



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 2020

Agenda/Summary of Work at Eastgate

1. Executive Director Report

In accordance with the guidelines and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the State of Ohio to mitigate the community spread of COVID-19, Eastgate Regional Councils of Governments office continues to be closed to the public through June 1, 2020.

Eastgate will continue to conduct business by telecommuting. All voicemail messages and emails are important to us and will be replied to in a timely manner. [Click here](#) for contact information and [here](#) for Agency updates.

Recognizing that many of the agencies and organizations involved with each of your communities may be caught in the middle of managing in what is our "new normal", I want to continue to let our members know that Eastgate can help with mapping, research, needed contacts, etc. if assistance is needed in your communities. Our goal continues to be helping to make sure that our local communities are best equipped to handle this challenge. If anyone needs help, they can contact us by email, and we'll work to figure out a solution.

As there was not a physical TAC meeting held in April, there are currently no minutes to ask this committee to approve at this time. The following summary of work provides information on the current work and initiatives underway at Eastgate.

2. Eastgate Traffic Count Map Updated

Eastgate's latest traffic counting map is now available. This map covers all counts conducted by Eastgate from 2015 to 2019. These counts and all older counts are available in the Traffic Count Database on Eastgate's website. Counts conducted by ODOT on State, Interstate, and US Routes are available on [ODOT's Traffic Count Map](#). Please visit: <https://eastgatecog.org/data-mapping/traffic-counts> to view the updated map.

3. CEDS Update

Eastgate has completed the update of the 2020-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. That document is available for reference on Eastgate's website by accessing the following link: <https://www.eastgatecog.org/regional-planning/economic-development>

Once at this page, scroll down to the CEDS section, and a link to the document can be found there. This strategy is the result of nearly 8 months of planning by the CEDS Advisory Council (CAC), CAC Steering Committee, and Eastgate staff. Feedback from partners and stakeholders throughout the region was routinely sought out and utilized.

4. Broadband

In March, Eastgate, along with partners from Ashtabula, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties applied to the Economic Development Administration for funding to perform a Regional Broadband Feasibility Study. The primary goal of this study is to demonstrate the gaps in both rural and urban coverage throughout the region while providing a strategy for implementation to construct a state-of-the-art broadband network.

As of right now, Eastgate's application has been moved forward in the process, meriting further consideration from the EDA. Eastgate will report more on this initiative as further information becomes available.

5. Food Pantry Mapping Initiative

Working with the Raymond J. Wean and Community Foundations, Eastgate has been asked to map food pantry locations in Trumbull, Mahoning and Columbiana counties. The goal of this initiative is to show where pantries are located so people in need know where to go for these services. It is also to be used as a tool for communities to allocate where food and supplies need to go in areas that lack proper services.

6. Appalachian Regional Commission Updates

Opportunity Appalachia announced the selection of six Ohio projects that were successful in being awarded technical assistance grants to bring jobs, business support, and make investments in the Appalachian region. Of the six Ohio projects selected, two were from the Eastgate ARC District. These proposed projects are particularly important at this challenging time as local economies look to restart once public health concerns resolve. Opportunity Appalachia will work closely with both private investors and federal agencies that have prioritized support for Opportunity Zone communities, an essential component of our national economic recovery. This support will be provided on contract by experienced business and development partners. It is anticipated that support of \$30,000 – \$75,000 will be provided for each applicant, averaging \$50,000 per applicant. Congratulations to the following local applicants:

- City of Youngstown: 20 Federal Place, Youngstown, Ohio
- Green Industrial Manufacturing Ecosystem Inc. (GIME), Struthers, Ohio.

Lastly, a reminder that Fiscal Year 2021 ARC pre-applications are due May 8, 2020 by 3:00 p.m. Due to the coronavirus precautions, this year pre-applications are to be submitted electronically to Kathy Zook at kzook@eastgatecog.org. A confirmation email will be sent to applicants verifying their application was received.

7. The Fiscal Year 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program Submittal and Overview

Eastgate's Fiscal Year 2021 to 2024 Transportation Improvement Program was finalized and submitted on May 1, 2020. This document contains separate sections for highway and transit improvements. These improvements are proposed by the lead agency responsible for their implementation, and are then reviewed by our Technical Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Board, and General Policy Board before being programmed into the TIP by Eastgate.

Over \$102 million in projects are included in the FY 2021 - 2024 TIP. These projects include funding sources such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Congestion Mitigation / Air Quality Program, Transportation Alternatives Program, Ohio Public Works Commission, Highway Safety Improvement Program, and more.

To view the final document please visit <https://www.eastgatecog.org/transportation/TIP> where other information is also provided including an interactive map showcasing all of the projects in the FY 2021 - 2024 TIP. If you have any questions, would like additional information, or would like a copy of the TIP document, please email Stephen Zubyk at szubyk@eastgatecog.org.

8. WRTA/Public Transit Updates

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act signed into law on March 27, 2020 provides emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and provides emergency appropriations to support Executive Branch agency operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CARES Act also supports public transportation across the nation as it authorizes the Federal Transit Administration to allocate \$25 billion to recipients of urbanized area and rural area formula funds, with \$22.7 billion to large and small urban areas and \$2.2 billion to rural areas. Funding will be provided at a 100% federal share, with no local match required, and will be available to support capital, operating, and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

Operating expenses incurred beginning on January 20, 2020 for all rural and urban recipients, even those in large urban areas, are also eligible, including operating expenses to maintain transit services as well as paying for administrative leave for transit personnel due to reduced operations during an emergency. For the Youngstown, OH-PA urban area, the WRTA's total apportionment allocated by FTA is \$11,106,926.

Lastly, during the third week of May, the WRTA will start to transition back to fixed route service in Mahoning and Trumbull counties with operational procedures to protect the general public from the spread of COVID-19. WRTA urges that all passengers wear face coverings for trips on all their buses. Seats will be sectioned off for social distancing to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. All buses have hand sanitizers mounted on the interior of their buses. The WRTA drivers have been equipped with face coverings and other personal protective equipment and all buses are disinfected using enhanced cleaning techniques. Please visit www.wrtaonline.com for future updates.

9. Other Business

In addition to the work listed above, staff has also submitted the Agency's overall work program which outlines the work planned for Fiscal Year 2021 which begins on July 1, 2020. Work is currently being done in our Environmental Department including drafting the next contract for work, and with the Clean Ohio program.

Work continues with mapping of Ohio Public Works Commission projects, Pavement Condition Ratings, and intersection safety data. The Transit Development Plan will also be completed by staff in this last quarter of Fiscal Year 2020.

Eastgate is exploring options that enable us to take some of our meetings online. Our staff is currently testing virtual conferencing software to find an application that meets our needs. The agency will be hosting the May Citizens Advisory Board meeting virtually with presentations from Mark Ragozine on the 2020-2022

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Stephen Zubyk on the Fiscal Year 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Plan. Any TAC member wishing to join the CAB WebEx meeting, can do so by contacting [Justin Mondok](#). Our goal in doing this is to expand the ways that we provide access to our programs and information, especially considering the current situation. Members can expect to see more virtual content from the agency in the future.

10. GPB Resolutions for Passage – there are no GPB Resolutions to pass at this time.