

COTA FACILITY MODERNIZATION PROJECT INVESTS IN SUSTAINABILITY, INNOVATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) broke ground this week on a transformative modernization project for its primary transit facility, enabling a more sustainable fleet while providing workforce training for the surrounding community. The \$65 million renovation of COTA's McKinley Avenue facility will include expansive electric vehicle charging capabilities, easing the transition to diesel-free transit vehicles. Meanwhile, the project will engage young people at the middle school, high school, trade school and college levels to provide hands-on job training, job shadowing, internships and externships.

COTA is on track to meet its commitment to be diesel-free by 2025, replacing all diesel transit vehicles with Compressed Natural Gas and soon piloting an electrical fleet. COTA reduced greenhouse gases by 9% between 2012 and 2020 – a period during which the Central Ohio region saw a 40% increase in transportation-related greenhouse gases. COTA is also committed to achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050, a goal that is aligned with the City of Columbus Climate Action Plan.

“This project is about transformation, which is focused on quality of life for all people,” said COTA President/CEO Joanna M. Pinkerton. “These are ambitious, necessary, and achievable goals which will ensure our next generation of workforce has a healthy region to prosper. COTA is committed to showing that sustainable growth can be done and it must be done to support vibrant, healthy neighborhoods and a vibrant, healthy economy for everyone.”

In partnership with Marker Construction, COTA will offer job training opportunities to students, women, minorities, unemployed adults, and formerly incarcerated individuals who are working hard to earn a second chance at life. A total of \$250,000 has been set aside for the administration, coordination and implementation of the workforce training program.

“I view the renovation of this building as a giant classroom to demonstrate to a new generation what the construction industry can offer,” said Alison Marker, president of Marker Construction. “The result will

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be a reimagining of the construction industry as a viable career path that offers well-paid jobs with excellent benefits and opportunities for career growth.”

“I am very excited about the innovative partnership between COTA and Marker Construction,” said Lisa Patt-McDaniel, CEO of the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio. “This project represents a unique opportunity to collaborate with job seekers, employers, and community partners so that all of us can unlock our potential for success.”

The renovation of COTA’s McKinley Avenue facility is projected to be completed in June 2023.

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The Central Ohio Transit Authority is the region’s mobility solutions provider, driven each day to connect people to prosperity through innovation, dedication and teamwork. By utilizing technology and data, establishing community partnerships and applying sustainability principles, COTA provides equitable access to jobs, healthcare and education.

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