



**TRANSFORM**

**CHANGE**

**2020**  
REPORT  
TO THE  
COMMUNITY

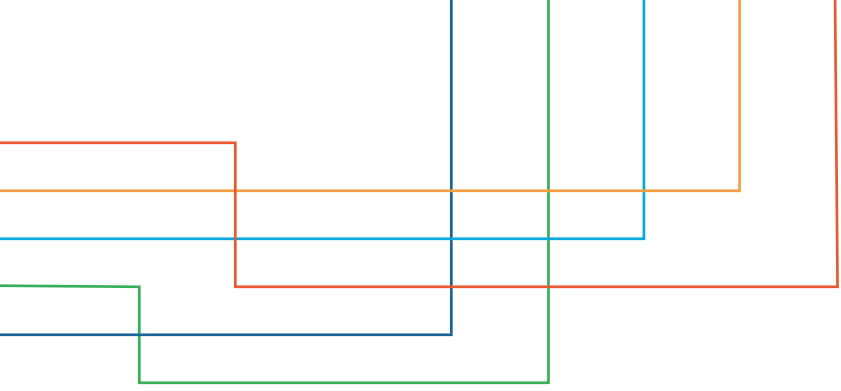
**TARTA**

**TAKING YOU PLACES**



**PIVOT**

**REIMAGINE**



**TARSA**

**TAKING YOU PLACES**





# 2020 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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- Kimberly A. Dunham, CEO
- Kelsie Hoagland, Board President
- Board of Trustees

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- New Strategic Plan
- TARTA Success Goals

## CHANGE

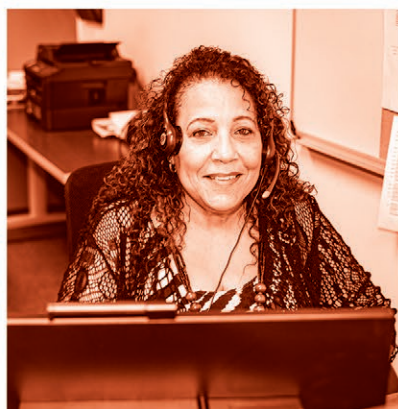
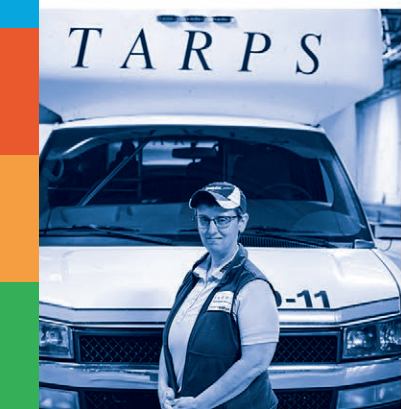
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# COMMUNITY MESSAGE



**Kimberly Dunham**  
Chief Executive Officer

We certainly faced many challenges this past year at TARTA, including things we inherited such as serious funding issues and a lack of proper investment in vehicles, facilities and technology. Add to that an unprecedented national pandemic that created challenges unlike any we have experienced in our lifetime.

There is one thing I know for sure – our staff is extremely resilient, and we have shown perseverance as a team. Our operators are frontline heroes and remain steadfast in their commitment to providing service to our community, even in the face of a pandemic. Team TARTA members in all departments play a vital role in collaboration and support, reaching for service standards of excellence in all we do.

This year was a pivotal turning point in the agency’s history. We renewed relationships in the community and let people know that we are a team of seasoned industry professionals here to do business. The community is realizing that transit should be at the table during discussions related to economic development, workforce development, health, safety and education. Proactively, as part of the planning process and not as an afterthought.

The Toledo Region is developing a reputation as a destination for businesses to locate and where people choose to live, work and play. Proper investment in TARTA is necessary to support a modern and sophisticated transit system that this region deserves.

As we enter the next chapter of the agency with new leadership on the Board and executive team and a new sense of hope, we surely have a very bright future ahead. People are paying attention to the change at TARTA and we are turning heads. Imagine what we can accomplish in the future with proper funding and support – the possibilities are endless.

In an unprecedented time, the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) is moving forward. Since the TARTA Board of Trustees hired a Chief Executive Officer in December 2019, the world has changed, but TARTA continues to provide essential transportation services, while redefining the future of public transit in our region.

TARTA’s proactive response to the pandemic has served as a leader for the early implementation of countermeasures to protect passengers and employees, including suspending fare collection, limiting the number of passengers per vehicle and providing masks to all customers in need. Despite these unusual circumstances, transportation has not been disrupted in our core service area.

Simultaneous with the Novel Coronavirus pandemic, the services we provide today and the planning for tomorrow have not stopped. TARTA’s new leadership team is working tirelessly, enhancing the assets we have: adding passenger amenities at the Downtown Transit Hub, redefining the maintenance of our vehicles and implementing new technology such as CAD/AVL and the mobile fare collection system.

New partnerships are creating opportunities for employment and recreation, and helping to align us more closely with the community we serve. New and expanded routes include service to the new Amazon Distribution Center in Rossford and the Toledo Zoo & Aquarium in Toledo.

Through it all, TARTA has not lost focus on its most critical asset: our customers. In the Board’s pursuit of strengthening the future of transit in this region, we are confident in this new leadership team of industry professionals who are excited for what is yet to come. Your support for transit and access to cost-effective transportation will help us grow into the system our region needs and deserves.



**Kelsie Hoagland**  
Board President

## COMMUNITY MESSAGE

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### Board of Trustees

#### Waterville

Kelsie Hoagland  
President

#### Sylvania

Mary Morrison  
Vice President

#### Maumee

Lou Thomson

#### Ottawa Hills

Marc Thompson

#### Rossford

Kevin Weeks

#### Sylvania Township

James Caldwell

#### Toledo

Heather Baker  
Michael Hart  
Patrick Kijowski  
Pat McKinstry  
Sam Olaniran  
Kendra Smith  
Katherine Hunt Thomas

“

*I am very excited about the **renaissance** at TARTA. It is an understatement to say that it is a time of **change and regeneration.***

Mary Morrison  
Vice President  
Board of Trustees

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TARTA bus operators masked up to keep service moving during COVID-19.

# TRANSFORM

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**Kimberly Dunham**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Leadership Team

TARTA hired an entirely new executive team, attracting top talent from across the nation. These individuals came to the Toledo Region knowing the monumental challenge that is ahead of them at TARTA and the unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on a community's mobility ecosystem. With accomplishments and experience in the public transit industry, private sector and local government, TARTA's leadership team is both embracing and leading change throughout the organization.



**Charles Odingbe**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Laura Koprowski**  
Chief Communications  
& Customer  
Experience Officer



**David Robinson**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Jim Fight**  
Director of Human  
Resources



**Lucas Boehm**  
Director of Information  
Technology



**Patricia Talbott**  
Director of Paratransit



TARTA introduced Fix It First to modernize its fleet.

## TRANSFORM

### New Strategic Plan

TARTA has embarked on a transformational journey through a visionary strategic planning process that identifies core improvements and success metrics, positioning ourselves to bring even greater value to the region.

The new TARTA strategic plan is a roadmap of key objectives and outcomes that will engage the entire TARTA team at every level throughout the organization.

Focusing on improved customer and employee experience, long-term financial stability and transparent communications, the strategic plan will completely redefine TARTA's business model and brand. A primary goal is to increase trust from our internal and external stakeholders within the Toledo metro community.

TARTA's new mission and vision reflect a commitment to ensure this public transit system will make a positive impact in the lives of our residents and future of our region, by serving as a mobility innovator.

**Mission**  
Empowering people to make connections.

**Vision**  
A trusted and reliable source of mobility and independence for the community.



# TARTA Success Goals



## Financial Sustainability

Showcase that we are responsible stewards of public finances by operating as an effective and productive business that yields return on investment worthy of long-term, sustainable funding from the community.



## Customer Experience

Our goal is that every TARTA customer can experience service standards of excellence in all that we do by fostering a culture focused on customers' needs, creating innovative strategies and measuring our performance.



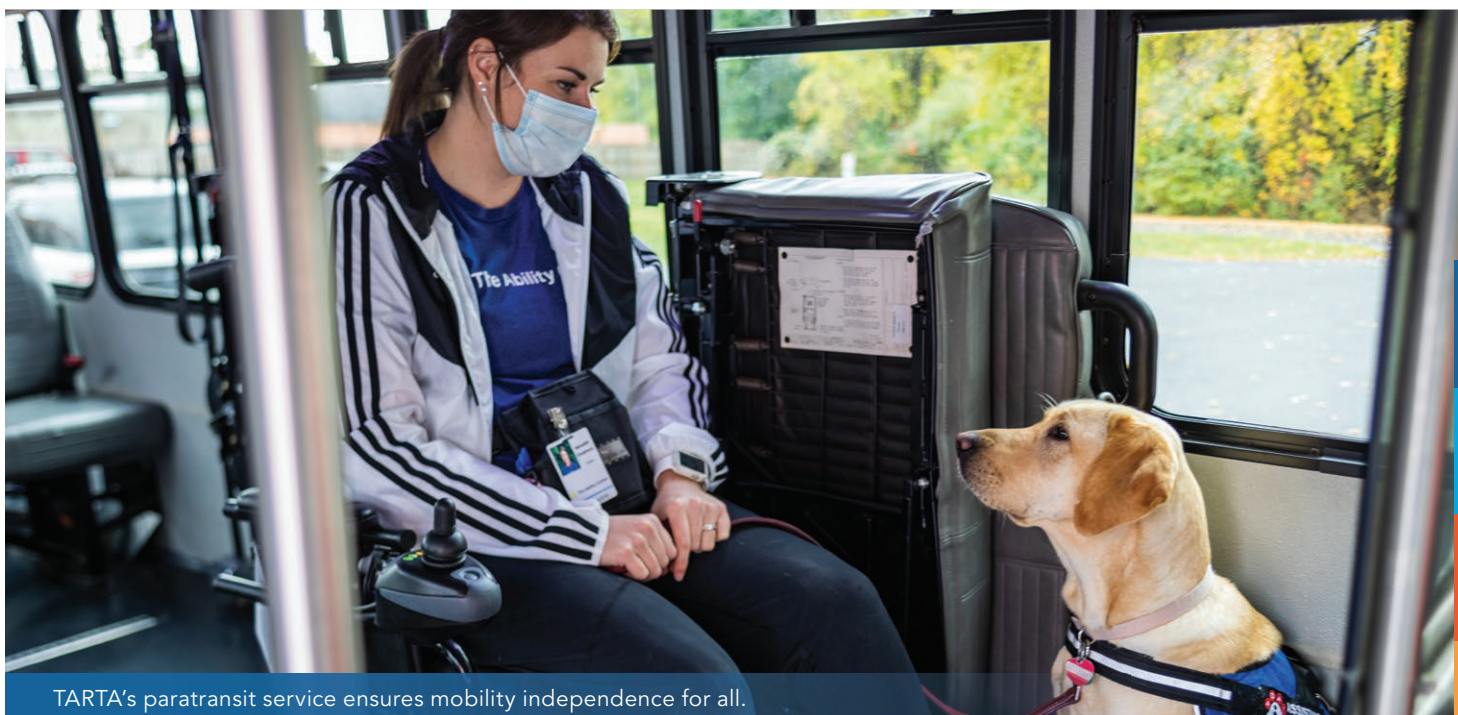
## Employee Engagement

TARTA employees should feel part of a team that values them, provides proper tools and resources, promotes a culture of diversity and inclusion, and offers professional growth opportunity through career pathway programs.



## Community Value

TARTA adds value to our community by making connections that drive economic vitality, improve quality of life and open doors of opportunity for business and residents to thrive.



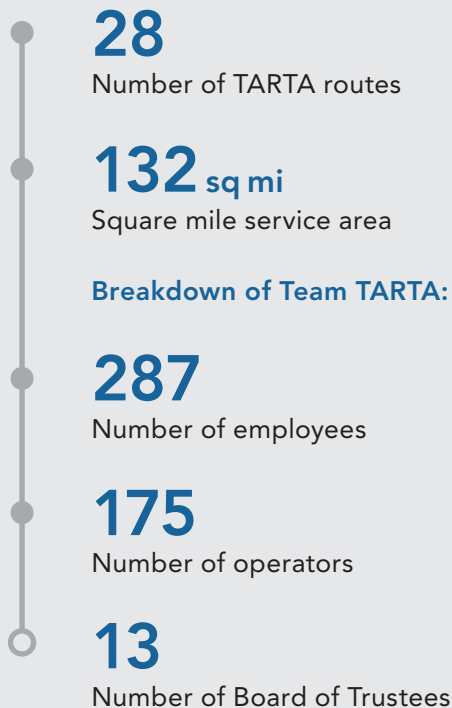
TARTA's paratransit service ensures mobility independence for all.

# CHANGE

## The TARTA Story

Change is happening at TARTA. 2020 was a foundational year for new initiatives and partnerships, measuring performance and operating as a safe transportation option during a historic pandemic.

### TARTA By the Numbers



### Our Fleet



### Our Services

- Fixed Route Bus Service
- Toledo Area Regional Paratransit Service (TARPS)
- Call-A-Ride
- University of Toledo Rocket Lift
- Commuter Vanpool Service
- Express Bus Service

### TARPS Customer Experience



**67%**  
use TARPS as a primary method of transportation



**94%**  
believe TARPS drivers are friendly and helpful, and that vehicles are driven safely



**61%**  
did not reduce their use of TARPS during the pandemic

Fall 2020 survey results of TARTA and TARPS customers

### Safety During COVID-19

- 1st in the state** to require masks for riders
- 8,545 free masks** distributed to riders
- Buses remain **fare free**
- 5 passenger** limit on TARPS and Call-A-Ride vehicles
- 10 passenger** limit on fixed-route buses
  - Shadow buses provided on high-ridership routes
- Rear-door** boarding
- Daily** sanitizing of buses



The City of Rossford is pleased to partner with TARTA during this exciting time in Rossford. **The 10L route, which provides service to Amazon and the Crossroads, continues to see double-digit increases in ridership each week.** The top site selection professionals in the country name public transportation as a key factor in business site selection, and we are fortunate to have a partner like TARTA servicing Rossford and the Metro Toledo area.

**Neil A. MacKinnon III**  
Mayor of Rossford



### New Business Partnerships

Amazon Rossford Fulfillment Center  
Toledo Zoo & Aquarium

### TARTA Customer Survey Highlights



**91%**  
Satisfied with bus operators operating vehicles safely



**86%**  
Customer service is helpful and courteous

#### Most important to customers:



**73%**  
On-time performance



**80%**  
Route coverage

Fall 2020 survey results of TARTA and TARPS customers

### Think of Community, Think of TARTA

Voter Ready with TARTA

Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness

Baby & Me Ride Free

2020 Census Outreach

Assistance Dogs Program with The Ability Center

TARTA is cosponsor of U.S. Department of Transportation BUILD Grant for Metroparks Toledo Glass City Riverwalk

TARTA is cosponsor of Lucas Metropolitan Authority U.S. HUD Complete Neighborhoods Grant

Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan with TMACOG

V Project Vaccination Sites & Outreach

U.S. Secret Service Partnership for Presidential Candidate Events

Food for Thought Saturday Luncheon Program

St. Pius Student Community Project

Team TARTA Race for the Cure

Youth Summer Reading Program with Toledo Lucas County Public Library

Connecting Kids to Meals Summer Meal Program



**TARTA will play an important role in Glass City Riverwalk.** The project, which received a \$24 million federal transportation grant, will transform our city's waterfront and connect neighborhoods. TARTA, with its bike rack equipped buses, will be a key a part of that connected network, making Riverwalk accessible for more people and a hub of activity in our region.

**Dave Zenk**  
Executive Director  
Metroparks Toledo



# PIVOT

Due to a historic pandemic, we all had to learn how to pivot quickly and often to handle situations no one ever imagined. TARTA is no different in its need to completely transform. Our new way of doing business is about a need to pivot that is intentional and by design to rebuild a modern and more sophisticated TARTA that the Toledo Metro Region needs and deserves.

## A Renewed Organization

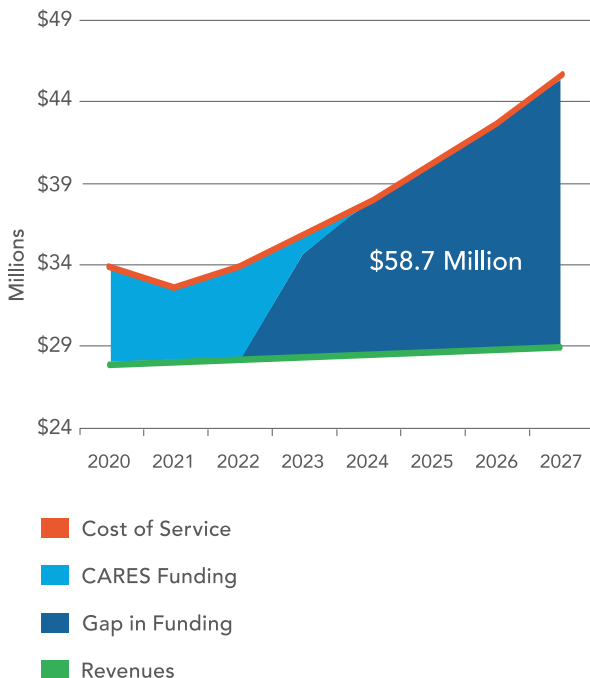
TARTA has been rebuilding itself from within by implementing a new organizational structure and culture. New departments have been created such as Communications & Customer Experience, as well as new positions such as Chief Operating Officer, to modernize Team TARTA to the latest industry standards. Employee town halls and a new internal text messaging system are keeping TARTA team members engaged and informed.

## One Team, One TARTA

### A NEW COMMITMENT TO:

- Employee engagement
- Improved labor relations
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Workforce development, training and recognition
- Creating career pathways for employees
- Modernizing the work environment with technology, tools and resources

## 2020 Financial Analysis



## Financial Reality of TARTA

Developing better transit for this region requires a full understanding of TARTA's financial picture. A detailed financial analysis revealed a \$58 million deficit for TARTA within six years without a new local funding source and a sustainable business model.

TARTA took immediate steps to respond and address years of not living within its means. TARTA is once again investing in its fleet, technology, equipment and facilities by applying for grants and properly budgeting in the future to use its \$6.5 million in annual federal apportionment funds for capital investment versus operating expenses.

Difficult business decisions have also been made by discontinuing transportation services that contribute to TARTA's long-term deficit. In other cases, contracts have been renegotiated to reduce financial exposure and risk to the organization. During this journey of financial discovery and renaissance, TARTA has been transparent and open with its Board, employees and the community.

## Fix It First: Modernize the Fleet

In 2020, TARTA created its Fix It First plan to quickly address the age and reliability of the bus fleet. Some of TARTA's oldest vehicles were 19 years old. Transit industry best practices advise the useful life of a public transit bus is 12 years and/or 500,000 miles.

TARTA successfully received \$2.2 million in competitive state grant funding to purchase new buses by leveraging existing federal funds. Collaborating with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), TARTA purchased 49 COTA vehicles that are modern and in good repair.

*TARTA successfully received \$2.2 million in state grant funding to purchase new buses.*

## Listening to the Community

Changing TARTA means listening and engaging with the community. The new leadership team members attended virtual city council and township trustee meetings of all TARTA local government members. TARTA joined area local chambers of commerce to build new relationships with the business community. Two customer surveys were conducted in 2020 to gain insight and feedback on service and performance. To better understand the needs of paratransit customers, TARTA employees attended monthly meetings of the Community Advocates for Transportation Rights (CATR). TARTA introduced new quarterly customer forums to share updates and answer questions. The forums are recorded and available at [tarta.com](http://tarta.com).



A new TARTA and COTA partnership is upgrading the bus fleet.

## Responsiveness During COVID

During 2020, TARTA became nimble and adept at consistently adjusting service and routes based on ridership and need. While service and hours of operation were scaled back, TARTA also introduced new service to support new jobs and through partnerships. The 10L bus service was expanded to the new Amazon Rossford Fulfillment Center in late 2020 to connect the local workforce with new opportunities. TARTA also collaborated with the Toledo Zoo & Aquarium on a pilot project to offer bus service on its free days to the community from mid-July through August.

Throughout the pandemic, TARTA has been an industry leader in safety protocols and procedures. Issuing the first passenger mask requirement of public transit authorities in the state, TARTA quickly worked with the community to be able to provide free masks to all riders and implement the safety mandate in a positive manner. To handle growing ridership on TARPS and still limit passenger numbers per vehicle, TARTA worked with local businesses to assist with providing transportation options to customers.

## REIMAGINE

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Now more than ever before, reimagining mobility in Northwest Ohio is vital to our region's future and economic success. We are excited to share some projects underway that will demonstrate a new, successful TARTA in 2021.

### Financial Investment

The framework of funding public transit in Ohio relies on local investment as the primary source. TARTA has been inadequately funded at the local level for years through a 2.5 mills property tax.

Robust conversations around a long-term, sustainable local funding model for TARTA are underway. Action in 2021 to change the local funding model is critical to avoid severe service reductions in 2022. Already, TARTA is not able to fund services to meet the transportation needs of second- and third-shift workers and does not operate on Sundays.

TARTA is committed to taking the organization from financial vulnerability to financial sustainability.



TARTA is reinventing itself with new, smart technologies to serve its customers.



*TARTA creates  
**\$52 million** in annual  
economic output in  
our community.*

2018 BGSU Economic  
Impact Study



### Redesigning TARTA

This spring, TARTA will kick off an 18-month effort to redesign the system to allow better access and connections to jobs, health care, educational institutions and other communities for the present and into the future. This Comprehensive Operational and Alternatives Analysis will require extensive community engagement in the coming year. Residents, local governments, businesses and others will be able to give ideas on new service options and participate in the development of the next generation of public transit for this region.

### Moving into the Future of Tech

Working with nMomentum, a technology consulting company specializing in the public transportation industry, TARTA developed a multi-year technology plan that will advance our vision for an innovative mobility system for the region. Identified areas of improvement for 2021 include implementing a fleet maintenance software system, computer aided dispatching, automatic passenger counters on all vehicles and vehicle location technology for the entire fleet.

## TARTA's New Look

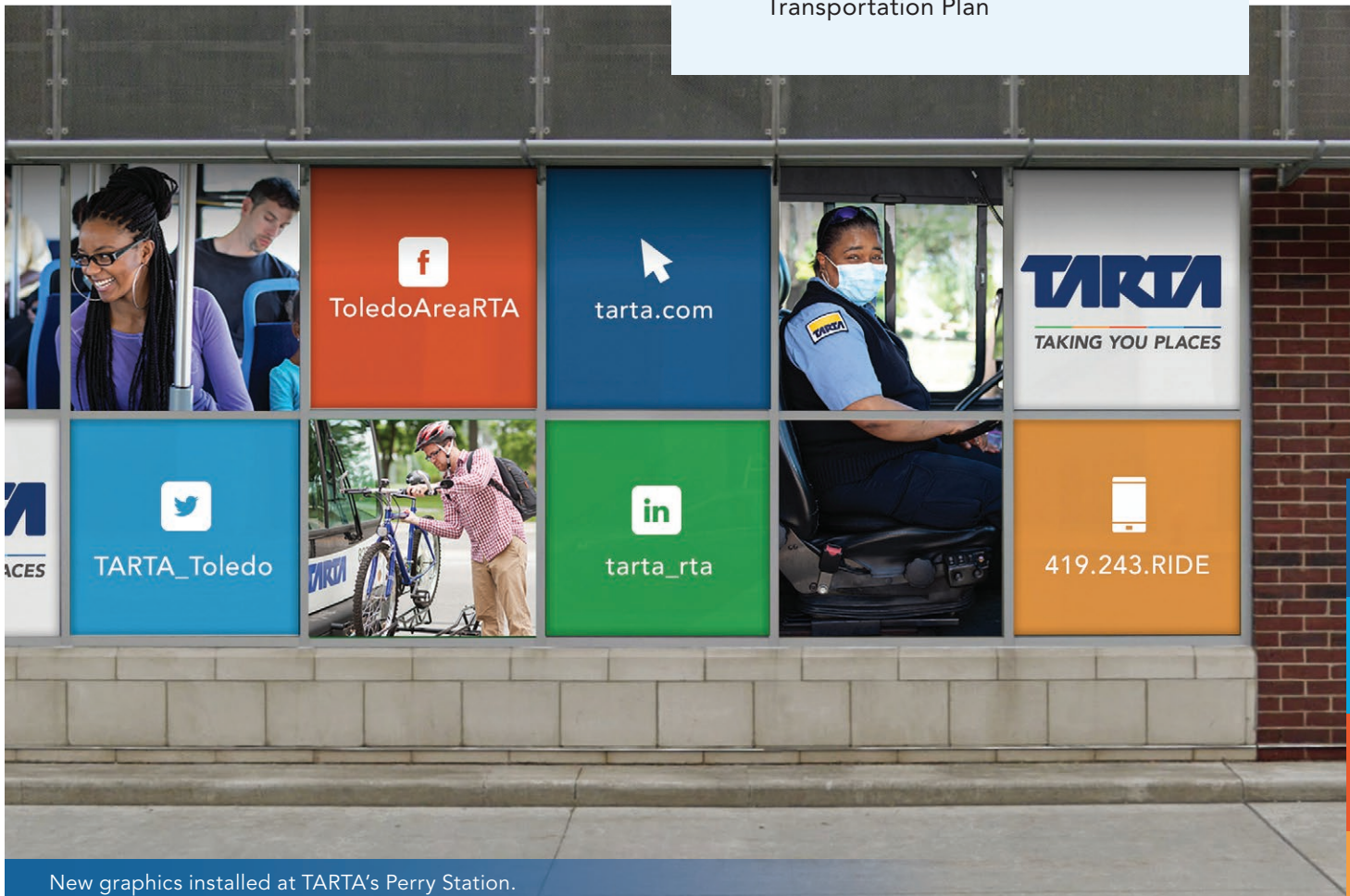
TARTA introduced a new brand and image so the community could see the difference, as well as experience it. Taking You Places, TARTA's new brand statement, conveys that TARTA is the solution to mobility challenges of residents, communities and employers.

The new branded TARTA is also on display with its fleet. For the first time in years, all of TARTA's fixed route buses are consistently wrapped in TARTA's signature colors, logo and lines of movement. Equally important is our commitment to roll out clean buses, reflective of our newfound pride, service standards of excellence and attention to detail.

## Plans to Guide the Future

The following plans were developed in 2020 to provide a clear framework for TARTA's new business-driven approach and where additional financial investment is needed.

- Transforming TARTA: 5-Year Strategic Plan
- Transit Asset Condition Assessment
- Technology and Communications Condition Assessment
- Safety & Security Gap Analysis
- Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan
- Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan





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