

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

Euclid Avenue construction begins

CLEVELAND - The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) has issued a "notice to proceed" to Terrace Construction to begin work on Euclid Avenue, as part of the long-awaited Euclid Corridor Transportation Project.

Work has started in Midtown, on the north side of Euclid Avenue, from the Innerbelt to E. 55th St. In August, work will switch to the south side of Euclid Avenue, in the same area, and be completed by December.

In 2007, Terrace Construction will extend the work to E. 79th St. The firm, at 3965 Pearl Road, was awarded a \$22.66 million contract to rebuild two miles of Euclid Avenue, from storefront to storefront.

More than 20 percent of the work will be done by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs).

Two additional major construction packages for the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project are expected to be awarded in the coming weeks.

RTA's new Silver Line will be fully operational in late 2008.

RTA points out that:

- At least one lane of traffic will always be open in each direction.
- Bus service is being maintained on Euclid Avenue.
- All merchants will remain open, and all entrances to all business will be accessible.

Usually, people moan over seeing orange barrels, but those in the Midtown area are excited and optimistic about the meaning behind the barrels.

"MidTown Cleveland, Inc. is very excited that this catalytic project is moving into the next phase of construction," says MidTown's Executive Director James Haviland.

"The new Silver Line will accelerate economic development here. Our new master plan and transit-supportive zoning will benefit from, and contribute

to, the success of the Silver Line. As the project moves forward, we will continue to work with RTA to minimize disruptions during construction so our stakeholders and their customers can continue to do business as these improvements are made."

Joe Calabrese, RTA's CEO & General Manager, echoed those feelings.

"The beginning of work on Euclid Avenue certainly marks a landmark day in Cleveland. We are working hard to minimize the natural disruptions caused by any construction project. We have individually contacted and visited all affected merchants. Entrances to all businesses will be accessible, and Euclid Avenue will remain open. Merchants along Euclid Ave. offer many fine products and services, and we urge Clevelanders to continue to support them."

Construction-related questions?

- Call the Euclid Corridor Construction Hotline, 216-566-5178.
- Call the Euclid Corridor satellite office, 216-881-7501. The office is at 1979 E. 55th St.
- Call Project Officer Danielle Willis, 216-771-4144, dwillis@gcrta.org.

For RTA service information, use the automated trip planner at rideRTA.com, or call the RTA Answerline, 216-621-9500.

Project background

The \$200-million Euclid Corridor Transportation Project is a combined effort of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), the City of Cleveland, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) and RTA.

The Project includes the design and construction of a 7.1 miles Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system -- RTA's new Silver Line -- from Public Square to East Cleveland, with 36 ADA-compliant stations. It connects downtown to Playhouse Square, Cleveland State University, Cleveland Clinic, University Circle, Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, and the Stokes-Windermere Station.

From Public Square to E. 17th St., there will be exclusive transit lanes for the Rapid Transit Vehicles (RTVs) only. From E. 17th St. to E. 107th St., there will be exclusive transit lanes used by all RTA vehicles. From E. 107th St. to the Stokes-Windermere Station, the RTVs and buses will be curbside operation in mixed traffic lanes.

Other project features:

- Each station in the median strip will offer level boarding and off-board fare collection.

- Traffic signal prioritization is an integral part of the project.
- RTA will purchase 20 articulated 62-foot low-floor vehicles with doors on both sides. These environmentally friendly vehicles will be fully ADA accessible, seat approximately 46 passengers, and utilize diesel/electric technology to provide electric power for propulsion and operation.
- Passengers will see a 12-minute travel time savings between Public Square and University Circle, and enjoy a more attractive streetscape.
- RTVs will operate every five minutes on weekdays and Saturdays.

By 2025, the project is expected to produce one million new riders annually, 13,000 new jobs, and 7.9 million square feet of commercial development.

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For project information, visit euclidtransit.org

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