

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

RTA to use hybrid electric vehicles in Euclid Corridor Transportation Project

CLEVELAND -- Officials of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) are going high-tech by using hybrid electric vehicles when the "new" Euclid Avenue opens in 2006.

That means there will be no need to hang miles of wire along Cleveland's major thoroughfare. The wires would have powered the trackless trolley-style coaches, a major component of the \$292-million Euclid Corridor Transportation Project (ECTP).

Cleveland is one of 10 cities being used to showcase new technology -- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Much of Euclid Avenue will receive a facelift from store-front to storefront, from Public Square to East Cleveland. The project is funded by RTA, the City of Cleveland, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The new vehicle is being included in a revised environmental assessment for the Euclid Corridor project. The assessment is expected to be submitted to the FTA this summer.

"It is a futuristic vehicle for a futuristic project," says Joe Calabrese, RTA CEO and General Manager. "This technology was not even available when the Euclid Corridor Project was conceived."

Calabrese says the vehicle offers these benefits:

- _ Because its power is not dependant on overhead wires, it offers greater flexibility and expandability.
- _ It eliminates concern about the visual impact of overhead electric wires.
- _ The vehicles are environmentally friendly and quiet to operate.
- _ RTA will save an estimated \$38 million to install the guide wires.
- _ RTA will save both capital and operating dollars when compared to previously anticipated technology.

The vehicles use a low-sulfur diesel engine that drives a generator to produce electricity powering the operation. It is 60-feet long, as opposed to standard 40-foot buses, with an articulation (bellows) near the center. It would have a low floor, for fast and easy boarding, with doors on both sides.

Calabrese says RTA has discussed the vehicle change with government agencies and local stakeholders, and all are supportive.

Other aspects of the Euclid Corridor project -- such as the roadway and streetscape design -- remain the same.

For more information on the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project, call Project Officer Danielle Willis, 216-771-4144, or send e-mail to dwillis@gcrta.org.

For media inquiries only contact:

Jerry Masek
RTA Media Relations Manager
P: 216.566.5211

F: 216.566.5240
jmasek@gcrta.org