HEALTHLINE

SUMMARY

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) began 'rail-like' BRT service of the HealthLine in the fall of 2008. With 9.3 miles of transit improvements, including more than seven miles running along historic Euclid Avenue, the HealthLine provides service from Public Square in downtown Cleveland to East Cleveland where riders can connect to RTA's heavy rail, the Red Line. The HealthLine operates 24 hours per day/seven days per week with a frequency of every five minutes during peak travel times.

BRT ELEMENTS

Uniquely-designed with five doors, the 63-foot rapid transit vehicles operate in dedicated lanes and stop at 36 stations, utilizing a mechanical guidance system for precision docking. The hybrid-electric vehicles have a seating/standing capacity of 47/53, provide onboard text display, audio announcement of upcoming stations and rear facing wheelchair positions to facilitate quicker securement. They are also equipped with GPS technology. The HealthLine has dedicated travel lanes for the majority of the line. Stations have ticket vending machines (TVM), raised platforms for level boarding, real time information displays, emergency phones, and lighting. Approximately 20 stations are equipped with interactive kiosks as well. Riders can use the TVMs to purchase a one-way trip for $2.25 or an all-day pass off-board and are able to quickly enter and exit through all doors. RTA Transit Police monitor fare collection along the HealthLine. Extended use fare cards may also be validated at the machines.

BRT PERFORMANCE

Connecting major employers in the area, the HealthLine allows riders to travel

from downtown to University Circle in 20 minutes and to East Cleveland in just under 30 minutes, speeding up service by 30 percent from the former bus line (Route 6). This improvement was made possible by attributes such as traffic signal prioritization and higher transit travel speeds than in adjacent general use lanes. Reduced travel times, greater frequencies, and reliable service have attracted a larger number of riders than previously recorded on the corridor. Current ridership on the HealthLine shows a more than 60 percent improvement than its predecessor, Route 6. Customer satisfaction is very high as well. In 2009, an onboard survey found that the HealthLine had an approval rating of over 90 percent, with 92 percent of responses indicating service was reliable, 94 percent indicating trips were on time, and 95 percent indicating that travel time is reasonable.

BRT BENEFITS

The HealthLine has been a great addition to RTA's transit service and has illustrated the strength of BRT as a viable rapid transit option. Economic redevelopment along the Euclid Avenue corridor has exceeded $4.3 billion and additional real estate investment continues to occur. In 2011, the HealthLine won two awards; the first, a National Recognition Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), and the second an Award of Excellence from the Urban Land Institute.

BRT COSTS

The total capital cost of the HealthLine was $168.4M, or approximately $23M per mile. $82M was received from the Federal Transit Administration, $50M from the State of Ohio, and the remaining amount from local sources. Unique branding resulted in a 25-year naming rights agreement with two of the region's two largest employers (Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals) providing millions of dollars to help offset operating costs.