



Why Did Cleveland's RTA Shut Down Its Entire Rapid Rail System?

All Aboard Ohio Asks: Is this willful neglect?

(Cleveland, Ohio) January 17, 2022 – Cleveland's first snowstorm of 2022 brought something more troubling than just snow. The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority shut down the "Rapid", its rail-based transit service, even while snow-clogged streets forced the suspension of bus service.

All Aboard Ohio must ask: What about the regular riders who depend on the Rapid to connect with jobs, health care and school? What about those riders who use the buses and were left without the option of rail service? What happened from Sunday into Monday of this week damages the credibility of the authority and undermines the idea that GCRTA services are reliable.

As recently as 2019, GCRTA touted the reliability benefits of the Rapid during the winter: that the authority operated early-morning "snow trains" to keep tracks and overhead wires clear of snow and ice. Why weren't those trains deployed?

Additionally, riders tell us that information about the shutdown, the reasons behind it and the schedule for the return to normal service was not readily available from GCRTA. The lack of any apology or explanation from GCRTA's executive leadership indicates a lack of transparency and basic customer communication. Furthermore, the winter storm was predicted. Riders should have been alerted as the weekend began.

"It's bad enough that GCRTA has let the Rapid fall into disrepair from decades of neglect and a failure to fund and procure replacement of equipment, some of which is way beyond its designed life span", says All Aboard Ohio Executive Director, Stu Nicholson. "But a total shutdown of the Rapid along with all bus service makes us wonder if this approaches willful neglect on the part of GCRTA management."

"We call on the Mayor of the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County Executive, both of which are represented on the GCRTA Board, to appoint GCRTA board members that will address these issues with urgency. We also demand a full investigation of why those who depend on or choose to use public transit were literally left in the lurch by the decision to suspend rail service."

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