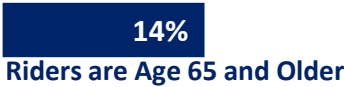


BEAVER COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (BCTA) PERFORMANCE REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



FIXED-ROUTE RIDER PROFILE

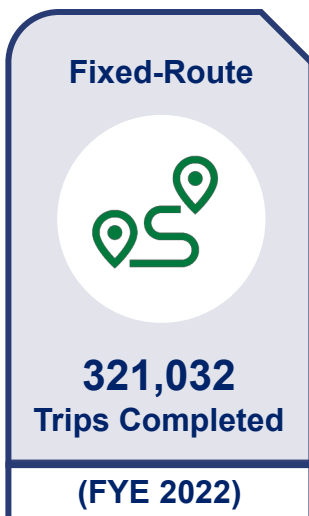


Source: 2023 BCTA Customer Satisfaction Survey

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

SOCIAL

Mobility Benefits



On-Time Performance
(FYE 2022)

Fixed-Route **79%**

Paratransit **92%**

Source: FYE 2022 dotGrants and Agency Reporting

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

ECONOMIC



\$4.9M

**Spent doing Business
With Pennsylvania Vendors (FYE 2022)**



\$2.0M



Operator Salaries & Wages (FYE 2022)

\$21.47

Average Hourly Fixed-Route Bus Driver Wage (FYE 2022)

Sources: FYE 2022 dotGrants and Agency Reporting

ACT 44 PERFORMANCE METRICS

		TARGET (2022)	ACTUAL (2022)	FUTURE (2027)
	INCREASE Passengers / RVH	19.19	7.99	8.82
	CONTAIN Operating Cost / RVH	\$134.73	\$130.94	\$151.79
	INCREASE Operating Revenue / RVH	\$35.21	\$13.13	\$15.22
	CONTAIN Operating Cost / Passenger	\$7.03	\$16.40	\$17.23

BEST PRACTICES

- Uses GFI data to validate APC-reported ridership numbers as a secondary data verification method.
- Annually updates a ten-year operating budget to monitor long-term financial sustainability.
- Hold quarterly strategic planning sessions between BCTA management and the Board.
- Roundtable discussions with human services agencies to troubleshoot paratransit issues

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Consider a public relations campaign to promote rebranding efforts and service changes.
- Develop a capital fleet replacement program reflecting minimum fleet requirements and downsized commuter bus service.
- Develop partnerships with local agencies to pursue discretionary grant opportunities for other multimodal improvements.

BCTA PERFORMANCE REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Other Fixed-Route Performance Statistics	FYE 2019	FYE 2022
Operating Revenue / Operating Cost	27.4%	10.0%
Operating Cost / Total Vehicle-Hours	\$101.89	\$122.06
Operating Cost / Total Vehicle-Miles	\$5.26	\$7.61
Total Passengers / Total Vehicle-Hours	14.50	7.44
Operating Cost / RVM	\$7.11	\$8.73
RVM / Total Vehicle-Miles	74.0%	87.2%
RVH / Total Vehicle-Hours	86.8%	93.2%
Operating Subsidy / Passenger Trip	\$5.10	\$14.75
Farebox Recovery	25.9%	9.7%

Note: Does not include ADA Paratransit Operating Statistics

Fixed-Route Annual Operating Statistics	FYE 2019	FYE 2022
Vehicles in Maximum Service (VOMS)	18	11
Operating Cost	\$5,340,674	\$5,263,491
Operating Revenues	\$1,464,983	\$527,778
Operating Subsidies	\$3,875,691	\$4,735,713
Total (Actual) Vehicle-Miles	1,014,582	691,532
Revenue Vehicle-Miles (RVM)	751,014	603,079
Total Vehicle-Hours	52,417	43,123
Revenue Vehicle-Hours (RVH)	45,484	40,198
Total Passenger Trips	760,209	321,032
Senior Passenger Trips	82,487	50,103

Note: Does not include ADA Paratransit Operating Statistics



BCTA Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Bus at the Expressway Travel Center

FLEET SNAPSHOT



43
Total
Vehicles

23 Heavy-Duty Buses

20 Light-Duty Buses



Heavy-Duty
Bus

34,000

Estimated Annual
Miles per Bus



Light-Duty
Bus

23,000

Estimated Annual
Miles per Bus

Source: 2023 Capital Planning Tool and FYE 2022 dotGrants Reporting

HIGH-LEVEL FINANCIAL INDICATORS

FYE 2019

FYE 2022

36.9%

119.2%



Total Reserves /
Total Operating Expenses

FYE 2019

FYE 2022

\$1.82

\$1.60



Effective Fare (Total Fare
Revenue / Passenger Boardings)

Source: dotGrants Reporting



Performance Report

October 10, 2023

Transit Performance Review

**Beaver County Transit Authority
(d.b.a, BCTA)**

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Contents

PREFACE	3
INTRODUCTION	4
Purpose.....	4
Performance Review Process Steps	4
Agency Overview	6
Community Impacts.....	9
AGENCY TRENDS	13
Annual Operating Statistics	13
Financial Health.....	14
Safety.....	16
Capital Asset Management.....	16
ACT 44 PERFORMANCE REVIEW FINDINGS	18
Prior Performance Reviews	18
Current Performance Assessment and Findings.....	18
Future Performance Goals	19
FUNCTIONAL REVIEW	21
Identifying Opportunities for Improvement and Best Practices	21
Retain and Promote Ridership.....	21
Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability.....	22
Identify Other Opportunities to Improve Performance	23
APPENDIX A: DATA RECONCILIATION	24
APPENDIX B: ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE	26
Part 1 – Actions to Retain and Promote Ridership.....	26
Part 2 – Actions to Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability.....	26
Part 3 – Other Opportunities for Improvement	26
APPENDIX C: ACT 44 PEER COMPARISON ANALYSIS	27

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1. Performance Review Process Steps.....	5
Exhibit 2. BCTA Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Bus at the Expressway Travel Center	6
Exhibit 3. BCTA System Map	7
Exhibit 4. Monthly Fixed-Route Ridership, 2019 – 2022	8
Exhibit 5. Customer Satisfaction Performance Metrics	9
Exhibit 6. Fixed-Route Rider Profile	10
Exhibit 7. Economic and Social Measures.....	12
Exhibit 8. FYE 2022 Operating Budget Summary.....	14
Exhibit 9. High-Level Financial Indicators.....	15
Exhibit 10. PTASP Annual Safety Performance Targets and 2023 Results	16
Exhibit 11. May 2023 Fleet Utilization Snapshot.....	17
Exhibit 12. FYE 2021 Performance Assessment.....	18
Exhibit 13. FYE 2027 Performance Goals	20

Preface

Pennsylvania law requires transit agency performance reviews and five-year performance targets to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service

COVID-19 disproportionately impacted transit-dependent populations

Transit agencies have navigated new requirements, higher costs, and shifting travel demand

A “new normal” for transit systems seems to be emerging, but uncertainty and volatility remain

PennDOT will reevaluate performance targets when the long-term impacts of the pandemic are known

Act 44 of 2007 and Act 89 of 2013 increased funding for public transportation in Pennsylvania. The laws also required transit agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through increased ridership, revenue, and cost containment. PennDOT evaluates every fixed-route transit agency in the Commonwealth through a performance review at least once every five years to determine how well the agency satisfies these requirements. Act 44 also requires PennDOT to develop five-year performance targets for each agency as part of the performance review process.

Beginning in February 2020, COVID-19 caused significant social and economic disruptions as workplaces closed and people limited travel and gatherings to reduce the spread of the disease. The adverse impacts throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania were profound. The health and unemployment effects of COVID-19 disproportionately impacted senior, disabled, and low-income populations. These individuals also rely heavily on public transportation to meet their essential travel needs.

The impacts of COVID-19 on the public transportation industry were also severe. Ridership decreased by more than 90 percent at some agencies during April 2020. Revenues dropped as agencies opted to waive fares to limit bus driver interactions and possible disease transmission from the handling of tickets and currency. Agencies increased the frequency and extent of bus cleaning, which increased operating costs. Some agencies furloughed drivers as they reduced service in response to plummeting passenger demand.

By late Summer 2020, transit agencies had begun to stabilize from the initial impacts of COVID-19, only to have statewide infection rates soar in the fall and winter. As COVID-19 lingered and mutated for more than three years, its impact on travel patterns became less severe, but its influence never fully subsided. As of early 2023, post-pandemic travel patterns have begun to emerge and stabilize, but the long-term effects of the pandemic on transit remain unknown.

Many of the ridership, revenue, and operating cost trends used to develop this transit performance review report, including five-year performance targets, rely on information that predates the pandemic. PennDOT will continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and reassess the transit agency's five-year performance targets when the long-term effects of the pandemic are known. If the performance targets are revised, they will be published as an addendum to this report.

Introduction

Purpose

Act 44 requires local transportation organizations that receive state operating assistance to participate in periodic reviews to assess agency performance. PennDOT established a framework for conducting performance reviews with local transportation organizations to:

- Assess efficiency and effectiveness of service, financial stability, and general management/business practices;
- Agree to five-year targets for Act 44-mandated performance criteria;
- Assist agencies in developing an action plan which addresses opportunities for improvement and ways to achieve performance targets;
- Provide technical assistance to implement the plan at the request of the transportation organization; and
- Reassess each organization on a five-year cycle.

The reassessment at the end of each five-year cycle is to evaluate:

- Whether the organization met the agreed-upon performance targets; and
- The sufficiency and effectiveness of actions taken by the organization to improve performance and management practices to meet performance targets.

This report presents the Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA) review conducted on April 4, 2023.

Performance Review Process Steps

The performance review process is a collaborative effort between the transit agency and PennDOT.

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, the performance review process assesses BCTA's unique challenges and changes since the previous performance review, the accuracy and reliability of reported data, implemented practices, additional opportunities for improvement, and realistic targets to attain before the next review.

Exhibit 1. Performance Review Process Steps

Key to Responsibilities: **PennDOT** **PennDOT + Transit Agency** **Transit Agency**

1.	Notify agency of performance review schedule and request supporting documents.
2.	Review available data and request additional information.
3.	Agree upon a set of peer agencies for comparison.
4.	Review the most recent customer satisfaction survey.
5.	Assess Act 44 variables, including current performance, targets from the previous review, and Action Plan implementation.
6.	Conduct Act 44 performance criteria analysis.
7.	Interview agency management, staff, and governing body.
8.	Perform supplementary data collection and reconciliation.
9.	Evaluate performance, financial management, and operations.
10.	Report results and determine agency compliance with performance requirements.
11.	Develop the performance report.
12.	Develop, implement, and monitor a five-year Action Plan.
13.	Provide technical assistance, if required, to help meet five-year performance targets.

Agency Overview

The Beaver County Transit Authority (d.b.a. BCTA) is a county-established municipal authority that provides local fixed-route bus, commuter bus to Pittsburgh, and countywide shared-ride service in Beaver County, Pennsylvania (**Exhibit 2**). A nine-member Board of Directors oversees BCTA. In 1983, BCTA established an on-demand shared-ride paratransit service called Demand and Response Transit (DART) and contracted with the Lutheran Service Society of Western Pennsylvania to operate the service. In 2003, BCTA began operating its fixed-route and demand-response services directly.

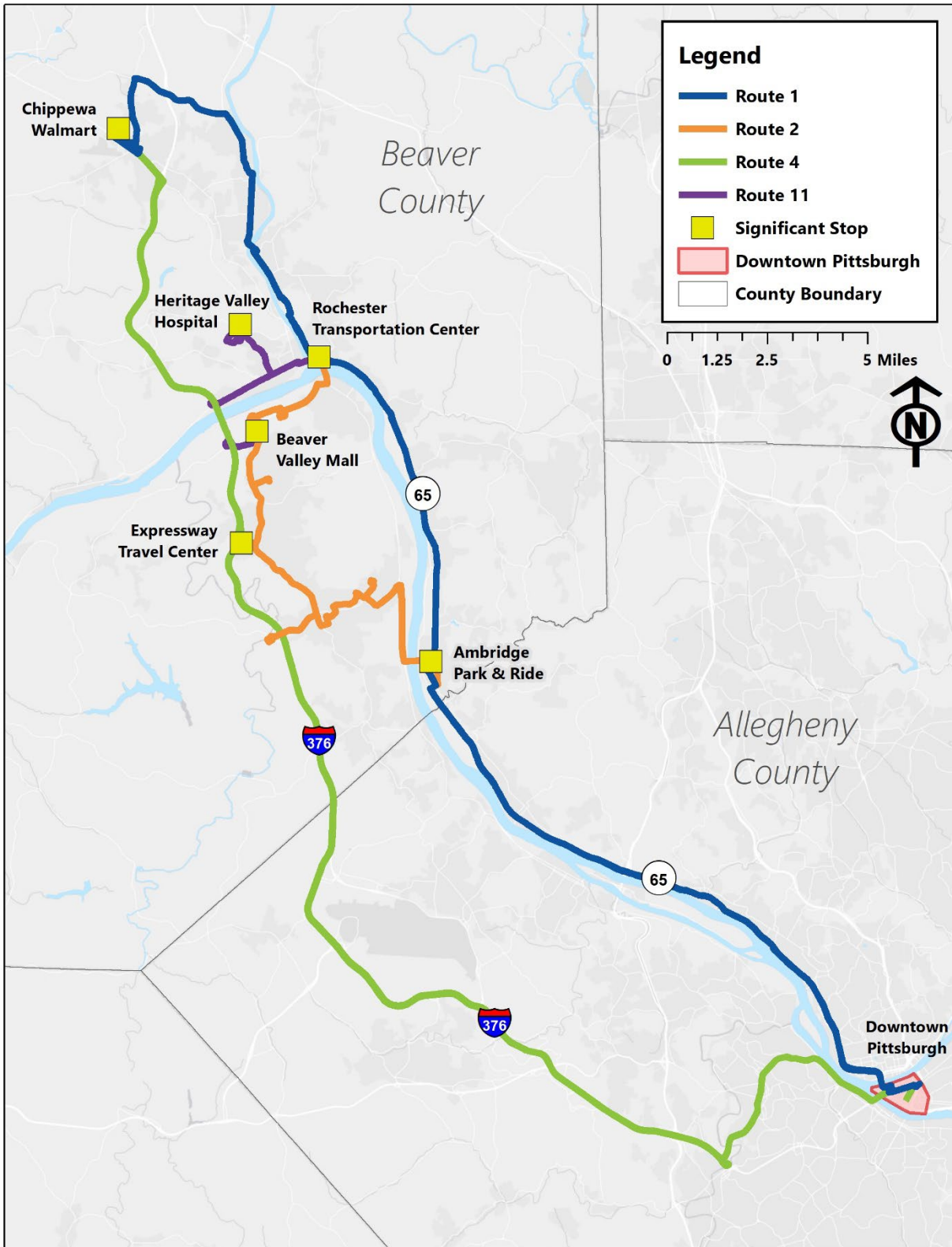
BCTA utilizes three facilities to operate local fixed route, commuter bus, and the DART demand response service. The Rochester Transportation Center (RTC) serves as BCTA's headquarters, transfer center, and customer service point. The Expressway Travel Center (ETC) in Center Township serves BCTA as a maintenance and storage garage. Both facilities include park-and-ride space for BCTA customers. Lastly, BCTA shares a park-and-ride in Ambridge with Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT), a regional facility owned by the Borough of Ambridge which serves the commuter market and functions as a transfer point between Routes 1 and 2 and PRT #14.¹ Currently, BCTA operates four fixed routes, two of which travel into Pittsburgh. BCTA has a free fare zone for stops around the commercial area near the Walmart in Chippewa and the Beaver Valley Mall in Monaca. **Exhibit 3** features a system map of BCTA, including significant stops.

Exhibit 2. BCTA Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Bus at the Expressway Travel Center



¹ BCTA is responsible for maintenance and cleaning of the shared bus shelter, while PRT is responsible for waste removal, landscaping, snow plowing, and paving repairs.

Exhibit 3. BCTA System Map

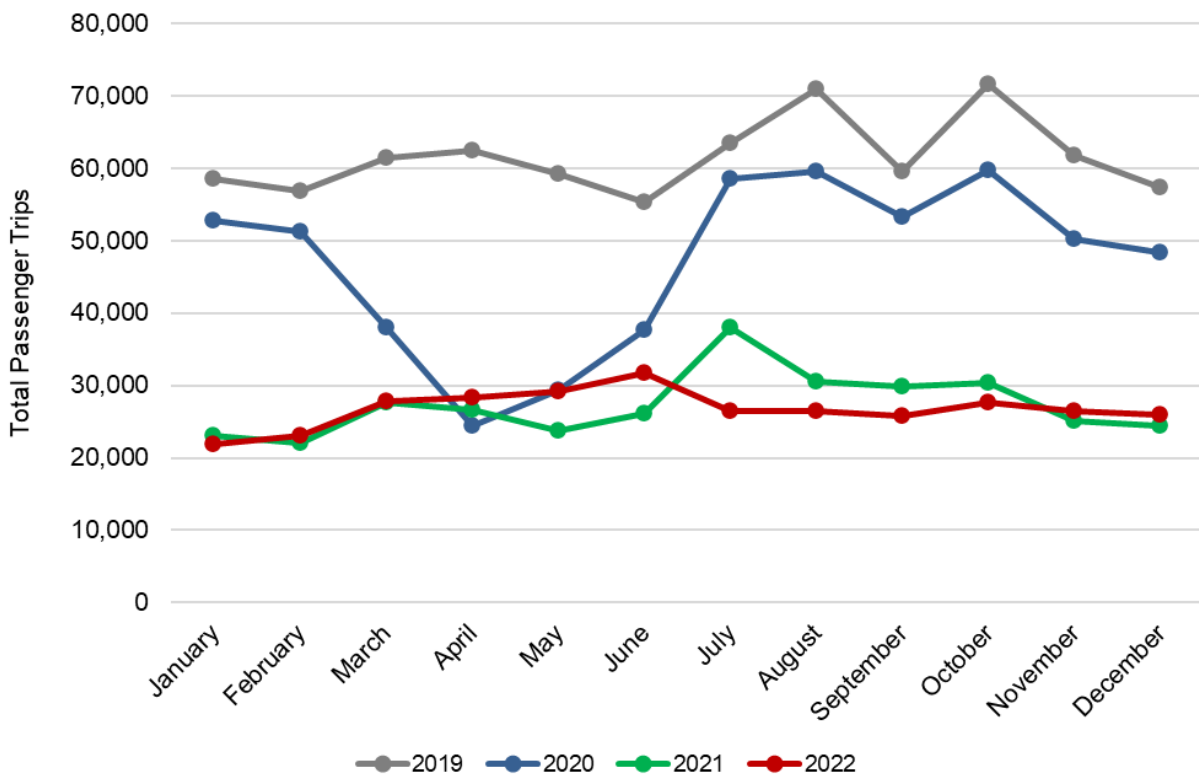


In Fiscal Year 2021-22 (FYE 2022), BCTA had 11 fixed-route vehicles operating in maximum service (VOMS). The Authority provided 321,032 total fixed-route passenger trips in FYE 2022. In FYE 2022, BCTA operated 19 vehicles in maximum service for its demand response paratransit service, DART. BCTA delivered 50,714 total demand-response trips in FYE 2022, including 25,225 shared-ride Lottery-funded trips for seniors, and 27,098 other shared-ride trips funded by the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP).

BCTA also provides transportation for some MATP trips outside of its published shared-ride operating hours and service area. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services sponsors these MATP trips. Because these trips are not available to the public, PennDOT requires agencies to report these trips, costs, and revenues as non-public transportation. BCTA provided 52,080 non-public transportation trips in FYE 2022.

Like most transit systems nationally and across Pennsylvania, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted BCTA's ridership beginning in March 2020. Monthly fixed-route ridership began to stabilize at the end of 2021 but remained below pre-pandemic levels in 2022 ([Exhibit 3](#)).

Exhibit 4. Monthly Fixed-Route Ridership, 2019 – 2022



Community Impacts

Public transportation is a vital service to the community. It provides mobility options and increases access to jobs, medical facilities, food stores, schools, and other economic destinations.

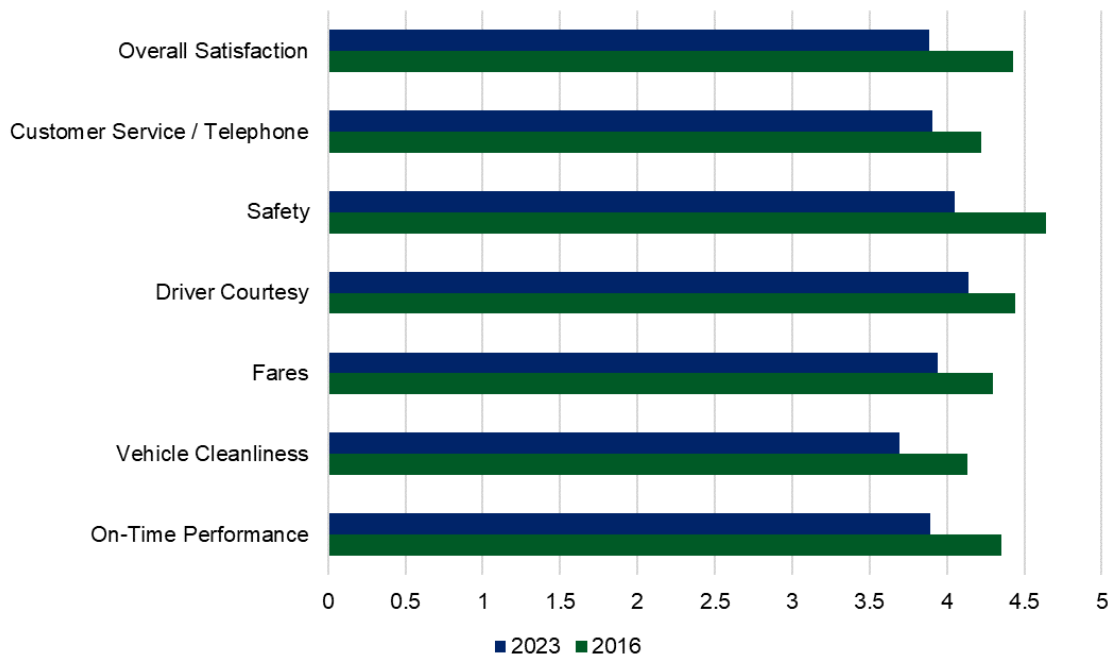
The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical nature of public transportation to individuals and their communities. Essential workers and those most reliant on public transportation services continued to ride throughout the pandemic while many former commuters and individuals in professional service jobs continue remote work and are not using the service as frequently as pre-pandemic. In response, BCTA reduced commuter operations because demand for travel into downtown Pittsburgh is now substantially lower than pre-pandemic. BCTA gradually reduced its express commuter service from 15 daily trips to three as of early 2023.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

BCTA conducted a customer satisfaction survey (CSS) in April 2023. A total of 133 completed surveys were collected. The survey was conducted online and in-person on BCTA buses and at BCTA transit centers. Approximately 87 percent of respondents submitted their survey electronically, including BCTA’s website, myStop, email, and social media. The survey collected demographic information and key performance metrics, comparing the results to the previous 2016 survey.

As shown in **Exhibit 4**, respondents rated BCTA higher in overall satisfaction with the service in 2016 than in 2023. Driver courtesy, customer service, and affordability varied the least in 2023 levels, while safety, vehicle cleanliness, and on-time performance decreased slightly compared to the 2016 survey.

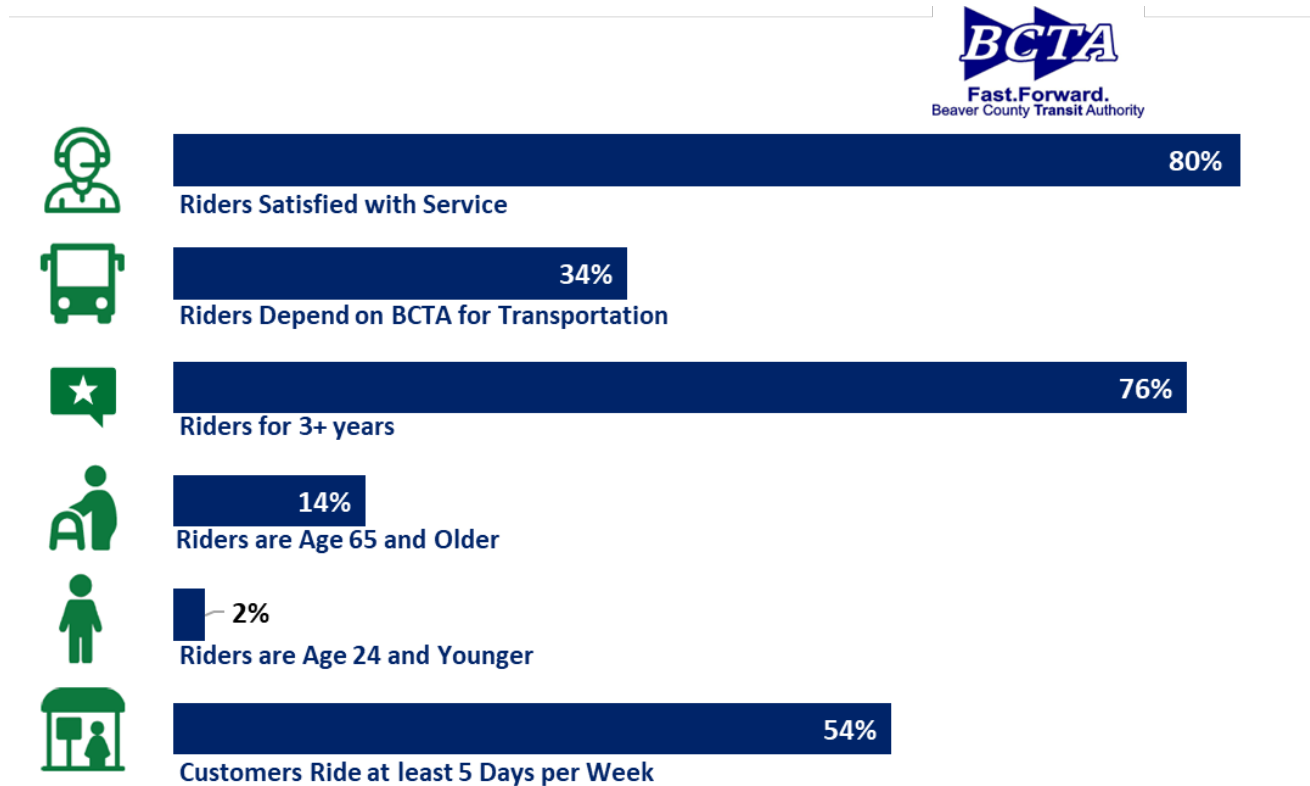
Exhibit 5. Customer Satisfaction Performance Metrics



BCTA Rider Profile

The CSS provides insight into rider characteristics and customer preferences, contributing a high-level fixed-route rider profile (**Exhibit 5**). Respondents from the 2023 survey indicated a 78 percent satisfaction level in their overall experience riding BCTA, and 54 percent of customers who frequently use BCTA ride at least five days per week. Many of BCTA’s customers have continued to ride since the COVID-19 pandemic with 76 percent of respondents continuing to ride BCTA for the last three years. Fixed-route bus is an essential service for many riders that rely on BCTA for their daily transportation needs for work, shopping, and medical appointments.

Exhibit 6. Fixed-Route Rider Profile



Source: 2023 BCTA CSS

Economic and Social Impacts

BCTA benefits the local economy and the communities it serves through the expenditure of public funds and fare revenue, supporting jobs in transit operations, and by purchasing services and goods (**Exhibit 6**).

In FYE 2022, BCTA's procurement of goods and services infused \$4.9 million into the Pennsylvania economy. BCTA invested \$3.3 million in total wages: \$2.0 million for operators, \$734,455 for maintenance personnel, and \$567,258 for general administration staff. BCTA

BCTA provided 321,032 fixed-route bus trips and 50,714 paratransit trips in FYE 2022.

currently employs 30 full-time fixed-route bus operators, and 19 full-time shared-ride operators. BCTA had an average fixed-route driver wage of \$21.47 per hour in FYE 2022, and an average shared-ride driver wage of \$17.72 per hour which approximates an annual income of \$43,000 and \$35,000 excluding overtime pay.

Total post-pandemic ridership on fixed-route service is approximately 42 percent of pre-COVID levels. BCTA provided 321,032 total passenger trips in FYE 2022 compared to 760,209 total trips in FYE 2019. Senior ridership increased after pandemic lows and currently stands at 61 percent of pre-Coronavirus levels; BCTA provided 50,103 senior fixed route trips in FYE 2022, compared to 82,487 in FYE 2019. Fixed-route on-time performance² was 79 percent in FYE 2022.

As noted in the previous performance reviews, BCTA had a robust commuter bus market into Pittsburgh. Commuters had two options with the Route 1 local bus and Express 4 into Pittsburgh. As BCTA's ridership defined a new baseline in FYE 2022, the commuter market has not materialized at the rate of local routes returning to pre-pandemic levels. Currently, the majority of BCTA's fixed-route trips occur within Beaver County.

In FYE 2022, BCTA provided 64,999 total paratransit trips on the countywide DART system and reclaimed 80 percent of its pre-pandemic ridership. DART carried 23,616 Lottery and 27,098 MATP-funded shared-ride trips and 14,285 DAS trips as of FYE 2022. BCTA reported a 92 percent on-time pick-up for demand-response services.

² BCTA defines "on-time" as one to ten minutes late from the scheduled arrival time.

Exhibit 7. Economic and Social Measures



ECONOMIC



\$4.9M

**Spent doing Business
With Pennsylvania Vendors (FYE 2022)**



\$2.0M

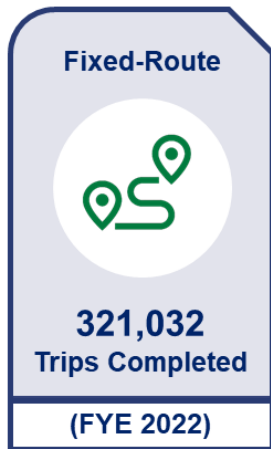
Operator Salaries & Wages (FYE 2022)

\$21.47

Average Hourly Fixed-Route Bus Driver Wage (FYE 2022)

SOCIAL

Mobility Benefits



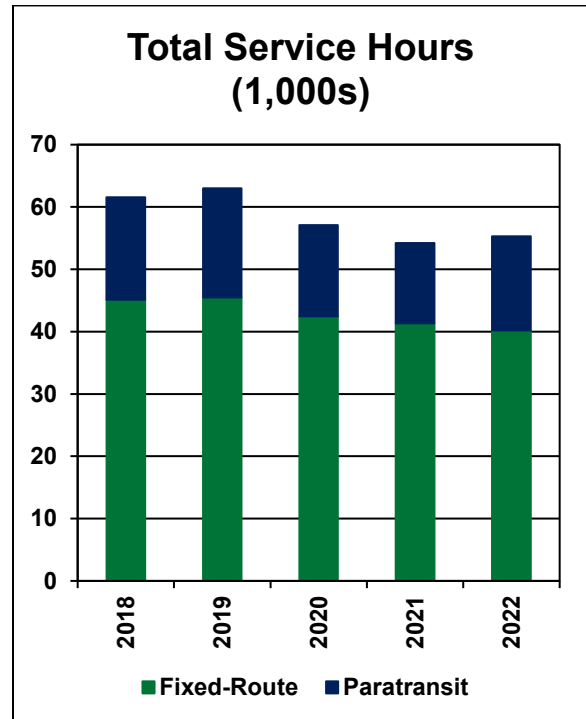
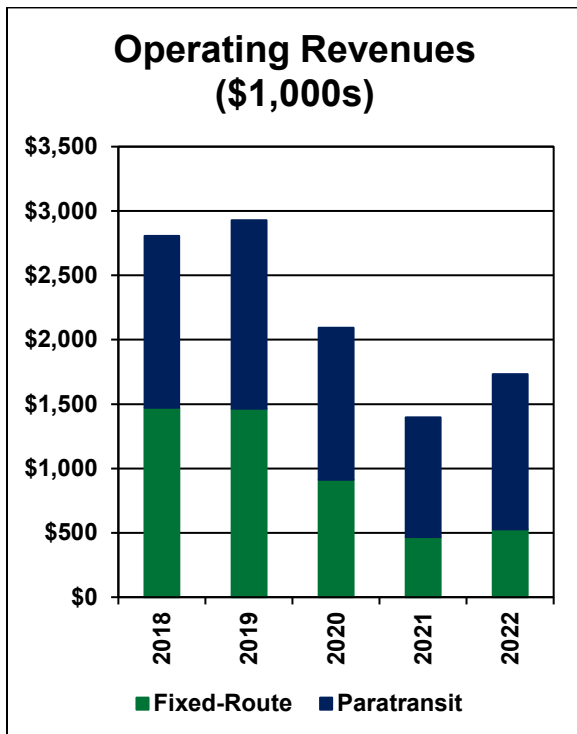
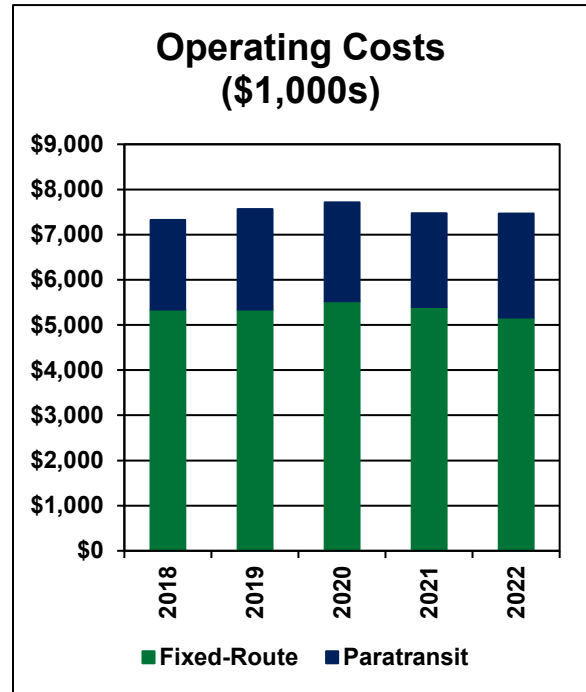
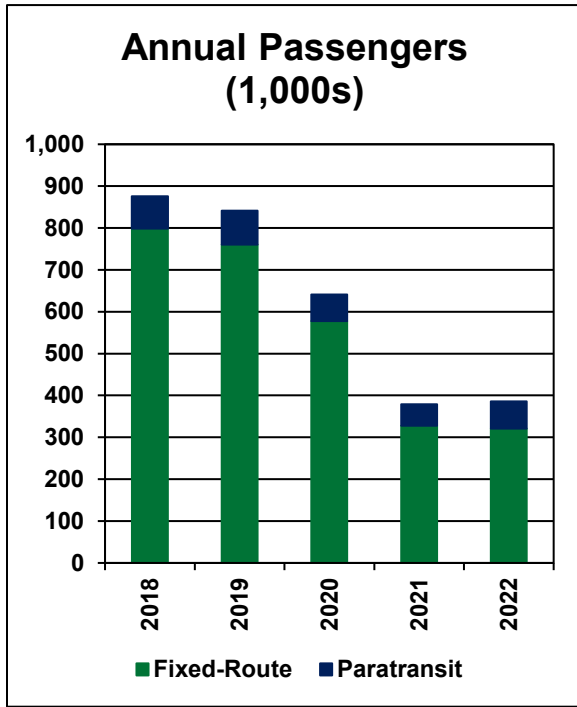
**On-Time Performance
(FYE 2022)**

Fixed-Route **79%** Paratransit **92%**

Source: FYE 2022 dotGrants and agency reporting values.

Agency Trends

Annual Operating Statistics



Note: **Appendix A: Data Reconciliation** on page 24 provides reconciled values between dotGrants and the National Transit Database (NTD).

Financial Health

Transit agencies in good financial health typically have diverse revenue streams, build sufficient operating reserves, and prioritize long-term financial sustainability. BCTA operated with a balanced budget during FYE 2022. Total transportation services cost approximately \$9 million to operate. BCTA earned approximately \$3.4 million in revenues and required roughly \$4.6 million in subsidies to offset operating deficits ([Exhibit 7](#)).

Exhibit 8. FYE 2022 Operating Budget Summary

FYE 2022	Fixed-Route	Shared-Ride	DAS	Non-Public	Total
Total Operating Expenses	\$5,163,491	\$1,596,760	\$705,792	\$1,624,910	\$9,090,953
Total Revenue	\$527,778	\$1,056,824	\$148,965	\$1,624,910	\$3,358,477
Total Federal Subsidies	\$3,827,887	\$431,477	\$371,975	\$0	\$4,631,339
Total State Subsidies	\$362,578	\$59,141	\$129,458	\$0	\$551,177
Total Local Subsidies	\$545,248	\$49,955	\$55,394	\$0	\$650,597

High-Level Financial Indicators

As shown in [Exhibit 8](#), BCTA had carryover subsidies (cash reserves) equal to 120.8 percent of its total annual operating costs at the end of the FY 2022. These cash reserves are attributable to an influx of federal COVID relief funds for operating expenses, which enabled the authority to build its state operating reserves from \$3.9 million in FYE 2019 to \$4.7 million as of FYE 2022.

BCTA has two \$500,000 lines of credit available for short-term use to maintain sufficient cash flow. One line of credit is available for public transportation services and the second line of credit is available exclusively for MATP. As of FYE 2022, BCTA had no outstanding balance on its credit lines or any other long-term debt, and negligible amounts in accounts payable and accounts receivable over 90 days.

Passenger fares recovered 9.9 percent of fixed-route operating expenses.

Before the pandemic, BCTA had a farebox recovery ration of 25.9 percent, largely attributable to its robust commuter bus service. In FYE 2022, farebox recovery decreased to 9.9 percent due to the impacts of the pandemic on ridership, particularly commuter bus services. BCTA gradually scaled down commuter bus operations from 15 daily Express 4 runs to three. BCTA's last

fixed-route fare increase occurred in 2019 and the base fare increased from \$2.25 to \$2.50. The base fare for Express 4 increased from \$4.00 to \$5.00 in 2022. BCTA's last shared-ride passenger fare increase was in 2019, from a \$21.50 full-fare to \$22.50.

BCTA's fixed-route operating subsidy per passenger trip was \$14.75 in FYE 2022. The operating subsidy per passenger trip nearly tripled from \$5.10 FYE 2019, the last fiscal year before the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on ridership, revenues, and operating costs. The increase in federal subsidies offset the loss of passenger revenue.

Exhibit 9. High-Level Financial Indicators

Indicator	Value		Assessment Criteria / Rationale	Source
	FYE 2019	FYE 2022		
Total Reserves / Annual Operating Cost	36.9%	119.2%	A combined target of 25%+ provides liquidity to cover unexpected cost increases or service changes without incurring interest fees from loans.	FYE 2019 Audit FYE 2022 Audit
Credit Available / Annual Payroll	25.0%		Only necessary if combined carryover subsidies are less than 25% of annual operating costs. This ensures that the agency maintains sufficient cash flow and liquidity to pay all current bills.	FYE 2022 Audit and PennDOT dotGrants
Accounts Payable (AP) 90+ days	0.0%		Target should be 0% over 90 days. Larger values indicate cash flow concerns.	November 2022 agency reported value
Accounts Receivable (AR) 90+ days	0.0%		Target should be 0% over 90 days. Larger values can cause cash flow problems.	November 2022 agency reported value
Debt / Annual Operating Cost	0.0%		Target should be 0%. Low debt amounts reduce interest expense.	FYE 2022 Audit
Farebox Recovery	FYE 2019	FYE 2022	Typically, the target should be 12%-15% or higher. The drop in ridership associated with the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced farebox recovery.	FYE 2019 Audit, FYE 2022 Audit, and PennDOT dotGrants
	25.9%	9.9%		
Effective Average Fare	\$1.82	\$1.60	Total fare revenue / total passengers. Effective fare calculates the actual value of fares per passenger trip and is an indicator of when fares might need adjustment to offset increases in operating costs.	FYE 2019 Audit, FYE 2022 Audit, and PennDOT dotGrants
Operating Subsidy per Passenger Trip	\$5.10	\$14.75	Indicates the subsidy requirement to offset operating losses per passenger trip.	FYE 2019 Audit, FYE 2022 Audit, and PennDOT dotGrants

Safety

Industry practices dictate a holistic approach to safety that includes the principles of Safety Management Systems (SMS). BCTA updated its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) in November 2022, as required by 49 CFR Part 673 for agencies that receive Section 5307 funding. The PTASP includes safety performance targets based on the federal measures established in the National Public Transportation Safety Plan and may include additional safety metrics self-reported by the agency. As shown in **Exhibit 9**, BCTA met its annual safety targets for fatalities and injuries, but experienced more safety events and major mechanical vehicle breakdowns³ than anticipated for the first three quarters of FYE 2023.

Exhibit 10. PTASP Annual Safety Performance Targets and 2023 Results

Safety Targets	Fixed-Route		Shared-Ride	
	Target	Result	Target	Result
Fatalities	0	0	0	0
Injuries	1	0	1	0
Safety Events ⁴	6	8	5	10
System Reliability (VRM/Failures)	1	2	1	0

Capital Asset Management

PennDOT verifies asset conditions by reviewing Capital Planning Tool (CPT) records and interviewing transit agency management, operations, and maintenance staff. Transit Asset Management (TAM) is a systematic process that allows agencies to track assets, forecast asset conditions, and plan for asset maintenance or replacement. This Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-required process accounts for the entire life cycle of a capital asset (e.g., facilities, equipment, rolling stock, and infrastructure) used for public transportation, from procurement through operations and maintenance to disposal. A critical element of the TAM process is the inventorying and assessment of asset conditions.

Detailed inventories of the fleet and other capital assets indicate when assets should be scheduled for replacement. This process is key for efficient coordination with local funding contributors. PennDOT recognizes a revenue vehicle asset as eligible for replacement when it reaches its useful life in years and miles. The estimated service life (ESL) for a vehicle depends on its size, fuel type, and seating capacity:

- Large, heavy-duty bus ESL is 500,000 miles and 12 years;
- Medium-duty bus ESL is 350,000 miles and 10 years;
- Light-duty bus ESL is 150,000 miles and five years; and
- Van ESL is 100,000 miles and four years.

³ System reliability is expressed in miles and is the average distance between major mechanical failures that prevent a vehicle from completing a revenue trip.

⁴ NTD defines as safety event as a collision, derailment, fire, hazardous material spill, act of nature (Act of God), evacuation, or other safety occurrence not otherwise classified (OSONOC) occurring on a transit right-of-way, in a transit revenue facility, in a transit maintenance facility, or involving a transit revenue vehicle and meeting established NTD thresholds.

As of 2023, BCTA had a fleet of 43 total vehicles in service. The fleet consists of heavy-duty buses and vans. As shown in (**Exhibit 10**):

- Heavy-duty buses accrued an average of 34,000 annual miles,
- Light-duty buses an average of 23,000 annual miles.

Exhibit 11. May 2023 Fleet Utilization Snapshot

Vehicle Type	Fleet	VOMS	ESL Requirements		Annual Miles	
			Years	Miles	2023 Estimate	ESL
Heavy-Duty Bus	23	11	12	500,000	34,000	42,000
Light-Duty Bus	20	16	5	150,000	23,000	30,000

Based on current odometer readings and estimated yearly mileage, BCTA’s heavy-duty buses and light-duty buses accumulated fewer than 42,000 and 30,000 annual miles, respectively. This mileage may require that vehicles remain in service longer than the estimated service life in years. Light-duty buses are currently averaging over the estimated service life in years at six years of service.

In response to lower demand for commuter buses into Pittsburgh, several of BCTA’s heavy-duty coach buses remain inactive but available for service. Management expressed an interest in right-sizing BCTA’s fleet to match available vehicle types to service types and demand.

In March 2023, BCTA initiated a service optimization analysis to reallocate former commuter bus resources for potential reinvestment in optimized commuter bus service, more frequent local service, and potential new service within Beaver County. As part of this study, BCTA will identify ideal vehicle types that satisfy peak load thresholds by route and identify an optimized fleet size based on the VOMS required to meet service needs with adequate spares to minimize service interruptions. BCTA anticipates open-door service for the new fixed-route system by Spring 2024.

Act 44 Performance Review Findings

Prior Performance Reviews

On prior performance reviews, BCTA took action to increase fixed-route ridership and revenues and contain growth in operating costs. Specifically, BCTA accomplished the following as part of prior action plans:

- Hired a Marketing Coordinator to oversee marketing activities, public relations, and the Authority’s rebranding project.
- Developed a process to identify and monitor major expense drivers, including workers compensation, fleet and general liability, health care, overtime, fleet maintenance (wages/benefits/overtime), tires, contract labor, parts, and facility maintenance.
- Streamlined the exit interview form to increase the response rate and offers an optional in-person interview as an additional listening session for employee feedback.
- Conducted a compensation analysis to determine BCTA's competitive position amongst competing businesses/agencies for drivers.
- Determined a competitive and sustainable price point for increasing fixed-route and shared-ride driver wages to strengthen BCTA’s market position for attracting and retaining drivers.

Current Performance Assessment and Findings

The current performance assessment reviews the agency’s progress in achieving its five-year performance goals and identifies additional steps to improve performance. The 2018 performance report established performance targets for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2021, based on the following annual goals (**Exhibit 11**):

- Increase passengers per revenue vehicle-hour by 1.0 percent per year;
- Increase operating revenue per revenue vehicle-hour 3.0 percent per year;
- Contain growth in operating costs per revenue vehicle-hour to 3.0 percent per year; and
- Contain growth in operating cost per passenger to 2.0 percent per year.

Exhibit 12. FYE 2021 Performance Assessment

Act 44 Performance Metrics	Annual Performance Goals	Performance Assessment	
		FYE 2022 Targets	FYE 2022 Actual
Passengers / RVH	1.00%	19.19	7.99
Operating Revenue / RVH	3.00%	\$35.21	\$13.13
Operating Cost / RVH	3.00%	\$134.73	\$128.45
Operating Cost / Passenger	2.00%	\$7.03	\$16.08

In addition to completing the 2018 Action Plan, steps BCTA took to improve agency performance included:

- Expanded youth pass to 21 to increase ridership from college-aged population
- Used GFI data to validate APC-reported ridership numbers
- Hired an in-house marketing coordinator to oversee future rebranding efforts
- Annually updates a ten-year budget as a tool for monitoring cost containment

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting changes in travel behavior adversely impacted BCTA's ability to achieve its 2021 performance targets. Ridership and revenue decreased significantly from March 2020 through 2021, while costs increased due to COVID mitigation measures (e.g., additional cleaning of vehicles, facilities, equipment, etc.). BCTA successfully met its five-year performance target for operating cost per revenue vehicle-hour.

Future Performance Goals

Background

Act 44 requires that PennDOT and transit agencies establish five-year performance targets for each of the four Act 44 metrics for fixed-route service:

- Passengers per Revenue Vehicle-Hour
- Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle-Hour
- Operating Revenue per Revenue Vehicle-Hour
- Operating Cost per Passenger

Setting performance targets for these metrics and regularly reevaluating performance is intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. To keep pace with increases in operating costs, Act 89 requires agencies to maintain a policy for adjusting fares for inflation. BCTA measures the price of its base fare against the federal inflation rate since it last raised its base fare to determine if an increase is warranted. BCTA last increased its base fixed-route fare in 2019 from \$2.00 to \$2.25 and its base commuter bus fare from \$4.00 to \$5.00 in 2022.

PennDOT uses the most recent audited and agency-verified values for passengers, operating costs, and operating revenues as the baseline for developing performance targets. Five-year targets are then set based on realistic and achievable expectations of improvement. At the time of the 2023 performance review, BCTA anticipated a significant increase in baseline operating costs to reflect a new competitive wage scale and for BCTA to maintain a competitive market position for drivers. As a result, BCTA received a one-time allowance for an additional 6.9 percent⁵ increase, in addition to the base 3.0 percent annual rate, which has been added in FYE 2023 to account for higher labor costs associated with BCTA's new collective bargaining agreement that takes effect in the Fiscal Year 2023-24. BCTA's operating cost per passenger target also received a one-time allowance to adjust FYE 2023 by 3.9 percent.

⁵ BCTA's one-time allowance of 6.9 percent for operating cost per revenue-vehicle hour is based on an average of five years of projected budget increases.

BCTA Goals for FYE 2027

PennDOT based BCTA's future-year performance targets on the most recent audited financial year (FYE 2022). Over the next five years, BCTA must work to achieve the targets shown in **Exhibit 12** to ensure continued eligibility for full Section 1513 funding.

Exhibit 13. FYE 2027 Performance Goals

Performance Criteria	FYE 2022 Observed	FYE 2023 Adjusted*	FYE 2027 Goal	Target Annual Increase
Passengers / RVH	7.99	8.15	8.82	2.00%
Operating Revenue / RVH	\$13.13	\$13.52	\$15.22	3.00%
Operating Cost / RVH	\$130.94	\$137.33	\$154.57	3.00%
Operating Cost / Passenger	\$16.40	\$16.71	\$17.39	1.00%

*Note: FYE 2023 adjustments account for a one-time allowance to increase operating cost per revenue vehicle hour by 6.9 percent and operating cost per passenger by 3.9 percent.

PennDOT will continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and reassess the transit agency's five-year performance targets when the long-term effects of the pandemic become known. If the performance targets are revised, they will be published as a supplement to this report.

Functional Review

Identifying Opportunities for Improvement and Best Practices

Functional reviews catalog best practices to share with other transit agencies and identify opportunities for improvement that should be addressed in the Action Plan. The performance review process includes assessing agency operations, management, and governance. PennDOT analyzes agency policies, programs, practices, and peer statistical comparisons to identify areas for review. The document review and peer comparison inform the performance discussion with agency leadership and staff. The outcome of the functional review is a collection of best practices potentially applicable to other Pennsylvania transit agencies and a list of opportunities for retaining and promoting ridership, ensuring long-term financial sustainability, and other opportunities for improvement.

A recommended Action Plan template is found in **Appendix B: Action Plan Template** on page 26 and the determinations and findings of the Act 44 peer review are found in **Appendix C: Act 44 Peer Comparison Analysis** on page 27.

Retain and Promote Ridership

Service must be responsive to community needs to achieve optimum service levels. Before the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ridership, transit systems nationwide faced lower ridership as gas prices fell and ridesharing companies competed with fixed-route systems. The rise in work-from-home practices, which increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, adversely impacted commuter and discretionary travel demand. As transit agencies work to restore ridership to pre-pandemic levels, actions that focus on raising the awareness of service, enhancing the customer experience, and improving service efficiency help retain and attract ridership.

Best Practices

- 1. Frequently surveys riders and non-riders to solicit feedback on how to continuously improve services.** BCTA proactively surveys its customers, human service organizations that regularly rely on DART, and municipal officials on how to improve bus service. Based on recent survey efforts, BCTA identified a need to restructure its services to meet the needs of its in-County residents and determined they could right-size commuter service to match demand.
- 2. Increased eligibility age of popular summer youth pass.** BCTA expanded its summer youth pass from age 17 to 21. Management reported over 100 sign-ups following BCTA's announcement in May 2023.
- 3. Uses GFI data to validate APC-reported ridership numbers as a secondary method of data verification.** BCTA routinely reviews its APC-collected ridership data and compares it against GFI farebox data. BCTA performs a monthly data reconciliation for ridership to ensure the accuracy of reported numbers and to flag potential discrepancies. FRITS offers a farebox vs. APC reconciliation analysis to highlight potential discrepancies systemwide and by route.

Opportunities for Improvement

- 1. Ensure potential route changes consider Act 44 five-year performance targets.** BCTA is conducting a service analysis to restructure fixed route services and is considering reallocating former commuter bus resources to improve local bus service. Management should ensure that any potential changes as part of BCTA's implementation plan factors in its five-year performance targets.
- 2. Consider a public relations campaign to promote rebranding efforts and service changes.** BCTA is planning an agency rebrand in spring 2024. This effort coincides with BCTA's planned route restructuring. BCTA should develop and release a public relations campaign to capitalize on the rebranding and inform the public of service changes. An effective public relations campaign will raise the public profile of BCTA and potentially attract new customers.
- 3. Develop a social media policy.** BCTA should develop a social media policy that sets guidelines for online communication internally and externally and formalizes the protocol for online customer service interactions.

Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Sound financial management is critical to ensuring the viability of transit services. Agencies often undertake multiple major expenditures on limited budgets. This includes financing major capital facility projects, fleet replacement, and funding recurring costs, including operations and maintenance, annual fringe benefits, fuel, utilities, and cleaning. Steps to ensure long-term financial sustainability include improving farebox recovery, diversifying revenue streams, right-sizing service to resources, and implementing cost-control measures.

Best Practices

- 1. Ten-year sustainable operating budget updated annually.** BCTA developed a budget that shows spending projection goals over the next ten years including maintenance, staff wages, etc. Due to potential unexpected increases in operating costs, such as the price of fuel, the budget is updated annually so that BCTA can make the best use of their funds. This practice provides BCTA with long-term financial sustainability.

Opportunities for Improvement

- 1. Develop a capital fleet replacement program reflecting updated minimum fleet requirements following a BCTA service analysis.** BCTA currently owns 14 over-the-road buses but only runs three trips daily that require an over-the-road bus. Management has stated that their commuter service numbers still have not rebounded to pre-covid numbers and therefore may not need as many buses in their fleet. To prevent excess fleet size, BCTA should, create a plan that reevaluates and updates their minimum fleet requirements.

Identify Other Opportunities to Improve Performance

There are additional opportunities to enhance agency performance. Actions that prioritize Board education, strategic planning, workforce management, and partner agency collaboration improve overall agency functions. Actions that target organizational improvement promote an efficient and transparent administration. Advocacy with stakeholders and funding partners on behalf of the agency builds stronger community ties. Goal-oriented actions help inform Management and the Board's decision-making process to inform investment decisions when pursuing significant capital investments and new information technologies.

Best Practices

1. **Quarterly strategic planning sessions.** BCTA holds quarterly strategic planning sessions between the Board and Management to discuss topics ranging from ridership, finance, marketing, human services, advocacy, etc. Each session is dedicated to a single topic, and the General Manager facilitates the discussion between the Board and a subject matter expert within BCTA.
2. **Roundtable discussions with human service agencies.** BCTA regularly has meetings with human service agencies within their service area to discuss the best ways to assist each other with coordinating public transportation according to public needs. For example, BCTA updating a service route path or operating day/time due to information received from the public through a human service agency. BCTA working with human service agencies achieves greater efficiency and service delivery through partner agency coordination.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. **Consider developing partnerships to pursue discretionary grant opportunities when seeking additional funding for multimodal improvements.** In addition to providing public transportation, BCTA has the staff resources to identify potential discretionary grant opportunities to fund other multimodal improvements like bicycle and pedestrian amenities. Developing strategic partnerships with municipal officials, local colleges, human service organizations, and major employers builds a greater level of local support for a more successful grant application.

Appendix A: Data Reconciliation

The performance review process reconciles NTD data to audited, agency-reported dotGrants legacy budgets to ensure the data presented in this report are consistent and accurate. Certified audits, financial statements, and other agency-generated reports are examined to identify discrepancies in financial and operating statistics. Any discrepancies discovered are verified and appropriately reconciled with agency management before determining Act 44 performance metrics and establishing new performance goals.

Data reported to NTD was inconsistent with dotGrants for many years due to inconsistencies in prior reporting practices. BCTA identified these discrepancies between NTD and dotGrants and took steps to ensure the accuracy of future reported information.

Ridership	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020	FYE 2021
NTD	851,517	798,836	760,209	577,800	327,878
dotGrants	851,517	798,836	760,209	577,800	327,878
Variance	0	0	0	0	0
Percent Difference	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Adjusted Value	851,517	798,836	760,209	577,800	327,878
Operating Costs	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020	FYE 2021
NTD	\$5,419,151	\$5,342,390	\$5,340,674	\$5,290,542	\$5,308,570
dotGrants	\$5,419,151	\$5,342,391	\$5,340,674	\$5,523,313	\$5,395,508
Variance	0	1	0	232,771	86,938
Percent Difference	0%	0%	0%	4%	2%
Adjusted Value	\$5,419,151	\$5,342,391	\$5,340,674	\$5,523,313	\$5,395,508
Operating Revenue	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020	FYE 2021
NTD	\$1,487,647	\$1,479,889	\$1,505,755	\$917,129	\$467,387
dotGrants	\$1,487,171	\$1,471,078	\$1,464,983	\$912,968	\$466,707
Variance	(476)	(8,811)	(40,772)	(4,161)	(680)
Percent Difference	0%	-1%	-3%	0%	0%
Adjusted Value	\$1,487,171	\$1,471,078	\$1,464,983	\$912,968	\$466,707
Revenue Vehicle-Hours	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020	FYE 2021
NTD	46,873	45,146	45,484	42,447	41,348
dotGrants	46,628	45,149	45,484	42,447	41,347
Variance	(245)	3	0	0	(1)
Percent Difference	-1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Adjusted Value	46,628	45,149	45,484	42,447	41,347

The following Act 44 performance metrics were calculated for BCTA.

Act 44 Adjusted Metrics	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pass/RVH	18.26	17.69	16.71	13.61	7.93
Op Rev/RVH	\$31.89	\$32.58	\$32.21	\$21.51	\$11.29
Op Cost/RVH	\$116.22	\$118.33	\$117.42	\$130.12	\$130.49
Op Cost/Pass	\$6.36	\$6.69	\$7.03	\$9.56	\$16.46

Appendix B: Action Plan Template

Part 1 – Actions to Retain and Promote Ridership

Recommendations from Narrative Starting on page 21.	BCTA Action	Estimated Initiation Date	Estimated Completion Date
Ensure potential route changes consider Act 44 five-year performance targets.			
Consider a public relations campaign to promote rebranding efforts and service changes.			
Develop a social media policy.			

Part 2 – Actions to Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Recommendations from Narrative Starting on page 22.	BCTA Action	Estimated Initiation Date	Estimated Completion Date
Develop a capital fleet replacement program reflecting updated minimum fleet requirements following a BCTA service analysis.			

Part 3 – Other Opportunities for Improvement

Recommendations from Narrative starting on page 23.	BCTA Action	Estimated Initiation Date	Estimated Completion Date
Consider developing partnerships to pursue discretionary grant opportunities when seeking additional funding for multimodal improvements			

Appendix C: Act 44 Peer Comparison Analysis

Peer agencies were identified through a collaborative process between PennDOT and BCTA management using criteria defined in Act 44 and NTD data from the most recently available year, FYE 2021. The systems identified for peer comparisons are:

1. Redding Area Bus Authority
2. Blue Water Area Transportation Commission
3. Michiana Area Council of Governments
4. Greeley, City Of
5. Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
6. Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority
7. City of Wichita Falls
8. City of Pueblo
9. City of Beaumont
10. Jackson Transit Authority
11. County of Lebanon Transit Authority
12. New Castle Area Transit Authority

Passengers per Revenue Vehicle-Hour: Motor Bus (MB)

Passengers / Revenue Hour (MB)					
System	FYE 2021 Single Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2016		
	Value	Rank of 13	2016 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 13
Redding Area Bus Authority	7.04	7	15.60	-14.70%	11
Blue Water Area Transportation Commission	11.48	1	25.42	-14.70%	10
Michiana Area Council of Governments	9.18	4	12.70	-6.29%	1
Greeley, City Of	9.36	3	15.28	-9.35%	4
Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation	4.95	13	10.80	-14.43%	9
Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority	6.98	8	18.49	-17.71%	13
City of Wichita Falls	6.43	10	13.52	-13.80%	8
City of Pueblo	11.33	2	22.87	-13.10%	7
City of Beaumont	6.04	12	8.85	-7.35%	2
Jackson Transit Authority	8.26	5	14.10	-10.15%	5
County of Lebanon Transit Authority	6.61	9	9.90	-7.77%	3
New Castle Area Transit Authority	6.34	11	11.21	-10.79%	6
Beaver County Transit Authority	7.93	6	19.21	-16.22%	12
<i>Average</i>	<i>7.84</i>		<i>15.23</i>	<i>-12.03%</i>	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>2.01</i>		<i>5.04</i>	<i>3.64%</i>	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	<i>5.83</i>		<i>10.19</i>	<i>-15.67%</i>	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	<i>9.85</i>		<i>20.26</i>	<i>-8.38%</i>	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	In Compliance		At Risk		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Stronger		Weaker		

Operating Revenue per Vehicle-Hour: MB

Operating Cost / Revenue Hour (MB)					
System	FYE 2021 Single Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2016		
	Value	Rank of 13	2016 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 13
Redding Area Bus Authority	\$120.55	11	\$89.28	6.19%	11
Blue Water Area Transportation Commission	\$104.08	6	\$82.50	4.76%	8
Michiana Area Council of Governments	\$67.25	1	\$54.72	4.21%	7
Greeley, City Of	\$115.21	8	\$70.35	10.37%	12
Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation	\$95.85	5	\$87.53	1.83%	1
Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority	\$119.14	10	\$69.14	11.50%	13
City of Wichita Falls	\$94.80	4	\$70.25	6.18%	10
City of Pueblo	\$115.00	7	\$99.71	2.89%	5
City of Beaumont	\$91.96	3	\$78.75	3.15%	6
Jackson Transit Authority	\$68.63	2	\$61.11	2.35%	3
County of Lebanon Transit Authority	\$117.80	9	\$88.80	5.82%	9
New Castle Area Transit Authority	\$131.66	13	\$118.30	2.16%	2
Beaver County Transit Authority	\$130.49	12	\$114.05	2.73%	4
<i>Average</i>	<i>\$105.57</i>		<i>\$83.42</i>	<i>4.93%</i>	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>\$20.96</i>		<i>\$19.13</i>	<i>3.07%</i>	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	<i>\$84.61</i>		<i>\$64.29</i>	<i>1.86%</i>	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	<i>\$126.53</i>		<i>\$102.55</i>	<i>8.01%</i>	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	At Risk		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Weaker		Stronger		

Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle-Hour: MB

Operating Revenue / Revenue Hour (MB)					
System	FYE 2021 Single Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2016		
	Value	Rank of 13	2016 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 13
Redding Area Bus Authority	\$8.06	7	\$15.49	-12.26%	8
Blue Water Area Transportation Commission	\$8.64	5	\$13.69	-8.80%	4
Michiana Area Council of Governments	\$4.85	12	\$7.56	-8.52%	3
Greeley, City Of	\$7.05	9	\$12.06	-10.18%	6
Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation	\$8.52	6	\$21.91	-17.22%	10
Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority	\$36.20	1	\$40.40	-2.17%	1
City of Wichita Falls	\$7.73	8	\$12.44	-9.07%	5
City of Pueblo	\$10.03	3	\$15.30	-8.11%	2
City of Beaumont	\$2.19	13	\$8.04	-22.91%	12
Jackson Transit Authority	\$5.67	11	\$9.85	-10.44%	7
County of Lebanon Transit Authority	\$9.11	4	\$97.71	-37.79%	13
New Castle Area Transit Authority	\$5.73	10	\$14.62	-17.09%	9
Beaver County Transit Authority	\$11.29	2	\$30.65	-18.11%	11
<i>Average</i>	\$9.62		\$23.06	-14.05%	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	\$8.33		\$24.29	8.98%	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$1.29		-\$1.24	-23.03%	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$17.95		\$47.35	-5.07%	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	In Compliance		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Stronger		Weaker		

Operating Cost per Passenger: MB

Operating Cost / Passenger (MB)					
System	FYE 2021 Single Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2016		
	Value	Rank of 13	2016 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 13
Redding Area Bus Authority	\$17.11	10	\$5.72	24.49%	12
Blue Water Area Transportation Commission	\$9.06	3	\$3.24	22.81%	10
Michiana Area Council of Governments	\$7.33	1	\$4.31	11.21%	1
Greeley, City Of	\$12.31	5	\$4.60	21.75%	8
Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation	\$19.35	12	\$8.11	19.01%	7
Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority	\$17.08	9	\$3.74	35.50%	13
City of Wichita Falls	\$14.74	6	\$5.20	23.18%	11
City of Pueblo	\$10.15	4	\$4.36	18.41%	6
City of Beaumont	\$15.22	7	\$8.90	11.33%	2
Jackson Transit Authority	\$8.31	2	\$4.33	13.91%	3
County of Lebanon Transit Authority	\$17.83	11	\$8.97	14.73%	5
New Castle Area Transit Authority	\$20.78	13	\$10.55	14.52%	4
Beaver County Transit Authority	\$16.46	8	\$5.94	22.61%	9
<i>Average</i>	\$14.29		\$6.00	19.50%	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	\$4.42		\$2.35	6.68%	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$9.87		\$3.65	12.82%	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$18.71		\$8.34	26.18%	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	In Compliance		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Weaker		Weaker		

