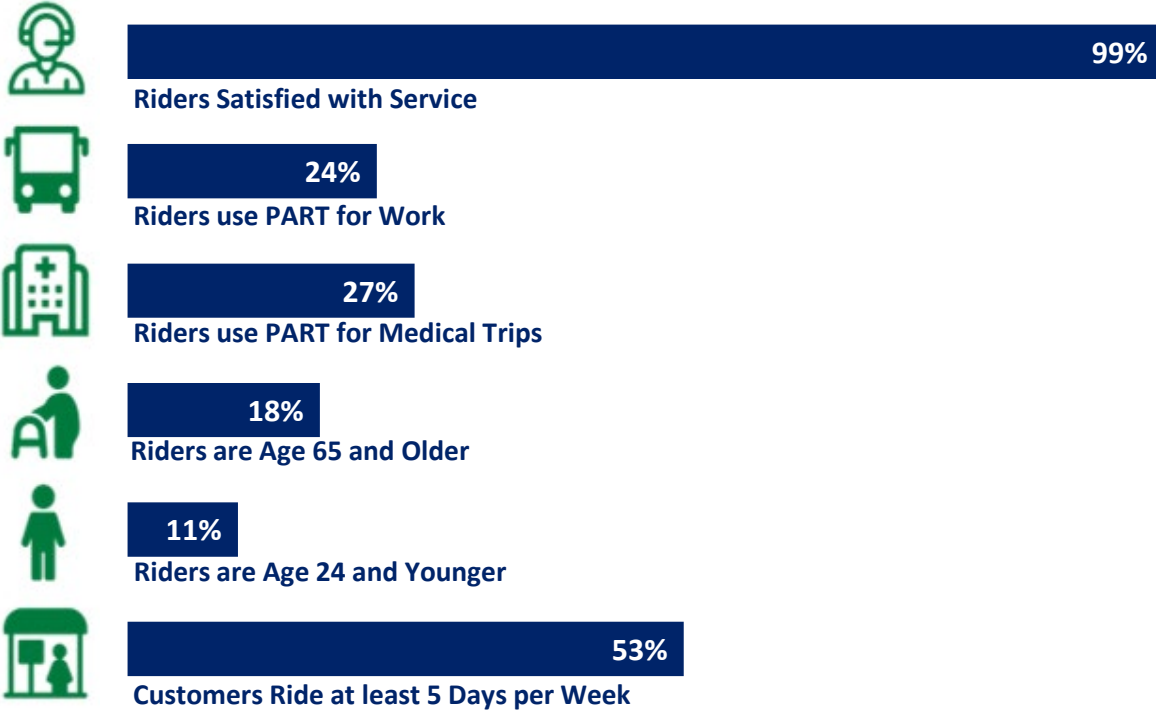


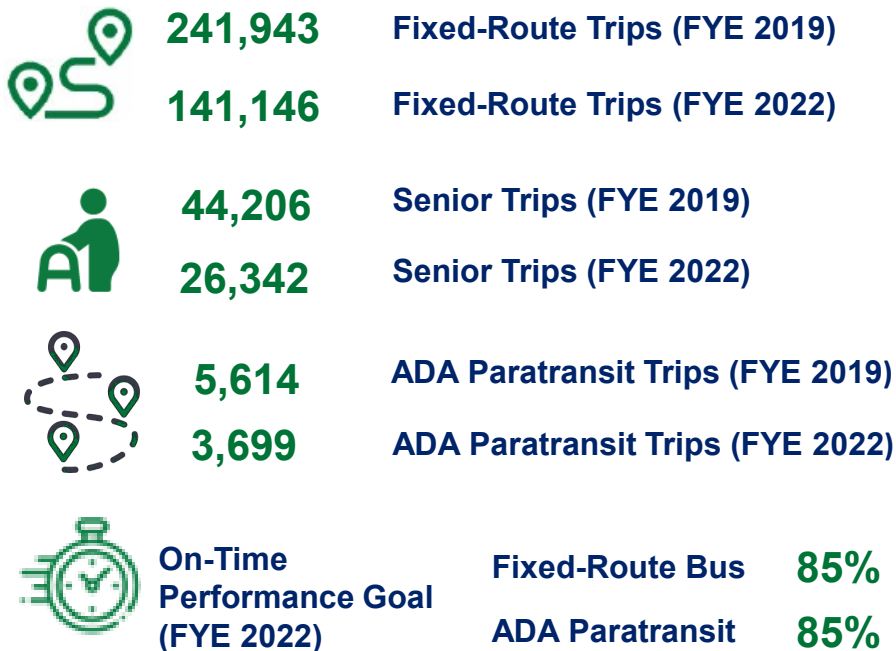
FIXED-ROUTE RIDER PROFILE



Source: 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

SOCIAL



Source: FYE 2022 dotGrants and Agency Reporting

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

ECONOMIC



\$2.2M Annual Investment Local Economy (FYE 2022)



\$25.75 Average Fixed-Route Hourly Driver Wage (FYE 2022)

Sources: FYE 2022 dotGrants and Agency Reporting

ACT 44 PERFORMANCE METRICS

	TARGET (2022)	ACTUAL (2022)	FUTURE (2027)
 <p>INCREASE Passengers / RVH</p>	14.20	6.76	7.46
 <p>CONTAIN Operating Cost / RVH</p>	\$17.46	\$6.99	\$8.10
 <p>INCREASE Operating Revenue / RVH</p>	\$129.30	\$115.86	\$134.31
 <p>CONTAIN Operating Cost / Passenger</p>	\$9.12	\$17.15	\$18.02

BEST PRACTICES

- PART holds an annual gift drive called “Take PART, Give Back” that discounts fares for participating customers.
- PART raises fares biannually to ensure operating revenues keep pace with inflation per Act 89 and to minimize pricing out vulnerable customers from significant and infrequent fare increases.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Resume efforts to develop a targeted marketing strategy as recommended in the 2018 Action Plan.
- Pursue a business relationship with the new hospital in Pottstown as a potential source of new ridership.
- Update Transit Development Plan (TDP) scenarios to factor post-pandemic travel patterns.

POTTSTOWN AREA RAPID TRANSIT (PART) PERFORMANCE REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Other Fixed-Route Performance Statistics	FYE 2019	FYE 2022
Operating Revenue / Operating Cost	14.7%	6.0%
Operating Cost / Total Vehicle-Hours	\$110.26	\$115.86
Operating Cost / Total Vehicle-Miles	\$7.48	\$8.73
Total Passengers / Total Vehicle-Hours	12.71	6.76
Operating Cost / RVM	\$8.06	\$8.73
RVM / Total Vehicle-Miles	92.8%	100.0%
RVH / Total Vehicle-Hours	100.0%	100.0%
Operating Subsidy / Passenger Trip	\$7.48	\$16.11
Farebox Recovery	13.8%	6.0%

Note: Does not include ADA Paratransit Operating Statistics

Fixed-Route Annual Operating Statistics	FYE 2019	FYE 2022
Vehicles in Maximum Service (VOMS)	5	5
Operating Cost	\$2,099,208	\$2,420,306
Operating Revenues	\$308,899	\$145,949
Operating Subsidies	\$1,810,494	\$2,274,357
Total (Actual) Vehicle-Miles	280,654	277,258
Revenue Vehicle-Miles (RVM)	260,365	277,258
Total Vehicle-Hours	19,039	20,890
Revenue Vehicle-Hours (RVH)	19,039	20,890
Total Passenger Trips	241,943	141,146
Senior Passenger Trips	44,206	26,342

Note: Does not include ADA Paratransit Operating Statistics



TACT Fixed-Route Bus in downtown Kittanning, PA

FLEET SNAPSHOT



9

Total Vehicles

7 Heavy-Duty Buses

2 Light-Duty Buses



System Reliability

139,000

Miles per Major Bus Breakdown



Heavy-Duty Bus

24,300

Estimated Annual Miles per Bus



Light-Duty Bus

11,000

Estimated Annual Miles per Bus

Source: 2023 Capital Planning Tool and FYE 2022 dotGrants Reporting

HIGH-LEVEL FINANCIAL INDICATORS

FYE 2019

FYE 2022

29.0%

0.1%



Total Cash Reserves / Total Operating Expenses

FYE 2019

FYE 2022

\$1.20

\$1.02



Effective Fare (Total Fare Revenue / Passenger Boardings)

Source: dotGrants Reporting



Performance Report

August 7, 2023

Transit Performance Review

**Borough of Pottstown
(d.b.a., Pottstown Area
Rapid Transit, PART)**

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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. By early 2023, post-pandemic travel patterns had 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 transit performance review for the Borough of Pottstown (d.b.a. Pottstown Area Rapid Transit, PART), conducted on November 2, 2022.

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 PART'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

Pottstown Area Rapid Transit (PART) was established by the Borough of Pottstown in 1974. At that time, it was known as Pottstown Urban Transit (PUT). The Borough assumed responsibility for local transportation services after private bus and rail operators ended services in suburban Montgomery County. Today, PART is a contracted fixed-route bus system with five bus routes serving the Pottstown area. The Borough contracts with PART, Inc., a local vendor that has operated the service since 1979.

PART has five daytime and three evening routes and complementary ADA paratransit service. All routes transfer at the Charles W. Dickenson Transportation Center in downtown Pottstown (**Exhibit 2**). PART's service area connects to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) Route 93 bus, which has hourly trips to Norristown and Philadelphia. Senior Shared-Ride, Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), and Persons with Disabilities (PwD) trips are provided by Suburban Transit Network, Inc. (TransNet) in Montgomery County.

PART is governed by the Pottstown Borough Council, which is advised by the Borough's Transportation Committee. Committee membership consists of Borough Council members, and representatives from the Pottstown Municipal Airport, and PART, Inc. In addition to local matching funds provided by the Borough of Pottstown, PART also receives local matching support from Chester and Montgomery Counties.

Exhibit 2. PART Bus at the Charles W. Dickinson Transportation Center in Pottstown, PA

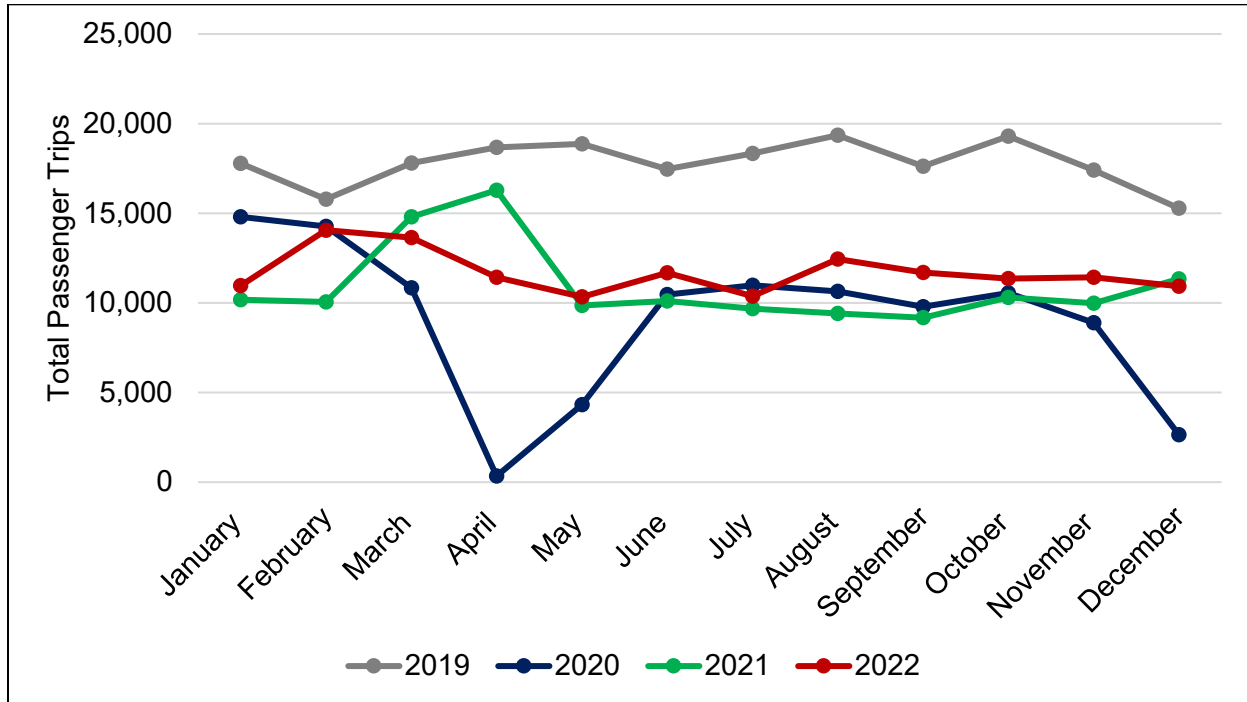


In Fiscal Year 2021-22, PART operated five fixed-route Vehicles in Maximum Service (VOMS) and provided 133,094 total fixed-route passenger trips. PART operated two VOMS for ADA service and provided 8,052 total passenger trips.

Like most transit systems nationally and across Pennsylvania, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted PART's ridership beginning in March 2020. PART began to regain ridership in 2021 as

businesses reopened for in-person activities. Monthly fixed-route ridership stabilized in 2022 but remained below pre-pandemic levels ([Exhibit 3](#)).

Exhibit 3. Monthly Fixed-Route Ridership, 2019 through 2022



Note: PART reported an initial spike in ridership in March 2021 and April 2021 that was in line with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in Montgomery County and PART's continued fare suspension.

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 professional services personnel continued remote work and are not using the service like they might have pre-pandemic.

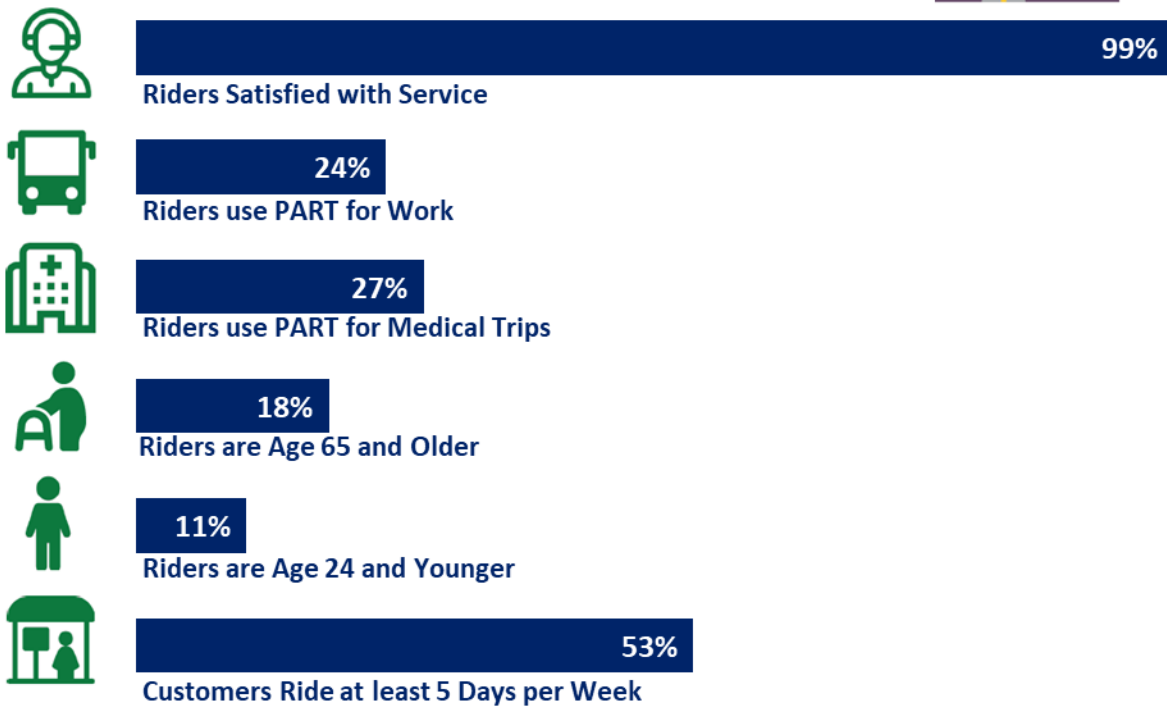
Customer Satisfaction Survey

In August 2022, PART initiated a fixed-route customer service satisfaction survey (CSS). A total of 413 survey responses were collected between August 18, 2022, and September 7, 2022. The survey results were aggregated to determine average satisfaction scores. The top-ranked measures included: the availability of seats on the bus, helpfulness of employees, and cleanliness inside the bus. Lowest-ranked measures included: bus-stop maintenance, comfort at bus stops, and frequency of weekend service.

PART Rider Profile

The CSS provides insight into rider characteristics and customer preferences (**Exhibit 4**). Survey respondents indicated a 99 percent satisfaction level with their overall experience with PART. Survey results reported 53 percent of customers who use PART frequently ride at least five days per week. Twenty-four percent of customers who use PART frequently ride at least five days per week. Twenty-four percent of riders commute regularly via PART. About one in four riders count on PART for essential medical trips. Senior customers account for 18 percent of PART’s riders, while only 11 percent are under age 24.

Exhibit 4. Fixed-Route Rider Profile



Source: 2022 PART CSS

Economic and Social Impacts

PART 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 5**).

The Borough of Pottstown contracts with PART, Inc., a local Pennsylvania-based transport operations company, to provide fixed-route bus and ADA paratransit service in the Pottstown area. In FYE 2022, PART invested \$2.2 million in the local economy through its contract with

Seniors continue to ride
PART despite the impact of
the COVID-19 pandemic.
They represent 18 percent of
total ridership.

PART, Inc., supporting driver and mechanic wages, and administrative salaries. PART, Inc. has 11 full-time and five part-time drivers, seven maintenance staff, and three mechanics. PART, Inc. has an average hourly driver wage of \$25.75, yielding an annual income of approximately \$53,500 for full-time drivers.

PART provided 241,943 fixed-route bus trips pre-pandemic, including 44,206 senior passenger trips. As of FYE 2022, ridership levels had stabilized but continued below pre-

pandemic levels. Fixed-route ridership in FYE 2022 was at 58 percent of FYE 2019 values, totaling 141,146 total passenger trips, including 26,342 senior trips. PART remains a vital lifeline service for seniors, with that group holding steady at 18 percent of total passenger trips, despite an overall downtrend in system-wide ridership. PART has a performance provision in its service contract requiring its contractor to maintain an on-time¹ performance goal of 85 percent for both fixed-route bus and ADA paratransit.

¹ PART's service contract defines on-time as within zero minutes early and up to five minutes late of scheduled times.

Exhibit 5. Economic and Social Measures

ECONOMIC



\$2.2M

Annual Investment Local Economy (FYE 2022)



\$25.75

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

SOCIAL



241,943

Fixed-Route Trips (FYE 2019)

141,146

Fixed-Route Trips (FYE 2022)



44,206

Senior Trips (FYE 2019)

26,342

Senior Trips (FYE 2022)



5,614

ADA Paratransit Trips (FYE 2019)

3,699

ADA Paratransit Trips (FYE 2022)



On-Time Performance Goal (FYE 2022)

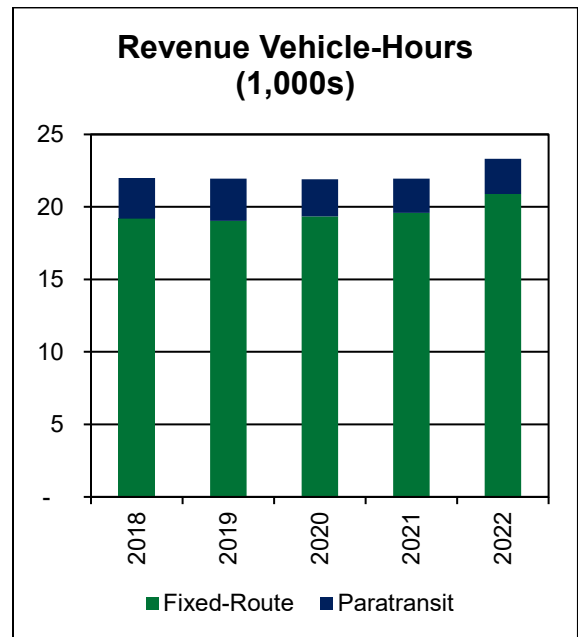
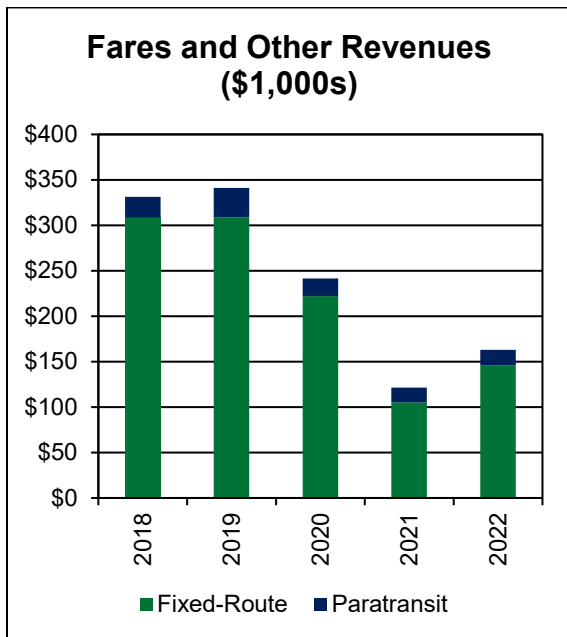
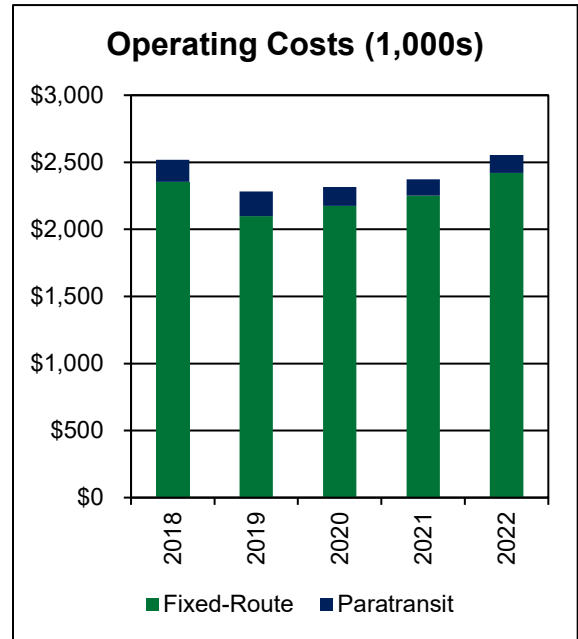
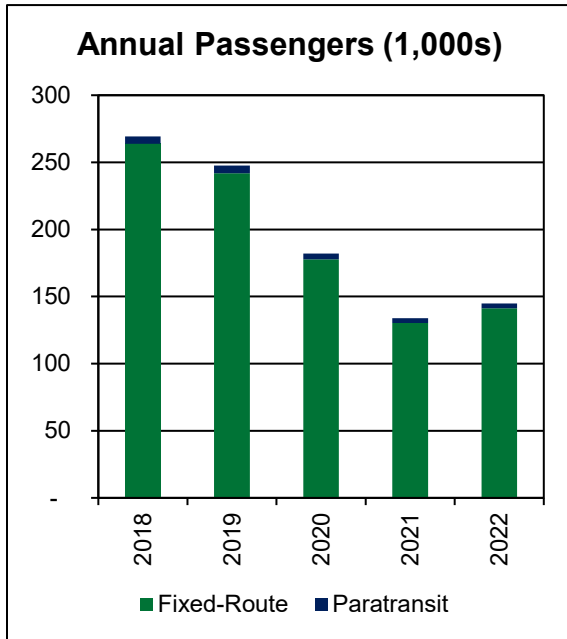
Fixed-Route Bus 85%

ADA Paratransit 85%

Source: FYE 2019 and FYE 2022 dotGrants and agency reporting values.

Agency Trends

Annual Operating Statistics



Note: **Appendix A: Data Reconciliation** on page 23 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. PART operated with a balanced budget during FYE 2022. Total transportation services cost approximately \$2.5 million to operate. PART earned approximately \$163,000 in revenues and required roughly \$2.3 million in subsidies to offset operating deficits (**Exhibit 6**).

Exhibit 6. FYE 2022 Operating Budget Summary

Fiscal Year 2021-22	Fixed-Route Bus	ADA Paratransit	Total Operating Budget
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,420,306	\$133,437	\$2,553,743
Total Revenue	\$145,949	\$16,935	\$162,884
Total Federal Subsidies	\$785,535	\$38,147	\$823,682
Total State Subsidies	\$1,390,074	\$73,158	\$1,463,232
Total Local Subsidies	\$98,748	\$5,197	\$103,945

High-Level Financial Indicators

As shown in **Exhibit 7**, as of FYE 2022, PART reported total reserves (available cash and carryover subsidies) equal to 0.1 percent of its total annual operating costs. As of FYE 2022, PART had no line of credit or any other long-term debt. Accounts payable or receivable amounts over 90 days are negligible. Federal COVID-19 relief packages provided the Borough with additional subsidies to fund capital purchases for bus replacements.

Typically, agencies should maintain a target reserve of carryover funds and available credit equal to 25 percent of operating costs to ensure adequate liquidity for unexpected increases in operating expenses. However, PART is a component of municipal government, with the Borough of Pottstown maintaining budgetary controls for PART at the fund level, recognized internally as the Urban Transit Fund. PART's budget is based on expected levels of government funding and the negotiated fixed price purchased transportation contract. The Borough adopts the annual budget for PART between April and May. As a contracted system, the PART operating expenses for which the Borough is responsible are generally known and are derived from negotiated terms in the service contract. Current financial practices at PART have the Borough using their full 1513 operating subsidies for operating deficits and supplementing with additional federal funds as needed. PART typically reserves federal funds for capital projects like bus replacements.

Fixed-route operating revenues recovered 13.8% of annual operating costs before the pandemic.

PART last raised its base fare for fixed-route service in 2018, from \$2.00 to \$2.25. Before the pandemic, PART had a farebox recovery ratio of 13.8 percent. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, farebox recovery decreased to 6.0 percent due to the impacts of the pandemic. As of FYE 2022, fixed-route ridership for PART had stabilized at 58 percent of its pre-COVID-19 ridership. Despite reclaiming some ridership, PART required an

increase in operating subsidies to offset its reduced fare revenue and increased operating costs due to additional cleaning and safety measures. PART's fixed-route operating subsidy per passenger trip more than doubled between FYE 2019 and FYE 2022, from \$7.48 to \$16.11.

Exhibit 7. High-Level Financial Indicators

Indicator	Value		Assessment Criteria / Rationale	Source
	FYE 2019	FYE 2022		
Total Reserves / Annual Operating Cost	29.0%	0.1%	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	0.0%		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.	August 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.	August 2022 agency-reported value
Debt / Annual Operating Cost	0.0%		Target should be 0%. Low debt amounts reduce interest expenses.	FYE 2022 Audit
Farebox Recovery	FYE 2019	FYE 2022	The drop in ridership associated with the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced farebox recovery.	FYE 2019 Audit, FYE 2022 Audit, and PennDOT dotGrants
	13.8%	6.0%		
Effective Average Fare	\$1.20	\$1.02	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	\$7.48	\$16.11	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). As required by 49 CFR Part 673, PART adopted its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) in July 2020. Agencies develop safety targets based on historical averages of reported data.

As shown in **Exhibit 8**, PART met all its safety targets in 2022. PART experienced only two major mechanical breakdowns in 2022, demonstrating the system reliability of its fleet with only a major vehicle failure approximately every 139,000 vehicle revenue-miles with five VOMS. **PART does not track safety performance targets for ADA paratransit.**

Exhibit 8. PTASP Annual Safety Performance Targets and 2022 Results

Safety Targets	Fixed-Route	
	Target	Result
Fatalities	0	0
Preventable Accidents	4	2
Non-Employee Injuries	2	1
ADA Improper Securement	0	0
Safety Events	11	7
System Reliability (revenue-miles per major mechanical failure)	10,000*	139,000

*Note: Revenue miles are based on an estimated 275,000 miles per year.

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.

As of April 2023, PART had a fleet of nine total vehicles. The fleet consists of heavy-duty and light-duty buses. As shown in **Exhibit 8**:

- Heavy-duty buses accrued an average of 24,300 annual miles; and

- Light-duty buses accrued an average of 11,000 annual miles.

Exhibit 9. 2023 Fleet Utilization

Vehicle Type	Fleet	ESL Requirements		Annual Miles	
		Years	Miles	2023 Estimate	ESL
Heavy-Duty Bus	7	12	500,000	24,300	42,000
Light-Duty Bus	2	5	150,000	11,000	30,000

Based on current odometer readings and estimated yearly mileage, PART’s heavy-duty and light-duty buses accumulated fewer than 42,000 and 30,000 annual miles and will remain in service beyond 12 and five years, respectively.

Currently, PART operates heavy-duty buses for fixed-route service and light-duty buses for ADA paratransit. As noted in PART’s 2019 Transit Development Plan (TDP), the High Street Route is the highest-performing route with pre-pandemic ridership that was consistently around 15-18 riders per hour and grew to 38-40 riders per hour between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and is the only route with peak loads requiring the seating capacity of a heavy-duty bus. Considering that current ridership is nearly 60 percent of 2019 levels, there are opportunities to right-size the fleet with a smaller vehicle type. Light-duty buses would meet current passenger demand while qualifying for replacement more rapidly. Ultimately this approach would result in newer vehicles but procured more frequently.

PART should consider optimizing its fleet with a potential capital fleet replacement schedule that:

- Identifies ideal vehicle types that satisfy peak load thresholds by route;
- Evaluates the upfront capital cost and the reoccurring operations and maintenance costs of a heavy-duty bus over its useful life compared to multiple light-duty buses for the same twelve-year period; and,
- Recommends an optimized fleet size based on the VOMS required to meet services needs and adequate spares to minimize service interruptions.

Act 44 Performance Review Findings

Prior Performance Reviews

On prior performance reviews, PART took action to increase fixed-route ridership and revenues and contain growth in operating costs. Prior action plans recommended that PART:

- Develop a targeted marketing strategy.
- Prioritize marketing objectives.
- Identify major time points that can be used to enforce on-time performance.
- Develop a documented procedure to routinely monitor on-time performance.
- Continue exploring options to generate advertising revenue.
- Continue cost-containment measures that control the rate of escalation for future years.
- Improve the quality of information reported to the Borough Transportation Committee to include Act 44 targets, marketing efforts, and customer service metrics.
- Increase contractor oversight to monitor on-time performance and compliance with service standards outlined in the service contract.
- Attend Fixed-Route Intelligent Transportation Systems (FRITS) training events.

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, 2022, based on the following annual goals (**Exhibit 9**):

- Increase passengers per revenue vehicle-hour by 1.0 percent per year;
- Increase operating revenue per revenue vehicle-hour 1.0 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 10. FYE 2022 Performance Assessment

Act 44 Performance Metric	Annual Performance Goal	Performance Assessment	
		FYE 2022 Target	FYE 2022 Actual
Passengers/RVH	1.0%	14.20	6.76
Operating Revenue/RVH	1.0%	\$17.46	\$6.99
Operating Cost/RVH	3.0%	\$129.30	\$115.86
Operating Cost/Passenger	2.0%	\$9.12	\$17.15

Note: Green shading indicates performance target achievement.

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

- Completing a TDP that developed growth scenarios for pre-pandemic ridership patterns.

- Eliminating opposing circulator routes in favor of single-directional circulator routes to improve operational efficiency without negative impacts to passenger demand.
- Serving new areas, including Gilbertsville and Boyertown.
- Improving transit amenities such as bus shelters to increase passenger comfort.
- Continuing local public outreach campaigns during the Thanksgiving Holiday season that incentivized participation through discounted fares.
- Participating in regional talks for the restoration of Amtrak passenger rail service between Philadelphia and Reading with a stop in Pottstown.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting changes in travel behavior adversely impacted PART's ability to achieve its 2022 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.). Ridership levels and farebox recovery continued below pre-pandemic levels throughout 2022.

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 reevaluating performance regularly is intended to improve service delivery effectiveness and efficiency. To keep pace with increases in operating costs, Act 89 requires agencies to maintain a policy to adjust fares for inflation. PART's Fare Structure Policy established programmed fare increases. This approach ensures farebox recovery keeps up with operating expenses on a systematic basis through biannual (every six months) increases based on cost recovery and other factors that affect fare revenue, ridership, and service delivery. PART reviews fare levels, productivity, and efficiency of the system on a quarterly basis.

PennDOT uses the most recent audited and agency-verified values for passengers, operating costs, and operating revenues as the baseline for developing the targets. Five-year targets are then set based on realistic and achievable expectations of improvement. Although ridership continues below pre-pandemic levels, post-pandemic travel patterns have begun to stabilize in 2023, allowing transit agencies to reassess their services, cut unproductive service, and potentially invest in improving routes that experienced continued ridership throughout the pandemic.

PART Goals for FYE 2027

PennDOT based PART's future-year performance targets on the most recent audited financial year (FYE 2022). Over the next five years, PART must work to achieve the targets shown in **Exhibit 10** to ensure continued eligibility for full Section 1513 funding.

Exhibit 11. FYE 2027 Performance Goals

Performance Metric	FYE 2022 Observed	FYE 2027 Goal	Target Annual Increase
Passengers/RVH	6.76	7.46	2.0%
Operating Revenue/RVH	\$6.99	\$8.10	3.0%
Operating Cost/RVH	\$115.86	\$134.31	3.0%
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$17.15	\$18.02	1.0%

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 25 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. **PART holds an annual gift drive called “Take PART, Give Back” that discounts fares for participating customers.** From late November to early December, PART holds a gift drive for essential items like personal hygiene supplies that the Borough donates to the Pottstown Cluster, a local charity. Participating passengers receive a discounted fare for donations. Philanthropic events such as this gift drive encourage customers to take part in community service and raise the positive perception of PART.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. **Resume efforts to develop a targeted marketing strategy as recommended in the 2018 Action Plan.** The 2018 performance review recommended PART develop a targeted marketing strategy to guide outreach activities. PART delayed its marketing strategy to account for the 2019 TDP in development, anticipating a March 2020 rollout.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic suspended these efforts. Since pandemic restrictions eased in Spring 2021, PART reported increased foot traffic in downtown Pottstown, the construction of a new hospital, and a continued residential migration to the Pottstown area. PART should resume the efforts to develop a targeted marketing strategy to increase public awareness of transit services, guide Borough budget decisions to support PART-specific marketing activities and measure the return on investment to assess effectiveness of marketing dollars spent.

- 2. Pursue a business relationship with the new hospital in Pottstown as a potential source of new ridership.** Borough management discussed a new hospital being constructed on Route 100, which could be served by an extension of the Orange Line. PART could develop a relationship with hospital management and identify a single point of contact for negotiating potential partnership opportunities to serve the hospital, providing service that is attractive for patients and healthcare employees. Other Pennsylvania transit agencies, including the Susquehanna Regional Transit Authority (d.b.a. rabbittransit) and the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANta) have successfully created service partnerships with the Geisinger Healthcare System and Lehigh Valley Health Network.
- 3. Update Transit Development Plan (TDP) scenarios to factor post-pandemic travel patterns.** The Borough developed its first TDP for PART beginning in 2019, finalizing the plan in early 2020, pre-pandemic. The TDP process provided insight into PART's high-performing routes and developed operating-cost-neutral scenarios to increase ridership for the system and better serve the community. However, beginning in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted PART's existing ridership and potential new markets. Ridership levels began to stabilize during 2022. The Borough should consider revisiting the recommendations of the TDP and assessing which scenarios are appropriate, given that the long-term impacts of the pandemic are still unknown. PART should update its TDP to factor in post-pandemic travel patterns, reassess route productivity, and potentially consider fleet optimization scenarios with alternative vehicle types for more timely vehicle replacement.

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. PART raises fares biannually to ensure operating revenues keep pace with inflation per Act 89 and to minimize pricing out vulnerable customers from significant and infrequent fare increases.** PART has a Fare Structure Policy based on three main factors: fare levels (i.e., the impact of pricing on customers and farebox recovery), productivity (i.e., passengers per mile or hour of service), and efficiency (i.e., fuel and labor operating costs incurred by the Borough from contracted service and

measured per hour of service). PART annually reviews quarterly reports on cost recovery to determine what other factors are affecting fare collection, ridership, and service delivery ahead of scheduled fare increases.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. **Seek revenue agreements to offset the cost of new or expanded services when negotiating deals with businesses and other public entities.** Management should evaluate the cost of providing new services and seek revenue agreements to help offset the cost of any new or expanded services. This would build in an element of cost recovery and contribute to long-term sustainability. For example, Lebanon Transit (LT) was able to offset 25 percent of service costs by securing revenue agreements from warehouses and distribution centers to guarantee service at those facilities.

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 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. **The Borough Council advocates for PART in discussions between the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority and Amtrak for the restoration of passenger rail service between Philadelphia and Reading.** The Borough Council has expressed interest in PART serving an Amtrak station in Pottstown in the event that passenger rail service is restored between Philadelphia and Reading. Currently, Amtrak operates a connector bus service between Philadelphia and Reading with a stop in Pottstown.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. **Ensure information reported between NTD and dotGrants is accurate and consistent.** Currently, PART manually reports ridership based on driver tally sheets and manually tracks miles and hours. PART, Inc., provides the Borough with quarterly performance reports tracking operating statistics, operating costs, and farebox recovery. However, information reported to NTD and dotGrants used to derive PART's Act 44 performance metrics and develop five-year targets is inconsistent between reporting entities. Variances between NTD and dotGrants range from 3.1 percent to 21.1 percent. The Borough should strengthen contractor oversight to ensure the information reported to NTD and dotGrants is accurate and consistent and investigate current manual tracking methods if variances are greater than three percent.
2. **Create a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in the event of any unexpected or unplanned absences to avoid service interruptions.** PART has had a longstanding

relationship with its contractor PART, Inc., a locally owned Pottstown-area business for several decades. The owner of PART, Inc., also operates other transportation businesses in the Pottstown area, including school bus, charter, and towing services. In addition to the owner, PART, Inc., has one manager who works alongside the Borough to ensure PART, Inc., meets its service delivery requirements. The Borough should consider developing a COOP for PART as part of the Borough's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The COOP should include succession planning elements as part of its next service contract in the event of any unexpected or unplanned absences from contractor management responsible for Borough transportation services. Essential COOP elements include:

- Activation protocols
 - Communication systems
 - Employees/human capital
 - Vital records, databases, and systems
 - Delegation of authority and order of succession
 - Notification and contact list
 - Training and exercises
3. **Develop PTASP targets for ADA paratransit and track safety performance metrics.** PART approved its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan in July 2020 but only set targets for fixed-route service. PART should update its safety plan to include PTASP targets for ADA paratransit.

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.

Ridership	FYE 2015	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020
NTD	228,586	252,686	237,923	233,941	223,639	164,526
dotGrants	252,357	274,268	258,226	263,798	241,943	177,781
Variance	23,771	21,582	20,303	29,857	18,304	13,255
Percent Difference	10.4%	8.5%	8.5%	12.8%	8.2%	8.1%
Operating Costs	FYE 2015	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020
NTD	\$1,906,603	\$1,904,456	\$1,828,234	\$1,943,826	\$1,995,531	\$1,972,357
dotGrants	\$1,966,378	\$2,036,881	\$2,131,943	\$2,353,167	\$2,099,208	\$2,174,079
Variance	\$59,775	\$132,425	\$303,709	\$409,341	\$103,677	\$201,722
Percent Difference	3.1%	7.0%	16.6%	21.1%	5.2%	10.2%
Revenue	FYE 2015	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020
NTD	\$310,325	\$325,845	\$294,156	\$309,152	\$322,199	\$223,914
dotGrants	\$310,323	\$325,845	\$317,587	\$308,721	\$308,899	\$222,290
Variance	\$(2)	\$-	\$23,431	\$(431)	\$(13,300)	\$(1,624)
Percent Difference	0.0%	0.0%	8.0%	-0.1%	-4.1%	-0.7%
Revenue Vehicle-Hours	FYE 2015	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020
NTD	19,012	19,137	19,229	19,197	19,041	19,352
dotGrants	19,006	19,134	19,114	19,195	19,039	19,350
Variance	(6)	(3)	(115)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Percent Difference	0.0%	0.0%	-0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The following Act 44 performance metrics were calculated for PART.

Act 44 Adjusted Metrics	FYE 2015	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020
Passengers/RVH	13.28	14.33	13.51	13.74	12.71	9.19
Operating Revenue/RVH	\$16.33	\$17.03	\$16.62	\$16.08	\$16.22	\$11.49
Operating Costs/RVH	\$103.46	\$106.45	\$111.54	\$122.59	\$110.26	\$112.36
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$7.79	\$7.43	\$8.26	\$8.92	\$8.68	\$12.23

Note: Data reconciliation adjusts NTD values to reconcile with dotGrants-reported values to derive Act 44 performance metrics.

Appendix B: Action Plan Template

Part 1 – Actions to Retain and Promote Ridership

Recommendations from narrative starting on page 19.	PART Action	Estimated Initiation Date	Estimated Completion Date
1. Resume efforts to develop a targeted marketing strategy as recommended in the 2018 Action Plan.			
2. Pursue a business relationship with the new hospital in Pottstown as a potential source of new ridership.			
3. Update Transit Development Plan (TDP) scenarios to factor post-pandemic travel patterns.			

Part 2 – Actions to Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Recommendations from narrative starting on page 20.	PART Action	Estimated Initiation Date	Estimated Completion Date
1. Seek out revenue agreements to offset the cost of new or expanded service when negotiating deals with businesses and other public entities.			

Part 3 – Other Opportunities for Improvement

Recommendations from narrative starting on page 21.	PART Action	Estimated Initiation Date	Estimated Completion Date
1. Ensure information reported between NTD and dotGrants is accurate and consistent.			
2. Create a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in the event of any unexpected or unplanned absences to avoid service interruptions.			
3. Develop PTASP targets for ADA paratransit and track safety performance metrics.			

Appendix C: Act 44 Peer Comparison Analysis

Peer agencies were identified through a collaborative process between PennDOT and PART management using criteria defined in Act 44 and NTD data from the most recent available year, FYE 2020. The systems identified for peer comparisons are:

1. Milford Transit District (MTD), Milford, CT
2. City of Columbus, Columbus, IN
3. City of Port Arthur (PAT), Port Arthur, TX
4. City of Glens Falls (GGFT), Queensbury, NY
5. City of Casper, Casper, WY
6. Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority (GWTA), Goldsboro, NC
7. City of Hattiesburg (HCT), Hattiesburg, MS
8. Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee (LATC), Auburn, ME
9. City of Hazleton (HPT), Hazleton, PA
10. City of Sharon (SVSS), Sharon, PA
11. Butler Transit Authority (BTA), Butler, PA

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

Passengers / Revenue-Hour					
System	FYE 2020 Single-Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2015		
	Value	Rank of 12	2015 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 12
Milford Transit District	12.02	2	17.50	-7.24%	8
City of Columbus	6.70	8	11.65	-10.47%	10
City of Port Arthur	5.70	10	8.17	-6.96%	6
City of Glens Falls	10.11	4	20.08	-12.82%	11
City of Casper	7.63	7	6.33	3.80%	1
Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority	9.01	6	11.23	-4.31%	4
City of Hattiesburg	4.04	12	8.33	-13.49%	12
Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee	13.66	1	22.45	-9.45%	9
City of Hazleton	6.18	9	7.35	-3.40%	3
City of Sharon	5.50	11	7.62	-6.31%	5
Butler Transit Authority	11.76	3	13.94	-3.35%	2
Borough of Pottstown	9.19	5	13.28	-7.10%	7
<i>Average</i>	8.46		12.33	-6.76%	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	3.00		5.31	4.71%	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	5.46		7.01	-11.47%	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	11.46		17.64	-2.05%	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	In Compliance		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Stronger		Weaker		

Operating Revenue per Vehicle-Hour: MB

System	FYE 2020 Single-Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2015		
	Value	Rank of 12	2015 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 12
Milford Transit District	\$12.24	1	\$14.64	-3.51%	4
City of Columbus	\$0.50	12	\$1.90	-23.39%	11
City of Port Arthur	\$4.59	9	\$5.95	-5.04%	6
City of Glens Falls	\$7.90	6	\$19.19	-16.26%	10
City of Casper	\$3.27	11	\$2.32	7.11%	2
Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority	\$6.89	8	\$54.14	-33.78%	12
City of Hattiesburg	\$7.32	7	\$4.08	12.42%	1
Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee	\$8.87	4	\$13.44	-7.98%	9
City of Hazleton	\$8.02	5	\$7.28	1.96%	3
City of Sharon	\$4.00	10	\$5.42	-5.90%	7
Butler Transit Authority	\$10.37	3	\$12.71	-3.98%	5
Borough of Pottstown	\$11.49	2	\$16.33	-6.79%	8
<i>Average</i>	\$7.12		\$13.12	-7.10%	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	\$3.51		\$14.15	12.63%	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$3.62		-\$1.03	-19.73%	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$10.63		\$27.26	5.54%	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	In Compliance		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Stronger		Stronger		

Operating Cost per Vehicle-Hour: MB

System	FYE 2020 Single-Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2015		
	Value	Rank of 12	2015 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 12
Milford Transit District	\$69.14	4	\$72.25	-0.88%	4
City of Columbus	\$66.74	3	\$59.50	2.32%	9
City of Port Arthur	\$93.04	8	\$116.18	-4.34%	1
City of Glens Falls	\$99.74	9	\$75.91	5.61%	12
City of Casper	\$41.86	1	\$46.26	-1.98%	3
Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority	\$59.81	2	\$59.53	0.09%	5
City of Hattiesburg	\$83.88	6	\$83.39	0.12%	6
Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee	\$102.22	10	\$80.13	4.99%	11
City of Hazleton	\$90.42	7	\$79.69	2.56%	10
City of Sharon	\$76.11	5	\$90.26	-3.35%	2
Butler Transit Authority	\$122.15	12	\$119.47	0.45%	7
Borough of Pottstown	\$112.36	11	\$103.46	1.66%	8
<i>Average</i>	\$84.79		\$82.17	0.60%	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	\$23.15		\$22.43	3.04%	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$61.63		\$59.75	-2.44%	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	\$107.94		\$104.60	3.65%	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	At Risk		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Weaker		Weaker		

Operating Cost per Passenger: MB

System	FYE 2020 Single-Year		Five-Year Change Since FYE 2015		
	Value	Rank of 12	2015 Value	Annual Rate	Rank of 12
Milford Transit District	\$5.75	2	\$4.13	6.86%	7
City of Columbus	\$9.96	6	\$5.11	14.29%	9
City of Port Arthur	\$16.33	11	\$14.22	2.81%	2
City of Glens Falls	\$9.87	5	\$3.78	21.15%	12
City of Casper	\$5.49	1	\$7.31	-5.57%	1
Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority	\$6.64	3	\$5.30	4.60%	5
City of Hattiesburg	\$20.78	12	\$10.01	15.73%	10
Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee	\$7.48	4	\$3.57	15.95%	11
City of Hazleton	\$14.63	10	\$10.85	6.17%	6
City of Sharon	\$13.83	9	\$11.84	3.15%	3
Butler Transit Authority	\$10.39	7	\$8.57	3.93%	4
Borough of Pottstown	\$12.23	8	\$7.79	9.43%	8
<i>Average</i>	<i>\$11.11</i>		<i>\$7.71</i>	<i>8.21%</i>	
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>\$4.66</i>		<i>\$3.48</i>	<i>7.41%</i>	
<i>Average – 1 Standard Deviation</i>	<i>\$6.46</i>		<i>\$4.22</i>	<i>0.80%</i>	
<i>Average + 1 Standard Deviation</i>	<i>\$15.77</i>		<i>\$11.19</i>	<i>15.62%</i>	
Act 44 Compliance Determination	In Compliance		In Compliance		
Compared to the Peer Group Average	Weaker		Weaker		

