

Triennial Performance Audit,
FY 2019/20 - FY 2021/22
Gold Coast Transit District



FINAL REPORT
APRIL 2023

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Chapter 1 | Executive Summary

In 2022, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) selected Moore & Associates, Inc., to prepare Triennial Performance Audits of itself as the RTPA and the 10 transit operators to which it allocates TDA funding.

The California Public Utilities Code requires all recipients of Transit Development Act (TDA) Article 4 funding to undergo an independent performance audit on a three-year cycle in order to maintain funding eligibility. Audits of Article 8 recipients are encouraged.

The Triennial Performance Audit is designed to be an independent and objective evaluation of Gold Coast Transit District as a public transit operator, providing operator management with information on the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs across the prior three fiscal years. In addition to assuring legislative and governing bodies (as well as the public) that resources are being economically and efficiently utilized, the Triennial Performance Audit fulfills the requirement of PUC Section 99246(a) that the RTPA designate an entity other than itself to conduct a performance audit of the activities of each operator to which it allocates funds.

This chapter summarizes key findings and recommendations developed during the Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) of Gold Coast Transit District's public transit program for the period:

- Fiscal Year 2019/20,
- Fiscal Year 2020/21, and
- Fiscal Year 2021/22.

The Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) provides bus and paratransit services within the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and Ventura, as well as in unincorporated areas of western Ventura County. Serving a population of approximately 375,000 and providing approximately four million unlinked rides annually, GCTD is the largest public transit service provider in Ventura County. GCTD operates 23 fixed routes (including four school trippers) from approximately 4:45 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. weekdays, and weekends from approximately 4:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.

GCTD's paratransit service is known as GO ACCESS, a shared-ride origin-to-destination service for ADA-certified persons with disabilities and seniors age 65 and above. GO ACCESS provides complementary ADA paratransit transportation during the same days and hours the fixed-route service, and across the same service area. It also provides general public Dial-A-Ride service (via its Late Night Safe Rides program) after 7:00 p.m. to provide coverage as various fixed routes end service for the evening.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that the audit team plans and performs the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for its findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. Moore & Associates, Inc. believes the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions.

This audit was also conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as outlined in the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*.

The Triennial Performance Audit includes five elements:

- Compliance requirements,
- Prior recommendations,
- Analysis of program data reporting,
- Performance Audit, and
- Functional review.

Test of Compliance

Based on discussions with Gold Coast Transit District staff, analysis of program performance, and an audit of program compliance and function, the audit team presents no compliance findings.

Status of Prior Recommendations

The prior audit – completed in April 2020 by Moore & Associates, Inc. for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2019 – included no recommendations.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on discussions with Gold Coast Transit District staff, analysis of program performance, and a review of program compliance and function, the audit team submits no compliance findings for Gold Coast Transit District.

The audit team has identified one functional finding. While this finding is not a compliance finding, the audit team believes it warrants inclusion in this report:

1. There are reporting errors in the State Controller Transit Operator Financial Transaction Reports for each year of the audit period.

In completing this Triennial Performance Audit, we submit the following recommendations for Gold Coast Transit District’s public transit program. They have been divided into two categories: TDA Program compliance recommendations and functional recommendations. TDA program compliance recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the operator into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA, while Functional Recommendations address issues identified during the triennial audit that are not specific to TDA compliance.

Exhibit 1.1 Summary of Audit Recommendations

Functional Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Ensure VSH and VSM data are correctly reported on the State Controller Financial Transaction Reports.	Medium	FY 2022/23

Chapter 2 | Audit Scope and Methodology

The Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) of Gold Coast Transit District’s public transit program covers the three-year period ending June 30, 2022. The California Public Utilities Code requires all recipients of Transit Development Act (TDA) funding to complete an independent review on a three-year cycle in order to maintain funding eligibility.

In 2022, the Ventura County Transportation Commission selected Moore & Associates, Inc., to prepare Triennial Performance Audits of itself as the RTPA and the 10 transit operators to which it allocates TDA funding. Moore & Associates, Inc. is a consulting firm specializing in public transportation, including audits of non-TDA Article 4 recipients. Selection of Moore & Associates, Inc. followed a competitive procurement process.

The Triennial Performance Audit is designed to be an independent and objective evaluation of Gold Coast Transit District as a public transit operator. Direct benefits of a Triennial Performance Audit include providing operator management with information on the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs across the prior three years; helpful insight for use in future planning; and assuring legislative and governing bodies (as well as the public) that resources are being economically and efficiently utilized. Finally, the Triennial Performance Audit fulfills the requirement of PUC Section 99246(a) that the RTPA designate an entity other than itself to conduct a performance audit of the activities of each operator to which it allocates funds.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that the audit team plans and performs the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for its findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. The auditors believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions.

The audit was also conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as outlined in the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*, as well as *Government Audit Standards* published by the U.S. Comptroller General.

Objectives

A Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) has four primary objectives:

1. Assess compliance with TDA regulations;
2. Review improvements subsequently implemented as well as progress toward adopted goals;
3. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit operator; and
4. Provide sound, constructive recommendations for improving the efficiency and functionality of the transit operator.

Scope

The TPA is a systematic review of performance evaluating the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of the transit operator. The audit of Gold Coast Transit District included five tasks:

1. A review of compliance with TDA requirements and regulations.
2. A review of the status of recommendations included in the prior Triennial Performance Audit.
3. A verification of the methodology for calculating performance indicators including the following activities:
 - Assessment of internal controls,
 - Test of data collection methods,
 - Calculation of performance indicators, and
 - Evaluation of performance.
4. Comparison of data reporting practices:
 - Internal reports,
 - State Controller Reports, and
 - National Transit Database.
5. Examination of the following functions:
 - General management and organization;
 - Service planning;
 - Scheduling, dispatching, and operations;
 - Personnel management and training;
 - Administration;
 - Marketing and public information; and
 - Fleet maintenance.
6. Conclusions and recommendations to address opportunities for improvement based upon analysis of the information collected and the audit of the transit operator's major functions.

Methodology

The methodology for the Triennial Performance Audit of Gold Coast Transit District included thorough review of documents relevant to the scope of the audit, as well as information contained on the District's website. The documents reviewed included the following (spanning the full three-year period):

- Monthly performance reports;
- State Controller Reports;
- Annual budgets;
- TDA fiscal audits;
- Transit marketing collateral;
- TDA claims;
- Fleet inventory;
- Preventive maintenance schedules and forms;
- California Highway Patrol Terminal Inspection reports;
- National Transit Database reports;

- Accident/road call logs; and
- Organizational chart.

Given impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the methodology for this audit included a virtual site visit with District representatives on March 2, 2023. The audit team met with Vanessa Rauschenberger (General Manager), Cynthia Torres Duque (Director of Planning and Marketing), James Beck (Director of Operations and Maintenance), Alex Zaretsky (Director of Human Resources), Tanya Hawk (Buyer), Veronica Navarro (Accounting Analyst), Chiharu Endo-Lee (Operations Manager), Margaret Schoep (Paratransit and Special Project Manager), Austin Novstrup (Planning Manager), Juan Delarosa (Fleet Manager), and Dawn Perkins (Director of Finance), and reviewed materials germane to the triennial audit.

This report is comprised of eight chapters divided into three sections:

1. Executive Summary: A summary of the key findings and recommendations developed during the Triennial Performance Audit process.
2. TPA Scope and Methodology: Methodology of the review and pertinent background information.
3. TPA Results: In-depth discussion of findings surrounding each of the subsequent elements of the audit:
 - Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements,
 - Status of prior recommendations,
 - Consistency among reported data,
 - Performance measures and trends,
 - Functional audit, and
 - Findings and recommendations.

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Chapter 3 | Program Compliance

This section examines the Gold Coast Transit District’s compliance with the Transportation Development Act as well as relevant sections of the California Code of Regulations. An annual certified fiscal audit confirms TDA funds were apportioned in conformance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. The Gold Coast Transit District considers full use of funds under California Code of Regulations (CCR) 6754(a) as referring to operating funds but not capital funds. The TPA findings and related comments are delineated in Exhibit 3.1.

Status of compliance items was determined through discussions with District staff as well as an inspection of relevant documents including the fiscal audits for each year of the triennium, State Controller annual filings, California Highway Patrol terminal inspections, National Transit Database reports, year-end performance reports, and other compliance-related documentation.

No compliance issues were identified for Gold Coast Transit District.

Developments Occurring During the Audit Period

The FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 audit period was significantly different than prior audit periods. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant declines in ridership and revenue, while changes to the TDA provided compliance waivers and amended existing legislation. In many instances, transit operators strove to retain operations staff despite adopting a reduced schedule, resulting in significant changes to many cost-related performance metrics. While infusions of funding through the CARES Act mitigated some of the lost revenues for federally funded programs, many transit operators have yet to return to pre-pandemic ridership and fare levels. As a result, this Triennial Performance Audit will provide an assessment not only of how COVID-19 impacted the organization, but how it responded to the crisis.

In the 50 years since introduction of the Transportation Development Act, there have been many changes to public transportation in California. Many operators have faced significant challenges in meeting the farebox recovery ratio requirement, calling into question whether it remains the best measure for TDA compliance. In 2018, the chairs of California’s state legislative transportation committees requested the California Transit Association spearhead a policy task force to examine the TDA, which resulted in a draft framework for TDA reform released in early 2020. The draft framework maintains the farebox recovery ratio requirement, but eliminates financial penalties and allows more flexibility with respect to individual operator targets. These changes have yet to be implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assembly Bill 90, signed into law on June 29, 2020, provides temporary regulatory relief for transit operators required to conform with Transportation Development Act (TDA) farebox recovery ratio thresholds in FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21. Assembly Bill 149, signed into law on July 16, 2021, provides additional regulatory relief by extending the provisions of AB 90 through FY 2022/23 and adjusting definitions of eligible revenues and operating costs. While the ability to maintain state mandates and performance measures is important, these measures enable transit operators to adjust to the impacts of COVID while continuing to receive their full allocations of funding under the TDA.

Together, these two pieces of legislation include the following provisions specific to transit operator TDA funding under Article 4 and Article 8:

1. Prohibits the imposition of the TDA revenue penalty on an operator that did not maintain the required ratio of fare revenues to operating cost from FY 2019/20 through FY 2022/23.
2. Waives the annual productivity improvement requirement of Section 99244 through FY 2022/23.
3. Adds a temporary provision exempting operators from farebox recovery ratio requirements through FY 2024/25 provided they expend at least the same amount of local funds as in FY 2018/19.
4. Expands the definition of “local funds” to enable the use of federal funding, such as the CARES Act or CRRSAA, to supplement fare revenues and allows operators to calculate free and reduced fares at their actual value.
5. Adjusts the definition of operating cost to exclude the cost of ADA paratransit services, demand-response and microtransit services designed to extend access to service, ticketing/payment systems, security, some pension costs, and some planning costs.
6. Requires the Controller to calculate and publish the allocation of transit operator revenue-based funds made pursuant to the State Transit Assistance (STA) Program for FY 2020/21 and FY 2021/22.
7. Allows operators to use STA funds as needed to keep transit service levels from being reduced or eliminated through FY 2022/23.

AB 149 also calls for an examination of the triennial performance audit process, to ensure the practice continues to be effective and beneficial.

Exhibit 3.1 Transit Development Act Compliance Requirements

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
State Controller Reports submitted on time.	PUC 99243	In compliance ¹	FY 2019/20: February 1, 2021 FY 2020/21: February 3, 2022 FY 2021/22: February 1, 2023
Fiscal and compliance audits submitted within 180 days following the end of the fiscal year (or with up to 90-day extension).	PUC 99245	In compliance	FY 2019/20: February 22, 2021 FY 2020/21: March 4, 2022 FY 2021/22: March 30, 2023
Operator's terminal rated as satisfactory by CHP within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim.	PUC 99251 B	In compliance	Fixed-route: November 13, 2019 October 29, 2020 November 2, 2021 November 9, 2022 Demand-Response: September 4, 2019 September 9, 2020 September 21, 2021 September 16, 2022
Operator's claim for TDA funds submitted in compliance with rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA.	PUC 99261	In compliance	
If operator serves urbanized and non-urbanized areas, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to the ratio determined by the rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA.	PUC 99270.1	Not applicable	
Except as otherwise provided, the allocation for any purpose specified under Article 8 may in no year exceed 50% of the amount required to meet the total planning expenditures for that purpose.	PUC 99405	Not applicable	
An operator receiving allocations under Article 8(c) may be subject to regional, countywide, or subarea performance criteria, local match requirements, or fare recovery ratios adopted by resolution of the RTPA.	PUC 99405	Not applicable	
The operator's operating budget has not increased by more than 15% over the preceding year, nor is there a substantial increase or decrease in the scope of operations or capital budget provisions for major new fixed facilities unless the operator has reasonably supported and substantiated the change(s).	PUC 99266	In compliance	FY 2019/20: -4.77% FY 2020/21: +9.78% FY 2021/22: -14.09%

¹ While State Controller Reports for FY 2020/21 and FY 2021/22 were submitted three days and one day late, respectively, we are not considering this a compliance finding due to the minimal delay. Staff cited a delay in receiving information from auditors and changes in the finance department as the primary reasons for the delayed submittals. GCTD has engaged a new audit team, which it anticipates will eliminate the delays in the audits as well as enable on-time submittals to the State Controller.

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
The operator's definitions of performance measures are consistent with the Public Utilities Code Section 99247.	PUC 99247	In compliance	
If the operator serves an urbanized area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating cost at least equal to one-fifth (20 percent).	PUC 99268.2, 99268.4, 99268.1	In compliance	FY 2019/20: 15.30% (waived) FY 2020/21: 7.30% (waived) FY 2021/22: 48.77% <i>FY 2022 farebox recovery ratio included federal funds as allowed under AB 149.</i>
If the operator serves a rural area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating cost at least equal to one-tenth (10 percent).	PUC 99268.2, 99268.4, 99268.5	Not applicable	
For a claimant that provides only services to elderly and handicapped persons, the ratio of fare revenues to operating cost shall be at least 10 percent.	PUC 99268.5, CCR 6633.5	In compliance	FY 2019/20: 16.50% FY 2020/21: 1.50% (waived) FY 2021/22: 64.5% <i>FY 2022 farebox recovery ratio included federal funds as allowed under AB 149.</i>
The current cost of the operator's retirement system is fully funded with respect to the officers and employees of its public transportation system, or the operator is implementing a plan approved by the RTPA, which will fully fund the retirement system for 40 years.	PUC 99271	In compliance	GCTD employees are eligible for benefits through CalPERS.
If the operator receives State Transit Assistance funds, the operator makes full use of funds available to it under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 before TDA claims are granted.	CCR 6754 (a) (3)	In compliance	
In order to use State Transit Assistance funds for operating assistance, the operator's total operating cost per revenue hour does not exceed the sum of the preceding year's total plus an amount equal to the product of the percentage change in the CPI for the same period multiplied by the preceding year's total operating cost per revenue hour. An operator may qualify based on the preceding year's operating cost per revenue hour or the average of the three prior years. If an operator does not meet these qualifying tests, the operator may only use STA funds for operating purposes according to a sliding scale.	PUC 99314.6	In compliance	

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
A transit claimant is precluded from receiving monies from the Local Transportation Fund and the State Transit Assistance Fund in an amount which exceeds the claimant's capital and operating costs less the actual amount of fares received, the amount of local support required to meet the fare ratio, the amount of federal operating assistance, and the amount received during the year from a city or county to which the operator has provided services beyond its boundaries.	CCR 6634	In compliance	

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Chapter 4 | Prior Recommendations

This section reviews and evaluates the implementation of prior Triennial Performance Audit recommendations. This objective assessment provides assurance Gold Coast Transit District has made quantifiable progress toward improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of its public transit program.

The prior audit – completed in April 2020 by Moore & Associates, Inc. for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2019 – included no recommendations.

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Chapter 5 | Data Reporting Analysis

An important aspect of the Triennial Performance Audit process is assessing how effectively and consistently the transit operator reports performance statistics to local, state, and federal agencies. Often as a condition of receipt of funding, an operator must collect, manage, and report data to different entities. Ensuring such data are consistent can be challenging given the differing definitions employed by different agencies as well as the varying reporting timeframes. This chapter examines the consistency of performance data reported by Gold Coast Transit District both internally as well as to outside entities during the audit period.

With respect to the State Controller Reports, in the original reports provided by GCTD, vehicle service hours (VSH) and vehicle service miles (VSM) included errors in reporting for all three years. It is likely the errors occurred when the report was being completed, as it appears some data was simply placed in the wrong field.

- FY 2019/20: Fixed-route VSH was reported as 1,432 (compared to 186,904 as reported to the NTD) and demand-response VSH was reported as 248 (compared to 39,935 as reported to the NTD). Fixed-route VSM was reported as 186,904 (compared to 1,990,877 as reported to the NTD) and demand-response VSM was reported as 39,935 (compared to 619,953 as reported to the NTD). It appears VSH was reported as VSM, though it is unclear what data was reported as VSH.
- FY 2020/21: Fixed-route VSH was reported correctly as 173,952 though demand-response VSH was reported as 176 (compared to 29,951 as reported to the NTD). Fixed-route VSM was reported as 173,952 (compared to 2,046,361 as reported to the NTD) and demand-response VSM was reported as 29,951 (compared to 511,051 as reported to the NTD). It appears VSH was reported as VSM, though it is unclear what data was reported as VSH for the demand-response service.
- FY 2021/22: Fixed-route VSH was reported correctly as 187,306 though demand-response VSH was reported as 223 (compared to 41,409 as reported to the NTD). Fixed-route VSM was also reported correctly as 2,100,001, and demand-response VSM was reported correctly as 562,865. It is unclear what data was reported as VSH for the demand-response service.

It should be noted that data accessed through the State Controller's website showed the correct data for VSH for both modes in FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21, but still included incorrect VSM data. (The FY 2021/22 data was not available online to verify whether the demand-response VSH had been corrected.)

With respect to full-time equivalent employees (FTE), GCTD has demonstrated it is using the proper definition, but is reporting a slightly different figure on its State Controller Reports that is calculated. For example, for the fixed-route service, 205 employees is reported every year, while the calculated figure is 207, 202, and 201 for the three years. For the demand-response service, FTE is reported as 45, 37, and 35 for the three years, while the calculated figures are 32, 39, and 35, respectively.

Exhibit 5.1 Data Reporting Comparison

Performance Measure	System-Wide		
	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)			
<i>TDA fiscal audit</i>	\$27,671,728	\$26,602,341	\$30,669,226
<i>National Transit Database</i>	\$27,867,776	\$26,706,542	\$31,857,148
<i>State Controller Report</i>	\$27,671,728	\$29,025,053	\$26,803,583
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)			
<i>TDA fiscal audit</i>	\$2,629,746	\$0	\$2,199,248
<i>National Transit Database</i>	\$2,356,308	\$324,216	\$2,079,498
<i>State Controller Report</i>	\$2,362,163	\$384,651	\$2,141,965
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	226,971	204,101	221,643
<i>National Transit Database</i>	226,839	203,901	226,140
<i>State Controller Report</i>	1,680	174,128	187,529
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	2,612,237	2,557,412	2,662,866
<i>National Transit Database</i>	2,610,830	2,557,412	2,662,866
<i>State Controller Report</i>	226,839	203,903	2,662,866
Passengers			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	3,040,662	1,955,918	2,287,241
<i>National Transit Database</i>	3,054,112	1,955,918	2,337,201
<i>State Controller Report</i>	3,054,112	1,955,918	2,337,201
Full-Time Equivalent Employees			
<i>State Controller Report</i>	250	242	240
<i>Per GCTD methodology</i>	239	241	236

Chapter 6 | Performance Analysis

Performance indicators are typically employed to quantify and assess the efficiency of a transit operator's activities. Such indicators provide insight into current operations as well as trend analysis of operator performance. Through a review of indicators, relative performance as well as possible inter-relationships between major functions is revealed.

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires recipients of TDA funding to track and report five performance indicators:

- Operating Cost/Passenger,
- Operating Cost/Vehicle Service Hour,
- Passengers/Vehicle Service Hour,
- Passengers/Vehicle Service Mile, and
- Vehicle Service Hours/Employee.

To assess the validity and use of performance indicators, the audit team performed the following activities:

- Assessed internal controls in place for the collection of performance-related information,
- Validated collection methods of key data,
- Calculated performance indicators, and
- Evaluated performance indicators.

The procedures used to calculate TDA-required performance measures for the current triennium were verified and compared with indicators included in similar reports to external entities (i.e., State Controller and Federal Transit Administration).

Operating Cost

The Transportation Development Act requires an operator to track and report transit-related costs reflective of the Uniform System of Accounts and Records developed by the State Controller and the California Department of Transportation. The most common method for ensuring this occurs is through a compliance audit report prepared by an independent auditor in accordance with California Code of Regulations Section 6667². The annual independent financial audit should confirm the use of the Uniform System of Accounts and Records. *Operating cost* – as defined by PUC Section 99247(a) – excluded the following during the audit period³:

- Cost in the depreciation and amortization expense object class adopted by the State Controller pursuant to PUC Section 99243,

² CCR Section 6667 outlines the minimum tasks which must be performed by an independent auditor in conducting the annual fiscal and compliance audit of the transit operator.

³ Given the passage of AB 149, the list of excluded costs will be expanded beginning with FY 2021/22.

- Subsidies for commuter rail services operated under the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission,
- Direct costs of providing charter service, and
- Vehicle lease costs.

Vehicle Service Hours and Miles

Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) and *Miles* (VSM) are defined as the time/distance during which a revenue vehicle is available to carry fare-paying passengers, and which includes only those times/miles between the time or scheduled time of the first passenger pickup and the time or scheduled time of the last passenger drop-off during a period of the vehicle's continuous availability.⁴ For example, demand-response service hours include those hours when a vehicle has dropped off a passenger and is traveling to pick up another passenger, but not those hours when the vehicle is unavailable for service due to driver breaks or lunch. For both demand-response and fixed-route services, service hours will exclude hours of "deadhead" travel to the first scheduled pick-up, and will also exclude hours of "deadhead" travel from the last scheduled drop-off back to the terminal. For fixed-route service, a vehicle is in service from first scheduled stop to last scheduled stop, whether or not passengers board or exit at those points (i.e., subtracting driver lunch and breaks but including scheduled layovers).

Passenger Counts

According to the Transportation Development Act, *total passengers* is equal to the total number of unlinked trips (i.e., those trips that are made by a passenger that involve a single boarding and departure), whether revenue-producing or not.

Employees

Employee hours is defined as the total number of hours (regular or overtime) which all employees have worked, and for which they have been paid a wage or salary. The hours must include transportation system-related hours worked by persons employed in connection with the system (whether or not the person is employed directly by the operator). Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is calculated by dividing the number of person-hours by 2,000.

Fare Revenue

Fare revenue is defined by California Code of Regulations Section 6611.2 as revenue collected from the farebox plus sales of fare media.

⁴ A vehicle is considered to be in revenue service despite a no-show or late cancellation if the vehicle remains available for passenger use.

TDA Required Indicators

To calculate the TDA indicators for Gold Coast Transit District, the following sources were employed:

- Operating Cost was not independently calculated as part of this audit. Operating Cost data were obtained via National Transit Database (NTD) Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. Operating Cost from the reports was compared against that reported in the City's audited financial reports and appeared to be consistent with TDA guidelines. In accordance with PUC Section 99247(a), the reported costs excluded depreciation and other allowable expenses.
- Fare Revenue was not independently calculated as part of this audit. Fare revenue data were obtained via NTD Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. This appears to be consistent with TDA guidelines as well as the uniform system of accounts.
- Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) data were obtained via NTD reports submitted to the FTA for each fiscal year covered by this audit. The District's calculation methodology is consistent with PUC guidelines.
- Vehicle Service Miles (VSM) data were obtained via NTD reports submitted to the FTA for each fiscal year covered by this audit. The District's calculation methodology is consistent with PUC guidelines.
- Unlinked trip data were obtained via NTD reports submitted to the FTA for each fiscal year covered by this audit. The District's calculation methodology is consistent with PUC guidelines.
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) data were obtained from work hour data by GCTD for each fiscal year covered by this review. Use of the TDA definition regarding FTE calculation was confirmed.

System Performance Trends

System-wide, operating cost experienced a net 14.3 percent increase during the audit period, and a 44.1 percent net increase across the last six years. Fare revenue, however, steadily decreased through FY 2020/21 before significantly increasing in FY 2021/22 (due to the resumption of fare collection following a lengthy free fare period). This resulted in a net 11.7 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 35.1 percent decrease over six years.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) experienced modest changes between FY 2016/17 and FY 2018/19, then declined during FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in a net 0.3 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 11.9 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) saw little change during the first half of the six-year period. This resulted in an overall net increase of 2 percent during the audit period and a 10.2 percent decrease over the six-year period. Ridership declined during three years of the six-year period, though the significant declines did not occur until FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a 23.5 percent net decrease during the audit period and a 34.9 percent net decrease across the six-year period.

Cost-related metrics typically provide an indicator of a system's efficiency, while passenger-related metrics offer insight into its productivity. Improvements are characterized by increases in passenger-related metrics and decreases in cost-related metrics. Despite the decreased operating cost in FY 2020/21, cost-related metrics increased during the audit period. Operating cost per passenger was impacted the most, given the 23.5 percent decrease in ridership during the audit period. Passenger-

related metrics fell during the audit period, with passengers per VSH decreasing 23.2 percent and passengers per VSM decreasing 25 percent.

Exhibit 6.1 System Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	System-wide					
	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$22,113,345	\$23,706,366	\$24,560,098	\$27,867,776	\$26,706,542	\$31,857,148
<i>Annual Change</i>		7.2%	3.6%	13.5%	-4.2%	19.3%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$3,204,858	\$3,112,123	\$3,216,832	\$2,356,308	\$324,216	\$2,079,498
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.9%	3.4%	-26.8%	-86.2%	541.4%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	256,733	252,796	251,657	226,839	203,901	226,140
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.5%	-0.5%	-9.9%	-10.1%	10.9%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	2,965,313	2,927,836	2,940,297	2,610,830	2,557,412	2,662,866
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.3%	0.4%	-11.2%	-2.0%	4.1%
Passengers	3,588,390	3,718,811	3,642,129	3,054,112	1,955,918	2,337,201
<i>Annual Change</i>		3.6%	-2.1%	-16.1%	-36.0%	19.5%
Employees	238	240	237	239	241	236
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.8%	-1.3%	0.8%	0.8%	-2.1%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$86.13	\$93.78	\$97.59	\$122.85	\$130.98	\$140.87
<i>Annual Change</i>		8.9%	4.1%	25.9%	6.6%	7.6%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$6.16	\$6.37	\$6.74	\$9.12	\$13.65	\$13.63
<i>Annual Change</i>		3.4%	5.8%	35.3%	49.6%	-0.2%
Passengers/VSH	13.98	14.71	14.47	13.46	9.59	10.34
<i>Annual Change</i>		5.2%	-1.6%	-7.0%	-28.8%	7.7%
Passengers/VSM	1.21	1.27	1.24	1.17	0.76	0.88
<i>Annual Change</i>		5.0%	-2.5%	-5.6%	-34.6%	14.8%
Farebox Recovery	14.5%	13.1%	13.1%	8.5%	1.2%	6.5%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9.4%	-0.2%	-35.4%	-85.6%	437.7%
Hours/Employee	1,078.7	1,053.3	1,061.8	949.1	846.1	958.2
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.4%	0.8%	-10.6%	-10.9%	13.3%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$7.46	\$8.10	\$8.35	\$10.67	\$10.44	\$11.96
<i>Annual Change</i>		8.6%	3.2%	27.8%	-2.2%	14.6%
VSM/VSH	11.55	11.58	11.68	11.51	12.54	11.78
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.3%	0.9%	-1.5%	9.0%	-6.1%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.89	\$0.84	\$0.88	\$0.77	\$0.17	\$0.89
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6.3%	5.5%	-12.6%	-78.5%	436.8%

Source: FY 2016/17 – FY 2018/19 data from prior audit. FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from NTD reports. FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 FTE data as provided by GCTD.

Exhibit 6.2 System Ridership

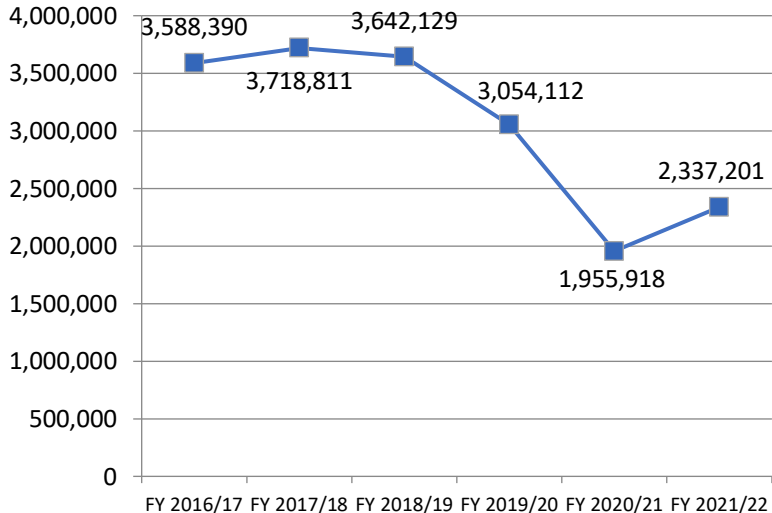


Exhibit 6.3 System Operating Cost/VSH

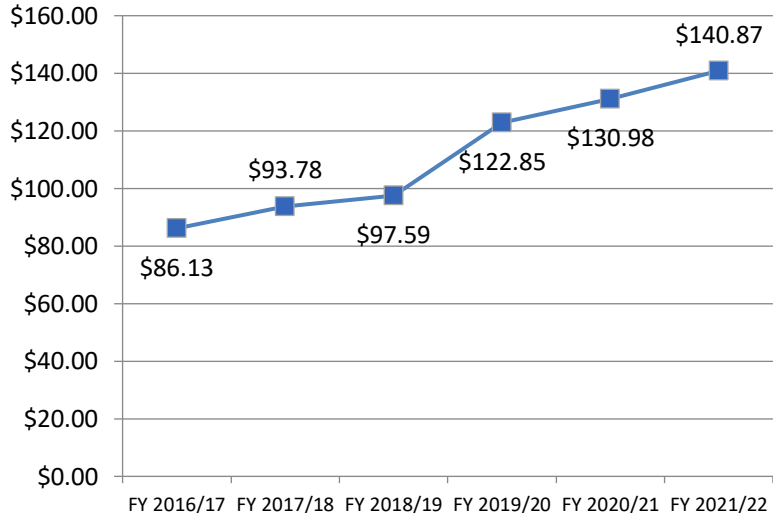


Exhibit 6.4 System Operating Cost/VSM

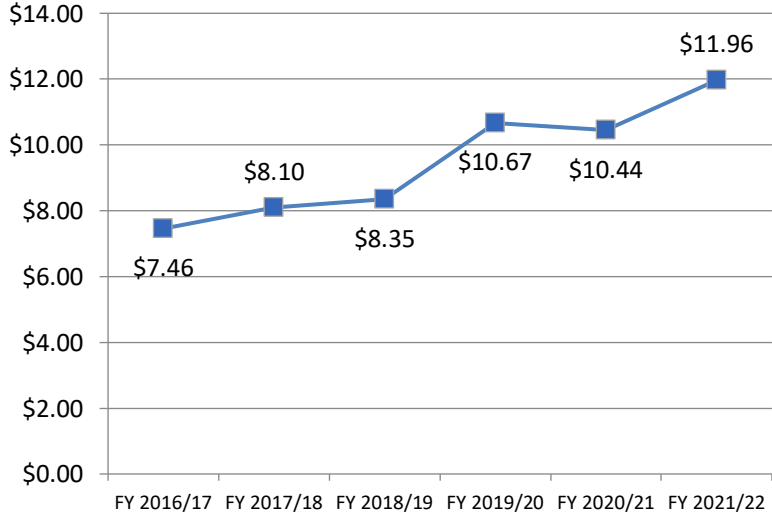


Exhibit 6.5 System VSM/VSH

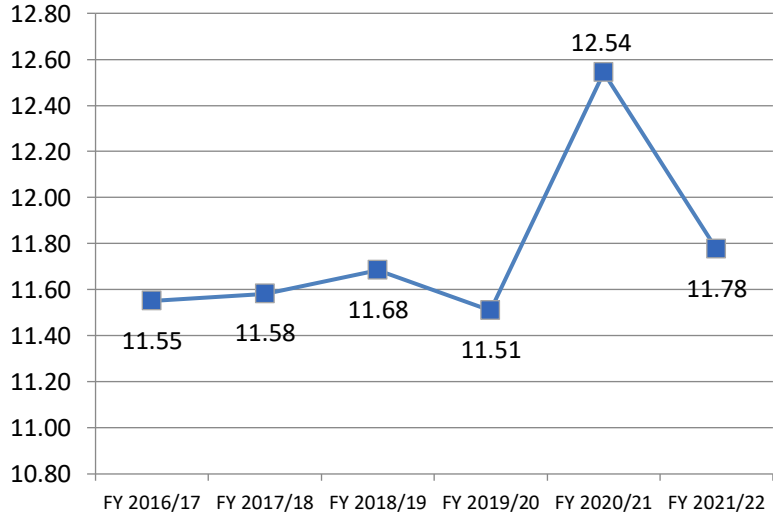


Exhibit 6.6 System Operating Cost/Passenger

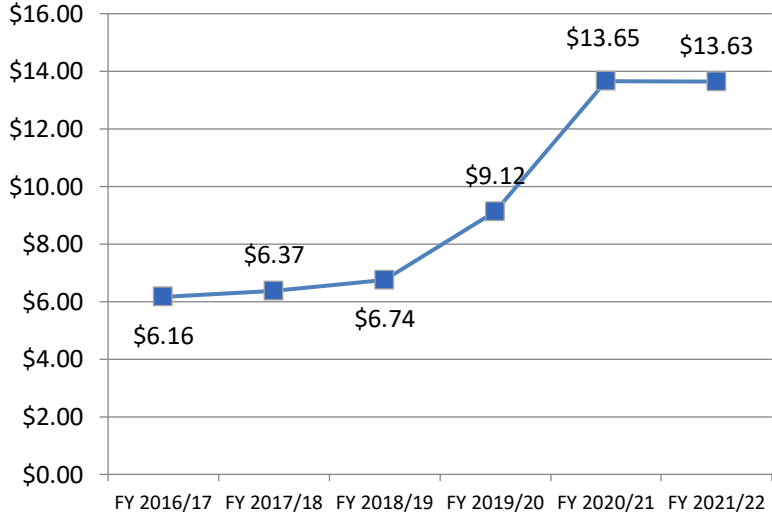


Exhibit 6.7 System Passengers/VSH

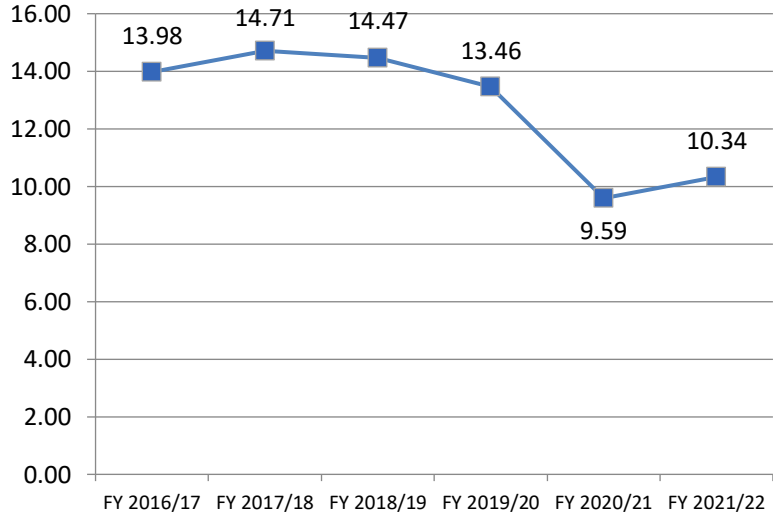


Exhibit 6.8 System Passengers/VSM

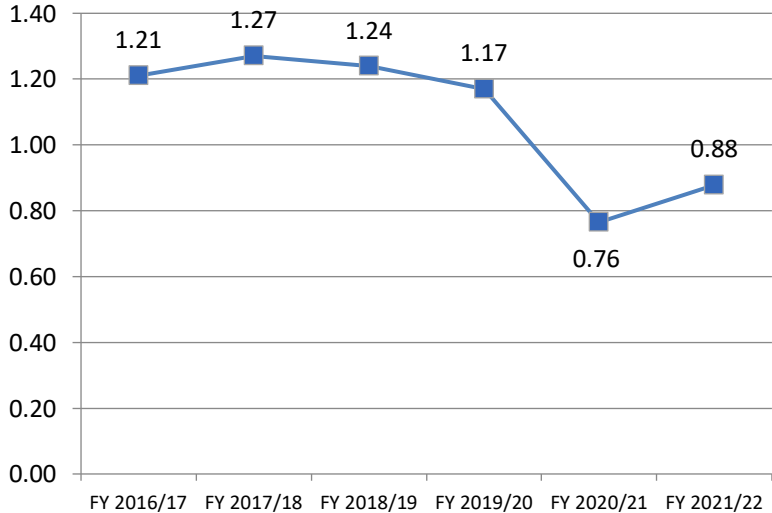


Exhibit 6.9 System VSH/FTE

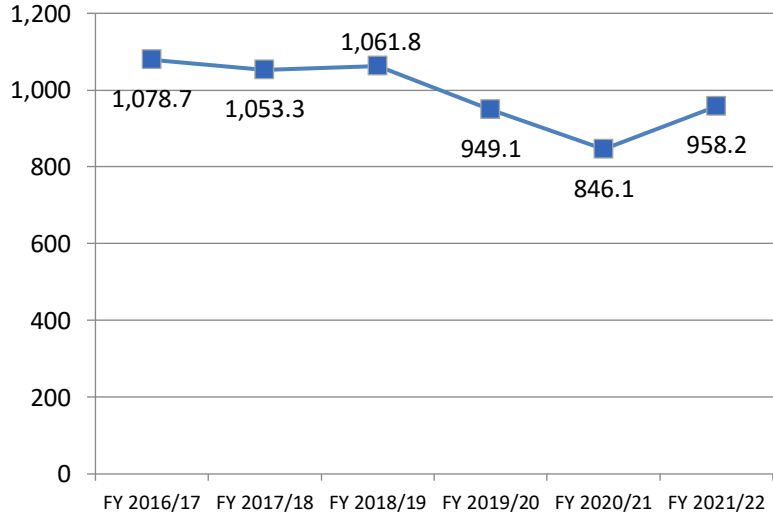


Exhibit 6.10 System Farebox Recovery

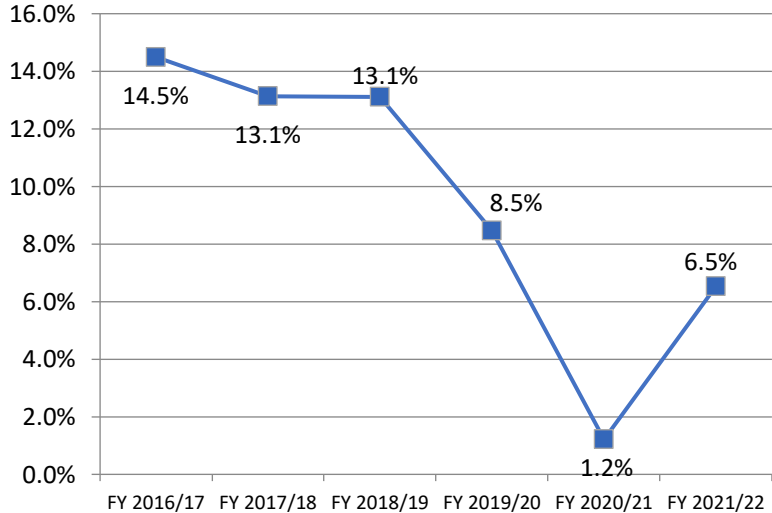
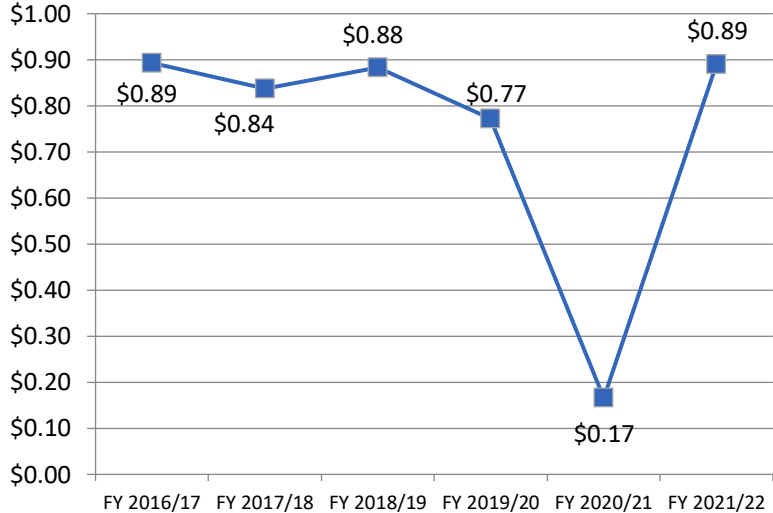


Exhibit 6.11 System Fare/Passenger



Fixed-Route Performance Trends

Fixed-route operating cost experienced a net 16.2 percent increase during the audit period, and a 42.6 percent net increase across the last six years. Fare revenue, however, decreased during FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21, with the greatest decline occurring in FY 2020/21. This resulted in a net 8.5 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 33.3 percent decrease over six years.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) declined every year with the exception of FY 2021/22. This resulted in a net 1.2 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 8.7 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) experienced a net 5.5 percent increase during the audit period and a net 2.9 percent decrease during the six-year period. Ridership declined during three years of the six-year period, though the significant declines did not occur until FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a 23.6 percent net decrease during the audit period and a 34.9 percent net decrease across the six-year period.

Operating cost per passenger rose 52.1 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics decreased during the audit period, with passengers per VSH decreasing 22.7 percent and passengers per VSM decreasing 27.5 percent.

Exhibit 6.12 Fixed-Route Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	Fixed-Route					
	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$18,949,465	\$20,327,043	\$21,052,979	\$23,257,544	\$22,092,950	\$27,030,511
<i>Annual Change</i>		7.3%	3.6%	10.5%	-5.0%	22.3%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$2,936,328	\$2,808,293	\$2,852,620	\$2,138,044	\$279,154	\$1,957,337
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4.4%	1.6%	-25.0%	-86.9%	601.2%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	202,365	203,608	201,430	186,904	173,950	184,731
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.6%	-1.1%	-7.2%	-6.9%	6.2%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	2,163,750	2,192,835	2,163,228	1,990,877	2,046,361	2,100,001
<i>Annual Change</i>		1.3%	-1.4%	-8.0%	2.8%	2.6%
Passengers	3,474,161	3,616,387	3,524,673	2,958,867	1,894,011	2,261,605
<i>Annual Change</i>		4.1%	-2.5%	-16.1%	-36.0%	19.4%
Employees	194	198	195	207	202	201
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.1%	-1.5%	6.2%	-2.4%	-0.5%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$93.64	\$99.83	\$104.52	\$124.44	\$127.01	\$146.32
<i>Annual Change</i>		6.6%	4.7%	19.1%	2.1%	15.2%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$5.45	\$5.62	\$5.97	\$7.86	\$11.66	\$11.95
<i>Annual Change</i>		3.1%	6.3%	31.6%	48.4%	2.5%
Passengers/VSH	17.17	17.76	17.50	15.83	10.89	12.24
<i>Annual Change</i>		3.5%	-1.5%	-9.5%	-31.2%	12.4%
Passengers/VSM	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.49	0.93	1.08
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.7%	-1.2%	-8.8%	-37.7%	16.4%
Farebox Recovery	15.5%	13.8%	13.5%	9.2%	1.3%	7.2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10.8%	-1.9%	-32.2%	-86.3%	473.1%
Hours/Employee	1,043.1	1,028.3	1,033.0	902.9	861.1	919.1
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.4%	0.5%	-12.6%	-4.6%	6.7%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$8.76	\$9.27	\$9.73	\$11.68	\$10.80	\$12.87
<i>Annual Change</i>		5.8%	5.0%	20.0%	-7.6%	19.2%
VSM/VSH	10.69	10.77	10.74	10.65	11.76	11.37
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.7%	-0.3%	-0.8%	10.4%	-3.4%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.85	\$0.78	\$0.81	\$0.72	\$0.15	\$0.87
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8.1%	4.2%	-10.7%	-79.6%	487.2%

Exhibit 6.13 Fixed-Route Ridership

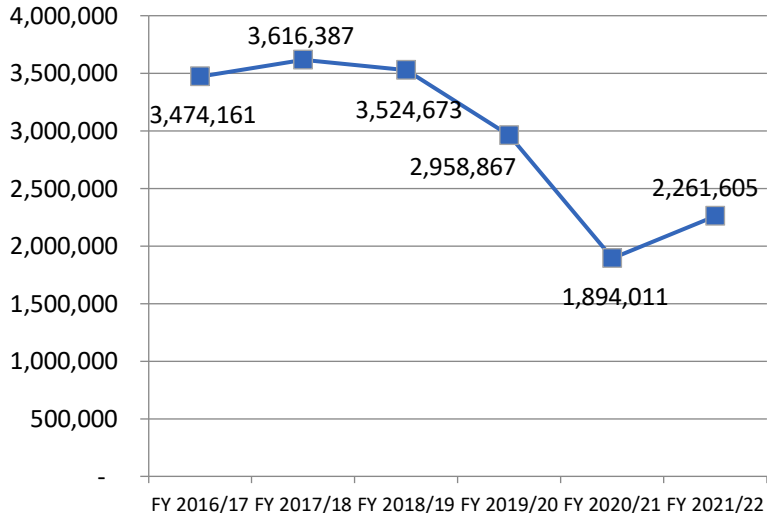


Exhibit 6.14 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/VSH

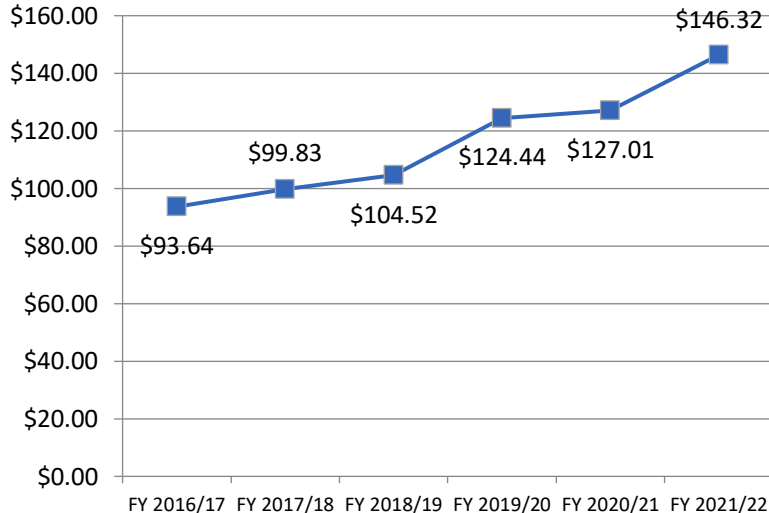


Exhibit 6.15 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/VSM

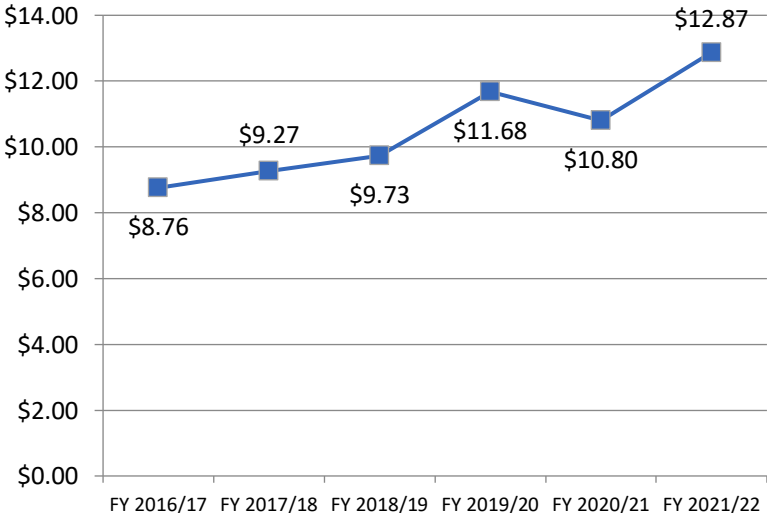


Exhibit 6.16 Fixed-Route VSM/VSH

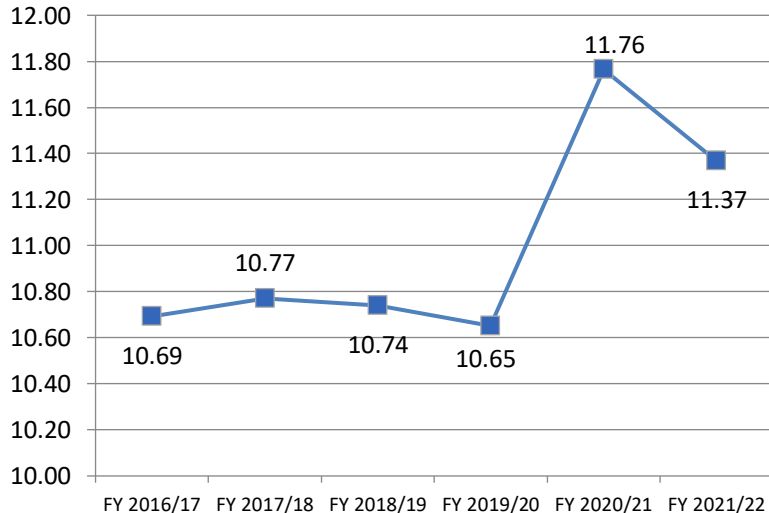


Exhibit 6.17 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/Passenger

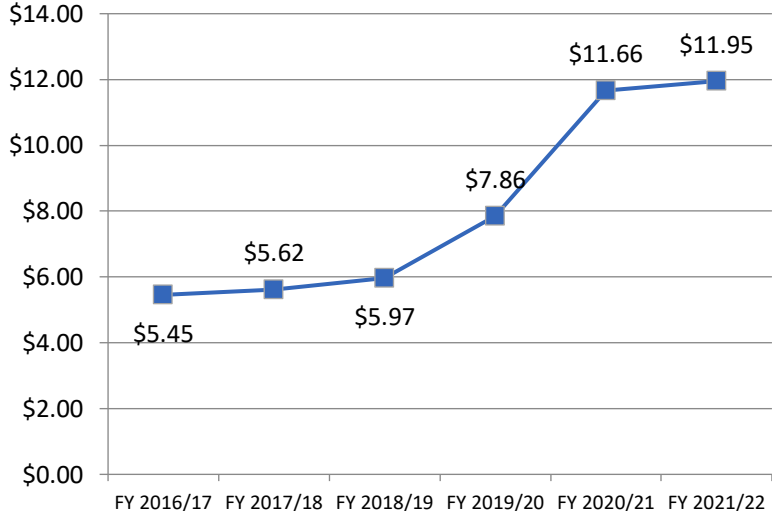


Exhibit 6.18 Fixed-Route Passengers/VSH

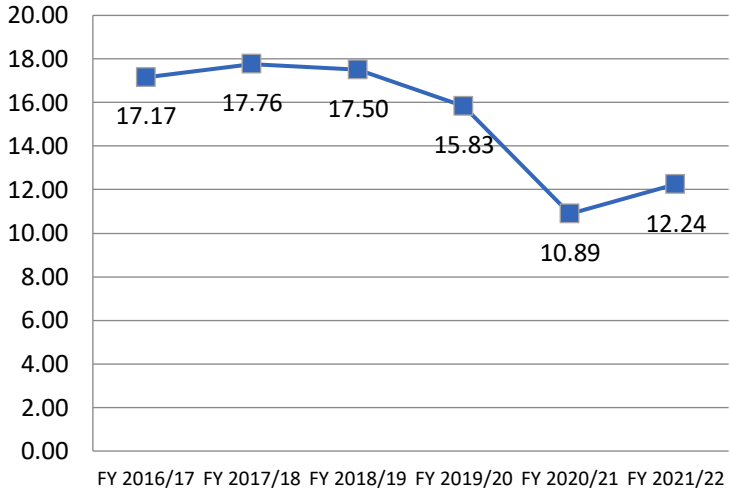


Exhibit 6.19 Fixed-Route Passengers/VSM

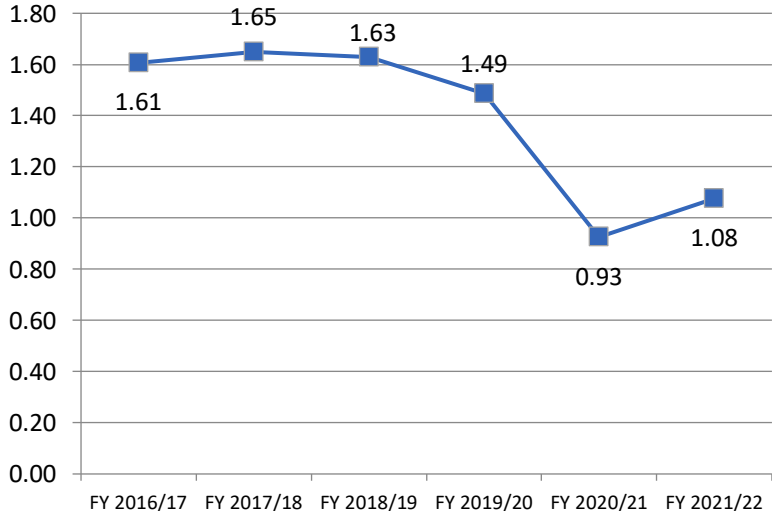


Exhibit 6.20 Fixed-Route VSH/FTE

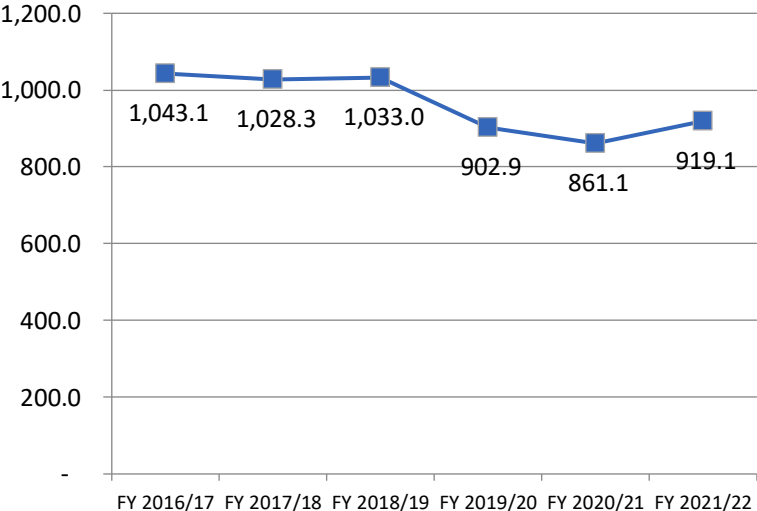


Exhibit 6.21 Fixed-Route Farebox Recovery

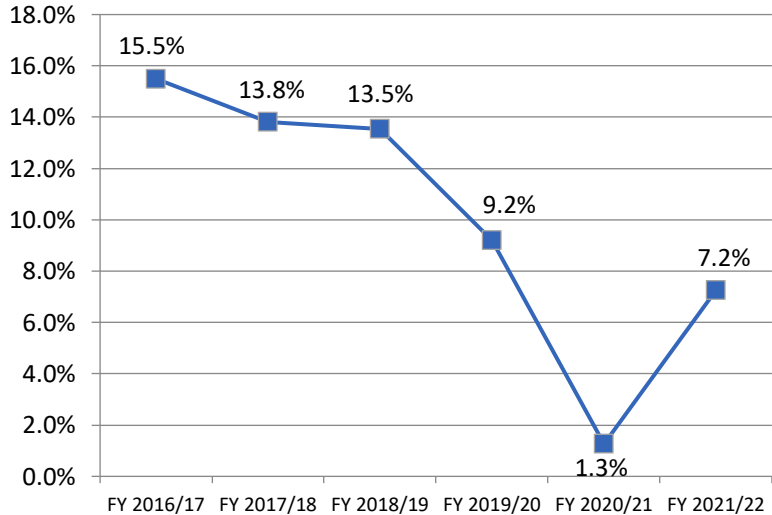
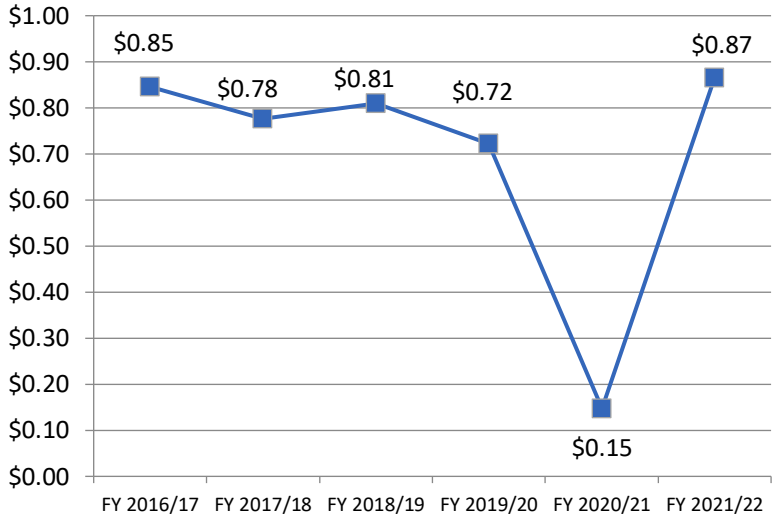


Exhibit 6.22 Fixed-Route Fare/Passenger



Demand-Response Performance Trends

Demand-response operating cost experienced a net 18.7 percent decrease during the audit period, and a net 25.6 percent decrease across the last six years. Fare revenue experienced a net 44 percent decrease during the audit period.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) decreased every year with the exception of FY 2018/19 and FY 2021/22. This resulted in a net 3.7 percent increase during the audit period, but a net 23.8 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) experienced a net 9.2 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 29.8 percent decrease during the six-year period. Ridership experienced a 20.6 percent net decrease during the audit period, and a 33.8 percent net decrease across the six-year period.

Cost-related metrics fluctuated during the audit period, with operating cost per VSH decreasing 21.6 percent and operating cost per passenger increasing 2.4 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics fell during the audit period, with passengers per VSH decreasing 23.5 percent and passengers per VSM decreasing 12.6 percent.

Exhibit 6.23 Demand-Response Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	Demand-Response					
	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$3,163,880	\$3,379,323	\$3,507,119	\$2,896,684	\$2,294,343	\$2,355,210
<i>Annual Change</i>		6.8%	3.8%	-17.4%	-20.8%	2.7%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$268,530	\$303,830	\$364,212	\$218,264	\$45,062	\$122,161
<i>Annual Change</i>		13.1%	19.9%	-40.1%	-79.4%	171.1%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	54,368	49,188	50,227	39,935	29,951	41,409
<i>Annual Change</i>		-9.5%	2.1%	-20.5%	-25.0%	38.3%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	801,563	735,001	777,069	619,953	511,051	562,865
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8.3%	5.7%	-20.2%	-17.6%	10.1%
Passengers	114,229	102,424	117,456	95,245	61,907	75,596
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10.3%	14.7%	-18.9%	-35.0%	22.1%
Employees	44	42	42	32	39	35
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4.5%	0.0%	-23.8%	21.9%	-10.3%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$58.19	\$68.70	\$69.83	\$72.53	\$76.60	\$56.88
<i>Annual Change</i>		18.1%	1.6%	3.9%	5.6%	-25.8%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$27.70	\$32.99	\$29.86	\$30.41	\$37.06	\$31.16
<i>Annual Change</i>		19.1%	-9.5%	1.9%	21.9%	-15.9%
Passengers/VSH	2.10	2.08	2.34	2.39	2.07	1.83
<i>Annual Change</i>		-0.9%	12.3%	2.0%	-13.3%	-11.7%
Passengers/VSM	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.12	0.13
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.2%	8.5%	1.6%	-21.2%	10.9%
Farebox Recovery	8.5%	9.0%	10.4%	7.5%	2.0%	5.2%
<i>Annual Change</i>		5.9%	15.5%	-27.4%	-73.9%	164.1%
Hours/Employee	1,235.6	1,171.1	1,195.9	1,248.0	768.0	1,183.1
<i>Annual Change</i>		-5.2%	2.1%	4.4%	-38.5%	54.1%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$3.95	\$4.60	\$4.51	\$4.67	\$4.49	\$4.18
<i>Annual Change</i>		16.5%	-1.8%	3.5%	-3.9%	-6.8%
VSM/VSH	14.74	14.94	15.47	15.52	17.06	13.59
<i>Annual Change</i>		1.4%	3.5%	0.3%	9.9%	-20.3%
Fare/Passenger	\$2.35	\$2.97	\$3.10	\$2.29	\$0.73	\$1.62
<i>Annual Change</i>		26.2%	4.5%	-26.1%	-68.2%	122.0%

Exhibit 6.24 Demand-Response Ridership

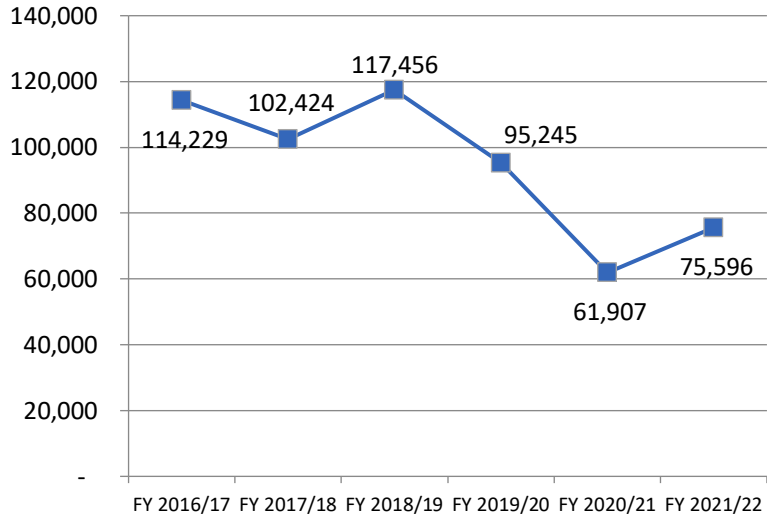


Exhibit 6.25 Demand-Response Operating Cost/VSH

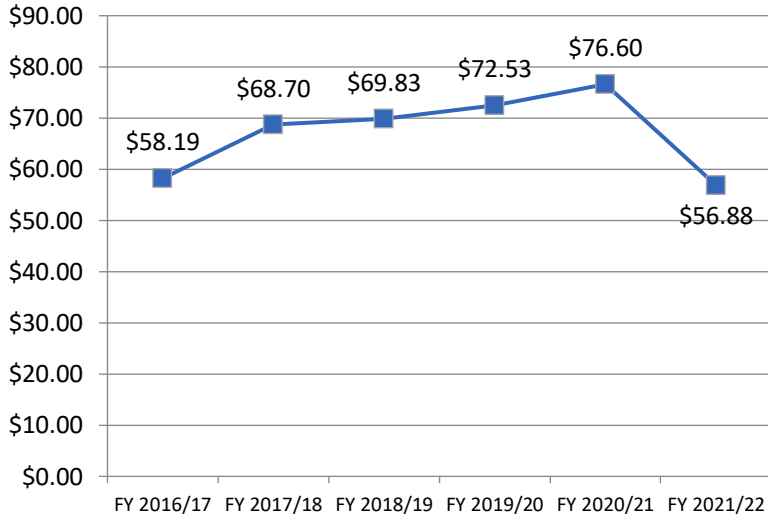


Exhibit 6.26 Demand-Response Operating Cost/VSM

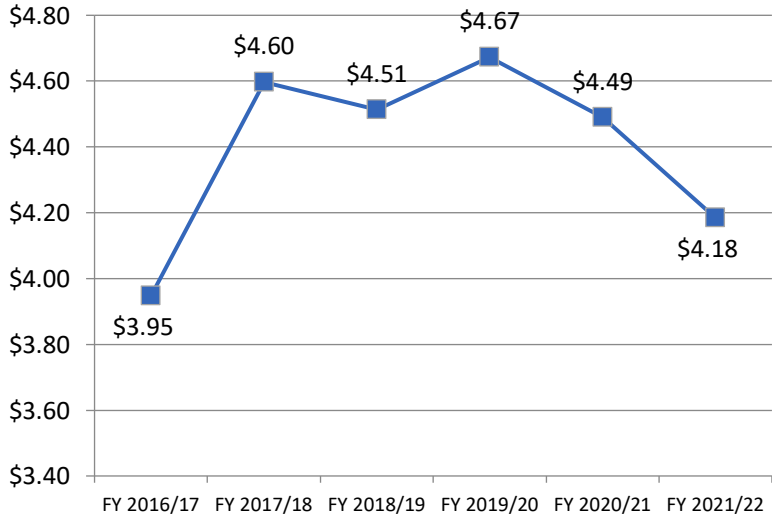


Exhibit 6.27 Demand-Response VSM/VSH

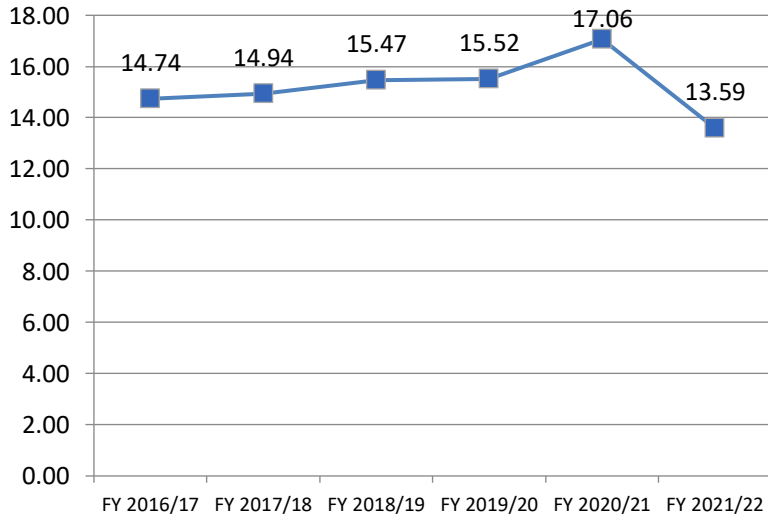


Exhibit 6.28 Demand-Response Operating Cost/Passenger

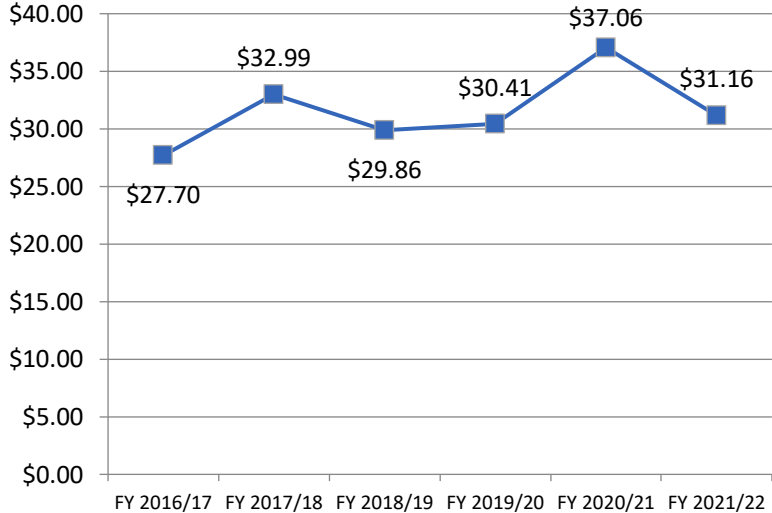


Exhibit 6.29 Demand-Response Passengers/VSH

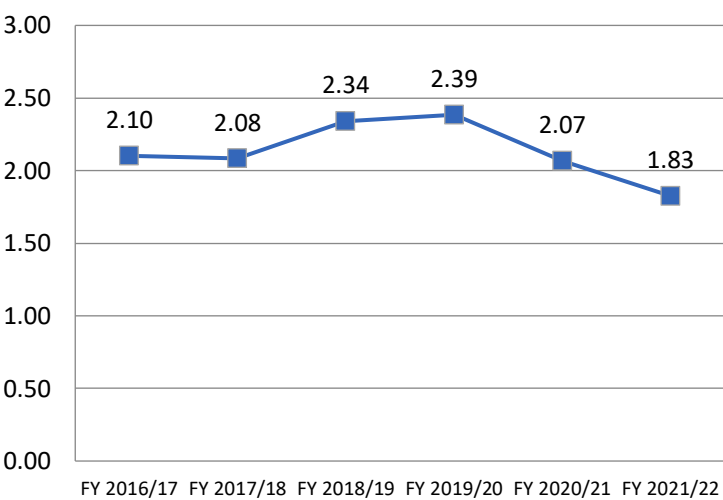


Exhibit 6.30 Demand-Response Passengers/VSM

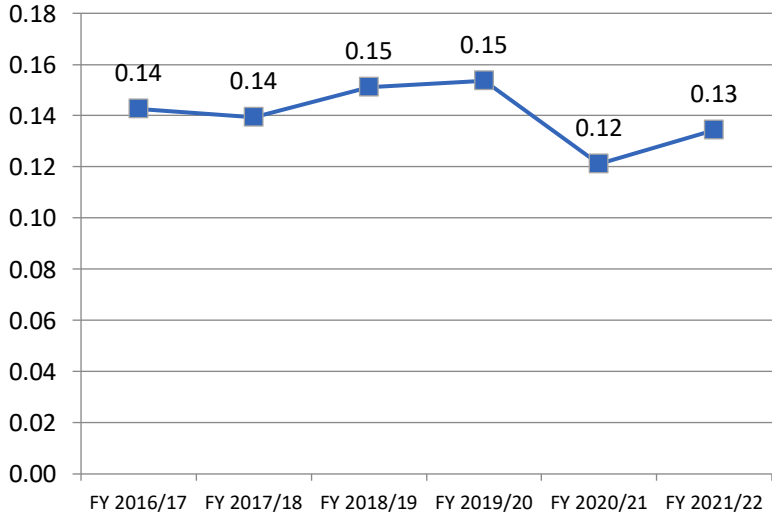


Exhibit 6.31 Demand-Response VSH/FTE

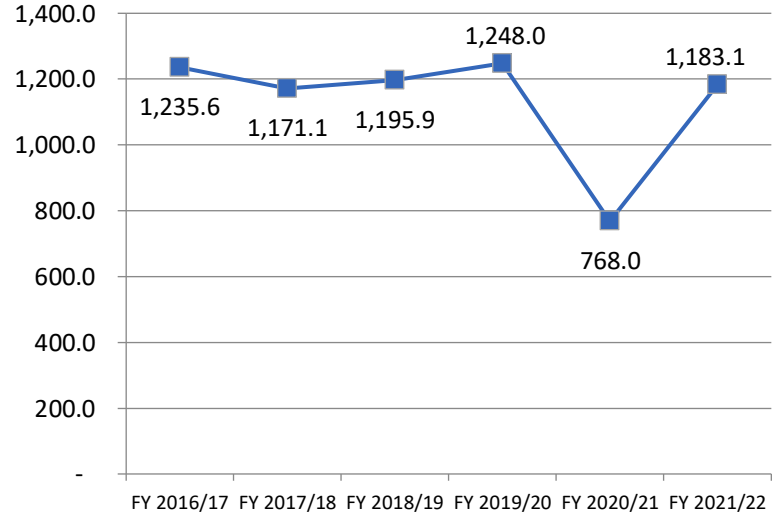


Exhibit 6.32 Demand-Response Farebox Recovery

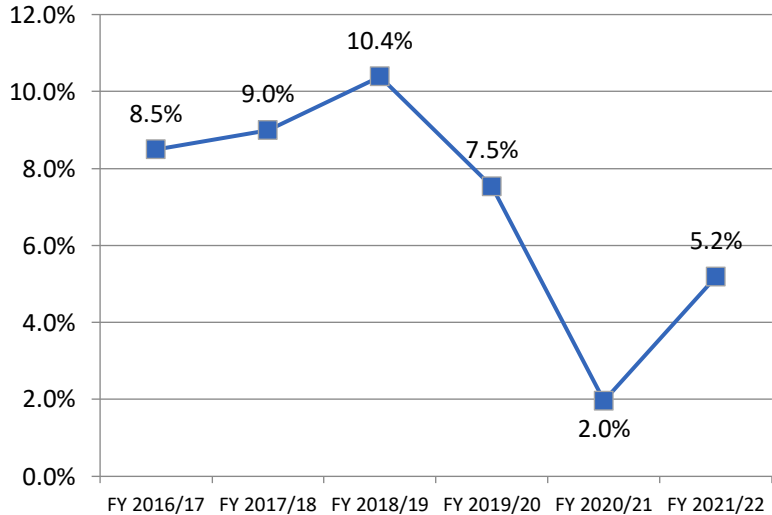
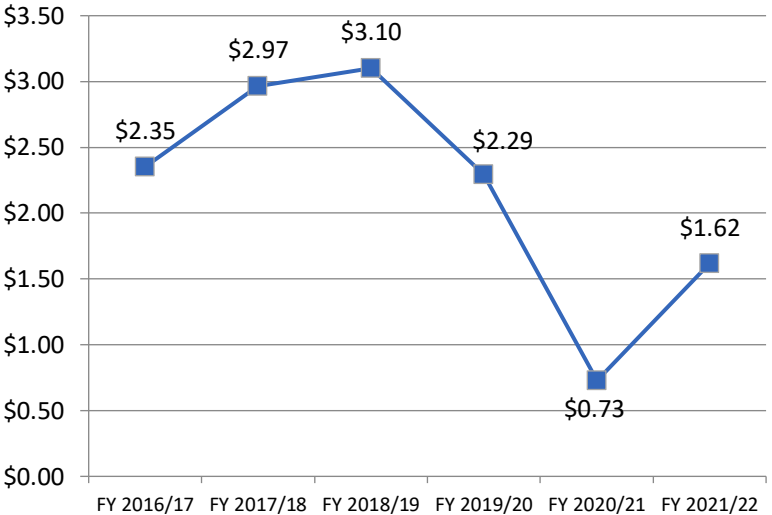


Exhibit 6.33 Demand-Response Fare/Passenger



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Chapter 7 | Functional Review

A functional review of the Gold Coast Transit District’s public transit program is intended to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the operator. Following a general summary of the City’s transit services, this chapter addresses seven functional areas. The list, taken from Section III of the *Performance Audit Guidebook* published by Caltrans, reflects those transit services provided by the District:

- General management and organization;
- Service planning;
- Administration;
- Marketing and public information;
- Scheduling, dispatch, and operations;
- Personnel management and training; and
- Fleet maintenance.

Service Overview

The Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) provides bus and paratransit services within the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and Ventura, as well as in unincorporated areas of western Ventura County. Serving a population of approximately 375,000 and providing approximately four million unlinked trips annually, GCTD is the largest public transit service provider in Ventura County. GCTD operates 19 fixed routes (including four school trippers) from approximately 4:45 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. weekdays, and weekends from approximately 4:45 a.m. to 10 p.m.

GCTD’s paratransit service is known as GO ACCESS, a shared-ride origin-to-destination service for ADA-certified persons with disabilities and seniors age 65 and above. GO ACCESS provides complementary ADA paratransit transportation during the same days and hours the fixed-route service, and across the same service area. It also provides general public Dial-A-Ride service (via its Late Night Safe Rides program) after 7:00 p.m. to provide coverage as various fixed routes end service for the evening.

Exhibit 7.1 Fixed-Route Fare Structure

Fare Category	Single ride	Day Pass	15-Ride Pass	31-Day Pass
Adult	\$1.50	\$4.00	\$20.00	\$50.00
Youth	Free	Free	Free	Free
Reduced (Seniors 65+, Disabled, and Veterans)	\$0.75	\$2.00	\$10.00	\$25.00
Seniors 75+	Free			
Children under 45" (with a paid fare)	Free			
Intra-Agency Transfers	Free			

Exhibit 7.2 Demand-Response Fare Structure

Fare Category	Fare
Cash fare, one-way (ADA-certified or senior)	\$3.00
Senior Nutrition	Free
Book of 10 tickets (ADA-certified or senior)	\$30.00
Personal Care Assistant (PCA)	Free
Companion/Guest	\$3.00
Late Night Safe Ride	\$2.00

Response to COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted GCTD in a number of ways. Service was scaled down at times due to a lack of bus operators, and at one point the administrative offices were closed for a week due to exposure. Service was also impacted by the reduction in riders as a result of the stay-at-home order. COVID-19 also affected employee recruitment.

The District has focused on safety throughout the pandemic. It developed a COVID exposure policy and an infectious disease policy that are still in place today. The Human Resources department monitors employee exposures and quarantines as well as advises regarding disease precautions and training. Lessons learned include being prepared with a stock of supplies on hand, working with other governmental entities, and keeping employees and the public well informed.

Service levels have returned to approximately 90 percent of pre-COVID levels, though Route 20 has remained suspended and other routes have had trips cut that have yet to be restored. Fixed-route ridership has returned to approximately 80 percent of pre-COVID numbers, while GO ACCESS is at approximately 70 to 75 percent of its pre-COVID ridership. Staff expect to fully achieve pre-pandemic service and ridership levels by early 2024.

General Management and Organization

GCTD's five member jurisdictions are the Cities of Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ojai, and the County of Ventura.

Gold Coast Transit was created in 1973 via a Joint Powers Agreement between the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme and San Buenaventura. The agreement enabled local and intercity public transportation in western Ventura County, which was initially named South Coast Area Transit (SCAT). In 1996 SCAT began operation of ACCESS, the regional paratransit service providing curb-to-curb transportation for people with disabilities and senior citizens. In June 2007, SCAT's Joint Powers Agreement, which by then included the County of Ventura, was amended to rename the agency as Gold Coast Transit.

In October 2013, in response to Senate Bill SB 716, which required that all TDA funds in Ventura County be used solely for public transit purposes, the Gold Coast Transit District was created by statute. GCTD is governed by a Board of Directors. Formation of a transit district provided GCTD's Board of Directors and staff greater flexibility in implementing service improvements. Each of GCTD's five member agencies appoints one elected official from its governing body to serve on the Board of Directors (a second member from each agency serves as an alternate member). The GCTD Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Board of Directors' meetings are open to the public and accessible by public transit.

GCTD's Management Team is comprised of a General Manager, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, Director of Planning and Marketing, and Director of Operations and Maintenance. GCTD's General Manager is appointed by, and reports to, the Board of Directors. The General Manager's role is to carry out Board policies and directives; the General Manager has full charge of the operation of GCTD's services, facilities, and administration of business affairs.

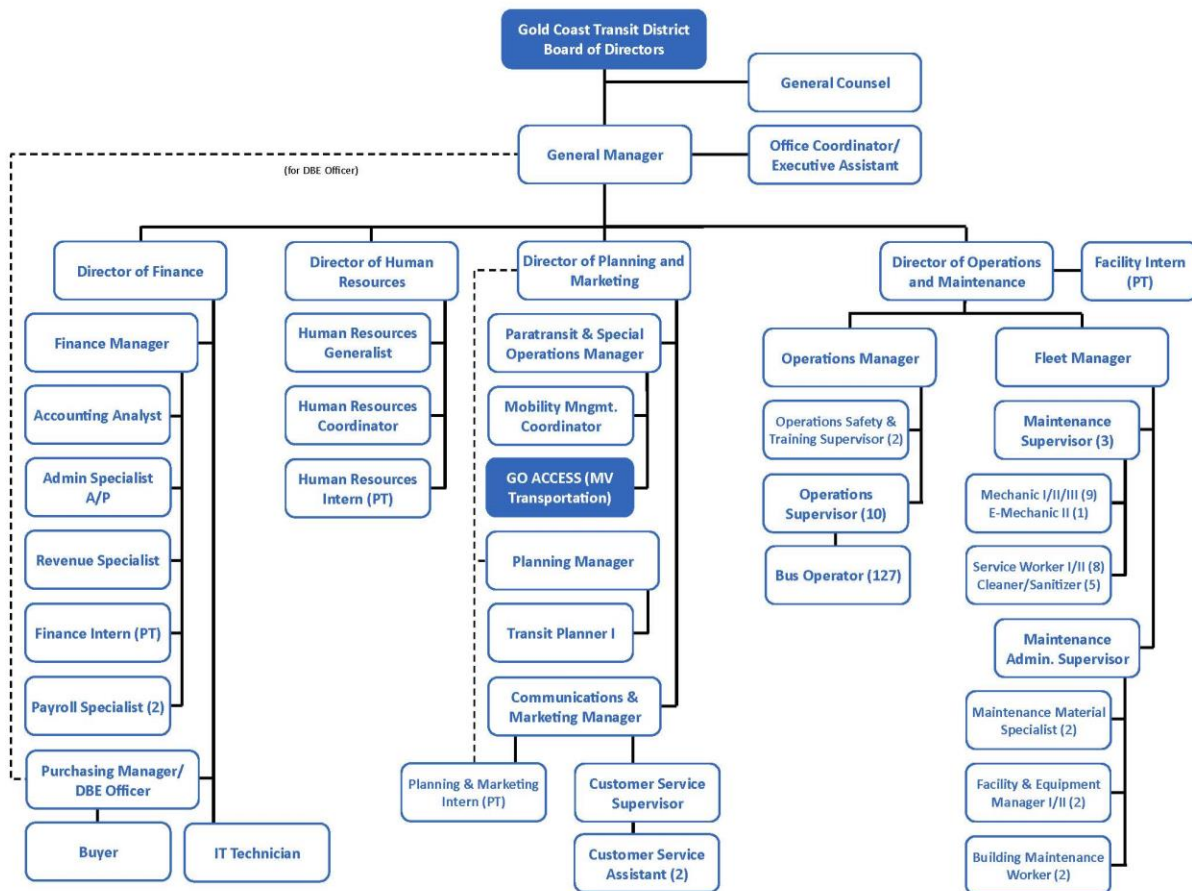
A weekly managers' meeting is held followed by a separate directors' meeting and conference. These meetings review current and upcoming issues as well as information from the Board. An expanded team meeting with all non-contract management staff is held monthly to provide updates on major projects.

The GCTD considers itself well structured, but is slightly understaffed, especially in the finance department. In the past, the District has utilized a consultant to assist with finance, but filled its Director of Finance position during the audit period. GCTD is still recruiting for an accounting manager. The organizational structure is assessed annually and adjusted as necessary. GCTD makes use of interns and temporary staff for cost-effective assistance as needed. Full-time employees are cross-trained for redundancy. Managerial authority is well-defined and lines of communication are clear.

The majority of GCTD's nearly 200 employees operate or maintain buses. All bus operators, most maintenance employees, and several administrative employees are represented by SEIU Local 721 and Teamsters 186. GCTD contracts with MV Transportation for the operation of GO ACCESS demand-response services. MV Transportation operations are located at 940 Maulhardt Avenue in Oxnard.

GCTD's organizational chart is illustrated in Exhibit 7.3.

Exhibit 7.3 Organizational Chart (FY 2022/23)



Several notable service changes have taken place since the beginning of the audit period. These include:

- July 2019: Reduced service span for routes 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, and 19. Reduced route 22 service frequency. Discontinued route 18C AM tripper and route 20 weekend service.
- January 2020: Demonstration route 22 discontinued and route 15 restructured to serve new area. Route 18 tripper rerouted to bypass the Oxnard Transit Center.
- January 2020: Introduced ADA and Senior direct connection to any address in the City of Camarillo.
- March 2020: All routes reduced to weekend frequency and service spans due to COVID-19.
- July 2020: Implemented route 23 demonstration route. Frequency restored for routes 1, 6, 17, and 21.
- November 2020: All routes reduced to weekend frequency and service spans due to COVID-19 and staff shortage.
- January 2021: Routes 1 and 6 frequency restored.
- May 2021: Introduced a general public dial-a-ride service for \$2.00.
- July 2021: Frequency improvements for routes 4B, 11, 16, 17, 21, and 23.
- January 2022: Route 6 frequency improvements.

GCTD collects data as part of its evaluation of new programs or services. This data includes passenger surveys, monitoring ridership and on-time performance, and conducting community outreach before and after. For example, GCTD introduced its Late Night Safe Rides (LNSR) program, a general public Dial-A-Ride, to identify potential fixed-route service expansion opportunities. However, no consistent pattern emerged to create a new fixed-route operation. The actual impact of service changes implemented due to the pandemic have been more difficult to anticipate. Several non-service changes also occurred during the audit period, including the appointment of a new General Manager (March 2022); a renegotiation of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with SEIU Operator, Maintenance, and Administrative units; and the implementation of a new payroll system (Paycom).

The Board is very engaged and has expressed particular interest in zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) transition planning, the customer experience, and efforts to recruit operators and grow ridership. GCTD has a good relationship with the Ventura County Transportation Commission and stays connected with other transit operators in the region, including participation in Transcom meetings and discussions regarding regional fare planning. Transcom provides each operator with the opportunity to discuss new services and how they are doing (i.e., productivity). The Planning Manager is the primary intergovernmental liaison, with the Director of Planning and Marketing as the designated alternate. The Paratransit and Special Operations Manager is the representative to East County Transit Alliance and currently serves as Vice-Chair of the CalACT Board of Directors.

Service Planning

District goals, objectives, and standards were originally adopted in March 2000 and were updated in 2009 and 2014. GCTD is currently engaged in a strategic planning effort that will update or replace that document. Planning documents that contribute to achieving the District's goals and objectives include the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), COVID-19 Recovery Plan, Service Planning Guidelines and Evaluation Policy, Bus Stop Guidelines, Building Transit Supportive Communities Plan, and Bus Stop Improvement Plan. GCTD monitors performance measures monthly, quarterly, and annually.

GCTD adopted its most recent Short Range Transit Plan in Fall 2015. The District delayed development of a new SRTP (scheduled for 2020) due to the pandemic and chose to adopt the 2021 COVID-19 Recovery Plan until conditions improve sufficiently to undertake the SRTP update. GCTD also participates in Development Advisory Committee meetings in the cities of Oxnard and Ventura to ensure new development areas are considered in short-range planning efforts.

GCTD, through its GO ACCESS program, ensures all complementary ADA paratransit requirements are met by providing demand-response service during the same times and in the same area as the fixed-route service, ensuring comparable trip lengths and no greater than twice the fixed-route fare. It also goes beyond what is required by the ADA to ensure community needs are met, including the Zones service which provides transportation for persons with temporary disabilities. GCTD also provides late-night transportation through its Late Night Safe Rides program, which operates nightly between 7:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m.

Public hearings are held annually during regularly scheduled Board meetings, and public participation is also conducted on an as-needed basis prior to service or fare changes. Community outreach is conducted throughout GCTD's multiple jurisdictions. It can be very difficult for families to come to meetings that are held at the GCTD offices or at other central locations.

The most recent rider survey was conducted in 2021. The last community-wide outreach effort was conducted during the last update of the Short Range Transit Plan in 2015.

Administration

The budgeting process starts in the spring with a comparison of the current year's budget-to-actual. Assumptions are established, information is received from VCTC, expected revenues are compared, and the budget is built by department. The management team meets to discuss the department budgets and priorities. Staff meet with the GCTD Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in March for its recommendations regarding service changes and service levels. The draft assumptions go to the Board in April, with the draft budget in May and the final in June. The budget is reviewed throughout the year by the Finance department. Financial data is stored and managed through Fleet-Net, and reported to the Board on a monthly basis.

Grants management is shared between the Department of Planning and Marketing and the Department of Finance. The Director of Planning and Marketing is registered in the federal ECHO system. The Planning Manager is responsible for submitting grant applications, preparing quarterly Milestone Progress Reports, and closing out grants. The Director of Finance oversees funds and processes fund requests in ECHO. Time and resource constraints may limit the number of grants GCTD applies for, but it has not lost any grants due to reporting.

Risks are identified, analyzed, and mitigated in part through quarterly meetings with staff, including management and union members; a monthly property evaluation for hazards; and use of the Track-It program to log incidents and accidents in real time. GCTD participates in the California Transit Indemnity Pool (CalTIP), a member-driven public sector organization dedicated to providing stable, cost-effective insurance, risk management, and safety services to public transit agencies. GCTD has an on-staff Risk Manager who is responsible for proactive safety/loss prevention initiatives. Safety practices are reviewed

annually as part of the update of the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). GCTD also has a current disaster preparedness and response plan.

The GO ACCESS contract with MV Transportation is one of the largest contracts managed by GCTD and is overseen by the Paratransit and Special Operations Manager. The District provides vehicles, fuel, and scheduling software, while MV operates the service and maintains the vehicles. GCTD works with MV to ensure staff are meeting ADA requirements. GCTD staff meet with MV weekly, and GCTD directors meet with the contractor monthly. GCTD management and maintenance personnel regularly conduct on-site audits to assure compliance and quality control. MV submits weekly reports providing updates on maintenance, safety, and operations in addition to detailed monthly reports submitted with the invoices.

Smaller contracts include software providers and other vendors. Designated project managers provide oversight on a weekly or monthly basis. Any contract over \$150,000 must be approved by the GCTD Board.

Facility maintenance is provided in-house. All GCTD passenger facilities are owned and maintained by individual GCTD member agencies.

Payroll processes are designed to provide oversight. Hours are tracked on PERDIS and transferred to Paycom. Employees submit timesheets as the basis for payroll. Both the employee and the department director approve timecards on a biweekly basis. Currently, 191 employees utilize direct deposit.

GCTD's Revenue Specialist handles accounts receivable, while the Accounts Payable Specialist handles accounts payable. All disbursements are approved by two directors, and all invoices are verified against processed and approved purchase orders. A two-person review process is required for maintenance inventory and parts purchases; a Maintenance Materials Specialist enters the items into Fleet-Net and reviewed by the Maintenance Supervisor before going for reconciliation by the Accounts Payable Specialist.

The District's Purchasing department lies within the Finance department and is overseen by the Purchasing Manager, who also serves as the DBE Officer. Procurement activities are detailed in GCTD's Purchasing Procedure Manual. All procurement activities are in accordance with state laws and regulations, and any procurements funded with federal funds are also in accordance with the FTA Master Agreement.

Marketing and Public Information

The Director of Planning and Marketing is responsible for marketing activities. The base marketing plan revolves around biannual service changes. It features five primary components: community outreach, printed communications, social networking, media outreach, and miscellaneous (as-needed) materials. Service performance and survey data are used to inform GCTD's marketing strategies. The 2021 rider survey revealed a largely positive perception of GCTD, with 76 percent of respondents feeling safe onboard GCTD buses.

Primary sources of service information are the bus book and Gold Coast Transit website. A new bus book is produced twice annually and distributed to locations throughout the service area. Promotional campaigns are utilized to launch services and new programs. During the audit period the District ran a promotional campaign for its launch of the new Late Night Safe Rides service, as well as a COVID-19 safety

campaign called “Keeping You Safe on the GO.” Social media is utilized as well, including the recent creation of a TikTok page to expand engagement.

GCTD staff maintains regular communication with schools, especially regarding the Youth Ride Free program launched in 2022. Prior to this program, school districts purchased bulk fare media. GCTD works with the schools to coordinate service to bell times. GCTD is also a member of all local chambers of commerce and frequently exchanges information with the business community.

A bilingual customer service center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Calls received outside those hours go to voicemail, which receive a call back within 24 hours. Complaints are documented on an intake form and forwarded to the appropriate department for further review. Complaints are collected and organized by date and category.

GCTD participates in transfer agreements with neighboring transit operators and also participates in advisory committees and boards, such as VCTC’s Transit Operators Advisory Committee (Transcom), Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), and Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC).

Scheduling, Dispatch, and Operations

GCTD staff is unionized. GO ACCESS employees (through MV Transportation) are represented by Teamsters Local #186, as are GCTD supervisors. Fixed-route drivers, administration, and maintenance (GCTD employees) are represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local #721, under three separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

All fixed-route drivers are full-time. GCTD is open to the idea of part-time drivers, and has had them in the past. Recruiting efforts indicated that there are some retirees that are interested in working part-time. However, this would require approval by the union, which is currently only interested in full-time drivers. MV Transportation does utilize some part-time drivers for the demand-response service.

Drivers bid on assignments twice annually (January and July), with awards based on seniority. Fixed-route drivers are certified to drive all vehicles in the fleet. Demand-response drivers are certified according to the vehicles they operate. Extra board drivers are used to cover drivers who call out sick. Vehicles are rotated through routes and assignments by dispatch.

GCTD has used GFI validating fareboxes since 2013. Service workers probe buses and drop the vaults. The vault room is located directly across from the dispatch office, is equipped with multiple cameras, and card/key access is limited. There are a limited number of keys to the outside door, and it takes two persons to get inside. The vaults are emptied three times per week, with two employees always present. They bag the cash from the vaults and place the bags in a secure anteroom for pickup by Brinks armored car service. Brinks employees can access the anteroom but not the vault room. All cash bags are numbered and labeled. Receipts and tags are provided to the accounting manager, who compares them to the Brinks count. Revenue is reported monthly. Vaults are always emptied on the last day of the month to ensure clean reporting.

Non-cash fare media and bulk fare media are sold at the Customer Service Center. Revenues are transported from the Customer Service Center to GCTD’s Revenue Specialist by the Customer Service

Supervisor (or designee) via a key-locked bag. The deposit is prepared once per week. Revenues from the four authorized ticket outlets are collected monthly. Mobile fares are received from Token Transit weekly; GCTD receives a transaction report and funds are directly deposited in its bank account.

Personnel Management and Training

GCTD currently is short-staffed for operators. The Human Resources department handles all recruitment in-house and is actively recruiting new drivers. Drivers are recruited via NEOGOV, the GCTD website, local newspaper advertising, roadside marketing banners, and word of mouth. Since the pandemic, staff have resumed attending recruitment job fairs.

The District motivates its employees through a combination of events and incentive programs. Events include holiday celebrations and lunch and learn opportunities. Incentives include hiring bonuses and recruitment incentives. Turnover is average, with most departures the result of retirements or new recruits that are not meeting expectations. All operations staff receive annual performance evaluations.

While some drivers may come in with some experience, all drivers are trained as if they are new. Training is conducted using dedicated in-house trainers (Operations Supervisors). Total initial training lasts approximately six to eight weeks, including five to seven days of classroom training, two weeks of bus familiarization, DMV testing, and two weeks of revenue training. Ongoing training includes monthly safety meetings, monthly VTT driver training, evaluations four times per year (two ride-alongs and two trail-alongs). Supervisors in the field investigate all issues, regardless of who reported them. All supervisors are Transportation Safety Institute (TSI)-trained.

GO ACCESS demand-response service is provided under contract to MV Transportation. A new contract with MV went into effect in March 2019, with a base term through June 2024. This contract includes multi-year options, should GCTD choose to exercise them. MV operates out of a local facility but fuels its vehicles at the GCTD yard. Demand-response dispatching, reservations, and maintenance services are provided at MV's facility. GCTD provides oversight on all aspects of the MV operations, including maintenance.

Personnel rules are spelled out in the GCTD Bus Operator Policy book as well as the labor agreements. GCTD enforces a no-tolerance drug and alcohol policy. Represented employees are subject to a progressive, points-driven discipline policy. Benefits for employees include health, vision, dental, retirement (CalPERS, 457 plan), and FSA plans. Benefits are communicated during new hire orientation and during open enrollment periods, as well as whenever updates to the MOUs or personnel rules are made.

Maintenance

The Fleet Manager develops GCTD's preventive maintenance (PM) schedules and inspection guidelines. GCTD utilizes Fleet-Net software to track and forecast service intervals and produce work orders for preventive maintenance. Fleet-Net is also linked into parts and pricing. The standard interval between preventive maintenance/safety inspections is 60 days or 5,000 miles, whichever comes first. Accumulated vehicle mileage determines what level of preventive maintenance is required (A through F).

Most maintenance work is performed in-house. Body work repairs and Amerex vehicle semiannual inspections are typically sent out. (While the facility can accommodate the Amerex inspections, GCTD

does not have certified staff to perform them.) The current facility is equipped with eight bays, with the opportunity to add four more as part of an expansion. Other equipment includes four in-ground Rotary lifts, two mobile Sefac lifts, one automotive lift, and a drive-through pit. There is ample space for administrative offices and records storage.

The Maintenance department is notified immediately of breakdowns. Unsafe vehicles are flagged in multiple ways to ensure they are not used in service. A “hold list” is provided to dispatchers via email and hard copy, and a “hold notice” placed on the vehicle’s steering wheel informs drivers that the bus should not be driven. Once a vehicle is repaired, a Maintenance Supervisor or lead mechanic informs dispatch and the vehicle is removed from the hold list. There is excellent communication between maintenance and dispatch. Daily vehicle inspection reports (DVIRs) are recorded on paper in triplicate and tracked every night.

The parts room is very secure. Only senior mechanics, supervisors, and parts room staff have access. All parts are tagged and numbered. The backlog for repairs and preventive maintenance is generally moderate, but is affected by having sufficient maintenance personnel and parts availability. Parts inventories and orders are adjusted to take into account the long lead times for some parts.

Some repairs covered under the manufacturers’ warranty are done in-house, while others (such as transmissions) are sent out. Engine work is done in-house. All in-house warranty work is submitted through the manufacturer.

The GCTD fleet includes a combination of buses, cutaway buses, and vans. Exhibit 7.4 details the GCTD fleet.

Exhibit 7.4 Gold Coast Transit District’s Transit Fleet

Quantity	Year	Vehicle Type	PAX + WC	Service
17	2006	40' New Flyer Low Floor	39 + 2	Fixed-route
9	2008	35' NABI Low Floor	30 + 2	Fixed-route
8	2009	35' NABI Low Floor	30 + 2	Fixed-route
8	2015	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
5	2016	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
5	2019	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
1	2020	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
2	2021	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
6	2022	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
13	2014	Mobility Venture/MV1	3/3 + 1	Demand-response
8	2017	Ford/Starcraft	12/3 + 3	Demand-response
5	2019	Ford/Transit	5/1 + 2	Demand-response
1	2021	Ford/Transit/E-Lightning	3/1 + 1	Demand-response

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Chapter 8 | Findings and Recommendations

Conclusions

Moore & Associates finds Gold Coast Transit District to be in compliance with the requirements of the Transportation Development Act. In addition, the entity generally functions in an efficient, effective, and economical manner.

Findings

Based on discussions with District staff, analysis of program performance, and an audit of program compliance and function, the audit team presents no compliance findings.

The audit team has identified one functional finding. While this finding is not a compliance finding, the audit team believes it warrants inclusion in this report:

1. There are reporting errors in the State Controller Transit Operator Financial Transaction Reports for each year of the audit period.

Program Recommendations

In completing this Triennial Performance Audit, the auditors submit the following recommendations for the Gold Coast Transit District's public transit program. They are divided into two categories: TDA Program Compliance Recommendations and Functional Recommendations. TDA Program Compliance Recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the operator into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA, while Functional Recommendations address issues identified during the audit that are not specific to TDA compliance. Each finding is presented with the elements identified within the 2011 *Government Auditing Standards* as well as one or more recommendations.

Given there were no compliance findings, only functional findings and recommendations are provided.

Functional Finding 1: There are reporting errors in the State Controller Transit Operator Financial Transaction Reports for each year of the audit period.

Criteria: It is the responsibility of the transit operator to ensure data is accurately recorded and reported to external agencies. PUC 99247 offers definitions of key performance measures.

Condition: As detailed in Chapter 5, vehicle service hours (VSH) and vehicle service miles (VSM) were incorrectly reported to the State Controller each year of the audit period. While it appears VSH was corrected at some point, VSM continued to report service hours rather than service miles.

Cause: Transposing data when entering it into the report interface can result in the wrong data being entered into certain fields.

Effect: This results in erroneous data being reported to the State Controller, even though the data is collected and recorded appropriately.

Recommendation: Ensure VSH and VSM data are correctly reported on the State Controller Financial Transaction Reports.

Recommended Action: Two primary steps can be taken to ensure data is reported accurately:

1. GCTD staff should review the State Controller Report prior to submittal to ensure the data is accurate.
2. Data that seems unusually low or high (such as 60 VSH for the entire year) should be verified against monthly or annual reports.

Timeline: FY 2022/23.

Anticipated Cost: None.

Management Response: GCTD staff preparing the State Controller’s Financial Transaction Reports have reviewed this finding and have implemented changes in the processes to correct this in future years.

Exhibit 8.1 Audit Recommendations

Functional Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Ensure VSH and VSM data are correctly reported on the State Controller Financial Transaction Reports.	Medium	FY 2022/23