



Gold Coast Transit District

TDA Triennial Performance Audit for
FY2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25



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Chapter 1 | Executive Summary

In 2025, 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 2022/23,
- Fiscal Year 2023/24, and
- Fiscal Year 2024/25.

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. 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. 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. In July 2024, GCTD introduced Sunrise Safe Rides to provide general public Dial-A-Ride service to anyone over the age of 16 from 4:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.

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 2023 by Moore & Associates, Inc. for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2022 – included one recommendation:

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

Status: Implemented.

Findings and Recommendations

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

Recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the operator into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA as well as address non-compliance-related issues, challenges, or opportunities observed during the site visit and functional review. The following recommendation is presented for the Gold Coast Transit District.

Exhibit 1.1 Summary of Audit Recommendations

Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Continue to work with the GCTD Board to identify an alternative zero-emission vehicle transition plan.	High	Ongoing

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, 2025. 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 2025, 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 Auditing 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 includes six 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;
 - Administration;
 - Marketing and public information;
 - Scheduling, dispatching, and operations;
 - Personnel management and training; and
 - 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 GCTD 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.

The methodology for this review included a virtual site visit on February 10, 2026. The audit team met with Vanessa Rauschenberger (General Manager), Christine Feng (Chief Fiscal Officer/Assistant General Manager), Catherine Tran (Fiscal Analyst), Cynthia Duque (Director of Planning and Marketing), James Beck (Director of Operations and Maintenance), Alex Zaretsky (Director of Human Resources), Marlena Kohler (Purchasing Manager and DBE Officer), Ana Perez (Human Resources Generalist), Lorne Henderson (Fleet Manager), Austin Novstrup (Planning Manager), and Robbie Lucio (Mobility Management Coordinator), 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 review, 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 Gold Coast Transit District’s 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, annual operating budgets, year-end performance reports, and other compliance-related documentation.

No compliance issues were identified for the Gold Coast Transit District.

Developments Occurring During the Audit Period

For many transit operators in California, recent years have reflected both the acute impacts of and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of FY 2024/25 – even earlier in some cases – most operators had exhausted federal relief funds, even though penalties for non-compliance with farebox recovery ratios continued to be waived. However, the receipt of federal relief funds complicated matters, as they impacted the amount of TDA funding operators were eligible to receive and, in some cases, resulted in over-payments that had to be resolved after the funds were spent. Many operators, even more than five years after the onset of the pandemic, still struggle with ridership that has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

California Assembly Bill 90, signed into law on June 29, 2020, provided 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. California Assembly Bill 149, signed into law on July 16, 2021, provided additional regulatory relief by extending the provisions of AB 90 through FY 2022/23 and adjusting definitions of eligible revenues and operating costs. Most recently, California Senate Bill 125, signed into law on July 10, 2023, extended protections provided via earlier legislation through FY 2025/26. While this means the audit period covered by this audit is fully exempt from penalties for non-compliance with the farebox recovery ratio, for example, it also means that transit operators may need to be in compliance by the second year of the next audit period.

While the ability to maintain state mandates and performance measures is important, these measures enabled transit operators to adjust to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to receive their full allocations of funding under the TDA.

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

- 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 2025/26.
- Expands the definition of “local funds” to enable the use of federal funding to supplement fare revenues and allows operators to calculate free and reduced fares at their actual value.
- Adjusts the definition of operating cost to exclude the cost of ADA paratransit services, demand-response and micro-transit services designed to extend access to service, ticketing/payment systems, security, some pension costs, and some planning costs.
- Allows operators to use STA funds as needed to keep transit service levels from being reduced or eliminated through FY 2025/26.

SB 125 also called for the establishment of the Transit Transformation Task Force to develop policy recommendations aimed at increasing transit ridership and improving the customer experience statewide. In the more than 50 years since the adoption of the Transportation Development Act (TDA), California’s public transportation landscape has evolved significantly. Many transit operators have struggled to meet the farebox recovery ratio requirement, raising questions about whether it remains an appropriate or effective measure of TDA compliance.

In 2018, the chairs of California’s legislative transportation committees asked the California Transit Association to convene a policy task force to examine the TDA. That effort produced a draft framework for reform in early 2020, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Transit Transformation Task Force released its report in December 2025. While the report includes several recommendations to modernize the TDA - including identifying the farebox recovery ratio and operating cost per hour requirements as outdated and recommending that farebox recovery and cost-inflation penalties be replaced - these proposals represent an initial step rather than immediate policy changes. Achieving the necessary funding and statutory reforms will require sustained advocacy over the coming years.

Exhibit 3.1 Transit Development Act Compliance Requirements

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
State Controller Reports submitted on time.	PUC 99243	In compliance	FY 2022/23: January 19, 2024 FY 2023/24: December 11, 2024 FY 2024/25: January 12, 2026
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 2022/23: December 31, 2023 FY 2023/24: December 18, 2024 FY 2024/25: December 17, 2025
Operator’s terminal rated as satisfactory by CHP within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim.	PUC 99251 B	In compliance	September 21, 2021 (MV) November 2, 2021 (GCTD) September 16, 2022 (MV) November 9, 2022 (GCTD) October 4, 2023 (MV) November 14, 2023 (GCTD) November 21, 2024 (GCTD) December 11, 2025 (GCTD)
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 definitions of performance measures are consistent with the Public Utilities Code Section 99247.	PUC 99247	In compliance	
The operator does not routinely staff with two or more persons a vehicle for public transportation purposes designed to be operated by one person.	PUC 99264	In compliance	
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 2022/23: +6.44% FY 2023/24: +9.36% FY 2024/25: +2.52% <i>Source: GCTD budget books.</i>



Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
The expenditure of funds received under Article 4 may not exceed 50 percent of the amount required to meet operating, maintenance, and capital and debt service requirements after the deduction of federal funds and amounts allocated under PUC 99314.5 (STA).	PUC 99268	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 2022/23: 20% FY 2023/24: 20% FY 2024/25: 20% <i>Source: TDA fiscal audits; this requirement was waived during the audit period due to AB 149 and SB 125.</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 2022/23: 20% FY 2023/24: 10% FY 2024/25: 10% <i>Source: TDA fiscal audits; this requirement was waived during the audit period due to AB 149 and SB 125.</i>
If the operator has utilized the exemption from the farebox recovery requirement for extension of services, it shall submit a report on the service to the RTPA within 90 days of the end of the first year of implementation.	PUC 99268.8, CCR 6633.8	In compliance	
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	
An operator claiming funds under Article 4.5 (CTSA) is in compliance with PUC 99268.3, 99268.4, 99268.5, or 99268.9, or regional, countywide, or county subarea performance criteria, local match requirements, or fare recovery ratios adopted by the RTPA.	PUC 99275.5	Not applicable	
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	



Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
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	GCTD does not use STA funds for operating purposes. This requirement was waived during the audit period under AB 149 and SB 125.
For an operator qualifying under PUC 99268.1, the funds received from the local transportation fund under Article 4 shall not exceed 50 percent of the amount that is the sum of the operator's operating cost, capital requirements, and debt service requirements less the sum of the operator's revenues from federal grants and the state transit assistance fund. The operator may receive from the local transportation fund up to 100 percent, rather than 50 percent, of the amount representing the operating cost of an extension of its public transportation system if the extension is within the definition of Section 6619.1 and if all the conditions of Section 6633.8 are met.	CCR 6633.1	Not applicable	
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 2023 by Moore & Associates, Inc. for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2022 – included one recommendation:

1. [Ensure VSH and VSM data are correctly reported on the State Controller Financial Transaction Reports.](#)

Discussion: As detailed in the prior audit, 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. Transposing data when entering it into the report interface can result in the wrong data being entered into certain fields. This results in erroneous data being reported to the State Controller, even though the data is collected and recorded appropriately.

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

Progress: 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. All performance data fields were reported using the appropriate data. However, there were still some variances between the State Controller Report and the National Transit Database (NTD) report due to differences in what was reported in each (for example, the Route 23 demonstration project was not included in the NTD report at the direction of the NTD).

Status: Implemented.

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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.

- **Operating cost:** Operating cost as reported to the NTD and State Controller were generally consistent, though with slight variances. Cost reported in the TDA fiscal audits was slightly higher each year, with a variances ranging between 2.2 percent and 2.8 percent.
- **Fare Revenue:** Fare revenue (including both passenger-paid and organization-paid fares) is reported most consistently between TDA fiscal audits reports and State Controller Report. However, in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25, the fare revenues reported to the NTD were lower by one to two percent.
- **Vehicle Service Hours (VSH):** Differences in VSH were primarily due to differences in the FY 2022/23 and FY 2023/24 demand-response and FY 2023/24 fixed-route reporting. For example, Route 23 data was not reported to the NTD at the direction of the NTD.
- **Vehicle Service Miles (VSM):** Differences in VSM were primarily due to differences in the FY 2023/24 fixed-route reporting. For example, Route 23 data was not reported to the NTD at the direction of the NTD.
- **Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees:** With respect to full-time equivalent employees (FTE), GCTD has been reporting an employee headcount as FTE on its State Controller Reports. As a part of this audit, GCTD was able to demonstrate use of the correct methodology, which resulted in a significantly lower number of employees.

Exhibit 5.1 Data Reporting Comparison

Performance Measure	System-Wide		
	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25
Operating Cost (Actual \$)			
<i>TDA fiscal audit</i>	\$32,755,966	\$35,387,390	\$37,168,693
<i>National Transit Database</i>	\$31,504,445	\$34,326,445	\$36,365,400
<i>State Controller Report</i>	\$31,837,718	\$34,420,224	\$36,355,276
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)			
<i>TDA fiscal audit</i>	\$2,295,654	\$2,133,570	\$2,522,558
<i>National Transit Database</i>	\$2,295,655	\$2,100,383	\$2,498,347
<i>State Controller Report</i>	\$2,295,655	\$2,137,566	\$2,523,376
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	226,545	238,875	233,425
<i>National Transit Database</i>	226,242	238,278	233,251
<i>State Controller Report</i>	234,469	260,035	233,261
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	2,728,294	2,925,364	2,866,233
<i>National Transit Database</i>	2,725,175	2,918,687	2,864,263
<i>State Controller Report</i>	2,725,586	3,130,240	2,864,263
Passengers			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	3,043,426	3,645,474	3,689,139
<i>National Transit Database</i>	3,043,328	3,645,475	3,689,139
<i>State Controller Report</i>	3,043,426	3,645,475	3,689,139
Full-Time Equivalent Employees			
<i>State Controller Report</i>	253	260	307

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 6667¹. 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 period²:

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

¹ 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.

² 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.³ 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. Given other revenues may be added to fare revenue for the calculation of the farebox recovery ratio, the Farebox Recovery cited within this section is not necessarily consistent with the farebox recovery ratio used for compliance determination in Chapter 4.

³ 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 GCTD'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. GCTD uses scheduling software to project revenue hours and tracks cancelled service to determine actuals. This 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. GCTD uses scheduling software to project revenue hours and tracks cancelled service to determine actuals. This 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. This data is captured by GFI fareboxes and Ecolane software. GCTD'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 15.4 percent increase during the audit period, and a 30.5 percent net increase across the last six years. Fare revenue (passenger- and organization-paid) decreased in FY 2020/21 before significantly increasing in FY 2021/22 (due to the resumption of fare collection following a lengthy free fare period). During the current audit period, fare revenue decreased in FY 2023/24 but increased during each of the other two years. This resulted in a net 8.8 percent increase during the audit period and a net 6.0 percent increase over six years.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) experienced slight changes throughout the last six years. This resulted in a net 3.1 percent increase during the audit period and a net 2.8 percent increase during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) increased every year with the exceptions of slight decreases in FY 2020/21 and FY 2024/25. This resulted in an overall net increase of 5.1 percent during the audit period and a 9.7 percent increase over the six-year period. Ridership declined significantly in FY 2020/21 due to COVID-19, before increasing every year after. This led to a 21.2 percent net increase during the audit period and a 20.8 percent net increase 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. Due the increased operating costs, cost-related



metrics increased during the audit period. However, operating cost per passenger decreased a net 4.8 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics rose during the audit period, with passengers per VSH increasing 17.6 percent and passengers per VSM increasing 15.3 percent.

Exhibit 6.1 System Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	System-wide					
	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$27,867,776	\$26,706,542	\$31,857,148	\$31,504,445	\$34,326,445	\$36,365,400
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4.2%	19.3%	-1.1%	9.0%	5.9%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$2,356,308	\$324,216	\$2,079,498	\$2,295,655	\$2,100,383	\$2,498,347
<i>Annual Change</i>		-86.2%	541.4%	10.4%	-8.5%	18.9%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	226,839	203,901	226,140	226,242	238,278	233,251
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10.1%	10.9%	0.0%	5.3%	-2.1%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	2,610,830	2,557,412	2,662,866	2,725,175	2,918,687	2,864,263
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.0%	4.1%	2.3%	7.1%	-1.9%
Passengers	3,054,112	1,955,918	2,337,201	3,043,328	3,645,475	3,689,139
<i>Annual Change</i>		-36.0%	19.5%	30.2%	19.8%	1.2%
Employees	239	241	236	253	260	307
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.8%	-2.1%	7.2%	2.8%	18.1%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$122.85	\$130.98	\$140.87	\$139.25	\$144.06	\$155.91
<i>Annual Change</i>		6.6%	7.6%	-1.2%	3.5%	8.2%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$9.12	\$13.65	\$13.63	\$10.35	\$9.42	\$9.86
<i>Annual Change</i>		49.6%	-0.2%	-24.1%	-9.0%	4.7%
Passengers/VSH	13.46	9.59	10.34	13.45	15.30	15.82
<i>Annual Change</i>		-28.8%	7.7%	30.2%	13.7%	3.4%
Passengers/VSM	1.17	0.76	0.88	1.12	1.25	1.29
<i>Annual Change</i>		-34.6%	14.8%	27.2%	11.8%	3.1%
Farebox Recovery	8.5%	1.2%	6.5%	7.3%	6.1%	6.9%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-85.6%	437.7%	11.6%	-16.0%	12.3%
Hours/Employee	949.1	846.1	958.2	894.2	916.5	759.8
<i>Annual Change</i>		-10.9%	13.3%	-6.7%	2.5%	-17.1%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$10.67	\$10.44	\$11.96	\$11.56	\$11.76	\$12.70
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.2%	14.6%	-3.4%	1.7%	8.0%
VSM/VSH	11.51	12.54	11.78	12.05	12.25	12.28
<i>Annual Change</i>		9.0%	-6.1%	2.3%	1.7%	0.3%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.77	\$0.17	\$0.89	\$0.75	\$0.58	\$0.68
<i>Annual Change</i>		-78.5%	436.8%	-15.2%	-23.6%	17.5%

Source: FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from prior audit. FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25 data from NTD reports. FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25 FTE data as reported to the State Controller.



Exhibit 6.2 System Ridership

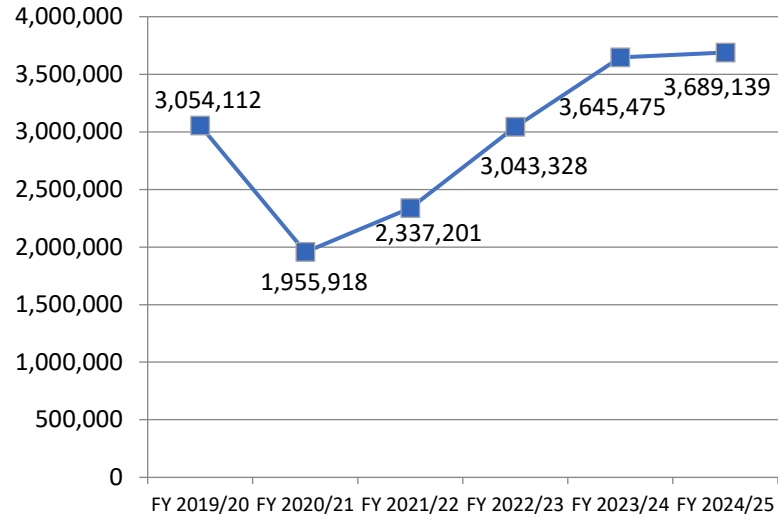


Exhibit 6.3 System Operating Cost/VSH

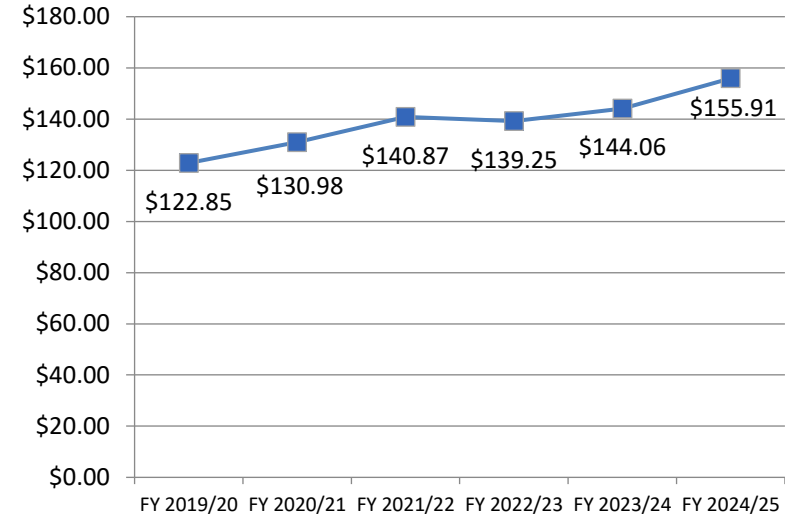


Exhibit 6.4 System Operating Cost/VSM

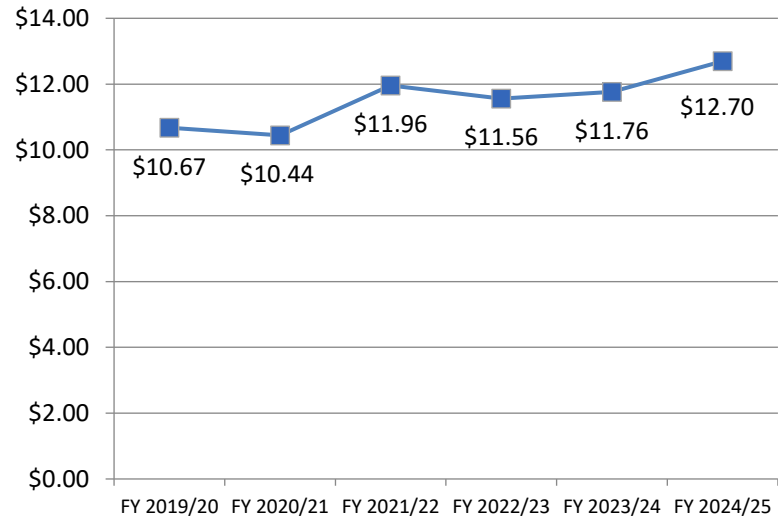


Exhibit 6.5 System VSM/VSH

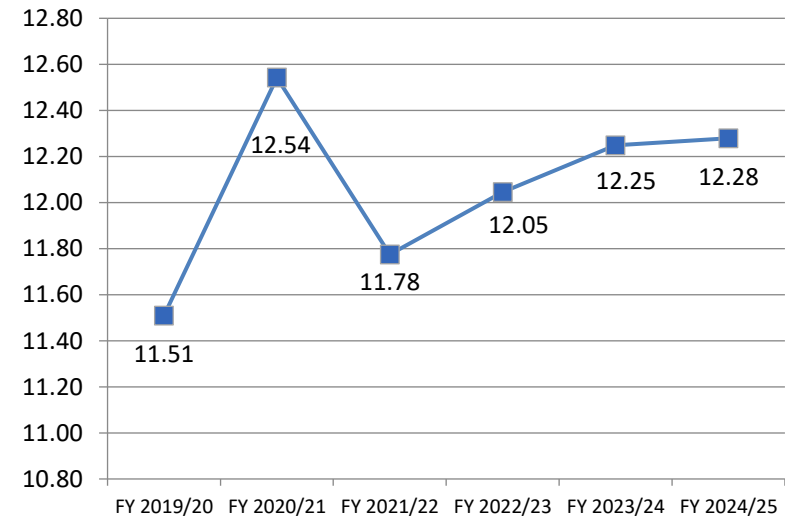


Exhibit 6.6 System Operating Cost/Passenger

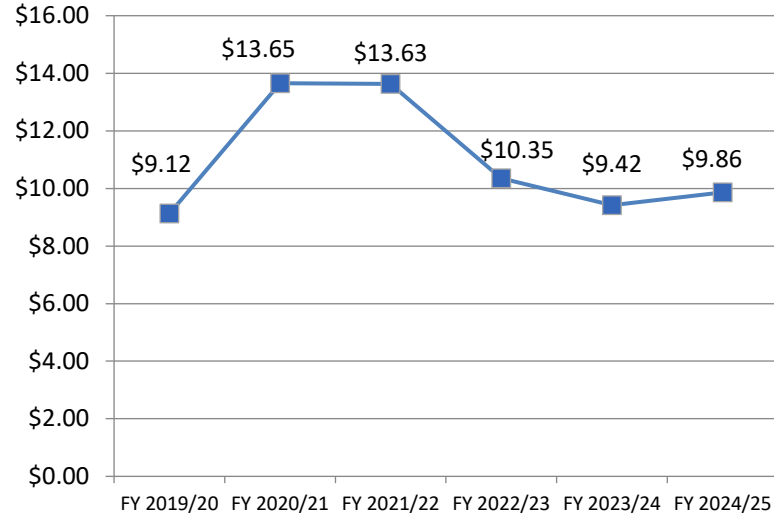


Exhibit 6.7 System Passengers/VSH

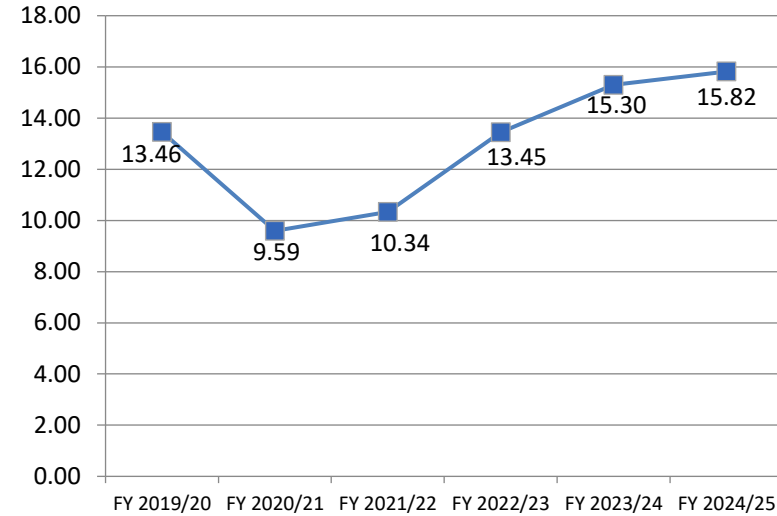


Exhibit 6.8 System Passengers/VSM

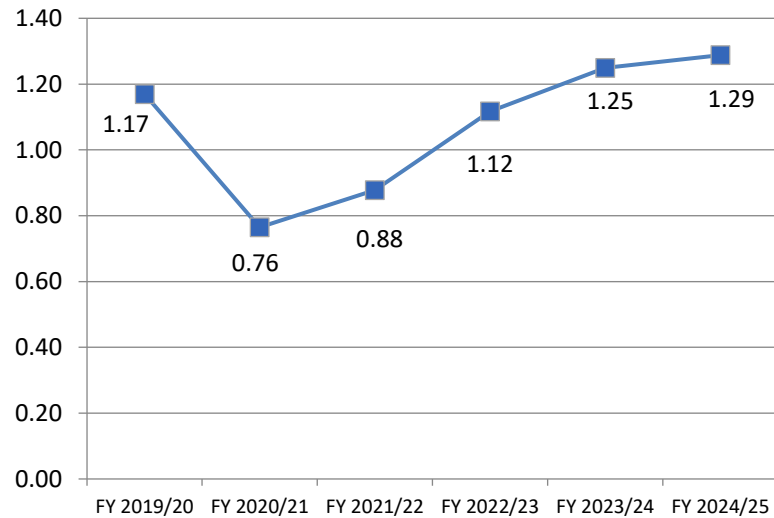


Exhibit 6.9 System VSH/FTE

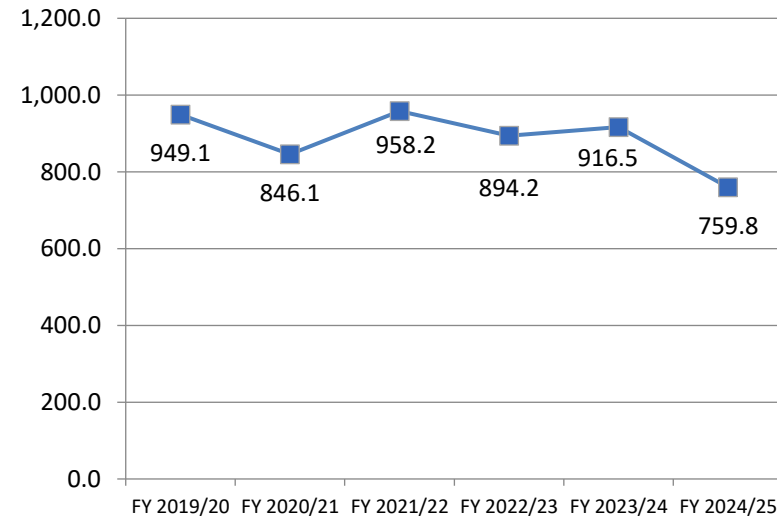


Exhibit 6.10 System Farebox Recovery

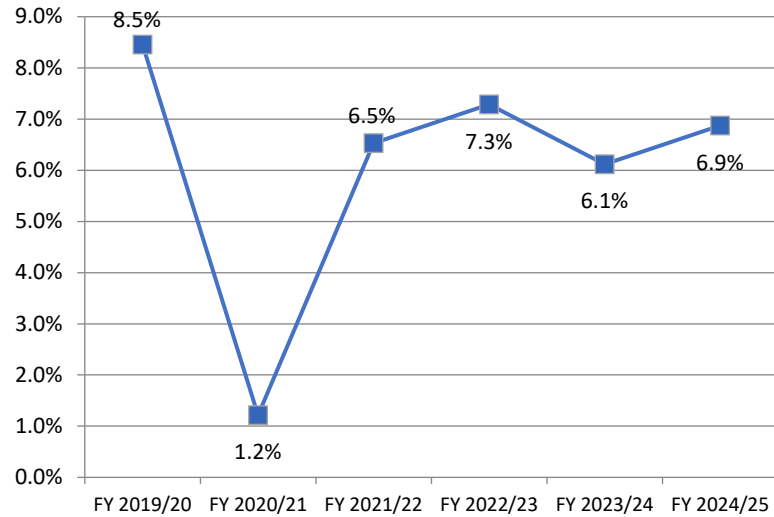
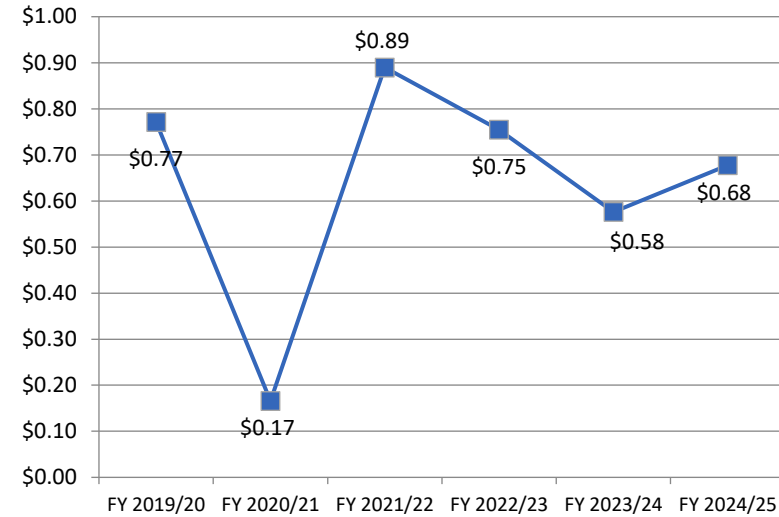


Exhibit 6.11 System Fare/Passenger



Fixed-Route Performance Trends

Fixed-route operating cost experienced a net 8.7 percent increase during the audit period, and a 31.4 percent net increase across the last six years. Fare revenue (passenger- and organization-paid) decreased in FY 2020/21 before significantly increasing in FY 2021/22 (due to the resumption of fare collection following a lengthy free fare period). During the current audit period, fare revenue decreased in FY 2023/24 but increased during each of the other two years. This resulted in a net 2.0 percent increase during the audit period and a net 0.7 percent increase over six years.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) declined every year with the exceptions of FY 2021/22 and FY 2022/23. This resulted in a net 2.8 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 3 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) experienced a net 3.2 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 1.6 percent increase during the six-year period. Ridership declined in FY 2020/21, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic before increasing every year after. This led to a 21.1 percent net increase during the audit period and a 21.1 percent net increase across the six-year period.

Operating cost per passenger declined 10.3 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics increased during the audit period, with passengers per VSH increasing 24.6 percent and passengers per VSM increasing 25.2 percent.



Exhibit 6.12 Fixed-Route Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	Fixed-Route					
	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$23,257,544	\$22,092,950	\$27,030,511	\$28,127,039	\$28,568,092	\$30,564,910
<i>Annual Change</i>		-5.0%	22.3%	4.1%	1.6%	7.0%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$2,138,044	\$279,154	\$1,957,337	\$2,110,092	\$1,798,373	\$2,152,280
<i>Annual Change</i>		-86.9%	601.2%	7.8%	-14.8%	19.7%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	186,904	173,950	184,731	186,565	184,285	181,373
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6.9%	6.2%	1.0%	-1.2%	-1.6%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	1,990,877	2,046,361	2,100,001	2,091,036	2,063,036	2,023,532
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.8%	2.6%	-0.4%	-1.3%	-1.9%
Passengers	2,958,867	1,894,011	2,261,605	2,958,433	3,530,561	3,583,780
<i>Annual Change</i>		-36.0%	19.4%	30.8%	19.3%	1.5%
Employees	207	202	201	192	199	251
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.4%	-0.5%	-4.5%	3.6%	26.1%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$124.44	\$127.01	\$146.32	\$150.76	\$155.02	\$168.52
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.1%	15.2%	3.0%	2.8%	8.7%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$7.86	\$11.66	\$11.95	\$9.51	\$8.09	\$8.53
<i>Annual Change</i>		48.4%	2.5%	-20.5%	-14.9%	5.4%
Passengers/VSH	15.83	10.89	12.24	15.86	19.16	19.76
<i>Annual Change</i>		-31.2%	12.4%	29.5%	20.8%	3.1%
Passengers/VSM	1.49	0.93	1.08	1.41	1.71	1.77
<i>Annual Change</i>		-37.7%	16.4%	31.4%	21.0%	3.5%
Farebox Recovery	9.2%	1.3%	7.2%	7.5%	6.3%	7.0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-86.3%	473.1%	3.6%	-16.1%	11.9%
Hours/Employee	902.9	861.1	919.1	971.7	926.1	722.6
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4.6%	6.7%	5.7%	-4.7%	-22.0%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$11.68	\$10.80	\$12.87	\$13.45	\$13.85	\$15.10
<i>Annual Change</i>		-7.6%	19.2%	4.5%	2.9%	9.1%
VSM/VSH	10.65	11.76	11.37	11.21	11.19	11.16
<i>Annual Change</i>		10.4%	-3.4%	-1.4%	-0.1%	-0.3%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.72	\$0.15	\$0.87	\$0.71	\$0.51	\$0.60
<i>Annual Change</i>		-79.6%	487.2%	-17.6%	-28.6%	17.9%

Source: FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from prior audit. FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25 data from NTD reports. FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25 FTE data as reported to the State Controller.



Exhibit 6.13 Fixed-Route Ridership

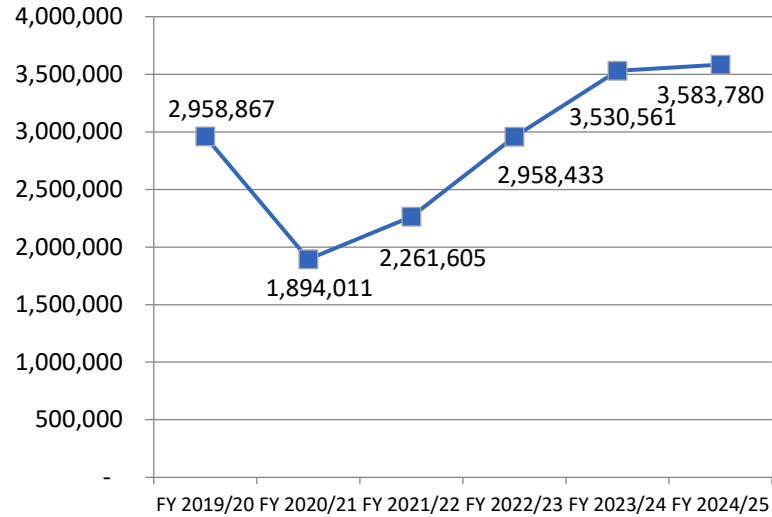


Exhibit 6.14 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/VSH

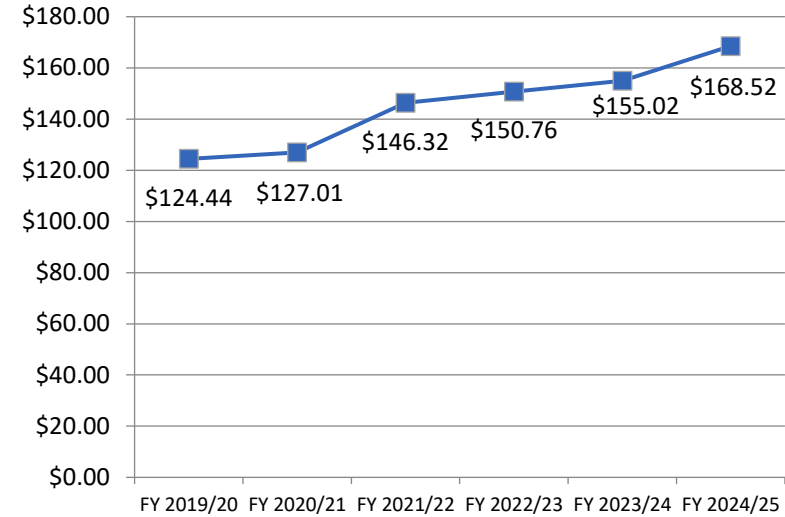


Exhibit 6.15 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/VSM

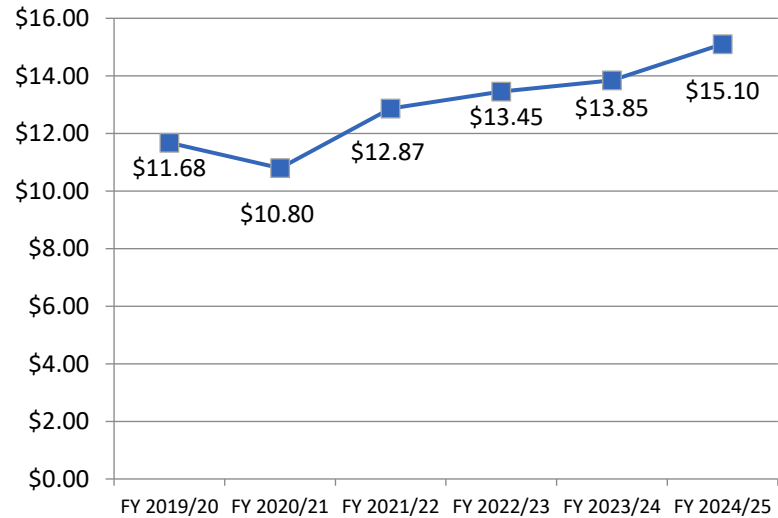


Exhibit 6.16 Fixed-Route VSM/VSH

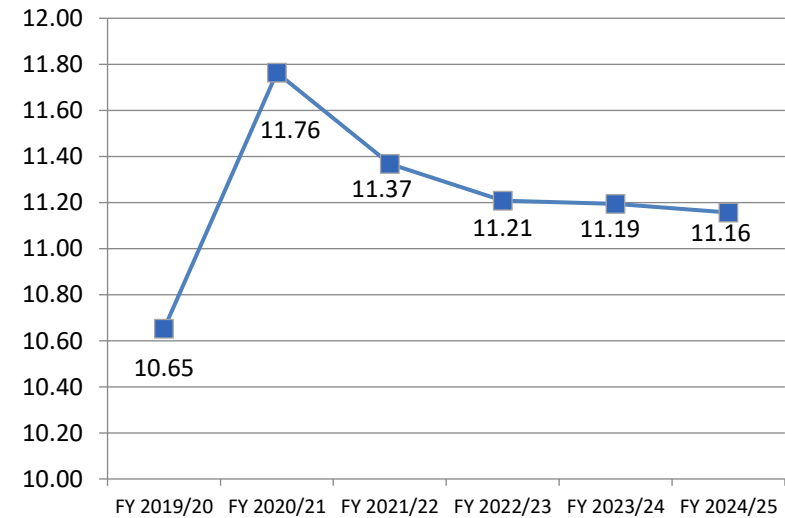


Exhibit 6.17 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/Passenger

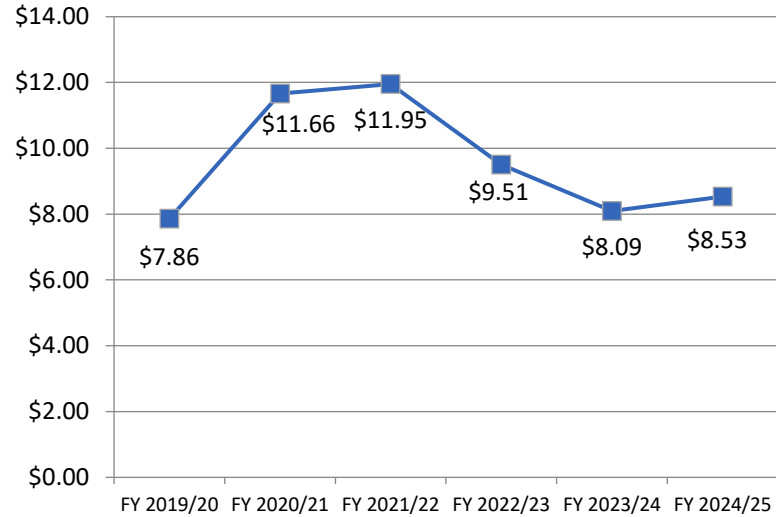


Exhibit 6.18 Fixed-Route Passengers/VSH

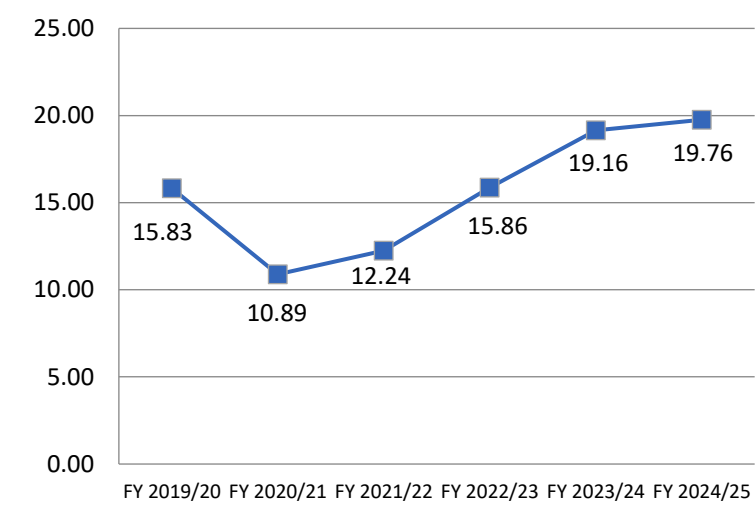


Exhibit 6.19 Fixed-Route Passengers/VSM

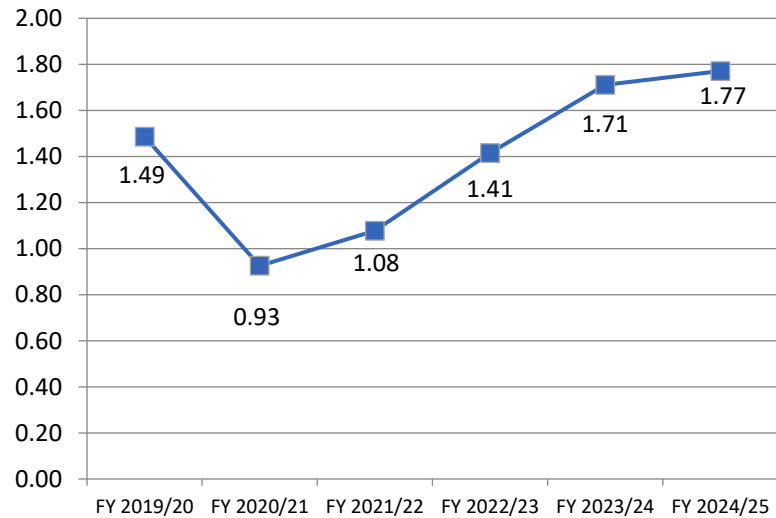


Exhibit 6.20 Fixed-Route VSH/FTE

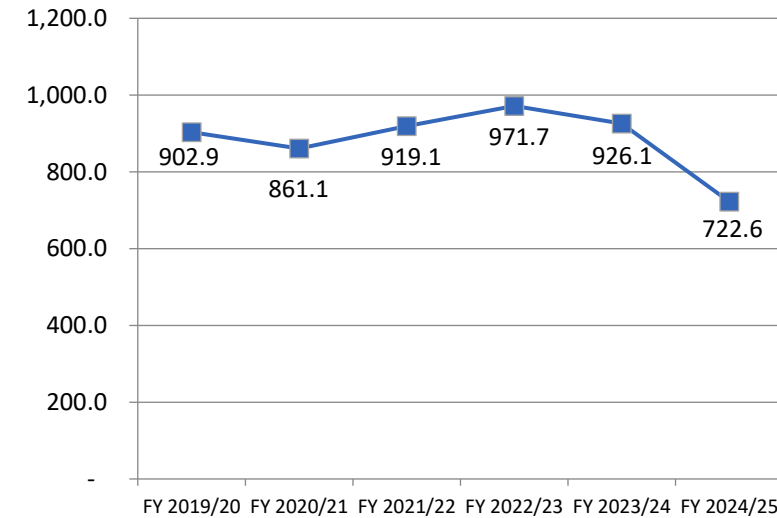


Exhibit 6.21 Fixed-Route Farebox Recovery

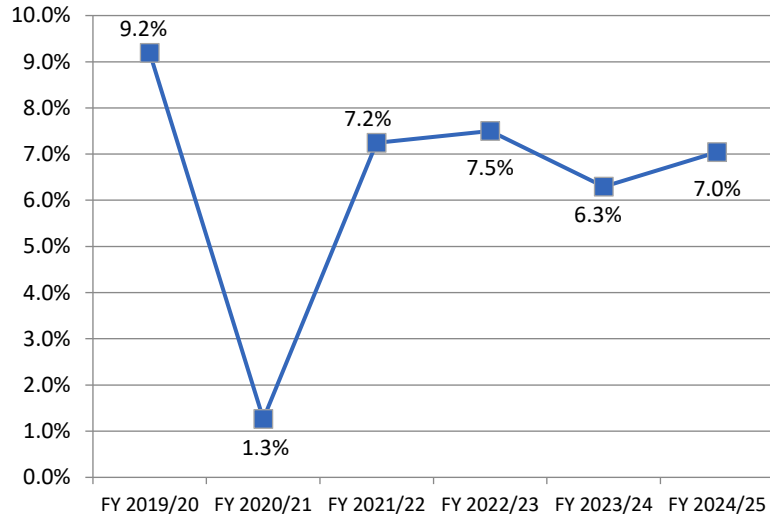
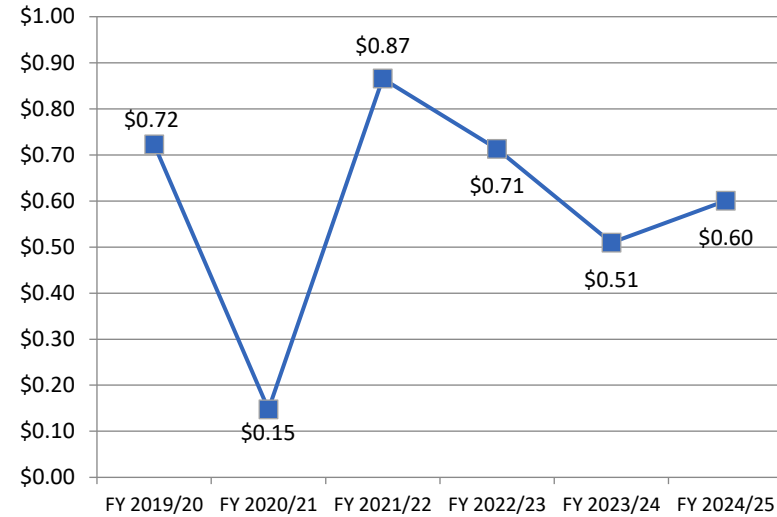


Exhibit 6.22 Fixed-Route Fare/Passenger



Demand-Response Performance Trends

Demand-response operating cost experienced a net 71.7 percent increase during the audit period, and a net 100.2 percent increase across the last six years. Fare revenue (passenger- and organization-paid) experienced a net 86.5 percent increase during the audit period.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) fluctuated year over year resulting in a net 30.8 percent increase during the audit period, and a net 35.6 percent increase during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) experienced a net 32.6 percent increase during the audit period and a net 35.6 percent increase during the six-year period. Ridership experienced a 24.1 percent net increase during the audit period, and a 10.6 percent net increase across the six-year period.

Cost-related metrics rose during the audit period, with operating cost per VSH increasing 31.4 percent and operating cost per passenger increasing 38.4 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics fell during the audit period, with passengers per VSH decreasing 5.1 percent and passengers per VSM decreasing 6.4 percent.



Exhibit 6.23 Demand-Response Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	Demand-Response					
	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$2,896,684	\$2,294,343	\$2,355,210	\$3,377,406	\$5,758,353	\$5,800,490
<i>Annual Change</i>		-20.8%	2.7%	43.4%	70.5%	0.7%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$218,264	\$45,062	\$122,161	\$185,563	\$302,010	\$346,067
<i>Annual Change</i>		-79.4%	171.1%	51.9%	62.8%	14.6%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	39,935	29,951	41,409	39,677	53,993	51,878
<i>Annual Change</i>		-25.0%	38.3%	-4.2%	36.1%	-3.9%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	619,953	511,051	562,865	634,139	855,651	840,731
<i>Annual Change</i>		-17.6%	10.1%	12.7%	34.9%	-1.7%
Passengers	95,245	61,907	75,596	84,895	114,914	105,359
<i>Annual Change</i>		-35.0%	22.1%	12.3%	35.4%	-8.3%
Employees	32	39	35	61	61	56
<i>Annual Change</i>		21.9%	-10.3%	74.3%	0.0%	-8.2%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$72.53	\$76.60	\$56.88	\$85.12	\$106.65	\$111.81
<i>Annual Change</i>		5.6%	-25.8%	49.7%	25.3%	4.8%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$30.41	\$37.06	\$31.16	\$39.78	\$50.11	\$55.05
<i>Annual Change</i>		21.9%	-15.9%	27.7%	26.0%	9.9%
Passengers/VSH	2.39	2.07	1.83	2.14	2.13	2.03
<i>Annual Change</i>		-13.3%	-11.7%	17.2%	-0.5%	-4.6%
Passengers/VSM	0.15	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13
<i>Annual Change</i>		-21.2%	10.9%	-0.3%	0.3%	-6.7%
Farebox Recovery	7.5%	2.0%	5.2%	5.5%	5.2%	6.0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		-73.9%	164.1%	5.9%	-4.5%	13.8%
Hours/Employee	1248.0	768.0	1183.1	650.4	885.1	926.4
<i>Annual Change</i>		-38.5%	54.1%	-45.0%	36.1%	4.7%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$4.67	\$4.49	\$4.18	\$5.33	\$6.73	\$6.90
<i>Annual Change</i>		-3.9%	-6.8%	27.3%	26.4%	2.5%
VSM/VSH	15.52	17.06	13.59	15.98	15.85	16.21
<i>Annual Change</i>		9.9%	-20.3%	17.6%	-0.8%	2.3%
Fare/Passenger	\$2.29	\$0.73	\$1.62	\$2.19	\$2.63	\$3.28
<i>Annual Change</i>		-68.2%	122.0%	35.3%	20.2%	25.0%

Source: FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from prior audit. FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25 data from NTD reports. FY 2022/23 – FY 2024/25 FTE data as reported to the State Controller.



Exhibit 6.24 Demand-Response Ridership

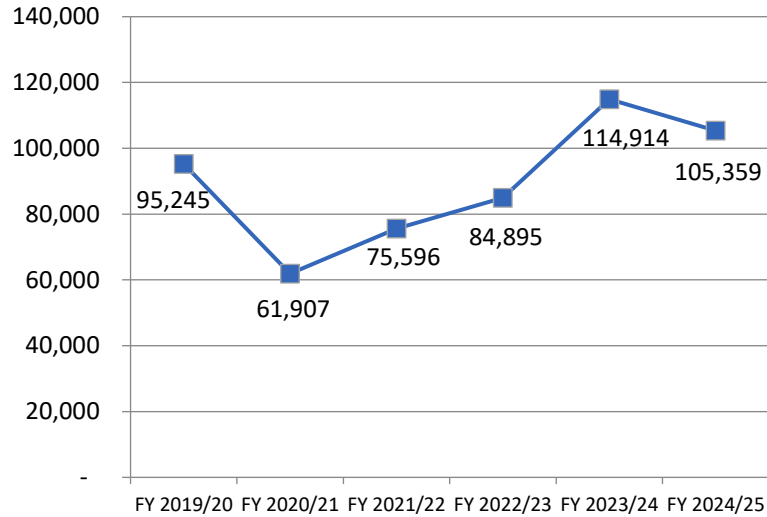


Exhibit 6.25 Demand-Response Operating Cost/VSH

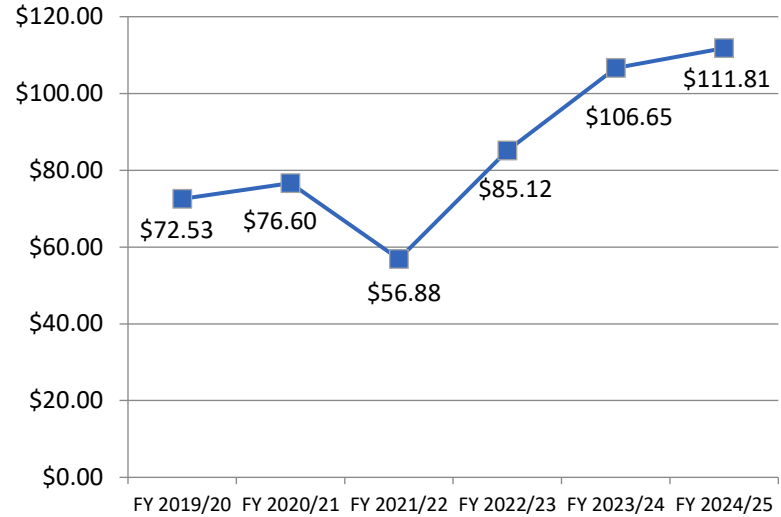


Exhibit 6.26 Demand-Response Operating Cost/VSM

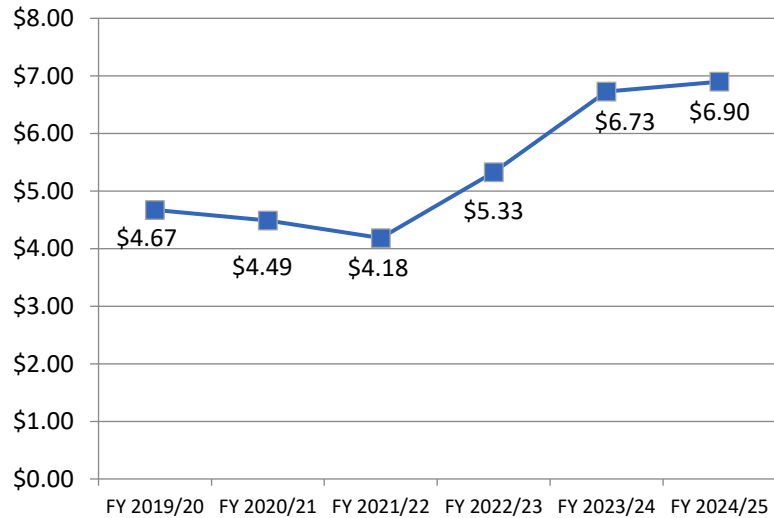


Exhibit 6.27 Demand-Response VSM/VSH

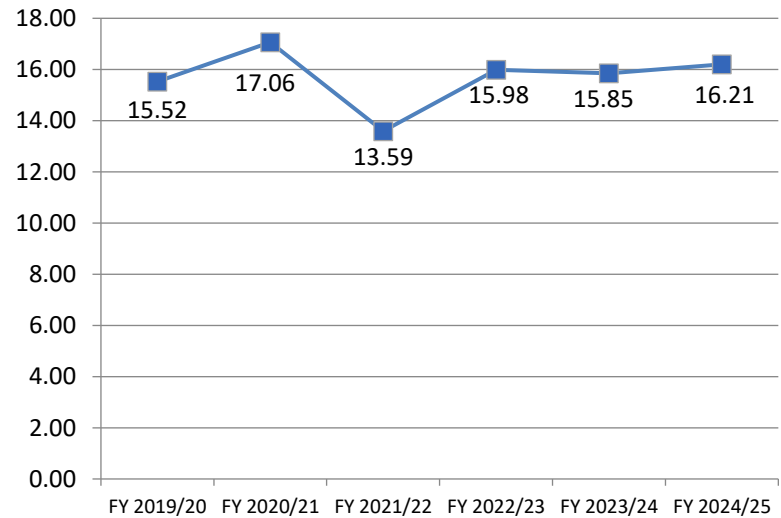


Exhibit 6.28 Demand-Response Operating Cost/Passenger

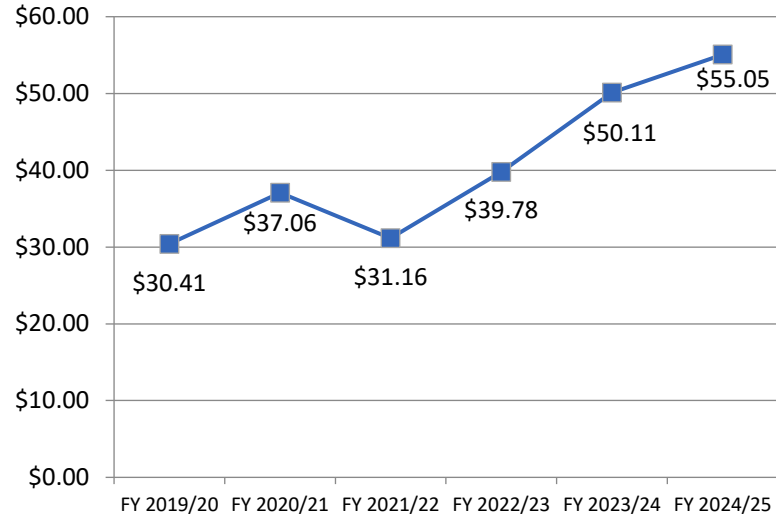


Exhibit 6.29 Demand-Response Passengers/VSH

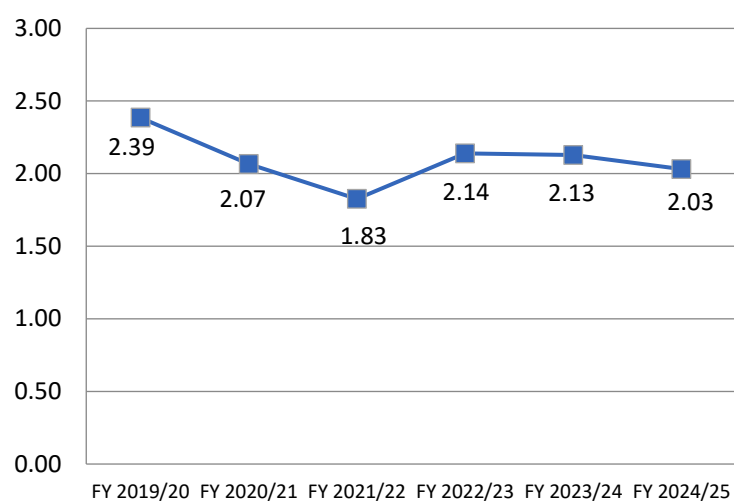


Exhibit 6.30 Demand-Response Passengers/VSM

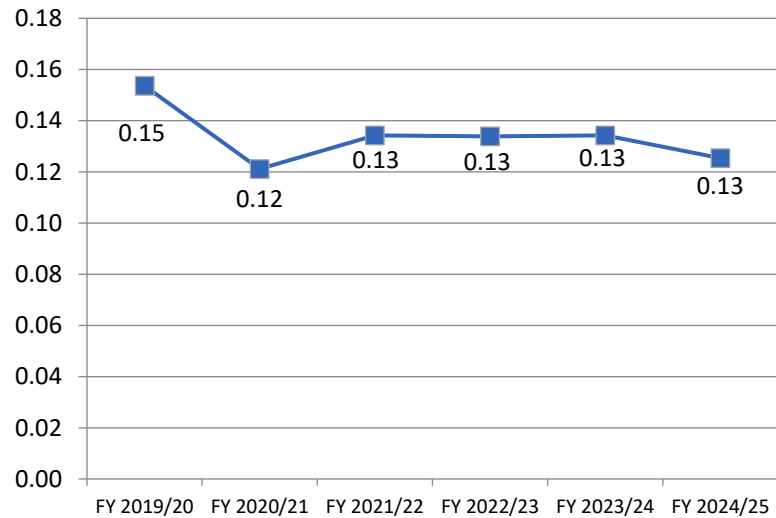


Exhibit 6.31 Demand-Response VSH/FTE

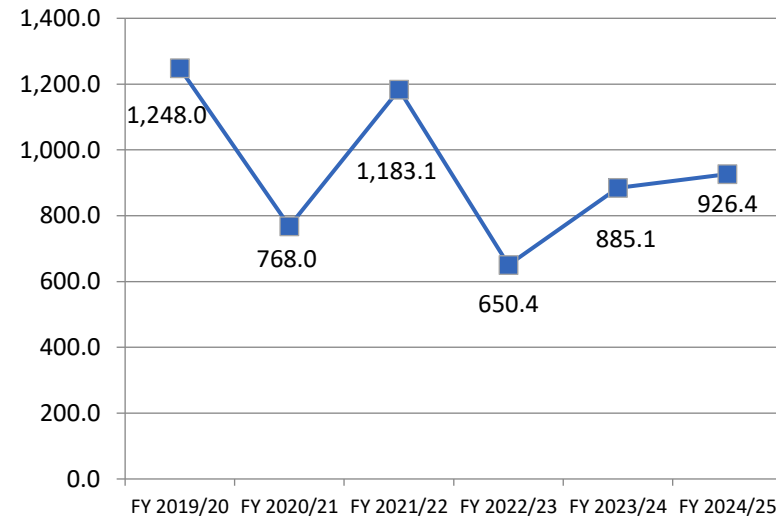


Exhibit 6.32 Demand-Response Farebox Recovery

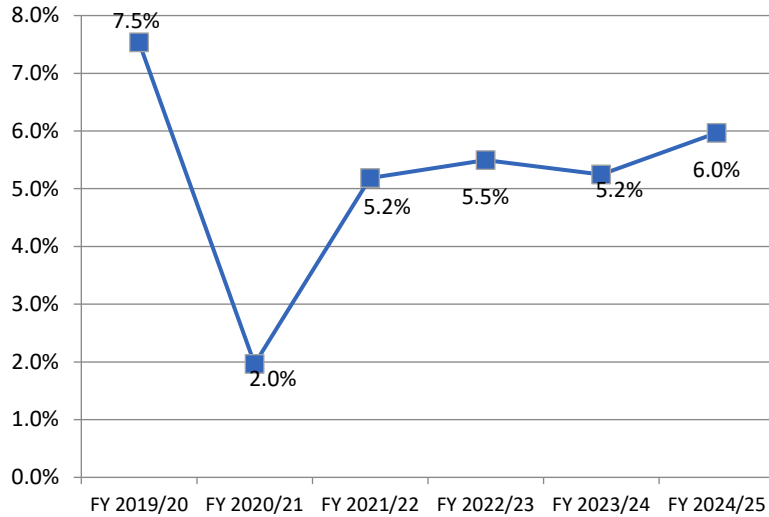
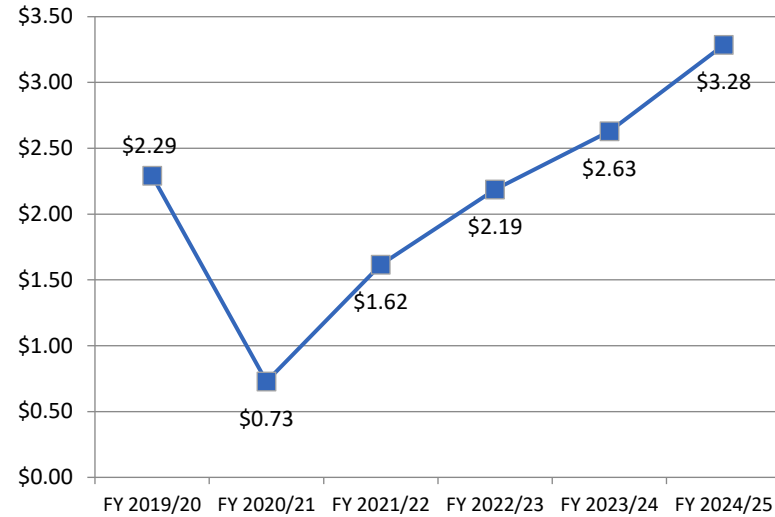


Exhibit 6.33 Demand-Response Fare/Passenger



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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 GCTD’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 agency:

- General management and organization;
- Service planning;
- Administration;
- Marketing and public information;
- Scheduling, dispatch, and operations;
- Personnel management and training; and
- 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. Providing nearly four million passenger trips a year, 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.

Exhibit 7.1 Gold Coast Transit fixed routes

Route #	Area Served	Service Days	Service Hours
1A/1B	Port Hueneme – Oxnard Transit Center (OTC)	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	4:50 a.m. – 9:47 p.m. 6:05 a.m. – 9:43 p.m.
2	Colonia – Downtown Oxnard	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	5:21 a.m. – 7:46 p.m. 7:25 a.m. – 7:29 p.m.
3	J Street – Centerpoint Mall – Lemonwood	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	5:35 a.m. – 7:03 p.m. 7:11 a.m. – 7:07 p.m.
4A	Gonzales Road – North Oxnard	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:03 a.m. – 8:23 p.m. 6:10 a.m. – 8:13 p.m.
4B	St. John’s – North Oxnard	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:10 a.m. – 8:36 p.m. 6:10 a.m. – 8:31 p.m.
5	Hemlock – Seabridge – Wooley	Monday – Sunday	6:50 a.m. – 7:54 p.m.
6	Oxnard – Ventura	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	4:50 a.m. – 10:12 p.m. 5:15 a.m. – 10:02 p.m.
7	Oxnard College – Centerpoint Mall	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:55 a.m. – 6:56 p.m. 10:14 a.m. – 5:44 p.m.
8	OTC – Oxnard College – Centerpoint Mall	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:35 a.m. – 7:56 p.m. 7:45 a.m. – 7:47 p.m.
10	Pacific View Mall – Telegraph – Saticoy	Monday – Sunday	6:10 a.m. – 8:57 p.m.
11	Pacific View Mall – Telephone – Wells Center	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:00 a.m. – 9:22 p.m. 6:00 a.m. – 8:37 p.m.
15	Esplanade – El Rio – St. John’s Medical Center	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	8:25 a.m. – 6:34 p.m. 9:40 a.m. – 5:36 p.m.



Route #	Area Served	Service Days	Service Hours
16	Downtown Ojai – Pacific View Mall	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	5:10 a.m. – 8:50 p.m. 6:05 a.m. – 8:50 p.m.
17	Esplanade – St. John’s – Oxnard College	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:36 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. 7:15 a.m. – 8:29 p.m.
18	School Trippers	Monday – Friday	Varies
19	Oxnard Transit Center – 5 th – Gonzales Road	Monday – Friday	5:55 a.m. – 7:55 p.m.
21	Pacific View Mall – Victoria Avenue – C Street Transfer Center	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	5:40 a.m. – 8:20 p.m. 7:05 a.m. – 8:29 p.m.
23	Oxnard College – Naval Base Ventura County – Esplanade	Monday – Friday Saturday – Sunday	6:50 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. 6:40 a.m. – 8:15 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. Premium Direct Connect Service to Camarillo is offered to ACCESS passengers who prefer to avoid a transfer for a premium fare rate.

For those who do not meet the eligibility requirements for GO ACCESS but need healthcare-related transportation, the GO ACCESS Zones service offers a more limited service for those with a temporary disability. Zones services is provided between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. daily, with at least a one-day advance reservation required. Five zones are offered, extending from Port Hueneme to Ojai. One-way fares range from \$4.00 to \$16.00 are based on the number of zones crossed.

GCTD 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. In July 2024, GCTD introduced Sunrise Safe Rides to provide general public Dial-A-Ride service to anyone over the age of 16 from 4:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. as a reliable and safe way to get to work and other destinations in the early morning hours.

Tickets and passes may be purchased at five locations through the service area, including the GCTD main office and the Ojai and Port Hueneme city halls. Contactless payment is available through Token Transit as well as the VCBuspass regional pass. VCBuspass users can use the Zone 1 31-day pass or the stored value feature on all GCTD fixed routes.

Exhibit 7.2 Fixed-Route Fare Structure

Fare Category	Single ride	Day Pass	15-Ride Pass	31-Day Pass
Adult	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$25.00	\$65.00
Youth	Free	Free	Free	Free
Reduced (Seniors 65+, Disabled, and Veterans)	\$1.00	\$2.00	\$12.00	\$32.00
Seniors 75+	Free			
College Ride Program	Free			
Intra-Agency Transfers	Free			

Exhibit 7.3 Demand-Response Fare Structure

Fare Category	Fare
Cash fare, one-way (ADA-certified or senior)	\$4.00
Senior Nutrition	Free
Premium Direct Connect	\$8.00
Personal Care Assistant (PCA)	Free
Companion/Guest	\$4.00
Late Night Safe Rides (General)	\$5.00
Late Night Safe Rides (ADA-certified or senior)	\$4.00
Sunrise Safe Rides (General)	\$5.00
Sunrise Safe Rides (ADA-certified or senior)	\$4.00

Exhibit 7.4 GO ACCESS Zones Fare Structure

Number of Zones	Fare
One zone	\$4.00
Two zones	\$8.00
Three zones	\$12.00
Four zones	\$16.00

General Management and Organization

GCTD’s five member jurisdictions are the cities of Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and 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 persons with disabilities and seniors. In June 2007, SCAT’s Joint Powers Agreement, which by then also 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.

During the audit period, an Ad Hoc committee was formed to improve the use of the transit facility. At the direction of the Board, in January 2024, GCTD decided to transition from a contracted model to in-house operations for its demand-response services. Fixed-route services have always been directly operated, while demand-response services had been contracted out. The demand-response services fully transitioned in October 2024.

GCTD’s Management Team is comprised of a General Manager, Chief Financial Officer/Assistant General Manager, 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 to review current and upcoming issues as well as information from the Board. Performance tracking includes ridership, passengers per hour, cost per hour, on-time performance, customer concerns, safety and incident reports, budget monitoring, and racking progress toward strategic goals to be shared with the Board every quarter. GCTD uses several systems – including Track-it, Avail, and UTA – to track performance.

The Gold Coast Transit District considers itself well structured. The organizational structure is appropriate for a small- to mid-sized transit agency, with clear accountability. GCTD has budgeted for a position that would enhance ADA compliance and grants management; however, this position has not been filled. The role is intended to provided dedicated oversight to the ADA service that was brought in-house. It is currently being filled by multiple staffers. GCTD may make changes to budgeted but unfilled positions once it undergoes an agency-wide compliance oversight project with an ADA specialist. It is also exploring opportunities for developing a dedicated grants position to provide more support.

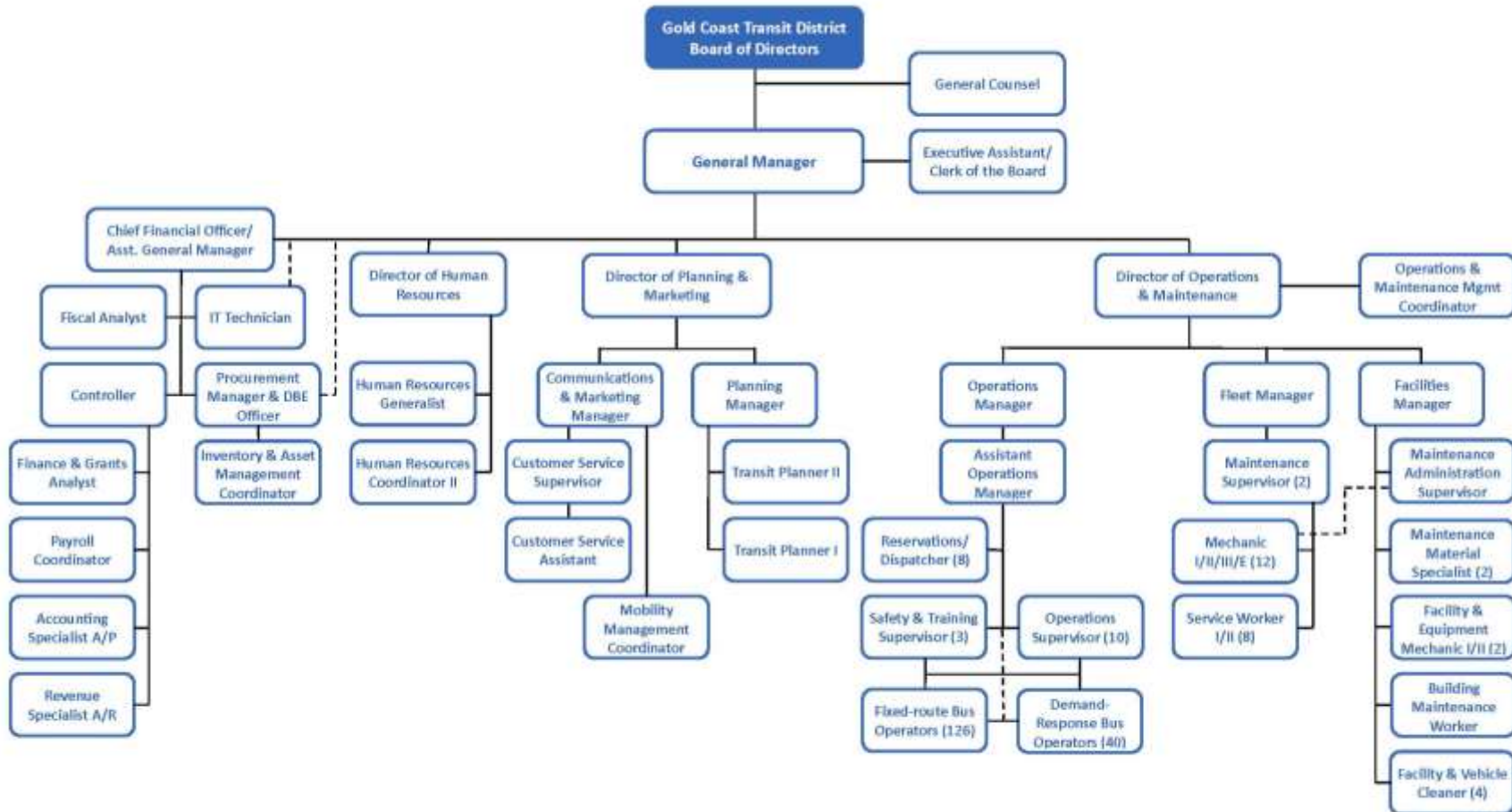
GCTD’s organizational chart is illustrated in Exhibit 7.5.

Service changes are implemented every six months in January and July. These changes typically include schedule changes and minor adjustments. In January 2023, the Youth Ride Free program was introduced all for all Ventura County services. In July 2024, GCTD introduced new fare changes. The standard adult base fare was adjusted from \$1.50 to \$2.00 and reduced fare was increased from \$0.75 to \$1.00 per ride. These increases were applied to all fare categories across GCTD’s service offerings and follow a decade of unchanged fare rates.

GCTD collects data as part of its evaluation of new programs or services. Management notes improvements in on-time performance on adjusted routes. While ridership increased during the audit period, GCTD finds it difficult to determine causality between the implemented changes and their observations.

As mentioned above, GCTD brought its demand-response service fully in-house in October 2024. This has provided the agency with a much clearer picture regarding service delivery, enabling it to both respond to issues more quickly and realize cost efficiencies through reducing overhead and better utilization of the facility.

Exhibit 7.5 Organizational Chart (2025)



The Board is very engaged and has expressed particular interest in zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) transition planning. GCTD has secured funding for the construction of a hydrogen fueling station and the purchase of five fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs). The buses have been ordered, and the fueling station is currently in the design phase. However, the project is on hiatus due to the cancellation of the ARCHES funding program that would have produced hydrogen in California. Without in-state hydrogen production, fuel would have to be purchased and shipped in from Nevada at a much higher cost. GCTD is working with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to request a temporary exemption to the Innovative Clean Transit mandate to give it time to develop – in conjunction with the GCTD Board – an alternative transition plan.

The Board is also focused on good fiscal stewardship. Staff support this focus through regular reporting on budgets and capital programs, offering policy recommendations where needed, and incorporating Board direction into service planning and work programs.

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 General Manager, Chief Financial Officer/Assistant General Manager, Director of Planning and Marketing, and the Planning Manager act as intergovernmental liaisons.

Key accomplishments during the audit period include the successful transition of demand-response services in-house, including onboarding over 40 employees and effectively integrating operations across departments. Financial oversight has improved through regular monthly departmental budget reviews, supported by detailed budget-to-actual reporting that enables timely decision-making. GCTD has significantly expanded its community presence in recent years through dedicated staff roles, increased participation in community events and meetings, and enhanced public engagement efforts that build trust and improve communication. Most notably, GCTD appreciates the tenure, loyalty, and commitment of its staff.

Service Planning

GCTD adopted its most recent Short Range Transit Plan in Fall 2024. Implementation of that plan began in Fall 2025. The first step is a schedule adjustment and realignment of the service's two busiest routes, the outreach for which started in early 2026. This will serve as the basis for other schedule and routing changes across the next three years, with an ultimate goal of a more cohesive system.

The SRTP was the result of extensive community outreach conducted across multiple years. GCTD looks forward to being able to address some of the biggest requests from the community, including more frequent, more direct, and faster service. The challenge is that doing so will require some trade-offs, which will impact some riders. The agency is cognizant that all changes will require an education component to remind the community why the changes are being made as well as their overall impact.

While GCTD staff provided comments on the recently completed County-wide Short Range Transit Plan, that document primarily cited GCTD's 2024 SRTP with respect to planning for the Gold Coast Transit District. Overall, GCTD was supportive of many of the regional goals included in that effort, including better coordination and technology projects.

Service metrics are measured against standards and reported to the GCTD Technical Advisory Committee and Board on a quarterly basis. The Strategic Plan outlines overarching goals and objectives, while the Service and Performance Standards establish specific route performance metrics. The majority of its services meet established standards; however, achieving the 90 percent on-time performance goal has proven challenging, as have productivity standards on some routes. While GCTD is considering revisions to some of the standards, it continues to look for ways to improve routes that fall below. The agency is also considering changes to the demand-response standards, now that demand-response services are directly operated.

During the audit period, in addition to the SRTP, GCTD has also prepared a Mobility Needs Assessment for the Nyeland Acres community, along with its annual service plans, biannual service changes, and Strategic Plan. 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. GCTD does not have a citizens advisory board, but does participate in VCTC's Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee. The agency conducts surveys annually, with the most recent one completed in late 2025. Staff also hold and attend community events, conduct pop-up events, and solicit feedback through social media.

Administration

The budgeting process, led by the Chief Financial Officer, 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. The draft assumptions go to the Board in April, with the draft budget in May and the final in June. The budget is reviewed monthly by the Finance department via a budget report from the department heads, who actively monitor expenditures, then reported to the Board. GCTD typically pursues any kind of additional revenues it can identify. Over the past two years, budgeting has been quite accurate with little budget variance. Financial data is stored and managed through Avail/FleetNet.

Budget adjustments that do not impact policy or change overall fund balances are typically approved administratively by the Chief Financial Officer and the General Manager, while those affecting the overall budget or agency policy require Board of Directors approval. Any additional funds beyond the approved budget or that impact agency policy must be submitted to and approved by the Board.

Grants management is shared between the Director of Planning & Marketing, Planning Manager, Finance & Grants Analyst, and Chief Financial Officer. GCTD applies for grants that are consistent with Board-

approved planning documents. These include formula-based grants, which must be applied for annually, as well as competitive grants, of which the majority are for vehicle replacements and guided by the Fleet Management Plan. The Planning Manager is responsible for submitting grant applications, preparing quarterly Milestone Progress Reports, and closing out grants. GCTD may consider adding a dedicated grants position as it continues to review organizational needs in the wake of bringing the demand-response service in-house.

The Human Resources department is responsible for risk management. 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. The Director of Human Resources serves as the Chief Safety Officer and 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's PTASP serves as its disaster preparedness/emergency response plan. The agency also worked closely with VCTC in preparing its Transportation Emergency Preparedness Plan (TEPP) and is part of the TransMAC agreement. GCTD has worked with VCTC to streamline communications via a single radio network that can be used to coordinate fleets during emergencies.

District staff utilize the OpenGov online platform to access all contracts, including the ability to enter vendor performance. Designated project managers provide oversight on a weekly or monthly basis.

The Director of Operations & Maintenance and Facilities Manager are responsible for overseeing facility maintenance. All GCTD passenger facilities (including bus stops) are owned and maintained by individual GCTD member jurisdictions, though Planning staff help to coordinate where improvements or maintenance are needed.

Payroll processes are designed to provide oversight. Bus operator hours are tracked through PERDIS and uploaded to Paycom (GCTD's payroll and human resources database system). All other employees submit timesheets directly through Paycom. Both the employee and the department director approve timecards on a biweekly basis. Currently, 98 percent of employees utilize direct deposit.

GCTD's Revenue Specialist handles accounts receivable, while the Accounts Payable Specialist handles accounts payable. Before a payment can be processed, receiving documents must be signed and forwarded to Finance, where accounts payable staff verify them against the invoice and purchase order.

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. Any contract over \$150,000 must be approved by the GCTD Board. Directors are authorized to make purchases up to \$50,000 with the approval of the General Manager. GCTD frequently piggybacks onto purchases made by larger agencies, uses state contracts when available, and participates in the CalACT purchasing cooperative.

Marketing and Public Information

The Director of Planning and Marketing is responsible for marketing activities. The base marketing plan revolves around the 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, such as identifying where additional service awareness is needed.

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 GCTD heavily promoted the Youth Ride Free program, resulting in record ridership increases. The campaign was promoted across all platforms as well as through outreach events and printed ads in the bus books. Social media is used to share service updates, rider alerts, marketing, community events, and general transit information, as well as engage with the public and respond to questions.

GCTD staff maintains regular communication with schools, especially regarding the regional Youth Ride Free program launched in 2022. Prior to this program, school districts purchased bulk fare media. GCTD continues to work with the schools to coordinate service levels and schedules with bell times. It 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 5:00 p.m. Calls received outside those hours go to voicemail, which receive a call back within 24 hours. Demand-response calls are taken seven days per week. Calls related to service issues, complaints, commendations, accessibility concerns, lost and found, and general customer assistance are logged for tracking and follow-up purposes. Reservations calls are recorded for training purposes. 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. The target timeframe for resolving complaints is one to three business days. The majority are addressed within this timeframe, though particularly complex issues that require additional coordination and follow-up may require more time to resolve.

GCTD uses the Token Transit app and the GOVCbus app for mobile ticketing options. Token Transit allows riders to purchase and store their GCTD mobile passes on their phones, activate before boarding, and offers fare capping. GOVCbus utilizes Umo technology for real-time bus tracking, trip planning, rider alerts, and route information for all Ventura County transit operators. GCTD also publishes its real-time GTFS feed for use by third-party platforms such as Google Maps, Moovit, and Transit.

Scheduling, Dispatch, and Operations

GCTD staff are represented by two unions. Demand-response Dispatch, Finance administrative support staff, and supervisors are represented by Teamsters Local #186. Drivers, mechanics, service workers, and customer service representatives are represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local #721.

At the time of the site visit, GCTD employed 169 full-time drivers (130 fixed-route and 39 demand-response). One additional driver was needed for demand-response, but the fixed-route drivers would be fully staffed once new hire training was completed. GCTD is potentially interested in considering part-

time drivers, as there are several drivers who have requested to reduce their working hours. However, this would require a change to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the union, which only includes full-time drivers.

Drivers bid on assignments twice annually (January and July), with awards based on seniority. All drivers are certified to drive all vehicles in the fleet. Planned absences (such as vacation) are offered to extra board drivers first, then to other drivers as an overtime shift. Call-outs are offered to extra board drivers on call for that shift, then to other drivers who have signed up for overtime. One-hour notice is required for call-outs. Supervisors and some managers are also licensed to drive.

Vehicles are randomly rotated through routes and assignments by dispatch. Maintenance prepares a hold list that is disseminated to operations staff daily and communicates vehicle availability throughout the day.

GCTD has used GFI validating fareboxes since 2013. Most fareboxes are GFI Genfare, though some are GFI FastFare. Service workers probe buses and drop the vaults twice per day. 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 two times per week, with two employees always present.

GCTD partners with the Arc of Ventura County to count the cash. Arc clients with a job coach count and bag the cash, which is placed in the anteroom for pick-up by an armored car service. This arrangement gives Arc clients valuable experience while GCTD gets a quicker cash count. Armored car 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. Finance staff verify the count with the bank and reconcile it with GFI. Revenue is reported monthly. Vaults are always emptied on the last day of the month to ensure clean reporting.

When the demand-response service was contracted out, the contractor used to drive the cash to the bank. Now drivers drop the cash into a safe, where it is collected by Operations management and placed in the vault room. It is now counted along with the fixed-route cash by the Arc counters and taken to the bank via armored car.

Non-cash fare media and bulk fare media are sold at the Customer Service Center, Checks Cashed Island Plaza in Oxnard, Checks Cashed Mission Plaza in Ventura, Ojai City Hall, and Port Hueneme City Hall. 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

Human Resources department handles all recruitment in-house and recruits on an as-needed basis. Drivers are recruited via NEOGOV, the GCTD website, Indeed, social media, roadside marketing banners, and word of mouth. Some recruitments may be posted to third-party websites as well depending upon the position. NEOGOV and word of mouth tend to be the most effective recruitment methods.

GCTD motivates its employees through a combination of events and incentive programs. Annual and quarterly events include holiday celebrations, lunch and learn opportunities, hall of fame, safety awards, million mile events, and employee of the quarter acknowledgement. Incentives include an attendance bonus, tuition reimbursement, and compensatory time off. Administrative and supervisory staff also receive performance-based annual merit raises above the standard cost-of-living increase. 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.

Operations Safety & Training Supervisors and the Human Resources team are responsible for all driver training. Recruits are not required to have a commercial license at the time of hire. 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. GCTD contracts with the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District for a certified DMV tester to assist in commercial license testing. Refresher training is provided on an as-needed basis.

The Director of Human Resources oversees GCTD's safety program. Ongoing training includes monthly safety meetings. These meetings help drivers meet the requirements of their Verification of Transit Training (VTT) hours as well as feature topics such as OSHA training; anti-harassment, discrimination, bullying, and retaliation training; defensive driving; and workplace violence prevention. Supervisors in the field investigate all issues, regardless of who reported them. All supervisors are Transportation Safety Institute (TSI)-trained.

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 Avail/FleetNet software to track and forecast service intervals and produce work orders for preventive maintenance. Avail/FleetNet 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, major engine repairs under warranty, and any warranty or complicated diagnostics are typically sent out. GCTD is authorized to perform minor Cummins warranty repairs, but major repairs and Allison and Ford warranty repairs must go to the dealers. Supervisors review all work orders before the Material Specialists review and close them. The Administration Supervisor reviews all closed work orders for any missed items including warranty items.

The current facility is equipped with eight bays and an appropriate number of lifts. There is ample space for administrative offices and on-site records storage. No improvements are needed at this time.

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, and are tracked using Avail/FleetNet. Parts inventories and orders are adjusted to take into account the long lead times for some parts as well as usage. Reports are run regularly to identify parts that are low in stock or out of stock. There have been some challenges in getting parts for the older buses, with some items being obsolete and others with long back orders.

Staffing and retention present ongoing challenges in fleet maintenance. The department is currently short one mechanic but is otherwise adequately staffed, with management typically able to fill vacancies within one to three months. However, the staffing gap, combined with PTO and delays in parts availability, has led to a modest backlog in repairs and preventive maintenance. GCTD strives to maintain a nine-to-one vehicle-to-mechanic ratio. There are also three supervisors who can perform repairs.

The GCTD fleet includes a combination of buses, cutaway buses, and vans. Exhibit 7.6 details the GCTD fleet.

Exhibit 7.6 Gold Coast Transit District Revenue Fleet

Quantity	Year	Vehicle Type	PAX + WC	Service
5	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
3	2021	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
9	2022	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
4	2023	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
5	2024	40' Gillig Low Floor	38 + 2	Fixed-route
10	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
2	2022	BraunAbility/Crysler Van	4/4 + 1	Demand-response
2	2023	BraunAbility/Crysler Van	4/4 + 1	Demand-response
2	2024	Hyundai Ioniq5	2 + 2	Demand-response
5	2025	MBLT/Ford/Transit	5/1 + 2	Demand-response

Chapter 8 | Findings and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Gold Coast Transit District is found to be in compliance with the Transportation Development Act (TDA). One recommendation intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the operator is detailed below.

Findings

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

Program Recommendations

Recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the operator into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA as well as address non-compliance-related issues, challenges, or opportunities observed during the site visit and functional review. The following recommendation is presented for GCTD.

Recommendation 1: Continue to work with the GCTD Board to identify an alternative zero-emission vehicle transition plan.

Discussion: While GCTD had settled on hydrogen as its primary path toward zero emissions, the withdrawal of \$12.6 billion in federal funding from the Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy Systems (ARCHES) initiative in 2025 significantly impacted the development of a robust green hydrogen generation network in California. Without this funding, there is no real plan to source hydrogen at an affordable rate, resulting in a much higher cost of fuel. GCTD was one of the 13 original transit agencies to sign onto the ARCHES agreement.

Contributing factors: In 2022, GCTD was awarded more than \$12 million for the purchase of five hydrogen fuel cell electric buses and to initiate design and construction of a hydrogen fueling station able to support up to 50 vehicles. For the past several years, the agency has focused on hydrogen as its path forward. The five buses were ordered and were set to be delivered in 2027. The fueling station design is currently approximately 50 percent complete. While several auxiliary vehicles and three demand-response vehicles have been converted to battery-electric, the remainder of the existing fleet is CNG.

Recommended Action: GCTD should continue to work with its Board to determine what its path forward should be. As it stands, with no reliable source of affordable hydrogen identified, continuing with the development of a hydrogen fleet and fueling station may not be feasible. However, with the ICT mandate still requiring the transition to zero-emission vehicles, other strategies will need to be identified. This is not a challenge that is likely to be resolved quickly, even during the next audit period. Determination of whether this recommendation has been implemented during the next audit should take into account what actions have been taken to move this issue along within the agency, with its Board, and with CARB.

GCTD has already requested an exemption from CARB, which was approved. As a result the agency does not have to purchase zero-emission vehicles until 2029. It plans to update its transition plan, but will likely complete the update closer to 2028 so it can utilize the most updated cost information.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Anticipated Cost: Unknown.

Exhibit 8.1 Audit Recommendations

	Recommendations	Importance	Timeline
1	Continue to work with the GCTD Board to identify an alternative zero-emission vehicle transition plan.	High	Ongoing