DRAFT 5/16/25

MEMO

Date: May 16th, 2025

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To: Sarah Ingle, RIPTA

Subject: TASK 3: PEER AND BEST PRACTICES REVIEW - DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the RIPTA Operational Efficiency Study, a Peer Agency and Best Practices Review was conducted consisting of desktop research and interviews with five agencies comparable to RIPTA in size, transit services offered, and service area coverage. The goal of the Peer Agency and Best Practices review is to understand how RIPTA's peers are navigating changes in ridership and customer expectations, funding uncertainties, and workforce challenges.

Across the transit industry nationwide, agencies have experienced similar challenges as they try to rebuild ridership back to pre-pandemic levels. According to American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) latest Ridership Policy Brief[1], bus ridership has recovered to 86 percent of 2019 levels, with Rail modes recovered to 72 percent of 2019 levels. Demand-response services have recovered to 93 percent. While ridership levels rebound, agencies are actively looking at ways to deliver better service, more efficiently while also navigating workforce and funding challenges.

The Peer Agency research and interviews yielded the following major themes and takeaways:

- To respond to changes in ridership levels and patterns, agencies interviewed cites the importance of reviewing current service levels including conducting comprehensive service analysis to identify and eliminate underperforming routes, shifting resources to higher performing routes and implementing microtransit in replacement of underperforming routes. Agencies shared that microtransit service should be carefully planned by considering the size of service area, cost per trip and the connection fixed route services. Peer agencies also identified an increase in cost for paratransit operations and stated that they are actively looking at ways to be more efficient including reviewing how eligibility and verification is performed, utilizing microtransit when possible, and investing in scheduling software to maximize the number of riders per trip.
- Many agencies are facing funding challenges due to expiring COVID funding, unstable or flat funding and rising costs due to inflation. As a result, agencies are looking to optimize their internal operations through technology and process improvements, as well as generating additional revenue through increased advertising, third party service contracts and the sale of station naming rights.
- Workforce recruitment and retention was identified as a major challenge for agencies across the board with agencies implementing a variety of strategies including offering higher wages, same day hiring, CDL training, attendance bonuses and more schedule flexibility through part-time work and compressed schedules.

[1] New APTA Reports Show Strong Industry Growth | Passenger Transport

Preliminary Draft for Review Only - Not a public record pursuant to RI Gen. Laws 38-2-2(4)(K).
Pre-Decisional/For Deliberative Discussion Only - Not a public record pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws 38-2-2(4)E).

Additional key themes, findings and takeaways are further explored in the following sections of the memo.

HIGH-LEVEL AGENCY COMPARISON

Table 1 lists the comparator transit agencies WSP interviewed for this peer agency analysis. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows National Transit Database agency statistics for all agencies as well as RIPTA's rank in each category relative to the rest of the sample.

Table 1: Comparator Transit Agencies

Agency	Abbreviation	City/Metro Area
Hampton Roads Transit	HRT	Norfolk, VA
Capital District Transportation Authority	CDTA	Albany, NY
Delaware Transit Corporation	DART	Delaware
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	KCATA	Kansas City, MO/KS
Regional Transit Service	RTS	Rochester, NY

PEER AGENCY SELECTION METHODOLOGY

Through the lens of RIPTA's stated goals, the project team developed a list of peer transit agencies comparable to RIPTA in size, transit services offered, and service area coverage. RIPTA was compared with the top performing similar transit agencies and a list of potential peers was presented for RIPTA's consideration and approval. Metrics featuring service area population, passenger miles traveled, unlinked passenger trips, vehicle revenue miles, and vehicles revenue hours (see Table 2).

Table 2: Peer Agency Comparison

	Service Area Population	Service Area Sq Miles	Annual Passenger Miles Traveled (Bus)	Annual Passenger Trips (Bus)	Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles (Bus)	Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours (Bus)
RIPTA	**1,048,319**	**1,436**	**46,337,486**	**11,040,120**	**9,322,856**	**538,795**
HRT (Norfolk, VA)	1,150,833	438	28,852,135	5,814,456	9,766,038	770,244
CDTA (Albany)	628,952	393	50,106,789	13,311,539	8,742,022	690,795
DART (Delaware)	1,018,396	1,948	39,408,751	6,818,411	8,864,097	546,132
KCATA (Kansas City)	621,956	459	36,800,284	10,841,740	5,603,453	448,592
RTS (Rochester)	674,800	298	24,382,975	8,761,940	4,498,030	411,978

Source: National Transit Database (2023 Annual Agency Profiles)

PEER AGENCY INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The WSP Project team interviewed five peer transit agencies identified in the agency comparison tables above (see Table 1). The interview questions focused on three main categories: Operations and Service Delivery, Funding Mechanisms and Revenue and Innovative Service Delivery. The interview questions can be found in the Appendix.

OPERATIONS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Ridership

As observed across the country, the rise of remote work has decreased transit ridership and shifted travel patterns. The agencies interviewed all experienced this, and pandemic-related ridership decreases were a common challenge. For three out of five agencies, ridership continues to be below pre-pandemic levels. Two agencies have ridership above pre-pandemic levels, and the reasons they cite for the increase vary. In one case the increase is partly attributed to the elimination of fares, which continues to this day. That agency is currently navigating the potential political impacts of bringing back fare collection. At the other agency, ridership growth has been linked to service area and service expansion, including the implementation of BRT projects.

To respond to changes in ridership levels and patterns, agencies interviewed adopted some common approaches:

- Comprehensive service analyses
- Elimination of underperforming fixed-route services
- Replacement of fixed-route services with microtransit

Two of the agencies interviewed noted that their initial response to the effects of the pandemic was to conduct a comprehensive analysis and system redesign.

Another common strategy was the implementation of microtransit to replace underperforming fixed-route service. Microtransit can be a more efficient way to provide service in areas that are not well suited for fixed routes. As a by-product of microtransit implementation, agencies recovered some fixed-route capacity that in some cases has been redeployed to improve service frequency in denser areas.

In broad strokes, one agency's redesign improved service frequency by implementing eight routes operating on 15-minute frequencies, with the remaining fixed route services at a standard of 30-minute frequencies. The agency also operates three crosstown routes, with remaining gaps supplemented by microtransit service zones. Similarly, another agency responded to changing ridership demands by reducing the number of express routes operated. Citing a lack of demand, community interest and funding, the agency eliminated poorly performing express routes and implemented microtransit services as a means of filling these gaps. Microtransit service is not without its own challenges, as some agencies cited high operating costs of long trips within microtransit zones.

One agency has used analytics to determine the new ridership patterns that have emerged since the pandemic. They expect that adjusting the service to meet the new trends will help reduce route overhead and management costs. For example, they note standard commuter peak patterns no longer exist, rather ridership remains relatively consistent between 6 AM and 6 PM. To meet these demand patterns, the agency provides consistent service within this time window, while reducing frequency significantly outside of it. The agency has also noted the need to re-evaluate ridership trends quarterly to ensure the service meets demand.

Workforce Shortages

Agencies interviewed reported experiencing challenges attracting and retaining drivers, operators, and mechanics. While this challenge existed before the pandemic, it has worsened since. To attract workers, agencies have used various approaches to differing degrees of success, including the following:

- Increasing wages to remain competitive in the labor market: One agency increased wages to a nationally competitive level, attracting workers from out-of-state, but citing a great financial cost
- Offering hiring, retention, and attendance bonuses: Hiring bonuses were seen by some as only a temporary solution, as workers often leave positions after receiving the hiring bonus
- Offering Commercial Driver's License (CDL) prep courses
- Participating in, and holding job fairs
- Holding same-day conditional hiring events
- Increasingly allowing opportunities for more flexible schedule arrangements such as part-time work, compressed schedules, and remote work

Supply Chain Issues

One effect of the pandemic was disruption of global supply chains, which has delayed the procurement of vehicles. Agencies have experienced delays in procuring buses, with one agency noting that this has been particularly true for the paratransit fleet.

Performance Management

Agencies interviewed track performance measures and implement periodic (quarterly or biannual) reviews. One agency has created and been using a branded performance 'scorecard' for over 15 years which sets targets and tracks a variety of metrics. Common metrics tracked across agencies include:

- Ridership, which is considered an important indicator that allows for periodic adjustments to service frequency to best meet demand. One agency noted their recent Automatic Passenger Counters (APC) have allowed them to track ridership effectively and efficiently.
- Ridership by revenue hour, which is considered by one agency to be a very good indicator of productivity. They set different expectations by mode and by time of day.
- On-time performance, which was commonly identified by agencies as a leading indicator that is strongly associated with customer satisfaction.
- Customer experience, which agencies commonly measure through regular customer satisfaction surveys.
- Employee satisfaction, which is also measured through surveys. One agency noted that employee satisfaction survey response rates are sometimes low, and they are considering the introduction of focus groups to increase employee input.

One agency maintains an online performance dashboard that encompasses key metrics for their services by route including on-time performance, ridership estimates, revenue hours, cost per rider, and more. The dashboard is primarily a public transparency tool that can be used to respond to questions related to service performance. The use of a software tool called Swiftly has allowed them to process large amounts of data in a short time and can automatically generate run times based on real-time data.

Another agency cited the desire to track additional performance metrics, including:

- Operating cost recovery or cost per hour
- Paratransit metrics
- High priority destinations and accessibility
- CO_2 emissions per passenger mile
- Ridership per revenue hour
- Passenger injuries and preventable collisions
- On-job staff injury rates
- Absenteeism

Paratransit

The structure and operations of paratransit and demand-response services vary significantly across agencies interviewed. One agency offers paratransit service within ¾ to 1 mile around fixed-route transit service. The agency owns their paratransit fleet, but operations and maintenance are contracted out to a third party, while another company is contracted to determine ADA eligibility.

Another agency operates their paratransit service with a service area that is three times larger than what is required under the ADA. The service area encompasses the required ADA service area as well as an additional three-quarters of a mile around those areas. They noted that this additional level of service, while beneficial to customers, is straining the system by exacerbating limited operator availability. The agency is monitoring the demand for this service while seeking to balance community needs with workforce shortages and higher operating expenses. They cited that their paratransit ridership has decreased since the pandemic and attributed that to having to deny trips to riders outside the ADA required service and lack of available of paratransit drivers to cover the large service area.

A third agency operates paratransit services under a hybrid model, where some operations are outsourced while others remain in-house. The agency is looking for opportunities to improve in-house capacity, as they believe it will be more cost-effective. They are also examining tightening eligibility standards to be more closely aligned with what is required by law.

Another agency, in contrast, has observed a surge in paratransit ridership. The increase is attributed in part to the elimination of fares. To more efficiently manage costs, the agency recently migrated to a new software platform called RideCo that will streamline the logistics of dispatching paratransit service. The agency has seen good results since making the switch. So far, vehicle hours are down, with a projected cost reduction of $4.8 million below 2024 costs.

FUNDING MECHANISMS AND REVENUE

Capital Funding

Agencies cited federal grants and state funds as their main sources of capital funding. Some agencies noted that there are concerns over the uncertainty of federal funding availability during the current federal administration.
One agency identified the following state funding mechanisms:

- Transportation Trust Fund
- Toll revenue
- Motor Vehicle fees
- Gas tax revenue

One agency identified the zero-emission fleet transition as one of the key capital needs in the next five to ten years. They noted that they are trying to conform to a state-mandated timeline for transition and expressed concern about less availability of federal funding to support the transition and supplement the funds set aside by the state.

Operating Funding

Like capital funding, operating expenses are commonly funded through a mix of federal formula grant programs and state funding sources. One agency noted that uncertainty about the availability of federal funds may increase reliance on state funds that may result in diminishing reserves. Many agencies are facing a drop in funding due to expiring pandemic funding and rising costs due to inflation. As a result, many agencies are looking for ways to optimize their system and create additional revenue sources. For instance, one agency noted that they hoped to increase service on the regional routes that typically generate more fare revenue.

By contrast, one agency is funded through a city-wide three-eighths cent sales tax allocated directly to the agency with additional funding coming from a one-half cent tax from member communities, the proportion of which goes to the agency is determined by each of the member communities. Most of the remaining budget comes from the city's general fund, which is variable year by year. The inherent uncertainty of this funding structure makes planning for the future difficult. Additional budgetary pressures are arising from a declining tax base.

With the elimination of fare revenue since the pandemic, coupled with increased costs of paratransit, one agency is facing an estimated loss of $17 million per year. An unintended side effect of free fare service is the additional cost of increased police and security presence (estimated at $4 million per year) to manage safety concerns related to loitering and substance abuse onboard transit vehicles.

For another agency, the farebox is not a reliable source of revenue given that fares are low across all services modes. Additionally, non-fare services account for a significant proportion of the agency's operating costs, including school bus operations which account for $10 million of the total $135 million budget.

One agency has identified a 'mortgage recording tax' as a funding mechanism that is performing well and is expected to grow in the coming years. This tax is a statewide source and comprises 9% of the agency's budget. Counties within the service area jurisdiction remit one-quarter of 1% to be used for public transit. Despite the funding mechanisms available, the agency is still facing budget shortfalls. With an estimated net deficit of $12 million, the shortfalls are currently bridged by the general funds which are expected to last for at least five years. To minimize the shortfalls, they are investigating potential changes to microtransit service to be more financially sustainable and operate at a net positive cost-per-customer.

Fare Policy

Fare policy varies significantly across the agencies interviewed ranging from fare-free, uniform fare for all modes, and differentiated fare types across modes and/or distances. More information on the fare policies of each agency interviewed is available in the Peer Agency Contacts and Profiles section.

One of the agencies last changed its fares in 2008 when it reduced its fares across all services to $1 dollar, except microtransit, which has a flat fare of $3 dollars. While the agency believes it is infeasible to increase fares in the short term, they might consider increasing microtransit fares. They have also pursued subsidy agreements with employers and education institutions in the area whereby the employer funds additional capacity, span of service, or route extensions.

For the agency operating fare-free, the potential return to fares is challenging. As part of their effort to develop a new fare policy, they are considering potential ridership programs for veterans, employers, students, and low-income riders.

Additional Revenue Sources

Advertising is a common source of revenue across agencies interviewed. Advertising revenue can come from vehicle interiors and exteriors, and in some cases, bus shelter advertising. One agency has offered casinos the naming rights to light rail stations as well as the option to buy advertising space on light rail vehicle wraps.

Agencies noted that while advertising revenue is stable, it is a small portion of all revenue and other stable revenue sources are needed. One agency is looking at new ways to generate sustainable funding by adopting a regional or county-wide approach that would help alleviate some of the lost tax base in the downtown area. Another agency spoke about having a third-party agreement where there is a tolling project whose revenues are dedicated to improving transit in that corridor. The state gave them a decades long concession to operate the tunnel and use the collected toll revenue for transit. Another novel approach for developing a new sustainable funding source is one agency's pursuit of "universal access agreements," which are a partnership model where employers pay an annual fee to the agency which enables employees (and students, in the case of universities) to access all transit services in the network.

Agencies are also investigating revenue sources linked to special events or one-time vehicle purchases. One agency incorporates special events as part of their annual service planning process. In coordination with their member communities, they calculate the number of hours needed to service the events and incorporate the cost into the draft budget. Subsequently, the agency can bill the event hours to the relevant member community. Another novel approach is one agency's pursuit of "universal access agreements", a partnership model where employers pay an annual fee to the agency which enables employees (and students, in the case of universities) to access all transit services in the network. One agency noted that they use the Transportation Planning Organization-managed CMAQ funding to buy buses.

Insurance

One of the agencies interviewed mentioned being self-insured through an umbrella policy with a $1.5 million deductible per incident. Despite a very good safety record, this agency has experienced rate increases, due in part to a small number of high-cost incidents. Despite this, the agency did not have any issues receiving quotes via a brokerage service.

INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Flexible Service Models and First and Last Mile Connections

A common strategy to boost ridership and eliminate operating inefficiencies has been the implementation of microtransit services. Generally, agencies characterized microtransit deployments as being successful, showing sustained high levels of ridership. One agency has plans to expand its microtransit zones and is adding more weekend services for service industry workers.

However, one agency noted that microtransit fares, which mirror fixed-route fares, have posed some challenges. The agency is now examining strategies to offset the higher costs of operating microtransit. One of these strategies is increasing fares for microtransit services, another would seek to improve efficiency by implementing virtual bus stops instead of curb-to-curb pickup and drop off. In virtual bus stops, riders are directed to a specific location for pickup and drop-off. Another approach being considered is to alter the layout of the microtransit zones to reduce the number of long-distance trips within a microtransit zone. For example, the agency is considering reducing the zone sizes around college areas, and offering microtransit services in the immediate area, with other commuter services between the college area and other areas in the region.

Another agency similarly noted the need to reconfigure certain features of their microtransit service, including moving away from curb-to-curb pickup and drop off, and altering microtransit zones to prioritize connections to the fixed-route system.

One of the agencies interviewed has made significant efforts to enhance modal connections for pedestrians, bicycle users, and other micromobility options by collaborating with the DOT on sidewalk and bike network improvements, participating in the advisory pedestrian council, and equipping buses with bike racks. They have also installed bike repair stations at some transit centers and designated bus lanes as bike lanes. The agency is exploring partnerships with Uber and Lyft to manage peak demand times for their app-driven microtransit on-demand services. Microtransit vehicles are ADA accessible and can connect users to fixed routes. The agency encourages microtransit use to reduce reliance on paratransit services. The agency has also implemented a variety of amenities that are aimed at improving customer experience, including onboard screens with both advertising and public information, real-time information and fare payments via a mobile app, and digital displays at major bus stops. They have also added bus lanes and bump-outs at shelters to improve safety and enhance the overall transit experience.

Economic Development

One of the agencies interviewed has a regional economic development team that brings in fees. As a quasi-governmental agency, it has the capacity to fund development and speed up the development process.

Another agency has supported transit-oriented development (TOD) around one transit station and is working with the DOT on transportation improvement districts to coordinate transportation improvements with developers.

New Technology

Of the agencies interviewed, one notes that agencies should not be afraid of new technology. Their adoption of data processing and analysis tools, such as Swiftly, has allowed the agency to quickly and efficiently manage scheduling, ridership, and operations. Another tool called Hop Through is a ridership trend analysis tool that has direct access to GTFS feeds and APC data. The software uses this data to create suggestions related to ridership trends and monetary savings. Finally, Transit, a popular trip planning application, helps operators identify and address issues in real-time through a crowdsourced mechanism allowing users to report problems so agencies can respond immediately and can generate bulletins to customers.

Additional Insights

At the end of the interview, agency staff were given the opportunity to discuss additional topics of their choosing. One agency emphasized the value of predictive maintenance to address potential issues as soon as possible. They also recommend considering other strategies for operator recruitment and retention, such a mentoring program.

Another agency discussed their focus on finding efficiencies wherever possible. One such example is the agency's practice of arranging for interlining routes. The agency is seeking new ways to conduct driver reliefs so that there is not a strain on equipment availability for revenue service. While typical driver relief involves a bus coming back to a hub with a new bus put into service to replace it, there are potential operational deficiencies associated with this practice. The agency is investigating the feasibility of relief vehicles, transporting drivers to and from the relief location, which would be better for overall service and operations. A reduction in overall necessary bus procurement would be replaced by likely additional need for cars or vans to conduct these shuttle operations, though at a much lower cost. Funding for this type of procurement is likely less competitive, making potential funding easier. The agency is running a pilot program to demonstrate the feasibility of this relief method and is looking to expand the program further.

The agency also highlighted the importance of creating guidelines for requested service changes and communicating directly with community partners regarding requests for additional service or service modifications and the best strategies to serve their communities. The service request guidelines helped to provide standards to allow the agency to respond fairly and consistently to requests for service, and avoid requests that would create inefficiencies.

PEER AGENCY CONTACTS AND PROFILES

INTERVIEW CONTACTS

The following agencies participated in the peer agency interview:

Agency	Agency Contact	Interview Date
HRT (Hampton Roads Transit) HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT	Ray Amoruso, Chief Planning & Development Officer Kim Wolcott, Chief Human Resource Office	Tuesday, May 13th
RTS (Regional Transit Service) RTS	Christopher Dobson, Chief Operating Officer	Tuesday, May 13th
KCATA (Kansas City Area Transportation Authority) KCATA	Tyler Means, Chief Mobility Strategy Officer AJ Farris, Planning and Scheduling Manager	Friday, May 9th
Delaware Transit Corp. (DART) DART Delaware Transit Corporation	John Sisson, Chief Executive Officer	Wednesday, May 7th
CDTA (Capital District Transit Authority) CDTA	Michael Williams, Director of Planning Ethan Warren, Senior Planner	Friday, May 16th

HRT (HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT)

NTD Data

Metric	HRT Data
Per Capita Spending on Transit	$82
Admin Cost per Service Hour	$25
Advertising Revenue per Service Hour	$0.89
Passenger Trips per Service Hour	8
Service Hours per 10,000 Passenger Trips	1,325
Cost per Service Hour	$119
Total Compensation per Hour for Bus Operations	$44
Fare Revenue per Trip	$1.12
Farebox Recovery	7%

Agency Profile

Category	Summary
Services	Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) is the regional public transit provider for Virginia's Hampton Roads metropolitan area, including the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Hampton, Newport News, Williamsburg, and the town of Smithfield. It currently serves a 369-square-mile service area. HRT provides a comprehensive range of public transportation services across the Hampton Roads region, including bus service, paratransit, light rail (The Tide), ferry service (Elizabeth River Ferry), microtransit, (OnDemand pilot program), and trolley service (VB Wave). Bus service is comprised of 71 routes broken out into five groupings: Southside (39 routes), VB Wave (4), Peninsula (15), Peninsula Commuter (5), and 757 Express (7). Services run every day with 15-minute frequency during peak hours. The Tide light rail runs 7.4 miles in Norfolk from Eastern Virginia Medical School through downtown Norfolk to Newtown Road near the city's eastern boundary. The Tide currently runs 15-minute frequencies serving its 11 stations between Fort Norfolk/EVMC Station & Newtown Road Station. Most stations are served with at least one HRT bus route. HRT provides ADA Paratransit service and is available within ¾ of a mile of regularly scheduled bus routes. Certification and reservations are required. Finally, the ferry operates every 30 minutes, with additional 15-minute service at peak times on weekends
Ridership (FY 2023)	Annual ridership for 2024 totaled 9.7 million trips. In 2024, HRT ridership peaked in August at 915,000 driven largely by transit bus usage, which accounted for 776,000 riders. Light rail also saw high usage that month with 74,000 riders. Ferry ridership shows a seasonal trend – trips peaked at around 40,000 riders in June, while ridership outside of those months does not exceed 20,000. Paratransit services remained relatively stable, ranging from 30,000 to 40,000 riders each month over the course of the year. Overall, transit buses remained the dominant mode of transportation, consistently carrying over 600,000 riders each month.
Fleet	The HRT fleet inventory consists of 345 vehicles, including 329 diesel buses, 10 trolley-style buses, and six battery electric buses. The fleet also includes nine light rail rolling stock, three paddle wheel ferries and 33 paratransit vans. HRT also leases an additional 54 paratransit vans from contractors

Category	Summary
	to meet service requirements. As of Summer 2024, free Wi-Fi is available on every bus, trolley, light rail car and ferry.
Workforce	Hampton Roads Transit envisions itself as a progressive mobility agency that fosters prosperity throughout the region by emphasizing collaboration and teamwork. Its mission is to connect the communities of Hampton Roads through transportation solutions that are reliable, safe, efficient, and sustainable. Guided by its core values—Safety, Customer Service, Workforce Success, and Fiscal Responsibility—HRT is committed to delivering high-quality transit services while supporting its employees and managing resources responsibly. HRT and its mission are supported by over 1,200 employees.
Fares Offered (Base)	All Bus, ferry, and light rail service is $2 per trip. Free fares are available to certified paratransit users, and children aged 17 and below. Further, discounted fares of $1 per trip are available to senior citizens, Medicare cardholders, and people with disabilities.
Other	HRT executes the Traffix Transportation demand management program that encourages people to use forms of transportation other than single occupancy cars. Traffix oversees and promotes regional commuter initiatives, including carpooling and remote work by reaching out to and collaborating with area employers.

RTS (REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE)

NTD Data

Metric	RTS Data
Per Capita Spending on Transit	$145
Admin Cost per Service Hour	$39
Advertising Revenue per Service Hour	$1.05
Passenger Trips per Service Hour	21
Service Hours per 10,000 Passenger Trips	470
Cost per Service Hour	$192
Total Compensation per Hour for Bus Operations	$85
Fare Revenue per Trip	$1.74
Farebox Recovery	19%

Agency Profile

Category	Summary
Services	RTS is operated by the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) and provides public transit across Monroe and seven surrounding counties in New York. Services include fixed-route buses, paratransit (RTS Access), RTS On Demand in suburban zones, and commuter and rural routes through subsidiaries like RTS Livingston, RTS Wayne, and others. RTS provides service to the surrounding counties of Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne and Wyoming, including service into Avon, Victor, Lyons, and Le Roy. Overall, RTS Connect (Monroe County) serves 33 routes, Neighborhood Direct Service provides 100 routes. Another 40 routes are served outside of Monroe County. Finally, there are seven On Demand Zones where curb-to-curb services may be called. RTS was 92% on-time in the eight-county region in 2022. RTS was 93% on-time in Monroe County, slightly more than the region overall.
Ridership (FY 2023)	In 2024, annual ridership hit 11.1 million, with average weekday ridership totaling 38,400. Most routes are within Monroe County, highlighting its pivotal role in the area's transit network.
Fleet	RTS is comprised of 308 revenue vehicles, and operates a mixed fleet of diesel, diesel-electric hybrid, and battery-electric buses. The fleet includes standard buses and vans, with ongoing efforts to modernize and electrify.
Workforce	The RGRTA is guided by a 16-member board of commissioners. Today, the agency employs nearly 1,000 people to support its operations. This includes operators, maintenance staff, administrative personnel, and support teams across its 11 subsidiaries.
Fares Offered (Base)	The base fare is $1 for RTS Connect (local fixed-route service). A reduced fare of $0.50 is available for seniors, people with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders. Children under five ride free and RTS On Demand is $1 per ride.
Other	RTS Transit Center in downtown Rochester serves as the central hub for the system. RTS On Demand zones offer flexible, app-based service in suburban areas. RTS buses are also equipped with bike racks, allowing riders to combine cycling with public transit. RTS is actively transitioning to a cleaner fleet, including battery-electric buses, and has a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

KCATA (KANSAS CITY AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY)

KCATA

NTD Data

Metric	KCATA Data
Per Capita Spending on Transit	$67
Admin Cost per Service Hour	$48
Advertising Revenue per Service Hour	$0.44
Passenger Trips per Service Hour	24
Service Hours per 10,000 Passenger Trips	414
Cost per Service Hour	$188
Total Compensation per Hour for Bus Operations	$72
Fare Revenue per Trip	$0.00
Farebox Recovery	0%

Agency Profile

Category	Summary
Services	The KCATA District includes seven counties: Cass, Clay, Jackson, and Platte in Missouri, and Johnson, Leavenworth, and Wyandotte in Kansas. RideKC offers a comprehensive public transportation system in Kansas City, including 41 fixed bus routes (29 operated by KCATA, five by Wyandotte County, and seven by Johnson County), six express routes (four by Johnson County and two by KCATA), and approximately 6,504 stops with nine transit centers and 11 major park-and-ride locations. The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system includes 3 MAX routes (Main MAX, Troost MAX, and Prospect MAX) with around 113 stops. Additionally, RideKC operates a 2.2-mile streetcar with 16 stops in Downtown Kansas City, a flex demand-response service in six zones, microtransit services in six zones, RideKC Freedom (on-demand paratransit for riders with disabilities), and RideKC Van (vanpool rideshare focused on work commutes). Service frequency varies by line: the KC Streetcar runs every 10-15 minutes during peak times and 12-18 minutes off-peak. The Main MAX and Prospect MAX routes have a 20-minute frequency, while the Troost MAX operates every 60 minutes.
Ridership (FY 2023)	The KC Streetcar averaged 4,400 daily riders and had 1.9 million riders in 2024. For 2025, up to March 31, the total ridership was 287,000 with a daily average of 3,200. Performance indicators for KCATA-operated services in March 2025 show 98.4% completed trips, 83.2% on-time performance for fixed routes, and 88.0% on-time performance for paratransit. Total ridership for March 2025 was 985,865, with 960,094 from fixed routes and 25,771 from Flex and IRIS services. There were 33,012 revenue hours, 45,842 platform hours, 29 passengers per revenue hour, 18,962 paratransit trips, 20,529 paratransit passengers, 68 road calls, and 22 vehicle incidents.
Fleet	The KCATA operates 300 fixed route buses, 31 MAX buses, and 14 streetcars.
Workforce	The KCATA's mission is to "Connect all people to opportunities," with a vision to "Enhance lives in our region through reliable and convenient mobility options." Their core values include Safety and Security, Customer Focus, Respect and Integrity, Fiscal Sustainability, and Collaboration. The agency is committed to addressing environmental pollution through mass transit solutions. KCATA employs approximately 800 people.
Fares Offered (Base)	KCATA ended fares in 2020, but as of April 2025, the agency is planning to reinstate $2 fares for most people. Low-income riders and people receiving aid from social service agencies, such as veterans or unhoused people, will not be charged fares under the proposed plan.

Category	Summary
Other	BikeWalkKC supports a transit-adjacent bikeshare system offering both electric and traditional rental bicycles with various rental options. In March 2025, there were 2,701 bike trips taken by 789 unique users, with an average trip time of 21 minutes.

DART (DELAWARE TRANSIT CORPORATION)

NTD Data

Metric	DART Data
Per Capita Spending on Transit	$23
Admin Cost per Service Hour	$22
Advertising Revenue per Service Hour	$0.82
Passenger Trips per Service Hour	12
Service Hours per 10,000 Passenger Trips	801
Cost per Service Hour	$147
Total Compensation per Hour for Bus Operations	$68
Fare Revenue per Trip	$1.11
Farebox Recovery	9%

Agency Profile

Category	Summary
Services	The agency offers a statewide network of transportation options, including 54 bus routes with over 2,300 bus stops, 37 park & rides, and 12 park & pools. It operates 49 county routes within New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, four intercounty routes, one flex route, three seasonal beach bus services, paratransit for people with disabilities, and commuter train services contracted through SEPTA and Delaware Commute Solutions. The SEPTA Wilmington/Newark Line in Delaware runs 32 weekday trains and 17 weekend trains.
Ridership (FY 2023)	In FY 2023, the agency recorded 6,328,833 trips system-wide, including 5,017,921 fixed route bus trips, 811,075 paratransit trips, and 499,837 SEPTA train trips.
Fleet	The agency operates 251 fixed route vehicles, 284 paratransit vehicles, and four rail cars.
Workforce	With over 1,000 employees across two administrative offices, the agency is committed to providing safe, reliable, and convenient rides, excellent customer experiences, and environmental protection. DTC is committed to providing a public transit service that protects and preserves the environment with every trip on DART services and every dollar invested in green technology.
Fares Offered (Base)	Adult fares are $2, with reduced fares of $0.80 available for seniors and people with disabilities. Fares for students aged 17 and below are $1. Children (46 inches in height or under) and blind individuals (with DVI photo ID card) ride free.
Other	The agency supports biking with bike racks on buses and offers the Home Free Guarantee for emergencies. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, supported by six Low/No Emission Bus Grants totaling $31.4M, and currently operates 14 zero-emission buses in New Castle and six each in Kent and Sussex counties.

CDTA (CAPITAL DISTRICT TRANSIT AUTHORITY)

NTD Data

Metric	CDTA Data
Per Capita Spending on Transit	$199
Admin Cost per Service Hour	$21
Advertising Revenue per Service Hour	$1.86
Passenger Trips per Service Hour	19
Service Hours per 10,000 Passenger Trips	519
Cost per Service Hour	$130
Total Compensation per Hour for Bus Operations	$69
Fare Revenue per Trip	$0.80
Farebox Recovery	12%

Agency Profile

Category	Summary
Services	CDTA provides a wide range of public transportation services across Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Montgomery, Washington, and Warren counties in New York. Its offerings include local and express bus service, Bus Rapid Transit (BusPlus) with four lines, commuter coach service, Paratransit (STAR), on-demand services (Flex) and the management of three Amtrak stations (Albany-Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Saratoga Springs). CDTA operates 65 routes, many of which connect neighborhoods to downtowns or downtowns to shopping areas, with six routes linking key towns together (NX: Northway Xpress). Service mostly runs from 5:30 a.m.-12:00 a.m. weeknights, 6:00 a.m.-12:00 a.m. Saturdays, and 7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Sundays with the college routes running until 2:00 a.m. in Albany and Troy. Flex on-demand services run Monday-Saturday from 6:00AM-10:45PM and Sunday from 10:00AM-6:00PM across three zones.
Ridership (FY 2023)	Annual Ridership in 2024 totaled 18,256,200, with average weekday ridership hitting nearly 60,000 trips.
Fleet	CDTA's fleet is comprised of 461 revenue vehicles. Fuel types include diesel and diesel-electric hybrid. CDTA will get 9 more electric buses, with delivery in early 2026. that will bring their fleet to 17 electric buses.
Workforce	CDTA envisions a sustainable and connected Capital Region, where public transportation plays a central role in enhancing quality of life, supporting economic development, reducing environmental impact, and promoting energy independence and cleaner communities. CDTA currently employs 750 people. Of these, 650 are frontline workers, including bus drivers, mechanics, and operational personnel.
Fares Offered (Base)	The base fare for local service is $1.50 for local service, with a reduced fare of $0.75 for seniors, people with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders. STAR paratransit fare is $2.50. BusPlus (BRT) and express fares vary based on travel distance across transit zones. Flex on-demand trips also cost $1.50 per ride.
Other	CDTA also supports establishing bike infrastructure and mobility hubs and has explored microtransit and mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) initiatives. For instance, CDTA had been promoting its own electric scooters. Initially planned for use by the public in the summer of 2021, implementation has been delayed.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Peer Agency Interview Questions

Operations and Service Delivery

1. What challenges has your agency faced since the pandemic – workforce shortages, decreased ridership, changing ridership patterns, equipment availability, etc.?
    a. How has the agency responded to changing ridership and commuting patterns?
2. If the agency has experienced workforce shortages, have any countermeasures been considered or implemented, including:
    a. Innovative recruitment strategies
    b. Improvements to the employee experience and/or benefits
    c. Other retainment strategies
3. What is your agency's approach to allocating service hours to urban/core services versus rural/regional/express services?
    a. Do you contract out any of these services and which?
    b. If not, have you considered contracting out any of these services?
4. Have there been any changes to your operational fleet (i.e. capacity, expansion, etc.) since your last NTD submission?
5. What key benchmarks does your agency use to monitor performance (i.e. ridership, on-time performance, revenue, etc.)?
    a. Are there performance metrics you would like to track but do not have the technology or capabilities to monitor?
    b. What do you view as the most critical operational metrics to improve the performance of your transit operations?
6. How often do you review your service for potential service reductions or service increases?
    a. Have you done a Comprehensive Operational Analysis in the last 5 years?
7. Can you share any of the best practices or strategies that your agency has implemented to save operating costs?
8. Related to ADA passenger access to the system – does your agency face capacity constraints? How are you addressing these?
9. For determining paratransit eligibility – do you require in person appointments? Or remote functional assessment?

Funding Mechanisms and Revenue

10. How is your agency's capital budget funded?
    a. How dependable/sustainable are these sources?
11. What state of good repair capital needs does your agency have?
12. How is your agency's operational budget funded?
    a. How dependable/sustainable are these sources?
    b. *(If needed)* What is your fare box recovery ratio?
13. What is your agency's biggest budgetary expense?
14. *(If applicable)* Would you share some examples of successful sustainable funding sources, revenue sources, and cost-sharing partnership opportunities?

15. Is your agency experiencing any funding shortfalls as we move away from federal funding made available during and following the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how is your agency anticipating filling funding gaps?
16. Have any of these measures been considered or implemented in recent years?
    a. Fare free service or fare discounts
    b. Fare Increases or fare policy changes
    c. Service reductions
    d. Network redesign
    e. Service to high-profile events
    f. Third party agreements with businesses or other private entities
    g. Ad revenue either through advertisements on board or at shelters/stops
    h. Marketing campaigns to increase ridership
17. When was your agency's last fare study done? What changes were made?
18. How does your agency use JARC, CMAQ, and Mobility Management funds?
19. Which advertising programs are the most lucrative/best ROI for your agency?
20. Has your agency made any staffing/organizational changes relating to revenue maximization? If so, describe
21. Do you self-insure or contract out for General Liability insurance? How easily are you able to get quotes and coverage?

Innovative Service Delivery

22. Has your agency made any effort to maximize safe and easy modal connections for pedestrians, bicycle users, and other micromobility options?
23. Do you have any success stories where the agency supported local and/or regional economic development?
24. Does your agency offer any app-driven microtransit on-demand services? If yes, can you tell us more about lessons learned with these services?
25. [If applicable] Does your agency have an overlap of service between ADA and microtransit services? If not, have you considered/studied this as an option?
26. In recent years, has the agency explored or implemented the use of new technologies to improve customer experience?

Appendix B: Peer Agency Selection

A total of 10 transit agencies were reviewed to identify the five to be included in the Peer Agency Review. Agencies that were comparable in operating statistics as shown in the chart below.

Agencies	Bus VRH National Rank	UZA Population (thousands)	Operating Expenses (millions of $)	Bus Ridership (thousands of UPT)	Buses Operated at Maximum Service
MTA (Baltimore)	17	2,212	$ 918.14	45,734	642
Cap Metro (Austin)	28	1,810	$ 345.08	22,491	290
COTA (Columbus, OH)	40	1,567	$ 186.98	11,129	189
HRT (Norfolk, VA)	43	1,452	$ 118.40	5,814	225
CTTransit (Hartford)	45	977	$ 119.59	13,969	209
CDTA (Albany)	46	593	$ 118.20	13,312	214
DART (Delaware)	58	5,696	$ 133.25	6,818	212
KCATA (Kansas City)	70	1,674	$ 112.75	10,842	120
Suffolk County Transit (Long Island)	72	19,426	$ 94.52	2,578	124
RTS (Rochester)	73	704	$ 102.16	8,762	163
RIPTA	**59**	**1,286**	**$ 129.93**	**11,040**	**192**

Source: 2023 NTD