

M O V E

CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

2018 Annual Report

LETTER FROM OUR CEO



**JOANNA M.
PINKERTON, P.E.**
PRESIDENT/CEO, COTA

This April marks my first anniversary at COTA, and I am incredibly proud of what Team COTA has accomplished in our first year together. Upon arrival, I was struck by the dedication of our team and the critical customer service roles they play in our community. I hold in special esteem the front-line employees who operate our system, interact with customers and serve as COTA's full-time community ambassadors. In August 2018, our team was recognized with an Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award by the American Public Transit Association. This national first place award is not a designation many entities can claim, and the employees of COTA have earned it for the first time in our organization's history.

Every day, Team COTA rolls out unique services to meet the current needs of our customers, and we are constantly evolving in order to serve the ever-growing needs of the community. By evolving, we will fully embrace our role in moving people, as well as the Central Ohio economy. According to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, the Central Ohio region experienced its largest single year of growth in history in 2018 – an increase of 43,000 residents. This pace of growth presents a mobility challenge for our region, but our team sees it as an **opportunity** to ensure more efficient, economically sustainable and safe transportation by providing shared services and more mobility choices for the people and businesses of our region. This is a challenge we are excited about meeting at COTA.

To us, our recent national designation of “best in class” comes with the understanding we must commit to excellence and an innovative spirit **every day**, especially during this time of unprecedented disruption in the global mobility industry and projected growth in our local community. COTA is on the path to becoming a mobility systems integrator; this means using technology, data and partnerships to create seamless regional mobility systems for people.

As we continue on our journey at COTA to serve, you will see us taking bold steps, trying new things and reaching out for ideas and support to design mobility options that work for our community. As you will see in the following pages, the past year has been an incredible demonstration of how our commitment to you and our employees has resulted in a year we are proud to call a success. Thank you for your interest in COTA and for being our daily inspiration to serve!

2018 Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award

LETTER FROM OUR BOARD



**TRUDY A.
BARTLEY**
CHAIR, BOARD
OF TRUSTEES

In March of 2018, the COTA Board of Trustees welcomed fresh, bold leadership with the selection of Joanna Pinkerton as president and CEO. A nationally recognized transportation expert and enthusiast, Joanna immediately infused our organization with new energy and ideas, to ensure COTA will be recognized as the leader of mobility in Central Ohio.

COTA was changing the way people move in 2018 prior to Joanna coming aboard. January 1, 2018 marked the debut of COTA CMAX, our first bus rapid transit line, connecting people to jobs along the Cleveland Avenue corridor. We also embarked on a partnership with the Capital Crossroads Downtown Special Improvement District (C-pass program), providing free rides for the downtown employees of participating businesses, which debuted in July 2018.

Transformative mobility initiatives are on the horizon as COTA leads the conversation about how to accommodate Central Ohio's growing transportation needs, habits and expectations. To that point, COTA's forthcoming strategic plan will serve as a blueprint for our future, addressing gaps in our vision and aligning our efforts with those of our partners. To make these changes, we are committing to internal transformation and seeking to diversify our workforce in order to ensure perspectives from people of different backgrounds.

In our year of transition, Team COTA continues to succeed. Our employees keep our buses operating smoothly and safely while greeting our customers with a smile each day. They are the reason COTA received the Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award by the American Public Transportation Association in August, and they remain the heart and soul of our organization.

We invite you to learn more about the achievements we made and the challenges we met in 2018, and hope you will be part of an increasingly exciting future at COTA.

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TRUDY A. BARTLEY, CHAIR

Associate Vice President, Community Relations,
The Ohio State University, Office of Government Affairs
Appointed by the City of Columbus

CRAIG P. TRENEFF, VICE CHAIR

Attorney at Law, Treneff Cozza Law, LLC
Mayor of Westerville
Appointed by Franklin County

CATHY DE ROSA

Dublin City Council Member
Appointed by the City of Dublin

THOMAS GROTE

Co-Partner, Grote & Turner
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AMY M. LANDINO

President, Vlog Boss Studios
Appointed by City of Columbus

MARLON R. MOORE

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Huntington National Bank
Appointed by the City of Columbus

DAVID M. NORSTROM

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JEAN CARTER RYAN

President
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Appointed by the City of Columbus

LETTY SCHAMP, P.E.

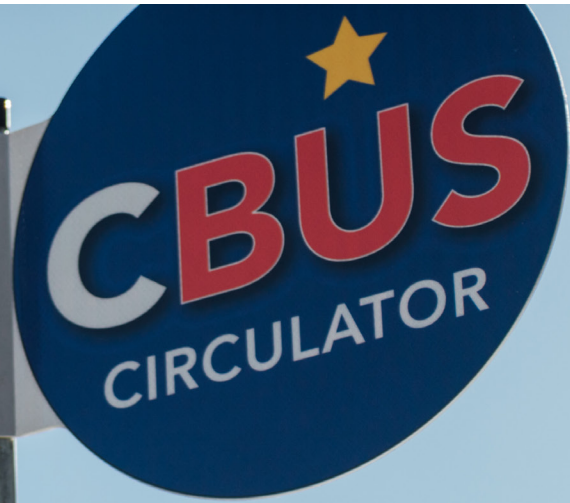
Transportation Engineer, City of Hilliard
Appointed by City of Hilliard

TIMOTHY J. SKINNER

Business Agent, Sprinklerfitter Local Union 669,
District 33
Appointed by the City of Columbus

MICHAEL H. STEVENS

Chief Innovation Officer, City of Columbus
Appointed by City of Columbus



2018

overview



OUR TEAM



President/CEO
JOANNA M. PINKERTON

OUR CUSTOMERS



18,913,789
total rides

+3%
from 2017

OUR FUNDING



Permanent local sales tax
.25%

Renewable local sales tax (Through 2026)
.25%

COTA MAINSTREAM

291,455
Total rides

OUR FLEET

322
buses

149
are Compressed Natural Gas Buses (CNG)

OUR ROUTES

3,030
Bus stops

43
routes

26 *Park & Rides and Transit Centers*

562 *sq mile service area*

OUR TECHNOLOGY

Wi-Fi

Traffic Signal Probability

Mobile ticketing

OUR SERVICES

CBUS
Free service from German Village to the Short North and everywhere between

CMAX
Rapid Transit from Downtown Columbus to Westerville on the Cleveland Avenue Corridor

C-pass
Downtown employee transit pass program through public-private partnership, first of its kind in the world

OUR HONORS

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC

#1 TRANSIT

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

from the American Public Transit Association

TOP PLACES TO WORK
for Columbus Young Professionals

THE AUDITOR OF STATE AWARD
with Distinction

A woman with short curly hair and glasses, wearing a denim jacket over a plaid shirt, is driving a bus. In the background, a woman with long dark hair in a teal shirt is looking at her phone. In the foreground, a man with a red beard and glasses, wearing a brown jacket, is using a silver Apple laptop. The bus interior has "WAIT" and "EXIT" signs visible.

COTA

stories

CMAX: A New Way to Ride

Every element of CMAX is unique. From the custom-branded buses to the pace it travels, CMAX stands out on the streets of Columbus. CMAX launched on January 1, 2018 as the city's first bus rapid transit line. Features include trips up to 16 percent faster than standard bus lines, dedicated lanes on High Street during rush hours and USB device charging ports on every coach. On a larger scale, CMAX is designed to serve the population living along the Cleveland Avenue corridor, an area of town that while full of culture, lacked resources such as health care and job opportunities. The Linden area is in the middle of revitalization due to the City of Columbus initiative, One Linden, which is a resident-driven planning effort to explore opportunities for additional community growth.

"COTA's mobility strategies are critical to connecting residents to employment, as well as just connecting the neighborhood as a whole to the rest of the city – two key pillars of the One Linden plan," said Carla William-Scott, Director of Neighborhoods for The City of Columbus.

COTA reported 1,554,060 rides taken on CMAX during 2018. That is a 17 percent increase over fixed-route ridership covering the same area in 2017. This was the largest increase in ridership among all COTA lines, and a benchmark far surpassing expectations. COTA's overall vision is to present transit as a mobility service, and to partner with organizations such as Smart Columbus to integrate technological advancements. CMAX can be credited to the beginning of a series of technology-focused innovation for COTA.

COTA received a \$37.5 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration to fund a bus rapid transit system, which included the implementation of traffic signal priority, a technical feature that allows for CMAX buses to change the speed of traffic lights if running behind schedule. Knowing the expectation would be to reduce congestion and increase ridership, COTA used population and economic development data to develop a bus route that would serve people who need reliable transit the most.

COTA also looked for ways to make CMAX more than just a way to get around. The work of local artists is displayed on the walls of the state-of-the-art CMAX shelters, complete with security cameras. Custom pylons display real-time bus tracking information. Community resources such as OhioHealth Westerville and Columbus State Community College were advertised to residents along Cleveland Avenue as easily accessible seven days a week by taking CMAX. Overall, CMAX proved to be more than a faster bus line. It is a new resource to a historic community searching for opportunity.



"We know that some of our students have additional responsibilities like helping with siblings or working part-time jobs and internships, so having access to a COTA bus that runs throughout the day is important for school attendance. COTA also provides additional transportation capacity to our students and families beyond the school day. COTA provides the transportation parents and caregivers need to be engaged in their student's academic career, which we know is important for overall student achievement."

TASHA BOOKER,
Executive Director, City Year Columbus



Fort Hayes and COTA Vehicle Maintenance Internship Program

The need for workforce development in skilled trade career settings is an increasing necessity. Research has shown that 40 percent of tradespeople currently in the workforce will retire over the next five to 10 years, and more than 30 million positions will be vacant by 2020 due to baby boomer retirement. Students looking for technical careers need to learn and grow in the right environment, and the skills gap has left many job openings unfilled. COTA anticipates the need for skilled workers, and is leveraging community resources to create a solution.

COTA is partnering with Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center and Columbus City Schools to create a vehicle maintenance apprenticeship program for students to get hands-on experience in the growing automotive care career field.

"Programs like this are critical in developing our workforce," said Tracy Spikes, COTA's Learning and Development Analyst. "In our second year, we have seen greater success in scheduling and mentor recognition, both of which are vital for the program."

The program allows for select students enrolled in the Automotive Technology/Collision program at Fort Hayes to apply for a school year-long apprenticeship. Valuing the idea of guidance and inclusivity in the workplace, students are paired with a mentor from first and second shifts in COTA's Vehicle Maintenance Department to learn various

responsibilities within the automotive industry. These responsibilities include real-time bus repairs, as students rotate between running and hard repair.

A day as a student apprentice is as follows. They are required to clock in around noon to meet with their first shift mentor. Students have the opportunity to log what they learned in a classroom setting before meeting up to work with their second shift mentor. Students are not permitted to work over 25 hours per week, but they do earn hourly wages.

Students can apply for open positions at COTA after completing the program. Two students from the 2017-2018 program now work full-time in the vehicle maintenance department.

The program is so successful that COTA is looking for ways to broaden its scope.

"In the future, we are looking forward to expanding the program to other schools and even into new career fields for students," Spikes said.

COTA SPOTLIGHT

"I envision the mobility of the future centered around two primary pillars: shared mobility and partnerships. I believe organizations like EmpowerBus and COTA are distinctively positioned to be key players in how the mobility of the future is defined and implemented."

JERRY TSAI,
Co-founder and President, EmpowerBus



C-pass Utilizes Innovative Partnership to Increase Downtown Ridership

The Columbus region continued to see impressive population growth in 2018, adding 43,000 residents to reach 2.4 million. As the only large northern city to expand by more than 10 percent between 2010 and 2017, that expansion comes with big economic benefits. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, employment also grew 11.2 percent in the Columbus metro area over the past 11 years, and 120,000 more people work here now than in 2007.

That economic and population explosion also comes with pain points, and four years ago, downtown property owners in particular feared a parking shortage would stall development. Those owners came together with COTA, the Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District (CCSID) and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) in a unique partnership to solve this problem.

This collaboration began with a pilot study to determine if downtown workers would change commuting habits with a transit incentive. We found that COTA ridership nearly doubled when employees were offered a free bus pass.

In June 2018, downtown property owners, MORPC, CCSID and generous corporate partners helped COTA provide unlimited, no-cost transit access through the C-pass program to 45,000 eligible downtown workers. Participating businesses register their employees, who can utilize their C-pass to travel anywhere in the system at any time.

"I was immediately sold on the concept and wanted Kegler to be part of process from ground up. In my opinion...there really was no excuse to say no," said Jennifer Rosengrant, Director of Facilities and Operations at Kegler Brown Hill and Ritter.

In the first seven months after the C-pass launch, 524,720 trips were taken by downtown employees. The launch saw 44,642 rides, which jumped quickly to 76,254 by September. C-pass ridership peaked in October with more than 100,000 trips. Across the seven months, that is about 2,500 trips per day.

"Employers and employees are embracing downtown C-pass, and we've seen significant increases in use of COTA by commuters," said Cleve Ricksecker, executive director of CCSID. "We are happy to see these results because increased use of transit is critical to the economic health of downtown."

COTA's ability to partner with a wide range of organizations to support this program was a huge factor in bringing C-pass to fruition, and continued private sector support will be key in alleviating downtown traffic congestion and parking shortages. Companies located here understand their transportation challenges, and we will continue bringing COTA's mobility solutions to the forefront as a solution and addition to our community's continuing economic and population expansion.

COTA SPOTLIGHT

"As a working mom, I have a lot on my mind. Riding the bus gives me time to take care of some of those items while removing the stresses of dealing with traffic. I wish I had made the switch sooner!"

AMANDA,
Downtown Employee

COTA Named Top Transit System in North America

In August 2018, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) named COTA the top public transit system in North America for medium-sized systems for its outstanding excellence, leadership and innovation in advancing public transportation. The award was announced at COTA's Annual Luncheon in front of nearly 700 attendees.

COTA reported nearly 19 million passenger trips in 2017, receiving the award among transportation systems with an annual ridership of more than 4 million and fewer than 20 million. COTA's recognition was based on overall operations, innovation, sustainability initiatives and safety.

"COTA's many achievements and its vision for greater mobility in the Columbus region are helping redefine public transportation as the backbone of an increasingly interconnected, multi-modal transportation network," said Paul Skoutelas, APTA president and CEO. "I congratulate COTA for winning APTA's top public transit system award in North America for medium-sized systems."

APTA recognized the importance and complexity of COTA's 2017 transit system redesign, the first overhaul of the entire bus network in 40 years. After gathering input from customers, operators, COTA's Board of Trustees and transit experts from around the country- the redesign features simplified routes, increased frequency, connections to more locations and reduced bus congestion in downtown Columbus.

"Today, Columbus residents have 80 percent more opportunities to catch the bus than they had 10 years ago," said Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther. "COTA offers better service to worksites, schools, health care centers, shopping destinations, our airport, and entertainment destinations like the Short North and Easton Town Center."

"Today, Columbus residents have 80% more opportunities to catch the bus than they had 10 years ago. COTA offers better service to worksites, schools, health care centers, shopping destinations, our airport, and entertainment destinations like the Short North and Easton Town Center. COTA's work is also making meaningful improvements to our keep our air clean by converting their fleet to CNG buses."

MAYOR ANDREW J. GINTHER,
CITY OF COLUMBUS

APTA also recognized COTA's safety record as being one of just 13 rail and mass transit agencies in the country to earn the Transportation Security Administration's highest "Gold Standard" rating. This rating followed a voluntary comprehensive review in 2016 of security plans, training, drills, exercise programs, public outreach efforts and background check programs.

Finally, COTA is working to greatly reduce its environmental footprint by transitioning the entire fleet to compressed natural gas, and becoming diesel-free by 2025. The transition saved \$9.3 million in fuel costs between 2015 and 2017, and clearly demonstrates both the environmental and economic impact sustainability initiatives can have.

"This national recognition validates our message that we are committed to innovation and accelerating solutions to support Central Ohio," said President/CEO Joanna Pinkerton. "I am so proud of the entire COTA team, especially our operators, mechanics and front-end employees who deliver such amazing and safe service to our riders. Together with our forward-thinking technology initiatives and collaborations, we're incredibly excited to serve our community so well."





MOBILITY
community

COTA SERVES COLUMBUS



THE BIG EXPLORE

December 29, 2018

45,000+ people rode COTA buses during The Big Explore! A 78% increase from the same day in 2017.



COTA ANNUAL LUNCHEON

August 16, 2018



RED, WHITE & BOOM

July 3, 2018

74,631 riders.



SMRT CENTER OPENING

June 30, 2018





CMAX LAUNCH

January 1, 2018



STATEWIDE TRIBUTE TO ROSA PARKS

December 3, 2018



UPGRADED MAINSTREAM TO FORD TRANSIT VEHICLES

November 2018



OHIO STATE BUS BONANZA

September 13, 2018

OSU ridership increase of 4% over 2017.



VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION & PARADE

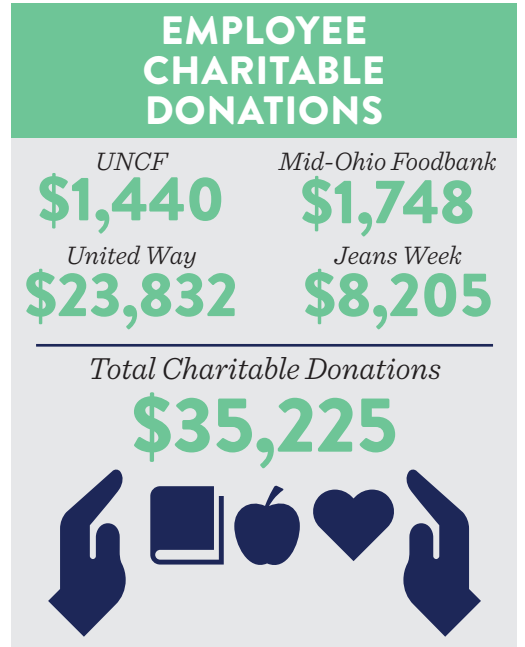
November 9, 2018

A woman with dark hair and glasses is smiling while looking at a computer monitor in a call center. The background shows other monitors and a window. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE & customer service'.

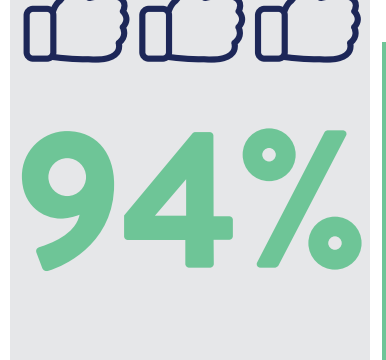
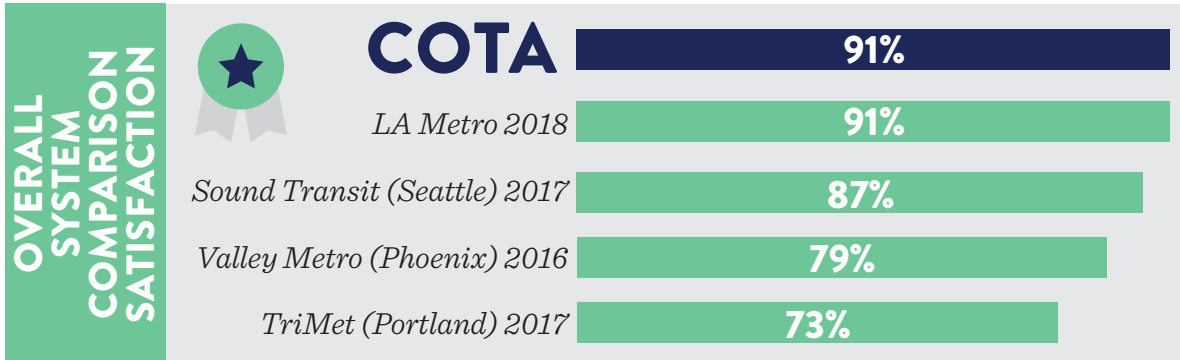
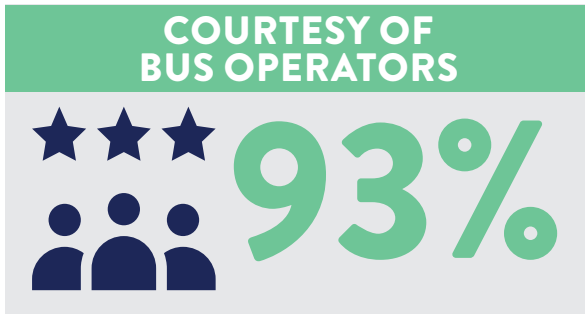
OPERATIONAL
PERFORMANCE

*& customer
service*

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE



CUSTOMER SERVICE



*Unaudited 2018 financial data provided by Central Ohio Transit Authority
 *Data Provided By 2018 Emc Research Survey



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