

# AUGUSTA PUBLIC TRANSIT

## Budget Presentation

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# Augusta Public Transit (APT)

- Serves Richmond County and a small portion of Columbia County
- 17 fixed-route buses, 8 paratransit vans, and 6 rural vans
- 9 routes
- Approximately 600 bus stops
- Annual ridership of nearly 800,000 fixed-route passenger trips, 26,000 demand-response trips, and 15,000 rural trips
- Average weekday ridership of 2600 passenger trips

# Assessment of Current Operations

- Funding challenges
- Direct support for facility repairs
  - Transit Facility Manager

# Budget Issues/Challenges

## Funding

- One of the greatest challenges that Transit faces currently is finding sufficient and reliable sources of funds to not only adequately operate and maintain existing systems, but also manage the potential implementation of new service and capacity.
- It is vital that Augusta begin discussions on the best way to address long term funding requirements.

# Budget Issues/Challenges

## Federal, State, and Local

- While federal funding has remained somewhat consistent, the current economic/political climate is one that we must constantly monitor.
- Programs designed to fund transit and spur development may change or disappear moving forward.

# Budget Issues/Challenges

- The **FAST Act** passed by congress provides what appears to be a reliable formula funding program for the next 4 to 5 years along with some discretionary programs to fund certain capital needs; however, they may not be at levels seen in recent years.
- APT has successfully been able to obtain formula grant funding for several projects over the last few years. These grants provide mainly for capital expenditures and some operational expenditures such as preventative maintenance. These grants may sometimes be used for other operational expenses based on a 50/50 match. However, that authorization can change on an annual basis and cannot be relied upon as a consistent funding source. It will be important to continue to competitively pursue other grant opportunities to support ongoing infrastructure needs as well as keep pace with technological changes in the future.

# APT Funding Sources

## Federal Grant Programs

- ❑ 5307 Capital Purchases (80/20) (when operational dollars are available, 50/50)
  - Urbanized Area Formula Grants - Provides funding to public transit systems in Urbanized Areas (UZA) for public transportation capital, planning, job access and reverse commute projects, as well as operating expenses in certain circumstances.
  
- ❑ 5339 Funds (80/20)
  - Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities - Provides funding to states and transit agencies through a statutory formula to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities.

# APT Funding Sources

## Federal Grant Programs (Continued)

- ❑ 5311 Funds (80/10/10)
  - Formula Grants for Rural Areas - Provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations.



# Ridership/Revenue Report

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018 YTD</u>
Passenger fare	587,786	541,734	522,442	510,167	349,683
ADA Fares	52,036	60,106	68,620	60,830	52,938
Passenger fare - Rural	42,006	35,092	38,120	38,161	31,358
* College Transit Fares	101,930	98,989	93,484	98,212	27,435

<u>Ridership</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018 YTD</u>
Motor Bus	797,851	787,145	767,109	696,145	492,040
ADA	19,694	23,135	27,392	26,347	21,577
Rural	13,353	13,984	15,044	15,296	11,415
College Transit	33,977	33,433	33,115	32,753	17,370

\* College Transit fares:

Augusta University	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Augusta Tech	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
Paine College	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Virginia College	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75

# Current Fare Structure (Since 2009)

Adult One-way	\$1.25
Youth Under Age 18 (I.D. Required)	\$0.60
Senior Citizens (I.D. or Medicare Card Required)	\$0.60
Persons with Disabilities (APT issued ID Card Required)	\$0.60
Children under 42" Height	Free
APT Transfers	\$0.50
Rural Transit One-way	\$3.00

# Current Fare Structure (Continued)

**ADA Paratransit Fees**

Range \$2.50 to \$7.00

**Passes**

31 Day Pass \$50.00

7 Day Pass \$15.00

**Discounted Passes**

31 Day Pass \$25.00

7 Day Pass \$ 7.50

# APT Funding Sources

- Local Subsidies (proposed for 2019)

– General Fund	\$ 3,951,050
– TIA Project	\$ 747,450
– Urban Services District Fund	\$ 230,950
– Tourism Fund	\$ 133,000
– GA Transit Operating Asst.	\$ 141,800
– TIA Discretionary Fund	<u>\$ 675,000</u>

**Total Subsidies**    \$ 5,879,250

# Total APT Budget

<u>2018</u>		<u>2019 (Proposed)</u>	
Transit Operations	\$ 6,427,770	Transit Operations	\$ 5,969,210
Grants	<u>\$ 14,419,410</u>	Grants	<u>\$ 13,800,150</u>
	\$ 20,847,180		\$ 19,769,360

# Budget Issues/Challenges

## Volatile Fuel Prices, Escalating Energy Costs & Sustainability Polices

- Fuel prices over the last several years have dropped dramatically and seem to have stabilized for the short term.
- The volatility of the market, however, requires constant attention to any sudden increase which could negatively affect operational costs.

# Budget Issues/Challenges

APT must continue to ensure that transportation is provided at a reasonable and affordable cost. We must continue to regularly evaluate our fare structure and revenue programs.

# FARE AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❑ **Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)**
  - **Gradually raising fares is recommended**, with the new revenues helping to fund increased options for fare purchase and payment.
  - **Eliminating the charge for transfers** will allow the optimal service network to be designed, without regard to whether a transfer will cost the customer an extra fare.
  - A promising approach for APT would be to **allow mobile phone payment** by visual inspection from bus operators.



# Operational Efficiency

- **APT must keep costs reasonable, especially infrastructure investment and maintenance costs associated with infrastructure requirements such as transit centers, shelter signage, information systems, and other high tech applications.**
- **Continue to improve efficiency and worker productivity**
- **Control labor costs**
- **Increase productivity through better training of workforce**
- **Succession planning**

# Key Ingredients for Success

- **Recognize Transit as important part of the Infrastructure**
- **Put Transit in the mix of community development planning**
- **Sustain and maintain system as a reliable and viable transportation option**

# Conclusion

- There are several decisions that need to be addressed for the future, both financial and operational.
- We have again initiated the recruitment process in an effort to hire a new director who can help make those decisions.

# Questions / Comments