RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Riverside Transit Agency

FY 2022-2024

Triennial Performance Audit of Riverside Transit Agency

January 2026

Final

Submitted to:
Riverside County Transportation Commission

Submitted by:

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Introduction

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) engaged the Michael Baker International consultant team to conduct the Transportation Development Act (TDA) triennial performance audit of the public transit operators under its jurisdiction. This performance audit is conducted for Riverside Transit Agency (RTA, Agency) covering the most recent triennial period, fiscal years (FYs) 2021-2022 through 2023-2024.

The purpose of the performance audit is to evaluate RTA's effectiveness and efficiency in its use of TDA funds to provide public transit in its service area. This evaluation is required as a condition for continued receipt of these funds for public transportation purposes. In addition, the audit evaluates RTA's compliance with the conditions specified in the California Public Utilities Code (PUC). This task involves ascertaining whether RTA is meeting the PUC's reporting requirements and is endeavoring to implement prior audit recommendations made to the Agency. Moreover, the audit includes calculations of transit service performance indicators and a detailed review of the Agency's departments and organizational functioning. From the analysis that has been undertaken, a set of recommendations have been made for the Agency which is intended to improve the performance of transit operations.

This TDA audit is intended to provide RTA with an independent, constructive, and objective evaluation of the organization and its operations. The methodology for the audit included interviews conducted with transit management, collection and review of agency documents, and data evaluation. The *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities* published by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) was used to guide in the development and conduct of the audit.

Overview of the Transit System

RTA is the largest transit operator within Riverside County and has one of the largest service areas in the United States. The Agency was established as a Joint Powers Agency on August 15, 1975, and began operating bus service on March 16, 1977. RTA is the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) for western Riverside County and is responsible for coordinating transit services throughout the approximate 2,500-square mile service area including providing driver training and assisting with grant applications. RTA is headquartered in Riverside.

Based on data from the California Department of Finance (DOF) intercensal estimates for cities and counties, from 2010 to 2020, Western Riverside County's population grew from 1,458,707 in 2010 to 1,628,567 in 2020, for a net gain of 169,860 people, or 11.64 percent. According to the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Connect SoCal 2024 Demographics & Growth Forecast Technical Report, Western Riverside County's population is projected to grow from about 1.63 million in 2020 to approximately 2.35 million by 2050. This represents an increase of roughly 44 percent over three decades, with most of the growth occurring between 2020 and 2040. Projected growth rates vary significantly across RTA's service area, and not all communities are anticipating significant growth. Development is occurring predominantly in the southern and western portions of Riverside County (Beaumont, Menifee, Lake Elsinore, and Eastvale). A population and land area summary of incorporated

cities and unincorporated communities located in the Western Riverside County is presented in Table I-1:

Table I-1
Western Riverside County Demographics

City	2020 US Census Population	Percent Change from 2010 US Census	Population 65 Years & Older (ACS)	2025 California DOF Estimate	Land Area (square miles)
Banning	29,505	-0.3%	27.40%	31,949	23.10
Beaumont	53,036	43.8%	13.50%	59,708	30.30
Cabazon	2,629	3.7%	11.8%	n/a	4.89
Canyon Lake	11,082	4.9%	18.90%	11,004	3.90
Cherry Valley	6,509	2.3%	32.4%	n/a	8.02
Corona	157,136	3.1%	9.90%	159,157	38.83
Coronita	2,639	1.2%	13.8%	n/a	0.60
Eastvale	69,757	30.0%	7.60%	69,799	11.40
East Hemet CDP	19,432	11.6%	12.1%	n/a	5.19
El Cerrito CDP	5,058	-0.8%	14.5%	n/a	2.83
El Sobrante CDP	14,039	10.3%	13.5%	n/a	7.23
French Valley CDP	35,280	52.9%	9.9%	n/a	10.88
Good Hope CDP	9,468	3.0%	9.5%	n/a	11.23
Green Acres CDP	2,918	61.7%	10.0%	n/a	1.40
Hemet	89,833	14.2%	22.10%	91,934	27.85
Highgrove CDP	7,515	88.4%	8.9%	n/a	3.22
Home Gardens CDP	11,203	-3.2%	11.8%	n/a	1.51
Homeland CDP	6,772	13.5%	18.4%	n/a	4.27
Idyllwild-Pine Grove	4,163	7.5%	29.2%	n/a	13.73
Jurupa Valley	105,053	10.6%	10.20%	105,928	43.50
Lake Elsinore	70,265	35.6%	7.20%	73,783	38.30
Menifee	102,527	32.3%	18.10%	115,316	46.47
Moreno Valley	208,634	7.9%	8.60%	210,823	51.27
Murrieta	110,949	7.2%	12.40%	111,789	33.60
Norco	26,316	-2.8%	13.90%	25,221	13.96
Perris	78,700	15.1%	6.20%	81,240	31.60
Riverside	314,998	3.7%	10.70%	320,337	81.20
San Jacinto	53,898	21.9%	11.40%	54,990	25.72
Temecula	110,003	9.9%	10.10%	112,220	37.30
Wildomar	36,875	14.6%	12.50%	37,077	23.69

Source: US Census, California Department of Finance, January 1, 2025

System Characteristics

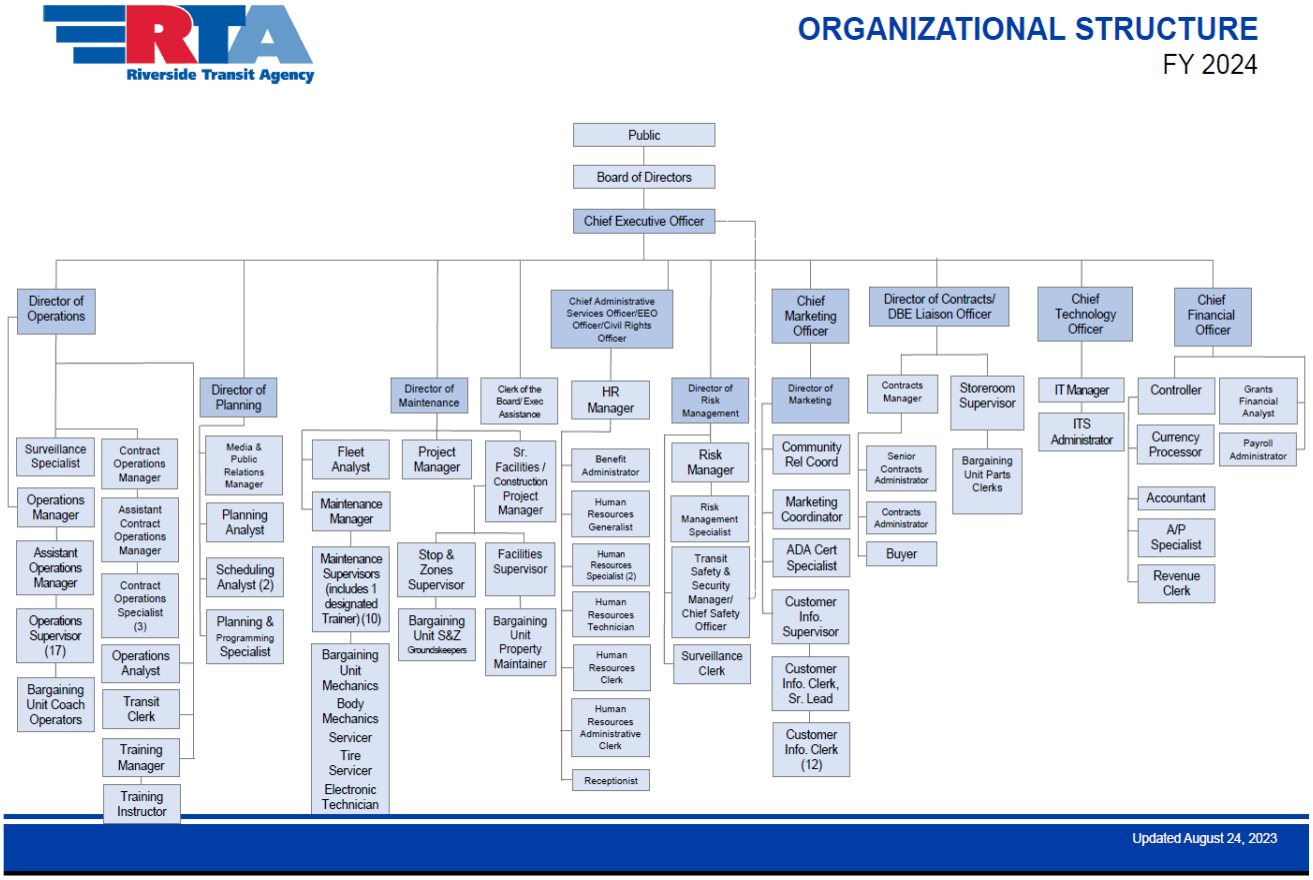
In FY 2021, RTA provided both local and regional services throughout the region with 36 regional, local, rural and trolley service routes, 3 CommuterLink Express routes, and Dial-A-Ride (DAR) services. In the Cities of Corona, Beaumont, and Banning, RTA coordinates regional services with municipal transit systems. In the City of Riverside, RTA coordinates with the Riverside Special Transportation Services, which provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary service to RTA's fixed-

route services.

RTA is governed by a board of directors comprising 22 elected officials, 18 representing cities in western Riverside County and four members of the County Board of Supervisors. The member jurisdictions include the Cities of Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Canyon Lake, Corona, Eastvale, Hemet, Jurupa Valley, Lake Elsinore, Moreno Valley, Menifee, Murrieta, Norco, Perris, Riverside, San Jacinto, Temecula, Wildomar, and the unincorporated areas of Riverside County Supervisorial Districts I, II, III, and V. The RTA Chief Executive Officer reports directly to the Board.

RTA is managed and administered by the Chief Executive Officer with support from the entire executive team. RTA's primary facility is located in the City of Riverside and houses the majority of the administration, operations, and maintenance departments with approximately 364 active employees on-site. RTA's secondary facility, located in Hemet, opened in June 2000. It now has approximately 114 maintenance, administrative, and operations employees assigned to the division. Figure I-1 shows the RTA organizational chart.

Figure I-1
Organizational Chart



Source: RTA, June 2024
Note: RTA's organizational structure has changed since the end of FY 2024.

Transit Services

RTA has both directly operated services and contracted services. Transdev is a private transportation company that provides RTA's DAR service. A supplemental taxi service was used prior to the pandemic and played an important role in accommodating unproductive paratransit trips, such as trips during peak period with capacity constraints or trips to remote areas. Empire Transportation, which began providing fixed-route service in FY 2012, was the fixed-route contractor for the entirety of the current audit period. The hours of operations are based on the route classification and service area. The overall span of services is from 3:50 a.m. to 11:55 p.m. The DAR service span mirrors the hours of fixed-route service, excluding the CommuterLink Express service.

Transit Centers: RTA operates several major transit centers across Western Riverside County, including the new Vine Street Mobility Hub in Riverside, the Corona Transit Center, the Hemet Valley Mall Transit Center, the Moreno Valley Mall Transit Center, and the Perris Transit Center. RTA's major transfer points include the Galleria at Tyler Mall, La Sierra Metrolink Station, Moreno Valley Mall, and Riverside Downtown Metrolink Station. Other key transfer points throughout the system include University of California, Riverside (UCR), Riverside University Health System Medical Center, Moreno Valley College, Hemet Valley Mall, Mt. San Jacinto College, Lake Elsinore Outlet Center, Temecula Promenade Mall, and the County Administration Building. New mobility hubs are located at the Temecula Promenade Mall to provide increased transit access to the Cities of Temecula and Murrieta, and the Vine Street Layover next to the Riverside Downtown Metrolink Station.

The design of the Vine Street hub includes a unique water sculpture to reflect the aquifer beneath the site and incorporates infographics that highlight Riverside's history and agricultural heritage. The hub is designed and constructed to support multiple modes of transportation, including bicycle parking, curbs designated as no-parking to allow ride-sharing services and drop-offs/pick-ups, and easy access to Metrolink train connections across the street. The facility is secured with 24-hour surveillance and a staffed security building with restrooms. Furthermore, community input played a key role in shaping the hub's design, which was recognized with an award from the Inland Empire Public Works. Operationally, the hub enhances the rider experience by offering a safe, comfortable, and efficient transfer point with seamless connections to Metrolink services. Post-construction surveys revealed strong community support, particularly regarding safety and design. The hub was also built with future growth in mind, especially with plans to collaborate with agencies such as Omnitrans and to expand its capabilities.

RTA provides connections to Metrolink stations located within the RTA service area, including stations serving the relatively new Metrolink Perris Valley Line. These stations include North Main Corona, Riverside-La Sierra, Pedley, Riverside-Downtown, Hunter Park/UCR, Moreno Valley/March Field, Perris, and South Perris. An overview of each service follows.

Regional and Local Fixed Routes: Regional routes comprise the backbone of the bus network between metropolitan areas along primary corridors (including freeways). Local routes supplement regional routes by circulating through various neighborhoods and serving secondary corridors. Local routes also serve as feeders to regional and express routes by transporting customers within a community on shorter trips. All 36 routes operate Monday through Friday with many routes operating on the weekends.

CommuterLink Express Routes: These regional express routes provide limited-stop service designed to primarily transport commuters to and from employment sites and provide connectivity to transit operations heading outside of western Riverside County, such as Metrolink. These buses use the freeway system to provide faster service.

CommuterLink routes provide service for long-distance commuters traveling to Metrolink, Coaster, and Sprinter rail stations; business parks; shopping malls; and regional transit facilities. Service operates on weekdays only.

Table I-2 provides a summary of local, regional, and CommuterLink routes:

Table I-2
RTA Route Summary

Route	Description	Frequency/Operation	Key Time points
1	UCR, Vine Street Mobility Hub, Corona Transit Center, Smith & 6th	Weekdays every 15 minutes (from 3:19 a.m. to 12:26 a.m.); Weekends every 15 minutes (from 5:44 a.m. to 10:34 p.m.)	▪Smith & 6th ▪Corona Transit Center ▪Magnolia & McKinley ▪Galleria at Tyler ▪Magnolia & Adams ▪Brockton Arcade ▪Riverside City College ▪Lemon & University ▪Vine Street Mobility Hub ▪UCR at Bannockburn
3	Eastvale, Norco, Corona Transit Center	Weekdays every 70 minutes (from 6:20 a.m. to 11:03 p.m.); Weekends every 120 minutes (from 6:15 a.m. to 7:59 p.m.)	▪Corona Transit Center ▪Main & Parkridge ▪Norco College ▪Market & Clark ▪Limonite & Eastvale Gateway ▪Amazon Eastvale
8	Lake Elsinore, Wildomar	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 5:40 a.m. to 8:27 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.)	▪Hwy 74 & Cambern ▪Lake Elsinore Outlet Center ▪Lakeshore & Viscaya ▪Grand & Baldwin ▪Palomar & Wildomar ▪Mission Trail & Malaga ▪Graham & Langstaff ▪Hwy 74 & Cambern
9	Perris Station Transit Center, Hwy 74 & Cambern	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 5:50 a.m. to 7:56 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (Weekends from 5:50 a.m. to 7:15 p.m.)	▪Hwy 74 & Cambern ▪Hwy 74 & Meadowbrook ▪Perris Station Transit Center
10	Big Springs & Watkins, Downtown Riverside, Galleria at Tyler	Weekdays every 90 minutes (from 6:49 a.m. to 8:42 p.m.); Weekends every 90 minutes	▪Galleria at Tyler ▪Lincoln & Jackson ▪Lincoln & Madison

Route	Description	Frequency/Operation	Key Time points
		(from 8:03 a.m. to 7:42 p.m.)	▪ Arlington at Target ▪ Brockton Arcade ▪ Victoria & Cridge ▪ Lemon & University ▪ RTA Offices ▪ Big Springs & Watkins
11	Moreno Valley Mall, March ARB, Alessandro & Frederick	Weekdays every 70 minutes (from 7:20 a.m. to 8:13 p.m.); Weekends every 65 minutes (from 9:29 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.)	▪ Moreno Valley Mall ▪ Heacock & Sunnymead ▪ Alessandro & Heacock ▪ N St & 6th ▪ Frederick & Alessandro
12	La Cadena & Interchange, Downtown Riverside, Corona Hills Plaza	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 4:55 a.m. to 11:01 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 6:27 a.m. to 8:28 p.m.)	▪ Promenade & McKinley ▪ Pierce & La Sierra ▪ Galleria at Tyler ▪ Arlington & Streeter ▪ Jurupa & Magnolia ▪ Olivewood & RCC ▪ Market & University ▪ La Cadena & Interchange
13	Hunter Park/UCR Metrolink Station, Downtown Riverside, Galleria at Tyler	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 6:30 a.m. to 7:46 p.m.); weekends every 70 minutes (from 6:28 a.m. to 6:36 p.m.)	▪ Galleria at Tyler ▪ Arlington & Van Buren ▪ Phoenix & Arlington ▪ Riverside City College ▪ Market & 11th ▪ Chicago & University ▪ Hunter Park/UCR Metrolink Station
14	Galleria at Tyler, Downtown Riverside, Loma Linda VA Hospital	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 4:55 a.m. to 8:54 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 7:55 a.m. to 7:41 p.m.)	▪ Galleria at Tyler ▪ Indiana & Madison ▪ Brockton Arcade ▪ University & Brockton ▪ Iowa & Blaine ▪ Center & Michigan ▪ Loma Linda VA Hospital
15	Vine Street Mobility Hub, Downtown Riverside, Galleria at Tyler	Weekdays every 45 minutes (from 4:00 a.m. to 9:58 a.m.); Weekends every 50 minutes (from 6:14 a.m. to 8:39 p.m.)	▪ Galleria at Tyler ▪ LA Sierra Metrolink Station ▪ LA Sierra & Hole/Pierce ▪ Arlington & LA Sierra ▪ Arlington & Van Buren ▪ Arlington & Streeter ▪ Brockton Arcade ▪ Riverside City College ▪ Vine Street Mobility Hub
16	UCR, Moreno Valley Mall	Weekdays every 15 minutes (from 4:15 a.m. to 10:47 p.m.); Weekends every 15 minutes (from 7:11 a.m. to 10:39 p.m.)	▪ Moreno Valley Mall ▪ University Ave & University Village ▪ UCR at Bannockburn

Route	Description	Frequency/Operation	Key Time points
18	Sunnymead Ranch, Moreno Valley Mall, Corporate Centre Place	Weekdays every 75 minutes (from 6:19 a.m. to 9:38 p.m.); Weekends every 75 minutes (from 6:32 a.m. to 9:11 p.m.)	▪ Moreno Valley Mall ▪ Heacock & Manzanita ▪ Moreno Valley Mall
19	Moreno Valley Mall, Perris Station Transit Center	Weekdays every 15 minutes (from 4:08 a.m. to 11:41 p.m.); Weekends every 30 minutes (from 5:05 a.m. to 11:27 p.m.)	▪ Moreno Valley Mall ▪ Sunnymead & Heacock ▪ Perris & Alessandro ▪ Moreno Valley College ▪ Perris & Ramona Expressway ▪ Perris Station Transit Center
20	Magnolia & Elizabeth, Moreno Valley/March Field Metrolink Station, RUMC, Kaiser Permanente, Moreno Valley College	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 3:43 a.m. to 11:24 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 6:49 a.m. to 8:35 p.m.)	▪ Magnolia & Elizabeth ▪ Mission Grove & Mission Village ▪ Moreno Valley March Field Metrolink Station ▪ Alessandro & Frederick ▪ Alessandro & Perris ▪ Riverside University Medical Center ▪ Iris at Kaiser Permanente Hospital ▪ Moreno Valley College ▪ Iris & Lasselle
21	Galleria at Tyler, Jurupa Valley Pedley Metrolink Station	Weekdays every 80 minutes (from 6:24 a.m. to 9:15 p.m.); Weekends every 70 minutes (from 7:41 a.m. to 7:23 p.m.)	▪ Galleria at Tyler ▪ Van Buren & Arlington ▪ Jurupa Valley/Pedley Metrolink Station
22	Vine Street Mobility Hub, Perris Station Transit Center	Weekdays every 40 minutes (from 5:20 a.m. to 8:39 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 5:25 a.m. to 8:22 p.m.)	▪ Perris Station Transit Center ▪ San Jacinto & Navajo ▪ Clark & Cajalco ▪ Parsons & Markham ▪ Trautwein & Van Buren ▪ Mission Grove & Mission Village ▪ Chicago & 12th ▪ Vine Street Mobility Hub
23	Temecula, Murrieta, Wildomar	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 6:00 a.m. to 8:14 p.m.); Weekends every 70 minutes (from 7:19 a.m. to 7:26 p.m.)	▪ Promenade Mall ▪ Winchester & Nicolas ▪ Rancho Springs Medical Center ▪ Murrieta Walmart ▪ Jefferson & Kalmia ▪ Skyview Ridge Amanda Apts ▪ Inland Valley Medical Center ▪ Palomar & Wildomar
24	Temecula, Pechanga Resort	Weekdays every 70 minutes (from 6:40 a.m. to 7:57 p.m.); Weekends every 70 minutes (from 7:40 a.m. to 7:13 p.m.)	▪ Temecula Valley Hospital ▪ Pechanga Resort ▪ Pujol & Main ▪ Margarita & Rancho California ▪ Promenade Mall

Route	Description	Frequency/Operation	Key Time points
27	Galleria at Tyler, Orangecrest, Perris Station Transit Center	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 5:23 a.m. to 9:33 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 5:30 a.m. to 9:11 p.m.)	▪ Perris Station Transit Center ▪ Trautwein & Van Buren ▪ Van Buren & Washington ▪ Galleria at Tyler
28	Perris Station Transit Center, Hemet Valley Mall, Florida & New Chicago	Weekdays every 30 minutes (from 3:40 a.m. to 12:20 a.m.); Weekends every 45 minutes (from 4:25 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.)	▪ Perris Station Transit Center ▪ Hwy 74 & Leon ▪ Hemet Valley Mall ▪ Florida & New Chicago
29	Vine Street Mobility Hub, Downtown Riverside, Jurupa Valley, Eastvale	Weekdays every 80 minutes (from 4:43 a.m. to 10:18 p.m.); Weekends every 80 minutes (from 5:55 a.m. to 9:09 p.m.)	▪ Amazon Eastvale ▪ Limonite & Eastvale Gateway ▪ Limonite & Archer ▪ Rubidoux & Mission ▪ Vine Street Mobility Hub
30	Perris Station Transit Center, May Ranch	Weekdays every 90 minutes (from 5:05 a.m. to 9:47 p.m.); Weekends every 80 minutes (from 7:45 a.m. to 7:10 p.m.)	▪ Perris Station Transit Center ▪ 4th & Perris ▪ Nuevo & Ruby ▪ Orange Vista High School ▪ Sherman & Walnut ▪ Morgan & Bradley
31	Moreno Valley Mall, Beaumont, Banning, MSJC San Jacinto	Weekdays every 80 minutes (from 5:33 a.m. to 8:50 p.m.); Weekends every 80 minutes (from 7:10 a.m. to 8:16 p.m.)	▪ Mt. San Jacinto College San Jacinto ▪ Beaumont Walmart ▪ Sun Lakes at Village ▪ Super Walmart at Moreno Beach Dr ▪ Riverside University Medical Center ▪ Moreno Valley Senior Center ▪ Moreno Valley Mall
41	Mead Valley Comm. Center, RUMC	Weekdays every 120 minutes (from 6:20 a.m. to 7:20 p.m.)	▪ Mead Valley Community Center ▪ Ross/Lowes/Starcrest ▪ Perris & Ramona Expressway ▪ Lasselle & Via De Anza ▪ Moreno Valley College ▪ Riverside University Medical Center
44	Hemet Valley Mall - Mt. San Jacinto College Circulator	Weekdays every 45 minutes (from 4:30 a.m. to 11:31 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 4:50 a.m. to 10:01 p.m.)	▪ Hemet Valley Mall ▪ State & Esplanade ▪ Mt. San Jacinto College San Jacinto ▪ San Jacinto & Sixth
49	Vine Street Mobility Hub, Downtown Riverside, Country Village, Fontana	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 4:12 a.m. to 10:33 p.m.); Weekends every 60 minutes (from 6:22 a.m. to 8:26 p.m.)	▪ Banana & Cherry ▪ Mission & Pedley ▪ Mission & Valley ▪ Mission & Rubidoux ▪ Vine Street Mobility Hub

Route	Description	Frequency/Operation	Key Time points
51	UCR, Canyon Crest, Riverside	Weekdays every 40 minutes (from 7:29 a.m. to 6:02 p.m.)	▪ University Village & Village Tower Apartments ▪ Watkins & Spruce ▪ UCR at Bannockburn ▪ Canyon Crest Towne Centre ▪ Chicago & Central
55	Harveston, Promenade Mall, County Center Dr	Weekdays every 30 minutes (from 6:55 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.)	▪ Harveston Village Center ▪ Winchester & Nicolas ▪ Promenade Mall ▪ County Center
56	Hunter Park-UCR Metrolink Station to UCR	Weekdays every 45 minutes (from 6:00 a.m. to 7:07 p.m.)	▪ Hunter Park/UCR Metrolink Station ▪ Watkins & Spruce ▪ N. Campus & Aberdeen ▪ Iowa & University
61	Perris Station Transit Center, Sun City, Quail Valley, Menifee, Murrieta, Temecula	Weekdays every 50 minutes (from 4:30 a.m. to 8:58 p.m.); Weekends every 90 minutes (from 6:20 a.m. to 7:44 p.m.)	▪ Promenade Mall ▪ Hancock & Los Alamos ▪ McElwain at Super Target ▪ Mt. San Jacinto College Menifee ▪ Quail Valley Fire Station ▪ Cherry Hills & Bradley ▪ Encanto & McCall ▪ Perris Station Transit Center
74	Hemet Valley Mall, Winchester, Menifee, Sun City	Weekdays every 70 minutes (from 5:00 a.m. to 8:15 p.m.); Weekends every 70 minutes (from 6:15 a.m. to 7:54 p.m.)	▪ Cherry Hills & Bradley ▪ Mt. San Jacinto College Menifee ▪ Simpson & Winchester ▪ Hemet Valley Mall
79	Hemet Valley Mall, Winchester, Temecula	Weekdays every 90 minutes (from 4:35 a.m. to 9:40 p.m.); Weekends every 90 minutes (from 6:49 a.m. to 7:50 p.m.)	▪ Promenade Mall ▪ Winchester & Nicolas ▪ Southwest Justice Center ▪ Winchester & Pourroy ▪ SImpson & Winchester ▪ Hemet Valley Mall
200	San Bernardino Downtown Transit Center, Downtown Riverside, Vine Street Mobility Hub, Galleria at Tyler, La Sierra Metrolink Station, Village at Orange, Anaheim, Disneyland	Weekdays every 60 minutes (from 4:00 a.m. to 12:11 a.m.); Weekends every 120 minutes (from 6:00 a.m. to 11:56 p.m.)	▪ San Bernardino Downtown Transit Center ▪ Vine Street Mobility Hub ▪ Galleria at Tyler ▪ La Sierra Metrolink Station ▪ Meats & Tustin ▪ Disneyland
204	UCR, Downtown Riverside, Country Village, Ontario Mills Mall, Montclair Transcenter	Weekdays 3 daily trips Northbound and 4 daily trips Southbound	▪ UCR at Bannockburn ▪ Market & University ▪ Country Village ▪ Ontario Mills Mall ▪ Montclair Transcenter

Route	Description	Frequency/Operation	Key Time points
206	Temecula, Murrieta, Lake Elsinore Outlet Center Park and Ride, Tom's Farms, Dos Lagos, Corona Transit Center	Weekdays 3 daily trips Northbound and 3 daily trips Southbound	▪ Promenade Mall ▪ Jefferson & Kalmia ▪ Lake Elsinore Outlet Center Park-And-Ride ▪ Toms Farms ▪ Dos Lagos ▪ Corona Transit Center

Source: RTA, June 2025

Sustainable Service Plan (SSP): RTA adopted the Sustainable Service Plan (SSP) in March 2023 to guide service realignment and improvements in response to post-pandemic travel behavior. The SSP builds upon prior systemwide service reductions and outlines a three-year strategy to enhance transit efficiency, accessibility, and rider experience. The SSP objectives include:

- Realigning services to reflect permanent shifts in travel demand;
- Increasing frequency on high ridership corridors;
- Improving connectivity to regional transit hubs and key destinations;
- Eliminating duplicative or underperforming services; and
- Introducing innovative mobility options such as on-demand transit.

In addition to the SSP, RTA implemented the following service changes during the audit period:

FY 2022:

- Increased service on Routes 1, 15, 16, 19, and 28 to ~80 percent of January 2020 (pre-COVID) levels.

- Expanded service on Routes 3, 10, 14, 20, 23, 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 42, and 79 to support area schools.

FY 2023:

- Increased service on Routes 12, 14, 20, and 49 to ~80 percent of January 2020 levels.
- Introduced new Route 56 connecting Hunter Park Metrolink Station with UC Riverside.
- Eliminated Route 205; trips consolidated under Route 206.
- Launched GoMicro, an on-demand shared ride service in Hemet–San Jacinto.
- Introduced Route 44 circulator between Hemet Valley Mall and Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC).
- Discontinued Route 31 segment between MSJC and Hemet Valley Mall; replaced by Route 44.
- Discontinued Routes 32, 33, and 42; replaced by GoMicro.
- Discontinued segments of Routes 74 and 79 between MSJC and Hemet Valley Mall; replaced by Route 44.

FY 2024:

- Opened Vine Street Mobility Hub (January 14, 2024), served by Routes 1, 15, 22, 29, 49, 200,

and Dial-A-Ride.

- Commenced Year One implementation of SSP recommendations:
  - Increased Route 1 frequency to every 15 minutes (6:00 a.m.– 6:00 p.m.).
  - Added early morning trips on Routes 21 and 30 for better Metrolink connections.
  - Discontinued Summerhill Loop on Route 8; added timed transfers between Routes 8 and 9.
  - Adjusted service on Routes 13, 18, and 61 to improve access to major destinations.

Dial-A-Ride Service: RTA is the designated CTSA for western Riverside County and offers three types of Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services: ADA Priority Dial-a-Ride, Senior/Disabled Dial-a-Ride, and Dial-a-Ride Plus Lifeline. Reservations for service must be made at least 24 hours in advance, with the option of calling up to 3 days in advance. DAR operates during the same days and hours as fixed-route buses within a 0.75-mile range of routes. Pickup times are scheduled within one hour before or one hour after each rider's requested pickup time. The base fare for DAR service is $3.50 per passenger, per boarding. The maximum fare is $10.50 per one-way trip and is based on the number of city zones that the rider travels. Depending on where the trip begins and ends, the rider may be required to transfer.

In an effort to improve the availability of appointment time slots and make Dial-a-Ride service more efficient for passengers, RTA has adopted a no-show policy that is designed to limit the number of late cancellations and no-shows. Any Dial-a-Ride rider who is a no-show or cancels their trip after 6:00 p.m. the day before their scheduled pickup may be given penalty points. If a passenger accumulates a specific number of points over a period of time, their service will be temporarily suspended.

ADA Priority DAR service offers wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles for curb-to-curb, shared-ride transportation services for persons who are ADA-certified. All ADA Priority Dial-a-Ride riders must apply and be certified for the service to become eligible. RTA has reduced the application processing time to an average of 10 days. Personal care attendants (PCAs) and companions are also able to ride DAR service with an ADA Priority Dial-a-Ride rider. PCAs can ride at no cost; however, companions and children are required to pay a fare. ADA Priority DAR riders are eligible for trips throughout the RTA service area within .75 miles of fixed routes.

Senior/Disabled DAR service offers persons 65 years and older and persons with disabilities who do not meet ADA Priority DAR criteria are eligible for local Dial-a-Ride service within a single city and within .75 miles of fixed routes. Companions are not eligible for these riders. This policy ensures that space is available for those attending ADA Priority Dial-a-Ride passengers. No application is required. However, on the first trip, riders are required to present proof of disability or age eligibility at the pickup location; photo identification will be required for each trip.

Fares

In April 2019, the RTA's Board approved a two-phase fare increase, the first of which was implemented in July 2019 and is shown in Table 1-3 below. The second fare increase was scheduled to be implemented in July 2021. However, on February 25, 2021, the Board unanimously approved delaying the July 2021 fare increase for one year until July 2022 due to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this, fares had not increased in a decade. On April 28, 2022, the Board unanimously approved canceling the July 2022 fare increase until a new fare policy study can be conducted.

Table I-3
Fare Structure

Fixed Route	Base Fare	Day Pass	7-Day Pass	30-Day Pass
General	$1.75	$5.00	$20.00	$60.00
Student (grades 1-12)	$1.75	$5.00	$20.00	$45.00
Senior (60+)/Disabled	$0.75	$2.50	$20.00	$30.00
Medicare Card Holder	$0.75	$2.50	$20.00	$30.00
Veteran	$0.75	$2.50	$20.00	$30.00
Children 46" tall or under	$0.50	n/a	n/a	n/a
CommuterLink	**Base Fare**	**Day Pass**	**30-Day Pass**	
General	$3.50	$10.00	$95.00	
Student (grades 1-12)	$3.50	$10.00	$95.00	
Senior (60+)/Disabled	$2.75	$7.00	$70.00	
Medicare Card Holder	$2.75	$7.00	$70.00	
Veteran	$2.75	$7.00	$70.00	
Children 46" tall or under	$2.75	n/a	n/a	
Dial-A-Ride	**Base Fare**	**10-Ticket Books**		
Senior/Disabled	$3.50	$35.00		
Medicare Card Holder	$3.50	$35.00		
Children under 46”	$0.75	n/a		

Source: RTA

RTA administers the following cooperative fare agreements and subsidy programs:

- University of California, Riverside – U-Pass Program, Route 51 Crest Cruiser, Route 56
- Riverside City College – Go-Pass Program
- Moreno Valley College – Go-Pass Program
- La Sierra University – U-Pass Program
- California Baptist University – U-Pass Program
- Mt. San Jacinto College – Go-Pass Program
- City of Temecula – Route 55 Temecula Trolley
- Riverside County Transportation Commission – Festival of Lights Shuttle
- Norco College – Go-Pass Program

RTA has transfer agreements with the following transit agencies:

- Corona Cruiser, Omnitrans, SunLine, Banning Connect, and City of Beaumont Transit: 1-Day and multi-day passes are accepted for base fare ($1.50 for General/Youth and $0.70 for Senior/ Disabled with proper ID) on local fixed-route buses at transfer locations only. Transfer media are not valid for DAR service on SunLine, Banning Connect, and Beaumont Transit. Omnitrans transfer media is valid on CommuterLink with payment of any fare differential. Omnitrans transfer media is not valid on DAR, and RTA transfer media is not valid on Access (Omnitrans demand-response service).

- Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA): 1-Day, multi-day, and Agency-issued ID fares are accepted on Routes 15, 200, and 205 only in Orange County and only for base fare ($1.50 for General/Youth and $0.70 for Senior/Disabled/Veteran with proper ID). Additional fare is required. OCTA passes are not accepted in Riverside County.
- Metrolink: RTA accepts valid Metrolink passes for the full fare on routes that serve Metrolink stations for customers traveling to or from a Metrolink station during the period from one hour before to one hour after Metrolink's service hours. The Metrolink pass must be valid on the day of travel. New, unvalidated 10-trip Metrolink passes carried by passengers traveling to Metrolink stations are also accepted on boardings as those pass-holders are required to validate their new passes at the stations. Metrolink passes are not valid on DAR service.

RTA has service agreements or memorandums of understanding (MOU) with the following agencies/organizations:

- Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians – bus stop agreement
- PLACE Performance – Trolley dances
- Moreno Valley Mall Holding LLC – bus stop agreement
- Menifee Valley Medical Center – bus stop agreement
- City of Riverside – Bike share facility at bus stop (Magnolia & Terracina)
- Family Service Association – bus stop agreement
- Wakeland Housing and Development Corporation – applying for funds to make sustainable transportation infrastructure improvements and the construction of transit amenities
- RCTC – ATIS equipment and maintenance of restrooms at transit centers
- Southern California Regional Rail Authority – Metrolink bus bridge service

Vehicle Fleet

Based on the FY 2024-25 Short Range Transit Plan, there were a total of 273 revenue vehicles in the RTA fleet as shown in Table I-4 below. Fixed-route vehicles totaled 197 (121 for directly operated service, 59 for contracted service), while demand- response vehicles totaled 93 (excluding taxis). The entire fixed-route fleet has been converted to compressed natural gas (CNG) fuel.

Table I-4
Vehicle Fleet

Vehicle Type	Year	Number of Vehicles	Service Mode	Seating
Directly Operated Fixed Route/CommuterLink (121 vehicles)				
Gillig G27D102N4	2013	1	Commuter Bus	38
Gillig G27D102N4	2014	2	Commuter Bus	38
Gillig G27D102N4	2016	9	Commuter Bus	38
Gillig G27D102N4	2013	7	Fixed Route	38
Gillig G27D102N4	2014	4	Fixed Route	38
Gillig G27D102N4	2016	28	Fixed Route	38
Gillig G31D102H4	2023	51	Fixed Route	38

Vehicle Type	Year	Number of Vehicles	Service Mode	Seating
Gillig G31D102H4	2024	19	Fixed Route	38
Contracted Fixed Route (59 vehicles)				
Hometown Villager	2017	3	Fixed Route	28
Glaval Entourage	2018	19	Fixed Route	28
Hometown Villager	2018	2	Fixed Route	28
Startrans Senator II	2018	2	Fixed Route	12
Glaval Entourage	2019	3	Fixed Route	28
Glaval Entourage	2020	30	Fixed Route	28
Contracted Demand Response (93 vehicles)				
Glaval Universal	2017	1	Demand Response	12
Startrans Senator II	2018	30	Demand Response	12
Startrans Senator II	2020	37	Demand Response	12
Startrans Senator II	2024	25	Demand Response	12

Source: RTA FY 2024-25 Short-Range Transit Plan-TransTrack Manager

In addition to the revenue vehicles, RTA has a fleet of 58 non-revenue support vehicles. Replacement and expansion of the fleet is determined by the Fleet Management Plan.

Fleet Facilities

RTA operates directly operated fixed-route service out of two facilities; one located in the City of Riverside and the other in the City of Hemet. While operations and maintenance are provided at both facilities, most of RTA's administrative employees are located in the main Riverside office. Contracted fixed- route and DAR services are operated out of two facilities in the City of Perris. CNG is available at the Riverside and Hemet facilities for the Agency's alternative fueled fleet. Because of the extensive investment needed for CNG technology and fueling stations, RTA's maintenance facility in Hemet also serves as a public fueling station for CNG vehicles. RTA generates additional revenue from the sale and use of CNG. The current facilities can accommodate present operations and have room for limited expansion if necessary.

Section II

Operator Compliance Requirements

This section of the audit report contains the analysis of RTA's ability to comply with state requirements for continued receipt of TDA funds. The evaluation uses the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies*, which was developed by Caltrans to assess transit operators. The guidebook contains a checklist of eleven measures taken from relevant sections of the PUC and the California Code of Regulations. Each of these requirements is discussed in the table below, including a description of the system's efforts to comply with the requirements. In addition, the findings from the compliance review are described in the text following the table.

Table II-1
Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix

Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
The transit operator has submitted annual reports to the RTPA based upon the Uniform System of Accounts and Records established by the State Controller. Report is due within seven (7) months after the end of the fiscal year (on or before January 31). The report shall contain underlying data from audited financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, if this data is available.	PUC, Section 99243	Completion/submittal dates: *General Public:* FY 2022: December 27, 2022 FY 2023: December 18, 2023 FY 2024: December 18, 2024 *Specialized Service:* FY 2022: December 27, 2022 FY 2023: December 18, 2023 FY 2024: December 18, 2024 RTA submitted separate Transit Operators Financial Transactions Reports for both fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services. It is noted GoMicro supplemental operating data is not separately reported in the fixed-route report. **Conclusion: Complied.**
The operator has submitted annual fiscal and compliance audits to the RTPA and to the State Controller within 180 days following the end of the fiscal year (Dec. 27) or has received the appropriate 90-day	PUC, Section 99245	Completion/submittal dates: FY 2022: October 13, 2022 FY 2023: October 6, 2023 FY 2024: October 4, 2024

Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
extension by the RTPA allowed by law.		*Source: FY 2022–2024 RTA Basic Financial Reports* **Conclusion: Complied.**
The CHP has, within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim submitted by an operator, certified the operator's compliance with Vehicle Code Section 1808.1 following a CHP inspection of the operator's terminal.	PUC, Section 99251 B	RTA and its contract operators participate in the California Highway Patrol (CHP) Transit Operator Compliance Program in which the CHP has conducted inspections within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim. Terminal inspections were conducted at RTA operations facilities located in Riverside at 1825 3rd Street and in Hemet at 700 Scaramella Circle. Inspections were also conducted at the contract operator facilities located at 110 South G Street, Perris (Transdev/Southland Transit), and at 340 Mountain Avenue, Perris (Empire Transportation). *RTA – Riverside:* Inspection dates applicable to the audit period were April 12, 13 & 14, 2022; April 11, 12 & 13, 2023; and April 8, 9 & 16, 2024. *RTA – Hemet:* Inspection dates applicable to the audit period were June 13, 2022; July 5, 6 & 7, 2023; and July 9 & 10, 2024. Note: CHP inspections in 2023 and 2024 noted that because RTA had two or more satisfactory terminal ratings, the number of maintenance records inspected was reduced to one-half the number of vehicles inspected. *Transdev/Southland Transit – Perris:* Inspection dates applicable to the audit period were April 13, 2022; September 5 & 6, 2023; April 17 & 30, 2024 and May 1, 2024.

Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		Empire Transportation – Perris: Inspection dates applicable to the audit period were March 28, 29 & 30, 2022; April 26, 27 & 28, 2023; December 22, 2023; and January 2 & 3, 2024. Inspections were rated satisfactory by the CHP. **Conclusion: Complied.**
The operator's claim for TDA funds is submitted in compliance with rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA for such claims.	PUC, Section 99261	As a condition of approval, RTA's annual claims for Local Transportation Funds and State Transit Assistance are submitted in compliance with the rules and regulations adopted by RCTC. **Conclusion: Complied.**
If an 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, Section 99270.1	RTA is subject to Section 99270.1 and is required to achieve or exceed a mandatory blended farebox recovery ratio target established by RCTC. Target** Actual* FY 2022: 16.89% 24.15% FY 2023: 17.34% 30.42% FY 2024: 17.20% 24.98% *Includes eligible non-fare revenue in calculation. ** Assembly Bill 90, passed into law and signed by the governor in June 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts, prohibits the imposition of penalties on a transit operator that does not maintain the required ratio of fare revenues to operating cost during the FY 2019–20 or FY 2020–21. **AB 149 extends the penalty exemption through FY 2022–23 and authorizes transit operators to include federal grant funds as

Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		local funds for the purpose of computing fare revenue ratios. This bill, until July 1, 2026, would exempt an operator from specified requirements related to fare box ratios and eligibility standards for a fiscal year in which the operator expended from local funding, as defined, an amount for transit operations not less than the amount the operator expended from local funding for transit operations during FY 2018–19. *Source: FY 2022–2024 RTA Basic Financial Statements* **Conclusion: Complied.**
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, Section 99266	Percentage change in the annual RTA operating budget: FY 2022: +4.0% FY 2023: +8.8% FY 2024: +9.4% *Source: RTA Operating Expense Budgets, All Departments for FYs 2022–2024* **Conclusion: Complied.**
The operator's definitions of performance measures are consistent with Public Utilities Code Section 99247, including (a) operating cost, (b) operating cost per passenger, (c) operating cost per vehicle service hour, (d) passengers per vehicle service hour, (e) passengers per vehicle service mile, (f) total passengers, (g) transit vehicle, (h) vehicle service hours, (i) vehicle service miles, and (j) vehicle service hours per employee.	PUC, Section 99247	RTA's performance measures are defined in accordance with PUC requirements. RTA collects data electronically and employs a verification method including auto-entry into TransTrack. **Conclusion: Complied.**

Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
If the operator serves an urbanized area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to one-fifth (20 percent), unless it is in a county with a population of less than 500,000, in which case it must maintain a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs of at least equal to three-twentieths (15 percent), if so determined by the RTPA.	PUC, Sections 99268.2, 99268.3, 99268.1	RTA must meet a blended farebox recovery ratio target that is under a separate operator compliance requirement. **Conclusion: Not Applicable.**
If the operator serves a rural area, or provides exclusive services to elderly and disabled persons, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to one-tenth (10 percent).	PUC, Sections 99268.2, 99268.4, 99268.5	RTA must meet a blended farebox recovery ratio target that is under a separate operator compliance requirement. **Conclusion: Not Applicable.**
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 within 40 years.	PUC, Section 99271	As described in the annual basic financial statements, RTA contributes to the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) under the 2% @ 62 provision on or after January 1, 2013 (2% @ 55 provision prior to January 1, 2013). Participants are required to contribute 7%–8.25% of their annual covered salary. In accordance with labor union MOUs, RTA contributes 9.6% to its employees' retirement. **Conclusion: Complied.**
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.	California Code of Regulations, Section 6754(a)(3)	RTA utilizes federal funds that are available to the Agency, as reported in the National Transit Database Reports (F-10) as follows: FY 2022: $46,831,633 (Operations) $4,081,529 (Capital) FY 2023: $34,640,082 (Operations) $5,019,428 (Capital) FY 2024: $23,059,595 (Operations) $5,694,507 (Capital)

Operator Compliance Requirements	Reference	Compliance Efforts
		Conclusion: Complied.

Findings and Observations from Operator Compliance Requirements Matrix

1. Of the compliance requirements pertaining to RTA, the operator fully complied with all nine applicable requirements. Two additional compliance requirements did not apply to RTA (rural and urbanized farebox recovery ratios), as the transit operator is subject to the blended ratio under PUC 99270.1.

2. The blended farebox recovery ratio targets approved by RCTC for RTA service were met in each year of the audit period pursuant to Public Utilities Code, Section 99270.1. The minimum farebox recovery ratios that RTA was required to meet were 16.89 percent in FY 2022; 17.34 percent in FY 2023; and 17.20 percent in FY 2024. Including eligible non-fare revenue, the farebox recovery ratio was 24.15 percent in FY 2022; 30.42 percent in FY 2023; and 24.98 percent in FY 2024[1], according to the audited basic financial statements. The average annual farebox recovery ratio was 26.52 percent. RTA exceeded the minimum standard in all three audit years.

3. RTA and its contract operators participated in the CHP Transit Operator Compliance Program and received vehicle inspections within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim. Terminal inspections received satisfactory ratings from the CHP. CHP inspections in 2023 and 2024 for Hemet noted that because RTA had two or more satisfactory terminal ratings, the number of maintenance records inspected was reduced to one-half the number of vehicles inspected.

4. The operating budget exhibited modest increases and did not exceed 15 percent during the period. Following a 4.0 percent increase in FY 2022, the budget increased 8.8 percent in FY 2023 and 9.4 percent in FY 2024. Purchased transportation costs primarily from the introduction of the GoMicro transit service in 2023 and increased demand for dial-a-ride increased the total agency budget.

[1] AB 90, passed into law and signed by the governor in June 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts, prohibits the imposition of penalties on a transit operator that does not maintain the required ratio of fare revenues to operating cost during FY 2019–20 or FY 2020–21. AB 149 extends the penalty exemption through FY 2022–23 and authorizes transit operators to include federal grant funds as local funds for the purpose of computing fare revenue ratios. This bill, until July 1, 2026, would exempt an operator from specified requirements related to fare box ratios and eligibility standards for a fiscal year in which the operator expended from local funding, as defined, an amount for transit operations not less than the amount the operator expended from local funding for transit operations during FY 2018–19.

Section III

Prior Triennial Performance Audit Recommendations

RTA's efforts to implement the recommendations made in the prior triennial audit are examined in this section of the report. For this purpose, each prior recommendation for the Agency is described, followed by a discussion of the Agency's efforts to implement the recommendation. Conclusions concerning the extent to which the recommendations have been adopted by the Agency are then presented.

Prior Recommendation 1

Conduct cost benefit for e-procurement alternatives.

Background: The Procurement Department solicited bids through the RTA website and experienced increased competitive bids and vendor interest from a virtual, web-based environment. The department maintains the Agency's vendor list, and filters bid notifications by vendor registration. Procurement tasks are delegated among the employees in the department. For any purchases more than $100,000, Board approval is required.

The RTA website provided the online conduit for bid opportunities which RTA must coordinate with the contracted webmaster to publish, a repeated, manually driven process that involves use of an Access database. RTA was not using established external procurement platforms such as PlanetBids due to cost-to-benefit results that did not warrant investment. However, procurement staff did see potential efficiencies and staff time savings that could result from the use of such e-procurement software, especially because of greater automation, increased remote vendor participation, and acceptance of electronic documentation. It was suggested that this trade-off analysis of transitioning to an e-procurement service continue as the technology matures and better economies could be realized for an Agency like RTA that will see increases in the number and value of procurements. The cost-benefit analysis would include variables such as personnel time, cost savings, process efficiencies, vendor profile maintenance, and increased competitive bidding, which could offset and justify the investment cost. Transit agencies that use procurement services like PlanetBids include RCTC, North County Transit District, Sacramento Regional Transit District, and Long Beach Transit.

Actions taken by RTA:

In response, RTA staff performed a cost-benefit analysis of e-procurement platforms during the development of the FY 2023 budget. It was determined that a moderately priced e-procurement platform could yield the type of benefits needed to enhance Agency operations. The Agency conducted a thorough evaluation process, including vendor demos and scope definition, ultimately selecting PlanetBids from six proposals. The Agency began using PlanetBids, an e-procurement platform, in December 2022.

Over the course of 2022 to 2024, response rates to RFPs have consistently grown, indicating successful vendor engagement and adoption of the new system. The agency has a five-year contract with

PlanetBids and is considering future expansion into additional modules, such as performance tracking, though current efforts remain focused on vendor management.

Conclusion:

This recommendation has been implemented.

Section IV

TDA Performance Indicators

This section reviews RTA's performance in providing transit service to the community in an efficient and effective manner. TDA requires that at least five specific performance indicators be reported, which are contained in the following tables. Farebox recovery ratio is not one of the five specific indicators but is a requirement for continued TDA funding. Therefore, farebox calculation is also included. Two additional performance indicators, operating cost per mile and average fare per passenger, are included as well. Findings from the analysis are contained in the section following the tables.

Tables IV-1 through IV-5 provide the performance indicators for the following services:

- System-wide
- Fixed Route, Directly Operated
- Fixed Route, Contracted
- General Public (total of fixed route directly operated and contracted)
- Demand Response (Dial-A-Ride)

Graphs are also provided to depict the trends in the indicators. Data in the tables and graphs were derived from several sources, including the RTA Basic Financial Statements *(audited)*; Table 2.1 SRTP Performance Reports from TransTrack and RTA's Pay Hours Report to calculate full-time employee equivalents. Sources are noted in footnotes below the tables.

Table IV-1
TDA Performance Indicators, System-wide

Verified TDA Statistics & Performance Indicators	Base Year FY 2021	Audit Review Period FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	% Change FY 2021- FY 2024
Operating Costs (less depreciation) (1)	$79,902,271	$76,329,506	$92,394,567	$98,246,796	23.0%
Adjusted Operating Costs (less depreciation, grant expenses, & expenses from exempt routes) (1)	$64,462,242	$45,200,127	$48,026,566	$59,622,399	-7.5%
Unlinked Passengers	3,015,434	3,759,770	5,246,457	5,754,320	90.8%
Vehicle Service Hours	527,715	520,338	619,239	618,449	17.2%
Vehicle Service Miles	8,206,885	8,958,230	9,238,974	9,166,978	11.7%
Employee FTEs	611	640	701	730	19.5%
Passenger Fare Revenue	$3,217,731	$4,216,068	$6,316,413	$7,558,508	134.9%
Other Fare Revenue Contributions	$3,100,820	$6,700,592	$8,292,766	$7,333,530	136.5%
Total Fare Revenue	$6,318,551	$10,916,660	$14,609,179	$14,892,038	135.7%
Operating Cost per Passenger (2)	$26.50	$20.30	$17.61	$17.07	-35.6%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour (2)	$151.41	$146.69	$149.21	$158.86	4.9%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile (2)	$9.74	$8.52	$10.00	$10.72	10.1%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	5.71	7.23	8.47	9.3	62.9%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	0.37	0.42	0.57	0.63	70.3%
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee FTE	864	813	883	847	-2.0%
Average Fare per Passenger	$1.07	$1.12	$1.20	$1.31	22.4%
Farebox Recovery Ratio (passenger fares only) (2)	4.0%	5.5%	6.8%	7.7%	92.5%
Fare Recovery Ratio with local support funds (3)	9.80%	24.15%	30.42%	24.98%	154.80%
Systemwide Farebox Recovery Ratio Target	17.81%	16.89%	17.34%	17.20%	-3.43%
Percentage Change in Consumer Price Index (CPI-All Items & Consumers, LA-Riverside-Orange Co.)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

(1) Systemwide operating costs as shown in RTA's Basic Financial Statement reports. Modal operational costs in subsequent tables are noted as shown in RTA's NTD reports. Modal operational costs do not sum to operational costs due to differing data sources.

(2) Calculation uses operating costs less depreciation.

(3) Calculation includes adjusted operational costs and local support funds as allowed by RCTC's Fare Box Recovery Ratio Policy.

Sources: RTA's Basic Financial Statements, Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack, and RTA's Pay Hours Report

Table IV-2
TDA Performance Indicators
Fixed Route, Directly Operated

Verified TDA Statistics & Performance Indicators	Base Year FY 2021	Audit Review Period FY 2022	Audit Review Period FY 2023	Audit Review Period FY 2024	% Change FY 2021- FY 2024
Operating Costs [1]	$55,643,500	$30,080,865	$58,358,667	$45,646,235	-18.0%
Unlinked Passengers	2,468,106	3,011,251	4,251,589	4,681,547	89.7%
Vehicle Service Hours	335,064	305,090	353,519	344,886	2.9%
Vehicle Service Miles	4,999,254	5,346,891	4,921,428	4,765,897	-4.7%
Employee FTEs	387	368	371	375	-3.1%
Passenger Fare Revenue	$5,279,941	$7,096,187	$11,295,579	$11,896,667	125.3%
Operating Cost per Passenger [2]	$22.55	$9.99	$13.73	$9.75	-56.8%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour [2]	$166.07	$98.60	$165.08	$132.35	-20.3%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile [2]	$11.13	$5.63	$11.86	$9.58	-13.9%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	7.37	9.87	12.03	13.57	84.1%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	0.49	0.56	0.86	0.98	100.0%
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee FTE	866	829	953	920	6.2%
Average Fare per Passenger	$2.14	$2.36	$2.66	$2.54	18.7%
Farebox Recovery Ratio (Fixed Route Directly Operated Mode Only) [2]	9.5%	23.6%	19.4%	26.1%	174.7%
Percentage Change in Consumer Price Index (CPI-All Items & Consumers, LA-Riverside-Orange Co.)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

[1] Modal operating costs as shown in RTA's Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack. Modal operational costs do not sum to systemwide operational costs due to differing data sources. Systemwide operating costs as shown in RTA's Basic Financial Statement reports.

[2] Calculation uses modal operational cost as reported in Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack

Sources: Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack and RTA's Pay Hours Report

Table IV-3
TDA Performance Indicators
Fixed Route, Contracted

Verified TDA Statistics & Performance Indicators	Base Year FY 2021	Audit Review Period FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	% Change FY 2021- FY 2024
Operating Costs [1]	$13,633,714	$15,119,262	$17,646,736	$13,976,164	2.5%
Unlinked Passengers	451,701	609,082	796,380	841,038	86.2%
Vehicle Service Hours	128,889	129,645	149,120	142,230	10.4%
Vehicle Service Miles	2,025,881	2,020,738	2,211,772	2,120,351	4.7%
Employee FTEs	127	178	186	193	52.0%
Passenger Fare Revenue	$636,057	$3,820,473	$5,422,425	$2,995,371	370.9%
Operating Cost per Passenger [2]	$30.18	$24.82	$22.16	$16.62	-44.9%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour [2]	$105.78	$116.62	$118.34	$98.26	-7.1%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile [2]	$6.73	$7.48	$7.98	$4.67	-30.6%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	3.5	4.7	5.34	5.91	68.9%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	0.22	0.3	0.36	0.28	27.3%
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee FTE	1,015	728	802	737	-27.4%
Average Fare per Passenger	$1.41	$6.27	$6.81	$3.56	152.5%
Farebox Recovery Ratio (Fixed Route, Contracted Mode Only) [2]	4.7%	25.3%	30.7%	21.4%	355.3%
Percentage Change in Consumer Price Index (CPI-All Items & Consumers, LA-Riverside-Orange Co.)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

[1] Modal operating costs as shown in RTA's Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack. Modal operational costs do not sum to systemwide operational costs due to differing data sources. Systemwide operating costs as shown in RTA's Basic Financial Statement reports.

[2] Calculation uses modal operational cost as reported in Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack

Sources: Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack and RTA's Pay Hours Report

Table IV-4
TDA Performance Indicators
General Public Service (Directly Operated and Contracted Fixed Route)

Verified TDA Statistics & Performance Indicators	Base Year FY 2021	Audit Review Period FY 2022	Audit Review Period FY 2023	Audit Review Period FY 2024	% Change FY 2021- FY 2024
Operating Costs [1]	$69,277,214	$45,200,127	$48,026,566	$59,622,399	-13.9%
Unlinked Passengers	2,919,807	3,620,333	5,047,969	5,522,585	89.1%
Vehicle Service Hours	463,953	434,735	502,639	487,116	5.0%
Vehicle Service Miles	7,025,135	7,367,629	7,133,200	6,886,248	-2.0%
Employee FTEs	514	546	557	568	10.5%
Passenger Fare Revenue	$5,915,998	$10,916,660	$14,609,179	$14,892,038	151.7%
Operating Cost per Passenger [2]	$23.73	$12.49	$9.51	$10.80	-54.5%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour [2]	$149.32	$103.97	$95.55	$122.40	-18.0%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile [2]	$9.86	$6.13	$6.73	$8.66	-12.2%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	6.29	8.33	10.04	11.34	80.3%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	0.42	0.49	0.71	0.8	90.5%
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee FTE	903	796	921	858	-5.0%
Average Fare per Passenger	$2.03	$3.02	$2.89	$2.70	33.0%
Farebox Recovery Ratio (Total Fixed Route Mode Only) [2]	8.5%	24.2%	30.4%	25.0%	194.1%
Percentage Change in Consumer Price Index (CPI-All Items & Consumers, LA-Riverside-Orange Co.)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

[1] Modal operating costs as shown in RTA's Note 10 of RTA's Basic Financial Statement Reports for FY 2022 through FY 2024. FY 2021 costs are derived from Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack.

[2] Calculation uses audited operational cost as reported in Note 10 of RTA's Basic Financial Statement Reports

Sources: RTA's Basic Financial Statements, Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack, and RTA's Pay Hours Report

Table IV-5
TDA Performance Indicators
Dial-A-Ride & Microtransit Service

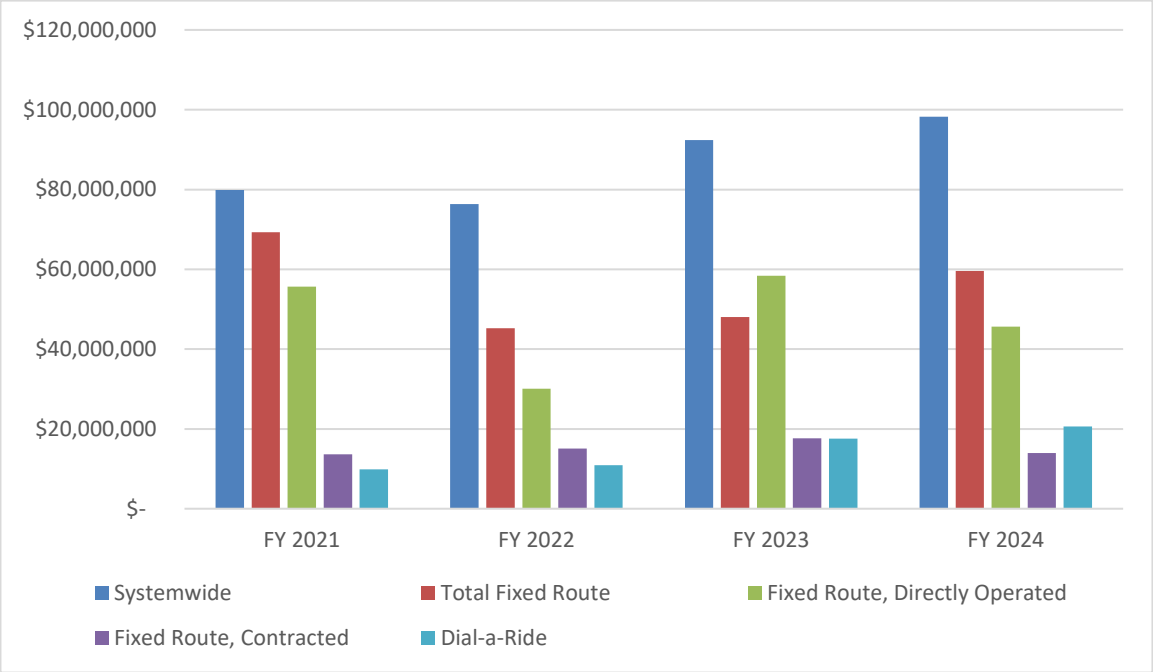
Verified TDA Statistics & Performance Indicators	Base Year FY 2021	Audit Review Period FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	% Change FY 2021- FY 2024
Operating Costs [1]	$9,848,802	$10,903,707	$17,561,693	$20,597,715	109.1%
Unlinked Passengers	95,627	139,437	198,488	231,735	142.3%
Vehicle Service Hours	63,762	85,603	116,600	131,333	106.0%
Vehicle Service Miles	1,181,750	1,590,601	2,105,774	2,280,730	93.0%
Employee FTEs	97	94	144	162	67.0%
Passenger Fare Revenue	$845,778	$827,289	$1,136,348	$1,321,679	56.3%
Operating Cost per Passenger [2]	$102.99	$78.20	$88.48	$88.88	-13.7%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour [2]	$154.46	$127.38	$150.61	$156.84	1.5%
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Mile [2]	$8.33	$6.86	$8.34	$9.03	8.4%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	1.50	1.63	1.70	1.76	17.7%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.10	25.6%
Vehicle Service Hours per Employee FTE	657.3	910.7	809.7	810.7	23.3%
Average Fare per Passenger	$8.84	$5.93	$5.73	$5.70	-35.5%
Farebox Recovery Ratio [2]	8.59%	7.59%	6.47%	6.42%	-25.3%
Percentage Change in Consumer Price Index (CPI-All Items & Consumers, LA-Riverside-Orange Co.)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

[1] Modal operating costs as shown in RTA's Note 10 of RTA's Basic Financial Statement Reports for FY 2022 through FY 2024. FY 2021 costs are derived from Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack.

[2] Calculation uses audited operational cost as reported in Note 10 of RTA's Basic Financial Statement Reports

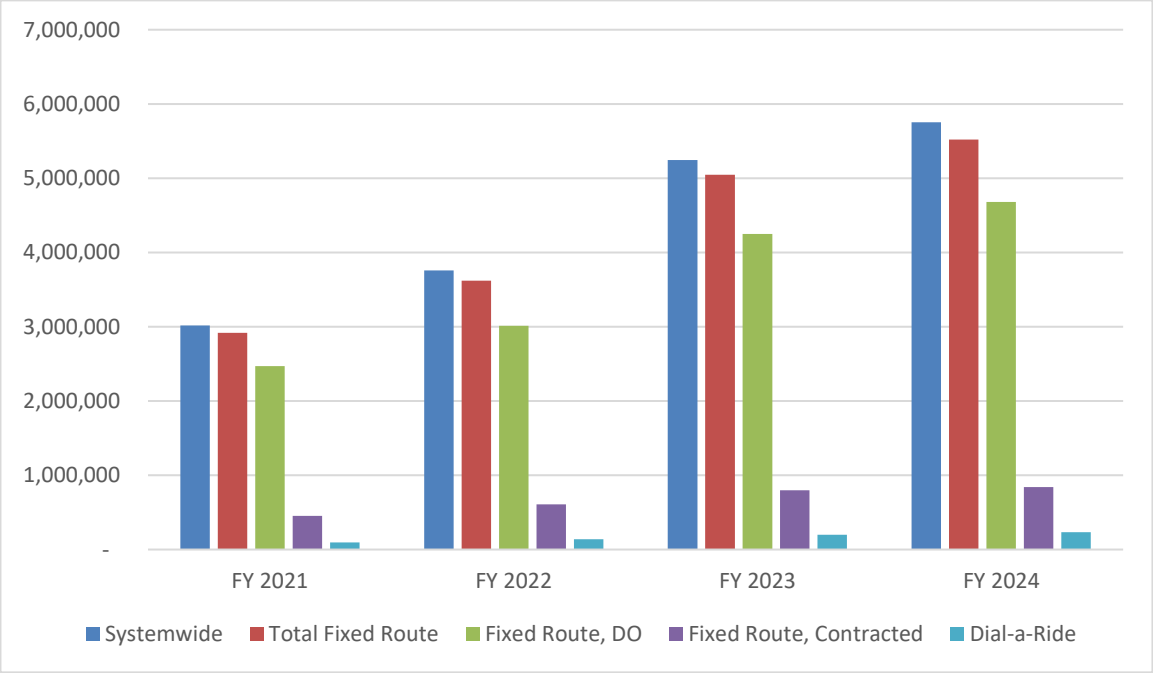
Sources: RTA's Basic Financial Statements, Table 2.1 - SRTP Performance Report in TransTrack, and RTA's Pay Hours Report

Graph IV-1
Operating Costs
System-wide, General Public (Direct & Contracted), and Demand Response

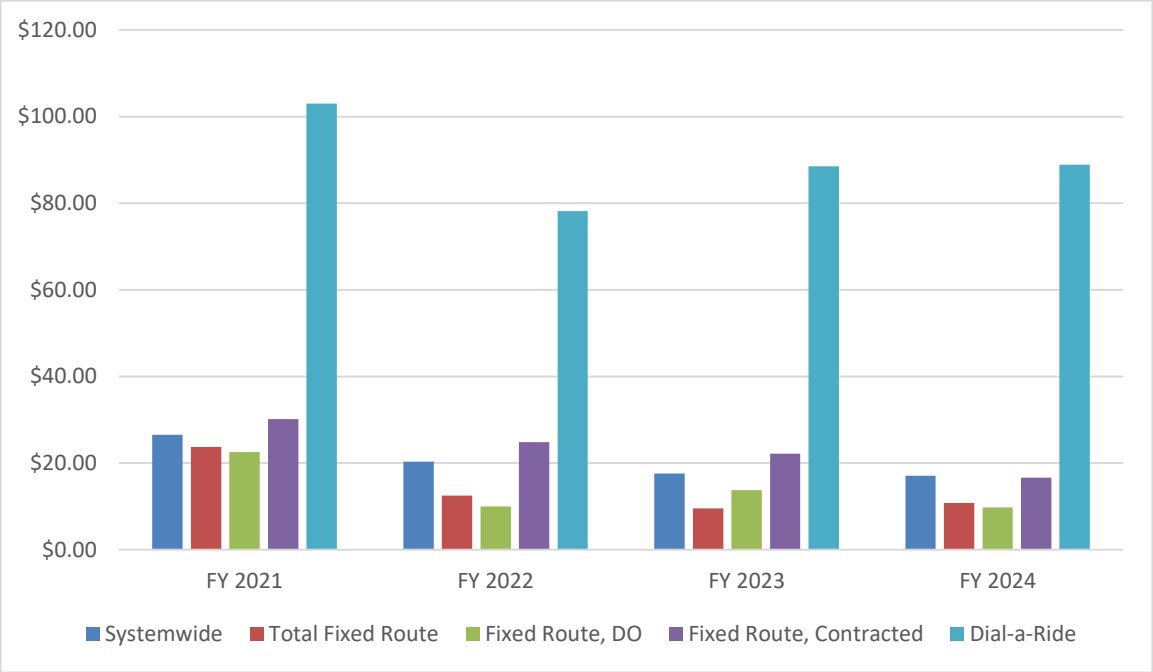


Note: Graph displays non-adjusted operating cost, less depreciation.

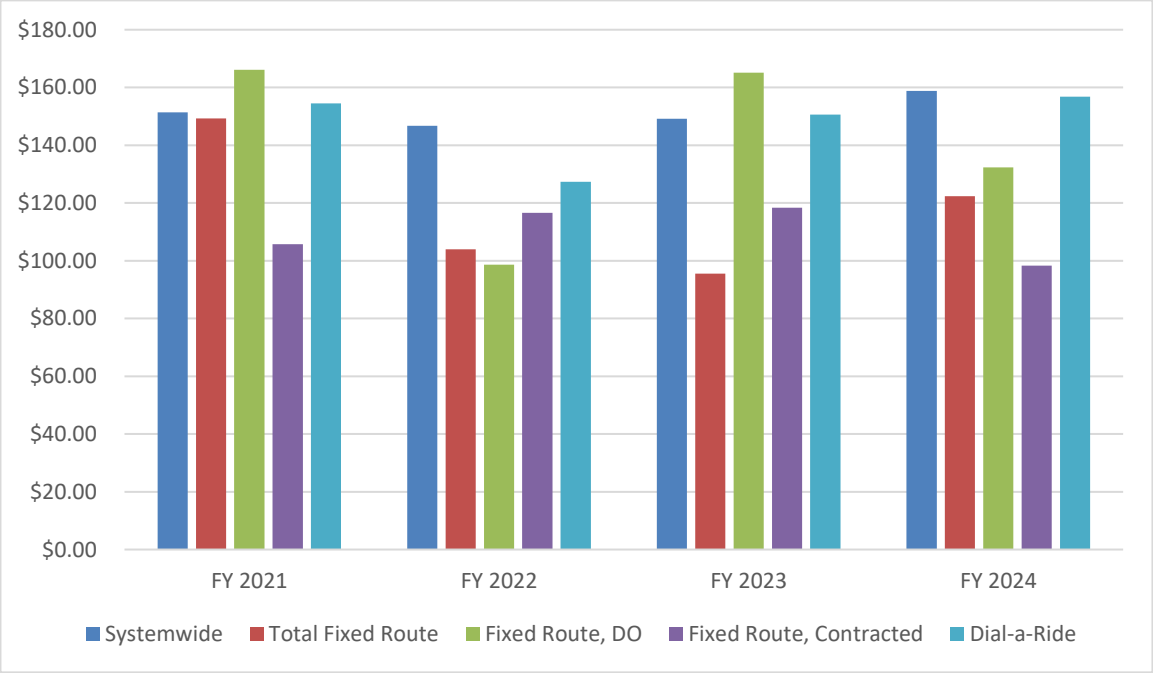
Graph IV-2
Ridership
System-wide, General Public (Direct & Contracted), and Demand Response



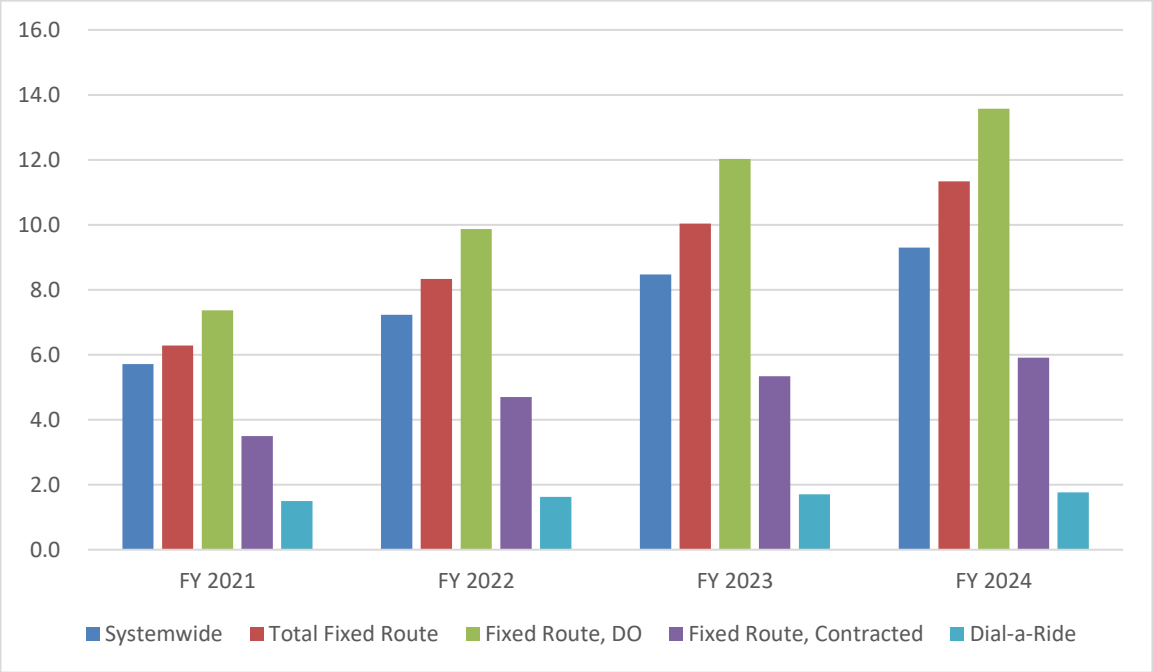
Graph IV-3
Operating Cost per Passenger
System-wide, General Public (Direct & Contracted), and Demand Response



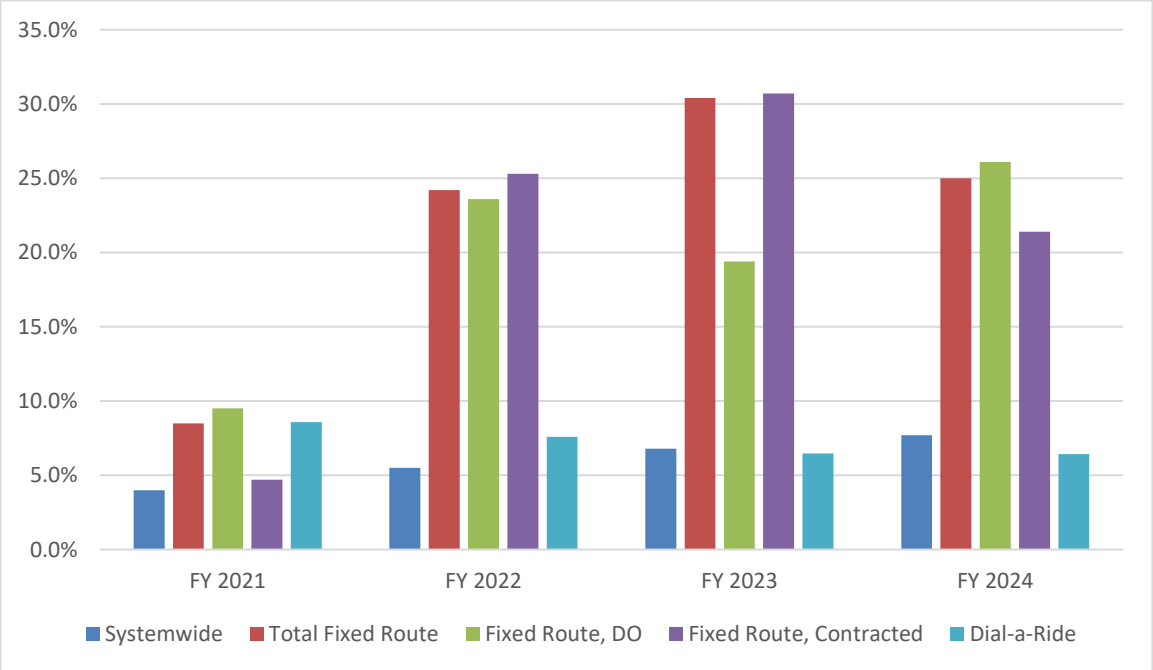
Graph IV-4
Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour
System-wide, General Public (Direct & Contracted), and Demand Response



Graph IV-5
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour
System-wide, General Public (Direct & Contracted), and Demand Response

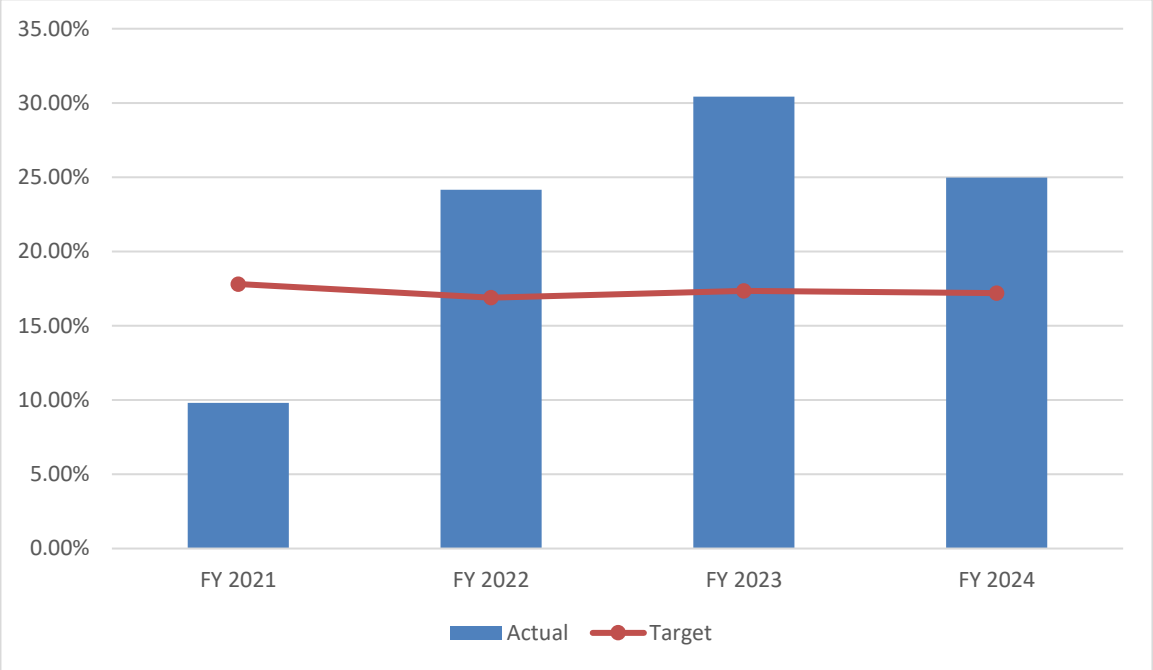


Graph IV-6
Fare Recovery Ratio
Fixed Route (Direct & Contracted), and Demand Response



Note: Modal farebox ratios are unaudited.

Graph IV-7
System-wide Fare Recovery Ratio: Actuals & Targets
(Using Adjusted Operating Costs & Other Fare Contributions)



Statement of Facts from Verification of TDA Performance Indicators

1. **Operating costs** (less depreciation) system-wide increased by 23.0 percent. Operating costs for RTA's general public service decreased by 13.9 percent over the audit period while demand response service increased by 109.1 percent. Both metrics reflect a resumption in service following the end of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as new and expanded service. In fact, adjusted operating costs (less depreciation, grant expenses, and expenses from exempt routes) decreased by 7.5 percent over the audit period.

2. **Ridership** system-wide increased by 90.8 percent during the audit period, which equates to a two-thirds return of the pre-pandemic level of ridership. Ridership on general public service increased by 89.1 percent from FY 2021 to FY 2024, from 2.9 million to 5.5 million passengers. Ridership on demand response service increased by 142.3 percent, from 95,627 to 231,735.

3. The provision of **vehicle service hours and miles** for general public service increased by 5.0 percent and decreased by 2.0 percent, respectively. Demand response vehicle service hours and miles increased by 106.0 percent and 93.0 percent, respectively.

4. **Operating cost per passenger** decreased by 35.6 percent system-wide, by 54.5 percent for general public service, and by 13.7 percent for demand response service. This performance measure reflects a greater return in ridership in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. **Operating cost per vehicle service hour** increased by 4.9 percent system-wide, decreased by 18.0 percent for general public service, and increased by 1.5 percent for demand response service.

6. **Operating cost per vehicle service mile** decreased by 12.2 percent for general public service, increased by 8.4 percent for demand response service, and increased by 10.1 percent system-wide.

7. **Passengers per vehicle service hour** increased by 62.9 percent system-wide, by 80.3 percent for general public service, and by 17.7 percent for demand response service. **Passengers per vehicle service mile** increased by 90.5 percent for general public service, by 25.6 percent for demand response service, and by 70.3 percent system-wide.

8. **Vehicle service hours per employee full time equivalent (FTE)** for general public service decreased by 5.0 percent, from 903 in FY 2021 to 858 in FY 2024, but increased for demand response by 23.3 percent, from 657 in FY 2021 to 811 in FY 2024.

9. The **average fare per passenger** increased 22.4 percent system-wide, from $1.07 in FY 2021 to $1.31 in FY 2024. The average fare for general public service increased by 33.0 percent, from $2.03 in FY 2021 to $2.70 in FY 2024. Average fare for demand response service decreased by 35.5 percent, from $8.84 in FY 2021 to $5.70 in FY 2024.

10. The **RCTC blended farebox recovery** is based on a system-wide, audited, blended farebox

recovery ratio target that accounts for both fixed-route and DAR service and includes multiple eligible non-fare revenue such as local Measure A sales tax contributions, LCTOP operating grant funds, Renewable Identification Numbers and Low Carbon Fuel Standard Revenues, and other locally generated revenue. State legislative relief for transit such as recognizing the value of free/discounted fares also played a large role raising the farebox recovery ratio well beyond the minimum standard in all three audit years, with adjusted farebox recovery ratios of 24.15 percent in FY 2022, 30.42 percent in FY 2023, and 24.98 percent in FY 2024. These exceeded the adjusted farebox targets each fiscal year set by RCTC of 16.89 percent, 17.34 percent, and 17.20 percent, respectively.

Systemwide operating costs (excluding depreciation) rose by 23.0 percent, from $79.9 million in FY 2021 to $98.2 million in FY 2024. However, adjusted operating costs, which exclude depreciation, grant expenses, and exempt routes—declined by 7.5 percent, reflecting cost management efforts. Total fare revenue more than doubled, increasing 135.7 percent to $14.9 million, driven by robust growth in both passenger fares and other fare contributions. Unlinked passenger trips surged by 90.8 percent, from 3.0 million to 5.75 million, representing approximately two-thirds of pre-pandemic levels. General public service ridership grew by 89.1 percent, from 2.9 million to 5.5 million passengers, while demand response ridership rose by 142.3 percent, from 95,627 to 231,735 trips. These gains underscore the agency's success in restoring mobility and attracting riders back to transit. Systemwide vehicle service hours and miles grew by 17.2 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively.

Operating cost per passenger declined sharply by 35.6 percent, from $26.50 to $17.07, indicating improved cost efficiency. Passengers per vehicle service hour rose by 62.9 percent, and passengers per mile by 70.3 percent, reflecting higher utilization of service. Conversely, operating cost per vehicle service hour increased slightly by 4.9 percent, and vehicle service hours per FTE decreased by 2.0 percent, suggesting modest productivity challenges in labor deployment.

Overall, RTA demonstrated strong ridership recovery and revenue growth post-pandemic, coupled with improved farebox recovery and cost efficiency per passenger. While operating costs have increased, the agency's ability to boost productivity and exceed farebox recovery targets reflects positive performance trends.

Section V

Review of Operator Functions

This section provides a review of various functions within RTA. The review highlights accomplishments, issues, and challenges that were determined during the audit period. The following functions were reviewed:

- Operations/Contract Operations
- Maintenance
- Administration and Management
- Planning
- Marketing
- Human Resources/Risk Management
- Procurement
- Information Technology

RTA Mission Statement

Riverside Transit Agency's updated mission is "We enrich lives by removing barriers to connect our community to more."

Major accomplishments during the audit period include:

- Service Recovery and Expansion: RTA restored pre-COVID service levels for its top-performing routes, launched innovative services like Go Micro, introduced new routes such as Route 56 and expanded Route 11, maintained service reliability, and implemented Sustainable Service Plan recommendations.

- Infrastructure and Facilities: Major projects included the construction and opening of the Vine Street Mobility Hub, enhancements to University of California, Riverside (UCR) Bannockburn bus stops, planned expansions of the Hemet facility, and securing funding for hydrogen fueling stations and low-emission buses.

- Fleet Modernization and Future Fuels: RTA modernized its fleet with 70 new CNG buses, addressed technical issues, and committed to hydrogen electric as its future fuel, with infrastructure investments and hydrogen fuel cell buses ordered for 2026.

- Fare Programs and Payment Systems: Innovative fare promotions and modernized payment systems, including the GoMobile app, enhanced ridership, and operational efficiency.

- Workforce Development and Culture: Initiatives like RAMP 22, apprenticeship programs, tuition reimbursement, and improved labor-management relations significantly reduced turnover,

boosted morale, and fostered engagement.

- Safety and Customer Experience: RTA enhanced passenger security with initiatives like "See Something, Say Something," joined anti-human trafficking efforts, improved route disruption management, modernized its website, and strengthened internal communications.

- RTA continued Cooperative Agreements with other transit operators in the region and RCTC for transit station facilities and the operation and maintenance of the Advanced Traveler Information System.

- Completed the transition of contracted fixed-route commuter service to directly operated service.

Operations/Contract Operations

The Operations and Contract Operations Departments are responsible for delivering transit service for all the Agency's fixed- route and demand- response operations, both directly and via private contractors. These departments comprise coach operators, dispatchers, supervisors, and managers who provide the daily interface between RTA and the riding public. Operations and Contract Operations work to maintain scheduled service, manage contracted services, adhere to regulatory requirements, and improve labor relations. The Operations and Contract Operations Departments prepare key performance indicators (KPI) reports that track indicators on a system-wide level, including discipline violations, overtime hours, accidents, and lost service hours. Each KPI is reported at least on a monthly basis.

During this triennial period, RTA has prioritized restoring its services to pre-pandemic levels, transitioning from operating on a Sunday schedule during the pandemic to rapidly reinstating services where it made the most sense to do so. This commitment has facilitated overall growth in ridership over the past three fiscal years, supported by increased service offerings and recruitment efforts. During the initial shutdown in March 2020, RTA maintained operations as an essential service, providing 4,000 to 6,000 trips daily for essential workers, underscoring its role in providing services to those in need.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, RTA undertook extensive measures to recover and adapt its operations, focusing on service restoration, workforce development, and addressing the evolving needs of its community. As described in bullet points above, the audit period highlights numerous initiatives aimed at post-pandemic recovery and growth.

To begin its recovery, the agency primarily prioritized restoring service levels to pre-pandemic standards. By fiscal year 2022, the agency successfully reinstated its top five performing routes to 80 percent of pre-COVID service levels, followed by the next five top-performing routes in fiscal year 2023. This marked efforts to return to full service, moving beyond the reduced Sunday-level schedules implemented during the pandemic.

Recognizing a need for service sustainability and that travel patterns had shifted, RTA launched the Sustainable Service Plan (SSP) as a strategic response to address changing travel patterns post-COVID.

This short-range plan, informed by extensive community feedback, analyzed shifts in mobility needs and led to the implementation of a number of recommendations in fiscal year 2024. Among these was the launch of the Go Micro microtransit service in January 2023 allowing RTA to replace three fixed routes in areas including Hemet and San Jacinto which achieved notable ridership growth and generated an estimated $2 million in annual savings by replacing less efficient fixed routes. Similarly, Route 11 was extended to service the March Veterans Military Project in September 2023.

However, the RapidLink express service was not reinstated, as passenger preferences shifted towards routes with more frequent stops closer to destinations. To maintain service reliability, RTA took proactive measures to avoid cancellations, including deploying supervisors to drive routes when necessary.

In addition to optimizing existing services, RTA expanded its network with the introduction of Route 56 in fiscal year 2023, serving the University of California, Riverside (UCR) area through a partnership with the university. This route, funded in part by UCR, underscores the collaborative efforts to enhance transit options for students and the broader community. This includes RTA's partnership with UCR and the City of Riverside for the construction of a mobility hub near the intersection of Canyon Crest and University. The project included the installation of new sawtooth bus bays, as well as passenger amenities including bus shelters, benches, and trash cans.

Student ridership and pass programs are a cornerstone of RTA's strategy, particularly as universities and colleges increase on-campus activities and reduce virtual classes. Currently, RTA has established pass programs with participating public universities in the area, including UCR, California Baptist University, Mount San Jacinto, and Riverside City College (RCC). These programs address affordability concerns, such as those raised by UCR students during the period when Route 208 (Perris Line) was discontinued during the COVID pandemic in part to reduce trip duplication with the Metrolink Perris Valley line, highlighting the high cost of Metrolink compared to RTA buses. The pass program with UCR has been instrumental in alleviating financial barriers for students.

RTA's outreach and collaboration efforts extend to engaging with educational institutions through initiatives like social media campaigns featuring mascots on RTA buses and presentations at student welcome events, during this audit period. Furthermore, RTA's Employer of Choice initiative promotes public transit as a career path by visiting high schools and colleges, offering tuition reimbursement, and showcasing growth opportunities within the agency. This initiative not only attracts younger talent but also helps build a sustainable future workforce for the agency.

To further support commuters, the agency provided Metrolink bus bridge services over 70 times in the past year, ensuring continuity for commuters during train disruptions. Discussions during the audit period also include possibility of reinstating the summer beach bus/shuttle service, which was discontinued due to COVID-19, through partnerships with San Diego County and local colleges.

Workforce challenges emerged as a critical issue during the audit period particularly due to high voluntary turnover among coach operators, many of whom were nearing retirement age. To address these issues, RTA implemented robust recruitment strategies, such as weekend hiring events where contingent job offers were made on the same day. These efforts aimed to rejuvenate the workforce

and ensure operational stability. Strict adherence to COVID protocols also continues to boost morale.

Creation of the RAMP 22 program within Operations provided the structure and ability for RTA to further boost morale of its coach operators with skills building activities such as roadeos, professional growth opportunities including mentorship, values learning, and feedback, and tiered financial incentives for on-the-job performance. The agency's RAMP 22 Mentorship Program (a joint RTA–ATU initiative) provides coaching and peer support for new and existing coach operators and mechanics, with goals of reducing voluntary attrition, improving job satisfaction, and strengthening team cohesion. Early indicators are encouraging: the employee survey response rate rose to 54 percent (from 22 percent), with improvements across all measured categories. As a demonstration of strength of RAMP 22, bonuses awarded to the number of operators increased almost three-fold from one six-month period to the next.

Alongside effort to restore service levels, during this reporting period, RTA has successfully leveraged fare promotions and discounts to boost ridership with initiatives such as $0.25 fares, commemorating RTA's 45th anniversary, and free Fridays have generated significant increases in trips, along with promotion days sometimes leading upwards of 2,000 additional trips. These efforts are supported by funding from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which RTA actively advocates for, recognizing its importance in encouraging transit usage. By offering discounted fares and student passes, RTA addresses financial barriers to transit access, benefiting youth, seniors, and other community members. Additionally, drivers have reported that the $0.25 fare promotion significantly reduced fare-related incidents and conflicts, which previously accounted for 75 percent of incidents, making their jobs easier and safer.

Complementing these fare strategies, RTA's Route 200 to Disneyland remains a strong performer. This success resulted from a partnership with Disney that allows RTA buses to operate within the resort for employee drop-offs and pick-ups, with Disney reimbursing employees for public transit use.

Despite these successes, RTA continues to face several challenges as it adapts to the post-pandemic era. Construction detours significantly impact bus routes and on-time performance (OTP). RTA is implementing new technologies such as the route disruption management module to provide real-time detour information to passengers. The planning team actively adjusts schedules based on performance data and driver feedback. Also, DMV approval delays hinder in-house Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training which delays completion of operator training. Further, public perception of safety on transit remains a challenge, often influenced by incidents in larger metropolitan areas. To address these concerns, RTA has implemented security measures such as mobile security patrols and the "See Something, Say Something" web form for silent reporting.

Moving forward in addressing these challenges, the agency plans to conduct extensive outreach to engage both current riders and non-riders, largely by attending 100 annual community event pop-ups and digital campaigns, to understand their needs and encourage transit use. Recognizing the evolving dynamics of transportation, RTA is undertaking a new Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) to develop a 10-year plan that will analyze travel patterns, population growth, and employment shifts. This analysis will help determine the viability of microtransit services and re-evaluate service standards. A marketing plan will accompany the COA rollout to ensure public engagement and

awareness. Additionally, RTA plans to implement journey mapping to assess riders' experiences at every touchpoint, identifying areas for improvement and enhancing the overall transit experience.

Between 2021 and 2024, ridership across all service categories experienced substantial changes. System-wide ridership increased from 3,015,434 to 5,754,320, marking a 90.83 percent increase. The total fixed route mode saw an 89.1 percent increase, growing from 2,919,807 to 5,522,585. Within this category, fixed route (Directly Operated) services increased by 89.7 percent, from 2,468,106 to 4,681,547, while fixed route (Contracted) services increased by 86.2 percent, from 451,701 to 841,038. The most dramatic change occurred in the demand response service (inclusive of microtransit), which surged by 142.3 percent, climbing from 95,627 in FY 2021 to 231,735 in FY 2024.

These figures highlight a strong recovery compared to RTA's COVID period ridership. There has been a nearly threefold increase in Dial-a-Ride ridership. Meanwhile, the consistent growth in fixed-route services—both directly operated and contracted—indicates broader improvements in transit accessibility, service quality, or public confidence in using transit systems. Overall, the data reflects a dynamic and evolving trend in ridership across all service types.

During this triennial period, RTA continued implementing its Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Plan, which was originally approved by the Board of Directors in December 2020. The plan details how RTA plans to transition to an all-hydrogen fuel cell electric bus fleet, a direction that was informed by a system-wide analysis of the feasibility of operating electric versus hydrogen-powered vehicles in the Agency's western Riverside County service area in response to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) mandate. RTA expects its first hydrogen fuel cell vehicles to be in fixed-route service in 2026 and plans to phase out its current CNG vehicle fleet in response to the mandate.

It should be noted that, unlike many transit operators in the country at this time, RTA has not faced large-scale operator shortages over the past few years, even during the pandemic. While some chose to stay home and not work, using COVID-19 leave time, many returned to work as the bus service ramped up. Although some operators were given alternative duties, such as bus servicers/cleaners, RTA did not lay off any operators due to lack of available work.

Operations Performance

Tables V-1, V-2, and V-3 provide several indicators based on NTD data of operations performance for RTA's directly operated fixed route, contracted fixed route, and contracted demand-response services, respectively.

Table V-1
Vehicle Operations Performance Indicators
Directly Operated Fixed Route

Operations Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY21-FY24
Cost for Operations	$25,714,321	$26,860,152	$27,607,674	$27,746,167	7.9%
Operator Salaries and Wages	$11,052,357	$13,822,142	$14,327,799	$14,419,310	30.5%
Operator Pay Hours	476,365	512,826	503,287	503,988	5.8%

Operations Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY21-FY24
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	335,063	333,889	351,909	341,596	1.9%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	4,999,256	4,625,004	4,907,588	4,737,581	-5.2%
Total Vehicle Hours	390,613	371,929	391,324	378,731	-3.0%
Total Vehicle Miles	6,425,390	5,464,373	5,718,133	5,508,634	-14.3%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	2,468,106	3,292,772	4,246,249	4,657,743	88.7%
Passenger Miles	18,775,771	25,809,911	31,582,064	34,998,782	86.4%
Preventable Accidents	113	67	90	79	-30.1%
Performance Indicators					
Veh Ops Cost per VSH	$76.74	$80.45	$78.45	$81.23	5.8%
Veh Ops Cost per VSM	$5.14	$5.81	$5.63	$5.86	13.9%
Veh Ops Cost per Passenger Trip	$10.42	$8.16	$6.50	$5.96	-42.8%
Veh Ops Cost per Passenger Mile	$1.37	$1.04	$0.87	$0.79	-42.1%
Average Wage per Operator Pay Hour	$23.20	$26.95	$28.47	$28.61	23.3%
VSH per Operator Pay Hour	0.70	0.65	0.70	0.68	-3.6%
VSM per Operator Pay Hour	10.49	9.02	9.75	9.40	-10.4%
Service Miles per Service Hour	14.92	13.85	13.95	13.87	-7.0%
Service Hours / Total Hours	85.8%	89.8%	89.9%	90.2%	5.1%
Service Miles / Total Miles	77.8%	84.6%	85.8%	86.0%	10.5%
Avg Psgr Miles per Psgr Trip	7.61	7.84	7.44	7.51	-1.2%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	7.37	9.86	12.07	13.64	85.1%
Prev Accidents per 100,000 Total Miles	1.76	1.23	1.57	1.43	-18.5%
On-Time Performance	90.0%	87.0%	89.0%	89.0%	-1.1%
Percentage Change					
Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Source: NTD Reports

Operations costs for directly operated fixed-route service increased 7.9 percent over the triennial period. Vehicle service hours per operator pay hour decreased by 3.6 percent while vehicle service miles per operator pay hour decreased by 10.4 percent. Service hours per total hour and service miles per total mile increased by 5.1 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively. Passenger miles per passenger trip, a reflection of average passenger trip length, decreased by 1.2 percent, from 7.61 miles to 7.51 miles.

The number of directly operated fixed-route preventable accidents per 100,000 miles was 1.23 in FY 2022, 1.57 in FY 2023, and 1.43 in FY 2024 for a net decrease of 18.5 percent over the audit period and using the FY 2021 figure of 1.76 as the base year. Considering the relatively heavy recruitment of new drivers, the trend remained modest. On-time performance (OTP) remained stable during the audit period with little variance. In FY 2022, OTP for directly operated fixed-route service was 87 percent, and 89 percent in both FYs 2023 and 2024. The OTP target of 90 percent for directly operated fixed-route service was not met for all three years of the audit period.

Table V-2
Vehicle Operations Performance Indicators
Contracted Fixed Route

Operations Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY21-FY24
Cost for Operations	$8,898,168	$8,694,931	$9,484,121	$8,809,101	-1.0%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	128,888	141,568	142,582	131,874	2.3%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	2,025,881	2,142,364	2,125,196	1,960,409	-3.2%
Total Vehicle Hours	153,294	170,631	172,418	162,454	6.0%
Total Vehicle Miles	2,699,547	2,915,106	2,913,862	2,748,943	1.8%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	451,701	666,012	775,941	810,022	79.3%
Passenger Miles	5,331,529	7,105,443	7,996,677	8,083,749	51.6%
Preventable Accidents	22	15	16	18	-18.2%
Performance Indicators					
Veh Ops Cost per VSH	$69.04	$61.42	$66.52	$66.80	-3.2%
Veh Ops Cost per VSM	$4.39	$4.06	$4.46	$4.49	2.3%
Veh Ops Cost per Passenger Trip	$19.70	$13.06	$12.22	$10.88	-44.8%
Veh Ops Cost per Passenger Mile	$1.67	$1.22	$1.19	$1.09	-34.7%
Service Miles Per Service Hour	15.72	15.13	14.91	14.87	-5.4%
Service Hours / Total Hours	84.1%	83.0%	82.7%	81.2%	-3.5%
Service Miles / Total Miles	75.0%	73.5%	72.9%	71.3%	-5.0%
Avg Psgr Miles per Psgr Trip	11.80	10.67	10.31	9.98	-15.4%
Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour	3.50	4.70	5.44	6.14	75.3%
Prev Accidents per 100,000 Total Miles	0.81	0.51	0.55	0.65	-19.7%
On-Time Performance	93.0%	88.0%	90.0%	91.0%	-2.2%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Sources: NTD Reports, Contractor Performance Indicator, Monthly, and Preventable Accidents Reports

Vehicle operations costs for contracted fixed-route service decreased by 1 percent during the audit period, which was due in part to RTA transitioning contracted fixed-route commuter service to directly operated service. Operations cost per vehicle service hour decreased by 3.2 percent while operations cost per vehicle service mile increase by 2.3 percent, respectively. Cost per passenger trip and cost per passenger mile decreased significantly, by 44.8 percent and 34.7 percent, respectively. By contrast, CPI increased by 8.1 percent during the audit period.

The number of contracted fixed-route preventable accidents per 100,000 miles was 0.51 in FY 2022, 0.55 in FY 2023, and 0.65 in FY 2024, for a net decrease of 19.7 percent over the audit period and using the FY 2021 figure of 0.81 as the base year. Over the audit period the OTP fluctuated slightly, averaging 89.7 percent. The OTP target of 90 percent established for the contract operators was not met in FY 2022 and was met in FYs 2023 and 2024.

Table V-3
Vehicle Operations Performance Indicators
Dial-A-Ride Demand Response

Operations Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY21-FY24
Cost for Operations	$4,678,171	$6,673,627	$11,728,503	$14,089,454	201.2%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	63,764	92,753	124,749	144,975	127.4%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	1,181,749	1,647,811	2,206,189	2,468,984	108.9%
Total Vehicle Hours	85,338	108,051	150,290	182,255	113.6%
Total Vehicle Miles	1,486,640	1,997,927	2,714,616	3,161,424	112.7%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	95,627	151,243	224,267	286,555	199.7%
Passenger Miles	1,088,666	1,669,764	2,176,705	2,545,168	133.8%
Preventable Accidents	10	18	20	26	160.0%
Performance Indicators					
Veh Ops Cost per VSH	$73.37	$71.95	$94.02	$97.19	32.5%
Veh Ops Cost per VSM	$3.96	$4.05	$5.32	$5.71	44.2%
Veh Ops Cost per Psgr Trip	$48.92	$44.13	$52.30	$49.17	0.5%
Veh Ops Cost per Psgr Mile	$4.30	$4.00	$5.39	$5.54	28.8%
Service Miles Per Service Hour	18.53	17.77	17.69	17.03	-8.1%
Service Hours / Total Hours	0.75	0.86	0.83	0.80	6.5%
Service Miles / Total Miles	0.79	0.82	0.81	0.78	-1.8%
Avg Psgr Miles per Psgr Trip	11.38	11.04	9.71	8.88	-22.0%
Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Hour	1.50	1.63	1.80	1.98	31.8%
Prev Accidents per 100,000 Total Miles	0.85	1.09	0.91	1.05	24.4%
On-Time Performance	91.0%	84.0%	85.0%	90.0%	-1.1%
Percentage Change					
Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Sources: NTD Reports, Contractor Performance Indicator, Monthly, and Preventable Accidents Reports

Vehicle operations costs for Dial-a-Ride service increased by 201.2 percent during the audit period. This is primarily attributed to the introduction of GoMicro microtransit service in 2023. Vehicle service hours and miles also increased significantly by 127 percent and 108.9 percent, respectively, during the audit period, though at a lesser rate than operations cost. This contributed to the trends in increased operations cost per vehicle service hour and cost per vehicle service mile by 32.5 percent and 44.2 percent, respectively. The indicators show higher cost trends to provide additional hours and miles of service. Cost per passenger trip increased marginally by 0.5 percent, while cost per passenger mile increased by 28.8 percent.

The various operating cost indicators show relatively larger increases in FYs 2023 and 2024, coinciding with the start of the GoMicro services as well as a new labor agreement in 2023. According to RTA, GoMicro was replacing and enhancing fixed route services in the Hemet-San Jacinto area. Based on RTA's modeling, the new service mode was intended to reduce long term costs with more cost-effective service. GoMicro was anticipated to provide reliable and frequent service in the Hemet-San Jacinto area. These trends should continue to be monitored as the new service develops, as well as

from increased Dial-A-Ride demand.

The number of contracted Dial-a-Ride preventable accidents per 100,000 miles was 1.09 in FY 2022, 0.91 in FY 2023, 1.05 in FY 2024, for a net increase of 24.4 percent over the audit period and using the FY 2021 figure of 0.85 as the base year. OTP decreased by 1.1 percent from 91.0 percent in FY 2021 to 90.0 percent in FY 2024, climbing back from lower OTP of 84.0 percent in FY 2022 and 85.0 percent in 2023. The OTP target of 90 percent established for dial-a-ride was met only in FY 2024 during the audit period.

Review of Methodology for Collection and Reporting Operations Data

Data collection and reporting of operations data, including hours and miles of service, are performed by several departments within RTA. For Dial-A-Ride operations, Trapeze dispatch and scheduling software is utilized, which ensures the proper calculation of revenue service hours and miles. Initially, hours and miles are estimated by the Planning Department based on the service changes that occur three times per year. The Operations Department measures schedule variances.

RTA's primary source of ridership and fare revenue data for directly operated and contracted services is the GFI fareboxes, which show passengers by fare type. Ridership counts from the APCs are used to validate the farebox data. For directly and contracted operated fixed-route service, OTP is measured using a Global Positioning Systems (GPS) based AVL system. Since the AVL system has more observations, it is believed to be more accurate. Trapeze is used to monitor Dial-A-Ride OTP.

RTA staff and the contractors are each responsible for collecting and handling cash from fares. For fixed route bus services, the cash reported is compared to what is projected by the GFI farebox. For DAR service, the cash reported is compared to paper slips. The Finance Department reconciles the actual and expected revenues. In the event of a discrepancy with a contractor, RTA charges the contractor the higher revenue number. RTA also conducts surprise in-house audits to maintain staff accountability. Fare revenue and ridership go into the Quarterly Comprehensive Route Performance Report produced by Finance.

The Contract Operations Department oversees contracted transportation services for performance indicators, including OTP, miles between road calls, Dial-a-Ride no-shows, and Dial-a-Ride call abandonment rates. Contracted services include fixed route, dial-a-ride, and microtransit. RTA departments conduct unannounced audits of the vendor's compliance with requirements as a measure of the vendor's overall performance including staff requirements and policies; training and safety programs; reservations, scheduling, and dispatch, including trip edit; vehicle operations; performance standards; data collection/reporting; and facilities and vehicle maintenance services. The contracts include a system of incentives/penalties negotiated between the parties for certain performance standards for operations, maintenance, and administrative. Examples include on-time performance, customer complaints, telephone response times, and maintenance.

Maintenance

The Maintenance Department maintains the directly operated fixed-route fleet and can perform most

service and repairs, including body work. In January 2023, RTA updated its Maintenance Of Rolling Stock Equipment document prescribing the basic preventive maintenance program to be used for the maintenance of rolling stock. For directly operated buses in warranty, the Preventative Maintenance Vehicle Inspections (PMVIs) are due every 6,000 miles and/or every 90 days, whichever comes first per manufacturer's recommendation. Each bus out of warranty undertakes the PMVI every 9,000 miles and/or every 90 days. All PMVIs must be performed within 10 percent of the actual due mileage of buses (600 miles for buses under warranty and 900 miles for buses out of warranty). Bus PMVIs are structured with four separate inspection types in each cycle. Those inspection types are A, B, C, D based on different mileage intervals for buses under and out of warranty.

Contracted transit buses are inspected to ensure quality control each quarter by RTA maintenance employees. Contractors perform preventative maintenance on each vehicle in accordance with the contract, OEM specifications, and/or prescribed by law. If any mechanical defect is found, the vehicle is "red-tagged" and pulled out of service. The contractor uses Zonar for daily vehicle inspections and to identify maintenance issues.

Non-revenue licensed vehicles (relief, staff, and service vehicles) are inspected every 7,500 miles and/or every 180 days whichever one comes first in accordance with OEM recommendations and/or as prescribed by law.

To further enhance efficiency and data management, the Maintenance Department continued using maintenance tracking software from Infor and enabling maintenance staff to utilize tablets for data entry. The software system allows for generating work orders, logging PMI data, accessing and updating parts inventory information, generating purchase orders, and running reports. The tablet system allows staff the convenience of entering vehicle data at their workstation as well as the ability to take and log photographs.

Preventative maintenance practices have evolved to meet manufacturer and warranty standards. As described above in the maintenance procedures document, the preventative maintenance schedules adhere to manufacturer recommendations, with newer buses receiving more frequent service due to warranty requirements. Approximately 95 percent of maintenance work is conducted in-house, including body shop repairs and engine rebuilds, which also serve as training opportunities for younger mechanics. Parts checkout is managed through a window system to ensure inventory control. The department is transitioning to a completely paperless system for maintenance records and procedures within the next one to two years.

Facility infrastructure supports these operations across two main locations. The Riverside maintenance facility has six service bays and one bus wash bay. Portable lifts are utilized. The Hemet facility has three service bays. There are two fast-fill CNG fueling pumps at the Riverside facility and two fast-fill CNG pumps at the Hemet facility.

To monitor performance and ensure accountability, the Maintenance Department prepares monthly maintenance standards and performance indicators report that tracks indicators including average miles per gallon, attendance, overtime, OSHA 300 log, maintenance expenses, cost per mile, vehicle availability, daily average of buses down for parts, inventory value, training hours, road calls, miles

between road calls, and inspections. Some data is oriented by base facility and is tabulated for each base while remaining indicators are tracked at a system-wide level.

Vehicle replacement planning is data-driven and collaborative. Maintenance staff forecast vehicle replacement needs by mileage. Mileage and age for each individual vehicle are tracked in four separate reports according to service type: directly operated fixed-route buses, contracted fixed-route buses, DAR vehicles, and other support/staff vehicles.

Warranty management is a joint effort between departments. It is the joint responsibility of Maintenance Department staff and the Parts Department to identify all potential warrantable items. During their routine repair and inspection of vehicles, Maintenance Department staff will mark known parts that have failed and may be eligible for warranty claims. The Parts Department then determines if an item is eligible to be processed for a warranty claim. The storeroom supervisor gathers all supporting documentation and submits a warranty request into the vendor. The storeroom supervisor tracks warranty recoveries by month.

Over the past three years, the department has embraced modernization and workforce development. The department has implemented transformative initiatives aimed at modernizing its fleet, integrating advanced technologies, and fostering a positive internal culture with enhanced training programs for employees.

Facility expansion plans reflect RTA's evolving service needs. The Hemet facility is set to experience increased activity with the renovation of an adjacent RTA-owned property to support additional compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. This expansion will increase the size of the Hemet maintenance facility and accommodate the incoming contracted fixed-route service.

Fleet modernization efforts have significantly improved vehicle quality and sustainability. RTA's fleet has undergone significant modernization, reducing its size from 145 to 120 buses while enhancing its quality. The agency has acquired 70 new 40-foot CNG buses over two fiscal years, replacing older models and ensuring that less than 10 buses in the fleet predate 2013. Additionally, 115 more CNG buses are on order, with production starting in January. Delivery of new buses has generally been on time. RTA is also transitioning towards an all-electric fleet, with hydrogen fuel cell buses on order. To optimize resources, older RapidLink buses are being repurposed as fixed route buses, extending their useful life and reducing the need for new purchases. For future routes, RTA is considering smaller buses as a cost-saving measure. Retired buses will be maintained until 2028 to support the Olympic Games and for use by the training department.

Training initiatives are central to preparing staff for future technologies. RTA has recently created a training supervisor position to develop in-house training programs and prepare for the transition to electric vehicles. The mentorship program (RAMP 22) is being extended to maintenance staff, with the first maintenance mentor recently assigned. RTA will host Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) instructor training in February, providing 12 spots to certify more drivers, addressing a previous lapse in certification. Training programs include de-escalation techniques due to safety concerns and emphasize "inform, not enforce" policies regarding fare collection. Wheelchair securement training is extensive, using various mobility devices and simulating real-life scenarios on buses, with

supervisors offering roadside assistance for complex securement needs. Mechanics receive training through partnerships with organizations like OCTA and directly from manufacturers.

Major accomplishments of the Maintenance Department during the audit period include:

- Maintenance facilities passed annual CHP terminal inspections.
- In light of RTA's new direction toward hydrogen fuel cell vehicles established in the ZEB Plan, previous planning efforts for a centralized operations, maintenance, and administration facility have been halted. The ZEB Plan identified that both the Riverside and Hemet facilities have room for expansion which can be utilized to accommodate the new vehicles at existing service levels.
- CNG control panel was updated at both the Riverside and Hemet facilities. Accompanying new software allows maintenance staff to understand the cause of alarm activations remotely.

Leadership changes have also shaped the department's trajectory. The Maintenance Department experienced turnover in the director's position during the audit period. Under this new directorship, the Maintenance Department continues efforts to update standard operating procedures for all tasks performed, including vehicle sanitation and cleaning procedures, and continues to cross-train staff across all tasks. CHP and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards' recommendations and requirements continue to be met or exceeded.

There are three levels of mechanics categorized as A, B, and C. The C category is an entry-level position. Mechanical applicants undergo a hands-on and written test for qualifications. Some mechanics are certified according to specialty and carry Automotive Service Excellence certification. The experienced mechanics train the younger maintenance personnel complimenting outside training resources. A mechanic apprenticeship program is in progress of being developed at a local junior college.

Maintenance Performance

Tables V-4, V-5, and V-6 show the trends in maintenance performance based on NTD data for RTA directly operated fixed route, contracted fixed route, and contracted demand-response services, respectively.

Table V-4
Maintenance Performance Indicators
Directly Operated Fixed Route

Maintenance Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Cost for Maintenance	$10,093,835	$10,784,685	$11,808,416	$12,299,912	21.9%
Maintenance Pay Hours	138,689	135,455	147,783	153,669	10.8%
Total Vehicle Hours	390,613	371,929	391,324	378,731	-3.0%
Total Vehicle Miles	6,425,390	5,464,373	5,718,233	5,508,634	-14.3%
Active Vehicles	145	145	125	148	2.1%
Peak Vehicles	115	87	85	86	-25.2%

Maintenance Data	Base Year FY 2021	Audit Review Period			% Change FY 21-FY 24
		FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	
Total Vehicle Failures	311	711	1,063	934	200.3%
Performance Indicators					
Maintenance Cost per Veh Hour	$25.84	$29.00	$30.18	$32.48	25.7%
Maintenance Cost per Veh Mile	$1.57	$1.97	$2.07	$2.23	42.1%
Maintenance Cost per Active Veh	$69,612	$74,377	$94,467	$83,107	19.4%
Veh Hours per Maint Pay Hour	2.82	2.75	2.65	2.46	-12.5%
Veh Miles per Maint Pay Hour	46.33	40.34	38.69	35.85	-22.6%
Veh Hours per Active Vehicle	2,694	2,565	3,131	2,559	-5.0%
Veh Miles per Active Vehicle	44,313	37,685	45,745	37,221	-16.0%
Spare Ratio	26.1%	66.7%	47.1%	72.1%	176.4%
Veh Miles Between Failures	20,660	7,685	5,379	5,898	-71.5%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Source: NTD Reports, Miles Between Road Call Reports

Maintenance costs for directly operated fixed-route services increased from $10 million in FY 2021 to $12.3 million in FY 2024, a 21.9 percent increase. The annual increase in cost generally paralleled the annual change in the CPI. Maintenance costs per vehicle hour and per vehicle mile increased by 25 percent and 42.1 percent, respectively. Maintenance cost per active vehicle increased by 19.4 percent, driven in part by continued mechanic training requirements for technical, more computer-based applications, and maintenance cost increases for highly used aging vehicles operating in the local environment. Vehicle hours per maintenance pay hour and vehicle miles per maintenance pay hour, functions of maintenance productivity, decreased by 12.5 percent and 22.6 percent, respectively. Vehicle hours per active vehicle and miles per active vehicle decreased by 5 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

While the number of active vehicles remained relatively the same combined with a decrease in peak vehicles from reduced service during the COVID pandemic, maintenance costs continued to rise under these parameters. In FY2021, RTA ran a heavy amount of sweepers (buses necessary for social distancing) which spread the service and mileage over many more buses that were not getting used due to pandemic cuts, while requiring less maintenance per bus and reduced maintenance intervals. RTA also made a business decision during COVID to retain staff to keep vehicles in a state of good repair. The agency relied on national and statewide COVID funding relief measures to retain staff. In retaining maintenance staff, RTA balanced short term expenses with long term fleet maintenance measures to be prepared as the service eventually increased post-COVID. Further, the spare ratio increased well above FTA standards, although FTA approved RTA's request for a spare ratio deviation through FY2023, when RTA estimates its Comprehensive Operational Analysis will allow it to bring the spare ratio into compliance. RTA's COA should evaluate service improvements and identify the appropriate balance for future bus maintenance.

Directly operated fixed-route vehicle miles between road calls showed a significant decrease during the audit period compared to the base year of FY 2021, declining from 20,660 miles in FY 2021 to 5,898 miles in FY 2024. However, for just the three-year audit period, vehicle miles between road calls were relatively flat between FY 2022 and 2024. The overall percentage change in vehicle spare ratio

over the course of the audit period increased due to impacts from the pandemic and service adjustments, coupled with new vehicle acquisitions.

Table V-5
Maintenance Performance Indicators
Contracted Fixed Route

Maintenance Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Cost for Maintenance	$1,712,194	$1,691,598	$1,795,886	$1,733,703	1.3%
Total Vehicle Hours	153,294	170,631	172,418	162,454	6.0%
Total Vehicle Miles	2,699,547	2,915,106	2,913,862	2,748,943	1.8%
Active Vehicles	72	79	56	63	-12.5%
Peak Vehicles	41	46	49	49	19.5%
Total Vehicle Failures	559	269	267	325	-41.9%
Performance Indicators					
Maintenance Cost per Veh Hour	$11.17	$9.91	$10.42	$10.67	-4.5%
Maintenance Cost per Veh Mile	$0.63	$0.58	$0.62	$0.63	-0.6%
Maintenance Cost per Active Veh	$23,780	$21,412	$32,069	$27,519	-15.7%
Veh Hours per Active Vehicle	2,129	2,160	3,079	2,579	21.1%
Veh Miles per Active Vehicle	37,494	36,900	52,033	43,634	16.4%
Veh Miles Between Failures	4,829	10,837	10,913	8,458	75.1%
Spare Ratio	75.6%	71.7%	14.3%	28.6%	-62.2%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Sources: NTD Reports, Contractor Performance Indicator, Monthly, and Preventable Accidents Reports

Contracted maintenance costs drawn from Federal NTD reports reflect purchase transportation expense for the assigned vehicle fleet and do not include associated RTA direct costs such as monitoring and oversight, or large maintenance facility expense. Maintenance costs for contracted fixed-route service increased by 1.3 percent during the audit period. Maintenance cost per vehicle hour and per vehicle mile decreased by 4.5 percent and 0.6 percent, respectively. Maintenance cost per active vehicle decreased by 15.7 percent. Vehicle hours per active vehicle and miles per active vehicle increased by 21.1 percent and 16.4 percent, respectively.

Table V-6
Maintenance Performance Indicators
Demand Response

Maintenance Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21- FY 24
Cost for Maintenance	$1,890,007	$699,801	$944,023	$1,173,083	-37.9%
Total Vehicle Hours [(1)]	85,338	108,051	150,290	182,255	113.6%
Total Vehicle Miles [(1)]	1,486,640	1,997,927	2,714,616	3,161,424	112.7%
Active Vehicles	125	114	100	100	-20.0%
Peak Vehicles	40	53	77	90	125.0%
Total Vehicle Failures	29	27	44	53	82.8%
Performance Indicators					

Maintenance Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21- FY 24
Maintenance Cost per Veh Hour	$22.15	$6.48	$6.28	$6.44	-70.9%
Maintenance Cost per Veh Mile	$1.27	$0.35	$0.35	$0.37	-70.8%
Maintenance Cost per Active Veh	$15,120	$6,138	$9,440	$11,730	-22.4%
Veh Hours per Active Vehicle	683	948	1,503	1,823	167.0%
Veh Miles per Active Vehicle	11,893	17,526	27,146	31,614	165.8%
Veh Miles Between Failures	62,197	82,391	78,792	72,617	16.8%
Spare Ratio	212.5%	115.1%	29.9%	11.1%	-94.8%
Percentage Change					
Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Sources: NTD Reports, Contractor Performance Indicator, Monthly, and Preventable Accidents Reports

(1) Total Vehicle Hours and Miles exclude Supplemental Taxi service.

Maintenance costs for Dial-a-Ride service decreased by 37.9 percent during the audit period, according to the NTD. In addition, maintenance cost per vehicle hour and per vehicle mile decreased by 70.9 percent and 70.8 percent, respectively. Maintenance cost per active vehicle decreased by 22.4 percent. Vehicle hours per active vehicle and vehicle miles per active vehicle increased by 167 percent and 165 percent, respectively. Miles between road calls increased by 16.8 percent from 62,197 in FY 2021 to 72,617 in FY 2024. The vehicle spare ratio decreased from 212.5 percent to 11.1 percent during the audit period, as the number of peak vehicles increased by 125.0 while the number of active vehicles decreased by only 20.0 from FY 2021 to FY 2024.

Administration and Management

Functions of various administrative departments include human resources, labor relations, risk management, marketing, information technology, finance/accounting, and training.

Each year, the department heads collaboratively develop overarching Agency goals. Each department then forms specific department goals with identified activities and measurements. Performance for each department goal is tracked monthly and reported quarterly with an annual presentation to the RTA Board. Samples of department performance indicator worksheets provided by RTA demonstrate a relatively comprehensive approach to addressing various facets of a department's work progress, objectives, and results. Some of the identified goals include increased ridership, maximizing cost efficiencies, and continuous service improvements.

Major accomplishments by administration and management during the audit period include continued use of innovative revenue-generating practices. Examples of such programs include interest income and commercial sale of CNG fuel at the RTA facility in Hemet. Many of these locally generated revenue strategies are included in the farebox recovery ratio enabled under RCTC policy and state legislation (Assembly Bill 149).

The annual budgeting process for RTA commences with a kickoff meeting with RCTC in February. Projected funding for the upcoming fiscal year is reviewed along with revenue guidance for the SRTP. An estimate of aggregate revenue sources is determined. LTF revenues are administered through

RCTC and in conjunction with the calculation of and comparison against RTA's blended farebox ratio recovery target.

RTA utilizes zero-based budgeting, which is a method of budgeting in which all expenses must be justified for each new period. This is necessary given the lack of reserve funding held by the agency per RCTC policy. The process starts from a "zero base," and every function within the Agency is analyzed for its needs and costs. Working within the total revenue projected, each department provides an estimate for the draft budget. The RTA Budget and Finance Committee convenes in early May to review the draft budget before the RTA Board adopts the final budget in late May.

Once the budget is adopted for the fiscal year, the performance against budget is reviewed monthly. RTA's expenditures generally come in under budget. Following the completion of the annual fiscal audit, TDA operating funds must be returned to its source per RCTC direction.

The agency is undergoing a significant transformation in its approach to fuel sourcing and sustainability. Historically reliant on a multiyear contract with GHI Energy LLC for its natural gas commodity needs, RTA has shifted its procurement strategy. With the expiration of the GHI contract in FY 2023, the agency now purchases natural gas directly from the utility company. Despite this change, RTA continues to benefit from the environmental attributes of clean natural gas, with costs fully offset by fluctuating credit revenues.

The new infrastructure upgrade was reported during this auditing period; the agency now operates fast-fill compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling stations at its Riverside and Hemet facilities. These dispensers are scheduled for replacement in late 2025 or early 2026 to accommodate both 40-foot and 34-foot buses, ensuring continued operational efficiency.

Financially, RTA, like all other transit agencies, remains dependent on additional external funding sources on top of TDA revenues and federal urban transit funds, as fare recovery alone across the system hovers around 7 percent return on operating expenses. The agency's LTF share for Western Riverside County was updated through RCTC during the audit period, reducing the funding available for RTA annually. While Measure A remains a good local funding source, another funding stream for the agency is the State's LCTOP that has been instrumental in supporting fare promotions. In parallel, the agency is exploring innovative funding mechanisms such as the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation program, funds. This initiative, which involves developer contributions, could provide sustainable support for youth ride-free programs and other transit incentives. RTA, in partnership with RCTC, also received a Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grant in FY 2024 to advance its GoMicro Microtransit Pilot Program Extension.

The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) Program ensures that a new development pays its fair share for the increased traffic that it creates. As identified in the WRCOG TUMF Administrative Plan, RTA is currently allocated three percent of every TUMF dollar collected for use on projects of regional significance located in the TUMF network.

Strategically, RTA is charting a bold course toward hydrogen fuel technology. Following an extensive

study, hydrogen emerged as the preferred alternative to battery-electric buses, primarily due to the geographic scale of RTA's service area and the limitations of battery range and infrastructure. The agency reported securing competitive grants to support this transition and is currently constructing a hydrogen fueling station at its Riverside facility.

Looking ahead, the agency planned the arrival of its first five hydrogen fuel cell buses in 2026, marking a pivotal step in RTA's clean energy journey. Additionally, RTA joined ARCHES (Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy System), a statewide partnership aimed at reducing hydrogen costs and accelerating adoption across California during this auditing period.

The Agency's financial software license is renewed annually assuring more transparency with the inclusion of licensing fees and life cycle costs. RTA has been transitioning existing desktop-based software to a cloud-based version of the same program which is a continuous effort with upgrades to support the internal infrastructure.

A Federal Transit Administration (FTA) triennial review was conducted in 2023 with site visits occurring in May of that year. The review examined compliance in 23 areas; one deficiency was found relating to disadvantaged business enterprise reporting. Subsequently, RTA submitted evidence of correcting the deficiency to FTA's satisfaction and providing closure to the review cycle.

Grants Management

RTA tracks grant status through the Capital Project Balances Report. The report includes federal grants (FTA Sections 5307, 5309, 5339), state grants (LTF, STA, SB1-SGR, SB125/ZETCP), and other grant programs (WRCOG/TUMF). The report tracks grant status by project to maintain consistency with the SRTP. Projects are updated based on activities which occurred during the quarter. Quarterly updates are made to project completion dates, major milestones achieved, and projected milestones for the coming quarter. Additionally, the report tracks total allocation of funds by funding source, funds spent to date, encumbered funds through purchase orders, and remaining funds for each project. These provisions enable RTA to stay abreast of outstanding grant monies and to spend down balances of its various grant allocations. In addition, RTA reviews relevant grant opportunities, which are presented quarterly at the Management Review meeting.

The SRTP tracks upcoming grant requests via the Summary of Funds Requested report. The report tracks requested funding at the project level and lists funding requests from federal, state, and local grants programs. An appendix to the report provides project description and project justification for capital projects.

In response to growing funding needs and promotion of key personnel, a Planning and Program Specialist was hired under Planning. Duties of this position include seeking out available grant opportunities RTA may be eligible for, presenting eligible grant opportunities to the RTA executive team, requesting compatible project ideas from RTA departments, and coordinating within and applying for grant opportunities RTA wishes to pursue. Additionally, this position plays a critical role in facilitating coordination with partnering organizations on grant funding pursuits that require external support. This position would have potential to elevate to a Grants Manager role.

The effectiveness of this coordination was demonstrated by a $31.2 million grant award from the State of California's Strategic Growth Council to integrate transit, urban greening, and affordable housing in Riverside's Eastside neighborhood. Transit initiatives made possible through this funding include the construction of the Vine Street Mobility Hub project, providing over 6,000 transit passes available to Entrada and Eastside residents, and access to travel training programs. RTA plans to continue seeking out future public-private partnership opportunities that support enhanced transit service and improved transit access to the community.

In 2024, RTA received $8.7 million in competitive grants which helped complete the Vine Street Mobility Hub, a state-of-the-art facility located across the street from the Riverside Downtown Metrolink station. Spanning approximately 4.5 acres, the hub features 16 bus bays, a covered pedestrian hall and plaza, solar-paneled shelters, and real-time bus information displays. The site also includes a community park with drought-tolerant landscaping, public restrooms, a security office, and dedicated facilities for coach operators. The competitive grant funds also supported the development of a hydrogen fueling station at RTA's Riverside facility—part of the hub—and contributed to workforce development initiatives.

Overall, RTA has embraced a proactive and strategic approach to grants and grants management, recognizing their essential role in sustaining operations, modernizing infrastructure, and advancing long-term transit goals. RTA relies heavily on external funding sources to maintain and expand its services.

To support this initiative, RTA's grant acquisition efforts during this auditing period span federal, state, and non-traditional sources. After eight years, RTA resumed federal advocacy trips to Washington D.C. in FY 2022, successfully securing multiple grants. These visits aim to build relationships with federal officials and advocate for more flexible funding, including for operational security costs. A joint advocacy campaign with RCTC underscores a regional approach.

At the state level, RTA reported lobbying efforts in Sacramento, advocating for legislation such as AB 394 (focused on driver safety). These efforts are now planned as annual engagements. RTA also leverages industry organizations like the California Transit Association (CTA) and is exploring dedicated lobbying for broader issues affecting the agency as a major employer.

Beyond traditional FTA grants, RTA actively reviews other potential US Department of Transportation grant opportunities such as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program and the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program for various projects. RTA secured an Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant from the State Housing and Community Development agency in partnership with an affordable housing developer and the City of Riverside and continues to monitor CARB's Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, advocating for cost relief due to the high expense of zero-emission buses.

The agency reported that central to its grant strategy are partnerships with local jurisdictions, such as the City of Riverside, which supports affordable housing and transit-oriented development (TOD) projects like the Vine Street Mobility Hub. These partnerships also facilitate transit pass distribution

and travel training for residents. RTA's engagement with Western Riverside County Planning and Public Works Directors' meetings ensures alignment with regional development and funding priorities.

During the audit period, RTA achieved several milestones through grant funding:

- Hydrogen Fueling Station: $8.7 million was awarded from competitive FTA 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities grant funds for a new hydrogen fueling station, with an additional $5.1 million for five hydrogen fuel cell buses arriving in 2026. This supports RTA's strategic shift toward hydrogen electric vehicles.
- Facility Upgrades: $1.6 million was secured from competitive FTA 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities grant funds for improvements at Riverside and Hemet bus facilities. The improvements include the current design and installation of solar photovoltaic systems.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): RTA successfully obtained ARP funding.
- Fare Promotions: LCTOP grants enabled discounted fares, including $0.25 rides for RTA's 45th anniversary, senior discounts, and free rides every Friday.
- VMT Mitigation Program: In partnership with WRCOG, RTA is developing a developer-funded transit pass system, with the goal of permanently funding youth free rides.
- RAMP 22 Mentorship Program: This labor-management initiative supports coach operators and mechanics, with grant-funded mentorship roles.

Despite these successes, RTA faces several challenges:

- ZEB Costs: High costs and limited options for smaller routes pose compliance challenges with CARB regulations.
- Union Objections: Past union objections to Department of Labor grants have delayed certifications, though recent rulings may improve this.
- FTA Auction Proceeds: New rules divert proceeds from retired vehicle auctions to the federal deficit, limiting RTA's ability to reinvest locally.

Administrative Performance

Tables V-7, V-8, and V-9 show the trends in administration performance based on NTD data for RTA directly operated fixed route, contracted fixed route, and contracted demand-response services, respectively.

Table V-7
Administration Performance Indicators
Directly Operated Fixed Route

Administrative Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Administration Costs	$18,624,613	$14,860,463	$20,340,302	$23,757,216	27.6%
Casualty & Liability Costs	$2,644,621	$5,114,793	$5,846,360	$6,899,876	160.9%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	335,063	333,889	351,909	341,596	1.9%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	4,999,256	4,625,004	4,907,588	4,737,581	-5.2%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	2,468,106	3,292,772	4,246,249	4,657,743	88.7%
Passenger Miles	18,775,771	25,809,911	31,582,064	34,998,782	86.4%
Performance Indicators					
Admin Cost per VSH	$55.59	$44.51	$57.80	$69.55	25.1%
Admin Cost per VSM	$3.73	$3.21	$4.14	$5.01	34.6%
Admin Cost per Psgr Trip	$7.55	$4.51	$4.79	$5.10	-32.4%
Admin Cost per Psgr Mile	$0.99	$0.58	$0.64	$0.68	-31.6%
Casualty & Liability Costs per VSM	$0.53	$1.11	$1.19	$1.46	175.3%
Percentage Change					
Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Source: NTD Reports

As shown in the NTD, administrative costs allocated to directly operated fixed-route service increased 27.6 percent for the audit period. The increase in administration costs was primarily due to fringe benefits increases over the three years as well as in casualty and liability costs. Liability and other insurance premiums have increased significantly over the past several years, as documented in the RTA financial audits. RTA conducted an administration salary study to assess staff's salary range, the results of which justified salary adjustments. As a result of the increase in costs and moderate changes in service indicators, performance indicators measured by administrative cost per vehicle hour and per vehicle mile showed increases above CPI, while administrative cost per passenger trip decreased from the rapid ridership growth.

Table V-8
Administration Performance Indicators
Contracted Fixed Route

Administration Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Cost for Administration	$2,899,733	$3,366,803	$3,835,035	$3,732,953	28.7%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	128,888	141,568	142,582	131,874	2.3%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	2,025,881	2,142,364	2,125,196	1,960,409	-3.2%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	451,701	666,012	775,941	810,022	79.3%
Passenger Miles	5,331,529	7,105,443	7,996,677	8,083,749	51.6%
Performance Indicators					
Admin Cost per VSH	$22.50	$23.78	$26.90	$28.31	25.8%
Admin Cost per VSM	$1.43	$1.57	$1.80	$1.90	33.0%
Admin Cost per Psgr Trip	$6.42	$5.06	$4.94	$4.61	-28.2%
Admin Cost per Psgr Mile	$0.54	$0.47	$0.48	$0.46	-15.1%

Administration Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Source: NTD Reports

Administration costs for contracted fixed-route service increased by 28.7 percent during the audit period. Administration cost per vehicle hour and per vehicle mile increased by 25.8 percent and 33.0 percent, respectively; administrative cost per passenger trip and per passenger mile decreased by 28.2 percent and 15.1 percent, respectively, from the rapid growth in these passenger performance indicators.

Table V-9
Administration Performance Indicators
Demand Response

Administration Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Cost for Administration	$2,464,326	$2,531,726	$3,634,886	$3,823,548	55.2%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	63,764	92,753	124,749	144,975	127.4%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	1,181,749	1,647,811	2,206,189	2,468,984	108.9%
Unlinked Passenger Trips	95,627	151,243	224,267	286,555	199.7%
Passenger Miles	1,088,666	1,669,764	2,176,705	2,545,168	133.8%
Performance Indicators					
Admin Cost per VSH	$38.65	$27.30	$29.14	$26.37	-31.8%
Admin Cost per VSM	$2.09	$1.54	$1.65	$1.55	-25.7%
Admin Cost per Psgr Trip	$25.77	$16.74	$16.21	$13.34	-48.2%
Admin Cost per Psgr Mile	$2.26	$1.52	$1.67	$1.50	-33.6%
Percentage Change Consumer Price Index (CPI-All)	3.31%	2.45%	2.85%	8.24%	

Source: NTD Reports

Administration costs for Dial-a-Ride service, which combines both RTA staff and contracted administration, increased by 55.2 percent during the audit period, coinciding with an increase in ridership which more than doubled. Combined with significant increases in service hours and miles, and ridership, administration cost per vehicle service hour, per vehicle service mile, per passenger trip, and per passenger mile decreased relative to the base year.

Planning

The Planning Department's function is unique in that it is very intertwined with other departments because of the SRTP development and its role with grant application and high level of communication with the other departments. Planning develops short- and long-range plans and programs, including the SRTP and Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). The SRTP is prepared and updated on an annual recurring basis to meet RCTC funding requirements and serves as RTA's primary financial, planning, and service policy document. Planning is also responsible for NTD reporting, Title VI analyses, and route/trip-specific surveys. RCTC's TransTrack program is used for data warehousing

and SRTP data analysis, as well as reporting to state and federal databases.

In December 2022, RTA transitioned from research to action by launching GoMicro, its microtransit service. This flexible, on-demand system has replaced inefficient fixed routes in targeted areas, resulting in an estimated $2 million in annual savings and increased ridership. With an average of over four passengers per vehicle hour, GoMicro offers more direct service and has garnered strong board support for expansion.

In FY 2023, RTA launched the Sustainable Service Plan (SSP)—a short-range, three-year initiative designed to assess post-pandemic travel patterns and guide incremental service restoration. The SSP was developed in response to the shifting travel behaviors following the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to recalibrate services in a cost-effective and responsive manner. Rather than reverting to pre-COVID service levels, the SSP emphasized gradual, informed adjustments. The first year's recommendations were implemented in FY 2024, marking a significant shift in planning philosophy. One notable decision was not reinstating the RapidLink express service, based on rider preferences.

Building on the momentum of the SSP, RTA focused on several key outcomes that shaped its service strategy:

- Incremental Service Restoration: Rather than reverting immediately to pre-pandemic service levels, RTA adopted a phased approach to service restoration, allowing for strategic adjustments aligned with actual demand.
- Community Engagement: RTA prioritized public input, responding to all 84 comments received during the SSP process to ensure services reflected community needs.
- Updated Service Standards and Warrants: The SSP led to revised service evaluation criteria, including frequency and stop spacing, which now guide future service improvements.
- RTA responded to all 84 public comments received during the SSP process, demonstrating the agency's commitment to community engagement and data-informed decision-making.
- Recommendations from the first year of the SSP were successfully implemented in FY2024.

Further building on SSP insights, RTA initiated a COA, a long-term planning effort building on a decade of prior initiatives and engaging all jurisdictions in its service area. The COA is designed to provide a robust framework for future service delivery and operational efficiency. Key components of the COA include:

- Jurisdictional and Community Outreach: RTA is engaging with every jurisdiction in its service area, collaborating with local planning groups to understand regional growth and employment trends. Extensive public outreach will ensure community voices shape the future of transit.
- Microtransit Exploration: The COA will assess the viability of microtransit services, particularly in suburban and rural areas, as a cost-effective alternative to fixed routes.
- Dial-a-Ride Review: A long-term evaluation of Dial-a-Ride services will be conducted to align with future mobility needs.
- Fare Study: RTA will review its fare structure, building on the last fare change in 2019, which

was postponed due to the pandemic.

- Fleet Sizing and Efficiency: The COA will explore downsizing buses on low-demand routes to smaller vehicles, aiming for significant cost savings.
- Strategic Planning Framework: The COA is informed by RTA's strategic plan, which identifies "quick wins" and long-term goals. A completed strategic plan document will be made available.
- Marketing and Engagement: A robust outreach campaign will accompany the COA, including virtual meetings, a 24-hour online meeting room, and in-person events to maximize public participation.

The agency also leverages Automatic Passenger Counters (APC) for ridership data and feedback from coach operators to evaluate performance. Routes are prioritized using metrics such as passengers per service hour, stop-level ridership, trip-level trends, and community input. Updated service standards and warrants now provide clear guidelines for evaluating frequency, stop spacing, and overall service quality.

RTA has progressively restored and expanded service on its most utilized routes. In FY 2022, the top five performing routes returned to 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels, followed by the top ten routes in FY 2023. New and expanded services include:

- Route 56, launched in partnership with UCR.
- Route 11, extended to serve the March Veterans Military Project.
- New stops inside Disneyland, enhancing rider experience through strategic partnerships.
- The summer beach bus service, once popular pre-COVID, remains discontinued, though discussions are underway with San Diego County to potentially revive it through shared funding.

The Planning Department works with the Finance Department to actively pursue competitive grants to support innovation and sustainability. Recent funding has supported projects like a hydrogen fueling station and workforce development initiatives. RTA has identified hydrogen electric as its preferred future fuel, particularly suited to its large service area. Grants such as the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) are also vital for fare promotions. Additionally, RTA is exploring new funding mechanisms, including Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) mitigation programs.

Marketing

The Marketing and Planning Departments are responsible for providing information about RTA services, programs, projects, and activities to existing and potential customers, the community at large, other agencies, and the media. The Marketing Department prepares informational materials to support transit operations, including bus schedules, how-to guides, newsletters, and fare media information.

During FYs 2022 through 2024, RTA's Marketing department underwent significant transformation, balancing external customer engagement with a deliberate focus on strengthening internal culture.

The team recalibrated its strategy, modernized tools and channels, and invested in employee engagement programs to advance both ridership growth and organizational cohesion.

At the outset of this transformation, following retirements of the Chief Marketing Officer and the Media and Public Relations Manager, the new Marketing Director evaluated workload, capabilities, and structural needs. Rather than backfilling the full-time media relations position, RTA opted to retain an external media relations firm to provide flexible capacity and specialized support. The department remains lean in headcount, which has made targeted outsourcing and partnerships a practical way to sustain productivity across campaigns, social channels, and major outreach initiatives. If the Media and Public Relations role is eventually rehired, it is expected to remain under the Marketing function.

A key focus area during this period was fare promotions designed to attract riders back to the system and lower barriers to trial. In FY 2022, RTA rolled back fares to $0.25 as part of its 45th anniversary celebration. Building on that traction, the agency extended a similar promotion in FY 2023 for seniors and Medicare cardholders, and in FY 2024 introduced free rides every Friday. These initiatives, supported in part by LCTOP funding, generated measurable results; on free fare days, ridership increased by 2,000 or more trips, signaling strong price sensitivity and demand elasticity among riders and prospective riders. While effective, the agency notes that ongoing reliance on LCTOP funding introduces uncertainty for sustained promotional activity and is monitoring the funding outlook closely.

In parallel, RTA advanced several payment and technology initiatives to streamline the rider experience. The GoMobile application launched in FY 2023, consolidating ticket purchase, trip planning, and real-time alerts into a single, easy-to-use platform. RTA also expanded open payment systems—including contactless credit/debit cards and mobile wallets such as Apple Pay and Google Pay—which accounted for approximately 15 percent of fares in FY 2024. The move toward contactless and mobile payments has reduced cash handling across the system, contributing to operational efficiencies and lower staffing needs in cash-related roles.

To maintain strong community connections, RTA's outreach efforts remained robust, with the Marketing team attending 100+ events annually to engage both riders and non-riders. This in-person presence was complemented by virtual meetings, including a 24/7 virtual meeting room, allowing convenient access for stakeholder input and customer dialogue. For broader marketing reach, the department deployed a diversified advertising mix—billboards, Riff Co TV commercials, local radio stations such as KGGI and Spanish radio station KRQB "La Que Buena.," and public access TV—while deliberately moving away from print newspaper advertising. Recognizing ongoing digital access gaps, RTA continues to make printed ride guides available upon request.

Complementing these outreach efforts, the agency's digital infrastructure was also modernized. RTA migrated its public website to a cloud-based platform to enhance flexibility, security, and reliability. Public-facing social media channels (X, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn) are now accessible from anywhere to facilitate timely updates and responsiveness. To further scale content and improve consistency, RTA initiated an RFP for a PR agency focused on social media content generation.

To deepen regional engagement, the RTA Transportation NOW program sustains monthly discussions across six chapters in Western Riverside County, convening community advocates and jurisdictional partners to exchange information on transportation priorities and gather feedback. On the system side, QR codes now appear at bus stops and major transit centers, and on the back of bus seats. Riders can use them to access customer information and submit silent issue reports via web form—an innovation that has been well-received by coach operators because it helps de-escalate fare-related interactions. For periods of significant service change, RTA deploys an ambassador program to support wayfinding and mitigate confusion at stops and transit centers.

Concurrently, RTA embarked on a comprehensive cultural renovation and leadership effort aimed at clarifying the agency's mission, vision, and values in the current operating environment. A fundamental premise of this work is that brand building starts internally: when employees understand and identify with organizational values—and feel supported in their roles—that sense of purpose translates into better customer experiences and public perception. Reinforcing this view, a union Vice President observed a notable positive shift in the agency's overall culture.

The Marketing team played a central role in reimagining internal engagement. RTA combined Transit Employee Appreciation Day with the agency's anniversary to create an expanded Spirit Week, designed to celebrate staff and generate energy across divisions and shifts. Participation has grown meaningfully: rodeo attendance increased from 115 to over 350 employees and family members, aided by the addition of a kid-friendly zone and a word-of-mouth strategy that tapped into internal champions.

Internal communications have also been modernized. To enhance internal communications, RTA transitioned away from monthly paper newsletters to a rhythm of weekly email updates supplemented by information boards in break rooms and lounges—improving timeliness and reach. An internal website now allows employees to access information from anywhere.

The Marketing Department also manages customer complaints and comments. Most customer comments are made through the call center, although RTA also receives comments through email/online, mail, and front desk. Comments are entered into a database with the date, time, and customer contact information. Each comment that requires follow-up is assigned to a department. All comments have to be closed out with a date stamp entered into the database. Each department can run a report to see what items are still open for their specific department. Total customer complaints are provided in Table V-10.

Table V-10
Customer Complaints

Customer Complaint Data	Base Year	Audit Review Period			% Change
	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 21-FY 24
Unlinked Passenger Trips	3,015,434	4,110,027	5,246,457	5,754,320	90.8%
Complaints	695	791	796	672	-3.3%
Complaints per 100,000 Psgr Trips	30	19	15	12	-49.3%

Sources: NTD Reports, Customer Complaints

The total number of complaints and the number of complaints per 100,000 passenger trips decreased by 3.3 percent and 49.3 percent respectively from FY 2021 to FY 2024.

The various complaints are categorized for trend analysis. Complaint statistics for operators are monitored to encourage positive behavior by RTA staff. RTA recognizes best performers (operators with commendations and zero complaints). If three or more valid complaints are found against a specific coach operator in a quarter such as for rudeness or passing up a rider, the driver may be subject to corrective action including additional training, coaching, counseling, or ride-alongs.

Despite notable gains, the department faces several ongoing challenges. A public safety stigma—driven by negative media coverage of transit incidents at other agencies—continues to influence perceptions. RTA proactively highlights its safety features and practices while retaining caution with sensitive measures. Finally, reaching non-riders remains labor- and cost-intensive, often requiring specialized consultants, persistent community presence, and tailored messaging to overcome ingrained perceptions and unfamiliarity with the network.

Human Resources and Risk Management

The Human Resources Department falls under the purview of the chief administrative services officer, while the Risk Management Department reports directly to the CEO, according to the agency organization chart for FY 2024. Human Resources recruits new hires for the agency, including providing initial assessment and screening tests. Human Resources is also responsible for worker pay and benefits, and certain labor issues.

The chief administrative services officer is supported by a human resources manager. At the time of this audit, the Human Resources Department has twelve positions. This reflects a recent expansion, as two HR specialists were newly hired to support the agency's growing organizational needs.

Directly operated services are provided by both represented and non-represented employees. All RTA drivers and maintenance personnel, excluding management, supervisory, professional, and confidential employees, are represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), Local 1277. All work performed on buses that seat 30 or more passengers must be performed by union employees. Contracted fixed-route Pro Park, LLC employees (dba Empire Transportation) are represented by the Teamsters Union. Paratransit employees under Transdev (which acquired First Transit) are represented by the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers Union. RTA administrative employees are not represented.

Administrative employees are subject to a six-month introductory period with an annual evaluation afterwards. The annual evaluation is conducted on the anniversary of the date of hire and includes a self-evaluation. At the organizational level, the Agency and each department set goals for the upcoming fiscal year. Goals are communicated to the employees and feedback is solicited from each department.

To combat primarily operator turnover, RTA launched the RAMP 22 Mentorship Program in 2021 in collaboration with the union. This initiative pairs new hires with experienced mentors who provide

both professional and personal support. The program has received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with mentees rating support at an average of 4.6 out of 5, well above the target of 4.0.

Mentors are selected based on experience (minimum three years), safety records, and disciplinary history. A part-time driver serves as the mentor coordinator, ensuring compatibility between mentors and mentees. The program has significantly improved union relations and halved voluntary attrition within its first year. Expansion efforts are underway to include maintenance staff and support for career planning for existing employees.

Complementing the mentorship program is RTA's Culture Renovation and Leadership Project, which redefined the agency's mission, vision, and values to better resonate with younger generations. This initiative, supported by external consultants, promotes a shift from a rigid leadership style to one that emphasizes empathy and respect.

Employee engagement has surged, evidenced by increased participation in events such as the annual rodeo, which grew from approximately 115 attendees to over 350. Follow-up surveys show improvements across all categories, with response rates rising from 22 percent to 54 percent. Additionally, tuition reimbursement is available to all employees, underscoring commitment to career development and acknowledging the increasingly technical requirements of frontline and maintenance roles.

The recruitment protocol for coach operators is composed of an online application that leads to the candidate screening process. In addition, candidates undergo an essential duties assessment, a physical assessment, and a 75-question Bus Operator Selection System survey. Candidates are also subject to Live Scan fingerprinting, criminal background checks, and review of work history. Once the screening is completed, viable candidates are invited to an initial interview and a second interview.

The Agency also holds all-day hiring events on designated Saturdays that encompass the employee screening process. Hiring events offer testing, a computer assessment, and same-day conditional offers of employment. The process averages 4.5 hours. Customer service skills and an alignment of RTA's core values are the key attributes that RTA looks for in potential employees. The new hire orientation involves Human Resources, Risk Management, and Training Departments.

To remain competitive, the Human Resources Department regularly evaluates job titles and roles to determine whether they can be performed more efficiently. RTA's compensation and salary policies are updated annually. The implementation of salary increases for administrative employees was put on hold during the pandemic. RTA conducted an administration salary study to assess staff's salary range well as RTA's relationship with comparative salaries industry- and region-wide, the results of which justified salary adjustments. The Agency's drug and alcohol policy and equal opportunity policy were updated during the audit period.

Coach operators undergo six weeks of training at the regular starting salary. Operators are required to have a Class B commercial license with air brake and passenger endorsements. Training is conducted on-site and involves classroom, behind-the-wheel, and line instruction or cadetting. RTA maintains a recruitment calendar based on service needs and changes in staffing.

Despite a notable expansion in service over the past three years, RTA has maintained a stable number of full-time equivalents (FTEs). This was achieved by reducing the high "extra board percentage"—employees on standby or leave—following the COVID-19 pandemic. Many staff who were previously on leave have now returned to active duty.

Following the stabilization of staffing levels, recruitment efforts, which were scaled back during the pandemic, have resumed with vigor during this auditing period. RTA now hosts regular hiring events, often on weekends, where candidates can receive contingent job offers on the spot, pending standard background checks, drug testing, and physical exams. To attract applicants, RTA utilizes a diverse array of advertising platforms including NeoGov/governmentjobs.com, talent.com, social media, direct mail, text messaging, transit.com, and Mass Transit online media.

In addition to external outreach, a referral bonus program incentivizes current employees to recommend qualified candidates. For coach operators, RTA prioritizes applicants with clean driving records and strong customer service skills, emphasizing interpersonal qualities over technical driving ability, which can be trained.

RTA has also observed a shift in its applicant pool, with more candidates requiring assistance with online applications due to limited digital literacy. Additionally, a recurring challenge has been candidates failing to attend scheduled interviews or not showing up on their first day of work.

To improve employee retention and satisfaction, in April 2024, RTA signed a new three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that included wage increases and expanded benefits. Tuition reimbursement is now available to all employees, not just administrative staff, promoting career development across the organization. Moreover, maintenance staff received an increase in their training allowance, and the attendance policy was revised to a more employee-friendly system—three points per year instead of a rolling system.

Despite these improvements, due to rising costs, retiree medical benefits were phased out for future employees. However, RTA remains committed to fair compensation, as demonstrated by a 5% wage increase for administrative employees following a salary study in July 2020. These studies are recommended every three to five years and have strong support.

RTA offers extensive training for coach operators, including hands-on practice with mobility devices and in-person assistance from supervisors at bus stops. Safety and conflict resolution are prioritized through de-escalation training using role-play and video scenarios. To alleviate pressure on drivers, RTA established a Fare Enforcement Task Force composed of non-drivers and security personnel. Supervisors also assist with fare announcements and follow up on fare evasion reports in high-incident areas.

To address performance issues, drivers receive targeted training and feedback on routes with on-time performance issues, with schedules adjusted based on their input. New drivers are supported by Line Instructors who provide practical route training and highlight potential challenges.

In the near future, RTA plans to host Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) Instructor Training, certifying 12 drivers to enhance in-house training capacity—especially important as RTA transitions contracted fixed-route services to direct operation. Also, middle management in operations and maintenance are receiving increased HR and administrative training as part of RTA's strategic plan. In addition, RTA aims to establish an Apprenticeship Program in partnership with a local college to attract younger talent to technical maintenance roles and coach operator positions.

Risk Management

The department covers risk, safety, and security, and reviews risk stemming from incidents and accidents, whether during revenue service or at any of RTA's properties. Public passenger behavior is monitored on-board buses and at bus stations. The department implements safety and development courses and is responsible for the coaching of drivers and retraining of operators after accidents, incidents, or customer service issues. Facilities also undergo inspections for compliance with the safety screening plan, and audits are conducted as needed. A safety committee convenes to discuss risk topics, solutions to issues, and implementable actions.

The department implements a root cause analysis for analyzing and preventing incidents and accidents. This analysis is conducted by a supervisor in response to every incident or accident that occurs and is intended to help determine if any changes to safety policies or processes could yield safer results. If new procedures are developed as a result of the root analysis findings, policy changes are conveyed to staff through a variety of means including safety bulletins, safety meetings, and trainings. For example, the backing up of a bus could require a modified procedure such as having a second person watch the backside.

The department increased its communication and cooperation with law enforcement. There are over 200 cameras at RTA facilities that capture incidents that could prove helpful to both RTA and law enforcement. Daily checks of the camera function are conducted. The Riverside facility is guarded at all times, while the Hemet facility has night shift security. The downtown Vine Street Mobility Hub receives 24/7 security surveillance. Security personnel are contracted with an outside firm to actively report and enforce safety rules at RTA facilities. RTA receives reports from the security firm on incidents and activity at patrol check points. Liquidated damages are included in the security contract for failing to fulfill responsibilities.

RTA regularly updates its Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) in compliance with FTA regulations. This plan details the process and procedures RTA utilizes to implement the Agency's Safety Management Systems. RTA staff utilizes FTA's PTASP Technical Assistance Center throughout the production of this plan. Annual updates to the PTASP are required; while only self-certification and board adoption are required for ratification of a PTASP, FTA will formally review the plan for compliance during the federal triennial review process. During the FY 2023 triennial review, no deficiencies were found with the PTASP regulation.

Procurement

The Procurement Department is responsible for procuring a wide range of equipment, parts, supplies,

contractors, vendors, and professional services that are used by RTA. The department maintains the Agency's vendor list, and filters bid notifications by vendor industry and interest. Over this triennial period, the Director of Procurement played a pivotal role in guiding the department through a period of transformation. Having risen through the ranks and served the agency for a considerable time, the director's leadership has positioned Procurement as a core function alongside departments such as Finance, Marketing, Operations, Risk, and Human Resources.

A significant milestone during the audit period was the launch of PlanetBids in December 2022. This initiative stemmed directly from a prior audit recommendation advocating for a cost-benefit analysis of e-procurement alternatives. The department conducted a thorough evaluation process, including vendor demos and scope definition, ultimately selecting PlanetBids from six proposals.

Since its implementation, the platform has proven to be user-friendly and well suited to the agency's needs. Its implementation involved migrating existing vendors and encouraging registration on the new system. Since its launch, the vendor base has expanded dramatically—from 540 to 2,129 active vendors—resulting in enhanced competition across most procurement categories. Notably, one transit enhancement project saw a new vendor win with a bid approximately $100,000 lower than the historically lowest bidder.

In addition to expanding the vendor base, PlanetBids has streamlined many previously manual processes, such as vendor list creation and email-based submissions. The platform enables 24/7 access for posting procurements, reducing delays, and increasing responsiveness. It also offers a robust library of scopes of work, which project managers use for market research and scope development, including filtering by transit agency.

The Board of Directors has expressed appreciation for the increased competition, frequently noting the rise in proposal submissions—often six or more for construction projects. While quantifying cost savings remains complex due to market-wide cost increases, the agency has observed tangible benefits from the heightened competition.

Over the course of 2022 to 2024, response rates to RFPs have consistently grown, indicating successful vendor engagement and adoption of the new system. The agency has a five-year contract with PlanetBids and is considering future expansion into additional modules, such as performance tracking, though current efforts remain focused on vendor management.

Meanwhile, the department continues to conduct weekly procurements for bus parts, engaging with 9 to 10 vendors twice weekly. No significant deficiencies were identified in procurement practices during the audit period, underscoring the department's operational integrity and effectiveness.

Information Technology

The IT Department is responsible for the provision of RTA IT services. The IT Department is staffed with three employees assigned to two facilities. The department manages the Agency's software and ERP/EAM infrastructure as well as providing technical and help desk assistance including ticket tracking and troubleshooting. RTA outsources hosting; this vendor manages RTA's network functions

and hosts equipment needs.

During the early period of the audit timeframe, the IT Department was involved in the upgrade of the probing computers and server for the GFI fareboxes. Vehicles are equipped with video and audio recording devices, Wi-Fi, and CAD/AVL/APC equipment and accompanying software. Software updates were done to video and audio recording software to increase recording storage from 30 days of memory to 60 days. CAD/AVL/APC functionalities allow RTA staff access to real-time vehicle location, ridership, passenger loads, OTP, and vehicle maintenance data. System updates were completed to allow the transmittal of updated data every 20 seconds, rather than the 30-second interval that was possible previously.

IT developed a customer-facing app feature that would utilize this data to allow riders to view vehicle capacity/bus crowding in real time. RTA also worked with Caltrans on a California Integrated Travel Project to implement General Transit Feed Specification Real Time (GTFS-real-time) technology. The result of this project allows RTA to publish real-time vehicle information to the public in an open data format that can be easily integrated by third-party app developers.

More recently, RTA's customer-facing technologies have evolved rapidly. The launch of the Go mobile app in FY 2023 marked a major milestone, offering riders a seamless platform to purchase tickets, plan trips, and receive real-time alerts. Complementing this is the implementation of open payment systems, allowing passengers to tap credit/debit cards or use Apple Pay and Google Pay directly on fare boxes. This shift has significantly reduced cash handling, with open payment usage rising from 12 percent to 15 percent in just one year.

To support these advancements, modern fare boxes now accommodate these payment methods, aligning with RTA's goal of convenience and efficiency. New fareboxes offer detailed reporting capabilities, and additional key performance indicators—including social media engagement and website traffic—are tracked and reported monthly to the board. Real-time service updates have also improved, thanks to the Clever IT assist system and a newly acquired Route Disruption Management module, which automates detour notifications on passenger-facing platforms like "bus watch." RTA's BusWatch is a free service that uses a Global Positioning System to pinpoint the location and estimated arrival time of the bus. BusWatch shows in real-time where buses are on the map and estimates when they will arrive at a stop.

Meanwhile, RTA's GoMicro microtransit service benefits from the RideCo software, praised for its effectiveness in managing passenger loads. Additionally, new software for dial-a-ride services promises further operational efficiencies.

On the safety and communication front, onboard systems have been bolstered with live-feed cameras and discreet feedback mechanisms, such as QR codes on seatbacks for silent issue reporting. Communication tools include phone radios and Clever devices, with supervisors actively monitoring connectivity.

RTA's administrative backbone has been strengthened through platforms like PlanetBids as well as the agency's financial management system, Protocol, which is currently undergoing an upgrade, while

grant management remains a priority, with robust tools in place to track federal and state funding opportunities.

Moreover, the maintenance operations have embraced digital transformation with the Infor EAM maintenance software which enables facilities staff to use tablets for work orders and preventive maintenance schedules, mirroring the mechanics' workflow. The goal is to go fully paperless within one to two years which is driving updates to PM schedules and the potential use of oil sampling for smarter maintenance intervals. While contractors use Zonar for electronic pre-trip inspections, RTA is exploring similar systems for its direct operations.

RTA's redesigned, cloud-based website has improved content management, security, and visitor analytics. Social media is managed through Cooksuite, which offers a centralized dashboard for platforms including X, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Plans are underway to engage a PR agency for content creation, while RTA retains control over publishing. Internal communications have shifted from monthly paper newsletters to weekly digital updates, accessible via email and breakroom displays. The intranet is now available remotely, enhancing employee connectivity.

Community outreach has embraced virtual meeting rooms, open 24/7, alongside traditional pop-up events. For the COA, RTA is developing GIS mapping tools to facilitate interactive public engagement. QR codes are also used for rider surveys, such as those conducted at the Vine Street Mobility Hub.

Section VI

Statement of Facts

The following summarizes factual events and trends obtained from this triennial audit covering fiscal years 2022 through 2024. Recommendations are then provided.

1. Of the compliance requirements pertaining to RTA, the operator fully complied with all nine applicable requirements. Two additional compliance requirements did not apply to RTA (rural and urbanized farebox recovery ratios), as the transit operator is subject to the blended ratio under PUC 99270.1.

2. The blended farebox recovery ratio targets approved by RCTC for RTA service were met in each year of the audit period pursuant to Public Utilities Code, Section 99270.1. The minimum farebox recovery ratios that RTA was required to meet were 16.89 percent in FY 2022; 17.34 percent in FY 2023; and 17.20 percent in FY 2024. Including eligible non-fare revenue, the farebox recovery ratio was 24.15 percent in FY 2022; 30.42 percent in FY 2023; and 24.98 percent in FY 2024[2], according to the audited basic financial statements. The average annual farebox recovery ratio was 26.52 percent. RTA exceeded the minimum standard in all three audit years.

3. RTA and its contract operators participated in the CHP Transit Operator Compliance Program and received vehicle inspections within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim. Terminal inspections received satisfactory ratings from the CHP. CHP inspections in 2023 and 2024 for Hemet noted that because RTA had two or more satisfactory terminal ratings, the number of maintenance records inspected was reduced to one-half the number of vehicles inspected.

4. The operating budget exhibited modest increases and did not exceed 15 percent during the period. Following a 4.0 percent increase in FY 2022, the budget increased 8.8 percent in FY 2023 and 9.4 percent in FY 2024. Purchased transportation costs primarily from the introduction of the GoMicro transit service in 2023 and increased demand for dial-a-ride increased the total agency budget.

5. RTA satisfactorily implemented its recommendation pertaining to conducting cost benefit for e-procurement alternatives. The agency launched PlanetBids in December 2022 following a thorough evaluation process including vendor demos and scope definition, ultimately selecting PlanetBids from six proposals.

[2] AB 90, passed into law and signed by the governor in June 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts, prohibits the imposition of penalties on a transit operator that does not maintain the required ratio of fare revenues to operating cost during FY 2019–20 or FY 2020–21. AB 149 extends the penalty exemption through FY 2022–23 and authorizes transit operators to include federal grant funds as local funds for the purpose of computing fare revenue ratios. This bill, until July 1, 2026, would exempt an operator from specified requirements related to fare box ratios and eligibility standards for a fiscal year in which the operator expended from local funding, as defined, an amount for transit operations not less than the amount the operator expended from local funding for transit operations during FY 2018–19.

6. Operating cost per passenger decreased by 35.6 percent system-wide, by 54.5 percent for general public service, and by 13.7 percent for Dial-a-Ride service. This performance measure reflects a greater return in ridership in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Operating cost[3] per vehicle service hour increased by 4.9 percent system-wide, decreased by 18 percent for general public service, and increased by 1.5 percent for Dial-a-Ride service. Operating cost per vehicle service mile decreased by 12.2 percent for general public service, increased by 8.4 percent for Dial-a-Ride service, and increased by 10.1 percent system-wide. When isolating operations department functional cost only, demand response cost increased by over three-fold during the audit period against operations outputs such as vehicle service hours and miles that increased less.

8. Passengers per vehicle service hour increased by 62.9 percent system-wide, by 80.3 percent for general public service, and by 17.7 percent for Dial-a-Ride service. Passengers per vehicle service mile increased by 90.5 percent for general public service, by 25.6 percent for Dial-a-Ride service, and by 70.3 percent system-wide.

9. RTA restored pre-COVID service levels for its top-performing routes, launched innovative services like GoMicro, introduced new routes such as Route 56 and expanded Route 11, maintained service reliability, and implemented Sustainable Service Plan recommendations.

10. Major projects included the construction and opening of the Vine Street Mobility Hub, enhancements to University of California, Riverside (UCR) Bannockburn Village bus stops, planned expansions of the Hemet facility, and securing funding for hydrogen fueling stations and low-emission buses.

11. RTA modernized its fleet with 70 new CNG buses, addressed technical issues, and committed to hydrogen electric as its future fuel, with infrastructure investments and hydrogen fuel cell buses ordered for 2026.

12. Innovative fare promotions and modernized payment systems, including the GoMobile app, enhanced ridership, and operational efficiency. RTA also enhanced passenger security with initiatives like "See Something, Say Something," joined anti-human trafficking efforts, improved route disruption management, modernized its website, and strengthened internal communications.

13. Initiatives like RAMP 22, apprenticeship programs, tuition reimbursement, and improved labor-management relations significantly reduced turnover, boosted morale, and fostered engagement.

[3] Operating cost in this performance indicator context includes the major functions of operations, maintenance, and administration.

Recommendations

1. **Monitor demand response operational performance trends.**

   Along with increased rider requests for demand response services, RTA commenced GoMicro microtransit service in 2023 which replaced and enhanced fixed route services in the Hemet-San Jacinto area and achieved cost-savings. RTA should focus on the evaluation and analysis of demand response services in the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). Strategies from the COA data analysis coupled with operational efficiency management should be formulated to address the pace of demand response operations cost increases relative to growth in service delivery.

2. **Monitor maintenance costs relative to the active fleet.**

   RTA retained maintenance staff during the COVID pandemic to keep vehicles in a state of good repair, relying on national and statewide COVID relief measures to balance short term expenses with long term measures. RTA's COA should review revenue vehicle requirements relative to the active fleet, peak vehicles, and spare ratio. The COA should evaluate service improvements and identify the appropriate balance for future bus maintenance.

3. **Report GoMicro microtransit operating data separately to the State Controller's Office.**

   RTA's FY 2024 State Controller Transit Operator Financial Transaction Report for general public service includes cost exemptions for microtransit service in the calculation of farebox recovery (Form #6). Under the Supplemental Operating Data Form #5, GoMicro operating data is not shown separately. Reporting microtransit separately is not currently a requirement of the State Controller's Report. However, we do recommend microtransit operating data including annual passengers, vehicle hours and miles, employees, and date of service commencement be reported separately by RTA, under the Other Transportation Mode column.