# LCTA – Fixed Route Strategic Business Plan 2018 to 2023



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Luzerne County Transportation Board Approved

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#### **Overview**

The Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA) Board met on June 12, 2018 and again on June 14, 2018 to define and develop a Strategic Business Plan that will guide the agency for the next three to five years. The meetings focused on identifying LCTA's mission, vision, goals, and key performance measures

Meeting participants included Staff and Board Members:

#### Staff

- John Alu, Finance Director
- Kathy Bednarek, Grants Coordinator
- Joshua Burkholder, IT Coordinator
- Vince Coviello, Maintenance Director
- Norm Gavlick, Executive Director
- Janine Hennigan, HR Director
- Lee Horton, Operations Director
- Tracy Kline, Accounting Manager
- Frank Knorek, Compliance Analyst
- Joe Roselle, Administrative Services Director
- Lou Uritz, Procurement Manager
- Lorri Vandermark, Marketing Coordinator

#### **Board**

- Michael Gilhooley, LCTA Board
- Dr. Sid Halsor, LCTA Board
- Dr. Valerie Kepner, LCTA Board
- Dr. John Koch, LCTA Board
- Charles Sciandra, LCTA Board
- Lynette Villano, LCTA Board

#### **Board Role in Visioning**

In addition to the organizational improvements required to reach LCTA's vision, the board's responsibilities include not only developing a plan, but also achieving the plan's goals and objectives.

In the planning sessions, the group actively pursued the meeting objectives:

- Review of board member roles and responsibilities
- > Identifying trends, mission, and vision for the organization
- Addressing financial projections and strategic goals and objectives

Prioritizing specific, measurable items for action and emphasis

#### **Agency Description**

The Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA) was incorporated in 1972 as an Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA), PennDOT, City Demonstration Agency of Wilkes-Barre, and Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA) demonstration project in response to service disruptions resulting from Hurricane Agnes. Since then, LCTA has grown to about 175 employees and provides fixed-route and ADA paratransit service. In terms of labor representation, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 175 and Teamsters 401 represent LCTA drivers and maintenance employees.

LCTA's fixed-route system consists of 18 bus routes serving Luzerne County and connecting with the County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS). The agency operates approximately 49 paratransit vehicles and about 38 fixed-route vehicles at maximum service levels. LCTA shares a downtown intermodal transfer center with Martz Trailways which is owned by the City of Wilkes-Barre. Fixed-route service is provided Monday through Saturday with the exception of designated holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day). Monday through Friday hours are approximately 5:00 a.m. until about 7:00 p.m. Saturday service begins at approximately 9:00 a.m. and continues until about 5:30 p.m.



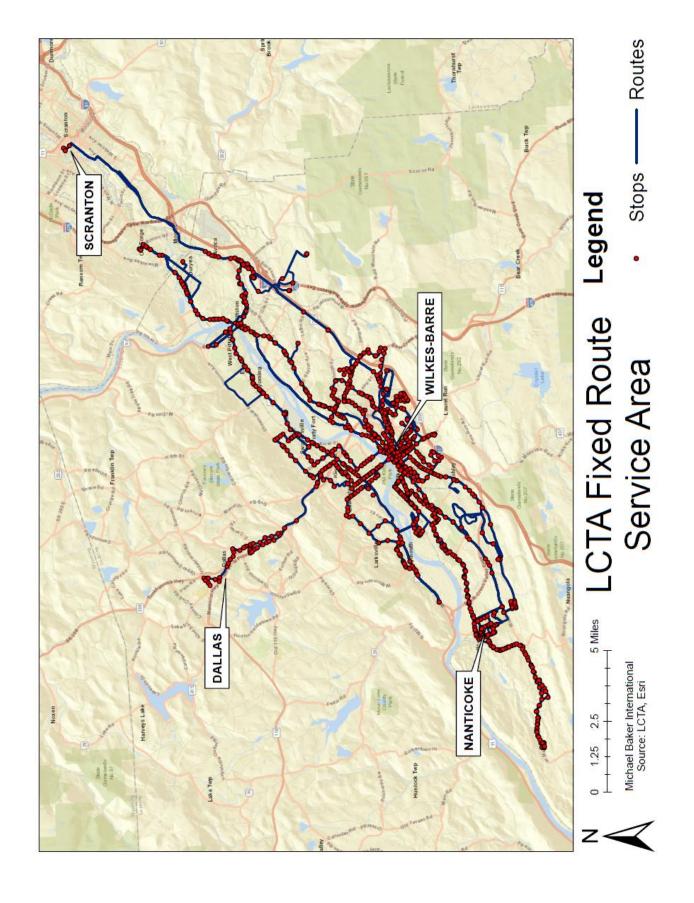
## Performance Statistics, Demographics, and Service Area Map

The group reviewed recent performance statistics from the 'DOTgrants' system in order to understand the current operating position of the agency and embedded trends for the foreseeable future:

Agency	Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA)									
Mode		Fixed Route								
	14-15		15-	·16	16-	·17	17-	·18	18	-19
Annual Operating Statistics	Audited		Au	dited	Au	dited	Pro	jected	Ар	plication
	3/4/201	6	2/7	//2017	1/3	/2018	5/3	3/2018	5/3	3/2018
Vehicles Maximum Service (VOMS)		38		32		32		32		32
Operating Cost	\$8,572,0	35	\$8	3,765,710	\$9	,718,336	\$8	,824,604	\$	9,508,571
Operating Revenues	\$1,240,4	80	\$1	,250,536	\$1	,178,318	\$1	,344,082	65	1,476,843
Total Vehicle Miles	1,070,7	38	1	,156,636	1	,161,339	1	,170,088		1,180,000
Vehicle Revenue Miles	1,042,2	209	1	,120,077	1	,125,950	1	,134,412		1,200,000
Total Vehicle Hours	73,0	11		77,499		77,833		78,114		80,000
Vehicle Revenue Hours	70,9	09		75,377		75,705		75,998		78,000
Total Passenger Trips	1,188,4	70	1	,217,161	1	,168,297	1	,196,090		1,218,000
Senior Citizen Passenger Trips	194,8	89		196,758		182,638		196,404		197,500
Act 44 Performance Statistics										
Passengers per Vehicle Revenue Hour	16	.76		16.15		15.43		15.74		15.62
Operating Costs per Vehicle Revenue Hour	\$ 120	.89	\$	116.29	\$	128.37	\$	116.12	\$	121.90
Operating Revenue per Vehicle Revenue Hour	\$ 17.	.49	\$	16.59	\$	15.56	\$	17.69	\$	18.93
Operating Costs per Passenger	\$ 7.	.21	\$	7.20	\$	8.32	\$	7.38	\$	7.81
Other Performance Statistics										
Operating Revenue per Operating Cost	14.4	7%		14.27%		12.12%		15.23%		15.53%
Operating Cost per Total Vehicle Hours	\$ 117.	.41	\$	113.11	\$	124.86	\$	112.97	\$	118.86
Operating Cost per Total Vehicle Miles	\$ 8	.01	\$	7.58	\$	8.37	\$	7.54	\$	8.06
Total Passengers per Total Vehicle Hours		.28		15.71		15.01		15.31		15.23
Operating Cost per Vehicle Revenue Hours	\$ 8	.22	\$	7.83	\$	8.63	\$	7.78	\$	7.92
Vehicle Revenue Miles Per Total Miles	97.3	4%		96.84%		96.95%		96.95%		101.69%
Vehicle Revenue Hours Per Total Hours	97.1	2%		97.26%		97.27%		97.29%		97.50%
Operating Subsidy per Passenger Trip	\$ 6	.17	\$	6.17	\$	7.31	\$	6.25	\$	6.59
Act 44 Performance Review Targets	14-15		15-	-16	16-	17	17-	-18	18	-19
Passengers per Vehicle Revenue Hour				16.32		16.64				
Operating Costsper Vehicle Revenue Hour			\$	102.58	\$	105.66				
Operating Revenue per Vehicle Revenue Hour			\$	16.22	\$	16.70				
Operating Costs per Passenger			\$	6.30	\$	6.36				

Additionally, recent socio-demographic information and fixed-route service area map was reviewed to inform the discussion of how LCTA needs to meet the demands of the regional riders (see the following table):

Luzerne County	/ Demog	unty Demographic Information	ıformati	on
Within .5 mile of Service (2016): So	6): Source Remix			
Population	167,470			
Jobs	91,858			
Poverty	19.40%			
Minority	14.60%			
Seniors 65+	19.50%			
Youth 18-	19.10%			
US Census Statistics	2007-2011	2012-2016	Difference	2012-2016 Difference Percent Change
Total Population	319,897	318,917	086-	-0.31%
Age 18+	77.80%	80.30%	2.50%	ı
Age 21+	75.60%	76.30%	0.70%	ı
Age 65+	18.00%	18.90%	%06'0	ı
Average Income	\$ 56,931	\$ 62,006	\$ 5,075	8.91%
Manufacturing Establishments	313	299	-14	-4.47%
Educational Services Establishments	56	09	4	7.14%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	947	921	-26	-2.75%
Accommodation and Food Services	745	761	16	2.15%



#### **Strategic Business Plan Overview**

The LCTA planning process included the following steps:

- Discussed Situational Analysis to identify customers, markets, and trends affecting the organization
- Developed Mission statement development to clarify LCTA's focus and direction
- Defined future Vision to determine characteristics of the Authority's future
- Performance measure discussion to ensure an outcomes-based strategic plan
- Performed a Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis to identify priority areas for action
- Identified strategic goals and objectives

An organization must have the workforce, operations, and financial strength to reach its customer and market goals. Each area requires specific goals and performance objectives that support and align with other areas.

Strategic Business Planning is important because it enables an organization to respond effectively to the changing circumstances with which it must contend.

At its best, strategic business planning requires broad-scale information gathering, an exploration of alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. A carefully structured process:

- Seeks to meet agency mandates and to fulfill the organization's mission
- Facilitates communication and participation
- Accommodates divergent interests and values
- Fosters orderly decision-making
- Frames the issues that need to be addressed
- Results in appropriate actions and outcomes



**Strategic Business Plan** – A disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it wants to achieve, and how it will accomplish its future.



Boards take a lead role in developing a strategic business plan. It documents the long term (3-5 years) action plan that outlines management's "game plan" to strengthen the performance of the transit agency.

#### **Situational Analysis**

Situational analysis is the first step in planning. The Board considered the current situational analysis of LCTA, in identifying customers, markets, and current trends that impact its operations.

Regional Trends	
Positive	Negative
o Industry expansion (warehousing)	o Skilled labor (fewer available)
o Technology(apps, self-driving)	o Aging population
o Fuel prices	o Fuel prices
o College growth	o Transit competition (Uber Lyft)
o Expanded health care service	o Decline in brick and mortar retail locations
o Legislative support	o Public perception
o Recreation (arena/casino)	
o Aging population	
o Younger population moving to urban areas	

This combination of trends requires LCTA to identify strategies for improvement in multiple areas, such as organizational efficiency, marketing, community partnerships, and revenue generation.

### **Customer Trends**

The other key element of a situational analysis is the market or customer base. It is essential to

The other key element of a situational analysis is the market of customer base. It is essential to						
determine the scope of existing and potential customers to ensure that mission, vision, and						
planning efforts reflect their needs and expectations.						
Current LCTA Customers/Markets	Potential LCTA Customers/Markets					
o Bus Riders	o Tourists					
o Commuters	o Event-based riders					
o Students	o Business travelers					
o Seniors	<ul> <li>Shoppers</li> </ul>					
o Persons with disabilities	o Large employers					
o Individuals with low incomes	o Hospitals					
o Paratransit riders	<ul> <li>Expanded Park and Ride services</li> </ul>					
	o Entertainment travel to local venues					

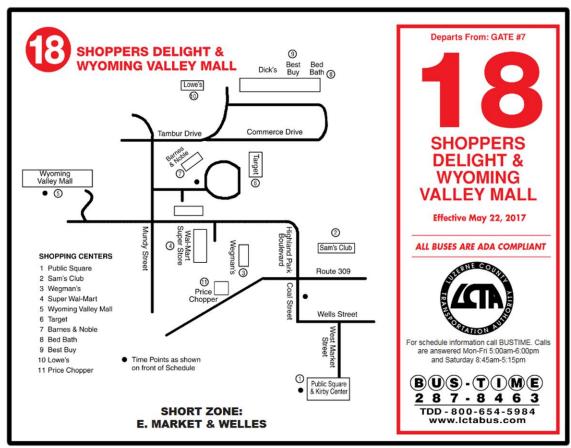
#### **Mission Statement**

Mission statements communicate the purpose of the organization to both external stakeholders and the organization's workforce. Mission statements are core elements of both planning and implementation. They serve as a means for managers and others to make decisions. Statements must be clear, concise, relevant, and easy to understand.

After discussion about LCTA's purpose, role, and distinctive competitive advantage, the Board developed the following draft mission statement for LCTA:

"The mission of LCTA is to provide on-time, accessible, and affordable public fixed-route bus and shared-ride van service for regional passengers through efficient operations, and well-maintained safe vehicles."

This statement serves as a litmus test for goals, objectives, and measures. Each goal must relate to the stated mission. All elements of the statement must be reflected in the strategic plan. Now that the Board has defined LCTA's purpose, the next step was to identify the organization's five-year plan.



#### **Vision Statement – Future Aspirations**

A vision is a clear, compelling, and shared picture of the future an organization seeks to create. The purpose of the vision is to offer guidance about what is expected; clarify organization's direction and purpose. A meaningful Vision creates a useful tension between the present and the desired future—provides motivation and challenge.

LCTA Defined its Vision as follows:

"Five years from now, LCTA will be considered the premier public-transit agency in Northeastern Pennsylvania, with an outstanding reputation built on:

- demonstrated high-quality customer experience,
- efficient operations,
- ethical and proactive management,
- while serving community transit needs."

The Board identified future characteristics and competitive advantages that would be evident in the future:

## In five years, LCTA will have:

- o A seamless advanced pay system
- o Additional transfer stations
- o Convenience/comfort (Wifi, padded seats, real time information, shelters)
- o A new location in Murray Complex
- o Closed the skills gap with mentor/job shadow program
- o Express BRT to Hazleton
- o Exceeded PennDOT performance goals
- o A newer modern fleet
- o Increased ridership
- o Recognition as premier NEPA transit provider (Hazelton FR and COLTS SR)
- o Sustained funding
- o A clean triennial FTA
- o Full service on weekday and Saturdays
- o College partnerships/contract (at least 2)

These elements comprise LCTA's achievable future. To get to that future, LCTA must also identify success factors and action plans.

#### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

There are two steps in a SWOT analysis. The first is to have the group "brainstorm" to develop a list of the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses and the market's external opportunities and threats. The next step in the process analysis is identifying actions and goals based on how strengths and weaknesses address threats and opportunities.

The Board identified the following strengths and weaknesses of the LCTA organization:

Strengths (Organizational attributes)	Weaknesses (Organizational challenges)
o New buses	o Aging bus fleet
o Passionate employees	o Separate operations locations
o Consolidated location	o Lack of board vision
o Improved image (need more evidence)	o Difficult to ride
o Project focus	o Lack of internal communication
o Management team	o Recruitment
o PennDOT relationship	o Slow financial coordination
o Increased relationship with legislators	
o IT hardware/software	
o Drivers positively represent organization	
o Frequent training	

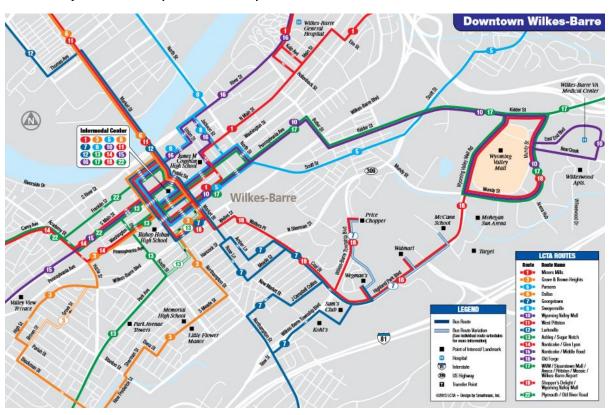
The Board listed the following external trends in terms of their status as an opportunity to be exploited or a threat to be mitigated:

Opportunities (External benefits)	Threats (External challenges)	
o Grants	o Decreased state/federal funding	
o Increased advertising revenue	o Low pool of employee applications	
o Economic redevelopment projects o Improved technology to track performance	o Crime downtown	
data (Avail) o New community events to build	o Economic	
relationships/build ridership	o Stigma of transit use	

#### **Common Themes**

Common, or strategic, themes are derived from the initial SWOT discussion. The following are those that were more prevalent in several areas. These help target the areas in which LCTA intends to make major improvements, and are to be included in strategic goal development in conjunction with the SWOT Analysis:

- Emphasize Drivers
- Perception of Service Quality
- Customer/Community Image
- Measure and Improve Efficiency
- Define and collect Performance Tracking Data and Reporting
- Continual and Streamlined Recruitment
- Develop Marketing
- Implement Technology
- Increase Revenues
- Improve Recovery Rates and Key Performance Metrics\*



\*Currently, there is no data or data collection process to determine customer characteristics, expectations, preferences, or levels of satisfaction with LCTA services.

### **SWOT Analysis**

The second step in a SWOT analysis focuses on establishing strategic goals and objectives that flow from the common themes.

SWOT Analysis considers both the current internal and external aspects of the organization.

- The Strengths and Weaknesses are internal; they relate to the important internal characteristics of LCTA as an organization.
- The Opportunities and Threats are external; they relate to the broader external environment in which LCTA functions.

	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	Capitalize	Turnaround
Weaknesses	Improve	Defend

The table below summarizes LCTA's SWOT Analysis:

	Op	portunities	Th	reats
	Wor	ckforce	Оре	rations
		Recruiting		More efficient service
ths		Develop driver recruitment/training program		Coordinate maintenance services
Strengths		Ensure that all skilled positions are 100% staffed		Improve technology
Str		Improve workforce knowledge and skills		Improve agency performance
		Increase labor union communication		Address preventative maintenance process
				Exceed Act 44 Performance Targets
	Fina	nncial	Cus	tomer/Community
		Improve financial position		Improve perception
ses		Sustain ongoing fiscal health		Improve safety on and off bus
Weaknesses		Maximize revenue growth		Improve customer experience
akr		Increase fare recovery ratio		Increase ridership
We				Increase partnership and relationships
				Demonstrate regional value
				Make riding the bus easier

#### **Strategic Goals**

LCTA must have the workforce, systems, and financial resources necessary to achieve its goals in the market. Moreover, decisions in each of these areas must support and align with goals and objectives in all other areas. Failure to align workforce, systems, and financial planning is a common reason that strategic plans fail.

Strategic goals are organized into four categories. These four categories represent four "perspectives" with which to think about the organization. The four perspectives with associated strategic goals developed by the group are:

#### Workforce

- Fully staffed with the right talent in all positions
- Provide necessary training and tools
- Improve morale
- Improve working relationship with labor unions

#### **Operations and Systems**

- Improve service efficiency
- Improve and integrate technology systems
- Ensure compliance of federal and state regulations
- Make riding easier
- Meet Act 44 performance measures and KPIs

#### **Financial**

- Improve and sustain fiscal position
- Investigate alternative funding sources

#### **Customer and Community**

- Improve customer experience
- Ensure rider safety
- Engage community partnerships
- Pursue alternative ridership channels
- Demonstrate regional value

The strategy map on the following page displays these goals, and establishes the relationships among goals in different perspectives. Mission Goals reflect outcomes that will drive long-term sustainability in the marketplace and support a customer-centric culture. LCTA's Customer & Community Goals focus on attaining customer needs and expectations in existing and new markets.

Supporting the Customer & Community Goals, the Financial Goals provide a path to funding customer and market outcomes. This includes goals both in revenue and expenses as well as generating financial support for the operations and workforce initiatives.

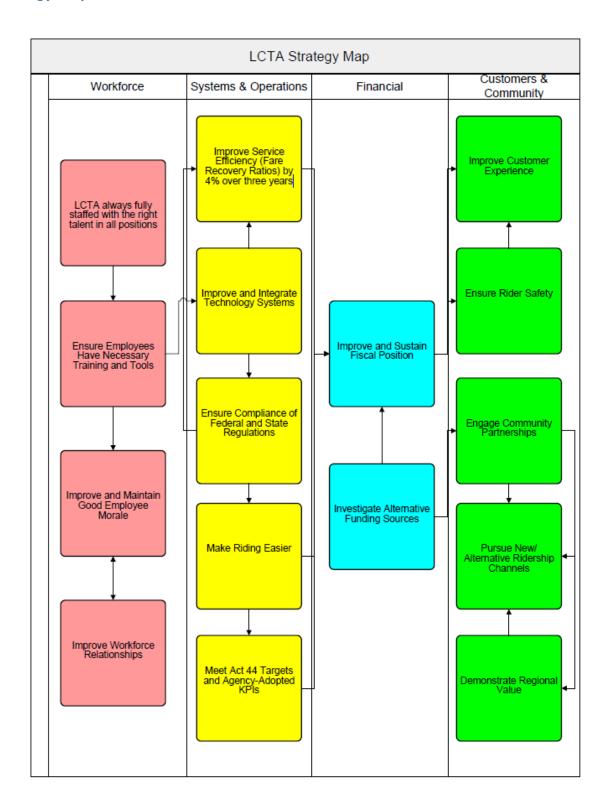
Systems & Operations Goals reflect the need for LCTA to develop internal systems and processes that support its mission, including both customer and financial stewardship goals. *LCTA must develop systems to collect, analyze, and disseminate information at all levels.* It must also take advantage of advances in technology to increase its route productivity.

Workforce Goals support all other endeavors. An opportunity exists to align talent with current and future needs. LCTA will first need to address its Workforce Goals to have the necessary resources, such as Drivers, to address all the other goals.

The LCTA Board will align Committee oversight of the Strategic Goals by assigning each of the four categories to respective committees, e.g. Personnel Committee with track Workforce Goals, Operations Committee will oversee Systems & Operations Goals, Budget Committee will track Finance Goals, and Marketing Committee will track Customer & Community Goals.



#### **Strategy Map**



As a guide to implementing the goals within each of the four perspectives, staff identified resource and timeframe considerations for each objective. The following charts outline these factors for each of the goals:

## Workforce Goals

Goal W-1: Fully staffed with the right talent in all positions.					
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe			
1. Reduce hiring obstacles	Board resolution to hiring policy, only review key executive positions	Board/ Sept 2018			
2. Evaluate job descriptions compare to actual duties	Revise job descriptions	Norm & Janine/ June 2019			
3. Perform driver wage evaluation/survey	Competitive analysis	Janine/ Dec. 2018			

Goal W-2: Provide necessary training and tools.					
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe			
Conduct employee survey for needed skills and knowledge	Completed survey with results complied and presented to board	Janine/ Oct. 2018			
Develop and execute a training plan for key staff members	Define training schedules	Janine/ June 2019			

Goal W-3: Improve morale.						
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe				
Create employee award/ years of service	Define programs for drivers and employees	Norm/ Dec. 2018				

Goal W-3: Improve morale.			
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
Establish employee     management     communications process	Regular scheduled meetings	Norm/ Sept. 2018	
3. Employee survey include morale questions	Compile/present results	Janine/ Oct. 2018	

Goal W-4: Improve workforce relationships.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
Establish monthly dialog     with shared ride workforce	Meeting notes	Norm/ Sept. 2018, ongoing
2. Establish monthly dialog with fixed route workforce	Meeting notes	Norm/ Sept. 2018, ongoing

## **Operations & Systems Goals**

Go	Goal O-1: Improve service efficiency.			
	Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
1.	Assist in information gather for transfer station and shelter grant	Submit necessary information to Mericle	John/ July 15, 2018	
2.	Consolidate and relocate LCTA facilities	Groundbreaking by July 31	Norm, John & Lou/ July 2018	
3.	Evaluate route optimization to accommodate better routes	Operation of night buses	Joe & Lee/ April 2019	
4.	Build CNG fueling station	Fueling station in operation	Lou/ May 2019	

Goal O-2: Improve and integrate technology systems.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
1. Upgrade/replace all IT on FR buses	Bus integrated technology	Joe/ Dec. 2018
2. Launch new website with rebranding	New website	Joe/ Sept. 2018

Goal O-3: Ensure compliance of federal and state regulations.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
Resolve outstanding FTA triannual issues	Clean triannual	Norm/ June 2019

Goal O-3: Ensure compliance of federal and state regulations.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
2. Resolve outstanding Act 44 issues	Clean report	Norm/ June 2021

Goal O-4: Make riding easier.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
Replace all systems bus stop signs	Signs replaced and locations adjusted	John/ July 2020
2. Repair bus shelters	All shelters improved	Vince/ Dec. 2018
3. Install new bus shelters	Bus shelters added	Lorri/ July 2020

Goal O-5: Meet Act 44 performance measures and KPIs.			
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
1. Define Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Examples: On time performance, customer satisfaction, recovery ratio, UPT/VRH	KPIs identified	Norm/ Sept. 2018	
2. Establish collection/reporting methodology	Collection processes implemented	Norm/ Dec. 2018	

## Finance Goals

## Goal F-1: Improve and sustain fiscal position.

Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
Ensure continuous strategic capital planning	Completed capital plans	John/ Ongoing annually
Ensure continuous fixed route balanced budget	Completed operational budget	John/ Ongoing annually

Go	Goal F-2: Investigate alternative funding sources.			
	Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
1.	Create a 501c3 to provide transportation grants.	Completed application	John/ Sept. 2018	
2.	Seek new grant opportunities	New grants awarded	John/ July 2019	
3.	Expand advertising options	Supplemental advertising options identified	Lorri/ July 2019 ongoing	
4.	Meet annual advertising sales goals	Sales goals met	Lorri/ July 2019	
5.	Evaluate sale/lease of LCTA facilities	FTA guidance	Norm/ Dec. 2019	

## **Customer & Community Goals**

Goal C-1: Improve customer experience.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
Evaluate fare structure for potential simplification	Restructure fares	Joe/ July 2019

Goal C-1: Improve customer experience.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe
Execute rebranding promotional campaign	Start campaign	Lorri/July 2020

Goal C-2: Ensure rider safety.			
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
Continuous driver training	Completed training	Lee/ Ongoing	
2. Camera installation/improvement	Cameras installed and monitored	Joe/ Dec. 2018	

Goal C-3: Engage community partnerships.			
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
Work with MPO on Back     Mountain PNR	MPO includes on TIP	John/ Ongoing	
Establish student advisory board	First meeting held	Lorri/ Sept. 2018	

Goal C-4: Pursue alternative ridership channels.		
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe

Goal C-4: Pursue alternative ridership channels.			
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
College ridership     recruiting/fare program	Signed agreements with colleges/landlords	Lorri/ Dec. 2018	
2. Partnerships with employers/destinations	Signed agreements	Lorri/ Dec. 2019	

Goal C-5: Demonstrate regional value.			
Objectives	Output/Metric	Responsibility/Timeframe	
Evaluate impact of LCTA     on service area	Documented marketing materials (customer surveys, ridership data, census)	Lorri/ Ongoing	
Develop relationship with local politicians/commissioners	Documented marketing materials	Lorri/ Ongoing	