



Ohio Public Transit Association: 2024 Strategic Priorities Mid-Year Check-In

1. Hold full-board meetings in person as much as possible.

- OPTA will host the September and November board meetings in-person in Columbus. The June board meeting was slated to be held in person but was moved to a virtual meeting due to multiple national conferences and scheduling conflicts from our membership that prohibited them from attending in-person.

2. Outreach to administration officials in preparation for introduction of 2026-27 Biennial Budget.

- OPTA has two meetings scheduled for Aug. 12 including a formal meeting with the Governor's Office (Policy Director, Legislative Director and Deputy Legislative Director) and ODOT (Dir. Marchbanks, COS and Executive Staff). OPTA members representing various types of our membership will attend (urban, rural, mobility management).

3. After retaining \$70M in funding for public transit in the most recent biennial transportation budget cycle and increasing funding with a legislative earmark creating the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership, funded at \$30M over the biennium, OPTA plans to continue rightsizing funding for public transit in Ohio.

- OPTA plans to ask for \$100M in funding for public transportation in the 2026-2027 biennial transportation budget.
- OPTA will seek adjustments to the restrictions around the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership fund to allow greater participation in the fund by more public transit agencies.
- OPTA will also seek language clarification in the budget to allow transit systems to provide cross-county service.
- OPTA will also seek operator assault language in the budget, similar to language that protects school bus drivers.
- OPTA will seek language to provide permissive authority to transit agencies to raise contract limits to \$250,000 before board approval is needed.

4. Participate in the transportation budget process through legislative outreach and testimony before legislative committees.

- OPTA's Executive Director and Government Relations Team plan to once again meet with the entire House of Representatives to discuss OPTA's priorities throughout the 2026-2027 Transportation Budget process.

- OPTA's Executive Director and Government Relations Team plan to once again meet with the entire Ohio Senate to discuss OPTA's priorities throughout the 2026-2027 Transportation Budget process.
- Coordinate testimony before the relevant committees from transit agencies in the Ohio House of Representatives and transit agencies in the Ohio Senate.

5. *Continue meeting with newly elected legislators and incumbent members about funding public transit.*

- As the leadership battle in the Ohio House unfolds and as new leadership is instilled in the Ohio Senate, OPTA will meet with new leadership teams in both chambers. OPTA will also meet with newly appointed committee chairs and members that have strategic importance for OPTA, once they are implemented.

6. *Planning the Ohio Needs Transit Conference & OPTA Expo 2024 to be hosted in Columbus, Ohio from Nov. 18-20, 2024.*

7. *Develop key messaging themes for funding ask and vital need for state support.*

- Develop talking points and budget priorities for members during the 2026-2027 Transportation Budget Process.

8. *Host OPTA's annual Ohio Loves Transit Day/Week with a legislative reception at the Ohio Statehouse, allowing OPTA members to communicate with elected officials. Ohio Loves Transit Week is scheduled for February 9-15, 2025 and Ohio Loves Transit Day is scheduled for February 11, 2025.*

9. *Continue to actively engage lawmakers at home and tell stories about essential public transit services.*

10. *Continue working with mobility managers to engage local legislators.*

- Speak on a statewide mobility manager conference call to discuss statewide engagement of legislators by mobility managers.
- Work with several mobility managers to help conduct outreach to members during the 2026-2027 Transportation Budget process.

11. *Continue to communicate key messages and priorities to membership and media.*

- Continue to produce and engage in regular communications with OPTA members.
- OPTA President and Executive Director plan to present at the Small Operators Summit

12. *Continue to be good stewards of OPTA's financial assets by thoughtfully managing the day-to-day operations, renewing insurance policies at competitive rates and growing OPTA's financial cushion.*

- OPTA negotiated better interest rates on our MMA with Huntington Bank that now generates significantly more interest than before
- OPTA met with Huntington Bank to further negotiate benefits for OPTA's accounts including investing in a high yield CD that will generate additional unbudgeted income
- For the past two years, OPTA's annual conference has not just broken even, but generated a profit

Looking forward to OPTA's 2025 Strategic Priorities

- 1. Host the Ohio Needs Transit Conference & OPTA Expo (date and location still TBD)*
- 2. Host Ohio Loves Transit Day/Week from February 9-15 with Ohio Loves Transit Day being Feb. 11th*
- 3. Participate in and support the Small Operators Summit*
- 4. Implement a new "OPTA Lunch and Learn" virtual webinar program designed to bring 45-60 minutes of continuing education to OPTA members throughout the year on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.*