

SAN LUIS OBISPO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

2015-2017 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

Adopted July 9, 2014

Executive Summary

This 2015-2017 Strategic Business Plan updates the previous Plan adopted by the RTA Board of Directors in October 2011. This three-year Plan incorporates both new and revised standards, which were analyzed by RTA staff members and members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee. It is anticipated that this Plan will be reviewed and revised again (as necessary) in mid-2017 to reflect changing conditions.

Background

In October 2008, the RTA Board, RTA staff, SLOCOG staff and members of the general public met in a day-long workshop to craft the elements of the first RTA Strategic Business Plan. The result of this workshop was a draft outline that contained the major sections and components of the Plan. During the development of the FY09-10 Operating and Capital Program, staff developed the four key sections of the plan and this was approved by the Board during the budget-making process. The major components of the plan are the RTA *Vision*, *Vision Elements*, *Mission* of the organization, and *Strategies* to achieve the mission.

The 2012-2014 Strategic Business Plan was subsequently adopted in October 2011, and it incorporated goals and objectives developed as part of the 2010 RTA Short Range Transit Plan. Staff uses the measurable standards in the Strategic Business Plan to help guide the organization toward meeting goals and objectives. The goals and objectives are premised on the following components:

Vision Statement

The RTA of the future is an integral part of the “SLO lifestyle.” From the vineyards in North County, to the secluded beach towns on the North Coast, to multi-faceted communities in the South County, residents and visitors use public transportation rather than relying on their cars.

Mission Statement

The Mission of RTA is to provide safe, reliable and efficient transportation services that improve and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of and visitors to San Luis Obispo County.

Vision Elements

- Continue successful partnerships with jurisdictions, the County, other public agencies, businesses and schools.
- Provide excellent, reliable, sustainable and seamless service that is effective in getting residents and visitors where they want to travel.

- Secure reliable funding.
- Implement an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) program to improve service quality and provide efficiencies.
- Develop a well-executed image-building campaign with a single face for public transportation.

Strategic Direction

- Stabilize and grow funding.
- Continue to improve service quality: On-time performance, scheduling and routing, customer amenities on our vehicles and at our bus stops, operating procedures.
- Consolidate and streamline operations to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation throughout the county.
- Include public transportation as part of the lifestyle evolution needed to confront climate change.
- Reduce private automobile Vehicle Miles Traveled.
- Embrace technological improvements that will positively impact efficiency and quality of service.

Overall Goals

1. Provide market-driven service that meets the needs of the communities that we serve but that will also attract discretionary riders.
2. Provide transportation services that are safe, reliable, economical and accessible in an efficient manner with innovative management practices and technological advancements.
3. Lead and participate in the analysis of the integration of transit operations throughout the county to ensure that customers are provided seamless transit alternatives and services that attract discretionary riders from every community that RTA serves.
4. Promote the value of RTA and public transportation to the quality of life in San Luis Obispo County and the environmental rewards of utilizing public transportation and the reduction of vehicle miles traveled.

Overall Objectives

- 1.1 Link population centers and major traffic generators within the region.
- 1.2 Coordinate service with all public transportation operators and services.

- 2.1 Provide safe public transportation.
- 2.2 Provide reliable public transportation.
- 2.3 Provide effective public transportation.
- 2.4 Provide efficient public transportation.
- 2.5 Provide comfortable intercity transportation.

- 3.1 Achieve a highly rated level of customer satisfaction.
- 3.3 Provide service that is supported by market demand.
- 3.3 Manage service in a cost-effective manner.
- 3.4 Deploy technology effectively and efficiently.

- 4.1 Provide accountability and transparency.
- 4.2 Increase use and support of public transportation in San Luis Obispo County.
- 4.3 Implement an annual marketing plan.
- 4.4 Use public funding efficiently in meeting public transportation needs of communities that RTA serves.
- 4.5 Educate community and business leaders and the public on the value of RTA services.

Current and Projected Business Conditions and Opportunities

Current and projected economic conditions have and will continue to impact the RTA. Although we are proud that we were one of a very few public transit agencies in the state that did not reduce service levels, reduce our workforce or enact furloughs during the economic downturn that began in 2008, the economy did impact our operating and capital programs. The biggest impact over the past several years has been sacrificing our capital investment plan for the sake of sustaining current levels of service to our customers and communities.

We are still recovering from what most economists define as the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. The state and local unemployment rate surpassed 10% for a number of quarters and we are just now experiencing an improved job market. The housing market took a significant hit as did overall consumer spending, although both have recovered to almost pre-recession levels in 2014. TDA revenues are also recovering, which has resulted in increased net revenues for jurisdictions for transit and non-transit uses. Prop 1B bond sales are also recently recovering so that long-planned capital projects can again be implemented. The State budget calls for Cap and Trade funds to be available for transit needs beginning in the next year, although the method for distribution has not yet been finalized.

However, on the Federal side, we are facing another expiring transportation authorization bill in September 2014. Furthermore, discretionary funds that have previously been used to replace buses and to fund operations of North Coast and South County services have dried up and there is not a replacement funding source being seriously discussed. In short, RTA's ability to rely upon large infusions of capital and discretionary operating funds in the future is uncertain at best. This might result in the region needing to fully finance such large-ticket items as a long-term operations/maintenance facility and/or the consolidated downtown transit center.

RTA continues to break ridership records, which has helped increase our Farebox Recovery Ratio (YTD over 30% through April 2014). Yet we still have many demands for new/expanded service and few new resources to fulfill these needs. Additionally we must continue our vigilance on containing costs as we still must contend with high fuel prices and increasing liability costs.

Overall Business Direction for FY15

- Focus on cost effectiveness and living with our resources, and by undertaking efforts to grow operating and capital revenues.
- Seek and implement innovative opportunities to improve service for our customers within current resources.
- Be a leader among transit systems in developing and implementing environmentally friendly transit service and sustainable business practices.
- Work with SLO Transit to develop a Joint Short Range Transit Plan.
- Begin environmental planning documentation to secure and begin development of a long-term operations/maintenance facility.
- Plan and prepare for the future growth of the system.

2015-17 Strategic Business Plan Objectives

Goal

Increase ridership through improved system design by attracting choice customers and improving sub-regional transit alternatives.

Objectives

1. Implement sub-regional service alternatives recommendations from South County and North County Transit Plans, the US101 Mobility Study, and the BRT Study.
2. Continue to analyze data from the RTA Route Performance Standards to evaluate service efficiencies and effectiveness.
3. Complete a biannual community survey to address current and potential customer needs.
4. Improve customer communications and information about RTA services.
5. Continue to explore alternative transit modes for underperforming and rural needs.
6. Achieve RTA Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to improve existing service (On Time Performance, Customer Comments, Service Interruptions, Vehicle Collision Rate, etc.).

Goal

Expand the development and use of our KPIs to enhance system performance, employee performance, and improve service quality to our customers.

Objectives

1. New KPIs will include the following Standards Categories: Service Quality and Efficiency, Resources and Revenue, Safety, Human Resources, Fleet and Facilities, Leadership.
2. With policy guidance from the RTA Board, the Executive Director with input from throughout the organization shall set the standards as detailed in this document. These will be provided to everyone in the organization and reported on quarterly.

Goal

Implement innovative opportunities to improve our service for our customers and potential customers.

Objectives

1. Implement RTA's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Program in conjunction with other jurisdictions.

2. Identify and secure funding to sustain the ITS Program.
3. Implement the recommendations of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study.

Regional Transit Authority Standards of Excellence: Service Quality and Efficiency

Summary: We will deliver dependable, customer focused and efficient transit services to the communities that we serve. Further, we will look for opportunities to deploy innovative new service within the resources available.

Standard 1: Fixed Route passengers per vehicle service hour will be 22 or greater.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed monthly by Operations, and reported by Executive Director at each Board meeting.

Standard 2: Service delivery rate shall be 99% or greater.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed quarterly by Operations, and reported by Executive Director bi-annually to the Board.

Standard 3: System wide On-time Performance shall be 95% or greater.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed quarterly by Operations, and reported by Executive Director bi-annually to the Board.

Standard 4: Runabout On-time Performance shall be 95% or greater.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed quarterly by Operations, and reported by Executive Director bi-annually to the Board.

Standard 5: RTA will make consistent efforts to explore new service and service delivery options as well as work with regional efficiencies in the delivery of transportation to the jurisdictions

Measurement: Subjective.

- Reported by the Executive Director and Division Heads annually.

Standard 6: The number of bus trips with passenger standees will not exceed 10% of the daily bus trips on that route.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reviewed quarterly by Operations, and reported by Executive Director biannually to the Board.

Regional Transit Authority Standards of Excellence: Revenue and Resources

We will live within our means. While providing excellent service to our customers and communities, we will do so within the financial resources available to us. The financial health of the organization will not be compromised and we will work to deliver good value for the taxpayers' investment in RTA.

Standard 1: The annual operating budget will be based upon projected revenue and the total operating cost will not exceed the budget adopted by the Board.

Measurement: Objective.

- Monthly financial statements and YTD budget expenses.

Standard 2: Fixed Route Farebox Recovery Ratio shall be greater than 25%.

Measurement: Objective.

- Based upon monthly Route Productivity/Performance Report.

Standard 3: No significant financial audit findings.

Measurement: Objective.

- Finance and Administration will report any negative audit findings.

Standard 4: Ensure that all capital procurements provide good value to our customers and our employees.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Evaluated through community evaluation survey, feedback from communities and review of the annual capital program by staff and the Board.

Regional Transit Authority Standards of Excellence: Safety

We recognize the tremendous importance of safety in the operation of RTA service to our customers and communities. Therefore the safety of our customers and employees will be an organizational priority and we will be proactive in promoting system safety.

Standard 1: Rate of preventable vehicle collisions will not exceed 1.0 per 100,000 miles.

Measurement: Objective.

- Rate shall be reported by Safety and Training.

Standard 2: Address all safety hazards indentified by the Safety Resource Committee.

Measurement: Objective.

- List shall be compiled with action items and timelines by Safety and Training.

Standard 3: Preventable workers compensation lost-time claims will not exceed 6 annually, and preventable medical-only claims will not exceed 10 annually.

Measurement: Objective.

- All work comp claims shall be duly investigated and reported by Finance and Administration.

Standard 4: Customer and Community perception of system safety will be at least 90%.

Measurement: Objective.

- As measured by community survey, which shall be conducted at least every two years.

Standard 5: Total risk management costs shall not exceed 8.5% of total operating costs.

Measurement: Objective.

- Reported monthly by Finance and Administration in financials and YTD budget reports.

Regional Transit Authority Standards of Excellence: Human Resources

Our employees are the foundation of the organization. We will support our employees in achieving excellence through training and development, teamwork, and continuous efforts at effective communication while treating each with integrity and dignity.

Standard 1: Recruit, promote and retain highly qualified employees to achieve our service standards.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Annual assessment by Executive Director and Department Heads.

Standard 2: Provide continuous development of organizational skills through ongoing training and development programs that result in personal and professional growth.

Measurement: Objective.

- Departments have submitted training needs with budget process.
- Maintenance: 30 Hours per technician annually.
- Operations Supervisors: 24 Hours annually.
- Bus Operators: 8 Hours Annually.
- Finance and Administration: 16 Hours per employee annually.

Standard 3: Enable our employees to achieve excellence in serving our customers by building teamwork and understanding effective communication within the organization.

Measurement: Subjective.

Standard 4: Employees will be evaluated annually in a fair and equitable way to judge performance and be provided a developmental plan for the next fiscal year.

Measurement: Objective.

- Employee merit evaluations will be provided to each employee annually with the evaluation grading measurement of attainment of department objectives developed during the budget process and achievement of RTA's Standards and RTA's KPIs.

Regional Transit Authority Standard of Excellence: Fleet and Facility

We will operate and maintain a modern and clean fleet and facilities that will be pleasing to our customers and a source of pride for our employees and our communities.

Standard 1: Replace-100% of all revenue vehicles no more than 40% beyond the FTA-defined useful life standard in terms of years or miles.

Measurement: Objective.

- As reported by Finance and Administration.

Standard 2: Road calls will not exceed 5 per 100,000 miles of vehicle service miles. A road call is defined as all failures that affect the completion of a scheduled revenue trip or the start of the next scheduled revenue trip, including failures during deadheading and layover.

Measurement: Objective.

- As reported by the Maintenance Department.

Standard 3: Maintain a clean, attractive fleet. Maintain our facilities so that they are safe and appealing to customers and employees.

Measurement: Subjective.

- As measured by employee and customer feedback.

Standard 4: Achieve an 80% favorable rating of bus stop appearance by customers and the communities that we serve.

Measurement: Objective.

- As measured in the biannual Community Evaluation conducted by Marketing.

Standard 5: Achieve all federal, state-mandated maintenance practices, as well as vendor recommended maintenance schedules for our fleet and facilities.

Measurement: Objective.

- No negative FTA or TDA audit findings.
- Preventative maintenance schedules for all equipment shall be done on a timely basis (3,000 mile intervals or as mandated by equipment OEM vendor).

Regional Transit Authority Standards of Excellence: Leadership

We will strive to be one of the nation's leading small transit operators. We will work to maintain collaborative relationships within the industry, our community, with our stakeholders and develop future leaders from within our organization.

Standard 1: Maintain cooperative relationships with federal, state and local funding agencies.

Measurement: Subjective.

- Will be reviewed by staff and RTA Board.

Standard 2: Develop partnerships with stakeholders, community leaders and decision makers keeping them well informed of the integral role of RTA and contributions to the communities that we serve.

Measurement: Subjective.

- To be evaluated and monitored by RTA Board.

Standard 3: Promote effective internal communications and promote the values of the organization.

Measure: Subjective.

- To be evaluated by Executive Director.

Standard 4: Provide effective leadership for public transportation within the County.

Measurement: Subjective.

- To be evaluated by Executive Director and RTA Board.