

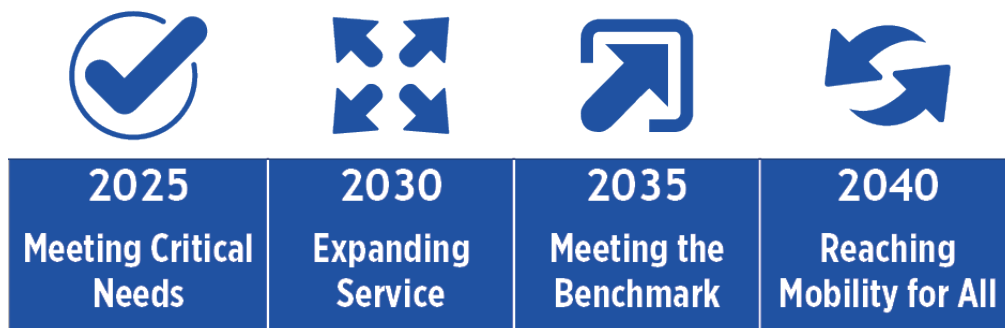


10 Implementation Priorities

INTRODUCTION

Federal, state, and local support are necessary to “ensure a coordinated public transit network that meets the mobility needs of all Oklahomans in a safe, efficient, and economical manner.” This mission statement is directly derived from the charge that HB 1365 created, ensuring inclusivity of all public transit systems and stakeholders. Public policies and administrative code must align with statewide transit priorities, in order to begin addressing the project goals and strategies set forth in this plan and to ultimately become a Top Ten state in transit.

Support for the statewide plan can take shape in many forms. Federal dollars can be maximized if the flexibility on the requirements of local match are continued past FFY 2021. A state dedicated funding source for public transit would take the pressure off of local systems from relying heavily on federal programs with strict requirements. Local systems should develop strategic transit plans that outline future investments to be consistent with the goals of this Plan.



Five-year incremental milestones were created to ensure investments are coordinated and transit improvements are continued throughout the 20-year period. Tracking progress through these milestones will allow the state to ensure a network of public transit systems that receive adequate funding to ensure the mobility needs of all Oklahomans are met in a safe, affordable, reliable, consistent, and coordinated fashion.

PLAN AND POLICY ALIGNMENT

Successful transit planning starts with making transit a priority.

For the goals and strategies of this Plan to be met, all state agencies with an interest in public transit need to ensure their programs are in alignment with this statewide plan. Alignment of state transit policies allows for coordination and efficient use of human resources, capital investment, and operating dollars.

In addition to state policy alignment, strategic transit planning at the local level is critical to ensuring success at a statewide level. Transit providers should work with their local governments to include transit in city and county strategic plans, and work to develop local (or agency-based) transit development plans consistent with the OPTPP. The development of transit plans assists in the strategic allocation of funding for future transit projects, while working to achieve the strategies in this Plan.

Training and Staff Support

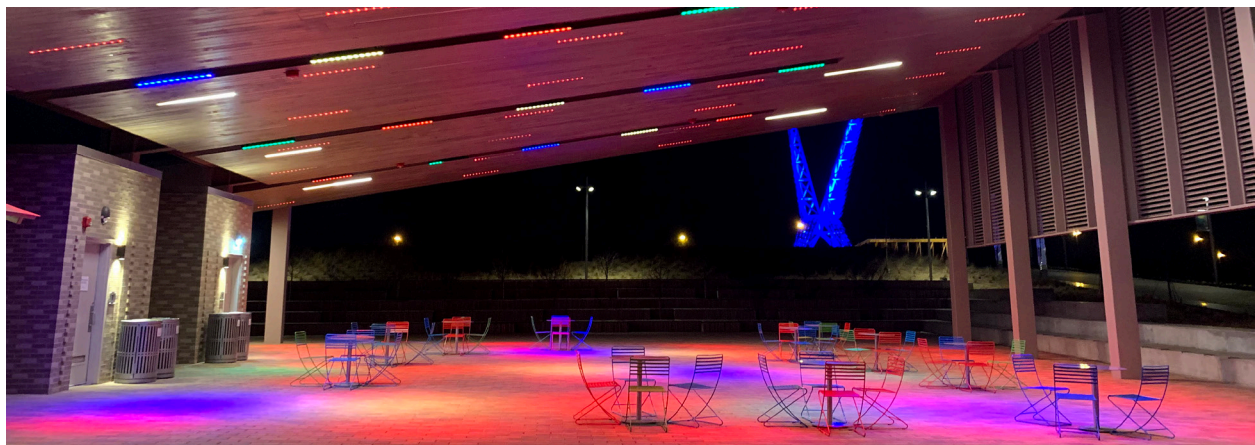
Training is an essential component for local agencies to administer transit services. Both ODOT and OTA should offer training through statewide and regional in-person sessions as well as virtual webinars. Administrative staff should receive training to ensure core competencies are met in the implementation of transit programs statewide. Training opportunities should provide guidance on

grant and program opportunities, drug and alcohol training, civil rights and equity, transit-oriented development, succession planning, and various other topics as needed. Driver safety training is critical to the delivery of service, be it in the form of passenger assistance training, cleaning protocols (both during and post-COVID), or safety operations.

In order to meet the milestones laid out in this Plan, additional planning and management resources will be necessary, internal to ODOT, OTA, and statewide. Regionally-based mobility management efforts are essential to providing mobility for all. While these resources do not necessarily need to be housed within the OMPT, consideration should be given to how best to support the overall statewide efforts.

FUNDING PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

Multiple options to fund the Strategic Investment Schedule over the course of the next 20 years are outlined in this Plan. Public policies, administrative codes, and funding programs should be in alignment with the focus of this Plan. Allowing for flexibility among funding programs is needed to ensure state and local agencies can maximize how funding is used for transit. In addition, federal and state requirements need to allow for more flexible funding options for transit agencies to provide mobility for all.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measurement is a means by which state agencies and local transit systems can track progress toward the achievement of goals and strategies. A 2011 study of the use of performance measures for transit program planning, management and oversight found that approximately two-thirds of states use some type of performance measures as part of their program management.¹ Additionally, the Government Performance and Accountability Act of 1993 requires federally funded programs to establish and track performance measures. Program managers and state

agencies should measure performance to assess the benefits and outcomes of investment in public programs, managerial efficiency, and administrative accountability to determine the effectiveness of the transit services provided throughout the state.

For the purposes of Plan implementation, it is important for ODOT and stakeholders to consider the establishment of a series of performance measures. To ensure consistency and meet the mission of this Plan, measures should be implemented at state and local levels.

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2011. State DOT Public Transportation Performance Measures: State of the Practice and Future Needs. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/14584>



Vermont

The Vermont Agency of Transportation conducts an annual Public Transit Route Performance Review monitoring the performance of all routes and services operated by the state's transit agencies. This review is required by the state legislature. This process helps to ensure that public investment in transit is well spent by comparing performance at the route and service level. If efforts to improve performance are not successful, resources are moved to other projects that offer a higher level of performance.



Maryland

In Maryland, performance standards for local transit service are applied as part of the grant application process, with funding for continuation of different types of services evaluated against the appropriate standards. Services that need improvement are also a focus of the five-year transportation development plans, which review service quality as part of the evaluation process.



Florida

The Florida DOT Office of Transit publishes an annual Florida Transit Information and Performance Handbook that documents the state's fixed-route transit agencies' performance, including outputs and productivity. It includes measure of output, service level, and cost-effectiveness, allowing assessment of system improvements over time.



CONCLUSION

There is a considerable gap between the current level of transit funding in Oklahoma and the amount needed to achieve mobility for all. This Plan is designed to be incremental and should be a guide for strategic transit investments and policy recommendations over the next 20 years.

Transit is currently funded with federal, state, and local dollars and system revenues. The current level of state funding is relatively low compared to other states. There are options available for increased funding, most of which are at the state level and would require legislation to enact. Many states use a combination of sources to fund transit services, and it is likely that would be the case in Oklahoma as well.

Public transit can impact Oklahoma's statewide economy at a much greater

scale than it is currently and can serve as a strong component of an economic recovery post-COVID-19. According to Oklahoma State University, public transit currently impacts the state's economy at \$815 million annually.² With this Plan's projected doubling of transit service by 2040, the economic impact would grow to more than \$1.6 billion per year.

To achieve these outcomes, it is critical for Oklahoma to develop policies and programs that work to implement the strategies laid out in this Plan, along with strategic investments to implement those strategies. Mobility needs in Oklahoma continue to grow. Time is of the essence for implementation of this Plan in order to achieve the goal of mobility for all Oklahomans.

² Oklahoma State University, Spears School of Business Study, 2018