

Talking Points for Dedicated Regional Transit Funding

1. Use of dedicated regional funding for public transit by GRTC.

GRTC should be empowered to identify and prioritize regional transit service and operations to include, but not be limited to:

- routes that are designed to connect residents from two or more jurisdictions to housing, jobs, and regional institutions of health care, education, food, or social services
- paratransit trips between eligible jurisdictions with regional transit service (not including those jurisdictions with commuter
- transit centers and park and rides that directly support regional bus routes to include van pool and carpool connectivity
- other capital improvements that directly connect to and support the transit service including sidewalk and bikeway connections within 3/4 mile of the facility

It is important that local dollars already committed to transit be preserved to re-invest in increased local transit needs including subsidized fares for vulnerable populations and higher service frequency, span, and coverage. New sources of revenue will be used to build out the basic regional system. These monies will be needed to support both regional capital and operational expenses.

2. Capital Needs for Regional Transit

Major capital infrastructure, equipment, and preventative maintenance needs for regional service will require multi-year phasing of dedicated capital funds. Any expenditure towards capital needs in any year should require ongoing dedicated operations and maintenance dollars to ensure the investment is maintained and operated effectively. Specific needs include, but are not limited to:

- Major Downtown Transfer Center
- Major Southside Transfer Center
- Regional Transfer Centers
- Pulse Park and Ride lots
- Admin and Maintenance Building Expansion
- Articulated Bus Fleet
- Expanded Commuter and Express Bus Fleet
- Expanded Paratransit Fleet
- Commuter System Park and Ride lots
- Shelters and Accessible Transit Stop Infrastructure along Regional Routes
- Technology for real time information on bus movements and arrival times
- Wi-Fi hardware and service for on-board technology and passenger communications need

3. Transit vs Multimodal

Multi-modal language should not be used to include greenways, bike lanes, or sidewalks except where they directly and immediately connect to transit routes.

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Some concern has been expressed that this would place all the transit-dedicated money into bus service and that not every jurisdiction in the region needs bus service. While it is true that not every locality needs local bus service, the entire region does need better connectivity through regional bus service that connects park and rides to major employment centers, rail stations, the airport, and other regionally significant destinations.

Without these regional bus connections, many of our most vulnerable residents are unable to access jobs, education, housing, health care and other basic human needs that our more affluent residents can reach easily and quickly through their personal car. While every jurisdiction may not need or use local bus service, the entire region benefits from a networked multi-modal and regional bus system.

4. GRTC Operational Funding

Regional route and system needs are being costed by DRPT and TPO; however, early review of proposed system maps for high frequency regional transit needs indicate that GRTC operating expenses over the next five to ten years could easily double if these improvements are implemented and as the basic regional system is matured. For context, GRTC current operational budget is \$55.9M with most of the dollars allocated to maintenance and operations departments for staffing the service we put on the road every day (see following three charts).

