



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE *Action Plan* 2026

Central Ohio Transit Authority

Message from COTA's President/CEO

At COTA, we believe public transit is more than driving customers from one place to another; it is about connecting people to opportunity and ensuring everyone in Central Ohio can access the jobs, education, healthcare and community resources they need to thrive.

As our region continues to grow, so too must our commitment to delivering a transit system that is not only reliable but intuitive, welcoming and responsive to the needs of our customers. **That is why we have developed COTA's first-ever Customer Experience Strategy.**

This strategy is a direct extension of our 2026-2031 Strategic Plan and reflects our commitment to delivering an exceptional experience for every rider, every day. It translates our long-term vision into clear, actionable steps that improve how our customers experience transit across every part of their journey, from planning a trip to reaching their destination.

What makes this work especially meaningful is that it is grounded in the voices of our customers. Through surveys, community engagement, operational data and feedback from our frontline employees, we heard clearly what matters most: reliable service, clear communication, safe and clean environments and a system that is easy to use.

This strategy is designed to deliver on those expectations. It prioritizes improvements that will strengthen trust, simplify the rider experience and ensure consistency across all of our services, fixed route, Mainstream and COTA//Plus. Just as importantly, it recognizes that delivering a great customer experience starts with our people. **By empowering our employees with the right tools, training and support, we are building a culture that puts customers at the center of everything we do.**

The work outlined in this strategy is already underway and will continue to evolve as we listen, measure and improve. It is also closely connected to the transformational investments we are making through the LinkUS Mobility Initiative, which will expand service, modernize infrastructure and create a more seamless, connected transportation system for our region.

Ultimately, this strategy reflects a simple but powerful goal: to make transit a service people can depend on and a system they choose to use.

We are proud to take this important step forward and remain committed to delivering a customer experience that truly moves every life forward.



Monica Téllez-Fowler
COTA President/CEO



WHAT IS TRANSIT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

COTA defines Customer Experience (CX) as the full journey a rider has when using our transit system.

It includes every interaction — from planning a trip to arriving at a destination.

Customer Experience is not limited to customer service. It reflects how our riders experience reliability, safety, communication, accessibility, comfort and ease of use across every touch point.

Public transit plays a critical role in connecting people to jobs, education, healthcare and community life. For many riders, it is essential infrastructure. For others, it is a choice. In both cases, the experience matters.

At COTA, Customer Experience means:

- Reliable and predictable service
- Clear and timely communication
- Safe and welcoming environments
- Accessible and intuitive systems
- Clean and comfortable vehicles and facilities

An improved Customer Experience ensures that transit is not only functional, but trusted, easy to navigate and responsive to the evolving needs of the communities we serve.



WHAT IS COTA'S CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACTION PLAN?

At COTA, we recognize that the Customer Experience begins the moment someone considers using transit and continues through every stage of their journey.

This Customer Experience Action Plan outlines how we will improve that journey.

This is not a long-term capital strategy or a comprehensive list of every agency initiative. Instead, it prioritizes the most impactful actions that directly respond to what riders told us matters most.

As COTA's first-ever CX Action Plan, it represents a meaningful milestone in our commitment to putting riders at the center of how we operate, prioritize and improve. It outlines specific actions we will take shaped by our customers' input.

We look forward to using the insights and commitments outlined in this plan to deliver a transit experience that is reliable, easy to navigate and responsive to our riders' needs.

The People Behind the Experience

Every great transit experience starts with the people who make it possible. When COTA employees are supported, informed and empowered, riders feel it in every interaction. This plan strengthens both the rider journey and the internal systems that enable consistent, reliable service. To enable this CX Action Plan, we have also developed the structures and systems that will ensure sustained accountability and continuous improvement over time.



GROUNDING IN FEEDBACK

The CX Action Plan is built on what our customers have told us and what our data confirms.

We have gathered input through rider surveys, direct customer feedback, community engagement, operational performance data and frontline employee insight. Together, these sources helped us identify recurring challenges and opportunities across the rider journey.

What We Learned

Across all sources, consistent themes emerged:

- Reliability and predictability matter most
- Clear and timely communication builds trust
- Safety and cleanliness shape perception
- Accessibility and ease of use reduce friction
- Seamless coordination across services improves the overall journey

These insights shaped the focus areas and commitments outlined in this Action Plan.

By listening, measuring and acting, COTA is strengthening its ability to deliver meaningful improvements and to continuously refine how we serve our community.



The Customer ***Journey***

To truly understand the rider experience, we must view it as a connected journey rather than a series of isolated interactions.

From the moment someone plans a trip to the moment they reach their destination, each step shapes how they experience transit. Planning, waiting, paying, riding, transferring and arriving all work together to form one continuous experience.

Along the way, there are key make-or-break moments. These are the points in the journey that most strongly influence how a rider feels about the experience. A missed connection, unclear communication, a long wait or an exceptionally helpful Operator can define the entire trip.

The following pages outline the customer journeys for:

- Fixed Route
- COTA Mainstream
- COTA//Plus

By mapping these journeys and identifying common make-or-break moments, we can focus our improvements where they will have the greatest impact.



FIXED-ROUTE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Fixed-route service forms the foundation of COTA's transit network. For many riders, it is the primary way they access work, education, healthcare and essential services.

The journey extends beyond boarding a bus. It begins with trip planning and continues through waiting, riding, transferring and reaching the final destination.

Across engagement and survey data, riders consistently identified key make-or-break moments that shape their experience. These moments influence trust, reliability and overall satisfaction.

Throughout the fixed-route customer journey, several themes emerged:

- Reliability is foundational to trust
- Waiting experience at transit stops needs attention
- Clarity and ease of use are paramount
- Transfer experience is a friction point
- Consistency in communication and follow-up shapes trust beyond the trip itself.

1. PLANNING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Ease of trip planning
- Transit coverage
- Excessive travel time compared to other travel modes
- Proactive communication about detours or delays

78% of riders report that COTA routes are easy to understand and navigate. While most riders find routes easy to follow, continued clarity in trip planning remains important.

FIRST MILE

2. Common Make or Break Moments

- Safe and quick access to stops

WAITING

3. Common Make or Break Moments

- Availability and condition of bus shelters
- Accessibility and safety of stops
- Vehicles running on time

Rider Suggestions

- Ensure consistent stop infrastructure and standards
- Improve the reliability of vehicles

59% of riders are satisfied with the cleanliness and condition of transit stops and shelters. Improving stop conditions and safety are an area of opportunity.

4. PAYING ***Common Make or Break Moments***

- Confusing fare structures
- Technical issues when paying

Rider Suggestions

- Expand support for debit, credit or mobile tap-to-pay options

5. RIDING ***Common Make or Break Moments***

- Operator courtesy and helpfulness
- Vehicle operation safety
- Vehicle comfort and cleanliness
- Consistent visual and audio stop announcements
- Reliable in-vehicle amenities such as charging ports and Wi-Fi

82% of riders report feeling satisfied with the safety of vehicle operations — one of the strongest ratings across the journey.

6. TRANSFERRING ***Common Make or Break Moments***

- Timely and reliable arrivals for connections
- Sufficient time to exit and reach connecting service

56% of riders report satisfaction with connections between vehicles, indicating room to strengthen transfer reliability and coordination.

7. LAST MILE ***Common Make or Break Moments***

- Long and potentially unsafe walks from stops
- Limited last-mile options

Rider Suggestions

- Improve visibility and safety patrol near bus stops

8. CUSTOMER SUPPORT ***Common Make or Break Moments***

- Courtesy and helpfulness of staff

Rider Suggestions

- Standardize resolution process

COTA MAINSTREAM CUSTOMER JOURNEY

COTA Mainstream service provides critical transportation for riders who depend on scheduled, accessible service to maintain independence and access essential destinations.

Unlike fixed-route service, the COTA Mainstream journey often begins with advance scheduling and requires close coordination across multiple steps. Because trips are time-sensitive and personalized, reliability, communication and consistency are especially important.

From application and scheduling to pickup, riding and arrival, each stage shapes how riders experience COTA Mainstream service.

Through survey data and rider feedback, several make-or-break moments consistently emerged:

- Ease of scheduling and modifying trips
- Pickup window accuracy and wait times
- Clear communication regarding delays
- Vehicle accessibility and equipment consistency
- Operator courtesy and professionalism

The journey map on the following page highlights these stages, key insights and opportunities to strengthen reliability and transparency.

1. APPLICATION PROCESS

Common Make or Break Moments

- Multiple in-person touch points
- Ease of understanding the service

Rider Suggestions

- Digitize the application process
- Alternative information channels

89% of riders report that the application process is easy to navigate.

2. PAYING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Ease of payments

Rider Suggestions

- Accept digital payments

3. SCHEDULING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Ease of scheduling rides the same day and in advance

Rider Suggestions

- Improve COTA Mainstream web booking portal

70% report satisfaction with same-day, on-demand scheduling, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen flexibility and responsiveness.

4. WAITING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Wait times for vehicles picking up riders from pickup locations

Rider Suggestions

- Enable real-time tracking for COTA Mainstream vehicles

58% of riders strongly agree that COTA Mainstream service is reliable, indicating continued opportunity to strengthen on-time pickup performance and real-time visibility.

5. BOARDING & EXITING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Ease of embarking and disembarking vehicles
- Accurate vehicle descriptions provided at booking

Rider Suggestions

- Improve alignment between booked and received vehicles
- Ensure replacement vehicles still have the appropriate securement infrastructure

6. RIDING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Total travel time, door-to-door
- Courtesy of Operators
- Sense of personal safety on board
- Cleanliness and condition of vehicles

Rider Suggestions

- Optimize routing to reduce journey length

93% of riders report positive satisfaction with Operator courtesy and professionalism — one of the highest ratings across the COTA Mainstream journey.

COTA//PLUS CUSTOMER JOURNEY

COTA//Plus offers an on-demand, app-based transit option designed to provide flexible, point-to-point service within designated zones.

For many riders, COTA//Plus serves as a first-mile or last-mile connector. For others, it offers a convenient alternative for shorter trips. Because it is technology-enabled and demand-responsive, expectations for real-time accuracy, communication and efficiency are especially high. COTA//Plus plays an important role in supporting the broader transit network. Improving coordination between on-demand and fixed-route service remains a priority in strengthening the overall rider journey.

Survey data and rider feedback reveal key make-or-break moments that shape perception:

- Clarity around service zones and integration with fixed route
- Pickup time reliability and vehicle availability
- Accuracy of real-time updates
- Ease of booking and payment
- Total travel time and efficiency

The journey map on the following page highlights these stages, rider insights and areas of opportunity.

1. **PLANNING**

Common Make or Break Moments

- Lack of integration between the COTA//Plus app and fixed-route services

Rider Suggestions

- Expand service hours and coverage zones
- Connect COTA//Plus and fixed-route trip planning

77% of riders report positive satisfaction with the service areas and destinations accessible via COTA//Plus.

2. **TRIP BOOKING**

Common Make or Break Moments

- Ease of using the COTA//Plus app
- Easy registration and payment

Rider Suggestions

- Provide ability to book rides in advance

3. WAITING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Variable pickup times due to vehicle availability
- App occasionally reports vehicle arrival inaccurately
- Inability for Operators and customers to communicate directly

Rider Suggestions

- Increase vehicle availability
- Provide real-time updates on vehicle arrivals

76% of riders report positive satisfaction with service availability during operating hours.

4. RIDING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Courtesy of Operators
- Cleanliness and condition of vehicles
- Sense of personal safety

80% of riders report positive satisfaction with Operator courtesy and professionalism.

5. DEBOARDING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Preprogrammed stops
- Efficient overall travel

69% of riders report positive satisfaction with total travel time, indicating an opportunity to further optimize routing and reduce trip duration variability.

6. TRANSFERRING

Common Make or Break Moments

- Unpredictable pickups delay connections
- Free transfers to and from fixed-route stops

Rider Suggestions

- Improve pickup time reliability to reduce connection delays







ACTION PLAN

ADVANCING COTA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This Customer Experience Action Plan directly advances COTA's 2026 Strategic Plan

Among the four identified Success Outcomes identified in our Strategic Plan, two are central to delivering a stronger rider experience: Customer Experience and Employee Engagement.

This CX Action Plan connects these two outcomes in a practical way.

When service is reliable, communication is clear and environments are safe and welcoming, customer experience improves.

When employees are supported with with clear processes, the right tools and defined accountability, they are better positioned to serve riders effectively.

The initiatives outlined in this plan are designed to strengthen both outcomes simultaneously.



COTA STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

*“Delivering an
exceptional
experience for
customers”*

- Expand access through more frequent and extended service
- Ensure high standards of safety, cleanliness and comfort
- Build and strengthen customer trust by improving service reliability and on-time performance
- Prioritize ease and convenience in the customer journey

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

*“Fostering a culture
where **employees are**
empowered and valued”*

- Model COTA's Core Values: Safety, Empowerment, Accountability, Teamwork and Service
- Invest in employees' professional development and career growth
- Cultivate trust through communication, inclusion and appreciation

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

KEY:

Not Yet Started



In Progress



The following initiatives directly advance the Customer Experience objectives identified in COTA's 2026 Strategic Plan.

Objective: Expand access through more frequent and extended service

Projects that support this objective:

- ▶ Expand Service
- ▶ Expand Support Channels
- ▶ Modernizing Through LinkUS

Objective: Prioritize ease and convenience in the customer journey

Projects that support this objective:

- ▶ Align In-Person Services
- ▶ Revise Transit Stop Design Guide
- ▶ Expand Digital Stop Displays
- ▶ Deploy Smartcard Kiosks
- ▶ Upgrade Audio-Visual Equipment
- ▶ Simplify Pass Activation
- ▶ Modernize COTA Mainstream Payments
- ▮ Streamline the Reduced Fare Program
- ▶ Simplify COTA Mainstream Applications
- ▶ Revise COTA Mainstream Accessibility Guide
- ▶ Digitize COTA Mainstream Bookings
- ▶ Strengthen Cross-Service Coordination
- ▶ C-Pass Program Transition
- ▮ Update Customer-Facing Policies

Objective: Ensure high standards of safety, cleanliness and comfort

Projects that support this objective:

- ▶ Improve Bus Conditions
- ▶ Refresh Stop Infrastructure
- ▶ Strengthen Safety Response
- ▶ Develop Disability Empathy Course

Objective: Build and strengthen customer trust by improving service reliability and on-time performance

Projects that support this objective:

- ▶ Expand Customer Notifications
- ▶ Enhance COTA Mainstream Bookings
- ▮ Enable Operator-Customer Communication
- ▶ Standardize Follow-Up Procedure
- ▶ Align External Messaging Across Channels
- ▮ Expand Customer Testing and Feedback
- ▮ Optimize and Strengthen Real-Time Feedback Channels
- ▮ Integrate Performance and Customer Insight Data
- ▶ Revise On-Time Performance Metrics
- ▮ Improve Transfer Protection
- ▮ Introduce Ambassador Program
- ▶ Streamline Trip Planning





WE WILL EXPAND ACCESS THROUGH MORE FREQUENT AND EXTENDED SERVICE

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

EXPAND SERVICE

What we heard

Riders want extended service windows and more frequent trips.

PROJECT OWNER: SERVICE PLANNING

We will:

- Increase fixed-route operating hours, expanding toward 24/7 service
- Improve frequency on core fixed-route network
- Expand fixed-route and COTA//Plus service into new areas
- Incorporate new BRT corridors into connected and integrated transit system



Ongoing

EXPAND SUPPORT CHANNELS

What we heard

Riders reported long wait times when contacting the COTA Customer Care Team.

PROJECT OWNER: CUSTOMER CARE

We will:

- Increase frontline staffing during peak hours
- Reduce average call wait times
- Expand digital support options, including AI-enabled tools
- Promote self-service through the Transit app



Q1 2026-Q4 2026

MODERNIZING THROUGH LINKUS

What we heard

- Riders want faster, more reliable trips
- Riders want safer, more accessible stations
- Riders want better connectivity across modes



PROJECT OWNER: CAPITAL DELIVERY

Through the LinkUS initiative we will deliver:

- New and improved sidewalks, bike lanes, trails and crosswalks
- Construction of new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors
- Micromobility connections
- More COTA//Plus zones for on-demand transit

2025-2050

WE WILL ENSURE HIGH STANDARDS OF SAFETY, CLEANLINESS AND COMFORT

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

IMPROVE BUS CONDITIONS



What we heard

Riders have reported issues with vehicle cleanliness. They also face unreliable amenities, including announcements, Wi-Fi, charging ports and fare scanners.

PROJECT OWNER: VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

We will:

- Increase fleet cleaning frequency
- Standardize vehicle condition inspections
- Ensure critical rider amenities such as Wi-Fi, charging ports and fare scanners remain operational, indicate when they are down or are removed if faulty

Ongoing

STRENGTHEN SAFETY RESPONSE

Status - In Progress



What we heard

Some riders told us they do not always feel safe at stops and on vehicles.

PROJECT OWNER: STRATEGIC RESPONSE

We will:

- Strengthen proactive monitoring and rapid response measures to enhance rider safety
- Implement a dedicated reporting system and targeted patrols on select routes
- Deploy Strategic Response Staff on staggered shifts to monitor high-activity locations and respond to incidents informed by incident reports
- Explore additional avenues to promote the reporting system, including posting QR codes at stops

Ongoing

REFRESH STOP INFRASTRUCTURE



What we heard

Inconsistent shelter quality and unclear pedestrian pathways at some stops make boarding and disembarking difficult for some of our customers.

PROJECT OWNER: SERVICE PLANNING

We will:

- Upgrade shelters with improved seating, lighting and accessibility
- Replace legacy shelters with modern designs where possible
- Prioritize improvements based on ridership and infrastructure need
- Improve safety, visibility and comfort while waiting

Annually / Ongoing

DELIVER DISABILITY EMPATHY COURSE



What we heard

Riders noted inconsistent sensitivity among fixed-route Operators when serving customers with disabilities.

PROJECT OWNER: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

We will:

- Launch a Disability Empathy Course to strengthen inclusive service practices
- Ensure consistent, respectful interactions across the system

Q4 2026

WE WILL BUILD AND STRENGTHEN CUSTOMER TRUST BY IMPROVING SERVICE RELIABILITY AND ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

EXPAND CUSTOMER NOTIFICATIONS



What we heard

Customers want to receive proactive and easy-to-understand communications about detours and delays.

PROJECT OWNER: OPERATIONS COMMAND CENTER

We will:

- Deliver accurate real-time alerts for detours, delays and service disruptions via the COTA website, Transit app, mapping platforms, social media, email, text and other channels
- Standardize communication language to ensure clarity and consistency
- Improve transparency and reduce uncertainty during service disruptions
- Partner with Swiftly to improve how detour information is shared with third-party platforms such as Google Maps and Apple Maps, ensuring customers receive accurate, real-time guidance in their preferred trip-planning tools

Q4 2026

ENABLE OPERATOR-CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION



What we heard

COTA//Plus Operators and customers would both like more ways to communicate during customer pickup.

PROJECT OWNER: ON-DEMAND SERVICES

We will:

- Explore implementing in-app communication between riders and Operators during pickup
- Improve coordination during variable arrival times
- Reduce missed pickups and rider uncertainty
- Increase transparency and improve on-time experience for COTA//Plus riders and Operators

2027

ENHANCE COTA MAINSTREAM BOOKINGS



What we heard

COTA Mainstream customers report that vehicles sometimes arrive late or depart early. Not all vehicles that arrive are well-suited to customer needs.

PROJECT OWNER: MOBILITY SERVICES

We will:

- Implement new trip booking software to improve ease of booking and trip tracking
- Enable real-time trip status through web and mobile platforms
- Expand availability of vehicles suited to customer mobility needs
- Enhance reliability and reduce uncertainty for COTA Mainstream riders

Q2 2026

STANDARDIZE FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES



What we heard

Customers wish to better understand the resolution or outcome of their inquiries and complaints.

PROJECT OWNER: CUSTOMER CARE

We will:

- Standardize resolution timelines and communication protocols
- Provide clear confirmation when inquiries are received
- Commit to follow-up within five business days
- Ensure customers understand the status and resolution of their concerns

Q4 2026

WE WILL BUILD AND STRENGTHEN CUSTOMER TRUST BY IMPROVING SERVICE RELIABILITY AND ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

ALIGN EXTERNAL MESSAGING ACROSS CHANNELS



What we heard

Customers sometimes receive conflicting information depending on which channel or staff member they interact with, creating confusion and undermining trust in COTA’s communications.

PROJECT OWNER: MARKETING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We will:

- Establish consistent messaging standards across all customer-facing touchpoints, including frontline staff, the Customer Care Center, the Customer Experience Center, Operators and the COTA website
- Identify preferred communication channels for each staff group to ensure guidance reaches the right people in the right way
- Reduce confusion and ensure customers receive consistent information regardless of channel

Q2-Q3 2027

EXPAND CUSTOMER TESTING AND FEEDBACK



What we heard

Customers want more meaningful opportunities to provide feedback that shapes COTA’s services. Current engagement channels are limited in scope and reach, resulting in fewer riders having a voice in service design and improvement decisions.

PROJECT OWNER: MARKETING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We will:

- Strengthen rider engagement by expanding existing customer feedback channels
- Explore a “Rider Labs” concept, inviting members of the COTA Voice Research Group to participate in pilots, test new tools and evaluate customer-facing spaces before launch
- Revise our approach to product and service design based on findings from this initiative

2027

OPTIMIZE & STRENGTHEN REAL-TIME FEEDBACK CHANNELS



What we heard

Customers want clear, accessible ways to report concerns and provide feedback about their service experience. COTA has mechanisms to provide feedback, but awareness and use of existing channels among customers vary.

PROJECT OWNER: MARKETING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We will:

- Assess and optimize existing rider feedback channels
- Expand promotion of reporting tools across shelters, transit centers and digital assets
- Evaluate enhancements such as texting functionality or live chat
- Ensure feedback channels are visible, accessible and operationally sustainable

Q4 2026

INTEGRATE PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER INSIGHT DATA



What we heard

Customer feedback, complaint trends and operational performance data are stored across multiple systems. Without a unified view, it can be difficult to identify recurring reliability issues or service breakdown patterns.

PROJECT OWNER: DATA ANALYTICS & DATA ARCHITECTURE

We will:

- Improve how we manage our data across the organization
- Evolve our use of cloud-based tools to make data more accessible throughout the organization
- Expand existing functionality in customer systems to better track customer requests
- Centralize feedback from reporting systems, CRM tools, customer support, surveys and Mystery Rider Reports

Q4 2026

WE WILL BUILD AND STRENGTHEN CUSTOMER TRUST BY IMPROVING SERVICE RELIABILITY AND ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

KEY:

Fixed Route	●
COTA//Plus	●
Mainstream	●
In Progress	▶
Not Yet Started	⏸

IMPROVE TRANSFER PROTECTION



What we heard

Riders told us that missed connections can result in long and unpredictable wait times.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Explore novel ways to reduce or alleviate long wait times resulting from missed connections
- Evaluate tools such as Transfer Protection to allow riders to request a transfer by holding connecting vehicles

2027

STREAMLINE TRIP PLANNING



What we heard

Customers who use both COTA//Plus and fixed-route service must plan each trip separately, as no single tool currently integrates both services, adding complexity for riders who depend on seamless transfers.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Explore integrating COTA//Plus with trip-planning tools such as the Transit App to provide a unified, multi-modal planning experience
- Improve multi-modal trip planning and reduce friction during transfers through better integration and real-time information sharing

2027

INTRODUCE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM



What we heard

Customers benefit from real-time, on-the-ground assistance that digital tools cannot always provide, especially during peak hours and service disruptions.

PROJECT OWNER: MARKETING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We will:

- Introduce an ambassador program that unifies existing teams supporting customers in the field
- Provide customers with real-time information, wayfinding support and local knowledge through ambassadors
- Capture customer interactions digitally to generate insights into customer needs and improve service delivery

Q1 2027

REVISE ON-TIME PERFORMANCE METRIC



What we heard

Our current measure of on-time performance excludes missed and cancelled trips, producing results that don't reflect the full customer experience.

PROJECT OWNER: DATA ANALYTICS

We will:

- Revise COTA's on-time performance definition to include canceled and missed trips
- Align our definition with peer agency standards to better reflect rider experience

Q4 2026

WE WILL PRIORITIZE EASE AND CONVENIENCE IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

ALIGN IN-PERSON SERVICES



What we heard

Customers expect consistent, comprehensive service at all COTA-operated facilities.

PROJECT OWNER: MARKETING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We will:

- Revitalize and standardize all customer-facing locations to ensure spaces are welcoming, current and easy to navigate
- Provide staff training to deliver comprehensive information, ticketing and booking across all service offerings
- Ensure a clear, consistent and high-quality customer experience across all COTA locations
- Reduce customer confusion by delivering a consistent level of service at every location

Q4 2027

EXPAND DIGITAL STOP DISPLAYS



What we heard

Customers want real-time information signage expanded to more bus stops.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Build on the success of the digital displays pilot program deployed at 30 stops
- Explore expanding the pilot to key bus stops and transit centers to provide real-time updates and improve the rider experience
- Reduce uncertainty and improve the waiting experience through expanded access to real-time information

Q4 2026

REVISE TRANSIT STOP DESIGN GUIDE



What we heard

At times customers struggle with wayfinding, especially for new customers, infrequent riders or customers travelling on routes they are unfamiliar with.

PROJECT OWNER: SERVICE PLANNING

We will:

- Update the Transit Stop Design Guide to strengthen accessibility and wayfinding across the system
- Introduce clearer signage standards to improve bus stop signage and information
- Clearly indicate boarding locations and bus directions to enhance customer understanding and navigation

2027

DEPLOY SMARTCARD KIOSKS



What we heard

Customers want more ways to manage their COTA Smartcard balances independently.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Introduce new ticket vending machines that allow customers to load funds onto their Smartcards and check balances independently
- Install machines at key stops and service centers for improved customer convenience
- Increase convenience and reduce reliance on in-person assistance

Q4 2026

WE WILL PRIORITIZE EASE AND CONVENIENCE IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

UPGRADE AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT



What we heard

Customers reported audio and visual stop announcements on buses are not always reliable.

PROJECT OWNER: VEHICLE ENGINEERING

We will:

- Upgrade aging audio-visual systems across the fleet
- Require Vehicle Maintenance and Operators to check audio and visual stop announcements during daily inspections
- Improve accessibility for all passengers by ensuring issues are identified and addressed promptly

2027

SIMPLIFY PASS ACTIVATION



What we heard

Customers find monthly pass activation rules confusing. Some products activate on first tap while others require a manual start date.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Improve monthly pass activation processes to make it simpler and more intuitive for customers

Q4 2026

MODERNIZE MAINSTREAM PAYMENTS



What we heard

COTA Mainstream riders receive their tickets via the mail and would prefer a more modern system.

PROJECT OWNER: MOBILITY SERVICES

We will:

- Expand digital options for purchasing and managing tickets for Mainstream customers
- Reduce the need for customers to call or visit mobility centers in person
- Enable customers to pay at booking using a debit or credit card

2027

STREAMLINE THE REDUCED FARE PROGRAM



What we heard

Customers told us the paper-based reduced fare application and renewal process can be difficult to navigate. In addition, limited awareness of the program means some eligible riders may not be accessing the benefits available to them.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Introduce digital application and renewal options for reduced fare programs
- Simplify documentation and verification requirements where possible
- Provide alternative support channels for customers who need assistance completing the process
- Improve visibility of reduced fare programs across COTA's digital platforms

2027

WE WILL PRIORITIZE EASE AND CONVENIENCE IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

SIMPLIFY MAINSTREAM APPLICATION PROCESS



What we heard

The current COTA Mainstream eligibility and application process requires multiple in-person steps and manual forms, creating unnecessary effort for customers.

PROJECT OWNER: MOBILITY SERVICES

We will:

- Digitize the Mainstream eligibility and application process to reduce customer effort and the need for in-person visits
- Implement an account-based system that allows customers to manage their profile online

Q4 2026

DIGITIZE MAINSTREAM BOOKINGS



What we heard

The current web booking portal has limited functionality and does not provide timely confirmation or real-time updates.

PROJECT OWNER: MOBILITY SERVICES

We will:

- Launch a modernized web portal which will enable instant booking confirmations, real-time vehicle arrival status and simplified booking across both COTA Mainstream services through a single interface

Q4 2026

REVISE MAINSTREAM ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE



What we heard

The Mainstream Accessibility Guide is lengthy and difficult to navigate, making it challenging for customers to quickly find the information they need.

PROJECT OWNER: MOBILITY SERVICES

We will:

- Update the guide to include simplified and alternative information formats to make information clearer and more accessible

Q4 2026

STRENGTHEN CROSS-SERVICE PAYMENT INTEGRATION



What we heard

Separate payment systems and policies across Fixed Route, COTA Mainstream and COTA//Plus create a fragmented customer experience.

PROJECT OWNER: INNOVATION

We will:

- Explore integrating systems to enable a single payment account across services
- Future system updates may allow customers to manage a single payment account across services, streamlining fare payment and access

Q4 2026

WE WILL PRIORITIZE EASE AND CONVENIENCE IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

KEY:

Fixed Route	●
COTA//Plus	●
Mainstream	●
In Progress	▶
Not Yet Started	⏸



C-PASS PROGRAM TRANSITION

What we heard

The Downtown C-pass program is highly valued by both customers and employers. With funding for this program expiring, we have an opportunity to revamp the Downtown C-pass program to improve the experience.

Project Owner: Strategic Partnerships

We will:

- Migrate C-pass customers to a more modern payment platform
- Sunset the Connector app, which is often inconsistent or incompatible with devices
- Introduce new, more user-friendly pass program to replace the Downtown C-pass

Q1 2027

UPDATE CUSTOMER-FACING POLICIES



What we heard

Some policies are outdated and not consistently updated to reflect the current environment. Some policies also unintentionally create barriers for customers.

Project Owner: Marketing & Customer Experience

We will:

- Work with departmental policy owners to identify and update policies that negatively impact customer experience
- Develop a process to communicate updated policies to internal departments and customers through various channels to ensure broad reach
- Develop an internal policy library to serve as a single source for current policies
- Conduct regular audits of policies and update as needed

2027



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACTION ITEMS TIMELINE

KEY:

- Expand Access ■
- Safety & Comfort ■
- Service Reliability ■
- Ease & Convenience ■

Reccomendation	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Expand Service																				
Modernizing through LinkUS																				
Expand Support Channels																				
Improve Bus Conditions																				
Refresh Stop Infrastructure																				
Strengthen Safety Response																				
Develop Disability Empathy Course																				
Expand Customer Notifications																				
Enhance COTA Mainstream Bookings																				
Enable Operator-Customer Communication																				
Standardize Follow-Up Procedures																				
Align External Messaging Across Channels																				
Streamline Trip Planning																				
Expand Customer Testing and Feedback																				
Optimize & Strengthen Real-Time Feedback Channels																				
Integrate Performance and Customer Insight Data																				
Revise On-Time Performance Metric																				
Improve Transfer Protection																				
Introduce Ambassador Program																				
Align In-Person Services																				
Revise Transit Stop Design Guide																				
Expand Digital Stop Displays																				
Deploy COTA Smartcard Kiosks																				
Upgrade Audio-Visual Equipment																				
Modernize COTA Mainstream Payments																				
Simplify Pass Activation																				
Streamline the Reduced Fare Program																				
Simplify COTA Mainstream Application Process																				
Revise COTA Mainstream Accessibility Guide																				
Digitize COTA Mainstream Bookings																				
Strengthen Cross-Service Payment Integration																				
C-Pass Program Transition																				
Update Customer-Facing Policies																				



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

KEY:

Not Yet Started



In Progress



The following initiatives directly advance the Customer Experience objectives identified in COTA's 2026 Strategic Plan.

OBJECTIVE:

Model COTA's Core Values: Safety, Empowerment, Accountability, Teamwork and Service

Projects that support this objective

-  Promote Frontline Safety
-  Expand Post Incident Support
-  Improve Internal Processes Through a CX Lens
-  Implement Ridership Program

OBJECTIVE:

Invest in employees' professional development and career growth

Projects that support this objective

-  Formalize Operational Immersion & Cross-Exposure
-  Roll Out Tailored CX Training
-  Enhance Recognition Programs

Objective:

Cultivate trust through communication, inclusion and appreciation

Projects that support this objective

-  Enhance Operator Feedback Opportunities
-  Streamline Internal Communications
-  Gather & Analyze Employee Feedback
-  Strengthen Knowledge & Policy Governance

WE WILL MODEL COTA'S CORE VALUES: SAFETY, EMPOWERMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, TEAMWORK AND SERVICE

KEY:	
Fixed Route	●
COTA//Plus	●
Mainstream	●
In Progress	▶
Not Yet Started	⏸

PROMOTE FRONTLINE SAFETY



What we heard

Frontline employees reported feeling unsafe or unsupported in certain customer interactions.

PROJECT OWNER: SAFETY

We will:

- Meet with individual divisions to discuss employee safety and explore new ways to support staff
- Expand de-escalation training for employees
- Review our code of conduct
- Incorporate into annual refresher training and create opportunities for staff to raise concerns

Q4 2026

IMPROVE INTERNAL PROCESSES THROUGH A CX LENS



What we heard

Recurring customer complaints often point to internal workflow breakdowns or unclear handoffs across departments.

PROJECT OWNER: CUSTOMER CARE

We will:

- Refine complaint categories
- Analyze recurring customer complaints to identify systemic process issues
- Conduct root-cause reviews across departments
- Redesign high-impact workflows with customer impact in mind
- Track reduction in repeat complaint themes over time

Q4 2026

EXPAND POST INCIDENT SUPPORT



What we heard

Some operators feel unsupported after experiencing safety-related incidents. While response and reporting processes exist, post-incident and mental health support may vary.

PROJECT OWNER: BENEFITS & WELLNESS

We will:

- Strengthen post-incident support by increasing access to mental health resources for frontline teams
- Offer optional mental health and first aid training for managers, directors and HR to better equip leaders to support employees in the immediate aftermath of incidents

Ongoing

IMPLEMENT RIDERSHIP PROGRAM



What we heard

We have an opportunity to deepen employee understanding of the customer journey.

PROJECT OWNER: SERVICE PLANNING

We will:

- Implement a structured ridership program for non-union employees
- Conduct regular ride-alongs to build firsthand awareness of the customer experience
- Capture employee observations and recommendations for service improvements through the program
- Consider completion of a ride-along as part of an annual performance review metric

Ongoing

WE WILL INVEST IN EMPLOYEES' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER GROWTH

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

ENHANCE RECOGNITION PROGRAMS



What we heard

Staff reported limited visibility and inconsistent recognition of positive contributions to the organization and customer impact.

PROJECT OWNER: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

We will:

- Explore innovative recognition programs to celebrate staff achievements related to the CX goals in our CX Strategy and Strategic Plan
- Expand recognition to include roles that may not be directly customer-facing but still have a meaningful impact on service delivery

Q4 2026

ROLL OUT TAILORED CX TRAINING



What we heard

Employees in non-customer-facing roles do not always see how their work impacts customers.

PROJECT OWNER: LEARNING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We will:

- Roll out customer experience training for all employees, emphasizing how every team influences CX
- Integrate the training as a required module within COTA's annual compliance program to reinforce shared service standards and keep customer experience top of mind across the organization

Q4 2026



FORMALIZE OPERATIONAL IMMERSION & CROSS-EXPOSURE



What we heard

Employees expressed interest in better understanding how other departments operate but noted that full shadowing programs can be difficult to scale. Existing ride-along programs are not widely known and participation varies across teams.

PROJECT OWNER: LEARNING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We will:

- Promote existing ride-along and shadowing opportunities across departments
- Pilot a structured cross-exposure program beginning with high-impact roles
- Define clear participation guidelines, cadence and expectations to ensure operational continuity
- Develop “day-in-the-life” features and recorded operational walkthroughs to broaden awareness
- Integrate operational immersion into onboarding for select roles where frontline exposure is critical

Q4 2026

WE WILL CULTIVATE TRUST THROUGH COMMUNICATION, INCLUSION AND APPRECIATION

KEY:	
Fixed Route	
COTA//Plus	
Mainstream	
In Progress	
Not Yet Started	

ENHANCE OPERATOR FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES



What we heard

Operators feel internal feedback mechanisms are difficult to navigate and do not always see how their input influences decisions. Opportunities for structured dialogue with leadership are limited.

PROJECT OWNER: OPERATIONS

We will:

- Centralize Operator feedback through existing digital tools
- Establish a consistent intake process to clarify routing and ownership across departments
- Ensure timely and regular communication back to Operators on actions taken and outcomes achieved
- Introduce regular feedback touchpoints, including town halls and discussion sessions

Q1 2027

GATHER & ANALYZE EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK



What we heard

Opportunities for employees to provide feedback are limited.

PROJECT OWNER: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

We will:

- Conduct regular employee sentiment surveys to capture concerns and feedback
- Report key themes and identify opportunities for improvement
- Explore enhancements to improve the overall employee experience

Ongoing

STREAMLINE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



What we heard

Internal communications flow through multiple channels. Some frontline staff feel they do not consistently receive timely, actionable updates. As a result, they learn about service changes or technology rollouts after implementation, limiting their ability to effectively support customers.

PROJECT OWNER: COMMUNICATIONS

We will:

- Clarify communication ownership and timing for major service or system changes
- Standardize update channels to reduce duplication and fragmentation
- Improve accessibility of information for frontline teams

Ongoing

STRENGTHEN KNOWLEDGE & POLICY GOVERNANCE



What we heard

Policies, procedures and operational guidance are stored across multiple systems and formats, and employees struggle to find relevant, up-to-date information.

PROJECT OWNER: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

We will:

- Create a centralized, searchable knowledge base that consolidates policies and operational guidance from different departments
- Prioritize updates to policies that generate recurring customer complaints or operational friction
- Communicate policy updates through standardized internal channels to ensure staff are aware of changes and expectations

2027

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTION ITEMS TIMELINE

KEY:

Model Our Values



Career Growth



Cultivate Trust



Reccomendation	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Promote Frontline Safety				Model Our Values																
Expand Post Incident Support	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values			
Improve Internal Processes through a CX lens				Model Our Values																
Implement Ridership Program	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values	Model Our Values
Enhance Recognition Programs				Career Growth																
Roll Out Tailored CX Training					Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth
Formalize Operational Immersion & Cross-Exposure					Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth	Career Growth												
Enhance Operator Feedback Opportunities					Cultivate Trust															
Streamline Internal Communications	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust
Gather & Analyze Employee Feedback	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust
Strengthen Knowledge & Policy Governance					Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust	Cultivate Trust												



ENABLERS

KEY ENABLERS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

Delivering a consistent, reliable and customer-centered transit experience requires a strong foundation.

We will put in place core enablers to ensure that we can effectively implement this Action Plan.



We foster a culture where employees are empowered, aligned and supported to deliver exceptional service.



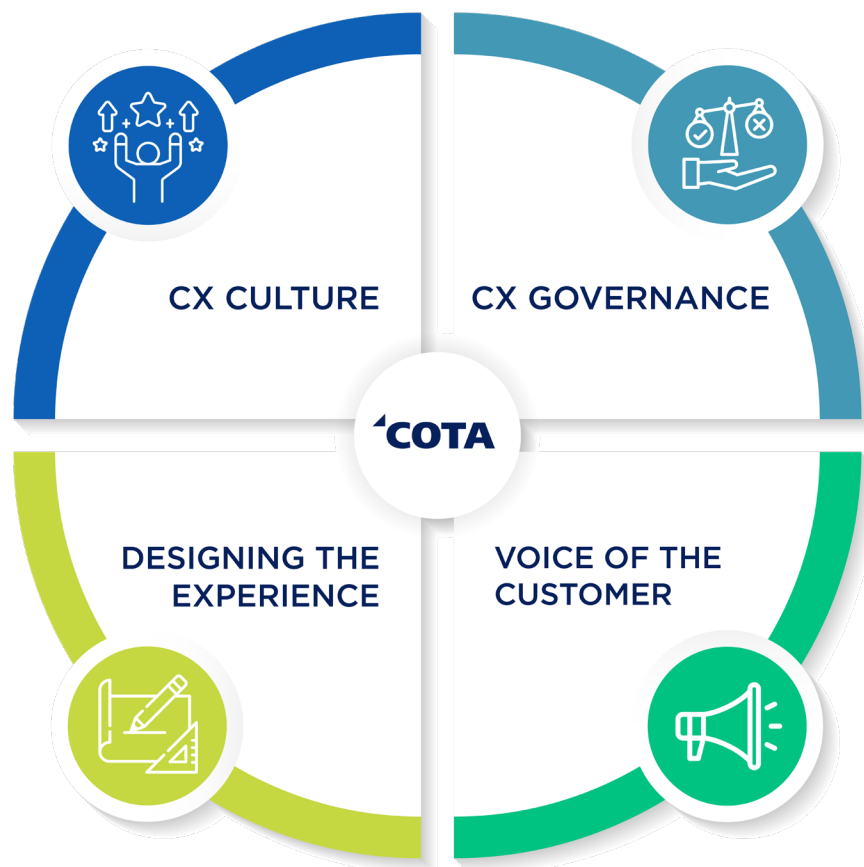
Clear ownership, decision rights and accountability ensure this Action Plan moves from commitment to execution.



We will capture customer feedback through all sources, translate it into actionable insight and use it to inform operational and strategic decisions.



We will design and refine services through a coordinated, customer-centered approach.



ENABLER 1: CX GOVERNANCE MODEL

To ensure customer experience improvements are coordinated, sustained and embedded across COTA, we have established a clear CX governance model.

This structure defines how we will make decisions, align priorities and maintain accountability across the organization.

Our CX governance model is built around six key roles:

- Executive Sponsor
- CX Team
- CX Data & Analytics
- CX Steering Committee
- Cross Functional CX Working Group
- CX Project Owners

EXECUTIVE SPONSOR - STRATEGIC ACCOUNTABILITY

The CX Executive sponsor will be a senior leader who:

- Champions CX at the leadership table
- Ensures CX priorities align with the Strategic Plan
- Holds divisions accountable for delivery
- Reviews quarterly performance and removes systemic barriers

CX TEAM - INTEGRATION & OVERSIGHT

To solidify our commitment to improving customer experience, we will add a dedicated CX function to our organization. Members of this team will be the internal subject-matter experts on customer experience, voice of the customer programs and other capabilities needed to catalyze organizational change around CX. This function will not own every initiative but rather serve as the enterprise integrators that drive internal alignment for CX initiatives.

The team will:

- Own the CX Action Plan, track initiative progress and hold Project Owners accountable for updates
- Interpret performance dashboards and customer feedback trends
- Identify emerging risks and improvement opportunities
- Escalate systemic issues to leadership
- Facilitate cross-department alignment through the CX Working Group
- Define CX policies and standards
- Work with departments to improve processes from a CX lens

ENABLER 1: CX GOVERNANCE MODEL

CX DATA & ANALYTICS - MEASUREMENT & INSIGHTS

The Data & Analytics team serves as the strategic measurement partner to the CX Team.

The team will:

- Design and maintain the CX performance dashboard.
- Own CX data architecture and metric definitions.
- Integrate customer feedback data from multiple sources (surveys, QR codes, CRM, call center, app, etc.).
- Validate and maintain methodologies for key metrics (e.g., on-time performance).
- Identify trends, patterns and anomalies in performance data.
- Support quarterly performance reviews with accurate reporting.

The Data & Analytics team ensures that CX performance is measurable, reliable and evidence-based.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL CX WORKING GROUP - CROSS-FUNCTIONAL ADVISORY

The CX Working Group will serve as a cross-functional advisory group, ensuring we intentionally integrate customer experience into planning, decision-making and initiative design across COTA.

Each representative will be responsible for:

- Reviewing new initiatives through a CX lens and identifying customer impacts, risks and unintended consequences.
- Aligning departmental initiatives with enterprise CX priorities.
- Surfacing frontline and rider feedback themes.
- Coordinating improvement efforts that span multiple departments.

Major customer-facing initiatives will be reviewed by the CX Working Group prior to launch to assess customer impact and cross-department coordination.

CX STEERING COMMITTEE - EXECUTIVE ALIGNMENT

The CX Steering Committee is comprised of CX Sponsor, CX Team and key senior executives who represent a cross-section of all our business units.

This committee will meet quarterly to:

- Review enterprise-level CX performance.
- Evaluate progress on major initiatives.
- Reprioritize resources if needed.
- Approve escalations raised by the CX Team.

Please note: The Steering Committee will align with leadership and is not be responsible for managing day-to-day work.

CX PROJECT OWNERS - DELIVERY AND EXECUTION

Each initiative in the CX Action Plan has a designated Project Owner accountable for executing the initiatives.

Each Project Owner will be responsible for:

- Delivering the assigned initiative according to the defined timeline.
- Coordinating cross-department dependencies.
- Identifying risks or barriers to implementation.
- Reporting progress to the CX Team and Working Group.
- Ensuring the initiative achieves its intended customer outcome.

To ensure the CX Action Plan moves from strategy to execution, COTA has established a defined governance operating structure with defined meeting objectives and cadence.

Monthly › Operational Alignment | **Quarterly** › Executive Oversight | **Annual** › Strategic Refresh

1. MONTHLY – CX WORKING GROUP

Purpose: Cross-functional alignment and issue resolution

Participants:

- CX Team
- Division representatives
- Data & Analytics (as needed)

Objectives:

- Review initiative status updates.
- Identify cross-functional dependencies.
- Surface customer impacts or emerging risks.
- Review new initiatives through a CX lens.
- Align near-term priorities.

Outputs:

- Updated initiative tracker
- Identified risks and mitigation actions
- Escalations (if required)

2. QUARTERLY – CX STEERING COMMITTEE

Purpose: Executive performance review and prioritization

Participants:

- Executive Sponsor
- CX Team
- Senior leaders representing key business units
- Data & Analytics

Objectives:

- Review CX performance dashboard
- Evaluate progress on major initiatives
- Assess KPI trends and metric changes
- Reprioritize initiatives if needed
- Approve escalations or resource shifts

Outputs:

- Confirmed priorities
- Leadership decisions
- Approved escalations

3. ANNUAL – CX ACTION PLAN REFRESH

Purpose: Strategic recalibration

Participants:

- Executive Sponsor
- CX Team
- Data & Analytics
- Steering Committee

Objectives:

- Review annual CX performance
- Incorporate new customer insight trends
- Update KPIs if needed
- Refine Action Plan initiatives
- Publish progress update

Outputs:

- Updated CX Action Plan
- Progress summary
- Refreshed initiative roadmap

INITIATIVE-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to the formal cadence:

- Project Owners provide monthly status updates to the CX Team.
- Data & Analytics maintains performance dashboards.
- The CX Team monitors initiative health between meeting.

ENABLER 2: CX CULTURE

We will embed a customer-centric culture into how we operate, how we evaluate our performance and how we recognize our employees.

DEFINE CX ATTRIBUTES

- Work with COTA leadership and CX Program Manager to define 3-4 observable Customer Experience (CX) attributes expected of all staff and leaders
- Ensure leadership commitment by communicating expectation and modeling behaviors

TALENT & CAPABILITY

- Integrate CX competencies into hiring, onboarding, performance reviews and require managers to incorporate CX expectations into regular performance conversations

REINFORCE & RECOGNIZE

- Recognize teams and staff that demonstrate measurable CX improvement
- Share customer stories and improvement wins internally.
- Highlight data-driven improvements in service performance

DEVELOP ROLE-BASED CX TRAINING

Develop CX training for all levels of staff:

- **Frontline training:** service recovery, de-escalation, accessibility, disruption communication
- **Supervisor training:** coaching CX behaviors and using CX data
- **Leadership sessions:** decision-making through a customer impact lens



ENABLER 3: VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

We will build systems to consolidate, analyze and translate customer feedback and operational data so we can translate it into clear and actionable insight

GATHER CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

We will

- Expand feedback options to enable customers to share concerns in the moment, including through QR codes on buses, at shelters and transit terminals
- Improve how we track customer service requests from submission to resolution
- Provide staff with visibility into outstanding issues and ensure all customer concerns are addressed

Ownership

- Marketing & Customer Experience leads QR code deployment and promotion
- Customer Care leads tracking of customer service requests

Outcome

- Real-time feedback related to specific locations
- Improved visibility into service pain points

CENTRALIZE CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

We will:

- Improve how we manage data across the organization
- Evolve our use of cloud-based tools to make data more accessible throughout the organization
- Expand existing functionality in customer systems to better track customer requests
- Centralize feedback from QR tools, Salesforce, the contact center, surveys and Mystery Rider reports

Ownership

- Data & Analytics leads consolidation and analytics
- Technology ensures system integration

Outcome

- Single source of truth for customer experience performance

GENERATE ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

We will:

- Produce recurring trend reports by route, service type and issue category
- Identify emerging risks and systemic patterns
- Surface priority themes to the CX Working Group

Ownership

- Data & Analytics prepares monthly trend summaries
- CX Team reviews and escalates systemic issues

Outcome

- Evidence-based understanding of where experience is improving or deteriorating

By gathering and organizing customer data, we will:

- Build a system-wide view of performance at the rider level
- Build a stronger foundation for rider-centered decisions
- Identify where targeted improvements have the greatest impact
- Treat collecting customer insights as a living process

ENABLER 4: DESIGNING THE EXPERIENCE

COTA will evaluate and design services through a coordinated, customer-centric approach.

The objective of this model is to unify CX under a 'One COTA Experience' while keeping our customers top of mind during service and product planning. Below we describe COTA's model for designing and implementing customer products and services.

CUSTOMER DATA: COTA collects customer insights continuously through its various sources (QR code surveys, Salesforce data, Mystery Rider programs etc). Data is centralized and reported on quarterly.)

PROCESS TO EVALUATE CURRENT SERVICE

MONITOR SIGNALS

Monitor consolidated customer data for indicators that signal potential CX issues or opportunities

CONDUCT IMPACT ANALYSIS

Evaluate issues based on how they affect customer segments and COTA departments

PRIORITIZE SERVICE CHANGES

Determine the appropriate course of action to address the concern such as internal process improvement or service enhancements

VALIDATE CHANGES

Test proposed service changes through rider labs and internal reviews to gather feedback and refine the solution

ROLL OUT AND PROMOTE

Roll out the change after user testing. Promote the change to ensure internal groups are aware and supportive



PROCESS TO CREATE NEW SERVICE

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITY

Surface unmet customer needs or emerging opportunities using consolidated CX data

SEEK RIDER INPUT

Use rider labs and targeted engagement to explore needs, test early concepts and shape the service

ALIGN ACROSS COTA

Collect feedback from relevant departments and ensure staff have the understanding, support and tools needed to support the new service

DESIGN SERVICE

Translate CX data, rider input and departmental requirements into a coordinated service model

PILOT & REFINE

Launch a controlled pilot to gather rider and staff feedback, refine the offering and confirm readiness for broader rollout







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