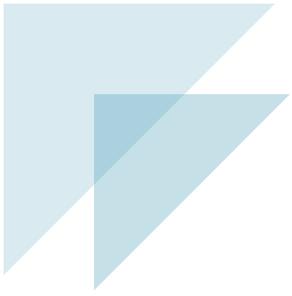


# LIVING OUR *commitment*

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The logo for COTA, featuring a red triangle pointing up and to the right, followed by the letters "COTA" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

AS WE LOOK BACK UPON A DIFFICULT  
YEAR, WE ARE INSTILLED WITH AN  
OVERWHELMING SENSE OF *gratitude*  
FOR THE STRONG POSITION WE  
FIND OURSELVES IN TODAY.



The role COTA plays in Central Ohio to keep people and our economy moving has never been more important than it was in 2020. Thanks to years of excellent financial stewardship, a culture of innovation and a nimble and courageous team, COTA not only delivered for our community without missing a day of service, but reimagined mobility solutions along the way.

COTA entered 2020 with an ambitious and transformational agenda based upon data from comprehensive customer research, and while we had to regain our balance once or twice, we were never knocked off course. Thanks to our dedicated team members, we were among the first to respond to COVID-19 by instituting new sanitization technology, health protocols and community support to allow our service to safely continue. At a time of heightened fear and uncertainty, our heroic frontline employees showed up to work so that other essential workers could perform their jobs. When our community joined the national movement for racial justice and equality, COTA stood with them, steadfast in our commitment to dismantle systemic racism. In the fall, when voters came out in record numbers through difficult circumstances, we were there to help transport and navigate them to their polling places.

As we adapted to a changing world, COTA accelerated our rollout of more flexible, targeted mobility options to reach those without access as part of a vision for a truly interconnected future. Fixed-route transit remains central to our service and is now expanded by our launch of the nation's first **BUS ON DEMAND** and the continued expansion of **COTA//PLUS**. Individual neighborhoods, businesses and customers have unique needs and characteristics that call for a more customized approach. Meanwhile, our rapidly growing community requires us to rethink the way we move, the way we live and the way we process data.

At the heart of our 2020 accomplishments is our vision to **MOVE EVERY LIFE FORWARD** through an intentional commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Especially during a year of unprecedented challenges, it was gratifying to see our team recognized globally as the **APTA OUTSTANDING MIDSIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM IN NORTH AMERICA**, as well as a **TOP PLACE FOR WOMEN TO SUCCEED**.

COTA was able to pivot in transformative ways because of our strong partnerships and resilient community. But this is just the beginning of COTA's next chapter; the infrastructure and policies COTA develops today will shape the equitable transformation of our region tomorrow. Team COTA is eager to face the challenges ahead with an innovative spirit and renewed sense of urgency, firm in the knowledge that we can create a more prosperous community for all.



Sincerely,

Joanna M. Pinkerton, President/CEO

Craig P. Treneff, Board of Trustees Chair



2001 COTA

CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

NEXT BUS PLEASE

APTA  
#1 AWARD  
WINNER  
2018 | 2020  
OUTSTANDING PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
COTA

PROUD TO BE 2X *Champions*

2018 AND 2020 #1 OUTSTANDING  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



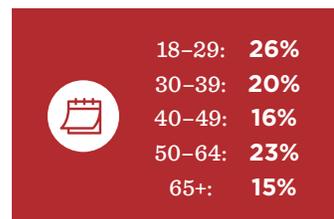
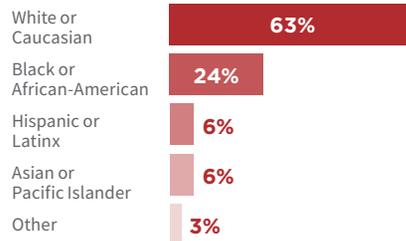
# REFINING OUR *voice*

## THE ROAD TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING OUR CUSTOMERS

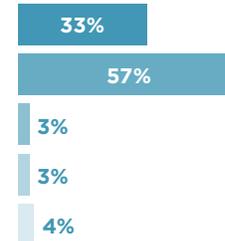
In this era of transformation, the motivation for every innovation or policy change grows out of a more thorough understanding of our customers. Prior to the pandemic, we analyzed data from **COTA'S CUSTOMER SATISFACTION STUDY**, which documents trip logistics, customer mobility behaviors and demographics between 2016 and 2019. Then, after the pandemic first swept across Central Ohio, we conducted additional interviews to understand how our ridership had changed almost overnight. Additionally, we have established **COTA VOICE**, an ongoing, online customer advisory panel of more than 1,500 customers who provide real-time feedback in a changing world.

In doing so, COTA has gained a better understanding of our customers' communication preferences and priorities. With our new Voice of the Customer program, we are committed to amplifying customer insight and feedback in 2021 and beyond.

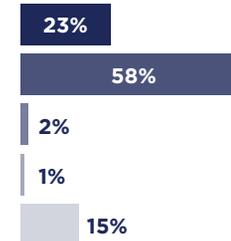
### FRANKLIN COUNTY ADULTS



### COTA CUSTOMERS (BEFORE COVID-19)



### COTA CUSTOMERS (DURING COVID-19)



	FRANKLIN COUNTY ADULTS	COTA CUSTOMERS (BEFORE COVID-19)	COTA CUSTOMERS (DURING COVID-19)
INCOME <\$30,000	 <b>27%</b>	 <b>40%</b>	 <b>57%</b>
4-YEAR DEGREE	 <b>45%</b>	 <b>30%</b>	 <b>22%</b>
DRIVER'S LICENSE	 <b>87%</b>	 <b>44%</b>	 <b>35%</b>
HOUSEHOLD VEHICLE ACCESS	 <b>93%</b>	 <b>34%</b>	 <b>23%</b>
CURRENTLY EMPLOYED	 <b>65%</b>	 <b>70%</b>	 <b>62%**</b>
LOST JOB	 <b>17%*</b>	 <b>25%**</b>	 <b>26%**</b>
LOST HOURS	 <b>39%*</b>	 <b>45%**</b>	 <b>51%**</b>
WORKING FROM HOME	 <b>47%*</b>	 <b>28%**</b>	 <b>13%**</b>

We learned that **67%** of pre-pandemic COTA customers were **PEOPLE OF COLOR**. But, at the height of the initial shutdown, the proportion increased to **76%**. Moreover, the percentage of customers with household incomes **LESS THAN \$30,000** increased from **40%** to **57%** in the early months of the pandemic. In May and June, **87%** of our customers reported working outside their homes in industries such as **HEALTHCARE, MANUFACTURING, RETAIL AND THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY**.

Unfortunately, a significant proportion of these customers lost hours, pay and, in many cases, their jobs entirely. In short, the spread of COVID-19 **INTENSIFIED THE SOCIOECONOMIC DISPARITIES** that were already deeply ingrained in the fabric of Central Ohio.

Lost job, lost hours and working from home percentages only represent employed adults. Franklin County data is from ACS, which may not be indicative of current employment levels.  
\*COTA Customers data gathered before the COVID-19 pandemic; COTA Customer Survey (2016/19) \*\*COTA Customers data during COVID-19 gathered from COTA Customer Survey (2020).

## OUR CORE CUSTOMERS CARE THAT COTA

- *is reliable*
- *is trustworthy*
- *is forward-thinking and*
- *cares about customers*

These findings impact how we position our organization to transform in a rapidly evolving transportation environment. This was a year where we focused on serving the essential, frontline workers who keep Central Ohio moving. This fuller understanding of our core customers helps COTA meet their needs while engaging with their vision for the future of mobility in the community we share.

# *adapting* TO A NEW REALITY

## PROVIDING SAFE MOBILITY WHEN OUR COMMUNITY NEEDED IT MOST

Even before Ohio confirmed its first cases of COVID-19 in early March 2020, COTA already had begun adapting to a new reality. As schools, offices, restaurants and other establishments shuttered their doors, COTA was faced by two immediate concerns: first was the health and safety of customers and employees, especially vehicle operators; second was the greater-than-ever need to get essential workers—including health service professionals—to their jobs while also providing sufficient mobility options to keep Central Ohio's economy from grinding to a halt.





With so many unknowns, Team COTA acted quickly and launched our **STOP THE SPREAD** campaign in **FEBRUARY**, quickly adding hand sanitizer dispensers in every transit vehicle while stepping up its cleaning schedule to multiple times per day. In **MARCH**, COTA moved to no fare and began requiring customers to board from the rear in order to reduce close contact with operators and imposed a temporary limit of 20 passengers per vehicle. In **APRIL**, COTA began requiring customers to wear masks, and in **MAY**, we introduced a groundbreaking and innovative sanitization process—using **Aegis Microbe Shield**, an **FDA-approved antimicrobial solution that creates an invisible layer of protection against harmful microbes**. By the end of 2020, COTA had earned the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Health and Safety Certification, as well as applied for the **Global Biorisk Advisory Council Gold Star Accreditation**.



As COVID-19 took its toll on the health and the livelihood of the community, COTA brought a more intentional focus to social mobility. Once the pandemic began, COTA began **COLLECTING AND DISTRIBUTING MASKS** so that our customers could ride safely. All told, more than 22,300 masks were handed out to riders and nonprofit organizations. In the spring, COTA launched a **PARTNERSHIP WITH BOB EVANS** to distribute meals to 15 different food pantries, food banks and other nonprofits.



In late summer, COTA transformed its COSI on Wheels partnership to make it a safe curbside experience; **COTA AND COSI COLLABORATED TO PROVIDE AN AMPLIFIED WI-FI ENABLED TRANSIT VEHICLE** to create a large free hotspot location—bringing science learning opportunities to Columbus City School locations, parks, libraries and other community locations in underserved neighborhoods.

FOR COTA, THE *heroes* OF 2020 WERE OUR FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES WHO PROVIDED ALMOST 11 MILLION TRIPS TO KEEP CENTRAL OHIO MOVING.



ALL YEAR, COTA OPERATORS AND MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS SHOWED UP TO WORK EACH DAY TO ENSURE THE CONTINUATION OF ESSENTIAL COTA SERVICE. THANKS TO THEIR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT, *Central Ohio never went a single day without reliable mobility services.*







*innovating*  
ON THE FLY

MEETING IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR TRANSFORMATION



## COTA ENTERED 2020 WITH THE MOST AGGRESSIVE MOBILITY INNOVATION AGENDA IN OUR HISTORY.

Coming off a 2019 cycle in which we surpassed national trends with the highest ridership in 31 years, COTA planned to launch a variety of projects to meet both the immediate and long-term mobility demands of Central Ohio residents and businesses. Preparing for an influx of new residents in the decades to come, COTA had engaged community partners to transform our way of thinking about transportation needs. And, drawing upon data and analytics from customer research, COTA had developed new initiatives to meet rapidly changing habits and needs.

Our team refused to let the onset of the pandemic in late winter delay these initiatives—but it did require COTA to innovate on the fly to address our changing reality. While launching new services in late March, COTA **refocused service to areas of greatest need**. COTA began operating the new **Fields Avenue Clean Natural Gas (CNG) Fueling Station**—a vital step toward our plan to discontinue all diesel fueling by 2025. The renovation also included our first-ever heavy duty electric charging stations to support our upcoming rollout of electric vehicles in 2021.



**COTA//PLUS**, an innovative microtransit service through which customers can request on-demand rides via our mobile app, was unveiled in 2019 through a pilot project in Grove City. In 2020, the COTA//Plus Grove City zone expanded to encompass the entire municipality. In August, COTA//Plus was introduced to Westerville, providing service to the entire city, Otterbein University, Polaris and the Uptown District. COTA//Plus South Columbus was launched in November, covering 16 neighborhoods and connecting customers to Nationwide Children’s Hospital, the Reeb Avenue Center and Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

On-demand expanded in news ways in 2020 as well. In September, customers could use the COTA//Plus app to request a ride via **BUS ON-DEMAND**, allowing customers impacted by service changes due to COVID-19 to still utilize COTA. This new on-demand platform created virtual transit stops, allowing easier accessibility to service and quicker connections to fixed-route lines. The bus on-demand zone includes John Glenn Columbus International Airport and Easton Town Center.

In June, COTA teamed up with the City of Columbus and MORPC to launch **LinkUS CENTRAL OHIO**, a community addressing initiative of long-term mobility issues, including traffic congestion, access to resources, affordable housing, and economic equity and vitality along key regional corridors. LinkUS begins with identifying and implementing strategies to develop high-frequency transit options and tying better mobility to housing, jobs and economic centers along the Northwest and East-West corridors.



In December, COTA announced the implementation of a traffic management and predictive analytics **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** system. The first-of-its-kind project will improve traffic safety and reduce travel time for residents across 13 Central Ohio counties through a cloud-based connected mobility platform owned and operated by **WAYCARE TECHNOLOGIES**. The project is made possible by a \$1.7 million Mobility Innovation Demonstration Research Grant awarded by the U.S. Ohio Department of Transportation to COTA and 13 additional partners. The system will be the largest of its kind in the country and the first involving public transit agencies.

# 2020 *recognition*



THOUGH HISTORY MAY REMEMBER 2020 AS A YEAR OF PROFOUND CHALLENGES, COTA'S FOCUS ON SOLUTION-ORIENTED THINKING REMAINED CONSTANT.

Thanks to the tenacity of our team and the support of our community, COTA earned several accolades that speak to our innovative approach to mobility, as well as our central focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.

## BEST COMPANIES FOR WOMEN TO ADVANCE LIST

In July, Parity.org recognized COTA in its list of 35 nationally-recognized brands of the Best Companies for Women to Advance. COTA's progressive practices earned us a spot alongside companies such as Adobe, Best Buy, NASDAQ and Ralph Lauren Corporation, to name a few. Sixty-four percent of COTA's executive leadership are women, and over the past two years, the number of women in director-level or higher positions has increased by 14 percent. Moreover, COTA offers programs that encourage the advancement of women, including a college tuition reimbursement program. In 2019, COTA signed a commitment to pay equity and raised the minimum wage for new and existing employees to \$15 per hour.



PARITY.ORG TOP  
COMPANY FOR WOMEN  
TO ADVANCE



COLUMBUS BUSINESS  
FIRST DIVERSITY IN  
BUSINESS AWARD



HEALTHY BUSINESS  
COUNCIL OF OHIO  
HEALTHY WORKSITE  
GOLD AWARD



HEALTHIEST  
EMPLOYERS IN  
OHIO AWARD



ACHIEVEMENT FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN  
FINANCIAL REPORTING



## OUTSTANDING MIDSIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM IN NORTH AMERICA

For the second time in three years, the APTA recognized COTA as the best transit organization of its size in North America. To APTA, COTA stood out among transportation organizations for a number of reasons:

- Highest ridership in 31 years in 2019
- COTA's development of on-demand service such as COTA//Plus and Mainstream On-Demand
- Adoption of a five-year strategic plan with a core focus on **EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**
- Conversion to low and no-emission transit vehicles
- Commitment to corridor development, to improve mobility and foster equitable economic development





# employee RESOURCE GROUPS

While we are proud of our external accolades, we also recognize our employees have learned a commitment to excellence starts from within our organization; driven by the needs and aspirations of our team members. COTA was proud to support three Employee Resource Groups in 2020: Together, all three of these groups collaborated to collect more than 500 toys for Nationwide Children’s Hospital during the holidays as an act of giving back.

**VETERANS EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (VERG)** created COTA’s first-ever Veterans Honor Wall and participated in Food Soldier, a food donation event sponsored by the National Veterans Memorial and Museum.

**PARENTS ACTIVELY COLLABORATING TOGETHER (PACT)**, formed in May, is dedicated to the working parents on Team COTA; PACT is orchestrating webinars to help employees access expanded child care benefits available to employees during the pandemic.

**BLACK EMPLOYEES LEADING INCLUSION, EXCELLENCE, VISION AND EDUCATION (BELIEVE)**, formed in October, will launch Racial Equity Training through the YWCA of Central Ohio in 2021 and will also lead our company’s celebration of Black History Month in February 2021.



# RAISING THE BAR

COTA'S COMMITMENT TO OPERATIONAL AND REPUTATIONAL EXCELLENCE

## HOW WE ARE SUPPORTED

	2020	2019
Sales Tax	\$133m	\$135.1m
Grants Awarded	\$39.5m	\$23.2m
COVID funding	\$49.8m	n/a
Passenger Fares	\$4.3m	\$19m
Interest Earnings	\$1.2m	\$4m
Miscellaneous	\$3.6m	\$4.3m
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$231.4m</b>	<b>\$185.6m</b>

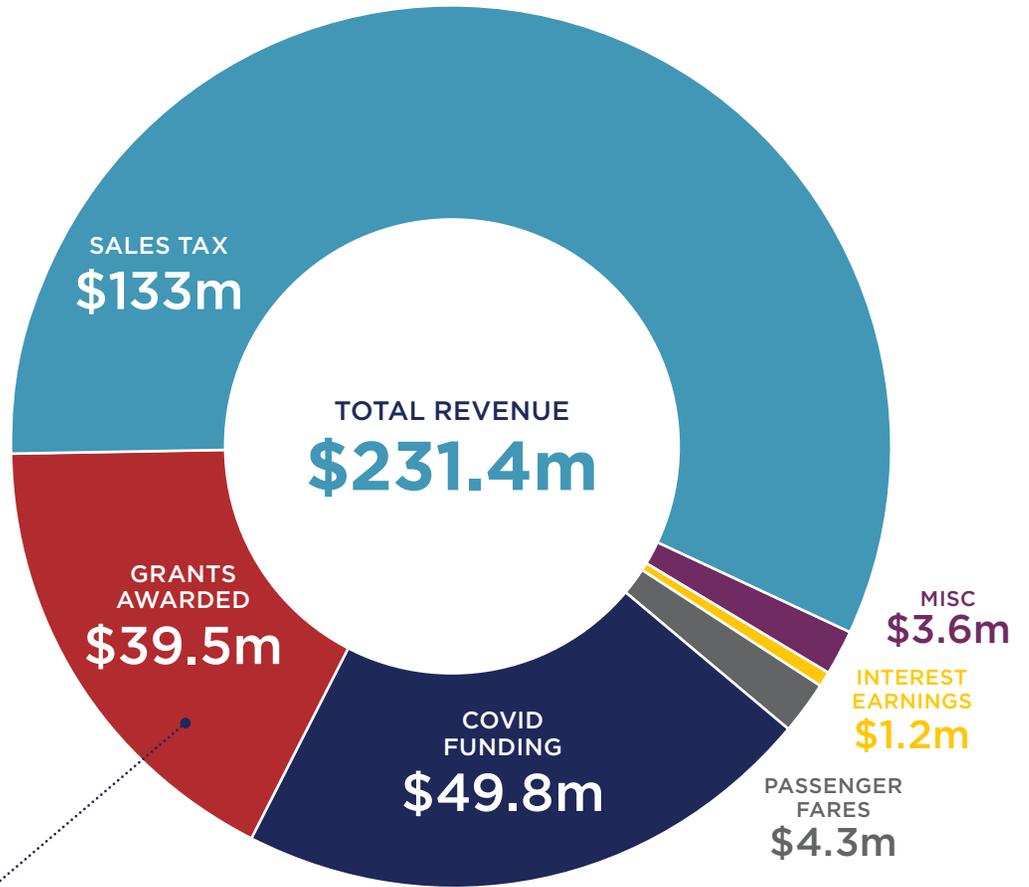
\*Unaudited

## ORGANIZATIONAL GIVING

TOTAL CHARITABLE DONATIONS BY EMPLOYEES

**\$36,588**  **25%**  
FROM 2019

to 25 community organizations including:



*grants* REPRESENT FEDERAL AND STATE DOLLARS THAT COTA LEVERAGES TO MAKE INVESTMENTS IN SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS SUCH AS:



MODERNIZING AND MOVING TOWARD AN ECO-FRIENDLY FLEET



ESTABLISHMENT OF ON-DEMAND TRANSIT SERVICE



UPGRADES TO TRANSIT CENTERS & PARK AND RIDES

## OUR SERVICES

**COTA**

**cmax**

downtown  
**c-pass**

**COTA**  
**//PLUS**

**COTA//PLUS**  
BUS ON DEMAND

**COTA**  
MAINSTREAM

**COTA**  
MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND  
Powered by  
**UZURV**



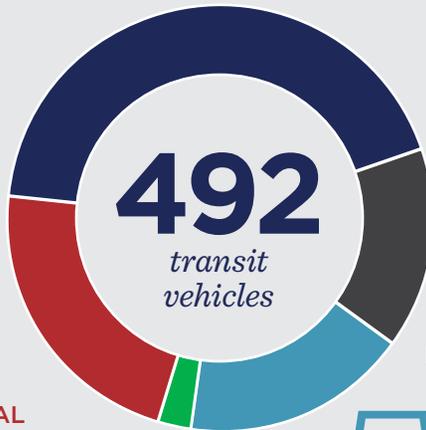
**COTA**  
**AirConnect**

SUSPENDED IN MARCH 2020

## OUR FLEET



**212** ECO-FRIENDLY HYBRIDS  
OR COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS



**109**  
TRADITIONAL  
FUEL FLEET



**12**  
COTA//PLUS



**74**  
MAINSTREAM



**85**  
MAINSTREAM  
ON-DEMAND

## OUR ROUTES

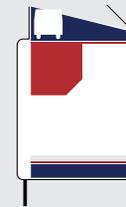
**41** routes  
PRE-COVID (JANUARY 2020)



**24** routes  
AS OF SEPTEMBER 2020



**562**  
square mile  
service area



**3,041** transit stops

**2,855** STOPS WERE ACTIVE  
AS OF 9/21/2020

## TEAM COTA

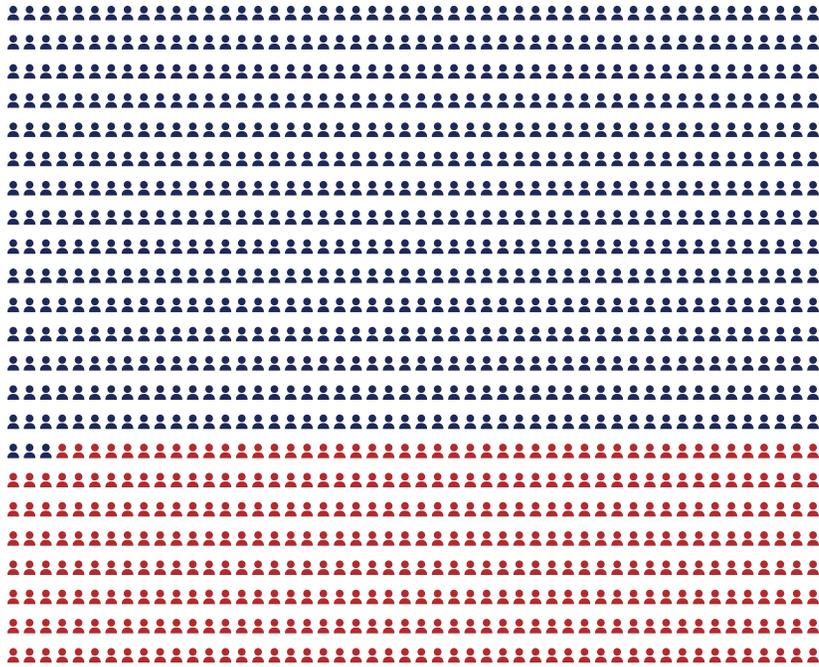
**711**  
operators

**13**  
Board of  
Trustees  
members

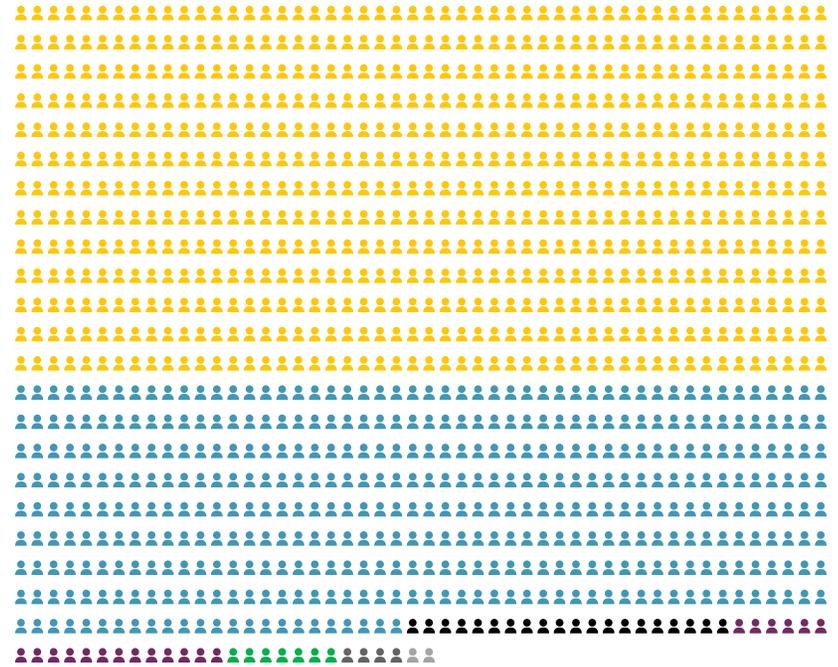
more than  
**1,121**  
employees

President/CEO  
**JOANNA M. PINKERTON**

## TEAM DEMOGRAPHICS



1,126  
employees



67%  
MALE

33%  
FEMALE

67%  
BLACK

35%  
WHITE

2%  
MULTI-  
RACIAL

2%  
HISPANIC

1%  
ASIAN

.3%  
PACIFIC

.2%  
NATIVE  
AMERICAN

## OUR RIDERSHIP

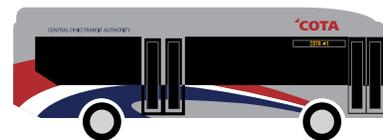


10,322,467  
*fixed-route ridership*

↓ 54% DUE TO COVID-19 AND TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED SERVICE

WEEKLY RIDERSHIP  
AVERAGE

198,508



238,713  
COTA MAINSTREAM & MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND RIDES  
WEEKLY 4,590



17,719  
COTA//PLUS RIDES  
WEEKLY 341



# LOOKING *forward*

## COTA'S TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH REMAINS STEADFAST

In 2020, Team COTA demonstrated that we are adaptive, innovative and capable of great things. We will carry that momentum and energy into 2021, but we do so with a heightened sense of urgency. Our community is in need—reeling from the aftershocks of a worldwide pandemic and widespread social injustice—and we feel the gravity of our role in Central Ohio's recovery.

This year, our customers can look forward to exciting developments, which range from a new fare management system and reimagined website, to continued support for on-demand mobility options and the integration of artificial intelligence technology from our Innovation department.

Our team is confident that, through the support of our incredible community, we can transform the challenges ahead into opportunities for growth. Transformation starts with planning, and COTA is in better shape than ever to plan for the future. We stand at a pivotal moment in COTA's history, determined to carve a path forward toward a more equitable and prosperous community.



WE LOOK TO 2021 WITH A SENSE  
OF EXCITEMENT. WE ARE GRATEFUL  
TO SERVE CENTRAL OHIO, AND WE  
ARE READY FOR THE CHALLENGES  
THAT LIE AHEAD. TOGETHER, WE  
WILL CONTINUE OUR COMMITMENT  
TO *move every life forward.*

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## **CRAIG P. TRENEFF, CHAIR**

Attorney at Law  
Treneff Cozza Law, LLC  
*Appointed by Franklin  
County Commissioners*

## **MARLON MOORE, PhD, VICE CHAIR CHAIR, STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

President  
Marlon Moore Consulting  
*Appointed by the City of Columbus*

## **TRUDY A. BARTLEY**

Associate Vice President, Local  
Government & Community Relations  
The Ohio State University  
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Vice Mayor  
Dublin City Council  
*Appointed by the City of Dublin*

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Director  
City of Columbus Department  
of Public Service  
*Appointed by the City of Columbus*

## **STEVEN D. GLADMAN**

President  
Affordable Housing Trust for  
Columbus & Franklin County  
*Appointed by the City of Grandview Heights*

## **THOMAS GROTE**

Co-Partner  
Grote & Turner  
*Appointed by the City of Gahanna*

## **AMY M. LANDINO CHAIR, EXTERNAL/STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

President  
Vlog Boss Studios  
*Appointed by the City of Columbus*

## **TIMOTHY SKINNER**

Business Agent  
Sprinklerfitter  
Local Union 669, District 33  
*Appointed by the City of Columbus*

## **JULIE SLOAT**

Executive Vice President  
and Chief Financial Officer  
AEP  
*Appointed by the City of Columbus*

## **MICHAEL H. STEVENS**

Director  
City of Columbus Department of Development  
*Appointed by the City of Columbus*

## **KUMI WALKER CHAIR, PERFORMANCE MONITORING/AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Chief Business Development  
and Strategy Officer  
Root Insurance  
*Appointed by the City of Bexley*

# LEADERSHIP TEAM

## **JOANNA M. PINKERTON, P.E.**

President/CEO

## **EMILLE WILLIAMS**

Deputy CEO

## **MATTHEW ALLISON**

Chief of Transit Operations

## **TERRY FOEGLER**

Chief Development Officer

## **MONICA CERREZUELA**

Chief of Staff

## **PATRICK HARRIS**

Assistant Vice President  
of Government Affairs/  
Corporate Communication

## **SOPHIA MOHR**

Chief Innovation Officer

## **SINDY MONDESIR**

Chief People Officer

## **ANGEL MUMMA**

Chief Financial Officer

## **CHRISTINA WENDELL**

Chief Legal/General Counsel

## **ALEXIS YAMOKOSKI, PhD**

Chief Marketing and Experience Officer

## **ANDREW BISTERVELD**

Senior Director of Capital Projects

## **KIMBERLY SHARP**

Senior Director of Development

## **SHANE WARNER**

Senior Director of Information Technology

## **GRACE ALEX**

Senior Executive Assistant





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