Schuylkill Transportation System

Strategic Business Plan

August 2021

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Project Overview

The Schuylkill Transportation System (STS) executive director and key staff met on June 8, 2021, and again on June 16, 2021, to define and develop a Strategic Business Plan (SBP) for the next three years. The meetings focused on identifying STS's mission, business strategies, goals and objectives, and key performance metrics.

Meeting participants included:

- David Bekisz, Executive Director
- John Consugar, Finance Director
- Rhonda Lomas, Human Resources Director
- Gary Martinaitis, Director of Operations
- Sam Detweiler, Maintenance Director

This SBP itself was completed over a period of two months using information and ideas gathered at the staff meetings. It includes goals, measures, and implementation plans, as well as a list of desired key performance indicators (KPIs), specifically chosen by management to define, track, and report on a regular basis.

Agency Overview

The Schuylkill Transportation System (STS) was created in 1982 in Schuylkill County, PA, by the Schuylkill County Commissioners. STS expanded from a five-route bus system in Pottsville, PA, to a 10-route system providing rural public transportation in Schuylkill County. STS was initially a county-run agency, before being managed by a firm called REDCO. Then in 2011, the County created the Authority named Schuylkill County Transportation Authority.

STS is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors appointed directly by Schuylkill County commissioners. STS provides fixed-route, shared-ride, and ADA complementary paratransit services in the City of Pottsville and Schuylkill County. All vehicles, assets, and facilities are owned by Schuylkill County. The County also serves as the grantee for public funds. STS serves as the operator of the service and directs the capital procurement process in consultation with Schuylkill County.

Currently, STS operates ten weekday routes, seven weekend routes, and a circulator in downtown Pottsville and service to Penn State Schuylkill. Opening in 2011, Union Station in Pottsville is the system's main transfer facility and customer service center. There are seven Saturday routes that are currently suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
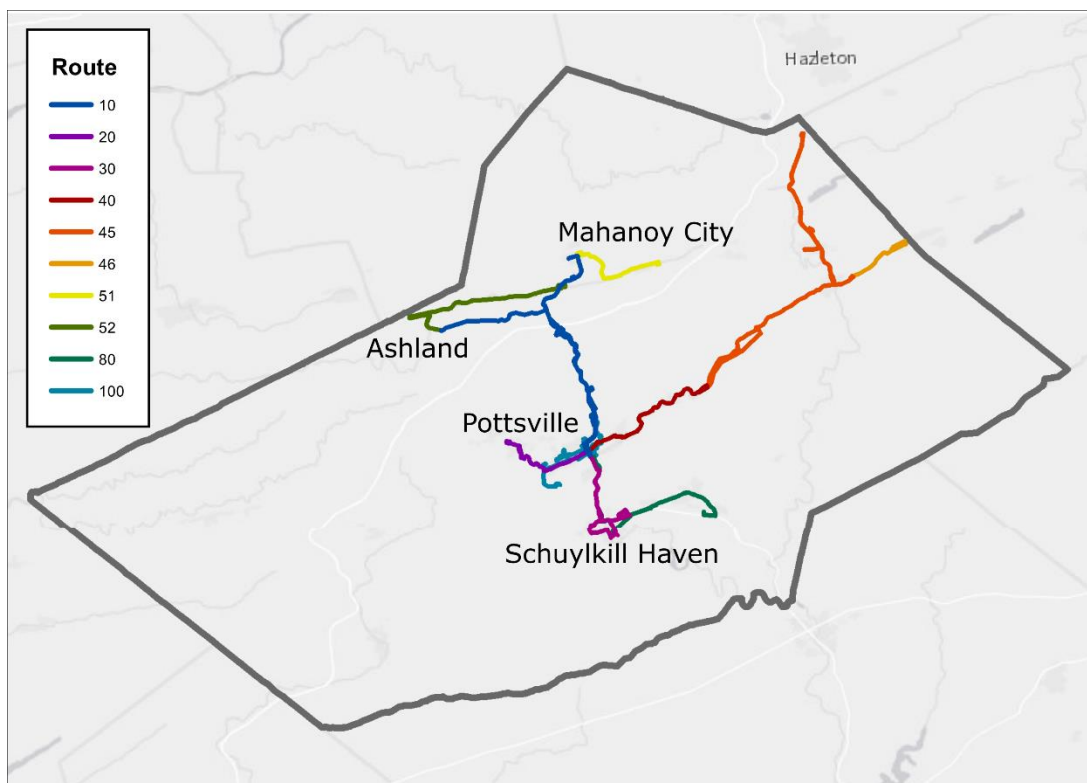
Strategic Business Planning

Strategic planning is the process by which the members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future. This vision of the future state of the organization provides both a direction in which the organization should move and the energy to do it.
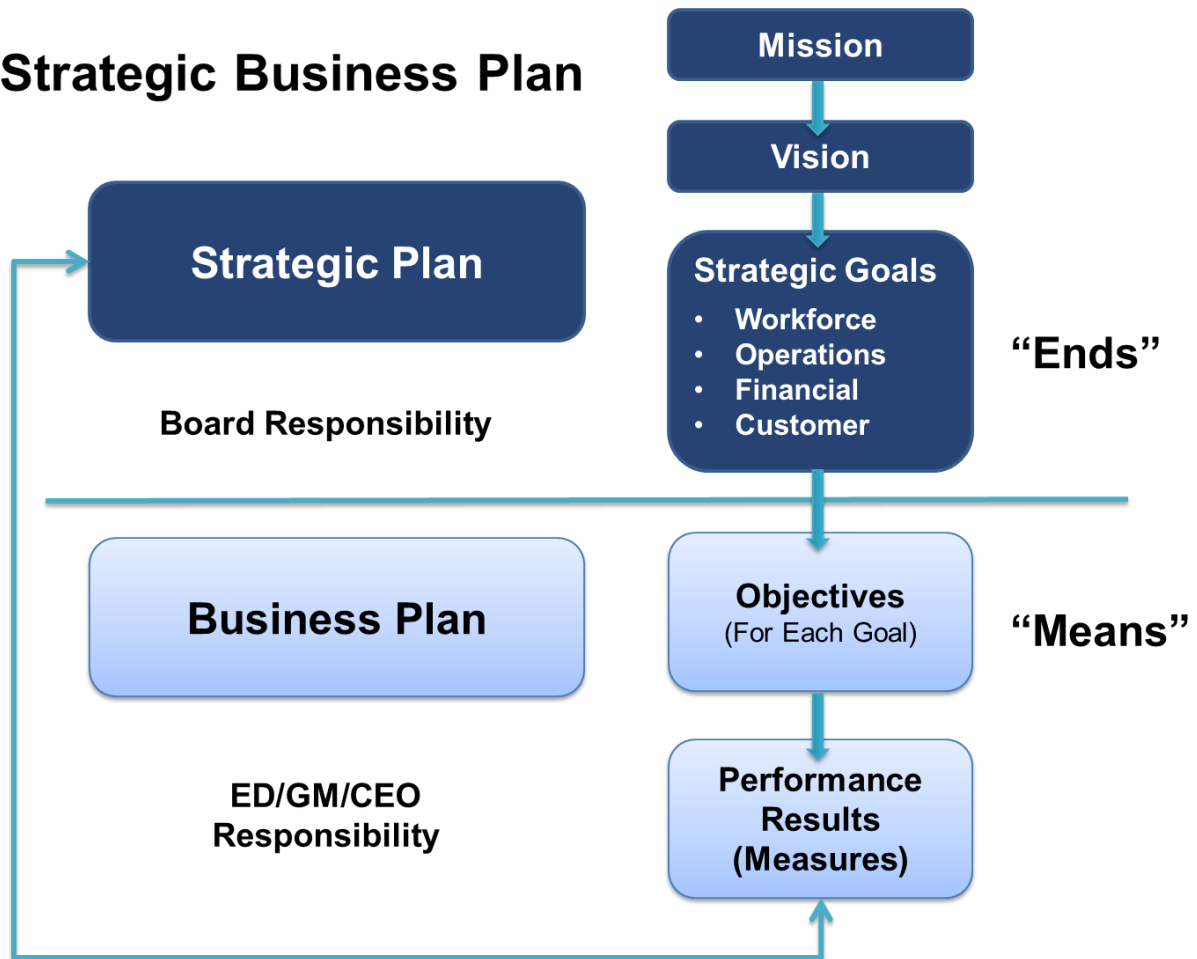
A strategic business plan is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.

Strategic business planning enables an organization to respond effectively to the changing circumstances with which it must contend.

At its best, strategic business planning requires broad-scale information gathering, an exploration of alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. A carefully structured process...

1. Seeks to meet agency mandates and to fulfill the organization's mission
2. Facilitates communication and participation
3. Accommodates divergent interests and values
4. Fosters orderly decision-making
5. Frames the issues that need to be addressed
6. Results in appropriate actions and outcomes

Strategic Business Plan

Mission

↓

Vision

↓

Strategic Plan

Board Responsibility

Strategic Goals
- **Workforce**
- **Operations**
- **Financial**
- **Customer**

"Ends"

Business Plan

ED/GM/CEO Responsibility

Objectives
(For Each Goal)

"Means"

Performance Results (Measures)

Strategic business plans (SBPs) are created and used by organizations worldwide to guide management actions and ensure that all levels of the organization are advancing in a shared direction.

SBPs are intended to identify the "ENDS," or outcomes (Strategic Goals), that the organization intends to achieve and are owned by the Board of Directors.

Accordingly, SBPs document the "MEANS," that is, the activities that are to be completed to attain the "ENDS." Business Plans are generally created and "owned" by management and staff.

The Strategic Business Plan combines these two functions and is specifically designed to overcome potential organizational accountability issues and to facilitate decision-making for the next three to five years.

Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning is the process by which the members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future. This vision of the future state of the organization provides both a direction in which the organization should move and the energy to do it.

Strategic Business Planning is important because it enables an organization to respond effectively to the changing circumstances with which it must contend. The Strategic Business Plan followed a prescribed process designed to quickly achieve an action- oriented plan to advance public transportation in Schuylkill County. The process focused on engaging STS senior staff to define and develop the Strategic Business Plan and to ensure that the overall direction, philosophy, and purpose are aligned in a positive direction.

During the process, the senior STS staff proceeded through the phases of the strategic planning process. The key steps of the process actively engaged the group and included the following:

- **Mission Confirmation** - communicates the purpose of the agency

- **Situational Analysis** – an external analysis used to identify customers, markets, and trends affecting the region

- **Agency Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)** – considers both the internal and external aspects of the agency

- **Goal & Objective Development** – addresses all critical goals and actions necessary to satisfy the goals

- **Performance Management / Accountability** – identifies quantifiable and ongoing measures used to evaluate success compared to a standard, by which the board and management can track progress

Mission Statement

Mission statements communicate the purpose of the organization to both external stakeholders and the organization's workforce. Mission statements are core elements of both planning and implementation. They serve as a means for managers and others to make decisions. Statements must be clear, concise,
relevant, and easy to understand.

The mission statement answers the questions:

- *What* customer or client needs the organization is attempting to fill;

- *Who* the organization's primary customers are;

- *How* the organization plans to go about its business; and

- *Why* the organization exists, the overriding purpose that the organization is trying to serve and its transcendental goals.

> *The mission of the Schuylkill Transportation System is to meet the public transportation needs of Schuylkill County residents while providing safe, dependable, and cost-effective transportation.*

This statement serves as a litmus test for goals, objectives, and measures. Each goal must relate to the stated mission. All elements of the statement must be reflected in the strategic business plan.

Situational Analysis

A situational analysis is an analysis of past and current organizational performance and is the first step in the strategic planning process. This process identifies political, economic, social, and technological trends and the implications of these trends for strategy formulation.

It identifies the realities (or situation) of the organization. The situational analysis includes an overview of the services provided, current financial position, system performance, customers, markets, and trends that affect the organization. This is a key step to narrowing the focus of a strategic planning process and identifying priority areas for goal setting.

Major Transit Trends

- Schuylkill County has a continually aging population
- Services are moving out of town and into more remote/harder to serve areas
- Healthcare options are dispersing personalized care
- Senior center participation has declined
- Ridership demographics are changing
- Senior-related housing is growing less isolated reducing the need for transportation
- Difficult to find driver employees
- Medical trips may decrease because of telehealth
- Challenging rural geography (widespread population and difficult topography)
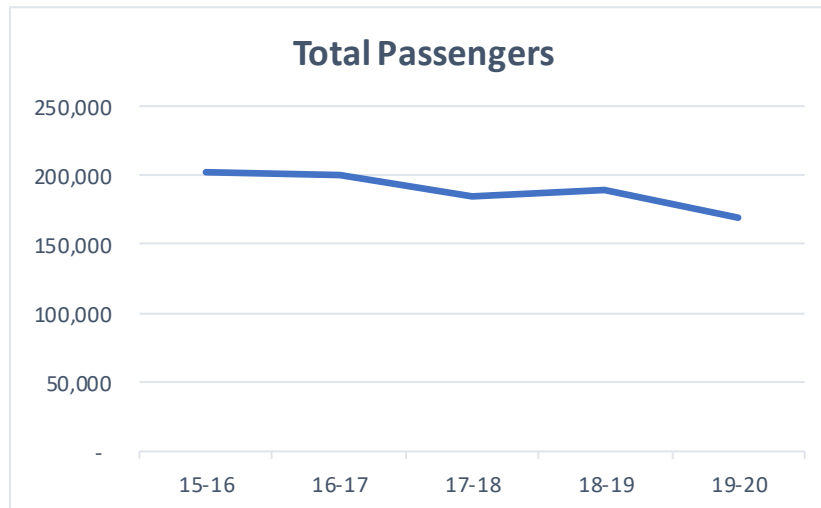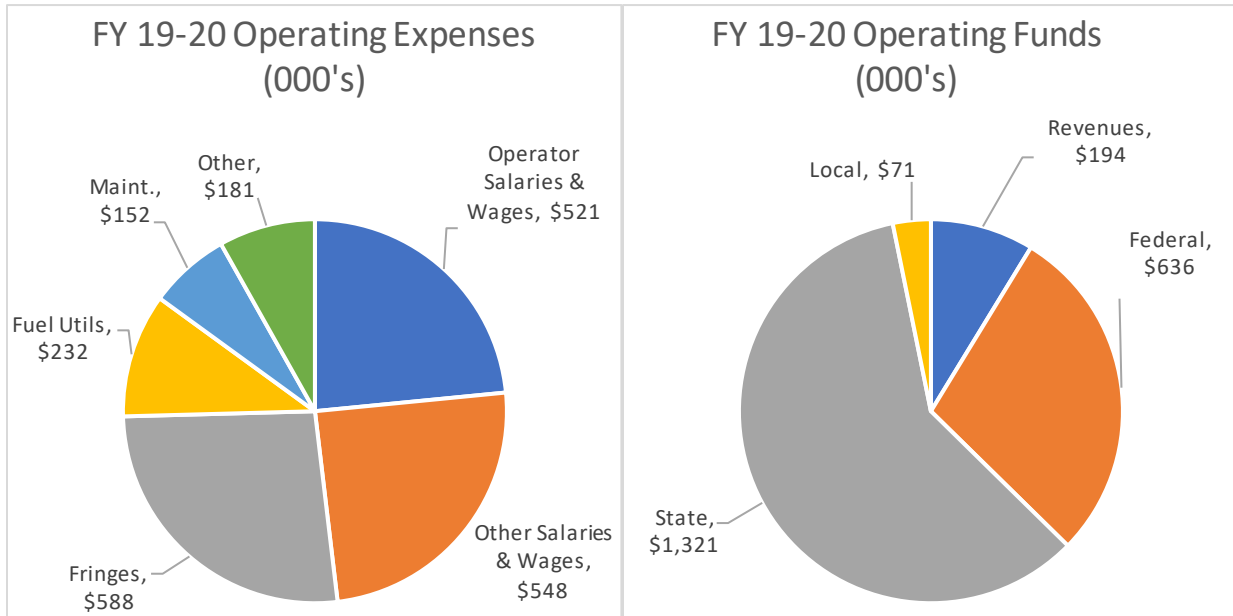
Customer and Financial Trends

Another key element of a situational analysis is the market or customer base. It is essential to determine the scope of existing and potential customers to ensure that mission, vision, and planning reflect their needs and expectations.
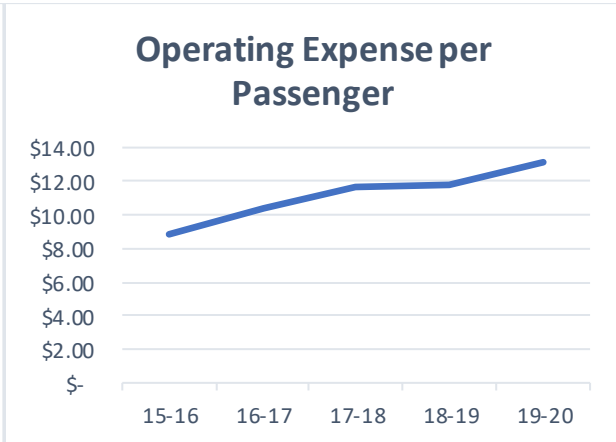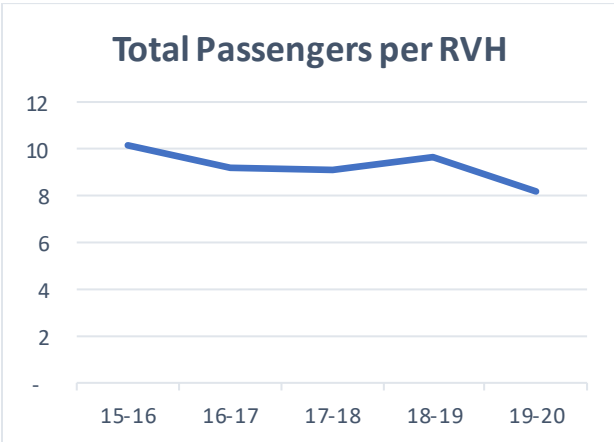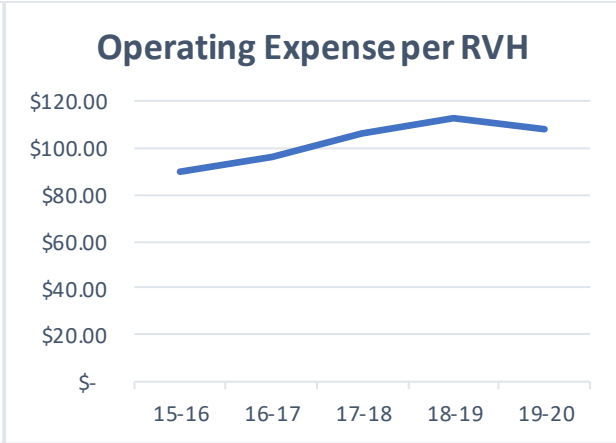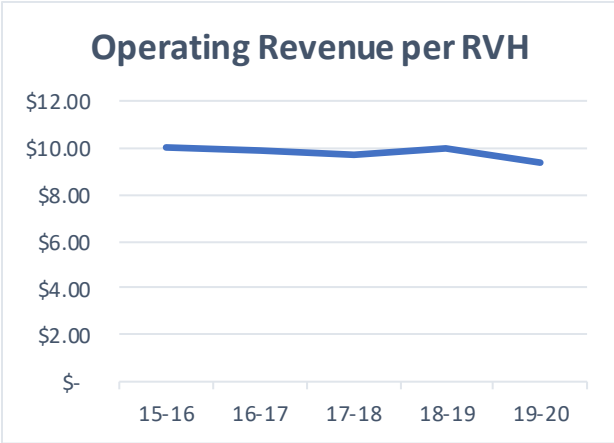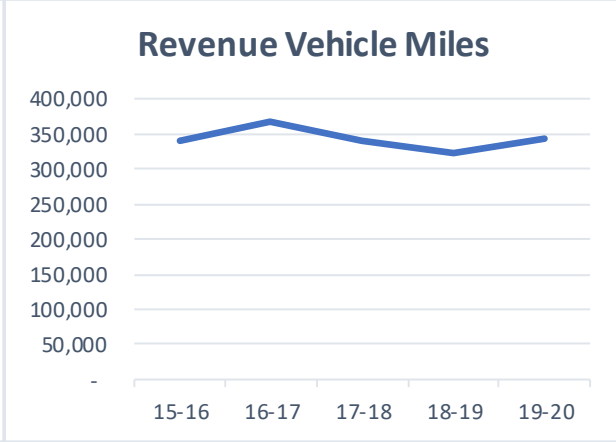
- COVID-19 has made ridership unpredictable e.g.: Last Friday's Free Fare Friday, only 482 people rode. Pre-pandemic it would be 1,100 people.

- Pre-pandemic, ridership was about 600 people on a regular fixed-route day.

- Ridership trends followed the national trend, generally declining for the past decade; however, STS saw an increase from 2018 to 2019 which was counter to the national trend.

- Since the beginning of 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, declining ridership in Schuylkill County decreased by 40%.

- Saturday service was cut because of COVID-19.

- Some service within routes changed, because of COVID-19, such as the Southern Loop.

- Recovery Ratio has continued steady decline over last five years; is currently at 6%.

Current STS Customers / Markets	
Fixed-Route Characteristics:	**Shared-Ride Characteristics:**
- Current riders use the systems as a choice of last resort. - Do not own a vehicle, or do not drive - Riders tend to be low income - Live in the core area of the County - The Shenandoah route does well because of Walmart and the mall. 51% of the system's business is on the Shenandoah route. - Ridership increases significantly on free fare days, therefore lower income levels may have greater potential - Shoppers (mostly use southern route)	- Seniors, persons with disabilities, individuals that qualify for ADA paratransit. - Senior group trips for recreation (i.e restaurants and shopping) - Seniors and their caregivers traveling to medical appointments - Cost is discounted 40% for medical - STS also has an annual contract with the county for the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP). This contract is funded separately from the shared-ride program funded by the Commonwealth.

Performance Trends

Operating expenses continue to increase, while the number of passengers and revenues decline.

FY 19-20 Operating Expenses (000's)

- Operator Salaries & Wages, $521
- Other Salaries & Wages, $548
- Fringes, $588
- Fuel Utils, $232
- Maint., $152
- Other, $181

FY 19-20 Operating Funds (000's)

- Revenues, $194
- Federal, $636
- State, $1,321
- Local, $71

Total Passengers

	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20

Revenue Vehicle Hours

Revenue Vehicle Miles

Operating Revenue per RVH

Operating Expense per RVH

Total Passengers per RVH

Operating Expense per Passenger

Employment and Demographic Trends

Major employers based on pre-COVID-19 pandemic data[1]:

Wal-Mart Associates Inc.

PA State Government

Sapa Extrusions Inc.

Lehigh Valley Health Network

Wegmans Food Markets Inc.

Lowe's Home Centers LLC

Jeld-Wen Inc.

County of Schuylkill

Federal Government

The population in Schuylkill County has continued to decline for over 30 years. The past decade shows an ongoing reduction of 5%. In particular, the number of county residents under the age of 18 has decreased by 7.2% between 2010 and 2019. Overall, the decreasing population is aging.

Demographic Trends – Schuylkill County, PA			
Demographics	**2010**	**2019**	**Change**
Population Total	148,290	141,359	-4.7%
% Aged Under 5 Years	5.2%	4.9%	-0.3%
% Aged Under 18 Years	61.9%	54.7%	-7.2%
% Aged 18 - 64 Years	14.9%	19.7%	4.9%
% Aged 65 Years and Over	18.1%	20.7%	2.6%
% Female	49.3%	48.8%	-0.5%
% White	94.4%	94.1%	-0.3%
% Black or African American	2.7%	3.6%	0.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	1.4%	00.4%	-1.0%
Asian alone, percent	0.5%	0.6%	0.1%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	1.3%	5.2%	3.9%
Median Household Income	$47,315	$52,280	10.5%
Per Capita Income	$25,037	$27,431	9.6%

Source: Census.gov

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[1] Source: "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages." Center for Workforce Information & Analysis, www.workstats.dli.pa.gov

Operating Statistics

Fixed Routes					
Name		**Annual Riders / Trips**			
		17-18	**18-19**	**19-20**	**20-21 (Ann.)**
10	Shenandoah	88,424	85,233	75,284	61,209
14	Long Line	1,203	1,431	1,128	29
20	Minersville	43,053	45,006	38,358	28,627
30	Schuylkill Haven	16,777	21,925	19,147	14,465
31	Sch. Co. Fair	-	-	37	-
40	Middleport	2,504	2,188	2,469	953
45	McAdoo	6,831	7,262	7,392	5,495
46	Coaldale	-	-	333	225
47	HFM	268	259	193	-
51	Mahanoy City	227	380	5,416	5,583
52	Ashland	6,165	6,214	5,601	5,497
80	Southern Loop	5,098	6,376	1,639	1,801
100	Pottsville Loop	5,473	6,457	6,263	4,780
Totals		**176,023**	**182,731**	**163,260**	**128,664**

Shared Ride				
Annual Riders / Trips				
	17-18	**18-19**	**19-20**	**20-21 (Ann.)**
Seniors	39,356	40,100	34,109	21,790
PWD	4,815	5,181	4,411	3,821
Other	18,538	23,319	21,400	15,265
Totals	**62,709**	**68,600**	**59,920**	**40,876**

Fixed-Route Service

Annual Operating Statistics	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Actual	19-20 Actual	20-21 Estimated
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	9	8	10	11	11
Operating Expenses	$1,757,166	$1,880,676	$2,000,715	$1,993,479	$2,184,466
Operating Revenues	$190,833	$175,486	$178,610	$176,686	$133,636
Revenue Vehicle Miles	367,217	338,848	282,169*	303,938*	308,612
Revenue Vehicle Hours	21,659	17,031*	17,291*	18,350*	18,586
Total Vehicle Hours	19,717	19,258	19,513	20,738	21,015
Total Passenger Trips	189,806*	175,968*	182,731*	163,260*	163,908
Senior Passenger Trips	58,641	52,868	56,030	45,385	45,409
Operating Expense per RVH	$81.13*	$110.43*	$115.71*	$108.64*	$117.53
Operating Revenue per RVH	$10.93*	$10.30*	$10.00*	$9.63*	$7.19
Operating Expense per Passenger	$9.26*	$10.69*	$10.95*	$12.21*	$13.33
Operating Revenue per Operating Cost (Expense Recovery)	$0.11	$0.09	$0.09	$0.09	$0.06
Operating Revenue Less Operating Expenses	($1,566,333)	($1,705,190)	($1,822105)	($1,816,793)	($2,050,830)
Operating Expense per RVM	$4.79	$5.55	$7.09	$6.56	$7.08
Total Passengers per RVH	8.76*	10.33*	10.57*	8.90*	8.82
Operating Cost per RVH	$89.94	$120.73	$126.04	$118.27	$124.72

Shared-Ride Service

Annual Operating Statistics	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Actual	19-20 Actual	20-21 Estimated
Vehicle Maximum Service (VOMS)	23	23	26	28	–
Operating Expenses	$2,376,299	$2,533	$2,765	$2,638	$2,153,611
Operating Funds	$2,209,101	$2,533	$2,765	$2,638	$2,153,611
Total Shared-Ride Trips *	58,545	62,709	68,600	59,830	–
65+ Trips	39,887	39,356	40,100	34,019	–
PwD Trips	4,766	4,815	5,181	4,411	–
Other Trips	21.05	23.44	23.28	25.73	–
Average Shared-Ride Cost Per Trip	$33.33	$33.71	$33.85	$36.86	–
Shared-Ride Fare Recovery (cost per trip minus fare)	($12.28)	($10.27)	($10.57)	($11.13)	–

Business Assumptions Looking Ahead

- Management team predicts "business as usual" over the next five years

- A new and more cost-effective STS building will open in the next 12-18 months.

- The current public transportation funding formulas are dependent on several factors including the amount of revenue service provided. The impact of the pandemic on ridership suggests there will be less funding from formula grants until ridership recovers.

- Recent initiatives implemented since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic have provided overall funding levels which have exceeded the previous few calendar years. However, there is uncertainty on how those funds will be distributed in the future.

- 80% of the employees are unionized (more van drivers than bus drivers in Union)

- Fuel and wages continue to be the most expensive and, overall, expenses will continue to increase about 4%, while revenue per trip has decreased

- Revenue is expected to remain flat, maybe increase by 1% per year for the next three years.

- Average fares for fixed route will stay the same or slightly increase (due to less seniors)

- Reserves may increase marginally or stay steady

- Labor force will stay constant; 80% of work force is union

- Health care costs will continue to increase in the foreseeable future

- Equipment fleet will depend on service and ridership levels

- Every year agency adds to reserves (currently about $4M) or break even.

- Subsidies cover deficits. The agency could probably survive for a year without subsidies if necessary.

- Agency has sufficient cash with reserves to keep agency running for ten years.

SWOT Analysis

As part of the strategic planning process, the strategic planning committee completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

SWOT analyses help identify an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. There are two steps in this analysis. The first is to have the group brainstorm a list of the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses and the market's external opportunities and threats. The next step in the process, analysis, identifies actions and goals based on how strengths and weaknesses address threats and opportunities.

SWOT Analysis considers both the current internal and external aspects of the organization.

- The Strengths and Weaknesses are *internal*; they relate to the important internal characteristics of STS as an organization.

- The Opportunities and Threats are *external*; they relate to the broader external environment in which STS functions.

Strengths	Internal forces, assets, or areas of expertise that contribute to the organization's effectiveness.
Weaknesses	Internal voids or soft spots that need to be strengthened and addressed.
Opportunities	Conditions or situations in the external environment which can, or will, work to the organization's benefit or advantage.
Threats	External forces which threaten, or will threaten, the effectiveness and viability of the organization.

	Opportunities	**Threats**
Strengths	Capitalize	Turnaround
Weaknesses	Improve	Defend

Strengths (Organizational Attributes)

Internal organizational attributes that are accomplished particularly well or are unique assets as compared to similar or competitive organizations. *Strengths need to be preserved, built on, and leveraged.* STS is seen to be strong for the following reasons:

- New fleet / new building
- Good workforce
- Provides good employee training
- Provides good employee benefits
- Has a good working relationship with PennDOT
- Financially sound due to reserves

Weaknesses (Organizational Challenges)

Internal challenges that are not accomplished particularly well, hinder or prevent attaining desired performance or are acutely lacking or need to be improved. *Weaknesses need to be addressed and remedied.* STS is seen to have the following weaknesses:

- Aging workforce
- Difficult to attract new drivers
- Still utilizes a fair amount of manual processes

Opportunities (External Benefits)

External positives that can be captured to help realize the mission and vision of the Authority. *Opportunities need to be seized or capitalized on:*

- Funding
- Rebound
- Scheduling systems (2 systems)

Threats (External Challenges)

<u>External</u> challenges that can threaten the realization of the mission and vision of the authority. *Threats need to be mitigated or, if possible, eliminated:*

- Funding
- Demographic Population
- Technological advances reduce the need for public transit
- Wages (union contract)
- Gasoline prices
- Legislative decisions

The second step in a SWOT analysis focuses on areas of emphasis; that is, identified "Strategic Themes", **based on how strengths and weaknesses address threats and opportunitie**s:

- Where an organizational strength meets an external opportunity, it can *capitalize* on the situation.
- Where an organizational strength meets an external threat, it can mitigate the threat and *turn around* the situation.
- Where an organizational weakness meets and external opportunity, it can *improve* its performance.
- Where an organizational weakness meets an external threat, it must expend resources to *defend* itself until a weakness can be turned into a strength.

Strategic Themes and Formulating Goals

The following strategic themes were more prevalent during the planning sessions and SWOT analysis:

- COVID-19 had a major impact on service and ridership, and STS hopes for a turnaround.

- Driver recruitment and training should be emphasized to improve performance.

- STS needs a succession plan for managers to take over after several retirements.

- A greater perception of service quality is needed.

- STS's image to customers and the community needs improvement; surveys could be a helpful tool.

- Measuring effectiveness and improving efficiency are both needed to help STS reach its operational goals.

- Performance tracking data should be defined and regularly reported.

- Continual and streamlined recruitment is important to service continuity.

- A marketing program could shore up declining ridership.

- Implementing technology will continue to be a key part of improving performance.

- Revenue/fare elasticity could be evaluated to improve ridership and reduce costs.

- Key Performance Metrics (KPIs) should be implemented.

STS requires the workforce, operations, financial, and customer resources necessary to achieve its goals in the market. Moreover, decisions in each of these areas should support and align with goals and objectives in all other areas. Failure to align workforce, operations, financial, and customer planning is a common reason that strategic business plans fail.

This approach includes goal development in four areas:

1. Customer (Consumers and Markets)
2. Financial (Revenue and Funding)
3. Operations (Systems and Processes)
4. Workforce (People and Resources)

Supporting the Customer Goals, the Financial Goals provide a path to funding customer and market outcomes. This includes goals both in productivity and revenue as well as seeking financial support for the operations and workforce initiatives necessary to achieve Customer Goals.

Operations Goals identify the key areas STS will focus on to support its mission of providing safe, dependable, and cost-effective transportation. STS' leadership team has actively engaged in strategies and tactics to adjust to its rapidly changing environment over the past two years. STS had identified a desire to formulize its approaches to using performance information to guide the organization.

Workforce Goals support all other endeavors. Staff members identified the STS workforce as a "strength" in terms of the quality of its people. However, a significant organizational weakness is a lack of people in key functions. An opportunity exists to align talent with current and future needs. STS will first need to address its Workforce Goals to have the necessary resources to address operations, financial, and customer goals.
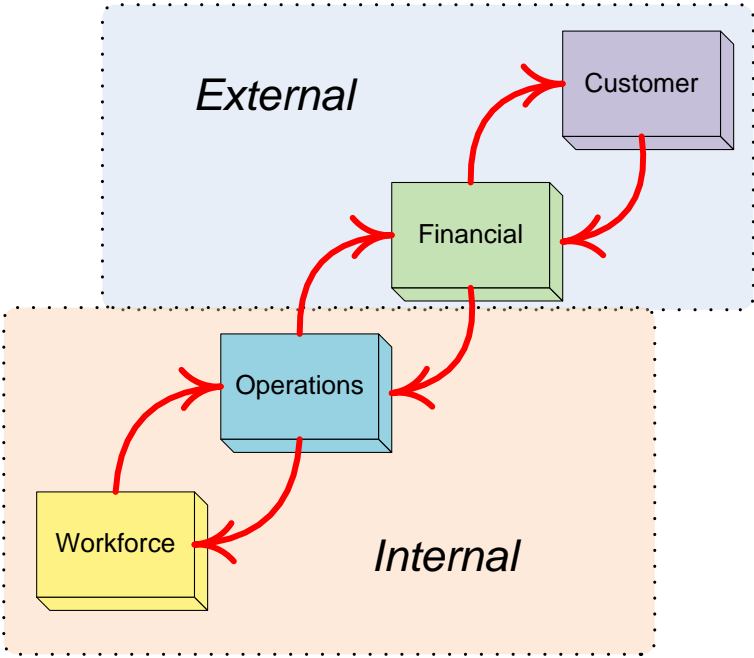
These goals can help focus the areas where STS intends to make major improvements and are included in strategic goal development in conjunction with the SWOT Analysis.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goals represent the primary areas of work for the organization over the next three to five years. Goals are specific enough to be measured but broad enough to stretch the organization to achieve better results. Goals must support the STS mission and advance the organization towards achieving the vision that was set at the beginning of the strategic planning process.

Each goal consists of objectives or strategic actions, small steps that must be taken to achieve the goal identified. Objectives are assigned to specific staff members who are responsible for managing their completion. Goals were created to advance each of the four organizational perspectives and to address the themes developed through the situational and SWOT analysis. The goals are identified on the following pages.

Workforce

Workforce Goals support all agency endeavors and focus on the most basic resource of the agency: its people. An opportunity exists in these goals to align talent with current and future needs.

The workforce goals are:

Goal W-1: Maintain organizational training for drivers and staff		
Objectives	**Output/Measure**	**Responsibility/ Timeframe**
1. Develop cross-training program	Documented cross-training program	Executive Director (December 2021)

Goal W-2: Develop management succession plan		
Objectives	**Output/Measure**	**Responsibility/ Timeframe**
1. Develop Succession Plan	Board approved Succession Plan	Executive Director (June 2022)

Goal W-3: Ensure proper/enough talent in all positions		
Objectives	**Output/Measure**	**Responsibility/ Timeframe**
1. Recruit part-time drivers (3-4)	Drivers hired	(ongoing)
2. Regularly evaluate driver status	Driver status review	Director of Operations (ongoing)

Goal W-4: Maintain employee performance		
Objectives	**Output/Measure**	**Responsibility/ Timeframe**
1. Continue/maintain annual driver performance review	Annual Performance Review	Safety and Operations Supervisor (annually, October)
2. Initiate annual staff performance review	Develop Annual Staff Review Process	Non-union, Administrative, Maintenance (annually, November)
3. Annual executive director performance review	Board Approved Executive Director performance review	Board of Directors (annually, November)

Operations

Operations Goals identify the key areas STS will focus on to support its mission of providing safe, dependable, and cost-effective transportation. STS had identified a desire to formulize its approaches to using performance information to guide the organization.

The primary operations goal is:

Goal: Improve system-wide performance		
Objectives	**Output/Measure**	**Responsibility/ Timeframe**
1. Review/adjust current fixed routes	Finalize fixed route service changes	Director of Operations (annually, November – December)
2. Review/adjust shared-ride service plan	Finalize shared ride service changes	Director of Operations (annually, November – December)
3. Identify STS Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)	Identify and approved by Board	Executive Director (annually)
4. Review STS KPI's	Regular monthly KPI status report	Director of Operations (monthly)

Financial

Financial Goals provide a path to funding customer and market outcomes. This includes goals both in productivity and revenue as well as seeking financial support for the operations and workforce initiatives necessary to achieve Customer Goals.

The primary financial goal is:

Goal: Ensure/maintain fiscal sustainability		
Objectives	Output/Measure	Responsibility/ Timeframe
1. Contain cost-growth to less than 4% year-over-year	Monthly revenue and expense KPI report	Finance Director (monthly)
2. Explore new non-public revenue streams	New revenue streams identified	Finance Director (quarterly)
3. Develop balanced budget	Completed annual balanced budget	Finance Director (April, annually)

Customer

Customer Goals reflect outcomes that will drive long-term sustainability in the marketplace and support a customer-centric culture. STS Customer Goals focus on determining customer needs and expectations and identifying and engaging stakeholders and new markets.

The primary customer goal is:

Goal: Restore pre-COVID-19 ridership levels		
Objectives	Output/Measure	Responsibility/ Timeframe
1. Re-evaluate customers' and potential riders' needs • Outreach (ongoing) • Use BPT survey (annual) • Conduct non-rider survey	Semi-annual customer survey completed	Marketing Coordinator
2. Identify / Evaluate / Change potential STS riders' perception	Semi-annual customer survey completed	Marketing Committee (September)
3. Define on-time performance	On-time performance measure defined with Board approval	Executive Director (December 2021)

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

Performance measures serve two purposes in planning and managing strategy:

Clarify the completion of the goals and objectives.

> In communicating strategic goals to the workforce and stakeholder groups, performance measures help to clarify the intent of each goal and objective by evidence of achieving the goals.

Monitor performance of the agency.

> In measuring performance, data is collected and analyzed that indicates how well the organization is performing in achieving its strategic goals (desired outcomes).

KPI's Chosen by STS

1. On-time performance

   - Performance measure needs defined
   - Uses Avail system as basis
   - Lot of stops are "will call"/request stops
   - Different routes have different on-time performance results

2. Total senior ridership - change over time

3. Administrative expenses v. total expenses

4. Change in total ridership (fixed and shared route, separately)

5. Change (+/-) shared ride and fixed route ridership

Appendix A: PennDOT Action Plan

PART 1- ACTIONS TO INCREASE PASSENGERS / REVENUE HOUR			
Recommendation	**STS Action**	**Estimated Initiation Date**	**Estimated Completion Date**
1. Develop a strategic business plan to guide service improvements and prioritize investments.	With Board and BPT approval STS plans to produce an SBP to address many of the actions identified in the Act 44 performance Review of 2020.		
2. Develop a TDP to assess existing service for opportunities for improvement that align with the goals of the strategic plan.	Include in SBP		
3. Develop a service standards policy that formalizes the use of KPIs to identify high performing routes, underperforming routes, and when service adjustments (as a result of low ridership, on-time performance, or cost recovery) should be initiated.	Include in SBP		
4. Develop systemwide and route-based on-time performance goals; reevaluate existing time points for opportunities to improve schedule adherence.	Included in SBP with the aid of Avail reports generated from newly implemented FRITS software.		
PART 2 - ACTIONS TO INCREASE OPERATING REVENUE / REVENUE HOUR			
Recommendation	**STS Action**	**Estimated Initiation Date**	**Estimated Completion Date**
1. Coordinate with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) to design and implement a non-rider survey.	STS is currently working with Data Centric to introduce a Shared-Ride Survey to ridership.		
PART 3- ACTIONS TO REDUCE OR CONTAIN OPERATING COST / REVENUE HOUR			
Recommendation	**STS Action**	**Estimated Initiation Date**	**Estimated Completion Date**
1. Identify cost drivers and implement cost control measures to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.	Include in SBP		
2. Review peer agencies that experienced high health care costs and identify best practices for cost containment.	Dave Bekisz, John Consugar, and Rhonda Lomas to head a committee to research options for health care.		
PART 4 - OTHER ACTIONS TO IMPROVE OVERALL PERFORMANCE			
Recommendation	**STS Action**	**Estimated Initiation Date**	**Estimated Completion Date**
1. Develop an annual review process that assesses agency performance from the prior year and clearly identifies goals for the coming year.	SBP will give the Board information to create a review process.		
2. Assess prior year performance for management staff and identifies goals for the coming year.	With the aid of the SBP management will work with HR to create goals.		

Appendix B: Post-COVID-19 Trends

Below are the top mobility trends for the overall public transportation industry identified in 2021[2].

1. Creating a more customer-centric rider experience

The expectations of immediacy have grown considerably this year because of COVID-19, and the customer-led perspective is becoming a benchmark for sustained success. Customers want more control, period, and agencies can better compete with new mobility services if they meet customer expectations. They want to know when their next bus is arriving and if it will be crowded. They want to be able to order a ride on-demand like they do with other mobility services. They want to know if their bus or train is canceled and what their other options are.

2. Harnessing the power of multimodal transportation

In 2021, we'll continue to see riders choose single-mode transportation options, including micromobility, mainly on bikes and scooters. An urban mobility trend within the Mobility as a Service (MaaS) experience is the emergence of micromobility solutions covering the last mile. In urban areas, these are especially useful to get from a subway or bus stop to their workplace and back, which may be just out of walking distance. Agencies can help their riders by adopting a journey-planning app that includes micromobility.

3. Sharing real-time data on everything, from arrivals to crowdedness

COVID-19 showed the importance of getting data in real-time. With the amount of uncertainty in the industry, knowing exactly when passengers can expect their ride offers passengers the confidence to continue relying on public transit – even in the middle of a pandemic.

4. Employing on-demand transit services

Cities and transit agencies around the world are beginning to understand the potential of on-demand services. The ability for agencies to use their existing vehicles and leverage smart routing algorithms to quickly revamp their services and switch to flexible, on-demand routes has been a lifesaver for many agencies and their rider. The move from paper-based tickets to smart-cards and mobile fares has sped up significantly over the last year to allow for safer, contactless payment methods. In an effort to protect both employees and passengers from the risks of cash handling, agencies are integrating mobile payments for transit services. By giving riders a 'plan, pay, and ride' experience with a single platform for all their transportation needs, agencies can reap the benefits that come with better service: Increased riders and efficiency, more actionable data, new customers, and more. Additionally, moving away from legacy hardware and the timely, expensive updates they require is the cherry on top.

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[2] Adapted from "The Future of Urban Mobility: 5 Transit Trends We're Seeing for 2021" (Moovit.com)