

4-2019

Feasibility Report for Lewiston and Auburn Regional Transportation Authority

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Becker, Anika; Naughton, Claire; and Kasih, Tala, "Feasibility Report for Lewiston and Auburn Regional Transportation Authority" (2019). *Community Engaged Research Reports*. 50.
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Feasibility Report for Lewiston and Auburn Regional Transportation Authority

Completed in partnership with the cities of
Lewiston and Auburn

Anika Becker, Claire Naughton, Tala Kasih

Environmental Studies Program, Bates College, 12th April, 2019

Executive Summary

A Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) consists of a single committee overlooking the transportation needs, for example rail, bus, or airplane, of a designated region or city. The implementation of an RTA within a region establishes a streamlined approach to decision making, economic development, and meeting community needs in areas such as accessibility and sustainability. In this report we interviewed transportation authorities within Lewiston-Auburn and researched existing RTAs throughout the country. We show results from both our interviews and research into existing RTAs and offer recommendations towards implementing an RTA in the Lewiston-Auburn region.

In order to understand the specific needs, wants, and complications faced by Lewiston-Auburn and the broader Androscoggin region, we interviewed six different transportation entities in addition to representatives of the cities of Lewiston and Auburn. Each entity interviewed expressed frustrations with the existing system and responded to the possible creation of an RTA with enthusiasm. Entities were most excited about the improved decision-making process and increased ability to collaborate that would be facilitated by an RTA, as well as the general growth that public transportation systems experience within an RTA.

To help with the process of creating an RTA within the Lewiston-Auburn region we studied existing RTA models that varied in size and demographic. The goal was to establish a variety of RTA models based on existing RTAs and the different ways they were structured and funded. By examining RTAs that varied in size, funding sources, and governance structures, we hoped to discover the common trends and styles employed by the majority of existing RTAs. We

prioritized research that would provide us with examples that were most relevant to Lewiston-Auburn's needs. The perceived needs of Lewiston-Auburn were identified through the interview process conducted at the start of this project.

The purpose of this research was to provide examples pertaining to funding and structure that could be mimicked, explored, or altered by Lewiston-Auburn in order to best create their own RTA.

We have compiled a list of recommendations from broad to specific next steps. We hope these recommendations serve as a starting point into the discussion surrounding the implementation of an RTA in the Lewiston-Auburn region.

Recommendations:

- Define the community, in terms of both areas the RTA will serve as well as which transportation entities will make up this RTA
- Create a mission statement which is tailored specifically to the needs of Lewiston-Auburn in terms of efficiency, environmental sustainability, and public accessibility
- Define a governance structure for the RTA
- Connect with other RTAs whose governance structure, funding sources and/or mission statement resonant most with Lewiston-Auburn
- Explore public perceptions and opinions regarding RTAs

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Methodology.....	12
Results and Discussion.....	14
Recommendations for Next Steps.....	30
Works Referenced.....	36
Appendices.....	40

List of Tables & Figures

Figure 1. Current board structure of any given transportation entity in Lewiston-Auburn.

Figure 2. Funding Source Breakdown for Cape Cod RTA FY2019 taken from FY2019 Budget Report

Figure 3. Funding Source Breakdown for Minnesota Valley RTA FY2016 taken from 2016 Budget Report

Figure 4. Funding Source Breakdown for South Florida RTA FY2019 taken from 2019 Budget Report

Figure 5. Funding Source Breakdown for Middle Tennessee RTA FY2016 taken from 2016 Budget Report

Figure 6. The board structure of Cape Cod RTA, and a separation of power and responsibility across the executive committee and advisory board.

Introduction

As the country grows and reliance on public transportation options expand, many municipalities are shifting toward new, alternative approaches to provide the most effective transportation options for its residents. One such approach is the formation and implementation of a regional transportation authority (RTA), which develop a single committee to oversee aspects of transit authorities throughout a region. RTAs are “affected by forces of change, both internally (such as operations and organizational policies) and externally (such as funding constraints, physical boundaries, and customers’ service needs,” (Booz et al. 6). RTAs, therefore, overcome barriers such as funding and decision making across multiple forums to allow for the collective pooling of resources and a streamlined approach to decision making across transit entities within a single region. The structure of an RTA also allows for a broader range of focus within the transportation system, with specific attention paid to environmental impact and equal treatment across all entities. RTAs also allow for a collaborative network among transportation entities to promote one, cohesive transportation unit across regions.

The American population is heavily reliant upon personal vehicles for commuter purposes. In the 2000 census it was found that 87.9% of the United States population commuted to work in a car and 75.7% of those commuters drove alone (Greenhouse). These are relevant statistics as rising air quality problems can be attributed to an increase in personal vehicles and traffic congestion, particularly in urban areas (Thornbush 2). Many drivers commute in personal vehicles due to convenience, economic status, or necessity due to an insufficient public transportation system. Studies support the theory that improved public transportation will reduce the use of private transportation, and consequently reduce gasoline consumption and carbon

emissions (Greenhouse). According to a study done in Oxford, urban sustainability, measured in reductions of traffic and air pollutions, is directly linked with a “reduced dependency on personalized motor vehicles” (Thornbush 12). Therefore there is a direct connection between air quality improvement and public transportation growth.

Many RTAs also create branches focused explicitly on environmental impact and sustainability. By developing an RTA, a region can aid with issues of congestion, improve air quality, and reduce their environmental impact. Studies have found that commuting by subway produces 73% less carbon emissions than driving (APTA). The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions has found that an individual commuter switching their 20 mile round-trip commute from private to public transportation can save 4,800 pounds of carbon emissions annually (C2ES). The development of an RTA can greatly improve the public transportation system of a region, as seen in cities such as Chicago, Illinois and Minnesota Valley by increasing collaboration amongst the different transportation entities and by streamlining decision-making processes. During a period of expressed decline, these two cities have increased their public transit ridership by expanding and revamping their bus networks (transitcenter.org) This is due to the presence of RTAs, which have allowed for emphasis to be placed on the whole system, rather than individual entities and/or programs. The creation of an RTA is an environmentally conscious move for any region seeking to improve their air quality and reduce congestion in urban areas.

In addition to the aforementioned environmental benefits, RTAs also help improve communities based on inclusion, diversity, and accessibility by providing safe and reliable transportation services. RTAs provide transportation options for low-income and disabled

communities, that are otherwise not readily available or are too expensive. Because RTAs help make transportation more reliable and accessible, they can aid a region's economic development by connecting people to their jobs and increasing accessibility to the job market. According to APTA, Investing \$1B in public transit supports 50,000 jobs and \$642 million in tax revenue (APTA). As a result, states such as Massachusetts, implemented law Chapter 161B: Transportation Facilities Highway Systems And Urban Development Plans requiring the creation of regional transportation authorities.

The development of an RTA has been proposed in Lewiston-Auburn to promote economic effectiveness across all transit entities within the region by leveraging resources and prioritize public transportation in the community. The cities of Lewiston and Auburn hired a private consulting firm, The Wathen Group, to identify potential pros and cons of various models of transportation authorities, and collectively decided an RTA was the best option for the region. The Wathen Group recommended forming an RTA and not another transportation authority, like a Port Authority, because RTAs provide the "potential for financing with a variety of sources (user fees, fares, local, state, and federal funds, taxes), can offer less politicization, and allows for long term investments," (The Wathen Group)¹. The cities would like to move forward by understanding the economic feasibility of such an authority, as well as the political and social implications of forming an RTA within the Lewiston-Auburn region.

The initial benefits of forming an RTA in Lewiston-Auburn would include economic development opportunities, decision-making efficiency, and environmental benefits. Each region is unique in its needs, funding sources, governance structures, and demographics. Therefore, the cities of Lewiston and Auburn are interested in understanding the implications of

¹ This information is taken from The Wathen Group's presentation to the cities of Lewiston and Auburn.

developing an RTA and if the development of such will provide improved benefits for the communities they serve.

Ultimately, developing an RTA in the Lewiston-Auburn region will have economic, social, and environmental benefits. To start with, an RTA will help stimulate economic growth by connecting people with jobs and opportunities. Secondly, it will lead to more efficient decision-making process by having a more structured authority that will help streamline the decision-making process and potentially, increase collaboration across entities. An RTA will also ensure that all communities' needs in the region are met and will be able to provide safe and reliable transportation options for everyone, including the disabled community and low-income people. Finally, forming an RTA in the Lewiston-Auburn region will improve the public transportation system and thus, will incentivize people to use public transportation and stop using their private cars as regularly, aiding in congestion, air quality, and reducing environmental impact. In 2016, it was reported that 72.4% and 76.8% of workers in Lewiston and Auburn respectively, drive alone to work (datausa.io) and that 59 and 26 households in Lewiston and Auburn respectively, use public transportation (datausa.io).

The current model for transportation in Lewiston-Auburn does not provide sufficient support for an expansion for public transportation. Common concerns in regard to the current situation found through interviews with the different transportation entities included; inefficiencies within decision-making processes, limited funding, lack of collaboration, and independent board structures which further isolated the various transportation entities from one another. As seen in Figure 1, the current decision making process in Lewiston-Auburn consists of an entity proposing a change or development. This proposal must pass through the entity's

own committee first. After it is approved within the entity it is brought before the cities of Lewiston and Auburn separately. Each city has the power to veto a proposal and a unanimous approval is needed for a proposal to pass. Multiple entities expressed their frustration with the convoluted nature of this process as well as with this inefficient use of time. Therefore, the different transportation entities expressed their interests in the formation of an RTA in Lewiston-Auburn in order to mitigate existing inefficiencies, increase levels of collaboration, and explore increased funding opportunities.

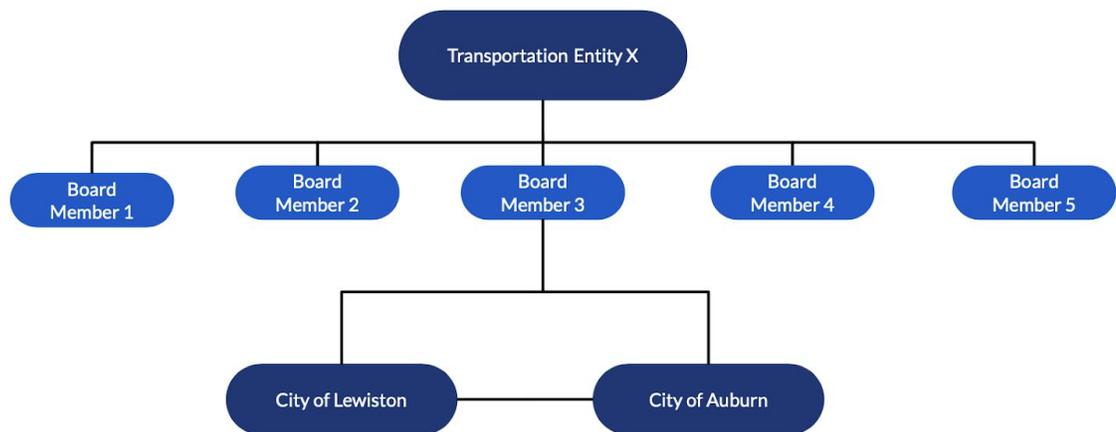


Figure 1. The current board structure in Lewiston-Auburn.

Each of the existing transportation within Lewiston-Auburn were involved in first steps of this project through extensive interviews. These interviews helped establish the shared concerns and hopes of each transportation entity in regards to the creation of an RTA. Multiple entities expressed a hope that the establishment of an RTA would increase efficiency, collaboration, streamline decision making, increase staffing, aid in meeting workforce demand, and allow for an update to outdated bylaws and agreements. Common concerns discovered through the interviews include potential neglect, unequal distribution of funds, and the

difficulties of change. The interviews also provided an opportunity to discuss and examine the existing budgets and by-laws of each entity, all of which can be found online or through the contact persons in Appendix 1.

Research Aims & Objectives

Project aim: To identify viable models of successful RTAs in various regions across the U.S. to best advise the cities of Lewiston-Auburn to eventually achieve economic development and streamline decision-making processes within the community.

To achieve the aim of this project, we determined the following objectives:

Objective 1: Meet with all transportation committees and related entities at Lewiston City Hall to learn about the concerns, constraints, and opportunities understood by all transportation and related entities in the region. All meetings were hosted by Denis D'Auteuil and the schedule is listed in the document Appendix 2.

Objective 2: Compile and synthesize funding breakdowns for fiscal years 2018/2019, interlocal agreements, by-laws, strategic plans, and other documentation provided by each entity to explore the most effective development strategies in terms of potential economic, political, and social factors of a regional transportation authority.

Objective 3: Research and explore existing regional transportation authorities in other communities similar to Lewiston-Auburn in terms of population size, funding opportunities, geography, and related factors, and combine the most relevant aspects of models which would be most successful in Lewiston-Auburn in order to best advise them on next steps in organizing an RTA.

Methodology

To expand on The Wathen Group's findings and assess the feasibility of creating an RTA in the Lewiston-Auburn region and we take the following steps:

Data Collection: We met with each transportation committee and other involved entities to gather information using the survey questions provided by our community partner.² All the meetings were coordinated by our community partner, Denis D'Auteuil, and were held in Lewiston City Hall. We recorded all meetings using our phones after taking permission from the interviewee, as well as all took the responsibility to take notes. Denis D'Auteuil attended all the meetings as a facilitator and was able to fill the gaps when necessary, but we led the interviews by asking the survey questions provided by Denis D'Auteuil and asking our own questions as they arose. Denis D'Auteuil also shared everyone's contact information after each meeting just in case we needed to reach out again and ask follow up questions or they needed to send us any relevant documents that would assist in our data collection process. The agenda for each meeting was as follows: we introduced everyone in the room then took permission to record the interview. Next, we went through the questions on the survey. The interview questionnaire started with us asking the representative to introduce their organization, then goes on asking for a breakdown of the organization's committee/board structure, the organization's staffing levels, strategic plan, perceived advantages and disadvantages that will arise to each organization if a Regional Transportation Authority is created, by-laws, interlocal agreements, incorporation documents, and a detailed FY2018 Budget. After each meeting, we sent a thank you email in

² A copy of the survey questions can be found in the Appendix

addition to any follow-up questions and any documents that were not provided during the meeting.

Data Analysis: We evaluated each survey response and compared answers across each entity, looking for trends and discrepancies with a focus on the different needs of various groups. We paid especially close attention to the detailed FY2018 budget and the perceived advantages and disadvantages for each transportation entity in creating a unified Regional Transportation Authority. We then evaluated survey responses by comparing each other's notes from each meeting, transcribed the interviews, listened to the recordings, and went through each organization's budget paying close attention to federal, local, and state funding.

Investigate: We researched models of already existing RTAs in cities most similar to Lewiston-Auburn in demographics, population size, funding opportunities, geography, and other related factors. We then critically examined these models' successes, failures, and looked into challenges they faced as they were creating their RTA. This enabled us to learn lessons from already existing RTAs and provide the most salient recommendations to Lewiston-Auburn. We used a simple google search to find other RTA models. We also made sure to ask each transportation agency after our meetings if they know of any RTAs in the region that we could explore.

Synthesize: Lastly, we synthesized all the information we gathered from our interviews and from our research of other existing RTA models to best advise an RTA model for Lewiston and Auburn specifically.

Results and Discussion

In exploring the feasibility of creating an RTA in the Lewiston/Auburn area it was vital to understand the functions and processes of existing RTAs in the United States. Each RTA has unique challenges and strategies but there are also trends and similarities throughout. By examining existing RTAs we hope to provide a roadmap for Lewiston/Auburn as they go through the steps of creating an RTA and a support network. Many RTAs have been in existence for several decades and provide intel regarding structuring, federal funding, and possible difficulties. The initial RTAs discussed operate within much larger urban areas, such as major or capital cities, but still contain pertinent information in regards to the function of an RTA. Later in this section we will explore an RTA model more closely related to the Lewiston/Auburn area. For in-depth information on each of the RTAs researched, see Appendix A.

Funding

In examining existing RTAs it became clear that there were several common funding sources utilized. The first was the fare box income. For the majority of RTAs, the fare box amounted to over 20% of the standard operating funds. The Chicago RTA receives 80% of its funding through passenger fares (Chicago RTA). The Middle Tennessee RTA receives 40% of its funding through passenger fares (PLLC, C). The Minnesota Valley RTA counts passenger fares as 30% of their annual funding (Finance Department). Currently, the Greater Cleveland RTA has experienced a dip in ridership that can be connected to lower gas prices. This ridership drop has reduced the Greater Cleveland RTA passengers fare income, and these profits now account for 16.7% of their total budget (Calabrese). The Cape Cod RTA reported the lowest

funding from passenger fares. Currently, the passenger fares in Cape Cod contribute roughly 7% to the total budget (Cape Cod Commuter).

Another common funding source for RTAs were sales taxes and dues. The amount of tax levied varied within the studied RTAs. In The Greater Cleveland RTA, the sales tax accounted for 70% of the total revenue. Currently, the RTA of Cleveland receives a 1% sales tax on all goods and services sold in Cuyahoga County (Calabrese). In 2016 this amounted to \$218 million. Recently though, Medicaid has refused to pay sales tax on managed health-care costs in 8 different states, including Ohio. This has resulted in a \$20 million annual deficit for the RTA, roughly 7% of their total budget. The Greater Cleveland RTA has explored many different possibilities to compensate for this loss, including the sale of two unused garages, netting \$4.4 million and saving \$850,000 annually in maintenance fees, as well as selling advertising space on over 500 bus shelters for a profit of \$250,000 (Caver, F. R., Ph.D.).

Other RTAs receive taxable income from other sources. The South Florida RTA receives roughly \$2 million annually from county gas tax funds (Stephens). The Minnesota Valley RTA also receives upwards of 70% of their funding from a motor vehicle sales tax, or MSVT (Finance Department). The Chicago RTA receives funding from a sales tax applied to six counties throughout the Northeastern Illinois region that range from .5-1.25%. This accumulated in \$1.2 billion in 2017. They also receive funding from Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT) with a charge of \$1.50 for every \$500. Similarly to Cleveland though, the tax income for the Chicago RTA took a hit, as the state now takes a 2% surcharge which is planned to reduce the RTA funding by \$24 million annually (Chicago RTA).

The Middle Tennessee RTA does not collect sales tax but has levied a due comparable to taxes on the counties that joined the RTA. These dues are calculated based on the population of the county (PLLC, C). Legislation approving the dues was passed in 2003. The Middle Tennessee RTA has reported dual benefits from the implementation of dues. On a funding level, the dues can go towards overhead and administrative costs which allow for greater utilization of Federal and State grants. The other benefit is to the counties that participate in the RTA. New criteria implemented with the passing of the dues has opened up the RTA to communities that had previously been unable to join. The dues also create a sense of community, involvement, and endorsement for the various counties (PLLC, C).

Most RTAs receive state and local funding in order to cover their expenses. Three counties involved in the South Florida RTA contribute a minimum of \$1.6 million each annually since 2003 (Stephens). The Chicago RTA receives state funding that accounts for 20% of their budget, which is roughly \$8.5 million annually (Chicago RTA). The Minnesota Valley RTA received a grant of \$1 million in order to implement the very first suburb to suburb express bus service in the region. The bus routed from the Mall of America to Shakopee and was used to provide job access (Finance Department). The Cleveland RTA receives almost negligible state funding. Cleveland's neighboring state of Michigan provides \$57.71 of transportation funding per person. Cleveland provides \$0.63 per person (Calabrese).

In terms of Federal funding, a wide variety of grants are used by each of the RTAs. One of the grants, the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program is no longer offered by the FAST Act or the FDOH (Pustizzi). But JARC funding was used by both the South Florida RTA and the Middle Tennessee RTA (Stephens). JARC funding was meant to support efforts to

increase job access for low-income individuals. JARC funding also supported increase accessibility for reverse-commuting, which is commuting services that bring urban or rural residents to suburban areas for job opportunities (Pustizzi).

A federal funding opportunity that still operates is Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. This funding is for projects that seek to improve surface transportation, public transportation, and other steps necessary to improve air quality and reduce congestion (Bartlett). The Middle Tennessee RTA, Greater Cleveland RTA, Chicago RTA, and Cape Cod RTA all receive CMAQ funding. In 2015 the Cleveland RTA won \$6.9 million in CMAQ funding in order to replace diesel-fueled buses with natural gas powered buses. They replaced 106 buses and saved over \$800,000 in gas expenses in 2017 (Calabrese). The Chicago RTA also received CMAQ funding through their Access to Transit program. This program combines smaller projects pitched by various groups and regions within the RTA and pitches them as a single CMAQ application (Chicago RTA). CMAQ funding can cover projects ranging from infrastructure improvements to increase accessibility to bus stops all the way to multi-million bus replacements.

South Florida also receives funding from the New Freedom Program, which seeks to provide more accessible public transportation to people with disabilities (Simpson). This program has since been incorporated in funding for The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310). Cape Cod receives funding from the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). This funding is distributed by the Department of Transportation with the intent of creating systems and policies that ensure that DBEs receive equal opportunities in regards to participating in DOT-assisted contracts (Cape Cod Commuter).

Other federal funds previously or currently used by existing RTAs include BUILD funding, CRISI funding, New Starts, Small Starts, and TIFIA funding. BUILD funding, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Public Development, was originally known as TIGER funding. BUILD funding has \$7.1 billion to distribute over ten rounds of applications. BUILD seeks to support projects working to improve roads, rails, and ports with significance both locally and regionally (Build America Bureau). It offers unique funding for multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects that might be difficult to fund through a more traditional DOT approach. TIGER funding was rebranded to BUILD in 2018. The criteria have remained mostly the same, with a focus on innovative projects, service to underserved communities, and a partnership between the public and private sector. But BUILD has a specific focus on the prioritization of rural projects and the improvement of rural infrastructure (Osborne).

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) funding also focuses on meeting the transportation needs of rural areas. This funding is also available to projects that improve rail congestion or general rail safety (Federal Railroad Administration). New Starts and Small Starts also focus on improved rail infrastructure but can be applied to bus transportation systems as well (Federal Transit Administration). The programs are differentiated by their budgets. New Starts can fund projects equal or greater to \$300 million while Small Starts funds projects costing less than \$300 million. Both programs focus on projects seeking to create new rail systems, extend existing systems, or improve bus rapid transit systems (BRT) and the corridors served (Federal Transit Administration). The South Florida RTA has received funding from CRISI, New Starts, Small Starts, and The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and

Innovation Act (TIFIA). TIFIA funding requires a project costing at least \$50 million which a specific focus on nationally relevant projects.

A varying percentage of funding for each RTA stems from concession and advertising. The Greater Cleveland RTA has a \$1.3 million advertising contract (Calabrese). The Chicago RTA also qualifies their income from advertising and concessions as significant to their budget as a whole (Chicago RTA). Ultimately though, the importance and relevance of advertising and concession to an RTA budget depend on the size of the region, the desirability of the ad placement, and the contracts the RTA can secure.

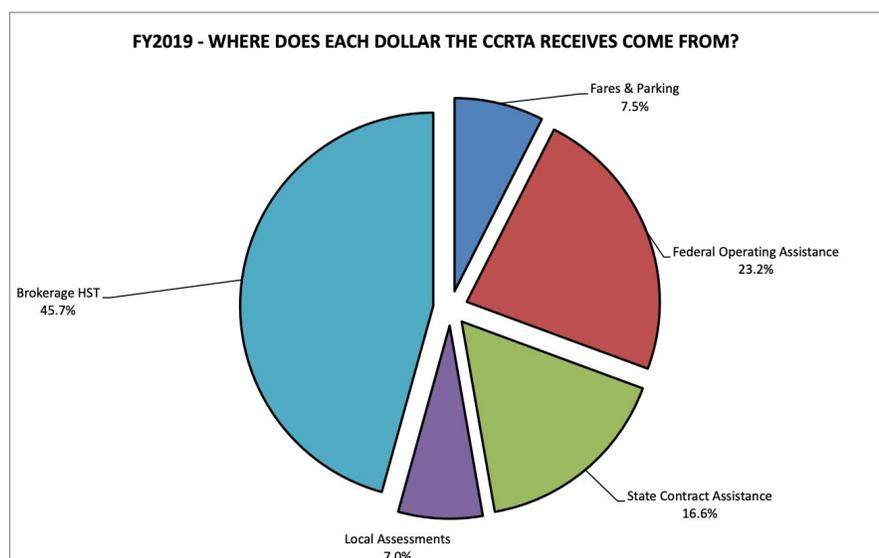


Figure 2: Funding Source Breakdown for Cape Cod RTA FY2019 taken from FY2019 Budget Report

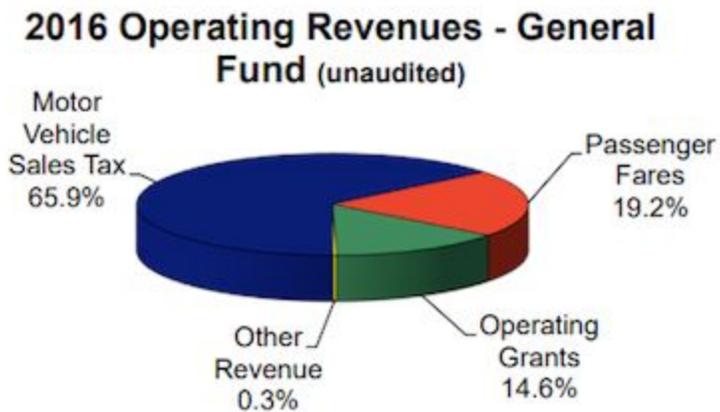


Figure 3: Funding Source Breakdown for Minnesota Valley RTA FY2016 taken from 2016 Budget Report

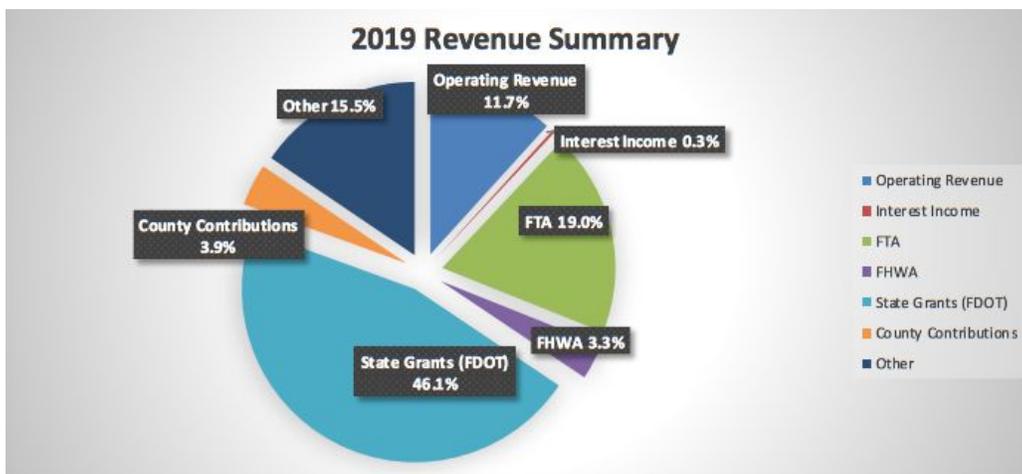


Figure 4: Funding Source Breakdown for South Florida RTA FY2019 taken from 2019 Budget Report

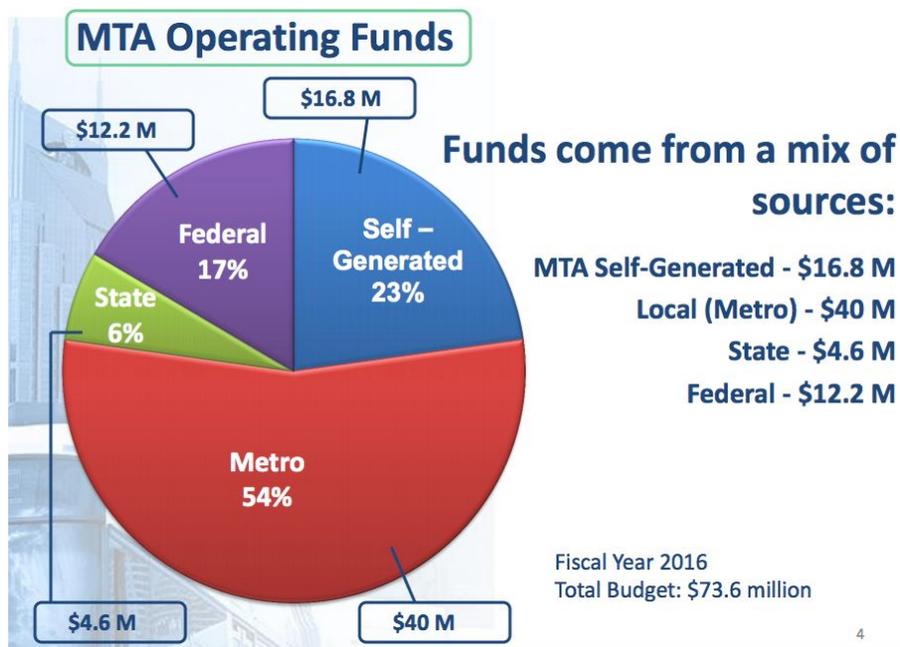


Figure 5: Funding Source Breakdown for Middle Tennessee RTA FY2016 taken from 2016 Budget Report

Board Structure and Governance

Through research into successful and established RTAs across the country, a series of themes surrounding agency governing bodies and structures became apparent. Similar to how each transportation entity in Lewiston-Auburn has its unique board structures, which are each tasked with varying responsibilities depending on each entity, so do RTAs across the country. This section evaluates the governing structures of each of the entities researched throughout this project, and focuses on trends found in each of them.

There were a few options of governing structures across each of the six regions evaluated; elected officials, appointed officials, and/or both a board of trustees and executive directions were themes present in all six. The Greater Cleveland, Ohio RTA, Minnesota Valley

RTA, and Chicago RTA all utilize a board compiled of elected officials. The Cape Cod RTA relies on appointed officials. The Greater Cleveland, Ohio RTA, Minnesota Valley RTA, and Chicago all use a combination style of governance, utilizing both elected officials and appointed officials to operate. The South Florida RTA and the Cape Cod RTA operates with both a board of trustees as well as executive directors.

The Cape Cod RTA has a unique structure in that it utilizes both an executive committee as well as an advisory board. This is unique in that this was the only RTA found in this project which operates under split authority. Appointment of CCRTA's Advisory Board is organized so that a member from each of the fifteen communities is represented, and there are therefore fifteen town managers on the Advisory Board. Additionally, they are required by Statute to have one member of the "Disabled Commuter" population and one member of the "Rider Community" population be part of the Advisory Board and they each get one vote as Advisory Board members. In general, the Advisory Board's job includes approving budgets, approval of any changes in ridership costs, and the approval of substantial changes in transportation services within the member communities within the region.

The Advisory Board bylaws also require CCRTA to establish an Executive Committee "comprised of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Clerk, and such other members of the Advisory Board as are from time to time elected by the Advisory Board". (CITATION) The Executive Committee is required to report all actions to the Advisory Board during board meetings, but also has the authority to act on all matters requiring prompt action. Therefore, the Executive Committee is responsible for daily tasks and tasks requiring immediate attention, whereas the

Advisory Board is responsible for the making decisions on issues of long-term impact for the RTA.

In addition to the Advisory Board and the Executive Committee, there are other Advisory Boards included in the decision-making process that deal with issues such as: Budget, Personnel and Fare and Service. Three members are selected from the Advisory Board comprise an advisory board on each topic and then to report updates from members to the full Advisory Board during meetings.

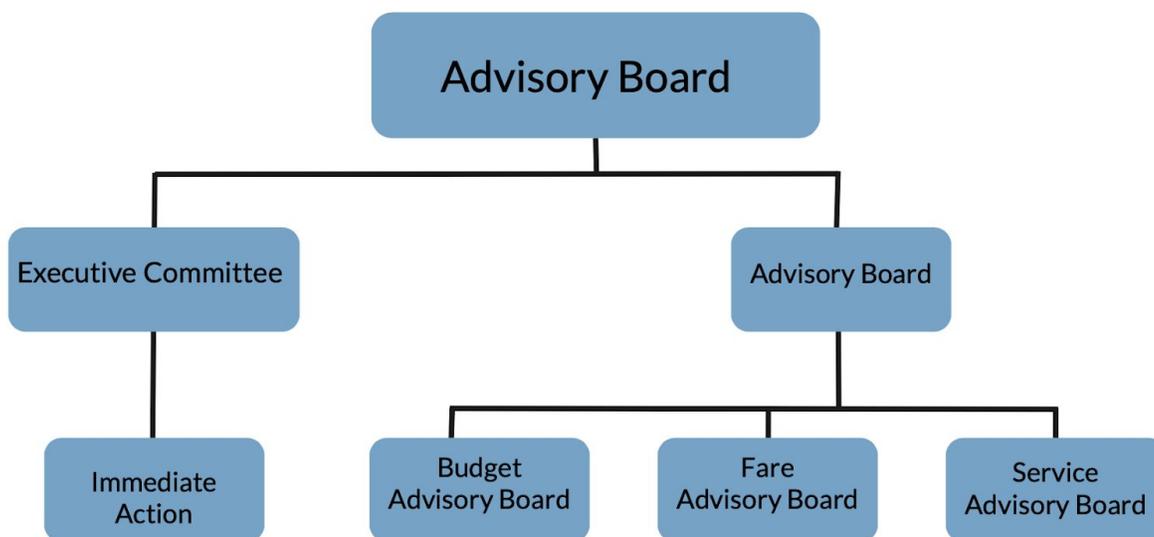


Figure 6. The board structure of CCRTA, and a separation of power and responsibility across the executive committee and advisory board.

Lessons From Already Existing RTAs

Regional Transit Authority of southeast Michigan has expressed some challenges they have faced since creating their RTA. Some of these challenges include difficulty getting taxpayers to fund the RTA. We imagine this would be a problem for Lewiston-Auburn's RTA because of the different needs of each community, especially smaller communities such as

Lisbon, Turner, and Livermore, who do not see themselves benefitting as much from an RTA if the bus does not reach their homes, as their communities are more rural and less accessible.

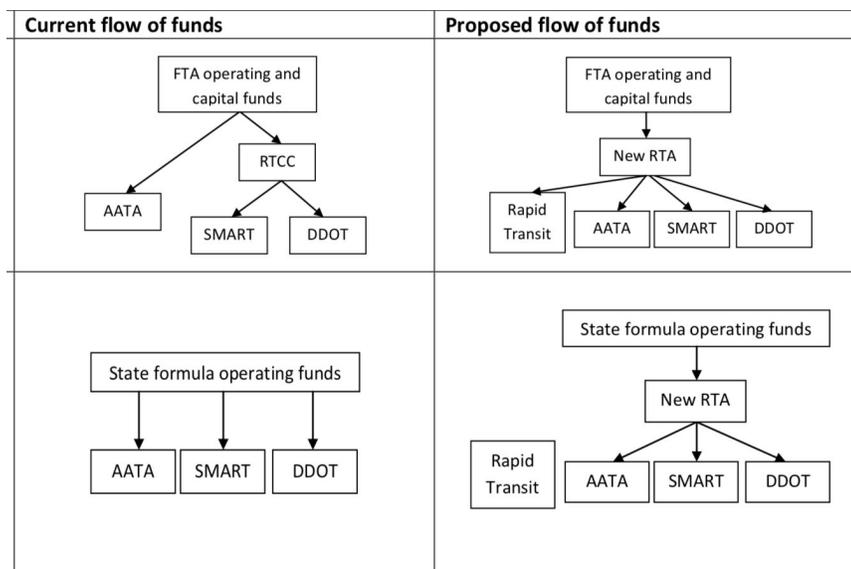
Therefore, when Lewiston-Auburn creates their version of an RTA, the model has to accommodate areas where transit is not necessarily readily available or practical. Additionally, southeast Michigan RTA expressed concern for the difficulty of making sure each community is fully represented regardless of their size since the areas look different within the region in terms of size and demand. Matt Webb, the RTAs General Manager expressed this challenge by saying “the needs are completely different than downtown Detroit, downtown Ann Arbor, our core communities.” This could be a challenge Lewiston-Auburn faces as well. Additionally, they faced some challenges in getting all the communities to accept to raised property tax to get additional funding for the RTA that would equal \$4.5 billion, but it did not go through because it did not get the required support from all the counties and thus failed. Webb says that the RTA funding model has to change if they want to get the support of the smaller communities. With Lewiston-Auburn trying to create an RTA, it is important to keep in mind the needs of smaller communities in order to ensure their support and further safeguard funding. Matt Webb describes their current situation as: “right now, we have a one-size-fits-all approach for funding. That won’t work.” - Matt Webb

The lessons most prevalent to Lewiston and Auburn in regards to the creation of an RTA are those of funding and structuring. The general structure of an RTA and its committee is based on the degree to which an RTA serves the region. Most boards work to utilize fair representation. All of the existing RTAs mentioned in this report have board members from each of the

encompassed regions. Some boards, such as those in Cape Cod, also have members who represent marginalized communities, like the disabled community.

Funding Concerns

The concerns expressed by both the cities of Lewiston and Auburn and across transportation entities within those cities address ideas of funding flows and avenues, and how existing funding models might shift. The city of Ann Arbor, Michigan, had similar concerns moving toward an RTA model, and published the following figure to explain funding flows within an RTA.



(http://www.annarbor.com/RTA_funding_sources_March_2012.pdf)

Under their current model, as well as under Lewiston and Auburn's current model, each transportation entity receives federal and state funding individually and to be used as they deem fit. Under an RTA model, state and federal funds would be applied to in the name of the RTA itself, and then divided up and distributed among transportation entities according to its need

determined by the RTA board. Under this new model, the RTA becomes the “designated recipient” of Federal funding, where it can legally “remit funds to local agencies within 10 business days of receipt,” (www.annarbor.com). In this way, funds cannot be viewed independently of the organization, or in other terms, money generated and earned by one entity cannot leave that organization and be allocated elsewhere. The same is true for the state.

The RTA is responsible for distributing state funds within 10 business days of receipt. Again, any funding that an agency earns on its own or through particular state initiatives may not be reallocated to any other agency. In this way, an RTA will not have the authority to strip any agency of monetary funding, or favor one agency over another. As a way of safeguarding the success of all entities involved within an RTA, the RTA acts simply as a system through which the process of funding allocation becomes more streamline. Entities under this model will not lose any of their current funding or will feel left behind within an RTA model.

Potential Funding Opportunities

In restructuring as an RTA Lewiston-Auburn might have new opportunities for increased funding. The majority of these opportunities would be through exploring new federal funding. An RTA would aid this as it would offer an administrative structure that could streamline the application process. Also, similar to The Chicago RTA Access to Transit program, the RTA in Lewiston-Auburn could work to consolidate smaller projects into one large application. This would increase accessibility to a variety of funds without forcing the Lewiston-Auburn area to commit to massive and expensive projects.

Unfortunately, the JARC funding that was used by both the South Florida RTA and the Middle Tennessee RTA is no longer available. This funding would have worked nicely with the demographics of Lewiston-Auburn.

A funding opportunity that is still available and should be explored is CMAQ funding. The CMAQ funds contribute to the budgets of the Chicago, Greater Cleveland, Middle Tennessee, and Cape Cod RTA. Auburn, Maine also has a previous history with CMAQ funding. The construction of the Maine Intermodal Terminal, located in Auburn, helped reduce carbon emissions in the area by decreasing the flow of long-haul trucks. (FHWA) The Intermodal Terminal allows for more rail transport into the region and stimulates the growth of local trucking services. The changes were so significant that a \$0.5 million in CMAQ funds were given to the terminal for increased storage in 2001 (FHWA). Lewiston-Auburn should further explore the possibility of CMAQ funds contributing to the RTA, due to the direct link between RTAs decreased congestion and increased air quality, thanks to the growth of public transportation.

BUILD and CRISI are also programs that Lewiston-Auburn should explore. Especially with BUILDS restructuring and new focus on rural infrastructure development, Lewiston-Auburn and Androscoggin County have a unique opportunity to capitalize on rural improvement. Also by incorporating the private railroad company of Lewiston-Auburn into the RTA it may become possible to apply for CRISI funds. These could be put towards the future development of a commuter rail line, which would revolutionize the landscape of the region. Also Lewiston-Auburn should explore New Start and Small Start funding. These funds specifically

focus on rail services as well, but can be applied to buses and seem to have an emphasis on aiding programs with innovation.

In 2012, MassDOT awarded 10 Massachusetts RTAs with \$13.2 million to “make needed capital investments including new bus purchases and facility repairs” (Jessen, 2012). The funds were available as part of the Obama Administration’s “We Can’t Wait” initiative that allows states to “repurpose unused federal transportation earmarks (from 2003 to 2006) for use on highway and transit projects that are able to obligate the funds by the end of the year”. While federal funding for transportation has been limited in recent years, the possibility of a new administration and political changes in coming years means that there may be future opportunities to apply for federal aid specifically regarding RTA systems. These opportunities will likely come and go with passing years and Lewiston-Auburn should pay close attention in order to take advantage of any available funding.

The Transit Cooperative Research Program (5312 (i)) is an applied research program that funds the transit industry when they allocate the money to doing research to promote more effective and efficient operations in the public transportation industry. Money should go towards research projects designed to solve operational problems and adopt useful, innovative technologies that provides better customer service. According to the Federal Transit Administration, the funds are allocated annually and there is no matching required. The Lewiston-Auburn region could apply for this fund to use some of the money towards research on making the transportation operations run more efficiently and in a cohesive, collaborative way by looking into more innovative tools to meet new challenges and opportunities.

Lewiston-Auburn is still unsure of how they are going to fund their RTA and it could be beneficial to explore the options that other RTAs have already found useful. Federal funding programs, such as CMAQ, BUILD, CRISI, New Start, and Small Start should be carefully examined. Lewiston-Auburn has the potential to meet the criteria for several of these programs due to its rural and urban components and the large room for growth within the public transportation sector of Lewiston -Auburn. Also, when structuring and creating an RTA, Androscoggin County as a whole should meet and discuss the implementation of dues. This would be an excellent source of funding for the RTA.

Recommendations for Next Steps

General Recommendations

Our project serves as an initial investigation into the implementation of an RTA. As such, we would like to make recommendations for the first steps in creating this RTA. We recommend that first the Lewiston-Auburn region define the community, create a mission statement, define a governance structure, connect with other RTAs, and gauge public opinion.

We recommend that the Lewiston-Auburn region define its community. This recommendation is two-fold; first, which transportation entities will be involved in this RTA from its start, and second, what parts of the region and cities will the Lewiston-Auburn RTA serve. It is important to define which entities will be involved in the RTA as planning for any potential changes in operation or structure in any entity should be done as early as possible to make a smooth transition between the current model of independent entities and an RTA. Similarly, it is important that the RTA define which communities outside of Lewiston-Auburn it will serve. Defining these borders will be both helpful in building public support of the RTA, it will also be beneficial to establish a complete understanding of the potential income and funding available to the RTA. Therefore, it is important that the Lewiston-Auburn RTA define its community, in terms of both the transportation entities involved as well as the communities served.

Another step which will serve important to creating the Lewiston-Auburn RTA is constructing a mission statement. It is important to create a mission statement tailored specifically to the needs of the Lewiston-Auburn region in terms of efficiency, environmental

sustainability, and public accessibility. This will be beneficial to both catalyze the development of the RTA and garner public support of it.

As mentioned in earlier in this section, under Board Structure and Governance, it is important to define a governance structure for the RTA early in its development. A well-thought out and established board structure will help authenticate and legitimize the RTA. It will also establish the RTA as structure committed to equal distribution of resources and fair treatment of all individuals regardless of race, class, gender, or other identities. This structure will also reassure the existing transportation entities, specifically in relation to their fears regarding unequal treatment or distribution of funds.

Connecting with other RTAs, including the six explored in this report as well as others, is a recommendation we offer as well. It will be helpful to establish these connections mainly to understand the development process of creating an RTA and understand challenges other regions faced in the hopes of avoiding the same obstacles or setbacks.

Another recommendation we would like to provide is gauging public opinion as early as possible. While an RTA will hopefully only improve services for the public, it is important to gain public support early in the development process. In addition, it will serve helpful to gauge public support early in the process as this will help to create a mission statement which centers around the needs of the community. In addition, if taxes in the communities served by the RTA will be affected by its implementation, it is important to clearly illustrate the benefits of an RTA for riders in the area in order to justify any tax adjustments.

Recommendations on Funding

The majority of the recommendations for funding can be found in the **Funding Opportunities** section of this report. In general, Lewiston-Auburn has a lot of new funding opportunities to explore. The development of an RTA would aid in the application process for many of these programs. When the RTA is developed, we believe a tandem program similar to Chicago's Access All Transit should be created. This program is hugely useful in combining smaller, locally focused projects and compiling them into one large application. While the Access All Transit program focuses primarily on obtaining CMAQ funding, a similar program within Lewiston-Auburn could work throughout the region and address all forms of funding. Having a designated program to identify, organize, and quantify various small projects is useful in a region such as Lewiston-Auburn that will likely not require grants on the scale of other RTAs. Combining multiple smaller projects into one large, innovation oriented and multi-step approach could help Lewiston-Auburn stand out.

A clear funding obstacle is the importance of fare box fees in funding RTAs. Of the LATC's income, less than 13% is associated with farebox revenue. Studies have shown that improvements to public transportation increase the use of public transit, but the difficulty is in justifying or finding the increased funding until the farebox can fulfill its designated role. Several of the RTAs studied, including the Chicago RTA and the Greater Cleveland RTA supplemented their income with advertising and concessions. An increased push to capitalize on advertising space within public transportation, either on bus or bus shelters, could help fill the gap left by a low farebox revenue.

Another means of filling gaps in funding goes hand-in-hand with possible CMAQ funds, or other environmentally motivated funding. CMAQ funding can be put towards programs that will help Lewiston-Auburn save money in the long run. The Greater Cleveland RTA has implemented a program that focus on energy risk management. This program seeks to stabilize diesel fuel prices, therefore reducing inconsistent expenses. Also the Greater Cleveland RTA, as previously noted, used its CMAQ funding to replace 106 diesel buses with natural gas buses. This has saved the RTA close to \$1 million in gas expenses between 2017 and 2018. Lewiston and Auburn could explore environmentally motivated programs that also reduce general operating costs.

One of the RTA's, the Middle Tennessee RTA, received a \$100,000 initial start-up fund from from the Tennessee General Assembly. Unfortunately it is not clear where this money came from or what legislation prompted the start-up fund. What is clear is that an initial cash flow could help the Lewiston-Auburn RTA to establish itself and immediately begin significant work on projects aimed at increasing usability and accessibility of public transportation.

Overall, our recommendations for Lewiston-Auburn regarding potential funding for their RTA focus on innovation, accessibility, and flexibility. Especially in its founding years the RTA may still be undefined or underdeveloped. The best approach that Lewiston-Auburn could take involves an open mind. There are many federal opportunities for transportation funding, and the potential for a new administration in the coming years means that new programs may be enacted. Lewiston-Auburn must explore all external possibilities while also examining how to best capitalize and streamline their own existing programs.

Recommendations on Board Structure and Governance

The issue of inefficiencies in Lewiston-Auburn surfaced as a challenge across all transportation entities and was an area that the entities wish to improve upon in the creation of an RTA. Because an RTA would combine all of these entities which now act relatively independent of one another under one governing structure, it is important to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various structures to ensure that the interests of all entities are represented equally, and that the RTA will provide the best, most accessible and reliable services to the Lewiston-Auburn area.

As mentioned in the Research section of this report, there are a few combinations which are most present within successful RTAs across the country. Through in-depth research into the six RTAs explored, it became obvious that there is no one, clear structure which is the obvious route the Lewiston-Auburn RTA should take. Instead, there are a few models which may be successful in Lewiston-Auburn, and are dependent on the atmosphere in the area during the construction of the RTA, political and otherwise.

Cape Cod RTA has been successful in its model of split governance. A similar structure may be advantageous for Lewiston-Auburn to adapt, as the division of power and decision-making could be appealing to transportation authorities and city officials alike. To reiterate, this structure would combine the employment of both elected committee members and appointed committee members, who would comprise both an Executive Board as well as an Advisory Board. One would handle the everyday operations of the RTA, while the other would handle more of the large-scale, long-term projects. This structure could be useful to

Lewiston-Auburn because it could aid with efficiency as well as ensure that all entities are treated equally.

Another aspect that is of vital importance in the creation of the RTA would be to include a representative from each city which will be included in the RTA at the onset of the project. The only true constant across all RTAs explored in this project was that representation from each communities served was both evident in their board structure, as well as central to the RTAs mission. This will ensure that the needs of each community served are met, including persons with disabilities, as well as improve public support and individual cities' endorsements of the RTA at its earliest stages.

While there were multiple models suggested in the Research section of this report, choosing to use either elected or appointed officials, or a Board of Trustees along with an Executive Committee, or any combination of these, are all viable options for Lewiston-Auburn. Each RTA explored in this report created a governance structure which was most viable for their specific region, and we recommend the Lewiston-Auburn RTA choose the system best for them considering the needs of transportation entities in the area, as well as the political environment in the area. The strongest recommendation we offer for Lewiston-Auburn RTA is to ensure that each community served is represented within whatever structure is chosen.

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Appendix 1. Contact Persons

Denis D'Auteuil, Lewiston Deputy City Administrator

Ed Barrett, Lewiston City Administrator

Heather Hunter, Lewiston City Government

Jennifer Williams, Metropolitan Planning Organization

Kim Bustamante, Androscoggin Valley Council Of Governments, Finance Director

Marsha Bennett, Androscoggin Valley Council Of Governments

Peter Crichton, Auburn City Manager

Phil Crowell, Auburn Assistant City Manager

Sandy Buchanan, Western Maine Transportation

Rick Lanman, Auburn-Lewiston Airport

Richard Trafton, Lewiston-Auburn Railroad

Appendix 2. Interview Schedule**Wednesday January 23, 2019:**

3:00pm: LA Railroad- Richard Trafton, Board Chair

4:00pm: Auburn-Lewiston Airport – Rick Lanman, Airport Manager

Friday January 25, 2019:

3:15pm: Lewiston Auburn Transit Committee(LATC) and Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center(ATRC)- Denis D'Auteuil, LATC Board Chair; Marsha Bennett, Transit Coordinator; Jennifer Williams Transportation/MPO Director; Kim Bustamante, AVCOG Finance Director.

Monday January 28, 2019:

11:15am: City of Lewiston, City of Auburn, and Androscoggin County – Ed Barrett, Lewiston City Administrator; Denis D'Auteuil, Lewiston Deputy City Administrator; Peter Crichton Auburn City Manager; Phil Crowell, Auburn Assistant City Manager

Friday February 1, 2019:

11:15am: Western Maine Transportation – Sandy Buchanan, General Manager

Monday March 4, 2019:

11:00am: Follow-up meeting, City of Auburn - Peter Crichton Auburn City Manager

Thursday March 20, 2019:

1:00pm: Discuss financials of various transportation entities and perceived changes within an RTA - Jill Eastman, Kim Bustamante, Heather Hunter

Appendix 3. Interview Questionnaire

**Regional Transportation Authority
Documents and Information**

Objective: Working with the Lewiston-Auburn Railroad Company, Auburn-Lewiston Airport, and Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee, Androscoggin County, and the cities of Lewiston-Auburn we are researching the feasibility of creating a Regional Transportation Authority by merging all of the region's transportation entities under one organizational structure.

Agency _____

1. Introduction - Provide a brief explanation of your organizations purpose, mechanism/authority that created your entity, mechanism/authority to dissolve your entity and other key points.

2. Provide your organizations By-Laws, Incorporation documentation, Inter-local Agreement, etc.

- 3. Provide a description of your agency's committee/board structure.**

4. Provide a description of staffing levels, full and part-time, and contracts for staffing related services, ie: cleaning, snow plowing.

- 5. Budget – Provide your FY2018 budget**

Provide additional information/explanation on the following:

- A. Funding Sources

- B. Funding Restrictions (ie: Capital only, matching requirements, etc.)

- C. Assets (include any restrictions that may apply, such as use of the asset or lease arrangements)

- D. Debt

6. Does your organization have a Strategic Plan? If so please provide a copy of the most recent version of the plan.

7. What challenges/obstacles do you see for your organization if a Regional Transportation Authority is created?

8. What advantages do you see for your organization if a Regional Transportation Authority is created?

9. Other– Please provide any additional information that you see as important.

10. General comments:

Appendix 4. Existing RTA Demographics

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

- Established July 2003
- Serves 3 counties
- Services 72 miles with 18 stations
- Hours of Operation
 - Weekdays: 4 AM - 11:35 PM
 - Weekend/Holidays: 5:17 AM - 11:45 PM
- Ridership: 15,000 weekday average (4,325,856 in FY 2018)

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

- Services 7 suburbs
 - 15 miles south of Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Developed in 1980's under state legislation, which
 - allowed outer-ring suburbs to “opt-out” of centrally provided transportation services
- The combined population of 7 suburbs is approximately 303,491 people

Middle Tennessee RTA

- Services 9 counties
 - 10 regional bus routes between downtown Nashville and bordering cities
 - Vanpool and carpool programs for Middle Tennessee counties
- Created in 1988 with a focus on economic growth and air quality improvement
- Services a population of 1,918,186
 - Ridership of more than 850,000 passenger trips
- Total budget: \$73.6 million
 - 6% state
 - 17% federal
 - 23% self-generated
 - 54% metro

Greater Cleveland RTA

- Average weekday services 150,000- 200,000 riders daily (45 million riders annually)
- In 2016, RTA provided 18.1 million vehicle miles
- 2017 General Fund budget of expenditures of \$312 million
- 1974:
 - Ohio State Senate passed SB 544, which provided RTA's to be created with a dedicated tax base
 - National Mass Transportation Act
 - RTA established

Cape Cod RTA

- One of 15 Regional Transit Authorities within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts since 1976
- Serves 15 communities
- Population as of July 2017 is 213,444
- Fixed Route Ridership = 28,985 in January 2018
 - 102,451 in August
- Demand Response Ridership= 35,199 January
 - 39,466 in August

Chicago RTA

- Serves two million riders every weekday
 - In 2017, ridership hit ~594.7 million,
 - Declined from 2012 peak ridership of 666.1 million
- Serves six counties
- Transit routes totaling 7,200 miles
- RTA includes CTA, Metra, Pace, and ADA Paratransit
- Total estimated budget for the region is \$575.3 million

Appendix 5. Existing RTA Detailed Information

Greater Cleveland

The Greater Cleveland area instituted an RTA in 1974 in order to increase the effectiveness of their transportation service. The creation of an RTA allowed for Cleveland to create a regional tax base and also increased their ability to apply for federal funds. Over the course of its existence, the Greater Cleveland RTA has worked to make numerous improvements to the infrastructure of Cleveland, has expanded the assets of the Cleveland transit system, and has specifically focused on expanding the services available to the elderly and disabled.

The Greater Cleveland RTA is funded primarily by sales tax, federal funding and grants, and the fare box. The sales tax utilized by the Greater Cleveland RTA is a 1% tax on goods and services sold in Cuyahoga County. The majority of the RTAs revenue stems from this tax, upwards of 75% of the operating budget. This tax is a fluctuating source of income though. Recent years have shown an increase in sales tax receipts due to economic growth, but there is a future prediction of decline. Therefore the RTA operates with an inconsistent budget, one of the restrictions of the system.

In terms of Government or federal funding, the Cleveland RTA utilizes the Fixing America's Surface Transportation, or FAST, Act. This act was approved in 2015 and will run until 2020. The extended lifespan of this act was useful to all transportation groups as it helped combat the struggle of inconsistent funding due to yearly acts being the previous norm. But even with its longer lifespan, the FAST act has failed to establish a long-term financial strategy for the transportation world of America, and the future is in question.

The farebox makes up roughly 18-20% of the Cleveland RTAs operating budget. This is a trend seen in many large urban RTAs and is one of the greatest obstacles facing Lewiston/Auburn in regards to switching over to an RTA model. The farebox for the Lewiston/Auburn transit system currently does not gross enough revenue to fulfill the same role of a farebox in larger RTAs. There is a hope that by increasing the function of the Lewiston/Auburn public transportation system the customer base will similarly increase. But it is important to understand the crucial role of farebox income in sustaining an RTA.

But even in large urban RTAs, similar to sales tax and government funding, the fare box experiences fluctuations, both positive and negative. The budget approximation of \$2.50 in the Greater Cleveland RTA is not the average fare collected, as many passengers utilize discounts for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and the utilization of multi-ride passes. These tactics reduce the average ticket cost to \$1.10. Therefore budgeting the farebox is a struggle for both small and large RTAs.

The Cleveland RTA has struggled throughout its history with the inconsistency of its budget. The RTA has worked to decrease overhead costs by consolidating facilities, but on many occasions, the Cleveland RTA has had to freeze wages or even eliminate salaried positions. There have also been service cutbacks as the funding is not sufficient to cover the costs. The primary reason for these cutbacks and the inconsistencies in the budget can be attributed to population loss within the Greater Cleveland area. As the population decreases so too does federal funding, and the sales tax and fare box are also affected by a decreased population.

The Cleveland RTA has worked to find new sources of funding. They now receive funding via CMAQ, congestion mitigation and air quality control funds. This ties in nicely to the Cleveland RTAs driven focus regarding environmental sustainability. The use of public transportation is an important tool in decreasing the utilization of single passenger commuter cars, which can aid in the general air quality and traffic reduction of a region.

The Greater Cleveland RTA offers a great look into the pros and cons of instituting an RTA. They experience many budget inconsistencies but have also experienced great success in advancing the transportation services of Cleveland. The system has also allowed for a greater focus on sustainability, environmental consciousness, and ethical treatment of all passengers.

Middle Tennessee

The RTA of Middle Tennessee was created in 1988 and services 9 counties within Tennessee. Similar to the Greater Cleveland RTA the Middle Tennessee RTA focuses on a larger urban area than Lewiston/Auburn, but the regional focus of the Middle Tennessee is more comparable to the goals of Lewiston and Auburn. The RTA oversees nine regional bus routes, the first regional rail project, and the largest commuter vanpool program in the Southeast. The Middle Tennessee RTA had an initial start-up fund of \$100,000 but there was no plan for future funding. Many of the RTAs examined either received or raised an initial start-up fund to jumpstart the creation of their RTAs. The sources varied and were difficult to identify but it is clear that an initial cash flow is helpful in creating the required infrastructure to sustain an RTA.

The RTA of Middle Tennessee also utilizes CMAQ funding. This funding stems from the rideshare and commuter vanpool program of the RTA but can be inconsistent as well. Much like the Greater Cleveland RTA, a common problem is inconsistent funding and budget cutbacks.

This is not a problem unique to RTAs though. This funding inconsistency is found within any program reliant upon federal funding or an income that can fluctuate as freely as public transportation use.

Particularly relevant to the proposed Lewiston/Auburn RTA, the RTA of Middle Tennessee receives funding from the JARC, or the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program. This program focuses on providing funding for services that offer transportation for individuals specifically in the Welfare-to-Work program or simply economically disadvantaged individuals who rely on public transportation in order to commute to and from their jobs. In Middle Tennessee, the JARC program provides roughly 44,000 work-related rides annually. This could be a relevant program for the Lewiston/Auburn region to explore as many of the benefits of expanded transportation service are found through commuter use. Expanded hours can aid those working second and third shifts, and a greater network of transit routes can allow for external commuters into the Lewiston/Auburn area for peripheral counties.

Also relevant to the Lewiston Auburn area is the fact that the Greater Tennessee RTA relies on dues from the various regions it serves. These dues are paid by cities and counties within the region that wish to join the RTA. They are based on population and not only fund the RTA but also allow the cities and counties of the RTA to physically support the RTA and contribute to the decision making process.

South Florida Regional Transportation

The JARC program is also utilized by the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, or the SFRTA. The SFRTA focuses on the reverse-commute aspect of the funding. Reverse commuting is when individuals from urban, suburban, or rural areas commute to

suburban employment opportunities. The applicability of this to Androscoggin County is unclear but the prevalence of JARC funding in many RTAs shows the need to explore this possibility.

The SFRTA also receives funding from the FTA's New Freedom Program. This program focuses on providing transportation to persons with disabilities. Like most federal funding there are inconsistencies but this is another program worth exploring.

Minnesota Valley

The Minnesota Valley Transportation Authority, or MVTA, serves seven suburbs outside of Minneapolis and St Paul. This is the large urban RTA model that is most similar to Lewiston/Auburn, due to the presence of the twin cities of Minneapolis and St Paul. The MVTA receives its funding primarily through a portion of the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax, grant applications, and partially from passenger fare systems. The MVTA is governed by a nine-member board of elected officials. This board is made up of an appointee from each of the cities included in the agency, and one city staff person as an alternate board member. The final two seats are filled by county commissioners from both counties represented in the agency.

MVTA is similar to Lewiston in size and in regional geography. Similar to Minnesota Valley, the Lewiston-Auburn RTA will service cities across Androscoggin county, and will ultimately be made up of a board to direct the agency. Lewiston-Auburn could benefit to structure their RTA similar to MVTA by appointing board members from each city. It would be beneficial to include one staff person from both cities of Lewiston and Auburn to ensure equality across both cities. The board would also be made with a representative from Androscoggin County. This would ensure that there is equal representation across all cities a part of the RTA,

as well as not allowing for any transportation entity to be more involved in decision making processes than any other.

Chicago

The city of Chicago, IL's RTA serves six counties, with ridership around 2 million daily. Chicago's RTA has a particular funding break down and has a funding model of hundreds of billions of dollars. The agency receives about 85% of its Service Board system-generated revenue dollars from passenger fares, and also through concessions and advertising.

The state of Illinois also enables the RTA to implement a sales tax throughout the counties served by the RTA. The tax is imposed in different percentages across each county depending on the comparative level of service provided in each county. In 2017, it was expected this tax generated about \$1.2 billion. The RTA planned to distribute in that same year about \$1.5 billion of public funding to its operations, with outside funding coming primarily from federal funds. The tax is collected by the Illinois Department of Revenue and paid to the Treasurer of the State of Illinois to be held in trust for the RTA. In addition, the RTA manages a \$5 billion five-year capital program, housing hundreds of thousands of dollars of RTA bonds and administering grants. The state is obligated to transfer from the State of Illinois' General Revenue Fund to the Public Transportation Fund an amount equal to 30% of the revenue realized from the tax and 30% of the revenue realized from the CTA's portion of the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT). RETT is another tax authorized by Chicago to impose during the transfer of title to, or beneficial interest in real property within the city. The supplemental tax rate is \$1.50 per \$500 of the transfer price on all sales within the city to assist the CTA. The city of Chicago received about \$400 million from the State Public Transportation Fund in 2017. The money

dedicated to public transportation is also designed to fluctuate along with increases or decreases in the growth of the tax. The RTA also receives state funding for ADA Paratransit under a Memorandum of Understanding, starting in November of 2009. Funding for ADA has been provided by the state of Illinois, and in 2018 the RTA received \$8.5 million.

The Chicago RTAs leadership is organized as a board of directors, a sixteen member group of professionals, which governs the activities and initiatives of the RTA. 15 of the directors are appointed from within the six-county region; five of whom appointed by the Mayor of the City of Chicago, four by the suburban members of the Cook County Board, one by the President of the Cook County Board, and five by the Chairman of each collar county, with one representative from each of the other counties. The chairman of the RTA Board is elected by at least 11 of the 15 appointed members, with at least 2 affirmative votes from the directors who reside in the counties appointed by the Chairman of each collar county.

Cape Cod

Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) is one of the 15 RTAs within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It has been providing public transportation to residents and visitors for all 15 Cape Cod communities. Cape Cod's RTA could be used as a useful model to compare to the feasibility of creating a Regional Transportation Authority in the Lewiston-Auburn region because it is similar in size of member communities. If the cities of Lewiston and Auburn were able to get the smaller communities in Androscoggin County to participate in the RTA, both would be serving the same number of communities (14 in our case). Additionally, both Cape Cod and the Lewiston-Auburn region receive tourists in certain times of the year and Cape Cod's RTA model emphasizes the fact that the RTA is structured in a way to

most efficiently support a fluctuating transportation model, further incentivizing and accommodating tourism in the region. Therefore, if the Lewiston-Auburn region had an RTA and focused on having a more efficient and coherent mode of transportation, more tourists would be incentivized to come to events such as Campers Weekend and Parents Weekend at Bates College, strengthening the region's economy. Although tourism in both regions are not equivalent in all senses, the Cape Cod RTA serves as a model that shows how an RTA could incentivize more tourists to come to the area and stimulate the economy.

Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority has two year round services, fixed route and demand response service. They also have a seasonal service that only operates during the summer when there are more tourists wanting to go to Cape Cod. Lewiston-Auburn could use that as a model and have seasonal services at times where people come to the region such as Bates College events, Campers Weekend, and fall in Maine.

As for the appointment of CCRTA's Advisory Board, they have a member representing each of the fifteen communities, and therefore have fifteen town managers on the Advisory Board. Additionally, they are required by Statute to have one member of the "Disabled Commuter" population and one member of the "Rider Community" population be part of the Advisory Board and they each get one vote as Advisory Board members. The Advisory Board By-Laws requires them to establish an Executive Committee "comprised of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Clerk, and such other members of the Advisory Board as are from time to time elected by the Advisory Board" and the Executive Committee is required to report all actions to the Advisory Board during board meetings, but they have the power to act on all matters requiring prompt action. In addition to the Advisory Board and the Executive Committee, there

are other Advisory Boards included in the decision-making process that deal with issues such as: Budget, Personnel and Fare and Service. Three members are selected from the Advisory Board to report updates from members to the full Advisory Board during meetings. Such a model could be applicable for an RTA in Lewiston-Auburn region because it emphasizes increased efficiency in decision-making by decentralizing management and power. This could be especially useful if the smaller towns in the region are involved and could feel like they would be represented as equally as the big players such as Lewiston-Auburn. In general, the Advisory Board's job includes approving budgets, approval of any changes in ridership costs, and the approval of substantial changes in transportation services within the member communities within the region.