



COTA

JOB PROPOSAL

for

Chief Operating Officer

at Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA)
in Columbus, OH

Trusted Hiring Partner



ABOUT CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

About COTA

The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) serves as the regional mobility leader for more than 40 municipalities across Central Ohio. In 2024, COTA provided more than 12 million passenger trips across its fixed-route bus system, COTA//Plus microtransit and Mainstream paratransit services. With a workforce of over 1,200 employees — including 900 frontline staff — COTA delivers equitable access to employment, education, healthcare, groceries, and other essential destinations.

COTA is helping guide one of the most ambitious mobility transformations in the Midwest. In 2024, voters overwhelmingly supported LinkUS, an \$8 billion initiative that will deliver:

- 45% more transit service, including five new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors
- A 24-hour transit system planned within five years, building on newly expanded midnight service currently available on 30 routes
- 500 miles of sidewalks, bikeways, and trails to ensure holistic mobility for all
- Sustainable growth through equitable housing and economic development along transit corridors

This transformation positions Columbus as an ideal setting for transit leaders to witness innovation in action as we deliver on our promise to create a connected, inclusive, and future-ready region.

COTA's Vision

To move every life forward.

Why Join COTA as Chief Operating Officer?

As COO, you'll be at the forefront of transforming how Central Ohio moves. This is a rare opportunity to lead operational strategy, safety, customer care, and fleet modernization in a city that embraces innovation and growth. You'll work alongside a visionary executive team and help shape the future of mobility in one of America's most dynamic regions.



THE COMMUNITY

Welcome to Columbus, Ohio – A City of Growth, Innovation, and Opportunity

Columbus is the fastest-growing city in the Midwest and the 14th largest in the U.S. It's a vibrant, inclusive community with a booming economy, world-class education, and a thriving arts and culinary scene. Known for its affordability, innovation, and welcoming spirit, Columbus offers the perfect balance of professional opportunity and personal fulfillment.

What Columbus is Known For

- **Innovation & Industry**

Home to Fortune 500 companies like Nationwide, Honda, and Cardinal Health, plus a growing tech ecosystem supported by Smart Columbus and Rev1 Ventures.

- **Education & Research**

Anchored by The Ohio State University and Battelle, Columbus is a hub for academic excellence and cutting-edge research.

- **Affordability & Livability**

Low cost of living, high quality of life, and diverse, walkable neighborhoods make Columbus ideal for professionals and families alike.

Things to Do in Columbus

- **Arts & Culture**

Explore the Short North Arts District, Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio Theatre, and annual events like the Arts Festival and HighBall Halloween.

- **Outdoor Adventures**

Bike the Olentangy Trail, kayak the Scioto River, or hike in nearby Hocking Hills. Enjoy over 20 metro parks and scenic greenways.

- **Family Fun**

Visit the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, COSI science museum, LEGOLAND Discovery Center, and seasonal festivals like the Ohio State Fair.

- **Food Scene**

From Jeni's Ice Cream and North Market to global cuisine and craft breweries, Columbus is a foodie's paradise.

Why You'll Love Living Here

- Short commutes and easy access to nature
- A welcoming, diverse community
- Four distinct seasons with year-round activities
- A booming downtown with ongoing development



JOB SUMMARY

THE ROLE: Chief Operating Officer

The COO is a senior executive responsible for leading all aspects of COTA's service operations and customer care. Reporting to the Deputy CEO, the COO provides strategic leadership to ensure safe, reliable, and innovative mobility services.



Key Responsibilities

- Lead operational strategy across fixed-route, paratransit, and on-demand services.
- Champion safety, reliability, and customer satisfaction.
- Oversee fleet modernization and sustainability initiatives.
- Manage operational budgets and resource allocation.
- Foster a high-performance culture aligned with COTA's core values: Safety, Empowerment, Accountability, Teamwork, Service
- Represent COTA in external forums and stakeholder partnerships.

Leadership Scope

- Supervise Deputy COOs and operational leaders.
- Collaborate with the CEO, Deputy CEO, and Board of Directors.
- Drive organizational transformation and labor relations.
- Engage with regional agencies, municipalities, and community stakeholders.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS



Executive Leadership & Strategy

- Provide overall leadership for COTA's operations division, aligning strategies with organizational goals and regional mobility priorities.
- Partner with the CEO, Deputy CEO and executive team to define and execute long-term strategies for service growth.
- Advance data-driven decision-making by leveraging technology platforms and analytics tools to optimize transit operations, improve fleet performance, enhance maintenance planning, and support real-time service monitoring and customer responsiveness.
- Ensure integration and coordination between fixed-route, paratransit, on-demand, and customer care operations.

Operational Excellence

- Drive a culture of safety, reliability, and accountability across all operational areas.
- In collaboration with the Director of Safety, oversee and implement risk management strategies, ensuring proactive identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks related to service reliability, fleet performance, regulatory compliance, and workplace safety.
- Direct emergency preparedness and crisis management planning for Operations division, including development of response protocols, coordination with local agencies, and execution of drills to ensure continuity of service and safety of passengers and staff during critical incidents.
- Establish and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) for service reliability, customer satisfaction, safety, and efficiency.
- Lead efforts to modernize fleet, facilities, and technology to enhance service delivery and sustainability.
- Champion sustainability initiatives across transit operations, including the adoption of low-emission technologies, optimization of fleet efficiency, and integration of environmentally responsible practices into maintenance and service delivery strategies.

Financial & Resource Stewardship

- Oversee operational budgets, ensuring fiscal responsibility, transparency, and alignment with strategic priorities.
- Optimize resource allocation across departments to maximize value for the community.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS - continued



Workforce & Culture

- Provide leadership, guidance, and mentorship to Deputy Chief Operating Officers and operational leaders.
- Lead organizational turnaround and culture transformation by embedding the agency's core values, SEATS – Safety, Empowerment, Accountability, Transparency, and Service – into daily operations, leadership practices, and workforce engagement, fostering a resilient, high-performance, and customer-centric culture.
- Ensure strong labor-management relations and compliance with collective bargaining agreements.

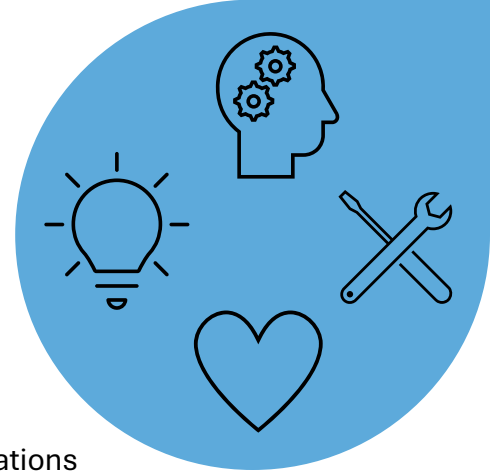
Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- Represent COTA in external forums, industry associations, and with community stakeholders.
- Partner with regional agencies, municipalities, and mobility providers to expand access and improve service delivery.
- Act as a visible leader and spokesperson for COTA's operational initiatives.

OTHER JOB FUNCTIONS

- Works collaboratively with the Deputy CEO to help the COTA Board of Directors monitor and evaluate COTA's relevancy to the community and its effectiveness in achieving its mission;
- Confer with the CEO and Deputy CEO on policy matters and strategies to accomplish organizational goals;
- Participates in negotiations of all collective bargaining agreements and other labor relations;
- Administers through the Operations departments, COTA's Bargaining Agreement with Transport Workers Union, Local 208 to promote sound and effective labor relations;
- May represent COTA before local, regional, state and federal government agencies, boards, commissions and conferences;
- Directs and provides leadership for their staff. Hires, trains, develops, and appraises staff effectively. Ensures the organization meets its EEO responsibilities by assisting in identifying problem areas, participating in local minority organizations, participating in review of complaints alleging discrimination, and supporting career counseling for employees. Takes corrective action as necessary, on a timely basis, and in accordance with policy; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES & OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS



Knowledge

- Knowledge of public transportation
- Knowledge of vehicle maintenance and engineering operations
- Knowledge of the MS Office (or similar) package, including but not limited to Excel, Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint

Skills

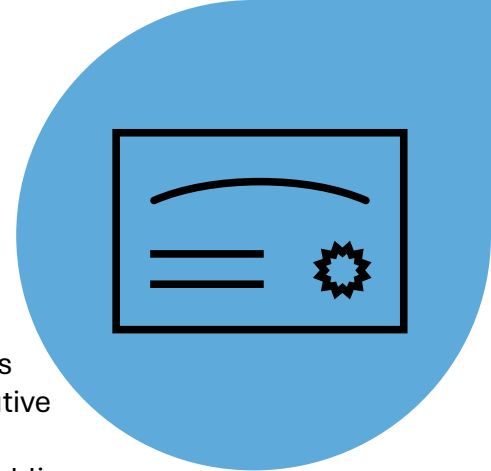
- Skills in verbal and written communication
- Skills in communicating with all levels of supervisory and non-supervisory employees, contractors, vendors, government entities, and community, and others internal and external to the organization

Abilities

- Ability to interrelate well with colleagues, various public officials and agencies and members of the Central Ohio community
- Ability to create and enhance policies, procedures and programs to achieve agency goals for a more effective organization that is financially sustainable
- Ability to lead and achieve objectives across divisional lines
- Ability to inspire, persuade, engage, speak straight-forwardly about complex transit issues, make tough decisions and take difficult actions
- Ability to display balanced thinking that combines analysis, wisdom, experience and perspective
- Ability to generate new, innovative and visionary approaches to transit systems that are effective and responsive
- Ability to develop and maintain a cost-effective operating budget
- Ability to define problems, research issues and develop logical and practical solutions within the framework of general principles of transportation and the policies and procedures of the organization

Other Characteristics

- Demonstrated experience in working with appointed or elected Board of Trustees
- Brings a perspective on emerging and leading transit trends and best practices



MINIMUM EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Requires a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Transportation Management, Engineering, or a related field and at least fifteen (15) years' increasingly responsible managerial experience working in a multi-modal public transportation operations and/or maintenance environment at the director or executive level.
- An equivalent combination of education in business or public administration and experience in transit operations leadership will also be considered.

LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Transit Manager (CTM) preferred.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

This position requires exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects, including the human body and the following additional physical abilities:

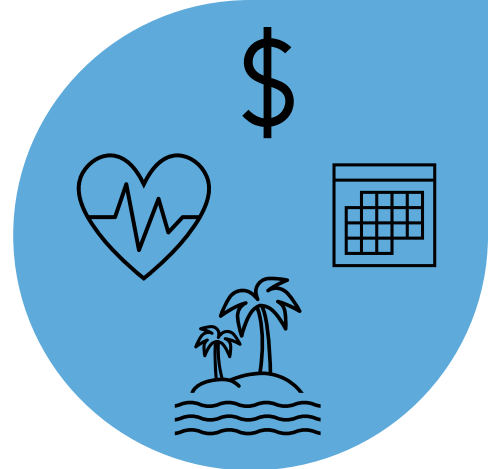
- Hearing 1: Perceiving the nature of sounds at normal speaking levels with or without correction. Ability to receive detailed information through oral communication, and to make the discrimination in sound.
- Mental Acuity: Ability to make rational decisions through sound logic and deductive processes.
- Speaking: Expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word including the ability to convey detailed or important spoken instructions to other workers accurately and concisely.
- Talking 1: Expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word including those activities in which they must convey detailed or important spoken instructions to other workers accurately, loudly, or quickly.
- Visual Acuity 1: Have close visual acuity to perform an activity such as: preparing and analyzing data and figures; transcribing; viewing a computer terminal; and/or extensive reading.
- Visual Acuity 4: Have visual acuity to operate motor vehicles and/or heavy equipment.

SALARY RANGE

\$142,001 - \$217,193

BENEFITS - FULL TIME EMPLOYEES

- Medical/Rx, Dental & Vision Insurance
- Medical Plan Opt Out
- Biometric Screening & Wellness Opportunities
- OPERS (Ohio Public Employees Retirement System)
- 457 (B) Deferred Compensation Plan
- Basic Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance
- Short-Term Disability Insurance
- Long-Term Disability Insurance
- Paid Family Leave
- Employee Assistance Program
- Health Flexible Spending Account
- Dependent Care Spending Account
- Lifestyle Spending Account
- Voluntary Insurance Benefits
- Student Loan Assistance
- Credit Unions
- Training and Development
- Additional Benefits (free bus passes, paid vacations, holiday and sick pay)



APPLY NOW

Why Choose COTA as Your Next Leadership Role?

- **You want to lead with purpose** in a region committed to equitable, accessible mobility for all.
- **You're ready to shape strategy and culture** in a forward-thinking transit authority driving innovation and sustainability.
- **You value operational excellence** and thrive in environments where collaboration and accountability fuel success.
- **You're excited by the opportunity to modernize transit** through data-driven decision-making, fleet transformation, and customer-focused service delivery.
- **You want to live in a city** that offers professional growth, community engagement, and a high quality of life.

To apply for the Chief Operating Officer position with Central Ohio Transit Authority, please visit www.davidgomezpartners.com or send your resume to Recruiting@DavidGomezPartners.com.