



RIVER VALLEY
TRANSIT AUTHORITY
STRATEGIC PLAN
Reset, Recover, Reach Forward

STRATEGIC PLAN > 2023-2027



Table of Contents

- Letter from Board of Directors Chair i
- Executive Summary1
- RVTA at a Glance2
- RVTA Vision and Values4
- Strategic Goals6
- Implementation of Strategic Goals..... 12
- Mid- to Long-Term Goals 15
- Short-Term & Future Planning Initiatives for RVTA..... 17
- Conclusion 18

Acknowledgments

This planning effort was led by the River Valley Transit Authority (RVTA) Board of Directors and leadership staff in collaboration with STV Incorporated. This Strategic Plan was funded by Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Bureau of Public Transportation.



Letter from Board of Directors Chair

This Strategic Plan addresses ongoing challenges, goals to achieve, and commitments to our employees, riders, and communities in the upcoming years. This plan is a collaboration of a wide range of individuals including: Board members, Management Team members, Bus Operators, Lycoming County Planning Personnel, and representatives of A.T.U. Local 1496.

Over the past three years, RVTA has dealt with two abrupt leadership changes, the COVID Pandemic, and the rapid formation of a governing authority. Our dedicated employees have risen above those three challenges and continue to provide safe, reliable, and clean services to our riding population. The goal of the newly formed Board is to provide stability, guidance, and support to the amazing staff of RVTA, public transit users, and our community partners.

RVTA is at the forefront of Public Transportation in Pennsylvania as we have state of the art facilities, a wide range of buses, trolleys, and vans to provide small and large-scale services, and an amazing team to cover the needs of the Greater Susquehanna Valley.

Throughout this strategic document, you will see how RVTA plans to further its progress in public transportation as we complete and conquer each of our objectives. Within every goal attained, RVTA will foster better relationships with its employees, continue excellent service to our riders, and build everlasting partnerships with our communities and stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Noah C. Bower



Executive Summary

River Valley Transit Authority (RVTA) was established as a newly independent transit authority in 2022. RVTA is charting a path toward providing greater benefits to the communities it serves, as well as greater autonomy to leverage resources and funding opportunities to support its operation in the future. This Strategic Plan, funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Bureau of Public Transportation, aims to guide RVTA as a new transit authority. This document is a dynamic blueprint for growth of the transit authority.

Strategic Planning Process

Throughout the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023 RVTA's Board of Directors, staff, and stakeholders worked together to plan and strategize for the authority's future. During this time, there were several types of input formed the foundation of this Strategic Plan, including an employee survey, stakeholder interviews, and two strategic planning workshops. Two workshops were conducted with RVTA Board members, staff, and stakeholders who collaboratively identified the needs of the authority. This Strategic Plan lays out the Vision, Values, and Goals for RVTA to reach forward as a new authority in the coming years. RVTA leadership and the Board of Directors will evaluate its success by reporting on the goals and actions set forth in this plan.

Board of Directors

Noah Bower - *Chair*

Max Moore - *Vice Chair*

Chuck Crews - *Treasurer*

Richard Staiman

Marshall Welch

Executive Director

Todd Wright



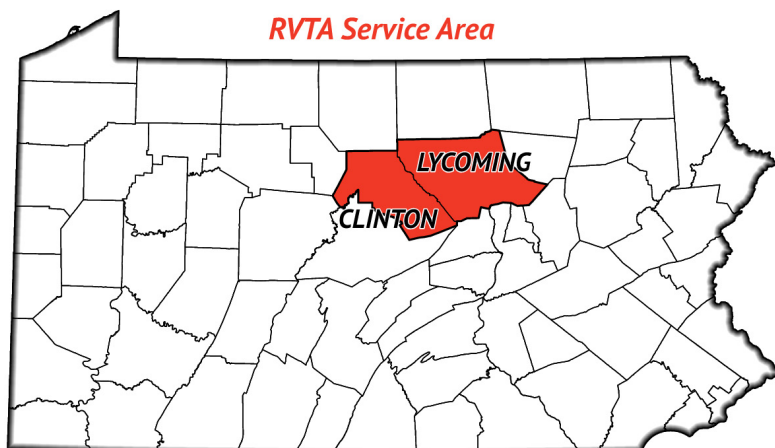
Reset, Recover, Reach Forward

The concepts stated in this Strategic Plan are the fundamental and foundational aspects of the “reset and recover” phase for RVTA as an agency, hence they may appear to be basic in nature but are necessary to be able to “reach forward.” During the strategic planning workshops it was discussed early on the foundational pieces are needed and must be supported by the Board of Directors, leadership, and employees to allow for RVTA to be successful as a new transit authority.

RVTA at a Glance

River Valley Transit Authority (RVTA) is headquartered in Lycoming County in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

- > Operates in a 92 sq. mile service area in Lycoming County with limited service in Clinton County.
- > Serves a population of approximately 70,000 people.
- > In FY2020-2021 RVTA's system provided:
 - > 25 routes for 637,533 fixed route riders
 - > 18% were senior riders
- > System-wide fleet contains a total of 40 vehicles:
 - > Eight diesel motor buses, 29 compressed natural gas (CNG) motor buses, and three gasoline/diesel paratransit vehicles
- > RVTA has a total of 87 employees:
 - > 86 full-time and one part-time





RVTA VISION AND VALUES

RVTA Vision and Values

The vision statement describes the future desired state of the authority. As RVTA progresses in accomplishing the goals set forth in this Strategic Plan, the vision statement will continue to guide the authority's direction for decision-making and future work.

Vision

An employee and customer driven team that delivers safe, accessible, clean, and reliable transit services for our community.

"RVTA is the place that I want to retire from, I know we have been through a lot over the last couple years, moving forward we will have some bumps along the road but that is expected. Now we can strive for greatness and be the best transit company we can be."

- RVTA Employee

The identification of organizational values ensures all RVTA team members work toward a common purpose. These words and phrases help guide the principles of the authority. They steer the authority to maximize the impact RVTA's work has on its employees, customers, and community.

Values



SAFETY



CUSTOMER SERVICE



ACCOUNTABILITY



TEAMWORK



INTEGRITY



STRATEGIC GOALS



Goal 1 - Hire/Appoint a Leader

RVTA will focus on hiring or designating a permanent Executive Director to manage the authority in its entirety. The leadership position will require an individual who can provide a variety of skill sets for RVTA including, but not limited to, transit knowledge, active listening, strategic and critical thinking skills, and problem solving.

ACTIONS

- >Set a target of Q4 of the 2023 fiscal year for the leader to be in place
- >Develop a Communication Plan for internal and external use





Goal 2 - Build Back Internal Trust

RVTA will rebuild internal trust between leadership, staff, and the Board of Directors. RVTA is committed to building internal trust between and within the many departments RVTA depends on to complete their obligation of providing transit services to the community.

ACTIONS

- > Demonstrate accountability by all employees
- > Create clear policies and procedures
- > Develop trust between department heads and their staff
- > Establish a true chain of command throughout the authority
- > Provide opportunities for formal and informal recognition of employees





Goal 3 - Establish a Commitment to Communication

RVTA will provide efficient and consistent communication within the authority. RVTA has a dedicated staff who will communicate effectively to convey important information not only to and between employees, but also to the public.



ACTIONS

- > Hold monthly administrative staff meetings, quarterly driver meetings, and department meetings as needed
- > Provide opportunities for Board of Directors participation in department meetings
- > Hold A.T.U. Local 1496 report out meetings for staff
- > Institute monthly, random, one-on-one feedback sessions within departments
- > Develop an online employee feedback form with follow-up mechanism
- > Disseminate information discussed in Board meetings to employees



Goal 4 - Restore Community and Rider Image

RVTA will build community and rider support for RVTA services through marketing, engagement, and participation in local community functions. RVTA is committed to developing relationships with local members of the Williamsport and service area communities to support the work of the authority.

ACTIONS

- >Market and promote services through education and more consistent branding
- >Engage with the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce for promotion and resources
- >Attend public events and encourage employees to participate to increase RVTA visibility in the community and promote authority services
- >Develop an action plan for achieving uniform branding





Goal 5 - Improve Customer Experience

RVTA will use tools and technology to enhance services and customer experience. RVTA will implement mechanisms to increase the use of resources and technology, while being cognizant of the needs of the community for other methods of information sharing.

ACTIONS

- > Enhance options for fare purchasing on/off the buses with technology and apps
- > Increase social media presence throughout the community
- > Develop Token Transit Ambassador Program
- > Clarify scheduling and routes for transit users
- > Enhance customer service training for employees










IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC GOALS

Implementation of Strategic Goals

RVTA intends to achieve the Strategic Goals within the next five years utilizing the information listed below.

	Strategic Goal	Actions	Lead/Responsible Party	Timeline	Needs for Implementation
	Goal 1: Hire/Appoint a Leader	Set a target of Q4 of the 2023 fiscal year for the leader to be in place	Board of Directors	FY2023, Q4	> None
		Develop Communications Plan for internal and external use	Board of Directors Chair	FY2023, Q4	> Solicit input and collaboration from stakeholders including staff, union members, municipalities, and funding partners.
	Goal 2: Build Back Internal Trust	Demonstrate accountability by all employees	Board of Directors, Executive Director, All Employees	Immediate	> None
		Create clear policies and procedures	HR Department, Department Heads	6 - 18 months	> Review and clarify policies and procedures for RVTA vs RVT.
		Develop trust between department heads and their staff	Executive Director, Department Heads	3 months	> Review and clarify policies and procedures for RVTA vs RVT. > Define procurement and budget policies related to Department Head responsibility.
		Establish a true chain of command throughout the authority	Executive Director, Department Heads	Immediate	> Reaffirm Department Head communication channels to and from employees (e.g., email, payroll splash screen notices, bulletin board postings, phone calls).
	Goal 3: Establish a Commitment to Communication	Provide opportunities for formal and informal recognition of employees	Department Heads, Supervisors	6 months	> Provide budget available for recognition and appreciation awards.
		Hold monthly administrative staff meetings, quarterly driver meetings, and department meetings as needed	Executive Director, Department Heads	Immediate	> Provide opportunity of two to three meeting sessions per year to accommodate driver schedules. > Develop virtual participation meeting option.
		Provide opportunities for Board of Directors participation in department meetings	Executive Director, Department Heads	3 months	> Create Board subcommittees to interact with different departments. > Provide flexibility of meeting dates and times to accommodate scheduling conflicts.
		Hold A.T.U. Local 1496 report out meetings for staff	Executive Director, Department Heads, Union Leadership	3 - 6 months	> Provide flexibility of meeting dates and times to accommodate scheduling conflicts.
		Institute monthly, random, one-on-one feedback sessions within departments	Department Heads	As needed	> Review schedule for one-on-one feedback sessions with employees.
		Develop an online employee feedback form with follow-up mechanism	Executive Director, Marketing Department, IT Department	6 - 12 months	> Determine technology needs to provide feedback form. > Ensure feedback submissions are responded to by appropriate leadership staff member.
Disseminate information discussed in Board meetings to employees	Board of Directors, Executive Director	3 - 6 months	> Determine method of communication from Board to RVTA employees.		

Implementation of Strategic Goals

<i>Strategic Goal</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead/Responsible Party</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Needs for Implementation</i>
 Goal 4: Restore Community and Rider Image	Market and promote services through education and more consistent branding	Marketing Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Review personnel required, scheduling, and coordination needs. > Determine financial impact of re-branding RVTA assets.
	Engage with the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce for promotion and resources	Marketing Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Coordinate with appropriate departments for participation in engagement.
	Attend public events and encourage employees to participate to increase RVTA visibility in the community and promote authority services	Outreach Coordinator	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Identify internal resources (e.g., operations, finance) available for involvement. > Review RVTA policies and procedures for public engagement.
	Develop an action plan for achieving uniform branding	Marketing Coordinator, Fleet Manager, Finance Department	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Define timeline for full replacement of fleet branding. > Determine funding needed for inclusion in Capital Plan.
 Goal 5: Improve the Customer Experience	Enhance options for fare purchasing on/off the buses with technology and apps	IT Manager, Fleet Manager, Finance Department, Planning Department	End of 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Determine full scope of physical asset replacement (e.g., fareboxes and readers in buses, kiosks at key locations, development of specifications for implementation). > Review needs of replacement with funding available for capital purchasing. > Define temporary staffing needs, training for employees, and communication plan for rollout of technology.
	Increase social media presence throughout the community	Marketing Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish targets for different social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).
	Develop Token Transit Ambassador Program	Marketing Coordinator, Planning Department	12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Define objectives for goal setting, education, and promotion of Token Transit system. > Encourage uptake of digital fare purchasing system utilizing ambassador program. > Determine total number of temporary employees needed for full rollout of program.
	Clarify scheduling and routes for transit users	Marketing Coordinator, Planning Department	End of 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Review current scheduling and route information available for transit users. > Develop strategy to update existing information and provide new information. > Ensure variety of team members provide input including planning, operators, marketing, and customer service. > Hire additional (one to two) planning staff members to update and simplify Ride Guide.
	Enhance customer service training for employees	Marketing Coordinator, HR Department	12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop strategy to provide customer service training for all employees.



MID-TO LONG- TERM GOALS



Mid- to Long-Term Goals

Mid- to long-term goals are intended to be addressed within the five to 10 year planning horizon as the authority heads toward long-term success of the identified short-term, Strategic Goals. As RVTA progresses the Strategic Goals, the mid- to -long-term goals will begin to surface and become priority opportunities.

- > *Expand Transit Services to Additional Populations and Employers in Surrounding Counties through Coordination and Partnerships with Neighboring Transit Agencies*
- > *Explore Alternative Transit Service Delivery Options and Capabilities including Microtransit*
- > *Create an Employee Engagement and Career Development Strategy*
- > *Develop a Long-Term Financial Plan to Identify Stability for Long-Term Funding*
- > *Be a Successful, Smaller Transit Authority*
- > *Strive to Better Anticipate Unknowns*
- > *Coordinate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization to Identify New Development Taking Place in the Region*





SHORT-TERM & FUTURE PLANNING INITIATIVES FOR RVTA



Short-Term & Future Planning Initiatives for RVTA

To be successful in implementing this Strategic Plan, RVTA will continuously evaluate the goals and accomplishments utilizing the internal metrics identified. The implementation of this plan will rely on leadership to keep a close eye on the goals and resources needed to accomplish them. Future Planning Initiatives are additional plans that can be completed to further assist RVTA to become a more successful transit authority.

Short-Term Planning

Implementation, Evaluation, and Promotion of Strategic Plan

- > Develop internal implementation strategy for accomplishing goals
- > Define reporting process to evaluate goal progress
- > Coordinate public communication strategy for promotion of this Strategic Plan

Future Planning

Transit Development Plan

- > Existing service evaluation
 - > Measure current service reliability
 - > Identify demographics served and travel trends
- > Future service provisions
 - > Determine new areas to serve and new service types
 - > Identify key improvements for RVTA





Conclusion

RVTA's Strategic Plan is a blueprint to guide the agency into its new chapter as a newly formed authority. The groundwork has been laid with input from many levels of staff, leadership, stakeholders, and Board members to ensure RVTA can reach forward with success. RVTA will provide excellent service to the community, growing on its capabilities to provide new and exciting opportunities for both existing and future riders of transit services.

This Strategic Plan will be continually referenced and evaluated in all the work RVTA strives to accomplish. The leadership team will provide guidance for each staff member on how each of the Strategic Goals will be incorporated into day-to-day operations at RVTA. The future for RVTA is bright with new opportunities to provide first-rate transit services to its service area and beyond.



OFFICE CONTACT

1500 West 3rd St · Williamsport
(570) 326-2500
1-800-248-9287

TRANSIT CENTRE CONTACT

144 West 3rd St, Transit Drive · Williamsport
(570) 326-2500
1-800-248-9287