



ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

2014 - 2016

BUSINESS PLAN

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Member Input and Feedback	4
The Business Plan 2014 – 2016	6
Vision and Mission Statements.....	6
Strategies	6
2014 – 2016 Plan Direction.....	9
2014 – 2016 Major Work Plan Initiatives	10
2014 – 2016 Financial Plan and Performance Targets.....	12

Executive Summary

The OPTA Board is pleased to present the latest version of the Business Plan to guide the next several years. While the 2008-2010 period was characterized by a fair degree of legislative and regulatory activity, the 2011-2013 period was much quieter on the legislative front due largely to the minority government in Ontario. That said, the Association continued to grow in terms of membership and engagement, as characterized by the increased attendance at regional meetings and other committee meetings, as well as the feedback gathered from those attending the annual Ontario Transportation Expo. This plan recognizes the importance of members in all categories, but also recognizes the need for OPTA to stay focused on its main mission given the resources available to run the organization.

The previous decade was a “boom” one in many respects for transit, and was capped off with the permanent entrenching in legislation of the 2% gas tax in 2013. The large pool of funding contained in the 2014 “re-introduced” Budget, divided roughly equally for GTA and rest of the Province requirements will provide much needed funding for transit systems across the province. Looking over the next few years, it is probable that funding gains will be small and will be fewer and farther between. However, that does not minimize the importance of work at Queen’s Park, nor does it change the fact that members continue to look to OPTA for networking, information exchange and learning.

The 2014-2016 OPTA Business Plan was put together based on input from the Member Survey conducted in May of 2014, as well as a strategic planning session which the Board held in June. This Plan is supported by a number of factors including:

- the need to provide members with a multi-year planning horizon
- the need to demonstrate to the membership that appropriate resources (both human and financial) are being allocated to deliver on the key strategies identified by the members and the Board
- the need to continue to engage the membership in the ongoing initiatives undertaken by the association
- the need to set expectations for the organization, and report progress toward same to the membership on an annual basis, but also throughout the year through regular News & Information Updates.

Accordingly, the 2014 – 2016 Business Plan and accompanying Financial Plan has been adopted by the Board of Directors. It is seen as building on the successes associated with the first iteration of Business Plan and continuing to ensure a strong foundation for the association.

Based largely on strong and convincing input from the member survey, the Board has left untouched the Mission and Vision statements which were developed in 2007 when “OPTA”, formerly “OCTA”, assumed its new name. However, the Board elected to reduce the number of Strategic Objectives from 6 to 4 in order to better focus the energy and resources of staff and the membership.

The Mission and Vision statements, as well as the 4 Strategic Objectives associated with the 2014 – 2016 Business Plan are set out below.

Mission

To strengthen and enhance public transit through advocacy and information sharing

Vision

Excellence in the provision of sustainable public transit services for Ontarians

Strategic Objectives

- 1. Influence provincial government to make decisions in support of public transit*
- 2. Share information and provide opportunities to network*
- 3. Deliver programs focused on the educational and technical needs of the industry*
- 4. Assist members to influence local governments to develop transit-supportive public policy*

Member Input and Feedback

The first iteration of this Business Plan was based in part on member feedback which was gathered through a member survey undertaken in May 2014. The survey results provided the OPTA Board of Directors with guidance regarding the areas of focus members felt should be a priority for the Association. The purpose of the survey – which was virtually identical to similar ones undertaken in 2010 and 2012 -- is to provide the board with a gauge to determine member satisfaction with progress toward identified strategies, and to invite input on issues related to communications, services and lobbying.

Members were asked whether they believed the Vision and Mission Statements remained relevant, and over 90% of respondents in both questions indicated they believed the statements remained very relevant.

As in past surveys, members were also asked to identify the top three influencing factors they believed would impact the delivery of public transit services in their local jurisdiction over the next three years, the results of which are set out in the table below.

Factors Most Likely to Impact Transit – Next 3 Years

Answer Options	Response Percent
Availability of Funding	65.1%
Greater Support at the Municipal Level	44.2%
Public Policy Supporting Public Transit	25.6%
General Economic Performance	20.9%
Greater application of new technologies	20.9%
Greater focus on customer service	18.6%
OPTA success in lobbying	14.0%
Population growth	14.0%
Integrated land use	7.0%
Public Education campaign to promote transit	2.3%
Strong local marketing	2.3%

Further, and tied to the influencing factors, members were asked to identify the top five areas of focus for OPTA over the next 3 years, the results of which are set out in the table below.

Areas for OPTA Focus – Next 3 Years

Answer Options	Total Points
Government relations & lobbying	126
Annual Conference	73
Regional managers meetings	60
Committee meetings & workshops	55
Employee training & education	51
Data collection & assessment	51
Interactive website	26
Member surveys	17
Membership directory	14
Media relations	11
Membership newsletter	5

Members were also surveyed with respect to the applicability of the six key strategies that were part of the previous Business Plan, and how they viewed OPTA's performance with respect to same over the previous two years. The table below sets out the ratings from the membership:

Six Strategic Objectives - 2011-2013 Plan	% of Good to Excellent Ratings
1. Influence provincial government to make decisions supporting public transit	78.1%
2. Share Information and provide opportunities to network	90.2%
3. Deliver programs focused on the educational and technical needs of the industry	75.6%
4. Advocate the economic, environment and social benefits of public transit	75.0%
5. Foster and maintain strategic alliances with government and other stakeholders	82.9%
6. Help members to influence local governments to develop transit supportive public policy	52.5%

Member input and feedback as gathered by the survey was a key consideration in the development the Business Plan, as well as a number of other factors, including:

- the Memorandum of Understanding between OPTA and CUTA which sets out the roles and responsibilities for OPTA and the Ontario Regional Committee of CUTA
- the financial resources with which OPTA has to operate, noting the need to ensure sustainability for the association on a going forward basis
- the current organizational structure and available human resources including the intended roles of the various OPTA Committees
- the need for continued awareness and advocacy at the Provincial level given the Province's role with public transit
- the need for regular, ongoing consultation and engagement with members to ensure the association is delivering a message that is generally supported across the province, and that OPTA is working the policy issues of greatest importance to the membership.

In addition to considering the feedback from the member survey, the Board engaged in a strategic planning session to help define the association's priorities and to develop an outline for the key elements in this Business Plan. To assist in this process, the Board hired Parsons Brinckerhoff to facilitate the meeting and write a report based on the discussion. The summary report provided the basis for this plan.

The Business Plan 2014 – 2016: Four Key Strategic Objectives

Business Plan Key Strategic Objectives

The 2014-2016 Business Plan will be directed by the association's mission statement, which is supported by a number of related strategic objectives. The Board has reduced the number of key strategies from 6 in previous years to 4. Each strategic objective, as well as initiatives that will be required to achieve that objective, are set out below.

Influence provincial government to make decisions in support of public transit

Key Initiatives:

- at least one meeting per year with Minister of Transportation and other Ministers as required who have an influence upon public transit
- develop and maintain regular communication with political and administrative staff within key Ministries
- the creation of position papers as required on key issues with a direct impact on transit
- participation in stakeholder consultations

- working with other associations and fostering strong alliances where appropriate to convey the industry's perspective (i.e. Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Ontario Motor Coach Association, etc)
- keeping members informed on funding and legislative issues impacting the delivery of public transit services
- providing timely responses to media enquiries with Ontario-wide implications for transit
- consideration of an one-time or annual reception for MPP's at Queen's Park
- providing members with a generic "Tool Kit" to help educate local councilors and other decision makers on the benefits of transit investment
- collaborating with CUTA to develop position papers and share information which will promote the interests of the transit industry
- making a greater effort to educate members on the benefits of legislative changes that OPTA has championed
- communicate OPTA's "wins" to stakeholders more effectively and frequently
- ensuring the benefits of public transit are clearly articulated in all communications with stakeholders

Share information and provide opportunities to network

Key Initiatives:

- conducting regular member visits to gather feedback on member needs and expectations
- holding annual Regional Managers Meetings in the Fall timeframe
- holding annual Province-wide Accessibility Meetings, Marketing Meetings, Maintenance Meetings and Trainers Meetings, as well as others should the need arise
- holding issue-specific meetings or workshops as required in order to provide updates or receive input from members
- planning and holding an annual joint conference/trade show ensuring ample opportunity for roundtable discussions among members at the annual OTE conference
- producing and distributing the OPTA Membership Directory
- providing prompt and timely feedback to member enquiries
- holding an Annual General Meeting and Board Elections
- providing email contact lists as required to assist members with polling other systems
- looking for opportunities to address the varying needs of all members
- expanding the ability of OPTA to offer more options for on-line and 'virtual' interaction and information exchange among members

Deliver programs focused on the educational and technical needs of the industry

Key Initiatives:

- the promotion & delivery of the P.R.I.D.E. Program in co-operation with OMCA & OSBA
- working with the Bus Council to ensure that OPTA issues are being considered in programs under development as well as keeping members informed about programs being offered

- the assessment of new training programs, and partnership in development of same
- participation in all opportunities for stakeholder engagement relating to any regulatory or legislative issues that may impact OPTA members
- providing timely and relevant information to members on legislation or regulations which impact the industry
- maintenance of OPTA Web Site
- maintaining regular contact with Maintenance committee members on issues of common importance

Assist members in the influence of local government

Key Initiatives:

- the development of an Advocacy Tool Kit for member use locally
- the provision of e-mail bulletins and newsletters to members with respect to key issues
- the provision of Position Papers to members as applicable
- promoting and encouraging members to share local success stories
- consideration of holding a one-day transit forum for members of municipal council subsequent to municipal elections
- strengthened links with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and other associations as appropriate, depending on the issue[s] involved

2014-2016 Plan Direction

The key work plan initiatives for 2014 through 2016 are set out in the following table. When identifying the priorities for the four strategies and related initiatives, the availability of resources, and the priorities as identified by the members in the June 2014 survey were the key considerations.

The strategies and associated priorities in terms of resource allocation and implementation timeframes were established given consideration to the following:

- the need for continued focus on Provincial government relations given the Province's role in funding and enacting and enforcing legislation that impacts the industry
- the need for increased priority on relationships with other associations that may assist OPTA in promoting the industry's position on public policy issues
- the requirement for heightened focus on advocacy and awareness at the provincial level given the increased focus on the role an effective and efficient transportation system can play in delivering social, environmental and economic benefits to a community
- the requirement for increased participation from the membership to ensure the association can deliver on its mission. A key component of this participation will be through participation on OPTA committees, each with mandates that assist in the delivery of the work plan initiatives.
 - **OTE Planning Committee:** this committee provides topic and speaker suggestions for OPTA's annual conference
 - **Maintenance Committee:** comprised mainly of maintenance and fleet management personnel, this committee meets twice a year to review all aspects of vehicle maintenance practices, standards and technical issues and invites the active participation of Business members.
 - **Audit and Finance Committees:** comprised mainly of Board members including the Treasurer, these two committees oversee the preparation of the annual budget for Board approval, and the audit process to ensure compliance with all aspects of the audit engagement.

**Ontario Public Transit Association
Major Work Plan Initiatives 2014- 2016**

Description	2014	2015	2016
General Association Requirements – One time and Ongoing			
Establish and maintain OPTA Committees	X	X	X
Assess adequacy of membership fees	X	X	
Complete follow-up membership satisfaction survey			X
Monitor and apply use of OPTA Training, Research & Promotion [TRP] fund	X	X	X
Regular meetings with members to gather feedback on needs and expectations	X	X	X
Influence provincial government to make decisions in support of public transit			
Schedule meetings with Ministers and/or senior officials <i>as appropriate</i> in the following Ministries:			
▪ Transportation	X	X	X
▪ Finance	X	X	X
▪ Community and Social Services	X	X	X
▪ Infrastructure	X	X	X
▪ Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing	X	X	X
▪ Premier's Office	X	X	X
Develop and maintain links with staff in Ministers' offices <i>as appropriate</i>	X	X	X
Produce Position Papers for key issues such as			
▪ Pre-Budget Consultations	X	X	X
▪ Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	X	X	X
▪ MTO Regulatory Changes	X	X	X
▪ Others as appropriate	X	X	X
Co-operate with Media enquiries to ensure OPTA's views are understood	X	X	X
Monitor and address regulatory and funding issues	X	X	X
Consideration of an annual transit reception for MPPs	X	X	X
Share data relating to the benefits with decision makers, members and media	X	X	X
Share information and provide opportunities to network			
Hold Annual Regional Managers Meetings in the Fall timeframe	X	X	X
Hold Annual Province-wide Meetings on			
▪ Accessibility	X	X	X
▪ Marketing	X	X	X
▪ Maintenance [2x]	X	X	X
▪ Trainers		X	X
▪ Others as required	X	X	X
Hold Annual General Meeting and Board Elections	X	X	X
Hold annual conference/trade show [OTE]	X	X	X
Ensure opportunity for member roundtable discussions in OTE conference sessions	X	X	X
Membership Directory available in soft copy format	X	X	X
Provide members with email contact lists upon request	X	X	X
Obtain feedback and respond to existing and potential members	X	X	X

**Ontario Public Transit Association
Major Work Plan Initiatives 2014- 2016**

Description	2014	2015	2016
Deliver programs focused on the educational and technical needs of the industry			
Promote and oversee PRIDE Train the Trainer Programs	X	X	X
Assess potential new training programs, and partnership in development of same		X	X
Work with Bus Council on program content and participation	X	X	X
Host workshops on issues of interest to members as applicable	X	X	X
Upgrade, Advertise and Maintain OPTA Web Site	X	X	X
Assess the need for other member committees and meetings	X	X	X
Maintenance Committee meetings and information sharing as appropriate	X	X	X
Assist members to influence local governments to develop transit-supportive public policy			
Update Municipal Advocacy Tool Kit	X		
Periodic e-mails of the "News and Information Update" to members	X	X	X
Post all position papers and key communications on web site	X	X	X
Consider holding a one-day transit forum for members of municipal council		X	
Strengthen links with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to ensure OPTA members are aware of AMO initiatives	X	X	X

**Operating Estimates
Ontario Public Transit Association
2014 to 2016**

Description	2014	2015*	2016*
Revenue			
Membership Fees	170,000	173,000	176,000
Annual Conference Revenue	43,000	45,000	45,000
Training Revenue	7,000	9,000	9,500
Meeting Revenue & Sponsorship			
Interest	500	500	500
Other			
Transfer from Reserve ⁽¹⁾		3,200	11,400
Total	220,500	230,700	242,400
Expenditures			
Staff Salaries	137,000	140,000	145,000
Travel and Conference Fees	19,000	20,000	21,000
General Office	22,500	25,000	27,000
Financial Services and Audit	14,500	15,500	16,500
Insurance	4,000	4,200	4,400
Member Services	23,000	26,000	28,500
Other	500		
Total	220,500	230,700	242,400

Notes:

* Projected deficits in any FY will be covered by transfers from the Reserve as required. As set out in the Work Plan, the Board will work to assess the adequacy of membership fees, identify new sources of revenue going forward, and monitor the balance sheet to ensure reserves do not exceed CRA guidelines.