



**Written Statement of  
Bill Carpenter  
Chief Executive Officer  
Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority  
Before the  
New York State Joint Legislative Public Hearing  
2013-14 Executive Budget Proposal**

**TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION**

**January 31, 2013**

**Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority  
1372 East Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14609**

Chairman DeFrancisco, Chairman Farrell, Chairman Fuschillo, Chairman Gantt, and members of the Committee, my name is Bill Carpenter. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA).

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share, on behalf of the RGRTA Board of Commissioners and our 832 employees, our progress in achieving our vision to become the preferred transportation choice for the residents of Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Together the people of RGRTA share a commitment and a passion to provide on time, safe, and affordable public transit, including Para-transit service, so that our customers can access jobs, health care, education, retail, and cultural activities.

First I wish to thank Governor Cuomo and Lt. Governor Duffy for their hard work on the Executive budget. We appreciate that the 2013-14 Mass Transportation Operating Assistance (STOA) appropriation for Upstate Transit Authorities has been maintained. In addition we applaud the continued equitable distribution of this funding across the Upstate Transit Authorities.

We have achieved seven consecutive years of financial stability. In March I will recommend to our Commissioners that the \$1 fare we instituted in 2008 remain in place for the next three years. This way, transit-dependent customers can affordably get to their destinations and keep the economy moving.

Guided by a disciplined private sector mindset with a performance focused culture, we're driving forward to achieve sustainable growth in a fiscally responsible way.

Ridership has increased over the past seven years -- outpacing the national average -- and now totals over 18 million trips annually. Customer satisfaction is rising steadily as well – 55% of our bus customers say they are likely to promote our service based on their bus riding experience.

There is good reason why ridership has increased and customer satisfaction exceeds, not just others in transportation, but many other industries as well. Over the last several years our performance focus has dramatically improved service to our customers. Some examples comparing the transit experience in 2008 versus 2012:

- In 2008 we did not have the ability to reliably measure whether or not the buses reached our bus stops according to our printed schedule. When we started in 2009 we found we were on time 83% of the time. Last month we were up to 91% on time performance
- In 2009 we accepted as “normal” that 15 times a month either a bus or an operator would be unavailable to start a route. It is very difficult to satisfy your customer if the bus does not show up. Using lean six sigma methodologies we identified root causes and implemented changed processes. This month is our 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive month every route has been covered.
- Last summer we redesigned our most heavily traveled route, the Route 10. We improved frequency at the busiest times, adjusted the path the bus takes, modified where bus stops were located...resulting in increased ridership and no additional cost to the Authority!

**Our Performance Culture works!**

Our vision to be the preferred transportation choice can only be achieved by continuously improving in areas that are key to our success – financial performance, on time performance, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement.

As part of our ongoing technology investments to drive service excellence, we've harnessed GPS technology and solved for our customers the mystery of 'Where's my Bus?' Digital signs at our 15 busiest bus stops in Downtown and around Rochester provide real time bus arrival times. Text, voice, or email messages now notify customers on their cell phones when the next three buses are due, replacing anxiety ("Did I miss the bus?" or "How long do I need to wait?") with peace of mind. Usage of these innovative transit tools continues to grow at a rapid pace and now exceed 100,000 inquiries every month. Just recently we placed the bus locator technology on our web site so that our customers can use their smart phone to see— real time -- the bus drive to their location.

We continue to measure, monitor, and report with full transparency our overall performance and progress using the industry-leading Transit Operations Performance Scorecard, or TOPS. In a very simple and clear way, TOPS conveys how every action taken and every decision made by every employee impacts and contributes to RGRTA's success. It focuses our attention and directs our efforts for continuous improvement.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Authority has exceeded its TOPS goal every single quarter.

At the end of each fiscal year, we fine-tune our goals and determine suitable targets for the upcoming year. The level of difficulty for each metric is re-calibrated to adjust for changes in staff, funding, equipment, and other resources. All of the goals we set for ourselves are challenging. Nevertheless, we believe they are achievable. Our goals for the coming year[s] are to build our infrastructure, consistently improve the customer experience, introduce innovative new products, and continue to develop and expand unique community partnerships, all to serve current and future transit users.

Our private sector mindset drives us to find solutions to deliver our successes in a fiscally constrained manner. Frankly, there is more demand to be met should additional funding be made available. I would encourage focus on the STOA funding formula that this year includes a 7.2% overall increase in STOA, yet, due to the funding formula created long ago, results in flat funding for Upstate Transit operating aid.

Two final points: The Executive Budget includes two items that I would urge your support: First, the inclusion of \$18.5M into the non-MTA capital program (also known as the State Dedicated Fund) supports capital asset purchases necessary to help insure our system remains in a state of Good Repair. Second, Changes to the Article VII Transportation and Economic and Development Bill, Part B makes permanent the redistribution of the statewide collected transmission tax between the Upstate (PTOA) and downstate (MMTOA) Transit accounts in an equitable manner.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, the employees and the communities served by RGRTA, I want to thank Governor Cuomo for his Executive Budget and the Legislature for your ongoing support for Transit. We effectively use your funding to improve the quality of life in our area. You have my commitment to successfully serve our communities as we drive forward to be the preferred transportation choice.

