



FY2024 CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT



Alfreda Camacho Maratita
**Special Assistant for
Public Transportation**

Special Message from the Special Assistant for Public Transportation

As we present the FY2024 Citizen Centric Report for the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA), I am truly honored to reflect on the remarkable progress we've made together. This year has been pivotal for COTA, marked by our dedication to enhancing public transportation services throughout the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

One of our most significant accomplishments this year has been the successful rebranding and launch of Blue Line 1B fixed route service which covers the villages along Beach Road, San Antonio, Koblerville, As Lito, and the Northern Marianas College in Fina Sisu, Saipan. This initiative not only revitalized our image but also made our services more recognizable and accessible to our community. We are proud to report that we have served **68,564** rides from both the demand-responsive shared ride program and fixed route system, a testament to the community's growing trust and engagement with our transit system. The total revenue collected in FY2024 for COTA's program income account amounted to **\$79,063.44**.

Additionally, we are proud to announce the approval of a little over **\$200,000.00** in

operational funds from the Department of Interior: Office of Insular Affairs - Technical Assistance Program to expand transit services for Rota and Tinian, aimed at improving accessibility and service quality for our residents on these islands. This initiative has received strong support from Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, who share our vision for a more connected Commonwealth.

Looking ahead, we are excited to share plans for future transit infrastructure projects incorporating clean energy surface transit solutions. These initiatives reflect our commitment to sustainability and innovation, ensuring that our public transportation network meets current needs and anticipates future challenges and opportunities.

I want to extend my gratitude to the CNMI community for your steadfast support and collaboration. Your trust and feedback have been invaluable as we strive to provide affordable, safe, and reliable transportation services. Together, we are building a more resilient and accessible Commonwealth.

For more information about our services and future projects, please visit our website at transit.cnmi.gov, follow our social media account on Facebook and Instagram: "Transit CNMI" or reach out to us at (670) 236-2682. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, as we work hand in hand towards a brighter and sustainable future for our community. Thank you for your partnership and commitment to the betterment of the CNMI.

Yours In Transit,

Alfreda Camacho Maratita
Special Assistant for Public Transportation
Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA)
Office of the Governor

What is COTA?

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA) was established by CNMI Public Law 17-43 on May 27, 2011. COTA is responsible for the development and establishment of a public transportation system in the Commonwealth.

COTA is administrated Special Assistant for Public Transportation who is appointed by the Governor and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

COTA has six-member Commonwealth Public Transportation Advisory Board established by Public Law 18-51.

Mission Statement:

COTA shall provide the citizens of our communities with a dependable, reliable, safe and cost-effective public transit system in order to reduce energy consumption, strengthen cultural values, and contribute economic development for the residents of the Commonwealth.



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Performance and Progress



Demand Responsive Shared Ride Service, Call-A-Ride Saipan (CARS)

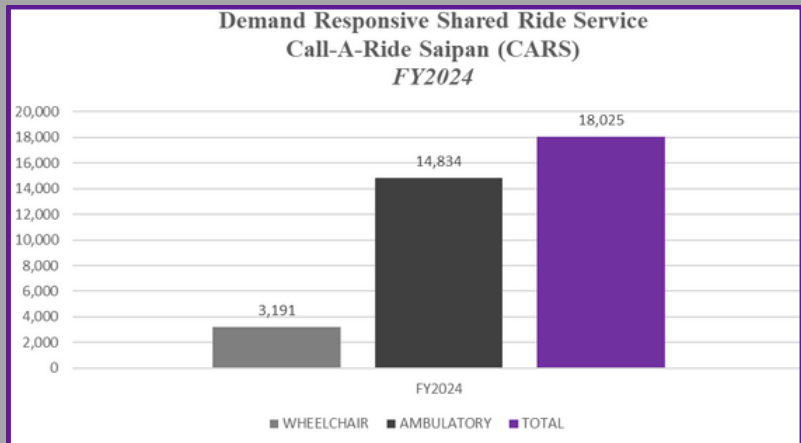
The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority's (COTA) Demand Responsive Shared Ride Service, Call-A-Ride Saipan (CARS) ridership data shows a total of **18,025** trips that were made in FY 2024. Please see the bar graph on the right side of this page.

CARS is a reservation based, curb-to-curb, and door to door service that is offered to anyone on the island. All riders must call two (2) days in advance for reservations.

Operation Hours:

Monday - Friday: 06:30 am to 08:30 pm

Weekends & Holidays: 06:30 am to 08:00 pm



Total Ridership: 18,025

GRANTS

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration		
Description:	Amount:	Status:
Low or No Emissions Competitive Program - Purchase of Electric Transit Vehicles and Charging Stations.	\$2,373,675	Active/Executed
Areas of Persistent Poverty: Transportation Master Plan and Ferry Feasibility Study	\$800,000	Active/Executed
Operating Assistance, Program Management, and Project Management Services.	\$468,251	Active/Executed
FIA COVID-19 Research and Demonstration	\$300,000	Pending Review
Operating Assistance and Program Administrative	\$2,373,872	Active/Executed
Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs		
Technical Assistant Program Grant	\$207,027	Approved
FY23 Marianas Earmarks		
Bus Stop Shelters	\$4,500,000	Approved
Bus Transfer Stations	\$900,000	Approved
Covered Bus Parking	\$3,000,000	Approved

FY 2024 Accomplishments

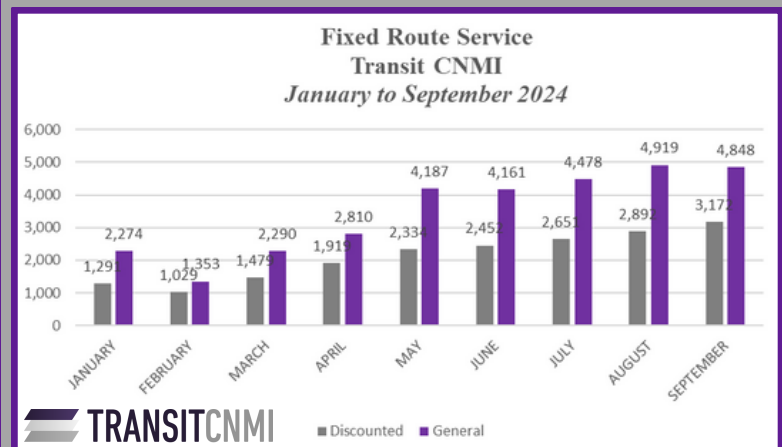
- October 2024: COTA in collaboration with Turnkey Solutions, launched the marketing campaign to promote COTA's Fixed Route Service (TransitCNMI) Blue Line 1B on Saipan.
- November 2023: COTA did a trial run of its Fixed Route Service (TransitCNMI) Blue Line 1B offering free rides to the community till December 2023. The ridership data reveals a substantial ridership of **5,337** recorded by COTA affirming the rising demand for public transportation in the CNMI.
- January 1, 2024: COTA successfully initiated the soft launch of its Fixed Route: Blue Line 1B, operating along Route 33 (Beach Road). This service comprises of two (2) buses, concurrently traversing from Garapan to Tottotville in both Northbound and Southbound.
- July 2024: the Special Assistant for Public Transportation represented COTA under the Office of the Governor in the presentation of the CNMI's Built Infrastructure Highlights that include: Accessible Transit Electrification, Park-and-Ride Facilities, and the CNMI Inter-Island Ferry System, and Transit Tech.
- July 16, 2024: the Special Assistant for Public Transportation along with COTA team members celebrated Rural Transit Day with a special proclamation signing by the Honorable Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang.
- August 2024: COTA undertook the TSA Assessment with Mr. Wilfredo Pena and Mr. Edgar Bernardo regarding COTA's facility, vehicles, operations, safety, etc.
- September 2024: The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration was on-site at COTA's Administrative Building and Maintenance Facility to conduct the FY2024 State Management Review Audit for our agency.

Fixed Route Service (TransitCNMI) Blue Line 1B

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA) conducted a trial run of its Fixed Route Service (TransitCNMI), offering free rides to the community from November to December 2023. During this period, total ridership reached **5,337**, highlighting the demand for public transportation in the CNMI.

On January 1, 2024, COTA officially launched the Fixed Route Service (TransitCNMI) Blue Line 1B, introducing a fare of \$1.00 for the general public and \$0.50 for individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, active military/veterans & their families, and students. From January to September 2024, ridership totaled **50,539** passengers.

This increasing usage underscores the multiple benefits of a well-established transit system, including cost-effective and sustainable travel, reduced traffic congestion, improved environmental impact, enhanced social equity, and convenient exploration for both residents and tourists. A growing public transportation network contributes significantly to the overall development and vitality of the CNMI community.



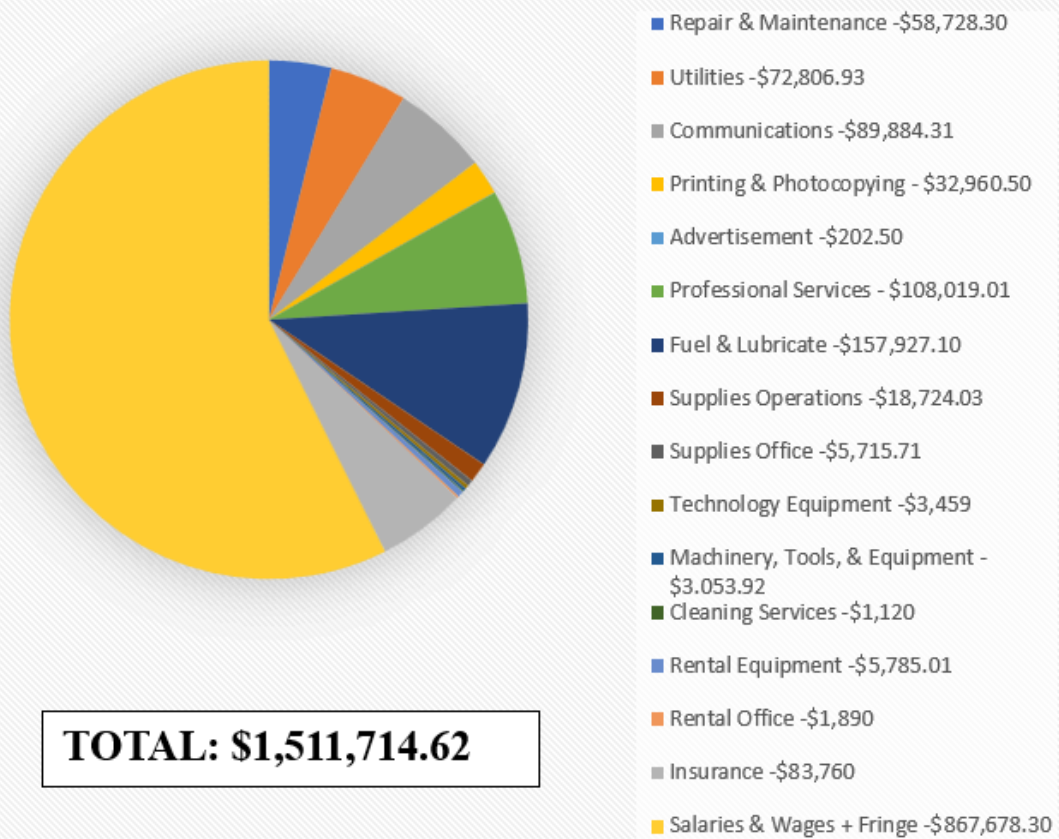
Total Ridership: 50,539

Revenue and Expenses

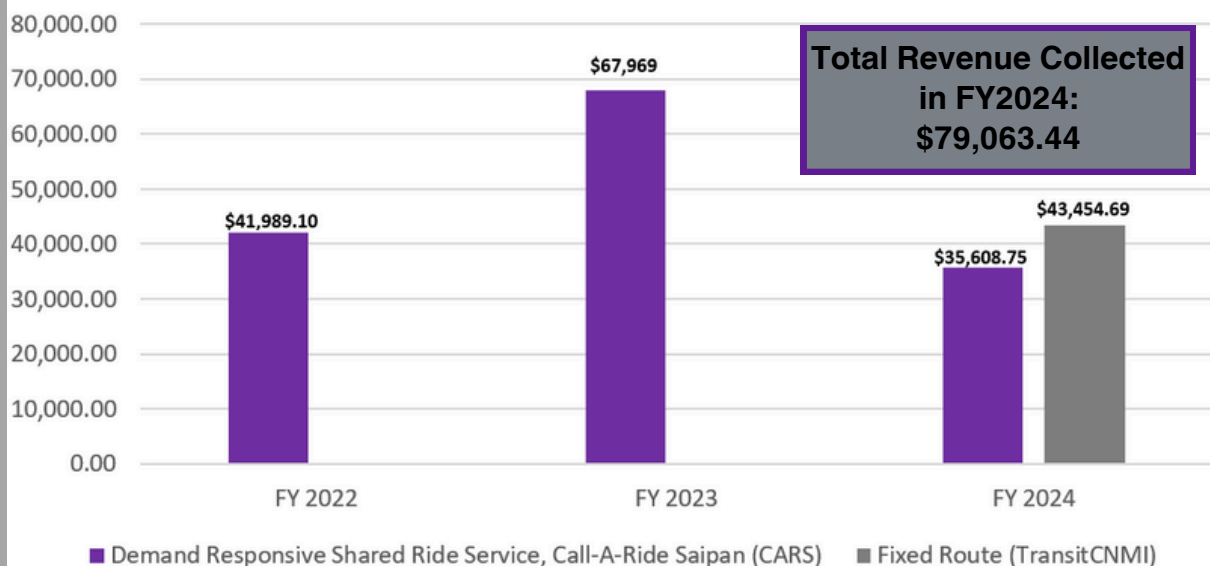


COTA's revenue includes federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, as well as contributions to the Program Income account from community and partner agencies that purchase transit vouchers for services like the Demand Responsive Shared Ride Service, Call-A-Ride Saipan (CARS), and the Fixed Route Service (TransitCNMI). Partnering agencies include the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Center for Living Independently, the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation, Northern Marianas College, and the Public School System Co-Op Program, all of which utilize public transportation on Saipan.

FY 2024 Expenditures



COTA's Program Income Account Revenue Collection



Looking Forward



Expansion of Fixed Route Service

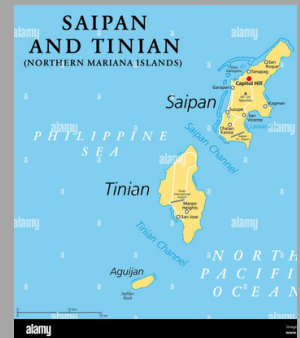
The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority has launched its Fixed Route service for Blue Line 1B that operates through Route 33 (Beach Road). This route connects from Garapan to the Northern Marianas College (NMC).



COTA is now in the planning phase of expanding the Fixed Route Service to the Northside of the island and Middle Road. We anticipate for the assessments to begin in the 1st quarter of FY2025.

Expansion of Services to Tinian and Rota

COTA was approved for \$207,027 through the Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, Technical Assistant Program grant that will support expansion efforts to Tinian and Rota, CNMI.



COTA will be meeting with the Mayor of Rota and the Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan to discuss the initial assessment and gather surveys from community members to gauge the need for public transportation in the islands of Tinian and Rota.

Ferry Feasibility Study and Transportation Master Plan

COTA was awarded \$800,000 from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Areas of Persistent Poverty Competitive Grant.



On February 2024, the Department of Finance, Division of Procurement Services issued the Request for Proposals for the ferry feasibility study and transportation master plan.

Acquisition of Electric Vehicles & Charging Infrastructure

Acquisition of Electric Vehicles (EVs) & Charging Infrastructure: COTA received \$2M from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration through the Low/No Competitive Grant Program. COTA anticipates to issue the Invitation to Bid sometime within the 1st quarter of FY 2025.



A&E Design and Construction of Bus Shelters

COTA received \$4,500,000 through the FY23 Marianas Earmarks from Congressman Kilili Sablan's Office. This project is currently in the planning phase as COTA will be working with the Department of Public Works-Federal Highway Section to finalize placements for all bus stop shelters. We anticipate to issue the ITB/RFP in the 1st quarter of FY2025.



A&E Design and Construction of Bus Transfer Stations

COTA received \$900,000 through the FY23 Marianas Earmarks from Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan's Office. This project is still under the planning phase as we work with the Department of Public Works in building the specifications for the bus transfer stations in Kagman, Northern Marianas College, and Garapan. We anticipate to issue the RFP/ITB in the 2nd Quarter of FY2025.



A&E Design & Construction of Solar Covered Parking

COTA received \$3,000,000 through the FY23 Marianas Earmarks from Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan's Office. This project is currently under the planning phase as we work with the Department of Public Works on building the specifications that is conducive to our administrative building and maintenance facility. We anticipate to issue the RFP/ITB in the 3rd Quarter of FY2025.



Contact Information:

COTA's Administrative Building and Maintenance Facility
12841, Lower Base, Dr., Saipan
Caller Box 10007
Saipan MP, 96950
Telephone No.: (670) 664-2682
One-Call/One-Click: (670) 236-2682
Email: alfredac.maratita@gov.mp
Website: transit.cnmi.gov

Administrative Office

Monday to Friday: 07:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Closed on weekends and Holidays

For reservations, please contact COTA's One-Call/One-Click Transportation Information Resource Center at (670) 236-2682 two (2) days in advance to schedule your desired trip.