COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY

CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2026

ABOUT COTA

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA) was established by CNMI Public Law 17-43 on May 27, 2011. COTA opened on January 28, 2013 and is responsible for the development and establishment of public transportation in the Commonwealth. COTA is administered by the Special Assistant for Public Transportation who is appointed by the Governor. Under Public Law 18-51, the COTA has a six-member Commonwealth Public Transportation Advisory Board.

OUR MISSION

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority 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.

OUR VISION

Transportation is always the link, and never the barrier, to accessing training, employment, childcare, and related destinations. We shall be recognized as the premier island-wide public transit provider committed to safety, courtesy, quality, responsiveness, efficiency, and innovation.

OUR GOALS

1. Ensure that the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color, or national origin.
2. Identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects of programs and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.
3. Promote a full and fair participation of all affected populations in transportation decision making.
4. Prevent the denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations.
5. Ensure meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

MESSAGE FROM THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT

Alfreda Camacho Maratita
Special Assistant for
Public Transportation

As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2026, I am proud of the work COTA continues to do to serve the people of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. Our responsibility is to provide transportation services that help our residents access employment, education, healthcare, and other essential needs. While we continue to improve and expand our services, we also recognize the challenges our islands face and the importance of remaining responsive to the needs of our communities.

During FY2026, COTA provided **59,728** rides throughout the Commonwealth, including **1,762** rides in response to the transportation needs created by Super Typhoon Sinlaku and Super Typhoon Bavi. These numbers represent the scale of our operations and the important role COTA played in helping residents access transportation during a difficult time for our islands.

The impacts of Sinlaku placed significant demands on our employees, vehicles, and resources. As our communities began recovering, COTA continued working to meet transportation needs while responding to operational challenges. The dedication of our employees during this period demonstrated the importance of having a transportation system that can respond when our people need it most.

Throughout the year, COTA also continued working to improve services and expand mobility options. From fixed-route bus service on Saipan to demand-response transportation on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian, we remain committed to helping our residents get where they need to go. We continued pursuing federal investments to strengthen our fleet, improve transportation facilities, increase accessibility, and explore future transportation options, including the potential for ferry service.

The progress COTA has made reflects the dedication of our employees, the support of our partners, and the responsible use of resources entrusted to us. We recognize that there is still more work to accomplish. Maintaining reliable services, preparing for emergencies, improving facilities, and identifying new ways to serve our communities require continued attention and commitment.

I am grateful to our COTA team members for their hard work and dedication, particularly during a year that tested our operations and resilience. I also thank Governor Apatang and Lieutenant Governor Mendiola, our federal and local partners, and the residents of the CNMI for their continued support. Most importantly, thank you to our passengers and the communities we serve. Your transportation needs remain at the center of our responsibility, and your trust is something we must continue to earn through our work.

As we look ahead, our responsibility is to build on the progress made, protect the investments entrusted to COTA, and continue developing transportation services that meet the needs of our people. The work of public transportation does not end with a fiscal year. It requires continued planning, responsible decisions, and a commitment to ensuring that residents throughout the Commonwealth have transportation options they can depend on.

Thank you for allowing COTA to serve our communities. May we continue moving forward together, strengthening our services and connecting our islands for the benefit of present and future generations.

In Humble Service,

Alfreda Camacho Maratita
Special Assistant for Public Transportation
Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

OUR SERVICES

- TransitCNMI - Fixed Route Services
  - Blue Line 1B - Paseo De Marianas to NMC
  - Green Line - As Matuis to Paseo De Marianas
- Call-A-Ride - Demand Responsive Shared Ride Services
  - Call-A-Ride Saipan (CARS)
  - Call-A-Ride Rota (CARR)
  - Call-A-Ride Tinian (CART)

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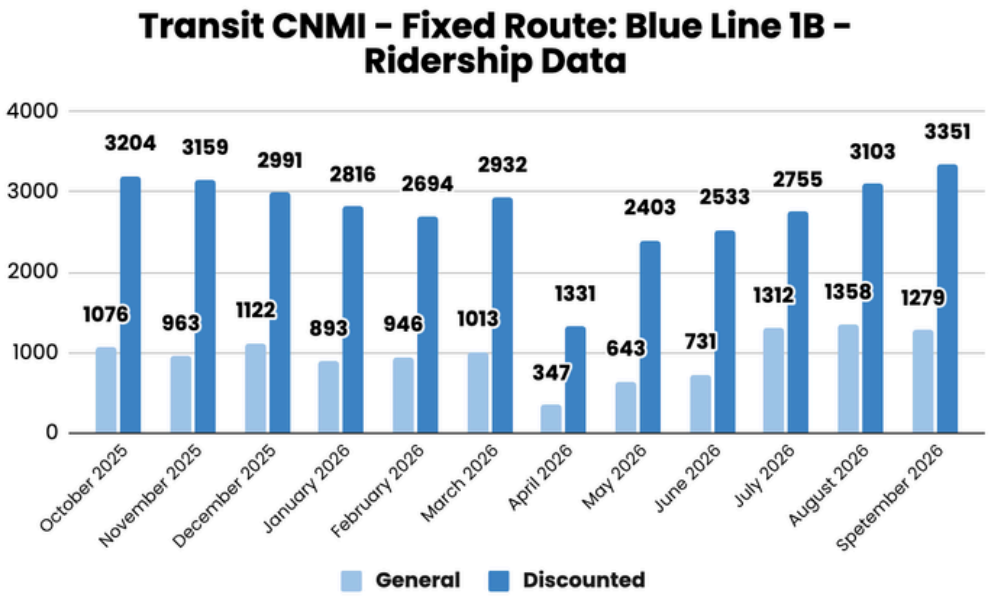
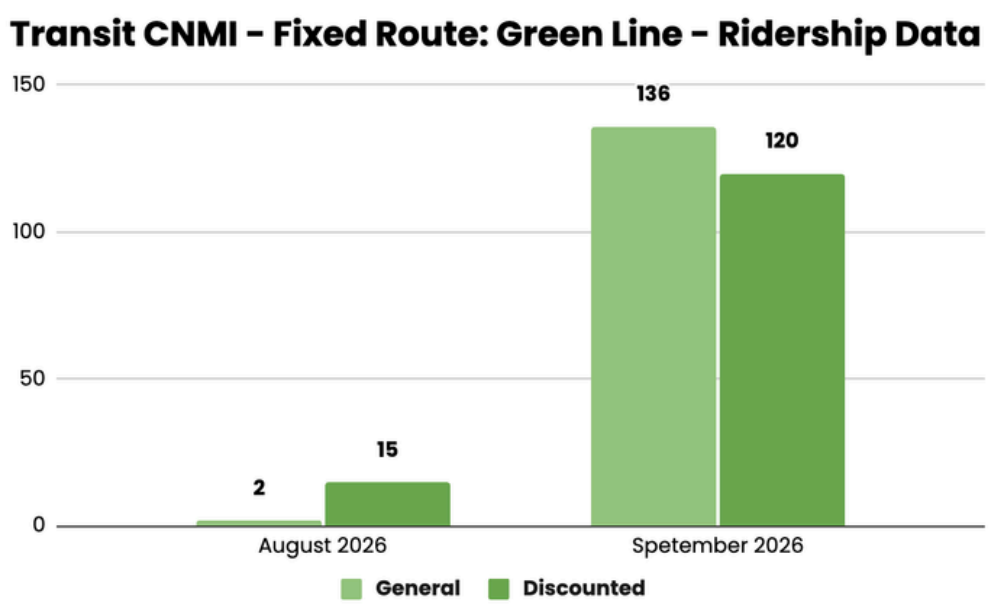
PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS
CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2026

TRANSIT CNMI - FIXED ROUTE

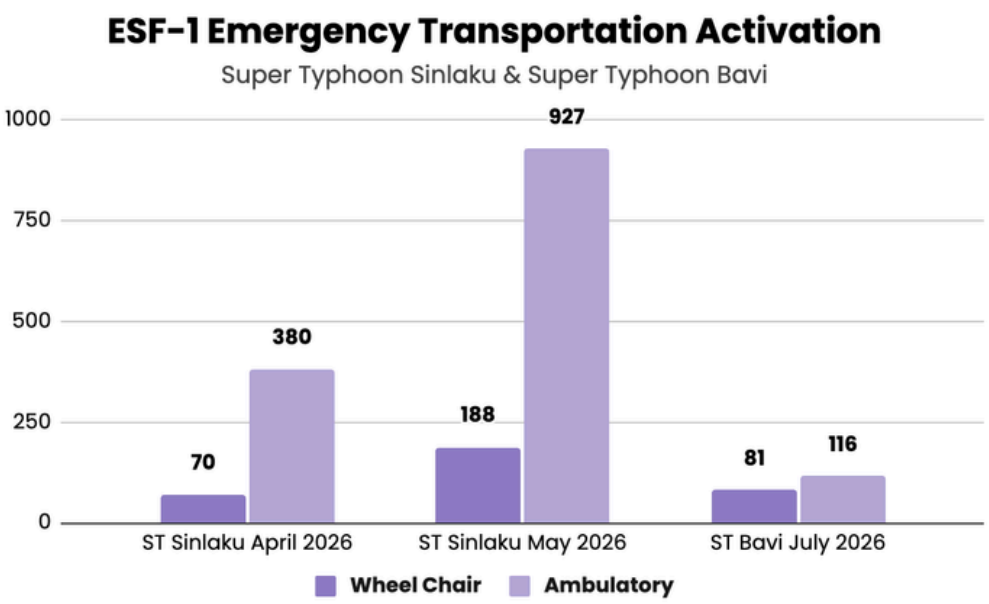


From October 2025 to September 2026, the Transit CNMI - Fixed Route Blue Line 1B route had a total of **44,955** rides.



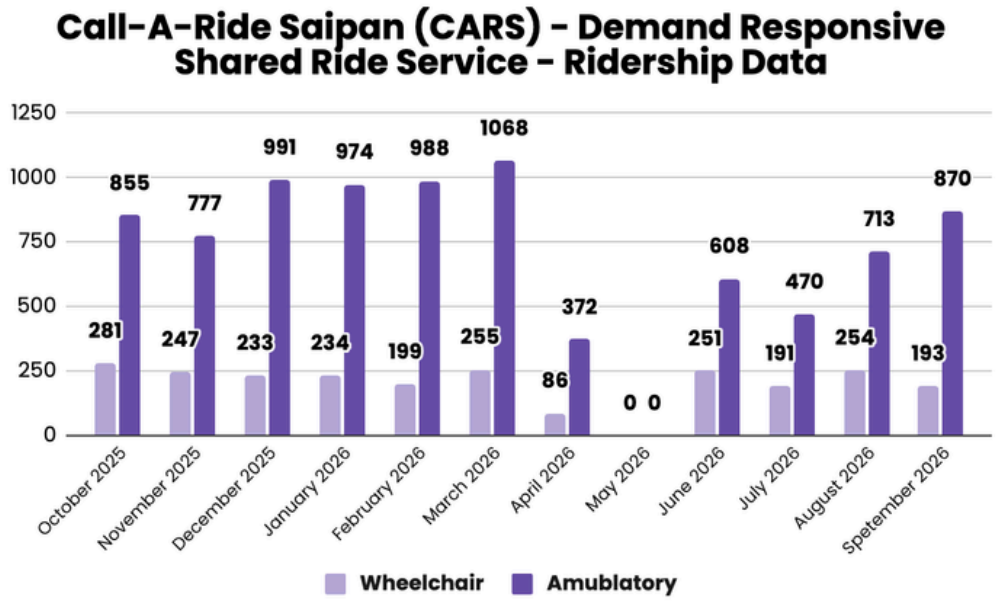
In August of 2026, COTA launched the Green Line, connecting residents from As Matuis to Paseo De Marianas. From October 2025 to September 2026, the Transit CNMI - Fixed Route Green Line had a total of **273** rides.

ESF-1 EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION



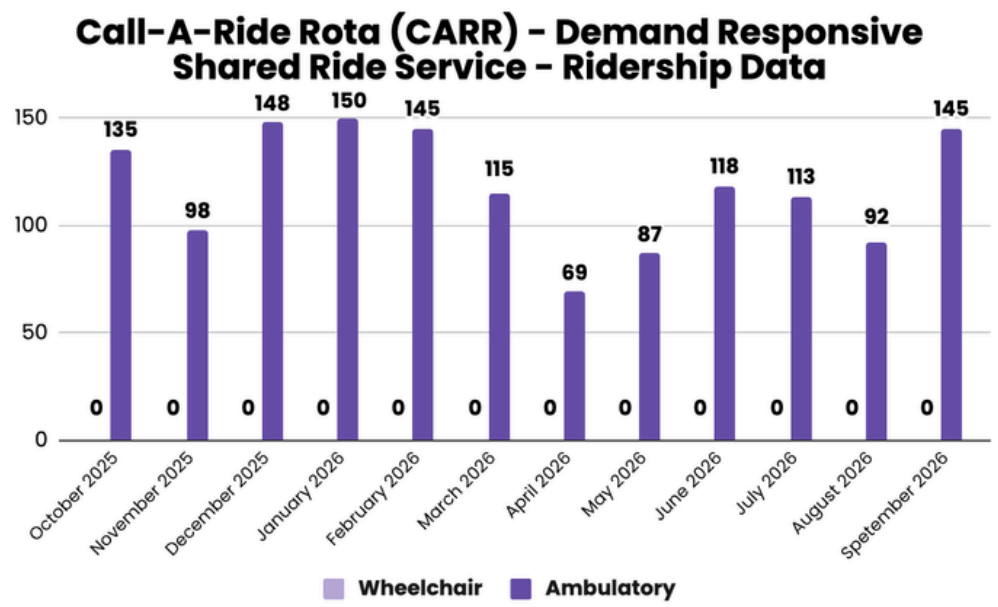
On April, May and July of 2026, COTA was activated in support of CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management's Emergency Operations Center for ESF-1 transportation activation for shelter, relief and recovery for Super Typhoons Sinlaku and Bavi. For Super Typhoon Sinlaku from April to May, we had a total of **1,565** rides. For Super Typhoon Bavi in July, we had a total of **197** rides.

CALL-A-RIDE SAIPAN (CARS)



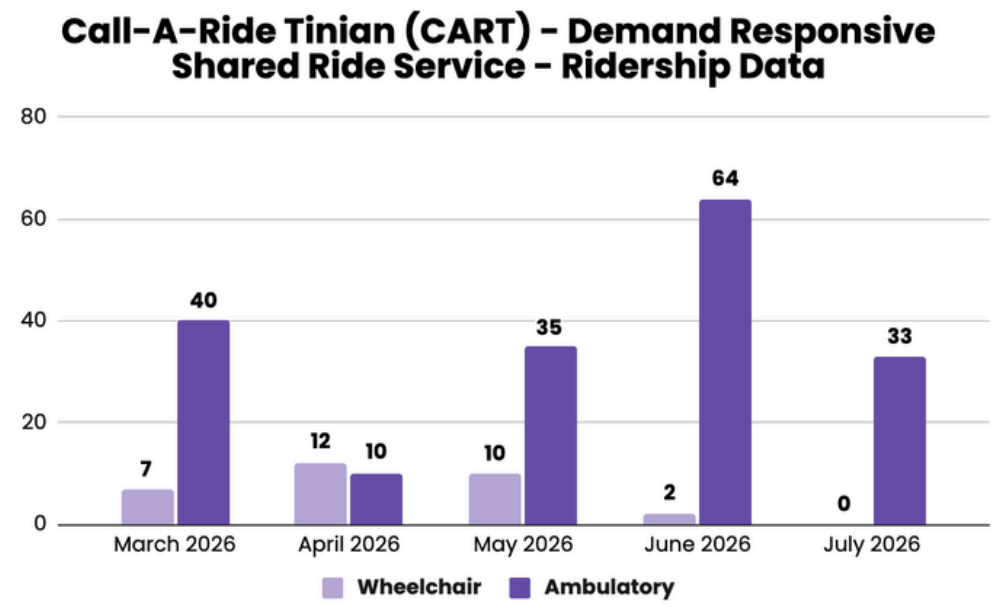
From October 2025 to September 2026, the Call-A-Ride Saipan (CARS) - Demand Responsive Shared Ride service had a total of **11,110** rides.

PILOT PROJECT: CALL-A-RIDE ROTA



COTA has conducted a pilot project on the island of Rota to determine the feasibility of public transportation in the CNMI. From October 2025 to September 2026, we had a total of **1,415** rides on the island of Rota.

PILOT PROJECT: CALL-A-RIDE TINIAN

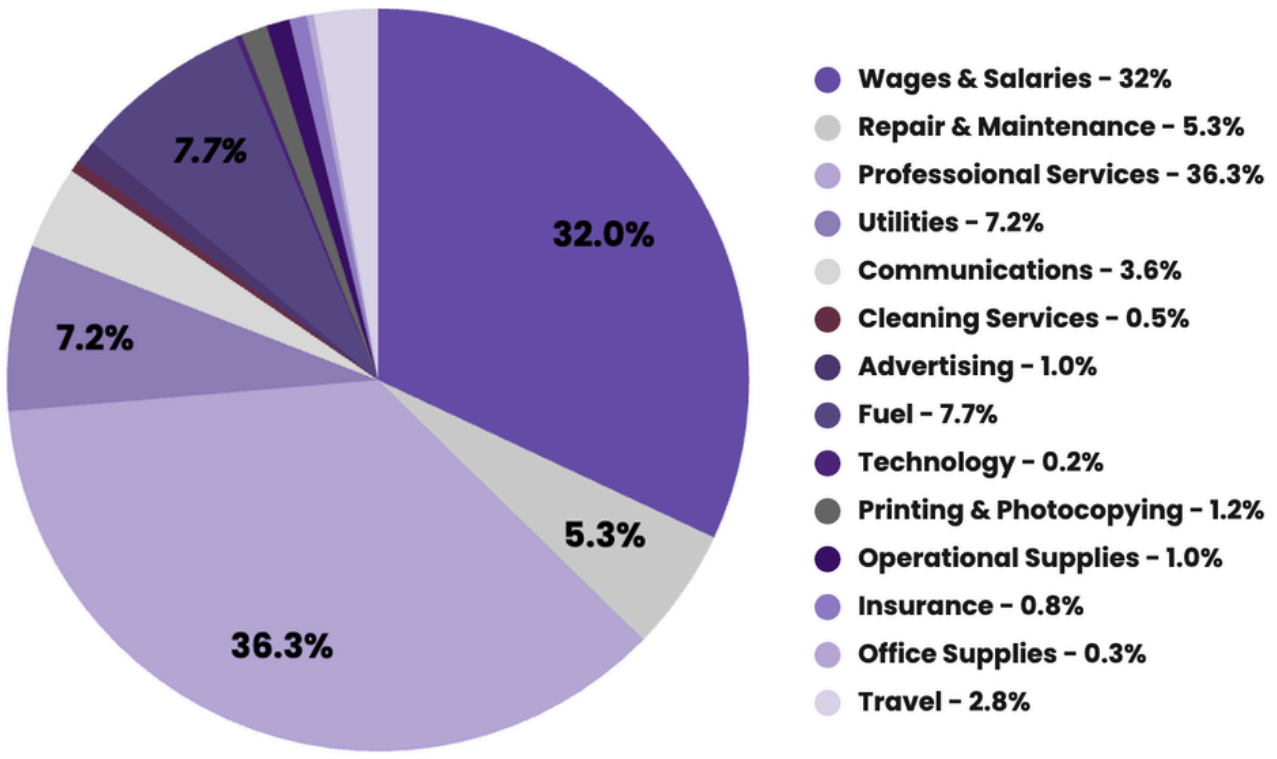


On March 17, 2026, COTA started the pilot project on the island of Tinian to determine the feasibility of public transportation in the CNMI. From March 2026 to July 2026, we had a total of **213** rides.

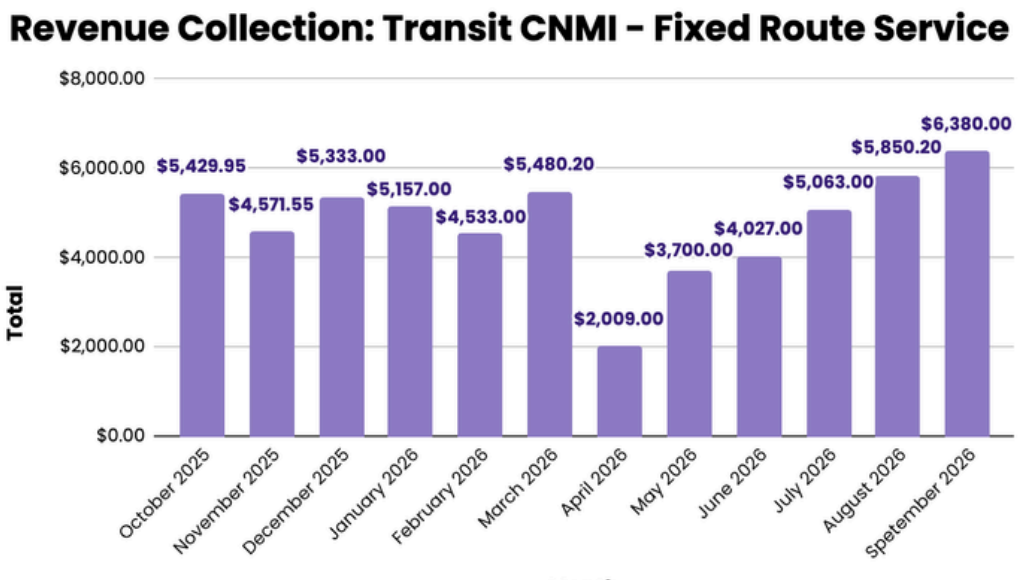
EXPENSES AND REVENUE
CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2026

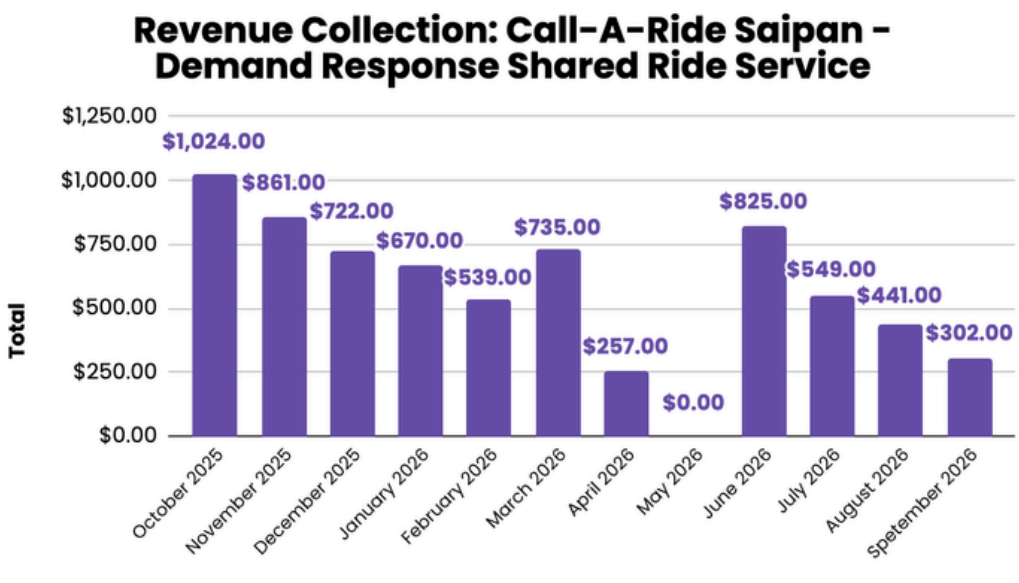
EXPENSES

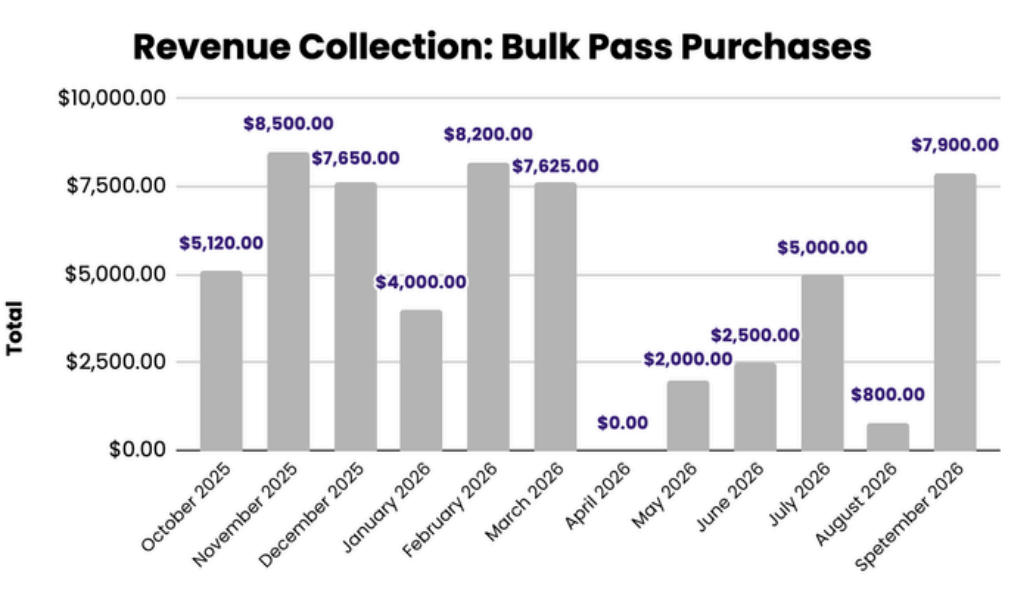
WAGES & SALARIES	$805,002.63
REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	$134,405.44
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	$915,278.36
UTILITIES	$182,172.79
COMMUNICATIONS	$91,558.99
CLEANING SERVICES	$13,315.40
ADVERTISING	$24,505.93
FUEL	$194,285.42
TECHNOLOGY	$6,082.94
PRINTING & PHOTOCOPYING	$29,050.31
OPERATIONAL SUPPLIES	$25,414.06
INSURANCE	$19,132.49
OFFICE SUPPLIES	$7,782.94
TRAVEL	$70,030.63
TOTAL:	**$2,518,018.33**



REVENUE - PROGRAM INCOME ACCOUNT







FISCAL YEAR 2026 REVENUE	
TRANSIT CNMI - FIXED ROUTE SERVICE	$57,533.90
CALL-A-RIDE SAIPAN (CARS) - DEMAND RESPONSE	$6,925.00
BULK PASS PURCHASES	$59,295.00
TOTAL:	**$123,753.90**

GRANTS

COMPETITIVE GRANTS	
CNMI PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM EXPANSION	$6,387,346.00
FY21 SECTION 5339 LOW OR NO EMISSIONS...	$2,372,675.00
FORMULA GRANTS	
FY24 & FY25 CONSOLIDATED SECTION 5311	$2,867,089.00
FY22 CONSOLIDATED SECTION 5311	$468,251.00
COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING	
FY23 CPF - BUS SHELTERS	$4,500,000.00
FY23 MARIANAS EARMARKS	
BUS TRANSFER STATIONS	$900,000.00
COTA'S COVERED PARKING FACILITY	$3,000,000.00
TOTAL:	**$20,496,361.00**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE PROJECTS

CITIZEN CENTRIC REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2026

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Throughout November, COTA celebrated Veterans Day by offering free rides to all veterans.
- In partnership with Congresswoman Kimberlyn Kind-Hinds, COTA participated in the Heroes Among Us: Veteran Resource Fair, promoting public transportation opportunities to veterans and the community.
- In December 2025, COTA completed the Ferry Feasibility Study (FFS) and 20-Year Sustainable Transportation Master Plan (STMP), exploring ferry routes between the Commonwealth and Guam and outlining sustainable transit expansion and fleet maintenance strategies.
- On December 7, 2026, Mr. John Demapan, Jr., Marketing Specialist, and Mr. John Cabrera, Transit Operator, received the Walk of Fame Star Award from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP).
- On December 8, 2026, Alfreda Camacho Maratita, Special Assistant for Public Transportation, spoke at the 6th National Rural Transit Assistance Program Conference in Austin, Texas.
- In partnership with the Department of Labor, COTA participated in the 2026 Job Fair, promoting employment opportunities and public transportation services.
- All COTA employees completed Government Ethics Act training and certification through the Office of the Public Auditor.
- In March 2026, Brian Reyes, Jr., Finance Coordinator, attended Procurement Series I: Introduction to Transit Procurement training in Newark, New Jersey.
- On March 12, 2026, Public Law 24-24 was signed into law to provide greater authority to government transit buses owned and operated by the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA), establishing traffic safety measures.
- On March 17, 2026, COTA launched Call-A-Ride Tinian, a demand-responsive shared-ride service, expanding public transportation across the Commonwealth.
- COTA celebrated Easter by hosting a community Easter Egg Hunt.
- In partnership with the CNMI Zoning Office, COTA participated in the 2026 Island-Wide Clean Up at Paseo De Marianas.
- Following Super Typhoon Sinlaku, COTA supported CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management through Emergency Support Function 1: Transportation, providing shelter, relief, and recovery transportation and completing 1,565 rides.
- COTA transported 35 U.S. Forest Service Region IX firefighters and their equipment from the airport to support Super Typhoon Sinlaku recovery operations.
- COTA supported the Guam National Guard's recovery efforts by providing transportation and helping soldiers access grant relief resources to restore their homes.
- In May 2026, Workforce Investment Agency (WIA) trainees Ms. Isa Rios and Ms. Hazel Efraim completed their training and transitioned into full-time positions in COTA's Administration and Finance sections.
- On June 6, 2026, COTA participated in the Rise Up: Sinlaku Recovery and Appreciation event hosted by the Saipan Mayor's Office and KKMP Foundation.
- On June 8, 2026, COTA attended the 2026 UCEDD Summit and received a medal of appreciation for serving the disability community through transportation services.
- On June 30, 2026, Paul Ruechoway, Transit Safety Officer, and Peter Maratita, Operations and Maintenance Supervisor (Rota), attended the National Rural Transit Assistance Program Tribal and Rural Transit Mini-Conference and earned PASS 8.0 certification through the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).
- Following Super Typhoon Bavi, COTA supported CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management through Emergency Support Function 1: Transportation, providing shelter, relief, and recovery services and completing 197 rides.
- On July 16, 2026, COTA celebrated Rural Transit Day by offering free rides and merchandise to riders.
- In early August, Yulia Aleksenko, Administrative Specialist, and Sharon Shiprit, Operations and Maintenance Supervisor, completed Equal Employment Opportunity training through the Office of Personnel Management.
- On August 28, 2026, COTA launched the Transit CNMI Fixed Route Green Line, expanding service from As Matuis to Paseo De Marianas in Garapan.
- COTA wrapped all 10 Transit CNMI Fixed Route buses, refreshing the fleet's appearance for the new fiscal year.
- In September 2026, operations supervisors and section leads Franklin Aldan, Paul Ruechoway, Peter Laniyo, Sharon Shiprit, and Jonavaughn Mafnas completed the National Transit Institute's online Introduction to Paratransit Management and Operations training.
- To close the fiscal year, COTA completed its 100 Milestone Challenge 2026, promoting wellness and healthy habits.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- **Expansion of Transit CNMI - Fixed Route Lines** – COTA plans to expand its Transit CNMI Fixed Route service with new routes serving Kagman, Capitol Hill, San Vicente, Middle Road, and Airport Road. The expansion will introduce the Blue Line 1A, Yellow Line, Red Line, and Orange Line, improving transportation access and connectivity throughout the Commonwealth.
- **Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Services for Bus Shelter Construction** – COTA is preparing a contract for Architectural and Engineering Services to design 187 bus shelters across Saipan. Future efforts will focus on advancing the design and construction of shelters along the Blue Line 1B, Green Line, and Blue Line 1A to improve passenger safety, comfort, and accessibility.
- **Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Services for COTA's Covered Parking Facility** – COTA received $3,000,000 through the FY2023 Marianas Earmarks from Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan's Office to support a covered parking facility. In collaboration with the Department of Public Works, COTA is developing project specifications to accommodate its administrative building, maintenance facility, and fleet, including future electric vehicles.
- **Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Services for Bus Transfer Stations** – COTA received $900,000 through the FY2023 Marianas Earmarks from Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan's Office to develop bus transfer stations. Plans are being finalized for proposed locations at Northern Marianas College (NMC), Garapan, and Kagman to improve route connectivity and passenger transfers.
- **Improving Transit Infrastructure** – COTA plans to upgrade existing bus stop signage and structures with more visible, accessible, and ADA-compliant features, enhancing passenger safety and improving the transit experience for individuals of all abilities.
- **Bus Replacement and Expansion Program** – COTA plans to issue solicitations for replacement and additional vans to improve fleet reliability, increase service capacity, and expand transportation access throughout the Commonwealth.
- **Acquisition of Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Charging Infrastructure** – COTA received $2,000,000 from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration through the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program Competitive Grant. In collaboration with the Office of Grants Management and State Clearinghouse, COTA plans to solicit the purchase of electric vehicles to promote sustainable transportation throughout the CNMI.
- **Continuation of Pilot Project on Rota and Tinian** – COTA plans to continue the Office of Insular Affairs-funded Co-Pilot Project for Call-A-Ride Rota (CARR) and Call-A-Ride Tinian (CART) to assess public transportation feasibility and support future service expansion on both islands.
- **Technology and Software Upgrades** – COTA plans to enhance operational efficiency through updated bus tracking, data management, and vehicle location systems. Additional investments in computers, equipment, and machinery will further strengthen productivity and service delivery.
- **Long-Term Fleet Maintenance** – COTA plans to solicit bids for a qualified vendor to provide ongoing vehicle maintenance and repairs, increasing fleet availability, reducing downtime, and ensuring reliable transportation services.
- **Mobility and Operational Training** – COTA will continue investing in employee development through specialized training in Passenger Assistance, Safety and Sensitivity (PASS), Incident Command System (ICS), and mobility management to strengthen workforce capabilities and deliver safe, efficient, and accessible transportation.