

# Federal Legislative Priorities

- MAP-21 allows transit systems to use a portion of their formula grant programs for workforce development activities. However, a 50% local match is required for training programs not offered through the National Transit Institute (NTI), which only require a 20% match.

There are rarely NTI training opportunities located within our area, and the cost to travel to NTI classes is prohibitive. Congress should amend the workforce development set-aside to allow an equal 20% local match requirement for NTI and non-NTI programs.



CATA provides a reliable, clean, comfortable and safe transportation option for Central Arkansas residents.

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CATA's River Rail provides an excellent economic development tool for Little Rock and North Little Rock.

# CATA

## Central Arkansas Transit Authority: Legislative Update



## CATA

### CENTRAL ARKANSAS TRANSIT AUTHORITY

CATA was created by an interlocal agreement in 1986 and currently serves the cities of Little Rock, North Little Rock, Maumelle, Sherwood, Jacksonville and the County of Pulaski. CATA directly operates 26 fixed bus routes, the 3.4 mile River Rail streetcar line and Links paratransit services. The agency carries nearly 3 million passengers annually systemwide.

CATA can be considered a smaller transit system in the national scope, but it is no less important to the fabric of our community. People of all walks of life rely on our services to get to work, run errands, attend critical medical appointments, and social engagements. Like other transit systems in our country, CATA helps create jobs and spurs economic development in our community.

### IMPORTANCE OF FEDERAL TRANSIT PROGRAM

CATA's partnership with the federal government through its participation in the Federal Transit program is critical. Under current Federal Transit Administration formula grant programs, CATA receives \$5.7 million per year to support its operations and capital program.

These funds are a critical component of our annual budget, and allow us to meet ridership demands, improve passenger amenities, maintain our assets in a state of good repair, and replace our aging bus fleet with new environmentally friendly CNG buses.



A passenger boards a River Rail streetcar vehicle.



# Current Projects

## MOVE CENTRAL ARKANSAS



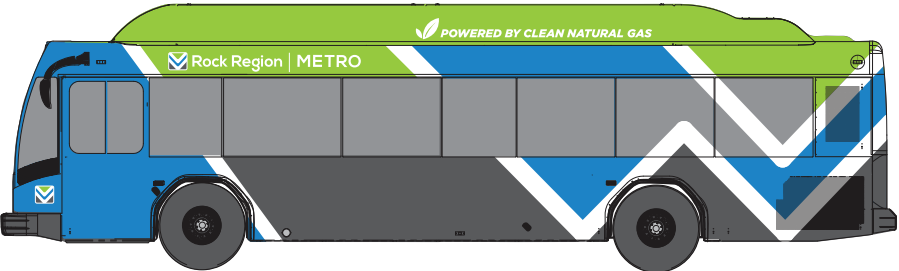
A new vision for public transportation is being developed with guidance from the business community, academic institutions, citizens, and CATA riders. The MOVE initiative will create a transit system and set of services that makes riding transit easier and more desirable for more people in the community. Additionally, MOVE is focusing on the development of a dedicated funding source that allows CATA to grow and develop in response to community needs and desires for increased transit services. MOVE also includes new branding for our agency and vehicle designs. We are proud to announce that CATA will transition to Rock Region METRO this summer.

## COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS (CNG)

The CATA Board of Directors and our funding partners have chosen to invest in the transition to cleaner burning and more cost effective natural gas buses. CATA has begun construction of a CNG fueling station and has ordered fifteen (15) new CNG powered transit buses scheduled to arrive in July.

## MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

To improve the customer experience, CATA is developing a real-time passenger information system that will use mobile technology to let our passengers know exactly when their bus will arrive. Transit passengers enjoy the opportunity to stay connected during their commute, so the project will also include free public Wi-Fi on all of CATA's buses.



In addition to proposed service improvements, CATA will be getting a name change and new look to reflect its growing importance in the region. The new buses will run on compressed natural gas.



As part of the MOVE initiative, community stakeholders worked together to identify service priorities.



CATA's new real-time information system will provide better information to passengers connecting between buses.

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## PASSAGE OF A FULLY FUNDED, LONG TERM AUTHORIZATION BILL

CATA urges Congress to pass a robust, fully funded, 6-year authorization bill prior to the expiration of the current MAP-21 extension on May 31. The uncertainty caused by the endless cycle of short term bills and extensions makes it extremely difficult to plan for the future.

If Congress fails to pass a new bill this year or extend the federal program, CATA will be forced to cut service and put its capital expansion plans on hold.

## GROW THE FEDERAL TRANSIT PROGRAM

CATA calls on Congress to find a stable source of revenue to allow for growth in the federal transit program. Congress should consider all financing options, including raising revenue through tax reform, repatriation of off-shore accounts, and increasing the motor fuels user fee.

Increased funding for the federal transit program will allow CATA to more quickly meet the growing demands of our community. CATA also opposes any attempt to remove dedicated funding for mass transit from the highway trust fund. Transit systems in America rely on the stability of a dedicated, guaranteed source of revenue.

## FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS

- CATA supports maintaining the stability and flexibility of the formula grant programs created in MAP-21, particularly the 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program, the Bus and Bus Facilities Grant Program, and the State of Good Repairs grant program.
- For CATA, the 5307 program is our primary source of funding for new bus procurements. In addition, it is important for CATA to continue to have the ability to use these funds to support preventative maintenance and paratransit services.
- CATA supports setting aside a portion of the FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Program funds for discretionary grants to allow us to pursue larger grant funds to address periodic major capital needs or to accelerate our fleet replacement.



CATA buses have bike racks. Riders can take advantage of the regional bike trails and ride the bus.



CATA's Links service provides accessible ADA-complementary paratransit for people with disabilities.

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