

Strengthened by Our Community

A Message from COTA CEO, Joanna Pinkerton

October 28, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Earlier this month, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) officially recognized COTA as **the best transit agency of our size in North America**. If this sounds like old news, it is because – incredibly – this is the second time within three years that COTA has earned this honor. It brings me a great deal of pride to be part of such an amazing organization of dedicated team members who keep this community moving.

The pride I feel is for our community as well. Achieving this level of excellence does not happen internally only. COTA's success is **generated by you** – our customers and everyone in the Central Ohio community. Whether you are a direct customer of our services or not, there are literally thousands of individuals focused on creating and living in a more equitable, more innovative and more connected community which supports our work. It is this creative culture and the support from people, businesses and non-profit organizations who understand that mobility is key to a vibrant **inclusive** economy which keeps **US** moving – striving to be the best. Our commitment to a high quality of life and prosperity for all shows in the grit of our team members who deliver service twenty two hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

There are more people than I could possibly call out who deserve credit for APTA's reassertion that COTA is the finest transit authority of its size. If I were to try to name them, they would include:

- **Our frontline employees**, who have nimbly adapted to Central Ohio's mobility needs in a time of rapid transformation. This past March, Team COTA adjusted our operations to ensure customer health and safety while maintaining our service in the face of an unprecedented pandemic. The mettle of our employees provided a lifeline to this community by operating each and every day to meet the essential travel needs of our residents. Join me in expressing gratitude any time you see a hero with the COTA uniform.

- **Our community**, including elected officials, business leaders, and nonprofit partners who have joined us on this journey of reimagining mobility in Central Ohio. Without their leadership and support, we would not have achieved such innovations as CMAX, **C-pass**, **COTA//Plus**, expanded pass programs for students, and **LinkUs** – all collaborative partnerships that are changing how we move and how we live.
- **Our customers**, who make us better each day with their steadfast support and candid feedback. Collectively, they have shown not only a willingness to adapt to change, but an eagerness to challenge us to evolve. It is for our customers that COTA strives to be the best, and it is because of customers that we are the best.
- **Our military veterans**, who make up more than ten percent of Team COTA. As we approach this important holiday in November, remember to literally take the time to thank a vet who has stood in a place to defend your freedom. You can also support our veterans by joining us for the **Annual National Veterans Memorial & Museum 5 Mile, 5K and 1 Mile**, of which COTA is a proud sponsor. Central Ohio is blessed to have many Veterans whom continue to serve our community in a wide variety of roles throughout our region.

As COTA accepts this national honor from APTA, we do so on your behalf – and we thank you for helping us continue to grow in to the organization we need to be for our community.