

Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation 2025 Impact Report



From the Executive Director



Fiscal Year 2025 can perhaps be best summed up with the phrase, “Successes Among the Stressors.”

As an organization, we are as solid as we have ever been. Ridership continues to grow quarter over quarter, and our spring passenger survey resulted in continued high marks for COAST’s service, reliability and affordability.

We have a strong leadership team at both the board and staff levels, which has advanced work in two critical areas this year—raising awareness and investing in COAST’s future.

Raising awareness and connecting with new stakeholders are central to our ability to evolve our funding structure

and reduce our reliance on federal funding.

With increased visibility and awareness has come new interest and investment from foundations and businesses. In FY25 we received several grants, donations and sponsorships that facilitated our annual operations, and welcomed several new donors to the roster of capital campaign donors.

Another notable result of our education and advocacy work was the \$3.0M that was included in the final State Budget after funding for statewide transit was initially zeroed out.

COAST prides itself on our ability to plan for the future. This year we invested in our physical operations in a number of ways including ordering 12 new vehicles,

advancing our new facility design to the 95% mark and hiring our first Director of Development.

While COAST as an organization remains strong, the future we are driving towards is increasingly uncertain and we face several external stressors—the current political climate and inflation, to name just two—each presenting unique challenges.

So, what keeps us all going in the face of these strengthening headwinds? The rewards of doing a job that makes a meaningful difference in so many peoples’ lives fuels our dedicated team. Thank you for being part of our important work and year.

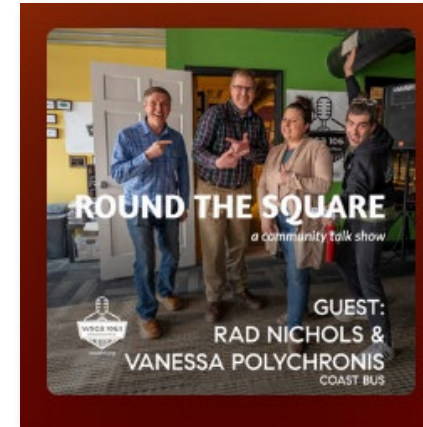
~Rad Nichols

Raising Awareness

Raising Awareness and connecting with new stakeholders are central to our ability to evolve our funding structure and reducing our reliance on federal funding—which this year was 53% of our total budget.

Some examples of our increased outreach work from the past year include:

- Participating in Learn & Engage events in Rochester, Dover and Portsmouth
- 4 Radio, Podcast and Local TV Appearances
- COAST board members completing the A Week (or Day) Without Driving Challenge
- Dover ArtStops community partnership brings local art into COAST bus shelters
- Capital Campaign Video created



Fueling COAST – Increased Foundation and Business Support

Key Investments Made in FY25 Include:

- \$30,000 NH Charitable Foundation grant for expanded Free Ticket Program
- \$25,000 Greater Rochester Charitable Foundation grant to support ACT and TripLink
- Three local businesses sponsored three new Fare Free Saturdays
- \$50,000 NH Charitable Foundation capacity building grant
- \$25,000 Foundation for Seacoast Health rider education grant
- \$90,000 foundation grant to fund Newmarket-Exeter Connector expansion, TripLink and Ready Rides operations

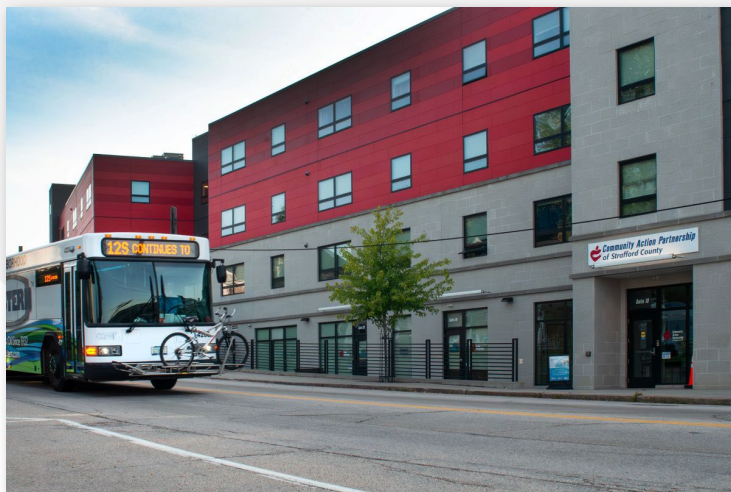


+\$227.5k

Fueling COAST — Sustained Municipal Investment

Sustained support from our member communities is a critical component of COAST’s annual operating budget.

We are grateful to these communities for recognizing and investing in the region’s public transit system, which connects our communities and drives our local economy.



Town	Services	Request	Approved
Berwick	Rtes. 1, 100 & ADA	\$32,172	\$32,172
Dover	Rtes. 1, 12, 13, 33, 34 & ADA	\$491,231	\$491,231
Exeter	Newmarket-Exeter Connector	\$32,172	\$25,760
Farmington	Route 6 & ADA	\$47,591	\$47,591
Kittery	Rtes. 44, 100 & ADA	\$36,094	\$36,094
Newington	Route 43 & ADA	\$32,172	\$25,000
Newmarket	Newmarket-Exeter Connector	\$32,172	\$26,000
Portsmouth	Rtes. 13, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, ADA & Senior Trans.	\$778,958	\$778,958
Rochester	Rtes. 6, 12, 14 & ADA	\$256,508	\$256,508
Somersworth	Rtes. 1, 12, 100 & ADA	\$177,178	\$177,178
TOTAL		\$1,916,248	\$1,896,492

Fueling COAST — State Investment



+\$3M

Though statewide public transit funding was initially zeroed out of the FY26-27 State Budget, COAST's participation in significant education and advocacy work resulted in \$3.0M for public transit being included in the final budget.

As the Chair of the NH Transit Association and member of the NH State Coordinating Council on Community Transportation, COAST helped steer education efforts in the Legislature and Senate around the importance of this funding for public transit agencies across NH.

Doing the Work – Operational Highlights



Estimated 2,708,901 miles (+7.2% over FY24) traveled by COAST passengers onboard our buses.

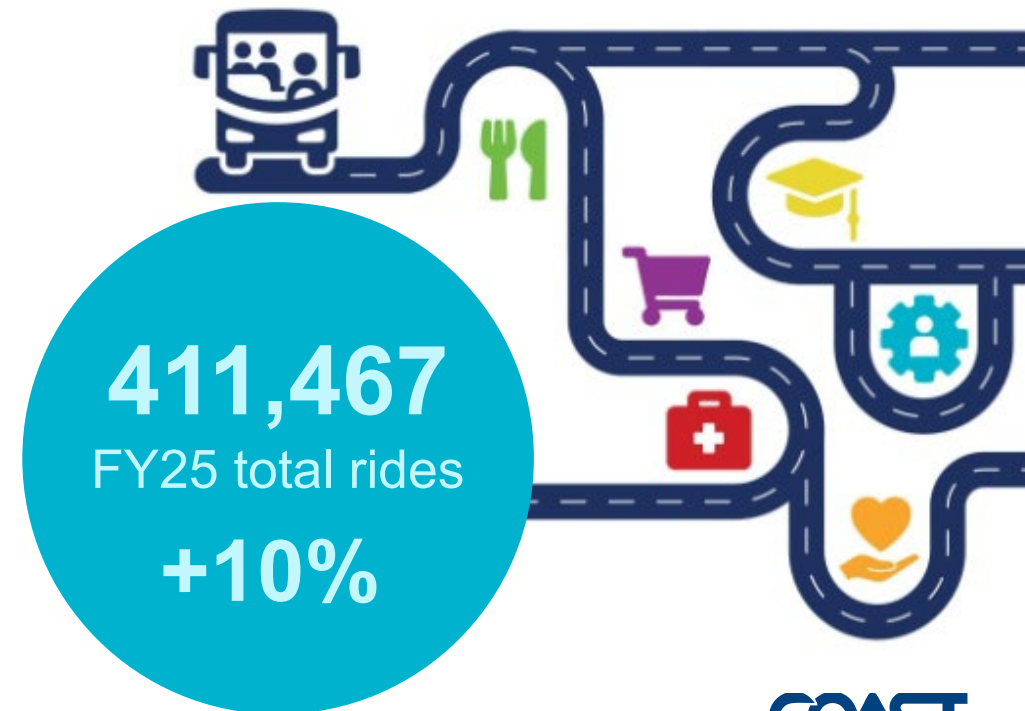
Riders **avoided an estimated 1,194 tons (2,388,000 lbs.)** of greenhouse gases being emitted into the atmosphere.

Maintained competitive pay rates for COAST staff while increasing and stabilizing staffing levels for most of the year.

Ordered 6 new minibuses and 6 new heavy-duty buses

Doing the Work – Connecting People and Communities

For over 42 years COAST has provided over 17.1 million rides and connected people at all stages of life to work, school, medical appointments, shopping, social events and support services.



Doing the Work – Fixed Route Services

In FY25, fixed route riders enjoyed the following features:

Nine local and four regional routes, connecting 10 communities in New Hampshire and Maine to each other via public transit.

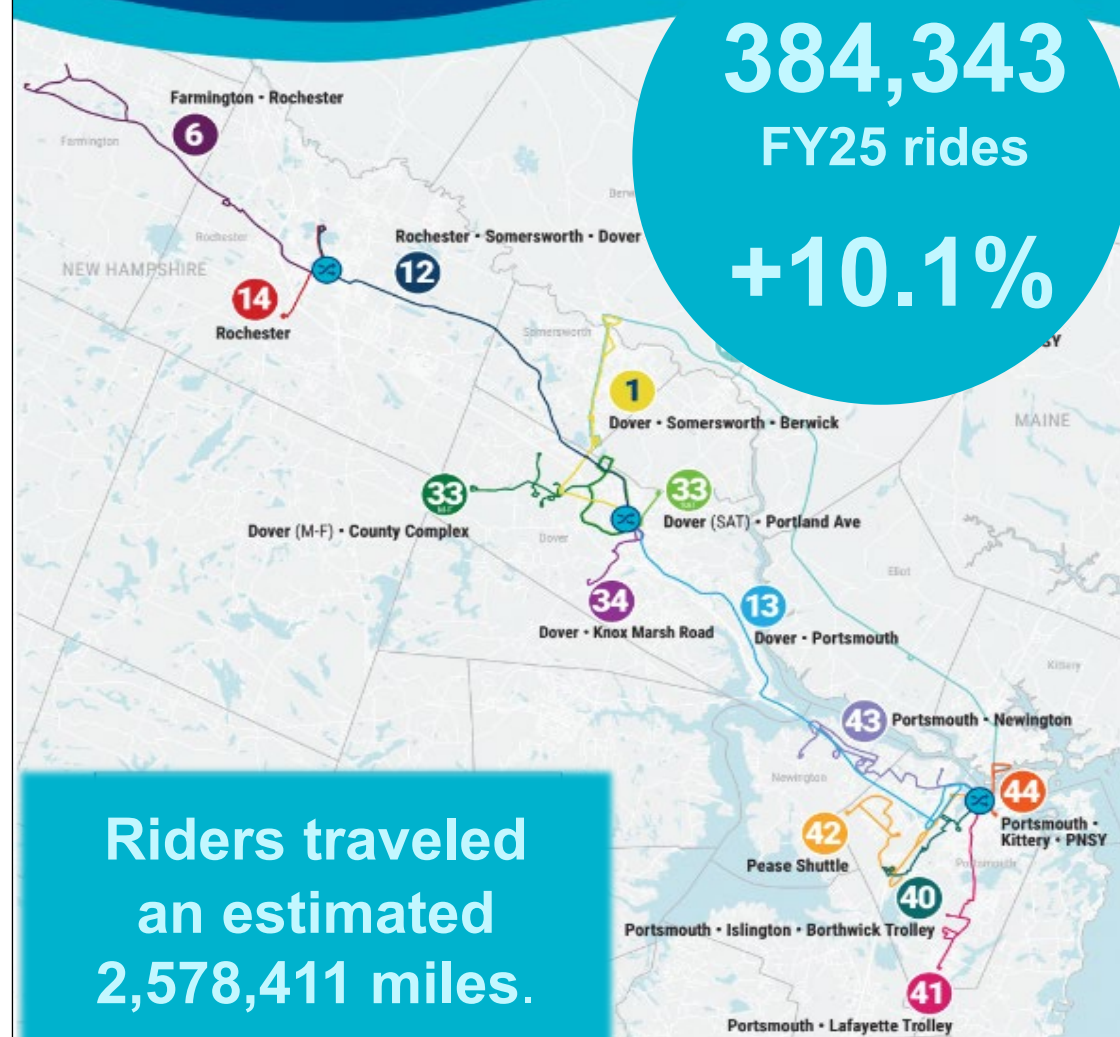
Hourly frequency on all routes, with easy-to-remember schedules.

Timely connection / transfer locations in downtown Dover, Portsmouth and Rochester.

Affordable \$1.50 regular fare / \$0.75 half fare for older adults and people living with disabilities. Free transfers.

Connections with Wildcat Transit, C&J, Greyhound, the Downeaster, Allegiant Airlines and Breeze Airways.

COAST SYSTEM MAP



384,343
FY25 rides
+10.1%

**Riders traveled
an estimated
2,578,411 miles.**

Doing the Work – Demand Response Services

In FY25, demand response riders enjoyed the following features:

179,009 estimated miles traveled by demand response riders

Seven unique services focused on serving primarily older adults and individuals living with disabilities.

Fares for demand response trips range from free to 2x the fare (depending on eligibility) for an equivalent trip on the fixed route system.

For riders not able to use the fixed route system, demand response services provide a **lifeline for area residents** by taking them to their jobs, volunteering, medical appointments, pharmacies, grocery stores, or to get out and enjoy socializing with friends and family.

27,124
FY25 rides
+9.4%



Doing the Work—Customer Survey Results

This year, COAST surveyed customers and other Seacoast residents about a variety of topics including:

- Reasons for using public transportation
- Quality of COAST services
- Degree of importance of COAST services in their lives

While there were many consistencies between the 2023 and 2025 customer survey results, including COAST's high ratings related to the quality of our service, friendliness of our staff, cleanliness of our vehicles and on-time performance, **there were several notable shifts since the last survey**, including those listed to the right.

Affordability more important than ever—the importance of affordability increased significantly with 75% of respondents indicating that they ride COAST because of its affordability (up from 25% in 2023)

Non-senior ridership growing—the overall % of riders in all age categories between 18-55 increased.

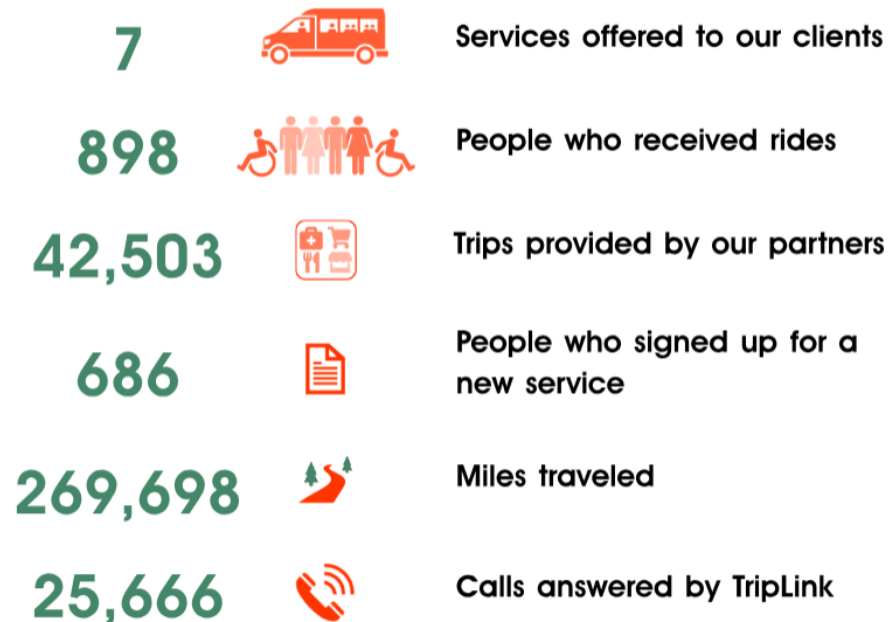
Making more connections for life—the % of respondents who reported using COAST to get to work, medical appointments, shopping and recreation/community/social activities all increased significantly across both fixed route and demand response services.

More Portsmouth boardings—now ranked #2 behind Dover, with Rochester and Somersworth being 3rd and 4th.

Doing the Work – ACT/Regional Coordination

COAST serves as the lead agency of the Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT) / Region 10 in the State's network of Regional Coordination Councils for Community Transportation.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR PARTNERS IN SFY25



In SFY25:

More People Signed Up for Services
(+10% over SFY24)

More Rides Taken (+3% over SFY24)

**More Connection = More Freedom =
Better Lives**

New Facility Progress



Design Status

In FY25, we reached the 95% design completion level, which included developing interior design plans.



Latest Cost Estimate/Grant Work

The updated final design cost estimate came in at \$19,540,000, up from the preliminary design estimate of \$17,200,000.

We are preparing to apply for up to \$5M of additional federal funding through a BUILD grant due in February 2026. This additional federal funding would not require matching funds.

Capital Campaign

With support from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, COAST hired its first-ever Director of Development in August 2025. This new full-time staff person is playing a critical role in ensuring COAST meets our capital campaign fundraising goal, while helping us lay a solid and more diversified financial foundation for the future.

FY25 Financials

Operated under budget, and with a very small gain, minimizing our losses after factoring in the local share of depreciation.

2024 audit was once again clean.

Remain a grantee of low concern for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).



COAST Income Statement September 2025

Internal Statements, subject to adjustment

Operating Revenues	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Change	%	Notes
Farebox/Contract Revenue	\$ 409,404	\$ 423,046	\$ (13,642)	-3.2%	
Advertising Revenue	\$ 154,011	\$ 205,000	\$ (50,989)	-24.9%	
Interest & Other Income	\$ 273,588	\$ 42,000	\$ 231,588	551.4%	Interest & Private Grants
Municipal Match Contributions	\$ 1,542,812	\$ 1,587,968	\$ (45,156)	-2.8%	Lower approved support
Partner & Other Contributions	\$ 551,366	\$ 573,660	\$ (22,294)	-3.9%	Lower approved support
State Assistance (ME & NH)	\$ 427,733	\$ 429,127	\$ (1,394)	-0.3%	
Federal Assistance	\$ 3,595,065	\$ 3,837,196	\$ (242,131)	-6.3%	Lower Expense = Lower Reimbursement
Non Cash Contributions	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ -	0.0%	
TMA Funding	\$ 12,378	\$ 140,000	\$ (127,622)	-91.2%	CommuterSmart restart delayed by grant process
Coordination Funding	\$ 713,304	\$ 655,671	\$ 57,633	8.8%	Includes recent foundation grants
Total Revenues	\$ 7,682,662	\$ 7,896,668	\$ (214,006)	-2.7%	
Operating Expenses	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Change		
Wages	\$ 3,387,707	\$ 3,478,825	\$ (91,118)	-2.6%	
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,833,812	\$ 1,829,423	\$ 4,389	0.2%	
Contract Services	\$ 228,291	\$ 325,278	\$ (96,987)	-29.8%	Depends on usage of outside services
Materials & Supplies	\$ 849,479	\$ 1,034,043	\$ (184,564)	-17.8%	Included engine rebuilds no longer expected this year
Utilities	\$ 85,556	\$ 89,155	\$ (3,599)	-4.0%	
Insurance	\$ 584,576	\$ 591,026	\$ (6,450)	-1.1%	
Purchased Transportation	\$ (62,930)	\$ (47,000)	\$ (15,930)	33.9%	Higher use of demand response services
Misc. Items	\$ 73,505	\$ 107,310	\$ (33,805)	-31.5%	Need varies by yearly activity
Planning	\$ 12,792	\$ 11,312	\$ 1,480	13.1%	
TMA Activities	\$ 6,777	\$ 140,000	\$ (133,223)	-95.2%	CommuterSmart hiring delayed by grant approval process
Coordination Costs	\$ 656,317	\$ 655,671	\$ 646	0.1%	
Total Expenses (with Depreciation)	\$ 7,655,882	\$ 8,215,043	\$ (559,161)	-6.8%	
Gross Gain (Loss)	\$ 26,780	\$ (318,375)	\$ 345,155		
Depreciation Expense	\$ 615,185				
Local Share of Depreciation	\$ 123,037				
Gain (Loss) Less Local Depr.	\$ (96,257)				

FY25 Financials

COAST's available funds (unrestricted assets) are important for ensuring future cash flow, covering unforeseen operating shortfalls, and capital replacement needs, at least in the short term.

This is important due to increasingly unpredictable government funding.

We used \$153,135 of these funds for our capital replacement needs in FY25. Our FY26 projection is to use over \$320,000 for this purpose.

COAST Balance Sheet September 2025

Assets

Cash

Petty Cash	\$	350.00
Checking		391,390.26
Savings		3,088,987.59
	\$	<u>3,480,727.85</u>

Receivables

A/R General	\$	523,510.48
	\$	<u>523,510.48</u>

Other

Prepaid Expenses	\$	39,068.04
Inventory		108,319.09
	\$	<u>147,387.13</u>

Property & Equipment

Transit Equipment	\$	8,586,754.73
Structures		1,100,748.14
Furniture & Equipment		719,336.04
Amenities & Misc.		656,215.65
Accumulated Depr.		(7,467,279.04)
Work in Process		983,247.48
	\$	<u>4,579,023.00</u>

Total Assets \$ **8,730,648.46**

Available Funds

Current Assets	\$	4,043,306.37
Current Liabilities		(826,072.11)
	\$	3,217,234.26

Preliminary, Subject to Audit Adjustment

Liabilities

Payables

Accounts Payable	\$	252,985.19
Wages/PR Taxes Payable		127,877.64
		<u>380,862.83</u>

Other

Accrued Expenses	\$	278,051.16
Local Funding (COAST Held)		41,613.95
Coordination Held Funds		45,724.17
Building Donations - Restricted		79,820.00
	\$	<u>445,209.28</u>

Total Liabilities \$ **826,072.11**

Equity

Undesignated - Net Assets	\$	6,681,950.29
Designated - Net Assets		96,238.50
Federal Capital Contributions		1,475,629.00
State Capital Contributions		111,928.56
Local Capital Contributions		-
Current Year Net Income		(461,170.00)
	\$	<u>7,904,576.35</u>

Total Equity \$ **7,904,576.35**

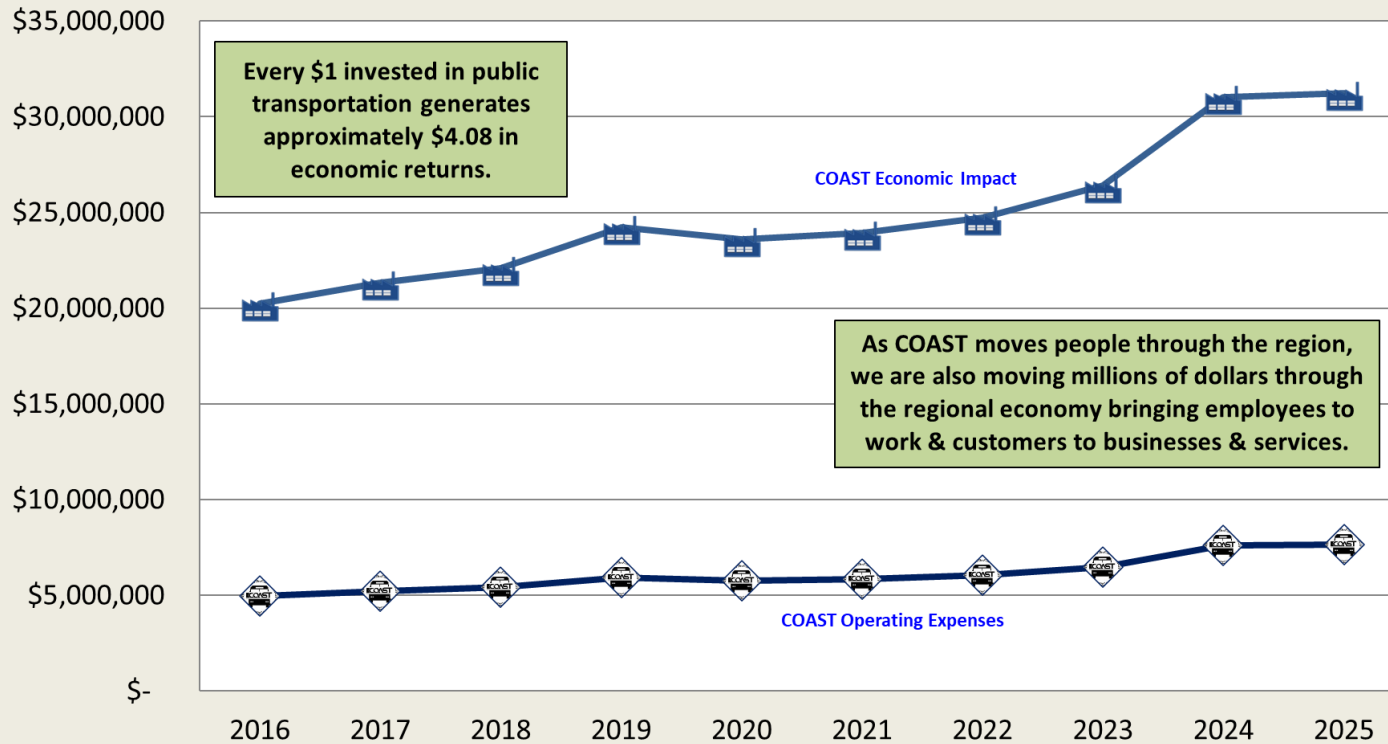
Total Liabilities & Equity \$ **8,730,648.46**

Cash, Receivables, & Prepaids
Payables, Accrued Exp. & Held Funds

Local Match for Future Capital Purchases
and Monthly Cash Flow Use.

FY25 Regional Economic Impact

COAST: FY16-FY25 Regional Economic Impact Estimates



Based on COAST’s spending of \$7.7 million towards the system’s operation in FY25, COAST’s regional economic impact is estimated to be \$31 million.

In the past 10 years COAST’s estimated regional economic impact has totaled just under \$250 million.

Source: American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

Challenges on the Horizon for FY26

While COAST remains strong, the future we is increasingly uncertain as we face several external stressors that present unique challenges, including:

- Current **political climate** at the federal level—COAST faced uncertainty about the level of continued federal financial support, potential for clawbacks of funds, and new vague Federal directives that appear to go against longstanding policy and guidance
- Two **government shutdowns** in one calendar year
- **Increased costs** due to the impacts of tariffs and inflation on the products we need to run our operation, vehicles to replace our fleet and construction of our new facility
- **Increases in the frequency and intensity of challenging passenger behavior**, placing additional stress on the drivers who are responsible for maintaining a positive environment on the buses for everyone.
- Lower than authorized increases in FTA formula program allocations under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and a **need to reduce our reliance on federal funds**.



Looking Ahead – Our Financial Future

In FY25 we **reviewed ridership data across all COAST's routes** to identify where service reductions could be made to reduce our reliance on federal funds while impacting the fewest riders.

After conducting a public input process, the following changes were implemented on October 4, 2025:

- Routes 42 and 100 were discontinued
- Adjustments to the schedules and route coverage were made to Routes 33, 40 and 43, and
- Service system-wide concludes by 8:15pm.

The services identified carried less than 5% of COAST's ridership, cost \$492,000 to provide, and are expected to have the effect of reducing our use of federal funding by \$290,000 in FY26.

Under the leadership of our new Director of Development, we are working to expand our base of support among local businesses, individuals and foundations to further reduce our reliance on federal funding..



The Road Ahead – FY26 Goals

Operational Goals

- Reduce our reliance on federal funding, specifically FTA 5307 funds, while minimizing impacts of service reductions on ridership
- Operate within, or under, budget
- Maintain competitive pay rates, particularly for our most challenging to fill positions (Operators and Mechanics)

Fundraising and Other Goals

- Raise remaining funds needed (\$3.2-\$4M) to begin construction of our new facility
- Grow the visibility and understanding of the importance of public transit statewide in New Hampshire
- Continue to educate the public that COAST is a nonprofit



Thank you to our Partners and Contributors

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Foundations

Exeter Hospital Community Grant Fund
First Seacoast Bank Foundation
Greater Rochester Community Health Foundation
Kennebunk Savings Bank Foundation
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Barbara K. and Cyrus B. Sweet III Fund
Thompson Family Fund
Wentworth-Douglass Hospital Foundation

Businesses

Bank of New Hampshire
Breezeline
Cross Insurance
Novocure
Piscataqua Savings Bank
Shaheen & Gordon, P.A.

Nonprofit Agencies

Community Action Partnership of Strafford County
Ready Rides
Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels

Municipalities

Berwick
Dover
Exeter
Farmington
Kittery
Newington
Newmarket
Portsmouth
Rochester
Somersworth

Counties

Rockingham
Strafford

States

Maine
New Hampshire

Government Agencies

Federal Transit Administration
Great Bay Community College
NH Department of Transportation
Pease Development Authority