Authorizations

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21" Century (MAP-21) and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) granted the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) the authority to establish and enforce a comprehensive framework to oversee the safety of transit bus systems throughout the United States. On July 19, 2018, the FTA promulgated its final rule 49 C.F.R. Part *6i3* - Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) which requires recipients of FTA Chapter 5307 funds to develop and implement a safety plan based on Safety Management Systems (SMS) principles and methods.

Valdosta On-Demand ("VOD") establishes this Safety Plan as our agency's commitment to system safety and the principles of SMS. The objectives of our plan are to:

- Increase the safety of transit systems by proactively identifying, assessing and controlling risks.
- Continually improve safety performance.
- Improve the commitment of transit leadership to safety; and Foster a culture of safety awareness and responsiveness.

VOD is committed to implementing a systematic and comprehensive safety program. Leadership will visibly demonstrate its commitment to safety by monitoring hazards, enforcing, and supporting safety programs, and promoting an open and transparent environment to discuss and address safety issues.

Additionally, FTA recently released proposed revisions to the National Public Transportation Safety Plan (NPTSP) to address the new requirements in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to further advance transit safety. This Plan NPTSP supersedes the one which the FTA published in January 2017. It lays out a performance-based approach to reduce injuries and fatalities on transit systems under FTA's safety jurisdiction. If these changes are ratified, this plan will be updated to include safety training for maintenance staff as well as de-escalation training for all safety sensitive personnel. Three new Safety Performance Measures will be added for tracking including: "Transit Worker Fatality Rate," "Assaults on Transit Workers," and "Rate of Assaults on Transit Workers." This plan will then be updated to include two new Safety Risk Reduction Program Measures which are — "Assaults on Transit Workers" and "Rate of Assaults on Transit Workers, —both of which are already reported by ATS to the FTA through the National Transit Database (NTD). Safety is a core business function of all public transportation providers and should be systematically applied to every aspect of service delivery. At ATS, all levels of management, administration, and operations are responsible for the safety of their customers and themselves. To improve public transportation safety to the highest practicable level in the state and comply with FTA requirements, GDOT originally developed this PTASP in collaboration with VOD.

Furthermore, In April 2024, FTA made important updates to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulations to improve safety management and performance monitoring for transit agencies. These updates stress the need for decisions based on data and proactive risk management. Key changes include using advanced safety performance metrics to provide a more complete view of safety by recording a wider range of incidents and near-misses. This helps agencies spot potential hazards earlier and take action to prevent them. Additionally, the FTA now requires more thorough training programs for transit staff, focusing on modern safety management systems (SMS) practices and emergency preparedness to create a knowledgeable workforce focused on the culture of safety.

The updated PTASP regulation also adds stronger oversight and accountability measures for 5307 agencies. These agencies must now conduct regular safety audits and submit detailed reports on their safety performance and compliance with SMS as detailed in their PTASP plans. These reports should include specific plans for addressing any safety issues identified and providing a commitment t