

Letter from the Treasurer: Justin Rison

Dear GTA Members,

Spring is becoming summer, which means for many of us a new fiscal year for GTA, summer vacations, and the need to make sure A/C units are running correctly! As the outgoing conference co-chair, I want to sincerely thank everyone within GTA for the support and your attendance over the last four years of conferences. Looking forward, the conference is in great hands, and this December, we will be returning again to Jekyll Island for what is sure to be a memorable event.

Reminder: GTA dues for the 2019 Fiscal Year will be mailed/emailed out in the next 45 days. If you need to update your contact information, please contact Beverly at beverly@gatransit.org. During the conference last December, and over the last few months, I received numerous communications from both private and public sector subrecipients regarding the GDOT contracting and payment process for the 2018 fiscal year. I directly expressed the concern that some transit programs had payment delays from 90 days to as many as 150 days from new fiscal year date of receiving a first reimbursement from GDOT. After gathering all data points, I communicated the shared concerns directly with Nancy Cobb, Assistant Division Director, Intermodal Office GDOT. Below is a transcript of our conversation:



Rison: This past year, with the changes to the GDOT contracting processes, many regions (and transit systems) expressed significant delays with the receiving of GDOT payments for the July 1, 2017 contract year (FY2018).

Cobb: Last year, we did not receive the 5311 grant award until September. Certainly, we plan to be prepared to issue electronic contracts to our subrecipients upon notification of grant award. It is important to note, however, the ability to issue a contract is contingent upon receipt of the 10% local match.

Rison: Looking into the coming new fiscal year, will GDOT have any solutions to speed up this process for contracts and payment cycles?

Cobb: Our application requesting funding for subrecipients under the 5311 program was submitted for FTA review on April 19th. This is not necessarily an indicator of when we might expect a grant award.

Rison: If you have any information I can share openly with GTA regarding any changes or improvements to the payment processes for the coming fiscal year, this would be greatly appreciated!

Cobb: All of our subrecipients approved for vehicle purchases will be receiving an invoice for the 10% this week or next. This is done by another department within GDOT. Upon FTA approval of our application, state budget allotment for 1Q FY19, and receipt of 10% local match, we can prepare and issue the

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contract document in our electronic contracting system. It will not allow us to push the button until all the funding is allotted on the subrecipient's FY19 project ID.

I want to personally thank Nancy for her quick and direct response to our questions. Transportation systems for many communities in Georgia are a coordinated event, with the sum of many parts creating a total service for our shared commuters. While we as a group strive to create or improve services, we cannot overlook the daily efforts necessary to undertake our shared missions.

My final two thoughts for your consideration are this for your summer: First, just about every trip performed equals a multiplying local spend. While as a group, we don't always track this process, millions of dollars are spent in our shared communities each year based on smaller investments by our local and state systems. Investments in transit are investments into our local businesses, schools and workforce.

Second (and most important), while we sometimes track "our customer" or "employer" based on contracts or receipt of income, please always remember the customer and purpose for employment is the commuter using your services. When was the last time you connected with commuters at a work location, transit hub or medical facility? I challenge all of you to visit, participate and witness first-hand the empowerment transit provides your communities and share these stories with GTA over the coming months. When you connect with the commuter and are reminded how transit positively influences life, you realize the purpose of our shared employment.

Have a wonderful and safe summer, and I look forward to seeing you in Jekyll Island in December!

Best,

Justin Rison
GTA, Treasurer

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