

# **Shared Ride Advisory Committee (SRAC)**

## **Meeting #1**

MAY 29, 2026 (V05)

# Today's Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- SRAC Purpose, Charge, and Structure
- Shared Ride Transportation Overview
- Roundtable Discussion of SRAC Perspectives
- Schedule and Next Steps
- Public Comments



# Welcome and Introductions

# Housekeeping Items

- Safety & evacuation
- Restrooms
- Public participation
- This meeting is being recorded



# SRAC Purpose, Charge, and Structure

# Mission

The mission of the Shared Ride Advisory Committee is  
to provide PennDOT with **actionable advice**  
to modernize the Shared Ride Program and  
ensure long-term service sustainability.



# Key Objectives

- **Assess** system performance, cost drivers, and funding challenges.
- **Identify** structural issues impacting long-term viability.
- **Develop** policy and service delivery options.
- **Ensure** equitable and reliable access statewide.
- **Advise PennDOT** on paths for implementation and reform.



# SRAC Charge and Responsibilities

- SRAC Members
  - Advise & evaluate
  - Communicate and gather input from your peers and policy-makers
  
- PennDOT's SRAC Support Staff
  - Prepare analyses, summaries, and easy-to-understand media
  - Facilitate discussion
  - Document SRAC advice, findings, and suggestions



# Guiding Principles

- **Equity** – Fairly serve those who depend on the system
- **Sustainability** – Ensure long-term viability
- **Efficiency** – Maximize service per public dollar
- **Coordination** – Align programs and funding streams
- **Accountability** – Use clear performance measures



# Shared Ride Program Overview

# **Understanding Shared Ride Transportation**

**The Shared Ride Program is unique to Pennsylvania**

# Fixed-Route vs. Shared Ride

## Fixed Route Bus Service

## Shared Ride Service

<b>SCHEDULE</b>	Operates on a fixed schedule over predetermined routes.	Routes and schedules are determined each day to accommodate trip requests.
<b>VEHICLES</b>	35- to 40-passenger buses.	Small buses (15- to 20-passenger), vans (7- to 12-passenger), and sedans (5-passenger).
<b>FARES</b>	\$1 to \$3 for a one-way trip.	Full fare is \$10 to \$50+ depending on trip length.
<b>SUBSIDY</b>	Service is <b>subsidized</b> with federal, state, and local funds to make the fares affordable.	The <u>service</u> is <b>not subsidized</b> . State and federal programs pay a portion (85% to 100%) of individual <u>fares</u> to make the service affordable.
<b>ACCESS</b>	Passengers board and disembark at designated bus stops at prescheduled times with no reservation.	Passengers make a reservation at least one day in advance of the trip. Service is door-to-door (e.g., from rider's home to doctor's office).
<b>OPERATING COST PER HOUR</b>	Typically, about \$140-\$160	Typically, about \$70-\$80



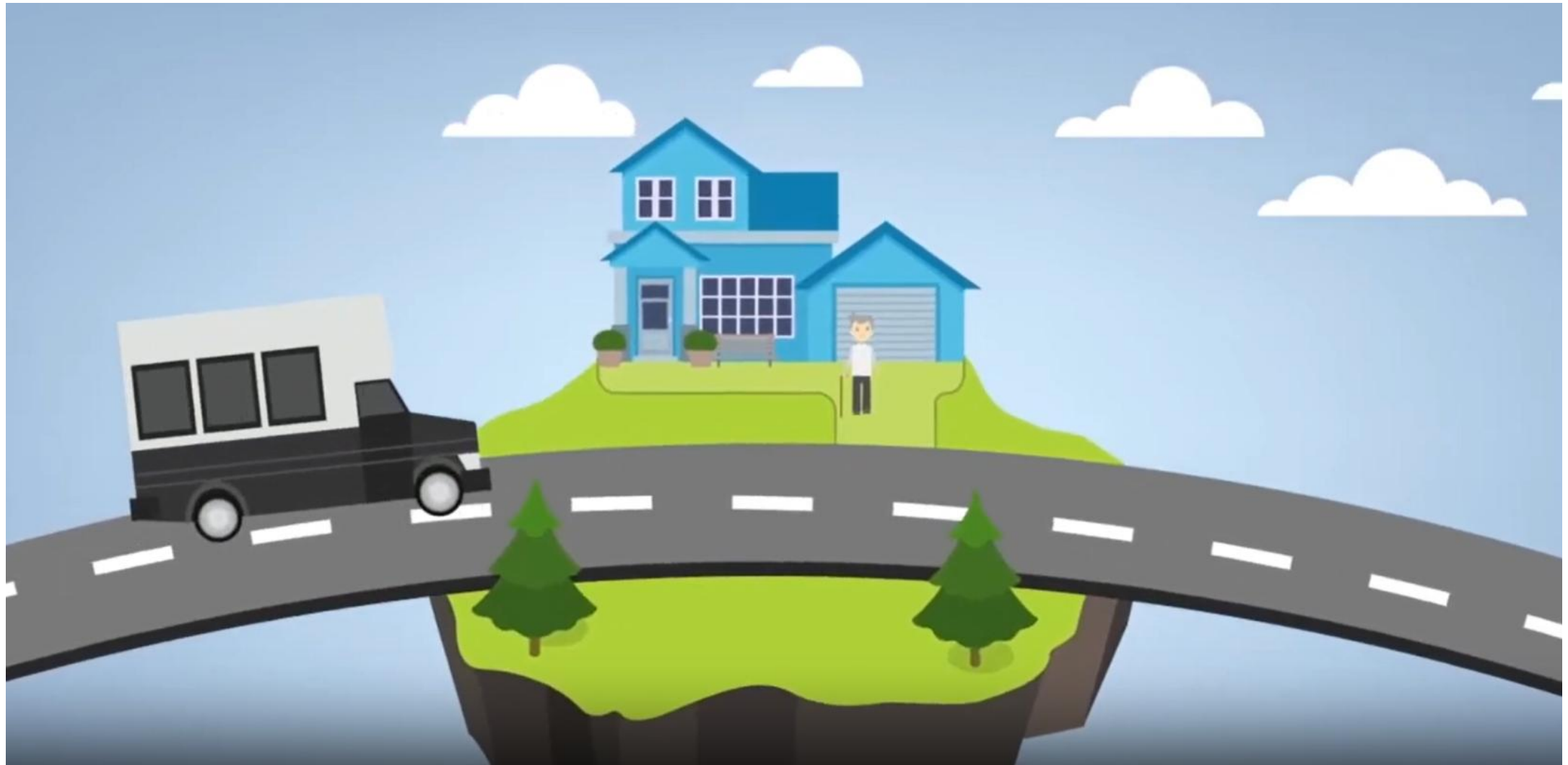


# Shared Ride Service Highlights

- The **only** public transportation service in many rural counties.
- Provides nearly **six million** passenger trips each year.
- **Not** a taxi, ride-share, or charter service.
- **Open** to the general public (although unaffordable for anyone who does not qualify for a fare subsidy based on income, age, etc.).
- Over time, other funding programs piggy-backed on the Shared ride backbone of service, resulting in **coordination** of service and trips, particularly for human service programs.



# Introduction Video



# **Shared Ride Legislation and Partners**

# Shared Ride's Legislative Basis

Act	Enacted	Result
Act 91	8/26/1971	The Lottery Law sponsored free transit for seniors in all areas with fixed route transportation – 1973.
Act 101	7/10/1980	Established the senior Shared ride program throughout the Commonwealth. Required seniors to pay 25% of the fare, but no less than 25 cents.
Act 49	5/1/1984	Reduced senior co-payments from 25% of the fare to 10% of the fare.
Act 36	8/14/1991	The Lottery Fund Preservation Act increased senior co-payments from 10% to 15% of the fare.
Act 44	7/18/2007	Stabilized public transportation funding, funded PwD service, and encouraged efficiency through consolidation, coordination, and technology.
Act 89	11/25/2013	Incentivized consolidation and promoted pilot projects to evaluate new ways of funding and delivering Shared ride service.

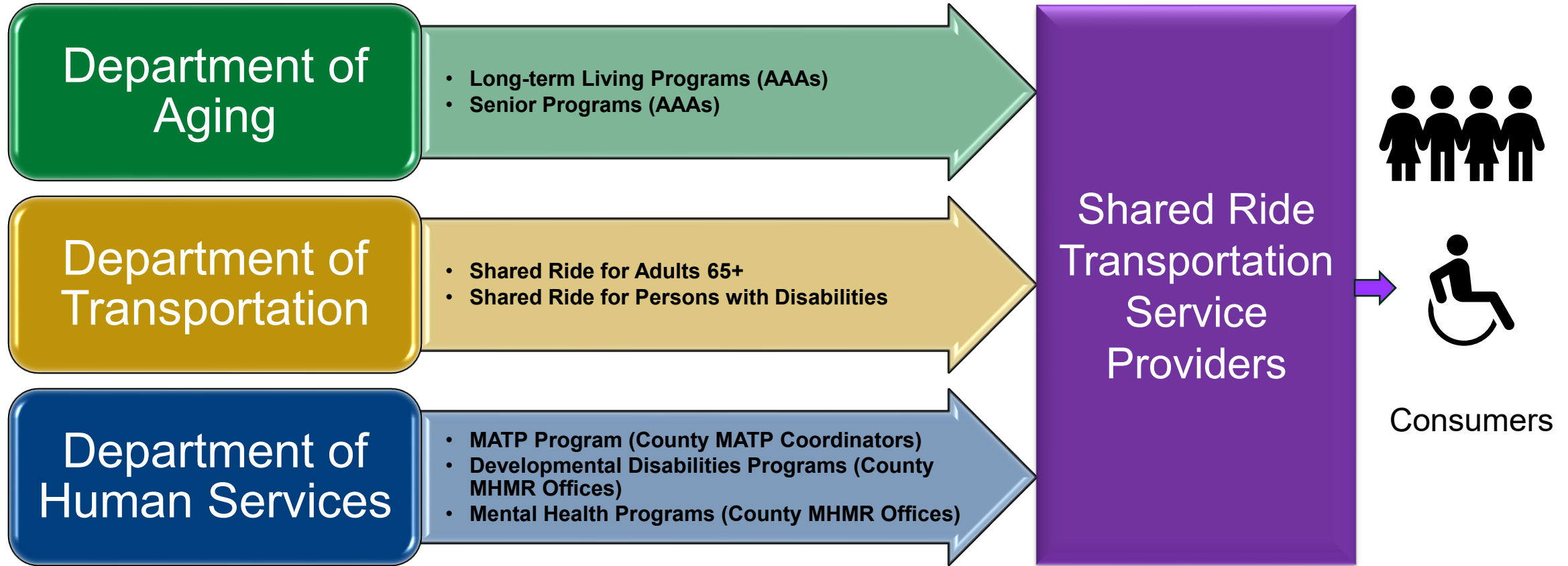


# Partner Roles

- **The State** provides funding to cover a portion of fares, pays for capital equipment, provides scheduling software and technology, and establishes high-level program rules.
- **The local systems** provide the trips and determine service parameters such as:
  - Geographical service area
  - Days and hours
  - Other limitations
- The local systems must navigate the rules and requirements of each funding program.



# State-Level Shared Ride Management

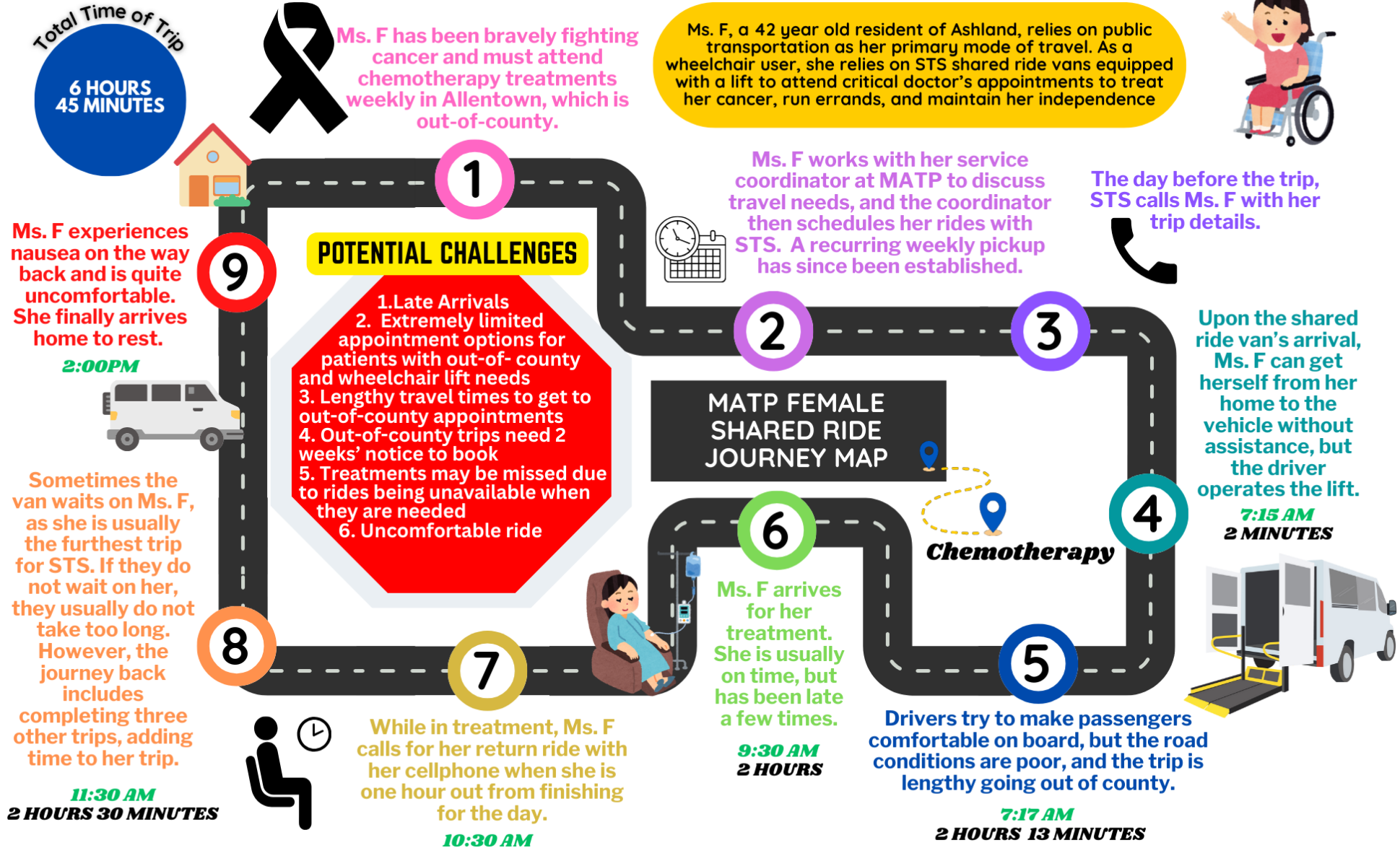


Unique rules, funds, policies, reports, reimbursement, supports, and systems for each funding agency and program



# How a Shared Ride Trip Works

# Trip Example – PwD Out-of-County Journey





# **Why Does Pennsylvania Need a Shared Ride Program?**

# Pennsylvanians Depend on Shared Ride Service

- Passengers are commonly adults 65+ and people with disabilities, low income, or mobility-limited.
- These populations commonly have no personal transportation available.
- Shared ride service provides access to affordable lifeline transportation, including medical, work, and shopping trips necessary for daily living.
- Shared Ride Service supports independent living, better health, less social isolation, and greater productivity.
- The Lottery, MATP, and other human service programs subsidize fares for adults 65+, people with disabilities (PwD), and persons eligible for Medical Assistance.

“I'm 36 years old, and I can't drive. I'm getting a shot appointment once a month. ... Why can't I use Transnet for anything else?”

MATP Listening  
Session Consumer



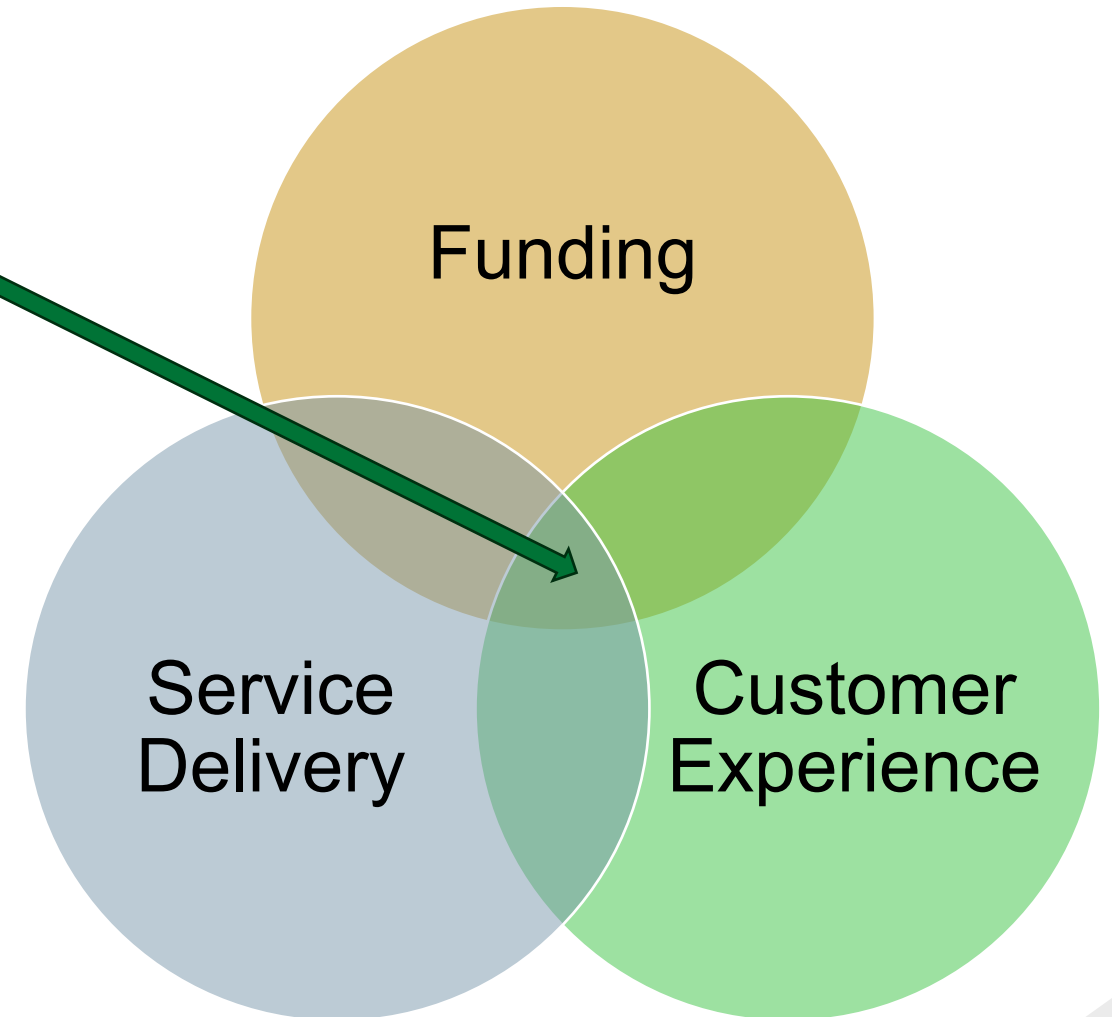
# If There Were No Shared Ride System...

- Most rural residents would have no public transportation option.
- Mobility-limited urban residents would have no public transportation option if they live more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from a bus route.
- Many adults 65+ would be unable to attend community centers.
- Many persons with physical or developmental disabilities would be unable to work or attend college.
- Many persons in need of chronic care (e.g., dialysis) or recovery (e.g., methadone) would be unable to receive regular treatment.
- We need to find a **sustainable** way to continue delivering Shared ride service.



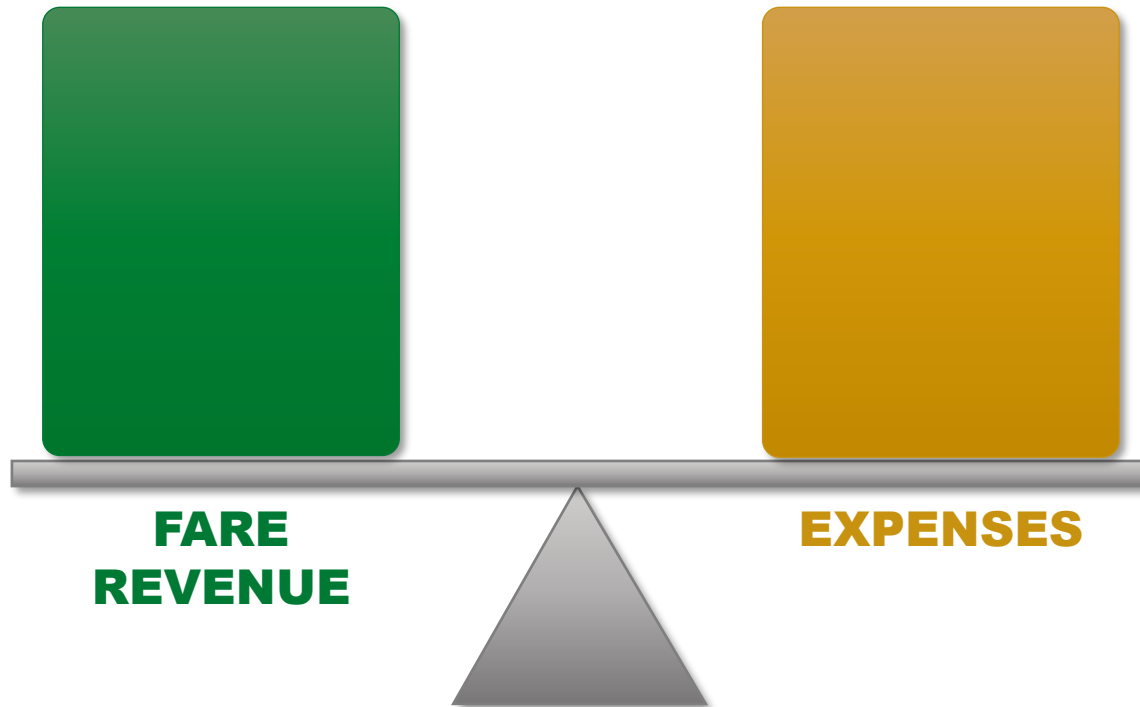
# What Do We Mean by “Sustainable?”

A sustainable Shared ride system balances and adapts to available funding, service delivery, and customer needs.



# Paying for Shared Ride

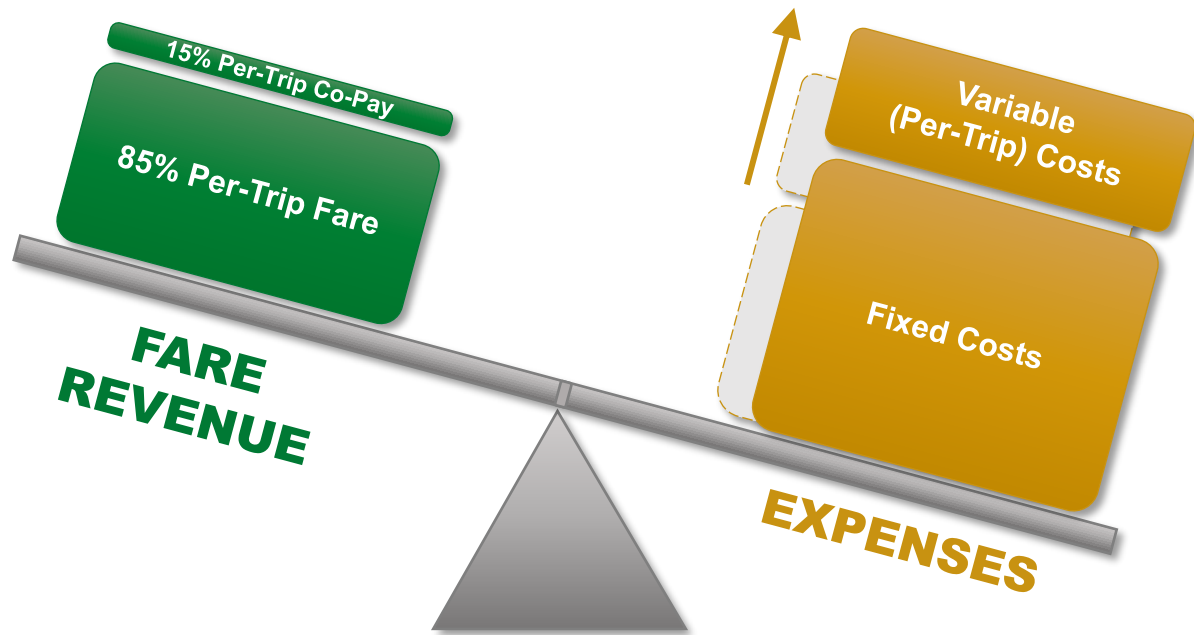
# Financial Sustainability Target



For Shared ride service to be financially sustainable, revenue must at least equal expenses.



# When Expenses Exceed Revenue



When costs increase, expenses go up without a corresponding increase in revenue—tipping budgets out of balance.

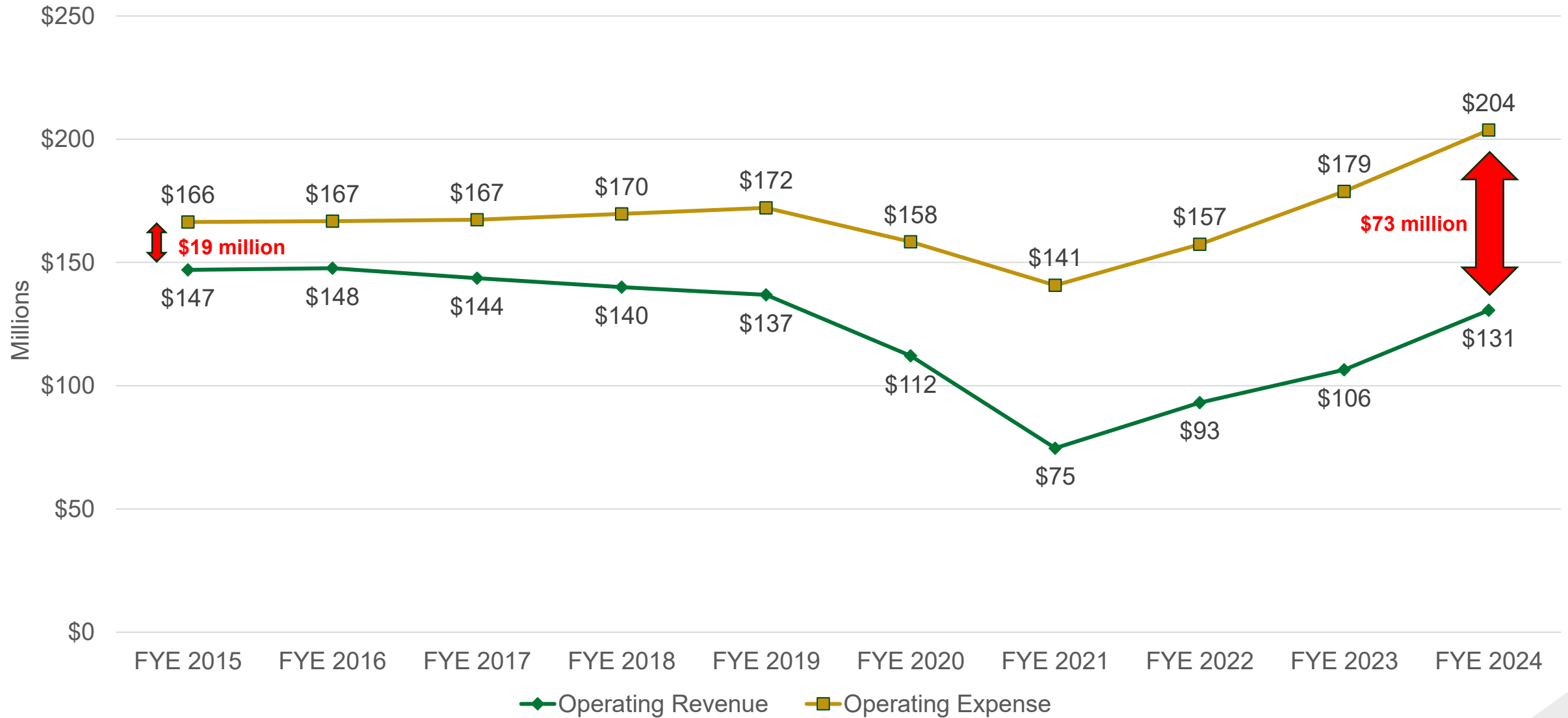


# Changes That Impact Shared Ride

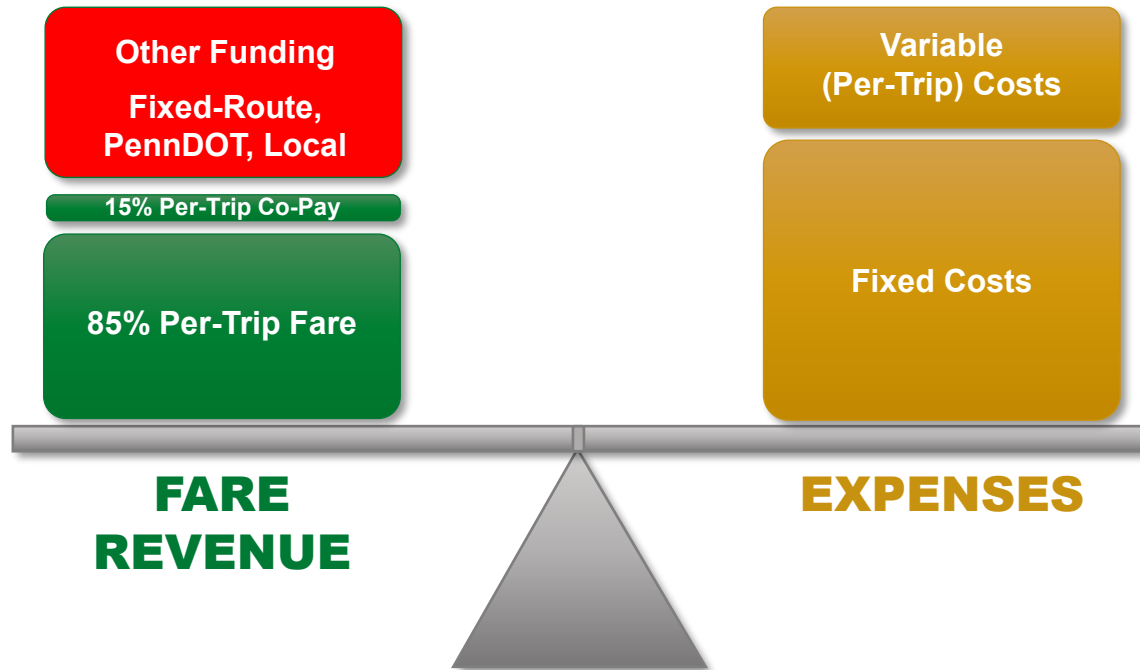
- The customers using the service are older on average.
- More riders need physical assistance, slowing service.
- There are more individual vs. group trips, thereby lowering productivity and increasing per-trip costs.
- Consolidation of healthcare facilities in rural areas results in much longer trips, impacting agency capacity.
- Emphasis on independent home-based living for older adults and people with long-term care needs results in sustained demand for transportation.
- The post-COVID economy has increased transportation costs at a much higher rate than revenue can grow.



# Annual Shared Ride Financial Trends



# Budgets Must be Balanced



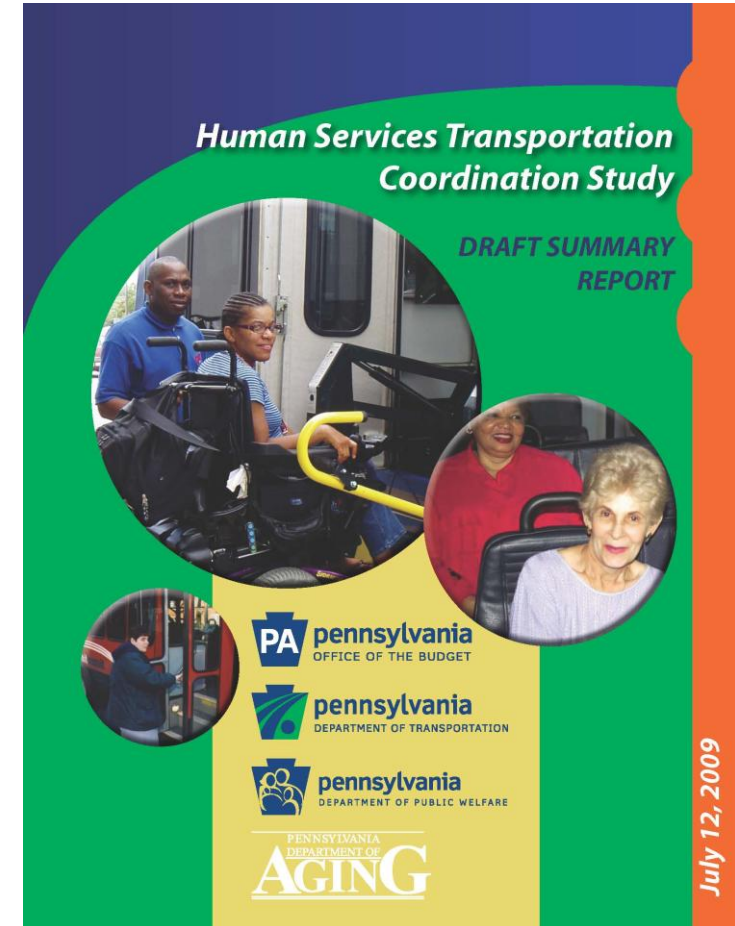
Operating losses must be paid for by other programs or funding sources.

- Fixed-route operators use local, state, and federal funding to cover Shared ride losses, resulting in less fixed-route service.
- Other agencies use local funds and PennDOT Service Stabilization to balance their budget.



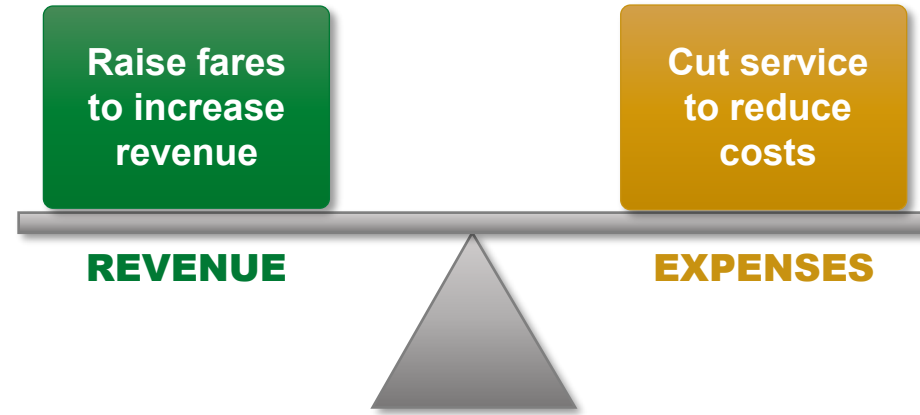
# Efforts to Save Costs and Enhance Efficiency

- Automated scheduling technology applications and staff training
- Transit consolidation
- Non-profit funding of trips
- PennDOT oversight and technical assistance
- Service Changes
  - Reduced hours of service
  - Geographic limitations



# Why Not Raise Fares and Cut Service?

This may seem like the way to get the system in balance:



But here is what happens:

Even fewer people take Shared ride—they can't afford it, and/or it doesn't meet their schedule or destination needs.

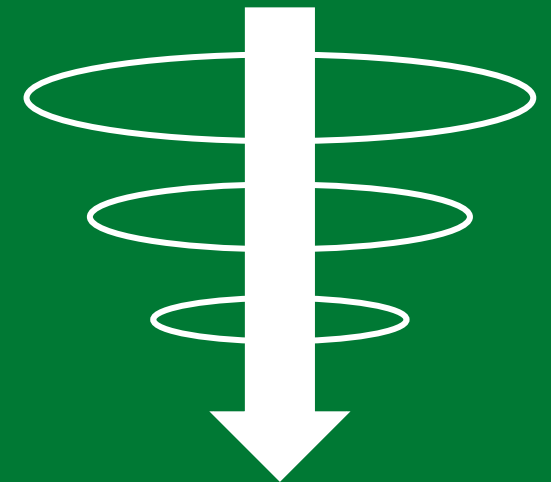
Which yields the opposite of the intended effect:

Fewer trips means less revenue, with the system in rapid decline.

And if we double down on fare increases and service cuts:

Ridership is gutted; costs per trip become completely unsustainable; third-party sponsors spend more money or stop sponsoring trips, permanent service cuts are inevitable.  
**Vulnerable populations lose.**

Doing so creates a downward spiral.



# Declining Ridership – A Downward Spiral



If it costs **\$200** to operate a Shared Ride van from a senior living facility to the closest medical complex.

With four riders, the cost is **\$50 per trip**.

Co-pays are \$7.50.

With two riders, the cost is **\$100 per trip**.

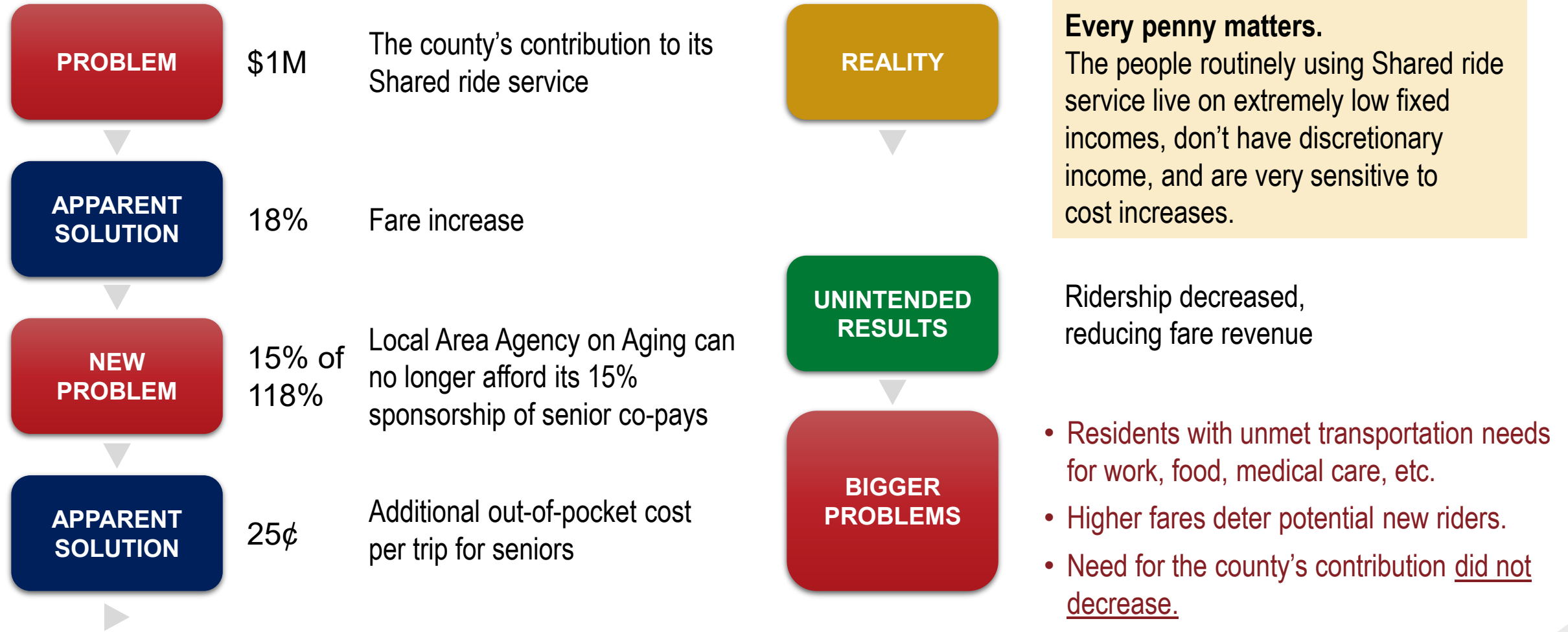
Co-pays are \$15.00.

With one rider, the cost is **\$200 per trip**.

The co-pay is \$30.00.

**Fare increases and service cuts result in reduced ridership, which contributes to per-trip costs rising to an unsustainable level.**

# Impacts of Fare Increases – County Example



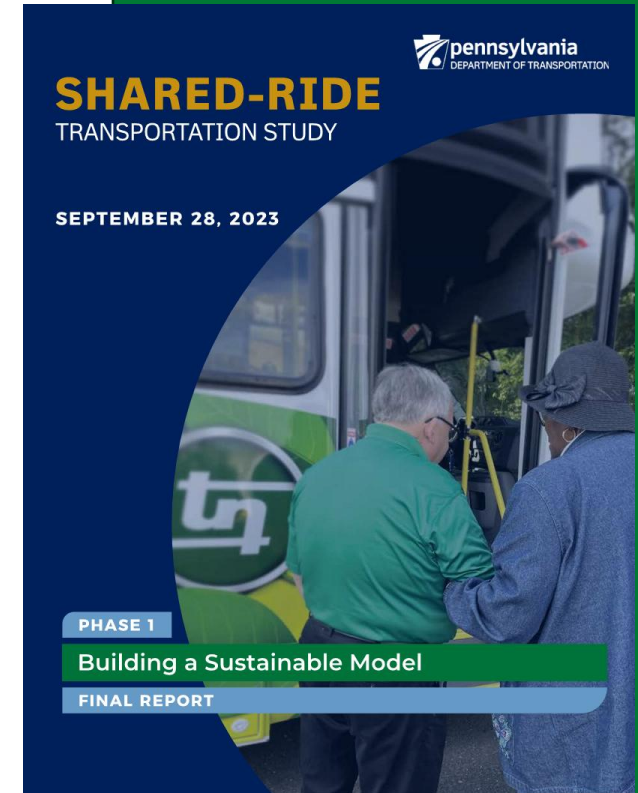
# Funding Issues are Not a New Problem

- **2002 to the Present** – Various brokerage models explored.
- **2009** – PennDOT partnered with the Departments of Aging, Human Services, and Budget to examine human service transportation.
- **2014** – Shared ride pilot studies and implementation.
- **2023** – PennDOT conducted a study to identify opportunities and to lay the groundwork to update the Shared ride funding approach.



# 2023 Study Scope

- PennDOT conducted a study to identify opportunities to update the Shared Ride Program funding approach to ensure its **long-term viability**.
- The study examined Shared ride history and lessons learned in Pennsylvania and nationally.
- The team interviewed Shared ride service providers and worked with state funding agencies.
- **Four alternative models** were identified; each has strengths and weaknesses.



# Key Points

- The status quo is unsustainable.
- A sustainable solution will balance the needs and limitations of customers, service providers, and funding partners.
- Legislation, regulations, policies, state plans, and oversight need to be updated to achieve a sustainable Shared ride model.
- Alternative service delivery and funding models need to be explored.



# Roundtable Discussion of Perspectives

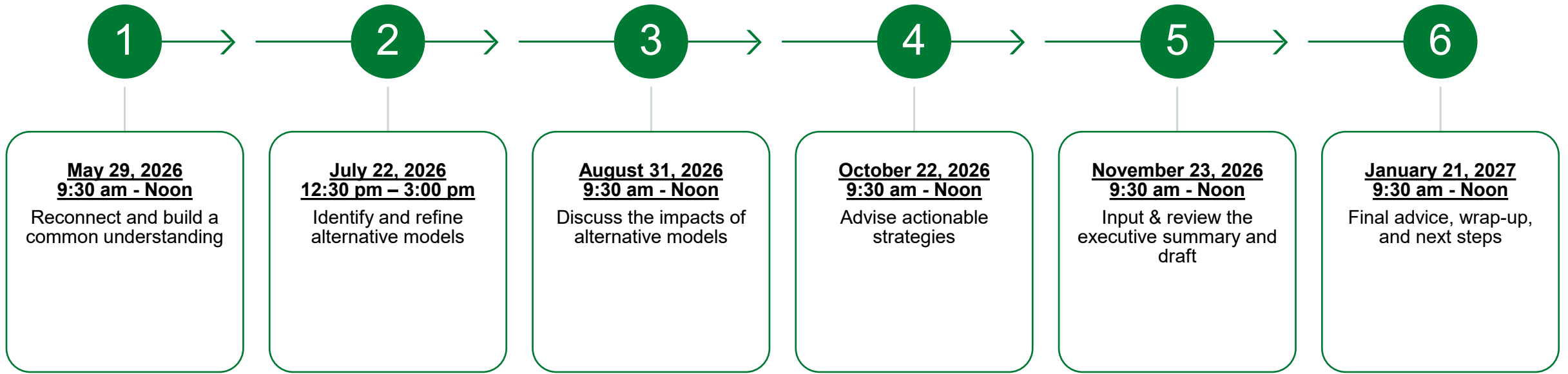
# Discussion Topics

- What will make this SRAC effort a success?
- What are the key Shared ride challenges and limitations?
- How should transportation needs for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes be met?
- Is there a different expectation or solution for rural, suburban, and urban communities?



# Schedule and Next Steps

# SRAC Proposed Meeting Schedule



# Next Steps

- Work with the Shared Ride Advisory Committee to:
  - Identify and analyze options and alternatives
  - Identify the best ways to engage stakeholders and advocacy organizations to gather more perspectives and ideas



# Public Comment Opportunity