Building Back from COVID-19

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Potential Policy Changes

- Decontamination and Prevention Policies
- Employee Policies
- Passenger Policies
- Human Resource Policies
- Financial Considerations/Policies
- Bus Configuration
- Planning
- Communication

A Phased Approach to Normalizing Operations

- **Short-term:**
    - Cases are still rising. Some businesses and organizations may be operating, but service limitations are in place.

- **Intermediate:**
    - Cases are declining, thresholds for reopening have been established, or a vaccine has been created. Agencies must decide what service limitations/ alterations they will continue.

- **Long-term:**
    - The immediate threat of the virus has passed. Agencies will need to update emergency plans, establish a long-term recovery plan, and determine which COVID-19 policies will remain permanent.

Short Term: Focused on Prevention

- Decontamination and prevention focused
- Immediate changes to employee and passenger policies
- Bus configuration
- Communicating policy changes internally and with the public
- Financial Considerations

Decontamination and Prevention

- Establish daily, written, cleaning procedures for vehicles and facilities
- Post "last cleaned" signage
- Create a decontamination response plan if a passenger or employee tests positive
- Install hand sanitizer dispensers on all vehicles
- Provide alcohol wipes or spray bottles and paper towels for cleaning high touch areas between passengers
- Install physical barriers to protect drivers from exposure to COVID-19

Employee and Passenger Policies

Employee

- Set employee testing/ screening requirements
- Develop workplace notification system for positive tests
- Create return to work policies for employees who have traveled, were potentially exposed, or tested positive
- Utilize work-from-home policies when possible
- Formalize PPE requirements
- Establish supply chain to secure and distribute PPE
- Provide trainings on cleaning and spotting virus symptoms

Passenger

- Post signage explaining social distancing
- Establish formalized rider policies (PPE, social distancing, trip prioritization)

Bus Configuration

- Install seat covers, signs, or other barriers to maintain a socially distanced vehicle
- If possible, have passengers board using the rear door

Images retrieved from: Colorado Transit

Financial Considerations

- Waive fares or develop fare-less system
- Report all pandemic related expenses, alterations to hours, fares, work assignments, etc.

Communicating Policy Changes

Intermediate: Cautious Renewal of Service

- Re-evaluate effectiveness of COVID-19 procedures
  - Decontamination and prevention considerations
  - Employee and passenger policies
  - Emergency management planning

General Emergency Management Planning

- Determine thresholds for service renewal/ reduction
  - Decontamination and prevention policies
  - Employee and passenger policies

- Utilize a phased approach like the State of Kansas

- Considerations when determining service renewal/reduction thresholds:
  - What are the federal, state, and local government guidelines?
    - Check CDC and KDHE websites for more information phased reopening metrics
  - What policies would it be beneficial to implement indefinitely?
  - What are the challenges of keeping policies in place?

Decontamination Considerations

- At minimum, the following procedures should be evaluated:
    - Daily vehicle cleaning policies
    - Postage of last-cleaned signage
    - Personal cleaning supplies for passenger (e.g. – hand sanitizer, wipes for seats, etc.)
    - Use of seat covers/ social distancing

Employee and Passenger Policies

- Agencies should also begin to consider thresholds for reducing COVID-19 related employee or passenger policies, including:
    - Social distancing
    - Personal protective equipment
    - Rear-door boarding
    - Fare free service
    - Remote working for employees
    - Employee testing

Long-Term: Service Adjustments Post COVID-19

- Institutionalize new policies
    - Employee
    - Passenger
- Consider local match revenue sources
- Building back ridership

Institutionalize New Policies

Employee

- Formally update employee wage and hour policies

- Update job descriptions to include services provided during pandemic (cleaning)

- Update employee training policies

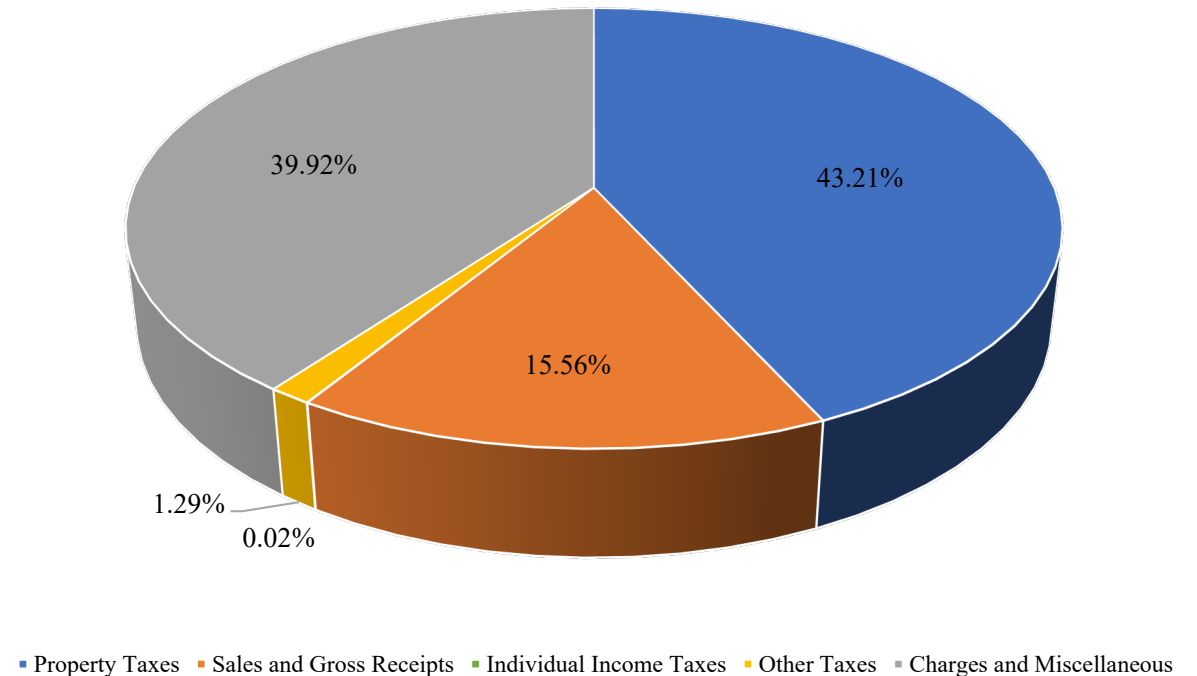- Formally update employee emergency procedures

Passenger

- Formally update rider policies
- Communicate policy changes to the public

Financial Planning in Uncertain Times

- Post CARES Act agencies will be responsible for a 30% local match

- The pandemic and recession may not recover at the same rate

- In the long-term, agencies should reconsider the stability their local match revenue sources

Figure 1. Kansas Local Government Own-Source Revenue (2017)

39.92%

43.21%

15.56%

1.29%

0.02%

■ Property Taxes ■ Sales and Gross Receipts ■ Individual Income Taxes ■ Other Taxes ■ Charges and Miscellaneous

Figure 1: Data retrieved from US Census Bureau

Building back Ridership

- Ridership was down 40.7% in March of 2020 and 9.9% in the first quarter of 2020

- Rebuilding a sense of trust and safety will be essential to building back ridership in a post-COVID world
  - Communicating policy changes effectively will be critical

- Agencies should prepare for slow and more rapid recoveries

Communicating Policy Changes to the Public