



March 7, 2025

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager *SM*

Subject: ODOT Annual Program Status Report

The Ohio Department of Transportation, State Safety Office (ODOT SSO) oversees the Cincinnati Streetcar and requires an annual report to be submitted. This annual report is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Included in your materials, is the 2023 Annual Program Status Report which highlights activities and accomplishments from the ODOT Rail Transit State Safety Oversight program, focused on calendar year 2023. The annual report is issued in arrears to allow completion of any investigations and to finalize the data and analysis results.

This is for information only; no action or decision is required by Council.

cc: John S. Brazina, Interim Assistant City Manager
Greg Long, P.E., Interim Director, Transportation and Engineering



**Department of
Transportation**
transportation.ohio.gov

Mike DeWine, *Governor*
Jim Tressel, *Lt. Governor*
Pamela Boratyn, *Director*

February 24, 2025

City Council
City of Cincinnati
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

**Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Rail Transit State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program
2023 Annual Program Status Report**

Dear Members of the Council:

Attached with this letter is the ODOT SSO Program 2023 Annual Program Status Report, as required per 49 CFR Part 674.13(a)(7):

At least once a year, the SSOA reports the status of the safety of each rail fixed guideway public transportation system to the Governor, the FTA, and the board of directors, or equivalent entity, of the rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

This annual program status report has also been delivered to the Board of Trustees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), City Council of the City of Cincinnati, Transdev, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Director of ODOT.

Sincerely,

E-SIGNED by Joachim Bean
on 2025-02-24 17:54:40 GMT

Joachim Bean
ODOT Data Program/SSO Program Coordinator
Division of Planning
Office of Transit

Rail Transit State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program 2023 Annual Program Status Report

Prepared by
ODOT Office of Transit

FINAL
January 24, 2025



Department of
Transportation

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Chapter 1: *Introduction*



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This 2023 Annual Program Status Report highlights activities and accomplishments from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rail Transit State Safety Oversight (SSO) program, focused on calendar year 2023. There is some delay in completing this annual report to complete investigations and finalize data and analysis results. This annual report is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) SSO Rule outlined below.

49 CFR § 674.13 Designation of oversight agency.

(a) Every State that must establish a State Safety Oversight program in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5329(e) and must also establish a SSOA [State Safety Oversight Agency] for the purpose of overseeing the safety of rail fixed guideway public transportation systems within that State. Further, the State must ensure that:

(7) At least once a year, the SSOA reports the status of the safety of each rail fixed guideway public transportation system to the Governor, the FTA, and the board of directors, or equivalent entity, of the rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

The Ohio Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs) included in this SSO program are the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) heavy and light rail systems, and the City of Cincinnati - Cincinnati Connector Streetcar system.

In Ohio, the designated State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) is the ODOT Office of Transit. This office provides financial and technical assistance to public transit systems, local governments, and human service agencies throughout the state for the planning, establishment, and operation of those public transit systems. The ODOT SSO program has provided safety oversight for GCRTA since the beginning of the program (1996) and now for the Cincinnati Connector Streetcar since 2012.





Chapter 2: *FTA's Safety Program Update*



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On November 15, 2021, the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)** or **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** was signed into law. This five-year funding legislation provides authorization for ongoing transportation funding, including for transit. Funding for transit operations and projects was significantly increased, as well as a nearly 70% increase for the SSO Program grant funding. With this increased funding, several requirements and expectations have been added including the following:

- SSO Programs and their RTAs must develop policies and procedures for safety-related data, access to RTA property and infrastructure, and a new risk-based inspection program. These changes are to be agreed to and included in the Program Standard and Agency Safety Plans.
- The Agency Safety Plans must be consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State health authority guidelines to minimize exposure to infectious diseases.
- RTAs must complete several new requirements for their Agency Safety Plans (ASPs):
 - Establish a Safety Committee composed of representatives of frontline employees and management, that is responsible for identifying, recommending, and analyzing the effectiveness of risk-based mitigations or strategies to reduce consequences identified in the agencies' safety risk assessment activities.
 - Develop a risk reduction program for transit operations to improve safety by reducing the number and rates of accidents, injuries and assaults on transit workers based on data submitted to the National Transit Database.
 - Set risk reduction performance targets using a three-year rolling average of the data submitted by the recipient to the National Transit Database and allocate not less than 0.75% of their Section 5307 funds to safety related projects.
 - Require maintenance personnel to meet the existing safety training requirements and safety, operations, and maintenance personnel to complete de-escalation training.

While awaiting the FTA to update the safety program related regulations, the ODOT SSO Program, along with all the SSO programs in the country, received a Special Directive (SD), Ohio's was SD 22-41 (<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/safety/fta-special-directive-22-41-ohio-department-transportation>), Required Actions to Implement a Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) Program at the Ohio Department of Transportation, dated October 21, 2022. The FTA also included an RBI Development Toolkit to help in responding to the SD and the new authorities described in 49 U.S.C. Section 5329(k) Inspections and 49 CFR Part 674 when updated to the related BIL changes. The SSOAs have two years (October 21, 2024) to have their RBI programs approved by the FTA and then within 12 months of being approved, provide six months of records from the RBI program.

The RBI requirements have been divided into six categories as outlined below. The FTA describes the RBI program as focused on the use of qualitative and quantitative data analysis to inform ongoing inspection activities. RBI programs are designed to prioritize inspections to address safety concerns and hazards associated with the highest levels of safety risk at each RTA.



RBI Requirements

Category 1: Authority to Perform Risk-Based Inspections

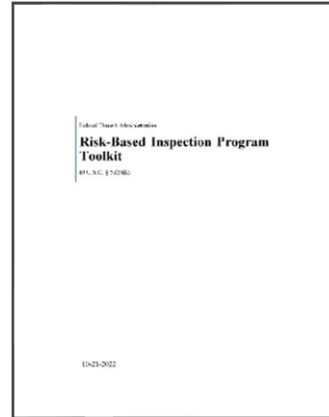
Category 2: Risk-Based Inspection Policies and Procedures

Category 3: Data Sources and Collection

Category 4: Inspection Prioritization

Category 5: Risk-Based Inspection Programs are Commensurate with Number, Size, and Complexity of the Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation System (RFGPTS)

Category 6: SSO Staffing, Qualification, and Training



Each SSOA must develop policies and procedures for inspection access and data collection in consultation with each RTA that the SSOA oversees. The policies and procedures must address SSOA authority and capability to enter and conduct inspections of the RFGPTS, including access for inspections that occur with and without advance notice. Additionally, the policies and procedures must address how the SSOA will collect data from each RTA to support its RBI monitoring and prioritization activities, including data that the RFGPTS collects when identifying and evaluating safety risk. RBI programs must be implemented in a way that is commensurate with the size and complexity of each RFGPTS that the SSOA oversees.



Chapter 3: *ODOT SSO Program Standard Update*



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The ODOT SSO Program Standard was updated to Version 6.0 in January 2022

(<https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/programs/transit/transit-coordination-resources/state-safety-oversight>).

Many of the Program Standard appendices were transitioned to a stand-alone but connected Reference Guide, also released in January 2022.





Chapter 4: *FTA Audit of the ODOT SSO Program*



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CHAPTER 4: FTA AUDIT OF THE ODOT SSO PROGRAM

The ODOT SSO program was last audited by the FTA in 2023. Four findings and corrective actions were developed as required. The next FTA audit of the ODOT SSO Program is planned for the federal fiscal year 2026.





Chapter 5:
*Greater Cleveland Regional
Transit Authority (GCRTA)*



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The ODOT SSO program provides safety oversight for the GCRTA (www.riderta.com) heavy and light rail systems shown in Figure 1, which include 37 miles of double track and catenary power system. Pictured in Figure 2 is one of the light rail vehicles on the Green Line.

FIGURE 1. GCRTA HEAVY AND LIGHT RAIL SYSTEMS



FIGURE 2. LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM ON THE GREEN LINE



The current safety program related management staff are as follows:

- Ms. India Birdsong Terry, General Manager and CEO (Accountable Executive)
- Dr. Floun'say Caver, Chief Operating Officer
- Ms. Janet Burney, General Counsel, Deputy General Manager, Legal Affairs and Chief Safety Officer
- Mr. Anthony Garofoli, Executive Director, Internal Audit
- Mr. Michael Schipper, Deputy General Manager, Engineering & Project Management
- Mr. Joseph Shaffer, Director, Engineering & Project Development
- Mr. Steven Peganoff, Director, Safety
- Mr. Sean Thompson, Director, Rail District
- Ms. Teresa Muti, Director, Power and Way
- Chief Deirdre Jones, Transit Police
- Mr. Anthony Richardson, Senior Manager Service Quality

Communications with the GCRTA occur daily with email or phone calls, usually with the Safety Department. The GCRTA provides monthly status reports for all investigations, internal audits, corrective actions, and hazards. Additional data and information are provided and reviewed as well as scheduled meetings, including the following:

- Daily car status
- Monthly capital projects status
- Monthly Executive Safety Committee (ESC) meetings
- Monthly Configuration Management and Review Board (CMRB) meetings
- General Notices, Bulletins, and Orders when released
- Annual review of Signals Violations and adjudication
- Updates of documents that have been designated as minimum standards for safety

The results of meetings, data collection, and related information are reviewed and the safety risk management and monitoring log (referred to as the safety risk monitoring log) is updated with new information. The ODOT SSO program keeps the safety risk monitoring log up to date after site visits and with

monthly program status report completion. In addition, an analysis report is updated twice per year to monitor safety performance trends and other safety-related issues. This report was updated in May and September during 2023. Examples of the important safety-related topics being tracked include the following:

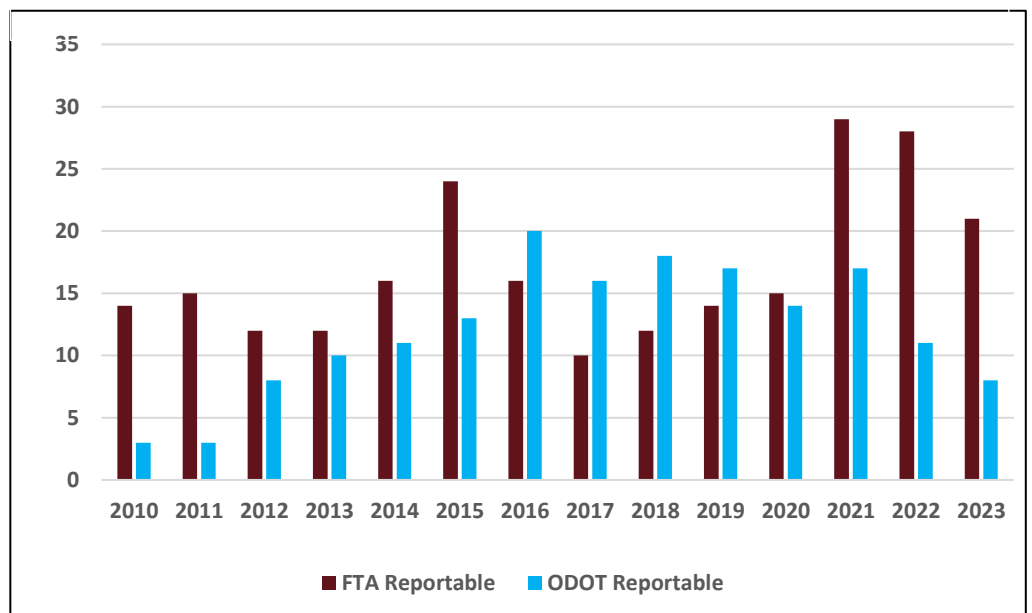
- Signals state of repair and maintenance practices review
- Issues with the Waterfront Bridge that have caused the closure of the Waterfront line
- New railcar procurement and related capital projects
- Substation upgrades and replacements
- Upgrades of track, signals/SCADA, and concrete management in and around Tower City
- Electric motor smoke events for heavy rail vehicles

The ODOT SSO program and the GCRTA have quarterly meetings at GCRTA with executive and department management staff to discuss the status of corrective actions and current safety related activities for the ODOT SSO program. Quarterly meetings for 2023 occurred on February 1st, May 3rd, July 19th, and November 1st. These Quarterly meetings typically include a three-day visit with multiple onsite meetings with Safety, Rail, and Engineering. During calendar year 2023, the ODOT SSO program staff completed onsite visits beyond the Quarterly visits during June and August.

The FTA joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop was held on November 14-16, 2023, and was attended virtually by staff from GCRTA Safety and in person by the ODOT SSO program team. Mr. Cameron Phelps, Former ODOT SSO Program Manager, was a presenter at the conference.

The GCRTA and the ODOT SSO program have actively worked together completing investigations and internal audits, using these as an opportunity to enhance safety capabilities and performance related to the rail systems. As depicted in Figure 3, the number of reportable event investigations over the last 13 years has been steady with an average of nearly 16 per year. There was an increased number of reportable events in 2021 and 2022 due to electrical motor smoke events that caused an

FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF FTA AND ODOT REQUIRED INVESTIGATIONS BY YEAR



evacuation for life safety. In 2023, the GCRTA completed an electric motor overhaul process and a technical review of current procedures that resulted in modifications to those inspection and maintenance procedures. During 2023, the number of heavy rail electric motor failures decreased to a much lower number.

The ODOT SSO program requires additional, less severe, safety events that were already being investigated to also be included in the ODOT SSO program. Note the significant increase of the ODOT reportable events starting in 2012 is a part of the new requirements for the enhanced SSO program. It is believed that the focus and attention on the less severe safety events has reduced the number of the more severe/significant safety events.

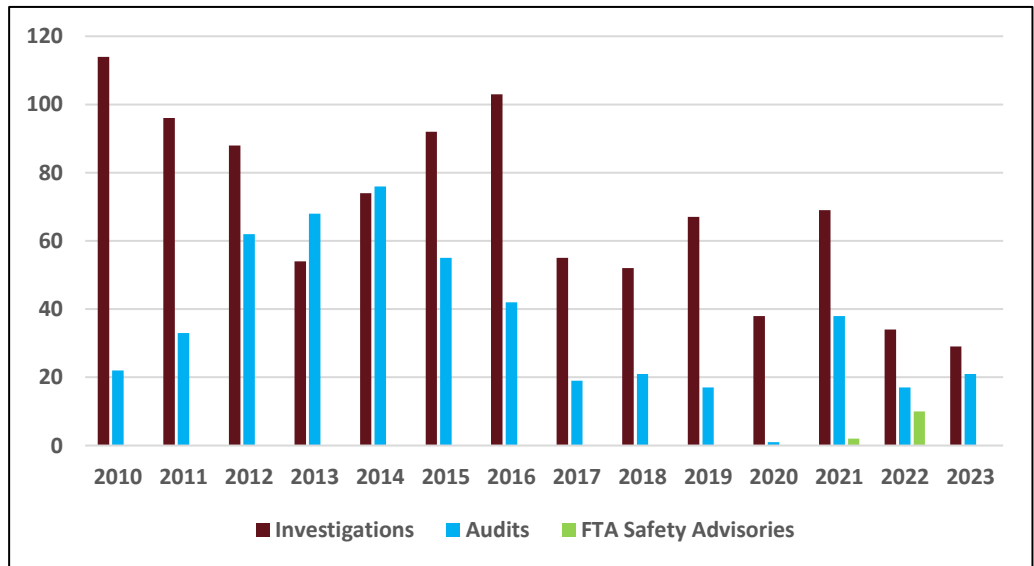
With the Certification of the ODOT SSO program in August 2017, the FTA reportable safety event criteria and thresholds changed in calendar year 2018 to the new SSO Rule.

The ODOT SSO program assigns the GCRTA to complete these investigations, and the ODOT SSO program approves and adopts all the investigations and Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). The ODOT SSO program staff carefully and independently review the investigations for sufficiency, thoroughness, and agreement with findings of causation, as well as CAPs to ensure all the causes and contributing factors for the events were fully investigated and appropriately mitigated/controlled.

All CAPs from investigations, internal reviews/audits, and ODOT SSO program Triennial Audits at the GCRTA during the 13-year period are depicted in Figure 4. These CAPs have been approved by and included in the ODOT SSO program. The

CAPs represent action items to improve safety performance on the rail system including training, additional maintenance, or adding new/improving existing capabilities. The total number of CAPs typically averages 112 per year, except for the lower numbers occurring in 2017, 2018, and 2020. The number of CAPs for 2021 was impacted by the completion of the

FIGURE 4. NUMBER OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR INVESTIGATIONS AND AUDITS BY YEAR



Triennial Safety Program Audit during September through December 2021, with final reporting and CAPs (based on 10 Findings and 34 Recommendations) approval occurring in early 2022.

The GCRTA’s internal safety reviews/audits are coordinated with the ODOT SSO program and the GCRTA’s Safety and Internal Audit Departments. Each year, approximately one-third of the ASP groupings and System Security Plan (SSP) sections are audited to cover the entire safety program over a three-year period, as well



as a review of the ASP and Safety Management System (SMS) implementation. For each internal safety review/audit, the ODOT SSO program is included for review of the review/audit plan both for information and in case the ODOT SSO program staff decide to participate in those internal safety reviews/audits. Several meetings during the year are completed with Safety and the Internal Audit Departments to accomplish this coordination and inclusion in the ODOT SSO program.

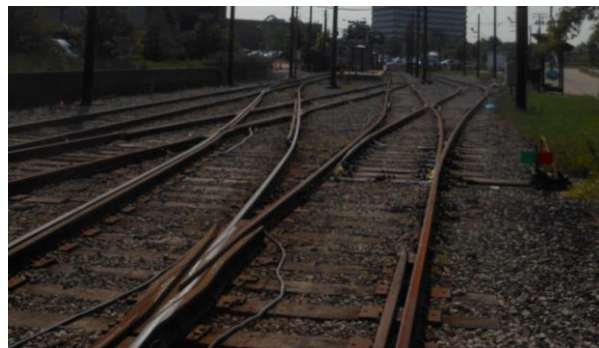
The ODOT SSO program and the GCRTA Safety staff continue to monitor and complete the FTA's training requirements as defined for the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCPTP). All required planning, scheduling, and refresher training is currently being completed on time.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM GCRTA RAIL IN 2023

Outlined below are several highlights for the GCRTA, including some for only the Rail-related departments:

- The GCRTA Board of Trustees approved the 2023 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan December 20, 2022, and the ODOT SSO Program approved on February 27, 2023.
- The Rail Operators Rule Book (RORB), Train Control standard operating procedures (SOPs), and related documents, procedures and training are reviewed and updated, as needed, on an annual basis. Multiple departments at GCRTA ensured this activity was successfully completed - Rail, Service Quality, Engineering, Safety, Training, and Internal Audit.
- Significant capital projects for the rail systems and infrastructure continued including Tower City, multiple stations, and track and power (substation replacement) system projects. Significant work to Shaker Junction has been completed to add warning systems and controls for the Blue and Green Lines.
- GCRTA completed significant work for their process to purchase new rail vehicles including selecting a vendor, resolving technical issues, clarifying scope and negotiation, and building and sourcing the significant capital funds needed.
- Significant technical projects to implement quality control processes to ensure that subsystems and components of the rail vehicles can be maintained while awaiting the replacement of these older rail vehicles.
- On October 13, 2022, the FTA issued Safety Advisory 22-2 Signal System Safety and Train Control. Throughout 2023, GCRTA staff extracted and analyzed one year of completed Power & Way signal maintenance requirements focusing on content, timing, defects, and repairs and determined if any mitigations were needed. In addition, one year of completed Rail Equipment Shop maintenance

FIGURE 5. TRACKS AT WARRENSVILLE VAN AKEN STATION (BLUE LINE)



requirements pertaining to on-board cab signal equipment in both fleets was extracted and analyzed with a focus on content, timing, defects and repairs and determined if any mitigations were needed.

- On April 5, 2023, the FTA issued a Request for Information for Rail Transit Vehicle Crashworthiness Standards.
- On November 28, 2023, the GCRTA Board of Trustees, in Resolution No. 2023-088, authorized the first option to purchase six additional railcars.

GCRTA RAIL SAFETY PROGRAM STATUS

From the ODOT SSO program perspective, the GCRTA rail system safety program is being managed properly and all deadlines for annual certification continue to be completed on time. The working relationship with the GCRTA executive management, department management, and staff continues to be excellent. The GCRTA's challenges from a safety performance perspective continue to be managing aging infrastructure and rail vehicles. The GCRTA has been working to complete specification and purchase of new rail vehicles. Multiple capital projects are underway or are being planned each year to ensure the rail systems achieve a state of good repair. The GCRTA has also invested significantly in training and capabilities for the technical staff in rail-related departments. These activities require a tremendous amount of effort and discipline, and significant progress continues to be made.





Chapter 6:

*City of Cincinnati Streetcar -
Cincinnati Connector*



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CHAPTER 6: CITY OF CINCINNATI STREETCAR – CINCINNATI CONNECTOR

The ODOT SSO program also provides safety program oversight for the City of Cincinnati Streetcar - Cincinnati Connector (<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/>), which includes a route of 3.6 miles of single track and catenary power system. This streetcar system entered service on time on September 9, 2016.

One of the modern streetcar vehicles and the route map, which runs between the Banks through downtown up to the Over the Rhine neighborhood, are shown in Figures 6 and 7, respectively. The City of Cincinnati owns the assets for the Cincinnati Connector and contracts with Transdev for operations and maintenance, including management and staff to operate and maintain the streetcar services. The Maintenance and Operating Facility (MOF) and one of the maintenance tracks, including the wheel truing machine, are pictured in Figures 8 and 9, respectively.

FIGURE 6. CINCINNATI CONNECTOR STREETCAR



FIGURE 7. CINCINNATI CONNECTOR ROUTE MAP

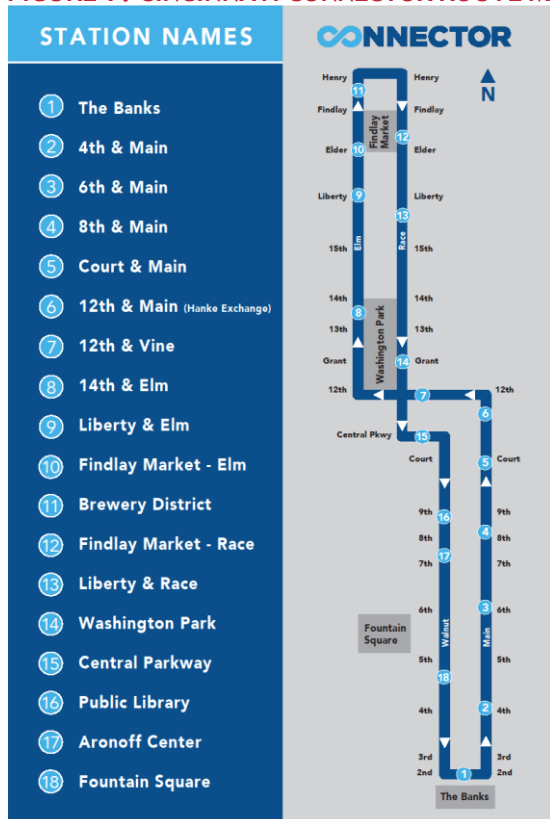
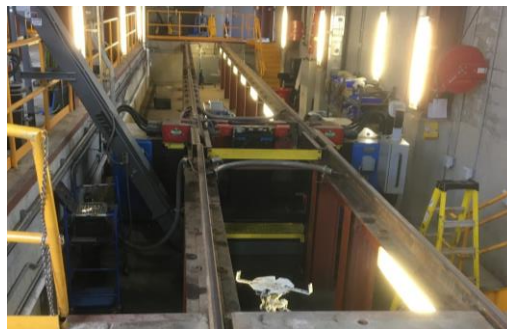


FIGURE 8. CINCINNATI CONNECTOR MOF



FIGURE 9. MOF MAINTENANCE TRACK AND WHEEL TRUING MACHINE



As of the end of 2023 and for the Annual Certification, the safety program management of record for the Cincinnati Streetcar, from the ODOT SSO program point of view, were as follows:

- City of Cincinnati (Asset Owner and Operator)
 - Ms. Sheryl M. M. Long, City of Cincinnati City Manager (Accountable Executive)
 - Ms. Lori Burchett, City of Cincinnati Deputy Director of Streetcar Services
 - Mr. Paul Conway, City of Cincinnati (Chief Safety Officer)
 - Mr. Matthew Hulme, City of Cincinnati, Transit Coordinator
- Transdev (Operations and Maintenance)
 - Les Shaw, General Manager
 - Sheri Allen, Operations Manager
 - Chris Bundy, Maintenance Manager

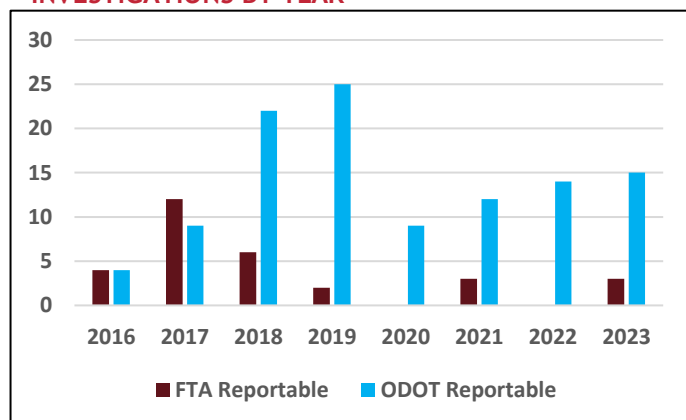
Safety program documentation updates have been completed, including completion and approval of a City of Cincinnati specific Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) by City Council (as the equivalent Board of Directors) on November 1, 2023, and approved by the ODOT on March 12, 2024.

Communications with the project team occur daily with email or phone calls. The City of Cincinnati provides monthly status reports, including logs for daily incidents, blocking vehicles (or construction equipment), and CAPs (from Transdev and as agreed to by the City of Cincinnati). The ODOT SSO program participates in the Safety and Security Review Committee (SSRC) meetings, which also includes configuration management committee duties. The ODOT SSO program and City of Cincinnati and Transdev conducted 2023 Quarterly meetings on February 8th, May 16th, August 2nd, and December 5th in Cincinnati to discuss the status of the operations, maintenance, development of procedures, and development of related safety and security program processes and documents, as well as investigations and CAPs.

Investigations completed by the Cincinnati Streetcar team for the ODOT SSO program, including the FTA required and the State only required investigations, are depicted in Figure 10.

Revenue service in 2016 included nearly four months of operation and the chart includes all of 2017 through 2023. The FTA reportable event investigations changed in 2018 to a lower number based on the change of safety event criteria and threshold from the new SSO Rule (49 CFR Part 674). From the beginning of 2018 on, note that streetcar collisions with motor vehicles in street running or at

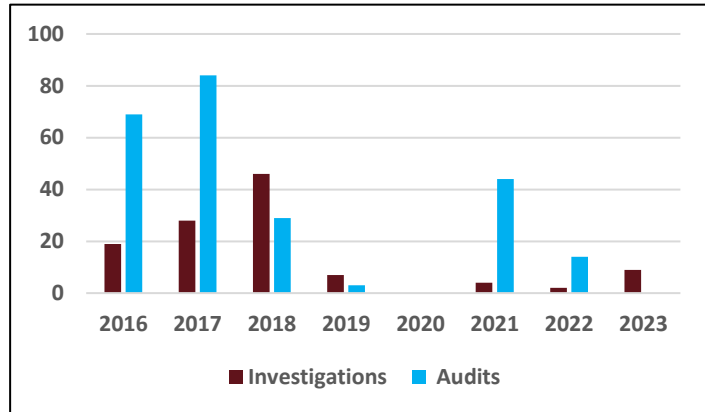
FIGURE 10. NUMBER OF FTA AND ODOT REQUIRED INVESTIGATIONS BY YEAR



intersections are no longer automatically reportable unless substantial damage is established from the safety event.

The corrective actions developed for audits and inspections by year are summarized in Figure 11. For operating years 2016 and 2017, there were several audits included to ensure proper and safe transition into revenue service for the Streetcar system. The number of corrective actions from investigations increased through 2018 as processes, procedures, and training requirements were improved based on experience in revenue service. The number of corrective actions was significantly lower in 2019 and 2020, and audits for 2021 increased due to the completion of the 2020 Triennial Audit CAPs.

FIGURE 11. NUMBER OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR INVESTIGATIONS AND AUDITS BY YEAR



The Cincinnati Streetcar safety program completed all internal reviews/audits in 2022 for the three-year cycle.

The Cincinnati Streetcar safety program was last audited by the ODOT SSO Program staff in 2023. There were 10 findings and 32 recommendations resulting in corrective actions were developed as required. The next FTA audit of the ODOT SSO Program is planned for the federal fiscal year 2026.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CINCINNATI STREETCAR IN 2023

Outlined below are several highlights for calendar year 2023:

- The Cincinnati Streetcar Agency Safety Plan was completed and approved on November 1, 2023, by City Council and by the ODOT SSO program on March 12, 2024.
- In calendar year 2023, the Cincinnati Streetcar ridership continued to increase, hitting a record number of over 1 million riders in 2023. The Cincinnati Streetcar continues to be fare-free.
- The City of Cincinnati and Transdev have successfully negotiated option years to continue operations, maintenance, and management of the streetcar system with management and financial support from the City of Cincinnati.
- Work has continued in 2023 to keep the streetcar vehicles operating in service. Once the streetcar vehicles were out of warranty, some ongoing issues were more easily managed with options for sourcing components. (Refer to Figure 12 for the new streetcar wrap). Types of work conducted include:

FIGURE 12. CINCINNATI CONNECTOR STREETCAR IN YARD AT MOF



- Ensuring vehicle configuration control and software maintainability
- Issues with wheels and maintenance of wheels
- Ensuring access to spare parts and special tools
- The ODOT SSO program staff and Cincinnati Streetcar staff met on multiple occasions (many of those meetings were virtual) to review corrective actions status, closure evidence, and completed quality assurance of the closure evidence, as appropriate. With the number of corrective actions developed early in operations and several management changes at Transdev during the first couple of years in operation, there was a need to ensure proper processes, communication, and coordination. As of the end of 2023, the significant number of CAPs issued has been fully resolved.

CINCINNATI STREETCAR RAIL SAFETY PROGRAM STATUS

From the ODOT SSO program perspective, the Cincinnati Streetcar rail system safety program is being managed properly and all deadlines for developing documentation for the safety program are being met. The working relationship with the City of Cincinnati and Transdev management and staff continues to be excellent.





Chapter 7: *ODOT SSO Program Plans for 2024*



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The 2024 calendar year is expected to be busy with planned activities for the ODOT SSO program as follows:

- The ODOT SSO program continues to monitor the GCRTA's process for specifying and purchasing new rail cars for the heavy and light rail systems. At the same time, the existing aging infrastructure continues to be a high priority for Safety Risk Management (SRM) monitoring.
- The ODOT SSO program needs to conduct the Triennial Safety Program Audit for GCRTA from the period of 2021-2023.
- The FTA and the ODOT SSO program continue conference calls to coordinate updates and information requested from the FTA. Updates for the Reference Guide are expected in early 2024.
- Required completion of Annual Reports and Certification from GCRTA and Cincinnati Streetcar by January 31st and approval from the ODOT SSO program were completed on time. Required annual data and information submission and annual certification by the ODOT SSO program to the FTA completed in March 2024, as required.
- Quarterly meetings will be conducted, as scheduled.
 - GCRTA - January, April, July, and October
 - City of Cincinnati/Transdev - February, May, August, and November
- The ODOT SSO program staff and the RTA staff continue to attend required FTA SSO program workshops.
- The ODOT SSO program staff continues to attend required FTA safety certification training classes and to develop and implement the technical training plan with the GCRTA and Cincinnati Connector Streetcar.
- Both Ohio RTAs (GCRTA and City of Cincinnati) staff supporting the safety program continue to work towards completing the FTA-required safety certification training.
- The ODOT SSO program continues to monitor the BIL changes and information

