



# SOUTH COUNTY CONNECTOR

Tate Coleman, Director of Public Transportation  
Transit Department Director's Report – May 2026



## Staff Recognition / Updates

Throughout May, the team focused on doing what we do best: showing up, running a reliable service, and continuing to build momentum. The results speak for themselves - 2,624 rides in May, tying the all-time South County Connector record set in August 2024. That number doesn't happen without a team that's fully committed to the work every single day.

I also want to give a well-deserved shoutout to two members of our leadership team. With the Operations Team Leader (Vehicle Maintenance & Safety Coordinator) position still vacant, Messiah Vision and Michael Richter have been stepping up to cover those responsibilities - including coming in on their days off at times to make sure vehicles are receiving their preventive maintenance on schedule and that any mechanical issues are addressed promptly. That's exactly the kind of commitment that keeps this service running reliably for riders, and I want to make sure it's recognized here. Thank you, Messiah and Mike.

We are actively conducting rolling interviews for the open F/T Operations Team Leader position (Vehicle Maintenance & Safety Coordinator focus). Please refer anyone who might be a great fit to [socoride.org/employment](https://socoride.org/employment) - and let us know you've referred them!

A sampling of May rider surveys about the team (**98.8%** positive):

I love riding with Bonnie. She's so very present and also pleasant. (5 stars)

Ellen was very helpful, friendly, shared information on how the system works. So glad I heard about you! (5 stars)

Very professional and friendly drivers and riders - I am grateful for your exceptional service. (5 stars)

I love riding with Mike. He's such a competent driver and he's kind. Yay South County Connector! (5 stars)

## Current Staffing

| Position                                      | Budgeted | Filled | Pending /<br>Trainees | Open |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|--------|-----------------------|------|
| Director of Public Transportation             | 1        | 1      | 0                     | 0    |
| Operations Manager                            | 1        | 1      | 0                     | 0    |
| Operations Team Leader                        | 3        | 2      | 0                     | 1    |
| Systems Specialist                            | 1        | 1      | 0                     | 0    |
| Cash Revenue Auditor (Senior Tax<br>Work-off) | 1        | 1      | 0                     | 0    |

| Position                                   | Budgeted                  | Filled    | Pending /<br>Trainees | Open                    |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Graphic Designer (Senior Tax Work-off)     | 1                         | 1         | 0                     | 0                       |
| Accounts Coordinator (Senior Tax Work-off) | 1                         | 0         | 0                     | 1                       |
| F/T Team Members                           | 3                         | 3         | 0                     | 0                       |
| P/T Team Members                           | 4                         | 4         | 0                     | 0                       |
| On Demand Team Members                     | Min. 6 / Up to 10         | 6         | 0                     | Min. 0 / Up to 4        |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>Min. 22 / Up to 26</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>0</b>              | <b>Min. 2 / Up to 6</b> |

See below for notes on open positions. The leadership team is conducting interviews on a rolling basis. Please refer anyone interested in joining our team to [socoride.org/employment](https://socoride.org/employment).

## Ridership

Month-over-Month (Last Month & Last May)

| Performance Measure                                 | May 2026       | Apr 2026 | May 2025 | YoY Change |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Total Rides (Unlinked Passenger Trips)              | <b>2,624</b>   | 2,415    | 2,266    | +15.8%     |
| On-Time Performance (< 10 min late) Goal: 95%+      | <b>90.9% *</b> | 96.0%    | 95.2%    | -4.5%      |
| Excessively Late Rides (> 15 min late) Goal: < 1.5% | — **           | 1.29%    | 1.64%    | —          |
| Pooled Ride Percentage                              | <b>47.6%</b>   | 27.7%    | 27.1%    | +75.6%     |
| Driver Hours (excl. Pittsfield)                     | <b>856***</b>  | 922.3    | —        | —          |
| Pittsfield FLEX Rides                               | <b>53</b>      | 49       | —        | —          |
| Trip Denial Rate                                    | <b>15.35%</b>  | — **     | —        | —          |

\* On-time performance was lower in May as the team was still getting used to Via's scheduling and dispatch workflow. We are also still fine-tuning our OTP reporting methodology in partnership with Via, so this number should be read with that context in mind. We expect improvement as the platform becomes more familiar.

\*\* Excessively late ride data not yet available for May 2026. We are working to configure this within Via and expect it to be available in the July report. May 2026 was also the first month trip denial data was automatically tracked via Via; prior months required manual tracking.

\*\*\* With Via, we now have the ability to more accurately track “revenue hours” rather than “driver hours”. “Revenue hours” is the more standard industry metric. The numbers may not quite be an apples-to-apples comparison.

Ridership increased by 8.7% from April to May — 2,624 rides, tying the all-time record. This is the first full month of operating on Via, and the pooled ride percentage jumped to 47.6%, which is

already a strong sign that the new platform's optimization is having a real impact. A 15.8% increase over May 2025 speaks to how much the service has grown.

### Capital Update

**MassDOT Vehicle Grant** – In late April, MassDOT announced awards for six replacement vehicles — allowing us to receive six new 2023 Ford E-Transit accessible vans for roughly the same cost of three 2026 vans. Two replacement vehicles each were awarded to Great Barrington, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge. Stockbridge's local match (\$18,205) was approved at their Town Meeting on May 19. West Stockbridge's was previously approved. Great Barrington's local match remains unresolved after the item was pulled from the Annual Town Meeting warrant due to broader Proposition 2½ override-related budget considerations — RTAC members are actively exploring alternate options.

### Projects Update

**Operations Dashboard** – The dashboard is taking a bit longer than anticipated. Daniel Rose-Levine (Systems Specialist) has been working through some challenges in translating historical data from our prior system (TripShot) into Via's format. We're now targeting an early/mid July launch. Once live, it will be available to anyone at [socoride.org/dashboard](https://socoride.org/dashboard) and will update automatically with near real-time data from Via.

**Via Operations Software** – May was the first full month on Via, and overall things are going well. The pooled ride percentage (47.6%) is already higher than what we were seeing on TripShot, automated rider reminders are live, and the SCC-branded app is available for riders to download. That said, a few riders left feedback noting that pickup windows felt off or that they were being booked outside their preferred times — this is consistent with the team still getting used to the platform's scheduling logic. We're actively working through these fine-tuning items with Via and expect continued improvement.

**Vehicle Wrapping & Visibility** – We've been working with our volunteer graphic designer, Bill Cooke, on a vehicle wrap design to make SCC vehicles more recognizable out on the road. An internal design has been selected, and we're exploring the feasibility of including this in the FY2027 budget.

**Service Information Brochures** – Updated brochures incorporating new Via booking information have been pushed to FY2027. We'll have updated materials out to senior centers and community locations as soon as they're ready.

**Hillsdale, NY Service Pilot** – Planning for a FY2027 pilot continues. The Hillsdale Town Board approved a resolution supporting the pilot back in February, and the project is currently under review by the Great Barrington Town Manager's office. We expect to revisit this in June.

**Operations Center** – The department is still operating out of the Great Barrington Town Hall basement following our relocation in mid-February. The search for a permanent space that meets our operational needs and budget is ongoing.

### Grants & Community

**MassDOT Microtransit & Last Mile Grant (\$600,000)** – Awarded. This confirms FY2027 operating funding and is the foundation of our budget for the coming year. We are very thankful to MassDOT for their continued support.

**MCOA FY2027 Grant Applications** – Applications are due June 5, and five communities are on track to submit: Great Barrington, Egremont, Monterey, Stockbridge, and New Marlborough. Combined potential funding is up to \$125,000. We'll keep RTAC members updated.

**CDBG Application (\$190,000)** – Successfully submitted in April in partnership with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and the Town of West Stockbridge. If awarded, this would fund fare-free service for low and moderate income residents, a dedicated vehicle in West Stockbridge, and additional driver capacity for workforce trips including late-night service. Awaiting decision.

**Volunteers in Medicine Partnership** – Our intercity medical trip service through VIM continues to operate, with trips open to the general public on a space-available basis. Details and scheduled trips are posted at [socoride.org](http://socoride.org) under “Intercity.”

**Soldier On Referral Program** – After a check-in with MassDOT earlier this year, we connected with Soldier On in Pittsfield to understand what services they already provide for veterans. It turns out they already offer free rides to VA Medical Hospitals for all Berkshire County veterans — including all South County communities. We won't be moving forward with a separate VA service ourselves, but we're happy to refer any veteran who calls in. Messiah Vision (Operations Team Leader) distributed a flyer with Soldier On's information to all member communities in mid-May.

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Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions. I look forward to continuing to work with everyone, and to the exciting new developments coming our way soon. Thank you for your continued support!

**Tate Coleman**

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