



# Detroit Department of Transportation

100 Mack Avenue • Detroit, MI 48201 • 313.933.1300 • [Detroitmi.gov/DDOT](http://Detroitmi.gov/DDOT)

**To:** Council Member Scott Benson, District 3  
**From:** Robert Cramer, Executive Director, Detroit Department of Transportation  
**Date:** April 2, 2025  
**Re:** Responses to 2025-2026 DDOT Budget Questions

---

Please find below responses to your questions sent on 3/19/2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Detroit Department of Transportation.

1. The FY 2024-25 budget states that DDOT had 514 full-time operators (FTOs) as of November 2024. What is the current number of FTOs? What is the optimal number required to maintain reliable service, and what strategies are being implemented to attract and retain high-quality operators?

TEOs/Operators	
Active	490
Inactive	31
Out of Service	5
Current Student Headcount	115
Total Number of Vacancies	101

This is a moving target as service increases are being programmed for upcoming Transportation Equipment Operator (TEO) Picks. Current service requires 397 Operators, 476 with a 20% Extra Board, and about 516 with an allowance for FMLA and non-driving positions. That number will increase by about 40 with every incremental service increase.

Currently HR has implemented the following strategies for improving recruitment and retention of essential positions:

1. Enhanced Job Postings & Online Presence
  - a. Update social media with job postings, including a QR code linking directly to the application opportunities.
  - b. Sponsor job postings on Indeed, Transit Talent, and Nextdoor to reach a broader audience.
2. Employee Referral Program
  - a. Create an Employee Referral Program.
3. Community Outreach & Advertising
  - a. Create and distribute job flyers throughout the city.
  - b. Promote job openings across digital platforms:
    - i. DDOT Facebook
    - ii. Talent Acquisition Facebook & Instagram
    - iii. City of Detroit LinkedIn

iv. NeoGov

4. Recruitment Events & Job Fairs

- a. Feature current job opportunities at job fairs, highlighting the benefits of a union-secured job and training at DDOT.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

- a. Strengthen communication between DDOT and other City of Detroit Departments to develop new recruitment strategies through biweekly brainstorming meetings.

**2. Has DDOT addressed the issues with the in-bus camera system to ensure incidents on buses can be easily tracked and reviewed?**

Currently there are 10 cameras (average) installed on each DDOT bus, and there are currently 194 buses in service. Out of the 1940 cameras in service, there are 56 bus cameras that have received camera maintenance alerts recently. These alerts let the Vehicle Maintenance team know that the camera has a connection issue. We are working on having these cameras serviced, and this should be completed within the next month.

It should also be noted that DDOT is in the process of acquiring a new camera system. DDOT is currently in the evaluation phase of this project, which is being handled by the Office of Contracting & Procurement (OCP). Once the contract is in place, maintenance can coordinate to complete the retrofit installation between 6-8 months. Our goal is to have this completed by the end of 2025.

**3. What is the current on-time performance of DDOT's regular bus service? How does this compare to national benchmarks, and what key factors are affecting performance? What steps are being taken to improve reliability?**

Currently, System-wide OTP is at 81%, with the industry standard being 85%. The key factors that have a major effect on performance, would be the number of active Operators (Drivers) and the available coaches for release. In addition to the request for additional funding this fiscal year, which will help greatly, the DDOT Operations Division has updated the current training practices, and resources are being provided to better train the workforce (TEOs') on time management.

**4. If the City Council were to approve a significant budget increase for DDOT, how would those additional funds be allocated to improve service, safety, and efficiency?**

Should the FY26 Mayor's Proposed Budget Recommendation be approved by City Council, DDOT would utilize that funding to increase the number of available TEOs (Drivers) and Vehicle Maintenance staff and increase the available resources to assist with extending the useful life of our coaches. Additionally, DDOT has begun training to better utilize our Clever Cad system and the Road Supervisors we have, to target the

lowest performing routes and operators for improvement. Additional shelters, seating, bus stop signs, and coach amenities will be available. The ultimate goal is to improve the safety, reliability, and riding experience for our customers.

No additional funding is needed beyond the FY26 Mayor's Proposed Budget Recommendation to achieve the above improvements.

**5. What measures have been implemented to reduce accidents and mitigate the volume of lawsuits generated by the department?**

During 2024, under the leadership of the Safety Department and in collaboration with the DDOT Training Center, the student TEO curriculum was reviewed and revised to incorporate interactive modules focused on accident prevention. Additionally, daily drive-time accountability measures were created to ensure that new hires received consistent behind-the-wheel instruction throughout induction training.

2024 also marked the reimplementation of annual refresher training. This one (1) day training session was freshly designed, deployed to all active TEO's and covered various topics ranging from departmental operating policies, defensive driving techniques, and customer service. Through the combination of revised induction training and the reintroduction of refresher training, DDOT has experienced a downward trend of accidents which will inherently translate to a reduction in the amount of litigation settlements.

In addition to training initiatives, an increase in supervisor-led in-service ride checks has increased accountability through the implementation of immediate coaching on proper operational and safety procedures.

**6. With the introduction of electric buses into DDOT's fleet, what has been the overall performance and effectiveness of these vehicles in service?**

Without on-street charging infrastructure, each of these buses can only be utilized for a maximum of six (6) hours per day. They can only be assigned to blocks that are under six (6) hours from pull-out time to pull-in time, which is not very beneficial when it comes to DDOT being able to service our customers. It takes approximately three (3) to four (4) electric buses to replace just one (1) diesel bus that can stay in service for over 18 hours without refueling. Driver efficiency can also create issues with utilizing these buses more frequently, so the overall usefulness of these buses is limited.

Signed by:

*Robert Cramer*

BBCB1C0F6420490...