



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

# Fiscal Year 2020 Report

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT  
OF RAIL AND PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virginia Code §33.2-106 directs the Secretary of Transportation to submit an annual report to the General Assembly “on actions taken by the Commonwealth, local governments, and regional transportation authorities to (i) increase transit use and (ii) reduce highway congestion and use of single occupant vehicles through programs and initiatives involving transportation demand management, transit use, telecommuting, carpooling, construction of commuter parking facilities, use of flexible work hours, and telecommunications technology.”

Additionally, Item 1, Subsection O, of Chapter 1289 of the 2020 Virginia Acts of Assembly directs the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability (JCTA) to “regularly review, and provide oversight of the usage of funding generated pursuant to the provisions of House Bill 2313, 2013 Session of the General Assembly.” This section also requires preparation of a report on the uses of the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Funds (IPROC) to be submitted to the JCTA annually.

This report combines these two reports in one Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) annual report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.<sup>1</sup> Because DRPT not only manages grant programs for transit and passenger rail, but also provides grant funding to the nine shortline and two Class I freight railroads that operate in the Commonwealth, the FY 2020 DRPT Annual Report also highlights freight rail initiatives. The 2020 General Assembly, in Chapter 1230, restructured transportation funding with the creation of the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF), into which all transportation revenues are deposited. In addition to streamlining reporting to the General Assembly, this report also reflects the creation of this Fund and the resulting consolidation of the Rail Enhancement Fund and IPROC into the Commonwealth Rail Fund within the CTF.

As reflected in this report, FY 2020 was a unique time for transportation in Virginia due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the majority of this report focuses on the yearly activities that occurred, a section was added to highlight the role and importance of transportation during the COVID-19 health crisis. Throughout, DRPT worked closely with its partners to protect the health and safety of its employees and customers as it also distributed state and federal funding to assist during these difficult times.

DRPT is a state agency with a focus on the movement of people and goods with primary areas of activity in rail, public transportation, and commuter services. DRPT works with local, regional, state, and federal government, as well as private entities, to provide support for projects and programs. In FY 2020, DRPT administered more than \$700 million to freight and passenger rail programs and projects, public transportation agencies, including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Agency (WMATA), and TDM programs.

To administer this funding, DRPT oversaw both state and federal funds for distribution to its partners. IPROC supports the cost of operating intercity passenger rail services as well as acquiring, leasing, or improving railways or railroad equipment. The REF provides for the retention, maintenance, improvement, and development of freight and passenger railways. The Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Fund is a grant program targeted to state-of-good-repair and capacity improvement projects on the shortline railroad network. The Rail Industrial Access Fund (RIA) provides funding for rail access to industrial sites for economic development purposes. This program supports economic

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<sup>1</sup> All data in this report is generated by DRPT unless otherwise noted. Additional information is available at the DRPT [website](#).

development on shortline and Class 1 railroads by offering grant funding to build or rehabilitate rail spurs. Lastly, the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund provides dollars for public transportation capital expenditures, operating assistance, and TDM programs and projects. This fund comprises the largest share of DRPT’s FY 2020 Six-Year Improvement Program.

DRPT’s rail and public transportation stakeholders **serve citizens throughout the Commonwealth** and include 41 transit systems, 60 human service operators, a commuter rail provider, 16 transportation demand management agencies, 15 metropolitan planning organizations, nine shortline railroads, two Class I freight railroads, an intercity passenger rail operator, and a DRPT-supported intercity bus operator.

With its partners, DRPT **provides benefits to all Virginians** by improving accessibility and mobility options, relieving congestion, removing single-occupant vehicles from the highways, reducing the number of trucks by transporting goods via rail, and providing transportation services to those most in need.

Mode	FY2019	FY2020	% Change
Amtrak State-Sponsored Ridership <sup>2</sup>	559,994	661,304	+18.1%
Transit Unlinked Passenger Trips	112,777,110	115,571,432	+2.5%
Virginia Breeze Ridership <sup>3</sup>	24,532	24,790	+1.1%
Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduced Via TDM Programs <sup>4</sup>	-----	31,113,908	-----
Truckload Equivalents Removed from Highways Via Rail Preservation Fund Projects <sup>5</sup>	2,364,435	2,058,239 <sup>6</sup>	-13.0%
Truckload Equivalents Removed from Highways Via Rail Industrial Access Fund Projects <sup>7</sup>	18,061	46,804	+154.5%
Truckload Equivalents Removed from Highways Via Rail Enhancement Fund Projects <sup>8</sup>	4,846,721	5,493,856	+13.4%

In addition, DRPT and its grantees provide other significant benefits to the Commonwealth, including economic, safety, and environmental. Transit generates \$3.4 billion in gross state product and rail

<sup>2</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DRPT is reporting ridership between July 2019 and February 2020 for Amtrak state-sponsored service as well as the 41 transit agencies operating in Virginia. Starting in March 2020, passenger rail and transit services throughout the United States saw a significant decline in ridership.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Breeze stopped service in early April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite not operating for approximately three months in FY 2020, the Virginia Breeze still had an increase in ridership.

<sup>4</sup> TDM programs saw a significant decline in FY 2020 in “vehicle miles reduced” for two reasons. The first reason is the impact of COVID-19 on commuter patterns. A second reason is that, in FY 2019, DRPT converted to a new ridematching system for about half of its TDM programs. The change meant a lot more ridematching was automatically conducted and a new reporting matrix implemented in FY 2020.

<sup>5</sup> The Rail Preservation, Rail Industrial Access, and Rail Enhancement Funds report the truckload equivalents removed annually from Virginia’s highways due to their projects.

<sup>6</sup> The Rail Preservation Fund saw a decrease in FY 2020 due to a decline in corn and coal shipments.

<sup>7</sup> With the Rail Industrial Access program, the number and type of grantees in performance can change significantly each year, which affects the number of carloads. This year, DRPT had six grantees in the reporting period.

<sup>8</sup> DRPT reports its truckload data for the Rail Enhancement Program using the calendar year, instead of the fiscal year.

generates \$30 billion. Rail services also prevent 3,000 crashes on Virginia’s highways each year, and freight rail generates 75 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions than vehicle travel.

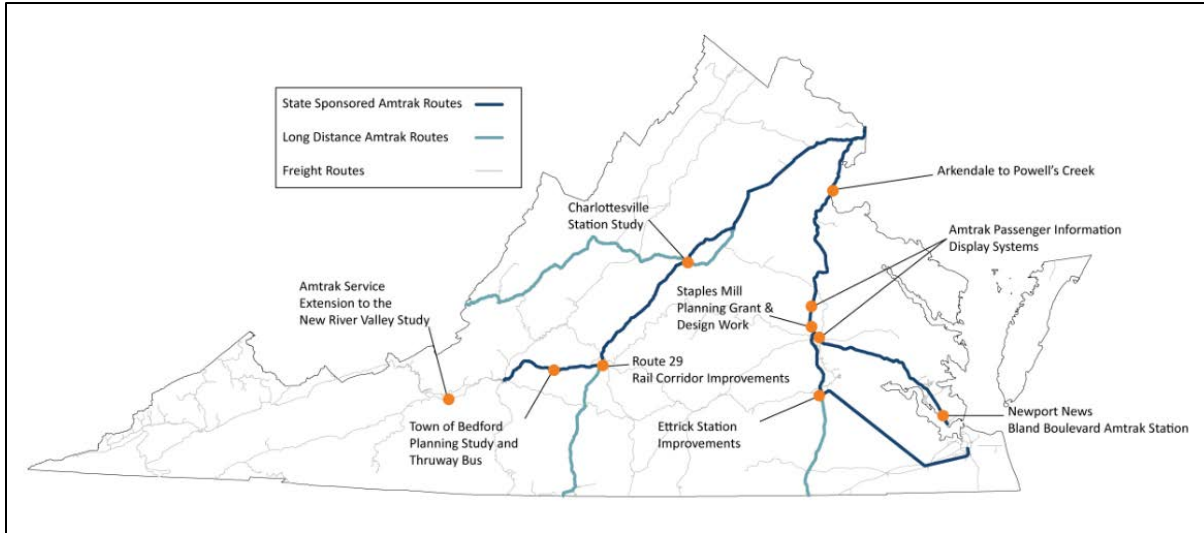
In March 2020, Governor Northam declared a state of emergency, and DRPT immediately worked with its partners to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Amtrak and many transit agencies reduced service, while some stopped service completely. Additionally, the Virginia Breeze, Virginia’s intercity bus service, suspended its Valley Flyer route in early April. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) allocated an additional \$11 million in operating assistance to aid transit agencies during this period. DRPT assisted in distributing approximately \$99 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. The CARES Act also authorized more than \$1 billion to Amtrak for intercity passenger rail operations across the United States.

While continuing to operate during the pandemic, transit agencies had to modify service. This includes: i) limiting physical interactions by suspending fare collections and allowing rear-door boarding only; ii) heightening sanitation and precautions, including distributing masks to employees and riders; and iii) tailoring operations by reducing and enhancing service on an as-need basis.

DRPT’s most significant initiative for FY 2020 was **Transforming Rail in Virginia**. On December 19, 2019, Governor Northam and CSX announced a \$3.7 billion landmark deal that includes the purchase of more than 350 miles of railroad right-of-way and 225 miles of track. The Commonwealth will fund two-thirds of this project with state and local revenues. Amtrak plans to contribute approximately \$944 million over ten years for the project.

1 Right of Way/ Track Acquisition	2 Infrastructure Upgrades	3 Additional Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 350 miles of right of way</li> <li>• 39 miles of track from Washington to Richmond</li> <li>• Over 170 miles of track on the east-west Buckingham Branch corridor between Doswell and Clifton Forge</li> <li>• 75 miles of abandoned track between Petersburg and Ridgeway, North Carolina</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of a second Long Bridge and 4th track in the District of Columbia</li> <li>• 4th track in Arlington and Alexandria</li> <li>• 3rd track from Franconia to Lorton</li> <li>• Franconia- Springfield Bypass</li> <li>• Siding at Potomac Creek, Woodford-Milford, Hanover, Neabsco, Creek-Woodbridge, Aquia Creek, and Crossroads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doubling of state sponsored Amtrak service with nearly hour service from Washington-Richmond</li> <li>• An additional train to Norfolk and mid-day arrival and departure</li> <li>• A new round-trip service to Newport News</li> <li>• 75 percent increase in VRE service along the Fredericksburg line</li> <li>• Ability to increase Roanoke Amtrak service and VRE Manassas line service</li> </ul>

In addition to the *Transforming Rail in Virginia* project, DRPT is financing other projects benefiting passenger rail in the Commonwealth.



During FY 2020, DRPT continued to work with the WMATA on **bringing it “Back2Good.”** The 2018 General Assembly passed legislation providing approximately \$154.5 million in annual dedicated funding for the WMATA Capital Fund, Virginia’s proportional regional share of \$500 million in annual additional capital for critical state of good repair needs. The Maryland General Assembly and the District of Columbia City Council followed Virginia’s lead by passing their own funding packages later in 2018. FY 2020 was the second year that WMATA received funding from Virginia through this dedicated revenue stream, and the Commonwealth is seeing the benefits of these additional funds. In the summers of 2019 and 2020, WMATA implemented its platform improvement project along the Metrorail Blue, Orange, and Yellow lines in Virginia. Throughout the entire system, WMATA had forty-five outdoor stations with concrete platforms that were exposed to weather and de-icing agents for 35 to 40 years and were at the end of their useful lives. Twenty stations had platforms requiring immediate attention, and WMATA had installed temporary measures at those stations to stabilize and ensure safety until reconstruction could occur.

The 2018 General Assembly also provided additional state oversight of WMATA.

### Board Governance

- Alternates cannot participate at a WMATA Board meeting when a director is present
- WMATA must approve policy prohibiting the participation of alternates

### Operating Assistance Cap

- The total Virginia operating subsidy in the approved WMATA budget cannot increase by more than three percent from the operating subsidy in the prior year’s budget

### Capital Improvement Plan

- WMATA must have a detailed capital improvement program covering the current fiscal year and the next five fiscal years

### Strategic Plan

- WMATA is required to adopt a strategic plan every three years
- The next update is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2022

While also working with WMATA, DRPT is **providing transparency to transit and TDM funding**. Chapters 854 and 856 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly created new reforms regarding DRPT’s statewide public transportation grant programs. In order to implement these reforms, DRPT created the Making Efficient, Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) program with the following components:

- Statewide transit capital prioritization
- Statewide performance-based transit operating assistance
- Urban transit strategic plans

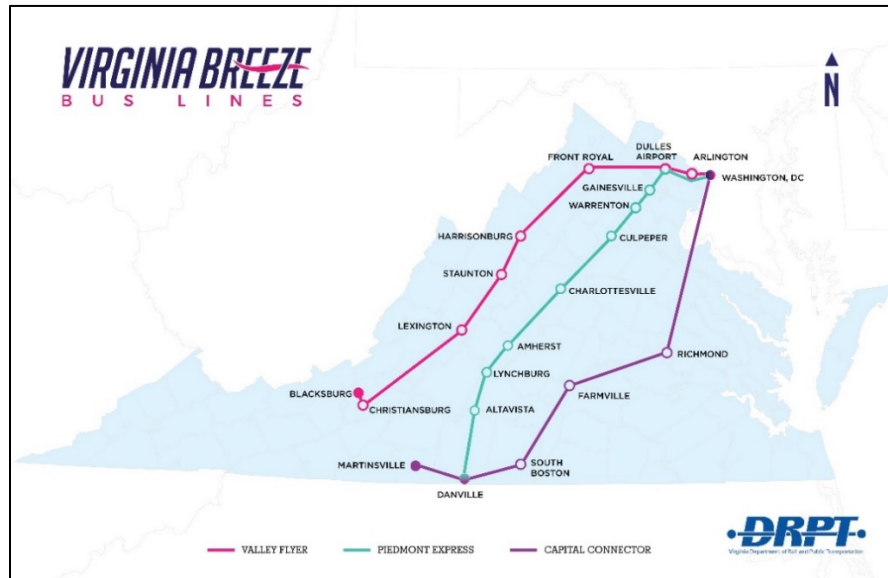
Additionally, SMART SCALE provides transportation funding through a prioritization process that evaluates projects based on improvements to safety, congestion, accessibility, land use, economic development, and the environment. DRPT, VDOT, and the Office of Intermodal Planning Investment oversee the development and implementation of the SMART SCALE process, with oversight by the CTB. As of August 2020, DRPT received 85 applications with transit as a component during the current round of SMART SCALE. Transit was cited as a primary component in eight of those projects and a secondary component in 77 projects.

DRPT and its partners are also **reducing single-occupant vehicle travel on highways**. The I-395 Express Lanes, I-66 Inside the Beltway High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes, and I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes projects will result in major improvements to person throughput in these corridors. Toll revenues are used for both highway and multimodal projects that will aid transportation network users. These enhanced services will provide low-cost and reliable travel options to commuters, remove cars from congested roadways, and help optimize the transportation network by moving more people.



Intercity bus service connects two or more urban areas not in close proximity and operates on a regularly scheduled, fixed-route service. It is available to the general public with the capability of carrying baggage while providing meaningful access to the national intercity bus network. The goal of intercity bus service is to connect underserved communities, such as households without vehicles, students, the elderly, and the disabled to interregional bus, rail, and air travel. Currently, DRPT provides services along three routes operating under the Virginia Breeze title, the Valley Flyer – operating from

Blacksburg to Washington, D.C., the Piedmont Express – operating from Danville to D.C., and the Capital Connector – operating from Martinsville to Richmond and then on to D.C.



Transportation demand management also plays a significant role in increasing throughput on Virginia’s major highways. Telework!VA was launched in 2001 by DRPT for the purpose of reducing traffic congestion by encouraging and assisting businesses with the development and implementation of telework programs. Similarly, vanpools are owned and operated by private entities with commuter volunteer drivers. The full cost of vanpool operations are paid for by the riders. Public funds are only used to help start a vanpool, to assist a vanpool when it loses riders, and to provide a monthly stipend to collect operating data from the private vanpool company.

DRPT is **integrating technology into transit and TDM** as public transit is rapidly transforming due to the emergence of innovative technologies and services. New alternative transportation services continue to evolve, providing travelers with greater convenience in requesting, tracking, and paying for trips. Data is used to analyze how people move in and around our communities; and the advancement of technologies such as electric buses, driver assistance systems, and autonomous vehicles is giving transit agencies the ability to provide cleaner, safer, and more cost-efficient service and additional mobility options. The emergence of these services and technologies is drastically changing the mobility landscape.

In addition to advancing commuter and passenger benefits throughout the Commonwealth, DRPT and its partners are also removing trucks from major highways by **strengthening its freight rail network**. Through the REF, Virginia is financing projects that benefit the Port of Virginia as well as the Norfolk Southern and CSX railroad networks. Additionally, the Shortline Railway Preservation Fund is providing funding for projects within the Commonwealth’s shortline network, including:



## Track and Surface Improvements

- Ballast and aligning track geometry

## Rail and Tie Replacement

- Programmatic tie and rail replacement to maintain Track 2 Safety Standards

## Bridge Upgrades

- Programmatic upgrades and repairs to maintain Track 2 Safety Standards as well as 286 K capacity

## Yard Upgrades and Improvements

- Upgrades, improvements, and expansions to ease congestion

## Transload Facilities

- Rehabilitation of existing transload facilities and construction of tracks and facilities for new expansion projects

## Tunnel Upgrades

- Replacement of ties and rail in tunnels as well as removal of Plate F restrictions

## Sliding and Turnouts

- Lengthening of existing sidings as well as construction of new sidings to ease congestion and maintain time schedules on lines with passenger rail

## Crossing Rehabilitation

- Upgrade and programmatic rehabilitation of highway and rail crossings

Through the RIA Fund, DRPT works with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and local economic development departments to award funding to industrial sites for economic development purposes and to ensure that companies are aware of the RIA program as a potential incentive to locate or expand operations. In FY 2019 and 2020, DRPT awarded funding for four projects.

DRPT is the state agency responsible for distributing federal and state funding allocations to **enhance human service transportation providers**. The purpose of this program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation options. The program provides funding for the following: i) accessible vehicles for public agencies and private non-profit agencies that are transporting seniors or individuals with disabilities; and ii) operating expenditures to enhance paratransit beyond the minimum requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This includes expansion of service hours, days, and areas, alternatives to public transportation, and voucher programs.

DRPT also **provides oversight of public transportation safety** and is the designated Rail State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) for the Commonwealth. The SSOA's core mission is to continuously verify that a rail transit agency is executing the documented programs in place to ensure the safety of its passengers and employees. The rail fixed guideway system DRPT oversees is the Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) Tide light rail system in Norfolk.

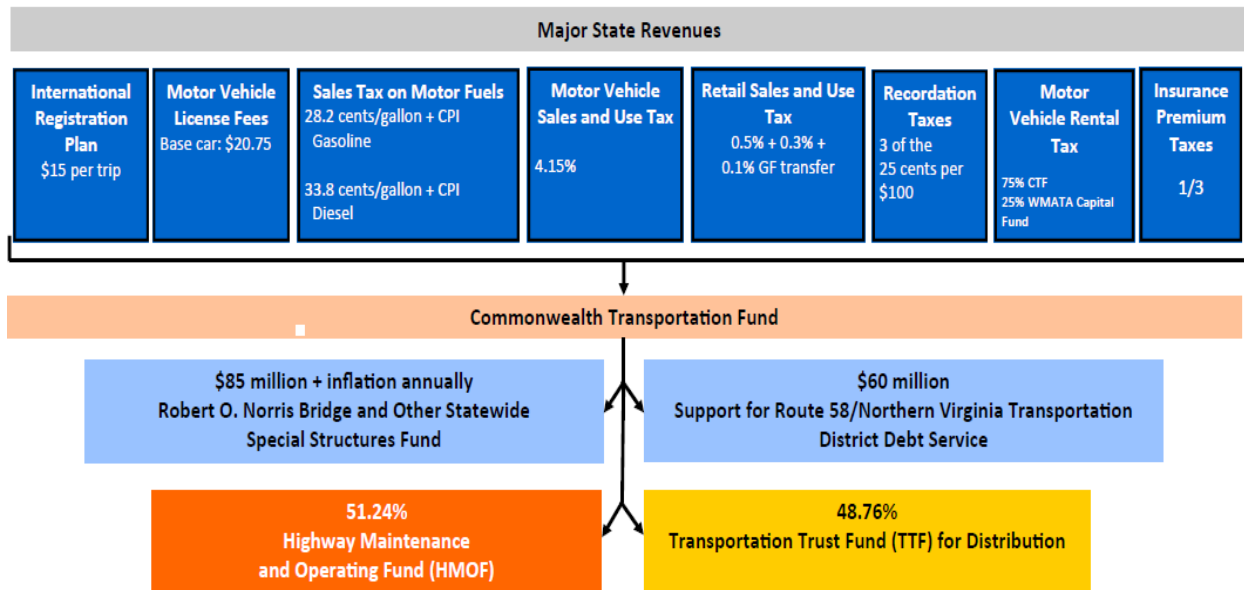
In FY 2020, DRPT completed the first Statewide Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) for Tier II Small Public Transportation Providers in the Commonwealth. The plan was developed in

collaboration with 15 small transit agencies and included extensive outreach and field visits to each agency.<sup>9</sup> The Tier II PTASP was completed in July 2020 and met the originally scheduled compliance deadline established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

DRPT leads the Commonwealth in **promoting rail, transit, and TDM**. These promotions are designed to raise awareness and encourage the use of commuting options such as transit, biking, and telework. DRPT accomplishes this through its Celebrate Transportation Day, Telework Week, and Try Transit Week campaigns. In addition to these efforts, DRPT also oversees marketing efforts for the Amtrak state-sponsored and Virginia Breeze intercity bus services.

DRPT also is **looking ahead** to 2021 and beyond. The 2020 General Assembly made tremendous strides by passing the Governor’s Omnibus transportation bill, which transformed transportation funding as well as creating the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and the Transit Ridership Incentive Program. The General Assembly also passed legislation creating the Central Virginia Transportation Authority and the Hampton Roads Transit Regional Transit Program.

In addition to increased revenues for transit and rail, the Omnibus transportation bill also streamlines all transportation funding through the Commonwealth Transportation Fund. All these revenues are then distributed to the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund and the Commonwealth Rail Fund via the Transportation Trust Fund. These changes reflect a financial commitment to Virginia’s multimodal transportation system.



<sup>9</sup> These 15 agencies are BRITE, Bristol Transit, Charlottesville Area Transit, Fredericksburg Regional Transit, Greater Lynchburg Transit Company, Greater Roanoke Transit Company, City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation, JAUNT, District Three/Mountain Lynx Transit, Petersburg Area Transit, Radford Transit, Suffolk Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, and Winchester Transit.

In 2021, working closely with the Secretary's Office, responding to COVID-19 will continue to be of utmost importance. Throughout the pandemic, DRPT has been analyzing the state of rail, transit, and TDM in a post-pandemic world.

Possible scenarios and their impact on these modes include:

1 Pandemic concludes with effective eradication	2 Pandemic slowly concludes with mandatory social distancing policies for the foreseeable future	3 Pandemic continues with a second wave/ rebound
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ridership will (perhaps slowly) bounce back to pre-COVID-19 numbers</li><li>• Service will adjust back to normalcy</li><li>• Communications will focus on alleviating past concerns</li><li>• Employees will slowly move back into the office with a newfound importance placed on teleworking a few days per week</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amtrak, transit, and vanpools must tailor operations around social distancing policies</li><li>• Transit agencies will continue to prioritize the safety of riders and operators by limiting interactions</li><li>• Communications will focus on essential trips and safe transit and Amtrak use</li><li>• Full time teleworking for some</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must prioritize long term changes (i.e. further service reductions, low maximum capacities, long term fare-free options, permanent teleworking schedules)</li><li>• Communications will focus on how services are necessary for essential community functions</li><li>• Full time teleworking for many</li><li>• Vanpooling allowed, could alternate rider days</li></ul>

Despite the negative impact of COVID-19 on transit, transportation demand management, and rail, the future outlook for these modes in the Commonwealth is still positive. With leadership from DRPT and from across the Transportation Secretariat, there have been exciting advancements in 2020. DRPT looks forward to continuing this momentum for years to come.

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## II. DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Pursuant to *Virginia Code* §33.2-106 and Chapter 1289, Item 1, Subsection O of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, in the past, DRPT has submitted two reports: one highlighting transit and transportation demand management initiatives and one regarding the use of the Intercity Rail Operating and Capital Fund. For the first time, these reports have been combined, along with a discussion of freight rail initiatives, to produce a DRPT annual report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.<sup>10</sup> In addition to supplying grant programs for transit and passenger rail, DRPT provides grant funding to the nine shortline and two Class I freight railroads that operate in the Commonwealth.



FY 2020 was unique for transportation in Virginia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as reflected in this report. While the majority of this report focus on the annual activities that occur, one section highlights the role and importance of these transportation modes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### BACKGROUND

In 1992, the General Assembly created DRPT noting that:

There is a compelling need to provide a balanced multimodal transportation system that enhances the service capabilities of passenger and freight rail, public transportation, highways, aviation, and ports. It is in the public interest to ensure that passenger and freight rail and public transportation are full participants in that multimodal system to reduce energy consumption, congestion, and air pollution; to enhance the environment; to support economic development; and to ensure the efficient movement of goods and people.



Code of Virginia §33.2-281 et. seq. defines the agency's policies, powers, and responsibilities.

### MISSION

DRPT's mission is to facilitate and improve the mobility of the citizens of Virginia and to promote the efficient transport of goods and people in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner.

The agency is the Commonwealth's advocate for promoting transportation options to the general public, businesses, and community decision makers. As an agency entrusted with public dollars, it seeks the highest possible return on investment to maximize limited funding and strives to implement best practice management tools and techniques.



### STAFF

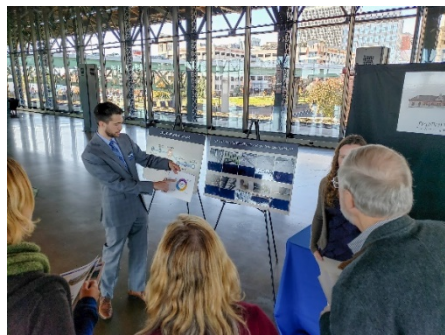
Pursuant to Chapter 854, Item 447, of the 2019 Acts of Assembly, DRPT had a maximum employee level of 64 in FY 2020.<sup>11</sup> The agency maintains offices in Richmond and Alexandria. However, it implemented

<sup>10</sup> All data in this report is generated by DRPT unless otherwise noted. Additional information is available at the DRPT's [website](#).

<sup>11</sup> The 2020 General Assembly increased this level to 72 employees starting in FY 2021.

full-time teleworking for the safety of its employees starting in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jennifer Mitchell was re-appointed in January 2018 by Governor Ralph Northam as Director of DRPT. She was previously appointed to this position in January of 2014 by Governor Terry McAuliffe. Ms. Mitchell has over twenty-five years of experience in the transportation industry, where she has specialized in the planning and implementation of public transit projects, with a particular emphasis on developing strategic financial plans and advancing major projects through planning, design and construction. DRPT's leadership also includes Jennifer DeBruhl, Chief of Public Transportation; Michael McLaughlin, Chief of Rail Transportation; and William Pittard, Chief Financial Officer.<sup>12</sup>



DRPT reports to Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine, who also chairs the CTB. The CTB is comprised of 17 members throughout Virginia who are appointed by the Governor. The Board oversees transportation projects and initiatives, and meets monthly. The DRPT Director is a member.

DRPT staff focuses on improving the movement of people via public transportation, transportation demand management, and rail. In addition to having backgrounds in these fields, DRPT employees have experience in communications, finance,

government and legislative affairs, and public relations. DRPT staff provides support for projects and programs by:

- Assessing feasibility and environmental impacts of new and expanding services;
- Conducting statewide rail and public transportation studies;
- Planning and programming new services and capital improvement projects;
- Providing leadership advocacy, technical assistance, and funding.

To accomplish these goals, DRPT works with local, regional, state, and federal governments as well as private entities and associations, including the Virginia Transit Association, the Virginia Railroad Association, and Virginians for High Speed Rail.

Throughout the year, DRPT staff makes presentations to entities not only in the Commonwealth, but across the United States to share their experiences and expertise in promoting transit and rail in Virginia. In addition to the associations mentioned above, DRPT staff presented to the American Public Transportation Association, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and many others.

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<sup>12</sup> [DRPT Organizational Chart](#)

DRPT staff also holds annual transit and rail workshops for its partners. These workshops include presentations on existing projects and programs, detailed handouts outlining grant programs and policies, and interactive workshops. Also, staff participates in spring and fall transportation meetings at which the general public can learn about initiatives. Representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment also participate.<sup>13</sup>

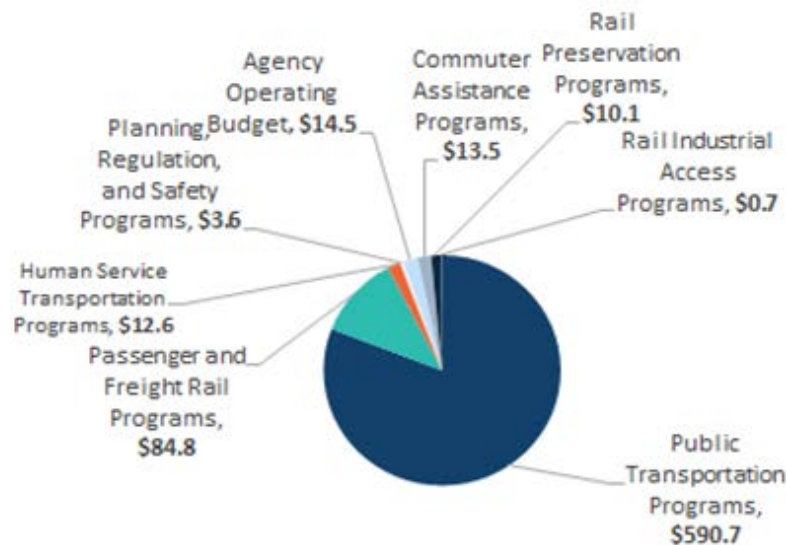


In addition to regular attendance at the monthly CTB meetings, DRPT also staffs the CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee that meets monthly prior to the start of the full committee meeting.

## FUNDING

The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is the CTB’s joint annual funding allocation program for the projects and initiatives DRPT and VDOT administers. The SYIP funds public transportation facilities, commuter and public transportation programs, rail initiatives, and all interstate and primary highway projects throughout Virginia over six fiscal years. The fiscal year starts on July 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. All projects in the SYIP that are eligible for federal funding will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, which documents how Virginia will obligate its share of federal funds.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 1: Fiscal Year 2020 Budgeted Expenditures: \$730.5 Million**



<sup>13</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the delayed implementation of the FY 2021 Six-Year Improvement Plan, the annual spring transportation meetings were canceled for 2020.

<sup>14</sup> [DRPT's Six Year Improvement Program and Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan can be found on DRPT's website.](#)



## Rail<sup>15</sup>

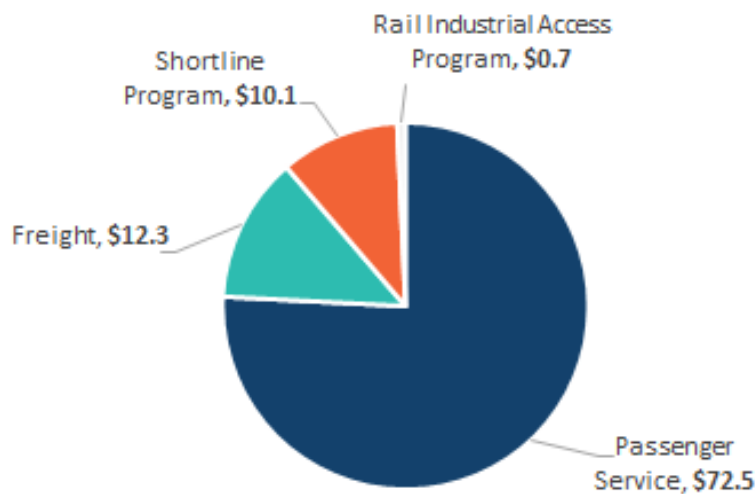
DRPT's rail division administers passenger and freight rail initiatives through grant funding options, including annual capital and operations costs for Amtrak service in the Commonwealth and associated capital infrastructure improvements. Improvements to Virginia's railways and services are implemented through four grant programs with dedicated state funding:

**Figure 2: DRPT Fiscal Year 2020 Rail Programs**



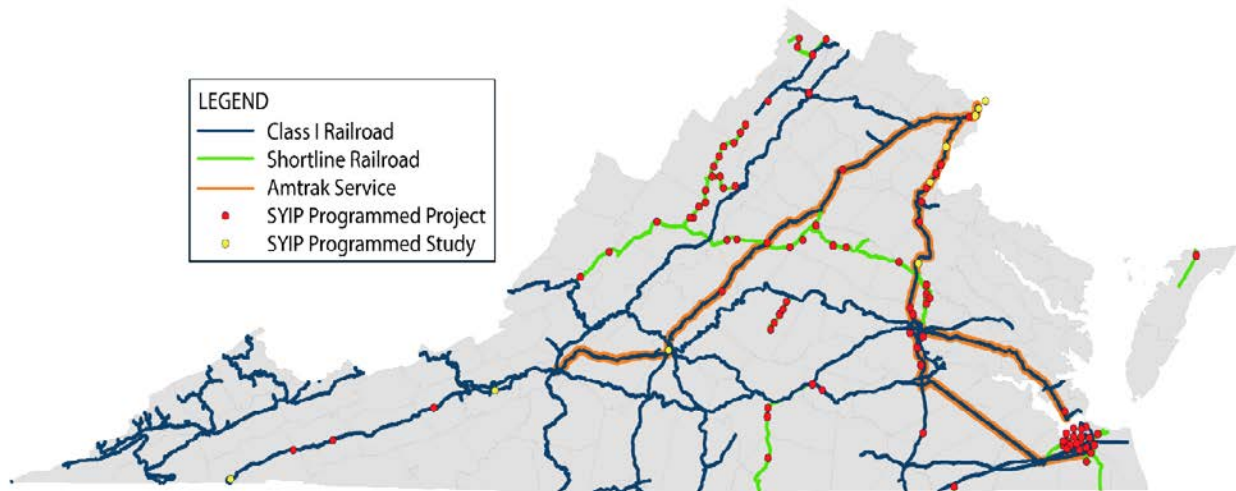
Funds are also received from private, discretionary, and federal dollars as well as other state sources.

**Figure 3: Fiscal Year 2020 Rail Investments: \$95.6 Million**

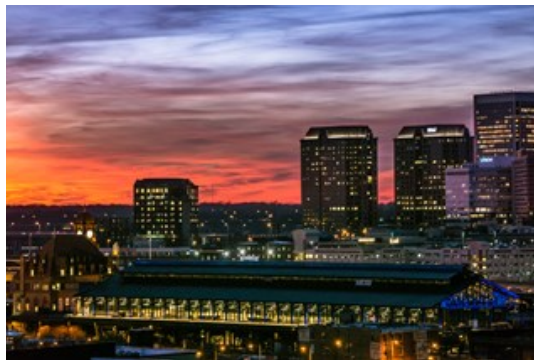


<sup>15</sup> The 2020 General Assembly passed House Bill 1414 and Senate Bill 890 restructuring rail funding for the Commonwealth by consolidating IPROC and REF into the Commonwealth Rail Fund. For more information about these bills, please see "Advocating Federal and State Legislators."

**Figure 4: DRPT Fiscal Year 2020 Rail Projects and Studies**



*Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund*



DRPT administers and commits IPROC funds subject to CTB approval. The 2013 General Assembly enacted House Bill 2313 allocating 0.05 percent of the retail sales and use tax to IPROC. This action made Virginia one of the first states in the nation to provide dedicated annual funding to state-sponsored passenger rail services.

These funds support the cost of operating intercity passenger rail services as well as acquiring, leasing, or improving railways or railroad equipment. The program enables DRPT to expand services throughout the Commonwealth with 100 percent state funds. In FY 2020, IPROC had \$54 million in revenues with approximately \$61.3 million in commitments. Prior to the creation of the Commonwealth Rail Fund by the 2020 General Assembly, the CTB estimated that IPROC would have \$372.7 million in revenues and commitments between FY 2020-2025. This is primarily due to the *Transforming Rail in Virginia* project.

*Rail Enhancement Fund*

In addition to IPROC funds, DRPT also administers the Rail Enhancement Fund (REF). Two-thirds of the total amount of motor vehicle rental taxes collected are deposited into REF. In FY 2020, that amount equaled approximately \$22 million.

REF provides for the retention, maintenance, improvement, and development of freight and passenger railways. Projects undertaken using these funds must create public benefits within the Commonwealth that exceed the investment from the Fund. Such benefits include the improvement of traffic congestion, environmental quality, and reduction in highway maintenance needs. This fund is the primary source for the implementation of large capital projects for rail improvements. All projects receiving funds from the REF must include a minimum of 30 percent cash or “in-kind” matching contribution from a non-state

source, which may include a railroad, regional authority, local government, federal funds for freight rail projects, or a combination of such sources.

#### *Shortline Railway Preservation Fund*

The Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Fund is a grant program targeted at state-of-good-repair and capacity improvement projects on the shortline railroad network. The goal of the program is to maintain FRA Class 2 Track Safety Standards, which have implications for speed, service, and reliability of the network as the last mile of service to customers. Rail Preservation projects consist primarily of bridge and track upgrades, signal system upgrades, yard improvements, siding enhancement, and tie and rail replacement. The program receives \$4 million annually from the Highway Construction Fund (Transportation Trust Fund) and can receive additional funds – up to \$4 million of unobligated Rail Freight funds each year. For FY 2020, DRPT allocated approximately \$10 million in funding under this program.



#### *Rail Industrial Access Fund*

The Rail Industrial Access Fund (RIA) provides funding for rail access to industrial sites for economic development purposes. This program supports economic development on shortline and Class 1 railroads by offering grant funding to build or rehabilitate rail spurs. RIA promotes truck diversion by providing grant assistance to connect new or expanding businesses to the freight rail network. RIA shares approximately \$5.5 million in funds from the Transportation Trust Fund with VDOT, which administers a similar grant program (Economic Development Access Program). Applicants can apply for up to \$450,000 with a requirement of a 30 percent match from the applicant.

#### *Federal Funding*



The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Congress' 2015 multi-year surface transportation legislation, reauthorized and created several major discretionary grant programs for which freight and passenger rail projects are eligible recipients. These annual grant programs include Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) and Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD). In 2016, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) awarded Virginia the largest INFRA grant for freight and passenger rail to date, \$45 million for rail elements in the \$1.6 billion multimodal *Atlantic Gateway* initiative. Projects funded with this INFRA grant are now included as part of Governor Northam's *Transforming Rail in Virginia* initiative. The FAST Act also included two new grant programs specifically for Amtrak, the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements and the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair programs.

Several existing formula-based highway and transit programs are also rail eligible, including the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

program. DRPT works with VDOT across several joint agency agreements to allocate federal program funds to rail and transit projects such as the US 29 Improvement program, which includes CMAQ funding for a second Lynchburg to Washington Amtrak service.

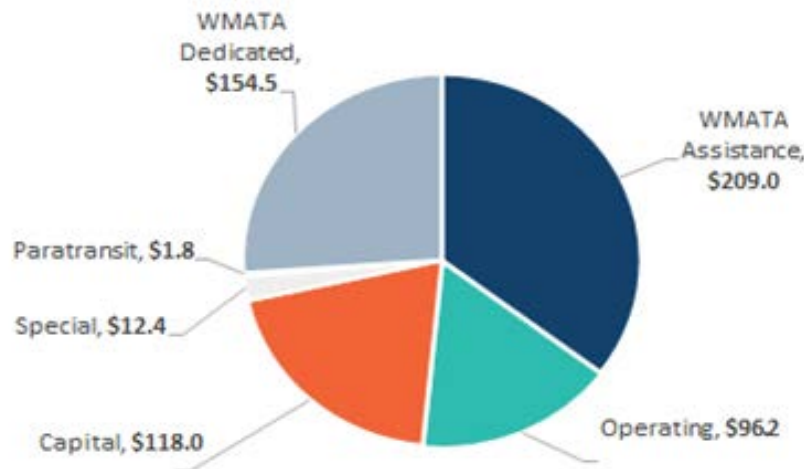
The Section 130 program remains the only federal highway formula program specifically dedicated to rail. A cost-sharing agreement between state departments of transportation and freight railroads, Section 130 funds highway-rail grade crossings and is managed by VDOT.

The FAST Act also formalized the relationship between states, Amtrak, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), first created in 2008 under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), in its creation of the State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC). SAIPRC, of which Virginia is a member, meets regularly to advance state and Amtrak relations, especially in terms of their mutual cost-sharing agreements and the development and procurement of new rail equipment and technologies. The FAST Act expired September 30, 2020. Virginia will continue to work with its Congressional delegation to support a robust, multimodal, multi-year federal surface transportation reauthorization.

### Transit

DRPT works with public transportation systems in Virginia to help manage traffic congestion and provide transportation choices while also safely transporting people to destinations across the Commonwealth. For FY 2020, DRPT allocated approximately \$592 million in state transit and TDM initiatives. The chart below breaks this funding into six categories: WMATA, WMATA dedicated, statewide capital, statewide operating, paratransit, and special (which includes TDM).

**Figure 5: Fiscal Year 2020 Transit Investments: \$591.9 Million**



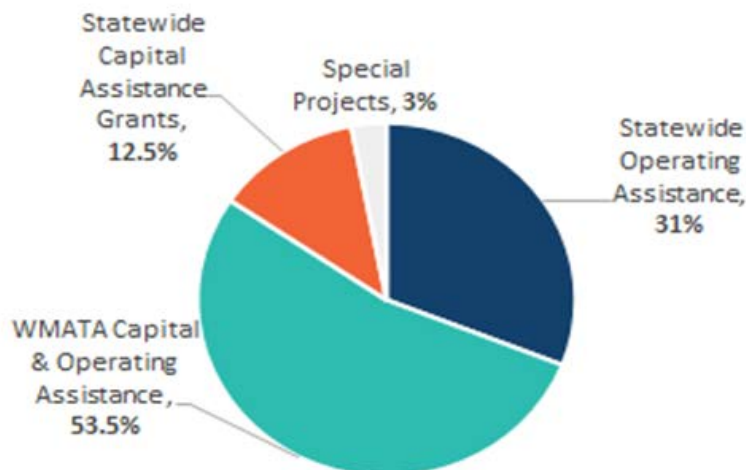
### Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund<sup>16</sup>

The majority of DRPT's portion of the FY 2020 SYIP includes the funding allocations from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund for public transportation capital purchases, operating assistance, and TDM programs and projects. Revenues deposited into the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund include:

- \$0.03 of the statewide recordation tax
- 3.7 percent of the motor vehicle fuel tax
- 14.7 percent of the 1986 Special Session revenues
- 60 percent of the 0.125 percent addition to the general sales and use tax passed by the 2013 General Assembly



Figure 6: Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund Distributions



Funds through the statewide operating assistance program and statewide capital assistance grants are distributed through the MERIT program.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the above, DRPT sets aside 3.5 percent of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund to support DRPT project development, administration, and compliance; and the agency provides \$1.2 million for state safety oversight and \$1.5 million for paratransit capital and enhanced transportation services for the elderly and disabled.

<sup>16</sup> House Bill 1414 and Senate Bill 890 made significant changes to the distribution of funds in the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund. For more information, please see Section XVI.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about the MERIT program, please see Section IX.

### Federal Transit Funding

Federal funding for public transportation in Virginia not only provides essential resources to local public transit agencies, but also significantly reduces the state funding burden and frees up additional resources to meet greater needs. Since 1982, 20 percent of the federal excise tax on gasoline has been set-aside into the Mass Transit Account for formula.



For many statewide transit capital projects, this blend of federal funding as well as the statewide capital program often means that the local community is able to deliver projects by only meeting their required four percent match.

DRPT is the Commonwealth’s designated agency responsible for administering many FTA formula funding programs. Through an inter-agency agreement with VDOT, DRPT also administers federal-aid highway formula funding allocated for the CMAQ, Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP), and STBG programs for use on public transportation projects.

**Figure 7: Federal Formula and Discretionary Grant Programs**

FTA Formula Grant Programs	FTA Discretionary Grant Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning (5303/5304)</li> <li>• Urbanized Area Formula (5307)</li> <li>• Elderly and Disabled (5310)</li> <li>• Formula Grants for Rural Areas (5311)</li> <li>• Public Transportation Safety Program (5329)</li> <li>• State of Good Repair (5337)</li> <li>• Bus and Bus Facilities (5339 (a))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed Gateway Capital Investment Grants (CIG, formerly known as New Starts)</li> <li>• Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Grants (5339 (b))</li> <li>• Expedited Project Delivery for CIG Pilot Program (subsection 3005 (b) of FAST)</li> <li>• Mobility for All (subsection 3005 (b) of FAST)</li> <li>• Integrated Mobility Innovation</li> <li>• Passenger Ferry</li> </ul>

### WMATA Capital Fund

Chapters 854 and 856 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly established the WMATA Capital Fund providing \$154.5 million in annual dedicated funding for the transit agency. This amounts to Virginia’s proportional regional share (30.9 percent) of \$500 million in annual additional capital needs for critical state of good repairs.<sup>18</sup> It also established a restricted and non-restricted account within the WMATA Capital Fund. Monies in the restricted account (local recordation taxes and statewide motor vehicle rental tax) may be used for capital purposes other than for the payment of, or security for, debt service

<sup>18</sup> To learn more about the WMATA’s use of the funds, please see Section VIII.

on bonds or other indebtedness of WMATA. Monies in the non-restricted account (NVTC regional grantor's tax, NVTC regional gas taxes, NVTC two percent transient occupancy tax, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority 30 percent local taxes) may be used for capital purposes including the payment of debt service on bonds or other indebtedness.

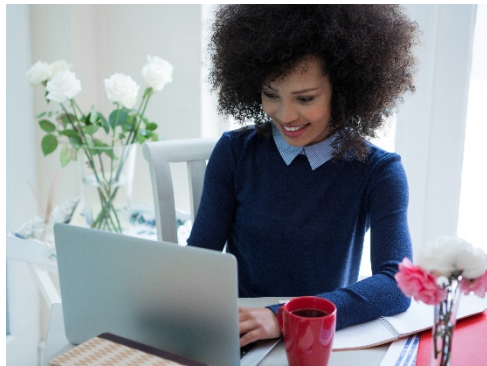
### *Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund*

Chapters 854 and 856 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly also established the Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund (C-ROC). Funds in C-ROC are used to fund the cost of operating commuter rail service; acquiring, leasing, or improving railways or railroad equipment, rolling stock, rights-of-way, or facilities; or assisting other appropriate entities to acquire, lease, or improve railways or railroad equipment, rolling stock, rights-of way, or facilities for commuter rail transportation purposes. Currently, the Virginia Railway Express is the only commuter rail service in Virginia.



The Department of Motor Vehicles is the state agency responsible for administering gas tax revenues collected for this fund. The Commonwealth deposits monies amounting to roughly \$15 million annually into the Fund from a regional gas tax in Northern Virginia.

### **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**



DRPT uses a portion of the three percent Special Projects allocation from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund to provide grants to qualifying agencies to operate TDM programs in their region or locality. Through the TDM Operating Assistance and Mobility Programs grants, DRPT provides funding to support the operation of commuter assistance programs, employer outreach, and vanpool assistance that serve the public and employers. The goal of DRPT's TDM grant programs is to mitigate congestion by reducing single-occupant vehicle trips and increasing the use of carpool, vanpool, transit, and telework.

FY 2020 TDM Operating Assistance included 16 grants totaling \$2,601,345. FY 2020 Mobility Programs included 18 grants totaling \$1,752,353.

DRPT also administers CMAQ and RSTP federal-aid highway funding that is allocated by Metropolitan Planning Organizations for TDM programs and projects operated by Arlington County, City of Alexandria, GRTC-RideFinders, Fairfax County, Hampton Roads Transit, and PRTC. Through partnerships with VDOT and local jurisdictions, DRPT administers funding from VDOT for TDM projects developed to mitigate single-occupant vehicle trips during construction of the I-66 Express Lanes. The TDM projects are part of the federally required Transportation Management Plan for the express lanes project. Lastly, funding for DRPT's telework assistance to employers in Northern Virginia is also provided through a partnership with VDOT.

### III. SERVING THE ENTIRE COMMONWEALTH

DRPT’s rail and public transportation stakeholders include 41 transit systems, 60 human service operators, a commuter rail provider, 16 transportation demand management agencies, 15 metropolitan planning organizations, nine shortline railroads, two Class I freight railroads, an intercity passenger rail operator, and a DRPT-supported intercity bus operator.

#### FREIGHT RAIL

Virginia’s rail system includes approximately 3,000 miles of rail lines operated by 11 freight railroads – two Class I railroads and nine shortline railroads. Class I railroads are defined as those railroads that have an annual carrier operating revenue of more than \$250 million (1991 dollars). While there are seven Class I railroads operating in the United States and Canada, CSX and Norfolk Southern are the only Class I providers in the Commonwealth. Additionally, several shortline railroads operate in Virginia.

### Virginia Shortline Railroads:



Buckingham Branch



Chesapeake & Albemarle



Chesapeake Western



Commonwealth Railway



Delmarva



North Carolina & Virginia



Winchester & Western



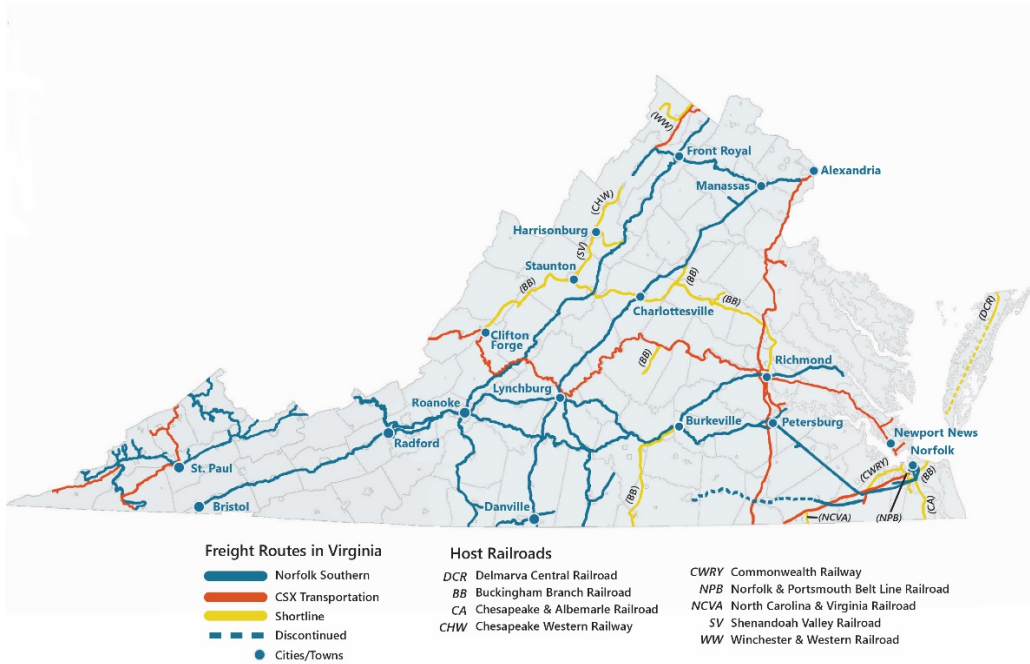
Norfolk & Portsmouth  
Belt Line



Shenandoah Valley

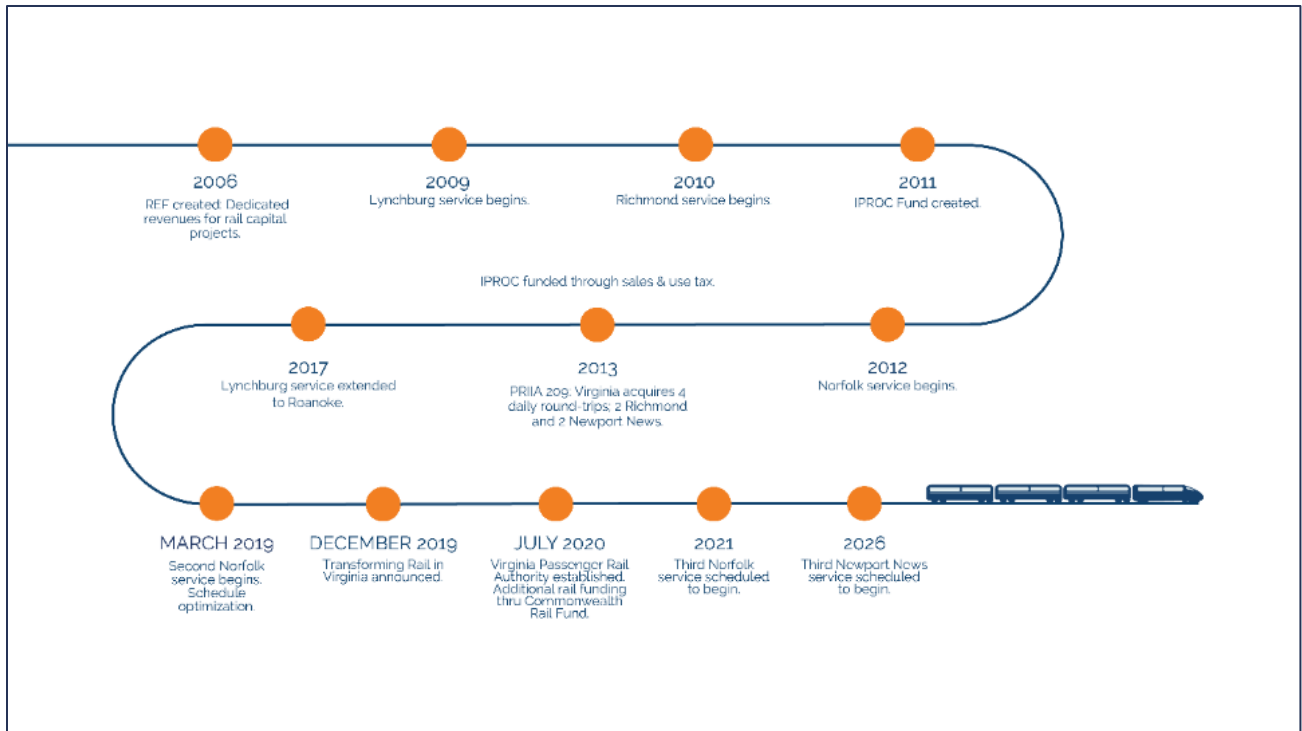


Figure 8: Freight Railroads in Virginia



PASSENGER RAIL

Figure 9: History of Amtrak State-Sponsored Service in Virginia



The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 required states with Amtrak services shorter than 750 miles and greater than 70 miles to assume a significant share of capital and operating costs for the routes, with failure to do so leading to discontinuation of the routes.<sup>19</sup> If the General Assembly had not taken action, Virginia would have lost all service originating in Newport News, leaving Hampton Roads without Amtrak service.

Since state-sponsored service began in Lynchburg in 2009, DRPT has expanded its operations and now provides grant funds for four intercity passenger routes with a total of six daily roundtrip trains on the Northeast Regional line through grant agreements with Amtrak.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 10: Amtrak State-Sponsored Service**

Route Number	Route	Frequency
46	Roanoke-Washington	1 daily round trip
47	Newport News-Washington	2 daily round trips
50	Norfolk-Washington	2 daily round trips
51	Richmond-Washington	1 daily round trip

Six long-distance services and one North Carolina state-sponsored service also operate in Virginia. These services do not receive state funding but are the only intercity passenger rail services in the localities of Lorton, Staunton, Danville, and Clifton Forge.

**Figure 11: Amtrak Long-Distance Service in Virginia**

Name	Route	Frequency
Auto Train	Lorton-Sanford, FL	Daily
Cardinal	Chicago-New York City	3 days a week
Crescent	New Orleans-New York City	Daily
Palmetto	Savannah-New York City	Daily
Silver Meteor	Miami-New York City	Daily
Silver Star	Miami-New York City	Daily
Carolinian <sup>21</sup>	Charlotte-New York City	Daily

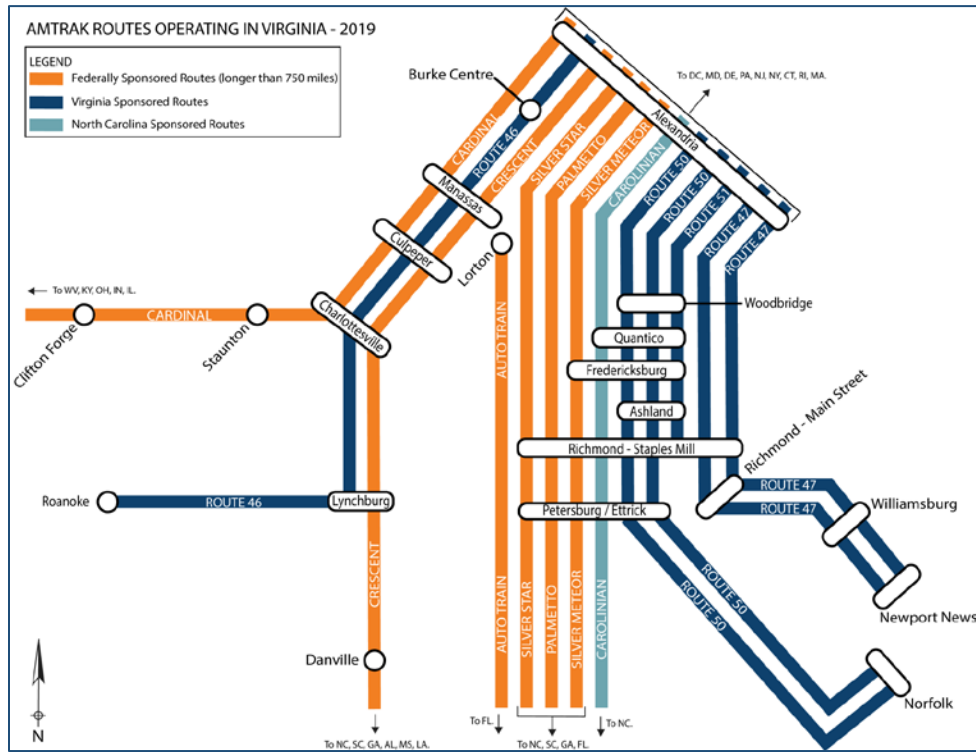
Additionally, DRPT supports thruway buses connecting riders to the Newport News, Norfolk, and Roanoke train stations. The IPROC fund sponsors daily round-trip buses from Virginia Beach to Norfolk and Newport News. Through its transit program, DRPT sponsors a daily roundtrip bus originating at Virginia Tech that serves the Roanoke train station.

<sup>19</sup> Overview, Highlights, and Summary of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) (<https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L02692>)

<sup>20</sup> All state-sponsored Amtrak service travels into the Northeast Corridor and offers one-seat rides to destinations including Washington, DC, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston.

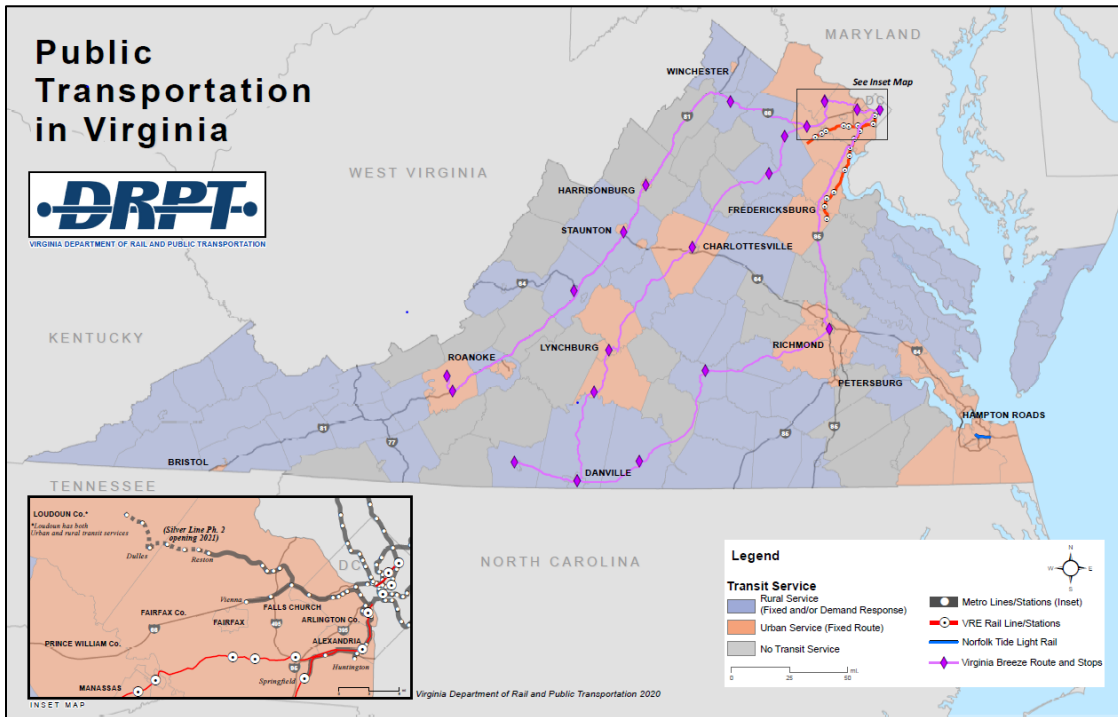
<sup>21</sup> The Carolinian is a daily North Carolina state-sponsored service.

Figure 12: Amtrak Routes Operating in Virginia



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Figure 13: Public Transportation in Virginia



49 U.S.C. §5302 defines public transportation as “regular, continuing shared-ride surface transportation services that are open to the general public or open to a segment of the general public defined by age, disability or low income.” In Virginia, this includes bus (40 transit providers), commuter rail (Virginia Railway Express), heavy rail (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority), light rail (Hampton Roads Transit’s The Tide), paratransit, and ferryboat (Hampton Roads Transit). Pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 33.2-285, DRPT is the state agency responsible for public transportation funding in the Commonwealth.

**Figure 14: Public Transportation Agencies in Virginia**

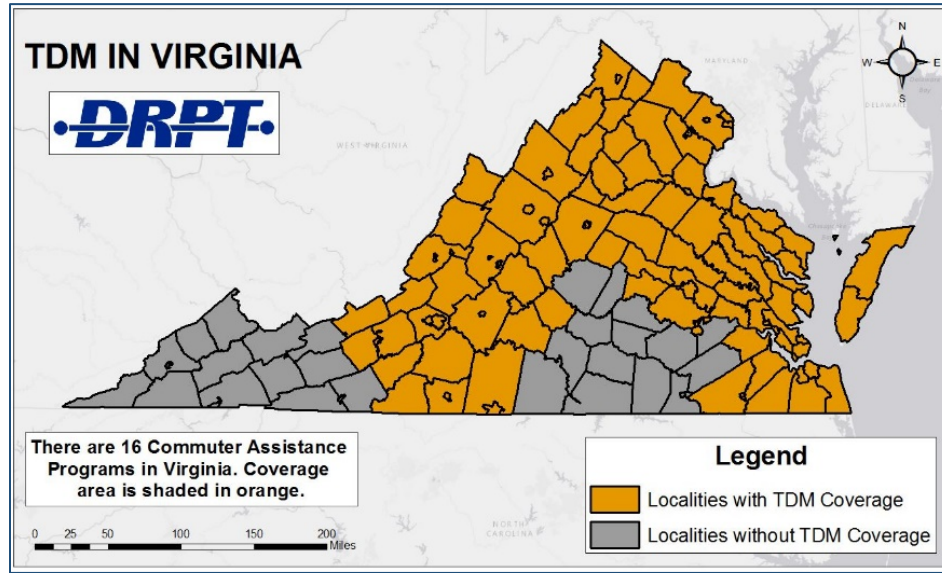
Alexandria Transit Company (DASH)	Greene County Transit <sup>22</sup>
Altavista Community Transit System	Greenville-Emporia Transit
Arlington County Transit (ART)	Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)
Bay Transit	Harrisonburg Department of Transportation (HDPT)
Blacksburg Transit (BT)	JAUNT
Blackstone Area Bus System (BABS)	Lake Country Area Agency on Aging
Bristol Virginia Transit	Loudoun County Transit (LC Transit)
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (BRITE)	Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC)
Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT)	Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)
Danville Transit	RADAR
District Three Public Transit (Mountain Lynx)	Radford Transit
Fairfax County (Fairfax Connector)	STAR Transit
Farmville Area Bus (FAB)	Suffolk Transit
Four County Transit	Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
Fredericksburg Regional Transit (FRED)	Virginia Regional Transit (VRT)
Graham Transit	Winchester (WinTran)
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC)	Williamsburg Area Transit (WATA)
Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro)	

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation demand management (TDM) encompasses a multitude of programs, services, and policies that reduce vehicle demand on the transportation network or redistribute the demand to off-peak times or other routes and modes. TDM includes ridesharing arrangements such as carpools, vanpools, and bus pools.

<sup>22</sup> Effective July 1, 2020, Greene County Transit became part of JAUNT.

Figure 15: TDM in Virginia



Governor James Gilmore issued an executive order mandating all executive branch agencies with an office in Northern Virginia provide full-time employees with a tax-free qualified transportation fringe benefit. The benefit is equal to the employee’s cost of commuting to and from their workplace using vanpools or transit. The Executive Order also encouraged all agencies, regardless of location, to provide a commuter benefit. TDM agencies serving the public are also called commuter assistance programs.

Figure 16: TDM Agencies Operating in Virginia

Commuter Assistance Program	Operating Agency
Arlington County Commuter Services	Arlington County Department of Environmental Services
Commuter Services by RRRCC	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
Fairfax County Commuter Services	Fairfax County Department of Transportation
GO Alex	Alexandria Department of Transportation
GWRideConnect	George Washington Regional Commission
LiveMore	Dulles Area Transportation Association
Loudoun County Commuter Services	Loudoun County Department of Transportation
Middle Peninsula Rideshare	Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
Northern Neck Commute Services	Northern Neck Planning District Commission
PRTC OmniMatch	Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission
RideFinders	Greater Richmond Transit Company
RideShare	Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
RideSmart	Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission
RIDE Solutions	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission New River Valley Regional Commission Central Virginia Planning District Commission Piedmont Workforce Investment Board
TRAFFIX	Hampton Roads Transit
Tysons TMA	Tysons Partnership, Inc.

## IV. PROVIDING BENEFITS TO ALL VIRGINIANS

### AMTRAK STATE-SPONSORED RIDERSHIP

Ridership on the Virginia state-sponsored service is defined as the number of people who purchased tickets on the following four routes: Roanoke, Newport News, Norfolk, and Richmond routes with at least one end point in Virginia. It is possible for two or more end points to be in Virginia on one ticket; however, each ticket is only counted one time as one rider.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership decreased dramatically beginning in March 2020. For that reason, this report only examines ridership during the eight months of FY 2020 when the pandemic did not impact service.

**Figure 17: Amtrak State-Sponsored Ridership by Route**

Route	FY19 (July 18-Feb 19)	FY20 (July 19-Feb 20)	% Change
Roanoke-Washington	137,685	152,644	+10.9%
Newport News-Washington	217,915	229,427	+5.3%
Norfolk-Washington	103,085	203,672	+97.6%
Richmond-Washington	101,309	75,561	-25.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>559,994</b>	<b>687,633</b>	<b>+22.8%</b>

During this time period, Amtrak state-sponsored service saw a significant increase across all four state sponsored routes. This increase occurred for several reasons. First, there was an extension of one Richmond service to Norfolk, providing it with two daily round trips. This second Norfolk daily roundtrip service started on March 4, 2019. Therefore, the Norfolk-Washington service saw a substantial increase, and the Richmond-Washington service saw a decrease in ridership. In total, the Hampton Roads region now has four Amtrak state-sponsored services originating in the area.

Simultaneously, Amtrak and DRPT made changes to the departure and arrival times in Newport News to provide citizens throughout Hampton Roads with a variety of arrival and departure options at both stations.

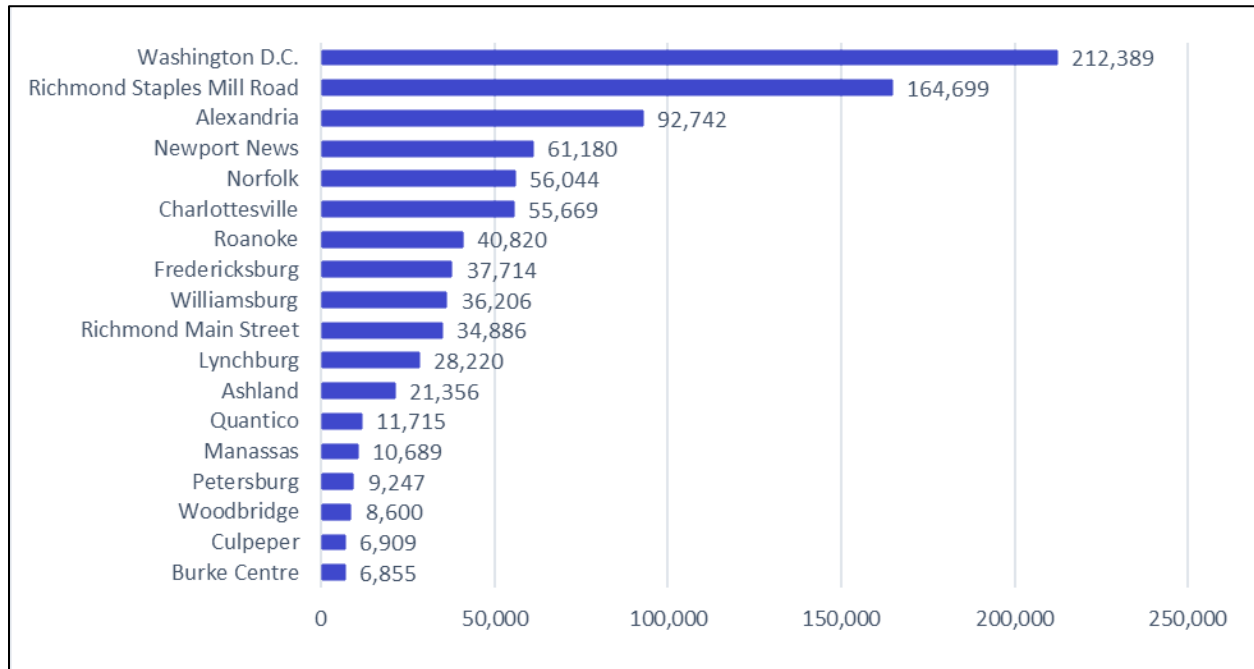
Additionally, the introduction of a 15 percent discount for all Virginians traveling within the Commonwealth and to the District of Columbia has led to an increase in ridership. Similarly, to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of state sponsored service in the Commonwealth, Amtrak promoted \$10 dollar tickets for the first ten days in October 2020. This promotion also had a significant positive impact on ridership.

Lastly, the Acca Yard project was completed in December 2018. During its construction, this project had a negative impact on ridership along the Interstate 95 and 64 corridors.

### AMTRAK STATE-SPONSORED STATION ACTIVITY

Station activity is the combined number of riders getting on or off a train at a station. Station activity data shown in the chart below is for state-sponsored routes from July 2019 through February 2020.

**Figure 18: Amtrak State-Sponsored Ridership by Station (July 2019-February 2020)**



### AMTRAK STATE-SPONSORED ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

On-Time Performance (OTP) is the percentage of trains arriving at a station within 15 minutes of scheduled arrival time. End Point OTP is the percentage of trains arriving at their destination station within 15 minutes of scheduled arrival time. Figure 19 shows monthly average of end-point OTP for both northbound and southbound trains on state-sponsored routes. Weather- and construction-related slowdowns can affect OTP.

**Figure 19: Amtrak State-Sponsored On-Time Performance**

Route	Roanoke-Washington	Newport News-Washington	Norfolk-Washington	Richmond-Washington
July 2019	38.7%	57.3%	37.0%	48.5%
August 2019	50.0%	75.0%	54.5%	68.7%
September 2019	41.7%	81.7%	79.0%	75.4%
October 2019	50.0%	83.1%	72.3%	80.3%
November 2019	57.6%	88.3%	76.9%	69.7%
December 2019	56.5%	80.6%	62.3%	69.1%
January 2020	75.8%	84.7%	80.7%	85.1%
February 2020	N/A	81.0%	N/A	82.8%
<b>MEDIAN</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>81.4%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>72.6%</b>

### STATEWIDE TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

According to the FTA, unlinked passenger trips are the number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles (i.e. ridership). Passengers are counted each time they board transit vehicles no

matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination. All public transit agencies in the Commonwealth are required to report monthly unlinked passenger trips to DRPT.

In FY 2020, transit agencies across the Commonwealth experienced catastrophic ridership declines due to the impact of COVID-19. Beginning in March, many transit agencies reduced their vehicle capacities and asked passengers to use transit only for essential trips in an effort to address passenger safety and comply with social distancing guidelines. Consequently, transit agencies experienced ridership declines upwards of 94 percent. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, transit ridership in the Commonwealth was growing. In FY 2019, transit ridership grew for the first time in many years, and this positive trend was poised to continue through FY 2020. For purposes of this report, transit ridership is published through February, which was the last month without any significant COVID-19 impact.

From July 2019 through February 2020, Virginia’s transit agencies, including WMATA, reported 115,571,432 unlinked passenger trips across all modes, which represents a 2.5 percent increase compared to the same months in FY 2019. This marks the second year in a row of transit ridership increases reported from Virginia’s transit agencies. Commuter rail, heavy rail, and bus ridership all experienced growth, while light rail, ferryboat, and paratransit experienced ridership declines.

**Figure 20: Statewide Transit Ridership by Mode**

Mode	FY19 (July 18-Feb 19)	FY20 (July 19-Feb 20)	% Change
Heavy Rail	58,778,997	61,469,907	+4.6%
Bus	49,033,235	49,060,605	+0.1%
Commuter Rail	2,811,187	2,994,111	+6.5%
Paratransit	1,013,218	1,005,736	-0.7%
Light Rail	958,534	867,388	-9.5%
Ferryboat	181,939	173,685	-8.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112,777,110</b>	<b>115,571,432</b>	<b>+2.5%</b>

In FY 2019, nineteen transit agencies reported ridership increases and much of the growth was attributed to rural and small urban areas. In FY 2020, however, 26 transit agencies reported ridership increases through February and the growth was more evenly distributed between large urban, small urban, and rural areas. Greenville Emporia Transit (GET) experienced a 61.7 percent increase in transit ridership, the largest of any transit agency in the Commonwealth. Established through a partnership between Greenville County and the City of Emporia, GET launched in 2018 with transit service that provides access to employment centers and educational, healthcare, and recreational facilities in the Greenville-Emporia area. Ridership has consistently grown since the deployment of the service.

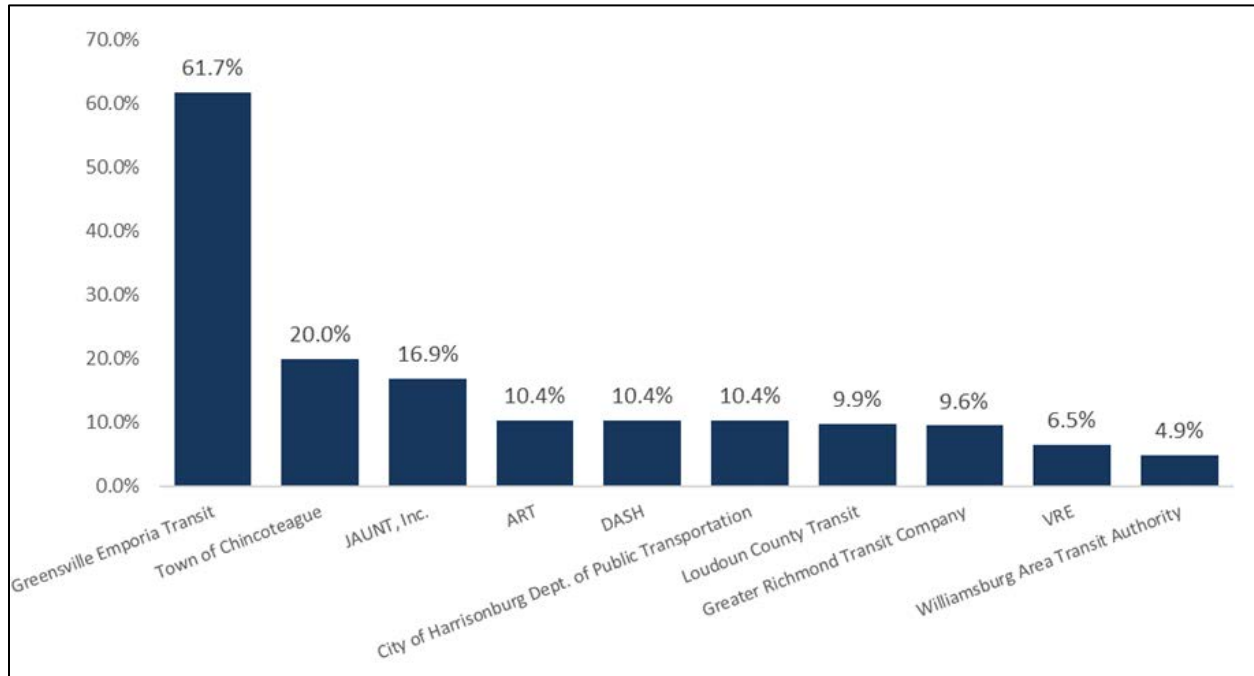
JAUNT and the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) reported ridership increases of 16.9 percent and 10.4 percent respectively, which can be attributed to growing transit demand, coupled with agency-initiated service improvements and expansions. JAUNT, which operates transit service in the Charlottesville-Albemarle region, deployed a number of operational improvements aimed at increasing service efficiency and added transit service in Buckingham, Crozet, and Louisa to address growing demand in these areas. HDPT, which operates in the City of Harrisonburg, also performed a number of operational improvements after completing a transit route re-evaluation initiative.

In Northern Virginia, ART, DASH, Loudoun County Transit, VRE, PRTC, CUE, and Fairfax County reported ridership increases in FY 2020 through February. Many of these agencies carried larger passenger loads



during the summer months when WMATA’s Platform Improvement Program suspended portions of the Yellow and Blue lines.

**Figure 21: Top 10 Agencies with Fiscal Year 2020 Ridership Increases (Thru Feb.2020)**



**WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA) RIDERSHIP**

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) reports the Commonwealth of Virginia’s transit ridership on behalf of WMATA. To be included in WMATA’s Virginia ridership, a passenger trip must either originate or terminate in the Commonwealth. From June 2019 through February 2020, WMATA provided 72,614,670 passenger trips in Virginia, which represents a 4.1 percent increase from FY 2019. Figure 22 shows WMATA’s Virginia ridership for heavy rail, bus, and paratransit over the past two fiscal years through February.

**Figure 22: WMATA Ridership by Mode**

Mode	FY19 (July 18-Feb 19)	FY20 (July 19-Feb 20)	% Change
Heavy Rail	58,778,997	61,469,907	+4.6%
Bus	10,743,310	10,924,083	+1.7%
Paratransit	228,859	220,680	-3.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69,751,166</b>	<b>72,614,670</b>	<b>+4.1%</b>

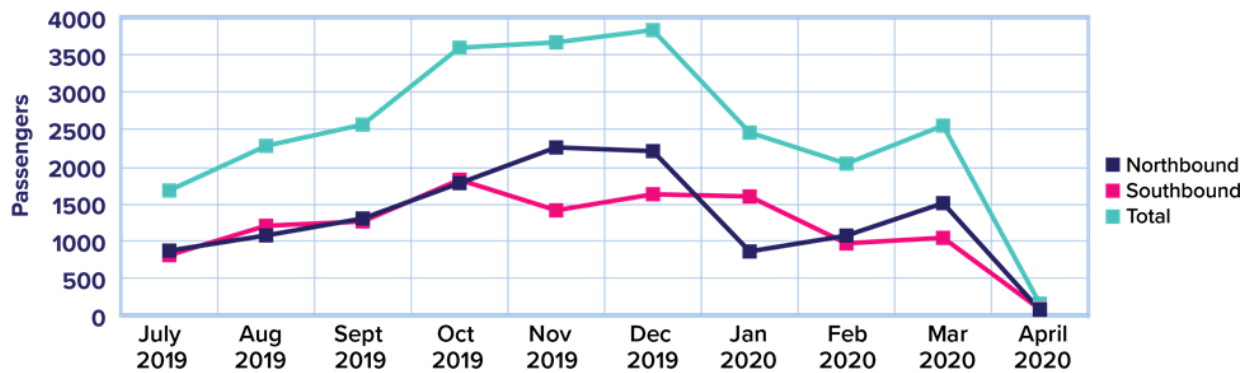
WMATA’s Platform Improvement Program suspended heavy rail service on the Yellow and Blue lines between Franconia-Springfield and National Airport from May 25, 2019, to September 8, 2019. As a result, heavy rail ridership declined during these months as many passengers shifted travel modes during the temporary station shut down. Rail ridership did, however, bounce back once the platform improvements were completed in September. Despite these major service disruptions, heavy rail ridership increased in FY 2020 by 4.6 percent through February.

After many years of ridership declines, Metrobus ridership in Virginia experienced a modest increase in FY 2020 through February. This came as WMATA began to roll out an Action Plan for its Bus Transformation Project.<sup>23</sup>

### VIRGINIA BREEZE RIDERSHIP

In FY 2020, the Virginia Breeze operated between Blacksburg and Union Station in Washington, D.C., with stops in Christiansburg, Lexington, Staunton, Harrisonburg, Front Royal, Dulles Airport, and Arlington.<sup>24</sup> When service began on December 1, 2017, DRPT predicted that annual ridership would be 7,125. Ridership for FY 2019 was 24,532. Despite operating for only nine months in FY 2020, ridership continued to grow to a total of 24,790 riders.<sup>25</sup> The below graph breaks down ridership by month.

Figure 23: Fiscal Year 2020 Virginia Breeze Ridership



### TDM PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

DRPT collects data from its TDM partners on the number of trips reduced and the number of vehicle miles traveled reduced through its programs. Unfortunately, FY 2020 was a difficult one for these programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon Governor Northam’s issuance of a stay-at-home order, many people started teleworking from home and no longer needed TDM programs such as vanpools.

Additionally, DRPT converted to a new ridematching system for approximately half of its commuter assistance programs. The change means many more ridematching was automatically conducted and a new reporting matrix was implemented in FY 2020.

Figure 24: Trips & Miles Reduced by Virginia TDM Programs

Virginia TDM Programs	FY 2020
Trips Reduced	718,883
Vehicles Miles Traveled Reduced	31,113,908

<sup>23</sup> For more information about the WMATA Bus Transformation Project, see Section VIII.

<sup>24</sup> To learn more about the Virginia Breeze service, please see Section X.

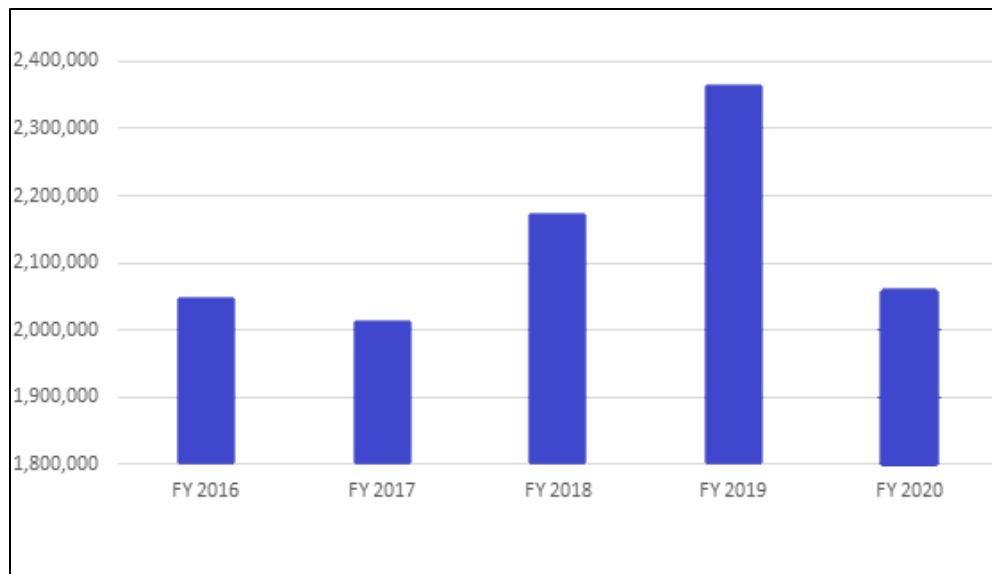
<sup>25</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DRPT suspended Virginia Breeze service on April 5, 2020.

## SHORTLINE RAILWAY PRESERVATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

To gauge the performance of the Rail Preservation, Rail Industrial Access, and Rail Enhancement Funds, DRPT calculates the number of trucks removed from Virginia’s highways through the funds’ projects. This measure is calculated using program agreement performance that is reported by grantees annually. On average, one train carload removes the equivalent of four truckloads from the highway.

According to the American Association of Railroads, the annual carloads of intermodal units by Class I railroads in the United States has been consistent at approximately 30,000,000 units with a slight year-to-year variation over the past ten years. While coal has declined from 7 million carloads a year to 4 million per year that was slightly offset by stability in other commodities and increases in various types of crude.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 25: Truckloads Removed from VA Highways via the Shortline Railway Preservation Program



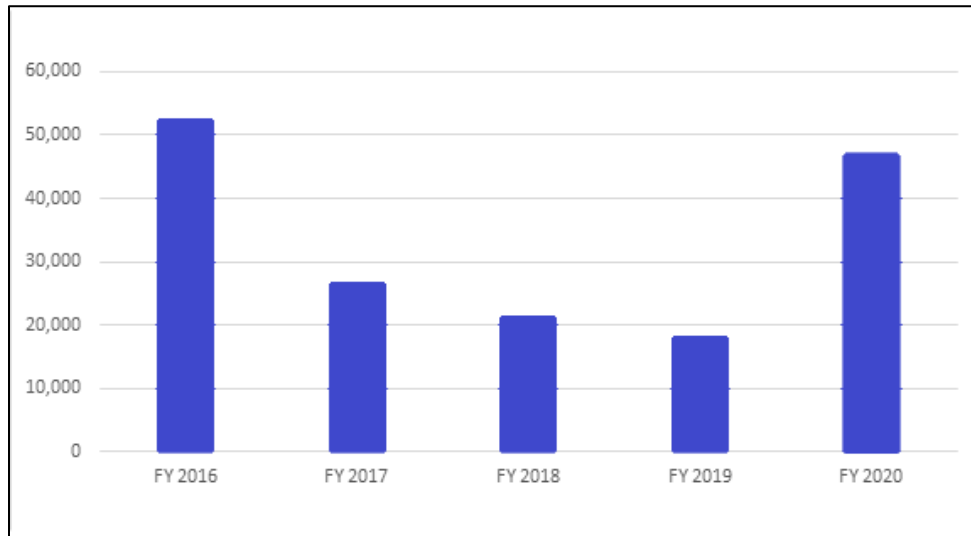
Over the past five years, projects funded through the Rail Preservation Fund have removed between approximately 2.0 million and 2.4 million trucks from Virginia highways annually. The high point was in FY 2020 when the number reached 2,364,435. While FY 2020 was still a successful year for the program, there was a decrease to 2,058,329 due to a decline in grain and coal shipments.

## RAIL INDUSTRIAL ACCESS PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

DRPT also calculates the number of truckloads removed from Virginia highways via the Rail Industrial Access program.

<sup>26</sup> [American Association of Railroads-Rail Traffic Data](#)

**Figure 26: Truckloads Removed from VA Highways via the Rail Industrial Access Program**

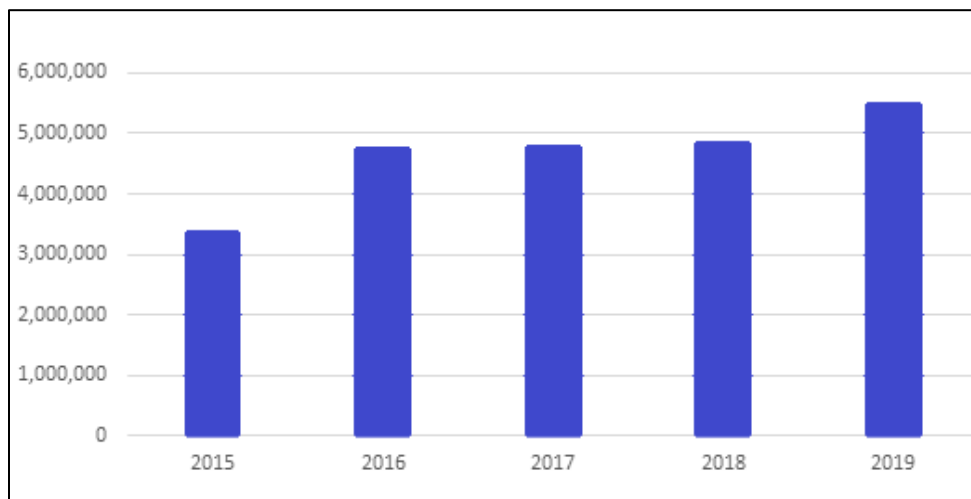


The annual data reported for the Rail Industrial Access program is highly variable year-to-year depending on the types of industries in their reporting phases. Additionally, companies have a three-year reporting period after receiving funds. As companies move out of their reporting phase and new companies move in, the data will change and will not follow a general upward trajectory every year. In FY 2019, DRPT had four companies in the reporting period while it had six companies in FY 2020.

### RAIL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

During its existence, the Rail Enhancement Program saw an increase each year in truckloads removed from Virginia's highways. In 2019, the program removed its largest number: 5,493,856.<sup>27</sup>

**Figure 27: Truckloads Removed from VA Highways via the Rail Enhancement Program**

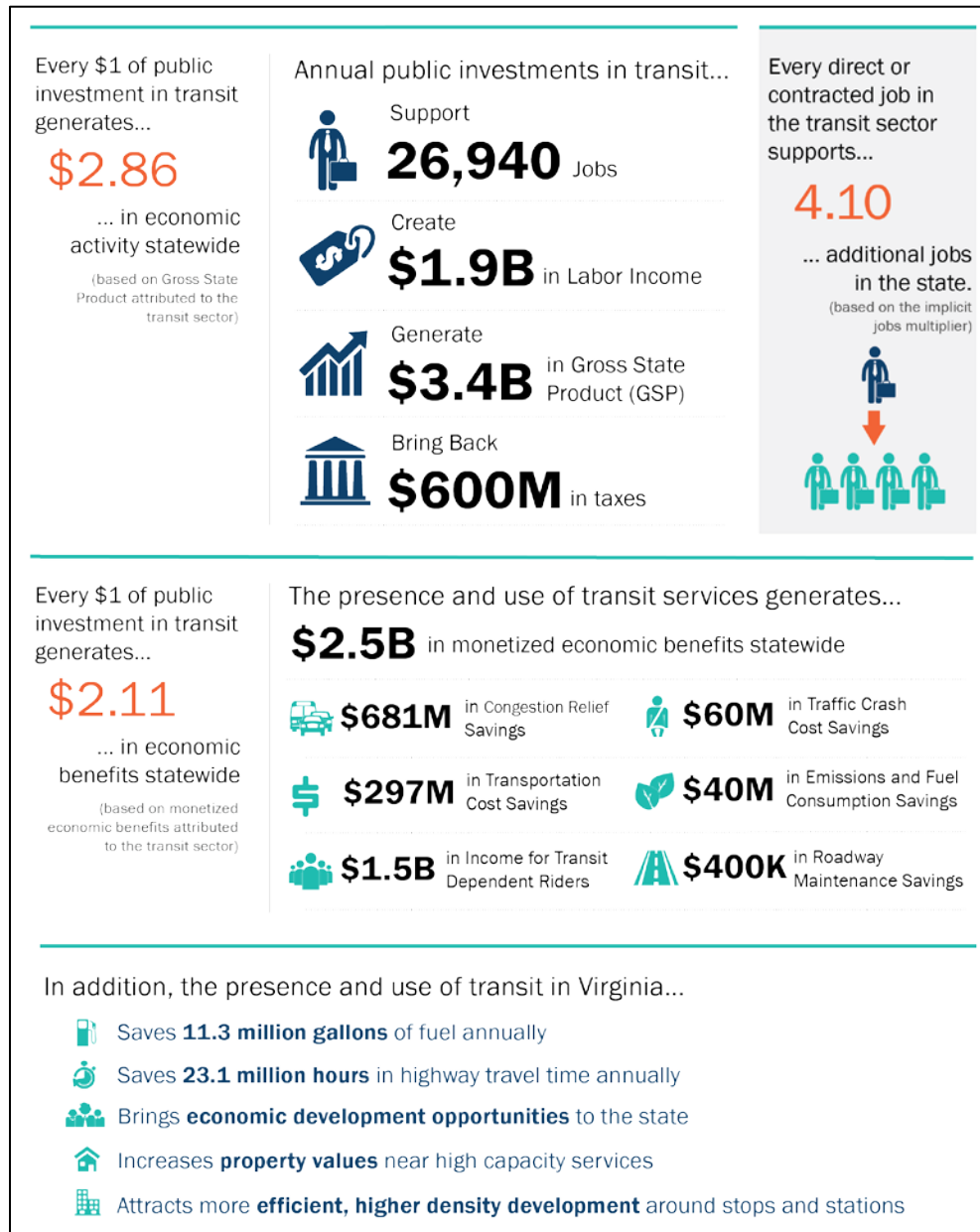


<sup>27</sup> DRPT reports truckloads removed from Virginia Highways via the Rail Enhancement Program by calendar year.

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF TRANSIT<sup>28</sup>

Besides removing vehicles from the highway, the presence of transit as a travel option in communities throughout Virginia has a large impact on the state's economy and brings an impressive amount of additional benefit.

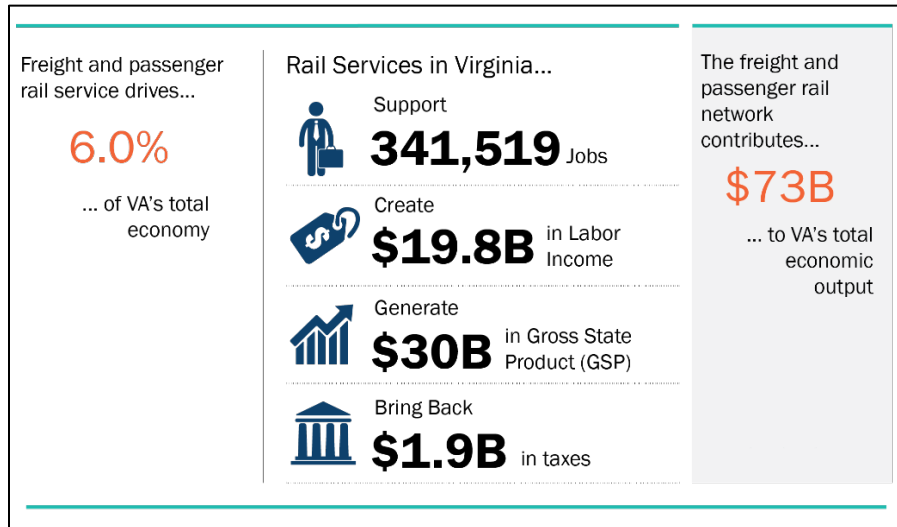
Figure 28: Economic Benefits of Transit



<sup>28</sup> For more information about the economic benefits of transit, please see DRPT's Study on the Economic Benefits of Transit.

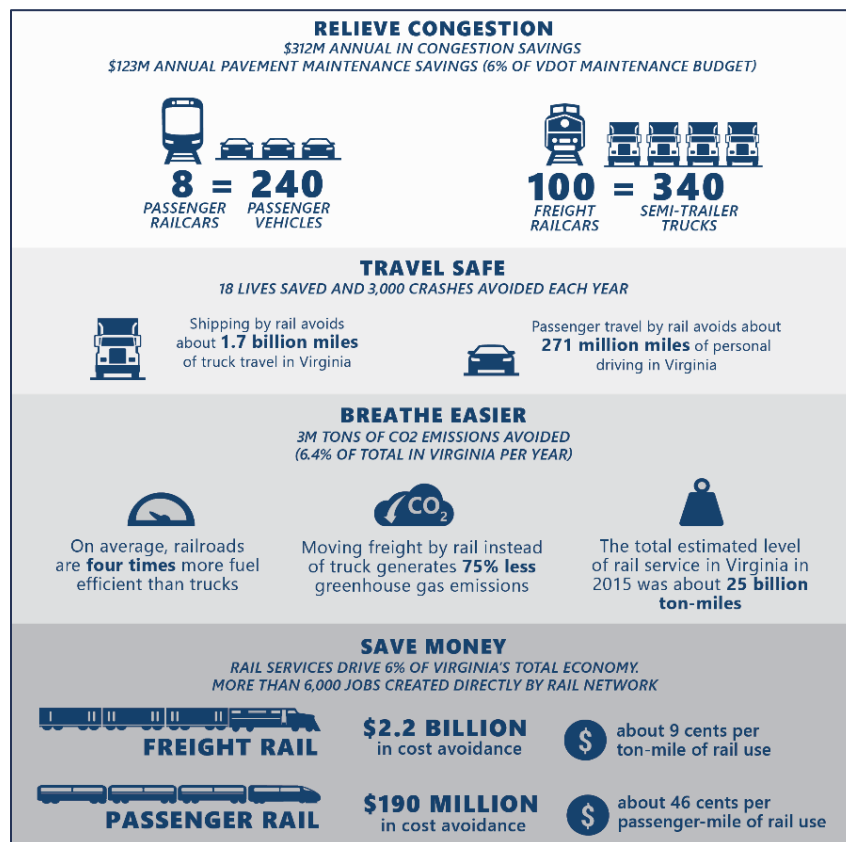
## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF FREIGHT & PASSENGER RAIL

Figure 29: Economic Benefits of Freight and Passenger Rail



As a complement to the highway network, transit, and transportation demand management services, passenger rail is a major part of Virginia's traffic solution.

Figure 30: Additional Benefits of Freight and Passenger Rail









## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF TDM

By putting more people in buses, trains, carpools, and vanpools, and increasing the use of telework, TDM plays a vital role in Virginia's transportation system.

**Figure 31: Benefits of Transportation Demand Management**

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### Transportation Demand Management Programs in Virginia...

-  Reduce **roadway congestion** and **increase travel options**
-  Provide **commuter information** that enables better decision making
-  Provide **contingencies for commuters** that choose to leave their cars at home
-  Improve **travel time reliability**
-  **Save commuters and the state money**
-  Contribute to **reduced emissions** from the transportation sector

## V. RESPONDING TO COVID-19

On March 12, 2020, Governor Northam declared a state of emergency for Virginia due to the continued spread of the coronavirus. While transit and rail saw a significant decline in ridership as a result, these services remained open, providing essential trips and services. Transit and rail employees continue to work during these unprecedented times ensuring that communities maintain access to jobs and healthcare.

### FEDERAL AND STATE

At its March 2020 meeting, the CTB approved the provision of \$11,000,000 in supplemental operating assistance to help offset the COVID-19 pandemic response and mitigation. This dollar amount came from residual funds on completed and canceled projects. The amount allocated was equivalent to one month of statewide transit agency operating expenses and was allocated on a proportional basis to the transit agencies.

Additionally, DRPT, in cooperation with the COVID-19 Unified Command Joint Information Center, provided guidance on March 30, 2020; April 6, 2020; and July 1, 2020, to assist transit agencies with their response to COVID-19.<sup>29</sup> During this timeframe, DRPT offered similar guidance to transportation demand management agencies. DRPT also hosted two webinars to provide guidance and to answer any questions.

On March 27, 2020, Congress passed the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act provided \$25 billion to transit agencies throughout the nation to help “prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic”<sup>30</sup>. The Commonwealth was allocated a total of \$456.4 million in CARES Act funding for transit. DRPT was responsible for distributing \$99.7 million to agencies throughout the Commonwealth, while \$356.6 million was allocated directly to transit agencies in the large urban areas of the state.

**Figure 32: CARES Act Funding Distributed by DRPT for Transit**

	CARES Act Funding
Small Urban (Section 5307) Transit Agencies <sup>31</sup>	\$47,205,359
Rural (Section 5311) Transit Agencies <sup>32</sup>	\$51,377,174
Appalachian Development (ADTAP)	\$1,150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$99,732,533</b>

In addition to significant federal assistance to public transportation agencies, the CARES Act also authorized over \$1 billion to Amtrak for intercity passenger rail operations across the United States. Included in that figure was over \$236 million set aside for state-sponsors of intercity passenger rail such as Virginia. Under the terms of the legislation, Amtrak’s FY 2020 billing to Virginia for annual operating and capital costs cannot exceed 80 percent of its FY 2019 billing.

<sup>29</sup> DRPT is maintaining a [webpage](#) with this guidance and other helpful information for its transit and rail partners.

<sup>30</sup> *Fiscal Year 2020 CARES Act Supplemental Public Transportation Apportionments and Allocations*. Federal Transit Administration. April 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Transit systems that serve urban areas with populations greater than 50,000

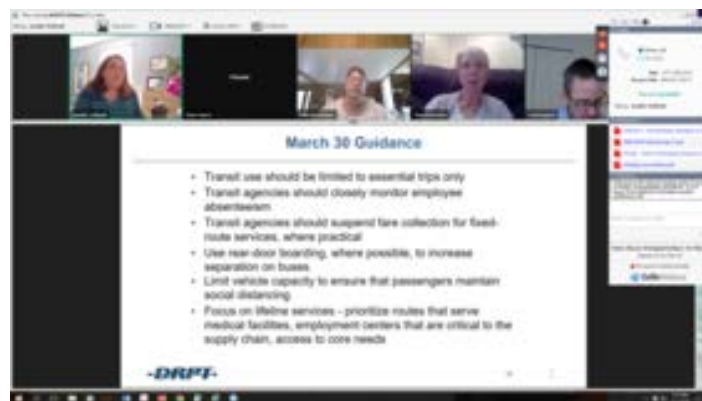
<sup>32</sup> Transit systems that serve rural areas with populations less than 50,000.



On May 28, 2020, the USDOT announced that it would distribute approximately 15.5 million cloth face coverings to transportation personnel across the United States, 4.8 million of which have been reserved for mass transit and passenger rail workers. The announcement came one day before Executive Order 63 went into effect in the Commonwealth of Virginia, which mandated the use of facial coverings in train stations, bus stations, and intrastate public transportation. The order also applies to any waiting or congregating areas associated with boarding public transportation. DRPT and VDOT distributed 10,000 face coverings statewide to transit agencies with fewer than 40 employees. Larger transit agencies received shipments directly from USDOT. Transit agencies may dispense the washable and reusable cloth face coverings to its employees and passengers.

During the pandemic, DRPT leadership participated in several webinars to share their experiences in Virginia with other transportation leaders, not only in the Commonwealth but throughout the United States.

DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell participated in webinars with the Virginia Transit Association, the FTA, and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to discuss the state of transit and rail during the pandemic as well as plans to move forward. Jen DeBruhl, DRPT's Chief of Public Transportation, shared the experiences of Virginia's public transit agencies during the pandemic on webinars hosted by the American Association of



State Highway and Transportation Officials, APTA, the Partnership for Smarter Growth, and the Virginia Conversation Network/Energy Foundation. Additionally, Michael McLaughlin, DRPT's Chief of Rail Transportation, discussed the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of freight and passenger rail service during a webinar hosted by the Virginians for High Speed Rail.

## FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL

On March 11, 2020, Amtrak announced that it would increase the frequency of its cleaning service on its trains and at its stations. Additionally, it increased the quantity of sanitizers and disinfectant wipes available for customers and employees throughout its trains and stations. Lastly, Amtrak announced that it would waive change and cancellation fees on bookings.

Amtrak and DRPT announced a move on March 16, 2020, to a slightly reduced "weekend" schedule. Subsequently, on April 1<sup>st</sup>, Amtrak and DRPT cut service in half, offering one daily round trip train to Roanoke, Newport News, and Norfolk. The Richmond service was suspended; however, the two Richmond stations are still served by national routes as well as the Newport News and Norfolk routes.

Figure 33: Amtrak Service in Virginia-April 1, 2020

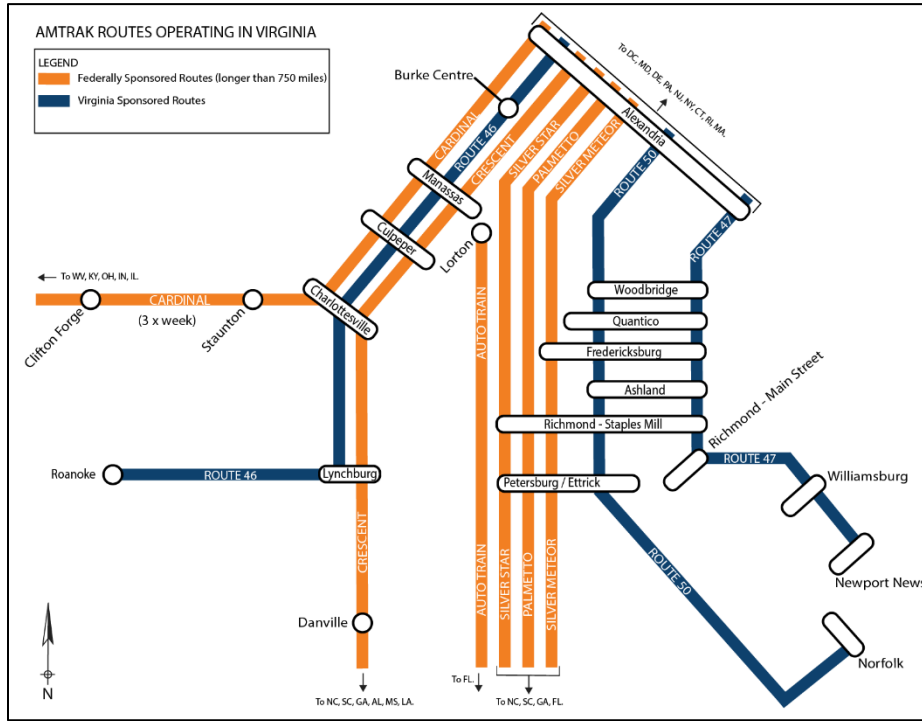


Figure 34: Amtrak Service in Virginia-May 6, 2020

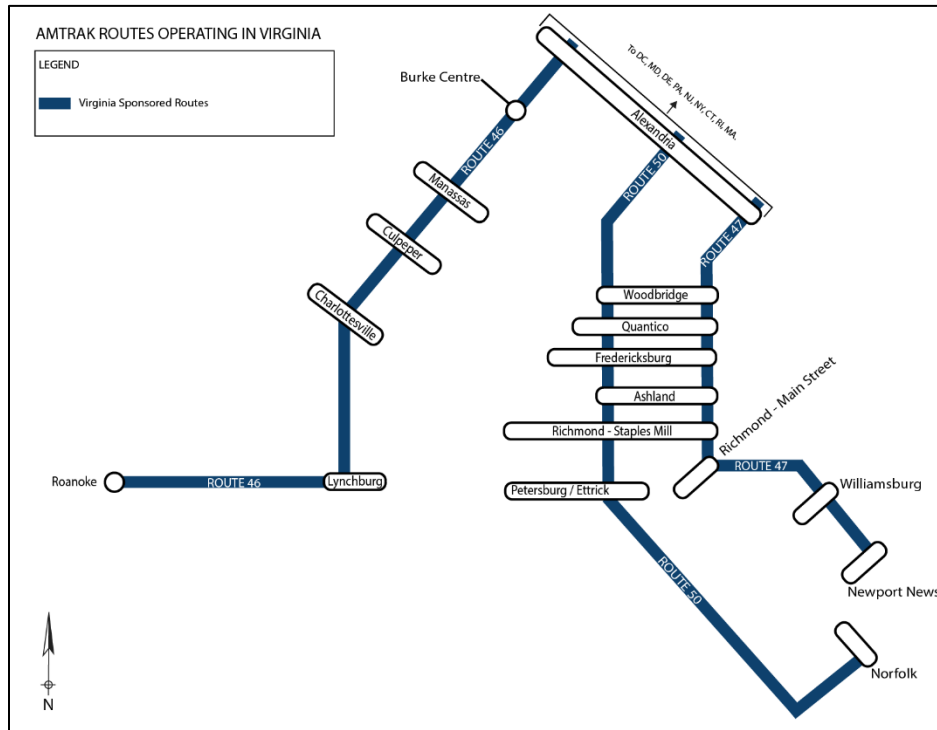
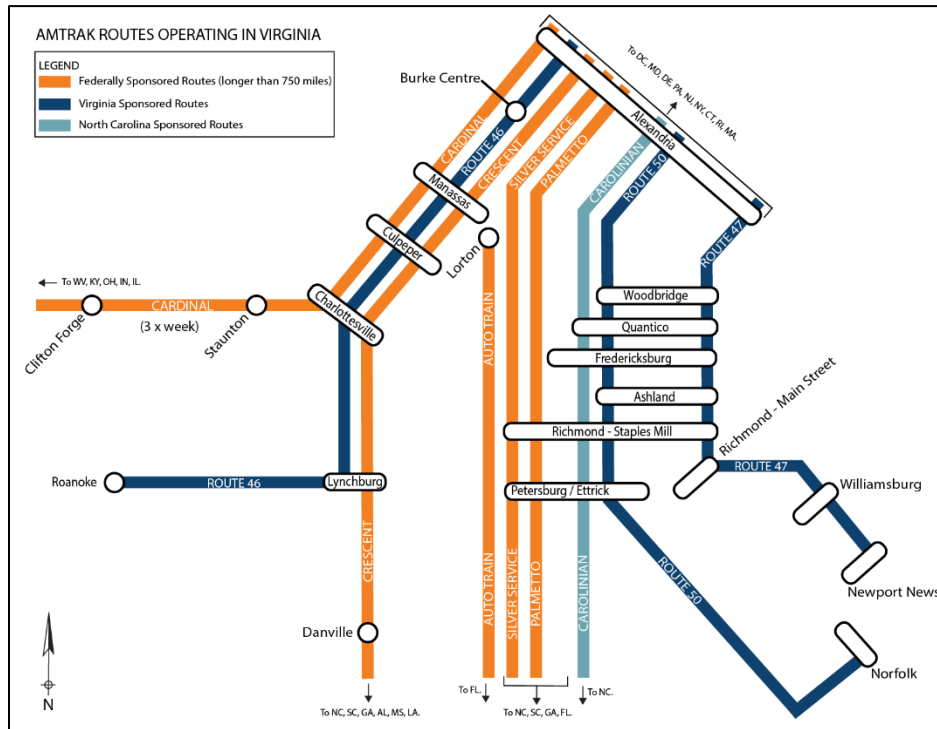


Figure 35: Amtrak Service in Virginia - June 7, 2020



The Class I and shortline rail providers have also taken action to protect their employees during the ongoing pandemic. The Association of American Railroads has produced a fact sheet highlighting their actions, including social distancing and transferring employees to teleworking when possible.<sup>33</sup>

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

DRPT has carefully monitored and supported transit agencies during the 2020 coronavirus outbreak. This section provides a summary of transit agencies' responses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 36 provides an abbreviated illustration of practices deployed by transit agencies to across the Commonwealth to prioritize the community health.

*For the safety of passengers and operators, DRPT suspended the Virginia Breeze intercity bus service on April 10, 2020. The Valley Flyer relaunched on July 24, 2020. For its restart, the bus operator established safety guidelines that are posted on bus shelters and buses as well as on social media and the [Virginiabreeze.org](http://Virginiabreeze.org) website.*

<sup>33</sup> [Railroads & COVID-19 Response: Keeping Workers Safe](#)

Figure 36: Transit Agencies' Response to COVID-19



### Limiting Interactions

*Elimination of Fares:* 25 transit agencies enacted fare-free policies. These agencies followed national trends to protect the safety of their riders and operators by limiting the interactions associated with fare collection. Fare-free transit protects riders by limiting close contact with others and allows for more seamless transit use by reducing the number of touched surfaces such as currency and fare cards. Going fare-free not only protects the safety of operators and riders, but also provides financial relief to those struggling during the pandemic.

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*To limit the number of riders, AASC/Four County Transit, which services Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Tazewell counties, enacted a shadow bus policy. On routes with greater ridership during peak times, additional buses were deployed to follow buses that reached maximum capacity. These shadow buses operate to compensate for new social distancing policies and limited bus capacities while still providing essential transportation for the community.*

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*Rear-Door Boarding:* While going fare-free limits certain transactions, rear-door boarding policies further protect the safety of operators by creating greater distance between riders and staff. Fifteen Virginia transit agencies enacted rear door-only boarding policies to allow for more distance between users. Under the rear-door boarding policy, riders enter the bus through the rear door, away from the driver, unless they are physically unable to do so.

*Barriers between Drivers and Riders:* In addition to rear-door boarding, some agencies have installed physical barriers to provide a shield between riders and operators. Agencies have installed Plexiglas or Clear Vinyl Protective curtains to provide an additional layer of personal protection to operators. Some agencies are roping off the first few rows of seats to ensure riders stay approximately six feet away from the operator. In some cases, agencies roped off multiple rows to further ensure social distancing throughout the bus.



*Limiting Number of Patrons:* Transit agencies also have been limiting the number of riders per vehicle to encourage appropriate distancing. Some examples of recommended vehicle loads include three passengers on a 15-passenger Body on Chassis (BOC) van and ten passengers on a 40-foot transit bus. Many agencies have modified their routes and/or schedules in order to provide additional buses on high-demand corridors to provide for physical distancing. VRE provided customers with information about ridership levels by train, so riders could choose to take trips with fewer people.

### **Heightened Sanitation and Other Precautions**

*Masks:* Since the start of the pandemic, it has been strongly recommended for transit agencies to require the use of masks on vehicles and in facilities. Many transit agencies provided masks to riders who did not have them. On May 26, Governor Northam issued Executive Order 63, which required all Virginians to wear masks in public places including “train stations, bus stations, and on intrastate public transportation, including in waiting or congregating areas.”

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*The Arc of Greater Williamsburg has supported food drives by picking up and delivering food to local food pantries and residents, coordinated meal delivery for food insecure school-aged children and their families, and delivered a variety of other items including signs, medications, and produce when called upon by community partners.*

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*Sanitation:* DRPT recommended the extensive cleaning of transit vehicles and facilities early in the pandemic, following CDC guidelines. Bay Aging, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, Four County Transit, and GRTC partnered with local distilleries to attain alcohol solutions for weekly bus cleanings.

*Employee Monitoring:* Public-facing transit staff, such as operators and other essential employees, may be at risk for COVID-19 exposure despite all of the precautionary efforts. Some larger urban systems, such as the Greater Richmond Transit Company, provide on-site COVID-19 testing for staff. This service is voluntary and paid for by GRTC on behalf of its employees.

## Tailoring Operations



While these precautionary efforts have helped mitigate some risks during the coronavirus outbreak, the emphasis on utilizing transit only for essential trips will still negatively impact ridership. DRPT urged agencies to prioritize routes that serve medical facilities, employment centers, core needs, and lifeline services for the most vulnerable populations in their service reductions.

*Essential Trips Only:* Virginia transit agencies were also advised in March 2020 to communicate the importance of riders utilizing transit only for essential trips during the COVID-19 pandemic. These trips included, but were not limited to: grocery stores, food banks, schools, employment, healthcare, and other lifeline services for the most vulnerable populations.

*Reducing Local Service:* Thirty Virginia transit agencies have modified their service levels in light of the pandemic. The majority of these changes focused on reducing underutilized routes. For example, once universities transitioned to online courses, routes that typically access higher education institutions experienced large decreases in ridership. Furthermore, express routes that are frequently used by commuters were also reduced or temporarily suspended when more people began working from home.

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

COVID-19 significantly changed the way commuter assistance programs provide TDM services as people were less likely to need commute options. The primary goal of DRPT's TDM grant programs is to reduce single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel, and COVID-19 did that in dramatic fashion. VDOT reported that traffic volumes across the Commonwealth dropped 60 percent or more during April 2020.

With few people using transit, carpooling and vanpooling, or looking for commute options, commuter assistance programs needed to change how they did business.



During the health crisis, it became clear that marketing and promotion to reduce SOVs was neither needed nor a wise use of public funding. Additionally, many events and on-site meeting and fairs were canceled as a result of social distancing requirements and restrictions on public gatherings. Therefore, DRPT directed TDM grant recipients to reduce activities and advertising related to the promotion of travel options and instead promote resources with telework technical assistance.

DRPT allowed grant recipients of TDM Operating Assistance that have FY 2020 grants only to carry over balances to FY 2021. The decision to allow FY 2020 funding to be used in FY 2021 also helped address the uncertainty around FY 2021 budget.

Vanpools experienced a dramatic loss in ridership due to COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, there were more than 900 vanpools providing more than 3 million passenger trips a year. As difficult as it is under normal circumstances to form and keep vanpools operating, a significant loss of ridership could be catastrophic for the vanpool industry. Therefore, DRPT relaxed the rules for vanpools to qualify for VanSave funding. VanSave provides emergency funding to temporarily subsidize vacant seats caused by the sudden loss of riders.

Many vanpools ceased operating when most or all riders were no longer commuting to the office. Some vanpool companies allowed the vehicles to be “parked” at the vanpool coordinator’s home rather than returning the van to the vanpool company. Parking the vans instead of returning them will allow the vanpool to restart operating quickly, when the riders return to commuting to the office. In April 2020, the Vanpool Alliance program operated by PRTC for Northern Virginia reported an 80 percent decline in vanpool ridership as 525 vanpools were no longer operating.

In Richmond, GRTC continued to provide the \$250 per month stipend to 150 vanpools. HRT in Hampton Roads provided \$325 or \$300 (depending on the size of the van) to all 46 of their vanpools. In Northern Virginia, PRTC through the regional Vanpool Alliance program provided over \$300,000 in direct payments through its Emergency Vanpool Relief Assistance (EVRA) program. In addition, the program provided PPE to all program participants to aid a safe return to vanpooling when appropriate. The program is also waiving ridership requirements to allow program participants to continue to receive their monthly vanpool stipend even though the van is parked.

The loss of vanpools is significant for two reasons. First, vanpools help move more people and mitigate traffic congestion. Second, many vanpools report their operating data to transit agencies that use the data to qualify for additional federal transit funding. Vanpool data brings in an estimated \$6 million in FTA funding for Virginia’s urban areas.

**Figure 37: Vanpools in Large Urban Areas**

	February 2020	April 2020	June 2020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>281</b>
Richmond	150	55	61
Hampton Roads	46	16	17
Northern Virginia	656	131	203

As businesses reopen and more employees are commuting to the office, vanpooling is seeing a rebound in operation. Many vanpools that were “parked” or stopped operating altogether are beginning to return to operation. Commuters that may be apprehensive about commuting with strangers may feel more comfortable traveling with co-workers, particularly if they work for companies that have a robust health screening process and protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## VI. TRANSFORMING RAIL IN VIRGINIA

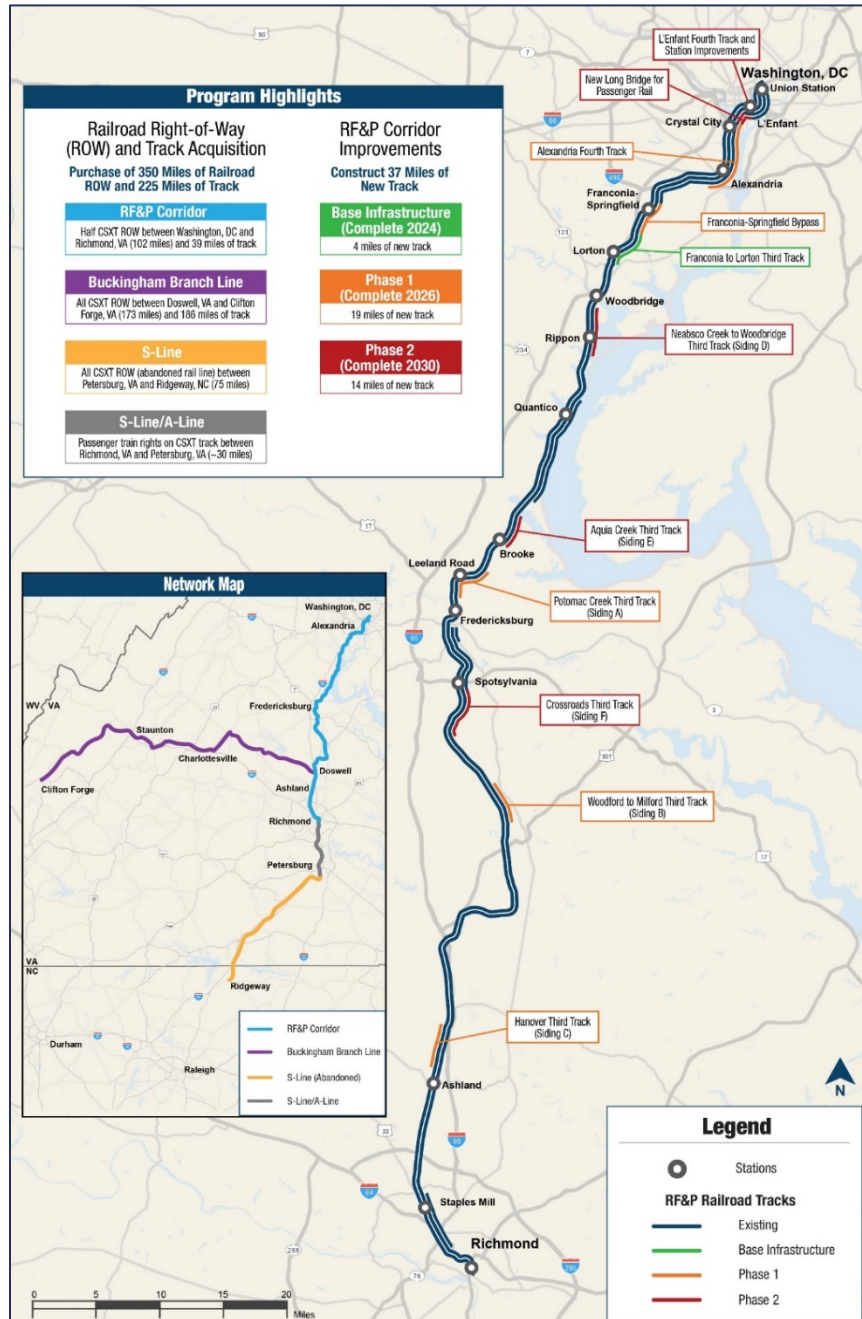
On December 19, 2019, Governor Northam and CSX announced a \$3.7 billion landmark deal that includes the purchase of over 350 miles of railroad right of way and 225 miles of track. The Commonwealth will fund two-thirds of this project with state and local revenues. Amtrak plans to contribute approximately \$944 million over ten years for the project.

The major features of this project include:

- Acquisition of right-of-way, track, and passenger rights from CSX;
- Build-out of infrastructure in two phases;
- Additional Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express service resulting from completion of these phases;
- Path forward to a full separation of freight and passenger service in the future;
- Preservation of future rail corridors.

The project will grow Virginia's economy by \$2 billion annually and improve mobility by expanding and improving Amtrak, VRE, and freight rail services. Improvements to freight rail services will increase rail capacity to support the Port of Virginia, which is becoming increasingly dependent upon freight rail to move goods to and from the Port.

Virginia needs more rail transportation because of its limited interstate capacity. Across Virginia, travelers currently experience 230 million hours of delay, resulting in \$6.5 billion in annual congestion costs. Current conditions and increasing demand means more throughput capacity is needed along the

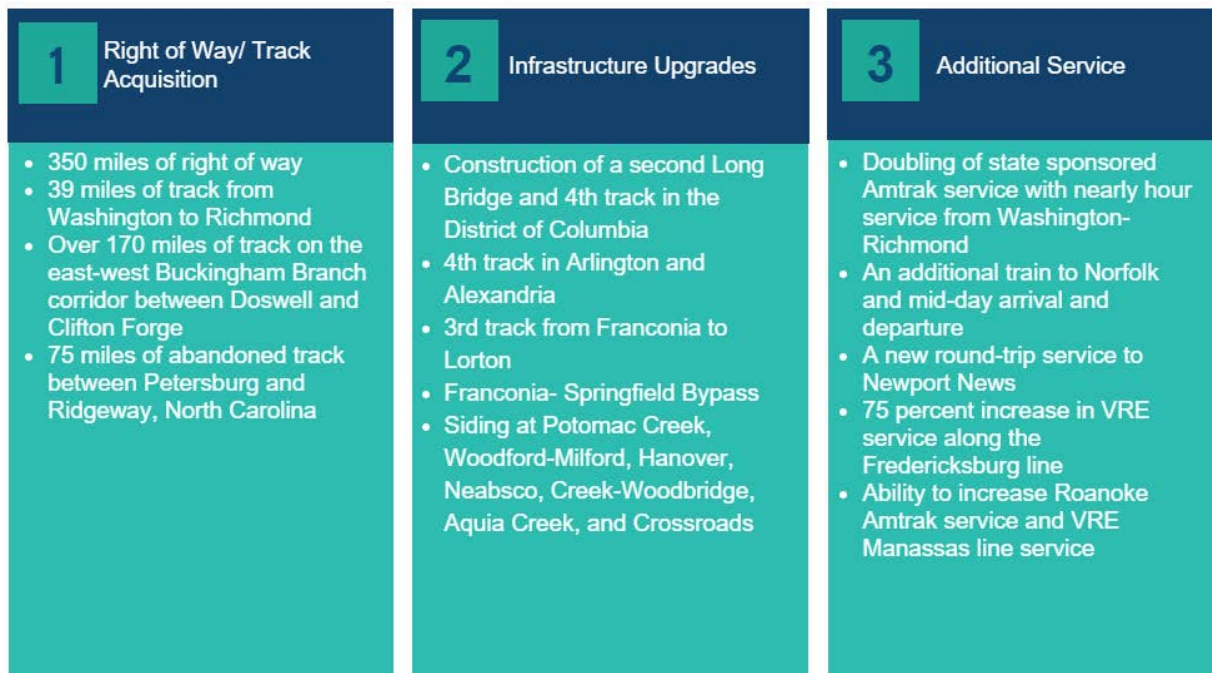




Commonwealth’s interstate corridors, and passenger rail provides the most cost-effective solution in the short and long term.

At the same time, passenger rail performance cannot improve and services cannot grow without expanding the existing infrastructure. Amtrak and VRE trains suffer delays repeatedly from train interference due to congestion on the railroad. The current Long Bridge over the Potomac River is one of the most significant rail bottlenecks along the entire East Coast of the United States. Long Bridge is currently at 98 percent capacity during the peak period. The agreement with CSX will directly address these constraints and improve mobility for Virginians.

**Figure 38: Transforming Rail in Virginia**



**Long Bridge Expansion**

The construction of a second Long Bridge across the Potomac River in Washington, D.C will cost approximately \$1.9 billion and will unlock congestion along the East Coast. This 1.5-mile corridor includes a new two-track bridge over the river as well as a fourth track within the District. It is anticipated to be completed by 2030.

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*The original Long Bridge structure was built in 1808, and the two-track steel through girder/through-truss railroad bridge was constructed in 1904. The bridge subsequently was reinforced in 1942 during World War II for heavy loads. Currently, the Long Bridge is the only railroad bridge connecting Virginia passenger rail to the District of Columbia and the Northeast corridor.*

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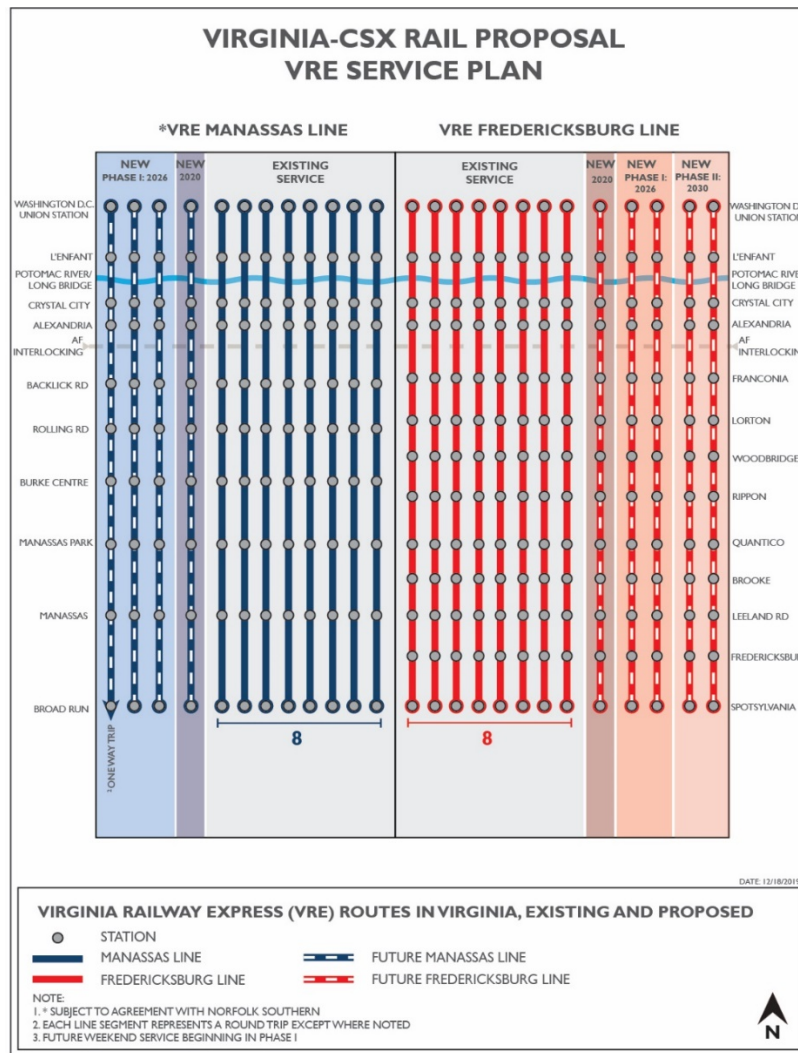
There is an existing bottleneck due to a two-track Long Bridge connecting three tracks on each side of the Potomac River in the District of Columbia and Virginia. Also, there are speed restrictions on the bridge. As noted, the bridge is at 98 percent capacity during the peak hours, and over the course of the day, traffic is split at 70 percent passenger and 30 percent freight. This translates into approximately 34

Virginia Railway Express trains and 24 Amtrak trains daily. With no rail network redundancy, there is without question a need for a new, two-track bridge for the passenger corridor.

DC2RVA, which is the planning study for the Washington, D.C., to Richmond segment of the Southeast High Speed Rail project, indicated there is no further capacity available for additional passenger trains in the Commonwealth beyond those currently funded in the Six-Year Improvement Program without a second Long Bridge and related improvements along the Interstate 95 rail corridor.

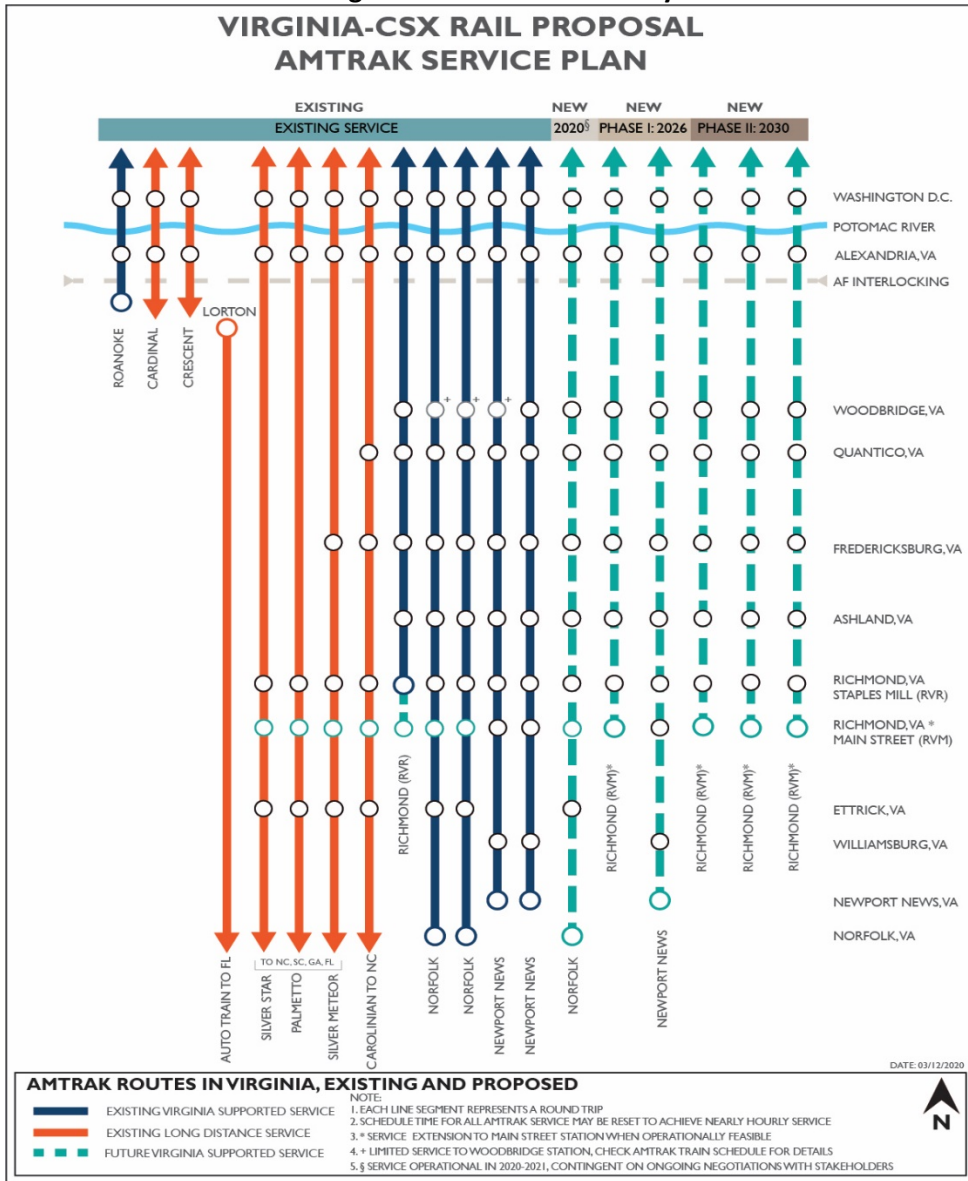
In addition to these benefits, a new Long Bridge will provide over 18,000 new freight and passenger train crossings annually. It is estimated that it will take one million trucks off the highway as well as five million vehicles. Lastly, there will be an increase in safety by reducing the number of crashes on the highways.

Figure 39: VRE Service by 2030



The expanded VRE service will provide five new VRE trains along the Fredericksburg line by 2030 and will include new late-night and weekend service.

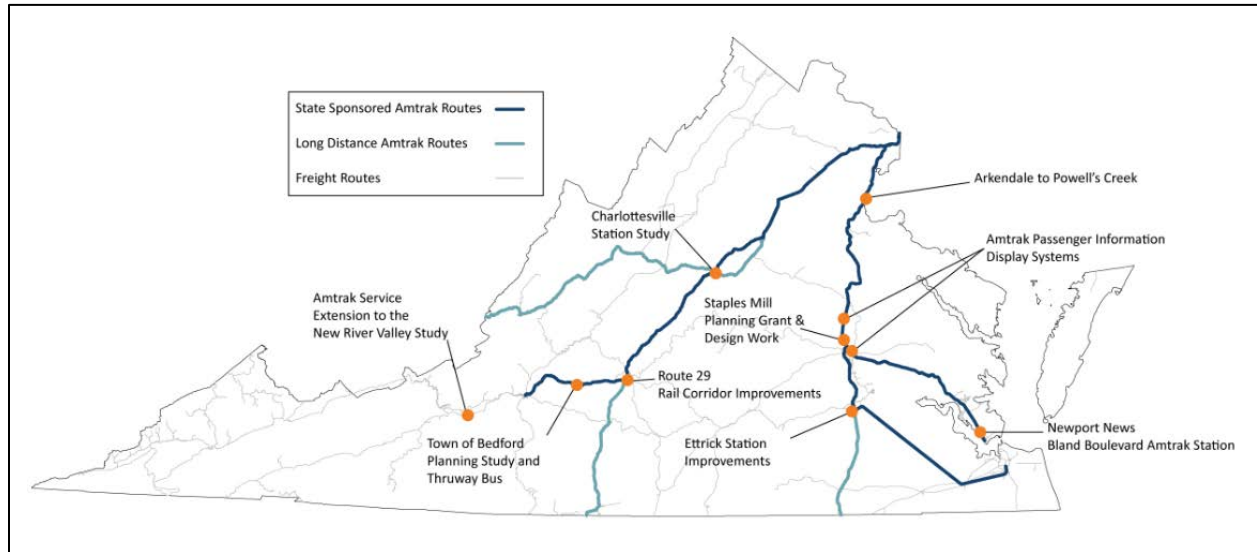
Figure 40: Amtrak Service by 2030



## VII. IMPROVING COMMUTER AND PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES

In addition to the large Transforming Rail in Virginia project, DRPT is financing additional projects benefiting commuter and passenger rail using dollars from IPROC and REF.

**Figure 41: IPROC-Funded Projects**



### ARKENDALE TO POWELL'S CREEK

The \$115 million Arkendale project provides for the design and construction of a third track along the heavily congested nine-mile stretch of CSX's main line from Powell's Creek to Arkendale in Northern Virginia. In 2010, the project received a \$75 million grant from the federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program. Dedicated funding in the SYIP to complete the Arkendale project includes \$26.5 million in IPROC funds. The third track segment will be used to meet, pass, and overtake trains to enhance the performance schedule for intercity passenger service, high-speed passenger rail service, and Virginia Railway Express commuter service while preserving freight operations. This is a critical section of third track needed between Washington, D.C., and Fredericksburg.

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*DRPT is working with the District of Columbia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida, as well as the USDOT, to establish the Southeast Corridor Commission. The Commission will meet quarterly to broaden the geographic footprint, align freight and passenger interests in the region, and position the corridor for directed federal funding.*

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An additional component of this project includes improvements to Quantico Station, benefiting Amtrak and VRE customers. Improvements include construction of an island platform with platform extensions of existing platforms, and pedestrian bridges from the east side of the tracks/station building and from the Marine Corps Base parking facility on the west side of the tracks. \$13.6M in IPROC funds have been allocated to the Quantico Station improvements as part of the Arkendale 3rd Track Project.

## ROUTE 29 RAIL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

DRPT is working with Norfolk Southern to determine whether Norfolk Southern could accommodate an additional intercity passenger rail service between the New River Valley and Washington, D.C., via Roanoke and Lynchburg. Approximately \$13.3 million in IPROC funds has been set aside for this effort. The existing route is currently the most successful state-sponsored route in Virginia.

## NEWPORT NEWS BLAND BOULEVARD AMTRAK STATION

This new \$48 million station, which will be located at the intersection of Bland Boulevard and Interstate 64, will be more energy efficient, will be ADA compliant, and will allow the existing Amtrak trains to avoid entering a CSX coal yard for turning and servicing. DRPT has allocated \$20.5 million of IPROC funds toward construction of a platform, servicing facility, and associated turning and storage facilities. Newport News is funding approximately \$20.5 million for the station and associated costs. This multimodal station will increase transportation options through new inter-city bus service with local connections including Hampton Roads Transit, shuttles to the airport, and taxi service. Construction began in 2020 and will be completed by 2022.



## AMTRAK PASSENGER INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The unstaffed Amtrak station in Ashland, Virginia, has two main-line tracks on which northbound and southbound trains arrive. In order to determine on which side of the tracks to stand, passengers must wait until the trains are within sight and then migrate to the appropriate side. Furthermore, there is no way to notify passengers at the station of arrival times for trains in the event of delays. Currently, at the Richmond Main Street Station, passengers are notified of train arrival times and ushered to the platform by the station security guards who rely on the Amtrak mobile app for alerts and then announce arrival times.

Installing Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) at both stations will provide a safe, ADA-compliant method of making arrival notifications, which will improve the overall customer experience. DRPT has allocated \$1.23 million of IPROC funds for design and installation of these systems. Per the CTB-approved station policy, the localities will fund the operation and maintenance of the PIDS.

## ETTRICK STATION IMPROVEMENTS

The Amtrak station in Chesterfield County is located in The Village of Ettrick near Petersburg. The station was built in 1955 and has seen few improvements since then. DRPT, in partnership with Amtrak and Chesterfield County, is planning to address State of Good Repair (SOGR) needs at the Ettrick station. The 2019 Station Needs Assessment Study conducted by DRPT identified Ettrick as the station with highest SOGR needs in the state. Service to Ettrick station increased in 2018 with the start of the second Norfolk roundtrip, and a third roundtrip service to Norfolk is slated to begin in 2021. Ettrick station will also be a future stop on service from Virginia to North Carolina. The budget for ADA improvements being carried out by Amtrak at Ettrick station is estimated to be \$3 million. DRPT has proposed \$1.5 million towards

SOGR improvements at Ettrick using FY 2021 IPROC funds. In addition to IPROC funding, Chesterfield County is contributing \$75,000 for SOGR improvements at Ettrick.

### **STAPLES MILL STATION PLANNING GRANT AND DESIGN WORK**

DRPT has allocated IPROC funds for advanced station planning between Henrico County, Amtrak, and CSX as well as preliminary engineering for station infrastructure improvements cleared under the DC2RVA Record of Decision. DC2RVA designed the Staples Mill station to a 10 percent conceptual level, and this planning grant will assist in taking the design planning to 30 percent. The planning project will focus on the island platforms, addressing the building size, and other improvements.

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*DRPT, in collaboration with its partners, developed an update to the Multimodal System Design Guidelines. The guidelines provide a statewide set of tools for multimodal planning and design at the regional, community, and corridor scales. It will be used to inform multimodal planning and design studies across the Commonwealth, including the Staples Mill Station Planning and Design Study.*

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### **CHARLOTTESVILLE STATION STUDY**

DRPT is leading a study to assess the possibilities of building a larger multi-modal facility on the existing station site. The study is being coordinated with the City of Charlottesville and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission. The study tasks will include an identification of station needs, analysis of site plan alternatives, development of preliminary cost estimates, and development of a funding/financing plan for construction.

### **TOWN OF BEDFORD PLANNING STUDY AND THRUWAY BUS**

The study's purpose is to work with the Bedford-Franklin Regional Rail Initiative (BFRI) to develop a report that assesses the feasibility of an Amtrak station stop in the Town of Bedford. The study will draw from previous studies, most notably the BFRI 2015 White Paper, the 2016 Wendel Study (funded by local advocates), and the Amtrak/DRPT ridership study from 2017. Study tasks will include development of a planning-level conceptual design for a station that meets Amtrak and NS standards, development of a planning-level cost estimate, a traveler survey, development of a ridership methodology, and an analysis of ridership results. An optional task includes conducting a benefit-cost analysis for the station based on identified benefits and planning-level station costs. In addition to the study, DRPT will fund a free Amtrak Thruway bus from Bedford to the Lynchburg Station to gauge the demand for a train stop in the town.

### **AMTRAK SERVICE EXTENSION TO THE NEW RIVER VALLEY STUDY**

DRPT has programmed \$350,000 in IPROC funds for a study of future network requirements to accommodate the extension of Amtrak service from Roanoke to Christiansburg. Since the potential route will be along the Norfolk Southern corridor the study would need to be conducted and lead by Norfolk Southern. This study will serve as the basis to negotiate necessary infrastructure improvements.

## RF&P CORRIDOR



The REF program focused significant efforts on improving passenger service and operations on the CSX National Gateway Corridor, which parallels Interstate 95 in Virginia. Specifically, the REF program funded multiple platform improvement projects for VRE commuter rail service, including: Crystal City; L'Enfant; Brooke; Leeland; and Potomac Shores. In total, these projects account for nearly \$21 million of REF funding and over \$18 million of local/private matching funds.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, FY 2020 saw the completion of the Acca Yard reconstruction project. This program of projects constructed a passenger bypass of one of Virginia's primary passenger rail chokepoints. It was supported by \$132 million in capital investment, including nearly \$80 million from REF over several fiscal years.

<sup>34</sup> For information regarding VRE improvements along the Manassas line, please see Section X.

## VIII. BRINGING WMATA “BACK2GOOD”

In the 1960s, Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia jointly established an interstate compact creating the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA). The compact members include the District of Columbia and Maryland as well as the Virginia jurisdictions of Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church. Upon completion of the Metrorail Silver Line, Loudoun County will be added. With almost 100 million riders in Virginia annually, Metro is the largest transit provider in the Commonwealth. These following sections highlight key activities by Virginia and WMATA during FY 2020.



### USE OF WMATA CAPITAL FUNDS

The 2018 General Assembly passed legislation providing approximately \$154.5 million in annual dedicated funding for the WMATA Capital Fund, Virginia’s proportional regional share of \$500 million in annual additional capital required for critical state of good repair needs. The Maryland General Assembly and the District of Columbia City Council followed Virginia’s lead by passing their own funding packages later in 2018. FY 2020 was the second year that WMATA received funding from this dedicated revenue stream from Virginia, and the Commonwealth is seeing the benefits of these additional funds.

#### Platform Improvement Program



In the summer of 2019, WMATA started its platform improvement project along the Metrorail Blue and Yellow Lines south of Reagan National Airport. Throughout the entire system, WMATA had forty-five outdoor stations with concrete platforms that were exposed to weather and de-icing agents for 35 to 40 years and were at the end of their useful lives. Twenty stations had platforms requiring immediate attention, and WMATA had installed temporary measures at those stations to stabilize and ensure safety until reconstruction could occur.

From May 25, 2019, through September 8, 2019, WMATA shut down Metrorail operations on the Blue and Yellow Lines south of Reagan National Airport and reconstructed the platforms at the Braddock Road, King Street-Old Town Alexandria, Eisenhower Avenue, Van Dorn Street, Huntington, and Franconia-Springfield Metrorail stations. On a typical weekday during peak periods, the six stations record about 17,000 entries per AM Peak, which is approximately eight percent of the 212,000 AM Peak entries system wide. Metro announced this work in May 2019 with coordination led by a Northern Virginia stakeholder group with support from DRPT and NVTC. This group was comprised of more than 140 members including representatives from local government, state government, congressional offices, federal government, transit providers, police and emergency management, and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA).





In preparation for these closures, DRPT coordinated with local transit agencies and TDM operators for the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, NVTC, PRTC, and VDOT. They developed a regional plan of supplemental transportation services to complement WMATA’s mitigation plan to operate bus shuttle services in replacement of Metrorail service. DRPT identified de-obligated funds of approximately \$4 million from previously completed Northern Virginia projects that were utilized to support local mitigation efforts.

During the first quarter of calendar year 2020, WMATA announced its plans for Metrorail platform replacement work during summer 2020. This work required a closure of the above-ground stations on the western end of the Orange Line in Virginia. The Virginia Metrorail stations impacted, to varying degrees, were East Falls Church, West Falls Church, Dunn Loring, and Vienna. Metro re-opened West Falls Church to service on August 16, 2020, while the other stations remained closed until fall 2020. WMATA later announced that it would take advantage of shorter service hours and lower ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic to accelerate the platform improvement program. Additionally, five Silver Line stations – McLean, Tysons Corner, Greensboro, Spring Hill, and Wiehle-Reston East – closed to allow for integration of the train control systems between Phase 1 and 2 of the Silver Line. Work began on the Silver Line stations on May 23, 2020, and WMATA completed its work on August 16, 2020.

WMATA operated free shuttles during the work period to replicate Orange and Silver Line services. DRPT administered \$1.6 million to support supplemental services by other local transit agencies from a total of \$4 million allocated in the FY 2020 SYIP.

### Issuance of Debt

Additionally, WMATA leveraged dedicated revenues from the WMATA Capital Fund to issue debt in support of WMATA’s Capital Improvement Program.

The dedicated revenue financing program seeks to maximize capital funding and minimize cost to ensure a state of good repair. Debt will provide over \$1.6 billion through FY 2024 to support WMATA’s capital investments, and the bonds will mature in 25 years. Of Virginia’s \$154.5 million annual contribution, \$124 million is bondable, while all of the District of Columbia and Maryland’s contribution is bondable. WMATA is unable to use approximately \$30 million of Virginia’s share for bonds due to the origin of those revenues. Virginia raises those funds through state sources, the Northern Virginia Transportation District and state motor vehicle rental taxes; and WMATA’s use of those funds will adversely impact the Commonwealth’s bond capacity. WMATA forecasts that capital investments to be funded with this debt include railcars, rail systems, track and structure rehabilitation, station and passenger facilities, bus and paratransit, and business support.

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*NVTC is required by Virginia law to obtain certain documents from WMATA to confirm the agency’s benefits to persons living, traveling, commuting, and working in NVTC localities. NVTC also provides an annual WMATA update to the General Assembly and the Governor. NVTC provided the last report in October 2019.*

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### INCREASED STATE OVERSIGHT

Chapters 854 and 856 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly also increased state oversight of WMATA’s actions and implemented financial penalties should the agency not meet certain requirements. WMATA has supplied certification to DRPT that it has complied with all of these requirements for FY 2020. The CTB passed a resolution at its October 2020 meeting confirming that WMATA had complied with these requirements.

**Figure 42: State Oversight of WMATA**

### **Board Governance**

- Alternates cannot participate at a WMATA Board meeting when a director is present
- WMATA must approve policy prohibiting the participation of alternates

### **Operating Assistance Cap**

- The total Virginia operating subsidy in the approved WMATA budget cannot increase by more than three percent from the operating subsidy in the prior year's budget

### **Capital Improvement Plan**

- WMATA must have a detailed capital improvement program covering the current fiscal year and the next five fiscal years

### **Strategic Plan**

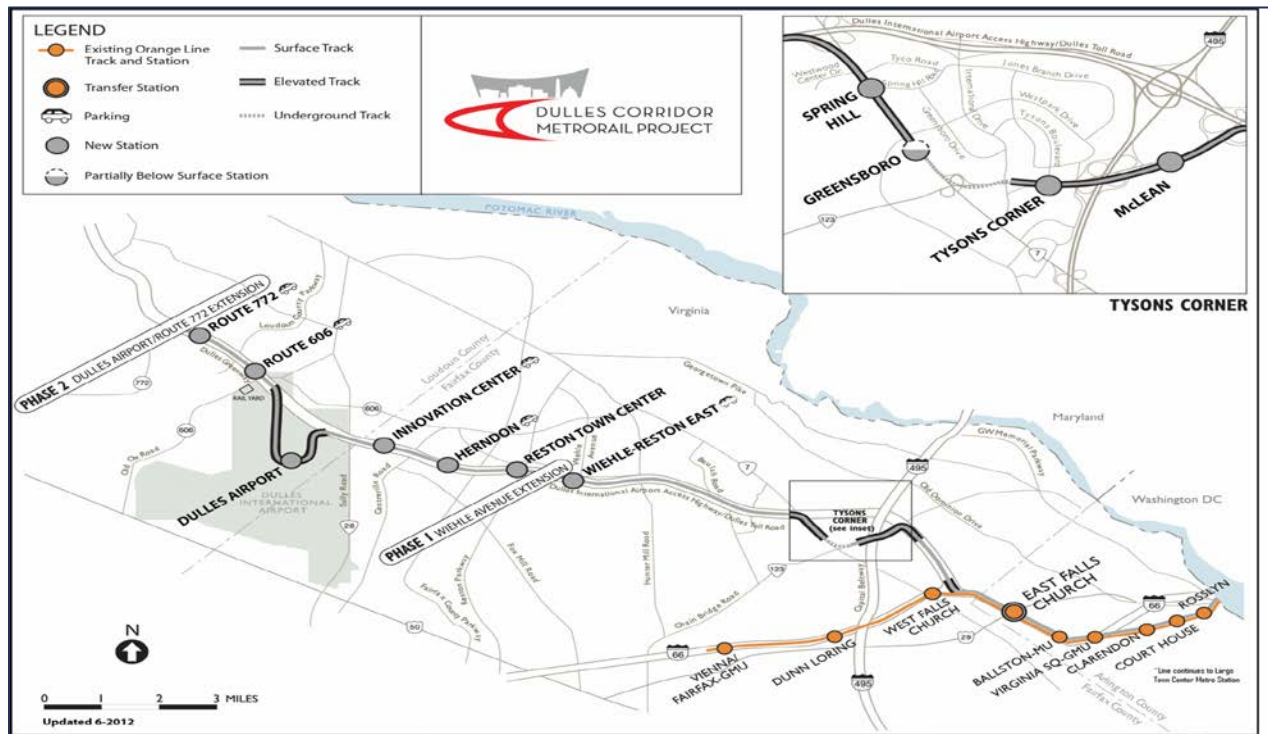
- WMATA is required to adopt a strategic plan every three years
- The next update is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2022

## **SILVER LINE EXPANSION**

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) completed Phase 1 in summer of 2014, with the Silver Line providing rail service that connects downtown Washington with Tysons Corner and Reston. The completed Phase 1 stations are McLean, Tysons Corner, Greensboro, Spring Hill, and Wiehle-Reston East.

Phase 2 is currently under construction and will extend the Silver Line to Reston Town Center, Herndon, Washington Dulles International Airport, Route 606, and Ashburn. It is anticipated that Phase 2 will be operational in 2021, at which time Loudoun County will become a full member of the WMATA Compact. MWAA is the primary funding source for this project, and DRPT, WMATA, Fairfax County, and Loudoun County are providing technical assistance during the construction of the 23.1-mile extension.

Figure 43: WMATA Silver Line Expansion



## BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

After the 2017 release of the LaHood Report, WMATA initiated a Bus Transformation Study: a regionally developed mobility strategy designed to define the roles of buses and their operators, advance innovations, and create a plan to move these goals forward. The project re-envisioned the bus network in the Washington region as a coordinated regional transportation solution. It addresses the changing needs of customers, leverages innovative technology, and employs a sustainable cost structure. In January 2020, the WMATA Board endorsed the vision, goals, and implementation of the recommendations from the Bus Transformation Project.<sup>35</sup>

*On March 18, 2019, the FTA announced the certification of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission. With certification, independent responsibility for direct safety oversight of the WMATA Metrorail system immediately transferred from the FTA to the Commission. The Commission provided its annual report to the Commonwealth on June 29, 2020.*

The BTP developed five major goals for Metrobus improvement:

- 1) Regional Connectivity: Provide high-quality on-street transit options that efficiently and reliably connect people to places and improve mobility.
- 2) Rider Experience: Ensure that a bus is convenient, safe, easy-to-use, and user-centered mobility option.
- 3) Financial Stewardship: Maintain a transit mode that is financially responsible in the long-term.

<sup>35</sup> [WMATA Bus Transformation Project](#)

- 4) Sustainable Economic Health and Access to Opportunity: Encourage vibrant, economically-thriving and sustainable communities through investments in bus.
- 5) Equity: Create a transit system that is affordable and equitable to all users.

### **BLUE/ORANGE/SILVER LINES CAPACITY AND RELIABILITY STUDY**

In FY 2020, WMATA initiated the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines Capacity and Reliability study. WMATA released initial long-term alternatives to address congestion in the Rosslyn Tunnel in early 2019; these alternatives were developed with input from technical and stakeholder committees and extensive passenger surveying during the summer. The six concepts include operational turn backs, a second Rosslyn station, rerouting Blue and Silver Line trains, creating a downtown loop, and several options for a separated Blue or Silver Line. The study is also looking at investments to improve reliability such as shortening signal blocks, upgrading communications equipment, building passing tracks, and returning to Automatic Train Operation. WMATA anticipates completing the study in calendar year 2021.

### **IMPACT OF COVID-19**

As with other public transportation agencies, WMATA's finances were severely impacted by the pandemic. As ridership decreased, so too did fare box revenues. In order to maintain safe and reliable service, WMATA has had to consider service modifications and other measures. Supporting WMATA as it continues to work through such issues to protect this vital service for our workforce and residents of the Capital region remains a top priority for the Commonwealth.

## IX. PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY TO TRANSIT & TDM FUNDING

### MERIT: MAKING EFFICIENT + RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS IN TRANSIT

Chapters 854 and 856 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly created new reforms regarding DRPT's statewide public transportation grant programs. In order to implement these reforms, DRPT created the MERIT program with the following components:



- Statewide capital prioritization
- Statewide performance-based operating assistance
- Urban transit strategic plans<sup>36</sup>

In FY 2021, DRPT expanded MERIT to include technical assistance, demonstration project assistance, the public transportation intern program, TDM operating assistance, mobility, and senior transportation. All programs will have a prioritization and scoring method. Additionally, in preparation for including these programs as part of MERIT, DRPT staff updated its internal grant management system by making changes to its guidelines, handbook, and application process.

#### Statewide Capital Prioritization<sup>37</sup>

The statewide transit capital assistance program is guided by a prioritization and scoring process that allows DRPT to allocate and assign limited resources to investments identified as the most critical. This process favors replacement and rehabilitation projects that help achieve the DRPT policy objective of maintaining existing assets in a “state of good repair,” as well as expansion projects that have the greatest impact on the provision of transit services.

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*In FY 2020, the CTB provided funding for five expansion vehicles, 85 replacement vehicles, and 17 electric vehicles as well as for the rehabilitation for 25 buses. Additionally, the Board is providing funding for 4 major expansion projects, which are all related to Amazon's second headquarters in Crystal City.*

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Under the capital assistance program, projects are prioritized separately under the following categories: state of good repair, minor enhancements, and major expansions. The state of good repair category includes projects that replace or rehabilitate existing transit agency assets. The minor enhancement category includes projects that add capacity, new technology, or customer facilities with either a cost less of than \$2 million or, in the case of a vehicle expansion project, no more than five vehicles or five percent of the existing fleet size, whichever is greater. For both the state of good repair and the minor enhancements categories, the state will provide a match of up to 68 percent of a project's total cost. All projects or programs that receive state capital funding require a four percent local match.

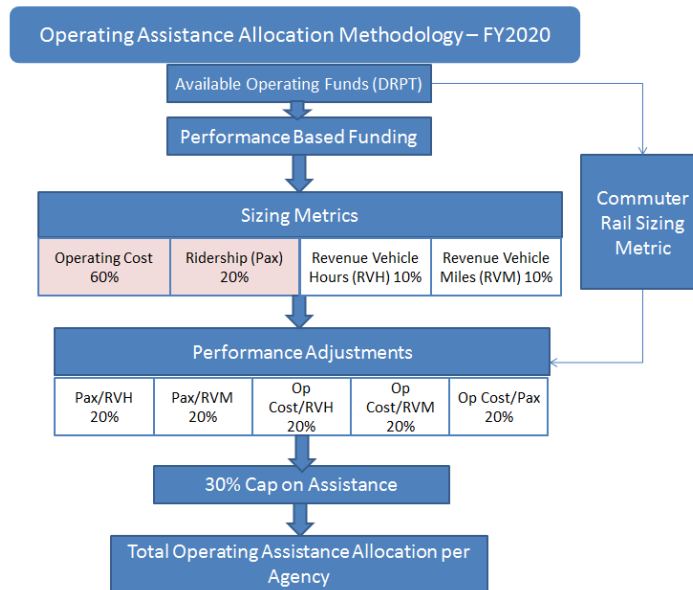
<sup>36</sup> [Additional information about the MERIT program including agency guidance and guidelines can be found on DRPT's website.](#)

<sup>37</sup> To learn more about the development of the MERIT program, please see the 2019 Annual Report.

## Statewide Operating Assistance

The statewide operating assistance program provides funding for eligible operating expenses for all modes of public transportation services throughout the state, including local bus, commuter bus, commuter rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, demand response, paratransit, and ferry services. DRPT follows a performance-based methodology to determine the specific allocation of operating assistance funds to each agency throughout the state. The program funds up to 30 percent of all operating expenses borne by public operators. Overall, 33 of 41 Virginia transit agencies saw an increase in funding for FY 2020 compared to FY 2019.

**Figure 44: Fiscal Year 2020 Statewide Operating Assistance**



Chapters 551 and 567 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly gave the DRPT Director the ability to provide up to \$3 million in supplemental operating funds in FY 2020, or “transition assistance,” if a transit agency lost funding as a direct result of the performance-based allocation process. The following agencies received transition assistance: Charlottesville Area Transit, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia Railway Express, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), and Blacksburg Transit. Some agencies, most notably Hampton Roads Transit, received less funding solely due to the agency’s performance relative to the statewide average. As such, they did not receive transition assistance.

## Urban Transit Strategic Plans

The transit reforms legislation also implemented a requirement that all large urban transit agencies develop a Transit Strategic Plan. These plans are required for agencies that both serve an urbanized area with at least 50,000 people and that operate a fleet of at least 20 buses. These planning documents

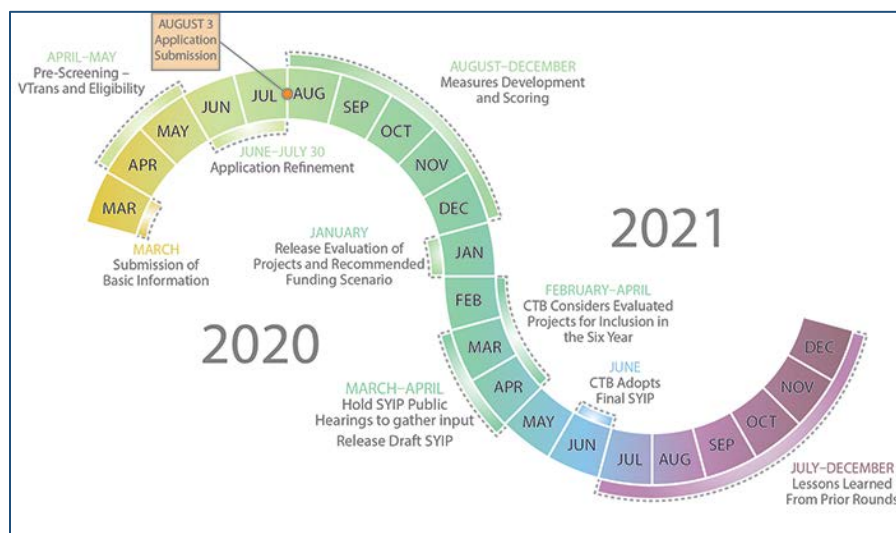
must be updated every five years as a condition of receiving funds from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund.<sup>38</sup>

The TSP’s goal is to create a strategic blueprint outlining desired changes that will improve the provision of transit services throughout each agency’s service area within existing funding structures. This is an opportunity for each agency to look at its system as a blank slate, re-examine the priorities of stakeholders and riders, and make difficult choices concerning where and how to provide services in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The Greater Lynchburg Transit Company and Hampton Roads Transit served as pilot agencies and were the first two to complete their strategic plans.

### SCORING IN SMART SCALE

SMART SCALE provides transportation funding through a prioritization process that evaluates projects based on improvements to safety, congestion, accessibility, land use, economic development, and the environment. DRPT, VDOT, and the Office of Intermodal Planning Investment oversee the development and implementation of the SMART SCALE process.

**Figure 45: Current SMART SCALE Schedule**



As of August 2020, DRPT received 85 applications with transit as a component. Of those, 8 projects had transit as a primary component; and 77 projects had transit as a secondary component. DRPT staff focused its work on assisting transit agencies and local governments with applications. In this development phase, DRPT staff offers policy expertise on multimodal projects and provides technical assistance to localities and transit agencies that apply for funding. DRPT’s SMART SCALE technical assistance includes ridership forecasting, location guidance, cost estimation, data development and analysis, engineering review, and National Environmental Policy Act assistance.

<sup>38</sup> Alexandria (DASH), Arlington Transit, Blacksburg Transit, Charlottesville Area Transit, Fairfax Connector, Fredericksburg Transit, Greater Lynchburg Transit Company, Greater Richmond Transit Company, Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro), Hampton Roads Transit, Loudoun Transit, Petersburg Area Transit, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, Radford Transit, and Williamsburg Area Transit are required to complete an urban transit strategic plan.

Despite increased competition, transit projects continue to compete well through this funding program. Through three rounds, DRPT has administered funding to 32 transit projects; however, SMART SCALE does not provide funding to cover operating costs. Today's expansion projects will be state of good repair projects in the future. The Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund will be used to fund operating costs in the present and anticipated state of good repair projects.



## X. REDUCING SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLE TRAVEL ON HIGHWAYS

### EXPRESS LANES IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

The I-395 Express Lanes, I-66 Inside the Beltway HOT (High-Occupancy Toll) Lanes, and I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes projects will result in major improvements to person throughput in those corridors. Toll revenues are used for both highway and multimodal projects that will aid the users of the transportation network. These enhanced services will provide low-cost and reliable travel options to commuters, remove cars from congested roadways, and help to optimize the transportation network by moving more people.

Figure 46: Express Lanes in Northern Virginia



#### Transform 66-Inside the Beltway



Since December 2017, I-66 between the I-495 Capital Beltway and Rosslyn converts to HOT lanes in the peak travel direction during peak periods.

VDOT manages this tolling system and collects the tolls. When the HOT lanes are active, single occupant vehicles (SOV) pay a variable toll, whereas vehicles with

two or more occupants travel for free. In 2022, that number will increase to three or more occupants when the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes are complete. Toll prices are adjusted to manage demand for the lanes and keep traffic free flowing. When there is more traffic, prices will be higher; when there is less traffic, prices will be lower. The tolling period for eastbound travel is 5:30 - 9:30 a.m. on weekdays and 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. on weekdays for westbound travel.

NVTC administers the I-66 Inside the Beltway Program, which is a set of multi-modal programs funded with the toll revenues. According to NVTC, these projects move an additional 8,300 individuals through

the corridor each day and have reduced almost one million hours of travel delays annually.<sup>39</sup> In 2017, NVTC allocated approximately \$9.8 million for ten transit and TDM projects. Those numbers increased in 2018 to approximately \$12.1 million for 15 projects. Last year, six transit and TDM projects received roughly \$9.0 million in funding.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impact on toll revenues, NVTC elected not to select projects and allocate funding for two years in June 2020 as previously scheduled. NVTC re-evaluated the timing of the approval of the 2020-2021 biannual program and approved a set of projects totaling \$4 million in fall 2020. Additionally, the Commonwealth and NVTC amended their MOA to allow the use of toll revenues from the Transform 66-Inside the Beltway project to support the CTB's sale of up to \$1 billion in bonds that will be used for the Long Bridge and Rosslyn Metro Station projects.<sup>40</sup>

### **Transform 66-Outside the Beltway**

The Commonwealth selected Express Mobility Partners in November 2016 to build new Express Lanes on I-66 Outside the Beltway, between the I-495 Capital Beltway and Gainesville, with the goal of increasing person throughput by highway and transit improvements in this congested corridor.



As part of the agreement, Express Mobility Providers provided an upfront concession payment to the Commonwealth for use on projects that will benefit users of the corridor, including:

- VRE improvements to enhance commuter rail service on the Manassas Line;
- Median widening to accommodate any future westward expansion of WMATA Orange Line;
- Construction of a new commuter parking structure at Fairfax Corner;
- Construction of a new western maintenance and bus storage facility for PRTC; and
- Expansion of bus bays at the East Falls Church WMATA station to accommodate new I-66 commuter buses.

Express Mobility Providers will also provide annual payments to the Commonwealth over the next 50 years to support enhanced bus transit, transportation demand management, and commuter rail services in the corridor.

DRPT completed an update to the I-66 Transit/TDM plan in February 2020.<sup>41</sup> Through this effort, DRPT developed an updated program of transit/TDM services to be funded with the annual dedicated revenues that are available through the Transform 66-Outside the Beltway project concession agreement. The update to the plan also included recommendations to fund additional VRE commuter rail service parallel to the corridor as well as coordination with NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice program, which were not considered in previous planning efforts.

Specifically, the report recommended one additional VRE train along the Manassas Line once the Broad Run expansion is complete. Additionally, after the completion of the Long Bridge project, VRE would be

<sup>39</sup> [NVTC Commuter Choice 2019 Annual Report](#)

<sup>40</sup> For more information, see Section XVI.

<sup>41</sup> [I-66 Corridor Transit & Transportation Demand Management Plan Update](#)

able to add additional peak period trains with 15-minute headways. These services recommended in the updated plan are expected to enhance transportation alternatives and either directly utilize or complement the new Express Lanes in the corridor.

### **I-395 Express Lanes**

In late 2019, VDOT converted the existing eight-mile-long HOV facility on Interstate 395 into an Express Lanes facility, which Transurban operates. Vehicles with three or more occupants travel for free, and vehicles with fewer than three occupants pay a variable toll based on congestion. As part of its agreement with the Commonwealth, Transurban returns a portion of the toll revenues to Virginia as an annual transit payment to fund improvements beneficial to toll payers along the corridor.



Through an MOA with the Commonwealth, beginning in FY 2020, NVTC and PRTC, in consultation with DRPT, jointly developed the I-395 Commuter Choice Program, a biannual program of multimodal improvements funded with the I-395 Annual Transit Payment that must be approved by the CTB. NVTC and PRTC are responsible for ensuring that the projects are completed and that they achieve the promised benefits and for reporting annually on the projects to the CTB. In FY 2020, the I-395 Commuter Choice Program received 17 applications totaling \$31 million with \$22 million available for funding.

The CTB approved the following 10 projects at its October 2020 meeting:

- Arlington County Commuter store at the Pentagon Transit Center
- DASH Enhanced bus service on AT-1 Plus: West End to Van Dorn Metro Station
- DASH Enhanced bus service on AT-9: Mark Center to Potomac Yard
- Fairfax County New bus service to the Pentagon with Gambrill and Backlick North Park and Ride Improvements
- NVRC New TDM Outreach campaign for military families
- Omniride New bus service from Staffordboro to Downtown D.C.
- Omniride Enhanced bus service from Dale City to Ballston
- Omniride Enhanced bus service on Prince William Metro Express: Omniride Transit Center to Franconia-Springfield Metro
- Omniride Enhanced bus service on Route 1 Local: Quantico to Woodbridge VRE
- Omniride New bus service from Staffordboro to the Pentagon

Without question, using toll revenues to support transit has provided relief to some of the Commonwealth's busiest corridors. However, it is important to note that these new and expansion projects will one day become state of good repair projects whose repair and/or replacement will need to be funded out of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund.

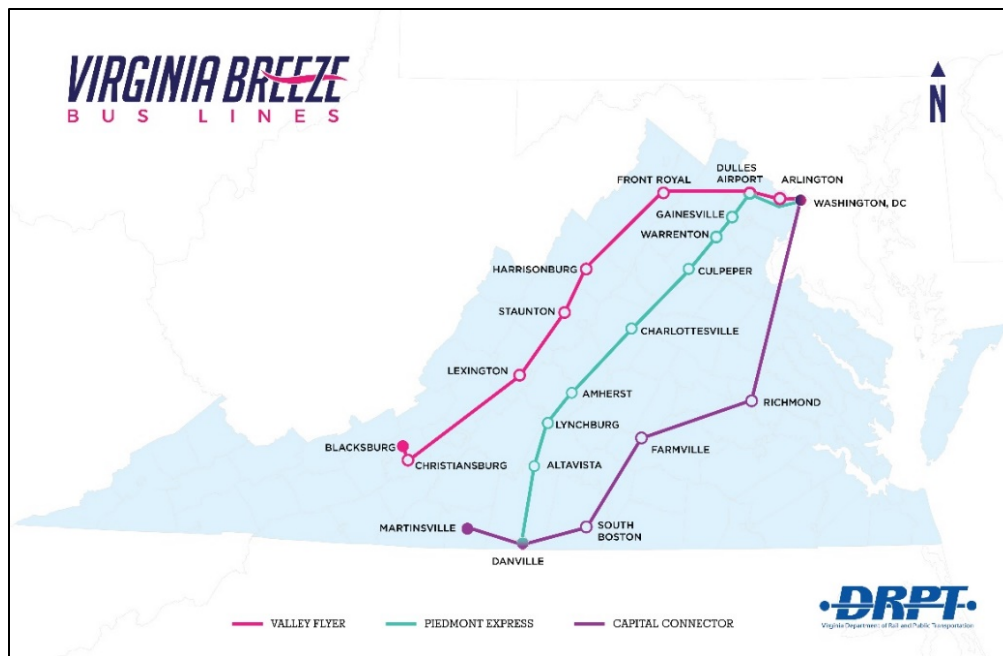
## VIRGINIA BREEZE INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

Intercity bus service provides limited service between two or more urban areas not in close proximity, and it operates on a regularly scheduled fixed-route service. It is available to the general public and their luggage while

providing meaningful connections to the national intercity bus network. The goal of intercity bus service is to connect underserved communities, such as households without vehicles, students, the elderly, and the disabled, to interregional bus, rail, and air travel. It also provides travel options in corridors where alternatives to the personal vehicle are limited or do not exist as well as supplement service or private providers.



Figure 47: Virginia Breeze Service



### The Valley Flyer

The Virginia Breeze program launched on December 1, 2017, providing daily service between Blacksburg and Washington D.C., connecting a crucial transportation artery for the Commonwealth. This route has stops in Christiansburg, Lexington, Staunton, Harrisonburg, Front Royal, Dulles Airport, and Arlington. It also provides connections to local transit service in Blacksburg, Staunton, Harrisonburg, and Arlington. In FY 2020, the Virginia Breeze program named this route “The Valley Flyer.”

The Valley Flyer surpassed expectations on every level from on-time performance, total ridership, and farebox recovery. In FY 2020, DRPT began to track on-time performance of the Virginia Breeze Bus Lines recognizing the significance of this service adhering to its schedule. The route’s on-time performance from July 2019 to March 2020 averaged 82 percent. Also, farebox recovery from March 2019 to March 2020 was 79 percent with the remainder funded through FTA 5311 funds.

## Piedmont Express & Capital Connector

DRPT recognized the continued need for connecting other underserved segments and began a study in FY 2019 to determine the unmet intercity travel need by identifying potential routes for expansion. Once DRPT identified these rural communities, work began to determine optimal placement of bus stops. This process involved collaborating with local government representatives, planning commissions, and transit agencies. DRPT considered many factors when selecting sites for stopping, including safety, timing, access, and parking. Passenger safety remains the primary objective for this service, so considerations of ample lighting and access to shelter weighed heavily in this decision. Timing of routes is also an important consideration. Locations selected provided access to communities while not diverting routes from primary corridors. DRPT also recognized that parking does play an important role in someone's decision to take an intercity bus and such considerations were made when choosing sites. As a result of this study, DRPT unveiled two additional routes for the Virginia Breeze Bus Lines that began service on August 7, 2020.

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*DRPT, in cooperation with the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment and VDOT, studied the entire length of the Interstate 81 corridor in Virginia and resulted in the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan.*

*The plan identified a \$2 billion package of transportation projects for the corridor and identified a need to invest in multimodal improvements benefitting the corridor. Through a cooperative process involving OIPI, the railroad industry, intercity bus operators, and others, DRPT is developing specific multimodal recommendations for increased passenger rail service, intercity bus service, and freight rail improvements that may be funded by the plan.*

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The Piedmont Express is a solution for the underserved US 29 corridor connecting Danville to Washington, D.C. This route provides roundtrip service once daily with stops in Danville, Altavista, Lynchburg, Amherst, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Warrenton, Gainesville, Dulles Airport, and Union Station.

The Capital Connector reestablishes intercity bus service to Martinsville to Richmond. This route provides daily trips with stops in Martinsville, Danville, South Boston, Farmville, and Richmond. This route also provides express service from Richmond to Washington, D.C., stopping at Union Station.

Service on the Piedmont Express and Capital Connector routes began on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

## TELEWORK!VA

Telework!VA was launched in 2001 by DRPT for the purpose of reducing traffic congestion by encouraging and assisting businesses with the development and implementation of telework programs.

Telework!VA provides businesses with free technical assistance, comprehensive in-person or virtual consultations, and program evaluation with DRPT's telework experts.



Technical assistance includes facilitation with implementation and management of their telework program, including assessing positions for telework, surveying managers and employees, developing a

telework policy, creating employee telework agreements, reviewing technological requirements, training supervisors to successfully manage teleworkers, and training employees to be productive teleworkers. Telework!VA's technical assistance to businesses is provided by DRPT's experienced staff and a contractor that is a national leader and expert in the telework field. This assistance is free to businesses throughout Virginia.

A variety of free online resources, tips, information, and the latest news are provided for businesses, managers, and teleworkers on the Telework!VA website [teleworkva.org](http://teleworkva.org). In FY 2020, DRPT began a redesign and enhancement of the website and content to benefit user experience.

## VANPOOL!VA

Each year, DRPT provides funding to local governments, transit agencies and other local agencies to form new vanpools and assist existing vanpools when needed. The Commonwealth's assistance with vanpooling can be considered a public-private partnership. Vanpools are owned and operated by private entities, and the drivers are commuter volunteers. The full cost of vanpool operations are paid for by the riders. Public funds are only used to help start a vanpool, to assist a vanpool when it loses riders, and to provide a monthly stipend to collect operating data from the private vanpool company.



DRPT's vanpool assistance is provided through its statewide Vanpool!VA program. Through Vanpool!VA, vanpooling is encouraged as an option for long commutes where transit is not available. The Vanpool!VA website, <http://vanpoolva.org/>, serves as a one-stop information portal for vanpooling. The website serves the public, vanpool operators, commuter assistance program operators, and transit agencies. DRPT also developed and implemented a statewide promotional campaign to educate the public on the benefits of vanpooling and how vanpooling works. Commuter assistance programs can use the marketing and branding materials developed by DRPT for local, targeted marketing of vanpools.

## XI. INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN TRANSIT & TDM

Public transit is rapidly transforming due to the emergence of innovative technologies and services. New alternative transportation services continue to evolve, providing travelers with greater convenience in requesting, tracking, and paying for trips. Data is used to analyze how people move in and around our communities. The advancement of new technologies, such as electric buses, driver assistance systems, and autonomous vehicles, is giving transit agencies the ability to provide cleaner, safer, and more cost-efficient service and additional mobility options. The emergence of these services and technologies is drastically changing the mobility landscape.

### STATEWIDE INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLAN

Understanding the importance of emerging technologies and services, DRPT developed a Statewide Integrated Mobility Plan in FY 2019. This plan explored the evolving paradigm of integrated mobility, the relationship between transit and other shared mobility modes of travel, and how technology can enhance this relationship. This initiative assessed the potential for partnerships between transit agencies and shared mobility providers, which could include first/last mile connection services, mobile app or fare payment integration, shared branding, data-sharing agreements, third-party contracting or reservation mechanisms and others. The Statewide Integrated Mobility Plan recommendations guided work in FY 2020 including revisions to DRPT's Technical Assistance and Demonstration grant programs to allow for more innovation and technology projects, FTA grant projects exploring microtransit and Software-as-a-Service models, and continued work in automated and connected vehicle pilots throughout the state.

### ELECTRIC BUSES

In FY 2019, Governor Northam announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia would invest a portion of the \$93.6 million in Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust (VW Trust) funding to replace older diesel transit buses with battery-powered electric transit buses through a new Clean Transportation Voucher Program.

This program was implemented as part of MERIT, which prioritizes transit projects based on an objective scoring rubric. Following a comprehensive review and analysis of funding requests, DRPT announced more than \$12 million in VW Trust and state transit capital funds to three agencies: Hampton Roads Transit, Alexandria (DASH), and Blacksburg Transit.

The buses awarded in FY20 will be delivered on the following timelines:

- Hampton Roads Transit was awarded \$3.9 million with delivery in fall 2020;
- Alexandria (DASH) was awarded \$5.1 million with delivery in fall 2020;
- Blacksburg Transit was awarded \$3.3 million with delivery in fall 2020.

### AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE PILOTS

As the shared mobility ecosystem expands, DRPT recognizes the value of supporting pilots and programs for autonomous transit vehicles and innovative technology deployments with a variety of partner agencies in Virginia. DRPT is actively engaged in two pilot projects and will evaluate the performance of these pilots and programs to best identify resources and service models for implementation.

## Connected Autonomous Vehicle Shuttle Pilot



DRPT awarded Fairfax County a \$250,000 demonstration grant for testing driverless technology. This project will develop proof of concept for a first/last mile connection from a WMATA metro station to a mixed-use development with potential to expand service into a medical campus in later phases. Relay, the all-electric, self-driving, autonomous shared-ride shuttle, will provide service between the Dunn Loring Metro station and the Mosaic District. The goal of the pilot is to learn about the various aspects of deploying autonomous vehicles as part of a large

public transportation system. Major partners and stakeholders include Dominion Energy, VDOT, Fairfax County, and DRPT. The shuttle began testing in summer 2020 with service starting in late 2020 once infrastructure has been installed along the service route and all required training has been conducted.

## DRIVER ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS (DAS) PILOT

Initiated in December 2017, DRPT executed a statewide procurement contract with Rosco Collision Avoidance Inc. to secure a pedestrian collision avoidance system that could be retrofitted to existing transit vehicles and provide operators real-time alerts on pedestrians and bicyclists in the transit vehicle's forward facing blind spots. These systems include a heads-up display that provides varying scales of audio and visual alerts to assist the operator in improving safety and operations of the vehicle. Data collected by the systems provide various reports such as hotspots for pedestrians or incidents with transit vehicles. DRPT recently completed a demonstration pilot for 50 transit vehicles, operated by nine agencies, throughout the Commonwealth to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the Mobileye Shield+ system in a variety of geographic service areas and fleet sizes. Evaluation is currently underway in partnership with the Virginia Transportation Research Council. The statewide contract has been renewed and updated with the newest model of the Mobileye Shield+ system, which includes nighttime detection capabilities and 4G technology.

## REGIONAL MULTI-MODAL MOBILITY PROGRAM (RM3P)

Titled the Northern Virginia Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) initiative, this collaborative program aims to improve safety, mobility, and reliability for travelers in Northern Virginia. The program was jointly launched by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), VDOT, and DRPT and builds on prior studies involving multi-modal corridor planning on the East-West Corridor, with I-66 as its anchor, and on the North-South Corridor, with I-95/395 at its center. RM3P will implement key foundational technologies intended to optimize performance of the existing transportation infrastructure, enhance travel-time reliability for regional commuters, and support on-demand, multi-modal trip options/choices for travelers. Five program elements comprise the program – a data lake, artificial intelligence-based decision support system, commuter parking information system, mobility gap dashboard, and dynamic incentivization. The first phase of the program is set to be completed by early 2021 with the procurement of technology solutions for each program element.

## INTEGRATED MOBILITY INNOVATION (IMI) AND MOBILITY FOR ALL (M4A) GRANTS

FTA awarded DRPT two grants totaling \$239,000 in spring 2020. Designed to improve access to public transportation through the use of technology, both programs are part of a limited number of competitive, discretionary funding opportunities across the United States. The Mobility for All grant is a



\$79,000 award to develop a new statewide *TransportationNavigator* website. DRPT is collaborating with *VirginiaNavigator*, a Chesterfield County based non-profit that provides free, statewide resource information associated with aging, disabilities, post-military life, and overall well-being. The online resource will be available to all Virginians as a tool to view at a glance which transportation options are available in their area. DRPT will use data collected through *TransportationNavigator* to significantly improve transit service coordination and communication in rural and small urban areas.

The Integrated Mobility Innovation grant is a \$160,000 award to fund two pilot projects designed to determine whether a technology-driven solution results in a more efficient way to deliver transit service in rural areas. The solution will be an Information Technology-based multi-passenger transportation service, known as microtransit, to enable passengers to use dynamically-generated routes to make their way to and from common pick-up or drop-off points. DRPT will be working in collaboration with its local partners at Bay Transit of Gloucester and Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) of Wise, and plans will be coordinated with the Office of Innovation and the Virginia Transportation Research Council.

## USING TDM TECHNOLOGY TO CHANGE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

For some, taking the bus is the first choice when it comes to selecting a travel mode to work. For many, however, driving alone is the natural choice. Many drive alone because they have limited options, others do not know they have options, and others just need a little nudge to try another option. Technology can be a useful tool to help commuters discover their options and reward them when they are not a single-occupant vehicle (SOV).

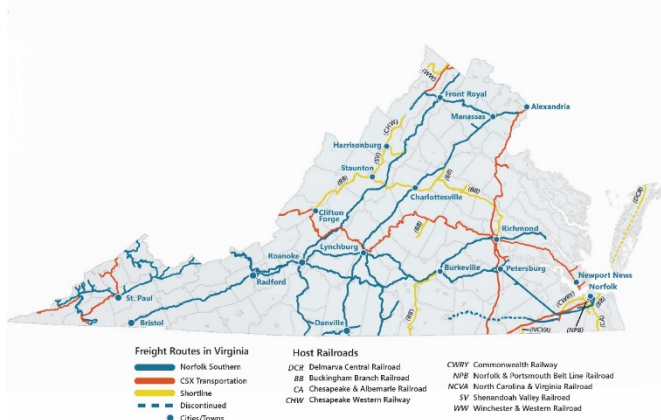


DRPT provides the public and commuter assistance programs serving the Middle Peninsula, Central, Southeast, and Southwest Virginia with a state-of-the-art TDM system from Agile Mile that helps reduce SOV travel. The system is provided to the public through DRPT's Commute!VA and through the local commuter assistance program websites and mobile apps. It can be used for real-time and planned trips and shows all commute modes (e.g., bus, carpool, vanpool) available to the user. A dashboard provides the commuter with a variety of valuable reporting metrics, including trips taken, miles reduced, and emissions prevented.

Additionally, the new ridematching system provides rewards for commuters that carpool, vanpool, use transit, bicycle, and telework. Commuters using the new service can earn points for tracking their greener trips, which can be redeemed for rewards, such as discounts at select retailers, restaurants, entertainment, attractions, and more.

During FY 2021, DRPT plans to add a statewide mobile app, an enhanced Commute!VA website, and expand the system to other parts of Virginia.

## XII. STRENGTHENING VIRGINIA'S FREIGHT RAIL NETWORK

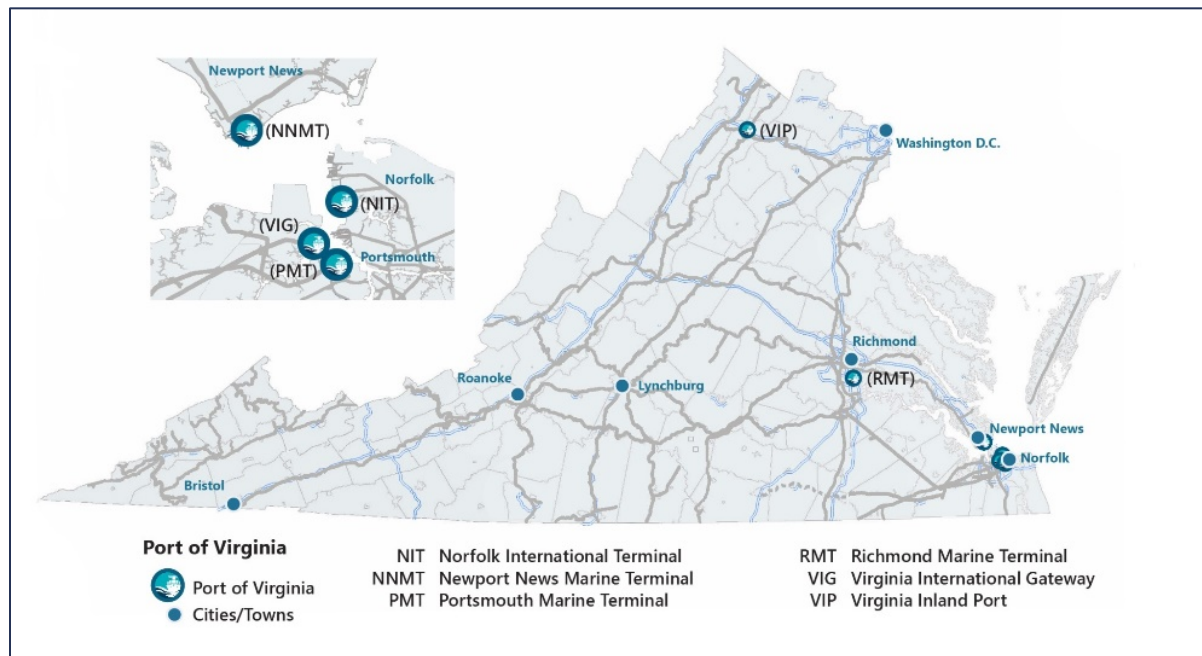


Virginia's rail system includes approximately 3,000 miles of rail lines operated by 11 freight railroads – two Class I railroads and nine shortline railroads. Class I railroads are defined as those railroads that have an annual carrier operating revenue of more than \$250 million (1991 dollars). While there are seven Class I railroads operating in the United States and Canada, CSX and Norfolk Southern are the only Class I providers in the Commonwealth. Additionally, several shortline railroads operate in Virginia. The next several sections

highlight some of DRPT's key activities in FY 2020 to strengthen the freight rail network in the Commonwealth.

## MOVING GOODS FROM THE PORT OF VIRGINIA

Figure 48: Port of Virginia Facilities throughout the Commonwealth



The REF program invested significant funding to improve rail throughput to the various ports operated by the Virginia Port Authority. Within the FY 2020 SYIP, the REF program committed approximately \$50 million, with over \$20 million in matching funds.

These commitments expand rail terminal capacity at Norfolk International Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port, as well as multiple capacity improvements to the rail lines serving these ports and the Virginia International Gateway.

## WORKING WITH NORFOLK SOUTHERN

REF also takes a statewide approach, with several investments in the Norfolk Southern network, including additional capacity and tunnel clearances in Southwest Virginia; speed improvements along the passenger line serving Lynchburg, Charlottesville, and Alexandria; and strategic economic development investments to better serve Virginia business with rail service and connectivity.

In total, the REF program committed over \$60 million to the Norfolk Southern network in the FY 2020 SYIP.

## WORKING WITH CSX

The Commonwealth has had a long-term working relationship with Class I railroad CSX. In December 2019, Governor Northam announced a \$3.7 billion agreement with CSX that will have significant benefits for Virginia. By allowing for the separation of freight and passenger rail in the future along the I-95 corridor, this program of projects not only will improve passenger rail service but also will strengthen the freight rail network by eliminating conflict between freight and passenger rail services.

## IMPROVING THE SHORTLINE NETWORK

In the FY 2020-2025 SYIP, DRPT allocated funding to the following types of projects within the Commonwealth's shortline network.

DRPT works with the following nine shortline railroads that currently operate in Virginia.

### Virginia Shortline Railroads:



Buckingham Branch



Chesapeake & Albemarle



Chesapeake Western



Commonwealth Railway



Delmarva



North Carolina & Virginia



Winchester & Western



Norfolk & Portsmouth  
Belt Line



Shenandoah Valley

Figure 49: Rail Preservation Fund Project Types

### Track and Surface Improvements

- Ballast and aligning track geometry

### Rail and Tie Replacement

- Programmatic tie and rail replacement to maintain Track 2 Safety Standards

### Bridge Upgrades

- Programmatic upgrades and repairs to maintain Track 2 Safety Standards as well as 286 K capacity

### Yard Upgrades and Improvements

- Upgrades, improvements, and expansions to ease congestion

### Transload Facilities

- Rehabilitation of existing transload facilities and construction of tracks and facilities for new expansion projects

### Tunnel Upgrades

- Replacement of ties and rail in tunnels as well as removal of Plate F restrictions

### Sliding and Turnouts

- Lengthening of existing sidings as well as construction of new sidings to ease congestion and maintain time schedules on lines with passenger rail

### Crossing Rehabilitation

- Upgrade and programmatic rehabilitation of highway and rail crossings

In November 2020, the CTB implemented a new prioritization process for the allocation of funding to Virginia's shortlines beginning in FY 2021. This process will focus on program goals, state initiatives, cost effectiveness, and applicant priority when determining allocations.

## USING THE RIA FUND TO MOVE FREIGHT

Through the RIA Fund, DRPT works with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the local economic development departments to award funding to industrial sites for economic development purposes and to ensure that companies are aware of the RIA program as a potential incentive to locate or expand operations. In FY 2019 and 2020, DRPT awarded funding for four projects.

### ARREFF Terminals, Inc.

On July 17, 2019, the CTB awarded \$140,000 in RIA funds for this project. ARREFF Terminals, Inc. is an agricultural product transloading and bagging facility located in Norfolk, Virginia. This new facility will



serve the Port of Virginia, Norfolk International Terminals. ARREFF committed to approximately 1,500 rail carloads per year. AAREFF invested \$3 million in capital, which includes a new rail spur with connection to shortline railroad Norfolk, and Portsmouth Belt Line. The facility will generate 12 new jobs.

#### **Phoenix Packaging Operations, LLC**

On February 19, 2020, the CTB awarded \$450,000 in RIA funds for this project. Phoenix Packaging Operations, LLC, designs and manufactures rigid packaging solutions for commercial food and beverages, healthcare, and disposable consumer product industries and is located in Pulaski County, Virginia. This facility will serve national and international markets and will ship through the Port of Virginia. Phoenix committed to approximately 296 rail carloads per year. The company invested \$30 million in capital, which includes

extension of an existing rail spur and construction of a new rail spur with connection to Norfolk Southern Railroad, as well as a new 176,000-square-foot warehouse and manufacturing facility. The facility will generate 145 new jobs.

#### **Superb Solutions For You, Inc.**

The CTB awarded \$230,810 in RIA funds on December 5, 2018, for this project. Superb Solutions For You, Inc., is a start-up water treatment chemical company located in Waverly, Virginia (County of Sussex). The facility committed to approximately 260 rail carloads per year and help divert inbound and outbound truck traffic from secondary roads and highways. Superb has invested approximately \$2.3 million in capital, which includes track rehabilitation with connection to the Norfolk Southern mainline and the purchase of an existing industrial facility. The business will generate 25 new jobs.

#### **InterChange Cold Storage, LLC**

On June 19, 2019, the CTB awarded \$450,000 in RIA funds for this project. InterChange Cold Storage, LLC, is a semi-automated cold storage distribution facility located in Rockingham County. This new facility will serve area manufacturers as well as the Port of Virginia. The facility committed to approximately 104 rail carloads per year with an anticipated increase after buildout of the facility allows for additional rail users. Interchange has invested approximately \$41.6 million in capital, which includes a new rail spur with connection to shortline railroad Shenandoah Valley Railroad. The facility will generate 88 new jobs.

### XIII. ENHANCING HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION

The purpose of human service transportation is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. DRPT is the state agency responsible for distributing federal and state funding allocations to human service providers. The program provides funding for the following:

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*In FY 2020, DRPT awarded funding for 141 accessible vehicles to Virginia agencies. DRPT also provided approximately \$2.8 million in federal and state funding for operating, capital, and mobility management support as well as \$167,000 for senior transportation grants to ten agencies.*

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- Accessible vehicles for public agencies and private non-profit agencies that are transporting seniors or individuals with disabilities; and
- Operating expenditures to enhance paratransit beyond the minimum requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This includes expansion of service hours, days, and areas; alternatives to public transportation; and voucher programs.

From July 1, 2020, through February 29, 2020, human service transportation provided 1,101,760 trips.



DRPT, in FY 2020, awarded a capital grant totaling \$127,000 to Hanover County. There is no public transportation service in Hanover, which is home to many senior or disabled residents who lack access to medical and other personal services. A volunteer non-profit organization that Hanover supports has been providing rides since 2013, but has been unable to meet the demand for trips. Hanover has implemented a turnkey, point-to-point transportation service with accessible vehicles to meet the needs of its residents. Under the new program, Hanover residents are eligible for trips to or from locations within Hanover County and a

seven-mile radius around the county. The seven-mile radius includes parts of Spotsylvania, Louisa, Caroline, Goochland, King William, New Kent, and Henrico counties, the City of Richmond, and ten major hospitals within these localities. Hanover County began this service in December 2019.

## XIV. PROVIDING OVERSIGHT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

### RAIL STATE SAFETY OVERSIGHT<sup>42</sup>



DRPT is the designated Rail State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The state safety oversight agency's core mission is the continuous verification that a rail transit agency is carrying out its documented programs that are in place to ensure the safety of its passengers and its employees. The rail fixed guideway system DRPT oversees is the Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) Tide light rail system in Norfolk, Virginia.

DRPT's Transit Rail Safety and Emergency Management Administrator administers DRPT's state safety oversight program with support from contracted consultant staff who are subject matter experts in fields such as train signaling, civil engineering, and rail operations. The budget for the state safety oversight program is funded by FTA dedicated formula grants that are matched with DRPT administrative funds.

In its oversight role, DRPT:

- Conducts audits and inspections (both announced and unannounced) of the Tide system
- Reviews and adopts accident, incident, and hazard investigations
- Tracks and verifies HRT's progress in correcting safety and security gaps on its light rail system

#### January-December 2019 Program Highlights<sup>43</sup>

##### Triennial Audits

- March – HRT Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan(s) and programs
- September – Light rail vehicle maintenance, shop safety, and associated training

##### Inspections (announced and unannounced)

- Operator rule compliance, grade crossing checks, and riding observations
- Tide rail vehicle maintenance, train control maintenance, and shop safety
- Tide track and electrical power maintenance activities and shop safety
- Tide operations including rule compliance, fitness for duty, and drug and alcohol programs

##### Accident notification and investigations (all investigations and reports adopted by DRPT)

- Three (3) collisions were the fault of drivers in privately owned vehicles
- Two (2) collisions with objects in the Tide light rail vehicle maintenance shop were the result of HRT personnel rule violations

<sup>42</sup> For additional information about DRPT's State Safety Oversight Program, please visit <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/about/state-safety-oversight/>.

<sup>43</sup> DRPT State Safety Oversight Program reports its findings based on the calendar year, not the fiscal year. This section reflects that difference.

## Federal Regulatory Compliance

DRPT continues to work with HRT on compliance with new FTA regulations, 49 CFR 673 and 672. These regulations pertain to safety training requirements, implementation of Safety Management Systems, and development of HRT's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). Once approved by DRPT, the PTASP will replace the current System Safety Program Plan.

## STATEWIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN

DRPT completed the first Statewide Public Transportation Safety Plan (PTASP) for Tier II Small Public Transportation Providers in the Commonwealth. The plan was developed in collaboration with 15 small transit agencies and included extensive outreach and field visits to each agency.<sup>44</sup> The Tier II PTASP was completed in July 2020 and met the originally scheduled compliance deadline established by the FTA.

The Comprehensive Safety plan outlines the Safety Management Systems (SMS) programs and safety performance targets for the participating small transit agencies. The Plan provides a flexible framework that Virginia's small transit agencies will utilize to deliver transit services in a safe and efficient manner. Safety targets established in the plan will be incorporated into Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Plans and Constrained Long-Range Plans. The safety plan and related safety performance targets will be reviewed by DRPT and transit agencies on an annual basis.

FTA now requires PTSAPs for certain operators of public transportation systems that receive federal funds under FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Grants to develop and maintain safety plans that include the processes and procedures to implement Safety Management Systems (SMS) along with a set of safety-related performance targets. The requirements specify that states are responsible for taking a lead role in developing PTASPs for smaller transit agencies which do not operate rail fixed guideway transit or have fewer than 100 vehicles in peak revenue service (Tier II). Larger Tier I agencies that operate fixed guideway rail transit or have over 1,010 vehicles in peak revenue service are required to develop their own PTASPs. In the Commonwealth, Greater Richmond Transit Company, Hampton Roads Transit, and Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission have developed their own Tier I PTASPs.

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<sup>44</sup> These 15 agencies are: BRITE, Bristol Transit, Charlottesville Area Transit, Fredericksburg Regional Transit, Greater Lynchburg Transit Company, Greater Roanoke Transit Company, City of Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation, JAUNT, District Three/Mountain Lynx Transit, Petersburg Area Transit, Radford Transit, Suffolk Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, and Winchester Transit.



## XV. PROMOTING RAIL, TDM, AND TRANSIT

DRPT leads the Commonwealth in promoting multimodal transportation options. These promotions are designed to raise awareness and encourage the use of commute options such as transit, biking, and telework. DRPT partners with transit agencies and agencies that receive grants from DRPT to operate commuter assistance programs to expand the reach of annual promotions.

### CELEBRATE TRANSPORTATION DAY

During its 2018 session, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that designates the Thursday before Memorial Day each year as Celebrate Transportation Day in Virginia. DRPT joined VDOT, Department of Aviation, Department of Motor Vehicles, Port of Virginia, and Commercial Space Flight Authority to honor heroes of the transportation industry and provide online activities for K-12 students. Activities and profiles of transportation heroes were provided through the Celebrate Transportation Day website, [transpodayva.org](http://transpodayva.org).

### TELEWORK WEEK

The first full week in March is designated Virginia Telework Week. In 2020, DRPT conducted its tenth annual Virginia Telework Week campaign. In addition to conducting a statewide promotion, DRPT coordinates local promotions of the benefits of telework and Telework Week with local commuter assistance programs. Telework Week encourages businesses across Virginia to establish a formal or pilot telework program and allow qualifying employees to work from home at least one day during Telework Week. Businesses are encouraged to contact DRPT to receive free expert assistance to establish a telework program for their employees. Telework resources for businesses, managers, and employees are available on DRPT's [teleworkva.org](http://teleworkva.org) website.

### TRY TRANSIT WEEK

Held during the third week of September, Try Transit Week promotes all forms of transit—bus, rail, ferry, and vanpool. To raise awareness and to encourage public participation, DRPT holds a contest through which the Grand Prize winner receives one year of free rides on transit and two round-trip tickets on Amtrak. DRPT conducts statewide marketing and partners with transit and commuter assistance program operators to promote Try Transit Week locally. Over the past few years, many transit operators have donated bus passes for DRPT to hold local prize drawings. The public can enter the contest by going to [www.trytransitweek.org](http://www.trytransitweek.org) and completing a form pledging to try transit.



### MARKETING AMTRAK VIRGINIA

FY 2020 was a big year for Amtrak in Virginia. Listening to consumers through qualitative and quantitative research, Amtrak used its findings to improve marketing and outreach efforts.

#### Marketing Action Based on Research Finding

*Target:* Focus investments on reaching the leisure traveler. Target specialized messaging and media efforts to reach the commuting business traveler.

*Benefits:* Prioritize benefits of skipping traffic, relaxation, ease, and train travel perks (i.e., device connectivity, comfortable seats, scenery) in messaging.

*Barriers:* Focus on destinations that are universally desirable (e.g., D.C., NYC). Create new discounts for Virginians and promote them. Partner with Lyft to offer a valuable last-mile solution. Lean into the romance of train travel in creative messaging. Continue to improve reliability, schedules, and routes (i.e., Norfolk II, CSX deal)

*Awareness:* Increase media spend and continuously review and improve marketing efforts. Increase sponsorships and media relations investment. Communicate DRPT's mission and service plan.



## **Discounts**

*Saver Fare:* Book travel at least 14 days in advance to save 25 percent. While consumer research was in field, Amtrak began running digital advertising promoting the Saver Fare, the most valuable discount proving Amtrak's "value for my money." Messaging focused on the discount, destinations, train benefits and travel occasions. Geo-targeted media to Virginia stations with state-sponsored service via search, social, and digital advertising. Creative leveraging of existing photography and stock imagery.

*Virginia Anytime Fare:* In research, economic forecasting revealed a 15 percent off intra-Virginia discount could increase ridership (+6.1 percent) without significantly impacting revenue (-1.3 percent). As a result, DRPT instated the 15 percent off intra-Virginia discount. The discount was branded as the *Virginia Anytime Fare* and was launched with refreshed advertising to promote the new discount through digital advertising, rush hour radio, and highway billboards. Messaging focused on the savings and train benefits.

*Targeting Business Riders:* Business-targeted media ran online, targeting D.C. commuters in Richmond and Hampton Roads. Messaging promoted the *Virginia Anytime Fare* and business travel benefits of riding the train.

*Virginia Student Fare:* As another valuable incentive for Virginia riders, DRPT introduced a 25 percent off discount for students. The discount was branded the *Virginia Student Fare* and promoted through advertising with Virginia Commonwealth University, media relations with colleges in Virginia, and information at sponsored events.

*Flash Sales:* Various flash sales were promoted with digital advertising throughout the year, primarily picking up creative from National due to short lead times. Discounts ranged from 30 percent off to Buy One, Get One (BOGO).

*10-Year Anniversary Fare:* Celebrating 10 years of state-sponsored Amtrak service, DRPT gave Virginians the \$10 Amtrak fare for travel Oct 1-10 in Virginia and Washington, DC. The \$10 price point was an opportunity to drive travel and as well as communicate DRPT's mission, which consumer research indicated increases consideration of Amtrak. The deal was announced at an anniversary press

conference at Main Street Station, was promoted online and through a partnership with tourism agencies, and gained earned-media attention.

### **Sponsorship and Partnerships**

*Sponsored Events:* Amtrak sponsored popular Virginia events attracting the leisure target audience in Richmond, Hampton Roads, and Roanoke.

*Amtrak at Events:* Amtrak showed up at the events on site and through event communications. It delivered a memorable brand experience to consumers while also educating about service and discounts in Virginia. Through ticket giveaways, more than 2,000 email addresses were collected from Virginians interested in Amtrak, which will be used for ongoing email marketing.

*College Sponsorships:* Amtrak sponsored UVA Athletics and VCU Athletics as a platform to engage students, alumni, and fans. Marketing included digital advertising, emails, radio, and in-game promotions.

*Lyft Partnerships:* As a solution to the first/last mile pain point seen in consumer research, Amtrak partnered with Lyft to offer 50 percent off Lyft rides to/from Richmond Amtrak stations. With the success of this test, the partnership expanded statewide for the summer travel period at 25 percent off. The partnership received a completely positive response on social media and the promotion had nearly 100 redemptions, which Lyft considered a success.

*Rail Industry Day:* Rail Industry Day served as an informational gathering following the announcement of DRPT's Rail Expansion project. Engineering, architecture, and transportation firms joined to learn more about DRPT's rail expansion project. The purpose of Rail Industry Day was to create awareness, provide information, and offer a Q&A session.

*Hometown Heroes Chili Cookoff:* On March 8, 2020, Radio One Richmond hosted the Hometown Heroes Chili Cook-Off. Several individuals competed in a chili cook-off judged by veterans, police officers, and fire fighters. The Grand Prize winner received two round-trip Amtrak Northeast Regional train tickets and several other prizes. This opportunity also served as a way to educate participants on train benefits, such as skipping highway traffic, relaxing in comfortable seats with extra legroom, and staying connected with free WiFi. Valuable discounts were also shared, such as the *Saver Fare*, the *Virginia Anytime Fare*, and our 10 percent discount for military personnel.

### **Owned Media**

*Social Media:* Ongoing social media included organic content posts and comment monitoring on Amtrak Virginia's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Social platforms are used to inspire train travel and educate about discounts, perks, destinations, and Virginia passenger rail news. Beautiful imagery of trains and train stations capture our audience's attention. On Facebook, rail news has high engagement.

*Refreshed Website:* The website was refreshed with imagery and copy on the Amtrak Virginia site with the launch of the new creative campaign, "Where to, Virginia?" The page educates Virginians on discounts, destinations, and benefits, and explains DRPT's mission to the general public consumer. Note: digital advertising drives to this landing page.

*Ongoing Amtrak Guest Rewards E-mails:* Virginia-specific messaging in Amtrak Guest Rewards (AGR) e-statements was monthly to 145,000 AGR members who list a Virginia station as their home station.

## MARKETING THE VIRGINIA BREEZE



In FY 2020, the Virginia Breeze launched a new marketing campaign “Connecting the Commonwealth,” renamed the Valley Flyer, which provides daily service between the New River Valley and Washington, D.C., and launched two additional routes in August 2020: Piedmont Express, providing daily service between Danville to Washington, D.C., and the Capital Connector, connecting Martinsville to Richmond and Washington, D.C.

The marketing campaign, through a combination of organic social content, community partnerships, and promotional materials, established the route as a sustainable and viable service. Numbers surpassed the first and second-year ridership projections and revenue forecasts, despite the service not operating from April 5 through June 30, 2020, due to markedly lower demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Virginia Breeze adopted new branding in FY 2020, reflecting the bus line’s mission of connecting communities throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. The new logo and bus wraps use vibrant and modern color and typography embodying the movement and speed of transportation.

## XVI. LOOKING AHEAD

### FISCAL YEAR 2021 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The 2020 General Assembly passed an omnibus transportation bill that increased transportation funding, committed to a truly multimodal transportation system, and created the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and Transit Ridership Incentive Program. Additionally, the General Assembly passed legislation creating the Central Virginia Transportation Authority and the Hampton Roads Transit Regional Transit Program.

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*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly passed legislation during its April 2020 Reconvened Session allowing for the delay of the FY 2021 Six-Year Improvement Plan. The FY 2020 Plan will remain in place until further notice.*

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Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn and Majority Leader Dick Saslaw introduced the omnibus transportation bill, House Bill 1414 and Senate Bill 890, making the following changes to statewide tax revenues for transportation:

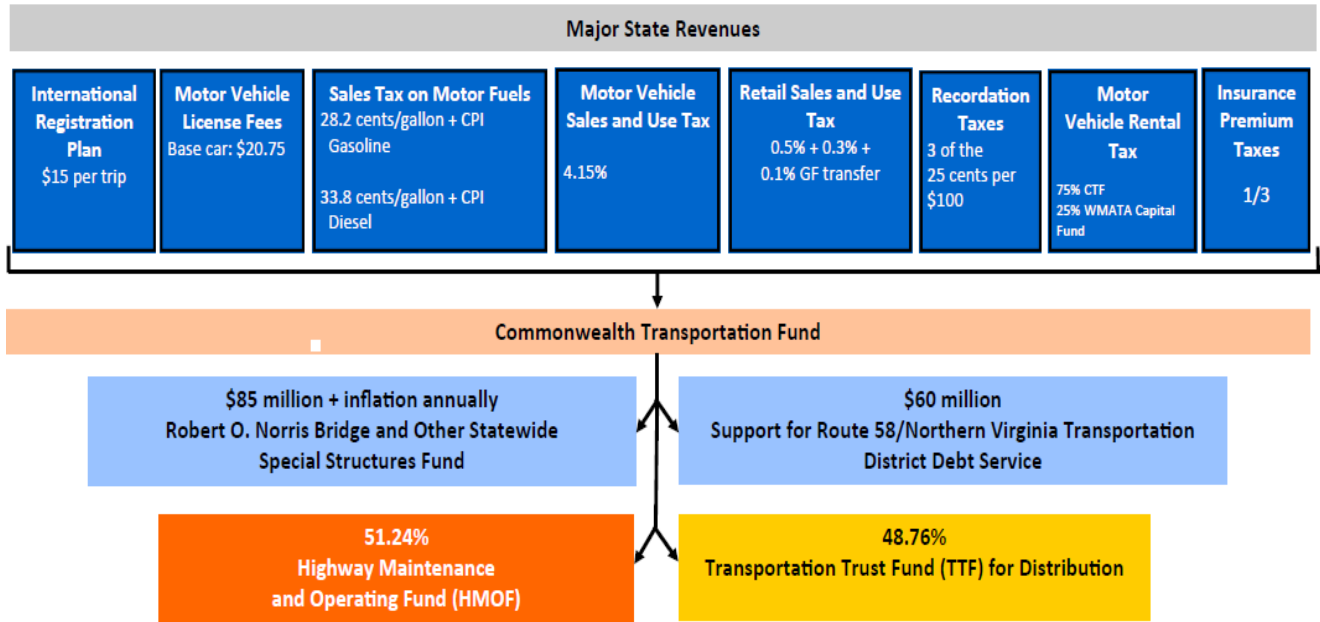
- Raises the gas tax by ten cents over two years, starting on July 1, 2020
- Raises the diesel tax by 6.8 cents on July 1, 2021
- Indexes the gas and diesel tax to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than the sales price of fuel
- Creates a new highway use fee on fuel-efficient, alternative fuel, and electric vehicles (a tiered fee based on fuel economy)
- Reduces most annual vehicle registration fees by \$10

The legislation also makes several changes to regional funding sources for transportation:

- Indexes the regional fuels taxes to CPI instead of the sales price of fuel
- Imposes the regional fuels tax in all areas of the Commonwealth where it is not imposed to be used for the VDOT District Grant Program in SMART SCALE
- Changes funding streams in Northern Virginia, including for the WMATA Capital Fund
- Provides additional funding to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

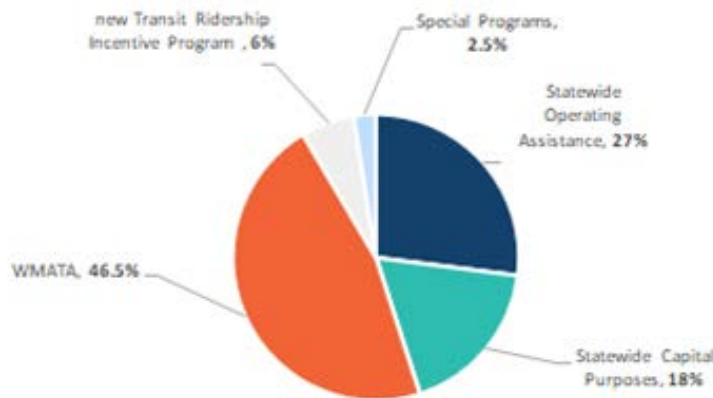
All statewide transportation revenues are deposited into the Commonwealth Transportation Fund. This new streamlined approach to transportation funding means all modes, including transit and rail, are not dependent on one or two funding streams. This approach is especially important in times of economic crisis, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, when one funding stream experiences a significant decline in funding. From the Commonwealth Transportation Fund revenues, 48.76 percent will be distributed to the Transportation Trust Fund. The Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund will receive 23 percent of funds allocated to the Transportation Trust Fund; and the newly created Commonwealth Rail Fund will receive seven percent.

Figure 50: Fiscal Year 2021 Distribution of Transportation Revenues



**Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund**

Figure 51: Fiscal Year 2021 Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund Allocations



*\*\*Up to \$50 million off-the-top to WMATA to match the federal PRIIA funds, provided the District of Columbia, Maryland, and the Federal Transit Administration provide their pro-rata shares*

**Transit Ridership Incentive Program**

House Bill 1414 and Senate Bill 890 established the new Transit Ridership Incentive Program. At least 75 percent of the funds will be used to assist with critical, regional transit connections by offsetting capital and operating needs in major urbanized areas with populations over 100,000. The program will provide

funding to support routes of regional significance; development and implementation of regional subsidy allocation models; implementation of integrated fare collection; establishment of bus-only lanes for routes of regional significance; and implementation of other actions and services determined by the CTB to improve transit service. Urbanized areas that are eligible for these funds are Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, Richmond, Roanoke, Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, and Blacksburg.

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*The 2020 General Assembly created the Central Virginia Transportation Authority, which will raise regional revenues for transportation in Planning District 15, which includes the City of Richmond and surrounding localities. 15 percent of those funds will be dedicated to the Greater Richmond Transit Company.*

*In separate legislation, the 2020 General Assembly created the Hampton Roads Transit Regional Program. Regional revenues will be used to establish and maintain much needed inter-jurisdictional transit service.*

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The General Assembly also included language in the FY 2021-2022 Biennial Budget directing DRPT to include a congestion mitigation program within the Transit Ridership Incentive Program that will use at least \$5 million annually for operating cost assistance to reduce congestion in urban areas.

In addition to these components of the Transit Ridership Incentive Program, DRPT may also use up to 25 percent of funds to reduce fares for low-income individuals. These funds can be used throughout the Commonwealth for either fare reduction or fare elimination programs.

### Commonwealth Rail Fund

Figure 52: Fiscal Year 2021 Commonwealth Rail Fund Allocations



Of the funds DRPT retains, the agency may use up to \$4 million for the purposes of the Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Fund. This allocation is in addition to the \$4 million transfer from the highway construction fund.

## Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

The omnibus transportation bill also established the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) as a political subdivision of the state. The VPRA will promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service and increase ridership by connecting population centers in Virginia with service and increasing the availability of such service. Its goals are to increase passenger rail capacity and improve passenger rail services, ameliorate current and future traffic congestion, and promote industrial and economic development.

The Governor will appoint a 15-member Board with representation throughout the state to govern the Authority. The Board must meet at least quarterly. The VPRA has the following powers:

- Grant others the privilege to design, build, finance, operate, and/or maintain rail facilities
- Fix, alter, change, and collect rates for use of rail facilities
- Issue bonds and accept federal loans (debt may not be supported by tax-supported revenues)
- Use eminent domain for construction or efficient operation of rail facilities

The VPRA will own all rail assets and right-of-way, and it will possess sovereign immunity and manage other liabilities. However, it may not directly operate passenger, commuter, or freight service.

The General Assembly also included the Passenger Rail Facilities Act of 2020 in the recently passed omnibus transportation bill. This section authorizes the use of toll revenues from the Interstate 66 Inside the Beltway project to support the CTB's sale of up to \$1 billion in bonds. These bonds will support the construction of a second Long Bridge across the Potomac River and related track improvements, as well as upgrades to the Rosslyn Metro station, with a term not to exceed 39 years.

## Studies

The 2020 General Assembly has directed the Secretary of Transportation and DRPT to conduct several studies during FY 2021 and 2022. Upcoming DRPT annual reports will address the findings of those studies. DRPT will:

- Study the utilization and impact of commuter tax benefit deductions for businesses in Virginia
- Evaluate enhanced public transportation services from Franconia-Springfield Metro Station to Marine Corps Base Quantico in Prince William and Stafford Counties
- Investigate the need for, and its ability to fund, a connector bus from Roanoke to the Clifton Forge Amtrak station
- Study the feasibility of an east-west Commonwealth Corridor passenger rail service connecting Hampton Roads, Richmond, and the New River Valley

## FAST ACT REAUTHORIZATION

In 2015, the United States Congress adopted the FAST Act, a five year, multi-billion dollar authorization of all USDOT surface transportation programs, including public transportation. This act provided predictability for public transportation in Virginia by authorizing maximum annual funding levels for a five-year period; however, total annual funding availability remains subject to annual Congressional appropriations. Additionally, Congress implemented a multi-billion dollar budget rescission in FY 2020 in order for the Congressional Budget Office to score the FAST Act within pay-as-you-go rules. Funding in



this rescission could otherwise be appropriated to state and local governments for highway and public transportation expenditures.

The FAST Act expired September 30, 2020, and Congress will either need to enact new multi-year surface transportation authorization, or extend the current provisions of the FAST Act, similar to the extensive extensions it enacted for prior transportation bills like SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) and MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act).

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*At DRPT's request, Congressman Rob Wittman and Congressman Don Beyer introduced H.R. 7489, the Long Bridge Act of 2020, in July 2020. This legislation allows the National Park Service to convey and authorize necessary federal property for the construction of the new commuter rail and pedestrian bridge spanning the Potomac River.*

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On July 2, 2020, the United States House of Representatives passed a \$1.5 trillion bill with authorizations of \$494 billion on surface transportation projects, more than \$100 billion to upgrade schools in impoverished districts, \$10 billion for childcare facilities, \$100 billion for housing infrastructure, and \$100 billion for expanding broadband access. The legislation included significant funding increases for transit and passenger rail, including an \$83 billion increase in general fund grant programs like BUILD and INFRA.

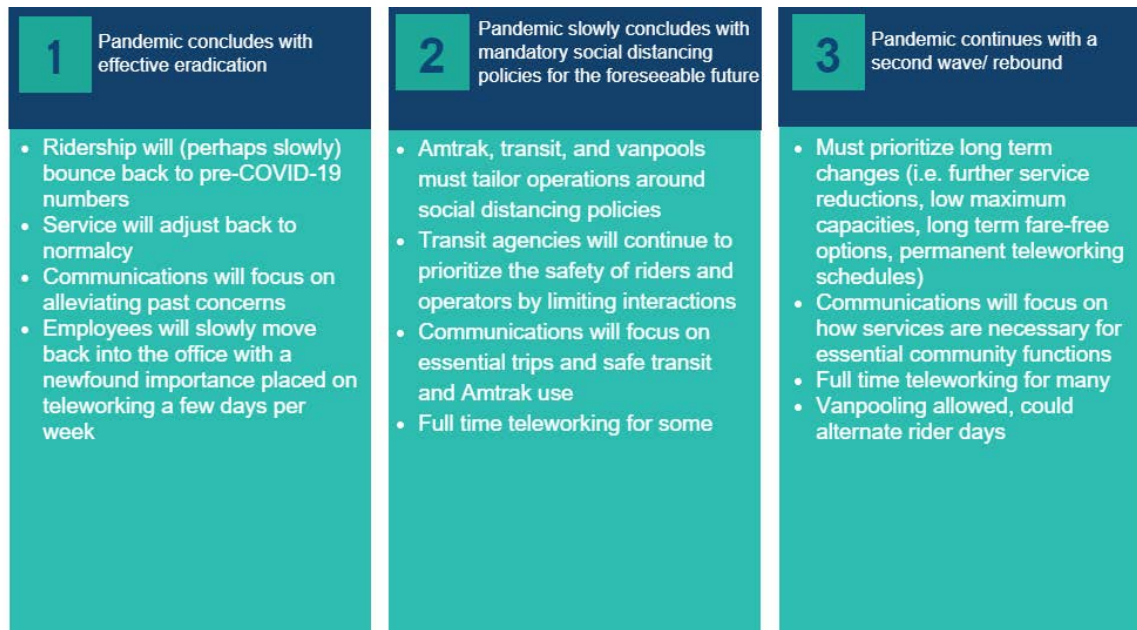
The bill also included a new 10-year authorization to WMATA (PRIIA), escalating each year by \$5 million. However, the bill also reserves a minimum of seven percent each year to fund the WMATA Office of Inspector General (OIG). Under the current draft, it will be WMATA's responsibility to set aside seven percent after the local match has been made; thus, match local obligations will begin to increase by FY 2022, and the federal share going to capital will be at least seven percent less than the total combined local match.

## PLANNING FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacting transit and rail ridership during the last four months of the year, FY 2020 was a dynamic and productive year for DRPT. The Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative and accompanying projects provide the Commonwealth with the opportunity to be a national leader in growing commuter and passenger rail services. At the same time, DRPT continued to provide benefits to freight rail through the Rail Enhancement, Rail Preservation, and Rail Industrial Access programs. Transit and transportation demand management practices in the Commonwealth continue to lead the nation. From working with WMATA to improve its system to expanding the Virginia Breeze intercity bus service along two new routes to providing transportation services to those who need it the most, DRPT and its partners have found new and innovative approaches.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be of utmost importance to DRPT. As the pandemic stretched into FY 2021, DRPT began internal discussions about the state of rail, transit, and transportation demand management in a post pandemic world. Some possible scenarios and their impact on these modes are:

**Figure 53: Scenarios in a Post-Pandemic World**



As of the publication of this report, the Commonwealth is starting to see a return of service. Most transit systems began ramping service up from lifeline levels in mid-June, and commuter systems began reinstating long-haul commuter runs in June, but at much lower frequencies than normal. Systems such as PRTC began to resume full commuter operations after Labor Day while HRT resumed full service in mid-June and fare collection on July 1. Other systems, such as Valley Metro and RADAR, also resumed fare collection on July 1. Washington Metro entered Phase 2 of its recovery plan in August, with increases to service levels and operating hours. Also, Greenville-Emporia returned to limited service in late July, after nearly 2 months. Similarly, Amtrak Virginia returned to most of its normal schedule in fall 2020. In FY 2021, DRPT will continue to work with its partners to ensure the safety of its riders and workers.

As the Commonwealth continues to re-open and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals will need transportation options that rail, transit, and transportation demand management services can provide. These services will continue playing a significant role in the lives of Virginia citizens for the foreseeable future.

Despite the negative impact of COVID-19 on transit, transportation demand management, and rail, the future outlook for these modes in the Commonwealth is still positive. With leadership from DRPT and from across the Transportation Secretariat, there have been exciting advancements in 2020. DRPT looks forward to continuing this momentum for years to come.