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FY2024 Annual Report

**Virginia Department of Rail
and Public Transportation**

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Director Message

2024 has been a year of highlights for rail and public transportation in Virginia. Between record-setting public transit ridership, legislation improving public transit accessibility, investments in essential rail infrastructure that support the economy, and planning the future of rail and public transit across the Commonwealth, it has been an eventful year for the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). DRPT aims to create a positive impact on the Commonwealth, with the prior year demonstrating these positive impacts.

When I joined DRPT two years ago, Virginia was still reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought public transit ridership to record lows. Now, numerous public transit agencies have set **records for ridership**. Major investments in transit infrastructure, technology, and new public transit programs have made taking public transit an even more attractive proposition. **The Virginia Breeze**, the Commonwealth's intercity bus service, is the perfect example, with the service having its third straight year of record ridership. Demand for the service remains high, as evidenced by the desire for an east-west Virginia Breeze service that DRPT will add as the **fifth route** in 2025.

As public transit grappled with the heaviest impacts of the global pandemic, Virginia, through the **Virginia Passenger Rail Authority**, made groundbreaking investments in passenger rail. In my role as the acting Chair of the VPRA Board, I am excited to play my part as Virginia's passenger rail renaissance kicks off. Virginia makes critical **investments** in the freight rail industry, ensuring the Commonwealth's rail infrastructure is in a state of good repair. DRPT invested in rail infrastructure improvements that expand network capacity, such as the Port of Virginia's marshaling yards, or connected manufacturing facilities to the larger railroad network through the Rail Industrial Access program. These investments attracted jobs to Virginia, ensured Virginia's industries and ports move goods quickly and competitively, diverted trucks off some of the most congested highways in the country, and reduced pollution by moving goods efficiently on rails.

The General Assembly passed legislation in 2024 to improve Virginia's access to reliable transportation. **Senate Joint Resolution 28** established a Joint Subcommittee charged with studying the growing public transportation needs in Northern Virginia. This study will identify key funding sources and opportunities for cost savings to ensure that public transportation is on track for a financially prudent and stable future. Following the passage of **House Bill 285** and with funding and technical support from DRPT staff, Virginia can more easily build accessible, comfortable, safe, and dignified bus shelters for transit users in all parts of the state.

Internally, DRPT's **strategic plan, Next Stop: 2030** challenges the agency to improve and keep exceeding an already high bar for excellence. The agency's performance metrics demonstrate that DRPT continues to prosper as a sustainable and well-managed organization. The agency wrapped up Fiscal Year 2024 fully staffed, with a diverse and engaged workforce that persistently meets internal key customer service and engagement benchmarks and expands upon our institutional knowledge and professional growth through training and workshops. DRPT achieved priority strategic initiatives by revamping our **Open Data Portal**, launching **advertising campaigns** to support our rail and transit partners, relocating Virginia Breeze bus stops **to more accessible locations**, and conducting many, many studies that will guide the future of Virginia's **public transportation improvements, freight rail economy, and passenger rail renaissance**. All the while, DRPT maintained a low turnover rate and minimized spending on administrative costs.

Taking on the role of Acting Director of DRPT has been an honor and an exciting opportunity. Virginia continues to go from strength to strength, and DRPT's amazing team will ensure that our network of rail and public transportation thrives. DRPT has made incredible gains in recent years and consistently works on adding more achievements to our trophy cabinet. Through continued funding, support from our Governor and Legislature, and the dedication of DRPT's staff, these victories will keep on coming.

Zach Trogdon
Acting Director

Executive Summary

40 transit systems. 82 human service providers. 16 transportation demand management agencies. 15 metropolitan planning organizations. Nine shortline railroads. Two Class I freight railroads. One intercity passenger rail operator. One intercity bus operator. What do these entities all have in common? Each benefit in one way or another from the work of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT).

The Virginia General Assembly created DRPT in 1992. Since then, the agency has focused on moving people and goods via public transportation, rail, and transportation demand management. As a part of this focus, DRPT drives projects and programs forward by allocating state and federal funding; conducting statewide rail and public transportation studies; planning and programming new services and capital improvement projects; and providing leadership, advocacy, technical assistance, and funding oversight. The agency's 2024 Annual Report profiles all these efforts with greater specificity as they occurred over Fiscal Year 2024.

Within this report are an introduction to DRPT, a summary of how DRPT embodies organizational values, guidance on how the agency is funded and administered, and highlights of key programs the agency leads. Also included are major data points, inspiring success stories, financial insights, programmatic backgrounds, and more. The report concludes with an overview of why DRPT is here today and why the agency will be here for every tomorrow to come.

DRPT ventures to catalyze connections, create community, and cultivate collaboration across the Commonwealth. This work is done to expand the reach and impact of the 166 entities that depend on the dollars, data, direction, and due diligence DRPT delivers. For more details, dive into DRPT's 2024 Annual Report.

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 33.2-106, § 33.2-1526.3, and Chapter 2, Item 1, Subsection I of the 2024 Acts of Assembly, DRPT is required to report on its actions to increase transit use and reduce highway congestion, its projects and services funded by the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), and its use of the Commonwealth Rail Fund. DRPT took a combined approach to meeting these requirements to produce an annual report for Fiscal Year 2024. However, this report serves as more than just an exercise in checking statutory boxes. What follows is a snapshot of DRPT's extensive work across the Commonwealth over the past fiscal year. It is by no means exhaustive but should impart an understanding of where DRPT has been, where it plans to go next, how that route has been decided upon, and all the communities it has helped uplift along the way.

About DRPT

In 1992, Governor L. Douglas Wilder signed Virginia Senate Bill 223 into law, establishing DRPT. This bill addressed the “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.” The legislation notes that transit and freight rail are a significant part of such a multimodal system when it comes to enhancing the environment, ensuring economic development, and efficiently moving goods and people.

Mission and Vision

In the 32 years since, while much has changed, DRPT’s mission has not: to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians through innovative transportation solutions. The agency’s vision is a connected Commonwealth with an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need. This mission and vision inform DRPT’s work with rail and public transportation stakeholders to provide service to people throughout Virginia. While many agencies operate locally and regionally to meet transportation needs, DRPT is a coordinator and catalyst for all these activities at the state level.

Strategy

To fulfill its mission and vision, DRPT’s strategic plan guides the agency’s approach and actions over the next several years as it innovates and evolves with best-in-class options to meet the needs of all Virginians. In developing the plan, DRPT targeted building alignment around the agency’s values, mission, vision, goals, objectives, and initiatives. This plan, known as “**Next Stop 2030**,” orients the agency’s progress around four milestones:

- Create a positive impact on the Commonwealth. DRPT provides support and solutions to positively impact the lives of Virginians, the economy, and the environment.
- Foster innovative practical solutions. DRPT challenges the status quo, creating solutions while sharing new ideas and innovative practices that contribute to better transportation outcomes.
- Convene with partners and stakeholders. DRPT brings together the right people at the right time to leverage resources, address important transportation issues, and create the best solutions collaboratively.
- Cultivate a sustainable well-managed organization. DRPT delivers exceptional service with an engaged workforce that effectively manages public assets and promotes transparency.

These goals will be framed within the context of some of DRPT’s programs throughout the report. Metrics and performance measures related to these goals can be found on [the strategic plan dashboard](#) on DRPT’s [Open Data Portal](#).

Values

DRPT holds five values as core to the achieving the spirit of the agency’s mission and vision.

Professionalism

DRPT communicates effectively and appropriately and is respectful of others. The agency is productive and disciplined, caring about every aspect of the agency's jobs and partners.

Stewardship

DRPT provides an environment where staff and partners are engaged and can thrive. DRPT is transparent and earns public trust by ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources to drive results.

Knowledge

DRPT respects expertise and staff have the skills and attributes to successfully perform their jobs. DRPT believes in seeking out and sharing knowledge as well as providing opportunities for everyone to learn and grow as technical experts.

Innovation

DRPT anticipates needs and challenges the status quo when necessary. The agency encourages curiosity while exploring new ideas and learning from mistakes to continuously improve.

Collaboration

DRPT believes in the synergy of diverse thoughts and ideas. The agency is forthcoming with information and proactively convenes with stakeholders and colleagues to improve process, generate new ideas, and find solutions.

Below are ways in which DRPT has embodied these values over the past year and in all the work the agency undertakes

Professionalism

In June 2024, DRPT Director Jennifer DeBruhl retired after over 30 years of distinguished public service. She was a cherished member of the DRPT team, known for her diplomacy, enthusiasm, determination, and friendliness. During her tenure, the agency made tremendous progress in improving public transportation and rail throughout the Commonwealth. Implementing funding reforms for major programs, expanding the Virginia Breeze, establishing a strong relationship with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), and navigating the struggles presented by a global pandemic and supply chain issues were just a few of the major accomplishments achieved under Director DeBruhl's leadership.

Zach Trogdon was appointed to serve as Acting Director of DRPT in conjunction with his role as Chief of Public Transportation. As a part of this role, Mr. Trogdon is responsible for driving the evaluation, development, and execution of a six-year, \$4.7 billion portfolio of public transportation, commuter assistance, and congestion management programs throughout the Commonwealth. His counterpart in managing DRPT's rail programs and planning is Emily Stock, who serves as Chief of Rail Transportation, providing leadership for freight and passenger rail planning and policy development as well as DRPT's freight rail grant programs and initiatives. She collaborates with partner agencies, railroads, and neighboring states to develop programs with maximum benefit and realistic implementation strategies.

Beyond overseeing programs related to public transportation and rail, the agency is responsible for managing a budget, a suite of human and technological resources, and relationships with the public, policymakers, and the business community. Each of these priorities is covered by a separate division within DRPT. Deanna Oware serves as the agency's Chief Financial Officer

(CFO), supervising DRPT's \$1 billion annual budget composed of state, federal, and local resources that go toward improving rail and public transportation capacity and service across the Commonwealth. As CFO, Ms. Oware leads budget oversight, financial programming, financial reporting, fiscal operations, and audits.

Jennifer Mayton, Chief of Administration, directs human resources, information technology, procurement, facilities, and emergency management functions for the agency as well as administrative support for the agency and the Director's Office. Rounding out DRPT's Executive Leadership Team is Andrew Wright, Chief of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives. Mr. Wright's responsibilities include overseeing the agency's internal and external communication efforts, media outreach, and marketing for the Virginia Breeze and public transportation programs. He also manages the agency's legislative agenda and serves as DRPT's liaison to the General Assembly and federal representatives. These servant leaders set an outstanding standard for professionalism that trickles down to each team they manage.

This gravitas also extends to roles outside of DRPT. DRPT leadership serves on several organizations related to transit and rail. The Director of DRPT chairs the VPRA board and sits on the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee is also staffed by DRPT. DRPT reports to the Secretary of Transportation, the Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III, who serves as Chairman of the CTB. The CTB is comprised of 17 members located throughout Virginia who are appointed by the Governor. DRPT staff also participate, either as representatives of DRPT or as designees of the Chairman of the CTB, on the following boards, commissions, and authorities:

- Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission
- Potomac And Rappahannock Transportation Commission
- Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads
- Virginia Railway Express Operations Board
- Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
- Hampton Roads Transit Planning Organization Policy Board
- Roanoke Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board
- Northern Virginia Transit Authority
- Central Virginia Transportation Authority
- Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission
- Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Danville-Pittsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Harrisonburg Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Kingsport Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
- Central Virginia Transportation Planning Organization
- New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization
- Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization
- Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Transportation Planning Organization
- Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Winchester-Frederick Metropolitan Planning Organization

Stewardship

DRPT distributes over \$1 billion in funding annually to improve rail and public transportation capacity and service across the Commonwealth, with this funding going to public transportation providers, local and regional government entities, freight railroads, and VPRA. This funding is shared through capital and operating grants, as well as grants designed to specific enhancements and improvements. Ensuring that key partners have access to the resources they need to offer quality transportation options to citizens and businesses is central to DRPT's mission. Yet there is more to DRPT's work than just the power of the purse. DRPT staff propel projects and programs by:

- Promoting transportation options to the public, businesses, and community decision-makers
- Assessing feasibility and environmental impacts of new and expanding services
- Conducting statewide rail and public transportation studies, many aimed at improving service or identifying new opportunities
- Planning and programming new services and capital improvement projects from public transportation to freight and passenger rail using a data-driven methodology
- Providing leadership, advocacy, funding oversight, and technical assistance

Knowledge

Being a responsible steward of public dollars means ensuring that opportunities are available to spend these dollars to create the greatest benefit to the Commonwealth. DRPT makes a plethora of grant opportunities available to the private, public, and non-profit sectors to foster innovative solutions for pressing issues in rail and public transportation. For each of these grant programs, DRPT staff dedicate their time through training, the development of guidelines and best practices, and one-on-ones to assist applicants as they navigate through the application and administration portions of the grant process. DRPT also provides technical assistance and support for agencies interested in applying for federal grant programs.

To get transit agencies off to a strong start, position them to grow, and empower them to adapt to the ever-evolving needs of their communities, DRPT requires that any public transit operator receiving state funding complete either a Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) or a Transit Development Plan (TDP). Staff members compile guidelines and resources for the development of these plans that are available on the DRPT website and proactively offer technical assistance to transit agencies throughout the development process. DRPT also releases guidance and provides technical assistance for planning and development related to the creation of commuter assistance program strategic plans. As far as other guidance goes, DRPT maintains a collection of resources for public transportation agency safety planning, multimodal system design guidelines, transit asset management planning, state management planning, and public transportation grant administration.

On the rail side of DRPT's work, DRPT's rail planning enterprises power local and regional economic development, assisting partners as they develop, acquire, upgrade and maintain rail infrastructure. Through studies and data collection, DRPT can approve projects with intentionality and confidence and anticipate changing dynamics on the horizon to plan proactively. This planning supports the wider alignment of DRPT's portfolio of projects and partners with stated and measurable goals. By revisiting planning regularly, DRPT fosters a culture of innovation, working to improve on what has been done in the past and aim even higher in the future. DRPT consistently connects with planning organizations, Class I and III rail owners, federal officials, and localities to incorporate their perspectives and interests into all rail

planning. Outside organizations regularly request that DRPT staff provide technical expertise and present learnings, seeking to use the successes of DRPT's rail planning as a model for their own work. DRPT is seen as a go-to partner, connector, and advisor to those applying for grants and interested in expanding their rail capacity.

Innovation

DRPT also practices what it preaches when it comes to planning and innovation. All endeavors undertaken by the agency are informed by a wide range of studies, research, data collection, and analytics. The outcomes of these inquiries not only strengthen the foundation upon which DRPT's initiatives are built, but also serve as blueprints other agencies can leverage for success. DRPT has constantly pushed to increase the efficiency of Virginia's existing transit and rail system and helped plan future expansions to meet the anticipated increase in demand.

Intercity Bus Study

Based on the findings from previous inquiries, DRPT continued its investigation into expanding the intercity bus services offered by the Virginia Breeze. Given that the four existing routes on the Virginia Breeze do not offer East-West service, a study has been conducted to identify potential stops for a route that would cover the I-64 corridor. This route, called the Tidewater Current, would connect the Shenandoah Valley and Tidewater regions of the Commonwealth. DRPT anticipates service starting in Calendar Year 2025.

Open Data Portal

Over the past year, DRPT transferred a variety of data projects, metrics, and performance measures onto a new platform on the DRPT website, the **Open Data Portal**. Included in this hub are major highlights from the six-year improvement program (SYIP), financial reporting data, metrics related to the strategic plan, numbers outlining advances made through the **SMART SCALE** program, geospatial data showing the geographic impact of DRPT's efforts, performance data including transit ridership and rail economic develop, and more. Shifting from a quantitative approach to encapsulating successes, the DATA Stories series, also hosted on the Open Data Portal, delves into the narratives behind the numbers. DRPT will strive to keep these types of analytics available to the public and make sure that the gains made through the creation of the Open Data Portal are used as a stepping stone for further enhancements.

Modernizing Transit Fleets

Throughout Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT has sought to develop a comprehensive toolkit for transit agencies interested in switching to low- and zero-emission vehicles. Based on the groundwork laid in the **House Joint Resolution 542 Transit Modernization Study**, this toolkit tailors resources and guidance to add value for both the larger transit agencies as well as the smaller urban and rural transit agencies that face greater barriers to implementing such modernization efforts. Stakeholders from within the transit industry, the utilities industry, and other agencies have been heavily involved in the development of this toolkit, and it has been designed with these parties in mind, as well as to position those who use it to maximize ongoing funding opportunities offered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Some of the resources available in the toolkit will include:

- Agency readiness checklist
- Utility engagement and planning guidance
- Workforce development best practices for change management
- Transit agency financial analysis tool
- Transit agency emissions reduction modeling tool based on the Environmental

- Protection Agency's (EPA's) MOVES4 Model
- FTA-compliant agency transition plan template

Reducing Environmental Impacts

DRPT recognizes that transit and rail are paramount to reducing the environmental impact of transportation and has actively sought out opportunities to build alliances around mitigating transit and rail's carbon footprint. One example is the Share Your eNroute Charger Project, known as Project SYNC. Dominion Energy Virginia received discretionary funding to assess, develop, and test a business model for installing enroute electric vehicle chargers for use by transit agencies and the general public. This project is being facilitated by Bay Transit, Jaunt, and DRPT, as the project will work to increase clean mobility options for Jaunt users and carless residents of the Bay Aging housing units, who are serviced by Bay Transit. Another example is the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) partnership with DRPT and several other agencies to apply for funding through EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. The grant will allow DEQ to develop a priority climate action plan to identify near-term, high impact products to reduce emissions, as well as a comprehensive climate action plan to implement a longer-term statewide plan for reducing emissions.

Coordinated Human Service Mobility (CHSM) Plan

As a requirement of the FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program, all activities funded through this program must be supported by a coordinated transportation plan that reviews current services for and transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities, considers tactics for addressing service gaps, and establishes targets for project implementation. Applicants are required to demonstrate the alignment of their project with the CHSM strategies and actions when pursuing Section 5310 funding through DRPT. The most recent update to the CHSM Plan was made available in Fiscal Year 2024. This update was developed with significant public input that was gathered through meetings, ride-alongs, surveys, and interviews over a series of several months in 2019 along with a selection of surveys of riders and providers for the latest iteration of the plan. More information on this plan can be found in the [Paratransit](#) section of this report.

Statewide Remix Contract

Starting at the beginning of the fiscal year, public transit agencies were enabled to utilize the Remix planning tool, which was made available through a partnership with DRPT. Providing this access has allowed agencies to consider planning for existing, on-demand, and future services based on publicly available demographic data. DRPT assisted in spreading the word and providing education about the tool by hosting monthly office hours, publishing a press release, conducting on-site training, and engaging with the Virginia Transit Leadership Institute. This tool has since been adopted as an essential part of constructing TDPs and TSPs.

WebGrants

On December 1, 2023, DRPT modernized its grant management systems by moving to WebGrants. A number of other state agencies in the Commonwealth use the same system. This switch has reduced the regulatory burden faced by partners by simplifying the agency's grant application process. To make this transition as painless as possible, DRPT created a WebGrants helpdesk email, held multiple webinars, recorded demonstrations of how to use the platform, and proactively engaged with partners to get their input and share learnings.

Collaboration

DRPT serves as a convener of the larger transit and rail ecosystem both within and outside of the Commonwealth. More than serving as a source of funding for agencies, DRPT streamlines, synchronizes, and synergizes the work entities are doing to reduce silos and increase efficiencies between different entities. Looking at the larger picture, DRPT also collaborates with partners to envision and realize the benefits of an integrated multimodal transportation network from numerous perspectives.

ConnectingVA

DRPT launched the ConnectingVA program to encourage Virginians to take advantage of transit, rideshare, vanpools or biking for commutes and aid businesses in planning around hybrid work arrangements and commuting alternatives. The program has an app that helps riders plan their trips and earn incentives for switching their commute by logging their journeys by transit, bus, carpool, vanpool, or bike. DRPT aligns agency activities and coordinates resources to ensure Virginians across the Commonwealth can make the most of the transit options available to them. The ConnectingVA app represented a major shift in these efforts by consolidating regional transit planning and incentive applications and branding under one umbrella, with the exception of Northern Virginia. In addition to the ConnectingVA program, DRPT provides marketing toolkits, assets, and planning for agencies to further campaigns that emphasize the use of commuting alternatives. The impact of this work has been enormous in reducing congestion and environmental footprints. More information on this can be found in the [Commuter Assistance Program](#) section of the report.

External Organizations

DRPT cultivates partnerships with a myriad of organizations to connect communities via public transportation and rail throughout the Commonwealth. Some of these partners include representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), VPRA, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), Amtrak, the Port of Virginia, VirginiaNavigator, and VTrans. Private entities and associations DRPT collaborate with include the Virginia Transit Association, the Community Transportation Association of Virginia, the Virginia Railroad Association, and Virginians for High-Speed Rail.

General Assembly

[Senate Joint Resolution No. 28](#) established a joint subcommittee to study long-term, sustainable, dedicated operating and capital funding as well as cost-containment controls and strategies to guarantee that transportation agencies and entities in Northern Virginia can meet the increasing need for public transportation in the region. This includes the local public transportation providers in each locality, the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). DRPT staff has worked closely with the subcommittee, including by presenting on transit funding in Virginia. This bill also established a technical working group to: examine potential revenue sources, cost-saving, and cost-containment tools; estimate current and future costs and revenues; consider future land use planning; evaluate telework impacts on regional transit ridership; delve into appropriate uses of local bus services; and investigate current subsidy, oversight, jurisdictional, governance, structural, and prioritization practices that contribute to organizational instability. DRPT staff are represented in this technical working group.

Industry Groups

DRPT serves as a member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Staff members participate on internal boards and working groups within these organizations. These boards and groups allow DRPT to stay informed about trends in public transit and rail and elevate insights to a wider group of transportation leaders so that best practices and policies implemented in Virginia can be adopted and adapted in other states. DRPT also assists in organizing and hosting major events for these groups. With Virginia being the only state in the country with separate agencies dedicated to public transportation and rail, DRPT plays a unique role in these organizations by coordinating activities in these groups with VDOT and VPRA.

DRPT partners with other Southeastern states to advance rail transportation through the Southeast Corridor Commission. The **Southeast Corridor Commission (SEC)** is a multistate cooperation and planning effort to connect states in the Southeast megaregion with passenger and freight rail. In addition to supporting the FRA with the development of the Southeast Regional Rail Plan released in 2020, the SEC's mission is to estimate economic benefits of rail along the Southeast Corridor, create a project implementation plan, and prioritize major projects. The goal of this effort is to improve the mutual cooperation and planning between states and stakeholders to position the Southeast Corridor to receive federal funding for project development and implementation.

The SEC is comprised of executive level members from seven State Departments of Transportation including Virginia, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C. Each of these states are voting members of the commission.

Petersburg

In 2022, Governor Youngkin created the Partnership for Petersburg initiative as a collaboration between state, local, community, and faith leaders. The mission of the partnership is, **according to their website**, "to help Petersburg become one of the best cities to live, work, and raise a family." The partnership centers more than 40 initiatives under eight distinct pillars to improve the lives and livelihoods of the citizens of Petersburg along with the economic health of the city. One of the eight pillars included as part of the partnership is transportation, which has the goal that "citizens have increased access to transportation options for work and recreation." This year, DRPT executed a federal grant that will fund a study of Petersburg Area Transit to review the system as a whole and identify how public services like transit can help areas emerge from lingering poverty. DRPT engineering staff also have supported the City of Petersburg in completing a Title VI Equity Analysis for selecting property for a new transit facility.

Nearby States

DRPT often collaborates with nearby states and the District of Columbia on transit and rail initiatives.

North Carolina

Virginia and North Carolina are a part of the North Carolina-Virginia Interstate High-Speed Rail Compact, along with both being members of the Southeast Corridor Commission. In early December, the Raleigh to Richmond project received up to \$1.1 billion in federal funding to strengthen the rail corridor between the two cities by building out the first section of the S-line. The project aims to connect the two cities through the acquisition of unused lines from CSX, repairing sections in disrepair, and developing new lines when necessary. Along with this progress, in April, the Compact was selected to receive \$200,000 in discretionary funding to

advance a Southeast Rail Network analysis to identify and alleviate freight and passenger rail bottlenecks.

Tennessee

DRPT staff provided input to Tennessee's Department of Transportation as they work to further develop their passenger rail program. Virginia was asked to participate because the Commonwealth is regarded as having a more developed rail program.

District of Columbia and Maryland

DRPT is responsible for ensuring that WMATA is adequately funded in partnership with the District of Columbia and Maryland. Some of the funding provided by these areas is matched by funding from FTA. To preserve the long-term viability and sustainability of transit in the Capitol region, WMATA and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments have convened a task force of political and transportation leaders known as DMVMoves. The group will analyze the existing transit network, assess where needs and opportunities lie, outline potential costs and revenue streams, determine governance and management structures, and ultimately create a unified vision for transit across the three regions. DRPT participates in the DMVMoves Government Partners Advisory Group to voice the perspective of the Commonwealth and provide technical learnings shaping the future development of transit, particularly as it impacts Northern Virginia.

SMART SCALE

SMART SCALE is a funding program that competitively assesses transportation projects based on an objective, outcome-based method that upholds transparency and accountability when it comes to the spending of taxpayer dollars. All projects must meet at least one of the transportation needs identified in Virginia's Transportation Plan, VTrans. The program is led by OIPI, with DRPT and VDOT serving as team members who provide support by determining eligibility and funding, screening projects, and evaluating and scoring applications.

State Safety Oversight

In compliance with federal law, DRPT has been designated as the State Safety Oversight Agency, which oversees the state's public transportation safety. This oversight is funded through a dedicated formula grant from FTA that is matched by DRPT's administrative funds. Through this role, DRPT is responsible for overseeing the Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) Tide light rail system. This requires DRPT to conduct audits and inspections, review accident, incident, and hazard investigations, and track and verify HRT's progress in correcting safety and security gaps on its light rail system. Other key program activities include conducting regular work sessions with HRT rail personnel, and reviewing and approving HRT rail safety, security, and emergency preparedness plans.

These efforts are led by the Transit Rail Safety and Emergency Management Administrator, who reports on the program to the DRPT Director. In February of 2024, DRPT released a report outlining the accomplishments of the program over the previous calendar year. Included in this report are findings from triennial audits, an overview of program documents that were reviewed and approved, a calendar of and select findings from inspections, an overview of investigations, and updates on federal compliance and rule changes and their implementation by DRPT and HRT.

Final Thoughts

DRPT not only steps up to the plate when it comes to technical assistance, innovation, safety, and collaboration but is also a proactive driver of rail and transit developments within the Commonwealth. Staff members conduct site visits and outreach trips throughout the year to get an understanding of the successes and struggles of grantees and partners. The agency opens its doors to guests and visitors to engage directly with staff and leadership around transportation topics. DRPT recognizes the contributions of its staff all year long and hosts festivities during public service recognition week to emphasize its appreciation. By applauding the positive contributions of staff internally, DRPT empowers staff members to amplify the positive impact of the agency externally too. The programmatic profiles later in the report will highlight specific one-off public engagements but it is worth reiterating that DRPT's level of attentiveness and presence across the Commonwealth is anything but one-off.

DRPT Administration and Funding

Commonwealth Transportation Board

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation reports to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The 17-member CTB oversees the lion's share of Virginia's transportation funding, statewide planning, project selection, and other initiatives in Virginia under DRPT, including all freight rail and public transportation initiatives, as well as VDOT's programs and projects.

The CTB is chaired by the Secretary of Transportation, with the Director of DRPT and Commissioner of VDOT sitting on the Board as non-voting members. Nine appointed members represent each of the nine Transportation Construction Districts, with five representing rural or urban Virginia at-large.

Typically, the CTB meets on the third Tuesday and Wednesday of each month and rotates meeting locations between Richmond at VDOT's headquarters and elsewhere across Virginia. Board meetings are open to the public. The CTB approves DRPT's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), approves program grants, certifies compliance for, and subsequently disburses funding to WMATA and VRE, and adopts policies and regulations for implementing rail and public transportation programs.

Funding

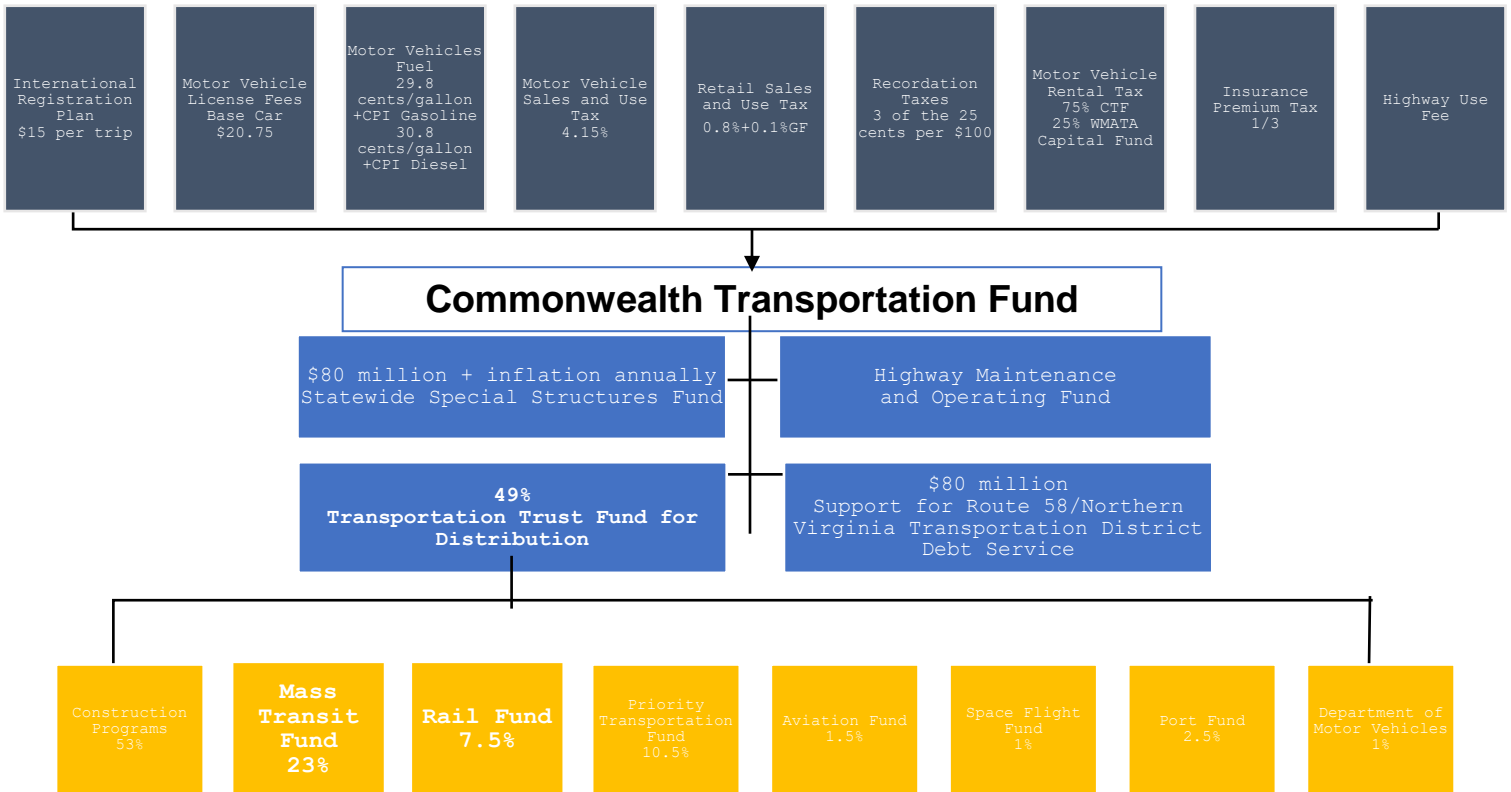
DRPT provides state funds for rail programs and public transportation operating, capital, and additional programs. DRPT also distributes some federal funds to transit agencies. This section dives into how DRPT is funded, and how DRPT's funding is allocated.

Commonwealth Transportation Fund

The bulk of DRPT's budget is distributed from the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF), Virginia's formula-driven funding mechanism for transportation initiatives. Since being substantially revised by the General Assembly in 2020, § 33.2 Chapter 15 of the Code of Virginia establishes the CTF and lays out the revenue sources for the CTF and the distributions of revenues. The CTF is the funding pool in which dedicated state funds are deposited and distributed among Virginia's transportation programs and funds.

Once revenues are pooled into the CTF, the funds are distributed by a formula as laid out in the Code of Virginia. From the CTF, 51% of funds are distributed to the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund for programs managed by VDOT and 49% to the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). From the Transportation Trust Fund, 23% is distributed to the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF) and 7.5% to the Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF), both of which provide funds to DRPT. The remainder of funds within the TTF are distributed to other Virginia agencies or programs. The figure below visualizes this flow of funding from the source to DRPT's two primary funds.

Figure 1. The Commonwealth Transportation Fund



From the CMTF and CRF, there are further distributions to individual programs managed by DRPT and our partner agencies. The next sections delineate the specific distributions within each fund, before going into DRPT’s federal funds and additional funds.

Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund

The Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF) is laid out in § 33.2-1526.1 of the Code of Virginia. Its funds are used to support public transportation across Virginia. The CMTF itself is distributed through a formula to specific programs for public transportation providers. Before going through that formula, several programs take funding “off the top” to provide a fixed, dedicated funding stream. Those programs are:

- State safety oversight (\$2 million)
- Virginia’s \$50 million share to match \$150 million from the Federal Government for the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (WMATA). Maryland and the District of Columbia also contribute \$50 million each.
- State paratransit assistance (\$1.5 million)
- DRPT may reserve up to 5% to cover the costs of administering the CMTF. Historically, DRPT has reserved less than 4% annually for administration.

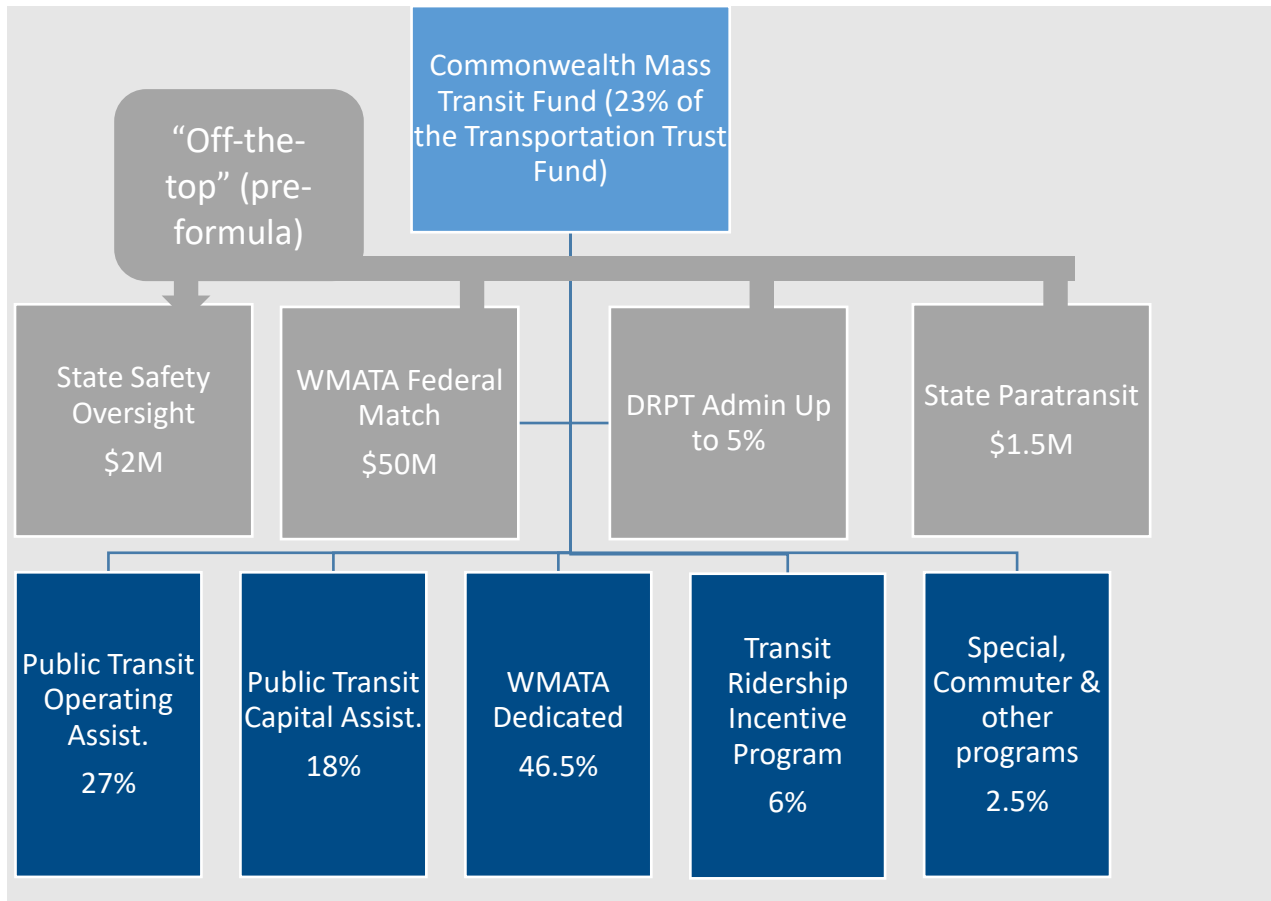
After the “off-the-top” funding, the CMTF is distributed as follows:

- 27% for public transit operating assistance (beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, this will be 24.5%).
- 18% for public transit capital assistance (beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, this will be 17%).

- 46.5% dedicated to WMATA.
- 6% to the Transit Ridership Incentive Program.
- 2.5% to special, commuter, and other programs.
- Beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, up to 3.5% to VRE for operating and capital purposes.

The figure below visualizes the flow of funding from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund:

Figure 2. Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund distributions



Public Transit Operating Assistance

Public transit operating assistance is distributed through the Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) Operating program. DRPT provides operating assistance using a performance-based process to Virginia’s 38 public transit providers (excluding WMATA, which has its own dedicated funding and, beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, VRE) through the MERIT Operating program. DRPT uses ridership numbers and the cumulative number of hours or miles a transit provider is in operation (called revenue hours or revenue miles, respectively) and audited financial information to determine a transit provider’s funding levels. State assistance can provide up to 30% of a transit provider’s operating expenses. DRPT allocated just over \$133 million in MERIT Operating assistance in Fiscal Year 2024.

Public Transit Capital Assistance

Public transit capital assistance funds the MERIT Capital program. Much like MERIT Operating, MERIT Capital provides assistance to Virginia’s 38 public transit providers (except WMATA and,

beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, VRE) for purchasing capital assets. MERIT Capital supports three categories of capital purchases: state-of-good repair, small enhancements, and major expansions. DRPT allocated over \$100 million in MERIT Capital assistance in Fiscal Year 2024. Of that \$100 million, \$62 million went to state of good repair projects (replacing or rehabilitating transit operating and support vehicles, or replacing bus or transit shelters), \$24 million went to minor enhancement projects (supporting the purchase of new transit operating or support vehicles, transit support equipment such as dispatch radios, maintenance equipment and parts, or transit facility improvements), and \$8 million went to two major expansion projects (replacing WinTran's maintenance facility and expanding VRE's Manassas Park Station parking garage). The remaining amount was set aside as a reserve fund to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) discretionary grants.

In addition to funds from the MERIT Capital Program, public transit providers are eligible to receive funds from SMART SCALE. SMART SCALE is Virginia's statewide prioritization process for picking the right transportation projects for funding and ensuring the best use of limited tax dollars. Transportation projects are scored based on an objective, outcome-based process that is transparent to the public and allows decision-makers to be held accountable to taxpayers. SMART SCALE funds can be used to support capital projects such as the expansion of bus shelters across a transit network or the development of a bus-rapid transit corridor.

WMATA Funding

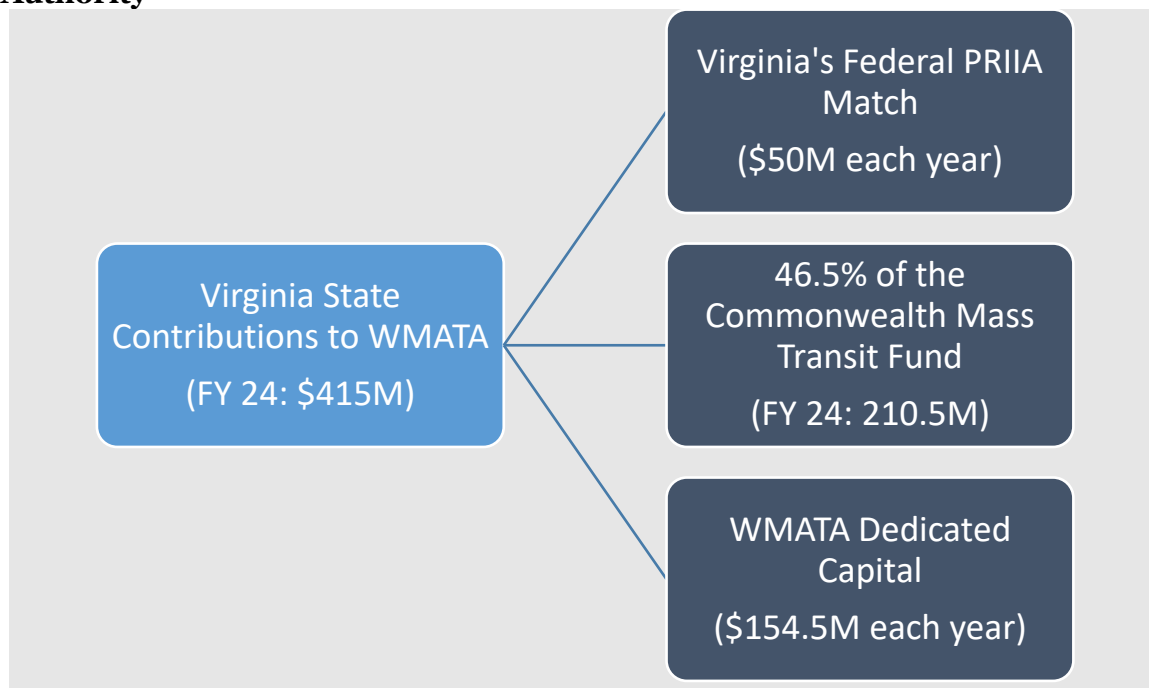
The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) is the largest public transit provider in Virginia and operates Metro rail, Metro bus, and Metro access in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. To support WMATA's operations, 46.5% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund is dedicated to supporting its operating and capital costs. In Fiscal Year 2024, CMTF funding dedicated to WMATA totaled just over \$210 million.

Additionally, \$50 million is taken "off-the-top" (before going through the CMTF formula) for WMATA. This is Virginia's share of funding to match the \$150 million annual Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act funding the federal government provides to WMATA. D.C. and Maryland contribute \$50 million each to match the federal funding.

Chapters 854 and 856 of the 2018 Acts of Assembly established the WMATA Capital Fund, providing \$154.5 million in annual capital funding. These funds come from the localities served by WMATA, not the CMTF. This amounts to Virginia's proportional regional share (30.9 percent) of \$500 million in annual additional funding for critical projects supporting a state of good repair. Maryland and D.C. provide the remaining funds for the \$500 million in capital needs.

The figure below visualizes Virginia's funding for WMATA:

Figure 3. Virginia Funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority



Transit Ridership Incentive Program

The Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) receives 6% of the CMTF. TRIP provides funding to promote improved transit service with more regional connectivity, better amenities, better safety, and improved affordability. In Fiscal Year 2024, TRIP received just under \$27 million to support its programs.

Special, Commuter, and Additional Programs

DRPT’s Commuter Assistance Program, demonstration projects, public transit marketing, conducting studies, and providing technical assistance all share 2.5% of the CMTF.

VRE Dedicated

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is the commuter rail service that provides weekday, rush-hour commuter service along the I-95 and I-66 corridors into Washington, D.C. Its two lines run from Manassas/Broad Run to Union Station and Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania to Union Station. Up to Fiscal Year 2024, VRE received funding through the MERIT Operating program, like most other public transit providers. In 2023, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, House Bill 1496 and Senate Bill 1079, dedicating up to 3.5% of the CMTF to VRE for operating or capital purposes, depending on service delivery factors. These changes will first be reflected in Fiscal Year 2025.

Commonwealth Rail Fund

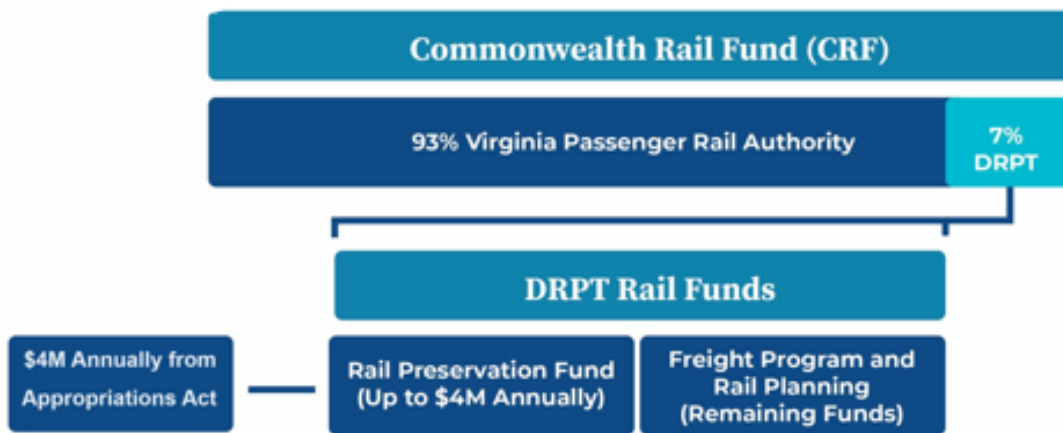
The Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF) is laid out in § 33.2-1526.4 of the Code of Virginia and receives 7.5% of the Transportation Trust Fund. The CRF is shared by DRPT and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), Virginia’s agency for promoting and sustaining passenger rail. DRPT retains 7% of the CRF for freight rail grants, statewide rail planning, technical assistance,

and administration. The remaining 93% is passed through DRPT to VPRA for passenger rail programs.

DRPT's portion of the CRF pays for statewide rail planning for both freight and passenger rail conducted by DRPT, and for implementation of freight rail improvements through the Freight Rail Enhancement to Increase Goods and Highway Throughput (FREIGHT) grant program. Of the funds DRPT retains, the agency may also use up to \$4 million to supplement the Rail Preservation (Shortline) Fund.

The chart below visualizes the distribution of the Commonwealth Rail Fund:

Figure 4. The Commonwealth Rail Fund



The FREIGHT Program and Statewide Rail Planning

The CRF primarily supports the FREIGHT Program, which is designed to support rail infrastructure investments to expand the Virginia freight rail network. Funding awards require a performance period once the project has been completed to ensure the investment brings lasting benefits to the economy and transportation network in Virginia. The program supports projects that improve, for example, railways, railroad equipment, rolling stock, rights-of-way, rail facilities, and engineering and design. The FREIGHT program accepted its first round of applications in advance of the adoption of the Fiscal Year 23 Six-Year Improvement Program. In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT allocated over \$12.1 million to fund Virginia’s share of FREIGHT Program projects.

In addition to the FREIGHT Program, DRPT retains some of the CRF for statewide rail planning and project management. These funds are used for managing DRPT’s rail programs, providing technical assistance to freight railroads, localities, and, planning organizations, and conducting rail studies, such as the Central Virginia Rail Economic Development Study. DRPT conducts long-term passenger rail planning that develops the path forward for passenger rail expansion and enhancement. The **DC2RVA** study, which led to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority’s **Transforming Rail in Virginia** initiative, is one example of DRPT’s long-term rail planning efforts. Similarly, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)-created **Corridor Identification and Development** Program (Corridor ID) will create a pipeline of projects to advance passenger rail expansion. At the time of writing, DRPT has begun the Corridor ID process to study two corridors: the Commonwealth Corridor, which will connect Hampton Roads to the New River Valley via Richmond and Charlottesville, and the Washington D.C. to Bristol corridor. Additionally, every four years, DRPT prepares and submits an updated **Statewide Rail**

Plan to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This is required for Virginia to be eligible for federal rail funding.

Rail Preservation Fund

The Rail Preservation Fund (RPF), also known as the Shortline Railway Preservation program, provides shortline (class-III) railroads grant funding to maintain a state of good repair for infrastructure and rolling stock, and to improve the capacity of shortline rail networks. The goal is to maintain FRA Class 2 Track Safety Standards, ensuring a baseline speed and reliability of service.

The Rail Preservation Fund receives \$4 million annually from VDOT’s Highway Construction Fund as allocated in the biennial budget and can receive up to \$4 million in unallocated funds from the Commonwealth Rail Fund/FREIGHT Program. In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT provided nearly \$8.7 million to the Rail Preservation Fund. The surplus above \$8 million is due to carryovers from previous unallocated funds.

Rail Industrial Access Program

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 \$5.5 million in funds from the Transportation Trust Fund with VDOT’s Economic Development Access Program, a similar program that provides road access to businesses. Applicants can apply for up to \$750,000 (as of March 2024) with a requirement of a 30 percent match from the applicant.

Federal Funds

In addition to administering state funds, DRPT passes through federal transit funds to public transit agencies. These formula funds are established in Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the United States Code (U.S.C.), which governs public transportation in the United States. The federal transit funds DRPT administers are shown in the graphic below, with the U.S.C. title and description:

Figure 5. Federal Transportation Funds administered by DRPT

49 U.S.C § 5303	• Metropolitan multimodal planning support
49 U.S.C § 5307	• Capital and operating formula assistance in urban areas
49 U.S.C § 5310	• Paratransit/transportation for older adults and individuals with limited mobility
49 U.S.C § 5311	• Capital and operating formula assistance in rural areas
49 U.S.C § 5329	• State safety and oversight for fixed rail guideways
49 U.S.C § 5339	• Grants for buses and bus equipment

These federal funds supplement state and local funding for public transportation. It should be noted that larger urban public transportation providers receive federal funding directly from the FTA, while smaller urban public transportation providers and rural public transportation providers have access to these federal funds after they pass through DRPT. It is also worth noting that DRPT receives some funding from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program as well as the Regional Surface Transportation program, both of which are administered federally.

Six-Year Improvement Program

The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is the Commonwealth’s joint annual funding allocation program for the programs and initiatives that DRPT and VDOT administer. The SYIP acts as DRPT’s budget for funding and supporting rail and public transit programs across the Commonwealth. The programs within the SYIP receive their funding from the programs and formulas of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund and the Commonwealth Rail Fund. Operating support is provided through formula-based funding (see MERIT Operating), while capital and other projects are individually scored and funded through the grant application process.

The Fiscal Year 2024 Six-Year Improvement Program

The Code of Virginia requires the CTB to adopt the upcoming fiscal year’s SYIP by July 1st of each year. On June 21st, 2023, the CTB adopted DRPT’s Fiscal Year 2024 SYIP. DRPT’s Fiscal Year 2024 SYIP provides record funding for rail and public transportation projects across the Commonwealth.

The SYIP includes all the funding from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund and Commonwealth Rail Fund. Additionally, all DRPT-managed federal funds are included in the SYIP, as well as additional smaller programs such as toll programs (passed through DRPT to regional transportation entities in Northern Virginia) and pass-through funds for VPRRA.

The table below shows the Fiscal Year 2024 SYIP projection of allocations from Fiscal Year 2024 to Fiscal Year 2029:

Table 1. Fiscal Year 2024 Six-Year Improvement Program (\$ in Millions)

Source	Fund	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	Total
Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund	Public Transit Operating Assistance	\$ 134.8	\$ 116.5	\$ 118.8	\$ 121.3	\$ 123.6	\$ 125.7	\$ 740.7
	Public Transit Capital Assistance	\$ 100.8	\$ 79.4	\$ 81.0	\$ 82.7	\$ 84.2	\$ 85.6	\$ 513.7
	WMATA Allocation	\$ 210.5	\$ 217.2	\$ 221.5	\$ 226.1	\$ 230.4	\$ 234.2	\$ 1,339.9
	VRE Allocation*	\$ -	\$ 16.4	\$ 16.7	\$ 17.0	\$ 17.3	\$ 17.6	\$ 85.0
	Transit Ridership	\$ 26.9	\$ 28.0	\$ 28.6	\$ 29.2	\$ 29.7	\$ 30.2	\$ 172.6

	Incentive Program							
	Special Projects, CAP Projects	\$ 10.7	\$ 11.7	\$ 11.9	\$ 12.2	\$ 12.4	\$ 12.6	\$ 71.4
	State Safety Oversight-WMSC	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	\$ 12.0
	Paratransit Assistance Program	\$ 1.1	\$ 1.5	\$ 1.5	\$ 1.5	\$ 1.5	\$ 1.5	\$ 8.6
Regional WMATA Funds	Dedicated Funds - WMATA	\$ 154.5	\$ 154.5	\$ 154.5	\$ 154.5	\$ 154.5	\$ 154.5	\$ 927.0
DRPT-Administered Federal Funds	FTA State Administered Program Funds	\$ 75.2	\$ 77.5	\$ 79.8	\$ 82.2	\$ 84.6	\$ 87.2	\$ 486.4
	Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ)	\$ 11.2	\$ 7.8	\$ 11.3	\$ 9.7	\$ 10.6	\$ 6.3	\$ 56.8
	Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP)	\$ 6.3	\$ 4.9	\$ 10.0	\$ 5.9	\$ 13.8	\$ 2.2	\$ 43.0
	State Match from Transportation Trust Fund (TTF)	\$ 4.4	\$ 3.2	\$ 5.3	\$ 3.9	\$ 6.1	\$ 2.1	\$ 25.0
Additional Funds and Toll Revenues	Local Funds	\$ 0.5	\$ 0.9	\$ 0.9	\$ 1.0	\$ 1.0	\$ 1.0	\$ 5.3
	I-395 Toll Funds	\$ 16.6	\$ 17.0	\$ 17.4	\$ 17.8	\$ 18.3	\$ 18.7	\$ 105.8
	I-66 Outside the Beltway Toll Funds	\$ 5.0	\$ 11.0	\$ 11.0	\$ 12.0	\$ 15.0	\$ 18.0	\$ 72.0
	<i>Total Public Transportation Allocation</i>	\$ 810.5	\$ 802.4	\$ 825.2	\$ 831.8	\$ 858.0	\$ 852.5	\$ 4,980.4
Commonwealth Rail Fund and Additional State Rail Funding	Planning and FREIGHT	\$ 13.2	\$ 3.0	\$ 4.6	\$ 1.1	\$ 1.1	\$ 1.1	\$ 24.1
	Rail Preservation Fund Program	\$ 8.7	\$ 8.1	\$ 3.7	\$ 2.8	\$ 2.3	\$ 0.7	\$ 26.2
	<i>Total DRPT Rail Allocation</i>	\$ 21.9	\$ 11.0	\$ 8.3	\$ 3.9	\$ 3.4	\$ 1.8	\$ 50.4

Pass-through funds	VPRA Transforming Rail in Virginia	\$ 93.2	\$ 174.4	\$ 879.6	\$ 92.4	\$ 48.0	\$ 30.4	\$ 1,317.9
Total Allocations		\$ 925.5	\$ 987.8	\$ 1,713.2	\$ 928.0	\$ 909.4	\$ 884.7	\$ 6,348.6

Note: Operating and Capital Assistance include funds carried over from prior fiscal years, as well as some minor toll revenues.

*Note: At the time of publication, the **Fiscal Year 2025 SYIP** has been approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board and includes updated projections and additional General Funds. Please refer to this version of the SYIP for the most up-to-date projections.*

**VRE will begin to receive a dedicated source of funding in Fiscal Year 2025.*

DRPT Transit Programs

DRPT offers a range of support for Virginia’s 40 public transportation providers. DRPT provides grant funding, technical assistance, leadership, and additional support to all public transportation providers. Additionally, DRPT conducts studies, prepares statewide plans, and distributes most of its funds to support Virginia’s public transportation agencies and providers. This is done through several DRPT-managed projects and programs providing formula-driven funding support and grants. This section dives into the details of these projects and programs. While this section does describe how programs are funded, the [Administration and Funding](#) section of this report has further details on where State public transportation funding comes from.

Virginia’s Public Transit Network

Chapter 49 of the United States Code § 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.” This includes buses, light rail, subways, commuter rail, paratransit, and ferryboats, all of which operate in Virginia. Pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 33.2-285, DRPT is the agency responsible for public transportation funding in Virginia.

There are 40 public transportation providers in Virginia, not including private bus services (nor the Virginia Breeze) or paratransit providers. These range from small, rural public transportation providers with a single route or operating microtransit services only, to multistate authorities that move tens of millions of people yearly. Public transportation in Virginia covers all corners of the Commonwealth and serves all kinds of geographies.

The table below covers all the public transportation providers in Virginia:

Table 2. Public Transportation Providers in Virginia

Transportation Construction District	Transit Provider Name	Transportation Construction District	Transit Provider Name
Bristol	Four County Transit	Northern Virginia (continued)	CUE (City of Fairfax)
	Bristol Transit		Fairfax Connector
	Mountain Lynx Transit		Virginia Railway Express
	Mountain Empire Transit		OmniRide
	Graham Transit		WMATA
Culpeper	Charlottesville Area Transit	Richmond	Petersburg Area Transit
Fredericksburg	FXBGo! (Fredericksburg Regional Transit)		Greater Richmond Transit Company
Hampton Roads	Suffolk Transit	Salem	Radford Transit
	Greensville-Emporia Transit		Valley Metro/GRTC Roanoke
	Hampton Roads Transit		Pulaski Area Transit
	STAR Transit (Accomack-Northampton TDC)		Blacksburg Transit
	Pony Express (Chincoteague)	Staunton	BRITE (Central Shenandoah)

	Williamsburg Area Transit Authority		Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation
Lynchburg	Danville Transit	Multi-District	WinTran
	Farmville Area Bus		Bay Transit
	Greater Lynchburg Transit Company		Blackstone Area Bus System
	Altavista Community Transit System		JAUNT
Northern Virginia	Loudoun County Transit	The Virginia Breeze	Lake Area Bus / Halifax Area Rural Transportation
	Arlington Regional Transit		RADAR / UHSTS
	DASH (Alexandria)		Virginia Regional Transit
Intercity Bus			

The map below shows the areas of Virginia served by public transportation:

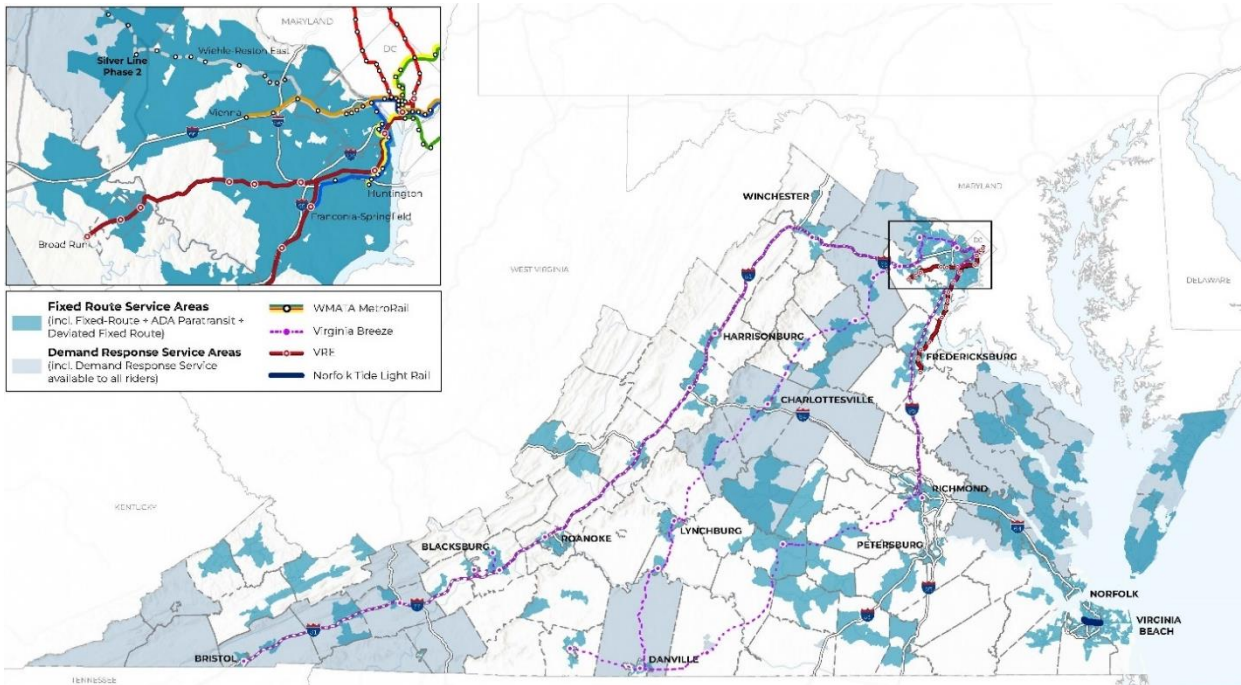


Figure 6. Public Transportation Services in Virginia

The Virginia Breeze

The Virginia Breeze Bus Line is DRPT’s intercity bus service that connects underserved rural communities with larger urban areas across the Commonwealth, improving access to reliable transportation and moving more people across the Commonwealth. As of the end of Fiscal Year 2024, the service consists of four routes: the Valley Flyer, the Piedmont Express, the Capital Connector, and the Highlands Rhythm. The Virginia Breeze operates in each direction on every route 365 days a year.

Background

The Virginia Breeze was created in 2017 with one route – simply called *The Virginia Breeze* – to provide intercity public transportation options to underserved and rural areas of Virginia. Virginia previously identified a service gap in intercity public transportation options in many underserved and rural areas, where alternatives to private automobiles were limited or non-existent. To fill that gap, DRPT partnered with the Federal Transit Administration’s Intercity Bus Program to launch the Virginia Breeze. Now, the Virginia Breeze operates four routes:

The Valley Flyer

The Valley Flyer is the original Virginia Breeze route launched in December 2017, providing daily service between Blacksburg and Washington, D.C. The route mostly parallels the highly trafficked Interstate 81 corridor, before connecting to Washington, D.C. via Interstate 66. The Valley Flyer also serves stops in Christiansburg, Lexington, Staunton, Harrisonburg, Front Royal, Dulles International Airport, and West Falls Church.

The Piedmont Express

The Piedmont Express was launched in August 2020, after the Covid-19 pandemic paused the Virginia Breeze service. The Piedmont Express provides daily service between Danville and Washington D.C., largely following Route 29, with intermediate stops at Altavista, Lynchburg, Amherst, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Warrenton, Gainesville, and Dulles International Airport.

The Capital Connector

The Capital Connector launched at the same time as the Piedmont Express in August 2020, largely serving parts of southside Virginia. The Capital Connector provides daily service between Martinsville and Washington D.C., with intermediate stops at Danville, South Boston, Farmville, and Richmond, before traveling north along I-95 to Washington D.C.

The Highlands Rhythm

The most recent addition to the Virginia Breeze service is the Highlands Rhythm. The Highlands Rhythm launched in November 2021, primarily serving the I-81 corridor and Southwest Virginia. It provides daily service between Bristol, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., with intermediate stops in Wytheville, Radford, Christiansburg, Salem, Harrisonburg, Dulles International Airport, and the West Falls Church Metrorail station. The Highlands Rhythm overlaps with the Valley Flyer’s service at Christiansburg, Harrisonburg, Dulles International Airport, and West Falls Church. This provides a second daily service in each direction at some of the Virginia Breeze’s busiest stops along the Interstate 81 corridor.

Success Story: The Virginia Breeze is Breaking Records and Building Bridges to Continue Increasing Ridership

Overall, it has been a record-breaking year for the Virginia Breeze, with over 61,000 riders using the Virginia Breeze to connect across the Commonwealth.

Early in the calendar year, DRPT worked with the University of Virginia to move the Charlottesville Virginia Breeze bus stop from a more remote location to a spot on Grounds across from the Gooch-Dillard residence hall complex. The move occurred on February 17 and is expected to have a positive impact on ridership.

Funding

The Virginia Breeze is funded through a mix of federal funds (through FTA 5311(f) funds) and tickets purchased by passengers, as well as a small amount of I-81 Corridor Improvement funding for the Highlands Rhythm.

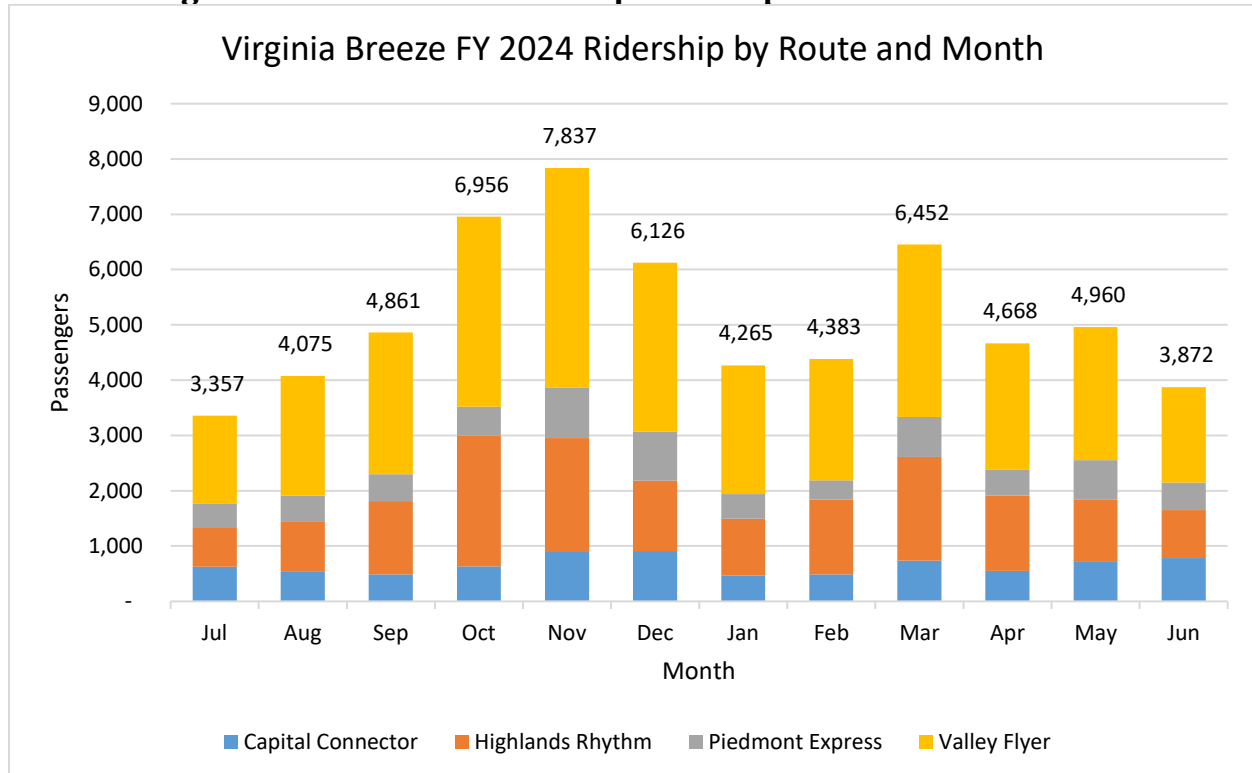
Administration

DRPT manages and markets the Virginia Breeze Service and contracts with Dillon’s Bus Service (owned by Megabus/Coach USA) to operate it. Dillon’s Bus Service provides vehicles, drivers, maintenance, and ticketing systems. In June 2024, Coach USA filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, dropping some of its private services but remaining operational. There has been no impact to the Virginia Breeze, and DRPT is closely monitoring the situation to ensure there will be no impact.

Data and Positive Outcomes

The Virginia Breeze has continued to break ridership records in Fiscal Year 2024. With all four routes in full service and ridership impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic largely subsided, the Virginia Breeze transported a record 61,812 people in Fiscal Year 2024. The chart below illustrates the Virginia Breeze’s ridership in Fiscal Year 2024 by month and route:

Chart 1. Virginia Breeze Fiscal Year 2024 Ridership

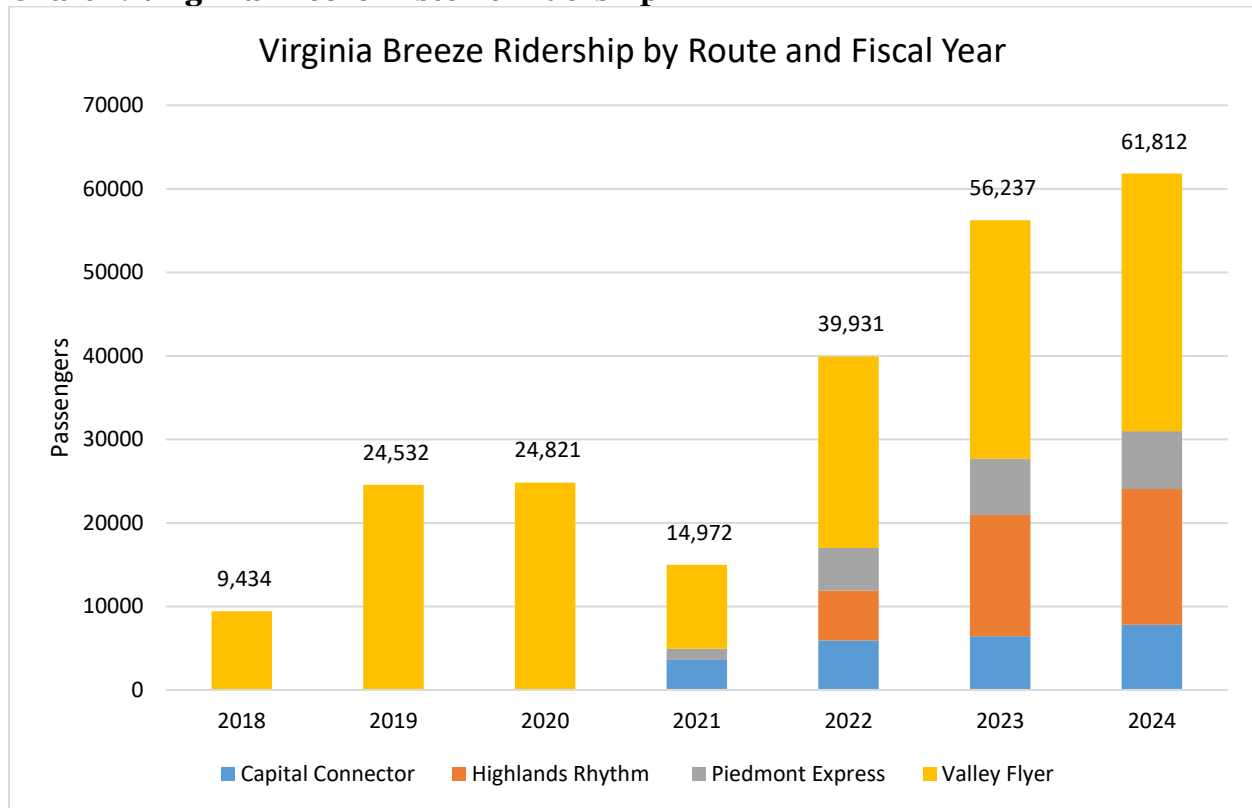


Fluctuations in Virginia Breeze ridership levels month-to-month are largely driven by the travel trends of students attending colleges or universities, contributing to a significant increase in trips. For example, June and July ridership were lower as the typical college semester does not extend into those months, thus college students are home and not using the service. On the other extreme, November is typically the Virginia Breeze’s busiest month, largely driven by college students traveling for Thanksgiving. Many more trips are made by individuals seeking to

connect to the larger national transportation network by connecting at transit hubs like Dulles International Airport or Washington Union Station. November 2023 was the Virginia Breeze’s busiest month ever.

The chart below shows the Virginia Breeze’s ridership by fiscal year and route, illustrating the bus service’s growth over time:

Chart 2. Virginia Breeze Historic Ridership



Public Engagement

DRPT team members showed their DRPT spirit by attending a Richmond Kickers game to promote the Virginia Breeze. Kickeroo even hopped over to the table and the Virginia Breeze-themed pom-poms were a big hit. Team members also went wa-hoo-wild as they tabled at UVA Football, Baseball, and Basketball games.

Next Stop 2030

The Virginia Breeze ensures areas of the Commonwealth with less access to intercity transportation solutions are able to connect to new communities and larger intermodal connection points. At the same time, it brings new people and faces to areas that are less accessible via highways. The Virginia Breeze also helps mitigate congestion by providing riders with an alternative to driving their cars down interstates, such as I-81, often burdened by traffic. Since last year, ridership increased by over 5,000 riders; and the Virginia Breeze’s reach is expanding, with an additional route in the planning phases. The Virginia Breeze bolsters equitable access to transportation and minimizes the environmental impact of transportation by taking cars off of the road, both of which are key to ensuring the service’s continued positive impact on the Commonwealth.

The successes have not stopped for the Virginia Breeze, and yet, the push for continued improvements goes on. The Virginia Breeze was nationally recognized by APTA in 2024 for its outstanding marketing campaigns and approaches to spreading the word about the service. Terms in the operating contract for the Virginia Breeze will give greater assurance that service providers improve on-time performance, acquire new buses as needed, and provide real-time data to riders. With well-managed data collection and strong partnerships, DRPT has been able to respond to user trends and adjust stops accordingly, fostering innovative practical solutions and contributing to better transportation outcomes across the Commonwealth and country.

All these strides are driven first and foremost by customer experience. DRPT solicits public feedback and input through surveys and in-person events to hear directly from customers and tailor the Virginia Breeze experience to their unique needs. Positive survey results have been highlighted on DRPT's social media while the feedback shared directly from customers as well as implicitly through data has informed changes to the routes and stops. For example, one Virginia Breeze stop was relocated on the grounds of the University of Virginia to make the stop more accessible to students. Future stop relocations are in progress for Fiscal Year 2025. DRPT will continue to collaborate proactively with partners and stakeholders to create the best possible solutions for the Virginia Breeze.

Looking Toward the Future

In May 2024, DRPT announced the newest Virginia Breeze route: The Tidewater Current. This announcement was the culmination of several studies, public surveys, and rider feedback on the Virginia Breeze, all of which pointed to a major service gap in the Virginia Breeze's service: an east-to-west connection. The Tidewater Current will provide that connection, traveling along the I-64 corridor from the Shenandoah Valley to Hampton Roads, with stops between. The service is expected to launch in the Summer of 2025.

The East-West Virginia Breeze study identified two alternatives for routings to connect Hampton Roads to the Shenandoah Valley. The preferred alternative, which was identified to have a higher annual ridership and a lower annual operating cost, will serve Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Newport News, Williamsburg, New Kent County, Richmond International Airport, Richmond Main Street Station, Charlottesville, Crozet, Waynesboro, Staunton, and Harrisonburg. The exact stop locations are still to be determined.

DRPT is continuing to work on this new route. Through the rest of 2024, DRPT will identify the specific locations for stops along the preferred alternative, if they do not exist already. Once an operator for the service is identified, DRPT will begin to move forward with launching the service for passengers. The estimated trip time, from end to end, is 6.5 hours. Ticket pricing is to be determined. Like all Virginia Breeze routes, the Tidewater Current will run 365 days a year, with service in each direction every day.

Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT)

Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) is a statewide grants program that provides financial assistance to support public transportation providers throughout Virginia. MERIT funds public transportation providers for operating expenses, capital purchases, demonstration projects, technical assistance, and workforce development programs.

Background

The 2018 General Assembly passed House Bill 1539/Senate Bill 856, which required the Commonwealth Transportation Board to develop a prioritization process for public transportation funding, which became the program now known as MERIT. Using MERIT, DRPT ensures that Virginia's limited transportation funding is given to the most important transit projects that maximizes the benefits for passengers and the public.

MERIT Operating

MERIT Operating grants state funding support to a portion of a public transportation provider's operating expenses, the exact amount being determined by performance metrics and audited expenses. Virginia's public transportation providers (except WMATA, which receives dedicated funding, and VRE which will begin receiving dedicated funding in Fiscal Year 2025) each receive MERIT Operating support annually. MERIT Operating is distributed to transit providers based on service delivery factors, including ridership, revenue hours, and revenue miles, to ensure public resources are used sustainably and responsibly. These metrics are tracked by DRPT and posted on DRPT's [Open Data Portal](#). DRPT provides up to 30% of a transit agency's operating expenses, based on the prior year's audited operating expenses, through this program.

In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT provided \$133 million in MERIT Operating support to public transportation providers across Virginia. See [Appendix Table 1](#) for the total MERIT Operating funding received by each public transportation provider.

MERIT Capital

MERIT Capital dedicates state funding for a portion of the cost of purchasing capital assets. This can range from small equipment like new radios or repair equipment to operating vehicles like buses and vans, or major capital projects such as a fleet maintenance facility.

The MERIT Capital program itself is divided into three categories: State of Good Repair, Minor Enhancements, and Major Expansions. State of Good Repair funds can be used for replacing or rehabilitating existing assets to maintain transit assets at a condition sufficient to operate at a full level of performance or to replace transit vehicles that are approaching the end of their useful life. The lion's share of capital funding supports State of Good Repair projects. Minor Enhancements are smaller capital projects with a total cost of less than \$3 million or programs that add capacity to a transit provider's operations or include purchasing new assets. Small fleet expansions of new vehicles and all engineering or design projects are included in this category. The final category is Major Expansions which covers projects that greatly expand a transit provider's fleet or the replacement of an entire existing facility. All projects with a total cost of over \$3 million fall under this category.

In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT gave around \$100 million in MERIT Capital support to public transportation providers across Virginia. See [Appendix Table 2](#) for the total MERIT Capital funding received by each public transportation provider.

MERIT Demonstration Projects

MERIT Demonstration Projects afford funds for projects that pilot new opportunities. Demonstration projects are short-term projects that explore new transit services or technology. By being short-term projects, the risk of a demonstration project is mitigated, and new service or technology can be safely field-tested. In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT awarded nine Demonstration

grants, totaling \$2.6 million in State funds across the projects. The table below shows the Fiscal Year 2024 Demonstration Program’s projects:

Table 3. Fiscal Year 2024 Demonstration Projects, \$ in Thousands

Transportation Construction District	Recipient	Project Name	State Funds (\$ in thousands)
Hampton Roads	City of Franklin	City of Franklin Public Transportation	\$ 241
Bristol	Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc.	Met-Go Innovation Project	\$ 46
Lynchburg	Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	GLTC Microtransit Demo	\$ 785
Northern Virginia	Alexandria Transit Company	DASH Automated Wheelchair Securement System Pilot	\$ 64
Northern Virginia	Alexandria Transit Company	DASH Electric Bus Charge Management System Pilot	\$ 188
Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	GRTC Ashland and Powhatan Microtransit Pilot	\$ 972
Salem	City of Radford	Radford Transit Website Design	\$ 32
Salem	County of Roanoke	McAfee Knob Trailhead Shuttle Expansion	\$ 171
Salem	Town of Bedford	Bedford Otter Bus - Phase 2	\$ 140

MERIT Demonstration projects cover a broad range of projects, from supporting expansion into areas never served by public transit to improving safety and accessibility for wheelchair users. Below are a few spotlighted demonstration grant projects:

Microtransit Pilot Programs

Both the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) and the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) received funds to implement microtransit in their regions. Microtransit is on-demand public transit that facilitates curb-to-curb transit within a service zone, rather than operating on a fixed schedule with fixed routes. Microtransit services fill a gap in areas where traditional fixed-route bus service is not feasible, but the need for public transit services exists. GLTC’s microtransit service (GLTC FLEX) will cover portions of southern Lynchburg and into Bedford County suburbs. GRTC’s microtransit service (called GRTC Link) will cover the area around the Town of Ashland in Hanover County and parts of Powhatan County. GRTC’s Link Microtransit is the first public transit service ever to serve Powhatan County.

Expanding Public Transportation

The City of Franklin received a demonstration grant to implement public transportation in the City for the first time. The awarding of this grant follows up on a 2023 feasibility study evaluating options for deploying public transportation in Franklin. The City of Franklin elected to implement a fixed-route public transit system, and DRPT’s Demonstration grant will partially fund the service until its demonstration period ends.

Improving Accessibility and Sustainability

DASH (Alexandria Transit Company) received two demonstration grants. The first of these grants will allow DASH to implement and evaluate the use of automatic wheelchair securement systems on five pilot buses. This will give wheelchair users the ability to safely secure themselves without driver assistance and could lead to a larger implementation of the service if deemed safe and successful. The second demonstration grant will partially fund an electric bus charge management system that will monitor all charging activities and manage charging in real time on DASH’s electric bus fleet.

MERIT Technical Assistance

MERIT Technical Assistance supports studies, plans, research, data collection, and evaluation projects to help improve public transportation services. In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT awarded 14 Technical Assistance grants, providing just under \$2.5 million in state funds to support a range of feasibility studies, assessments, and strategic plan development. The table below shows the Fiscal Year 2024 Technical Assistance projects:

Table 4. Fiscal Year 2024 Technical Assistance Projects, \$ in Thousands

Transportation Construction District	Recipient	Project Name	State Funds (\$ in Thousands)
Bristol	City of Bristol Virginia	Bristol Virginia Transit Microtransit Feasibility Study	\$ 25
Hampton Roads	Hampton Roads Transit	TRAFFIX Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan	\$ 25
Hampton Roads	STAR Transit	STAR Transit EV Assessment	\$ 10
Multi-District	JAUNT, Inc.	JAUNT Battery Electric Vehicle Implementation Study	\$ 42
Multi-District	JAUNT, Inc.	JAUNT Mobility-on-Demand Service Design and Development	\$ 65
Multi-District	Virginia Regional Transit	Virginia Regional Transit EV Assessment	\$ 10
Northern Virginia	NVTC - City of Fairfax	Fairfax CUE Transit Development Plan and Zero-Fare Evaluation	\$ 50
Northern Virginia	NVTC - NVTC	NVTC Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit Planning and NEPA Analysis	\$ 500
Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	GRTC Downtown Transfer Center Study	\$ 282
Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	GRTC North-South BRT Environmental Clearance and Conceptual Design	\$ 1,250
Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	GRTC East End Transfer Area NEPA Analysis	\$ 48
Richmond	RideFinders	RideFinders - Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan	\$ 48

Salem	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission	RVARC - Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan	\$ 52
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MERIT Workforce Development

Finally, MERIT Workforce Development aids agencies in the hiring of apprentices or interns who are interested in pursuing careers in public transportation. In Fiscal Year 2024, DRPT allocated just over \$400,000 to ten Workforce Development Programs across the Commonwealth, helping transit agencies take on the next generation of talent and leaders in the transit industry. The table below shows the Fiscal Year 2024 Workforce Development project:

Table 5. Fiscal Year 2024 Workforce Development Projects, \$ in Thousands

Transportation Construction District	Recipient	Project Name	State Funds (\$ in Thousands)
Hampton Roads	Hampton Roads Transit	HRT Internship	\$ 16
Lynchburg	Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	GLTC Intern Program	\$ 17
Northern Virginia	Alexandria Transit Company	DASH Internship Program	\$ 44
Northern Virginia	Arlington County	ART Internship Program (2)	\$ 67
Northern Virginia	NVTC - NVTC	NVTC Transit Fellow Program (3)	\$ 40
Northern Virginia	PRTC	PRTC Professional Development Fellow Program	\$ 31
Richmond	City of Richmond	City of Richmond Internship (2)	\$ 48
Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	GRTC Internship (2)	\$ 33
Richmond	Virginia Transit Association	VTA FY24 Professional Development Training	\$ 101
Salem	City of Radford	Radford Transit Internship	\$ 12

Success Story: New Parking Lot for Commuters with VRE and Customers of Nearby Businesses in Manassas Park

In July of 2023, the Virginia Railway Express began construction on a new parking lot near the Manassas Park VRE station. This lot was funded through a combination of funds from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the city, I-66 Outside the Beltway concessionaire payments, the I-66 Commuter Choice program from NVTC, as well as MERIT Capital funding. With 540 spaces, the lot will serve VRE passengers as well as patrons of nearby businesses. “The folks that commute on VRE, they love VRE. It’s consistent, it’s clean, it’s convenient, it’s a great option to help meet your transportation needs,” former DRPT Director Jennifer DeBruhl said during the groundbreaking. “And here in Manassas Park, ... the parking expansion is a big

step forward into the future. It will help us increase ridership and add to the many reasons why people do love the VRE.” The lot is expected to be completed in 2025. More information on this exciting project can be found in the section of this report focused on [VRE](#).

Funding/Financing

MERIT’s programs are funded through the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund. The Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund distributes funding to MERIT’s programs through a formula established in Virginia Law. According to § 33.2-1526.1. of the Code of Virginia requires that 27% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund supports MERIT Operating and 18% funds MERIT Capital. MERIT’s Technical, Demonstration, and Workforce Development programs share 2.5% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund, alongside DRPT’s Commuter Assistance Program (see the [Commuter Assistance Programs](#) for further detail). For further details on the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund, see the [Administration and Funding](#) section.

Administration

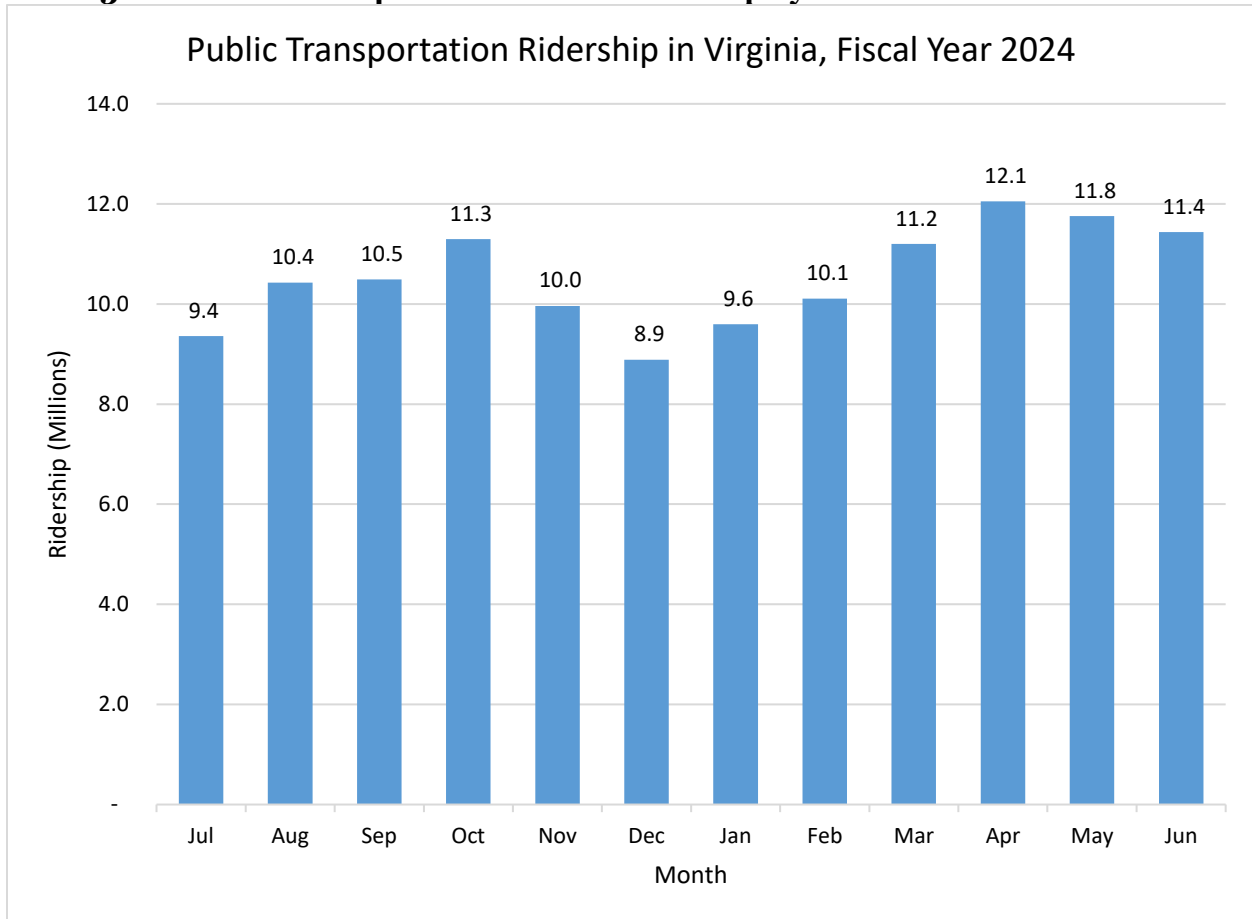
DRPT staff are responsible for administering MERIT. All MERIT programs, except for MERIT Operating, are application-based grant programs that begin accepting applications during the prior fiscal year. Eligible recipients can apply starting in December of the prior fiscal year. DRPT then awards grants based on the availability of funding and the score a grant application receives. MERIT Operating uses a formula based on reported sizing and performance-based metrics to allocate operating support. Grants and operating funding that are awarded are then programmed into DRPT’s Six-Year Improvement Program. This Six-Year Improvement Program contains a list of all funded MERIT and non-MERIT programs for the fiscal year, as well as projections for allocations in the five subsequent fiscal years.

Data and Positive Outcomes

Fiscal Year 2024 saw Virginia’s transit ridership continues to climb as public transit providers across the Commonwealth restored service to pre-pandemic levels, new and enhanced services went into service, zero or reduced fare programs reduced barriers to transit use, and access to public transit increased.

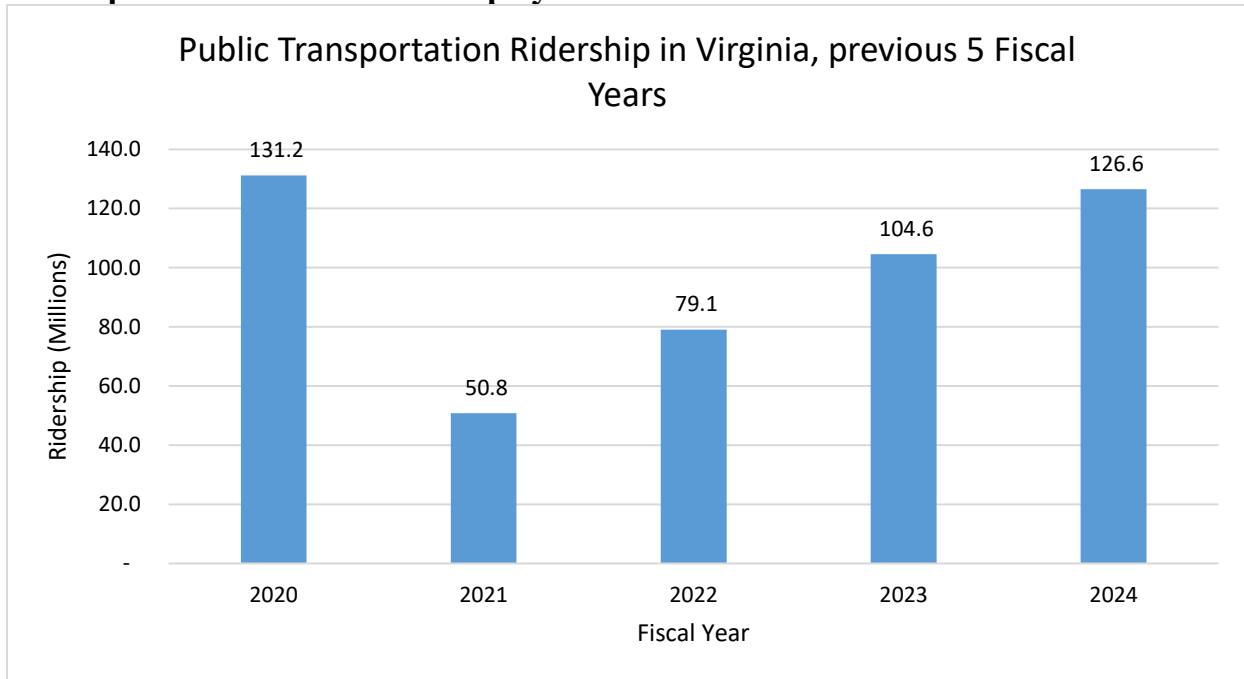
In total, over 126.6 million trips were taken on public transit across Virginia during Fiscal Year 2024. For comparison, there were 104.5 million public transit trips across Virginia in Fiscal Year 2023. Those 22 million more trips in Fiscal Year 2024 translate to a 21% increase in statewide transit ridership. The table below shows Fiscal Year 2024 ridership month by month:

Chart 3. Fiscal Year 2024 Public Transit Ridership by Month



As stated above, ridership increased 21% over Fiscal Year 2023 ridership. The table below shows Virginia’s public transit ridership over the previous five fiscal years:

Chart 4. Public Transit Ridership by Fiscal Year



Virginia’s public transportation ridership levels declined significantly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, setting a low of just over 50 million trips in Fiscal Year 2021. Since then, public transit ridership has increased year over year and is nearly at pre-pandemic levels.

For more detailed ridership figures by public transportation providers or mode of transit, see [Appendix Tables 3 & 4](#).

Public Engagement

DRPT attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 29th for the expansion of the McAfee Knob shuttle service that operates in Roanoke County from the City of Salem. This service connects more stops in the Roanoke region to McAfee Knob and provides access to the popular hiking destination when parking is shut down due to construction at the trailhead. DRPT had previously uplifted this project in the agency’s Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report and is pleased with the progress being made.

Next Stop 2030

Funding provided through MERIT Capital and Operating grants ensures that transit agencies across the Commonwealth can make long-term, thoughtful investments into transit infrastructure and service. Dollars are apportioned responsibly, with MERIT Operating funding being formula-driven and based on ridership data and all other MERIT funding made available through a competitive grant process. MERIT Operating and Capital funding has been awarded to all nine transportation districts so that no corner of the Commonwealth is deprived of the opportunity to strengthen and expand service. Between Technical Assistance grants and Demonstration Project grants, the MERIT program allows for the state’s transit agencies to pursue cutting-edge innovations, conduct future-looking studies, and pilot novel solutions to local problems. Transit is not just about programs, but about people, which is why the MERIT Workforce Development Program invests in the next generation of the transit workforce and gives them the exposure and learning needed today to tackle the toughest transit problems of tomorrow.

Looking Toward the Future

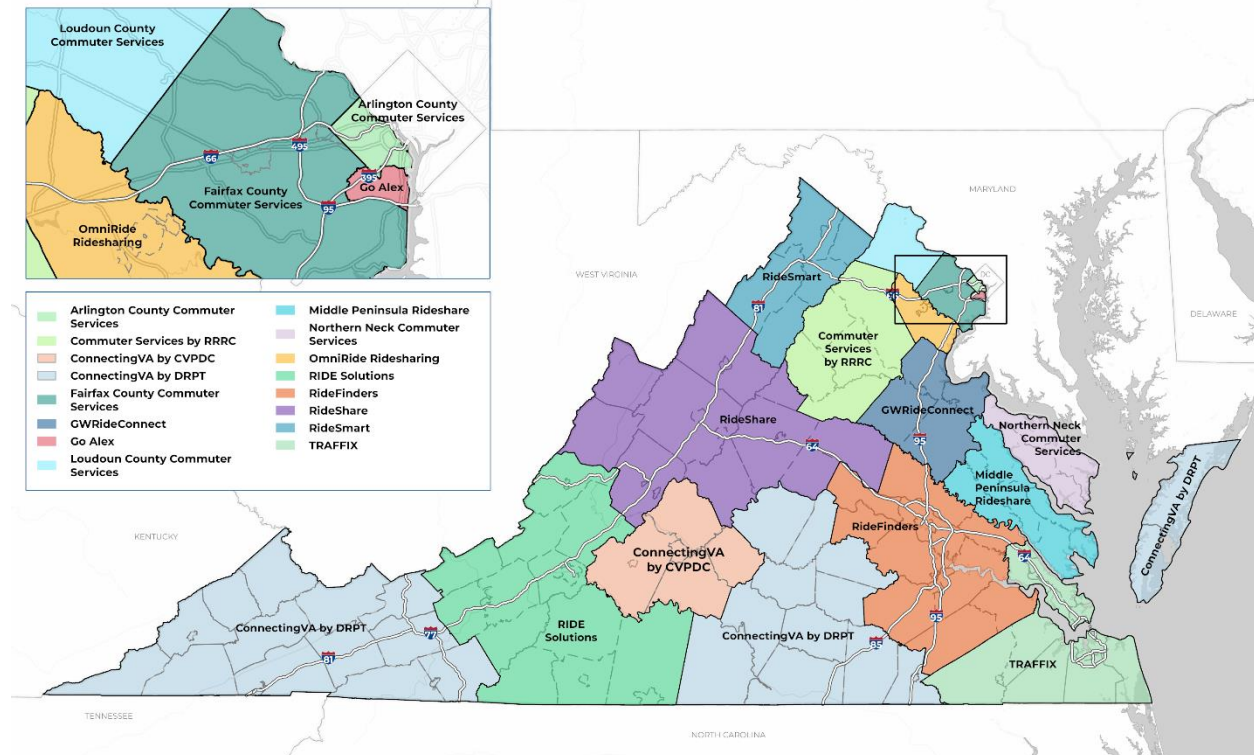
DRPT works with the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) to review its scoring methodology for the MERIT Program. TSDAC consists of members of Virginia’s transportation community and meets annually to review the methodology for scoring and awarding MERIT funding. In 2025, DRPT will work with TSDAC to review and update MERIT scoring and funding as needed. By regularly reviewing MERIT’s funding and scoring methodology, DRPT ensures that it is a good steward of public resources and is aligning program and funding criteria to support public transportation in Virginia.

Commuter Assistance Programs

The Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) is a statewide grant program for programs and projects that are both efficient and effective at increasing ridership via transit, vanpools, and carpooling, leading to moving more people on Virginia’s roads, mitigating traffic congestion, and reducing single-occupant vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, and fuel costs for Virginians.

There are 16 commuter assistance programs — including DRPT’s ConnectingVA — across the Commonwealth to help people interested in using public transportation or finding their commuting options. Virginia’s commuter assistance programs and the agencies that operate them can be found in [Appendix Table 5](#). A map showing Virginia’s commuter demand response areas is below:

Figure 7. Commuter areas in Virginia:



DRPT’s ConnectingVA website and mobile app equips the public and the other commuter assistance programs with a platform for ride-matching, trip planning, and rewards. The ConnectingVA app and website assist the public with identifying bus and train transit options,

carpools, vanpools, or bike options. App users log their non-drive-alone trips or telework days in the app to earn points which they can redeem for discounts for dining, shopping, leisure activities, services, and more.

Background & Funding

CAP grant programs are funded through the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund. CAP shares 2.5% of the CMTF with DRPT’s MERIT Technical Assistance, Demonstration, and Workforce Development Program (see the section on **MERIT** for further details). CAP is divided into two categories: Operating Assistance and Project Assistance.

The CAP Operating grant program funds the operation of regional and local commuter assistance programs that serve the public by directly engaging the public to encourage the use of transit, carpools, and vanpools, and by sharing multimodal ridematching services and travel mode options information. Programs funded under the CAP Operating grant program must achieve a measurable increase in the use of ridematching services and an increase in the use of transit, carpools, vanpools, and/or bicycle commuting. CAP Operating can cover the following types of services:

- Ride matching services that match commuters and travelers in carpools, vanpools, and transit options
- Commuter assistance websites and phone numbers
- Trip planning
- Contacting the public to encourage the use of the ridematching service, transit, carpools, and vanpools
- Guaranteed/Emergency Ride Home programs to help commuters get home when they carpool, vanpool, or use transit to work and have to leave early or work late unexpectedly
- Marketing and promotion of carpool, vanpool, transit, and bike-to-work travel options to residents, commuters, employers, and employees in Virginia

In Fiscal Year 2024, just over \$2.5 million in state funds were provided to CAP Operating grants distributed across 15 commuter assistance programs from the New River Valley to Northern Virginia. The table below lists the recipients of CAP Operating Grants, the funded project, and the State’s contribution:

Table 6. Fiscal Year 2024 Commuter Assistance Operating Grants

Transportation Construction District	Recipient	Project Name	State Funds (\$ in thousands)
Culpeper	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission	RRRC Commuter Services	\$ 132
Culpeper	Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission	RideShare	\$ 139
Fredericksburg	George Washington Regional Commission	GWRideConnect	\$ 273
Fredericksburg	Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission	Middle Peninsula Rideshare	\$ 73
Fredericksburg	Northern Neck Planning District Commission	Northern Neck Commuter Services	\$ 47

Lynchburg	Central Virginia Planning District Commission	RIDE Solutions - Central Virginia	\$ 51
Northern Virginia	City of Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services	GO Alex	\$ 95
Northern Virginia	County of Loudoun	Loudoun County Commuter Services	\$ 386
Northern Virginia	Fairfax County	Fairfax County Commuter Services (FCCS)	\$ 550
Northern Virginia	Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission	OmniRide Ridesharing	\$ 145
Salem	New River Valley Regional Commission	RIDE Solutions - New River Valley	\$ 94
Salem	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission	RIDE Solutions - Roanoke Valley-Alleghany	\$ 172
Salem	West Piedmont Planning District Commission	RIDE Solutions of the West Piedmont	\$ 47
Staunton	Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission	RideShare - Central Shenandoah	\$ 76
Staunton	Northern Shenandoah Valley Reg. Commission	RideSmart	\$ 228

CAP Project Assistance grant program bolsters transportation demand management projects, such as employer trip reduction, vanpool assistance, transit marketing, and other types of projects that achieve a measurable increase in the public's use of carpools, vanpools, transit, and/or bicycle when commuting to work. This program is targeted to projects that:

- Increase the number of private sector employers providing commuter benefits to employees who commute via public transportation or vanpools
- Increase the number of private sector employees commuting in carpools, vanpools, and transit
- Form new vanpools, increase the overall number of vanpools, and increase the number of vanpools riders
- Create and implement marketing campaigns that increase transit ridership

In Fiscal Year 2024, just under \$1.4 million in state funds were provided to CAP Project Assistance grants, supporting 12 individual projects across the Commonwealth, not including the \$750,000 allocated for statewide transit marketing. The table below lists the recipients of CAP Project Assistance grants, the funded project, and the State's contribution:

Table 7. Fiscal Year 2024 Commuter Assistance Project Assistance Grants

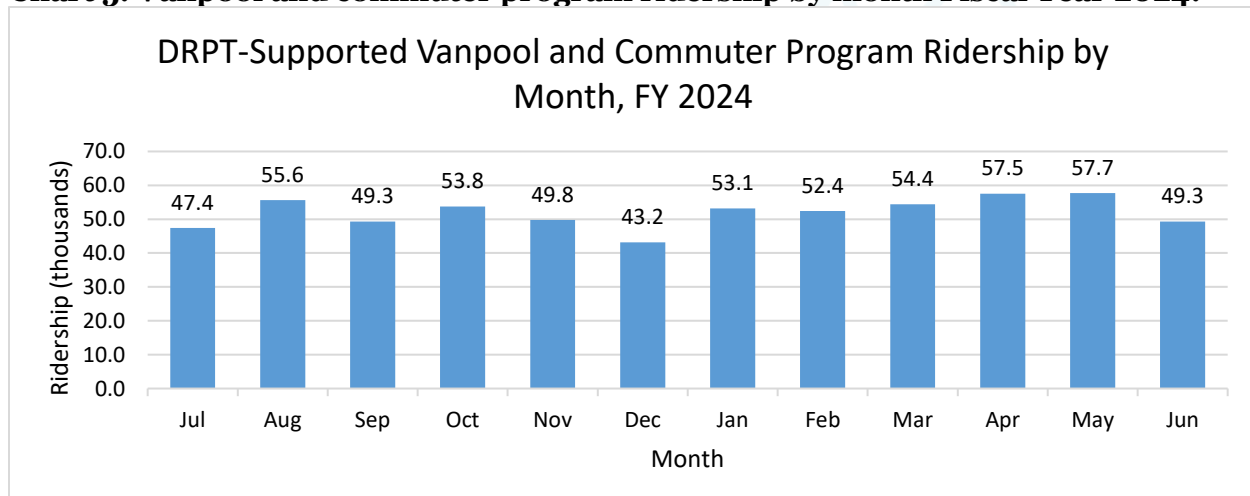
Transportation Construction District	Recipient	Project Name	State Funds (\$ in Thousands)
Fredericksburg	George Washington Regional Commission	AdVANtage Vanpool Self-Insurance Program	\$ 60

Fredericksburg	George Washington Regional Commission	Vanpool Connections by GWRideConnect	\$ 124
Northern Virginia	City of Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services	DASH Marketing	\$ 160
Northern Virginia	County of Loudoun	Loudoun County Bus Transit Marketing	\$ 316
Northern Virginia	County of Loudoun	Loudoun County Employer Trip Reduction Project	\$ 48
Northern Virginia	Dulles Area Transportation Association	DATA - Employer Trip Reduction Project	\$ 200
Northern Virginia	Fairfax County	Fairfax County - Employer Trip Reduction Project	\$ 123
Northern Virginia	Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission	PRTC Vanpool Assistance	\$ 13
Northern Virginia	Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission	PRTC Employer Trip Reduction	\$ 37
Richmond	RideFinders	Incentives for Carpools	\$ 100
Salem	Town of Blacksburg	Bus Service & Multi Modal Transfer Facility Marketing	\$ 40

Data and Positive Outcomes

Vanpools and commuter programs across Virginia transported over 620,000 people during Fiscal Year 2024. By commuting by vanpool, tens of thousands of cars were taken off Virginia's busiest roads and highways, reducing congestion and saving gas and money. The chart below shows the number of vanpool or commuter program riders by month for Fiscal Year 2024:

Chart 5. Vanpool and commuter program ridership by month Fiscal Year 2024:



Success Story: CAP is Exceeding Goals for Ridership and Helping Promote the New Multimodal Transit Center in Blacksburg

DRPT's strategic plan, Next Stop: 2030, challenges DRPT to increase ridership on vanpools across the Commonwealth to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel. For 2024, this performance measure set a goal of having 618,000 riders on vanpools, an increase of nearly 16,000 over 2023. Vanpool ridership in fiscal year 2024 was 623,503, an increase of 41,177 from 2023.

As far as projects benefiting from CAP, DRPT provided funding to assist in marketing a new transit center in Blacksburg, VA through a CAP project grant. Since 2021, the Town of Blacksburg and Virginia Tech have been constructing a new Multimodal Transit Facility on campus. The six-acre, 13,000 gross-square-foot, two-story transit center boasts several enhanced amenities that will greatly benefit passengers with improved shelter lighting and accessibility features to provide travelers with a safer and more comfortable waiting area. Additionally, the strategic placement of the center on Virginia Tech's campus allows for easier access by local transit providers, creating a seamless connection for passengers traveling to and from the university. The center, expected to open in the Fall of 2024, will serve as a nexus for Blacksburg Transit, the Smart Way bus, Virginia Breeze, and bike sharing.

Public Engagement

DRPT staff, in partnership with VDOT, facilitated a kickoff meeting for the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) Dynamic Incentivization project. RM3P strives to increase travel safety, reliability, and mobility for travelers in Northern Virginia and the Fredericksburg regions by facilitating the collaborative use of real-time data by private and public entities in the Commonwealth. DRPT's Manager of Statewide Commuter Programs is serving as a lead for the Dynamic Incentivization (DI) project with VDOT. The DI project will be a data-driven mobile app offering the public incentives and rewards to modify their travel choices and behaviors in response to real-time travel conditions. The goal of such a program would be to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and encourage the use of transit, carpooling, and vanpooling.

Next Stop 2030

DRPT's Commuter Assistance Programs and support for transportation demand management reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, giving commuters the power to save money, better utilize their time, and travel more safely. These combined efforts get more people to more places reliably, equitably, and with less of an impact on the environment. Platforms like ConnectingVA are continually refining new resources, tools, and user interfaces to better serve users, demonstrate the variety of options available, and induce positive behavioral change through rewards and incentives. Partners across the Commonwealth have access to customizable marketing tools designed with them in mind that spread the word and share stories about the advantages of switching up their commutes to commuters. Marketing toolkits allow DRPT to proactively collaborate with transit agencies, establish a well-designed process to amplify DRPT's messaging, and reduce complications that come when numerous stakeholders try to coordinate strategy independently. By being the go-to organization for promotional materials and clarifying our role as such, DRPT allows partners to dedicate more of their time and energy to managing service and less to having to promote it.

Paratransit and Human Service Providers

Paratransit and human service transportation are a specific subset of public transportation that is intended to serve specific populations with outsized needs for alternatives to personal transportation. Most frequently, this definition encompasses transportation for senior citizens or

individuals with limited mobility but can be extended to others, including veterans or low-income individuals. Fundamentally, the mission of human service transportation is to improve personal mobility for individuals not well served by traditional forms of transportation. DRPT provides funding to crucial paratransit services in Virginia, primarily through financial assistance to purchase paratransit vehicles, as well as by distributing Federal Transportation Administration funding.

Background

Paratransit services are operated by numerous human service providers across the Commonwealth, ranging from Community Service Boards (CSBs) and Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and similar quasi-government organizations, to institutions like hospitals, health clinics, or retirement communities. These providers fill a gap in transportation for many who need it the most and serve a population that may not benefit from traditional public transportation. Many paratransit services arrange direct connections to essential services – hospitals, community service centers, and similar institutions – in an on-demand fashion. Access to paratransit is key to improving paths to reliable transportation for those who often have the greatest need and the least access.

Funding for paratransit comes from several sources and varies depending on a provider's geographic location or role. DRPT provides up to \$1.5 million from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (see the [Administration and Funding](#) section for further details) each year in paratransit operating and mobility management grants. In the Fiscal Year 2024 SYIP, DRPT apportioned just over \$1.1 million in state funds towards operating and mobility management paratransit grants.

Additionally, DRPT administers FTA Section 5310 Grants for paratransit for providers in Richmond, Roanoke, and the Virginia Beach urbanized areas, awarding individual grants to paratransit providers through an annual grant application process. For Northern Virginia, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments administers FTA funding. These awards fund capital projects to replace or expand vehicle fleets, mobility management projects to coordinate transportation, operating projects to provide transportation, and other capital projects to develop programs serving eligible populations.

In the Fiscal Year 2024 SYIP, DRPT allocated over \$7.7 million in FTA 5310 funds, for the purchase or replacement of dozens of paratransit vehicles.

Coordinated Human Services Mobility

In 2022, DRPT updated its [Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan](#) (CHSM), which seeks to enhance access to, and the efficiency of, transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, low-income people, and veterans. The CHSM plan identifies gaps and challenges related to its target populations. The plan presents statewide and regional gaps as well as strategies to improve human services transportation in Virginia.

Success Story

Through 5310 funding, localities and agencies were able to buy a total of 28 buses in Fiscal Year 2024 to enable access to needed care through transit. In addition to administering funding, DRPT also continually partners with human service providers working to bridge divides in transit access for seniors, veterans, differently abled people, and more. For example, DRPT has worked with Healthy Generations Rappahannock Area Agency on Aging, Inc. to pursue

innovative mobility solutions for Fredericksburg residents. Some of these services include direct door-to-door transportation and one-call/one-click center services.

Transit Ridership Incentive Program

The Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) is a statewide grants program funding transit agencies and governing bodies to create more accessible, safe, and regionally significant transit networks. TRIP funds four project categories: Zero and Reduced Fare, Regional Connectivity, Public Safety, and Passenger Amenities. For Fiscal Year 2024, TRIP awarded approximately \$27 million to fund the four project categories.

Background

The 2020 General Assembly established the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) with the passage (and signature of the Governor) of the Omnibus Transportation Act (House Bill 1414/Senate Bill 890). The creation of TRIP had two distinct goals: to improve regional connectivity of urban areas with a population of more than 100,000 and to reduce barriers to transit use for low-income riders by supporting Zero or Reduced-Fare programs. TRIP is established in [§ 33.2-1526.3](#) of the Code of Virginia, which spells out the program and requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board to report annually on the projects and services funded by TRIP.

TRIP has undergone several changes since its establishment. In 2022, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed House Bill 142 to amend the Code of Virginia to increase the percentage of funding available for TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare Programs. That legislation included a “sunset clause” reverting the changes, effective July 1st, 2024. In 2023, the Governor signed House Bill 2338/Senate Bill 1326, which added the final two project categories to TRIP: Passenger Amenities and Public Safety. Fiscal Year 2024 was the first year in which all four project categories were available. The table below lists each TRIP project category and provides examples of projects eligible to be funded under each category:

Table 8. TRIP Project Categories

Project Area	Eligible Projects
Public Safety	Public safety equipment, planning, programming, training
Passenger Amenities	Improvements or additions of new bus stops, shelters, or other passenger facilities, transit facility planning
Zero and Reduced-Fare	The provision of subsidized or fully free passes to low-income populations, elimination of fares on certain corridors, establishment of zero-fare zones, deployment of an entirely zero-fare system, fare policy planning
Regional Connectivity	Expanding routes of regional significance, implementation of integrated fare collection, development of regional subsidy allocation models, establishment of bus-only lanes on routes of regional significance

Success Story: MetGo! Recognized for Go-Getting Efforts with Free Microtransit

Mountain Empire Older Citizen’s free microtransit service, MetGo! which operates on-demand, door-to-door bus services in the Wise-Norton area and has been recognized by the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center in its annual Innovation Showcase. MetGo! has been providing more than 200 trips a day. This zero-fare project costs only \$18,000 to the state, which is less than what fare collection cost the service previously.

Funding/Financing

TRIP receives 6% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund, translating to approximately \$27 million in Fiscal Year 2024. For further information about how TRIP is funded or the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund, see the section on [Administration and Funding](#).

Per § 33.2-1526.3 of the Code of Virginia, TRIP assigns a specific percentage of funding to each project category. For Fiscal Year 2024, a minimum of 25% of TRIP funds were made available for Regional Connectivity, a minimum of 25% for Zero and Reduced-Fare, and at most 30% of funds for both Passenger Amenities and Public Safety. The remaining 20% of funds can be split between Regional Connectivity or Zero and Reduced-Fare projects. Effective July 1st, 2024, a “sunset clause” will change TRIP once more, capping funding for Zero and Reduced-Fare at 25%, instead of a minimum of 25% from Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond.

For Fiscal Year 2024, 34 individual TRIP projects received state funding. Out of these, 15 are multi-year projects awarded in prior fiscal years, the CTB approved four as part of the approval of the full SYIP, and the CTB approved another 15 in December as an addendum to the SYIP. This mid-cycle grant allowed transit providers and local governments to apply for funding for Passenger Amenities and Public Safety projects for the first time. The table below shows all projects funded by TRIP in Fiscal Year 2024:

Table 9. Fiscal Year 2024 TRIP Projects

Recipient	Project	TRIP Project Category	Previous Funding	Fiscal Year 2024 DRPT TRIP Funding
Mountain Empire Older Citizens	Zero Fare Project	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 84,000	\$ 18,000
Charlottesville Area Transit	Zero Fare Project	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 878,393	\$ 188,227
Fredericksburg Regional Transit	Zero Fare Project	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 483,884	\$ 78,076
Hampton Roads Transit	Naval Station Norfolk Internal Circulator	Regional Connectivity	\$ 1,925,506	\$ 462,692
Hampton Roads Transit	On-Demand Microtransit Service	Regional Connectivity	NEW - FY 24	\$ 2,800,000
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	Route 4 Regional Connectivity Improvement	Regional Connectivity	\$ 1,141,280	\$ 244,560

City of Alexandria	Zero Fare Project	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 5,453,594	\$ 1,782,577
NVTC - Fairfax County	Subsidized SmarTrip Cards	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 4,525,080	\$ 969,660
NVTC - Fairfax County	Fare Equipment (Integrated Fare Collection)	Regional Connectivity	NEW - FY 24	\$ 11,200,000
NVTC - City of Fairfax	CUE Bus Zero Fare Project	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 300,000	\$ 231,000
PRTC	Regional Connectivity - Manassas Metro Express Bus	Regional Connectivity	\$ 477,773	\$ 371,391
County of Loudoun	Fare Equipment (Integrated Fare Collection)	Regional Connectivity	NEW - FY 24	\$ 3,680,330
County of Loudoun	Silver Line Service	Regional Connectivity	\$ 2,343,115	\$ 1,794,489
City of Petersburg	PAT Zero Fare and Low Income	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 627,403	\$ 470,552
City of Petersburg	Petersburg Area Transit Southern Express	Regional Connectivity	\$ 832,192	\$ 150,949
Greater Richmond Transit Company	Zero Fare Project	Zero and Reduced Fare	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Greater Richmond Transit Company	Regional Microtransit Service	Regional Connectivity	\$ 2,325,760	\$ 1,143,238
City of Radford	Regional Connector Service	Regional Connectivity	\$ 177,057	\$ 129,793
Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission	RideSmart Service	Regional Connectivity	NEW - FY 24	\$ 195,200
Bristol Transit	Bristol transit vehicle security cameras	Public Safety	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 21,563
Bristol Transit	Bristol bus shelter improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 81,600
District Three Governmental Cooperative	District Three systemwide zero-fare program	Zero and Reduced Fare	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 56,000
Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)	HRT ferry shelter improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 561,000
Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)	HRT bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 189,720
Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)	HRT operator safety barriers on buses	Public Safety	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 982,789

Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA)	WATA transit vehicle security cameras	Public Safety	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 23,612
City of Alexandria	Alexandria Landmark transit center amenities	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 544,000
Arlington Regional Transit (ART)	ART bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 367,200
Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)	GRTC Richmond bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 394,054
Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)	GRTC Chesterfield bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 54,991
Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)	PAT Multimodal Center security guards	Public Safety	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 120,197
Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)	PAT Multimodal Center security cameras	Public Safety	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 201,599
Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC)	Roanoke County bus shelter project	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 20,400
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)	CSPDC Lewis Street Hub improvements	Passenger Amenities	NEW - FY 24 Mid-Cycle Grant	\$ 805,150

Analysis of Funded Projects

The Code of Virginia requires that DRPT reports to the Governor and General Assembly on the projects and services funded by TRIP. TRIP funded 34 individual projects across all four project categories during Fiscal Year 2024. Because of advancements made thanks to TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare projects, transit operators have been able to rebound their ridership levels post-pandemic more quickly than their counterparts. TRIP projects have supported the establishment of new services such as microtransit in rural areas or increased route frequency through TRIP Regional Connectivity, increasing access to transit for those who need it most and attracting new riders. The newest TRIP grants have furthered projects that build new bus shelters and provide safety equipment for bus drivers through TRIP Passenger Amenities and Public Safety.

TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare Performance

TRIP funded nine Zero and Reduced Fare projects during Fiscal Year 2024, with all but one grant awarded in prior years. Numerous transit providers elected to go fare-free because of the COVID-19 pandemic through the TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare program. Most recipients went completely zero-fare systemwide. All TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare grants are multi-year projects. The table below shows the individual TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare grant, its impact on a public transit agency's ridership, and the amount of TRIP funds awarded in Fiscal Year 2024.

Table 10. TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare Project Performance

Recipient	Project	Fiscal year grant received	Pre-grant annual ridership	Ridership Fiscal Year 2024	% Change in ridership Post-TRIP Zero-Fare Grant	Fiscal Year 2024 DRPT TRIP Funding (\$ in Thousands)
METGo! (Mountain Empire Older Citizens)	Zero Fare Project	2022	47,469	130,896	176%	\$ 18
Charlottesville Area Transit	Zero Fare Project	2022	617,010	1,353,059	119%	\$ 188
FXBGO! (Fredericksburg Regional Transit)	Zero Fare Project	2022	142,040	332,441	134%	\$ 78
DASH (Alexandria)	Zero Fare Project	2022	1,530,851	5,351,634	250%	\$ 1,783
Fairfax Connector (Fairfax County)	Subsidized SmarTrip Cards	2022	4,566,013	8,716,249	91%	\$ 970
Greater Richmond Transit Company	Zero Fare Project	2022	7,694,498	10,839,638	41%	\$ 1,000
CUE (Fairfax City)	CUE Bus Zero Fare Project	2023	471,899	982,981	108%	\$ 231
Petersburg Area Transit	PAT Zero Fare and Low-Income	2023	404,081	471,466	17%	\$ 471
Mountain Lynx Transit (District Three Govt. Cooperative)	District Three systemwide zero-fare program	2024	162,649	177,659	9%	\$ 56

TRIP Regional Connectivity Performance

In Fiscal Year 2024, there were 11 active TRIP Regional Connectivity grants. Some TRIP grants are multi-year projects, while others are single-year projects funding capital purchases. These projects range from enhancing additional services along routes of regional significance, creating new services to connect and integrate regional transportation networks, adding new services such as microtransit in areas where fixed-route service is not feasible, to integrating fare collection equipment for seamless purchasing of fares. The table below lists the Regional Connectivity projects funded and their description:

Table 11. Fiscal Year 2024 TRIP Regional Connectivity Projects

Recipient	Project Description	Fiscal Year 2024 DRPT TRIP Funding (\$ in Thousands)
Hampton Roads Transit	Naval Station Norfolk Internal Circulator	\$ 463
Hampton Roads Transit	On-Demand Microtransit Service	\$ 2,800
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	Route 4 Regional Connectivity Improvement	\$ 245
NVTC - Fairfax County	Fare Equipment (Integrated Fare Collection)	\$ 11,200
Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission	OmniRide Manassas Metro Express Bus	\$ 371
County of Loudoun	Fare Equipment (Integrated Fare Collection)	\$ 3,680
County of Loudoun	Silver Line Service	\$ 1,794
City of Petersburg	Petersburg Area Transit Southern Express	\$ 151
Greater Richmond Transit Company	Regional Microtransit Service	\$ 1,143
City of Radford	Regional Connector Service	\$ 130
Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission	RideSmart Service	\$ 195

TRIP Regional Connectivity is a broad category that makes flexible funding available to transit providers to meet different goals, needs, and objectives. Below are some highlights from a select range of TRIP Regional Connectivity projects:

Ridership impacts:

Not all TRIP Regional Connectivity projects have reported ridership for Fiscal Year 2024. This can be because a project is not adding new or expanded services (such as the two integrated fare collection projects). Other reasons include that there may be a lag in specific route performance data availability or because a project started late in Fiscal Year 2024 and has not hit a performance data reporting deadline. Three TRIP Regional Connectivity projects have reported ridership numbers:

Hampton Roads Transit – Naval Station Norfolk Internal Circulator

The Naval Station Norfolk Internal Circulator supports two routes – the blue and gold routes – that promote transit access within Naval Station Norfolk, the world’s largest naval base. From July 1st, 2023, to April 1st, 2024, about 37,000 trips were provided. The final quarter of Fiscal Year 2024 has not yet been recorded.

Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission – OmniRide Manassas Metro Express Bus

OmniRide’s Manassas Metro Express Bus TRIP program supports mid-day and off-peak service for a route that serves major destinations in Northern Virginia, from Tysons Corner and the

Northern Virginia Community College's campus at Manassas to Metro Silver Line Stations. During the first half of Fiscal Year 2024, 22,000 trips were provided. Ridership during the second half of Fiscal Year 2024 has not been separated from system-wide ridership at the time of writing.

County of Loudoun Silver Line Service

Loudoun County Transit's Silver Line Service supports the operations of four routes (LCT 321, 351, 381, and 382) that connect parts of Loudoun County to the recently completed Silver Line extension at the Ashburn and Loudoun Gateway stations. Over Fiscal Year 2024, Loudoun County Transit provided 34,000 trips on the four routes. Ridership for the entire fiscal year has been reported.

Expanded Service

RideSmart Service – Commuter Bus

RideSmart is the regional commuter assistance service operated by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC). RideSmart providers promote ridesharing and commuter options for residents, workers, commuters, and tourists in Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties and the City of Winchester.

The NSVRC applied for and received a multi-year TRIP Regional Connectivity grant to fund a new commuter bus service from the Waterloo Park and Ride lot in Clarke County to Washington, D.C. This new service can save commuters money on gas and car maintenance, as well as taking cars off the extremely congested I-66 corridor. According to [a news article](#) released following a ribbon cutting of the new service, around 30% of Clarke County residents work in the D.C. area. These residents now have the option of commuting via bus instead of driving alone.

Greater Lynchburg Transportation Company – Route 4 Regional Connectivity Improvement

The Greater Lynchburg Transportation Company maintains fixed-route bus services for the City of Lynchburg and into surrounding Campbell and Amherst Counties.

GLTC's Route 4 links prime connections in the Lynchburg region – from transportation hubs like Lynchburg Regional Airport and the Kemper Street Amtrak Station to shopping destinations and Liberty University. GLTC's Route 4 thus is an essential service in the network. TRIP's Regional Connectivity grant allows GLTC to double Route 4 services.

GRTC Richmond Regional Microtransit Service

The Greater Richmond Transportation Company manages fixed-route bus and bus-rapid transit in the Richmond region. GRTC applied for a TRIP Regional Connectivity grant in Fiscal Year 2024 to launch three microtransit services (two additional microtransit services were funded by MERIT Demonstration funds) in Richmond's service area which has a demand for public transportation but limited capacity for fixed-route bus service.

With funding from the TRIP Regional Connectivity program, GRTC's LINK Microtransit was able to launch three new microtransit zones: Azalea, Cloverdale, and Sandston-Elko. These zones join the Powhatan zone and Ashland zone in GRTC's Microtransit network. The areas served by GRTC's Microtransit have never before had reliable public transit access. Each microtransit zone was phased in throughout Fiscal Year 2024, with the Sandston/Elko being the last service to launch on June 27th, 2024. Between zones funded by TRIP and MERIT's Demonstration grant, GRTC's microtransit service transported **over 20,000** people in Fiscal Year 2024.

TRIP Passenger Amenities and Public Safety Performance

Fiscal Year 2024 was the first year DRPT awarded TRIP Passenger Amenities and Public Safety grants. DRPT disbursed nine Passenger Amenities grants and five Public Safety grants, with a total of \$4.4 million in TRIP funds distributed in this category. These projects will accelerate the construction of bus shelters, the development of transit hubs, and the installation of security cameras. The table below lists the Passenger Amenity and Public Safety projects funded and their description:

Table 12. Fiscal Year 2024 TRIP Passenger Amenities and Public Safety Projects

Recipient	Project Description	Project Category	Fiscal year 2024 DRPT TRIP Funding (\$ in Thousands)
Bristol Transit	Bristol bus shelter improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 82
Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)	HRT ferry shelter improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 561
Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)	HRT bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 190
City of Alexandria	Alexandria Landmark Transit Center amenities	Passenger Amenities	\$ 544
Arlington Regional Transit (ART)	ART bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 367
Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)	GRTC Richmond bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 394
Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)	GRTC Chesterfield bus stop improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 55
Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC)	Roanoke County bus shelter project	Passenger Amenities	\$ 20
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)	CSPDC Lewis Street Hub improvements	Passenger Amenities	\$ 805
Bristol Transit	Bristol transit vehicle security cameras	Public Safety	\$ 22
Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)	HRT operator safety barriers on buses	Public Safety	\$ 983
Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA)	WATA transit vehicle security cameras	Public Safety	\$ 24
Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)	PAT Multimodal Center security guards	Public Safety	\$ 120
Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)	PAT Multimodal Center security cameras	Public Safety	\$ 202

The CTB approved TRIP’s Fiscal Year 2024 Passenger Amenities and Public Safety grants in December 2023 following a mid-cycle grant period. As a result, many TRIP Passenger Amenities or Public Safety projects have not yet been completed at the time of writing. However, many are in the works and should make significant progress in the coming months. Below is a description of several TRIP Passenger Amenities and Public Safety projects and their expected outcomes:

Arlington Regional Transit (ART)

ART will construct a new bus stop and make Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant site improvements to three bus stops. This grant will allow the county to use on-call contractors to immediately address accessibility issues to improve rider experience.

Bristol Virginia Transit

Bristol Transit will install security cameras on six transit buses and one passenger van to improve transit driver and rider safety. Currently, none of these transit vehicles are outfitted with security cameras. Bristol Transit will also construct a new bus shelter at an existing transit stop, improving passenger comfort and safety as well as traffic flow.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)

CSPDC will rehabilitate the BRITE Transit Hub. The project will define a separate bus lane and vehicle parking, assure ADA-compliant access to bus loading areas, relocate bus shelters adjacent to bus parking, and outfit each with safety lighting and bike racks.

City of Alexandria

Alexandria will now have shelters, benches, and real-time signage at the planned transit center in the West End development (formerly Landmark Transit Center). The transit center is a high-ridership transfer hub for local and regional bus service and will act as a major hub for two planned bus rapid transit networks in the center of a significant new development.

Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)

GRTC will make bus stop improvements in Richmond and Chesterfield County to enhance ADA accessibility and to test new text-to-speech technology sharing real-time transit information with riders.

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)

HRT will improve shelters and amenities at three existing ferry stops. The new amenities will include lighting and security features to improve accessibility for customers during the evening and enhance the existing ADA amenities. HRT will also receive funding to improve rider amenities at 22 stops across the system with benches, shelters, and trash cans. HRT will additionally purchase and install driver safety barriers on 155.

Petersburg Area Transit (PAT)

PAT will hire three security officers and install a new security camera system to monitor PAT's downtown multimodal center.

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC)

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission will build a new bus shelter at an existing Roanoke County bus stop, providing an enhanced experience for riders with shelter from the weather, a place to sit and rest, and improved solar-powered lighting.

Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA)

WATA will outfit six buses with new security cameras, improving safety for both the passengers and operations staff by having live camera feeds.

Public Engagement

DRPT attended the ribbon-cutting ceremonies for several new microtransit services initiated by GRTC. These new services supply curb-to-curb transit to the Town of Ashland, the City of

Richmond, and Henrico, Chesterfield, and Powhatan Counties. Previously, many of these areas lacked access to public transit. GRTC's microtransit is funded through TRIP as well as MERIT.

Next Stop 2030

TRIP regional connectivity projects create vital touchpoints in community transit systems by allowing historically isolated areas to have access to larger transportation networks. This increases the throughput of people to places they need to go in an equitable style that drives economic vitality and development, as these places often are commercial centers and places of business. TRIP projects also improve geographic, demographic, and economic accessibility to transit, empowering localities and operators to develop programs that accommodate the nuances and niches specific to the communities they serve. The program fosters the exploration of ingenious approaches to reducing financial barriers to transit, increasing ridership, and reducing costs associated with fare collection and enforcement. DRPT has made its presence felt at an abundance of events related to the program and is honored to be invited to celebrate all that grantees have been able to achieve thanks to this program. The projects funded under TRIP advance customer service and experience when it comes to safety and amenities in a responsive, adaptive, and pioneering fashion.

WMATA Support

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA or Metro) is the multi-jurisdictional transportation authority that operates Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess services in Northern Virginia, Washington D.C., and parts of Maryland. WMATA is the largest provider of public transportation in Virginia, in terms of scale of operations and annual ridership levels. DRPT is the agency charged with providing and overseeing Virginia's share of funds to WMATA. Additionally, DRPT ensures WMATA's compliance with Virginia's oversight requirements.

Background

In 1967, Virginia, Maryland, D.C. and the United States Congress jointly established an interstate compact creating the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority. The compact members include the District of Columbia and Maryland as well as the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission jurisdictions of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun Counties and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church.

WMATA manages three services in Virginia: Metrorail, the subway service that transports the largest share of passenger trips in Virginia, Metrobus, which operates like a conventional bus network but connects to D.C. or to a Metrorail station, and MetroAccess which is WMATA's paratransit service for the region.

Success Story: WMATA is Moving from Strength to Strength and Stop to Stop Non-Stop

WMATA went from strength to strength in the latter half of Fiscal Year 2024, setting monthly ridership records and seeing significant drop-offs in fare evasion and major increases in safety. In April 2024, **WMATA noted** that fare evasion was down 50% systemwide compared to the prior year. This was due to investments in retrofitted fare gates that discourage fare evasion, as well as continued enforcement by the WMATA police. WMATA reported that 33 of its 98 stations had these retrofitted fare gates installed as of March 2024. Similarly, crime on WMATA's system was down 19% overall year-over-year at the time of reporting.

WMATA reported that the weekday commute – the largest segment of riders that was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts – has been rebounding quickly. In March 2024, WMATA reported that peak commute hours (8 to 9 a.m., and 5 to 6 p.m.) saw an average of 50,000 entries to the WMATA system an hour (including those in D.C. and Maryland), a 25% year-over-year increase. This increase in ridership during the typical commute period was bolstered by a reported 33% increase in trips by federal employees.

Other reported metrics of note (as of March 2024):

- A 38% year-over-year increase in ridership at the Dulles International Airport WMATA Station along the recently opened western extension of the Silver Line in Loudoun County.
- A 23% year-over-year increase in ridership at Washington Union Station WMATA Station, a major connection point for riders of Amtrak coming from or going into Virginia or commuters traveling with Virginia Railway Express.
- At least 60% of WMATA's 1,500-bus-strong fleet is now equipped with new and more reliable fareboxes.

Zeroing in on a major WMATA station in the Commonwealth: the Dulles Airport Station opened in November 2022 and welcomed its millionth rider in the Fall of 2023. Ridership was 38% higher in March of 2024 compared to the previous year for the Dulles Airport Station.

Funding/Financing

WMATA receives funding from a myriad of sources, including from federal, state, and local sources, as well as collecting fares and additional revenues from advertising. These investments and revenue streams reflect WMATA's status as one of the nation's top transportation providers. DRPT distributes Virginia's share of funding for WMATA, splitting costs with Maryland, D.C., and the localities embraced by WMATA, as well as the Federal Government. For further details on WMATA's funding, see the [Administration and Funding](#) section on WMATA.

In addition to giving funding to WMATA, DRPT assures that WMATA complies with the oversight requirements of the CTB. If WMATA does not comply with these requirements, the CTB may withhold Commonwealth Mass Transit Funding from WMATA. These requirements include:

1. Supplying an annual budget and proposed capital expenditures to the CTB
2. Requiring WMATA General Manager and Commonwealth's WMATA Board members to address CTB annually
3. Limiting WMATA Board of Directors alternates' participation at WMATA Board Meetings
4. Capping growth in WMATA's operating costs at 3% each year. *Note: This provision has been suspended for the 2024-2026 biennium by the biennial budget enacted by the Virginia General Assembly and signed by the Governor.*
5. Adopting/Updating its Strategic Plan every three years and holding a public hearing in Northern Virginia
6. Adopting by July 1st of each year a Capital Improvement Plan that covers six years and holding a public hearing in Northern Virginia

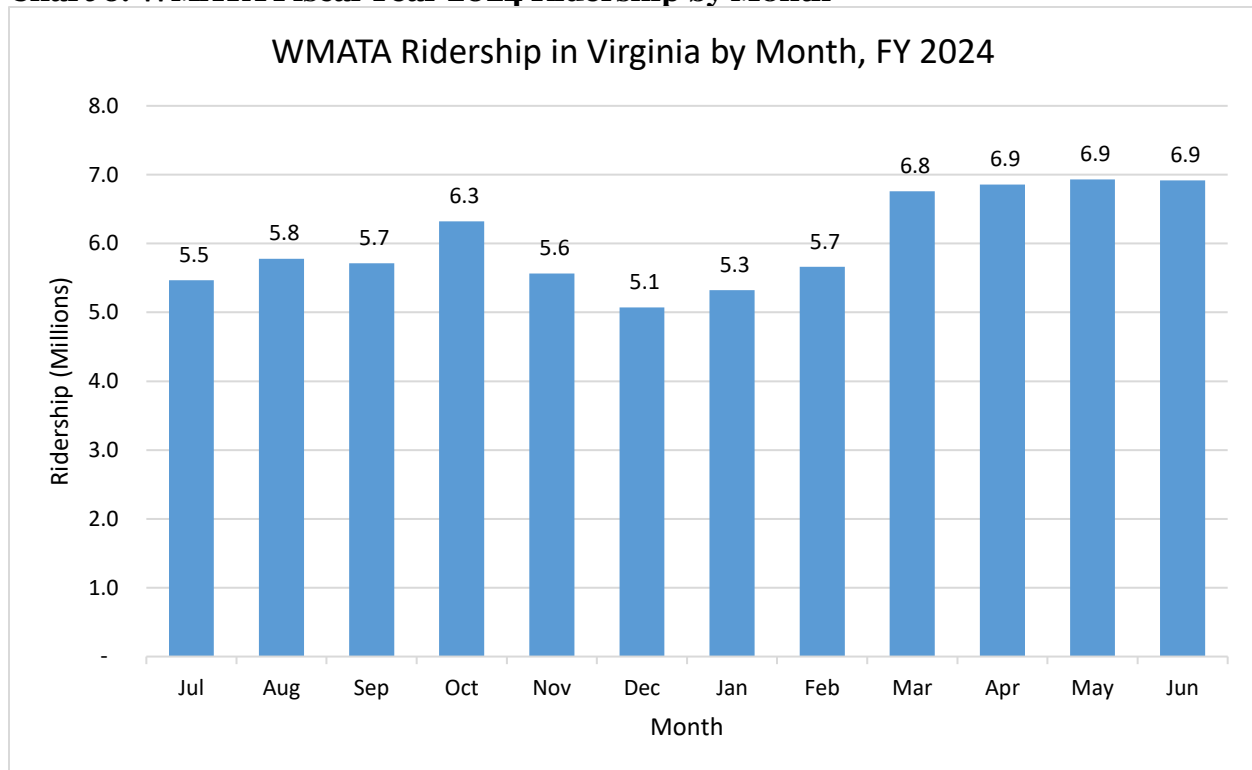
In October 2024, the CTB will vote to certify WMATA's compliance with the Commonwealth's requirements.

Data and Positive Outcomes

WMATA is Virginia’s largest provider of public transportation in terms of ridership, and one of the largest public transit providers in the United States. In Fiscal Year 2024, WMATA provided over 72 million trips, not including trips in Washington, D.C. or Maryland only.

Metro rail and Metrobus are the two largest services WMATA operates, together moving millions of people in Virginia every month. In Fiscal Year 2024, Metro rail provided over 58.6 million trips in Virginia, while Metrobus provided just under 13.6 million trips. MetroAccess provided over 171 thousand trips. The table below visualizes WMATA’s ridership in Virginia in Fiscal Year 2024:

Chart 6. WMATA Fiscal Year 2024 Ridership by Month



Public Engagement

DRPT staff had the fortune of connecting with the Fleet of the Future Expo that was held by WMATA in the Spring. This historic event gave attendees a preview of the next generation of railcars and buses. The first public display of new trains on the mall since 1968, this event ran from March 20 through April 3 and let attendees test their Metro knowledge, explore photos from Metro’s history, and get a feel for the fleet of the future. Features of the fleet of the future on display included open gangways, more space, better digital screens for real-time information, enhanced video systems to improve safety, more sustainable aluminum shells, and eye-catching design.

Next Stop 2030

WMATA has continued to evolve its approach to recovering fares, increasing ridership, adjusting service, boosting safety, and broadening its geographic footprint. Its post-pandemic recovery has defied expectations, and DRPT has been a partner every step of the way to grow a culture of innovation that enhances the customer experience while aligning program and

funding criteria to facilitate pragmatic solutions. For example, DRPT has assisted WMATA in developing business and budget plans to bring the largest value possible back to the Commonwealth and facilitate responsible use of resources. DRPT staff members are also represented on the WMATA Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee (JCC) which gives input into WMATA financial planning and service initiatives. Between DRPT's roles on the JCC, the SJ 28 Technical Working Group, PRTC, NVTC, and DMVMoves, staff are always plugged into developments at WMATA from multiple angles and advocate for capitalizing on strengths and learning from others.

Toll Programs & Commuter Choice

Northern Virginia has constructed several tolled highway express lanes in recent years to create an alternative to driving along congested highways to ease congestion for all users of the system. Two segments of tolled express lanes in Northern Virginia, I-66 inside the beltway (ITB) and I-395/95, contribute the net revenue of collected tolls to public transportation projects in Northern Virginia. VDOT and the operator of the tolls transfer concessionaire payments and toll revenues to DRPT. These funds are programmed into DRPT's SYIP and transferred to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), a regional transportation entity that administers funding and give guidance for Northern Virginia's public transit providers and regional transit coordination. NVTC uses these funds for capital and service improvements, diverting cars from congested I-66 and I-395/95 corridors. These projects are planned and funded by NVTC and approved by the CTB annually. Below are examples of **funded projects**:

Capital Improvement:

- VRE Crystal City Station Expansion Project
- Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Implementation

Service Improvement:

- Reinstatement of the Amtrak Step-Up Program on VRE Fredericksburg Line
- DASH Line 35 Service Enhancement
- OmniRide Prince William Metro Express Service Enhancement

Virginia Railway Express Support

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is a commuter rail service that offers weekday, rush-hour service to and from Washington D.C. and points along the I-66 and I-95 corridors. VRE's two commuter rail lines (Fredericksburg Line and Manassas Line) serve Virginia's most populated region and divert cars and commuters from Virginia's busiest roads and highways during the most congested times of the day.

Background

The Virginia Railway Express began running commuter rail services in 1992 after nearly a decade of planning. VRE is jointly owned by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission and is governed by a board of directors. DRPT works with VRE to support commuter rail services.

When it comes to funding, DRPT dedicates funding from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund to VRE to support commuter rail. In Fiscal Year 2024, VRE received \$6.7 million in State funds from the MERIT Operating program (see MERIT Operating for more details). Additionally, VRE received a total of \$7 million in MERIT Capital funds, with \$6.1 million in state funds granted to assist in the construction of a parking garage at the Manassas VRE station.

In 2023, the Governor signed House Bill 1496/Senate Bil 1079 that will allocate up to 3.5% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund to VRE, depending on service delivery factors. This will first be reflected in the Fiscal Year 2025 Six-Year Improvement Program. Prior to Fiscal Year 2025, VRE applied for funding through the MERIT Operating and Capital programs. This legislation also requires VRE to submit a detailed annual operating budget and capital expenditures to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

In addition to funds provided by DRPT, the Virginia Railway Express receives state funds from the Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund (CROC), which is administered by the Department of Motor Vehicles and provides \$15 million per year.

VRE receives the remainder of its funds from fares, funds given by NVTC and PRTC, some federal sources, and smaller fringe revenues.

Success Story: Getting On Track to Improve Stations

The Virginia Railway Express marked several major achievements during Fiscal Year 2024, ranging from breaking ground on new capital projects to completing others and adopting a new, long-term plan for the VRE system.

Fredericksburg Station Rehabilitation

The Fredericksburg VRE station is a historic station right in downtown Fredericksburg and a key point along the busy I-95 corridor. The Fredericksburg Station also serves numerous daily Amtrak trains. For these reasons, it is at the epicenter of VPRA's Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, which will double Amtrak state-supported service between Richmond and Washington, D.C. and increase VRE service with several additional trains a day.

As a result, VRE initiated the Fredericksburg Station Rehabilitation project. The project aimed to improve operational flexibility, add capacity to the station, and reduce the dwell times at the station. VRE rehabilitated 125 feet of the station's platform and increased the total boarding length of the platform to 525 feet, up from 400. This allows for quicker and safer boarding and alighting of passengers on VRE or Amtrak trains.

Additional improvements include a new set of stairs to access the Station from the new lengthened end of the station, minor concrete repairs to the bridges, and improved signage, lighting, and a fresh coat of paint.

To celebrate the completion of the project, DRPT joined VRE, VPRA, and other local officials to celebrate a ribbon cutting for the completion of the project in May 2024.

Manassas Park Parking Expansion

The Manassas Park Station Parking Expansion project is a joint development project between VRE and the City of Manassas Park to construct a parking garage on City-owned property near the VRE Manassas Park station. This project will add 540 more spaces to the current parking lot, which has recently seen an increase in demand for parking. Additionally, the project is indispensable to the Manassas Park City Center Redevelopment District, which emphasizes transit-oriented development, particularly around the VRE Station.

The Manassas Park Station Parking Expansion will improve access to reliable transportation in one of Virginia's major urban areas. To partially fund construction, VRE received \$6.4 million from DRPT's MERIT Capital program, one of two major MERIT Capital projects funded in Fiscal

Year 2024. The groundbreaking of the project was held in July 2023, and construction continued through Fiscal Year 2024. Substantial completion is expected by the end of Calendar Year 2024.

VRE System Plan 2050

In 2024, VRE unveiled its long-term strategic plan: **System Plan 2050**, replacing the prior 2014 system plan. This strategic plan outlines VRE's plan for future improvements and needed projects over the next two-and-a-half decades. The Plan lays out general strategies for when, where, and how VRE trains will operate in the future and the station, track, and rolling stock investments that will be needed by 2050.

Quantico Station Improvements

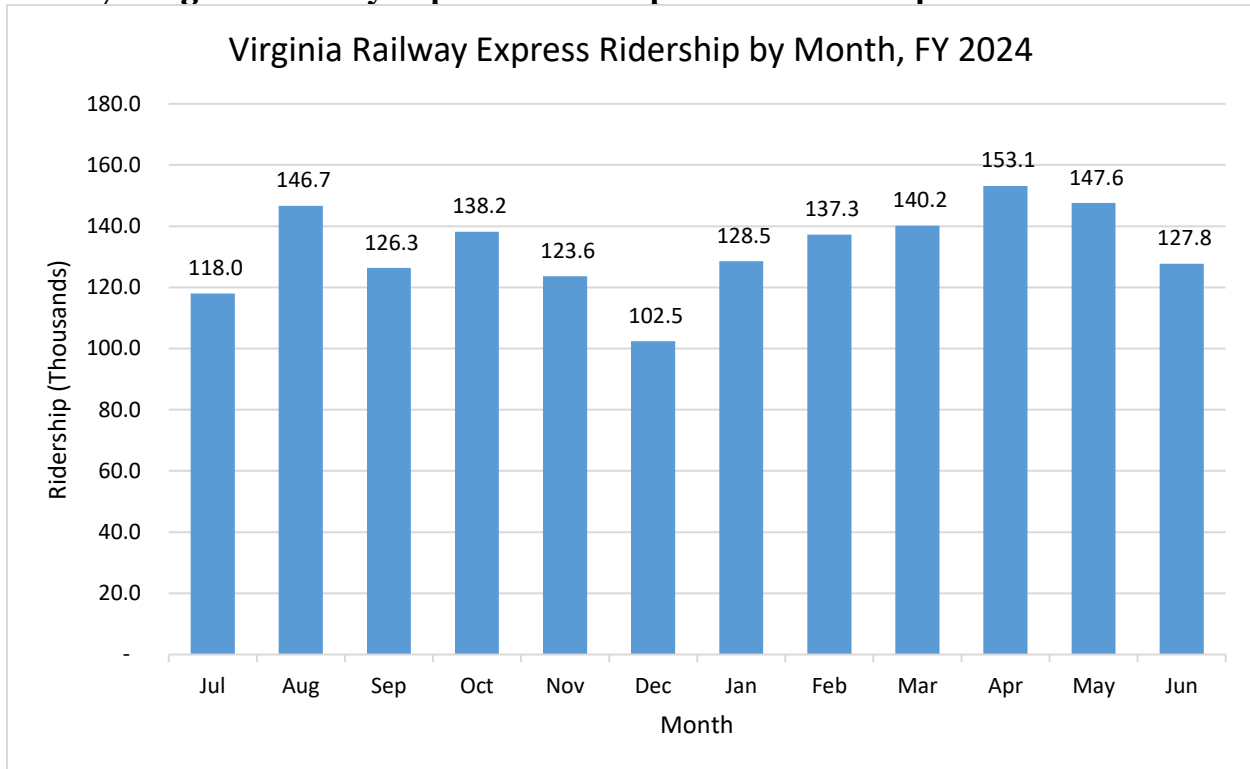
The Town of Quantico and Marine Corps Base Quantico (MCBQ) are served by the VRE Fredericksburg Line and by some Amtrak trains, connecting Quantico to Washington, D.C., Fredericksburg, and points between. In years past, the Quantico Train Station was a considerable choke point for VRE, Amtrak, and CSX trains along the busy main line, where all three services converge on two tracks. Additionally, passengers of VRE trains were occasionally stuck on the wrong side of the track due to passing trains.

To remedy these issues, the Quantico Station Improvements will add a third track around Quantico Station, as well as an improved station facility and island platform. This will allow access to the island platform without any passengers having to walk across tracks. VRE and DRPT are partnering with freight railroad CSX to make these modifications, which will also align with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's Arkendale 3rd track project, which will add additional track capacity along the corridor through Quantico. This project will be completed during Fiscal Year 2025.

Data and Positive Outcomes

VRE primarily serves the population that commutes into D.C. from Virginia suburbs during the typical rush hour. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the sizeable shift to working from home, ridership on VRE plummeted. While ridership on VRE has begun to recover from pandemic lows, today it remains well below pre-pandemic levels. In Fiscal Year 2024, VRE transported just under 1.6 million people, up from under 1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2023. The chart below shows VRE's ridership in Fiscal Year 2024:

Chart 7. Virginia Railway Express Ridership Fiscal Year 2024



DRPT Rail Programs

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation is the Commonwealth agency charged with supporting and improving Virginia’s rail network. DRPT is responsible for statewide passenger and freight rail planning. Other rail initiatives include overseeing three programs dedicated to expanding, preserving, and connecting the statewide rail network.

Virginia’s Rail Network

There are 3,000 route miles and over 6,000 miles of track in Virginia, reaching all corners of the Commonwealth and connecting freight and passengers to points within and beyond Virginia. The operators of Virginia’s railroads are split between freight rail companies and passenger rail providers.

Rail Providers in Virginia

On the freight rail side, Virginia’s two Class-I railroads and nine Class-III (shortline) railroads own and operate most of the rail network. Passenger rail is provided by Amtrak, officially the National Passenger Rail Corporation. Commuter rail service is offered by the Virginia Railway Express (VRE). VRE is funded under DRPT’s transit programs and is considered a public transportation provider. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), a separate and independent entity within Virginia’s Transportation Secretariat, is tasked with growing, enhancing, and sustaining Virginia’s passenger rail system in partnership with DRPT, Amtrak, and VRE. VPRA does not operate trains themselves, and instead contracts with Amtrak to operate rolling stock. The table below shows the operators of rail in Virginia:

Table 13. Railroad operators in Virginia

Type	Classification	Railroad	Region in Virginia/Routes
Freight	Class-I	CSX	Statewide
	Class-I	Norfolk Southern	Statewide
	Shortline (Class-III)	Buckingham Branch Railroad	Multiple
	Shortline (Class-III)	Chesapeake and Albemarle Railroad	Hampton Roads
	Shortline (Class-III)	Chesapeake Western Railway	Shenandoah Valley
	Shortline (Class-III)	Commonwealth Railway	Hampton Roads
	Shortline (Class-III)	Delmarva Central Railroad	Accomack County
	Shortline (Class-III)	Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad	Hampton Roads
	Shortline (Class-III)	North Carolina and Virginia Railroad	Southampton County
	Shortline (Class-III)	Shenandoah Valley Railroad	Staunton/Augusta County
	Shortline (Class-III)	Winchester and Western Railroad	Winchester/Frederick County

Passenger	Intercity Passenger Rail	Amtrak	Northeast Regional routes to Roanoke, Norfolk, Newport News, Richmond, and points between. Long-distance routes to New York, Chicago, New Orleans, Savannah, Lorton, and Miami.
	Commuter Rail	Virginia Railway Express	Commuter lines on the I-66 or I-95 corridor to Manassas or Fredericksburg, with points between

Class-III Railroads (called shortlines) are smaller railroads with limited trackage that earn revenue under an amount determined by the Surface Transportation Board. Class-I Railroads operate large networks with revenues of over \$900 million

The maps below visualize Virginia’s freight and passenger rail networks:

Figure 8. Virginia’s Freight Rail Network

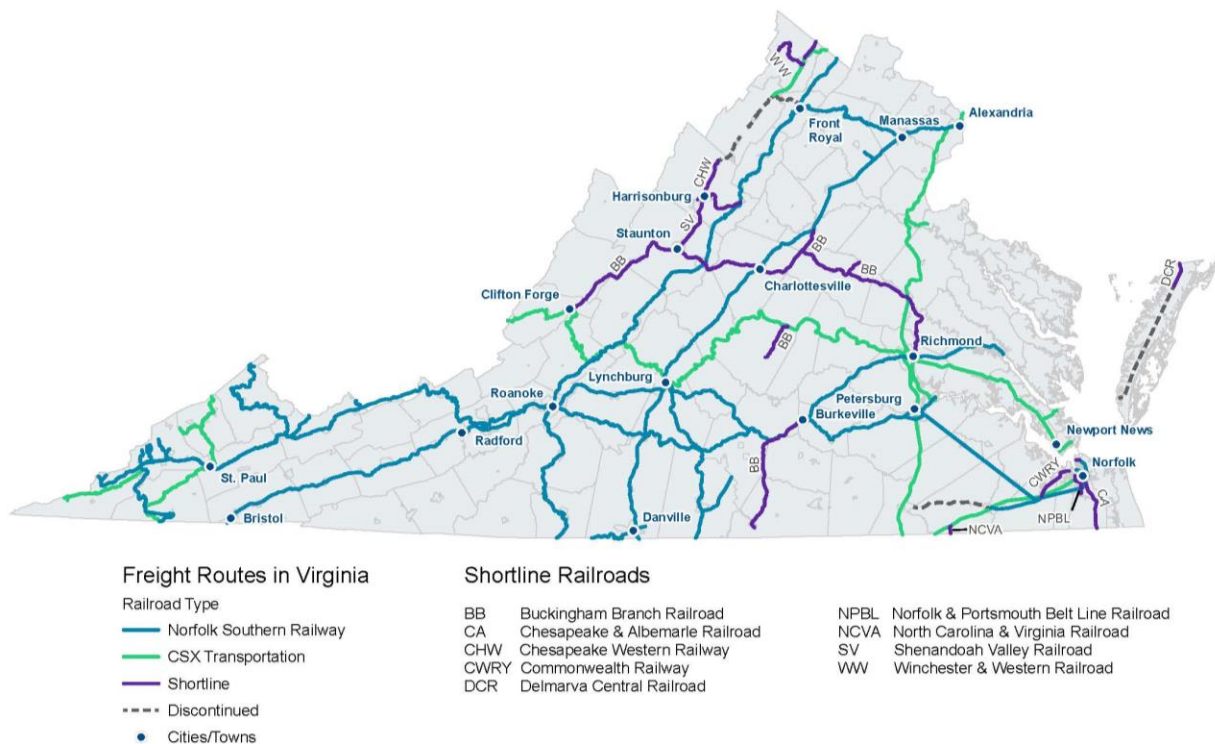
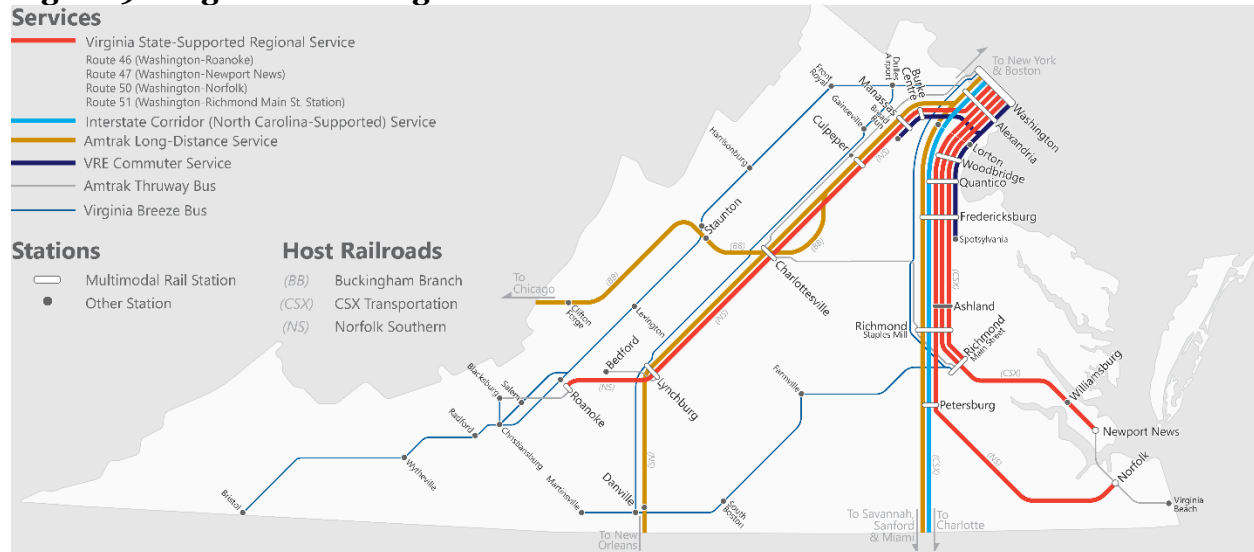


Figure 9. Virginia's Passenger Rail Network Services



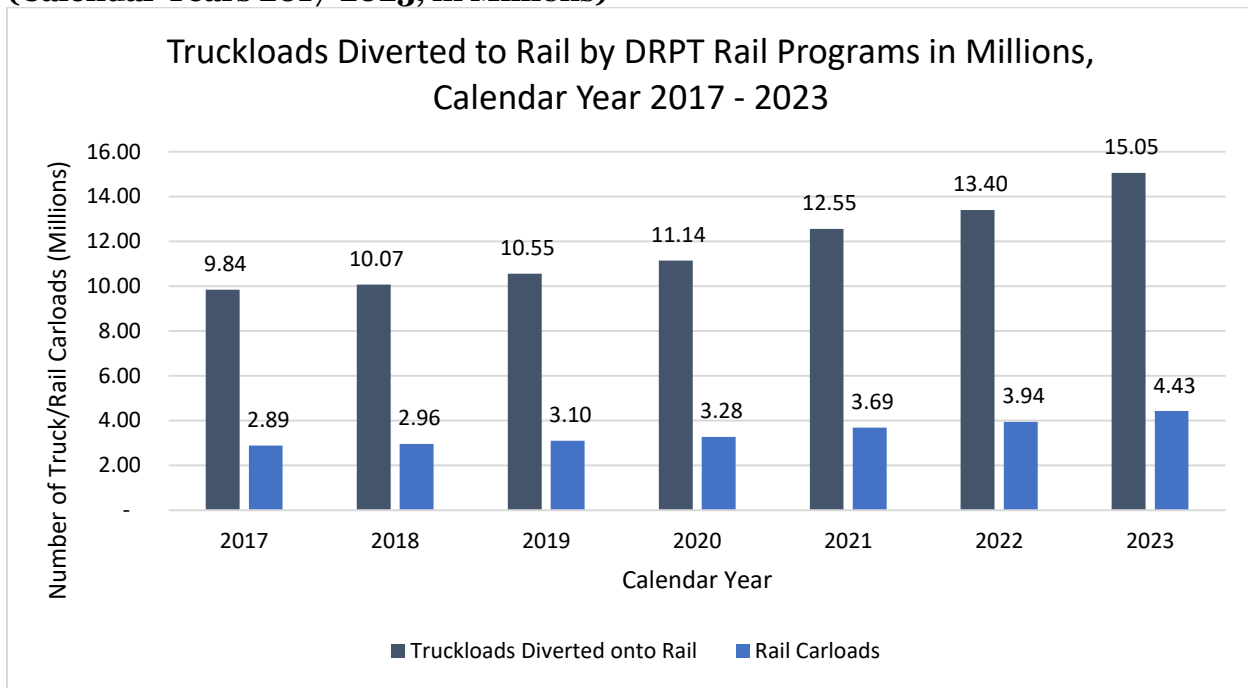
DRPT and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

The 2020 General Assembly established VPRA as a political subdivision of the state to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail services. DRPT's Director serves as the chair of VPRA's Board of Directors, providing guidance and expertise to VPRA's operations. DRPT conducts Virginia's high-level passenger rail planning, while VPRA turns those plans into infrastructure projects and manages passenger operations. VPRA has purchased and owns rail infrastructure and right-of-way and contracts with Amtrak to provide intercity passenger rail services.

Data and Positive Outcomes

DRPT's three freight rail grant programs strengthen Virginia's rail network and promote economic vitality and development. DRPT gauges the performance of its rail programs by calculating the number of trucks diverted from Virginia's highways through funded projects. This measure is calculated using performance data reported to the agency by grantees annually. On average, one rail carload removes the equivalent of 3.4 truckloads from the highway. From Calendar Year 2017 to the end of Calendar Year 2023, DRPT's rail programs have diverted over 83 million truckloads from Virginia's highways by delivering over 24 million rail carloads. The chart below visualizes Virginia's trucks diverted through DRPT-funded projects:

Chart 8. truckloads Diverted from Virginia's Highways by DRPT Rail Programs (Calendar Years 2017-2023, in Millions)



Rail Planning

DRPT is tasked with planning for the future of freight and passenger rail across the Commonwealth. In addition to statewide planning, DRPT coordinates with federal agencies and other states as Virginia is a major connection between the North and Southeast and an important freight link to the Midwest. DRPT also provides technical assistance to localities and Metropolitan Planning Organizations and conducts environmental studies in conjunction with federal, state, and local partners.

DRPT is required by the FRA to produce the Statewide Rail Plan every four years and is the primary recipient of federal grants for state rail planning initiatives. The [2022 Statewide Rail Plan](#) is the current guide for the future of rail in Virginia. The 2022 Statewide Rail Plan incorporates the efforts of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, the Transforming Rail in Virginia Initiative, the Western Rail Initiative, and the Creating Connections campaign into one plan.

The plan is available online as an interactive ArcGIS Story Map explaining rail's role in statewide transportation, providing data on Virginia's existing rail system, and displaying the state's passenger and freight rail improvements and investments, as well as the public involvement and coordination that went into the plan.

Success Story: DRPT Receives Two Grants for Studying Potential Rail Expansion

In the Fall of 2023, the FRA awarded DRPT two grants through the Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID). This program will enable DRPT to study passenger rail expansion for both the Commonwealth and the Western Rail Corridors. The Commonwealth Corridor is a potential east-west service that would connect Hampton Roads to the New River Valley through Richmond and Charlottesville. The Western Rail Corridor is a potential extension

of Amtrak service into Southwest Virginia, going to and through Bristol. This service would expand upon VPRA's ongoing efforts to extend Amtrak services from Roanoke to the New River Valley.

The Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) established the Corridor Identification and Development Program to create a pipeline of projects to advance passenger rail expansion. The program encompasses pre-construction development of selected corridors, which may include planning, environmental review, preliminary engineering, and other corridor development activities. This funding will assist with the planning for further developing the two identified corridors.

Central Virginia Rail Economic Development Study

In the Fall of 2023, the General Assembly tasked DRPT with the Central Virginia Rail Economic Development study. This study will evaluate rail opportunities that may yield long-term regional economic growth in the Central Virginia area, including Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell Counties, and the City of Lynchburg.

Through research and outreach, the study gauges industry drivers and analyzes regional economic and market conditions. Outcomes include concepts for rail-centric economic development opportunities that capitalize on the natural advantages of the region's existing landscape and cultivate growth in established sectors. The study also includes projected benefits and identified strategies for implementation.

Public Engagement

Members of DRPT staff presented the 2022 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan at Virginia's American Planning Association Conference, for the Richmond Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and during a webinar for AASHTO's Geospatial Online Transportation User Group. Although the plan was released in 2023, the sustained interest from partners in how the plan was developed and the pathway it lays for rail in the Commonwealth demonstrates the plan's shrewdness and depth. The plan has also served as an inspiration internally, with other teams in DRPT looking to the plan as a model for developing educational resources and fulfilling reporting requirements interactively and engagingly.

Rail Industrial Access

The Rail Industrial Access (RIA) program provides funding to construct, rehabilitate, or design rail spurs to connect new or growing businesses to Virginia's rail network. RIA diverts trucks from Virginia's busy roads and onto the freight railroad network. These projects spur regional economic development, alleviate roadway congestion, and enhance air quality. Grant funding of up to \$750,000 is available, provided applicants contribute a 30% match. Eligible costs include engineering, site preparation, track construction, rehabilitation and improvement, environmental mitigation, and mainline railroad switching. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis based on project eligibility and scoring. Scoring criteria consider the number of cars diverted, the economic impact of the project, and the levels of private investment generated.

Background

The CTB passed a resolution on November 16, 1995, to create the Rail Industrial Access program, then known as the Industrial Access Railroad Tracks program. The purpose of this program is to grant funding as an incentive to encourage industrial and commercial development across the state. Section 33.2-1600 of the Code of Virginia outlines the purpose of

the program. The General Assembly declared that it is in the public interest to ensure certain industrial and commercial sites have access to railroad tracks and facilities and that rail freight trackage be furnished for those certain sites if none exists presently.

More recently, the CTB adopted a policy resolution updating the requirements of the program in 2018. In 2024, the CTB raised the maximum grant amount from \$450,000 to \$750,000. This is the first time the amount has been increased since the program was created. "This increase in funding for the Rail Industrial Access grants will further enhance economic development opportunities across the state," said former DRPT Director Jennifer DeBruhl. "By investing in rail infrastructure, we are creating more efficient transportation options for businesses and reducing congestion on our roadways." This year, three grant recipients were awarded a total of \$1.3 million in grant funds from DRPT and, in addition to the funding provided by DRPT, generated \$63.5 million in public-private investment.

Success Story: RIA Program Builds Businesses and Rail Capacity Across the Commonwealth

Norfolk Terminal, a transload and warehousing facility, focuses on exporting plastics and PVC through the Port of Virginia. To enhance its rail capabilities, Norfolk Terminal plans to construct 1,524 feet of new track through funding awarded through the RIA program. The company will receive \$560,000 from the grant with a total public/private investment of \$59.9 million. The goal of the project is to allow the company to better receive, store, package, and ship products through the Port of Virginia. Norfolk Terminal's 10,815-foot rail siding is expected to divert approximately 10,200 trucks from Virginia's highways per year by utilizing the rail network.

Another success story is Carolina Avenue, LLC. The Henrico-based distribution center was awarded an RIA grant in September 2023 to rehabilitate an existing 4,000-foot spur which is serviced by shortline Buckingham Branch Railroad. TemperPack Technologies, Inc. is a manufacturer of sustainable cold-chain packaging that, through constant innovation and capitalization of a growing market, has expanded from an unknown start-up to the national leader in its sector. TemperPack is headquartered at the Carolina Avenue, LLC. Distribution center site. After settling in Richmond, the growing TemperPack team invented its flagship product, ClimaCell, a high performing curbside recyclable insulation liner composed of 90% corn starch and paper designed to compete head-to-head with Styrofoam (EPS) on thermal performance. Along with the invention of the product, the team developed the manufacturing process and supply chain to produce and ship the insulation to customers nationwide. Thanks to the distribution center's improved rail access, the TemperPack team developed a plan to design and execute a railcar-to-silo transloading process. Funding was used to perform critical long-term upgrades to the existing rail to support its continued use. These activities have allowed TemperPack to further expand its reach. The majority of TemperPack's Richmond exports ship to major distribution centers along the Atlantic coast and mid-west, including Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Atlanta, and New York City. Some volumes have been shipped internationally through the Port of Virginia. TemperPack will continue to rely on rail access for the foreseeable future and is investigating adding similar systems in other plant locations. Additionally, current and prospective tenants of the Richmond Distribution Center will also benefit from the restored rail.

Funding/Financing

Rail Industrial Access shares funds with VDOT's Economic Development Access Program, which, similarly, provides funding for road construction to support economic development projects.

Administration

The RIA program is administered by DRPT under the direction of the CTB. DRPT staff receive and score applications, make recommendations to the CTB for approval, disburse funds, monitor project progress, and ensure Virginia's funds were used responsibly upon completion of a project.

Data and Positive Outcomes

Since 2018, 27 projects have been awarded RIA grant funds. These projects have diverted nearly 156,000 trucks from highways, shifting freight onto over 45,000 rail cars. Through these projects, \$1.27 billion in capital investment has been generated while 3,474 jobs have been added to local economies. The RIA program creates a positive impact on the Commonwealth for minimal cost; total rail project costs from this program account for less than 3% of the total capital investment generated.

DRPT staff track the impact of the RIA program on the [Open Data Portal](#).

Public Engagement

Projects DRPT funds are often monitored through site visits from staff to allow DRPT to connect directly with project leadership, continually monitor how the project is progressing, provide any needed technical assistance, and ensure the responsible use of funding. One such site visit was conducted in 2024 when DRPT staff visited a project site in Wythe County. Over the past year, Wythe County Industrial Park completed construction on a project to improve rail access, which will support further development of the area. The project will now move into the performance review reporting and 15-year contingent interest period. Partially funded by a \$450,000 RIA grant, this project generated over \$113 million in capital investment.

Next Step 2030

DRPT's RIA program takes thousands of truckloads off highways and puts them onto rails, reducing congestion and improving air quality to minimize the negative effects of transportation on the environment. RIA additionally serves as a major economic development program, attracting businesses and jobs to the Commonwealth. Through the matching funding system, the program brings investment into the Commonwealth from private entities and facilitates business development in Virginia. This also adds a level of confidence to the programs and shows that outside stakeholders are interested and engaged, which creates a positive impact on the Commonwealth. In addition to creating jobs, this program is administered efficiently and economically, costing a fraction of what it generates in capital investment and promoting a responsible stewardship of public resources. Beneficiaries of this funding cross industries and geographies, strengthening economic development across the Commonwealth.

Rail Preservation Fund

The Rail Preservation Fund supports Virginia's nine shortline (Class-III) railroads. Shortline railroads are important connectors to jobs and industries in Virginia, linking Virginia to the larger, national freight rail network and providing last-mile service to Virginia businesses. Shortline railroads are significantly smaller than the Class-I railroads, and with support from Virginia, they can continue to generate new jobs and move goods through Virginia.

Projects funded through this program require a minimum 30% match from the grant recipient. Eligible activities include constructing rail transportation, improving shortline track and bridges to Class 2 Track Safety Standards, improving safety, and acquiring property and new track

facilities. Applicants are scored based on whether the projects meet certain threshold criteria, how well the projects meet the goals of the program, as well as other state initiatives, and the cost-effectiveness of the project.

Background

The Rail Preservation Fund is established under § 33.2-1602 of the Code of Virginia. Upon its creation, the Virginia General Assembly declared it to be in the public interest that the preservation and development of railway transportation facilities are crucial to the Commonwealth's balanced transportation system. The retention, maintenance, and improvement of the shortline railways and the development of railway transportation support facilities are pivotal in continuing the growth and success of rail transportation as an industry and mode of travel in Virginia.

In 2019, the CTB moved to update the program's evaluative criteria to reflect increased interest in the program from applicants. In Fiscal Year 2024, 13 projects received over \$8.3 million in funding through this program. The table below lists all the Rail Preservation Fund projects funded in the Fiscal Year 2024 Six-Year Improvement Program:

Table 14. Fiscal Year 2024 Rail Preservation Fund Projects

Transportation Construction District	Shortline Railroad Recipient	Project Description	Fiscal Year 2024 State Rail Preservation Funding (\$ in Thousands)
Multiple	Buckingham Branch Railroad Company	Surface Improvements on Richmond to Alleghany	\$ 1,400
Multiple	Buckingham Branch Railroad Company	Division - Henrico to Alleghany County	\$ 1,400
Lynchburg	Buckingham Branch Railroad Company	Buckingham Division Bridge Improvements	\$ 210
Hampton Roads	Chesapeake and Albemarle Railroad	MP 9.5 Bridge Project	\$ 316
Hampton Roads	Delmarva Central Railroad	BCR Phase III Upgrades	\$ 895
Hampton Roads	Norfolk Portsmouth Belt Line	Berkley Yard Lead & Switches - Chesapeake & Norfolk	\$ 1,540
Hampton Roads	Norfolk Portsmouth Belt Line	Programmatic Small Bridge Priority Repairs - Chesapeake	\$ 175
Hampton Roads	Norfolk Portsmouth Belt Line	Southern Branch Rehabilitation - Chesapeake	\$ 805
Hampton Roads	Norfolk Portsmouth Belt Line	Programmatic Main Line Bridge Upgrades	\$ 175
Hampton Roads	Norfolk Portsmouth Belt Line	Programmatic Rail Infrastructure Upgrades	\$ 280
Staunton	Shenandoah Valley Railroad	Track Bed Upgrade and Tie Replacement - Rockingham & Augusta	\$ 414
Staunton	Shenandoah Valley Railroad	Public Graded Crossing Upgrades and Safety Project	\$ 244

Staunton	Winchester & Western Railroad	Sandman Subdivision Curve Rail Project	\$	472
Total			\$	8,325

Success Story: Shortline Railroad Supporting 24 Industries Funded to Make Critical Upgrades

The Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad (NPBL) is a shortline railroad headquartered in Chesapeake, Virginia. NPBL operates in Chesapeake and Portsmouth and interchanges with CSX, NS, Buckingham Branch Railroad, and the Chesapeake and Albemarle Railroad. Through the Rail Preservation Fund, DRPT has provided approximately \$23.6 million in grant funds to NPBL since 2000 to assist with projects to maintain the state of good repair as well as upgrades to rail, ties, bridges, and yards. In 2024, NPBL was awarded \$1.3 million to replace rail and ties as well as improve surfacing and provide upgrades to bridges. NPBL owns 36 miles of track and offers switching services that support 24 industries.

Funding/Financing

The Rail Preservation Fund receives \$4 million each year from VDOT’s Highway Construction Fund, as allocated in the biennial budget, and can receive up to \$4 million from DRPT’s unobligated Commonwealth Rail Fund expenditures. For further information on how the Rail Preservation Fund is funded, see the [Administration and Finance](#) section.

Administration

DRPT administers the program, subject to the review and approval of the CTB. In allocating funds for improvement, DRPT and the CTB consider project costs concerning the prospective use, line capacity, and economic and public benefits. The Rail Preservation Fund is intended to give shortline railroads the ability to acquire or improve railways, railroad equipment, rolling stock, rights-of-way, and facilities directly related to servicing rolling stock.

Public Engagement

Members of DRPT’s rail team went to Roanoke, VA to attend the Virginia Railroad Association’s annual Fall meeting. The group attended with an interest in learning more about advancements and challenges faced by operators when it comes to shortline rail in Virginia. While attending this event, the team ran into former DRPT Director and current FRA Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell. Numerous other industry leaders in rail attended the event as well, giving DRPT an excellent opportunity to engage with stakeholders face-to-face.

Next Stop 2030

In an era of massive consolidation in transportation, the Rail Preservation Fund is a lifeline for the Commonwealth’s small but mighty Class III railroad operators. Shortline railroads provide first-mile and last-mile options within the supply chain and connects to regions that are left underserved by Class I railroad operators. Many of these operators have been mainstays of their local economies for decades and have empowered smaller businesses to connect to the larger freight network, keeping doors open and jobs local. Strengthening this network of rail operators allows for reliable and fair access to transportation and for more passengers and products to reach across the Commonwealth. DRPT is proud to support these rail operators and assist them through state-of-the-art technical solutions and modern engineering. This is just one way the agency is looking to revolutionize transportation. Through frequent site visits, regular contact, and conference connections, DRPT has established a successful standard for program

oversight, customer service, and direct engagement. This enables DRPT to engage with stakeholders at the right place and right time to maximize DRPT’s impact.

The FREIGHT Program

DRPT’s Freight Rail Enhancement to Increase Goods and Highway Throughput (FREIGHT) program is designed to support rail infrastructure investments that expand the Virginia freight rail network. DRPT supports projects that improve, expand, or develop railways, railroad equipment, rolling stock, rights of way, rail facilities, and engineering and design. Just like the Rail Preservation Fund and Rail Industrial Access program, grants awarded by the FREIGHT program require a performance period once the project has been completed to ensure the investment brings lasting benefits to the economy and transportation network in Virginia.

Background

In 2020, the General Assembly passed the Omnibus Transportation Act, creating the Commonwealth Rail Fund, and declared that developing freight rail infrastructure is, “essential to the Commonwealth’s continued economic growth, vitality, and competitiveness in national and world markets.” In 2021, the CTB adopted a policy creating the FREIGHT Program based on the directive set out in the Omnibus bill. In Fiscal Year 2024, a mix of four new projects and three multi-year projects funded in prior years received a combined \$12.1 million in funding through the FREIGHT Program. When combining public and private investment, these projects received \$26.7 million in Fiscal Year 2024. The table below shows the projects funded by the FREIGHT Program in Fiscal Year 2024.

Table 15. Fiscal Year 2024 Freight Program projects

Transportation Construction District	Recipient	Project Description	Fiscal Year 2024 State Funds (\$ in Thousands)
Hampton Roads	Virginia Port Authority	Norfolk International Terminal North Lead Study	\$ 1,500
Richmond	Buckingham Branch Railroad	South Anna Siding	\$ 1,120
Lynchburg	Cathcart	Tank Car Repair Modernization	\$ 1,314
Staunton	Shenandoah Valley Railroad	Pleasant Valley Yard Design	\$ 34
Hampton Roads	Virginia Port Authority	Norfolk International Terminal Central Rail Yard Expansion	\$ 4,000
Hampton Roads	Norfolk Southern Railway	Lamberts Point	\$ 2,920
Lynchburg	Buckingham Branch Railroad	Virginia Line Purchase	\$ 1,250
Total			\$ 12,138

Success Story: Shifting the Tide in the Tidewater Region by Expanding Freight Capacity

The Commonwealth Railway Median Rail Project in Chesapeake and Suffolk finished its 15th and final year of performance, completing the Commonwealth's contingent interest. This project involved relocating 4.5 miles of the West Norfolk Spur of the Commonwealth Rail Line to the medians of the Western Freeway and Interstate 664, which runs through Chesapeake and Portsmouth. Commonwealth Railway reported that three million containers used the line since 2008, nearly double the requirement outlined in the initial grant. This move also reduced noise and air pollution caused by the idling cars at the stretch's 14 at-grade crossings and allowed for emergency vehicles to respond to incidents using more direct routes. The project was originally funded as a Rail Enhancement Fund project but has since become incorporated as a project under the FREIGHT Program.

Another success story for the FREIGHT Program has been the project to expand Norfolk International Terminals' (NIT) Central Rail Yard, which neared completion by the end of Fiscal Year 2024. Construction began in 2022 and was supported by a \$20 million federal grant complemented by a \$20 million grant from DRPT. This funding went towards building two new rail-track bundles and purchasing three all-electric cantilever rail-mounted gantry cranes. Upon completion, this project will give the Port of Virginia the capacity to process two million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) by rail annually and serve as a critical connection point for shipping to the Midwest. This project is on track to be completed on time and on budget.

Funding/Financing

The FREIGHT Program receives funding through the Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF). The CRF is split between VPRA and DRPT, with 7% of the fund dedicated to DRPT FREIGHT Program and rail planning, as well as for contributing to the Rail Preservation Fund. For further information, see the [Administration and Finance](#) section.

Administration

DRPT administers the FREIGHT Program. Once applications have been submitted, DRPT presents recommended projects to the CTB for approval. The baseline eligibility requirements include that projects should be aligned with at least one of the goals included in the statewide rail plan, that projects must expand the capacity of the freight rail network, and that 30% design on these projects must be completed. Upon meeting those criteria, applications are scored based on how the project performs relative to others when considering benefit-cost analyses, the percentage of matching funds contributed, how complete the project is, and how many goals are met from the statewide rail plan.

Public Engagement

DRPT proactively collaborates with partners in conducting studies. This was exemplified through the Central Virginia Rail Economic Development study, which DRPT spearheaded over the course of the year. In June 2024, DRPT engaged in a Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance roundtable with private sector freight rail users to identify the role Virginia's rail network plays in their businesses. This roundtable allowed DRPT to learn from the experiences of these stakeholders and consider potential rail economic development opportunities in the Lynchburg region.

Next Stop 2030

Projects funded by DRPT's freight rail grants help increase the movement of goods and reduce highway maintenance costs by improving rail infrastructure and expanding rail capacity. The

projects also better local economic conditions and get the Commonwealth closer to meeting the goals outlined in VTRANS. The application procedures for this program are transparent, with clear and objective criteria that reduce the ambiguities and minimize complexities that often exist in the grant application and award cycle. Because of the wide eligibility of potential recipients and projects, partners from across industries, sectors, and counties can connect to this program and bring the benefits back to their communities. Projects are closely monitored throughout the lifetime of the grant, with recipients required to include progress reports with each invoice they submit for reimbursement and DRPT staff regularly conducting site visits to confirm projects are advancing as expected. This diligent oversight also continues after the project is completed, with recipients required to report on annual network activity for at least six years after completion. This enables DRPT to better capture the long-term positive impacts of these projects and promote these compelling stories that DRPT has made possible to internal and external stakeholders. DRPT's retention of a contingent interest in the project improvements for at least six years after project completion also guarantees the project work remains in service at a state of good repair, allowing today's investments into freight rail infrastructure to generate dividends for years to come.

Conclusion

DRPT is the catalyst to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians through innovative transportation solutions. This report has hopefully outlined *how* DRPT has led as a convener of partners and stakeholders, worked to foster innovative practical solutions, cultivated a sustainable well-managed organization, and ultimately created a positive impact on the Commonwealth in Fiscal Year 2024. The report also has covered *where* DRPT came from, *when* it was created, *who* provides leadership, and *which* tasks DRPT takes on (Hint: DRPT is more than just a funding agency). But what this report has not explored is *why* DRPT serves in this role.

Virginia is the only state in the country that has an entirely separate agency dedicated to supporting rail and public transportation. When Governor Wilder and the General Assembly created DRPT in 1992, they were not hopping on the bandwagon, but they were not trendsetters either, since no other state since has decided to follow their lead. Yet, DRPT is still here because transit and rail remain unique priorities in and to the Commonwealth and DRPT remains the go-to organization for advancing them.

The agency has continued to work to expand and reinforce an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need. Every person deserves to travel with dignity. Every business deserves to move their goods efficiently. And every need deserves to be met. It is not always easy to make this dream a reality; this work is often thankless but is certainly necessary to move people and goods throughout Virginia. DRPT gets it done because of a dedication to service.

Transit agencies and rail operators across the Commonwealth do the most with the least to create connections and cultivate communities. If every person deserves to travel, every business deserves to move their goods, and every need deserves to be met, then every entity that endeavors to span the chasm between this ideal and the status quo deserves just as dedicated a partner. DRPT is that partner, champion, cheerleader, advocate, and collaborator. Through its continuing work for Virginia citizens, DRPT stands by and will do so until every person, business, and need are satisfied.

And that is the *why* of it all. All that remains to ask is *what* is next. To answer that question, stay connected to DRPT's work by [following the agency online](#), [visiting DRPT's website](#), and [subscribing to DRPT's newsletters](#). DRPT is here to help, but it takes everyone's connections to keep things moving in Everywhere, VA, every way, every how, every day.

Appendix

MERIT Operating Support by Public Transportation Provider

Appendix Table 1. MERIT Operating Support by Transit provider, Fiscal Year 2024, \$ IN MILLIONS

Transportation Construction District	Transit Provider Name	Fiscal Year 2024 MERIT Operating (\$ in Millions)	Transportation Construction District	Transit Provider Name	Fiscal Year 2024 MERIT Operating (\$ in Millions)
Bristol	Four County Transit	\$ 0.68	Northern Virginia (continued)	CUE (City of Fairfax)	\$ 1.54
	Bristol Transit	\$ 0.14		Fairfax Connector	\$ 26.40
	Mountain Lynx Transit	\$ 0.79		Virginia Railway Express	\$ 6.74
	Mountain Empire Transit	\$ 0.65		OmniRide	\$ 7.93
	Graham Transit	\$ 0.14		Petersburg Area Transit	\$ 1.22
Culpeper	Charlottesville Area Transit	\$ 2.76	Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	\$ 17.51
Fredericksburg	FXBGo! (Fredericksburg Regional Transit)	\$ 1.08	Salem	Radford Transit	\$ 0.53
Hampton Roads	Suffolk Transit	\$ 0.48		Valley Metro/GRTC Roanoke	\$ 3.19
	Greensville-Emporia Transit	\$ 0.05		Pulaski Area Transit	\$ 0.21
	Hampton Roads Transit	\$ 26.84		Blacksburg Transit	\$ 3.00
	STAR Transit (Accomack-Northampton TDC)	\$ 0.36	Staunton	BRITE (Central Shenandoah)	\$ 0.69
	Pony Express (Chincoteague)	\$ 0.02		Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation	\$ 1.79
	Williamsburg Area Transit Authority	\$ 2.24		WinTran	\$ 0.43

Lynchburg	Danville Transit	\$ 0.95	Multi-District	Bay Transit	\$ 1.39
	Farmville Area Bus	\$ 0.18		Blackstone Area Bus System	\$ 0.17
	Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	\$ 1.79		JAUNT	\$ 1.85
	Altavista Community Transit System	\$ 0.03		Lake Area Bus / Halifax Area Rural Transportation	\$ 0.05
Northern Virginia	Loudoun County Transit	\$ 3.16		RADAR / UHSTS	\$ 0.36
	Arlington Regional Transit	\$ 6.55		Virginia Regional Transit	\$ 1.19
	DASH (Alexandria)	\$ 8.18			

MERIT Capital Support by Public Transportation Provider

Appendix Table 2. MERIT Capital Support by Transit Provider, Fiscal Year 2024, \$ in Millions

Transportation Construction District	Transit Provider Name	Fiscal Year 2024 MERIT Capital (\$ in Millions)	Transportation Construction District	Transit Provider Name	Fiscal Year 2024 MERIT Capital (\$ in Millions)
Bristol	Four County Transit	\$ 0.07	Northern Virginia (continued)	CUE (City of Fairfax)	\$ 0.07
	Bristol Transit	\$ 0.05		Fairfax Connector	\$ 26.54
	Mountain Lynx Transit	\$ 0.13		Virginia Railway Express	\$ 6.42
	Mountain Empire Transit	\$ 0.11		OmniRide	\$ 2.39
	Graham Transit	\$ 0.03		Petersburg Area Transit	\$ 0.17
Culpeper	Charlottesville Area Transit	\$ 5.36	Richmond	Greater Richmond Transit Company	\$ 9.54
Fredericksburg	FXBGo! (Fredericksburg Regional Transit)	\$ 0.34	Salem	Radford Transit	\$ 0.05
Hampton Roads	Suffolk Transit	\$ 0.16		Valley Metro/GR	\$ -

			Staunton	TC Roanoke	
	Greensville-Emporia Transit	\$ 0.08		Pulaski Area Transit	\$ 0.07
	Hampton Roads Transit	\$ 15.94		Blacksburg Transit	\$ 3.73
	STAR Transit (Accomack-Northampton TDC)	\$ 0.11		BRITE (Central Shenandoah)	\$ 0.18
	Pony Express (Chincoteague)	\$ -		Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation	\$ 0.06
	Williamsburg Area Transit Authority	\$ -		WinTran	\$ 1.70
Lynchburg	Danville Transit System	\$ 0.25	Multi-District	Bay Transit	\$ 0.30
	Farmville Area Bus	\$ 0.05		Blackstone Area Bus System	\$ 0.03
	Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	\$ -		JAUNT	\$ 0.07
	Altavista Community Transit System	\$ 0.02		Lake Area Bus / Halifax Area Rural Transportation	\$ 0.01
Northern Virginia	Loudoun County Transit	\$ -	RADAR / UHSTS	\$ 0.23	
	Arlington Regional Transit	\$ 11.41	Virginia Regional Transit	\$ 0.54	
	DASH (Alexandria)	\$ 6.25			

Note: Some years, transit providers do not apply for any State capital funds. This is often because no vehicle in their fleet needs to be substantially repaired or replaced. Many transit agencies receive Federal formula funds to pay for small capital projects.

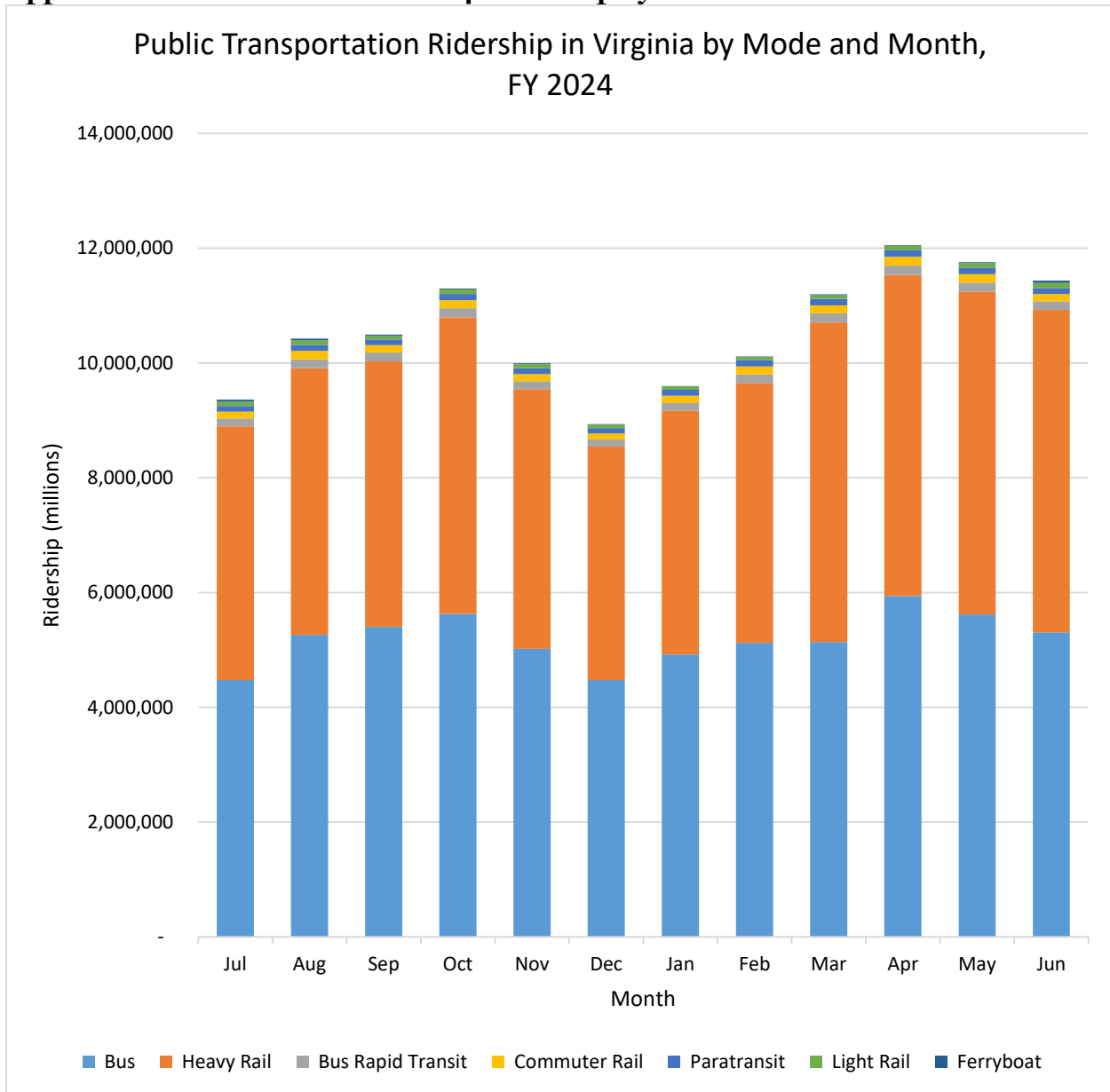
Ridership by Public Transportation Provider

Appendix Table 3. Fiscal Year 2024 Ridership by Public Transit Provider

Public Transit Provider	Fiscal Year 2024 Ridership	Public Transit Provider (continued)	Fiscal Year 2024 Ridership
Four County Transit	124,617	JAUNT	228,961
Bay Transit	131,277	Lake Area Bus	12,090
BRITE	212,642	Mountain Empire Transit	130,896
Charlottesville Area Transit	1,353,059	RideSmart	3,047
Bristol Virginia Transit	42,876	Arlington Regional Transit	2,458,738
City of Harrisonburg Dept. of Public Transportation	1,877,126	DASH (Alexandria Transit Company)	5,351,634
Petersburg Area Transit	471,466	CUE (Fairfax City)	982,981
Radford Transit	90,833	Fairfax Connector (Fairfax County)	8,716,249
Suffolk Transit	77,888	Virginia Railway Express	1,589,693
WinTran	181,306	OmniRide	1,949,355
Loudoun County Transit	648,606	Pulaski Area Transit	28,456
McAfee Knob	3,571	RADAR/UHSTS	62,335
Danville Transit	257,650	STAR Transit	101,901
Mountain Lynx Transit	177,659	Altavista Community Transit System	15,318
Farmville Area Bus	96,178	Blacksburg Transit	3,791,431
FXBGo! (Fredericksburg Regional Transit)	332,441	Blackstone Area Bus System	28,882
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	585,759	Graham Transit	33,235
GRTC (Greater Richmond Transit Company)	10,839,638	PONY Express	6,423
ValleyMetro (GRTC Roanoke)	1,383,180	Virginia Regional Transit	192,243
Greensville-Emporia Transit	11,791	Williamsburg Area Transit Authority	1,051,426
Hampton Roads Transit	8,575,405	WMATA	72,365,626

Ridership by Transit Mode

Appendix Chart 1. Fiscal Year 2024 Ridership by Transit Mode



Appendix Table 4. Fiscal Year 2024 Share of Ridership by Transit Mode

Public Transportation Ridership in Virginia by Mode, Fiscal Year 2024	
Mode	Percent share of trips taken
Bus	49.19%
Heavy Rail	46.30%
Bus Rapid Transit	1.41%
Commuter Rail	1.26%

Paratransit	1.00%
Light Rail	0.68%
Ferryboat	0.17%

Commuter Assistance Programs by Operating Agencies

Appendix Table 5. Commuter Assistance Programs and Operating Agencies

Commuter Assistance Program	Operating Agency
Arlington County Commuter Services	Arlington County Department of Environmental Services
Commuter Services by RRRRC	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
ConnectingVA	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
DATA	Dulles Area Transportation Association
Fairfax County Commuter Services	Fairfax County Department of Transportation
GO Alex	Alexandria Department of Transportation
GWRideConnect	George Washington Regional Commission
Loudoun County Commuter Services	Loudoun County Department of Transportation
MidPenRideShare	Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
Northern Neck Commuter Services	Northern Neck Planning District Commission
OmniRide Ridesharing	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, West Piedmont Planning District Commission
TRAFFIX	Hampton Roads Transit