



# Annual Report

## Fiscal Year 2025

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## Director's Message

As DRPT Director, I have the honor of leading an agency that has administered over a billion dollars in funding for transit and rail this past fiscal year. But our agency is more than just our grant programs. We are also responsible for:

- conducting statewide rail and public transportation studies;
- planning and programming new services and capital improvement projects;
- providing leadership, advocacy, technical assistance, funding oversight and monitoring.

At our core though, our agency is our people. We are a small team of less than 70 individuals who help take cars and trucks off the roads, allocate dollars to ensure they have the maximum benefit, and move heaven and earth to support transit and rail in the Commonwealth.

Since I started in this role in November 2024, I have learned that it is not cars or trucks or buses that really move people: it is people that move people. I personally have been moved by the stories showing the benefit of transit and rail on people's lives and the hard workers who keep these services going.

In 2025, there were a multitude of stories to celebrate about transit and rail. Some of these were successes we celebrated, such as miles upon miles of travel on transit, millions of trucks diverted, game-changing groundbreakings, and remarkable ribbon-cuttings. Others were more modest moments signifying meaningful milestones, like:

- Greenville Emporia Transit using state and federal funds to replace their entire fleet while adding an additional bus, after experiencing a 50% increase in riders over five years;
- Buckingham Branch Railroad leveraging funds awarded through Virginia's Rail Preservation Program to rehabilitate track that had been washed out in 36 locations along a 17-mile corridor during Hurricane Helene, quickly restoring vital service along the shortline; and
- Transit and rail partners being recognized by local, state, and national organizations for their work, while DRPT staff were sought out as subject matter experts by organizations across the Commonwealth and the entire country.

Big or small, we are proud to have been – and to continue to be – your partner, as a technical assistance provider, collaborator, thought leader, innovator, steward, and most of all, as one DRPT.

As we look back on lessons learned, alliances forged, improvements made, and victories won, we are reminded of the task before us, which is to go even further in the next year. We know what transit and rail mean to communities across the Commonwealth, and we understand the impact that every dollar, every hour, every person, can have on keeping things moving. As we look ahead to 2026, we cannot wait to start another year of progress, partnerships, and positive impact!

# Introduction

## About This Report

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 33.2-106, § 33.2-1526.3, and the Appropriations Act, 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, and its use of the Commonwealth Rail Fund, respectively. DRPT combined these reports to produce an annual report for FY25.

## Our History

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.

## About DRPT

The agency works with rail and public transportation stakeholders to provide service to people throughout Virginia and promotes transportation options to the general public, businesses, and community decision makers. As an agency entrusted with public dollars, DRPT seeks the highest possible return on investment to maximize funding and strive to implement best practice management tools and techniques.

DRPT’s primary areas of activity include:

**Public Transportation** - DRPT administers public transportation funding and planning in Virginia. The transit systems include 40 bus providers as well as commuter rail, heavy rail, light rail, paratransit, and ferryboat.

**Rail** – DRPT oversees programs and initiatives that support freight investments and delivers data-driven planning recommendations and policies for both passenger and freight rail.

**Commuter Programs** - DRPT manages investments in local and regional commuter assistance programs that mitigate congestion, manage transportation demand, and promote and encourage the use of transit, vanpools, and carpools

## Mission

DRPT’s mission is to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians with innovative transportation solutions.



DRPT’s vision is a connected Commonwealth with an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need.

## Vision

DRPT's vision is a connected Commonwealth with an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need.

## 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.

## 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.

## 10 Numbers to Know about DRPT

- **33 Years of Work:** In 1992, Governor Wilder signed Senate Bill 223 into law, establishing DRPT. Since then, while much has changed, DRPT's resolve to connect the Commonwealth has remained steadfast.
- **7 Billion Dollars:** DRPT disburses over seven billion dollars in funding to support transit and rail in Virginia over six years, as outlined in the Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP).
- **40 Transit Agencies:** DRPT offers a range of support for Virginia's transit agencies, including funding, technical assistance, and leadership. DRPT also conducts studies, prepares statewide plans, and distributes most of its funds to support public transportation agencies and providers.
- **4 State-Operated Intercity Bus Routes:** The Virginia Breeze Bus Line is DRPT's intercity bus service, which covers four routes and connects underserved rural communities with larger urban areas, improving access to reliable transportation and moving more people across the Commonwealth.
- **60 Human Services Providers:** Many human services and paratransit providers arrange on-demand connections to essential services like hospitals and community service centers. Human services and paratransit are key to improving reliable transportation for those who often have the greatest need and the least access.
- **16 Commuter Assistance Programs:** 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.
- **9 Shortline Rail Operators:** Shortline railroads are important connectors to jobs and industries and link Virginia to the larger, national freight rail network. With support from Virginia, they can continue to generate new jobs and move goods across the Commonwealth.
- **2 Class-I Railroads:** There are around 6,000 miles of track in Virginia, connecting freight and passengers to points within and beyond Virginia. The two freight railroads that operate statewide are Norfolk Southern and CSX.
- **69 Team Members:** DRPT delivers exceptional service with an engaged workforce that effectively manages public assets and promotes transparency. Staff proactively convene stakeholders covering all corners of the Commonwealth each and every day.
- **1 DRPT:** DRPT works to expand and reinforce an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need. This work, while at times thankless, gets done because of a dedication to service that is foundational to DRPT as an agency.

# DRPT Transit & Transit Programs

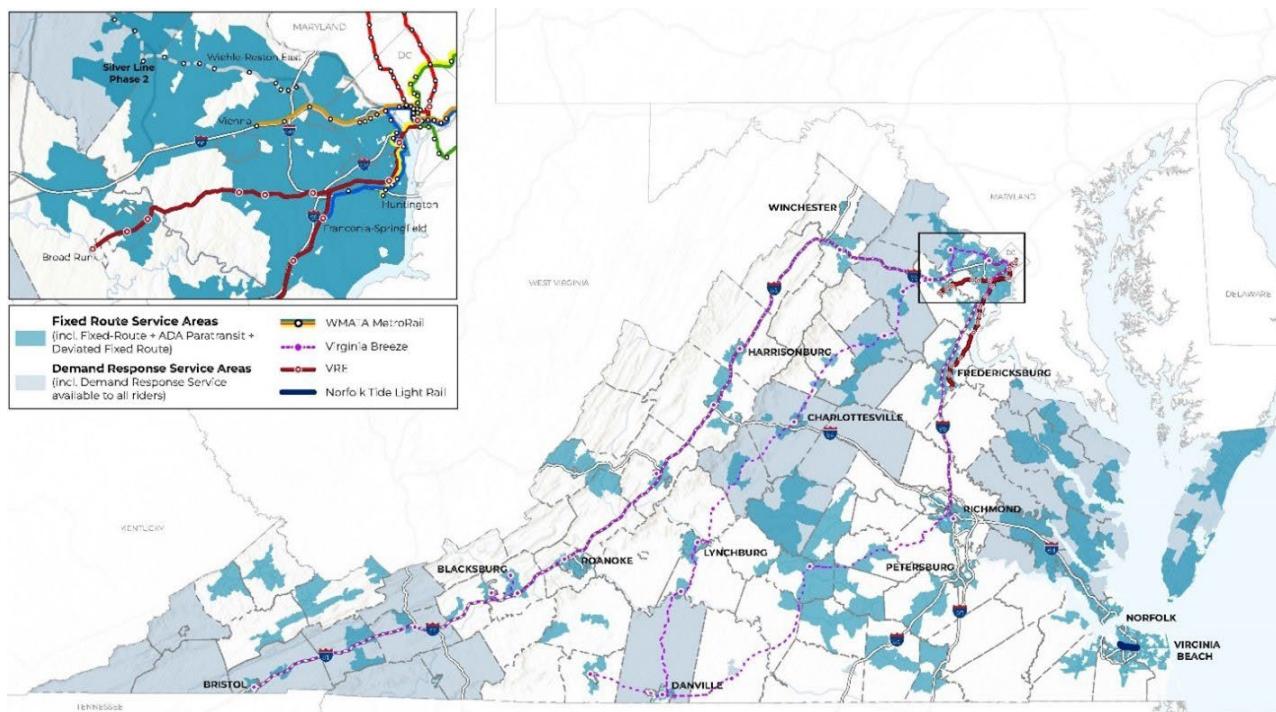
Public transportation brings many advantages to its communities and can fill many roles. Transit provides safe and reliable transportation for essential services, eases congestion on Virginia's busiest roads and highways, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, gets workers from home to work and back, and can be a driver of job creation, development, and economic growth.

As the agency tasked with strengthening the Commonwealth's transit network, DRPT proudly administers grants, offers technical assistance, conducts studies, and provides oversight, all to keep the wheels on the bus going and to put riders in the driver's seat.

## Virginia's 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..." There are 40 public transportation providers in Virginia, not including private bus services (nor the Virginia Breeze) or human service transportation providers. The 40 transit providers range from local providers with a single route, to massive interstate authorities that move millions of people a year. No matter their size or scope, all 40 are supported by DRPT's transit programs.

This map visualizes the locations of transit providers in Virginia, and the type of service provided:



## GRTC Has Their Eyes on the Rise, Their Thumb on the Pulse

One transit agency over the past year has demonstrated the interconnectivity and impact of DRPT's grant programs: The Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC).

GRTC, based in Richmond and serving the capital of Virginia, received a \$4.4M MERIT Demonstration grant to expand service on Route 1, one of GRTC's most popular fixed routes. The extension connects Downtown Richmond to Virginia Center Commons in Henrico County, while adding 36 new stops along 15.5 miles. This extended Route 1 service was projected to add over 20,000 monthly riders to the already popular service. As of April 2025 reporting, GRTC's Route 1 extension has an average of over 90,000 riders per month. GRTC's project not only improves service on their most popular fixed route but will also help inform GRTC's plans for future construction of the North-South Pulse-BRT project.

GRTC's current bus rapid transit system (BRT), the East-West Pulse, has been so successful that expanded capacity was needed. In late FY 2025, GRTC unveiled four new 60-foot articulated buses, increasing bus capacity, allowing for quicker boarding, reducing dwell times at stations, and improving the passenger experience. Two of these buses were purchased with support from DRPT's MERIT Capital program, while the other two were funded through SMART SCALE. Over calendar year 2024, the Pulse moved 1.7 million riders across the Richmond area, and the purchase of these buses is a pivotal steppingstone on GRTC's path for continued growth of the service.

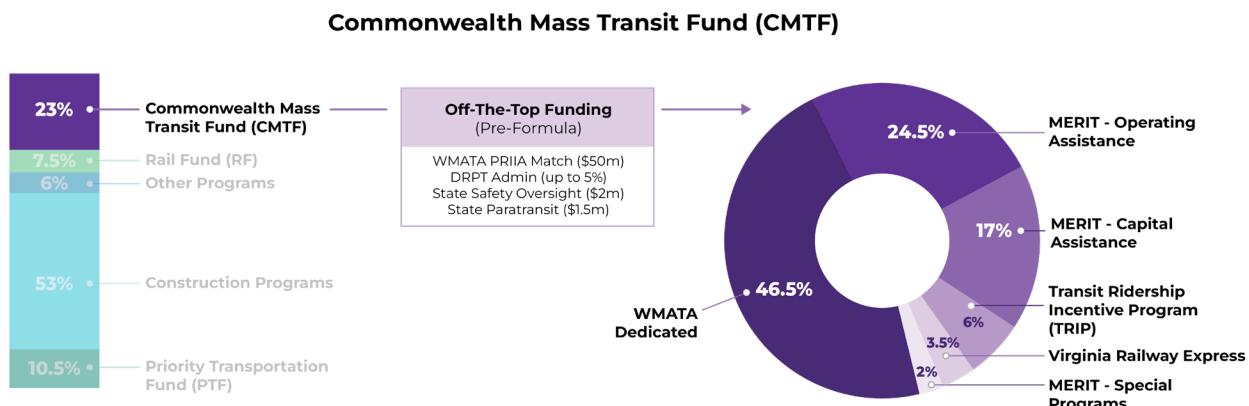
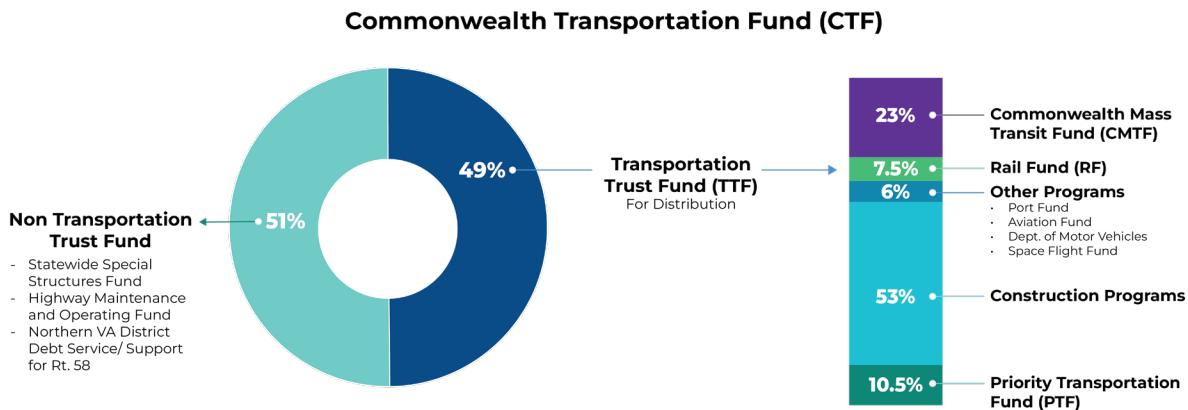
Breaking ground and improving upon current infrastructure is another essential part of sustaining growth. GRTC's Downtown Transfer Center Study, an FY 2024 Technical Assistance grant, was completed in FY 2025 and identified a site recommendation for their permanent downtown transfer center. GRTC has operated out of a temporary location on 9th and Clay Streets since September 2023. GRTC has begun NEPA evaluation, engineering, and design work for the selected site with funding from a FY 2025 Technical Assistance grant. At the same time, GRTC has received funding through TRIP's Passenger Amenities and Facilities and Public Safety programs to add bus tracking signage for the Pulse, add solar lights to bus stops, install access security gates, and improve bus stop amenities overall. Riders will reap the rewards of the seeds planted by GRTC for the Downtown Transfer Center in the future and will benefit from a best-in-class passenger experience at visually appealing and safe bus stops in the present.

When they are not building better bus stops, buying better buses, or broaching better bus centers, GRTC is creating connections for potential riders, regions, and recruits. Through funding from DRPT's TRIP Regional Connectivity Program and MERIT Demonstration Program, GRTC continues to grow their regional microtransit service, LINK, to bridge transportation divides between the City of Richmond and its surrounding counties. GRTC also breaks down barriers to transit access by offering fare free transit across its systems, which began a few years back with TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare funding. Finally, GRTC has received funding for the past several years through the MERIT Workforce Development program to host interns across multiple departments. All these examples demonstrate how GRTC is investing in its people, its product, and its potential and DRPT is a proud partner every step of the way.

# Funding Public Transportation

## State Funding

State funding for public transportation is distributed through DRPT's statewide transit grant programs. DRPT funds these transit programs through the Commonwealth Mass Transit reach



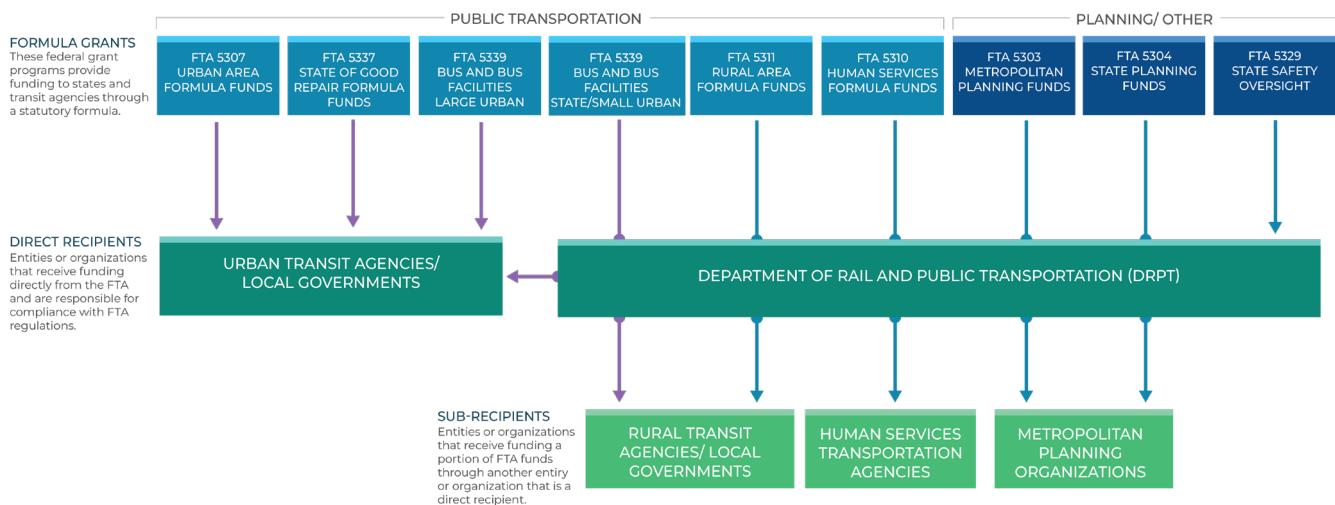
## Federal Funding

Transit is also supported by federal funding programs that flow to the state from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Every year, DRPT, transit service providers, and local governments receive millions of dollars through federal formula grant programs, which guarantee this funding through a statutory formula approved by the U.S. Congress. DRPT administers some funds on behalf of rural and small urban transit providers or planning organizations, while other funds go directly to the large urban transit providers.

In addition to these federal programs, DRPT assists in the administration of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds from the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP, sometimes called the Regional Surface Transportation Block Grant) and the Congestion

Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).

### Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Formula Funding



## Other Funding

### Regional commissions, authorities, and funds

In addition to statewide funding, there are several regional funds that provide regional funding for public transportation. The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission administers regional transit funding in Northern Virginia, supporting WMATA, VRE, and several local transit providers. The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission administers funds in its service area to support VRE and local and regional transit provider OmniRide.

The Central Virginia Transportation Authority in the greater Richmond region provides a dedicated portion of its revenue to the Greater Richmond Transit Company. Similarly, the Hampton Roads Regional Transit Fund provides dedicated revenues to Hampton Roads Transit for regional transit services. These funds are distributed from the regional transportation fund administered by the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, a distinct entity from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, provides regional funding in Northern Virginia for transportation capital projects of all kinds. This includes providing capital funding for regional public transportation projects.

### Toll programs and Commuter Choice

Virginia's I-66 and I-95 High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) express lanes provide a quick commuting option in the peak direction of travel for Northern Virginia commuters. Some of the revenues from these HOT Lanes are dedicated to supporting public transportation in the Northern Virginia region through the Commuter Choice Program, managed by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. The Commuter Choice Program provides grants for transit operating and capital projects that help mitigate congestion along the I-66 or I-95 corridors.

## DRPT Transit Planning

### What is DRPT Transit Planning?

DRPT supports the planning and implementation of transit service and expansion across the Commonwealth by conducting transit studies aimed at improving existing or developing new services and providing technical assistance to transit agencies and regional planning bodies pursuing the same outcome. These efforts often involve coordination with local, state, and national partners and programs, facilitating data collection and analysis, and offering resources to support the planning, data, and asset management of grantees.

### Why is DRPT Transit Planning Important?

Between nine DRPT grant programs, five discretionary federal grant programs, 15 metropolitan planning organizations, 40 transit agencies, and 144 million passengers in FY 2025, transit has numerous moving pieces. Transit planning is essential in ensuring that passengers and the organizations that move them get where they want to go today and are heading in the right direction tomorrow. DRPT's role as a go-to organization for planning and best practices ensures Virginia's transit future is planned for.



### Petersburg Profits from Participation in Persistent Poverty Planning Program

In 2023, the Federal Transit Administration awarded DRPT \$450,000 from the Areas of Persistent Poverty (AoPP) program to create a plan that would identify opportunities for improved paratransit service reliability, evaluate the potential for transit accessibility improvements to key regional destinations and identify a plan for Petersburg Area Transit (PAT) to shift towards alternative fuel vehicles. DRPT's finalized plan included two phases of activity, with the first involving public engagement and comprehensive operational analyses of paratransit services and the second focusing on evaluating a potential fleet transition to alternative sources of fuel.



PAT provides fare-free service to Petersburg city residents as well as into the cities of Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Richmond, and portions of Chesterfield County, Dinwiddie County, and Prince George County. Supporting the agency through this effort not only contributes to the long-term viability of transit in the area but is aligned with larger statewide strategic investments into the region. Governor Youngkin launched the Partnership for Petersburg initiative with state, local, community, and faith leaders in 2022. With support from the Commonwealth's resources, the Partnership's mission is to help Petersburg become one of the best cities to live, work, and raise a family. Keeping Petersburg moving has been identified as a key priority as a part of this initiative, which will include strengthening transportation resources.

## DRPT Transit Programs – MERIT

### What is MERIT?

The Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) program is a statewide grant program that enables transit agencies to fund capital investments, operating expenses, workforce development, technical assistance, and demonstration activities.

### Why is MERIT Important?

The MERIT program protects the daily operation of transit services by providing funding to support the people who keep vehicles and riders on the road, the vehicles that get riders where they want to go, and the infrastructure that keeps the transit system safe and serviceable. Beyond supporting investments in labor, back-end operations, vehicles, and facilities, the program also enables transit agencies to keep one eye on existing services and another on expansion, growth, and innovation.

## DRPT Transit Programs – MERIT Operating Assistance

### What is MERIT Operating Assistance?

The MERIT Operating Assistance program distributes State funding for operating expenses for 38 of the 40 public transportation providers in the Commonwealth (VRE and WMATA receive their own funding). MERIT Operating Assistance uses a size- and performance-based formula to allocate the State's share of funding in a fiscally responsible, reliable, and fair way.

### Why is MERIT Operating Assistance Important?

The MERIT Operating Assistance program helps ensure Virginia's transit network is reliable and gets passengers where they need to go. This funding allows Virginia's transit operators to provide reliable transit services and have the confidence to plan for the future. The formula used to distribute these funds ensures that DRPT is a good steward of public resources by providing funding at an appropriate level and ensuring a cost-effective return on investment.

## Celebrating Operators Who Mean Bus-ness

DRPT collected stories from transit providers about the tremendous impact the operators and other personnel who keep their systems running make on their communities and the industry as a whole. These stories made DRPT even prouder to support transit in the Commonwealth through programs like MERIT Operating Assistance than the agency was before. One such highlight includes:

"In 1975, the same year Valley Metro began service in the Roanoke Valley, Myron Deberry took the driver's seat as a dedicated bus operator. Over the past 50 years, he has been a reliable presence on Roanoke's streets, safely transporting millions of passengers and becoming a familiar face among riders. Myron has always approached his role with professionalism, patience, and

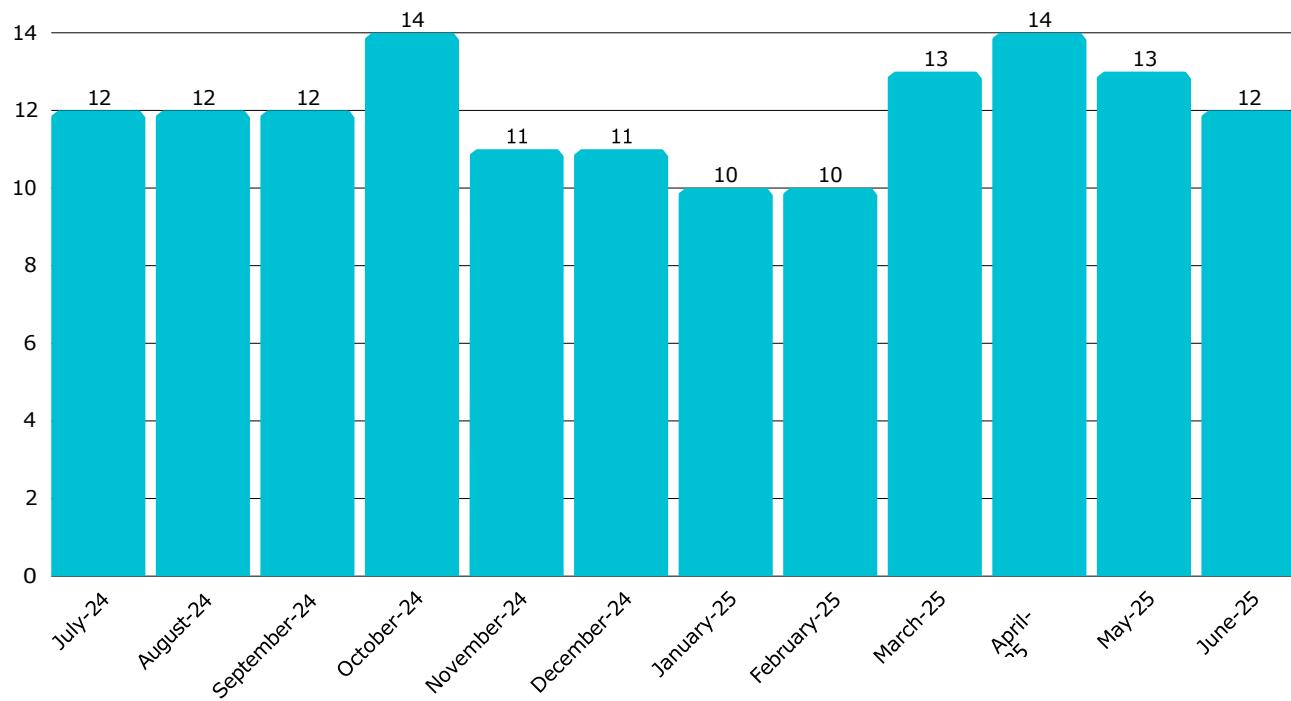
responsibility. He has adapted to Valley Metro's growth, from expansions to technology upgrades, always prioritizing safety and comfort. He has navigated challenges like the Flood of 1985, the Blizzard of 1993, and the COVID pandemic, ensuring safe and reliable transit. Myron has mentored new operators and helped maintain Valley Metro's high standards, making a lasting impact on both the agency and the community."



## MERIT Operating Assistance Keeps Millions of Riders Moving

In FY 2025, statewide transit ridership was over 144 million, a 14% increase over FY 2024.

## Statewide Transit Ridership by FY 2025 by Month (in Millions)



## DRPT Transit Programs – MERIT Capital Assistance

### What is MERIT Capital Assistance?

The MERIT Capital Assistance program allocates state funding to support a portion of the cost of purchasing capital assets. These assets can range from purchasing maintenance equipment, repairing or replacing transit vehicles, adding new buses to a transit fleet, to supporting major capital expansions like constructing transit facilities. MERIT Capital funding is foremost dedicated to replacing or rehabilitating transit vehicles and facilities that are at the end of their useful life, before allocating funds to enhancements or expansions. This ensures that Virginia's transit operators maintain a state of good repair.

### Why is MERIT Capital Assistance Important?

The MERIT Capital Assistance program ensures that Virginia's transit providers are best in class, well-maintained, safe, dependable, and clean. Transit vehicles in good condition are more reliable, comfortable, and provide a better experience for the rider. Additionally, MERIT Capital Assistance funding helps Virginia's transit operators grow and thrive. By providing Virginia's share of capital funding, transit operators can expand their fleets, improve their facilities, and add important amenities like transfer centers and bus stops in their service areas.



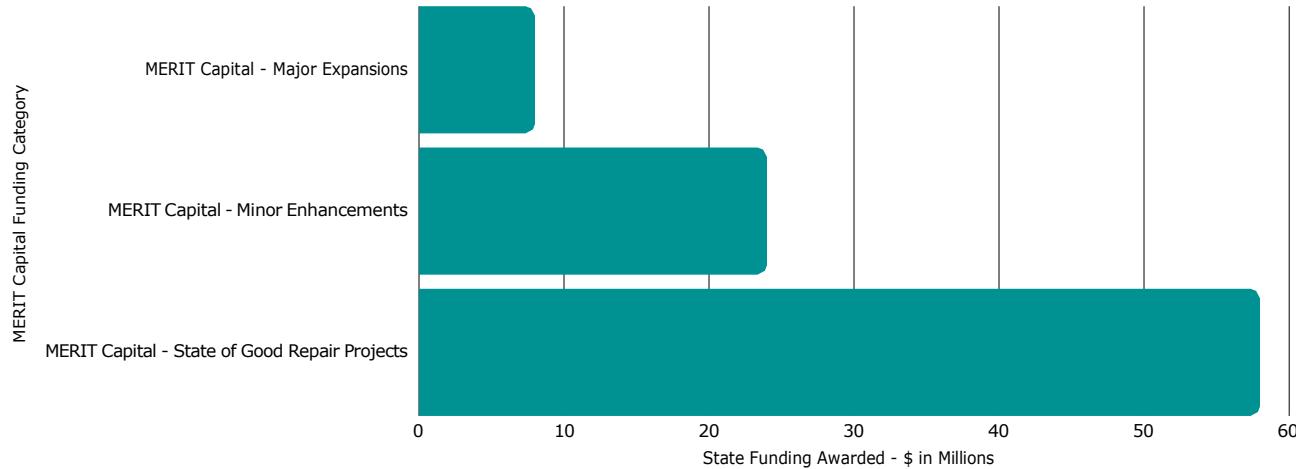
## Hokies Score a Transit Touchdown with Multimodal Transit Facility

In March of 2025, Blacksburg Transit opened the Multimodal Transit Facility. Some of the services that will find a nexus point at this new facility include local transit providers Blacksburg Transit, College Transit, Radford Transit, and Valley Metro's Smart Way Bus, as well as intercity bus services provided by the Virginia Breeze and OurBus. The facility will also house Virginia Tech's Sustainable Transportation Department, which promotes alternative modes of transportation including buses, walking, and biking. The building is situated on the south side of the Perry Street parking garage, and it includes two bus loops with a total of 17 bus bays. Construction began in 2021 and was completed in Spring of 2025. Since 2005, DRPT has awarded \$10.8 million for this project, covering architectural design, engineering, and construction. Funding for the project came from the MERIT Capital Program, along with some federal sources.

## MERIT Capital Assistance by the Numbers

In FY 2025, DRPT's MERIT Capital program provided \$90 million in State funding for capital projects across Virginia. This image visualizes the funding awarded in the FY 2025 SYIP:

### MERIT Capital: FY 2025 Funding Awarded by Program Area



## Recommended Improvements to the MERIT Program

Over the past year, DRPT has led a comprehensive review of the MERIT Program to improve how transit operating and capital assistance funds are allocated across Virginia. This effort, required by state law for the operating assistance program every three years, involved collaboration with the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC), stakeholder outreach, and public comment. The review identified key challenges with the current operating assistance formula, including its complexity, lack of transparency, and limited alignment with performance goals. DRPT proposed a revised formula that simplifies metrics, introduces a dedicated performance set-aside, and rewards agencies that operate efficiently and carry more riders per dollar.

For capital assistance, DRPT recommended updates to project categorization, streamlined methodologies for vehicle expansion, and revised incentive scoring to better reflect federal priorities and encourage strong grants management.

DRPT looks forward to continuing these efforts with its partners, working towards CTB adoption of the changes in the Spring of 2026. The revised formulas aim to be more outcome-focused, performance-based, and adaptable to future enhancements such as mode-level data and passenger miles traveled. These changes will help ensure that Virginia's transit funding remains equitable, efficient, and aligned with statewide transportation goals.

## DRPT Transit Programs – MERIT Demonstration Grant

### What is the MERIT Demonstration Grant?

The MERIT Demonstration Grant program affords funds for short-term projects that pilot new opportunities, technology, or innovative transit service. The grant program incentivizes implementation of new transit services and testing of innovative or non-traditional public transportation solutions.

### Why is the MERIT Demonstration Grant Important?

MERIT Demonstration Grants are a cost-effective means to test new public transportation services in the Commonwealth, many of which have been built upon successful studies and supported by previous technical assistance grants DRPT offers. By providing short-term grants without large funding commitments, the Demonstration program allows transit operators and partners to explore innovative new services and technology without sacrificing crucial day-to-day service or bearing the full cost alone. The program represents a low-risk investment into pioneering innovations in transit that can produce major rewards for riders, the community, and the Commonwealth as a whole.

### Not to flex, but HDPT launches HB Flex Microtransit Service

Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) launched their microtransit pilot, HB Flex, in May 2025. HB Flex was partially funded by a DRPT MERIT Demonstration Grant, and ran

the demonstration service through the summer, from 5am-9am and 5pm-11pm every day. HDPT utilized the Passio GO app for riders to sign up and request their rides. HBFlex operated fare free and provided transit within the Harrisonburg boundaries including Downtown Harrisonburg, Valley Mall, and the Burgess Road Walmart area. According to HDPT's Transit Superintendent Elliot Menge (as quoted by WHSV), "We are looking for ways to complement our current service, and we believe this microtransit program is going to allow more of a flexible option."

### **DASH Thru Vision Blindspot Camera Pilot – City of Alexandria “dashing” through improving safety for their transit vehicles with new blindspot cameras**

This pilot program installed and tested new technology in the form of Thru Vision blindspot cameras on up to 20 DASH buses. The installation required two exterior cameras on the front of the bus and two screens inside the bus on two front pillars. These cameras aim to improve safety while the bus is in operation and reduce the likelihood of pedestrian or other collisions. Testing of the camera systems is set to be completed by Fall 2025.

### **MERIT Demonstration Grant by the Numbers**

DRPT's MERIT Demonstration program provided funds for four demonstration projects in FY 2025:

Recipient/Transit Provider	Demo. Project Name	State Funds Provided
<b>DASH (Alexandria)</b>	DASH Thru Vision Blindspot Camera Pilot	\$80,000
<b>GRTC (Richmond)</b>	Route 1 Extension Demonstration	\$3.5M
<b>Otter Bus (Bedford)</b>	Bedford Otter Bus - Phase 3	\$247,000
<b>Harrisonburg Dept. of Public Transportation</b>	HDPT Microtransit Demonstration	\$440,000



## MERIT Technical Assistance Grant

### What is the MERIT Technical Assistance Grant?

MERIT Technical Assistance supports studies, plans, research, data collection, and evaluation projects that will improve public transportation services. Technical assistance grants assist transit providers, planning organizations, and localities in developing high quality and actionable plans for adding, expanding, or improving public transportation.

### Why is the MERIT Technical Assistance Grant Important?

DRPT is Virginia's go-to organization for technical assistance and innovative transportation solutions. Through the MERIT Technical Assistance program, DRPT ensures Virginia's public transportation services have a plan for the future, impactful options to improve now, and the best technology for today.

### Bay Transit Pursues Microtransit for a Macro Impact Bay Transit's completed



Bay Transit's completed the New Kent and Charles City Transit Feasibility Study, with funding from the MERIT Technical Assistance program received in FY 2025. The results of the feasibility study helped inform Bay Transit's successful MERIT Demonstration application to replace existing demand response service with microtransit services in the service areas for New Kent and Charles City counties in FY 2026. In 2024, New Kent County was the 10th fastest growing county in the country among municipalities with populations greater than 20,000, while the 2020 Census found that New Kent was the second-fastest growing county in the Commonwealth. Moving from a traditional demand response model towards microtransit will allow Bay Transit to adapt their service to better meet the needs of this rapidly growing community.

## MERIT Technical Assistance by the Numbers

- **19** Technical assistance grants awarded in FY 2025
- **\$3.2** million in MERIT Technical Assistance funding awarded for FY 2025
- **14** Unique agencies received funding

# MERIT Workforce Development Grant

## What is the MERIT Workforce Development Grant?

The MERIT Workforce Development Grant aids agencies in the hiring of apprentices or interns who are interested in pursuing careers in public transportation.

## Why is the MERIT Workforce Development Grant Important?

The transit industry has many distinct skills and needs that can only be learned on the job. This can include anything from maintaining alternative-fuel buses, to designing and updating bus tracking apps for riders to know when and where their bus is arriving. By aiding transit agencies with internships and apprenticeships, DRPT helps increase awareness of the transit industry to ensure Virginia's transit providers will have the skilled workforce they need now and in the future.

## Mountain Empire Transit and the Mechanics



In Southwest Virginia, Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. (MEOC) plays a vital role in providing transportation services to the community's older adults and individuals with disabilities through its public transportation service, Mountain Empire Transit (MET). As a smaller agency with a tight budget, MET faced a critical challenge when their master mechanic announced retirement. The agency recognized that losing this invaluable expertise without a proper transition could disrupt vehicle maintenance and disrupt essential services.

With help from the DRPT MERIT Workforce Development program, MET implemented a strategic mechanic succession plan. The grant enabled them to hire and financially support a new mechanic who could work closely alongside the retiring master mechanic. This mentorship period ensured a seamless transfer of knowledge, skills, and best practices to prevent any lapse in vehicle maintenance and safeguarding the reliability of transportation services for vulnerable populations.

This proactive approach not only preserved operational continuity but also strengthened MET's

workforce capacity and resilience. The MERIT program's support was instrumental in helping MET maintain high service standards despite budget constraints, exemplifying the impact of targeted workforce development funding in small, rural transit agencies.

## **MERIT Workforce Development by the Numbers**

- **11** Workforce Development grants in FY 2025
- **\$570,000** in MERIT Workforce Development funding distributed
- **8** Unique grant recipients

# Transit Ridership Incentive Program

## What is the 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. As established in the 33.2-1526.3 Code of Virginia, TRIP has four project categories: Zero and Reduced Fare, Regional Connectivity, Public Safety, and Passenger Amenities.

## Why is the Transit Ridership Incentive Program Important?

TRIP provides unique project categories that incentivize ridership while improving the passenger experience on all forms of public transportation. Through TRIP, transit agencies have bolstered critical transit infrastructure that ensures passengers have dignified places to wait for their ride, reduced cost barriers to mobility, expanded transit services to areas that have never before had public transportation, and improved safety for bus drivers.

## Transit Ridership Incentive Program – Regional Connectivity

### What is TRIP Regional Connectivity?

TRIP Regional Connectivity is designed to improve transit on routes of regional significance and mitigate congestion in urban areas through the provision of regional public transportation projects.

### Why is TRIP Regional Connectivity Important?

Transit trips do not always end at jurisdictional boundaries and are not always inherently local – many trips traverse regions or go longer distances. The TRIP Regional Connectivity program incentivizes, enhances, and encourages regional transit service. Rather than simply providing operating funding for a transit provider, it helps provide funding to begin new transit services, and transitioning new transit services into the regular operations of local transit providers.

## OmniRide Finds Post-Pandemic Express Success

DRPT funded several commuter bus services through TRIP Regional Connectivity during the pandemic. Pursuing improvements and expansions of routes of regional significance in that period of uncertainty presented complex challenges to transit providers. However, with more employees returning to in-person work, ridership has boomed, particularly in Northern Virginia. For example, OmniRide's Express and Metro Express routes went from an average of around 5,000 riders per day in March and April of 2024 to nearly 8,000 riders per day during March and April of 2025.

## TRIP Regional Connectivity by the Numbers

- **Two** new TRIP Regional Connectivity projects
- **11** total active TRIP Regional Connectivity projects in FY 2025
- **\$7.2** million in State funds awarded

## Transit Ridership Incentive Program – Zero and Reduced Fare

### What is TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare?

TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare provides funding to transit agencies for deploying zero fare and/or reduced fare pilot programs designed to support low-income communities. These programs aim at increasing the system's ridership and accessibility.

### Why is TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare Important?

Zero and reduced fare programs reduce barriers to transit for individuals with lower incomes, improving access and providing a reliable transit option. Additionally, lowering the cost to use public transportation can attract new riders, removing cars from the road.



### No Fares? No Problem! DASH Expands on Zero Fare Wins

The City of Alexandria's DASH bus has been operating without fares since September 2021 in part via TRIP Zero and Reduced Fares funding. They are currently in their last year of the program which requires the effort to be funded exclusively through local investment. The shift has been a major success for DASH, with survey data showing that:

- **54%** of DASH riders reported that they have started riding DASH since the launch of the new DASH network and free fares in September 2021.
- Among these new riders, **62%** reported that free fares had an impact on their decision to start riding DASH.
- **53%** of customers who were riding DASH prior to free fares reported that they are riding DASH more often now that the system is free to ride.

Rather than let the shift in funding deter them, DASH is continuing to invest in affordable public transportation for their community. For example, the service was awarded a TRIP grant for FY26 to distribute free WMATA passes to public school students. This new grant supports developing a user base of people whose first choice of travel will be transit. Overall, this will make students more comfortable with the system by lowering barriers like fares or lack general awareness of how to use transit.

## TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare by the Numbers

- **8** active zero or reduced fare projects
- **\$4** million in State funds awarded in FY25

## Transit Ridership Incentive Program – Public Safety

### What is TRIP Public Safety?

The safety of transit riders, operators, and employees is a priority of the Commonwealth of Virginia. TRIP Public Safety grants ensure transit continues to be the safest way to get around the Commonwealth.

### Why is TRIP Public Safety Important?

Ensuring transit remains a safe means of getting around is crucial to all users. TRIP Public Safety grants can fund barriers that protect bus drivers, security cameras that deter crimes, or security fencing that prevents vandalism. No matter where, every transit rider should have a safe and clean transit experience. Thanks to TRIP Public Safety, that is what riders get.

### The Boys in Blue Making Lynchburg Transit Safer for You



The Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) received funding through TRIP Public Safety to host police officers from the Lynchburg Police Department (LPD). According to GLTC, "Most of our customers have been very appreciative of having LPD officers at the Transit Station." A few rider testimonials include:

"I like having the officers here because you feel safer knowing they are here if something happens".

"As a single mother, I feel safer seeing them on the platform when it's dark (wintertime). Sometimes you worry about other people, but I feel better with the officers here."

Operators and staff appreciate having officers on-site because it fosters improved collaboration if there are any issues or a need for an officer. The officers not only improve safety at the transit station, but also patrol the general area, which includes the Greyhound and Virginia Breeze bus stops, the Amtrak station, and the City of Lynchburg's Registrar's Office, all in a day's work for these involved stewards of the Lynchburg community.

## TRIP Public Safety by the Numbers

- **7** Unique TRIP Public Safety recipients in FY25
- **8** Public Safety projects
- **\$1.3** million in State Funds Awarded

## Transit Ridership Incentive Program – Passenger Amenities



### What is TRIP Passenger Amenities?

Passenger amenities and facilities greatly improve the transit rider experience and increase the accessibility of the system. The TRIP Passenger Amenities program supports the addition and improvement of passenger related infrastructure.

### Why is TRIP Passenger Amenities Important?

Every transit rider deserves a dignified place to wait for the bus, and every user deserves a transit system that is accessible. Passenger amenities and facilities funded through TRIP help make that a reality by funding improvements of transit bus passenger facilities. These improvements can

range from simply providing bus shelters, to building curbs that allow individuals in wheelchairs to easily and simply board the bus.

## **Rehabilitated Transit Hub Comes Up Roses in Staunton**

During FY 2025, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission unveiled the renovated Lewis Street Hub, to be used by BRITE Transit. The complete transit hub includes a dedicated bus lane, parking area, all new ADA-accessible sidewalks, curb ramps with detectable warning surface plates, safety lighting, installation of conduits for future Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, and new landscaping.

This hub not only improves the day-to-day experience for transit riders through enhanced safety and accessibility improvements and upgraded passenger amenities but also contributes to the liveliness of Downtown Staunton. CSPDC's excellent work on this project earned a Civic Improvement Commendation from the Garden Club of America for "outstanding efforts which enhance, protect, or restore the local environment and improve the community."

Construction began in 2024 and was completed in the Spring of 2025. Funding sources for this project included DRPT's TRIP Passenger Amenities and FTA's Bus and Bus Facility Discretionary funding.

## **Some numbers**

- **14** TRIP Passenger Amenities Recipients in FY25
- **25** Passenger Amenity projects
- **\$15.5** million in State Funds Awarded

## DRPT Transit Programs - WMATA

### What is WMATA?

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

### Why is WMATA Important?

WMATA is the single largest provider of public transportation in Virginia, moving 84 million people in Virginia alone in Fiscal Year 2025. WMATA is, by ridership, among the biggest transit providers in the entire United States. The benefits WMATA brings to the DC region are substantial: from driving economic growth, residential development, and attracting jobs, to reducing congestion, improving safety, and saving households money. WMATA leads the way for transit in Virginia, driving innovation, efficiency, and creating a vision for its regional transit future. When WMATA thrives, the DC Region thrives.

### WMATA is Focused on What Matters: Safety and Customer Satisfaction

During FY 2025, WMATA saw over a 40% decline in Part 1 crime and an 82% reduction in rail fare evasion since the installation of new faregates. Metro has also sustained its FY 2024 record customer satisfaction for rail and bus, closing out FY 2025 with rates of 89% satisfaction for Metrorail, 83% satisfaction for Metrobus, and 78% satisfaction for MetroAccess.

WMATA is not just improving safety and satisfaction, it is saving money as well. Since 2023, the authority has implemented efficiencies that have reduced costs by nearly half a billion dollars. WMATA achieved these savings by freezing wage increases, consolidating call centers, reducing use of consultants, optimizing service, standardizing bus shelters, and minimizing capital program administration and IT system support costs.

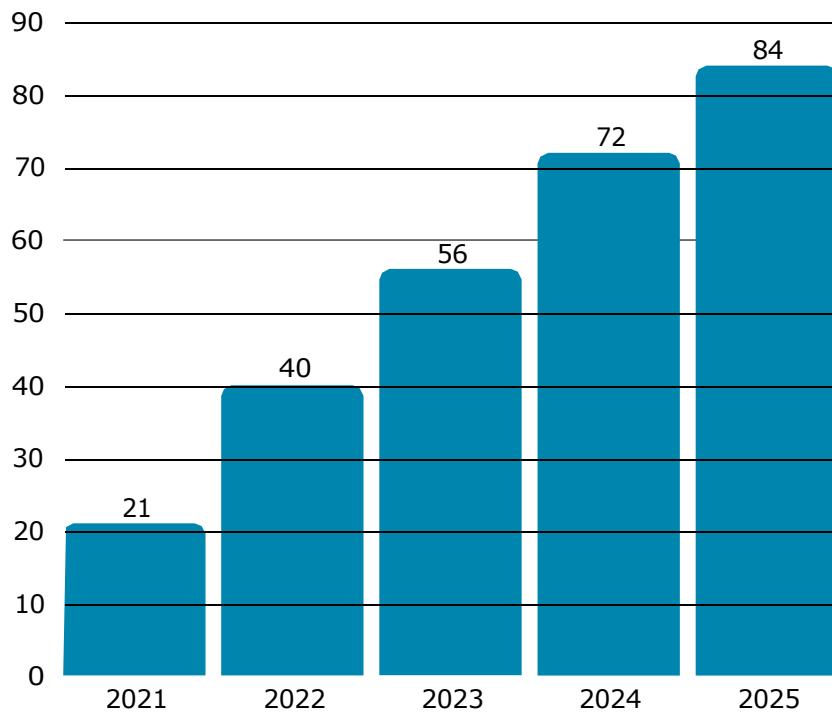
The agency has continued to seek out efficiencies in 2025 with the return of automatic train operation and maximum design speeds, resulting in a safer, faster, and more reliable ride. Equipment located between tracks deliver signal and speed commands while an operator will remain inside the operator's cab at all times. These combined efforts demonstrate WMATA's commitment to responsibly providing quality service at reasonable costs and are just the beginning of WMATA's plans for improving the way they keep transit on track in the DMV.



## WMATA: Ridership Machine.

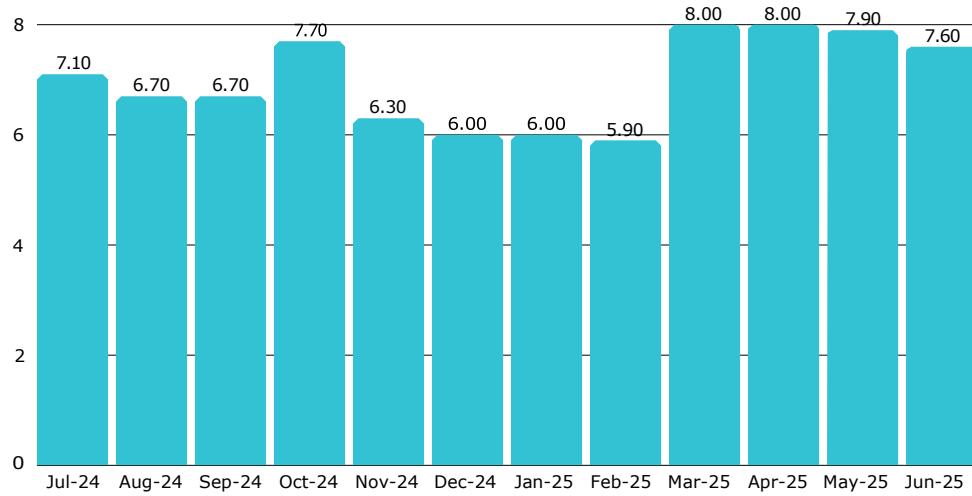
WMATA's ridership in Virginia increased by 16% between FY 2024 and FY 2025, transporting over 84 million people with overall ridership up 9%. DRPT only reports WMATA ridership for trips that either began or ended in Virginia, and does not include trips that were either exclusively in DC or Maryland. Systemwide WMATA ridership is significantly higher. Ridership records were broken in March 2025, when WMATA (systemwide) transported nearly 600,000 people on one day during a weekend (typically WMATA's slowest time). This chart shows WMATA's ridership in Virginia from FY 2021 to FY 2025:

**WMATA Ridership in Virginia, FY 2021-2025, in Millions**



This next chart shows WMATA's ridership in Virginia month by month in FY 2025:

**WMATA Ridership in Virginia, in Millions, FY 2025**



## DRPT Transit Programs - VRE



### What is VRE?

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is the commuter rail service that offers weekday rush-hour service to and from Washington DC and points along the I-66 and I-95 corridors. VRE's two commuter rail lines (the Fredericksburg Line and the 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.

### Why is VRE Important?

VRE is a crucial commuter service along the heavily traversed roads of Northern Virginia, offering comfortable, safe, reliable, and affordable trips in the DC suburbs and beyond. The commuter trains operate on weekdays in the morning and evening, with most trains operating in the direction of peak traffic. VRE provides tens of thousands of trips every weekday to its riders, many of whom work for the federal government in DC.

VRE has consistently improved its operations and facilities in recent years and shows no signs of slowing down. Recently completed and underway [projects](#) include:

- [Quantico Station Improvements](#)
- [Manassas Station Improvements](#)
- [Manassas Park Parking Expansion](#)
- [Crystal City Station Improvements](#)
- [Seminary Yard Midday Storage Facility](#)

In addition to its station and service improvements, VRE works and coordinates with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority on the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, which will expand capacity for new passenger and commuter trains in Virginia.

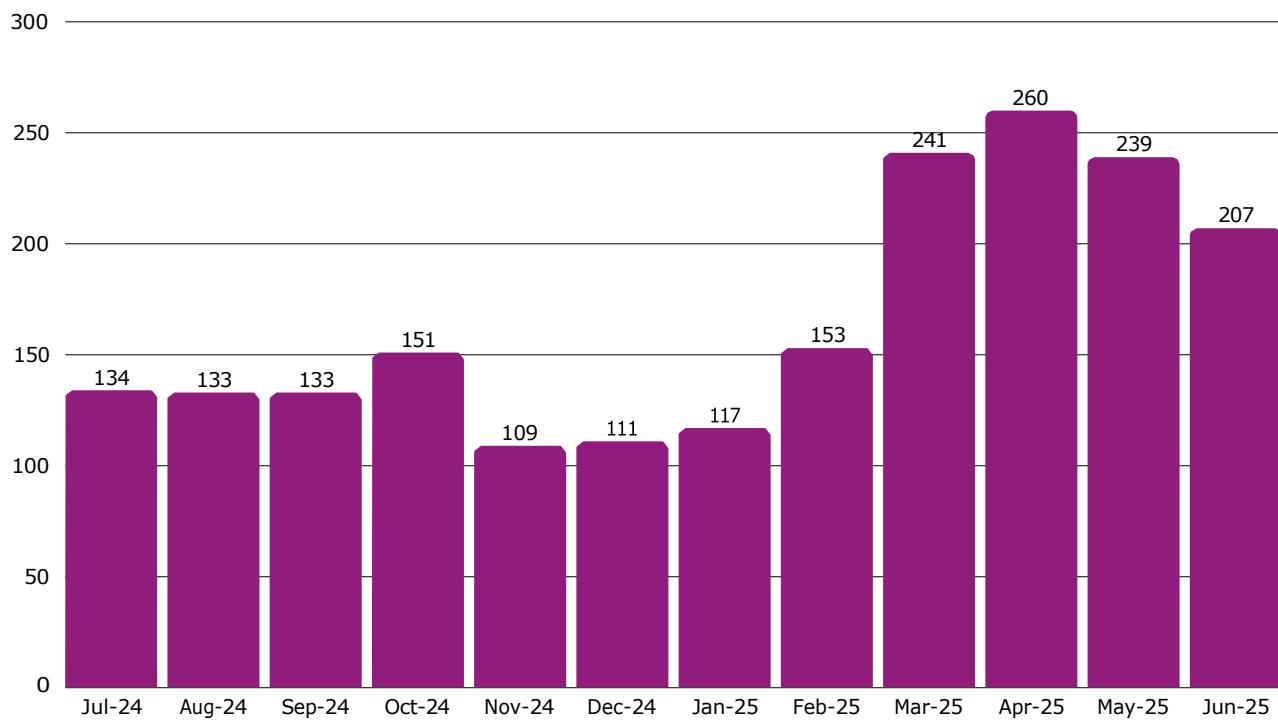
## VRE Ridership Booms, Traffic is Still a Bust

Ridership on VRE is booming due to strategic measures aimed at increasing growth and due to the larger federal return to office. Comparing ridership in March of 2024 to March of 2025, VRE experienced a boost of nearly 100,000 passengers, an increase of about 85% compared to July-December of 2024. Fare revenues during this period are also up by 60%, going from \$1.3 million to \$2 million in March of 2025. VRE's projects (as well as the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's projects) will improve the passenger experience and add capacity for VRE. This benefits VRE commuters with more and better commute options, and benefits drivers on the I-95 and I-66 corridors by diverting more commutes off the busy highways.

### VRE Ridership by the Numbers

VRE Ridership has boomed as more workers in the DC-area return to the office. Between January and April 2025, monthly ridership on VRE increased by more than 220%. VRE's total ridership for FY 2025 was just under 2 million, a 25% increase over FY 2024.

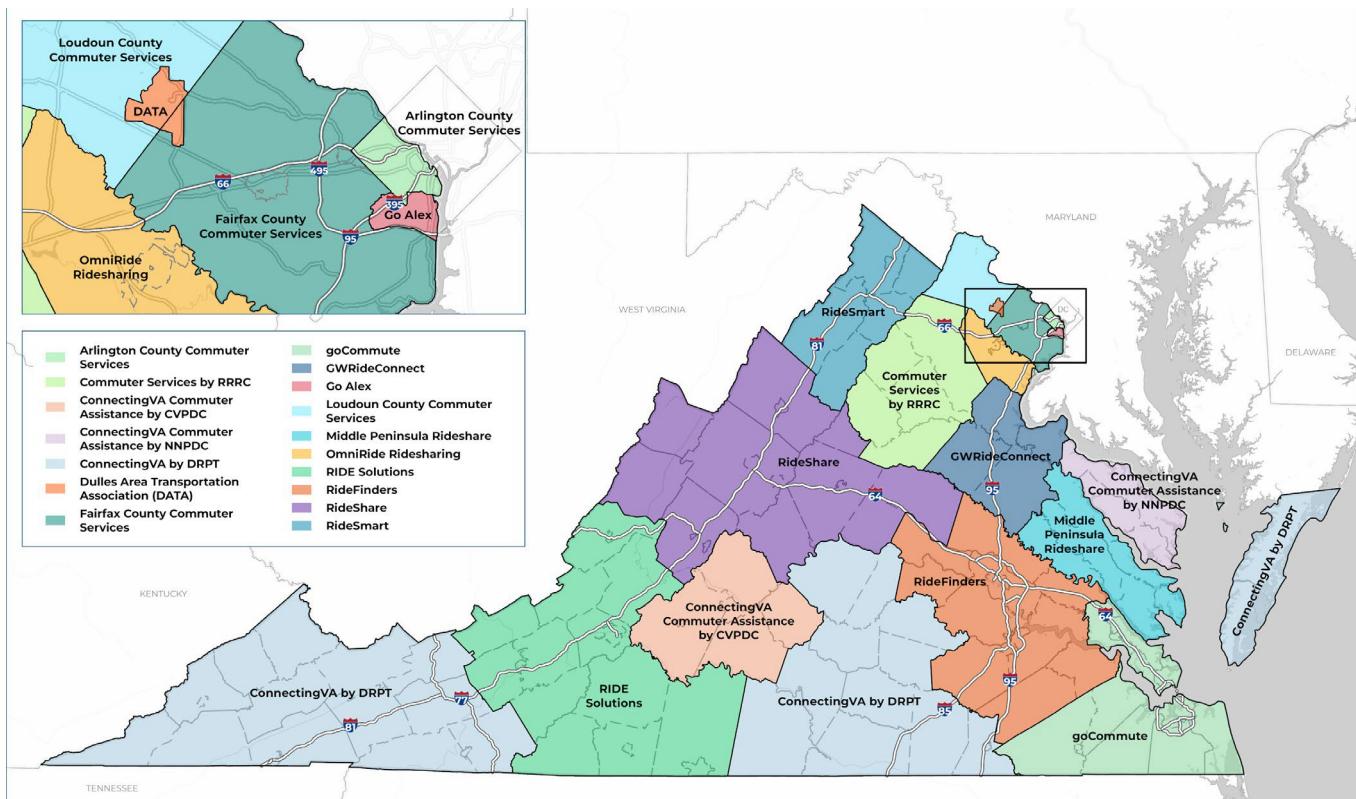
#### VRE Ridership, in Thousands, by Month in 2025



## DRPT Commuter Assistance Program

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation is responsible for promoting the use of vanpooling, carpooling, transit, and commuter assistance programs across the Commonwealth through promotions, grants, planning, and technical assistance. DRPT's Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) support efforts that are efficient and effective at getting commuters to carpool, vanpool, or use public transportation to their destination, reducing the number of cars on the road. This helps relieve congestion, decrease fuel costs per traveler, and mitigate air pollution from tailpipe emissions. DRPT provides commuter assistance services to the public through its Virginia-wide ConnectingVA program and through CAP grants to agencies that operate a local or regional commuter assistance program. The CAP grant program is funded through special programs from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund.

### Virginia's Commuter Assistance Programs Areas



There are 17 local and regional commuter programs in Virginia, each serving a different region. Wherever a formal commuter program does not exist, DRPT's ConnectingVA program steps in, matching commuters with other commuters and providing commute and travel mode options information.

## Virginia's Commuter Assistance Programs and Operating Agencies

Commuter Program	Operating Agency	Commuter Program	Operating Agency
<b>Arlington County Commuter Services</b>	Arlington County Department of Environmental Services	MidPenRideShare	Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
<b>Commuter Services by RRRC</b>	Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission	DATA	Dulles Area Transportation Association
<b>ConnectingVA</b>	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation	OmniRide Ridesharing	Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission
<b>ConnectingVA Commuter Assistance by CVPDC</b>	Central Virginia Planning District Commission	RideFinders	Greater Richmond Transit Company
<b>Fairfax County Commuter Services</b>	Fairfax County Department of Transportation	RideShare	Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
<b>GO Alex</b>	City of Alexandria Department of Transportation & Environmental Services	RideSmart	Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission
<b>GW Ride Connect</b>	George Washington Regional Commission	RIDE Solutions	Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, New River Valley Regional Commission, West Piedmont Planning District Commission
<b>Loudoun County Commuter Services</b>	Loudoun County Department of General Services	goCommute	Hampton Roads Transit

## Commuter Assistance Program – Operating Assistance

### What is the CAP Operating Assistance Grant?

The CAP Operating Assistance 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 ride matching services and travel mode options information. Programs funded under the CAP Operating grant program must achieve a measurable increase in the use of ride matching services and an increase in the use of transit, carpools, vanpools, and/or bicycle commuting.

### Why is the CAP Operating Assistance Grant Important?

Commuter assistance programs help individuals find carpools, vanpools, and transit options that get them to and from work quickly, safely, and more cost-effectively than driving alone. Vanpools transport multiple commuters at once, greatly reducing the number of single-occupant vehicles on Virginia's roads.

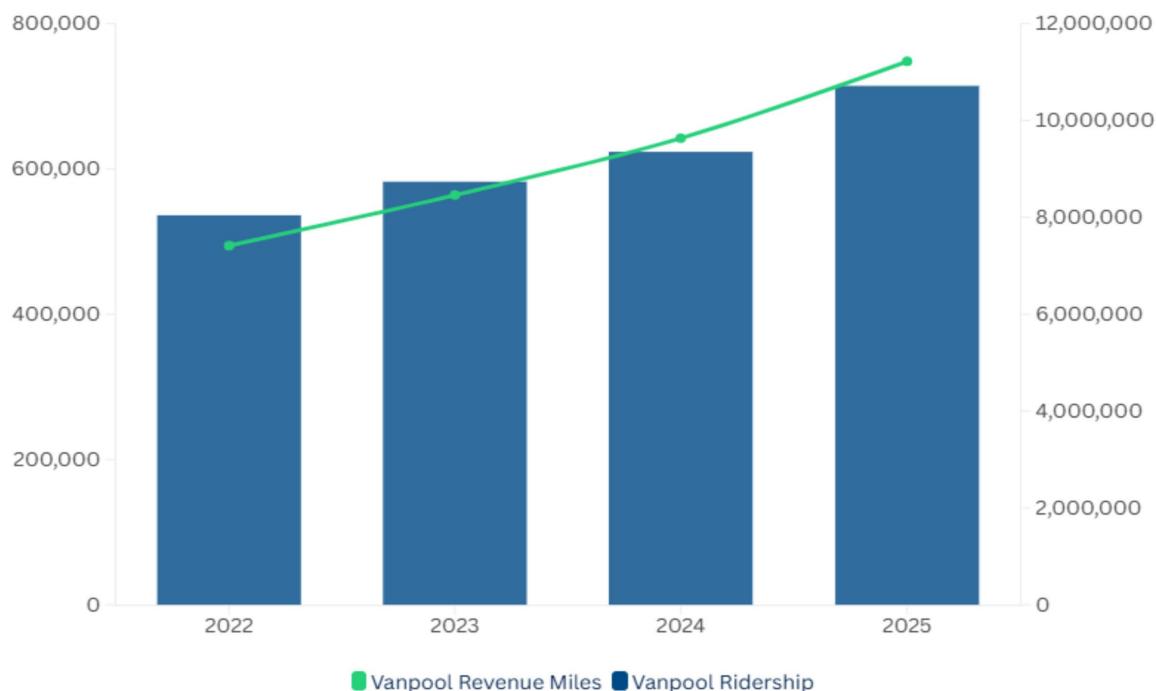
### Take a Vanpool, Save Millions of Vehicle Miles Travelled



Over 714,000 passengers travelled using a DRPT-supported vanpool in FY 2025, a 15% increase over FY 2024. Cumulatively, the vehicles utilized by these vanpools travelled over 11.2 million miles. For reference, 11.2 million miles is the equivalent of driving around the circumference of the Earth 450 times or making 23 round trips to the moon! The consolidation of these trips into single vehicles greatly reduces

the number of vehicle miles travelled on roads and helps reduce congestion.

### DRPT-Supported Vanpool Ridership and Total Vehicle Revenue



As more commuters return to the office, and as traffic increases, the demand for vanpooling increases. This is demonstrated by the nearly 180 new vanpools created in FY 2025 – up from 105 new vanpools in FY 2024!

### **CAP Operating Assistance by the Numbers**

- **15** CAP Operating Assistance grants in FY2025
- **\$2.5** million in State funds awarded
- **18** federal and state grant recipients across Virginia

## **Commuter Assistance Program - Project Assistance**

### **What is the CAP Project Assistance Grant?**

The 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 for commuting to work.

### **Why is the CAP Project Assistance Grant Important?**

CAP Projects 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 using transit, form new vanpools, increase the overall number of vanpools, increase the number of vanpools riders, and create and implement marketing campaigns that increase transit ridership.

### **“Meating” Commuters Needs as Employees Flock to Work**

Through DRPT's ConnectingVA Vanpool Program, six employee vanpools have been started to George's Inc. poultry processing plant in Harrisonburg, VA. George's Inc. also has a processing plant in Edinburg, VA where they have 16 vanpools for employees. The partnership between George's Inc. and DRPT is a great example of a small-scale public-private partnership that helps workers access jobs and helps an employer keep good employees. George's Inc. pays for their employees to ride the vanpools, Enterprise, Inc. provides the vehicles and covers vehicle maintenance, and DRPT provides financial assistance to help lower the cost to George's Inc. so they can increase the number of vanpools for employees. With the rising cost of transportation, George's Inc. may have had to cut back on their vanpool program if it were not for DRPT's financial assistance.

The vanpools for both George's locations pick employees up at or near their homes and ensure viable, reliable and sustainable transportation for over 320 employees (most of whom are Virginia residents) in housing that includes shelters, low-income housing and rural areas that have no other transportation options available.



### CAP Project Assistance by the Numbers

- **14** CAP Project Assistance grants awarded in FY 2025
- **\$3.6** million in State funds awarded
- **7** CAP Project Assistance grant recipients across Virginia
- **11** federal and state CAP project grant recipients

# Human Services Transportation

## What is it

Human services transportation is a subset of public transportation that improves personal mobility for individuals underserved by traditional forms of transportation. Riders are typically older adults or people with disabilities, but services can be extended to others, including veterans or low-income individuals. DRPT provides funding to human services agencies in Virginia for these essential services through the state's contribution to operating costs, as well as by distributing Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) Section 5310 funding for capital and operating.

## Why is it important

Numerous human service organizations provide specialized transportation across the Commonwealth. Providers include Community Service Boards (CSBs), Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and transit operators, as well as private nonprofits, counties, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). These providers ensure accessible transportation is available for clients to reach medical appointments, grocery stores, and places of work, as well as other quality of life services. Access to reliable, personalized transportation is key to improving paths to independence for those who often have the greatest need and the least access.

## Success Story – Human Services Grantee Recognized By VACO for Getting Riders Around Hanover in a DASH

Hanover DASH, one of DRPT's Human Service Transportation grantees, received a 2024 Achievement Award in Transportation from the Virginia Association of Counties. The award highlights Hanover County's specialized transportation service (DASH), which provides rides to individuals with disabilities and seniors. Service first launched in 2019, with the planning for this service having received funds through the MERIT Technical Assistance program.

## Human Services Transportation by the Numbers

**\$1.5 million** in state funding offered annually

**60** human services transportation providers receive funding

**15%** of the population in VA is 65 or older

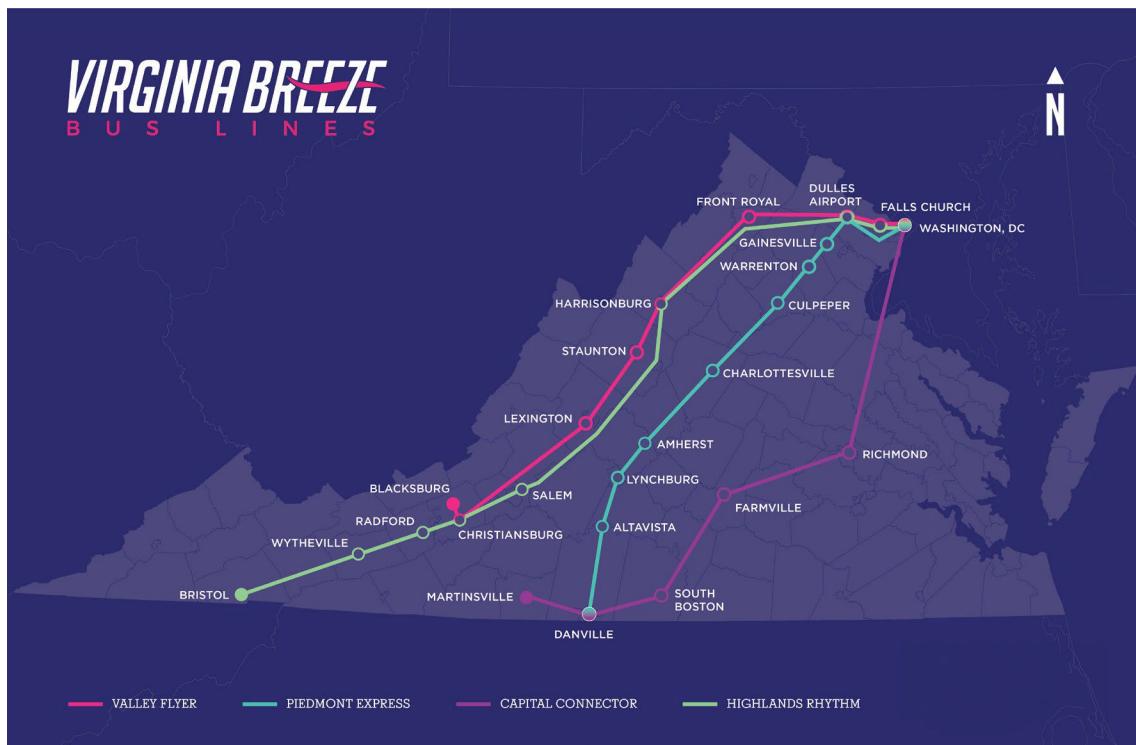
**12%** of the population of VA has a disability

# Virginia Breeze Bus Lines

## What is the Virginia Breeze?

The Virginia Breeze Bus Line is DRPT's intercity bus service that connects rural communities and larger urban areas alike, improving access to reliable transportation, and moving more people across the Commonwealth. The Virginia Breeze aims to provide affordable, high-quality intercity transportation, particularly in communities that are underserved by other transportation options. Further, the Virginia Breeze connects with the national bus network at Union Station, extending the range someone can travel by bus.

The Virginia Breeze has four routes as of 2025: The Valley Flyer, the Highlands Rhythm, the Piedmont Express, and the Capital Connector.



## Creating connections across the Commonwealth, from the busiest 'burbs to the quaintest towns

### Origins and expansion

The Virginia Breeze was created in 2017 after a DRPT study identified a distinct gap in options for intercity transportation in rural areas and those with limited alternatives to driving. In addition to connecting underserved areas, the Virginia Breeze reduces congestion and greenhouse emissions by taking cars off the road, as well as improving Virginia's connections within the Commonwealth and to points beyond.

The Virginia Breeze's successes led DRPT to evaluate opportunities for expanding intercity bus service, leading to the development of the Tidewater Current. The Tidewater Current will be the Virginia Breeze's next service, the first route running east-west and connecting stops along the I-64 corridor from Hampton Roads to the Shenandoah Valley. The Virginia Breeze will have stops in Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Newport News, Williamsburg, New Kent, Richmond Airport, Richmond Main Street Station, Charlottesville, Staunton, and Harrisonburg. Following the completion of [VDOT's proposed Crozet Park and Ride](#), DRPT plans to add a stop there. DRPT projects the route to have significant annual ridership and, at the time of writing, is in the process of developing the final operations of the service. The Tidewater Current is expected to launch in 2026, the perfect way to celebrate nine years of the Virginia Breeze.

## **Benefiting your commute, the environment, and Virginia's multi-modal network**

By reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, the Virginia Breeze benefits us all by reducing congestion, road maintenance, and greenhouse gas emissions. In FY 2025, the Virginia Breeze helped keep the equivalent of over 3,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases out of Virginia's air. Additionally, the Virginia Breeze decreased nearly 12 million vehicle miles travelled on Virginia's busiest roads.

### **Making connections with our neighbors to the south.**

The successes of the Virginia Breeze have inspired connections across state lines. In January 2025, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, in coordination with DRPT, announced the launch of the Triad-Danville Connector, which now connects Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and Reidsville, North Carolina, with Danville at the downtown Danville Transit Center. There, the new Triad-Danville Connector joins with two Virginia Breeze routes: the Capitol Connector and the Piedmont Express. Having the Triad-Danville Connector link with the Virginia Breeze in Danville is a no-brainer. The Danville region is closely integrated with North Carolina and is a major hub and critical gateway in the region.

### **Better bus stops. Better service. Virginia Breeze.**

In addition to expanding service, DRPT will look to improve the existing operations of the Virginia Breeze. DRPT will conduct an inventory of all existing bus stops and make recommendations on improvements to be made to enhance accessibility, lighting, seating, facility access, and shelter for passengers. This effort to assess stop locations demonstrates the agency's desire to enhance the passenger experience by prioritizing bus stop improvements system wide.

At the same time, DRPT is already implementing improvements to the current network. In August of 2024, DRPT relocated two of the Virginia Breeze's stops, first in Blacksburg, then in Staunton, that both serve the Valley Flyer route.

Blacksburg's [Multi-Modal Transit Facility \(MMTF\)](#) opened in 2024 (after years of support from DRPT!) and with it, the Virginia Breeze's Valley Flyer relocated to the modern, state-of-the-art transit facility. The new location at the MMTF boasts several enhanced amenities that will greatly benefit passengers with improved shelter lighting and accessibility features to provide a safer and more comfortable waiting area for travelers. Additionally, the strategic placement of the MMTF on Virginia Tech's campus allows for easier access by local transit providers, ensuring a seamless connection for passengers traveling to and from the university.

Just a few weeks later, the Virginia Breeze's stop in Staunton relocated from a grocery store parking lot to the brand-new [Staunton Crossing VDOT Park and Ride](#). Situated right off Interstate 81, the Staunton Crossing VDOT Park and Ride offers a convenient and easily accessible location for travelers. With over 1,500 Virginia Breeze riders arriving and departing from Staunton in FY 2025 alone, the relocation will better accommodate the needs of the growing number of passengers. The project includes shelters and amenities that will be shared with the [Afton Express](#), ensuring a comfortable and seamless experience for all.

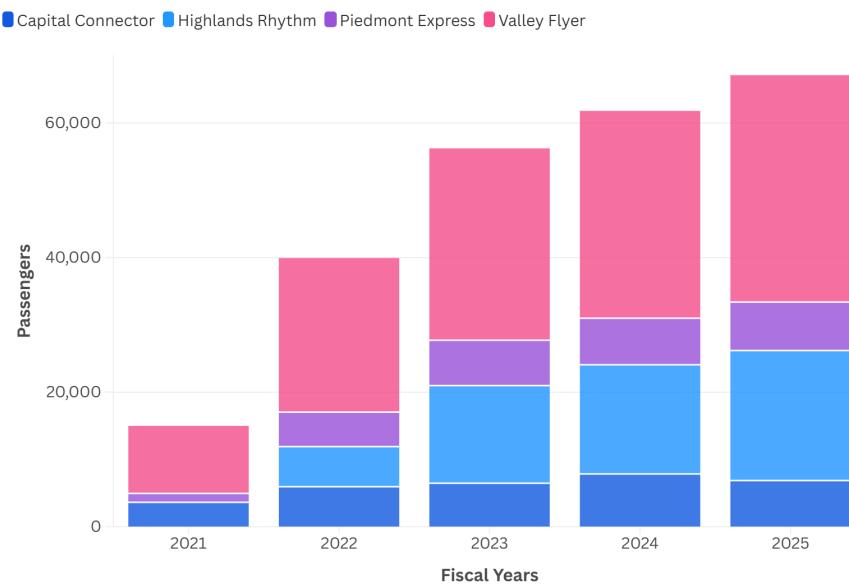
Not resting on our laurels, DRPT is working to relocate the Virginia Breeze bus stop in Wytheville. The new Wytheville stop, serving the Highlands Rhythm, would move from a Rural King store parking lot to the downtown Elizabeth Brown Park. The new stop will have a proper bus shelter, seating, lighting, and a bus pull off area, greatly improving access to reliable transportation and improving the passenger experience,

## Ridership records made; ridership records broken

### Annual Ridership

The Virginia Breeze continues to best itself with consistent ridership growth for five straight fiscal years. During FY 2025, the Virginia Breeze transported over 67,000 people, an 11% increase over FY 2024. The chart below visualizes the ridership growth since FY 2021:

**Historic Virginia Breeze Ridership By Route and Fiscal Year, FY 2021-FY2025**

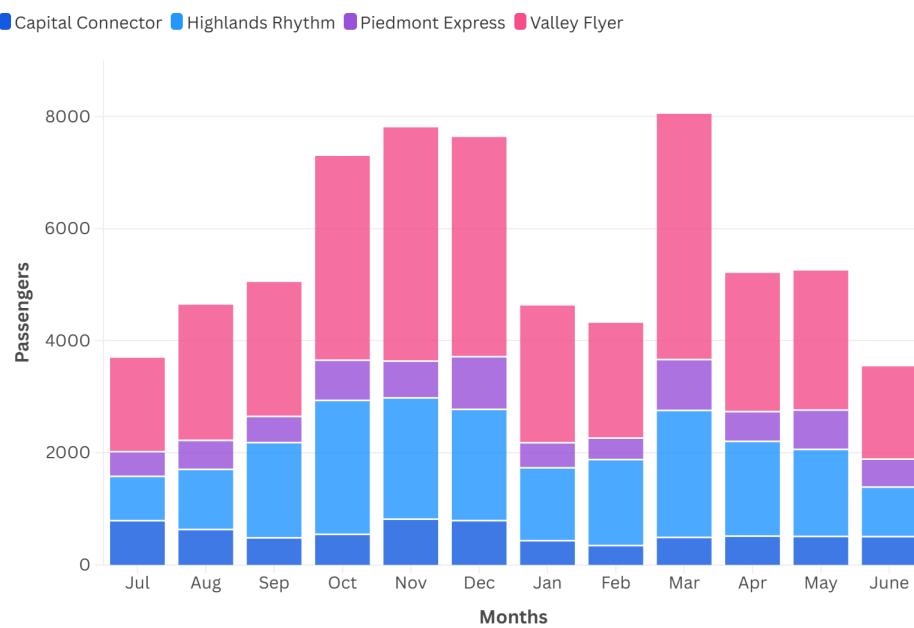


*Note: the Highlands Rhythm launched in November 2021, part way into FY 2022.*

## Setting monthly ridership records

The Virginia Breeze broke its own monthly ridership record in March of 2025, transporting more than 8,000 people that month. Typically, the busiest month for the Virginia Breeze is November – driven by passengers travelling for the holidays. A record-setting March illustrates the demand for reliable and affordable intercity travel that the Virginia Breeze offers. The chart below shows the monthly ridership for the Virginia Breeze across FY 2025:

### FY 2025 Virginia Breeze Ridership by Route and Month



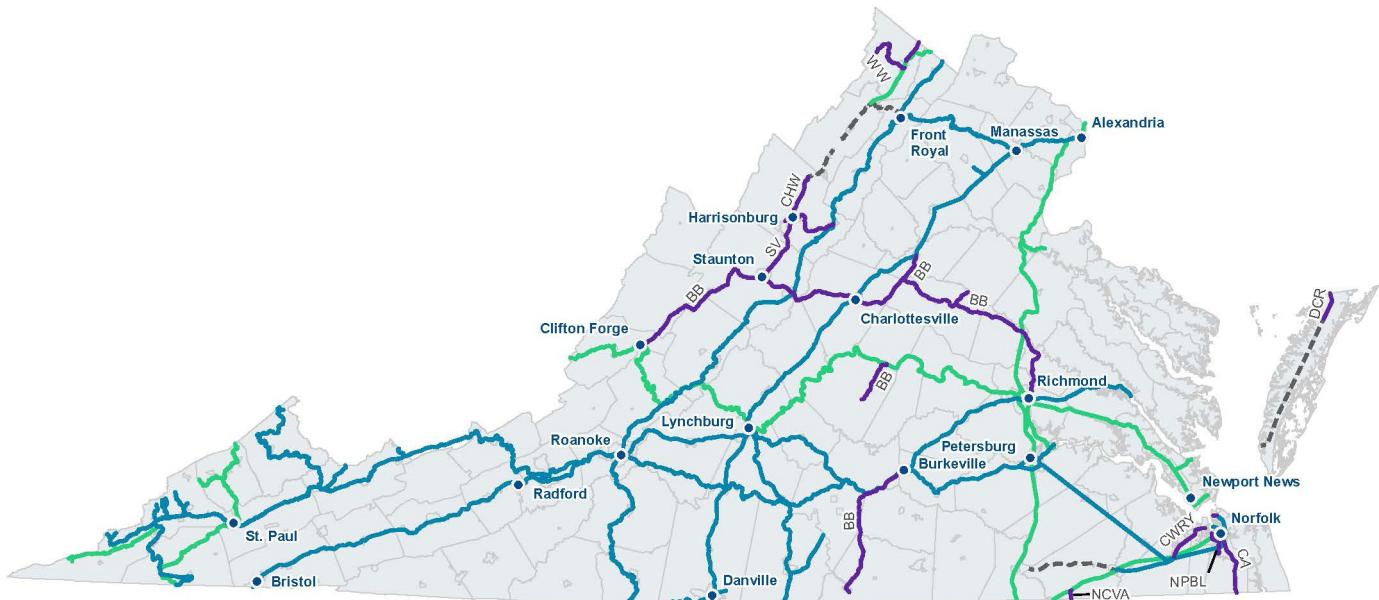
## DRPT Rail Division

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provides grants and technical assistance that sustain, expand, and enhance Virginia's rail network. The DRPT Rail Division supports economic development by facilitating freight and passenger movement by rail, moving goods and people alike from origin to destination. DRPT's Rail Programs help reduce congestion, emissions, and other costs associated with truck and car travel in the Commonwealth by reducing the number of vehicles on the road. DRPT is also responsible for rail planning, which guides the future of both freight and passenger rail in the Commonwealth, including activities of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA). By offering technical assistance to railroads, businesses, and localities, DRPT assists partners in navigating opportunities for potential federal funding and support as they seek to improve Virginia's rail network.

### Virginia's Rail Network

Virginia has a robust rail network, with freight and passenger rail connections covering all corners of the Commonwealth. Virginia has over 3,000 route-miles of track, nine shortline (class-III) railroads, two class-I railroads, one intercity passenger rail (Amtrak), and one commuter rail (the Virginia Railway Express).

### Virginia's Rail Providers



## Services

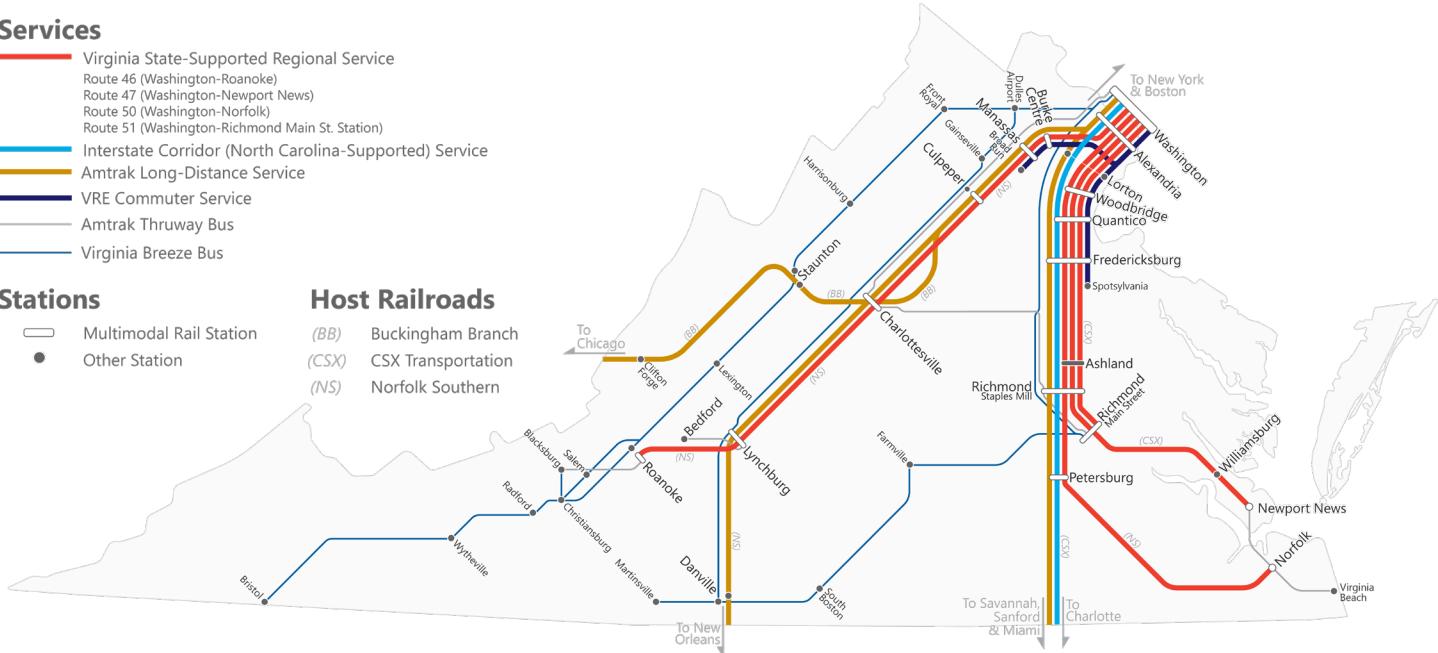
- Virginia State-Supported Regional Service
  - Route 46 (Washington-Roanoke)
  - Route 47 (Washington-Newport News)
  - Route 50 (Washington-Norfolk)
  - Route 51 (Washington-Richmond Main St. Station)
- Interstate Corridor (North Carolina-Supported) Service
- Amtrak Long-Distance Service
- VRE Commuter Service
- Amtrak Thruway Bus
- Virginia Breeze Bus

## Stations

- Multimodal Rail Station
- Other Station

## Host Railroads

- (BB) Buckingham Branch
- (CSX) CSX Transportation
- (NS) Norfolk Southern



## Shenandoah Valley Railroad Moves Mountains for Virginia



The Shenandoah Valley Railroad (SVRR) is a locally owned shortline railroad that provides first- and last-mile service to a diverse range of customers and commodities. SVRR operates over 20 miles of track between Staunton and Pleasant Valley in Rockingham County. The railroad interchanges with CSX and Buckingham Branch Railroad in Staunton and Norfolk Southern in

Pleasant Valley, just south of Harrisonburg.

SVRR has the unique distinction of taking part in all three of DRPT's rail programs. This decades-long public private partnership continues to benefit the Commonwealth by preserving and expanding its rail transportation network and spurring economic development in the Shenandoah Valley.

Over the past 32 years, SVRR has received \$12.1M in Rail Preservation Grants which supported improvements to preserve the shortline railroad's Class 2 Track Safety Standards and upgrade bridges, crossings and yards. With the success of the Rail Preservation investments, SVRR shifted its focus toward growth, adding network capacity with the help of two DRPT FREIGHT Grants. SVRR was first awarded engineering design plans in FY 2024 for yard improvements through the FREIGHT Program. Upon completion of the design project, SVRR was awarded a second grant for construction, which is set to start in FY 2026. This marked the first use of a two-step design-to-construction approach under the FREIGHT Program. This strategy was introduced to DRPT's rail initiatives with the FREIGHT Program's launch in FY2022.

Shenandoah Valley Railroad's customers are leaders in rail-to-truck transload operations, including Houff Corporation / Railside Industries, which benefited from a Rail Industrial Access grant to support its transload operation for bulk deicing salt, fertilizer, and wood.

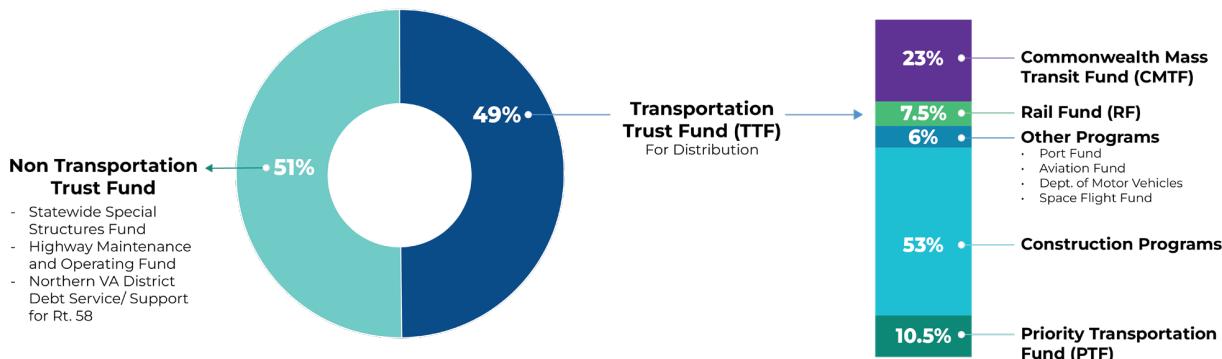
## Funding DRPT Rail Programs

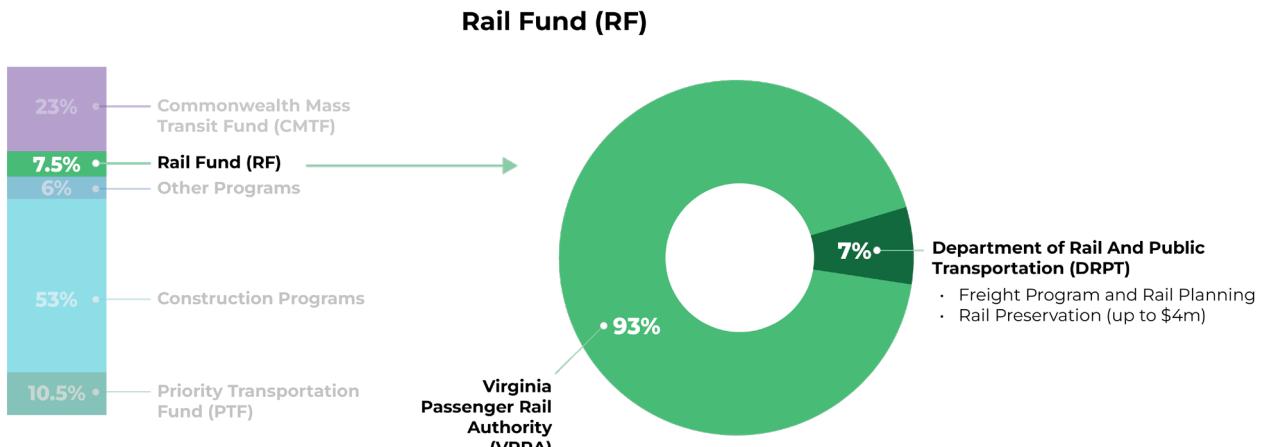
### Commonwealth Rail Fund

Virginia provides funding for freight and passenger rail improvements through the Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF). The CRF itself is a distribution of the wider Commonwealth Transportation Fund, the source of the vast majority of Virginia's transportation funding. Funds from the CRF are split between DRPT and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. DRPT retains seven percent of the CRF to support statewide rail planning, the FREIGHT Program, and the Rail Preservation Fund.

DRPT uses its share of the CRF to support Rail Planning and the FREIGHT Program. Starting in FY 2026, DRPT is permitted to transfer up to 50% of its share of the CRF to the Rail Preservation Fund (RPF). This is a change from the previous maximum of up to \$4 million CRF transfer to RPF.

#### Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF)





\*Beginning in FY 2026, DRPT may transfer up to 50% of its share of the CRF to the Rail Preservation Fund.

## DRPT Rail Programs –Rail Preservation Fund

### What is the Rail Preservation Fund?

The Rail Preservation Fund (RPF) is a grant program for shortline (class-III) railroads in Virginia, supporting projects that maintain a state of good repair on Virginia's shortline rail network. DRPT receives \$4 million annually for RPF from VDOT's Highway Construction Fund, as prescribed in the biennial budget. This can be supplemented by CRF funds at DRPT's discretion, as described above.

### Importance of the Rail Preservation Fund

In an era of massive consolidation in transportation, the RPF 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 connect to regions that are left underserviced by Class I railroad operators. Many of these shortline 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.

### Rail Preservation Funding Helps Shortline Delmarva Central Railroad Enable Businesses to Go Long

The Delmarva Central Railroad (DCRR) continues to make improvements in northern Accomack County on a line once known as the Eastern Shore Railroad. DCRR began its operation in Virginia in 2018 with 15 miles of track through Accomack County to Pocomoke, Maryland with connections to northern destinations. During FY 2025, DCRR was instrumental in assisting SharpTech USA with the completion of a Rail Industrial Access Grant-funded rail spur to serve its Accomack County plant. SharpTech USA produces virgin grade glycols and operates a custom blending system for specialized glycol-based products. SharpTech USA is the only glycol producer on the East Coast. DCRR's use of rail preservation funding to upgrade the mainline track has provided more reliable service to customers and has allowed DCRR to bring new businesses to the rail shipping mode of transportation.

## Rail Preservation Fund by the Numbers

- **Nine** shortline railroads
- **15** projects receiving funds in FY 2025
- **\$8.4** million from the Rail Preservation Fund awarded in FY 2025
- **\$12** million in total cost of projects
- **604** miles of track improved

## DRPT Rail Programs – FREIGHT Program

### What is 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.

### Why is the FREIGHT Program important?

Projects funded by DRPT's FREIGHT program increase transportation capacity without strapping the Commonwealth with the cost of maintaining more infrastructure since privately-owned railroads are responsible for rail maintenance. This differs from road capacity projects, which add lanes that are maintained through public funding sources. In addition to infrastructure maintenance, the railroad is obligated to maintain service on the line through its common carrier obligation to move freight at a reasonable rate if a customer on the line requests service. This further protects the Commonwealth's investment in infrastructure it does not own. These advantages apply to DRPT's other grant programs, as well, but are especially relevant for FREIGHT.



## Buckingham Branch Railroad helps its customers and the FREIGHT Program to branch out

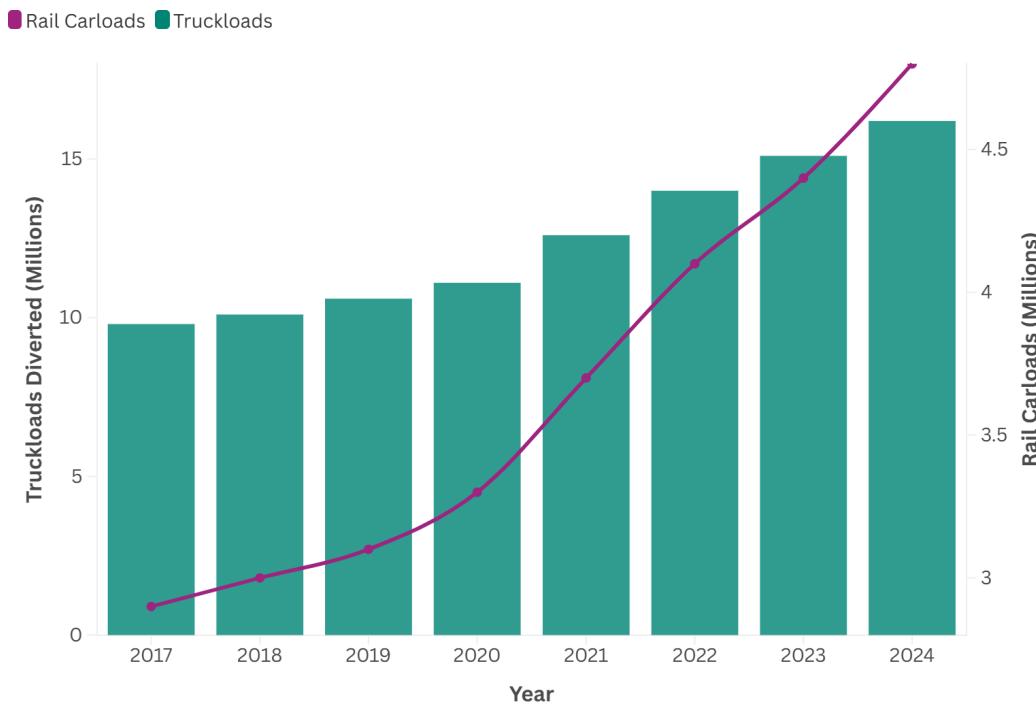
The Buckingham Branch Railroad (BBRR) Rolling Stock Capacity Improvement Project marks the first time the FREIGHT program was used to purchase railcars. The \$2.4M grant was used to purchase 19 open-top hopper cars. BBRR provided a 20% match. These new cars will accommodate a greater railcar spot capacity to provide a competitive freight transport service option for existing and new businesses throughout the Commonwealth. The railcars were delivered from FreightCar America's Mexico division in March 2025.

The railcars will support the growing decorative stone market. Shipping by rail allows shippers to reach distant markets. The purchase of these railcars enables BBRR to retain existing traffic and handle anticipated growth.

## Increasing rail throughput and diverting trucks from roads

A benefit of DRPT's rail grant programs is that trucks are diverted off of Virginia's busiest roads and highways. This reduces congestion, lowers road maintenance costs by removing heavy truckloads, and improves safety. Grant recipients are required to report the number of rail carloads diverted from Virginia's highways as a result of DRPT-funded projects to measure the positive impact of DRPT programs. These figures are reported annually. On average, one rail carload moves the equivalent of 3.4 truckloads. DRPT's rail grant programs helped remove the equivalent of 16.2 million truckloads from Virginia's roads in 2024, and have removed nearly 100 million cumulatively since 2017.

### Reported Truckloads Diverted onto Railcars by DRPT Rail Program, 2017-2024



## DRPT Rail Programs – Rail Industrial Access

### What is Rail Industrial Access?

The Rail Industrial Access (RIA) program is DRPT's economic development incentive program that provides funding to design and construct or rehabilitate rail spurs that connect new or growing businesses to Virginia's rail network. RIA grants are promoted by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) as one of the [infrastructure assistance](#) incentives offered to attract companies that will generate new jobs and bring capital investment. VEDP coordinates with DRPT to refer projects for application.

### Why is the Rail Industrial Access program important?

Freight rail has been an important economic driver across the country for nearly two centuries. In Virginia, businesses continue to utilize Virginia's freight rail network to deliver or receive their goods and products in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner. RIA helps attract companies that bring jobs and capital investment to Virginia, encouraging economic growth that makes use of cost-effective rail transportation and avoids adding to roadway congestion and air pollution.

### Bringing jobs to Virginia, moving goods across the world, with RIA



The DeLong Co., Inc. was awarded a \$750,000 Rail Industrial Access (RIA) grant in March 2025 to support the company's first Virginia location in the city of Portsmouth, expanding its agribusiness operations into the Commonwealth.

DeLong Co., Inc., headquartered in Clinton, Wisconsin, specializes in the global distribution of grains, oils, and byproducts. Recognized as the 5th largest container exporter in the United States by the 2024 Journal of Commerce Export Rankings, the company exports over two million tons annually from its 39 facilities across Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio.

With a total investment of \$26.7 million, DeLong's new Portsmouth location will feature the construction of four new grain bins, a loadout building, operational elevators, scales, conveyors, and extensive rail infrastructure. The project's rail component, valued at \$2.2 million, includes over 7,000 feet of linear track improvements and the addition of seven new turnouts. CSX will serve the site ensuring efficient rail operations.

The RIA grant will be used for rail construction, enhancing the facility's capability to transport agricultural products. The Portsmouth location will facilitate the import of soybeans, corn, wheat, and biodiesel from the Midwest and Northeast while also supporting the export of filled containers via the Port of Virginia to Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

The expansion of DeLong's operations into Virginia underscores the state's commitment to supporting businesses through strategic rail investments that enhance freight mobility and promote sustainable transportation solutions.

### Rail Industrial Access by the Numbers

- **27** RIA Grants awarded between 2018-2024
- **~3,474** jobs attracted to Virginia
- **~46,000** rail carloads generated from RIA projects
- **~156,000** truckloads diverted from roads and highways
- **\$1.27** billion

**27**

**RIA Grants between  
2017 and 2024**

**~3,400**

**Jobs attracted to  
Virginia**

**46,000**

**Rail carloads  
generated**

**156,000**

**Truckloads diverted  
from Virginia's roads**

**\$1.27B**

**In private capital  
investment in VA**

## DRPT Rail Programs – Statewide Rail Planning

### What is Statewide Rail Planning?

DRPT is tasked with planning for the future of freight and passenger rail across the Commonwealth. As part of its planning efforts, 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.

### Why is Statewide Rail Planning Important?

DRPT Rail Planning lays the foundation for freight and passenger rail expansions, improvements, and enhancements across Virginia, setting up rail to thrive and succeed. DRPT is the steward of the Statewide Rail Plan, which analyzes the current landscape of rail in Virginia, and makes policy framework and recommendations for the short-term and long-term.

### Rail Planning Initiatives Do More with their Federal Dollars



2025 was a year of numerous wins for DRPT's statewide rail planning efforts. In September of 2024, DRPT Rail Planning assisted five localities with the preparation of applications to the FRA's Rail Crossing Elimination grant program and committed state matching funds for the projects if they were awarded federal funding. In January 2025, FRA announced that all five applications had been awarded the requested federal funding, which will support studies for grade crossing improvements and potential grade separations in the City of Richmond, Henrico County, City of Chesapeake, City of Suffolk, and Town of Ashland. The total cost for the studies is estimated at

approximately \$10M, with federal funding offsetting more than \$8M of the project costs.

Creating separation between rail traffic and vehicle and pedestrian traffic, in addition to improving safety, improves the flow of traffic, ensuring kids get to school on time and emergency services can get where they need to go, rather than be stuck waiting at a grade crossing for a train to pass.

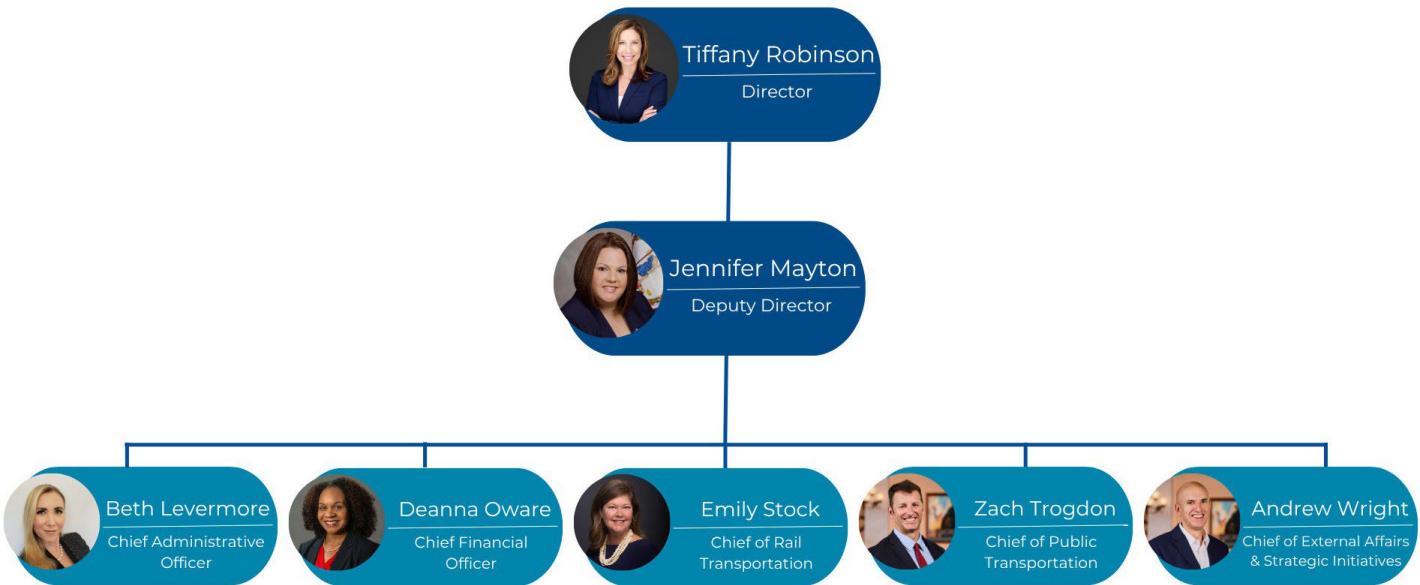
Another victory for DRPT Rail Planning involves getting the most out federal funding for a separate planning project. DRPT completed the \$55M DC2RVA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2019 with a balance of over \$7M remaining in the federal grant. Since then, DRPT has worked with FRA to spend the remaining funds on eligible projects within the DC to Richmond corridor, many of which helped support VPRA's Transforming Rail in Virginia program. The agency completed the spend down of DC2RVA funds in early 2025 and will achieve full project closeout by July.

## Topline numbers

- **\$961,700** in state funds for Rail Planning in FY 2025
- **\$1,500,000** in federal funds dedicated towards Rail Planning in FY 2025
- **5** localities awarded Rail Crossing Elimination Grants with DRPT's support

# DRPT Administration

## Leadership & Our Team



DRPT is committed to cultivating a sustainable, well-managed organization. DRPT's leadership team sets the standard for the agency, upholding DRPT's values of professionalism, stewardship, knowledge, innovation, and collaboration.

### Director

Tiffany Robinson has served as Director for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation since November 2024, spearheading the department's mission to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians with innovative transportation solutions. Ms. Robinson previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff in the Governor Youngkin's Office managing a diverse portfolio including transportation, labor, gaming, and health and human resources.

### Deputy Director

Jennifer Mayton has served as the Deputy Director since December 2024. She provides day-to-day executive-level leadership and serves as the most senior advisor to the Director. Ms. Mayton previously served as the Chief Administrative Officer for DRPT since joining in 2021 to lead the newly reorganized administrative division.

### Chief Administrative Officer

Beth Levermore joined DRPT in May 2025 as the Chief Administrative Officer. She oversees 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.

## Chief Financial Officer

Deanna Oware joined DRPT in June 2023 as the Chief Financial Officer. She oversees DRPT's \$1 billion annual budget composed of state, federal, and local resources that go toward improving rail and public transportation capacity and service. As CFO, Ms. Oware leads budget, financial programming, financial reporting, fiscal operations, and audits.

## Chief of Rail Transportation

Emily Stock, AICP, serves as the 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 a realistic implementation strategy. Ms. Stock serves as the Commonwealth's representative on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' Council on Rail Transportation and on the Technical Committee of the Southeast Rail Corridor Commission.

## Chief of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives

Andrew Wright serves as the Chief of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives. Mr. Wright has been with DRPT since 2016. Mr. Wright's responsibilities include overseeing the agency's communication efforts, including internal and external communications, media outreach, and marketing for the Virginia Breeze and public transportation programs. He also manages the agency's legislative and legal agenda and serves as the legislative liaison to the General Assembly and federal representatives.

## Chief of Public Transportation

Zach Trogdon serves as Chief of Public Transportation for DRPT, providing leadership in the evaluation, development, and execution of a \$4.7 billion portfolio of public transportation, commuter assistance, and congestion management programs throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. Trogdon joined DRPT in 2022 and has two decades of experience in the public sector. He previously served as the Executive Director of the Williamsburg Area Transit Authority as well as the County Administrator in Charles City County and a Town Manager in North Carolina.

## The Commonwealth Transportation Board

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation reports to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), which oversees transportation funding, statewide planning, project selection, and other initiatives. The CTB approves DRPT's budget and the Six-Year Improvement Program, allocating funding for rail and transit initiatives every year, as well as adopting policies, establishing guidelines for programs, and approving projects. The CTB also oversees VDOT's programs, budgets, and initiatives.

The CTB is chaired by the Secretary of Transportation, with the DRPT Director and VDOT Commissioner sitting on the Board as non-voting members. Nine appointed members represent each of Virginia's nine Transportation Construction Districts, while five members represent either

rural or urban Virginia at-large.

## Other Boards, Committees, and Entities

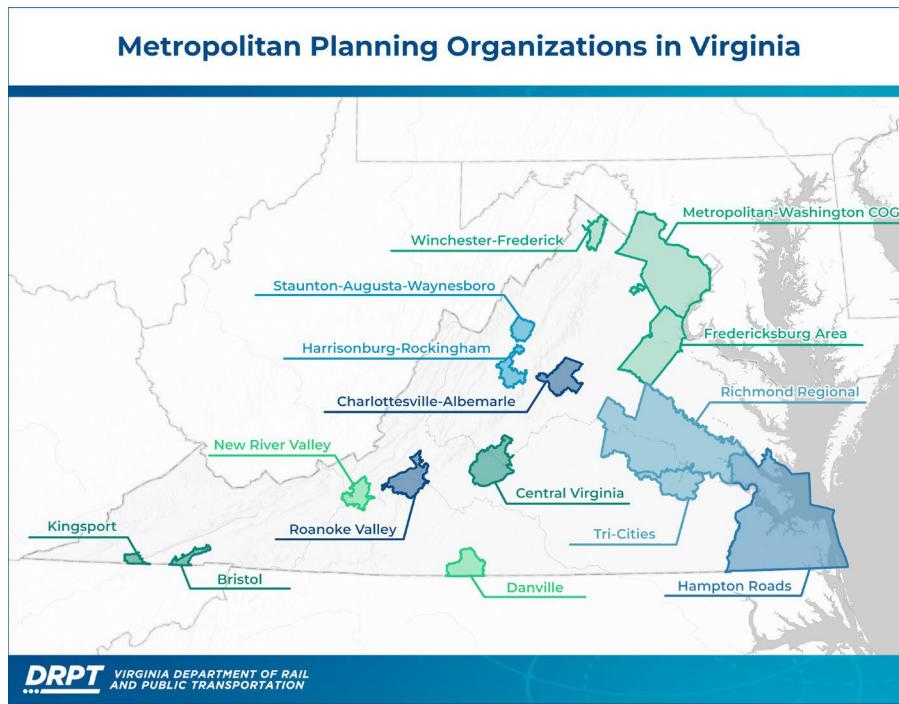
DRPT leadership and staff represent the Agency and Virginia on numerous boards, commissions, and regional planning bodies across the Commonwealth. In this capacity, DRPT serves as the 'go-to' organization for best practices, technical assistance, and leadership in the rail and public transit community.

### The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) was created in 2020 to promote, sustain, and enhance passenger rail in Virginia. The DRPT Director is the statutory chair of VPRA's Board, providing leadership, experience, and perspective for VPRA. Whereas DRPT plans the future of rail in Virginia through the Statewide Rail Plan and rail studies, VPRA is responsible for turning those plans into projects and passenger rail service.

### Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are federally required regional transportation planning organizations in urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000. MPOs serve as the forum for local decision-makers to plan for regional transportation priorities, create long-term regional transportation goals, and create actionable projects to improve transportation. There are 15 MPOs in Virginia, including those that cross State borders into Tennessee, North Carolina, and DC/Maryland. DRPT staff represent Virginia on many of the MPOs, being the go-to organization for technical assistance and best practices.



### Planning District Commissions

Planning District Commissions (PDC), as created under the Regional Cooperation Act of Virginia (1968), are voluntary associations of local governments intended to foster common regional

planning and services. There are 21 PDCs in Virginia, covering all corners of the Commonwealth. Among other duties such as regional planning and grant management, many PDCs guide and plan public transit services in its area. Some PDCs even operate public transit, human service transportation, or commuter programs themselves. In addition to funding support for planning, transit, or commuter programs, DRPT provides technical assistance for PDCs to improve, enhance, and sustain transit and commuter programs across the Commonwealth.

### **Regional Transportation Organizations**

In addition to the planning organizations, DRPT represents Virginia's best interests on additional regional transportation commissions and authorities:

#### **Transportation District Commissions:**

A Transportation District Commission (TDC) is a voluntary organization of local governments to foster regional cooperation and development of transportation systems, composed of transit facilities, public highways, and other modes of transport. Virginia has four TDCs, each dedicated (in some form or another) to supporting public transit in its respective service area. Those TDCs are:

- The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
- The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission
- The Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads
- The Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission

#### **Transportation Authorities**

Regional transportation authorities are regional governmental organizations that use regional funds (often from sales tax or fuels tax) for transportation projects. The three regional transportation authorities in Virginia are:

- The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
- The Central Virginia Transportation Authority
- The Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission

Both the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission and the Central Virginia Transportation Authority provide dedicated funding for public transit, while all three can fund public transit capital

# The Six-Year Improvement Program

## What is it

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. Both DRPT and VDOT develop a new SYIP each fiscal year, subject to approval by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The DRPT SYIP incorporates the programs and projects funded through DRPT's rail and transit grants.

## Why is it important

The SYIP programs every project receiving funds through DRPT for each fiscal year – from the smallest investment in spare parts for buses to the largest capital investments such as transit centers. Additionally, the SYIP projects the funding available in DRPT's programs over the next six fiscal years, providing stable and reliable dollars for rail and transit across the Commonwealth. These funded projects are crucial to maintaining a reliable transportation network for both freight and passengers, thereby increasing the throughput of people and goods.

## The FY 2025 SYIP

The FY 2025 SYIP programmed over \$1.1 billion for freight, passenger, and public transit projects and programs in FY 2025. In total, the FY 2025 SYIP projected over \$6.5 billion in rail and transit allocations over the next six fiscal years. This table lists programmed and projected funding for rail and transit programs between FY25 and FY30:

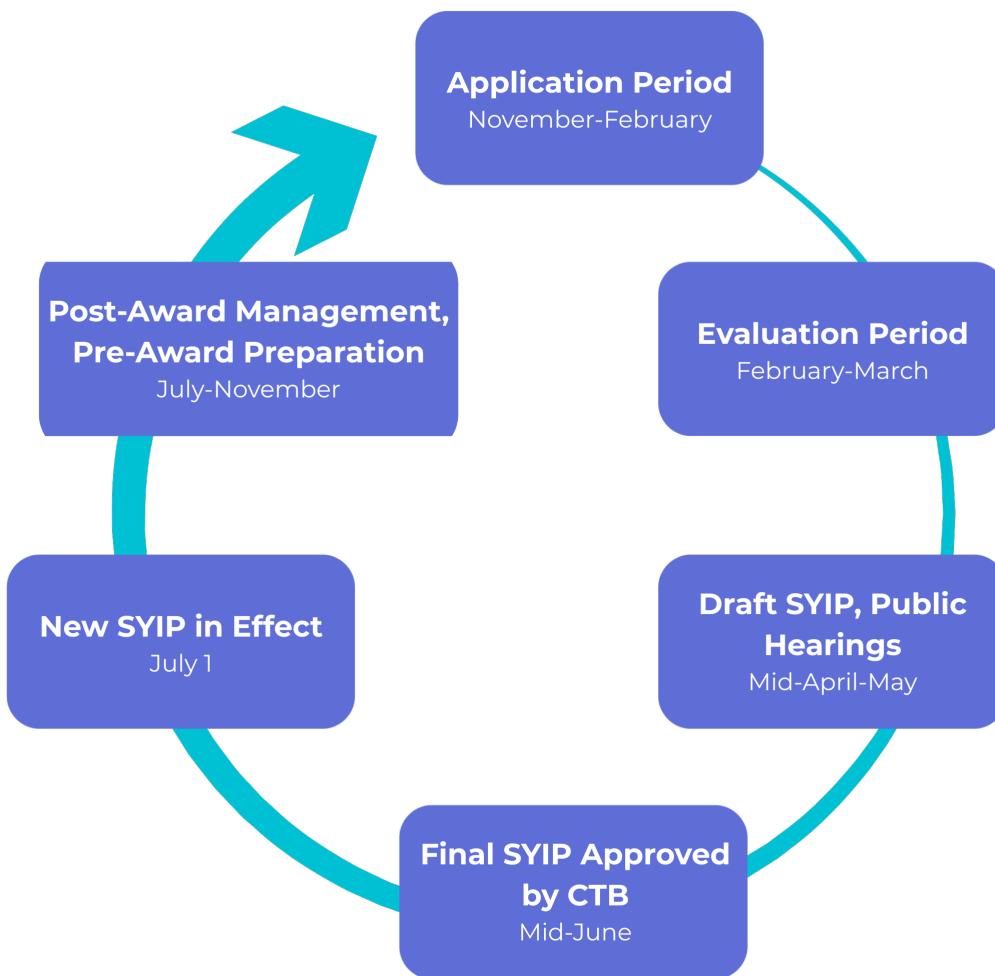
Funding Allocation Area	FY 25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY 25-30 SYIP Total
<b>State Operating Assistance (MERIT Operating)</b>	\$130.0	\$120.3	\$123.0	\$125.7	\$128.4	\$131.4	<b>\$758.7</b>
<b>State Capital Assistance</b>	\$90.8	\$79.9	\$81.7	\$83.6	\$85.4	\$87.5	<b>\$508.9</b>
<b>Virginia WMATA Contributions</b>	\$484.7	\$507.6	\$428.0	\$433.2	\$438.1	\$443.9	<b>\$275.4</b>
<b>VRE Funding</b>	\$16.3	\$16.5	\$16.8	\$17.2	\$17.6	\$18.0	<b>\$102.4</b>
<b>Commuter, human service, state safety oversight, and other special programs</b>	\$17.3	\$15.3	\$15.5	\$15.8	\$16.1	\$16.4	<b>\$96.3</b>
<b>Transit Ridership Incentive Program</b>	\$28.0	\$28.2	\$28.8	\$29.5	\$30.1	\$30.9	<b>\$175.5</b>

<b>Federal Funds and Federal Programs</b>	\$99.5	\$101.6	\$101.5	\$108.3	\$108.0	\$121.6	<b>\$640.5</b>
<b>Other Funds</b>	\$6.7	\$6.6	\$6.0	\$7.1	\$6.5	\$8.2	<b>\$41.1</b>
<b>Commuter Choice (Express Lane Program)</b>	\$33.0	\$28.4	\$28.8	\$30.3	\$33.7	\$37	<b>\$191.4</b>
<b>Total Public Transportation Allocation</b>	\$906.1	\$904.2	\$830.2	\$850.7	\$863.8	\$895.2	<b>\$5,250.2</b>
<b>Planning and Freight Rail Program</b>	\$9.8	\$9.3	\$4.0	\$4.5	\$2.1	\$2.2	<b>\$31.8</b>
<b>Rail Preservation Program</b>	\$8.4	\$5.8	\$5.4	\$5.4	\$2.8	\$2.2	<b>\$30.0</b>
<b>Total DRPT Rail Allocation</b>	\$18.2	\$15.1	\$9.4	\$9.9	\$4.8	\$4.4	<b>\$61.9</b>
<b>VPRA Transforming Rail in Virginia</b>	\$190.7	\$231.8	\$669.0	\$58.0	\$50.4	\$34.2	<b>\$1,234.1</b>
<b>Total SYIP Allocation</b>	\$1,115.0	\$1,151.1	\$1,508.6	\$918.6	\$919.1	\$933.8	<b>\$6,546.2</b>

*Note: \$ in millions. Most funds are not committed, but rather projections of future allocations.*

*Note: At the time of publication, the FY 2026 SYIP has been approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board and is currently in effect. These above numbers are based off of the FY2025 SYIP.*

## The Six-Year Improvement Program Lifecycle



## We Are...

Previous sections of this report have expounded upon what DRPT does and how DRPT does it, but to get a full understanding of the agency's impact, it is worth understanding "who we are." While DRPT is responsible for funding transit and rail projects across the Commonwealth, DRPT is more than just a funding agency. What follows are just a few examples of DRPT's prowess beyond the power of the purse.

### We are providers of oversight...

In compliance with federal law, DRPT serves as Virginia's State Safety Oversight Agency, which oversees the state's public transportation safety. 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.

DRPT assures that WMATA and VRE comply with the oversight requirements of the CTB. If WMATA or VRE do not comply with these requirements, the CTB is empowered to withhold Commonwealth Mass Transit Funding.

### We are technical assistance providers...

On January 10th, FRA announced that eight Rail Crossing Elimination awards would be going to projects in the Commonwealth. DRPT provided technical assistance and committed matching funds for five of the eight.

DRPT provided technical assistance for two successful grant applications to FRA's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program. The two grants are: \$6 million for Buckingham Branch Railroad to replace old rail tracks and ties across central Virginia, improving rail safety and reliability, and ~\$1.5 million for the Town of Bedford to develop plans for a new rail station.

### We are collaborators...

On January 21st, the North Carolina Department of Transportation announced the launch of a new intercity bus route between Winston-Salem and Danville. The new route, the Triad-Danville Connector, will connect with DRPT's Virginia Breeze in Danville and will operate twice a day, seven days a week.

DRPT and VPRA finalized an interagency agreement for VPRA to administer the \$45 million FRA FASTLANE grant that DRPT received in 2019. The grant provides federal funding to support the Alexandria Fourth Track project, which will construct approximately six miles of new rail track up to the Long Bridge.

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. Campaigns have targeted direct outreach to

the business community, commuters, and communities as a whole. Spotlight topics have also focused on promoting the use of bikes for community and promoting the use of transit among both students as well as seniors.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 28 in 2024 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 and serving on the subcommittee's technical working group.

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.

DRPT staff actively participate in industry groups such as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Virginia Transit Association (VTA), the Virginia Railroad Association (VRRA), the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT), the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), the Community Transportation Association of Virginia (CTAV), the Intelligent Transportation Society of Virginia (ITSVA), and the Southeast Corridor Commission (SEC) just to name a few. The agency also closely collaborates with 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, and VirginiaNavigator.

DRPT was accepted as a contributor to ESRI, the company that builds ArcGIS, the world's leading geographic information system (GIS) mapping software. This role will enable DRPT to make spot corrections to ESRI's basemap railroad references and eventually share data directly. This effort came about because DRPT collaborated with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and CSX regarding a mislabeled rail line from ESRI's basemap at an economic development site in Halifax County.

DRPT and NVTC held a kick-off meeting for a new I-66 Corridor Needs Assessment that is being jointly funded by both entities. The study will be completed in the summer of 2025 and will identify new multimodal services and projects that could be funded in future cycles of DRPT's I-66 Outside the Beltway funding program and NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice funding program.

## We are thought leaders...

The FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program requires that any activity funded under this program be supported by a coordinated transportation plan that assesses current services and transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities, identifies strategies to address service gaps, and sets priorities for project implementation. At DRPT, this plan is known as the Coordinated Human Service Mobility (CHSM) Plan and is updated every three years. The plan was last updated in 2022, and DRPT was proud to kickoff the update for 2025 this year.

In 2025, DRPT began working on the next iteration of the Statewide Rail Plan. DRPT develops an updated Statewide Rail Plan every four years per Federal Railroad Administration guidance and in alignment with the goals and objectives of VTrans, the Commonwealth's multimodal transportation plan. This plan provides long-term guidance for Virginia's transportation leadership to ensure that the Commonwealth's rail needs for people, communities, and commerce are addressed, policies for future rail investments are consistent, the public is educated on current rail issues, and that rail transportation continues to be a safe, economical, and environmentally friendly mode choice.

DRPT staff support transit agencies as they compile Transit Strategic Plans and Transit Development Plans as required for receiving state funding. These plans enable transit agencies to start projects strong, successfully grow, and remain nimble and responsive to community needs. Ways DRPT staff help this task go smoothly for transit agencies include by compiling guidelines and resources available online and proactively offering technical assistance throughout the development process.

## We are innovators...

DRPT has continued to build on the successes of the Open Data Portal by adding additional features and updating existing features to promote transparency and data accessibility.

One example of how DRPT has become more enterprising in the use of data is the development of "Our Story," an interactive StoryMap that delves into how the agency's work gets done, where there have been successes and what lies ahead.

DRPT leads 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.

## We are stewards...

During FY25 and 26, DRPT will reexamine the MERIT program to support a stronger emphasis on performance-based metrics, a renewed focus on right-sizing agency requests, the provision of additional incentives to promote adoption of best practices and the development of metrics to

identify the return on investments made through the program. The goals of this endeavor are to strive to remain best in class when it comes to the reviewing, scoring, and awarding of grant funds and deliver the most value and best outcomes for customers as efficiently as possible.

DRPT staff initiated a study on the future of rural transit funding in Virginia. The goal of the study is to identify short- and long-term strategies for ensuring rural transit is funded to support the current uptick in demand.

The Governor signed HB1603 Commonwealth Rail Fund; funds applied to Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Fund into law, empowering DRPT to allow up to 50% of the agency's share of the Commonwealth Rail Fund to go to the Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Fund (RPF). Previously, there was a \$4 million cap on the amount of funds that could be moved between the two. With requests for RPF funding for projects greatly outpacing the existing amount of funds, this change allows for the agency to more effectively administer funds and adapt to meet the needs of grantees.

## **We are ONE DRPT!**

DRPT's 69 staff are spread across five divisions and two offices. While each team member may have different tasks, employees are united by a common desire to provide superb service to the public.

## Next Stop: 2026

During 2025, DRPT has convened with partners and stakeholders, fostered innovative practical solutions, cultivated a sustainable well-managed organization, and created a positive impact on the Commonwealth. These goals lay the foundation of our strategic plan, "Next Stop: 2030." Since we are at the halfway point of both our strategic plan and the decade as a whole, now seems like the ideal time to take stock of the path that led us here and consider what the path ahead may look like.

While this report has captured a plethora of ways DRPT has fulfilled the goals of our strategic plan, we are still seeking ways to go the extra mile. In 2026, we are:

- Reassessing our existing programs to enhance flexibility and predictability;
- Bringing in new staff and initiating new projects;
- Finding novel partnerships and funding opportunities to pursue, and
- Doing it all at minimal cost to the taxpayer for the maximum impact on the Commonwealth.

Virginia is the only state in the country that has a separate agency for transit, commuter assistance, and rail. What this means is that 1) transit, commuter assistance, and rail are unique priorities for the Commonwealth, and 2) as the only agency of our kind in the U.S., the road less traveled is a road well-worn for us. This path of change is one we have chosen for ourselves, rather than one we have been led down by others or out of necessity. Our agency has decided to make this moment a turning point instead of waiting to find ourselves at a crossroads.

This work is driven by our grantees, our partners, and people like you. DRPT is making bold moves today to ensure transit, commuter assistance, and rail can continue move the Commonwealth tomorrow. Now is your chance to get on board—because the best is yet to come.