

Commonwealth Transportation Board Rail and Transit Subcommittee
Virginia Department of Transportation - Central Office
First Floor Training Room
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
June 20, 2023
9:00 a.m.

AGENDA

- 1. Approval of March 29, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 2. Public Comment
- 3. Director's Report- Jennifer DeBruhl
- 4. I-395 Commuter Choice Zach Trogdon/ Ben Owen / Adam Hager
- 5. Best Practice Research RIA Mike Todd



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Jennifer B. DeBruhl

DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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Director

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DRAFT MINUTES CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting

VDOT Central Office – HR Training Room 1221 East Broad Street Richmond, Virginia 23219 Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 8:30 am

The CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee held a meeting on March 29, 2023. The location was VDOT HR Training Room, located at 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

CTB MEMBERS PRESENT

Jennifer DeBruhl (Chair), Thomas Lawson, E. Scott Kasprowicz, Mary Hynes, Thomas Fowlkes, Mark Merrill, Dr. Raymond Smoot, Jr., and Wayne Coleman

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Sheila Beard (VDRPT), Emily Stock (VDRPT), DJ Stadler (VPRA), Karen Harrington (HDR), Adisa Muse (HRT), Margaret Rockwell (McGuireWoods Consulting), Grant Sparks (VDRPT), Mike Todd (VDRPT), Tiffany Dubinsky (VDRPT), Zach Trogdon (VDRPT), Linda Balderson (VDRPT), Janet Mineva (VDRPT), Henry Bendon (VDRPT), Mary Olivia Rentner (VDRPT), Mike Todd (VDRPT), Mitchell Smiley (VML) and Dan Sonenklar (VDRPT).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair DeBruhl called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE December 6, 2022 MINUTES

On a motion by Thomas Fowlkes and seconded by Wayne Coleman, the December 6, 2022, CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee meeting minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one signed up for public comment.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Presented by Chair Jennifer DeBruhl

Chair DeBruhl provided everyone with a brief overview of what to expect in the board meeting with updates on the following:

Statewide Rail Plan (SRP): Chair DeBruhl informed the subcommittee that the had been approved by the FRA. Additionally, she provided updates concerning two new DRPT applications for FRA corridor ID programs – the Commonwealth Corridor and the New River Valley through Bristol. The subcommittee discussed initial cost estimates, the technical specifications behind an emerging rail corridor, and potential timelines for the NRV to Bristol Corridor.

The Chair then led the subcommittee through an informal round robin on statewide rail projects and agencies. The subcommittee talked about proposals for rails and trails in Shenandoah, the purchase of and upgrade requirements for the CSX S line between Richmond and Raleigh, North Carolina's role in planning and spending on S line upgrades, and VRE.

The Subcommittee VRE discussion explored current ridership levels, commonwealth funding, and how VRE fits into the larger regional transportation and congestion program. Chair DeBruhl and Mary Hynes explained the state's contribution to VRE as essential for regional transit and traffic mitigation, with specific reference to how the recent Omniride strike demonstrated the interconnected nature of Northern Virginia transit agencies. The subcommittee also explored VRE funding mechanisms.

The Chair's final update touted Virginia state supported Amtrak routes again setting monthly ridership records, with high expectations of continued growth.

Rail Industrial Access Program Overview

Presented by Michael Todd, Rail Programs Director, DRPT

Mr. Todd provided an overview of the Rail Industrial Access grant program, including a discussion of the creation of the program in the Virginia code; an overview of the program purpose; metrics regarding program budget, and past project investments and performance; development of current program policies; development of the current program application evaluation criteria; and introduce a schedule for reviewing and updating the current program guidance with the Board's input.

Mr. Todd highlighted the ways in which the current program guidance safeguards Virginia's funding and ensures that the benefits of each project are realized by Virginia businesses and residents. Some initial input from Board members included the need to ensure that Rail Industrial Access investments influence economic development decisions in Virginia, and potentially increasing the per project funding maximum. However, this input should not impact the protections and safeguards already established by the code and the current program guidance.

Next steps include best practice research and interviews with other State partners that manage similar grant programs.

FY 24 Rail Update

Presented by Emily Stock, Chief of Rail Transportation, DRPT

Ms. Stock provided an overview of the FY2024 Rail Program, explaining the three main components of the program: Freight, Rail Preservation, and Rail Industrial Access. The subcommittee was especially interested in the amount of money available for Rail Industrial Access projects, discussing at some length the cap on the program relative to increases in the VDOT road access budget and the potential of increasing RIA funds on improving Virginia's competitiveness.

The FY24 update also included a breakdown of the funding requests and appropriations for Freight and Rail Preservation projects, and a brief discussion of some projects funded by each program. Ms. Stock also led the subcommittee through an impromptu overview fo the rail preservation program and process. also inquired about the ability of Class 1 railroads to apply to the freight funding program – they can.

FY 24 Transit Update

Presented by Zach Trogdon, Chief of Public Transportation, DRPT

Mr. Trogdon delivered an overview of FY2024 Transit Programs Funding. The FY24 Cycle marks the fifth year of the MERIT (Making Efficient Responsible Investments in Transit) program, the funding and methodology of which was explained throughout the presentation. The MERIT program was presented by funding asks and allocations for operating, capital, TRIP, and special program budgets for the FY24 period, and covered prioritization and expansion project scoring and decision making processes.

Mr. Trogdon informed the board that the combination of MERIT funding and federal funds has "really shored up" the funding for MERIT special projects, though acknowledged that implementation of plans has been less immediate because of supply chain issues. The conversation then turned to long term planning, where Chair DeBruhl stepped in to provide context on DRPT's long term capital forecasting and the subcommittee talked about local agency long term planning,

The subcommittee also heard more in detail about future of TRIP (transportation ridership incentive program), which will continue in it's current form through the FY24 period but will see some changes next year thanks to updates passed in this years General Assembly.

After some conversation about the distribution of MERIT funds and the impact and importance of local agency funding, the presentation and subcommittee meeting wrapped.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair DeBruhl adjourned the meeting at 9:57 a.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9uvU8vO09umEWIdES2Ivow

Respectfully Submitted: Sheila Beard, Executive Assistant assisted by Henry Bendon











Director's Report

June 2023







Administrative Highlights

Maximum Employment Level: 72

Current Vacancy Rate: 17 percent

Goal: Eight percent

New Hires:

Deanna Oware, Chief Financial Officer (Start Date: June 10)

Shannon Girouard, Senior Grants Analyst (Start Date: June 25)

Paige Lazar, Statewide Transit Planner (Start Date: July 10)

Rail Highlights

Awards

The 2022 State Rail Plan won **Best Digital Application** at the Virginia Association for Mapping and Land Information Systems (VAMLIS) 2023 Conference

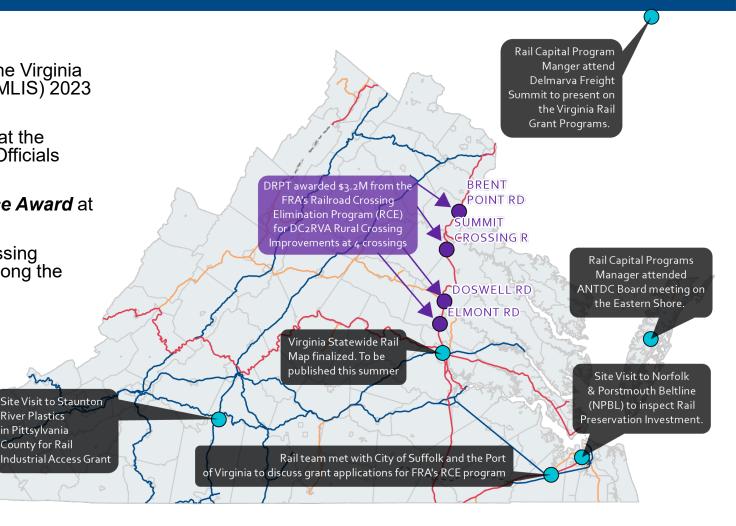
The 2022 State Rail Plan won **Best Storymap Application** at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) GIS-Transportation 2023 Conference.

The Official Virginia State Rail Map won the **People's Choice Award** at the AASHTO GIS-T Conference.

River Plastics

in Pittsylvania County for Rail

DRPT awarded **\$3.2M** from the inaugural FRA Railroad Crossing Elimination Program to improve safety at 4 rural crossings along the DC2RVA corridor (seen on map)



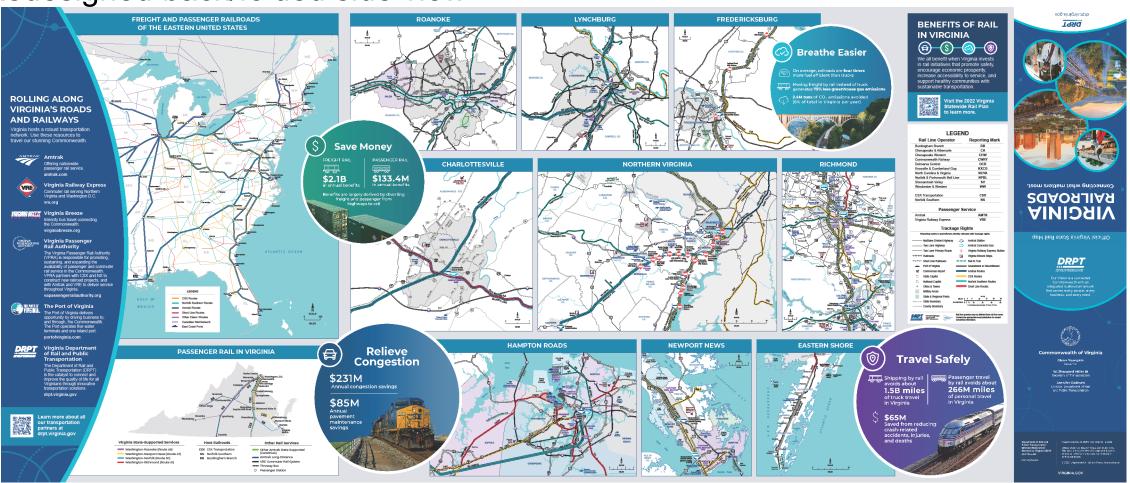
Rail Highlights

- Updated Official Virginia State Rail Map complete
- To be printed this summer and distributed across the Commonwealth



Rail Highlights

Redesigned back/folded side view

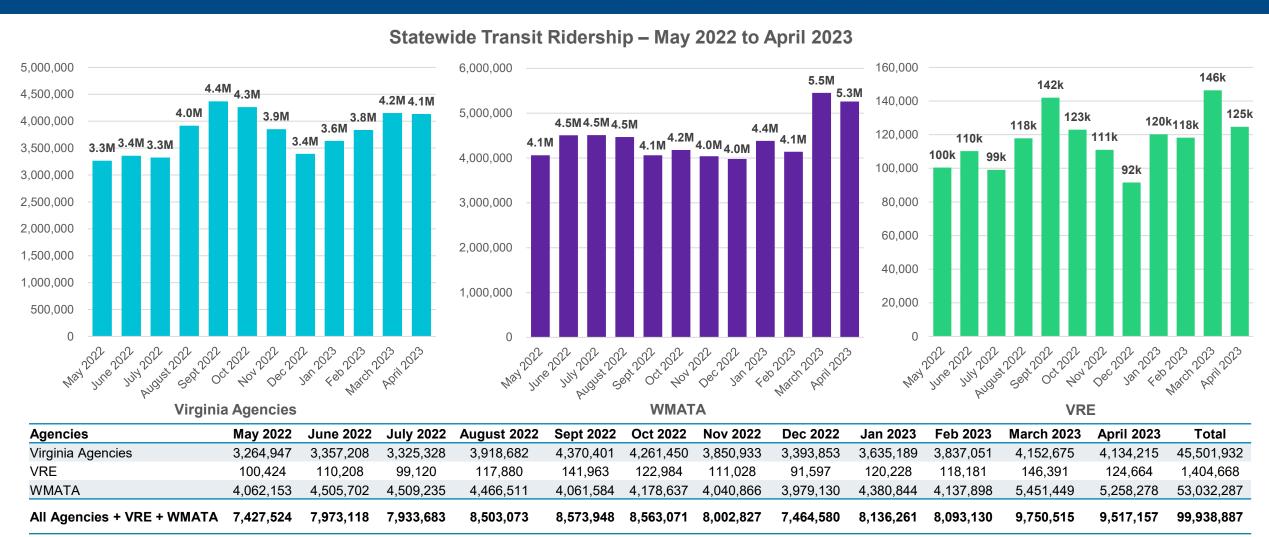


Public Transportation Highlights

- HJ542 Study
 - ACEC National Recognition Award
- Virginia Railway Express is nearing completion of the rehabilitation of its Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) Facility.
 - Once completed, the facility will provide VRE the ability to perform an expanded range of maintenance activities, including heavy work on locomotive parts, that cannot be done in its current facility.
 - This will save a tremendous amount of time and money in eliminating the need to ship parts out of state for repair.
 - The facility also has the most modern safety features that allow maximum protection to technicians performing the work.

- Mountain Empire Transit, located in Big Stone Gap, recently experienced its highest ridership day to date on the METGo! microtransit service.
 - The route that serves Norton and Wise provided more than 300 trips one day.
 - The service was started with the help of an award in 2021 from DRPT and Mountain Empire has started planning for additional routes.
- The "Relay" project in Fairfax County, a pilot project to operate an electric driverless shuttle in the Mosaic District of the County, has concluded after two-year run.
 - The data and findings from the project will be used to determine the potential of expanding the use of driverless vehicle technology.
 - The project was the result of a partnership between DRPT, VDOT, Virginia Tech, and George Mason University.

Statewide Transit Ridership



April Statewide Ridership Comparison: Year-to-Year

Transit ridership for Virginia agencies in April 2023 was 19% higher than April 2022.

Bus ridership was 21% higher

April 2023 ridership for Virginia agencies was 74% of pre-pandemic April 2019 levels.

Bus ridership was 72% of 2019 levels

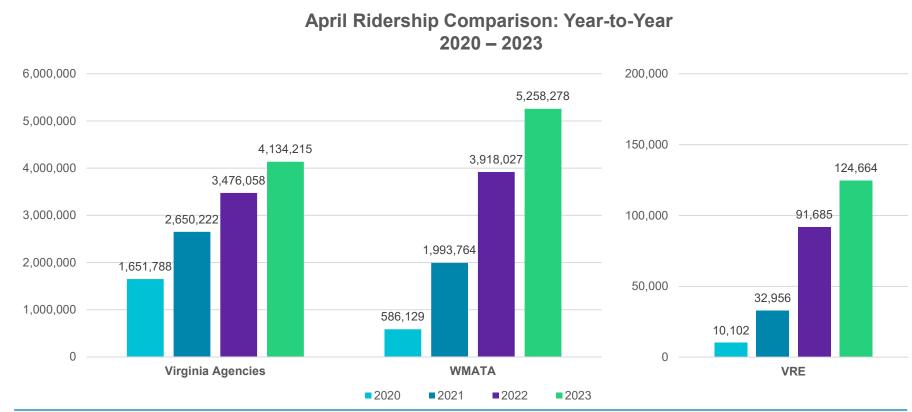
VRE ridership in April 2023 was 36% higher than April 2022 and 30% of pre-pandemic April 2019 levels.

WMATA ridership in April 2023 was 34% higher than in April 2022.

- Bus ridership was 16% higher
- Heavy rail (Metro) was 40% higher

April 2023 WMATA ridership was 52% of prepandemic April 2019 levels.

- Bus ridership was 68% of 2019 levels
- Heavy rail (Metro) is 50% of 2019 levels



Mode	April 2020	April 2021	April 2022	April 2023	April 2023 vs 2020	April 2023 vs 2021	April 2023 vs 2022
Virginia Agencies	1,651,788	2,650,222	3,476,058	4,134,215	150%	56%	19%
VRE	10,102	32,956	91,685	124,664	1134%	278%	36%
WMATA	586,129	1,993,764	3,918,027	5,258,278	797%	164%	34%
All Agencies + VRE + WMATA	2,248,019	4,676,942	7,485,770	9,517,157	323%	103%	27%

Virginia Breeze Ridership - April

In April 2023, ridership on VA Breeze routes totaled 4,731 which was:

- 165% higher than original estimates
- 17% higher than April 2022

On-time-performance (OTP) was 78% and the overall farebox recovery was 42%

For the month of April 2023, the VA Breeze contributed to a reduction of 160 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions.

Valley Flyer:

- Ridership 19% higher than April 2022
- Farebox Rev. 15% higher than April 2022

Piedmont Express:

- Ridership 2% higher than April 2022
- Farebox Rev. 3% higher than April 2022

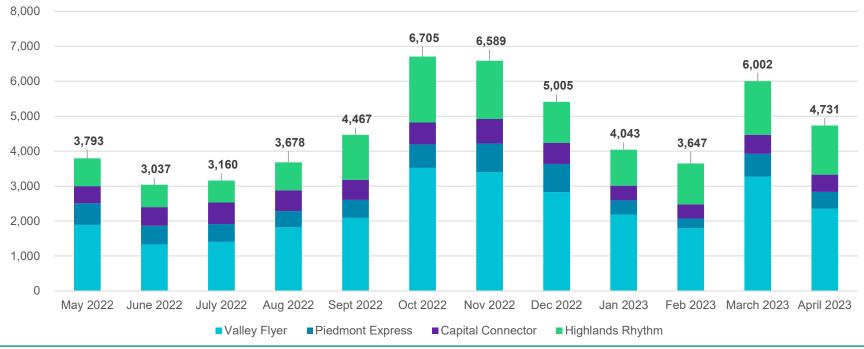
Capital Connector:

- Ridership 7% lower than April 2022
- Farebox Rev. 6% lower than April 2022

Highlands Rhythm:

- Ridership 31% higher than April 2022
- Farebox Rev 30% higher than April 2022

Virginia Breeze Ridership by Route – May 2022 to April 2023



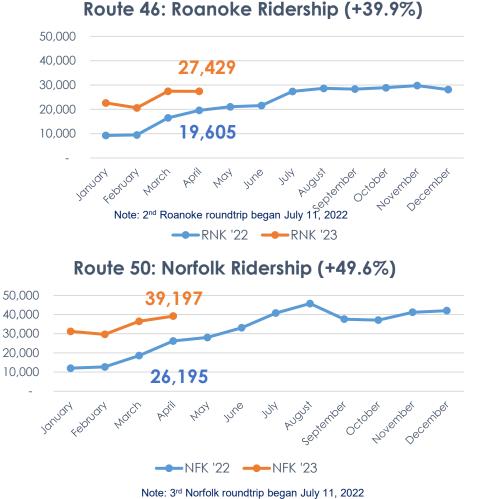
Route	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Aug 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	March 2023	April 2023	Total
Valley Flyer	1,888	1,329	1,405	1,820	2,091	3,519	3,394	2,826	2,187	1,793	3,269	2,351	27,872
Piedmont Express	618	537	507	464	511	672	827	808	402	278	656	483	6,763
Capital Connector	490	533	621	597	581	627	701	606	421	404	544	493	6,618
Highlands Rhythm	797	638	627	797	1,284	1,887	1,667	1,171	1,033	1,172	1,533	1,404	14,010
All Routes	3,793	3,037	3,160	3,678	4,467	6,705	6,589	5,411	4,043	3,647	6,002	4,731	55,263

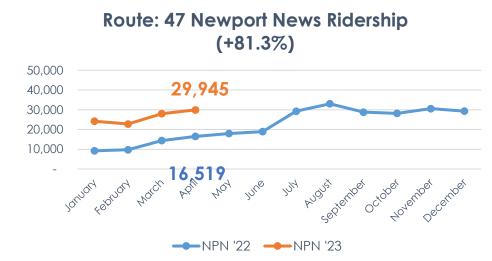
Virginia-Supported April Ridership by Route 2023 VS 2022

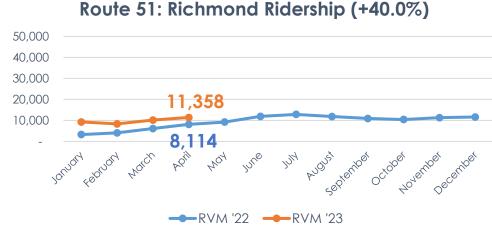
The largest year over year ridership increase was Route 47: Newport News at 81.3%. (+13,426)

All four routes saw increased ridership year over year.

Note: Roanoke ridership for April subject to slight variance due to ongoing Amtrak allocation adjustments













I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee June 20, 2023

Zach TrogdonDRPT Chief of Public
Transportation

Ben Owen *NVTC Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager*

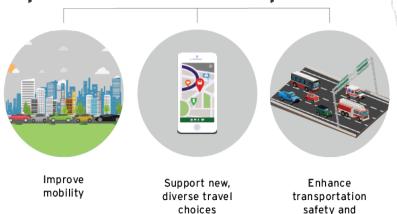
Adam Hager NVTC Commuter Choice Senior Program Analyst

About Commuter Choice

A competitive grant program that invests toll revenues from I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-395/95 into transportation projects that...

Maximize Person Throughput & Implement Multimodal Improvements

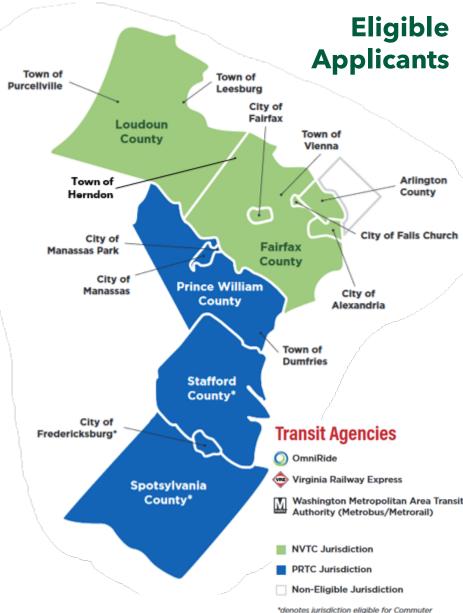




travel reliability

Each corridor has a multi-decade payout schedule and <u>typically</u> about \$30 million in available funds per two-year program.





*denotes jurisdiction eligible for Commuter Choice on the I-395/95 corridor only

The FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects







\$88M

requested for **16** eligible projects by **5** applicants



\$48M

total award to **13** projects



11,000
additional
weekday
passenger trips

76%
GHG emissions
reduction over
driving alone

35M

fewer annual vehicle miles

\$4M annual savings for commuters in fuel costs

138K

hours of delay saved each year

42

automobile crashes **avoided** each year

The FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects **Capital Improvements**







Applicant	Title	Proposed Award
Virginia Railway Express	Crystal City Station Expansion Relocates and expands the commuter rail station to enable simultaneous boarding of two full-length trains and allow Amtrak trains to serve the station.	\$10,786,281 *
Fairfax County	Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Implementation: Fort Belvoir to Huntington Station Constructs a seven-mile, nine-station bus rapid transit line operating in new median lanes along U.S. Highway 1.	\$10,000,000 **
DASH	DASH Line 35 Bus Fleet Capacity Expansion with Electric Buses: Van Dorn Street Station to the Pentagon Deploys two additional 60-foot electric buses to meet anticipated ridership growth.	\$3,452,000

Taken together, \$18,000,000 of the available funding in the FY 2026-2027 Program of Projects would be programmed in advance.

^{*} Total funding request is \$18,786,281. The remaining \$8,000,000 would be fulfilled in the FY 2026-2027 Program of Projects.

^{**} Total funding request is \$20,000,000. The remaining \$10,000,000 would be fulfilled in the FY 2026-2027 Program of Projects. for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Implementation.

The FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects **Service Improvements (1 of 2)**



Applicant	Title	Proposed Award
DASH	DASH Line 35 Service Enhancement: Van Dorn Street Station to the Pentagon (Continuation) Continues 10-minute all-day weekday service and 15-minute all-day weekend service between Alexandria's West End and the Pentagon via the 395 Express Lanes.	\$7,290,000
Arlington County	Metrobus 16M Service Enhancement: Skyline to Crystal City Expands peak-period local bus service along Columbia Pike from every 12 minutes to every 6 minutes.	\$5,000,000
DASH	DASH Line 36A/B Service Enhancement: Mark Center to Potomac Yard-VT Station (Continuation) Continues 15-minute all-day service, seven days per week, between the Mark Center, Shirlington and the Potomac Yard area.	\$3,774,000
Fairfax County	Fairfax Connector Route 396: Backlick North Park and Ride to the Pentagon (Continuation) Continues peak-period express bus service between Springfield and the Pentagon operating every 15 to 20 minutes via the 395 Express Lanes.	\$1,750,915
OmniRide	OmniRide Route 942: Staffordboro to the Pentagon (Continuation) Continues commuter express service between Stafford County and the Pentagon and adds three morning and three evening trips to meet demand.	\$1,638,926

The FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects **Service Improvements (2 of 2)**



Applicant	Title	Proposed Award
Virginia Railway Express	TDM Strategy: Amtrak Step-Up Reinstatement on VRE Fredericksburg Line Allows VRE multi-ride pass holders to travel between Northern Virginia and D.C. on select Amtrak Northeast Regional trains serving VRE's Fredericksburg Line. Subsidizes Amtrak perboarding fees for 24 months.	\$1,477,065
OmniRide	OmniRide Route 543: Staffordboro to Downtown Washington, D.C. (Continuation) Continues commuter express service between Stafford County and downtown Washington, DC.	\$1,025,441
OmniRide	OmniRide Route 1 Local Service Enhancement: Quantico to Woodbridge Station (Continuation) Continues expanded peak-period local bus service along U.S. Highway 1 in Prince William County.	\$755,020
OmniRide	OmniRide Prince William Metro Express Service Enhancement: Dale City to Franconia-Springfield Station (Continuation) Continues expanded peak-period service between Woodbridge, Potomac Mills, the Horner Road Commuter Lot and the Franconia-Springfield Station.	\$671,678
OmniRide	OmniRide Route D-200 Service Enhancement: Dale City to Ballston (Continuation) Continues two additional morning and evening commuter express trips between Dale City and the Pentagon, Rosslyn and Ballston.	\$304,626

Public Comment

April 14 - May 15, 2023



646 comment submissions

the most we've ever received (by far)



DASH Needs Your Help to Maintain Current Bus Service on Lines 35 & 36A/B!

DASH needs your help to maintain current service levels on Lines 35 & 36A/B in West Alexandria! Please take this **short online survey** to tell NVTC that these routes are important to the West Alexandria community!

Promotion by Applicants







WJLA News Segment

Read the summary of **public comments**

Next Steps







- Technical Evaluation
- Public Outreach and Comment
- Program of Projects Adoption by Commissions and Referral to CTB



• **CTB** adopts the program of projects into the FY 2024-2029 Six-Year Improvement Program



NVTC and recipients begin to execute Standard Project Agreements for selected projects



- Recipients carry out selected projects and report on project status and performance to NVTC
- NVTC administers funds, monitors project implementation and develops annual reports on funded projects

Thank You.

Zach Trogdon

Chief of Public Transportation,
Department of Rail and Public Transportation

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Ben Owen

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Adam Hager

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http://www.novatransit.org/programs/commuterchoice/















Best Practice Research

Rail Industrial Access Grant Program







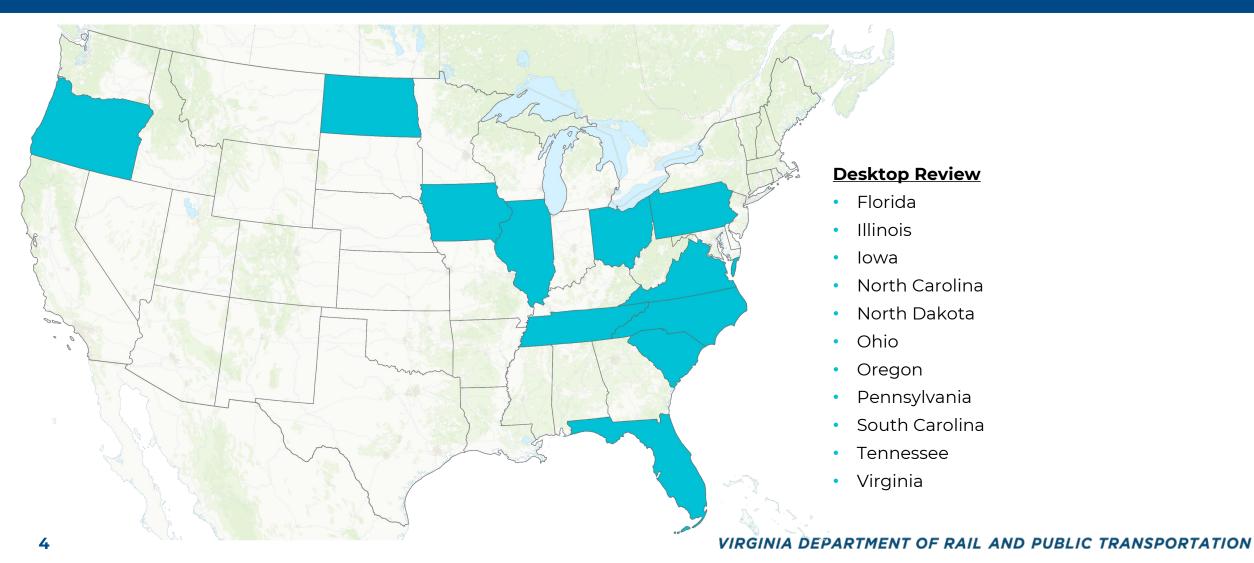
Agenda

- Research Methodology
- Major Takeaways & Draft
 Recommendations
- Next Steps

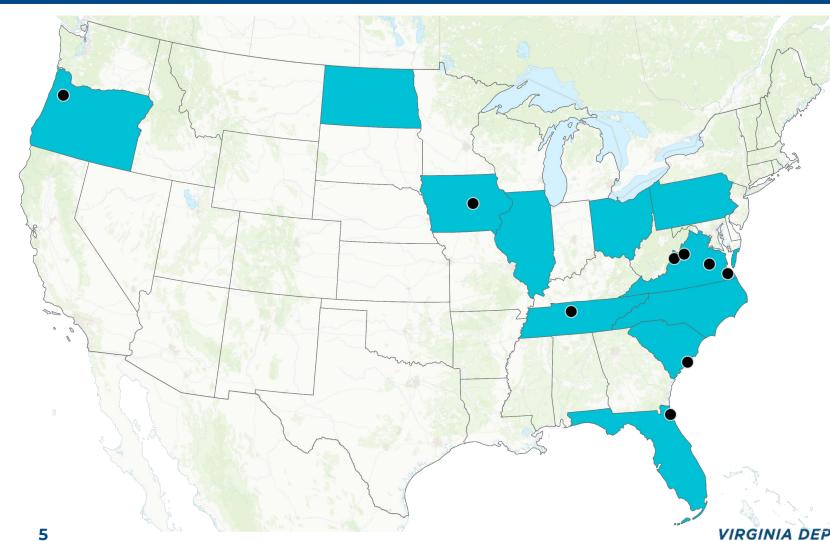
Research Methodology



Desktop Review



Interviews



Desktop Review

- Florida
- Illinois
- lowa
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Virginia

Interviews

- Genessee & Wyoming
- Houff Corporation
- Iowa DOT
- Oregon DOT
- Port of Virginia
- Shenandoah Valley RR
- South Carolina Port
- Tennessee ECD
- Virginia DOT

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Topic Areas

Purpose

 The reasoning for committing resources to rail improvements and how that informs program guidance.

Process

 Administrative process best practices for application, adoption, and implementation of grant funded projects.

Funding

 Revenue structures and their impact on planning, grant management, and project implementation.

Major Takeaways & Draft Recommendations





Purpose

Purpose: Major Takeaways

Customer Drives Mode Choice

Capacity Equals Resiliency

Efficiency of Public-Private Partnerships

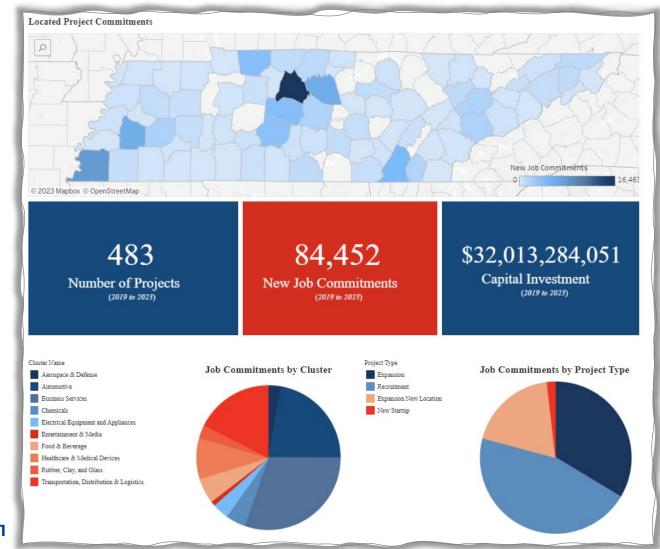


Purpose: Draft Recommendations

Targeted Marketing

Rail Toolkit

Purpose: Example Targeted Marketing



Purpose: Example Rail Toolkit

ARE YOU A RAIL SHIPPER?

IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR YOU?

If you answer more than five questions "yes," it might be worth evaluating your rail options.

YES

- Do you ship more than three truckloads to any destination within a week?
- Do your shipments move more than 300 miles?
- If transporting by rail takes longer but is reliable, could you include rail in your supply chain?
- Is it becoming more difficult to get a truck to move your freight?
- Is a rail transload located within 50 miles of your customers?



Process

Process: Major Takeaways

Transparent

Objective Scoring

Link to State Goals



Process: Draft Recommendations

Add Screening Criteria

Update Matching Funds

Process: Example Screening

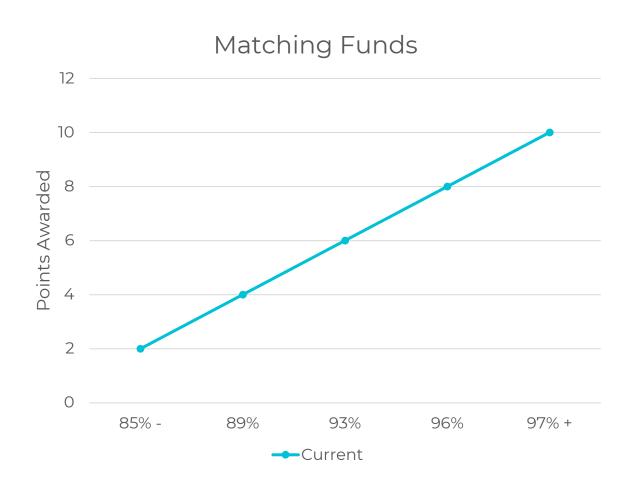
Eligible Project

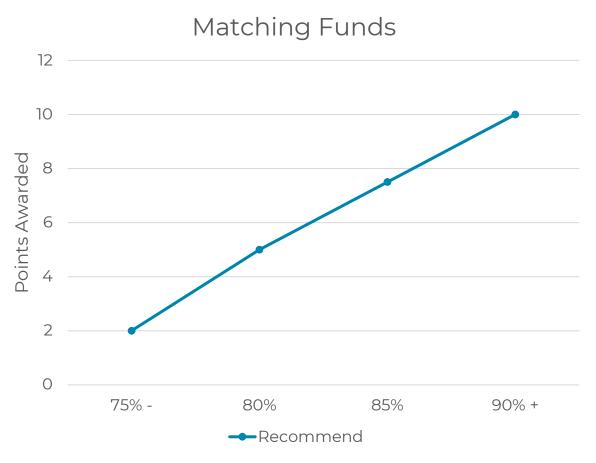
Eligible Recipient

Letter of Support

Meet State Goals

Process: Example Scoring Update







Funding

Funding: Major Takeaways

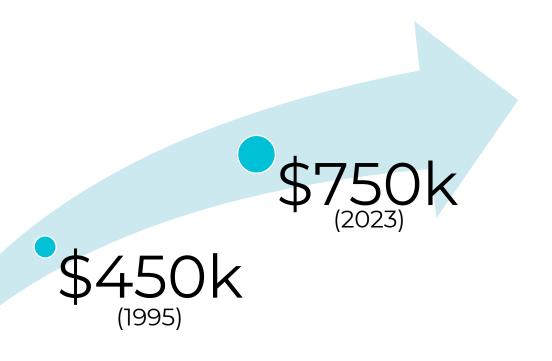
Annually Dedicated

Performance Based Protections

Rising Costs

Funding: Draft Recommendation

Increase Per Project Maximum





Recommendations Summary

- Targeted Marketing
- 2. Use Rail Toolkit
- 3. Add Screening Criteria
- 4. Matching Funds Scoring Update
- 5. Increase Per Project Maximum



Next Steps





September

October

December

Finalize Recommendations Present to CTB Workshop

Adopt Updated Guidance

Thank You

Questions?

