

Commonwealth Transportation Board Rail and Transit Subcommittee
VDOT Conference Room
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
March 19, 2024
8:30 a.m.

AGENDA

- 1. Approval of June 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 2. Public Comment
- 3. Director's Report Jennifer DeBruhl, DRPT Director
- 4. Fiscal Year 2025 Public Transportation Update *Zach Trogdon, Chief of Public Transportation*
- 5. Fiscal Year 2025 Rail Update Emily Stock, Chief of Rail Transportation
- 6. Virginia Breeze Expansion *Avery Daughtery, Statewide Programs Manager*



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Jennifer B. DeBruhl
Director

DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 600 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 2102 RICHMOND, VA 23219-2416 (804) 786-4440 FAX (804) 225-3752 Virginia Relay Center 800-828-1120 (TDD)

DRAFT MINUTES CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting

VDOT Central Office – HR Training Room 1221 East Broad Street Richmond, Virginia 23219 Tuesday, June 20, 2023, 9:00 am

The CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee held a meeting on June 20, 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, Frederick Stant, III, Mark Merrill, Dr. Raymond Smoot, Jr., and Wayne Coleman

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Sheila Beard (VDRPT), Emily Stock (VDRPT), Henry Atkinson (Intern- SFAC), Robert Whitfield, Evan Price (VA Management Fellow), Johnathan Arnold (Intern - SFAC), Grant Sparks (VDRPT), Mike Todd (VDRPT), Deanna Oware (VDRPT), Zach Trogdon (VDRPT), Linda Balderson (VDRPT), Janet Mineva (VDRPT), Adam Hager (NVTC), Mary Olivia Rentner (VDRPT).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair DeBruhl called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE March 29, 2023 MINUTES

On a motion by Mary Hynes and seconded by E. Scott Kasprowicz, the March 29, 2023, 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:

Chair DeBruhl informed the subcommittee with a big-picture overview of where the agency is currently. She stated the agency is in a much better place now than a few months ago. The agency has gone through a tremendous amount of turnover. Roughly 75% of the agency has turned over in the last couple of years. Chair DeBruhl expressed excitement because the vacancy rate is now 17%, which is a significant decrease from nearly 30%. The target goal is to be 8%. Chair DeBruhl stated she pulled back some positions about a year ago, that have been in reserve, in order to reach 8%.

She then introduced the committee to the new CFO, Deanna Oware who started with the agency on June 10. There will be additional new hires starting between June 25 and July 10.

Chair DeBruhl moved on with updates regarding Rail. The Rail team has recently won a couple of big awards. The awards included: Digital application at the Association for Mapping and Land Information Systems, a story map application at AASHTO, which is the state highway and transportation officials, and also the People's Choice award. A big event held a couple of weeks ago was the rail crossing elimination program. We put in a request for \$3.2 million to upgrade four rural crossings in the transforming rail in Virginia along the 95 corridors. Director DeBruhl stated the agency received the full amount requested. She also informed the committee that the rail maps will be printed this summer and distributed across the Commonwealth. She stated the rail team will work with VDOT to get them into rest areas and development centers, as well as work with the VPRA.

The Chair then led the subcommittee through an informal round-robin to explore current ridership levels, commonwealth funding, and how VRE fits into the larger regional transportation and congestion program. The Subcommittee proposed questions on the status of the Long Bridge project. Chair DeBruhl informed the subcommittee that they would receive an executive summary update at a later date.

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

Presented by Zach Trogdon, Chief of Transportation, DRPT, and Adam Hager, Sr. Program Analyst, NVTC

Chair Debruhl introduced the I-395 Commuter Choice presentation by noting that the program uses revenue raised from users of the express lanes in Northern Virginia to fund transit and transportation improvements to move more people more efficiently through the corridors. Ms. Debruhl noted that NVTC scores and prioritizes the program of projects and that the CTB reviews them for concurrence and inclusion in the Six-year Improvement Program. Mr. Trogdon introduced Adam Hager, Commuter Choice Senior Program Analyst, to present a summary of the recommended projects for FY 2024-2025.

Mr. Hager stated that the recommendation from NVTC staff includes the award of \$48 million to 13 eligible projects. Three of these projects are capital improvement projects and the remainder are service improvements. Mr. Hager noted that the selection process included a public comment period during which 646 comments were submitted, the highest number ever. The next steps in the process if the CTB approves the SYIP with the recommended projects will be for NVTC to project execution and implementation. The Board did not identify any concerns with the projects and expressed appreciation to Mr. Hager for the presentation."

Best Practice Research – Rail Industrial Access Grant Program

Presented by Mike Todd, Rail Programs Director, DRPT

Michael Todd, Rail Programs Director, presented on the Rail Industrial Access (RIA) grant program. Including a discussion of national best practices research, major takeaways, and draft recommendations. Regarding research, desktop reviews and interviews were held with other states, railroads, Ports, and economic development authorities. Research topic areas included reasoning for committing resources to rail improvements, best practices for application, adoption and implementation of projects, and revenue structures. Some of the major takeaways included the need for transparency of program policies and procedures; an objective scoring process to compare diverse projects; ensuring projects further larger State goals; annually dedicated funding to improve program planning and consistency; and the rising costs of labor and materials that demand further investment.

Draft recommendations were looked on favorably by CTB members, and included:

- Targeted marketing to promote the program
- A rail toolkit to drive growing Virginia businesses toward the RIA program
- Creating a more transparent screening criteria checklist
- Update the objective matching funds scoring criteria to prioritize private matching funds
- Increase the per-project maximum funding from \$450,000 to \$750,000.

Members were specifically interested in the targeted marketing campaign and asked DRPT to present more details on the DRPT rail marketing plan to them at a later date.

Next Steps include the presentation of the updated guidance with recommendations to the Board in September Workshop meeting with Action taken in October.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair DeBruhl adjourned the meeting at 10:21 a.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at https://youtu.be/YUjMHzfGwuk

Respectfully Submitted: Sheila Beard, Executive Assistant











Director's Report

March 2024





DRPT Next Stop 2030



Next Stop: 2030 DRPT's Strategic Plan

- Create a positive impact on the Commonwealth: Provide support and solutions
 to positively impact the lives of Virginians, the economy, and the environment
- Foster innovative practical solutions: Challenge the status quo, creating solutions while sharing new ideas and innovative practices that contribute to better transportation outcomes
- Convene with partners and stakeholders: Bring 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: Deliver exceptional service with an engaged workforce that effectively manages public assets and promotes transparency

Create a positive impact on the Commonwealth

Improve access to reliable transportation.

- DRPT worked with the University of Virginia to move the Charlottesville Virginia Breeze bus stop
 to serve campus grounds. The move occurred February 17 and is anticipated to increase
 ridership along the Piedmont Express route.
- DRPT staff and partners are working to expand commuter service from Front Royal to DC, and to expand vanpools across the state.

Increase throughput of people and goods.

- Public transit in Virginia provided 116 million trips in calendar year 2023 24 million more than in calendar year 2022.
- Ridership across all agencies in December 2023 (including WMATA and VRE) was 20% higher year-over-year than December 2022.

Promote factors driving economic vitality and development.

The Commonwealth Railway Median Rail Project in Chesapeake and Suffolk completed its 15th (and final) year of performance, completing the Commonwealth's contingent interest. CWRY reported that 3 million containers used the line since 2008, nearly double the requirement outlined in the initial grant.

Foster innovative practical solutions

- Be the 'go-to' organization for best practices, technical assistance, and implementation of innovative transportation solutions.
 - DRPT is working with WMATA to develop WMATA's FY25 budget and business plan.
 - DRPT's Jen Monaco was nominated to Chair the WMATA Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee (JCC) for calendar year 2024. The JCC is comprised of staff from all WMATA member jurisdictions and provides input into WMATA financial, planning, and service initiatives.
- Foster a culture of innovation.
 - DRPT executed a federal grant that will be used to conduct a study for Petersburg Area Transit. The study will be a comprehensive review of PAT's transit system and identify ways public services can help areas emerge from lingering poverty.
- Align program and funding criteria to support practices to revolutionize transportation.
 - DRPT's Rail Planning team has convened a meeting with VDOT Section 130 team to discuss a joint prioritization plan for the Federal Highway Administration's Section 130 fund projects and Federal Railroad Administration Rail Crossing Elimination Program projects.

Convene with partners and stakeholders

- Collaborate proactively with partners and stakeholders.
 - The DRPT Rail Planning Team is coordinating with the MPOs in the I-81 and US Route 29
 Corridors to alert them to the FRA Long Distance Passenger Rail Study's opportunity for
 comment on Route Identification, which includes a route from New York to Houston that would
 link DC to Roanoke Amtrak service through southwest Virginia and Bristol to Chattanooga, TN
 and onto Atlanta. The comment period for Route Identification ended on March 8.
- Engage with partners and stakeholders at the right time to maximize DRPT's influence.
 - DRPT released an update to its State Management Plan (SMP) for public comment. The SMP is required to receive funding from the Federal Transit Administration and provides the policies and procedures DRPT follows to administer federal funding.

Cultivate a sustainable well-managed organization

- Promote DRPT's compelling story and valuable contribution with internal and external stakeholders.
 - DRPT is partnering with graduate students at VCU to develop a capstone project revolving around fare collection policies. The outcome of the project will be a series of items for agencies to consider around this issue.
- Enhance the customer experience through well-designed processes and systems.
 - DRPT has updated its Open Data Portal with a new SMART SCALE dashboard and more detailed analysis of performance metrics. The dashboard is required by state code. This new approach uses a lower cost software and in-house staff at a significant cost savings to the agency.
- Be good stewards of public resources.
 - DRPT is participating in workshops with the Federal Transit Administration in preparation for an upcoming State Management Review. The review evaluates DRPT's use of federal funding over the last three-year period.

Performance Measures



Statewide Transit Ridership



Statewide Ridership Comparison: December Year-to-Year

1.604.009

3,928,191

2,861,270

5,947,300

Transit ridership for Virginia agencies in December 2023 was 11% higher than December 2022.

Bus ridership was 11% higher

December 2023 ridership for Virginia agencies was 86% of pre-pandemic December 2019 levels.

Bus ridership was 84% of 2019 levels

VRE ridership in December 2023 was 12% higher than December 2022 and 32% of pre-pandemic December 2019 levels.

WMATA ridership in December 2023 was 27% higher than in December 2022.

- Bus ridership was 17% higher
- Heavy rail (Metro) was 31% higher

December 2023 WMATA ridership was 61% of pre-pandemic December 2019 levels.

Bus ridership was 84% of December 2019 levels

WMATA

All Agencies + VRE + WMATA

 Heavy rail (Metro) was 58% of December 2019 levels



3.979.130

7,469,704

5,072,553

8,932,688

77%

50%

27%

20%

216%

127%

Virginia Breeze Ridership - December

In December 2023, ridership on VA Breeze routes totaled 6,126 which was:

- 214% higher than original estimates, and
- 13% higher than December 2022

For the month of December 2023, the VA Breeze contributed to a reduction of 270 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions.

Valley Flyer:

- Ridership 8% higher than December 2022
- Farebox Rev. 7% higher than December 2022

Piedmont Express:

- Ridership 10% higher than December 2022
- Farebox Rev. 12% higher than December 2022

Capital Connector:

- Ridership 50% higher than December 2022
- Farebox Rev. 47% higher than December 2022

Highlands Rhythm:

- Ridership 9% higher than December 2022
- Farebox Rev 9% higher than December 2022

Virginia Breeze Ridership by Route – January 2023 to December 2023



Route	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Valley Flyer	2,187	1,793	3,269	2,351	2,248	1,627	1,586	2,166	2,562	3,407	3,975	3,058	30,229
Piedmont Express	402	278	656	483	664	468	446	469	486	521	907	887	6,667
Capital Connector	421	404	544	493	455	468	625	545	488	634	891	908	6,876
Highlands Rhythm	1,033	1,172	1,533	1,404	969	759	700	893	1,234	2,368	2,064	1,273	15,402
All Routes	4,043	3,647	6,002	4,731	4,336	3,322	3,357	4,073	4,770	6,930	7,837	6,126	59,174

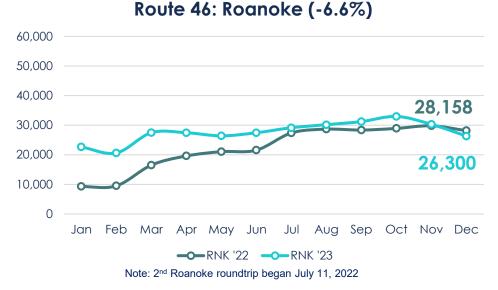
Amtrak Virginia Ridership (Virginia Passenger Rail Authority)

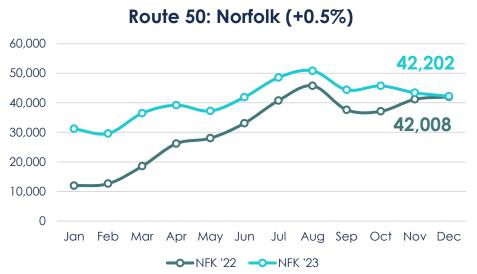


Virginia-Supported Monthly Ridership by Route 2023 vs 2022

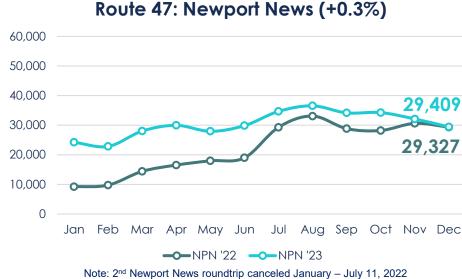
Four trains were canceled December 31st due to Northeast Corridor outages (2 RNK, 1 NFK, 1 RVM)

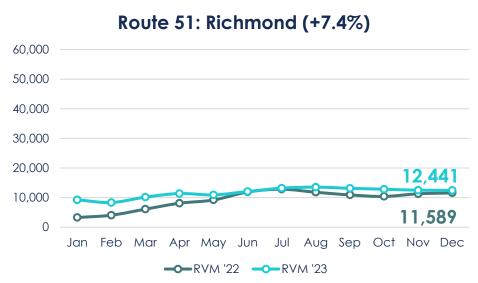
Three of the four routes saw ridership growth year over year.





Note: 3rd Norfolk roundtrip began July 11, 2022

















Transit Programs Funding Update

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee

Zach Trogdon – Chief of Public Transportation March 19, 2024





MERIT (Making Efficient Responsible Investments in Transit)

- The FY2025 cycle is the sixth year of the program (effective July 1, 2019)
- Centered on a prioritization/performance-based process for allocating Operating,
 Capital, and Special Programs funding to transit partners in the Commonwealth
- The funding flows from the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund as stipulated in 33.2-1526.1

FY25 - Available Transit Funding

- MERIT Operating: \$116.9M
- MERIT Capital: \$90.8M in state funds, \$22M in state controlled federal funds
- MERIT Special Programs: \$6.5M
 - Includes:
 - Technical Assistance
 - Demonstration Assistance
 - Workforce Development
 - Commuter Assistance Programs (CAP) Operating and Project Assistance
- Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP): \$41.7M
- FTA 5310 Enhanced Mobility: \$12.9M

MERIT—Operating Assistance

- State Operating allocations are performance-based and utilize the following metrics:
 - Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Hour
 - Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Mile
 - Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour
 - Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle Mile
 - Operating Cost per Passenger
- Projected FY25 operating revenue: \$116.9M
- Recipients may receive no more than 30% of eligible operating costs based on the most recently audited fiscal year

MERIT—Capital Assistance

- The Commonwealth Transportation Board has developed a Prioritization Process for capital projects to provide objective decision-making criteria
- Project categories:
 - State of Good Repair (SGR):
 - Based on transit asset management principles, including federal requirements for Transit Asset Management
 - Minor Enhancement:
 - Based on service impact factors (e.g., operating efficiency, frequency, reliability)
 - Major Expansion:
 - Based on:
 - Congestion mitigation
 - Economic development
 - Accessibility
 - Safety
 - Environmental quality
 - Land use

MERIT – Capital: State of Good Repair Scoring

Asset
Condition
Score
(up to 60
points)

Age (percent of useful life)
Mileage (vehicles only)

Service Impact Score (up to 40 points) Operating Efficiency (max 10 points)
Frequency, Travel Time, and/or Reliability (max 10 points)
Accessibility and/or Customer Experience (max 10 points)

Safety and security (max 10 points)

Score (up to 10 points)

Zero Emissions Technology Innovation Safety/Comfort Around Customer Facilities Agency Accountability State of
Good Repair
Technical
Score
(up to 110
points)

MERIT - Capital: Minor Enhancement Scoring

Service Impact Score (up to 40 points) **Operating Efficiency** (max 10 points)

Frequency, Travel Time, and/or Reliability (max 10 points)

Accessibility and/or Customer Experience (max 10 points)

Safety and security (max 10 points)

Score (up to 10 points)

Zero Emissions Technology Innovation Safety/Comfort Around Customer Facilities Agency Accountability Minor
Enhancement
Technical
Score
(up to 50 points)

MERIT – Capital: Major Expansion Scoring

Factor	Measure	Measure Weight	
Congestion Mitigation	Change in peak-period transit system ridership attributed to the project	100%	
Economic Development	Project consistency with regional and local economic development plans and policies, and support for local development activity	100%	
Accessibility	Project improvement in accessibility to jobs and select non-work destinations	50%	
	Disadvantaged population (low-income, minority, or limited English proficiency) within walking distance of project	50%	
Safety	Project contribution to improving safety and security, reducing risk of fatalities or injuries	100%	
Environmental Quality	Reduction in daily vehicle miles traveled resulting from project	100%	
Land Use	Transit supportive land use served by the project	100%	

FY25 MERIT— Capital Assistance

Capital Requests:

- 430 individually evaluated assets/projects
- \$113.8M in total state funding
- \$17.2M in total state controlled federal funding

Requests by Sub-Type:

Capital Sub-Type	Number	State Capital	State Controlled Federal
State of Good Repair (replacement assets)	299	\$68.9M	\$11.2M
Minor Enhancements (projects)	129	\$30.6M	\$4.1M
Major Expansions (projects)	2	\$14.3M	\$1.8M





FY25 MERIT - Special Programs

- Special Programs Requests:
 - 59 individually evaluated projects
 - \$15M in total state funding available
- Requests by Program Area:

Program Area	Number	State Special
Technical Assistance	25	\$3.6M
Demonstration Assistance	6	\$6.6M
Workforce Development	14	\$582k
Commuter Assistance Programs (CAP) - Operating	15	\$2.8M
Commuter Assistance Programs (CAP) – Project Assistance	13	\$1.9M

FY25 Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)

- The TRIP program was created under 33.2-1526.3 of the Code of Virginia, and includes 4 program areas
- TRIP Requests:
 - 31 individually evaluated projects
 - \$23.1M in total state funding available
- Requests by Program Area:

Program Area	Number	TRIP
Regional Connectivity	3	\$3.3M
Fare-Free/ Subsidized Fares	1	\$3.6M
Passenger Amenities	24	\$15.8M
Public Safety and Crime Prevention	3	\$413k





FY25 MERIT – FTA 5310 Enhanced Mobility

- FTA 5310 Enhanced Mobility Requests
 - 51 individually evaluated projects
 - \$9.3M in total state controlled federal funding available
- Requests by Program Area:

Program Area	Number	State Special
Capital Vehicles	23	\$3.9M
Capital – Other	12	\$3.4M
Operating	16	\$1.9M

Next Steps

- DRPT staff finalize scoring, prioritization, and review of eligible projects to determine those that will be included in the draft SYIP
- The draft FY25-FY30 SYIP presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board at its April 2024 workshop meeting.
- The draft FY25-FY30 SYIP released for public review and DRPT staff participate in public hearings around the Commonwealth.
- Changes to the draft SYIP pursuant to feedback from the public or otherwise are finalized and the FY25-FY30 SYIP presented for approval at the June 2024 meeting of the CTB.

Thank you!













FY25 Rail Applications

Summary Update

Emily Stock | Chief of Rail March 19, 2024







Agenda

- Rail Program Overview
- Rail Application Dashboard

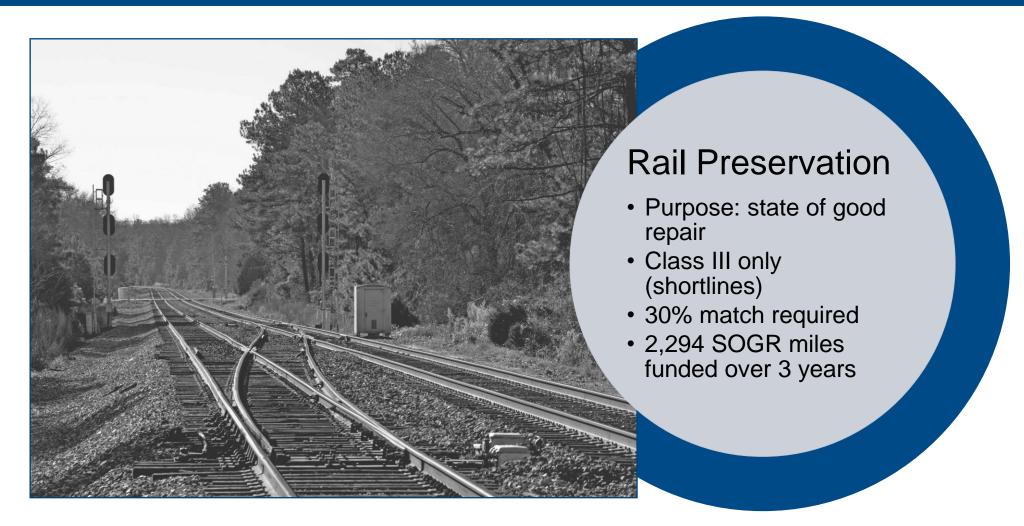
Rail Program Overview



FREIGHT

- Purpose: increase network capacity
- BCA, 30% design required
- FY23-25 grants:
- 33% avg. match
- 440k carload commitment (equivalent to 1.5M Trucks)

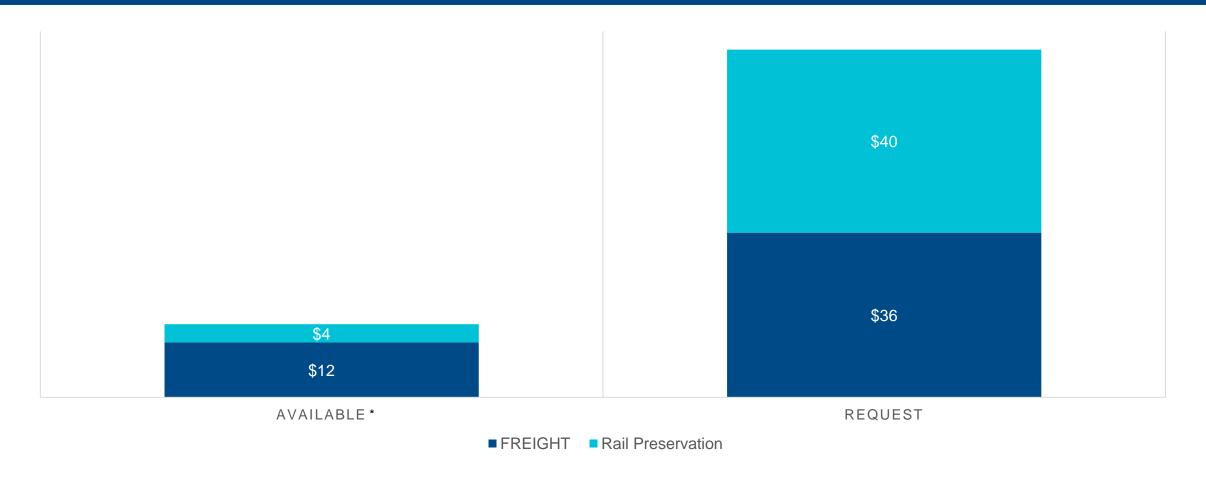
Rail Program Overview



FY25 Rail Application Dashboard

Dashboard Location Count Cost Legend \$39.4M Rail Program FREIGHT \$75.8M Rail Preservation \$36.4M ■ FREIGHT ■ Rail Preservation Match Applicant Match \$40M 30% \$30M \$20M 91% 70% \$10M **FREIGHT** Rail Preservation Hampton Roads Inset

Available vs Request FY25



^{*} Up to \$4M of FREIGHT funds can be shifted to Rail Preservation projects per year. Total funding across both programs remains \$16M.

Thank You













Virginia Breeze

I-64 Corridor East-West Route

Avery Daugherty, Statewide Transit Programs Manager Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation







Overview



Launched in 2017 to connect underserved rural communities to national bus network and other transportation modes



Operates 365 days a year on four routes connecting cities through Western and Central Virginia to Washington, D.C.



Funded through Federal Transit Administration's Intercity Bus Program, ticket sales, and I-81 improvement funding from VDOT

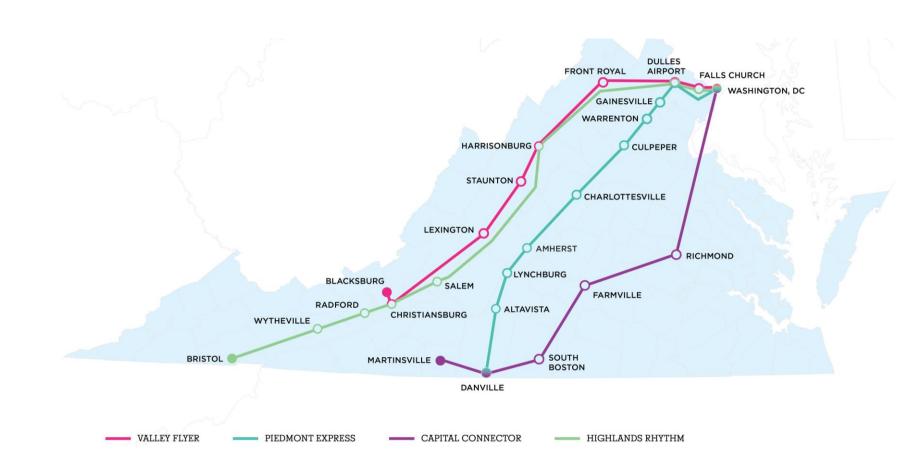


Dillon's Bus Service is contracted by DRPT to operate the service and provides drivers, vehicles, and maintenance

What Qualifies As Intercity Bus Service



Existing Virginia Breeze Service





Intercity Bus Needs Assessments

The Federal Transit Administration requires states to regularly analyze whether intercity bus needs have been met.

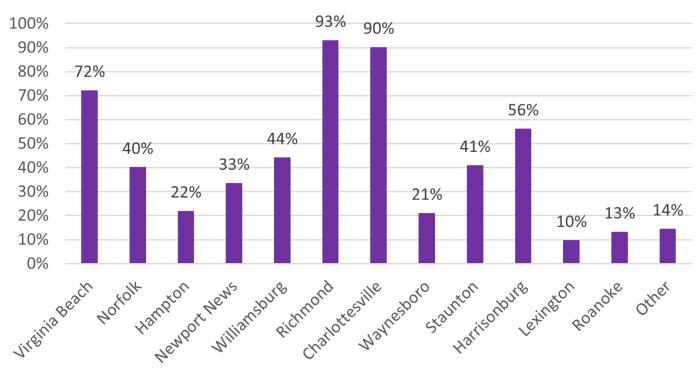
I-64 Intercity Bus Needs Assessment



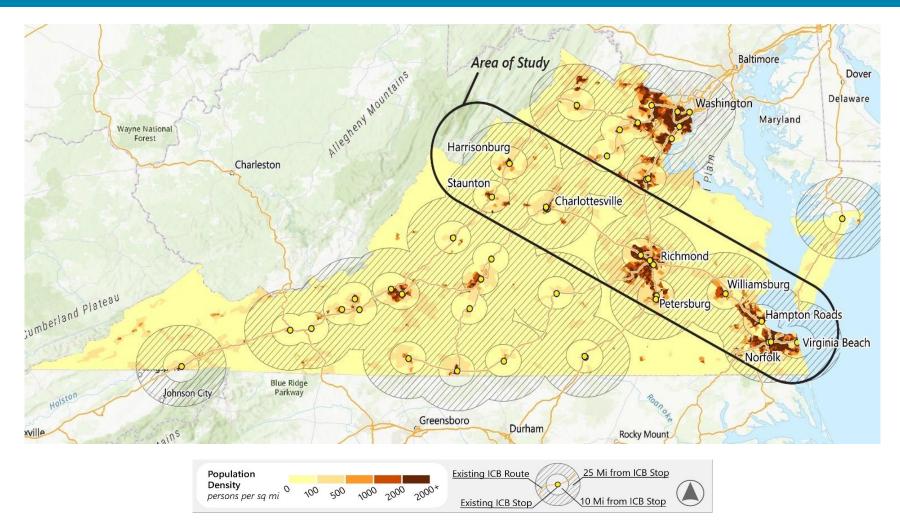
Stakeholder Engagement

- Virginia Breeze General Public Survey
 - Asked where the public would like to see the Virginia Breeze expand
- Stakeholder Survey and Meetings
 - 100% of respondents stated a need for East-West service.
 - 61% of respondents stated that it would be ideal having two round trips per day.

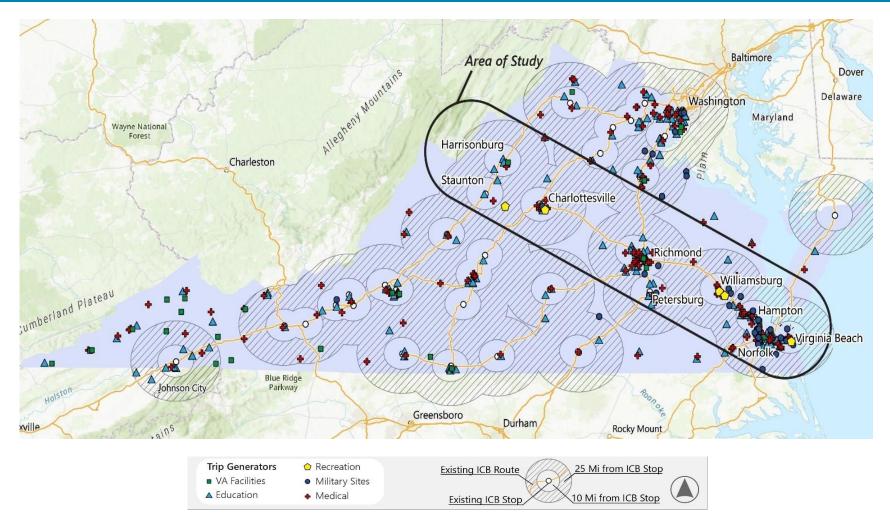
Highest Priority Stop Locations



Population Density



Areas of Interest



Alternatives Considered



Alternative #1

Virginia Beach - Norfolk - Newport News - Williamsburg - New Kent - Richmond International Airport - Richmond Main St. - Charlottesville - Crozet - Waynesboro - Staunton - Harrisonburg

Estimated Annual Ridership: 18,250

Annual Net Cost to Operate (Projected): \$506,010



Alternative #2

Virginia Beach - Norfolk - Suffolk - Petersburg - Richmond Main St. - Richmond Staples Mill - Charlottesville - Crozet - Waynesboro - Staunton - Harrisonburg

Estimated Annual Ridership: 16,060

Annual Net Cost to Operate (Projected): \$572,701



Next Steps

Funding for the new service will be programmed in the FY25 SYIP

Combination of federal funding and TRIP funding

Apr. 2024

Begin procurement for the new I-64 Virginia Breeze route

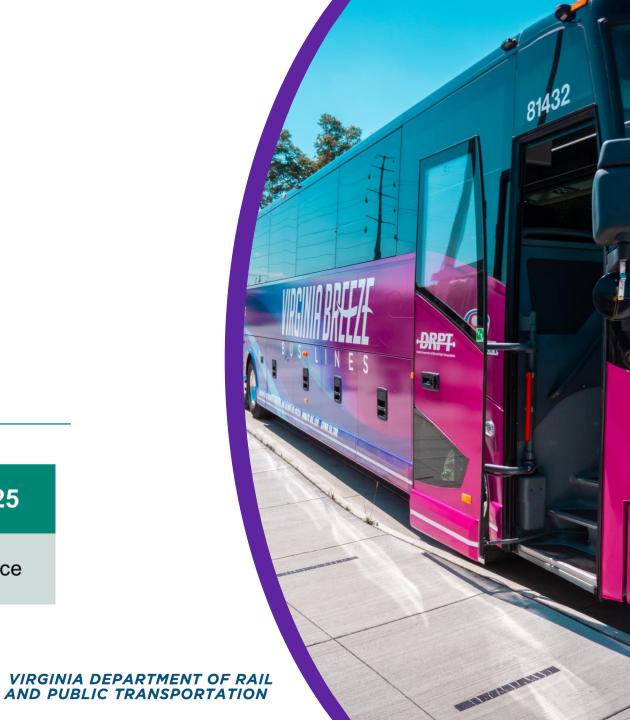
Aug. 2024

May 2024

Identify and announce the preferred route alternative

Summer 2025

Launch new service





Questions?

Avery Daugherty

Avery.Daugherty@drpt.virginia.gov