

INTERCITY BUS AND RAIL TRAVEL STUDY

Overview

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TPB Technical Committee
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National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Why Study Intercity Travel?



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- Economic impact due to tourism and business travel.
- Potential use overlap with commuter transit.
- Supports equity due to affordability and access to long-distance travel options.
- Offers travel options for rural and small urban areas.
- Federal requirements for MPO regional planning.



TPB 2016 Intercity Bus Travel Study

In response to new federal requirements, TPB studied intercity bus passenger traffic in 2016.

Key findings:

- Union Station was the dominant boarding/alighting point.
- Most trips are to or from the NYC area.
- Fridays were the busiest travel day by bus.

INTERCITY BUS TRAFFIC AND PATRONAGE IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGION

An intercity bus patronage count conducted in the fall of 2016 at 14 locations in Washington, D.C. and suburban jurisdictions of Maryland and Virginia

January 2017



June 2023 TPB Presentation

Collected updated information on intercity bus and rail operations in the NCR:

- Online news articles, social media posts, and other open-source data were reviewed.
- Amtrak service schedules were reviewed for intercity rail.



October 2023 TPB Work Session

Work session held prior to the day's TPB meeting with a panel of travel experts from across the region.

- A. **TRANSFORMING RAIL IN VIRGINIA**, *DJ Stadtler, CEO, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*
- B. **INTERCITY TRAVEL IN MARYLAND**, *Travis Johnston, Director of Local Transit Support, Maryland DOT-Maryland Transit Administration*
- C. **INTERCITY BUS**, *Brandon Buchanan, Director of Regulatory Affairs, American Bus Association*
- D. **AMTRAK**, *Jeffrey Ensor, Senior Director of Portfolio Management - NEC South End, Amtrak*
- E. **UNION STATION**, *Doug Carr, President & CEO, Union Station Redevelopment Corporation*

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2023/10/18/intercity-rail-and-bus-travel-work-session/>



FY 2024 UPWP Scope: Intercity Travel Study

- Tasks 3.7 and 7.1 of TPB's FY 2024 UPWP include a complete update to the 2016 intercity travel count
- Joint project between Systems Performance Planning and Transportation Research and Data teams
- From FY 2024 UPWP Task 7.1: “... conduct a regional survey gathering usage information on intercity buses, commuter buses, rail transit, and commuter rail ... to advise regional planning and coordination”

D.C. Greyhound Station – Union Station (Pierre Gaunard/COG)



Draft Scope of Work

A consultant (or team) will be asked to:

- Expand on previous work to also include intercity passenger rail, i.e., Amtrak, and commuter rail, as well as private bus services and bus services that are publicly funded and/or operated under public contract.
- Collect intercity travel data and information, to include ridership, intercity trips by time of day and day of week, station and stop locations, traveler demographics, traveler origins and destinations (inc. jurisdiction/zip code of residence), traveler trip purpose (e.g., business or tourism), and traveler modes of access.
- Prepare a draft and final report on the information collected, as well as a webmap with geographic data.



Next Steps and Schedule

- TPB staff will work with the consulting team to finalize the study scope of work. Anticipate issuing Notice To Proceed in late February.
- First outreach to regional members possibly in April to schedule May consultations on jurisdictional plans, challenges, and desired outcomes for intercity travel.
- Objective is to complete work by the end of calendar year 2024, which will enable incorporation of appropriate information into the Visualize 2050 regional transportation plan.



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