

# 2020 STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REPORT

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Transportation Planner

**Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee**  
July 27, 2021



# Presentation Items

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- Purpose
- Sections of the 2020 SOPT Report
- 2019 National Transit Database (NTD) Data
- Highlights from 2020



# Purpose

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- The purpose of the report is to provide a snapshot of public transportation activities in the region
- The report includes transit ridership and financial data, however the focus is on recent accomplishments and upcoming activities
- Data comes from the 2019 National Transit Database, which was released October 2020
- Accomplishments, plans, and studies come from past TPB RPTS meetings / input from organizational representatives



# Sections of the SOPTR

## Part I: COVID-19's Impact on Public Transportation

- Overview of health, safety impacts and responses from service providers and ridership levels through end of 2020.

## Part II: Fixed Route Transit Services

- Profile sheets provide overview of ridership, operational expenses, revenue sources, recent accomplishments and system characteristics.

## Part III: Other Public Transit Services

- Overview of additional transit services such as paratransit and commuter services and their recent accomplishments.

## Part IV: Regional Public Transportation Organizations

- Information on organizations that operate, provide research or project development for public transportation

## Part V: Public Transportation Accomplishments

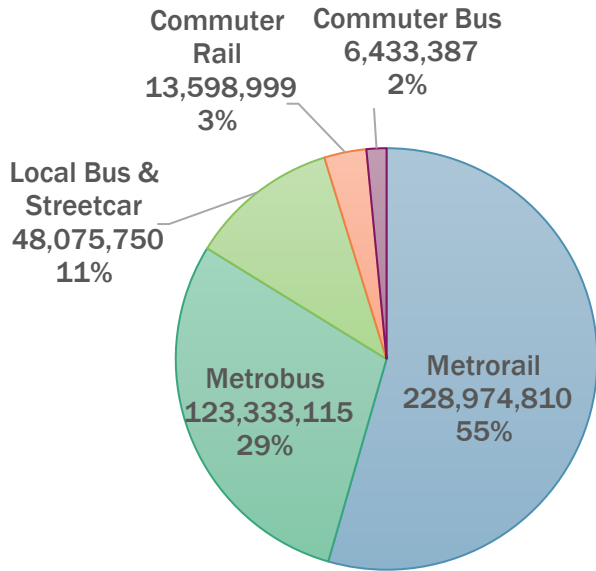
- Major studies planned, in progress or completed and significant operational achievements occurring during CY 2020 by service provider.

## Part VI: Transportation Planning Board

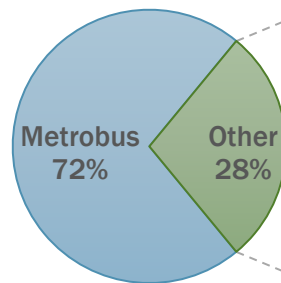
- Overview of how the TPB assists with regional public transportation including RPTS, PBPP and Visualize 2045.



# 2019 NTD Data NCR Overview



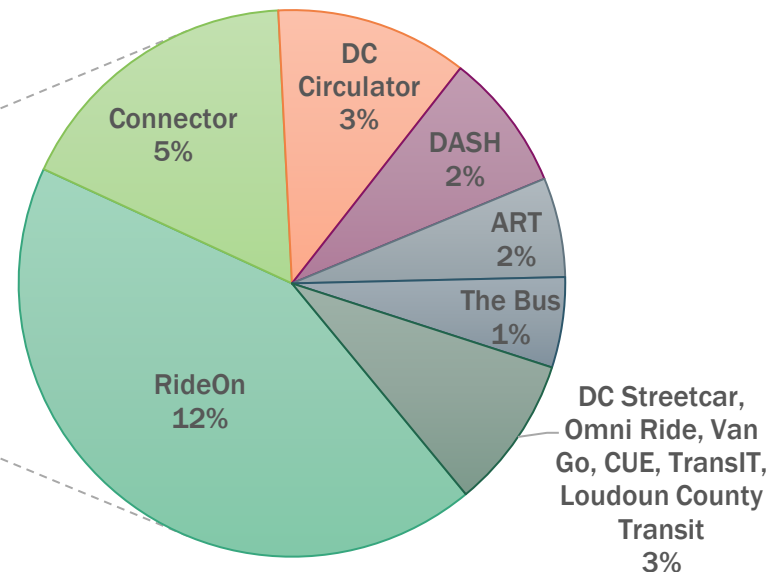
- 30% of bus trips occurred on local bus



- Over **420 MILLION UNLINKED PASSENGER TRIPS** in 2019\*

\*MARC and MTA Commuter Bus imputed for NCR

- **OVER 40%** of trips in the region occurred by **BUS**



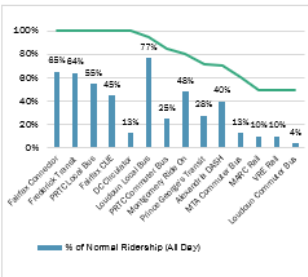
# Review of the 2020 SOPTR

## PART I - COVID-19 & IMPACTS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

### Overview

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout 2020 local transit services in the National Capital Region were faced with new pressures operationally, socially and politically to adapt to a new normal of decreasing ridership, peak travel demand and related fare revenue losses as a result of stay-at-home orders and work from home policies implemented and expanded across many employers. Simultaneously, service providers quickly adapted to the new public health protocols mandated across all levels of government, to protect the health and safety of riders and operators. Through these new pressures, many of our local service providers quickly shifted priorities and service levels to balance short- and long-term needs while finding innovative new ways to ensure the region's transportation networks remain operational for the transit dependent workers unable to telework. A few measures taken by local service providers across 2020 included suspending fare collection and enabling or requiring rear-door boarding, implementing social distancing requirements on vehicles, installing physical barriers between riders and operators, and increasing cleaning frequencies of fleets to reduce or prevent the spread of the virus. More detailed policies and strategies can be found below for each service provider in the region.

Figure 3 - Percentages of Normal Transit Ridership and Service Levels Reported by Selected Transit Providers As of December 1, 2020



Source: SOPTR Questionnaire and online review of service providers' COVID-19 policies.

Figure 4 - Overview of COVID-19 responses by Service Provider in the NCR

AGENCY	SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS	REDUCED SERVICE	SUSPENDED FARE COLLECTION	REAR DOOR BOARDING	INCREASED PASSENGER COMMUNICATIONS	OPERATOR BARRIERS
WMATA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DASH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DDOT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CUE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Connector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Frederick County	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VanGO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ride On	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Bus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PRTC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VRE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>36%</b>

Source: SOPTR Questionnaire and online review of service providers' COVID-19 policies.

## PART VI: TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD ACTIVITIES

### PART V - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS MAJOR STUDIES COMPLETED AND LIST OF STUDIES IN PROGRESS

### PART IV - REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS

### PART III - OTHER PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES - OVERVIEW

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF

### PART II - FIXED ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES PROFILE SHEETS

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA) METROBUS  
<https://www.wmata.com>



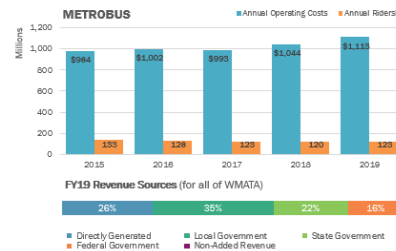
Overview  
Metrobus provides more than 400,000 trips each weekday serving 11,500 bus stops in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Metrobus is the sixth busiest bus agency in the United States, with a fleet of more than 1,500 buses.

#### Recent Accomplishments

- Newly updated Metrobus Service Guidelines create a clear and formalized approach to service and budget decisions, assist in the provision of more equitable service, incorporate customer experiences, and align Metrobus with peers locally and nationally. The service guidelines were the first recommendation from the Bus Transformation Project.
- Worked closely with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) on a number of bus priority projects, including the expansion of bus priority lanes (red painted lanes), testing of Transit Signal Prioritization (TSP) software with the District, and advanced TSP implementation programs. The agency also identified additional bus Queue Jump locations for the District and agreed to coordinate a deployment schedule.

System Characteristics  
Vehicle Fleet: 1558 Buses, 319 Routes, 14 Maintenance Facilities  
Service Type: Fixed Route

#### Provider Data



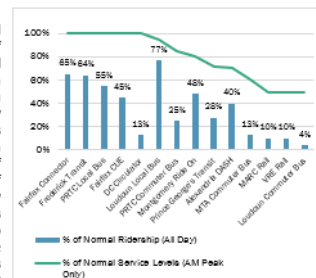
# Highlights: Part I – COVID-19 & Transit

## PART I – COVID-19 & IMPACTS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

### Overview

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout 2020 local transit services in the National Capital Region were faced with new pressures operationally, financially and politically to adapt to a new normal of decreasing ridership, loss of peak travel demand and related fare revenue losses as a result of stay-at-home orders and work from home policies implemented across many employers. Simultaneously, service providers quickly adapted to the new public health protocols mandated across levels of government, to protect the health and safety of riders and operators. Through these new pressures, many of our local service providers quickly shifted priorities and service levels to balance short- and long-term needs while finding innovative ways to ensure the region's transportation networks remain operational for our transit dependent workers unable to telework. A few measures taken by local service providers across 2020 included suspension of fare collection and allowed or mandated rear-door boarding, implementation of social distancing requirements on vehicles, installation of physical barriers between riders and operators, and increased cleaning frequencies of fleets to reduce or prevent the spread of the virus. More detailed policies and strategies can be found below for each service provider in the region.

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Source: SOPTR Questionnaire and online review of service providers' COVID-19 policies.

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Mar – Aug 2020, Metro implemented A/B Scheduling for operators and maintenance personnel
- Mar 29, Ride On implemented Essential Service Plan
- Ride On expanded Call-n-Ride service to allow taxis to deliver essential goods

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Source: SOPTR Questionnaire & review of service providers' COVID-19 policies.



# Highlights: Part II – Profile Sheets

## PART II - FIXED ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES PROFILE SHEETS

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### Overview

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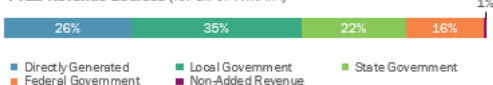
### System Characteristics

Vehicle Fleet: 1558 Buses, 319 Routes, 14 Maintenance Facilities  
 Service Type: Fixed Route

### Provider Data



FY19 Revenue Sources (for all of WMATA)



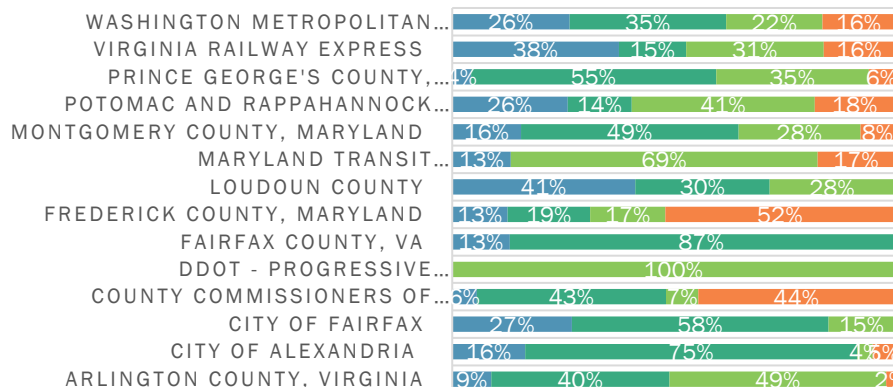
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## HIGHLIGHTS

- App / App integration improvements
- New Routes & Service Changes
- Capital Improvements
- Electric Buses

## NCR TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDERS' FY19 REVENUE SOURCES

Legend: Directly Generated (Blue), Local Government (Green), State Government (Light Green), Federal Government (Orange)





# Sample of Part III – Other Public Transit

## PART III - OTHER PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES - OVERVIEW

### WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA) METROACCESS

#### Overview

MetroAccess is a shared ride, door-to-door transportation service for people with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route public transit. MetroAccess is the fifth largest paratransit service in the country, transporting approximately 2.2 million passengers annually. Service is provided to locations in Fairfax, Arlington, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties; the District; and the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church, and Alexandria that are located within ¾ mile of a Metrobus or Metrorail line.

The Abilities-Ride program offers MetroAccess customers a new, more flexible option for travel within Maryland. Metro has partnered with Regency Taxi and Silver Cab to provide on-demand discounted taxi services.

#### Recent Accomplishments

In concurrence with the WMATA IG MetroAccess Report, WMATA has committed to continuing to monitor trip length performance to comply with ADA allowable fixed route equivalent (FRE) time and identify potential scheduling / routing issues. Additional commitments include updating MetroAccess' Performance Report to reflect On-Time Pick-up and including FRE compliance, soliciting Real Time Traffic (RTT) service for MetroAccess use in scheduling (testing of RTT service is expected to complete by the end of Fall 2021), and continuing to provide regular updates to the accessibility advisory committee and members of the disability community at-large of updates to MetroAccess service improvements.

### FASTRAN

#### Overview

Fastran is a specialized transportation service for residents of Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church that offers lift-equipped, door-to-door service for people whose disability or special need prevents them from using public transportation to get to county-sponsored programs and services. All Fastran riders must be certified by a sponsoring Human Services agency:

- Critical Medical Care: Transportation for Fairfax County residents who must undergo life sustaining treatments including dialysis, radiology, chemotherapy, brain injury therapy, physical therapy and water therapy. Transportation service under this program is not guaranteed but is provided on a space available basis.
- Adult Day Health Care - Transportation to and from adult day health care centers.
- Community Services Board - Transportation to and from support services and worksites related to intellectual disability, mental health and the Recovery Women's Center.
- Senior Centers - Transportation to and from Fairfax County Senior Centers. Service is arranged through centers only.
- Senior Residences - Transportation for twice-a-month grocery shopping trips and a trip to the mall every other month for residents of 18 senior residence developments. Trips scheduled by sites.
- Therapeutic Recreation Services - Transportation to and from outings and structured recreational activities for individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities.

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Specialized Transit for Arlington Residents (STAR) 'Stuff the Bus' Event
- First batch of MARC overhauled railcars revenue service in second half of 2020
- RTA introduced free transfers and fare capping across its system.



# Sample of Part IV – Regional Orgs

## PART IV - REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS

### NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (NVTC)

#### Overview

NVTC advances a robust and reliable public transit network to support communities in Northern Virginia. As the voice of transit in Northern Virginia, NVTC brings the region together to plan, coordinate, and secure funding for transit systems that are financially sustainable and high performing. The agency serves as a regional forum for discussion and analysis of transit issues that are critically important to Northern Virginia's economy and quality of life. NVTC's efforts include:

- Serve as a regional hub for coordination of transit services
- Fund and provide oversight for metro and appoint board members
- Provide expertise on transit systems, ridership and advanced fare collection
- Jointly own Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
- Provide leadership on legislative and policy issues
- Manage state and regional funding for six bus systems
- Administer the Commuter Choice program
- Provide Northern Virginia focused transit research and technical expertise

#### Recent Accomplishments

##### METRO POLICY & GOVERNANCE

NVTC delivered the third annual *Report on the Performance and Condition of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)* to the Virginia General Assembly. NVTC continues to press Metro to encourage riders to return to the system, align service to demand and work closely with our Northern

Virginia transit operators to improve the efficiency of the bus transit network, all through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic and the systemic challenges that will linger in the years ahead. The report also presents the last annual set of performance and condition data prior to the stay-at-home orders issued in the region and travel changes stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

NVTC authored a new *Report on Virginia's 3% Cap on the Growth in Operating Assistance Payments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)*. The report examines Virginia's operating subsidy payments to Metro to identify and differentiate the true drivers of past and present operating subsidy increases from assumed cost drivers. The report also acknowledges the impact of Metro's implementation of the cap on Virginia's subsidy payments and the role of NVTC jurisdictions in funding Metro. Since the cap has only been in place for two Metro budget cycles, the report concludes that the existing cap appears to be a useful tool to manage the growth in Virginia's operating assistance payments to Metro.

##### Commuter Choice

NVTC's innovative Commuter Choice program reinvests toll revenues from I-66 Inside the Beltway and the 95 and 395 Express Lanes in Northern Virginia into transportation projects that move more people and foster effective multimodal improvements in these corridors. Commuter Choice supports transit service expansions and capital improvements, access to transit improvements, roadway enhancements, commuter incentives and other strategies that benefit toll payers and contribute to these goals. Tolls provide the revenue necessary to fund new projects well into the future.

NVTC has awarded a total of \$64 million to 43 projects in the two corridors since 2017. Most

## HIGHLIGHTS

- NVTC 2020 Updates to Northern Virginia Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan
- NVTA FY20-25 Six-Year Program & CMAQ/RSTP Allocations
- I-495 American Legion Bridge TDM Study (DRPT / MDOT MTA)



# Sample of Part V – Major Accomplishments

## PART V - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### MAJOR STUDIES COMPLETED AND LIST OF STUDIES IN PROGRESS

#### Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

As the region's major transit system, WMATA regularly conducts a number of important studies to improve and expand public transportation.

#### BLUE/ORANGE/SILVER LINE CORRIDOR RELIABILITY AND CAPACITY STUDY

Metro continues to advance the Blue/Orange/Silver Line Corridor Reliability and Capacity Study: an Alternatives Analysis of potential options for expanding capacity, improving reliability, and increasing operational flexibility within the rail corridor shared by the Blue, Orange, and Silver Metrorail lines. The goal of the alternatives analysis is to identify infrastructure and operational improvements that maintain quality service and meet riders' short and long-term transit needs along the corridor. Four Metrorail alternatives and a Lower Capital Cost alternative are being evaluated as part of the project's Cost-Benefit Analysis. A preferred alternative will be selected based on the comparative analysis of these alternatives as well as public and stakeholder input.

#### DASH

##### ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT VISION PLAN

The Transit Vision Plan was adopted in December 2019 and includes redesigned bus networks (New DASH Network) for 2022 & 2030. New bus service as proposed in the plan will begin in Fall 2021.

##### ALEXANDRIA MOBILITY PLAN (AMP)

The ongoing AMP will update Alexandria's Transportation Master Plan is scheduled to be completed in 2021.

##### DASH ZERO EMISSION FLEET FEASIBILITY REVIEW

Completed in 2020

##### ZERO EMISSION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Scheduled for Completion in 2021

##### ALEXANDRIA LOW-INCOME FARE PASS ASSESSMENT

The study reviewed the feasibility and mechanics of a fare program to benefit low-income riders on the DASH bus system. The scenarios were analyzed: free fares for all (resulting in an estimated +23.2% in ridership), free fares for low-income passengers (+5.7%), and subsidized fares for low income passengers (+3.4%). The study was funded by MWCOG's Transportation Land-Use Connections Grant program and completed in Spring of 2021.

##### FY21-26 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP)

The latest iteration of the TDP was adopted by the ATC Board of Directors in May 2020 and includes several minor service change proposals for FY2021.

##### DC Circulator

##### BUS PRIORITY TOOLBOX

The DDOT Bus Priority Program is working to streamline delivery of projects that improve bus service in the District, with a goal of faster delivery timelines and improved coordination. To support those efforts, DDOT developed a Toolbox of potential bus priority treatments that can be consistently applied to future efforts to improve the speed and reliability of bus service or create safer interactions with other modes.

##### BUS PRIORITY PLAN

The Bus Priority Plan will outline the development of DDOT's bus priority network, a corridor analysis, and project prioritization. Internal technical work took place in 2020. A draft plan document is anticipated for public comment in 2021.

##### CUE

##### DRAFT BUS STOP DESIGN GUIDELINES & FEASIBILITY STUDY

## HIGHLIGHTS OF STUDIES

- Alexandria DASH's FY21-26 TDP Adopted
- Prince George's County TheBus service changes & Microtransit TLC Grant
- Fairfax Connector began operating two new routes in 2020 and modified existing routes improving on-time performance, service span and to meet rider demand.



# Sample of Part VI – TPB Activities

## PART VI: TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD ACTIVITIES

### TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE (RPTS)

The subcommittee was formed by resolution of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on January 17, 2007 as the Regional Bus Subcommittee. Its mission was to provide a permanent process for the coordination of bus planning throughout the Washington region, and for incorporating regional bus plans into the long-range transportation plan. The subcommittee reports to the TPB Technical Committee of jurisdictional staff on issues and interests of the region's public transportation providers.

In response to MAP-21 and the requirement for increased representation of public transportation on metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), the TPB passed a resolution in September 2014 declaring itself in compliance with MAP-21, but also calling for further dialogue and the reconstitution of the TPB's Regional Bus Subcommittee as the Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee (RPTS) to include all regional providers of public transportation. The mission, goals and membership of the reconstituted subcommittee were approved by the TPB Technical Committee, and an annual "State of Public Transportation" report was to be developed to communicate public transportation provider interests to the TPB.

Membership of the Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee includes representatives from all transit operators in the region as well as the departments of transportation and other regional transportation agencies. Private providers are encouraged to use the forum of the Subcommittee to highlight their strategic transportation needs with the TPB. The

Subcommittee coordinates with and engages the public transportation services in the region.

Issues discussed at RPTS Meetings in 2020 include:

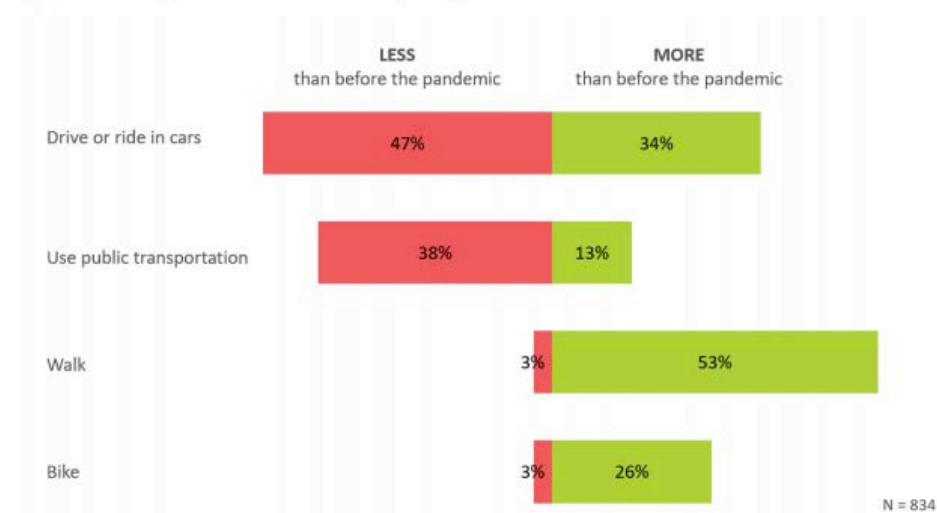
- **Test** Service Planning Modeling for Alexandria and Fairfax, WMATA Ridership Data Portal
- MDP: Transit Station Area Profile Tool, Montgomery County Flex Service...Book & Go! Service Evaluation, Expansions & Ridership Growth, 2020 Spring Street Smart Campaign
- MARC/VRE Run Through Service Market Assessment Update, Transit Oriented Communities
- Roundtable Discussion: Covid-19 and Regional Public Transportation
- Update on The District's DC Neighborhood Connect Program, Update on Montgomery County's Flex Transit Services
- Update on TLC program / TAFAs, Update on regional info gathering regarding transit operations
- Update on the District's bus priority projects, Bus priority best practices synthesis for NCR, Alexandria TSP update.
- Maryland Statewide Transit Plan, Regional Transit UPWP Technical Assistance Update
- Presentation by Via on services, Updated on Flash BRT

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Visualize2045 In Progress / Voice of the Region Survey kicked off

Figure 5: Travel Expectations after the Pandemic (S1Q11)



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National Capital Region  
**Transportation Planning Board**