

STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 2022 REPORT

An overview of public transportation in the National Capital Region

November 2023



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION | 2022 REPORT

Prepared for the TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee

November 2023

ABOUT THE TPB

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for metropolitan Washington. It is responsible for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in the metropolitan area. Members of the TPB include representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia, 24 local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and nonvoting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies. The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

CREDITS

Editors: Pierre Gaunaud (TPB), Eric Randall (TPB)

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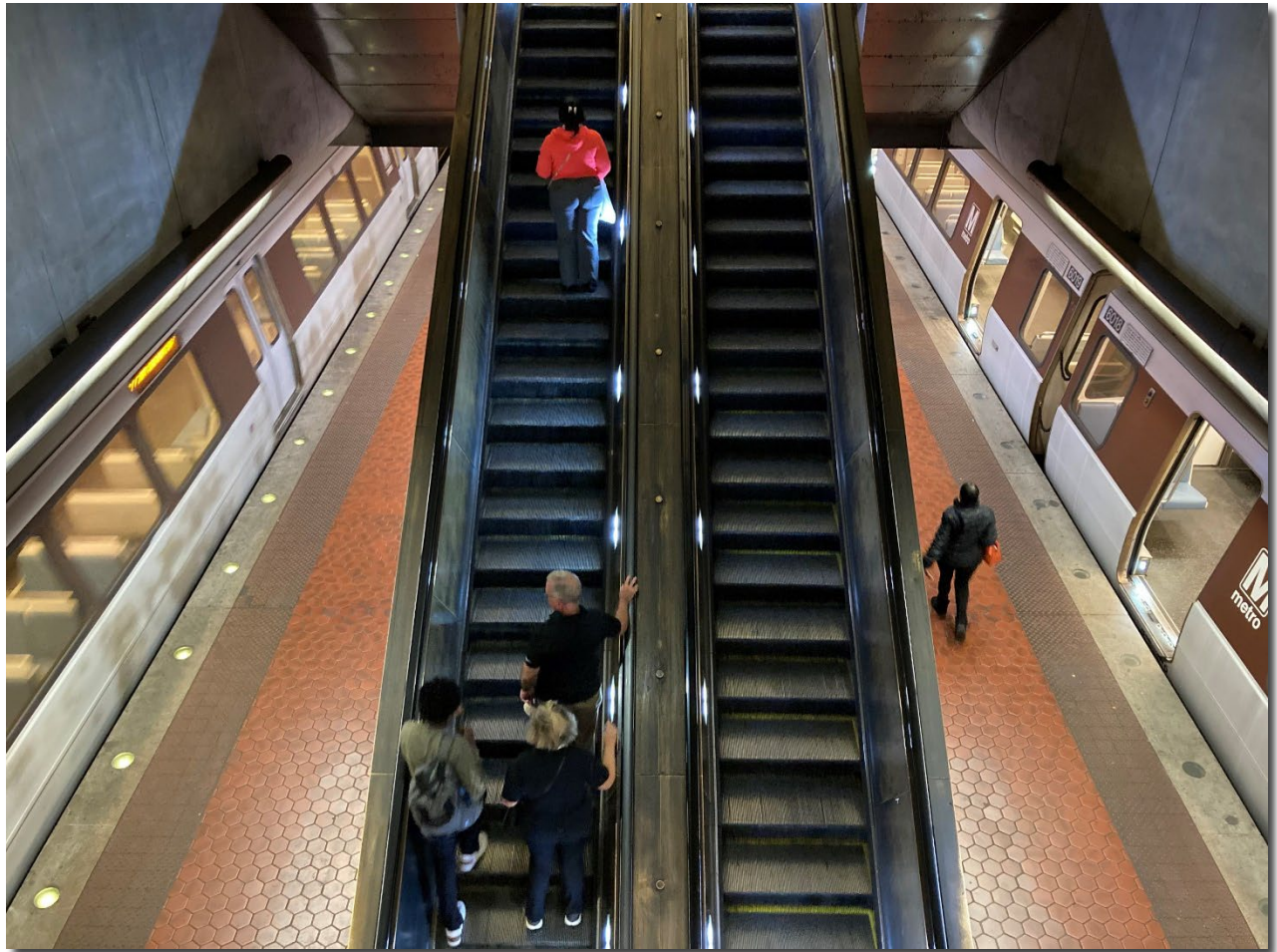
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PART 1 - SUMMARY

This section provides a general summary of the state of public transportation operations within the National Capital Region in 2022.



Passengers at the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station in Washington, D.C. (Pierre Gaunard/TPB)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a concise overview of the state of regional public transportation in the National Capital Region (NCR) in calendar year 2022. The report first provides a summary of data, followed by a profile for each fixed-route service provider in the region, as well as other providers, and then summarizes accomplishments and other activities that took place in public transportation across the region, including at the TPB.

SUMMARY

Public transportation is a vital component to improving livability, environmental and economic quality of life for the region. Impacts include providing access to jobs, goods, and services for millions of residents, allowing more vibrant and meaningful social interaction during daily travel, serving as an alternative to single-occupancy vehicles, reducing congestion, and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions. Within the TPB region, riders continued to return to public transportation in 2022 after the blanket disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the habits and routines of customers continued to change, many agencies expanded their services and adopted new fare policies to increase demand and help financially strained customers.

In 2022, more than 6.6% of commuters used public transportation within the region.¹ Of those using public transportation, approximately 40% of commuters rode bus transit, whereas 55% took the Metro according to Census Bureau estimates.² However, 2021 data reported in the National Transit Database (NTD) showed that 65% of unlinked passenger trips in the region are by bus, making that the primary form of public transportation.³ In total, the NTD reported that in 2021 there were almost 113 million unlinked passenger trips on public transportation across the region, approximately 65% less than in 2020 due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.⁴

Three primary modes of public transportation operate in the region: rail, bus, and paratransit.

Rail

Rail offers high-capacity, high quality transit along major corridors. The region's major public transportation provider, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), operates Metrorail, which is historically the backbone of the region's transit system but is recovering from significant decreases in ridership due to pandemic related changes in travel behavior. In 2022, Phase 2 of the Metrorail Silver Line extension opened to riders, adding 11.4 miles of track and six stations with heavy rail connections to Washington Dulles International Airport and Loudoun County, VA. MARC and VRE operate commuter rail for Maryland and Virginia respectively and bring travelers from more distant communities to employment centers in the downtown core. The region's rail network will expand further when the Purple Line light rail in Maryland is completed (expected 2027). In addition, there is a short segment of streetcar in the District of Columbia.

Bus

Bus provides access across the NCR and carries 67% of all transit trips. Thirteen bus transit operators form a regional network and continue to be the primary means of public transportation for most travelers, as well as connecting many passengers to rail stations to

continue their trips. The region’s transportation network is supplemented by longer-distance commuter buses, which offer a variety of services like bus to rail connections. Local and regional bus operators take advantage of bus rapid transit and other bus priority strategies expanding across the region to improve service efficiency and frequency.

Paratransit

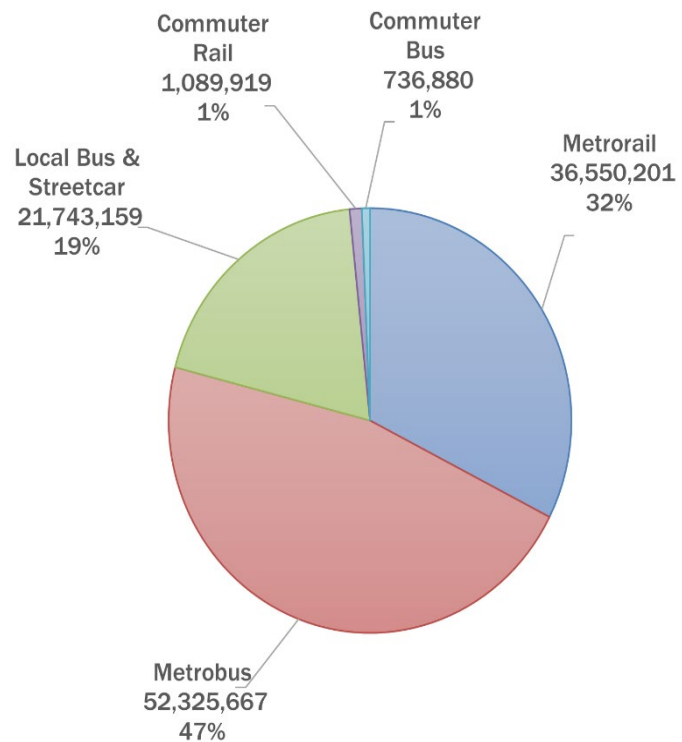
Paratransit supplements bus and rail fixed-route service by offering on-demand or shuttle services for customers with disabilities or qualifying individuals facing a difficulty reaching fixed route service. MetroAccess is the largest paratransit operator and provides most service in D.C. and Maryland, while several Virginia jurisdictions operate their own local services. Paratransit providers must meet certain operating requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Other modes and providers of public transportation

Beyond the services operated by government agencies, other providers that operate within the NCR include private coach operators, taxicabs, private shuttle services, Transportation Networking Companies (TNCs) and more.

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the annual transit ridership by mode in the NCR Capital Region. In 2021, 79% of all public transportation rides in the region were delivered by WMATA; however, as opposed to previous years, the majority of those rides were on Metrobus instead of Metrorail. This is a result of Metrorail’s loss of commuter ridership and the bus’s ability to more conveniently take riders to everyday destinations. Local bus operators and the DC Streetcar made up 19% of the annual public transportation trips in the region. Commuter rail and commuter bus accounted for 2% of the annual public transit trips, decreasing its total share from 2020 due to the increase in remote work and less commuters regularly travelling to work.

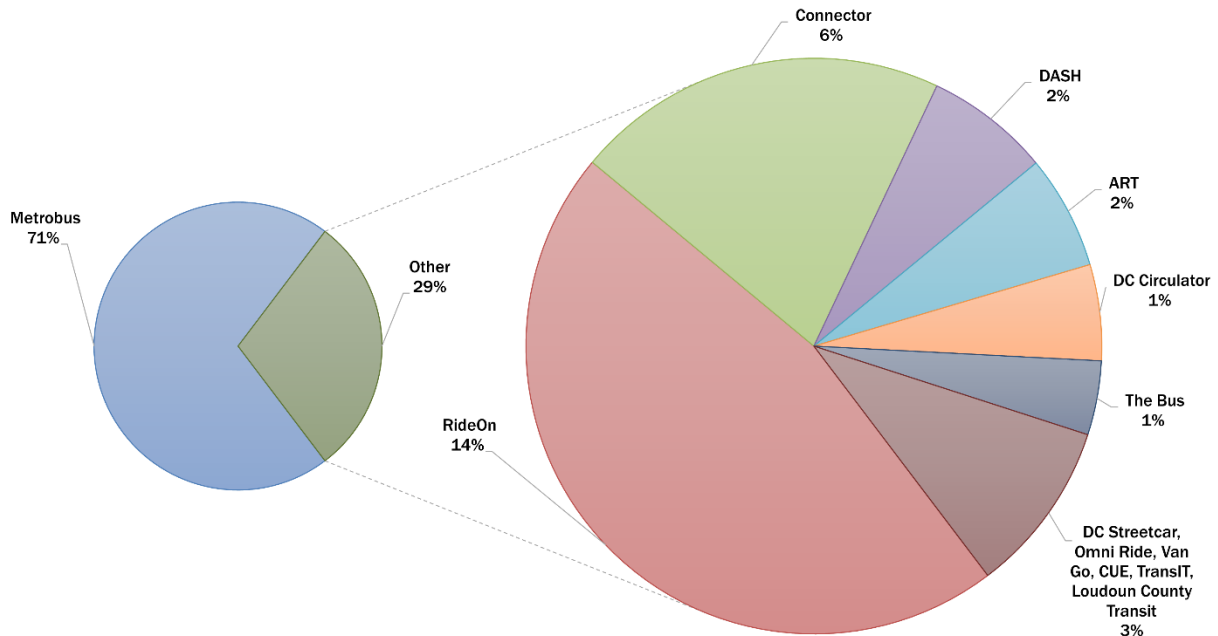
Figure 1: NCR Unlinked Annual Trips by Mode (Percentage), 2021 NTD



Separate from WMATA, the NCR contains several local public transportation operators who combined provided over 21.7 million unlinked passenger trips in 2021, a 38% drop from 2020. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage by operator of local bus and streetcar ridership for 2021. Montgomery County’s Ride On ranked second in total bus trips behind Metrobus, with over 10 million passenger trips in 2021, approximately 6 million less than 2020. Fairfax Connector remained the third largest bus operator in the region with almost 4.6 million trips, about two-thirds the previous year’s

ridership. These top three agencies account for 91% of local bus trips in the NCR, with the remaining 10 local bus service operators providing just over 7 million trips. Figure 3 (see page 5) shows the routes and geographies each of these operators serve in the region.

Figure 2: NCR Local Agency Bus/Streetcar Trips by Agency (Percentage), 2021 NTD



TPB STUDIES AND PROJECTS

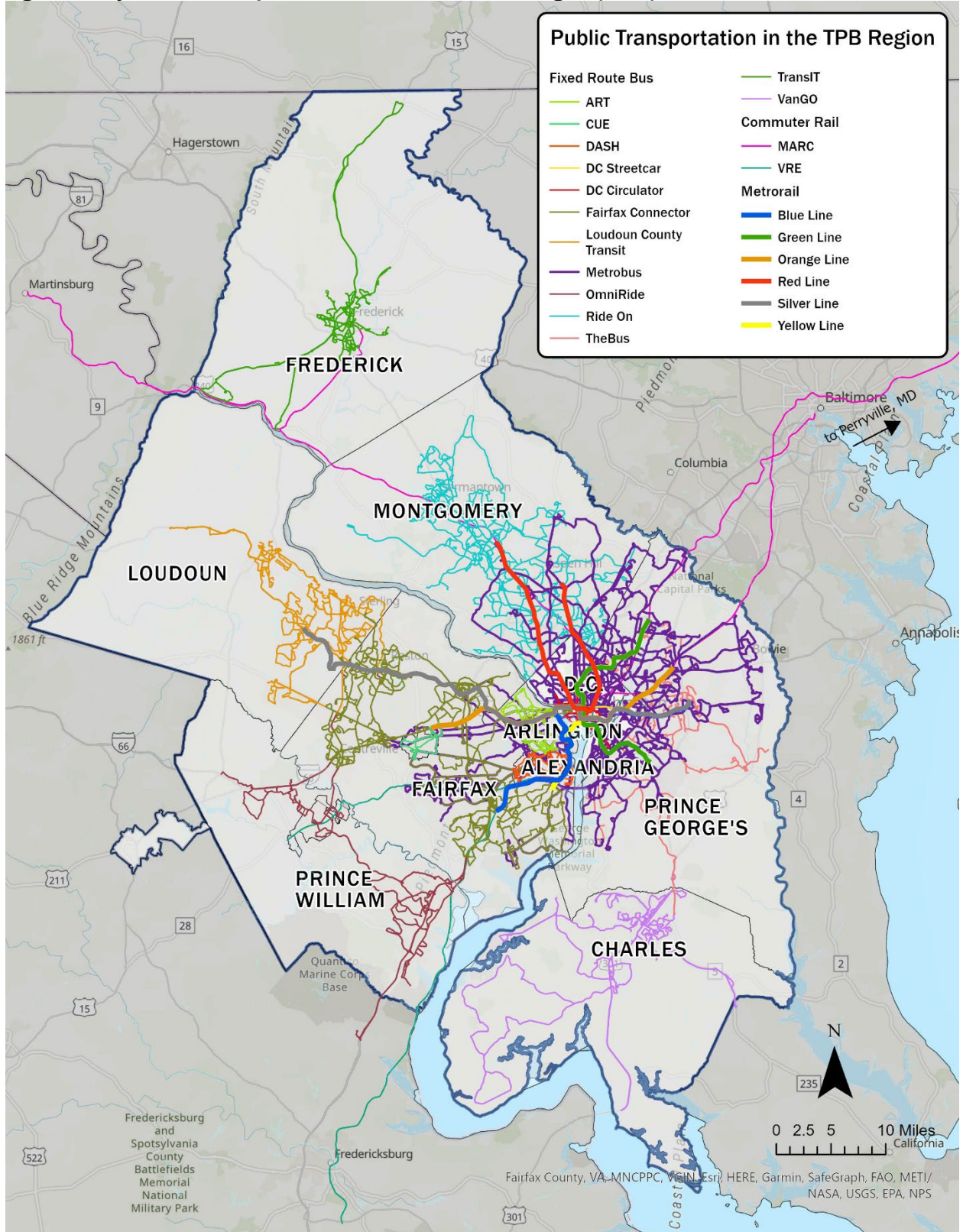
TPB studies and reports in 2022 included, but are not limited to, the following:

- Bus Transit Service Equity Analysis Update** - In 2022, TPB, with the help of ICF Consulting and Foursquare ITP, updated its prior year's analysis. In 2022, TPB, with the help of ICF Consulting and Foursquare ITP, updated its prior year's analysis of the regional bus system's equity. The more recent study found that although sixty percent of the COG region's general population lives within a ¼ mile of a local bus stop, only 35% of people of color have access to frequent service.
- TPB High-Capacity Transit Map Update** - TPB is developing an updated high-capacity transit map that will serve as a tool for planners and decision makers. Data collection and analysis were ongoing throughout the year and into 2023.
- PBPP Transit Safety and Asset Management Targets** - As part of its federal performance-based planning and programming obligations, TPB collects independent transit safety and asset management targets annually from public transportation agencies in the region that receive certain federal funding. These targets are then used by TPB to set its regional targets according to regulatory requirements for metropolitan planning organizations. Regional targets for transit asset management were approved by the TPB in March 2022 and transit safety targets were approved in December 2022.

- **Transit Within Reach Program** - This is a technical assistance program operated by MWCOC which grants funding for preliminary to 30% engineering and design work on projects that help create better bike and pedestrian connections to local transit. Jurisdictions apply for the funding, which if granted, is paid directly to the consultants. 2022 was the first grant cycle of the program.
- **Visualize 2045 plan** – The quadrennial update to the region’s long-range transportation plan was approved by the TPB in August 2022. An additional update to this plan was mandated by the TPB in June 2021 and, at the time, due for approval in 2024. It will be known as Visualize 2050.

All documents can be found at the RPTS events page via the link below:
https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/?F_committee=165

Figure 3: Major Public Transportation Providers in the TPB Region (2022)



PART 2 – THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC’S CONTINUED IMPACT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Transit agencies continued to respond to the health and safety threats caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic throughout 2022. As the country adjusted to living with the virus, agencies pivoted attention toward recovering from historic service and ridership drops while offering safe working and onboard conditions for staff and customers.

DC Circulator @DCCirculator · Mar 4
We understand the importance of keeping riders safe, which is why we prioritize frequently cleaning all 72 of our buses with high-grade disinfectants to eliminate the spread of COVID-19. See what else @DCCirculator is doing. #YourRideOurPriority hubs.la/Q015nXP00

Ride On Bus @RideOnMCT · Dec 8
Masks are encouraged on public transportation and remain available on our buses.

Attention: Ride On Passengers

Face masks are encouraged but no longer required.

Drivers will provide riders a mask if needed.

MCDOT RideOnBus.com Ride On

Virginia Railway Express @VaRailExpress · Apr 19, 2022
Effective immediately, VRE passengers and crew members will no longer be required to wear a mask onboard the train.

Masks are optional and VRE will continue to support those passengers and crew members who wish to wear a mask.

We would I manager.everbridge.net/pub/2692158515...

1 3

Covid-19 mask mandate and safety related tweets from transit agencies (DCCirculator/X, RideOnMCT/X, VaRailExpress/X)

OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to take lives and disrupt society throughout 2022. Since early 2020, lifestyles altered due to the pandemic, among other causes, led to reduced transit ridership compared to 2019 totals. The health and safety needs of staff and riders meant that implementation of certain emergency measures and strict protocols continued. However, unlike the previous two years, transit agencies adapted to updated policy and societal conditions that swung between extremes during the first half of 2022.

As the year began, the United States as a whole, and the NCR region specifically, were deep in a surge of COVID-19 cases due to the highly contagious Omicron-variant of the virus. During this period, federal, state, and local mandates to wear face coverings onboard public transit continued, as well as heightened disinfectant and cleaning protocols for buses and trains.

On April 18, 2022, a federal court in Florida held that the federal masking mandate for public transportation was unconstitutional.⁵ In response, transportation operators who enforced mask mandates due to the federal requirement announced they would no longer enforce masks onboard.⁶ Most of the transit operators in the region posted on their websites or on social media that their mask requirements were lifted. Some, such as Ride On, reiterated that they continued to maintain heightened cleaning protocols, even if masks were no longer necessary.⁷ As of December 2022, some operators either no longer had dedicated COVID-19 information pages on their websites or no longer regularly updated them.

The ridership and economic impacts of the existing pandemic continued to apply pressure on transit agencies dealing with reduced revenues and uncertain futures. Federal and state grant funding helped bridge the balance sheets for transit agencies across the country. Nationally, funds from the CARES Act, CRRSA, and ARPA stimulus funds helped cover operating expenses for many transit agencies. In Virginia, funds from the nascent Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) were diverted to help cover immediate agency needs; however, in the following years, TRIP funds became integral to pilot projects meant to increase ridership and equitably expand access to service.

THE PANDEMIC'S TRANSIT LEGACY

Years into the pandemic, its impact on ridership and the regional economy continued to apply pressure on transit agencies. Although more employees were called back to offices across the region in 2022 and people were generally more willing to travel than in the 2020 or 2021, remote working and altered travel behaviors left many agencies in need of lost fare revenue and some facing uncertain futures. At the same time, some of the novel policies implemented early during the pandemic to ensure operator safety and efficiency have remained in place even as operations have largely returned to normal levels of service and some health protocols lifted.

By April 2020, twelve of the seventeen public transportation services in the region were fare free.⁸ This was done to protect drivers and riders from potential exposure to the virus as they passed each other at the farebox.⁹ Also, across agencies, most riders were required to board through the rear door of the bus for the safety of the driver, among other restrictions.¹⁰ These strategies began to be dropped eight months later as Arlington Transit (ART), Metrobus, and The Bus all reinstated fare collection and, as a result, front-door only boarding in January 2021 in an effort to increase revenue.¹¹ To make this possible, COVID-19 interventions such as protective barriers between drivers and continued mask wearing were put in place to maintain safety. However, in 2022, VanGO

reversed the trend and went fare free to help increase ridership and offer financial relief to riders impacted by the pandemic.¹²

Fare free service and more efficient operations due to the lack of fare collection, and related availability of rear door boarding, proved popular with riders. Many agencies subsequently examined how to offer these features as part of regular service after the pandemic emergency. As shown in Table 1, nine transit operators continued to offer unlimited universal or partial fare free service as of December 2022.¹³ DC Streetcar has always been fare free and is not included in the table.

Partial fare free programs extended the availability of fare free service to particular demographics that received discounted fares prior to the pandemic, such as seniors, riders with disabilities, and students. However, OmniRide offered fare free service to all riders, but only on its local and express routes. Virginia's Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) for Zero and Reduced Fare provided grants that helped several agencies in Northern Virginia provide fare free service, including CUE and DASH.¹⁴ VanGO's pilot program was initially funded through multiple federal grants but became subsidized by the county.¹⁵

Many transit agencies that began collecting fares again in 2021 continued to examine free or reduced fare programs in order to assist riders and foster a more equitable service. For example, ART, Fairfax Connector, Metrorail, Ride On, and TheBus all implemented low fare programs or policies to accommodate passengers with difficulty paying for a ride.¹⁶ At Ride On and TheBus, a universal reduction to the standard fare (at all times) was applied. Metrorail implemented a similar universal fare discount for late night rides, requiring a flat fare of two dollars no matter the distance of the trip.

DASH, which went fare free in September 2021, saw its average daily ridership increase by 117% between August 2021 and August 2022.¹⁷ One year after going fare free, it experienced its busiest month to date (September 2022) in boardings since 2015.¹⁸ The changes in ridership and fare policy concurrently occurred with the implementation of a new service network that began in September 2021.¹⁹ This new network complemented the fare policy change to increase transit access across Alexandria.²⁰

As a result of fare free service and their larger buses with dual entry points, CUE, DASH, DC Streetcar, and Frederick Transit were able to offer all-door boarding. In 2023, Metrobus will begin installing fareboxes in the rear of the bus, allowing riders to board through the rear door as they had at the start of the pandemic.²¹ Another safety feature that became prominent during the pandemic, plexiglass shields between drivers and riders, remained in place across agencies.²²

The COVID-19 pandemic forced public transportation providers to quickly adapt to maintain safe operations. Subsequently, the lessons learned from the past three years informed policy changes making it less expensive and more efficient for riders to choose transit.

Table 1: NCR Transit Agencies Offering Any Extent of Fare Free Service in 2022

Agencies Offering Fare Free Service in 2022				
Agency	Fare Free			
	Universal		Partial	
	Start	End	Start	End
ART	April 2020	January 2021	August 2022	ongoing
CUE	March 2020	ongoing		
DASH	March 2020	March 2021		
	September 2021	ongoing		
Frederick Transit	March 2020	ongoing		
Loudoun County	March 2020	May 2021	November 2022	January 2023
PRTC/Omniride			March 2020	ongoing
Ride On	March 2020	August 2022	August 2022	ongoing
TheBus	March 2020	January 2021	January 2021	ongoing
VanGO	January 2022	ongoing		
VRE	September 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022

PART 3 – PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY PROFILES

The following section contains individual profile sheets for each agency in the region that operates fixed-route bus, commuter bus, and commuter rail service. These profile sheets include an overview of the agency, recent accomplishments, system characteristics such as fleet and facility data, and provider data including operating costs, fare revenue, and ridership.



Vienna, VA bus stop for Fairfax Connector (Pierre Gaunaud/TPB)



Metrorail passengers boarding train (Pierre Gaunaud/TPB)



Metrobus departing Vienna Metro station (Pierre Gaunaud/TPB)

Key

In the System Snapshot section of each Operator Profile, the abbreviations in the Service category mean the following:

CB - Commuter Bus
FR - Fixed Route Bus
SR - Streetcar

CR - Commuter Rail
MT - Microtransit

Agency Profiles

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

District Department of Transportation (DDOT) - DC Circulator

<https://dccirculator.com/>

Overview

The DC Circulator, operated by DDOT, began operating in 2005 as a local transit service intended to complement the existing Metrobus and Metrorail operations serving the Washington, DC metropolitan area. In conjunction with regional partners, DDOT's goal is to promote economic activity by facilitating visitor access to neighborhoods in Washington, DC and to improve mobility for downtown workers during the workday.

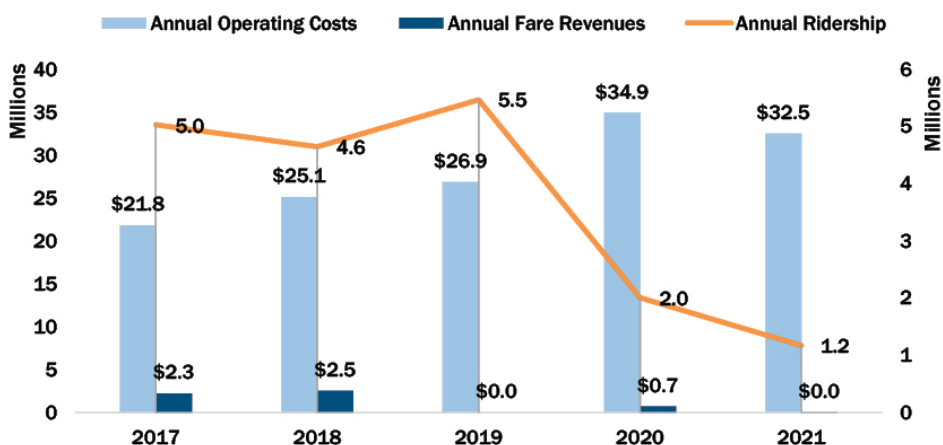
Recent Accomplishments

Released the Transit Development Plan (TDP) 2020 Update, which evaluated the operations and performance of the Circulator system since the TDP 2017 Update and potential system expansion to Ward 7, selecting the Union Station to Deanwood route as the preferred route.

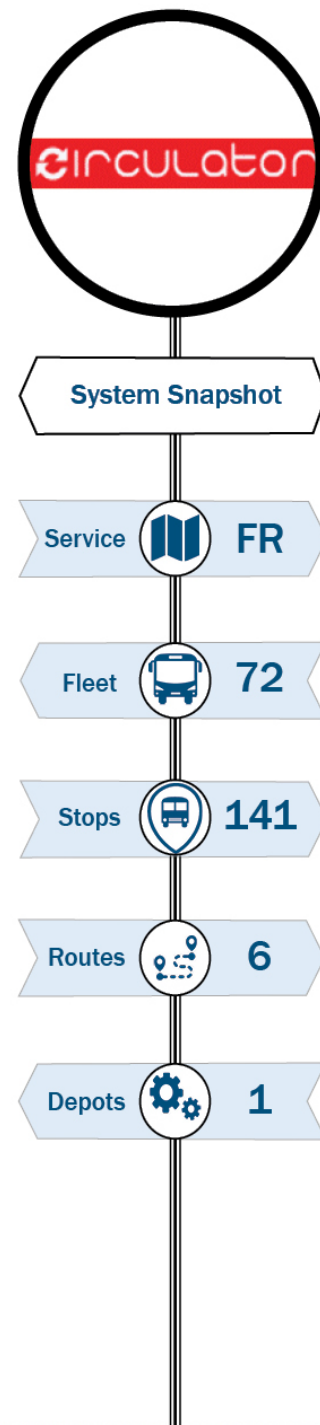
Completed the DC Circulator Electrification Plan, which outlines a strategy to reach full fleet electrification using battery-electric buses by 2030.

Awarded a Lo or No Emissions grant for \$9,590,000 by the Federal Transit Administration.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



DC Circulator bus at the National Zoo (DDOT/goDCgo.com)



District Department of Transportation (DDOT) - DC Streetcar

<https://dcstreetcar.com/>

Overview

The DC Streetcar is a surface streetcar network in Washington, D.C. It currently consists of a single 2.2-mile line running in mixed traffic along H Street and Benning Road in the city's Northeast quadrant. It operates as a free service with the goals of linking neighborhoods with a modern, convenient, and attractive transportation alternative, reducing parking demand, traffic congestion, and air pollution, plus encouraging economic development and affordable housing options along streetcar corridors.

Recent Accomplishments

Improved passenger information systems and wayfinding signage.

Increased the streetcar's visibility and protected it from wear and tear via seasonal and other car wraps that resemble the D.C. Circulator's appearance and design.

Explored options to procure replacement streetcars for aging vehicles and additional streetcars to support service extension to Benning Road Metro Station.

Improved service reliability by increasing preventative maintenance activities with an emphasis on identifying root causes of reoccurring issues.

System Snapshot

Service  SR

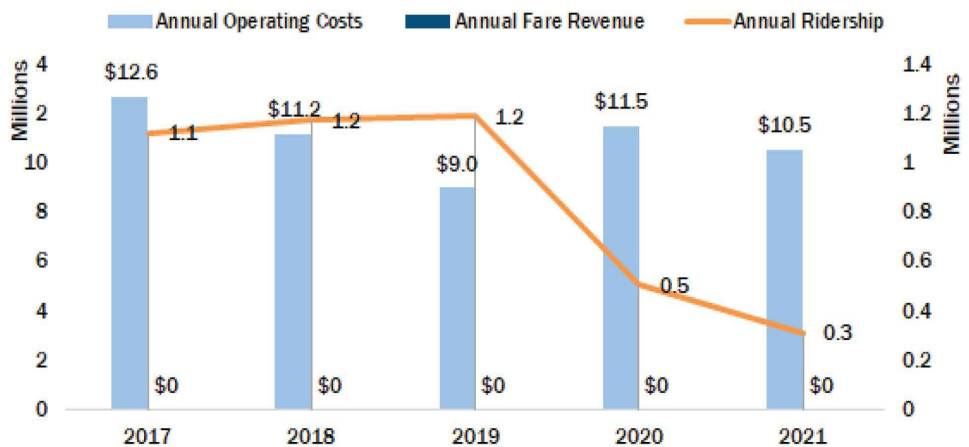
Fleet  6

Stops  8

Routes  1

Depots  1

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



DC Streetcar going eastbound on H Street NE (DC Streetcar/Flickr)

Agency Profiles
MARYLAND



System Snapshot

Service **FR**

Fleet **42**

Stops **395**

Routes **16**

Depots **1**

Charles County Transit Services - VanGO

<https://www.charlescountymd.gov/services/transportation/vango-public-transportation>

Overview

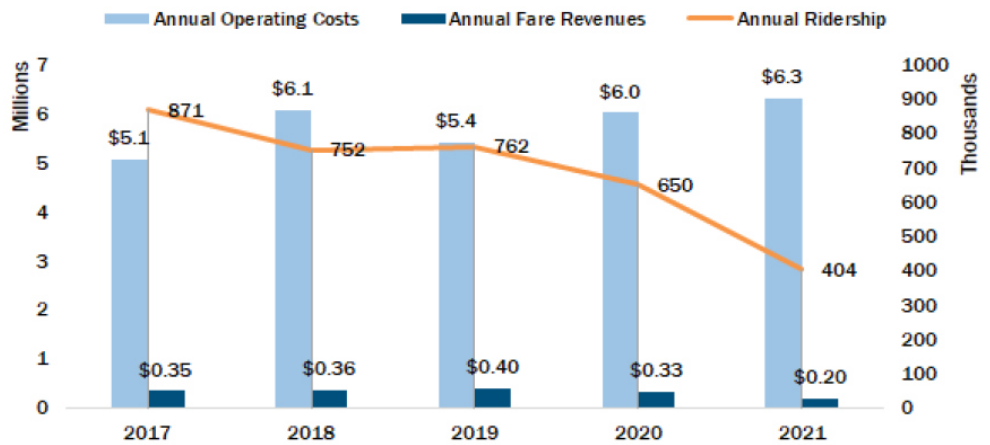
Charles County operates VanGo, a public transit network of 16 fixed routes connecting urban and rural areas of the county. ADA service is available to those with disabilities preventing them from using fixed route service. Subscription service is also available to ADA eligible residents traveling to dialysis centers or senior centers on a regular basis. VanGO also operates a very limited paratransit service beyond the 3/4 mile ADA service area for citizens age 60 and above who do not have transportation available.

Recent Accomplishments

Completed 50% design and engineering for a new 18,000 square foot transit and operations facility. Completion of design and engineering and start of construction is expected in 2023.

Starting on 1/1/22 eliminated all fares. System charges no fares and Board of County Commissioners voted to make the fare free program permanent.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



VanGO shuttle at bus stop (Charles County Government/Facebook)

Transit Services of Frederick County

<https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/105/Transit-Services>

Overview

Transit Services of Frederick County is an award-winning public transit organization, reducing auto emissions and traffic congestion, and improving the quality of life for residents of Frederick County. Connector buses operate in the City of Frederick and the urbanized areas of Frederick County. Six routes can deviate within ¾ mile of the route for passengers who are unable to board the bus at a regular stop. Shuttles serve our more rural communities, as well as commuters, and paratransit provides service countywide, supplemented by a Taxi Access Program (TAP).

Recent Accomplishments

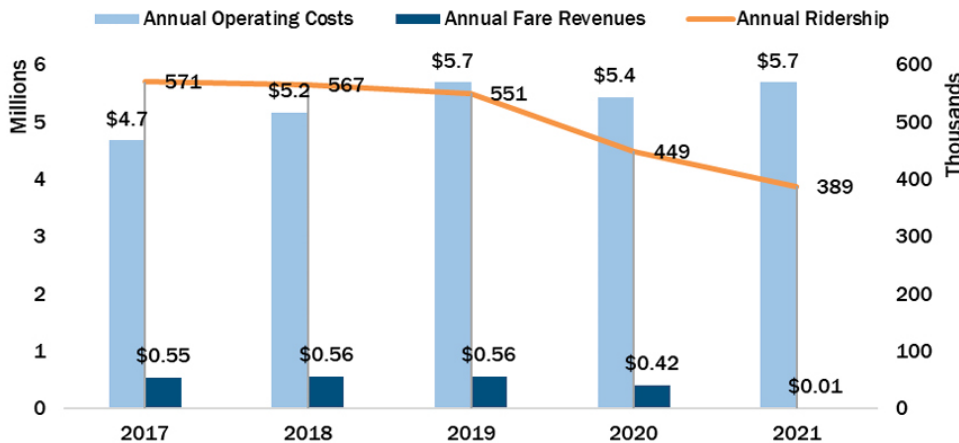
Completed and opened an expanded administration and operations building, plus a new maintenance and wash facility for buses.

Improved coordination with the City of Frederick, community organizations, and elected officials through events like ride-alongs.

Provided essential transportation services throughout the pandemic and helped deploy a mobile vaccination clinic.

Completed and approved Frederick Transit's Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service  FR

Fleet  44

Stops  350

Routes  17

Depots  1



Frederick Transit buses parked (Transit Services of Frederick County/Facebook)



Montgomery County Transit - Ride On

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/>

Overview

The Montgomery County Division of Transit Services plans, schedules, and manages the County's Ride On bus system. The Ride On system is designed to complement the transit services of other providers in the region. The County also manages Xtra: a popular limited stop service, Flex: the first on-demand service in the region, FLASH: a bus rapid transit-like service, and related transit infrastructure including over 500 bus shelters, 5,000 bus stops, 700 benches and multiple Park & Ride lots.

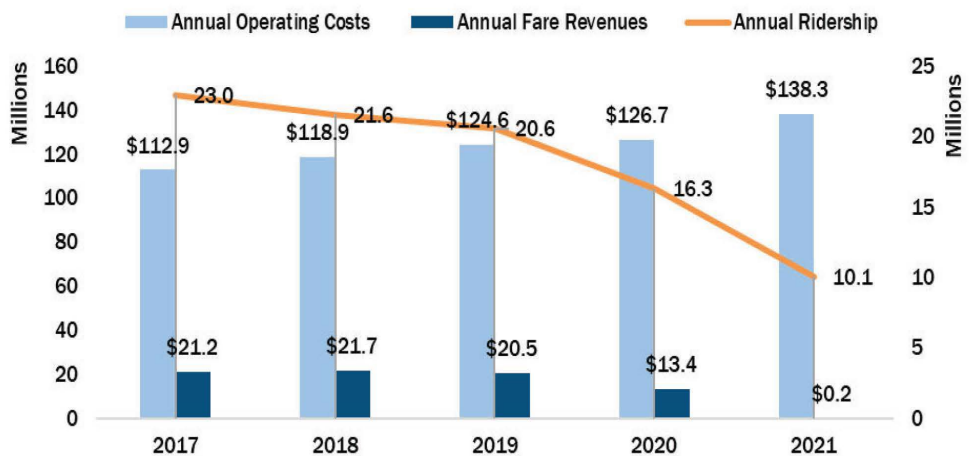
Recent Accomplishments

Completed the Brookville Smart Energy Depot, the largest solar bus charging infrastructure project in the country. The new solar powered depot and microgrid will reduce carbon emissions by sixty-two percent.

Restored fares on Ride On buses at half of the pre-pandemic cost. Riders pay \$1 per ride as of August 2022.

Received \$263,000 in grant money to upgrade driver training and improve safety for operators, riders, and the community. Also, awarded Buses and Facilities/Low or No Emission Fed Grants to buy thirteen hydrogen fuel cell buses.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21

System Snapshot

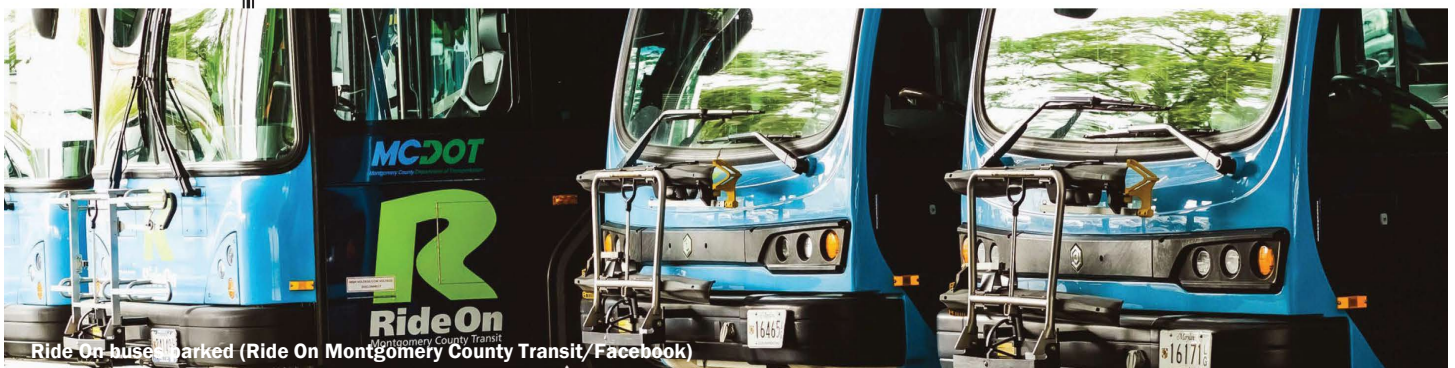
Service  FR, MT, BRT

Fleet  382

Stops  5,405

Routes  83

Depots  3



Ride On buses parked (Ride On Montgomery County Transit/Facebook)

Prince George's County Transit - TheBus

<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/1120/Countys-TheBus>

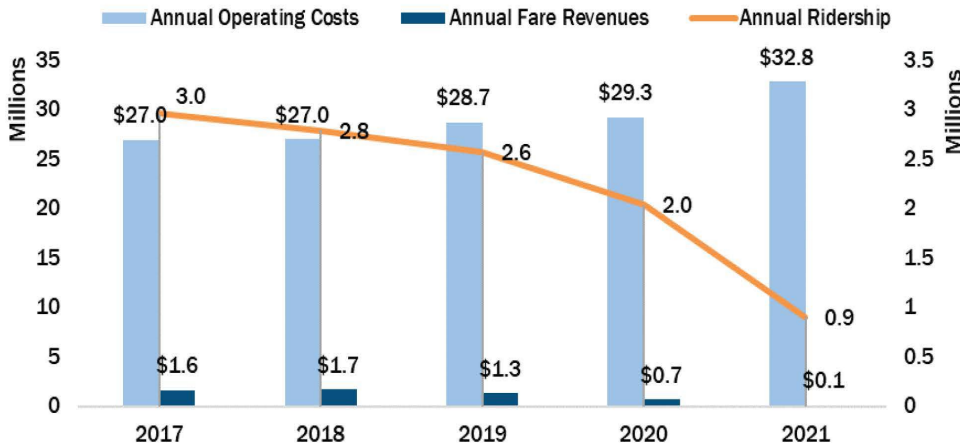
Overview

Prince George's County operates TheBus, a fixed route bus system for the county with 28 routes. A microtransit service called "Link" now operates in one geographic zone as of 2022. The Bus also offers "Call-A-Bus" (curb-to-curb service) and "Call-A-Cab" (discounts cab service when public transit is unavailable) for seniors and persons with disabilities through a small network of scheduled routes and participating cab companies. The services are overseen by the Department of Public Works and Transportation.

Recent Accomplishments

Awarded \$25 million in Low or No Emission federal grant money for the purchase of twenty battery electric buses and improvement of depot infrastructure to accommodate zero-emission buses, as well as development of a distributed charging network and microgrid. The microgrid is expected to cut approximately 1,227 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service FR, MT

Fleet 105

Stops 2,154

Routes 28

Depots 2



TheBus parked at a bus stop (Prince George's County DPW&T)



System Snapshot

Service CB

Fleet 82

Stops N/A

Routes 30*

Depots N/A

* in TPB region

MDOT MTA - Commuter Bus

<https://www.mta.maryland.gov/schedule?type=commuter-bus>

Overview

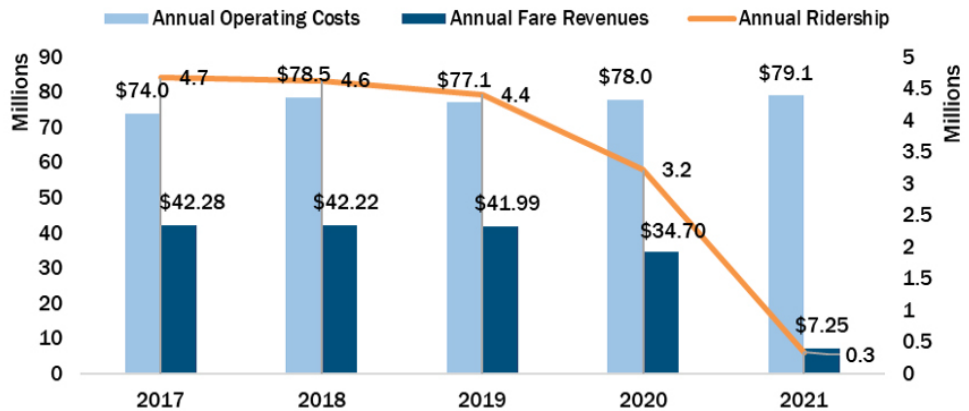
MDOT MTA Commuter Bus Service is a vital link that connects thousands of Maryland's suburban residents with jobs in Baltimore and Washington D.C. MDOT MTA Commuter Bus service is supplied by private contractors with oversight from MDOT MTA and operates weekdays during morning and evening rush hours and with select mid-day trips.

Recent Accomplishments

In August 2022, MTA's commuter bus operations across the system (including and beyond the Washington region) surpassed 100,000 monthly riders for the first time since March 2020.

MDOT MTA completed its 10-Year Capital Needs Inventory & Prioritization plan in July 2022 that runs through CY 2031.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



MTA Commuter Bus (Maryland Transit Administration/Facebook)

MDOT MTA - MARC Commuter Rail

<https://www.mta.maryland.gov/schedule?type=marc-train>

Overview

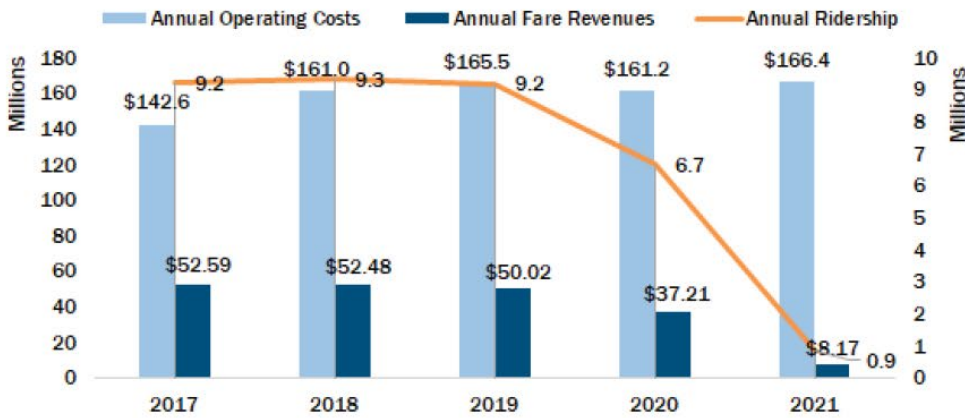
The MARC rail system, serves Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and surrounding areas, as well as Martinsburg, WV. MARC Train operates across three routes including the Brunswick Line, Camden Line, and Penn Line. All routes originate and terminate at Washington Union Station.

Recent Accomplishments

Completed a new heavy maintenance facility in Baltimore (MARC Riverside) that is expected to improve repair times, maintenance capabilities, and on-time performance.

Worked on the MARC Brunswick Line Commuter Rail Expansion Study throughout 2022.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service CR

Fleet 177*
46**

Stops 24^

Routes 3

Depots 6

* railcars

** locomotives

^ in TPB region



MARC train stopped at a station (Maryland Transit Administration/Facebook)

Agency Profiles
VIRGINIA

Alexandria Transit Company - DASH

<https://www.dashbus.com/>

Overview

The Alexandria Transit Company's DASH system provides safe, reliable, and convenient bus service within the City of Alexandria. DASH's eleven routes connect with regional transit services including Metrobus, Metrorail, Virginia Railway Express, and other local bus systems. DASH serves all of the Alexandria Metrorail Stations, as well as the Pentagon Metrorail station during morning and evening peak periods. DASH's name symbolizes a commitment to the citizens of Alexandria: Driving Alexandria Safely Home.

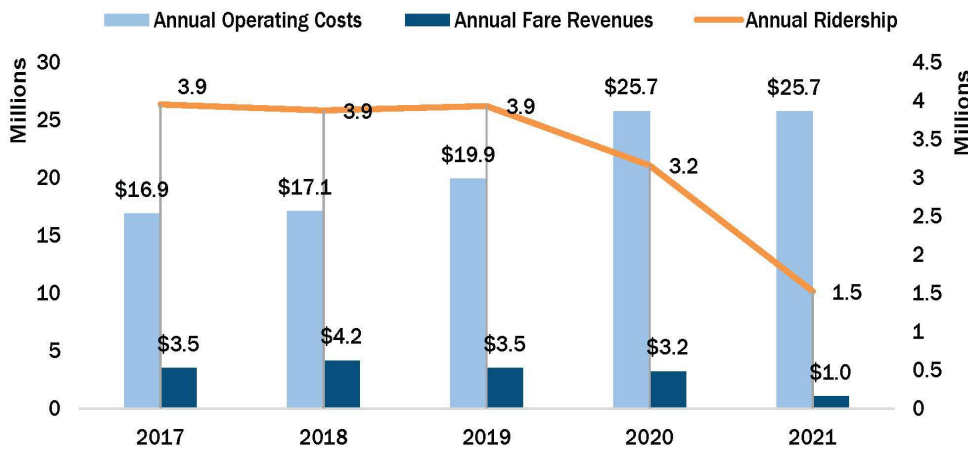
Recent Accomplishments

Increased ridership by 117% between Aug. 2021 and Aug. 2022, in part due to adopting fare free service and redesigning the route network.

Began all-door boarding across the system and authorized open stroller use on-board buses when ADA accessible seating is not in use.

Acquired Board approval for the 2023-2028 Transit Development Plan, which details proposed route changes and service enhancements based on needs, the upcoming Potomac Yard Metrorail station, etc.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service  FR

Fleet  101

Stops  544

Routes  11

Depots  2



Electric DASH bus parked (Alexandria Transit Company/Dashbus.com)



Arlington Transit - ART

<https://www.arlingtontransit.com>

Overview

Arlington Transit (ART) operates within Arlington County, Virginia, supplementing Metrobus with cross-county routes and neighborhood connections to Metrorail and VRE. ART improves the quality of life in the region by moving and connecting people while reducing traffic congestion and pollution. All ART buses operate on clean-burning natural gas (CNG) and are fully ADA accessible.

System Snapshot

Service FR

Fleet 78

Stops 1,004

Routes 19

Depots 2

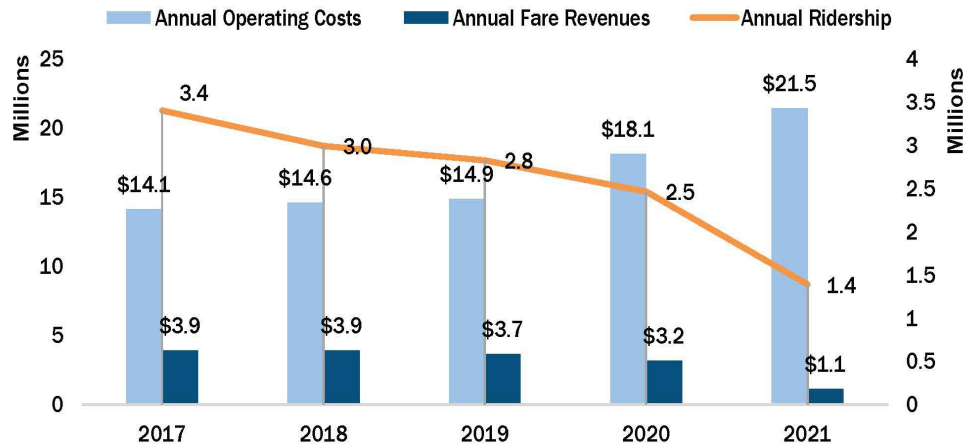
Recent Accomplishments

Partnered with the Arlington County Department of Human Services to pilot a prepaid bus fare program for eligible recipients (7,200 households) of TANF and SNAP benefits.

Began developing the ART Transit Strategic Plan, outlining the agency's goals and objectives.

Ridership increased approximately seventeen percent between Sept. 2021 and Sept. 2022.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



City of Fairfax City-University Energysaver - CUE

<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/public-works/transportation-division/cue-bus-system>

Overview

The City of Fairfax City-University Energysaver (CUE) bus system provides regularly scheduled, low-cost transportation services to George Mason University, shopping centers, and other locations within the City of Fairfax, as well as to the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metrorail Station. All CUE buses are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

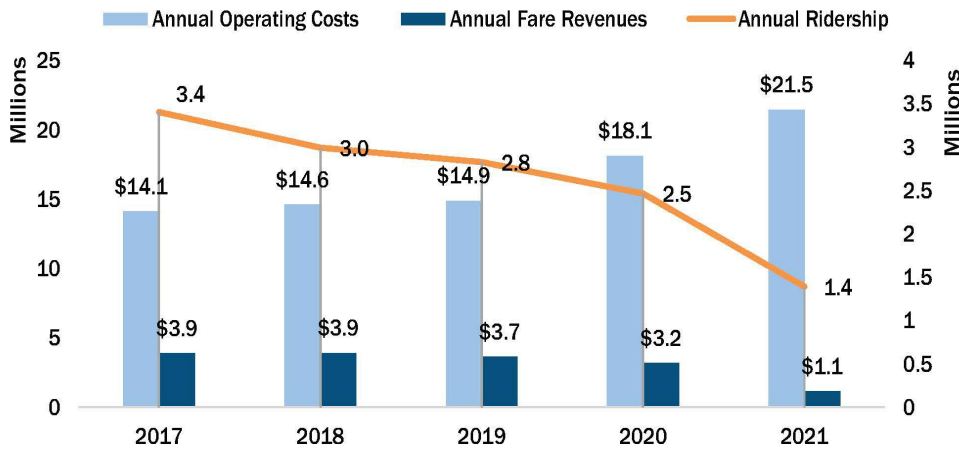
Recent Accomplishments

Awarded a \$1.55 million TRIP grant by DRPT to conduct a four year fare free pilot program.

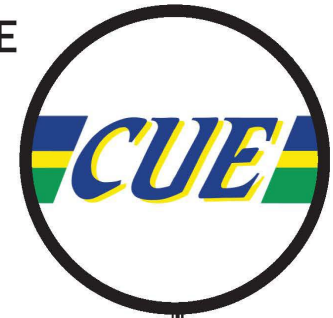
Approved new branding for the CUE in September 2022, implementation of which will begin in 2023. Part of this effort includes renaming CUE as “City University Everyone.”

Redesigned Gold 1 and Gold 2 bus routes in order to align with the city’s growth. These service changes went into effect in August 2022.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service  FR

Fleet  12

Stops  200

Routes  4

Depots  1



CUE bus (City of Fairfax/Fairfaxva.gov)



System Snapshot

Service  **FR**

Fleet  **346**

Stops  **3,081**

Routes  **93**

Depots  **3**

Fairfax Connector

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/>

Overview

Fairfax Connector is the largest local bus system in Northern Virginia, transporting approximately 26,000 passengers daily on ninety-three routes. Fairfax Connector aims to provide world class transportation service and promote greater mobility while improving the safety of its community and enhancing the quality of life for riders.

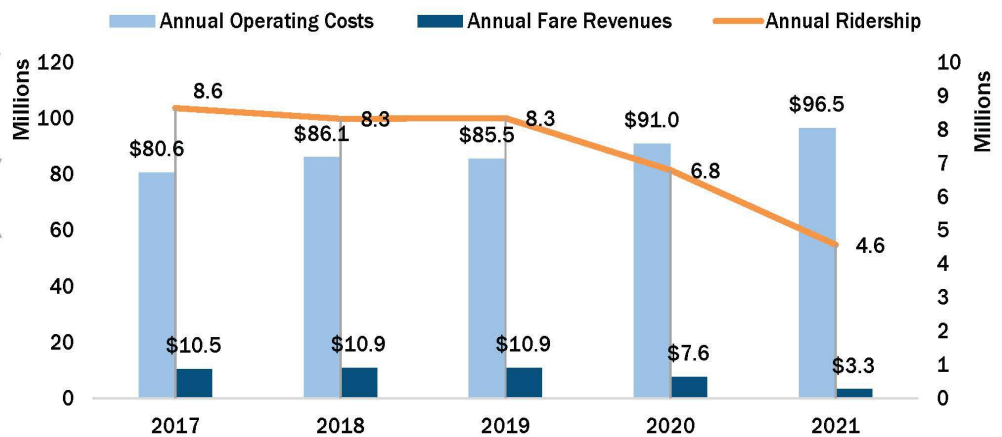
Recent Accomplishments

Thirty-five service changes or additions in the Reston-Herndon area, including modifications made to accommodate connections to the new Silver Line stations.

Planned to begin an electric bus pilot on eight routes. Fairfax County has a goal to transition to a 100% zero-emission bus fleet by 2035.

Approved a four year low-fare pilot for riders earning up to 225% of the federal poverty income limit, funded by an almost \$10 million TRIP state grant.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



Fairfax Connector bus (Fairfax Connector/Facebook)

Loudoun County Transit

<https://www.loudoun.gov/4121/Transit-Commuter-Services>

Overview

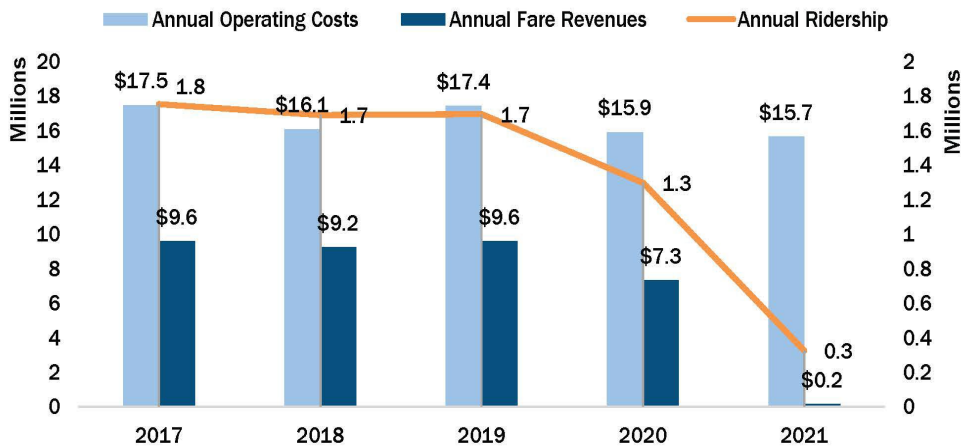
Loudoun County offers four distinct transit services: Local Fixed Routes, Paratransit, Metro Connection, and Commuter Bus. The Local Fixed Routes provide all day transit service from Purcellville through Leesburg and eastern Loudoun County. Paratransit services provide ADA-accessible curb-to-curb bus service for eligible riders within 3/4 of a mile of local fixed routes. Metro Connection provides rush hour bus service between Park and Ride Lots and Metrorail. The commuter bus service operates during the AM and PM peak periods providing transportation from Park and Ride lots to Rosslyn, Crystal City, the Pentagon, and D.C.

Recent Accomplishments

Created four new transit routes using DRPT funding. These routes are part of an expansion and redesign of the transit network and will connect to one of the three new Metrorail stations in Loudoun County.

Began public outreach and listening sessions for the Transit and Commuter Services Plan update process.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service  FR, CB

Fleet  112+

Stops  500

Routes  48

Depots  1





Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission - Omniride

<https://omniride.com/>

Overview

OmniRide is PRTC's commuter and local bus service. OmniRide offers safe, reliable, and flexible weekday service throughout Prince William County and along the I-95 and I-66 corridors to destinations including the Mark Center, Pentagon, Crystal City, Rosslyn/Ballston, Tysons Corner, and downtown Washington, D.C.. In addition to morning and evening commuter service, midday service is available on most routes.

Recent Accomplishments

Introduced the OmniRide Connect microtransit service for Manassas Park in December 2022 in order to replace an under-utilized fixed route. Passengers may use an app, website or phone to reserve their rides.

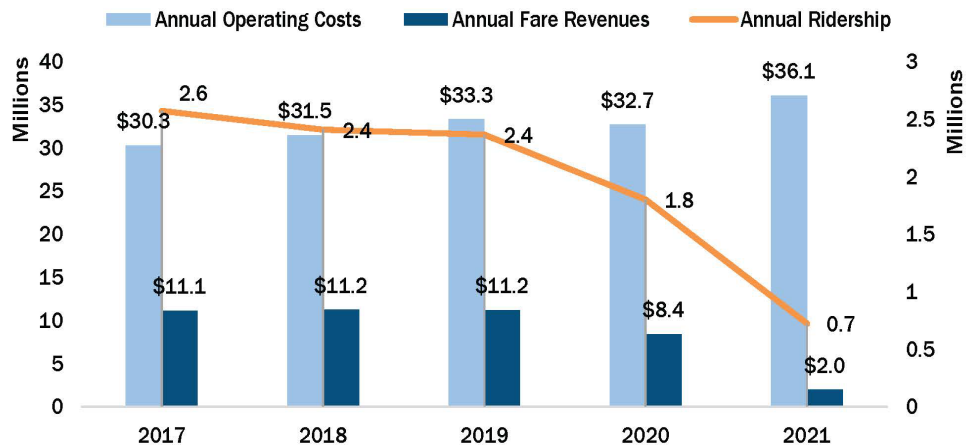
Partnered with Keep Prince William Beautiful to initiate a shelter art campaign at four bus shelters. Local artists submitted their artwork and they were installed on selected shelters throughout the County.

Began operation of a new commuter route between the new Balls Ford Commuter Lot in Manassas and the Reston-Herndon area.

Provider Data

System Snapshot

- Service: FR, MT, CB
- Fleet: 167
- Stops: 543
- Routes: 28
- Depots: 2



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



OmniRide commuter bus (Potomac and Rappahannock Commission/Facebook)

Virginia Railway Express - VRE

<https://www.vre.org/>

Overview

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is a joint project of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission to provide safe, cost effective, accessible, reliable, convenient, and comfortable commuter-oriented passenger rail service. VRE provides commuter rail service from the Northern Virginia suburbs to Alexandria, Crystal City and downtown Washington, D.C., along the I-66 and I-95 corridors.

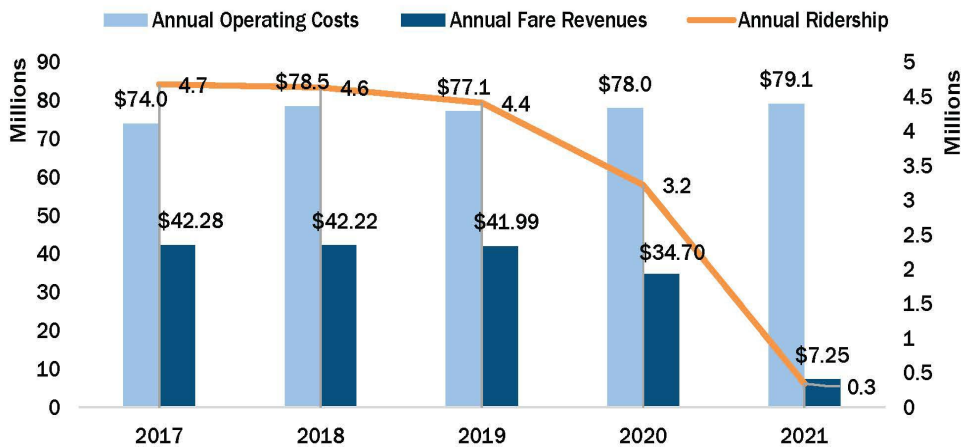
Recent Accomplishments

Completed the Rolling Road Station Platform Extension project in Fall 2022. The 290-foot extension allows the platform to accommodate eight-car trains, facilitating future service expansions on the Manassas Line.

Neared completion of the Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) facility at the Fredericksburg Line's Crossroads Yard. The new facility will allow VRE to perform heavy maintenance onsite.

Constructed new platforms, stair and elevator towers, and a connecting walkway at Quantico station. The project accommodates eight-car VRE and Amtrak trains and will allow the state of Virginia to construct the final segment of the Arkendale to Powells Creek Third Track project.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service CR

Fleet 100*
20**

Stops 15^

Routes 2

Depots 2

* railcars

** locomotives

^ in TPB region



VRE train travelling near the Washington Monument (VRE/VRE.org)

Agency Profiles

**WASHINGTON
METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSIT AUTHORITY
(WMATA)**

WMATA - Metrobus

<https://www.wmata.com/service/bus/>

Overview

Metrobus is the sixth busiest bus agency in the United States, with a fleet of almost 1,600 buses. In 2022, Metrobus provided an average of more than 175,000 trips each weekday in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Average weekend ridership was over 100,000.

Recent Accomplishments

Completed its 2022 Transit Asset Management Plan, describing how the agency will align its asset management activities with internal goals and best practices.

Continued implementing bus priority projects in order to reduce transit times through strategies like queue jumps and other tools.

Updated the agency's Zero-Emission Transition Plan outlining the long-term, phased conversion of the agency's bus fleet and supporting infrastructure to low or no emission fuel and battery electric buses.

Launched Phase 1 of the Better Bus Network Redesign project, conducting public engagement throughout the Fall.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



System Snapshot

Service  FR

Fleet  1,588

Stops  10,649

Routes  187

Depots  11



Metrobus bus driving through downtown D.C. (Pierre Gaunard/TPB)



System Snapshot

Service **HR**

Fleet **1,236**

Stops **97**

Routes **6**

Depots **10**

WMATA - Metrorail

<https://www.wmata.com/service/rail/>

Overview

Metrorail provides safe, clean, reliable transit service for approximately four million people throughout the Washington, DC area. The system is one of the busiest in the United States, serving ninety-seven stations in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia as of December 2022. In FY2022, an average of 186,000 people rode the Metrorail service on weekdays. The Metrorail urban rail system is the third largest urban rail system in the country, serving a 1,500 square mile area and including 118 miles of network.

Recent Accomplishments

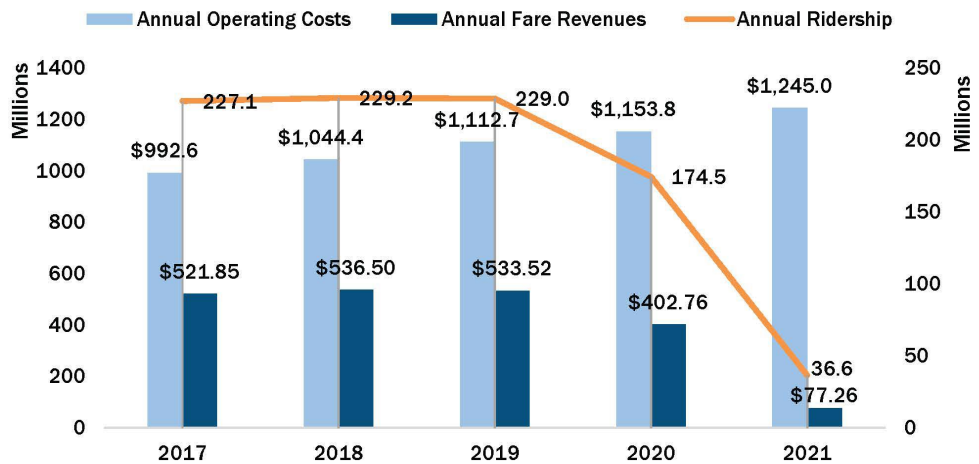
Opened six new Metrorail stations in Fairfax and Loudoun counties along the Silver Line extension, including a stop at Washington Dulles International Airport.

Completed Metro's four year long Platform Improvement Project.

Returned more 7000 series railcars into service, improving headways on various lines.

Replaced faregates with upgraded infrastructure meant to improve the fare payment experience.

Provider Data



Source: National Transit Database FY17-21



Metrorail train entering the Gallery Place-Chinatown Metro station (Pierre Gaunard/TPB)

PART 4 – OTHER PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES – OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief overview of other transit services in the region not included in the previous section. These include mostly paratransit agencies and some commuter transit agencies that operate services into the National Capital Region.



Prince George's County Call-A-Bus vehicles with new bike racks installed (Prince George's County DPW&T/The Dispatch Newsletter via GovDelivery.com)

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY TRANSIT (AACT)

Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation (AA OOT) offers transit via fixed route, microtransit (coming 2023), and paratransit service across the county and within the city of Annapolis (independent of Annapolis Transit). Through its contractor First Transit, AACT operates nine fixed bus routes.²³ AA OOT also supports one fixed route in the county operated by RTA of Central Maryland. AACT's upcoming Transit Development Plan foresees future service expansion crossing into Prince George's County, MD.

DC DEPARTMENT OF FOR-HIRE VEHICLES

The DC Department of For-Hire Vehicles is responsible for regulation of the vehicle-for-hire sector within the District. It also operates the DC Neighborhood Connect microtransit service, which offers an on-demand, curb-to-curb, shared-ride public transportation option to customers moving within three available zones. These zones transect five of the city's wards (1, 4, 5, 6, and 8). Customers use the service's app to book a trip, but there is also a call-in option. DC Neighborhood Connect began as "DC Microtransit" in 2019, but pivoted its service during the pandemic, focusing instead on offering a safe and affordable travel option to healthcare workers and providing necessary goods under the public health emergency. Returning to its original public transportation purpose, DC Neighborhood Connect was fare-free in 2022 and expanded its service area.²⁴ Throughout 2022, ridership increased 65% compared to the previous year and the average trip was shorter (1.2 miles vs 1.5 miles).²⁵

DOT

DOT is the City of Alexandria's paratransit service for residents and visitors who cannot use fixed-route bus or rail services due to their disability. DOT provides service throughout the City of Alexandria as well as the City of Falls Church, Arlington, and Fairfax Counties and the City of Fairfax. In the summer of 2022, DOT partnered with mobility software company Via to offer customers app-based service.²⁶

EASTERN PANHANDLE TRANSIT AUTHORITY (EPTA)

EPTA is a public transportation agency based out of Martinsburg, WV, running fixed-route, demand response, and paratransit service. It serves various cities and areas within the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, including Martinsburg, Charles Town, and Harpers Ferry. EPTA's fleet operates along twelve fixed routes daily.²⁷ It also has two special routes that serve MARC riders with stops in Frederick County, MD and operates bus service for Shepherd University.²⁸ EPTA has plans to begin commuter service between Martinsburg, WV, and the Ashburn, VA, Silver Line Metrorail stop in Loudoun County, with the possibility of adding Leesburg, VA, as a stop.²⁹

FASTRAN

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, such as:

- **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 eighteen senior residence developments. Trips scheduled by sites; or,
- **Therapeutic Recreation Services** - Transportation to and from outings and structured recreational activities for individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY CALL-A-BUS

Call-A-Bus is the paratransit service provided by Prince George's County, providing demand response, curb-to-curb bus service throughout the county available to all residents who are not served by, or cannot use, existing bus or rail services. However, priority is given to older adults and persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities must provide their own escort, if needed. Service animals are allowed for riders with visual impairments. Reservations can be made up to seven days in advance. In addition to the County's Call-a-Bus service, seventeen local municipalities also provide their own Call-a-Bus service.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OF CENTRAL MARYLAND (RTA)

The RTA of Central Maryland is an organization made up of multiple jurisdictions to establish a more effective and efficient public transportation system across Central Maryland. The RTA's operational area primarily lies outside of the TPB area but includes Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Northern Prince George's County, and the City of Laurel. The RTA has combined the management and administrative functions of all jurisdictions to reduce operating expenses and provide a better customer service experience for riders. The Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission (CMTMC) provides oversight of the organization and is made up of two representatives from each jurisdiction.

STAR

Specialized Transit for Arlington Residents (STAR) is the paratransit component of Arlington Transit (ART) and provides shared ride paratransit service for Arlington residents who have difficulties using public fixed route transit service either due to age or disability.

VIRGINIA REGIONAL TRANSIT (VRT)

Virginia Regional Transit operates, manages, and plans fixed-route, demand-response, and commuter transportation services across fifteen different jurisdictions primarily outside the Metropolitan Washington Region, but includes: Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Clarke, Warrenton, Augusta, and Charlottesville. The organization delivers efficient, cost effective and quality services for riders so they can move about their communities and live their lives fully.

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA) METROACCESS

MetroAccess is a shared ride, door-to-door transportation service for people with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route public transit. 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 $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a Metrobus or Metrorail line, in accordance with federal requirements.

The Abilities-Ride program offers MetroAccess customers a more flexible option for travel within Maryland. Metro has partnered with local taxicab and transportation network companies to provide on-demand discounted taxi services.

PART 5 - REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS

This section details state- or regional-level, organizations in Maryland and Virginia that conduct planning for public transportation in the National Capital Region, including an overview of and recent accomplishments for each organization.



MARC and Amtrak trains at their platforms in Union Station, Washington, D.C. (Pierre Gaunard/TPB)

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (MDOT MTA)

Overview

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is a division of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and one of the largest multimodal transit systems in the United States. MDOT MTA operates Local Buses (CityLink and LocalLink), Commuter Buses, and multiple rail services including light (RailLink), heavy (SubwayLink), and commuter rail (Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC), and a comprehensive Paratransit system (MobilityLink). MDOT MTA also manages the Taxi Access system and directs funding and statewide assistance to Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS) in each of Maryland's twenty-three counties, Baltimore City, Annapolis, and Ocean City. MDOT MTA's commuter bus and rail services (MARC) operate in portions of the NCR.

Recent Accomplishments

The MTA Office of Local Transit Support conducted a study of locally operated transit systems (LOTS) statewide with the aim of assisting those agencies transition their fleets to zero emission vehicles. Completion of this study is expected in 2023.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (NVTA)

Overview

The Virginia General Assembly created the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) in 2002 with a mandate to prepare a long-range transportation plan for Northern Virginia and fund transportation capital improvement projects using the sustainable revenue stream (sales tax) established in 2013 (HB 2313). Seventy percent of the revenues are directly programmed by NVTA, and the remaining thirty percent are distributed to NVTA's nine-member jurisdictions who allocate these revenues to transportation projects of their choosing, including public transportation projects, in accord with HB 2313. NVTA's efforts include:

- Updating TransAction, the long-range multi-modal transportation plan for Northern Virginia, a fiscally and geographically unconstrained plan that currently includes 424 regional projects with an estimated capital cost of more than \$75 billion. TransAction is updated on a five-year cycle and was last adopted in December 2022.
- Programming its regional (seventy percent) revenues through NVTA's Six Year Program (SYP), which is updated on a two-year cycle. So far, NVTA has programmed \$2.5 billion in regional funds for multimodal projects across the region covering FY2014-2025.
- In addition, NVTA makes recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for allocation of federal CMAQ and RSTP revenues in Northern Virginia. In 2022, NVTA recommended and CTB approved more than \$60 million CMAQ and RSTP funds for projects such as Commuter Connections, Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC), Metrobus and PRTC bus replacements, Metrorail access improvements, BRT projects, traffic signal priority, and signal optimization. NVTA continues to work with the Commonwealth of Virginia as a co-sponsor of the Regional Multimodal Mobility Program (RM3P) that uses information and communications technologies to address Northern Virginia's mobility needs.

Recent Accomplishments

TRANSACTION UPDATE

In December 2022, NVTA adopted the latest update to the TransAction Plan. The two-year process conducted extensive data-driven analyses and a series of public engagement activities. The analyses included three plausible future scenarios (post-pandemic new normal, technology, incentives/pricing) and how the plan performs under and compared to them. The incentives/pricing scenario showed high potential for mode shift to transit. The Plan identified more than 100 transit projects worth approximately \$45 billion, including implementation of a regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, Metrorail core capacity, VRE rail capacity, bus maintenance & storage facilities, and station access improvements. There were also projects that supports zero emission transit vehicles. A major focus of the Plan is to develop a regional BRT system that will become the backbone of transit in Northern Virginia filling a gap between Metrorail/VRE and local/commuter bus services. As part of this work, NVTA has collaborated with not only jurisdictions/agencies in Northern Virginia but with TPB, WMATA, DDOT, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. This collaboration is expected to continue.

FY2022-2027 SIX YEAR PROGRAM

In July 2022, the Authority approved \$625 million for twenty multimodal transportation projects across the region. These investments continued NVTA's commitment to BRT solutions, rail and transit solutions in the most congested corridors, transportation technology, and active transportation solutions such as bike/pedestrian facilities. These investments, together with previous investments, make the total investment more than \$1 billion in transit/access to transit projects. This cycle of funding included the second entrance to Ballston-MU Metrorail station, Richmond Highway BRT, and new battery electric buses for Fairfax Connector. In addition, NVTA jurisdictions have programmed close to \$200 million from NVTA thirty percent funds on transit and access projects including WMATA/VRE/PRTC subsidies and transit operations/maintenance.

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:

- Serving as a regional hub for coordination of transit services
- Funding and providing oversight for Metro and appointing board members
- Providing expertise on transit systems, ridership, and advanced fare collection
- Jointly owning Virginia Railway Express
- Providing leadership on legislative and policy issues
- Managing state and regional funding for six bus systems
- Administering the Commuter Choice program

- Providing Northern Virginia focused transit research and technical expertise

Recent Accomplishments

2022 REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE AND CONDITION OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA)

In December 2022, NVTC delivered the annual Report on the Performance and Condition of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to the Virginia General Assembly. NVTC recommended strategies press upon Metro to improve service, safety and security, enforce fare payment, simplify the fare structure, increase non-fare revenues and manage labor costs. The year's report also directs NVTC staff to explore the implications of Northern Virginia local transit agencies assuming operations of Metrobus services and to examine and develop options for a new financial operating model for Metro. Further, the report also presents the uses of Virginia's dedicated capital funding as well as safety, reliability, financial performance, and ridership data on Metrorail and Metrobus.

https://novatransit.org/uploads/studiesarchive/2022%20Annual%20Report%20on%20WMATA2022_All.pdf

COMMUTER CHOICE

NVTC's Commuter Choice program uses toll money from the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors to support alternatives to people driving alone. Commuter Choice awarded a total of \$15.1 million to seven projects in the I-66 corridor in FY 2022. Commuter Choice-supported projects rebounded strongly and continued to serve the region's commuters with reliable service. NVTC also reported on the first five years of the Commuter Choice program, finding that Commuter Choice has funded \$92.7 million in projects that also:

- Saved commuters 900,000 hours of travel time, commensurate to \$24 million in economic benefits to the region
- Saved commuters \$12 million in fuel costs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 69% relative to driving alone for comparable trips
- Avoided 100 automobile crashes

https://commuterchoicecar.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/NVTC_CommuterChoice_AnnualReport2022_WEB.pdf

TRANSIT DASHBOARD

NVTC's Transit Resource Center (TRC) organizes, analyzes, and reports data about the eight transit systems that operate within NVTC's jurisdictions, including Metro (Metrobus and Metrorail), DASH, ART, Fairfax Connector, Loudoun County Transit, VRE, CUE and OmniRide. The purpose of the NoVaTransit Data Dashboard is to aggregate and visualize these data in a publicly accessible way and to make the region's transit data more accessible and transparent to both the public as well as professionals who might find the data useful for their own work.

<https://novatransit.org/transit-dashboard/>

ENVISION ROUTE 7 BUS RAPID TRANSIT STUDY

NVTC continued to lead the planning process for the Envision Route 7 project, which is a bus rapid transit (BRT) system that would provide high-quality, high-capacity transit service between Tysons and the Mark Center in Alexandria with stops in Falls Church and Seven Corners. NVTC hosted a community chat in Falls Church in October 2022 to share details on the project and answer questions.

<https://novatransit.org/programs/route7/>

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSIT THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This report attempts to evaluate and better understand pandemic transit trends in Northern Virginia. Although previous work has looked at transit in other regions, and transit more generally, no other work focused only on Northern Virginia. There were four primary goals for this report: provide an overview of major transit trends in Northern Virginia for the past three years, explore how Northern Virginia travel patterns or habits have changed, explore how Northern Virginia transit services have changed and summarize the analysis and findings to provide transit takeaways for the region.

<https://novatransit.org/uploads/studiesarchive/2022NoVaCOVIDTransitReport.pdf>

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (DRPT)

Overview

The mission of DRPT is to facilitate and improve the mobility of the citizens of Virginia and to promote the efficient transport of goods and people in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner. DRPT is a state agency that reports to the Secretary of Transportation. Its focus is on the movement of people and goods throughout the Commonwealth, the primary areas of activity are rail, public transportation, and commuter services. DRPT works with local, regional, state, and federal governments, as well as private entities to provide support for projects and programs by:

- Assessing feasibility and environmental impacts of new and expanding services,
- Conducting statewide rail and public transportation studies,
- Planning and programming new services and capital improvement projects, and
- Providing leadership, advocacy, technical assistance, and funding.

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (WSTC)

Overview

Created in 1965, the Commission administers the Washington Suburban Transit District and has powers to plan, develop, and oversee, on a bi-county basis, a transportation system, including mass transit facilities, for Montgomery County and Prince George's County, Maryland. It coordinates mass transit programs with the two county governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Within Montgomery and Prince George's counties, the Commission acts as the financial conduit for funding of mass transportation projects. It also is authorized to levy a property tax in each county to support mass transit services, and associated debt service and administrative costs.

The Commission consists of seven members appointed to three-year terms. Two are chosen by the Montgomery County Executive, and two by the Prince George's County Executive. With Senate advice and consent, the Governor appoints one member from Montgomery County and one from Prince George's County. One member serves ex officio. Annually, the position of chair alternates between Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

PART 6 - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This section showcases some of the major accomplishments by transit agencies in the region over the past year, including major studies completed or in progress as well as significant operational achievements.



Metrorail train at the station with a "Happy Holidays!" wrap displayed (Pierre Gaunard/TPB)

MAJOR STUDIES COMPLETED AND LIST OF STUDIES IN PROGRESS

DDOT/DC CIRCULATOR & STREETCAR

DC Circulator Transit Development Plan 2020 Update

The final draft of the DC Circulator's Transit Development Plan was completed in 2021 and published for public comment and review. The final document was published in 2022. The plan evaluated the current system's routes and performance goals, as well as outlined service changes aimed to better align District Department of Transportation (DDOT) resources with growing activity centers and improve the reliability of DC Circulator service. The main proposal from the plan was the implementation of a new route in Ward 7. At the time, DDOT expected the proposed route to be implemented in 2023. Other changes and improvements to the existing service such as bus stop consolidation, transit priority improvements and traffic safety enhancements will be also implemented to improve the service.

DC Circulator Electrification Plan

The DC Circulator Electrification Plan was completed in 2022. The plan outlined a strategy to reach full DC Circulator fleet electrification using battery-electric buses by 2030 (dependent on facility infrastructure developments). Modeled based on potential service expansion by 2030, DC Circulator forecasts the system will require 100 battery-electric buses, including spares.

DC Circulator is in the process of renovating an existing facility to include additional electric bus storage and charging capacity, and planning for a new, purpose-built facility that would only house zero-emission vehicles.

2022 Transit Asset Management Plan Update

DDOT completed the 2022 update to the Transit Asset Management Plan, which addresses both the DC Streetcar and DC Circulator systems. The plan inventories both systems' assets, the condition of each, and expectations for how long each asset can be maintained in a state of good repair. Priorities for the future include continuing to improve maintenance practices and tracking, improving planning for systems replacements and upgrades, and integrating new systems elements into existing asset management systems.

Preparing for Future Streetcar Expansion

DC Streetcar continued to plan needed projects, including the addition of in-house maintenance and vehicle storage and the procurement of additional cars in anticipation of the two-mile extension of service to the Benning Road Metrorail Station.

CITY OF FAIRFAX/CUE

Brand Update

In 2022, CUE finished a project to envision a new brand for the organization. The new bus livery and agency branding will be rolled out publicly in Summer 2023.

Figure 4: Renderings of CUE Rebranding



Equity and Sustainability

CUE continues to consider equity in all service changes and future service plans. CUE will be updating its TDP in 2023. This plan will play an important role in future service improvement. In addition, the City of Fairfax, CUE's parent organization, is currently undergoing a Title VI analysis to understand opportunities to improve equity in transportation. The NVTC Zero-Emission Bus Study will also help to plan for the feasibility of zero-emission buses on CUE's routes.

FAIRFAX COUNTY/CONNECTOR

Activities undertaken in FY 2022 included a series of planning efforts as part of multiple route optimization studies. These subarea studies assessed the County's transit needs and provided input to the TDP/TSP. Route optimization studies were conducted for the bus routes serving four areas of the County:

- The Reston – Herndon study examined how Fairfax Connector bus service could be modified to better serve riders and respond to Metrorail's Silver Line Phase 2 extension to the Dulles Airport and Loudoun County. This study was completed in FY 2021, approved in FY 2022, and implemented in FY 2023.
- The Centreville – Chantilly – Vienna – Tysons study examined opportunities to better align Fairfax Connector service with the transportation needs of residents and visitors along the I-66 and I-495 corridors. The study also investigated ways to leverage the infrastructure investments of the I-66 Express Lanes Project to enhance transit services within the corridor.
- The Huntington – Lorton study examined opportunities to better align Fairfax Connector service with the transportation needs of the public within the Richmond Highway corridor. The study also investigated how local bus service could be adjusted in response to the planned Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project. This study is also part of the larger TSP, described below.
- The Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) was in development during FY 2022 and was anticipated to be completed in the fourth quarter of FY2023. The TSP includes both the fiscally constrained transit program that includes all investments for which funding has been identified, as well

as the unconstrained program that identifies future transit investments that are currently unfunded.

Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Planning

Fairfax County has made the commitment to begin its transition to an all-ZEV Fairfax Connector bus fleet beginning in FY 2025. Beginning in that fiscal year, all replacement and expansion bus purchases will be ZEV. This presents several challenges for the County including changes in maintenance infrastructure and training at the three operating garages, and the placement and types of charging infrastructure that will be required by the fleet transition.

FREDERICK COUNTY/TRANSIT

2022 Transit Development Plan Update

Construction on Transit's administrative and operations facility continued, with anticipated completion in early FY23. The Transit Development Plan (TDP) was completed and approved. Transit continues to monitor potential federal funding opportunities that align with projects identified in the TDP. One project outlined in previous TDPs has been more streamlined integration of schedule and fare information. Passengers were presented with real-time data availability through the Transit app and other third-party apps. In addition, ongoing data updates will enable improved integration with real-time tracking apps such as Google Maps.

Another ongoing project outlined in previous TDPs is the expansion of passenger amenities. Transit is continuing to expand the bus shelter and shelter advertising program, including coordination with the City of Frederick, the business community, and residential and commercial developers. Transit continues to identify appropriate locations with high transit ridership in Frederick to implement new passenger amenities. Finally, Transit has identified opportunities to improve accessibility at existing stops and incorporate best practices into planning review for proposed stops.

PRTC/OMNIRIDE

Zero Emissions Bus Study

A Zero Emissions Bus Study was launched in Fall 2021. Throughout 2022, significant work was completed in assessing the OmniRide's commuter and local bus network, developing the fleet transition plan, and providing an overview of what facility upgrades would be necessary at the Western Maintenance Facility to accommodate Battery Electric Bus (BEB) infrastructure. In Fall 2022, OmniRide's consultant group provided an in-depth update to the PRTC Board of Commissioners, establishing the goals and desired outcomes of the study.

Converting smaller vehicles to non-fossil fueled sources, continued evaluation of what alternative fuels make sense for the larger fleet and restructuring of services to meet customer demand are key to rebuilding the local bus network. Commuter buses have a very different duty cycle and therefore, we will be diligent and precise with what fuel makes the most sense for those vehicles. The key is to incorporate elements into commuter lots so passengers could truly have a green commute. This could mean partnerships to introduce charging stations at commuter lots, which then allows the passenger to use a bus to complete their trip, reducing carbon emissions even further.

During 2022, PRTC submitted a Low or No Emissions Grant application to purchase new light and medium duty vehicles to begin a transition to zero emissions, but the application was unsuccessful. However, the ZEB study specifies the transition plan not only for heavy duty buses, but for light and medium duty vehicles and the goal is to apply for the next round of Low or No funding in 2023.

VRE

System Plan 2050 Update

VRE commenced an update of its System Plan 2050, replacing the existing System Plan 2040 adopted in 2014. This update will respond to the numerous changes in regional travel patterns observed since the previous Plan was completed and the COVID pandemic began. The scope of this comprehensive update is structured into three discrete phases that will take place over eighteen months beginning in June 2022. The Plan will allow VRE to identify ways to serve a greater number of people in the region and support a variety of travel needs, trip purposes, and rider demographics.

System Safety Program Plan

VRE completed its System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) in March of 2022 to comply with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations governing safety of commuter rail operators. The Plan lays out VRE's responsibilities to develop, implement, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated safety program, which includes responsibility for monitoring the compliance of all operations and support activities, and for reinforcing safe work practices aimed at identifying risks and reducing accidents.

Solar Power Generation Study

VRE conducted a study to identify potential locations for solar power generation pilots. Two stations, Lorton and Spotsylvania, were identified as having the greatest potential for solar electric generation based on their orientation, topography, and available land. VRE anticipates an 80% reduction in kilowatt hours (kWh) of grid electrical demand at these facilities, resulting in lower energy costs and a 57-ton decrease in greenhouse gas emissions annually. Additional installations are being studied at other VRE facilities for future implementation. VRE is also investigating opportunities to incorporate zero and/or low emission technologies in its locomotive fleet as its Rail Fleet Management and Transit Asset Management Plans are implemented to address fleet expansion needs and state of good repair and fleet renewal.

2022 Transit Asset Management Plan

VRE completed its quadrennial update to the Transit Asset Management Plan in September. This Plan is required under Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act changes to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) mandating that transit agencies develop a plan to establish asset management performance measures and targets. VRE's plan not only meets federal requirements but also allows the agency to improve operational efficiency, maintain assets in a state of good repair, and make data-driven asset improvement and capital expenditure investments.

SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

CITY OF FAIRFAX/CUE

Technology Update

In early 2022, CUE transitioned their AVL and APC systems to TransLoc.

Wage Increases

Labor challenges have continued to keep overtime high, but CUE has managed to not miss service. Thanks to a starting wage increase in late 2022, staffing levels were near optimal at the end of the year.

Increased Ridership

CUE secured funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Transit Ridership Incentive Program to help fund a four-year zero-fare pilot systemwide on CUE. So far ridership has responded well, rebounding above 2019 levels. We have seen notably higher usage from members of the George Mason University community living within the City of Fairfax, including at a new student housing development in Old Town Fairfax.

DDOT/DC CIRCULATOR & STREETCAR

Bus Priority Program

See <https://buspriority.ddot.dc.gov/> for project information.

Bus priority projects completed:

- 16th Street NW: Arkansas Ave to K St
- H Street NW: 13th St to North Capitol

Bus Priority projects in progress:

- Minnesota Avenue SE: Pennsylvania Avenue to East Capitol
- Pennsylvania Avenue SE: 2nd to Barney Circle
- MLK Jr. Avenue SE: Good Hope Road to St. Elizabeth's East Campus, building upon the existing pilot lanes
- M Street SE: 11th Street to South Capitol, building upon the existing pilot lanes
- 11th Street NW: Pennsylvania Avenue to Massachusetts Avenue
- 8th Street SE: Florida Avenue to East Capitol
- Columbia Road NW: 16th Street to California Street
- K Street Transitway: 11th Street to 21st Street
- 7th St NW: Pennsylvania Avenue to Massachusetts Avenue
- 14th St NW: Newton to Upshur
- Georgia Ave NW: Kansas to Barry
- Good Hope / Minnesota Ave SE: MLK to Pennsylvania Ave
- H Street NE: North Capitol to Benning Rd
- Nannie Helen Boroughs Ave NE: Minnesota to Eastern Ave

Federal Low/No Emissions Grant Award

DDOT was awarded a Low or No Emissions grant in 2022 for \$9,590,000 by the Federal Transit Administration. The District of Columbia Department of Transportation will receive funds to purchase seventeen battery electric buses to replace older buses. The District, which has committed to cut air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and prioritize communities that are overburdened by pollution, will operate the electric buses in a city ward with the poorest air quality and higher rates of asthma. The grant will continue DDOT's transition of the DC Circulator fleet away from fossil fuels, resulting in the remaining active fleet being either electric, hybrid, or clean diesel powered.

DC Streetcar Improved Service Quality

DC Streetcar significantly improved Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF) over the past six months. While this statistic is not often seen by the public, it translates directly into the service quality and reliability experienced by the public. Streetcar maintenance staff continue to make improvements in maintenance processes and identify solutions to repeat problems.

FAIRFAX CONNECTOR

Service Changes

The following service changes went into effect on October 1, 2022:

- Route 334: Newington Circulator
- Service on this route was streamlined to weekday rush hour and one mid-day trip.
- Route 350, 351, 352, 353: TAGS: Springfield Circulators
- To improve efficiency on existing Routes 350 and 351, which link the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Springfield Town Center, Route 350 was split, adding two routes - Route 352 and 353.
- Route 495: Burke Center - Tysons
- Service was streamlined on this route to rush hour and a mid-day trip similar to the aforementioned service change on Route 334. Route was also truncated on the north end to Tysons.
- Route 722: Chain Bridge Road - McLean - Langley
- This change improves operation of Route 722 with a minor schedule adjustment.
- Route 599: Pentagon - Crystal City

Express

- The fare on Route 599 is reduced from \$7.50 to \$4.25. The fare reduction is made possible by a grant from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC).
- On November 16, 2022 Fairfax Connector implemented an improved service plan in the Reston-Herndon area, that aligns with the opening of Metrorail's Silver Line Extension to Dulles International Airport
 - As part of the plan to improve frequency, span of service, and coverage 12 routes were eliminated (505, 551, 554, 556, 559, 585, 926, 927, 929, 980, 981, and 985) and their service hours were reallocated across the new bus network.

- To improve connectivity, frequency, and to reduce travel time in the Reston-Herndon area 19 routes were modified (507, 552, 553, 557, 558, 574, 599, 605, 924, 937, 950, 951, 952, 983, RIBS1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
- Four new routes were added:
 - **Route 615: Fair Oaks – Greenbriar**
Route provides more direct connections with Reston at Fair Oaks Hospital.
 - **Route 901: Herndon Metrorail – Centreville**
Route provides connectivity between the Herndon, Centreville, and Chantilly areas. Travel time is significantly reduced between these areas, while providing access from residential areas to employment centers.
 - **Route 921: Herndon Circulator**
Route operates as a loop through the Town of Herndon, connecting Herndon downtown and historical areas to the Herndon Metrorail Station. Service includes Parcher Avenue and Spring Street/Van Buren Street area not currently served by public transit. The route operates with 40-minute frequency on weekdays and weekends.
 - **Route 954: Sterling Plaza – Herndon Metrorail**
Route 954 provides all-day service between Sterling Plaza and Herndon Metrorail Station, improving access to employment, shopping, and Loudoun County Transit. Additionally, Route 954 provides more frequent and regular connections to medium-density and high-density areas along Herndon Parkway and Crestview Drive not currently served by public transit.

Low or No Fare Access Expanded

A state TRIP grant from DRPT was awarded in May 2022, supporting low/no fare programs to increase transit ridership.

Furthermore, the free Student Bus Pass Program was expanded to George C. Marshall High School in September 2022.

More Equitable Service

With regards to its 2022 service changes, Fairfax Connector took steps to better serve a broader share of potential customers. This included creating new bus timetables in English and Spanish. As a result of the Reston-Herndon service changes implemented in November 2022, the population and households served within a quarter of the system increased by twenty-four percent for minority population and twenty-three percent for low-income households (households earning at or below \$50,000).

FREDERICK TRANSIT

As the COVID-19 pandemic upended the ways Marylanders lived and worked, the dedicated employees of Frederick Transit found new and innovative ways to deliver meaningful services to the residents of Frederick County, especially those living or working in our more rural communities.

Building the Brand

Frederick Transit began conducting more effective public outreach during FY 2022, resulting in better knowledge of Transit services and programs. In addition, this outreach led to new bus stops and amenities, plus routes were retimed for operational improvement.

Partnership

Working with partner agencies, Frederick Transit staff identified outstanding needs within the community, primarily in the county's more rural communities. For example, to support the county's vaccination efforts, especially in underserved areas, Transit partnered with the Frederick County Health Department to create a mobile vaccination clinic. This effort spanned FY 2021 and FY 2022. One of Frederick Transit's electric buses was transformed into a fully equipped mobile clinic capable of traveling into areas in the county where transportation access may be minimal.

Transit works closely with the Frederick County Health Department to share information on its vehicles and social media platforms, including marketing materials for the mobile vaccination clinics. It also provides information for other County Divisions on transit access to upcoming public health related efforts.

Ridership

Ridership continues to rebound and is approximately eighty percent of pre-pandemic levels. Every route is operating as scheduled except for select Meet-the-MARC Shuttle runs, which have been reduced to reflect limited MARC train ridership (down nearly ninety percent of pre-pandemic levels). Drivers have been reassigned to assist with call-out coverage and additional paratransit support.

Safety

The Frederick Transit team remained flexible and responsive to ensure safety of their staff and passengers, maintain service availability for essential personnel, and identify unique uses of Frederick Transit resources. Frederick County was the first transit agency in the state to mandate masks and facial coverings onboard vehicles for both passengers and staff, prior to the establishment of the federal mask mandate. Masks are still provided to any rider that requests one.

Frederick Transit chose to operate fare-free for all services in late March 2020 and continued this effort through FY 2022, further ensuring the safety of passengers and drivers through the elimination of physical contact. Driver barriers were installed on each of the fixed-route buses, the shuttle buses, and the paratransit vehicles to provide an additional layer of protection. To further protect drivers, Frederick Transit is still practicing rear-door boarding where possible.

Frederick Transit and Staff Win Multiple Awards

In FY 2022, Frederick Transit won the following awards:

Transportation Association of Maryland

- COVID-19 Above and Beyond Award
- 2021 Driver of the Year Award (Ricardo Hernandez)

Federal Transit Administration

- Connecting Rural Communities Award

Association for Commuter Transportation

- 40 Under 40 Award (Kendall Tiffany)

Frederick County Office of Economic Development

- 50 Under 40 Award (Roman Steichen)

Frederick County Commission for Women

- Up and Coming Woman of the Year Award (Jaime McKay)

PRTC/OMNIRIDE

Commuter Bus Service

Ridership consistency was the biggest challenge for commuter buses. For commuter bus riders, OmniRide evaluated SmarTrip utilization and found that on average, a passenger was using the service two times per week. While there were many passengers that still used the service four or five times a week, most were three and under. As ridership evaluations continue, OmniRide will make necessary revisions to schedules to account for the reduced daily ridership count, yet still maintain high productivity services. The focus is to continue to operate services to the Pentagon and the core of Washington which consistently have the highest demand for services.

Commuter Choice Funding

PRTC continued to apply for Commuter Choice funding provided by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). In winter 2022, continued funding was secured for commuter operations along the I-66 corridor. This funding pays for 100% of the Route 612-Gainesville-Pentagon-Navy Yard and 622-Haymarket-Rosslyn-Ballston routes. The goal is to submit applications to maintain funding for I-395 Commuter Choice funded services in January 2023, with the awards being announced in spring 2023.

Local Bus Service

For the local bus network, ridership surpassed pre-pandemic ridership. Free fares went into effect in March 2020, which translated into more passenger utilization of the local bus routes. In the western county, ridership surpassed pre-pandemic totals, even given the gains in ridership experienced starting in December 2019 following a network restructuring that reduced transfers.

OmniRide staff is in the midst of evaluating local bus restructuring for services in the eastern part of the county. This includes robust outreach to the community by way of the Team 360 Outreach that was launched in summer 2022, evaluation of new microtransit zones, as well as introduction of paratransit to the eastern county, which would eliminate the need for fixed route deviation services.

Microtransit Service

In December 2022, OmniRide introduced microtransit in Manassas Park to replace a cancelled fixed-route bus route. OmniRide will continue to consider microtransit for areas that either do not have

service or where ridership may be lagging on segments of routes, but transit services are still necessary. It is a cost-effective and flexible tool to operate transit services in areas where a large bus may not be necessary.

Navigating Workforce Challenges

The national workforce challenges that have plagued most transit systems impacted OmniRide's ability to fully operate all trips without having some gaps in service. Progress was made on filling vacant operator positions, however, staff also adjusted schedules to increase reliability and customer confidence and not over-schedule routes that do not have the same levels of ridership.

State Funding Leads to All-Day Service to Metro

OmniRide received Transit Ridership Incentivization (TRIP) funding through DRPT to establish all-day, bi-directional service between Manassas and Tysons Metro Station. Previously, this route only operated during peak times in peak directions. All-day service has been a consistent request and this grant provided the necessary funding to operate the route all day.

Weekend Bus Service

In August 2022, OmniRide launched its first Sunday service for local and Metro Express services. Seven day a week service is now available on the Dale City, Dumfries, Woodbridge-Lake Ridge and Route 1 local routes as well as the Prince William Metro Express that connects Woodbridge to the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. The addition of Sunday service increased overall weekend ridership on the eastern local routes. Immediately after implementing this new service, Saturday service increased at a higher rate than expected. Overall, Sunday service tracked at about sixty percent of Saturday ridership.

VRE

Full Size Bicycles Allowed Permanently

To encourage more sustainable commutes to and from VRE stations, VRE amended its passenger tariff to allow full-sized bicycles on all VRE trains. VRE also installed new bike racks at L'Enfant, Crystal City, and Brooke stations that previously had lacked bicycle parking.

Infrastructure Investments

The Rolling Road Station Platform Extension project was completed in the fall of 2022. The 290-foot extension allows the platform to accommodate 8-car trains, facilitating future service expansions on the Manassas Line.

VRE Operations Board selected a preferred alternative for the L'Enfant Track and Station Improvements project in October. The selected alternative best accommodates long-term platform capacity and operational requirements while enhancing station access. The next steps in this project include preliminary engineering and an environmental review, commencing in spring 2023.

The Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) facility at the Fredericksburg Line's Crossroads Yard is nearing completion, with a topping-out ceremony held in August. The \$53 million facility will allow

VRE to perform heavy maintenance onsite, as opposed to contracting out major rolling stock upgrades.

The Quantico Station Improvement project began to take shape in 2022 with construction of a pair of new platforms, stair and elevator towers, and connecting walkway. The \$24 million project accommodates 8-car VRE and Amtrak trains and will allow the Commonwealth to construct the final segment of the Arkendale to Powells Creek Third Track project through the station site, bringing long-term corridor fluidity benefits and improved on-time performance and customer experience to Fredericksburg Line riders.

VRE approved contracts for construction management and construction services for the rehabilitation of the aerial structures and station platforms at Fredericksburg. The \$11 million project will also add a set of stairs on the south end of the east platform, enabling more efficient boarding and alighting and access to VRE parking facilities. Construction is expected to commence in early 2023.

VRE also approved a contract with Gannet Fleming in July for construction management services for a 736-space parking garage at the Manassas Park station to support the development of the Manassas Park town center and accommodate service increases at the station through 2050. Construction on the parking facility and associated platform access bridge is expected to commence in mid-2023.

Ridership Increasing Throughout the Year

VRE's ridership in FY 2022 was 19.6% of FY 2019's total (July 1 to June 30) but steadily increased as federal agency employees (that make up roughly sixty to seventy percent of VRE's ridership) and other workers returned to in-office work schedules. Many commuters worked hybrid schedules and as a result, VRE continued to see softer patronage on Mondays and Fridays, with peak ridership days being in the middle of the week. From an ultimate low point of 459 average daily ridership in April of 2020, VRE patronage increased 1,373% through September 2022, when average daily ridership for the month reached 6,760, the highest since pre-pandemic. Wednesday, September 29 saw the highest single-day patronage since February 2020 at 9,039 systemwide. Federal pandemic relief funds have been used since the start of the pandemic to supplant lost fare revenue, and these funds are expected to last for several more fiscal years, providing VRE with a longer period to rebuild ridership and restructure service to best meet the needs of the region post-COVID.

Safety Accomplishments

VRE achieved an impressive milestone in November with seven injury-free years by the Keolis (VRE's contract operator) mechanical team at VRE's Broad Run Yard. In September and October, VRE conducted outreach activities at five stations to raise awareness of Emergency Notification System signs at grade crossings. These signs contain a phone number that puts the public in direct contact with railroad dispatch staff in the event of an emergency such as a vehicle on the tracks or a trespasser sighting. Additionally, VRE installed "988" Suicide and Crisis Lifeline signs at all stations to promote the new national network of crisis centers.

Temporary Fare Free Operations

VRE went 100% fare-free in September to promote the service and to assist WMATA customers impacted by the Blue and Yellow Line shutdown. In October, VRE continued offering free fares between stations in zones 3, 2, and 1 as the shutdown continued through October.

PART 7 - TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD ACTIVITIES

This section details the activities of the Transportation Planning Board, the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the National Capital Region. These include accomplishments and major changes with the Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee (RPTS), performance-based planning and programming (PBPP), and Visualize 2045 and 2050, the region's current and upcoming transportation plans respectively.



National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board meeting room at MWCOG (Pierre Gaunard/TPB)

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. Topics discussed at RPTS Meetings in 2022 include:

TPB Activities and Products:

- Bus Transit Service Equity Analysis and Webmap
- Transit Within Reach Program
- TPB High-Capacity Transit Map Update
- Visualize 2045 plan progress
- PBPP Transit Asset Management Targets

WMATA Activities and Products:

- On-Demand Transit Study
- WMATA Better Bus
- WMATA Bus Priority Update
- Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity and Reliability Study

Other Regional Transit Provider and Local Government Activities:

- DC Neighborhood Connect Overview
- Montgomery County BRT Update
- Visually Impaired and Urban Navigation Study and Pilot Design
- DC Circulator TDP Overview
- SMRT Project Overview
- DDOT Georgia Ave. Bus Priority Project

Other Regional Plans and Activities:

- NVTC Research Activities
- MetroNow 2021 Progress Report
- NVTC Commuter Choice Performance Framework

All documents can be found at the RPTS events page via the link below:
https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/?F_committee=165

PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

Transit Asset Management

Transit asset management (TAM) is federally defined as “a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving public transportation capital assets effectively through the life cycle of such assets.” In accordance with federal requirements, providers of public transportation must adopt annual targets for the performance of their transit assets.

TAM targets were developed for the region for adoption by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) initially in 2017, and subsequently in 2019 and 2022. The setting of annual TAM targets is one of the requirements of the performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) rulemakings enacted by the federal government in accordance with the MAP-21 and FAST Act surface transportation acts. Once providers of public transportation have each set their TAM targets, MPOs have 180 days to adopt transit asset targets for their metropolitan planning area to comply with requirements.

TAM targets are adopted by the region’s providers of public transportation, following which TPB staff, in consultation and coordination with the region’s providers, propose a set of TAM targets for the region that summarizes the reported targets of all agencies in table or matrix format. This summary table of TAM targets is then adopted by the TPB as the set of regional TAM targets. Per FTA guidance, the regional TAM targets are developed as a single regional target for each asset class. Regional targets are developed by calculating the total number of each asset class and the associated target based on the targets of each the region’s providers of public transportation.

VISUALIZE 2045

Visualize 2045 is the federally mandated, long-range transportation plan (“Plan”) for the National Capital Region. The Plan underwent its federally mandated quadrennial update, which was approved in June 2022. The Plan includes additional items like TPB’s aspirational initiatives, new programs, and policies like added language in the air quality analysis resolution to increase the region’s commitment to addressing climate change within the transportation sector.

The Visualize 2045 update is organized into nine chapters:

1. About the Plan: provides an overview of the regional planning process and how the plan was developed.

2. **Where Are We Today?:** describes the regional context of geography, demographics, population, jobs, cultural, social, and environmental conditions.
3. **Visualizing Our Future Together:** describes the goals and priorities TPB uses to guide planning in the region.
4. **What Factors Affect Our Future?:** examines factors that impact communities and the transportation network.
5. **How Do We Engage the Public?:** summarizes the “Voices of the Region” public engagement used for the 2022 update
6. **Strategies for a Brighter Future:** describes planning activities and strategies TPB is using to improve the transportation network for all users.
7. **Funding the Transportation System:** provides an overview of transportation funding and financial planning in the region.
8. **Planning for Performance:** describes the TPB performance planning activities and congestion management process that aim to reduce congestion and pollution.
9. **What Happens Next?:** visualizes the future challenges the region faces to achieve the goals outlined in the plan and what actions are necessary to achieve the best future for the region.

VISUALIZE 2050

In June 2021, the TPB passed a resolution requiring an updated Plan to be submitted for approval in 2024. Work on this updated Plan, which will be known as Visualize 2050: National Capital Region Transportation Plan, began in late 2022

APPENDIX

The report's appendix is divided into sections reflecting extra information significant to the content of the main report. This includes the report's research methodology, supplementary data, and references and credits.

A.1 METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

Data for the State of Public Transportation report was gathered using mixed methods, including: questionnaires sent to RPTS member jurisdictions and transit agencies, follow-up correspondences via e-mail, research of primary and secondary sources such as transit agency websites, equipment manufacturer websites, federal NTD Agency Profiles and other databases, news media, press releases, transit agency videos and agency-related videos on YouTube, transit agency social media (including X (formerly Twitter) posts and Facebook pages), publicly available transit development plans, fleet management plans, transit strategic plans, comprehensive plans, progress reports, board presentations, meeting minutes, and more.

National Transit Database (NTD)

Congress established the NTD to be the Nation's primary source for information and statistics for U.S. transit systems. Federal law requires that recipients or beneficiaries of grants from the FTA under the Urbanized Area Formula Program (§5307) or Other than Urbanized Area (Rural) Formula Program (§5311) submit data to the NTD.

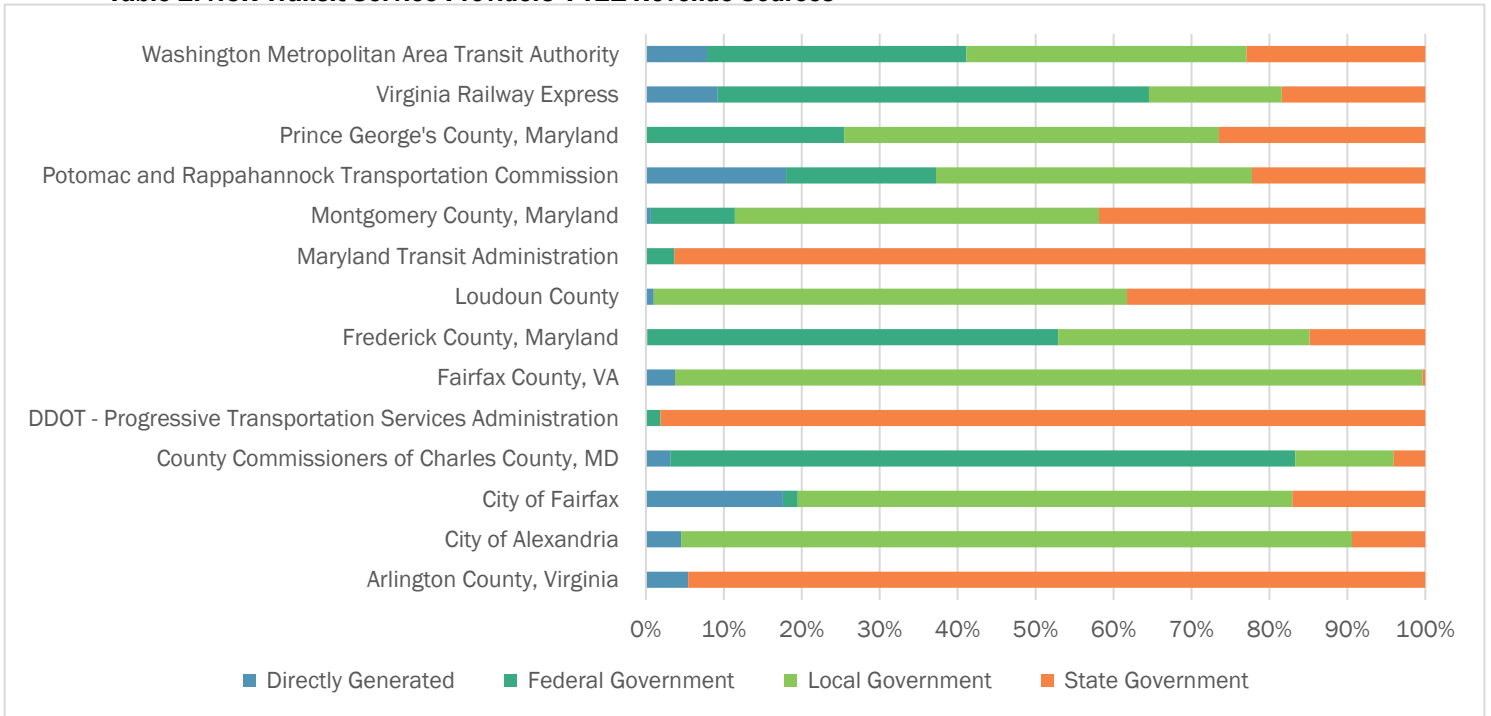
Where information appears from the NTD Agency Profiles, the data is from calendar year 2021, not 2022. The annual profile updates are released by the Federal Transit Administration every fall after the year for which the data is applicable. This timeline means that the data is typically released after this report is published. Therefore, although this State of Public Transportation report is concerned with activities from 2022, the data available from the NTD for relevant agencies, at the time of preparing the report, was from 2021 and that is what appears in the report where cited.

Data Decisions

Where the data obtained for a particular metric (e.g., bus stop total, fleet count) varied between different sources, the total provided directly by the transit agency (if given) was the one chosen for this report. Otherwise, the most recently provided metric available in a transit agency produced document (including by an agency contractor) is used. Finally, if neither of those are available, the most recent metric totals available using secondary sources (e.g., news articles, reports produced by third parties) were used. For the purposes of this report, "recently" means the data that is most up to date as of December 2022. For bus fleet totals, all buses actively in service and available for service were included in the total count. This included buses that were expected to arrive for service within 2022 and could be verified as received, particularly relevant for new electric buses.

A.2 AGENCY REVENUE DATA (FROM NTD 2021)

Table 2: NCR Transit Service Providers' FY21 Revenue Sources



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Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

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