



INTERCITY TRAVEL OVERVIEW

National Capital Region Operations – Spring 2023

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Purpose and Contents

- Recap intercity travel and federal planning requirements
- Refresh everyone on TPB's 2016 Count of Intercity Bus Traffic Study
- Present an updated overview of NCR intercity bus and rail operations
 - Private and public intercity bus
 - Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation)
- Highlight planned FY 2024 TPB UPWP activities
- An abridged presentation will be given to the TPB at its June 21 meeting



Intercity Bus Stops at D.C. Union Station (Pierre Gaunard/COG)



Background

What Is Intercity Travel?

- *Intercity Bus* “**Regularly scheduled bus service** for the general public that operates **with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity**, that has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and that makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus service to more distant points, if such service is available.” (FTA C 9040.1G, Federal Transit Administration, 2014)
- *Intercity Rail*: “...means **rail passenger transportation**, except commuter rail passenger transportation (49 U.S. Code § 24102)



Why Study Intercity Travel?



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- Popular modes of transportation
- Potential use overlap with commuter transit
- Supports equity in value and access to long-distance travel options
- Intercity bus especially:
 - Affordable travel option
 - Convenient stop locations
 - Offers travel options for rural and small urban areas
- Federal requirements



Federal Planning Regulations

- Federal planning regulations related to the FAST Act and published in May 2016 (*Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning; Final Rule*) require MPO consideration of intercity travel in regional planning:
 - “... the MPO designated for each urbanized area is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and a TIP, that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including accessible pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities, and **intermodal facilities that support intercity transportation, including intercity buses and intercity bus facilities** and commuter vanpool providers) ... § 450.300(a)



TPB - 2016 Count of Intercity Bus Traffic study

- 14 intercity bus stops were visited in the region
- 10 service operators studied
- Key findings:
 - Fridays were the busiest travel day by bus
 - Union Station was the dominant boarding/alighting point
 - Most trips are to or from the NYC area

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Spring 2023 Overview – Methodology

Collect updated information on intercity bus and rail operations in the NCR

- Online news articles, social media posts, and other open-source data were reviewed to conclude which intercity bus providers are actively operating in the region
- Amtrak service schedules were reviewed for intercity rail
- This overview focuses primarily on destinations with direct service from the NCR



Intercity Bus Stop at Vienna Metro Station (Pierre Gaunard/COG)



Intercity Snapshot – Spring 2023

25

NCR Intercity
Bus Stops
(Trip Origin)

17

Intercity bus stops
located at rail or
transit stations
/park and rides*

9

Amtrak NCR
stops

50+

Intercity bus
destinations with
direct (one bus)
service from NCR

* Others like Dupont Circle and Bethesda stops are near Metrorail



NCR Intercity Bus Services



Intercity Bus Service – Spring 2023

15

Intercity Bus
Operators

59

Daily Bus
Trips to
Baltimore,
2nd busiest
destination
from NCR

81

Daily Bus
Trips to NYC
from Union
Station*

129

Daily Bus
Trips to NYC
originating
from all
other NCR
stops*^

- *On Fridays, generally the highest day of service (few operators offer more trips on Saturday or Sunday); total includes direct & indirect trips.
- ^ Some of these trips stop at Union Station before proceeding to NYC



Bus Stops and Providers

County or city	Station	Providers	Destinations
Washington, D.C.	Dupont Circle	FlixBus, Best Bus, Washington Deluxe, OurBus	New York City
	Metro Center	The Jet	New York City
	Union Station	Greyhound, Flixbus, Peter Pan, Megabus, Best Bus, Virginia Breeze, Washington Deluxe, OurBus	<u>MD</u> : Annapolis, Baltimore (area); <u>PA</u> : Philadelphia, Pittsburgh; <u>OH</u> : Cleveland; <u>NY</u> : New York City, Ithaca; <u>MA</u> : Boston; <u>DE</u> : Dewey Beach; <u>VA</u> : Warrenton, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Blacksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond; <u>GA</u> : Savannah, Atlanta, <u>NC</u> : Raleigh/Durham, Charlotte; <u>FL</u> : Jacksonville, Orlando, Miami



Bus Stops and Providers – Union Station



Buses parked at Union Station (Pierre Gaunard/COG)



Bus Stops and Providers (cont.)

County or city	Station	Providers	Destinations
Washington, D.C.	Stadium-Armory Metro	OurBus	<u>NJ</u> : Newark; <u>NY</u> : New York City
	3355 Benning Road NE (Gas Station)	Wanda Coach/ Starline Coach	New York City
	2305 Pennsylvania Av. SE	PandaNY	<u>FL</u> : Orlando, Jacksonville; <u>GA</u> : Atlanta, Savannah; <u>NC</u> : Greensboro, Raleigh, Charlotte; <u>NY</u> : New York City
Frederick County	Frederick MARC	BayRunner, Greyhound	<u>DC</u> : Washington; <u>IL</u> : Chicago; <u>MD</u> : Baltimore, BWI, Silver Spring; <u>OH</u> : Cleveland, Toledo; <u>PA</u> : Pittsburgh;



Bus Stops and Providers (cont.)

County or city	Station	Providers	Destinations
Frederick County	Frederick Airport	BayRunner,	<u>MD:</u> Baltimore, BWI,
Montgomery County	Bethesda	FlixBus, OurBus	<u>GA:</u> Atlanta; <u>MA:</u> Boston (area); <u>NC:</u> Charlotte; <u>NY:</u> New York City, Ithaca; <u>PA:</u> Pittsburgh; <u>VA:</u> Richmond, Tysons
	Rockville	FlixBus	<u>MA:</u> Boston (area); <u>NY:</u> New York City, Ithaca
	Silver Spring	Greyhound	<u>DE:</u> Wilmington; <u>IL:</u> Chicago; <u>MD:</u> Baltimore; <u>NY:</u> New York City; <u>OH:</u> Cleveland; <u>PA:</u> Philadelphia, Pittsburgh; <u>VA:</u> Fredericksburg, Richmond
	Silver Spring (Transit Center)	Greyhound, Peter Pan	<u>FL:</u> Orlando, Jacksonville; <u>MD:</u> Baltimore; <u>NY:</u> New York City; <u>PA:</u> Philadelphia



Bus Stops and Providers (cont.)

County or city	Station	Providers	Destinations
Prince George's County	College Park	Greyhound	<u>MD</u> : Baltimore ; <u>PA</u> : Philadelphia; <u>NJ</u> : Newark; <u>NY</u> : New York City; <u>DE</u> : Wilmington;
	Laurel	Greyhound	<u>MD</u> : Baltimore ; <u>PA</u> : Philadelphia; <u>NY</u> : New York City; <u>DE</u> : Wilmington;
	New Carrollton	Greyhound	<u>MD</u> : Baltimore ; <u>PA</u> : Philadelphia; <u>NY</u> : New York City; <u>DE</u> : Wilmington;
Arlington County	Rosslyn Metro	FlixBus, Vamoose, Tripper Bus	<u>MA</u> : Boston (area); <u>NY</u> : New York City, Ithaca
Fairfax County	Lorton VRE Station	Vamoose	New York City
	Springfield Metro	Greyhound, Best Bus, OurBus	New York City



Bus Stops and Providers (cont.)

County or city	Station	Providers	Destinations
Fairfax County	Tysons Corner Metro	Go Bus	New York City
	Tysons - McLean Metro	OurBus	Harrisonburg, Roanoke, Blacksburg
	Vienna Metro	Go Bus, Best Bus, OurBus	New York City
	Woodbridge VRE	Greyhound	<u>DE:</u> Wilmington; <u>MD:</u> Baltimore; <u>NY:</u> New York City; <u>PA:</u> Philadelphia; <u>VA:</u> Richmond, Springfield
Falls Church	West Falls Church Metro	Virginia Breeze/Megabus	<u>NY:</u> New York City; <u>PA:</u> Philadelphia (via D.C. on Virginia Breeze)
Prince William County	Gainesville (University Park & Ride)	Virginia Breeze	Washington, D.C.



Bus Stops and Providers (cont.)

County or city	Station	Providers	Destinations
Prince William County	Manassas (Cushing Rd Park & Ride)	OurBus, Best Bus, Go Bus	New York City



Select Bus Origins and Destinations

- Maryland: Baltimore (Downtown), White Marsh, BWI Airport, Annapolis
- Virginia: Springfield, Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Blacksburg, Richmond, Lynchburg
- North Carolina: Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro
- Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, York
- Delaware: Wilmington, Newark, Dewey Beach
- Massachusetts: Boston
- Ohio: Cleveland, Toledo
- Illinois: Chicago



Intercity Bus Providers

Current Providers Included in 2016 Study

Greyhound

Peter Pan

Megabus

Best Bus

Vamoose

BayRunner

Washington Deluxe

TripperBus

New Bus Lines for 2023 Review*

FlixBus

Go Bus

Virginia Breeze

The Jet

OurBus

Wanda Coach/Starline

Coach

PandaNY

Providers No Longer In Service **

BoltBus

Eastern

Omnibus LaCubana

Rapid Overland Express

Royal Traveler

Sprinter Bus

NOTES:

* Some of these may have operated in 2016, but were not included in the study

** BoltBus and Eastern are now part of FlixBus; Sprinter Bus' status is unclear



Business Class Intercity Bus Providers

- Four premium intercity bus options
 - BestBus Prime
 - TripperBus Elite
 - Vamoose Gold
 - The Jet (all buses luxury)
- Prices range from \$49-\$179 one way.
- Amenities may include: more leg room, more comfortable seats, enhanced wifi, etc.

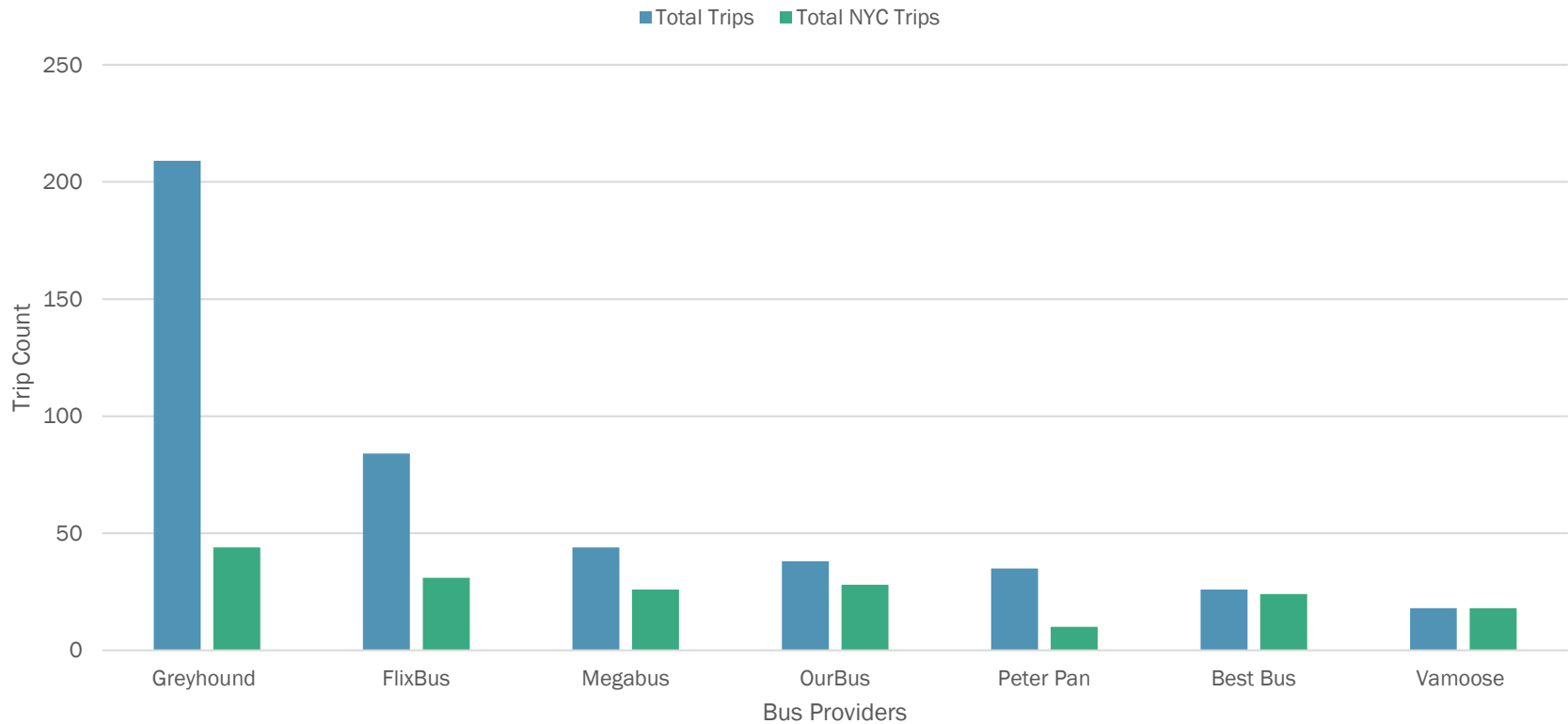


BestBus Prime Interior (BestBus./<https://www.bestbus.com/pages/prime.aspx>)



Intercity Bus Providers – Service Share

Share of Trips By Largest Bus Providers



Source: Bus Provider Online Schedules



Intercity Bus Ridership – Covid Impacts

- Scheduled motorcoach businesses (intercity buses) experienced a 64.8% decline in passengers nationally between 2019 and 2020 (American Bus Association’s 2020 Motorcoach Census)
 - 61.8 million vs. 33.6 million
- 25% of the bus industry closed as a result of the COVID pandemic (Chaddick Institute/ABA)
- As of February 2023, intercity bus ridership has returned to 70-75% of pre-pandemic totals
 - The expectation is it will return to 80-85% by the end of 2023 (Chaddick Institute/Smart Cities Dive)

ROX RAPID OVERLAND XPRESS



Rapid Overland Xpress has operated three years under difficult travel and economic conditions. ROX will suspend service until further notice, as of Sunday, May 22, 2022.

ROX Home Page in May 2023 (Rapid Overland Express <https://ridetherox.com/>)

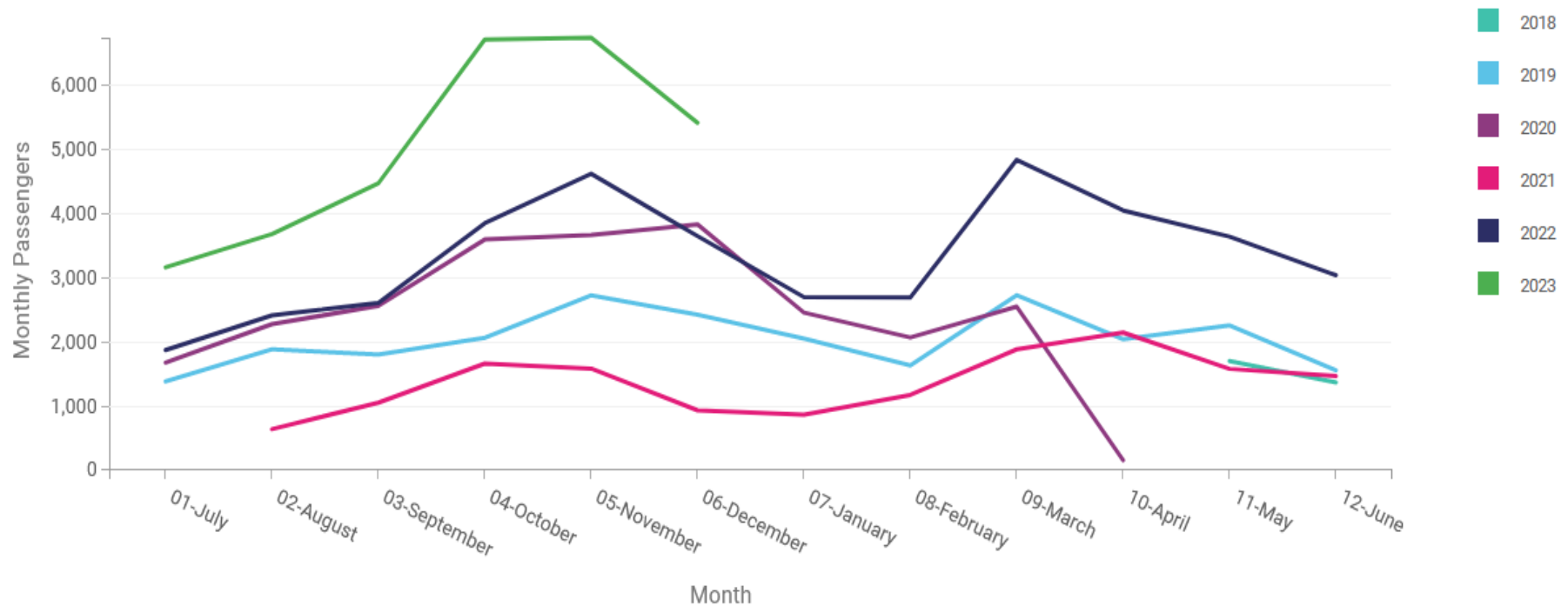


Intercity Bus Ridership – Virginia Breeze

- Virginia Breeze/DRPT publishes quarterly reports of ridership statistics
- Ridership trends are seasonally consistent, but increasing annually

Ridership by Fiscal Year

Each line represents a single fiscal year. Use the filter to explore route, stop, and month details. Note: the Virginia Breeze was inactive between April and August of 2020.



Source: Virginia Breeze/DRPT Data Dashboard



NCR Intercity Rail (Amtrak)



Amtrak – Service Map



Amtrak Route Map (Amtrak/<https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/Maps/Amtrak-System-Map-1018.pdf>)

Amtrak operates in four directions from Washington, DC

- Northeast: Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston or Montreal
- Northwest: Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago
- Southwest: Charlottesville, Atlanta
- Southeast: Richmond, and either Hampton Roads or on to Savannah and Florida



Amtrak – Local Stations



Amtrak Route Map
 (Amtrak/<https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/Maps/Amtrak-System-Map-1018.pdf>)

Amtrak trains stop at Union Station. Other stations in the region include:

- Northeast: New Carrollton (followed by BWI Marshall Airport)

- Northwest: Rockville

Southbound trains stop at Alexandria, and then:

- Southwest: Burke, Manassas
- Southeast: Woodbridge, and Quantico (followed by Fredericksburg)

Lorton (*Auto Train*)



Amtrak – Train Service

- Most trips are between Washington DC and the Northeast/New York City

Name	Typical* Trips / weekday	Terminals
Acela	11 (16 in 2019)	Washington, DC <> Boston
Northeast Regional	14 (19 in 2019)	Washington, DC <> Boston plus Roanoke, Newport News, Norfolk
Vermont	1	Washington, DC <> Vermont
Capitol Limited	1	Washington, DC <> Chicago
Cardinal	3/week	Chicago <> New York City
Carolinian	1	Charlotte <> New York City
Crescent	1	New Orleans <> New York City

* As of May 18, 2023. Schedules may vary day-to-day



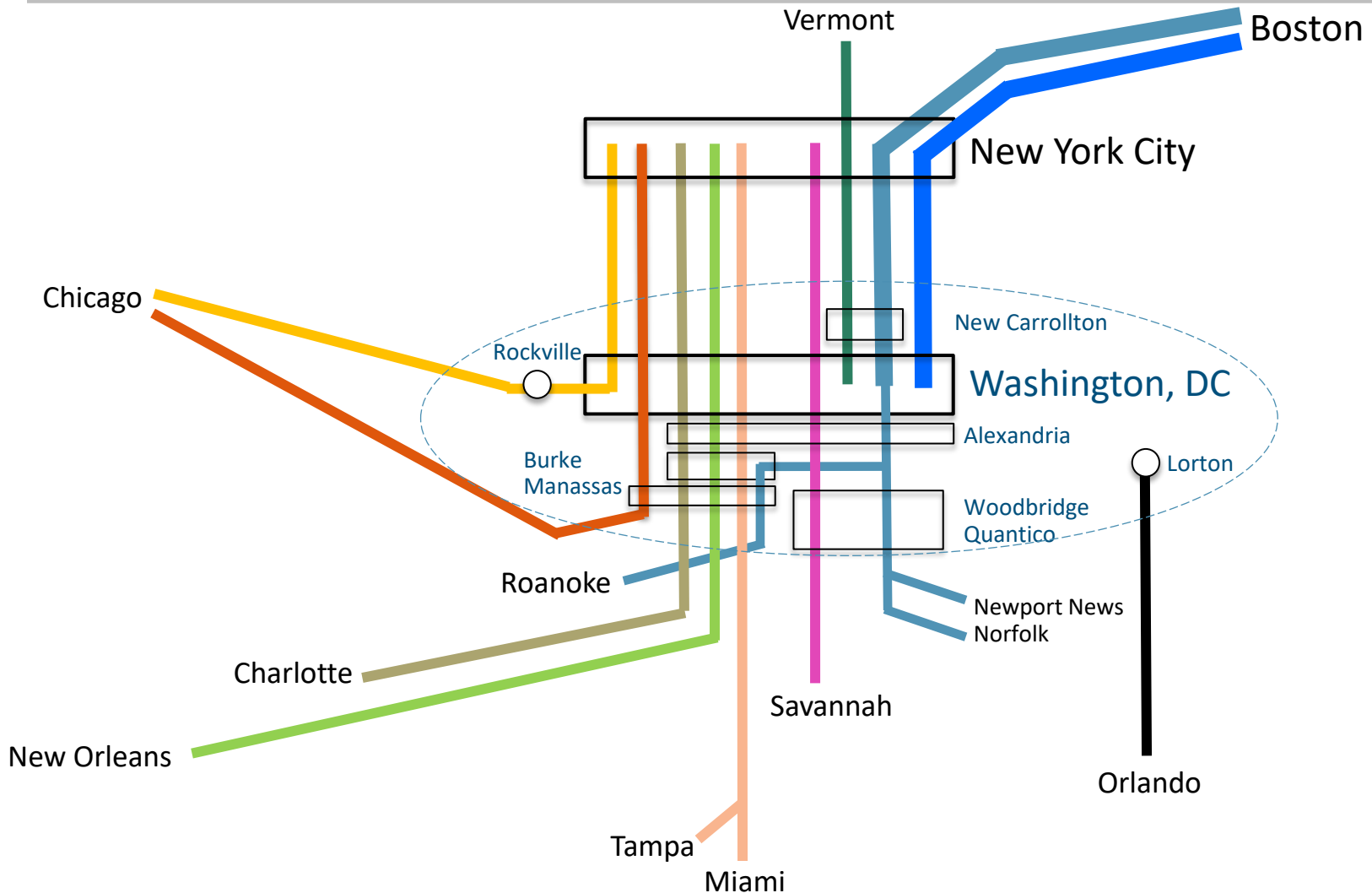
Amtrak – Train Service (cont.)

Name	Typical* Trips / weekday	Terminals
Palmetto	1	Savannah <> New York City
Silver Meteor	1	Miami <> New York City
Silver Star	1	Tampa <> New York City
Auto Train	1	Lorton, VA <> Orlando (Sanford, FL)

* As of May 18, 2023. Schedules may vary day-to-day



Amtrak – Train Service Schematic



Amtrak – Ridership Information (2019)

Union Station (Second busiest station in nation after New York Penn)

- 85 - 90 trains daily
- 5.2 million passengers in FY 2019

Other stations in the NCR in FY 2019

- Alexandria: 201K
- Burke: 9K
- Lorton: 236K (Auto-Train)
- Manassas: 26K
- Quantico: 20K
- Woodbridge: 12K
- New Carrollton: 186K
- Rockville: 5K
- *BWI Marshall: 751K*
- *Baltimore: 1.044 M*





Key Findings

- Similar trends to the 2016 Intercity Travel Study
 - Fridays are the busiest day on average
 - Northeast Corridor routes make up most regional intercity bus and rail travel
- Slow recovery of pre-pandemic ridership
- Bus lines dealing with workforce shortage and pandemic recovery

D.C. Amtrak Ticket Counter – Union Station (Pierre Gaunard/COG)



Future Intercity Travel Study

- Tasks 3.7 and 7.1 of TPB's FY24 UPWP include a complete update to the 2016 intercity travel count
 - Joint project between Systems Performance Planning and Transportation Research and Data teams
 - From FY24 UPWP Task 7.1: "...conduct a regional survey gathering usage information on intercity buses, commuter buses, rail transit, and commuter rail ... to advise regional planning and coordination"

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



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National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Appendix



Methodology – Spring 2023

- Origin Stops: The list of intercity bus stations and stops in the national capital region (NCR) was derived from both the 2016 TPB intercity travel study and current research of bus service providers' websites:
 - (ex. route maps, stop lists, bus schedules, etc.).
- Destination Stops: To find the list of destinations served by intercity travel providers, we also referenced the 2016 study, travel provider websites, and bus ticket booking sites.
 - In order to narrow the list of destination trips offered, this preliminary analysis focuses on destinations with direct service from the NCR (no bus transfer required).
- Provider List: Online news articles, social media posts, and other open source data were reviewed to conclude which bus providers are actively operating in the region.



Methodology – Spring 2023

- Trip totals for travel to individual destinations were calculated by researching provider schedules and counting the total number of trips offered to the applicable destination city from regional stops (whether direct or transfer service).
- Friday was the travel day used to calculate total trips offered to any city by every provider.
 - Some did offer more trips on Saturdays, Sundays, or specific times of the year.



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* As of May 18. Schedules may vary day-to-day



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