Director's Report

February 2026



DRPT
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation Updates

Statewide Ridership

- Statewide transit ridership was significantly impacted in November 2025 by the federal government shutdown with approximately 11.5M trips. See Slides 6 and 7 for more details.

Virginia Breeze Intercity Bus Service

- Virginia Breeze ridership was 8,300 in November 2025, up from 7,800 in November 2024. See Slide 8 for more details.
- The fifth route of the Virginia Breeze, the Tidewater Current, is set to launch in April. The Tidewater Current will run east-west from Harrisonburg to Virginia Beach, with points between, along the I-64 Corridor.

MERIT Review

- DRPT has been hosting meetings of the Transit Service and Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) at our Richmond offices to continue discussions on the MERIT Capital and Operating Assistance review.

Partner News

- Hampton Roads Transit had a ribbon cutting/launch event for their Hampton and Chesapeake On-Demand Microtransit Service on January 12. Both services funded by DRPT's Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) in the FY26 SYIP.
- DRPT and new WMATA Board Member Darrien Flowers were briefed on WMATA's operational updates during the week of February 2nd.

Industry Engagement

- DRPT participated in VTA Transit Advocacy Day on February 2, including hosting an open house for the Department's new leadership to meet with transit agencies across the Commonwealth.

CTB Resolution Update
MERIT Review

- Seeking CTB approval to revise Board action until DRPT can analyze Virginia's most recent transit performance data to better understand impacts of any proposed changes. This does not change the timeline for implementation.
- Updated Recommendation: Revise DRPT presenting a formal recommendation to the Board at its **September** meeting with a CTB vote at its **October** meeting. Any changes will still be implemented with the Fiscal Year 2028 Six Year Improvement Program; which opens for applications in December 2026.
  - Provides the TSDAC with additional time to complete its work.
  - Allows DRPT the opportunity to conduct additional outreach and engagement with the transit industry and general public.
  - Gives DRPT and TSDAC the ability to use updated April 2026 performance data to better inform impacts of any proposed changes.

Rail Updates

UP-NS Merger

- DRPT has filed a “Notice of Intent to Participate (Without Comment)” with the Surface Transportation Board on the UP-NS Merger – formally indicating with the Board the agency’s intent to be a party of record without submitting substantive comments at that time. VPRA and the Port of Virginia have also filed this notice, and any future State formal response would be coordinated through the Secretary’s office.

Rail Crossing Information Systems

- DRPT, VDOT’s Rail and Traffic Operations Divisions, the State Corporation Commission Utility & Railroad Safety Division, and VPRA participated in a virtual demonstration call with Oculus Rail, a Rail Crossing Information Systems (RXIS) technology company based in Norfolk with pilot projects in Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth.

Industry Engagement

- On January 30, DRPT Rail staff and Director Zimmerman participated in the annual Virginia Railroad Association Legislative Meeting to provide agency updates and understand Virginia’s rail industry’s legislative priorities.

Long Bridge

- Work windows for the construction of the new Long Bridge began January 12th, allowing VPRA contractors time during working hours to construct the new structure with minimal interference from freight or passenger trains. Amtrak and VRE service has adjusted, and may continue to adjust, to accommodate work windows over the approximately five years of construction of the Long Bridge project. VPRA is coordinating with Amtrak, VRE, CSX, and NS to monitor performance, and Amtrak and VRE are proactively providing notice to customers through calls, emails, social media, and in-station notices regarding any changes affecting passengers in advance of their trips.

Financial Updates

Preliminary FY2027-FY2032 Revenue Estimates – Transit and Rail highlights

Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund

- **FY2027 Revenue Estimate**: $600 million for public transit projects
- **FY2027-FY2032 Revenue:** $164.5 million higher than previous SYIP
  - MERIT Operating: $39.3 million
  - MERIT Capital: $27.4 million
  - WMATA Assistance: $75.1 million
  - VRE: 5.6 million
  - TRIP: $9.7 million
  - Special: $3.9 million
  - Other (Off the Top): $3.5 million

Commonwealth Rail Fund

- **FY2027 Revenue Estimate:** $194.7 million for Commonwealth Rail projects
  - DRPT FREIGHT Rail and Planning: $13.6 million
  - VPRA: $181.1 million

Rail Preservation Fund

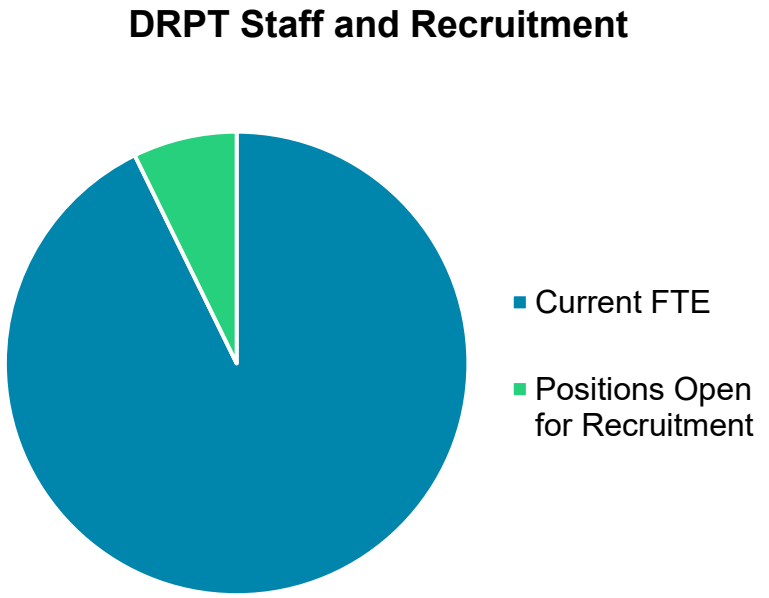
- **FY2027 Revenue Estimate**: $4.2 million

DRPT Staff Updates

- Mariia Zimmerman started as DRPT Director on January 20th.
- Allan Fye started as DPRT Chief Deputy Director on February 1st.



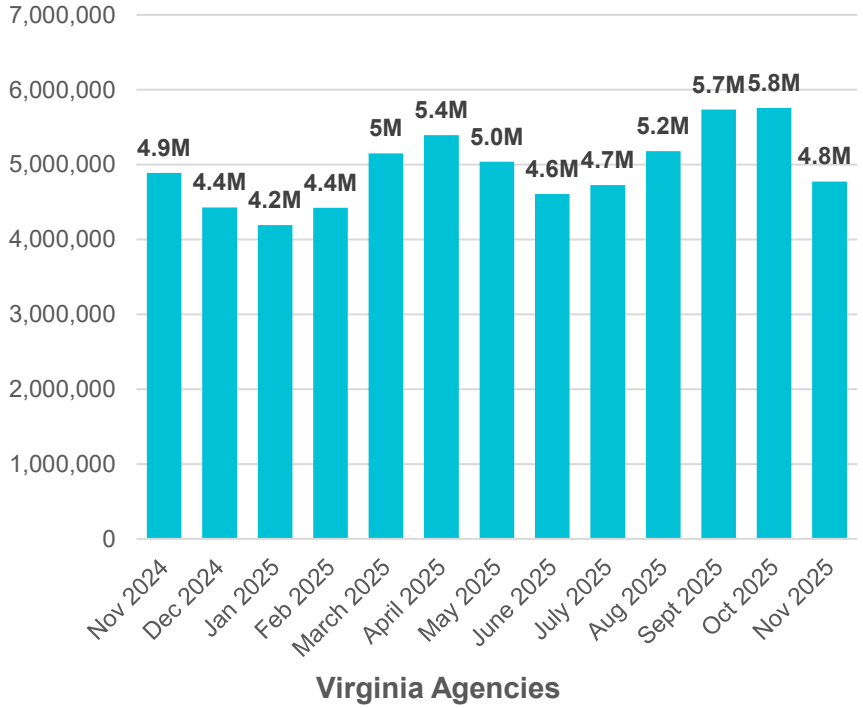




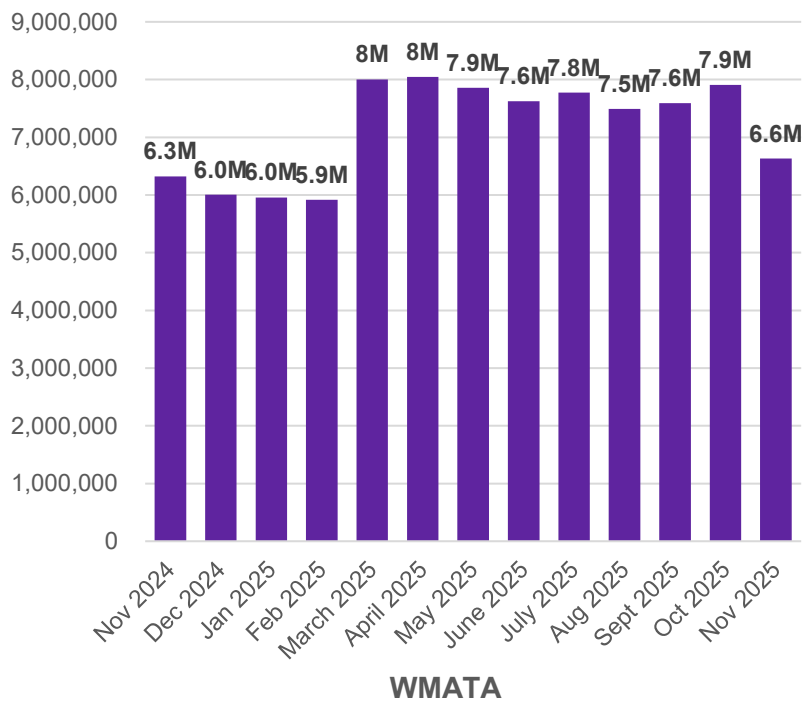
DRPT currently has 64 full-time employees.
DRPT is currently recruiting for five positions.

Statewide Transit Ridership

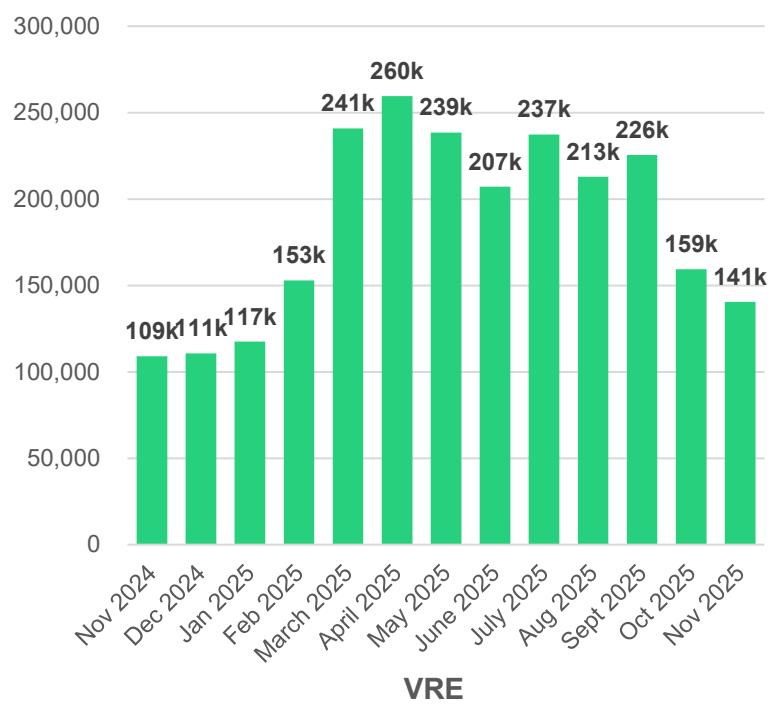
Statewide Transit Ridership – November 2024 to November 2025



Virginia Agencies



WMATA

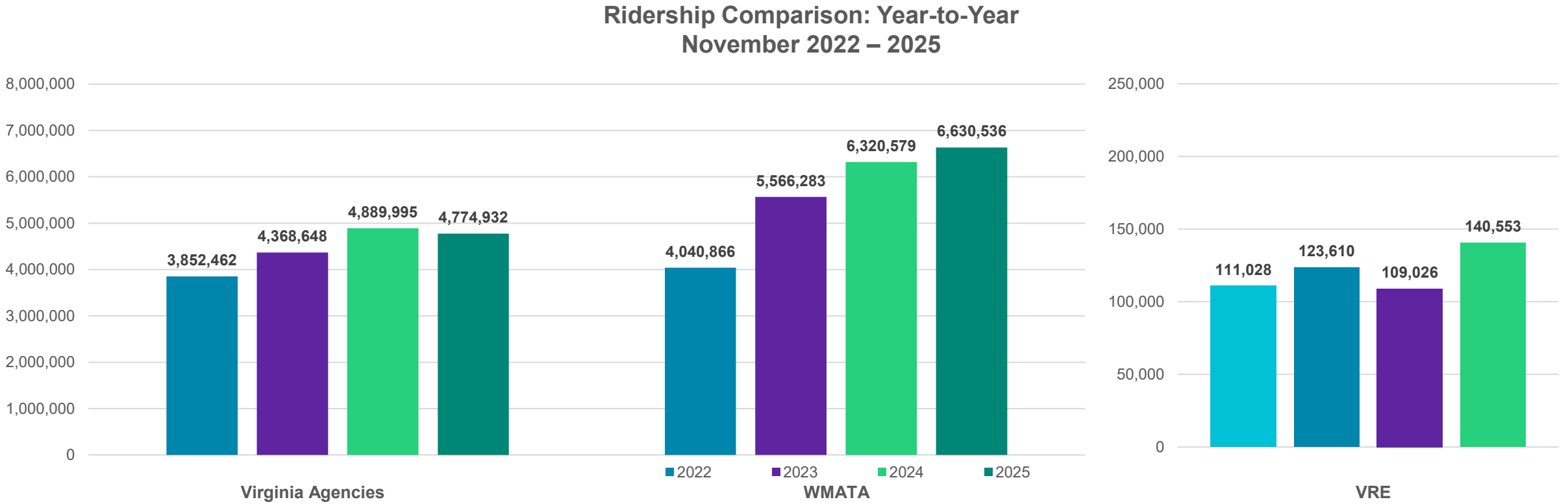


VRE

Agencies	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Total*
Virginia Agencies	4,889,995	4,427,193	4,190,344	4,422,095	5,149,919	5,392,036	5,038,705	4,605,627	4,726,900	5,178,330	5,735,065	5,758,386	4,774,932	59,399,532
VRE	109,026	110,625	117,466	152,882	240,794	259,585	238,518	207,130	237,363	212,798	225,504	159,390	140,553	2,302,608
WMATA	6,320,579	6,005,122	5,957,138	5,915,679	8,001,329	8,047,711	7,856,235	7,621,634	7,772,694	7,491,352	7,591,794	7,909,663	6,630,536	86,800,887
All Agencies + VRE + WMATA	**11,319,600**	**10,542,940**	**10,264,948**	**10,490,656**	**13,392,042**	**13,699,332**	**13,133,458**	**12,434,391**	**12,736,957**	**12,882,480**	**13,552,363**	**13,827,439**	**11,546,021**	**148,503,027**

*Last 12 Months

Four-Year Transit Ridership Monthly Lookback: November 2022-2025



Mode	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025 vs 2022	2025 vs 2023	2025 vs 2024
Virginia Agencies	3,852,462	4,368,648	4,889,995	4,774,932	24%	9%	-2%
VRE	111,028	123,610	109,026	140,553	27%	14%	29%
WMATA	4,040,866	5,566,283	6,320,579	6,630,536	64%	19%	5%
All Agencies + VRE + WMATA	**8,004,356**	**10,058,541**	**11,319,600**	**11,546,021**	**44%**	**15%**	**2%**

Virginia Breeze Intercity Ridership

In November 2025, ridership on VA Breeze routes totaled 8,300 which was:

- 291% higher than original estimates, and
- 10% higher than November 2024

In November 2025, the VA Breeze contributed to a reduction of 840 metric tons of CO_2 equivalent emissions.

Valley Flyer:

- Ridership – 1% lower than November 2024
- Farebox Rev. – 1% lower than November 2024

Piedmont Express:

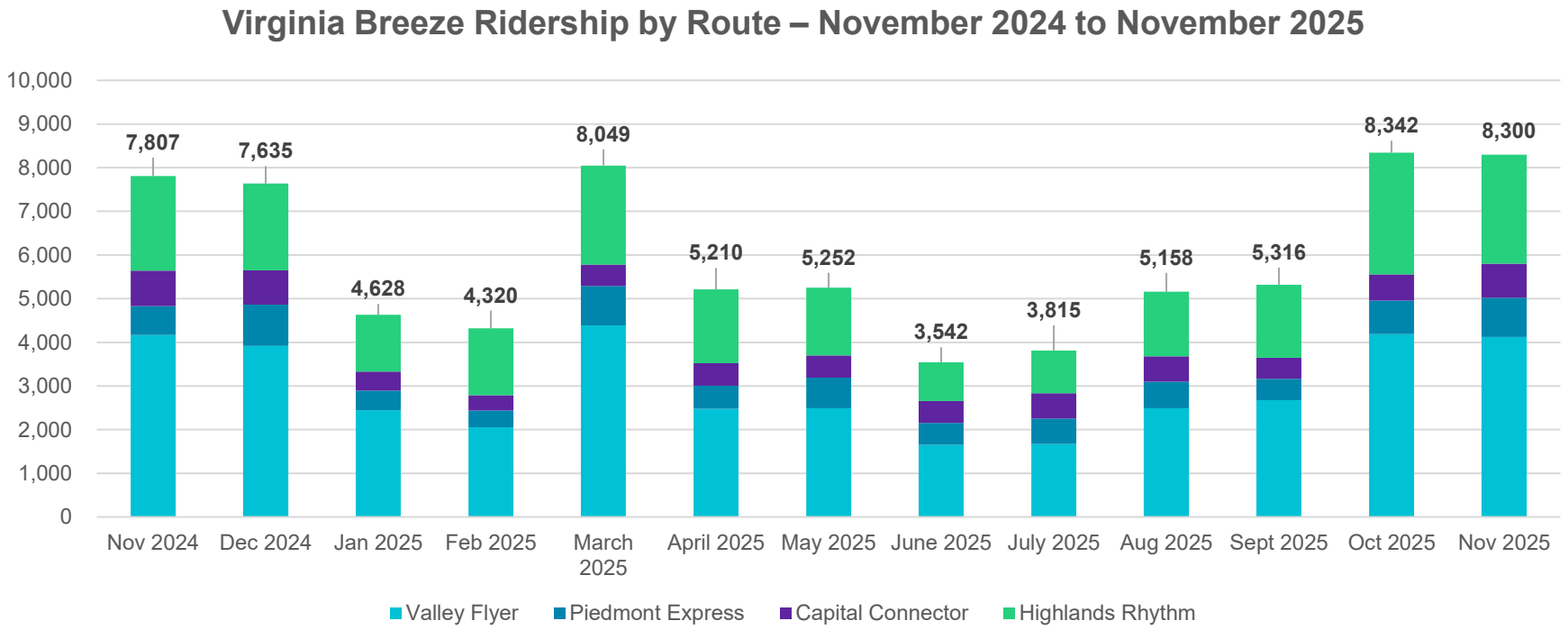
- Ridership – 36% higher than November 2024
- Farebox Rev. – 36% higher than November 2024

Capital Connector:

- Ridership – 5% lower than November 2024
- Farebox Rev. – 3% lower than November 2024

Highlands Rhythm:

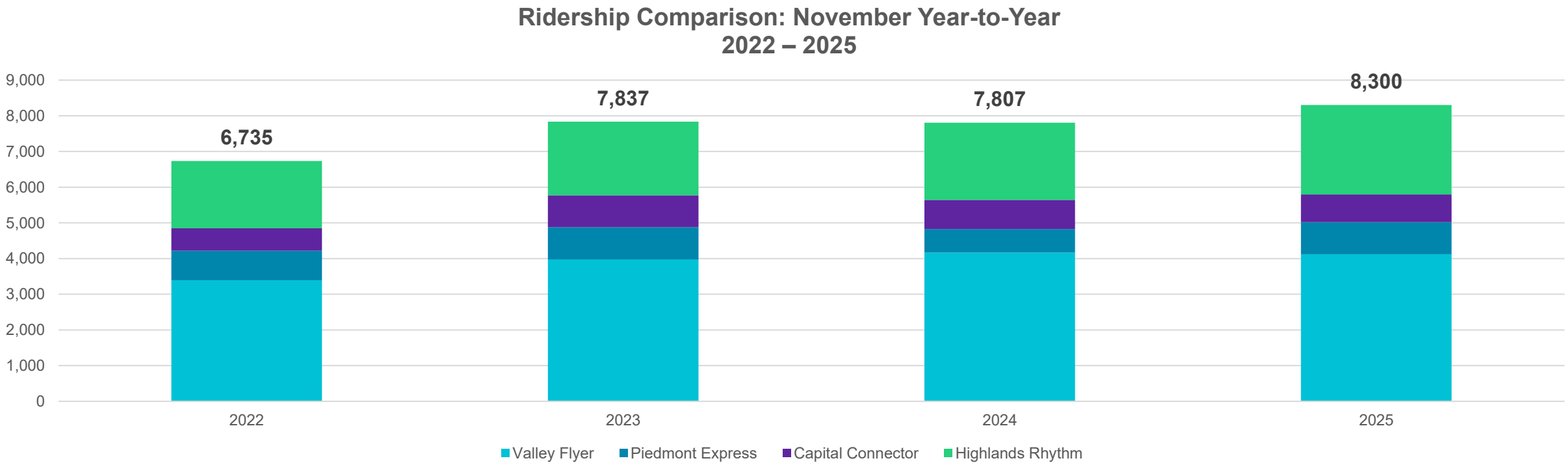
- Ridership – 16% higher than November 2024
- Farebox Rev – 16% higher than November 2024



Route	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Total*
Valley Flyer	4,171	3,920	2,448	2,057	4,385	2,475	2,489	1,655	1,675	2,493	2,676	4,189	4,124	34,586
Piedmont Express	656	940	448	384	908	531	702	499	577	606	490	767	895	7,747
Capital Connector	816	790	432	345	490	513	508	504	585	581	484	598	778	6,608
Highlands Rhythm	2,164	1,985	1,300	1,534	2,266	1,691	1,553	884	978	1,478	1,666	2,788	2,503	20,626
All Routes	**7,807**	**7,635**	**4,628**	**4,320**	**8,049**	**5,210**	**5,252**	**3,542**	**3,815**	**5,158**	**5,316**	**8,342**	**8,300**	**69,567**

*Last 12 Months

Four-Year Virginia Breeze Ridership Monthly Lookback:
November 2022-2025



Mode	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025 vs 2022	2025 vs 2023	2025 vs 2024
Valley Flyer	3,394	3,975	4,171	4,124	22%	4%	-1%
Piedmont Express	827	907	656	895	8%	-1%	36%
Capital Connector	627	891	816	778	24%	-13%	-5%
Highlands Rhythm	1,887	2,064	2,164	2,503	33%	21%	16%
All Routes	**6,735**	**7,837**	**7,807**	**8,300**	**20%**	**0%**	**3%**

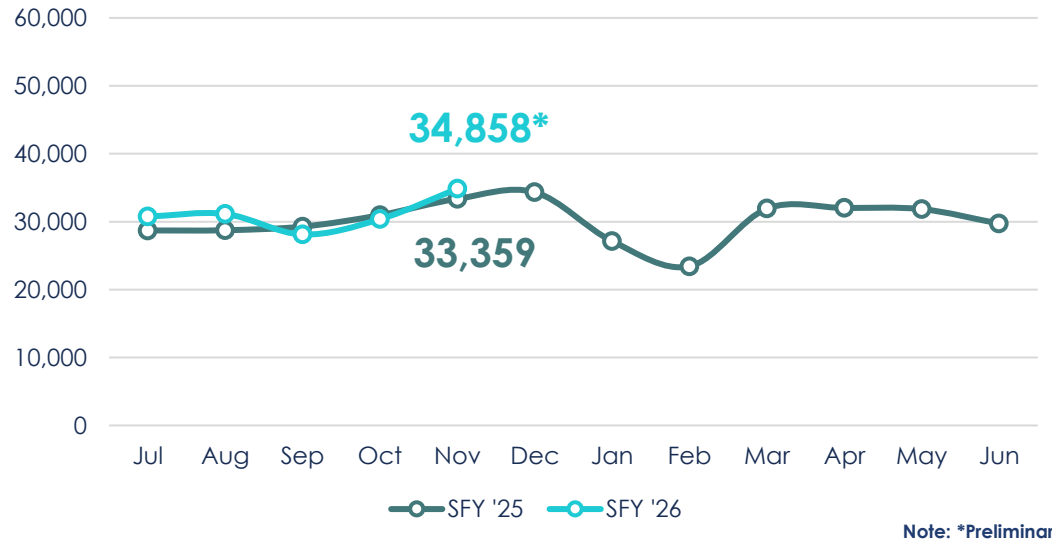
State-Supported Rail Monthly Ridership by Route SFY 26 vs. SFY 25

Both the RNK & NFK routes respectively set new all-time high monthly ridership records.

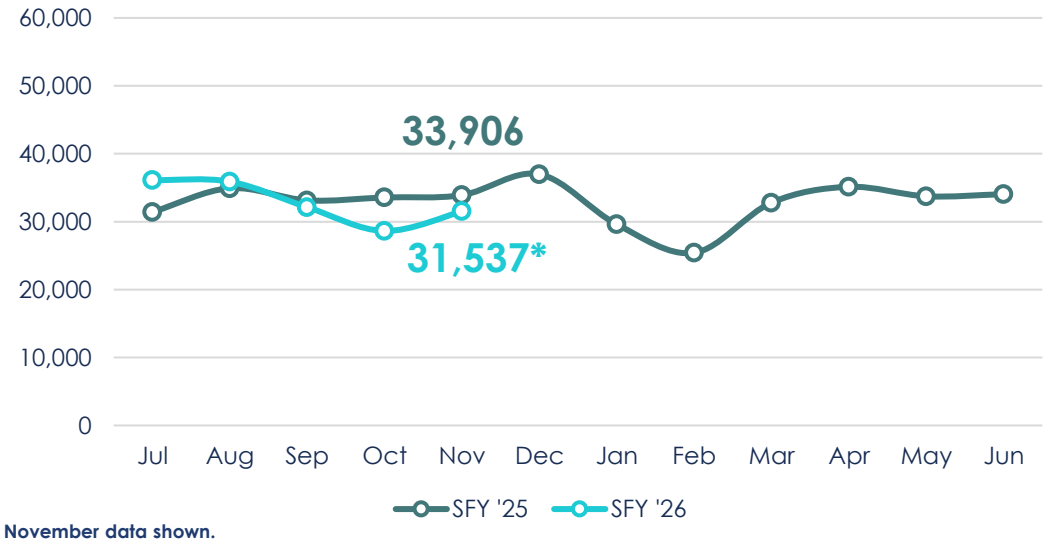
The NPN route is back in service after it was suspended 10/25-11/7 due to a freight rail incident.

NFK station +25.0% YoY.

Route 46: Roanoke (+4.5%)

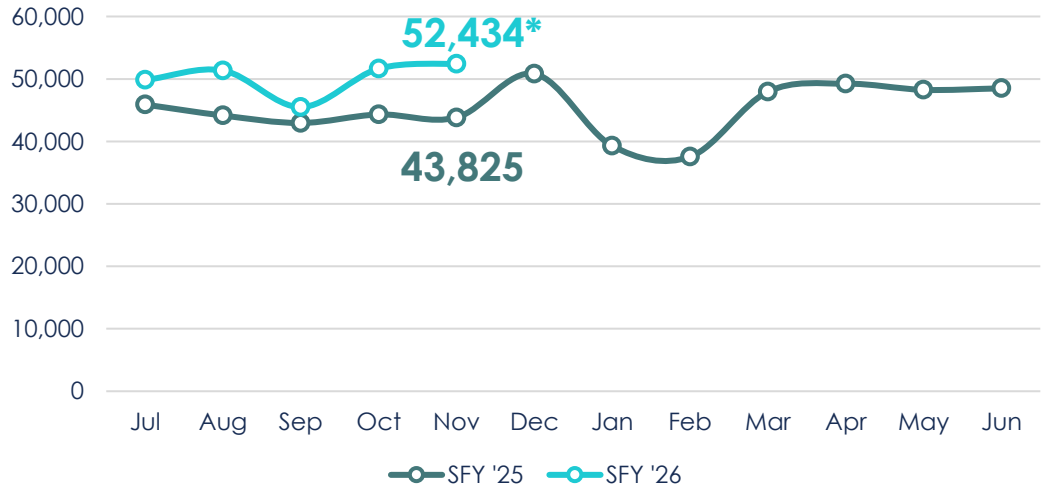


Route 47: Newport News (-7.0%)

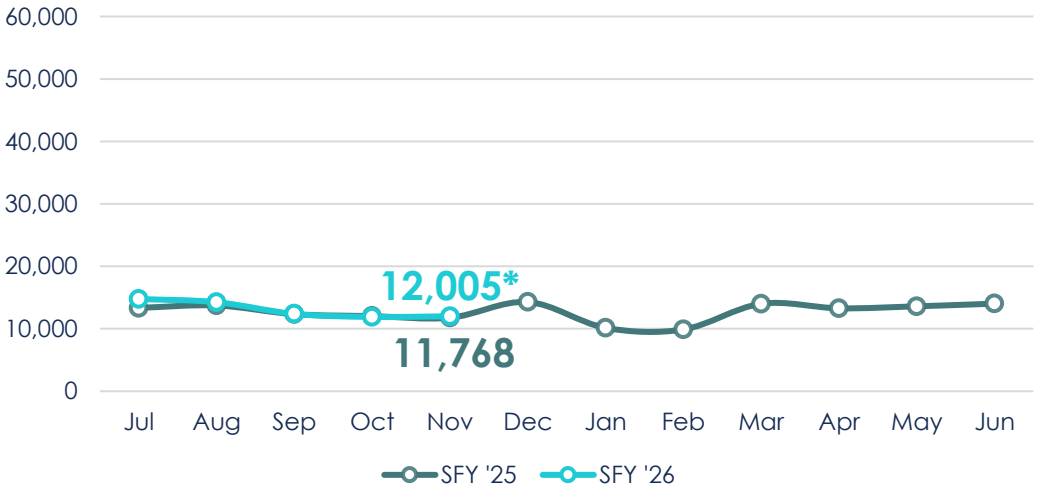


Note: *Preliminary November data shown.

Route 50: Norfolk (+19.6%)



Route 51: Richmond (+2.0%)



VPRA

Virginia & Comparable State-Supported Rail Service Ridership

Normalized: Monthly Ridership ÷ Daily Trains

