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VIRGINIA BREEZE

Connecting Communities Across the Commonwealth

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July 21, 2026

DRPT
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Virginia Breeze

- No CTB action
- Overview of DRPT's Virginia Breeze origins, service and key connections, funding, and future planning for long-term growth and success



Overview

Operates 365 days a year with five routes connecting cities through Western and Central Virginia to Washington, D.C. and from the Shenandoah Valley to Hampton Roads.

Academy Bus and Dillon's Bus Service are contracted by DRPT to operate the service and provides drivers, vehicles, and maintenance.



Why the Virginia Breeze Was Created

- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires states to use a portion of its federal funding to meet intercity bus needs.
- DRPT opted to develop service from end-to-end (branding, routes, schedules, and operator oversight managed by staff).
- Connects underserved rural communities to major destinations.
- Reliable, affordable, eco-friendly travel.



Why the Virginia Breeze Matters

- Provides critical lifeline for rural communities lacking intercity travel options.
- Supports economic development, workforce access, and educational opportunity.
- Reduces single-occupancy vehicle travel, lowering congestion and emissions.
- Ensures essential mobility where private operators no longer provide service.

How the Virginia Breeze Has Grown

2017

Original Route- Valley Flyer Launched

2020

Piedmont Express & Capital Connector Routes Added

2021

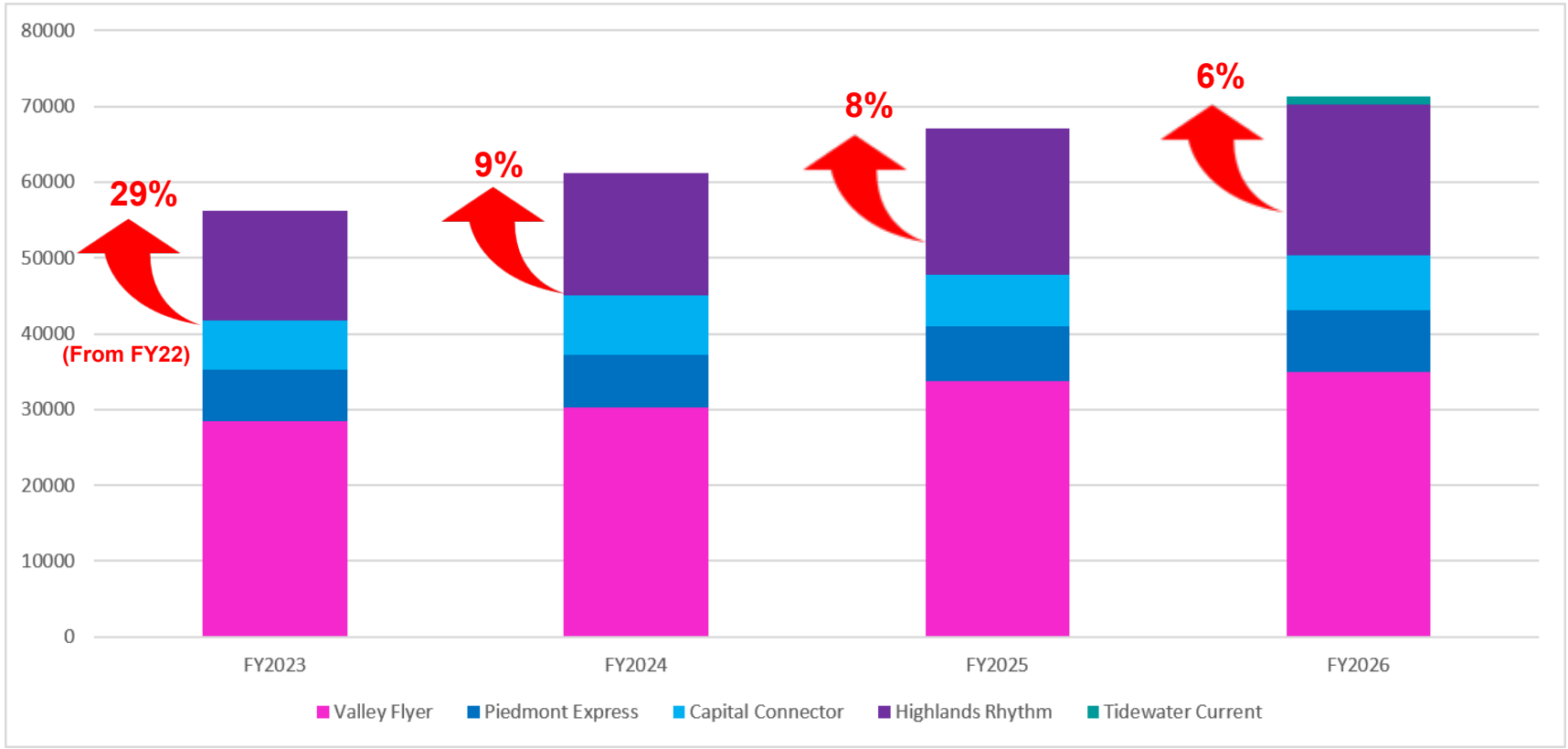
Highlands Rhythm Route Added- Extended Service to Southwestern VA

2026

Tidewater Current Launched- 1st East-West route



Virginia Breeze Ridership



- **FY23: 56,237**
  - Valley Flyer: 28,530
  - Piedmont Express: 6,740
  - Capital Connector: 6,444
  - Highlands Rhythm: 14,523
- **FY24: 61,812**
  - Valley Flyer: 30,826
  - Piedmont Express: 6,926
  - Capital Connector: 7,823
  - Highlands Rhythm: 16,237
- **FY25: 67,127**
  - Valley Flyer: 33,741
  - Piedmont Express: 7,210
  - Capital Connector: 6,846
  - Highlands Rhythm: 19,330
- **FY26: 71,333**
  - Valley Flyer: 34,957
  - Piedmont Express: 8,110
  - Capital Connector: 7,346
  - Highlands Rhythm: 19,871
  - Tidewater Current: 1,049

Virginia Breeze: Major Destinations

Amtrak & Transit Stations:

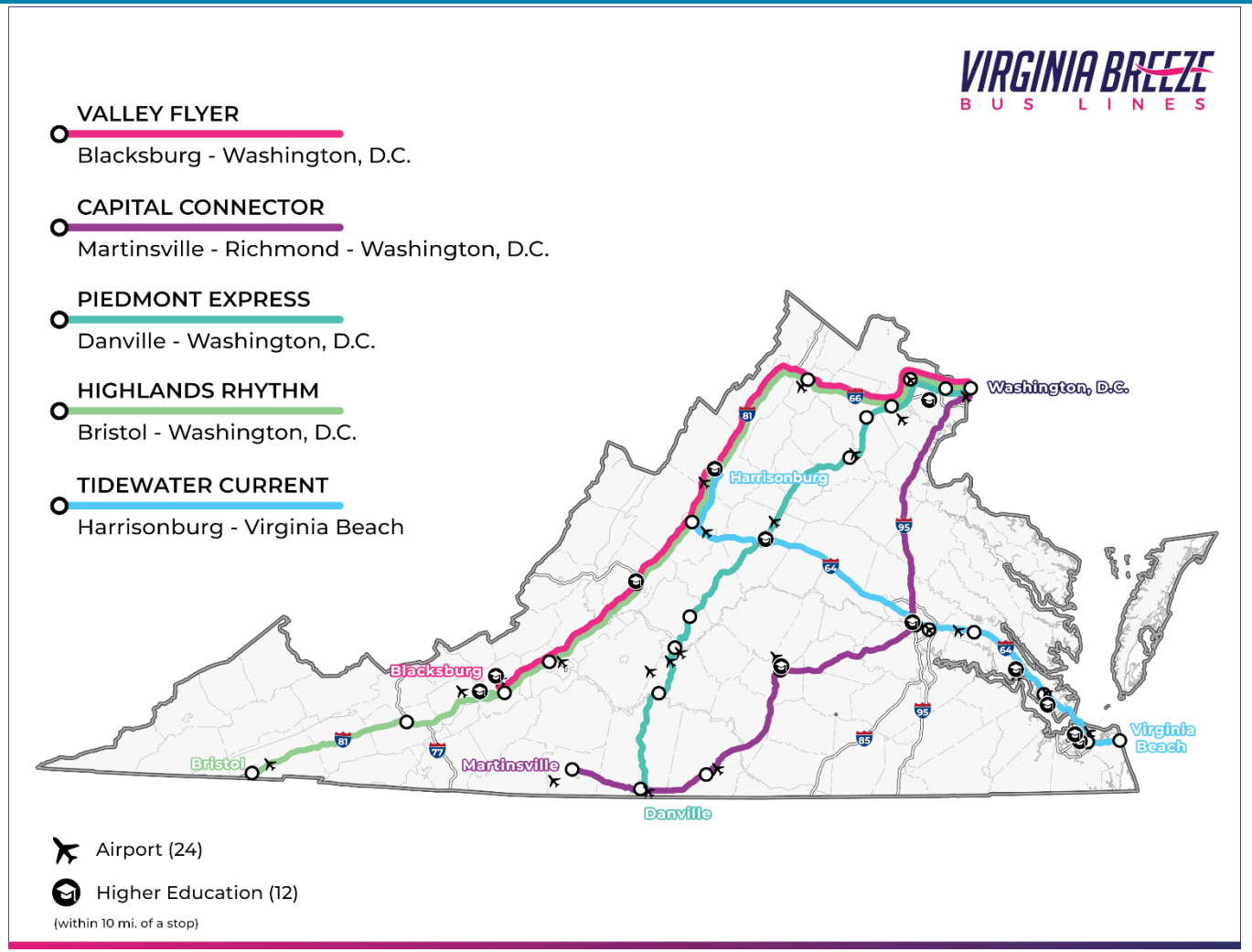
- Northeast Corridor at Union Station
- Silver Line Metrorail Via Dulles Airport
- West Falls Church Metrorail Station
- Richmond Main Street Station
- Charlottesville Station
- Lynchburg Station
- Williamsburg Station
- Newport News Station
- Norfolk Station (in future)

Airports:

- Dulles International Airport (IAD)
- Richmond International Airport (RIC)

Universities:

- Virginia Tech
- James Madison University
- Longwood University
- Radford University
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- William & Mary





Highest Ridership Stops

- Dulles International Airport (IAD) - 24%
- Harrisonburg - 18%
- Washington, D.C. (Union Station) -16%
- Blacksburg – 14%
- West Falls Church – 6%
- Richmond – 4%
- Charlottesville – 4%
- Christiansburg – 3%
- Danville – 2%
- Lexington – 2%

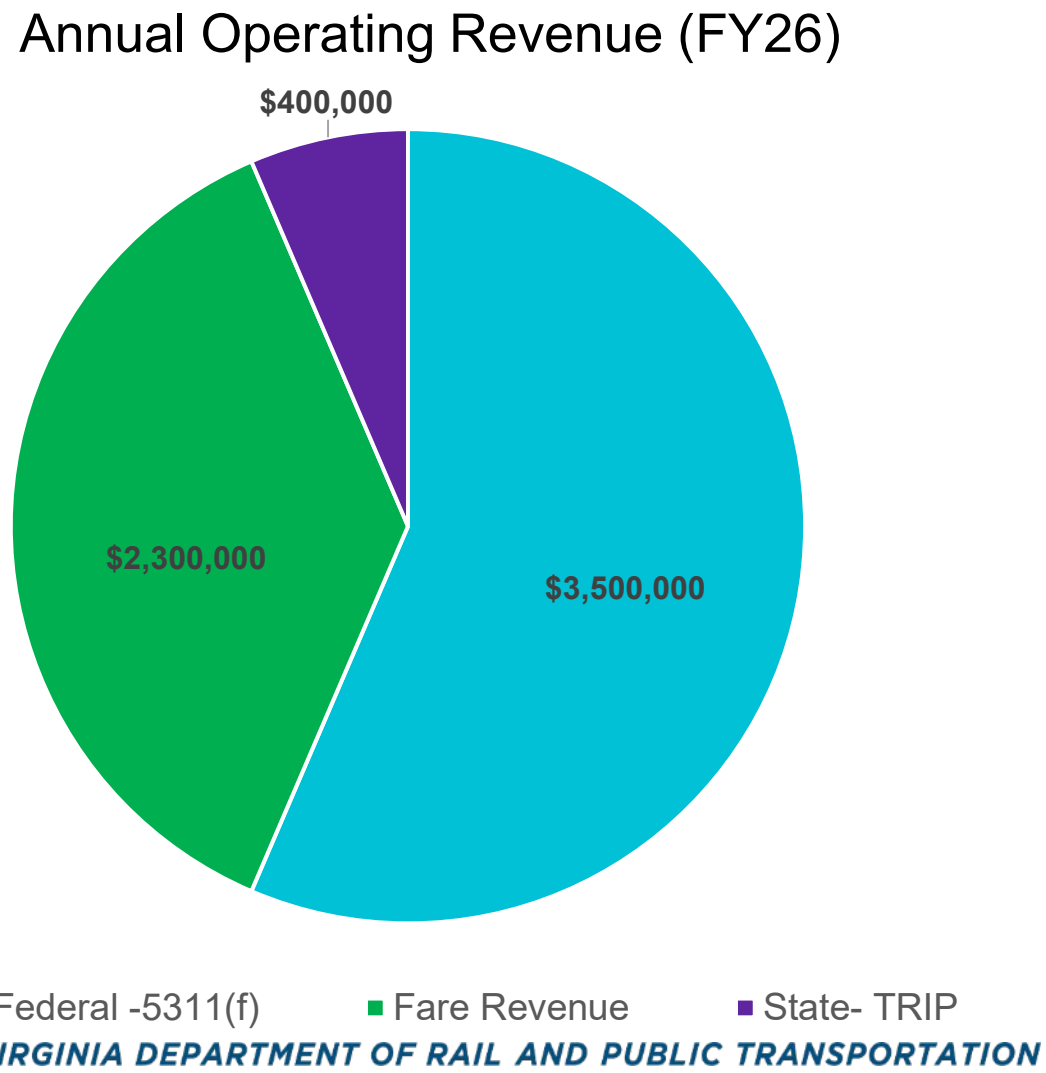
Virginia Breeze is for Everyone

- **Age:**
  - 18-24 – 34%
  - 25-44 – 27%
  - 45-64 – 30%
- **Employment:**
  - Student – 31%
  - Employed Full-Time – 31%
  - Employed Part-Time/Retired/Unemployed – 38%
- **Income:**
  - Less than $20K – 24%
  - $100,000+ – 21%
- **Purpose of Trip:**
  - Social/Recreational – 71%
  - Medical/School – 20%
  - Work – 9%



How the Virginia Breeze is Funded

- Funded primarily through FTA 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program.
- Supported through the Commonwealth's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).
- Farebox revenue offsets operating costs.
- DRPT monitors performance through the Performance Data Dashboard.
- No capital costs to DRPT – these are included in the turnkey operating agreement.



Virginia Breeze Net Costs (System-Wide)

- Growing demand has resulted in more trips added.
- Contracted costs have risen 7% annually.
  - Inflationary factors such driver wages, fuel, insurance, buses, parts, etc. contribute to rising costs.
- FY27 net costs are estimated to be $4.7M.
- DRPT has launched comprehensive review of services and financial sustainability study to address rising costs.
  - To be completed in Spring 2027.





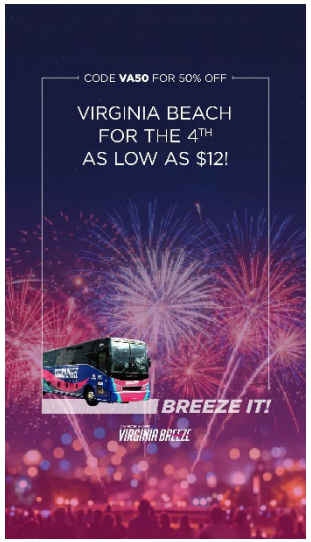
The Future of the Virginia Breeze

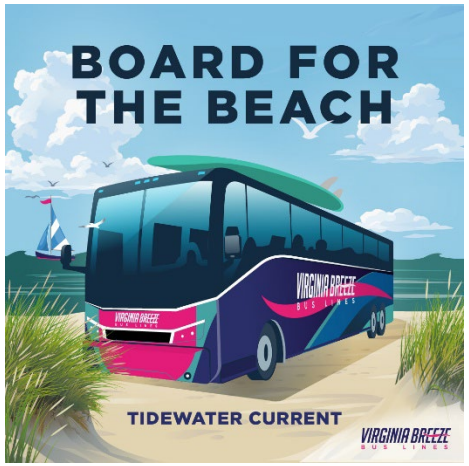
- Comprehensive Study to:
  - Evaluate strategic growth opportunities,
  - Opportunities to better coordinate service with intercity and regional rail,
  - Identify long-term, sustainable funding, and
  - Provide options to ensure VA Breeze remains an affordable travel option.

Hop on the Bus!
VirginiaBreeze.org















VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Questions?

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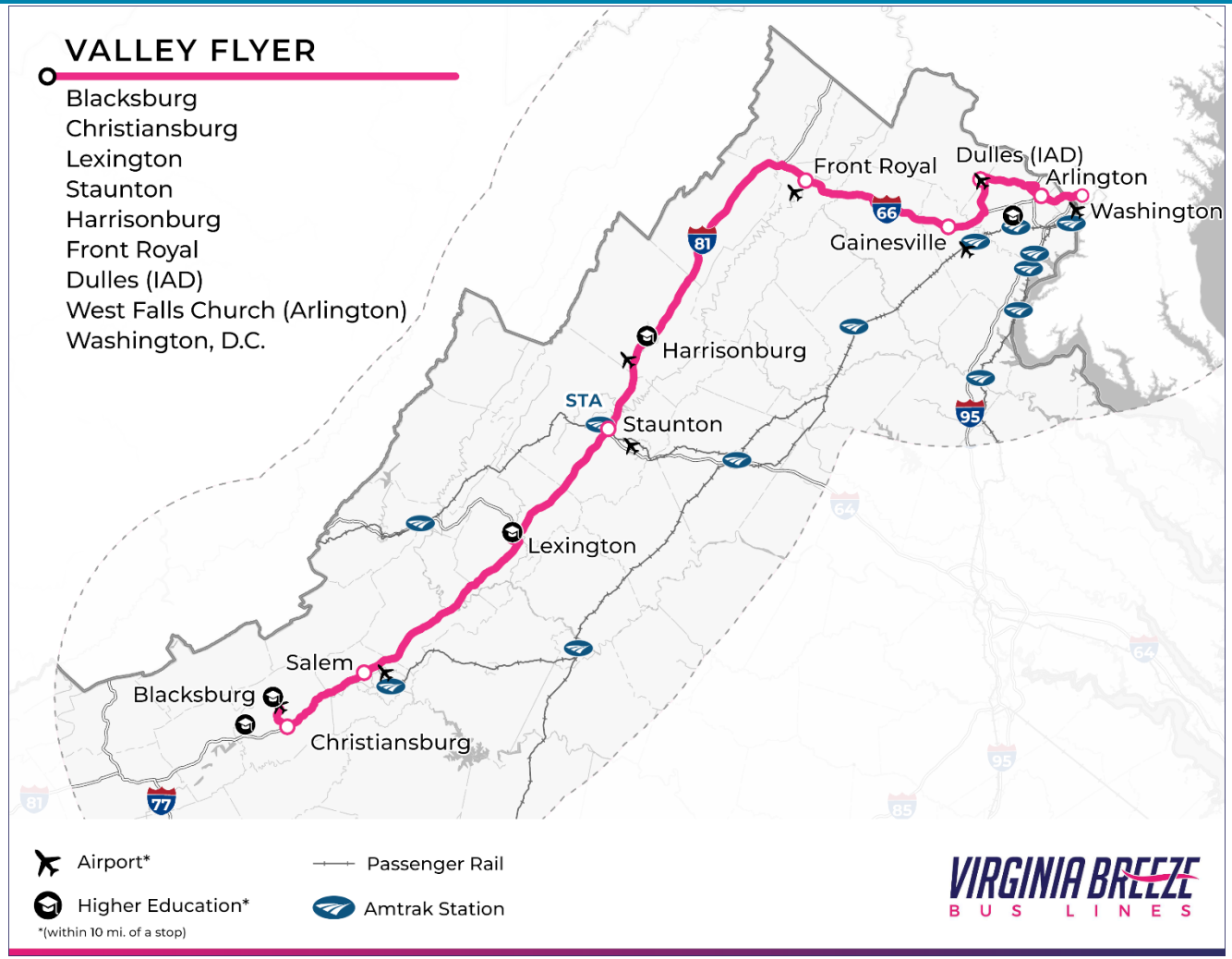
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Appendix

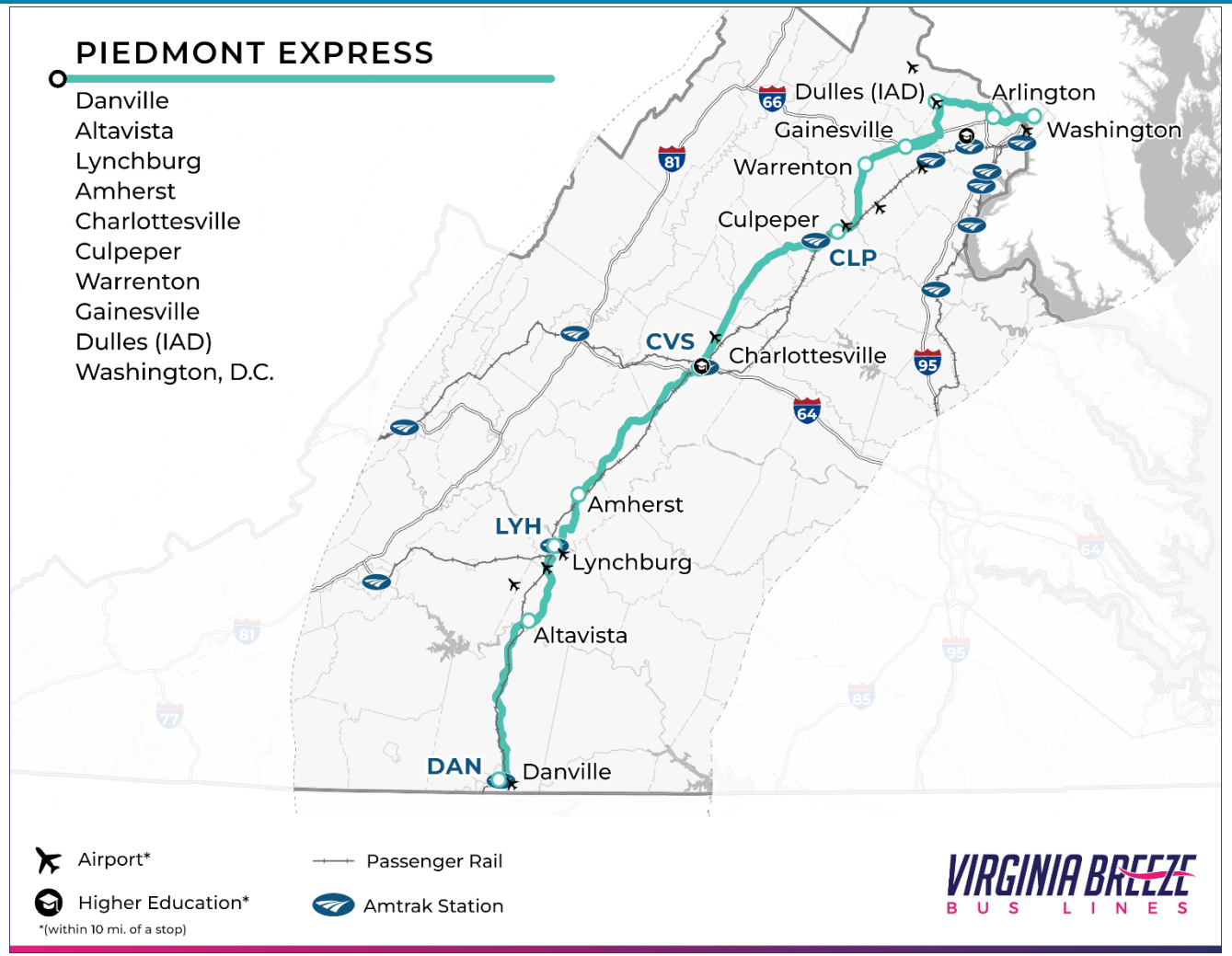
Valley Flyer

- Northbound
  - 8:00am departure from Blacksburg
  - 2:15pm arrival to Union Station
- Southbound
  - 9:35am departure from Union Station
  - 3:50pm arrival to Blacksburg



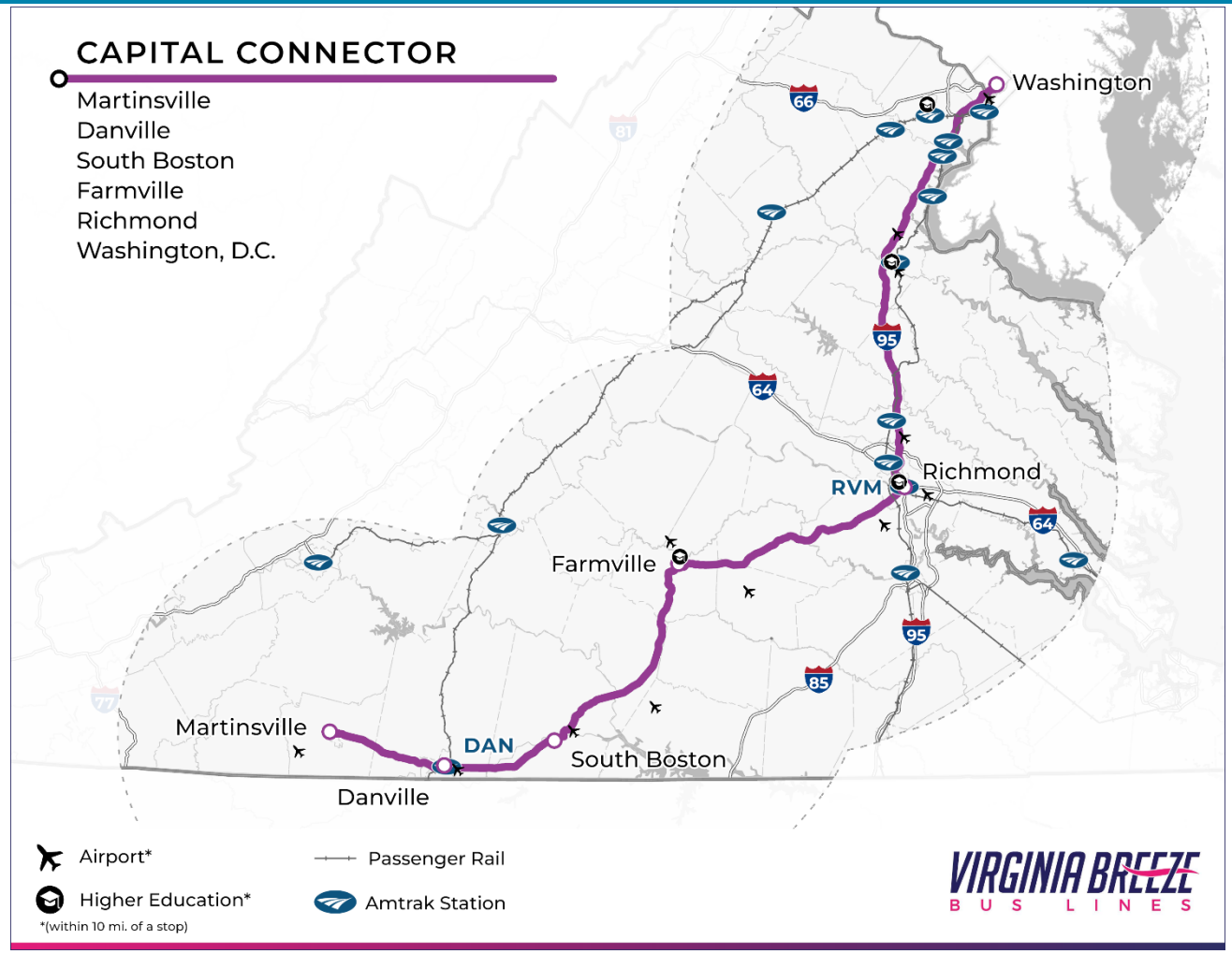
Piedmont Express

- Northbound
  - 8:00am departure from Danville
  - 2:00pm arrival to Union Station
- Southbound
  - 10:05am departure from Union Station
  - 4:15pm arrival to Danville



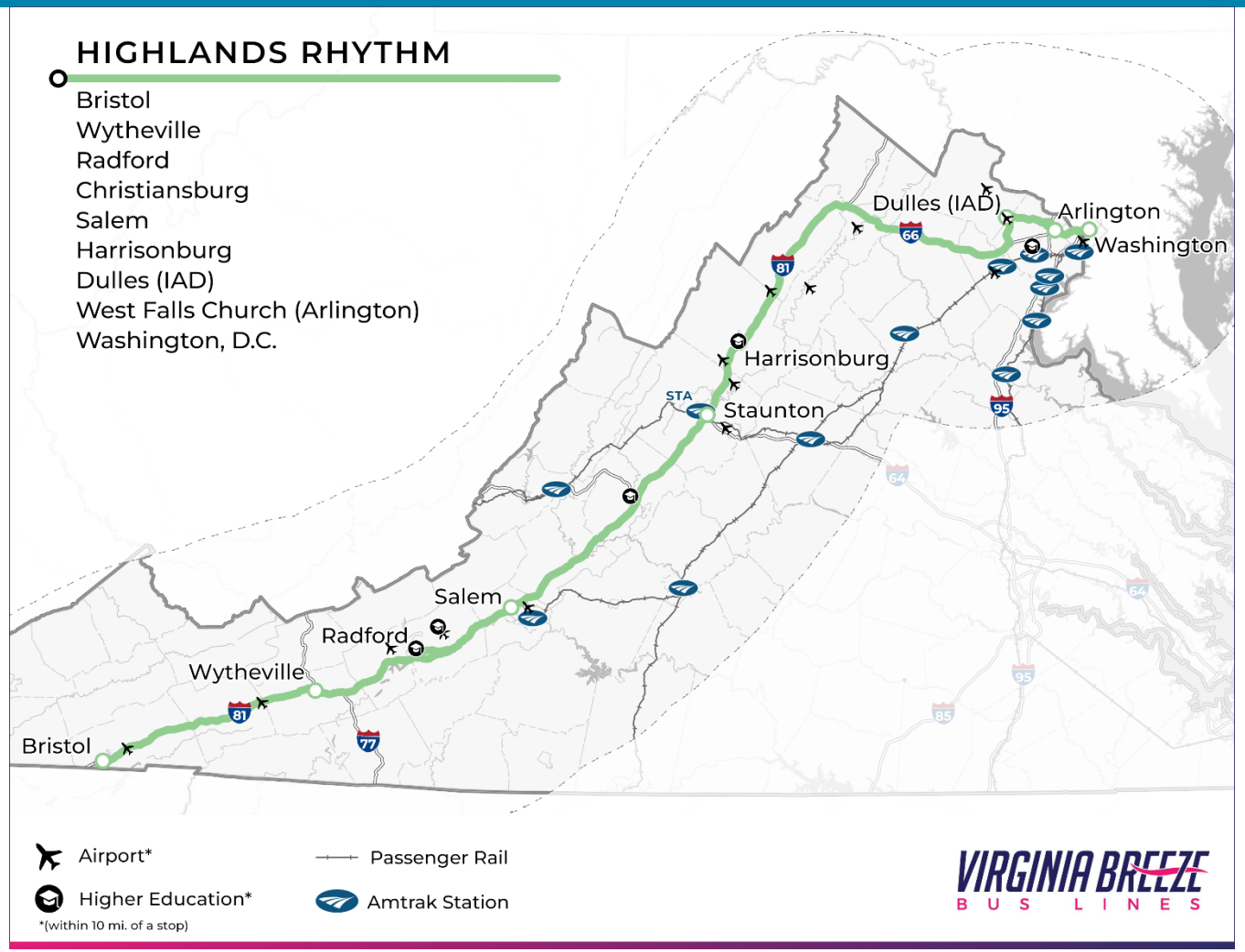
Capital Connector

- Northbound
  - 6:45am departure from Martinsville
  - 1:00pm arrival to Union Station
- Southbound
  - 1:05pm departure from Union Station
  - 7:25pm arrival to Martinsville



Highlands Rhythm

- Northbound
  - 11:00am departure from Bristol
  - 6:45pm arrival to Union Station
- Southbound
  - 1:15pm departure from Union Station
  - 9:20pm arrival to Bristol



Tidewater Current

- Eastbound
  - 6:20am departure from Virginia Beach
  - 12:55pm arrival to Harrisonburg
- Westbound
  - 6:50am departure from Harrisonburg
  - 1:25pm arrival to Virginia Beach

