Director's Report

October 2026

DRPT

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Growing Ridership and Relationships

Statewide Transit Ridership

- July 2026 statewide transit ridership was 14.3 million, nearly 11% higher than July 2025. See slide 10 for more details.

Virginia Breeze Ridership

- July 2026 Virginia Breeze ridership was 4,520, an 18% increase from July 2025. See slide 12 for more information.

Industry Engagement

- On September 23, Director Zimmerman and other DRPT staff spoke at the VDOT Local Programs workshop meeting in Roanoke.
- On September 30, Director Zimmerman spoke at the Virginia Railroad Association's annual meeting.
- Through September, DRPT staff participated at the Mpact Transit + Community Conference, focusing on Transit-Oriented Development. DRPT staff also attended the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Council on Public Transportation Meeting, focusing on State Partnerships.

Celebrating our Partners

Milestones from Across the Commonwealth

Hampton Roads Transit Announced Dr. Brian Smith as new CEO, starting in October.

FXBGo! Celebrated 30 years of Connecting the Fredericksburg Region in September.

Jaunt Celebrated 50 years of Serving the Greater Charlottesville-Albemarle region in September.

New fare-free Mountain Empire Transit Route to Connect “Lenowisco” Area with Kingsport, TN.

NVTC and PRTC are celebrating 10 years of the *Commuter Choice* supporting program supporting transit in Northern Virginia.







DRPT-Supported Human Service Transportation
Performance Data

41,050

Unique clients served
from July 2024 – June 2025

1,012,676

Total number of trips
from July 2024 – June 2025



Updates from the Yard
DRPT Rail Updates

Statewide Rail Plan Public Survey.

- On October 5, DRPT launched a second phase of 2026 Statewide Rail Plan survey. The survey seeks to hear from residents, businesses owners, community members and other travelers about what the future of rail in Virginia should look like. The survey is open until November 5.

Proposed Union Pacific - Norfolk Southern Merger.

- The Surface Transportation Board is proceeding with a required NEPA Environmental Impact Statement to thoroughly assess the potential environmental impacts that may result from the proposed UP-NS merger.



Rail Plan Survey QR Code

Transforming Rail in Virginia
Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Project Updates

Long Bridge Project

- VPRA received a bridge construction permit for the new rail bridge from the U.S. Coast Guard on September 8 and completed permitting for all in-water work.
- Bridge abutment work on both sides of the river is on schedule as part of the South Package.
- The North Package contractor is continuing construction on retaining walls.

Franconia-Springfield Bypass

- The contractor began installing drilled shafts for the Bypass bridge in September to support the flyover bridge that will carry passenger trains over the freight tracks.
- Construction of retaining walls and fabrication of the bridge structural steel is progressing.

New River Valley Passenger Rail Project

- Significant progress is happening to construct the 960-foot-long high-level passenger platform.
- VPRA anticipates New River Valley service to occur in the second half of 2027.

Ongoing Transit Studies
Monthly Study Update

- **Statewide Transit Oriented Development Study**
  - DRPT's Statewide TOD Survey closed on September 25 and regional stakeholder meetings held in September and October.
- **Equivalent Compensation Labor Study**
  - The third work group meeting was held on September 28 to discuss emerging themes, considerations and options for implementation of HB 547 and SB 731.
- **WMATA Efficiency Reporting (due October 2026)**
  - Report is in final review, ahead of an October submission deadline.
- **HJ28 Hampton Roads Transit Regional Needs Study (due 2027)**
  - The first Joint Subcommittee Meeting was held on September 23 with presentations from DRPT, Hampton Roads Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, and Suffolk Transit.
- **Northern Virginia Bus Transit Consolidation Study**
  - On October 21, DRPT will host a leadership roundtable at NVTC for elected officials, transit leaders, and regional partners to review draft findings.
- **Virginia Breeze Study***
  - The study is preparing to begin financial and fare analysis components to evaluate long-term financial sustainability and future service scenarios.
- **Transit Transformation***
  - Kimley Horn has been selected to support DRPT's efforts in the study.

**DRPT initiated study that will conclude in 2027; all others requested by General Assembly are due in December 2026 unless otherwise noted.*

DRPT/OIPI Transit-Primary Pipeline Studies

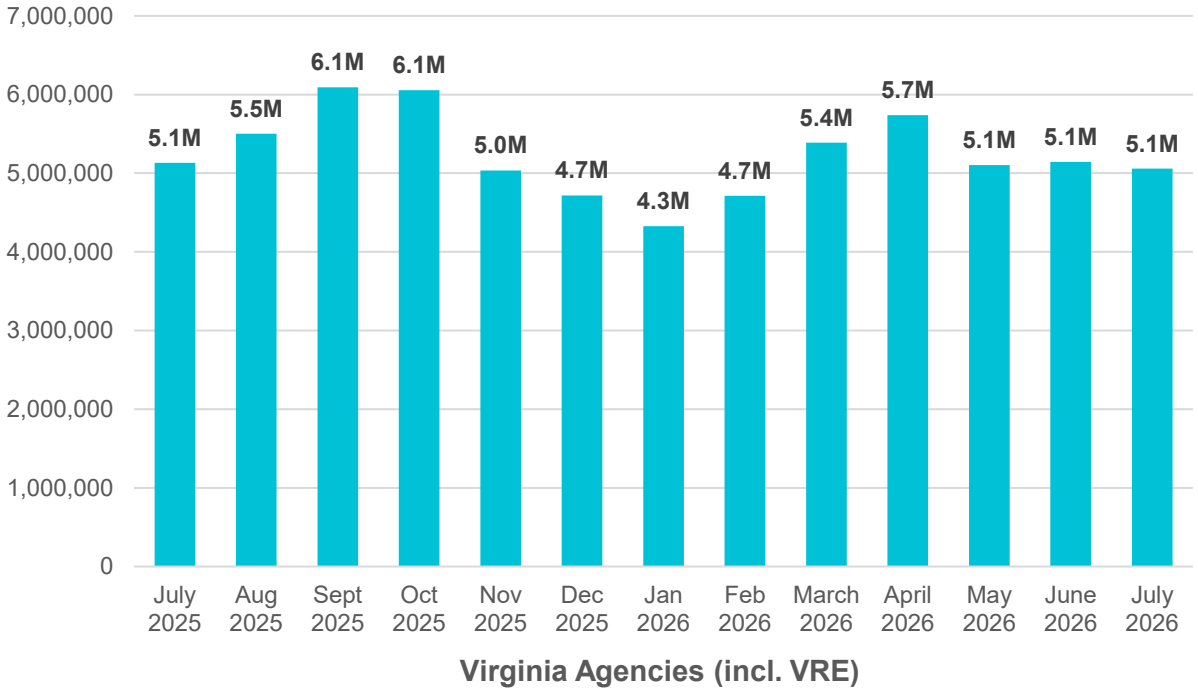
- Goal: Develop a pipeline study framework for transit projects to successfully navigate the SMART SCALE pre-application process.

- Next Steps:
  - Continue discussions with DRPT, VDOT, and OIPI to develop the framework, guidelines, and expectations
  - Identify funding for pipeline studies
  - Identify 4 to 5 transit projects of varying sizes and geographically spread across the Commonwealth
  - Coordinate with transit agencies and VDOT Districts

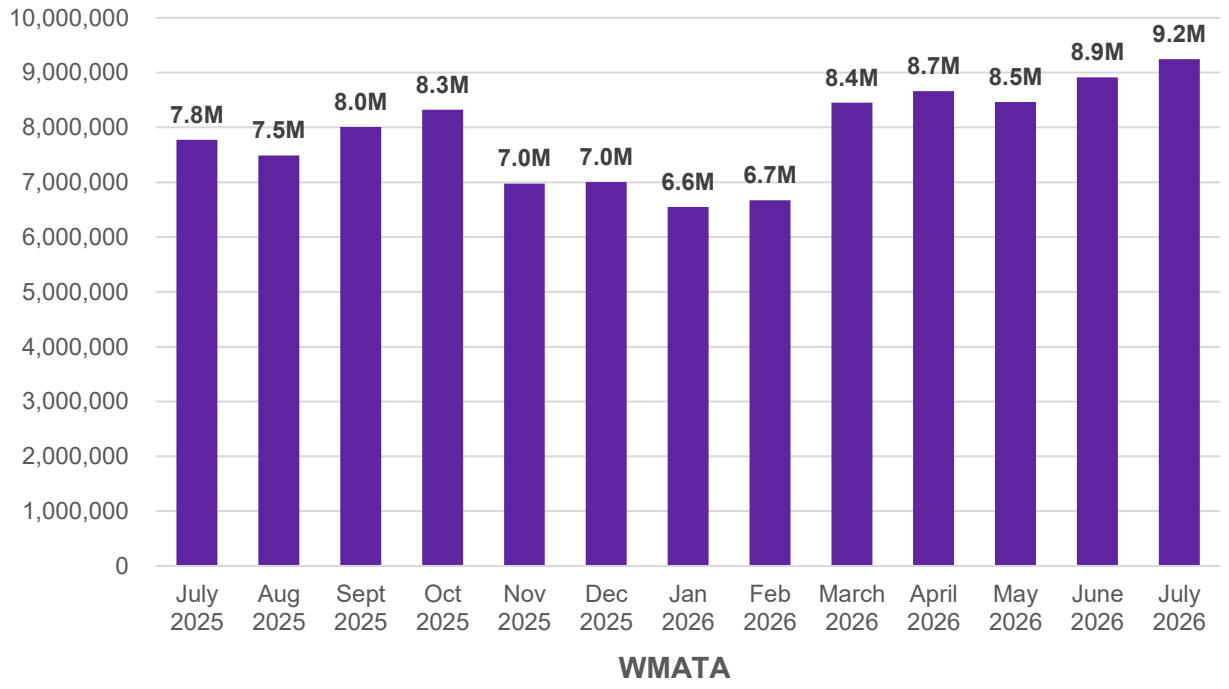
Appendix

Statewide Transit Ridership

Statewide Transit Ridership – July 2025 to July 2026



Virginia Agencies (incl. VRE)

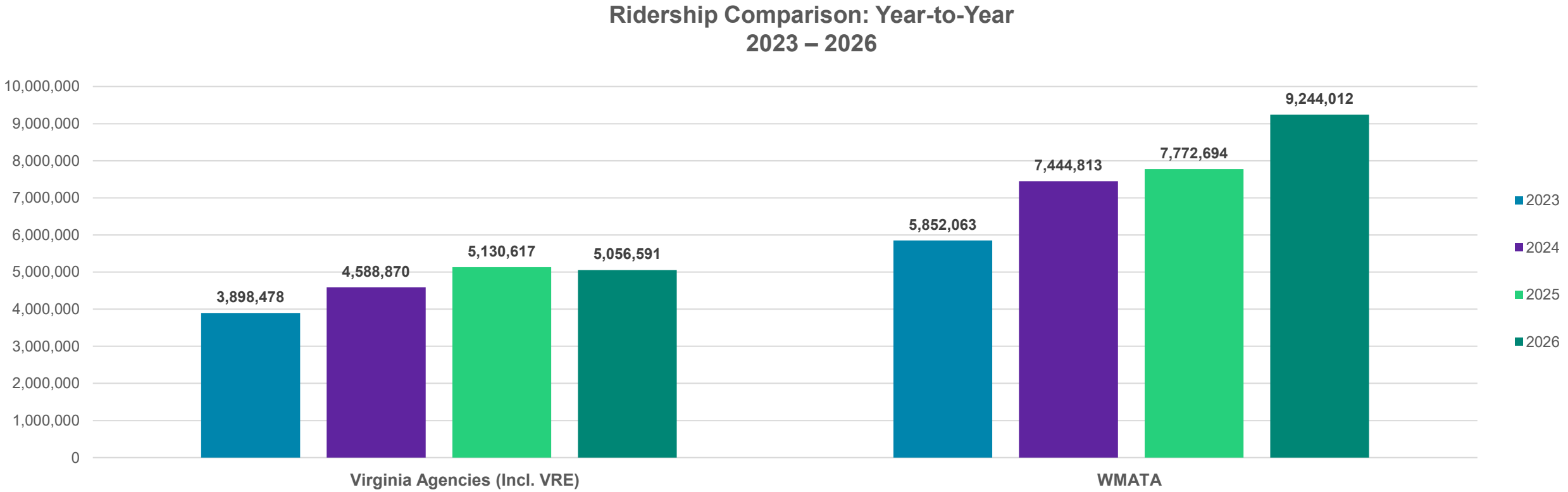


WMATA

Agencies	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	Total*
Virginia Agencies	5,130,617	5,501,192	6,092,184	6,054,733	5,035,161	4,718,126	4,327,420	4,713,290	5,387,549	5,739,431	5,104,481	5,144,741	5,056,591	62,874,899
WMATA	7,772,694	7,491,352	8,005,759	8,320,907	6,977,427	7,005,271	6,551,481	6,668,660	8,449,361	8,661,623	8,463,248	8,913,639	9,244,012	94,752,740
Total	**12,903,311**	**12,992,544**	**14,097,943**	**14,375,640**	**12,012,588**	**11,723,397**	**10,878,901**	**11,381,950**	**13,836,910**	**14,401,054**	**13,567,729**	**14,058,380**	**14,300,603**	**157,627,639**

*Last 12 Months

Statewide Ridership Comparison: July Year-to-Year



Mode	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026 vs 2023	2026 vs 2024	2026 vs 2025
Virginia Agencies	3,898,478	4,588,870	5,130,617	5,056,591	30%	10%	-1%
WMATA	5,852,063	7,444,813	7,772,694	9,244,012	58%	24%	19%
Total	**9,750,541**	**12,033,683**	**12,903,311**	**14,300,603**	**47%**	**19%**	**11%**

Virginia Breeze Ridership – July

In July 2026, ridership on VA Breeze routes totaled 4,520 which was:

- 104% higher than original estimates, and
- 18% higher than July 2025

In July 2026, the VA Breeze contributed to a reduction of 121 metric tons of CO_2 equivalent emissions.

Valley Flyer:

- Ridership – equal to July 2025
- Farebox Rev. – 1% lower than July 2025

Piedmont Express:

- Ridership – 2% higher than July 2025
- Farebox Rev. – 5% lower than July 2025

Capital Connector:

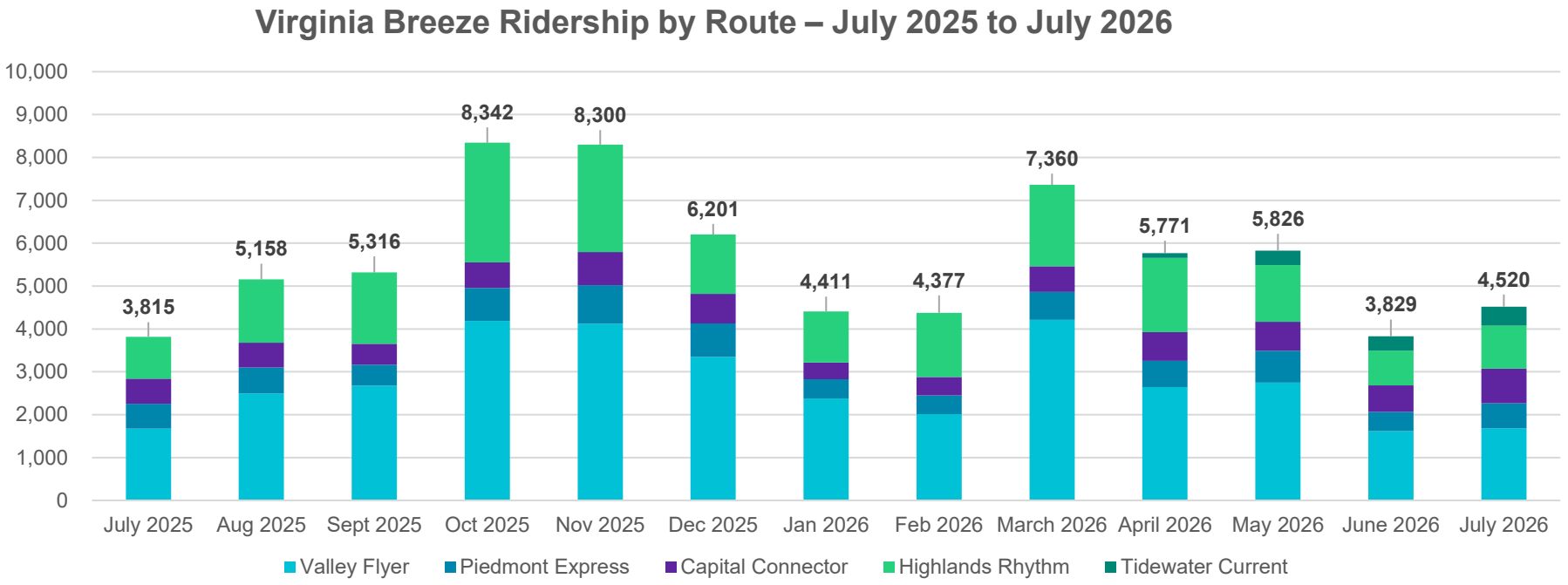
- Ridership – 38% higher than July 2025
- Farebox Rev. – 33% higher than July 2025

Highlands Rhythm:

- Ridership – 2% higher than July 2025
- Farebox Rev – 2% higher than July 2025

Tidewater Current:

- Ridership – N/A
- Farebox Rev – N/A



Route	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	Total*
Valley Flyer	1,675	2,493	2,676	4,189	4,124	3,344	2,377	2,012	4,211	2,645	2,746	1,617	1,681	34,115
Piedmont Express	577	606	490	767	895	781	451	440	650	609	744	449	587	7,469
Capital Connector	585	581	484	598	778	694	389	424	602	670	676	618	805	7,319
Highlands Rhythm	978	1,478	1,666	2,788	2,503	1,382	1,194	1,501	1,897	1,734	1,325	806	1,002	19,276
Tidewater Current										113	335	339	445	1,232
All Routes	**3,815**	**5,158**	**5,316**	**8,342**	**8,300**	**6,201**	**4,411**	**4,377**	**7,360**	**5,771**	**5,826**	**3,829**	**4,520**	**69,411**

*Last 12 Months

Virginia-Supported Monthly Amtrak Ridership SFY ’26 vs. SFY ‘25

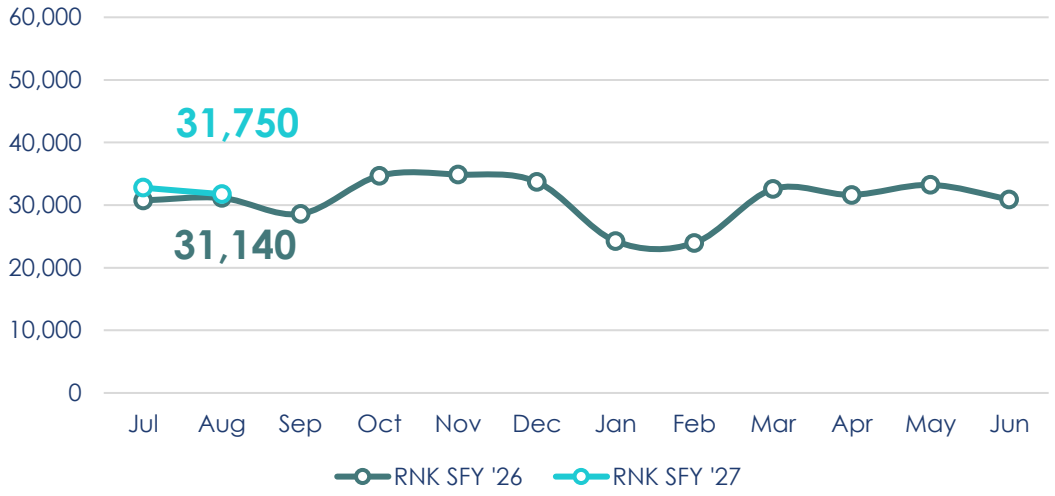
Due to the Long Bridge work window, the NFK route serves 33% less trains or 1 less daily roundtrip YoY.

Ridership on the NFK route is down -11.4% YoY.

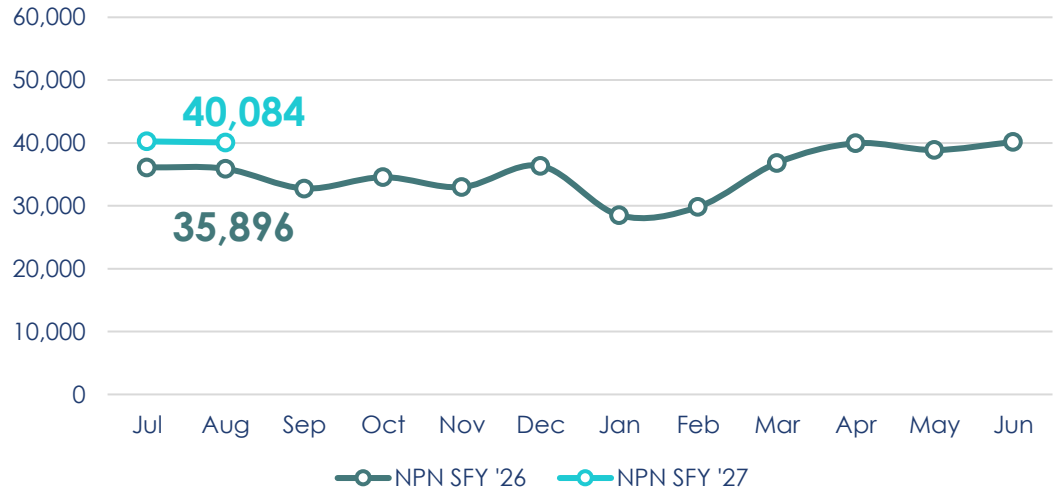
Hampton Roads is also served by several supplemental express buses to/from D.C.

Express bus ridership breakout on Slide 12.

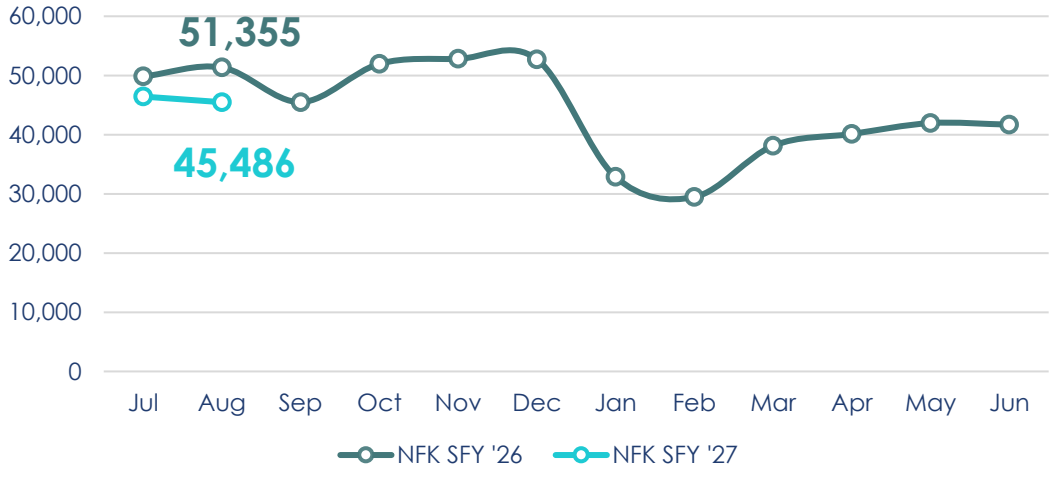
Route 46: Roanoke (+2.3%)



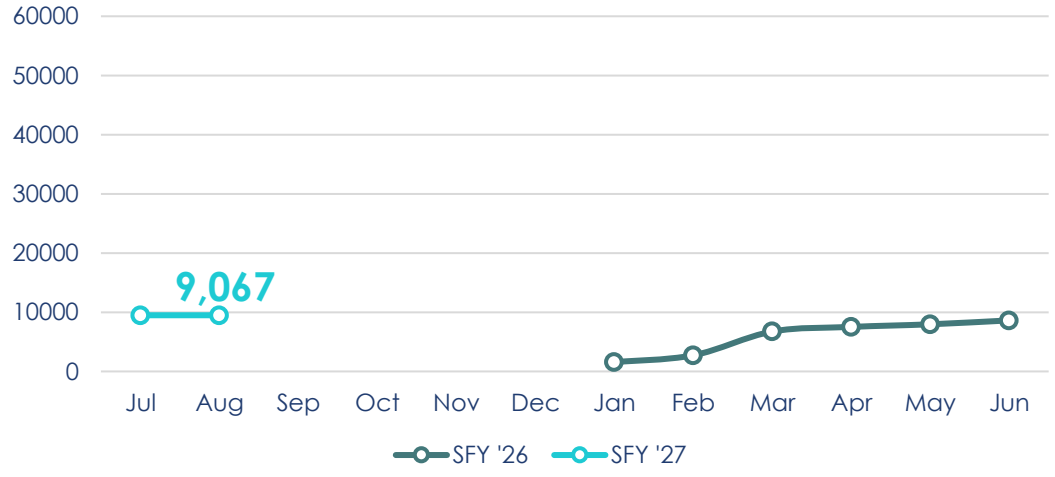
Route 47: Newport News (+11.7%)



Route 50: Norfolk (-11.4%)

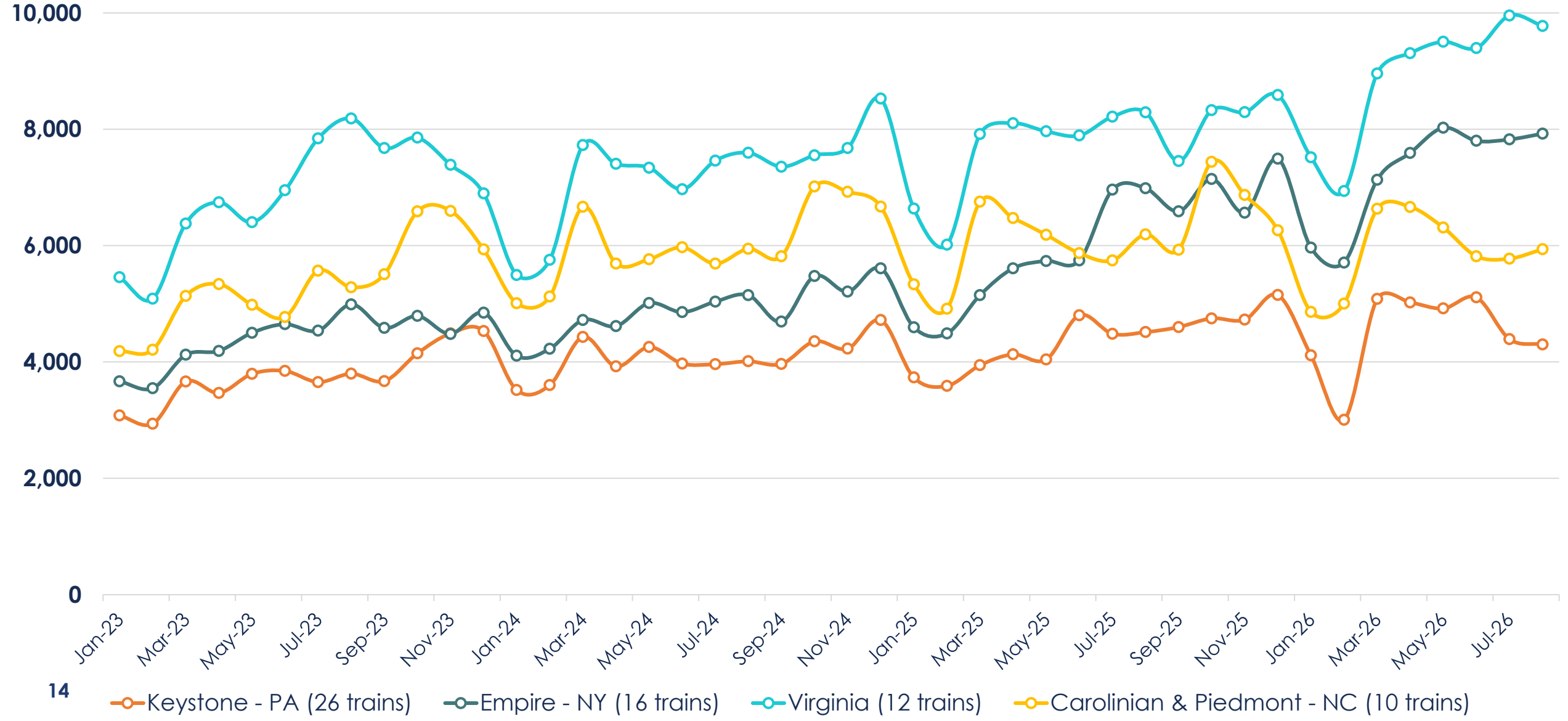


D.C. Express Buses



Virginia & Comparable State-Supported Amtrak Service Ridership

Normalized: Monthly Ridership ÷ Daily Trains



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