Director's Report

September 2026

DRPT

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Growing Ridership and Relationships

- **Statewide Transit Ridership**
  - Fiscal Year 2026 transit ridership was over 156 million, a five percent increase year-over-year. See slide 13 for more details.
  - June 2026 ridership was 14 million, a nine percent increase over June 2025.
- **Virginia Breeze Ridership**
  - FY 2026 Virginia Breeze ridership was nearly 69,000, a two percent increase year-over-year and is record ridership. See slide 15 for more details.
  - June 2026 Virginia Breeze ridership was over 3,800, an eight percent increase over June 2025.
- **Amtrak Virginia Ridership**
  - FY 2026 Amtrak Virginia ridership was over 1.4 million, around the same as FY 2025. Despite service reductions due to Long Bridge construction windows, ridership has barely decreased. See slide 16 for more details.
- **Industry Engagement**
  - August 11-13: the Community Transportation Association of Virginia held its annual conference in Williamsburg. Session topics included the proposed TRIP changes and new project eligibility, Mobility Management Roundtable, and a CEO/Executive Roundtable on rising costs. Secretary Donohue provided closing remarks for the conference.
  - September 1: Director Zimmerman participated in a panel discussion with Secretary Donohue and Commissioner Brich at the annual Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance Fall Consultant Forum.
  - September 2: Director Zimmerman participated in a Northeast Corridor CEO Roundtable discussion hosted by the Greater Washington Partnership, with a discussion focused on the importance of passenger rail for businesses on the Northeast Corridor and beyond.
  - September 10: Director Zimmerman moderated a session at the Affordable & Connected Communities: Transit, Development and Anti-Displacement in the Mid-Atlantic conference hosted by the University of Maryland

Celebrating our Partners

Milestones from Across the Commonwealth

- **OmniRide Celebrates 40 Years of Operations**
  - In August, OmniRide celebrated 40 years of operations when its operating organization, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, met for the first time. Since then, OmniRide took over local and commuter bus services, and has expanded into neighboring localities.
- **FTA Launches Transit Moves America Dashboard**
  - The FTA launched the dashboard in late July, providing a look at public transportation in communities across the country, highlighting FTA's safety and accessibility data so Americans have a better understanding of their transit systems.
- **Hampton Roads PDC Survey Highlights Transit as a Regional Priority**
  - In August, the Hampton Roads PDC revealed the results of a survey on regional planning priorities. After education and housing, survey responders indicated that transit was the third top priority, ahead of road networks and flood mitigation.
- **FTA Ferry Grant for the Jamestown/Scotland Ferry**
  - In August, the FTA announced $68 million to DRPT for the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry Replacement of VDOT's 'Surry' Ferry. The funds will be utilized by VDOT to replace the current ferry with Electric/Low-Emitting/Passenger Ferry.

Public Engagement
DRPT Marketing and Communications

- **Safety and Design Division Announcement**
  - On September 1, DPRT sent a press release to announce the creation of a new Safety and Design Division and the selection of Alan Saunders PE, CCM, as the Division head. The new division will equip transit agencies and localities to improve progress and performance on federal safety and security compliance requirements and capital project delivery to ensure safe, reliable and affordable mobility for those who rely upon and work in transit and rail.
- **Try Transit Month**
  - September is Try Transit Month. DRPT and transit partners promote and encourage Virginians who do not normally take public transit to give it a try. Switching from driving alone to taking public transportation can save households thousands of dollars per year.
- **Operation Lifesaver**
  - September 21 to 27 is See tracks? Think trains week, a week of rail safety awareness sponsored by Operation Lifesaver. DRPT, alongside VPRA and the State Corporation Commission, partner to promote safety around railroads, especially when walking or driving across railroad crossings.



Updates from the Yard
DRPT Rail Updates

- **Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board Meeting**
  - On August 27, the VPRA Board met to elect new officers, welcome new members Amanda Pratter and Prescott Sherrod and discuss progress on major capital projects such as Long Bridge.
- **Freight Advisory Committee Update on Statewide Rail Plan**
  - On August 12, DRPT provided a Statewide Rail Plan update to the Virginia Freight Advisory Committee. The Rail Plan will identify priority projects and recommended policy considerations for freight railroads.
- **Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High Speed Rail Compact Commission**
  - On September 8, DRPT, VPRA and the North Carolina Department of Transportation hosted a meeting of the Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High-Speed Rail Compact Commission with participation by Senators Surovell and Sturtevant; and Delegates Glass, Phillips, and Ward; in addition to North Carolina legislators McInnis, Lazzara, Winslow, and Moss.
- **Statewide Rail Plan Public Meeting**
  - Also on September 8, DRPT hosted a 2026 Statewide Rail Plan public meeting. This second public meeting built on feedback collected during the June public meeting, as well as stakeholder meetings conducted over the summer.

Transforming Rail in Virginia

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Project Updates

- **Long Bridge Project**
  - The project is making progress on multiple fronts. For the new Potomac River rail bridge, crews are constructing the abutments on the Virginia and DC shores.
  - At Maine Ave SW, work continues on a major retaining wall and bridge foundations for future track shifts.
- **New River Valley Passenger Rail Project**
  - Concrete pouring continues for the passenger platform sidewalls and base. To date, 675 linear feet have been poured out of 960 feet total.
  - VPRA anticipates the service extension to the New River Valley to occur in the second half of 2027.
- **USDOT Grant Awards**
  - On August 14, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded three federal grants for rail improvements in the Commonwealth.
    - VPRA will receive $25M for the Richmond Layover Facility, an overnight storage and maintenance facility, as well as $15.6M for Staunton Station accessibility and state-of-good-repair improvements.
    - Chesterfield County will receive $2.3M for project development of rail grade crossing separations and closing at-grade crossings to enhance safety and reliability.





Limited Amtrak Service Outage in October
Pause for Progress

- From October 16-26, 2026, Amtrak train service south of Washington Union Station will be severely curtailed for First Street Tunnel A-Interlocking trackwork.
- The A-Interlocking is a signal point where trains can switch tracks in the First Street Tunnel, which provides access to Union Station to/from Virginia. This is a critical repair work and will improve service reliability.
- Reduced Amtrak service operating in Virginia will terminate northbound service at Alexandria with Bus Bridges to Washington Union Station. Busses will also connect from Washington to southbound trains from Alexandria.
  - Virginia passenger rail service will operate limited train service for stations between Roanoke – Alexandria; Norfolk – Alexandria. The Carolinian train will serve stations between Raleigh – Alexandria. Long Distance Trains will not operate in Virginia during this time (this includes the Palmetto, Silver Meteor, Floridian, Crescent, Cardinal services). The Auto Train will continue to operate between Lorton, Virginia and Sandford, Florida.
- VRE trains will service all stations except for Union Station, running up to L'Enfant in the morning and originating from L'Enfant in the evenings.
- VPRA and DRPT are coordinating on intercity bus services as alternative options, including existing Virginia Breeze Routes.
  - Amtrak will operate express buses to Washington Union Station directly from the following stations: Roanoke – DC, Charlottesville – DC, Norfolk/Newport News/Williamsburg – DC, Richmond Main Street – DC; Richmond Staples Mill to DC.

Ongoing Transit Studies
Monthly Study Update

- **Statewide Transit Oriented Development Study**
  - DRPT has been engaging with stakeholders and subject-matter experts throughout August.
- **Equivalent Compensation Labor Study**
  - The second work group met on August 24, with a third meeting scheduled for September 28. A letter from work group legislation patrons Delegate Helmer and Senator Salim was distributed to the work group members.
- **WMATA Efficiency Reporting**
  - DRPT is finalizing the report ahead of an October 15 due date.
- **HJ28 Hampton Roads Transit Regional Needs Study**
  - First meeting of the joint commission is anticipated for September.
- **Northern Virginia Bus Transit Consolidation Study**
  - Based on meetings with localities, staff are developing technical memos on existing conditions, potential, scenarios, and analyzing the impact of a potential consolidation.
- **Virginia Breeze Study***
  - Project is in early stages, evaluating existing conditions, gathering passenger and performance data, and modeling financials.
- **Transit Transformation***
  - DRPT is selecting a consultant team to assist the plan's development.



Interested in the TOD Study? Fill out the General Survey here until Sep. 25!

*DRPT Initiated; Others required by General Assembly

Ongoing Transit Studies
Monthly Study Update

- **Statewide Transit Oriented Development Study**
  - DRPT has been engaging with stakeholders and subject-matter experts throughout August.
- **Equivalent Compensation Labor Study**
  - The second work group met on August 24, with a third meeting scheduled for September 28. A letter from work group legislation patron Senator Salim was distributed to the work group members.
- **WMATA Efficiency Reporting**
  - DRPT is finalizing the report ahead of an October 15 due date.
- **HJ28 Hampton Roads Transit Regional Needs Study**
  - First meeting of the joint commission is anticipated for September.
- **Northern Virginia Bus Transit Consolidation Study**
  - Based on meetings with localities, staff are developing technical memos on existing conditions, potential, scenarios, and analyzing the impact of a potential consolidation.
- **Virginia Breeze Study***
  - Project is in early stages, evaluating existing conditions, gathering passenger and performance data, and modeling financials.
- **Transit Transformation***
  - DRPT is selecting a consultant team to assist the plan's development.



Interested in the TOD Study? Fill out the General Survey here until Sep. 25!

***DRPT Initiated; Others required by General Assembly**

CTB Action: Allocation of $19 million in Capital Funding provided by General Assembly for FY 2027

- The FY 2027 Budget included $19 million from the General Fund to support transit capital projects. These funds must be spent by the end of the fiscal year.
  - Transit capital projects have a longer lead time for spending - DRPT is putting these additional dollars towards grants that were identified in FY 2027 SYIP which will allow more capital funding to be allocated for FY 2028.

- The $19 million in FY 2027 funds will support the purchase of 43 vehicles, including Light-Duty Transit Vehicles and 35’/40’ Heavy Duty Transit Buses
  - All State and Federal match commitments remain unchanged.
  - If there is a balance of General Funds at the end of the year, DRPT will apply it to other expenses at one of the agencies included on the list.

- CTB will vote on this allocation in its October 2026 meeting.

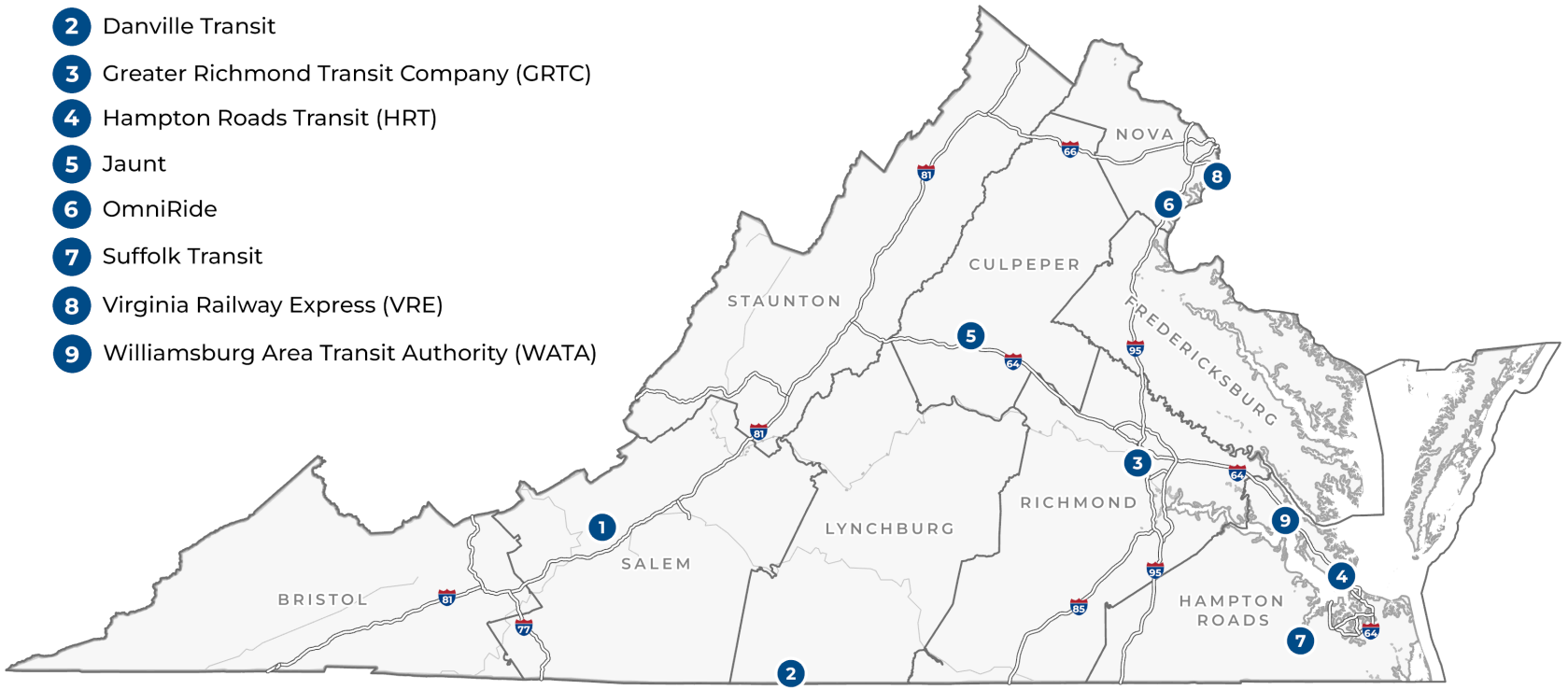
Projects Receiving Transit Capital General Funds

Project	General Fund replacing FY27 CTF Program Funds	State Match	State Cost Estimate
Virginia Railway Express (VRE): Broad Run Yard Property Acquisition*	N/A	NA	$6,600,000
Williamsburg Area Transit Authority: Old Mooretown Rd. Transfer Facility	TRIP Passenger Amenities & Facilities	65%	$4,258,705
Blacksburg Transit: 5 Replacement Light-Duty Transit Vehicles	MERIT Capital	68%	$713,128
Suffolk Transit: 2 Replacement Light-Duty Transit Vehicles	MERIT Capital	16%	$85,917
Danville Transit System (DTS): 1 Replacement Medium-Duty Transit Vehicle	MERIT Capital	68%	$198,847
GRTC (Richmond): 13 Replacement Light-Duty Transit Vehicles	MERIT Capital	68%	$1,723,800
Jaunt: 8 Replacement Light-Duty Transit Vehicles	MERIT Capital	68%	$1,008,317
PRTC (OmniRide): Replacement of 7 Heavy Duty Transit Buses	MERIT Capital	16%	$915,776
HRT: Replacement of 7 Heavy Duty Transit Buses	MERIT Capital	68%	$3,487,188

* DRPT will amend an existing VRE grant for this capital project.

Proposed Projects

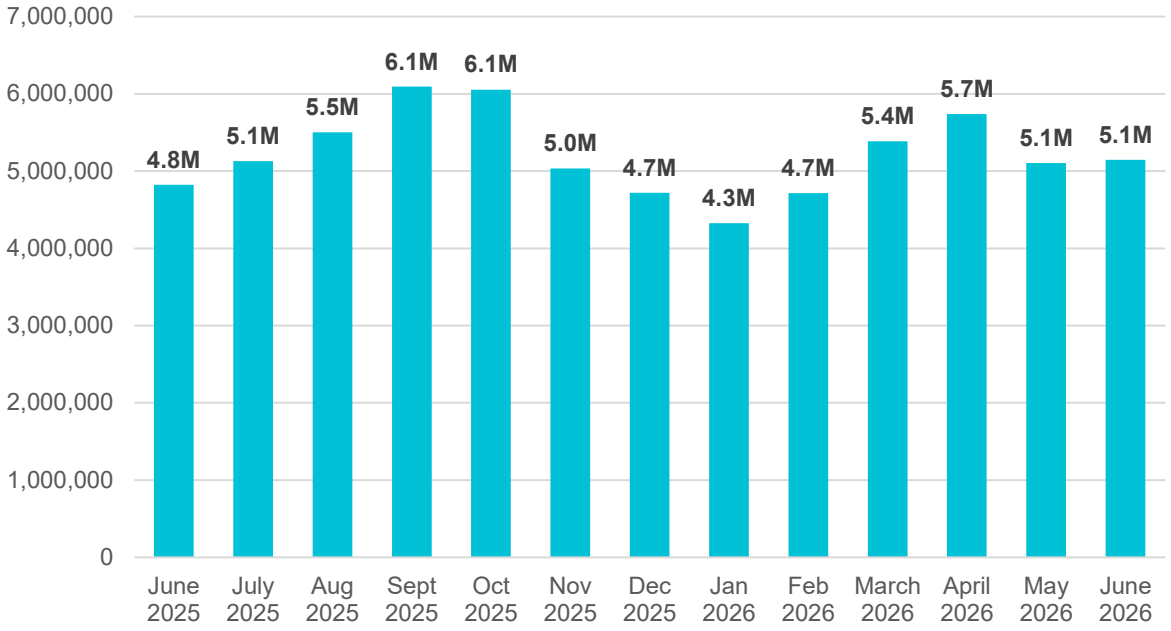
1. Blacksburg Transit (BT)
2. Danville Transit
3. Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC)
4. Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)
5. Jaunt
6. OmniRide
7. Suffolk Transit
8. Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
9. Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA)



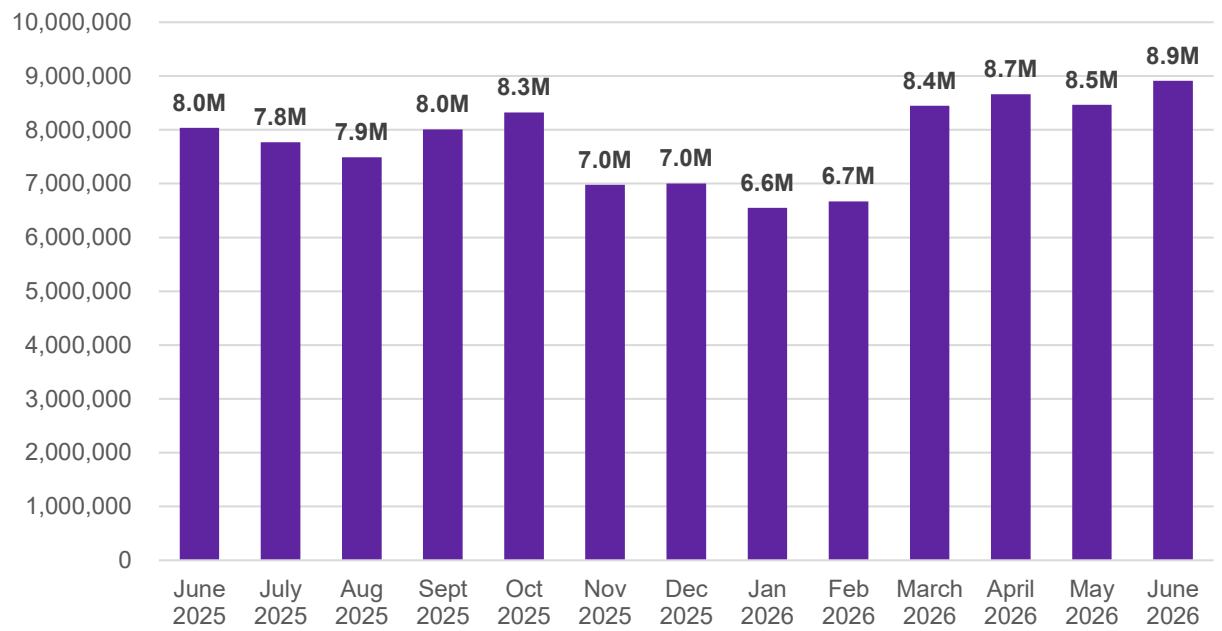
Appendix

Statewide Transit Ridership – Past 13 months

Statewide Transit Ridership – June 2025 to June 2026



Virginia Agencies (incl. VRE)

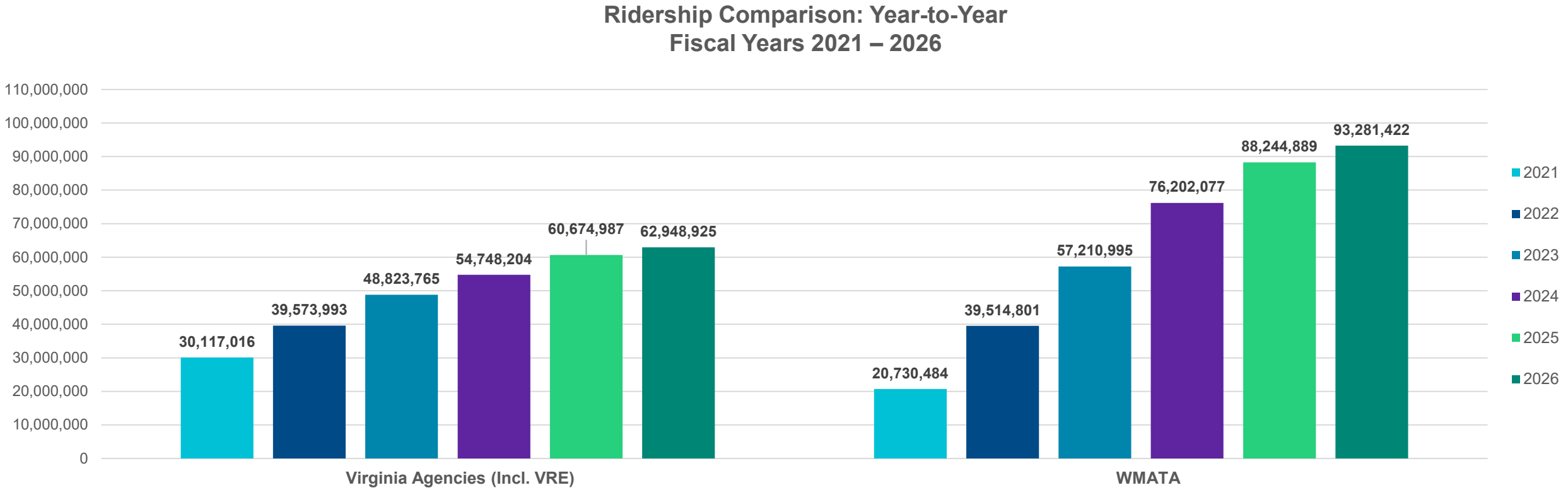


WMATA

Agencies	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	Total*
Virginia Agencies	4,823,693	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	62,948,925
WMATA	8,038,628	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	93,281,422
Total	**12,862,321**	**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**	**156,230,347**

*Last 12 Months

Statewide Ridership Comparison: Year-to-Year



Mode	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026 vs 2021	2026 vs 2022	2026 vs 2023	2026 vs 2024	2026 vs 2025
Virginia Agencies	30,117,016	39,573,993	48,823,765	54,748,204	60,674,987	62,948,925	109%	59%	29%	15%	4%
WMATA	20,730,484	39,514,801	57,210,995	76,202,077	88,244,889	93,281,422	350%	136%	63%	22%	6%
Total	**50,847,500**	**79,088,794**	**106,034,760**	**130,950,281**	**148,919,876**	**156,230,347**	**207%**	**98%**	**47%**	**19%**	**5%**

Virginia Breeze Ridership – June

In June 2026, ridership on VA Breeze routes totaled 3,829 which was:

- 88% higher than original estimates, and
- 8% higher than June 2025

In June 2026, the VA Breeze contributed to a reduction of 77 metric tons of CO_2 equivalent emissions.

Valley Flyer:

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

Piedmont Express:

- Ridership – 10% lower than June 2025
- Farebox Rev. – 12% lower than June 2025

Capital Connector:

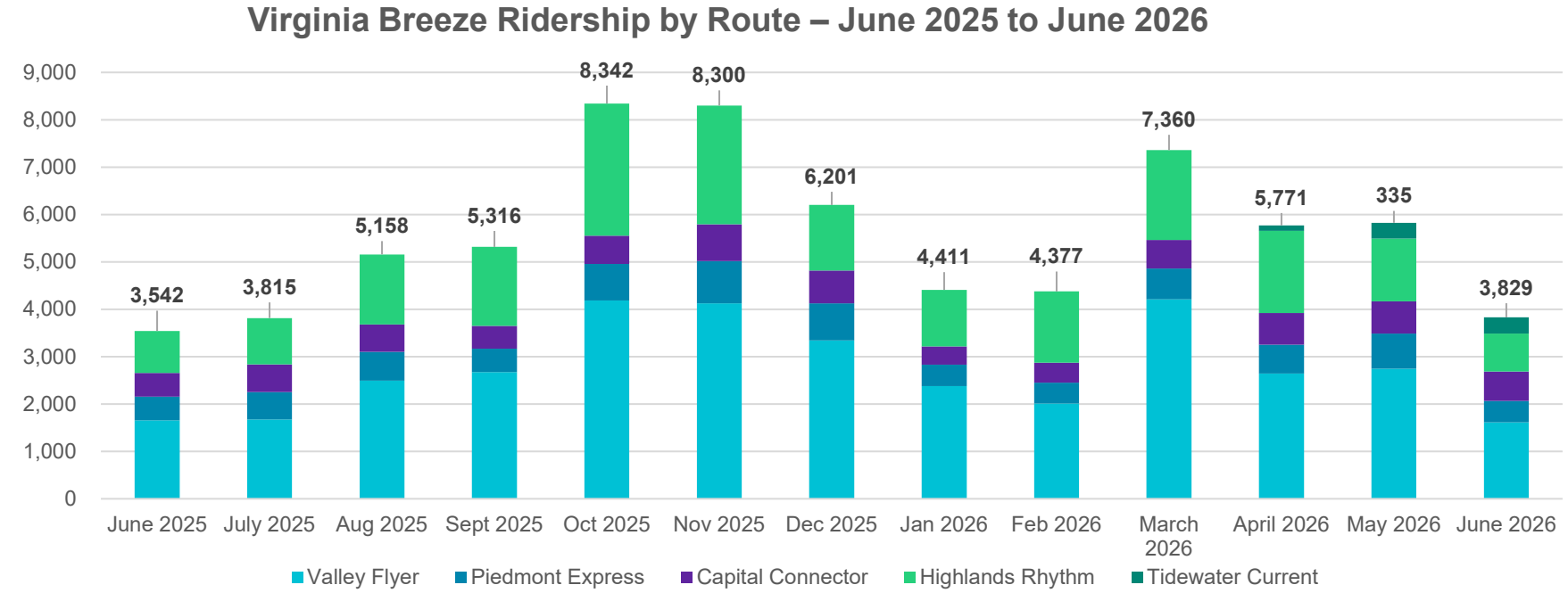
- Ridership – 23% higher than June 2025
- Farebox Rev. – 17% higher than June 2025

Highlands Rhythm:

- Ridership – 9% lower than June 2025
- Farebox Rev – 13% lower than June 2025

Tidewater Current:

- Ridership – N/A
- Farebox Rev – N/A



Route	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	Total*
Valley Flyer	1,655	1,675	2,493	2,676	4,189	4,124	3,344	2,377	2,012	4,211	2,645	2,746	1,617	34,109
Piedmont Express	499	577	606	490	767	895	781	451	440	650	609	744	449	7,459
Capital Connector	504	585	581	484	598	778	694	389	424	602	670	676	618	7,099
Highlands Rhythm	884	978	1,478	1,666	2,788	2,503	1,382	1,194	1,501	1,897	1,734	1,325	806	19,252
Tidewater Current											113	335	339	787
All Routes	**3,542**	**3,815**	**5,158**	**5,316**	**8,342**	**8,300**	**6,201**	**4,411**	**4,377**	**7,360**	**5,771**	**5,826**	**3,829**	**68,706**

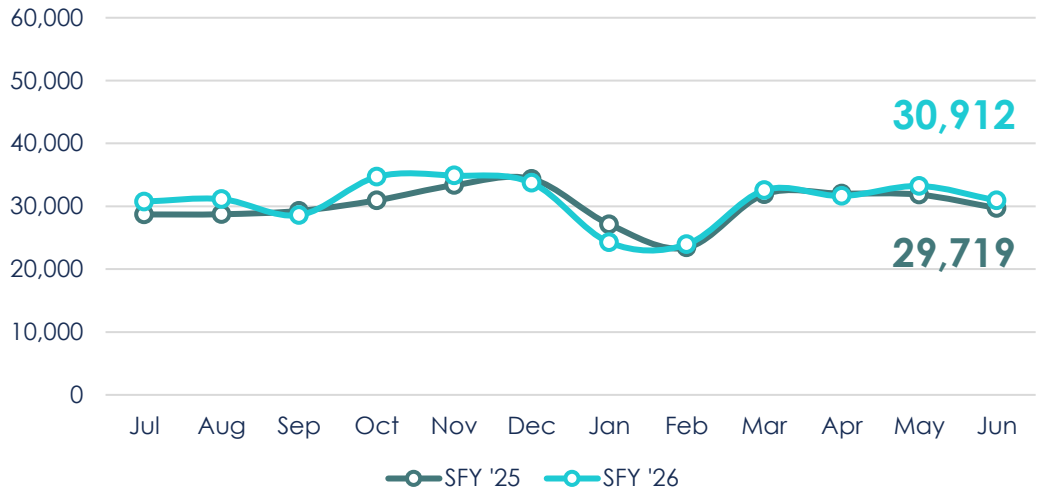
*Last 12 Months

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

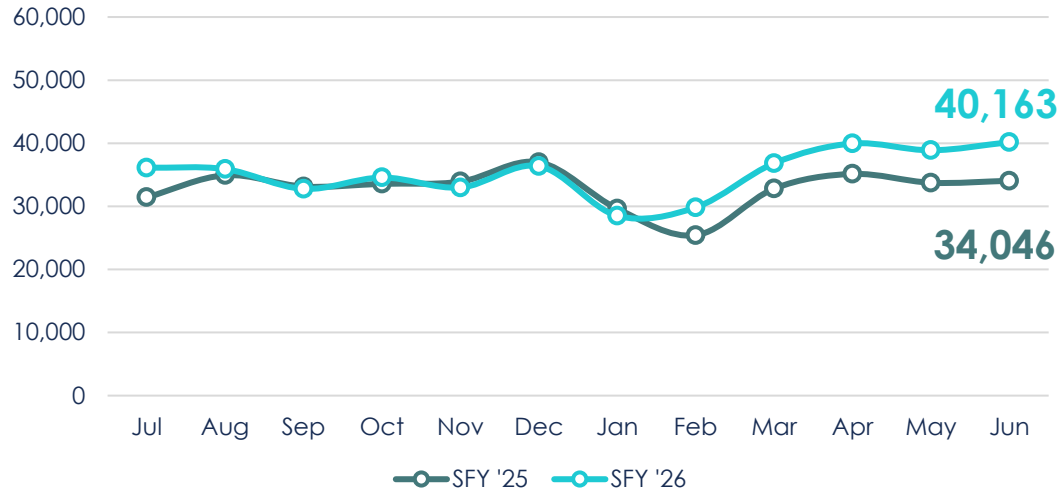
Express buses chart displays both Hampton Roads and Richmond area ridership.

Express bus ridership breakout on Slide 11.

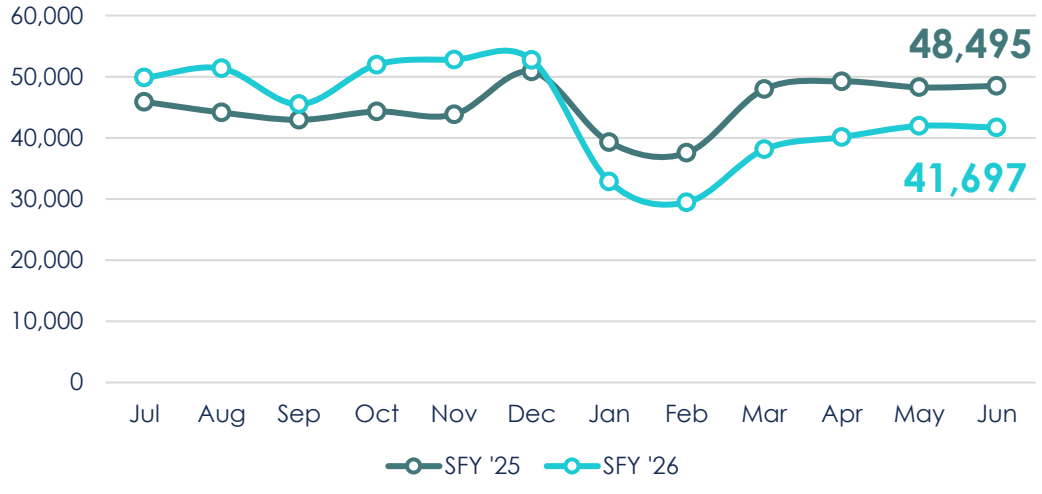
Route 46: Roanoke (+4.0%)



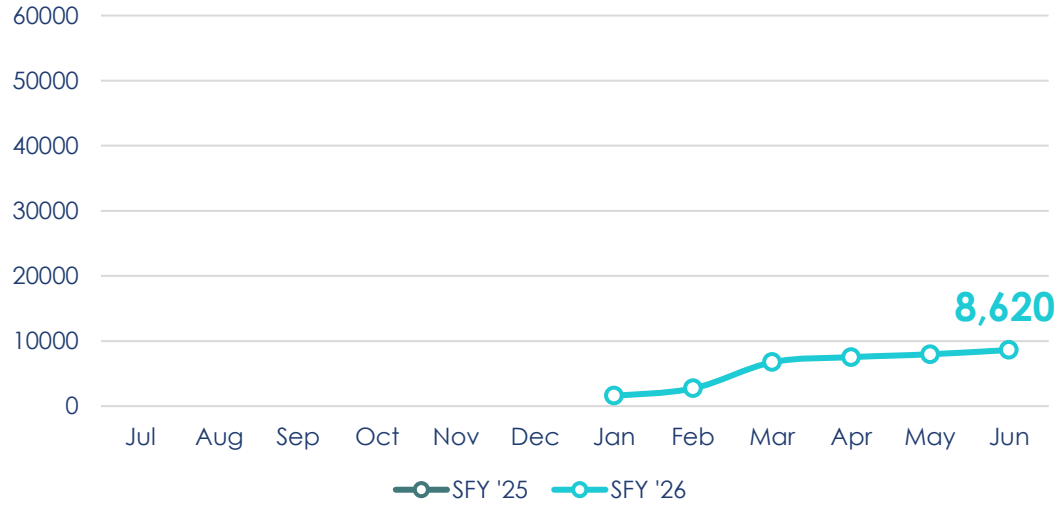
Route 47: Newport News (+18.0%)



Route 50: Norfolk (-14.0%)

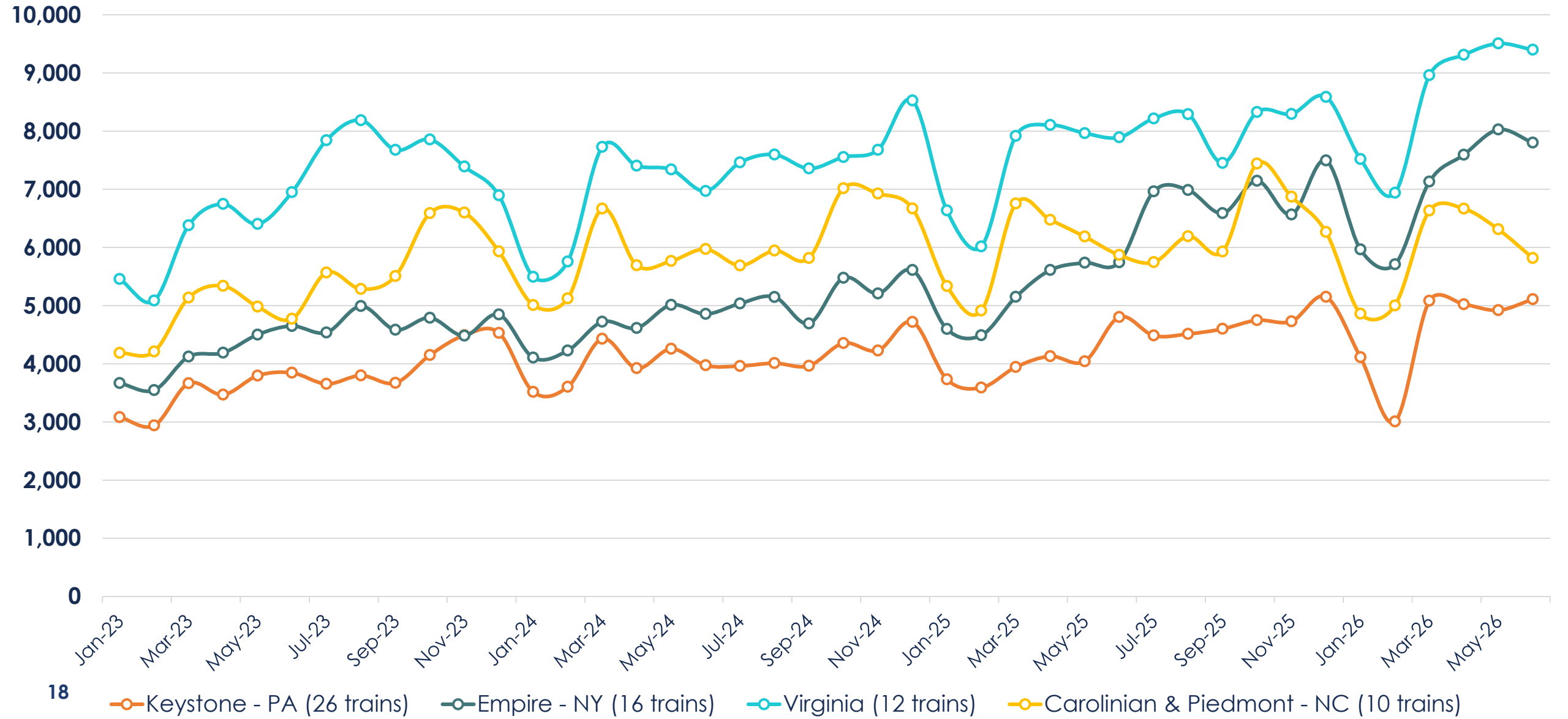


D.C. Express Buses



Virginia & Comparable State-Supported Amtrak Service Ridership

Normalized: Monthly Ridership ÷ Daily Trains



FY27 SYIP Transfers

DRPT Director Approved - Under 200,000

Recipient Project Number & Description	Recipient Original Allocation	Recipient New Allocation	Transfer Amount
State Transit Operator and Maintenance Roadeo-Hampton Roads Transit	Federal = $0.00 State = $50,824	Federal = $0.00 State = $101,648	Federal = $0.00 State = $50,824
ADP Software - Operations (Radio Communication System) -FXBGO!	Federal = $14,000 State = $34,000	Federal = $14,650 State = $35,580	Federal = $650 State = $1,580
Spare Parts / Capital Maintenance Items (Miscellaneous Parts)-Bay Aging, Inc	Federal = $33,931 State = $82,405.12	Federal = $37,984.35 State = $92,247.71	Federal = $4,035.35 State = $9,842.59
County of Fairfax-FY25 Transit Bus Roadeo	Federal = $0.00 State = $55,082.50	Federal = $0.00 State = $77,805.57	Federal = $0.00 State = $22,723.07
TOTAL Transfers			**FEDERAL = $4,685.35** **STATE = $84,969.66**

**Transfers are all below the $200,000 threshold and do not require CTB approval. DRPT is providing the CTB with a list of all transfers approved during July and August of SFY 2027.*

FY26 Q4 Rail and Public Transportation Report- Expenditures

Schedule of Budget vs. Actual
As of June 30, 2026
($ in Millions)

	Adopted FY 2026	Actual 6/30/2026	Remaining Balance	Percentage Remaining	Notes
Public Transportation Programs					
Operating Assistance	$ 164.3	$ 161.8	$ 2.5	1.5%	A
Capital Assistance	213.2	139.0	74.2	34.8%	B
Special Programs	9.4	8.3	1.1	11.7%	
Ridership Incentive Programs	77.2	23.5	53.7	69.6%	
VRE Assistance	17.4	17.4	-	0.0%	
WMATA Assistance	364.6	364.0	0.6	0.2%	C
Total	**846.1**	**714.0**	**132.1**	**15.6%**	
Commuter Assistance Programs	**7.3**	**17.1**	**(9.8)**	**-134.2%**	D
Human Service Transportation Pgm	**6.7**	**9.8**	**(3.1)**	**-46.3%**	
Planning, Regulation, & Safety Pgm	**6.7**	**5.1**	**1.6**	**23.9%**	
WMATA Dedicated	**154.5**	**154.5**	**-**	**0.0%**	E
Total Transit Programs	**1,021.3**	**900.5**	**120.8**	**11.8%**	
Rail Assistance Programs					
Rail Preservation Programs	7.7	4.6	3.1	40.3%	
Rail Industrial Access	2.7	1.4	1.3	48.1%	
Freight Rail and Rail Planning Programs	23.2	10.5	12.7	54.7%	
Total Rail Programs	**33.6**	**16.5**	**17.1**	**50.9%**	
Administrative Expenses	**19.9**	**18.9**	**1.0**	**5.0%**	
Agency Total before VPRA	**$ 1,074.8**	**$ 935.9**	**$ 138.9**	**12.9%**	
VPRA Recurring Payments	**192.3**	**178.6**	**13.7**	**7.1%**	F
Agency Total	**$ 1,267.1**	**$ 1,114.5**	**$ 152.6**	**12.0%**	

FY26 Q4 Rail and Public Transportation Report- Resources & Commitments

Schedule of Resources and Commitments
As of June 30, 2026
($ in Millions)

	6/30/2026			6/30/2025
	Rail	Transit	Total	Total
Resources				
Cash	$ 57.6	$ 585.9	$ 643.5	$ 687.6
Estimated Revenues - FY 2027	22.8	941.7	964.5	922.7
Accounts Receivable	-	4.0	4.0	3.1
Bonds Receivable	0.2	-	0.2	0.6
Anticipated Bond Proceeds	9.3	17.0	26.3	29.9
Anticipated Reimbursement - VDOT	-	178.5	178.5	189.9
Anticipated Reimbursement - VPRA	8.6	-	8.6	8.6
Anticipated Reimbursement - DEQ	-	6.5	6.5	6.5
Anticipated Reimbursement - Federal	38.9	80.8	119.7	119.5
Total Resources (A)	137.4	1,814.4	1,951.8	1,968.4
Commitments				
Transit & TDM Commitments	-	1,674.4	1,674.4	1,671.8
Rail Commitments	122.2	-	122.2	116.9
VPRA Commitments	7.7	-	7.7	13.0
Due to VDOT / VPRA	-	2.2	2.2	13.3
Total Commitments (B)	129.9	1,676.6	1,806.5	1,815.0
Funds Available	$ 7.5	$ 137.8	$ 145.3	$ 153.4