



CARTA Board Meeting

June 5, 2026

Grant Sparks, Director of Statewide Transit Programs



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



DRPT's Role in Transportation

Who are we?



The catalyst to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians through innovative transportation solutions



Our vision is a connected Commonwealth with an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need



The agency works with rail and public transportation stakeholders to provide service to people throughout Virginia



1992 General Assembly established DRPT as an independent agency separate from VDOT

What do we do?



Allocates state and federal funding through capital and operating grants, as well as grants to support specific enhancements or improvements



Conducts statewide rail and transit studies, including improving service or identifying new opportunities



Plans and programs new services and capital improvement projects, from public transportation to freight and passenger rail



Provides leadership, advocacy, technical assistance, and funding oversight

Virginia's Transit Network

Public Transportation in Virginia



5 VIRGINIA BREEZE BUS ROUTES



41 TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDERS



60 HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION OPERATORS



17 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Transit Landscape in Virginia

Fixed Route Service Areas
(includes Fixed-Route + ADA Paratransit + Deviated Fixed Route)

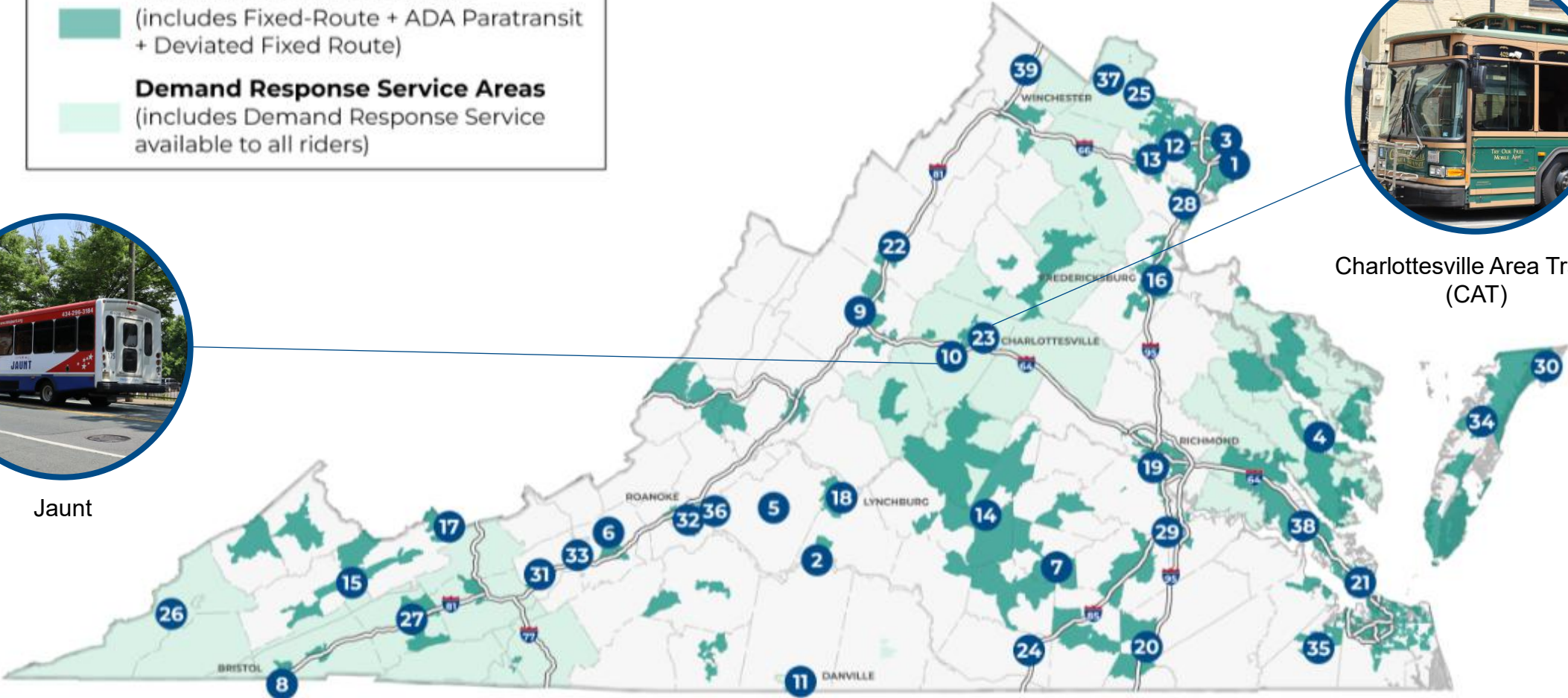
Demand Response Service Areas
(includes Demand Response Service available to all riders)



Jaunt



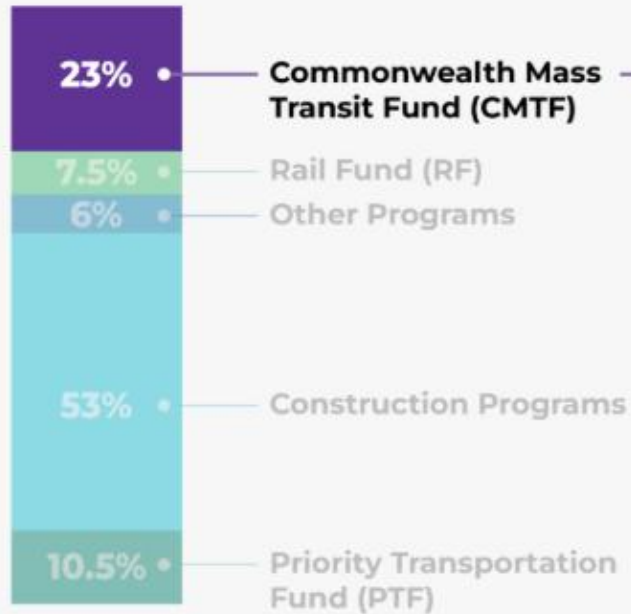
Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT)



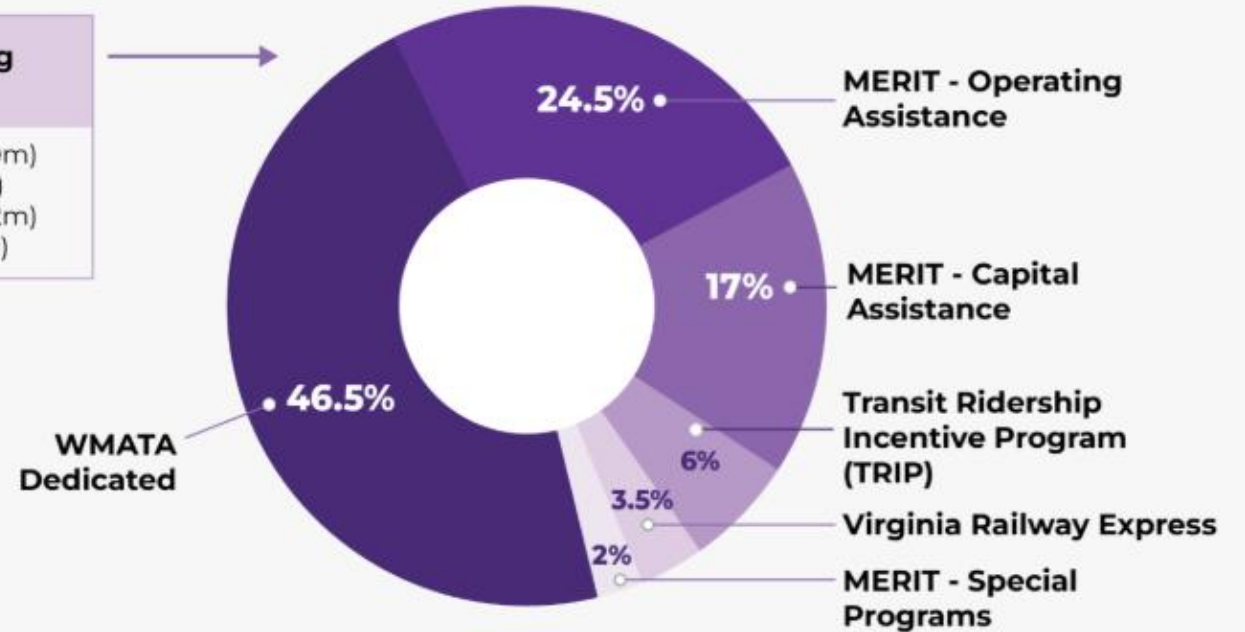
State Transit Funding

Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF)

Transportation Trust Fund (TTF)



Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF)



MERIT Operating Assistance

FY27 MERIT Operating Assistance Recommended Award: \$138.8M

- Eligible transit agencies receive state operating funds through a formula that considers:
 - **Sizing Metrics**
 - Costs, Ridership, Revenue Hours, Revenue Miles
 - **Performance Metrics**
 - Passengers/Hour, Passengers/Mile, Cost/Hour, Cost/Mile, Cost/Passenger
- Draft FY27 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Operating Allocations:
 - CAT: \$3.7M
 - Jaunt: \$970K
- The average operating allocation in the Draft FY27 SYIP accounts for 23% of transit agency operating expenses.

MERIT Capital Assistance

FY27 MERIT Capital Assistance Recommended Award: \$101M

- MERIT Capital Assistance is a discretionary program that prioritizes State of Good Repair (SGR) projects over enhancement/expansion projects.
- Draft FY27 SYIP Capital Allocations:
 - CAT: \$6.3M
 - Vehicle replacements, new facility E&D, maintenance equipment, ITS equipment
 - Jaunt: \$1.9M
 - Vehicle replacements, spare parts, maintenance equipment, on-board tablets, etc.
- State capital funding typically accounts for 68% of total project costs with the exception of “Major” capital projects where state funding is capped at 50%.

Other State Funding Programs

Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)

- TRIP funds regionally significant transit projects, zero/reduced fare projects, public safety projects, and passenger amenity projects.
 - Draft FY27 SYIP TRIP Allocation (CAT): \$1.3M – Bus Shelters

MERIT Special Programs

- MERIT Special Programs fund pilot projects, innovation projects, new studies/plans, and workforce development projects.
 - Draft FY27 SYIP Allocation (Jaunt): \$490K – Pilot projects in Fluvanna, Louisa, Greene County

SMART SCALE

- SMART SCALE funds capital transportation projects that expand capacity (ex: buses and infrastructure for a new Bus Rapid Transit service).

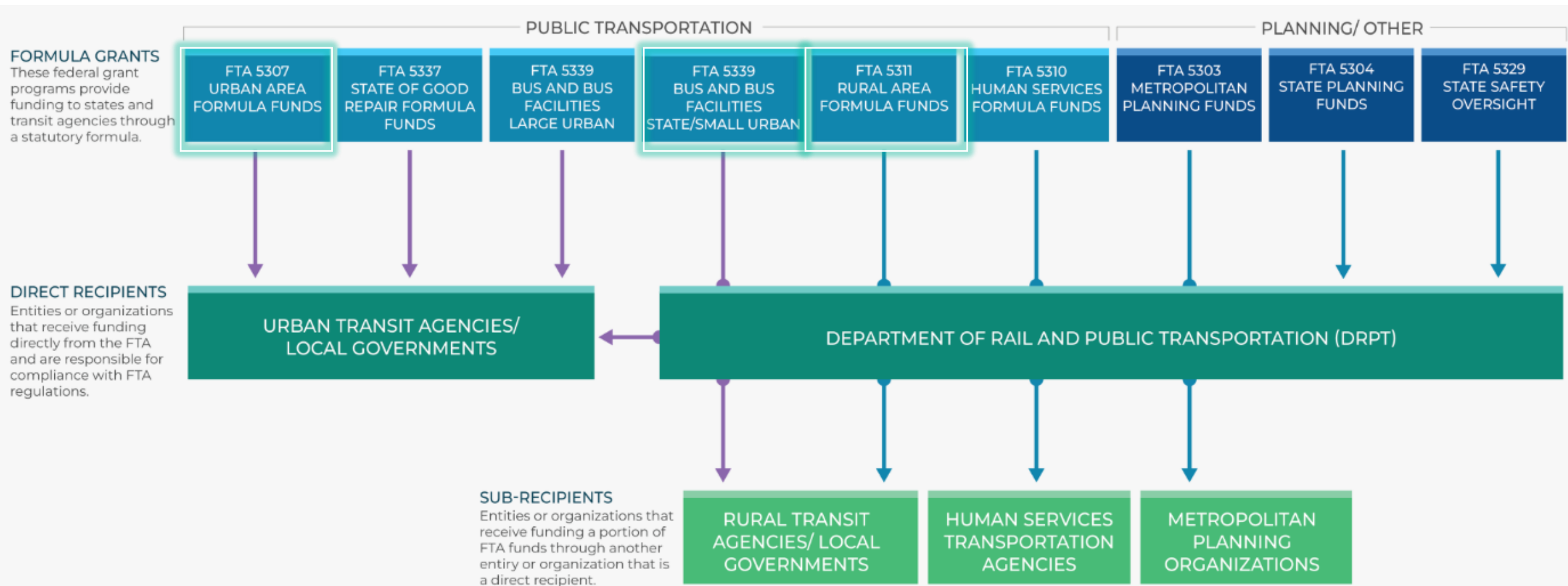
Federal Transit Funding

Federal Funding Programs

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) apportions federal transit funding based on geography, not agency:

- **Urbanized Areas (UZAs) with Population >200K: Large Urban**
 - A single agency is identified as the Designated Recipient for each Large Urban area (typically the primary transit provider).
- **Urbanized Areas (UZAs) with Population 50K-200K: Small Urban**
 - DRPT is the Designated Recipient of FTA funding for all Small Urban areas in Virginia.
 - CAT is the Direct Recipient of FTA funding for the Charlottesville UZA.
- **Areas with Population <50K: Rural**
 - DRPT is the Designated and Direct Recipient of FTA funding in all Rural areas in Virginia.
 - Jaunt is a Subrecipient to DRPT for Rural FTA funding.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Programs



Federal Funding: Small Urban Areas

FTA Section 5307 Formula Program

- FTA Section 5307 Formula Program is the primary federal funding program for urban transit providers (ex: CAT).
- It can be used for capital or operating expenses.
- The funding formula is primarily based on population and population density but also includes a performance-based set aside that offers additional 5307 funding for agencies that are deemed as high performers (i.e. Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) funding).
- FTA apportions 5307 funding for Small Urban areas to states, who then suballocate these funds to transit agencies in these areas.
- Draft FY27 SYIP 5307 Allocation (CAT): \$4.3M

Federal Funding: Small Urban Areas

FFY26 FTA Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) Funding Table

Urbanized Area (UZA) Description	Passenger Miles per Vehicle Revenue Mile	Passenger Miles per Vehicle Revenue Hour	Vehicle Revenue Mile per Capita	Vehicle Revenue Hour per Capita	Passenger Miles per Capita	Passenger Trips per Capita	Number of Performance Factors Met or Exceeded	STIC Funding: @ ≈ \$542,412 per Factor Met or Exceeded
Avg for UZAs with Populations 200K - 999K	4.71630	80.71282	10.44697	0.66475	55.43578	8.64342		
Blacksburg-Christiansburg, VA	6.41545	72.06129	19.20521	1.70360	118.26413	56.35819	5	\$2,712,061
Charlottesville, VA	2.07478	24.14498	10.57134	0.93825	10.86108	9.75741	3	\$1,627,236
Fredericksburg, VA	5.74030	320.46131	4.04324	0.23144	5.11235	2.00105	2	\$1,084,824
Harrisonburg, VA	4.30619	43.20340	10.47545	1.04411	45.10930	25.58194	3	\$1,627,236
Lynchburg, VA	1.88457	27.39471	9.22254	0.63445	17.38049	4.66383	0	\$0
Staunton-Waynesboro, VA	0.00000	0.00000	5.90150	0.39472	0.00000	2.77200	0	\$0
Williamsburg, VA	3.63973	59.39870	9.94419	0.60934	36.19418	12.43867	1	\$542,412
Winchester, VA	0.00000	0.00000	3.97287	0.30306	0.00000	2.17453	0	\$0

Federal Funding: Rural Areas

FTA Section 5311 Formula Program

- The FTA Section 5311 Formula Program is the primary federal funding program for rural transit providers (ex: Jaunt).
- It can be used for capital or operating expenses.
- The funding formula is based primarily on rural land area and population.
- FTA apportions 5311 funding to states and states suballocate funding to rural transit agencies.
 - DRPT suballocates 5311 Operating funds based on submitted transit agency budgets for the upcoming year.
 - DRPT suballocates 5311 Capital funding using the same prioritization process as MERIT Capital.
- Draft FY27 SYIP 5311 Allocation (Jaunt):
 - Operating: \$3M
 - Capital: \$259K

Federal Funding: Small Urban AND Rural Areas

FTA Section 5339a Formula Program

- The FTA Section 5339a Formula Program is the federal funding program for both small urban and rural transit providers.
- It can only be used for capital expenses.
- The funding formula is based primarily on rural land area and population.
- FTA apportions funding to states and states suballocate funding to small urban and/or rural transit agencies.
 - DRPT utilizes its MERIT Capital prioritization process to determine allocations.
- Draft FY27 SYIP 5339a Allocation
 - CAT: \$2.5M
 - Jaunt: \$618K

Federal Funding: Discretionary Programs

- **US DOT BUILD**
 - Funds capital infrastructure projects
 - \$5M minimum award (Urban) and \$1M minimum award (rural)
- **FTA Capital Investment Grants (CIG)**
 - Primary federal funding source for new BRT/passenger rail projects
 - Match rates are scaled based on the size of the project
- **FTA Buses and Bus Facilities (5339b)**
 - Funds buses and passenger facility projects
 - 80% standard federal share
- **FTA Low/No Emissions (5339c)**
 - Funds low and no emission bus and infrastructure projects
 - 80-90% federal share depending on project type

FY27 State and Federal Transit Funding

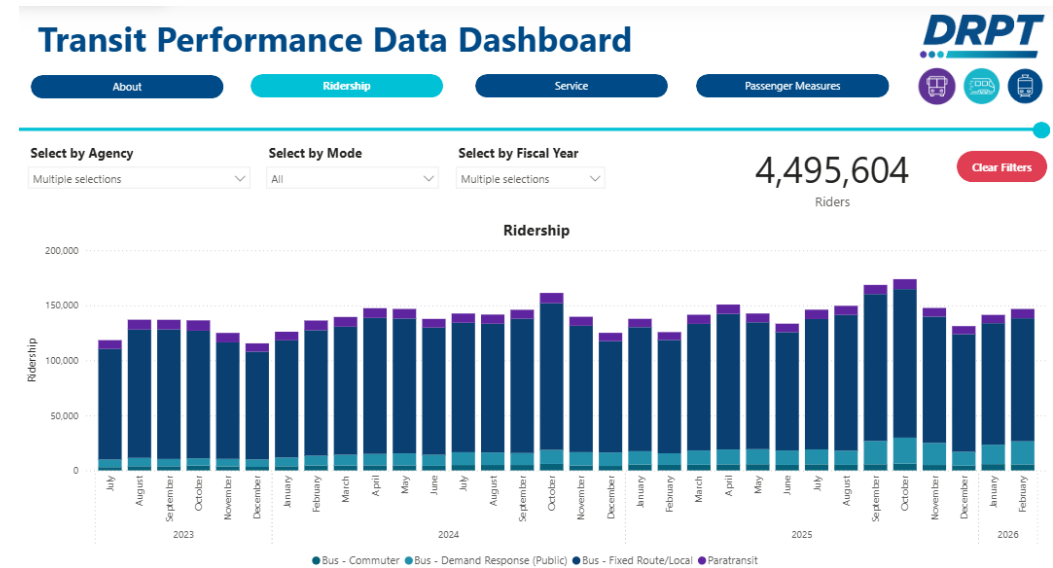
FY27 DRPT State and Federal Funding Allocations to CAT and Jaunt

	State Funding Programs				Federal Funding Programs			Total
	MERIT Operating	MERIT Capital	TRIP	MERIT Special	5307	5311	5339	
CAT	\$3,733,430	\$6,346,094	\$1,277,719	-	\$4,256,074	-	\$2,530,776	\$13,888,018
Jaunt	\$966,623	\$1,861,330	-	\$487,753	-	\$3,317,979	\$618,584	\$7,245,063
Region Subtotal	\$4,700,053	\$8,207,424	\$1,277,719	\$487,753	\$4,256,074	\$3,317,979	\$3,149,360	\$21,133,081

Transit Performance

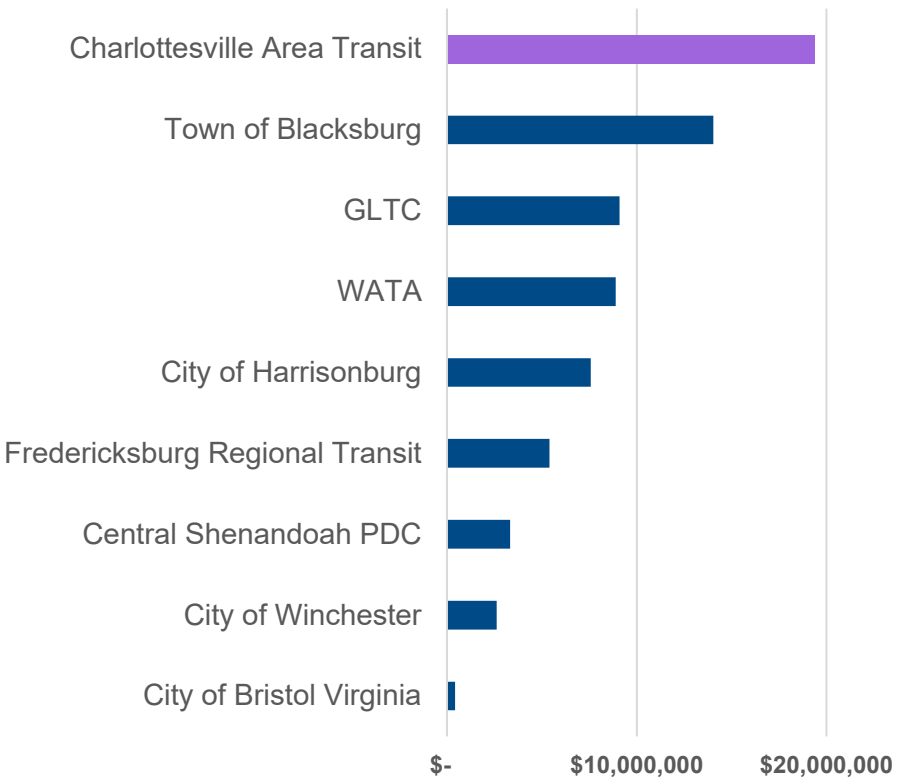
Transit Performance Metrics

- Performance metrics are used to determine allocations in both the MERIT Operating (state) formula, as well as the 5307 STIC (federal) formula.
 - DRPT is considering changes to the performance metrics used in the MERIT Operating formula.
- DRPT collects ridership, revenue hours, and revenue miles data from every transit agency in Virginia on a monthly basis and collects cost data annually.
- Performance metrics are posted for all agencies on [DRPT's Open Data Portal](#).

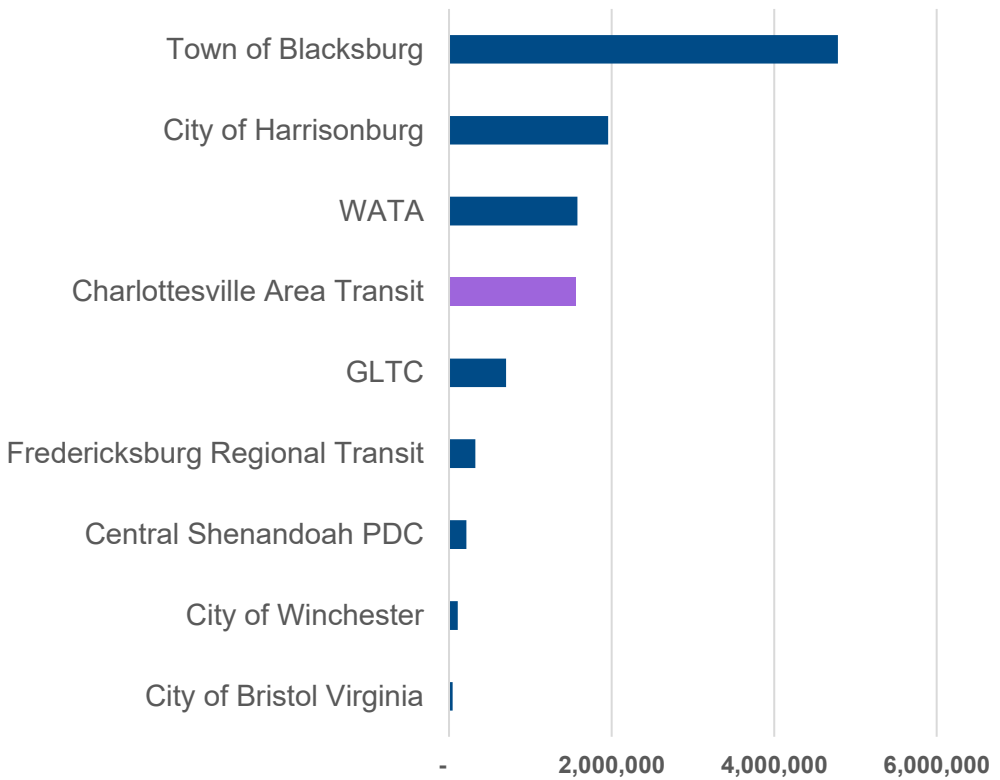


Virginia Small Urban Metrics: Cost & Ridership

2025 Operating Cost

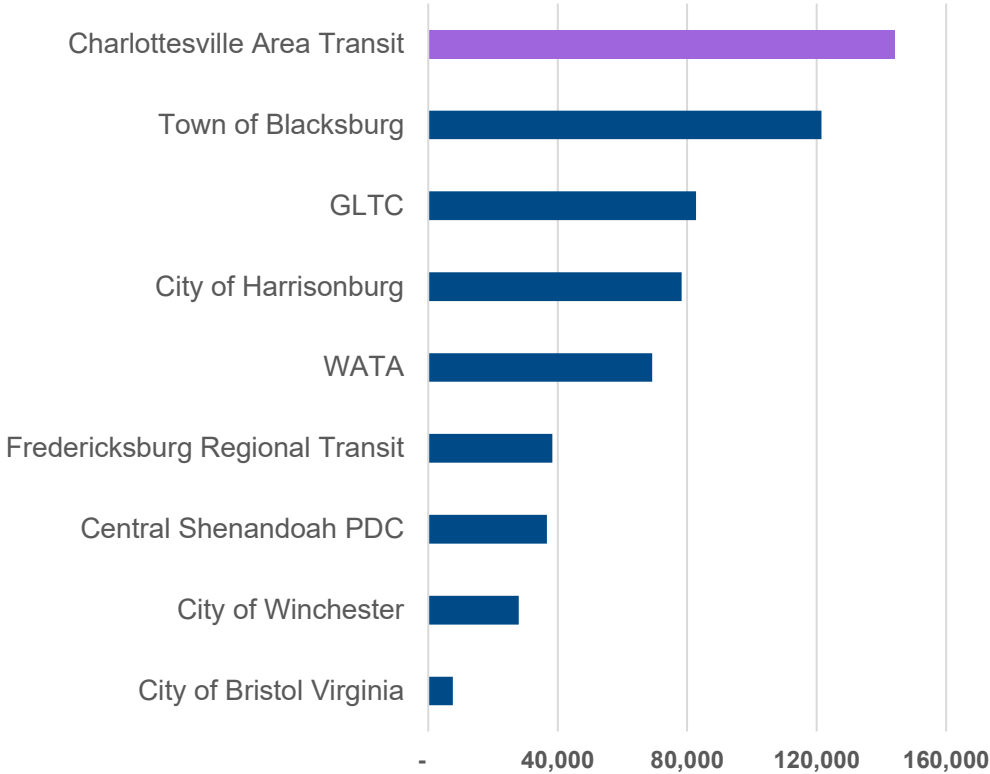


2025 Ridership

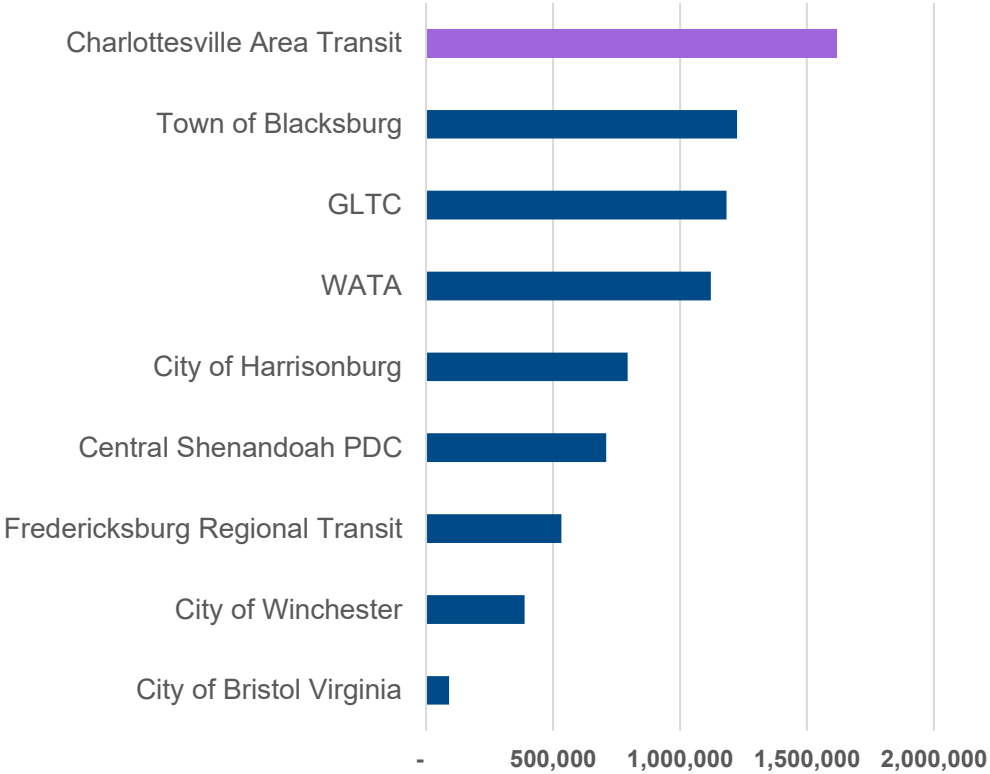


Virginia Small Urban Metrics: Hours & Miles

2025 Revenue Hours

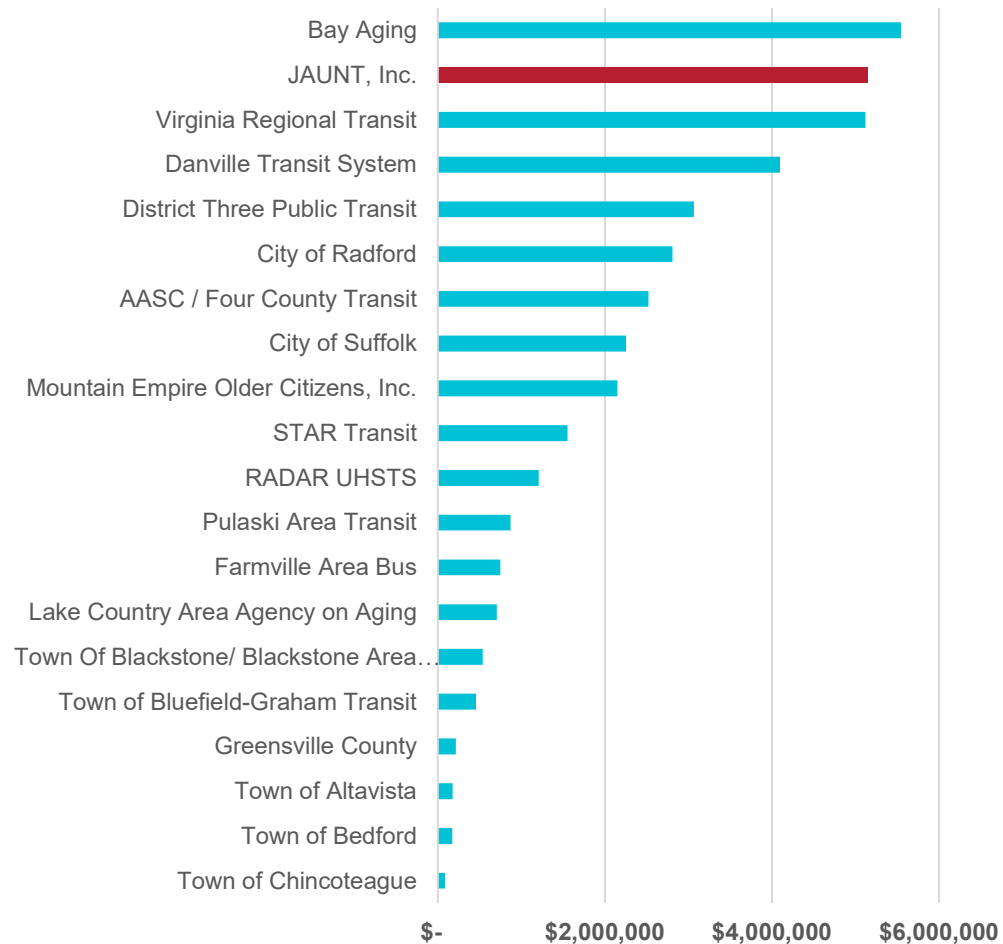


2025 Revenue Miles

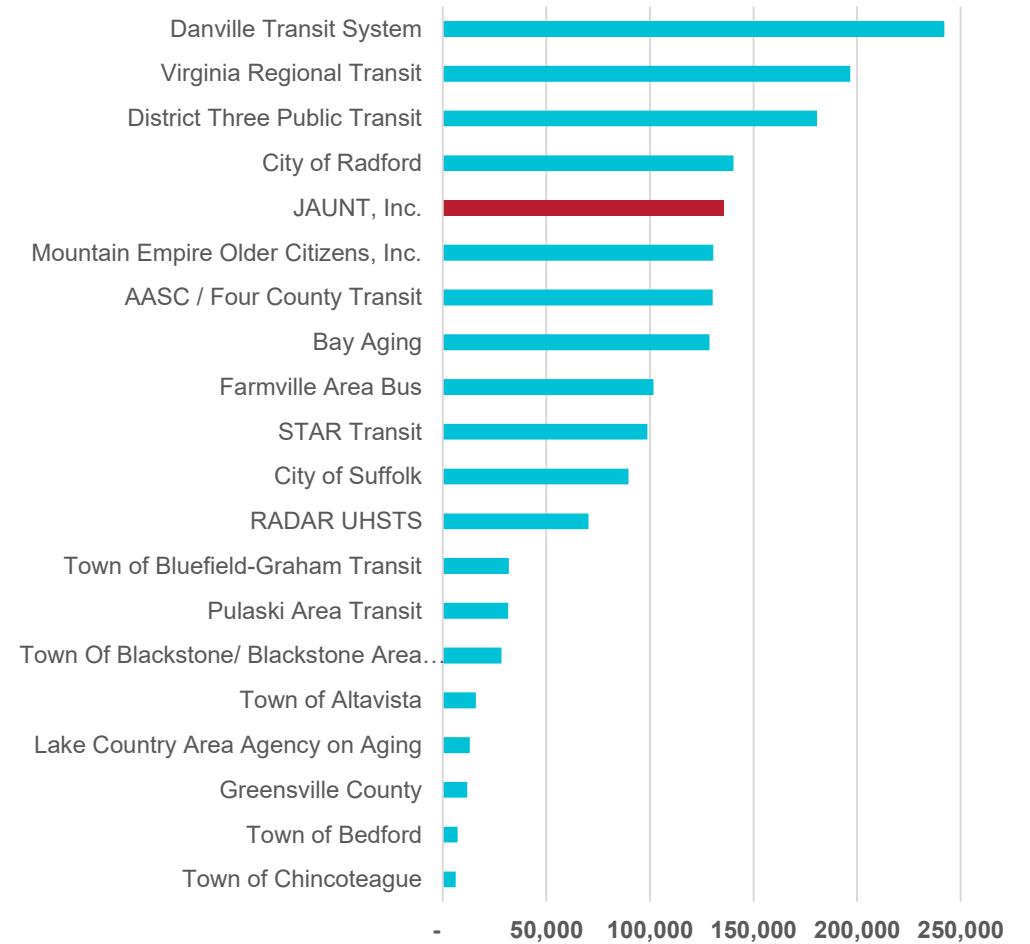


Rural Cohort – Sizing Metrics

2025 Operating Cost

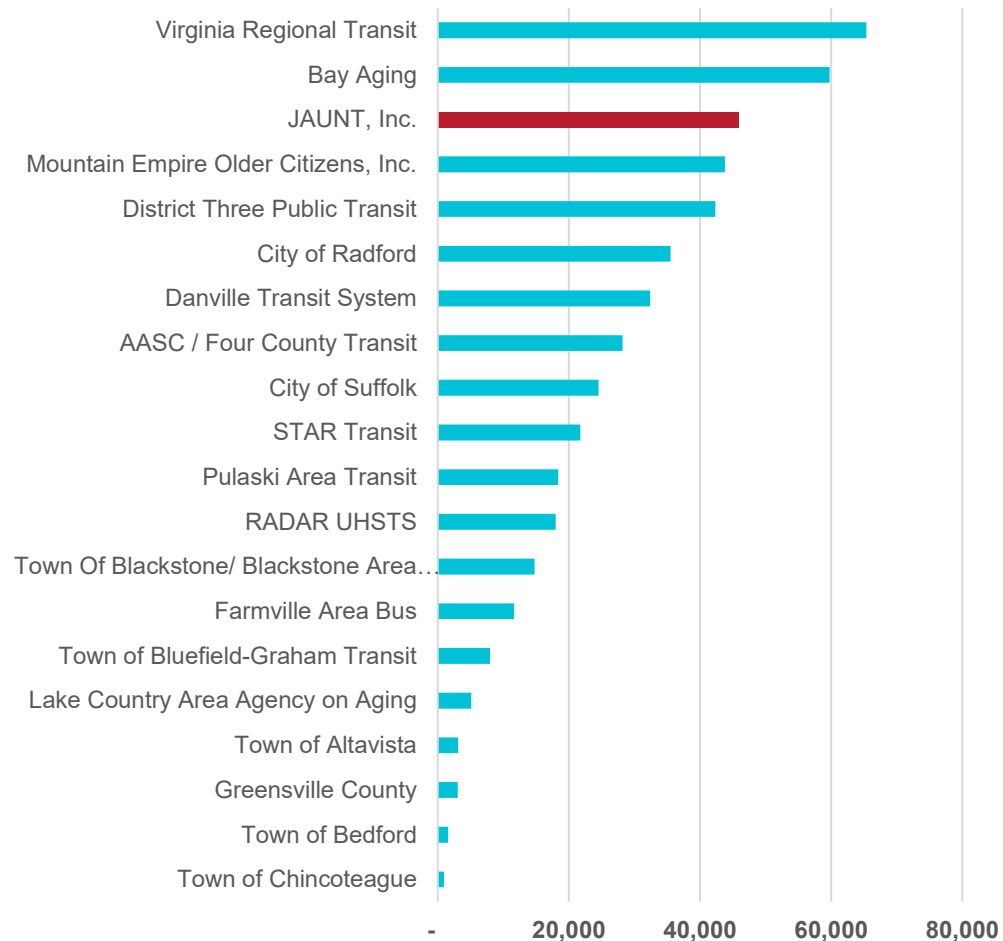


2025 Ridership

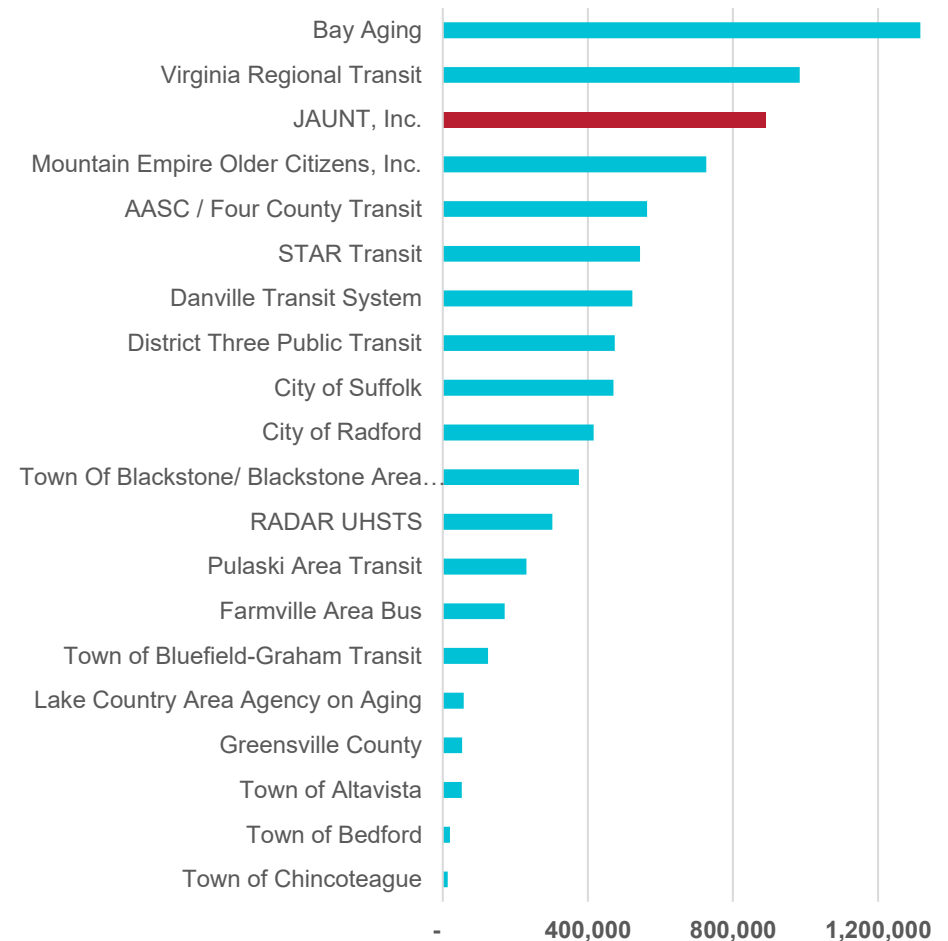


Rural Cohort – Sizing Metrics

2025 Revenue Hours



2025 Revenue Miles



Regional Considerations

Transit Considerations for the Greater Charlottesville Region

- Currently, there are no **Transit Authorities** in Virginia that receive dedicated regional transit revenues. If CARTA pursues dedicated regional transit funding, it would be the first of its kind in Virginia and potentially a model for other systems.
- There are opportunities to bring more federal and state funding to the region if regional transit performance metrics are improved via MERIT Operating and STIC.
 - The Incorporation of UTS data would likely lead to more federal funding for the region.
- Regional transit can come in many different forms:
 - Richmond: One regional transit agency (GRTC)
 - Northern Virginia: One regional Commission (NVTC) with multiple local transit agencies
- **What should Regional Transit look like in the Greater Charlottesville Region?**



Questions?