

Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) Meeting

Draft Minutes, June 5, 2026

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWtf2ptLdzA&t=44s>

VOTING MEMBERS & ALTERNATES		STAFF	
Jen Fleisher, Charlottesville	x	Christine Jacobs, TJPDC	x
Natalie Oschrin, Charlottesville	x	Lucinda Shannon, PATH and TJPDC	x
Sally Duncan, Albemarle	x	David Blount, TJPDC	x
Mike Pruitt, Albemarle	x	Taylor Lowery, TJPDC	x
		Sara Pennginton, Rideshare	x
		Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	x
		Ben Chambers, Charlottesville	
		Ann Wall, Albemarle	x
NON-VOTING MEMBERS		GUESTS/PUBLIC	
Grant Sparks, DRPT	x	Katy Miller, DRPT	x
		James Freas, City of Charlottesville	x
		Garland Williams, CAT	x
		Scott Silsdorf, UTS	x
		Mike Murphy, Jaunt	x
		Zoë Macomber, CAT	x
		Tonya Swartzendruber, Albemarle	x
		Jessica Dimmick, Albemarle	x
		Stacy Beverly, UTS	
		Sean Tubbs	
		Jason Espie, Jaunt	
		Chet Parsons, CVTA	x
		Mariia Zimmerman, DRPT	x

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Natalie Oschrin called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves, and she welcomed Mariia Zimmerman as the special guest.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA (MINUTE 3:11)

Motion/Action: Jen Fleisher moved to approve the agenda. Mike Pruitt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC (MINUTE 3:28)

None.



4. CENTRAL VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CVTA) OVERVIEW (MINUTE 4:48)

Chet Parsons, CVTA, provided background on CVTA's creation and funding.

He gave a report on the total receipts of taxes, both the sales and use tax and the gas tax, that fund the CVTA. He also presented FY25 tax revenues and gave a breakdown on where they are allocated. He showed a graph with regionally funded projects by locality and by mode, 2021 through 2032.

He continued by presenting GRTC's funding commitments. (FY25 funding commitments are \$34,306,050).

He showed a chart for the funding of the regional public transportation plan. He briefly reviewed the code language that informs how and where to spend their revenue.

Mr. Parsons presented their regional allocations. He said since 2020, they have supported 77 projects.

He briefly presented Smart Scale Round 4 project highlights.

He reviewed their next steps and what they are working on for the future.

There was a question-and-answer session after the presentation.

5. STATEWIDE TRANSIT FUNDING OVERVIEW (MINUTE 41:51)

Grant Sparks, DRPT, presented what the organization is and its role in transportation. He presented the transit landscape in Virginia and pointed out Jaunt and CAT on his map.

He continued with the state transit funding portion of the presentation. He noted that it is quite technical in nature. He said the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) is a wide variety of fees and taxes collected at the state level. DRPT gets 23% of that fund. He broke down the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF) and the percentages of the revenue and where it is designated.

He continued describing the MERIT Operating assistance for FY27, which amounts to \$138.8 million. It is formula-driven and installment-based. (listen for a few more MERIT programs)

He also briefly reviewed other state funding programs including Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), MERIT Special Programs, and SMART Scale.

Mariia Zimmerman said \$16 million is supposed to come to this area in FY27. Some of that is outside of MPO area, but most of that is for Jaunt and CAT.

Mr. Sparks continued with federal funding programs. The FTA apportions federal transit funding based on geography, not agency, which translates into "large urban", "small urban" and "rural" areas based on population. He then gave an overview of the FTA programs.

Mr. Sparks reviewed federal funding for small urban areas. He reviewed the 5307 funding and who can receive it and what it can be used for. He described the metrics used for federal funding for the small urban areas and how those areas might get bonuses.

He continued by reviewing federal funding for rural areas. He reviewed the 5311 funding, who can receive it and what it can be used for.

He reviewed 5339a Formula funding for small urban and rural areas and noted that it can only be used for capital expenses.

Mr. Sparks reviewed discretionary programs including US DOT's BUILD, FTA Capital Investment Grants (CIG), FTA's Buses and Bus Facilities (5339b), and FTA's Low/No Emissions (5339c).

Mr. Sparks briefly covered the FY27 state and federal transit funding.

He continued presenting the transit performance metrics. He noted that all of the data collected is available on the open data portal. He proceeded to share some of the data collected.

Mr. Sparks said there are no transit authorities in Virginia that receive dedicated regional transit revenues. If CARTA pursues dedicated regional transit funding but would be the first of its kind in Virginia and potentially a model for other systems. He noted that there are opportunities to bring more federal and state funding to the region if regional transit performance metrics are improved via MERIT and STIC.

There was a question-and-answer session after the presentation.

Mariia Zimmerman said to start asking the question, "What is transit and what is included in transit?" Sidewalks? Bus Stops? Software for applications? Roads? Bikeshare?

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION (MINUTE 1:23:18)

Christine Jacobs thanked Ms. Zimmerman for being at the meeting and being available for open dialog.

Ms. Jacobs asked what regional transit should look like in this area and how CARTA should be moving forward.

She asked DRPT to share transit priorities for providers and localities.

Ms. Zimmerman said one of the goals of the administration is that transportation is important to the commonwealth and transit is the safest, most affordable form of transportation. It is their guiding star to make sure that remains the case.

She said most parts of the state have recovered from the Covid years. She said some commuter patterns changed, but note that transit programs themselves have changed. She said it is important

for DRPT to learn how to grow ridership with the Transit Transformation planning effort they are implementing. She noted that transit only works as well as the land use around it. There will be a transit-oriented development study in the next year about the state of TOD in the Commonwealth and the potential for new housing at their existing and planned transit stations and rail stations. She said they are in the process of completing the statewide rail plan.

She said DRPT, DMV, and VDOT have been working together to increase safety on transportation systems by using a targeted, data-driven approach to addressing key safety needs.

Ms. Zimmerman said there will be a General Assembly-directed study on transit and housing.

Ms. Jacobs asked Mr. Parsons to speak to their initial engagements with rural areas vs the way they engage now.

Ms. Zimmerman said the challenge is that the MPO is larger than just Charlottesville and Albemarle. She said there are also UVA and UVA Health and other special destinations. She said Charlottesville/Albemarle is a hub in the larger region for commerce and employment and their shared futures rely on one another. She acknowledged that more people are moving farther out. The question is how to bring in other county partners because without a regional approach, how does that work? She noted that there are truly growing needs for rural areas. She asked how CARTA would work to approach that.

Ms. Oschrein said people are moving farther away because they cannot afford to live closer. Mr. Pruitt said commuter buses will be important.

Mr. Murphy said at Jaunt, there is already an agreement on the services they want. He said there is a major communication hurdle when it comes to CARTA in getting voters to want to pay for transit over schools, firemen, etc. He said there is a different mindset in each locality. They are not the same, so that needs to an adjustment when considering the different localities.

7. TRANSIT AGENCY REMARKS (MINUTE 1:50:20)

Jaunt

Mr. Murphy said they are in their 50th year and personally invited the folks from DRPT to the celebration in September. He said they have new buses on the road. He said he is impressed by how much their drivers are committed to the organization. He said he appreciates that DRPT is listening to him about numerous issues he has had. He said they are getting another \$4-5 million for a parking lot to put their vehicles behind a fence and a security system.

Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT)

Garland Williams said he appreciates the support from DRPT. He said the team of Alan & Bethel have been great regarding putting in bus stops. Zoë Macomber has been helpful in pushing it along, but it has been onerous. He said the costs have gone up in 2 years by nearly 30%. He doesn't know how to combat that, but any help would be appreciated. He also said the BEB infrastructure is being put in

place now. They have BEBs that should be completed by 7/28/28. The next steps are working with Bethel on their new maintenance facility.

Ms. Zimmerman said they are talking with the CTB Director re: workforce and cost issues and challenges. They are working with the Department of Labor and will be happy to follow up with CAT and Jaunt. She asked how to better help agencies with project delivery? She said there will be a new safety and design division being created.

University Transit Services (UTS)

Scott Silsdorf said they do not receive state money for their operations. He said UTS is committed to working with CAT and Jaunt. At the institution level, there are several commuter programs. He noted that there are numerous employees from the Shenandoah Valley and Richmond. He said multi-modal and land use drive the decisions on whether to drive alone or rideshare or walk/bike somewhere.

Ms. Oschrein announced that the City won the Bike Challenge. She thanked Ms. Zimmerman for being present.

Ms. Zimmerman announced that there will be a special half price Virginia Breeze fare for the Juneteenth weekend and 4th of July weekend.

11. ADJOURN

Ms. Oschrein adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

The next Board meeting is on July 23, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at the Water Street Center, 407 E Water Street, Charlottesville, VA.