Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

Regional Vision ▪ Collaborative Leadership ▪ Professional Service

Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) Meeting

Draft Minutes, September 24, 2026

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWPoJIZJ3sM

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		Taylor Lowery, TJPDC	x
Mike Pruitt, Albemarle	x	Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	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
		Ben Chambers, Charlottesville	x
		Ann Wall, Albemarle	x
		Sean Tubbs *	x
		Monica Backmon, NVTA *	x
		Peter Krebs, PEC	x
		Amila Tola, NVTA *	x

** Attended virtually*

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Natalie Oschrin called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Lucinda Shannon called roll. Jen Fleisher noted that Loop de Ville is happening this Sunday, September 28. Natalie Oschrin noted that this weekend is Pride Weekend and the Saturday bike ride will be pride themed. Go to BikeCville.com for more information.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA (MINUTE 3:20)

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

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3. MEETING MINUTES (MINUTE 3:42)

Motion/Action: Mike Pruitt made a motion to approve the August 24, 2026, meeting minutes. Jen Fleisher seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC (MINUTE 3:58)

Peter Krebs, Piedmont Environmental Commission, says he lives right next to a City school, and while he was a big proponent of expanding the student responsibility zones, he said there are many unintended consequences that the City needs to face. He noticed that there are many single vehicles in the morning for drop-offs and it creates a lot of congestion on the streets. He asked the elected officials to consider what can be done to get more buses to the students. He said while CARTA is considering what transit can do, he asked that the board consider what we used to take for granted and that current parents don't really get to take for granted anymore. He understands there are current challenges in the transit world, he asked that the Board not forget the smallest among us.

5. NEXT STEPS: KEY POLICY QUESTIONS (MINUTE 7:30)

Taylor Lowery said after listening to the Board at the special meeting last month, she said there were a few questions that needed more information. She said there were two prominent themes that emerged from the special meeting: 1) What is CARTA's role in regional transit governance going forward, and 2) what is the legislative and funding proposal and how do we get there? She said the memo covers how staff would possibly be handling that between now and May or June of 2027. (See memo from agenda packet.) Jen Fleisher said the themes outlined are correct. Ms. Lowery said that since those are affirmed, staff has an idea on how to plan out what to expect at future meetings. It was noted that there is still a staff working group with the City and the County. Mr. Pruitt noted that when there is going to be a substantive policy discussion and decisions, the CARTA board needs to be involved and cannot be done/made solely by staff. He said the board needs staff to provide guardrails and experts to help lead decision-making.

6. NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OVERVIEW (MINUTE 13:)

Monica Backmon, NVTA, gave background on the NVTA and the funding streams dedicated to investing in transportation projects that reduce congestion. She covered the NVTA's planning and funding programs including TransAction and their six-year program. She reported that they have nearly $6 billion programmed in 400+ multimodal projects. She continued by giving a general overview of the investments made with that funding. Ms. Blackmon shared all of the collaborative partners which include numerous government entities, including several elected officials.

There was a brief question-and-answer session after the presentation. For additional information, you can find them online at www.TheNoVAAuthority.org. or Northern Virginia Transportation Authority on LinkedIn.

7. AFTON EXPRESS ANNUAL UPDATE (MINUTE 47:30)

Danielle Gannon, Transit Planner with the CSPDC, shared the background on the Afton Express and showed a general service route. She noted that the Afton Express has been running for 5 years. She reported that UVA subsidizes the fares for its employees. She shared the schedule revision project from last year and noted that they created changes that allowed for better alignment with employer

start times, created more even intervals, high demand coverage, express routes, and added a morning trip.

Ms. Gannon shared the FY26 marketing grant milestones. She shared the ridership growth they are seeing now. February and June showed the largest gains.

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

8. TRANSIT PROVIDER UPDATES (MINUTE 58:47)

CAT

Garland Williams said their Battery Electric charging infrastructure project is moving along well. They applied for a discretionary grant on the No-Lo Emissions grant program for 4 buses for a total of $5.26 million. He said $4.2 million of that is from federal funding and the rest would be from the City. He said he is hopeful that they will be awarded the funds.

He continued by giving an update on service improvements with numerous routes. He said there will be an updated route schedule for the buses in the next several months.

Mr. Williams said on September 8, he participated in a peer-to-peer session on no-fare transit. He is going to participate in the Governor's Transportation Conference in October. He also said their fuel costs are becoming a major concern for them.

Regarding the parent responsibility zones, CAT is always looking to hire drivers. There are currently five openings, with offers out to four people. Unfortunately, CAT does not have benefits available to part-time drivers and many applicants are looking for a job with benefits.

Jaunt

Mike Murphy said for Jaunt, fuel is also an issue. There is an issue with the DMV deciding that the taxes they are paying need to be rebated instead of being exempt up-front. He may be looking for help from DRPT on that issue.

Jaunt has met a collaboration agreement, they will be interviewing software companies in October and November and he feels sure that there will be a contract for the scheduling software organization sometime in April.

He shared that they have three demo grants currently ongoing.

He said there has been ongoing planning on the Greene County Connect route.

He also said Jaunt is planning a Board retreat in February.

Lastly, he said Jaunt is looking to hire a planner on their staff.

UVA Transit

Scott Silsdorf reported on the service changes for UTS. He said the changes seem to be working well so far. He reported that UVA FlexRide, the on-demand service, is also doing well. Mr. Silsdorf said they got a new delivery of four Carson eJests and noted that the existing eJests are now wrapped. He said these buses are made in Turkey and Jaunt and CAT have a clause that says they must buy American, so that may be a loophole for them to purchase these buses. It was noted by Grant Sparks that there is a waiver for that clause.

Lastly, he said the new parking garage will be open in the next couple of months. He said the Gold and Silver lines will loop through the garage. He said there will be a dedicated bus lane and there is also their first-ever multi-modal "Wahoo Wheels" bicycle garage. He is not certain when that will be open.

Mr. Williams noted that UNC Chapel Hill transit will be visiting and have requested to see CAT and UTS.

Ms. Oschrin said that October 1-8 is "Week without Driving" week. It is about learning about how 1/3 of Americans live without access to driving.

6. ADJOURN

Ms. Oschrin adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.