



Innovation in Transportation

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Director of Transit Planning
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Public Transit in Virginia



40 transit agencies

- *Heavy Rail*
- *Commuter Rail*
- *Light Rail*
- *Ferry*
- *BRT*
- *Fixed Route*
- *Demand Response*



90M annual transit riders (2022)



\$800M annual transit allocations

Transit Funding in Virginia

A couple major changes have been made to state and federal transit funding over the last few years:

STATE FUNDING

*Omnibus Transportation Bill
(2020)*



FEDERAL FUNDING

*Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
(2021)*



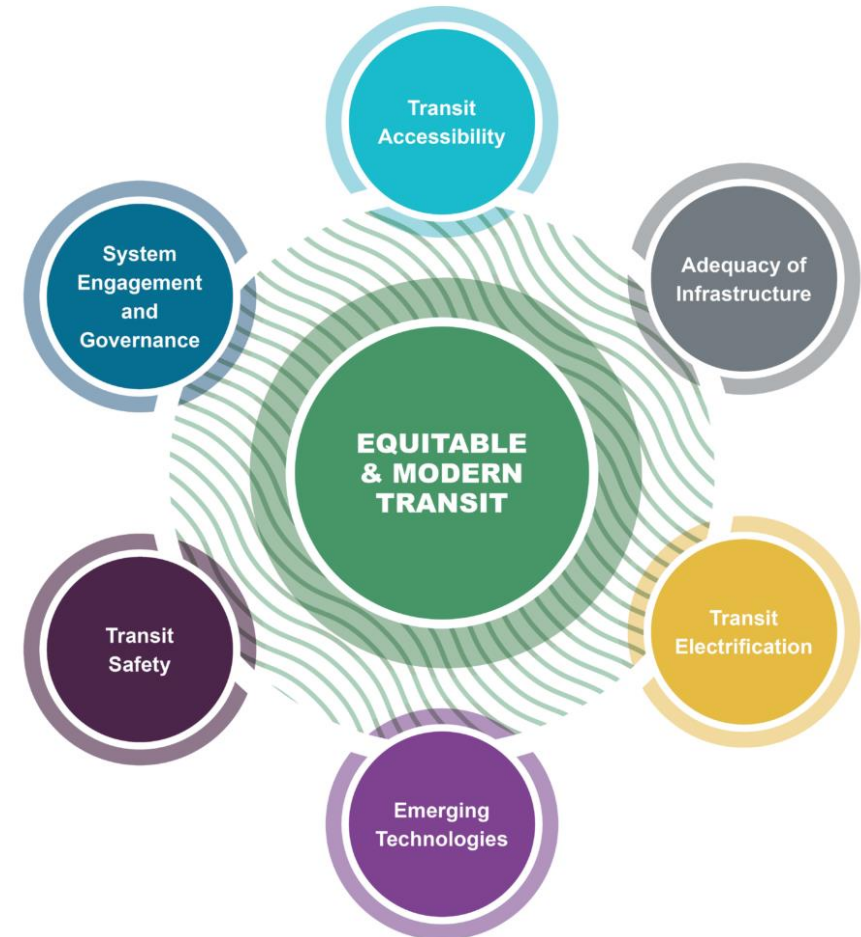
What are the transit needs?



Virginia Transit Equity & Modernization Study

House Joint Resolution 542 (2021)

- Required DRPT to complete a needs assessment that focused on the advancement of transit equity and modernization efforts in Virginia
- Identified six topic areas to be studied
- Emphasis on providing engagement opportunities for underrepresented and underserved communities



Study Process



Key Findings



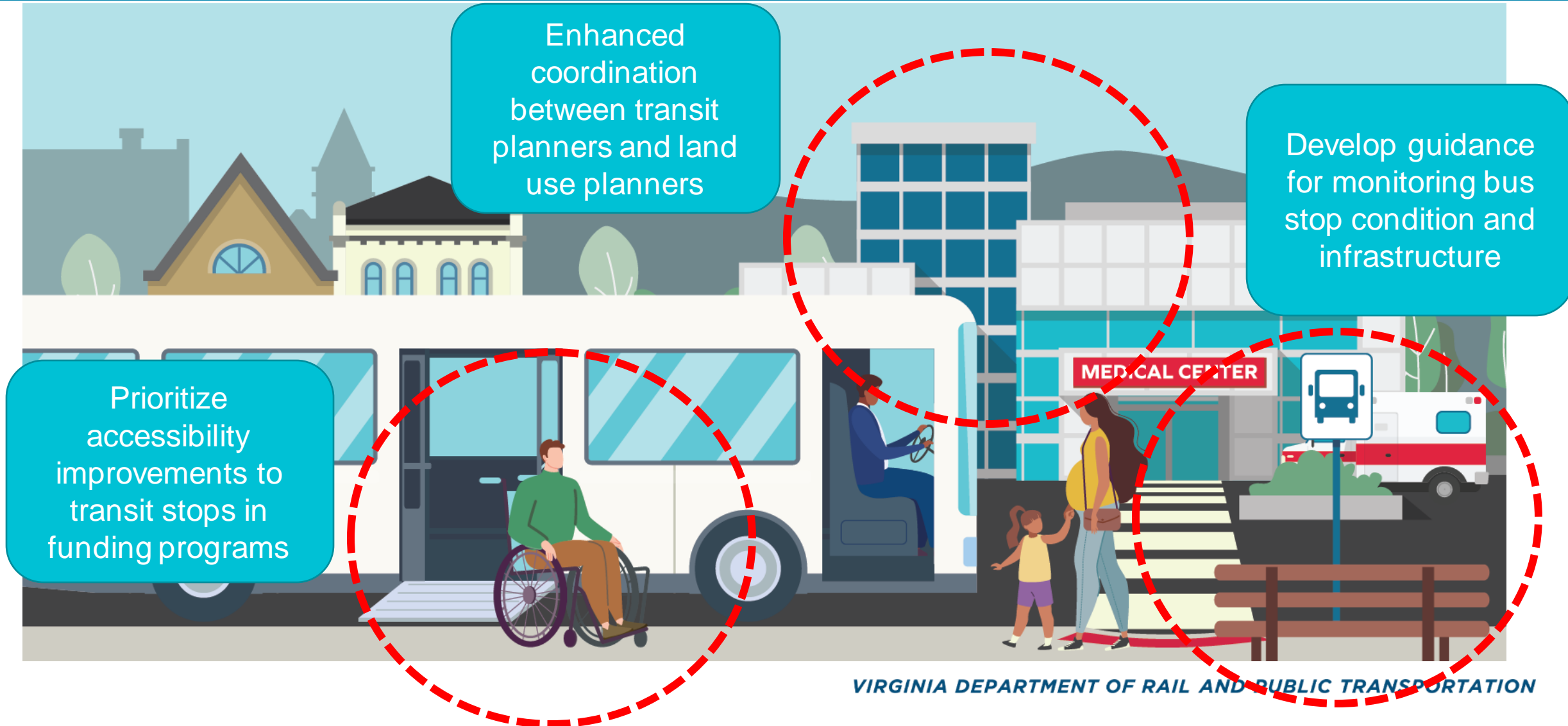
1. Many bus stops are poorly placed and not well-connected to sidewalks.
2. Basic transit infrastructure is inconsistent.
3. There is increasing interest in piloting zero-fare service to overcome barriers to transit access.
4. The availability of transit in Virginia is high, but gaps exist.
5. There is strong interest in transitioning to zero-emission fleets across Virginia transit agencies.

Key Findings



6. There are unique needs for and barriers to adopting new and emerging technology among Virginia's transit agencies.
7. Transit is among the safest ways to travel, but there is room to improve both perceived and actual safety for transit riders, operators, and employees.
8. More data with better precision is needed to make informed decisions.
9. Transit riders have limited opportunities to be a part of the decision-making process.
10. Equity and accessibility must be more heavily considered in guidance, requirements, and funding programs for transit agencies.

HJ 542 Recommendations



HJ 542 Recommendations

Develop guidance on bus stop design elements and permitting process

Expand use of data standards (ex: GTFS) and develop more statewide tech procurements

Develop resources to assist agencies in converting fleets to zero-emission



HJ 542 Recommendations

Develop best practices for engaging local law enforcement on crime prevention

Provide guidance on crime prevention through design and rider safety/etiquette

Be kind to your fellow passengers

Develop resources for transit agencies to evaluate their fare policies

RIDER NOTICE:
Route Z is detoured for construction at stops...

BUS #	3:21 PM
1606	Monday
M	MAIN ST - 10TH AVE

UPCOMING STOPS

MAIN & 4TH AVE	2 M
MAIN & 6TH AVE	
MAIN & 8TH AVE	

HJ 542 Recommendations

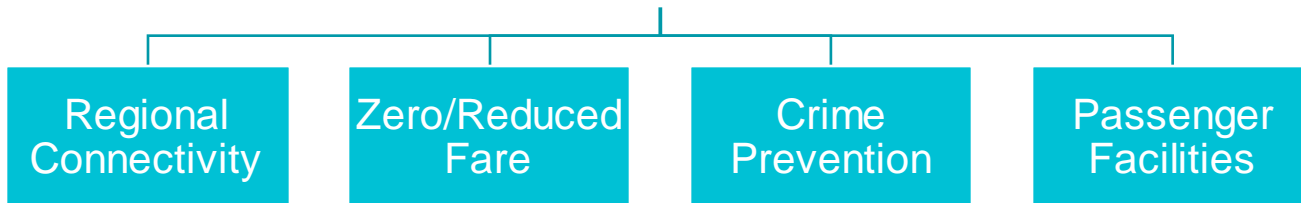


Funding the Study Recommendations

- Recommendations to be implemented by DRPT or transit agencies/partners
- Many state and federal discretionary funding programs already exist that can address study needs
- Successful implementation will require matching certain recommendations with an appropriate state/federal funding program(s)



Funding the Study Recommendations



- ~\$23M in state funding available per year
- New project types added during 2023 General Assembly
- Can fund project for up-to five years
- Multi-year projects include state funding “step down:”
 - Year 1: 80% state
 - Year 2: 60% state
 - Year 3: 30% state
 - Year 4: 20% state
 - Year 5: 10% state



DRPT Federal Discretionary Grants

2019

- FTA Integrated Mobility and Innovation

2020

- FTA Passenger Ferry
- FTA COVID Research

2021

- FTA Access and Mobility for All
- FTA Passenger Ferry Program

2022

- FTA Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility

2023

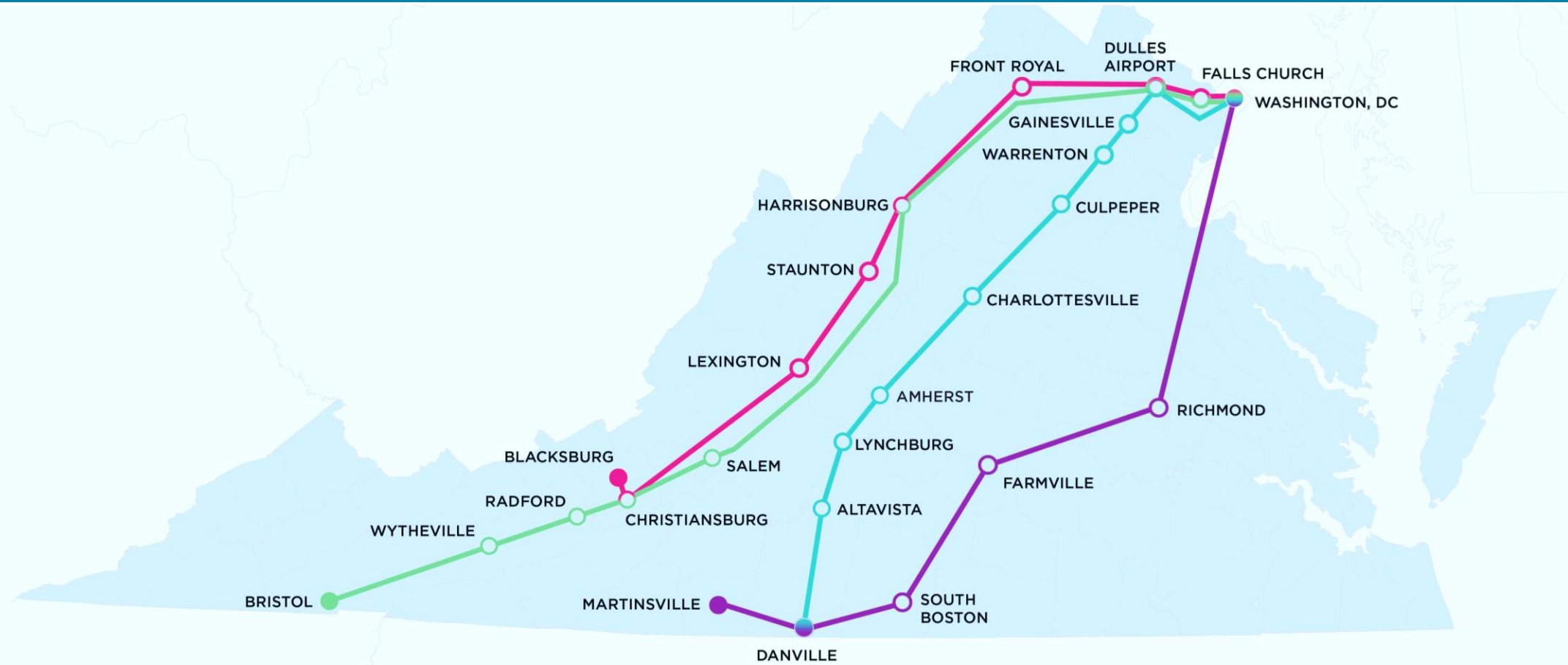
- FTA Buses and Bus Facilities
- FTA Areas of Persistent Poverty

Virginia Breeze



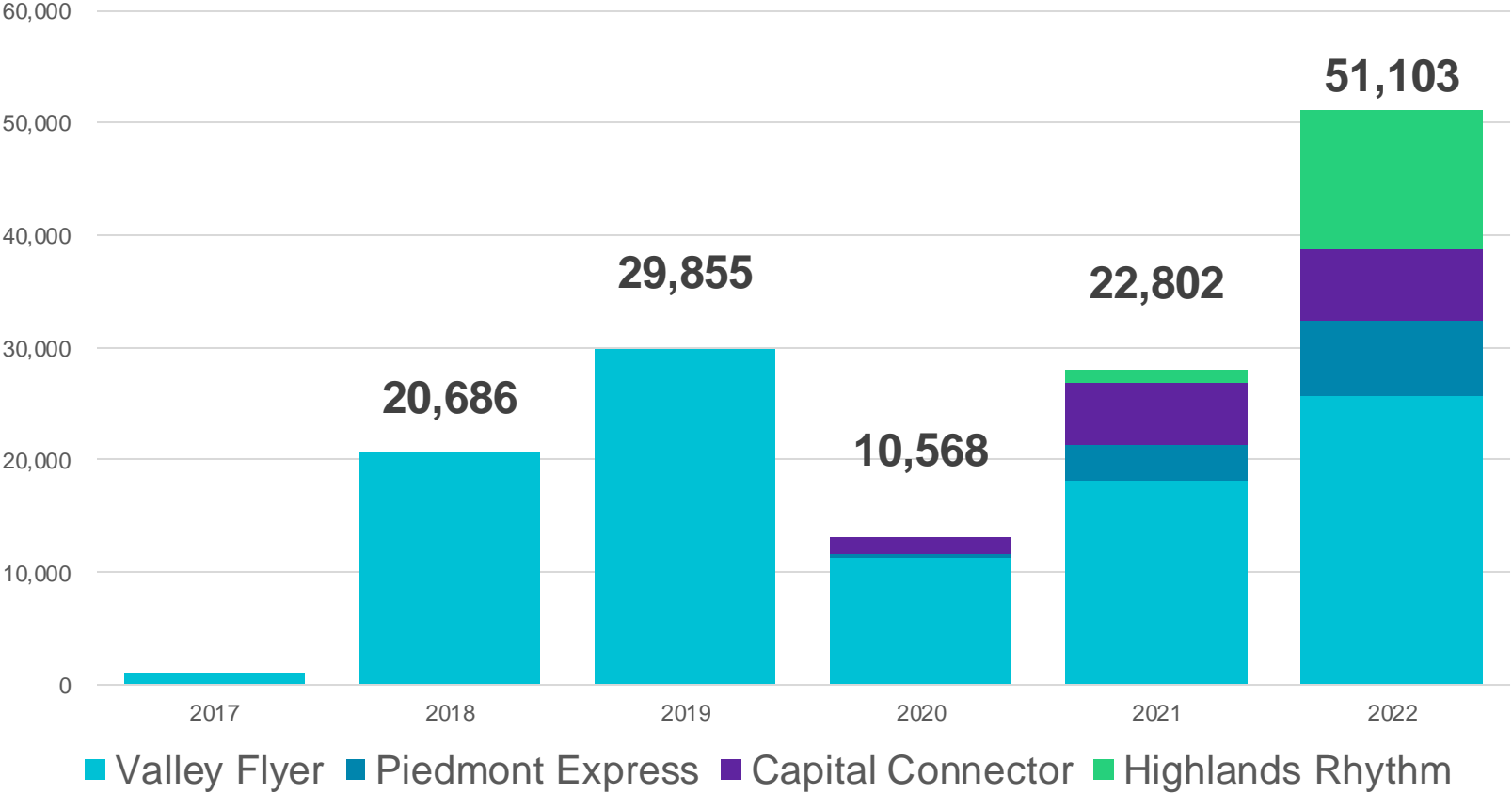
- Intercity bus service connecting underserved communities to the national network
 - Funded entirely with federal dollars and ticket sales
 - Ridership has exceeded pre-pandemic levels and is **110% higher** than original estimates
- Routes:
 - Valley Flyer (Blacksburg-DC)
 - Piedmont Express (Danville-DC)
 - Capital Connector (Martinsville-Richmond-DC)
 - Highlands Rhythm (Bristol-DC)

Four Bus Routes



— VALLEY FLYER — PIEDMONT EXPRESS — CAPITAL CONNECTOR — HIGHLANDS RHYTHM

Virginia Breeze Ridership





Overview



Launched in 2017 to connect underserved rural communities to national bus network and other transportation modes



Operates 365 days a year on all four routes



Funded through Federal Transit Administration's Intercity Bus Program (5311(f)) and ticket sales



Dillon's Bus Service operates the service, providing vehicles, drivers, and maintenance, and DRPT manages the service

Timeline



SERVICE STARTS

Virginia Breeze makes first trip from Blacksburg to D.C. in December 2017



ADDITIONAL ROUTES

Two new routes, Piedmont Express and Capital Connector added in August 2020



NEWEST ROUTE

DRPT launches fourth route, Highlands Rhythm, in November 2021



HAMPTON ROADS-FREDERICKSBURG STUDY

Currently not feasible option in 2022



HAMPTON ROADS-STAUNTON STUDY

I-64 Corridor, east/west connection in 2023



5311 (f) Intercity Bus Program Funding

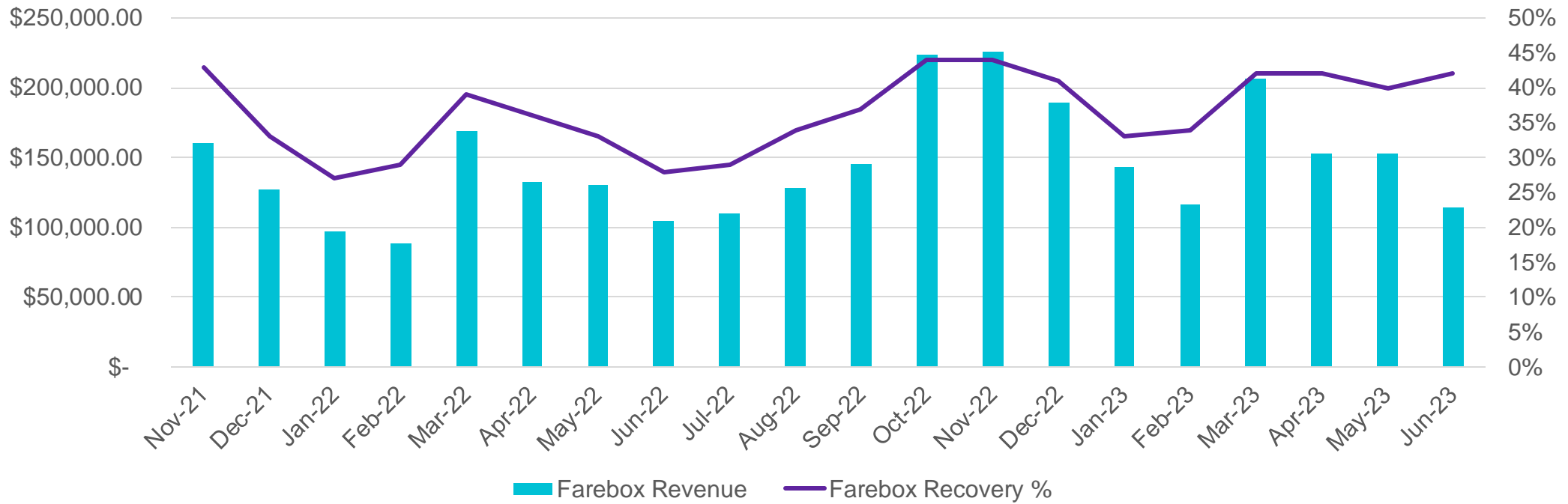
- FTA 5311 funding apportioned to states for rural transit use
- 15% of annual 5311 apportionment must be spent on Intercity Bus Service unless the state can validate that all intercity bus needs are met
- To be eligible for funding, service must provide meaningful connections to rural areas

In-Kind Matching

- FTA allows in-kind contributions to be used as a match against federal funding. For 5311(f), in-kind match is provided in the form of service connections that extend beyond the Virginia Breeze terminus in Washington D.C.
- DRPT contractor calculates in-kind contributions by identifying the individuals who made an intercity bus connection in Washington D.C. and assigning a cost per mile value to the additional miles travelled.
- FTA section 5311(f) funds can be used to provide up to 50% of the net cost of service (total cost less farebox revenue). The remaining 50% of the net cost of service must be provided with cash or in-kind match.

Revenue

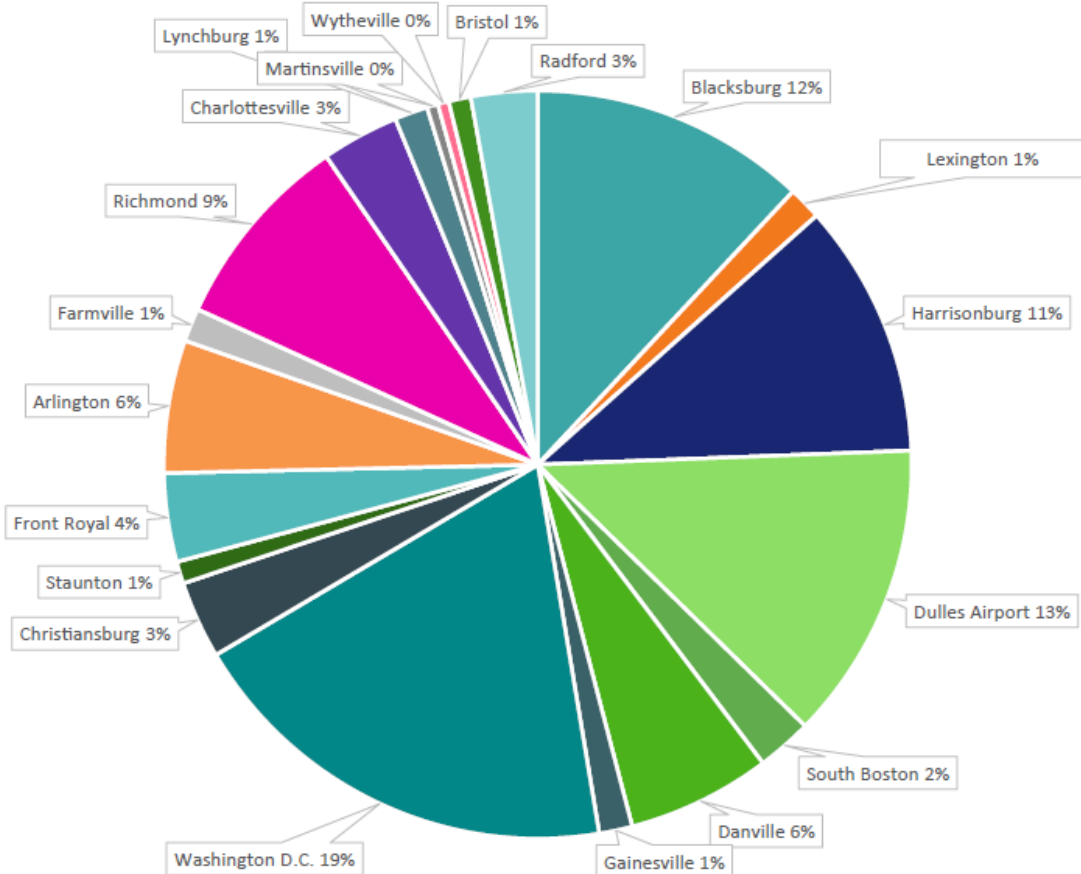
Virginia Breeze Revenue and Farebox Recovery



Connecting the Commonwealth

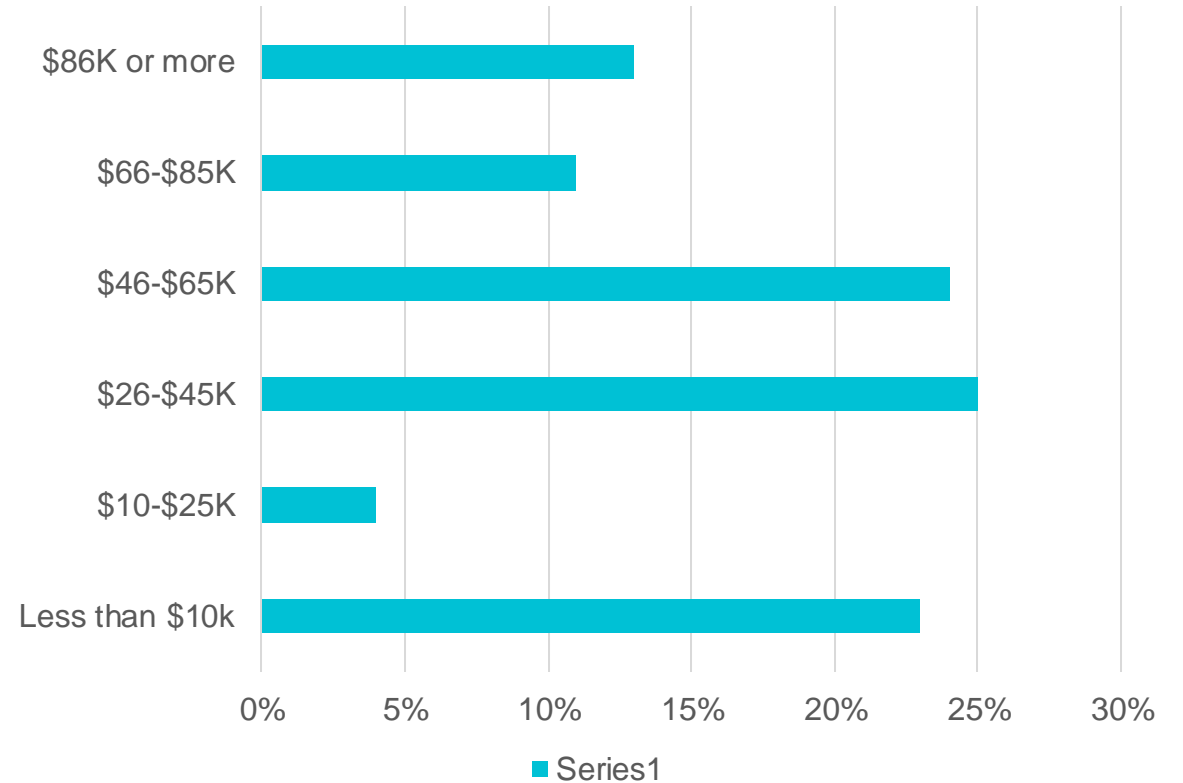
- Underserved Communities

Where did you start your trip today?



- Affordable transportation options

- 52% of passengers earn <45k annually



Future Planning

- Amenity enhancements for existing bus stops
- Continued analysis of unmet needs with other bus stops along routes
- I-64 Corridor Study currently underway
- Partnerships with local transit systems to study enhancing passenger access





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