



# Virginia Breeze

Connecting the Commonwealth with  
Virginia's Intercity Bus Service

Zach Trogon, Chief of Public Transportation



# What is Intercity Bus Service?

- Has stops in underserved rural communities that have lower levels of access to intercity transportation
- Provides meaningful connections with stops and schedules that allow public transit users or other passengers to transfer to the national intercity network
- Provides space for passengers' baggage
- Maintains a fixed-route, fixed-schedule
- Travels long-distance - generally meaning between two urban areas not in proximity





# What is the Virginia Breeze?



Launched in 2017 after a needs assessment determined that bus operators had abandoned unproductive routes and were not meeting the travel needs of rural Virginia



Valley Flyer was the original route connecting Blacksburg to Union Station in D.C. Service funded solely through FTA Intercity Bus Program and ticket sales



Two new routes added in August 2020 – Piedmont Express (Danville to D.C. via Route 29) and Capital Connector (Martinsville to D.C. via 360/95)

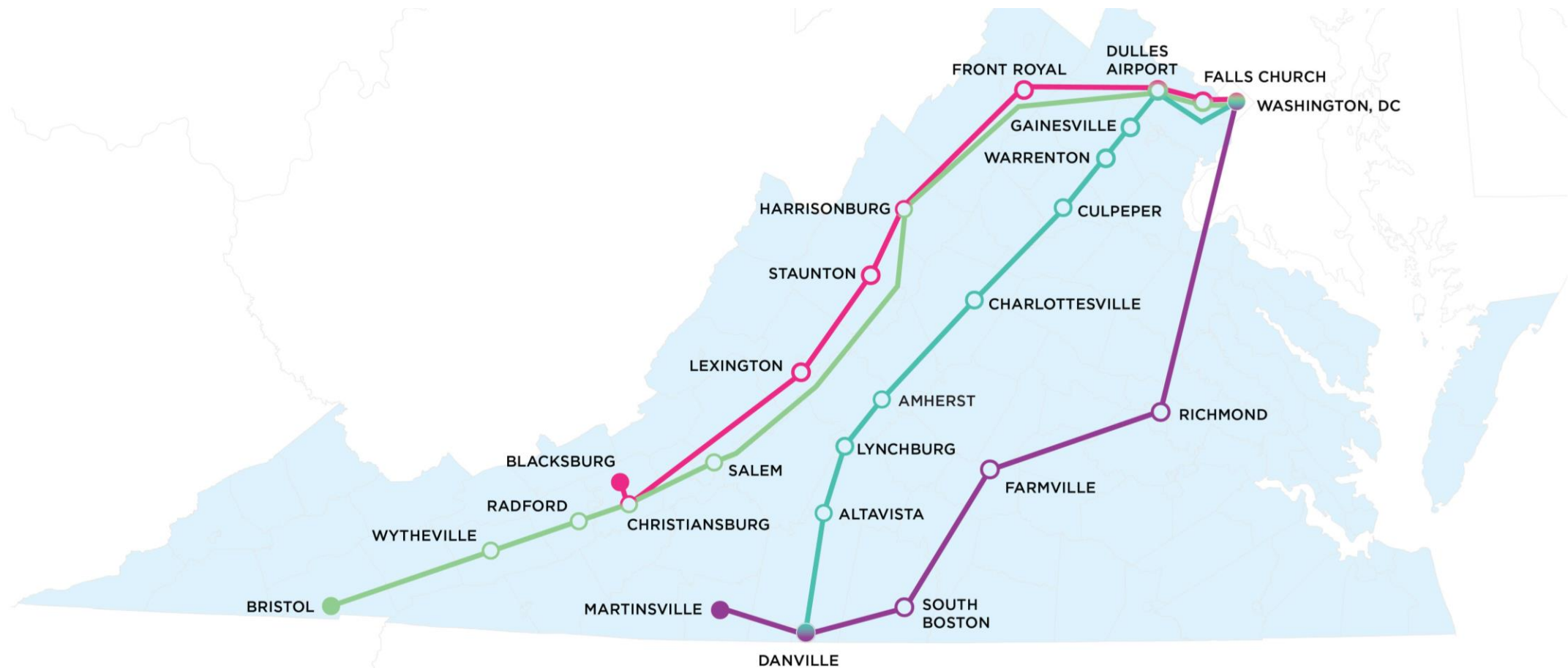


The Highlands Rhythm began operation in November 2021. CTB approved I-81 funding of \$243,000 annually for five years (through November 2026) to support a portion of operating expenses for Bristol extension. \$100,000 in one-time capital funds were also included for stop improvements such as shelters and benches



Operated by Dillon's Bus Service, which provides vehicles, drivers, and maintenance

# Virginia Breeze Routes



— VALLEY FLYER

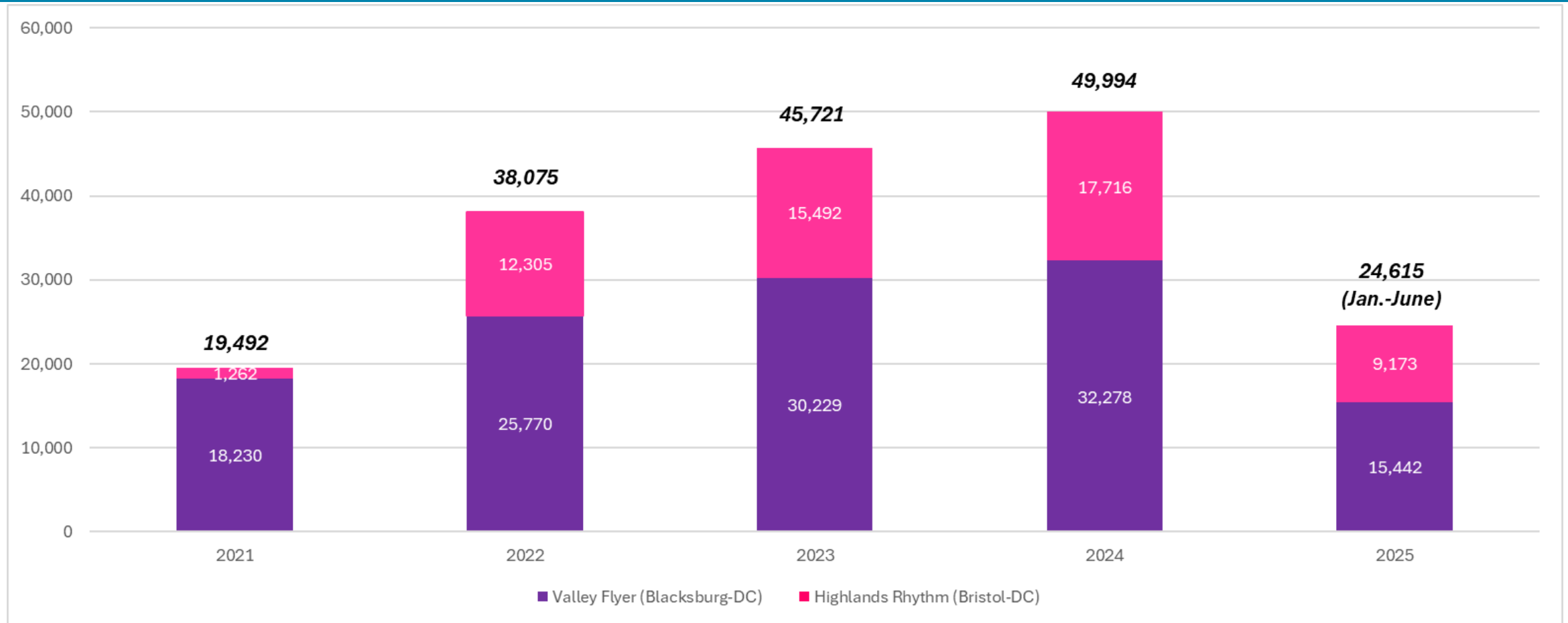
— PIEDMONT EXPRESS\*

— CAPITAL CONNECTOR\*

— HIGHLANDS RHYTHM

*\*Piedmont Express and Capital Connector routes shown for illustration. These routes do not serve the I-81 Corridor or receive I-81 funding.*

# Virginia Breeze Ridership I-81 Corridor



- Highlands Rhythm began operation in November 2021
- Valley Flyer does not receive funding from the I-81 program
- Ridership displayed by calendar year (January-December)

# Highlands Rhythm

## Daily Schedule

Northbound Schedule (Bristol-DC)	Departure
Bristol*	11:00am
Wytheville	12:10pm
Radford*	12:55pm
Christiansburg	1:10pm
Salem	1:45pm
Harrisonburg*	3:40pm
Dulles Airport*	5:45pm
West Falls Church	6:20pm
Washington, DC*	6:55pm

Southbound Schedule (DC-Bristol)	Departure
Washington, DC*	12:50pm
West Falls Church	1:20pm
Dulles Airport*	1:55pm
Harrisonburg*	4:00pm
Salem	5:50pm
Christiansburg	6:15pm
Radford*	6:35pm
Wytheville	7:20pm
Bristol*	8:30pm

\* Top-Performing Stops



# Highlands Rhythm Funding Sources

Source	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Budget
I-81 Program Multimodal Funding	\$243,000 (16%)	\$243,000 (15%)
FTA 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program	\$681,790 (44%)	\$729,515 (45%)
Ticket Sales*	\$609,346 (40%)	\$652,000 (40%)
<b>Total Funding Sources</b>	<b>\$1,534,136</b>	<b>\$1,624,515</b>

\*Fares range from \$21 to \$60 depending on origin/destination and average fare is \$31.

# I-81 Intercity Bus Enhancements



## Wytheville Bus Stop Relocation

Efforts currently underway to utilize I-81 capital funds to relocate existing bus stop to have greater connectivity and amenities to include lighting, ADA accessibility, and a bus shelter. Construction to be completed by the end of the year.



## Tidewater Current Route Development

New route being developed linking I-64 and I-81 Corridors with proposed stops including Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Newport News, Williamsburg, New Kent, Richmond International Airport, Richmond Main Street Station, Charlottesville, Staunton, and Harrisonburg. DRPT anticipates selecting a contractor in Fall 2025 with a service launch in early 2026.





# Questions?

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