

A Pipeline to New Transportation Service

DRPT Grants and Technical Assistance

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Special Programs

1. Workforce Development Grant Program *(Rebrand of Public Transportation Intern Program)*
2. Technical Assistance
3. Demonstration Project Assistance
4. Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)



Workforce Development Grant Program

- Supports the hiring of interns and apprentices who are interested in pursuing careers in public transportation
- Agencies are encouraged to gear apprenticeships toward any facet of the public transportation industry and may focus programs on the operations side of the public transit agency to demonstrate potential career tracks for future mechanics, operators, dispatchers, and operations supervisors
- Match rates:
 - 80% state match; 20% local match
- Eligible applicants:
 - Transit agencies, local governments, public service corporations, PDCs, MPOs, human service agencies involved in rural transit, and commuter assistance program operators
- Eligible expenses:
 - Wages, fringe benefits, training (may include CDL or other appropriate certifications), and travel

Technical Assistance

CHAPTER 2

System Performance and Operations Analysis



- Supports a variety of planning-related activities
 - Studies, plans, and technical evaluations
 - Feasibility studies for major capital projects and innovation
 - Support of federal requirements (i.e., TAM and PTASP)
 - CAPSP and TDM plans, and TSP/TDP plans
- Match Rates: 50% state match; 50% local match
- Eligible applicants:
 - Transit agencies, local governments, public service corporations, PDCs, MPOs, human service agencies involved in rural transit, and commuter assistance program operators
- Applications must clearly demonstrate how resources will benefit transit



Demonstration Project Assistance

- Support and incentivize implementation of new transit services and test innovative and non-traditional public transportation solutions
- Reduce financial risk and fill funding gaps for projects and activities not directly suited for other state and federal funding programs
- 12-18 month timeframe for projects
- Match Rates: 80% state match; 20% local match
- Eligible applicants:
 - Transit agencies, local governments, PDCs, and MPOs

Demonstration Project Assistance

- **Type 1: New Service**

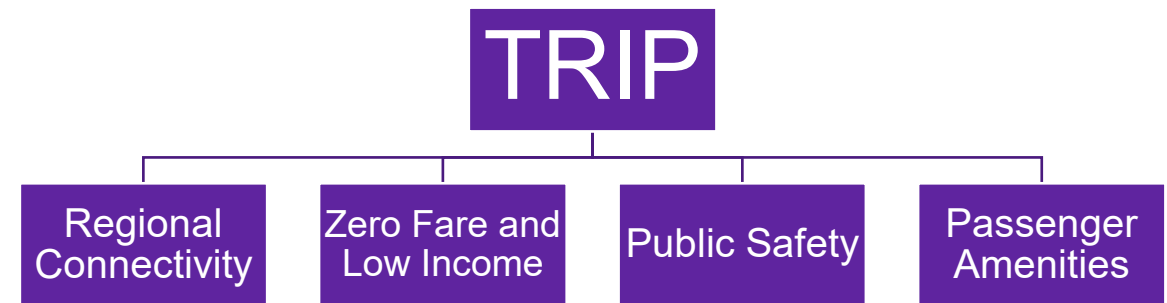
- Areas or markets not currently served by public transportation or additional connections to areas currently served
- Feasibility or other suitable document
- Does not include:
 - Replacing discontinued routes
 - Traditional public transit services eligible for funding through other state and federal programs

- **Type 2: Innovation and Technology**

- Test “proof of concept” for new technologies used in public transportation services
- Projects in both areas currently served and not served by public transportation
- Does not include:
 - Technological solutions that have been deployed for years and have proven effectiveness

TRIP – Transit Ridership Incentive Program

- TRIP was created as part of the 2020 Transportation Omnibus Bill
- TRIP has two distinct program goals:
 1. To reduce the impact of fares on low-income populations (zero fare and low income)
 2. To promote transit routes of regional significance and support improvements to regional transit service
- Eligible projects for FY24:
 - Regional connectivity
 - Zero fare and low Income
 - Passenger amenities and facilities
 - Crime prevention and public safety



TRIP – Regional Connectivity

Eligible Project Types:

- Development or improvement of regionally significant transit routes
- Creation of finance subsidy models
- Deployment of integrated fare collection
- Addition of bus-only lanes (transit prioritization) on regionally significant corridors

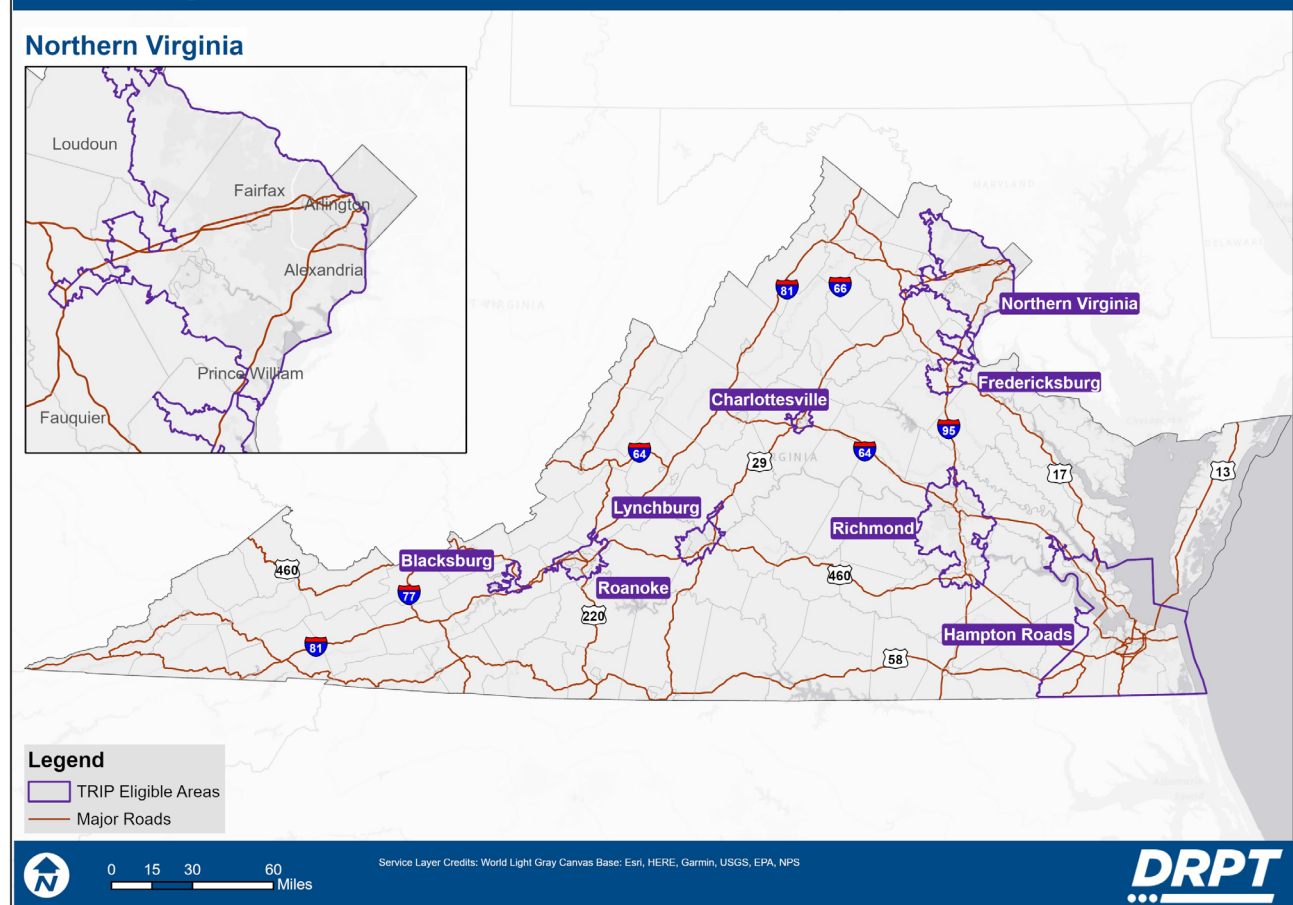
Eligible Recipients:

- Public service corporations that serve urbanized areas with populations in excess of 100,000 (see figure)
- Transportation district commissions
- Local governments
- Private nonprofit transit providers

Funding Duration:

- Up to 5 years

TRIP Eligible Areas



TRIP – Zero Fare and Low Income

Eligible Project Types:

- Deployment of an entirely zero fare system
- Elimination of fares on high-capacity corridors, establishing zero-fare zones
- The provision of subsidized or fully free passes to low-income populations

Projects will be reimbursed based on net fare collection

Eligible Recipients:

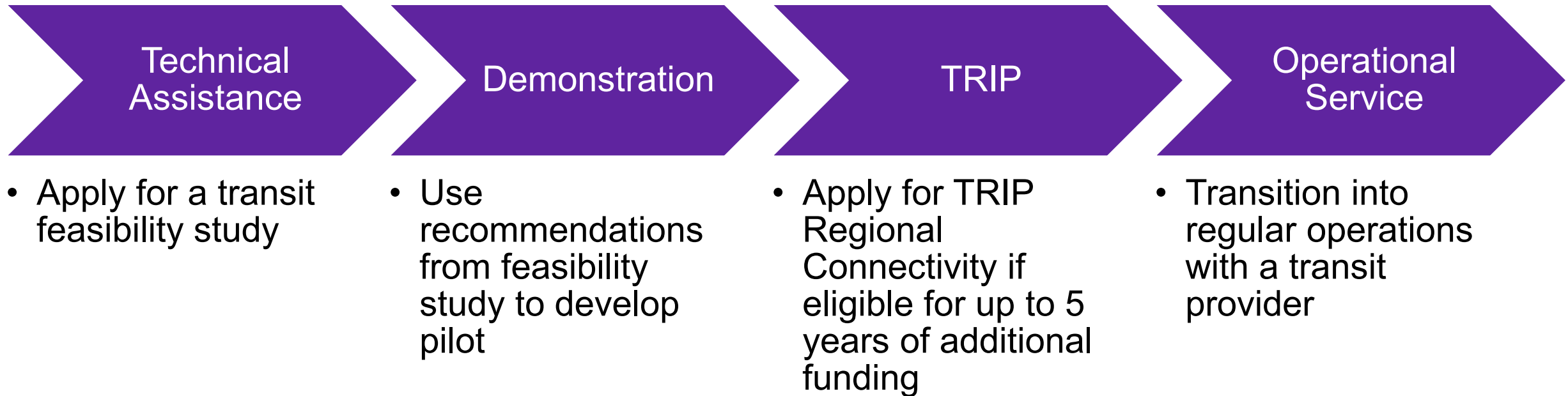
- Public service corporations (no population threshold)
- Transportation District Commissions
- Local Governments
- Private nonprofit transit providers

Funding Duration:

- Up to 3 years

*Note: All **systemwide** zero fare applicants must commit to an additional 4th year of operations with 100% local dollars and continued state oversight*

DRPT Pipeline for New Transportation Service



Example Projects

- McAfee Knob Trailhead Shuttle (Roanoke County)
- Bedford Otter Bus (Town of Bedford)
- Afton Express (CSPDC/BRITE)
- ShenGO (Shenandoah County)
- GLTC Microtransit (Lynchburg)
- GRTC Microtransit (Richmond region)
- GRTC Route 111 and Route 60 (Chesterfield County)
- Albemarle County Microtransit (Albemarle County/CAT)
- Bay Transit Microtransit (Gloucester County/Bay Transit)
- METGO! Microtransit (Mountain Empire Older Citizens)
- Franklin Transit (City of Franklin)
- Giles County Transit (Giles County)

Shenandoah County (ShenGO)



- Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) applied for a Technical Assistance grant to conduct a transit feasibility study in 2018
- NSVRC applied for a Demonstration grant in 2020 to pilot two routes in Shenandoah County from Strasburg to New Market
- ShenGO is operated by Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) Monday-Saturday from 6AM-6PM, \$1 fare each trip
- Partnerships:
 - Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce, NSVRC, RideSmart, and local partners including Valley Health/Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, New Market Poultry, and Walmart
- More information: <https://vatransit.org/shengo/>

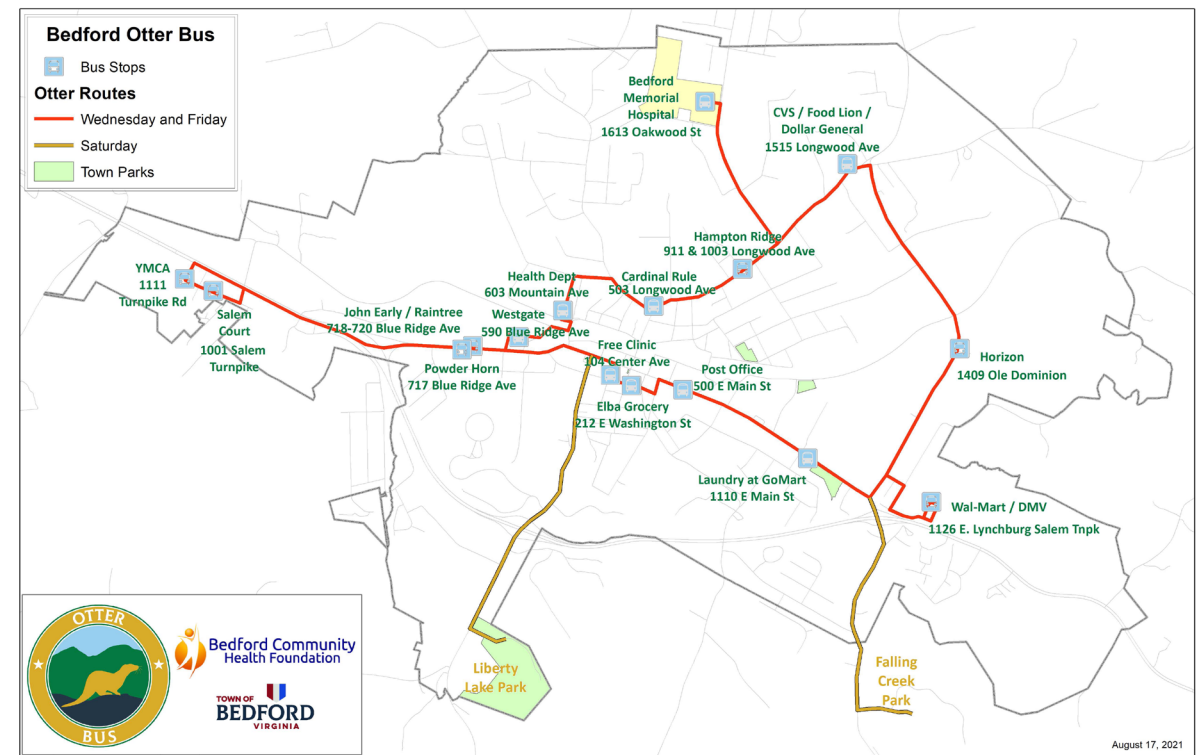


Afton Express

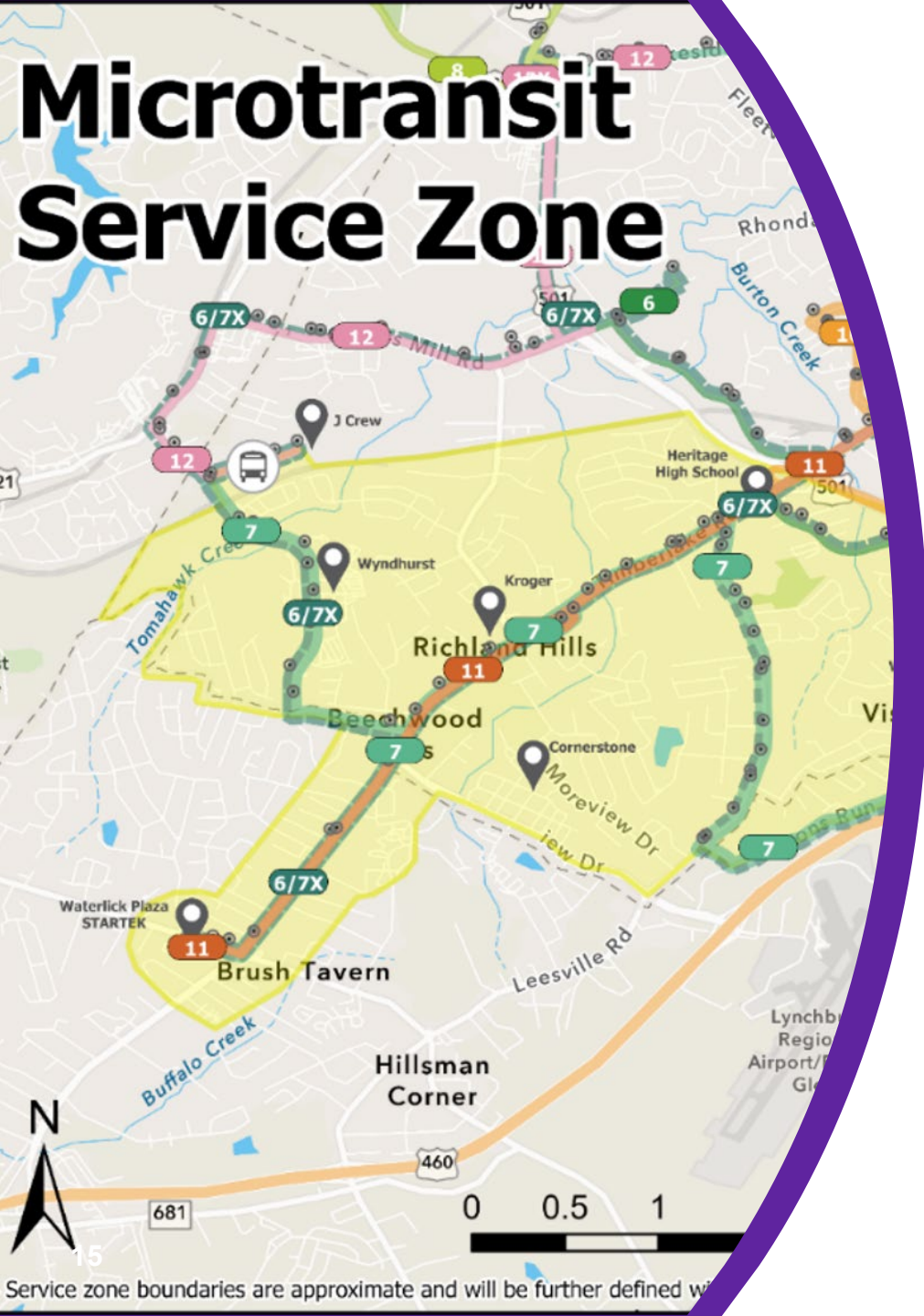
- Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)/BRITE applied for a Technical Assistance grant in 2017 and 2019 for a transit feasibility study and service operations plan
- CSPDC/BRITE applied for a Demonstration grant in 2021 and 2022 to finalize planning and launch pilot service between Charlottesville/Albemarle County and Staunton/Fishersville/Waynesboro
- \$3 fare one way with 10 ride farecards for \$25
- Expansion service in February 2023 to add expanded AM and PM times and new stop, modifications to existing departure times
- Local funding from City of Staunton, City of Waynesboro, August County, Albemarle County, UVA, and City of Charlottesville
- More information: www.aftonexpress.org

Bedford Otter Bus

- Town of Bedford, in partnership with the Bedford Community Health Foundation (BCHF), launched a six-month pilot in September 2021 to operate transportation services within the town
- They applied for a Demonstration grant in 2022 to continue the pilot service
- They applied for a second Demonstration grant in 2023 to expand services as part of a three-year plan to develop sustainable operations after a 74% growth in average monthly ridership
- The Bedford Otter Bus operates one route with 17 stops Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10AM-6PM
- The service is provided through Ride Source
- More information: www.otterbus.com



Microtransit Service Zone



Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) Microtransit Pilot

- GLTC completed a microtransit feasibility study with DRPT in 2022 for service within the City of Lynchburg and in conjunction with GLTC's current and future service
- GLTC applied for both a Demonstration and TRIP grant in 2023 to implement two service zones recommended in the study
- The Pilot will launch in FY24 as one Demonstration grant project

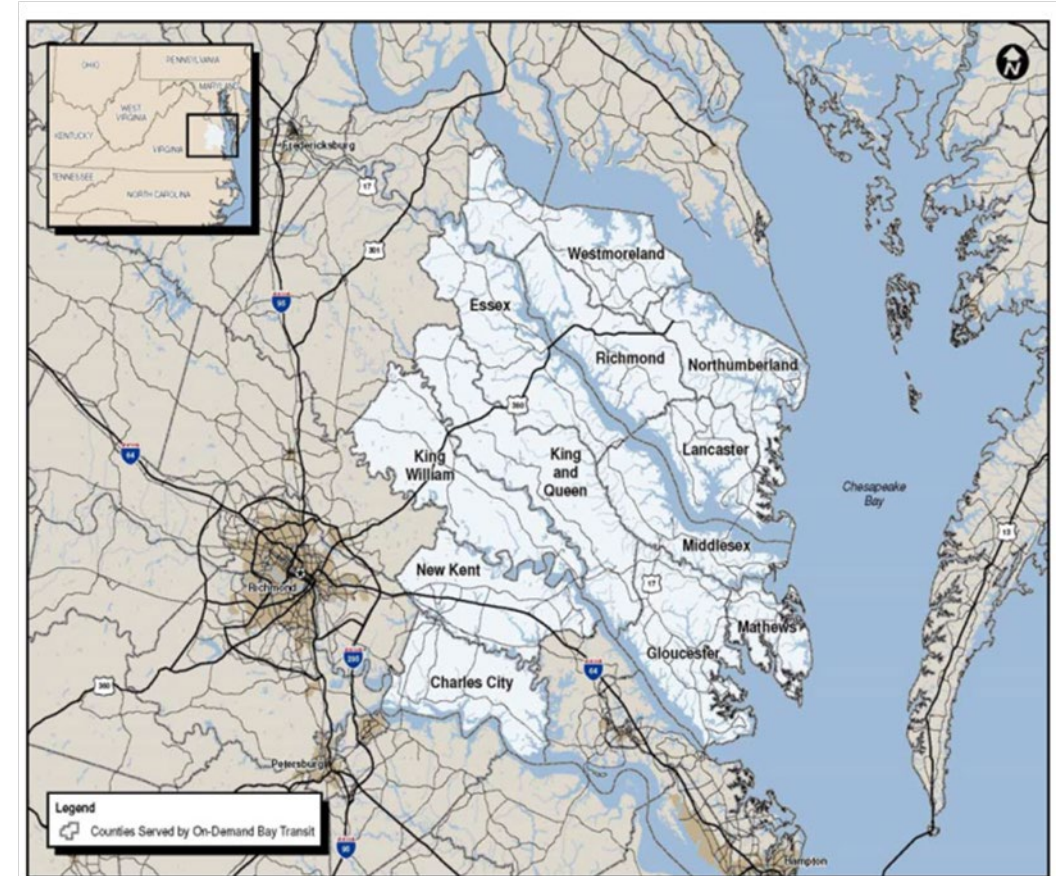


Virginia Rural Microtransit Deployment Initiative

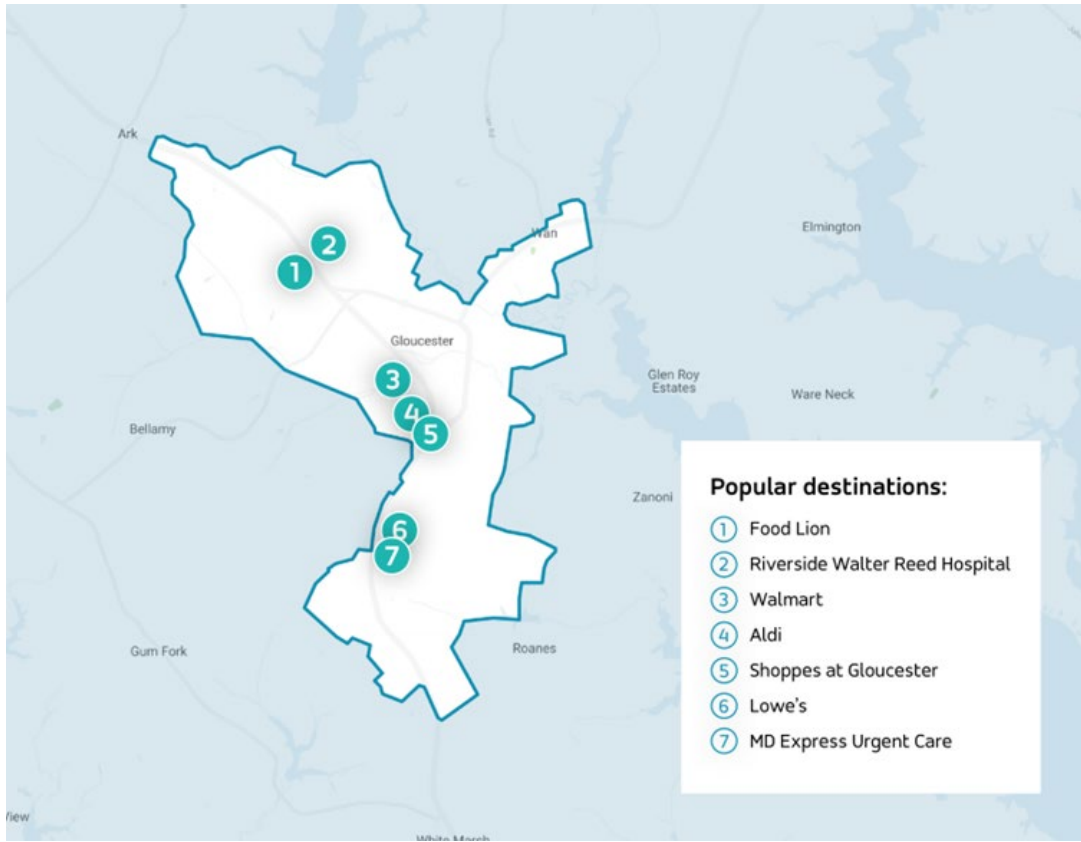
- Funded in part through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) Grant and the Commonwealth's Innovation Technology Transportation Fund (ITTF)
- The goal of the initiative is to understand how microtransit solutions can be scaled and deployed effectively to meet mobility needs of rural and underserved communities in Virginia
- The focus is on software-as-a-service (SaaS) technologies within existing framework of transit services
- The initiative features two service deployments:
 - Wise, Virginia (Operated by MEOC)
 - Gloucester, Virginia (Operated by Bay Transit)

Bay Transit Express

- Bay Transit is a public transportation provider for the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck, and Charles City and New Kent Counties
- They provide demand responsive service with two deviated fixed route lines
- They launched microtransit service on June 28, 2021
- They applied for a Demonstration grant in 2022 to expand microtransit service to replace deviated fixed route HiveXpress and add more vehicles
- The Demonstration project started on October 1, 2022



Bay Transit Express Initial and Expanded Service Zones

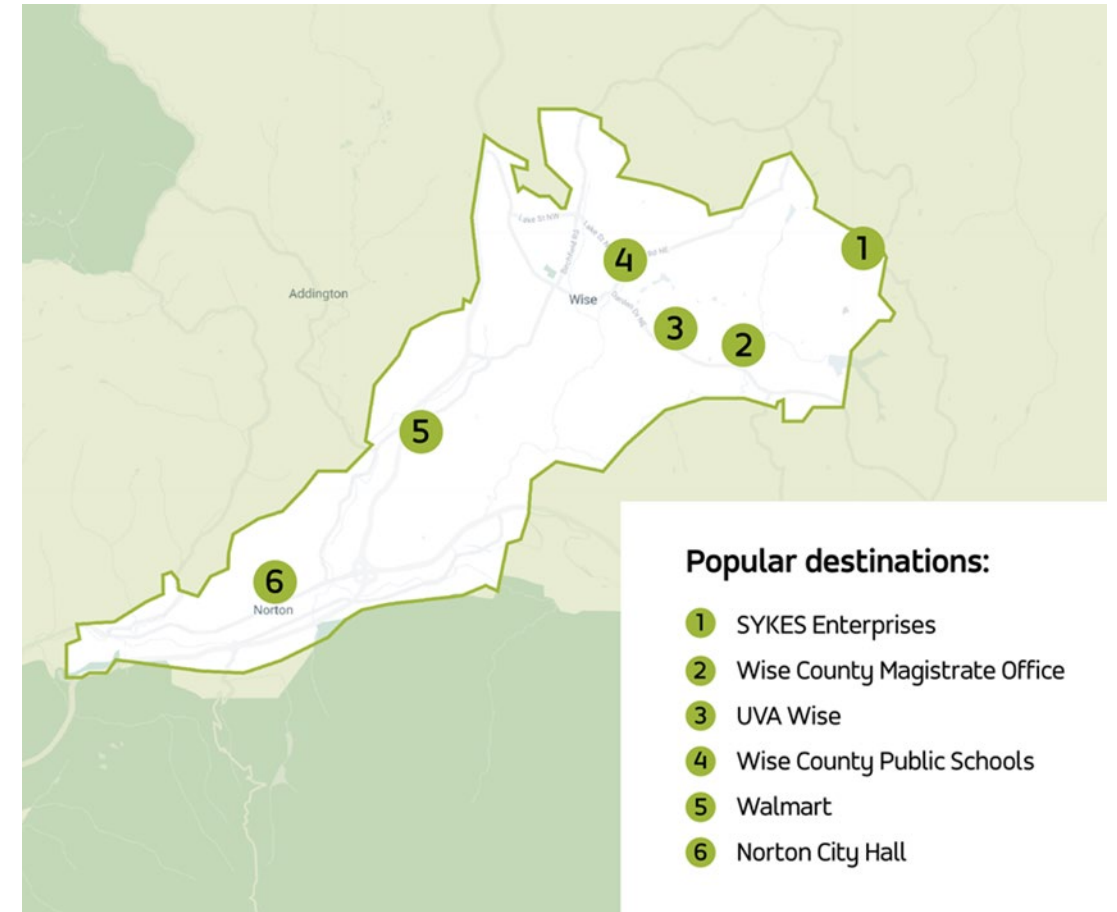


METGo!

- Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) provides demand responsive service for the Counties of Lee, Scott, and Wise and the City of Norton, Monday-Friday
- They launched microtransit service on June 28, 2021 and currently operate fare free through a TRIP grant
- They applied for a Demonstration grant to expand microtransit service to Big Stone Gap/Appalachia and Duffield in late 2023
- There are plans for an expansion to Town of Pennington Gap/Jonesville in 2024



METGo! Initial and Expanded Service Zones



Final Report and Toolkit



- Available on the DRPT website:
<https://drpt.virginia.gov/studies-and-reports/rural-microtransit-case-study-and-report/>
- Report contains:
 - An evaluation of the Virginia Rural Microtransit Deployment
 - An Operational Sustainability Strategy
 - A Rural Microtransit Suitability Checklist and Implementation Toolkit

Questions?

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