

I-81/I-64 Inter-Regional Public Transportation Proposal

Public bus service connecting Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Charlottesville

Background

- The need for inter-regional transit service between the Shenandoah Valley and Charlottesville has been discussed for many years and has been identified in various transportation planning documents.
- With funding assistance from the MPOs in the study area (Harrisonburg-Rockingham; Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro; and Charlottesville-Albemarle), the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) led the development of a transit feasibility study and service plan.
- The study was conducted between February 2016 and May 2017, with input and guidance from a stakeholder committee made up of representatives from the following agencies: each of the three MPOs; CSPDC; Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC); James Madison University (JMU); University of Virginia (UVA); Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT); BRITE; JAUNT; the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT); and others.

Public Survey Highlights

- Over 600 survey respondents
- Current travelers through the corridor reported the following trip purposes: work (63%); errands (11%); medical (6%); school (5%) and rail/air travel (4% each).
- 96% reported a need for service; 40% would use; 56% might use.
- Features such as a guaranteed ride home program, Wi-Fi, and affordable fares were valued by respondents.
- *“I feel that a commuter/inter-regional bus service connecting Harrisonburg and Charlottesville is greatly needed and would contribute immensely to the quality of life in the region.”*



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Employment Travel Highlights

- 1,257 commuters from Central Shenandoah service corridor to downtown Charlottesville and UVA Medical.
 - There are currently 705 UVA employees who live in Waynesboro, Staunton, or Harrisonburg. Additional UVA employees live within the broader corridor.
- 237 commuters from Central Shenandoah service corridor to Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital and Pantops.
- 556 commuters from downtown Charlottesville and service corridor to Harrisonburg (JMU and downtown).

Major Institutions and Jurisdictions in Service Corridor

- James Madison University
- Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Augusta Health
- University of Virginia
- University of Virginia Medical Center
- Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital
- Harrisonburg City
- Rockingham County
- Staunton City
- Augusta County
- Waynesboro City
- Albemarle County
- Charlottesville City

Service Concept

- Implement a public transportation link between Harrisonburg and Charlottesville to serve a variety of trip needs including work, education, access to Greyhound and Amtrak, and access to medical care.
- As designed the service will:
 - Connect James Madison University and the University of Virginia.
 - Provide an alternative travel option for people who do not drive or choose not to drive through the corridor and over Afton Mountain.
 - Offer direct connections to and from Greyhound and Amtrak service in Charlottesville.
- Projected demand at full implementation: 44,620 annual passenger trips (175 daily)

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Level of Service and Fares

- Monday through Friday, 5:50 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.
- Six eastbound trips; seven westbound trips each weekday.
- Distance-based fares: \$5.00 between Harrisonburg and Charlottesville; \$4.00 between Staunton/Waynesboro and Charlottesville; and \$3.00 within the Shenandoah Valley.

Vehicles Required

- Three buses in service and one spare
- 28-passenger capacity buses for start-up
- Leased or contractor-owned



Bus Type Example

Park and Ride Lot Needs

- Harrisonburg – I-81, Exit 245
- Weyers Cave – I-81, Exit 235
- Staunton – I-81, Exit 222
- Waynesboro – I-64, Exit 94
 - Improvements planned through Smart Scale grant

Proposed Implementation Timeline and 3-Year Budget

- Three-year service start-up proposed, beginning in January, 2019
- FY19, service start-up, January 2019, 6 months of the fiscal year
- FY20, 1st full year
- FY21, 2nd full year
- FY22, first 6 months to end of the fiscal year

Implementation Year	Annual Operating Costs	Estimated Funding Splits			
		Farebox Revenue	Federal S.5311	State Assistance	Local Assistance
FY19 (1)	\$249,357	\$33,450	\$107,954	\$34,545	\$73,408
FY20	\$513,675	\$88,347	\$212,664	\$68,052	\$144,612
FY21	\$529,085	\$133,860	\$197,613	\$63,236	\$134,377
FY22 (1)	\$264,543	\$66,930	\$98,806	\$31,618	\$67,188

(1) Six-month budget

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Proposed Local Match and Commitment

If ten local funding partners share the responsibility to provide local match for the proposed three-year start-up, **each** would pay the following:

- FY19: \$7,341
- FY20: \$14,461
- FY21: \$13,438
- FY22: \$6,719

The service would then be evaluated to determine if it is successful and should continue, at which time the local funding commitments would be re-evaluated.

Preliminary Implementation Tasks

- Continued dialogue with DRPT with regard to grant applicant, organizational structure, and availability of federal and state funding
- Dialogue with Greyhound and Amtrak to learn about the availability of funding based on service connections
- Development of local match through discussions with major institutions served and local jurisdictions in the corridor
- Identification of park and ride lots
- Development of branding and marketing campaign
- Fine-tuning of level of service and bus stops
- Development of grant application(s) (applications due February 1, 2018 for FY 2019)

Proposed Service Corridor and Stops

