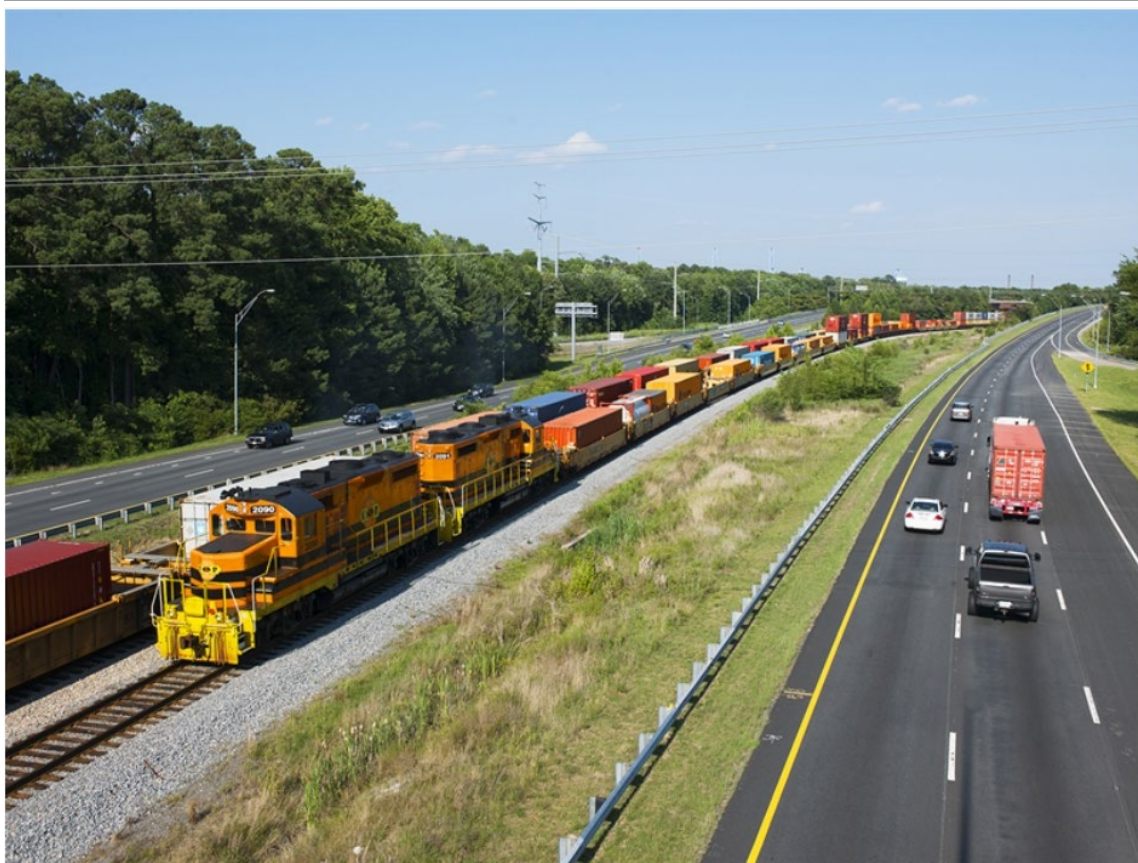Welcome to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Data Stories, and thank you for signing up! This monthly series aims to find the narrative in data DRPT collects and uses, highlighting Virginia's rail and transit community. This month, Data Stories introduces a new feature on DRPT's website – Our Story – as well as highlights our geospatial data portals!

DRPT is consistently working to improve how we present our data and tell our story. One example that embodies just that goal is the newest feature on DRPT's website: *Our Story*. *Our Story* brings together the inspiring impact of DRPT's work with the dynamism of data visualization software to create a compelling StoryMap that tells DRPT's story, from internal administration and funding, to grants, studies, and every program and project in between.

Our Story

Our Story provides an overview of DRPT using the ArcGIS StoryMap format (more about GIS later). *Our Story* covers who DRPT is, our Administration and Funding, and our Public Transit and Rail partners, as well as highlighting rail and transit successes in FY 2024. To view *Our Story*, click here or on the image above to visit the website.
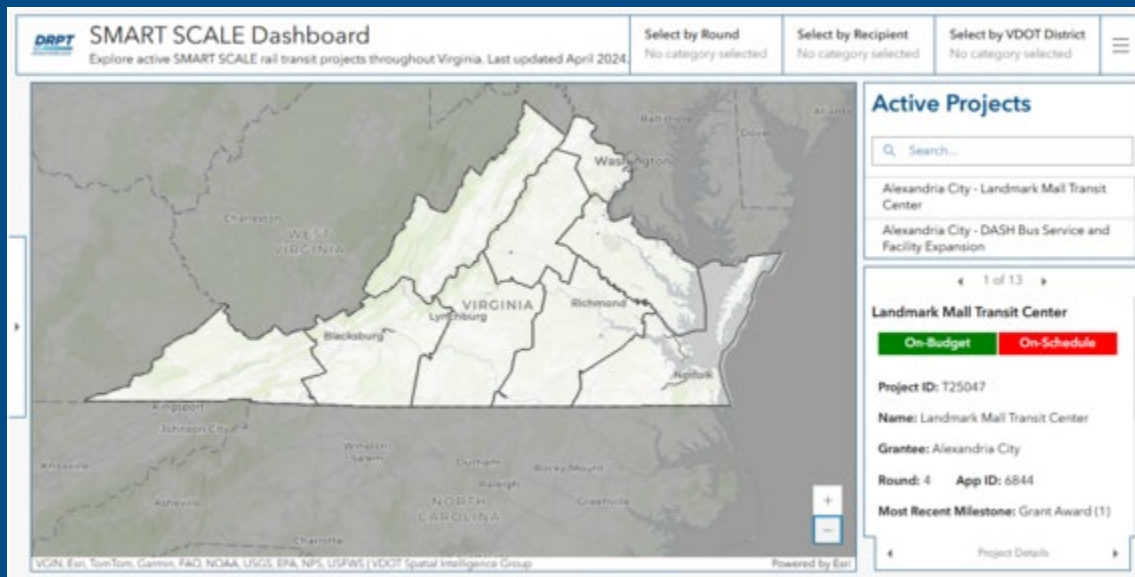
StoryMaps are an improvement over a static PDF, allowing the viewer to interact with the story, easily sort through sections, and, in some instances, filter for certain information. Additionally, StoryMaps better visualize the funding for rail and transit in Virginia, which flows through a complex formula and grant-prioritization process. DRPT has employed StoryMaps as a more accessible and enjoyable way to view strategic plans, financial programs, and to visualize data. DRPT's 2022 Statewide Rail Plan and 2022 Coordinated Human Services Mobility Plan both used this format.

GIS and DRPT
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are software systems that can analyze and display geographic information, most often through a map. As the Commonwealth's agency for promoting rail and transit, DRPT collects, maintains, and publishes a significant amount of geographic information. This section highlights a select few DRPT GIS dashboards on the Open Data Portal:

SMART SCALE Dashboard

SMART SCALE is Virginia's funding prioritization project for major transportation capital projects. SMART SCALE, which is managed by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, funds more than just rail or public transit projects. However, DRPT plays a crucial role in the review and scoring of SMART SCLAE projects. To that end, DRPT manages and maintains the SMART SCALE dashboard specifically designed for tracking the progress of transit and rail projects.

Virginia Rail Infrastructure

DRPT is charged with serving as the statewide rail planning agency, guiding the future of both freight and passenger rail projects across the Commonwealth. In addition to capturing performance metrics gathered by DRPT's three rail grant programs (Rail Preservation, FREIGHT, and Rail Industrial Access), DRPT's rail planning team develops rail dashboards to plan for the future of rail, including maps of Virginia's rail network infrastructure and rail-road grade-crossings.

Perhaps the most important rail-GIS software-based product is the Virginia Statewide Rail Plan. The Virginia Statewide Rail Plan provides long-term guidance for Virginia's transportation leadership, ensuring that the Commonwealth's rail needs for people, communities, and commerce are addressed, policies for future rail investments are consistent, the public is
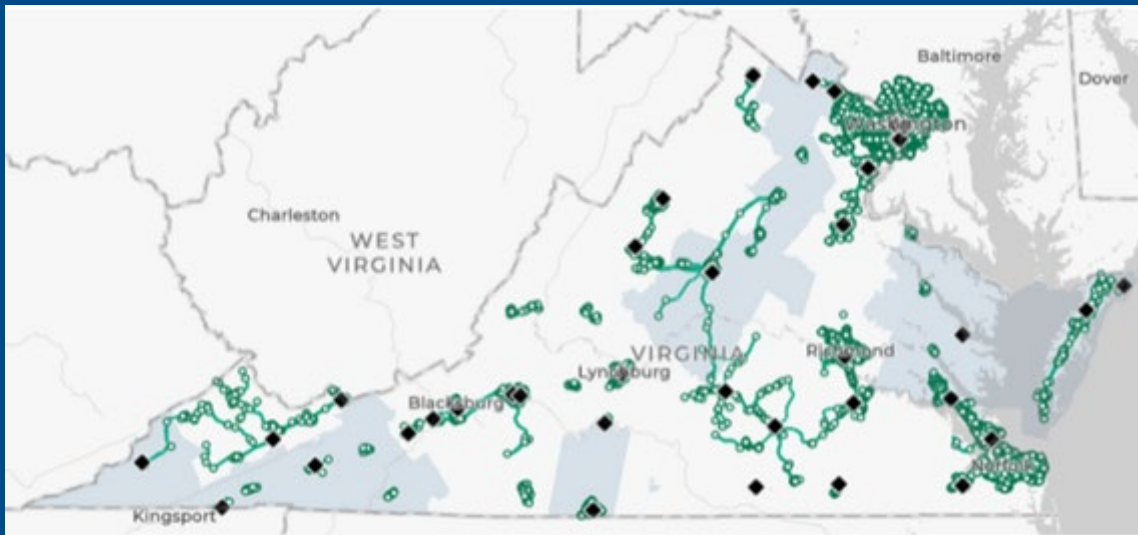
educated on current rail issues, and that rail transportation continues to be a safe, economical, and environmentally friendly mode choice. The Virginia Statewide Rail Plan, most importantly, guides the vision for the improvement for rail and transit in Virginia.
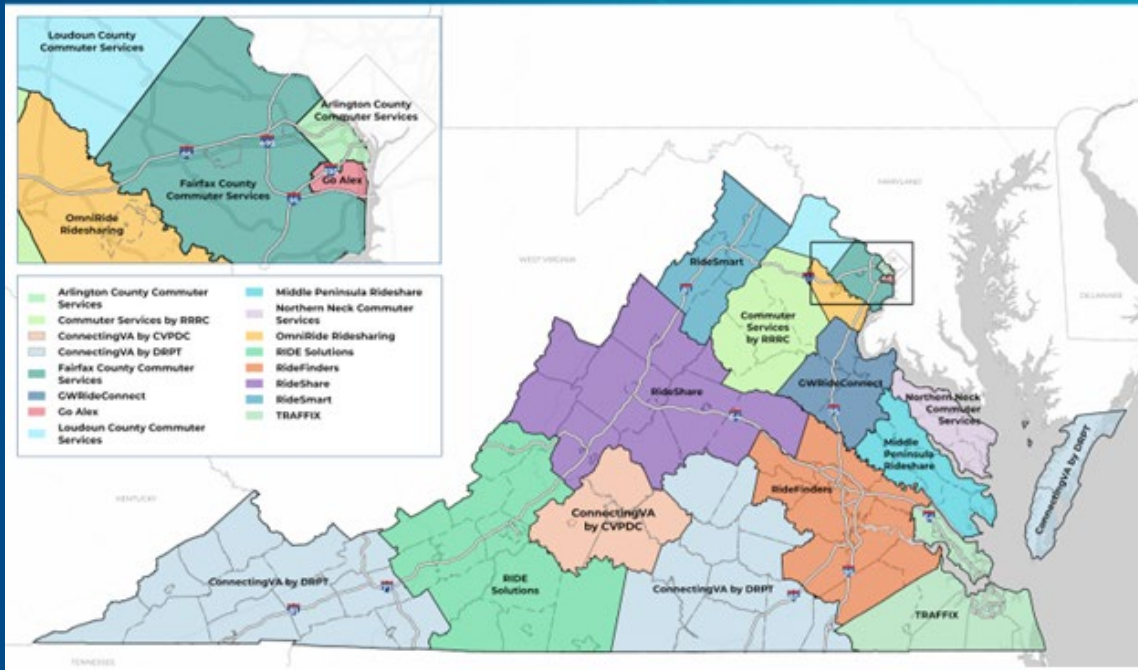
Statewide Transit

DRPT gathers and presents a range of information on Virginia's public transit network and operators. In addition to non-geospatial transit data, such as transit ridership, DRPT publishes Virginia's statewide transit service areas and Commuter Assistance Program areas.

The Statewide transit data dashboard use General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data to keep an up-to-date record of where Virginia's transit providers operate fixed route and demand-response public transit and visualize this complex information into an interactive map. Fun fact: apps like Google Maps use GTFS data to plan trips!

Commuter Assistance Programs are regional commuter services that increase carpool or vanpool services. DRPT's Commuter Assistance grants provide operating and project assistance funding to support the establishment and operation of carpools. The Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) dashboard visualizes CAP service areas, many of which include organized local carpools and vanpools funded through DRPT's CAP grants.

Our Story, Our Mission

The DRPT website's newest addition, *Our Story*, is the latest innovative feature aimed at promoting DRPT's compelling story and valuable contribution, and enhances the customer experience. *Our Story* aims to promote transparency, informing the public, stakeholders, members of Virginia's government, and the transportation community of DRPT's mission, vision, and goals. DRPT's geographic data inform not only the future of rail and public transit in Virginia, but also serve as an important resource for the public today.

You've read the Data Story—now get the *whole* scoop!

Say hello to *The Loop*!

It's your all-access pass to DRPT's latest projects, events, and behind-the-scenes fun. Don't miss out—subscribe now and stay in *The Loop*!

DRPT *Connects*

DRPT's mission is to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians with innovative transportation solutions. Our vision is a connected Commonwealth with an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need. DRPT's Six-Year Improvement Program provides funding for rail and public transportation initiatives across the Commonwealth, enabling Virginia's rail and public transportation network to thrive. Did someone forward this email to you? Sign up to get Data Stories directly in your inbox! Having trouble viewing this email? View it as a Web page.

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