

PUBLIC TRANSIT  
PROGRAM  
OVERVIEW AND  
LEGISLATIVE STUDY

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AGENCY OF  
TRANSPORTATION

# PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM IN VERMONT - VISION

*“Public transit meets the basic mobility needs of all Vermonters including transit dependent persons, provides access to employment and other modes, mitigates congestion, preserves air quality and promotes efficient energy use, and advances the State’s economic development objectives – all in a safe, reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible manner.”*



# PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM IN VERMONT (FUNDS AND SERVICES)

Approximately \$48 million annual budget - Over 65% from state funds or “flexed over” from FHWA funds.

FTA Formula Funds  
FHWA “Flex” funds  
State Funds  
Local Funds

Fixed Routes w/ ADA Paratransit service  
Deviated Fixed Routes  
Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities Demand Response  
NEMT (Medicaid) Demand Response  
Intercity  
Go Vermont  
Mobility and Transportation Innovation Grant Program



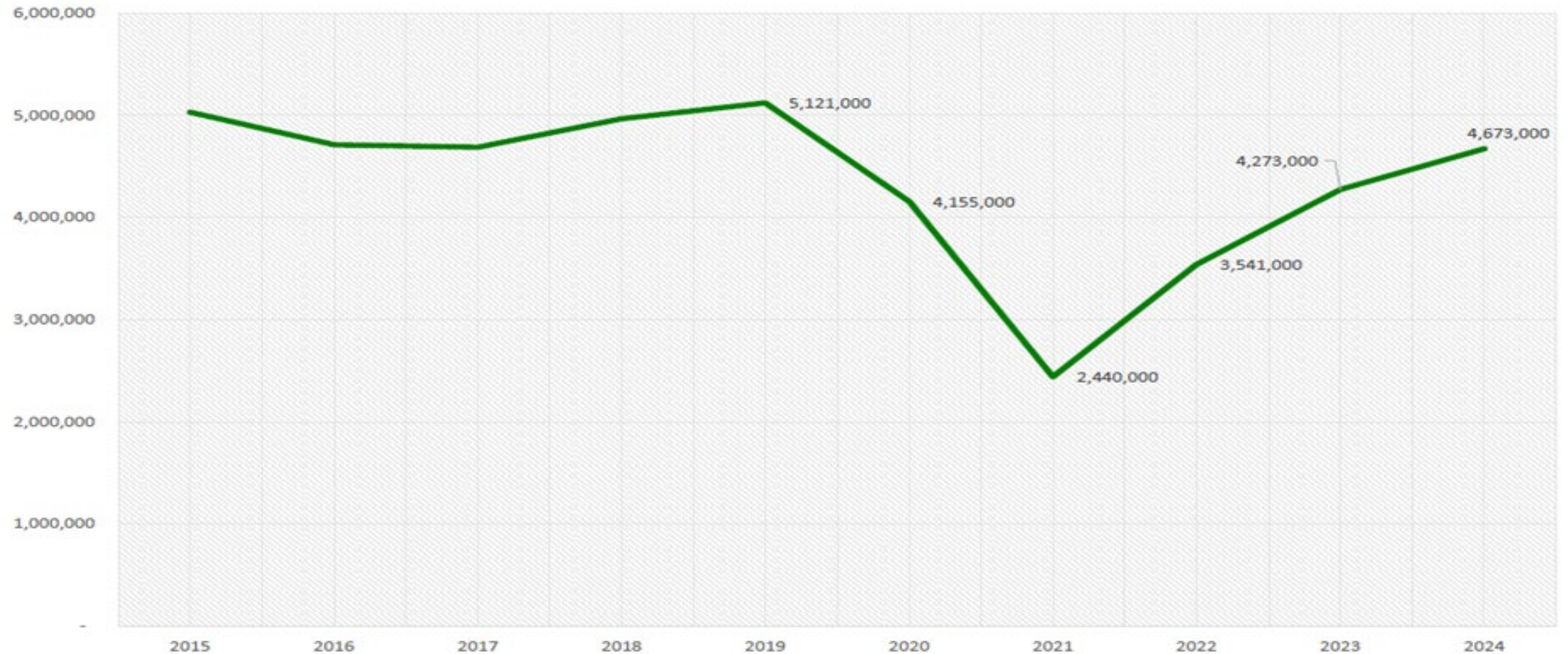
# PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM UPDATES



- **Incorporating New Federal funds** – applying Carbon Reduction Program Funds for Ops (\$3M), eBuses (\$2.9M), and Mobility and Transportation Innovation Grant program awards (\$2M remaining from FY’25 awards).
- **Microtransit** - 6 regions being served with this real-time on-demand transit service (Montpelier, Newport, Manchester, Middlebury, Brattleboro, Windsor, Morristown).
- **Transit app** – Open data, route planning and analysis modules. Free version released to the public. Over 13,000 monthly users.
- **EV Buses** – Funding, procurement and facilities are in place for 15% of transit fleet to be electric (65 eBuses of a total 410 vehicles).
- **Ridership has largely returned to or exceeded pre-Covid levels** – **Commuter routes continue to lag.**

# SFY 2024 PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

Public Transit  
Ridership by State Fiscal Year

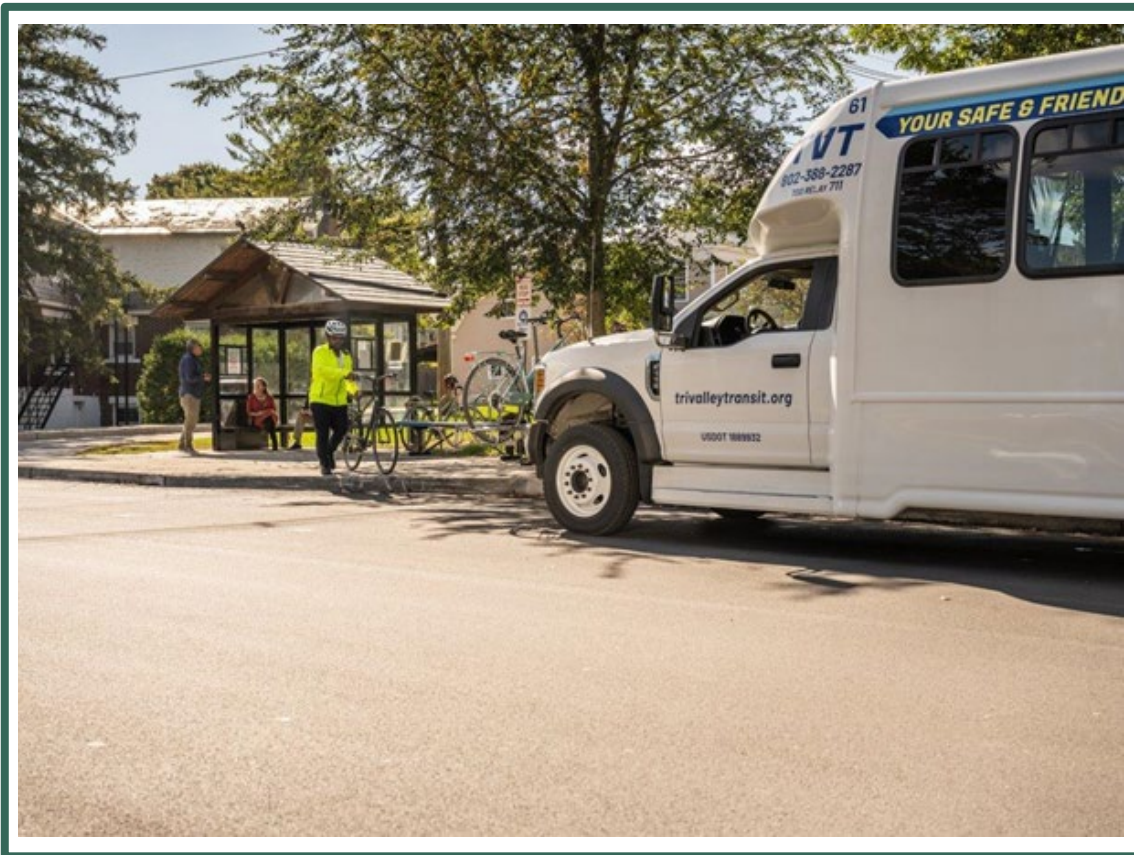


# CHALLENGES



- Costs are increasing to maintain existing services.
- “Volunteer” driver numbers haven’t returned to pre-pandemic levels in most regions. Demand Response (DR) costs remain high. “Community Driver” pilots are continuing.
- Aging population is increasing demand for DR trips.
- Mobility gaps are persistent and continually cited as a primary barrier to job access, healthcare, daycare, training and education.
- System has been rebuilt, and the program goal is to sustain services... not grow outside of demand response mode.
- Rural provider region adjustments will require careful planning and implementation.

# OPPORTUNITIES



- Update the combined Public Transit Policy and Human Service Coordination Plan to address Environmental Policy and Sustainability efforts, revise electrification schedule, assess microtransit role in transit system, O&D survey results, etc.
- Contribute to Transportation Equity Plan and Carbon Reduction Strategies
- Improve passenger amenities.
- Continue to grow the transit “network of advocates” and capacity (Capstone, Community Driver programs, etc.).
- Implement rural provider region adjustments.
- **Align program and budget for sustainable services.**



# Study of Rural Options for Green Mountain Transit



January 7, 2025



# Introduction

- Purpose of the study
  - “in coordination with the Agency of Transportation, Special Service Transportation Agency, Rural Community Transportation, and Tri-Valley Transit, evaluate alternative options for delivering cost-effective urban fixed-route transit service, rural transit service, commuter service, and any other specialized services currently provided”
  - Analyze costs and benefits of GMT operating rural service compared to alternative providers
- Related efforts
  - Organizational Assessment
  - Urban Service Reductions
  - Long-term Fiscal Sustainability
    - 2023 Nonfederal Match Study

# Recommendations

- All-or-nothing approach to rural service makes more sense than partial transfer
  - Transferring one of the two rural regions would not appreciably reduce the administrative and management burden of the many rural programs (especially Medicaid)
- Transfers of GMT's rural service to rural providers is recommended
  - Will allow GMT to manage its urban service more effectively
  - Will reduce costs in the rural areas, benefiting all rural providers
    - VTrans will have more money available to support other rural operations
    - VPTA will have more Medicaid funds available for other rural providers
- Washington County service recommended to be transferred to TVT
- Mountain Road Shuttle seasonal service recommended to go to RCT
- Franklin County service, other than commuter routes, to go to RCT
- Alburgh and Richford Commuter routes recommended to stay with GMT

# Implementation Timeline

- Transfer Mountain Road Shuttle in Fall 2025
- RCT to operate some demand response service in Franklin County in FY26
- Full transfers of rural regions to TVT and RCT to occur on July 1, 2026
  - If feasible, transfer Sugarbush seasonal service to TVT one year later
- Restructure Franklin County commuter routes by July 1, 2026
- Arrange for new subrecipient agreements/contracts with CIDER, CRVT and SSTA by July 1, 2026 so that no rural funding flows to GMT

# Implementation Steps

- GMT submits report, including this analysis, to Legislature by February 1
- Boards of GMT, TVT and RCT consider recommendations and provide advisory votes to VTrans and Legislature
- **Legislature takes action during 2025 session**
- If Legislature decides to approve transfers, pursue additional financial analysis and appropriate funds to address increased overhead costs for GMT as well as cash flow issue
- Commence/continue discussions with Teamsters regarding transitions
- Undertake facility plan for Washington County
- In Summer/Fall 2025, all agencies would develop FY27 budgets to address service transitions

# Transit Rates – SFY '24 and 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. SFY '25

Agency	FY24 cost per vehicle hour	FY25 Q1 cost per vehicle hour				
Advance Transit	\$123.12	\$117.30				
Green Mountain Community Network	\$90.44	\$85.25				
Marble Valley Regional Transit District	\$103.93	\$103.02				
Rural Community Transportation	\$92.30	\$94.99				
Southeast Vermont Transit	\$101.67	\$101.95				
Tri-Valley Transit	\$112.60	\$116.40				
GMT Urban	\$138.72	\$157.15				
GMT Rural	\$130.58	\$159.84	Q1 rate			
		\$149.45	Likely full year rate if Q1 correct			
		<b>\$149.06</b>	Q1 rate if VH for van specials matches ridership			
		\$139.37	Likely full year rate with adjusted Q1 rate			

### Graph #3: 2024 Demand Response Cost per Passenger

