

STATE OF THE SYSTEM

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN WEST VIRGINIA



West Virginians and visitors rely on public transportation every day to provide economic, recreational, and health benefits to communities across the state and to access work, education, training, medical facilities, and shopping areas. Utilizing transit reduces individual transportation costs, congestion and delay, and road construction and maintenance. The transit network continues to shape communities as residents gravitate to mobility options that improve their quality of life and provide connections to opportunities.

Urban Transit Systems

Urban transit systems are those that serve incorporated areas of over 50,000 people. Urban transit services include a variety of combinations of fixed route, deviated fixed route, demand-response, non-emergency medical, and ADA paratransit. These providers are distributed FTA funding by the WVDOT Division of Public Transit.

There are eight urban transit providers in West Virginia.

While not an urban system per FTA, the Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system at West Virginia University provides transit access for faculty and staff.

Rural Transit Systems

Rural transit systems serve populations outside of urban areas. The need for rural transit has historically been linked with providing mobility and accessibility to essential employment opportunities, goods, and services for older adults, those with disabilities, and low-income persons. Rural transit services include non-emergency medical, fixed route, and deviated fixed route.

There are ten rural transportation providers in West Virginia, plus the Sistersville ferry.

Intercity Systems

Barons Bus provides daily service between Charleston and Morgantown, and multiple destination along the I-79 corridor. This service connects to Greyhound stations in Charleston and Morgantown and to local transit systems.

West Virginia supports the Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC), which includes a route that connects Martinsburg to Washington D.C.

Amtrak serves West Virginia through "Capitol Limited" service (daily) and "Cardinal" service (three days per week).

**2019
DATA**

**7.2M
passenger
trips**

**12.5M
revenue-
miles of
service**

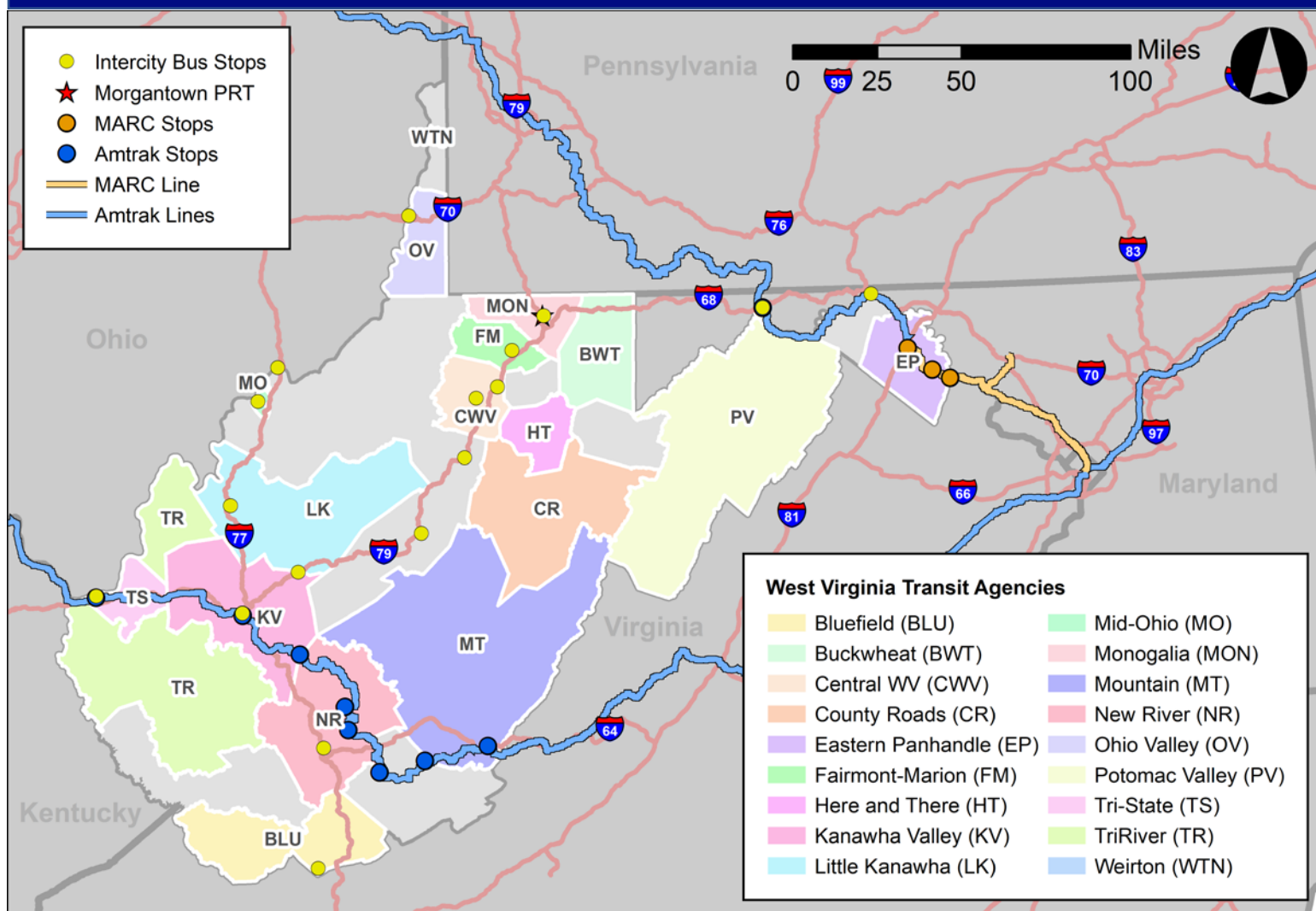
**800k
revenue
hours of
service**

**404
vehicles in
operation
(at maximum
service)**

Source: 2019 National Transit Database

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This map presents a high-level summary of the statewide public transportation system including fixed-route services in urban areas, rural transit providers, intercity bus stations, and Amtrak and MARC passenger rail stations. The map focuses on service areas rather than specific routes. Specific route information is available through each provider's website.

Intercity bus stations include stations served by Greyhound and Barons Bus. A few of these stations are adjacent to Amtrak stations in Charleston, Huntington, and Cumberland, MD.

Gaps in current transit service are seen in north central WV (Wetzel, Tyler, Ritchie, among others) and some discontinuous areas in the southern half of the state including Mingo, Wyoming, Summers, and Monroe Counties. 37 of 55 counties have some level of access to public transit service.

Also on this map is the Morgantown Personal Rapid Transit (PRT), which is a fixed-route train-like system in Morgantown. It connects the three Morgantown campuses of West Virginia University to downtown Morgantown.

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WHY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS IMPORTANT

ECONOMY

- Public transportation provides jobs for West Virginians in the form of drivers, cleaners, mechanics, and more
- Each year, federal grants provide over \$28.5M of funding for transit in West Virginia
- Transit-Oriented Development is used as a development tool around stations
- Towns along the state's tourist railroads depend on transit to fuel their economies

QUALITY OF LIFE

- For individuals without access to an automobile, public transportation allows them to access employment opportunities, essential goods and services, and recreation
- Elderly individuals or individuals with disabilities may not be able to drive personal vehicles and rely on public transportation to access services and health care
- Commuting by public transportation is less stressful than commuting by vehicle

TOURISM

- Many travelers who fly into West Virginia may not want to rent a car while visiting, public transit offers an alternative to access destinations without a vehicle
- Intercity bus service also provides connections between Charleston and Morgantown and to Greyhound services that connect WV to adjacent states and regions
- Local transit services also connect to Amtrak stations

HEALTH & SAFETY

- People who live near high-quality public transportation are more likely to rely on healthier modes of transportation (e.g. walking, biking, transit)
- Riding transit decreases pollution and production of greenhouse gases
- Rural transit services provide vulnerable citizens access to health care facilities that may otherwise be impossible to reach

TRENDS IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- As autonomous and connected vehicles become more prevalent and the technology surrounding these innovations improves, transit systems may adapt and employ more of this technology
- Transit is drifting towards "Mobility as a Service" (MaaS), where an individual pays for access to a public and private network of vehicles (buses, cars, bikes, scooters) and reserves service with mobile apps
- Microtransit is becoming more widespread, which are private- or publicly-operated vehicles where customers reserve trips and algorithms match passengers with similar routes (e.g. UberPool or LyftLine)
- In West Virginia, funds from Volkswagen's environmental mitigation settlement are being used to upgrade transit vehicles to allow them to use newer and cleaner fuel sources

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CURRENT PLANS AND PROGRAMS IN WEST VIRGINIA

Group Asset Management Plan

West Virginia's Transit Asset Management Plan is a document that guides the state's transit organizations in operating, maintaining, upgrading, and replacing transit capital assets throughout their lifecycles. Given that increased funding will not alone solve the problems of deteriorating transit assets, this document directs the state's transit providers on how to efficiently spend money.

Currently, 90% West Virginia's transit vehicles are in an acceptable state-of-repair.

Section 5310 Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program

The Section 5310 Program provides funding to agencies in meeting the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Eligible projects include traditional capital investments like paratransit vehicles and nontraditional investments such as funding for mobility manager and contracted services projects. These funds come from the federal government, but require a 80%/20% federal/local match. **In 2020, West Virginia received approximately \$2.2 million from FTA for these critical services.**

Section 5311 State Management Plan

The goal of this program is to maintain and provide for the continuation of the state's existing rural transportation systems through the provision of operating and technical assistance and the purchase of capital equipment. The state does this by allocating federal formula funds among the rural transit systems; in 2020, \$11 million was allocated.

These funds are available for only the state's rural transit systems. They are funded at 80% federal level with a 20% local match. In addition to technical assistance and capital equipment, funds can be spent on training of employees and operating expenses.

Section 5339 State Management Plan

The Section 5339 Program is another federal formula funding source for urban areas. The objectives of the 5339 program are as follows:

- Preserve the statewide levels of equipment and transit infrastructure available to West Virginia's transit organizations/providers.
- Cover transit operating expenses.

LONG-RANGE PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

Providing transportation options to residents who have mobility limitations, particularly limitations that hamper their access to health care, education, and employment opportunities is a significant challenge. Funding constraints, distances between destinations, and declining population challenge service in rural areas. In growing urban areas, public transportation can serve as a reasonable option to driving alone, although with continuing growth of new mobility options, public transportation will also compete with these services for choice riders.