

Annual Report

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01.

Our Leadership Team





A Message from the CEO

Progress. It's a word that resonates with us at Hampton Roads Transit.

It's in our vision – to be a progressive mobility agency that promotes prosperity across Hampton Roads through collaboration and teamwork.

But it's more than aspirational. Progress is what we do every day.

Progress is about transporting people on our buses, light rail, ferry and paratransit. It's how we meet the ever-changing needs of the six cities we serve. Progress is about building lives with reliable transportation solutions. And it's about moving the region's economy forward.

In Fiscal Year 2024, we made progress on many fronts, including growing ridership, renewal of our fleets, new technology, service upgrades and additional community outreach.

We've made progress this year. But we're not slowing down.

Our progress would not be possible without the commitment of our dedicated workforce, unwavering advocacy from our Commission, and continual support of our customers. I invite you to review our pursuit of progress throughout this annual report.

I look forward to building on our success in Fiscal Year 2025. Thank you for trying transit and enjoy the ride!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the President and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit.

President and CEO, Hampton Roads Transit

Senior Executive Team



Brian Smith
Deputy CEO



Conner Burns
Chief Financial Officer



Dawn Sciortino
Chief Safety Officer



Benjamin Simms
Chief Operating Officer



Sibyl Pappas
Chief Engineering
& Facilities Officer



Ray Amoruso
Chief Planning
& Development Officer



Alexis Majied
Chief Communications
Officer



Michael Price
Chief Information
& Technology Officer



Robert Travers
Corporate Counsel



Kim Wolcott
Chief Human
Resources Officer



Malika Blume
Director of Internal Audit

2024 Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads

Honorable Don Carey (Chair)

Chesapeake

Honorable Shannon E. Glover (Vice-Chair)

Portsmouth

Honorable Patricia P. Woodbury (Past-Chair)

Newport News

Senator J. D. "Danny" Diggs

Virginia Senate

Commissioner Anthony "Tony" Goodwin

Portsmouth

Commissioner Kirk T. Houston

Norfolk

Delegate Alex Askew

Virginia House of Representatives

Avery Daughtrey

VDRPT, Alternate

Honorable Andria McClellan

Norfolk

Honorable Jimmy Gray

Hampton

Honorable Amelia Ross-Hammond

Virginia Beach

Commissioner August B. Bullock

Newport News

Commissioner Roland White

Hampton

Commissioner Stephens Johnson

Chesapeake

Zach Trogdon

VDRPT



Dr. Woodbury Completes Third Term as Commission Chair

The Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads has been led over the years by dedicated leaders representing the cities we serve. None more so than the outgoing Chair, Dr. Patricia Woodbury of Newport News, the Commission's longest-serving member. She joined the board in 2008 and finished her third term as Chair in 2024. During her tenure, she's been involved in every Commission committee.

Woodbury will continue to serve as Past Chair to support the Chair, Don Carey of Chesapeake (left).



02.

Customer Focused Operations



Provide a high-quality service that is easy to use and enhances people's lives.

Free Fare Days Continue Tradition

HRT's tradition of Free Fare Days continued in Fiscal Year 2024, enabling customers to experience travel on buses, light rail, ferry and paratransit at no cost to them. Free Fare Days were offered four times: Election Day (Nov. 7, 2023), Transit Equity Day (Feb. 5, 2024), Earth Day (April 22, 2024) and Juneteenth (June 19, 2024). HRT's Transit Equity Day initiative – celebrating the courageous acts of civil rights icon Rosa Parks while highlighting the importance of equitable transit – received an Outstanding Community Program Award from the Virginia Transit Association (VTA).



Paratransit Ridership and Fleet Grow

In addition to buses, light rail and ferry, HRT's paratransit service fills a crucial transportation gap. Paratransit vans help thousands of riders with disabilities gain mobility and independence throughout Hampton Roads. From shopping trips and medical appointments to social visits and entertainment, paratransit can mean the difference between seclusion and succeeding. Paratransit grew more than 6 percent during the fiscal year. Paratransit added 20 new, accessible Chrysler Voyager minivans to its growing fleet to meet demand.



Hundreds of Bus Stops Updated with New Signage

Passenger Information Displays were among HRT's technology investments in FY24. These video display screens, installed at transit centers in Norfolk, Hampton and Newport News, provide real-time bus departure information. Like screens found at airports, they also display customer alerts, safety information, promotions and other announcements to enhance the customer experience.



02. Customer Focused Operations

Fairs Connect Community with Resources

HRT hosted its second annual Community Resource (CORE) Fair in Norfolk and Hampton. These one-stop events connect our customers with services and benefits provided by more than a dozen community partners. Vendors participating in this year's CORE Fair included YWCA of South Hampton Roads, Urban Renewal Center, CHAS Foundation, Norfolk Community Services Board, Norfolk Family Justice Center, Childcare Subsidy Unit, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training (SNAPET), Eggleston, Bright View, Step-Up Inc., Eviction Prevention Center and Rent Ready Norfolk, Minority Aids Support Services and TRAFFIX.



Free Rides for Norfolk Tides Home Games

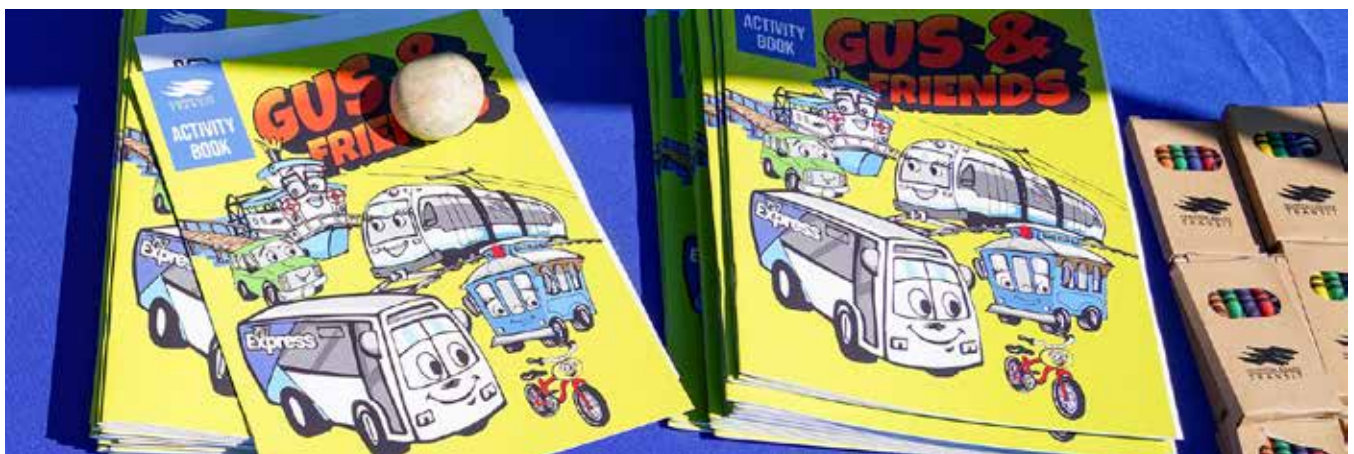
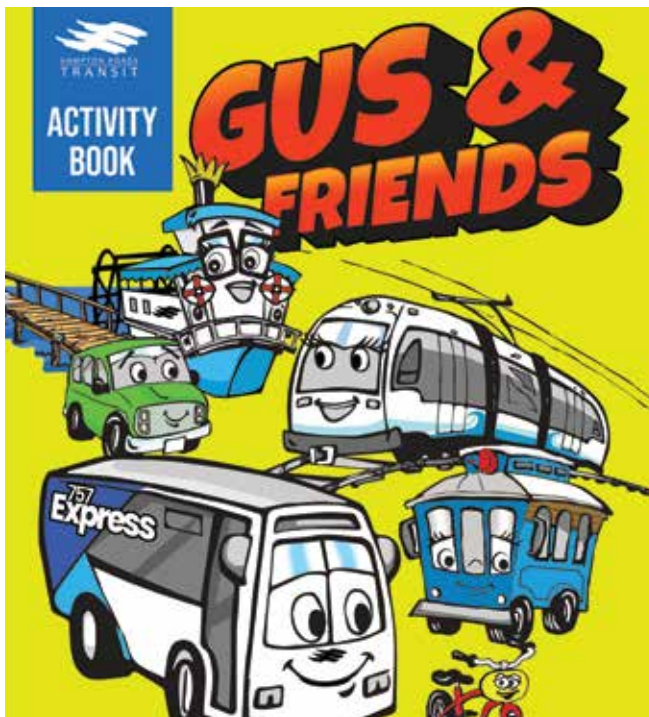
Hampton Roads Transit, the City of Norfolk and the Norfolk Tides baseball team collaborated this season to provide free rides on The Tide light rail for every home game. Complimentary rides – courtesy of the City of Norfolk and the Tides – were available two hours prior to and after each of the 75 regular-season games, up from just a handful of games last year.



HRT Engages Future Riders with New Mascot, Coloring Book

HRT unveiled two new initiatives aimed at young riders – Gus the Bus mascot and a coloring book “Gus & Friends.” The mascot – in the shape of a bus worn by a member of the HRT Outreach team – made appearances at community events, Norfolk Tides games, bus stops and light rail stations.

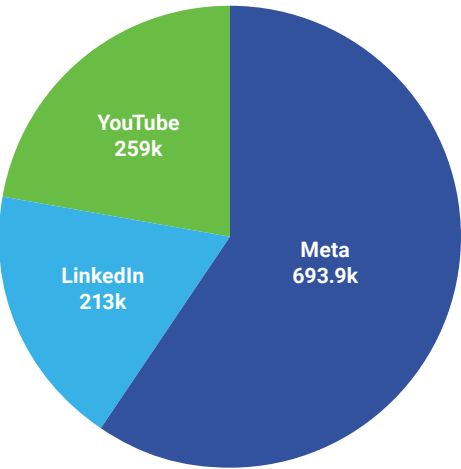
The coloring book, designed by the Marketing and Strategic Communications Department, tells the story of Gus the Bus as he travels throughout Hampton Roads. One day, someone forgot Mike the Bike on Gus’s bike rack. Gus and Mike then head back to the garage to find the owner of the bike. Along the way, they encounter Dan the Van, Gail the Light Rail, Ellie the Elizabeth River Ferry and Dolly the Trolley to include all of HRT’s modes in one big adventure.



HRT Grows Digital Presence

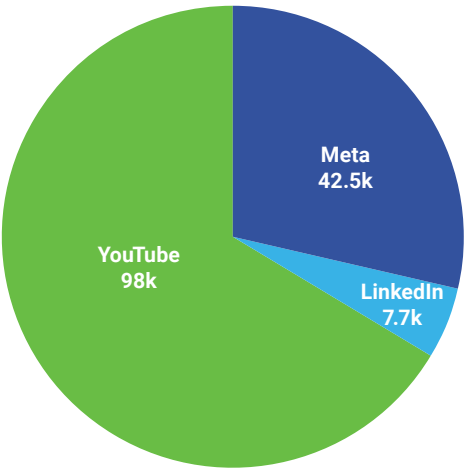
HRT connects with customers and advocates through a growing social media presence. Here’s a look at our social media reach, visits and interactions:

Social Media Reach



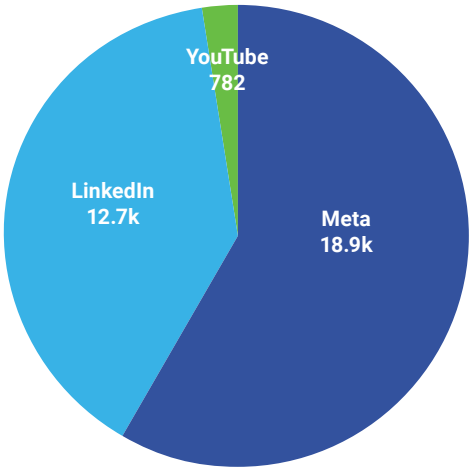
Number of unique individuals who have seen a piece of content on a social media platform.

Social Media Visits



Number of unique visitors by social media platform.

Social Media Content Interactions

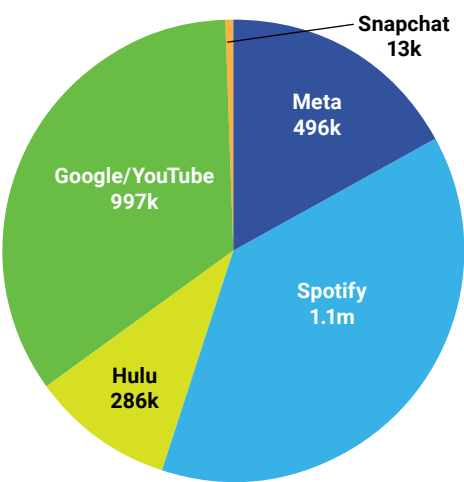


This measures engagement with content shared by HRT. Interaction occurs when users interact with photos, videos and posts by liking, sharing and commenting on posts.

02. Customer Focused Operations

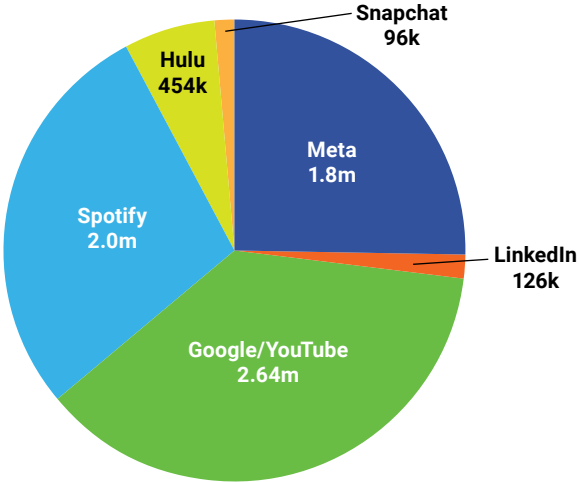
HRT connects with our audiences – and reaches new ones – with the efficiency of digital advertising. Here’s a breakdown of digital advertising reach, impressions and clicks to our website.

Digital Ad Reach



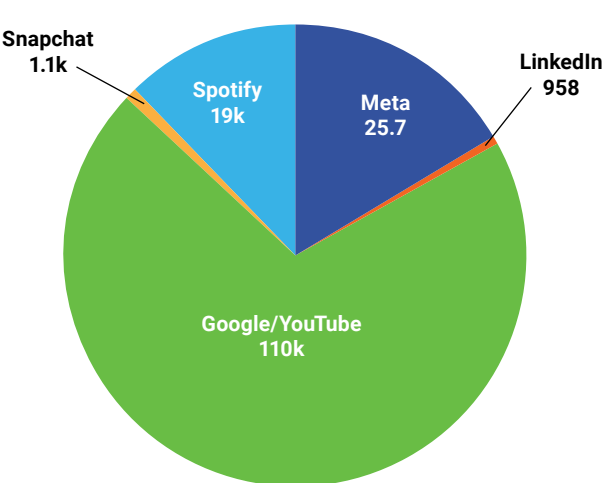
Number of unique individuals who have seen an HRT digital ad.

Digital Ad Impressions

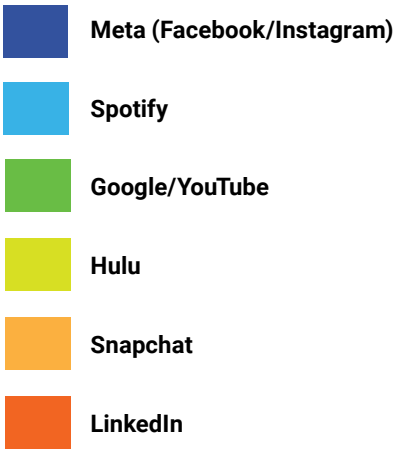


Number of unique visitors by social media platform.

Digital Ad Clicks



Number of clicks to HRT website received from digital ads, by platform.



HRT Increases Advertising Opportunities

HRT's buses, light rail and ferries are billboards in motion, and advertisers are noticing.

Led by the Marketing and Strategic Communications Department's Advertising team, HRT sold more than **\$1.7 million in advertising.**

HRT's advertising options are a natural choice for advertisers wishing to put their messages in front of mobile customers.



02. Customer Focused Operations



03.

Regional Impact



Foster regional quality of life and economic vitality.

HRT Takes Delivery of New Buses and Ferries

HRT took delivery of 32 new buses to serve routes across Hampton Roads. The fleet renewal is funded by federal, state, and local funds. The new buses are in addition to the 12 new low-emission buses dedicated as the 757 Express fleet announced in November 2023. Meanwhile, Elizabeth River Ferries VI and VII joined the fleet with a community event at Waterside in Norfolk in February.



757 Express Routes Show Increase in Ridership

Ridership increased on HRT's key 757 Express Routes, a direct result of increased service frequencies during morning and afternoon commutes. Three routes serving the Peninsula and Southside – routes 112, 114 and 20 – saw significant monthly growth after frequencies increased to every 15 minutes during peak hours. The 757 Express will eventually consist of 13 bus routes connecting the highest densities of people and jobs in the region. Buses arrive every 15 minutes during the weekday peak hours of 6-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m.



03. Regional Impact

High-Capacity Transit Study Kicks Off in Chesapeake

HRT is collaborating with the City of Chesapeake to explore high-capacity transit options that enhance the City's economy, align with future growth plans and improve connectivity to the regional transportation network. Connecting Chesapeake: A Study of High-Capacity Transit kicked off in summer 2023. The study team is working alongside the community to evaluate the need for high-capacity transit service, identify and screen potential alignment alternatives, and determine the best alternatives to improve connections within Chesapeake and the Hampton Roads region.



HRT Installs 500th Bus Shelter

Virginia Beach elected officials and hospitality leaders joined HRT in April to celebrate the installation of the 500th bus shelter in Hampton Roads. The new shelter is located across the street from the Historic Cavalier Hotel and Beach Club on Atlantic Avenue. Since August 2021, more than 220 of them have been installed and paid for with dedicated funding approved by the Virginia General Assembly in 2020. HRT's 501st bus shelter was also installed as part of this project. It sits on the corner of 43rd Street and Atlantic Avenue.



03. Regional Impact

TRAFFIX Program Office Supports Sailors

The TRAFFIX commuter options program, administered by HRT, debuted its renovated office at Naval Station Norfolk as part of ongoing support of regional military bases and personnel. The refreshed TRAFFIX office provides active-duty service members, civilian employees, dependents and visitors with commuter information and resources about vanpools, carpools, transit, walking, biking, teleworking and other transportation options available through HRT, TRAFFIX and the Department of Defense.

It's the first renovation of the 120-square-foot space since it opened in 2008 on the world's largest naval base. The office is the latest example of HRT's commitment to support Hampton Roads military personnel, their families and workers. In partnership with Naval Station Norfolk, HRT operates the Base Express, a free shuttle bus service helping sailors and their families, government employees, veterans and Navy contractors move around the base and visit the Navy Exchange (NEX) Mall. The Base Express carries between 4,000-5,000 passengers every month.



Ad Campaigns Encourage Ridesharing Throughout Hampton Roads

TRAFFIX also launched several campaigns to encourage ridesharing throughout Hampton Roads, including a "Vanuary" campaign to start the year and "Rideshare the Love" for Valentine's Day in February.



GoPass 365 Makes the Most of Commuting

The GoPass 365 program is a discounted pass that gives commuters unlimited usage of some of HRT's services. More than 20 participating companies and colleges provide these passes to their employees and students to make the most of commuting.



Student Freedom Passes Help Teens Get Around

HRT's Student Freedom Pass provides riders ages 13-17 with unlimited rides on HRT's bus, ferry and light rail services in Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach at no cost to the pass holder. During the fiscal year, HRT signed up 1,495 students for these passes – up 218 from a year earlier.



HRT, Regional Transit Agencies Host First State of Transit Summit

HRT joined Williamsburg Area Transit Authority and Suffolk Transit to host the inaugural State of Transit summit in November. In addition to a keynote address and networking, participants heard panel discussions about the state of public transportation and its role to keep Hampton Roads economically competitive. Approximately 200 business professionals and community members attended this inaugural event at Hub757 in Suffolk. Distinguished guests included Congressman Bobby Scott; Portsmouth Mayor Shannon Glover; Williamsburg Mayor Doug Pons and other elected and appointed officials. The keynote address was given by Maurice Jones, founder & CEO, MJ Connects. Other speakers included William Harrell, HRT's President and CEO; Matt Scalia, executive director, Williamsburg Area Transit; Maria Ptakowski, transit manager, City of Suffolk; Bryan Stephens, President & CEO, Hampton Roads Chamber; Tom Cosgrove, chair, Virginia Peninsula Chamber; and Terry Banez, CEO, Greater Williamsburg Chamber.



HRT Hosts Regional Transit Advocacy Day

Representatives from Hampton Roads Transit visited the region's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. in May. They met with senators and representatives from Hampton Roads, offering thanks for their support of federal funding for the Southside Operations Facility and to request additional funding to expand our current paratransit vehicle fleet. The delegation was led by External & Legislative Affairs Committee (ELAC) Chair, August Bullock, and included Commissioners Tony Goodwin and Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond, as well as Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) Chair, Denise Johnson, HRT Organizational Advancement Officer, Noelle Pinkard, TRAFFIX Military Liaison, Caleb Smith, Deputy CEO Brian Smith and other key team members.



03. Regional Impact

HRT Riders Tell Us Why They Ride

HRT asked customers across Hampton Roads why they ride, and they answered. From workers hopping on the light rail to Downtown Norfolk to families enjoying a ferry ride from Portsmouth to Waterside and visitors at the Oceanfront taking advantage of the VB Wave or shipyard employees who rely on the bus to get back and forth to work, customers told their story for a multi-media information campaign. While they all have different reasons for why they ride, the overarching message was the same: HRT provides an essential service to the region.



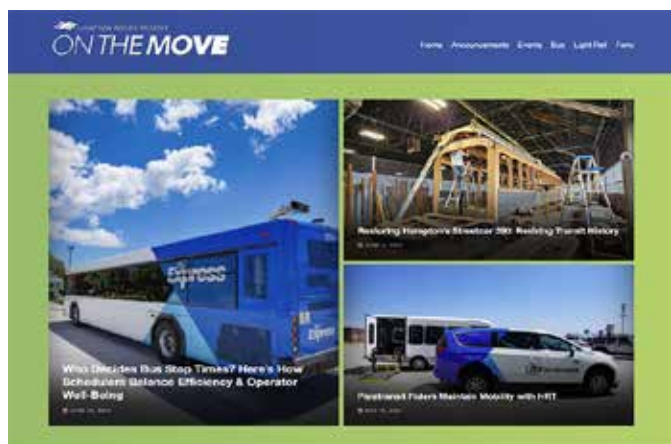
HRT Celebrates Earth Day with Green Initiatives

HRT celebrated Earth Day on April 22 with several initiatives to encourage use of public transit and keep bus stops clean. As one of four Free Fare Days, rides were at no cost on all bus, light rail, ferry and paratransit services. Members of HRT's governing board, the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads, hosted round-trip rides to meet the public in their cities. HRT also reminded customers about the Am I Clean Campaign, providing a tool enabling anyone to easily and anonymously report on the cleanliness of bus stops and passenger amenities. HRT employees also fanned out across the region to pick up trash and beautify transit stops.



New Blog Tells Transit Stories

HRT expanded its communications toolbox with a new blog called On the Move. The blog goes beyond the headlines to tackle news, issues and trends of interest to the region. In addition to a printed quarterly newsletter and YouTube show of the same name, the blog further augments HRT's commitment to public communications, which also include the monthly Community Connector e-newsletter, news releases and public outreach. Check out the blog at <https://blog.gohrt.com/>.



04.

Organizational Performance



Ensure financial stewardship of cost-effective operations.

Survey Uncovers Details About Customers

HRT's latest Origin-and-Destination (O&D) study provides a deep dive into who our customers are, where they're going, and why they're riding. It was the first survey conducted since the Covid-19 pandemic, and results reflect the realities of post-pandemic travel, including people working from home at least one day a week. The survey found that 64 percent of HRT customers ride four to seven times a week. During a typical week, 54 percent of our customers commute between home and work and 46 percent use transit for other activities such as school, medical appointments, shopping, appointments, entertainment and sporting events. The survey also found transit stops to be clean and safe while reporting positive interactions with operators.

The study, conducted between August and November 2023, interviewed nearly 5,000 riders. The number of respondents represented nearly 20 percent of average weekday ridership touching every route and mode in the system (bus, light rail and ferry). Data was then expanded and weighted to ensure the sample collection was statistically representative of all ridership. Knowing who our riders are, where they are going and how they get there helps HRT to make critical decisions to guide the agency and improve services for customers.



04. Organizational Performance

Elizabeth River Ferry Celebrates 40 Years of Service

The Elizabeth River Ferry, an essential link between Portsmouth and Norfolk, celebrated its 40th anniversary in July 2023. More than 100 people gathered at the North Landing Dock in Portsmouth to mark the occasion. Ferry service has been a mainstay of Hampton Roads for hundreds of years. HRT is proud to play a crucial role in continuing this time-honored tradition.

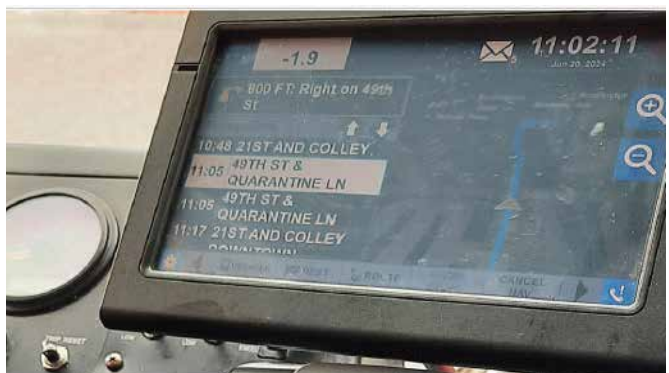
Over the last 40 years, the ferry fleet has moved more than 16.5 million riders back and forth across the Elizabeth River for work, entertainment, shopping and more. A special thanks to David Jordan of Norfolk by Boat. The Portsmouth native helped secure the purchase of the first Elizabeth River Ferry.



Turn-by-Turn Navigation to Aid in Operational Performance

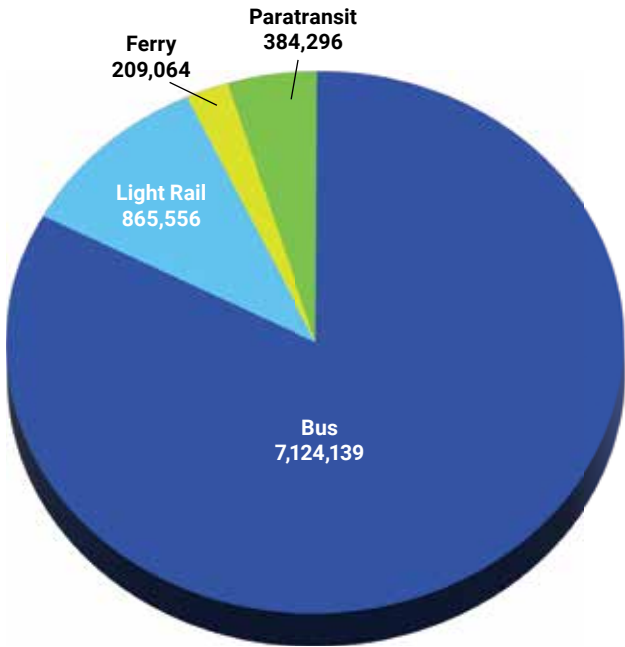
In March, HRT successfully conducted a pilot program for turn-by-turn navigation to give bus operators additional information to enhance operational performance. The technology mirrors that of any smartphone navigation app with step-by-step instructions. But, instead of navigating the shortest or fastest route, it uses predefined HRT routes to guide operators to each designated stop.

A large display provides the operator multiple options, including a map view and a list of all stops. An area on the display that indicates whether a bus is running on schedule and another that will flash if a bus goes off route. The turn-by-turn navigation can be used with or without voice assistance. HRT aims to implement this transformative technology system wide by October.

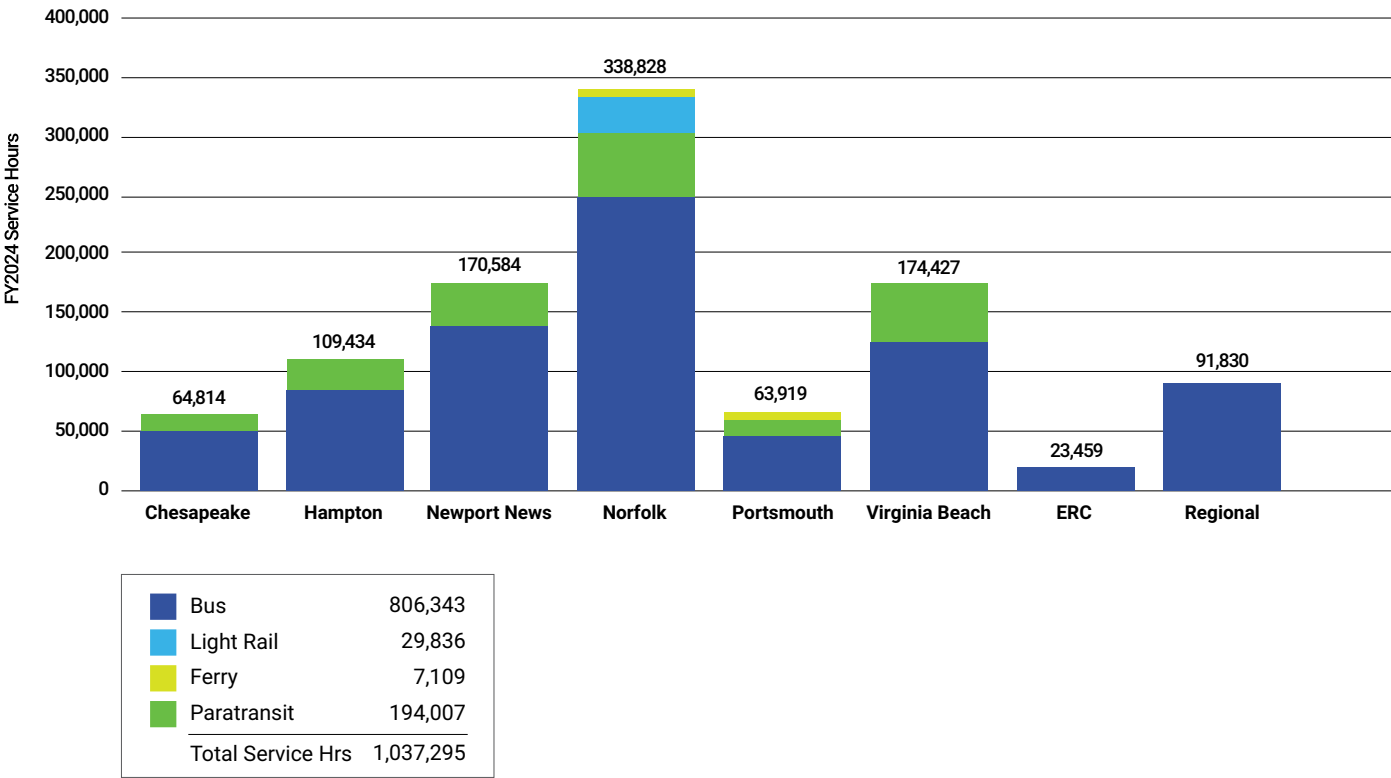


FY2024 Ridership by the Numbers

Total Boardings		8,583,055
By Mode:		
Bus	7,124,139	+22.3% vs. FY23
Light Rail	865,556	+20.7% vs. FY23
Ferry	209,064	-8.8% vs. FY23
Paratransit	384,296	+2.9% vs. FY23

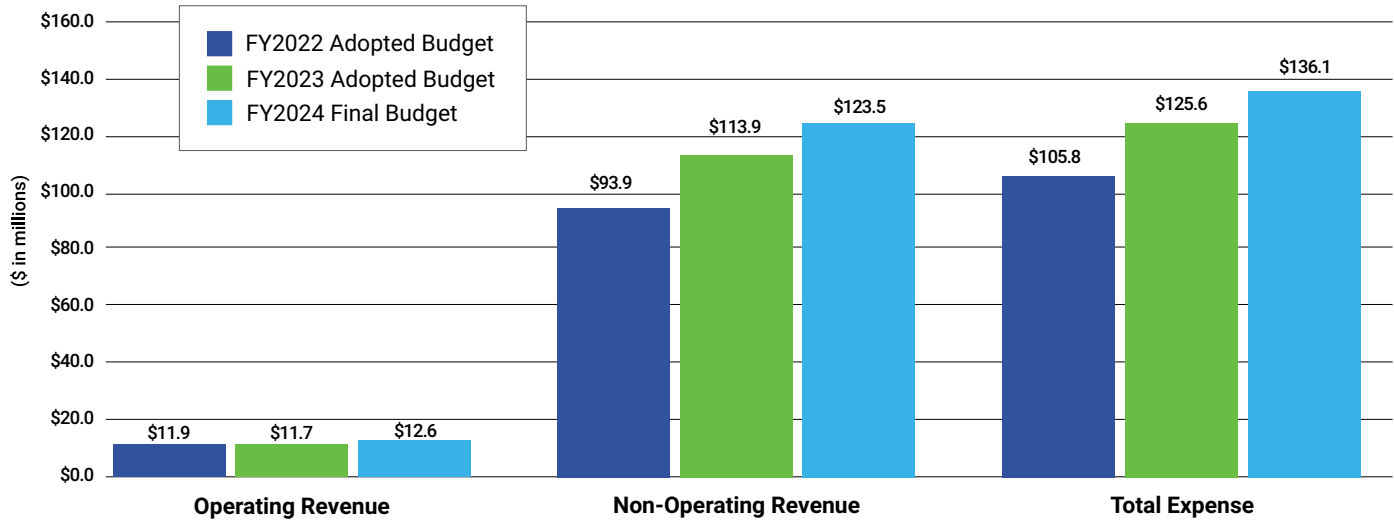


FY2024 Service Hours by Mode

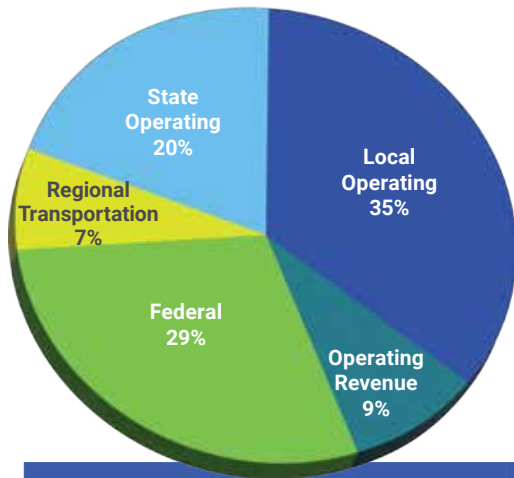


Financials

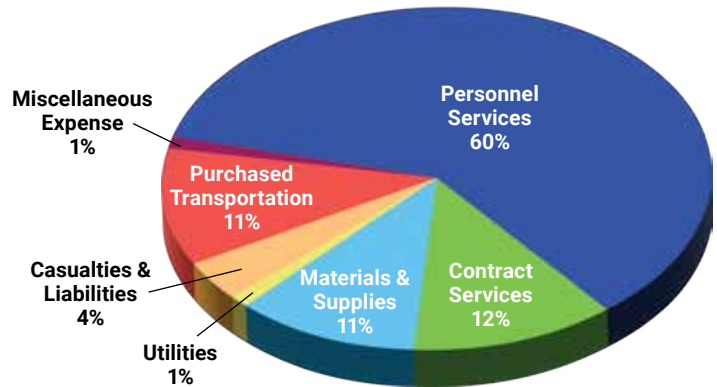
FY2024 Budget



FY2024 Revenue Funding Sources



FY2024 Operating Expenses



Revenue (in thousands)	FY2022 Adopted Budget	FY2023 Adopted Budget	FY2024 Adopted Budget	Prior Year \$ +/-	Prior Year \$ +/-	FY2024 Budget %
Operating Revenue	\$11,912.0	\$11,713.7	\$12,640.1	\$926.4	8%	9%
Federal Funding	\$22,053.7	\$26,694.0	\$38,859.0	\$12,165.0	46%	29%
Regional Funding	\$5,730.1	\$10,319.0	\$10,044.1	(274.9)	(3%)	7%
State Operating Funding	\$21,438.3	\$31,464.9	\$26,837.1	(4,627.8)	(15%)	20%
Local Operating Funding	\$44,696.1	\$45,396.5	\$47,766.3	\$2,369.8	5%	35%
Total Revenue	\$105,830.2	\$125,588.1	\$136,146.6	\$10,558.5	8%	100%

05.

Workforce Success



Build a culture of innovation and workforce success to ensure HRT remain relevant to the dynamic needs of the region.

Employee Survey Sets Baseline for Future Progress

An organization that values the input of its employees is poised for success. To that end, in January 2024, Hampton Roads Transit conducted its first agency-wide employee survey. The goal was to gather information on what the agency is doing well and where improvement is needed. Responses were anonymous to encourage participation. More than 350 surveys were collected online and in person over three weeks. Employees were asked questions covering five major themes: The Company, Company Culture, Management, The Work You Do, and Miscellaneous. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree, HRT earned a 3.66 rating. Most employees (68 percent) indicated that, overall, they are satisfied at HRT, while 66 percent said they can see themselves still working here in five years. Another survey is scheduled for January.

New Union Contract Increases Pay for Operators, Mechanics

HRT and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1177 reached an agreement with its unionized workers on a new contract providing higher base pay, increased benefits and increases in the tool and uniform allowances. The new three-year contract was negotiated in Fiscal Year 24 to take effect July 1, 2024.

The new contract also included additional employee incentives, including an increase in accumulated sick leave and additional personal days.

CEO Roundtables

HRT's Senior Leadership Team continued a series of in-person meetings with employees throughout the system. These CEO Roundtables featured President and CEO William E. Harrell. Staff asked questions about issues, concerns and future direction while receiving updates on recruitment, upcoming events, employee survey results, and programs and initiatives.



05. Workforce Success

LEAD Program Graduates 133 Employees

HRT is committed to growing and developing its workforce. Throughout the year, the Human Resources Department offered two courses as part of its Leading, Educating and Developing (LEAD) Program.

- Sessions held: 3
- Employee graduates from both courses: 133
- Training courses completed: 4,122 courses
- Hours of training completed: 803



Career Fairs Highlight Opportunities

If you're looking for a career on the move, HRT could be the place for you. HRT held near-monthly Career Fairs in Norfolk and Hampton, drawing interest from dozens of applicants interested in contributing to HRT's success. Career Fair participants were able to fill out an application, undergo a brief screening and get an on-the-spot interview to determine if they're the right fit for HRT.



05. Workforce Success

Bus Roadeo Tests the Best

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) won best overall at the 2024 Virginia State Bus Roadeo, an annual showcase of the best bus operators and mechanics. In addition, HRT bus operator Reginald Charity received the Smooth/Safe Operation Award. Charity also won third place overall for operators while HRT's George Sweeny and Jose Brito won third place for mechanics.

The Virginia State Bus Roadeo tests the skills and expertise of transit agency bus operators and maintenance professionals in a timed competition. Bus operators drive through an obstacle course reflecting maneuvers that they encounter daily, including turns, courtesy stops and navigating tight spaces in 40-foot buses. Operators are also judged on the presentation and appearance of their uniforms, safety, the smoothness with which they maneuver through these obstacles, and their ability to identify defects on their bus during a pre-trip inspection. Mechanics, meanwhile, had to discover and correct six defects, including multiplex boards, vapor doors, engines, brakes, air-conditioning and bus defects



05. Workforce Success

HRT and Employees Honored with Awards

HRT employees were recognized for their industry-leading knowledge and accomplishments:



Outstanding Public Employee Award by the Hampton Roads Chapter of The American Society for Public Administration: **Antoinette White, Dr. Christine Mann Darden**



Women in Business Achievement Award from Inside Business: **Sybil Pappas and Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond**



Inside Business Top Forty Under 40: **Katie Fenimore**



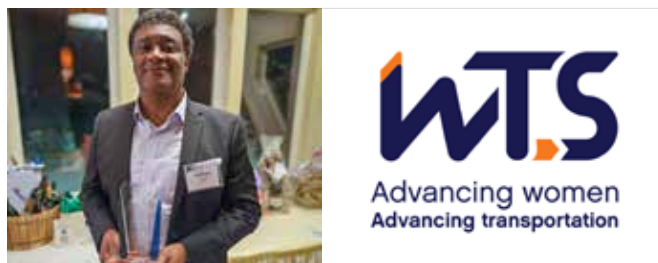
2024 Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association's Ordinary Awards (VRLTA): **VB Wave Trolley Operators**



Fellow, Virginia Transit Leadership Institute (VTLI): **Sonya Luther**



Gold Award from Hampton Roads Sanitation District for environmental excellence: **Southside Operations Complex**



WTS honored President & CEO William Harrell with the Honorable Ray Hood Award for contributing to the advancement of women and minorities.



Outstanding Community Program Award for Multifaceted Community Engagement and Outreach from Virginia Transit Association (VTA): **Hampton Roads Transit**

05. Workforce Success

Reward and Recognition Committee Holds Events

HRT's Reward and Recognition Committee held events throughout the fiscal year. Some included:

- Pool tournament
- School supplies drive
- Bra-ha-ha
- Chili Cook Off
- Simulator Rodeo
- Drive Out Hunger Food Drive



New Toastmasters Club Serves Up Public Speaking Skills

HRT created a new chapter of Toastmasters International for employees looking to grow their public speaking and presentation skills. The chapter meets monthly to practice giving speeches in group settings while receiving constructive feedback from peers.



06.

What's Next for HRT?



06. What's Next for HRT?

As we look ahead to 2024, we are excited about continuing to move Hampton Roads Transit forward. The agency endeavors to further expand regional connectivity, bring new technologies onboard, and increase passenger amenities. We look forward to offering additional 757 Express routes, adding free wi-fi on more buses, launching mobile ticketing, improving the customer experience by installing digital signage at transfer stations and adding shelters and solar lighting at more bus stops.

Through 2024 we look forward to providing transit services that effectively connect communities and businesses across the region, improving access to jobs, healthcare, education, workforce training, shopping, and entertainment. We'll also be taking a deep dive into our bus network with our System Optimization Plan, a comprehensive initiative to identify how HRT's network of 35 local bus routes can more efficiently feed into our network of 757 Express routes in the six cities we serve. And given how vital transit is for a growing, inclusive and prosperous region, HRT is also conducting a Regional Transit Sustainability Study to address long-term and sustainable funding for public transportation capital and operating needs in Hampton Roads.

HRT will maintain and cultivate new partnerships throughout the community to ensure we are meeting the dynamic needs of the region. New connections, creating a better commute for current and potential customers alike. Public transit is not just transportation – it's transformative.

Connecting Hampton Roads: Building Public Transit Better, **Together.**

Scan the QR code to access a video of this report.





