



2026 Annual Conference & Bus Expo

Fredericksburg Convention Center | 2371 Carl D. Silver Pkwy, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

May 19-20, 2026

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Program Sponsor



This Conference would not be possible without the incredible support of our partners at DRPT.

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Attendees, don't forget to visit our exhibitors for Bucket Brigade raffle tickets to win prizes at our May 19th reception!

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Don't forget to MARK YOUR CALENDARS:
2027 VTA 50th Anniversary Conference & Expo!
May 25-26, 2027 | Williamsburg, Virginia



Important Conference Information:

Conference Mobile App:

Search for **eVentsLite** in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Enter **vta2026** for the event code. Please enter the email address that you used when registering and use **vta26conf** as the initial password to log in. The app includes schedules, maps, speaker bios, evaluation forms, and ways to connect with fellow participants.

Download Conference app:
Search: **eVentsLite** Email: **Your Email** Password: **vta2026conf**
Event Code: **vta2026**



Conference Points of Contact:

- **Danny Plaughter (VTA): 804-461-8165**
- **Diana Hall (VTA): 757-236-8648**
- **Oliver Harmon (VTA): 804-690-6003**



Bucket Brigade:

Prizes: Vendors, please bring your Bucket Brigade prizes to the designated expo table prior to the 5:30pm reception.

Tickets: Vendors, please give each attendee who visits your exhibitor table a double ticket. Attendees, please keep one side of the double ticket and deposit the other side in the bucket for the prize you wish to take a chance on.

 @VaTransitAssoc

 @VaTransit

Please share your photos and memories on social media with our hashtag **#VTAConference** & tagging us!
We love seeing your posts!

Congratulations to our awe-inspiring award winners and a huge thanks to the members of our Awards Committee:

*Maria Ptakowski, Levern Sydnor, Lindsey Martin, Devon Thompson, Chris Poindexter, John O'Keefe, Mathew Friedman, Charles Koonce, and Kyle Trissel.
The awards committee is made up of your peers in the transit industry.*

2026 Public Transportation Award Winners

Outstanding Contribution by an Individual Award: Public Official

Victor S. Angry | PRTC & Neabsco | PRTC Chair & Neabsco District Supervisor

Transit Employee Unsung Hero Award:

Curtis Paige | GRTC | Bus Operator

Outstanding Community Program Award:

Workforce: UVA University Transit Service | Pipelines & Pathways
Outreach: Charlottesville Area Transit | Sustainable Transit Bus Wrap Art Contest
Education: Greater Lynchburg Transit Company | Transit Academy Program
Education: Loudoun County Transit | Travel Training Program
Safety: GRTC | Public Safety Ambassador & Public Safety Officer Programs

Outstanding Public Transit Marketing Award:

Collaboration: RideFinders | Count It. Change It.
Collaboration: GRTC | TAP into Transit Day
Very Large Agency: WMATA | Tap. Ride. Go. Campaign
Large Agency: Hampton Roads Transit | OnDemand Ridesharing
Small Agency: Suffolk Transit | A Good Time to Ride

Outstanding Contribution by a Partner Award:

UVA University Transit Service | from CSPDC/BRITE Bus

Outstanding Contribution by a Partner Award:

Keolis Transit Services | from PRTC/OmniRide

The Helen Poore Transit Professional Distinguished Service Award:

Cheryl Spain | Harrisonburg Transit | Assistant Director
William Harrell | Hampton Roads Transit | President & CEO
Ann Jones | GRTC | CARE Paratransit Dispatcher

2026 Hill Turner Ridership Awards:

Very Large Group: 2+ million trips
Blacksburg Transit (First Place) | **OmniRide** (Runner Up)
Large Group: 1+ million trips
Virginia Railway Express (First Place) | **Williamsburg Area Transit Authority** (Runner Up)
Medium Group: 100,000+ trips
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (First Place) | **Loudoun County Transit** (Runner Up)
Small Group: Under 100,000 trips
Suffolk Transit (First Place) | **Virginia Breeze** (Runner Up)

Virginia Transit Leadership Institute Graduates - Class III

Ashley Austin
Nicole Barnes
Jeremy Branham
Danielle Gannon
Angela Gregory

Jeannie Leonard
Trevor Logan
Jennifer Monaco
Cynthia Porter-Johnson
Reem Rayef

Cassandra Reeders
Gary Shivers
Karen Scott
Wanda St. Leger
Scott Tmay

80's Night at the Arcade

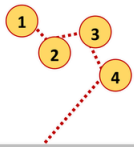
Brought to you by:



Evening Details

Come join us for a night of 1980's arcade fun from 6:30pm until 9:00pm at Reclaim Arcade! Join us for appetizers, games, and drinks; courtesy of our sponsor, **Sonny Merryman**. We also have several local restaurants offering deals for VTA Conference attendees when you show your nametag.

Shuttle Bus Route:



- 1 Fredericksburg Convention Center
- 2 Homewood Suites by Hilton
- 3 Hilton Garden Inn
- 4 Hampton Inn & Suites
- 5 Reclaim Arcade

Before/After Dinner:

Special discounts with VTA Conference name tag.

The Alpine Chef
200 Lafayette Blvd
10% off with purchase of an entree

Carrabba's
1951 Carl D Silver Pkwy
10% off, please call ahead to ensure space

Check our app for more details!



Reclaim Arcade
2324 Plank Rd

As we begin our "Route to 50," we are proud to celebrate both VTA's 49th Anniversary and America's 250th Anniversary here in iconic Fredericksburg—known as "America's Most Historic City."

It has been an extraordinary year for public transit across the Commonwealth. Our 41 transit agencies experienced 14% year-over-year growth from FY 2024 to FY 2025, with buses, trains, and ferries carrying more than 408,000 passengers each day. We are also on track to surpass 150 million trips in FY 2026.

This growth in ridership has delivered meaningful impact. In FY 2025 alone, public transportation generated over \$11 billion in economic benefits, supported more than 92,000 jobs, reduced fuel consumption by over 14 million gallons, and prevented more than 130,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

There is no question about the vital role public transportation plays in strengthening our economy, protecting our environment, and enhancing our quality of life. While challenges such as inflation, tariffs, and rising fuel costs continue to impact our industry, one thing remains clear: when we work together, we succeed together.

I am honored and excited to celebrate another outstanding year for public transportation with all of you.

Regards,

Danny Plaucher
Executive Director



Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Time	Activity/Topic	Speakers	Room
8:00-9:00 am	Vehicle Exhibitor Enter		Exhibit Hall A
9:00-5:00 pm	Conference Registration		Conference Lobby
10:00-11:00 am	VTA Board of Directors Meeting		Ballroom C
11:30-1:00 pm	Welcome Luncheon brought to you by our Gold Sponsors	Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond (VTA President)	Exhibit Hall B
	General Session I: Navigating Uncertain Terrain: The CEO's Perspective	Melody Fowler (FXBGo!), William Harrell (HRT), Josh Moore (GLTC), and Bob Schneider (OmniRide)	
11:30-2:45 pm	Exhibitor Set-up		Exhibit Hall A
1:15-1:45 pm	Coffee Break		
Breakout Sessions I			
1:45-2:45 pm	Breakout 1 (Roundtable): MERIT and TRIP Program Changes	Zach Trogdon (DRPT), Grant Sparks (DRPT), and Tiffany Dubinsky (DRPT)	Ballroom A
	Breakout 2: 10 Years of Commuter Choice: A Decade of Investing of Toll Revenues into Transit Projects in Northern Virginia* (AICP CM Credit #9328240)	Daniel Knickelbein (NVTC), Ann McGrane (NVTC), and Perrin Palistrant (OmniRide)	Ballroom B
	Breakout 3: "Transit Operator Hiring Practices and Their Effect on Claims and Litigation"	Eric Kimpfler (VILP), David Harmer (VILP), and Keenan Hogg (GRTC)	Ballroom C
2:45-3:00 pm	Coffee Break		
3:00-5:30 pm	Mini-Raffles brought to you by our Exhibitors!	EXPO Fair!	Exhibit Hall A
5:30-6:30 pm	Cocktail Reception & Big-Raffles		
6:30-9:00 pm	"80's Night at the Arcade" at Reclaim Arcade sponsored by Sonny Merryman		
6:30-8:00 pm	Exhibitor Breakdown and Vehicle Exhibitor Exit		

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Time	Activity/Topic	Speakers	Room
7:30-8:30 am	General Session II: Federal Update and The Next IJJA (Breakfast) brought to you by our Silver Sponsors	Benji Schwartz (APTA) and David Schilling (FTA)	Exhibit Hall B
Breakout Sessions II			
8:45-9:45 am	Breakout 4 (Roundtable): MERIT and TRIP Program Changes	Zach Trogdon (DRPT), Grant Sparks (DRPT), and Tiffany Dubinsky (DRPT)	Ballroom A
	Breakout 5: Expanding Access to All: Insights from the 2026 Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan* (AICP CM Credit #9328241)	Jess Maffey (DRPT) and Evan Tuten (DRPT)	Ballroom B
	Breakout 6: Stories that Move People: Building Transit's Case in the Community	Kayla Dixon (CSPDC) and Paula Melester (CSPDC)	Ballroom C
9:45-10:00 am	Coffee Break		
10:00-10:45 am	General Session III: Navigating Uncertain Terrain: The Legislative Perspective	Kate Matlice (NVTC), Joe Dillard (GRTC), Noelle Pinkard (HRT), and Lauren Gilbert (Advantus Strategies)	Exhibit Hall B
10:45-11:00 am	Coffee Break		
Breakout Sessions III			
11:00-11:55 pm	Breakout 7 (Roundtable): Rolling Stock Challenges, Opportunities, and the Future of Cooperative Procurement	Avery Daugherty (DRPT)	Ballroom A
	Breakout 8: Selling Your Transit System: Crafting GRTC's Needs and Vision Plan	Adrienne Torres (GRTC) and Scudder Wagg (JW&A)	Ballroom B
	Breakout 9: Working with Federal Installations	Caleb Smith (HRT), Perrin Palistrant (OmniRide), Moustapha Djama (Fairfax Connector), and Matt Scalia (WATA)	Ballroom C
12:15-2:15 pm	Awards Luncheon and Virginia Transit Leadership Institute Graduation brought to you by our Platinum Sponsors with special keynote from the Honorable Ghazala Hashmi , Lt. Governor of Virginia		Exhibit Hall B

*Denotes eligible for AICP CM credits.