

Morgantown Monongalia MPO
2025 - 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Appendix D: Mountain Line Transit
Authority Report



Serving Monongalia County, WV

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Mountain Line Transit Authority

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mountain Line Transit Authority (MLTA) is the primary provider of public transportation service within Morgantown and Monongalia County offering deviating route and specialty demand-response service seven days a week, 365 days a year. MLTA is governed by a seven member Board of Directors appointed by the City of Morgantown and the Monongalia County Commission. WVU also provides public transportation service within Morgantown and Monongalia County offering a variety of shuttles and buses as well as a unique fixed guideway system known as Personal Rapid Transit (PRT).

SERVICE

MLTA operates 20 deviating routes, with 1 intercity route within the MPO area and a MicroTransit Service in the county. Most routes operate around or through downtown Morgantown. MLTA's routes are deviating fixed routes which provide flag-down service (with some express route exceptions) with opportunities for customers to request (in advance) deviations up to 0.75 miles to safely pick up patrons along routes. Presence and condition of sidewalks are a primary safety concern for MLTA and its riders, necessitating its flag-down route operation (exception of three routes with designated stops). Many routes operate Monday through Saturday between the hours of 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM, on a weekday schedule with reduced service on Sundays. Several routes run until midnight or later. A few routes have late night service on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. Headways are generally 60 minutes or greater, with six routes (1, 11, 30, 38, 39, and 44) operating with headways between 10-30 minutes. Routes 38 and 39 operate in opposite directions along the same roads, with 10-minute headways. Rural routes include Routes 11 (Cassville), 13 (Crown), 46 (Eastern Circulator), and 52 (Wadestown). Rural service also includes our Microtransit service which has taken the place of Routes 14 (Mountain Heights) and 15 (Grafton Road).

The cost to ride MLTA is \$0.75 per trip and has not changed in more than 25 years since Mountain Line began. Route deviations are an additional \$0.50. Other reduced fare options include 15-ride passes, 30-day passes, and a monthly Monster Pass that includes intercity service. Half fare programs are available for seniors over 65 years and Medicare participants, and fare-free options are offered to High School students, WVU students/employees (subsidized by the University), and Monongalia County property owners via the Property Tax Bus Pass Program. The convenience of Mobile payment is now available with the Token Transit Mobile App.

CONTRACTED SERVICES

At the start of 2019 the specialty demand response NewFIT service began providing critical medical trips to residents who had no other transportation options. This service was created in response to the closure

of In Touch and Concerned, a local social service agency previously providing such trips in Monongalia County. Ridership on this service has increased by 72% since 2019 despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on public transportation ridership. A similar ridership increase has been observed for the specialty demand response service for the West Virginia State Opioid Recovery (SOR) program, which launched in 2020. MLTA ridership through this program has grown to provide nearly 22,000 trips

(Monongalia County and vicinity) for substance abuse disorder treatment.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Transit ridership on MLTA routes is displayed below with the percent change in ridership from 2023 to 2024. Route 50 Don Knotts ridership has quadrupled since the 2019 and 2021 ridership numbers since an increase in service hours in August of 2021. Rt 38 Blue & Gold remains one of the highest ridership routes servicing mostly the student population and has a frequency of 20 minutes. This route along with 39 Beechurst allows students easy access between the two campuses. Our third highest ridership is on Route 30 West Run, this route is subsidized partially by an apartment complex service mostly students. This route travels Monday through Friday with additional late night service on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays.

RIDERSHIP

Route	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Inc Dec
50 Don Knotts	20,626	14,730	22,412	45,904	73,864	84,812	15%
38 Blue & Gold	202,119	73,350	53,941	73,256	89,606	80,980	-10%
30 West Run	106,420	34,257	39,626	60,747	64,465	53,159	-18%
9 Purple	51,724	35,256	33,282	43,294	45,158	51,207	13%
1 Campus	43,105	17,274	21,557	36,182	37,905	39,615	5%
6 Gold	29,068	21,895	21,641	29,691	35,179	37,410	6%
7 Red	55,055	30,075	22,584	30,388	31,265	34,542	10%
11 Cassville	38,656	26,604	28,079	34,719	32,757	34,529	5%
8 Brookhaven	30,933	25,226	18,038	22,151	26,418	31,079	18%
47 Northern Circulator	25,174	16,216	15,377	21,755	22,198	25,488	15%
4 Orange	38,681	23,516	20,942	22,298	22,962	24,900	8%
39 Beechurst EXP	74,144	26,890	6,644	14,419	25,415	20,124	-21%
16 Pink	21,904	16,410	14,695	16,112	15,867	18,451	16%
51 Westridge	2,040	1,160	2,603	8,489	15,347	16,145	5%
44 Valley View	38,412	10,185	8,704	16,324	16,922	12,697	-25%
46 Eastern Circulator	16,550	10,433	9,335	10,393	12,727	12,649	-1%
2 DT Mall	15,755	7,570	8,841	13,436	13,361	12,604	-6%
12 Blue	14,343	10,691	9,744	11,283	11,359	11,049	-3%
29 Grey	11,168	6,905	7,945	10,967	9,303	10,642	14%
14 Mnt. Heights (RideMon)	4,785	2,357	2,321	2,636	2,263	3,366	49%
13 Crown	3,690	2,004	2,875	1,988	2,048	1,743	-15%
52 Wadestown	1,240	1,218	1,157	1,225	2,385	1,596	-33%
15 Grafton RD	1,321	742	907	779	584		

Total passenger trips were at their lowest in 2021 with a small climb to 660,291 in 2023 and 2024 ending with a 2% decrease to 643,966. Total unlinked passenger trips across all lines for 2021 totaled just over 400,000, roughly half as many as 2019. Like many transit systems across the United States, ridership

during the COVID-19 pandemic caused a steep decline in these totals as well. Despite this decline in trips, total vehicle miles has increased over the same time period; the Strategic Plan (2021) notes that this may be influenced by the 2018 relocation of the MLTA administrative and operations facility to Westover, and modification of most routes. The early 2020 ridership reflects a recovery from the 2018 move and ridership was on par to be our highest yet prior to COVID beginning to effect ridership around May.

SERVICE FORECAST

The hours of service were nearly doubled with the passing of the 2016 County Transit Levy. The levy has since passed again in 2020 and again in 2024. Service levels have been maintained, and increased to growth areas such as Rt 50 Don Knotts, Rt 51 West Ridge Mylan and Rt 52 Wadestown. Future service changes will evaluate the interconnectivity of the routes where timing adjustments may allow better transfers. Increases to service have been somewhat hindered by the availability of drivers. Staff will be focusing on retention and recruitment strategies to create an environment where additional service can be added. The agency is working with fareboxes that have been discontinued, with new technologies available the agency will be taking a fresh look at fare collection and opening options to make it easier to ride.

The MPO actively collaborates with Mountain Line Transit Authority (MLTA) to support route updates, enhance system efficiency, and increase ridership. These efforts are reflected in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and its future updates. Under this update the MPO also reaffirms the goals and objectives established for Mountain Line in the 2022 Plan.