



COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, APPROPRIATIONS & FINANCE

OCTOBER 30, 2024

Derek Gabriel

Commissioner
Department of Public Works



Good morning, Honorable Senator Donna Frett-Gregory, Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance; committee members; other Senators in attendance; and the listening and viewing public. My name is Derek Gabriel, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works (DPW). Assistant Commissioner Rueben Jennings is accompanying me in the well today. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the local subsidy for the public transportation system.

The Department of Public Works requests a \$5,000,000 appropriation to the Public Transportation Fund to subsidize VITRAN operations.

The Government of the Virgin Islands has historically funded most of VITRAN's operations, with federal funds covering less than 30% of daily operations. As detailed in the attached documentation, the subsidy budget for VITRAN personnel is \$4.9 million, covering 68 positions. The remaining \$100,000 from the subsidy is allocated for fuel.

Funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) currently covers 20 personnel at a cost of \$1,421,475.47. Federal funds are primarily obtained through competitive grants and largely designated for capital improvement projects and procuring equipment such as buses. Just within the last few years, the department was given the authority to utilize these funds to cover operational costs.

The omitted \$5,000,000 appropriation from DPW's FY2025 budget is essential for funding VITRAN's personnel costs, fuel, and supplies necessary for daily operations. Without this funding, VITRAN will face severe financial constraints and be forced to significantly reduce or even cease operations and furlough employees.

In fiscal year 2024, VITRAN served 269,868 fixed-route and Paratransit riders. Of that, 44,240 rides were free, which amounts to approximately 20% of our ridership. The department increased rates on June 1, 2024, to help cover operational costs. Fixed-route service was increased to \$2, and Paratransit service to \$4. The department saw that global economic factors such as logistics and supply chain issues and the pandemic adversely impacted services. Also, operating costs have skyrocketed – whether it's the cost of replacement parts, consumables such as diesel and oil, or replacement buses. Discounts for Medicare Cardholders and free rides for seniors will remain in effect.

The paratransit ridership is high, and most daily trips include rides to dialysis treatment centers, other medical visits, personal care visits, and work. Most riders are senior citizens and persons with disabilities, including children and young adults. Competitor costs for similar services are much higher, up to 20x higher than the current Paratransit fee. The loss of these services would devastate our community, particularly those who rely on public transportation for their daily commutes and access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. Due to paratransit client demand, we also offer those services on weekends and holidays.

As an aside, the department is under contract, utilizing federal funds, for seven new medium-duty buses and has an amendment for two additional buses. It expects to acquire 12 new ADA Paratransit vans during this fiscal year.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee regarding this extremely important budgetary issue. Assistant Commissioner Jennings and I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

Date	Position ID*	Position Name*	FTE*	Funds	TYPE	SALARIES TOTAL	FRINGE TOTAL	TOTAL
2025	261000210	BUS DRIVER/DISPATCH	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000151	BUS DRIVER	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000157	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000567	SUP MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		51658	25260.027	76918.027
2025	261000196	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000220	MECHANIC I	1	6058		45272.61	29862.81802	75135.42802
2025	261000227	MECHANIC III	1	6058		37661.61	20900.15152	58561.76152
2025	261000186	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000181	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	12707.04608	51780.96608
2025	261000187	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000154	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000572	BUS DRIVER	1	6058		39073.92	566.57184	39640.49184
2025	261000465	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000160	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	12707.04608	51780.96608
2025	261000570	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27909.42608	66983.34608
2025	261000185	BUS DRIVER	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000217	MECHANIC II	1	6058		42059.04	28861.79096	70920.83096
2025	261000212	BUS DRIVER/DISPATCH	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000531	SUP MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		50645	24944.4775	75589.4775
2025	261000197	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	12194.02608	51267.94608
2025	261000805	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000224	MECHANIC II	1	6058		42059.04	28861.79096	70920.83096
2025	261000501	SUP MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		53745	32501.9675	86246.9675
2025	261000552	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000563	SUPERVISOR MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		51658	31851.867	83509.867
2025	261000464X	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000195	BUS DRIVER	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000175	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000457	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000156	BUS DRIVER	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	161000529	VITRAN OPS MANAGER	1	6058	EXEMPT	75000	36772.9	111772.9
2025	261000225	VITRAN BUS MEC III	1	6058		37661.61	20877.65152	58539.26152
2025	261000133	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000236	SECRETARY/ADA	1	6058		30197.49	25166.91814	55364.40814
2025	261000231	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000030	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000211	BUS DRIVER/DISPATCH	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000135	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000176	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000189	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000234	MECHANIC III	1	6058		37661.61	27491.99152	65153.60152
2025	261000166	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000158	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000152	BUS DRIVER	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000029	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000205	CUSTODIAL WORKER	1	6058		31329.89	25519.66074	56849.55074
2025	261000242	UTILITY WORKER STT	1	6058		32504.79	25885.64209	58390.43209
2025	161000058	EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	1	6058	EXEMPT	40000	28220.4	68220.4
2025	261000184	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000551	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	161000235	OPERATIONS MANAGER STJ	1	6058	EXEMPT	70000	29798.56	99798.56
2025	261000466	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	161000556	ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST	1	6058	EXEMPT	40000	21628.56	61628.56
2025	261000222	MECHANIC II	1	6058		42059.04	28861.79096	70920.83096
2025	261000203	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000216	MAINTENANCE CLEANER	1	6058		31329.89	18927.82074	50257.71074
2025	261000239	UTILITY WORKER STT	1	6058		32504.79	25885.64209	58390.43209
2025	261000188	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000164	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	261000163	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000461	SUP MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		57035	26934.9625	83969.9625
2025	261000219	MECHANIC I	1	6058		45272.61	23270.97802	68543.58802
2025	261000173	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	27931.92608	67005.84608
2025	261000230	MECHANIC II	1	6058		42059.04	22269.95096	64328.99096
2025	161000115	SENIOR TRANSPORTATION DATA MANAGER	1	6058	EXEMPT	55000	32892.9	87892.9
2025	261000194	BUS OPERATOR	1	6058		39073.92	21340.08608	60414.00608
2025	22834369	OVERTIME	1	6058		300000	22950	322950
2025	A00000043	HOLIDAY PAY	1	6058		149600	11444.4	161044.4
2025	A00000045	FEES & COMP	1	6058		11000	841.5	11841.5
2025	A00000048	DIFFERENTIAL	1	6058		11000	841.5	11841.5
2025	261000226	MECHANIC III	0.5	6058		18830.805	13745.99576	32576.80076
2025	261000550	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	0.5	6058		19536.95	10670.03993	30206.98993
						\$ 3,225,446.46	\$ 1,671,673.24	\$ 4,897,119.69

Date	Position ID*	Position Name*	Funds	Departr	TYPE	SALARIES TOTAL	FRINGE TOTAL	TOTAL	FRINGE AS A % OF SALARIES
2025	261000134	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	3100	610		39,073.92	21,340.09	60,414.01	0.546146537
2025	161000549	TRANSIT ADA ASST	3100	610	EXEMPT	30,000.00	25,105.40	55,105.40	0.836846667
2025	261000556	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	3100	610		39,073.92	21,340.09	60,414.01	0.546146537
2025	261000559	CUSTODIAN	3100	610		31,329.89	18,927.82	50,257.71	0.604145777
2025	161000050	OPERATIONS MANAGER	3100	610	EXEMPT	35,000.00	18,195.20	53,195.20	0.519862857
2025	161000063	ADMINISTRATOR DRUG & ALCOHOL	3100	610	EXEMPT	46,350.00	26,258.33	72,608.33	0.566522654
2025	161000536	TRANS PLANNER	3100	610	EXEMPT	76,000.00	30,257.56	106,257.56	0.398125789
2025	161000538	DEPUTY COMM OF TRANSPORTATION	3100	610	EXEMPT	90,000.00	31,328.56	121,328.56	0.348095111
2025	261000516	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	3100	610		39,073.92	21,340.09	60,414.01	0.546146537
2025	161101024	ROUTE MATCH ADMIN	3100	610	EXEMPT	45,000.00	14,553.02	59,553.02	0.323400444
2025	161000537	TRANS PLANNER	3100	610	EXEMPT	82,400.00	37,339.00	119,739.00	0.453143204
2025	261000523	VI TRANS BUS MECH II	3100	610		42,059.04	13,123.89	55,182.93	0.312034962
2025	161000062	ADA COORDINATOR	3100	610	EXEMPT	43,775.00	29,396.31	73,171.31	0.671531982
2025	261000557	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	3100	610		39,073.92	27,931.93	67,005.85	0.71484832
2025	161000064	FEDERAL FISCAL OFFICER	3100	610	EXEMPT	60,513.00	28,018.36	88,531.36	0.46301389
2025	161000502	COORDINATOR FERRYBOAT OPERATOR & MAINTENANCE	3100	610	EXEMPT	60,000.00	27,858.56	87,858.56	0.464309333
2025	161000511	TRANSIT SPECIALIST	3100	610	EXEMPT	27,040.00	17,591.52	44,631.52	0.650573964
2025	261000560	CUSTODIAN	3100	610		31,329.89	18,927.82	50,257.71	0.604145777
2025	161000520	MASS TRANSIT BUS OPERATOR	3100	610		39,073.92	21,340.09	60,414.01	0.546146537
2025	261000558	VI TRANS BUS MECH I	3100	610		45,272.61	29,862.82	75,135.43	0.659622187
						941,439.03	480,036.44	1,421,475.47	