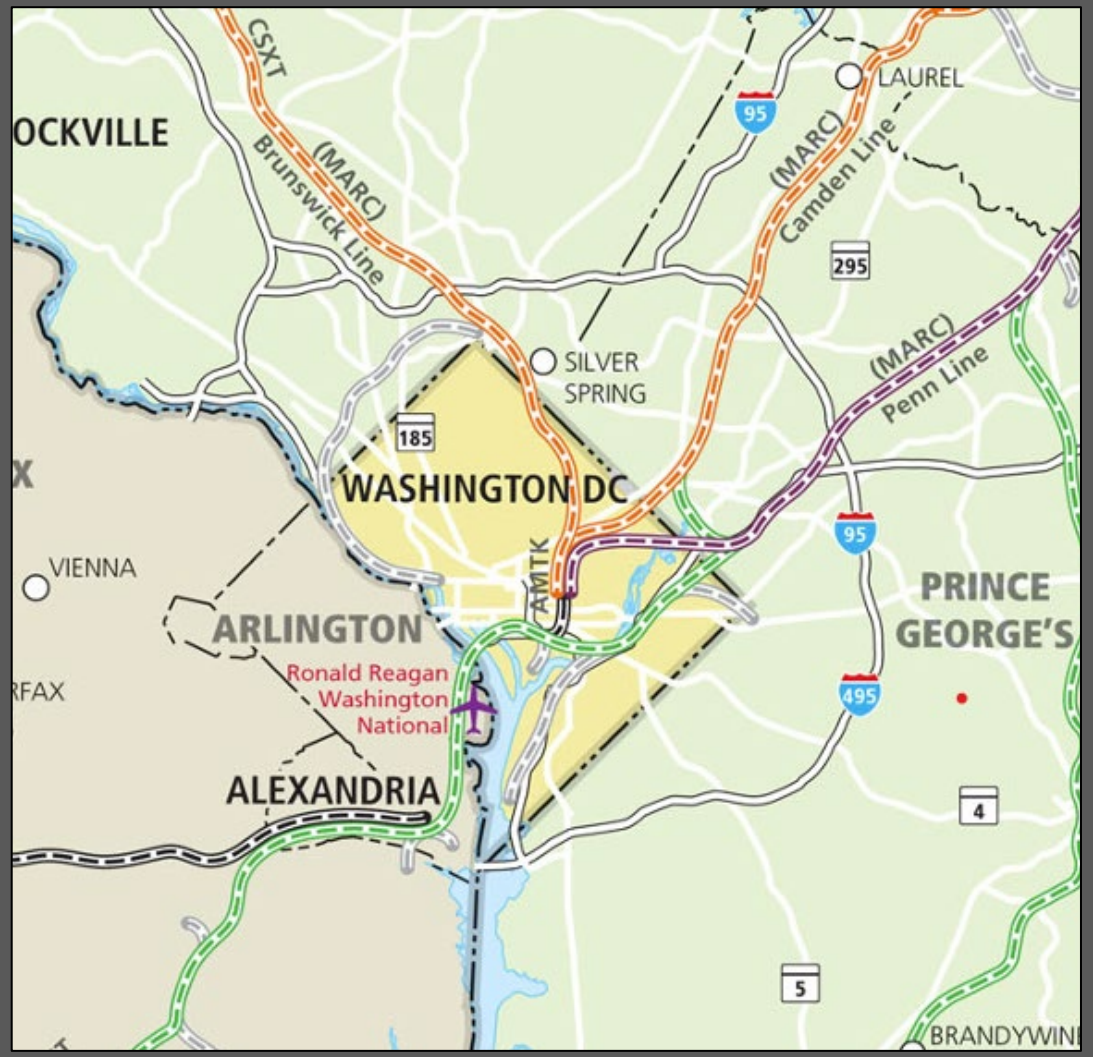
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION



State Rail Plan 2026 Update

November 2026

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

What is a State Rail Plan?

- FRA-required summary of **passenger and freight rail** in a state (DC)
  - Role of Rail in Statewide Transportation
  - Existing Rail System (description of assets and inventory)
  - Passenger Rail Improvements and Investments (includes MTA, Amtrak and VRE projects in the District)
  - Freight Rail Improvements and Investments (primarily CSX)
  - Rail Service and Investment Program (future-looking)
  - Coordination, Engagement, Implementation

DC State Rail Plan Update 2026-27 Discussion

- **Overview of work to date**
  - Literature review
  - Data analysis
  - Interviews
  - Updates to new and completed projects
- **Common threads from stakeholder conversations**
  - Themes Drawn from Passenger and Freight stakeholders
- **Alignment with regional goals**
- **Group discussion**: What would you add?
- **Next steps**

Stakeholder Interviews

- CSX
- Norfolk Southern
- Amtrak
- MDOT/MTA
- WMATA
- VRE
- NVTA
- DRPT
- VPRA
- Rail Labor Union
- DDOT
- DC Office of Planning
- USDOT- FRA
- DOEE
- HSEMA
- City Administrator
- *DC Dept of Buildings*
- *Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC)*

Freight Rail Themes Drawn from Interviews



Anacostia Railroad Bridge *Source: www.hillrag.com, 2022*

Safety Priorities

- Separation of passenger and freight service
- Rail incident training across agencies
- Clear access to rail – emergency management
- No access to rail – stop trespassers

More Efficient Freight Movement

- Fewer but longer trains with fewer stops
- Less reliance on Benning Yard
- Testing battery-electric, biodiesel, and hydrogen locomotive technologies
- Network capacity fuels growth over demand forecasting

Freight Rail Themes Drawn from Interviews

Evolving District Roles

- Awareness of rail specific training for
  - Rapid response to rail emergencies (Hazmat)
  - Damage to utilities infrastructure along rail ROW (Fiber optic)
- Identify and pursue grant funding
  - DOEE rail and car maintenance inspections
  - Hazmat-related compliance
- Improve coordination between DOEE and DDOT inspectors
- Ensure policy to preserve possible future rail needs through zoning for rail adjacent development across agencies

Freight Rail Investments in the District of Columbia…

On The Right Track
Thanks To YOU!



Passenger Rail Themes Drawn from Interviews

Safety Priorities

- Clear access to rail for emergency management for both adjacent development and rail infrastructure
- Barriers, communication and outreach to discourage trespassers
- Stakeholder complexity (private property / engagement of DC resources)



Fire Truck *Source Frank van den Bergh/Getty Images*

Passenger Rail Themes Drawn from Interviews

Logistics for Efficient Operations

- Upgrading track alignments at Union Station
  - Future through service capability
- Coordinating train storage needs and availability
- Celebrating project impacts (Long Bridge, L'Enfant, First St. Tunnel upgrades, Ivy City modernization)
- Clear wayfinding to multi-modes and to final destinations
- Federal plans and investments priorities (particularly for Amtrak)
  - First Street Tunnel ventilation
  - Union Station track alignment and level platform adjustments



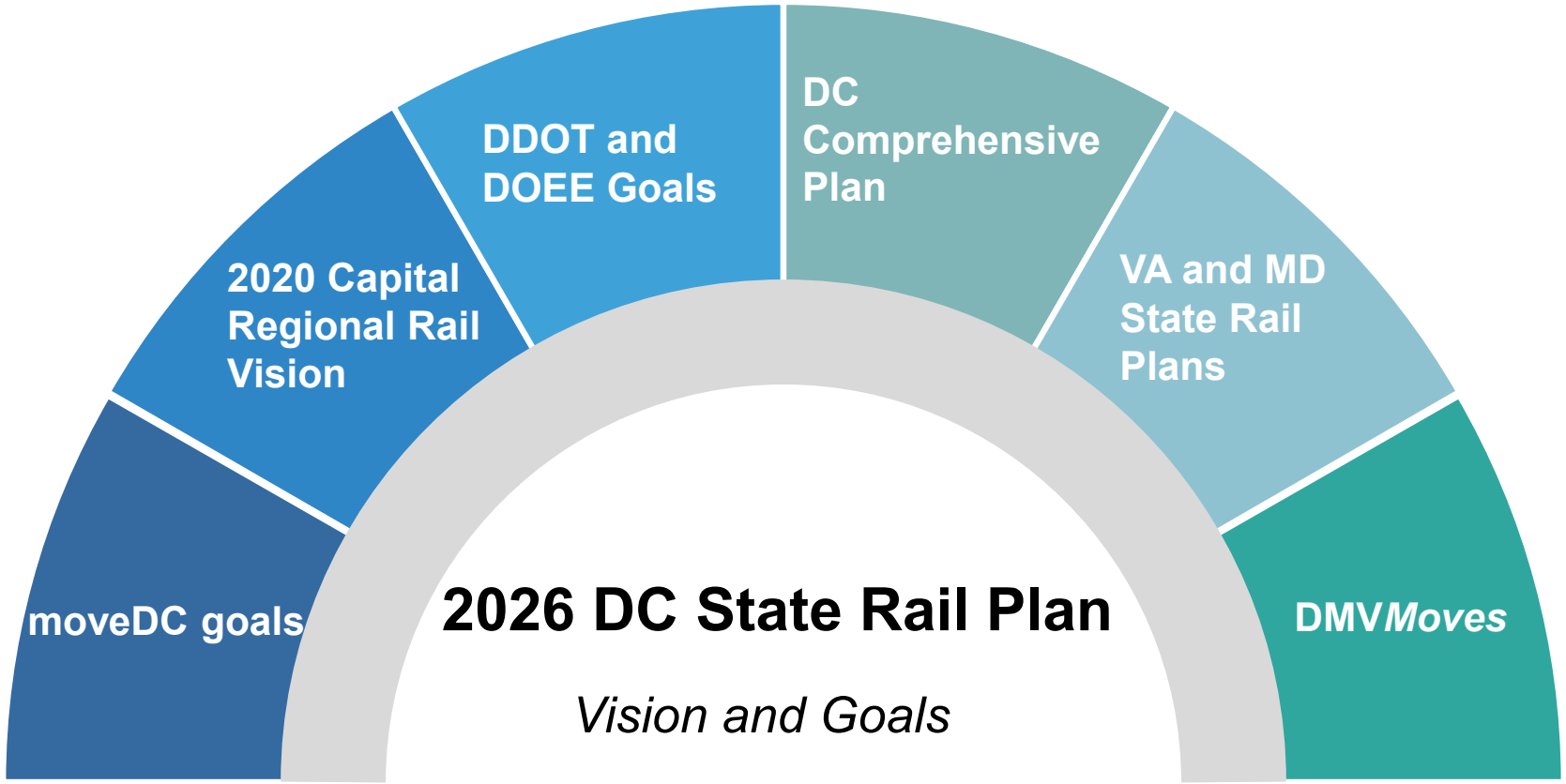
Washington Union Station *Source www.unionstationdc.com*

DDOT Rail Plan Goals and Objectives

Goals:

- Promote **Safety and Security**
- Support **Increased Use** of the Passenger Rail Network
- Increase System **Sustainability and Resiliency**
- Identify Regional **Economic Development Opportunities** Provided by the Rail System
- Ensure goals and objectives align with goals from other plans

Plans Integrated into the 2026 DC State Rail Plan



DDOT Freight Plan 2024
2026 US DOT National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP)

Questions for the Freight Subcommittee

- What **roles for DDOT or another District agency** have yet to be discussed?
- What **additional funding mechanisms** might enable the District to support heavy rail projects that may not be currently active?
- Are there any **outstanding trends, themes, or analysis reports** we need to highlight?

Next Steps

- **Complete Interviews**
- **Finalizing full draft for DDOT review**
  - Present to larger DDOT team
- **Receive DDOT comments**
  - Address comments
  - Finalize format and graphics
- **With DDOT approval**
  - Distribute draft Rail Plan for stakeholder comments
  - Address comments
- **Submit to FRA**

State Rail Plan Contact Information

Mark Rawlings
DDOT, Transportation Planning Administration
202.369.7845
mark.rawlings@dc.gov

Jennifer Smoker
Jacobs Team Lead
202-494-2076
Jennifer.Smoker@jacobs.com

Thank You!

District Department of Transportation

250 M St SE | Washington, DC 20003 | 202.673.6813