March 2012 CHRISTIANSBURG MONTHLY REPORT
January 2012 Data

Operating Budget

The Town of Blacksburg Recommended Operating Budget for FY 13 has been completed; the local match required to fund the Christiansburg routes is $205,757, which reflects a $6,000 increase from last year. The budget increase is necessary to maintain the current level of service; no additional service would be included.

Three service levels were provided to the Working Group for their review:

FY 12 Actual Budget:	$199,757
FY 13 Proposed Budget:	
Operating Budget increase to maintain current service	$ 6,000
Capital Projects (local match)	$ 5,300
New Service -2nd **Commuter Route** (local match) *Optional*	$ 5,200
Total Additional Funds:	$ 16,500
FY 13 *Minimum* Proposed Budget to maintain service:	$205,757

Considerations:

- Ridership has increased over 100% since inception.
  - Ridership has increased from 9,714 in the first fiscal year to 24,700 last year.
- BT receives complimentary feedback from customers on a regular basis.
  - "I really like this service you help elderly like me to get all the services I need" Christiansburg Comment Card.
- The Christiansburg bus service is providing a valuable economic development tool by providing reliable transportation for employment, shopping and medical purposes.
  - The NRV Mall, Dish Network and the NRV Superbowl are the top three employment destinations in January 2012.
- Public Transportation has become an integral part of Christiansburg, as new construction is developed transit service is being requested during the initial phases of planning.
  - A request for transit service was received during initial planning for the proposed apartment complex on Farmview Road.
- Fuel costs have increased by at least 50 percent in the last year, which is why costs have increased with no additional service.
  - In January, 2011 fuel prices averaged $2.82 per gallon, a year later in February 2012 they now average $3.36 per gallon.

Capital Budget

The Capital Improvement Program earmarks $53,000 to purchase four new shelters at a cost of $10,000 each, with the remaining $13,000 to be used to purchase replacement roofs for existing shelters. The anticipated funds for this project are as follows:

Federal Funds:	$	42,400
State Funds:	$	5,300
Local Matching Funds:	$	5,300
TOTAL	$	53,000

Survey

BT developed and executed a short survey on board the **Go Anywhere** buses in December 2011. The objective of the survey was to take a quick "snapshot" of our ridership and capture their feelings on several key aspects of the service. Since the survey, by plan, was very limited it cannot be used for a statistical analysis. The short survey was executed over two days, with a total of 19 passengers surveyed. The results of this survey supported the same conclusion as the survey conducted for the Transportation Development Plan a year ago, indicating that very few passengers have access to a personal vehicle; in this case only 3 out of 19 passengers have access to a personal vehicle.

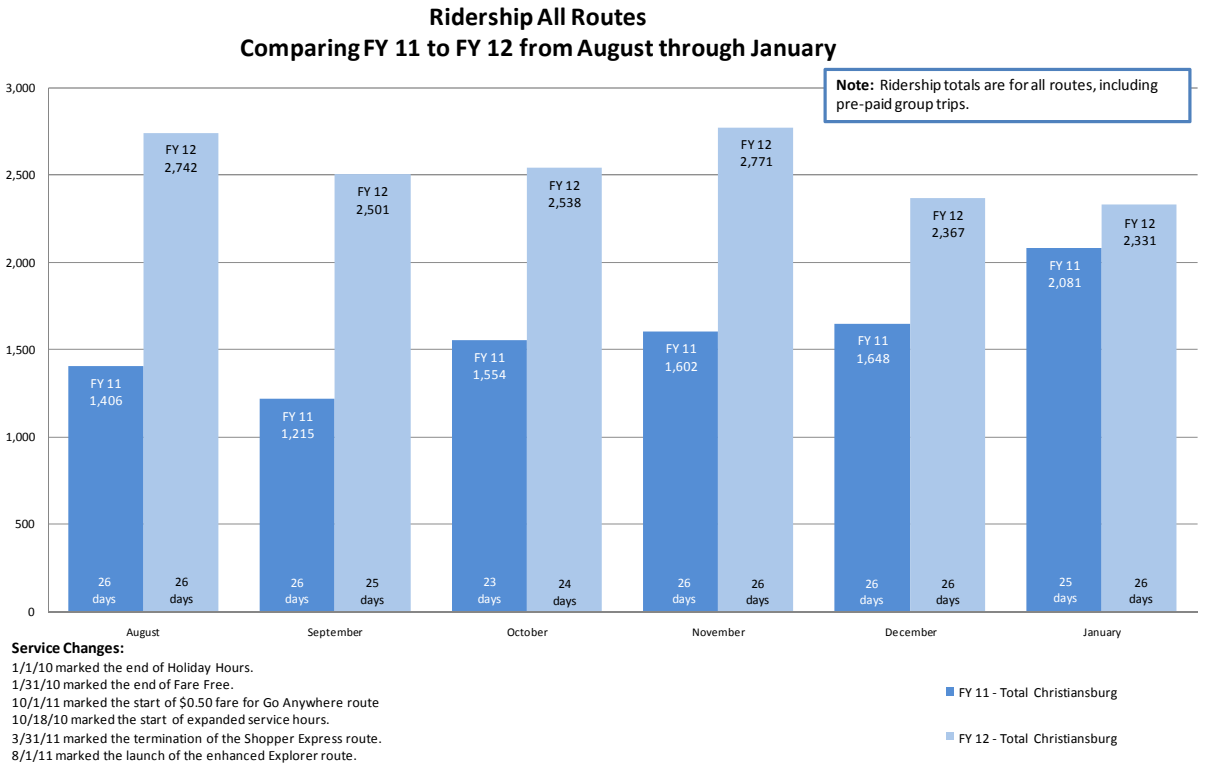
The results of this survey were reviewed by the Working Group during their meeting in February. They requested the next survey to be conducted across all three routes to gain a larger, broader sampling. During the next Working Group meeting the group will work together to formulate the questions for a more in depth survey in the future.

Recapped below are the key takeaways:

- 95% of passengers ride the Christiansburg bus service two or more times per week.
    - 10 customers or 56% use the service five or more times per week.
    - 7 customers or 39% use the service between two and five times per week.
- 77% of passengers list either work or shopping as their top destination. (Note: For purposes of this survey Wal-Mart and NRV Mall were categorized as "Shopping", although we have passengers that are known to work at both locations).
- The most common way passengers learn about the service is by word of mouth.
- 42% of customers responded that extended hours of service would be beneficial, if a change could be made to the service.
- 77% of passengers believe the fare is "just right", with 23% perceiving it as "too low."
- 53% of passengers rely on family/friends to get around if they can't use the bus, 27% walk to their destination if there are no other alternatives.

Ridership Review

A total of 2,331 trips were provided on the Christiansburg bus routes in January 2012. This was an increase of 250 passengers when compared to January 2011.

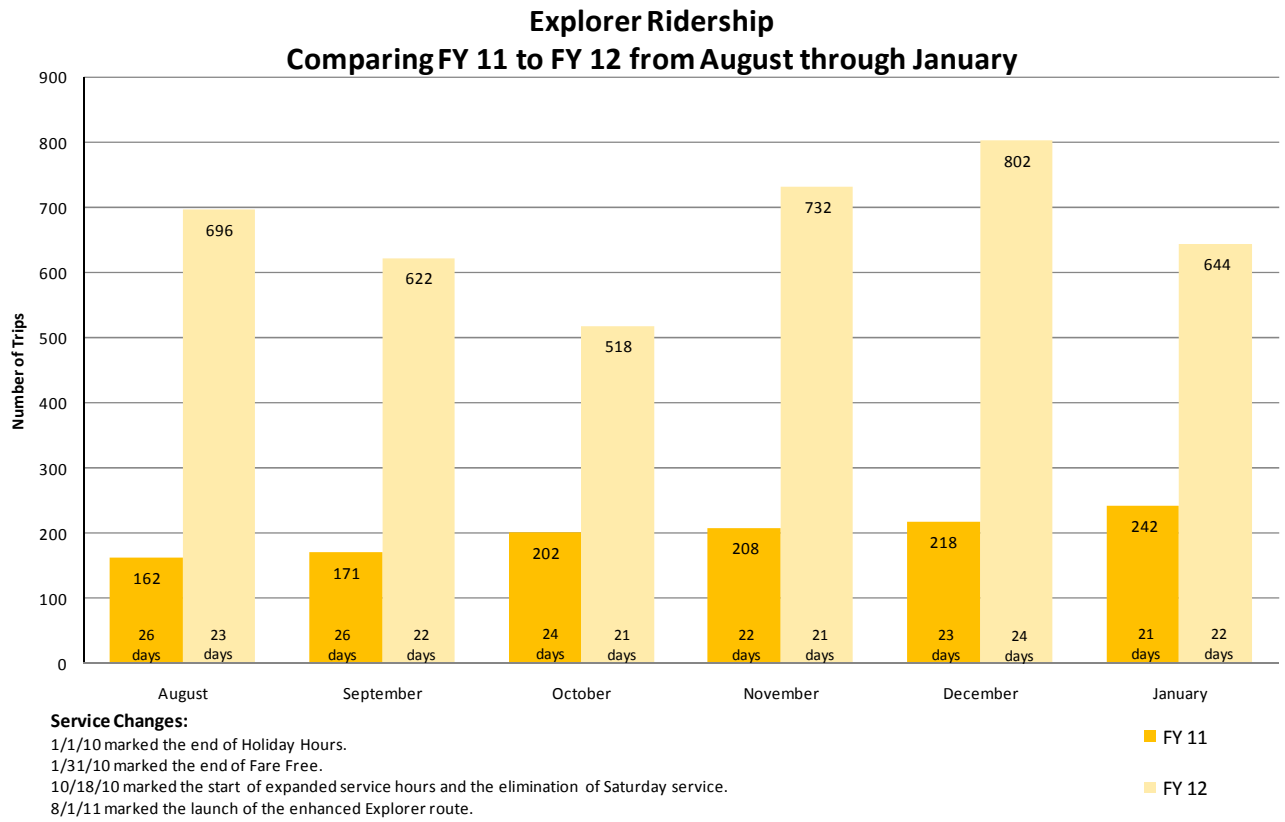


Why do we compare month to month? It is important to compare month to month so that all variables (such as weather, number of service days, local events, etc) are as similar as possible. For example, comparing February to July would give opposite weather conditions and a varying number of service days. Comparing different months also doesn't account for customer travel patterns which can change depending on which month customers typically take vacations, the weather, or simply whether Virginia Tech is in full service or not.

Explorer

A total of 644 passengers rode The **Explorer** route in January. This was almost three times as many riders as a year ago.

> "Operator of this bus was excellent and very nice."
>
> **Go Anywhere** comment card



Explorer Courtesy Stops

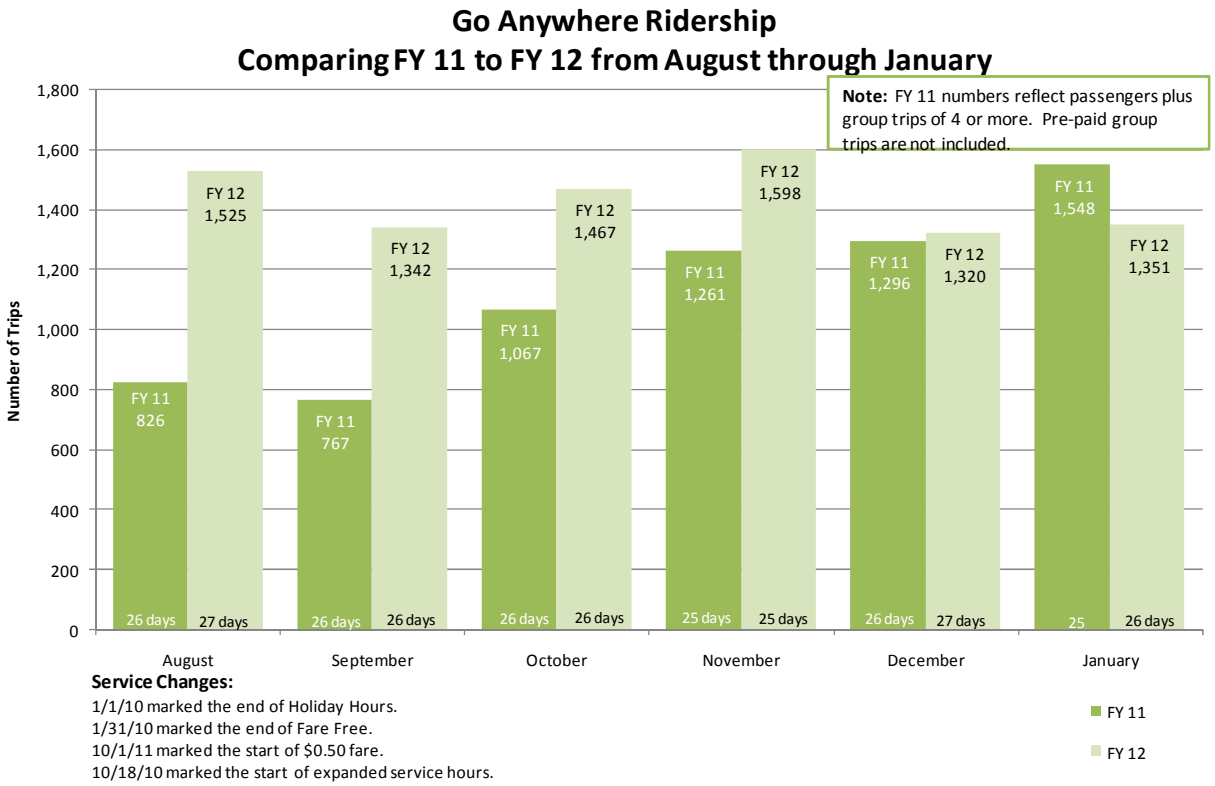
During January, a total of 22 courtesy stops, or stops at locations off-route took place. Typical courtesy stop locations are similar to previous months and include the following: Red Oak Drive (two blocks north of Arbor Drive intersection with North Franklin), Wheatland Hills retirement home, Long John Silver's (to get to Country Cooking) and the Christiansburg Bluffs.

Go Anywhere

The **Go Anywhere** route carried 1,351 passengers in January. There is a slight decrease in **Go Anywhere** passengers, which may be explained in part by our ability to move some passengers to the **Explorer** route, which is showing an increase in ridership.

There were no group trips provided by the **Go Anywhere** route to the Aquatic Center during January 2012. Additional trips are anticipated in February and March.

> "I love the Go Anywhere bus. I'm so much more independent. I can schedule when I need a ride. It's Great!"
>
> **Go Anywhere** comment card



Top 10 Origins & Destinations

The top origins and destinations are very similar from month to month; NRV Mall and Wal-Mart are usually within the top three origins and destinations!

BT staff has started identifying a trip purpose along with the destinations so we may better understand the data we are looking at. The categories used are: Education, Employment, Medical, Religious, Shopping and Other. Employment ranks as the primary reason for using the service, with the top three employment locations listed as NRV Mall, Dish Network and the NRV Superbowl.

Trip Purpose	Total Number of Trips by Trip Purpose	Percentage of Total trips by Trip Purpose
Education	94	9%
Employment	469	44%
Government Services	6	1%
Medical	42	4%
Other	354	33%
Religious	0	0%
Shopping	107	10%
Total Trips	**1,072**	**100%**

TOP 10 ORIGINS 1 January - 31 January 2012		
1	**2400 North Franklin Street** Wal-Mart	**63**
2	**Virginian Drive - Multiple Passengers** (Residential area behind Adventure World)	**58**
3	**736 New River Rd** NRCC entrance at NRV Mall	**51**
4	**Reading Rd - Residence** (Residential area behind Montgomery Cty Govt Ctr)	**49**
5	**Beaver Drive - Residence** (Residential area to the North of Rte 11)	**45**
6	**595 Republic Rd** The Bluffs	**41**
7	**Red Oak Drive** Residential area opposite Corning	**39**
8	**Thelma Lane** (Residential area in Cambria)	**36**
	1000 Laurel Street Kmart	**36**
9	**2680 Market Street** Burger King	**27**
10	**1 E Main Street** Montgomery County Courthouse	**25**

TOP 10 DESTINATIONS 1 January - 31 January 2012		
1	**736 New River Rd** NRCC entrance at NRV Mall	**90**
2	**2400 North Franklin Street** Wal-Mart	**72**
3	**595 Republic Rd** The Bluffs	**47**
	Beaver Drive - Residence (Residential area to the North of Rte 11)	**47**
4	**Virginian Drive - Multiple Passengers** (Residential area behind Adventure World)	**41**
5	**Reading Rd - Residence** (Residential area behind Montgomery Cty Govt Ctr)	**37**
6	**100 Independence Blvd** Christiansburg High School	**31**
7	**2680 Market Street** Burger King	**30**
	375 Arbor Drive NRV Superbowl	**30**
8	**1 E Main Street** Montgomery County Courthouse	**29**
9	**1000 Laurel Street** Kmart	**28**
10	**2580 North Franklin** Ryans	**26**

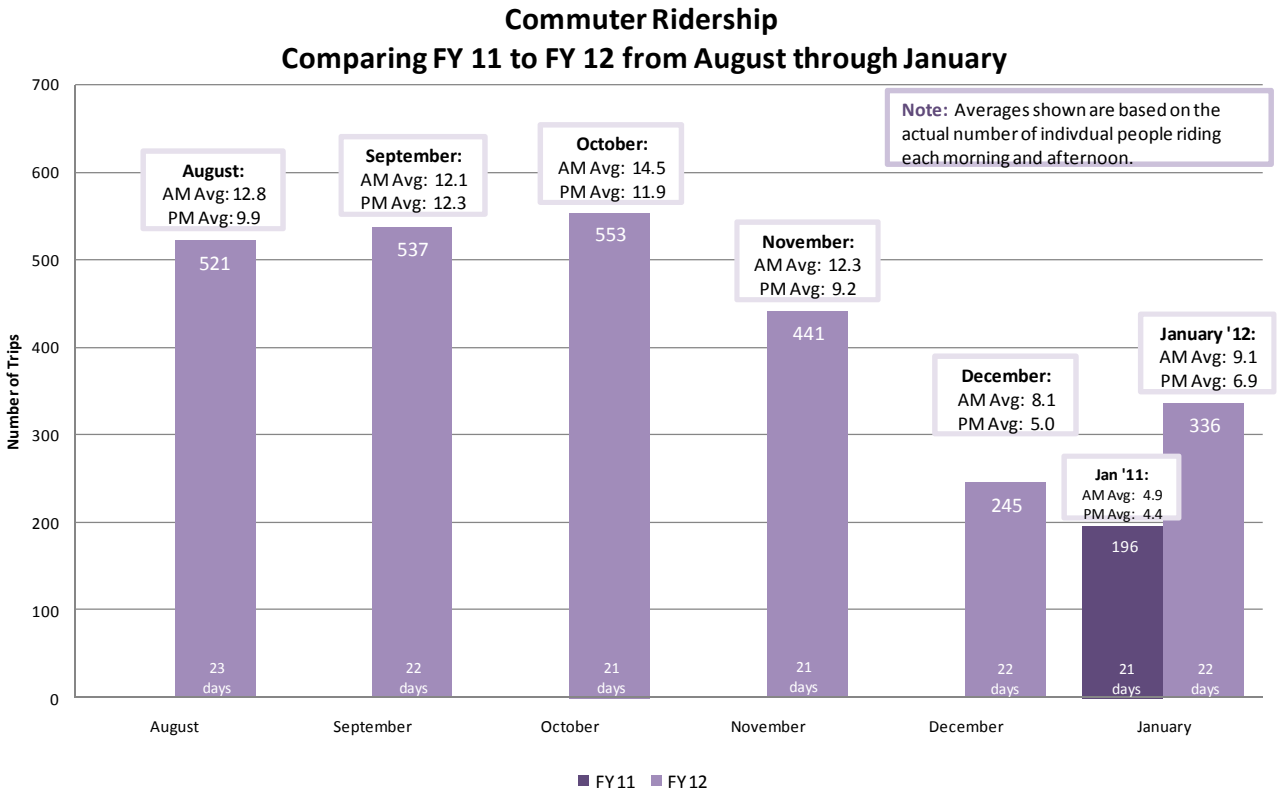
New Customers

26 more customers signed up to use the **Go Anywhere** service in January, bringing the total passengers signed up (since November 2009) to 1,208; with an average of 46 new customers per month.

Unique New Passengers - Go Anywhere Route

Month	Number of New Passengers Added
Pre-Route Match (4.2 months)	227
April, 2010	33
May, 2010	44
June, 2010	33
July, 2010	33
August, 2010	42
September, 2010	36
October, 2010	58
November, 2010	59
December, 2010	78
January, 2011	61
February, 2011	50
March, 2011	54
April, 2011	39
May, 2011	52
June, 2011	51
July, 2011	58
August, 2011	54
September, 2011	47
October, 2011	36
November, 2011	23
December, 2011	14
January, 2012	26
Total	**1208**
Average/Month	**46.11**

BT Commuter Service

The **Commuter Route** has been operational for a full year; we can begin comparing ridership numbers to those from a year ago. While ridership in January tends to be lower than other months because of the holidays, a significant increase over last year can already be seen!

- Morning average ridership has increased from 4.9 to 9.1 passengers.
- Afternoon average ridership has increased from 4.4 to 6.9 passengers.