

# Impact Report

2024



ADVANCE TRANSIT





## Guided by Mission

Service and community are at the heart of our work at Advance Transit (AT). This Impact Report highlights our ongoing efforts during our past fiscal year (July 2023–June 2024) to serve our region and to drive our mission forward.

Our fare-free bus service is a cornerstone of accessibility, equity, and sustainability in the Upper Valley, ensuring transportation is available to everyone, fostering economic growth and social inclusion.

Our service connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services, enhancing access and promoting community well-being.

Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in our efforts to reduce traffic congestion, manage parking demand, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

We remain dedicated to meeting the region’s evolving transit needs, recognizing the connections that exist within our communities and our role in strengthening these bonds.

## Connected with Each Other

### Riding with Kyle

Kyle, a resident of Lebanon, New Hampshire, has been riding the bus ever since his middle school days in Norwich, Vermont. Today, Kyle relies on AT for his work commute to DHMC and his various errands. And he appreciates that he doesn’t have to worry about traffic, parking, or a car.

Whether it’s shopping for groceries, hitting the gym, or exploring the Upper Valley, the bus has become his trusty steed. “I’ve pretty much taken every route,” Kyle shares. “One Thursday, just for fun, I rode all but one.”

Beyond the practical benefits, Kyle has found a sense of community on the bus. “You meet a lot of interesting people,” he explains. Kyle’s story not only reflects the convenience and affordability of public transit, but also the special ways it can bring people together.



### Riding with Emily

Emily, a longtime resident of Wilder, Vermont, is a retired community member who has never driven a car. She has relied on AT to navigate the Upper Valley for years. She has the flexibility to go wherever she needs to go, whether it’s visiting the Bugbee Senior Center, running errands, or attending events in the area.

While Emily’s initial experience with AT in the early 1980s was a bit intimidating, she quickly became accustomed to the system. She enjoys seeing the community in action. “It’s a great way to stay connected,” she says.

One of the biggest benefits of using AT is the freedom and independence it provides. Emily no longer has to rely on others for rides, allowing her to stay socially involved and to avoid feeling isolated. Emily’s story is a reminder of the invaluable role that public transit can play in fostering independence and connection within a community.



## Strengthened by Partnership

### Pink Route with Dartmouth College

Over the summer, AT launched the Pink route, offering frequent service between Hanover and Lot 9 with mid-day trips to Centerra Park. Supported by Dartmouth College, this route features express peak-hour commuter service and mid-day local service with stops at Centerra Park.

### Bus Ride to King Arthur with AARP, Bugbee Senior Center, Tri-Valley Transit, and Vital Communities

In June, AT and its community partners led a guided bus ride to King Arthur Café and Bakery. This ride was preceded by an informative discussion on public transit, offering guidance to older riders on using transit options in our region.

### Videos with Junction Arts & Media (JAM)

AT and JAM developed a series of informative videos with how-to guides on using public transit and highlights of notable locations in the Upper Valley accessible by bus. This was made possible through a grant from the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

### How to Ride the Bus Adventure with Kilton Library

AT and the Kilton Library hosted a program to help community members gain confidence in using public transit. Participants gathered at the Kilton Library to learn tips on riding the bus. Afterward, the group embarked on a ride to Colburn Park for a visit to the Farmers’ Market.

## A 40-Year Journey

Since its incorporation on January 12, 1984, Advance Transit has become a crucial part of our region, ensuring accessible transportation. As we celebrate four decades of service, we look back on our incredible journey!



1981

AT initially launched as a program of the Upper Valley Senior Citizens Council providing transportation services for older and disabled riders.

1987

Van Chesnut became AT’s Executive Director, serving for 35 years and retiring in 2022.

1992

AT launched its Upper Valley Rideshare program as Vermont began its statewide rideshare program. In 1994, this was expanded into AT’s service area in New Hampshire.

1994

AT cut the ribbon on its new headquarters in its current location at Billings Farm Road.

1996

AT offered service to Hartland, with funding from the State of Vermont and the Hartland School District. Service was discontinued in 2005.

2001

Dartmouth College sponsored a “Show ID - Ride Free” program. Dartmouth students, faculty, and employees rode free on AT’s system.

2004

AT added eight new Gillig buses to its fleet, its first heavy-duty buses and low-floor buses with wheelchair ramps.

2011

AT cut the ribbon on its expanded facility, a LEED-certified building that uses a solar array and actively harvests rainwater to wash buses.

2020

AT’s drivers continued to operate bus service through the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a much-needed service.

Spring 2023

AT introduced the first electric buses to its fleet and added an electrical charging infrastructure to its facility.

2024

AT celebrates 40th anniversary and looks forward to more years of serving the Upper Valley.

1984

AT was formally incorporated as a 501(c)(3), offering public transit service to the community. Helene Chapman served as the first Executive Director.

1991

AT took over a redesigned shuttle system with service to the newly completed Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC).

1993

The “free zone” was created. Passengers traveling between downtown Hanover and DHMC rode fare-free. In the following years, this expanded to other areas.



1995

Due to rapid growth at DHMC, a new peripheral parking shuttle service was introduced and financed by the medical center.

2000

Free service was extended to AT’s entire service area in Vermont.

2002

AT became fare-free for ALL riders, thanks to support from Dartmouth College, DHMC, and the State of Vermont.

2009

AT broke ground for expansion of its Billings Farm facility, adding to its garage and maintenance space.

2017

AT exceeded 900k trips per year.

Winter 2023

AT named headquarters the Van Chesnut Transit Operations Center, honoring Chesnut’s years of service.



Fall 2023

AT expanded service to include evening and Saturday hours.

2024

AT implements updated transit plan to add more EVs to fleet and to continue enhancing service to meet community needs.





# Dedicated to Service

During the past 2024 fiscal year (July 2023 to June 2024), Advance Transit (AT) enhanced our vehicles, improved the rider experience, and provided additional service, thanks to the dedication of our team and the support of our community.

Here's a look back at this past year.

**Service Expansion:** In September 2023, AT expanded service hours to include later weekday evenings and Saturdays. Our first month saw a significant increase in ridership, reflecting the transit need in our region.

**Capital Projects:** AT welcomed two new heavy-duty buses and cutaways to our fleet, as well as new support vehicles used to transport drivers between shifts. AT buses now have new bike racks that accommodate larger bikes, including electric bikes. Additionally, we acquired new maintenance equipment to help ensure vehicle safety and comfort.



**Rider Resources:** AT launched a suite of rider tools to help community members feel comfortable using public transit. These resources include a series of educational videos and a range of informative brochures designed to provide passengers with the knowledge to navigate our transit system confidently. We also distributed a brand-new schedule, which includes detailed route maps, a list of all bus stops, and an easy-to-use timetable to help with travel planning.

**Community Business of the Year:** In January 2024, AT was named the Community Business of the Year by Vermont's Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce (HACC). It was an honor to be recognized for our commitment to providing fare-free transportation services and our impact on the community.



# Driven by Community

Advance Transit is a nonprofit organization that relies on the support of our donors to help us provide fare-free public transit. We're incredibly grateful for the generous support that we've received from the community. Your donations offer more than just a ride. They increase access to essential resources, reduce carbon emissions, and strengthen our community.

To donate and support our mission, visit [advancetransit.com/donate](https://advancetransit.com/donate) or scan the QR code.



## Ridership from July 2023 to June 2024

**627,366** | Fixed-route rides

**2,702** | Daily average boardings

**8,507** | Paratransit rides

# Benefits of Fare-Free Public Transit



**Economic driver** that provides transportation to jobs and retailers



**Environmental impact** from lower carbon emissions



**Household savings** from reduced cost of vehicle maintenance



**Increased access** that helps people with physical and financial challenges



**Social driver of health**, helping people stay connected with each other

