



Small agency, big upgrade


Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority punches above its weight with new fare payment options

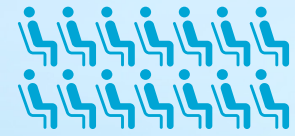

Case Study




Executive Summary

MMVTA by the numbers

21 TOWNS

3 COUNTIES
10 FIXED ROUTES

200,000
PASSENGER TRIPS




32 GILLIG
CNG BUSES



Features



Fare capping



Open payment



Mobile payment with trip planning and bus tracking



Cash and coin



CAD/AVL integration

Results

BEFORE



100%
cash, coin and paper tickets

AFTER

6 months after Fast Fares installed and 3 months after Mobile Link implemented:



85%
cash and coin



14%
open payment



1%
mobile app



For us, this upgrade wasn't just about new equipment.

It was about improving convenience and flexibility for our riders while positioning MMVTA for the future of transit."

— Ashley Seman,
Executive Director, MMVTA



Overview

The Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority (MMVTA) is a lifeline for residents of 21 municipalities across southwestern Pennsylvania. Established in 1985 to fuel the revitalization of the historic steel-making region, the agency serves the counties of Washington, Westmoreland, and Fayette, about 20 miles south of Pittsburgh. The Monongahela River runs through the area's main economic and recreational corridor.

MMVTA provides about 200,000 passenger trips a year, connecting these river-town communities to each other and to downtown Pittsburgh. Ten fixed routes include a shuttle route for PennWest University. The agency has steadily reclaimed overall ridership since the pandemic, with the number of local rides higher than the number of commuter rides to the city.

The agency also offers a successful paratransit service with high ridership.

New fare options, better data

MMVTA recently made a big push to modernize, improving the rider experience with real-time bus tracking, arrival predictions, and service alerts via digital signage, a browser-based web tracker, and texts. In 2025, it embarked on a major overhaul of its fare collection system to give riders more fare payment options in addition to cash, coin, and paper passes.

“Our goal was to update the rider experience while making fare payment more flexible. Riders expect the same convenience they get in retail—tap, scan, and go—and we wanted to bring that level of simplicity to our system,” says Ashley Seman, executive director, MMVTA.

The agency also wanted the ability to gather and analyze more comprehensive data, such as fare payment and ridership trends, to quickly react to changes in rider behavior and make impactful decisions more effectively. That was not possible with its legacy farebox system, which could not send data to MMVTA's backend system for study and optimization.

It was also important that the new fareboxes and software worked seamlessly with MMVTA's existing computer-aided dispatch/automatic vehicle location (CAD/AVL) and reporting platforms. MMVTA uses a specific reporting platform mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) in connection with its statewide fixed-route intelligent transportation system, so data produced by the new fareboxes had to flow to the third-party platform.

What makes MMVTA unique

It's governed by a 21-member board.

Each member municipality is represented by a local taxpayer.

It's a non-operating authority.

MV Transportation is contracted to handle its bus operators, maintenance, and other vehicle support services.

Solution

To meet these goals and requirements, MMVTA chose Genfare as its fare collection partner. It cited Genfare's ability to adapt technologies to agencies of all sizes and needs, as well as its experience in integrating its systems with third-party technologies.

The MMVTA team worked closely with Ed Brandis, Genfare's business development director-Northeast, to create a system that would modernize fare payment options, allow more informed, data-driven decisions, and improve operational efficiency while supporting a smaller-agency scope.

"This is not an insignificant investment to make, and it's not an insignificant technology upgrade as a small agency," Ed says. "But in many respects, MMVTA doesn't behave like a small agency. They punch above their weight class."



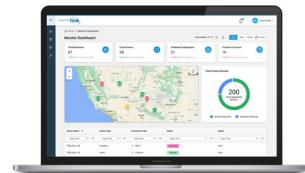
Edward Brandis
Business Development
Director - Northeast

Hardware and software purchased

Fast Fare® fareboxes, versatile, all-in-one validating devices that can accept all types of fare media, adapt to new technology, and wirelessly transfer data in near-real-time to Genfare Link



Genfare Link cloud-based backend platform to collect and process data from the fareboxes and ensure accurate, secure, and instantaneous reporting to MMVTA's backend system



DualPort vault system for enhanced revenue security and improved operational efficiency






Mobile Link ticketing with deep links to myStop, MMVTA's third-party CAD/AVL-connected bus tracking and trip planning app



Fare payment choices

With Genfare's support, MMVTA made an "electronic first" choice, retaining cash and coin acceptance for riders who rely on this option while encouraging all other riders to use the following new options:

-  **Open payment** using credit/debit bank cards and mobile wallets
-  **Mobile ticketing** via its TraXster Pay app
-  **Fare capping** using the mobile app

MMVTA chose to bypass dedicated fare media and not offer smart cards, LUCCs, or magnetic media initially. The agency determined that purchasing, storing, and managing physical fare media isn't worth the cost or time required.

But if a niche for encoded fare cards arises later, such as at the request of a local college or social service agency, the Fast Fare system is ready to accept these cards quickly, without a hardware overhaul.



We weren't expecting to go cashless; so many of our riders use cash and coin—including pennies. **This upgrade allowed us to have a farebox or a system that accommodates all forms of payment in a single piece of equipment.**

— Ashley Seman,
Executive Director, MMVTA



Project Implementation and Process

MMVTA aimed to offer all new fare payment options in the simplest form possible—and with the least equipment possible, Ashley notes. As soon as the MMVTA-Genfare contract was signed, Genfare project manager Jeffrey Hanft came on board to support and advocate for MMVTA—staying in steady communication all the way through the system’s go-live date.



Jeffrey Hanft
Program Manager

Working with the Genfare team, the agency had modern Fast Fare® fareboxes installed across its entire fixed-route fleet in August 2025. A new DualPort stationary vault, with a larger capacity than its old vault, was installed in the bus depot.



Relationship goals

“Genfare worked closely with our team throughout the process,” Ashley says. “For a smaller agency like MMVTA, it was important that the system could scale to our needs while still offering modern capabilities.”

Genfare aims to make the lift lighter with a partnership built on trust, so sophisticated tech upgrades aren’t burdensome, Ed adds. “Small agencies should know that the upgrade process itself can be an enjoyable endeavor.”

Moving forward, MMVTA will also benefit from its software support agreement, which includes access to the Customer Portal for training, easy ordering of parts, or maintenance requests.

MMVTA also launched two white-labeled stand-alone mobile apps with deep links connecting them for a seamless rider experience. Together, TraXster and TraXster Pay appear to be a single, unified platform combining the features riders want:

- **Avail Technologies’ myStop** provides real-time bus tracking and arrivals and trip planning using CAD/AVL data.
- **Genfare’s Mobile Link** provides mobile ticketing, stored value fare products, and fare capping functions.



It was important that the system could scale to our needs while still offering modern capabilities.”



— Ashley Seman,
Executive Director, MMVTA



Challenges

For a successful upgrade, Genfare would need to integrate its fare collection system with MMVTA's existing CAD/AVL system. Avail Technologies, the CAD/AVL vendor, also contributes a state-mandated reporting database for many fixed-route transit agencies across Pennsylvania, including MMVTA.

Genfare and Avail have partnered on several projects using Genfare's Internet of Things-enabled hardware and open-architected software, so the two companies were up to the task.

Flexible problem-solving around a new network

As a non-operating authority, MMVTA contracts with a service provider to manage operations. Its operating provider had assembled its own Internet network using multiple network setups for different functions. To transition to a connected, data-enabled platform, MMVTA needed a single garage data system to support cellular connectivity for its modernized fare collection system.

To this end, Verizon was contracted to get the system updated, and Avail updated its software for compatibility as well. This resulted in a fully integrated system with options for further consolidation, Jeff says.

To keep the farebox installation on schedule while the new garage data system was installed, the agency needed a stop-gap solution. Genfare created an isolated network, normally a part of the test environment, to keep things running smoothly. Although the vault data wasn't yet connected while the network vendor did its overhaul, Genfare was able to provide MMVTA access to its vault data via computer.

"That kept our Field Services team lined up, and the installation on track," Jeff says. "It took creative thinking and provided a lot of value."

"This was a huge project to take on as a small agency," Ashley says. "Genfare adapted to our needs, and they were able to answer all the questions and really get us where we needed to be to implement it."



This upgrade positions MMVTA for the future."

— Ashley Seman,
Executive Director, MMVTA



Full support

Regular weekly meetings with all stakeholders kept all aspects of the project on track, from the new network to third-party collaboration to the new fare payment options.

"That constant communication between us and Genfare is certainly helpful with the operation side and the implementation side," Ashley says. "Genfare helped us to adapt and broke things down for how to manage [the new] backend system. Communication was definitely key for us."





Fare capping

Fare capping is a modern public transit pricing model that acts as a financial safety net, ensuring riders never pay more than the cost of a daily, weekly, or monthly pass, regardless of how often they ride.

Modern fareboxes, equipped with account-based ticketing, instantly track tapping activity and automatically upgrade passengers to period passes once the cost threshold is met, then stop charging for rides until the period ends. For example, at MMVTA, local rides cost \$2 each and 7-day local passes are \$18. If a rider took 20 trips in 7 days, here's what they would pay:

7-day Pass	Cash	Fare Capping
PAY UPFRONT	PAY AS YOU GO	PAY AS YOU GO
		
\$18 Covered 20 rides	\$40 Same # of rides, but paid \$20 more	\$18 Never pay more than a 7-day pass

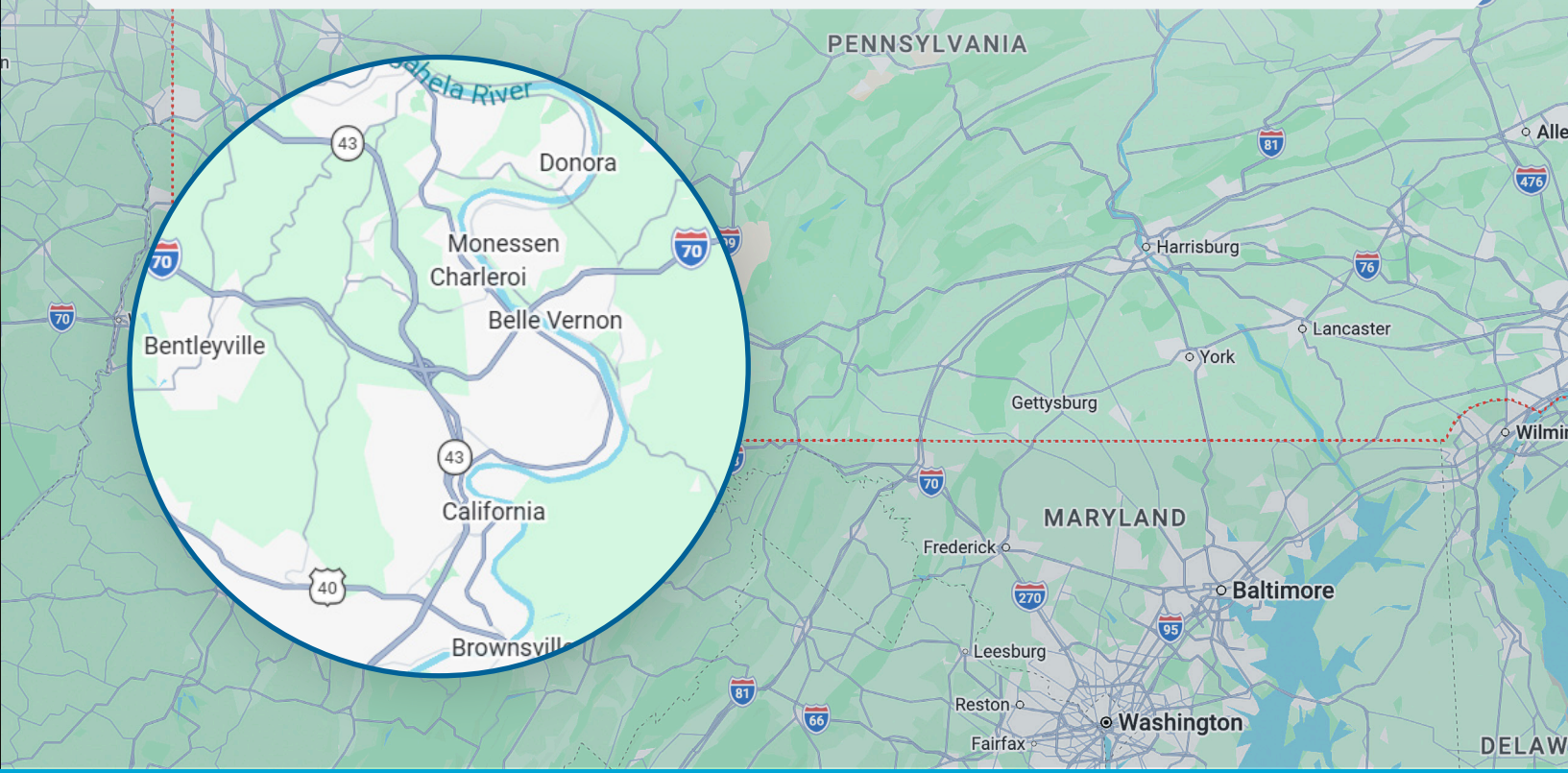
Fare capping has many benefits:

- It simplifies the rider experience by giving the rider the best value for their usage automatically.
- It empowers equitable mobility by giving riders who can't afford to pay upfront the same advantages of those who can.
- It speeds boarding by automatically assigning fare products using payment methods the rider is already carrying.

Open payment advantages

The validator on Genfare's Fast Fare® farebox is certified for single-transaction use and accepts open payment microtransactions. Each tap pays for a single ride for a single rider. There are good reasons for this:

- 
Faster boarding
 Eliminates real-time card authorization, keeping buses on schedule.
- 
Better ridership data
 Each tap equals one ride, producing an accurate reflection of ridership.
- 
Lower risk
 Only small payments are accepted. The farebox maintains a "bad list" of previously rejected cards and will not accept them.
- 
Less reliance on connectivity
 If network connectivity is temporarily lost, a PCI-PTS certified device can securely store encrypted transaction data for transfer when connectivity resumes.



Results

"This project demonstrates how Genfare solutions are suitable for any agency of any size," says Genfare's Ed Brandis. A carefully curated investment can help small agencies move the needle on growth and customer satisfaction while staying within their budget and scope, he explains.

"One of the things we're proud of is bringing technology that's typically seen in larger transit systems to a smaller regional agency like ours," Ashley says. "This upgrade positions MMVTA for the future. It allows us to continue improving the rider experience while giving us the tools to adapt as technology and rider expectations evolve."

Just six months after the launch of the new fare collection system, MMVTA was already seeing strong results.

Tap-to-pay takes off

The new open payment option gained rider converts immediately, accounting for more than 12 percent of fare revenue within the first two months of the October 2025 implementation, a number that continued to rise in early 2026. MMTVA saw this healthy use of open payment play out in the counting room as well, with less cash to handle and the potential for less frequent vaulting, says Jeff.

"Less cash in the cash box and live reporting of fare payments helps support operational savings by speeding up reconciliation workflows and improving accuracy, which can significantly cut labor hours," he says.

Fare capping gains a following

MMTVA riders also now benefit from fare capping when using the mobile app. This ensures they get the best value without having to commit to a weekly or monthly pass upfront.

"The fare capping has two tiers, a seven-day cap and a 30-day cap, so it is really providing a lot of opportunities for return and committed riders to maximize thoughtful cost savings that also don't require an advanced outlay," Jeff says.

"The individual is not going to overpay [with fare capping]," Ed says. "The agency may not collect as much per rider, but fare capping attracts more riders because it's the most equitable fare."



12%

of fare revenue from open payment in the first two months



2-tier

fare capping structure (7-day cap and 30-day cap)



Live reporting

of fare payments and operational data

Rider outreach reaches riders

MMVTA spread the word about the new payment options via its website and social media. Outreach was crucial in a transit environment where there had only ever been a cash and coin option, Ashley says.

"Like any technology upgrade, there's a learning curve," she says. "Communication and rider education were key for us. We focused on clear messaging to help people understand the new options."

Data-driven decision making

Enhanced reporting gives MMVTA more opportunities to be proactive, with a data-driven operation for better-informed operational decisions, improved revenue tracking, and enhanced passenger convenience. The agency can now, for example, pull up the most current data for a deep dive into ridership trends and stop-level insights, seeing not just how many people boarded, but fare tier ridership (such as full, reduced, or student fares) and open payment usage.

While MMVTA is required by the state to use Avail's backend, having Genfare Link running alongside and processing farebox, mobile app, and vault data has proven to be useful. For example, when the platform was having some issues, staff was able to use Genfare Link's visualizations to filter data and help Avail troubleshoot the issue.

In addition, the integration between Genfare's Fast Fare and the Avail AVL system takes MMVTA's operational efficiency to a new level, Ed says. When a driver logs into the AVL system, for example, that data automatically syncs to the farebox, providing data for state and federal reporting.

"The improved data and reporting tools will help us better understand rider patterns and make more informed service-planning decisions," says Ashley. "And we expect open payment to grow over time as riders become more comfortable tapping their cards or phones to board."

TraXster JUST GOT EVEN BETTER!

Tap. Ride. Relax.

- ✓ Open Payment – Tap your card or phone
- ✓ Mobile Ticketing – Buy and store passes right from your phone
- ✓ Fare Capping – Never pay more than a 7-day or 31-day max

Download the new MMVTA App today!

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

MMVTA advertised TraXster to the community.

Genfare makes modernization work

We understand the funding and timing constraints transit agencies face. Whether you need a rapid, full-solution fare collection implementation or a phased approach spread out over multiple years, Genfare can make it happen.

Contact your Business Development Director to learn more about how Genfare can support your transit agency's needs within your budget and timeframe.



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