



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Shannon Valentine
Secretary of Transportation

November 15, 2018

The Honorable Timothy D. Hugo, Chair
Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability
Post Office Box 893
Centreville, Virginia 20122

Dear Delegate Hugo,

Under the Virginia Secretary of Transportation, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation administers, expends, and commits Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital (IPROC) funds subject to the approval of the Commonwealth Transportation Board per *Va. Code* § 33.2-1603. In accordance with Chapter 2, Item 1, Subsection O of the 2018 Special Session I Acts of Assembly, DRPT is required to provide to the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability an annual review of the usage of these funds. This attached report serves as the annual review.

If you have any questions or comments about this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S. Valentine", written over a horizontal line.

Shannon Valentine

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Charles W. Carrico
The Honorable R. Creigh Deeds
The Honorable Eileen Filler-Corn
The Honorable T. Scott Garrett
The Honorable David LaRock
The Honorable David R. Suetterlein
The Honorable Frank Wagner
The Honorable Vivian Watts
The Honorable David E. Yancey

**REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Annual Report on the Uses of the Intercity
Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund**

**TO THE JOINT COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION
ACCOUNTABILITY**



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2018**

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1 Introduction

Within the Virginia Transportation Secretariat, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) administers, expends, and commits Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital funds subject to the approval of the Commonwealth Transportation Board per *Va. Code* § 33.2-1603.

Pursuant to Chapter 2, Item 1, Subsection O of the 2018 Special Session 1 Acts of Assembly, DRPT is required to provide to the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability an annual review of the usage of these funds. This report serves as the annual review.

1.1 DRPT's Role in the Commonwealth

DRPT's mission is to facilitate and improve the mobility of Virginia's citizens and promote the efficient transport of goods and people in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner. DRPT and its partners:

- Improve access for the general public and businesses to transportation choices (public transportation, carpools, vanpools, human service transportation, passenger rail, freight rail, and telecommuting);
- Provide access and improvements to Virginia's railways to encourage economic development and reduce traffic/congestion on Virginia's highways; and
- Increase communications to the general public, businesses, and community decision makers on alternative transportation choices.

DRPT's rail division administers passenger and freight rail initiatives through grant funding options, including annual capital and operations costs for Amtrak service in the Commonwealth and associated capital infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the division provides counsel, research, and advocacy as well as representing the state's interests in interstate and national rail issues.

Improvements to Virginia's railways and services are implemented through four grant programs with dedicated state funding:

- (i) Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund (IPROC);
- (ii) Rail Enhancement Fund (REF)
- (iii) Rail Preservation Fund; and
- (iv) Rail Industrial Access Program.

Additional funds are received from private, discretionary, and formula federal dollars as well as other state sources. This report focuses solely on the use of IPROC funds; to learn more about the other rail funds, please visit <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/rail/grants/>.

1.2 DRPT’s Statutory Oversight of the IPROC Fund

DRPT administers and commits Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital (IPROC) funds subject to the approval of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The 2013 General Assembly enacted House Bill 2313 allocating 0.05 percent of the retail sales and use tax to IPROC. This action made Virginia one of the first states in the nation to provide dedicated annual funding to state-supported passenger rail services.

These funds support the cost of operating intercity passenger rail services as well as acquiring, leasing, or improving railways or railroad equipment. The program enables DRPT to expand services throughout the Commonwealth with 100 percent state funds.

1.3 IRPOC Funds in the Fiscal Year 2019 Six Year Improvement Program

\$ Millions	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	TOTAL
IPROC Revenues	\$52.3	\$53.1	\$54.0	\$57.4	\$58.5	\$58.5	\$334.9
IPROC Commitments	\$45.8	\$46.0	\$47.0	\$50.1	\$51.8	\$20.8	\$262.1

While DRPT currently forecasts an unobligated balance of funds in IPROC in its current Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP), this forecast excludes numerous possible long-term, high-cost projects, such as the construction of a second Long Bridge across the Potomac River. This bridge’s construction is vital to the long-term success of Amtrak service in the Commonwealth. This report discusses the future of IPROC funding, including the need of an additional Long Bridge in Section 5.

1.4 History of State-Supported Amtrak Service in Virginia

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 required states with Amtrak services shorter than 750 miles and greater than 70 miles to assume a significant share of capital and operating costs for the routes or otherwise the routes would be discontinued.¹ If the General Assembly had not chosen to fund Amtrak service, Virginia would have lost one of two trains originating in Richmond and all service originating in Newport News. The elimination of Newport News service would have left Hampton Roads without any Amtrak service.

The following year, the Commonwealth initiated state-supported regional intercity service. On October 1, 2009, the Commonwealth contracted with Amtrak to run same-seat daily service

¹ Overview, Highlights and Summary of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) (<https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L02692>)

between Lynchburg and Boston. Prior to the initiation of service, DRPT worked with Norfolk Southern to make capital improvements along the route in Virginia. This initiation occurred before the creation of the IPROC fund. Although it had no dedicated state funding source at the time, the service was well-received by the public, and all costs were covered through a revenue-sharing arrangement with Amtrak. On July 20, 2010, a second state-supported service started with Richmond as the southern terminus. In that same year, the General Assembly authorized the use of funding from REF to make the necessary railway improvements to initiate similar service in Norfolk.

The General Assembly responded to the need for dedicated funding for intercity passenger rail service in a tiered approach between 2011 and 2013. First, the 2011 General Assembly recognized this need by creating the IPROC fund. However, the General Assembly did not provide a dedicated source of revenue at that time. Instead, it allocated a one-time \$28.7 million contribution to the IPROC fund from the general fund in 2012. As part of a larger 2013 transportation initiative, the General Assembly created a dedicated revenue source for the IPROC fund. *Va. Code* § 58.1-638.3 allocated to the IPROC fund 0.05 percent of the increase of 0.3 percent to the retail sales and use tax in Virginia levied under *Va. Code* § 58.1-603.

Since the creation of the IPROC fund and the dedication of a reliable long-term source of funding, the Commonwealth has continued to expand service to new regions in cooperation with Norfolk Southern and CSX. These Class I Railroads have assisted in making the necessary capital improvements along the corridor to make these services possible. This includes Norfolk Southern and CSX assistance to allow DRPT-initiated service to Norfolk by extending the Richmond train beginning on December 12, 2012. DRPT also assumed control of two previously federally funded trains originating in Newport News and two previously federally funded trains originating in Richmond on October 1, 2013. Norfolk Southern, with funding assistance from DRPT, also constructed capital improvements to allow the Commonwealth's most recent extension, which began on October 31, 2017, extending the Lynchburg service to Roanoke. These state-supported Amtrak services support citizens along the I-95, I-64, I-81, and Route 29 corridors by providing much-needed congestion relief on Virginia's highways.

Due to the strong commitment of the General Assembly and the efforts of DRPT, ridership has grown tremendously over the past fifteen years. To view ridership over the past ten years, please see Section 3 of this report.

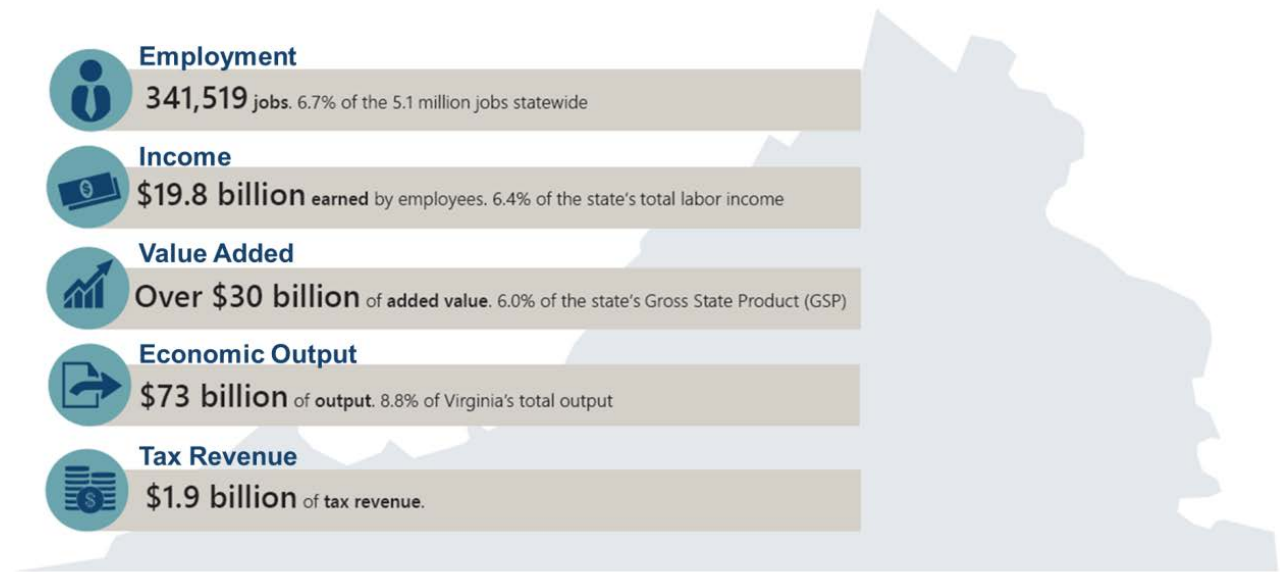
2 Benefits of Rail in Virginia

Below are two charts highlighting the positive benefits of freight and passenger rail in the Commonwealth. These charts and related research were a part of DRPT’s federally mandated state rail plan.²

Rail economic impacts to Virginia are estimated using multipliers from the IMPLAN economic model with input data and assumptions from freight movement data, passenger rail operations, and visitor characteristics. Impacts of rail service-related spending in Virginia emanate from firms providing freight and passenger transport services, industries using such services to trade goods (shippers/receivers), and expenditures by visitors who reach Virginia via rail.

2.1 Economic Benefits of Rail in Virginia

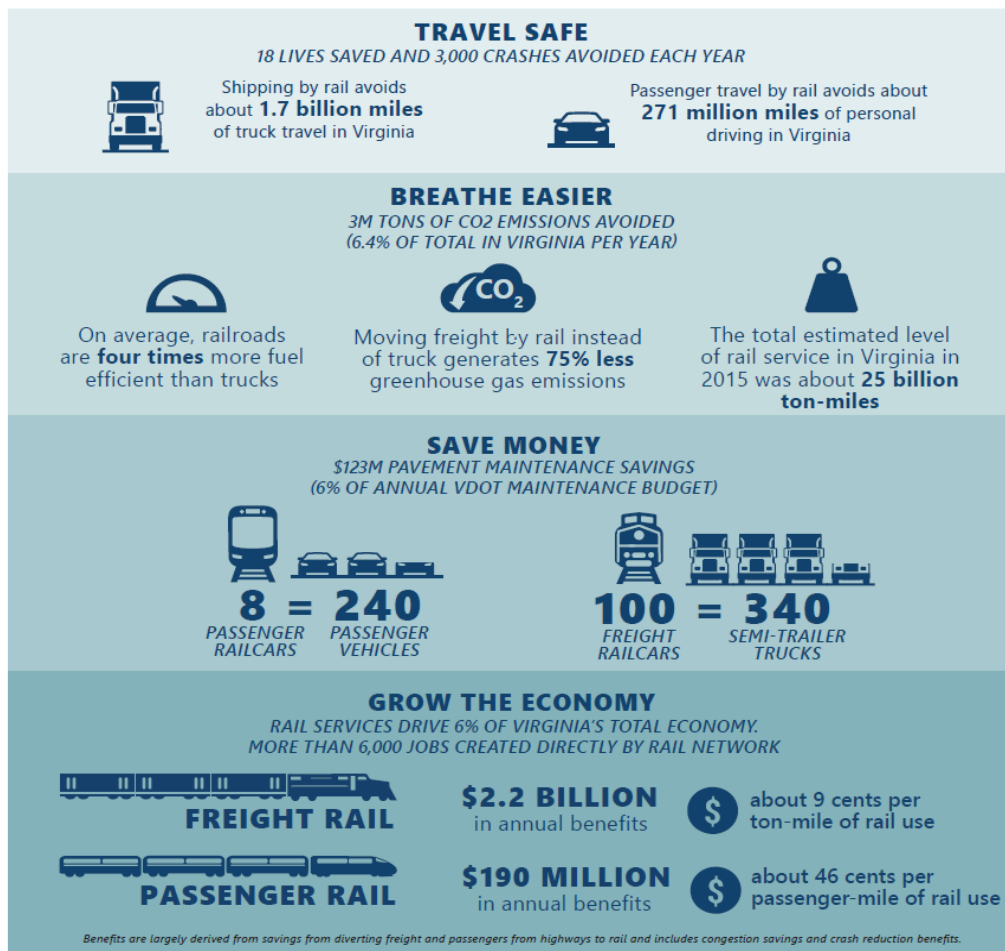
Passenger rail plays a significant role in Virginia’s economy. Together, passenger and freight rail services drive six percent of Virginia’s total economy; and passenger rail alone provides \$190 million in annual benefits. It also represents a key component of Virginia’s tourism industry. Passenger rail facilitates travel to and within the Commonwealth, which saw a record high of 45 million domestic visitors in 2016. It also has contributed to the \$2.2 billion increase in tourism revenue since 2014. Virginia’s investment in passenger rail and the overall rail network is vital to meeting a growing demand, protecting the Commonwealth’s economic interests, and providing Virginians with a variety of transportation options to meet their evolving needs.



² For more information about the benefits of passenger and rail service, please see the [Virginia Statewide Rail Plan](#), which was completed in Fall 2017.

2.2 Additional Benefits of Rail in Virginia

As a complement to the Virginia highway network, as well as transit and transportation demand management services, passenger rail is a major part of Virginia’s traffic solution. For example, eight passenger rail cars remove 240 vehicles off of Virginia’s crowded highways. Passenger rail also improves air quality and reduces spending on pavement maintenance. Additionally, passenger and freight rail save Virginia approximately \$123 million annually in pavement maintenance costs. Lastly, and most importantly, fewer miles driven leads to fewer crashes and more lives saved. The below infographic highlights some of the additional benefits that rail provides to Virginia’s citizens.



3 Current State-Supported Service in Virginia

At the time of this report's submission, DRPT has not received all the ridership and related information for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 18 (October 1, 2017, to September 30, 2018).

3.1 Current State-Supported Operating Routes³

Route Number	Origination	Frequency
Route 46	Roanoke/Lynchburg-Washington	One daily round trip
Route 47	Newport News-Washington	Two daily round trips
Route 50	Norfolk-Washington	One daily round trip
Route 51	Richmond-Washington	Two daily round trips

DRPT provides grant funds for four intercity passenger routes with a total of six daily round trip trains on the Northeast Regional line through grant agreements with Amtrak. FFY 18 marked the start of service in Roanoke as DRPT extended its service from Lynchburg.

Additionally, DRPT supports thruway buses connecting riders to the Newport News, Norfolk, and Roanoke train stations. The IPROC fund sponsors daily round-trip buses from Virginia Beach to Norfolk and Newport News. Through its transit program, DRPT sponsors a daily roundtrip bus originating at Virginia Tech and serving the Roanoke train station.

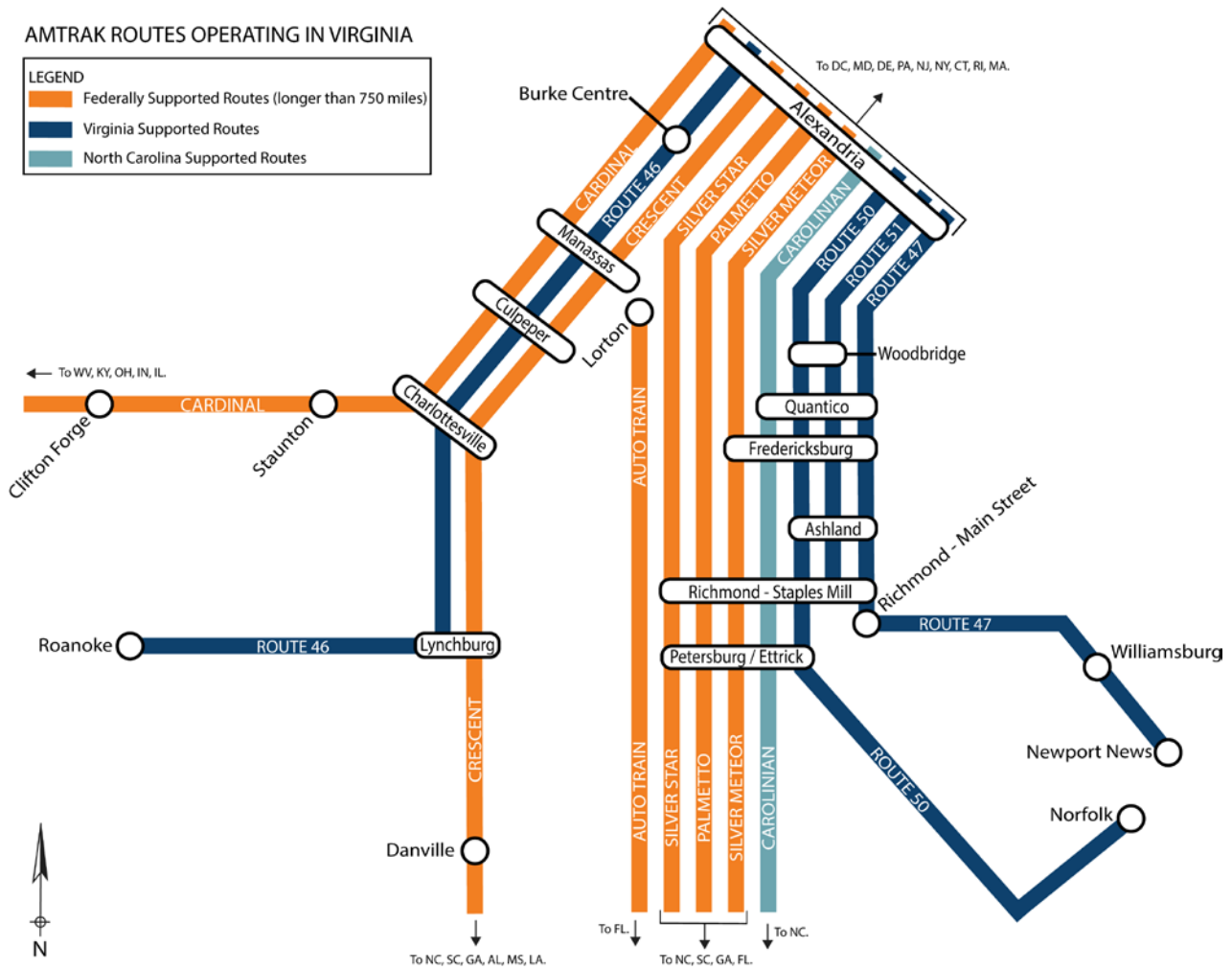
3.2 Amtrak Routes Operating in Virginia

The map below shows all Amtrak routes operating through the Commonwealth. Included in this map are six long-distance services:

- Auto Train (daily service between Lorton and Sanford, Florida);
- Cardinal (three days a week between Chicago-New York City);
- Crescent (daily service between New Orleans-New York City);
- Palmetto (daily service between New York City-Savannah, Georgia);
- Silver Meteor and Silver Star (daily service between Miami-New York City).

Additionally, a state-supported train funded by North Carolina, which provides daily service between Charlotte and New York City, operates within the Commonwealth.

³ All state supported Amtrak state-sponsored service travels into the Northeast Corridor and offers one-seat rides to destinations including Washington, DC, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston.



3.3 Ridership on Virginia State-Supported Routes for FFY 16-FFY 18

Ridership	FFY 16	% Change (FFY 16-17)	FFY 17	% Change (FFY 17-18)	FFY 18
Lynchburg/Roanoke to Washington ⁴	184,868	2.7%	189,881	8.7%	206,252
Newport News to Washington	329,551	0.5%	331,308	-2.7%	322,265
Norfolk to Washington	146,605	6.0%	155,389	-1.8%	152,611
Richmond to Washington	177,305	-1.3%	174,935	-9.5%	158,318
TOTAL	838,329	1.6%	851,443	-1.3%	839,466

⁴ Service started in Roanoke on October 31, 2017.

Ridership on the Virginia-supported Amtrak service is defined as the number of people who purchased tickets on the Lynchburg/Roanoke, Newport News, Norfolk, and Richmond routes with at least one end point in Virginia. It is possible for two or more end points to be in Virginia on one ticket, but each ticket is only counted one time as one rider.

Between FFY 16 and FFY 17, ridership increased along three of the four routes while the Richmond route remained relatively steady. As congestion on Virginia's highways worsens, more travelers are turning to passenger rail service. Passenger volumes on state-supported Amtrak service totaled over 838,000 riders in FFY 2016 and 851,000 riders in FFY 2017. This represents a wide variety of passengers of all ages and income levels, supporting a range of business, leisure, and military travel.

However, FFY 18 has seen a modest decrease in ridership. In particular, March-May 2018 saw a significant decrease in ridership across the Commonwealth due to 15 percent of all Richmond trains being canceled as a result of weather conditions and on-going construction at Acca Yard. Additionally, negative media coverage from a derailment in Alexandria and an accident involving members of Congress in Crozet has likely impacted ridership. Nonetheless, the Roanoke extension provided positive ridership growth.

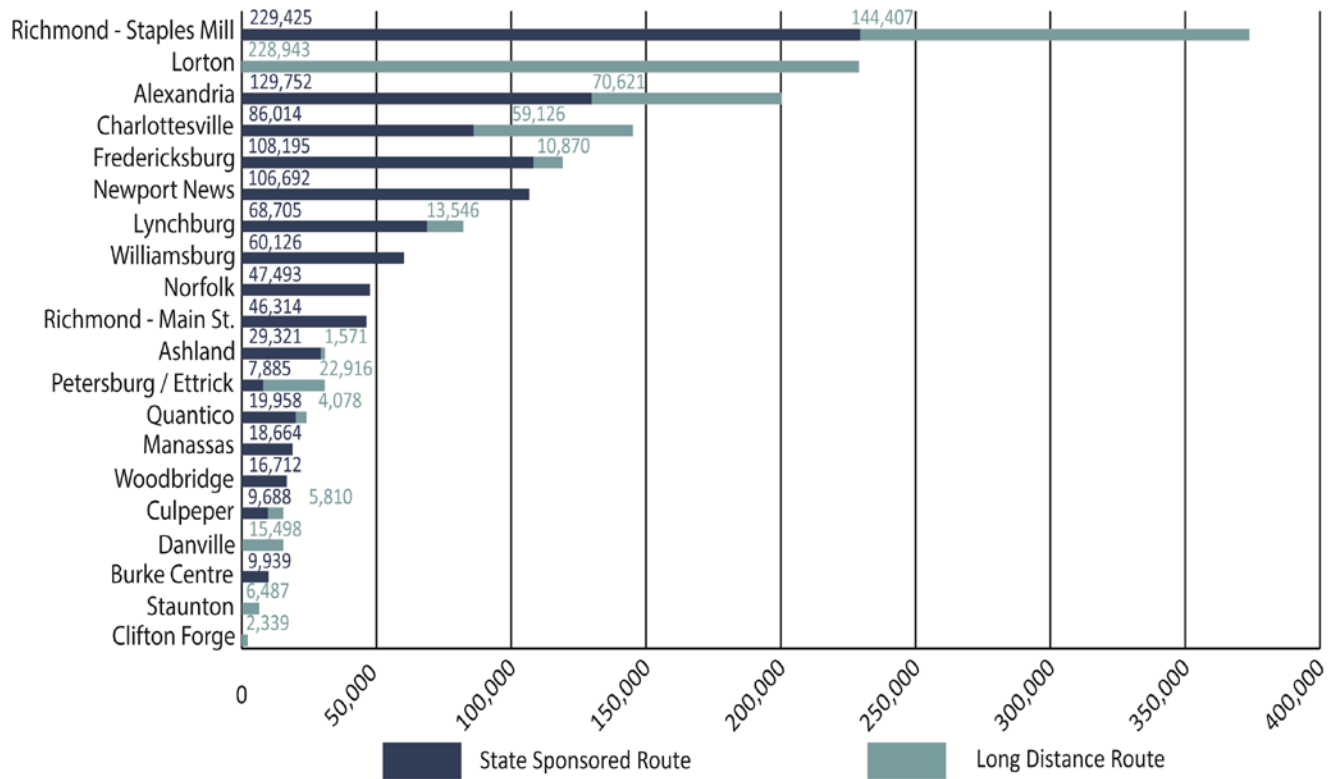
3.4 FFY 18 Roanoke Station Activity

Month	Boardings	Alightings	Total
October 2017	148	103	251
November 2017	2,622	2,426	5,048
December 2017	3,288	2,941	6,229
January 2018	1,933	2,256	4,189
February 2018	1,566	1,538	3,104
March 2018	2,278	2,000	4,278
April 2018	2,343	2,327	4,670
May 2018	2,429	2,231	4,660
June 2018	2,739	2,586	5,325
July 2018	2,707	2,836	5,543
August 2018	2,544	2,620	5,164
September 2018	1,592	1,645	3,237
TOTAL	26,189	25,509	51,698

DRPT, in collaboration with Amtrak, the City of Roanoke, and Norfolk Southern, brought passenger service back to Roanoke for the first time in forty years on October 31, 2017.

Additional information about the capital projects funded by IPROC to allow service to return to Roanoke is described in further detail in Section 4.5.

3.5 Virginia Station Activity FFY 17⁵

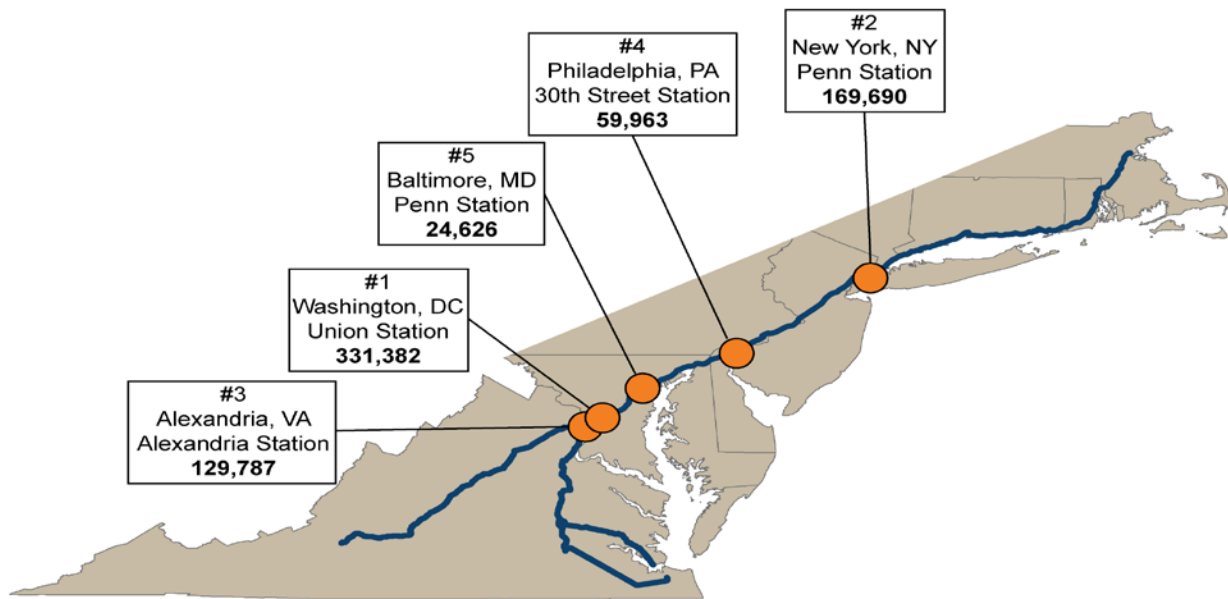


Station activity is defined as the number of people who get on and off at the train stations. It is possible for each person to be counted multiple times throughout the trip as they get on and off the trains. Further, not only is it the most used station in Virginia, Staples Mill is the most used station in the Southeast. For that reason, it was necessary to expand parking at that location. This completed project is described in detail in Section 4.4.

This chart also includes four stations that are not served by state-supported service: Lorton, Danville, Clifton Forge, and Staunton. These locations are served by the Auto Train (Lorton), Crescent (Danville), and Cardinal (Clifton Forge and Staunton) long-distance services.

⁵ The station activity data for the entire FFY 2018 was not available at the time of this report's completion.

3.6 Top 5 Destinations for State Supported Service

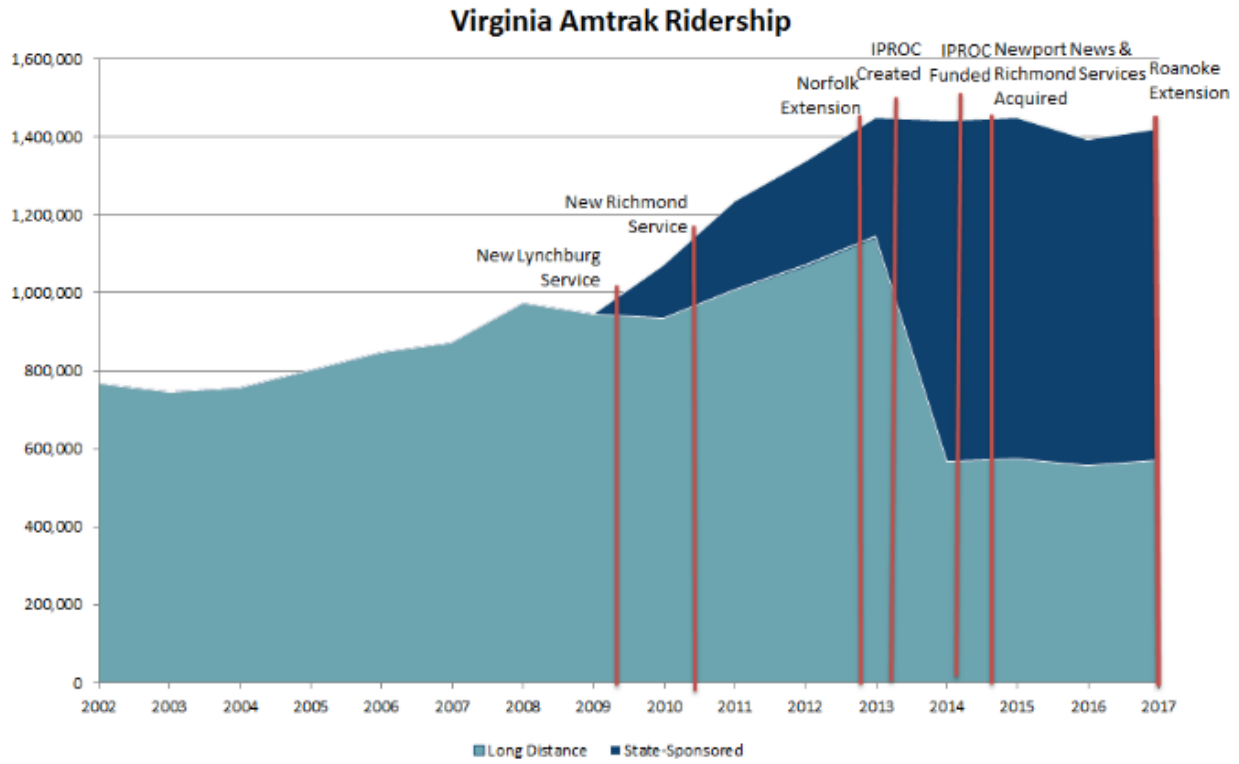


The map above shows the top five destinations for people traveling from the Commonwealth. This map highlights the importance of Virginia’s location to metropolitan areas in the Northeast Corridor by showing that many riders are using the service to travel short distances along the congested I-95 corridor. The top five city pairs are: (i) Staples Mill Station (Richmond) to Washington, DC; (ii) Charlottesville to Washington, DC; (iii) New York City to Staples Mill Station (Richmond); (iv) Newport News to Washington, DC; and (v) Charlottesville to New York City.

3.7 Ridership Demographics

Route	Gender	Age Range	Trip Purpose
Norfolk	Female: 63%	18-34: 24%	Leisure: 69%
	Male: 37%	55+: 49%	Business: 31%
Newport News	Female: 43%	18-34: 29%	Leisure: 78%
	Male: 57%	55+: 37%	Business: 22%
Lynchburg/Roanoke	Female: 60%	18-34: 34%	Leisure: 77%
	Male: 40%	55+: 43%	Business: 23%
Richmond	Female: 62%	18-34: 20%	Leisure: 58%
	Male: 38%	55+: 49%	Business: 42%

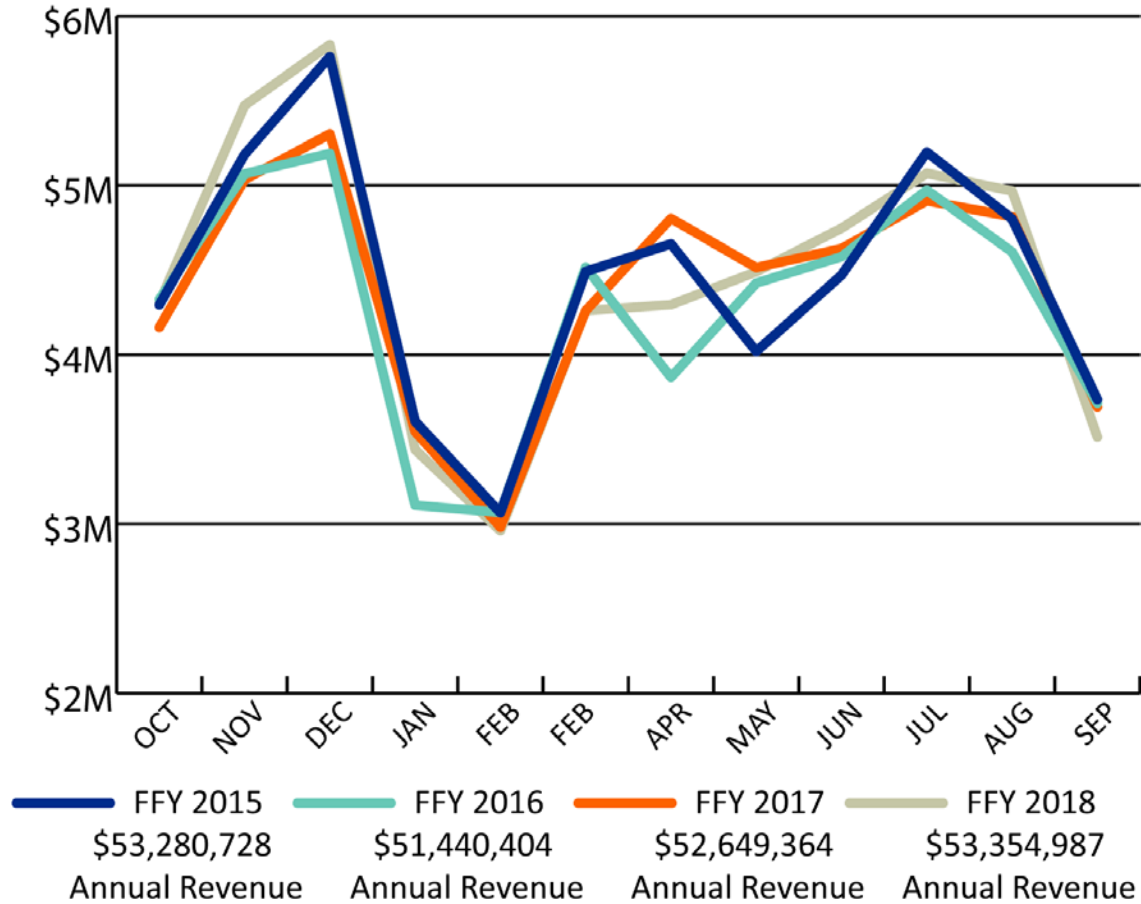
3.8 Virginia Amtrak Ridership FFY 02-17



The chart above highlights Virginia’s state-supported and long distance ridership over the past fifteen years. Long distance ridership includes the Carolinian, a daily roundtrip North Carolina state-sponsored service originating in Charlotte. As noted in Section 2.4, Virginia’s support of Amtrak service began in 2009 with the origination of service in Lynchburg. With the introduction of Virginia’s support for Amtrak, ridership has increased by approximately 500,000 riders in Virginia over the last eight years of available data.

3.9 Monthly Ticket Revenue FFY 15-18

Ticket revenue has been fairly consistent over the past four years, with November and December being the highest months for revenues due to holiday travel. The winter months see a decrease in travel due to the weather, and ridership increases during the summer months as individuals travel more due to the warmer weather. The chart below highlights ticket revenues over the past four federal fiscal years.



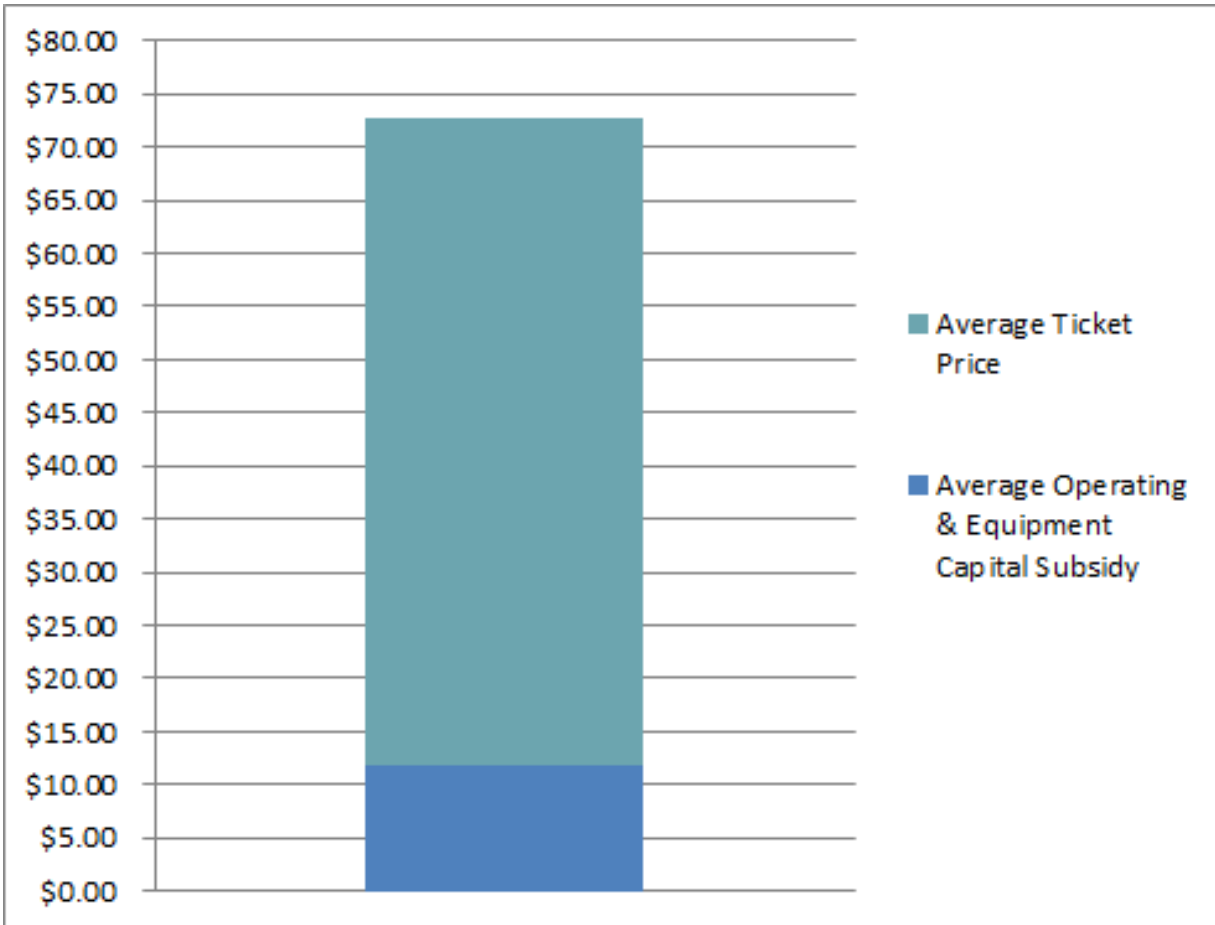
During Federal Fiscal Year 2017, Amtrak offered numerous discounts to its riders. Of the 851,443 Amtrak riders, 511,744 paid full fare. The remainder used these discounts for a reduced fare:

Discount	Riders
14-day Saver	138,689
VRE Step-Up Ticket⁶	80,412
Senior	49,062
AAA	34,006
Student	27,143
Seven-day Saver	26,823
Vets Advantage	2,710

Beginning in January 2018, Amtrak made the decision to eliminate several permanent discounts, including AAA, Student, and Vets Advantage, instead focusing on targeted flash sales to these specific demographics. Additionally, they reduced the Senior discount.

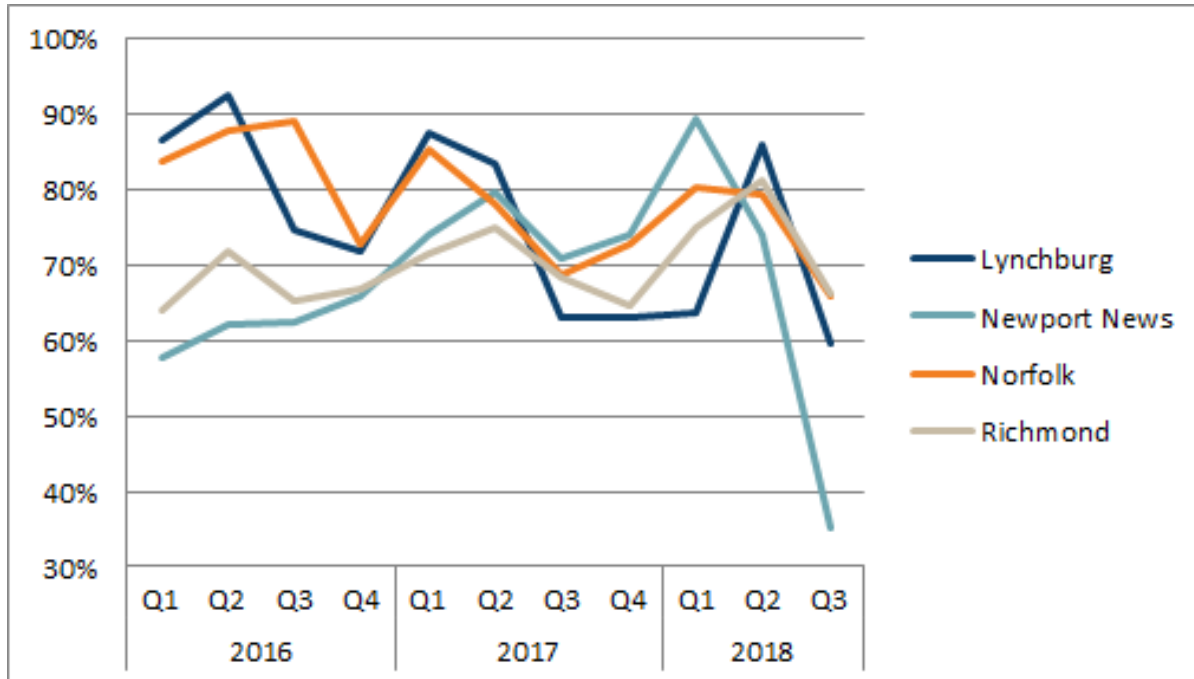
⁶ Certain VRE riders are allowed to purchase “step-up” tickets at a cost of \$8.00 to use Amtrak service.

3.10 Subsidy and Ticket Price Per Passenger FFY 17



The chart above highlights the total cost of a ticket on Virginia’s state-supported services and the amount of Virginia’s investment in capital and operating per ticket. While Virginia has made a significant investment in capital projects, as well as continuing operating expenses, the majority of the cost of operating service is born by the passengers.

3.11 Quarterly On-Time Performance FFY 15-18⁷



On-time performance continues to be an issue for Amtrak service throughout the United States, and Virginia is no different. In Virginia, capacity is near full; and Amtrak service shares railroad track with CSX and Norfolk Southern as well as the Virginia Railway Express service north of Manassas for the Roanoke route and north of Spotsylvania along the Richmond, Newport News, and Norfolk routes. Additionally, on-going construction, such as the Acca Yard project, have caused short-term negative impacts to on-time performance, with the benefit of providing long-term positive impacts for on-time performance once the project is complete.

Poor on-time performance hurts ridership. One of the best way to improve ridership in the Commonwealth is by improving on-time performance. The benefits of saving money and time by not sitting in traffic along congested highways are eliminated when individuals cannot depend upon rail service to get them to where they need to be in a timely manner. As Section 4 will demonstrate, IPROC funds have been used and will continue to be used to improve on-time performance. DRPT will continue to work with railroads to identify projects that can assist with this improvement.

⁷ On-time performance data for the final quarter of Federal Fiscal Year 2018 is not available at the time of this report’s publication.

4 IPROC-Funded Capital Projects

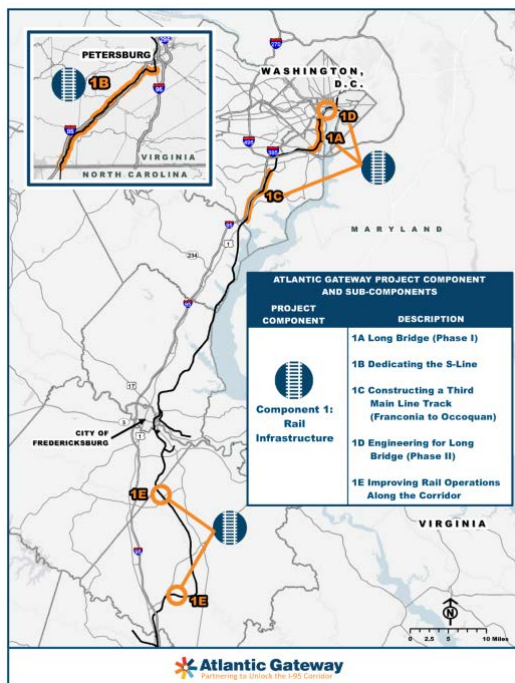
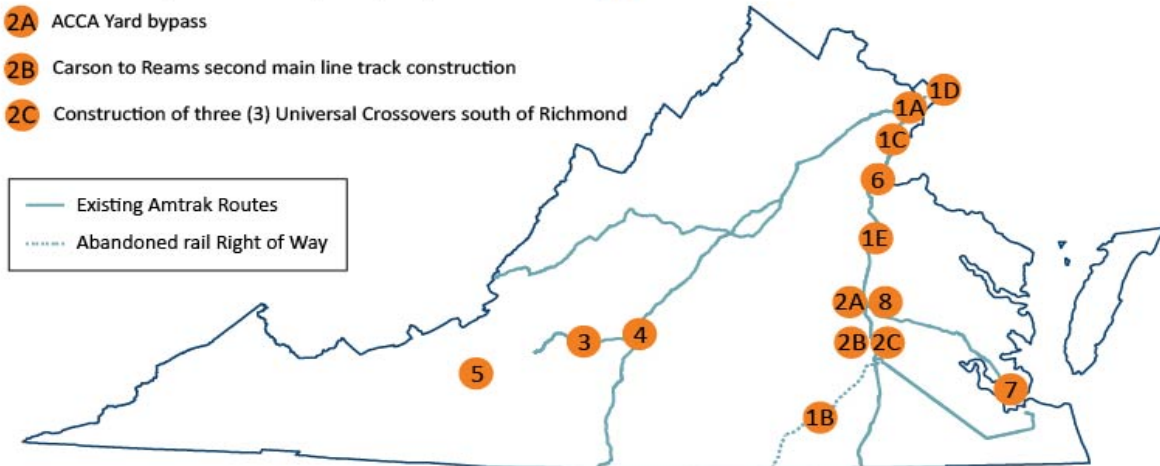
Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital (IPROC) Fund Projects in Virginia

Atlantic Gateway

- 1A** Long Bridge - Phase I (NEPA)
- 1B** Dedicating the S-Line
- 1C** Franconia to Occoquan third main line track construction
- 1D** Long Bridge - Phase II (Engineering)
- 1E** Construction of two (2) Caroline County Universal Crossovers
- 3** Extension of Amtrak service from Lynchburg to Roanoke
- 4** Addition of 2nd Lynchburg round-trip Amtrak service
- 5** Study for extension of Amtrak service to the New River Valley
- 6** Arkendale rail improvements (including Quantico Station)
- 7** Construction of Bland Boulevard Amtrak Station

Richmond Regional Rail Capacity Improvements

- 2A** ACCA Yard bypass
- 2B** Carson to Reams second main line track construction
- 2C** Construction of three (3) Universal Crossovers south of Richmond
- 8** Staples Mill Station parking improvement & expansion



4.1 Atlantic Gateway

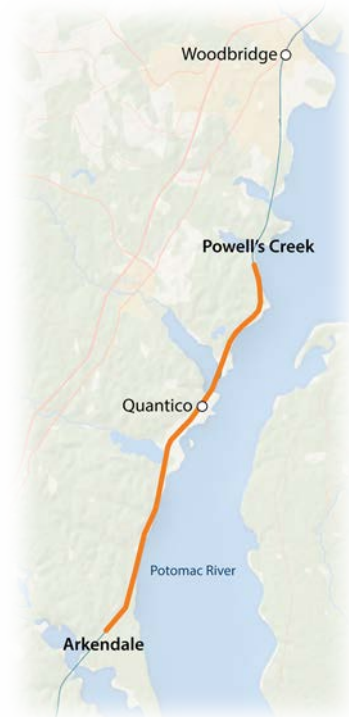
This initiative is a \$1.4 billion program of multimodal projects designed to provide essential travel options and reliability to the heavily congested I-95 corridor. It contains \$535 million in rail projects. These construction projects include: (i) construction of approximately six miles of a fourth main track from the south bank of the Potomac River to Alexandria, allowing for additional Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and Amtrak service; (ii) construction of approximately eight miles of new third main line track on CSX’s freight corridor between the Franconia/Springfield VRE station to the Occoquan River in Fairfax County allowing for additional VRE service; and (iii) design and installation of two universal track crossovers in Caroline County to increase the flexibility of Amtrak trains to pass freight

traffic. Dedicated funding in the SYIP to complete Atlantic Gateway includes approximately \$170 million in IPROC funds.

There are also two additional components to the rail portion of the Atlantic Gateway project. First, CSX is dedicating the abandoned rail line between Petersburg and the North Carolina/Virginia border, which is an integral part of a future Southeast High Speed rail project. Lastly, and most importantly, the Atlantic Gateway project advances the design and engineering to accelerate the permitting and construction of the full Long Bridge project. Long Bridge is discussed in further detail in Section 5 of this report.

4.2 Arkendale to Powell’s Creek

The Arkendale project provides for the design and construction of a third track along the heavily congested nine-mile stretch of CSX’s main line from Powell’s Creek to Arkendale in Northern Virginia. In 2010, the project received a \$75 million grant from the federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program. Dedicated funding in the SYIP to complete the Arkendale project includes \$16.5 million in IPROC funds. The third track segment will be used to meet, pass, and overtake trains to enhance the performance schedule for intercity passenger service, high speed passenger rail service, and Virginia Railway Express commuter service while preserving freight operations. This is a critical section of third track needed between Washington, DC, and Fredericksburg.



4.3 Acca Yard and Richmond-Area Improvements

The Acca Yard improvement project is a \$132 million public-private investment in CSX’s heavily congested rail yard near Richmond. This project will be completed by January 1, 2019, on time and on budget. It includes constructing a second mainline track between Carsons and Reams and two bypass tracks, and a reconstruction of Acca Yard. This project significantly increases freight fluidity for CSX and increases passenger rail travel time reliability and on-time performance for the Newport News-Washington and Norfolk-Washington passenger rail services. Additionally, it includes a commitment from CSX to provide slots for two

additional Norfolk passenger rail services, beginning in 2019 and 2022, respectively, and an additional slot for a future Lynchburg-bound train over Long Bridge. Dedicated funding in the SYIP to complete the Acca Yard project includes \$26.4 million in IPROC funds.

4.4 Staples Mill Station Parking Lot Expansion



With over 350,000 boardings and alightings annually, Staples Mill is Virginia's busiest rail station, and parking was historically inadequate to handle the volume of passengers. DRPT purchased seven parcels of land around the station to more than double the number of parking spaces, improve Amtrak thruway bus operations,

add an additional ingress/egress at a signaled intersection, update the parking lot to current ADA standards, and allow for more taxis. The \$3.3 million from IPROC was obligated toward construction for these improvements, and a portion of parking revenues will be provided to DRPT to offset the Commonwealth's investment. Construction was completed two months ahead of schedule in June 2018.

4.5 Amtrak Service Extension to Roanoke

DRPT entered into capital funding agreements with the City of Roanoke and Norfolk Southern for the improvements necessary to extend Amtrak service to downtown Roanoke. Of the total \$99 million cost, approximately \$78 million in IPROC funds was obligated to construct track capacity improvements between Lynchburg and Roanoke as well as a train servicing facility and a platform in downtown Roanoke. Service to Roanoke began on October 31, 2017. This marked the return of passenger service to Roanoke for the first time since 1979.



4.6 Second Lynchburg Roundtrip Amtrak Service Capital Improvements

DRPT is working with Norfolk Southern to determine whether Norfolk Southern could accommodate an additional intercity passenger rail slot between Lynchburg and Washington, DC. Approximately \$13.3 million in IPROC funds has been set aside for this effort. The existing route is currently the most successful state-sponsored route in Virginia.

4.7 Extension of Amtrak Service to the New River Valley Study

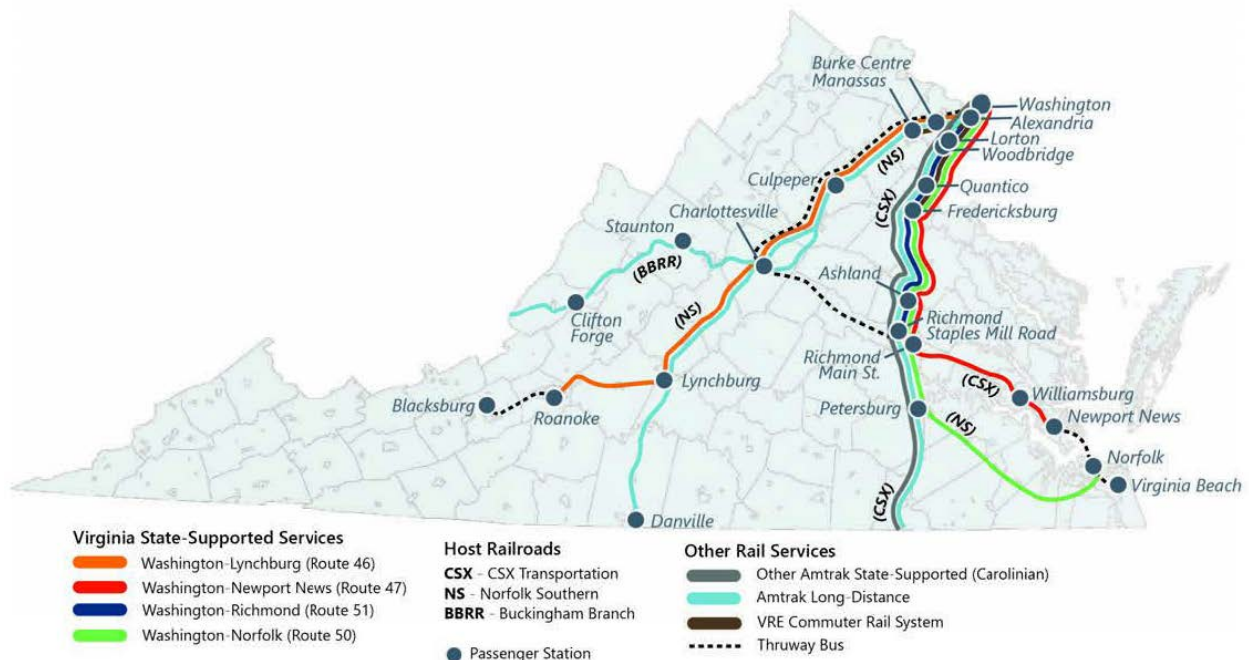
DRPT has programmed \$350,000 in IPROC funds in FY 19 for a study of future network requirements to accommodate the extension of Amtrak service from Roanoke to Christiansburg. Since the potential route will be along the Norfolk Southern corridor, the study would need to be conducted and led by Norfolk Southern. This study will serve as the basis to negotiate necessary infrastructure improvements.

4.8 Newport News Bland Boulevard Amtrak Station

This new location, situated at the intersection of Bland Boulevard and Interstate 64, will be more energy efficient and will allow the existing Amtrak trains to avoid entering a CSX coal yard for turning and servicing. DRPT has allocated \$20.5 million of IPROC funds toward construction of a platform, servicing facility, and associated turning and storage facilities. The City of Newport News is funding approximately \$20.5 million for the station and associated costs. This multimodal station will increase transportation options through new inter-city bus service with local connections, including Hampton Roads Transit, shuttles to the airport, and taxi service. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2019 and will be completed by 2021.

5 The Future of IPROC

DC2RVA, the Washington, DC, to Richmond segment of the Southeast High Speed Rail project, and Atlantic Gateway planning, which occurred in coordination with CSX, indicated there is no further capacity available for additional passenger trains in the Commonwealth (beyond the two Norfolk trains generated by the Acca Yard Improvements and an additional passenger train to Lynchburg) until the Atlantic Gateway investments and the construction of a second Long Bridge is complete. Long Bridge is a CSX rail bridge over the Potomac River between Arlington and Washington, DC, which is currently at 98 percent capacity during peak hours. All freight, Amtrak, and Virginia Railway Express rail traffic between Virginia and the northeast use Long Bridge. The map below highlights the amount of passenger rail traffic passing over Long Bridge.



Without question, it is a major bottleneck for the rail network on the entire East Coast. For that reason, a second Long Bridge is being planned for construction parallel to the current structure. Led by the Washington, DC, Department of Transportation, the Long Bridge Environmental Impact Study is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2020. A cost estimate is anticipated by Summer 2019.



Currently, there is no funding source identified for the Long Bridge expansion project. DRPT may need to rely on unallocated monies in IPROC and REF to fund a significant portion of the Commonwealth’s share of this project. The current FY 19-FY 25 SYIP has approximately \$80.8 million in unallocated funding through FY 25 in the IPROC fund. Further, DRPT has more flexibility in spending dollars in the IPROC fund due to the fact that REF requires a 30 percent match from a railroad, a regional authority, a local government source, or a combination of such sources. The Long Bridge project will be one of the top priorities for DRPT over the next five to ten years.

6 Conclusion

Virginians need a reliable and sustainable transportation system that advances Virginia businesses, attracts a 21st-century workforce, and promotes healthy communities where Virginians of all ages and abilities can thrive. Thanks to the leadership of the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia has a rail network that is instrumental to a multimodal transportation approach; and DRPT will continue serving as an advocate and administrator for passenger rail initiatives.

The Commonwealth has invested programmatically in Virginia rail systems; and as the aforementioned projects demonstrate, many of these investments have been significant. Without question, they benefit a combination of passenger, freight, and economic development interests. These investments stretch through all parts of Virginia, from the heavily congested areas of Hampton Roads and the I-95 corridor between Richmond and Northern Virginia to the growing Shenandoah Valley and truck-heavy Interstate 81 corridor. Rail service benefits Virginians and offers a viable alternative to car travel on the many congested roadways throughout the state.

Passenger rail continues to grow and evolve in Virginia. While the Commonwealth has been successful thus far with its approach to growing passenger service, it faces challenges moving forward. DRPT must identify projects that will improve on-time performance of the state-supported services. Passenger service cannot be a viable alternative to vehicle travel if individuals do not know when they will arrive at their destination. Additionally, a need for a second Long Bridge to connect Virginia to the Northeast Corridor is necessary for any expanded service.