

Western Rail Initiative Brief and Related Amtrak Service Improvements

VPRA Board Meeting – May 2022



Norfolk Southern Agreement: Roanoke Route & NRV

- Amtrak service to Lynchburg began in 2009 with one daily round trip (RT) between Lynchburg and Boston. Actual ridership was more than three times the forecasted amount of 33,100.
- Lynchburg service extended to Roanoke in November 2017. Route carried 220,000+ passengers in 2019.
- Service expansion announced in 2021. NS will allow a second Roanoke train in summer 2022 after financial close.
- Both Roanoke trains will be extended to the New River Valley (NRV) after infrastructure projects are complete. Forecast of 80,000 annual net new rides along the whole NRV Corridor.
- Legal agreements with NS finalized in January. Financial Close expected in June 2022 after environmental, survey, title work, and federal clearance are complete.



Proposed Extension of Virginia Sponsored Amtrak Service to New River Valley

Ongoing Work for Financial Close

- Title Examination
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Update
- Surface Transportation Board Determination
- Cut Points Survey
- Review of Corridor Agreements
- Preparation of Instruments
- Purchase of Insurance

Improvements by Norfolk Southern

Nokesville to Calverton Double Track: \$50M

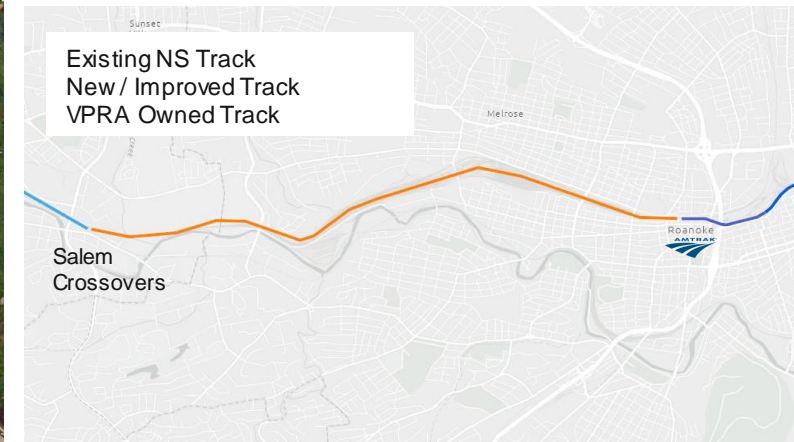
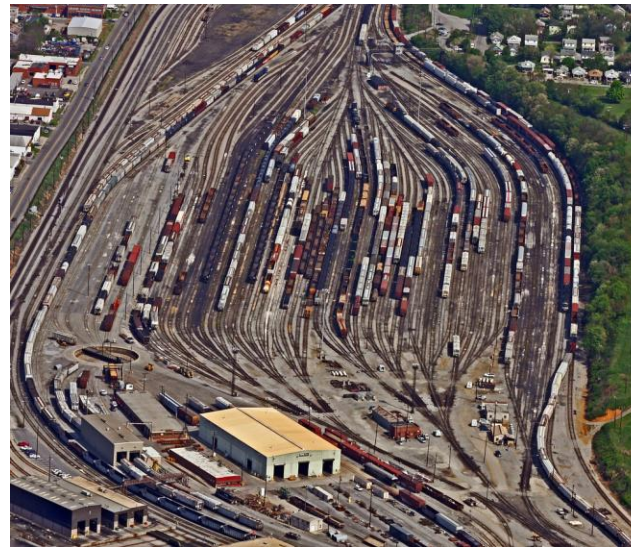
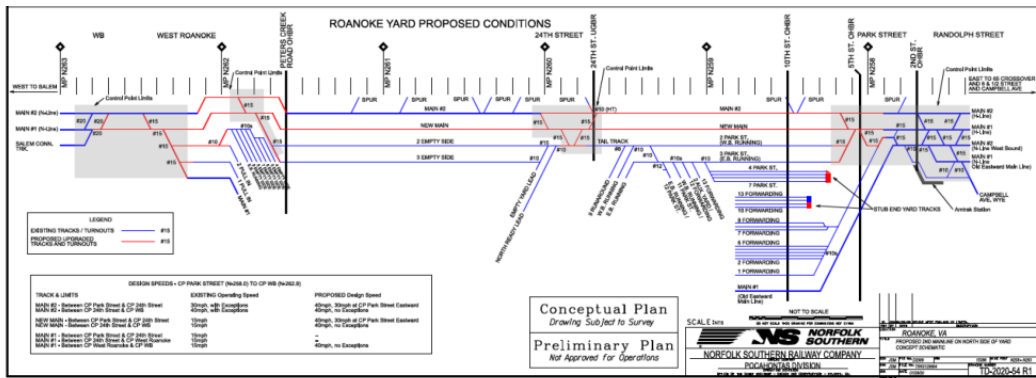
- Construct over 7 miles of double track on the NS line, which provides for a continuous 2 track corridor for 22 miles from Manassas to Remington.
- Extra capacity will solve a bottleneck and support improved passenger operations.
- Includes property takings.
- Construction estimated to be complete late 2024.
- Virginia successfully negotiated for commencement of 2nd train before this project was complete; NS demanded this project be complete first.



Improvements by Norfolk Southern

Roanoke West Yard: \$36.5M

- Construction of tracks to allow a passenger train to bypass congested yard tracks through the existing Norfolk Southern yard.
- Includes a reconstruction of several crossovers and industrial leads to accommodate the new tracks.
- Construction estimated to be complete in 2025.



- **Bridge Enhancement & Replacement:**

- \$14.3 million is included in the VPRR budget to keep 25 bridges in good repair, but VPRR would like to replace some bridges before the end of their useful life.
- **Merrimac Tunnel:** \$47.9 million is in the VPRR Budget to retrofit the mile-long Merrimac tunnel to meet fire code standards to allow for passengers to safely depart the train and tunnel in case of emergency.
 - **Track Upgrades:** \$22.5 million is in the VPRR budget to accommodate passenger rail service and perform capital improvements of track and 23 culverts on the VPRR purchased V-Line to maintain a state of good repair.

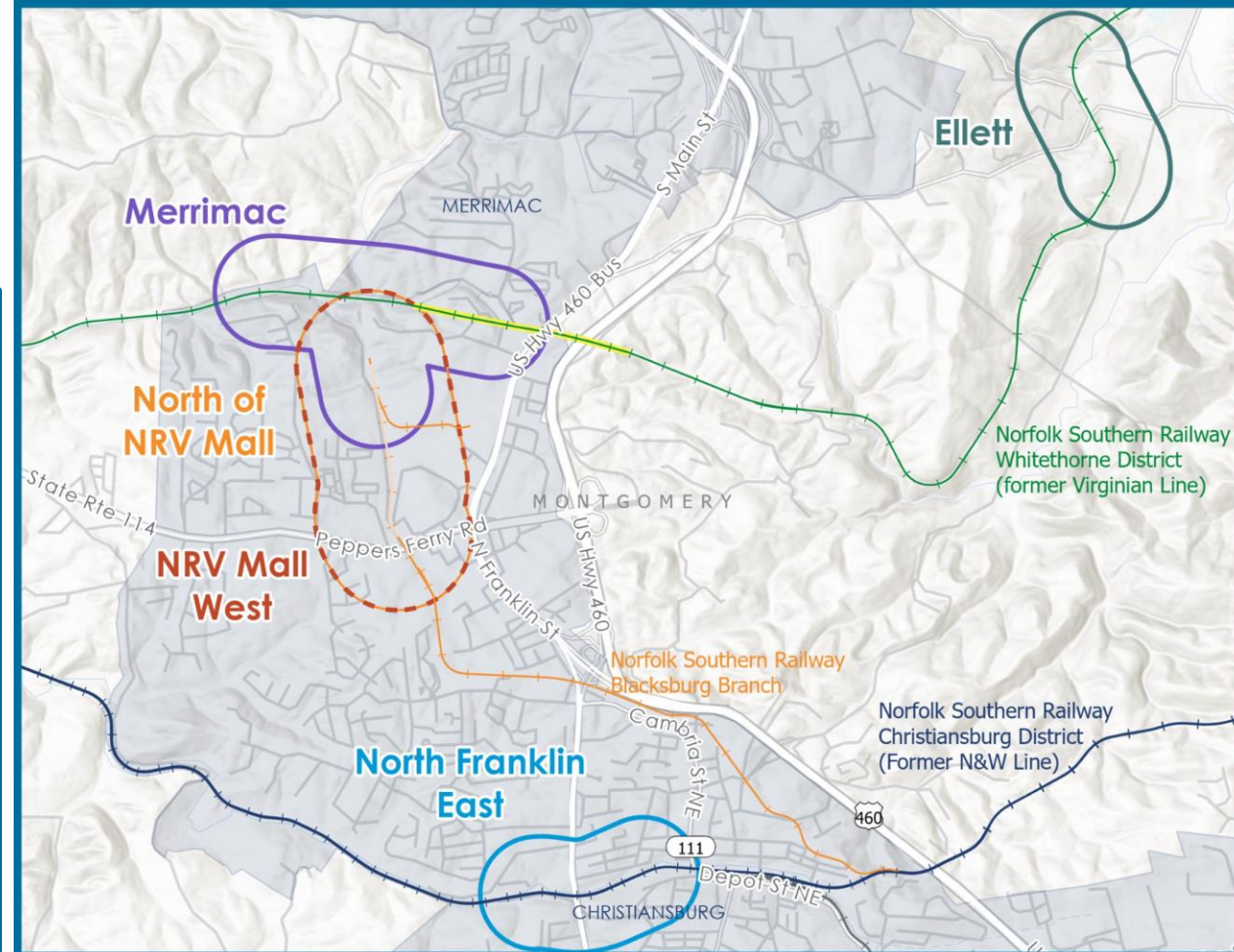
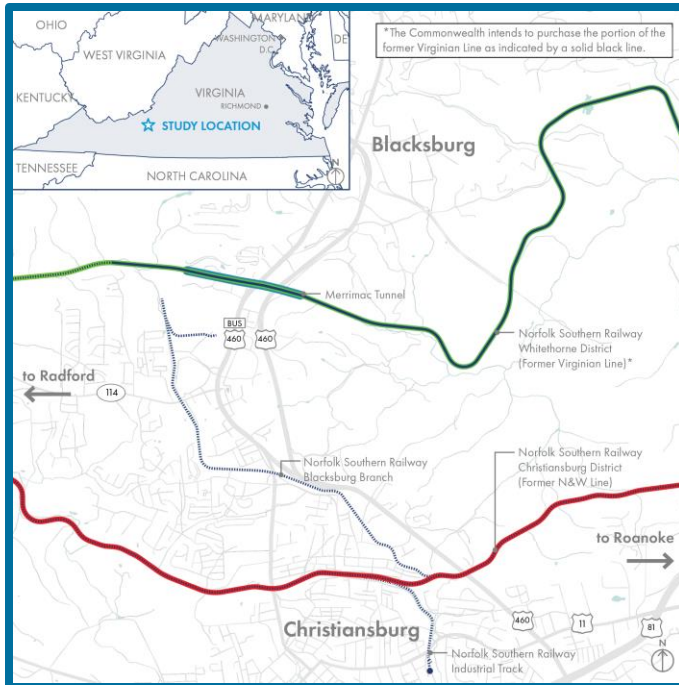


Improvements by VPRA: Station Study Area Locations

5 Alternatives

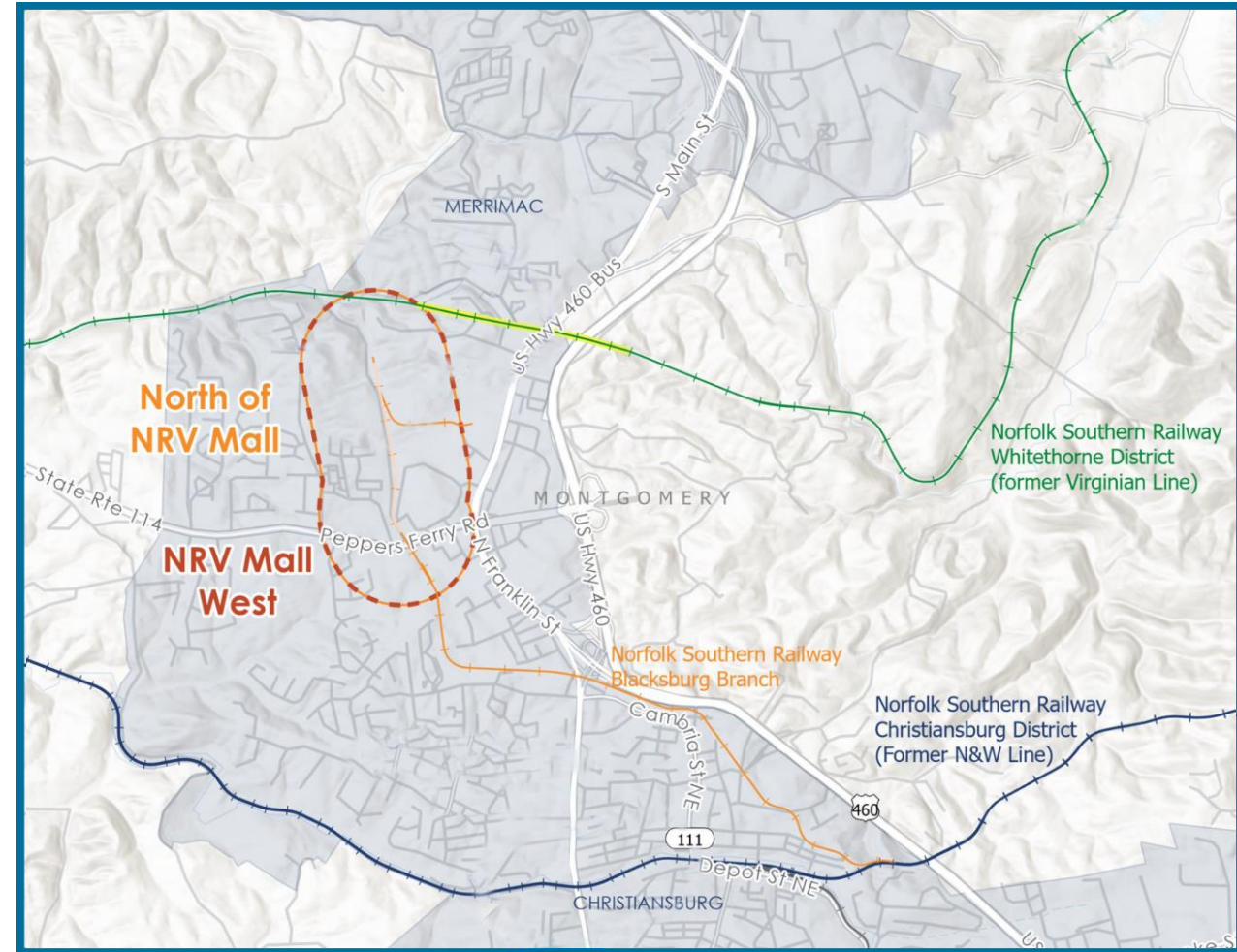
Considered

1. North Franklin East
2. Ellett
3. Merrimac
4. NRV Mall North
5. NRV Mall West

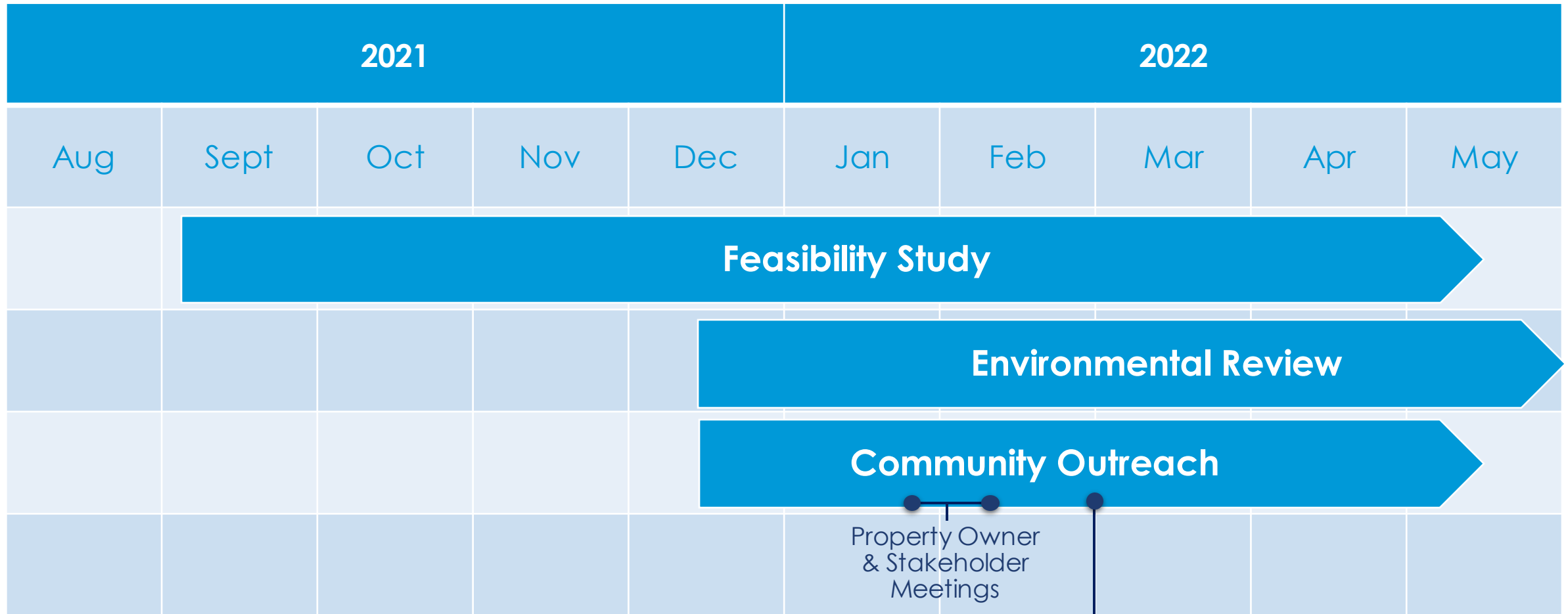


NRV Study Area Locations

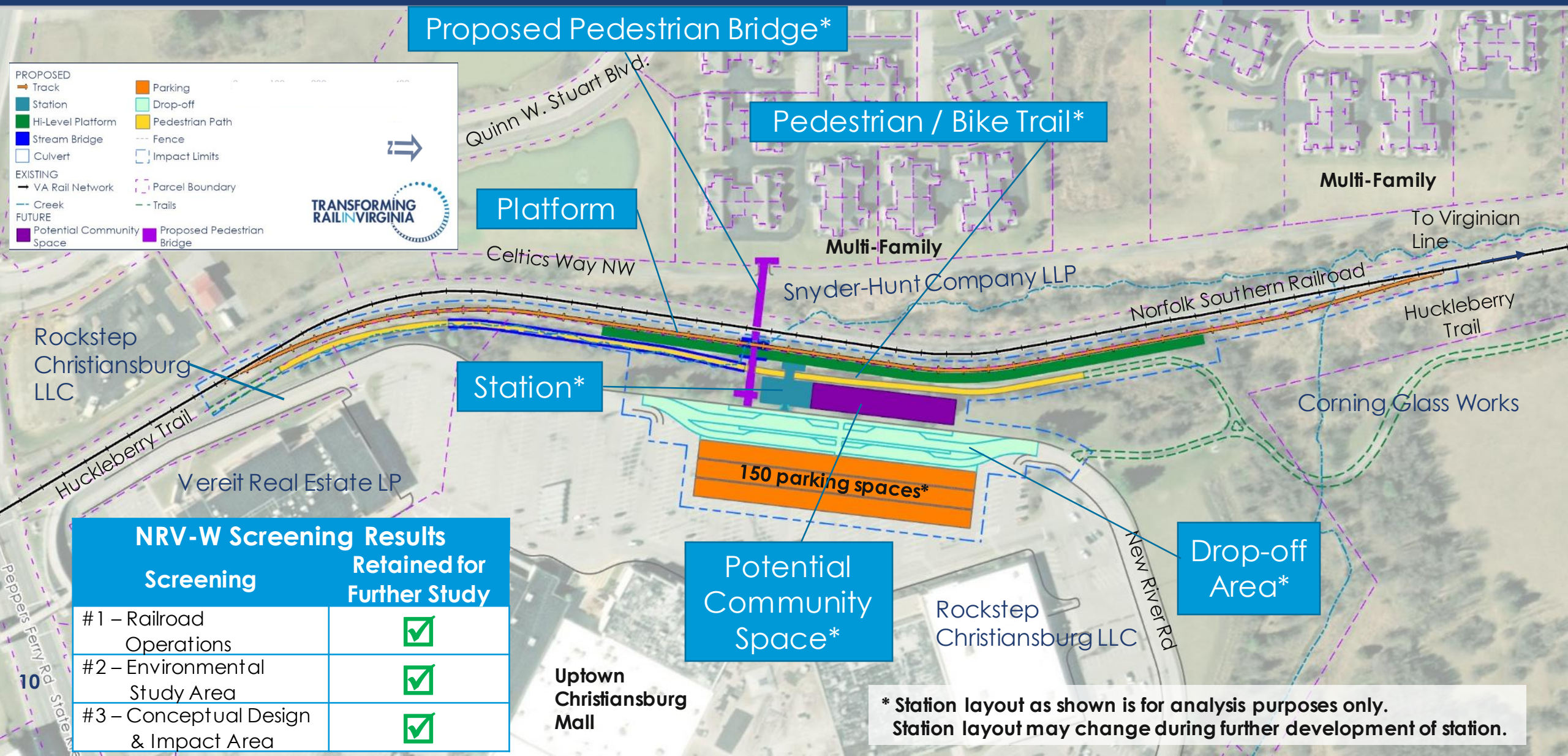
- North Franklin East was eliminated early in the Feasibility Study due to its location on the NS Main Line.
- NRV-W & NRV-N were the alternatives that received the most amount of favorable comments in the surveys.
- NRV-W & NRV-N are the most financially advantageous due to existing infrastructure.



Feasibility Study Timeline



Station Alternatives & Screening – NRV West



NRV-W Screening Results

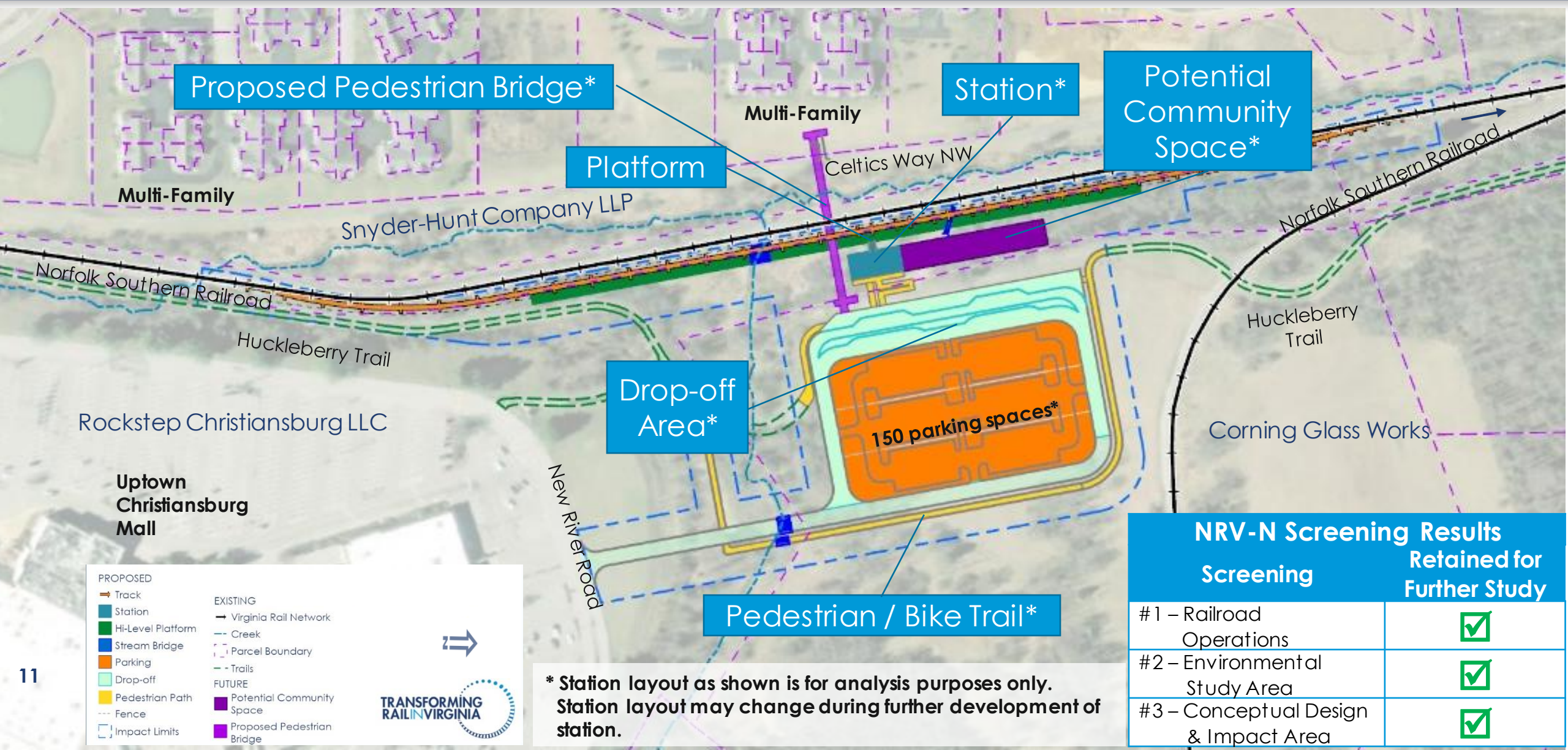
Screening

Retained for Further Study

#1 – Railroad Operations	✓
#2 – Environmental Study Area	✓
#3 – Conceptual Design & Impact Area	✓

* Station layout as shown is for analysis purposes only. Station layout may change during further development of station.

Station Alternatives & Screening – NRV North

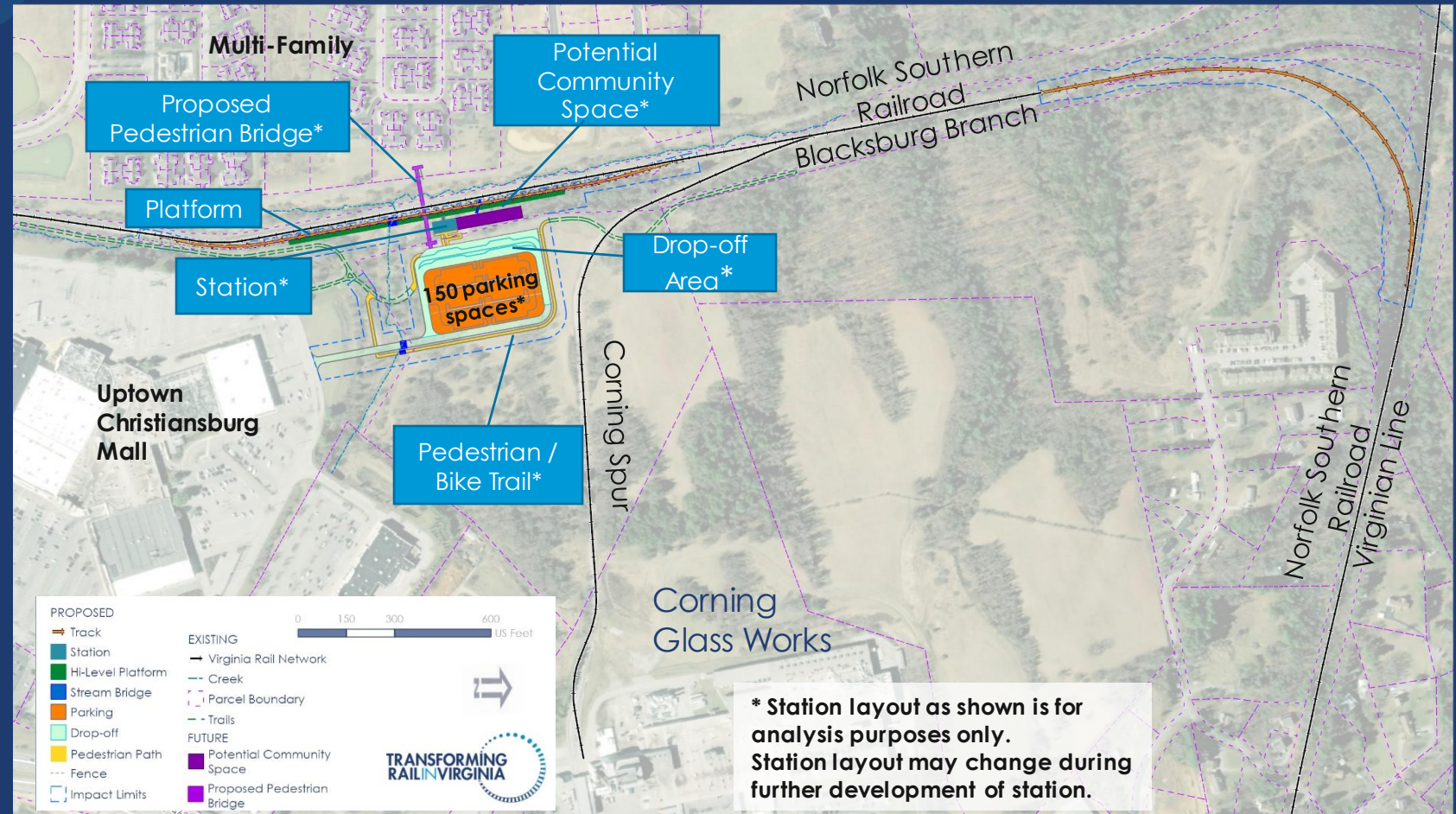


NRV-N Screening Results	
Screening	Retained for Further Study
#1 – Railroad Operations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
#2 – Environmental Study Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
#3 – Conceptual Design & Impact Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

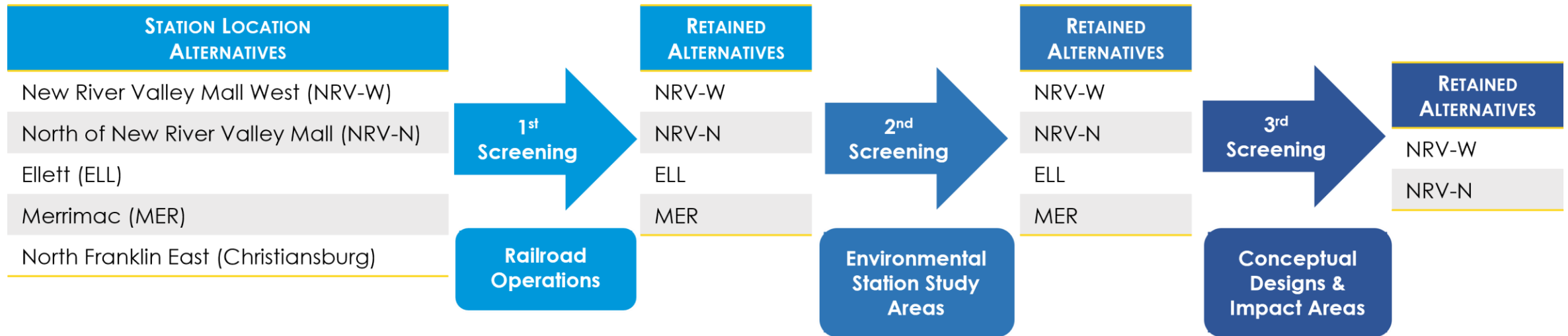
* Station layout as shown is for analysis purposes only. Station layout may change during further development of station.

Additional Infrastructure – NRV-W and NRV-N

- Track connection between the Blacksburg Branch and the Virginian Line.
- Connecting Track Earthwork.



Screening



Capital Cost Estimates*

Station Alternative Sites	Offsite	Station System	Total Construction
NRV – N	\$21.4M	\$35.9M	\$57.3M
NRV – W	\$21.4M	\$34.7M	\$56.1M
Merrimac	\$25.5M	\$49.8M	\$75.3M
Ellett	\$97.2M	\$80.1M	\$177.3M

Station Systems

- Track
- Turnouts
- Fencing
- Platform
- Signals
- Earthwork
- Retaining walls
- Maintenance facility
- Caretaker station
- Pedestrian bridge
- Parking / drop-off area
- Staircase / elevators
- Pedestrian walkway
- Pedestrian / bike path

Offsite

- Connecting track
- Earthwork
- Utilities
- Drainage
- Signalized intersections
- Roadway improvements
- Shared-use path

Public Outreach

Virtual Meetings

- Seven Impacted property owner meetings 1/25 – 2/25/2022
- Three Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings 2/7 – 2/10/2022
 - Educational, business, & economic development
 - Government & transportation
 - Rail advocacy
- Two Public meetings: 2/28 – 3/1/2022 – 188 attendees

Targeted Outreach & Media

- Project webpage launched 12/22/2021
- Email to listserv announcing project launch 12/22/2021
- Three online newspaper articles on the Study 12/23 – 12/28/2021
- Certified letters mailed to impacted property owners 12/29/2022
- Four emails to listserv announcing public meetings 2/4 – 2/28/2022
- Three online news articles on the Public Meetings 2/13 – 2/23/2022
- Six social media posts - website and Survey 1 12/22 – 3/14/2022
- Nine social media posts - public meetings & Survey 2 1/28 – 3/14/2022

General Public Sentiments

Survey 1: 2,630 participants (12/22 – 1/31)

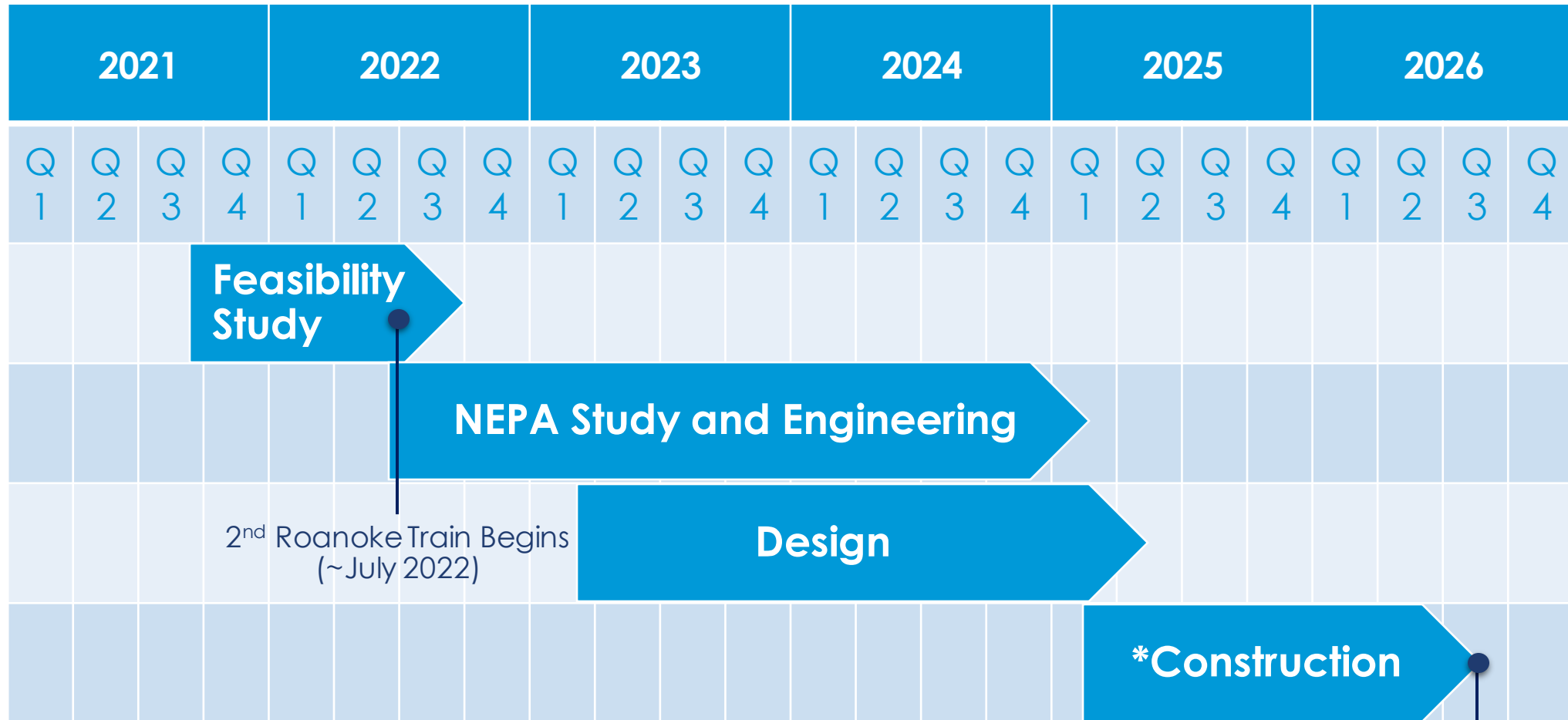
- General sentiment is people are excited and looking forward to this becoming a reality.
- Access to site depends on location, however most respondents can't walk/bike (although they would like to) and will likely have to drive.
- Both NRV Mall sites are preferred sites.

Survey 2: 158 participants (2/28 – 3/15)

- Ease of access and connection of Huckleberry Trail is important.
- The pedestrian bridge location and connection raises concerns for adjacent neighbors.
- Multi-modal and public transit access/service to station, connectivity, and student access are important issues.



Next Steps - Project Timeline



Amtrak Service Expansion

- **Service Expansion:** One additional round trip on Roanoke and Norfolk routes
- **Start Date:** New service is anticipated to begin in July 2022 on both routes
- **Current Status:** Schedules are currently under review by CSX and NS and are subject to change.

Roanoke Service

Roanoke Service		
Northbound		
Roanoke		Washington D.C.
Departure		Arrival
6:32 AM	→	11:34 AM
4:35 PM*	→	9:35 PM*
Southbound		
Washington D.C.		Roanoke
Departure		Arrival
5:00 PM	→	10:06 PM
8:05 AM*	→	12:56 PM*

* Denotes new roundtrip

Norfolk Service

Norfolk Service		
Northbound		
Norfolk		Washington D.C.
Departure		Arrival
6:15 AM	→	10:46 AM
9:00 AM	→	1:28 PM
1:00 PM*	→	5:38 PM*
Southbound		
Washington D.C.		Norfolk
Departure		Arrival
2:36 PM	→	7:07 PM
5:45 PM	→	10:26 PM
12:05 PM*	→	4:47 PM*

* Denotes new roundtrip



Norfolk, VA, Amtrak Station

Questions?