

# VPRA 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



## About Us

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority is an independent authority created by the Virginia General Assembly in 2020 to promote, sustain and increase the availability of passenger rail and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. We are changing the future of rail transportation in Virginia by expanding high-quality, modern passenger rail service across the Commonwealth, making it more frequent, reliable, and convenient.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the three years since the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority was created, we have worked to reach our goals to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. Our focus has been twofold – building new infrastructure for a dedicated passenger rail corridor while growing our existing Amtrak Virginia service.

Our fiscal year 2023 highlights include:

- Reaching an unprecedented growth in ridership, topping pre-pandemic numbers, and continuing to grow with more than a million passengers traveling on Virginia state-supported trains in the last year.
- Advancing numerous infrastructure projects to key design work milestones – among them Long Bridge and the Franconia Springfield Bypass to 30% design and Alexandria 4th Track to 60% design.
- Securing \$3.2 million in dedicated federal funding for the New River Valley Passenger Service Extension and the Newport News Transportation Center.
- Advancing the Long Bridge Project from early design to actively procuring construction contractors.
- Continuing to secure necessary funding including a \$20 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant awarded by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) in support of the Bridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing of the Long Bridge Project.
- Working with our partners at Amtrak, designing a more sustainable way to travel with the new Amtrak Airo dual-powered equipment with both electric and diesel engine capabilities.
- Growing our team from a few dozen to nearly 50 professionals all with varied experiences and backgrounds but working towards a common goal.

Though our Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, the Commonwealth is taking the lead in the expansion of passenger rail, building the infrastructure needed to develop a new rail corridor for its citizens – something not seen anywhere else in the country.

The construction of Long Bridge will alleviate rail congestion, not only between Virginia and Washington, DC, but along the entire East Coast of the US, and the planned infrastructure improvements will result in expanded service that is more reliable and convenient.

Each of these efforts are noteworthy, and combined, they represent a commitment to passenger rail that will benefit Virginians for generations to come. Greater frequency and more reliable travel times are probably the two most exciting features for your average Virginian.



**DJ Stadler,**  
Executive Director



**Mike McLaughlin,**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Steve Pittard,**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Michael Westermann,**  
General Counsel



**Joan Panik,**  
Chief Administrative Officer

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE VPRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since the creation of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority in 2020, the General Assembly's vision to expand passenger rail service to reach even more Virginians has begun to take shape. Partnerships have grown, agreements have been signed, and plans are being advanced. We have seen the strength of our Amtrak Virginia service evolve as ridership continues to set records, far exceeding pre-pandemic numbers. This growth shows that passenger rail will be an integral part of the Commonwealth's multimodal transportation system for years to come.

VPRA's Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative is doing just that – transforming passenger rail throughout Virginia. As one of 17 states with state-supported Amtrak service, Virginia is breaking the mold by not only offering passenger rail service, but by building the necessary infrastructure to greatly expand service.

As we look to the coming year, Virginians will see our commitment to passenger rail come to life as construction is slated to begin on several infrastructure projects, most notably Long Bridge. This once-in-a-lifetime project will connect the Commonwealth with Washington, DC, across the Potomac River.

It will add two new tracks, doubling the rail capacity across the river and alleviating a chokepoint that has caused delays to both passenger and freight trains for years. Additional capacity will also be built in Northern Virginia to align with the bridge once constructed. All of these projects will work together to provide more consistent and convenient rail service along the East Coast, benefiting not only Virginia, but also our neighboring states.

Our projects will begin in Northern Virginia but our commitment to expanding passenger rail extends throughout the Commonwealth. We are working to expand service from Roanoke into the New River Valley as well as taking the first steps to improve service between Richmond and Raleigh. While these projects are in their infancy, their successful completion will bring reliable passenger rail service to even more Virginians.

Through the hard work of our VPRA team and partners, Virginia is a national leader in passenger rail. We are striving toward our goal to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth.



JENNIFER DEBRUHL,  
CHAIR



THE HONORABLE  
SHARON BULOVA



SANDY BUSHUE



VICTOR CARDWELL



RICH DALTON



JOHN DELANDRO III



PATRICIA DOERSCH



THE HONORABLE  
THELMA DRAKE



RODERICK  
"ROD" HALL



BRUNO MAESTRI



CYNTHIA MOSES-  
NEDD



CHARLES  
"CHARLIE" PAYNE



BETH RHINEHART



JAMES SPORE



THE HONORABLE  
JOHN WATKINS

# OUR CULTURE

## OUR MISSION

To promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth.

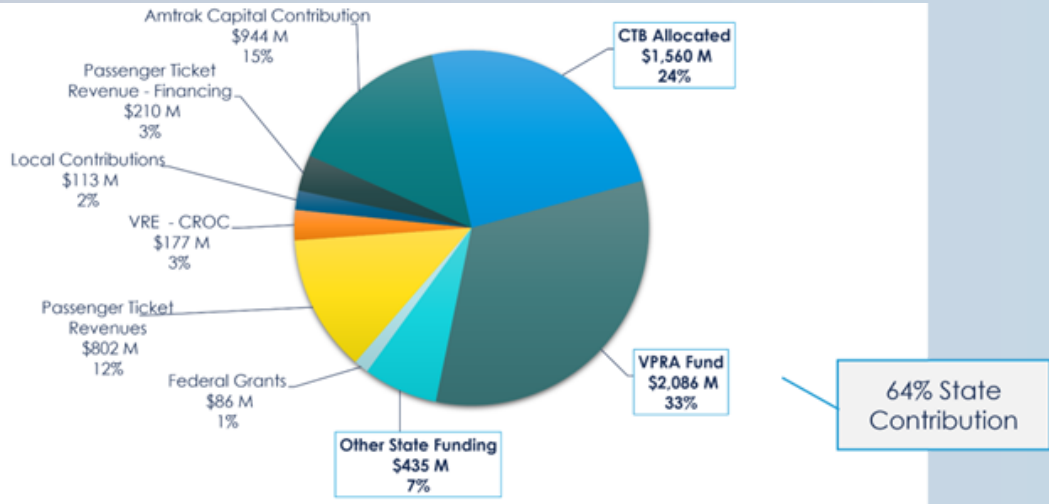
## OUR VISION

To deliver passenger rail service as an integrated, affordable, convenient travel option that benefits the Commonwealth.

## OUR VALUES

- Foster Leadership and Public Service
- Promote Innovation and Excellence
- Ensure Safety and Reliability
- Advance Environmental Sustainability
- Demonstrate Financial Stewardship
- Champion Equity and Inclusion

# FISCAL YEAR 2023 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Project Description	PY Expense	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	Total Project Budget
I-95 Corridor Projects	433.8	219.5	306.6	712.9	863.7	603.8	473.7	452.8	224.8	107.1	4,398.7
Western Rail Corridor Capital Projects	41.0	17.4	61.9	61.5	43.5	22.7	7.9	8.6	9.5	-	274.0
Other Capital Projects	-	27.6	129.2	32.5	9.0	2.5	2.5	-	-	-	203.3
<b>Total Capital Projects</b>	<b>474.8</b>	<b>264.5</b>	<b>497.7</b>	<b>806.9</b>	<b>916.2</b>	<b>629.0</b>	<b>484.1</b>	<b>461.4</b>	<b>234.3</b>	<b>107.1</b>	<b>4,876.0</b>
<b>Capital Grants</b>	<b>107.9</b>	<b>125.2</b>	<b>120.0</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>619.5</b>
<b>Operations</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>126.0</b>	<b>148.9</b>	<b>161.0</b>	<b>193.7</b>	<b>203.4</b>	<b>212.3</b>	<b>223.0</b>	<b>248.4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,614.7</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$680.7</b>	<b>\$515.7</b>	<b>\$766.6</b>	<b>\$1,050.2</b>	<b>\$1,167.8</b>	<b>\$861.7</b>	<b>\$725.7</b>	<b>\$714.0</b>	<b>\$520.7</b>	<b>\$107.1</b>	<b>\$7,110.2</b>
Unfunded I-95 Corridor Projects	-	-	-	-	1.5	13.7	119.7	339.6	152.1	72.4	699.0
Unfunded Other Capital Projects	-	-	1.0	4.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.7
<b>Total Unfunded</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	<b>\$1.0</b>	<b>\$4.7</b>	<b>\$1.5</b>	<b>\$13.7</b>	<b>\$119.7</b>	<b>\$339.6</b>	<b>\$152.1</b>	<b>\$72.4</b>	<b>\$704.7</b>
<b>Total Budgeted</b>	<b>\$680.7</b>	<b>\$515.7</b>	<b>\$765.6</b>	<b>\$1,045.5</b>	<b>\$1,166.3</b>	<b>\$848.0</b>	<b>\$606.0</b>	<b>\$374.4</b>	<b>\$368.6</b>	<b>\$34.7</b>	<b>\$6,405.5</b>

VPRF Financial Plan Funding Sources and Uses

# TRANSFORMING RAIL IN VIRGINIA



The Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative will change the future of rail transportation by acquiring railroad right-of-way, increasing rail capacity, and reworking passenger and freight operations to improve reliability and increase rail service in Virginia. Several VPRA projects are moving into critical project delivery phases, including final design and construction.

## I-95 CORRIDOR PHASE I

- Alexandria Fourth Track
- Franconia to Lorton Third Track
- Franconia-Springfield
- Bridges over Newington Road
- Potomac Creek Third Track South (Siding A)
- Woodford to Milford Third Track (Siding B)
- Hanover Third Track (Siding C)

## I-95 CORRIDOR PHASE II

- Long Bridge
- Neabsco Creek to Woodbridge Third Track (Siding D)
- Aquia Creek Third Track (Siding E)
- Crossroads Third Track (Siding F)
- L'Enfant Fourth Track and Station Improvements

## WESTERN RAIL CORRIDOR

- New River Valley Passenger Rail
- Service Expansion

## S-LINE CORRIDOR

- Richmond to Raleigh:
- Southeast Passenger Rail
- Corridor Development

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## LONG BRIDGE PROJECT

The Long Bridge Project is currently VPRA's most significant endeavor, as it has regional and national significance. The Project will construct a new, two-track railroad bridge next to the existing Long Bridge across the Potomac River, creating a four-track corridor and relieving congestion between Virginia and Washington, DC. Advancement of this project is critical to expanding passenger rail service in the Commonwealth.



Over the past year, the Long Bridge Project hit several major milestones as design work advanced to 30%. The Project is now actively procuring construction contractors for the North Package, which includes all of the construction activity north of the Potomac River, and the South Package, which includes the rail bridges across the Potomac.

## ALEXANDRIA FOURTH TRACK

The Alexandria Fourth Track Project will add a fourth mainline track between Northern Virginia and Washington, DC. The project will begin just south of the George Washington Memorial Parkway at the southern end of the Long Bridge Project and end at the AF interlocking, west of the Telegraph Road overpass. The project will involve the construction of approximately six miles of new track in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, generally staying within the existing railroad right-of-way. The existing tracks will be shifted to improve speeds and accommodate station and platform improvements. The final design is anticipated to be completed in the first quarter of 2024 and construction is expected to begin in 2024.



## FRANCONIA AREA PROJECTS

The Franconia Bypass Project is a 1.8-mile-long dedicated passenger rail bridge in the northern VRE Corridor (Franconia-Washington, DC) that will enhance passenger rail access and eliminate up to 286 conflicts a day between passenger and freight trains. The bypass is within the limits of VPRA's Franconia to Lorton Third Track project, which extends the current three-track section north of the VRE Franconia-Springfield Station south to Lorton VRE Station (approximately 6 miles). The Washington, DC, to Fredericksburg section is the most congested part of the rail network in Virginia. VRE operations will especially benefit from less train interference, as they consistently report interference as one of the most common causes of delay. It will also enable the region to maximize the benefits of other rail infrastructure improvements being planned or underway, such as the planned construction of a four-track corridor between Alexandria and Washington DC, including the Long Bridge Project, Alexandria 4th Track Project, and VRE station projects.



## QUANTICO STATION IMPROVEMENTS

The Quantico Station, which serves both Amtrak and VRE trains, is undergoing a major station improvement project designed to improve passenger and freight rail service through the area.

Construction, which is led by VRE with funding from VPRA, began in 2021 and has progressed significantly over the past year. Project work currently underway includes constructing a new third mainline track through the area to relieve congestion. In addition, the project calls for extending and improving the existing platform on Track 2 (closest to the station) and replacing the Track 3 side platform with a new island platform between the existing Track 3 and the new third track. Overhead pedestrian crossings will allow passengers to move between the tracks safely.



## ETTRICK STATION IMPROVEMENTS

VPRA received Ettrick Station Improvements Project received federal funding in 2021 under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program. The total budget for all station upgrades is \$11.8 million with \$6.4 million coming from the CRISI grant and the remaining funding to be provided by VPRA. Current plans call for construction to begin in 2025 and continue through 2027. Located in the Historic Ettrick area of Chesterfield County, the station primarily serves Petersburg, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie County, and Prince George County.



The Project will provide essential state-of-good repair and ADA upgrades by replacing and reconstructing the station platform and canopy, upgrading the station building facilities, and reconstructing the parking lot. Once completed, the project will provide a safer and more secure environment, improve satisfaction when traveling by rail, enhance customer service, and encourage future ridership growth.

## NEW RIVER VALLEY PASSENGER RAIL EXPANSION

Last summer, VPRA increased its Amtrak Virginia service along the I-81 corridor to Southwest Virginia with the launch of a second roundtrip between Washington, DC, and Roanoke. Over the past year, this service has grown exponentially, and in June, 27,424 passengers traveled on the service, an increase of 27.2% over June of 2022.

VPRA continues to plan for the extension of service from Roanoke to the New River Valley (Christiansburg) which has not had passenger rail service since 1979. Last summer, the Commonwealth acquired 28.5 miles of the railroad right-of-way from the Salem Crossovers to Christiansburg from Norfolk Southern (NS) through the Western Rail Agreement. Currently, the project is in the planning and development phase, which includes environmental evaluation work and public involvement. Needed infrastructure improvements include track and signal upgrades.



# SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

## BREAKING RIDERSHIP RECORDS

Ridership on the Commonwealth's Amtrak Virginia service continued to grow last year with more than one million people traveling. That set an annual record for ridership since the Commonwealth launched state-supported service in 2009. Since that time, the Commonwealth's service has grown to include eight roundtrips daily with stops at 17 stations along four corridors. In FY23, more than 1.26 million passengers traveled on Amtrak Virginia, setting a record.

## IMPROVING SERVICE STANDARDS

In 2023, VPRRA began its Supplemental Standards Initiative in partnership with Amtrak. The Supplemental Standards Initiative is a data-driven framework for accountability related to the customer experience including cleanliness, Wi-Fi, on-time performance, food and beverage, passenger safety, and overall station experience.

## GROWING BRAND RECOGNITION

In FY23, Virginia's State-supported service, AmtrakVA, marketing earned over:

- 50 million impressions across online and print
- 346,184 clicks
- Average online click thru rate (CTR) of 71%
- Facebook/Instagram, Google, and YouTube reported \$7.1 million in conversion revenue in FY23, \$4.5 million over FY22 conversions

## PARTNERING TO PROMOTE RAIL TRAVEL

Travelers in and around Virginia are increasingly choosing passenger rail to reach their destinations. Through strategic partnerships and marketing opportunities, Amtrak Virginia has created a data-driven program to increase brand recognition and establish Amtrak Virginia as the superior travel choice in the Commonwealth.



# OUR IMPACT

## RAIL SAFETY

Improving safety near railroads requires greater public awareness and understanding of the risks involved and ways to prevent these tragic and avoidable injuries and fatalities. VPRA is implementing a public outreach and awareness strategies to emphasize the dangers of ignoring safety warnings at level crossing and trespassing on rail property to reduce avoidable deaths, injuries, and damage caused by incidents involving trains and citizens

In September VPRA recognized Rail Safety Month with an official proclamation from Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, and an online toolkit with rail safety materials, available for use by all Virginians. VPRA worked with our partners, VRE, Operation Lifesaver, and YOVASO-Youth of Virginia Speak Out, to host rail safety at events around the state including at the Richmond Railroad Museum, the Children's Museum of Richmond, Ettrick Station in Petersburg, and the Woodbridge VRE Station. An Op-Ed on the importance of rail safety by VPRA Executive Director DJ Stadtler also appeared in the Virginian-Pilot.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Ongoing and varied community and stakeholder engagement is essential to VPRA's work. It informs us of current and ongoing passenger rail needs in the Commonwealth; allows us to educate about and build support for the TRV vision; and helps us identify potential concerns or conflicts that could hinder VPRA's progress. We actively build relationships with all levels of government, residents, businesses, advocacy groups, current riders, future riders, train operators, rail facility owners, funding partners, and beyond. Strong lines of communication with our diverse stakeholders allow VPRA to adapt and grow over time, and maintain a widespread public commitment to high quality passenger rail investments in the Commonwealth.

VPRA's community engagement in fiscal year 2023 has ranged from large-scale virtual public meetings to pop-ups at VRE stations and community events, Supervisor briefings, door-to-door canvassing, letters, and neighborhood discussions. VPRA also works to ensure outreach is accessible online through website updates, e-blasts, online surveys, and an active social media presence. We encourage questions and reply individually to all inquiries. Through these diverse outreach strategies, we are able to engage our current followers and grow that base of interest.



## SUSTAINABILITY

Passenger rail is the most energy-efficient mode of transportation on a passenger-miles-traveled (PMT) basis, emitting 46% less greenhouse gas emissions than cars and 34% less than airplanes. It also removes tens of millions of passengers from highways and airports each year, mitigating air pollution and encouraging denser development around stations.

VPRA is working to reduce emissions and highway use by increasing the diversity of transportation modes and choices. VPRA's suite of projects will include new passenger rail service, which will reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by shifting passengers from highways to rail. Our projects are estimated to avoid 850,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over 30 years, and the environmental cost savings are estimated to be over \$34 million.



# THE TRACK AHEAD

## FY24 GOALS



### ENSURE THE ORGANIZATION CAN DELIVER AGAINST ITS GOALS WITH THE RIGHT STAFFING AND RESOURCES

Implement second phase of **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)** initiative by **EOM May 2024**  
Implement a **standardized project management process** to allow for increasingly accurate baseline scope, schedule, and budgets (cash flows) by **EOM March 2024**



### SERVICE AND RIDERSHIP

Increase ridership by **3%** (state FY24 ridership compared to state FY23 ridership)  
Achieve a cost recovery goal of **67%**

### ADVANCE KEY PROJECT MILESTONES



Issue **RFP for Long Bridge South package** by **EOM March 2024**  
Issue **Phase 1 Notice to Proceed (NTP)** on **Long Bridge North package** by **EOM January 2024**  
Complete contractor selection for **Alexandria 4th Track** by **EOM May 2024**  
Complete **30% design** of **New River Valley Project** and present results to Board at the **January 2024 Board Meeting**

