

# WELCOME

April 18, 2024

## New River Valley Passenger Rail Project

### Public Open House

Montgomery County Government Center  
Christiansburg, VA



# AGENDA

- Introduce VPRA
- New River Valley Passenger Rail Project Overview
- What's Happening Now?
- Review Alternatives
- Today's Open House



# WHAT IS THE VIRGINIA PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY?

## MISSION

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

## VISION

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

## VALUES



Fostering Leadership  
and Public Service



Ensuring Safety  
and Reliability



Demonstrating  
Financial Stewardship



Promoting Innovation  
and Excellence



Advancing Environmental  
Sustainability



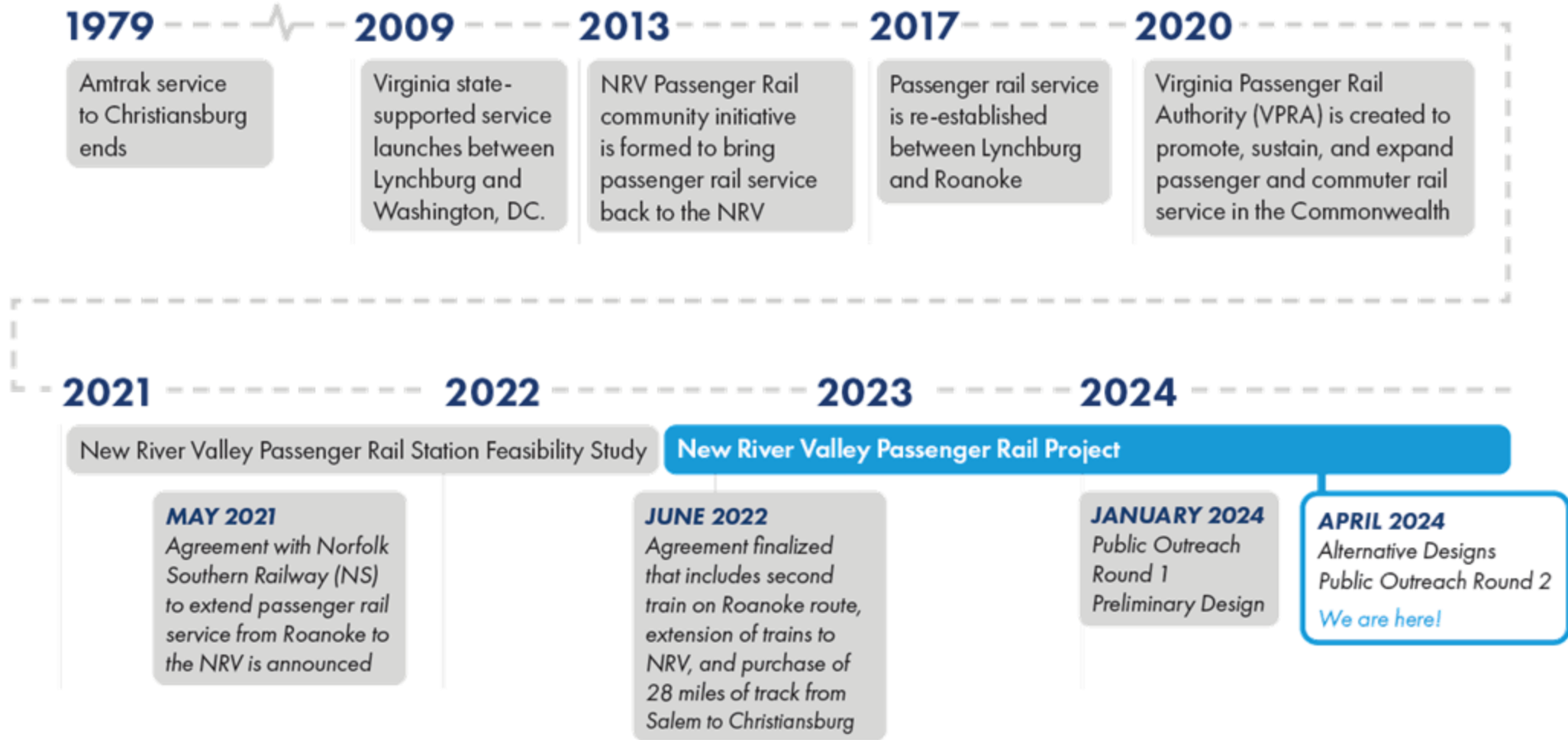
Championing Equity  
and Inclusion

# BACKGROUND

- May 5, 2021: The Commonwealth & Norfolk Southern (NS) announce an agreement to extend passenger rail service to the New River Valley (NRV).
- June 2022: Agreement with NS for purchase of ~28 miles of the Virginian Line (V-Line) finalized and 2<sup>nd</sup> Amtrak roundtrip from the Northeast Corridor to Roanoke began the following month.

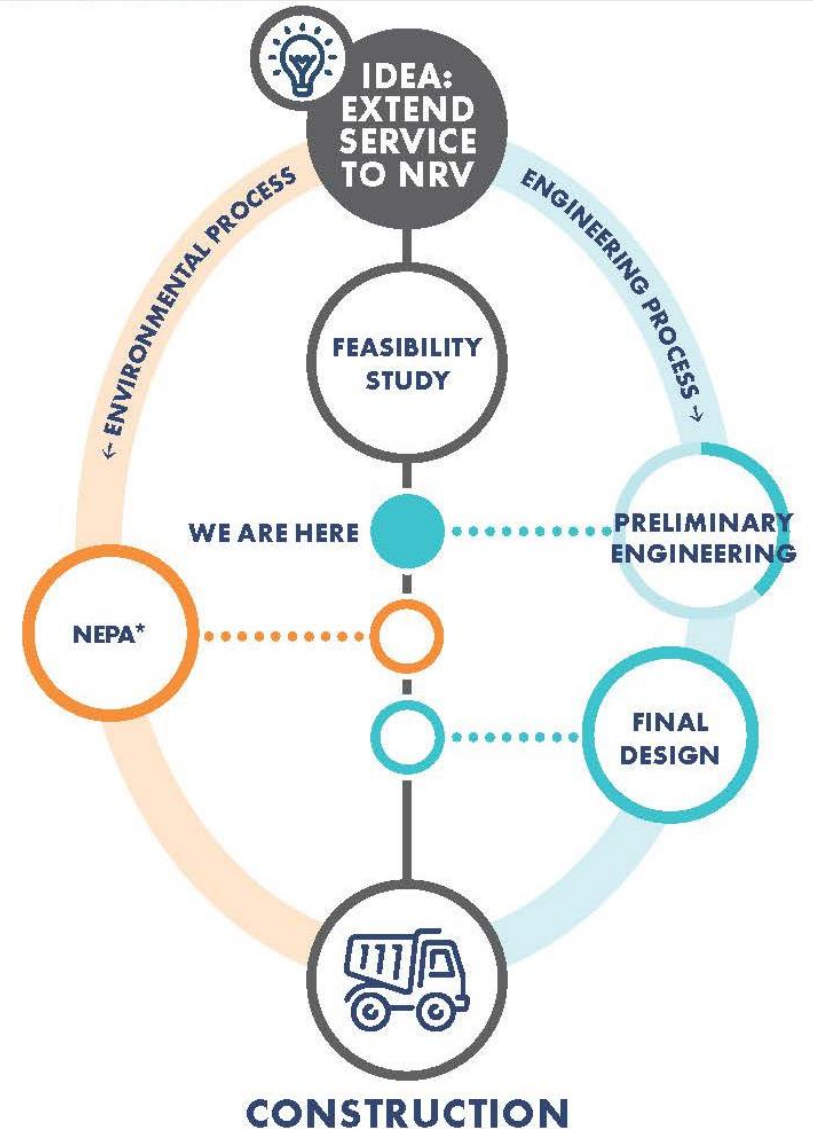


# HISTORY



# NRV PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Starts with an idea
- Feasibility Study was the first step in the project development process
- Preliminary engineering (30% design)
- 60% Design
- Environmental process
  - Alternatives Analysis
  - NEPA
  - Permitting
- Final design
- Construction



\* National Environmental Policy Act

# WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW



**Completing preliminary engineering** as a part of project development

- Developing potential design concepts that include all of the infrastructure needed to extend passenger rail service from Roanoke to the New River Valley.



**Preparing to address the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**



**Gathering your input** to help VPRA evaluate the design concepts, a process sometimes called alternatives analysis and help refine the Purpose & Need statement.

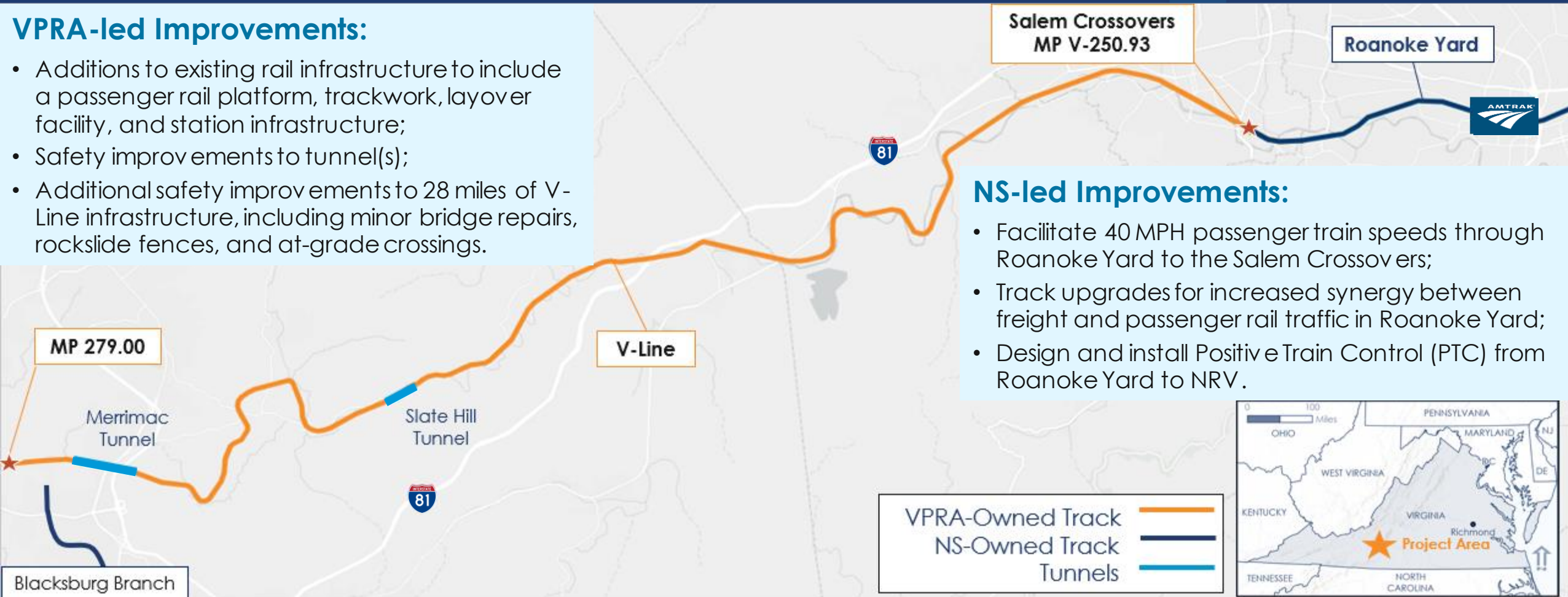
# NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO BRING SERVICE TO NRV

## VPRA-led Improvements:

- Additions to existing rail infrastructure to include a passenger rail platform, trackwork, layover facility, and station infrastructure;
- Safety improvements to tunnel(s);
- Additional safety improvements to 28 miles of V-Line infrastructure, including minor bridge repairs, rockslide fences, and at-grade crossings.

## NS-led Improvements:

- Facilitate 40 MPH passenger train speeds through Roanoke Yard to the Salem Crossovers;
- Track upgrades for increased synergy between freight and passenger rail traffic in Roanoke Yard;
- Design and install Positive Train Control (PTC) from Roanoke Yard to NRV.





# NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

- Federal law requiring federal agencies to:
  - Consider environmental impacts of proposed actions (human and natural)
  - Evaluate alternative actions
  - Integrate public into the decision-making process
- NEPA is a process, not a document, undertaken *before* conducting major Federal actions
- Why do we (VPRA) have to do the NEPA process?
  - Federal funding
  - USACE permit



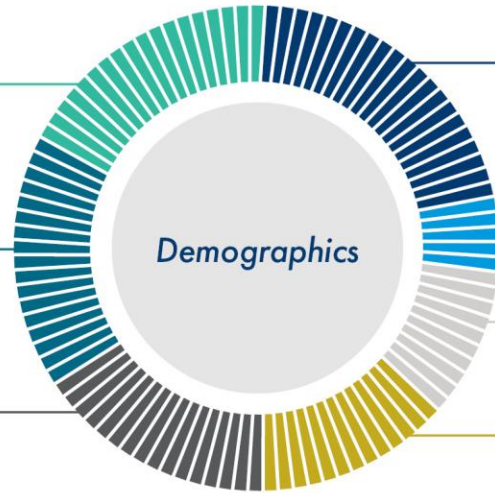
# What We Heard in Round 1 of Outreach

## Who Took the Survey

**17%**  
36-45 years old

**17%**  
56-65 years old

**16%**  
66-75 years old



**21%**  
46-55 years old

**5%**  
76+ years old

**10%**  
18-25 years old

**13%**  
26-35 years old

## Key Themes

***The NRV Passenger Rail Project is highly supported.***

- ✓ Top priorities for the new service
- ✓ Support for the new station
- ✓ Current transportation patterns
- ✓ How would travelers access a future passenger rail station

**750**  
rack cards distributed


































**35,293**  
impressions on social media

**150+**  
attended the open house

**1,947**  
surveys completed

**500+**  
comments submitted

# Alternatives Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria (in order of community priority from Round 1 survey)	Explanation	Evaluation Scale
Accessible by public transportation	Considers proximity of station to existing transit routes*	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Operational as soon as possible	Considers schedule for initial operation	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Minimize impacts to natural resources (streams, wetlands, protected species habitat, etc.)	Considers potential physical natural resource impacts**	Most Impact    Least Impact
Good financial stewardship of public resources	Considers cost for full build-out	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Proximity to commercial areas	Considers proximity of station to commercial areas	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Economic development	Considers potential for induced development due to station location	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Minimize noise increases to residential areas and other sensitive receptors	Considers proximity to residences and other uses (e.g., schools, parks)	Most Impact    Least Impact
Proximity to bicycle and pedestrian facilities	Considers proximity of station to existing bike/ped facilities	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Proximity for residential areas to access new passenger rail station	Considers proximity for residential areas to access new passenger rail station	Least Benefit    Most Benefit
Minimize impacts to the visual environment	Considers new location for rail and earth/tree removal	Most Impact    Least Impact
Minimize substantial earth removal	Considers new location for rail and station	Most Impact    Least Impact

\*New transit routes may be added to serve additional areas in the future. VPR is working with local transit providers.

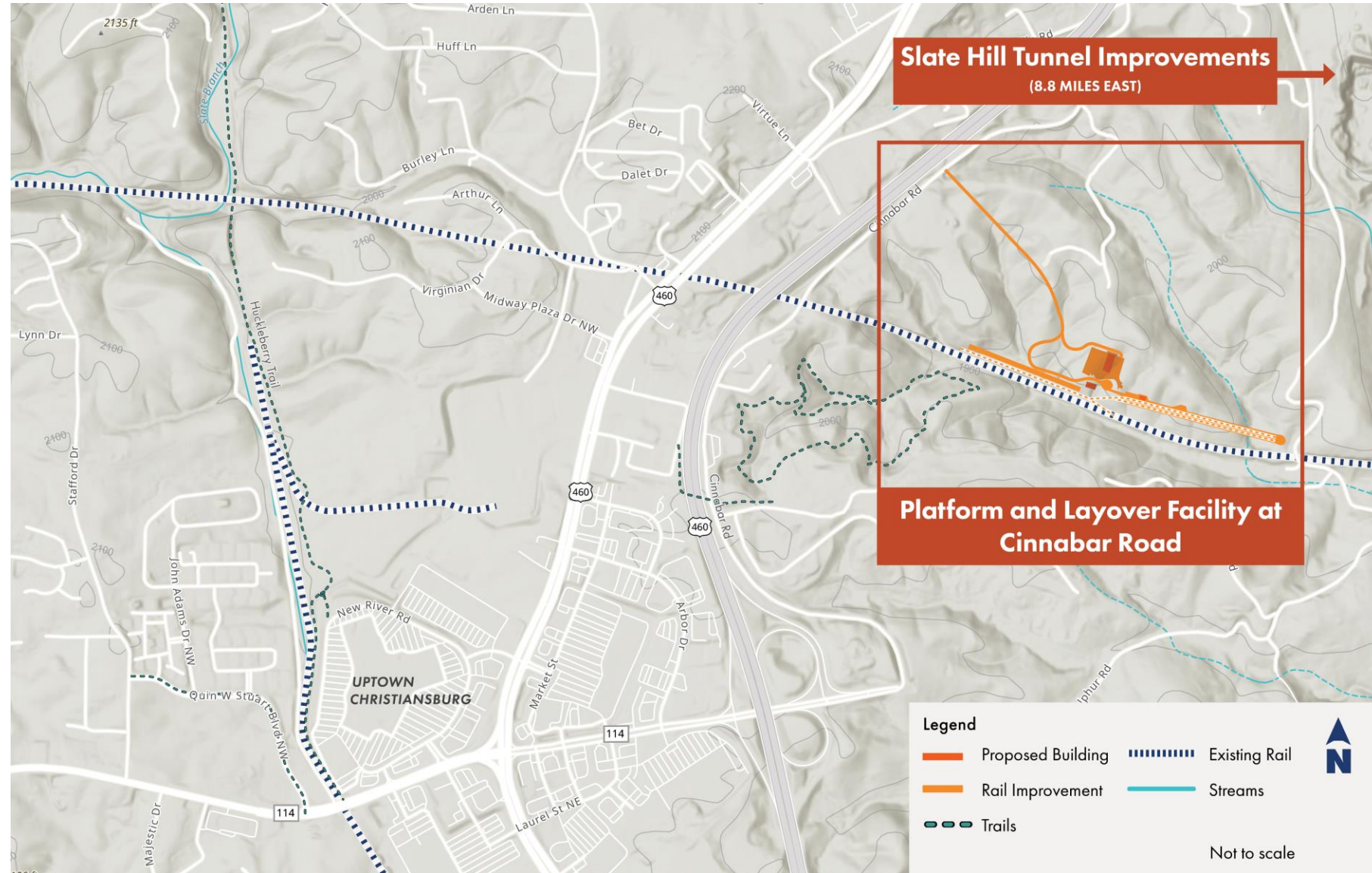
\*\*More physical natural resource impacts influence the ability to permit the project and could affect timeline.

# Alternative A: Cinnabar Site

- Slate Hill Tunnel Improvements
- Passenger Rail Platform near Cinnabar Road
- Layover Facility near Cinnabar Road
- Access Road from Cinnabar Road
- Transit Drop-off Zone
- Area for Passenger Rail Station and for a potential Community Center (to be built by others)

Service Start: Q2 2028

Cost (2027 USD): \$366 million



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*\*The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority will lead the construction and maintenance of the future station facility.*

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## Alternative A Evaluation:

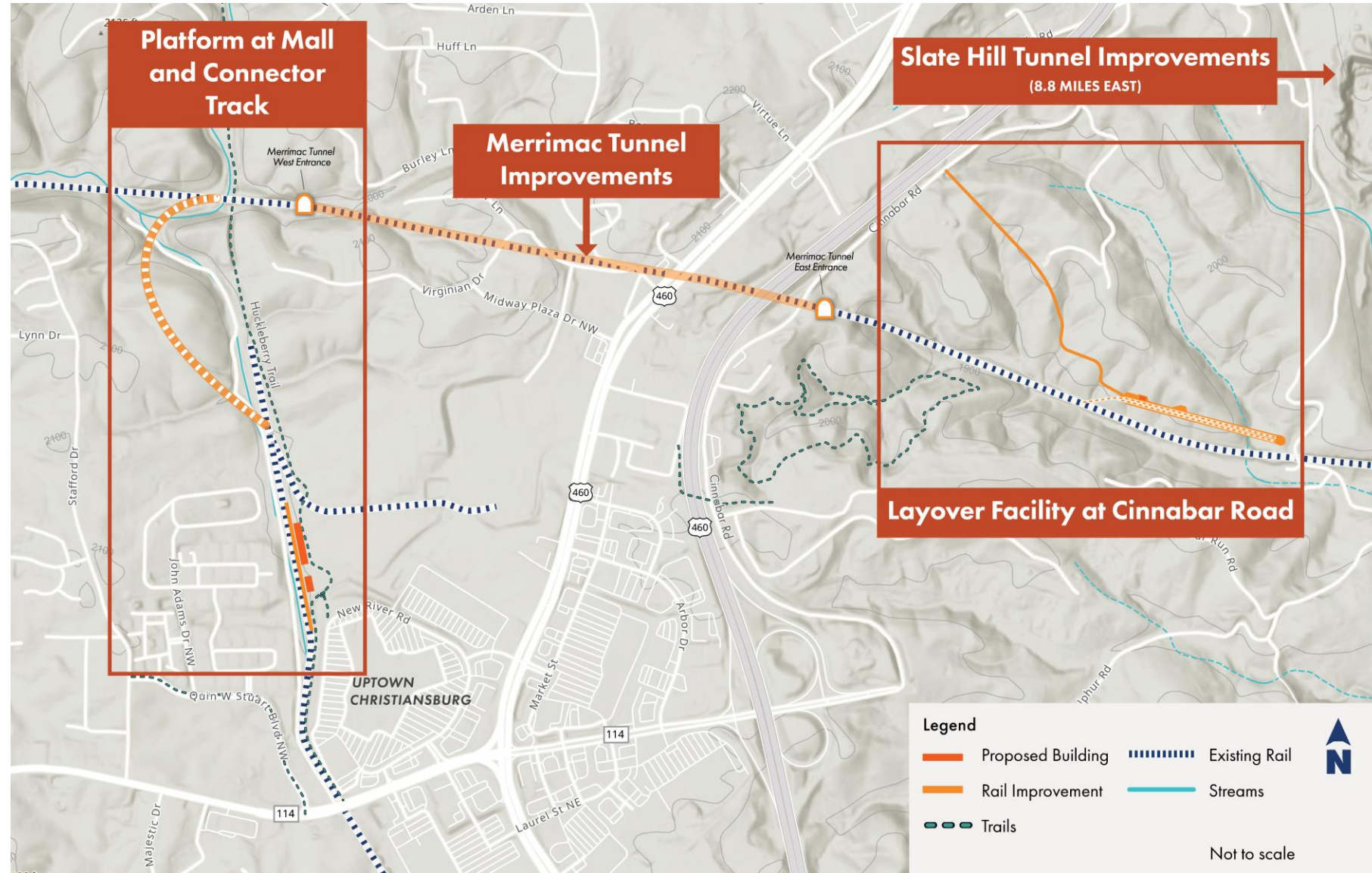
Evaluation Criteria	Impact			Benefit		
	Most		Least	Least		Most
Accessible by public transportation				■		
Operational as soon as possible				■	■	■
Minimize impacts to natural resources (streams, wetlands, protected species habitat, etc.)			■			
Good financial stewardship of public resources				■	■	■
Proximity to commercial areas				■		
Economic development				■	■	
Minimize noise increases to residential areas and other sensitive receptors			■			
Proximity to bicycle and pedestrian facilities				■		
Proximity for residential areas to access new passenger rail station				■		
Minimize impacts to the visual environment			■			
Minimize substantial earth removal			■			

# Alternative B: Mall Site + Cinnabar Layover

- Slate Hill Tunnel Improvements
- Merrimac Tunnel Improvements
- Passenger Rail Platform at Uptown Christiansburg Mall
- Expanded Mall Parking
- Connector Track from Virginian Line to Blacksburg Branch
- Layover Facility near Cinnabar Road
- Access Road from Cinnabar Road
- Area at the Mall Site for Passenger Rail Station and for a potential Community Center (to be built by others)

Service Start: Q2 2030

Cost (2029 USD): \$785 million

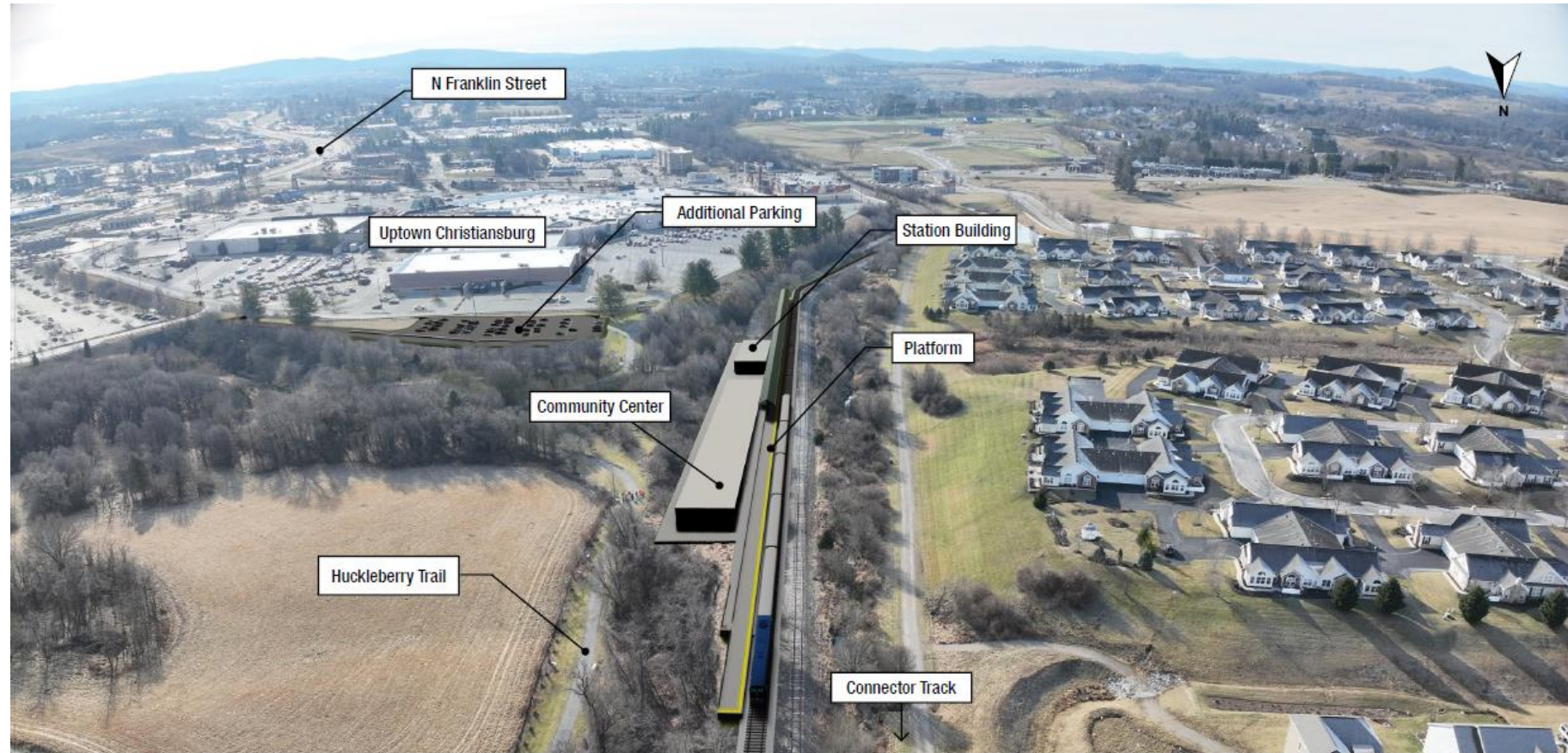


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**Cost (2029 USD): \$785 million**

## Alternative B Evaluation:

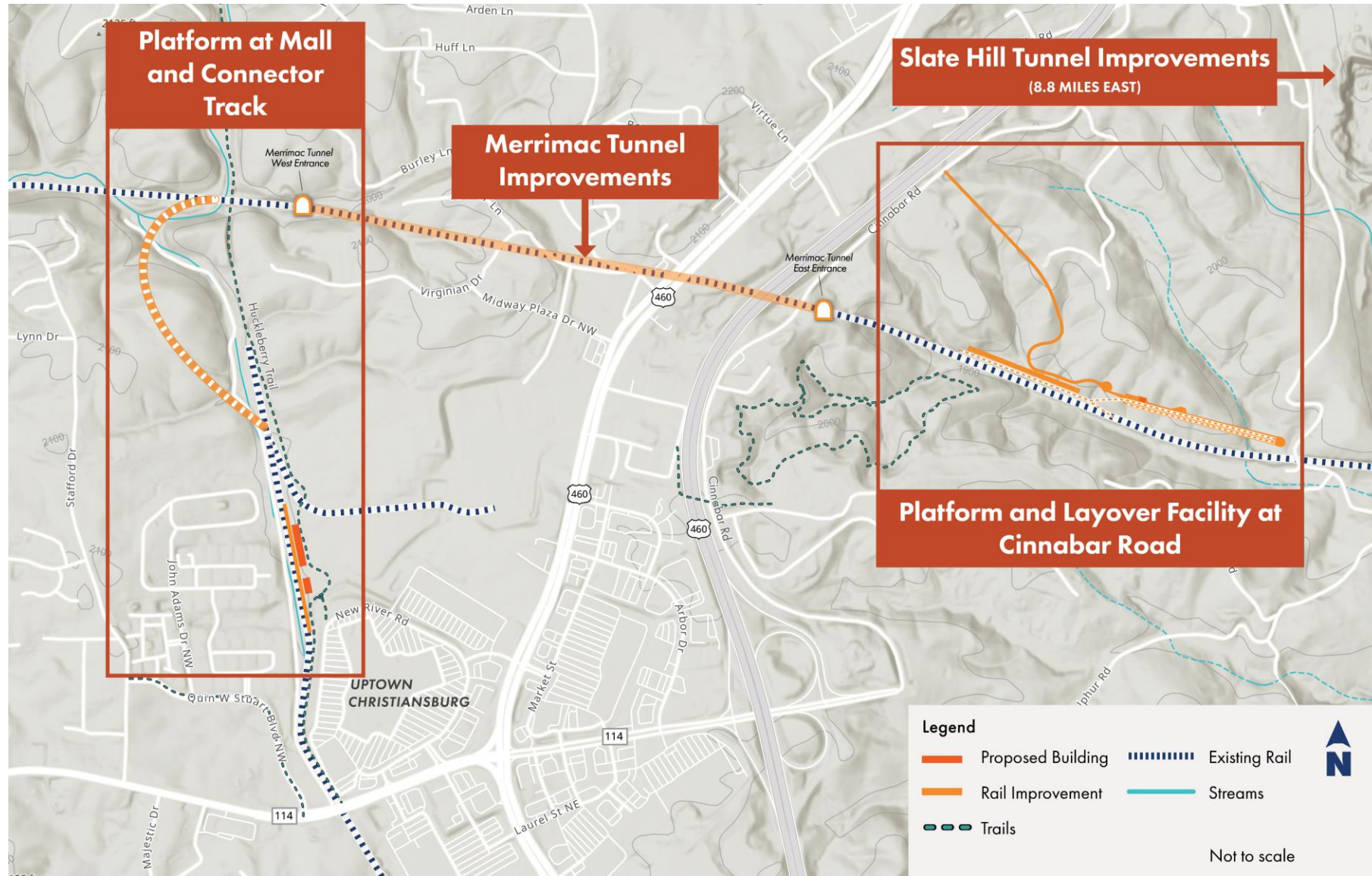
Evaluation Criteria	Impact			Benefit		
	Most		Least	Least		Most
Accessible by public transportation				■	■	■
Operational as soon as possible				■		
Minimize impacts to natural resources (streams, wetlands, protected species habitat, etc.)		■	■			
Good financial stewardship of public resources				■		
Proximity to commercial areas				■	■	■
Economic development				■	■	■
Minimize noise increases to residential areas and other sensitive receptors	■	■	■			
Proximity to bicycle and pedestrian facilities				■	■	■
Proximity for residential areas to access new passenger rail station				■	■	■
Minimize impacts to the visual environment	■	■	■			
Minimize substantial earth removal	■	■	■			

# Alternative C: Mall Site + Cinnabar

- Slate Hill Tunnel Improvements
- Merrimac Tunnel Improvements
- Passenger Rail Platform at Uptown Christiansburg Mall
- Expanded Mall Parking
- Connector Track from Virginian Line to Blacksburg Branch
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Service Start: Q2 2028

Cost (2029 USD): \$951 million

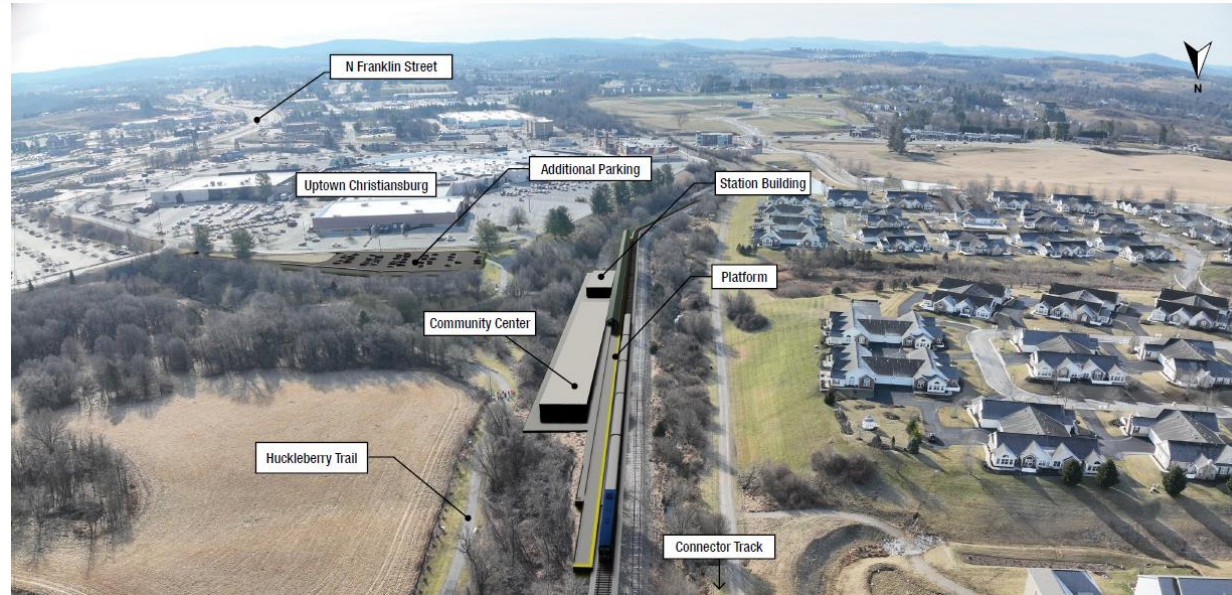


# Alternative C: Mall Site + Cinnabar

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# Alternative C: Mall Site + Cinnabar

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Cost (2029 USD): \$951 million



## Alternative C Evaluation:

Evaluation Criteria	Impact			Benefit		
	Most		Least	Least		Most
Accessible by public transportation				■	■	■
Operational as soon as possible				■	■	
Minimize impacts to natural resources (streams, wetlands, protected species habitat, etc.)	■	■	■			
Good financial stewardship of public resources				■		
Proximity to commercial areas				■	■	■
Economic development				■	■	■
Minimize noise increases to residential areas and other sensitive receptors	■	■	■			
Proximity to bicycle and pedestrian facilities				■	■	■
Proximity for residential areas to access new passenger rail station				■	■	■
Minimize impacts to the visual environment	■	■	■			
Minimize substantial earth removal	■	■	■			

# Summary

Evaluation Criteria	ALT A - Cinnabar Package	ALT B - Mall Package	ALT C - Mall and Cinnabar Package
Accessible by public transportation			
Operational as soon as possible			
Minimize impacts to natural resources (streams, wetlands, protected species habitat, etc.)			
Good financial stewardship of public resources			
Proximity to commercial areas			
Economic development			
Minimize noise increases to residential areas and other sensitive receptors			
Proximity to bicycle and pedestrian facilities			
Proximity for residential areas to access new passenger rail station			
Minimize impacts to the visual environment			
Minimize substantial earth removal			



Most Impact Least Impact

Least Benefit Most Benefit

# WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW



**Completing preliminary engineering** as a part of project development

- Developing potential design concepts that include all of the infrastructure needed to extend passenger rail service from Roanoke to the New River Valley.



**Preparing to address the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**



**Gathering your input** to help VPRA evaluate the design concepts, a process sometimes called alternatives analysis and help refine the Purpose & Need statement.

# TODAY'S OPEN HOUSE

## Stations

About VPRA

About the Project

Passenger Rail  
Infrastructure

Environmental  
Considerations

Alternatives



**Ask questions and learn more:** Please walk around the room where our staff are available to talk about what it will take to bring new rail service to the New River Valley.



**Take our brief survey:** At the back of the room is a station where you can fill out our survey online or on paper. This survey will help us select a preferred alternative to present to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) as a part of the NEPA process.

THANK YOU!

