

Fairfax Projects CAG Zoom Meeting

August 13, 2025

Q & A Transcript

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

The Lorton Road Bridge, is that going to be east or west of the existing bridge? In other words, will you be adding the lane, the track rail on the east or west side of that Lorton Road interchange? That is going to be a huge bottleneck and already is, due to the VDOT construction at 123.

And, 95 down in Woodbridge, and the traffic backs up through Lorton, so that's going to have a major impact on traffic in that area.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

Regarding the shoo-fly: Those are essentially sidings, correct?

A. Geoff Pelletier, VPRA: For the Lorton Road Bridge, we are going to be widening to the east, so that the illustration or the animation that Sarah showed earlier was looking from the east, so the expansion is eastward.

We are working with VDOT, and CSX is proposing a transportation management plan. We'll ultimately come up with a maintenance of traffic plan.

That will assist in routing traffic when the bridge is under construction. So that is still something that's in progress. And as I mentioned, the Lorton Road Bridge will not start until sometime in roughly 2027, so we are still working with them on that.

And the shoo-fly tracks are effectively sidings, but they're really a complete detour, so it's not like a siding which can sometimes be a place for trains to pull off to the side and let other tracks go by. This is an actual rerouting of the two mainline tracks in both directions.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

Thank you very much for both responses. The reason I ask about the sidings is originally, when we looked at the VRE expansion, and this is probably 2-year-old information, there were a series of sidings, starting north of Fredericksburg, in order to take care of the passenger traffic versus rail traffic, freight traffic.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

If those sidings are going to remain, are those going to be sidings used for that same process, immediately?

A. Geoff Pelletier: Sidings are certainly under design and will be under construction in the next couple of years. We have 6 sidings that are contemplated throughout the DC to Richmond corridor.

There's a number of them in Fredericksburg. The VPRA website shows project maps showing different sidings that we are planning to build, which are effectively third tracks for a number of miles. In some cases, it's 2 miles, other cases it's 3 to 4 miles. But yes, we intend to build a number of sidings throughout the corridor to eventually get to our goal, which is 3, and in the long term, 4 tracks all the way to Richmond.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

Thank you very much for the explanation. I think it would be very important to list the sidings that are north of the Occoquan River, so that would be in the Lorton area proper, that we would be able to see where those are located or proposed for reaction.

My last question is, my assumption is none of this is including the redo of the CSX bridge over Route 1, just immediately less than a mile south of the Lorton VRE Station, correct?

A. Geoff Pelletier: That is correct. That was part of our preliminary engineering for the Francona-Lorton project. We have designed that to 30%. However, we did not have enough funding to continue all the way down to the Occoquan River, so there is a remaining 2-mile segment from Lorton to Occoquan that we are looking to fund in the future that would also include the replacement of the railroad bridges over Route 1.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

Well, just the last comment, more of a comment than a question, and that is, we were promised when the Long Bridge funding went through, and lobbying for that Long Bridge funding, which our community did, that that would be part of... the repair of that bridge would be part of that Long Bridge funding. What I hear you saying is, no, that's not going to be part of it.

A. Geoff Pelletier: That's correct.

Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

Disappointing. Thank you.

Q. Angela: My questions pertain to more of a traveler, a passenger, I ride VRE. Where does the third track start? Does it start in Lorton or south of Lorton?

A. Geoff Pelletier: The third track will be starting just south of Lorton Station. It is farther south of the auto train station as well, so it'll be picking up south of the station, and it will continue all the way to where the third track currently ends, just north of Franconia-Springfield Station.

Q. Angela: On how it impacts travel, ... Lorton Station Road, which is how we enter the VRE in Lorton? And that part of 95, how will that be impacted? And I'm asking because there's school buses that go down that road, but how is that part impacted? How will those roads be impacted?

A. Geoff Pelletier: There will be some construction entrances around the Lorton Station area. We are currently working with the county, who owns the parking lot, on how we will access that in the future. But that's something that we haven't fully figured out yet, because we're still working on how those will be accessed. But yes, we do recognize that there will be impacts to travel... it'll be more in terms of, I think, construction traffic. But we are looking to stay as far away as possible from the main entry point and the main pedestrian access to Lorton Station platform.

Q. Angela: Do you know if we can get a bus set up, during those times when it's closed to take us to the Springfield, station?

A. Geoff Pelletier: Yeah, I'm sorry, we don't intend to actually shut down Lorton Station at any point. It'll remain active. I guess, Jason, I don't want to speak on VRE's behalf necessarily, but I think at no point have we talked about fully shutting down Lorton Station.

A. Jason Bortz, VRE: One of the slides made reference to potential platform closures at the Franconia Station. Just for clarity the closures refer only to platforms at the Franconia Station, where there's more than one platform. We might only be able to board on one of the two current platforms. As far as Lorton goes, our intention is that it will be in service throughout construction of all of these projects that we're discussing.

Q. Angela: My last question, so Amtrak and CSX, they will continue to share a track, just VRE gets its own dedicated track? Is that the way it works?

A. Geoff Pelletier: No, the dedicated passenger track would be for Amtrak and VRE, and as long as we still have three tracks, we do need to make the third track what we call inoperable, so CSX may still use it in emergency situations, or in some rare cases. But the intent of the third track, like even here in Alexandria, with the fourth track, is that we are either going to have one or two dedicated tracks for passenger service.

Q. Angela: Amtrak and VRE may still share, but CSX would not be on that same track?

A. Geoff Pelletier: Not commonly, no.

QUESTIONS FROM THE CHAT:

Q. Kajal Kapur: Were any economic, environmental or other studies done for these projects? If so, are they available and how?

A. Angel Reed, VPRA: The Franconia-Lorton Third Track and Bypass projects are being evaluated to assess environmental impacts and include an array of technical studies on various resources. The studies are in development and are not planned to be made publicly available at this time.

Q. Tom Moore: Yes, thanks for having the meeting. Question, can you have the slide deck that you showed during the meeting available on the website and or some other way?

And, lastly, my understanding is there are no sound walls involved in any of this, and the reason I'm asking that is when they do road improvements around here, sometimes they run some equation, and some neighborhoods get sound walls, but I understand the railroad doesn't do sound walls, is that correct?

A. Geoff Pelletier: That is correct.... I can't get too deep into it, but I mean, the noise that trains generate, isn't mitigated or abated the way that roadway noise is on highways, so there's not much utility to having sound walls, or noise walls or sound walls, as we call them.

Tom Moore: Thank you.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation: It might be important to show the redesign for the Lorton VRE station with the third track shown.

A. Jason Bortz, VRE: Just to speak to, one of the questions in the chat about, showing redesign of the Lorton VRE station with the third track shown. The third track is actually on the far side of the rail corridor from the station, so actually, from a station impact, there's almost no impact, it's just the tracks on the opposite side of the of the railroad right-of-way.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation: Thank you very much, Mr. Bortz. I understand that, but I think it might be important for residents that are along there to understand not only Tom's excellent question about noise impact, but how that's going to look from where they are, and how the station will operate, how different would the station be

for the VRE passengers. It's a full lot, there's a lot of VRE passengers there every day, so I think that might just be important for people to see how exactly the layout and design would be.

A. Jason Bortz, VRE: Yeah, we could certainly pull the relevant sheet, just to demonstrate that the existing station, the existing lot, the existing platform, all of that is unchanged, both in its layout and in its operation. There will be some temporary operational impacts, but even that will be limited to within the immediate footprint of the platform area.

Q. From the chat: Can anybody speak to future passenger rail scheduling? How that might come into play during construction, and then once our proposed improvements are in place?

A. Jason Bortz, VRE: Essentially, what we're trying to do is, make modest schedule adjustments, not wholesale changes or major categorical changes, but maximize the period in the middle of the day between our AM service going into DC and our PM service coming back out - to maximize that time period, so that contractors can get as much work done during that time as possible. Because once we get outside of those hours, then we start running into noise restrictions and things like that, and obviously nobody wants to do night work any more than anyone wants to hear the night work.

A. Geoff Pelletier: Yeah, that's a good point, Jason, and I know a lot of the schedule modifications are being done to accommodate the Long Bridge construction, which is a lot more constrained, just because of the proximity of different buildings to it. That work is still ongoing right now, and I think towards... in the next few months, certainly by the end of the year, we should see what the revised schedules are going to look like, but...I don't know that it's anything we can share at this point, but we will, you know, once we have it, we'll certainly be broadcasting on all channels, including this CAG and the Alexandria Long Bridge CAG as well, because of the impact that's going to have.

A. Erin Murphy, Kimley Horn: And then in the long term, once we get out of the other side of the construction process, we anticipate additional service – which is one of the major reasons that these projects have been undertaken.

A. Geoff Pelletier: Absolutely, yes, and I did mention that we will have new round trips that are activated once this work is done. I don't know that we have a timetable for that yet, but we know generally where the destinations are going to be, the additional trains to Richmond, I think there's additional to Newport News. And further up north with Long Bridge and Alexandria, there's potential for additional out to Roanoke as well. Those service plans are

available on our website. But the timetables will be available in the years to come, before the projects are done.

Q. Dale Rumberger-Beechwood Co Chair Parks and Enviro/Transportation:

What is the construction schedule for the entire project. We'll begin this fall of 2025, but it will not be completed until sometime in 2029, is that correct?

A. Geoff Pelletier: That's correct. The full package of projects that we presented today start pretty much this month, and we'll continue to early 2029.