COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Transportation Board

W. Sheppard Miller, III
Chairperson

1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 482-5818
Fax: (804) 786-2940

DRAFT MINUTES
MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WORKSHOP MEETING
VDOT Central Auditorium
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
January 6, 2026

The workshop meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board was held in the Central Office Auditorium of the Virginia Department of Transportation in Richmond, Virginia, on January 6, 2026. The Chairman, W. Sheppard Miller, presided and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Messrs. Byers, Coleman, Davis, Fowlkes, Good, Gribbin, Lawson, Laird, Minchew, Smoot, Stant, Ms. Dunlop, Ms. Green, Ms. Sellers, Mr. Brich, ex officio, Commissioner of Highways and Ms. Tiffany Robinson, ex officio, Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Absent: None

Agenda 1. Regulatory Reduction Program & Proposed Regulatory Amendments
Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas and Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs
Robert Hofrichter, Virginia Department of Transportation
Referenced by attachment of presentation.

Agenda 2. Proposed Regulatory Amendments
Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices, 24VAC30-120
Robert Hofrichter, Virginia Department of Transportation
Referenced by attachment of presentation.

Agenda 3. Transportation Alternatives Program
FY 27/28 Application Cycle
Terry Short, Virginia Department of Transportation
Referenced by attachment of presentation.

Agenda 4. Recreational Access Program
Russell County – Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve
Terry Short, Virginia Department of Transportation
Referenced by attachment of presentation.

Agenda 5. WMATA Operational Analysis
Jennifer Monaco, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Colin Hood, Partner, Guidehouse
Referenced by attachment of presentation.

The Chair suspended the meeting at 11:18 a.m. on January 6, 2026, providing the Board with a ten-minute break.

The Chair reconvened the suspended meeting at 11:29 a.m. on January 6, 2026.

Agenda 6. SVRT Review
Shep Miller, Secretary of Transportation

Agenda 7. Director's Items
Tiffany Robinson, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Agenda 8. Commissioner's Items
Stephen Brich, Virginia Department of Transportation

Agenda 9. Secretary's Items
Shep Miller, Secretary of Transportation

ADJOURNMENT:
The meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m. on January 6, 2026.
Respectfully Submitted:
Carol Mathis,
Assistant Secretary to the Board

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COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WORKSHOP AGENDA

VDOT Central Office Auditorium
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
January 6, 2026
9:00 a.m.

1. Regulatory Reduction Program & Proposed Regulatory Amendments
   Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas and Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs
   Robert Hofrichter, Virginia Department of Transportation

2. Proposed Regulatory Amendments
   Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices, 24VAC30-120
   Robert Hofrichter, Virginia Department of Transportation

3. Transportation Alternatives Program
   FY 27/28 Application Cycle
   Terry Short, Virginia Department of Transportation

4. Recreational Access Program
   Russell County – Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve
   Terry Short, Virginia Department of Transportation

5. WMATA Operational Analysis
   Jennifer Monaco, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
   Colin Hood, Guidehouse

6. SVRT Review
   John Lawson, Deputy Secretary of Transportation

7. Director's Items
   Tiffany Robinson, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

8. Commissioner's Items
   Stephen Brich, Virginia Department of Transportation

9. Secretary's Items
   Shep Miller, Secretary of Transportation

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VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation

REGULATORY REDUCTION PROGRAM & PROPOSED REGULATORY AMENDMENTS

Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas (24VAC30-50) and Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs (24VAC30-100)

Robert Hofrichter, Director, Office of Land Use

January 6, 2026

Regulatory Reduction Program/Proposed Amendments

- **In December 2024, the CTB approved the proposed regulatory amendments to streamline and combine the Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas (24VAC30-50) and the Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs (24VAC30-100).**
- **The proposed stage was published in the Virginia Register for a 60-day public comment period.**
  - No public comments were received.
  - As such, VDOT recommends no changes to the amendments as previously approved by the CTB.
- **The final stage, including the amendments and associated documentation, must now be filed to complete the regulatory process.**

Background on Existing Regulations

- **Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas establish overall policies, procedures, and conditions under which waysides and rest areas may be used and address subjects such as operating hours and prohibited and restricted activities.**
- **Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs establish the rules and conditions governing the use of, and activities that may be conducted in, parking lots and related environs and address subjects such as restrictions on parking, prohibited activities, and activities that may be performed under a permit.**

Significant Amendments

Summary of Significant Amendments

- Combine the two regulatory chapters into a new Chapter 51 to remove the overlapping requirements currently duplicated in both regulations.
  - Overlapping requirements will be consolidated into one section within the new regulatory text. The unique provisions of each current chapter will be retained as new standalone sections.
- New allowance for state government entities to request permission for activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law.

Significant Amendments

Summary of Significant Amendments (cont.)

- New allowance for permitting of events in parking lots on weekends.
- Expansion of allowance for mobile food vending to parking lots outside of Planning District 8.
- Achieve administrative updates, add clarifying language, and bring the text in line with current practice.

Next Steps

- If final amendments are approved by the CTB at a subsequent meeting, VDOT staff will file the final stage on Town Hall.*
- The final amendments will then go through Executive Branch review, after which they will be published in the Virginia Register for the public to review.
- Public comment will be received for 30 days before the amendments become effective.

* Text of final amendments and Town Hall documentation is included in CTB package.


VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation

Project 8000 - Proposed

Department of Transportation

Review of Rules for the Administration of Waysides, Rest Areas, Parking Lots and Environs

Chapter 50

Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas (REPEALED)

24VAC30-50-10. ~~Waysides and rest areas.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. Waysides identified by name and without lights shall be open from 8 a.m. to one hour after sunset. Areas having security lighting will be open at all times.~~

~~B. When an area is posted for limited parking, the operator of each vehicle may be required to sign a register setting forth the time of arrival.~~

~~C. When posted, parking shall be limited to the period specified.~~

~~D. No overnight parking will be permitted.~~

~~E. Camping is not permitted at any time.~~

~~F. Sleeping in any section of the rest area building is not permitted at any time.~~

~~G. No vehicle shall be parked in such manner as to occupy more than one marked parking space.~~

~~H. No domestic animals shall be permitted to go at large. Dogs must be kept on leash and shall not be taken into any shelter or other building; guide, hearing, or service dogs as defined by the Code of Virginia are an exception to this rule.~~

~~I. No person shall pick any flowers, foliage, or fruit, or cut, break, dig up, or in any way mutilate or injure any tree, shrub, plant, grass, turf, railing, seat, fence, structure, or anything within this area; or cut, carve, paint, mark or paste on any tree, stone, fence, wall, building, monument or other object therein, any bill, advertisement, or inscription whatsoever.~~

~~J. No person shall disturb or injure any bird, birds' nests or eggs, or any squirrel or other animal within this area.~~

~~K. No person shall dig up or remove any dirt, stones, rock or other thing, make any excavation, quarry any stone or lay or set off any blast, or cause or assist in doing any of said things within this area without~~

~~the special order or license of the commissioner.~~

~~L. No threatening, abusive, boisterous, insulting or indecent language or gesture shall be used within this area. Nor shall any oration, or other public demonstration be made, unless by special authority of the commissioner.~~

~~M. No person shall offer any article or thing for sale within this area except by permission of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.~~

~~N. No person shall bathe or fish in any waters within this area, except in such places and subject to such regulations as the commissioner may, from time to time, specially designate by a public notice set up for that purpose within the same.~~

~~O. No person shall light, kindle or use any fire within this area, except at fireplaces designed and built for such purposes and the person or persons building a fire therein will be responsible for having it completely extinguished before leaving it.~~

~~P. No person shall discharge or set off within this area, any firearms, firecrackers, torpedoes, rockets, or other fireworks, except by permit from the commissioner.~~

~~Q. No bottles, broken glass, ashes, waste paper, or other rubbish shall be left within this area, except at such places as may be provided for the same.~~

~~R. No automobile or other vehicle shall be taken into or driven upon this area, except upon such drives and subject to such regulations as the commissioner may, from time to time, designate by a public notice set up for that purpose within the same.~~

~~S. Any person violating any of the preceding rules and regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, be fined not less than five dollars nor more than $100 for each offense.~~

Chapter 51

Rules for the Administration of Waysides, Rest Areas, and Parking Lots

24VAC30-51-10. Provisions concerning the use of waysides, rest areas, parking lots, and environs.

A. While in waysides, rest areas, parking lots and the environs of those spaces, all persons shall obey official posted signs and public notices.

B. No camping is permitted in waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces.

C. No person may park a vehicle in such a manner as to occupy more than one parking space in waysides, rest areas, or parking lots.

D. No person may paste, attach, or place bills, advertisements, or inscriptions on vehicles parked in waysides, rest areas, or parking lots.

E. No domestic animals may go at large in waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces.

F. While in waysides, rest areas, parking lots, and the environs of those spaces, no person may pick any flowers, foliage, or fruit; cut, break, dig up, mutilate, or injure trees, shrubs, plants, grass, turf, railings, seats, fences, structures, or other objects; or cut, carve, paint, mark, paste, or attach bills, advertisements, or inscriptions on trees, stones, fences, walls, buildings, monuments, or other objects.

G. No person may disturb or injure any bird, bird's nest or eggs, or other animal within waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces.

H. No person may dig up or remove any dirt, stones, rock, or other thing, make any excavation, quarry any stone, or lay or set off any blast or cause or assist in any of these activities within waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces, except by permit issued pursuant to the Land Use Permit Regulations (24VAC30-151).

I. No oration, demonstration, picketing, public display, assembly, dissemination, or similar activity may occur in waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces, except as may be allowed by 24VAC30-51-30 or 24VAC30-51-40. This prohibition does not apply to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

J. No person may offer any article or thing for sale within waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces, except pursuant to a vendor contract with the Virginia Department of Transportation by permit in accordance with the Land Use Permit Regulations, or as permitted by 24VAC30-51-40.

K. No person may discharge or set off within waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces firearms, fireworks as defined in § 27-95 of the Code of Virginia, or other incendiary device, except by permit issued pursuant to the Land Use Permit Regulations.

L. No bottles, broken glass, wastepaper, or other rubbish may be left within waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces, except in such receptacles as may be provided for those

materials.

M. Vehicles may only be taken into or driven upon designated locations within waysides, rest areas, parking lots, and the environs of those spaces. Drivers shall obey all traffic signs and markings posted in waysides, rest areas, and parking lots.

N. Any person found in violation of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, be fined not less than $5.00 nor more than $100 for each offense and shall be civilly liable to the Commonwealth for all actual damage caused by a violation of this chapter.

24VAC30-51-20. Provisions governing waysides.

A. Unless otherwise posted, waysides identified by name and without lights are open from 8 a.m. until one hour after sunset, and waysides having security lighting are open at all times.

B. When posted, parking in waysides shall be limited to the period specified.

C. No overnight parking in waysides is permitted.

D. Unless otherwise posted, no person may swim or fish in any waters within a wayside.

E. No person may light, kindle, or use a fire within a wayside or its environs, except at designated areas designed and built for such purposes, in which case the person building the fire is responsible for having it completely extinguished before leaving it. Ashes shall be removed from the designated areas and disposed of in such receptacles as may be provided for ash disposal.

24VAC30-51-30. Provisions governing rest areas.

A. No overnight parking is permitted in rest areas.

B. No sleeping in any section of the rest area building is permitted at any time.

C. No dogs may be taken into any rest area building; guide, hearing, or service dogs as defined by § 51.5-44 of the Code of Virginia are an exception to this rule.

D. No person may light, kindle, or use a fire within a rest area or its environs, except at designated areas designed and built for such purposes, in which case the person building the fire is responsible for having it completely extinguished before leaving it. Ashes shall be removed from the designated areas and disposed of in such receptacles as may be provided for ash disposal.

E. Notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter, state government entities may request permission for

activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, and the Virginia Department of Transportation may grant such requests at its discretion.

24VAC30-51-40. Provisions governing parking lots.

A. Overnight parking may be restricted in accordance with posted signs.

B. In accordance with a permit issued pursuant to the Land Use Permit Regulations (24VAC30-151), the Commonwealth Transportation Board may permit persons, organizations, or groups to use parking lots or parking lot environs for various purposes or events when the use will not interfere with or disrupt the normal and intended functions of the lots.

1. No activities will be permitted that would constitute a violation of, or that are inconsistent with, the provisions of this chapter, state or federal law, or local ordinances, including noise ordinances.

2. Events must provide reasonable safety for all participants, spectators, other parking lot users, and the public.

3. Events must preserve the aesthetic appearance of buildings and grounds and provide for the removal of waste that may be left by event participants or spectators.

4. Requests for permits generally will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking lots may only be available for permitted events on Saturdays and Sundays. No more than one event will be scheduled for the same time on the same day. This includes permitted setup and takedown time.

5. The Virginia Department of Transportation may require the cancellation of a permitted event and the immediate removal of all related equipment if the permittee violates the permit conditions, does not preserve public safety or order, or does not prevent damage to the parking lot and parking lot environs during the permitted event.

C. Except as authorized by the terms of a land use permit issued to a mobile food vendor, no person may light, kindle, or use any fire within parking lots or parking lot environs.

D. Mobile food vending.

1. Mobile food vending shall be allowed within commuter lots in Planning District 8, and may be allowed in other parking lots, except parking lots that meet at least one of the following conditions:

a. Parking lots or parking lot portions determined to be part of the Interstate system.

b. Parking lots that, as of the last Virginia Department of Transportation survey, had occupancy

rates of 98% or higher, except that mobile food vending may be permitted in such lots (i) if a paved area, the use of which does not include or block access to one or more parking spaces, is available within the lot; (ii) if the vending is from a non-motorized cart on sidewalks, provided that the vehicle that is used to transport the cart is not parked in the parking lot; or (iii) on weekends.

c. The locality in which the parking lot is located requested that the parking lot not be made available for mobile food vending.

2. Permission for mobile food vending shall be granted through a land use permit issued to the mobile food vendor in accordance with the Land Use Permit Regulations.

3. In order for a mobile food vendor to be granted or to retain a land use permit for mobile food vending at parking lots pursuant to this subsection, the vendor must comply with all of the following:

a. All relevant locality and Department of Health policies and requirements for mobile food vending.

b. All conditions and requirements set forth within or attached to the land use permit, which may include provisions relating to the location of the vending unit, the collection and disposal of litter, a limitation on vending times, a requirement for minimum insurance, and the provision of surety.

c. Posted signs or public notices setting out regulations or requirements for the use of the parking lot.

d. Ensuring that mobile food vending shall be conducted with pedestrians only and may not be conducted with occupants of vehicles.

e. Neither the mobile food vendor nor the vending operation may interfere with the intended operation of the parking lot and the safety of the lot's users. The determination of interference shall be solely within the discretion of the Virginia Department of Transportation.

f. The mobile food vendor may not post advertising within or upon the grounds of the parking lot or the parking lot environs. Advertising on the mobile food vending unit (e.g., vehicle, trailer, or pushcart) promoting the products or services offered by the mobile food vendor at that mobile food vending unit shall not be considered a violation of this subdivision.

4. Failure to comply with subdivision 3 of this subsection will result in the revocation of the land use

permit.

Chapter 100

Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs (REPEALED)

24VAC30-100-10. ~~Parking lots and environs.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. While in this area all persons shall be subject to such regulations as the commissioner may designate by posted signs or public notice posted within the area.~~

~~B. No vehicle shall be parked in such a manner as to occupy more than one parking space.~~

~~C. No person shall paste, attach or place on any vehicle parked in this lot any bill, advertisement or inscription whatsoever.~~

~~D. No bottles, broken glass, ashes, waste paper, or other rubbish shall be left within this area except in such receptacles as may be provided for the same.~~

~~E. No person shall pick any flowers, foliage, or fruit; or cut, break, dig up or in any way mutilate or injure any tree, shrub, plant, grass, turf, fence, structure, or anything within this area; or cut, carve, paint, mark, paste, or in any way attach on any tree, stone fence, wall, building, or other object therein, any bill, advertisement, or inscription whatsoever.~~

~~F. No person shall disturb or injure any bird, birds' nest or eggs, or any squirrel or other animal within this area.~~

~~G. No threatening, abusive, boisterous, insulting or indecent language, or gesture shall be used within this area; furthermore, no oration or other public demonstration be made, except by permit from the commissioner.~~

~~H. No person shall offer any article or thing for sale within this area except by permission of the commissioner.~~

~~I. Mobile food vending.~~

~~1. Mobile food vending shall be allowed within commuter lots in Planning District 8 except lots that meet at least one of the following conditions:~~

~~a. Commuter lots or the portions thereof determined to be part of the interstate system.~~

~~b. Commuter lots that, as of last Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) survey, had~~

occupancy rates of 98% or higher, except that mobile food vending may be permitted in such lots (i) if a paved area, the use of which does not include one or more parking spaces or block one or more parking spaces, is available within the lot; (ii) if vending is from a nonmotorized cart on sidewalks, provided that the vehicle used to transport the cart is not parked within the commuter lot; or (iii) on weekends.

c. Commuter lots that have been requested by the locality to not be made available for mobile food vending.

2. Permission for mobile food vending shall be granted through a land use permit issued to the mobile food vendor in accordance with the Land Use Permit Regulations (24VAC30-151).

3. In order for a mobile food vendor to be granted or to retain a land use permit for mobile food vending at commuter lots pursuant to this subsection, the vendor must comply with all of the following:

a. All relevant locality and Department of Health policies and requirements for mobile food vending.

b. All land use permit conditions and requirements set forth within or attached to the land use permit, which may include provisions relating to the location of the vending unit, the collection and disposal of litter, a limitation on vending times, a requirement for minimum insurance, and the provision of surety.

c. Posted signs or public notices setting out regulations or requirements for the use of commuter lots.

d. Mobile food vending shall be conducted with pedestrians only and shall not be conducted with occupants of vehicles.

e. Neither the mobile food vendor nor the vendor's operation shall interfere with the operation of the commuter lot and the safety of the lot's users, and the determination of whether the mobile food vendor or the vendor's operation is interfering with the operation of the commuter lot or the safety of the lot's users shall be solely within the discretion of VDOT.

f. The mobile food vendor shall post no advertising within or upon the grounds of the commuter lot. Advertising on the mobile food vending unit (vehicle, trailer, or pushcart), promoting the products or services offered by the mobile food vendor at that mobile food vending unit, is not

~~considered a violation of this section.~~

~~Failure to comply with this subdivision 3 will result in the revocation of the permit.~~

~~J. Except as authorized by the terms of a land use permit issued to a mobile food vendor, no person shall light, kindle, or use any fire within this area.~~

~~K. No person shall discharge or set off within this area, any firearms or fireworks, except by permit from the commissioner.~~

~~L. Any person violating any of the preceding rules and regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, be fined not less than five dollars nor more than $100 for each offense.~~

Attachment B

Form: TH-03
May 2025

townhall.virginia.gov

Final Regulation
Agency Background Document

Agency name	Commonwealth Transportation Board
Virginia Administrative Code (VAC) Chapter citation(s)	24VAC30-50 and 24VAC30-100
VAC Chapter title(s)	Review of Rules for the Administration of Waysides, Rest Areas, Parking Lots and Environs
Action title	Chapters 50 and 100 Regulatory Reform and Periodic Review
Date this document prepared	____, 2026

This information is required for executive branch review and the Virginia Registrar of Regulations, pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act (APA), Executive Order 19 (2022) (EO 19), any instructions or procedures issued by the Office of Regulatory Management (ORM) or the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) pursuant to EO 19, the Regulations for Filing and Publishing Agency Regulations (1 VAC 7-10), and the *Form and Style Requirements for the Virginia Register of Regulations and Virginia Administrative Code*.

Brief Summary

Provide a brief summary (preferably no more than 2 or 3 paragraphs) of this regulatory change (i.e., new regulation, amendments to an existing regulation, or repeal of an existing regulation). Alert the reader to all substantive matters. If applicable, generally describe the existing regulation.

The Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas, 24VAC30-50, establishes overall policies, procedures, and conditions under which waysides and rest areas under the control of the CTB may be used. Currently, Chapter 50 addresses subjects such as operating hours and prohibited and restricted activities. The Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs, 24VAC30-100, establishes the rules and conditions governing the use of, and activities that may be conducted in, parking lots and related environs under the control of the CTB. Currently, Chapter 100 addresses subjects such as restrictions on parking, prohibited activities, and activities that may be performed under a permit.

The CTB has undertaken a comprehensive review of 24VAC30-50 and 24VAC30-100. The intent of this action is to achieve regulatory reduction and streamlining and to remove redundant or obsolete language in accordance with Governor Youngkin's Executive Order 19 (EO 19). The two regulatory chapters are

proposed to be combined into a new Chapter 51 to remove the overlapping requirements currently duplicated in both regulations. The requirements common to both current chapters will be consolidated into one section within the new regulatory text. The unique provisions of each current chapter will be retained as new standalone sections to ensure the public can easily find and understand the applicable requirements.

Other proposed new additions include the allowance for state government entities to request and be granted permission for activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, allowance for permitting of events in parking lots on weekends, and expansion of the allowance for mobile food vending to parking lots outside of Planning District 8.

Acronyms and Definitions

Define all acronyms used in this form, and any technical terms that are not also defined in the "Definitions" section of the regulation.

"Agency" or "VDOT" means the Virginia Department of Transportation.

"CTB" means the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Statement of Final Agency Action

Provide a statement of the final action taken by the agency including: 1) the date the action was taken; 2) that the agency has "adopted final amendments" to the regulation; 3) the name of the agency taking the action; and 4) the title of the regulation. A suggested statement is, "On [insert date] the Board/Department of [insert name] adopted final amendments to the [title of regulation(s)]."

On ____, 2026, the CTB adopted final amendments to 24VAC30-50, Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Waysides and Rest Areas, and 24VAC30-100, Rules and Regulations for the Administration of Parking Lots and Environs.

Mandate and Impetus

List all changes to the information reported on the Agency Background Document submitted for the previous stage regarding the mandate for this regulatory change, and any other impetus that specifically prompted its initiation. If there are no changes to previously reported information, include a specific statement to that effect.

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Legal Basis

Identify (1) the promulgating agency, and (2) the state and/or federal legal authority for the regulatory change, including the most relevant citations to the Code of Virginia and Acts of Assembly chapter number(s), if applicable. Your citation must include a specific provision, if any, authorizing the promulgating agency to regulate this specific subject or program, as well as a reference to the agency's overall regulatory authority.

Authority for these chapters comes from § 33.2-210 of the Code of Virginia and 23 USC § 111 and related federal regulations. The Commonwealth Transportation Board has general authority to adopt regulations "for the protection of and covering traffic on and for the use of systems of state highways" and has "the authority to add to, amend, or repeal such regulations" pursuant to § 33.2-210 of the Code of Virginia. 23 USC § 111 and 23 CFR § 752.5 govern agreements between states and the federal government for the construction of projects on the Interstate System and grant states the ability to acquire, construct, operate, and maintain rest areas along Interstate highways and place restrictions and limitations on the use of the areas.

Additional authority for Chapter 50 is provided under subsection E of § 33.2-246 of the Code of Virginia, which authorizes the CTB to "establish regulations for the use of recreational waysides, including regulations relating to (i) the time, place, and manner of parking of vehicles; (ii) activities that may be conducted within such waysides; (iii) solicitation and selling within the waysides; and (iv) such other matters as may be necessary or expedient in the interest of the motoring public."

Additional authority for Chapter 100 comes from § 33.2-118 of the Code of Virginia, which provides authority for regulation of mobile food vending in commuter parking lots in Planning District 8.

Purpose

Explain the need for the regulatory change, including a description of: (1) the rationale or justification, (2) the specific reasons the regulatory change is essential to protect the health, safety, or welfare of citizens, and (3) the goals of the regulatory change and the problems it is intended to solve.

The CTB believes Chapters 50 and 100 are necessary for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. The amendments will preserve the health, safety, and welfare of users and the integrity of the facilities through prohibiting potentially dangerous conduct and restricting other conduct which may negatively interfere with the intended uses of these areas. The combination of Chapters 50 and 100 into a new Chapter 51 will also protect citizens as there is considerable overlap between the two existing regulations, and this change will streamline the regulations and reduce confusion for users of these facilities. Text that is outdated and no longer reflects agency practice is proposed for removal. Many changes to the text of the regulation will be made in accordance with the Virginia Register of Regulation's "Form, Style and Procedure Manual for Publication of Virginia Regulations" to ensure the regulation is easily readable and understandable.

A provision will be added to allow for state government entities to request permission for activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law. This will ensure the restrictions on uses of rest areas do not prohibit the distribution of relevant safety information to travelers by state government entities. Additional changes allow for permitting of events in parking lots on weekends. This will provide for use of the parking lot facilities on weekends when they are typically not otherwise being used by parked vehicles. Another change is to expand mobile food vending to parking lots outside of Planning District 8. Other changes to the regulation are necessary to update language which is no longer relevant or which no longer reflects current practice.

Substance

Briefly identify and explain the new substantive provisions, the substantive changes to existing sections, or both. A more detailed discussion is provided in the "Detail of Changes" section below.

Substantive changes include combining the two regulatory chapters into a new Chapter 51 to remove the overlapping requirements currently duplicated in both regulations. The overlapping requirements will be

consolidated into one section within the new regulatory text and the unique provisions of each current chapter will be retained as new standalone sections to ensure the public can easily find and understand the applicable requirements.

Furthermore, new substantive additions include the allowance for state government entities to request permission for activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, the allowance for permitting events in parking lots on weekends, and expansion of the allowance for mobile food vending to parking lots outside of Planning District 8.

Other proposed amendments will achieve administrative updates, add clarifying language, and bring the text in line with current practice.

Issues

Identify the issues associated with the regulatory change, including: 1) the primary advantages and disadvantages to the public, such as individual private citizens or businesses, of implementing the new or amended provisions; 2) the primary advantages and disadvantages to the agency or the Commonwealth; and 3) other pertinent matters of interest to the regulated community, government officials, and the public. If there are no disadvantages to the public or the Commonwealth, include a specific statement to that effect.

The primary benefit to the public of combining the two regulatory chapters into a new Chapter 51 is to ensure the regulatory requirements are easy to find and understand. Other proposed changes will benefit the public through removing outdated language and providing clarity as to current VDOT practice.

The allowance for state government entities to request permission for activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law will benefit other state government entities as they will be able to request permission to set up tables or hand out educational materials to the public at Virginia's rest areas. This will also benefit the traveling public as they will be better informed as a result of the information provided to them by government entities.

The allowance for permitting events in parking lots will benefit the public as there will be more opportunities for productive use of the parking lots on weekends. Example activities that could be permitted include farmers markets or car shows.

Expanding the opportunity for mobile food vending in parking lots outside of Planning District 8 will benefit mobile food vendors as they will be able to obtain permits for vending in more lots than allowed under the current regulation. The number and location of lots where new vending would be permitted has not yet been determined.

There are no anticipated disadvantages to the public or the Commonwealth from the proposed regulatory changes.

Requirements More Restrictive than Federal

List all changes to the information reported on the Agency Background Document submitted for the previous stage regarding any requirement of the regulatory change which is more restrictive than applicable federal requirements. If there are no changes to previously reported information, include a specific statement to that effect.

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Agencies, Localities, and Other Entities Particularly Affected

List all changes to the information reported on the Agency Background Document submitted for the previous stage regarding any other state agencies, localities, or other entities that are particularly affected by the regulatory change. If there are no changes to previously reported information, include a specific statement to that effect.

Other State Agencies Particularly Affected

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Localities Particularly Affected

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Other Entities Particularly Affected

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Public Comment

Summarize all comments received during the public comment period following the publication of the previous stage, and provide the agency's response. Include all comments submitted: including those received on Town Hall, in a public hearing, or submitted directly to the agency. If no comment was received, enter a specific statement to that effect.

No public comments were received during the public comment period.

Detail of Changes Made Since the Previous Stage

*List all changes made to the text since the previous stage was published in the Virginia Register of Regulations and the rationale for the changes. For example, describe the intent of the language and the expected impact. Describe the difference between existing requirement(s) and/or agency practice(s) and what is being proposed in this regulatory change. Explain the new requirements and what they mean rather than merely quoting the text of the regulation. * Put an asterisk next to any substantive changes.*

A comma will be added after "Transportation" in the proposed 24VAC30-51-10(J). The subsection will read, "No person may offer any article or thing for sale within waysides, rest areas, parking lots and their environs except pursuant to a vendor contract with the Virginia Department of Transportation, by permit in accordance with the Land Use Permit Regulations (24VAC30-151), or as permitted by section 40 of this chapter." This comma was inadvertently removed upon publication of the Proposed stage. The CTB proposes to add this comma back into the regulatory text to ensure the meaning of the subsection is as intended.

Detail of All Changes Proposed in this Regulatory Action

List all changes proposed in this action and the rationale for the changes. For example, describe the intent of the language and the expected impact. Describe the difference between existing requirement(s)

*and/or agency practice(s) and what is being proposed in this regulatory change. Explain the new requirements and what they mean rather than merely quoting the text of the regulation. * Put an asterisk next to any substantive changes.*

Current chapter-section number	New chapter-section number, if applicable	Current requirements in VAC	Change, intent, rationale, and likely impact of updated requirements
50-10(A)	51-20(A)	Sets the hours during which certain waysides will be open.	This language will be added to the new section pertaining to waysides. In the new regulatory text, "Unless otherwise posted," will be added to the beginning of this provision to allow flexibility for signage to be posted at specific waysides setting different opening hours.
50-10(B)		States that when an area is posted for limited parking, the operator of each vehicle may be required to sign a register setting forth the time of arrival.	This language is proposed to be removed as it is not current practice to require vehicle operators to sign a register setting forth the time of arrival.
50-10(C)	51-20(B)	States that when posted, parking shall be limited to the period specified.	This language will be added to the new section pertaining to waysides.
50-10(D)	51-20(C) and 51-30(A)	Prohibits overnight parking.	This language will be simplified and added to the new sections pertaining to waysides and rest areas.
50-10(E)	51-10(B)	States that camping is not permitted at any time.	The text of this requirement will be simplified. In the combined regulation, this will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs.
50-10(F)	51-30(B)	Prohibits sleeping in rest area buildings.	This language will be added to the new section pertaining to rest areas.
50-10(G) and 100-10(B)	51-10(C)	States that no vehicle shall be parked in such manner as to occupy more than one marked parking space. The word "marked" is not included in the very similar text from Chapter 100.	The text of this requirement will be simplified. In the combined regulation, this will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs.
50-10(H)	51-10(E) and 51-30(C)	Prohibits domestic animals from going at large; requires dogs to be kept on leash and prohibits them from being taken into any shelter or other building; and exempts guide, hearing, or service dogs as defined by the Code of Virginia.	The prohibition on domestic animals going at large will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified. Specific language regarding dogs entering buildings will be added to the new section pertaining to rest areas. The text will also be simplified.

50-10(I) and 100-10(E)	51-10(F)	Prohibit picking any flowers, foliage, or fruit; cutting, breaking, digging up or in any way mutilating or injuring any tree, shrub, plant, grass, turf, fence, structure, or anything within the area; or cutting, carving, painting, marking, pasting, or in any way attaching on any tree, stone, fence, wall, building, or other object therein, any bill, advertisement, or inscription whatsoever.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified.
50-10(J) and 100-10(F)	51-10(G)	State that no person shall disturb or injure any bird, birds' nest or eggs, or any squirrel or other animal within the area.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified.
50-10(K)	51-10(H)	Prohibits digging up or removing any dirt, stones, rock or other thing, making any excavation, quarrying any stone or laying or setting off any blast, or causing or assisting in doing any of said things without the special order or license of the commissioner.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified and modified to reflect the current agency practice of requiring a Land Use Permit in accordance with 24VAC30-151 for conduct of the noted activities.
50-10(L) and 100-10(G)	51-10(I)	Prohibit threatening, abusive, boisterous, insulting or indecent language or gestures within these areas and prohibits any oration, or other public demonstration, unless permitted by the commissioner.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be rewritten and clarified to state, “No oration, demonstration, picketing, public display, assembly, dissemination, or similar activity may occur in waysides, rest areas, parking lots, or the environs of those spaces, except as may be allowed by 24VAC30-51-30 or 24VAC30-51-40. This prohibition does not apply to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).” These changes will reflect text proposed to be added to sections 30 and 40 of the new regulation.
50-10(M) and 100-10(H)	51-10(J)	Prohibit offering any article or thing for sale within these areas except by permission of the CTB for waysides and rest areas or the commissioner for parking lots and environs.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified and modified to reflect the current agency practice. A comma will be added after “Transportation” in the proposed 24VAC30-51-10(J). The subsection will read, “No person may offer any article or thing for sale within waysides, rest

			areas, parking lots and their environs except pursuant to a vendor contract with the Virginia Department of Transportation, by permit in accordance with the Land Use Permit Regulations (24VAC30-151), or as permitted by section 40 of this chapter." This comma was inadvertently removed upon publication of the Proposed stage. The CTB proposes to add this comma back into the regulatory text to ensure the meaning of the subsection is as intended.
50-10(N)	51-20(D)	Prohibits bathing or fishing in any waters within waysides or rest areas, except in such places and subject to such regulations as the commissioner may, from time to time, specially designate by a public notice set up for that purpose within the same.	This language will be simplified and added to the new section pertaining to waysides.
50-10(O) and 100-10(J)	51-20(E), 51-30(D), and 51-40(C)	Prohibit lighting, kindling, or using any fire within these areas. The current Chapter 50 text provides an exemption for fires at fireplaces designed and built for such purposes and requires the person or persons building a fire therein to be responsible for having it completely extinguished before leaving it. The current Chapter 100 text provides an exemption for fires authorized by the terms of a land use permit issued to a mobile food vendor.	The proposed fire-related text for the new sections on waysides and rest areas will make minor changes to the current Chapter 50 text, including replacing "fireplaces" with "designated areas." An additional sentence will clarify that, "Ashes shall be removed from the designated areas and disposed of in such receptacles as may be provided for ash disposal." The proposed text for the new section on parking lots and environs will make minor changes to the current Chapter 100 text.
50-10(P) and 100-10(K)	51-10(K)	Prohibit the discharge or setting off of any firearms, firecrackers, and other various incendiary devices except by permit from the commissioner.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified and modified to reflect the current agency practice of requiring a Land Use Permit in accordance with 24VAC30-151 for conduct of the noted activities.
50-10(Q) and 100-10(D)	51-10(L)	Prohibit bottles, broken glass, ashes, waste paper, or other rubbish from being left within these areas except in such receptacles as may be provided for the same.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified.
50-10(R)	51-10(M)	Prohibits automobiles or other vehicles from being taken into or driven upon these areas, except	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and

		upon such drives and subject to such regulations as the commissioner may, from time to time, designate by a public notice set up for that purpose within the same.	environs. The text will be simplified. A new sentence will also be added to state, "Drivers shall obey all traffic signs posted in waysides, rest areas, and parking lots."
50-10(S) and 100-10(L)	51-10(N)	State that, "Any person violating any of the preceding rules and regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, be fined not less than five dollars nor more than $100 for each offense.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. Edits regarding civil liability will be made to the text to conform to similar proposed amendments to the Land Use Permit Regulations.
100-10(A)	51-10(A)	Requires all persons within the regulated parking lots and associated environs to be subject to such regulations as the commissioner may designate by posted signs or public notice posted within the area.	This requirement will be simplified to state, "While in waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and the environs of those spaces, all persons shall obey official posted signs or public notices." In the combined regulation, this will be a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs.
100-10(C)	51-10(D)	Requires that no person paste, attach or place on any vehicle parked in parking lots any bill, advertisement or inscription whatsoever.	This language will become a generally applicable requirement for waysides, rest areas, and parking lots and environs. The text will be simplified.
100-10(I)	51-40(D)	Sets the requirements for mobile food vending within commuter lots in Planning District 8.	* This language will be added to the new section pertaining to parking lots and environs. The requirement that mobile food vending be allowed within commuter lots in Planning District 8 will be expanded to state, "…and may be allowed at other parking lots…" This change reflects interest from localities and mobile food vendors in having the option for mobile food vending available in parking lots not in Planning District 8. Additional changes will be made to simplify and clarify the text.
N/A	51-30(E)		* Adds the ability for state government entities to request permission for activities at and uses and occupation of rest areas not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law.
N/A	51-40(A)		A new subsection in the section pertaining to parking lots and environs will state, "Overnight parking may be restricted in accordance with posted signs." This is in accordance with § 46.2-1219.2 of the Code of Virginia which requires parking to be in conformance with posted signs and

			pavement markings and which also requires in Planning District 8 that such signs clearly indicate that before 10:00 a.m. Monday through Friday except holidays parking is only for commuters using mass transit or who are car pool or bicycle riders.
N/A	51-40(B)		* A new subsection in the section pertaining to parking lots and environs will provide the ability for the CTB to permit persons, organizations, or groups to use the lots for various purposes and events when the use will not interfere with or disrupt the normal and intended function of the lots in accordance with 24VAC30-151. This addition is proposed to reflect requests from localities to allow for events to be held in these parking lots on weekends. Proposed restrictions will state that no activities will be permitted that violate or are inconsistent with the regulatory chapter, Virginia or federal law, or local ordinances, including noise ordinances; that events must provide reasonable safety for all participants, spectators, other parking lot users, and the public; and that events must preserve the aesthetic appearance of buildings and grounds and provide for the removal of waste that may be left by event participants. Additional proposed text will clarify that requests for permits generally will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis, that parking lots may only be available for permitted events on Saturdays and Sundays, and that no more than one event will be scheduled for the same time on the same day, including set up and break down. Text will also be added to state that VDOT may require the cancellation of a permitted event and the immediate removal of all related equipment if the permittee violates the permit conditions, to preserve public safety or order, or prevent damage to the lot and environs.


VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation

PROPOSED REGULATORY AMENDMENTS

Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices, 24VAC30-120

Robert Hofrichter
Director, Office of Land Use

January 6, 2026

24VAC30-120 – Background

- The Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices address key issues, such as size, spacing, and lighting, for advertisements and directional and other official signs placed adjacent to the highway right-of-way
  - CTB policy dates to 1976; regulation established in 1995
  - Adopted pursuant to the authority in Sections 33.2-1200 and 33.2-1220
  - Last periodic review was in 2021; last substantive amendments were in 2004

Periodic Review/Regulatory Reduction Program

- In July 2025, to fulfill regulatory periodic review requirements and to further regulatory reduction and streamlining efforts, the CTB approved a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) for 24VAC30-120
- VDOT filed the NOIRA, which was published in the Virginia Register in November for a 30-day public comment period.
- Filing the Proposed stage is the next step of the regulatory process

Periodic Review/Regulatory Reduction Program

- **One set of public comments were received from Scenic America during the NOIRA public comment period**
  - **Recommends that the regulation be amended to:**
    - Set specific daytime and nighttime luminance values for digital billboards
      - *Recommend rejecting, § 33.2-1229 and the proposed 24VAC30-122-40 already allow VDOT to address signs that impair vision*
    - Implement time restrictions for LED displays
      - *Recommend rejecting, law and proposed regulations already allow VDOT to address signs that impair vision; not aware of any situations where this has caused issues*

Periodic Review/Regulatory Reduction Program

- **Comments received from Scenic America during the NOIRA public comment period (cont'd)**
  - **Recommends that the regulation be amended to:**
    - Clarify that converting a static billboard to a digital or electronic display constitutes a substantial change in existing use
      - *Only applies to nonconforming billboards, recommend rejecting as current law and proposed rules effectively prevent this conversion*
    - Prohibit maintenance requiring the destruction or cutting of trees, shrubs, or other vegetation located on the state-owned or -controlled right-of-way to increase the visibility of outdoor advertising structures.
      - *Recommend rejecting, § 33.2-1221 specifically allows cutting*

24VAC30-120 – Proposed Significant Amendments

- Significant reorganization and streamlining of the regulation to make the text easier for regulated entities to read and understand
  - Assembled items that impact all signs covered into one section
  - Removed supplemental signing reference (covered by Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices)
  - Due to the extent of the reorganization, propose to repeal Chapter 120 and promulgate Chapter 122
- Nonconforming signs
  - The number of months a nonconforming sign can be blank will be revised from 18 months to 24 months to provide added flexibility to regulants
  - The number of days the sign owner has to display a message after receiving written notice will be revised from 120 days to 30 days in conformance with the timeline for corrective action set in § 33.2-1229

Next Steps

- If amendments are approved by the CTB, VDOT staff will file the Proposed stage on Town Hall*
- The amendments will then go through executive branch review, after which they will be published in the Virginia Register for the public to review
- Public comment will be received for 60 days
- Proposed regulations may be adopted as Final regulations with or without further amendments or not at all

*Text of proposed amendments and Town Hall documentation is included in CTB package

Questions?

Project 8470 - NOIRA

Department of Transportation

Review of Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Other Signs and Notices

Chapter 120

Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices

(REPEALED)

~~Part I~~

~~Outdoor Advertising in Zoned and Unzoned Commercial and Industrial Areas~~

24VAC30-120-10. ~~Definitions.~~ (Repealed.)

~~For the purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:~~

~~"Commercial or industrial activities" means those activities generally recognized as commercial or industrial by zoning authorities in this Commonwealth, except that none of the following activities shall be considered commercial or industrial:~~

~~1. Outdoor advertising structures.~~

~~2. Agricultural, forestry, grazing, farming, and related activities including, but not limited to, wayside fresh produce stands.~~

~~3. Transient or temporary activities.~~

~~4. Activities not visible from the main traveled way.~~

~~5. Activities more than 300 feet from the nearest edge of the right of way.~~

~~6. Activities conducted in a building principally used as a residence.~~

~~7. Railroad tracks and minor sidings.~~

~~"National highway system" means the federal-aid highway system described in subsection (b) of § 103 of Title 23, United States Code, and regulations adopted pursuant to that law, or as defined in § 33.2-1200 of the Code of Virginia.~~

~~"Unzoned commercial or industrial areas" means those areas on which there is located one or more~~

~~permanent structures devoted to a business on industrial activity or on which a commercial or industrial activity is actually conducted, whether or not a permanent structure is located thereon, and the area along the highway extending outward 500 feet from and beyond the edge of such activity. Each side of the highway will be considered separately in applying this definition.~~

~~"Zoned commercial or industrial areas" means those areas which are reserved for business, commerce, or trade pursuant to a comprehensive state or local zoning ordinance or regulation. All measurements shall be from the outer edges of the regularly used buildings, parking lots, storage or processing areas of the activities, not from the property lines of the activities, and shall be along or parallel to the edge or pavement of the highway.~~

24VAC30-120-20. ~~Zoning requirements.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. In zoned commercial and industrial areas where the locality has regulations governing the size, spacing and lighting of signs, such regulations shall control and govern when so certified to the appropriate federal authority by the commissioner.~~

~~B. In all other zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas, the criteria set forth in this part shall apply.~~

24VAC30-120-30. ~~Size of signs.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. The maximum area for any advertisement shall be 1,200 square feet with a maximum height of 25 feet and maximum length of 60 feet, inclusive of any border and trim but excluding ornamental base or apron supports and other structural members.~~

~~B. The area shall be measured by the smallest square, rectangle, triangle, circle, or combination thereof which will encompass the entire advertisement.~~

~~C. A sign structure may contain one or two advertisements per facing, not to exceed the maximum area.~~

~~D. Double-faced structures will be permitted with the maximum area being allowed for each facing.~~

24VAC30-120-40. ~~Spacing of signs.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. Interstate highway and freeways on the national highway or federal-aid primary systems.~~

~~1. No two structures shall be spaced less than 500 feet apart.~~

~~2. No structure may be located within 500 feet of an interchange, or intersection at grade, or rest~~

area (measured along the interstate or freeway from the sign to the nearest point of the beginning or ending of pavement widening at the exit from or entrance to the main traveled way).

B. Nonfreeway federal-aid primary or national highway system routes.

1. Outside of municipalities. No two structures shall be spaced less than 300 feet apart.

2. Inside municipalities. No two structures shall be spaced less than 100 feet apart.

C. Explanatory notes.

1. Official and "on premise" signs, as defined in § 131(c) of Title 23, United States Code, shall not be counted nor shall measurements be made from them for purposes of determining compliance with spacing requirements.

2. The minimum distance between signs shall be measured along the nearest edge of the pavement between points directly opposite the signs along each side of the highway.

24VAC30-120-50. Lighting. (Repealed.)

Signs may be illuminated, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Signs which contain, include, or are illuminated by any flashing intermittent, or moving light or lights are prohibited, except those giving public service information such as time, date, temperature, weather, or similar information.

2. Signs which are not effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled ways of the interstate or primary highway and which are of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or which otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle are prohibited.

3. No sign shall be so illuminated that it interferes with the effectiveness of, or obscures an official traffic sign, device, or signal.

4. All such lighting shall be subject to any other provisions relating to lighting of signs presently applicable to all highways under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth.

24VAC30-120-60. Zoning requirements; interstate highways. (Repealed.)

Notwithstanding 24VAC30-120-20 A and 24VAC30-120-20 B, no signs, advertisements or advertising structures may be erected, maintained or displayed adjacent to interstate highways except:

1. In zoned commercial or industrial areas within the boundaries of incorporated municipalities as such boundaries existed on September 21, 1959.

2. In other areas zoned commercial or industrial as of September 21, 1959.

24VAC30-120-70. Certification of comprehensive zoning. (Repealed.)

At any time that a locality adopts a comprehensive zoning ordinance which also controls outdoor advertising including size, lighting and spacing controls in zoned commercial and industrial areas, the regulation of signs under these rules and regulations shall be transferred from 24VAC30-120-20 B to 24VAC30-120-20 A when so certified to the appropriate federal authority by the commissioner. Upon the written request of such locality or any other interested party, the commissioner will review such certification request for compliance with this section.

At such time as the commissioner determines that such locality no longer has a comprehensive zoning ordinance which also controls outdoor advertising including size, lighting and spacing controls in zoned commercial and industrial areas, such certification shall be withdrawn and the regulation of signs under these rules and regulations shall be retransferred from 24VAC30-120-20 A to 24VAC30-120-20 B.

Part II

Directional and Other Official Signs and Notices (Located Off Highway Right of Way)

24VAC30-120-80. Definitions. (Repealed.)

The following definitions apply to directional and other official signs and notices which are erected and maintained within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right of way of interstate, federal-aid primary and national highway systems, which are not erected on the highway right of way and which are visible from the main-traveled way of the system.

"Directional and other official signs and notices" means only official signs and notices, public utility signs, service club and religious notices, public service signs, and directional signs.

"Directional signs" means signs containing directional information about public places owned or operated by federal, state, or local governments or their agencies; publicly or privately owned natural phenomena, historic, cultural, scientific, educational, and religious sites; and areas of natural scenic beauty or naturally suited for outdoor recreation, deemed to be in the interest of the traveling public.

"Erect" means to construct, build, raise, assemble, place, affix, attach, create, paint, draw, or in any other way bring into being or establish.

"Federal or state law" means a federal or state constitutional provision or statute, or an ordinance, rule or regulation enacted or adopted by a state or federal agency or a political subdivision of a state pursuant to a federal or state constitution or statute.

"Freeway" means a divided arterial highway for through traffic with full control of access.

"Interstate system" means the national system of interstate and defense highways, described in § 103(e) of Title 23, United States Code.

"Maintain" means to allow to exist.

"Main-traveled way" means the through traffic lanes of the highway, exclusive of frontage roads, auxiliary lanes and ramps.

"National highway system" means the federal-aid highway system described in subsection (b) of § 103 of Title 23, United States Code, and regulations adopted pursuant to that law, or as defined in § 33.2-1200 of the Code of Virginia.

"Official signs and notices" means signs and notices erected and maintained by public officers or public agencies within their territorial or zoning jurisdiction and pursuant to and in accordance with direction or authorization contained in federal, state or local law for the purposes of carrying out an official duty or responsibility. Historical markers authorized by state law and erected by state or local government agencies or nonprofit historical societies may be considered official signs.

"Parkland" means any publicly owned land which is designated or used as a public park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge or historic site.

"Primary system" means the federal-aid highway system described in § 103(b) of Title 23, United States Code.

"Public service signs" means signs located on school bus stop shelters, which:

1. Identify the donor, sponsor, or contributor of said shelter;

2. Contain safety slogans or messages, which shall occupy not less than 60% of the area of the sign;

3. Contain no other message;

~~4. Are located on school bus shelters which are authorized or approved by city, county, or state law, regulation or ordinance, and at places approved by the city, county, or state agency controlling the highway involved; and~~

~~5. May not exceed 32 square feet in area. Not more than one sign on each shelter shall face in any one direction.~~

~~"Public utility signs" means warning signs, informational signs, notices, or markers which are customarily erected and maintained by publicly or privately owned public utilities, as essential to their operations.~~

~~"Rest area" means an area or site established and maintained within or adjacent to the highway right of way by or under public supervision or control for the convenience of the traveling public.~~

~~"Scenic area" means any area of particular scenic beauty or historical significance as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, and includes interests in land which has been acquired for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty.~~

~~"Service club and religious notices" means signs and notices whose erection is authorized by law, relating to meetings of nonprofit service clubs or charitable associations, or religious services, which signs do not exceed eight square feet in area.~~

~~"Sign" means an outdoor sign, light, display device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard, or other thing which is designed, intended, or used to advertise or inform any part of the advertising or informative contents of which is visible from any place on the main-traveled way of the interstate or federal-aid primary highway.~~

~~"Single route" means one numbered highway or a combination of numbered highways affording a means of reaching an advertised activity from any one point.~~

~~"State" means any one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.~~

~~"Visible" means capable of being seen (whether or not legible) without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity.~~

24VAC30-120-90. ~~Prohibited signs.~~ (Repealed.)

~~The following signs are prohibited:~~

~~1. Signs advertising activities that are illegal under federal or state laws or regulations in effect at the~~

~~location of those signs or at the location of those activities.~~

~~2. Signs located in such a manner as to obscure or otherwise interfere with the effectiveness of an official traffic sign, signal, or device, or obstruction or interfere with the driver's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic.~~

~~3. Signs which are erected or maintained upon trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural features.~~

~~4. Obsolete signs.~~

~~5. Signs which are structurally unsafe or in disrepair.~~

~~6. Signs which move or have any animated or moving parts.~~

~~7. Signs located in rest area, parklands or scenic areas.~~

~~8. Signs that identify ancillary sites, areas, features or activities.~~

24VAC30-120-100. ~~Size.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. No sign shall exceed the following limits:~~

~~1. Maximum area -- 150 square feet~~

~~2. Maximum height -- 20 feet.~~

~~3. Maximum length -- 20 feet.~~

~~B. All dimensions include border and trim, but exclude supports.~~

24VAC30-120-110. ~~Lighting.~~ (Repealed.)

~~Signs may be illuminated, subject to the following:~~

~~1. Signs which contain, include, or are illuminated by any flashing, intermittent, or moving light or lights are prohibited.~~

~~2. Signs which are not effectively shielded so as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled way of an interstate or primary highway or which are of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or which otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle are prohibited.~~

~~3. No sign may be so illuminated as to interfere with the effectiveness of or obscure an official traffic~~

~~sign, device, or signal.~~

24VAC30-120-120. ~~Spacing.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. Each location of a sign must be approved by the state Department of Transportation.~~

~~B. No sign may be located within 2,000 feet of an interchange, or intersection at grade along the interstate system or other freeways (measured along the interstate or freeway from the nearest point of the beginning or ending or pavement widening at the exit from or entrance to the main-traveled way).~~

~~C. No sign may be located within 2,000 feet of a rest area, parkland, or scenic area.~~

~~D. 1. No two signs facing the same direction of travel shall be spaced less than one mile apart;~~

~~2. Not more than three signs pertaining to the same activity and facing the same direction of travel may be erected along a single route approaching the activity;~~

~~3. Signs located adjacent to the interstate system shall be within 75 air miles of the activity; and~~

~~4. Signs located adjacent to the primary system shall be within 50 air miles of the activity.~~

24VAC30-120-130. ~~Message content.~~ (Repealed.)

~~The message on signs shall be limited to the identification of the approved site, feature, area or activity and directional information useful to the traveler in locating the site, area, feature, or activity, such as mileage, route number or exit numbers. Descriptive words or phrases, and pictorial or photographic representations of the activity or its environs are prohibited.~~

24VAC30-120-140. ~~Administration of regulations.~~ (Repealed.)

~~The Commissioner of Highways, under § 33.2-1201 of the Code of Virginia, has the duty to administer and enforce provisions of Chapter 12 (§ 33.2-1200 et seq.) of Title 33.2 of the Code of Virginia. The board and the Commissioner of Highways recognize that there are other state agencies which have as their primary purpose the control and administration of the type of specific unique phenomena or site, for which a directional sign application may be made, that have valuable experience and knowledge in the matters contained in the definition of "directional signs." Therefore, the following state agencies are hereby recognized for the purpose of making recommendations whether a site, area, agency, or phenomena falls within the definition of "directional signs" set forth in 24VAC30-120-80:~~

~~Department of Conservation and Recreation~~

~~Department of Historic Resources~~

~~The Library of Virginia~~

~~The recommendations must be based upon criteria presently utilized or hereinafter adopted by one of these agencies.~~

~~After the recommendation is received the commissioner must employ the following standards in addition to those which appear elsewhere to ascertain whether a site, area, agency, or phenomena is eligible for directional signs.~~

~~1. That publicly or privately owned activities or attractions eligible for directional signing are limited to the following: natural phenomena; scenic attractions; historic, educational, cultural, scientific, and religious sites; and areas naturally suited for outdoor recreation.~~

~~2. Any of the above must be nationally or regionally known as determined by the commissioner.~~

~~3. Any of the above must be of outstanding interest to the traveling public as determined by the Commissioner of Highways.~~

~~The area, site, agency, or phenomena seeking to qualify for "directional signs" shall be the principal area, site, agency, or phenomena which would appear on proposed sign and not ancillary to the message which would appear on the sign.~~

24VAC30-120-150. ~~Final determination.~~ (Repealed.)

~~The commissioner shall make the final determination whether a site, area, agency or phenomena is eligible for directional signs. The signs must conform to the requirements and standards set out herein in Part II (24VAC30-120-80 et seq.).~~

~~Part III~~

~~Signs on Rights of Way of the Interstate and Other Controlled Access Highways~~

24VAC30-120-160. ~~Definitions.~~ (Repealed.)

~~The original text of Part III pertains to traffic signs and other markers, which are exempt from the Administrative Process Act. The department has filed a replacement to this part as VR 385-01-63 ("Supplemental Signing Criteria") to comply with provisions of the Virginia Register Act (§ 2.2-4100 et seq. of the Code of Virginia). This document is available for inspection at the Department of Transportation, in~~

~~the Office of Public Affairs in the Department's principal office at 1401 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219.~~

~~Part IV~~

~~Control and Continuance of Nonconforming Signs, Advertisements, and Advertising Structures~~

~~The definitions set out in § 33.2-1200 of the Code of Virginia and the following definitions shall apply:~~

~~"Erect" means to construct, build, raise, assemble, place, affix, attach, create, paint, draw, or in any other way bring into being or establish.~~

~~"Nonconforming sign" means one which was lawfully erected but which does not comply with the provisions of state law or state regulations passed at a later date or which later fails to comply with state law or state regulations due to changed conditions.~~

~~An example of changed conditions would be a sign or advertisement lawfully in existence in a commercial area which at a later date becomes noncommercial and thus required to be protected, or a sign or advertisement lawfully erected on a federal-aid secondary highway later upgraded to a federal-aid primary highway. Illegally erected or maintained signs or advertisements are not nonconforming signs.~~

~~"Nonconforming sign - grandfather clause" means a sign lawfully in existence on certain dates or as specified in the state-federal agreement erected in a commercial or industrial area which does not conform to size, lighting, or spacing criteria.~~

24VAC30-120-170. ~~Criteria for the maintenance and continuance of a nonconforming sign, advertisement or advertising structure.~~ (Repealed.)

~~A. To be classified as a nonconforming sign or structure, such sign or structure must have been in lawful existence on the effective date of the state law or regulation or changed condition and must continue to be lawfully maintained.~~

~~B. To be allowed to continue as nonconforming, a sign or structure must remain substantially unchanged from its condition as of the effective date of the state law or regulations or changed condition.~~

~~1. Replacement, extension, or enlargement of the sign or structure is a substantial change in the existing use.~~

~~2. The change of location or height of such sign or structure is a substantial change in the existing use.~~

3. A change of the message content is not a substantial change in existing use. In the event a sign has been blank for a period of 18 consecutive months, the owner will be given written notice of 120 days to display a message on or remove such sign structure. In the event a message is not displayed on the sign structure within 120 days from the postdate of the aforementioned written notice, the permit shall be cancelled.

4. Rebuilding, or re-erecting the sign or structure, is a substantial change in existing use if such rebuilding, or re-erection expenses exceed 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure.

EXCEPTION:

If it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the commissioner that a nonconforming sign or structure has been vandalized or subject to other criminal or tortious act, then the replacement, rebuilding, or re-erecting of such sign or structure will not be considered a substantial change in existing use irrespective of the cost of such replacement; however, it will be considered a substantial change in existing use if damage to nonconforming signs or structures is caused by natural disasters, hurricanes, high winds, hail, or the like, and such damage exceeds 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure. In the event vandalism and an act of God combine to damage a nonconforming sign or structure, the commissioner shall determine the percentage allocated to each cause of damage before determining whether a substantial change in existing use has occurred.

5. Normal upkeep and repair of such sign or structure on a frequent basis, to the extent that the total cost of such repairs in the 12-month period would not exceed 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure, is not a substantial change in existing use.

C. In reaching a determination on the cost point in subdivisions B 4 and B 5 of this section the following will apply:

1. The sign owner shall furnish the commissioner cost data supporting any contention that such sign or structure is not damaged more than 50% of the current replacement cost new.

2. The commissioner may also utilize any other data available to him.

3. A sign or advertising structure lawfully in existence under the "Grandfather Clause" (see 24VAC30-120-160, Definitions) must conform to the criteria set out herein.

4. Certain standard maintenance practices and techniques utilized by the industry relating to how repairs are accomplished may be individually approved, in which case nonconforming rights shall not be terminated.

5. A nonconforming sign or structure that does not conform to the foregoing criteria shall constitute a substantial change in existing use thereby terminating nonconforming rights and legal status.

D. Once the sign owner has submitted the data per subsection C of this section, the commissioner, per §§ 33.2-1201 and 33.2-1219 of the Code of Virginia, shall make a determination whether the cost of the requested or required repairs exceeds 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire billboard or structure. The determination shall be communicated to the sign owner and the building official of the locality. The sign owner is required to apply for a building permit from the locality before repairs can be commenced. If the building official of the locality objects to the commissioner's determination, for good cause shown, he may submit the objection to the commissioner, with a copy to the sign owner, within 30 days of the building permit application by the sign owner. Upon receipt of the objection the commissioner, per §§ 33.2-1201 and 33.2-1219 of the Code of Virginia, shall consider the documentation submitted by the building official and reissue a determination, which shall be binding upon the locality.

24VAC30-120-180. Right to continue. (Repealed.)

The right to continue a nonconforming sign, advertisement, or advertising structure is not confined to its owner or any one individual or corporation so using the land. Thus, a nonconforming sign, advertisement, or advertising structure may be sold, leased or otherwise transferred without affecting its status.

24VAC30-120-190. Owner's responsibility. (Repealed.)

The owner is responsible for the maintenance and continuance of a sign, advertisement, or advertising structure in conformity with the foregoing, which is not construed to relieve owner of such responsibility, nor to waive applicable provisions of the Code of Virginia relating to outdoor advertising including, but not limited to, §§ 33.2-1200, 33.2-1211, 33.2-1216, 33.2-1217, 33.2-1220, and 33.2-1227 of the Code of Virginia.

FORMS (24VAC30-120)(Repealed)

Application for Outdoor Advertising Permit OA-105A (rev. 2/2024)

Chapter 122

Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and other Signs and Notices

24VAC30-122-10. Definitions.

The following words and terms when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Erect" means to construct, build, raise, assemble, place, affix, attach, create, paint, draw, or in any other way bring into being or establish.

"Maintain" means to allow to exist.

"Main-traveled way" means the through traffic lanes of the highway, exclusive of frontage roads, auxiliary lanes, and ramps.

"Nonconforming sign" means one that was lawfully erected but that does not comply with the provisions of state law or state regulation passed at a later date, or that later fails to comply with state law or state regulation due to changed conditions. An example of changed conditions would be a sign or advertisement lawfully in existence in a commercial area that at a later date becomes noncommercial and thus is required to be protected. Illegally erected or maintained signs or advertisements are not nonconforming signs.

"Parkland" means any publicly owned land which is designated or used as a public park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or historic site.

"Scenic area" means any area of particular scenic beauty or historical significance as determined by the federal, state or local officials having jurisdiction, and includes interests in land which has been acquired for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty.

24VAC30-122-20. Owner's responsibility.

The sign owner is responsible for the maintenance and continuance of a sign, advertisement, or advertising structure in conformity with this chapter. Compliance with this chapter does not relieve the owner of complying with, nor does it waive, the applicable provisions of the Code of Virginia relating to outdoor advertising.

24VAC30-122-30. Prohibited signs.

The following signs are prohibited:

1. Signs advertising activities that are illegal under federal or state laws or regulations in effect at the location of those signs or at the location of those activities.

2. Signs that obscure or interfere with the effectiveness of an official traffic sign, signal, or device, or that obstruct or interfere with the driver's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic.

3. Signs that are structurally unsafe or in disrepair.

4. Signs that move or have any animated or moving parts.

5. Signs located in rest areas, parklands, or scenic areas.

24VAC30-122-40. Lighting.

Signs may be illuminated subject to §33.2-1216 (2) of the Code of Virginia. Signs that are not effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled ways under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Highways, that are of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or that otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle are prohibited.

Part I

Off Right of Way Outdoor Advertising in Zoned and Unzoned Commercial and Industrial Areas

24VAC30-122-50. Zoning requirements generally.

A. Zoned commercial or industrial areas are areas reserved for business, commerce, or trade pursuant to a comprehensive zoning ordinance or regulation.

Unzoned commercial or industrial areas are those areas for which there is no zoning ordinance and on which one or more permanent structures devoted to a business or industrial activity is located or a commercial or industrial activity is conducted. Unzoned commercial or industrial areas include the areas along a highway extending outward 500 feet from and beyond the edge of such commercial or industrial activity. All measurements shall be from the outer edges of the regularly used buildings, parking lots, storage or processing areas of the activities, not from the property lines of the activities, and shall be along or parallel to the edge or pavement of the highway. Each side of the highway shall be considered separately.

The following activities and structures are not considered commercial or industrial:

1. Outdoor advertising structures.

2. Agricultural, forestry, grazing, farming, and related activities, including wayside fresh produce stands.

3. Transient or temporary activities.

4. Activities not visible from the main-traveled way.

5. Activities more than 300 feet from the nearest edge of the right of way.

6. Activities conducted in a building principally used as a residence.

7. Railroad tracks and minor sidings.

B. In zoned commercial or industrial areas where the locality has regulations governing the size, spacing, and lighting of signs, such regulations shall control and govern when so certified to the appropriate federal authority by the Commissioner of Highways.

C. In all other zoned and unzoned commercial or industrial areas, the criteria set forth in this part shall apply.

24VAC30-122-60. Zoning requirements; interstate highways.

Notwithstanding 24VAC30-122-50 B and 24VAC30-122-50 C, signs, advertisements, or advertising structures may not be erected, maintained, or displayed adjacent to interstate highways except:

1. In zoned commercial or industrial areas within the boundaries of incorporated municipalities, as such boundaries existed on September 21, 1959; or

2. In all other areas zoned commercial or industrial as of September 21, 1959.

24VAC30-122-70. Certification of comprehensive zoning.

When a locality adopts a comprehensive zoning ordinance that also controls outdoor advertising, including size, spacing, and lighting controls in zoned commercial or industrial areas, the regulation of signs under part I of this chapter shall be transferred from 24VAC30-122-50 C to 24VAC30-122-50 B when certified to the appropriate federal authority by the Commissioner of Highways. Upon the written request of the locality, the Commissioner of Highways will review the certification request for compliance with this section.

At such time as the Commissioner of Highways determines that a locality no longer has a comprehensive zoning ordinance that also controls outdoor advertising, including size, spacing, and lighting controls in zoned commercial or industrial areas, the certification shall be withdrawn and the regulation of signs under part I of this chapter shall be re-transferred from 24VAC30-122-50 B to 24VAC30-122-50 C.

24VAC30-122-80. Size of signs.

A. The maximum area for any advertisement shall be 1,200 square feet with a maximum height of 25 feet and a maximum length of 60 feet, inclusive of any border trim but excluding ornamental base or apron supports and other structural members.

B. The area shall be measured by the smallest regular shapes that will encompass the entire advertisement.

C. A sign structure may contain one or two advertisements per facing, each facing not to exceed 1,200

square feet.

D. Double-faced structures will be permitted with the maximum area being allowed for each facing.

24VAC30-122-90. Spacing of signs.

A. On interstate highways and freeways on the National Highway System or Federal-Aid Primary system:

1. Structures shall be spaced at least 500 feet apart.

2. Structures may not be located within 500 feet of an interchange, intersection, or rest area (measured along the interstate or freeway from the sign to the nearest point of the beginning or ending of pavement widening at the exit from or entrance to the main-traveled way).

B. On non-freeway Federal Aid Primary or National Highway System routes:

1. Outside of municipalities, structures shall be spaced at least 300 feet apart.

2. Inside municipalities, structures shall be placed at least 100 feet apart.

C. Official signs, as defined in § 131(c) of Title 23, United States Code, and on-premise signs may not be counted nor may measurements be made from them for the purposes of determining compliance with spacing requirements.

D. The minimum distance between signs shall be measured along the nearest edge of the pavement between points directly opposite the signs along each side of the highway.

Part II

Off Right of Way Directional and Other Official Signs and Notices

24VAC30-122-100. Directional and other official signs and notices generally.

A. Directional signs are signs containing directional information about public places owned or operated by federal, state, or local governments or their agencies; publicly or privately owned natural phenomena, historic, cultural, scientific, educational, and religious sites; and areas of natural scenic beauty or naturally suited for outdoor recreation, deemed to be in the interest of the traveling public. Directional signs may be erected and maintained off highway right of way but within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right of way of interstate, Federal-Aid Primary, and National Highway Systems, where they may be visible from the main-traveled way of the highway system.

B. The message on a directional sign shall be limited to the identification of the approved site, area, feature, or activity, and directional information useful to the traveler in locating the site, area, feature, or activity,

such as mileage, route number, or exit number. Descriptive words or phrases on pictorial or photographic representations of the activity or its environs are prohibited.

C. Official signs and notices are signs and notices erected and maintained by public officers or public agencies within their territorial or zoning jurisdiction in accordance with direction or authorization contained in federal, state, or local law, for the purposes of carrying out an official duty or responsibility. Historical markers authorized by state law and erected by state or local government agencies or non-profit historical societies may be considered official signs.

24VAC30-122-110. Administration.

In addition to those criteria which appear elsewhere in state or federal law or regulation, the Commissioner of Highways shall ascertain whether a site, area, agency, or phenomena is eligible for directional signs by determining that the publicly or privately owned activities or attractions eligible for directional signing are limited to those specified in 24VAC30-122-100 A, are nationally or regionally known, and are of outstanding interest to the traveling public. The area, site, agency, or phenomena seeking to qualify for directional signs shall be the principal area, site, agency, or phenomena which would appear on the proposed sign and not ancillary to the message that would appear on the sign.

24VAC30-122-120. Final determination.

The Commissioner of Highways shall make the final determination whether a site, area, agency, or phenomena is eligible for directional signs.

24VAC30-122-130. Prohibited directional or other official signs.

Signs that identify ancillary sites, areas, features, or activities are prohibited. Signs that are erected or maintained upon trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural features are prohibited.

24VAC30-122-140. Size of directional or other official signs.

A. Directional and other official signs and notices may not exceed the following limits:

1. Maximum area: 150 square feet.

2. Maximum height: 20 feet.

3. Maximum length: 20 feet.

B. All dimensions include border and trim but exclude supports.

24VAC30-122-150. Spacing of directional or other official signs.

A. Each location of a directional or other official sign must be approved by the Commissioner of Highways.

B. Signs may not be located within 2,000 feet of an interchange or intersection along the interstate

system or other freeways, measured along the interstate or freeway from the nearest point of the beginning or ending of pavement widening at the exit from or entrance to the main-traveled way.

C. Signs may not be located within 2,000 feet of a rest area, parkland, or scenic area.

D. The following spacing requirements apply to route signing:

1. Two signs facing the same direction of travel may not be spaced less than one mile apart;

2. No more than three signs pertaining to the same activity and facing the same direction of travel may be erected along a single route approaching the activity;

3. Signs located adjacent to the interstate system shall be within 75 air miles of the activity; and

4. Signs located adjacent to the primary system shall be within 50 air miles of the activity.

Part III

Control and Continuance of Nonconforming Signs, Advertisements, and Advertising Structures

24VAC30-122-160. Criteria for maintenance and continuance of a nonconforming sign, advertisement or advertising structure.

A. To be classified as a nonconforming sign or structure, the sign or structure must have been in lawful existence on the effective date of the state law, regulation, local ordinance, or changed condition which caused the sign to be nonconforming and must continue to be lawfully maintained.

B. To be allowed to continue as nonconforming, a sign or structure must remain substantially unchanged from its condition as of the effective date of the state law, regulation, local ordinance, or changed condition which caused the sign to be nonconforming.

1. Substantial changes in existing condition include:

a. Replacement, extension, or enlargement of the sign or structure;

b. Change in the location or height of such sign or structure; or

c. Rebuilding or re-erecting the sign or structure if such rebuilding or re-erection expenses exceed 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure. If it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Highways that a nonconforming sign or structure has been vandalized or subject to other criminal or tortious acts, then the replacement,

rebuilding, or re-erecting of such sign or structure will not be considered a substantial change in existing condition irrespective of the cost of such replacement; however, it will be considered a substantial change in existing condition if damage to nonconforming signs or structures is caused by natural disasters, hurricanes, high winds, hail, or similar causes, and such damage exceeds 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure. In the event vandalism and an act of God combine to damage a nonconforming sign or structure, the Commissioner of Highways shall determine the percentage allocated to each cause of damage before determining whether a substantial change in existing condition has occurred.

2. Substantial changes in existing condition do not include:

a. Normal upkeep and repair of such sign or structure on a frequent basis, to the extent that the total cost of such repairs in the 12-month period would not exceed 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure; or

b. A change of the message content. In the event a sign has been blank for a period of 24 consecutive months, the owner will be given written notice of 30 days to display a message on or remove the sign structure. In the event a message is not displayed on the sign structure within 30 days from the postdate of the written notice, the permit shall be revoked.

C. In reaching a determination on the cost point in subdivisions B 1 c and B 2 a of this section, the following apply:

1. The sign owner shall furnish the Commissioner of Highways cost data supporting any contention that such sign or structure is not damaged more than 50% of the current replacement cost new.

2. The Commissioner of Highways may also utilize any other available data.

3. The sign structure must be in place at its original location until the Commissioner of Highways' determination is made.

D. Once the sign owner has submitted the data as required in subdivision C 1 of this section, the Commissioner of Highways, in accordance with §§ 33.2-1201 and 33.2-1219 of the Code of Virginia, shall make a determination whether the cost of the requested or required repairs exceeds 50% of the current replacement cost new of the entire sign or structure. The determination shall be communicated to the sign owner and the building official of the locality. The sign owner is required to apply for a building permit from the locality before repairs can commence. If the building official of the locality objects to the Commissioner

of Highways' determination, for good cause shown, the building official may submit the objection to the Commissioner of Highways, with a copy to the sign owner, within 30 days of the building permit application by the sign owner. Upon receipt of the objection, the Commissioner of Highways, in accordance with §§ 33.2-1201 and 33.2-1219 of the Code of Virginia, shall consider the documentation submitted by the building official and reissue a determination, which shall be binding on the locality.

E. A nonconforming sign or structure that does not conform to the criteria in subsection B of this section shall constitute a substantial change in existing use, thereby terminating nonconforming rights and legal status.

24VAC30-122-170. Right to continue.

A nonconforming sign, advertisement, or advertising structure may be sold, leased, or otherwise transferred without affecting its status.

FORMS (24VAC30-122)

Application for Outdoor Advertising Permit, OA-105A (rev. 12/2025)

townhall.virginia.gov

Proposed Regulation
Agency Background Document

Agency name	Commonwealth Transportation Board
Virginia Administrative Code (VAC) Chapter citation(s)	24VAC30-120
VAC Chapter title(s)	Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices
Action title	Review of the Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices
Date this document prepared	____, 2026

This information is required for executive branch review and the Virginia Registrar of Regulations, pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act (APA), Executive Order 19 (2022) (EO 19), any instructions or procedures issued by the Office of Regulatory Management (ORM) or the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) pursuant to EO 19, the Regulations for Filing and Publishing Agency Regulations (1 VAC 7-10), and the *Form and Style Requirements for the Virginia Register of Regulations and Virginia Administrative Code*.

Brief Summary

Provide a brief summary (preferably no more than 2 or 3 paragraphs) of this regulatory change (i.e., new regulation, amendments to an existing regulation, or repeal of an existing regulation). Alert the reader to all substantive matters. If applicable, generally describe the existing regulation.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has undertaken a comprehensive review of 24VAC30-120, Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices. Through this regulation, the CTB regulates the placement and characteristics of outdoor advertising and signs consistent with requirements of federal law and regulation. Significant opportunities for regulatory reduction and streamlining were identified. As such, the CTB is proposing the repeal of 24VAC30-120 and the promulgation of a new regulation, 24VAC30-122, to reflect the reorganized text.

Acronyms and Definitions

Define all acronyms used in this form, and any technical terms that are not also defined in the "Definitions" section of the regulation.

CTB means the Commonwealth Transportation Board.
VDOT means the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Mandate and Impetus

Identify the mandate for this regulatory change and any other impetus that specifically prompted its initiation (e.g., new or modified mandate, petition for rulemaking, periodic review, or board decision). For purposes of executive branch review, "mandate" has the same meaning as defined in the ORM procedures, "a directive from the General Assembly, the federal government, or a court that requires that a regulation be promulgated, amended, or repealed in whole or part."

On July 16, 2025, the CTB approved a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action to review 24VAC30-120 to potentially amend any overly burdensome requirements, remove any obsolete information, and provide more clarity with streamlined text. On _____, the CTB approved the proposed amendments to repeal 24VAC30-120 and promulgate 24VAC30-122.

Legal Basis

Identify (1) the promulgating agency, and (2) the state and/or federal legal authority for the regulatory change, including the most relevant citations to the Code of Virginia and Acts of Assembly chapter number(s), if applicable. Your citation must include a specific provision, if any, authorizing the promulgating agency to regulate this specific subject or program, as well as a reference to the agency's overall regulatory authority.

The CTB originally promulgated/adopted the Rules and Regulations Controlling Outdoor Advertising and Directional and Other Signs and Notices (24VAC30-120) pursuant to its general authority to adopt regulations in § 33.2-210 of the Code of Virginia and the authority granted in other sections of the Code of Virginia, including § 33.2-1200 and § 33.2-1220, relating to outdoor advertising.

Pursuant to § 33.2-1200 of the Code of Virginia, "[i]n order to promote the safety, convenience, and enjoyment of travel on and protection of the public investment in highways within the Commonwealth, attract tourists and promote the prosperity, economic well-being, and general welfare of the Commonwealth, and preserve and enhance the natural scenic beauty or aesthetic features of the highways and adjacent areas, the General Assembly declares it to be the policy of the Commonwealth that the erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising in areas adjacent to the rights-of-way of the highways within the Commonwealth shall be regulated in accordance with the terms of this article [article 1 of Chapter 12 of Title 33.2] and regulations promulgated by the Board pursuant thereto." Further, § 33.2-1220 of the Code of Virginia states that the CTB "may issue regulations and is authorized to enter into agreements with the United States as provided in 23 U.S.C. § 131 with respect to the regulation and control of signs, advertisements, and advertising structures in conformity with § 33.2-1217, provided that such agreements shall not prevent the General Assembly of Virginia from amending or repealing § 33.2-1217 at any time, and provided further that in the event the federal law is amended to lessen the special restrictions applicable to signs, advertisements, and advertising structures adjacent to Interstate System or federal-aid primary highways, the Board is authorized to adopt regulations to conform to such change in federal law and to amend any agreement with the United States relating to such control."

Purpose

Explain the need for the regulatory change, including a description of: (1) the rationale or justification, (2) the specific reasons the regulatory change is essential to protect the health, safety or welfare of citizens, and (3) the goals of the regulatory change and the problems it is intended to solve.

This regulation is essential to protect the health, safety, and welfare of citizens because it addresses key issues for advertisements and directional and other official signs placed adjacent to the highway right-of-way, such as size, spacing, and lighting, in conformance with the requirements of the Highway Beautification Act (23 U.S.C. § 131) and 23 CFR Part 750.

The CTB proposes to significantly streamline and reorganize the text within Chapter 120, necessitating the repeal of that chapter and the promulgation of a new Chapter 122. The existing regulation contains a considerable amount of outdated and unnecessary text. The goal of the regulatory change is to ensure the regulation is up to date and easy to understand, which will advance the health, safety, and welfare of citizens by ensuring outdoor advertising along Virginia's highways is conducted safely.

Substance

Briefly identify and explain the new substantive provisions, the substantive changes to existing sections, or both. A more detailed discussion is provided in the "Detail of Changes" section below.

In addition to the general changes to streamline and reorganize the regulation, the CTB proposes to revise the text specifying the number of months a nonconforming sign can be blank from 18 to 24 months and the number of days the owner has to display a message after receiving written notice from 120 to 30 days. The change to 24 months adds flexibility for sign owners. The change to 30 days brings the regulation into conformance with the timeline for corrective action set in § 33.2-1229.

Issues

Identify the issues associated with the regulatory change, including: 1) the primary advantages and disadvantages to the public, such as individual private citizens or businesses, of implementing the new or amended provisions; 2) the primary advantages and disadvantages to the agency or the Commonwealth; and 3) other pertinent matters of interest to the regulated community, government officials, and the public. If there are no disadvantages to the public or the Commonwealth, include a specific statement to that effect.

The primary advantage to the public and the agency is the increased clarity of the regulatory text. The text will be condensed and streamlined, allowing for regulated entities to more easily read and understand the regulation. There are no disadvantages to the public or the Commonwealth from this regulatory action.

Requirements More Restrictive than Federal

Identify and describe any requirement of the regulatory change which is more restrictive than applicable federal requirements. Include a specific citation for each applicable federal requirement, and a rationale for the need for the more restrictive requirements. If there are no applicable federal requirements, or no requirements that exceed applicable federal requirements, include a specific statement to that effect.

There are no requirements that are more restrictive than federal requirements. The regulation is written to be consistent with and comply with the federal requirements.

Agencies, Localities, and Other Entities Particularly Affected

Consistent with § 2.2-4007.04 of the Code of Virginia, identify any other state agencies, localities, or other entities particularly affected by the regulatory change. Other entities could include local partners such as tribal governments, school boards, community services boards, and similar regional organizations. "Particularly affected" are those that are likely to bear any identified disproportionate material impact which would not be experienced by other agencies, localities, or entities. "Locality" can refer to either local governments or the locations in the Commonwealth where the activities relevant to the regulation or regulatory change are most likely to occur. If no agency, locality, or entity is particularly affected, include a specific statement to that effect.

Other State Agencies Particularly Affected

No other state agencies are particularly affected.

Localities Particularly Affected

No localities are particularly affected.

Other Entities Particularly Affected

No other entities are particularly affected.

Economic Impact

Consistent with § 2.2-4007.04 of the Code of Virginia, identify all specific economic impacts (costs and/or benefits) anticipated to result from the regulatory change. When describing a particular economic impact, specify which new requirement or change in requirement creates the anticipated economic impact. Keep in mind that this is the proposed change versus the status quo.

Impact on State Agencies

For your agency: projected costs, savings, fees, or revenues resulting from the regulatory change, including: a) fund source / fund detail; b) delineation of one-time versus on-going expenditures; and c) whether any costs or revenue loss can be absorbed within existing resources.	There are no projected costs, savings, fees, or revenues for VDOT resulting from the regulatory changes.
For other state agencies: projected costs, savings, fees, or revenues resulting from the regulatory change, including a delineation of one-time versus on-going expenditures.	There are no projected costs, savings, fees, or revenues for other state agencies resulting from the regulatory changes.
For all agencies: Benefits the regulatory change is designed to produce.	The benefit of the regulatory change is the increased clarity of the regulatory text.

Impact on Localities

If this analysis has been reported on the ORM Economic Impact form, indicate the tables (1a or 2) on which it was reported. Information provided on that form need not be repeated here.

Projected costs, savings, fees, or revenues resulting from the regulatory change.	There are no projected costs, savings, fees, or revenues for localities resulting from the regulatory changes.
Benefits the regulatory change is designed to produce.	The benefit of the regulatory change is the increased clarity of the regulatory text.

Impact on Other Entities

If this analysis has been reported on the ORM Economic Impact form, indicate the tables (1a, 3, or 4) on which it was reported. Information provided on that form need not be repeated here.

Description of the individuals, businesses, or other entities likely to be affected by the regulatory change. If no other entities will be affected, include a specific statement to that effect.	Outdoor advertisers and entities wishing to place signs off the right of way of Virginia's highways will be affected by the regulatory changes.
Agency's best estimate of the number of such entities that will be affected. Include an estimate of the number of small businesses affected. Small business means a business entity, including its affiliates, that: a) is independently owned and operated, and; b) employs fewer than 500 full-time employees or has gross annual sales of less than $6 million.	VDOT cannot estimate the number of entities that will be affected nor the number of small businesses affected.
All projected costs for affected individuals, businesses, or other entities resulting from the regulatory change. Be specific and include all costs including, but not limited to: a) projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other administrative costs required for compliance by small businesses; b) specify any costs related to the development of real estate for commercial or residential purposes that are a consequence of the regulatory change; c) fees; d) purchases of equipment or services; and e) time required to comply with the requirements.	There are no projected costs for affected entities from the proposed changes.
Benefits the regulatory change is designed to produce.	The benefit of the regulatory change is the increased clarity of the regulatory text.

Alternatives to Regulation

Describe any viable alternatives to the regulatory change that were considered, and the rationale used by the agency to select the least burdensome or intrusive alternative that meets the essential purpose of the regulatory change. Also, include discussion of less intrusive or less costly alternatives for small businesses, as defined in § 2.2-4007.1 of the Code of Virginia, of achieving the purpose of the regulatory change.

No alternatives to the regulatory changes were considered. The changes are not burdensome, intrusive, or costly for small businesses.

If this analysis has been reported on the ORM Economic Impact form, indicate the tables on which it was reported. Information provided on that form need not be repeated here.

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Consistent with § 2.2-4007.1 B of the Code of Virginia, describe the agency's analysis of alternative regulatory methods, consistent with health, safety, environmental, and economic welfare, that will accomplish the objectives of applicable law while minimizing the adverse impact on small business. Alternative regulatory methods include, at a minimum: 1) establishing less stringent compliance or reporting requirements; 2) establishing less stringent schedules or deadlines for compliance or reporting requirements; 3) consolidation or simplification of compliance or reporting requirements; 4) establishing performance standards for small businesses to replace design or operational standards required in the proposed regulation; and 5) the exemption of small businesses from all or any part of the requirements contained in the regulatory change.

A proposed change will revise the text specifying the number of months a nonconforming sign can be blank from 18 to 24 months. This will provide regulated entities with six additional months to display a message on or remove the sign structure. Otherwise, no alternative regulatory methods are applicable, nor were alternative regulatory methods considered. There are no anticipated adverse impacts on small businesses from the regulatory changes.

If this analysis has been reported on the ORM Economic Impact form, indicate the tables on which it was reported. Information provided on that form need not be repeated here.

Periodic Review and Small Business Impact Review Report of Findings

If you are using this form to report the result of a periodic review/small business impact review that is being conducted as part of this regulatory action, and was announced during the NOIRA stage, indicate whether the regulatory change meets the criteria set out in EO 19 and the ORM procedures, e.g., is necessary for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare; minimizes the economic impact on small businesses consistent with the stated objectives of applicable law; and is clearly written and easily understandable. In addition, as required by § 2.2-4007.1 E and F of the Code of Virginia, discuss the agency's consideration of: (1) the continued need for the regulation; (2) the nature of complaints or comments received concerning the regulation; (3) the complexity of the regulation; (4) the extent to the which the regulation overlaps, duplicates, or conflicts with federal or state law or regulation; and (5) the length of time since the regulation has been evaluated or the degree to which technology, economic conditions, or other factors have changed in the area affected by the regulation. Also, discuss why the agency's decision, consistent with applicable law, will minimize the economic impact of regulations on small businesses.

The regulation allows for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare and continues to be needed. The proposed changes are largely intended to streamline and clarify the regulation. The regulation is long and overly complex, and as such, the proposed streamlined text will be beneficial to the public. The regulation was last reviewed in 2021, and no complaints have been received since the last review. The proposed regulation is not overly burdensome for small businesses.

Public Comment

Summarize all comments received during the public comment period following the publication of the previous stage, and provide the agency's response. Include all comments submitted: including those received on Town Hall, in a public hearing, or submitted directly to the agency. If no comment was received, enter a specific statement to that effect.

Commenter	Comment	Agency response
Mark Falzone, President, Scenic America	Recommends that the regulation be amended to: 1. Set specific daytime and nighttime luminance values for digital billboards; 2. Implement time restrictions for LED displays; 3. Clarify that converting a static billboard to a digital or electronic display constitutes a substantial change in existing use; 4. Prohibit maintenance requiring the destruction or cutting of trees, shrubs, or other vegetation located on the state-owned or -controlled right-of-way to increase the visibility of outdoor advertising structures.	1. Currently, the CTB and VDOT only regulate brightness when it impairs the vision of the traveling public. Section 33.2-1229 C (ii) of the Code of Virginia allows for the removal of signs that pose a risk to highway safety. However, this option has never been used. With the addition of 24VAC30-122-40 as a generally applicable section of the revised regulation, VDOT will be able to address lighting issues with all signs. 2. VDOT is not aware of specific concerns that would warrant adding this requirement to the regulation and is uncertain of the enforceability of this proposal. 3. Substantial changes in existing use are already addressed in Virginia law and regulation. VDOT notes that this type of sign conversion has not previously been an issue and would likely be considered a substantial change under the requirements of Section 33.2-1219 in the Code of Virginia. 4. Section 33.2-1221 of the Code of Virginia requires VDOT allow vegetation cutting in front of outdoor advertising structures.

Public Participation

Indicate how the public should contact the agency to submit comments on this regulation, and whether a public hearing will be held, by completing the text below.

The CTB is providing an opportunity for comments on this regulatory proposal, including but not limited to (i) the costs and benefits of the regulatory proposal, (ii) any alternative approaches, (iii) the potential impacts of the regulation, and (iv) the agency's regulatory flexibility analysis stated in that section of this background document.

Anyone wishing to submit written comments for the public comment file may do so through the Public Comment Forums feature of the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall web site at: https://townhall.virginia.gov.

Comments may also be submitted by mail or email to Steven Jack, 1221 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA, 23219, 804-786-3885, steven.jack@vdot.virginia.gov. In order to be considered, comments must be received by 11:59 pm on the last day of the public comment period.

A public hearing will not be held following the publication of this stage of this regulatory action.

Detail of Changes

List all regulatory changes and the consequences of the changes. Explain the new requirements and what they mean rather than merely quoting the text of the regulation. For example, describe the intent of the language and the expected impact. Describe the difference between existing requirement(s) and/or agency practice(s) and what is being proposed in this regulatory change. Use all tables that apply, but delete inapplicable tables.

If an existing VAC Chapter(s) is being amended or repealed, use Table 1 to describe the changes between the existing VAC Chapter(s) and the proposed regulation. If the existing VAC Chapter(s) or sections are being repealed and replaced, ensure Table 1 clearly shows both the current number and the new number for each repealed section and the replacement section.

Table 1: Changes to Existing VAC Chapter(s)

Current chapter-section number	New chapter-section number, if applicable	Current requirements in VAC	Change, intent, rationale, and likely impact of new requirements
120-10, 120-80, and 120-160	122-10	Sections 10, 80, and 160 represent three separate definitions sections within the existing regulation.	The definitions currently contained in the three separate sections will be consolidated into one section in the new regulation. Terms to be removed from the revised regulatory text include: directional and other official signs and notices, federal or state law, freeway, Interstate system, national highway system, nonconforming sign – grandfather clause, primary system, public service signs, public utility signs, rest area, sign, single route, state, and visible. These terms will be removed because they are either defined in the Code of Virginia or in federal law or regulation, not used in the body of the regulation, or otherwise not needed for general understanding of the regulatory text. Current defined terms that will be moved into the body of the new regulation include: commercial or industrial areas, directional signs, official signs and notices, unzoned commercial or industrial areas, and zoned commercial or industrial areas.
120-20	122-50	Section 20 establishes the zoning-related criteria for applicability of the regulation.	The previously defined terms of “zoned commercial or industrial areas,” “unzoned commercial or industrial

			areas," and "commercial or industrial areas" will be added to this section for clarity. An issue with the existing regulation in which text that was incorrectly associated with the definition of "zoned commercial or industrial areas" has been resolved by associating the text with the description of "unzoned commercial or industrial areas."
120-30	122-80	Section 30 sets the requirements for and restrictions on the size of outdoor advertising signs in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas.	Minor clarifying changes are proposed to this text.
120-40	122-90	Section 40 sets the requirements for spacing of outdoor advertising signs in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas.	Minor clarifying changes are proposed to this text.
120-50 and 120-110	122-40	Section 50 details the lighting restrictions for outdoor advertising signs in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas. Section 110 details the lighting restrictions for directional and other official signs and notices located off the highway right of way.	The text from the current section 50 will be combined with the lighting-related text in section 110 to form a new, generally applicable section on lighting for all outdoor advertising signs regulated pursuant to this chapter. Text that is unnecessary or that duplicates requirements stated in the Code of Virginia will be removed.
120-60	122-60	Section 60 specifies in which zoned commercial or industrial areas outdoor advertising signs may be placed.	Minor clarifying changes are proposed to this text.
120-70	122-70	Section 70 details requirements for certification of a locality's comprehensive zoning ordinance which also controls outdoor advertising.	Minor clarifying changes are proposed to this text.
120-90	122-30 and 122-130	Section 90 describes the prohibited directional and other official signs and notices located off highway right of way.	In the revised regulation, this section will become a generally applicable section as the listed prohibited signs are not limited to directional and other official signs and notices. Since obsolete signs are prohibited pursuant to § 33.2-1216 of the Code of Virginia, obsolete signs will be removed from the list. Two other categories of prohibited signs, those which identify ancillary sites, areas, features or activities and those erected or maintained upon trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural

			features, will be moved to the new section 130 in Part II on directional signs.
120-100	122-140	Section 100 describes the size limits for directional and other official signs and notices located off highway right of way.	Minor clarifying changes are proposed to this text.
120-120	122-150	Section 120 describes the spacing requirements for directional and other official signs and notices located off highway right of way.	Minor clarifying changes are proposed to this text.
120-130	122-100	Section 130 describes the message content limitations for directional and other official signs and notices located off highway right of way.	The new section 100 will combine the text of current section 130, definitions of "directional signs" and "official signs and notices" found in current section 80, and other descriptive text in current section 80.
120-140	122-110	Section 140 describes certain requirements for the Commissioner of Highways in administration of the regulation.	Unnecessary text at the beginning of the existing section 140 regarding statutory authority and the other state agencies that can recommend whether a site falls within the definition of "directional sign" has been removed in the new section 110.
120-150	122-120	Section 150 describes the final determination to be made by the commissioner.	An unnecessary sentence from the existing section 150 requiring signs to conform to the requirements and standards set out in the regulation has been removed in the new section 120.
120-170	122-160	Section 170 sets the criteria for the maintenance and continuance of a nonconforming sign, advertisement or advertising structure.	The text stating the number of months a sign can be blank will be revised from 18 months to 24 months to provide added flexibility to regulants. The number of days the sign owner has to display a message after receiving written notice will be revised from 120 days to 30 days in conformance with the timeline for corrective action set in § 33.2-1229. Current subparts C3 and C4 will be removed as the text is either no longer needed or covered by § 33.2-1219. Other minor clarifying changes are proposed.
120-180	122-170	Section 180 details the right to continue a nonconforming sign.	Unnecessary text from the existing section 180 will be removed in the new section 170.
120-190	122-20	Section 190 describes the sign owner's responsibility.	This section will become a generally applicable section in the proposed regulation.
120-FORMS	122-FORMS	This section contains the application form for an outdoor advertising permit.	The application form will be updated and included in the new chapter 122.

If a <u>new</u> VAC Chapter(s) is being promulgated and is <u>not</u> replacing an existing Chapter(s), use Table 2.

Table 2: Promulgating New VAC Chapter(s) without Repeal and Replace

New chapter-section number	New requirements to be added to VAC	Other regulations and laws that apply	Change, intent, rationale, and likely impact of new requirements

*If the regulatory change is replacing an **emergency regulation**, and the proposed regulation is identical to the emergency regulation, complete Table 1 and/or Table 2, as described above.*

*If the regulatory change is replacing an **emergency regulation**, but changes have been made since the emergency regulation became effective, also complete Table 3 to describe the changes made since the emergency regulation.*

Table 3: Changes to the Emergency Regulation

Emergency chapter-section number	New chapter-section number, if applicable	Current emergency requirement	Change, intent, rationale, and likely impact of new or changed requirements since emergency stage


VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

FY 27/28 Application Cycle

Terry R. Short, Jr., AICP
Local Assistance Division Director

January 6, 2026

Program Background and Purpose

- Federal funding program established in 1991 as Transportation Enhancement
  - Through reauthorization, the program evolved to Transportation Alternatives in 2012
- Transportation Alternatives expands non-motorized travel choices, maximizing the use of right-of-way for bicyclists and pedestrians and increases safety, accessibility, and/or connectivity.



Manassas Crosswalk


Harrisonburg Crosswalk


Yorktown Riverwalk

Program Eligibility

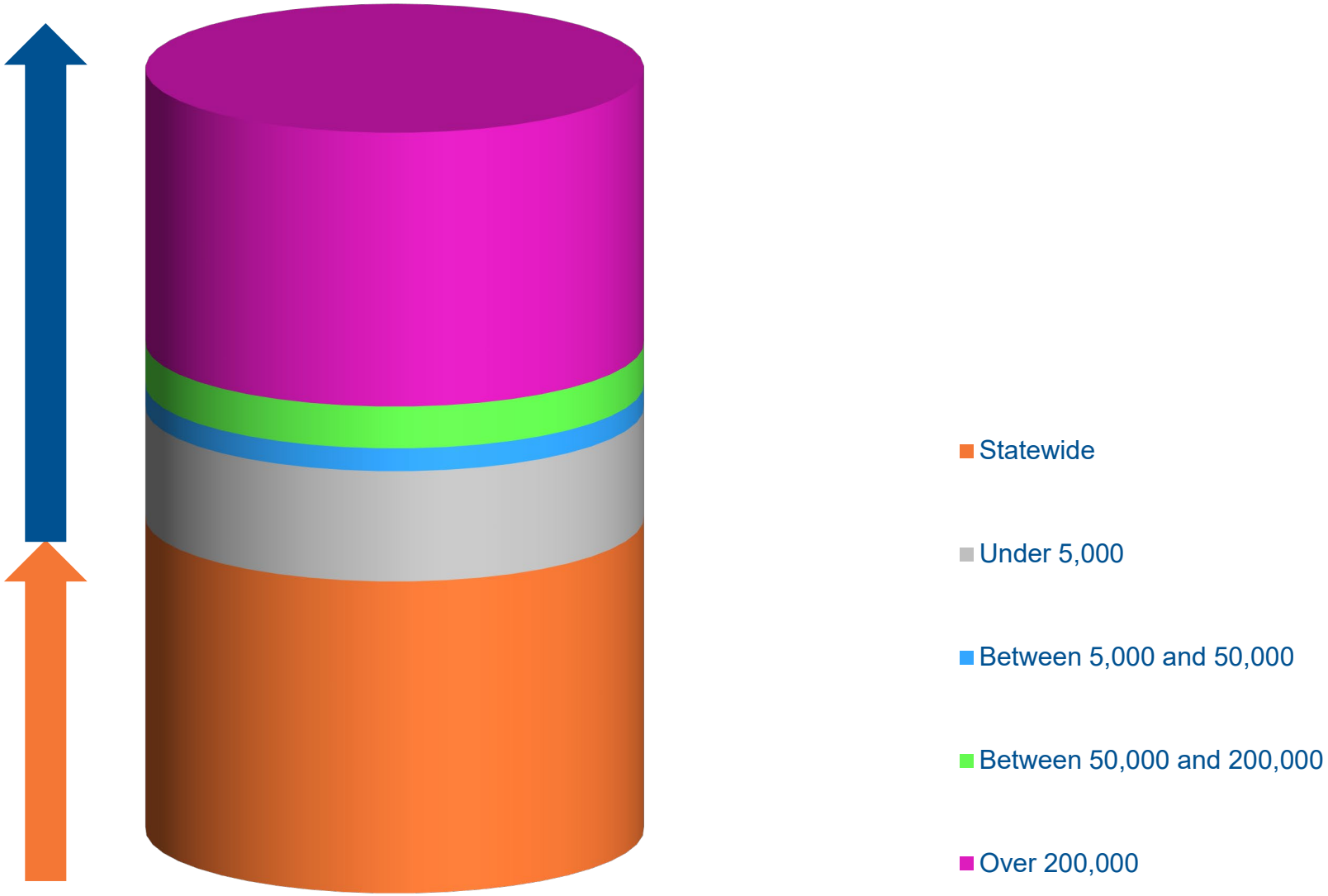
Eligible Applicants	Eligible Projects

• Local government
• Regional transportation authority
• Transit agencies
• Natural resource or public land agencies
• School districts/schools
• Tribal government
• Metropolitan Planning Organizations without Transportation Management Areas
• Other local/regional governmental entities with transportation oversight
• State DOTs at the request of another eligible applicant
	• On- and off-road trails
	• Infrastructure projects and systems that provide safe routes for non-drivers
	• Converting abandoned railroad corridors to trails
	• Turnout and viewing areas
	• Community improvement activities, such as:
	  ▪ Outdoor advertising control/removal
	  ▪ Historic preservation/rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
	  ▪ Vegetation management in transportation ROW
	• Environmental mitigation related to highway construction or to reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality
	• Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure programs
	• Boulevards from divided highways

Transportation Alternatives Approximate Funding Distribution by Population Area

59% available for distribution by population

41% available for distribution statewide



Funding Process

- Federal legislation appropriates 59% of funds by population and 41% statewide (after a recreational trails program allocation to DCR)
- Virginia allocates funds through a biennial application process
- Allocations made by Commonwealth Transportation Board (statewide) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) with Transportation Management Areas (TMA)
  - TMAs are Census-designated areas with populations greater than 200,000
  - MPO/TMA funds are available across MPO area; not limited to just the TMA
- 80% federal; 20% non-federal local match
  - $2.5M federal cap per project by CTB policy
- Funding available in year 1 of the SYIP
- Projects must reach construction by the fourth year by CTB policy

Safe Routes to School: Non-Infrastructure Program

- Three applications in total for this round which would primarily support local bicycle/pedestrian coordinator positions, as well as events and capital items that promote and encourage safer bicycling and walking to school

- Transportation Alternatives is the only current funding source
  - Categories formerly eligible under SAFETEA-LU have been incorporated into TA

- Facilitates planning, development, and implementation of programs that improve safety and reduce traffic

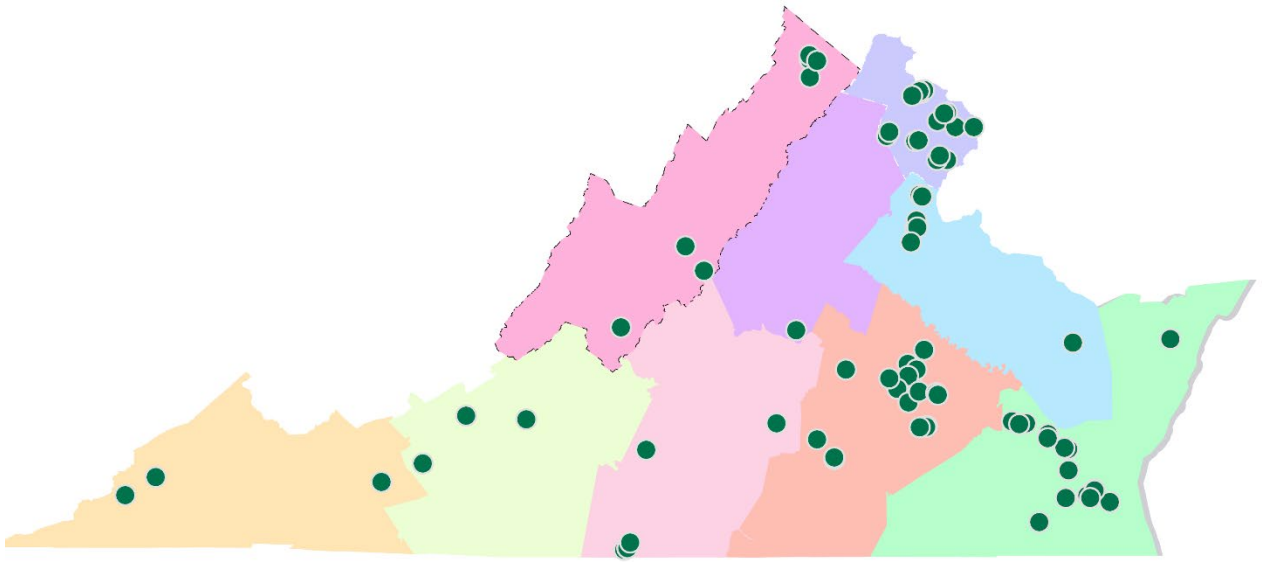
CTB Project Selection Policy

- Selected projects will receive 100% of the funds requested in the application, up to a $2.5M cap per project
- Allocations are divided equally among each CTB member
- CTB At-Large members select projects as a group to ensure population area allocations are met

FY 27/28 Application Insights

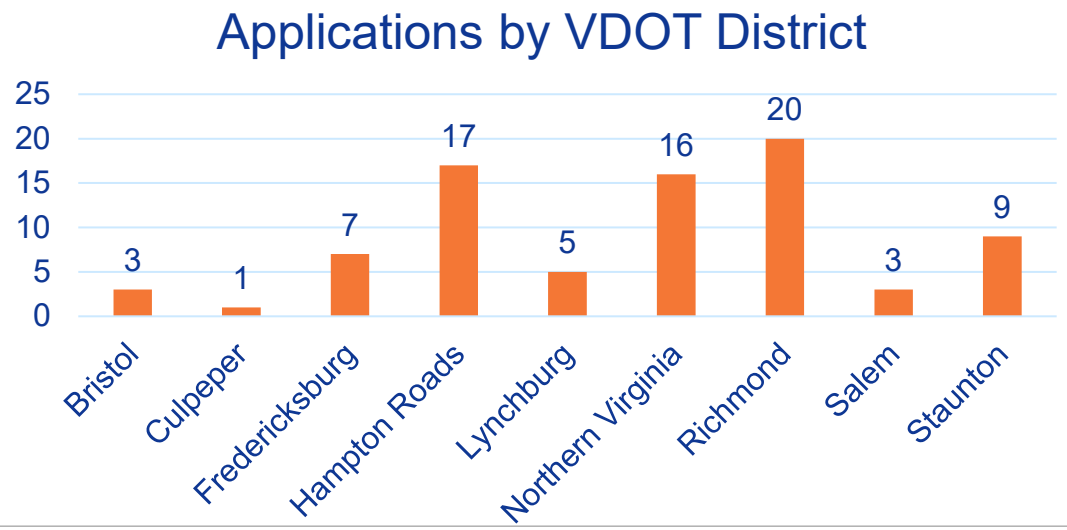
Pre-Application Insights

- 109 pre-applications
- 8 screen-out decisions



Full Application Insights

- 89 full applications submitted
- 7 screen-out decisions
- $131.5M total requests for $247.9M total estimated project costs
    - 2 existing project requests valued at $2M



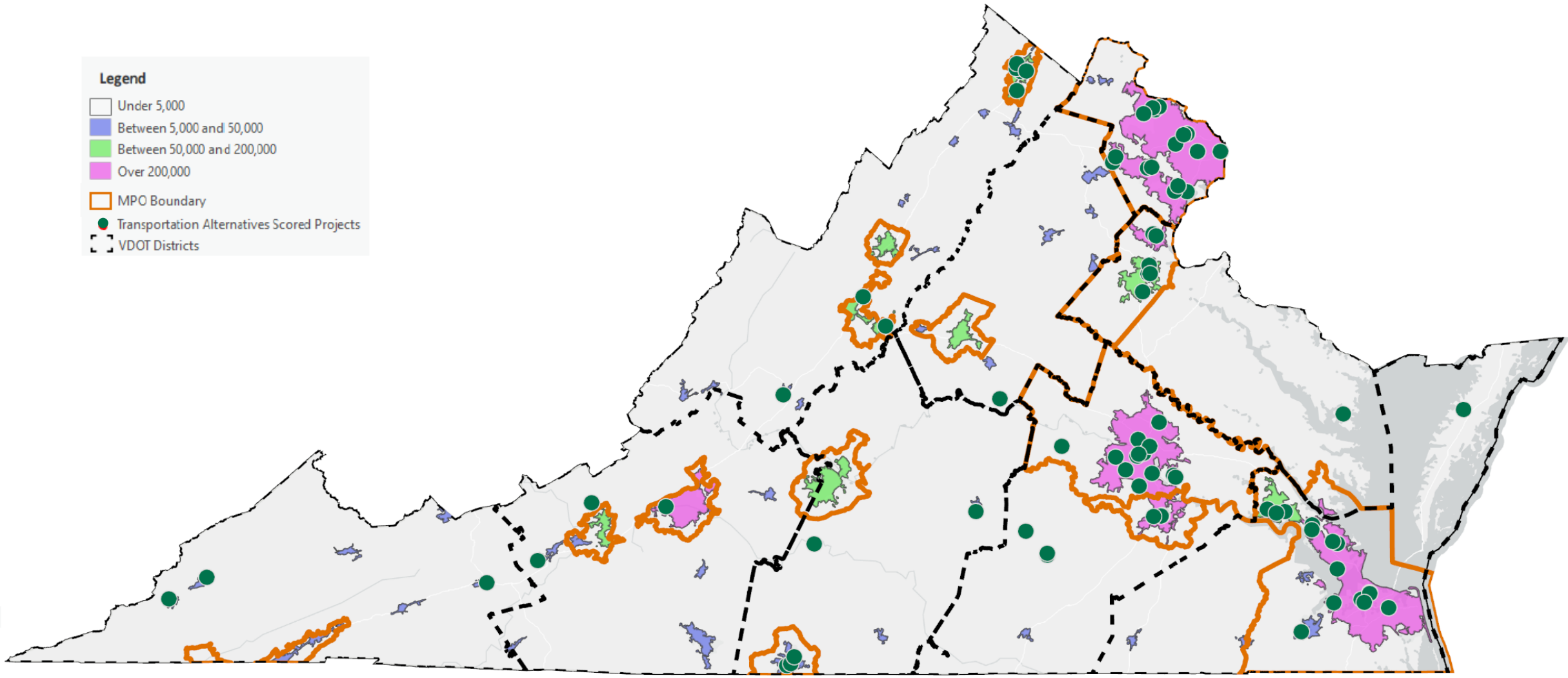
FY 27/28 Available Allocations and Distributions – MPO Selection Responsibility

MPO Allocations >200,000 Population Areas	Available Allocations – Preliminary Estimates
Northern Virginia	$12.5M
Hampton Roads	$7.2M
Richmond	$4.7M
Tri-Cities	$0.6M
Fredericksburg	$1.3M
Roanoke	$1.9M

FY 27/28 Available Allocations and Distributions – CTB Selection Responsibility

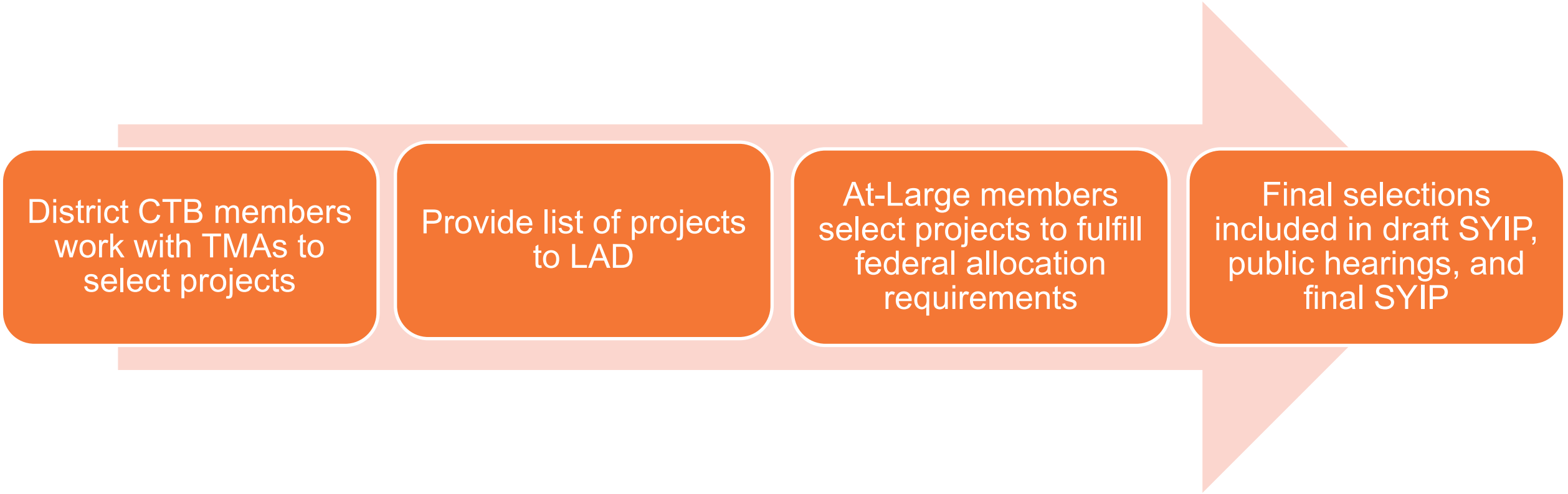
CTB Distribution Requirements	Available or Required Distribution Estimates
Statewide	$39.5M
<5,000 Population Areas	$13.5M
>5,000-50,000 Population Areas	$2.1M
>50,000-200,000 Population Areas	$4.8M
Minus $2M Statewide to keep for Balance Entry	$2M

Transportation Alternatives Population Funding Areas



Application Selection Process

CTB Members & MPOs (with TMAs) make the final selections, with support and advice from staff

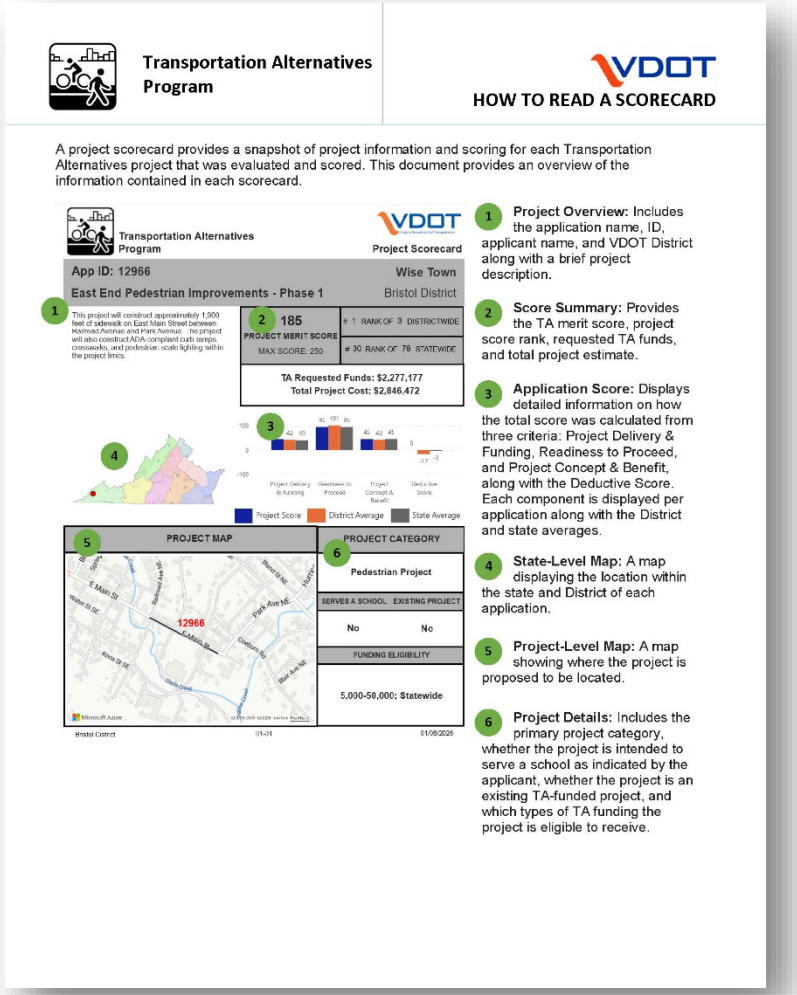


Application Submittal Package

- FY 27/28 Application Scorecards
- Current CTB TA Selection Policy
- List of Current Active Projects by District
  - Color-coded to indicate status (under construction or under development)
- List of Submitted Trail Projects
- Central Office - Local Assistance Division TA Staff Contact List

Scorecard Review – Infrastructure Projects

- Packet includes an instructional overview of how to review an infrastructure project scorecard
- Table of Contents summarizes District and Statewide Ranks of the project scores
- Scorecards organized by VDOT District
- Individual scorecards for all infrastructure applications



Transportation Alternatives Program

VDOT

HOW TO READ A SCORECARD

A project scorecard provides a snapshot of project information and scoring for each Transportation Alternatives project that was evaluated and scored. This document provides an overview of the information contained in each scorecard.

Transportation Alternatives Program — Project Scorecard

App ID: 12966 — Wise Town

East End Pedestrian Improvements - Phase 1 — Bristol District

185 PROJECT MERIT SCORE (MAX SCORE: 250)

1 RANK OF 3 DISTRICTWIDE

30 RANK OF 78 STATEWIDE

TA Requested Funds: $2,277,177

Total Project Cost: $2,846,472

Project Score | District Average | State Average

PROJECT MAP

PROJECT CATEGORY

Pedestrian Project

SERVES A SCHOOL | EXISTING PROJECT

No | No

FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

5,000-50,000; Statewide

1 **Project Overview:** Includes the application name, ID, applicant name, and VDOT District along with a brief project description.

2 **Score Summary:** Provides the TA merit score, project score rank, requested TA funds, and total project estimate.

3 **Application Score:** Displays detailed information on how the total score was calculated from three criteria: Project Delivery & Funding, Readiness to Proceed, and Project Concept & Benefit, along with the Deductive Score. Each component is displayed per application along with the District and state averages.

4 **State-Level Map:** A map displaying the location within the state and District of each application.

5 **Project-Level Map:** A map showing where the project is proposed to be located.

6 **Project Details:** Includes the primary project category, whether the project is intended to serve a school as indicated by the applicant, whether the project is an existing TA-funded project, and which types of TA funding the project is eligible to receive.

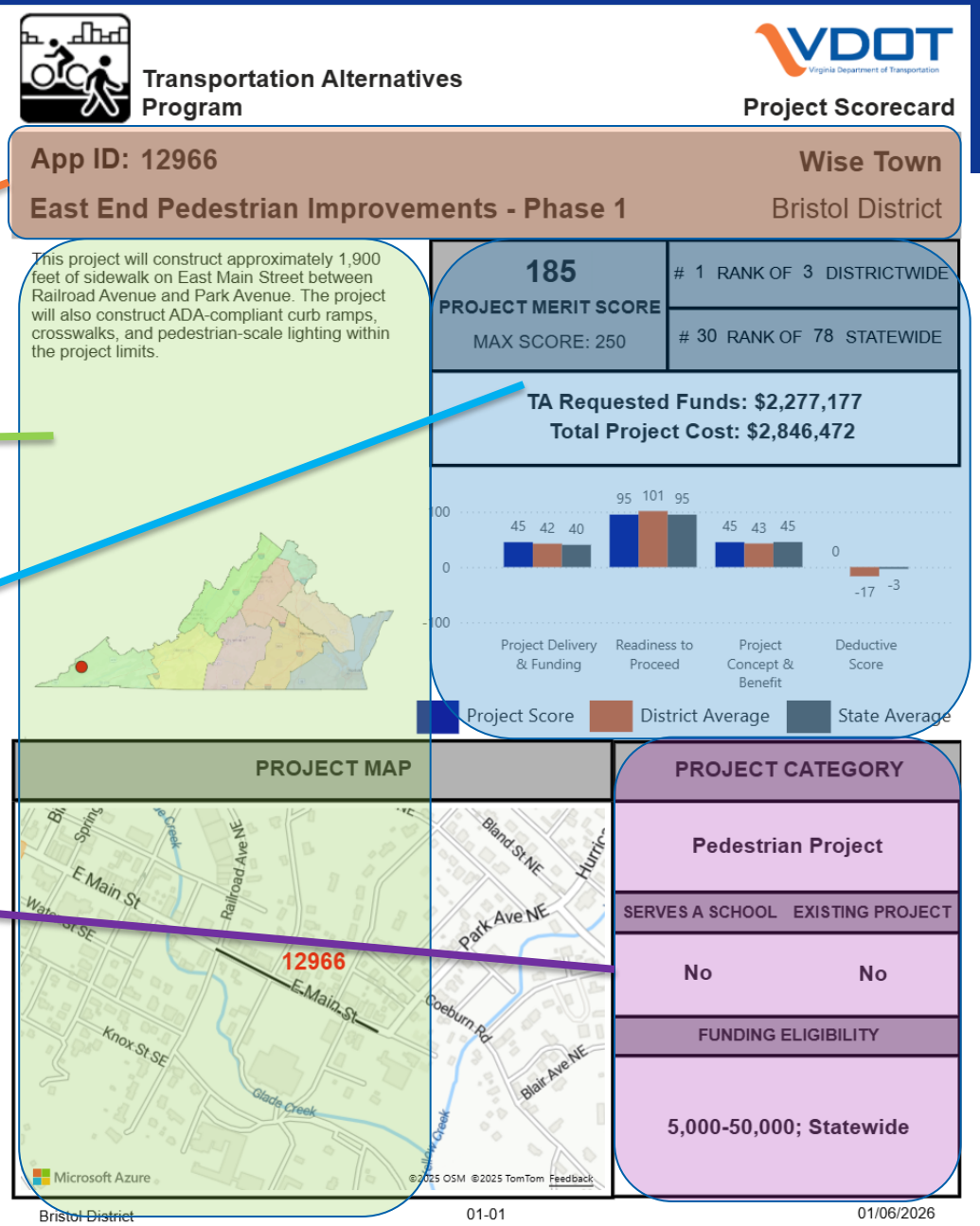
Scorecard Overview

Application ID, Project Title, Applicant

Project Description and Location

Project Merit Score, Score Rank by District and Statewide, Cost Details

Additional Project Details to aid your evaluation



TA Project Scoring

- Scoring - All projects have a score derived from responses in the application:
  - Project Delivery and Funding
  - Readiness to Proceed
  - Project Concept and Benefit
  - Deductive Measure
- Priority Status for Existing Projects
  - Existing projects are indicated on the scorecards

Deductive Measure

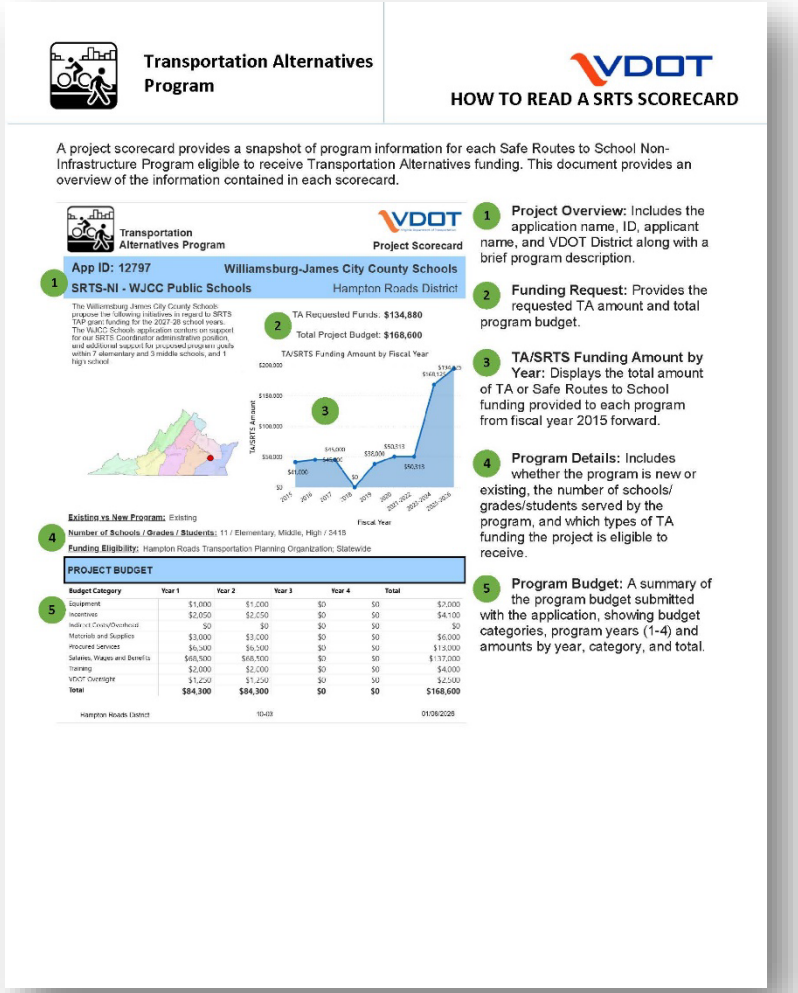
Three components for maximum -100:

- Noncompliance with CTB's 4-year policy (-20)
- Cancelled TA projects with payback required in the last five years (-50)
- Current LSPP status (-30 maximum)

District	Locality	On-Time	Reasonable Progress	Fiscal Management
Bristol	Bristol			
Culpeper	Charlottesville			
Hampton Roads	Virginia Beach			
Hampton Roads	Portsmouth			
Hampton Roads	Williamsburg			
Northern Virginia	Alexandria			
Northern Virginia	Falls Church			
Northern Virginia	Loudoun County			

Scorecard Review – Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure

- Packet includes an instructional overview of how to review a non-infrastructure program scorecard
- All SRTS-NI scorecards are provided at the back of the packet in order of application ID
- Scores were not assigned to SRTS-NI programs, but additional information is provided on each application's requested budget, program reach, and history of funding through the department from fiscal year 2015 forward



Transportation Alternatives Program

VDOT

HOW TO READ A SRTS SCORECARD

A project scorecard provides a snapshot of program information for each Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program eligible to receive Transportation Alternatives funding. This document provides an overview of the information contained in each scorecard.

Transportation Alternatives Program — VDOT — Project Scorecard

App ID: 12797 — Williamsburg-James City County Schools

SRTS-NI - WJCC Public Schools — Hampton Roads District

TA Requested Funds: $134,880

Total Project Budget: $168,600

TA/SRTS Funding Amount by Fiscal Year

Existing vs New Program: Existing

Number of Schools / Grades / Students: 11 / Elementary, Middle, High / 5415

Funding Eligibility: Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization; Statewide

PROJECT BUDGET

Budget Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Equipment	$1,000	$1,000	$0	$0	$2,000
Incentives	$2,050	$2,050	$0	$0	$4,100
Indirect Costs/Overhead	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Materials and Supplies	$3,000	$3,000	$0	$0	$6,000
Procured Services	$6,500	$6,500	$0	$0	$13,000
Salaries, Wages and Benefits	$68,500	$68,500	$0	$0	$137,000
Training	$2,000	$2,000	$0	$0	$4,000
VDOT Oversight	$1,250	$1,250	$0	$0	$2,500
Total	$84,300	$84,300	$0	$0	$168,600

Hampton Roads District — 10-03 — 01/06/2026

1 **Project Overview:** Includes the application name, ID, applicant name, and VDOT District along with a brief program description.

2 **Funding Request:** Provides the requested TA amount and total program budget.

3 **TA/SRTS Funding Amount by Year:** Displays the total amount of TA or Safe Routes to School funding provided to each program from fiscal year 2015 forward.

4 **Program Details:** Includes whether the program is new or existing, the number of schools/ grades/students served by the program, and which types of TA funding the project is eligible to receive.

5 **Program Budget:** A summary of the program budget submitted with the application, showing budget categories, program years (1-4) and amounts by year, category, and total.

SRTS-NI Scorecard Overview

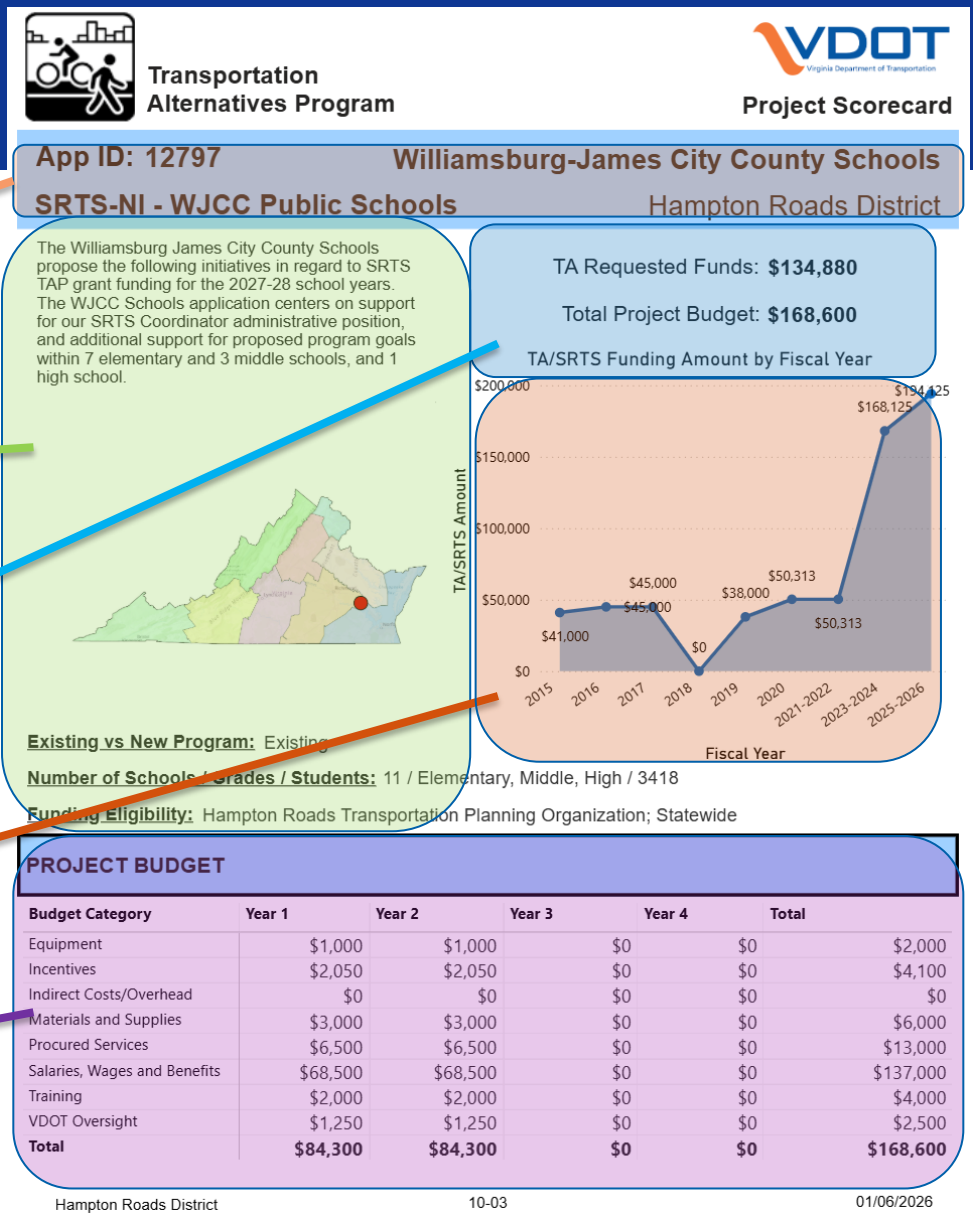
Application ID, Project Title, Applicant

Program Description, Location and Details

Requested Amount and Program Budget

Prior Funding FY15-FY25/26

Submitted Budget



Transportation Alternatives Program

VDOT Project Scorecard

App ID: 12797 — Williamsburg-James City County Schools

SRTS-NI - WJCC Public Schools — Hampton Roads District

The Williamsburg James City County Schools propose the following initiatives in regard to SRTS TAP grant funding for the 2027-28 school years. The WJCC Schools application centers on support for our SRTS Coordinator administrative position, and additional support for proposed program goals within 7 elementary and 3 middle schools, and 1 high school.

TA Requested Funds: **$134,880**

Total Project Budget: **$168,600**

TA/SRTS Funding Amount by Fiscal Year

Existing vs New Program: Existing

Number of Schools / Grades / Students: 11 / Elementary, Middle, High / 3418

Funding Eligibility: Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization; Statewide

PROJECT BUDGET

Budget Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Equipment	$1,000	$1,000	$0	$0	$2,000
Incentives	$2,050	$2,050	$0	$0	$4,100
Indirect Costs/Overhead	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Materials and Supplies	$3,000	$3,000	$0	$0	$6,000
Procured Services	$6,500	$6,500	$0	$0	$13,000
Salaries, Wages and Benefits	$68,500	$68,500	$0	$0	$137,000
Training	$2,000	$2,000	$0	$0	$4,000
VDOT Oversight	$1,250	$1,250	$0	$0	$2,500
Total	**$84,300**	**$84,300**	**$0**	**$0**	**$168,600**

Hampton Roads District 10-03 01/06/2026

Next Steps

Date	Milestone
January 6, 2026	Present TA update and scores to CTB District Members and TMAs for use in selections
By February 6, 2026	CTB District Member and TMA selections provided to LAD
February 17, 2026	CTB At-Large member selection meeting following CTB Action meeting
March - May 2026	SYIP preparation and public meetings
June 2026	CTB approval of project allocations


VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation


VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation

RECREATIONAL ACCESS (REC) PROGRAM

Russell County – Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve

Terry R. Short Jr., AICP
Local Assistance Division

January 6, 2026

Recreational Access (REC) Program

- **Provides funding to design and construct roads and/or bikeways that serve new or existing public recreational or historic sites**
  - Localities submit applications for REC Funding to VDOT, and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) considers and approves project allocations

- **The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) or the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) must provide a project recommendation letter**

Fund Source	State Operated Facility	Locality Operated Facility	
Roadway	$400,000 (unmatched)	$250,000 (unmatched)	$100,000 (matched)
Bikeway	$75,000 (unmatched)	$60,000 (unmatched)	$15,000 (matched)

Recreational Access Project – Russell County



Recreational Access Project – Russell County

- The proposed project will reconstruct 0.21 miles of Tank Hollow Road, improving access to the Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve

- Project design details:
  - Installation of 3 cross drains
  - Paving existing gravel sections of the 0.21-mile-long access road
  - Nominal widening to provide 2 pull-out locations

- Proposed Project Allocation: $250,000
  - State Funds: $250,000 unmatched

Recreational Access Project – Russell County



Recreational Access Project – Russell County



Viewpoint: Tank Hollow Road looking south

- Steep grade at the beginning of the access road



Viewpoint: Tank Hollow Road looking south

- Access road curve below the initial steep slope

Recreational Access Project – Russell County



Viewpoint: Tank Hollow Road looking south

- Level portion of the access road where minor widening is proposed



Viewpoint: Tank Hollow Road looking north

- Parking area to the left and access to Tank Hollow Falls is behind the picture's point of view

Next Steps

- **February 2026 meeting, the CTB will be presented with a Resolution proposing to establish a new REC project**

- **If approved by the CTB, VDOT will proceed with administering this project**


VDOT
Virginia Department of Transportation



WMATA Operational Analysis

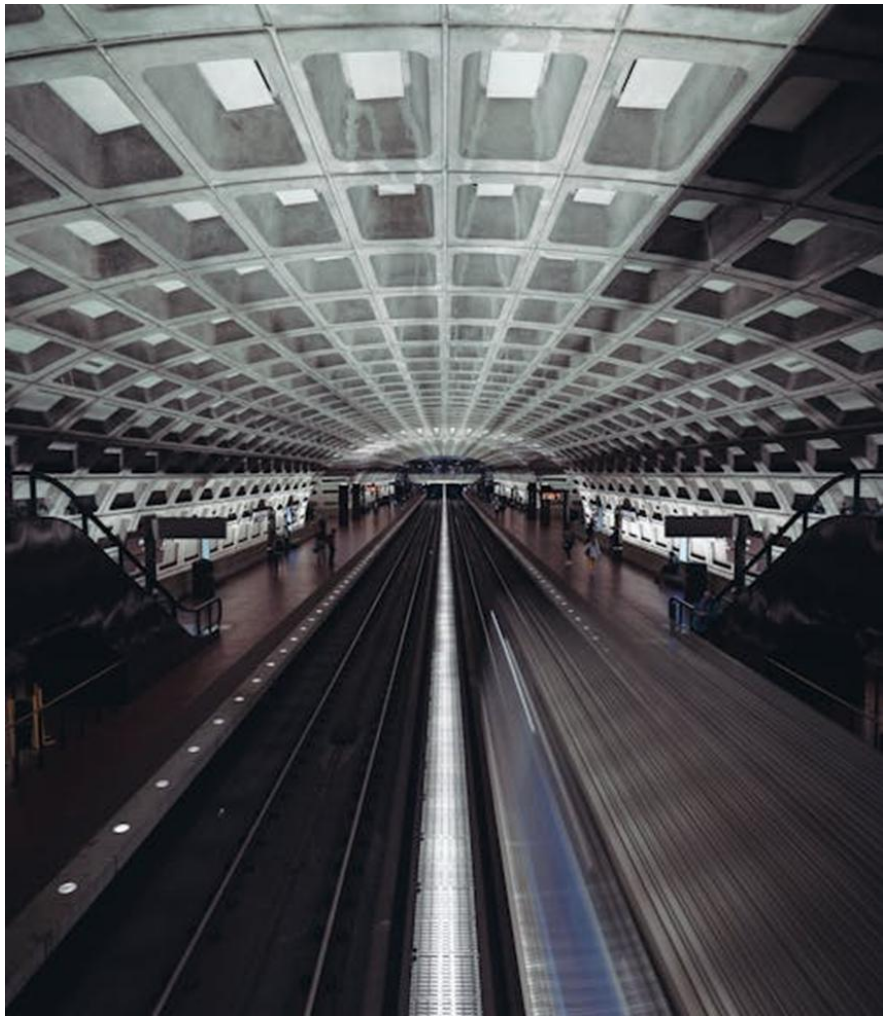
Interim Report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board

January 6, 2026

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority &
Guidehouse

Agenda

1. Summary of Current State Findings
2. Overview of Draft Opportunities
3. Next Steps
4. Questions and Answers

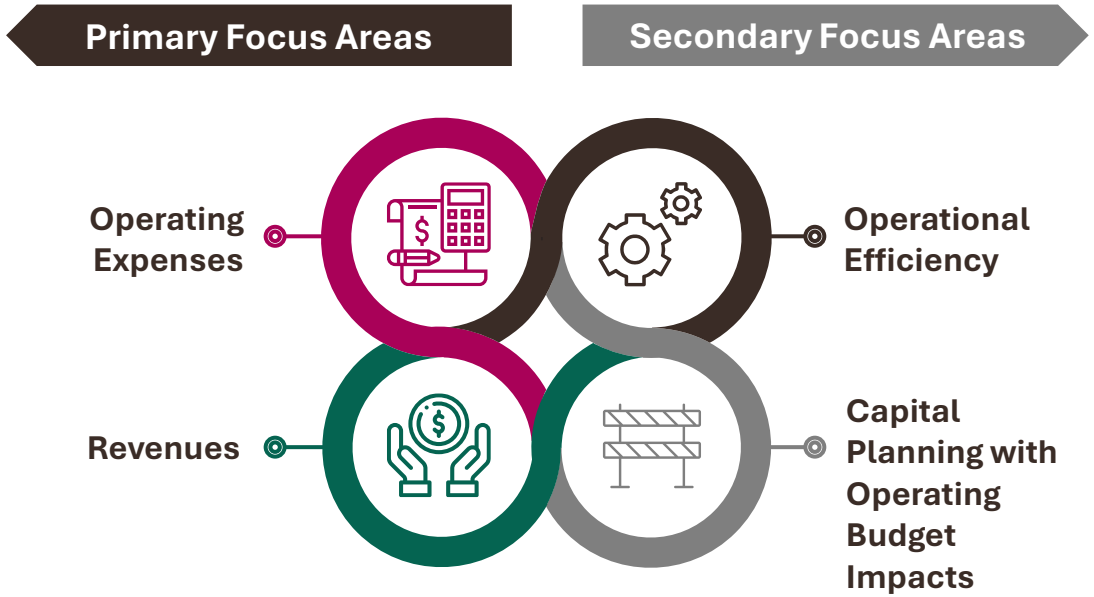


To uncover actionable cost-saving opportunities, a data-driven, stakeholder-informed assessment was commissioned

Operational Analysis Objectives

- ✓ **Assess the current state of WMATA's operations** in terms of key cost drivers, revenue streams, and service and ridership trends
- ✓ **Develop data-driven opportunities** for containing costs, enhancing revenue, and advancing operational efficiency
- ✓ **Synthesize opportunities** to guide WMATA's Board and management in making informed decisions

Primary and Secondary Focus Areas



The Operational Analysis is a **focused, actionable assessment**—intended as a **practical tool** to analyze WMATA's operations, budget, and finances and identify opportunities for improvement

This assessment serves as a living resource for the Board and WMATA Management, intended as a starting point for ongoing improvement

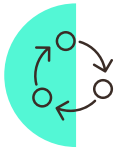
How the Operational Analysis Can Be Used



Starting Point, Not the Final Word: Treat the assessment as a starting point for deeper dives, follow-up analysis, and continued dialogue



Reference for Decision-Making: Use this report as a foundation for budget planning, strategic discussions, and ongoing oversight.



Validate and Prioritize: Use the analysis to validate what WMATA is doing well, surface areas for further focus, and prioritize potential initiatives.



Support for Board and Management: Return to the findings as new data emerges, policy environments shift, or as new initiatives and investments arise.



Catalyst for Collaboration: Leverage the report to foster ongoing collaboration with stakeholders – ensuring alignment on goals.

The opportunities identified in this assessment are grounded in detailed data and analysis

Operational Analysis Inputs

WMATA's Annual Budget

5+ years of budget and financial data analyzed



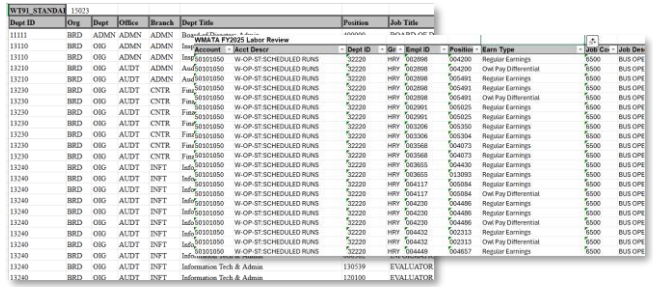
Data and Documentation

150+ documents reviewed



Workforce Assessment

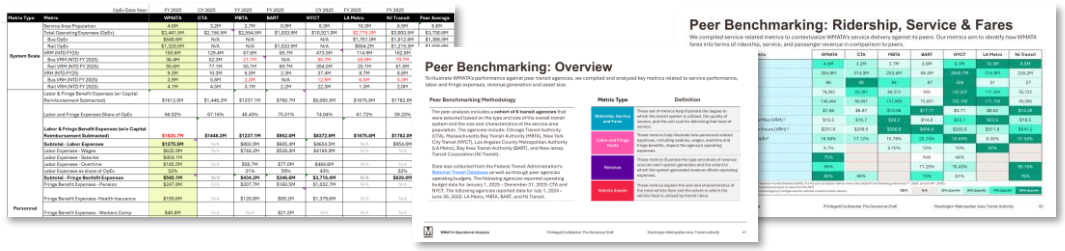
10+ workforce and payroll reports analyzed



Peer Benchmarking

6 peer agencies analyzed

300+ peer datapoints collected



Inputs from Partners

20+ individuals interviewed

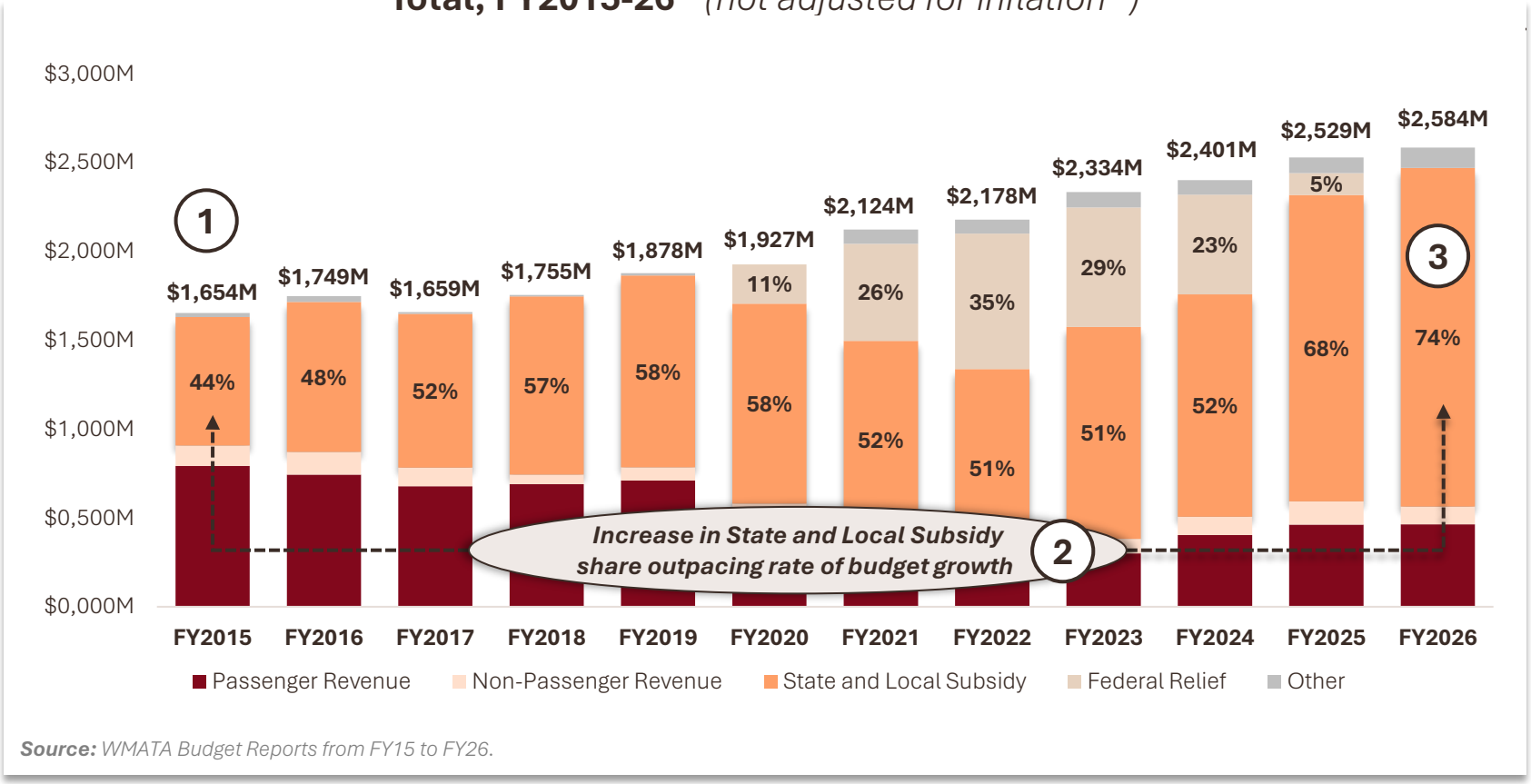






In the past decade, WMATA's operating budget growth has become more reliant on state and local subsidies

WMATA Operating Budget by Source with Federal, State and Local Subsidy as % of Total, FY2015-26 [a] *(not adjusted for inflation [b])*



Source: *WMATA Budget Reports from FY15 to FY26.*

Key Takeaways

1. WMATA's **annual operating budget** from FY2015-FY2026 grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of **4.1%**
2. Over that same period, **state and local subsidies** saw a CAGR of **9.2%**
3. This is the result of factors such as lower passenger revenue during COVID, closeout of federal relief funds, and system expansions (e.g., Silver Line Phase 2)

WMATA's funding source fluctuations highlight the need for **sustainable savings** and **new revenue**

Notes: a) "Actual" values were used where available, and "Budget" values were used in FY25 and FY26 where not available; b) WMATA's budget from FY15 through FY26 grew at a CAGR of 1.3% above inflation; c) "Other" category includes debt service, prior year savings, and reimbursable funds. These categories were not included in the total operating budget for the detailed analysis and recommendations; as such, total operating budget in the above graph is higher than operating budget listed in other sections of this report.

Our opportunities build on WMATA's 25+ recent efforts to identify operating budget savings, offsets, and efficiencies

Sample of WMATA's Recent Relevant Efforts

Operating Expenses
10+ identified initiatives

$38 million
saved through wage and salary freezes in FY2025

$11 million
saved through optimized materials and supplies expense management

Improved **energy efficiency** by retrofitting HVAC systems in facilities

6 weeks
of time saved by bringing police training in-house

Revenues
5+ identified initiatives

Implemented **open payment methods** for Metrorail, Metrobus, and parking lots

$50 million
in potential new lease revenue from joint development strategic plan

Expanded ability to charge riders and non-riders for **parking**

Integrated management of advertising content and revenue into **one consolidated platform**

Operational Efficiency
10+ identified initiatives

$123 million
saved through one-time management efficiencies

$20 million
saved through service adjustments

Reduced bus fleet by **110 vehicles** and rail fleet by **76 railcars**

$40 million
saved by outsourcing some MetroAccess rides

Capital Projects

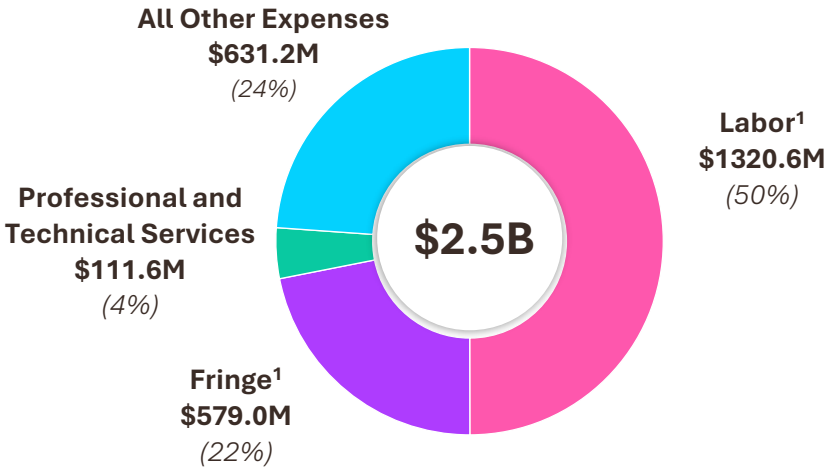
25+ capital improvement projects with direct operating budget impacts in the FY2025-FY2030 Capital Improvement Program

Our opportunities complement WMATA's existing efforts (including the Strategic Transformation Plan, Digital Roadmap, and the Capital Improvement Plan) by identifying **supplementary measures** to decrease operating expenses, grow revenues, and improve operational efficiency

Note: This initiative is focused on WMATA's operating budget and does not include opportunities related to capital improvements

Today, workforce expenditures account for the majority of WMATA's $2.5B operating budget

WMATA Operating Budget by Expenditure Type, FY2026



Source: *WMATA FY26 Budget Report*

Operating Budget Allocation Peer Comparison, FY2025

Metric	WMATA	Peer Average
Labor & Fringe	72%	69%
Professional & Technical Services	4%	31%
All Other Expenses	24%	

Source: *National Transit Database and Peer FY25 Annual Reports. See peer benchmarking appendix for additional details.*

Summary of Current State Assessment Key Findings

Labor

- **The size of WMATA's workforce is a key cost driver,** with headcount growing annually (10% since FY2021) as modernization and operational efficiencies continue.
- **Overtime is a growing contributor to WMATA's labor costs.** In FY2025, WMATA's overtime costs grew to more than 8% of the operating budget. In each year from FY2023–FY2025, overtime expenditures were also more than 50% higher than budgeted.

Fringe

- **Fringe expenses, particularly pensions, are often driven by the requirements of Collective Bargaining Agreements.** For example, more than 77% of WMATA employees participate in pensions that count overtime earnings – which are not capped – towards pension benefits.

Services

- **Professional and technical service expenses have grown 56% since FY2021** and comprise 4% of the FY2026 budget. While a relatively small share of the budget, multiple stakeholders expressed an opportunity to reduce reliance on contract labor.

Other

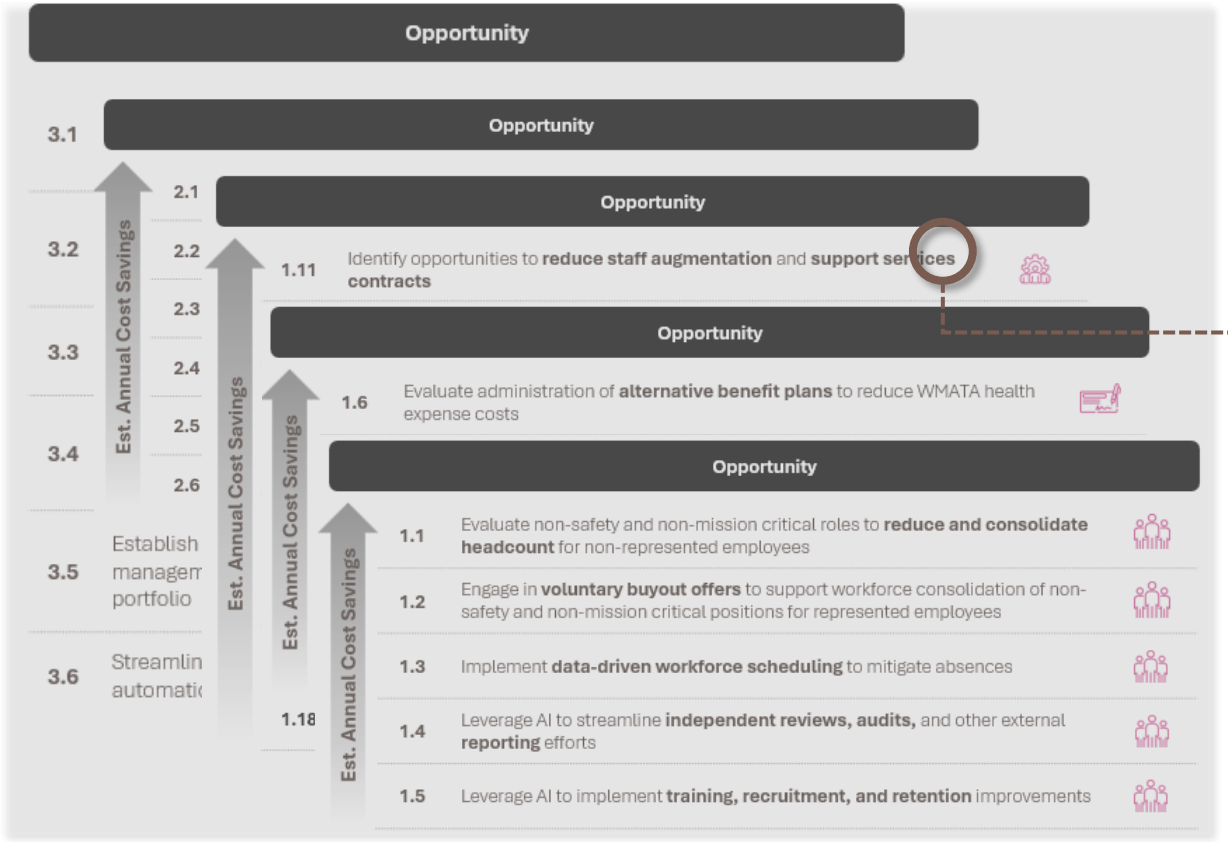
- Though **all other expenses** make up diverse and smaller shares of the operating budget, a range of cost-savings opportunities within these areas could yield significant savings.

Revenue

- Although **passenger revenue** is steadily rising post-pandemic, it offsets just 18% of WMATA's operating expenses, underscoring the need to pursue additional **farebox recovery** and **other revenue opportunities** to offset expenses.

Note: 1) Labor and fringe operating expense have not been reduced to reflect $143,985,000 capital allocation transfer.

This report identifies opportunities that can guide WMATA's decision making regarding cost saving and revenue generation



How does this report define an "opportunity"?

- Initiative with **potential** to reduce costs, generate revenue, or improve efficiency.
- 30 opportunities identified to **guide decision-making** over the next 1–5 years.
- Includes **estimated savings/revenue** where data was available.
- **Preliminary** insights – require **management validation** before action.
- View as a **starting point** for deeper analysis and dialogue.

Opportunities are **not prescriptive** – they are designed to spark discussion and guide prioritization

There are 30 potential opportunities for WMATA that may result in up to $147M in savings and $61M in added revenue

Overview of Draft Opportunities

	Challenge	Opportunity	Initiatives	Est. Annual Impact[1]
Operating Expenses	 **High Labor and Fringe Costs**	Optimize Workforce Planning and Overtime Management	**10** initiatives	**$79M - $139M**
Operating Expenses	 **Rising Services and Miscellaneous Costs**	Increase Efficiency of Procurement, Maintenance, and Utilities	**8** initiatives	**$6M - $8M+**[2]
Revenues	 **Reliance on State and Local Subsidies**	Grow and Diversify Revenue Streams	**4** initiatives	**$12M - $21M**
Revenues	 **Low System-Generated Revenue**	Improve Cost Recovery via Collections and Fare Increases	**2** initiatives	**$10M - $40M**
Operational Efficiency	 **Limited Ridership Growth**	Optimize Service and Asset Deployment	**2** initiatives	**N/A**[3]
Operational Efficiency	 **Tech and Financial Planning Inefficiencies**	Modernize Technology, Streamline Processes, and Encourage Long-Term Financial Planning	**4** initiatives	**N/A**[3]

Notes: 1) The estimated potential cost benefit is the summation of the "most likely" scenarios based on assumptions, available data, and research. 2) The estimated impact of the other expense recommendations is likely to be higher as six of eight recommendations are not included in cost estimates given additional technical analysis required. 3) The impacts of relevant initiatives were not estimated due to insufficient data.

Optimize Workforce Planning and Overtime Management (1/2)

Draft Labor Opportunities: $38M - $69M in Total Potential Budget Benefit

Est. Annual Cost Savings

	Opportunity		Est. Annual Cost Savings	Organizational Impact[1]	Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Involvement
1.1	Evaluate non-safety and non-mission critical roles to **reduce and consolidate headcount** for non-represented employees		$26M - $44M	High	No
1.2	Engage in **voluntary buyout offers** to support workforce consolidation of non-safety and non-mission critical positions for represented employees		$8M - $14M	High	Yes
1.3	Implement **data-driven workforce scheduling** to mitigate absences	STP (2,A)	$2M - $8M	Low	No
1.4	Leverage AI to streamline **independent reviews, audits,** and other external **reporting** efforts	STP (3,B)	$2M - $3M	Low	No
1.5	Leverage AI to implement **training, recruitment, and retention** improvements	STP (2,A)	*Further Analysis Required*	Medium	No

Key Labor Opportunities | STP Aligns to Strategic Transformation Plan (Goal, Objective)

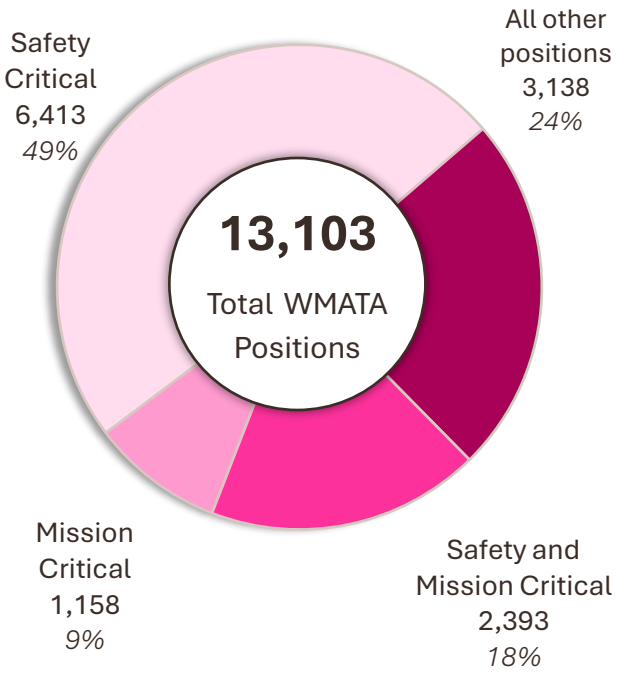
1. Organizational impact is defined as the level of organizational change management that would be required should the recommendation be implemented.

Workforce Consolidation Deep Dive

Workforce Consolidation Opportunities

Opportunity	Potential Position Reductions
1.1: Evaluate non-safety and non-mission critical roles to **reduce and consolidate headcount** for non-represented employees.	**198 - 330 positions** *(7-12% total non-represented[1])*
1.2: Engage in **voluntary buyout offers** to support workforce consolidation of non-safety and non-mission critical positions for represented employees.	**75 - 125 positions** *(~1% total represented[2])*

Breakdown of Positions by Type



Source: 2023 Guidehouse analysis of WMATA's workforce

Consolidation Scenarios

1. **Reduction in Force Program**
   Combined reduction in force (RIF; applicable to non-represented positions) and voluntary buyout (VBO; applicable to represented positions). This approach yields earlier operating budget savings than the following two options.

2. **Voluntary Separation Program**
   A voluntary separation program targeting both represented and non-represented positions identified for consolidation.

3. **Hiring Freeze**
   A hiring freeze on positions identified for consolidation. These positions are gradually reduced over time through natural attrition.

Note: All other positions include those that do not directly provide or impact transit service or safety, and do not provide employee oversight or supervision. *1.* Total non-represented across WMATA includes 2,766 filled positions (21%). *2.* Total represented across WMATA includes 10,337 filled positions (79%).

Optimize Workforce Planning and Overtime Management (2/2)

Draft Fringe Opportunities: $41M - $70M in Total Potential Budget Benefit

Est. Annual Cost Savings

	Opportunity	Est. Annual Cost Savings	Organizational Impact[1]	CBA Involvement
1.6	Evaluate administration of **alternative benefit plans** to reduce WMATA health expense costs	$20M - $31M	Medium	Yes
1.7	Increase **employee contribution rates** to actuarily-defined contributions to reduce WMATA pension costs	$15M - $19M	Medium	Yes
1.8	Reduce WMATA contributions to **401(a) defined contribution retirement plans** for non-represented employees	$5M - $17M	Medium	No
1.9	Restrict **overtime earnings** used in calculating pensionable earnings to reduce future pension liabilities	$1M - $2M[1]	Medium	Yes
1.10	Increase the number of **highest earning years** applied towards employee pension benefit calculations to reduce future pension liabilities	$.4M - $1M[1]	Medium	Yes

Key Fringe Opportunities

Note: 1) The estimated annual impact is underreported given compounded savings as more employees retire.

1. Organizational impact is defined as the level of organizational change management that would be required should the recommendation be implemented.

Increase Efficiency of Procurement, Maintenance, and Asset Management

Draft Other Expenses Opportunities: $6M - $8M+ in Total Potential Budget Benefit

Est. Annual Cost Savings

	Opportunity		Est. Annual Cost Savings	Organizational Impact[1]	Difficulty of Implementation
1.11	Identify opportunities to **reduce staff augmentation** and **support services contracts**		$5M - $6M	Medium	Medium
1.12	Transform existing real estate assets into energy generating assets and **reduce annual energy** purchases from utilities	STP (3,C)	$1M - $2M	Low	High
1.13	Leverage AI for **predictive analytics** to reduce asset breakdowns and increase mean distances between failure	STP (1,B)	*Asset Analysis Required*	Medium	Medium
1.14	**Modernize maintenance shop services** to reduce administrative needs and effort	STP (3,B)	*Asset Analysis Required*	Medium	Low
1.15	**Simplify design standards** across capital assets, including vehicles and facilities, to streamline maintenance		*Asset Analysis Required*	Low	High
1.16	Evaluate **asset management lifecycles** to consider quicker retirement of older assets or divestment of retired assets	STP (1,B)	*Asset Analysis Required*	Low	High
1.17	Optimize use of **underutilized office space** to reduce leasing costs		*Asset Analysis Required*	Low	Medium
1.18	**Reduce warehouse and yard footprints** based on review of fleet size and needs	STP (1,B)	*Asset Analysis Required*	Medium	High

Key

- Professional & Technical Services Opportunities
- Contract Maintenance Opportunities
- 'All Other Expenses' Opportunities
- STP — Aligns to Strategic Transformation Plan (Goal, Objective)

1. Organizational impact is defined as the level of organizational change management that would be required should the recommendation be implemented.

Grow and Diversify Revenue Streams; Improve Cost Recovery

Draft Revenue Opportunities: $22M - $61M in Total Potential Budget Benefit

Est. Annual Cost Savings

	Opportunity		Est. Annual Revenue Growth	Organizational Impact[1]	Difficulty of Implementation
2.1	Increase **passenger fares** across transportation modes, with a focus on rail services		$10M - $40M	Low	Medium
2.2	Lease underutilized **parking lots**	STP (3,A)	$5M - $9M	Low	Medium
2.3	Increase **parking rates**	STP (3,A)	$4M - $7M	Low	Medium
2.4	Enhance **advertising revenue** through additional potential partnership opportunities and investments	STP (3,A)	$3M - $4M	Low	Low
2.5	Assess potential (non-food/drink) **concession and leasing** opportunities at rail stations	STP (3,A)	$290K - $520K	Low	Low
2.6	Identify and implement additional **strategic fare collection** efforts		$100K - $250K	Low	Low

Key

- Passenger Revenue Opportunities
- Other Revenue Opportunities
- STP — Aligns to Strategic Transformation Plan (Goal, Objective)

1. Organizational impact is defined as the level of organizational change management that would be required should the recommendation be implemented.

Optimize Service Provision and Asset Deployment; Encourage Long-Term Financial Planning

Draft Opportunities

	Opportunity		Anticipated Budget Impact	Considerations
3.1	Continue to evaluate opportunities to **adjust service levels**, including consideration of current and future ridership demand, economic cost-benefits, and Board service requirements		Service cuts will generally improve operating budget	• Cuts often do not create proportional budget benefits • Reduction in service may reduce ridership, system value, and broader economic and societal impacts
3.2	Continue to evaluate opportunities to **rationalize fleet size**, including consideration of retirement of railcars and buses and associated facility footprints, as well as current and future ridership demand	STP (1,B)	Fleet reductions will generally improve operating budget	• Reductions may impact service delivery and should be considered in accordance with service levels • Reductions may impair future system growth
3.3	Pursue additional federal financing options (e.g., **TIFIA loans**)		Securing TIFIA loans can relieve financial pressures	• Can be used to fund WMATA's ongoing capital needs – freeing up funds for other capital priorities • Requires additional finance administration support
3.4	Modify WMATA's annual budget submission process to require an **extended multi-year budget** to align with multi-year plans and strengthen planning and oversight of WMATA's current and future budget requirements		Provides greater insight into future financial needs	• Will give three jurisdictions – DC, MD and VA – more lead time to plan appropriations • Requires additional finance administration support
3.5	Establish **AIOps capabilities** to enhance and streamline the management (O&M) of the current digital ecosystem and application portfolio	STP (3,B)	Reduce labor and IT spend on O&M	• Must successfully navigate integration and data source complexity and data source/system • Contractor support review needed to reduce redundancy
3.6	Streamline procurement through centralized content, insights, and automation	STP (3,B)	Labor savings enabled by productivity gain	• Will require upfront investment in data and AI capabilities • Operational efficiency may reduce staffing levels or redirect time to other tasks

Key Service Level and Fleet Size Opportunities | Financial Planning Opportunities | Digital Modernization Opportunities | STP Aligns to Strategic Transformation Plan (Goal, Objective)

Next Steps

Operational Analysis Objectives and Status



Assess the current state of WMATA's operations in terms of key cost drivers, revenue streams, and service and ridership levels

Complete



Develop data-driven opportunities for containing costs, enhancing revenue, and advancing operational efficiency

Drafted



Synthesize opportunities into a final report to guide WMATA's decision-making in improving agency and system operations

Upcoming

Guidehouse Next Steps

1. Refine opportunities to incorporate CTB input
2. Finalize estimates for cost savings and revenue generation
3. Develop and share final report

Mathis, Carol A. (VDOT)

From: Miller, Shep (GOV)
Sent: Sunday, January 4, 2026 8:28 PM
To: Miller, Shep (GOV); Smoot, Ray (CTB); Stant, Frederick (CTB); Fowlkes, Tom (CTB); Coleman, Wayne (CTB); Byers, Darrell (CTB); Laird, Randy (CTB); Lawson, Thomas (CTB); Sellers, Laura (CTB); Davis, Joel (CTB); Green, Linda (CTB); Gribbin, DJ (CTB); Dunlop, Becky (CTB); GoodJr, John (CTB); Minchew, Randall (CTB); Robinson, Tiffany (DRPT); Brich, Stephen (VDOT)
Cc: DJ Stadtler; Mathis, Carol A. (VDOT); Lawson, John (GOV); Maxwell, JoAnne P (VDOT); Mitchell, Jacob (GOV)
Subject: Memo of Recommendation re Shenandoah Rail and Trail Proposal with Advocacy Pro and Con
Attachments: Mayor_Ltr_CTB-2026.docx; 2025 December Alliance Comment Letter to VPRA.pdf; SRTEP Letter to CTB 12-11-2025.pdf; VPRA Rail Trail Board Letter - Del. Wilt.pdf; Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation letter.pdf; VPF statement on rail with trail proposal 12-2025.pdf; Luraydoc06835220251214161251.pdf; Allegheny Lumber - Customer Letter of Interest (1).pdf; DGVR Letter of Support.pdf; DelRunionRails with Trails.docx; RWT Shenandoah BOS letter.docx; RWT_Dotson Local_Govt_Discernment_Dotson.PDF; SVBF Fact Sheet.docx; SVRT Rail and Trail Compiled Public Comment.pdf; Likely Railbanking Procedures.docx; SVBF Fact Sheet - January 2026 final.docx; SVRT Rail and Trail Compiled Public Comment.pdf

To my CTB colleagues,

Please find attached a memo (the last attachment on this email - "SVBF Fact Sheet- January 2026 Final") regarding your consideration of the administration's recommendation to pursue a Trail AND Rail for the Shenandoah Valley Rail Corridor. The additional attachments are referenced in the memo.

The Governor and I are convinced that this route reflects the best interests of the citizens of the Commonwealth. It gets the trail started sooner, with a partner that is experienced in building and maintaining trails, one who has a track record of success and who pledges to work with all stakeholders. It also preserves the rail corridor and allows for excursion rail, rail biking, short line operation and commuter/passenger rail, consistent with the direction to ensure consideration of the same, as directed by the General Assembly in the 2023 budget. ALL of the $35M allocated, less the amount already spent, can ONLY be spent on the trail advancement, NONE on rail. Continuing public engagement, including public hearings , will be conducted by VPRA, before any transaction is finalized.
According to Norfolk Southern, this transaction is at risk if not completed by May 2026, due to Norfolk Southern's impending merger with Union Pacific.
Please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have. A resolution to advance this will be provided to you tomorrow.
Thanks for all that you do.

Best regards,

W. Sheppard Miller III
Secretary of Transportation
Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
804-692-2557

ALLIANCE
FOR THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

Board

Christine Andreae
Warren County

Sarah Francisco
Augusta County

Emmett Hanger
Augusta County

Christine Hartman
Warren County

Lisa Anne Hawkins
Rockingham County

Rollin G. Johnson Jr.
Harrisonburg

Carolyn Long
Shenandoah County

Eric Reiley
Shenandoah County

Bob Threewitts
Rockingham County

Brent Trumbo
Rockingham County

Robert Whitescarver
Augusta County

December 15, 2025

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board
919 East Main Street, Suite 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Shenandoah Rail Trail

Dear Mr. Stadtler and VPRA Board Members:

Thank you for your service in support of the VPRA. Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley works to protect the farm and forestland, clean streams and rivers, and thriving communities in our region. Our staff advocates for land use and transportation policies that generate fewer car trips and we promote expanded transit and rail service where feasible. In short, **we share your commitment to the public benefits that passenger and commuter rail provide**.

We are not particularly familiar with the VPRA as we do not have passenger rail in our region, but I spent the weekend reading about your organization, and it strikes me as most unusual that you are being asked to administer funds the General Assembly has allocated for the Shenandoah Rail Trail. We **respectfully ask you to defer action in order to take the necessary time to fully understand the details of this request and exactly how it relates to your mission**.

Procurement, Public Private Partnership, and Transparency

We understand from the VPRA's enabling language from the General Assembly (§ 33.2-299.1. Exemption of Authority from personnel and procurement procedures) that the VPRA is exempt from the Virginia Public Procurement Act. In lieu of that Act's requirements, VPRA adopted its own Procurement Rules on May 23, 2022, which provide for very limited exceptions to competitive bidding or competitive negotiation, none of which seem applicable to this proposed contract for "Construction" and "Services" as defined in that Policy. As provided in that Policy, "nothing shall prevent VPRA from electing to use competitive procurement methods even if another method of procurement is available to it."

We also note the **strong internal controls for transactions under your Procurement Ethics and Standards of Conduct Policy**, adopted March 2023, including requirements to:

- "promote integrity, transparency, competitiveness and fairness in VPRA's procurements and contracts," and
- "make certain that funds and resources of the Commonwealth and VPRA funding partners are used with extreme care, guided by prudent judgment and good business practices."

To that end, if you do choose to move forward with this peculiar transaction as it is currently envisioned, I encourage you to initiate a process by which you can **prudently consider other entities to administer the $35 million intended for the Shenandoah Rail Trail**. Community leaders in the Valley have always expected that specific decisions about the trail's design, development, and operation would be determined through a public process, given the substantial public funding at issue and project impacts on multiple localities. A few organizations that may wish to express interest or submit proposals come to mind.

- Virginia's **Department of Conservation and Recreation** (DCR) has had a role in the Shenandoah Rail Trail from the beginning, when they conducted a feasibility study in partnership with VDOT in 2021. DCR owns and manages several long distance destination trails as state parks, providing extraordinary public benefit to our Commonwealth.

- For several years, **The Conservation Fund** (TCF) has been a close working partner to the Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership of 12 local governments and supporting organizations (Partnership). On behalf of the local governments, TCF contracted an appraisal of the corridor in conjunction with Norfolk Southern. TCF has extensive experience with sophisticated real estate transactions, including with Class I railroads, and would be a logical partner for the Commonwealth for this project.

- Finally, I strongly encourage VPRA to consider the **Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission** (NSVRC) as an alternative to the Battlefields Foundation as its partner in this transaction. The NSVRC is one of the two planning district commissions along the corridor and already functions as the trusted and transparent fiscal partner for the Partnership. NSVRC collected and administered funds that local governments contributed for a study of the economic impact that the region could expect from new spending by visitors who come to use the trail in 2019. They successfully applied for a Congressionally Directed Spending request from Congress in 2022 on behalf of the Partnership. NSVRC also has a track record as fiscal agent for large, multi-jurisdictional publicly-funded projects in the Shenandoah Valley. They have the capacity and experience to do this. And, unlike the Battlefields Foundation, they have been working closely in concert with the communities along the 49-mile corridor throughout this long process.

Why Is VPRA Being Asked to Do This?

We are perplexed by VDOT's decision to have the VPRA administer the transfer of funds that the General Assembly primarily designated for a trail project. I see in the VPRA's founding documents that it is "responsible for promoting, sustaining, and expanding the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth." I believe that the **possibility of passenger or commuter rail service on this corridor in our lifetimes or our children's lifetimes is not a feasible idea**. We simply do not have the population density to begin to justify the cost of upgrading the rail corridor.

VDOT's Phase 3 rail-with-trail assessment concludes that it will cost an estimated $687 million to build rail-with-trail on this corridor, including $382 million simply to restore the existing line to FRA Class II requirements for 25 mph freight or excursion rail operation. This corridor has 117 roadway crossings and it passes through downtown areas of eight towns, so in reality passenger speeds would probably be much slower than 25 mph.

However, as you are aware, **there is a parallel rail corridor running north-south through our Valley**. This line, known as the Crescent Corridor, carries freight from Memphis or New Orleans in the south, to upstate New York in the north. In the past two decades, the Commonwealth and the federal government have invested significant funds in increasing speed and reliability in this corridor, including separated grade crossings, straightened curves, and increased height for freight double stacking. In my view, **when passenger rail someday comes to our region, this corridor is a much more affordable and reasonable option**. Furthermore, we believe that acquisition of the Shenandoah Rail Trail corridor through railbanking will ensure that we don't foreclose the opportunity to build passenger rail in either corridor in the distant future.

In sum, there is no prospect for passenger rail in any meaningful timeframe on this corridor, and **the $35 million was clearly appropriated for a *trail* project consistent with the vision the Valley's communities have pursued for years** to bring the needed economic and quality-of-life benefits associated with a destination trail. I question whether the Administration misstepped when they decided that VPRA is the most fitting entity to administer this transaction. I urge you to take the time you need to fully assess whether acting on these funds, in such a rushed manner, would be inconsistent with your mission and purpose.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me at 540.908.3914 at any time.

Sincerely yours,



Kate Wofford
Executive Director

ALLEGHENY FEED & MILLING LLC.
548 SHAWNA ROAD
NORTHERN CAMBRIA PA 15714
814 650 4694

Webb's*SuperMelt!*

12/21/2021

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter today to express on behalf of my companies, Allegheny Feed & Milling and the Lane Sawmill & Lumber Company that we have a direct interest in the railroad line extending from Front Royal to Broadway Virginia.

As we look to expand and grow our feed business it is very apparent that the poultry growing region of western Virginia is something we should consider in our portfolio. There are several mill sites along the railroad corridor that could be utilized as a part of our expansion plans. Understandably trucking has not been a favorable way for us to ship and we are held captive at our Pennsylvania locations. Only recently have we discovered a potential dairy feed location that is close enough to be able to transload from rail to truck. If there is a way to utilize rail service and continually receive the bulk discounts of large grain shipments, this would be of MAJOR interest to us. That said we feel there is a lot of opportunity in this regard in the northern Shenandoah Valley should the railroad remain intact.

Additionally, as a lumbering interest we recognize that there are some wood preservative plants in the area, and we are actively working to expand our railroad tie production. Although there is not quite as much interest in locating a lumber yard in this area (not as much as a feed mill), we would be willing to consider "piggy-backing" a sawmilling site at a feed mill location further creating value in moving there.

To cut up the railroad would mean to cut out any development for us in the Shenandoah Valley and as long as there is potential to work with a shortline partner on this section of railroad; we will continue to investigate the potential sites and determine whether this is an acceptable expansion opportunity. We will be following very closely the developments of this corridor and we hope that a reasonable compromise between a private shortline enterprise and a rail trail group can be had. One where both parties can work together to have the trail constructed adjacent to and not on top of the railroad bed.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at the number listed on the letterhead.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Lane

Owner and General Manager
Allegheny Feed & Milling LLC.
Lane Sawmill & Lumber Company.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

CHRIS RUNION

POST OFFICE BOX 202
BRIDGEWATER, VIRGINIA 22812

THIRTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
ADRICULTURE, CHESAPEAKE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
FINANCE
LABOR AND COMMERCE

The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Virginia
PO Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board
c/o Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Miller and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board,

I write to offer my unqualified support for the *Rails with Trails* project. The completed study presents a comprehensive, collaborative, and economically sound plan for the corridor that integrates biking and hiking trails, tourist excursion rail service, and opportunities to support business, industry, and agriculture.

This plan addresses both immediate needs and long-term utilization. Importantly, the corridor passes through several Shenandoah Valley Civil War battlefields, providing a unique opportunity to educate, engage, and promote Shenandoah Valley's rich historical legacy.

The *Rails with Trails* project offer numerous advantages, including:

- Use by a broad range of constituent groups
- Multi-modal recreational opportunities, including hiking, biking, and rail excursions
- Support for existing and future diverse economic development activities
- An accelerated pathway to move the project into the action phase
- Future opportunities to expand passenger rail service in the Valley, with connections to Virginia's modern and effective public passenger rail network

I appreciate your time, leadership, and service, and respectfully urge the Commonwealth Transportation Board to approve this proposal at its meeting on January 6, 2026.

With my best regards,

Chris Runion

Delegate Chris Runion

Cc: Keven Walker, Executive Director
Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Association

THE DURBIN & GREENBRIER VALLEY RAILROAD INCORPORATED

PO BOX 44, DURBIN, WV 26264
304-456-3442, X-200; PH
john@mountainrail.com

January 29, 2022

Expression of Interest to Revitalize Rail Service:

RE: Broadway, VA to Riverton Junction, VA

To Whom It May Concern,

Durbin & Greenbrier Valley RR, Inc. (DGVR) is a West Virginia-based shortline operator that specializes in revitalizing moribund and underserved rail corridors. An example is the Shenandoah Valley RR (SVRR) which serves the area between Staunton and Harrisonburg. When DGVR was named operator in 2006, this railroad handled 500 railcars annually and was not profitable. Today, SVRR moves upwards of 2,000 railcars and has become a revenue source to its corporate owners and an economic generator for the area it serves. Two other instances of resurrected rail properties are found in West Virginia where DGVR has successfully combined freight and tourist services to create an enterprise that benefits area local communities and businesses.

DGVR is very familiar with the section of line extending between Broadway, VA north to Riverton Jct., VA. We are confident that a similar business strategy can be applied here. This line contains the possibility to become much the same as the DGVR-operated West Virginia Central RR in and around the Elkins, WV area. When purchased by the West Virginia Rail Authority in 1996, there was no activity on the entire 90-mile line. Portions of the track had been flooded and become inaccessible. For comparison, during the last pre-pandemic year of 2019, the WVC has grown to handle 60,000 tourist passengers along with 900 railcar loads of freight and has become an important part of the economic health of central West Virginia.

At one time, railroads were sought after by communities searching for economic growth. As other more flexible transportation modes became available, the influence and importance of railroads waned. However, in terms of moving bulk freight in large quantities over long distances at reasonable rates, railroads are still important transportation arteries in the manufacturing and warehouse sectors. The section being discussed in this letter features several large shippers located along the current tracks whose business plans would benefit greatly if rail service was available. Likely, the quantity of loaded railcars that these businesses generate may not meet the criteria to sustain a stand-alone freight railroad. However, as noted above, this section of track

has similar qualities to our successful operation in West Virginia. Freight activity that sustains the local online business customers can be augmented by a tourist passenger train operation. Together, the two operations on the same line operated by the same business will add revenue and growth to this area of Virginia. Now is the time, before the tracks are removed, to fully consider the economic impacts of rail/trail versus railroad. The state of Virginia may realize a much larger benefit by retaining the tracks or possibly building a rail-with-trail. Removal of the railroad brings along with it a reduction in future business opportunities. Rail/trails are a good way to maintain the original corridor, but they normally don't result in new business siting or job opportunities for the nearby communities.

Warmest Regards,

_____

John W. Smith, DGVR

This short document compares the likely procedures for a transfer of the Shenandoah Valley rail corridor for (i) a rail with trail (to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation ("SVBF") or its subsidiary), and (ii) for a trail only (to an entity yet to be determined):

1. Service has been "discontinued" on the corridor but has not been legally abandoned. Thus, a transfer of the rail line (including the common carrier responsibilities) can be transferred from Norfolk Southern Railway ("NSR") to the Foundation pursuant to the regulations of the federal Surface Transportation Board ("STB") – the federal agency with exclusive jurisdiction over rail transportation and rail lines – applicable to transfer of rail lines to a noncarrier (SVBF or a subsidiary). 49 C.F.R. Section 1150.31. The regulations provide an expeditious procedure for such transfers – 49 C.F.R. Section 1150.32 provides these transactions can be accomplished by a notice of exemption, a brief notice describing details about the transaction, **that becomes effective 30 days** after filing of the notice.

Once the purchase funds become available to SVBF and a purchase agreement finalized with NSR, the transfer of the corridor to SVBF or its subsidiary can be accomplished in as little as 30 days after closing, and design and construction of the parallel rail trail commenced. SVBF has already created the subsidiary entity which could take ownership of the corridor.

2. Acquisition of the rail corridor for a trail only would be more complex and time consuming and more subject to uncertainty, reflecting the federal policy that rail lines be kept in operation if at all feasible.

Since the trail only group intends to rip up the rails and destroy any realistic opportunity for renewed freight rail service to the Valley, the line would first need to be legally abandoned under STB regulations. This necessitates a notice of exemption filed by NSR under 49 C.F.R. Section 1152.50 – while more expeditious than a full-scale abandonment procedure, the abandonment exemption is much more involved than the transfer of rail line exemption procedure described in 1. above. The applicant (NSR), which would be under no obligation to file such notice at any particular time (if at all), must certify that no local traffic has moved over the line for at least two (2) years and any overhead traffic on the line can be rerouted over other lines, and that no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line is pending with either the Board or any U.S. District Court. There are also extensive notice requirements to potentially interested parties. The STB will then publish a notice in the Federal Register within 20 days after the filing of the notice of exemption. The notice shall include a statement to alert the public that following any

abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including **interim trail use**.

Opponents of the abandonment are free to file petitions to stay the abandonment, which is ordinarily effective 30 days after filing.

Requests for a trail use condition must be filed within ten (10) days after publication of the notice in the Federal Register. **If NSR agrees** to negotiate an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with the interim trail sponsor, then the Board will issue a Notice of Interim Trail Use or Abandonment (NITU) to the railroad and to the interim trail sponsor for the portion of the right-of-way as to which both parties are willing to negotiate. The "interim trail sponsor" must issue a statement including the below:

Statement of Willingness to Assume Financial Responsibility

In order to establish interim trail use and rail banking under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) and 49 CFR 1152.29 with respect to the right-of-way owned by _____ (Railroad) and operated by _____ (Railroad), _____ (Interim Trail Sponsor) is willing to assume full responsibility for: (1) Managing the right-of-way, (2) any legal liability arising out of the transfer or use of the right-of-way (unless the sponsor is immune from liability, in which case it need only indemnify the railroad against any potential liability), and (3) the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed against the right of way.

The STB allows a one-year period for an owning railroad (i.e., NSR) to reach an interim trail use/rail banking agreement with the interim trail sponsor, subject to possibility of three one-year extensions. SVBF is not aware that trail only advocates have yet created or arranged for any entity to act as the interim trail sponsor.

In addition, the notice of exemption for abandonment procedure allows an interested preliminarily financially responsible party to make an offer to purchase (or subsidize) the line for continued rail service. In the case of a party seeking to purchase, the preliminary financial responsibility amount shall be the sum of the rail steel scrap price per ton (dated within 30 days of the submission of the expression of intent), times 132 short tons per track mile or 117.857 long tons per track mile, times the length of the line in miles, plus $4,000 times the number of miles of track times two. SVBF believes this amount may be less than the $23 Million for which NSR has indicated its willingness to sell the line to SVBF. Should another rail carrier or party purchase the corridor under these provisions (SVBF understands one or more freight carriers are considering utilizing such procedure, as would SVBF if necessary to preserve the corridor), no trail would be likely at all.

In sum, alternative 2. above is likely to delay commencement of trail construction, if not forestall it altogether, for many years.

LURAY CAVERNS
In Virginia's Shenandoah Valley

What will you discover?

Mr. DJ Stadtler

Executive Director

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

919 East Main Street, Suite 2400

Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Stadtler, 14 December 2025

The purpose of this letter is to express to you my support for the Shenandoah Rail Corridor development and to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) having a conceptual vision for this endeavor.

As the president of Luray Caverns Corporation, I fully understand the positive impact this project will bring to tourism in the Valley of Virginia. Luray Caverns attracts over 500,000 guests each year, entertaining tourists from at least 60 countries from all over the world. The Valley Region of Virginia benefits and invites tourism sponsored activities and I believe the Shenandoah Rail Corridor project will be an enormous tourism and agricultural financial success, providing not only tourism dollars, but employment opportunities and additional tourism support businesses throughout the valley.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the betterment of Virginia.

Most sincerely,

John H. H. Graves

President

Luray Caverns Corporation

970 US Highway 211 West • PO Box 748 • Luray, VA 22835 • (540) 743-6551 • www.luraycaverns.com

December 23, 2025

Commonwealth Transportation Board

Virginia Department of Transportation

Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Members of the CTB:

As elected representatives of the nine towns along the Shenandoah Rail Trail corridor, we ***ask you to defer action*** *at your January 6 meeting on the proposal to transfer the rail-trail project and its funding to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. This proposal is being hurried toward an outcome that appears misaligned with our towns' economic and quality-of-life interests, but rather is placed with a private entity that has no formal accountability to our communities.*

We are concerned about rushing this process that will impact our communities for generations. *We only learned of this proposal after it was unveiled at your December work session in a last-minute addition to the agenda. We had been following VDOT's work on the rail-with-trail assessment, including the long-promised final step of public engagement, which has not yet happened. So the new proposal at the CTB work session came as an alarming surprise to us.*

These nine towns joined with our adjacent three counties to adopt formal resolutions in 2021 endorsing the corridor's conversion into a destination trail. This vision—which preserves the right-of-way for future rail through railbanking—is a proven economic engine. ***By channeling trail users through and into our downtowns, we anticipate a significant increase in sales*** *for local restaurants, shops, and lodging, providing a crucial revitalization boon for our towns, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Commonwealth.*

At the groundbreaking for the restoration of the Creeper Trail in Damascus on December 18, Governor Youngkin and Damascus Mayor Katie Lamb spoke powerfully about the incredible collaboration between the state and the town for a project that will deliver significant benefits to southwest Virginia. With great emotion, Mayor Lamb welcomed the visitors who will shop, dine, and lodge in her town and enjoy her community's hospitality when the project is done next year.

We, too, have been looking forward to welcoming trail visitors into our towns and communities. However, ***we are concerned that transferring this project to the VPRA will jeopardize these benefits****. Any scenario that adds the reconstruction of 49 miles of deteriorated rail line will dramatically increase costs, complicate fundraising, and threaten the completion of a fully-connected, ADA-compliant, destination trail. Furthermore,* ***a tourist train that doesn't stop in***

our downtown commercial centers will not deliver the same economic impact *as a fully-connected and accessible trail.*

This is a public project that will deeply impact our towns. ***Our communities deserve a transparent and deliberative process*** *that ensures that* ***our localities have a formal role in the oversight*** *of the project's management and implementation,* ***including the selection of a fully-vetted, credible, and accountable management entity*** *that is the best fit for the project.*

We request that the CTB ***delay action until the rail-with-trail assessment process is completed as originally outlined****, including public engagement and consultation with corridor localities, to allow all of us to fully review the options and provide meaningful input on* ***a decision that will shape the economic and transportation future of the Shenandoah Valley for generations****.*

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Jordan (Dec 23, 2025 18:40:57 EST)
Mayor David Jordan
Town of Broadway

Don Delaughter (Dec 23, 2025 14:41:54 EST)
Mayor Don Delaughter
Town of Timberville

Peter Hughes (Dec 29, 2025 19:17:54 EST)
Mayor Peter Hughes
Town of New Market

Rodney Shepherd (Dec 23, 2025 12:47:16 EST)
Vice-Mayor Rodney Shepherd
Town of Mount Jackson

Dan Harshman (Dec 25, 2025 13:22:42 EST)
Mayor Dan Harshman
Town of Edinburg

Jeremy McCleary (Dec 23, 2025 17:08:24 EST)
Mayor Jeremy McCleary
Town of Woodstock

Lisa Currie (Dec 23, 2025 19:11:59 EST)
Mayor Lisa Currie
Town of Toms Brook

Brandy Hawkins Boies (Dec 30, 2025 10:36:59 EST)
Mayor Brandy Hawkins Boies
Town of Strasburg

Lori A. Cockrell (Dec 23, 2025 16:23:01 EST)
Mayor Lori Cockrell
Town of Front Royal

District 1: Josh Stephens
District 2: Steve Baker
District 3: David Ferguson
District 4: Karl Roulston
District 5: Dennis Morris
District 6: Tim Taylor

SHENANDOAH COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ADMINSTRATION
Evan L. Vass, County Administrator
Mandy R. Belyea, Deputy County Administrator

December 15, 2025

DJ Stadtler – Executive Director
Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
919 East Main St, Suite 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Stadtler,

Our Board was presented with a Rail to Trail concept in early 2021 and passed resolution on March 9, 2021 supporting that effort. We were never presented with any other alternative use for this corridor. Since that time, I have been to several meetings, town hall events, and VDOT functions listening to constituents about this issue. I can say that the voice in our county to preserve the rail AND provide a trail has become a sounding majority.

When asked later if the original supporters of the Rail to Trail project knew of other alternatives, their answer was yes. I was told however, "that's not what we want". This project can not be one that should be approved based on the "wants" of a small fraction of our county citizens that are involved in a special interest group. It should be one that has a long bright future that serves the best interest of ALL county citizens. The best solution in my mind is the "Rails WITH Trails" model.

This corridor represents a unique opportunity to enhance economic development, tourism, recreation, and transportation options across our region. Shenandoah County, with its towns of Mount Jackson, Edinburg, Woodstock, Toms Brook, and Strasburg, stands to benefit significantly from a multi-use approach that preserves rail infrastructure while incorporating a parallel trail.

I commend ongoing efforts, including the Virginia Department of Transportation's Rail with Trail Assessment and recent proposals to partner with organizations experienced in rail preservation, such as the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. Preserving the rail corridor ensures flexibility for future transportation needs while maximizing public investment and community benefits.

I urge the Commonwealth to prioritize options that maintain and restore rail capability alongside trail development. This balanced approach will best serve the long-term interests of our residents, businesses, and visitors.

Sincerely,

Josh Stephens – Chairman of the Board

Mark Dotson
Shenandoah County District 1 Planning Commissioner (Vice Chair)
Supervisor Elect, Shenandoah County District 1
PO Box 165
New Market, VA 22844
December 15, 2025

DJ Stadtler, Executive Director, VPRA
and Members of the Board
919 East Main Street, Ste 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

First let me thank the members of the Virigina Passenger Rail Authority board for considering participating in a plan that will have a positive impact on the future of Shenandoah County and the broader Shenandoah Valley.

You may ask what saving a rail corridor has to do with rejuvenating Shenandoah County where 70% of this corridor is located? It turns out this struggle is the perfect metaphor for which competing vision will prevail for this special place and I commend the Commonwealth for listening to all options, discerning what's best for citizens and taking action. I encourage the boards for the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and Commonwealth Transportation Board to approve the Commonwealth's proposed solution to implement a Rails With Trails (RWT) model.

For background, my perspective is that of a current Planning Commission (Vice Chair) and future Board of Supervisor in Shenandoah County which counters the false narrative that all government officials support a trail only alternative. When I first heard this discussion, I felt called to find the ground truth as this corridor has many ties to the challenging land-use decisions I saw in my role as a Planning Commissioner. Over the last nine months campaigning for, and winning, a seat on the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisor has sharpened my focus on the financial crisis my county is facing and the potential of the rail corridor to dramatically improve that plight. As an anchor point, Shenandoah County is the entity most directly impacted by this discussion - 70% of this corridor is in Shenandoah County while the other counties with small corridor segments (Warren & Rockingham) both have thriving rail infrastructure.

Shenandoah County unanimously adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in fall of 2024 which envisions balancing our rural character with economic activities located along the Interstate 81 and Route 11 transportation corridors. This out of service rail corridor parallels these two critical arteries serving as the backbone of the county passing through numerous small towns, industrial parks and alongside many vacant industry facilities. Utilizing these facilities aligns with our future land use goals - re-energize existing industrial zoned properties to provide jobs and diversify our tax

base so we can sustain agriculture as our number one industry and tourism as the number two industry - the order here matters as #1 enables #2. The Shenandoah County Farm Bureau validated these goals with their endorsement of the RWT model. Not only does the RWT model support both of these industries, it also ties in within another important component addressed in the Comprehensive Plan for the goal of "the most popular regional trail in the state". This goal was agnostic to what type of trial could possibly be implemented as indicated by the potential action to "prepare for decision by stakeholders on future use of County rail corridor". To reiterate, this is the most current trail policy position which was unanimously approved by all Shenandoah County Supervisors in September 2024.

Shenandoah County desperately needs the re-establishment of rail service to drive a period of renewed economic development. Shenandoah County has over $240M of unfunded capital projects for shared services (primarily outdated schools) and the slow hemorrhaging of industry has resulted in an out of balance tax base which is reliant on real estate and personal property taxes. A trail only solution would only amplify this dynamic where the 6 towns in Shenandoah County stand to collect trail related use taxes with little impact on shared services while a RWT solution will attract industry resulting in jobs and business tax revenues to diversify the County's tax base. RWT will also supercharge tourism opportunities not just from the recreational trail, but also from the proposed exceptional excursion rail and rail bike activities. Finally, I'd like to add that the concept of rail banking on this corridor is a red herring argument. As transportation officials, you realize the continuously rising cost of rebuilding rail infrastructure would never provide the return on investment for municipal governments or investors who have their pick of top tier development sites with existing transportation infrastructure.

Thank you again for listening and discerning the real issues at hand and please support Rails With Trails.

Sincerely,

Mark Dotson
Shenandoah County District 1 Planning Commissioner (Vice Chair)
Supervisor Elect, Shenandoah County District 1

Shenandoah County Farm Bureau

January 19, 2025

Directors and Managers of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

Attn. Mr. Kevin Walker, CEO

Dear Mr. Walker,

On behalf of the Shenandoah County Farm Bureau, I would like to express to you our strong support for the proposed Rail and Trail initiative for our existing rail corridor here in Shenandoah County. I am proud to represent over 1600 Farm Bureau members here in the county. Our members represent the backbone of the county. Hard working Farmers, agribusiness owners, landowners and many individuals who respect and cherish our rural way of life. Agriculture is our county's number one industry.

Over the past two years we have discussed the two options slated for the corridor. The Rail to Trail (with the removal of the rail) and the Rail with Trail (with the revitalization of our rail system accompanied with a recreational trail). After talking to countless fellow farmers, agribusiness owners, the general public and landowners adjacent to the corridor, our board unanimously voted to support the latter. We strongly feel that a Rail with Trail will create a balance in our rural county by still allowing for the transport of agricultural goods and products to our many businesses along the corridor. In addition to this, the potential for a scenic passenger train along with the accompanying bike trail would provide business opportunities for local farmers and farm markets to sell locally raised products.

Please feel free to reach out to me if there is anything we can help you with regarding this important issue. I feel that with the right insight, planning and coordination with county, state and federal lawmakers this great concept can become a successful reality for our agricultural community.

Sincerely,

Chuck French
President, Shenandoah County Farm Bureau
Cell: 540-335-4770

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

Fact Sheet

Executive Summary

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) is a nonprofit organization focused on preserving and interpreting Civil War battlefields in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Established in 1996, it has protected over 7,000 acres through more than 70 preservation efforts, contributing to regional economic activity including $293.2 million in annual tourism revenue, 3,930 supported jobs, and $20.4 million in state and local taxes. As of fiscal year 2024, SVBF reports $70.7 million in assets and a net income of $5.6 million. Its proposed Rail-with-Trail initiative for the 48-mile Manassas Gap Railroad (MGRR) corridor involves retaining historic rails alongside a multi-use trail. The Commonwealth has allocated $35 million for acquisition, with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) involved in potential transfer. This briefing provides an overview of SVBF's operations, financial position, track record, and the initiative's details for consideration in state partnership decisions.

Background on the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

SVBF was formed in response to the 1996 congressional creation of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, covering eight counties in Virginia. The organization's activities include land preservation, historical interpretation, and heritage tourism promotion in collaboration with public and private entities.

Key facilities managed by SVBF include the New Market Battlefield Visitor Center and Museum, the Shenandoah Valley Civil War Museum in Winchester, and the James R. Wilkins, Jr. Civil War Visitors Center also in Winchester. These sites attract over 100,000 visitors annually with attractions including battlefield parks with more than 14 miles of trails.

Organizational Strengths

Track Record

Since inception, SVBF has completed over 70 land preservation transactions, securing more than 7,000 acres of battlefield sites. This includes the development of over 14 miles of interpreted trails at locations throughout the Shenandoah Valley. A 2023 economic impact study indicates SVBF's contributions to $293.2 million in heritage tourism revenue for the region. The organization holds a 3/4-star rating from Charity Navigator, reflecting its governance and operational practices.

Financial Position

As of September 2024, SVBF's financial statements show total assets of $70.7 million and liabilities of $8.2 million, resulting in net assets of $62.5 million. Revenue for the year totaled $9.05 million, with contributions accounting for $7.7 million (85%), leading to a net income of

$5.6 million after $3.5 million in expenses. Funding sources are diversified, including memberships, grants, and investments. Executive compensation represents 4.7% of expenses, with policies in place for transparency and conflict-of-interest management.

Details of the Rail-with-Trail Initiative

The initiative targets the 48-mile, 450-acre MGRR corridor, connecting sites such as Cedar Creek, Front Royal, and Fisher's Hill Battlefields. SVBF's "Trails Plus Plan" proposes maintaining the rails and roadbed while adding an adjacent trail for non-motorized uses, with options for excursion activities like rail biking or limited freight. This differs from trail-only options that would remove the rails.

The project aligns with state priorities in transportation, recreation, and heritage preservation. The Commonwealth has appropriated $35 million for acquisition from Norfolk Southern, with VPRA facilitating potential transfer to SVBF. A 2025 VDOT assessment confirms feasibility, noting benefits like landscape preservation and connectivity, with costs lower than full rail restoration ($687 million). SVBF has a Letter of Intent with Norfolk Southern, requiring $350,000 in private funds to proceed.

Considerations for State Involvement

SVBF's financial stability and history of successful projects position it as a capable partner for managing the corridor. Potential outcomes include enhanced multimodal access, increased tourism revenue building on the region's $293 million heritage economy, and preservation of historical assets. Prior collaborations with state agencies provide a foundation for coordination.

Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail (SVRT) Fact Sheet

Background

- The Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail has a more than 20-year history of study and advocacy. Between 2021 and 2024 the General Assembly provided funding for the development of trails, stipulating in 2023 that up to $35M shall be allocated to the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail (SVRT), specifically for land acquisition, planning, and site development, efforts which shall not preclude options to maintain rail transportation in the corridor.

- VDOT studied the constraints, considerations, and costs for constructing a trail alongside the rail line as an alternative to the previously studied rail-to-trail option. The third and final phase of this study was published in November 2025.

- The final phase of the VDOT three phase study included estimates of $164M to rip up the rails and build a trail on the rail bed and $382M if the trail was built aside the rail bed. These estimates are not informed by engineering or design work and thus contain high amounts of assumptions and contingency.

- The previous 2021 feasibility study identified involvement by a state agency or regionally sponsored nonprofit as potential methods of owning and maintaining the rail corridor.
    - The report also noted: "The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), established by Chapter 1230 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, is responsible for promoting, sustaining, and expanding the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. If the state rail authority takes ownership of this corridor, a rail with trail is a possibility.

The question posed is whether the Commonwealth should pursue a Rail AND Trail concept or ONLY a Trail.

- The Administration believes that pursuing both delivers the greatest benefit to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Leaving the rail in place, while building the trail allows for Excursion Rail, Rail Biking, Short Line Use and ultimately (maybe 20 years plus) Commuter and/or Passenger rail.

- VPRA CEO D J Stadtler spoke about the future potential uses at our November CTB meeting. Tearing the rail up and building the trail on the railbed, which would include "railbanking" (see attached description), would

technically allow the same. However, imagine tearing out an established and active trail to restore the rail line. The cost would be exorbitant, and the public would have to give up the trail or rebuild it alongside the rebuilt rail, driving the cost up even further. Cost and public opposition would be expected to keep this from occurring. As a practical matter, railbanking the corridor and building a trail on the railbed, would close this corridor for future rail use.

<u>Interest in both options has been strong.</u>

- Over 2200 individual emails have been received from Trail only advocates. A small percentage of them were personalized and included additional remarks. We also received a letter signed by 10 towns advocating for Trail only option and a letter from both the Alliance for Shenandoah Valley and the Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership. In addition, Delegate Tony Wilt sent a letter (All, other than the 2200 emails, are attached).

- Rail AND Trail advocacy has been similarly vocal The Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation Sent one email listing the email addresses of 1550+ advocates including funding contributors. In addition, the Farm Bureau for Shenandoah County (representing over 1600 members), the Va. Poultry Growers Association and the Va. Cattlemen's Association all sent letters supporting Rail AND Trail (attached). Businesses (Luray Caverns, Houff Corp, Allegheny Feed & Milling, Lane Sawmill, George's Inc Feedmill, Holtzman Oil and Valley Fertilizer) also sent letters of support (attached).

- Shortline operator Durbin and Greenbrier Valley RR and scenic rail operator Railroad Investment Corporate Holdings submitted letters of interest (attached) and SMS Lines proposes short line, excursion and rail biking (attached). Valley Railroad Company, who specializes in the maintenance, repair, replacement, and construction of railroad track, bolstered by a consulting study prepared by Stone Consulting, believes the line could be rehabilitated for far less than the phase 3 report estimates (attached).

- Political leaders including Del. Chris Runion (attached), Del. Delores Oakes (verbally to Secretary Miller) and Del.-Elect Pence, have all advocated for both the Rail and Trail option. Shenandoah County Board Chairman Josh Stephens and incoming member (former Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission) Mark Dotson also expressed strong support for this option (attached).

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF)

- SVBF is a private, non-profit organization formed in 2000 as the "management entity" with respect to the management and administration of the Congressionally-created Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. (Public Law 104-333)

- SVBF is charged with, among other things, preserving historical transportation linkages among Civil War battlefields within the district, including investigating the establishment of walking trails within the district, and the potential re-establishment of passenger rail service along historic rail lines within the District. It has a track record of success.

- A fact sheet on SVBF is attached.

Recommendation

To preserve the rail corridor for potential future rail service, the Commonwealth proposes transferring the funding and project to VPRA.

- As VPRA's mission is to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth, VPRA would accept the funding in accord with an MOA with the CTB and then 1) finalize a term sheet with SVBF, or another similarly situated and like-minded entity. The Commonwealth has worked extensively with the Battlefield Foundation, as they were the only entity pursuing rail and trail, have a mission that includes both, and a track record of success, 2) continue the public input process by conducting public meetings to obtain feedback on the plan, and 3) obtain VPRA board approval to include a grant arrangement within VPRA's budget.

- Under the proposed agreement, VPRA would facilitate the purchase of the corridor from Norfolk Southern for $23M, the previously agreed to amount, and supply the residual funding, on a reimbursement basis for trail design and construction. None of the $35M could be used on any rail related activities, rather it would be entirely dedicated to advancing the trail. Any grantee would be subject to performance metrics, target dates and any default would allow the Commonwealth (VPRA)to take possession of the asset.

- VPRA will conduct public meetings to discuss the planned agreement with SVBF prior to execution of the agreement between the parties.

Benefits of the Transaction

- VPRA preserves the 48-mile Shenandoah rail corridor between Front Royal and Broadway.

- VPRA gains exclusive right (but not duty) to introduce intercity and/or commuter rail service in the future.

- VPRA has option to acquire (at no or nominal cost) the purchased corridor if SVBF does not fulfill its duty to design and construct the recreational trail appropriately and timely.

- Development of the trail should begin right away while the feasibility of other rail activities (Excursion, Rail Biking, Short Line Freight, Commuter/Passenger) are investigated and pursued. ANY funds needed to investigate, plan or construct rail facilities would come from other sources, secured by the SVBF. None of the $35M could be spent on that.

- The SVBF agrees to work and partner with ALL interested parties to advance the trail. Railbanking the corridor and removing the rails, would likely take a year or more and would practically eliminate those other uses permanently.

- Norfolk Southern has advised that due to its upcoming merger, this transaction to acquire the corridor needs to be completed by May 2026, or it could be in jeopardy.

Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership

Partners

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

Rockingham County

Shenandoah County

Warren County

Broadway

Edinburg

Front Royal

Mount Jackson

New Market

Strasburg

Timberville

Toms Brook

Woodstock

Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley

Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River

Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition

December 11, 2025

Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board:

On behalf of the 17-member Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership, we are writing to urge you to **delay action** on the proposal unveiled at the December 9 Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting regarding the transfer of the Shenandoah Rail Trail project and its funding to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) for execution in partnership with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

This new proposal **lacks the necessary community and public scrutiny** that the Shenandoah Rail Trail project has received over five years, including formal local support and state feasibility documentation. Furthermore, the proposal appears to directly contradict VDOT's current Rail-With-Trail Assessment, which indicates that **co-locating rail alongside a trail would be prohibitively costly and complicated,** and would require easement acquisition for adjacent private land. Lastly, there is no demonstrated interest from rail operators that would make revitalization of the rail line economically viable.

We are also deeply concerned that by embracing a concept that mirrors the most expensive and complex option studied so far, **this rushed proposal would threaten the successful and timely development of the full 49-mile destination trail outcome** that the Valley's communities have long pursued. It is vital that this project, which is so consequential to Valley localities, residents, and the Commonwealth, is entrusted to a fully-vetted, credible entity that is publicly accountable.

Background on the Shenandoah Rail Trail

Beginning in 2019, a coalition of towns, counties, planning district commissions, and others in the Shenandoah Valley formed the unincorporated Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership to explore transforming an unused single-track railroad corridor from Broadway to Front Royal into a multi-use 49-mile trail reconnecting communities, businesses, schools, and many local cultural and historic resources.

While the last passenger train ran in this corridor in 1949, Norfolk Southern began in 1989 to close different sections of the line due to a lack of freight demand. Since 2020, when the entire corridor was put up for sale, no rail company has made an offer.

By 2021, all 12 localities along the 49-mile corridor had formally endorsed the Shenandoah Rail Trail. They are the towns of Front Royal, Strasburg, Toms Brook, Woodstock, Edinburg, Mount Jackson, New Market, Timberville, Broadway, and Warren County, Shenandoah County, and Rockingham County. We have also been supported by two planning district commissions (PDCs): the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. When presented with an alternative proposal to pursue a rail-with-trail on the corridor, each locality opted to maintain support for the Shenandoah Rail Trail instead of changing their position. Members of the CTB heard directly from these localities at the July 2025 meeting in Winchester, where the localities demonstrated unified support with a joint statement in favor of the Shenandoah Rail Trail.

Results of Previous and Current Studies

In a 2021 study, VDOT and DCR concluded that rail-to-trail conversion is feasible and that there is overwhelming support for the concept. The corridor's current right-of-way is wide enough to fit a 10-foot wide multi-use trail, and many trailheads and points of interest are already in place. In addition, although the existing bridges require repair, they have sufficient structural capacity to carry a trail.

In 2022, the General Assembly allocated up to $35 million for land acquisition, initial planning, and site development for the Shenandoah Rail Trail. In 2023, new budget language stipulated, "Any land acquisition by the Commonwealth as part of this trail's development shall not preclude the consideration of options to maintain rail transportation in the corridor."

To meet this requirement, VDOT has been conducting an assessment throughout 2025 to explore the inclusion of rail restoration as part of the trail project. On December 1, they released their cost estimates, which confirm that **restoration of the old rail line next to a trail would cost an estimated $687 million** (in 2025 dollars), reflecting the extensive engineering, construction, and additional private land right-of-way/easement acquisition required in order to safely include rail restoration in accordance with federal and state regulations for an FRA Class II rail line.

Throughout this entire assessment process (and in the Phase 3 document released on December 1), VDOT has stated that the next step would be public meetings and an online survey. **This public engagement has not yet taken place.** In addition, **the CTB has not been fully briefed on the latest phase of the assessment.** We imagine that the VPRA would now also need to be briefed on the current status of the assessment before granting $35 million in taxpayer dollars to a private organization for the purpose of a rail-with-trail project in this corridor.

None of the corridor's studies explored commuter rail. Further, **while restoring rail in this corridor does not appear in the Virginia Statewide Rail Plan, the plan does identify future rail-to-trail** in the corridor. We are not certain how the administration of a trail project fits within the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's core mission.

The Shenandoah Rail Trail: A Preservation Project through Railbanking

As noted in the 2021 feasibility study, **converting the rail line to a trail through railbanking would ensure that the corridor is preserved,** allowing for the interim use to be reversed if it is later determined that the line should be returned to rail use. Railbanking also satisfies the requirement in the General Assembly's budget stipulation for the $35 million that "this trail's development shall not preclude the consideration of options to maintain rail transportation in the corridor."

The Responsible Path Forward

We believe that **rail-to-trail is the most responsible, achievable, and cost-effective path** to preserve the potential for rail in the future while delivering quality-of-life and economic benefits to businesses and residents of the Shenandoah Valley, and the Commonwealth's own studies have supported this.

We are concerned that members of the CTB and the VPRA board have been asked to make a rushed decision on a newly unveiled proposal that has not received the kind of community and public scrutiny that should be required of such a large transfer of public funds to a private entity for the development of a transformational public project that will impact Virginians in the Shenandoah Valley for generations to come.

The allocation of $35 million in taxpayer funds warrants a transparent and deliberative process. We respectfully request that you delay action on this new proposal to ensure that both you and the public can thoroughly review the available options and provide meaningful input on this critical decision for the Valley's future.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Executive Committee
Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership

Brandon P. Davis

Ann W. Cundy

Brandy Hawkins Boies

Austin C. Garber II

Your source of independent thought and analysis on rail policy...

VRPI
VIRGINIA RAIL POLICY INSTITUTE

Public Comments from
Virginia Rail Policy Institute to the
Virginia Department of Transportation
on the disposition of the rail line between Broadway and Front Royal

April 8, 2025

Good evening, everyone.

I am Michael Testerman, and I serve as executive director of the Virginia Rail Policy Institute (VRPI). On behalf of our organization, I want to thank VDOT for hosting these Open House events to receive comments on the future of Norfolk Southern's inactive rail line north of here.

The non-profit Virginia Rail Policy Institute is made up of professionals from multiple fields of interest, including both freight and passenger rail, engineering, economics, law, academia, business, public-interest advocacy, and government. As example, the late Ray Pethtel served as a VRPI officer, following his distinguished career with the Virginia Department of Transportation. We regularly host programs related to rail transportation, maintain a website as a resource for rail policy research, reports and publications, and provide commentary and recommendations to decision-makers regarding key policies and projects—with a focus on improving and expanding rail service.

Our mission is to strengthen and improve public policy with respect to both freight and passenger rail in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through objective and rigorous research, publication, education, and outreach, VRPI strives to increase public understanding of freight and passenger rail and to promote public policies that will secure the future of rail transportation as a cost-effective, sustainable, and essential element of Virginia's 21st Century transportation system.

In the past, we have weighed in on the conversion of inactive rail lines to public trails; notably the Eastern Shore Railroad, in 2020. Before that, the development of the former Norfolk and Western main line through Farmville, into the High Bridge Trail.

Most recently, we have expended much attention and energy in calling for rail service to be reestablished between Harrisonburg and Front Royal. There is much support for this rail line to be converted into a Rail Trail. Our research—and a webinar with national experts—has shown that Rail *with* Trail development is appropriate in this instance.

Especially in this case, our emphasis is to draw the public's attention to the fact that rail lines are every bit as much, corridors of transportation—for public convenience and necessity—as are our highways. Modern development patterns make it very difficult to assemble transportation corridors from scratch. The highest and best use of this rail line is to be returned to service and to retain its valuable asset to the public as a robust transportation corridor.

Just over the horizon, this rail line offers Valley residents the opportunity to transfer freight from trucks back to trains.

Perhaps more importantly, reactivating this rail line will preserve the prospects for the future development of scheduled passenger rail for Harrisonburg residents and James Madison University students. JMU has a chance to avoid foreclosing the option of passenger rail that Longwood University experienced.

VRPI offers a best-practices approach for retaining and possibly improving all rail corridors, and recommends adoption of the following, as standard transportation policy, to address future rail abandonments and rails-to-trails proposals:

1. Current and/or inactive rail lines coming up for abandonment shall be rail banked;
2. If trails are to be developed on banked or abandoned rail lines, trails shall be designed, constructed, and operated in a manner that will permit future train operations, and;
3. For rail lines that are abandoned, there should be a set period of time, perhaps 25 years, during which the right-of-way shall not be fragmented or irreversibly repurposed.

The Virginia Rail Policy Institute says it's time for Virginia to evaluate every road-expansion plan to consider delegating mobility responsibilities to parallel rail corridors, regardless of the rail operators' current business model. Public investments can provide infrastructure improvements that the private sector may not be willing or able to make. Once improved and held to higher expectations, rail lines can help us move into a brighter, more sustainable future.

Thank you again for affording the opportunity for VRPI to present its views and advice.

Senator Frank W Nolen, PE

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Senate of Virginia
24th District
1975-1995

January 1, 2026

To : The Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board

Subject: Proposal concerning Transfer of Shenandoah Rail Trail Project to the VA Passenger Rail Authority

About thirty years ago the Norfolk Southern Railroad filed to abandon a portion of the Chesapeake and Western Railroad from Harrisonburg south to Staunton, Virginia.

There were few customers because of poor tracks and service. However, several businesses and individuals realized the importance of this railway in Augusta and Rockingham counties. Therefore, a group called Greater Shenandoah Valley Development Co (GSDC) was formed to purchase the tracks and right of way.

When the offer to purchase was made to NS, they filed with the ICC to withdraw the abandonment which the ICC denied. However, NS was able to withdraw the trackage from Harrisonburg to Pleasant Valley. The GSDC then pursued buying the remaining trackage of about 19 miles. After a lot of wrangling and negotiating, GSDC was able to purchase the short line and start operating as Shenandoah Valley Railroad.

Today SVRR carries about 2000 carloads of freight per year. In conjunction with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the ownership has invested funds in upgrading the rail bridges and roadbed. SVRR hauls freight most every business day. In the last decade, the carloads have increased 2-fold.

I believe the Shenandoah Rail Corridor from Broadway to Riverton Junction can achieve the same success with a similar private public partnership. The partnership between the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority as proposed by the Commonwealth is exactly what is needed to promote economic development as well as public recreation in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

I support the proposal before the Commonwealth Transportation Board. This project need not be delayed. If the rails are removed and the right of way is modified, it will be practically impossible to restore the rails in the future.

I strongly urge all involved to retain and make usable this important rail link between Broadway and Riverton Junction. I am willing to the extent of my ability to help make this happen.

Sincerely,

Frank W Nolen PE

Joesph A. Bosco
3121 Newark Street NW
Washington, DC 20008

January 1, 2026

To: Members of the VA Commonwealth Transportation Board

I served as special assistant to U.S. Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe in the first Nixon administration when America's rail passenger service was overhauled and consolidated, resulting in the curtailment of many lines. When Congress and the administration created Amtrak (originally called Railpax), it was stipulated that the right of way for any passenger rail line temporarily deactivated was to be preserved as a "transportation corridor" for possible future movement of people and goods. The concept of multi-modalism was a by-word of Secretary Volpe, the Nixon administration and Congress. Preserving the Shenandoah Valley's rail right-of-way for both rail transportation and compatible trail use would serve that purpose.

The volume of heavy truck traffic along Interstate 81 illustrates both the problem in Virginia and much of the nation, as well as the likely solution. Trucks, which have grown far larger in recent decades, now dominate many of America's highways even though, as is true with I-81, there is a viable rail alternative available. Transferring any quantity of the freight now carried on Interstate 81 to the still-extant rail line would save fuel and minimize environmental pollution, reduce costs to shippers, expand industry and agriculture logistics options, and reduce the highway safety dangers associated with the high volume of big truck traffic.

The revival of rail freight service and the inauguration of rail tourism will preserve this irreplaceable transportation asset in the Shenandoah Valley. Additionally, your vision to preserve access of the corridor for future passenger use would enable a Virginia renaissance of commuter and rail passenger service which could serve as a national model.

I strongly urge the Commonwealth Transportation Board to vote in favor of moving the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail Project to the VA Passenger Rail Authority. This transfer should be made without delay so this visionary project can proceed.

Sincerely,

Joeseph Bosco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Shenandoah County Farm Bureau
Shenandoahss@vafb.com
(540) 459-4019

Shenandoah County Farm Bureau Endorses "Rails With Trails"

Shenandoah County, September 7, 2023- The Shenandoah County Farm Bureau has announced its endorsement of the "Rails With Trails" initiative, while highlighting the vital role that potential rail service could play in the future in supporting the agricultural industry in Shenandoah County.

The "Rails With Trails" is a bold vision to preserve the Shenandoah Valley's heritage, re-empower the rail line as an economic engine, and create a full range of tourism and recreation opportunities. The state of Virginia is currently negotiating to purchase the 48-mile corridor stretching from Broadway to Front Royal currently owned by Norfolk Southern Railway Corp. Freight rail service on the line has been discontinued.

As the largest membership organization in the county, Shenandoah County Farm Bureau recognizes the positive impact that future rail could have on farmers and the agricultural industry in the county. The group supports fueling commerce in the region with a revitalized short line railroad.

"Shenandoah County Farm Bureau recognizes the potential impact that a short line railroad could have in supporting the agricultural industry, taking traffic off of I-81, and contributing to the economic viability of our county." Said Chuck French, President of Shenandoah County Farm Bureau. "While we recognize there are still questions to be answered, this concept allows us to maintain our valuable rail corridor for the future benefit of farmers and agribusinesses in our community."

With over 1,600 members, Shenandoah County Farm Bureau is the largest agricultural advocacy organization in the county. Shenandoah County Farm Bureau is a non-governmental, nonpartisan, voluntary organization committed to supporting agriculture and preserving the rural way of life.

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Shenandoah County Farm Bureau

January 19, 2025

Directors and Managers of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

Attn. Mr. Kevin Walker, CEO

Dear Mr. Walker,

On behalf of the Shenandoah County Farm Bureau, I would like to express to you our strong support for the proposed Rail and Trail initiative for our existing rail corridor here in Shenandoah County. I am proud to represent over 1600 Farm Bureau members here in the county. Our members represent the backbone of the county. Hard working Farmers, agribusiness owners, landowners and many individuals who respect and cherish our rural way of life. Agriculture is our county's number one industry.

Over the past two years we have discussed the two options slated for the corridor. The Rail to Trail (with the removal of the rail) and the Rail with Trail (with the revitalization of our rail system accompanied with a recreational trail). After talking to countless fellow farmers, agribusiness owners, the general public and landowners adjacent to the corridor, our board unanimously voted to support the latter. We strongly feel that a Rail with Trail will create a balance in our rural county by still allowing for the transport of agricultural goods and products to our many businesses along the corridor. In addition to this, the potential for a scenic passenger train along with the accompanying bike trail would provide business opportunities for local farmers and farm markets to sell locally raised products.

Please feel free to reach out to me if there is anything we can help you with regarding this important issue. I feel that with the right insight, planning and coordination with county, state and federal lawmakers this great concept can become a successful reality for our agricultural community.

Sincerely,

Chuck French
President, Shenandoah County Farm Bureau
Cell: 540-335-4770

P.O. Box 2277, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Virginia Poultry Federation Statement on Rails-with-Trails Proposal in Northern Shenandoah Valley

December 31, 2025

Virginia Poultry Federation (VPF) is a member of the Shenandoah Rail Corridor coalition that seeks to preserve the Norfolk Southern rail corridor in the Northern Shenandoah Valley for potential future use while advancing a recreational trail through the corridor. The proposal before the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) offers an opportunity to advance the trail concept together with preservation of the railroad corridor for potential future rail service.

VPF is the statewide trade association representing the poultry industry in Virginia. According to a recent economic study[i], the poultry and egg industry in Virginia employs as many as 20,451 people across the Commonwealth on family farms and at processing plants, feed mills, hatcheries, and other operations and generates an additional 39,907 jobs in supplier and ancillary industries. The study shows the industry has a direct economic impact of $8.3 billion and overall contribute $17.8 billion in economic activity in the Commonwealth. Much of this economic activity is in the Shenandoah Valley.

Rail infrastructure is critical to the Valley's poultry industry, delivering corn and soybean meal from the Mid-West. The Norfolk Southern line running north from Broadway, VA once delivered feed ingredients for poultry operations, and while the line is not currently in service, the coalition envisions reestablishing rail service that could benefit agriculture, tourism, and potentially passengers. We believe it would be a mistake to abandon permanently rail infrastructure that could potentially benefit commerce, including the poultry and ag sector in the future.

VPF asks the CTB to approve the proposal before it during its meeting on January 6, 2026.

Attributable: Hobey Bauhan, President, (540) 478-8199, hobey@vapoultry.com

Virginia Poultry Federation, founded in 1925, is a nonprofit trade association that promotes the interests of Virginia's poultry and egg industry through public and government relations and educational programs.

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[i] 2022 Poultry and Egg Economic Impact Study, Prepared for U.S. Poultry & Egg Association by John Dunham and Associates, Inc., Brooklyn, New York (https://www.poultryfeedsamerica.org/#:~:text

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Email: breeves@vacattlemen.org
Website: www.vacattlemen.org

Affiliated with The National Cattlemen's Beef Association

December 15, 2025

TO: Mr. DJ Stadtler, Executive Director, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
FROM: Brandon Reeves, Executive Director, Virginia Cattlemen's Association
RE: Preserving Shenandoah Valley Rail Corridor

Dear Mr. Stadtler:

Please find this letter of support in favor of preserving the Norfolk Southern rail corridor in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. We support the recent proposal at the Commonwealth Transportation Board to advance the Rails with Trails project by transferring funds to the VPRA. We believe that abandoning this infrastructure would be incredibly short-sighted given the potential this rail has to offer.

In Virginia, the production of beef cattle is the Commonwealth's second leading agricultural enterprise in terms of farm gate receipts and support of cattle is the state's largest use of private land in agricultural production. Virginia Cattlemen's Association works to help promote and protect the interests of cattle producers across the Commonwealth. The state's two largest cattle producing counties, Augusta and Rockingham, are located in the heart of the Valley.

The viability of our state's cattle industry depends on having diverse infrastructure and opportunities. We depend on having access to commodities that are not always available or grown in Virginia. We also depend on having the ability to ship our products to other markets in interstate commerce. This rail once helped provide those opportunities and has the potential to develop back into a vital transportation source.

The Virginia Cattlemen's Association supports efforts to maintain and build infrastructure to help sustain and grow our industry. It's time to move forward. We greatly appreciate the consideration of the VPRA, and the CTB in this matter.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Brandon Reeves
VCA Executive Director

December 31, 2025

Sub: Letter of support

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of Georges Inc., I would like to support the effort to preserve the railroad line running from Broadway, VA to Riverton Junction, VA. This line served our feed mill located in Mount Jackson, VA until 2013 when Norfolk Southern discontinued service. Rail infrastructure is vital to the economic viability of the poultry industry; especially in the Shenandoah Valley where the majority of the feedstuffs utilized are shipped from other parts of the country. George's Inc. enjoys the competitive advantage of rail service at all of its feed mills. The Mount Jackson location is the only mill within our network that does not have rail service presently.

It is my understanding that the Commonwealth Transportation Board will be voting to transfer control of the Shenandoah Rail Corridor to the VA Passenger Rail Authority. We would like to state our support for this vote to transfer control and reaffirm our support of potentially restoring freight service to the region.

It is my understanding that there are several short line railroads interested in leasing the line and resuming service. This would be of great interest to George's because we could ship via CSX at Strasburg or Norfolk Southern in Broadway. In addition, we could reduce the dependence on trucking for feed mill operations. We appreciate your consideration of our industry needs.

Sincerely,

Boone Hardy

Boone Hardy
Director of Grain
George's Inc
P.O. Drawer G
Springdale, AR 72765-2030

THE VALLEY FERTILIZER & CHEMICAL CO., INC.

201 VALLEY ROAD
MT. JACKSON, VIRGINIA 22842
PHONE (540) 477-3121
FAX (540) 477-3123
(800) 571-3121

December 15, 2025

DJ Stadtler & Members of the Board
Executive Director
VPRA
919 East Main Street, Ste 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

Director Stadtler and Members of the Board:

Valley Fertilizer unequivocally supports the recent proposal at the Commonwealth Transportation Board to advance the Rails with Trails project by transferring funds to the VPRA.

Our Company is very interested in utilizing rail service directly adjacent to our headquarters in Mt. Jackson, Virginia. For years, we had relied on Norfolk Southern's rail service for more affordable freight rates than trucking to deliver our products to our customers until we were given 30 days' notice of the cessation of the freight service in March of 2014. We are eager to restart our fertilizer transload site in Shenandoah County. Rail service would save us over $200,000 in shipping costs annually; enough to pass those savings to our local farmers.

Our Company was a leading and founding partner in the Shenandoah Rail Corridor coalition in 2022, and we are excited to finally see movement on this project. We urge the VPRA, as well as the CTB, to act quickly to protect this vital infrastructure from the abandonment process by voting to adopt the Rails with Trails vision. We also reaffirm our support for the original Rails with Trails proposal and its cost estimates put forth by our coalition.

We support the Commonwealth's shift towards a public/private partnership with our brother organization, The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. Our relationship with this foundation has always been rewarding, and they have a proven track record of success in handling large preservation projects on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Virginia has spent enough time studying this project, it's time to move forward. We greatly appreciate the consideration of the VPRA, and the CTB in this matter.

Sincerely,
VALLEY FERTILIZER & CHEMICAL CO.

William T. Holtzman
Vice President

A Resolution of the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce in Support of the Study of all potential uses of the rail corridor from the Towns of Broadway to Front Royal

WHEREAS The Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce represents 525 businesses, non-profit agencies and local governments within Shenandoah County; promoting economic opportunity and growth for local businesses.

WHEREAS The Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership and the Shenandoah Rail Corridor have been formed to explore trail and rail feasibility; and

WHEREAS The proposed location presents an opportunity to create a world-class trail, rail or combination of both providing bicycle, pedestrian, train (rail excursion, freight rail), and equestrian access to extraordinary landscape views and several important Civil War battlefields.

WHEREAS The proposed ideas would be a catalyst for tourism as well as non- tourism economic growth, not only within the participating localities, but surrounding communities as well.

WHEREAS The aforementioned trail would offer the option of safe alternative transportation within and between the communities to a broad segment of the local population, for commuting to work and school, thereby improving the quality of life; and

WHEREAS Access to the Right-of-way which runs through Shenandoah County be a topic of utmost importance in the discussion of either alternative.

WHEREAS The Virginia General Assembly directed the Virginia Department of Transportation to study the rail and trail feasibility;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the Board of Directors of the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce supports the continued efforts to explore the feasibility of both options with access to the right-of-way of utmost importance and advocating right of way access be no more burdensome than current railroad regulation. Conclusively the opportunity to create either option shall be in the best interests of the members of the chamber and our community.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 21 day of May 2024.

Stuart Freakley, Chair
Board of Directors

Sharon Baroncelli, President/CEO

WHOLESOME
COMPANIES
FOODS · ENERGY · TRANSPORTATION · LOGISTICS
Est. 1964

986 South Ox Road – Edinburg, VA 22824

January 2, 2026

To: Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board

Wholesome Energy is an affiliate of Wholesome Foods, a family-owned business in Shenandoah County that has been in operation since 1964. Since 2008, Wholesome Energy has been in the business of processing waste fats and vegetable oils into products used in biofuel production as well as feed products for the poultry, swine, and pet food industries.

Our company's growth is limited by the availability of the raw products we need. Currently we ship raw material by truck from as far as 500 miles. Our research has shown that our transportation costs would be significantly reduced if we could ship via rail locally and we have already identified a transload location. We currently process 2 million pounds of product per week, with rail access, we will expand production which will help the local economy and remove trucks from crowded interstates.

Additionally, I serve on the Economic Development Council for Shenandoah County's Chamber of Commerce. Once the Chamber understood there was an option to preserve rail and recognized the powerful catalyst this would provide for business growth, we issued a resolution supporting "efforts to explore the feasibility of both options".

Our company fully supports the Shenandoah Rail Corridors' efforts to preserve our local rail infrastructure as well as construct a recreational trail within the right of way. We urge you to support the Commonwealth's proposal to move forward with rail preservation to enable the return of local rail service and development of a recreational trail. Please do not delay this important action.

Sincerely,

Nathan E. Pence

Nathan E. Pence

Vice President, Wholesome Companies

HOLTZMAN OIL CORP.
P.O. Box 8 Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842 540.477.3131

December 15, 2025

DJ Stadtler & Members of the Board
Executive Director
VPRA
919 East Main Street, Ste 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

Director Stadtler and Members of the Board:

Holtzman Oil and Holtzman Propane unequivocally support the recent proposal at the Commonwealth Transportation Board to advance the Rails with Trails project by transferring funds to the VPRA.

Our Company is very interested in utilizing rail service directly adjacent to our headquarters in Mt. Jackson and Strasburg, Virginia. For years, we have relied on the trucking industry alone to deliver our products to our customers, and have long requested rail service, not just from Norfolk Southern, but also from our county. We are eager to locate our propane transload site in Shenandoah County, but due to the stalling of this project, we are forced to consider other locations.

Our Company was a leading and founding partner in the Shenandoah Rail Corridor coalition in 2022, and we are excited to finally see movement on this project. We urge the VPRA, as well as the CTB, to act quickly to protect this vital infrastructure from the abandonment process by voting to adopt the Rails with Trails vision. We also reaffirm our support for the original Rails with Trails proposal and its cost estimates put forth by our coalition.

We support the Commonwealth's shift towards a public/private partnership with our brother organization, The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. Our relationship with this foundation has always been rewarding, and they have a proven track record of success in handling large preservation projects on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Virginia has spent enough time studying this project, it's time to move forward. We greatly appreciate the consideration of the VPRA, and the CTB in this matter.

Sincerely,

HOLTZMAN OIL CORP.

William B. Holtzman
Chairman of the Board

HOLTZMAN
PROPANE

Main Office/Payments
P.O. Box 7
Mount Jackson, Virginia 22842

December 15, 2025

DJ Stadtler & Members of the Board
Executive Director
VPRA
919 East Main Street, Ste 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

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Sincerely,

HOLTZMAN PROPANE

William T. Holtzman
President

Houff Corporation

97 Railside Drive

Weyers Cave Virginia

February 7, 2023

To Whom it may concern

Subject: Transload/Shortline Railways

Houff Corporation and their sister company IDM Trucking relocated their fertilizer and transportation businesses to Weyers Cave in 1993. The purchased property bordered the proposed abandoned rail of Norfolk Southern Railroad. Houff Corporation had no intention of using the rail at the time we purchased the property in 1990. By the time we began construction in 1993 we understood that the rail was being revitalized and would operate as the Shenandoah Valley Railroad short line. Upon receipt of this new information, we altered our plans to allow for the new fertilizer facility to be rail served.

After several years of utilizing the rail for our own fertilizer products, we realized we had an asset at our back door that we could use for other local businesses that were not located directly on rail. Thus the transload division of Houff Corporation was born. Today we operate three terminals within the state, two on short line railroads, and one on CSX. We will exceed 4000 cars of volume through these terminals delivering to businesses within 100 miles of our terminals. These businesses did not have rail options previously.

My purpose in recounting our history is to ask that you not look at rail viability based only on the traditional and historical use of rail with 1000 car volumes, and unit trains running directly into industrial complexes. Our 4000 car volume has a few larger users but predominantly is made up of a number of 30- 200 car customers of various commodities. These goods are as diverse as the industries within the region ranging from agricultural goods to hazardous materials and were transported entirely by truck before our conversion to transload. These customers did not have rail options without transload and are located some distance off of the actual rail.

The economics of rail trail or freight rail for the northern Shenandoah Valley needs to be thoroughly vetted with open eyes before decisions are made. Both avenues will be expensive. While the aesthetics of a rail trail sound appealing, can the Commonwealth afford such a luxury when we struggle to maintain our highway infrastructure?

I am confident the type of rail freight that we have acquired in our transload operations is saving our highways and having significant positive impact to the economy. When looking at economics of rail freight please consider transload and widen your economic impact circle to industry 50-100 mile out from the rail corridor in question.

Best Regards,



Neil Houff

President

Houff Corporation

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Media Contact:
Tom Cox
Virginia Museum of Transportation
(540) 947-5850

For Immediate Release January 2, 2026

VMT SUPPORTS "RAILS-WITH-TRAILS" PROJECT

January 2, 2026 -- The Virginia Museum of Transportation, Inc. is announcing its full support for the Shenandoah Rail Corridor's "Rails-WITH-Trails" project, which would preserve rail usage along the route known as the Norfolk Southern "B-line" running from Front Royal to Broadway, Virginia.

"Rails-With-Trails" has gained significant attention with the Virginia Department of Transportation. It aims to determine the best use for this nearly 50-mile long unused rail corridor in the Shenandoah Valley, spanning three counties and nine towns.

This particular railroad is too historically significant as a transportation asset to allow the trail project to move forward without preserving the rail infrastructure as well.

The uncertainty of this line has gone on too long. Every passing year sees economic loss and more rail deterioration. Rails WITH trails have been a significant success across the country. The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad is one such example. Rail bikes are overwhelmingly popular in every area they are utilized in. West Virginia's rail bikes are fast becoming one of the state's biggest tourist attractions. Trails can co-exist with rails successfully and are an economic driver of positive consequence.

Virginia needs to catch up with other states with successful historic rail excursions. They not only create jobs and drive millions of dollars in tourism revenue but also create a positive image for states and communities. Recent historic steam excursions pulled by our #611 steam locomotive in Rockbridge and Augusta counties have brought millions of dollars to the state through the 20,000 plus visitors who came to ride over only five weekends. Virginia the beautiful never looks better than from excursions, rail bikes, and trails.

As Virginia's Official Transportation Museum and as curators of Virginia's Official Steam Locomotive J-Class #611, the Virginia Museum of Transportation and its Board of Directors stand behind and support

the common sense efforts of the Shenandoah Corridor group as well as the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation as the lead managing partner of this important resource. We ask the State Secretary of Transportation Shep Miller, III and the Commonwealth Transportation Board to support this initiative when they vote on January 6.

# # # # #



Railroad Investment Corporate Holdings, Inc.
55 John Allman Lane
Sylva, North Carolina 28779

December 15, 2025

DJ Stadtler
Executive Director
Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
919 East Main Street, Suite 2400
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Mr. Stadtler,

Railroad Investment Corporate Holdings, Inc. (RICH) is pleased to support the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's plan to partner with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation to acquire the Norfolk Southern Railway "B" Line (former Manassas Gap Railroad) for a rail-with-trail attraction. We would also like to introduce ourselves as a prospective operator for this corridor.

RICH currently operates the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad located in Romney, West Virginia. Since acquiring the Potomac Eagle in 2018, ridership has tripled due to RICH's experience and strategic investments in marketing, customer experience, and special events. Our scenic excursion trains run from April through December and highlight the natural beauty of the area in which we operate. Additionally, our North Pole Express holiday events delight thousands of riders annually.

RICH owners Robert and Celeste Franzen also operate Steam Services of America, a longtime nationwide provider of historic railroad equipment repair, operation, and consulting services. Between the Potomac Eagle and SSOA, RICH employs 80 full and part-time employees.

In August of 2024, RICH submitted a comprehensive, 227-page business proposal to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Transportation Preservation Corporation to operate tourist rail, freight rail, and railbike adventures on the corridor. The RICH proposal team carries an extensive resume of railroading experience with a focus on building and developing tourist rail operations. We have spent considerable time in the region assessing the infrastructure and engaging with local leaders, potential customers, and the public.

We recognize the ongoing discussion on how best to make use of the line. While some argue that its current dormancy signals a lack of viability or that rail-with-trail would be too costly, many dormant

rail lines have been successfully revitalized by short lines and regional railroads. Although the recent Shenandoah Valley Rail-with-Trail Assessment by the Virginia Department of Transportation estimates a high cost for rebuilding, RICH believes that restoring the infrastructure for safe excursion trains, railbikes, and low-frequency freight is achievable at a much lower cost.

Our proposal embraces a parallel bicycle trail and highlights the synergistic benefits of combining robust rail operations with a trail. A coexisting railroad and bike trail can create a "1+1=3" scenario, offering joint events, educational collaborations with neighboring Civil War battlefields, and combined advocacy for grants and community support.

RICH strongly supports the efforts of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Transportation Preservation Corporation and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation to advance a combined Rail and Trail solution for the NS "B" Line. We believe this alternative will provide the surrounding communities with the best of both worlds, creating a world-class attraction for visitors.

We are excited by the opportunity to partner with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Transportation Preservation Corporation, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and neighboring communities to rebuild the railroad and support a parallel bicycle trail. We look forward to collaborating on this exciting endeavor.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Franzen
President
Railroad Investment Corporate Holdings, Inc.
c: 828-226-5214
rfranzen@potomaceagle.com

SMS Rail Service, Inc.
Post Office Box 711
Bridgeport, NJ 08014
Phone: (856) 467-4800
Fax: (856) 467-2121
www.smsrail.com

December 15, 2025

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
919 East Main Street, Suite 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Shenandoah Rail Corridor
Vision for Freight, Tourism, and Corridor Revitalization

Dear Members of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority:

SMS Rail Service, Inc. ("SMS") appreciates the opportunity to share its vision for the revitalization of approximately 50 miles of rail infrastructure in the Shenandoah Valley, extending from Front Royal, Virginia, through Strasburg to Broadway. Last year, SMS began evaluating the feasibility and long-term potential of restoring this important rail asset and has submitted to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Transportation Preservation Corporation ("NSVTPC") its Proposal for operation of the corridor.

Based on our operational analysis, infrastructure review, and experience revitalizing underutilized rail corridors, SMS is confident that utilizing the "rails with trails concept, this line can be successfully returned to service in a manner that supports freight transportation, regional economic development, and public-facing rail and recreational activities. We believe the corridor presents a unique opportunity to advance Virginia's rail objectives while delivering meaningful benefits to the communities it serves.

SMS Rail's approach emphasizes a balanced, multi-use model, including:

- The restoration of reliable freight rail service to support agricultural, industrial, and commercial shippers in the Shenandoah Valley
- The development of excursion train operations that highlight the region's history, natural beauty, and cultural assets
- The introduction of rail bike operations to expand recreational access, attract tourism, and promote public engagement with rail infrastructure

Together, these elements form a sustainable operating strategy designed to enhance corridor utilization, reduce highway congestion, and create long-term value for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

SMS Rail recognizes the critical role the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority plays in protecting and advancing the Commonwealth's rail network. We are committed to working collaboratively with VPRA, NSVTPC, local governments, and regional stakeholders to ensure that any future

operations are compatible with Virginia's broader transportation goals and preserve long-term corridor flexibility.

We believe this project represents a rare opportunity to reactivate dormant infrastructure while advancing economic development, tourism, and rail connectivity in the Shenandoah Valley. SMS Rail would welcome the opportunity to discuss our analysis and operating philosophy in greater detail and explore how this corridor can complement VPRA's strategic vision.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration.

Kind regards,

Jim Pfeiffer, Chief Operating Officer
(856) 467-4800, ext. 303
jpfeiffer@smsrail.com

/JRP
Enclosure: Press Release

Stone Consulting, Inc.

December 15, 2025

D. J. Stadtler, Executive Director VPRA
and Members of the Board
919 East Main Street, Suite 2400
Richmond VA 23219

Subject: Letter of Support

Gentlemen:

Stone Consulting has strongly supported the preservation and development of the Shenandoah corridor since we first examined it at the request of Norfolk Southern in 2000. Only a quirk in historic railroad management and resulting mergers prevented this rail line from becoming a far more significant corridor for economic development in the Commonwealth. As an independent shortline connecting to NS and CSX for competitive access, it has a future.

We have become champions nationally for encouraging public ownership of corridors for development of rail WITH trail, and consider this to be the most outstanding example of that dual potential. Our own research and development on this corridor has proven both the impacts from the trail, and develop equal or more economic impacts from allowing the rail corridor to be developed and managed by a viable shortline railroad entity that specializes in both freight and excursion operations.

We continue to support the rail with trail concept, and remain genuinely puzzled as to why VDOT has overcomplicated the project, unnecessarily ballooned the projected costs, and ignored their own study of 19 pages of existing and successful rail with trail operations in their own Phase II report index. We support any attempt to move this to an agency and nonprofit that can balance the needs of the trail interests along with promoting and stabilizing the agricultural, manufacturing and tourism potential of the entire 50-mile corridor. Combining VPRA and the Battlefields Foundation is a viable methodology to achieve both goals of rail and trail.

Our firm has spent 25 years working on this project, this time with a proven partner and concept, and it's time to move it forward.

Sincerely,

Stone Consulting, Inc.

Randall D. Gustafson
Vice President Operations

RDG/fsc

324 Pennsylvania Avenue West, P.O. Box 306, Warren PA 16365
(814) 726-9870 tel (814) 726-9855 fax stone@stoneconsulting.com

VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY, LLC

Valley Railroad Company supports transferring rail-with-trail funding to VPRA, reaffirms support for rail service in Shenandoah County.

DJ Stadtler, Executive Director VPRA
& Members of the Board

919 East Main Street, Ste 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

In response to the December 9th Commonwealth Transportation Board workshop, Valley Railroad Company, LLC unequivocally supports the proposal to transfer the money for the Norfolk Southern B-Line extension from VDOT to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA). We believe that VPRA is better equipped to handle rail-centric projects and negotiations such as this. We have applied our combined 80 years of railroad track construction experience to reviewing Phase 3 of VDOT's Shenandoah Valley Rail-With-Trail assessment. **In no scenario would it cost $305 million to fix 49 miles of track in its present condition**. Rather, our company stands by the findings in our coalition's track report from Stone Consulting that the track, which was last used in 2020, can be fixed for approximately $18 million or less over the five-year period. In our professional opinion, this gross inflation of costs appears to be an attempt by a special interest group of trail supporters to delay or even sand bag this critical infrastructure project and waste even more taxpayer money. We underscore Transportation Secretary Miller's comments regarding VDOT not building this project; *"We're not going to build a trail, VDOT's not going to do that."* **We support the Commonwealth's shift towards a public-private partnership with our brother organization, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.**

Our team attended the rail-with-trail community input meeting following Phase 1 in our hometown of Woodstock, Virginia on April 15th and we were excited by the outpouring of support for the return of rail service. Our headquarters is just outside of town and our local small family-owned business is uniquely positioned in the center of the 49 miles to cover the track needs of the Shenandoah Rail Corridor and future and existing customers alike. **A project of this magnitude would grow our company by adding 30 local, good paying jobs to the 11 we've already created in our 15-year history in Woodstock.**

We also reaffirm our support of the original rail-with-trail proposal and it's cost estimates put forth by our Shenandoah Rail Corridor coalition and stand ready to assist the selected operator and future customers with our track services. **Virginia has spent enough time studying this project and its Transportation Board must act swiftly towards a purchase for a Shenandoah Valley Rail-With-Trail.**

Sincerely,

Derek Burgess
540-335-1043
dburgessvrc@gmail.com

P.O. Box 2277, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Virginia Poultry Federation Statement on Rails-with-Trails Proposal in Northern Shenandoah Valley

December 31, 2025

Virginia Poultry Federation (VPF) is a member of the Shenandoah Rail Corridor coalition that seeks to preserve the Norfolk Southern rail corridor in the Northern Shenandoah Valley for potential future use while advancing a recreational trail through the corridor. The proposal before the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) offers an opportunity to advance the trail concept together with preservation of the railroad corridor for potential future rail service.

VPF is the statewide trade association representing the poultry industry in Virginia. According to a recent economic study[i], the poultry and egg industry in Virginia employs as many as 20,451 people across the Commonwealth on family farms and at processing plants, feed mills, hatcheries, and other operations and generates an additional 39,907 jobs in supplier and ancillary industries. The study shows the industry has a direct economic impact of $8.3 billion and overall contribute $17.8 billion in economic activity in the Commonwealth. Much of this economic activity is in the Shenandoah Valley.

Rail infrastructure is critical to the Valley's poultry industry, delivering corn and soybean meal from the Mid-West. The Norfolk Southern line running north from Broadway, VA once delivered feed ingredients for poultry operations, and while the line is not currently in service, the coalition envisions reestablishing rail service that could benefit agriculture, tourism, and potentially passengers. We believe it would be a mistake to abandon permanently rail infrastructure that could potentially benefit commerce, including the poultry and ag sector in the future.

VPF asks the CTB to approve the proposal during its meeting on January 6, 2026.

Attributable: Hobey Bauhan, President, (540) 478-8199, hobey@vapoultry.com

Virginia Poultry Federation, founded in 1925, is a nonprofit trade association that promotes the interests of Virginia's poultry and egg industry through public and government relations and educational programs.

####

[i] 2022 Poultry and Egg Economic Impact Study, Prepared for U.S. Poultry & Egg Association by John Dunham and Associates, Inc., Brooklyn, New York (https://www.poultryfeedsamerica.org/#:~:text

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

TONY O. WILT
POST OFFICE BOX 1425
HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA 22803

THIRTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
LABOR AND COMMERCE
AGRICULTURE, CHESAPEAKE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
PUBLIC SAFETY

December 12, 2025

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board of Directors
Truist Place, 919 East Main St., Suite 2400
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chair Robinson and Board Members:

It is my understanding at your upcoming December 16 VPRA Board meeting, you will be asked to accept a proposal directing the VPRA to receive Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail (SVRT) funds from the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), allocated by the General Assembly. The proposal further instructs VPRA to transfer those funds to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation for the purchase of the decommissioned Norfolk Southern rail line, with any remaining funds available for engineering, planning, and trail construction. I strongly urge the VPRA Board to **delay this action**.

Over more than a decade, there has been broad community interest in returning this inactive rail corridor from Broadway to Front Royal to productive use—most commonly discussed as a recreational trail. As momentum grew, I was proud to sponsor the 2020 budget amendment directing DCR to study the feasibility and benefits of the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail.

Over the years since the concept for this project was first brought to my attention, I have remained open to various ideas for the use of the corridor and have not taken a firm position regarding which option might ultimately be best. However, the most recent VDOT study estimates that the rail-with-trail alternative would cost more than four times the trail-only option - nearly $700 million. In addition, the rail-with-trail scenario introduces significant safety and engineering challenges and would require acquiring additional right-of-way from adjoining landowners. Furthermore, while statements have been made about interested parties, I have seen nothing publicly that indicates a strong or serious commitment from any rail operator to develop and run the line, or a robust customer base to support freight operations. This raises serious questions about the economic viability of restoring rail service. Overall, the latest study points to the trail option as a feasible path forward and the one with the broadest community support.

The same VDOT study also committed to a public hearing process and further opportunities for community input following its release. Yet references to those hearings have recently been removed from VDOT's website, and it appears the Department no longer intends to carry out this public engagement as promised.

Instead, at the December 9 CTB meeting, the Secretary's office presented a new proposal that has not been publicly vetted, conflicts with the findings of the latest study, allows no opportunity for competing proposals, and asks both CTB and VPRA to act within a month with inadequate transparency or public engagement. Most concerning is that the proposal seems to require that the existing rail infrastructure remain in place, effectively forcing a rail-with-trail scenario that, as previously outlined based on the study, poses steep hurdles to success. This provision alone may function as a poison pill and could prevent any trail infrastructure from ever being developed.

Because this proposal involves significant public funds and could determine the fate of a major corridor crossing multiple communities, I respectfully remind the Board of your responsibility to be wise stewards of taxpayer dollars. Taking steps to advance a plan that contradicts the Commonwealth's own study, limits public input, and locks the state into an infeasible and enormously costly configuration would not meet that standard.

For these reasons, I again urge the VPRA Board to delay any formal action under this framework. I am similarly calling on the CTB to delay taking any action to advance this proposal forward.

The most responsible immediate step is for VDOT to complete the public hearings promised as part of the study. Once that process concludes, if the consensus favors an entity outside of the Commonwealth managing or owning the corridor, a competitive RFP-style process should follow so that all qualified organizations may submit proposals. CTB or another state entity could then select the option that is most viable and most likely to succeed.

Thank you for your careful consideration and for your service to the Commonwealth. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at your convenience. My cell phone is 540-442-0121.

Sincerely,



Tony Wilt

Miller, Shep (GOV)

From: Miller, Shep (GOV)
Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 7:53 AM
To: Miller, Shep (GOV)
Subject: FW: RAILS with a trail

From: Justin Pence <DelJPence@house.virginia.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 7:04 PM
To: Miller, Shep (GOV) <shep.miller@governor.virginia.gov>
Cc: kwalker@svbf.net
Subject: RAILS with a trail

Good evening Secretary Miller,

Just wanted to pass on my support for the rails with trail plan that the CTB is voting on tomorrow. My statement released is included. I believe the securing of the right-of-way through Shenandoah County and the adjoining counties is imperative to the future of economic development and agricultural sustainability.

Public Statement:
I believe that attempting to develop both the rail and trail options is the best use for the corridor. This gives both sides what they want and protects the right-of-way at the lowest cost to the taxpayer once private investments are factored in. The rail and trail project would bring an important new recreational and tourism opportunity while revitalizing an important economic resource for local business and industry.

Regards

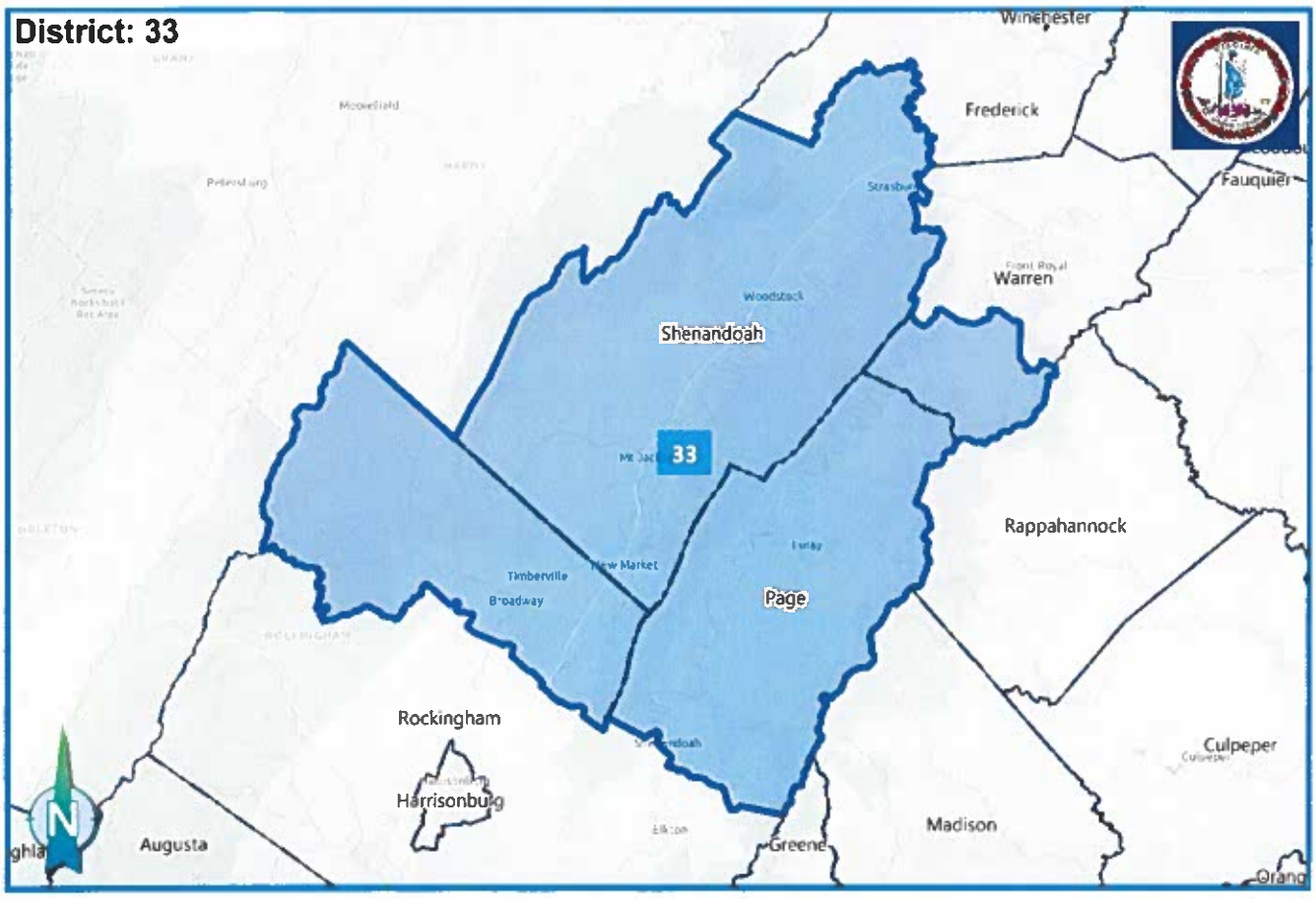
Justin Pence
Delegate Elect

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device

District Map

House District 33

Counties of Page, Rockingham (part), Shenandoah, and Warren (part)



Please use the "Who's My Legislator" tool to see all representatives for your address.

Virginia

VISIT

1000 Bank Street
Richmond, VA 23219

CONTACT

(804) 698-1788

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Director's Report

January 2026

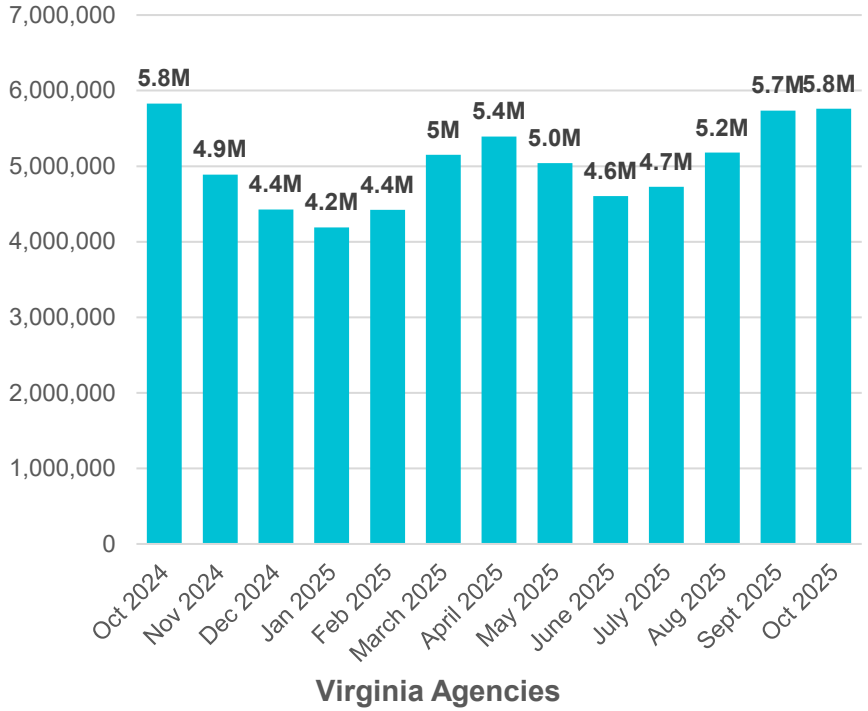
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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

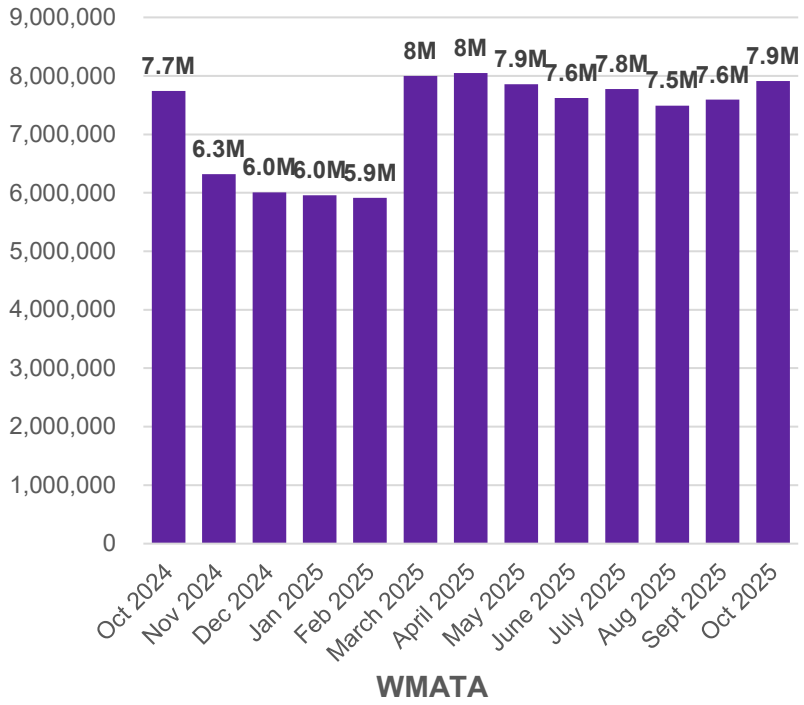


Statewide Transit Ridership

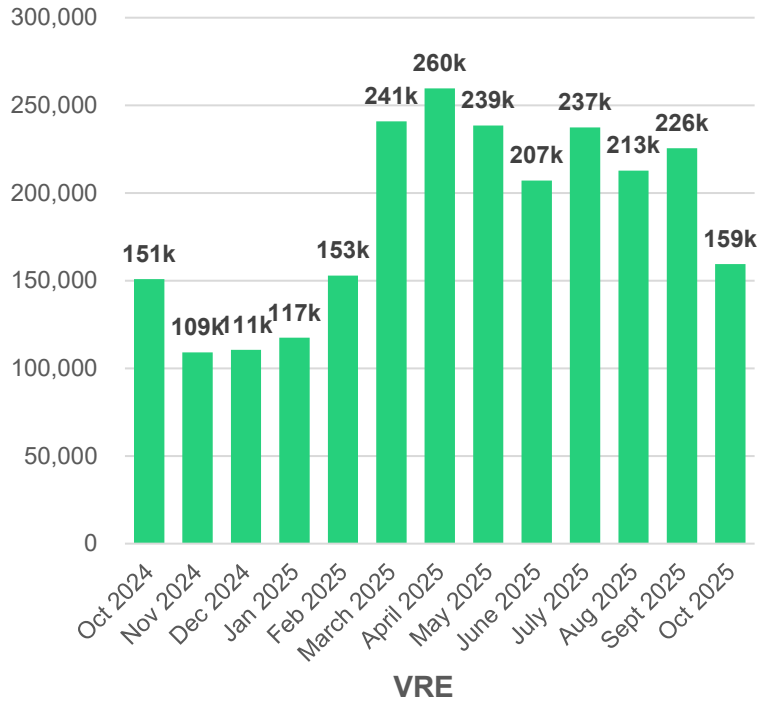
Statewide Transit Ridership – October 2024 to October 2025



Virginia Agencies



WMATA

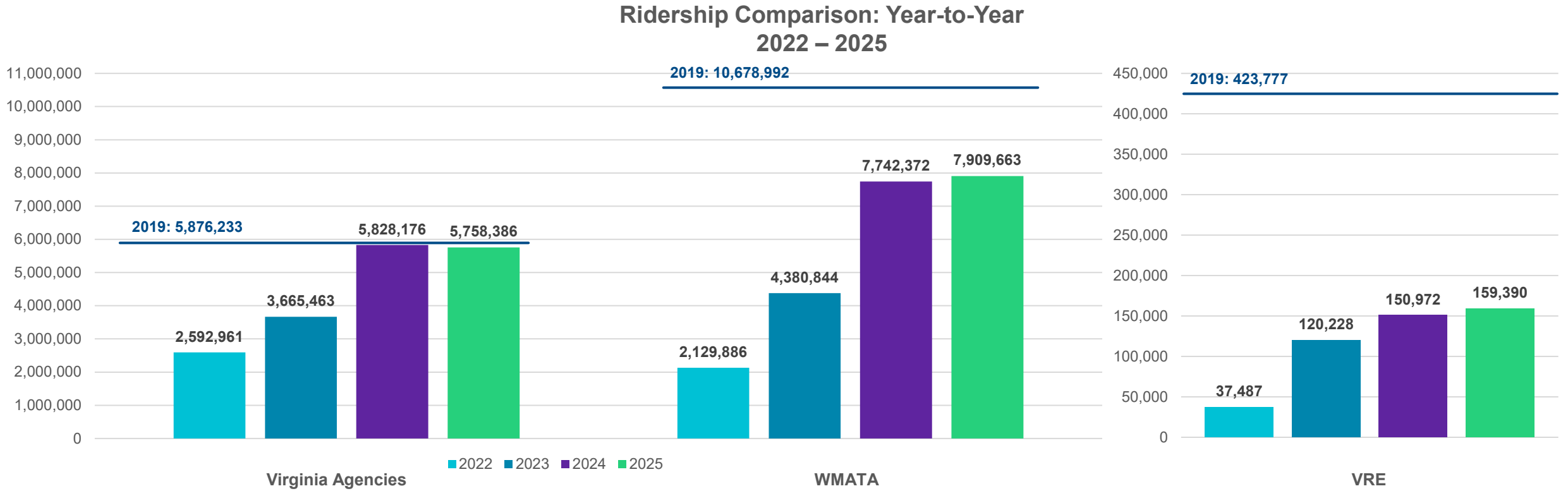


VRE

Agencies	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Total*
Virginia Agencies	5,828,176	4,889,995	4,427,193	4,190,344	4,422,095	5,149,919	5,392,036	5,038,705	4,605,627	4,726,900	5,178,330	5,735,065	5,758,386	59,514,595
VRE	150,972	109,026	110,625	117,466	152,882	240,794	259,585	238,518	207,130	237,363	212,798	225,504	159,390	2,271,081
WMATA	7,742,372	6,320,579	6,005,122	5,957,138	5,915,679	8,001,329	8,047,711	7,856,235	7,621,634	7,772,694	7,491,352	7,591,794	7,909,663	86,490,930
All Agencies + VRE + WMATA	**13,721,520**	**11,319,600**	**10,542,940**	**10,264,948**	**10,490,656**	**13,392,042**	**13,699,332**	**13,133,458**	**12,434,391**	**12,736,957**	**12,882,480**	**13,552,363**	**13,827,439**	**148,276,606**

*Last 12 Months

Statewide Ridership Comparison: October Year-to-Year



Mode	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025 vs 2022	2025 vs 2023	2025 vs 2024
Virginia Agencies	2,592,961	3,665,463	5,828,176	5,758,386	122%	57%	-1%
VRE	37,487	120,228	150,972	159,390	325%	33%	6%
WMATA	2,129,886	4,380,844	7,742,372	7,909,663	271%	81%	2%
All Agencies + VRE + WMATA	**4,760,334**	**8,166,535**	**13,721,520**	**13,827,439**	**190%**	**69%**	**1%**

Virginia Breeze Ridership – October

In October 2025, ridership on VA Breeze routes totaled 8,342 which was:

- 292% higher than original estimates, and
- 14% higher than October 2024

In October 2025, the VA Breeze contributed to a reduction of 422 metric tons of CO_2 equivalent emissions.

Valley Flyer:

- Ridership – 15% higher than October 2024
- Farebox Rev. – 15% higher than October 2024

Piedmont Express:

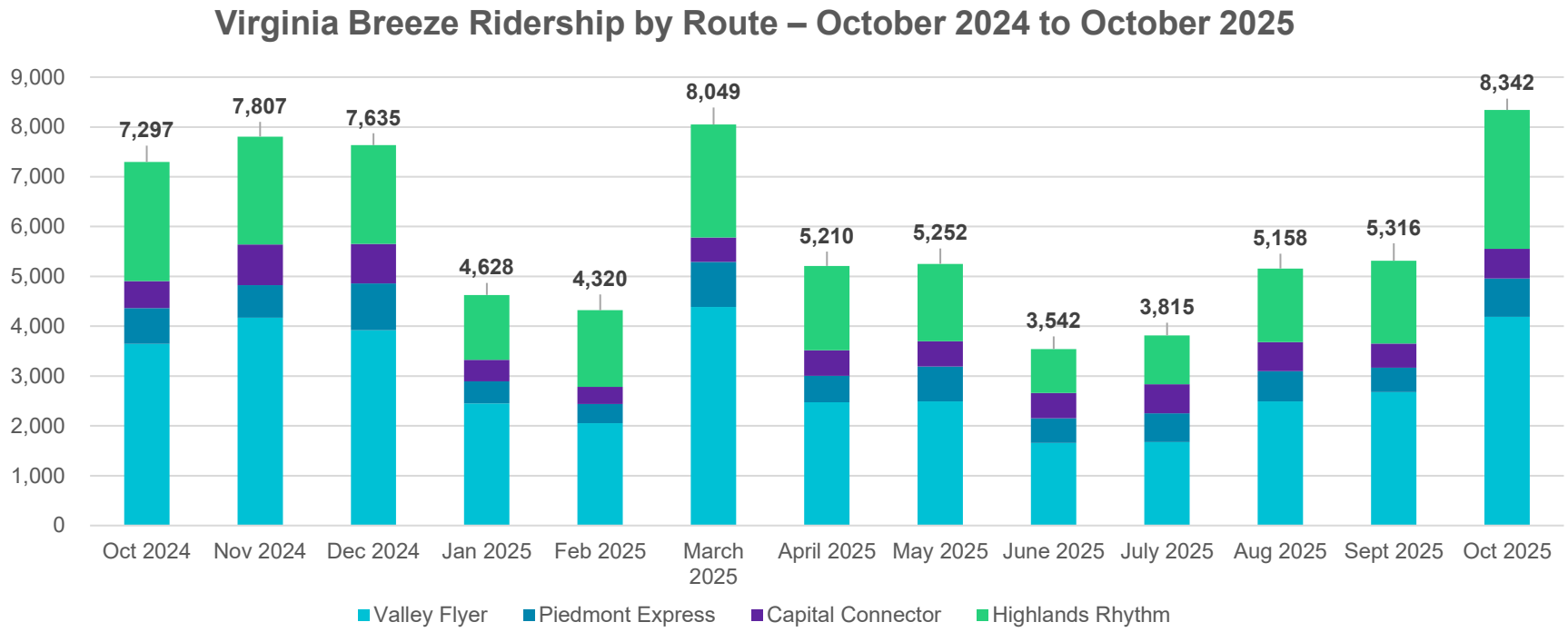
- Ridership – 7% higher than October 2024
- Farebox Rev. – 8% higher than October 2024

Capital Connector:

- Ridership – 10% higher than October 2024
- Farebox Rev. – 8% higher than October 2024

Highlands Rhythm:

- Ridership – 17% higher than October 2024
- Farebox Rev – 10% higher than October 2024



Route	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Total*
Valley Flyer	3,645	4,171	3,920	2,448	2,057	4,385	2,475	2,489	1,655	1,675	2,493	2,676	4,189	34,633
Piedmont Express	717	656	940	448	384	908	531	702	499	577	606	490	767	7,508
Capital Connector	545	816	790	432	345	490	513	508	504	585	581	484	598	6,646
Highlands Rhythm	2,390	2,164	1,985	1,300	1,534	2,266	1,691	1,553	884	978	1,478	1,666	2,788	20,287
All Routes	**7,297**	**7,807**	**7,635**	**4,628**	**4,320**	**8,049**	**5,210**	**5,252**	**3,542**	**3,815**	**5,158**	**5,316**	**8,342**	**69,074**

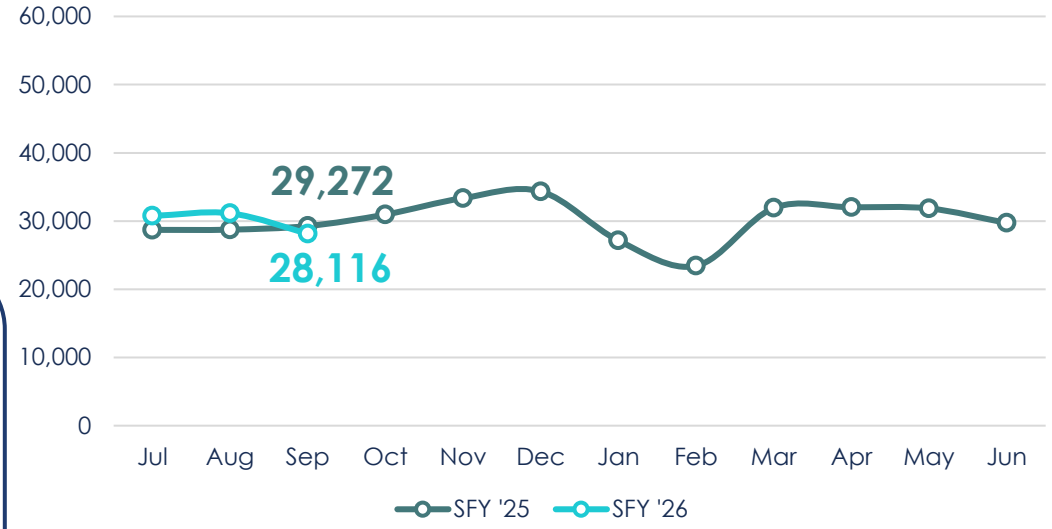
*Last 12 Months

Virginia-Supported Monthly Ridership by Route SFY ’26 vs. SFY ‘25

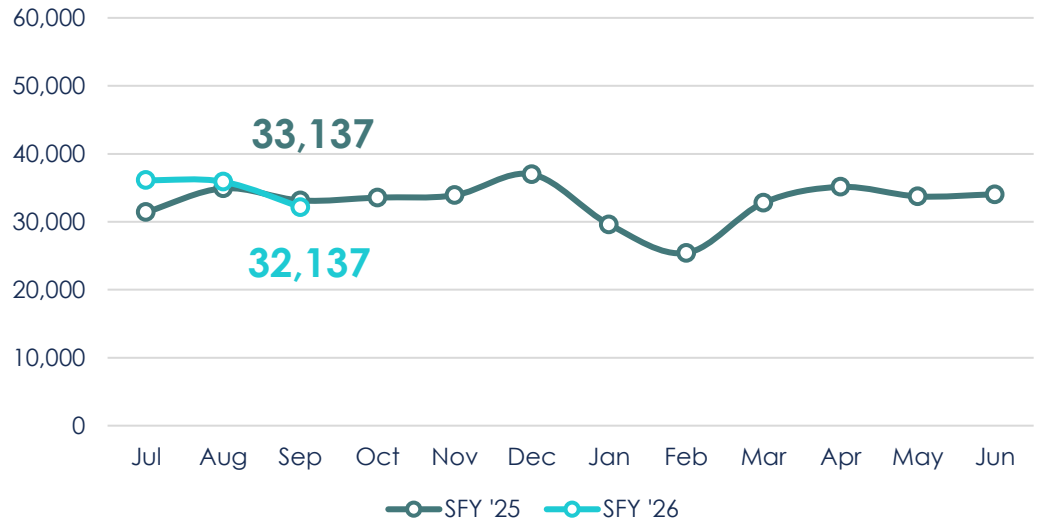
Four trains were cancelled November 3 due to freight partner trackwork outside of Norfolk.

All affected passengers were served via Amtrak connector bus.

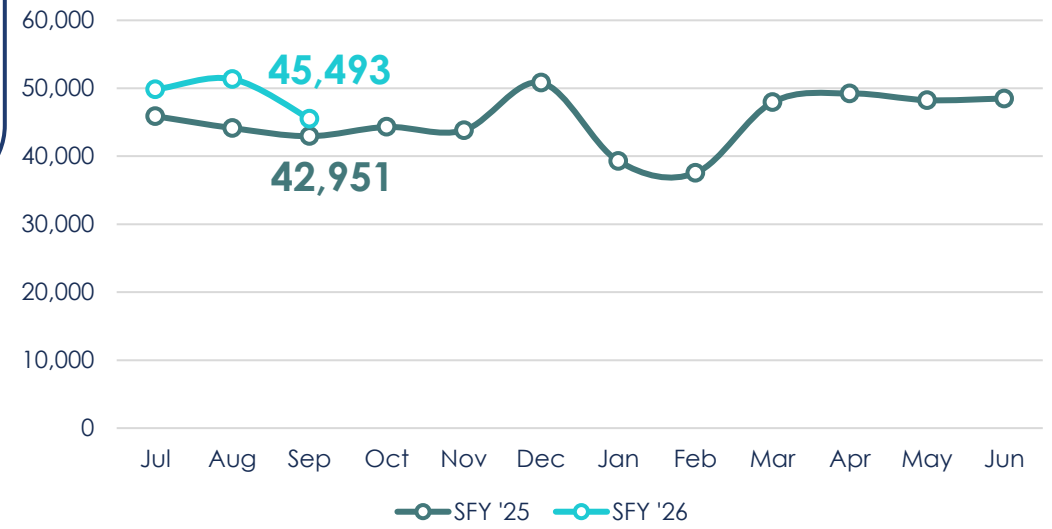
Route 46: Roanoke (-3.9%)



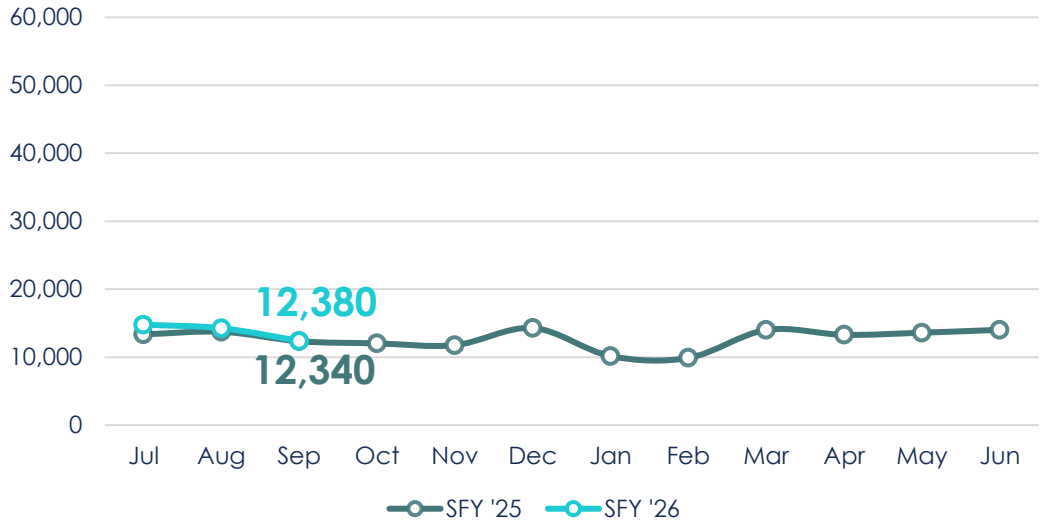
Route 47: Newport News (-3.0%)



Route 50: Norfolk (+5.9%)

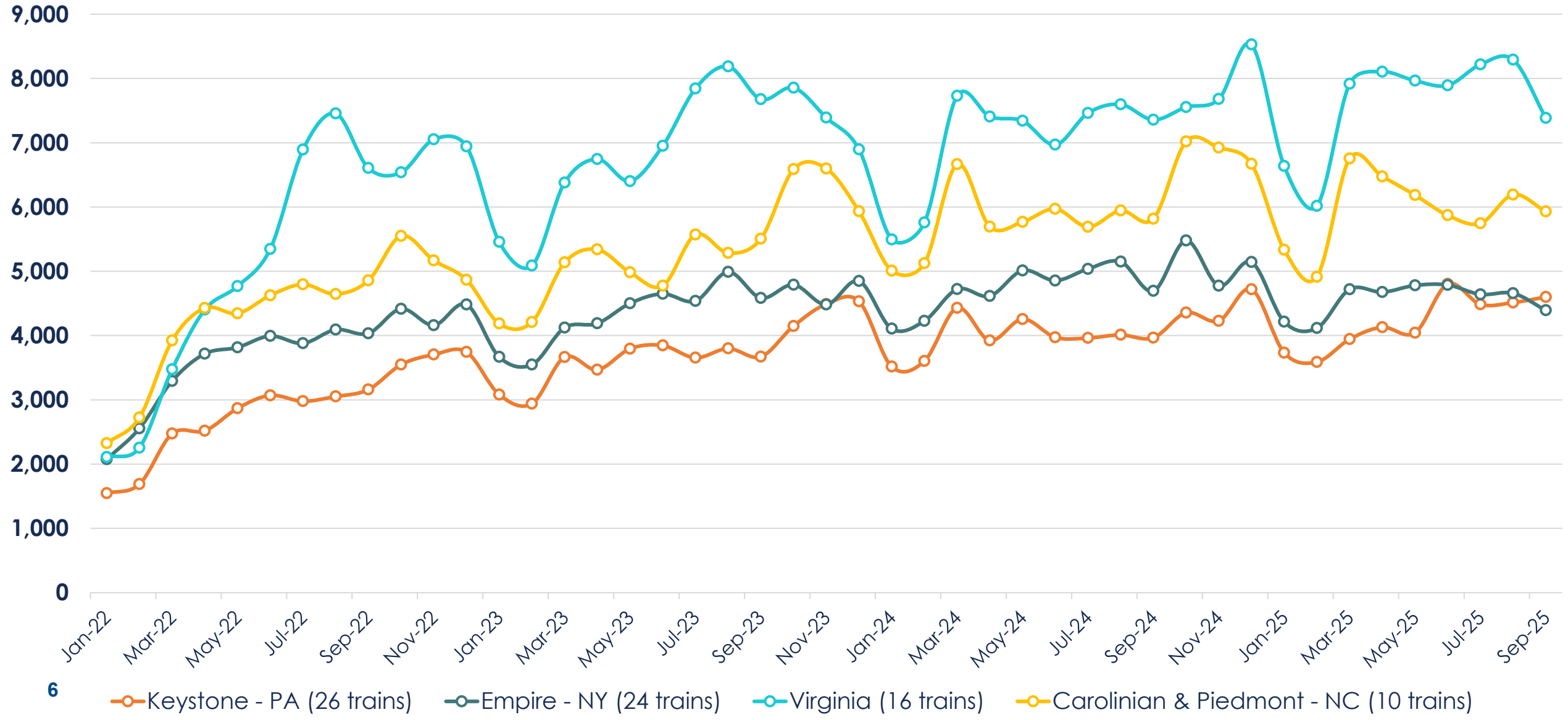


Route 51: Richmond (+0.3%)



Virginia & Comparable State-Supported Service Ridership

Normalized: Monthly Ridership ÷ Daily Trains



DRPT Next Stop: 2030
DRPT's Strategic Plan

Create a positive impact on the Commonwealth

- On November 19, DRPT was awarded over $8.6M from the USDOT's Bus and Bus Facilities program to support 11 rural transit agencies, modernize fleet, and maintain state of good repair. On the same date, WMATA and DASH (Alexandria) received a combined total $61M for new and replacement buses under the same program.
- Statewide transit ridership in October 2025 was 13.8 million, up from 13.7 million in October 2024.
- Virginia Breeze ridership in October 2025 was over 8,300, up from 7,300 in October 2024, even with the federal government shutdown having a slight impact on ridership.

Foster innovative practical solutions

- On December 11, the WMATA Board received the proposed FY27 WMATA budget and the FY27-31 CIP. Included in the FY27 budget are a projected $68M in revenue growth, $12M in internal cost reductions, as well as funding for service expansions and enhancements.

DRPT Next Stop: 2030
DRPT's Strategic Plan

Convene with partners and stakeholders

- On December 15, DRPT staff attended the annual NVTC/VRE/PRTC legislative forum.
  - Staff heard from a panel of Transit leaders in the Northern Virginia region, as well as regional elected officials.
  - The panelists previewed legislation that may be proposed in the upcoming 2026 General Assembly Session.

Cultivate a sustainable well-managed organization

- DRPT's Gabe Ortiz began as a Northern Virginia Transit Programs Manager, moving from the agency's Commuter Programs team.