



Next Stop: The 2026 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan

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An aerial photograph of a large freight train yard, showing numerous colorful railcars (blue, red, yellow, green, and white) parked in neat rows on multiple tracks. The image is partially obscured by a blue circular graphic element on the left side of the slide.

Overview

- What is a State Rail Plan?
- Review of 2022 Statewide Rail Plan
- DRPT & VPRA: Who Does What?
- Looking Ahead: 2026 Plan Vision
- Your Input: What Planners Need
- Q&A and Discussion

State Rail Plans

FRA Rail Plan Guidance

- Under 49 U.S. Code Chapter 227, each State, *at its own election*, may prepare and maintain a State Rail Plan as a means for:
 - Setting forth State policy involving freight and passenger rail transportation, including commuter rail operations, in the State
 - Establishing the period covered by the State Rail Plan
 - Presenting priorities and strategies to enhance rail service in the State that benefits the public
 - Serving as the basis for Federal and State rail investments within the State
- *No longer* required for projects to be eligible for federal discretionary grants*
- Recommendation remains for a 4-year cycle, which Virginia will continue
- Creates comparable metrics state-to-state

Virginia's Rail Plan Purpose



Records progress and charts path forward.

Data driven and aligns with goals/objectives of VTrans.

Requires close coordination with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA).

Includes 6-year and 20-year horizons.

Data points/metrics can be compared plan to plan and state to state.

Assists with federal rail funding for passenger and freight projects.

FRA Rail Plan Outline

1. The Role of Rail in Statewide Transportation
2. The State's Existing Rail System
 - I. Description and Inventory
 - II. Trends and Forecasts
 - III. Rail Service Needs and Opportunities
3. Proposed Passenger Rail Improvements and Investments
4. Proposed Freight Rail Improvements and Investments
5. The State's Rail Service and Investment Program
6. Coordination and Review

2022 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan Review

- First in the nation to be built entirely in ArcGIS Online Storymaps
 - Multimedia Applications
 - Interactive Maps, dashboards, and visuals for required data
- Written during major changes to VA rail landscape
 - Creation of VPRA
 - Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) deals
 - Passage of IIJA and new FRA grant programs



Collection

2022 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan

Virginia's rail network is a valuable asset that grows the economy, relieves congestion and saves taxpayer money. Continued investment in rail infrastructure will ensure the mission and vision of the Commonwealth's transportation network is achieved.

Get started



Role of Rail
in Statewide
Transportation

Chapter 1

Virginia's
Existing
Rail System

Chapter 2

Passenger Rail
Improvements
& Investments

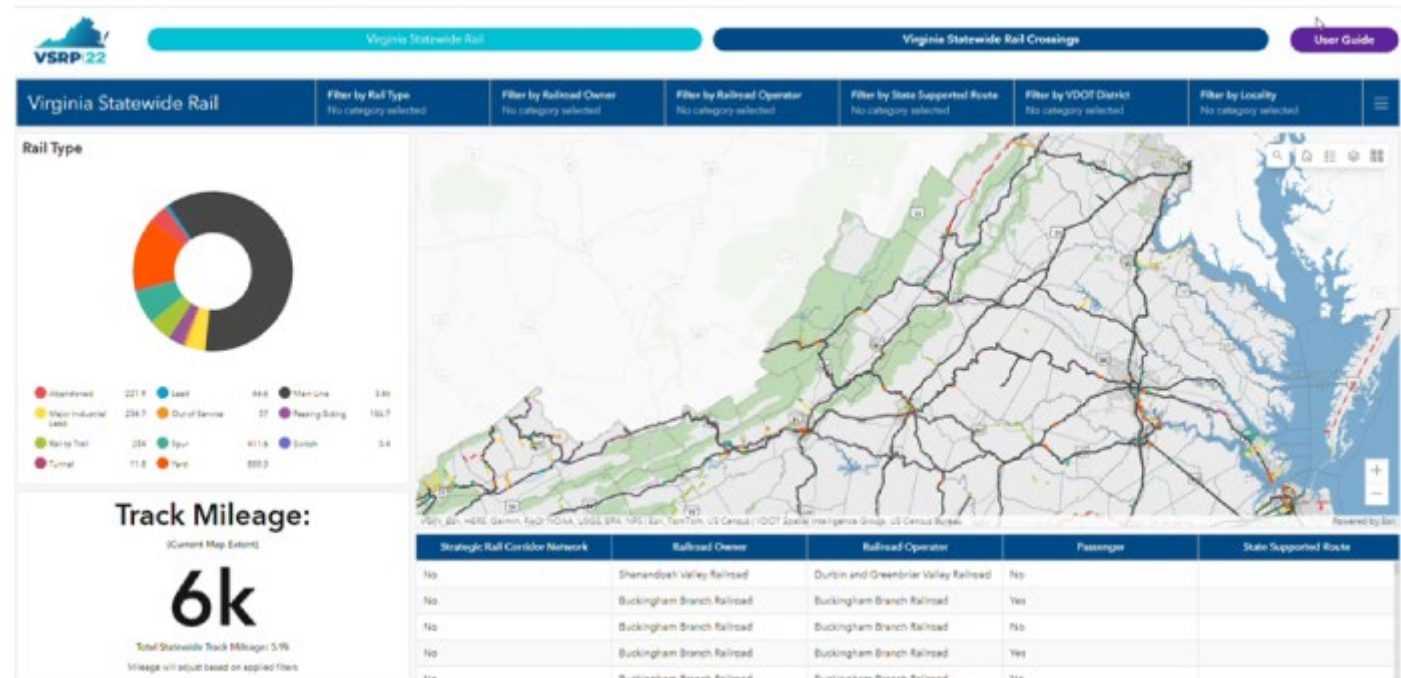
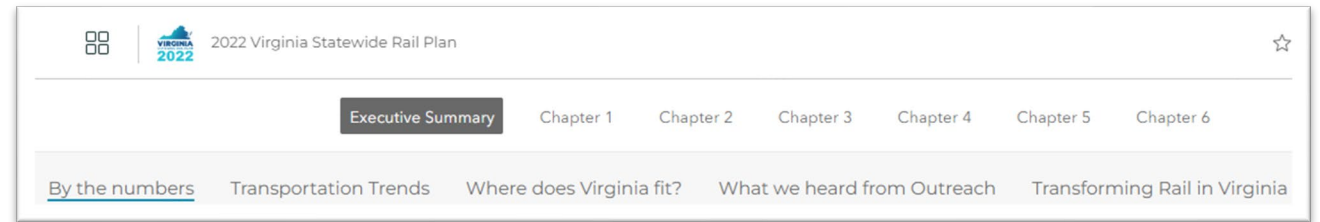
Chapter 3

Freight Rail
Improvements
& Investments

Chapter 4

Benefits of Storymap Platform

- Centralized Webpage
- Navigate Sections Seamlessly
- Illustrate Spatial Relationships
- Dynamic Data Filtering



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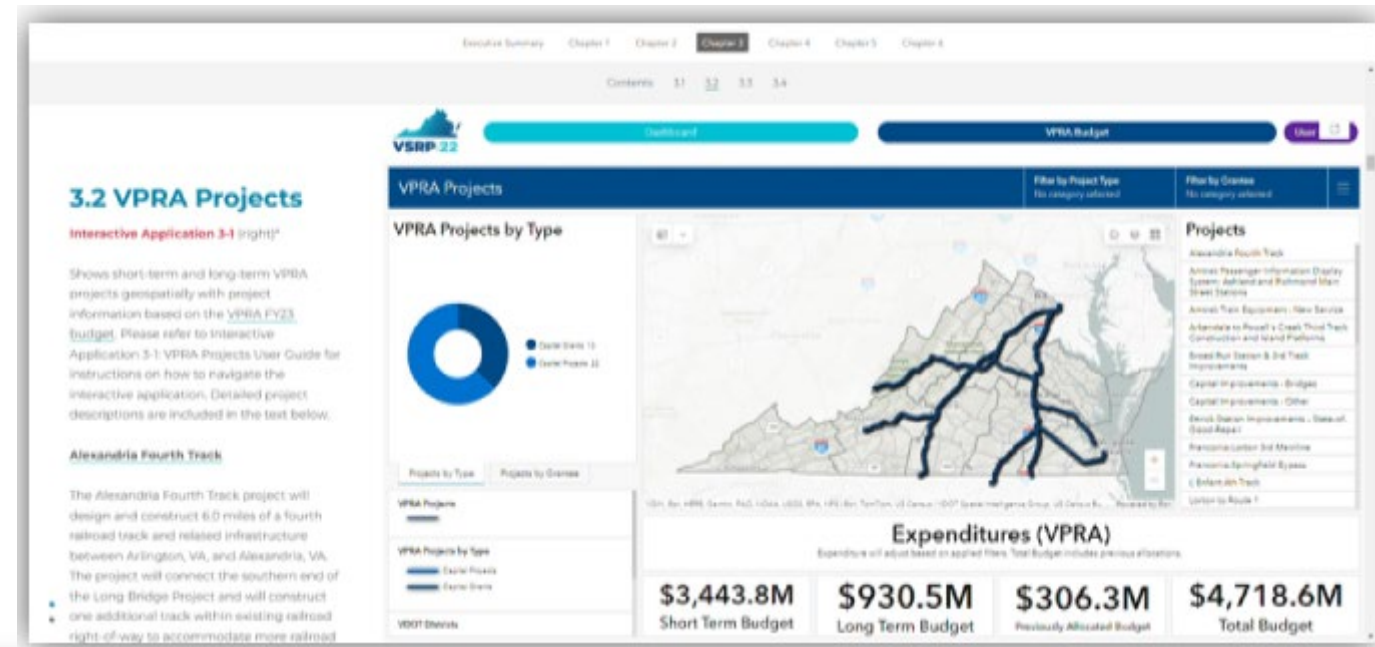


A lot has happened on Virginia's rail network since 2018.

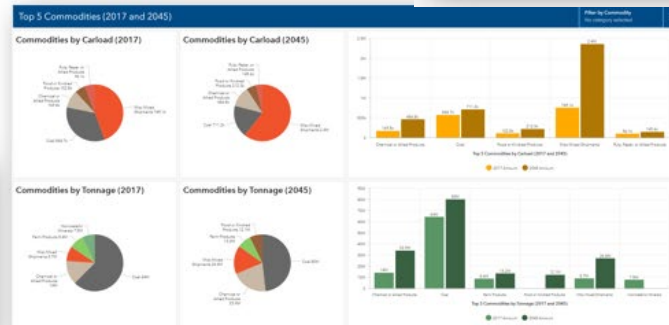
Here are the top ten highlights, by the numbers:

Benefits of Storymap Platform

- Project Lists
- Tabular Data Visualization
- Data reporting and access in one place



Outbound Tonnage by Commodity Group	
Commodity Group	Tonnage
Chemicals or Allied Products	18,400
Food or Kindred Products	18,400
Nonmetallic Minerals	18,400
Other	18,400
Transportation Equipment	18,400
Metals or Metal Products	18,400
Other	18,400
Transportation Equipment	18,400
Metals or Metal Products	18,400
Other	18,400
Transportation Equipment	18,400
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Metals or Metal Products	18,400
Other	18,400



Major commodity movements 2017	
Tonnage	Units
Coal (64 million tons, 49 percent)	Miscellaneous Mixed Shipments (145,108 units, 34 percent)
Chemicals or Allied Products (13.9 million tons, 11 percent)	Coal (568,722 units, 26 percent)
Miscellaneous Mixed Shipments (8.7 million tons, 7 percent)	Chemicals or Allied Products (183,840 units, 8 percent)
Farm Products (8.4 million tons, 6 percent)	Food or Kindred Products (102,840 units, 4 percent)
Nonmetallic Minerals (7.3 million tons, 6 percent)	Pulp, Paper or Allied Products (96,080 units, 4 percent)

Virginia's Rail Landscape

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Who are we?



The catalyst to connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians through innovative transportation solutions



Our vision is a connected Commonwealth with an integrated multimodal network that serves every person, every business, and every need



The agency works with rail and public transportation stakeholders to provide service to people throughout Virginia



1992 General Assembly established DRPT as an independent agency separate from VDOT

What do we do?



Allocates state and federal funding through capital and operating grants, as well as grants to support specific enhancements or improvements



Conducts statewide rail and transit studies, including improving service or identifying new opportunities



Plans and programs new services and capital improvement projects, from public transportation to freight and passenger rail



Provides leadership, advocacy, technical assistance, and funding oversight

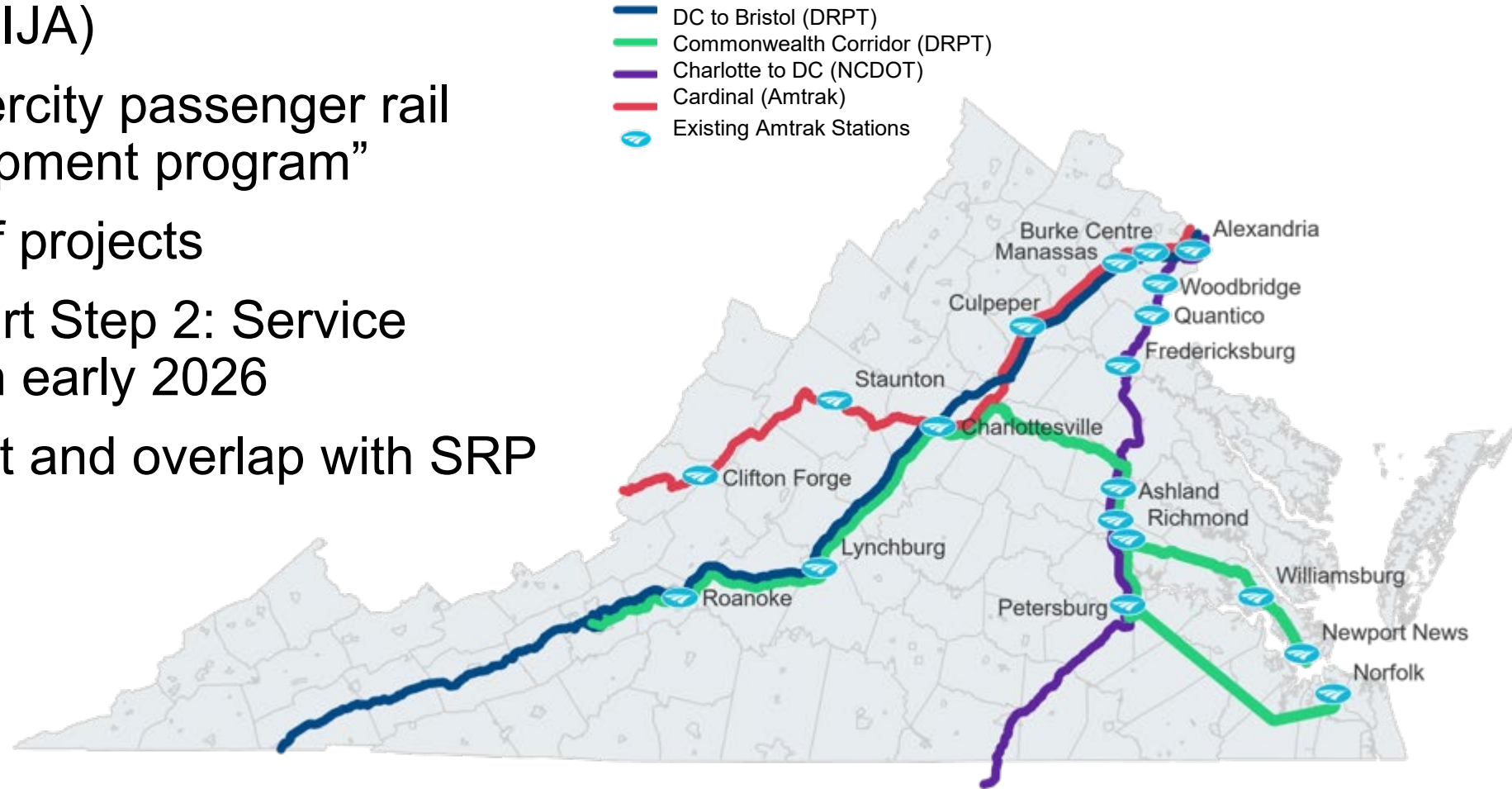
Virginia's Rail Agencies

- DRPT
 - Statewide Rail Planning
 - Long-Range Passenger Planning (ex CID)
 - Freight Rail Grant Programs
 - Stakeholder Coordination ([DRPT Connects!](#))
- VPRA
 - Operations Oversight (Amtrak service)
 - Design/Construction
 - Owns ROW/Infrastructure
 - Future: Maintenance & Dispatching
- Other
 - Safety: SCC, VDOT
 - Econ Dev: Port of VA, VEDP

	RAIL	
	FREIGHT	PASSENGER
Funding Administration	DRPT	VPRA
Corridor Planning	DRPT	VPRA
Statewide Planning	DRPT	
Programming/SYIP	DRPT	VPRA
Policy Setting	DRPT	VPRA
Design/Construction		VPRA
ROW/3 rd Party		VPRA
Operations Oversight		VPRA

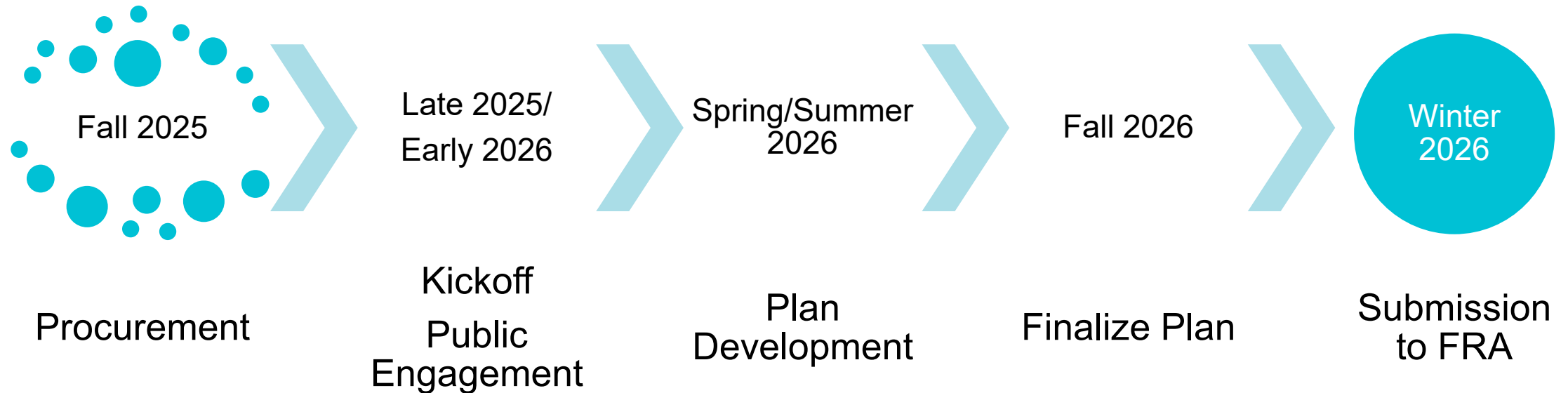
Corridor ID Program

- New FRA program (IIJA)
- “Comprehensive intercity passenger rail planning and development program”
- Creates a pipeline of projects
- DRPT expects to start Step 2: Service Development Plan in early 2026
- Work will compliment and overlap with SRP



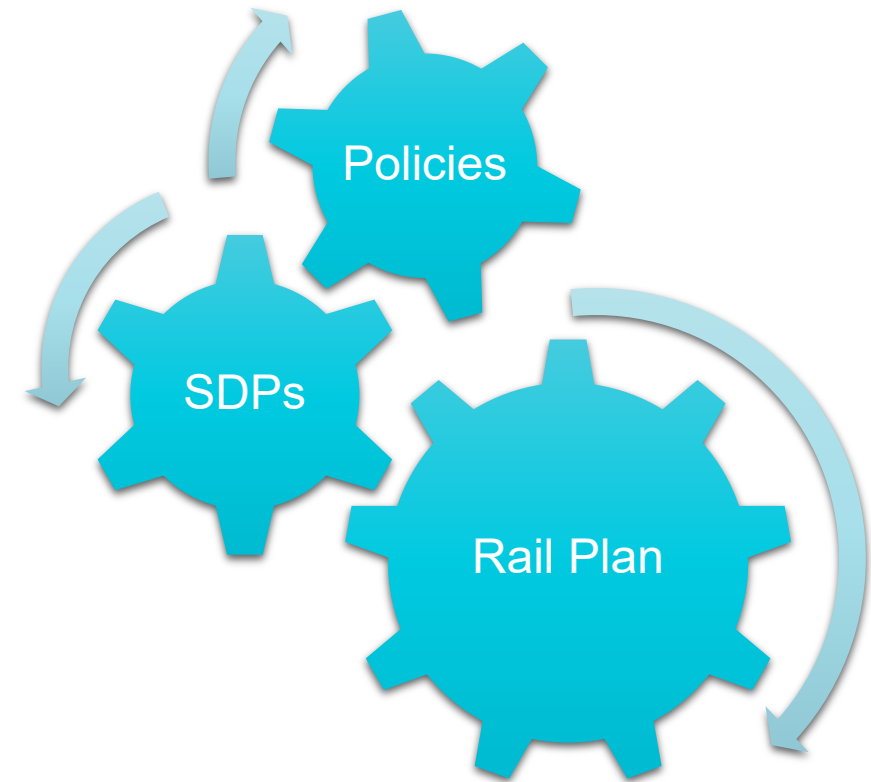
Looking Ahead – 2026 Plan Vision

Current 2026 Plan Timeline



Plan Integration

- CID Service Development Plans (SDPs) will start during the Rail Plan, and continue after it is complete
- Rail Plan public engagement and SDP engagement will overlap and inform each other
- The Rail Plan does not include specific policies, but often evaluates and informs changes ex:
 - Stations Policy
 - Grant Program Changes
 - SMART SCALE Updates



2026 Plan Priorities

- Virginia's Changing Role in Passenger Rail
- DRPT's Renewed Focus on Freight Rail
- Build on 2022 digital success
- Enhanced tools and guidance for planners and localities
- Evaluate progress and challenges since landmark changes have occurred
 - VPRA, TRV, IIJA, post-COVID, etc
- Look at changing landscape ahead
 - IIJA Reauthorization
 - Amtrak Fleet Renewal
 - Artificial Intelligence

Your Input – What Do Planners Need?

- How have you used the 2022 Rail Plan? What worked? What was missing?
- What rail data do you need? Ownership? Contacts? Future Development?
- How can we better support local comprehensive planning?
- What rail issues get brought to you?
- What don't we know to ask?

Thank you and stay tuned! The plan is just beginning!

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