

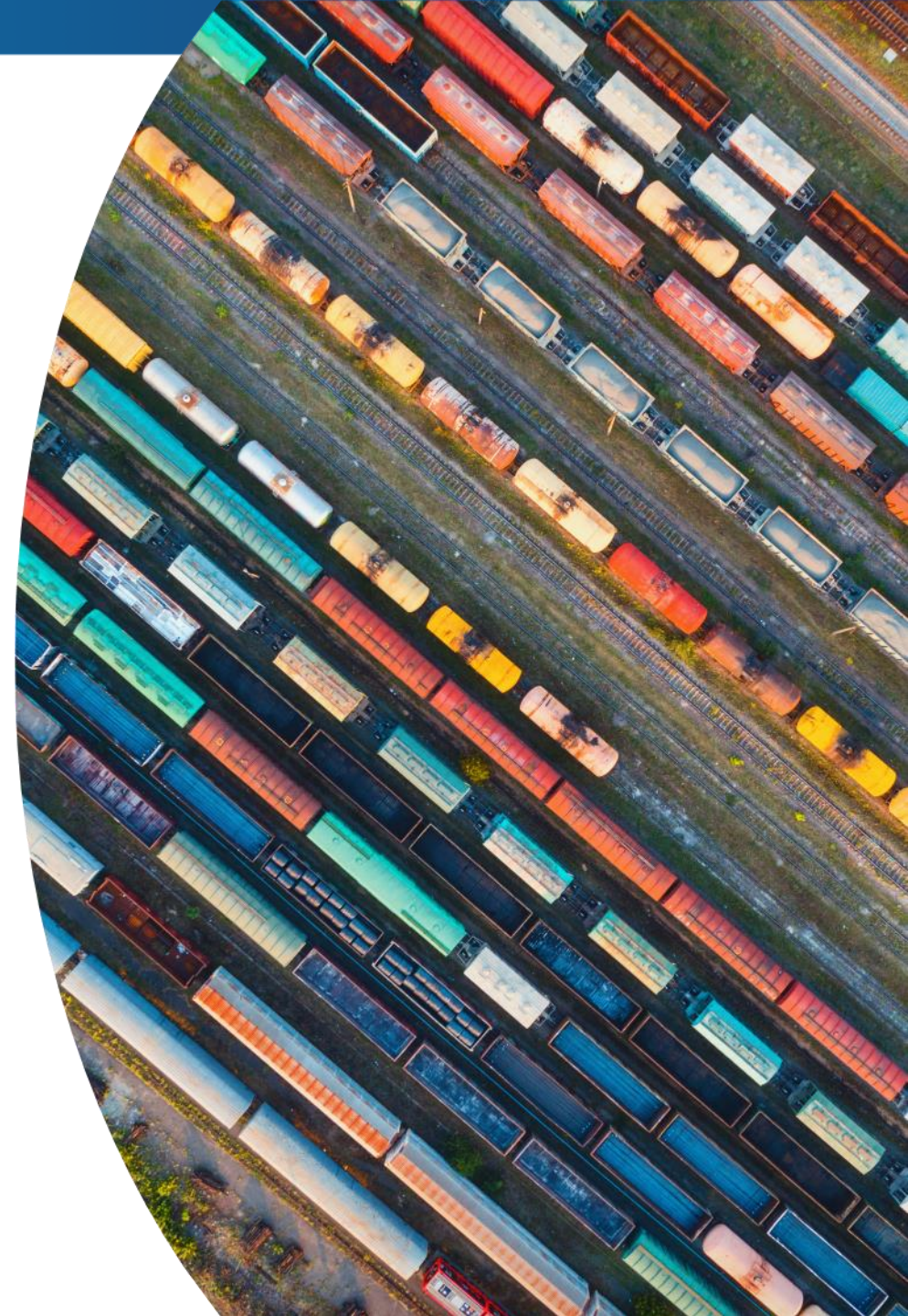


DRPT 101 and Virginia Statewide Rail Plan Update

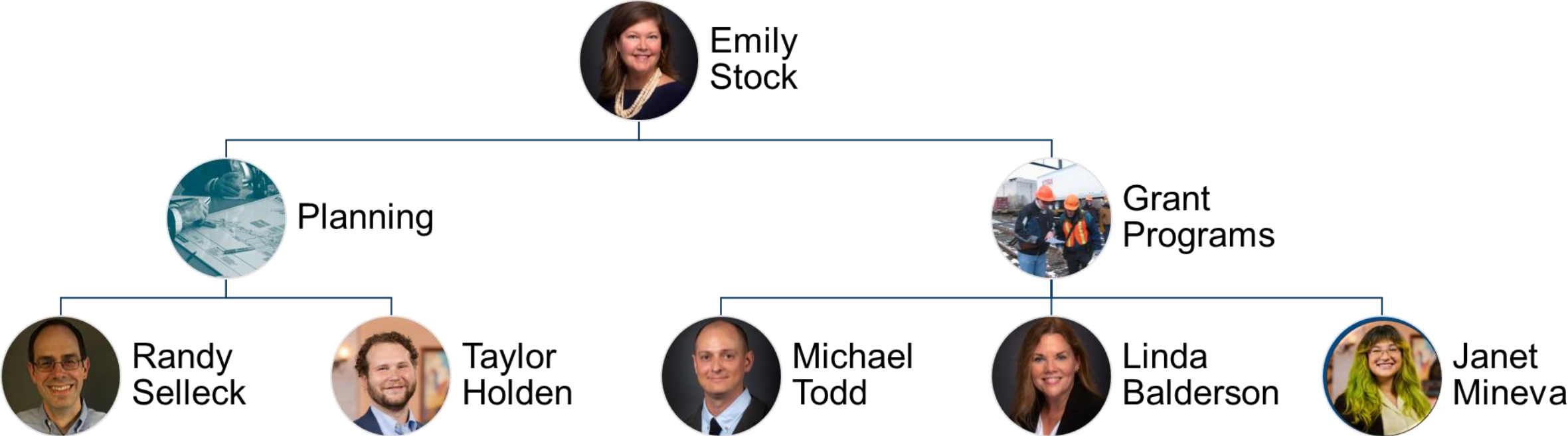
Emily Stock, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
May 21, 2026

Overview

- DRPT Rail 101
 - Value of Freight Rail
 - DRPT Funding Programs
 - Rail Crossing Initiative
- State Rail Plan Update
 - FRA State Rail Plan Guidance
 - 2026 Statewide Rail Plan Overview
 - Next Steps



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Rail Team



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

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



Rail and Public Transportation in Virginia

40 public transit systems

82 human service providers

17 transportation demand management (TDM) agencies

15 metropolitan planning organizations

1 commuter rail service (VRE)

1 state-supported intercity bus (Virginia Breeze)

9 shortline (Class-III) railroads

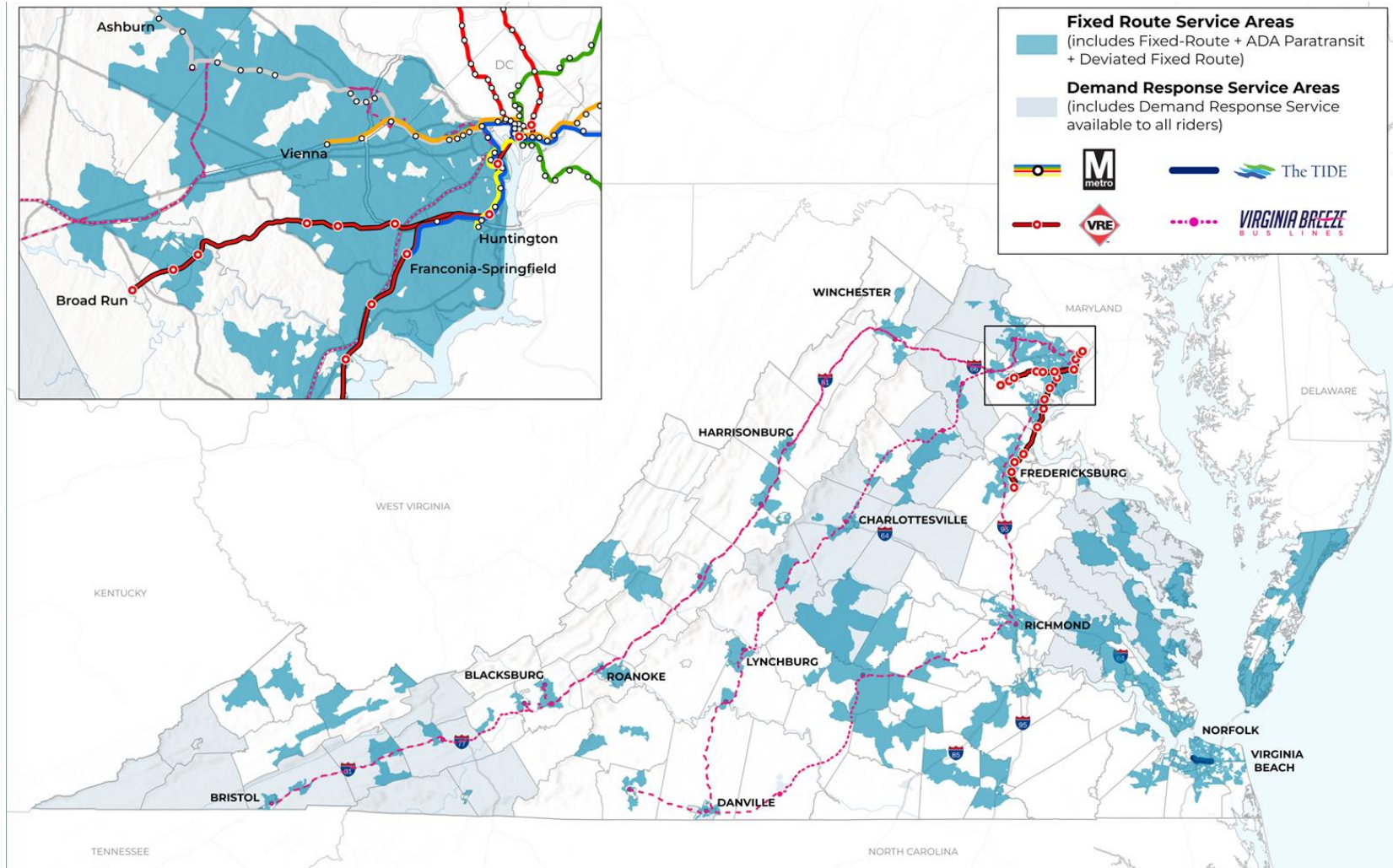
2 Class-I railroads (CSX and Norfolk Southern)

1 Intercity Passenger Rail (Amtrak)

Public Transportation in Virginia

CY2025
Ridership:
154M trips

9% YoY increase
126% increase
since 2020

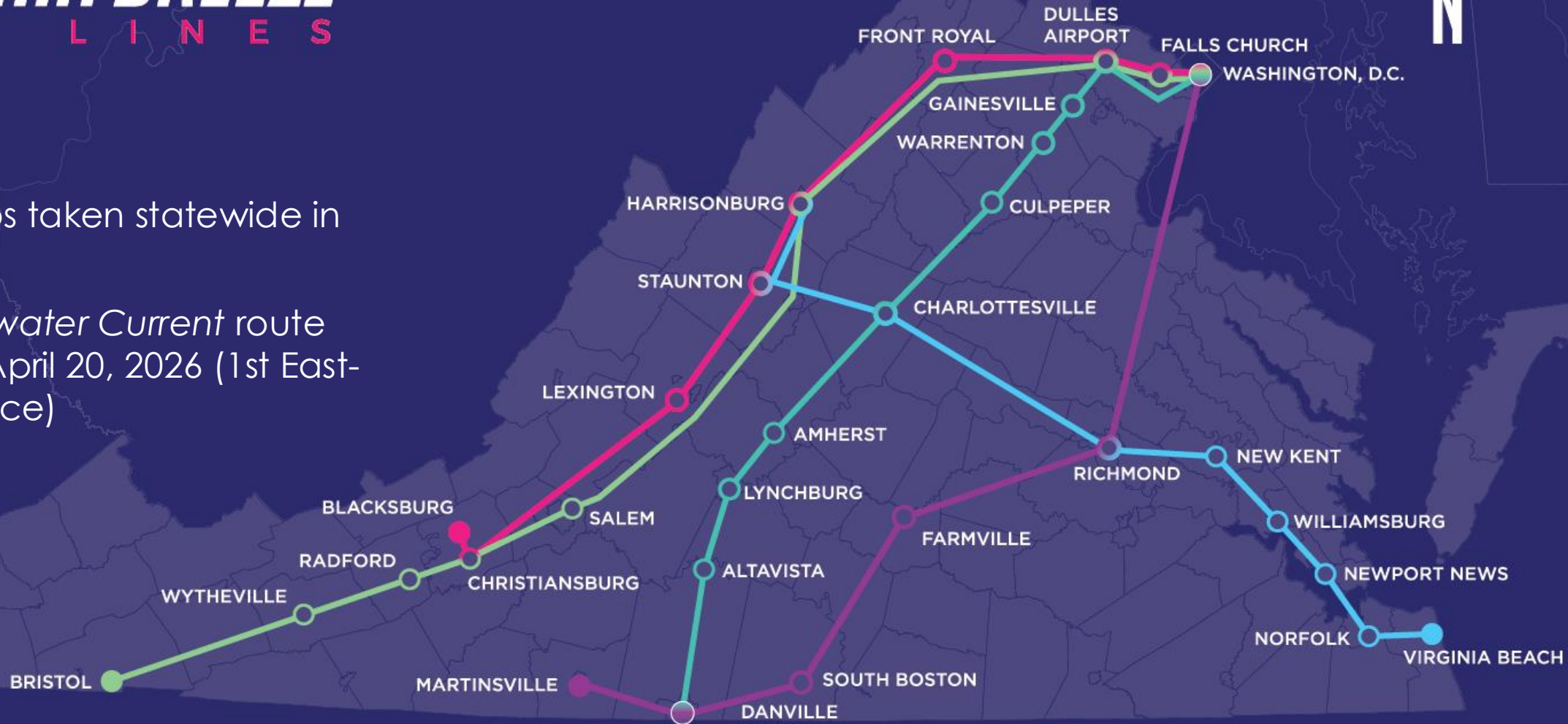


VIRGINIA BREEZE

B U S L I N E S

68,000 trips taken statewide in 2025

New *Tidewater Current* route opened April 20, 2026 (1st East-West service)



VALLEY FLYER

PIEDMONT EXPRESS

CAPITAL CONNECTOR

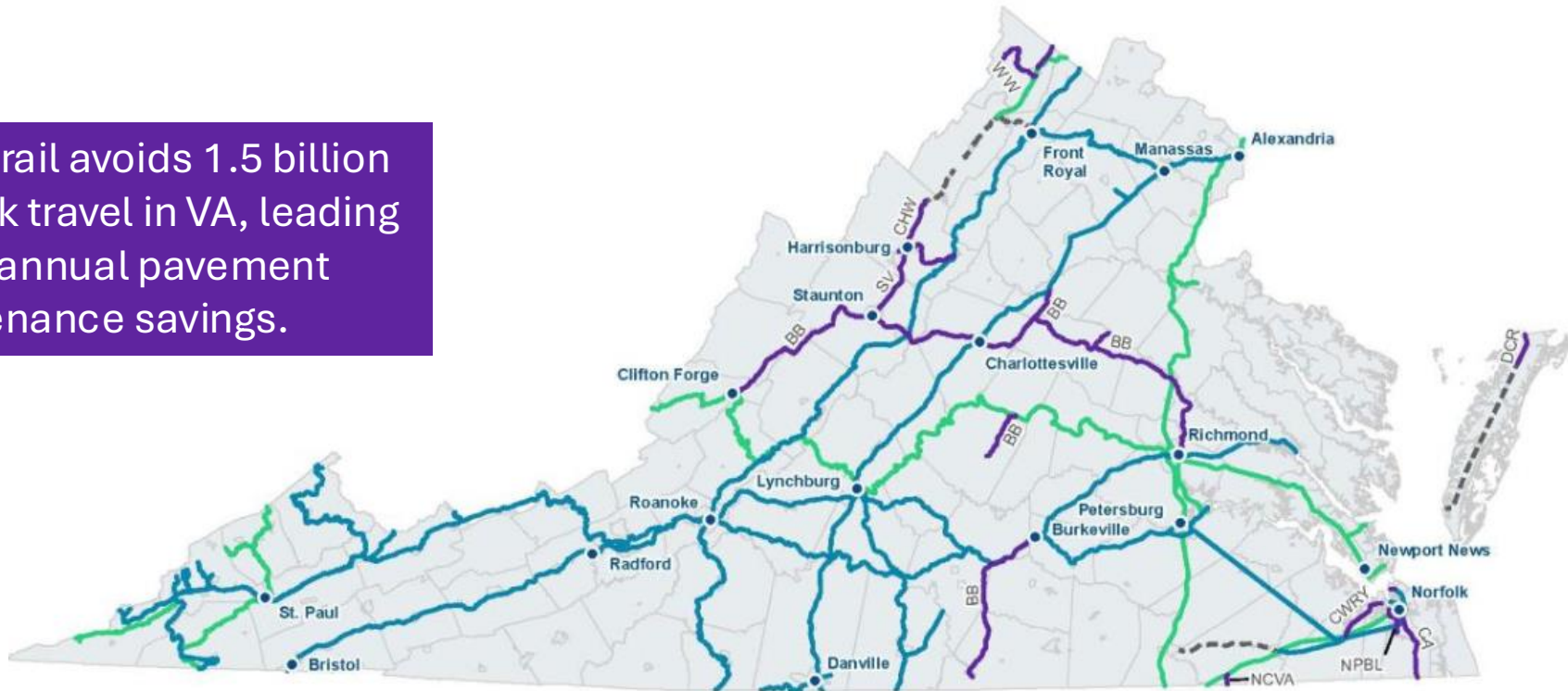
HIGHLANDS RHYTHM

TIDEWATER CURRENT



Freight Rail Network

Shipping by rail avoids 1.5 billion miles of truck travel in VA, leading to \$85m annual pavement maintenance savings.



Freight Routes in Virginia

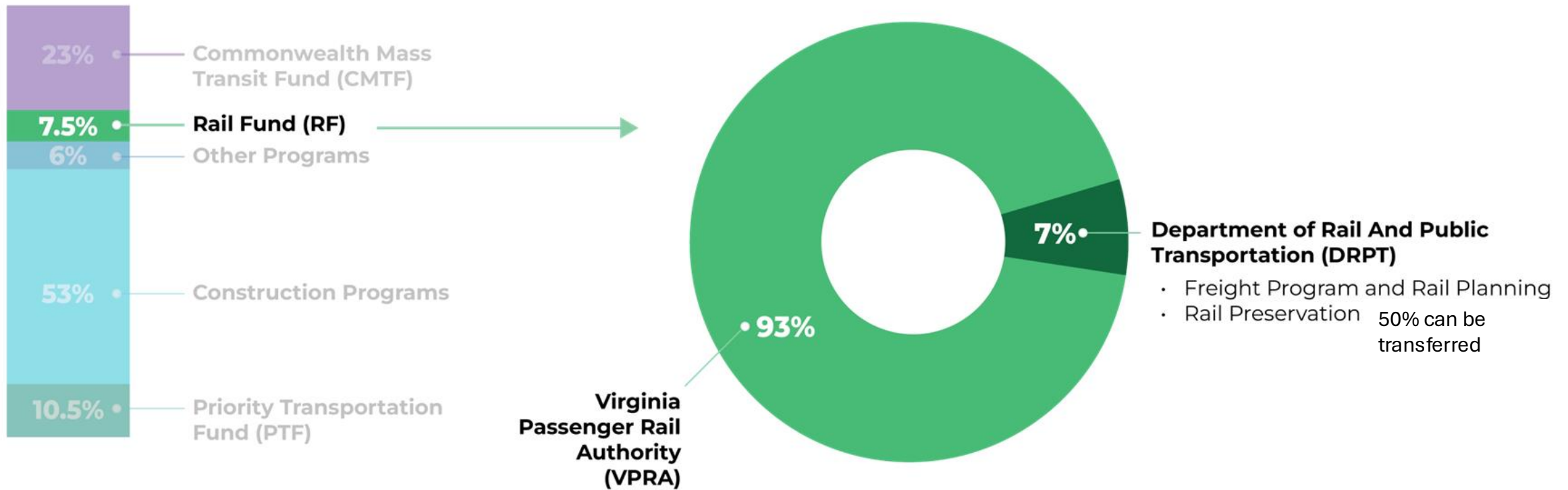
Railroad Type

- Norfolk Southern Railway
- CSX Transportation
- Shortline
- - - Discontinued
- Cities/Towns

Shortline Railroads

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------|
| BB | Buckingham Branch Railroad | NPBL | Norfolk & Portsmouth Belt Line Railroad |
| CA | Chesapeake & Albemarle Railroad | NCVA | North Carolina & Virginia Railroad |
| CHW | Chesapeake Western Railway | SV | Shenandoah Valley Railroad |
| CWRY | Commonwealth Railway | WW | Winchester & Western Railroad |
| DCR | Delmarva Central Railroad | | |

Commonwealth Rail Fund



DRPT Six-Year Improvement Program FY 2027-2032

CTB votes on the DRPT SYIP every June

- FY 2027 – FY 2032



\$7.4 billion in allocations over six fiscal years



\$5.4 billion to public transit, \$1.8 billion to rail



Distributes formula-driven funding to rail, transit, and commuter programs

- FY 2027



\$950.4 million for public transportation (includes VRE and WMATA)



\$25.4 million for DRPT rail



\$101 million for VPRA rail

Improving Network Fluidity and Preserving Critical Infrastructure

TOTAL NEW GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS RECOMMENDED - \$18M OVER MULTIPLE FISCAL YEARS

Hub Scrap Metal

(Staunton District)

- FREIGHT: \$4.4M
- Scope: Expand on-site rail yard in Frederick County
- Benefit: 23K+ trucks diverted from highway annually

Shenandoah Valley Railroad (SVRR) (Staunton District)

- Rail Preservation: \$4.7M
- Private Match: \$2M
- Scope: Six-year programmatic track and roadbed upgrades in Augusta and Rockingham Counties
- Benefit: Class II Track Standard Preserved

Norfolk Portsmouth Beltline (NPBL) (Hampton Roads District)

- Rail Preservation: \$1.05M
- Private Match: \$0.45M
- Scope: Programmatic bridge, rail, and tie upgrades in Norfolk and Portsmouth
- Benefit: Preserve critical infrastructure

Buckingham Branch Railroad (BBRR)

(Multi-District)

Three Crossover Projects

- FREIGHT: \$0.9M total, \$298K per project
- Private Match: \$383K total, \$0.13M per project
- Scope: Install new crossovers in Goshen, Charlottesville & Doswell
- Benefit: Improve overall network fluidity

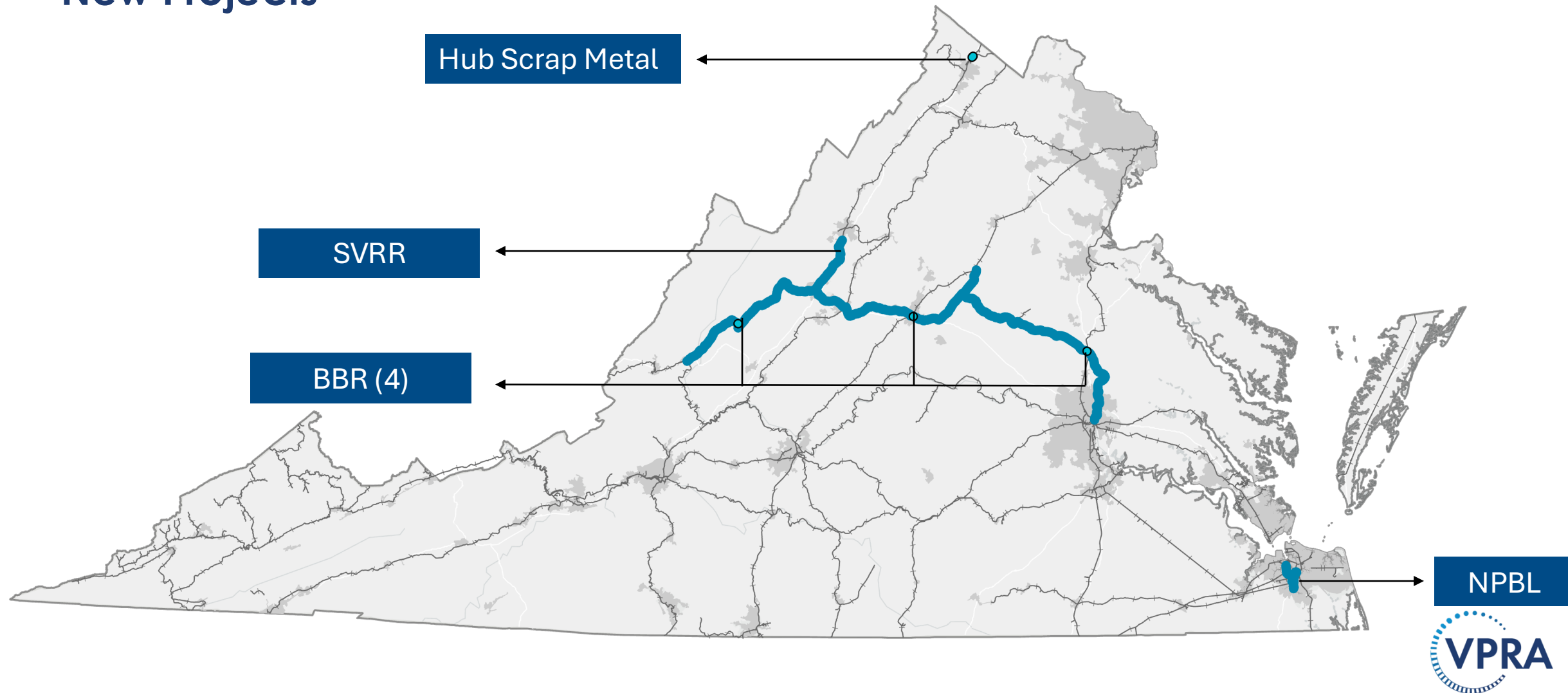
Richmond & Alleghany Bridge Improvements and Upgrades

- Rail Preservation: \$7M
- Private Match: \$3M
- Scope: Multi-bridge upgrade project to maintain 286k weight capacity between Richmond and Alleghany County
- Benefit: Preserve critical infrastructure



FY27 Recommended Application Locations

New Projects



FREIGHT Program

- Supports rail infrastructure investments to expand the Virginia freight rail network, bringing lasting benefits to Virginia's economy and transportation network.
- Focus on investment in the freight rail network to meet statewide multimodal network goals
- Use national best practices, lessons learned, and elements from current and prior rail programs
- Each grant application must:
 - Meet at least one statewide goal listed in the adopted State Rail Plan
 - Focus on capacity improvements to the freight rail network (not operational or passenger-related costs)
 - Include at least 30% design for construction projects



Rail Preservation Fund



- The program's purpose is to retain and improve the shortline railway network, maintain a state of good repair, and connect facilities for freight service
- Shortline railroads provide vital last-mile and switching services for businesses. Additionally, they divert trucks from the road, saving on maintenance costs
- Source of funding: \$4M of Highway Construction from the Biennial Budget and up to 50% of DRPT's share of the Commonwealth Rail Fund may be transferred to Rail Preservation annually.

Rail Industrial Access Program

- Rail Industrial Access connects businesses to the larger freight rail network by providing up to \$750,000 to construct or improve industrial access rail spurs.
- Incentivizes businesses to move goods by rail, invest in job growth, and expand its business.
- Grant applications are scored on number of carloads per year, added employment, total private investment, among other factors.
- From 2022-2025, 17 RIA projects have been awarded grants. These projects have added 3,215 jobs, diverted over 51,000 trucks from Virginia's highways, and connected businesses to the rail network in every region of Virginia.



DRPT Rail Crossing Initiative

**Broad Road
Boulevard
Separation**
City of Richmond
September 23, 2024
Application to the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program FY2023-FY2024

**Suffolk
Downtown
Crossing**
City of Suffolk
September 23, 2024
Application to the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program FY2023-FY2024

**Portlock Road
Grade Separation**
September 23, 2024
City of Chesapeake
Application to the FY2023-FY2024

**Hungary
Grade
Separation
Project**
Henrico County
September 23, 2024
Application to the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program FY2023-FY2024

**Ashland Grade
Crossing Study**
September 23, 2024
Town of Ashland
Application to the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program FY2023-FY2024

DRPT and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority was created in 2020 by the Omnibus Transportation Bill

VPRA is governed by a board of directors, and designs, constructs, and provides funding to operate intercity passenger rail in Virginia

DRPT plans passenger rail expansion and DRPT's Director chairs the VPRA Board, VPRA designs and builds according to those plans

VPRA receives pass-through Commonwealth Rail Funds through DRPT. The CTB approves VPRA capital budget and any disposal of property >\$5M

	Freight Rail Programs	Passenger Rail Projects	Public Transit & Commuter Programs
Funding Administration	DRPT	VPRA	DRPT
Corridor Planning	DRPT	VPRA	DRPT
Statewide Planning		DRPT	
Programming & SYIP	DRPT	VPRA	DRPT
Policy Setting	DRPT	VPRA	DRPT
Design & Construction		VPRA	
ROW/3 rd Party		VPRA	
Operations Oversight		VPRA	



Virginia Statewide Rail Plan

Creating a vision for the future of rail in Virginia

Records progress and charts path forward.

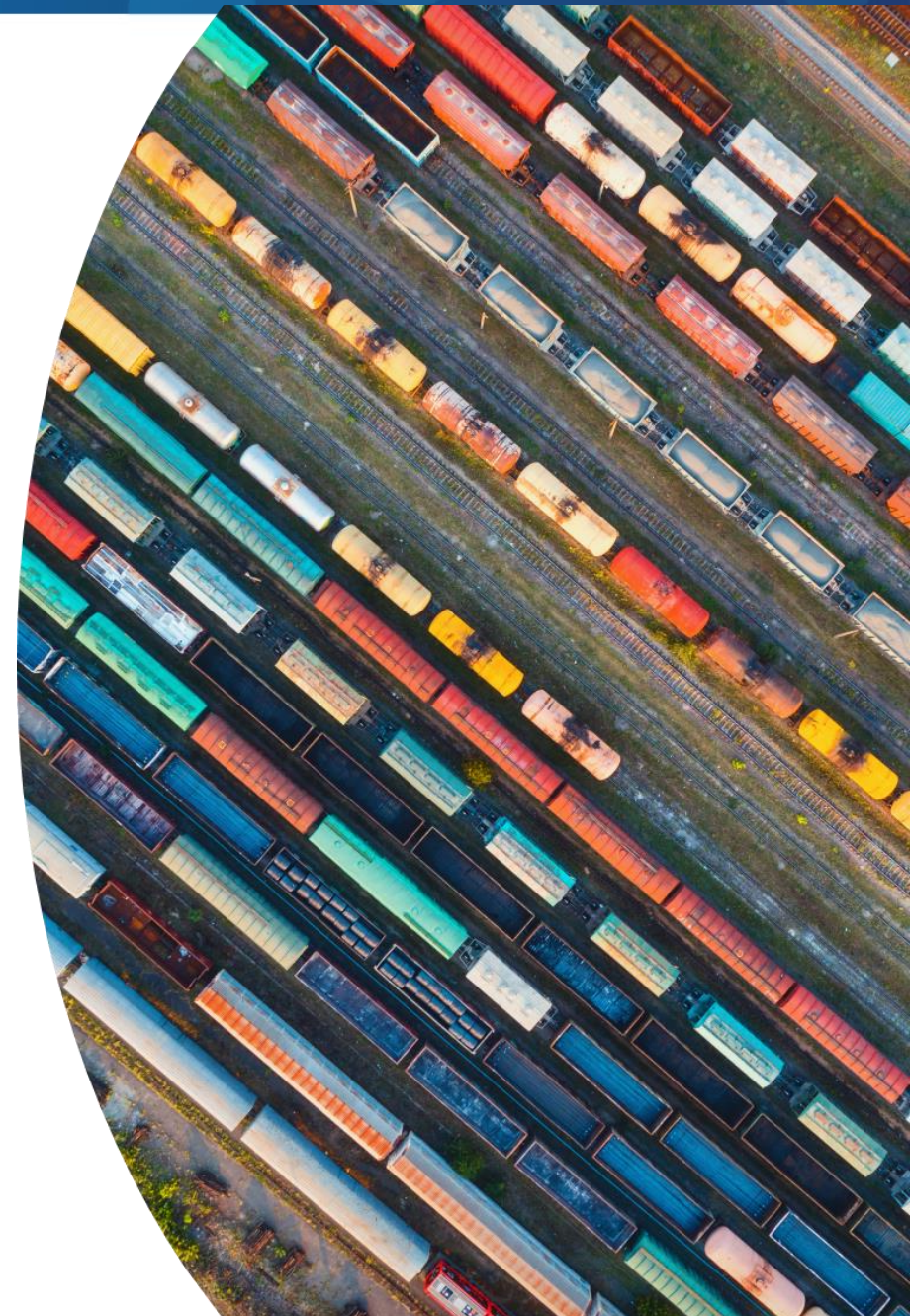
Data driven and aligns with goals/objectives of VTrans.

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.

Supports applications for federal rail funding for passenger and freight projects.



Data Sources and Analysis

Inputs

- DRPT GIS
- Railroad Operators
- Amtrak
- VRE
- FRA
- VDOT
- Transearch Data

Models/Tools

- DRPT GIS
- IMPLAN Model
- Virginia Statewide Transportation Model

SRP Outputs

- System Inventory & Infrastructure
- Safety & Security Metrics
- Freight Demand & Commodity Flows
- Passenger Ridership & Demand
- Economic & Environmental Impacts

Investment Plan and Funding Needs

Value of Rail - Truck Diversion



What is the Value of Mode Shift to Rail?

Save Money



Freight Rail

\$2.1 billion
in annual benefits

About 10 cents per ton-mile of rail use



Passenger Rail

\$133.4 million
in annual benefits

About 50 cents per passenger-mile of rail use

Benefits are largely derived from savings from diverting freight and passengers from highways to rail and includes congestion savings and crash reduction benefits and do not account for total economic benefit associated with job creation, tourism, tax generation, etc.

Breathe Easier



On average, railroads are **four times** more fuel efficient than trucks



Moving freight by rail instead of truck generates **75% less** greenhouse gas emissions



The total estimated level of rail service in Virginia in 2019 was about **21 billion ton-miles**



2.4M tons of CO₂ emissions avoided (6% of total in Virginia per year)

Travel Safe



Shipping by rail avoids about **1.5 billion miles** of truck travel in Virginia



Passenger travel by rail avoids about **266 million miles** of personal travel in Virginia



\$65M Saved from reducing crash-related accidents, injuries, and deaths

Relieve Congestion

\$231M Annual in congestion savings



1 = 30



\$85M Annual pavement maintenance savings



1 = 3.4

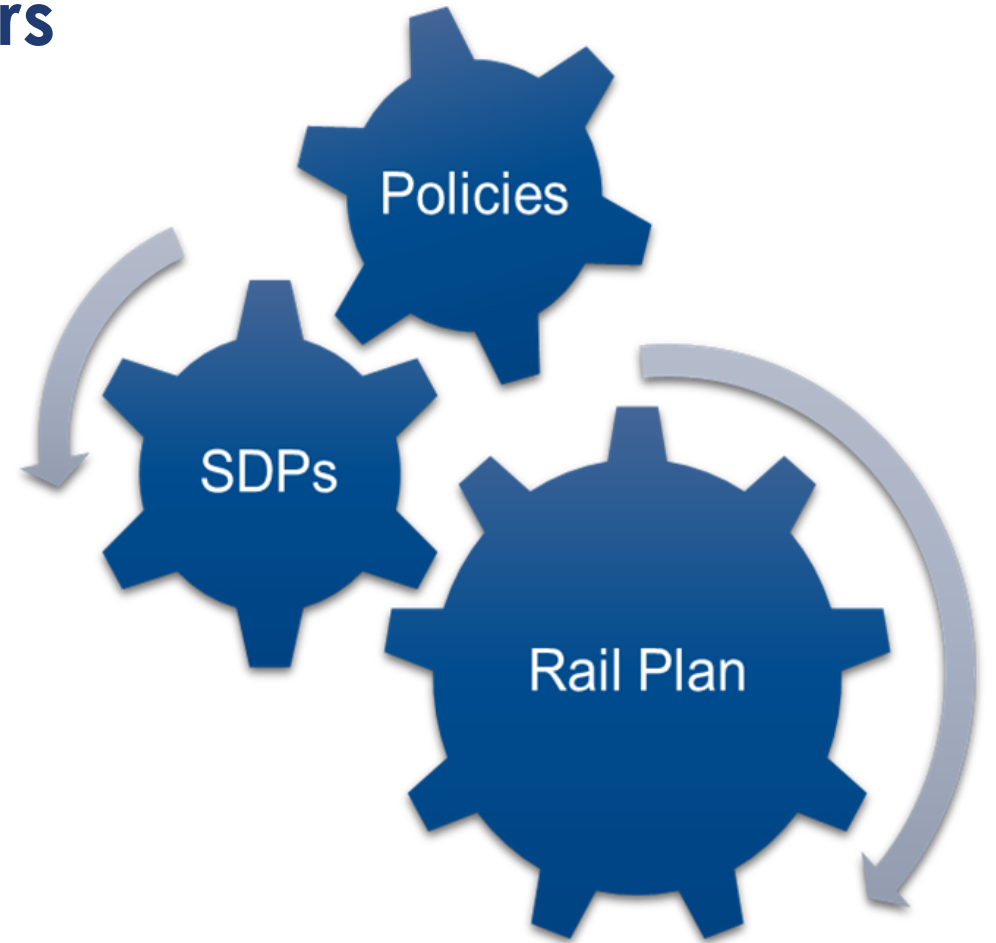


Source: 2022 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan.
Annual YOY 2020 estimates based on rail operations in 2019.
Figures to be updated with 2026 rail plan currently underway.

Statewide Rail Plan Integration

Coordinating planning with our partners

- Corridor ID Step 2 Service Development Plans (SDPs) will kick off during the Rail Plan and continue after it is complete.
- Rail Plan stakeholder and public engagement will lead into Corridor ID SDP engagement.
- Addresses ongoing work related to:
 - Transforming Rail in Virginia
 - Stations Policy
 - Grant Program Changes
 - Federal Grant Strategy
 - SMART SCALE Updates



2026 Statewide Rail Plan Priorities and Process

Building on consistent success

- Maintain consistency with FRA guidelines/format and build in 2022 digital success.
- Highlight Virginia's changing role in passenger rail, DRPT's renewed focus on freight rail.
- Evaluate progress, challenges, and funding impacts since the 2022 SRP.
- Partnering with UVA's Institute for Engagement and Negotiation for robust public and stakeholder engagement.
- Look at changing landscape ahead
 - IIJA Reauthorization and funding landscape
 - Amtrak Fleet Renewal
 - Artificial Intelligence and Other New Technology
 - Infrastructure Resilience

Corridor ID in Virginia

Long-range planning framework

Commonwealth Corridor

Evolution from 2021 GA Study

Would be East-West connection

SDP will look at both Norfolk and Newport News routes

DC to Bristol

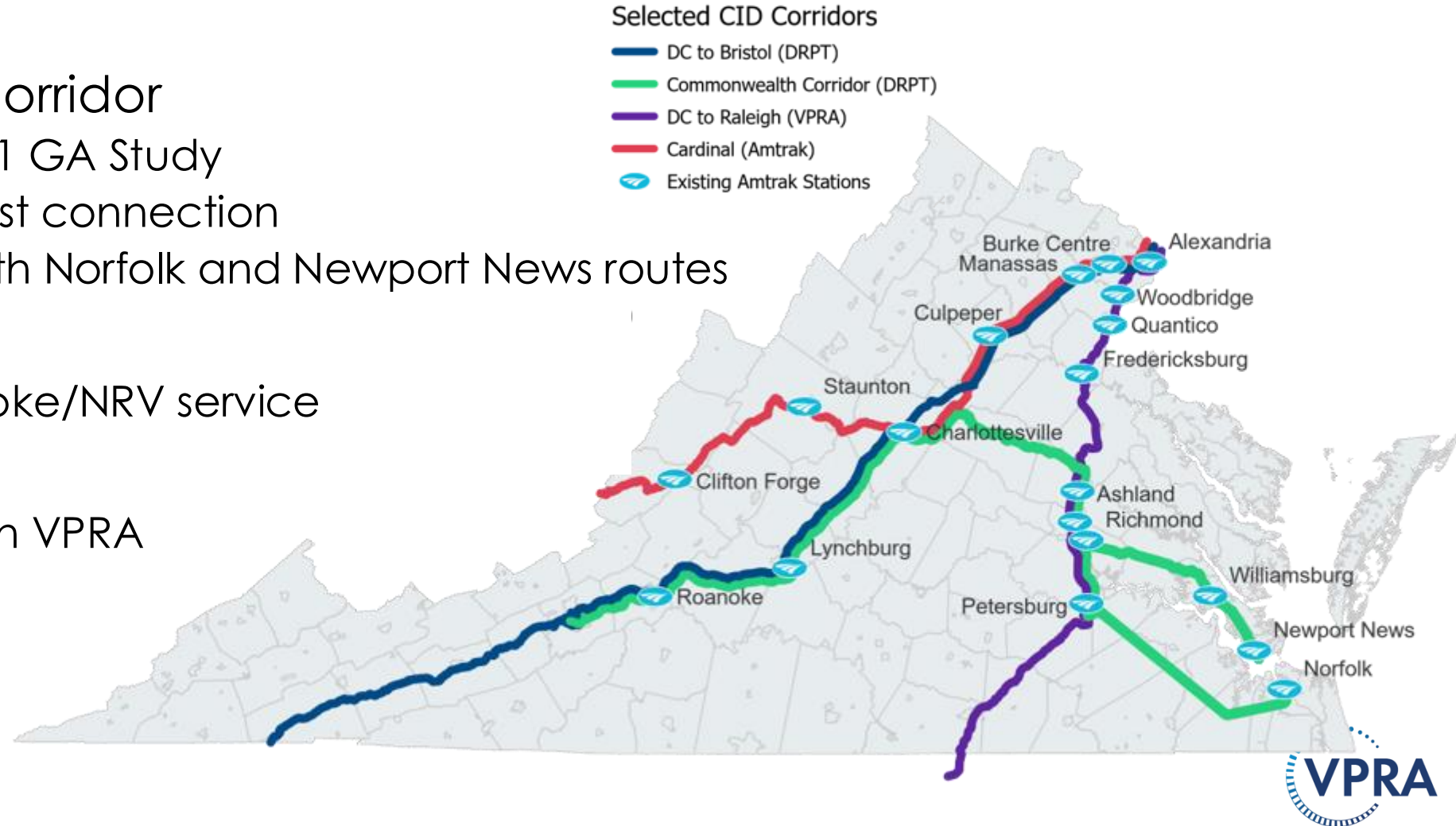
Extension of Roanoke/NRV service

Charlotte to DC

Led by NCDOT with VPRA

Cardinal Daily

Amtrak led



Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High-Speed Rail Compact

- Established in 1992 to study, develop, and promote a plan for the design, construction, financing, and operation of interstate high-speed rail service through and between points in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of North Carolina and adjacent states.
- To coordinate efforts to establish high-speed rail service at the federal, state, and local governmental levels, including advocating for federal funding.
- Compact is comprised of five legislators from Virginia (Del. Ward, Del. Glass, Del. Phillips, Sen. Surovell, and Sen. Sturtevant) and five legislators from North Carolina. Next meeting planned for summer 2026.

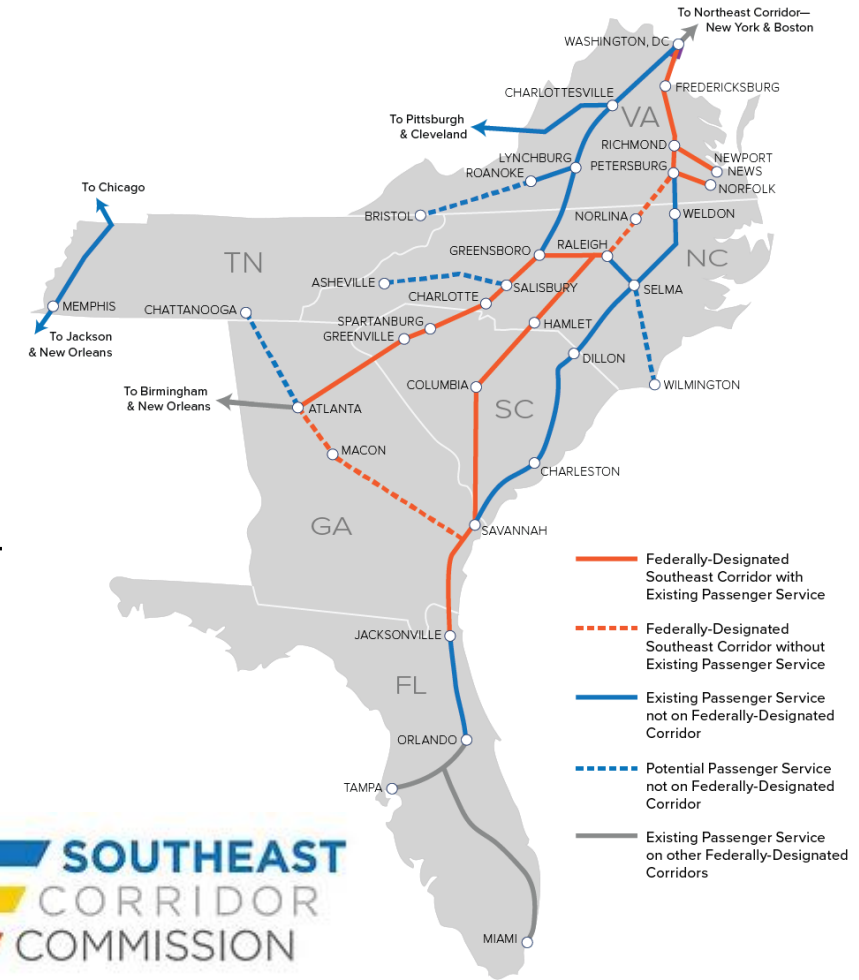
*High-performance rail is proposed in VA and NC, rather than high-speed rail. Planned maximum authorized speeds between Richmond and Raleigh are not to exceed 110.



Interstate Rail Compacts Grant

- Awarded by FRA to conduct a **Southeast Rail Network Analysis** that will evaluate the Southeast rail network constraints and identify opportunities to improve the fluidity of the network to benefit passenger and freight rail.
- Awarded for **administrative and operational expenses** related to VA-NC Compact and other technical coordination among states, Amtrak, FRA, and railroads to advance rail connections throughout the Southeast, including the Southeast Corridor Commission (SEC), which extends to TN, SC, GA and FL.

Virginia-North Carolina Interstate Rail Compact evolved with passenger rail conditions. SEC formed to include entire region, similar to the Northeast Corridor (NEC), to support rail projects of regional significance. DRPT Director Zimmerman serves as SEC Vice-Chair, NCDOT Dep. Sec. of Multimodal Transportation Julie White serves as Chair.



What's Next?

Rail Plan Schedule

Jan -
March

- Kickoff
- Begin Data Collection
- Surveys and Interviews

April -
June

- Public Meeting #1
- Stakeholder Workgroups
- Data Analysis

July -
Sept

- Draft & Review Plan
- Stakeholder Workgroups
- Public Meeting #2
- Survey #2

Oct -
Dec

- CTB Presentations
- Public Meeting #3
- Finalize Plan



THANK YOU

Questions?