

## Let's Talk!

The next VRE online forum will start on Wednesday, April 2nd at 12:00pm.



There are currently 13 questions waiting to be answered.

### **VRE Management:**

Thank you for joining us on this warm April afternoon. Spring is finally here, so we hope. We want to remind everyone of our annual Meet the Management starting April 30, 2014 at Union Station. Check the website for specific dates and times. The annual customer service survey will be conducted on all morning trains on Wednesday, May 7, 2014. Now on to the questions!

---

### **L from Rippon, VA asks:**

Do the conductors check to listen if the recording that identifies the stops and the Public Announcement system on the Fredericksburg Line, specifically trains 307 and 308 are audible and distinctive? (Note: On 3/24 and 3/25 the automated recording was very low and the conductor talking was unclear and faint, where previously they were louder and clear speaking and sounding).

### **VRE Management:**

Thanks for letting us know. We will have our mechanical department look into this.

---

### **B from Rippon, VA asks:**

What is the "metro option?" it was not identified as to what that meant when the conductor said "metro option" on 3/24/14 train 308.

### **VRE Management:**

For example if there is excessive congestion North of Alexandria then riders have an option to get off at Franconia/Springfield or Alexandria then they can take metro by showing station personnel their VRE ticket to get to their final destination. The metro option is open in an event of a cancelled VRE train or some other severe service disruption.

---

### **Doug from Manassas, VA asks:**

When do you expect to place the new cars in service to replace the old style Gallery cars on trains 324 and 335?

### **VRE Management:**

New cars should start arriving late April and May.

---

### **The Prophet from Brooke asks:**

To all those Brooke riders who have to be first in the parking lot in the morning, first in line on the platform, first on the train, first to stage at his destination, first off the train, first to stage coming home, first to his car and first out of the parking lot with no thought or consideration of his fellow riders remember Jesus said the first will be last and the last will be first

### **VRE Management:**

Courtesy reminder from a fellow passenger.

---

### **Stephen from Falmouth asks:**

I was on train 307 last week, and the chatter was unbearable. There are people who sit in the front end of the car making more noise than a flock of geese. People won't sit down and block the aisles. Worse yet is the conductor stops and chit-chats to incite them even more. Don't tell me to move cars. All the seats are full. When are we going to fix the problem of illegal parking at Leeland Station? I have called the sheriff to no avail.

### **VRE Management:**

We will work with the Conductors to enforce VRE policies. As for Leeland, we will contact Stafford's Sheriff department.

---

### **Steamy from Manassas asks:**

Manassas Train # 327 - Car 818 -B Side has had no Air Conditioning for several weeks now and is routinely near 80 degrees. The conductors have reported the problem several times, specifically Ben, and attempted repairs to date have failed. Why hasn't VRE taken this car out of the consist and executed

proper troubleshooting and repairs vs. leaving this STEAMY car in service??? and yes I have turned in an online feedback form on this issue too. Now its VRE's turn to take action!!

**VRE Management:**

This car has been removed from service for further evaluation.

---

**Kevin** from **Stafford** asks:

Why doesn't the staff do something about people taking two seats. You have people putting their bags and other stuff in the seat so no one sits beside them.

**VRE Management:**

We will remind the Conductors to enforce the no bags in seats. Please bring this to the attention of a Conductor and he/she will ask the passenger to move their bags or belongings.

---

**Sarah** from **Woodbridge, VA** asks:

Maybe we could have the announcements that are made telling people important information announced in Spanish for our Spanish only speaking passengers. Thank you (Gracias)

**VRE Management:**

Gracias por su comentario, seguimos tratando de mejorar nuestras maneras de comunicacion para toda la gente incluyendo pasajeros que no hablan ingles.

Thank you for the comment. We are continually looking for ways to improve our communication for everyone including our non-English speaking passengers.

---

**Frustrated** from **Anywhere, USA** asks:

Why is it that specific emails to VRE customer service receive absolutely no reply? Clearly communicates no one cares what your riders think. Riders ask questions and submit comments that deserve a response and acknowledgement.

**VRE Management:**

If you have a specific concern that has not been addressed please send to the attention of Chris Henry in the subject line.

---

**Connie** from **Dumfries, VA** asks:

Have you heard if the Transportation Bill will be signed this year to go back to the subsidy of \$245? Thank you

**VRE Management:**

The Chairman of the VRE Operations Board has sent letters to our congressional delegation expressing support for the passage of legislation to establish permanent parity between the parking and transit portion of the transit benefit. We continue to advocate for the restoration of the benefit.

---

**Don** from **Spotsylvania VA** asks:

Can you give us an update on the new Spotsylvania station, and an approx date of when it will open.

**VRE Management:**

The third track project necessary to service the Spotsylvania station is well underway. Once Spotsylvania County has acquired the land, we will be able to provide an update to everyone when the new station will open.

---

**Kevin** from **Burke ctr** asks:

When, via this forum, riders request specific action regarding other riders who are rude &/or ignore stated VRE policy, responding with something like 'comment by concerned rider' is insulting and a complete cop out. Clearly the request is to DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! Enforce VRE policies! If you ignore rider requests/communications, don't do the sessions!

**VRE Management:**

When we respond with "courtesy reminder from a fellow passenger" that means the issue is not policy related but behavior related. If there are specific policy issues that are identified in the comment we will address those separately.

---

**Big D** from **WB, VA** asks:

Now I have brought this up in the past but being a safety concern and also against the law can you please make people aware that crossing Rt. 1 from the Woodbridge Station over to Occoquan Rd in the right lane before 5pm is illegal. Once again I have witnessed a few potential accidents because of the same people not following the posted law. Please contact Prince William County Police to monitor this intersection.

**VRE Management:**

We will continue to address this with Prince William County.

---

**Available Seats?** from **Woodbridge, Va** asks:

Each morning on the 300 Express in the last car there is an individual with a bicycle. Now this person I'm sure is a paying customer which is great but his bike is taking up a seat. On the 300 Express there is never enough seats and others need to stand. Can this person put his bike somewhere else beside in front of a seat so someone else can sit down? That bicycle did not purchase a ticket.

**VRE Management:**

Collapsible bikes are permitted on every train. Full size bikes are only allowed on 308, 310 or 312 (last 3 northbound trains).

---

**Wanda** from **Manassas Park** asks:

the white stripes separating the parking at the station are getting fainter and fainter. are there any plans to re-paint them any time soon? it was especially hard to park during the snow days. thank you.

**VRE Management:**

We will pass this over to our Facilities Manager.

---

**Concerned** from **Woodbridge** asks:

Please remind the two male riders (F'burg VRE 303) to stop running from the train to the parking lot. One in particular (who cues up 3 stops ahead) cuts across the lawn and hedges at full speed. Other riders have to get out of his way or be trampled.

**VRE Management:**

This is a courtesy reminder from a fellow passenger.

---

**Spotsy Girl** from asks:

On a positive note, thank you for the wonderful service that you provide. Now on to the not so great stuff....I have found that in the morning when being dropped off at the Fredericksburg train station, the individuals that walk from the park lots do not care if a car is coming in to the station. They continue to walk and look at us as we are doing something wrong and no, they are not in the crosswalk!! This is very dangerous especially in the mornings when it is dark and most have on dark clothing. Is there a way to block off the section that they use to cut through, making them use the crosswalk by the station?? The other problem is cars double parked waiting to pick up or drop off, this causes lots of problems and backs up traffic for commuters that are being dropped off or picked up. Would love to see a "kiss and ride" at the Fredericksburg station, is this possible??

**VRE Management:**

We will work with the Fredericksburg City Police department to monitor the situation.

---

**dave** from **bristow** asks:

Getting out of Broad Run can take 30 minutes b/c of the light on Piper Ln. Anything we can do to extend the light? ADds a lot of time to a trip

**VRE Management:**

VDOT is aware of the situation and has made some improvements and will continue to look for ways to improve traffic flow.

---

**Dave** from **Manassas, VA** asks:

No questions, just some praise for the great service we continue to receive. Thanks to the operations folks and maintenance staff for keeping us up and on time.

**VRE Management:**

Thanks for the compliment Dave.

---

**Donald** from **VA** asks:

Has consideration been given to lengthening the platforms so that all car doors can open? This seems to be the least expensive way to speed up service.

**VRE Management:**

In recent years we have completed extensions at Broad Run and Burke Centre. The Lorton platform is the next extension to be completed. Rolling Road is also an active project. We continue to look for funding to extend all of our platforms.

---

**Dave** from **Burke, VA** asks:

I've noticed my morning train arrives consistently 5 minutes or more behind the scheduled time. It is not announced as a delay, which leads me to believe this is simply the time the train normally arrives. Have you considered updating the schedule to reflect more accurate arrival/departure times?

**VRE Management:**

We are currently looking to make improvements to the schedule.

---

**Burt from Manassas Park asks:**

When will the walls of the former ADA cage at Manassas Park be modified to allow riders to wait out of the rain?

**VRE Management:**

We removed the door and you are able to stand in the cage.

---

**David from Fredericksburg VA asks:**

Is there a map that shows the VRE reserved parking locations for the Fredericksburg station. I've been riding the VRE for years now and just found a VRE parking area close to the station that I never knew existed.

**VRE Management:**

A map is on our website under station information. <http://www.vre.org/service/stations/fbgparking.htm>

---

**Randy from stafford va asks:**

The VRE has a limit of handicap parking, and I see a lot of people on many occasions who jump out of their cars and run for the train. This leads me to assume that they are not as disabled as they claim or maybe they are using a relative's placard card to have closer parking! Only assuming, my question can you have county police run some tags of regulars in those spaces to verify if they do park legally? I have a friend who brings their spouse to train each morning and goes late to work because no parking is available in those spots when they arrive! Yes they could go earlier, but do to her health issues it's not an option right now! Just a concerned friend that wants eliminate abuses with fines or towing's! Thanks for your time.

**VRE Management:**

We will work with the local police department to ensure people are not abusing disabled parking.

---

**Philip Peans from Fredericksburg asks:**

I think I saw there was a possibility of adding a train between the times of the Southbound 12:55 from Union Station and the 3:35 from Union Station. Any idea what time it would leave Union Station and approx date it would take effect if it does happen? Thanks!

**VRE Management:**

Mr. Philip Peans, we do not have any plans to add another train during this time frame.

---

**Greg from Bristow, VA asks:**

I missed my train this week due to a Norfolk Southern train blocking the entrance to Manassas Airport and Broad Run station (crew change?). There wasn't enough time to go to an alternate entrance. These blockages can also occur in the evening when we're trying to get home. Can VRE coordinate with N/S regarding this? Even if they can't change their schedule, it would help if VRE can announce (as simple as a text) that that this will be happening so we can plan around it.

**VRE Management:**

We can ask Norfolk Southern to work with us on this issue.

---

**Rob from Haymarket asks:**

Whatever happened to the Gainesville-Haymarket extension?

**VRE Management:**

Please refer to our System Plan at [http://www.vre.org/about/strategic/strategic\\_plan.htm](http://www.vre.org/about/strategic/strategic_plan.htm)

---

**Janet from Virginia asks:**

Can you please grease the wheels of the cars. Some days the the squeaking is so loud I have to move to another car.

**VRE Management:**

Please send in more detailed information to [gotrains@vre.org](mailto:gotrains@vre.org) and we will look into it.

---

**Brian from Manassas Park, VA asks:**

Will there ever be Wi-Fi aboard the trains?

**VRE Management:**

As we stated before, there are dead spots that will affect the quality of service. We continue to look for ways to incorporate Wi-Fi in other projects.

---

**Sharon from Woodbridge, VA asks:**

Not a question, but I would like for you to know that your Conductors on the Fredericksburg line are truly professionals--top notch, especially Kindall, Robert, James Campbell and Tony. I ride the VRE everyday from Woodbridge to Union Station and they all are great!

**VRE Management:**

Thank you for that compliment. We will let their supervisor know so they will get the recognition they deserve.

---

**Keith from Bristow, VA asks:**

Are the "Compact Cars Only" signs at the Broad Run parking lot official/enforced or should they be removed. Full size pick-up trucks and large SUV's are parked in these spaces on a consistent basis. What is the VRE definition of a compact car?

**VRE Management:**

The definition is, do not park there if you have a pick-up truck or a large SUV. We will pass this along to Prince William County.

---

**Brenda from Leeland Station from Fredericksburg asks:**

THANK YOU!! Since the last forum, the train engineers are going over the bridge between Quantico and Rippon at a slower pace. This has eliminated the rough ride and provides peace of mind. Thanks for listening and correcting the situation.

**VRE Management:**

We think the on-line forum is a great avenue for passengers to voice their concerns. Another great avenue is our Meet the Management events and the first one this year is April 30, 2014 at Union Station.

---

**Gaile from Manassas, VA asks:**

I know the Quiet Car is not the Silent Car but have any VRE staff been in this car with the laptops click, clicks of women's nails and men's bang, bangs on the keys in surround sound? It's a lot louder than one would realize when no one is talking. Please move to another car!!! Thanks.

**VRE Management:**

Courtesy reminder from a fellow passenger.

---

**Sheri from Stafford, VA asks:**

Leeland Station is nearly full by 630 - Are there any plans for expansion? I think part of this is overflow from Fredericksburg - is there an ETA on when the new Spotsylvania station will be finished and running? Oh - Excellent on-time performance! Even with all the crazy weather....

**VRE Management:**

We believe when Spotsylvania station opens it will relieve some of the crowding at Leeland Road and Fredericksburg stations.

---

**Paul from Fredericksburg VA asks:**

Has construction started on the new Massaponax station yet? If not, any idea when it will start?

**VRE Management:**

We have started improvements on the third rail to the station and Spotsylvania County is still working on the land acquisition for the parking lot.

---

**Shelia from Fredericksburg, VA asks:**

When are you going to put a bathroom in the Fredericksburg train station? I think it is ridiculous that we have no where to go to relieve ourselves before and/or after we leave the train. I do not use the restrooms on the train because the floor is always wet with urine. This issue needs to be resolved.

**VRE Management:**

We do not have plans to install a bathroom at the Fredericksburg station.

---

**Shelia from Fredericksburg asks:**

When are they going to finish painting and repairing the Fredericksburg train station?

**VRE Management:**

We have no immediate plans and we will work with the City of Fredericksburg to identify future improvements.

---

**Kim from Fredericksburg, VA asks:**

Will there ever be an additional train on the Fredericksburg line arriving to L'Enfant during the 40 minute+ lapse between 5:23 and 6:08? Seems like a while to wait for the next train. Also, is there any way for you

guys to weed out questions already answered in previous forums? Seems like the same questions are addressed monthly such as Wi-fi...

**VRE Management:**

There are scheduled Amtrak trains and random freight trains that may operate during that time. We have plans to add another Fredericksburg train in the next fiscal year which will affect the schedule. As for redundant questions in the on-line forum, we answer them for the new participants.

---

**David from Woodbridge, VA asks:**

Yesterday on Train #307, many people get on at Lorton and stand in the isles because it is crowded. However, one person keeps holding the door open and won't let it close, so it stayed open to Woodbridge. The conductor was in the vestibule and did nothing about it. Please tell the conductor that if sees someone holding the door open to tell them to stop and close the door. I prefer to be closed.

**VRE Management:**

Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

---

**Davin from Woodbridge, VA asks:**

MARC's weekend service has proven extremely popular, that MARC had to add cars to the train. If VRE offered weekend service, it would be very popular. Traffic is heavy on Route 1 and I-95 on weekends and with Metro doing track work on weekends, their is no easy way to get to DC on weekends. Even the TRE in Texas offers Saturday service and CalTrain, MTA, Metra, MetroLink, NJ Transit, Northern Indiana Commuter Transit, San Diego Coster, Sound Transit and Tri Rail all offer weekend service leaving VRE the only commuter rail besides ACE that doesn't offer weekend service.

**VRE Management:**

Thank you Davin for the extensive research. Please see our "System Plan" at [http://www.vre.org/about/strategic/strategic\\_plan.htm](http://www.vre.org/about/strategic/strategic_plan.htm)

---

**Mike from Fredericksburg, VA asks:**

Subject: Fredericksburg Line Train Consists. According the average mid-week ridership for February 2014, with Train consists effective March 19, 2014, the Current Midweek Ridership indicates a need to change the existing consists. The current Train Pair of 304/309 supports 1095 seats with eight cars. Based on the ridership figures, Train 304 has the 4th highest total of riders and 3090 carries the second fewest passengers in the evening. Conversely, the Train Pair of 306/303 supports a total of 942 seats with seven cars. Based on the ridership figures, Train 306 has the highest total of ri

**VRE Management:**

We monitor the train ridership on a daily basis and make changes that accommodate the capacity and our train storage issues. The ridership between 306 and 304 has fluctuated over the last few months. We will make consist adjustments when necessary.

---

**Andrew from Manassas, VA asks:**

VDOT has multiple twitter accounts for various areas of the state. Would it be possible to break out the VRE twitter account? So there could be one for just Manassas riders, one for Fred, one combined with Amtrak. Those of us that use Twitter to get rail updates, it can be a bit of an annoyance constantly getting updates that the Amtrak is late, or a fred train is broken down if it has nothing to do with us.

**VRE Management:**

Thank you for the suggestion.

---

**Johnna from Fredericksburg, VA asks:**

VRE has discount ticket programs for secondary scstudents and disable people, why aren't there discount cost fees for adults students? There are adults students that live in the Stafford/Fredericksburg area that ride the train every day to school who can't afford the fee.

**VRE Management:**

Reduced fares are available for Youth, Seniors or Disabled passengers.

---

**Matt from Woodbridge, VA asks:**

Why did the crew on Train #307 decide to change with cars make the platform at Woodbridge yesterday? Usually it's the 2 cars behind the locomotive that don't make the platform, but yesterday it was the front car and the cab car at the North end that didn't make the platform

**VRE Management:**

The Conductors had to re position the train to accommodate a Passenger Needing Assistance (PNA) at that station.

---

**Aaron from Manassas Park asks:**

Now that tourist season is starting, is there anything that can be done to draw new rider's attention to the fact that they are sitting in the quiet car? Most tourists getting on at Union Station just jump in the first door they see. If the door to the car is already open and they sit in the first couple of rows of seats, they

miss all of the signs with the Quiet Car Rules. Anything you can do to help us avoid those awkward moments of having to point out the rules to them is much appreciated.

**VRE Management:**

We will work with our Conductors to identify and address these new rider situations.

---

**Dave from Springfield, VA asks:**

Since the VRE has announced its intent to award the Lorton platform extension contract, when can we expect the groundbreaking? Also - you might want to update the project update page at [http://www.vre.org/about/projects/cip/Lorton\\_station/Lorton\\_station\\_expansion.html](http://www.vre.org/about/projects/cip/Lorton_station/Lorton_station_expansion.html). It shows the project as complete last year!

**VRE Management:**

We will update the page with the correct information.

---

**Champe from VA asks:**

Any lessons learned/ thoughts/ feedback on the ROLL-ON BIKE SERVICE?

**VRE Management:**

We will talk to Amtrak to discuss their experience with their program.

---

**Mellie from Quantico asks:**

Hello the 312 has been getting a lot of travelers on board. In the old cars there's no place for their luggage (huge suitcases) The conductor says the bags can't be kept in the aisles. But the bags are taking up seats. Are there plans for an extra car?

**VRE Management:**

No plans for an extra car at this time.

---

**Jim from Manassas, VA asks:**

While passing through the Backlick Rd area I frequently spot what seems like to be homeless campsites. Are there agencies we can contact to let them know of their presence? I hope someone can reach out to them to provide help

**VRE Management:**

We have folks that we can contact. Thanks for letting us know.

---

**Mike from Burke VA asks:**

Dumb question, but I've always been curious. What do the train crews do between morning service and evening service. I often see the same team of conductors in the afternoon that I saw in the morning. What have they been doing in the ensuing hours?

**VRE Management:**

They have a mandatory rest period.

---

**Sam from Fredericksburg, VA asks:**

We can all benefit from an earlier AM Express Train (maybe 4:30 AM) to DC and also PM train around 3? Are there any plans? what is the status? thanks Sam

**VRE Management:**

There are no current plans.

---

**Deb from Burke asks:**

How about an FAQ page on vre.org with the standard questions and answers that frequently show up in each month's forum? And often have the same response from month to month: Spotsy station status, wifi, how to report issues. FAQs could be available on your site every day, updated when there is new information, and allow more time and attention for non-routine topics in each month's forum.

**VRE Management:**

We will update our current FAQ page with frequent questions from the on-line forum.

---

**Sam from Fredericksburg, VA asks:**

Are there any planned new AM/PM Fredericksburg trains? Short, mid and long term? Sam

**VRE Management:**

Yes, we plan to add a Fredericksburg train AM/PM in the next fiscal year. The specific schedule to be determined.

---

**VRE Management:**

Thank you for participating in another excellent on-line forum. We look forward to seeing you at Meet the

Management starting April 30th at Union Station.  
If your question wasn't answered, please send it to [gotrains@vre.org](mailto:gotrains@vre.org).  
Stay safe!  
Rich, Chris, et al.

---