



2022 Annual Report Virginia Railway Express

VRE is a transportation partnership of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission.



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Joint Message from the CEO & Chair

It is fitting that 2022 marked VRE's 30th anniversary. For the pearl, traditionally associated with such anniversaries, symbolizes resilience.

VRE'S STORY WAS, and continues to be, one of resilience, not to mention adaptability and perseverance. Long-lasting, solid, and signifying a strong bond, the pearl epitomizes VRE's continued commitment to provide safe, reliable, convenient, and comfortable commuter rail service.

2022 was the year VRE looked to put the pandemic in the rearview mirror. Its final vestige — a federal mask mandate — expired in April. Through a variety of initiatives and promotions, we welcomed back several thousand riders and introduced the service to a few thousand more.

The resumption of events — such as the Manassas Heritage Railway Festival, Clifton Days, and the Great Train Race in Fredericksburg — allowed us to reconnect with those in the communities we serve. The second annual Tour de VRE attracted several dozen cyclists and helped promote bikes on VRE trains. And the excitement was palpable when we announced the return of VRE's Santa Trains, tickets to which sold out in minutes online.

Milestones were reached on several construction projects. We cut the ribbon on a platform extension at Rolling Road, celebrated the placement of the final beam at our Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) Facility, and positioned spans connecting the towers of a new pedestrian bridge at the Quantico station. Construction of a new parking garage at Manassas Park and rehabilitation work at the Fredericksburg station are poised to commence in 2023.

VRE's partnership with the commonwealth on the visionary Transforming Rail in Virginia program became more tangible this year, as we contributed \$119.2 million from a green bond sale to advance the initiative. VRE also provided the state with \$7.5 million for expenses associated with construction of a second rail bridge over the Potomac River.

Customer service is VRE's passion, but safety is always our top priority. Several educational outreach efforts, enhanced training, and an emergency simulation at our Spotsylvania station kept staff and our stakeholders focused on this primary objective.

With the experience and pearls of wisdom gleaned over 30 years, VRE embarked on an update to its system plan, which will posit what our train service may look like in the future. The system plan will outline the challenges and opportunities ahead, which we are well positioned to tackle with decades of strong financial management and stewardship by the Operations Board.

VRE's story has often been compared to that of *"The Little Engine that Could."* While there are parallels and much to be said for the value of optimism and hard work, VRE owes its success to the faith and support of riders, residents, business leaders, and elected and appointed officials — past, present, and future.



Rich Dalton
*Chief Executive
Officer*



Margaret Franklin
*Operations
Board Chair*



VRE Operations Board

With an eye toward ensuring VRE's sustainability and future growth, a new executive committee took the helm in January.

THE OPERATIONS BOARD, chaired by Prince William County Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Margaret Franklin, advanced several projects and initiatives related to VRE governance, financial stability, ridership growth, station improvements and technology upgrades, which are detailed in the pages that follow.

VRE Operations Board Members

Top row, from left to right: Lori Hayes, Spotsylvania County; Walter Alcorn, Fairfax County; Alanna Mensing, City of Manassas Park; Dan Storck, Fairfax County; James Walkinshaw, Fairfax County; Matt Kelly, City of Fredericksburg; Jeanine Lawson, Prince William County; Michael McLaughlin, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.

Bottom row, from left to right: Libby Garvey, Arlington County; Meg Bohmke, Stafford County; Margaret Franklin, Prince William County; Sarah Bagley, City of Alexandria; Andrea Bailey, Prince William County; Monica Gary, Stafford County.

Not pictured: Ralph Smith, City of Manassas



Celebrating VRE's 30th Anniversary

VRE rolled out its 30th anniversary logo at the start of 2022. The design, a hybrid of old and new, harked back to a 1929 Railway Express Agency logo upon which VRE's original logo was based.



1929 Railway Express Agency Logo



1992 VRE Logo



2001 VRE Logo



2022 VRE 30th Anniversary Logo

TO CELEBRATE THREE DECADES of commuter rail service in Virginia, VRE held a small event at the historic Manassas station on June 22, the date the first trains rolled along the Manassas Line.

Remarks from VRE Operations Board Chair Margaret Franklin and Member Ralph Smith, City of Manassas Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger, and original Operations Board Members Sharon Bulova and David Brickley were eloquent and captured both VRE's history and bright future. A commemorative train ride from Manassas to Burke Centre capped the celebration.

A reception following the July Operations Board meeting marked the opening of the Fredericksburg Line on July 20, 1992. Many former board members attended, as did Tom Waldron, VRE's first general manager and director of operations. In comments after the luncheon, Waldron and others shared memories, both fond and funny, of their time at VRE.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors honored the anniversary in July by passing a resolution commemorating VRE's history of service to the community.





Right column, top to bottom: Attendees wrap up June's 30th anniversary celebration with a commemorative train ride on the Manassas Line; Burke Centre served as the final stop for passengers on VRE's 30th anniversary train ride; Among those attending the July celebration were (from left to right) Tom Waldron, VRE's first general manager and director of operations; Margaret Franklin, Operations Board chair; Sharon Bulova and David Brickley, original Operations Board members; and Rich Dalton, VRE CEO.



Left column, top to bottom: Festivities at the Manassas station on June 22 marked VRE's 30th anniversary; VRE Operations Board Alternate Victor Angry (left) and Member Monica Gary (right) unfurl a 1992 poster commemorating the start of VRE service; Current and former members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the county's director of transportation present a resolution to VRE CEO Rich Dalton (front, third from right) honoring VRE's 30th Anniversary.



Operations

Ridership more than doubled from 2021 to 2022, going from 530,618 to 1,166,830. Average daily ridership (ADR) went from 2,083 in January to 6,776 in September before finishing the year at 4,365. During Fare-Free September, when tickets were not required to ride, ADR grew by 32 percent over the month prior or by 1,651 riders.

THE OPERATIONS BOARD'S DECISION to suspend fares was designed to thank loyal passengers who rode VRE throughout the pandemic, welcome back former passengers returning to the office post-Labor Day, introduce VRE to potential new riders, and mitigate Metrorail's closure of six Blue- and Yellow-Line stations south of Ronald Reagan National Airport.

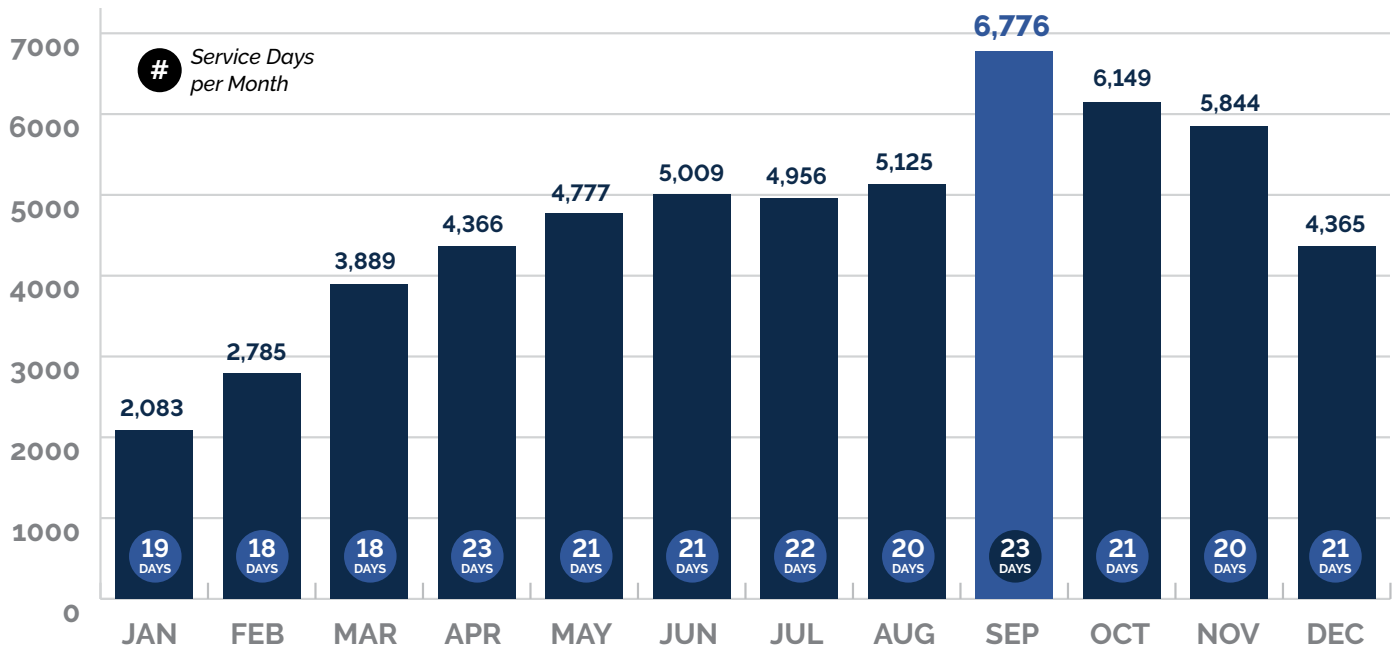
32% increase
in Average Daily Ridership during Fare-Free September

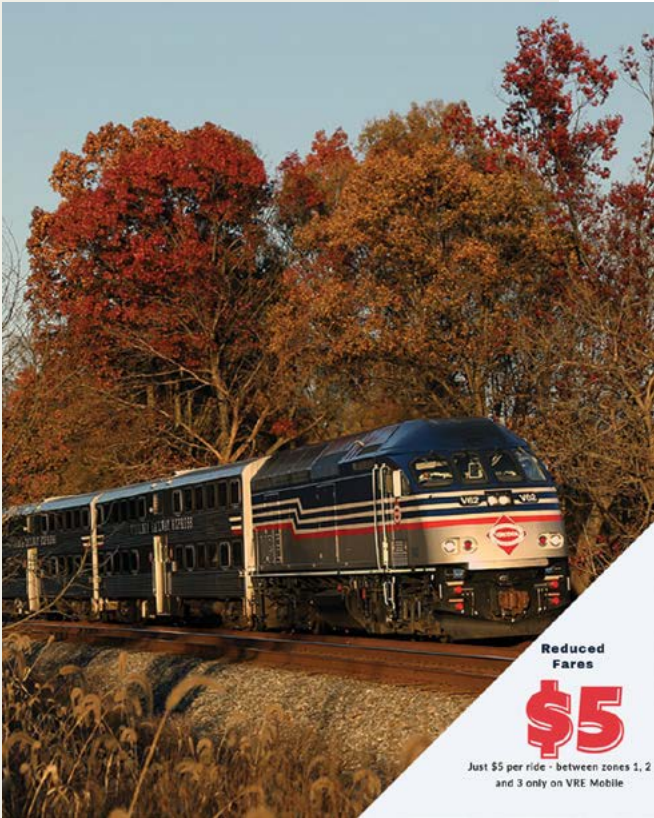
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RISE FOR FREE ALL MONTH LONG IN SEPTEMBER!

Visit vire.org for schedules and info

2022 Average Daily Ridership





WITH THE METRORAIL BLUE LINE closure extending into early November, VRE continued to offer free rides to those traveling within fare zones 1 (*Union Station and L'Enfant*), 2 (*Crystal City and Alexandria*) and 3 (*Franconia-Springfield and Backlick Road*). Following the resumption of Blue Line service, but with the Yellow Line remaining closed for tunnel work, VRE offered discounted fares — \$5 for a single trip — within those zones on VRE Mobile only.

VRE exceeded its on-time performance (OTP) goal of 90 percent for the first four months of 2022. Worsening train congestion on both lines, combined with other issues, pushed OTP into the mid-80 percent range most months and as low as 71 percent in May. VRE's OTP for the year was 86 percent.

The results of VRE's June Customer Service Survey showed increased levels of satisfaction in key areas when compared with results from 2019, the last year VRE undertook such a survey. The percentage of those pleased with VRE's overall communication with passengers jumped 25 points from 57 to 82. Satisfaction with the overall quality of service rose from 74 to 92 percent. And the rating of VRE's crew performance increased five points to 96 percent.

Preliminary results from VRE's Master Agreement Survey were shared with the Operations Board in November. Survey data is used as the basis for calculating jurisdictional subsidy allocations and to inform other decisions. Results showed a shift in share of riders from pre-pandemic numbers in the seven jurisdictions VRE tracks. Fairfax and Prince William counties experienced a decline, while the cities of Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park, as well as Spotsylvania and Stafford counties, posted increases.



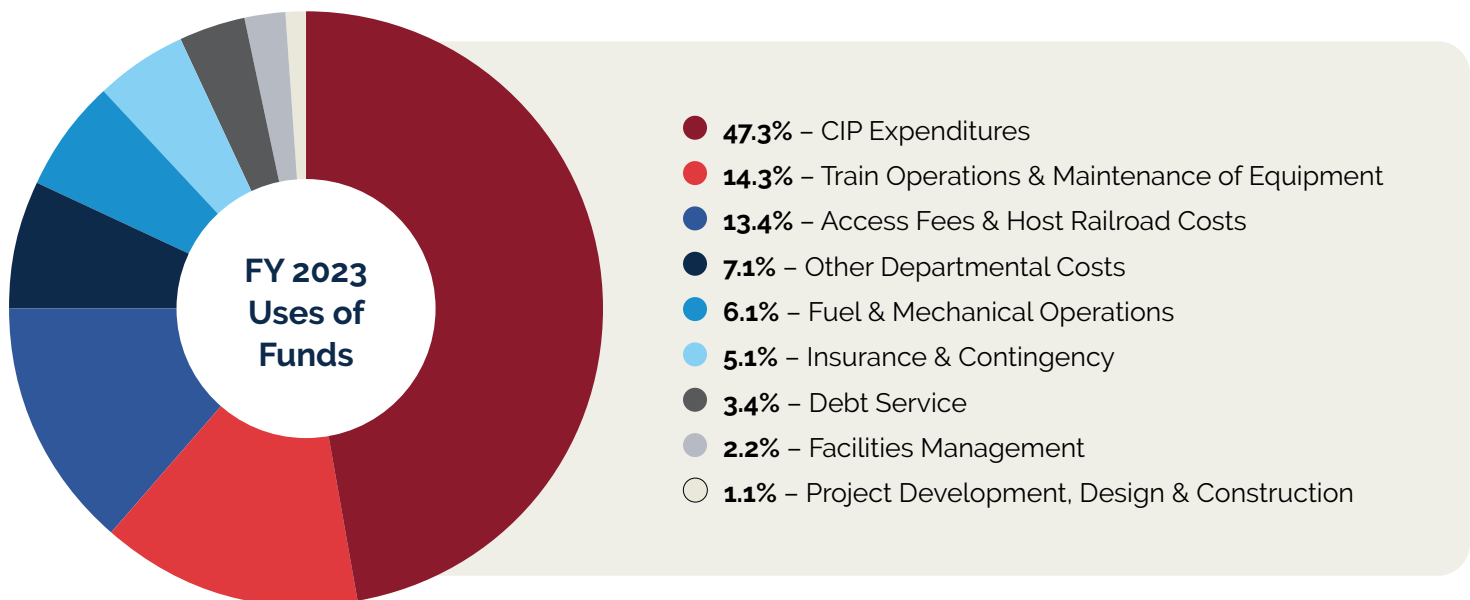
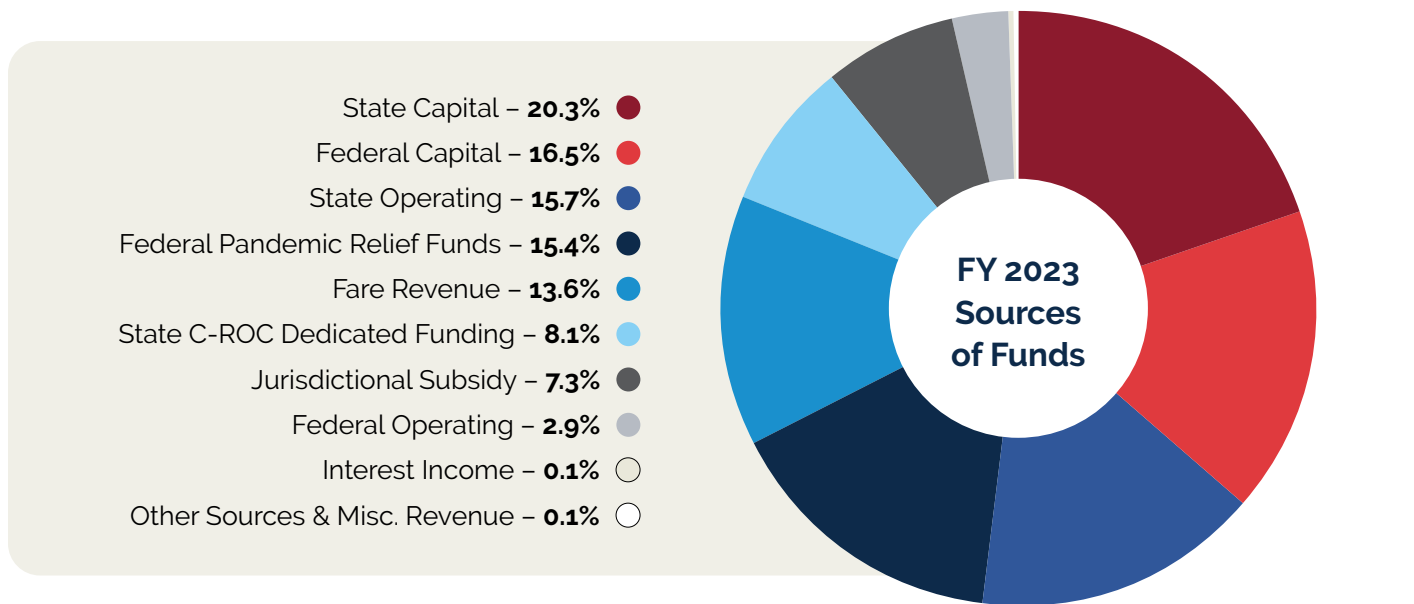
Annalee Judd was one of more than 30 VRE staff who assisted onboard trains with the June Customer Service Survey.



Audit & Budget

VRE received an unmodified opinion from PBMares LLP in November for the audit of its fiscal year (FY) 2022 financial statements. The opinion letter confirms that VRE's statements, in all material respects, fairly and accurately present the financial position of the organization. This opinion is the best outcome of a financial audit.

THE CONTINUED USE of federal pandemic relief funds allowed VRE to program a balanced budget for FY 2023, which began July 1, 2022. Those funds, comprising about 15 percent of the \$185.5 million operating and capital budget, mitigated a decline in farebox revenue and provided continued subsidy relief to the local jurisdictions. Budgeted operating expenses of \$97.8 million were 9 percent higher than the year prior. A corresponding reduction in programmed capital expenses brought the total budget in about \$400,000 lower than FY 2022.



Transforming Rail in Virginia

JUNE'S PUBLIC BOND SALE, backed by the Commuter Rail Operating and Capital (CROC) Fund, allowed VRE to contribute \$119.2 million to support the Commonwealth's \$4 billion **Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV)** program. The bond proceeds were transferred to the **Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA)** to assist in the purchase of rail right-of-way in the Interstate 95 corridor from CSX Transportation.

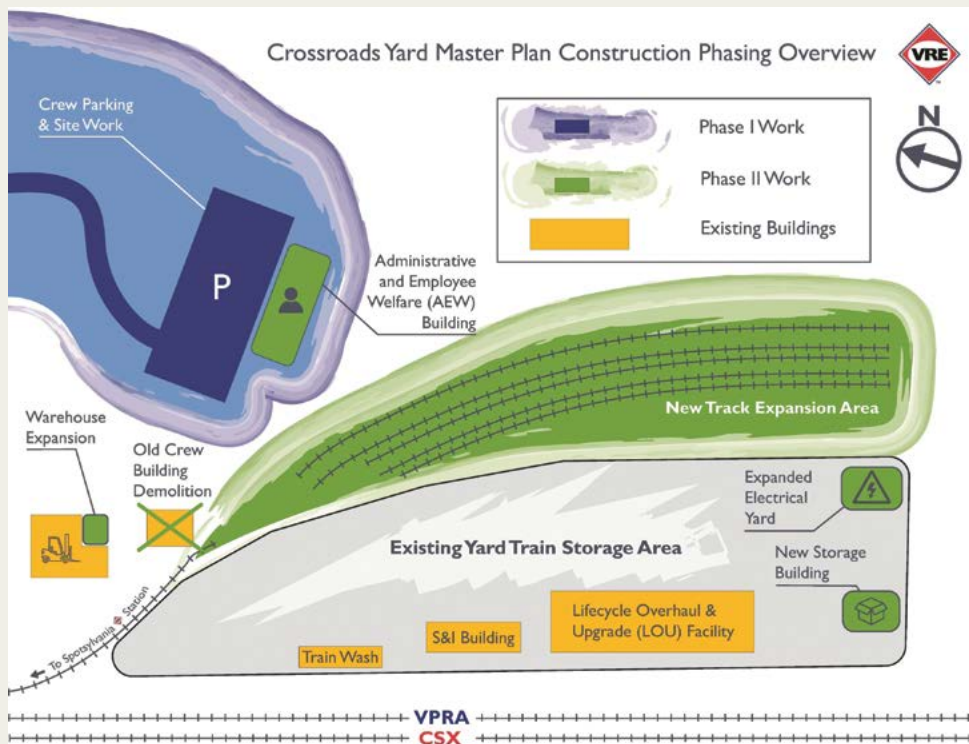
In addition to funds from the bond issuance, VRE committed another \$75 million of CROC funds to be paid over 10 years. The first contribution occurred in November when VRE reimbursed VPRA for \$7.5 million of engineering and environmental work necessary to construct a **second rail bridge over the Potomac River**.

Beyond those financial contributions, VRE continued to support TRV through station and rail infrastructure improvements. Its \$1.1 billion Capital Improvements Program was more than two-thirds funded. Among the projects were those that would lengthen existing and build new platforms to accommodate longer trains and allow for the simultaneous boarding of two trains at a station.

The recently completed Crossroads Yard Master Plan established the infrastructure requirements necessary to support increased VRE service on the Fredericksburg Line under TRV through 2030. Near-term needs include expanded parking and construction of an administrative and employee welfare building. Design work will continue into 2023.



VRE CEO Rich Dalton (*left*) presents a check from bond sale proceeds to Jennifer DeBruhl (*center*), director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and DJ Stadler (*right*), executive director of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.



The new master plan will assist VRE in making infrastructure investments needed to support increased passenger rail service on the Fredericksburg Line



Projects & Rolling Stock Purchases

Work began on an update to VRE's system plan, which provides a framework for VRE investments and actions to best meet regional travel needs. At year's end, the first phase — which included outreach to VRE riders, coordination with VRE member jurisdictions and regional agencies, collection of ridership data, and analysis of potential future VRE travel markets — was wrapping up. A significant public outreach campaign to solicit input on proposed service scenarios from both existing and non-VRE riders will launch in 2023.

Rolling Road Platform Extension and Station Improvements

Several dozen elected and appointed officials, VRE's contracting partners, and jurisdictional staff turned out on a fine September day to celebrate completion of the **Rolling Road Platform Extension and Station Improvements Project**. The 290-foot extension allowed the platform to accommodate eight-car trains. The \$5 million project included repair of the legacy platform and stairs, and upgrades to lighting and communications systems.

The L'Enfant Track and Station Improvements

The **L'Enfant Track and Station Improvements Project** took a step forward when the Operations Board approved a preferred alternative in October. The selected option best accommodates long-term platform capacity and operational requirements while enhancing station access. Next steps include preliminary engineering and environmental review, slated to commence in 2023.



Left: Dignitaries from the region cut the ribbon on VRE's Rolling Road Platform Extension and Station Improvements Project

Right: A preferred alternative to improve the existing L'Enfant station and tracks received approval from VRE's Operations Board





Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade Facility

To celebrate the placement of the last beam at the **Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) Facility**, VRE and Clark Construction held a topping out ceremony in August at the Crossroads Yard in Spotsylvania County.

Before the beam was hoisted into position, staff from the two organizations — as well those from VRE contractors Gannett Fleming, STV, Inc. and Keolis Rail Services Virginia — signed it. With structural steel complete, the focus shifted to installing the maintenance equipment, overhead crane, and office areas within the facility. The \$53 million LOU, which will allow VRE to perform heavy maintenance onsite, is slated for completion in 2023.

Top row: Staff from VRE and project contractors sign the final beam for the LOU Facility

Bottom left: The final beam for the LOU Facility is hoisted into place during a topping out ceremony

Bottom right: Construction focus turns to the interior and installation of equipment to perform heavy maintenance



Quantico Station Improvements

Under a starry August sky, VRE's construction team from Archer-Western placed spans connecting the towers of a new ADA-compliant pedestrian bridge at the Quantico station. Staff coordinated throughout the night with CSX dispatch to ensure the spans were safely set in between the passing of trains. The east span over the existing mainline tracks was installed first, followed by the west span over the future third track location. The **\$24 million project** includes an extension of the existing platform and construction of an island platform.



Left: A VRE train passes under the frame of the new Quantico pedestrian bridge.

Right: Crews work through the night to place spans connecting the towers of the bridge.





- CSXT tracks
- Existing platform
- Existing canopies
- Platform repairs/ extensions
- Bridge repairs

Planned improvements to the Fredericksburg station include platform lengthening and repairs.

Fredericksburg Station Rehabilitation

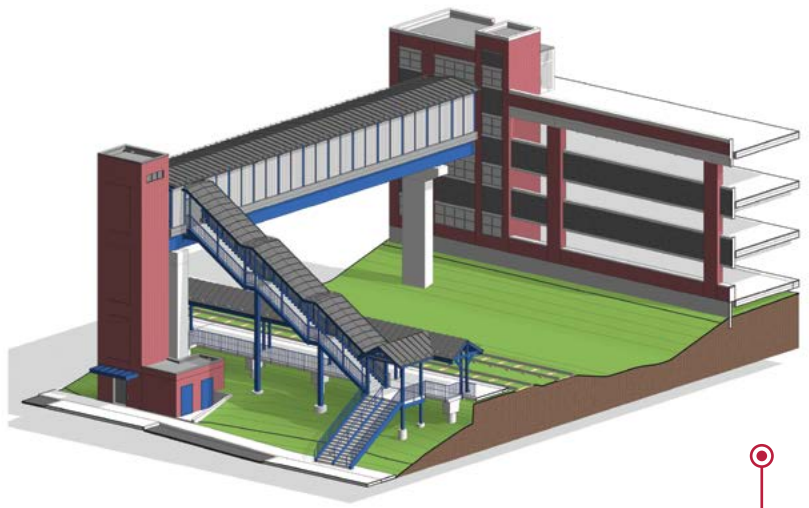
With design of the **Fredericksburg Station Rehabilitation Project** completed, the VRE Operations Board approved agreements with STV, Inc. in January for construction management services and Clark Construction Group, LLC in July for construction services. Work on the \$11 million project — which includes platform lengthening and repairs, and the addition of a set of stairs to eliminate an at-grade street crossing — will commence in early 2023.

Manassas Park Parking Expansion

Construction of a **parking garage at the Manassas Park station** advanced when the Operations Board approved a contract with Gannett Fleming in July for construction management services. Once a construction firm is selected in early 2023, work on the 736-space garage — including 540 for VRE passengers — can begin.

New Passenger Railcars

The preliminary design-review process for VRE's 21 new state-of-the-art passenger railcars reached the halfway point in September. Alstom Transportation Inc. shared functional design and architecture presentations of the Coradia multilevel railcars for VRE's review. The final-design review process will commence in early 2023.



Proposed design of the new Manassas Park station garage



Sustainability

Lighting and Solar Power

The installation of LED lighting at VRE's yards, headquarters and Fredericksburg offices, Alexandria station tunnel, and parking lot G at the Fredericksburg station reduced VRE's carbon footprint and electricity usage. LED lighting will be expanded to other stations.

A study identified two VRE stations as pilots for solar power generation. Once the solar panels are installed at the Lorton and Spotsylvania stations, VRE anticipates an 80 percent reduction in kilowatt hours there, resulting in lower energy costs and a 57-ton decrease in greenhouse gas emissions annually.

Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Friendly Features

To encourage more sustainable commutes to and from VRE stations, the Operations Board amended the VRE Passenger Tariff in April, officially allowing full-size bicycles on all railcars. This was the first of several enhancements designed to make the commuter rail service more accessible and welcoming to the cycling community. As a result, VRE trains carried 7,183 bicycles in 2022.

Recognizing that not everyone who bikes to a VRE station wants to take the bicycle onboard, VRE installed new eight-slot bike racks at stations, including three — L'Enfant, Crystal City and Brooke — that lacked bicycle parking. An evaluation of the need for more robust facilities, including bike shelters and lockers, was underway at year's end.

The March completion by Fairfax County of a 1,200-foot asphalt trail provided pedestrians and cyclists with easier access to the Burke Centre station. The project also included construction of a concrete sidewalk, on-road bicycle lanes, and crosswalk to help people reach the station more safely from the adjacent neighborhood.

Bike to Work Day

To promote VRE's bicycle-friendly features, staff participated in Bike to Work Day in May at three stations — Manassas, Manassas Park, and Woodbridge — partnering with other organizations that sponsored the pitstops.



Left to right: Lot G at the Fredericksburg station is one of several places where VRE has installed LED lighting; Full-size bicycles are now allowed on all VRE railcars; VRE's Natasha Khan (*right*) and Woodbridge volunteer Avis Bracey (*center*) join VRE Operations Board Chair Margaret Franklin at her Bike to Work Day pitstop at the Woodbridge station.



Tour de VRE

Thirty-three cyclists from 10 partner agencies and jurisdictions participated in October's Tour de VRE. The second annual ride was designed to raise awareness of VRE's bike policy, build camaraderie amongst staff, and raise funds for triple negative breast cancer research. The event — which included distances of 70-, 40-, 30- and 10-miles — started at the Crystal City station and concluded in Fredericksburg.

Tour de VRE

Top row, left to right: Cyclists for the 70-mile ride convene at the Crystal City station; The route includes urban roadways and suburban bike trails.

Bottom row, left to right: At the finish in Fredericksburg, the 33 cyclists don pink Tour de VRE t-shirts to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month; Cyclists wait on the platform for the first VRE train of the morning headed to Crystal City.



Safety

SEVEN INJURY-FREE YEARS by the Keolis mechanical team at VRE's Broad Run Yard was cause for celebration in November. It was a significant accomplishment given that over the last decade an average of about 4,000 U.S. railroad workers were injured on the job each year. VRE and Keolis managers honored the accomplishment with an award ceremony, presentation of heated jackets, and food-truck dinner at the Broad Run Maintenance and Storage Facility.

Designed to strengthen staff incident-management and -communication skills, VRE held a full-scale emergency simulation in partnership with Spotsylvania County, CSX Transportation, and Keolis. Participants in the October drill arrived to find a train derailment at the Spotsylvania station. Evaluators examined the implementation of Federal Emergency Management Agency incident-management standards and organizational teamwork.

Educating passengers about the existence and importance of **Emergency Notification System** signs was the aim of five outreach events at stations in September and October. The signs, found at every at-grade crossing in the United States, contain a phone number to call should someone spot a stalled vehicle, trespasser, or debris on the track. They also contain a number specific to the crossing that allows the host railroad to identify the location of the incident.

During September's **Rail Safety Week**, VRE staff visited stations, encouraging riders to review rail safety tips and take the **VRE Safety Pledge**. When the pledge concluded, the names of 10 participants were drawn at random to receive VRE-logo merchandise.

A **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** awareness campaign was launched at several VRE stations in November. Signs eventually will be placed at all stations. The lifeline is a national network of crisis centers providing free and confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Left to right: First responders assist an injured passenger during a simulated train derailment at the Spotsylvania station and remove a window to extricate a trapped passenger during the emergency drill; New signs promoting the 988 hotline were placed at several VRE stations; VRE worked to educate riders about the importance of Emergency Notification System signs.



Government Affairs

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS in Fredericksburg was the focus of a group tour with U.S. Senator Mark Warner in April. VRE CEO Rich Dalton was joined by Operations Board Member Matt Kelly and the city's mayor, Mary Katherine Greenlaw. The event, which included stops at Chatham Bridge and Riverfront Park, gave Mr. Dalton the opportunity to preview upcoming improvements to VRE's Fredericksburg station.

A second infrastructure event was hosted by U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly at VRE's Burke Centre station in May. Operations Board Vice Chair James Walkinshaw and VRE Director of Government and Community Affairs Joe Swartz spoke to the ways in which the federal infrastructure bill would support projects — particularly a second rail crossing over the Potomac — benefitting VRE and its riders.

VRE joined an alphabet soup of organizations — CTB, DRPT, NVTA, NVTC and VDOT — in May for the region's annual Joint Transportation Meeting. Staff were on hand to answer questions about VRE capital projects and service, and Operations Board Chair Margaret Franklin represented the rail service on the panel convened to accept public comment regarding the commonwealth's Six-Year Improvement Program.

General Assembly members and others in the business community learned of VRE's legislative priorities during a transportation forum hosted by its two parent commissions in December. CEO Rich Dalton, who was joined by leaders from OmniRide and Metro, spoke to value VRE brings to the region and the importance of safeguarding the Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund, proceeds from which help support Transforming Rail in Virginia, and diversifying its revenue sources.

Top to bottom: VRE CEO Rich Dalton (*left*) discusses the rehab of the Fredericksburg station with U.S. Sen. Mark Warner; VRE's Joe Swartz (*second from left*), Operation's Board Vice Chair James Walkinshaw (*second from right*) and others join U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (*right*) for an infrastructure forum at the Burke Centre station; VRE's Nick Ruiz (*left*) and Joe Swartz (*right*) share information about the rail system's capital projects at a regional transportation meeting; *From left to right:* Virginia Senator George Barker, PRTC Executive Director Bob Schneider, PRTC Chair Victor Angry, NVTC Chair Canek Aquirre, NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice, DRPT Director Jennifer DeBruhl, VRE CEO Rich Dalton, and WMATA General Manager and CEO Randy Clarke at the 2022 legislative forum



Outreach

After a two-year hiatus, several VRE events — including Santa Trains and Meet the Management — returned, and VRE again participated in community events sponsored by others.

Santa Trains

A holiday tradition cherished by families, **VRE's Santa Trains** brought good cheer to more than 11,000 enthralled passengers in December. During the 75-minute excursion, Santa, Mrs. Claus and their elves listened to children's Christmas wishes and handed out goodie bags. As in the past, this year's Santa Trains included educational — highlighting rail safety to children — and charitable — encouraging support of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program — components.

Meet the Management

Thirtieth anniversary trinkets, snacks, and cold drinks were in high demand during four Meet the Management events in June and July. Held at VRE's core stations — Alexandria, Crystal City, L'Enfant, and Union Station — these meet-and-greets gave passengers the opportunity to speak with the CEO,

senior managers, and other staff. Riders inquired about station improvements, possible weekend service, and additional weekday trains, to name a few.

Manassas Heritage Railway Festival

Excursion tours on VRE resumed as part of the **Manassas Heritage Railway Festival** in June. VRE has long participated in this family-friendly celebration of railroad history. This year, storm troopers boarded the trains to entertain and interact with passengers, to everyone's delight.

The Great Train Race

"Make a little noise!" That's what VRE staff told parents, grandparents, and kids as they handed clappers, imprinted with the VRE logo, to those cheering on runners in **The Great Train Race** in May. The race, which started at the Fredericksburg station, attracted some 1,300 youth participants and collected \$12,000 for charity.



Top row, left to right:
VRE resumed its Meet the Management events at four core stations; Mr. Claus returned to VRE trains and musicians to station platforms as VRE Santa Trains rolled again.

Bottom row, left to right: VRE's Fredericksburg station serves as the starting line for heats in the Great Train Race; Two runners sport VRE tattoos.



Clifton Day

Clifton Day is the only day of the year when VRE trains stop in this quaint town. With festival parking limited, VRE provided transportation between Clifton and four stations on the Manassas Line. Now in its 54th year, the festival harbingers the arrival of fall with activities for all ages.

Markets & Festivals

From farmers markets, festivals and fairs to chambers of commerce meetings, VRE staff attended dozens of events between April and August raising the rail service's visibility and offering free rides to prospective passengers.

Summer Interns

VRE staff shared information and insights with 18 summer interns from the U.S. Department of Transportation in July. The college students rode a midday train from Union Station to Broad Run, where they toured the maintenance and storage facility. This annual visit gives future transportation-sector workers a high-level overview of what it takes to run a safe and reliable commuter rail service.

Webinars

Some 250 consultants and contractors attended March's **Rail Industry Day webinar**. The event featured presentations from VRE, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation pertaining to upcoming projects and solicitations and engaged industry leaders in discussion about business opportunities. It also provided contractors with a better understanding of the commonwealth's Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative.

A **November webinar** brought together VRE CEO Rich Dalton and Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Executive Director DJ Statdler to update more than 300 viewers on passenger rail infrastructure projects across the commonwealth. The interactive hour-long program was sponsored by Virginians for High Speed Rail.



VRE trains stop just once a year in Clifton, providing transportation to and from its annual festival.

VRE Operations Board Secretary Sarah Bagley (left) joins VRE's Monica McKenzie (center) and Christine Hoeffner at the Old Town Farmers Market in Alexandria.

VRE's Tim Thomasson and Annalee Judd staff a table at the Fredericksburg Farmers Market.

Eighteen summer interns from the U.S. Department of Transportation toured VRE's Broad Run Yard.

VRE's jointly sponsored Rail Industry Day webinar attracted some 250 consultants and contractors



Staff

WHILE MANY MEMBERS of VRE's operations, financial and warehouse teams worked onsite throughout the pandemic, other staff began returning to the newly renovated headquarters office in April. A mandatory in-office presence was required Tuesday through Thursday.

What started in 2020 as a way to allow staff to mix and mingle in a safe and comfortable environment, VRE's internal wellness events evolved into a semi-annual gathering wherein staff get together outdoors and explore ways to stay healthy — physically, mentally and emotionally. In addition to enjoying lunch together in May and October, staff took part in educational and entertaining activities. The October event included recognition of those who reached milestone service anniversaries with VRE.

Lunch-and-learn programs updated staff on two topics. With safety being VRE's top priority, May's focus was the System Safety Program Plan, approved earlier in the year by the Federal Railroad Administration. Staff learned about VRE's use of system-wide processes to proactively identify and analyze hazards and risks associated with operations and how that information is employed to implement preventative actions to eliminate, control, or minimize the impacts of such hazards.

Details of a **plan to rebuild and modernize parts of Union Station** — including train tracks, platforms and gates — were shared with VRE staff over lunch in September. The plan includes an open train hall providing visual access to the train and bus concourses. The project, currently in the environmental stage, is targeted for completion in 2040.

VRE staff joined thousands of other companies and government agencies in celebrating their interns. Launched in July 2017, National Intern Day is designed to thank interns and applaud their work. VRE employs three information technology (IT) interns who gain valuable skills in a real-world operating environment working side by side with professionals on the IT team.



Staff (1) choose from healthy food options, (2) indulged in an apple cider bar, (3) learned to Zumba, and (4) had fun at a photo booth at VRE's semi-annual Health & Wellness gatherings; (5) Plans to modernize Union Station was the topic of a September staff lunch and learn; (6) VRE staff honored (from left to right) Nesta Fletcher, Luke Adair and Steven Phillips from the IT Department on National Intern Day.



THE VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE), a joint project of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, will provide safe, cost effective, accessible, reliable, convenient, and comfortable commuter-oriented rail passenger service. VRE will contribute to the economic development of its member jurisdictions as an integral part of a balanced, intermodal regional transportation system.





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