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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **VRE to Receive Over \$20 Million for Two Projects**

### ***I-395/95 Commuter Choice to Help Fund Amtrak Step-Up Program and New Crystal City Station***

**Alexandria, Va.** – Two projects proposed by the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) will receive more than \$20 million through the [I-395/95 Commuter Choice program](#) following votes Thursday by the [Northern Virginia Transportation Commission](#) and the [Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission](#). The funds will support reinstatement of the Amtrak Step-Up program and construction of a new VRE station in Crystal City.

“This funding will provide both short- and long-term benefits to VRE and its passengers,” said Operations Board Chair James Walkinshaw. “Our riders have been clamoring for a return of the Amtrak Step-Up program, which was suspended during the pandemic. Reinstatement and the possible expansion of this program will offer alternative travel options to many VRE passengers.”

The Amtrak Step-Up program allows VRE multi-ride ticketholders to ride select Amtrak trains for an additional charge. The nearly \$1.5 million in I-395/95 Commuter Choice funding will not only provide for the program’s reinstatement but subsidize the cost of Step-Up tickets on VRE’s Fredericksburg Line, which runs parallel to I-95 and I-395. VRE is working with Amtrak to finalize trains to include in the program and a mechanism to allow VRE passengers to ride, as Amtrak began requiring reservations on all trains when the pandemic hit.

The award of \$18.8 million for a [new Crystal City station](#) will complete the funding commitments for this highly anticipated project and leverage over \$50 million in federal, state and regional funds.

“This new station will help anchor redevelopment in the area and support the state’s [Transforming Rail in Virginia program](#),” said Walkinshaw. “Station access and service reliability will also be improved as a result of this project.”

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The station's design calls for a longer platform than exists at the current Crystal City station so that passengers can board or alight from any railcar of an eight-car train. The current platform only accommodates four railcars. The new "island platform" will allow two full-length trains to simultaneously service the platform. The design also accommodates a future pedestrian/bicycle connection between the station and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

VRE runs 32 trains each weekday, generally north in the morning and south in the afternoon and evening. It is the nation's 13th largest commuter rail service, connecting Central and Northern Virginia with the District of Columbia. VRE is recognized for its provision of safe, reliable, convenient, and comfortable transportation. Additional information is available at [www.vre.org](http://www.vre.org).

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