



Virginia Railway Express

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Virginia Railway Express (VRE)



- Began service in 1992
- Operate two lines – Manassas and Fredericksburg
- Run 29 trains at 18 stations in 8 cities and counties
- Connect to Metro in 5 locations & Amtrak in 7 locations
- Operate on 90 miles of track
- 16,500 average daily riders

VRE Basics



- VRE leases track access from:
 - CSX for Fredericksburg line (13 trains)
 - Norfolk Southern for Manassas line (16 trains)
- Number of trains limited by track rights with railroads
- FY 2009 annual budget of \$73M
- Employ 37 full time staff



Who Rides VRE

- New riders – 36% riding 1-3 years
- Most riders (51%) would drive if VRE were not available
- Most passengers (42%) drove before using VRE
- 75% of passengers use VRE five days per week
- 62% Male and 38% Female
- Dominant age range is 45-54 (35%)
- Over 70% of riders have a household income greater than \$100,000 per year.

Commuter Rail Defined



- Traditionally suburb-to-downtown
- Locomotive-hauled
- Travel primarily on leased freight railroad tracks
- Characterized by:
 - Multi-trip tickets
 - Station to station fares
 - Key stations in central business districts
 - 20 to 30 minute headways



Commuter Rail Is

- Long-haul commute – usually 50 to 60 miles from central business district
- Traverses multiple jurisdictions
- Little competition until close to central business district
- Higher priced – viewed as more high end



Commuter Rail is Not

- A subway, light rail or trolley system
- Not heavy volume
- Not high speed and rapid acceleration
- Operated on exclusive right-of-way – usually shared access with freight railroads
 - Lack of dedicated ROW limits number of trains and hours of operation



Advantages of Commuter Rail

- Use of existing railroad ROW and infrastructure
- Can move over 1,000 people per train
- Dispatching and maintenance of ROW provided by railroad
- Can be established relatively quickly
- Environmentally friendly



What People Want

- Drive from home to work, without congestion, and park for free
- For most, transit becomes an option if delays exist and/or parking is unavailable or cost prohibitive
- Commuter rail does not have to be faster or less expensive, just more reliable



VRE's Impact on the Region

- Reduces Congestion
 - Removes the equivalent of one lane of traffic from I-95 and I-66 during the peak periods
 - Creates capacity on other modes
- Lowers emissions
 - Reduces NOx by approximately 123 tons/year
 - Decreases VOCs by approximately 44 tons/year



VRE Impact in I-95 Corridor

AM Peak Period in the I-95 Corridor				
3-Hour AM Peak Period (6:00 am to 9:00 am)				
			Persons/ Lane/Hour	
	Persons	Percent		
Persons Non-HOV Lanes	63,189	61%	1,049	
Persons HOV Lanes	18,633	18%	3,106	
Transit Passengers	21,974	21%		
Total Persons	103,796	100%		
Metro Rail	15,131	69%		
VRE	3,521	16%	1,174	Persons/Hour
Total Bus	3,322	15%		
Total Persons	21,974	100%		

- VRE moves 1,174 people per hour = to one non-HOV lane/hour
- VRE moves more people than all buses
- Transit moves 39% of people in corridor (including HOV)



VRE Riders Want More Service

- Earlier train on Fredericksburg Line – 4:30 am
- Later train on Manassas Line – 8:00 pm
- Express trains – Limited stops
- Increased train frequency – every 20 minutes
- Holiday and weekend service



Growth Opportunities

- Gainesville/Haymarket Extension
 - Have funding for a feasibility study, environmental and PE
 - Could double ridership on Manassas line
 - Could be in place in about 5 years if steady flow of non-federal funding received
- Spotsylvania County Extension
 - Option to build station near yard
 - Would improve parking in Fredericksburg area
 - Would increase ridership on Fredericksburg Line



Challenges for Growth

- VRE has no dedicated funding source
 - Limited funding for operations – state and local jurisdictional budgets are strapped
 - 2% local gas tax is used by jurisdictions for VRE, transit and roads
- Shortage of mid-day train storage in DC
- Shortage of auto parking at key VRE stations
- Governance structure does not allow for growth outside of existing jurisdictions without membership additions



Questions?
