The Case for Passenger Rail & Transforming Rail in Virginia

Danny Plaugher, Executive Director
Who are Virginians for High Speed Rail?

We are non-profit coalition of citizens, businesses, localities, and community groups that educate and advocate for the expansion of fast, frequent, and reliable intercity rail service. We were founded in 1994 as a partnership between the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the Future of Hampton Roads.
Virginia is changing and our transportation challenges are increasing
Transportation in Virginia
1990-2019

• Population: +38%
  • 81% moving into Urban Crescent

• Road Network: +13.4% | VMT: +42%

• Highways: +13.3% | VMT: +75.3%

• Flights: -23.6% | PPF: +143.6%
The cost to **pave our way back to 2000**

- We would need **1,002** additional interstate lane miles.

- Est. total cost: **$44.3 billion**
Young Virginians prefer📞📞 to🚗🚗
Drivers Licenses in VA | 2019
According to US Census & Federal Highway Administration Data

- 16-34 year olds
- 35-54 year olds
- 55-74 year olds
- Over 75
- Virginia

70% 75% 80% 85% 90% 95%
Virginia 2040

- **1.3 million** more Virginians;
- **1.1 million** are projected to move to the Urban Crescent.
- **7 million** Virginians will live on less than **1/3** of our state’s land mass.
“We've got to move more people, not more vehicles.”

Aubrey Layne, VA Secretary of Transportation - 2016

“The I-95 Study analyzed many potential improvements to this critical corridor. It found that widening I-95 by one lane in each direction for 50 miles would cost $12.5 billion. While the cost was staggering, the most sobering part of the analysis was that by the time construction was completed in 10 years, the corridor would be just as congested as it is today. That finding is what led Virginia to rail.”

Shannon Valentine, VA Secretary of Transportation - 2021
Why Trains?
Because we’ve tried everything else….
And, passenger rail is successful!
Passenger Rail in Virginia is a success!

Since 2004:

- 46 percent increase in passenger rail service
- 96 percent increase in ridership
- 6.8 million Virginians with new or expanded rail service
- $9.6 billion in economic benefits generated
- 1.47 million metric tons of CO₂ not released
- 7.8 billion PMTs removed from our roadways
- 165 million gallons of fuel not used
Transforming Rail in Virginia
So, what does this mean for Richmond?
Thank you!

Questions?

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