



New River Valley Passenger Rail Update

I-81 Advisory Committee
December 13, 2024



Background: Virginia Passenger Rail Network: 2024

- Four State-Supported Amtrak Routes: 8 daily roundtrips
- Roanoke: 2
- Richmond: 1
- Newport News: 2
- Norfolk: 3
- Six Amtrak Long Distance Roundtrips
- One NC State-Supported Roundtrip
- Two Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Commuter Routes
- 16 daily roundtrips
- Manassas: 8
- Fredericksburg: 8



PASSENGER ROUTES

Virginia State-Supported Services

- Washington-Roanoke (Route 46)
- Washington-Newport News (Route 47)
- Washington-Norfolk (Route 50)
- Washington-Richmond (Route 51)

Host Railroads

- CSX - CSX Transportation
- NS - Norfolk Southern
- BBRR - Buckingham Branch
- Passenger Station

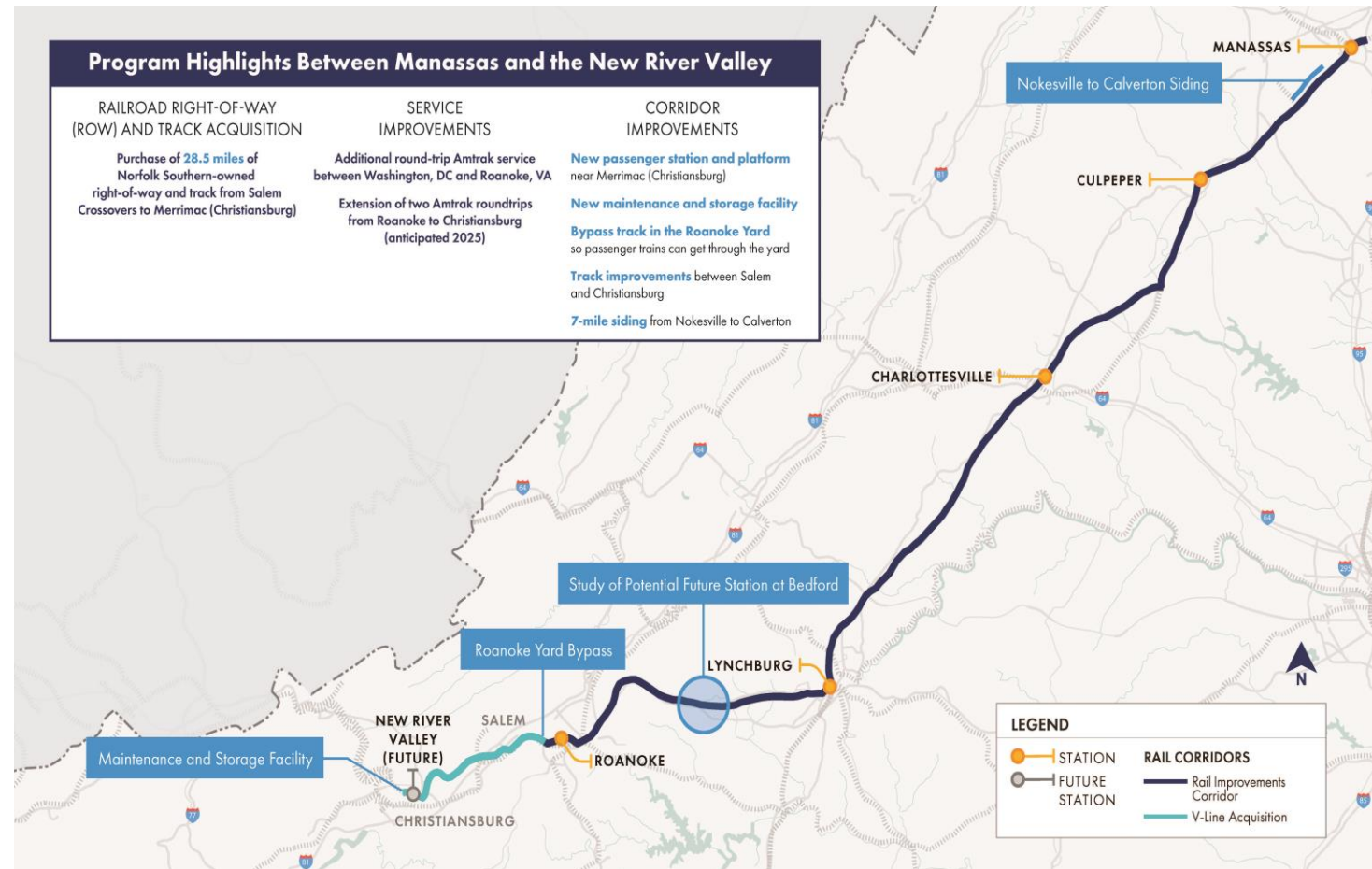
Other Services

- Other Amtrak State-Supported
- Amtrak Long-Distance
- VRE Commuter Rail
- Thruway Bus



Background: NS-VPRA 2022 Agreement

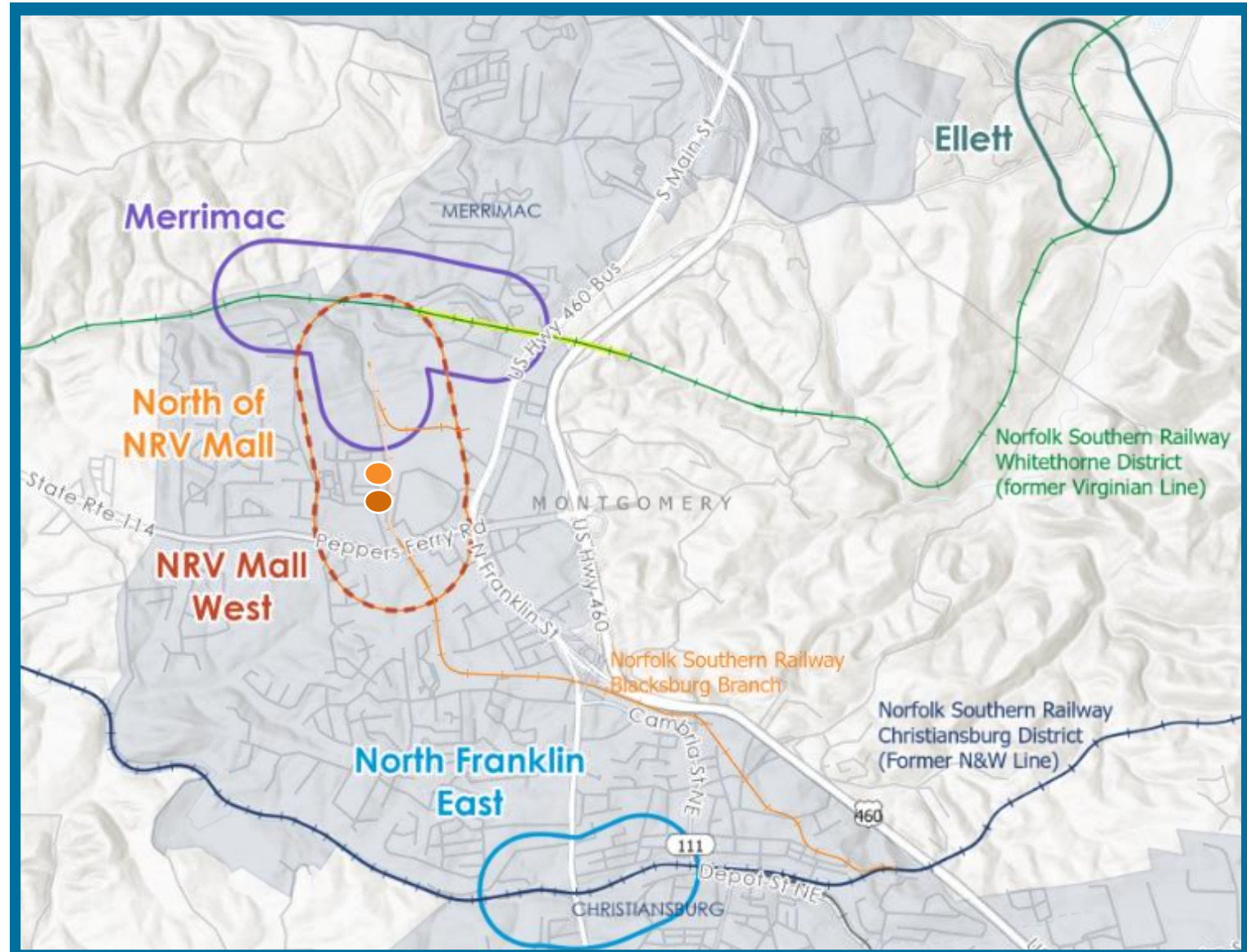
- Amtrak service began in 2009 with one round trip between Lynchburg and Boston - annual ridership forecast of 33,100; Service more than tripled the ridership forecast in the first year.
- Service expanded to Roanoke in November 2017.
- 2022 Agreement with NS included:
 - 2nd roundtrip to Roanoke, which began on July 11, 2022.
 - Extension to the New River Valley along the 28-mile Virginian Line, which Virginia purchased.
 - \$36.5M to NS for passenger rail improvements in Roanoke Yard
 - \$131M to NS for improvements along the Western Rail Corridor, such as Nokesville to Calverton double track



An estimated 80,000 net new riders annually will be added to the route due to the 2nd train to Roanoke and extension of both trains to the New River Valley.

NRV Station Feasibility Study (2022)

- Evaluated the feasibility of bringing passenger rail to the NRV.
- Assessed sites in the region that could feasibly support a passenger rail station.
 - Ellett
 - Merrimac
 - **North of NRV Mall (NRV-N)**
 - **NRV Mall West (NRV-W)**
 - North Franklin East



NRV Extension & Challenges

2022 Concept: Extend Amtrak service to New River Valley along NS's secondary "Virginian Line" (V-Line)

2022 estimates at 0% design:

- Cost to extend to NRV: **\$257M**
- Start of passenger service: **2026**

January 2024 Challenges: 30% design showed higher costs and longer schedule

- Least expensive option to New River Valley: **\$545M**
- Start of passenger service: **2028**
- Extension to preferred Mall site an additional **\$240M-400M** (service start **2029**)

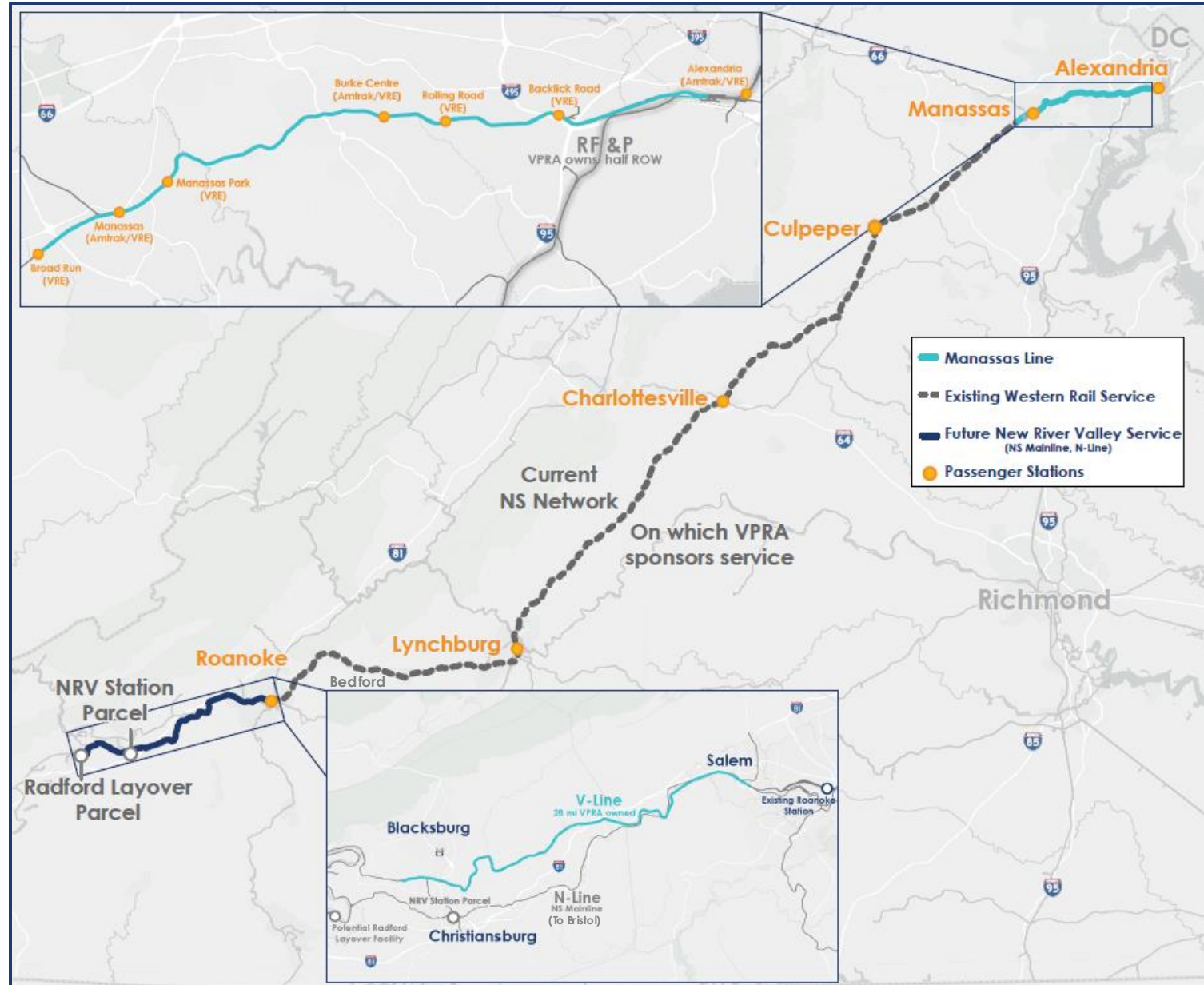


NRV Station Alternatives (2024)



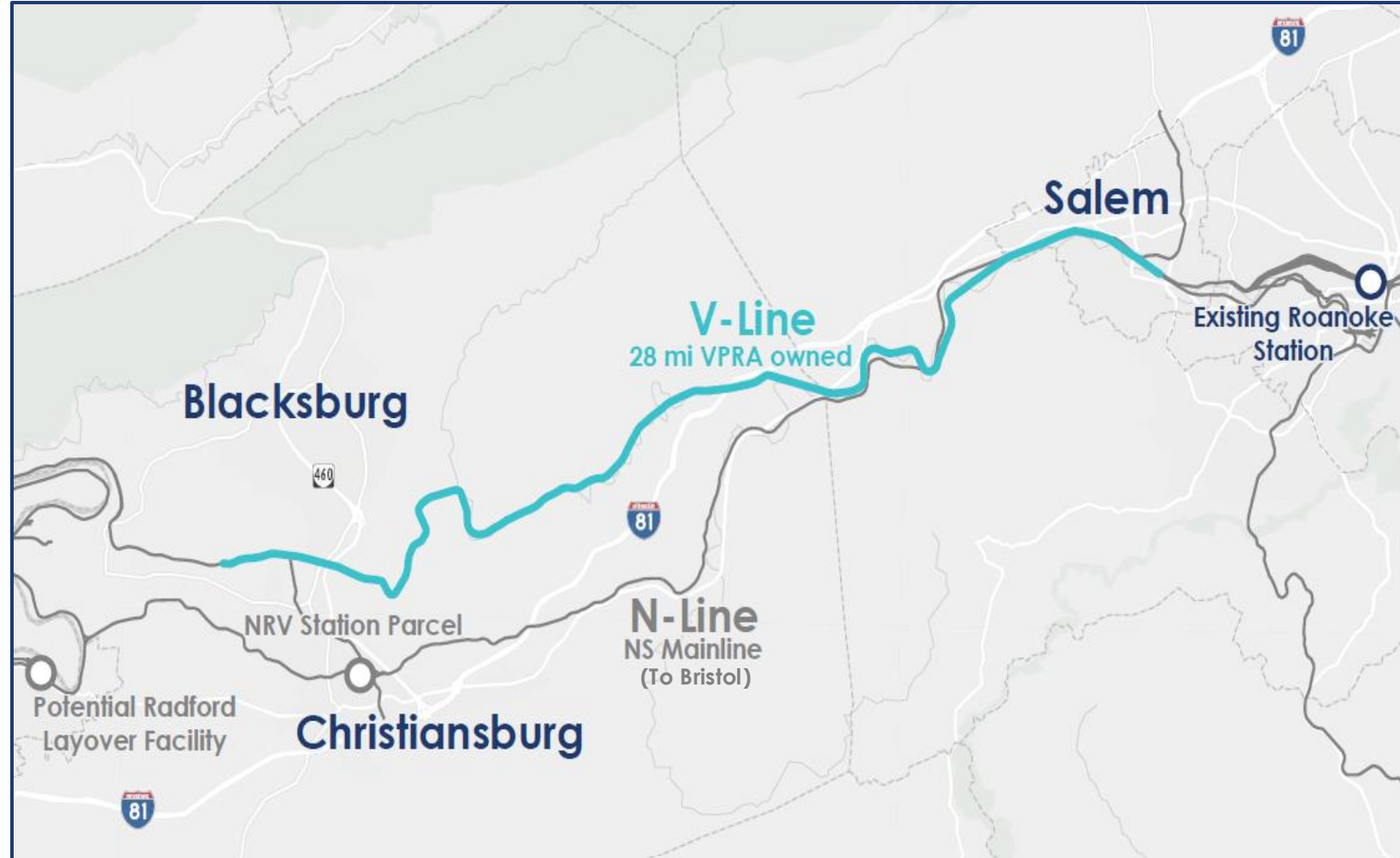
2024 NS Deal: Saving Time and Money

- VPRA approached NS in January 2024 seeking better options to reach the New River Valley
- NS open to extending passenger service on NS N Line if VPRA acquires Manassas Line
- Agreement executed between Virginia and NS on August 29, 2024
- Start of passenger service to NRV **no later than 2027**
 - 1-2 years sooner than 2022 location(s)
- VPRA control of Manassas Line
 - Dispatch services
 - Enables night and weekend VRE service



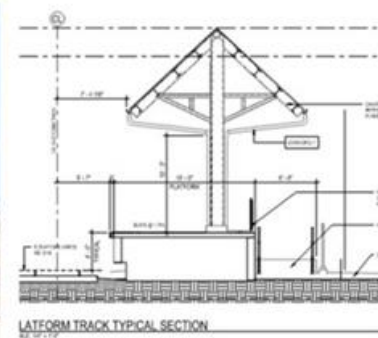
2024 NS Deal: New River Valley

- Extend to Christiansburg on NS Main Line (“N-Line”)
- Sale of the V-Line back to NS
- **NS Constructs platform, pocket track, and layover facility**
 - Service no later than **2027**
- **Acquire historic depot building**
 - In service from 1906 -1979
- Adds **Bedford** station stop
- Opens door for **Radford** service and **Third Daily Roanoke Train**
- Keeps **Bristol** expansion possible by avoiding costly Merrimac Tunnel on V-Line



2024 NS Deal is Better for Virginia

1. **Faster:** Expands to New River Valley about two years sooner
2. **Less Risk:** Shifts risk of construction delivery to NS and incentivizes early and under-budget delivery
3. **Cheaper:** Saves the Commonwealth over \$100M
4. **Better Location:** More central Christiansburg location; includes historic depot building
5. **More Service:** New Bedford service and opens possibility for Radford service and third Roanoke train
6. **Cost Avoidance:** Obviates maintenance costs on aging bridges and structures on V-Line
7. **Favorable to Expansion:** Locates passenger rail station on the mainline to Bristol, reducing future cost of potential SW expansion by avoiding costly tunnel upgrades
8. **More Control:** Dispatch and control of Manassas Line; add weekend and night VRE service
9. **Cost Certainty:** Guarantees VRE cost-controlled access to Manassas Line



New River Valley Project Funding: Sources & Uses

Cambria platform, pocket track, parking, and layover facility at Radford: **\$65M**

- \$47.9M from 2021 Commonwealth Appropriations Act
- \$17.5M from VPRA's Commonwealth Rail Funding

Roanoke Yard Improvements: **\$36.5M**

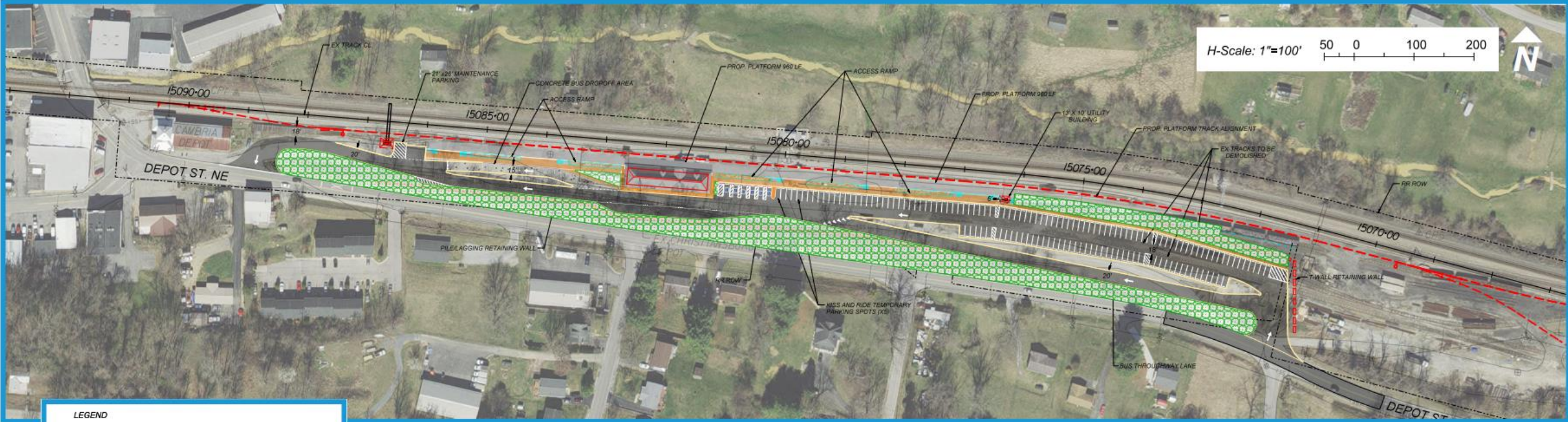
- \$36.4M from Commonwealth High Priority Projects Program (via SMART SCALE recommendation)
- \$.1M from VPRA Commonwealth Rail Funding

Western Rail Improvements: **\$131.5M**





- \$100M from I-81 funding
- \$13.5M from Commonwealth High Priority Projects Program (via SMART SCALE recommendation)
- \$17.9M from VPRA Commonwealth Rail Funding)



New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Conceptual Facility Layout



LEGEND

 PAINTED PAVEMENT	 GREEN SPACE
 ACCESS RAMP	 SIDEWALK
 TRACK PLATFORM	 STAIRCASE

Next Steps

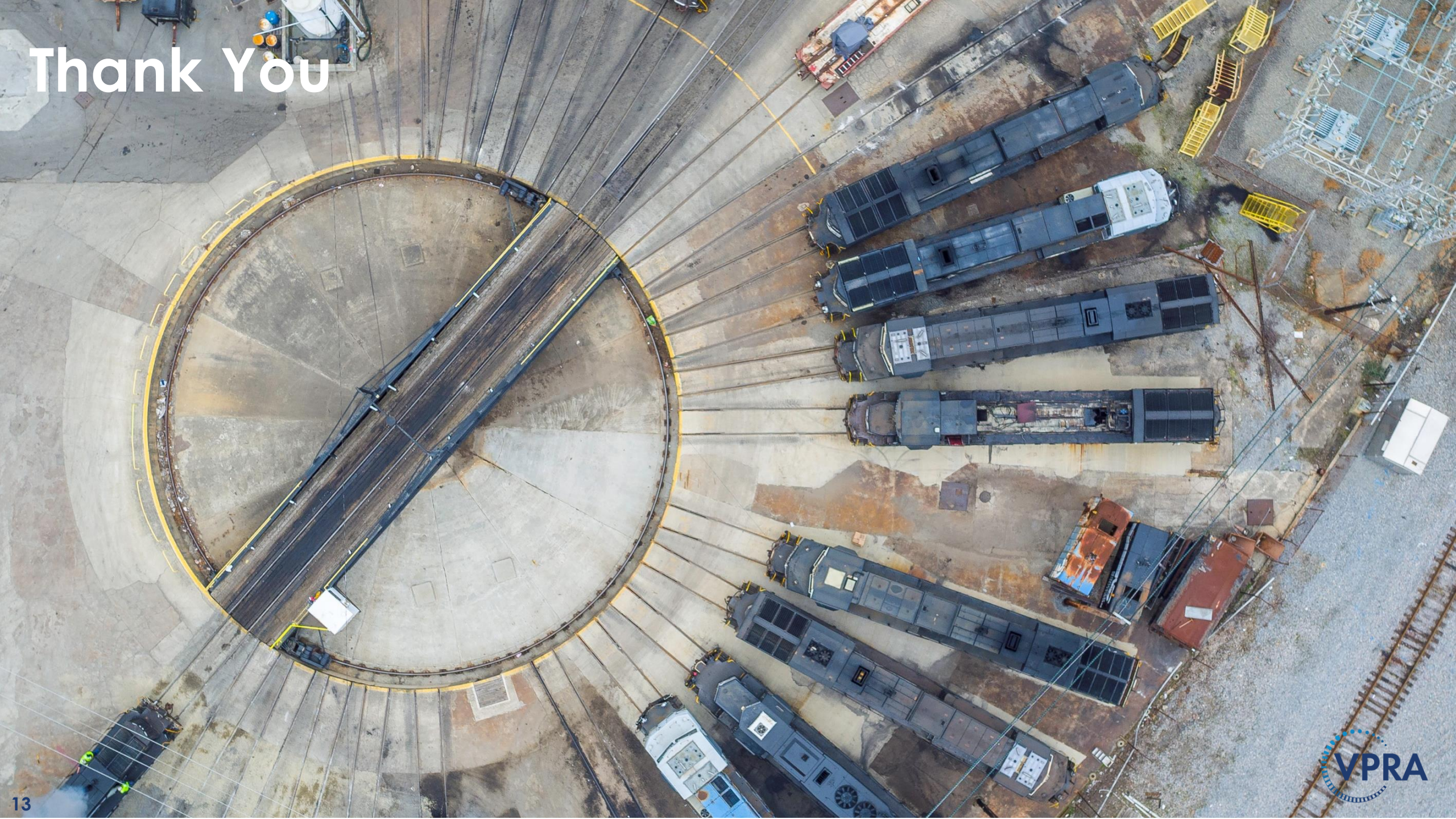
Immediate next steps:

- Prior to end of 2024: NS to complete final design of NRV Station and Layover Facility
- February 2025: State Environmental Impact Review on VPRA-owned infrastructure approved
- February-March 2025: NS to begin construction at Radford and Christiansburg
 - *Note: Construction of maintenance facility for NS at Christiansburg site has already begun*

Later steps:

- VPRA to pursue the transfer of \$2M FRA funding to NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority (PRSA)
- VPRA & NRV PRSA to execute term sheet and MOA outlining roles and responsibilities of station area
- NS to convey Christiansburg and Radford sites no later than August 2027
- Passenger rail extends to Christiansburg

Thank You



Appendix

Cinnabar Site Improvements & Issues

\$545M Cost Drivers: Slate Hill Tunnel, Grading for Layover Track and Site

Slate Hill Tunnel Improvements

- Egress shaft
- Ventilation systems
- Emergency notification systems

Cinnabar Road Site Improvements

- Property acquisition
- Earthwork needed to grade site for level equipment storage
- Need to create access for patrons, crews and vehicular traffic
- Wetland and stream impacts



Slate Hill Tunnel



Cinnabar Road Site

Mall Site/Tunnel Improvements & Issues

~\$785M Costs to traverse Merrimac Tunnel and Construct Mall Station

Merrimac Tunnel Safety Improvements

- Egress shafts
- Ventilation systems
- Emergency notification systems

Mall Site Improvements

- Reverse curve along 110 feet of elevation gain
- 600,000 cubic yards of rock cut

