



Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Electronic Board Meeting Packet

April 26, 2021

April 2021 VPRA Board Agenda Packet

Table of Contents

April 26, 2021 Board Agenda	3
Draft Minutes: March 22, 2021 VPRA Board Meeting	4
Draft Minutes: April 7, 2021 Special VPRA Board Meeting	9
Statewide Rail Plan Presentation	12
Rail Station Policy, Needs Assessment, and Prioritization...	24
Amtrak Ridership & Revenue: COVID Impacts	36

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board Meeting

April 26, 2021

10am – 3pm

Agenda Item	Presenter
Public Comment	
Board Chair Update	Jennifer Mitchell, Chairperson
Executive Director Update	DJ Stadler, Executive Director – VPRA
Statewide Rail Plan	Emily Stock, Manager of Rail Planning – DRPT
Rail Station Policy, Needs Assessment, and Prioritization Strategies for Station Funding	Emily Stock, Manager of Rail Planning – DRPT
Amtrak Ridership & Revenue: COVID Impacts	Jeremy Latimer, Director of Rail Programs – DRPT Haley Glynn, PR & Marketing Specialist – DRPT
Administrative Updates	Jennifer Mitchell, Chairperson Steve Pittard, Chief Financial Officer – DRPT
Closed Session	



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board

Jennifer L. Mitchell
Chairperson

600 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 786-4440 (DRPT)
Fax: (804) 786-3725 (DRPT)

DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Monday, March 22, 2021 - 10:00 am Electronic Board Meeting

In light of the continuing state of emergency declared by Governor Northam, where it is impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location, and as allowed by the General Assembly during the continuing state of emergency, this meeting to take action to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operation, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority held an electronic meeting on March 22, 2021.

All board members participated remotely using a GotoMeeting platform. Members of the public were able to witness the meeting online via live-streaming and were provided with the opportunity to provide public comment telephonically at the outset of the meeting using a dial in number provided in the online meeting public notice. The online internet public notice for the meeting noted that this meeting would be conducted using an electronic process due to the COVID-19 state of emergency and as a precaution to reduce the risk and spread of the novel coronavirus. The online meeting public notice also furnished the Agenda and Board materials as well as information regarding the availability of online live-streaming of the meeting at the noted link. Online viewers were furnished a telephone number to call to notify staff of any interruption of the live streaming of the meeting in accordance with Item 4-0.01.g. of Chapter 1289 and Section 2.2- 3708.2 of the Code of Virginia.

The audio and meeting documents and presentation materials are on the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's website, <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/>

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Bulova, Deborah Bulter Painter, Victor Cardwell, Patricia Doersch, Jay Fiset, Roderick Hall, Wick Moorman, Paul Nichols, Hossein Sadid, James Spore, Mariia Zimmerman, Rich Dalton (Ex-Officio), Bruno Maestri (Ex-Officio), and Jennifer Mitchell (Chair).

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STAFF PRESENT

Linda Balderson, Bridget Davis, Suzanne Ellison, Haley Glynn, Jeremy Latimer, Michael McLaughlin, Steve Pittard, Randy Selleck, Emily Stock, and Andrew Wright.

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

James Head (Hunton), Corey Hill (Kimley-Horn), Nathan Macek (WSP) and Lisa Wright (Office of the Attorney General).

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Chair, Jennifer Mitchell, presided and called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the procedures and instructions for the electronic meeting, including all votes will be conducted by roll call vote. The following statement was made:

"On November 19th, Governor Ralph Northam signed House Bill 5005, Virginia's revised biennial budget, which includes new language for meeting electronically. In light of the continuing state of emergency declared by Governor Northam, we are conducting this meeting in a remote setting, keeping safety top of mind and mitigating the impacts and spread of COVID-19."

Executive Assistant Bridget Davis then called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2021 MEETING

Ms. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Moorman to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2021 meeting. The vote was conducted by a roll call vote and the motion passed.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Mitchell opened the meeting up for public comment.

Ian Ollis, FAMPO, Fredericksburg, VA-

Mr. Ollis stated that he looks forward to future board meetings and hopes to encourage upgrades, improvement and additional train service for the Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania and Stafford community.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

The following item was presented for information:

1. Board Chair Update

Presented by: Jennifer Mitchell, Chair

Chair Mitchell provided the following updates:

- **Transforming Rail in Virginia:** Secretary Valentine testified on March 10 at the US House Rail Subcommittee regarding the \$3.7 billion Transforming Rail in Virginia program. The hearing and the Secretary's testimony centered on the economic and environmental benefits of rail investments in Virginia and across the nation. Specifically she reinforced Virginia's support for HR 2, the Moving Forward Act, and its new Passenger Rail Improvement, Modernization, and Expansion (PRIME) grants.
- **2021 General Assembly:** The Budget Conference Report provided one-time funding for the following DRPT rail programs in the 2021 Transportation Initiative:
 - \$83.5M: extend intercity passenger rail service between Roanoke-New River Valley and increase frequency of intercity passenger rail along the I-81/Route 29 corridor
 - \$83.5M: improve commuter rail service on the VRE Manassas Line
 - The Conference Report directs the Secretary of Transportation to conduct a cost assessment of extending passenger rail to Bristol and servicing a rail station in Bedford.
 - HB1893 and SB1212 introduced by Delegate Hurst and Senator Edwards to create a New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority have passed their respective houses and signed by respective house president and speaker. The bills is pending the Governor's signature.
- **VPRA:** The Transforming Rail in Virginia interim website is live and the full site is expected to debut in April.
- **Rail Industry Day:** DRPT and VRE held a joint Rail Industry Day on February 24 to inform the contracting community of the various upcoming procurements associated with the Transforming Rail in Virginia capital program. Approximately 350 people were in attendance.
- **Federal Stimulus, American Rescue Plan:** The newest round of federal stimulus in response to the pandemic has allocated \$1.7B total to Amtrak, with \$175M going to all state sponsored services. Official figures for Virginia are not yet available, but we expect to receive \$12M - \$13M.
- Amtrak is making the following service changes, made possible by the federal stimulus support:
 - **Long Distance Service Restoration:** Amtrak is fully restoring reduced Long Distance service to daily service between May 24 and June 7. The restoration includes all 12 routes that had day-of-week service reductions due to the pandemic. Long distance routes Crescent, Palmetto, Silver Meteor, and Silver Star which pass through Virginia are scheduled to be restored on June 7.
 - **Reinstate Furloughed Employees:** Amtrak will start the process of recalling approximately 1,250 furloughed employees later this month. Notifications to employees are expected to begin on or about March 15, with a goal of completing these notifications by March 29.

Amtrak Service:

- **Amtrak Northeast Regional Sale:** Amtrak is offering a \$19 flat rate sale on all NER trains to include Virginia sponsored trains.
 - Sale period: March 23 – March 26
 - Travel Period: March 30 – September 30
 - Accommodation: Coach and Business only - no Business or First Class
- **50% Capacity Restriction:** Amtrak is working on plans to lift capacity restriction on trains sometime this summer. Ridership demand and COVID infection rate will dictate termination of this capacity restriction. Amtrak is subject to federal law and masks will be required at stations and on trains until further federal guidance.
- **Virginia Sponsored Service Schedule:** All routes are back in operation except Washington D.C.-Richmond route, which still remains suspended due to COVID-19 impact. Richmond route stations are being served by Newport News and Norfolk route trains, as well as by long distance Amtrak service.

Amtrak Ridership:

- **Y-o-Y Ridership change for Virginia sponsored service:** Virginia sponsored service for the month of February 2021 was 31.1% of February 2020 ridership (down -68.9%).(see table below)
- **M-o-M ridership change for Virginia sponsored service:** February 2021 ridership was 5.4% lower than January 2021 ridership (-1,048). January 2021 ridership was 19,488.
- **Systemwide** ridership is at 26.5%
- **Amtrak Recovery:** 7-day moving average for bookings continues to improve. Systemwide bookings are at 33.3% of the bookings for the same week last year. The percent of bookings for trips with travel dates that are relatively further in the future are increasing. This shift to bookings with longer days-to-departure promises continued growth in trips ahead.

VRE Service:

- **COVID-19 Service Schedule:** VRE trains are operating on an 'S' Schedule Plus (special schedule for holidays and snow days, supplemented with Train 300 for the northbound commute and Train 307 for the southbound commute on the Fredericksburg line).
- **Step-up Program suspension:** VRE step-up program for Amtrak trains stands suspended. The duration of this suspension is unknown at this time.

VRE Ridership:

- **VRE's Average daily ridership (ADR)** in February 2021 was 1,131. Ridership was down slightly from January, which averaged 1,179 daily passengers.
- **VRE system wide on-time performance** rate for February 2021 was 93%, slightly higher than the previous month. System wide OTP rate was 92% in January 2021.

MOTION FOR CLOSED SESSION

Following the presentations, Ms. Bulova made the following motion:

*"I move that the Board convene in a Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing potential transactions where bargaining is involved and where the financial interest of the Commonwealth would be adversely affected if the discussion were made public at this time,
And,*

pursuant to Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3711(A)(8), for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel regarding provisions in the agreement requiring legal advice.

"Additionally, I move that staff and attorneys attend the Closed Session because their presence is deemed necessary, and will aid the Board in its consideration of this matter."

The motion was seconded by Ms. Butler Painter and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

The Board suspended the open session at 10:16 a.m. on March 22, 2021 to move into closed session with instructions that the open session would reconvene at 4:00 pm on March 22, 2021.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The Chair reconvened the open session meeting at 4:00 p.m. on March 22, 2021. Upon reconvening the meeting, the Chair made the following statement:

"We are now going to take a roll call vote, and I ask that each member indicate their agreement with the following:

To the best of my knowledge, during the Closed Meeting, the only matters heard, discussed or considered were those matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Moorman and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 4:04 p.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/.

Respectfully Submitted:

Bridget Davis, Executive Assistant

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Jennifer L. Mitchell
Chairperson

600 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Wednesday, April 7, 2021 - 3:00 pm Electronic Board Meeting

In light of the continuing state of emergency declared by Governor Northam, where it is impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location, and as allowed by the General Assembly during the continuing state of emergency, this meeting to take action to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operation, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority held an electronic meeting on April 7, 2021

All board members participated remotely using a GotoMeeting platform. Members of the public were able to witness the meeting online and were provided with the opportunity to provide public comment online. The online internet public notice for the meeting noted that this meeting would be conducted using an electronic process due to the COVID-19 state of emergency and as a precaution to reduce the risk and spread of the novel coronavirus. The online meeting public notice also furnished the Agenda and Board materials as well as information regarding the availability of an online meeting at the noted link. The audio and meeting documents and presentation materials are on the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's website, <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/>

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Bulova, Deborah Bulter-Painter, Victor Cardwell, Patricia Doersch, Jay Fiset, Roderick Hall, Cynthia Moses-Nedd, James Spore, Mariia Zimmerman, Rich Dalton (Ex-Officio), Bruno Maestri (Ex-Officio), and Jennifer Mitchell (Chair).

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STAFF PRESENT

Bridget Davis, Haley Glynn, Joy Harris, and Jeremy Latimer.

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

Lisa Butler Wright (Office of the Attorney General)

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Chair, Jennifer Mitchell, presided and called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the procedures and instructions for the electronic meeting, including all votes will be conducted by roll call vote. The following statement was made:

"On November 19th, Governor Ralph Northam signed House Bill 5005, Virginia's revised biennial budget, which includes new language for meeting electronically. In light of the continuing state of emergency declared by Governor Northam, we are conducting this meeting in a remote setting, keeping safety top of mind and mitigating the impacts and spread of COVID-19."

Administrative Assistant Joy Harris then called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

MOTION FOR CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Bulova made the following motion:

"I move that the Board convene in a Closed Session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussions related to the employment of a prospective candidate and salary; pursuant to Virginia Code Sec. 2.2-3711(A)(6) and (29), for the purpose of discussing award of a public contract and investment of public funds for banking services where discussion in open session would adversely affect the financial interest and bargaining position and negotiation strategy if discussions were public at this time; and, pursuant to Virginia Code Sec. 2.2-3711(A)(8), for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel regarding provisions in the agreement requiring legal advice. Additionally, I move that staff and attorneys attend the Closed Session because their presence is deemed necessary, and will aid the Board in its consideration of this matter."

The motion was seconded by Ms. Moses-Nedd and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

The Board suspended the open session at 3:08 p.m. on April 7, 2021 to move into closed session with instructions that the open session would reconvene at 4:00 pm on April 7, 2021.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The Chair reconvened the open session meeting at 3:38 p.m. on April 7, 2021. Upon reconvening the meeting, the Chair made the following statement:

"We are now going to take a roll call vote, and I ask that each member indicate their agreement with the following:

To the best of my knowledge, during the Closed Meeting, the only matters heard, discussed or considered were those matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened."

The motion was conducted by a roll call vote and carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

The following item was presented for action in the meeting:

Action: Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Enter Contract with Executive Director

Ms. Bulova made the following motion:

WHEREAS, Section 33.2-2980 of the Code of Virginia says the Authority shall employ an Executive Director who shall direct the day-to-day operations of the Authority. WHEREAS, the Executive Director Search Committee interviewed and recommends DJ Stadtler for employment and in conjunction with the Office of Attorney General drafted a proposed employment Agreement; and NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Director Search Committee hereby recommends the Board hire DJ Stadtler under the terms in the proposed employment agreement..

Ms. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Cardwell to approve the executive director's contract. The motion was conducted by a roll call vote and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/

Respectfully Submitted:

Joy Harris, Administrative Assistant

VIRGINIA

STATEWIDE RAIL PLAN

2022



VPRA Board

Emily Stock, Manager of Rail Planning
April 26, 2021

FRA Requirements



- Statewide Rail Plan every four years (last SRP adopted by CTB 2018)
- FRA-approved plan makes states eligible for Federal rail funding
- To contain data points/metrics that can be replicated and compared plan to plan and state to state
- To show a four year and a twenty year planning horizon

DRPT is the FRA-recognized State Rail Transportation Authority/Rail Plan Approval Authority. FRA allows states to create a Plan that works for the individual state and coordinates with existing statewide transportation plans.

2018 Plan

- Followed FRA document format
- Contains all FRA-required metrics for freight and passenger rail
- Expanded Economic Impact of Rail section with freight shipper flow data
- Station Stop Policy created
- Adopted by CTB, aligns with VTRANS
- Pre-VPRA, TRV, and COVID-19


2022 Plan

- Will use a new easy-to-follow format that tells the story of rail transportation in Virginia
- To develop specific freight and passenger rail policies to guide DRPT and VPRA decisions
- In conjunction with statewide transportation plans, will show how future rail projects can move through the implementation pipeline
- Ability to include TRV and post-COVID effects in 4- and 20-year assumptions
- Will still contain all FRA-required metrics for freight and passenger rail, and will be presented to CTB for adoption

Aligns with


DRPT's Mission To facilitate and improve the mobility of the citizens of Virginia and to promote the efficient transport of goods and people in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner

VTRANS Vision/Goals



Goals

VTrans Vision
Good for business, good for communities, and good to go.



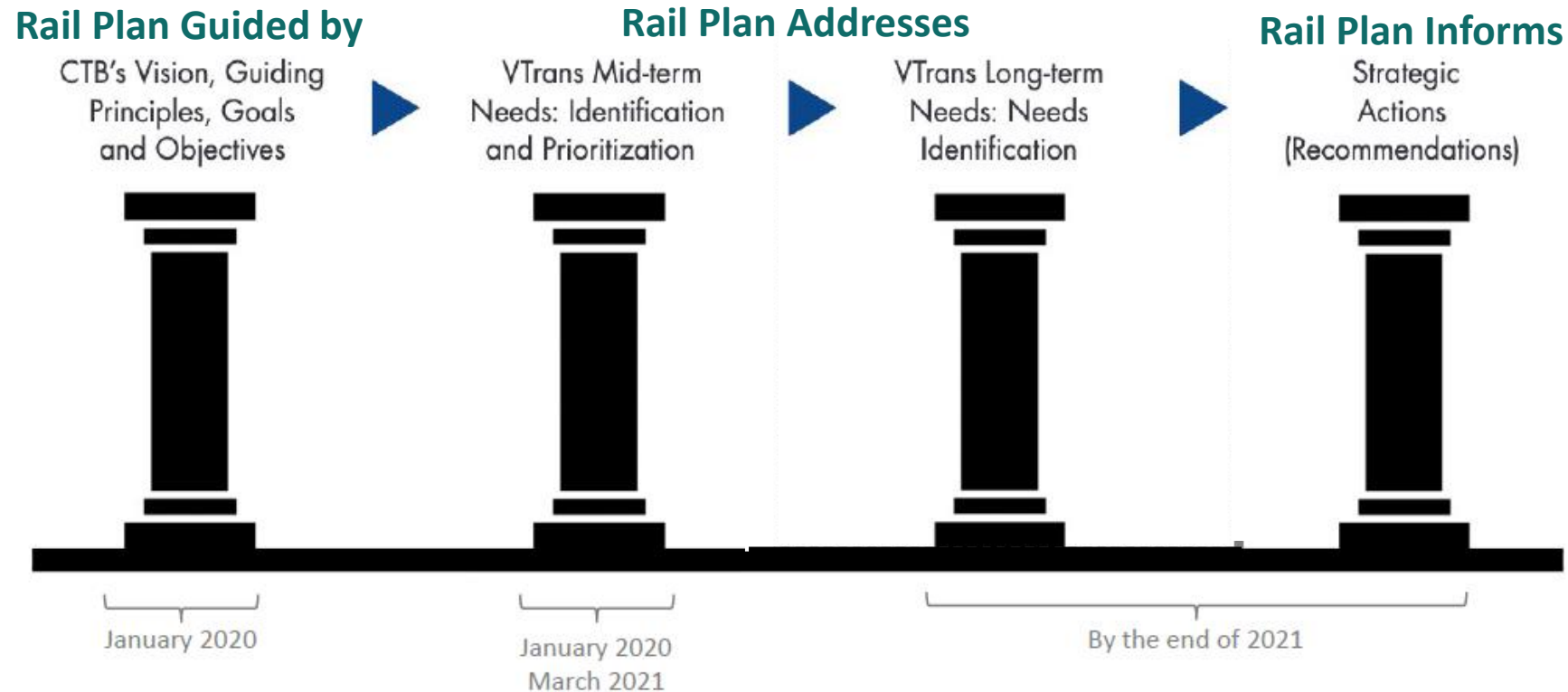
Objectives

State Rail Plan Vision
Virginia's rail network is a valuable asset that grows the economy, relieves congestion, saves lives, improves air quality, and saves money. Continued investment in rail infrastructure will ensure the mission and vision of the Commonwealth's transportation network is achieved.



Statewide Rail Plan and VTrans

- **VTrans** is Virginia's multimodal transportation plan that lays out overarching vision, goals, and needs adopted by the CTB.
- **DRPT's Statewide Rail Plan** serves as an implementation plan for rail projects that address mid-term and long-term VTrans needs.



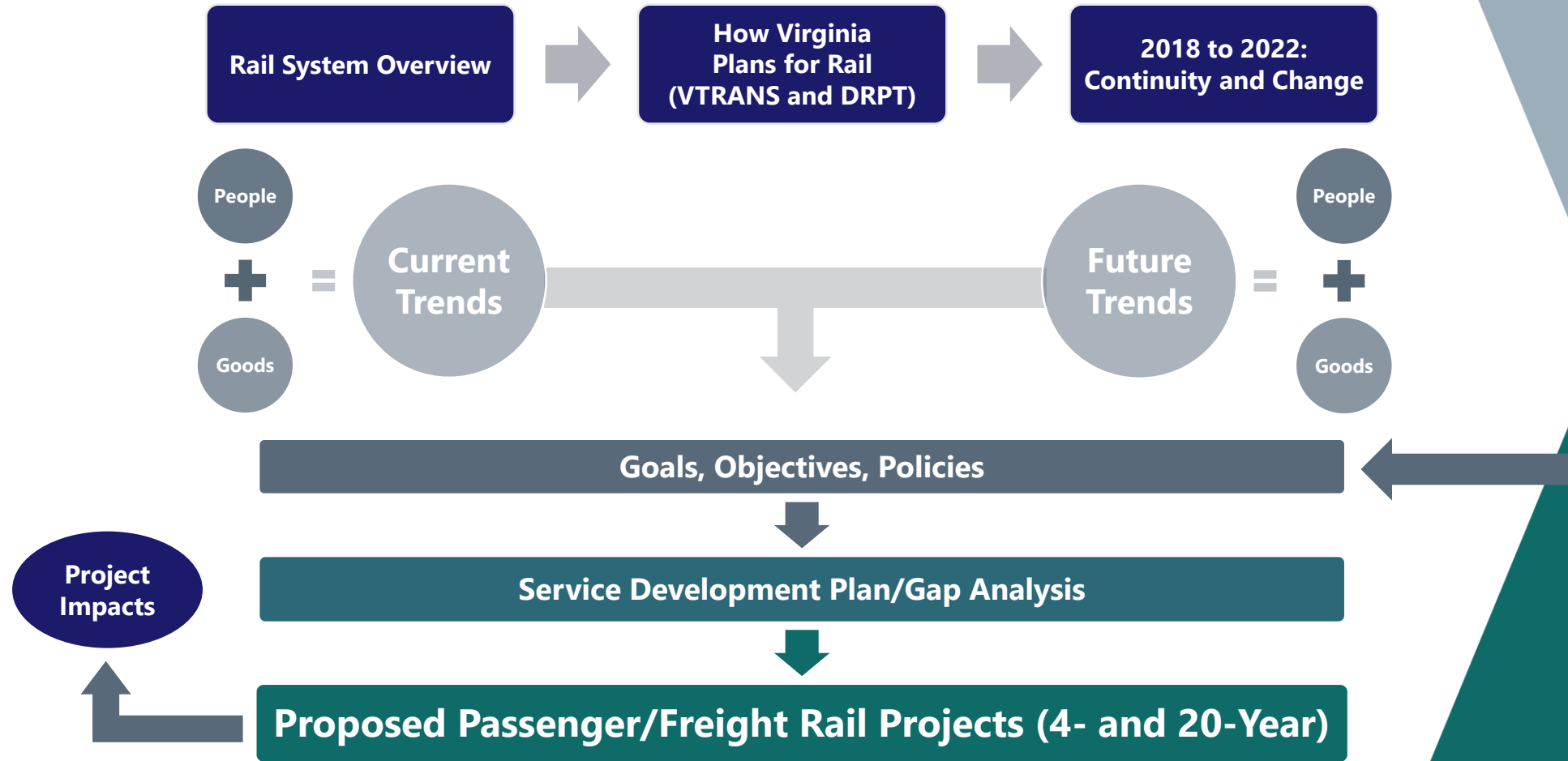
Rail Planning Policy Topics

- Planning in partnership with VPRA
- Freight rail preservation and access
- Amtrak and VRE fare pricing policy
- Service expansion/development
- Station development and station-area development
- Rail-banking, abandonment, discontinuances for trails and other adjacent uses

DRPT expects these will be the major topics of discussion throughout Plan preparation process, and that feedback through the Plan's public and stakeholder involvement process will help to inform the policies.



Plan Structure



Vision Statement:
The Statewide Rail Plan will provide long-term guidance for Virginia's transportation secretariat to ensure that the Commonwealth's rail needs for both people and goods are addressed, funding and policies for future rail investments are consistent across administrations, and that rail transportation continues to be a safe and economical mode choice.

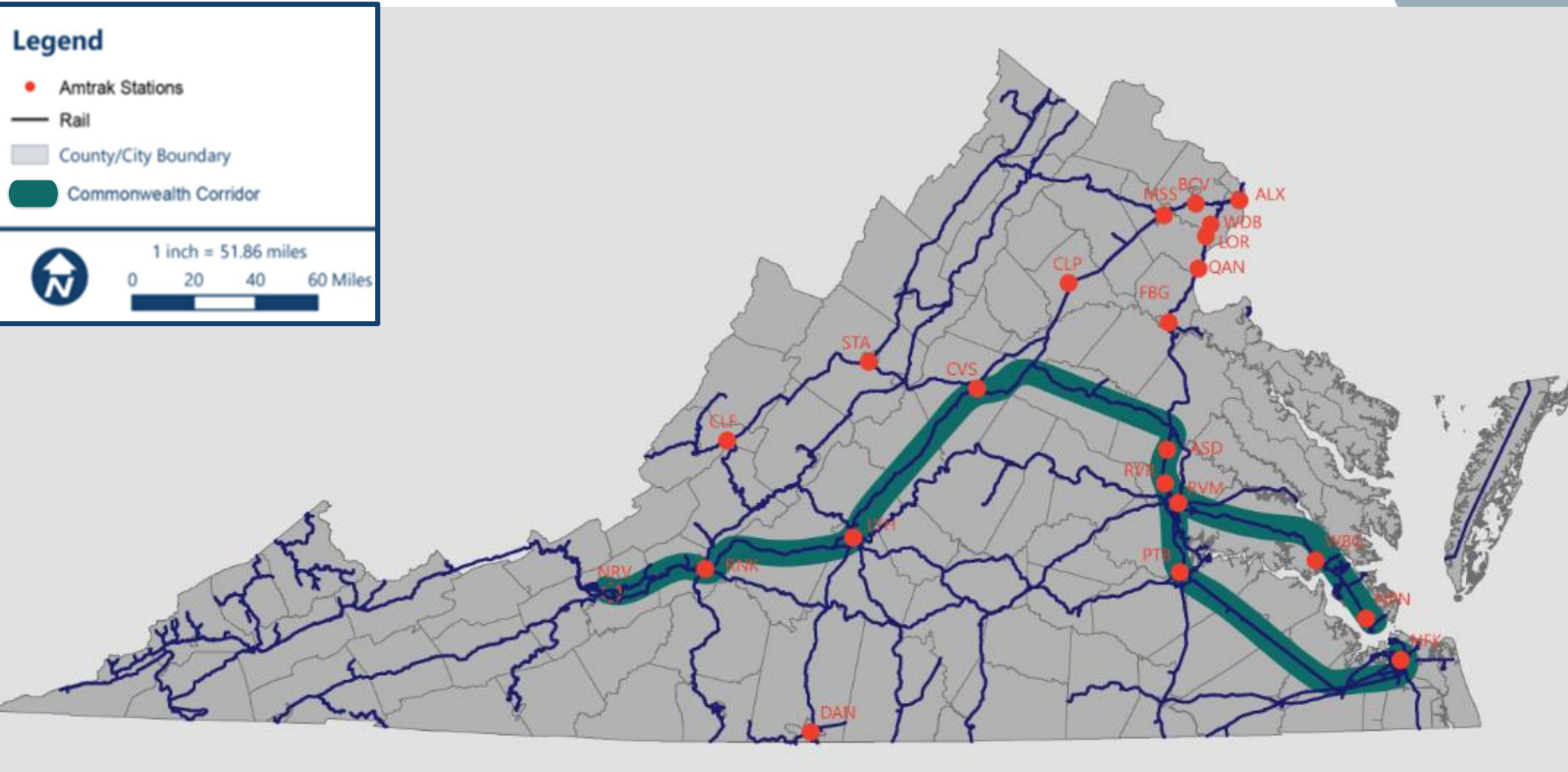
HJ 55 Commonwealth Corridor

- Required study of the feasibility of cross-state passenger rail service from Hampton Roads, through Richmond and Charlottesville, west to the New River Valley using part of the Buckingham Branch Railroad
- Will examine how service could integrate with service on the I-81/US-29 and I-95 corridors
- Opportunity to develop the Commonwealth's passenger rail corridor expansion policies
- Public outreach to be integrated with overall SRP outreach

Deadline for delivery to General Assembly: Beginning of 2022 GA session

DRPT will also conduct a **Bristol rail extension study** as a result of the budget amendment for Roanoke / NRV extension.

The Commonwealth Corridor



Statewide Service Plan

- A component of this Rail Plan
- Synthesizes existing service plans:
 - TRV Phase I and II service on the RF&P Corridor
 - I-81/U.S. Route 29 Corridor service proposals
 - VRE/MARC Run-through service plan proposal
 - Other intercity service, like the Virginia Breeze bus
- To incorporate passenger rail policies developed through the SRP process
- Incorporates demand/demographic data
- Delivers a statewide service concept for medium-term and long-term horizons



Plan Outreach Timeline

- Initial Scoping Meetings May 2021
- Draft Projects Outreach: Fall 2021
- Commonwealth Corridor Outreach: Summer and Fall 2021
- Final Projects Outreach: Spring 2022





VIRGINIA

STATEWIDE RAIL PLAN

2022

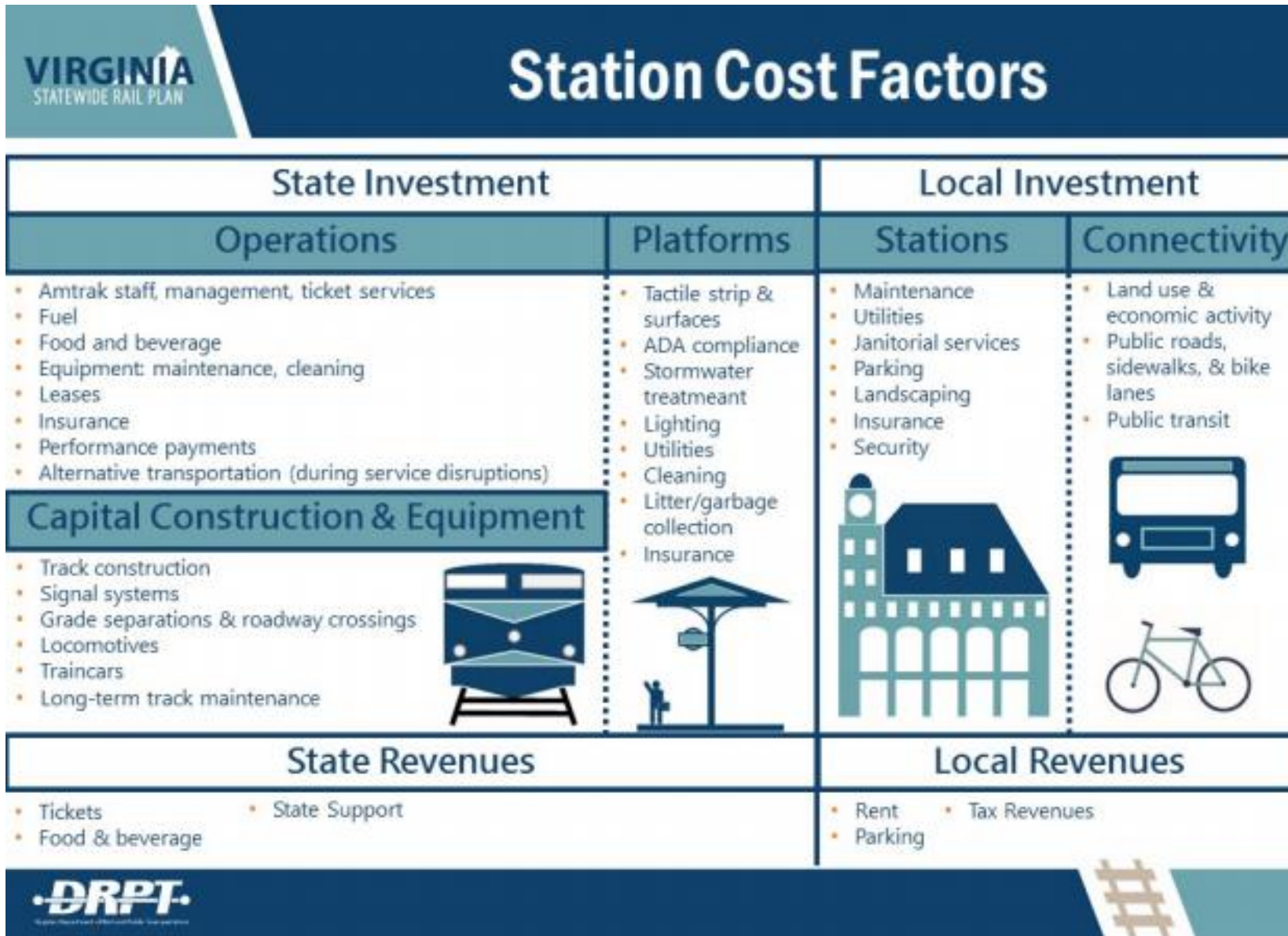
Station Policy, Needs Assessment, and Prioritization Strategies for Station Funding

VPRA Board Meeting – April 26, 2021

Emily Stock, Manager of Rail Planning
Department of Rail and Public Transportation



Current Passenger Rail Stop Policy



Recent Changes Related to Stations

- Developed as part of Statewide Rail Plan adopted in 2018 and approved by CTB Rail Committee
- Policy was prepared under IPROC/REF paradigm; now a single Commonwealth Rail Fund
- Predates concept of ownership of stations and platforms to be transferred to VA from CSX
 - VA now has responsibility for ADA compliance at platforms it owns (previously Amtrak responsibility)
- Policy assumed DRPT responsibility for stations; now future station improvements will be implemented by VPRA
- New River Valley expansion will be first expansion agreement since 2013

Current Station Responsibilities

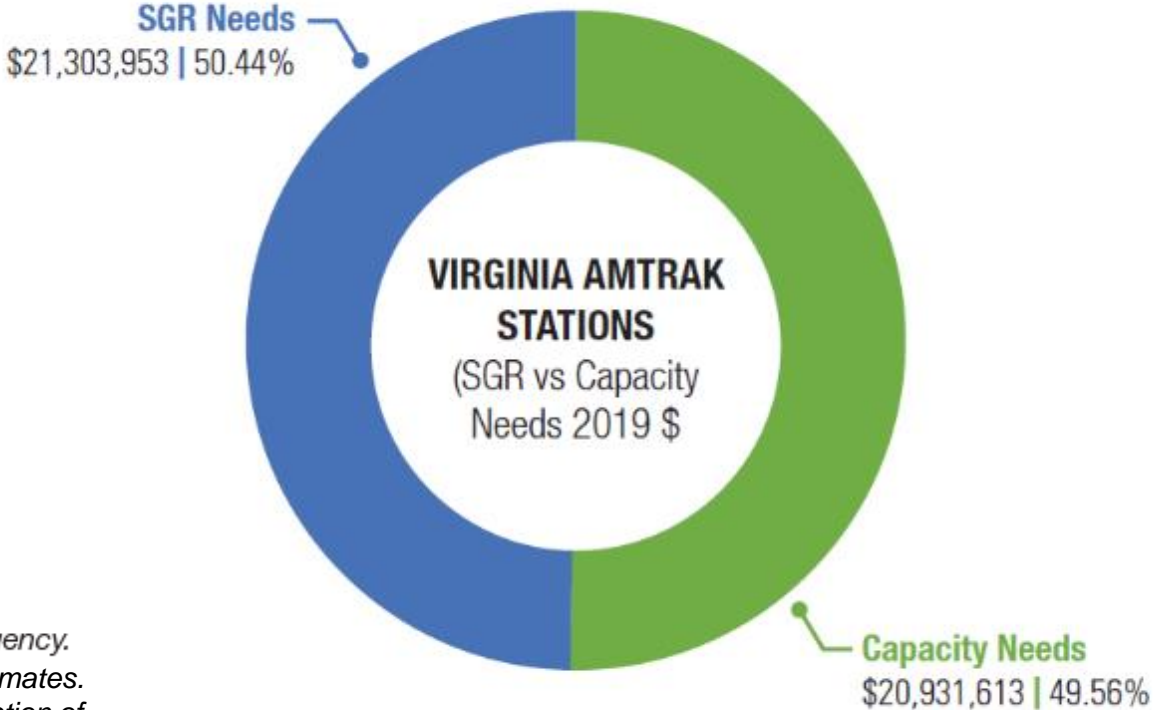
Amtrak

- Operates staffed and unstaffed stations
- O&M costs (non-VRE) proportionately billed to Virginia using PRIIA 209 Methodology
- Shares costs with VRE for those dual-served stations

Virginia

- Does not operate any stations, but owns portion of land under one (Richmond-Staples Mill)
- Pays for O&M costs billed by Amtrak under PRIIA 209
- Pays for track-side capital costs, including platforms
- Ensures local modal connectivity

2019 Station Needs Assessment



TOTAL COSTS¹

2019: \$42,235,566

2022: \$46,827,327

¹All costs listed include a contingency. These are planning-level cost estimates. Cost estimates are not an assumption of VPRAs responsibility.



State of Good Repair Needs

A State of Good Repair Need is a feature that is rated as “poor” or “marginal” as per the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM).



Capacity Needs

A Capacity Need is a feature or addition that is required to accommodate the expected number of passengers and employees according to the Amtrak Station Program and Planning Guidelines.

Potential Funding Prioritization

Guiding philosophy

- Focus on ADA and Safety/Security first
- All stations should be “safe, dry, and bright”
- Capacity constraints addressed only after basic passenger needs are met



New Station Roles

DRPT

- DRPT and the Statewide Rail Plan (approved by CTB) will provide a station policy and recommend a framework for prioritizing station needs
- DRPT/CTB could also give out grants to help upgrade stations

VPRA

- Prioritization and funding decisions related to VPRA funding for station upgrades will belong to the VPRA Board, particularly since VPRA will be the owner of the station facilities
- VPRA will also be responsible for ADA compliance, as the eventual owners

2022 Rail Plan will Help Establish Data-Driven Priorities

Station Type	Large	Medium	Small	Caretaker
Annual Ridership Threshold	Greater than 400,000	100,000 to 400,000	20,000 to 100,000	Less than 20,000

- Rail Plan to project time at which capacity upgrades will be necessary
- VPRA Board ultimately will determine prioritization of any station improvements to be funded with VPRA funds
- Rail Plan will inform an updated “Station Stop Policy”
- Could use portion of 7% of CRF designated for DRPT for a dedicated “Station Planning Assistance” grant for localities to pipeline SOGR projects (see below):

Virginia Rail Planning and Statewide Initiatives

Districts	Project Description	Applicant	Funding Source	Previous Allocations	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Total Programmed	
All Districts	Station Improvement Planning	DRPT	CRF	-	300,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	3,300,000	
Nova, Fredericksburg, Richmond	Statewide Rail Planning	Various	CRF	2,700,780	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,700,780	
Total Rail Planning and Statewide Initiatives					\$ 58,985,780	\$ 1,225,000	\$ 1,175,000	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000	\$ 1,100,000	\$ 1,100,000	\$ 65,385,780



Projects Already in the Pipeline

Ashland

- Amtrak ADA platform improvements almost complete.

Bedford

- Concept plan developed.

Charlottesville

- Long range Concept planning underway.
- Amtrak implementing ADA improvements - design/construction out for procurement.

Roanoke

- Locality moving closer to station building construction.

Ettrick

- SOGR project partnership with Chesterfield County and Amtrak.
- Working with Amtrak to perform ADA improvements to platform.

Newport News

- Construction underway, will be owned by City of Newport News. Includes servicing facility and level boarding platform.

Staples Mill

- Expansion 30% design soon to be complete.

Transforming Rail in Virginia Effects

Agreement with CSX to result in Commonwealth ownership of station elements (ex: parking lot, platform, or land) at these locations:

Alexandria (VRE)
Ashland
Brooke (VRE)
Charlottesville
Crystal City (VRE)
Franconia-Springfield (VRE)
Fredericksburg (VRE)
Leeland Road (VRE)
L'Enfant (VRE)
Lorton (VRE)
Petersburg
Quantico (VRE)
Richmond - Staples Mill
Rippon (VRE)
Spotsylvania (VRE)
Staunton
Woodbridge (VRE)

Transforming Rail in Virginia Effects

Amtrak Stations that will have Virginia Responsibilities:

Alexandria

Petersburg

Ashland

Richmond - Staples Mill

Charlottesville

Staunton

Fredericksburg

- As landowner, the Commonwealth is obligated to provide Amtrak with facilities that can be used. This includes making ADA improvements for those stations that are not currently compliant.
- New lease agreement requires Amtrak to maintain SOGR, but now the Commonwealth will have the right to fix things at stations if Amtrak fails maintain station facilities.



Questions

Amtrak Service in Virginia: Balancing Ridership & Revenue

Jeremy Latimer, DRPT – Director of Rail Programs

Haley Glynn, DRPT – Public Relations & Marketing Specialist

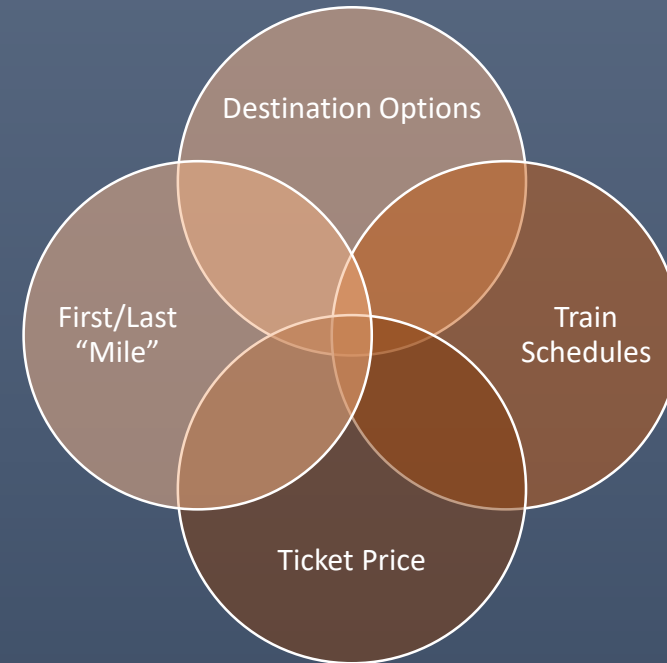
Balancing Ridership & Revenues

- Ridership Demand

- Demographics
- Destinations Served
- Trip Length
- Reasons for Travel (work / personal)
- Level of Service
- When a ticket is purchased
- Other transportation options
- Schedule

- Revenues Drivers

- Different price points target optimal pricing based on various factors
- Typically more “choice” when purchasing in advance
- Marketing strategies include discounts, flash sales, and advertising to the right market
- Coordination with Amtrak national strategy



Balancing Ridership & Revenue

- 2017 Fare Analysis

- Amtrak had eliminated/reduced some discounts
 - Amtrak Goal: Maximize Revenue
 - States: Balance Ridership
- Understand Virginia ridership trends and demographics
- Recommend fare and marketing strategies

4
Groups

12
Days

38
Virginians

5,219
Data Points



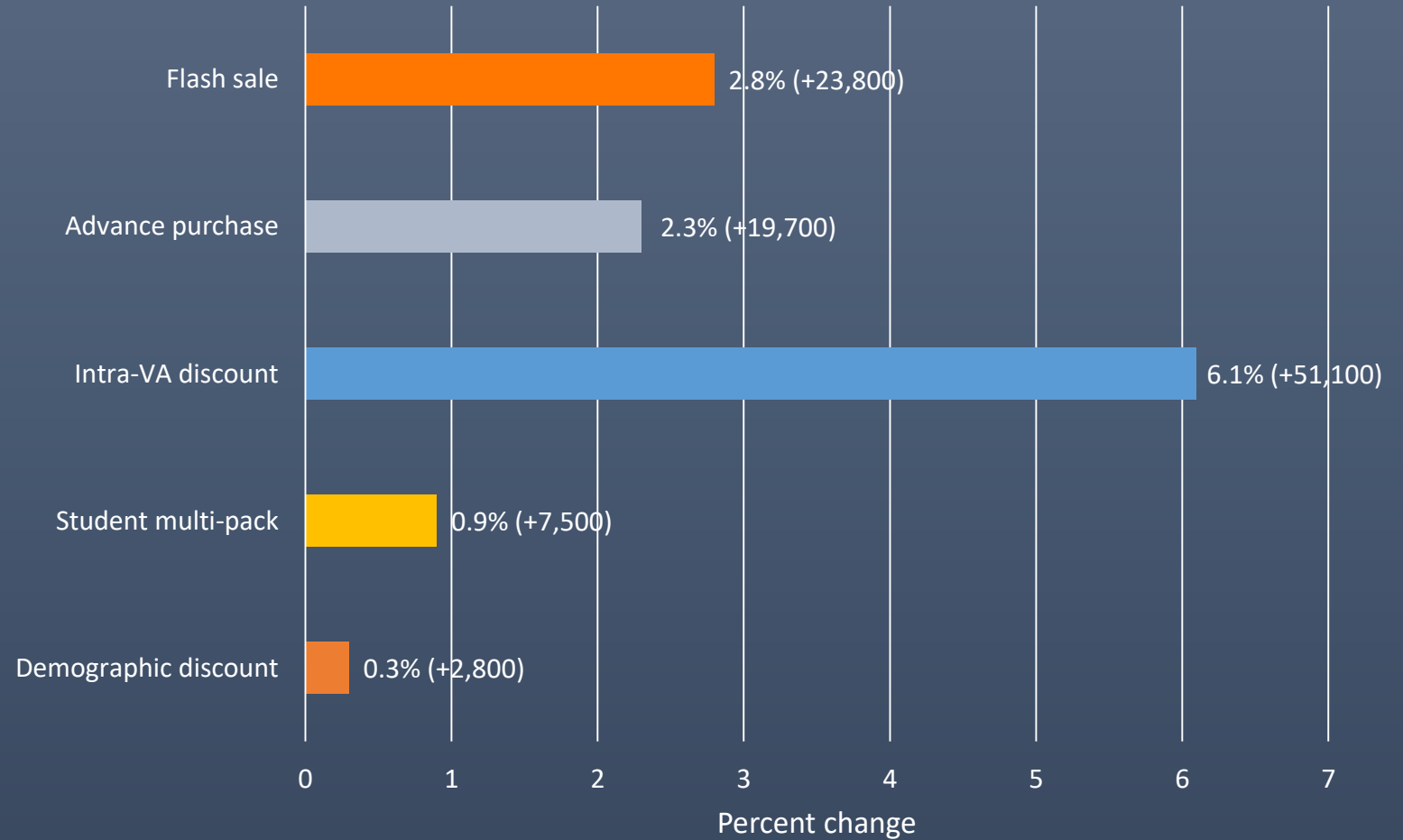
● Closest Train Station to Respondents

Fare Scenarios and Assumptions

- Existing Promotions
 - **Flash Sale Discount:** 30 percent off flash sale (customers either purchase quickly or lose). Assumed 25 percent of ridership would take advantage of this discount.
 - **Advance Purchase Discount:** 25 percent off ticket price discount (with a 14 days advance purchase). Assumed 25 percent of all ridership would take advantage of this discount.
- Potential Promotions
 - **Intra-Virginia Discount:** Permanently discounted tickets as a result of Intra-Virginia travel (including Washington D.C.). This discount is applied to all riders.
 - **Student Discount:** Pre-paid student ticket pack (e.g. six-pack of tickets at one upfront price). Assumed 20 percent of student ridership would take advantage of this discount.
- Past Promotions
 - **Demographic Discount:** Permanently discounted tickets based on demographics (e.g. student, senior, military). 10 percent off ticket price. Assumed 10 percent of all riders would take advantage of this discount.

Results of Fare Discount Scenarios

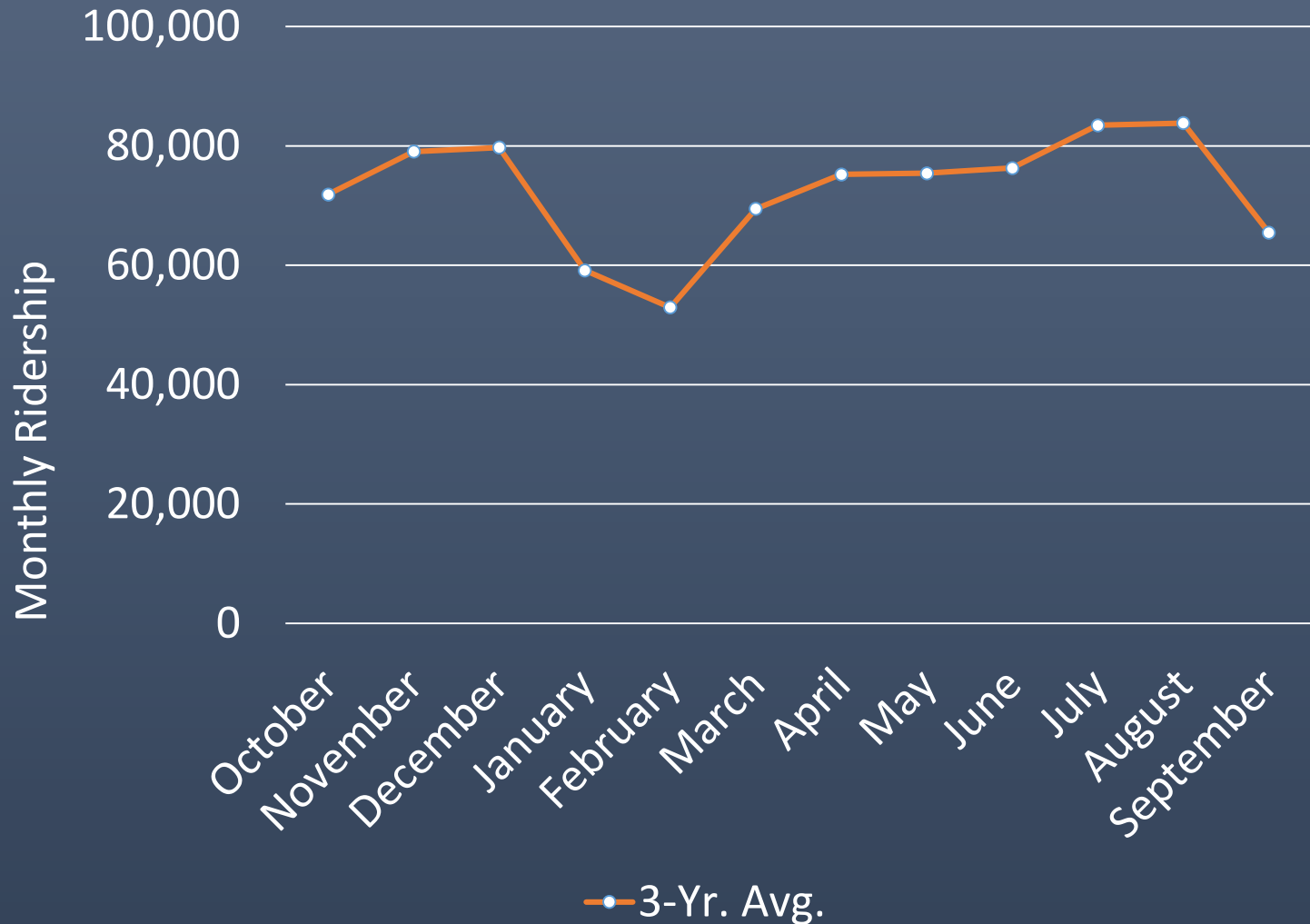
Estimated Increase in Annual Ridership



Amtrak VA-Sponsored Trains served 844,434 riders in FY 2018

Balancing Ridership & Revenues

- Ridership fluctuates seasonally
 - High season: Holidays and Summer Travel Season
 - Weather events
- Ridership fluctuates annually
 - Reliability trends
 - Customer experience
- Major Events
 - Pandemics
 - Inauguration



Pandemic Impacts on Service

Pre-pandemic

March 4, 2019 2nd Norfolk Service Begins

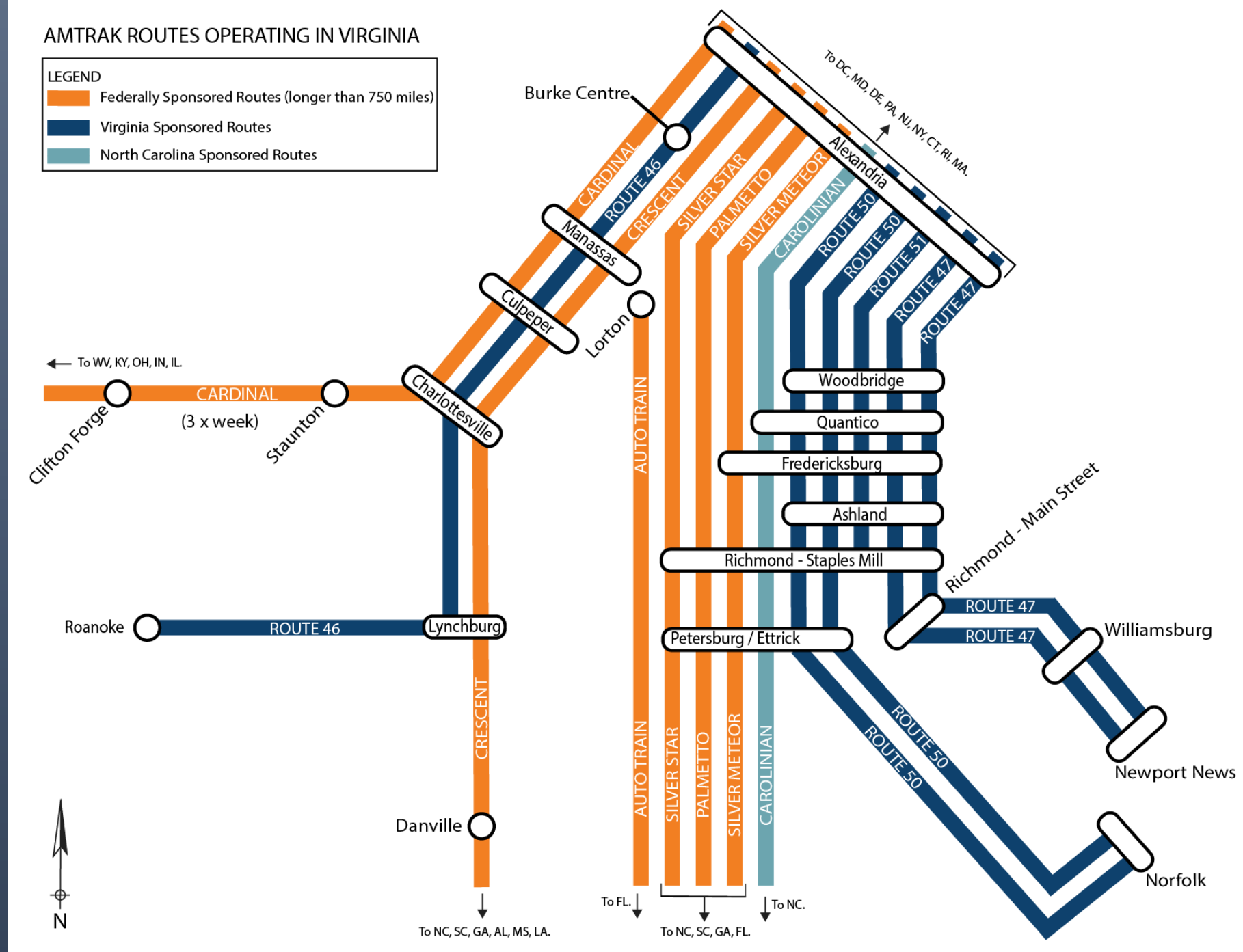
Ridership in FY19: 924,636

Revenue in FY19: \$41.5M

Oct, Nov, Dec 2019 were three highest individual months ever

Marketing Strategies were in place:

- Flash Sales
- Student Discount
- Intra-Virginia Discount
- Group Tickets
- Multi-ride fares



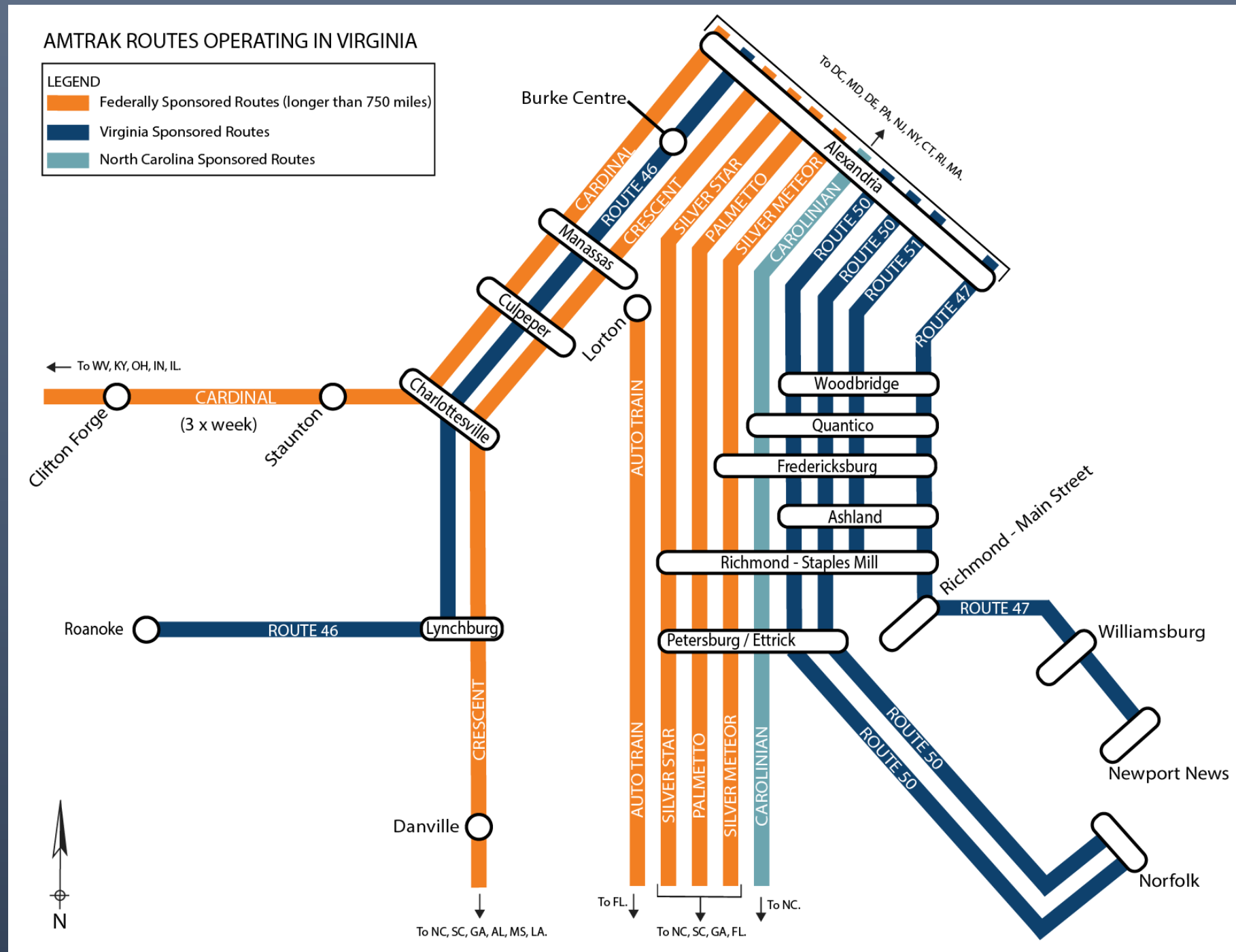
March 2020

CARES Act funding provided to states (March 27, 2020)

- \$239M made available to State-supported Services
- Amounts states owed held to 80% of FY19 operating costs (PRIIA 209)
- Virginia first decided to cease one round trip from Newport News as ridership was falling.

Amtrak waives Change and Cancellation Fees

Train consist sizes reduced



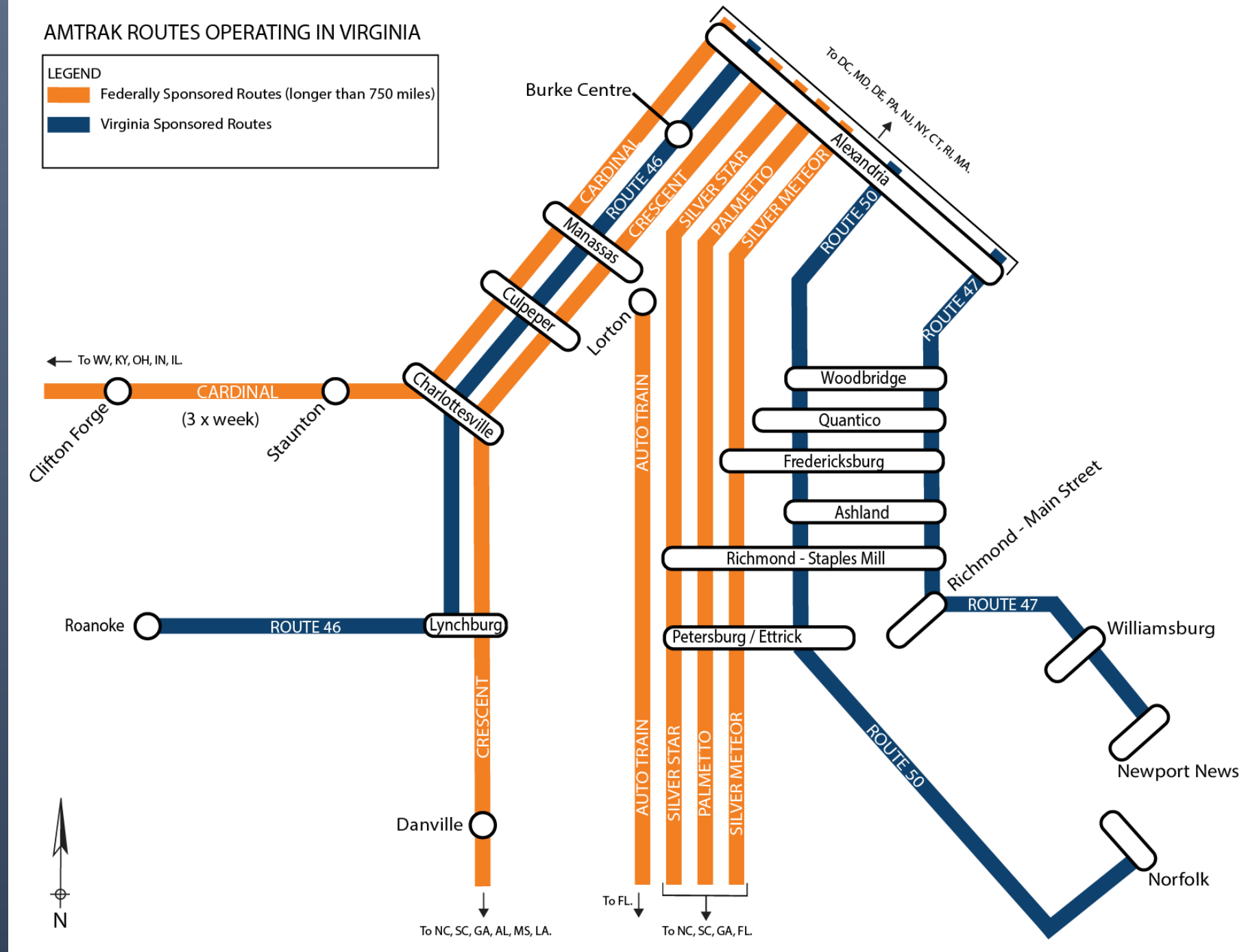
April 2020

Ridership dropped by 95.7% compared to April 2019

Restrictions were implemented without clear federal guidance

Services cancelled across the country

Amtrak begins weekly update calls for states and stakeholders





May 2020

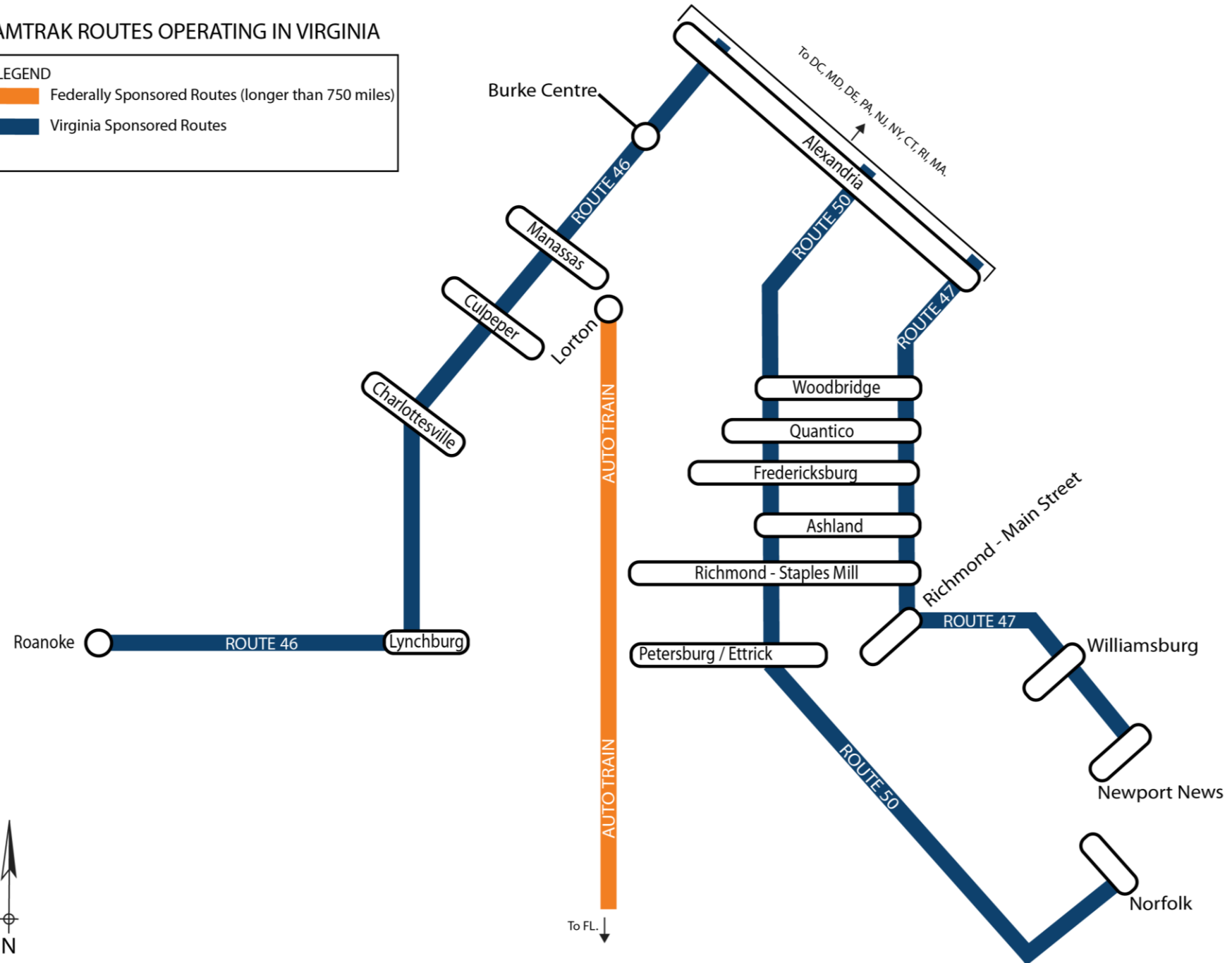
Amtrak ceased all Long Distance service except the Auto Train, combined with track work coinciding south of DC

Virginia acts on Amtrak's recommendations to reduce service (coordinated with NEC reductions) as ridership continued to plummet

AMTRAK ROUTES OPERATING IN VIRGINIA

LEGEND

-  Federally Sponsored Routes (longer than 750 miles)
-  Virginia Sponsored Routes



June 2020

Long Distance restored with restrictions and safety protocols

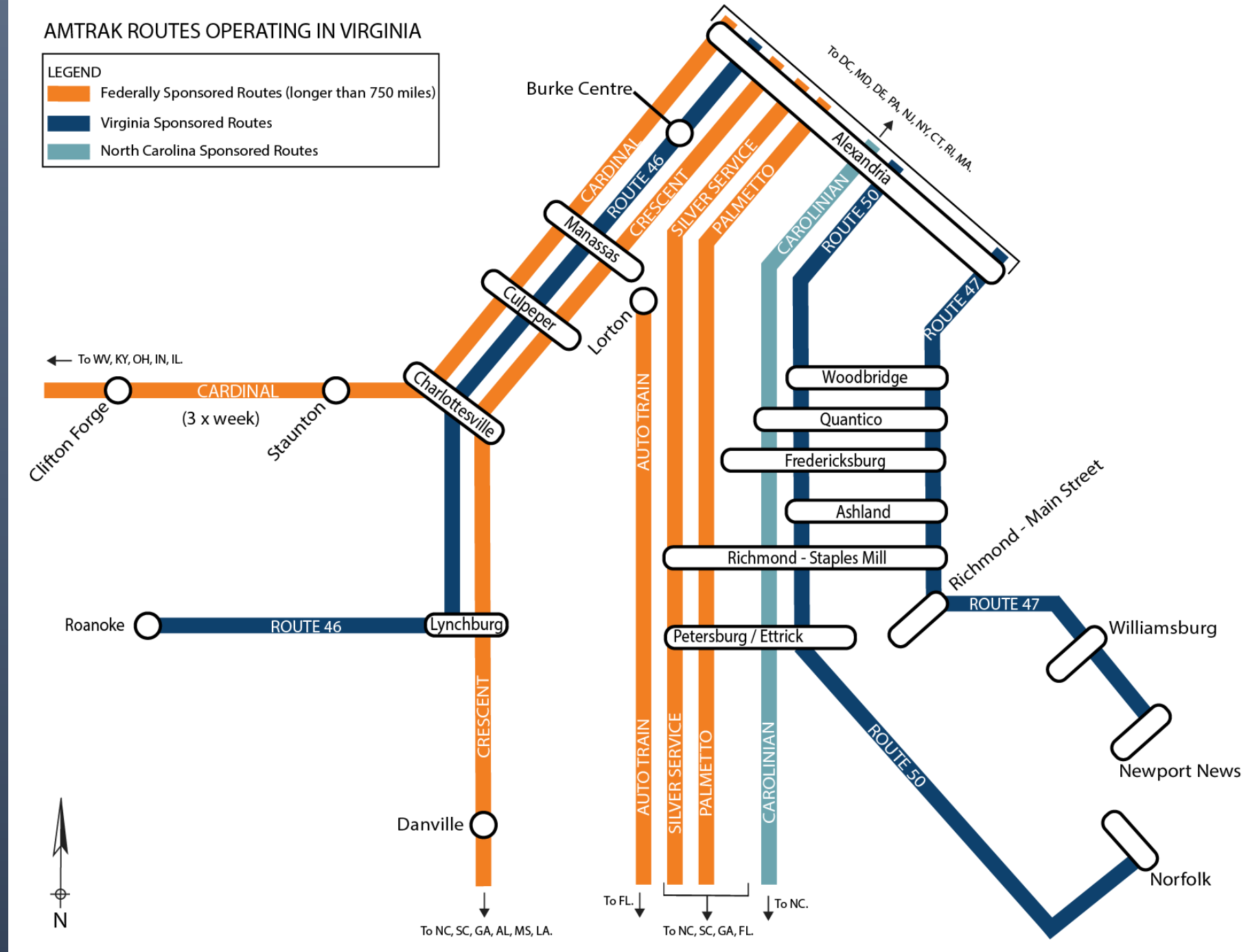
Carolinian service restored

Virginia remained at "50%" service levels

- June 2020 ridership 79,269
- Down 84% compared to June 2019

Prices lowered:

- 25% on SAVER fares
- 20% on VALUE fares



Sept. 2020

Amtrak's recommends restoration of Virginia service to 80% levels with capacity restrictions and safety protocols already in place

- Sept 2020 ridership 76,227
- Down 71% compared to Sept. 2019

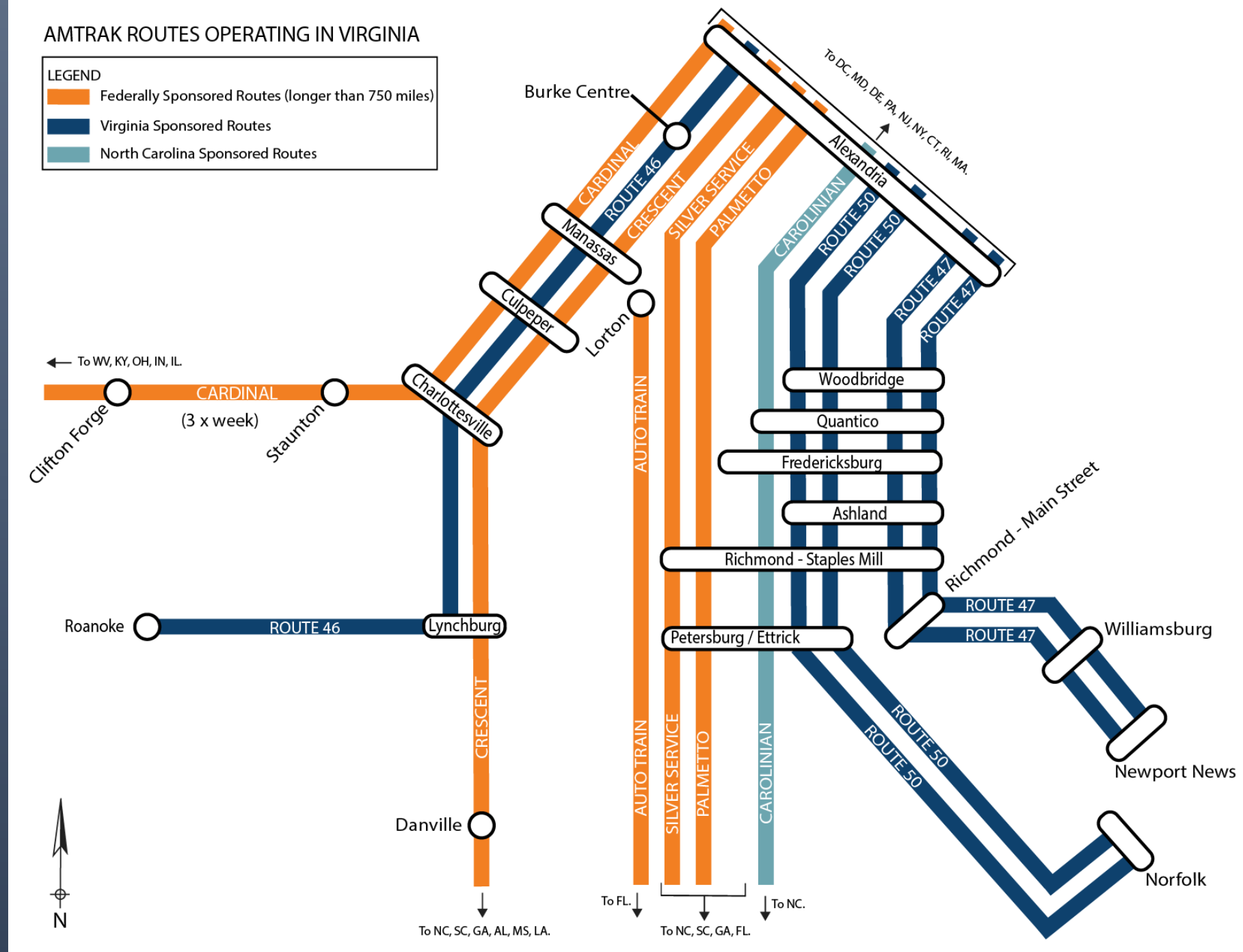
Amtrak faced with furloughs and employee lay-offs/buy-outs

CARES Act funds anticipated to run out by end of year

- States requested \$350M of federal support

Fare adjustments:

- Multi-ride ticket prices lowered 50%
- Cancellation fees reinstated
- Change fees still waived



Oct. 2020

FY21 Begins with “stable” service and plateaued ridership at 25% of FY19 levels

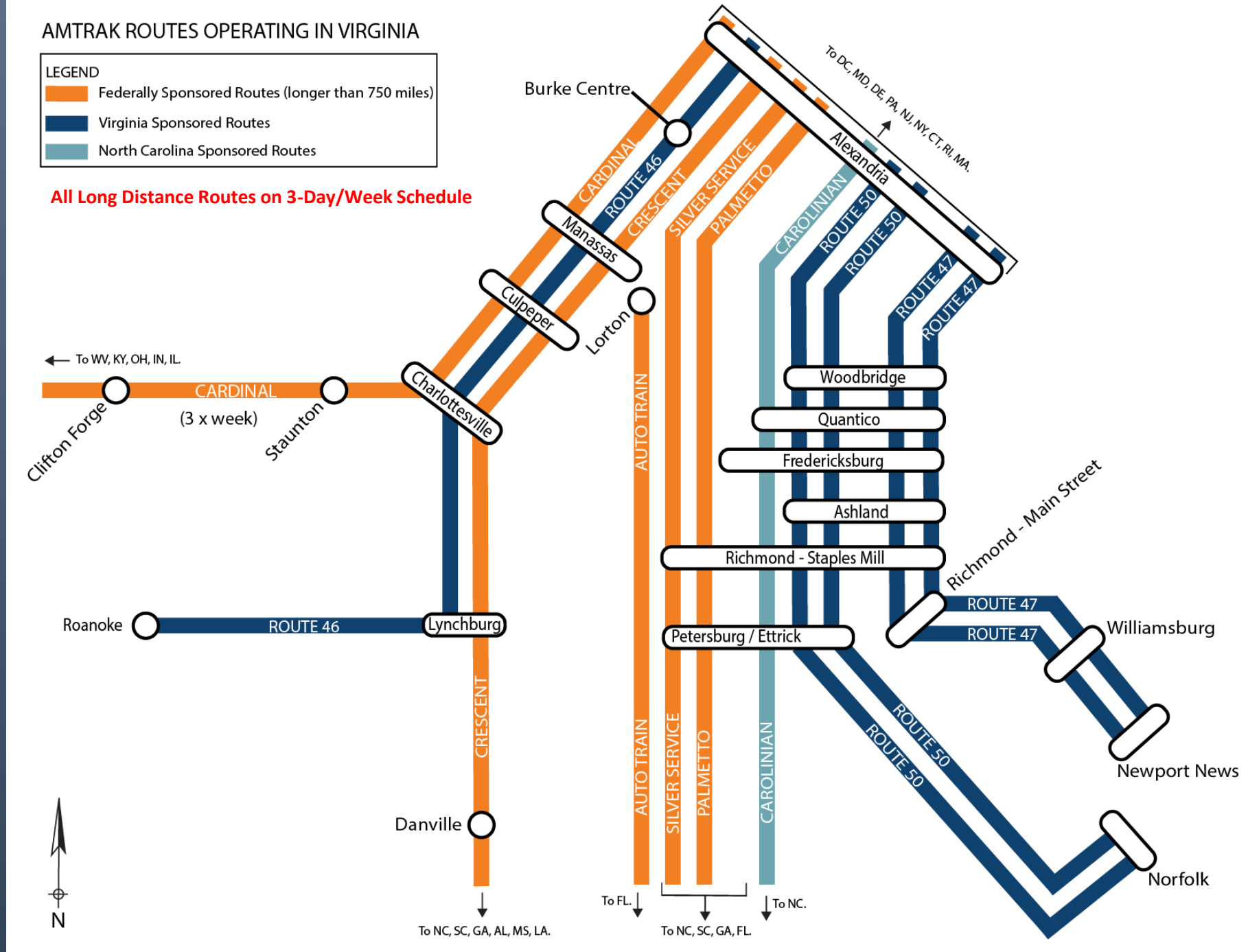
Ridership in FY20: 510,000

Revenue in FY20: \$22.2M

FY20 Operating Agreement extension clause in effect for FY21

Marketing under “Travel Restricted” Phase

- Prices remain low with changes fees waived.
- CARES Act funds remained to help with operations ahead of more federal relief.

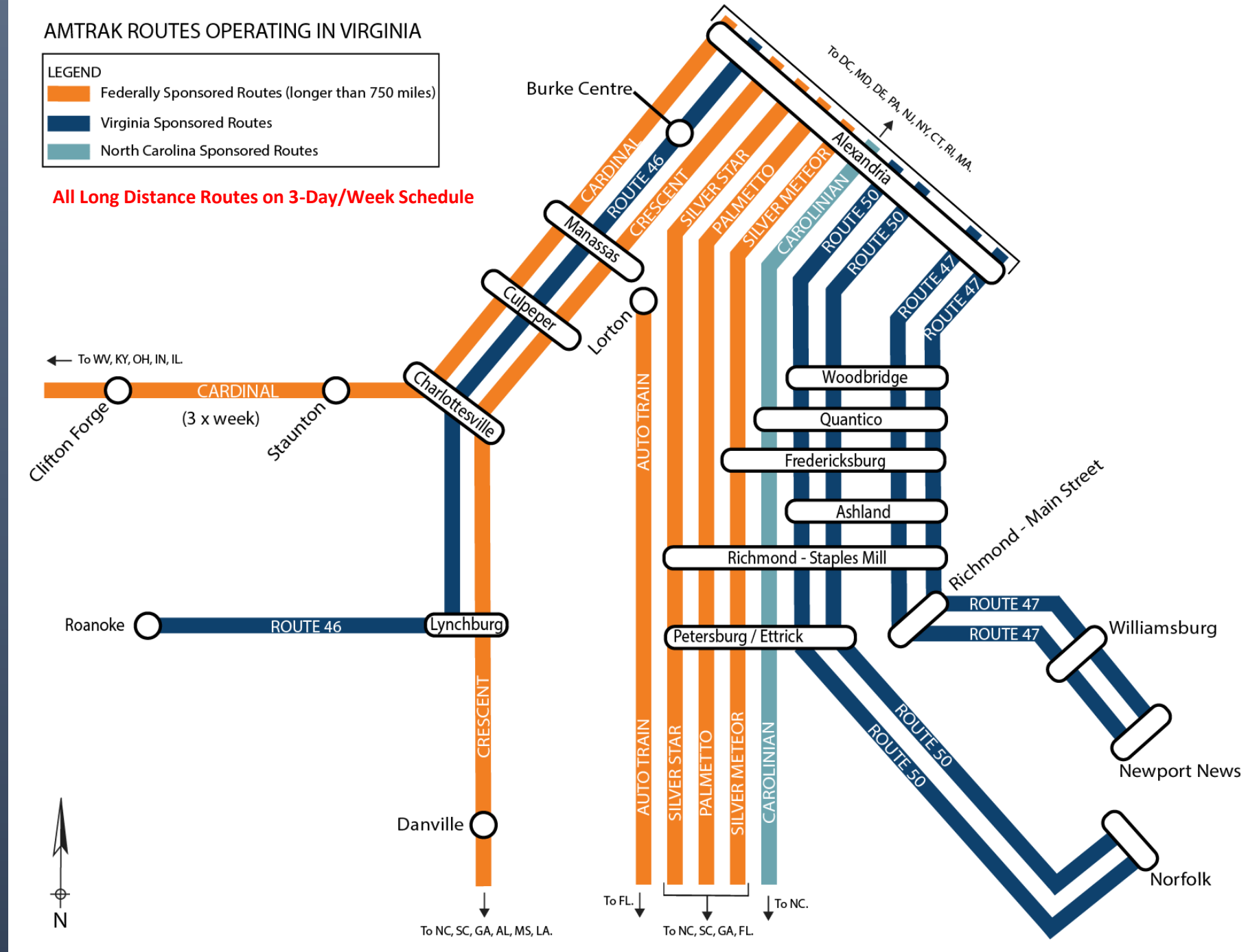


March 2021

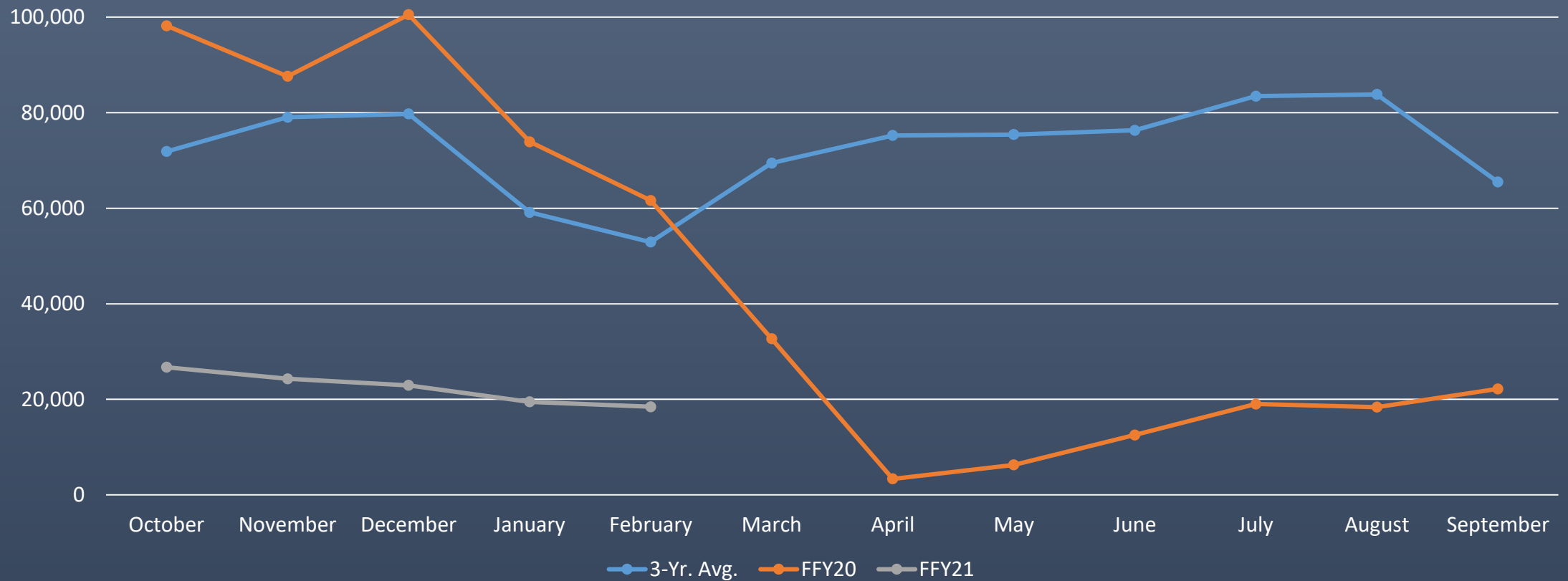
Amtrak restores Silver Star and Silver Meteor services – still reduced to 3 days per week

Federal relief provided to State-supported services

- December 2020 - \$175M
- March 2021 - \$175M
- Virginia receives \$25.2M (each round of relief)



Ridership 3-Yr Average vs. FY20



Revenue and Federal Aid

Federal Relief Program	Funding Support for States	Virginia's Share
CARES Act – March 2020	\$239M	\$22.5M
CRSSA – December 2020	\$175M	\$12.6M
ARPA – March 2021	\$175M	\$12.6M

- Federal aid amounts coordinated with Amtrak and SAIPRC
- Original federal support intended to keep reduced services running
- Later funding restores services and rehires Amtrak employees

Timeline for Recovery

TRAVEL RESTRICTED

- Traveler safety / reassurance # 1 priority
- Demonstrate support for community / help manage the situation
- Help people dream about better days - and shore up future demand
- Empathy and emotion are key

Support community. Remain engaged with travelers - most of whom cannot travel now

TRAVEL ALLOWED

- Prioritize traveler safety while inspiring 'now' travel (business or leisure)
- Empathy and emotion are key
- Visibly convey space and ability to 'social distance'
- Show how Amtrak is helping community
- Promote flexible travel
- Need to be prepared to activate / turn off by DMA/SL

Build preference for train travel among the still cautious, yet stir-crazy travelers (business and leisure)

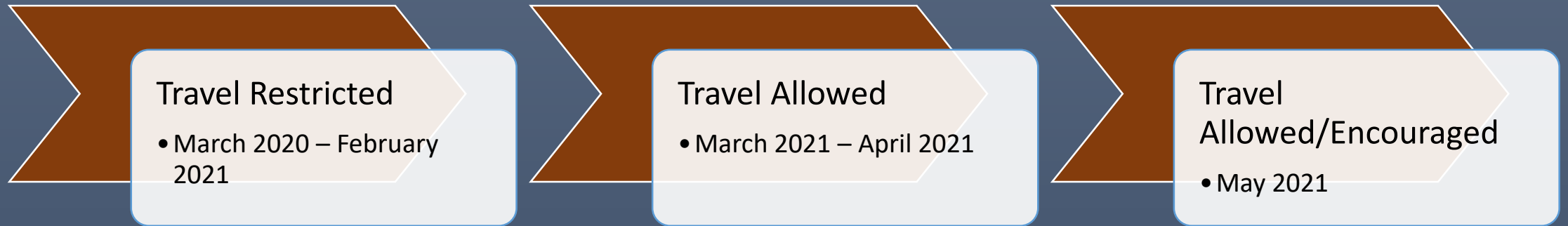
TRAVEL ENCOURAGED

- Full-scale plan across all SL/ DMAs (business and leisure)
- Continue to re-engage and re-inspire, while ramping up conversion efforts
- Show how Amtrak connects communities
- Empathy and emotion are still critical

Grow preference for train travel to capture bigger share of growing travel demand (biz and leisure)



Timeline for Recovery



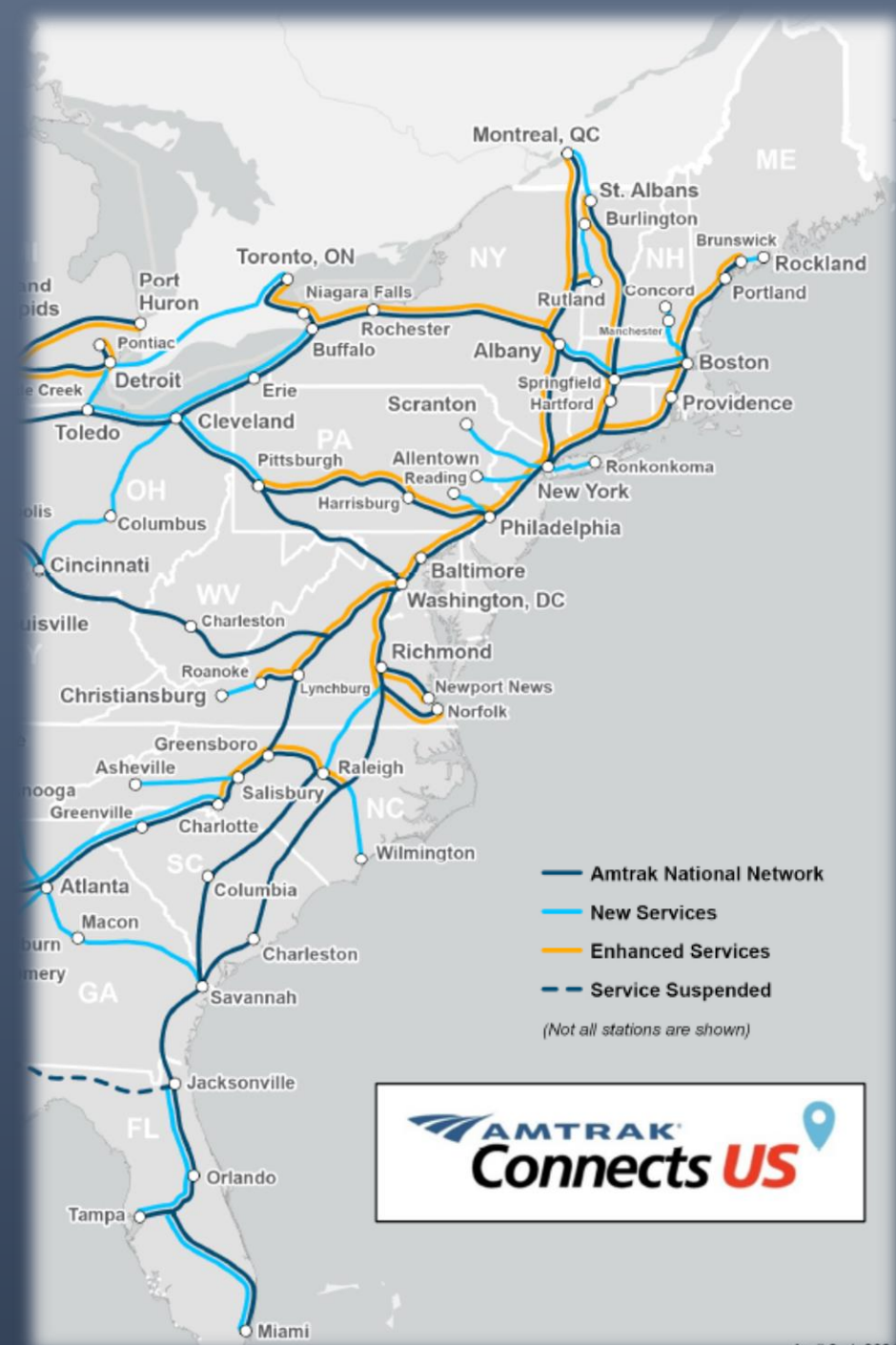
- Other service milestones
 - April 2020 Amtrak limited capacity of trains to 50%
 - Capacity indicator added when booking tickets
 - Cancellation fees waived through Labor Day 2021
 - May 23, 2020 Amtrak will lift 50% restriction
 - Capacity indicator will remain when booking tickets
 - Reduced pricing in place indefinitely

Marketing Strategy

Haley Glynn

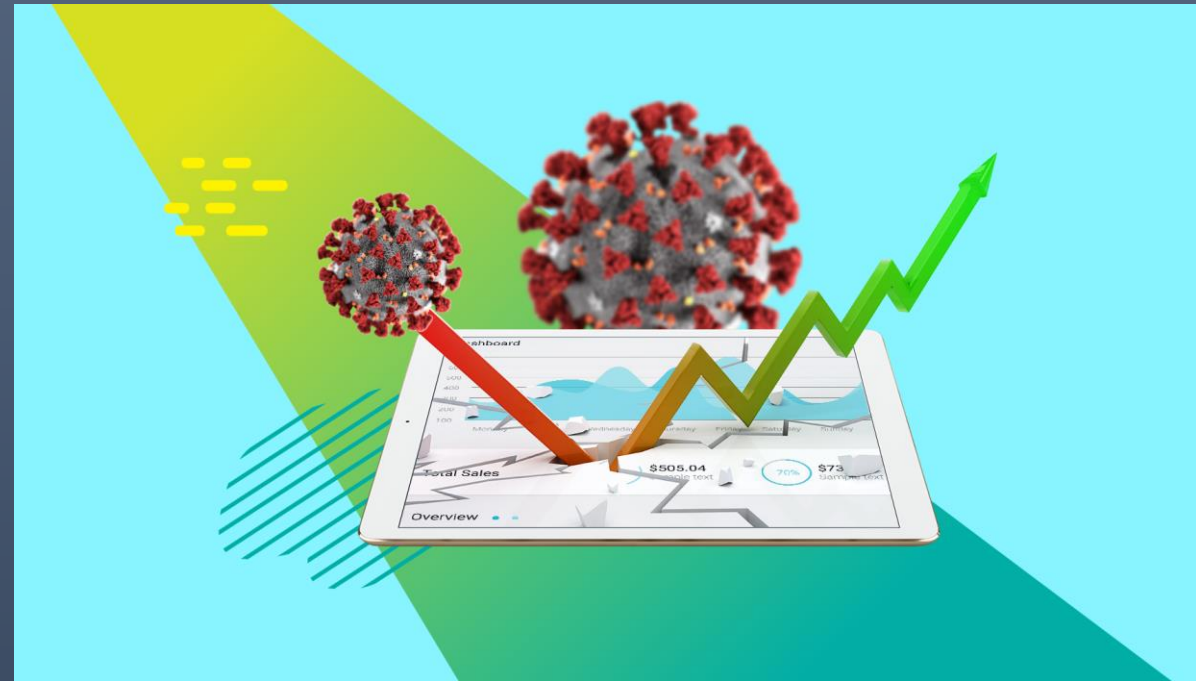
Marketing & Ticket Fares

- Generally Amtrak controls pricing
- DRPT may initiate marketing proposals affecting ticket fares
 - Excludes Amtrak's general tariff policies
 - Must be consistent with pricing on NEC
 - Proposals are at Dept. expense
- NEC, Long Distance Service, and Carolinian affect Virginia's services
 - Competing - most customers don't know which is a Virginia train
 - Complementary – LD and Carolinian offer more frequencies/convenience to Virginians
 - Complementary – NEC is urban/transit friendly



Marketing Campaigns Overview

- Travel Discouraged – No marketing efforts 3/20 – 6/20
 - Travel Restricted – Safety Messaging 6/20 – 9/20
 - Travel Allowed – Awareness Messaging
 - Kids BOGO Flash Sale – 10/20 – 10/25
 - Recovery Campaign – 11/16 – 12/31
 - Track Friday – 11/27 – 11/30
 - Valentine’s Sale – 2/11 – 2/16
 - Cell Phone Law Awareness Campaign – 3/1 – 4/30
 - NE Getaway Sale – 3/23 – 3/26
 - Bridge from Travel Allowed to Travel Encouraged
 - Recovery 2.0 Campaign – 5/3 – 6/30
 - Amtrak Anniversary Sale – 4/28 -5/5
 - Travel Encouraged
 - Fall Campaign – TBD
- “Where to next, Virginia?” & “Explore Va”




Travel Restricted Marketing

- Messaging:
 - Informed audience of enhanced safety measures, while reminding them to keep the train top of mind if they have to travel
- Audience:
 - Primarily targeted essential travelers (millennials, boomers, families, college students)
 - Secondarily targeted Business travelers looking for reliability, convenience, and efficiency (work while traveling) on the I-95 commute
- Overview:
 - Centered around safety messages and encouraging Virginians to take the train, when it's safe and they are ready
 - Focus centered on essential trips vs. leisure travel

Travel Restricted Messaging

Amtrak Virginia
Published by Amy Moore Dunkley · July 28

While you've been home, Virginia has been waiting for you. With cities that beg to be explored. Mountains that long to be climbed. And beaches that inspire relaxation.




THAT VIEW
MISSES YOU

AMTRAK.COM/VIRGINIA
WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?
We're ready when you are.

Book Now

Amtrak Virginia
Published by Amy Moore Dunkley · July 28

Skip the packed airplanes and congested highways. These days, you'll feel more comfortable on Amtrak Virginia - because we're limiting capacities on all our trains to practice safe physical distancing.




ROOM FOR A
SAFER RIDE.

AMTRAK.COM/VIRGINIA
WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?
We're ready when you are.

Book Now

Amtrak Virginia
Published by Amy Moore Dunkley · 10m

At Amtrak, we're committed to keeping you safe, with enhanced cleaning measures, physical distancing on board and in stations, and contact-free travel. So you can feel even more comfortable taking the train.



WE'LL DO THE
DRIVING. AND
THE CLEANING.

AMTRAK.COM/VIRGINIA
WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?
We're ready when you are.

Book Now


Travel Allowed Marketing

- Messaging:
 - Hopeful, optimistic
 - Rediscovering the train when they are ready
- Audience:
 - Primarily targeted leisure travelers (millennials, boomers, families, college students)
 - Secondarily targeted Business travelers looking for reliability, convenience, and efficiency (work while traveling) on the i-95 commute
- Overview:
 - Our recovery plan was centered around the pent-up travel demand

Travel Allowed Messaging

Amtrak Virginia
Sponsored · 🌐

With big, cozy seating, free WiFi and enhanced cleaning, Amtrak Virginia is all about making you comfortable.




WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?
We're ready when you are.

[Book Now](#)

Like Comment Share

Amtrak Virginia
Sponsored · 🌐

When you're ready, take the first simple step onto a train. It's your low-stress entry back into the world of exploration.



WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?
Your state awaits.

[Book Now](#)

Like Comment Share



LET'S START WITH VIRGINIA.

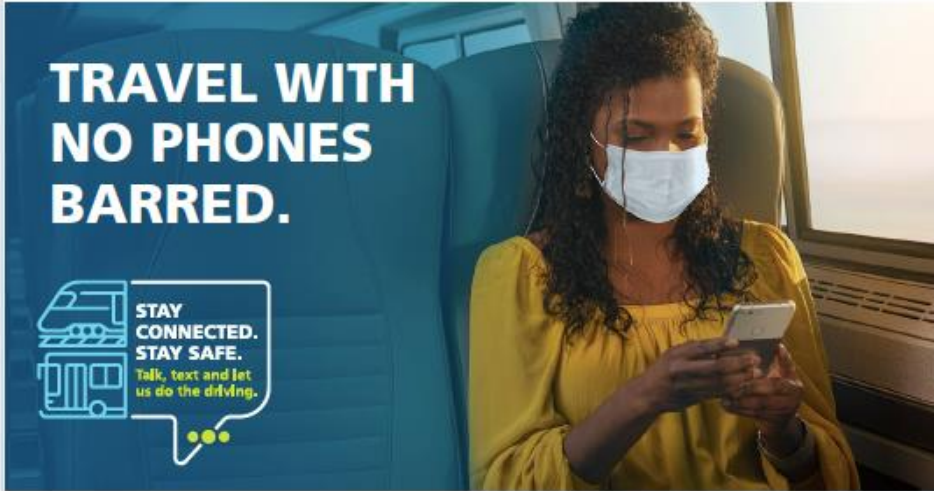


AMTRAK
WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?
[LEARN MORE](#)



Amtrak Virginia
Sponsored · ⚙️

You can't drive and hold a phone in Virginia. But you can talk, text and scroll away on Amtrak.



AMTRAK.COM/VIRGINIA
We'll Drive. You Text.
Stay connected on the train.

[Learn More](#)



👍 225 75 Comments 24 Shares

Like Comment Share

Travel Encouraged Marketing


- Messaging:
 - Warm, optimistic, friendly
 - Get out and explore Virginia again – and let the train take you there! It's a new day!
Where to, Next Virginia?
- Audience:
 - Leisure Travelers
 - Students
 - Business Travelers (secondary target)
- Overview:
 - Build upon the pent up demand to travel and remind Virginians of the wonderful destinations at their fingertips.

Travel Encouraged Messaging- A look ahead

 **Amtrak Virginia**
Sponsored · 




Make plans now to trade seclusion for adventure. Amtrak Virginia is here to help, with safety measures that will get you there comfortably.



**IT'S A NEW DAY.
ALL ABOARD.**



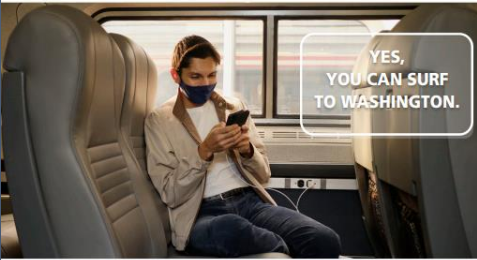
AMTRAK.COM/VIRGINIA
WHERE TO, VIRGINIA? [Book Now](#)

Let's binge-watch the real world.

 Like  Comment  Share

 **Amtrak Virginia**
Sponsored · 




With free WiFi, you can stay connected the whole time you travel on Amtrak Virginia.



**YES,
YOU CAN SURF
TO WASHINGTON.**

AMTRAK.COM/VIRGINIA
WHERE TO, VIRGINIA? [Book Now](#)

Stay connected. Let us drive.

 Like  Comment  Share

FACT: YOU CAN'T UNWIND ON I-95.



 **AMTRAK** WHERE TO, VIRGINIA?

Travel Data and Trends

- Campaign activity:
 - Higher engagement with “Ready to travel?” messaging vs. Safety messaging
 - People clicking on booking inquiry information more actively than previous months
 - Showcasing a pent-up desire to travel and eagerness to explore travel options
- Data shows:
 - More Americans consider themselves to be ready to travel than at any other time during the pandemic. Positive sentiment toward travel reaches new peaks.
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ travelers excited to learn about new destinations
 - Almost $\frac{2}{3}$ Americans would be excited to go on a getaway if asked by a friend
 - Lowest level of travel and leisure activities being perceived as unsafe -new pandemic record
 - Comfort level travelers feel in their own communities is on the rise; More acceptance of visitors.
 - 46.7% of Americans would feel happy about ads promoting their hometown
 - The proportion of travelers dreaming, talking about and planning leisure trips continues to grow.
 - Nearly 40% of Americans daydreamed or talked about planning a trip
 - 81.3% of people who have been vaccinated are more comfortable taking leisure trips.

*Source: Webinar conducted by “[Destination Analysts](#)” based off data from 1,200 Americans from all four regions, who have traveled pre/post pandemic

Summary

- Background
 - Pre-pandemic, boasted record numbers in ridership and revenue
 - During pandemic, travel came to a halt, as did our campaigns
 - Northeastern route was strongest performing and most consistent out of Amtrak National routes during pandemic
 - Consistently offered Va Anytime Fare (15% off) and Student discount (25% off)
- Resources for Marketing Strategy
 - Amtrak National and CDC
 - Our Riders – campaign activity, organic search activity, data trends
 - Pointing to pent up demand to travel & veering away from safety messaging
 - Mindset & Audience shifts
 - More leisure travelers than business
 - New, younger audience – Amtrak National calling the “Explorer” group
 - Uptick in first time train travelers