



MINUTES
MEETING OF THE INTERSTATE I-81 COMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting
October 23, 2020
9:00AM

The meeting of the I-81 Committee was held at virtually using electronic communications. The meeting began at 9:00AM on October 23, 2020.

Opening statement and roll call from Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment Deputy Director, Ronique Day.

Governor Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency in Virginia on Thursday, March 12 in response to COVID-19. In light of this action, we have decided to conduct the October Interstate 81 (I-81) Committee meeting using electronic communications in accordance with Item 4-0.01.g. of Chapter 1289 (2020 Acts of Assembly), as the COVID-19 emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble in a single location.

Present: Senator Todd Pillion, Chairman Frank Friedman, Bill Bestpitch, Chairman Michael Maslaney, Chairman Willie Greene, Senator Sam Rasoul, Senator John Edwards, Delegate Chris Hurst, Delegate Tony Wilt, and Delegate Wendy Gooditis, CTB Member Ray Smoot, Jr., Director Jennifer Mitchell, Commissioner Stephen Brich

Absent: Senator Creigh Deeds, Chairman Dennis Morris

1. Shannon Valentine, Secretary of Transportation presented on the roles, responsibilities of the Committee, and highlighted operation improvement projects.
2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
Procedural action: Election of committee chair and vice-chair by Deputy Secretary Nick Donohue

Motion for Delegate Wendy Gooditis for the Chair of the Committee made by: Chris Hurst

Seconded by: Delegate Sam Rasoul

Vote: Unanimous

Motion by: Senator John Edwards for vice-chair, Delegate Chris Hurst
Seconded by: Ray Smoot
Vote: Unanimous

3. Approval of minutes from October 1, 2019
Referenced by the attached presentation

Motion by: Chairman Frank Friedman for approval
Seconded by: Delegate Sam Rasoul
Vote: Unanimous

4. David Covington, Director, I-81 Corridor Program Delivery, VDOT presented project status update.
Referenced by the attached presentation

General Discussion: The Committee was briefed on the status of the I-81 Corridor Improvement Program to include COVID impacts to I-81 traffic, operational improvements and capital project status.

5. Emily Stock, Program Manager, DRPT presented an update on multi-modal improvements.
Referenced by the attached presentation

General Discussion: The Committee was briefed on multimodal improvements along the I-81 corridor to include transit and rail investment.

6. Cathy McGhee, Director, Innovation and Research, VDOT presented on Truck Parking.
Referenced by the attached presentation

General Discussion: The Committee was briefed on the Truck Parking Task Force and truck parking demand along the I-81 corridor.

7. Laura Farmer, Director, Chief Financial Officer, VDOT presented on Financial Overview.
Referenced by the attached presentation

General Discussion: The Committee was briefed on the current performance of the I-81 Corridor Improvement Fund, legislative updates to the fund and the current debt issuance plan.

8. Delegate Wendy Gooditis, Chairman of the Committee gave closing remarks and opened the floor for public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:15 a.m. The next meeting date will be determined upon call of the Chair.

All presentations to the Committee and meeting video can be found at [IMPROVE81.ORG](https://www.improve81.org)

IMPROVE 81

I-81 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

I-81 Committee Briefing

Dave Covington, PE

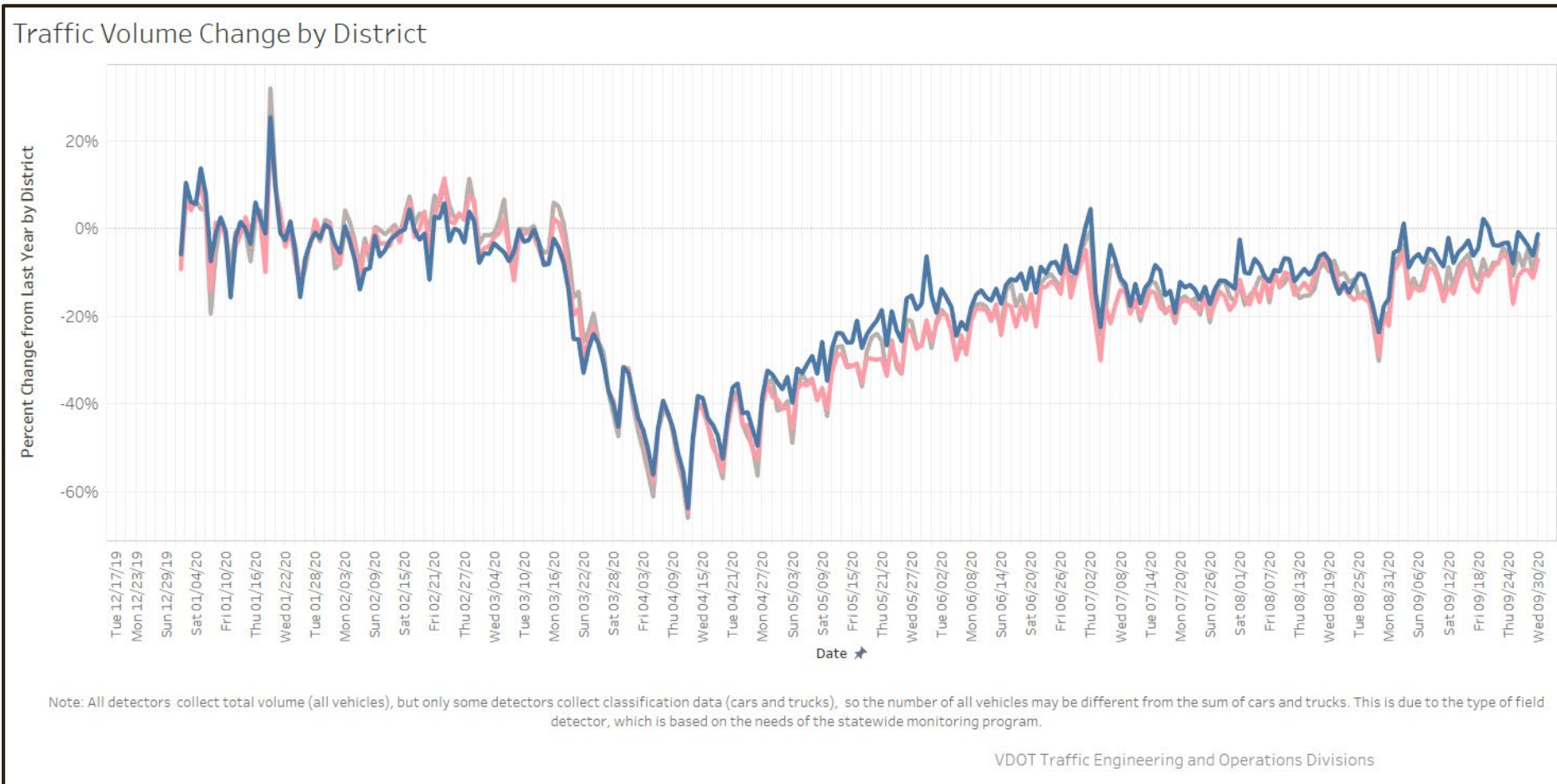
I-81 Program Delivery Director

October 23, 2020

I-81 Corridor Traffic Impacts Related to COVID-19

All Vehicle Types

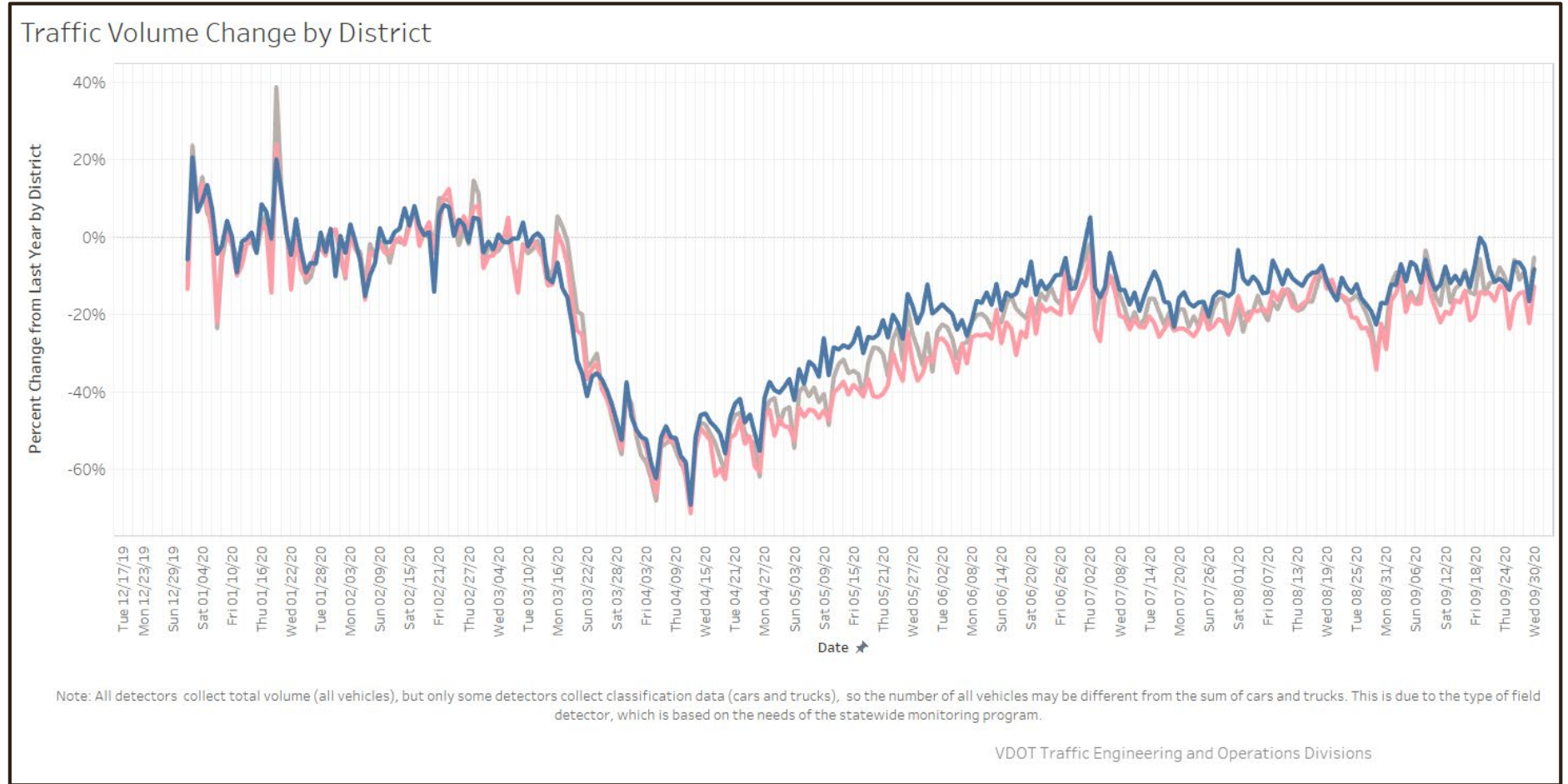
District
■ Bristol
■ Salem
■ Staunton



I-81 Corridor Traffic Impacts Related to COVID-19

Passenger Vehicles Only

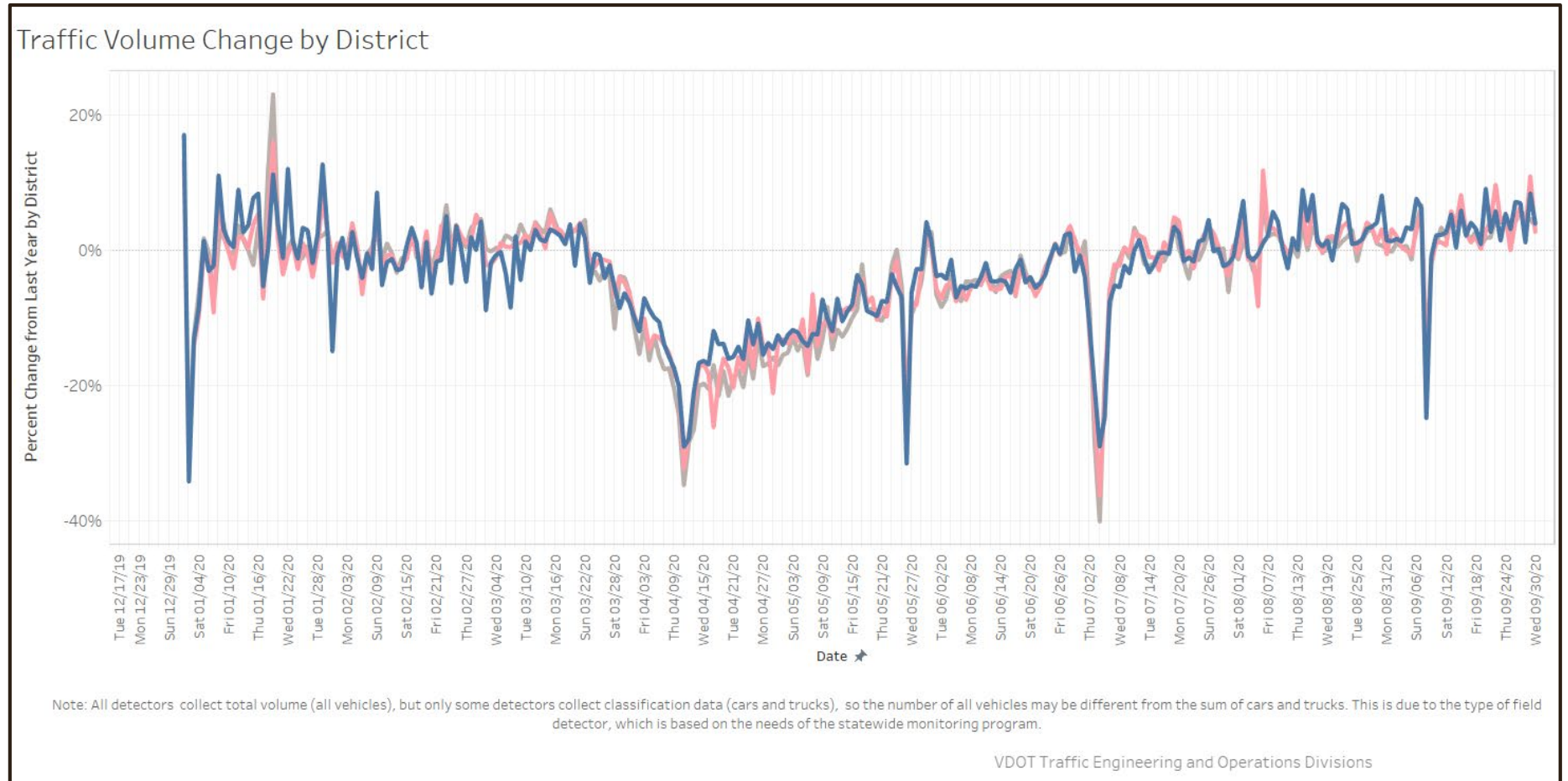
- District
- Bristol
 - Salem
 - Staunton



I-81 Corridor Traffic Impacts Related to COVID-19

Trucks Only

- District
- Bristol
 - Salem
 - Staunton



Project Development Process (Capital Projects)



Status

16 Projects

0 Projects

32 Projects

0 Projects

8 Projects

Capital Improvement Project Status - Bristol

Bristol District

- 7 projects under design by VDOT staff
- 6 projects under design by on-call consultant
- 2 projects under design by project-specific consultant (procured)
- 1 Design-Build project under design for December 2020/January 2021 advertisement
- 2 projects – Construction Complete
- Of the 18 current SYIP projects in the District, all are currently under design or have completed construction

Capital Improvement Project Status - Salem

Salem District

- 2 projects under design by VDOT staff
- 0 projects under design by on-call consultant
- 1 project under design by project-specific consultant (procured)
- 2 Design-Build projects, bundled and advertised (Request for Qualifications), Request for Proposals will be advertised in October 2020.
- 1 project - Construction Complete
- Of the 6 current SYIP projects in the District, all are currently under design or have completed construction

Capital Improvement Project Status - Staunton

Staunton District

- 6 projects under design by VDOT staff
- 1 project under design by on-call consultant
- 2 projects under design by project-specific consultants (procured)
- 0 Design-Build projects
- 5 projects – Construction Complete
- Of the 16 current SYIP projects in the District, 14 are currently under design or have completed construction
- 2 projects, bundled, are currently under contract negotiation for design services (Weyers Cave Truck Climbing Lanes NB and SB)

Operational Improvement Project Status

Corridor-wide Operational Improvements

- Curve Improvements (static and flashing Chevron signs) - Complete
- Safety Service Patrol Enhancements – Complete
- Lift and Tow - Complete
- Towing and Recovery Incentive Program – Underway with implementation scheduled for March 2021
- Traffic Camera Installations – 42 cameras now on VA 511, 8 awaiting integration to VA 511 (viewable to the Traffic Operations Center), 1 awaiting electric service installation.
- Changeable (Digital) Message Signs – Under construction, ahead of schedule, fixed completion date October 28, 2021

Arterial Improvement Project Status

Corridor-wide Arterial Improvements

- Signal upgrades –
 - Planning and design underway in concert with locality coordination for signal system integration into VDOT central signal system in all three Districts.
- Parallel Route upgrades –
 - Minor geometric improvement projects to facilitate access to and from I-81 during incidents under design for construction in the near future.

Communications Status

Corridor-wide Communications

- Development of Communications Plan – Complete
 - Communications Plan has been updated based on COVID-19 guidelines, specifically related to public involvement and in-person communication events.
- Development of Program-specific website – Complete
 - improve81.org
- Informational Products on website:
 - Development of Briefing Package – Complete
 - Development of Speaker's Bureau – Complete

Takeaway Scorecard

Activity	Status	Anticipated Completion
Curve improvements (8)	Complete	Fall 2019
Initial accel/decel lane extensions (8)	Complete	Fall 2020
Safety Service Patrol Expansion	Complete	July 2019
Additional Cameras (51)	Nearly Complete	Spring 2020
Additional Changeable Message Signs	Underway	October 2021
Arterial Upgrades	Underway	Varies by project
Remaining capital projects (32)	Underway	Varies by project

Next Steps

- Continue Design of Capital Improvement Projects
- Complete Traffic Camera Installations (Electric service and VA 511 Integration)
- Complete Procurement of Program's First Design-Build Contract in Salem District (Exit 137 – Exit 141)
- Advertise Ramp Extension projects in Staunton District (December). Includes Exit 304, Exit 296, and Exit 291 bundled into a single construction contract
- Award Project ID 26 (MM 16.6 – MM 16.7 SB) construction contract (Advertised September 8th)
- Advertise Single Phase Design Build Project in Bristol District
- Begin Arterial Improvements construction
- Execute TRIP Program

I-81 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FINANCE UPDATE

I-81 Committee Briefing

Laura Farmer
VDOT Chief Finance Officer

October 23, 2020



Outline

- **Fiscal Year 2020 revenue performance**
- **Legislative update**
- **Proposed funding structure**
- **Current debt issuance plan**
- **Next steps**

Fiscal Year 2020 Performance (in millions)

Interstate 81 Improvement Fund

Source	Estimate (February 2020)	Actual Collections
Regional Fuels Tax	\$55.0	\$69.8
Truck Registration Fee (IRP/License Fee)	30.2	19.3
Road Tax	6.8	3.3
Interest	-	0.7
TOTAL	\$92.0	\$93.1

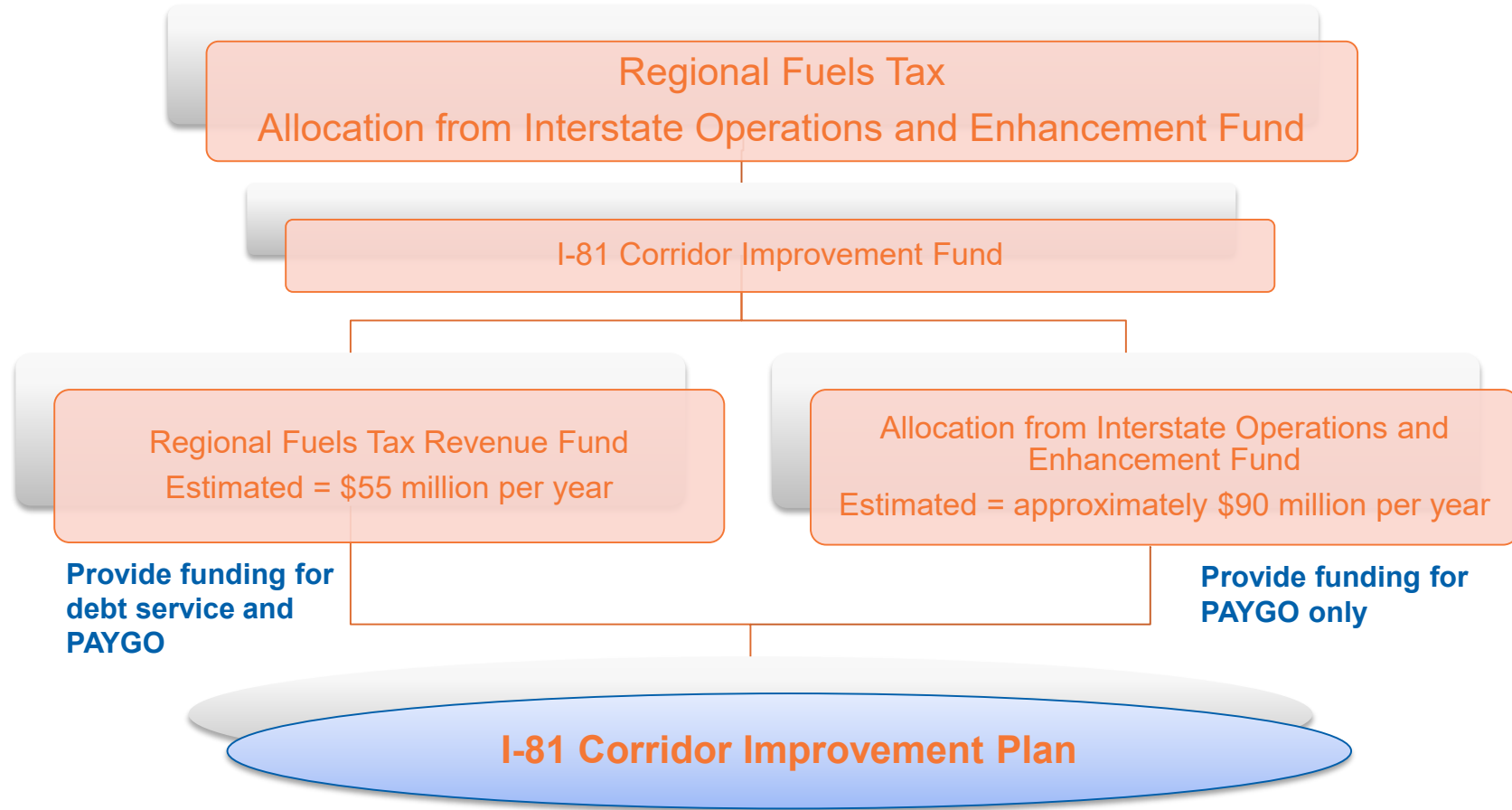
Project Expenditures through June 30, 2020	\$7.6
Cash Balance on June 30, 2020	\$85.5

Legislative Updates to Program

Chapters 1230 and 1275 (HB 1414 and SB 890)

- **Authorized the sale and issuance of bonds, with an aggregate principal amount of \$1 billion**
- **Updated the localities contributing to fuel tax revenue for I-81 Fund. They are now limited to those where I-81 passes through it or it is a city which is wholly encompassed by a county through which I-81 passes.**
- **Funding for corridor provided through the Interstate Operations and Enhancement Program**
Statewide revenue sources committed to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund

Funding Structure



Note:

1. Operational Improvement Projects funded by paygo cash only
2. Capital Improvement Projects funded by paygo and debt proceeds

Current Debt Issuance Plan

- **Senior lien – municipal bonds issued in the public market**
- **Junior lien – municipal bonds and/or federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loans**
- **Issuance timing and amounts match project annual payout needs**

Next Steps

- **Currently updating financial model with latest project estimates and schedules**
 - **December revenue estimate will provide long-term forecast**
- **Re-engage indicative rating processes with Rating Agencies while working on TIFIA Letter of Interest (LOI)**
- **Begin work on documents and associated approvals for bond transaction**
 - **Anticipate senior lien bond issuance in Spring 2021**
- **Incorporate use of debt into the Six-Year Improvement Program in the spring and the FY 2022 SYIP Update**



I-81 Multimodal Improvements Technical Report

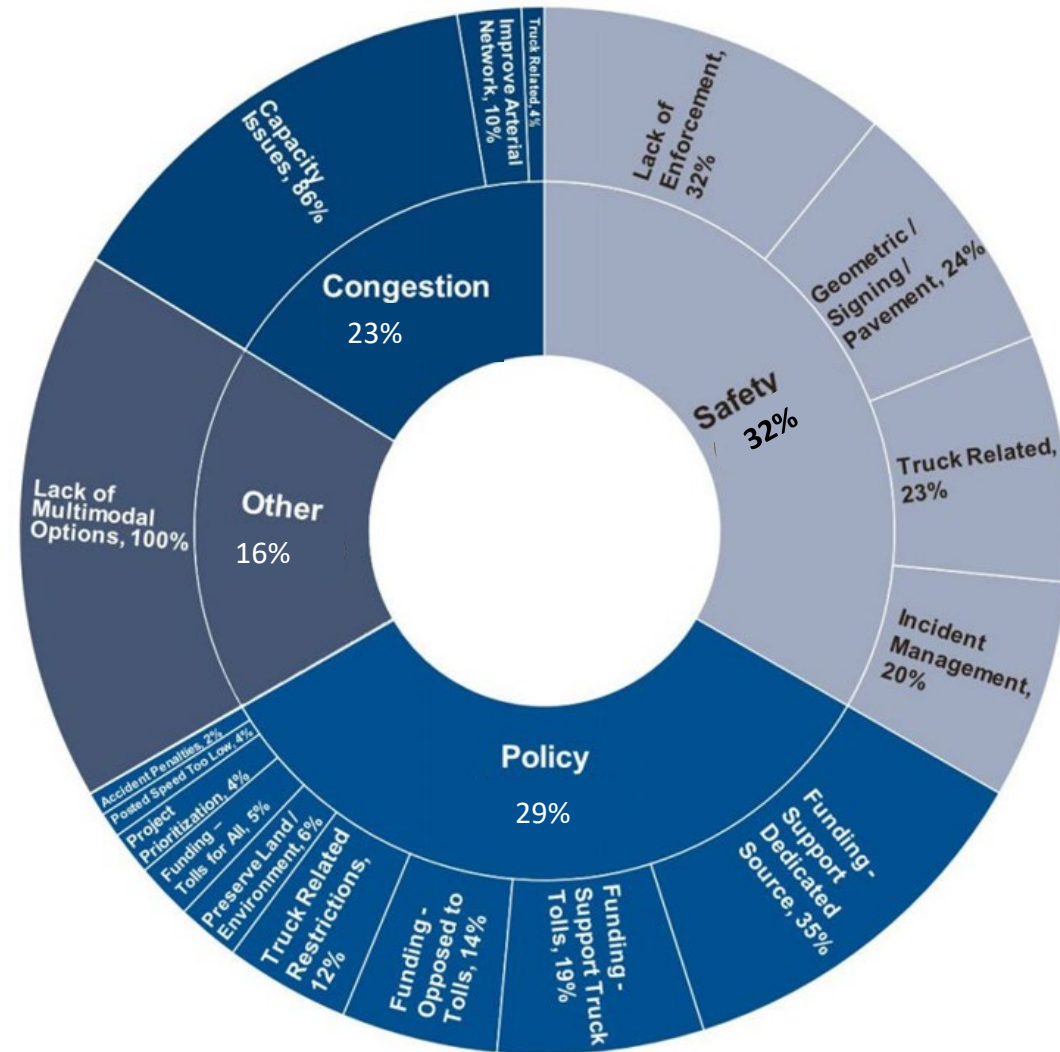
October 23, 2020

I-81 CORRIDOR
IMPROVEMENT PLAN



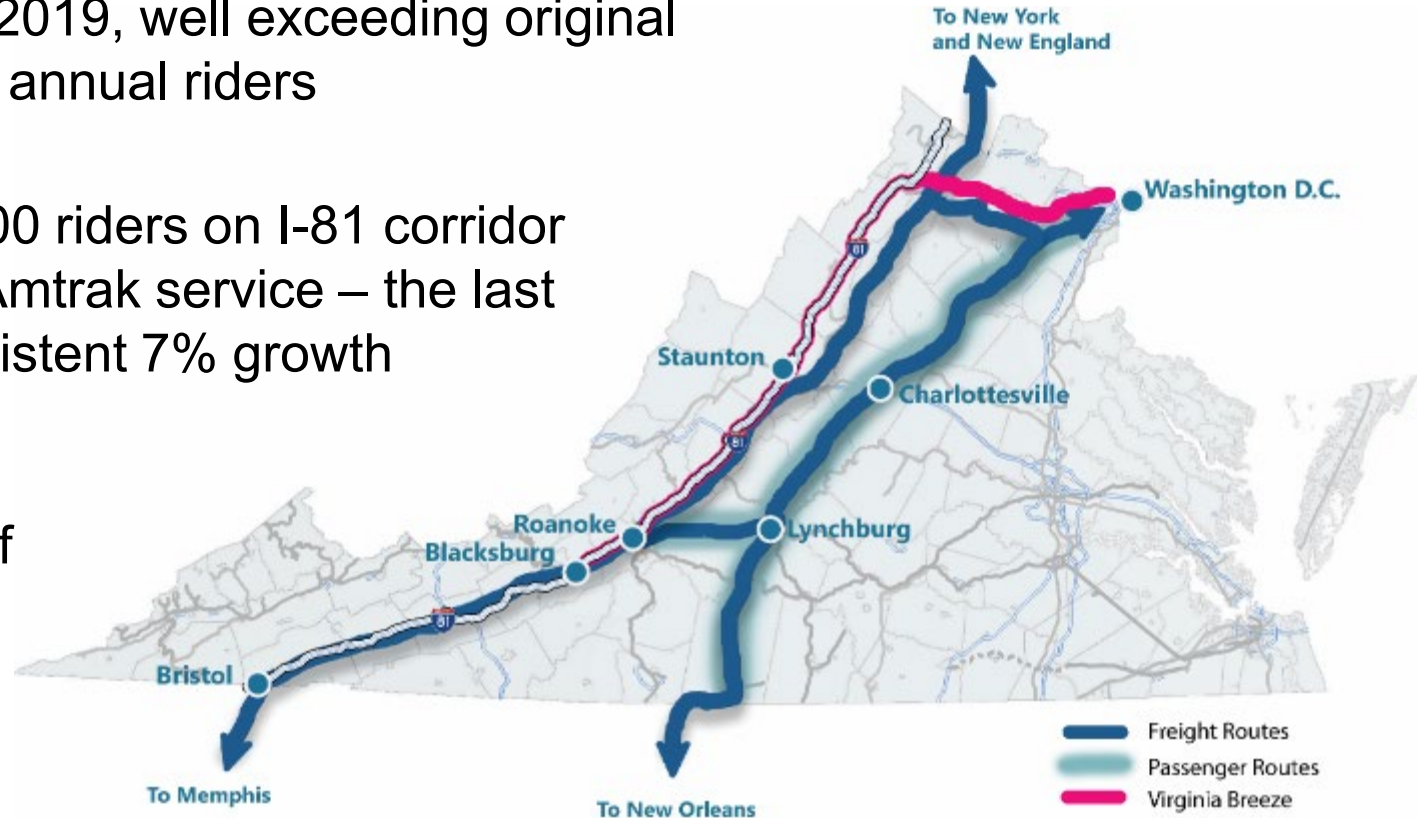
Background

- DRPT is identifying and prioritizing multimodal improvements along the corridor
- Over 300 comments from I-81 Corridor Improvement public meetings referenced lack of multimodal options
- DRPT has identified potential transit and rail improvements, taking into account existing gaps in service



Multimodal Improvements

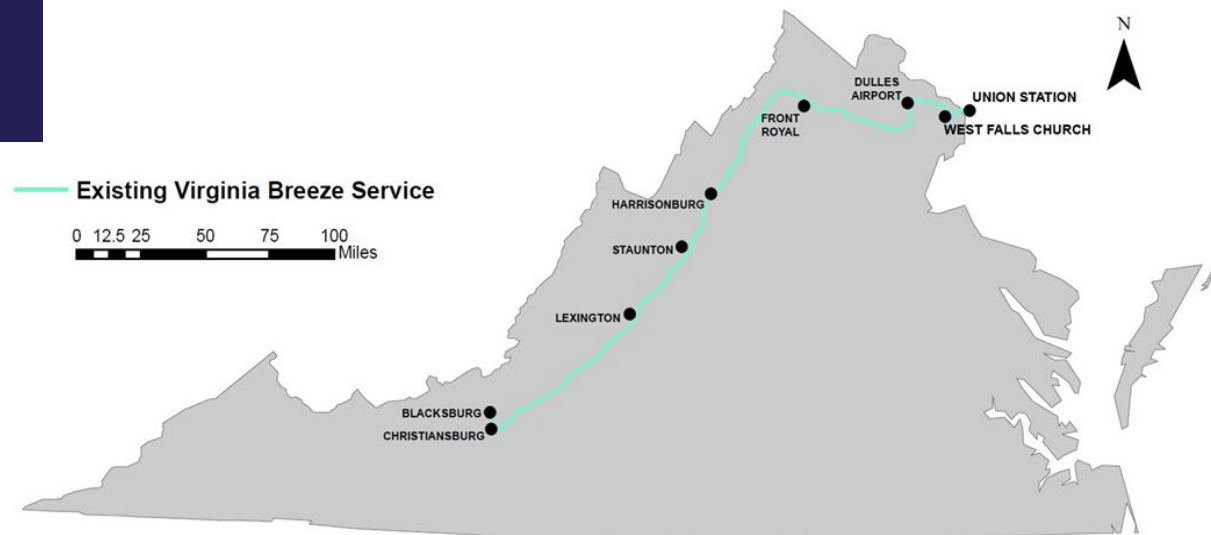
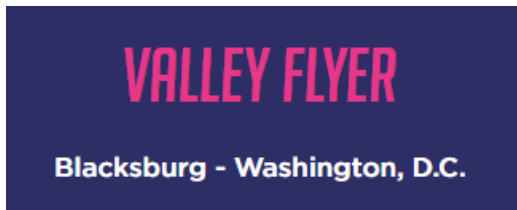
- *Virginia Breeze* bus service carried 28,855 riders in calendar year 2019, well exceeding original forecast of 7,000 annual riders
- More than 220,000 riders on I-81 corridor state supported Amtrak service – the last 2 years had consistent 7% growth
- ~70 million tons of freight moved by rail each year



Transit Improvements

Existing Conditions and Problem Identification

- *Virginia Breeze* Bus Lines operates the Valley Flyer daily roundtrip service between Blacksburg and Washington D.C. with stops in the Shenandoah Valley, Front Royal, Dulles Airport, and Arlington
- DRPT studied an extension of *Virginia Breeze* intercity bus service in southwestern Virginia, along with new bus stops and critical improvements to existing intercity bus stops along the corridor



Transit Improvements

Transit Improvement Concepts and Selection Process

- *Virginia Breeze* study concluded that one new round trip with service to Bristol and new stops at Wytheville and Salem (Alternative 3) would yield a farebox recovery of 83%, and an annual ridership increase of close to 70%
- Net annual O&M cost estimated at \$243,000*
- Bus stop improvements at Front Royal and Lexington estimated to cost \$60,000
- New bus stops at Bristol, Wytheville, and Salem estimated to cost \$40,000

*All costs shown are 2022 YOE

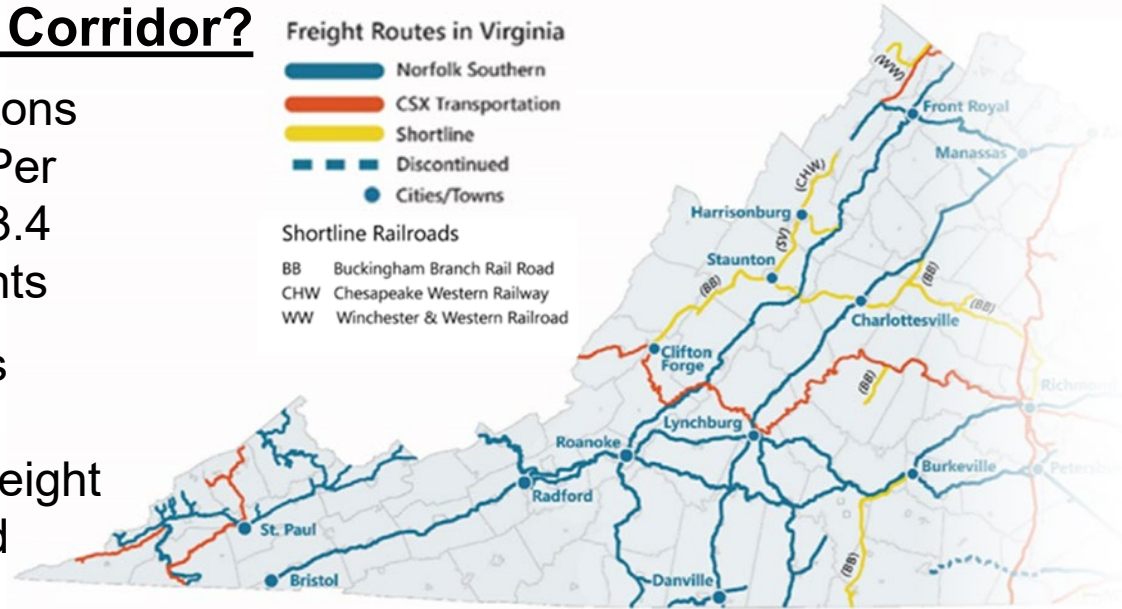


Rail Improvements

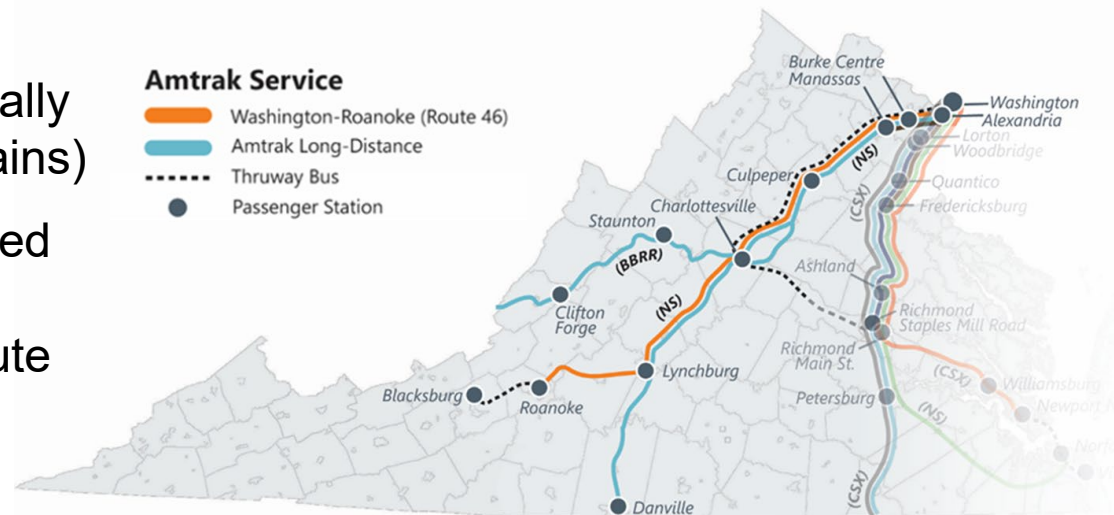
What does rail do for the I-81 Corridor?

- Approximately 70 Million total tons moved by rail in I-81 Corridor Per Year - equal to approximately 3.4 million individual truck shipments
- Once dominant coal shipments down, leaving capacity for intermodal and merchandise freight (includes agricultural and wood products)
- Over 270,000 ons and offs at Amtrak stations in corridor annually (state supported and intercity trains)
- Roanoke train revenues exceeded operating costs and route had highest load factor of any VA route

Freight Routes in Virginia



Amtrak Service



Rail Improvements

What does the Commonwealth do to support rail?

- Invested approximately \$200 million since 2006 to increase capacity and network reliability for freight and passenger rail
 - Created double stack clearance
 - \$1.2 billion annual savings to Virginia – avoided costs from accidents, congestion and pavement maintenance
 - Approximately \$100 million for capacity improvements to extend service to Roanoke
- \$11 million allocated in SYIP for Virginia Inland Port capacity improvements

Virginia Inland Port in Front Royal



Roanoke Amtrak Station



I-81 Corridor Rail Investments



REF - \$70.1 M

- 2nd Mainline Improvements, Tunnel Clearances, and Siding Extension
- Since 2006



RPF - \$9.3 M

- Shenandoah Valley Railroad
- Winchester & Western Railroad
- Since 2006



RIA - \$12.3 M

- 31 Projects currently in their 15-Year Commonwealth Interest Period



IPROC - \$100 M

- Extension of Amtrak Service: LYN - Roanoke
- NS Mainline Capacity Improvements
- Signal Upgrades



Amtrak Operating Support - \$3.6M **FY19 – FY24**

- Service between Roanoke and the Northeast

I-81 Corridor Rail Investments

Examples Spurring Economic Development

- Houff Corporation – Railside Industries
 - \$450,000 Rail Industrial Access Grant
 - 17,415 trucks off road during 5-year performance period
 - 28 new full-time jobs
 - Located on Shenandoah Valley Railroad
- Shenandoah Valley Railroad
 - \$3.1M Rail Preservation Fund investment since 2006
 - 52,074 trucks off road between 2009 to 2018
 - Preservation Fund investment has aided SVRR in doubling customer base



Rail Improvements

Why does the Commonwealth invest in rail?

Freight and passenger rail supports our economy efficiently and effectively

GROW THE ECONOMY

RAIL SERVICES DRIVE 6% OF VIRGINIA'S TOTAL ECONOMY.
MORE THAN 6,000 JOBS CREATED DIRECTLY BY RAIL NETWORK



\$2.2 BILLION
in direct annual benefits

\$ about 9 cents per ton-mile of rail use



\$190 MILLION
in direct annual benefits

\$ about 46 cents per passenger-mile of rail use

BREATHE EASIER

3M TONS OF CO₂ EMISSIONS AVOIDED
(6.4% OF TOTAL IN VIRGINIA PER YEAR)



On average, railroads are **four times** more fuel efficient than trucks



Moving freight by rail instead of truck generates **75% less** greenhouse gas emissions



The total estimated level of rail service in Virginia in 2015 was about **25 billion ton-miles**

TRAVEL SAFE

18 LIVES SAVED AND 3,000 CRASHES AVOIDED EACH YEAR



Shipping by rail avoids about **1.7 billion miles** of truck travel in Virginia



Passenger travel by rail avoids about **271 million miles** of personal driving in Virginia

SAVE MONEY

\$123M ANNUAL PAVEMENT MAINTENANCE SAVINGS
(6% OF ANNUAL VDOT MAINTENANCE BUDGET)

\$312M ANNUAL CONGESTION SAVINGS
(FREIGHT AND PASSENGER DIVERSION)



8 = 240
PASSENGER RAILCARS = PASSENGER VEHICLES



100 = 340
FREIGHT RAILCARS = SEMI-TRAILER TRUCKS

Rail Improvements

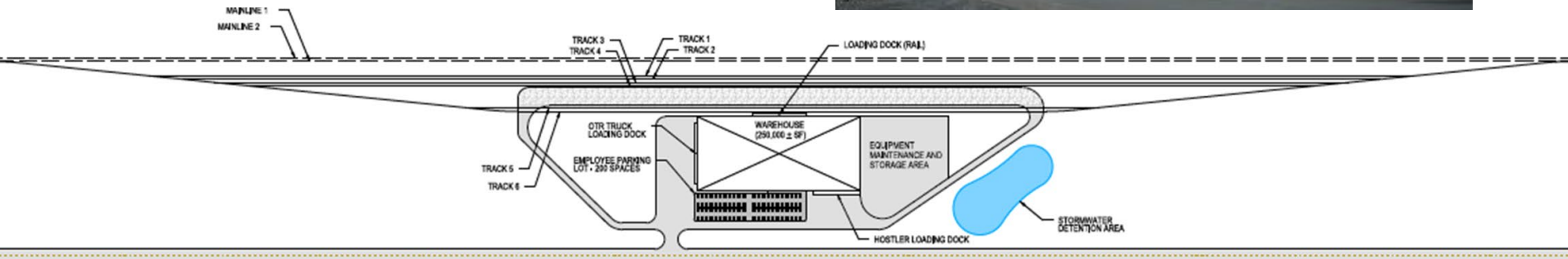
What type of rail investments make sense in the I-81 Corridor?

- Existing industries with commodities conducive to rail that currently ship by truck present opportunity to accommodate more freight transported by rail in the corridor
- Intermodal access** will facilitate shipments by rail. This can be at a large scale, such as the Virginia Inland Port; or a smaller scale transload facility, like Houff in Augusta County

*Houff Industries, Augusta County
transload facility funding from
DRPT Rail Industrial Access Program*



Example transload facility layout



Rail Improvements

What type of rail investments make sense in the I-81 Corridor?

- **Passenger rail** is a vital lifeline for colleges and universities in the corridor – Virginia Tech and Radford University
- Amtrak Route 46 launched successful service to Lynchburg in 2009, at the end of the last recession
- Continued consistent demand year to year

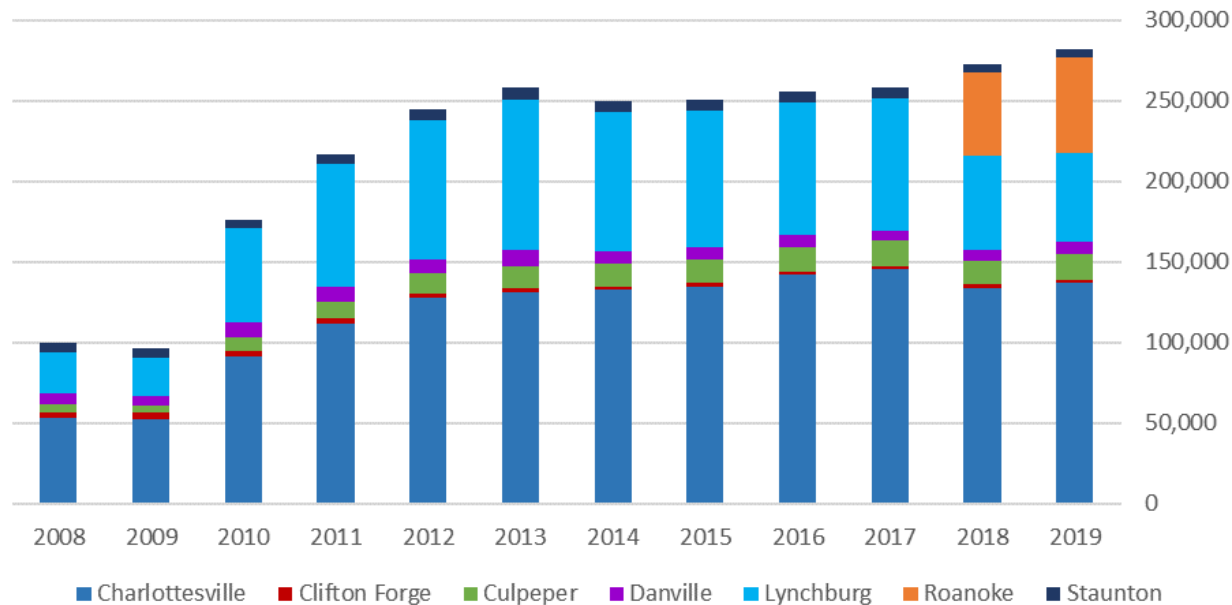
"Regional stakeholders view Amtrak service as an asset for its provision of easy access to Washington, DC. This access provides value to firms both by enabling easy business travel, and by enhancing the image of the region for young talent interested in proximity to major urban centers."

2017 Lynchburg Connectivity Study



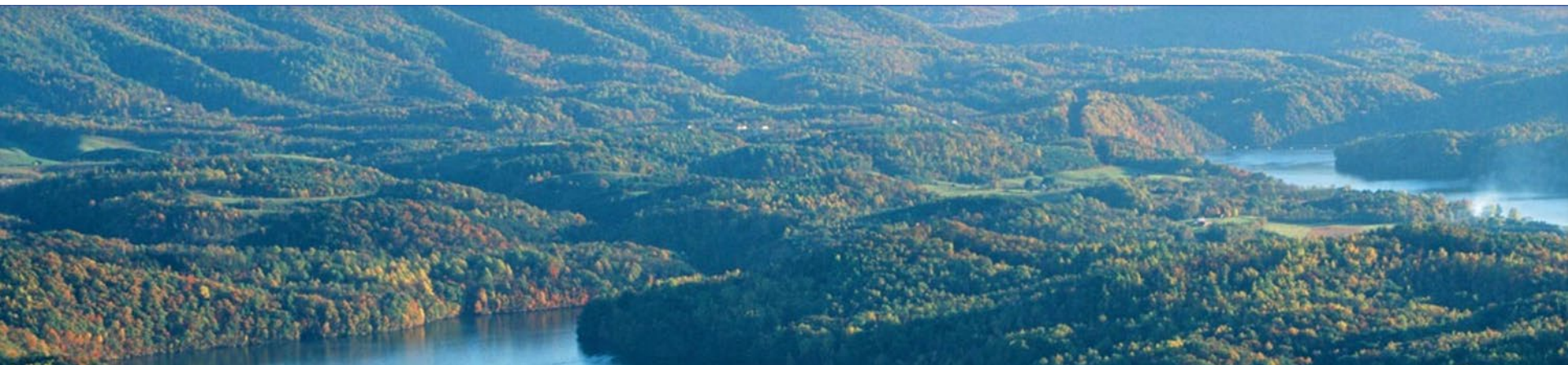
DRPT

Amtrak Station Activity in the I-81 Corridor



Next Steps

- Review potential alternatives for intercity bus service, passenger rail and freight rail investments
- Quantify potential benefits of investments and assess feasibility
- Prioritize investments and present recommendations to I-81 Commission



TRUCK PARKING TASK FORCE

 Cathy McGhee, Director of Research and Innovation

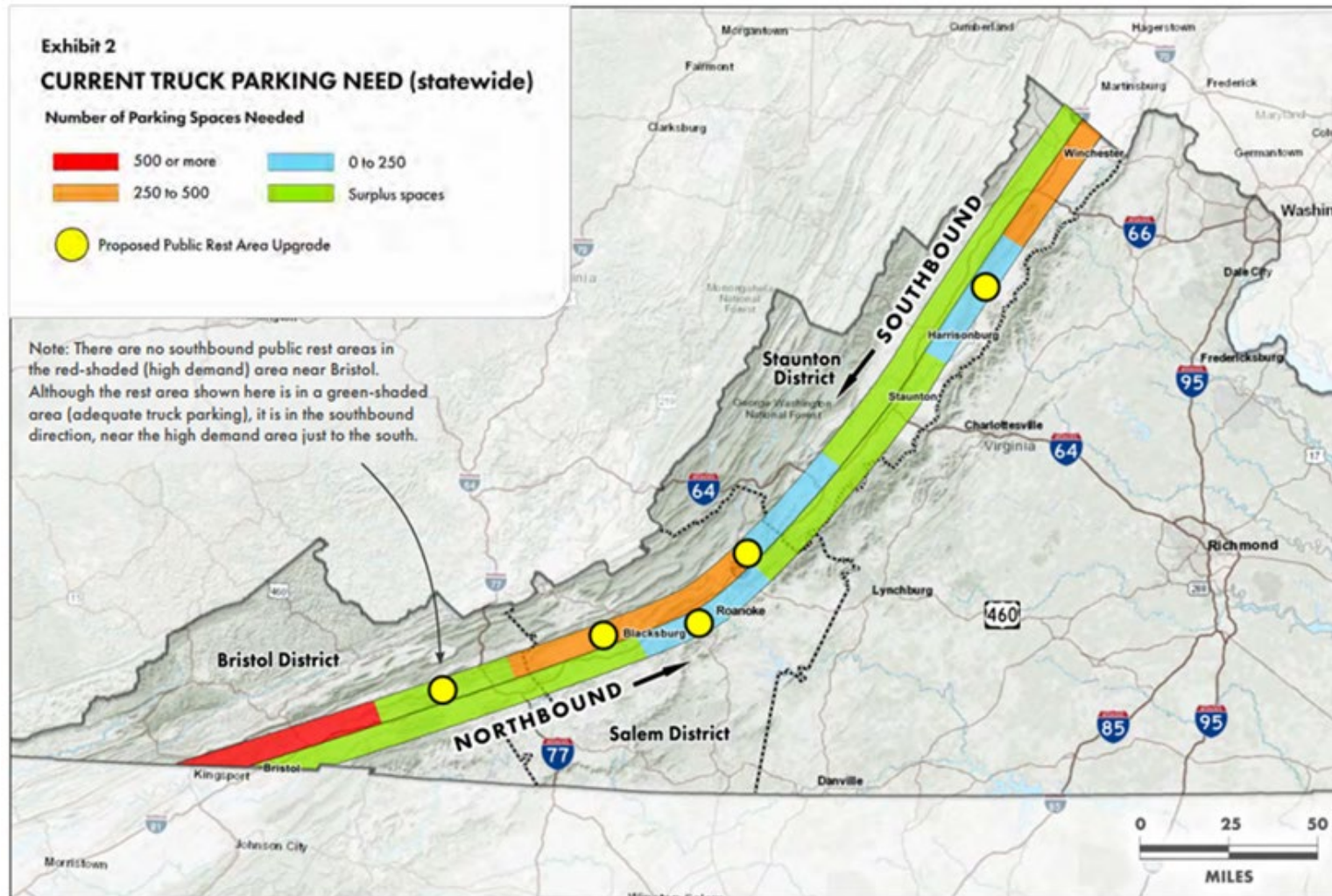
October 2020

Current Conditions for Truck Parking

	Current Supply ¹	Estimated Current Need	Total Deficit
Northbound	1,550	1,900	350
Southbound	1,900	2,500	600
Totals	3,450	4,400	950

Source: I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan, Appendix I

Current Conditions for Truck Parking



Opportunities for Additional Parking Capacity

- **Currently an approximately 9-to-1 ratio of private vs. public truck parking spaces**
 - Interviews with drivers indicates a preference for private travel centers due to the availability of services and amenities
 - Significant limitations on commercialization of public rest areas exist, however these spaces also see significant use
- **Study found that spaces could potentially be added at public rest areas along I-81**
- **Significant expansion of private capacity will also be necessary to meet demand**

Opportunities

- **Public rest area expansions**
 - **5 of 14 rest areas appear to have expansion possibilities**
 - Smyth Southbound (MM 53) – 8 spaces
 - Radford Southbound (MM 108) – 26 spaces
 - Ironto Northbound (MM 129) – 48 spaces
 - Troutville Southbound (MM 158) – 26 spaces
 - New Market Northbound (MM 262) – 23 spaces
- **Private parking expansions**
 - **Incentives to private operators could increase supply**
- **Technology applications**
 - **Explore implementation of a real-time truck parking availability and reservation system at VDOT rest areas and through partnerships in private facilities**

Truck Parking Task Force - Membership

- **Virginia Trucking Association**
- **Owner Operator Independent Driver Association (OOIDA)**
- **National Association of Truck Stop Owners**
- **Private Truck Stop Owners**
- **Trucking Companies**
- **Regional Planning Organizations**
- **I-81 Corridor Coalition and Eastern Transportation Coalition**
- **DMV, VSP, VDOT**

Task Force Goals

- **Understand the needs of commercial vehicle operators as it relates to truck parking. What services are needed? What is the appropriate mix of full service and minimal service?**
- **Evaluate options for meeting the need for additional capacity through public investment, private investment, and public-private partnerships. What are the hurdles to expanding parking capacity?**
- **Determine the need for and methods to provide information on truck parking availability in real-time. What is the preferred method of information dissemination? Is the ability to reserve spaces desired?**

Task Force Schedule

- **The Task Force will meet (virtually) every other month**
- **Segments will be evaluated beginning at the southern end of the corridor**
- **Recommendations will be offered to the Committee in Summer 2021**

