



# VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

June 6, 2017

The Honorable Jay Fisetto  
Chairman, Long-Range Plan Task Force  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

Subject: LRPTF Suggested Bundles of Projects, Programs, and Policies

***Transmitted by E-mail***

Dear Chairman Fisetto:

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) System Plan 2040 outlines the long-range vision for VRE service growth and railroad infrastructure needs. It describes a robust network of frequent, bi-directional commuter rail services to address the mobility challenges of the National Capital region. The objectives of the VRE System Plan 2040 align with goals identified by the Long-Range Plan Task Force (LRPTF) to provide a range of transportation options, promote a strong regional economy, address regional congestion, accessibility and mobility, prioritize state of good repair, and support inter-regional travel and commerce.

As the LRPTF reviews the suggested “bundles” of improvements and works to narrow them down to a manageable number of projects, programs, and policies, I ask you consider two VRE-related projects in particular that would be transformative for the region: adding capacity to the Long Bridge corridor and modernizing the Washington Union Station transportation complex.

The *Long Bridge Corridor Project* would expand capacity for regional passenger rail services through Southeast Washington and Arlington County to the benefit of District, Virginia and possibly Maryland commuters. It is a critical improvement of region-wide significance needed not only for VRE to achieve the service aspirations articulated in the System Plan 2040, but to also expand Amtrak Virginia service and implement the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor to the Carolinas. This project is a prerequisite for a possible extension of MARC Rail Service to Alexandria and will provide additional capacity for CSX Transportation freight service in combination with the Virginia Avenue Tunnel expansion. These initiatives collectively align directly with *Bundles B & F – Enhanced Regional Rail Service* and *Bundle DD – Convert Commuter Rail to Regional Rail* in the LRPTF table of suggested bundles of projects, programs and policies.

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Bundles B & F also make reference to capacity improvements to Washington Union Station, the region's most heavily trafficked intermodal hub and the nexus for Amtrak intercity and regional services, VRE and MARC Rail Service, and WMATA Metrorail. The 110 year-old terminal complex urgently requires rehabilitation and modernization of its tracks, platforms, concourses, storage and maintenance facilities, and underlying infrastructure to address the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century traveler, including cross-regional commuting patterns that were unimaginable in 1907.

Just as important as identifying major capital improvements is determining a realistic means to pay for their construction, operation, and maintenance. Bundle AA – Fix Metro Funding begins to address the need for regional dedicated funding but stops short of suggesting the vital need equally shared by VRE. The scope of this bundle should be expanded to include the need to identify a sustainable source of dedicated funding for all passenger rail carriers in the region.

As VRE celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we thank TPB for its continued support and advocacy. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns about this matter. VRE staff regularly attends the LRPTF task force meetings and can provide additional comments and guidance at meetings as desired.

Sincerely,



Doug Allen  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: M. Nohe, Prince William Board of County Supervisors  
C. Hudgins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
S. Kannan, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
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