



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Update



703-684-1001

www.vre.org

January 10, 2007

Editor's Note:

We don't know about you, but last year seemed to fly by. This year promises to be equally exciting. We've included some New Year's Resolutions (page 4) to help get the year started.

It's a new year, with new a new bridge and new cars (page 3), and we are definitely looking forward to the changes that are in store for us. In addition to these prominent projects, construction on a new parking garage in Manassas is scheduled to begin this year.

Just as every yin must have a yang, this year will also bring some unpopular changes. The possible changes to FRCs and the cost of the Step-Up tickets (page 4) are signs of the tight budget that we are going to face this summer.

All in all, we are confident that this year will be one of our best yet! Did we mention that 2007 will mark our 15th Anniversary? We'll be celebrating in June and July.

Until then, Happy New Year!

Quantico Bridge Nears Completion

Service Changes To Be Announced Soon

It's almost time to celebrate. The Quantico Bridge project—seven years and \$25 million in the making—is nearing completion, and it's a project that has run impressively on time. Once opened for rail traffic, the project will eliminate one of the most serious railroad bottlenecks between Richmond and Washington, D.C. Until now, the entire rail system between the two cities was made up of two tracks ... except for the Quantico Bridge. By adding a second span and a second track, the days of waiting for other trains to clear the bridge will be over.

But before railroad officials, staff and VRE riders can break out the pom poms, two final preparations are in order: First, an important

“cut-in” phase is scheduled to begin Saturday, February 10. This cut-in process, which will tie the new track in with the existing tracks, will take about 10 days to complete and will involve connecting and testing the new, approximately one-mile section of track on the new bridge and approaches.

Some schedule disruptions may result, because in order to properly test the track, some signals will need to be temporarily suspended. VRE and CSX are currently working out the details to minimize this disruption; look for more information in VRE Update, Train Talk and on our Web site.

Continued on page 3

Next Phase to Begin for Burke Centre Garage

Additional Spaces Will Be Lost

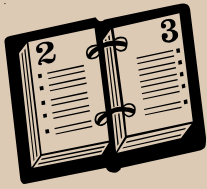
Some big changes are in store for the Burke Centre garage project in the coming months. Fairfax County is nearing completion on the first phase of the project—building a temporary lot of 162 parking spaces on the east side of the station, along with a temporary “Kiss & Ride” area. Both are expected to be finished by the end of this month. Passengers who use the Burke Centre station should be on the lookout for diagrams and directional signs that will guide them to the new, temporary lot, which can't be easily seen from the entrance.

“Passengers will need to drive past the construction site in order to reach the new lot,” explained Sirel Mouchantaf, VRE's Director of Construction and Facilities, “so we'll be

providing a lot of information to our riders to help them make the best use of the space. Directions to the new parking and Kiss and Ride area, as well as schematics of the lot configurations, will be available on our Web site and at the station.”

Once the temporary lot is open, the next major phase of the project will begin, and the contractor will section off a large portion of the existing parking lot where the garage will be located. The construction site will encompass the entire “footprint” of the new garage, and during the 14-month construction phase, an additional 103 parking spaces on-site will be lost. Those lost spaces have been supplemented

Continued on page 2



Burke Centre Garage Construction

Continued from page 1

Upcoming Dates

Mon., January 15
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday No VRE
Service

Wed., February 7 On-
Line Forum 12:00n

Mon., February 19
Presidents' Day Holiday
No VRE Service

by the new temporary lots, as well as 108 off-site spaces at the future Burke Library site (Fairfax County Parkway at Freds Oak Road), and 100 off-site spaces at St. Mary's Church (Zion Drive at Sideburn Road). Both of the off-site lots are served by shuttles. The use of these lots is *highly* recommended during this phase.

"The next 14 months will really make up the majority of the project," Mouchantaf added, "and once it's complete, we'll really only have to work through a series of much smaller phases, such as building access roads and paving a small parking lot on the west side, which we anticipate will only take about four additional months to complete. The project is on schedule so far, so we're very hopeful that in about 18 months, the difficulties of finding parking at the Burke Centre station will be history."

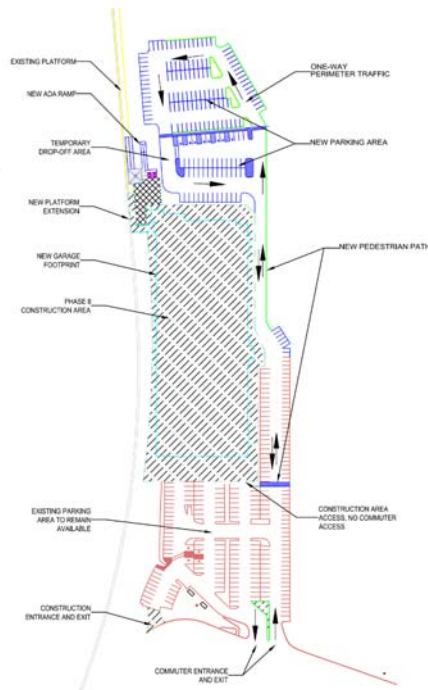
"As much as we need this parking garage and the extra spaces it will provide, we know that our riders need parking in the interim, and that's where the shuttles come in," said VRE's CEO Dale Zehner. "But because a multi-level parking garage is not something that can

be built in multiple phases, we will have to work around the fact that the construction site will take up some spaces. We're confident, however, that the relatively short-term loss of on-site spots, supplemented by temporary and off-site spots, will be well worth the wait for the long-term result: enough spaces for nearly 1,500 vehicles, a separate Kiss and Ride loop and many more amenities."

During the construction phase, we want to hear from commuters who use the Burke Centre station. If issues crop up at any point during

this 14-month long phase, we need to be fully aware of them. We'll continue to monitor the situation every day, but as we frequently say, our riders are often our first line of communication, and we hope that by working together, we can make this process go as smoothly as possible.

A \$28.8 million project, the Burke Centre garage is being federally funded through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program and federal earmarks. By its completion in summer 2008, the facility will boast approximately 1,290 garage spaces and 225 surface spaces, with a designated bus loop, kiss and ride drop-off area, bus shelters, elevators and stairways, a covered walkway to the train platform, and pedestrian and accessible amenities. With brick facades, decorative planters, and a clock tower, the architectural design aims to please, as well.



The construction plan for the next phase. A larger version is available on the Burke Centre Parking Page of our website at www.vre.org/service/stations/burkecentreparking.htm.

The design of the project is the result of extensive coordination between federal agencies, Fairfax County (Public Works and Transportation), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), VRE, the local Burke Centre community, and commuters. Throughout all phases of this project, up-to-date information will be posted onsite, on the VRE Web site (www.vre.org/service/stations/burkecentreparking.htm), and on the County Web site (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/construction/burke_vre/).



VRE Update is a publication of Virginia Railway Express. The newsletter is published bi-weekly 24 times per year. Stories included are for the sole use of VRE riders and its supporters. Comments and questions may be directed to VRE Customer Service at gotrains@vre.org or at (703) 684-1001.

Quantico Bridge Nearly Complete

Continued from page 1

“We’ll have to test about a mile of new track work and more than 14 miles of signals between Featherstone and Arkendale,” explained Sirel Mouchantaf, VRE’s Director of Construction and Facilities. “There are new signals north of the bridge that will be activated, as well as existing signals in this area that we need to ensure are working exactly as intended.”

Once completed, trains can operate over the new bridge while work is being finished and realignment of existing tracks is underway.

Once this first phase of testing is completed, there will be a second and final phase required, which will “cut in” the new switches just north of the bridge. This phase is scheduled to take place at the end of March, and once it’s finalized, the project will officially be complete, allowing double track operation over Quantico Creek and a new universal interlocking (switch) north of the Creek.

“The fact that we will not have to share a single track with all north- and south-bound rail traffic will make an enormous difference,” added Mouchantaf, “and for the immediate future, it will mean fewer delays for our customers. In the not-so-distant future, it will also mean that we’ll be able to add trains and increase service, which of course is one of our over-riding goals.”

Looking even further to the future, the task force—made up of officials from Virginia, VRE and CSX—also decided that even though the second span would initially be built with just one track, it should be designed so that a second track could eventually be added. Because that decision was acted upon, if that second track is ever added, there would be a total of three tracks across the Quantico Creek, making expansion of the entire Richmond to D.C. track system possible. The improved infrastructure would also be able to handle high-speed rail, a long-term goal of the state.

“It’s definitely a project that was built with an eye on the future,” Mouchantaf said, “as are our other projects. The Quantico Bridge project is part of other priority projects with CSX, and a memorandum of understanding between VRE, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and CSX—drafted in 2002—dictates how many trains VRE can add to the system as the projects are completed. With improved infrastructure, VRE’s capacity and reliability can be improved, as well.”



The Quantico Bridge is expected to be completely finished in April. Service disruptions may occur during the final stages. Once those details are finalized in the next few weeks, we’ll be alerting our riders through Train Talk, our website and upcoming issues of the Update.



New Cab Cars

Our new cab cars* are almost ready to go into service. Unlike an automobile, which you can drive off the lot, new rail cars need a little extra tweaking. We are in the process of doing just that. Once we make it through our punch list, we’ll be able to place them into regular service, hopefully, next week.

While the plan is subject to change, we anticipate putting four cab cars into service, two on each line. Because these are cab cars, they will go onto four different trains, replacing the single level cab cars. The additional 50 trailer cars are expected at the end of this year.

* A cab car is the car from which the engineer operates the train when the locomotive is at the rear of the train. At VRE, this car is normally on the north end of the train.

New Year's Resolutions for VRE Riders

√ I resolve to drive slowly and cautiously in the parking lots.

√ I resolve to queue for my stop after the train has departed the station before mine.

√ I resolve to treat my fellow riders and the train crew with courtesy and respect.

√ I resolve to adjust the volume on my headphones at a low level so that only I can hear the music.

√ I resolve to keep my feet on the floor, not on the opposite seat.

√ I resolve to take up only one seat.

VRE's New Year's Resolutions

√ We resolve to make our communications with our riders as quick and accurate as possible.

√ We resolve to work with our host railroads and maintenance crews to minimize the possibility of delays.

√ We resolve to find new ways to address courtesy issues amongst our passengers.

√ We resolve to make VRE your best commuting alternative.

√ We resolve to treat our riders with courtesy and respect.

Ask VRE

Dear VRE,

I saw in the VRE newsletter that Amtrak step up tickets are increasing 500% but the flyer did not say when this increase takes affect and whether old step up tickets will still be honored. Please fill in the details.

Steamed About the Step-Up

Dear Steamed,

To answer your question, the specific details will be determined once this course of action has been finalized. We realize that this is a significant increase for those who use the Amtrak service.

Forming next year's budget to meet the challenge of rising expenses while minimizing the impact on riders was no easy task. The proposed Step-Up fare is one example of trying to minimize the number of people affected. The fare from a VRE passenger who rides a VRE trains goes towards more than the operation of that train. The fare also goes towards other operational costs, such as the costs of our stations (the construction of which are still being paid for) and the lease and maintenance of our parking lots. On the other hand, the fare of a passenger who rides an Amtrak train goes entirely to Amtrak, yet that passenger still uses the same stations and parking lots. Therefore the increase in the Step-Up fare reflects not only what VRE must pay Amtrak, but the other operational costs that are currently not being covered by that fare.

Your Customer Advocate

Dear VRE,

The CEO is advocating deleting the Free Ride Certificate (FRC) program because of administrative costs - begging the question, what is the incentive for keeping a train's on-time performance where it should be?

I can only speak for myself, but the FRC was at least one way of saying, "we're sorry for your inconvenience - please accept this free ride as a token of our sincerity to correct the problem". Now the company is saying, Sorry folks, if we're late, we're late - maybe we'll do better tomorrow.

Frustrated and FRC-less

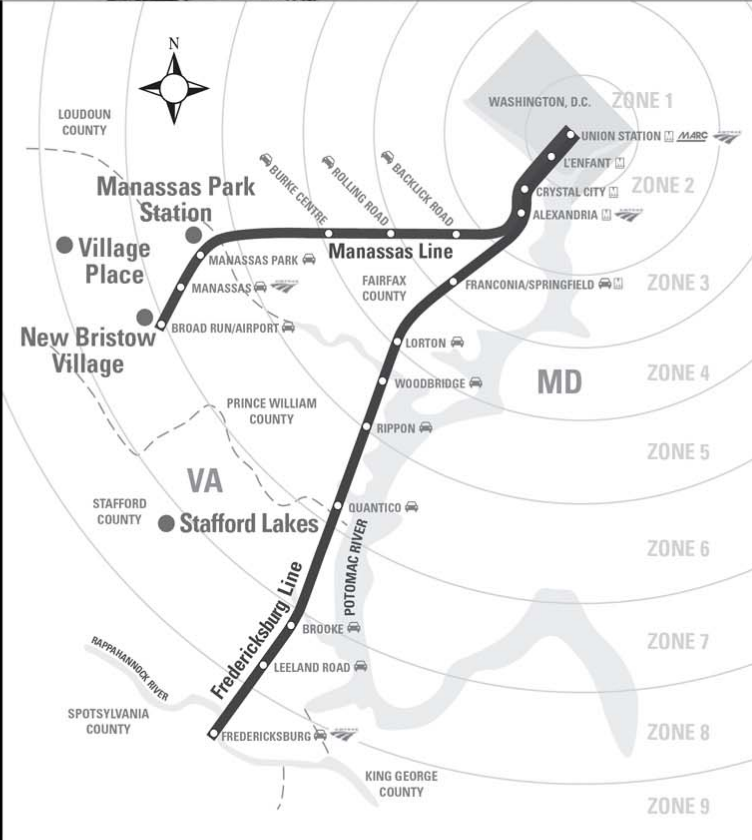
Dear FRC-less,

We were proud to be one of only a few transit agencies that provided this type of service guarantee and realize that the FRC program was popular among many riders.

Late trains impact VRE just as they impact you, regardless of whether or not an FRC program is in place. While the FRC service guarantee only went into place when the train was 30 minutes late, our on-time performance statistics are based on trains arriving at their final destinations within 5 minutes of schedule. Because of this, we are doing everything we can to ensure that on-time performance continues to improve, as it has over the past couple of months. We are working to minimize the number of delays you have experienced so that the elimination of this program is not nearly as noticeable.

Your Customer Advocate





Free Rides.

Visit any listed community for 2 free rides on VRE!*

Take your choice of single family homes, townhomes or condominiums all featuring superb access to VRE. You'll find the right prices, the right financing and the right programs for today's buyer's market. Select from convenient planned communities, estates, in-town and traditional neighborhoods by a homebuilder whose style and value have inspired confidence for 56 years. Centex Homes. Enjoy life.

*Prices, terms and availability are subject to change without obligation. Certain restrictions apply. This offer does not apply at all communities. Facades shown may not represent exact facades available at advertised communities. See a sales representative for details. This is not an offer in states that require registration. MHBR #483.
**Certain restrictions apply. For 2 free VRE tickets, must make appointment with a Centex Homes sales representative for any listed community and bring this postcard to community on first visit by 4/1/07.

CENTEX HOMES

For community information and directions visit www.CentexHomes.com

For personal attention and to schedule an appointment phone **(877) 682-3700**

Prince William County



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Estate Single Family Homes from the **upper \$500's**. (866) 255-8618



Village Place at Gainesville
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Stafford County



Stafford Lakes in Stafford Lakes Village
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