



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

Update



703-684-1001

www.vre.org

July 9, 2008

Editor's Note:

Capacity seems to be the theme of this week's Update, both for our trains and our stations. As anyone who has ridden recently knows, our ridership is up! Seven of our top ten ridership days occurred in June 2008. We are actively looking at ways to accommodate the growing number of people interested in riding VRE.

Parking is one step. The Manassas Garage, which has been in the works for a few years, is nearing completion. The Brooke station will be re-stripped later this month. (For those at the Brooke station, we heard your concerns about the way it was re-stripped last and have taken those comments into consideration).

We have also kicked off our preliminary study into the Gainesville-Haymarket expansion and welcome your input. Our feature article details how you can participate in this VRE first!

Study Underway for Gainesville-Haymarket Extension

As VRE ridership continues to expand, interest in extending service by approximately 11 miles to Gainesville and Haymarket has continued to grow. This spring, VRE took the first step toward evaluating that possibility with the development of the Gainesville-Haymarket Extension Feasibility Study and Alternatives Analysis.

The study, which began in April 2008, will last 12 months and conclude in March 2009. It will evaluate the feasibility and desirability of adding this new branch of service, as well as to address the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for potential project funding. Currently, the idea is to extend service from the existing VRE Manassas station in the City of Manassas to the Town of Haymarket, located in Prince William County, along Norfolk Southern's "B" Line and may include up to three new stations/stops.

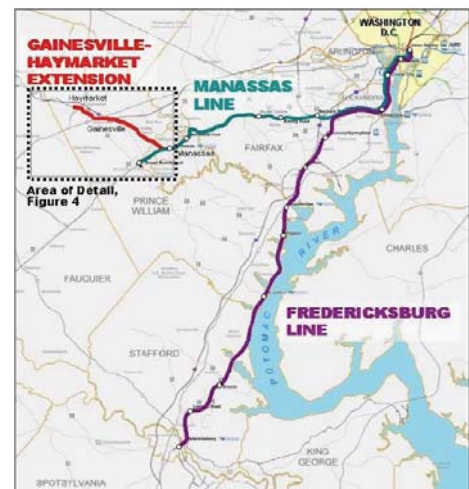
The study, which is being handled by planning/engineering consultant Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), will include:

1. An alternatives analysis,
2. An engineering feasibility analysis,
3. A preliminary environmental review,
4. An order of magnitude capital cost summary, and
5. Potential locations for:
 - a. Stations/stops
 - b. Layover/maintenance facility
 - c. Supporting infrastructure improvements and/or expansion.

As with any project of this magnitude, local stakeholder input will be critical, and VRE

welcomes and encourages the public's participation.

"Local stakeholders play an important role in this study, and VRE is seeking to understand community values and needs in regard to this

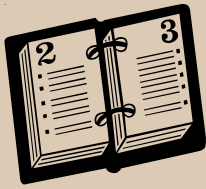


potential new branch of service," said Christine Hoeffner, VRE's manager of planning. "There will be several ways to participate, and we urge you to get involved with the planning process. Your input will be invaluable throughout the current analysis phase and, should we decide to move forward on the extension, throughout that phase as well."

There are three key ways for interested parties to get involved:

Contact Us. We welcome you to share your insight, observations, support, and concerns for this project. Feel free to call us at (703) 684-

Continued on page 2



Study Underway...

Continued from page 1

1001, or e-mail gotrains@vre.org with your ideas and opinions. Please write "Gainesville-Haymarket extension" in the subject line to ensure that your message is routed as quickly as possible to the right staff members.

Stay Informed. We will communicate regularly through facts sheets, e-mail, and the Web site. Sign up for our mailing lists at gotrains@vre.org (again, please write "Gainesville-Haymarket extension" in the subject line), or check our Web site at www.vre.org, which will soon have a page dedicated to this project for the latest and most up-to-date project information.

Attend a Workshop. We will be conducting a series of meetings and workshops throughout

the study area in locations convenient for stakeholders. Participants will receive information on the study and will take part in small-group discussions to identify their values and concerns. Information about these workshops will be communicated via VRE Update, TrainTalk, our Web site, and local press. The first public workshop will be at Stonewall Jackson High School, Wednesday, July 30th, from 6:30pm to 9:30pm. The address is 8820 Rixlew Lane, Manassas, VA 20109.

As part of the feasibility study/alternatives analysis, VRE is exploring a variety of funding alternatives. Specific funding sources will be identified once an extension plan is developed.

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, July 16
Meet the Management
Rolling Road
All Morning Trains

Wednesday, July 23
Meet the Management
Woodbridge
All Morning Trains

**Friday, July 25 to
Sunday, July 27**
Brooke restriping project
- cars will not be allowed
to park in the Brooke lot
after service or over the
weekend.

Wednesday, July 30
Meet the Management
Backlick Road
All Morning Trains

Wednesday, August 6
Meet the Management
Lorton
All Morning Trains

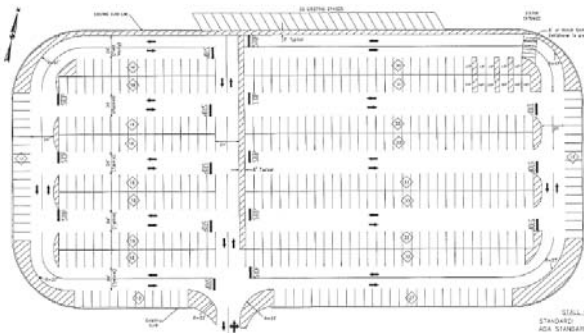
Brooke Lot to Gain More Spaces

The Brooke station parking lot is currently at capacity, and although expansion plans may come to fruition in the future, an immediate, short-term solution for adding 70 spaces is underway: Beginning on Friday, July 25 after evening service ends and continuing through Sunday, July 27, the entire lot will be re-striped.

The re-striping has been designed in order to increase the number of parking spaces while also improving traffic flow and pedestrian circulation. For those riders who may remember the old parking lot layout from several years ago, the center aisle way for cars and pedestrians will be restored, and the spaces will change from angled parking to perpendicular parking. That means that each aisle will now be two-way instead of one-way. Two spaces will also be added for motorcycle parking, and the number of ADA-accessible

spaces near the station entrance will increase, as well.

The design for the parking lot was, in part, based on rider feedback, and VRE is hopeful that the new layout will provide much needed extra capacity and make the lot safer for drivers and pedestrians alike.



Work is scheduled over a weekend to minimize disruption, but please be aware that the parking lot will be closed to all vehicles over the entire weekend, so if you plan

to park there on the morning of Friday, July 25, be sure that your car is removed by 8:30pm. Any vehicles that remain in the lot after 8:30 pm. will be towed at the owner's expense.

Should inclement weather force the delay of this project, we will notify riders via Train Talk, our Web site (www.vre.org), and signs posted at the Brooke parking lot.



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.

Manassas Garage Nears Completion

Last month was Burke Centre's turn to celebrate the opening of a new parking garage, and by the end of this month, the five-story Manassas garage will open its ramps to some 532 vehicles. While we don't yet have a firm date set, construction has been running about two months ahead of schedule, and we're hopeful that the finishing touches—signage, landscaping, and some final work on elevators and electricity—will be completed by month's end.

Once open, the parking garage, the construction and ownership of which is shared by the City of Manassas and VRE, will offer commuter parking on the first three levels (for a total of 319 spaces) and public, four-hour City parking on the top two levels. ADA-accessible parking spaces will be located on the second level, which provides direct access to the platform, and bicycle racks will be located on the first level. Two elevators, located in the northwest corner, will service all five levels. Access to the garage is off Prince William Street.

The other existing parking lots servicing the Manassas station will remain for commuter parking, with the exception of the parking

lot located behind the depot; it will be converted to four-hour City parking once the garage opens.

"The Manassas station and parking lots are not yet at capacity," said Sirel Mouchantaf, VRE's director of construction and facilities, "so we expect that the addition of this parking garage, plus the existing lots, will be sufficient for years to come. Once the garage opens, the total number of spaces will equal approximately 760, which is considerably more than is currently needed. We should be in good shape for quite some time."

The partnership that made this garage possible was a rather unique one, as the City of Manassas originally planned to construct a three-level garage on its own. But halfway through the design phase, City officials approached VRE to see if we wanted to join forces with them, which is how it ended up being a five-level garage with dedicated commuter parking.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held in late June, with County supervisors, VRE Board members and Manassas Mayor Douglas Waldron all in attendance.

Stay tuned for a firm opening date as we draw closer to late July!

Safety Sense

Parking Garage Safety!

In our last On-Line forum, a rider from Woodbridge asks: Can you please post signs at the garage in Woodbridge for people to turn their lights on when they are leaving the garage? I have almost been hit a few times because I have not seen the other cars. My lights are always on when I am leaving the garage. Thanks.

Having one's lights on in a parking garage is a good suggestion in order to keep everyone safe. Other good suggestions:

Do not speed around corners.

Follow the arrows and drive in the correct direction.

Look for vehicles exiting spaces (be polite...give them space to back out)

Do not exit where you are suppose to enter and do not enter where you are suppose to exit (seems like common sense but drivers in some parking garages have been observed doing both).



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