

VRE's "New Rider's" Guide Is Available On-Line

We can tell by the increasing numbers that there are many new riders joining the VRE family. We, therefore, wanted to make sure that these new riders were aware of our "New Rider's Guide" which is available on-line at www.vre.org under "Service Information". The "New Rider's Guide" contains all of the information new riders typically want to know and a refresher course for those who have been with us for some time. Below, is a brief sample of some of the information available in the guide.

First of all, "Welcome Aboard!"

How to Contact VRE

For schedule and fare information, train updates, holiday schedules, comments or suggestions, you can reach the Virginia Railway Express' automated phone system 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, by calling (703)-684-0400 or 1-800-RIDE-VRE. If you are hearing impaired, you can contact us through our TTY number (703) 684-0551 or email us at gotrains@vre.org.

Write to us: Virginia Railway Express, 1500 King Street, Suite 202, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Or reach us at: Lost and Found: (703) 684-1001, Email: gotrains@vre.org, Phone: (703) 684-1001, Fax: (703) 684-1313

How To Ride VRE

First, you will need to pick the stations that you want to travel from and to. Look at our System Map and pick the station most convenient for you. Next, choose the station closest to your destination. Don't worry if your destination isn't right next to a station, we connect with Metrorail at five of our convenient locations. In addition, VRE passengers can make easy connections to several transit options, including Metrobus, DASH bus, Fairfax Connector, ART bus, PRTC Omnalink, Amtrak and MARC trains.

Take note of the zone number of your origination station and also the zone number of your destination station. The zone pairing will determine your fare.

How much will my ticket be?

The next question is: how much will this cost? There are 7 different ticket options including:

- Monthly Ticket – (34% discount) unlimited rides in a calendar month.

- Transit Link Card (TLC) - unlimited VRE and Metrorail usage for one calendar month.

- Five-Day Pass – (20% discount) good for five consecutive VRE service days.

- Ten-Ride Ticket – (8% discount) good for ten one-way rides between the fare zones on the ticket.

- Step-Up Ticket – (Available for \$5.00 from the ticket vending machines), is used in conjunction with a valid multi-ride pass with the appropriate fare zones when riding select Amtrak trains

- Single-Ride Ticket - a single, one-way ride (can also be purchased with two rides to allow for a round-trip).

- Reduced Fare Tickets for seniors, persons with disabilities, and youth ages 11-18 (50% off regular ticket price, requires VRE reduced fare ID to purchase tickets), available from ticket vendors only. See web site for list of vendors.

- Free Rides for kids (ages 10 and under) with a fare paying adult.

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Upcoming Events

Wednesday, October 5th - Online Forum with CEO Dale Zehner, at noon/ Master Agreement Survey on trains

Monday, October 10th, Columbus Day, No VRE Service

Friday, November 11th, Veterans Day, No VRE Service

Thursday, November 24th, Thanksgiving, No VRE Service

Friday, November 25th, Day After Thanksgiving, "S" Schedule

Friday, December 23rd, Christmas Eve Observance, "S" Schedule

Monday, December 26th, Christmas Observance, No VRE Service



VRE Update is a publication of Virginia Railway Express. The newsletter is published monthly 12 times per year. Stories included are for the sole use of VRE riders. Comments and questions may be directed to VRE at gotrains@vire.org or at (703) 684-1001.

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To determine the cost of your ticket, look at the fare chart provided on our web site. Find your origination station zone on the left and your destination zone at the top to find your fare.

Other topics covered in the "New Rider's Guide" on-line include:

- What times do the trains run?
- Group travel
- SmartBenefit Vouchers
- Lost and Found
- Connecting Services
- Guaranteed Ride Home
- Refunds
- Baggage
- Bicycles
- Service animals
- Food and Beverages
- Ticket Vendors
- Smoking Policy
- Rail Time
- Train Talk
- Service Guarantee

If you want to start using VRE right away, the easiest and quickest way to get your tickets is to purchase them on the station platform at the Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) with a debit or credit card. Keep in mind that tickets are NOT sold on the trains. The TVMs are easy to use and very user friendly. They dispense Single-Ride, Two-Ride, Ten-Ride, Five-Day, and Monthly tickets. TLCs and Discounted tickets may only be purchased at specified vendor locations.

What else do I need to know?

If you have a Single-Ride, Two-Ride or Ten-Ride ticket, you must validate your ticket prior to each ride to make it valid (or usable). The TVMs are also validators. You simply insert the end of your ticket with the arrows in the validator and it will stamp the ticket. Five-Day passes must be validated prior to their first use and may be used until the expiration date/time (AM or PM) printed on the face of the ticket without further validations. TLCs and Monthly tickets are validated simply by printing your name on the back of the ticket. Virginia law (section 18.2-160.1) requires passengers to purchase and validate tickets before boarding VRE trains. Passengers observed onboard without a valid ticket may be issued a summons, punishable as a civil infraction with fines up to \$100 plus court costs, as determined by the presiding judge.

When the train arrives, simply board and attach your valid (validated) ticket to the clip at your seat (the conductor will be by to check it), sit back and relax. If you want, let the conductor know this is your first ride. He or she will be sure to help you with any questions or concerns you might have. Before each stop, the next station will be announced by the automated system on board the train. When you arrive at your destination station, be sure to pick up your ticket and belongings and simply walk on to work. Or take a short stroll to Metrorail, DASH bus, Metrobus or any number of other transportation systems to get to work. Coming home, simply repeat the earlier steps. If necessary, be sure to validate your ticket for the return trip.

We hope this makes things simple and easy to ride VRE. Enjoy the trip and thank you for riding.

BRAC-Related Bus Changes



Fairfax Connector to Fort Belvoir

The "Eagle Express", formally registered as Fairfax Connector Route 335, went into full service Sept. 6. The service to Fort Belvoir will operate in morning and afternoon rush hours Monday through Friday.

The addition of the "Eagle Express" route is one of a number of Fairfax Connector bus service changes and route restructuring which began on Sept. 3 in anticipation of Base Realignment and Closure growth at Fort Belvoir. Other changes will occur to eight existing Fairfax Connector routes: 159, 171, 305, 307, 310,

331, 332, and 380D. Additionally, four other new routes will be introduced: 333, 334, 335 and 371. These changes are currently in effect.

The "Eagle Express" will operate between the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station and the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital during morning and afternoon rush hours, Monday through Friday. The cost is the same as the regional express fare prices of \$3.65 with a SmarTrip card or \$3.85 with cash. Passengers will need to have a government-issued photo ID to ride this bus onto the post.

Meanwhile, details about other Fairfax... continued on page 3

BRAC-Related Bus... *continued from page 2*



Connector BRAC-related bus system changes are online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/news/2011/brac.htm>. To download the system map visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/pdf/scsystmapbrac.pdf>.

Metro bus to Mark Center

Mark Center-Pentagon Line, Route 7M (NEW)

- A new weekday route between the Pentagon and Mark Center will be implemented via I-395, Seminary Road, Beauregard Street and Mark Center Drive to the new transit station at the DOD facility on Mark Center Drive, south of Seminary Road in Alexandria. Buses will operate every 10 minutes during peak periods and every 15 minutes during midday hours, with departures from the Pentagon from 5:40 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from Mark Center from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

- The regular Metrobus fare will be charged. DOD employees boarding at the Pentagon, Mark Center or Southern Towers may ride free with their Mark Center ID on all 7M trips.

Lincolnia - North Fairlington Line, Routes 7A, E, F, Y

- Routing and schedules will not change. Routes 7A and 7F, which currently operate via Mark Center Drive seven days a week, will serve the new Mark Center Transit Station at the DOD facility on Mark Center Drive, south of Seminary Road in Alexandria.

- DOD employees boarding at the Pentagon, Mark Center or Southern Towers may ride free with their Mark Center ID on all 7A, E, F, Y trips.

Lincolnia - Park Center - Pentagon Line, Routes 7B, D, W, X only

- Routes 7W and 7X will be changed to serve the new Mark Center Transit Station to provide peak hour transit connections between the DOD facility on Mark Center Drive and points south.

- DOD employees boarding at the Pentagon, Mark Center or Southern Towers may ride free with their Mark Center ID on all 7B, D, W, X trips only.

Foxchase - Seminary Valley Line, Route 8W only

- Service will be extended from Seminary Road and Library Lane to Mark Center.

Barcroft - South Fairlington Line, Route 22A

- Additional peak hour short trips will be added to provide a 10 to 20 minute frequency of service between the Ballston - MU station and Barcroft to serve the DOD and State Department facilities at Arlington Hall (George Mason Drive, south of Arlington Boulevard). Eastbound 22A/ short trips to Barcroft (Four Mile Run Drive and Columbia Pike) will be scheduled to leave Ballston between 5:45 and 8:34 a.m. Westbound short trips to Ballston will be scheduled to leave Barcroft between 2:51 and 6:26 p.m.

Richmond Highway Express (REX)

Opening of the new Fort Belvoir Community Hospital:

- The Belvoir Road gate, returned to 24 hour operation on Aug. 7 when the new hospital opened. All weekday, Saturday and Sunday trips, including late evening trips currently terminating at Richmond Highway and Old Mill Road due to the 9 p.m. gate closure, will operate to and from Fort Belvoir serving the new hospital and then to Jackson Loop (the current weekday-only terminal).

- Two weekday northbound trips will be added leaving Fort Belvoir at 10:31 and 11 p.m. to serve late evening hospital shift workers. Weekday, Saturday and Sunday trip times will be adjusted by up to five minutes to reflect the revised routing in Fort Belvoir.

For more information, visit: http://www.wmata.com/bus/route_changes.cfm

Or contact Juanita Green, Transportation Demand Management Coordinator at juanita.b.green.civ@mail.mil.



SmartBenefits Reminder:

VRE Vendors will continue to accept SmartBenefit vouchers until November 30th. After Nov. 30th riders will no longer be able to exchange the paper vouchers for VRE tickets.

Riders who now receive electronic SmartBenefits need to first:

1. Purchase a SmarTrip card.
2. Register that SmarTrip card
3. Create an account with WMATA or contact Commuter Direct
4. Assign your benefits to an Electronic SmartBenefits vendor

Each month, your benefits will then be automatically assigned to the same vendor, unless you choose to change it (by making a change in your account on the WMATA website).

There are many other Transit Benefit Options that VRE accepts, from pre-paid debit cards of many different types/ issuers, to transit checks such as TransBen Checks or Commuter Check.

For more information, please visit <http://www.vre.org/service/service-information.htm>

Courtesy Corner

Please do not park in the spaces reserved for handicapped parking, even for "only a few minutes." Cars without a handicap tag are not allowed to park in disabled spots. The appropriate placard must be used, and used properly. If the person the placard is issued to is either not in the car or not getting out of the car, the parking space cannot be used. This would take away a spot from those who truly need it. Violations of these parking standards can result in heavy fines. Common courtesy would dictate that people without disabilities not park in a spot reserved for people who rely on wheelchairs and walkers to get around.

If that's not a strong enough reason, think safety.

Most handicap parking spots are close to entrances, not just for easy access but also to minimize how far people in a wheelchair have to travel through a parking lot.

Motorists have a hard time seeing the low profile of a person sitting in a wheelchair, especially as they back up a vehicle.

Clifton Day, Sunday, Oct. 9th



The annual non-profit Clifton Day event, raising funds for a variety of local organizations is Sunday, October 9th, with a rain date the following Sunday on October 16th. The festival includes arts and crafts, antiques, demonstrations, the Town Market, live music, children's activities and lots of good food. Hours of operations are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Getting to Clifton Day:

VRE will run trains from the Manassas, Manassas Park, Rolling Road and Burke Stations to Clifton for free. Tickets for the return trip from Clifton may be purchased at the red caboose in Clifton for \$5. Children aged 2 and under ride free with a fare paying adult. VRE passengers may NOT use their VRE ticket for passage.

For more information on Clifton Day call (703) 968-0740 or visit the Clifton Day website at cliftonday@verizon.net.

Donate a pint of blood to the American Red Cross on Clifton Day and be entered to win one of the following door prizes:

- \$50 gift certificate donated by Trummer's on Main

• A bottle of red wine – Le Lapin Multiplicity donated by The Clifton Wine Shop

• A bottle of white wine – Legacy Chardonnay Murfatlar donated by The Clifton Wine Shop

Train Schedule:

Eastbound Trains turn at Manassas Station

BROAD RUN	9:05					
MANASSAS	9:16	10:42	12:19	1:57	3:30	5:00
MANASSAS PARK	9:24	10:50	12:27	2:04	3:36	5:06
CLIFTON	9:32	10:58	12:35	2:12	3:44	5:14
CLIFTON	9:38	11:06	12:46	2:22	3:54	5:24
BURKE CENTRE	no stop	11:14	12:54	2:30	4:02	5:32
ROLLING RD	9:48	11:20	1:00	2:36	4:08	5:40

Trains turn at Rolling Rd Station

Westbound

ROLLING RD	9:58	11:30	1:08	2:45	4:15	5:48
BURKE CENTRE	10:08	11:40	1:18	2:53	4:23	5:56
CLIFTON	10:15	11:47	1:25	3:00	4:30	6:03
CLIFTON	10:21	11:57	1:35	3:10	4:40	6:10
MANASSAS PARK	no stop	12:03	1:41	3:16	4:46	6:16
MANASSAS	10:32	12:09	1:47	3:22	4:52	6:22
BROAD RUN						6:30

Trains turn at Manassas Station

Long-Awaited Cherry Hill Station Could Soon Become a Reality

A west coast development company, SunCal Cos., recently purchased the 1,920-acre lot located in Prince William County's Cherry Hill Peninsula, and wants to build Harbor Station — a mixed-use town center and golf course community that has been planned for years but has failed to come to fruition.

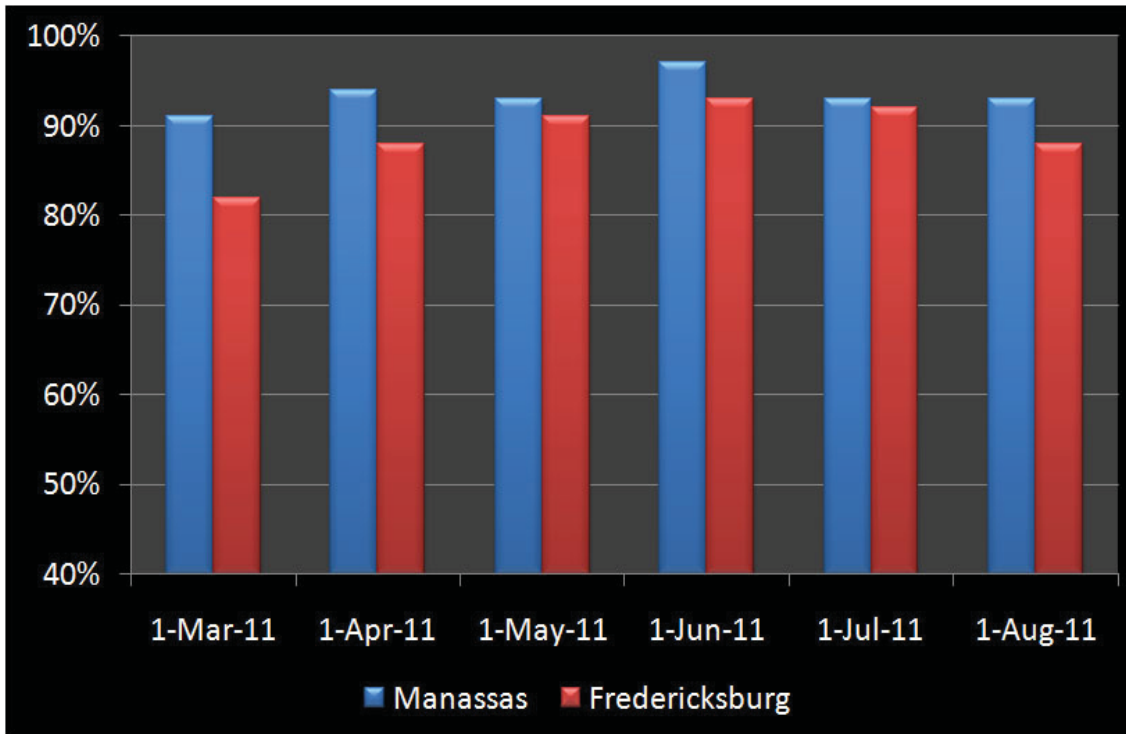
Before the recession hit in 2008, developer Robert C. Kettler had a grand vision for the property that fit into the county's plan to turn a portion of Prince William's eastern end dotted with strip malls and vacant buildings into a pristine community. Kettler had funneled about \$200 million into the project. He had built the golf course, which remains closed, and a network of roadways that is still waiting to be surrounded with development. When the recession hit, everything came to a halt and the property became available for sale again.

The new developer would like to have construction underway within a year but they are still evaluating the best build-out for the project, because it will all be market-driven.

The original Harbor Station plan called for up to 4,000 residential units, 3.7 million square feet of commercial space, a marina, hotel, golf course and a new Virginia Railway Express station.

Under the existing agreement, the VRE station, which is part of VRE's long-term plan, would be funded primarily by SunCal. VRE has already completed permitting and preliminary engineering on the third track from Powell's Creek to Arkendale. VRE is working on finishing the design in the next 1-2 years and starting construction on the track if funds become available. The track will need to be in place before the station is put in service.

On Time Performance



On-Time Performance August 2011

Fredericksburg Line

300 – 96%
 302 – 87%
 304 – 96%
 306 – 96%
 308 – 96%
 310 – 91%
 312 – 91%

301 – 96%
 303 – 87%
 305 – 74%
 307 – 96%
 309 – 83%
 311 – 83%
 313 – 91%

Overall – 88%

Manassas Line

322 – 100%
 324 – 100%
 326 – 100%
 328 – 100%
 330 – 100%
 332 – 100%
 336 – 91%
 338 – 96%

321 – 100%
 325 – 96%
 327 – 91%
 329 – 96%
 331 – 91%
 333 – 83%
 335 – 91%
 337 – 91%

Overall – 93%

*A train is considered delayed if it is more than 5 minutes later than the posted schedule into its final destination.



The photo above shows the washout near Franconia/Springfield that caused train delays and service cancellations on Sept 8th and 9th. The washout was spotted by one of our locomotive engineers. Thanks to the flash flood related speed restrictions, he was able to stop the train quickly and safely before reaching the washout.

Efficiency & Banner Testing

What exactly is efficiency testing, and how come it can't be done at the station before a train leaves or after a train arrives at its destination?

Efficiency tests are a bit like "traffic cops" of the railroad. In order to ensure your safety on a heavily traveled rail corridor, the operating officials of Keolis, CSX and Norfolk Southern periodically conduct "efficiency" or "banner" tests on the crews that operate your trains. Much like troopers on highways, these teams create unannounced "tests" and "observations" of employee compliance with the Codes of Operating Rules that ensure your safety.

In recent years, railroad locomotive engineers have become licensed within strict, federally approved guidelines. Part of this rulemaking, created by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), requires periodic testing of your engineer, in the field. Conductors are also tested within the owning railroad's rules and regulations. And, because the tests are administered by Keolis, Norfolk Southern and CSX, we do not have any control of when and where they will occur. Efficiency tests have many similarities with highway rules enforcement. The tests include using radar to discreetly check maximum speed compliance; setting railroad traffic control signals to "red" to check stopping compliance; and stopping and boarding trains to check that conductors and engineers have the proper rule books, bulletins and other associated paperwork required to safely run your train (much like a police officer stopping drivers at road blocks and asking for their license and registration). In some cases, a barricade is placed on the tracks, simulating that there is another train ahead. When a train has received verbal permission from a train dispatcher to pass a red (stop) signal, the train must proceed "prepared to stop short of train ahead or obstruction." The train must stop short of the barricade. These procedures have continued to insure alertness, professionalism

and, most importantly, cautious and safe train operation by Keolis-VRE crews. Operating a train is very similar to piloting an airliner. The engineers and conductors are constantly communicating with each other, just as pilots and co-pilots must do to safely operate a plane. They are continually verbalizing operating instructions and safety checks with each other, but on a train, they have to do it by radio rather than by sitting side-by-side. Conductors are responsible for reminding the engineers of where they must reduce their speed ... engineers call out the signals as he sees them from the front window.

It's a constant back-and-forth communication, and nothing can be overlooked. In today's world, where rail traffic is heavy and a lot of track work is underway, there are countless danger areas. The crew starts everyday with a sheet of orders that they must quickly digest, commit to memory, and then comply with throughout the trip. In that kind of intense environment, these tests are critical for the safe operation of our trains.

The efficiency tests and procedures can occur at any time, at any location, in any weather. Delays to your train can be as short as five minutes to as much as 20 minutes. If a crew failed a major test, a new crew would be called to take over operation, and the delay would be lengthy. Thankfully, VRE has always passed its efficiency testing and has never had to have a crew replaced ... and we, of course, plan to keep it that way! But the only way to ensure your safety and our continued safe operations, is to continue to endure with these tests. So, if you experience a delay due to an efficiency test, we ask for your patience. The reward is a great one: knowing that you are in good hands with well-trained crews—and safe from the maddening unknowns of the nearby highways. You may grumble at a delay, but simply put, we are never going to sacrifice safety for convenience.

For Your Safety: Stay Behind the Yellow Line



Always be aware of one's surroundings. For example, if you are standing near the yellow line on a very crowded station platform with people jostling to maneuver through the crowd, it is possible to be accidentally bumped

off the platform. Also, trains passing the stations are not required to slow down if they are not scheduled to stop. The wind generated by these passing trains can snatch a newspaper or hat very quickly, catching you off guard. Even worse, if a railcar happens to have a loose cable or a shifted load that inspections or detectors have failed to detect, they can cause harm to those who are crowding the edge of the platform. For your own safety, please stay back from the edge of the platform and remember that the yellow tactile strip is not intended to protect you from anything, it's only a minimal line of protection to prevent slip and fall accidents near the edges while boarding.

