

# WELCOME

January 29, 2024

## New River Valley Passenger Rail Project

Public Open House



# AGENDA

- Introduce VPRA
- New River Valley Passenger Rail Project Overview and Process
- Today's Open House



# WHAT IS THE VIRGINIA PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY?

## MISSION

To promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth.

## VISION

Deliver passenger rail service as an integrated, affordable, convenient travel option that benefits the Commonwealth.

## VALUES



Fostering Leadership  
and Public Service



Ensuring Safety  
and Reliability



Demonstrating  
Financial Stewardship



Promoting Innovation  
and Excellence



Advancing Environmental  
Sustainability



Championing Equity  
and Inclusion

# BACKGROUND

- May 5, 2021: The Commonwealth & Norfolk Southern (NS) announce an agreement to extend passenger rail service to the New River Valley (NRV).
- June 2022: Agreement with NS for purchase of ~28 miles of the Virginian Line (V-Line) finalized and 2<sup>nd</sup> Amtrak roundtrip from the Northeast Corridor to Roanoke began the following month.



# HISTORY

## HISTORY

**1979**

Amtrak service to Christiansburg, VA, ends

**2013**

NRV Passenger Rail community initiative is formed to bring passenger rail service back to the New River Valley

**2017**

Passenger rail service is re-established between Lynchburg and Roanoke

**2020**

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) is created to promote, sustain, and expand passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth

**2021**

New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Feasibility Study

**MAY 2021**

Agreement with Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) to extend passenger rail service from Roanoke to the NRV is announced

**2022**

**JUNE 2022**

Agreement finalized which includes second train on Roanoke route, extension of trains to NRV, and purchase of 28 miles of track from Salem to Christiansburg

**2023**

**New River Valley Passenger Rail Project**

**2024**

**JANUARY 2024**

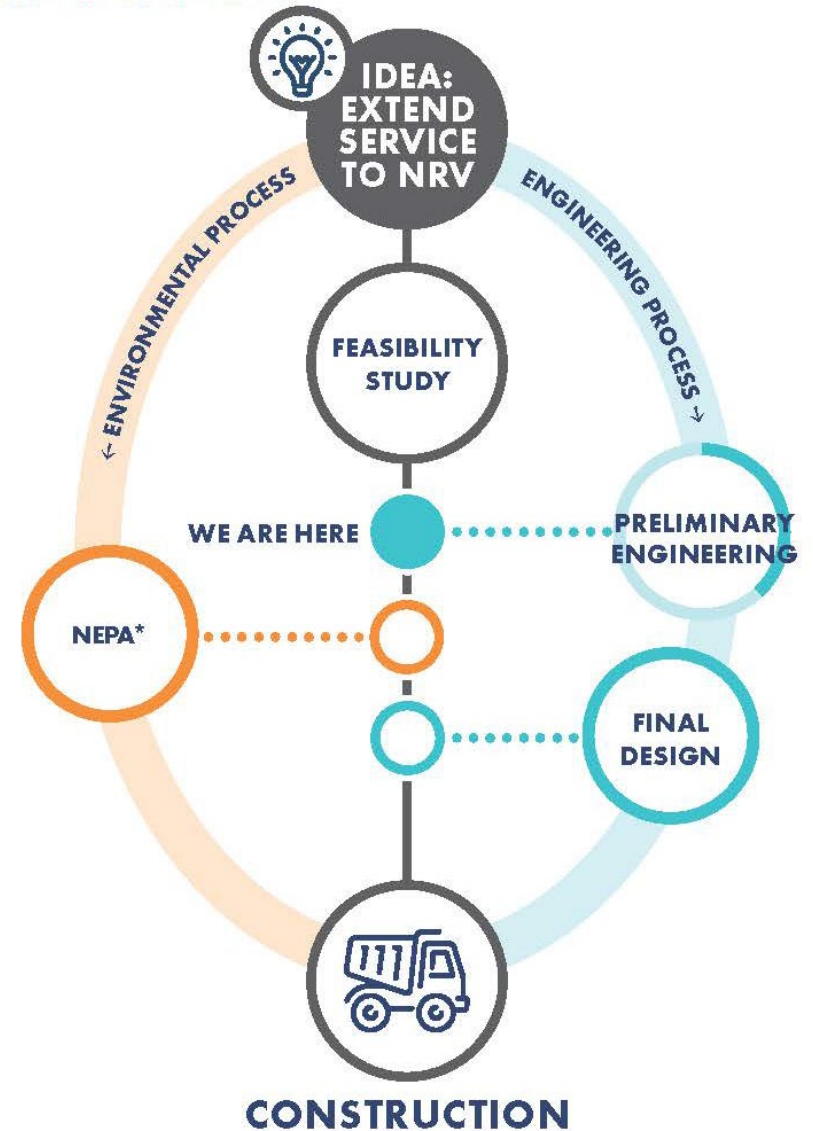
Public Outreach Round 1  
(We are here!)

**JANUARY 2024**

Preliminary Design

# NRV PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Starts with an idea
- Feasibility Study was the first step in the project development process
- Preliminary engineering (30% design)
- 60% Design
- Environmental process
  - Pre-NEPA
  - NEPA
  - Permitting
- Final design
- Construction



\*National Environmental Policy Act

# WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW



**Completing preliminary engineering** as a part of project development

- Developing potential design concepts that include all of the infrastructure needed to extend passenger rail service from Roanoke to the New River Valley.



**Preparing to address the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**



**Gathering your input** to help VPRA evaluate the design concepts, a process sometimes called alternatives analysis and help refine the Purpose & Need statement.

# NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

- Federal law requiring federal agencies to:
  - Consider environmental impacts of proposed actions
  - Evaluate alternative actions
  - Integrate public into the decision-making process
- NEPA is a process, not a document, undertaken *before* conducting major Federal actions
- Why do we (VPRA) have to do the NEPA process?
  - Federal funding
  - USACE permit
  - Environmental impacts (cultural, historic, endangered species)





# DRAFT PURPOSE & NEED STATEMENT

- The Purpose and Need (P&N) statement serves as the backbone of the NEPA process and describes why a transportation project is necessary despite its expense and potential environmental impacts.
  - **Purpose:** The “what” of the proposed action (what is the project trying to accomplish?)
  - **Need:** Identifies the problem(s) the proposed project would address (why is the proposed action needed?)

## New River Valley Passenger Rail Project Purpose and Need Statement (Draft)

- **Purpose**

*To increase regional mobility options to the New River Valley area by extending passenger rail service and by providing a connection from the New River Valley to other destinations in Virginia and beyond into the Northeast Corridor.*

- **Need**

*Addressing limited regional mobility options to the New River Valley area. Interstate 81 is over capacity much of the day with commuter traffic and trucks, leading to travel delays and unreliable travel times throughout the region.*

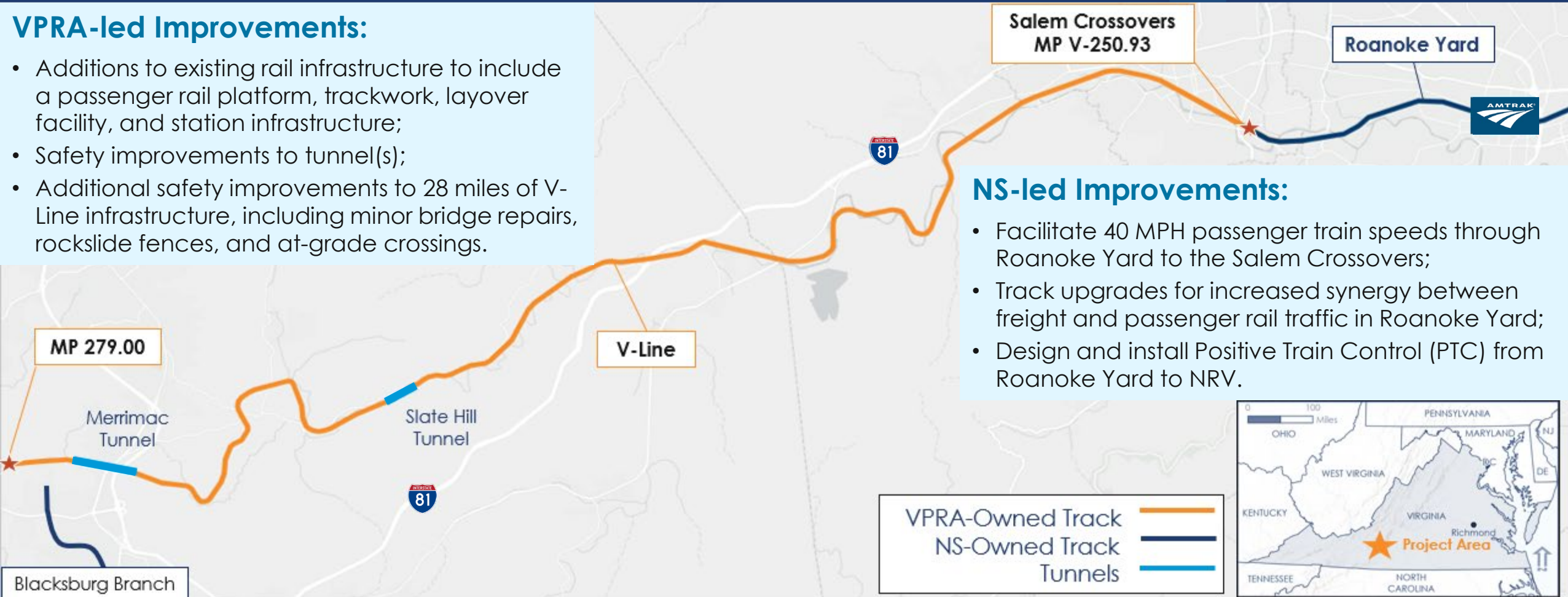
# NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO BRING SERVICE TO NRV

## VPRA-led Improvements:

- Additions to existing rail infrastructure to include a passenger rail platform, trackwork, layover facility, and station infrastructure;
- Safety improvements to tunnel(s);
- Additional safety improvements to 28 miles of V-Line infrastructure, including minor bridge repairs, rockslide fences, and at-grade crossings.

## NS-led Improvements:

- Facilitate 40 MPH passenger train speeds through Roanoke Yard to the Salem Crossovers;
- Track upgrades for increased synergy between freight and passenger rail traffic in Roanoke Yard;
- Design and install Positive Train Control (PTC) from Roanoke Yard to NRV.



# STATION SITE ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

## ALTERNATIVE A

**\$366M\***

**Q2 2028**

### Cinnabar Rd Site

- Slate Hill Tunnel

- Platform at Cinnabar Rd
- Layover facility at Cinnabar Rd

## ALTERNATIVE B

**\$785M**

**Q2 2030**

### Mall Site with Cinnabar layover

- Slate Hill Tunnel
- Merrimac Tunnel
- Connector Track

- Platform at NRV Mall
- Layover Facility at Cinnabar Rd

## ALTERNATIVE C

**\$951M**

**2028/2030**

### Mall Site with Cinnabar layover facility and Cinnabar platform

- Slate Hill Tunnel
- Merrimac Tunnel
- Connector track

- Platform at NRV Mall
- Layover facility at Cinnabar Rd
- Platform at Cinnabar Rd



\*Proposed FY 25 VPRA Budget includes \$366M in available funding for NRV

# TODAY'S OPEN HOUSE

## 4 Stations

About VPRA

About the Project

Passenger Rail  
Infrastructure

Environmental  
Considerations



**Ask questions and learn more:** Please walk around the room where our staff are available to talk about what it will take to bring new rail service to the New River Valley.



**Take our brief survey:** At the back of the room is a station where you can fill out our survey online or on paper. This survey will help us evaluate the different design options and refine the project Purpose and Need.



*We will be back in the spring to share the evaluation results and get your input on the preferred alternative.*

THANK YOU!

