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Governor Glenn Youngkin Breaks Ground on New River Valley Project

The \$264.5 million passenger rail project will
extend Amtrak Virginia service

WASHINGTON – Governor Glenn Youngkin today broke ground on the highly-anticipated New River Valley Rail Project in Christiansburg, Va. As part of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's (VPRA) Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) initiative, the New River Valley Project encompasses railroad infrastructure upgrades that will allow VPRA to extend its Amtrak Virginia service from Roanoke to Christiansburg and return passenger rail service to the New River Valley for the first time since 1979.

"Today's groundbreaking represents a lot of hard work, determination and collaboration," [Governor Glenn Youngkin](#) said. "We are here today because people came to the table and worked together to execute a new and dramatically better deal—one that accelerates the return of passenger rail service to the New River Valley years earlier, on a better line, and at a much lower cost to Virginia's taxpayers—than the one I inherited. I look forward to all that this station will do to support and grow such an important region of the Commonwealth."

The New River Valley Project includes:

- A new station platform with canopy
- Parking lot and access roads
- Track improvements and updated signaling system
- An Amtrak layover facility in nearby Radford

"I want to thank VPRA and Norfolk Southern for coming together last year to reach an all-around better deal for Virginians," [Virginia Secretary of Transportation W. Sheppard Miller III](#) said. "The new agreement between VPRA and Norfolk Southern is the reason we are here breaking ground on a project that will provide additional connectivity and promote economic growth in the New River Valley."

The extension of service to Christiansburg will be via Norfolk Southern's main line (N-Line), the result of an agreement between VPRA and Norfolk Southern completed last September through which VPRA purchased the Manassas Line and gained access to the N-Line. By expanding

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service from Roanoke to Christiansburg on the N-Line, VPRA will use existing infrastructure with a focus on developing a station stop at the Cambria site which previously served the community from 1904 to 1979. The project will also enhance Norfolk Southern's freight service through the area.

The New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority—created by the Virginia General Assembly in 2021—has the lead in the renovation of the historic Christiansburg station building at Cambria. It will be called the New River Valley Station and renovations are expected to begin in 2027.

The estimated cost of VPRA's New River Valley Project is \$264.5 million. Preliminary construction began in late February 2025 with full construction commencing this spring.

Amtrak Virginia service is expected to begin in 2027 with two daily roundtrips between Christiansburg and Washington, D.C., with stops in Roanoke, Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Manassas, Burke Centre, and Alexandria. Trip times are estimated to be 50 minutes between Christiansburg and Roanoke and just under six hours between Christiansburg and Washington, D.C. From Washington, D.C., the service will continue onto Amtrak's Northeast Corridor to Philadelphia, New York, Boston and points in-between.

"The groundbreaking of the New River Valley Project represents what can be achieved through strong partnerships," [Executive Director of VPRA DJ Stadtler](#) said. "This project would not be possible without the shared vision of providing Virginians with a rail alternative. We thank Governor Youngkin, Secretary Miller, Norfolk Southern, and Amtrak for their foresight and support in bringing passenger rail back to the New River Valley."

"We are witnessing a remarkable resurgence of passenger rail in the Commonwealth," [Tiffany Robinson, Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation](#), said. "Virginia is already home to some of the busiest Amtrak stations in the Southeast, and we continue to see record ridership year after year. I'm proud of DRPT's partnership with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority on this transformative project, and I'm excited to see the New River Valley take its place in the growing future of passenger rail across the Commonwealth."

“Expanding rail service and connecting people across the Commonwealth is great for local economies, cuts traffic, and improves air quality. It is great to be in Christiansburg today for the groundbreaking ceremony of the New River Valley Station, which will provide service to Roanoke and beyond,” [Senator Tim Kaine](#) said. “I was proud to extend passenger rail service to Lynchburg as Governor, support the expansion of service to Roanoke early in my Senate tenure and secure federal funds for the platform study that landed on the location for this extension to Christiansburg to make travel more convenient and consistent across Virginia.”

“Passenger rail creates greater potential for sustained economic growth, facilitates job creation and provides an efficient, affordable travel alternative to riding on the crowded interstate highway system,” [Congressman Morgan Griffith](#) said. “Today’s groundbreaking announcement means that the New River Valley will reap tremendous benefits and more. Extension of passenger rail to the New River Valley is an encouraging sign of things to come.”

“Extending passenger rail from Roanoke to Christiansburg will provide a much-needed transportation alternative along the increasingly busy I-81 Corridor,” [Virginia State Senator Travis Hackworth](#) said. “I’m excited to see this region of Virginia benefit from the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative. I want to thank all those involved for making this project a reality.”

“I’m thrilled that for the first time in almost 50 years, Christiansburg and the New River Valley will be served by Amtrak once more,” [Virginia State Delegate Chris Obenshain](#) said. “I’ve been a proud and vocal supporter of this effort to bring passenger rail back to the New River Valley. This project will open yet another door for tourists seeking a mountain getaway and will be a boon to economic growth and cooperation in this beautiful region of the Commonwealth. I’m so proud to be a part of this team that has worked tirelessly to make this day a reality.”

“We are proud to partner with VPRA to enable the return of passenger rail service to the New River Valley,” [Norfolk Southern Chief Strategy Officer Mike McClellan](#) said. “This project not only demonstrates our shared vision for smart, sustainable transportation solutions in the Commonwealth but also our deep commitment to strengthening the communities we serve.”

“This groundbreaking is a critical milestone in the Transforming Rail in Virginia project that will ultimately increase rail service in the Commonwealth,” [Jennifer Mitchell, Amtrak Executive Vice President of Strategy & Planning](#), said. “The record ridership we’re experiencing shows people in Virginia and throughout the U.S. want frequent, reliable, and convenient transportation. We are proud to partner with the Commonwealth of Virginia, VPRA, Norfolk Southern, and the Town

of Christiansburg to transform travel to connect more people and communities like never before.”

One of VPRA’s four corridors of service, the Roanoke corridor began with one daily roundtrip between Lynchburg and Washington, DC, in 2009. Since that time, the service was extended from Lynchburg to Roanoke and increased from one daily roundtrip to two daily roundtrips. Ridership along the corridor has grown from just over 100,000 between Lynchburg and Washington that first year to just over 343,000 between Roanoke and Washington last year.

VPRA was established in 2020 to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. VPRA is committed to delivering and expanding its state-supported Amtrak Virginia passenger rail service. The Commonwealth of Virginia first launched state-supported service in 2009 with one roundtrip between Lynchburg, Va., and Washington, DC. Since that time, the Commonwealth’s service has grown to include eight roundtrips daily along four corridors with stops at 17 stations in Virginia and one in Washington, DC.

For more information about VPRA, please visit vapassengerrailauthority.org

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