

# *New River Valley*

## 2015 Passenger Rail Study



# *Project Team*

## New River Valley MPO

- Lead agency
- Providing funding for project
- TAC = Working Committee
- Policy Board = Final Review & Approval
- Primary Contact: Dan Brugh
- Project Support: Erik Olsen



# Project Team

## New River Valley Passenger Rail Committee

- Review/endorse plan
- Supporting planning process
- Primary Contact: Diane Akers, Blacksburg Partnership
- Partners:

Blacksburg Partnership

Montgomery County

Pulaski County

City of Radford

NRVMPO

NRVPDC

NRV Alliance

Senator Warner's Office

Town of Christiansburg

Town of Blacksburg

Town of Pulaski

Radford University

Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech Foundation

Delegate Yost

Congressman Griffith's Office



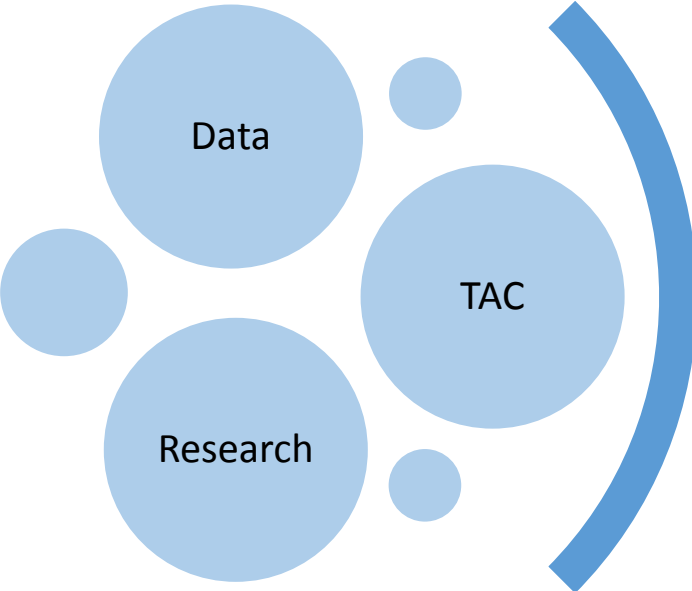
# *Project Team*

## New River Valley PDC

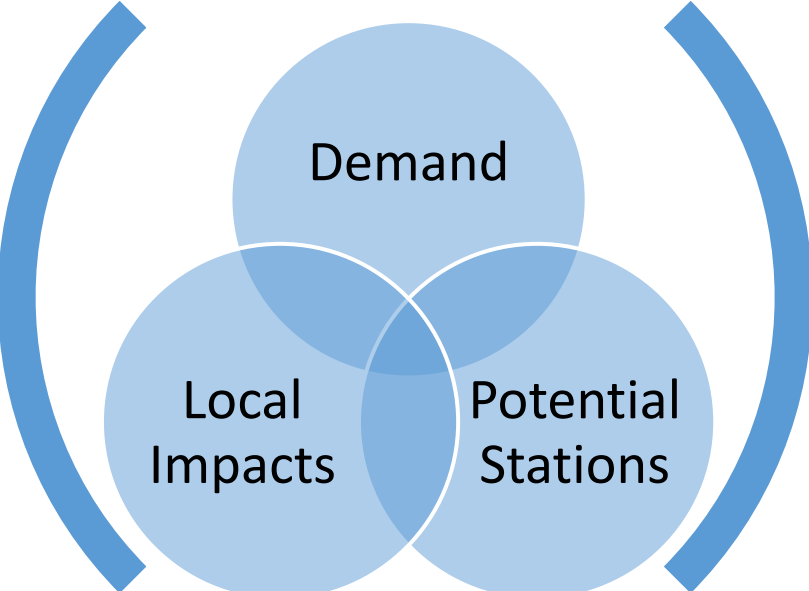
- Plan development
- Primary Contact: Elijah Sharp
- Passenger Rail Committee: Kevin Byrd, AICP
- History & Community Planning: Patrick Burton, AICP
- Economic Development & Surveys: Patrick O'Brien
- GIS & Technology: Jonnell Sanciangco, GISP



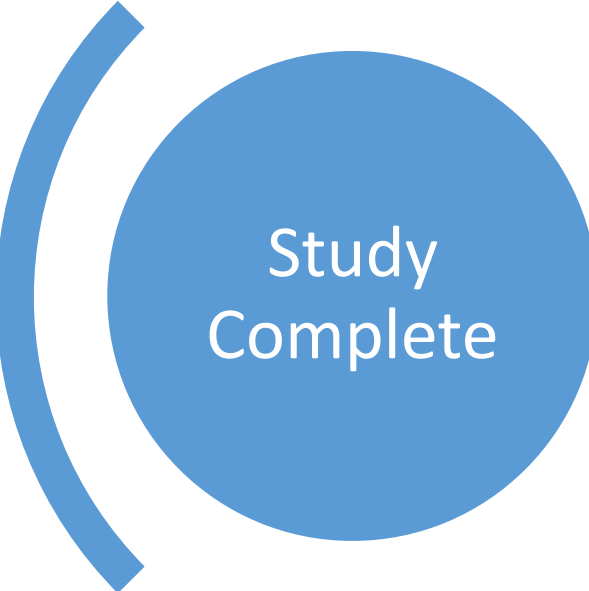
# Project Outline



Mar. 2015



Oct. 2015



Dec. 2015

# March 2015

- Establish Working Group
- Establish Content Sharing
- Review local and regional plans/projects
- Review statewide and national plans/projects
- Service preferences (departure time)



# October 2015

- Demonstrating Demand
  - Zip code analysis of potential users (VT, RU, etc.)
  - Regional surveys (population + employers)
  - Traveler surveys (rail stations, Megabus stops, etc.)
  - Air traffic data (commercial flights only)
  - VTC data on tourist volume
  - VDOT and Census data on commuting patterns
  - Personalized narratives of users' need/desire for passenger rail service



# October 2015

- Station Site Evaluation
  - Develop site selection criteria
  - Identify potential stops (up to 3)
  - Analyze existing transportation system
  - Organizational structure to implement service
  - Service operations
  - Service preferences (departure time)
  - Cost estimates
  - Implementation timeline





# October 2015

- Local Impacts
  - History
  - Economic
  - Traffic volume
  - Mode choice
  - Tourism



# December 2015

- Draft Study
  - Reviewed and approved by TAC
  - Hard copy for each project stakeholder
  - Online documents and story map
  - 3 Public meetings (1 near each potential station)
- Final Study
  - Accepted by Policy Board
  - Presented to Passenger Rail Group
  - Final products available online



# *Let's Get Started!*

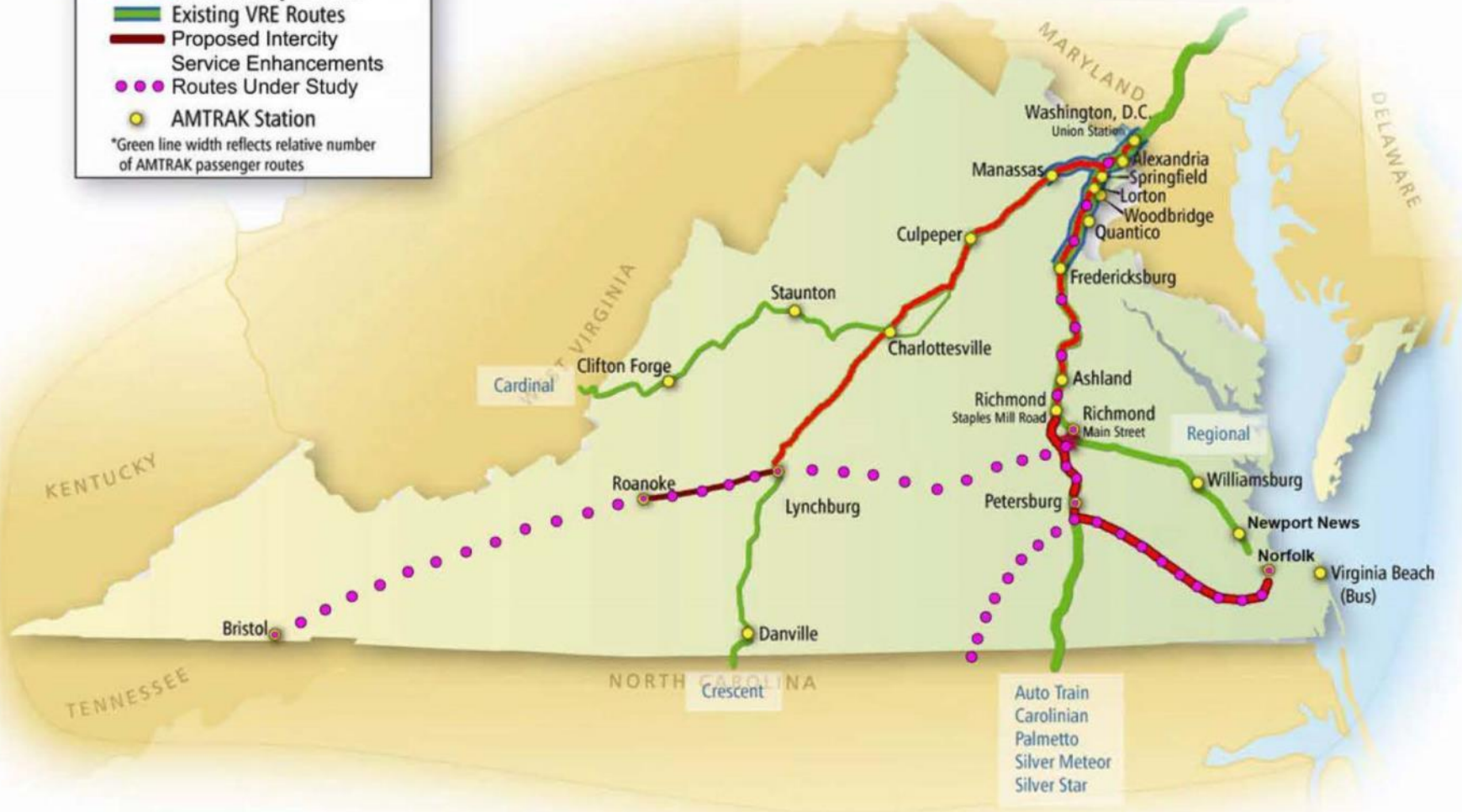
- Questions about the process?
- Group discussion:
  - State Rail Plan
  - History
  - Local and Regional plans/projects
  - Statewide and National plans/projects
  - Survey Content



# State Rail Plan

Figure 3-9: Virginia Passenger Rail

- Existing AMTRAK Routes\*
  - New Intercity Service
  - Existing VRE Routes
  - Proposed Intercity Service Enhancements
  - Routes Under Study
  - AMTRAK Station
- \*Green line width reflects relative number of AMTRAK passenger routes



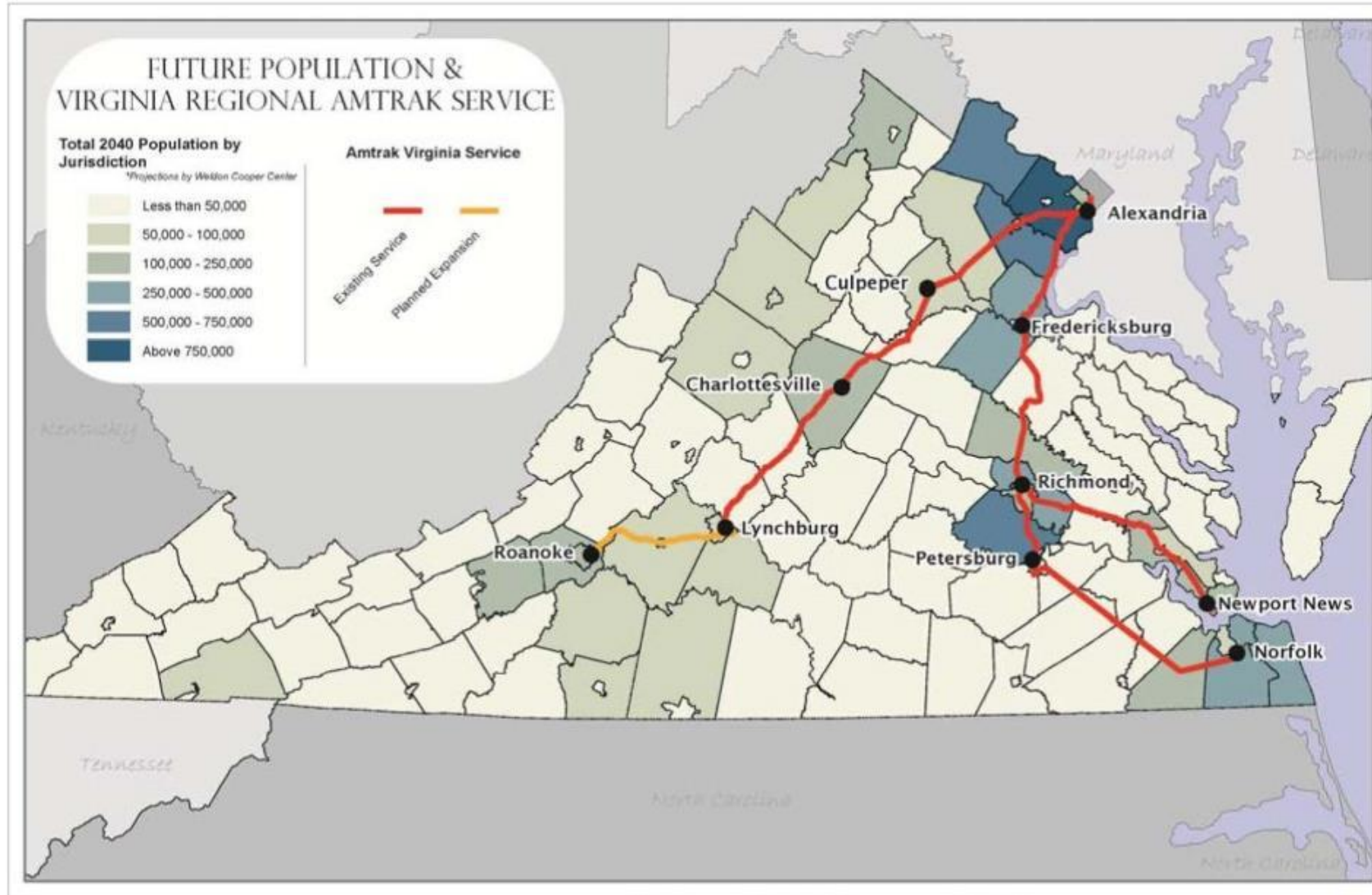
# *State Rail Plan*

- US 29, US 460, and I-81 Service
- New stops in Roanoke & Bristol
- Budgeting for new stops and track improvement
- Improving corridors for higher speed
- Incremental service strategy...
- Plan does not include a stop in the NRV



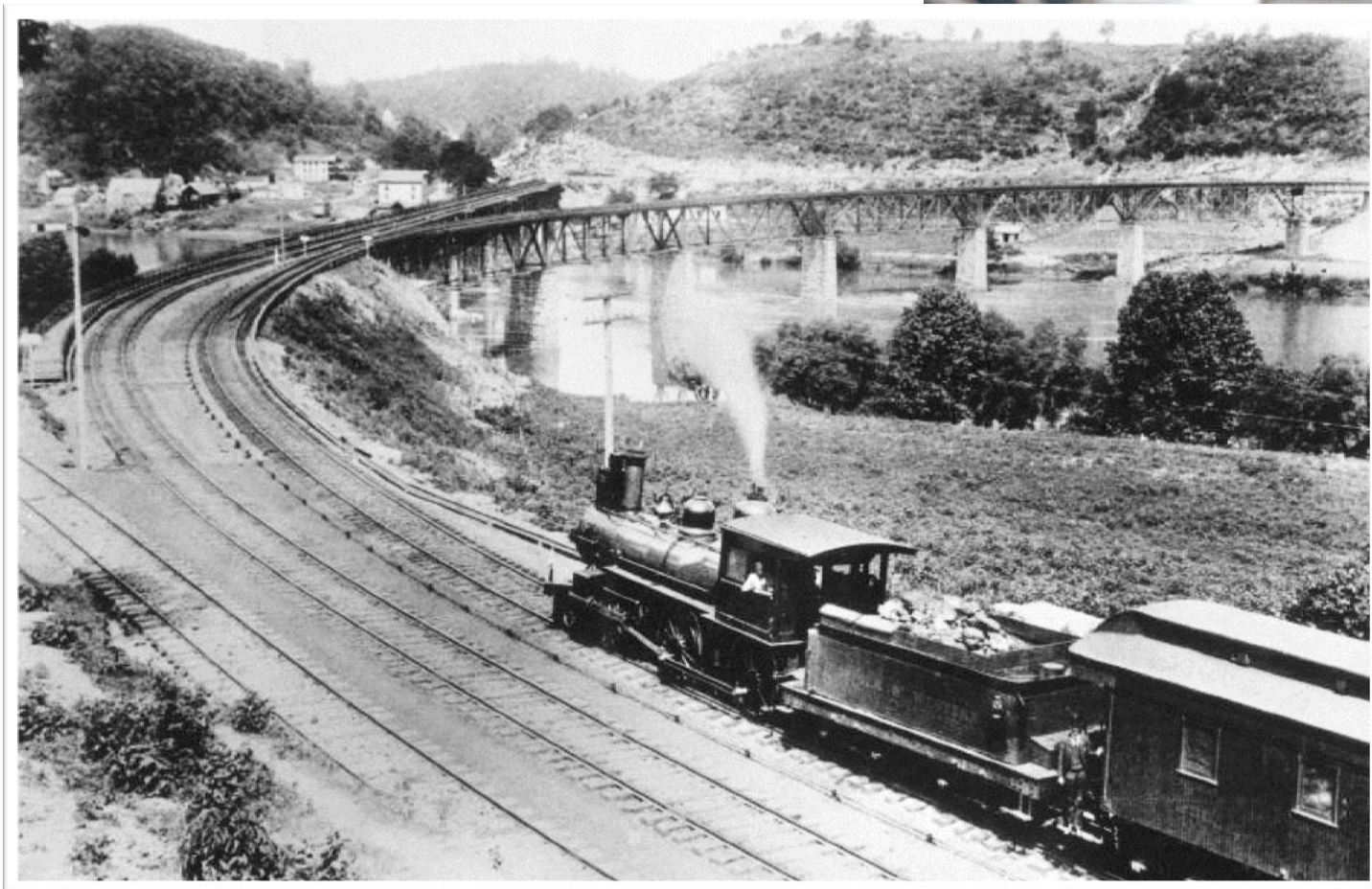
# State Rail Plan

Figure 2-2: County Percentage of Virginia Population in 2040



# History of Passenger Rail

- 1896
  - New River, VA
- 1971
  - NS services ended
- 1975-1977
  - Mountaineer  
Chicago - Norfolk
- 1977-1979
  - Hilltopper  
Washington - KY



# History

- More than when passenger service was present...
- Identify significant sites/resources
- Vision of passenger rail in NRV communities





# *Local & Regional Plans/Projects*

- MPO 2035 LRP
- MPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan
- NRV 2035 RLRP
- Local Comprehensive Plans
- Campus Master Plans
- Transit Development Plans (BT, PAT, RT, SW)
- Others?



# *Statewide & National Plans/Projects*

- Vtrans 2035
- Statewide Rail Plan
- North Carolina
- Washington State
- Regional economic impact studies (MA, OH, TX)
- Others?



# Survey Content

- Surveys tailored to several groups of potential passenger rail customers:
  - VT and RU students, staff, and visitors
  - Other major employers in NRV and adjacent
  - Travelers using existing transportation options (Megabus, Lynchburg Amtrak, etc.)
- Surveys in person or online as appropriate
- Harvest information from other recent surveys



# Survey Content

- Customer information
  - Travelers' home location and destination
  - Purpose of travel (business, tourism, etc.)
  - Travel frequency and duration
  - Modes of travel for current trips to DC, NYC, etc.
- Passenger rail user preferences
  - Time/frequency of departures
  - Price points vs. alternative travel options
  - Auxiliary service needs (parking, rental cars, etc.)



# *Other demand indicators*

- Regional events/attraction data (parks, sports, graduation, festivals, etc.)
- US Census Bureau commuting patterns data
- Virginia Tourism Corporation data on regional visitors (number, home location, etc.)
- Income and spending data (proprietary)
- Travel purchase data, if available from operators



# Information Sharing

- Project website:
  - <http://www.nrvpdc.org/PassengerRailStudy/>
  - Latest project news
  - Local Input, Research & Data Sharing
  - Project Team
  - Partners
- FTP site
  - Login info password protected



# Working Group Meeting Schedule

