



**Central Virginia Planning
District Commission**
828 Main Street, 12th Floor
Lynchburg, VA 24504
Office: (434) 845-3491
cvpdc.org

May 16, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Town of Bedford, VA, Application for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) for NEPA/PE for a New Passenger Rail Station in Bedford, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

This letter is to express the Central Virginia Planning District Commission's support for the Town of Bedford's submittal of an application for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant funding for NEPA/PE for a New Passenger Rail Station in Bedford, Virginia.

The CVPDC recognizes numerous benefits not only to the Town but to the region with the addition of a rail stop to serve communities around the station. These benefits include serving as a catalyst to revitalize Bedford's downtown area and spur economic growth across the region and facilitating visitation at major tourist destinations including the National D-Day Memorial, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Peaks of Otter, Smith Mountain Lake (SML) and SML State Park, and Poplar Forest. In addition, increased Amtrak ridership provides a valuable mode of transportation that residents, visitors, and merchants need to meet the travel demand to our region. A rail stop in Bedford further connects remote workers to destinations such as Charlottesville and Washington, D.C. Passenger rail service is integral to enhancing quality of life and increasing access to small businesses between Lynchburg and Roanoke.

Please accept this letter of recommendation from the CVPDC as unequivocal support for the request for FRA CRISI grant funding for NEPA/PE for a New Passenger Rail Station in Bedford, Virginia, to promote passenger rail ridership and increase transportation options to Central Virginia. I thank you for your consideration and support of multimodal transportation options.

Sincerely,

Alec Brebner, AICP - Executive Director

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

DATE: May 16, 2024

TO: CVPDC Managers/Administrators and/or Intergovernmental Review Designee

FROM: Alec Brebner
Central Virginia Planning District Commission

RE: **Final Disposition of Intergovernmental Review**
Applicant: Town of Bedford
Project: NEPA/PE for Bedford Rail Station
Agency: Federal Railroad Administration (CRISI)

FINAL DISPOSITION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT / AGENCY / ORGANIZATION

- Does not wish to comment
- Has no concern and recommends the CVPDC make a favorable comment on the above project.
- Has no concern and submits the attached letter of support to the above project.
- Wishes to express the following concerns that can likely be resolved:

- Makes the following recommendations based on concern with the proposal, which should be addressed by the federal agency but are not of sufficient concern to advocate halting the federal action:

- Has significant concern with the application and recommends the CVPDC make an unfavorable comment on the above project for the following reasons:

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Local Government/Agency/Organization: _____



FY 2021 CRISI

BEDFORD AREA STATION DEVELOPMENT NEPA/PE

NOVEMBER 2021



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

DJ Stadler
Executive Director

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Jennifer L. Mitchell
Chairperson

November 22, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY21 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), I am please to submit the **Bedford Station Development NEPA/PE** application under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program for fiscal year 2021.

Throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, multiple entities are working together to improve rural and intercity passenger mobility through expanded passenger rail service from Lynchburg to Roanoke to New River Valley, Virginia. As part of this effort, a new Amtrak station stop to serve Bedford and Franklin County is under development.

Virginia has already committed significant resources to develop the new Bedford Amtrak Station, including expenditures of approximately \$670,000 to support this project since 2014. Virginia has contracted with Norfolk Southern (NS), the host railroad, for approximately \$20,000 to review the station study, and contracted \$350,000 with NS to conduct the RTC modeling. Previously incurred costs include approximately \$300,000 for the *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study* which was initiated in 2019 and completed in October 2021. This study included a traveler survey, ridership forecast and station concept analysis as well as preliminary railroad operations modeling.

The Bedford Station application includes a Track 2 - PE/NEPA project to further the planning and design of a new Amtrak station; necessary track and platform work; parking and multimodal connectivity to and from the station; and assessment of the impacts to the regional economy and traffic patterns. This station development effort is in coordination with both the second daily Amtrak train to Roanoke as well as the New River Valley service that is expected to commence in 2025.

The advancement of this new Bedford Amtrak Station is a unique opportunity to compliment the advancing corridor development within a rural Virginia community. This step of advancing NEPA and engineering prepares the region for future service along the rail line that will lead to economic development, job growth and improved transportation equity through enhanced mobility opportunities to under-served communities.

Thank you for your consideration of the Bedford Station Development NEPA/PE application.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

C0D69C9037AD424...

DJ Stadler

Executive Director, VPRA

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Cover Page

Project Title	Bedford Area Station Development NEPA/PE
Applicant	Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
Project Track	2
Was a Federal grant application previously submitted for this project	No
If yes, state the name of the Federal Grant Program and title of the project in the previous application.	Federal Grant Program: N/A Project Title: N/A
Is this a Rural Project? What percentage of the project cost is based in a Rural Area?	Yes Percentage of total project cost: 100%
Is this a project eligible under 49 U.S.C. 22907(c)(2) that supports the development of new intercity passenger rail service routes including alignments for existing routes?	Yes
Is this for a Capital Project or engineering solution targeting trespassing?	No
Is this for a safety program to reduce trespassing through targeted law Enforcement Activities?	No
Is this for a safety program to implement or expand an Outreach Campaign for reducing railroad trespassing suicide?	No
City(ies), State(s) where the project is located	Town of Bedford, Bedford County, Virginia
Urbanized Area where project is located	N/A – project located in a rural area
Population of Urbanized Area	N/A – project located in a rural area
Is the project currently programmed in the: State rail plan, State Freight Plan, TIP, STIP, MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, State Long Range Transportation Plan?	Yes Virginia Statewide Transportation Plan Transforming Rail in Virginia Initiative Draft 2022 Virginia State Rail Plan Commonwealth Transportation Board FY22 Six Year Improvement Program Region 2000 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (see page 41) Lynchburg Connectivity Report (2017 – page 52) Town of Bedford Comprehensive Plan Town of Bedford Economic Development Authority Strategic Plan (p. 4-5 and 5-25)

1. Project Summary

The restoration of intercity passenger rail service to Bedford, Virginia would enhance accessibility and equity for this rural town and surrounding area with limited transportation options. Multiple entities are working together to improve rural and

A PREFERRED SITE ON MACON STREET EAST HAS BEEN SELECTED TO MOVE FORWARD THROUGH PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING AND NEPA WITH THE GOAL OF HAVING A NEW STATION AVAILABLE IN 2025 FOR THE OPENING OF THE NEW RIVER VALLEY SERVICE EXPANSION

intercity passenger mobility through expanded passenger rail service from Lynchburg to Roanoke, Virginia. As part of this effort, a new Amtrak station stop to serve the Bedford County and Franklin County area is under consideration. Past study efforts include

feasibility studies, conceptual design, and analysis by Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) regarding the potential impacts to freight rail. After the initial planning process and the recently completed *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study*, which included extensive stakeholder outreach and collaboration with NS, a preferred site on Macon Street East was selected to advance through preliminary engineering and NEPA with the goal of having a new station available in 2025 to coincide with the service expansion to the New River Valley. Upon completion, the Bedford Station will include surface parking, a caretaker style station, intertrack fence to deter trespassing, high-level platform for level boarding, and auto and transit drop-off facilities.

2. Project Funding

Advancing the Bedford Area Station Development project through PE/NEPA is expected to cost approximately \$1 million across two main tasks, as shown below. Further budget details are provided in Appendix A.

TABLE 2-1. PROJECT COST

Task #	Task Name / Bid Item	Cost	%
1.0	Preliminary Engineering	\$900,000	90%
2.0	Environmental/NEPA	\$100,000	10%
	Total Project Cost	\$1,000,000	100.0%

The anticipated total cost to complete the preliminary engineering and NEPA for this project, located completely in a rural area, is \$1 million. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA) is requesting \$600,000 in CRISI Track 2 – PE/NEPA funds to support the \$400,000 that the agency has set aside for the continuation of this work effort.

The \$400,000 in matching funds is allocated through the Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF), which is managed by VPRA. None of the matching funds for this project have any spending restrictions or expiration date. All local funds are anticipated to be available when needed to continue the development of the Bedford Station plans and are not contingent on the completion of any other items.

TABLE 2-2. PROJECT FUNDING

Concept	Amount	%
Federal Funds from Previous Grants	\$0	0%
FY2021 CRISI Federal Funding Request	\$600,000	60%
Non-Federal Funding/Match - Cash	\$400,000	40%
Non-Federal Funding/Match - In-Kind	\$0	0%
Private Sector Funding	\$0	0%
Portion of Funding Spent in Rural Area	\$1,000,000	100%
Pending Federal Funding Requests	\$0	0%

Previously Incurred Costs

Since 2014, approximately \$670,000 has been spent related to the development of this project. DRPT contracted with NS for approximately \$20,000 to review the station study and VPRA contracted \$350,000 with NS to conduct RTC modeling. Previously incurred costs also include approximately \$300,000 for the *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study* which was initiated in 2019 and completed in October 2021. This study included a traveler survey, ridership forecast, conceptual station design and cost estimates.

While this previously completed work supported the development of the Bedford Rail Station and readiness to enter into PE/NEPA analysis, the work was completed under separate scope efforts, and VPRA does not intend to seek reimbursement for or include the value of this work into his CRISI Track 2 – PE/NEPA request. As noted above, VPRA's \$400,000 match is offered in cash.

3. Applicant Eligibility

As a “public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more States,” the project applicant, VPRA meets the eligibility criteria defined in Section C(1)(d) of the August 31, 2021 CRISI Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The VPRA was

established by Chapter 1230 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly¹ to promote, sustain, and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. Since establishment, VPRA has administrative and fiduciary responsibilities for Virginia's state-supported passenger rail services, the Virginia Railway Express (VRE). VPRA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of 12 voting members, one (1) ex-officio member from Amtrak, one (1) ex-officio member from the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and the Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), who serves as Chairperson.

As part of this same enabling legislation, the transportation revenues of the Commonwealth were increased, and their allocation was adjusted. The Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF) was created and 7.5 percent of the state's Transportation Trust Fund revenues were dedicated to the CRF. By Code of Virginia authorization, VPRA receives 93 percent of the CRF annual revenues.²

The VPRA is considered a component unit of the Commonwealth, as its Board is primarily appointed by the Commonwealth and, as such, the Authority is included as a discretely presented component unit in basic financial statements of the Commonwealth's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The VPRA administers all capital expansion projects, infrastructure, and land acquisitions related to Governor Northam's \$3.7 billion Transforming Rail in Virginia Initiative, which will double Amtrak and VRE service in Virginia over the next decade.

4. Project Eligibility

VPRA is seeking CRISI grant funding to advance preliminary engineering and NEPA (Track 2 – PE/NEPA) for an intercity passenger rail station stop in Bedford, Virginia that will increase passenger mobility and enhance connectivity to this rural region.

VPRA intends to utilize grant funding to complete all required activities to advance the Bedford Station project through preliminary engineering and NEPA in support of future Final Design. A specific list of project elements intended for funding includes:

- Preliminary Engineering:
 - Traffic impact analysis
 - Survey & topographic mapping
 - Development of Design Criteria

¹ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/uncodifiedacts/2020/session1/chapter1230/>; accessed October 29, 2021.

² <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title33.2/> and <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/33.2-1526.4/>; accessed October 29, 2021

- Development of detailed construction cost estimate
 - Development of detailed construction schedule
 - Advance design to a minimum of 30%
 - Financial planning documentation
 - Refined project benefits estimate
 - Project Management documentation
 - Economic Development Analysis
- Environmental / NEPA
 - Complete Class of Action Determination (a Categorical Exclusion is assumed for this scope;
 - Complete any required supporting site analysis, studies or correspondence pursuant to determinations of impact in the Categorical Exclusion, including Section 106 and Section 4(f), as applicable;
 - Complete Categorical Exclusion Worksheet.

As detailed above, the Bedford Area Station Development NEPA/PE project is eligible under CRISI Track 2 with the purpose of advancing the project through preliminary engineering and NEPA to a sufficient level to proceed with Final Design and Construction in a timely manner for service implementation in 2025.

5. Detailed Project Description

VPRA is seeking CRISI Track 2 funds to initiate and advance engineering and NEPA through completion for the proposed Bedford Station that will be served by Amtrak intercity passenger service. The intent is to develop environmental documentation, preliminary design, and proceed toward final design and construction as part of the Commonwealth's Western Rail Initiative. Schedules are to be developed in coordination with both the second daily Amtrak Northeast Regional Route 46 train from Washington DC to Roanoke, as well as the New River Valley service that is expected to commence in 2025. The following section outlines the project history, specific project elements and challenges they will address, beneficiaries, and proposed performance measures.

Project History

The Town of Bedford, Virginia was home to an active intercity passenger rail station from the mid-1850's through 1971. Initially, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad constructed tracks through Bedford in 1857; after consolidations and realignments, the station was served by several Norfolk and Western Railways routes. When Amtrak began operations in 1971, service in this area was discontinued.



Historic Bedford Passenger Station: 1906



Historic Bedford Passenger Station: 1917

Sources: <https://www.bedfordva.gov/1189/About-the-Town-of-Bedford>; http://www.odelibertystation.com/ols_history.asp

In 2014, DRPT signed an agreement to extend passenger rail service from Lynchburg to Roanoke, with an understanding between the Commonwealth of Virginia, Amtrak, Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) and the City of Roanoke. With this announcement of this agreement, local stakeholders also formed the Bedford/Franklin Regional Rail Initiative (BFRRI) in 2014 to support enhanced rail service in the region. The Town of Bedford and DRPT completed passenger rail feasibility studies in 2016, including an agreement with NS to run an RTC operations model to determine if the station service would have any impact on freight service.

The extension of a daily train from Lynchburg to Roanoke began in October 2017. Since this time, DRPT and the BFRRI have continued conceptual development for a station in Bedford, including commissioning the *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study*. This study, completed in October 2021, included the following elements:

- **Planning-level conceptual design** that developed potential station locations and layouts consistent with Amtrak, NS, DRPT and Town of Bedford standards;
- **Planning-level opinion of probable construction costs;**
- **Traveler survey** that was developed and conducted to inform a ridership forecasting model; and
- **Ridership analysis** that included the development of a revenue and ridership methodology and forecasts for each of the station concepts.

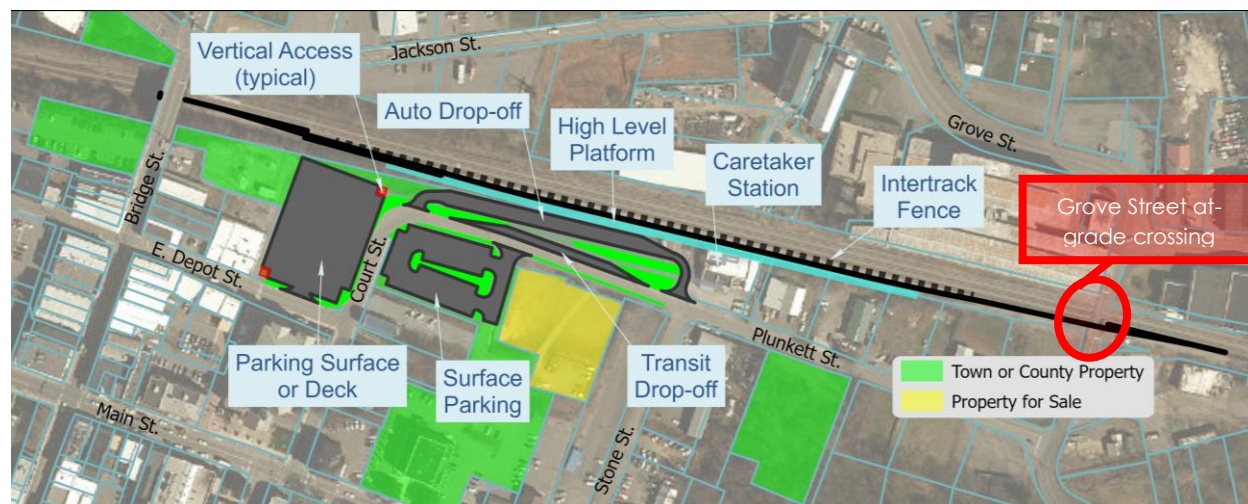
The study followed all relevant established guidelines, standards, references and codes throughout the evaluation. The initial feasibility studies have included site location selection, which considered requirements of relevant parties as follows:

- Level-boarding (high level) platform criteria as documented in 49 C.F.R. parts 27, 37, and 38;
- Norfolk Southern Public Projects Manual and Passenger Station Requirements, including:
 - No high level platform adjacent to freight tracks

- Side platforms not located near public at-grade crossings
- Adjustments to minimum horizontal clearance for any portion of platform not located in tangent track; and
- Amtrak Station Program and Planning Guidelines, including:
 - To plan the station where tangent tracks are available for full platform length
 - Consider that most host railroads will only allow new platforms on tangent track
 - Development of station category type in relative proportion to ridership estimates – “Caretaker Station” for Bedford³
- Town of Bedford Land Development Regulations and Zoning requirements
- Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual and Road and Bridge Standards

The site selection process resulted in BFRRI agreeing to conceptual designs for two (2) of the 18 possible site locations initially identified to present to NS for their review – Courthouse and Jackson. Of these sites, NS determined that one of them, Courthouse (layout shown in Figure 5-1), would only be acceptable with design changes, including **closing the at-grade railroad crossing at Grove Street**. NS did not find the Jackson site to be acceptable.

FIGURE 5-1. PROPOSED COURTHOUSE SITE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Source: Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study (October 2021), page 8. Grove Street Crossing added here for clarity.

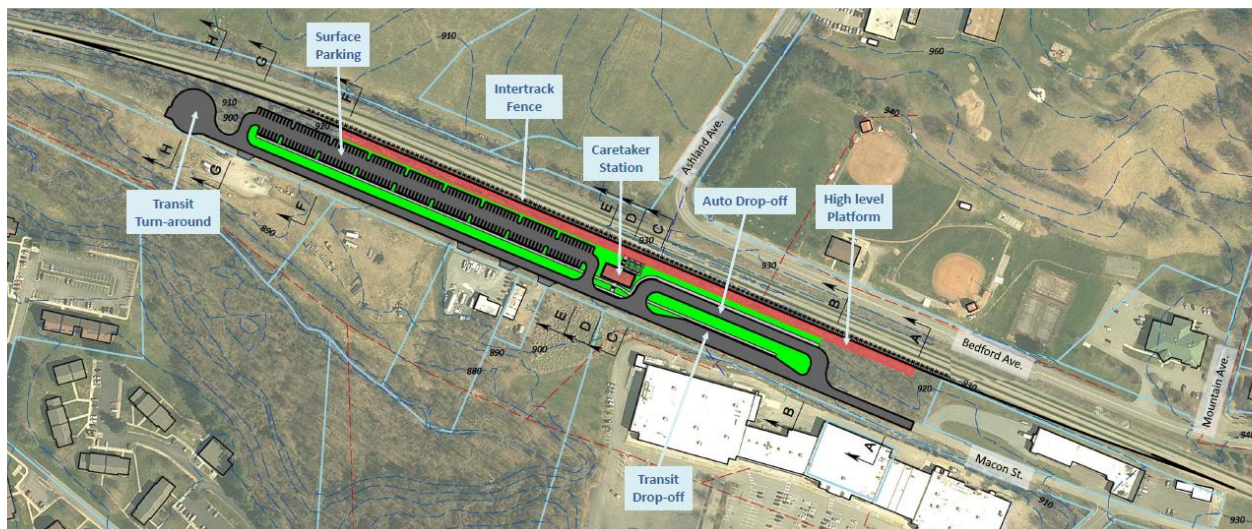
During their review, NS looked at all 18 of the originally proposed site locations and provided recommendations for an additional two of those sites that had not been

³ Based on ridership projections and area characteristics, Amtrak Level 3 “caretaker” stations, which serve 20,000-100,000 annual riders, and Amtrak Level 4 “shelter” stations, which should serve less than 20,000 annual passengers were both evaluated for space considerations.

advanced to conceptual design. These sites are on a straight section of track, west of the central business district (CBD) and would have minimal impacts on freight operations as they are away from industrial freight client sites.

BFRRRI decided that the closure of Grove Street that would be required to utilize the Courthouse Station site would not be in the best interest of the Town, and thus eliminated this site from further consideration. At this time, the two sites proposed by NS, Davenport and Merchants, were reconsidered for their potential suitability. After a detailed analysis and discussions with NS, the two sites were combined into a single station concept at Macon Street East, shown in Figure 5-2 below.

FIGURE 5-2. PROPOSED STATION LOCATION – MACON STREET EAST



Source: *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study* (October 2021), page 9.

This new site meets all criteria outlined above and is entirely within the rights-of-way of NS and Macon Street, minimizing impacts to adjacent parcels. It is located approximately one mile from the central business district. Through further discussion with NS, the Commonwealth identified the stakeholder proposed Macon Street East site as the preferred alternative that will be carried forward through Preliminary Engineering and evaluated through NEPA. No other reasonably feasible sites were found for the proposed station that meet the requirements of all parties.

In the summer of 2021, NS performed Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) modeling to assess the potential for delay introduced by the addition of an Amtrak passenger rail station stop at Bedford, Virginia on track shared with freight and intercity passenger operations. NS agreed to perform this analysis in cooperation with VPRRA to fulfill the requirements of Item 447.10 of Chapter 552 of the 2021 Special Session I Acts of Assembly, which directed the Secretary of Transportation to “provide an assessment of both the total project costs and incremental costs resulting from...modeling conducted to assess any infrastructure or network costs needed to service a rail station in Bedford, Virginia.”

The results of the RTC modeling indicated that the addition of this station stop would create non-material delays to NS operations, assuming that Amtrak schedules adhere to those utilized in the study.

A copy of the relevant studies and analyses can be found in the [project webpage](#).

Challenges to be addressed

The key challenge to be addressed by the Bedford Area Station Development NEPA/PE project is the lack of equity for this rural area relative to nearby Roanoke and Lynchburg. As presented in Table 5-1, the Town of Bedford lags the nearby cities of Roanoke and Lynchburg, as well as the state as a whole, in many key equity metrics. The availability of an alternative mode of transportation would provide opportunities that are currently unavailable to this relatively economically depressed and elderly area of Virginia.

TABLE 5-1. REGIONAL COMPARISON OF EQUITY METRIC

Variable	Town of Bedford	City of Roanoke	City of Lynchburg	Virginia Statewide
2021 Per Capita Income	\$22,697	\$29,030	\$26,364	\$41,359
2021 Median HH (Household) Income	\$40,140	\$44,623	\$51,966	\$76,448
2021 Average HH Income	\$52,901	\$65,875	\$68,521	\$108,047
2021 Median Age	44.9 yrs	40.1 yrs	33.1 yrs	39.2 yrs
2021 Senior Pop (Population) 65+	24.88%	18.85%	17.34%	16.77%
2019 HHs Below Poverty Level	23.48%	20.02%	18.07%	10.26%
2021 Pop 25+: < 9th Grade	5.07%	4.29%	3.34%	3.64%
2021 Pop 25+: 9-12th Grade No Diploma	12.22%	8.90%	7.38%	6.14%
2021 Pop 25+: High School Diploma	25.63%	26.97%	19.57%	19.46%
2021 Pop 25+: Some College/No Degree	25.27%	19.39%	19.30%	18.76%
2021 Pop 25+: Bachelor's Degree	14.95%	15.05%	21.80%	22.53%
2021 Pop 25+: Graduate/Professional Degree	4.52%	9.65%	15.39%	17.48%
2021 Pop 25+: GED/Alternative Credential	5.32%	6.35%	4.85%	3.94%
2019 Owner HHs with No Vehicles	2.84%	3.79%	3.00%	2.39%

2019 Renter HHs with No Vehicles	22.65%	22.89%	18.48%	13.38%
2019 Avg Commute Workers 16+	21.5 min	22.8 min	17.4 min	28.7 min
2019 Workers 16+ Took Other Means of Transportation	3.24%	1.39%	1.51%	1.02%
2019 HHs: No Internet Access	28.33%	21.32%	16.72%	12.80%
2019 Pop 18-64 HHs: No Computer	9.55%	5.56%	2.98%	2.32%
2019 Pop 65+ HHs: No Computer	4.51%	4.21%	3.52%	2.79%
2019 HHs: 1+ Persons with Disability	27.16%	23.07%	26.80%	23.72%

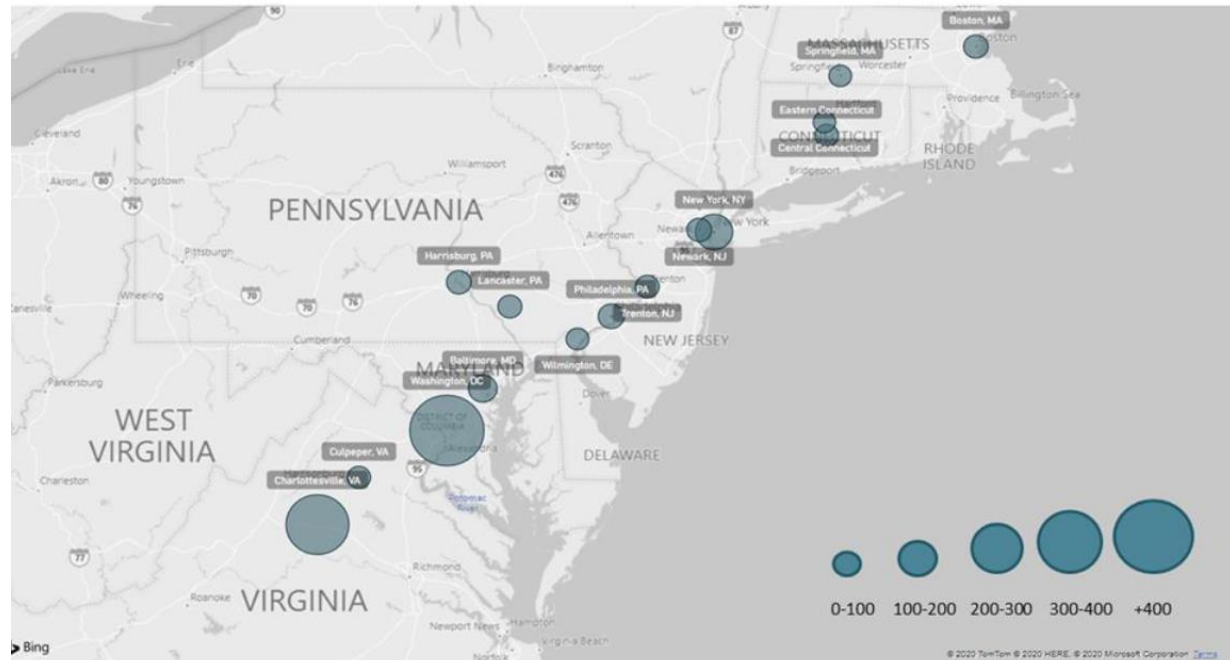
In addition, the presence of the Bedford station will increase the availability of non-auto transportation opportunities in this rural community and provide enhanced opportunities to visit local and regional tourist attractions, such as the National D-Day Memorial and Smith Mountain Lake State Park. These increased opportunities will benefit residents and visitors alike.

Users and Beneficiaries (including RRs)

As part of the *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study*, a traveler survey was conducted, with the information collected then used as an element of a ridership forecasting model. The traveler survey was a sampling of riders at the Lynchburg and Roanoke stations, and included questions about home location, trip purpose, typical modes of travel, group size, likelihood of using Bedford passenger rail and top factors that influence use of the train. Among residents, approximately nine percent utilized the train for business travel, and four percent for commuting to work; 41 percent were for social or leisure purposes, nine percent for personal business, and 35 percent were visiting family. For those respondents that were visitors, 55 percent were traveling for social, recreation or leisure purposes, 32 percent were visiting family, four percent were commuting to work and one percent were traveling on business. Key factors influencing whether respondents would take the train included ease of station access, parking availability, convenience of the schedule, and the ability to work/relax while traveling (51 percent of residents, 50 percent of visitors).

As shown in the figure below, the traveler survey indicates that the vast majority of trips on the train are for regional travel, with the most frequent destinations of Washington, DC and Charlottesville, VA.

FIGURE 5-3. TRAVELER SURVEY RESULTS – FREQUENT DESTINATIONS FOR RESIDENTS



An intercity passenger rail forecasting model was developed combining the results of the travel survey with demographic information, service characteristics by mode, and existing trip tables for various modes. As shown below, the Bedford station is expected to serve approximately 25,400 annual riders, including approximately 10,050 new riders that would not have taken the Amtrak service without Bedford station. Of the anticipated riders, 15,350 would now have access to a more favorable station location over the existing Lynchburg or Roanoke station, likely reducing their overall trip time and improving overall access.

Demand for a station in Bedford is significant enough that DRPT and Amtrak have committed to a two-year Thruway Bus pilot program beginning in Spring 2022. The service will provide a link between Bedford and Lynchburg's Kemper Street Station and will be timed to meet train departures and arrivals.

TABLE 5-2. RIDERSHIP MODEL RESULTS

Base Forecast Annual Ons & Offs	South of Washington (including to/from Washington)	Through Washington	Total
Lynchburg	35,800	8,700	44,500
Bedford	0	0	0
Roanoke	33,500	24,800	58,300
Total	69,300	33,500	102,800

Base Forecast Annual Ons & Offs	South of Washington (including to/from Washington)	Through Washington	Total
Lynchburg	40,600	8,700	49,300
Bedford	19,800	5,600	25,400
Roanoke	30,300	17,900	48,200
Total	90,700	32,200	122,900
Incremental Route Ridership = (build-base)/2			10,050

Source: Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study, October 2021.

As the rail line is owned by NS and provides active freight service in the region, it was important to also consider the impacts of this new stop to freight rail operations. The VPRA and NS agreed to evaluate, for informational purposes only, collateral track and signal improvements that would enable the addition of the proposed Amtrak station stop in Bedford to serve the two daily roundtrip services between Washington, D.C. and Roanoke, Virginia.⁴

The results of the rail operations modeling (RTC) indicated that the addition of this station stop will create non-material delays to NS operations, assuming that Amtrak schedules adhere to those utilized in the analysis.

Specific Project Details

The project includes the design of all elements necessary to create a new station at Bedford, including the station platform, building, parking area, ingress/egress, and new tangent track sidings. Conceptual design and station location selection have been undertaken and will be available for review to support the NEPA/PE. An opinion of probable construction costs indicates that construction of the new Bedford Station will cost \$10.95 million in 2025, which includes 40 percent contingency, cost of signals and communications, all station- and track-side improvements. This cost estimate does not include property acquisition. NS currently owns the proposed station area property and future ownership and operating agreements will need to be negotiated. The current design will not preclude the community from starting service with a platform only and phasing in a station building at a later time.

VPRA is requesting \$600,000 in CRISI Track 2 funding to advance this project through NEPA and preliminary engineering. The anticipated cost to reach this milestone is \$1 million. Elements included in the proposed CRISI project are detailed below.

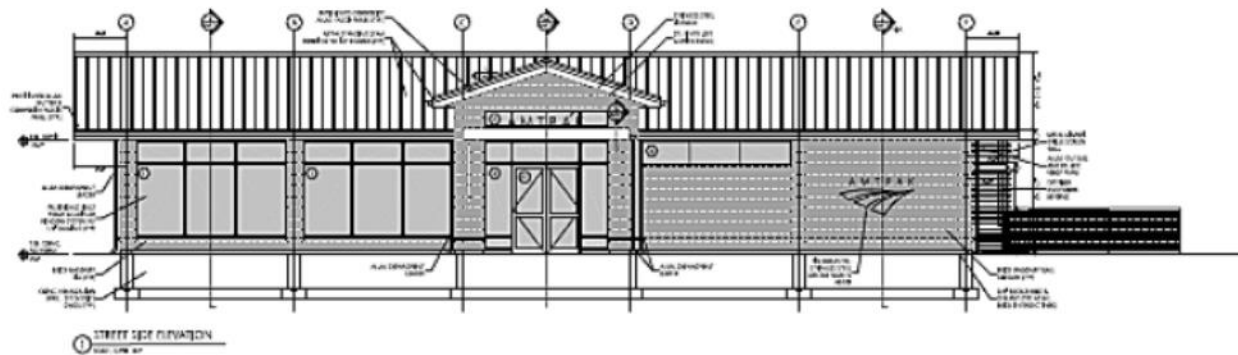
⁴ Note that this evaluation did not constitute an offer or an agreement to permit the construction or institute the new service.

Preliminary Engineering

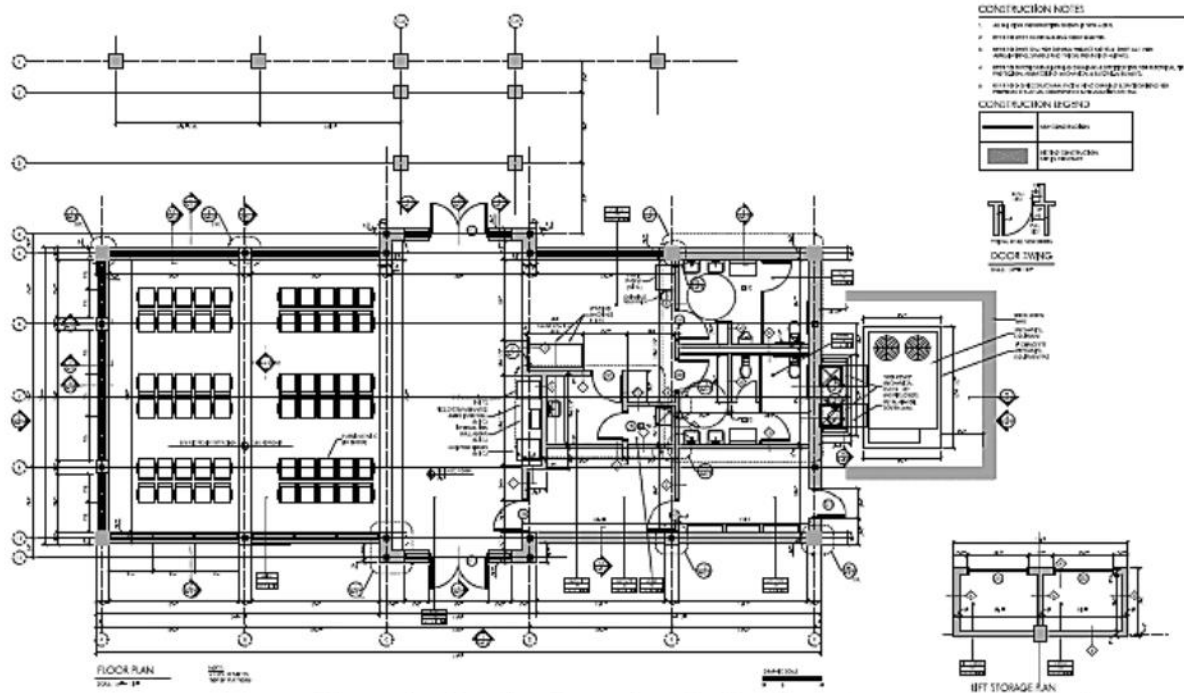
Preliminary engineering accounts for approximately 90 percent of the anticipated total CRISI costs, as VPRA desires to advance the project sufficiently to easily expedite final design and construction. The various elements of preliminary engineering are outlined below.

- Traffic impact analysis to evaluate the local traffic impacts of the new station.
- Survey & topographic mapping to finalize the details of the proposed station location.
- Development of Design Criteria as required to enter into final design
- Development of detailed construction cost estimate as required to enter into final design
- Development of detailed construction schedule as required to enter into final design
- Advance design to a minimum of 30 percent
 - Platform design
 - To meet Platform programming criteria, including length, width, ADA compliance, slope and weather protection
 - Track design
 - Station design
 - To be designed following Amtrak standards for “caretaker” stations as shown in the prototype in Figure 5-4 below.
 - Parking lot design
- Financial Planning documentation – preparation of relevant financial planning documentation as required to enter into Final Design
- Refined project benefits estimate – update of benefit-cost analysis for project based on any updated information generated as design progresses
- Project Management Documentation – preparation of relevant project management documentation as required by FRA to advance from NEPA/PE to Final Design
- Economic Development Assessment – undertake an analysis to understand the economic development potential associated with the proposed station, possible tourism increases, and opportunities for employment for underserved local residents.

FIGURE 5-4. AMTRAK CARETAKER STATION PROTOTYPE



Street Side Elevation of the Caretaker Station prototype



Floor plan for the Caretaker Station Prototype

Source: Amtrak, <https://www.greatamericanstations.com/planning-development/station-planning-guidelines/>

Environmental / NEPA

With the work to date, the DRPT and VPRRA are proposing to move forward with fulfilling the requirements of NEPA contained in 23 CFR Part 771 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures for the proposed passenger rail station. Based on the completed conceptual engineering and discussions with NS, stakeholders, and FRA, it is believed that this action will be eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under 23 CFR 771.116(c)(21).

While the initial screening criteria in the *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Study* identified Courthouse and Jackson as potential station locations, these sites were ruled out by NS. As discussed in the Project History section, DRPT/VPRA ultimately selected the Macon Street/Merchants site because it was determined through close collaboration with the community and NS to be the only feasible location for station development. Each of the other sites considered were eliminated from further consideration due to feasibility concerns, as discussed in the *Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study*.

The proposed station site is entirely within the rights-of-way of NS and Macon Street. It is expected the project will be eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) as the proposed actions will be occurring entirely within existing rights-of-way used for transportation purposes and is therefore consistent with existing uses and will not result in any major changes to traffic or access. This represents the type of action that normally does not result in a significant effect on the human environment, as contemplated in 40 CFR 1508.1(d). A CE is the assumed to be the appropriate FRA action to fulfill NEPA requirements for the proposed station, based on the following reasons:

- there are no significant anticipated impacts to planned growth or land use for the area;
- the proposed site will not require relocation of any individuals;
- there are no significant anticipated impacts on natural, cultural, recreational, historic or other resources;
- there are no anticipated air, noise, or water quality impacts;
- stakeholder and public engagement has taken place through the feasibility studies and will be included as part of the CE record;
- there are no anticipated impacts associated with travel patterns; and
- there are no known extraordinary circumstances present that would produce significant effects.

VPRA has not yet completed the FRA CE Worksheet because completion of the CE Worksheet and associated documentation will be coordinated with design and PE documentation, to help substantiate the CE evaluations for the proposed project site. Development is underway (draft attached to application) and completion is contemplated as part of the scope of this CRISI Track 2 request, will be undertaken in a timely manner, and coordinated appropriately with other Deliverables to continue advancing the project through engineering and toward construction. VPRA commits to following all applicable and established FRA policies and procedures related to environmental review, including formally establishing the Class of Action for the proposed project with the FRA, adherence to 23 CFR Part 771, and consultation of FRA's Categorical Exclusion Companion Guide.

Benefits to Rural Areas

The proposed project will provide significant equity-related benefits to residents in this rural area by providing opportunity to access intercity passenger service. The project is completely located within a rural area of southwest Virginia, which is relatively economically depressed compared to the surrounding areas and the state as a whole. The addition of rail service that stops in Bedford will provide opportunities for residents of this rural area to more easily access regional employment centers such as Roanoke and Lynchburg. It will also provide access to new visitors who may not otherwise stop in Bedford, providing potential economic development and tourism revenues. Letters of support for this application can be found in Appendix D.

Proposed Performance Measures

VPRA will coordinate with FRA to develop mutually agreeable performance measures to assess progress in achieving strategic goals and objectives for the Bedford Regional Passenger Rail NEPA/PE project. Potential performance measures include:

- Complete environmental review through NEPA Categorical Exclusion by late 2023
- Coordinate with the opening of the New River Valley service in 2025
- Continued coordination and agreement with NS

Additionally, as the PE/NEPA work progresses, VPRA commits to identifying performance measures applicable to the final design and construction of the station, focusing on ridership, enhanced safety, economic competitiveness of Amtrak services, and quality of life improvements due to expanded regional transportation options.

6. Project Location

The proposed project is located in the Town of Bedford in rural Bedford County, Virginia. Located approximately equidistant between Roanoke (28 miles) and Lynchburg (25 miles), this bucolic area has a population of approximately 6,657 as of the 2020 decennial Census.⁵ While the Town of Bedford is part of the Lynchburg Metropolitan Statistical Area, it is not located within an urbanized area, the station is therefore considered a rural project. The proposed project will be located on the Norfolk & Western line of the Norfolk Southern Railway.

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/bedfordtownvirginia>; last accessed November 12, 2021.

FIGURE 6-1. BEDFORD, VA LOCATION

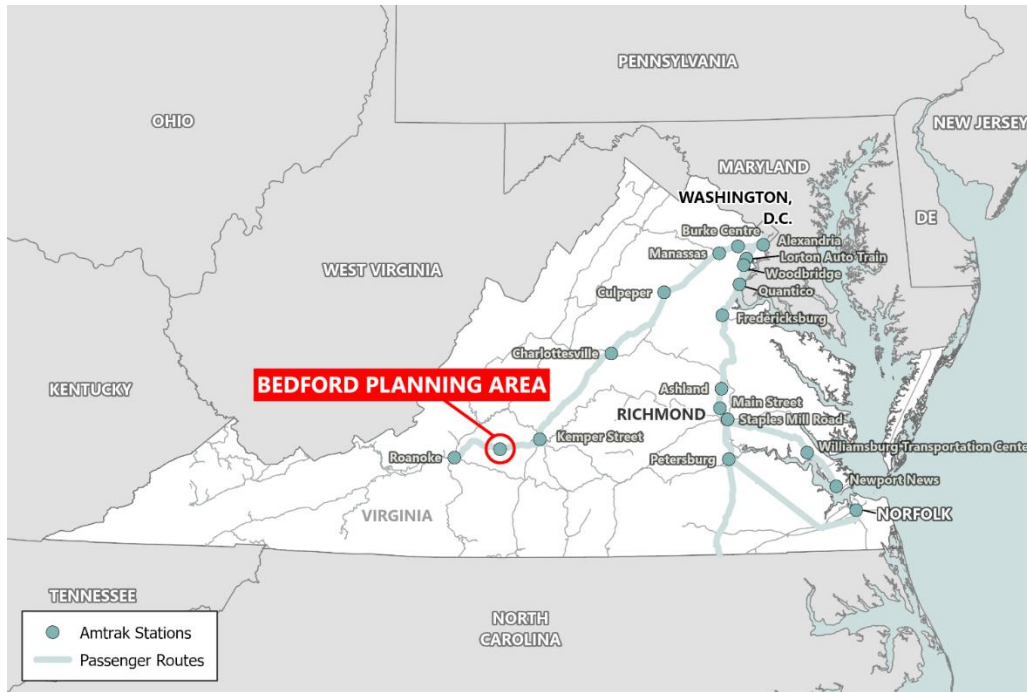
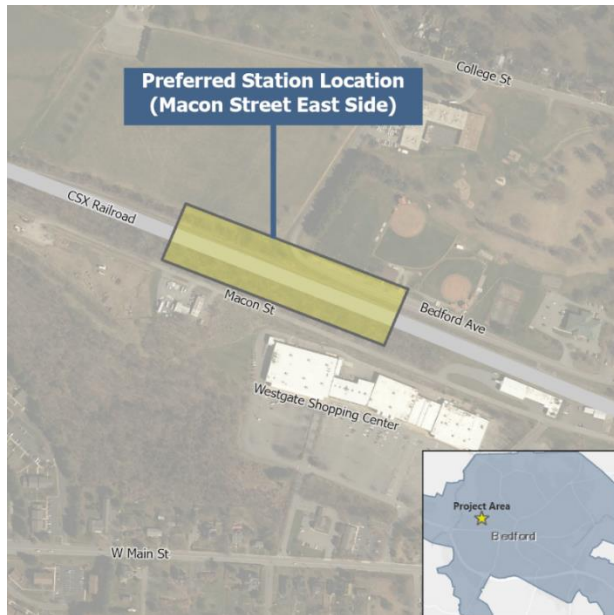


FIGURE 6-2. BEDFORD COUNTY LIMITS AND TOWN OF BEDFORD LIMITS

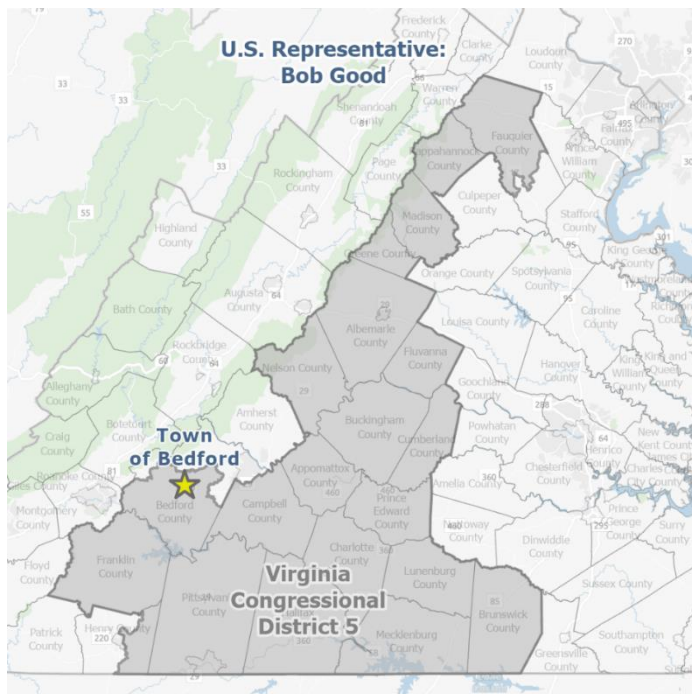


FIGURE 6-3. MACON STREET EAST SIDE – PREFERRED STATION LOCATION



Bedford is in District 19 for State Delegate and is represented by Terry L. Austin (R). It is part of District 23 for State Senate and is represented by Stephen D. Newman (R). For US Congress, it is in Virginia's 5th district and is represented by Bob Good. A maps of the federal congressional district is shown below with Bedford marked by the star.

FIGURE 6-4. BEDFORD US CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION



7. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The Bedford Area Station Development NEPA/PE project is well aligned with the evaluation and selection criteria for the CRISI program as demonstrated in the following sections.

Evaluation Criteria

Project Benefits

Upon implementation of the new station Amtrak ridership on the corridor to Roanoke is expected to increase. It is anticipated that approximately 10,050 new riders will utilize the Bedford stop and an additional 10,100 would shift from Roanoke to Bedford due to proximity and quality of the station. The \$1 million grant investment and \$10.9 million expenditures are expected to generate approximately \$27.7 million in non-discounted benefits. Utilizing a 7% discount rate⁶, the discounted \$7.2 million total investment generates \$10.5 million in benefits over a 20-year analysis period. This results in a benefit-cost ratio of 1.47.

The primary benefits associated with the project are an increase in safety due to reduced vehicle miles traveled for users who are now taking the train instead of driving. These avoided fatalities and injuries account for \$25.4 million of undiscounted benefits, or \$8.87 million in discounted benefits over the project analysis period.

Additional benefits include a reduction in vehicle emissions, reduction in vehicle operating costs, remaining useful life of station area assets, and benefits to new business travelers who are able to be productive during their travel when they would not have been before. It is also expected that there would be benefits to the 10,050 new users who were not previously taking the train. Further details of the Benefit-Cost Analysis are provided in Appendices B and C.


Technical Merit

The Bedford Area Station Development NEPA/PE meets or exceeds all criteria outlined by the FRA in the CRISI NOFO as follows:

Tasks and Subtasks in SOW are appropriate to achieve expected project outcomes

The tasks outlined in the Statement of Work (see Appendix A) and described in the Specific Project Details section are appropriate to meet the expected project outcomes of advancing the Bedford Station design through preliminary engineering and NEPA to enter into Final Design and Construction. These tasks align with the FRA

⁶ With the exception of CO2 emissions, which are discounted at 3% per USDOT Guidance.



requirements to advance a project from PE to Final Design, as outlined in the FRA PE/NEPA Template for Simple Projects and detailed in the SOW.⁷

Strong project readiness and meets Track 2 Requirements

The Bedford Area Station Development project has gone through conceptual design, station feasibility evaluation and site selection, and is ready to proceed through preliminary engineering and NEPA. VPRA is ready to complete all documentation to support a Categorical Exclusion and all elements included in the proposed project can be completed by summer 2025.

Personnel experience and qualifications

The staff proposed to manage the grant efforts have undertaken similar studies in the past and have the full capabilities to successfully execute the proposed project within the proposed timeframe and budget. While the VPRA is a new agency, much of the institutional knowledge and capabilities around passenger rail planning from DRPT will be preserved within the VPRA due to shared staff and transitions of some individuals from DRPT to VPRA. For example, Administration, Communications and Finance/Procurement staff from DRPT will initially be used within VPRA. VPRA staff will also have access to the same pool of experienced subcontractors that DRPT has had in the past to fulfill passenger rail projects, allowing VPRA to complete the work on time and within budget.

Consideration of Private Sector in Business Plan

While this phase of the project does not involve the private sector, previous phases have included participation from NS and there is the potential for private sector participation in future project phases, including construction or operations of the proposed new stop.

Legal, Financial and Technical Capacity and Continuing Control

The applicant, VPRA, has legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out the proposed project as outlined in its establishing legislation. VPRA also will have satisfactory continuing control over the use of the proposed station area and the capability and willingness to maintain the equipment and facilities upon completion. Since its formation, VPRA is now the appropriate state agency within Virginia to lead the grant effort and manage the project. At present, the proposed station site is owned by NS, with pending arrangements to possibly acquire the site for future operations.

Innovation

Matching funds will come from the new Commonwealth Rail Fund (CRF) as managed by the VPRA which has a new, innovative, funding mechanism that is not common

⁷ <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/preliminary-engineering-pe-nepa-template-simple-projects>

elsewhere in the United States. As previously mentioned in the Applicant Eligibility section, the CRF is a non-reverting fund that is distributed from the Commonwealth Transportation Trust Fund to maintain and expand a robust railway network in Virginia.

Consistency with Planning Guidance, Including Title 49, US Code, Chapter 227

As documented in the Detailed Project Description section, the project is consistent with the planning guidance from US DOT, NOFO criteria, Amtrak Guidelines and applicable regulations, and is also supported by multiple planning documents, as highlighted in the Planning Readiness section.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop NEPA/PE project meets FRA preferences for CRISI funding as demonstrated in the table below.

TABLE 7-1. BEDFORD AREA STATION PROJECT ALIGNMENT WITH FRA PREFERENCES

FRA Preference	Bedford Area Station Deveioment NEPA/PE
Federal Share of Project Cost	60%
Net benefits of grant funds	1.47
Pre-construction supports development of new intercity passenger rail service routes	Bedford Station provides support for the forthcoming New River Valley rail extension as well as the second daily round trip on Amtrak Route 46.

In addition to the preference criteria, the Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop project also meets the key US DOT Objectives as discussed below.

SAFETY

A station in Bedford will reduce overall vehicle miles traveled on the locally congested roadways, thereby reducing potential crashes. Additionally, the new station stop will be designed on a tangent track and meet all safety requirements, including fencing to reduce trespassing.

EQUITABLE ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND IMPROVING CORE ASSETS

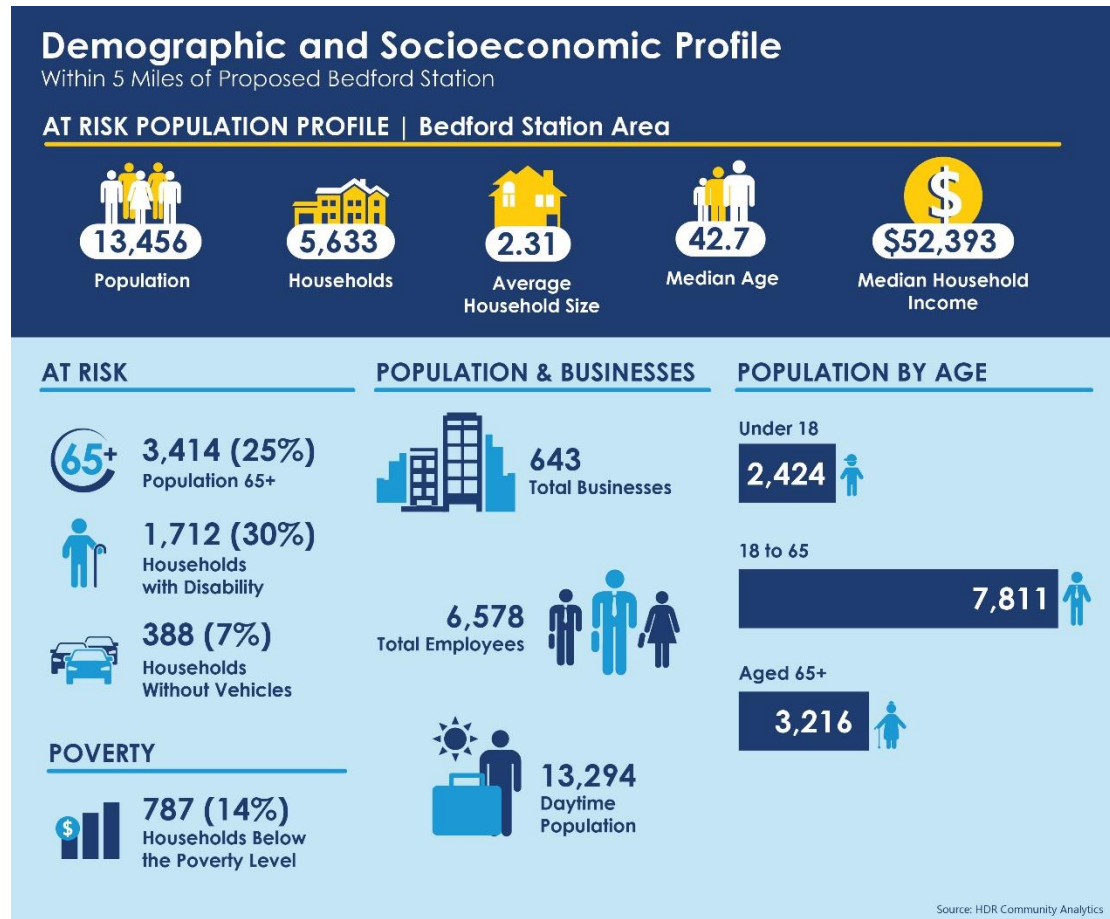
The Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop will contribute to economic progress through support of new infrastructure that provides rural community residents with improved access to opportunities in nearby municipalities while also providing improved access for visitors to tourist destinations. Though increased employment is not a direct goal of the project, there is the potential that the service may support enhanced employment opportunities through improved connections to Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Washington, DC Additionally, further benefits may be achieved through increased tourist visits to the

local attractions such as the National D-Day Memorial, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Peaks of Otter, Smith Mountain Lake State Park, and Poplar Forest.

ENSURING INVESTMENTS MEET RACIAL EQUITY AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION GOALS

Bedford is in a rural part of Virginia that is generally underserved by non-roadway infrastructure. Increasing opportunities for residents of this rural area with nearly 23.5 percent of the Town population, including 14 percent of the population within five-miles of the proposed station, living below the poverty line. Enhancing access and opportunities for these populations is a key objective that will be met by the funding of this project. As discussed previously in the Challenges to be addressed section, Bedford is a rural area that has additional barriers over those in Roanoke and Lynchburg, including elderly individuals comprising 25 percent of the population within five miles of the proposed station, 30 percent of households within five-miles of the station having at least one individual with a disability, and 7 percent of households within a five-mile radius having no access to vehicles. This project will enhance economic inclusion for these at risk populations that cannot be achieved under the current conditions with no local rail station.

FIGURE 7-1. KEY DEMOGRAPHICS WITHIN 5-MILE RADIUS OF PROPOSED BEDFORD STATION



RESILIENCE AND ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

By providing opportunities to utilize passenger rail instead of automobile travel, the presence of the new station may contribute to delaying some harmful effects of climate change. Existing users from Bedford who currently drive to Lynchburg or Roanoke will incur fewer vehicle miles to access their train service, and thus the associated emissions will be reduced. Additionally, the modal diversion for new users who take the train in Bedford has the potential to further reduce emissions due to reduced vehicle miles traveled.

While there are no known opportunities to recycle or redevelop existing infrastructure that arose during conceptual design, VPRA has not ruled out the possibility of working with the community and NS to evaluate potential opportunities as the project progresses.

TRANSFORMATION OF OUR NATION'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop will aid in transforming and improving the nation's transportation infrastructure by providing intercity passenger rail connections to a rural area, increasing mode choice and broadening connections to regional employment centers, enhancing passenger rail service for the residents and visitors of Bedford.

As discussed in the Virginia Statewide Transportation Plan (detailed further below in discussion of the Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) Initiative, there is a lack of suitable infrastructure serving western Virginia, creating safety and access concerns for residents along the US 460 and US 220 corridors, including through Bedford. Enhancement of multimodal opportunities will supplement the existing roadway network and provide additional opportunities for those who do not have access to automobiles or prefer alternative modes of transportation.

8. Project Implementation and Management

The VPRA will be the grantee for the Bedford Regional Passenger Rail Stop NEPA/PE project. Established by Chapter 1230 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, VPRA is a new agency that will assume the role of promoting, sustaining, and expanding availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth of Virginia from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). DRPT, which previously oversaw both passenger and freight rail, will maintain its rail planning and environmental function for long-range statewide passenger and freight planning, and its funding programs will focus on freight rail. Much of the institutional knowledge and capabilities

around passenger rail from DRPT will be preserved within VPRA due to sharing of staff or staff moving from DRPT to VPRA. In particular, support functions new to VPRA that will be borrowed initially from DPRT include Administration, Communications and Finance/Procurement.

VPRA will act as the lead on planning and stakeholder involvement, which includes NS, Bedford County, advocacy groups, and Amtrak passengers. Contract oversight, change order management, risk management, and conformance to federal requirements for project reporting will also be VPRA's responsibility and will be detailed in the Detailed Project Work Plan provided pursuant to Task 1 in the proposed SOW.

This arrangement is similar to several federally-funded projects DPRT (before the inception of VPRA) has managed as a grantee to the FRA, such as the following:

Southeast High-Speed Rail, Washington, D.C. to Richmond, Virginia (DC2RVA) Tier II Environmental Impact Statement and Preliminary Engineering

As the grantee for the federally funded (\$44 million) study to increase passenger train frequency, reliability, and reduce travel time, DRPT has contracted with CSX and Amtrak for design review and service planning. DRPT has provided contract management and oversight, project reporting, and risk management. DRPT brought on a team of consultants led by HDR Engineering to assist with the Tier II EIS, prepare conceptual and preliminary engineering plans, and estimate project ridership, costs, and performance through a Corridor Service Development Plan.

Arkendale 3rd Track Project

As the grantee for the federally funded (\$75 million) Arkendale 3rd Track Project in Stafford and Prince William Counties, Virginia, DRPT has contracted with CSX and Virginia Railway Express (sub-grantees) for the construction of 9 miles of additional third track and construction of station improvements at Quantico Station. DRPT also brought on Jacobs Engineering for additional project oversight and coordination between sub-grantees to ensure efficient coordination of design, scheduling, and construction activities.

9. Planning Readiness

Development of an Amtrak passenger rail station in the Bedford area is consistent with Federal, State and Local Plans and initiatives as discussed below.

Virginia Statewide Transportation Plan (VTrans)

Virginia's 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan promotes a vision for a multimodal transportation network that is "Good for Business, Good for Communities, and Good to Go." The Commonwealth recognizes that Virginia's rail network is a valuable asset that

drives the economy, reduces congestion, improves safety, and saves taxpayer money. Continued investment in rail infrastructure will ensure the mission and vision for the Commonwealth's transportation network is achieved.

Within VTrans, recommendation S.9 for the Salem District has identified as a Tier 1 need that "within the Salem District, the US 460 and US 220 corridors from New River Valley to Roanoke and Roanoke to Lynchburg have intercity transit, interregional connectivity, reliability, congestion, airport access, and safety needs."⁸ Additionally, the Lynchburg District identified Tier 1 need L.17, which states that "within the Lynchburg District, the US 460 corridor between Bedford and Farmville has redundancy, mode choice, safety and reliability needs."⁹

Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) Initiative

After decades of investment in the privately owned rail network to address capacity needs, and realizing the increasing demands for additional passenger service, Virginia partnered with CSX Transportation and NS to analyze future service needs and capacity constraints. The resulting Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) initiative includes a program of projects with a vision for public ownership of railroad assets to accommodate future passenger needs.

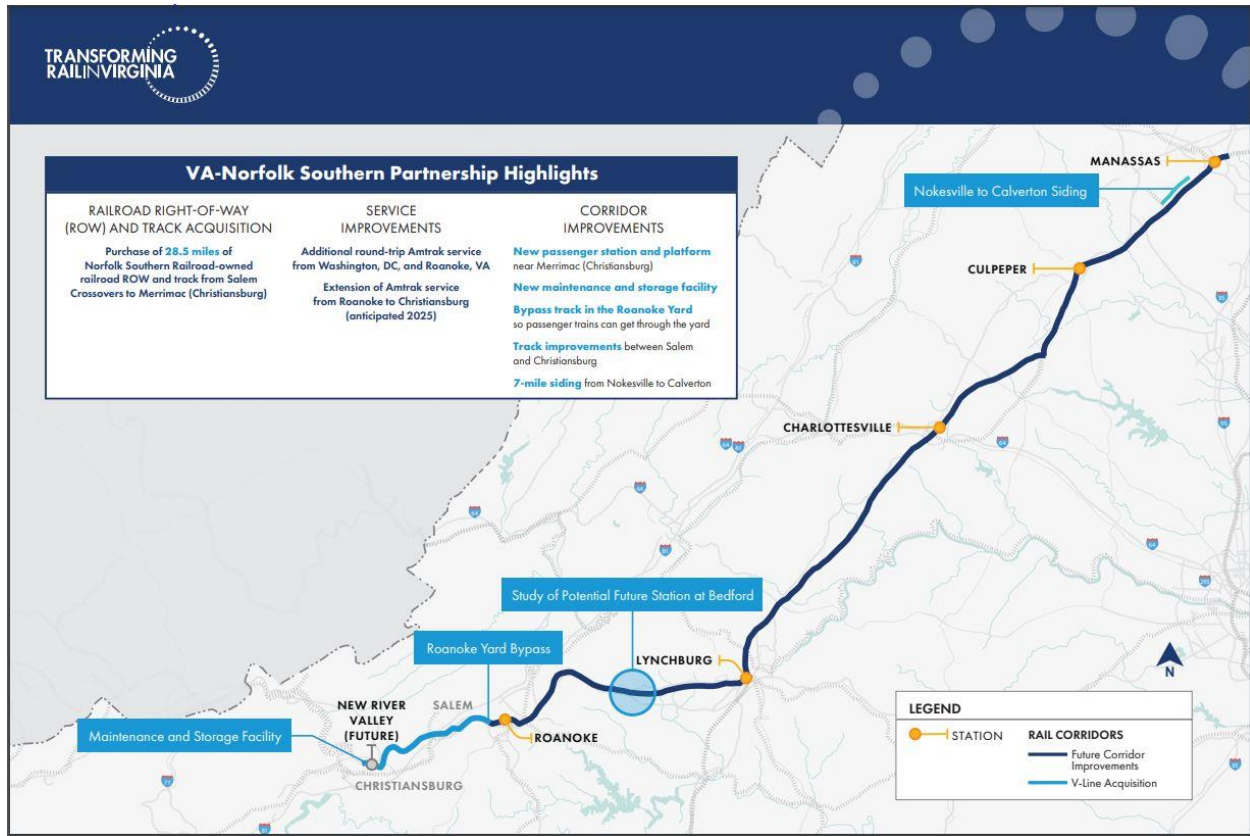
The TRV initiative represents a paradigm shift of Virginia's role in rail transportation. The Commonwealth will now own active railroad tracks and right of way, and ultimately control passenger rail activities on its corridor from Richmond to DC. In anticipation of the state's new responsibilities, the General Assembly and Governor Northam enabled Chapter 1230 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, which provides a significant increase in rail funding and a change in the management of intercity passenger rail in Virginia. Effective July 1, 2020 the VPRRA was inaugurated to manage ownership of rail assets, expand passenger rail services, and implement the TRV program.

The Commonwealth of Virginia and NS have partnered on the Western Rail Initiative, in which Virginia will acquire 28.5 miles of NS-owned right-of-way from the Salem Crossovers to Christiansburg. This track, known as the V-Line, will provide additional Amtrak passenger rail service from Roanoke to Christiansburg along the New River Valley line. This service is expected to begin in 2025. The continued study of Bedford Station is included in the TRV, with the anticipation of providing service in coordination with the start of the New River Valley Line service to Christiansburg.

⁸ https://vtrans.org/resources/VTrans2040_Recommendations_Salem.pdf, pdf pages 5-8.

⁹ https://vtrans.org/resources/VTrans2040_Recommendations_Lynchburg.pdf, pdf pages 5-6

FIGURE 9-1. VA-NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



Source: Transforming Rail in Virginia, https://transformingrailva.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/VA-NS-Highlights_V1.pdf

Bedford/Franklin Regional Passenger Rail Stop Study

This study, completed in October 2021, was led by the Virginia DRPT, with collaboration and input from the Bedford/Franklin Regional Rail Initiative, Norfolk Southern Railway, and Amtrak.

The project history and inclusion in noted documents above indicates readiness to move forward and through PE and NEPA to finalize planning and design documents and prepare the area for construction in time for the opening of the New River Valley extension in 2025.