

**DRPT Releases Report on Short-Term Passenger Rail Improvements
Amtrak Recommends Strategic Service Expansion for Virginia**
RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

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RICHMOND, Va., January 29, 2008- The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) today released the “Advancing Passenger Rail in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Short Term Action Plan” report developed by Amtrak.

DRPT requested that Amtrak provide recommendations to improve passenger rail service in Virginia as part of the agency’s efforts to develop a comprehensive Statewide Rail Plan for Virginia.

As the national passenger rail service provider in the United States, Amtrak is uniquely positioned to analyze potential service improvements in Virginia. The corporation has worked with many states across the country to assess their needs and recommend service enhancements.

DRPT Director Matthew O. Tucker said, “This report will provide valuable input into the development of Virginia’s Statewide Rail Plan. We appreciate Amtrak’s evaluation of the short-term opportunities for service improvements across the Commonwealth.”

Amtrak evaluated seven potential service improvements and/or expansions corresponding to key travel corridors in Virginia such as I-95, I-64, I-81, Route 29 and trans-Virginia service such as the proposed TransDominion Express. Detailed evaluation of each alternative focused on service implementation requirements, such as the need for train sets, track and storage facilities as well as operational issues such as the amount of operating subsidy required, current and projected freight and passenger rail traffic on the proposed service track, and connectivity of the enhanced service to Amtrak’s service routes.

While the Amtrak plan focuses on short term service improvements that could be implemented with minimal capital investment, DRPT is developing a comprehensive plan for Virginia that will include expanded service and improved service reliability consistent with the agency’s overall goal of providing better transportation choices. Today’s Amtrak report will be taken into consideration in the development of Virginia’s plan, currently scheduled for completion in summer 2008.

A copy of the report is available online at
<http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/studies/files/Amtrak%20Report%201-25-08.pdf>

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