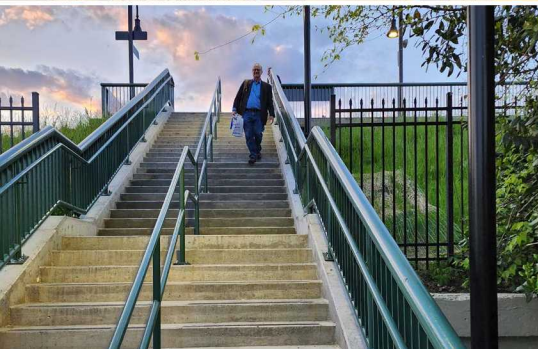


# Fredericksburg Rail Station



**VRE**

The Rehabilitation of a  
Regional Transportation Asset





*"VRE's laudable effort required skillful precision and technologically advanced techniques to properly analyze existing conditions, remove deteriorated fabric, conserve sound historic material, and make necessary repairs."*

— Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.

*VRE is a transportation partnership of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission.*

# The Rehabilitation of a Regional Transportation Asset

*For nearly a century, what is today the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Fredericksburg station has anchored the southern part of the city's downtown, connecting it with destinations near and far and bringing a sense of vitality to the area. But, as happens over time, the elements took their toll, especially on the station's concrete platforms and adjacent bridges.*

A vision for rehabilitating the structures emerged from strong long-standing partnerships between VRE and Amtrak, which serve the station; the City of Fredericksburg, which has a vested interest in the station's continued success; CSX Transportation, which owned the station infrastructure; and the Commonwealth of Virginia. As planning began in 2017, the partners identified several goals:

- Retain the station's historic character
- Perform necessary concrete repairs to bridges
- Restore parts of the platforms to accommodate longer trains
- Remove lead-based paint and refresh the platform and canopies with new paint
- Provide a safer path to a parking lot by adding a staircase from the platform
- Improve signage for wayfinding and to warn of a low clearance under one of the bridges

The results, portrayed in the pages that follow, depict a stunning transformation that enhances the passenger experience, improves the sense of safety for VRE riders and pedestrians, and restores the iconic image of the station for decades to come.

The rehabilitation project is the recipient of the 2024 Preservation Spark Award from the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. The foundation noted, "VRE's laudable effort required skillful precision and technologically advanced techniques to properly analyze existing conditions, remove deteriorated fabric, conserve sound historic material, and make necessary repairs."



**Rich Dalton**  
Chief Executive Officer

# A Brief History of the Fredericksburg Rail Station

Situated blocks from the Rappahannock River, the iconic 1910 rail station was the city's third passenger depot. The first was constructed several years before the start of the Civil War and the second opened in 1887. Both were owned by the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac (RF&P) Railroad and located one block west of and on the opposite side of the tracks from the existing station.

The popularity of train travel and the need to accommodate additional travelers led to construction of the Georgian Revival style passenger depot at 200 Lafayette Boulevard. The station was decorated with chestnut accents and terrazzo floors and featured both electric and gas lighting. It opened in 1910 to great fanfare.

The arrival of the automotive age prompted the RF&P in 1927 to elevate its tracks through the city, expand its passenger station, and construct a double-track bridge across the Rappahannock

River. A rear entrance to the elevated platforms was also constructed and today serves as the entrance to the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station.

Over the next five decades, the RF&P performed routine station, platform and track maintenance.

In 1971, the RF&P relinquished its passenger operations to Amtrak. But just five years later, Amtrak closed its ticket office, leaving the historic station unmanned. As the station fell into disrepair, Amtrak and the RF&P repaired a leaking roof, crumbling concrete, and broken windows and lighting in 1989, as efforts to stand up a new commuter railroad (VRE) gained momentum.

Three years later, the city's Architectural Review Board approved the design for a new VRE passenger station adjacent to the historic station. The first VRE train left the station at 5:29 a.m. on July 20, 1992.



**Left:** Historic 1910 Fredericksburg station



**Right:** Platform-level view of the elevated station (1952)

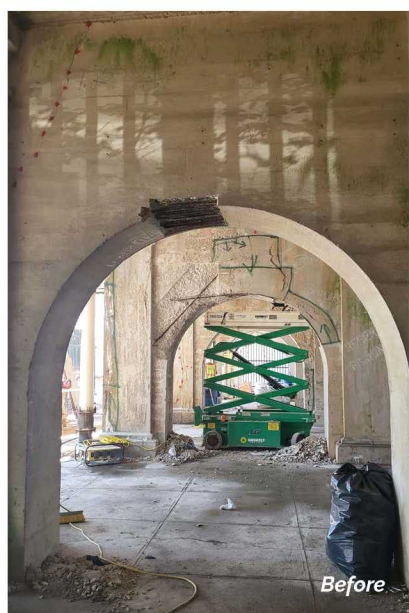




Before



After



Before



After

Eventually, a group of local businessmen purchased the historic station. After extensive renovations, the 1910 station building reopened as a restaurant in 1997.

Just over a decade later, VRE embarked on a project to enhance ADA accessibility and maintain the integrity of concrete on bridges over Princess Anne and Caroline streets and platforms. That effort stabilized existing structures but did little to improve their aesthetics. It did, however, shine a light on the need to fully rehabilitate the station and surrounding structures.

An agreement to transfer ownership of the VRE station and other rail assets from CSX Transportation to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority was reached in 2021.

The next year — with financial support from the state and federal government and VRE system — VRE began:

- rehabilitating the existing platforms, stairs and all four bridges
- constructing new stairs to mitigate a pedestrian street crossing to improve safety
- improving ADA access to the west side elevator
- adding signage, sidewalks and lighting, and
- refreshing the platform canopies and other areas with paint

These enhancements, completed in 2024, have succeeded in restoring the VRE station and surrounding structures to a state that closely mirrors their appearance nearly a century earlier. They also will help maintain the structural integrity of the station and bridges well into the future.



# Timeline of Rail in Fredericksburg



1837

RF&P reaches Fredericksburg vfrom Richmond to the south

Mid  
1850s

Small, one-story, wood-framed passenger depot constructed



1872

RF&P extends tracks to Washington, D.C.

1888

One-story, timber-frame passenger depot with covered platform constructed on site of original depot



1910

Georgian Colonial style train station opens a block north of passenger depot

1927

Construction of elevated station and tracks, and double-track bridge across the Rappahannock River

1971

RF&P transfers passenger operations to Amtrak

1976

Amtrak closes ticketing operations, leaving station unmanned

**Top to bottom:** Black-and-white rendering of 1910 station

Color rendering of 1910 station at night

Construction of rail bridge over the Rappahannock River (1926)

1989

Amtrak and RF&P repair roof, concrete, and broken lights and windows



1992

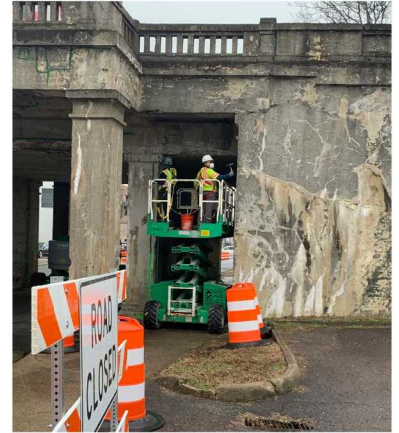
VRE station opens

1997

Historic station reopens as a restaurant

2011

VRE repairs concrete on platforms and bridges over Princess Anne and Caroline streets and improves ADA accessibility by altering the slope of the ramp at the station entrance



2021

CSX Transportation and the Commonwealth agree to transfer ownership of the station and other rail assets to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority



2024

VRE rehabilitates station platforms and all four bridges, improves signage and lighting, enhances ADA access to elevator, and constructs new staircase to mitigate pedestrian crossing at Princess Anne Street





A Special Thanks to Our Partners

