

Special Report: Intercity Passenger Rail Continues to Increase in Hampton Roads

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Intercity passenger rail travel is becoming a prominent mode of travel in Hampton Roads, with direct Amtrak service resuming on the Southside and passenger levels continuing to increase on the Peninsula.

After years of planning and \$114 million in rail line improvements, Amtrak provided intercity passenger rail service to the Southside of Hampton Roads on December 12th, 2012, for the first time since 1977. Demand for the opening day service, which occurred ten months ahead of original projections, was so high that Amtrak provided four additional cars to the inaugural train.

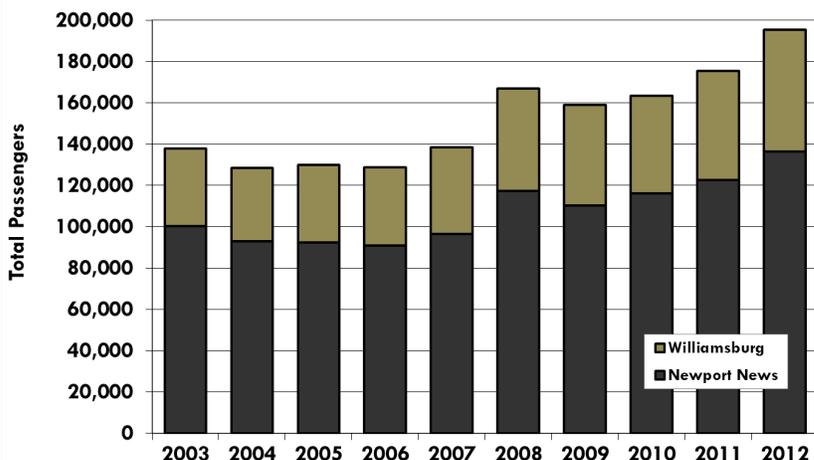
Trains serving the station adjacent to Harbor Park in Norfolk provide direct, single-seat service to the Northeast Corridor, including Richmond, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston. Although the Norfolk station is currently served by one train each day with a capacity of 480 passengers, plans include adding up to two additional trains each day as funding becomes available.

Plans are also underway to replace the temporary station with a \$3.7 million multi-modal station, providing connectivity between the Tide light rail transit, Hampton Roads Transit Ferry and Bus service, and Amtrak connector bus service. The multi-modal station is currently expected to be complete in Fall 2013. In addition, plans are underway on the Peninsula for a new multi-modal station near Bland Boulevard, replacing the current Amtrak station in Newport News. More than \$20 million in future regional funding has been allocated to this project.



Photo courtesy city of Norfolk.

Total Passengers Boarding or Departing Amtrak Trains in Hampton Roads, Federal Fiscal Years 2003 - 2012



Data source: Amtrak. Federal Fiscal Years run from October through September.

As the Southside Amtrak service gets underway, passenger levels continue to increase at Amtrak stations in Newport News and Williamsburg. There were a total of 195,300 passengers who boarded or departed Amtrak trains in Hampton Roads in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2012*, with 136,400 passengers at the Newport News station and 58,900 passengers at the Williamsburg station. The number of Amtrak passengers boarding or departing trains in Hampton Roads increased 11% between FFY 2011 and 2012, and increased 42% over the last decade. This increase occurred as roadway travel throughout Hampton Roads has decreased (down nearly 4% between 2006 and 2011), as has regional air travel at Hampton Roads commercial service airports (14% decrease between 2005 and 2011).

* - Federal Fiscal Years run from October through September. Federal Fiscal Year 2012 includes October 2011 through September 2012.