

Norfolk Amtrak schedule will allow day trips to D.C.

NORFOLK

New train service coming to Norfolk within two years will get passengers to Washington by 9 a.m. and back home again by 7 p.m.

"D.C. in about 3-1/2 hours and back the same afternoon - it will be a major addition to the community," said Norfolk's acting economic development director, Chuck Rigney.

Officials designed the schedule to be attractive to military and business officials who make day trips to the capital area.

New details about the Amtrak service and the station design at Harbor Park were unveiled Friday at a meeting of the Hampton Roads Mayors and Chairs.

City officials said a one-way ticket will cost about \$60, though the price is preliminary.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, including Director Thelma Drake, had not heard that price point before. Department spokeswoman Kimberly Kovac said the ticket prices won't be known until after a passenger-and-revenue analysis is complete in six to 10 months.

Amtrak service from Newport News to D.C. generally costs \$33 to \$46, and the trip takes 4 to 4-1/2 hours.

About 44,000 residents from South Hampton Roads travel to Newport News each year to catch a train. Amtrak officials have told the city they expect about 67,000 customers each year to use the Norfolk service, or close to 200 passengers a day. Updated ridership forecasts may be available in several weeks, Kovac said.

The state is now spending \$101 million to upgrade the Norfolk Southern and CSX freight corridor between Norfolk and Petersburg and Richmond to launch service no later than October 2013.

Service will start with one train departing and one arriving daily. The morning departure will be around 5 a.m., with service to Richmond by 7 a.m., and on to Washington by 9 a.m. The one-seat service will carry riders all the way to Boston.

A train will depart Washington around 3 p.m., arriving in Norfolk by 7 p.m. The train will stay overnight in Norfolk at a new Amtrak service facility along Saint Julian Avenue.

Officials plan to increase service to three round trips daily.

Trains will have eight passenger cars, each with 72 seats, and a diesel locomotive engine for a total capacity of 576 passengers. The trains will be 1,000 feet long.

The city will also provide secured overnight parking for 100 to 200 vehicles. Paul Filion, the city's transportation construction manager, said no decision had been made about charging a parking fee.

City officials on Friday also unveiled preliminary plans for a \$3 million, 4,000-square-foot train station.

Although the early sketches don't show it, the station will include a clock tower "to create a landmark," said Ray Gindroz, the city's design consultant. It also will include a pedestrian path to the light-rail station at Harbor Park.

Work is already under way on the tracks and the platform; construction on the station will begin this winter.

Debbie Messina, (757) 446-2588, debbie.messina@pilotonline.com [1]

PROPOSED TRAIN DEPOT

Amtrak passenger rail service is set to begin in Norfolk in 2013 from a station near Harbor Park. It will be part of a planned transportation hub along the waterfront.



SOURCE: Bing THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT



Source URL (retrieved on 10/31/2011 - 14:18): <http://hamptonroads.com/2011/10/norfolk-amtrak-schedule-will-allow-day-trips-dc>

Links:

[1] <mailto:debbie.messina@pilotonline.com>