



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CAC Meeting June, 26 2017
DRPT Passenger Rail Tier II EIS

Summary Notes

Topics

<p>So they don't want to let us look at anything we want to evaluate.</p>	<p>Alignments</p>
<p>How can rails between lanes of I-95 impact the environment more than the highway already does?</p>	<p>Conservation</p>
<p>The community and environmental impact of another rail (either east through Ashland or through the center) would seem to be overwhelmingly greater than other alternatives presented. Reconsideration of eastern possibilities should be done – especially the possibility of relocating the “Park”</p>	<p>Conservation, Alignments</p>
<p>It appears an eastern bypass along 95 is the less obtrusive. Why destroy the town or the farm lands?</p>	<p>Farmland</p>
<p>A third rail or 3-2-3 alignment through town would have devastating effects on the town of Ashland. It seems like a Western Bypass would make more sense, especially since there seems to be a need to build a temporary bypass in the west anyway – why not just build the permanent route to bypass town – or run 1 or 2 rails west to accommodate high speed needs. No high speed through Ashland. No new tracks in Ashland. 3 years to destroy would kill all businesses in Ashland.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>



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<p>If no restrictions where would the rail go and why? Have any rail locations been ruled out and why?</p>	<p>Rail Operations</p>
<p>A question rather than a comment. The high speed rail is for passenger trains. The rail will be used by Amtrak and CSX. How will the increase in speed for Amtrak be monitored/tracked so as not to interfere with CSX trains which can be extremely long. If I understand correctly there will be no "actual" high speed through Ashland.</p>	<p>Rail Operations</p>
<p>Within the dispatched operations model, as its current state, does the model reflect today's actual on-time performance, by season of passenger trains? Or, is it based on expectations?</p>	<p>Rail Operations</p>
<p>No third rail or 3-2-3. As a homeowner on Center St. I fully understand how either option will make the center of town practically uninhabitable.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>
<p>No third rail or 3-2-3 for Ashland! As a resident living on the eastern side of the tracks, I have grave concerns about the safety of the third rail and its proximity to my home. How would I access my home? Would DC2RVA purchase my home under the right of eminent domain? Have you considered how many families would be displaced? Please provide expected number of trains both passenger and freight extrapolated to 2035 (that would be traveling through Ashland) Is this project being driven primarily by CSX's desire to move more freight due to improvements to the Panama Canal? What is the actual right-of-way currently in place for the current tracks? Reconsider the Buckingham Branch!</p>	<p>Alternatives, Alignments</p>
<p>No third rail – no 3-2-3 – neither are acceptable options for the town of Ashland.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>



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<p>Carey Burch mentioned that using any of the Buckingham options may require the railroad “to step outside the existing right of way” To improve curves and to improve speed. In Mark Hemphill’s modeling presentation, I believe he indicated the Buckingham Branch options had not been modeled. If true, how does DRPT know the curves need improvement</p>	<p>Alternatives, Rail Operations</p>
<p>If you state you are not taking comments from the public you should abide by that rule. For those who are abiding by that rule, we are at a disadvantage to those who asked questions.</p>	<p>General</p>
<p>Please do not choose to follow either of the 2 plans – the third rail or the 3-2-3 plan. Either of these plans would destroy Ashland, our health, our safety, economy, culture, and quality of life. We traveled from New York’s Penn Station to Ashland last Thursday in day light. We do that trip as often as possible. There is no where between Ashland and New York like the town of Ashland. Nowhere else has homes, businesses, a college, and this place where people worship, gather, live, work, shop, learn, and live together so close to the train tracks. Thus your decision about high-speed rail will have serious consequences for many people for many years to come. Please consider these factors in your discussion and decision.</p> <p>Please reconsider the Eastern bypass. How can you equal the impact of your alternatives factors each as quality of life, safety, property, businesses, entertainment, homes, communities, college, tourists, risk factors compare of the wetlands? As you use wetlands to eliminate the eastern bypass)</p>	<p>Alignments, Alternatives</p>
<p>A third rail through the town of Ashland would destroy both a historic town and a historic college campus. It’s hard to believe that such destruction could be approved in the name of moderately improved passenger rail service.</p>	<p>Historic Resources, Alignments</p>
<p>Historic properties straddle the tracks. High speed rail would destroy them. We are in the flood zone in the wetlands. Changing the rail road would harm the environment. The western bypass also cuts through historic and environmentally important properties. Spend the money and follow 95. Consider the tunnel versus destroying property. Tell us the truth – is the cost the only consideration? How can you be sure the extra trains are really needed 20 years from now?</p>	<p>Historic Resources, Cost</p>



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<p>It is unthinkable to divide a town with such historic significance and deprive the US- the world! – of this rare commodity – a congenial, connected, diverse community. Stop switching train engines in DC and you will save an hour of travel time versus the 15 minutes for freight trains by dividing the town of Ashland. Keep them how they are and just add more passenger trains. Divert freight trains. The existing tracks cut through wetlands. I would like proof that NONE of the existing tracks or planned changes run through parks, not just in Hanover but coast to coast. Have you considered in your 20 year post-completion study, the effect of travelers and other transportation transitions? Maybe...trains won't be as popular. Consider the tunnel AGAIN.</p>	<p>Historic Resources</p>
<p>To DRPT Ashland-Hanover High Speed Rail Committee</p> <p>This comment is predominately about a possible tunnel under the CSX right of way through Ashland. Before I discuss this topic, however, my preference would be the two tracks through Ashland alternative. I understand this would be a bottleneck in the three track system planned for Washington to Richmond. But when the alternatives are considered, including cost and the disruption to the Town of Ashland, it has much merit. One important fact to remember is that the number of trains south of Spotsylvania-Fredericksburg is significantly less than north thereof. So with good operational planning and dispatching of trains I believe the two track bottleneck may prove to be satisfactory. This approach would also allow the Amtrak station to remain at its' present location with improved platforms and train warning signs.</p> <p>If the two track alternative is not possible, then a passenger train only tunnel should be considered. I understand the negotiated agreement with CSX is that they must have access to all tracks: and this passenger train only tunnel would preclude CSX freight trains from using this track. But as a good corporate citizen I hope they would be open to negotiation on this issue. This alternative would also allow the high speed trains to avoid Ashland. The other point to remember is that the original plan for high speed rail between Richmond and Washington was for a passenger train speed of 110 mph not 90 as now planned. This reduction in speed was because CSX freight trains could not use a track whose geometry allowed 110 mph so CSX has already impacted the project negatively from the high speed rail perspective.</p> <p>The tunnel option is viable, although the consultant, HDR has not expressed support for this alternative. They indicated they considered a deep tunnel in rock and that it was not economically feasible. I agree the deep tunnel is not feasible because: 1) they planned for a very large diameter tunnel that would accommodate double stack trains and 2) the entrance and exit slopes to reach the tunnel grade for freight trains requires a maximum 1 percent which means the entrance tracks to the tunnel would be over four miles long. The passenger train only tunnel would be 2/3 the diameter of the freight train tunnel and the slopes into and out of the tunnel could be 3 percent. This slope reduces the length of the entrance and exit slopes to less than 1/4 of the freight train tunnel. The other important feature of the passenger train tunnel is that it would be predominately a soft ground tunnel excavated by a tunnel boring machine. Grouting would likely be required under the tracks to reduce potential settlement caused by the tunnel and this would add cost but it would be much less costly than the freight train tunnel.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Alignments</p>



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I am a retired CEO of a consulting engineering firm which has a tunnel design group. I'm also familiar with tunnel design having been involved with the several tunnels for large dam projects. I can say unequivocally that a soft ground tunnel is feasible and should be considered as an alternative. It will cost more than adding a third track through Ashland but when the detrimental costs to the Town are added to the third track alternative, it would be viable.

Thanks for considering comment.