



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CAC Meeting August 28, 2017
DRPT Passenger Rail Tier II EIS

Source	Comment	Topics
14522 7/18 Web Comment	First let's be honest: What started out as High Speed Passenger Rail is now all about freight. In general I like trains it's what the town of Ashland as many others was built upon. However when a company [DRPT] draws a line on a map that disects my home (20 yards from my 12 year old home we built ourselves; and diagonally cuts my family's 150 year old farm in half) or wants to wipe out one side of downtown Ashland -- all for increased freight --or puts 55+ homes churches and farms on the chopping block then I have a BIG problem with trains. I always loved the romance of hearing the train whistle in the distance. I grew up here and love my place and the town but unless we wise up this is going to be the next Short Pump. Is this your plan? How does this benefit Ashland and Hanover County? What are you doing to help the dislocated families?	Alignments-Ashland, Displacements Res/Comm, Farmland
14523 7/18 Web Comment	i live in ashland va and do NOT want the third rail to go through ashland. it will ruin our town. actually i think the entire project is short sighted. the small savings of time do now outweigh the cost and disruption to any community. i fell like the real reason for this project is to help CSX with their freight trains. not good for our community.	Alignments-Ashland, Purpose and Need
14524 7/18 Web Comment	My dog's favorite park Dejarnette. Having a barrier that would prevent access to this part of town would limit his enjoyment. I also do pet sitting and this would also affect these pets.	Alignments-Ashland, Parks/Recreation
14525 7/18 Web Comment	The Western Bypass around Ashland will destroy our home and our community. This is not acceptable and I will fight it with all my energy and my life.	Alignments-Ashland



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<p>14526 7/18 Web Comment</p>	<p>The town of Ashland and the surrounding countryside are dear to us. There is no room in town for a third rail nor should a western bypass be imposed on the suburbs" of Ashland. This project will not and cannot possibly alleviate any significant traffic from I-95 and the extra "speed" that would be gained would net you at most 15 minutes on a 2 hour commute. There is no justification for destroying a bucolic small town OR ripping up the countryside for insignificant speed & passenger gains. Any third rail additions should be done to the north of town (to provide siding for through traffic) if done at all. I strongly urge the DPRT to reconsider all eastern bypass options as any of the ones mentioned would require less eminent domain and less destruction of private property or communities.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Purpose and Need, Displacements Res/Comm</p>
<p>14528 7/18 Web Comment</p>	<p>I think this whole thing stinks. This is not one bit about high speed passenger rail; it's about CSX and making money on freight. I have worked VERY hard to raise my daughter as a single mom on the beautiful piece of land we call home. We enjoy seeing deer hawks frogs rabbits turtles snakes groundhogs and turkeys in our yard. Our life as we know it will be seriously damaged by high speed rail in the western bypass. WE DON'T WANT IT!! Nor does the Town of Ashland. Keep Hanover County Beautiful! No high speed rail!!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Biological Resources, Aesthetics</p>
<p>14529 7/18 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am very opposed to the proposed Western Bypass in rural Hanover County. This route would destroy homes and farms that have been operating for several generations. Also I believe the third rail proposed to go thru Ashland would be extremely disruptive. I urge further options to be explored for Hanover County rail service.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Displacements Res/Comm, Farmland</p>
<p>14531 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>The eastern bypass option to reroute around Ashland is not acceptable to a significant number of families and communities that live close to the proposed route. We oppose the risk to our wetlands and Washington Lacy Park. We cannot imagine that high speed rail so close to so many homes and communities and the noise and vibration it would bring to a large population of people. We oppose the impact to route 54 and how the bypass would effectively cut off many small communities of people that have lived here for generations. We favor growth on the route 54 corridor between Ashland and Hanover. This proposed bypath route would be a significant deinsentive to that growth.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Wetlands, Biological Resources, Vibration, Noise</p>



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<p>14532 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>Adding a Third rail through the twon is a lame answer to rail system. Our family moved to Ashland 20 years ago because of the charm and family oriented town that is is. Bypass isthe only solution. Our little town will be destroyed. The town has been recognied and given gratsn to help up grade and embelish its charm because of the way it is now. Stay waaay from our beloved town! You are smart people come up with a better solution!!!!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14533 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>A western bypass is not the solution in Ashland. There has to be a better option than a western bypass. Think creatively & outside the box to look for solutions that will not destroys peoples homesteads & lives.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14536 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>As one who loves living in Ashland I am definitely opposed to changing the small town feel and the commerce that is center on the rails. With that being said I am open to progress and would hate for the trains to be a memory of yesteryear. Our rail systems do need somer eviving and if there is a way to incorporate a third rail with the required slowed speed improved crossings etc in Ashland then I am not opposed to it. I would rathet Ashland adapt and flourish then decline and cease to have a railroad.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, General Support</p>
<p>14537 7/12 Comment - Letter</p>	<p>Ms. Stock:I am writing in support of the currently delineated alternatives regarding the DRPT's high-speed rail project .I live near the current location of the Buckingham Branch line in Hanover Virginia just south of Hanover Courthouse. The use of the Buckingham Branch line was rightly rejected early on in the DC2RVA process; this route was studied and rejected because of the requirements for multiple grade crossings acquisition of land outside the right of way and engineering issues related to the curvature of the existing line in addition the environmental issues reported in the Mechanicsville Local Routing Options Narrowed. The Department clearly made the correct decision to reject this possible alternative. Please do not resurrect this bad option for high-speed rail through Hanover County. Those of us who live close to this line feel just as strongly about the potential impacts to our homes as those whose views are shouted more loudly but which are no more valid than our own. Michele Anne Gillette7479 Cady's Mill Road Hanover VA 23069</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>



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<p>14538 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>Please don't destroy our town. I say no to a thurd track.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14540 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>The eastern bypass option to reroute around Ashland is not acceptable to a significant number of families and communities that live close to the proposed route. We oppose the risk to our wetlands and Washington Lacy Park. We cannot imagine that high speed rail so close to so many homes and communities and the noise and vibration it would bring to a large population of people. We oppose the impact to route 54 and how the bypass would effectively cut off many small communities of people that have lived here for generations. We favor growth on the route 54 corridor between Ashland and Hanover. This proposed bypath route would be a significant deinsentive to that growth.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Wetlands, Biological Resources, Vibration, Noise</p>
<p>14541 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>A third rail through the town of Ashland should not be an option. It will effect the residences businesses and public buildings such as the Ashland Library.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Community Facilitates & Services</p>
<p>14546 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>Not at all in favor of a third rail in Ashland...I am a citizen of the town as well as a Randolph-Macon alumnus and now employee. There is absolutely no room for this project without completely changing the landscape of the town and R-MC campus.</p>	<p>Alignments- Ashland</p>



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<p>14547 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>To Whom it May Concern,</p> <p>My family lives right beside part of the proposed Eastern Bypass. We are very upset and disheartened that this area is even a proposal for the high speed rail at all. In our neighborhood alone, Providence, we will have something like 215 houses once we are fully built out, which will be in the next couple of years. The Eastern Bypass option to reroute these high speed trains around Ashland is not acceptable to my family nor is it acceptable to a significant number of Hanover families/communities that live close to this proposed route.</p> <p>Our family greatly opposes the risk this route would cause to the wetlands right outside our neighborhood as well as to Washington Lacy Park, which it is my understanding is on land that was given to Hanover County specifically for the purposes in which it is currently used.</p> <p>We cannot imagine that high speed rail so close to so many homes and communities is a safe alternative. Not to mention, the noise and vibration and property value reduction that this would bring to such a large population of families. Additionally, we oppose the impact this would cause on Route 54 as it would cause significant backups on Route 54 as well as possibly onto Interstate 95 for those of us who take Exit 92 towards Hanover Courthouse.</p> <p>Can you imagine being stopped on Interstate 95 because of a passing train? How dangerous! Next, the Eastern Bypass would effectively cut off many small communities of people that have lived here for generations off of Francis and Jamestown Roads. Next, Hanover Academy school would suffer a very negative impact caused by this potential route.</p> <p>Who would want their children going out to play in a school yard where 90 mph trains are passing by multiple times daily? We favor reasonable business growth on the route 54 corridor between Ashland and Hanover. This proposed high speed rail route would be a significant deinsentive to all of that potential business growth. We hope that all of these concerns are taken very seriously and into consideration regarding the proposed Eastern Bypass. Our family will be at the July 24th meeting and we want our voice heard. This option is simply not acceptable and would harm many families, taxpayers and Hanover voters.</p> <p>Thank you for listening and for considering the immediate shutting down of the proposed Eastern Route.</p>	<p>Alignments- Ashland, Vibration, Parks/Recreation, Traffic/Safety, Noise</p>
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<p>14548 7/19 Web Comment</p>	<p>My new home built only 3 years ago will be facing the eastern bypass if that is what's decided. I have 2 very young children who should not have to live within 100 yards of a lightrail. We did not sign up for city living" or additional train tracks. My entire neighborhood(Providence) is filled with young children that shouldn't be subjected to more traffic unsafe traffic possibly of transients in the neighborhood and interrupted sleep due to the noise coming from the tracks that are planned to be so close to the houses. If this is the future orn the area the Va railroad should offer to compensate the homeowners by buying the homes that are at the front of the neighborhood due to the extreme devaluing of the homes and property. If I wanted access to a light rail I woud have moved to more of a city setting not Hanover VA."</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Traffic/Safety, Noise, Real Estate</p>
<p>14550 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>The safety issue alone appears to logically prohibit a third rail. Increased train traffic along with ever increasing auto traffic is a disaster waiting to happen. What issues are preventing the use of the Buckingham rail right of way for freight and improve the two lines thru Ashland for passenger trains only. I understand that Buckingham is a private rail which could continue to operate as it does with two additional rails added for CSX up to Doswell junction Kindly let me know why this is not a option. Thank you.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety, Alternatives</p>
<p>14551 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>Please don't destroy the historic and vibrant town of Ashland with a third rail. I encourage you to consider all bypass options and the no-build option. Please reconsider all routes for eastern bypass and work with town and county to find the route least damaging to people's homes even if it means relocating a park or extra expense to build.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Displacements, Res/Comm Cost</p>



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<p>14554 7/14 Comment – Email</p>	<p>To the DC2RVA and its Leaders: Thank you for listening. As you have heard from others, the Third Rail option in Ashland is a totally unacceptable proposal, since it will -startlingly and ultimately - end the small town quality of life here. While I - and we - fully support the idea of improving the freight and passenger rail service in Virginia and America, it must not be at the expense of an entire great community. Can you imagine the quality of life here with the broad highway-like expanse of three active rails cutting the Town into two? There is a dramatic and vivid difference in the scale and activity of two rails, versus three. Please understand this. Who would live or shop or own a business on such a major industrial scale condition? I suggest that no one would. Would any of you live here under those conditions? I fully doubt it. The proximity of the new rail to the homes in the historic African American community north of the College, and to the many, many historic homes south of Downtown, and to Downtown itself must be understood by you as an unworkable situation. Automobile access cannot be developed that would actually serve the Downtown shops and the adjacent homes. This is a matter of dimension and fact. Please - please - take a very close look at the dimensions and conditions that this ungainly Third Rail would create. It is easy to see when one is paying attention Thank you again, and bless you for the mission you are on. Cordially, Robert Brown, Ashland</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Mobility, Economics</p>
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<p>14557 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am a 40 year resident of Ashland, and live in an historic home that was owned by my grandmother before me - she was the former editor of the county newspaper The Herald Progress. I have always loved the charm and unique nature of our town, with the railroad running down the center and where "the best people live on both sides of the tracks" (lyrics from a song written by my aunt. Please consider an outside bypass for your "third rail". The character of our dear town depends so much on the railroad and the vitality of the businesses "on the tracks". There are so few quaint towns left in the Washington-Richmond corridor. We value our unique nature and treasure the strength of our "small town" so close to valuable urban resources. We hope that your respect for our hometown values will prevail.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Economics</p>
<p>14558 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS Ashland is a diverse inclusive neighborhood and a rare find of a thriving Main" street with local businesses that will be totally destroyed if the third rail divides Ashland. Moreover it would put Randolph-Macon College students who cross the tracks on a regular basis with their eyes glued to their cell phones in grave danger.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>
<p>14559 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>Why would anyone destroy the amazing upbeat thriving town of Ashland so that CSX can make a buck or two?? CSX should spend a little more money and simply move the track to follow 95 or a similar route that does not do so much damage to existing businesses and private homes. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Cost</p>
<p>14560 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>This is not an appropriate use of the government's power to disrupt private livelihoods. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS The process seems to be a dishonest attempt to put money over culture safety and property rights .This is America. Move the tracks to 95.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Cost, Traffic/Safety, Cultural Resources</p>
<p>14561 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>When you do your analysis you can't quantify the devastation you will inflict on a unique community. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>



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<p>14562 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>You must find a bypass option...putting a third rail through the historic town of Ashland will destroy all of us economically culturally aesthetically. I am thinking of the entire town not only the properties adjacent to the tracks. Just the discussion is affecting our real estate market.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Aesthetics, Economics, Real Estate</p>
<p>14563 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>Please opt for the bypass - the quality of life in Ashland will suffer if a third line goes through the center of town. I grew up here and visit friends that live within one block of the railroad. I hate to think what the new traffic would bring.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>
<p>14564 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>A third rail through the town of Ashland would destroy our town. The entire character of the town would be changed forever. The safety barriers and fencing that would be required will make living by the tracks a nightmare. It would collapse the home values in the town. You need to choose a bypass route. SAVE OUR TOWN!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety, Real Estate</p>
<p>14565 7/20 Web Comment</p>	<p>This third rail will destroy the beauty businesses and history of our town. My first choice is no rail at all. My second is a bypass that reconnects miles from Ashland.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>



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<p>14567 7/21 Web Comment</p>	<p>Please find a by-pass around Ashland for high-speed rail. During the last meeting I was disturbed by the process that the staff/committee used for the 4 options that continue to be considered. Simulations? The technology does not do justice to the complicated impact of a 3rd rail through Ashland. And when the response to a concern raised about the impact for homes and businesses who do not live on a corner (on the east side of the track) the speaker said casually "We will buy the houses!" The lack of understanding and the lack of empathy displayed by the speakers concerning the impact of such destruction to the people, the homes, the businesses, the college, the culture, the community, the very character of Ashland was disturbing. We invite people making such recommendations to spend time in greater Ashland to understand the destruction that a third rail would cause for reasons that have never been justified and/or explained adequately. And the reasons given not to consider the eastern by-pass were also obviously not considered adequately. A park that consists of a picnic table and some horse trails (both of which could be moved somewhere else in our rural county) was used as justification for eliminating that eastern option. And historical buildings were also mentioned as a reason for eliminating the eastern by-pass. Has the committee considered the huge Historic District throughout Ashland? The oldest Methodist college in the country? The large number of lovely historic homes and businesses that are still thriving because the owners have continued to care and invest in them for many many years--contributing to the beauty, charm, economic value, and culture of greater Ashland. Please figure out a by-pass for the high speed rail. Thank you."</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Historic Resources, Public Involvement</p>
<p>14568 7/21 Web Comment</p>	<p>Don't ruin our town ! I have lived here for 75 years and a third rail would devastate this town. There is no room for it here through the middle of town. Property values would go down, businesses would close. The spirit of the town would be broken. PLEASE don't do this to us. The ONLY solution is a western bypass!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Real Estate</p>



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<p>14569 7/21 Web Comment</p>	<p>I live on Blunts Bridge Road and have for more than 39 years. While none of the current alternates cross our property the western bypass would cross Blunts Bridge Road within a quarter mile of us near Cross Corner Road. The western bypass alternate for this section of the project would entail the taking of multiple homes and multiple Century Farms. For those unfamiliar with Century Farms it is a national program sponsored by the U.S. Dept. Agriculture in all 50 states. In Virginia it is administered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture Office of Farmland Preservation. To be certified as a Century Farm a farm must have been owned by the same family for a minimum of 100 consecutive years be lived on or farmed by a descendant of the original owner and gross over \$2500 annually from the sale of farm products. To move to the west and build TWO tracks on new location taking multiple homes and prime farmland: four of which are certified as Century Farms and two others that I know could qualify but all of which would suffer major takes total destruction or severe impacts would be nothing less than the rape of agricultural and timber production in this portion of Hanover County. Therefore I believe the most prudent and feasible alternative for this section of the project is to utilize the existing tracks in Ashland and either tunnel add ONE track or adjust three tracks slightly to the center. This is a straight line with little or no grade and the impact" is already there with the two existing tracks. For years the Town has loved the train and even capitalized and benefitted from their beloved train town and their annual Train Day and hopefully this could be accomplished in such a way as to allow us all to still enjoy the train.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Farmland, Alternatives</p>
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<p>14570 7/21 Web Comment</p>	<p>You must choose a by-pass! A third rail through the town of Ashland will destroy the town. Unlike most communities where the railroad tracks run around the outskirts of town the railroad goes right through the center of the Town of Ashland and lends charm to our vibrant small-town. Ashland's Main Street" is on either side of the railroad tracks. Our most beautiful historic home directly face the railroad tracks. Randolph-Macon College's historic campus is built directly adjacent to the railroad tracks. There is no additional space for a third rail on the existing tracks. Forcing a third track through town would annihilate the street on one side of the tracks resulting in businesses going out of business. In addition the resulting amount of rail traffic would make it nearly impossible for cars to cross the tracks in town. Already there is so much train traffic that cars routinely back up nearly to the town's borders in both directions when CSX trains move through town. The addition of a third line would increase the rail traffic to the point that moving across town would be very difficult much of the time. There must be a by-pass around town. DC2RVA would kill the Town of Ashland if it proceeds with adding another line through town. VOTE BYPASS. Thank you.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Historic Resources, Traffic/Safety, Mobility</p>
<p>14571 7/21 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am opposed to a bypass known as The Western Bypass in Hanover County. This is a costly project that has not been projected correctly until recently. It was proposed by people who do not live in this area and the people of this area had no voice in its initial presentation of this recommendation. Many natural areas Century Farms and families will be impacted at a great cost to the taxpayer for CSX and Amtrak. It is a project that will be obsolete before it is completed. Though I know most will not care that I say this but The Western Bypass along Independence Road has been owned by the same families since the 1700's. Please look at Hanover County records and note The Cross Family name. The descendants of these folks do not carry the Cross name but they are still there. We are Hanover County and Ashland . Please hear our voices. I am a direct descendent as many others in this area who oppose a Western Bypass. Ruth S. Wright</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Displacements Res/Comm, Farmland</p>



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<p>14572 7/21 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am an owner of property that based on current maps conveniently falls directly in the path of the proposed western bypass around the town of Ashland. I stand with my wife and our neighbors in expressing my displeasure over this proposal. Despite the ongoing series of community meetings that are being held to discuss options" it is my belief that this project will ultimately move forward at the whim and guidance of CSX. This project represents the collaboration of three entities whose management groups have their eye on the prize regardless of community input. There will be no new high speed trains and new passenger cars. Simply put the existing worn and aged Amtrak engines will shift from fourth gear to fifth gear. This project is being railroaded by the CSX corporation and is predominately based on increased freight in the northeast corridor under the guise of high speed rail improvements despite the claims by CSX that they have sufficient rail service for their needs. For DRPT the issue with regard to the town of Ashland is the perfect scenario. You have a town that is divided both internally and externally against the surrounding communities. The town leadership's goal is to appear to have driven out the big bad railroad and pushed it out to the surrounding countryside while preserving a small town presence that has not actually existed since the 1950's. Other parts of the town maintain a steadfast intolerance of the local college for fear that it might increase it's footprint however in this case the town stands with the college. Finally you have input from a group (Virginians for High Speed Rail) whose knowledge of rail transportation comes from Internet searches and stop watch verification's of the time it presently takes to travel to Washington where they can attend functions that are far more important to them than are the rights of local property owners. DRPT was very lucky in the early stages of this project by gaining the unwavering support of the Virginians for High Speed Rail a group whose only stake in this effort is to shave fifteen minutes off of their travel time. I would have a much better opinion of this project and a better understanding of the impact to my individual property and that of my neighbors if the High Speed Freight project were managed by competent and honest agencies. Our neighbors are not blind to the efforts of DRPT and CSX with regard to the western bypass. What I find to be the most disturbing is that DRPT and CSX leadership both believe that they are so talented careful and shrewd with regard to this project that they can appease the community with the ongoing "I hear you" meetings while proceeding with property valuations at the Hanover courthouse and engineering plans based on the overhead track work that will be required for the western bypass route to take</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Public Involvement</p>
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	shape. Not only will our property be stolen by this project under the auspices of the court system and eminent domain but local taxpayers will ultimately have to pay the price for this failed attempt at improving the rail infrastructure in the north east corridor. Honesty in leadership goes a long way in keeping communities informed.	
14573 7/21 Web Comment	I live in Ashland VA and I do not support a third rail. I would prefer an Eastern bypass if possible but feel a 3rd rail would decimate our historic downtown.	Alignments-Ashland
14574 7/21 Web Comment	A third rail through this wonderful town would be devastating on so many levels. Please exhaust all possibilities of utilizing an underground tunnel .	Alignments-Ashland
14575 7/21 Web Comment	I am not available to attend the meeting on July 24. However as I have previously commented (more than a year ago) a third rail through the center of Ashland would destroy the heart of our town both residences and businesses and would have the effect of cutting many homes from frontal access and/or you would have to purchase and destroy those houses. I am in favor of a bypass to Ashland town center if indeed it is necessary to proceed with any update of the rail lines	Alignments-Ashland, Displacements Res/Comm



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<p>14577 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>As a former Ashland resident and the son brother grandson and nephew of family who live near the railroad tracks adding a 3rd rail is a horrible idea. Enough with the expansion of industry and subsequent environmental problems that would come with this project. Not only would this beautiful historic town be altered but the traffic would be unbearable waiting for train after train to pass through. The pollution would be suffocating and with more train traffic the likelihood of an accident would increase which creates a safety issue for residents of the town and those on the train. Why doesn't this committee consult with Elon Musk / Silicon Valley types and hack a new way to solve whatever problem exists without sending a wrecking ball through a small town? There are always better ways to solve problems (unless it's for political purposes or flat out greed) and I hope you reconsider this project and the implications of it to the community. Find a better solution! Thanks for your consideration. As a former Ashland resident and the son brother grandson and nephew of family who live near the railroad tracks adding a 3rd rail is a horrible idea. Enough with the expansion of industry and subsequent environmental problems that would come with this project. Not only would this beautiful historic town be altered but the traffic would be unbearable waiting for train after train to pass through. The pollution would be suffocating and with more train traffic the likelihood of an accident would increase which creates a safety issue for residents of the town and those on the train. Why doesn't this committee consult with Elon Musk / Silicon Valley types and hack a new way to solve whatever problem exists without sending a wrecking ball through a small town? There are always better ways to solve problems (unless it's for political purposes or flat out greed) and I hope you reconsider this project and the implications of it to the community. Find a better solution! Thanks for your consideration.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Air Quality, Traffic/Safety</p>
<p>14578 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>Vote NO to Third Rail through Ashland VA! It would be a real pity to destroy the beauty charm and ambiance of this quaint and unusual community. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>



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14579 7/22 Web Comment	Don't destroy the history and the family-friendly aspects of this town. If you must do something go with the bypass.	Alignments-Ashland
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Web
Comment

I've been researching best practices for Environmental Impact Assessments. The more I read the more I am amazed that the 3rd rail through Ashland proposal was not eliminate dearly on in the process. The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) defines an environmental impact assessment as the process of identifying predicting evaluating and mitigating the biophysical social and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made" (From "Principle of Environmental Impact Assessment Best Practice" . International Association for Impact Assessment. 1999.) Also the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility takes into account the spirit of the law. It has a triple bottom line: Social Economic and Environmental. It includes full cost accounting. I don't see that happening here. The example given in the article I read was this: if a corporation shows a monetary profit but their asbestos mine causes thousands of deaths from asbestosis and their copper mine pollutes a river and the government ends up spending taxpayer money on health care and river clean-up how do we perform a full societal cost benefit analysis? In our case the FRA the corporation in this case decides they cannot afford to go around Ashland using Buckingham Branch right of way or go down I-95 so they must put a third rail through Ashland. But a third rail through Ashland even if they don't have to demolish historic buildings which we think they will would require fences going down Center Street effectively separating east part of town and college from the west. They've been talking about making two small traveling lanes for cars and a tiny 3-foot sidewalk for pedestrians at least on the east side of the tracks if not both and no on-street parking so the downtown businesses would be effectively shut off from commerce. Given the FRA rules we think that it will entail cutting into some buildings like Cross Brothers and some of the residences on Center Street.(DC2RVA refuses to admit that but they also admit that those are engineering studies that will only be done after the decision is made.) RMC campus would also be cut in two. So the impact on Ashland of a third rail through town is that it severely hurts RMC and may put it out of business the downtown businesses go bankrupt and the business and residential real estate market in the town crashes then the town and county government lose revenue and become distressed local governments like Petersburg VA or Detroit MI. The community disintegrates and Ashland loses its community spirit and identity crime rises because the local government does not have the where with all to combat poverty and crime. Its a death spiral. In fact the real estate on Center Street has already been affected just from the

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	<p>discussion of the possibility of a third rail. Residential buyers have been reluctant to put a contract on a historic dwelling along the tracks and businesses are reluctant to relocate here. So it is starting already .In one article that I read the author states: The indirect effects of development can be much higher than the direct effects examined by an EIA. Proposals such as airports or shipyards cause wide-ranging national and international effects which should be covered in EIAs. From Shepherd A.; Ortolano L. (1996). "Strategic environmental assessment for sustainable urban development". Environmental Impact Assessment Review. Elsevier. 16 (4-6): 321-335His examples included airports and shipyards which can have wide-ranging side effects that cover more than just the land being developed and he says that those effects of development should be examined by an EIA. What we are talking about in Ashland is the indirect affect of changing the track right of way down the middle of Ashland. Yes you may not be touching the buildings but you are touching the way they are used rendering them unusable and you are touching the social importance of that area the historic nature of the groupings of the buildings changing the interaction of the community with that area. In fact you are destroying the area which is the heart of the town the pride of the town and the economic driver of the town. Those impacts should be part of DC2RVA's deliberations and they are not. Also I might add we've looked at the FRA guidelines and we think that some of the historic buildings both business and residences will have to be demolished. Please consider all of the social environmental and economic impacts of a third rail through Ashland not just the cost of buying rights of way and laying tracks. Please find an alternative route that has less overall impact such as tunneling under I-95 or using a version of the eastern bypass. Please take the Ashland route off the drawing board</p>	
<p>14581 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>I lived in Ashland for 10 years and pastored Ashland Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A third rail would destroy the town and be a safety hazard. Please vote NO!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>



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<p>14582 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>How can you even think about destroying a town ??! Going through farmland with few homes affected is one thing but to destroy homes businesses and a college by running through the middle of Ashland is another matter. There is also history home life and the character of the town at stake. For those of us who have lived here all of our lives this is an outrage.... Please do not put a 3rd rail through Ashland and destroy what has taken decades to build !!!!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Cultural Resources, Farmland</p>
<p>14583 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am an Ashland resident and strongly oppose a third rail through Ashland. First a third rail would in a short time destroy several businesses on Center Street simply because it would make access to the businesses inconvenient to patrons would make unattractive what is now a very attractive historic small town USA area that draws tourists and shoppers and would cause traffic congestion at the intersection of Hwy 54 and CenterSt. It appears obvious to me that this would greatly decrease the number of shoppers and visitors to the center of town. The destruction of those businesses on Center St would just be the beginning as the decrease in tourists and shoppers visiting Center St would have a ripple effect on businesses in the surrounding area. Second a third rail would greatly reduce the property value of old historic houses on CenterSt houses which help make the town a special attraction. While the third rail would not destroy all these houses it would severely decrease the utility of them. Building an access road to the rear of these homes is highly undesirable " who wants people driving up to their back door? The property devaluation like the loss of business would also soon spread to nearby neighborhoods. Third the decrease in property value and in commerce would greatly reduce the tax base upon which Ashland and Hanover County depend. This would in turn cause deterioration in infrastructure schools medical and other facilities. Before long the town would be a shell of itself with buildings and houses and citizens disappearing. Therefore YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS else Ashland will be destroyed with undesired ramifications not only to Ashland but to Hanover County and indeed central Virginia. Certainly a Bypass would have less impact on the economy and upon the number of people and businesses. Thank you for your consideration.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Economics, Real Estate, Property Access</p>



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<p>14584 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>Ashland has been my home since 1975 and the charm character history and ambiance of the Town including its businesses historic homes and college would be irreparably damaged by putting a third high speed rail line through the Town. I understand the Eastern and Western proposals are objected to by the people affected by each. However the most damaging route by far would be through the Town. Actually for the cost and advantage of approximately 20 minutes to Wash. D.C. as I understand it this seems a foolish project and an extravagant expenditure of public funds. There are far better public expenditures than this venture. Therefore please abandon your center of Ashland route option for this 3rd rail. Thank you.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Cost, General Opposition</p>
<p>14585 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>There probably isn't anything that I might say that hasn't already been said but having been a resident of Ashland for the past 20 years I certainly do not want my town destroyed nor my property nor the inheritance of my children. This may sound as if I am a "selfie" person of the now generation but I am retired and do not have much future elsewhere. This is a unique community that comes together to make it a better place to raise a family own a business and one can't keep starting over to make another community the likes of what we have here. As in most small towns the people work hard to sustain a lifestyle and move it forward to meet the needs of its people and the time. To have it destroyed would be shameful. We are in prayerful hope that you would choose a bypass route and not cause the destruction of a town and its culture.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Displacements Res/Comm</p>



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<p>14586 7/22 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am a resident of Ashland and have some questions about the third rail. In the meeting CAC meeting on 2 June I repeatedly heard concerns about possible damage to endangered species and wetlands. In the EIS was any consideration given to populace considerations? Seems to me from the discussion that the DRPT is giving more consideration to POSSIBLE species and wetland damage than to CERTAIN populace and economic damage. In the EIS is any consideration given to the economic destruction that would occur to Ashland and the damage to Hanover County if a third rail is built through Ashland? It appears to me from the statements in the meeting that the staff is letting questionable wetlands damage and one historic structure in Doswell take precedence over the destruction of a larger economic entity and populace – the Town of Ashland. I live on Center St and see many AMTRAK trains pass by and most appear to be nearly empty. If that is true then why is it so important to add 9 trains per day even if ridership increases ten-fold? It appeared in the CAC meeting on 2 Jun that the process being followed by the DRPT is highly bureaucratic and inflexible certainly in regards to the 4f considerations. It appeared tome that your staff is more concerned about following a process with form over substance little if any concern for the residents of Ashland and that there is very little effort if any being made to critical thinking and innovative solutions. I am still at a loss to understand why the Buckingham and Wye options are not being carried forward. I have not read any report that backs up the staff claim that these options are not feasible or that they would be too expensive. All I have read are statements that this is so but no facts to back it up. Again it appears from the lack of information that the staff is more concerned with POSSIBLE wetland and specie damage than to CERTAIN economic and cultural damage to Ashland and Hanover County. I implore the staff to be more open to be less bureaucratic and less concerned about form than substance and to please please CHOOSE A BYPASS that would impact less people and have less economic impact than would a third rail through Ashland.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Wetlands, Biological Resources, Economics, EIS Process</p>
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<p>14587 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>There is talk of a third rail through the middle of Ashland which would condemn every property on the East side of Center street without an outlet. It would bring the train incredibly close to many of the houses that remain condemning them too unless they can beset back. It would close the town crossovers and place a 12 foot high fence on either side to meet safety standards which if mischievous teenagers have their way will be graffiti filled within a few years. You may know our houses on Center Street last year we hosted Halloween again with over750 kids coming to our doors. You may have taken the kids to Train Day and parked beside our houses. If you take the train from Richmond to New York there is no comparable place like Ashland. Next to the track houses from the 1850's and later look out on the train at a very short distance. This historic area will be lost if another track comes through Ashland. The people of Ashland do not want the train to come through the surrounding farmlands but if a line must come then it has to be a bypass. Otherwise the destruction is for nothing because trains will still have to slow through Ashland the bottleneck will remain. In the last meeting the bypass was shown as a shared burden two tracks would remain through Ashland and two tracks bypass it. Ashland stops being a bottleneck for freight and Amtrak that way. For the citizens of Hanover a bypass makes the most common sense</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>
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<p>14588 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>As I sit down to write a comment for the committee this morning I cannot even think of words persuasive enough to beseech you not to destroy our town. I can only say that it is a town worthy of saving...Ashland is a town where people of all races and nationalities live together in harmony and genuinely care about their neighbors and community. They deliver meals to the elderly and sick they volunteer in their schools they engage children in healthy outdoor sports they have local food banks and community run programs for those less fortunate they provide programs at the local library for all ages they have a 100 year old grocery store where you can still sign a ticket for your groceries and that still delivers to shut ins they actually know their neighbors and their families by name they have strong churches of all faiths they honor and preserve the history of our town and the significance it has played in different arenas they provide programs for children emphasizing the arts at the 100+ year old historic community center they organize parades and variety shows where family members of all ages can participate together they sit on their porches in the evenings and visit. It is a place that provides peace tranquility and a sense of security for its residents. It is a place where children can still ride their bikes and play in the neighborhood without fear. If the third rail comes through town the unity of the town will be destroyed. Neighbors will no longer be able to cross the tracks. The beauty of the town will be desecrated. We will lose our historic train station. Our businesses will close. People's livelihoods will cease to exist. All this to cut 15 minutes off passenger travel. Is not a better option to let CSX move their freight on the existing Buckingham branch? As a Center Street resident who will be displaced with no access I cannot bear the thought of losing my home. However it is not about me and my family. It is about the good of our "home town". In the divided nation in which we live today should we not be trying top reserve small town America and embrace the wholesome values it represents rather than destroying it? YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS. Ashland is a town worthy of saving</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Community Facilitates & Services, Displacements Res/Comm, Property Access</p>
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<p>14589 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>Does spending billions of dollars along with the associated destruction of our thriving town of Ashland justify the minor gains that this project offers? It concerns me that:-more hazardous materials will be carried through the town of Ashland exposing a significant population to horrendous dangers!-more trains = more accidents more traffic longer waits for rescue personnel to cross tracks.-historical buildings homes a college campus and the culture of a town will be destroyed.-public funds will be used to finance a private business (CSX).-despite all the money time and other fallout from this decision ONLY 15 to 20 minutes travel time will be saved! Vote NO to a third rail through Ashland VA! Thank you! Sandra Lynne</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Cost, HazWaste Transport, Traffic/Safety, Historic Resources, Funding, Purpose and Need</p>
<p>14590 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>I soon turn 95. Five generations of my family call Ashland home.Please give future generations the same privilege by voting NO to a third rail through Ashland Virginia. Thank you. Marcyne Jones</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>

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<p>14591 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>The introduction of a third rail through the town of Ashland will have a devastating and potentially deadly effect on the lives of its citizens visitors and travelers on nearby roads. First responders (Police Fire and EMS personnel) provide vital services to the people of Ashland and surrounding areas. Currently they are often challenged to respond in an expedient manner because of the frequency and length of CSX freight trains through the town. Waiting for a 2-mile long train traveling 35 mph to clear one of the town’s at-grade crossings can take upwards of 3 ½ minutes. If another train happens to be passing in the opposite direction the length of time to traverse the crossing and respond to an emergency could almost double. Additionally discussions about potentially closing some of the on grade crossings in Ashland could increase response times even further. In a situation where seconds literally mean the difference between life and death the addition of a third rail and the potential for 3 trains to be passing through town at the same time creates a condition where our first responders will be further delayed from arriving at an emergency scene quickly leading to increases in property losses serious injuries or loss of life. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) issued NFPA 1710 a standard that sets minimum criteria for the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency operations to protect the safety of the Public and Fire Department employees. By responding quickly to a fire a small incident will remain small. When responses take more than a few minutes losses escalate substantially resulting in a greater loss of life and property. A requirement of NFPA 1710states that Fire Fighters will arrive at the emergency scene within 4 minutes of the dispatch center receiving the call. Current conditions push the limit of this standard and the addition of a third rail exacerbates an already difficult situation. Three research papers on the subject of EMS response times and patient mortality are Blackwell and Kaufman (2002) Pons et al. (2005) and Blanchard et al. (2012).They all agree that time reductions affecting the initial response time window have the greatest influence on mortality. Pons states that a survival benefit was identified for response times =< 4 mins which Blackwell adds to by saying mortality risk appeared sensitive to response times less than 5 minutes. The Blanchard paper emphasizes the importance of rapid response times for high-risk patients. All three of these authors found that the first few minutes (4- 5 minutes) have a significant impact on mortality. Their studies conclude that there is a positive correlation between response times and mortality rates. You must select a Bypass Option to allow our first responders to continue to protect the lives and property of the</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>
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citizens of Ashland and the surrounding areas visitors to the town and travelers on nearby roadways. When waiting for a first responder minutes can feel like hours. Adding even a few minutes to the response time can be life-changing or life-ending. A third track through Ashland may impact a family forever.1Pons et al. "Paramedic Response Time: Does It Affect Patient Survival?" pg. 597 2005 Quantifying the Impact of Emergency Response Times2Blackwell and Kaufman "Response Time Effectiveness: Comparison of Response Time and Survival in an Urban Emergency Medical Services System" pg. 293 20023Blanchard et al. "Emergency Medical Services Response Time and Mortality in an Urban Setting" pg. 142 201

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<p>14592 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>The high speed rail project is governed by Federal regulations that prohibit the acquisition of public parks for transportation projects. At the most recent meeting a country administrator said that if necessary the park could be moved somehow. "Washington Lacy was the 17th child born to two slaves who toiled on the Gregory Sheep Plantation which according to Hanover County Recreation and Parks was located 150yards from the present day park. (I'm not sure of the exact location). Washington rose from slavery to eventually purchase ten acres of land and his sister purchased twenty-six acres on which to raise horses. That parcel of land comprises part of the park that is named to honor him and his descendants populate the small close knit African American community along Jamestown Road which intersects with Woodside Lane in the park. He was an avid horseman as was his eldest son Franklin Louis Lacy. Both were sportsman and hunters. Franklin left the farm to seek his fortune in the Washington DC area joining the Navy and serving as a chauffeur. At the outbreak of WWII he enlisted in the Army's 10th Cavalry. He served with distinction as one of the famed Buffalo Soldiers. At war's end he was hired by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an analyst. While living in the Washington area he met his wife Arbutus and after his retirement the couple returned to the family farm in Ashland where he worked as a gemologist for the former Best Products Company. Franklin served as a deacon in the historic Providence Church for while the subdivision is named. Artubus preceded her husband in death in 2012.The Lacys and their neighbors along Jamestown Road have used Woodside Lane to reach their church for generations. Constructing a railroad across that road would isolate this small African American enclave from the outside except for the bridge across I-95 and destroy their property values and their way of life. Prior to their passing Washington Lacy park was nominated by the country to receive recognition and a medal for its unique qualities as a public recreation facility with horse trails--the same trails laid out and used by Washington Lacy and his family. Although it did not win the award Washington Lacy Park is a treasure that is dear to Hanoverians who bring their horses there to enjoy what the park offers.*It may be possible to move the park but impossible to move the legacy of Washington Lacy. From The Ashland Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2017After many discussions about guiding objectives the Parks and Recreation Committee came a consensus that they would like every Ashland resident to live within a 10-minute walk fan Ashland park facility.*Eliminating Washington Lacy Park will remove this ability for several communities around Woodside and Jamestown Road.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Parks/Recreation, Historic Resources</p>
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	<p>According to the Planning District Commission Washington Lacy Park is also a regional park. Regional Parks are intended to draw users from multiple communities and offer unique recreational opportunities that draw from a larger population base. Hanover€™s Washington Lacy Park is an example of a regional park.*Eliminating Washington Lacy Park would affect more than just local residents but also Virginia residents throughout the region."</p>	
<p>14593 7/23 Web Comment</p>	<p>My family has owned Cross Mill Gallery since 1966 [there had been grist mill on the site for over a 100 years]. It makes absolutely no sense to ruin the land streams and ponds [not to count waste the enormous amounts of money] to construct the western bypass. Thank you!...David Camden</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Water Resources, Cost</p>
<p>14594 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>As the sitting President of The United States has requested cuts to major Amtrak services who continue to loose money due to low rider ship it is great to see you still plowing ahead spending tax payers money on this slow speed rail project. The log jam you have created in the town of Ashland has neighbors fighting against neighbors with the outcome the same. Nobody wants this overpriced crap. While clearly money is no object concerning this project and since you have none why not consider a tunnel under Ashland to try to respond to all concerns by the people affected by this project both in town as well as outside of town. How much more could it possibility cost. The sky is clearly the limit on this so why not shoot for the stars. A tunnel stays within the existing CSX right of way and the project now encumbers little to no land which is the major point of contention by people both in town as well as outside of town. Businesses and parking could remain the same and the town would not be cut in half by any fencing. The bypass is a no go for the very same reasons you disqualified the eastern route some 5 years ago. Grade issues environmental historic etc all exist if you go west. The entire 123 mile section less Ashland has all been approved within the existing CSX right of way. Do the study on a tunnel and keep the tracks where they belong</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Ridership, Cost, Funding, Alternatives</p>



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<p>14595 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>If a third rail is added in Ashland VA alongside current two tracks historical downtown core would be devastated and it would have significant financial impact on the town. I also don't think enough marketing research has been done on passenger demand for this service. US citizens are addicted to their cars. Just adding a third rail with somewhat faster service is no guarantee for a significant increase in demand. Rail ticket prices are on par with air prices. You would need to subsidize passenger prices more than now to increase demand. Increased supply (even if it is slightly faster) is not enough to justify the cost of a third rail.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Economics, Ridership, Revenue</p>
<p>14596 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Ashland has a wonderful library on the tracks; a busy arts and activities center on the tracks; a college on the tracks; thriving businesses and restaurants on the tracks; beautiful Victorian houses on the tracks; and most importantly residents who live work and shop safely on the tracks. Ashland is truly the quintessential American small town. A third rail would surely ensure the destruction of the safety and character of our wonderful one of a kind hometown. We cannot allow this to happen. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Community Facilitates & Services</p>
<p>14597 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Please don't destroy our beautiful town by adding a third rail in the center of town. Any third rail in town would destroy our history businesses and homes and would be a great economic impact on this beautiful place. You must choose a bypass!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Economics</p>
<p>14598 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Having the Third Rail go through downtown Ashland would be a disaster to the town of Ashland: the businesses the homes Randolph-Macon College and all of Ashland. You must find a by-pass!!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14599 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>With a third rail Ashland's business will suffer; the safety of our citizens will become a major issue; and the character of this wonderful town will be in jeopardy. You must put a stop to this totally destructive proposal. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>



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<p>14600 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>I vote no to the 3rd rail going through downtown Ashland. I vote to bypass the town of Ashland.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14601 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Generations of Ashlanders have loved the railroad and the trains that run through our town. Even passengers passing through our town know that Ashland is a special place. It is the Center of the Universe to those of us who live and work here. A third rail running through the center of our historic businesses would ruin the experience of visitors and would ruin our livelihoods. Shoppers come to our businesses because Ashland is a place like no other we have been successful on Railroad Ave for 35 years. Please don't destroy the town that we and so many others love .Ashland is irreplaceable there has to be another way to move the freight without destroying this one-of-a-kind place</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Community Facilitates & Services</p>
<p>14602 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Putting a high speed rail\ 3rd rail through the center of Ashland would sever the main Artery of the town. The business along the tracks would lose all of the business from foot traffic which would be about 50% of may daily food sales. Ashland as been sought out for being used in movies and commercials. We have had many politicians travel through this beautiful town did you ever ask yourself WHY?" We have small town charm that has remained throughout the years we DO NOT what to have an "industrial feel" in the center of our beautiful town. We want to preserve it continue to make a place where families can visit days can be spent walking around the town and parks. Ashland has something special different from other small towns and we need to keep it that way. I have lived in this town my whole life I have seen things come and go. I have seen the vast improvements to center street. I am very proud to own a business in this town. The third rail would destroy all that we have worked for to make Ashland the great town that it is. I am not ready to give that up and I hope that the other people in this town feel the same. Again we do not need to sever the main artery of Ashland to save commuters approximately 20 minutes.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Economics</p>



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<p>14604 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>There is no need for a bypass especially one that would destroy parks and wetlands. Whenever more capacity is needed on roadways we simply expand the roadways (very rarely do we make greenfield roadways) to add the capacity by adding more lanes. The same logic should be applied for the railroads.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Wetlands, Parks/Recreation, Capacity</p>
<p>14605 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>My dad's entire family grew up in Ashland. His dad my grandfather was the mayor for a time. He would not be happy to know that THE center of the universe could be impacted by a third rail. It's absolutely unacceptable and takes away from Ashland's picturesque and unique appeal. You must choose a bypass if this thing is to actually exist. And if it does and isn't rerouted it will bring market values down congestion up and shame upon the builders of this railroad.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Real Estate, Traffic/Safety</p>
<p>14606 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>It would be irresponsible to effectively destroy" the Town of Ashland and the Randolph-Macon campus when there are better options available. The eastern bypass option would seem to make the most sense."</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14607 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Vote- no third rail in ashland</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14608 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>No Third Rail. Absolutely not in favor of an additional track in Town Western or Eastern bypass. Why should the residents and business owners pay the price because CSX wants to save as much money possible on THEIR project? Option 1. Prefer running a rail down I-95 between North & South Lanes constructed at same time as express lane expansion. Shared expense of Express Lanes and Tracks should help with expense. Option 2. Tunnel under Ashland I am sure these 2 options are not the most cost effective options however they have the least impact on our community. We have the most to lose and CSX has the most to gain. Why shouldn't CSX bear the burden of the expense. Mac McManus</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Ownership/Trackage Rights, Alternatives, Cost</p>



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<p>14609 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Vote No to a 3rd rail through Ashland Va. you can not consider having a 3rd rail go through this special historic small town. It would destroy Ashland to have a third rail. You must perseve this town.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14610 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>Please Vote NO. The Town will be destroyed! Please csse a bypass!!!</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14611 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>It would be a travesty to destroy historic downtown Ashland. A better route would be east of town using CSX property (formerly C& O).</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, ROW</p>
<p>14612 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS!! No third rail. Please dont destroy our beautiful historic town.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland</p>
<p>14613 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS! Ashland cannot handle a third rail. It will be too dangerous for our small town and traffic we already have. Please reconsider this option and listen to our town residents. Thank you.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Traffic/Safety</p>



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<p>14614 7/24 Web Comment</p>	<p>My name is Mitchell Goldstein. I live in the Providence Subdivision on Woodside Lane and am here to speak about the Eastern Bypass option being proposed by this Committee and Hanover County. Until recently I have been silent because the proposals involved another track through the Town of Ashland or a Western Bypass. While I am concerned how the rail will affect the area I watched and listened and learned. I live in an area surrounded by protected lands those being wetlands and a park. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that an Eastern Bypass running through that park and across those wetlands was being considered. Even worse it was proposed by the very people who are charged with being stewards of those lands for the common good of the people of Hanover. Still worse one of those people is supposed to represent us in the County. It gets even worse. No one bothered communicating this proposal to the residents that would be affected by it. We had to find out from social media and the local newspapers. Clearly it's not well known or else a recent Richmond Magazine article would have mentioned an Eastern Bypass when discussing the rail. Contrary to what's been written in the Herald-Progress such a bypass would have a great effect on homes and families. It would affect hundreds of homes and families upwards of 400-500 including newer communities like Providence and Woodside Estates where Hanover County is still granting building permits and older and in some cases historic communities like those on Frances Road Lacy Drive Jamestown Road Woodside Lane and Providence Church Road. Consider this: an Eastern Bypass would Disrupt cultural resources such as the historic Jamestown and Providence Church communities and Washington Lacy Park; Destroy natural resources including wetlands wildlife and Washington Lacy Park a multiuse park for hiking biking and horseback riding a park that comprises what the original survey or called a substantial amount of environmentally sensitive areas; and Come with significant infrastructure costs as it would have to cross I-95 twice as well as Routes 54 and 1. We may have been silent up until now but no longer. The people East of I-95 have come together to save our communities and our cultural and natural resources. We have seen that not only are we not represented on this committee but we don't seem to be represented by anyone in the County either. Remember this: Trees and Trails not Tracks and Trains. Save our Wetlands Wildlife and Communities. Thank you</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Biological Resources, Parks/Recreation, Public Involvement, Wetlands, Cultural Resources</p>
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<p>14616 7/25 Web Comment</p>	<p>As a Hanover County resident for 20 years and an Ashland VA resident for 10 years I vehemently oppose the proposed eastern bypass" options. My family recently moved to our dream house and dream community in Woodside Estates the fastest growing community in all of Hanover County. Hundreds of families live in this immediate area. The combined real estate value in this development Providence and the homes along Woodside Lane and Jamestown Rd. represent upwards of \$145 million. The eastern bypass would literally stop that tremendous growth in its tracks and immediately devalue our investments in the county and town affecting property values and tax income. Understanding the no new "at-grade" crossings means that we would have the equivalent of the Great Wall of China running just yards from our home to accommodate an elevated rail line as it crossed I-95 and Rte 1 multiple times. The noise and aesthetics associated with this project would destroy these communities. In addition Washington Lacy Park which has significant historic roots and the wetlands around it would be decimated. What a terrible social and environmental effect that would be! No eastern bypass!"</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Real Estate, Aesthetics, Noise, Parks/Recreation, Historic Resources</p>
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<p>14620 7/24 Comment -</p>	<p>I'm sending this letter I wrote on 6/30/17. Please add it to your collection. The whole issue needs to be reevaluated in present day context not in pre 2010 terms. The viability of a whole town is at stake. Is it all really necessary?</p> <p>Hill Carter Jr.Sent from AOL Mobile Mail Get the new AOL app: mail.mobile.aol.comOn Friday June 30 2017 Hill Carter <hill.carter@aol.com> wrote</p> <p>:Jim if you Could pass this on to Kristen Reihl</p> <p>.Jim Cox has sent me some info on the meeting at RMC about the rapid rail.</p> <p>Some thoughts:I am in favor of using the existing right of way for the Piedmont division of CSX now leased by Buckingham Branch Railroad. Back in the winter I expressed this in a letter to the head of the Dept of Transportation of VA Sterling Reeves and Sheila Thopkins. Owing a farm that is bisected by BBR I would be fine with their use of existing ROW and selling more for them to expand to double track. I have since talked to the Wickam's and Todd Rogers and they are willing for the high speed rail to be on the BBR that borders on their property. That is about 3 miles of track. It makes perfect sense to go straight from Doswell to Main Street Station and use existing ROW.CSX could then easily have its double track. Doswell can easily be bypassed without damage to their downtown". What parks would be damaged and how big are they? What historic structures are at risk? And are they any more or less important than the entire town of Ashland? Environmental sensitivities? Give me a break. That is a non issue as evidenced by all the new construction going on in this state (and the entire country). There are many new technologies for preservation of swamps etc. as well as mitigation trades. It is done all the time. This group of people with their leader looked at BBR 16 years ago and closed their minds to that route. They need to be MADE to reevaluate it with the destruction of an historic town kept in mind and formally state their reasons for their choice not some vague "well it just won't work" as was told to me at the Patrik Henry meeting. The Town of Ashland has voted heavily Democratic for years. It is time to call in markers and get the heavy hitters in politics to get the Governor of Va involved. If they can build a tunnel under the English Channel</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Historic Resources, Parks/Recreation</p>
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	<p>through the Alps and through miles of Italian mountains they can build a cut starting in Elmont slowly grade it down have a short tunnel under Ashland and slowly grade it back up via a cut north of Ashland. Just some thoughts. Please pass this on to Jim Foley and anyone else you want. Good luck. Hill.</p>	
<p>14621 7/25 Web Comment</p>	<p>Being a horseback rider I can tell you that the land around Lacy Park is swamp. There is a power line on the east/ west corridor of the park. Jamestown Road residents live and own their land for years. Your environmental studies also deal with low unstable land behind Wildwood Ave going through Elmont ruining valuable property the government will pay \$\$\$\$much homes and farm land.</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Displacements Res/Comm, Wetlands</p>



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<p>14622 7/21 Comment - Agency Letter/Email</p>	<p>Ashland Citizens, Friends, Neighbors and Community Members,</p> <p>I wanted to take a moment to reach out and update you on what the Town has been doing in reference to the DC2RVA High Speed Rail project. I apologize that it has been so long since my last outreach on May 1, 2017. I can sense the fear, anxiety and confusion in the community created by this threat to our Town.</p> <p>First, a little background. We are currently in the midst of a six month long community advisory committee (CAC) review of the project and alternative solutions. Monday, July 24, 2017 will be the third of six meetings. I would characterize the first meeting held on May 22 as largely informational. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VADRPT) staff explained the federal process they must use to study the corridor, and we learned a lot about the various engineering issues associated with operating trains.</p> <p>The second meeting was held on June 26. VADRPT staff did their best to explain the modeling they use to determine whether various routes will be able to meet the train capacity needs of CSX and Amtrak, and then we discussed the various screening mechanisms (parks, wetlands, cultural resources, etc.) they use to eliminate options. Unfortunately, it was this conversation that led to a lot of frustration among CAC members and the community. VADRPT staff approach this process in a very matter of fact way and do a very poor job of conveying understanding and empathy towards community members so enraged by the process and possible outcomes. They articulated a “check the box and follow the forms’ mentality without demonstrating any critical thinking.</p> <p>While the Community Advisory Committee process is advancing, our Town staff are also working with Town Council in other ways. We have re-engaged with our lobbyists to get their help in understanding and influencing the process. Town staff are working to gather facts to help support the community members’ heartfelt stories about the destruction various options would reap upon the Town. Town Council and I will continue to communicate with our state and federal elected officials so they know our story. We must be diligent, and I can assure you that the Ashland representatives on the CAC will be diligent, in asking probing questions of VADRPT that help all of us understand what the best alternatives actually are. We will demand of VADRPT information which has previously been withheld</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Public Involvement</p>
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	<p>As we move forward as a community my message to you is that we should plan for the worst and hope for the best. Your input is always welcome, appreciated and important, but please keep an eye out for particular opportunities where your input and outreach to VADRPT will have the most impact and carry the most weight. We will do a better job of keeping you informed of these very important strategic opportunities.</p> <p>We have been told the long-awaited release of the draft EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) will occur before August 1. While this document will largely exclude the Ashland area, it will be another important opportunity to provide critical feedback to DRPT and FRA. We will coordinate an informational blitz to take advantage of the 60 day public comment period. More to come on this point. (see pdf for more details..)</p>	
<p>14638 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Cross Bros. Grocery Store is one of the oldest continuously operated independent grocery stores in the nation. 105years old. The 3rd rail and its barriers and elimination of parking will impact our store traffic. Grocery store margins are slim and disruption to business could put us out of business. Closing the store would mean another abandoned building in our downtown area. We are 1-28 Main St town in VA.</p>	
<p>14643 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>My husband and I purchased a home in Woodside Estates sold on the fact that we are surrounded by Washington Lacey Park. Putting a train along Woodside Lane would simply devastate our community, by ruining natural wildlife, natural resources such as the wetlands, not to mention the increase in noise level. We also love the quaint, historic town of Ashland that we frequent often and feel that and eastern or even western bypass would cut many of us from Ashland, ruining our sense of community.</p>	
<p>14657 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>If you had not rejected the more expensive tunnel option, you could have saved years' worth of your study and days' worth of the valuable time we spend here. Study expenses, salaries, etc.</p>	



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<p>14649 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Why not start Dowell to Washington? Through rail was East coast thing. Not sure why this isn't regional effort. This makes most sense.</p>	
<p>14653 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>How much right of way will be taken from Center Street properties? What will access to Center St properties look like? Will barriers be required? What are the real impacts?</p>	
<p>14654 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>I respectfully ask that this council not choose a third rail option for the town of Ashland. It would destroy our downtown businesses. It would destroy a number of homes as well. One of the most significant impacts would be to the RMC campus. It would cut the campus, truly be an eyesore to the campus. All of the people involved have enjoyed a working relationship with railroads, but the suggestion of a third rail through town would destroy the relationship. Please take to heart this plea, No third rail.</p>	
<p>14655 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>To save 15 minutes per trip please don't hurt Ashland or the farms and homes to the west! A tunnel beside I-95 would be just fine.</p>	
<p>14656 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>An Eastern Bypass option will be detrimental to not only wetland and Washington-Lacey Park, but to the people who purchased homes in Providence and Woodside Estates. People built homes in this area to be far away from RR track and the noise that comes with living in Ashland Proper. This will cause brand new homes to lose a costly amount in value. It will also cause people to dislike the Hanover area in general.</p>	



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<p>14640 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Request consideration of a different eastern bypass option which would be “orange” bypass option west of I-95 and I-95 median in between. This option would be cheaper than a tunnel under Ashland and could likely win community support. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.</p>	
<p>14652 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Impact of rail tunnels- In DC, L’Enfant Plaza area as example, there are many long rail tunnels. In metro too. On the surface, you’d never know they’re there. Ashlanders should welcome this option.</p>	
<p>14634 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>After the CAC reaches agreement on a recommended route, what happens if the state or federal regulatory body rejects the CAC’s recommendation? Is there a backup plan?</p>	
<p>14651 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Stay on CSX land and leave the tax payers properties alone.</p>	
<p>14633 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>The Lacy Eastern Bypass option would divide the Woodside corridor. As a resident of Providence, the Eastern Bypass would separate my home from the Ashland community, greatly increase my commute time for work, increase noise and eliminate the ability to enjoy the natural spaces, the wetlands sounds, the trails in the park and the bird and plant life. I am opposed to the Lacy Eastern bypass, but I also wish to not divide the Ashland/Hanover community. Mr. Stanley has committed to preserving the character of the area, this option would destroy the Woodside Corridor.</p>	



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<p>14648 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>I oppose the Lacy Eastern Bypass. With this bypass, you take away one of the main larger parks in Ashland. Additionally, you would increase commute times for over 500 families and multiple neighborhoods – Providence Woods, Woodside, Jamestown Rd, and Hickory Hill. You would take away the sound barrier from 95 for all of these neighborhoods, you are also taking away the historical context of Washington Lacy Park. Washington Lacy was the 17th child born to 2 slaves who toiled on the Gregory sheep plantation. Washington rose from slavery and purchased land.</p>	
<p>14650 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Will Buckingham Branch not going through Staples Mill present a problem?</p>	
<p>14636 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Why not go out to contractors to get budget number on construction costs of each option. I am an estimator and do napkin estimates/budgets all the time. The higher cost options should be removed. Government will not approve higher cost options.</p>	
<p>14647 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>I would rather have no trains and no station then have my town decimated for the benefit of freight companies. There seems to be no pent-up demand for passenger rail, so I see this as aiming to improve for freight. No third rail, no by pass, 3-2-3, or tunnel.</p>	
<p>14646 Written Comment 07/26/2017</p>	<p>Please do not run a third rail through the Town of Ashland. Such a rail would not only hurt the Town, its residents, and its business owners. A third rail through Ashland would hurt the surrounding areas as well. If the heart of Ashland is destroyed, it will depress the surrounding areas as well. 3-2-3 option is the best one.</p>	



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14645
Written
Comment
07/26/2017

This "high speed rail" is dividing our community apart. It saddens me! I am a business owner in the town and a home owner in the west. Recently, I have heard people saying "I will not shop Ashland first anymore because of the stance the town has made." Please do not punish private businesses for what any government states. Yes, I pay my taxes to the town, the country, the state and to our federal government. But I should not be punished for what anyone else supports. As a business owner, I am opposed to a western bypass. Please, I beg this community to come together and support each other. The town is supported by the east and the west. We would not exist without the community that surrounds the town. We are one! Let's act like it!

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14642
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

My name is Alice Murphey.
I live on Blunts Bridge Road and have for more than 39 years. While none of the current alternates cross our property, the western bypass would come within a quarter mile.

The western bypass alternate would entail the taking of numerous homes and multiple Century Farms. For those of you who may not be familiar with the Century Farm program, it is a National program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in all 50 states. In Virginia it is administered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation. To be certified as a Century Farm, a farm must have been owned by the same family for a minimum of 100 consecutive years, be lived on or farmed by a descendant of the original owner and gross over \$2,500 annually from the sale of farm products.

To move to the west and build two tracks on new location taking numerous homes and multiple farms; four of which have been certified as Century Farms and two others that I know qualify, but all of which would suffer major takes, total destruction, or severe impacts would be nothing less than the rape of agricultural and timber production in this portion of Hanover County.

To move east and utilize portions of the Buckingham route would entail wetlands and a 4(f) taking of Legacy Park. These environmental impacts virtually eliminate it as being prudent and feasible.

In conclusion, I believe the most prudent and feasible alternate for this section of the project is to utilize the existing tracks in Ashland and either tunnel, add one track, or adjust three tracks slightly to the center. This is a straight line with little or no grade, and the major "impact" is already there with the two existing tracks. Thank you.

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14632
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

My name is Doug Riddell, a Hanover resident most of my life, and a home owner in Woodside Estates for the past six years. I retired from Amtrak after nearly 40 years on the railroad, most of it operating passenger trains through Ashland.

I watched in awe from the cab of my locomotive once as a human chain transferred the contents of the old library, on one side of the tracks, to the new Richard Gillis facility, on the other by hand, one book at a time. It symbolized what's good about our community-people of all stripes, coming together to help each other.

With this in mind, I purchased one of the first homes in Woodside Estates in 2011. Two years ago, my son and his wife built a home in Providence.

Nearly 500 new homes have sprung up along the Woodside Lane corridor in just six years. They're occupied by well educated, professional families, with above average incomes. Together with other nearby neighborhoods, we generate millions of dollars in tax revenue, while supporting local businesses. And we vote!

Washington Lacy Park, the centerpiece of this residential development, provides a sound barrier, protecting it from the noise of I-95, while its trees and wetlands cleanse the air of pollution and fumes. The park's pristine hiking and walking trails have made Woodside Estates-and now Providence-the largest and most popular planned residential developments in Hanover County.

It appears however, there are those attempting to persuade the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, to build an elevated, high speed rail by-pass, on an eastern route, that would create an eight mile long, three story-tall, earthen berm-a virtual replica of the Great Wall of China. It would form an ugly scar, stretching between Elmont and Ellett's Crossing-directly through, and eliminating Washington Lacy Park. Even if there is an alternative park site offered, it would violate the intent, if not the letter, of a 1969 federal law prohibiting the use of public parkland for transportation projects.

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It also violates Ashland's Master Plan, adopted just a couple of months ago, which includes a provision to have parklands evenly spread throughout the entire town, available to everyone. It ignores regulations protecting wetlands that comprise a good part of the park.

It would destroy the Colesville Nursery, a very successful private business.

It violates an agreement between the county and the descendants of Washington Lacy, for whom the park is named, the 17th child born to two slaves who toiled in servitude on the Gregory Plantation. Washington's eldest son, the late Franklin Lacy, served in the US Navy and enlisted in the US Army's 10th Cavalry during WWII. He was one of the famed Buffalo Soldiers. He later served his country as an analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency—a true American patriot.

Franklin ceded some of the family land for use as a public park. In exchange, Woodside Lane was improved and lengthened to connect with Jamestown Road, to enable the Lacys and other parishioners of the historic Providence Baptist Church, greater access to their house of worship.

The proposed eastern bypass would isolate this small African American enclave, decimate their homes, devalue their property and desecrate the Lacy family legacy.

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14639
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

My view is that all of the alternatives under consideration are flawed because they are based on unwarranted assumptions.

This is a very long lead time capital project. The critical horizon for planning purposes is the period between ten and thirty years from now. Whether the project is needed and whether the benefits will exceed the costs will be determined in large part by the conditions that exist during that window of time.

The two most critical assumptions underlying the determination of need for this project are the projected demand for rail freight service and for passenger service. Any model of future needs is necessarily sensitive to those factors, among others.

What DRPT has done is simply extrapolated recent trends 30 years into the future.

Based on my experience with large, long lead time capital projects, this is not a defensible approach.

what DRPT should have done is assembled the most complete possible information about what the transportation sector may look like 10 to 30 years from now, established ranges of possible outcomes, assigned probabilities to different points within those ranges, and plugged that information into its model.

Which brings us to what I will call the "elephant on the tracks."

When this project originated 20 years ago autonomous vehicles were pie in the sky stuff. That is no longer the case.

The largest corporations in the world, and all of the auto companies, are making huge investments in autonomous vehicles. They are not doing so in order to get 5% of some future market for passenger cars. They believe that transportation will be transformed by these vehicles, beginning in the next 3 to 5 years. VDOT has a report on its website entitled the future is now: autonomous

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vehicles have arrived. Just last week the commonwealth transportation board authorized the testing of autonomous vehicles on interstate 95.

How could the advent of autonomous vehicles affect the high speed rail project? The EIS assumes a steady increase in demand for rail freight service for the next 30 years. But a back of the envelope calculation indicates that self-driving trucks could reduce trucking costs by 30-40%. Trucks are CSX's main competition. What would this do to demand for rail service? That is the kind of question DRPT should be asking. The same question should be asked about the potential impacts of autonomous vehicles on passenger service.

So what should DRPT do now? I suggest, at a minimum, that the EIS be put on hold, and that one or more transportation consultants with expertise in autonomous vehicles and no axe to grind be retained to analyze the potential effects of autonomous vehicles and other technological changes upon the project.

I realize that this is an unappealing course of action, but it would, I submit, be preferable to being told by a federal judge a couple of years down the road to redo the environmental impact statement.

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14631
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

I want to thank Ms. Mitchell and the others on the Community Advisory Committee for giving us the opportunity to speak. Many of us are here this evening not because we oppose the expansion of the rail network but because we are surprised that consideration of a potential eastern bypass through the Washington Lacy Park is being promoted. As I have watched this play out, it has always seemed that the practical solution for a third rail is a western bypass that would have the least impact on the town of Ashland and residents of Hanover County. I couldn't comprehend an eastern route through a densely developed area that would need to cross 1-95 twice, Route 1 at least once, high voltage power lines, and then run through a park system and wetlands area. All which will certainly result in a higher construction cost and longer construction period. I couldn't understand this current effort to push for an eastern bypass. However, it was explained to me that the opposition to a western bypass was not necessarily based on practical considerations but on the potential economic impact. The concern is that a western bypass will decrease the property value and loss of revenue for large tracts of land that could be sold in the future as development expands westward in the county. I would like to point out to the CAC and our local officials that there is a large group of families along one of the proposed eastern bypass routes that will also suffer economic loss due to a reduction in property values. I would urge the CAC to listen to the collective voices of the families whose homes an eastern bypass would affect. Those voices come from the more than 400 families in the Woodside Estates and Providence subdivisions. They come from the families who live off of Jamestown Road, Lacy Drive, Woodside Lane, Providence Church Road, and Frances Road.



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14635
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

Good evening. My name is Les Cook and I live at 402 Virginia Street in Ashland. I am here tonight as a concerned Ashland resident and community member. I live one block from the tracks, and I am very worried about what a third rail would do to our town.

My family moved to Ashland 19 years ago. We instantly fell in love with this small town with the train tracks running through its center. Our kids, like all Ashland kids, learned how to safely cross the tracks, and they enjoyed walking up to Cross Brother's Grocery for a snack or to the Hanover Arts and Activity Center for an event. We walk to fin and feather for our pet supplies, and take our grandkids to Tiny Tim's Toys.

Frequently, my wife and I enjoy dinner at the Iron Horse, The Caboose, or the Trackside Grill. We also enjoy meeting up with friends at the Origin Beer Lab. However, if the High Speed Rail plan chosen runs through town, I fear that these businesses will suffer great financial hardship, or even be forced to close their doors. These businesses are part of what makes Ashland such a wonderful place to live.

I also fear what will happen to our property values if the High Speed Rail runs through town. When we moved to Ashland, we were comfortable with the current level of train traffic. However, a third rail, raised racks, or additional fences or walls would greatly change the town's look and feel. The destruction of the local businesses, increase in train traffic, and additional new railroad structures would destroy this town-property values would plummet.

I am opposed to a third rail or raised rail option that runs through the center of Ashland. In closing, I would like to request some clarification of the process once the high speed rail option is selected. How will public comment be collected at that point? How long will the comment period last? Can public comments actually influence the outcome? Also, do comments or resolutions made by an elected body during the public comment period carry more weight than a citizen's comment?

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14629
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

My name is Rosanne Groat Shalf. I am a local historian, the author of Ashland, Ashland, the history of our town, and a co-founder and the past president of Ashland Museum. My husband and I live in the historic district. My focus with these comments is on the third rail through Ashland.

Ashland's Historic District and that of the College, are considered important by state and national historians. I quote the DHR:

"Ashland Historic District displays a sense of historic continuity and evolution. The district is unique in its abundance and quality of late 19th- century frame construction. Virtually every architectural style from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century is expressed."

My question is this: in this process, as you evaluate the impact on the town and the historic district, are you counting in the significance of historic downtown Ashland to the larger Ashland community? It's not only about economic loss, but it is also about the heart of a community. Is there a means by which citizens and community members can share this sentiment that will actually carry weight in the final decision making process? If so, how much weight does it carry? "

Is it possible that in your analyses, you are only considering those buildings that would have to be destroyed and not the greater impact on the community. Also, when you say the Buckingham branch option is eliminated because one building might have to be moved seems odd when you are contemplating destroying the entire heart of the Ashland Historic District and the livelihood of most people in Ashland.

A third rail through Ashland, means fences down Center Street effectively separating east part of town and college from the west, a tiny 3-foot sidewalk for pedestrians, and no on- street parking, so the downtown businesses would be effectively shut off from commerce.

Please understand, you may not be touching the buildings in the historic district, but you are touching the way they are used individually and as a group, rendering them unusable. And you are



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touching the social and historical importance of the neighborhoods, and changing the interaction of the community with that area. The primary focus of our historic district is the part that is along Railroad Avenue and Center Street. It is the heart of the community. It is the pride of the town, and the economic driver of the town.

The actual long-term impact on Ashland of a third rail is that the solvency of the college is impaired, the downtown businesses risk bankruptcy, and the real estate market crashes. The community loses its focus and identity. It's a death spiral. In fact, it is already happening. Just with the prospect of a third rail, there have been buyers declining to put a contract on a house along the tracks and businesses who are reluctant to relocate to the heart of our historic downtown business district.

I am pretty sure that EIS cost benefit analyses are supposed to look beyond the narrow, direct costs to the broader community impact. Can you demonstrate that you are doing that?

I also ask you to give us real and detailed numbers instead of lump sums for the costs of the eliminated alternatives. We want to know exactly what you are including in your estimates and what you are not. We want to explore ways that perhaps the Hanover and Ashland community might make a different alternative work for you-maybe changing park boundaries, mitigating wetlands, among other solutions--but without those details, we can't.

Thank you.

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14637
Spoken
Comment
07/26/2017

Good evening. My name is Sue Watson and I live at 317 South James Street, Ashland, in the Historic District-where we have lived for 47 years. I value the notion of the common good, especially quality public schools (which we have here in Ashland/Hanover) and I was privileged to serve as the Ashland representative on the Hanover County School Board for 36 years. I also volunteer as co-director of the Ashland Musical Variety Show which brings together a cast of over 400 citizens to sing and dance together to support the Hanover Arts and Activities Center an historical community Center, located on the railroad tracks, that supports many important events and programs.

In our Ashland show, we talk about Community building through the arts, and our program's musical finale includes our town song (which most of us here could stand up and sing right now). In this song, we a boast about Ashland, our town, where "the best people live on both sides of the tracks." We do not let the tracks divide us. Our show and other community programs bring us together from both sides of the tracks, in powerful and effective ways, We are not just joking when we call our town, "the Center of the Universe."

It is critical for the people who are making railroad decisions to understand and value the importance of our quality of life, our strong town spirit, and the very special way that we value the diverse residents who live, work, and go to our schools and our college here in Ashland. People want to live, retire, work, and stay here (snapping up any available house), especially those on the tracks. Putting a third rail right through the middle of town would do incalculable damage to this community we love and that is so special to us. My husband has observed-and I don't think it's a great exaggeration- that running a third high-speed rail through the historic heart of our town would be an outrage akin to the building of the ugly Berlin wall that for decades inhumanly isolated one half of a vibrant community from its other half. This third track ironically would destroy the unique synergy between the town and its railroad tracks that has from the beginning been an essential part of Ashland's charm.

At the last committee meeting, when asked about the home owners who would not be able to get to their houses because of the 3rd rail, your staff spokesman explained, "We will buy their houses" -



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	<p>as if he were saying, "Oh we will pay someone for the damage that our wreck has caused his or her car. "An historic home, a historical and beautiful neighborhood, a historic college campus-builders of a third rail through Ashland could never provide adequate recompense for what would be destroyed. Our town's charm is priceless.</p> <p>Let me end with a specific question. I understand that the Federal Railroad Administration has an Acting Administrator--not one appointed by the new administration. So we need to know the process after your recommendation is made. To whom is the recommended alternative presented and who makes the final decision to accept the recommendation or to go with something else entirely?</p> <p>Finally, I find it important that the mission statement of the Federal Railroad Administration includes the guiding principles of excellence and integrity to guide "our stewardship of the public's trust and resources," and to uphold the values of "transparency and accountability"-thus supporting, "robust dialogue and constructive communication," supporting open decision making and engaging stakeholders in creative problem solving-thus supporting health and safety. May this important process that we all care and worry about follow these same guiding principles and values!</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I appreciate the diligence this committee is giving this process, but I think you are now suffering "paralysis of analysis". Just go ahead and make a decision. And why are options still being shown on slides if a "higher up authority" has already expressed concerns about the viability of said options. Whatever you recommend will likely be over-ridden anyway. For what it is worth (nothing) I oppose the western bypass.</p>	



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[Greetings to friends and constituents.] At the general assembly we have to deal with a lot of thorny issues sometimes. And a lot of times there is disagreement on what the best option is. And I think on those issues my good friends have found that a lot of times both sides have to give a bit, and we usually come up with some good legislation. I think in that case we're looking at that type of situation here. I would just like to say that in the interest, of course, money, that's always an important issue, and to reduce the impact to greatest extent possible on our landowners, I really think we need to look at the option that has the least amount of impact and confines itself to the existing right of way, to the greatest extent possible. And then finally, I noticed on one of the bullet points, that there is a possibility of revising the existing passenger VRE schedules and things like that in order to make some of the other options a little more workable. And I think that is something we also need to pursue. So anyway that is about all I wanted to say. I think is very important that we hear from the people.

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I'm a local historian. I wrote the history of the town. I'm co-founder and past president of Ashland Museum. My husband and I live in the historic district. My question is this: in the process, as you evaluate the impact in/on the town and in the historic district, are you counting in the significance of downtown Ashland to the larger Ashland community? It is not only about economic loss, it is about the heart of the community. Is there a means by which citizens and community members can share this sentiment that will actually carry weight in the final decision making process? If so, how much weight does it carry? Is it possible that in your analysis you are only considering those buildings that would have to be destroyed, and not the greater impact on the community? Also, when you say that the Buckingham Branch option is eliminated, because one building might have to be moved, it seems odd that you are contemplating destroying the entire heart of the Ashland historic district, and the livelihood of most Ashlanders. A third rail through town means fences down Center Street separating the east part of the town, and the college from the west, a tiny three foot sidewalk for pedestrians, and no on-street parking so that downtown businesses would be effectively shut off from commerce. Please understand, you may not be touching the buildings in the historic district, but you are touching the way they are used, individually and as a group, rendering them unusable. And you are touching the social and historical importance of the neighborhoods, and changing the interaction of the community with that area. The primary focus of the historic district is the part that is along Railroad Avenue and Center Street. It is the heart of the community and it's the pride of the town, and the economic driver.

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I'm director of the Ashland Main Street Association. I want to talk a little bit about the economic impact of a third rail coming through the middle of town. The whole purpose of the national main street initiative is to drive economic vitality back into historic small towns. The addition of a third rail down Center Street would have exactly the opposite impact on Ashland's economic activity. A third rail with its requisite fencing and/or solid barriers would divide our downtown shopping district in half, making it difficult to get from one store to another. The 92 properties on Center Street now worth 30-million dollars would lose significant value. These properties reside in not one, but two nation register historic districts. A third rail will ruin our recently completed multi-million dollar streetscape project, one that has received many awards for its environmental design. The businesses and the 14 historic buildings along the tracks employ more than 200 workers who depend on a thriving downtown for their livelihood. The construction of a third rail could potentially put downtown Ashland into an economic death spiral. Lower business activity and declining property values mean lower tax revenues for the town and the county. Lower tax revenues translate into deteriorating town and county services, and makes Ashland a less attractive place to live, shop, work, play and invest. The demise of economic activity in the downtown is what led to the exodus of businesses from other Virginia communities like; Petersburg, Bedford, Blackstone, Luray, Saint Paul, South Boston, Orange, Cape Charles, Danville and yes, Doswell. Please don't turn our historic downtown into a ghost town. We hope that the committee can reach consensus on an alternative solution on the third rail. One that as Mayor Foley said, does the least harm.



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[Thanks for opportunity to speak.] Many of us are here this evening not because we oppose the expansion of the rail network, but because we are surprised that the consideration of a potential eastern bypass, through Washington Lacy Park, is even being promoted. As I watch this play out, it has always seemed that the practical solution for a third rail is a western bypass that would have the least impact on the town of Ashland and the residents to Hanover County. I couldn't comprehend an eastern route through a densely developed area that would need to cross I-95 twice, Route 1 at least once, high voltage power lines, and then run through a park system and wetlands area – all which would certainly result in a higher construction cost and a longer construction period. I couldn't understand this current effort to push for an eastern bypass. However, it was explained to me that the opposition to a western bypass was not necessarily based on practical considerations but on the potential economic impact. The concern is the western bypass will decrease the property value and loss of revenue for large tracts of land that could be sold in the future as development expands westward in the county. I'd like to point out to the community advisory committee and our local officials, that there is a large group of families along one of the proposed eastern bypass routes that will also suffer economic loss due to a reduction in property values. I would urge the community advisory council to listen to the collective voices of the families whose homes an eastern bypass would affect. Those voices come from the more than 400 families in the Woodside Estates and Providence subdivisions. They come from the families who live off Jamestown Road, Lacey Drive, Woodside Lane, Providence Church Road and Francis Road.

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May I answer a question that was asked outside of my two minutes? You want to know why you can't run freight trains down the Buckingham Branch. When you get downtown south of main street station there's a C&O viaduct. The clearance on that is 16'-10". I know, I run trains through there – for forty years. It takes a twenty foot clearance to run a freight train under there. So any thoughts you've got of running a freight train down the Buckingham Branch are purely – unless you want to replace the entire James River viaduct out of Tredegar Iron Works to Fulton Yard then you can forget about running freight trains through the Buckingham Branch. [But there are freight trains under Buckingham Branch.] Yes, there are but not double stack trains. There are hopper trains. You can run flat trains down there. But the future of railroading is double stack railroading. And you can't run them the east route – is what we call them. Is there anyone besides me that's ever run a train? Oh, well I just wanted to answer your question. You wanted the answer so I thought I would give it to you. I live in Woodside Estates. I bought a home there when there was nothing there but us. That Washington Lacy Park provides us with a buffer between the traffic on interstate 95 and our neighborhood. Not only sound-wise but the wetlands – and I'm sorry you don't like horses, Mayor. But the wetlands, the trees, cleanse the air so we don't have to smell the odors/the fumes from interstate 95. We got anybody from Blue here that lives on the east side. I will say this and I agree with the lady right here and I'll take my time doing this because it has torn our community apart. I sat on a train/locomotive in Ashland one day and looked up and watched a chain of people from one side to the other transferring the books from the old Ashland Library to the new one. It made me want to come to Ashland and I bought a home in the Ashland area because I wanted to be a part of this community. But there were people there that didn't know each other, there were old people, young, tall, black, white... So, let's put down the signs. Let's put down the animosity and work for a solution that's going to benefit everybody. Nobody's going to get everything they want. We're going to have to compromise. And whether it's a tunnel or whatever you've got – let's be reasonable.



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[Thanks for allowing me to speak.] I live east of I-95 near Ashland. Three years ago, we bought a house in the Providence subdivision because it had everything we were looking for. We were attracted to the area because Providence is a planned community with controlled growth and many amenities. Only subdivisions around Woodside Lane have the abundance of trees, providing a beautiful rustic setting. We are surrounded by the pristine wetlands so the woods and natural settings remain undisturbed. Our home is within walking distance of Washington Lacy park and although we are close to I-95, the trees along Woodside Lane provide a barrier not only to the noise of the interstate, but also are a natural air filter. When we moved here we knew about the plans for the high-speed rail but understood the eastern bypass was discarded due to the major infrastructure cost, the preservation of the wetlands, the higher population density in the east, and the park. An eastern bypass through the Woodside Lane area (what is called the Lacey Park bypass). An eastern bypass there cannot be built at ground level, it requires a massive land bridge from near Glen Allen to all the way to Doswell. Gone would be the Washington Lacy Park. Gone would be the trees around Woodside Lane. Gone would be the peace and quiet of our neighborhood.



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I'm here to voice my opposition to the western bypass route. This route will run through houses, century old farms, a pre-revolutionary war farm and houses, a church, and directly through a lot of my friends' homes and farms. To reiterate things some things that have been said and previous comments, not today but at other times. This is not true high speed rail. It may be high-er speed rail but it is not true high speed rail. And when I look at it saving 15 minutes between Richmond and DC and going through churches, and farms and homes of people and it costs over 50-billion dollars - I have to sort of shake my head and wonder what's going on for it to be that expensive, and we're only getting 15-minutes. I would like you to consider the 3-2-3 option. Save some homes, parks. The people on the eastern bypass – I get it. Because the people on the western bypass have the same issues only their homes and farms are a hundred years old. They didn't buy their houses three years ago. Cary broke ground when she found out about the bypass. It's all of us. We need to get a solution that works for everyone. And the 3-2-3 option would be great going under Ashland. If that would work for freight – that's great. But let's get something that doesn't affect our homes, farms and our history.

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[What I wrote this it was under three minutes – I was told I had three minutes. I’ve been sitting there marking it up so if I go over, I’m sorry. I’ll do my best. Thanks for the opportunity.] My husband and I live on Center Street and ever since the possibility of a third rail became known we have felt threatened – as if by death. This is a strong term so I actually looked it up. (By definition; distinction, destruction and end of life). Because I do not want this to happen to my home, my town, I urge you to not put a third rail through Ashland. Barring a safety hazard – which is a major concern, no one is going to keel over and die because of a third rail. But there is going to be an end of life. You see, Ashland has a life of its own, which is now threatened. Life on Center Street includes numerous runs and walks, like the famous Railroad run. Ashland street parties hold 3-4 street parties right in the heart of town. The strawberry fair is held every June with an estimated 30 - 40,000 people that attend, enjoy the fair, and they park along Center Street. We have a 4th of July parade, and huge holiday parade to kick off the holiday season. The residents of Center street decorate their homes with lights for the Light Up the Tracks event held at Christmas-time. Maybe one of the most impressive turnouts is at Halloween, when our children come out to Trick or Treat. The police close down some streets (including a big section of Center Street) and children dressed in their costumes, accompanied by their parents, crisscross the tracks to say “trick or treat” and receive a piece of candy. Last year my husband and I gave out 800 pieces of candy - that’s 800 children. This is the life of Ashland – of Center Street. In general, on any given day Center Street has walkers, joggers, baby stroller-ers, front porch sitters, children and adults on bikes, kids walking to the pool – all of this is the life of our town and it is for this reason there should be no third rail through Ashland.



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>My wife and I just purchased a house in Providence. We lived in Fredericksburg and the reason we chose Providence was because it's very calm and very serene. We were actually drawn to the Ashland area – we love the town. It's got the community feel we were looking for. And to see a community torn apart is a difficult thing. Just as we are trying to join that community. We did want to take the opportunity to say that as we were looking, one of the major considerations was proximity to our work and my work in particular. I work in the Northern Neck and worked in Fredericksburg. And so trying to connect to where [my wife] grew up, so that we could be close to family as we start our family and be connected with our community. It was a difficult decision, but we wanted to be sure we were close enough, so that I was close enough, that I could get to my job and not miss out on those family times. So we chose Providence because it offered us all those things. When we heard about the third rail and the eastern bypass we became very concerned because the impacts to my commute changes everything. So now I'm looking at my commute and thinking I'm not going to be getting to my job in a timely manner. I'm not going to be able to get home to my children in a time frame that allows me to invest in them as people. So this debate is very difficult – we're very concerned about being divided from Ashland and having that opportunity to be connected with our neighbors – eastern, western and in Ashland.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>[Thanks to the committee.] Mine is just a procedural question. I live in Ashland two streets from the existing tracks. Once you all reach consensus with the recommendation that will go on up to the Feds, if, as the Mayor referenced, it is rejected, then what happens? What's the fall back position, does the selection decision making process revert back to this committee, or is it wrenched away from you and that big decision will be made at a higher place? Answer: Tonight we will not be able to do a lot of Q&A back and forth but I will say that this question did come up earlier about process and we'll get back some information at the next meeting about that.</p>	



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I'm here as a concerned Ashland resident and community member. I live one block from the tracks and I'm worried about what the third rail will do to the town. We moved to Ashland 19 years ago and we fell in love with the town. We had small kids that learned how to cross the tracks just like other people's kids in town have. And we enjoy going downtown to (listed many businesses and events) with our children and now with grandchildren. If the high speed rail that we choose runs through the town, I fear that these businesses will suffer great financial hardship and will even be forced to close their doors. These businesses are what makes Ashland such a wonderful place to live. I also fear what will happen to our property values if the high speed rail runs through town. When we moved to Ashland we were comfortable with the level of train traffic, however a third rail, raised tracks, additional fences and walls will greatly change the town's look and feel. Destruction of local businesses, increase in train traffic and additional rail and structures will eventually destroy this town and property values will plummet. I'm opposed to a third rail or a raised rail option that runs through town. I agree with other people that have talked about a tunnel or different other options that use some of the existing lines. I have some questions and don't expect and answers now, but will turn these in. I'd like some information on the process once an option is selected. How will the public comment be collected at that point? How long will public comment period last? Can public comments actually influence the outcome? Do comments made by an elected body during the public comment period carry more weight than the citizen's comments? I will leave a comment in comment box too.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I live at Center Street. The CAC has covered most of my thoughts this evening. My question is directly for the DRPT. At the last meeting, Mr. Burch indicated the Center Street properties with no side street access would have to be taken by eminent domain. I'd like to know why that is – since many of these properties have big front yards?</p>	

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I live at 203 Myrtle Street in Ashland. And I'm also the executive director of the Hanover Arts and Activities Center at 500 South Center Street in Ashland. The Hanover Arts and Activities Center was finished in 1859 and as the Ashland Baptist Church was the second permanent church structures in Ashland. It's one of the few remaining buildings built before the Civil War and our site is not only historically significant, but has been fundamentally woven into the fabric of the community for over 158 years. Its walls have witnessed christenings, weddings and caring for and the memorialization of those who have passed. For the past 50 years we have been the site of countless community events; education of the town's children, a place for music, art, dancing, history, and perhaps more importantly a place for communing with family and friends and fostering a sense of togetherness that often gets lost in today's fast passed society. Something vital to our community would be lost if the town is divided with the 3rd rail. Not only are homes and businesses of our neighbors at risk, but the very setting in which we gather and celebrate the traditions this town as a whole. As a non-profit we are dependent on the generosity of individuals that appreciate our programming and we depend upon its use as a wedding venue. The building of a 3rd rail would negatively impact our ability to host the events we've become known for, from a logistical and safety standpoint. Festivals (listed three) we host would likely not be able to continue. A third rail would impede access to our site and seriously limit the ease to which families, seniors, and children that use our building on a daily basis currently enjoy. A third rail would bisect the town and force a division, visually and physically, in the form of an industrial wall. It would intrinsically change how the town functions; from travel, emergency services and safe routes to school. My fear is not just the loss of practicalities to a third rail but to the very real loss of a tightly knit community and the loss of vital business and family homes in return for more shipping and passenger rails.



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>My husband and I live on Henry Clay Road, a short half block from the railroad tracks. My family moved from Richmond over 30 years ago. And one of the significant reasons we moved was because this presented a little bit of Mayberry - and we wanted to be a part of it. I hope you have heard tonight how special Ashland is. As one who crosses the tracks several times a day, I have noted the increase in wait time due to the length of the trains. What are the impacts on wait times, and traffic, and safety, and pedestrians, should the third rail be built? I still cannot fathom why the third track option is in the proposal because implementation would be devastating to the town - economically, visually, culturally and historically. I ask you to step into our shoes and imagine what it would be like if you lived here and that third rail was built – is that be something you’d really want to see. All options involve change but the other options are not as detrimental to the life of the entire town as the third track. I ask you bring closure to this option and take it off the table so that we can get about our lives.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I live in Woodside Estates and am a commercial concrete estimator. You all need to think about cost. I bid jobs all the time; government, private, commercial – everything. You know what everybody says? It’s over budget. Tunnels, west, east, are all expensive. What about the 3-2-3 options? Are there going to be barriers, sound walls like on the highway through the town so that you cannot get back and forth? Because it’s all about money and cuts and the government doesn’t have any.</p>	

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I want to take the third rail option off the table. I live at South James Street in Ashland in the historic district where we've lived together for 47 years. I value the common good - especially our quality public schools. Outstanding schools. I also volunteer as co-director of the Ashland Musical Variety show, which brings together a diverse cast of over 400 people who sing together and dance together, to bring people together. In our Ashland Musical Variety show we talk about community building through the arts and our finale is a song in which we sing the line, "The best people live on both sides of the tracks," we do not let the tracks divide us – tone and county. Our show our programs bring our community together from both sides of the track in powerful and effective ways. It is critical for the people making these rail decisions to understand and value the importance of our quality of life, our strong town spirit, the special way we value the diverse residents who live, work, go to our schools, go to our college here in Ashland. People want to live, work, retire here, stay here, snapping up any available home, including those on the tracks. Putting a third rail through this town would do significant damage to the community we love that is special to us. Putting a third rail through town would be an outrage akin to the building of an ugly Berlin wall which for decades inhumanely isolated half of a vibrant community from its other half. It would destroy the unique synergy of the town.

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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>We moved here because of all the historic properties and the Mayberry feel. I'm a current member of the Ashland Theater foundation. And it was my dream when I moved here that the theater would open up. The theater and historic properties are near the track and what is being described will affect the town especially the track side. We have been working to open up the historic theater, what is currently Trackside Grille, is the old historic theater, the Cab Theater - from 1948. The state is giving us \$500,000 to renovate the theater which we are working on right now. This will be a huge economic boost for the town, it's a performing arts center, and it will serve a lot of people and have a lot of full time employees. The idea of this third track is completely affecting the economic development of the town. Twelve of my neighbors on Railroad Avenue would lose access to their homes. The community itself – that's the key thing. Please explain how the negative effects on economic repercussions like I'm referring to with the theater, of the town is weighed in the decision making process of the third set of tracks going through town – how is this weighed in the process specifically? With the loss of the business activity downtown and the loss of property values both residential and commercial, the associated loss throughout the community, if you destroy this commercial center of town – how do you weigh that?</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I've lived for 20 years on West Francis Street in the town of Ashland. I am a retired Architect and urban designer and have done plans for many small towns, downtowns and neighborhoods that have been hugely successful - downtown Winston Salem for example. As a result of this background I was asked to chair the planning commission and be the leader of the design comprehensive plan for Ashland. I hope you've read it – it expresses our values. I am also the chair of the design committee for Ashland Main Street. I have great concerns for the survival of our thriving and historic downtown. I am specifically concerned and confused about the addition of a third track downtown right next to the doors of the buildings. Would we ever put a railroad against the storefront of Walmart or the shops next to it – of course not - because shoppers wouldn't be able to access businesses? My professional business experience tells me that retail businesses in this situation would not succeed and if they do not succeed the buildings have no value. Can you share with us how the negative impacts of the third rail as close to this historic downtown as it is will be weighed in your process?</p>	



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I've been an Ashland resident for 22 years and have worked for Hanover schools for just as many. Third rail through town and both the western and eastern bypasses should be removed from the options without question. The simple facts are families will lose their homes, family owned businesses will close - none of these facts are acceptable.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I am representing Cross Brothers Grocery Store. We are one of the oldest continuously operated grocery stores in the nation. We are 105 years old and are right on the tracks. A third rail and its required barriers and elimination of parking will significantly impact our store traffic and parking as well as all businesses on the track. Grocery stores operate on a very thin margin and any disruption in our current business would put us out of business. Closing Cross Brothers would be a loss to the community, to the staff and people in the neighborhoods that depend on us for their food and other businesses and staff members that depend on us for their livelihood. It would impact our local farmers and producers that provide us with their farm fresh vegetables, produce and meats and would have an impact on our local agricultural community. Closing the store might mean there would be another abandoned building in the downtown. And I know that we are one of the 28 main Main Streets in Virginia.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I am seventeen and young but my opinion matters. If the third rail is built it will be just about the time when I'm thinking about settling down and deciding where in Ashland to raise my family. I live directly in the path of the bypass. I've always dreamed about building a home on the land that my family has owned for several (eight) generations. I work and shop in town. I grew up going to the library and Cross's and am a decedent of the Crosses. What the DRPT wants to do with this area makes me sick. All of this to save a few minutes to go to DC. If people need to go to D.C. that fast, I say that they should probably move closer – that way they don't destroy what I know and what I love. It is one thing to say that you live on the same town that you grew up in, but how many of you can say you live on the same land that your family has since the 1700s. I can. Please decide against the Western Bypass. You're not only going to destroy homes, but families and a way of life as well. And before you decide the fate of where I raise my children, I would like cold hard facts on how many people will this benefit on a daily basis versus how many homes and farms you will destroy lives will be affected forever?</p>	



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Concerning the Mayor's comment and how we need to bring some common sense to this process. I believe that it has not been proven, rather it cannot be proven that the lack of a third rail, lack of a bypass is any impediment to the goals DC2RVA rail. I think we need to talk about other problems with the route that would have more meaningful impacts that just cutting off a few minutes. The elephant in the room is the Long Bridge connecting NoVA to DC and I believe is only two tracks. This is where your bottleneck is and you are losing the most minutes. I think it should be made clear to everyone that improvements to Long Bridge are not part of this study. They could build ten tracks through Ashland and it would not meaningfully cut travel time because the Long Bridge is the part of a separate study and we do not know what the end result will be. We should not be talking about destroying Ashland or building a bypass until Long Bridge is changed. It appears from the DC2RVA website that Northern VA will still be mostly 3 tracks except for about six miles from Alexandria to Long Bridge (don't know if the website is up to date). So if three tracks can accommodate traffic from Fredericksburg to Alexandria, all of the new trains, plus eight VRE trains, it defies logic that two tracks cannot accommodate traffic minus VRE trains in Ashland. Also, if there are heat restrictions – there will not be significant time – I haven't seen anything about improving the speed of the tracks. domain

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I'm concerned about eastern bypass. Until recently, I've been silent since the options involved another bypass – the western bypass. I live in an area surrounded by protected lands, those being wetlands and a park. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that an eastern bypass was proposed running through the park and across the wetlands was being considered. Even worse it was proposed by the very people who are charged with being stewards of those lands for the common good of the people of Hanover. No one bothered communicating this proposal to the residents that would be affected by it. We had to find out from social media and local newspapers– clearly it wasn't well known or else a recent Richmond magazine article would have mentioned there was an eastern bypass being proposed. Contrary to what is being written and what's been said the bypass would have a great effect on homes and families - upwards of 400 – 500, including newer homes in the newer communities of Providence and Woodside Estates where Hanover is still granting building permits and in the older historic communities like those on Francis Road, Lacey Drive, Jamestown Road, Woodside Lane and Providence Church Road. Consider this, an eastern bypass would disrupt cultural resources, such as the historic Jamestown and Providence church communities and Washington and Lacey Park. It would destroy natural resources including wetlands, wildlife in Washington and Lacy Park which, Mayor, it's a multiuse park, it's for hiking, biking, we can send our kids and families, and not just for horseback riding, it's for that as well. It's a park that comprises what the surveyor called a substantial amount of environmentally sensitive areas, and would also come with significant infrastructure costs, as it would require two crossings over I-95, crossings over 54, crossings over 1, and would cut us off from the areas to which we commute. We may have been silent up until now but no longer. The people east of I-95 have come together to save our communities and our cultural and natural resources. We've seen that not only are we not represented on this committee but we don't seem to be represented in this county either. Remember this – trees and trails, not tracks and trains. Save our wetlands, wildlife and communities.

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I live on Center Street about 100 feet from the tracks. My view is that all of the alternatives under consideration are flawed because they are based on unwarranted assumptions about the future. I urge this committee not to endorse any of the alternatives. This is a very long lead-time capital project. The critical horizon for planning purposes is the period between 10 and 30 years from now. Whether the project is needed and whether the benefits exceed the cost will be determined in large part by the conditions that exist during that window of time. The two most critical assumptions underlying the determination of need for the project are the projected demand for rail service and for passenger service. Any model of future needs is necessarily sensitive to those factors among others. What DRPT has done is simply extrapolated recent trends 30 years into the future, based on my experience with large, long lead-time capital projects that is not a defensible approach. But what DRPT should have done is assembled the most complete possible information about what the transportation sector may look like 10 – 30 years from now, establish ranges of possible outcomes, assign probabilities to the different points within those ranges and use that information in its model. When the project originated 20 years ago, autonomous vehicles were pie in the sky stuff. That is no longer the case. The largest corporations in the world and the auto companies making huge investments in autonomous vehicles. Not doing so in order to get a small percentage in the automobile market they believe that transportation will be transformed beginning in the next 3 to 5 years. VDOT.....I will submit the remainder of my comments for the record. But again, I don't think it was a very good idea to announce ahead of time that people would have 3 minutes, and then limit them to two after they prepared their comments.



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I live in the Providence subdivision off of Woodside Lane. Closely impacted and affected by the Washington-Lacey proposed eastern bypass. Politics is a pain isn't it – this is really tough. But yet here we are. Three representatives from the Town of Ashland supporting their view, Randolph-Macon with three representatives at the dais, a very well organized group from the Western bypass which got consideration early on in the process. When we first moved here we did not think the eastern bypass was going to be considered, but now here we are and do need to speak and talk about our concerns in this sometimes bickering and sometimes partisan process. I do believe what Del. Fowler said - that we need to be smart about what we are doing. The thing that makes the most common sense and use the most economic sense is to use existing right of ways, wherever they may be, rather than trying to build through and cost the expense and cost of those things that we have to run through. Cost has to be a consideration and I would hope this committee would use common sense. Smart planning ideas and being attune to what this thing is going to cost us. Change is coming. We may not all like it, but it's coming nonetheless so let's use the smart decisions that make the most financial sense for us.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>The town of Ashland wouldn't be if it weren't for the railroad. This whole process has pitted neighbor against neighbor, east against west, the town against everybody else on both sides. We all moved here for our various reasons and we all have invested in our properties. I would prefer using existing right of way – be it through town, under town – not a third rail per se but the 3-2-3 option, a deep bore, something that doesn't affect virgin land, be it the park, be it people's property out west, or other's property. I'd just ask you all to consider what would cause the least amount of impact to all the residents of Ashland and the county.</p>	

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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>We moved to Providence because we loved the rural character. We love the trees and the park. When they sell property in Providence they are selling that park. I go mountain biking and my local trails go right into the park. I want to let you know what I see in that park and why it is so special. It is a sound and pollution barrier – no doubt. It’s very important – it drowns out the sound from I-95. I can’t even imagine a raised train track across the street, a wall across the street from four hundred homes. The newest and most expensive homes in Hanover county – dense, real dense. So, when you go down in that park on the trails you feel like you are in a national forest. When you go down the northern part it feels like you’re in the mountains because the land rolls and there are trees bigger than you can put your arms around. There’s a reason we live here. And I also want to say I love Ashland. I’m a big huge fan of Ashland and to feel like we’re separated from our community – being literally on the wrong side of the tracks. Emotionally, that’s too much for me. I love Ashland, but I also love living practically living in a park. Not many people get to go outside their garage and get to go into what looks like a national park and then they can take that bike and get a beer on Center Street. This is amazing. I could not fathom what it’s going to look like to have a raised rail where a stand of trees was, across the street from 400 of the newest, most expensive houses in Hanover. Unbelievable.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I’m a local architect. I own property in on Lacy Drive. I’m here opposing the eastern bypass simply because it blocks off that very vibrant community to the city of Ashland. It’s going to introduce noise where there was none before. Over time there will be safety issues when the people, the children want to cross those tracks to get to the stores in the city of Ashland. Why can’t we unite this city and look more into the future. I’ve heard comments from the center of the town that’s been affected by the three rails or the two rails but think about Ashland fifty years from now. The forces so great. Being the center of the universe has consequences. We’ll have to begin to think about things to have a modern town with respect to the historical aspects.</p>	

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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I reside in Hanover County. This is my first meeting and I'm very disappointed. I stand in opposition to the rails. I don't think I've received sound proposals from the committee. I hope at our next meeting you will have additional information that will help us make decisions. The PowerPoint I hope that you would provide us a copy as well as any additional information, handouts that you might have that we can make a logical decision and have input. My major concern is the potential impact it may have on the Washington Lacy Park, Providence Baptist Church, and the Jamestown community. Washington Lacy family, many of us knew him and knew his family. Could you just raise your hand? I know that he would be gravely upset that we are thinking about putting so much noise near that park. Again, I stand in opposition to it. And I hope in our next meeting that we will have a room that's conducive. It's hot in here. We were not able to see the speakers and we should have more space so that people are not standing.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I live near the western bypass and I don't think it's going to affect me. But one of my questions is about this environmental impact statement. You've talked about the parks, historical buildings and districts, our water resources – but I haven't heard anything about the human impacts. And in the mission statement of the EPA it says...and I tried to get the definition from them which was very difficult. It has to do with the environment and the first thing they mention is humans and you don't seem to be taking this into consideration. And I'm also opposed to any of the alternatives, not because it's not needed – I think it probably is and everything. But last year Amtrak lost \$227M. I think you need to try to make it profitable before you try to expand it. As a taxpayer, that's ridiculous. CSX says they don't need this third rail and I don't think we do. I think you guys made a billion dollars last year in profit. Correct me if I'm wrong. So if CSX doesn't need it... I come from Long Island and I'm one of them damn Yankees. I came down here and stayed. And the Long Island railroad hasn't added track since 67 years that I've been alive.</p>	

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Me, my wife, my brother-in-law, father-in-law took two and a half years working every night and weekend to build a log home on a 150 acre state and family farm. We may not mean very much to anyone else but our forever home means the world to me, my wife and my boys. So as a family we are not bracing ourselves to losing a part of our land for something worthwhile. We're not talking about a new park, a war memorial or bike path, we're talking about western bypass with three sets of rails, two sixteen foot tall fences, and 80 trains a day that ride through the middle of our existence. My family will not benefit from this rail and neither will anyone else in this room. The only ones who will bear benefit from this is CSX. Selling this project as high speed rail is a marketing ploy. Amtrak is a 45 year old company with 80 year old technology that loses hundreds of millions of dollars every year and is subsidized by the federal government. I've read Amtrak referred to as, "a mobile money burning machine." Here's how eminent domain works. The government will take what it wants and pay market value for those lost acres. Market value is a funny thing because the instant someone decides to draw a line through your farm for a railroad, the land automatically becomes remarkably less valuable. By the time the new rails are added all of the land underneath them is blighted, worthless. It's a pretty slick way to pay pennies on the dollar for a tremendous amount of land against their wills. The primary responsibility of government is to defend our land and defend our rights. That does not seem to be working here yet. At times the leadership and residents of Ashland and Hanover County have had to band together to fight this initiative. At times it has come between us and torn us apart. I do not blame the residents of Ashland for not wanting an additional track – it would devastate downtown Ashland. And there isn't much to spare. I don't blame anyone who lives on any of the bypasses for not wanting to have their homes, farms and churches gutted like fish by the railroad. We've all been so fixated on this issue... In 1991 my wife and I were fortunate enough to move to Hanover County. In 1998 we landed in Ashland. Our home is not located on the tracks. It's not at risk like some of the other buildings and businesses. But what is at risk is a building and a business that I own on the tracks. I own a business on South Center Street, lovingly known as railroad avenue. We bought the building in 2001 and I opened Fin and Feather Pets Center of Ashland. It's a local pet store serving the Ashland and surrounding communities. And as much as I love the local patronage that I get from the citizens of Ashland and the surrounding communities, I could not survive without the support of other areas. I have

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	<p>customers that drive to my business from as far away as Chesterfield and Fredericksburg. And they come to shop at the store. They come to eat in our restaurants. They enjoy the lure of a wonderful railroad town of Ashland. The addition of a third track gives me cause for great concern. Aside from the impact it would have on our town, and more specifically our downtown area. I'm confident that my business is the most threatened by that third rail. Currently our front door is less than thirty-five feet from the railroad track. It seems unlikely there would be enough room for a real sidewalk. And that is in the front of our store. I'm concerned about the possibility of losing some of our property and even our building in order to accommodate that rail. Our frontage, its façade, the wide sidewalk, are one of the most important parts of our business as it attracts and welcomes shoppers through our front door. Your decision to place a third rail down the middle of town would destroy and quite possibly put an end to the Ashland historic district.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I love Hanover County...love Hanover County. I've lived in various counties since my husband and I have been married, 17 years, and we have probably moved 13 times – which is crazy. We have three kids so the two oldest have floated around from school to school. But when we moved to Ashland, we found our forever home. I've heard some people talk about that. I am here to speak against the eastern bypass. I'm against really all the options. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. I don't really have a speech prepared but I will read from a post that I made on social media when I was made aware of this proposal. Some individuals in the Providence area have started a Facebook group. So, I'll just read what I wrote. I live on Jamestown but frequent the two communities on Woodside almost daily. My two oldest children, sixteen and thirteen have friends in both of those communities. And about four to six times a week we cycle with my sixteen month old on the back of my bike through both neighborhoods. As I'm sure you've seen on Woodside people fly down Jamestown Road and many times it is used as a cut-thru to 54. Because this is unsafe for runners, walkers and cyclists we ride our bikes along Jamestown just so we can cruise around in those two communities. We ride the trails, we ride the streets, I get about 5-6 miles in, everybody says hi to us, and then we head back home. It's safe, I get my kids off the main roads but if you put that rail line in you cut me off. I cannot get my kids on their bikes down those roads. I can't get to Ashland because then I'd have to cross over Route 1. And that's a suicide mission. So, I'm against the eastern bypass.</p>	



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I own the Ironhorse Restaurant. We have sent some comments to the DC2RVA website. We feel it is important to be here to represent our business and town at this public meeting. In brief, we are very much against the third rail coming through the middle of downtown Ashland- as we have only heard of negative issues as it relates to our town. We agree that this would be devastating to historic downtown Ashland and our business. We are hopeful that the committee will come up with a plan that best suits our town as well as our surrounding communities.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I am the branch manager of the Ashland Library also known as the Richard S. Gillis Library. And he is the one who penned the phrase, “the center of the universe.” As Doug Riddell pointed out earlier, we are the very heart of the community. I am very concerned about a third rail going through the town of Ashland. The library is located at 201 S. Railroad Avenue, and that is the side where the proposed third rail would be located. It would have a negative impact on our town library because it would reduce access for many of our patrons who come to use our library’s services – including the use of our meeting room. We have 13,458 active borrowers and we had 92,622 visits this past fiscal year, with 274 programs offered to the public. The space in front of our library would be significantly reduced, which would eliminate the front library parking, the plaza sitting area, and the street access to the library. We are Ashland’s public library and we are very much a vital part of the community and I would encourage you to keep us in mind as you go forward.</p>	

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I presented a comment on-line so I'm not going to read this whole things. But one thing I'm in favor of is the 3-2-3. That makes sense to me. Somebody else talked about the traffic north of Fredericksburg and obviously it's much greater than it is here. I don't see any reason for three tracks through Ashland. The one thing I do want to talk about though is something that I know quite a bit about and that is a tunnel. HDR, the project consultant, has indicated that the deep rock tunnel is very expensive. And I was CEO of a consulting engineering firm until I retire about 15 years ago and I still do consulting engineering on dams and tunnels. And I can tell you that the deep rock tunnel is somewhere in the neighborhood of around 800 million bucks, so it's probably not going to work. And the reason it's so expensive is because you have to run freight trains through there. I think that one thing that hasn't been discussed at all is this agreement that has been reached between CXS and whoever – FRA, I guess – that says that CSX gets the rights to all three tracks. Originally, when this proposal was developed they were not going to get the rights to all three tracks. The speed was 110 miles per hour and now it's 90. Okay, the one alternative that does work, and I know because of my involvement in tunnels in the last 5 years, is a soft ground, shallow soft ground tunnel that would be for passenger trains only – in other words, the high speed rail trains. The run in and run out of the freight tunnel is 4 miles and the run in and run out of the passenger tunnel is 1 mile. The diameter of the passenger tunnel is 2/3 the size of the freight tunnel. So the only thing I can tell you is that a single tunnel for passenger trains makes sense.



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Take a deep breath – it’s hot. I live at South Center Street. I had a Hanover tomato sandwich for lunch. I went to Fin and Feather to buy some cat food this afternoon for my kitty cat. I took my grandson to look at the fishes on South Center Street. And I feel like my husband and I live in the middle of a quirky, thoughtful, warm, wonderful town. I think I want to put my conclusion out there before I lose it. And that is that I’m opposed most of all, to any sort of wall, train track that goes through the middle of the town. When my husband and I moved to Ashland almost a year and a half ago, we moved before Halloween. The neighbors across the street came and said we just wanted you to have a heads us about this. Something extraordinary is about to happened and indeed we had about 800 kids for Halloween. I don’t know if this is some kind of record but I think it might be. And I thinks is a kind of record in that it tells us about the quality of life in this town in this county and in this area. I have a couple of questions that I may not have time to ask but I’ve given them to the people out there. I want to know about this wall? Will there be a wall through the middle of town? Is it going to divide us? I live in a house that was built in 1858 and it has blood under the floor boards.....

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I don't have a lot to add to what has been said so I'll be brief, but I want to go on record. I live on Center Street, in a house that is 140 years old on give or take. And I want to go on record as being vehemently opposed to a third rail with a wall. The impact that would have on the town – I don't know how you could think that wouldn't be fatal for the town. I do want to bring up one aspect to the town that hasn't really been mentioned, at least directly. This town is a very caring town. There are people in town an around greater Ashland that are hurting and in need of help. This town helps. The churches and other organizations really give a hand out. So, what happens with those people when the town evaporates and fails? And I'll close with this – I was speaking with a friend of mine who is in the business development, economic development business in Richmond. And he said they've been instructed not to call it high speed rail but to call it high-er speed rail when they are speaking with companies they are trying to attract to the community. And because of that and the nature of it, he thinks that, and this is just his option, that the economic impact on the greater Richmond area will be limited - the positive impact. So if you balance the limited greater impact for greater Richmond and the devastating impact for Ashland of putting a third rack through, it just doesn't add up for to me. I'm an accountant by trade. Anyway – I'm done.

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I'm not a public speaker and I'm not very well versed on the proposed rail project. But like many other people I am confused by what I read, disappointed by the politics, and disgusted by the double-talk citizens have been fed throughout this entire project. Along with my two grown sons and my husband I live at White Oak Farm, and we are a century farm. Decedents of my husband's family have farmed their land for over a hundred years. And we make our living farming it today. White Oak Farm is directly in the path of the proposed western bypass which would effectively run through the middle of our farm. On the surface, one could believe that rail service through a farm and the disturbance to the crops, animals, pastures, wetlands, and homes, would be less disruptive than a third rail in town. I cannot speak to the cost, the safety issues or even the feasibility of any of the options but I will say this. One person's home, business or farm is no more or no less valuable than another's. I could speak about the destruction the bypass would mean to us, our business, and most importantly, our children's futures as farmers in Hanover. But to say that the proposed rail service should go here and not there, because this property is more or less important, historic or valuable than that property, would be self-serving. Therefore, unlike the Ashland Main Street Association's recent divisive email, I will not ask that citizens demand the third rail option over a bypass or vice versa. I understood that citizens of Ashland and the proposed western bypass were to pull work together and find an agreement. I leave you with this thought - Ashland is a train town. It has built its businesses, its highly sought after homes, and even its reputation on the tracks. It celebrates trains and those of us to the west celebrate with it by shopping, spending and supporting the town. This lifestyle is Ashland's and its people's choice. We to the west live differently. We choose cows rather than trains as our business....



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I'd like to voice my opposition to the third rail through the town of Ashland. I think we have described over and over the devastating impacts it would have to the town. And I would like to also say as a former elected official of the town. I've been around this process for eight or ten years and it has been difficult for the residents of Ashland to really participate in this process because it has been difficult to get into the specifics of the design. To understand when we talk about a third rail what does that actually look like, what happens to businesses, what happens to properties. We're just now starting to see some of that and this might have made this less contentious because there is so much conjecture. Finally, I think the tunnel represents a tempting, false choice. I don't think it is viable as a real option. I think we need to explore whether it is or not. But I think it's a choice lets us walk away pretending we don't have to make a hard decision when we actually do.

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We purchased a home one block west of the railroad tracks two years ago. We made a significant investment in our futures. We spend twelve months renovating the home – putting in a large sum of money renovating it. We moved in it about a year ago this month. Living one block from the southbound side of Center Street, we are concerned that most of the existing southbound vehicle traffic will end up being diverted and end up on Duncan Street – that will have a significant impact on the future value of our investment. We’re both adamantly opposed to the construction of a third rail. The key factor for our move into town was to locate a home that allows us to age in place, in an area where restaurants, shopping, health care, many services are in walking distance or at the very least at a low speed drive. Something particularly, even if we don’t get autonomous cars, will be important to me when I’m fumbling around at age eighty. Adding a third rail through the town of Ashland is going to eliminate virtually all of the retail services that attracted us here initially and may ultimately lead to the death spiral that [another member] referred to earlier. There are alternatives that have been presented, including some that have already been screened, and should be reexamined. A few that have fewer negative social and economic impacts, again, on humans. I’m also concerned about the fact that the original/last presentation we saw had a lot of federal standards that had been reviewed - nothing about Americans with Disabilities Act. Seems to me that the ADA compliance on the third rail may affect the 4 foot width that is required on your sidewalks. If that wasn’t considered – it should be. And if not, then the public ought to be informed as to why not. Finally, regarding the station’s impact – Ashland’s been adamant that our willingness to entertain a new station is based solely on keeping the third track out of town. As part of this, can you confirm the new station will not pave the way for the third rail?



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I am a resident of the Providence subdivision in Hanover County. I have three points. One is I want to voice my opposition to the Eastern Bypass through Washington Lacey Park and also opposition to the third rail Ashland. Two, I want to voice support for additional research into the Buckingham Branch option. Third, I want to propose a new option for an eastern bypass that has not been considered which I think that could maybe could gain community support. There's an orange option. The opposition to that orange option is on the east of 95. But what if this committee would consider the orange option on the west of I-95, and then use the I-95 median to connect the two pieces. I think that maybe that option may gain community support and would be cheaper than a tunnel.

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I was born and raised here in Ashland more decades that I care to admit to. Mayor Foley, I told you a year and a half ago that this is what was going to be what would happen – didn't I. I take offense when I'm told that we shouldn't put personal feelings in on this decision on what happens to my home town, because this is personal as you've heard tonight. So I thought I would just leave it to facts. I think everybody's done a good job on that part. I want to bring up a gentleman's name – his name is Ralph Vartabedian, he's a Los Angeles Times reporter. And since 2009 he has worked very hard at following the same problem that is going on in LA. So, I'm going to read something that he wrote January 13 and I'd be happy to post all this for you. In January 2012 the rail authority said it would start construction in Fresno, California by June of 2012. But it hadn't purchased a single piece by June of 2012. Farmer had protested from the start of 2009 saying that the route would cut diagonally through some of best nation's fertile acreage, devastating their operations. I think I've heard that here too. Actual construction did not start until mid-2014. These are facts – I think that is what I was asked to give so I'm giving you those. And at a much slower pace in 2014 than is sustainable to reach any goals that the FRA and the Federal Rails Ports says they can possibly meet as of January 2017. February 2016 the rail authority had expected to hand over 100% of the parcels in Fresno, California segment by June of 2018. They pushed that back to 2019 and they don't think that is going to happen. I think I've heard this before. Delays cost money. Even after 5 years of efforts to buy property the authority still lacks 25% of the parcels. This is what I want to get to. Even after 5 years of efforts to buy property the authority still lacks 25% of the parcels for the 29-mile section for Madera to Fresno and 50 % of the parcels needed... So I repeat the story – it's in Texas, it's in Florida. CSX, stay on to your property and leave us of those that love our land alone. Put it underground. I think this is a great report. And I will say this – time is money. You're going to hit overruns with everybody suing you. I'm saying this is too expensive...



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>This whole process started with letters to people living in Western Hanover. My sister did not get a letter though she lives 300 feet from the rail. Since the initial notice we've calmed down because you've come to listen to us from D.C. but there is still a lot we do not understand. I know everyone will work together to make a decision. I've been working with Amtrak and the station to organize a Santa day trip to Williamsburg. We need to make the track ADA compliant because without it the Santa trip is delayed at least 25 minutes. Hopefully this will be addressed.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>Thanks to everyone who actually stayed to the end with us. I can't tell you how much I've learned tonight. I also want to share with you, and my friend, Doug Riddell started earlier with history. This whole process started with letters that came to people that lived in western Hanover. My sister did not get one. Yet my sister's property was going to be 300 feet from a proposed rail line that was planned on Google Earth. We were all ready to shoot the messenger. The opposite has actually happened. You have come down from DC and you have listened to us. The first meeting was at the theater. We calmed down. Everyone calmed down. There are still a lot more things that we don't understand. I live at 315 Myrtle Street and I own Tiny Tim's Trains and Toys on the tracks. I am so thrilled to be in Ashland. I know that everyone will work to come out with the right decision. But I want to look more to the near future than the far future. Our streetscape is wonderful, but we still have a problem with our station. I am the proud person that has, for the past three years, working with Amtrak and starting to try and recreate something very, very special. In Richmond, we used to have the Santa-trains. This year, if all goes well, I will have two trips and 244 people who will be riding with Santa and Virginia's legendary Snow Queen to Williamsburg on a day trip in December. Last year, we had someone afraid to climb two steps – they had to roll out the ADA lift. That delayed our departure for 25 minutes from the station. I understand that we have a local concrete manufacturer and folks who might be able to solve that problem with the minimum of costs and a ramp that will go up two steps. So this year, none of my passengers will be afraid.</p>	



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I'm from Beaver Dam and I've spoken to some people here and I've heard what you've said tonight. And I've got a question about the Buckingham Branch. Did I hear you say that it could be built so that it could handle a double decker freight trains? I think that that is a good situation for everyone in the community. I think that the high speed rail is important but I'd like to see it go into Buckingham Branch. And that's away from Ashland and a long ways away from Ashland.</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I own property at 106 Railroad Avenue which is the historic Hughes Drug Store, which was built in 1898. I am opposed, of course, to the Center Street rail and third rail and all those things. But, I'm also thinking, we've got 16 billion and Amtrak that loses money every year. What would it look like if we spent that 16 billion and spent it on schools and nice places for people to live? Might that be a better use of 60 billion dollars?</p>	
<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>I'm from Montpelier. I used to be from Ashland. We moved down here from DC. We lived here for about a year and fell in love with the town. We still love the town and still come to visit the town every weekend, every day that we have an opportunity to – we love it. We love that our kids have a town they can call home, and be in love with and everything. I think this town is worth protecting. And even though I'm from the west I don't want anyone from the east to lose their houses. I don't want you to lose your park. I don't want anybody in the middle of town to lose. I think, all of us together, east, west and center can come together and say our town is worth something and we should all protect it. And not say, do it to them or, do it to them or to the middle. But I think we should all stand together, because Ashland is worth fighting for.</p>	



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<p>CAC Meeting #3</p>	<p>There's two things, as I sat and listened to everybody speak today, that came to mind. One is integrity – it's what you do when no one's watching. You guys are going to make all these decisions behind closed doors with none of us watching. And two is legacy. What will be your legacy from the decision you chose to make. There's a lot of people that have lived in this town longer than I have been alive. I want a hundred year old home. I don't want anybody's.... again, the gentlemen who spoke before me.... I don't want anybody's property to be damaged, hurt or anything like that. Please just remember the decision that you make – you will be gone. Your children, if you have them, my children, that live in this area, will have to deal with this, and a lot of other people's children. Just please think about it before you make a rash decision.</p>	
<p>14623 7/25 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am greatly disturbed that the DRPT is continuing to pursue a third rail through the Town of Ashland. Because of the long-term financial impact on housing values next to the rail lines, tourism and the Main Street Program as well as convenience of crossing the tracks in town (when a train isn't coming), and just every day living in the community (I am not addressing the by-pass since that apparently is no longer on the table)--I strongly support the option of building a tunnel in the granite below the town. Yes, I understand that this is probably the most costly option financially, but it would have the least impact on lives and culture than any other alternatives. DPRT needs to place a higher value on the effects on community overall instead of forcing an issue that is not wanted and will further create ill will.</p> <p>The tunnel, in spite of cost, has many advantages in that you could actually create a tunnel large enough to accommodate two rail lines, there would be no issue with rail crossings, nor would there be any issue of train speed. Therefore, the rail companies could easily accommodate faster and longer freight trains and possibly express commuter trains</p>	<p>Alignments-Ashland, Rail Operations, Alternatives</p>



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<p>14624 7/25 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am a resident of Woodside Estates on Woodside Lane. Just recently, I was made aware of the proposal for an eastern bypass to accommodate a third Ashland rail and was appalled that I am just now being informed about this matter as this would literally be in my backyard. My husband and two kids recently moved from the Glen Allen area to Woodside Estates two years ago. We were drawn to the serene location of Woodside Estates that is offered by Washington Lacy Park that surrounds our community. We love that we are able to just walk out our doors and explore the trails that the park offers whether on foot or bike. Often times, we will see horses along the trail and even walking down Woodside Lane, of which the back of our home faces. This neighborhood provides the many amenities we were looking for without the hustle and bustle of the short pump area. I love to sit out on my porch and listen to the wildlife that is provided by the forest and pristine wetlands and the trees of Washington Lacy Park create a natural barrier to the noise of I-95. With an eastern bypass, all of this serenity would be lost and as I sit out on my porch, I would no longer have the view of endless trees, but instead of concrete walls. I am sure you understand my concern as no one would want such a view. Please do not allow our community to be devastated in such a manner. Woodside Lane is home to two fast growing communities (Providence and Woodside Estates - about 400 homes) that are providing a significant amount of tax revenue for the county. If this eastern bypass were approved, the values of our homes would take a devastating hit and reduce the amount of county revenue.</p> <p>Additionally, Washington-Lacy Park has a huge historical significance. Washington Lacy was the 17th child born to two slaves. Washington rose from slavery and eventually purchased ten acres of land and his sister purchased 26 acres on which to raise horses. That parcel of land comprises part of the park that is named to honor him and his descendants populate the small, close knit African American community along Jamestown Road, which intersects with Woodside Lane in the park. What a devastation this would be to the community if this park were moved to accommodate a train.</p> <p>Ideally, I support no third rail as I feel it would tear the Ashland community apart and dampen the revitalization of the city of Ashland, but I implore you in ensuring that an eastern bypass option is taken off the table. I appreciate your time.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Parks/Recreation, Historic Resources, Economics</p>
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<p>14627 7/25 Web Comment</p>	<p>I am writing to you from the serenity of my backyard patio in the Providence Subdivision off of Woodside Lane in Ashland, VA. I am currently sitting here listening to children playing in the front of my house, birds are chirping, hummingbirds are sipping from our feeder, frogs are pleasantly croaking and the fountain in the retention pond beside my house is constantly flowing. The air is fresh and the breeze is slight. If I wanted to I could go for a walk or a run at any given moment out of my neighborhood right along Woodside Lane. From there I could continue down to walk/hike/run/bike in Washington Lacy Park. If I was a horse owner I would even have the option of going to get my horses and riding them on the trails of Washington Lacy Park. Doesn't this all sound delightful? That's because it truly is.</p> <p>My family was the first family to move into Providence. And this neighborhood came along at a time in our lives where we truly needed divine Providence. You see, we owned a home on the Illinois side of St. Louis that we could not sell. My husband moved here in 2012 for a position at the Federal Reserve of Richmond. We lived in Hanover County for years prior to the job transfer to St. Louis and we wanted to come back to the East Coast. After accepting the position in Richmond, my husband moved away, leaving me with our three children (who at the time were ages 9, 6 and 3). After trying unsuccessfully for months and growing weary of the nearly 900 mile separation between us, we gave up trying to sell our home and left, switching from trying to sell it to desperately trying just to rent it out.</p> <p>Once all five of us were back in Hanover County we ended up renting a home so that we could all be under the same roof. One winter day right before Christmas our whole family had been Christmas Caroling at a local nursing home in Ashland. We decided to go for a drive afterwards to take the children to look at Christmas lights. We ended up on Woodside Lane and passed a sign that read, "Providence-Coming Soon". My husband called the number listed on the sign the very next day and so our life here in Providence began. Here we have met kind and interesting people and our children have thrived in Hanover County's wonderful schools. We have enjoyed restaurants in Ashland and we have gone to the Ashland Library at least weekly. We have attended the Ashland Strawberry Faire and we exercise at the Patrick Henry YMCA. Our children have loved riding bikes around our neighborhood. We have personally seen numerous turtles, geese, snakes, dragonflies, various species of birds and deer. We</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Parks/Recreation, Community Facilitates & Services</p>
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have walked and run to Woodside Estates and Washington Lacy Park. And we walk almost daily our own neighborhood's streets and trails simply because we enjoy being here in nature. This is what Providence means to our family. This area is home to hundreds of other families very similar to ours. We are here and we care about our community, our roads, our trails, our homes, our wildlife, our safety and our environment. Please take my family's story into account when you are thinking about the proposed high speed rail and the Eastern Bypass option.

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<p>14659 7/26 Web Comment</p>	<p>First off, I would like to thank the committee for soliciting comments from the community and not hastily making seemingly unilateral decisions that would impact the areas in and around Ashland in a vacuum. I would, however, like to express my concern over the continued reevaluation of previously excluded alternatives, specifically the "Eastern Bypass Alternatives."</p> <p>The previous exclusion of these eastern options has led to the imbalance of comments heavily weighted against any western or central alternatives. Many individuals who would be negatively impacted by any eastern bypass alternative have offered support to their partners in opposition to western or central options, again heavily skewing the perceived public impact simply due to the fact that the eastern options were, based upon materials present on your website, "off of the table."</p> <p>Now that one or more eastern routes are being reconsidered, those of us who would be potentially impacted must now play "catch-up", voicing our opinions much later in the decision making process. NIMBY - or "Not In My Back Yard" is an expected response to proposed projects of such scale, complexity, potential disruption, decrease in quality of life and property values. Progress always has a cost, and we individually place more intrinsic concern, weight, value, and importance on impacts to our lives, often to the detriment of others.</p> <p>In order to counteract this NIMBY response, the DRPT must make decisions in accordance with Federal, State, and Local laws and policies to ensure that we do not miss the "forest for the trees." Parks (of any type), historic sites, private property acquisitions/displacements, wetlands, existing infrastructure and the actual/potential disruption thereof (roads and utilities) all have a higher subjective rather than objective value (cost to the community).</p> <p>Referencing infrastructure, it appears as if the eastern bypass would require at least two crossings of Route 1, at least two crossings of I-95, and several other crossings of feeder and arterial roads. Be they elevated, at grade, or below grade, the construction of each of these crossings will cause significant long-term delays, increased commute times, and even more of the already observed gridlock seen every day on I-95.</p> <p>In addition to the impact on vehicle traffic, the proposed eastern bypass will also require the relocation of at least one electric substation along with the relocation of many portions of the high-voltage transmission lines feeding the town, most of our neighborhoods, and Kings Dominion. So we all (western, central, and eastern) now have to deal with years of incremental power outages as</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Traffic/Safety, Utilities, Cumulative Impacts</p>
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well? What has been offered as a response to this concern? Surely any loss of power to Kings Dominion alone would cause a major decrease in tax revenues brought in from their operation. Finally, there is the simple fact that trains prefer (need) the most stable and "level" foundation possible. When comparing terrain in each of the proposed corridors, it seems as if the easiest route to take would be the one that does not require wetland and riparian crossings and does not require significant modifications to the terrain to create a navigable grade. The eastern bypass route is by no means the driest, most level, or stable option.

I have not heard a single person express a strong or even mild desire for any modifications to the rails in and around Ashland (CSX and Amtrak excluded, of course). While stated as an alternative, I do not realistically believe that the "no build" option will be considered, given corporate interests over the benefit of community choice (see cable/internet provider franchise agreements and contracts negotiated with the county as an example).

There comes a time when the community must make its voice heard, and I hope this is happening. Regardless of what option is chosen there will be "winners" and "losers." Please understand that, based upon the plethora of comments sent in, it is overwhelmingly apparent that homeowners, farmers, schools, business owners, and the Town of Ashland itself all have quite a lot to lose (in taxes, historic preservation, environmental disruption, quality of life, business revenue, safety, tranquility, and ease of mobility). If we are to bear all of these costs, how can we ever be the "winners" in this situation? Progress has a cost, but this cost should not be placed solely on the shoulders of Hanover/Ashland citizens.

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<p>14662 7/27 Web Comment</p>	<p>I'm writing about the poor communication regarding people adversely affected by this project. For example, here is my story. Western Bypass 1st alert – My property not within 500ft of the rail path, so I wasn't notified. I wasn't very happy to learn it was 700ft, WAY too close. I live a mile from the tracks for a reason. May 2016 – I get THE letter from DRPT. Due to adjustments to the Western Bypass the rail would now be cutting through my driveway! I spent a year wondering if my house would be bulldozed. May 2017- I discover on the DRPT website that there is a document called the Archaeological and Architectural Phase 1A Study for the Ashland Bypass Segment. Since I read any document concerning DC2RVA, I waded thru this one, where I discover that an “access spur” running thru my property is proposed so my neighbors and I can access our homes, therefore saving them from being bulldozed. So now if the Western Bypass happens, I not only have trains running thru my property, but also a road with neighborhood traffic. I WOULD RATHER HAVE PREFERRED MY HOUSE BEING BULLDOZED. There are other homes with new access roads so they can reach their property. Do they know?</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Specific Landowner Issues</p>
<p>14665 7/28 Web Comment</p>	<p>Ashland, RMC, and Hanover should all help the DRPT by urging them to abandon the DC2RVA Ashland area segment. This would allow them to focus more on the more beneficial areas. If in 20 years the DRPT comes back and says "We need to talk again", OK. Sounds fair enough. Would be a good consensus.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland</p>
<p>14667 7/29 Web Comment</p>	<p>My thoughts on the third rail thru Ashland, S. Center St new alignment idea Start the new S. Center St at Murtle. People along the new alignment would have to give up some of their fronts yards to allow some of their neighbors to access their homes. Small price to pay. This would save the destruction of the businesses along S. Center St, which would truly be sad.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland</p>



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<p>14677 8/2 Web Comment</p>	<p>Most of the people we know have heard about our fight to save the family farm, our home, heritage, legacy, and way of life. The DRPT has uncoupled our area from the DC2RVA rail recommendation for further study, and have been holding [now 3 of 4] meetings. Before the last meeting, it was announced residents would be given 3 minutes to speak. It was cut to 2 minutes</p> <p>"Here are the facts: My name is Kevin Tobin. Me, my wife, my brother-in-law, and father-in-law spent 2½ years working every night and weekend to build a log home on the 150-year-old Staton Family Farm -- Falling Creek Farm. May not mean very much to you [DRPT], but our forever home means the world to me, my wife and my boys Jamaeson and Liam.</p> <p>I live 40 minutes from where I work because Ashland offers something not many other places can. I don't mind the commute because I love my work and love where I live. This is being threatened in very real ways as a result of "high speed rail".</p> <p>As a family, we're not bracing ourselves to lose part of our land, or peace, for something worthwhile. We're not talking about a new park, a war memorial, or bike path. We're talking about a Western Bypass with (3) sets of rails, (2) 16' tall fences, and 80 trains a day right through the middle of our existence.</p> <p>The Tobins and Statons will not benefit from the rail, and neither will anyone else in the room. The only ones who benefit from all this is CSX. This project will further line their pockets. Selling this project as "high speed rail" is a marketing ploy. Amtrak is a 45 year old company with 80 year old technology that loses hundreds of millions of dollars every year, subsidized by the Federal and State Governments. I've read Amtrak referred to as a "mobile moneyburning machine". By saving less than 20 minutes in the commute from Richmond to DC, do they think THIS project will finally make it possible for them to stand on their own two feet? I think not.</p> <p>Here's how eminent domain works. The government will take what it wants and pay market value for those lost acres. Market value is a funny thing because the instant someone decides to draw a line through your farm for a railroad, the land automatically "becomes" remarkably less valuable. By the time the new rails are added, all of the land underneath them is blighted, worthless. It's a pretty slick way to pay pennies on the dollar for a tremendous amount of other people's land against their wills. The primary responsibility of a government is to defend our land and defend our rights. Doesn't seem to be working yet!</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Farmland, Purpose and Need, Displacements Res/Comm</p>
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At times the residents and leadership of Ashland and Hanover County have had to band together to fight this initiative. At times it has come between us and torn us apart. I don't blame the residents of Ashland for not wanting the additional track – it would devastate downtown Ashland, and there isn't much to spare. I don't blame anyone who lives on any of the proposed bypasses for not wanting to have their homes, farms and churches gutted like fish by a railroad.

We all have been so fixated on finding the “best solution” to this issue, be it a tunnel, bypass or third rail, we've forgotten to ask why ANY of this necessary. This whole mess, and I mean MESS, is based upon the assumptions in a report that more and more stuff will be moved by rail and people will suddenly embrace the train, despite gas prices under \$2 a gallon. Every energy company in the US is moving away from coal and coal trains. Amtrak has consistently lost billions of dollars and there's no hope in sight of that changing. This is the solution to a problem that does NOT need solving.

The term "railroaded" means “having something forced through, either unjustly or without proper regard for those affected. It clearly has its origins in analogy to the way early railroads were built, often running straight through private lands and geographic features.” Money talks and our rights have walked. We feel Railroaded!”



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<p>14680 8/2 Web Comment</p>	<p>I attended the DC2RVA meeting on 7/24 held at RMC in Ashland. I appreciated the information the DC2RAVA provided concerning the High Speed Rail and reviewing the other options given to the area. I live in the Ashland area, the side where the Western bypass is an option. I have previously express my thoughts concerning the massive effect towards the Western bypass. Yes, no one including myself want to see the Town of Ashland nor the Eastern side(Buckingham Route) along with the Western side to deal with the High Speed Rail. However, in response to last evening meeting I was a little concern and upset.</p> <p>I do respect everyone's' opinion but to point fingers and push the decision to one side or the other was up setting. We should all work together to decide the less cost and the lease impact it would have on everyone involved.</p> <p>To have your citizens to stand up and say we have lived in Ashland along the tracks for 1 to 14 years or those talking for the Woodside / Providence area who have move and lived for a couple of years is a little upsetting wanting to push the option to the Western bypass. Then to speak of Historical areas, was even more upsetting.</p> <p>The trains tracks in the Ashland have been there since the Civil War long before any of the speakers who spoke have live there or probably born. The tracks along with several of the existing homesteads, families and their decedents living on the Western bypass still operate on Century Farms; recognized by the Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>Century Farms and several on the Civil War homes are still standing along with the ancestor families buried on the farms. Decedents who remember stories told by their ancestors from one generation to another about the trains coming through Ashland over 100 years ago and the events that took place over time, not those individuals who claimed to lived in Ashland for 1-14 or 20 years. This is our heritage given to us from generation to generation.</p> <p>Century Farms are still in operation and producing in the Western bypass by decedents who have survived through the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and the Depression Years. Then speaking of the historical houses built along the track; these houses have been there just as long as the trains were coming through the town which then it included the old trolley rail track along side of the existing current tracks. To say by adding the 3rd rail in Ashland would</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Farmland, Historic Resources</p>
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	<p>Disrupt the economy, well, it would also, disrupt the farmers and their income. It certainly did cause misfortune over 100 years ago. Don't be pointing the fingers lets try to find a solution where everything will be preserved. Thank you.</p>	
<p>14688 7/25 Email</p>	<p>Hi Randy, Good meeting last night. I arrived a little late and was consequently near the bottom of the public comment list. I was in the rear balcony for most of the meeting and just came down the public comment. I moved from the Museum District to the Providence Subdivision in Hanover about a year ago. We have an Ashland Zip: 23005, but are just outside the town limits for Ashland near Washington Lacy Park. Prior to the meeting last night, I received a flyer from community activists East of I-95 which had the "Orange" route on the attached map, but not some of the other Eastern Bypass options which used the I- 95 median so that was what I was basing my comments off of. On looking at the online DC2RVA map (attached), my comment may be one of the one of the "Black" options already considered, but not advanced, I am not sure. In any event, I have attached a simple figure for an alternative Eastern Bypass which combines parts of existing alternatives combining the "Orange" alternative west of I-95 with the I-95 Median alternative in between. My thought is this would avoid the controversial Washington Lacy Park and Wetlands area associated with the "Orange" alternative east of I-95 and therefore potentially be able to gain broad community support from those living West of Ashland, in the town of Ashland, and those living East of I-95. And it would be cheaper and more feasible than a tunnel under Ashland. Thanks, Paul</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland</p>



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<p>14694 7/31 Letter</p>	<p>Dear Ms. Stock, The Providence Homeowners' Association, Inc. ("Providence") is the homeowners' association for a 211 home community located off of Woodside Road, at Route 54 in Ashland, VA. This letter is to document Providence's objection to the proposed Eastern Route for the DC2RVa high speed rail project ("Eastern Route"). Concerns regarding the Eastern Route stem from the impact its location would have to Washington Lacy Park and other significant cultural resources in the Eastern Route vicinity. An underground option would be the preferred option. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and prompt attention to this matter. Should there be any questions or if you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at gwmoore@hhhunt.com or 804-762-4800 x213. Sincerely,</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland</p>
<p>14700 8/7 Web Comment</p>	<p>It is real interesting to me that the town and the west side got a seat on the CAC and then pushed to move the route over the east side where we not only do not have a seat at the table but until recently havent been coming to the meetings because we were told that the east was not an option. Not including the approx 600 families that will be withing one block of the proposed eastern route was not only poor planning but opens up the CAC to a huge liability in the form of a class action suit for failure to allow representation I would think. We need to have Doug Riddell added to the CAC ASAP please.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland</p>
<p>14701 8/7 Web Comment</p>	<p>When can we get a detailed map of option AEB3 in Ashland/Hanover? This option hasn't been discussed at any CAC thus far.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland</p>



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<p>14702 8/4 Email</p>	<p>Dear Ms. Stock: Thank you so kindly for the above email concerning our recent comment on the DC2RVA rail project. I appreciate the fact that you read the comment and took the time to write. We have attended the monthly meetings and hope to be at the August gathering. I would like to offer the following remarks regarding the July meeting at RMC...My family and I attended and appreciated the opportunity to comment publicly about the rail project. After reading that there would be 2-3 minutes allowed per person who signed up to speak, I spent some time writing my comments down so I could time myself and ensure that I would not take longer than allowed. My comments were 2 minutes 15 seconds. However, when the time came to speak, you will remember that each person was given only 2 minutes and was then cut off. I understand there were lots of people to hear from, but may I say this was terribly unfair to those of us who were told we could speak for 2-3 minutes. I was cut off mid-sentence as were the other speakers. Needless to say there was no time to wrap up our comments and draw them to a close.</p> <p>In addition to this, the room was hot, and my son and husband had to stand for most of the 3 hour meeting. It's surely terribly difficult to guess how many people will attend, but it seems that when the public is invited and will have an opportunity to speak at a meeting addressing such a contentious subject, better arrangements should have been made. It would have been much better to have a room too large than too small.</p> <p>I hope your office will keep these issues in mind for future meetings. When things like this happen, it gives the impression of poor planning and a certain disregard for the public. That said, I would like to mention how accommodating and polite the staff greeting the attendees was and I appreciated that. Again, thanks for your email, and we look forward to the time when this entire issue is laid to rest.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Public Involvement</p>
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<p>8/7 Letter</p>	<p>Dear Mrs. Stock,</p> <p>The home owners of the neighborhoods that comprise the Woodside corridor (Jamestown Road, Woodside Estates, Providence, and associated residential areas) have organized, and in a meeting held Saturday, August 5 at Washington Lacy Park, we elected a board of citizens from each area to insure that we are not left out of discussions regarding route adoptions for the DC2RVA high speed rail project, most especially an route planned east of I-95.</p> <p>Our most pressing concern is that we have no representation on the CAC. While the Town of Ashland and Randolph-Macon College have representatives, we on the east side of I-95, have only those appointed by the Hanover Board of Supervisors, which is a group consisting entirely of persons who live in, or have personal interests tied directly to, that portion of Hanover County west of Ashland. They have a vested interest in preventing a western bypass, just as those who live within the town limits of Ashland oppose any option that would adversely affect their jurisdiction.</p> <p>We neither wish to recommend a western bypass, nor an expanded right of way through the downtown Ashland core. We simply want to make sure that before considering any option, the impact on the nearly 500 homeowners in the two new densely populated subdivisions of Woodside Estates and Providence and our neighboring residential areas, is noted. At this time, it appears that those who are supposed to be representing us, in fact are using their influence to urge adoption of a route engineered to take a path through Washington Lacy Park, only a few hundred yards from homes that have just been completed, and others that are either under construction or in the planning stages. We were led to believe that an eastern bypass option had been taken off of the table, and for that reason, we felt no reason to enter into the discussion.</p> <p>The members of our board voted to ask that I be seated as a member of the CAC for the purpose of representing residents east of I-95. I would gladly volunteer to do so, and I feel that my personal knowledge of rail operations in the area would serve to make the CAC better enabled to make informed decisions and realistic recommendations that if nothing else, would eliminate proposals that are impractical from a railroad operating standpoint.</p> <p>Is VDRPT in a position to ask the CAC to add a seat to their group, or shall the residents east of I-95 simply be forced to sit idly while those with conflicting interests be allowed to determine the agenda? We would appreciate your thought on the matter.</p>	<p>Alignments – Ashland, Public Involvement</p>
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