



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CAC Meeting July 24, 2017
DRPT Passenger Rail Tier II EIS

Source	Comment	Topics
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	So they don't want to let us look at anything we want to evaluate.	Alignments
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	How can rails between lanes of I-95 impact the environment more than the highway already does?	Conservation
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	The community and environmental impact of another rail (either east through Ashland or through the center) would seem to be overwhelmingly greater than other alternatives presented. Reconsideration of eastern possibilities should be done – especially the possibility of relocating the "Park"	Conservation, Alignments
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	It appears an eastern bypass along 95 is the less obtrusive. Why destroy the town or the farm lands?	Farmland
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	A third rail or 3-2-3 alignment through town would have devastating effects on the town of Ashland. It seems like a Western Bypass would make more sense, especially since there seems to be a need to build a temporary bypass in the west anyway – why not just build the permanent route to bypass town – or run 1 or 2 rails west to accommodate high speed needs. No high speed through Ashland. No new tracks in Ashland. 3 years to destroy would kill all businesses in Ashland.	Alternatives
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	If no restrictions where would the rail go and why? Have any rail locations been ruled out and why?	Rail Operations



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Received June 26 CAC Meeting	A question rather than a comment. The high speed rail is for passenger trains. The rail will be used by Amtrak and CSX. How will the increase in speed for Amtrak be monitored/tracked so as not to interfere with CSX trains which can be extremely long. If I understand correctly there will be no "actual" high speed through Ashland.	Rail Operations
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	Within the dispatched operations model, as its current state, does the model reflect today's actual on-time performance, by season of passenger trains? Or, is it based on expectations?	Rail Operations
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	No third rail or 3-2-3. As a homeowner on Center St. I fully understand how either option will make the center of town practically uninhabitable.	Alternatives
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	No third rail or 3-2-3 for Ashland! As a resident living on the eastern side of the tracks, I have grave concerns about the safety of the third rail and its proximity to my home. How would I access my home? Would DC2RVA purchase my home under the right of eminent domain? Have you considered how many families would be displaced? Please provide expected number of trains both passenger and freight extrapolated to 2035 (that would be traveling through Ashland) Is this project being driven primarily by CSX's desire to move more freight due to improvements to the Panama Canal? What is the actual right-of-way currently in place for the current tracks? Reconsider the Buckingham Branch!	Alternatives, Alignments
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	No third rail – no 3-2-3 – neither are acceptable options for the town of Ashland.	Alternatives
Received June 26 CAC Meeting	Carey Burch mentioned that using any of the Buckingham options may require the railroad "to step outside the existing right of way" To improve curves and to improve speed. In Mark Hemphill's modeling presentation, I believe he indicated the Buckingham Branch options had not been modeled. If true, how does DRPT know the curves need improvement	Alternatives, Rail Operations



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<p>Received June 26 CAC Meeting</p>	<p>If you state you are not taking comments from the public you should abide by that rule. For those who are abiding by that rule, we are at a disadvantage to those who asked questions.</p>	<p>General</p>
<p>Received June 26 CAC Meeting</p>	<p>Please do not choose to follow either of the 2 plans – the third rail or the 3-2-3 plan. Either of these plans would destroy Ashland, our health, our safety, economy, culture, and quality of life. We traveled from New York’s Penn Station to Ashland last Thursday in day light. We do that trip as often as possible. There is no where between Ashland and New York like the town of Ashland. Nowhere else has homes, businesses, a college, and this place where people worship, gather, live, work, shop, learn, and live together so close to the train tracks. Thus your decision about high-speed rail will have serious consequences for many people for many years to come. Please consider these factors in your discussion and decision.</p> <p>Please reconsider the Eastern bypass. How can you equal the impact of your alternatives factors each as quality of life, safety, property, businesses, entertainment, homes, communities, college, tourists, risk factors compare of the wetlands? As you use wetlands to eliminate the eastern bypass)</p>	<p>Alignments, Alternatives</p>
<p>Received June 26 CAC Meeting</p>	<p>A third rail through the town of Ashland would destroy both a historic town and a historic college campus. It’s hard to believe that such destruction could be approved in the name of moderately improved passenger rail service.</p>	<p>Historic Resources, Alignments</p>
<p>Received June 26 CAC Meeting</p>	<p>Historic properties straddle the tracks. High speed rail would destroy them. We are in the flood zone in the wetlands. Changing the rail road would harm the environment. The western bypass also cuts through historic and environmentally important properties. Spend the money and follow 95. Consider the tunnel versus destroying property. Tell us the truth – is the cost the only consideration? How can you be sure the extra trains are really needed 20 years from now?</p>	<p>Historic Resources, Cost</p>
<p>Received June 26 CAC Meeting</p>	<p>It is unthinkable to divide a town with such historic significance and deprive the US- the world! – of this rare commodity – a congenial, connected, diverse community. Stop switching train engines in DC and you will save an hour of travel time versus the 15 minutes for freight trains by dividing the town of Ashland. Keep them how they are and just add more passenger trains. Divert freight trains. The existing tracks cut through wetlands. I would like proof that NONE of the existing tracks or planned changes run through parks, not just in Hanover but coast to coast. Have you considered in your 20 year post-completion study, the effect of travelers and other transportation transitions? Maybe...trains won’t be as popular. Consider the tunnel AGAIN.</p>	<p>Historic Resources</p>



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<p>Received on DC2RVA project email</p>	<p>To DRPT Ashland-Hanover High Speed Rail Committee</p> <p>This comment is predominately about a possible tunnel under the CSX right of way through Ashland. Before I discuss this topic, however, my preference would be the two tracks through Ashland alternative. I understand this would be a bottleneck in the three track system planned for Washington to Richmond. But when the alternatives are considered, including cost and the disruption to the Town of Ashland, it has much merit. One important fact to remember is that the number of trains south of Spotsylvania-Fredericksburg is significantly less than north thereof. So with good operational planning and dispatching of trains I believe the two track bottleneck may prove to be satisfactory. This approach would also allow the Amtrak station to remain at its' present location with improved platforms and train warning signs.</p> <p>If the two track alternative is not possible, then a passenger train only tunnel should be considered. I understand the negotiated agreement with CSX is that they must have access to all tracks: and this passenger train only tunnel would preclude CSX freight trains from using this track. But as a good corporate citizen I hope they would be open to negotiation on this issue. This alternative would also allow the high speed trains to avoid Ashland. The other point to remember is that the original plan for high speed rail between Richmond and Washington was for a passenger train speed of 110 mph not 90 as now planned. This reduction in speed was because CSX freight trains could not use a track whose geometry allowed 110 mph so CSX has already impacted the project negatively from the high speed rail perspective.</p> <p>The tunnel option is viable, although the consultant, HDR has not expressed support for this alternative. They indicated they considered a deep tunnel in rock and that it was not economically feasible. I agree the deep tunnel is not feasible because: 1) they planned for a very large diameter tunnel that would accommodate double stack trains and 2) the entrance and exit slopes to reach the tunnel grade for freight trains requires a maximum 1 percent which means the entrance tracks to the tunnel would be over four miles long. The passenger train only tunnel would be 2/3 the diameter of the freight train tunnel and the slopes into and out of the tunnel could be 3 percent. This slope reduces the length of the entrance and exit slopes to less than 1/4 of the freight train tunnel. The other important feature of the passenger train tunnel is that it would be predominately a soft ground tunnel excavated by a tunnel boring machine. Grouting would likely be required under the tracks to reduce potential settlement caused by the tunnel and this would add cost but it would be much less costly than the freight train tunnel.</p> <p>I am a retired CEO of a consulting engineering firm which has a tunnel design group. I'm also familiar with tunnel design having been involved with the several tunnels for large dam projects. I can say unequivocally that a soft ground tunnel is feasible and should be considered as an alternative. It will cost more than adding a third track through Ashland but when the detrimental costs to the Town are added to the third track alternative, it would be viable.</p> <p>Thanks for considering comment.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Alignments</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>I am opposed to any potential high-speed rail line coming through the eastern side of Ashland. I thought the eastern corridor option was eliminated two years ago due to costs and environmental concerns. I attended the 6/26/17 CAC meeting; committee members and Hanover County supervisors are lobbying to bring the eastern corridor back on the table. It is dishonorable that the CAC has no representation from the east. Just because there are loud voices in the west and downtown does not mean putting the corridor in the east is a better alternative.</p>	<p>Alternative/Alignment</p>



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Received on DC2RVA project website	As a resident of Providence subdivision in Hanover. I DO NOT WANT THE EASTERN BYPASS!!! This puts trains between me and 95, more noise, lower home values and the money that is being spent to make the intersection at Woodside and 54 safer would be null and void! If traffic backed up to 95 ramps during lane closures on 54 what do you think it will do when trains taking 10 minutes to pass through will do?	Alternative/Alignment
Received on DC2RVA project website	The Town of Ashland was built to be a railroad town. Enhancing the existing tracks by building above or below them would do the least amount of damage to the surrounding area. Moreover, the trains already come through town. An Eastern bypass would damage wetlands and wildlife and communities unnecessarily.	Alignment
Received on DC2RVA project website	Concern is about the Bypass around Ashland (AEB 1 or 2) IS this still a possible route?	Alternative
Received on DC2RVA project website	Strongly oppose the 3rd Rail and 3/2/3 options for Ashland	Alignment
Received on DC2RVA project website	As a Century Farm - designated by the Governor of VA, in the path of the Western bypass alternative, we would once again like to take this opportunity to implore you to carefully consider a different route for the DC2RVA rail. We have attended most of the meetings and can see that much consideration is being given in making this decision, and we appreciate that. This decision making is a weight no one would like to carry I am sure yet difficult decisions must still be made. When looking at the alternatives we would ask that you consider that there are several Century farms in the direct path of the proposed rail. Ours is a working farm involving both our grown boys who work full time here as well. It has been, and continues to be, our hope that they can continue the farming tradition begun on this land over 100 years ago. The train will certainly dash that hope. Other farms in the path are also working farms and are in the same position. Farming is a dying art in the State of Virginia for various reasons, certainly one of the biggest being encroaching development and income that is not sufficient to support families. The train will be the nail in yet another farm's coffin if the western bypass alternative is chosen...several in fact. We do not wish to become such a statistic. While we would prefer the train not come at all, we believe the Ashland route would be a better choice as the train has been a life force of the town for many many years. Yes it would mean change, but as to my knowledge, homes would not be completely lost and businesses could be relocated if necessary with CSX's help. Not so with 200 cows and farmland. Please consider carefully when making this important decision.	Farmland/Alignment Property



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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>Why not promote this as the new city and encourage property owners that their values will increase above where they long should have been? But this will only be possible if you make Doswell a stop on this highway and pull Caroline in with promise on new infrastructure to tie them in. This would be a high win if people could see new schools, businesses and a mega city if the locals could get on board. They could become richer than Gate and Rockefeller. Help the people oh Hanover and Caroline and you may get the votes. You want a formula, i have one that works.</p>	<p>Website Promotion</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>I reside at 10637 Providence Green Dr. Ashland VA located in the Beaverdam District. I am writing to you as my Board Member and the other members of the Board and County Administrator to express my concerns regarding the reevaluation of an Eastern Rail Bypass. The Providence Community along with Woodside Estates is located off of Woodside Lane and adjacent to Washington-Lacy Park. The park serves as a desired multi-use amenity providing residents access to hiking biking and horseback riding this area also serves as a natural sound barrier helping to reduce the noise generated by vehicles on I-95. It is my understanding that an Eastern Bypass is being evaluated to run along the existing utility easement to the west of Washington-Lacy Park. This concerns me for several reasons one of which is that early in this process it was determined that an Eastern Bypass was not feasible. The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) in response to two separate resident questions responded with the following: The eastern bypass alternatives were dismissed from further consideration because they are not feasible from an engineering perspective have a higher relative cost and present more impacts to human and natural resources as well as existing infrastructure. The east side is more heavily developed than the west. Also a bypass east of Ashland would require multiple crossings of Route 1 and I-95." and "The eastern bypass alternatives were not carried forward for further review because they were not feasible from an engineering perspective presented more impacts to human and natural resources as well as existing infrastructure and development and would therefore have a higher relative cost." If an Eastern Bypass option were to move forward this would have a detrimental impact on our existing natural resources depress adjacent property values increase traffic along Route 54 as vehicle wait for passing trains and increase noise levels in an otherwise quiet area. Until recently the County Administration and Town of Ashland were supportive of a Western Bypass if a new rail line was determined to be needed. Only after vocal opposition was raised by residents in the West did the Board and County Administration rescind support of a Western Bypass option. With opposition in the West and as residents of the East are made aware of the renewed potential of an Eastern Bypass I foresee opposition building as well as most of us have invested significant resources in building new homes in the last three to five years. The only viable option with the least amount of impact appears to be using the existing rail lines in the Town of Ashland. In closing I would ask that you as my Board member and member of the Hanover Community Advisory Committee support the use of existing rail lines in Ashland for the expansion of High Speed Rail. This position is consistent with your statement published in the Richmond Times Dispatch on 3/31/16 "Stanley the longest-ever serving Hanover supervisor said he supports Families Under the Rail and long has gone to bat for the people he represents. He said he would push for the state to consider an option where the high speed trains would use the existing rail lines in Ashland slow down through town and regain speed once outside of it. "Thank you for your time and consideration. Regards"</p>	<p>Community Facilities & Services, Noise, Cost</p>



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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>No third rail or 3-2-3 for Ashland! As a resident living on the eastern side of the tracks I have grave concerns about the safety of the third rail and its proximity to my home. How would I access my home? Would DC2RVA purchase my home under the right of eminent domain? Have you considered how many families would be displaced? Please provide expected number of trains both passenger and freight extrapolated to 2035 (that would be traveling through Ashland) Is this project being driven primarily by CSX's desire to move more freight due to improvements to the Panama Canal? What is the actual right-of-way currently in place for the current tracks? Reconsider the Buckingham Branch!</p>	<p>Alternatives, Real Estate</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>Today I mailed a letter to do with my concerns about the reality of 20 year plans particularly given the tremendous amount of change going on in the transportation business. The letter was addressed to Director Mitchell. It can be downloaded from https://iansutton.com/downloads/20-Year-Plan.pdf will try and include as much of it as I can in this Comments box. Please make sure that the letter is routed into the formal Public Input to do with the Ashland options for the proposed High Speed Rail.</p> <p>Director Mitchell:</p> <p>At the last Citizen Council meeting to do with the potential for High Speed Rail in the Ashland area one of the presenters talked about the modeling software that he used and its application to the 20 year plan. Although he did not say so every statement that he made was based on the following premise. The future is a linear continuation of the present. When considering planning issues to do with the next few months or even the next few years this assumption may have some validity. Hence the models that the DRPT are using may be reasonably accurate in the short term. (Although speaking as an engineer who has worked with technical models of all types for many years I have learned to be deeply cautious even skeptical about the value of such models. All too often they assume that an interpolation can also be a successful extrapolation.) But when looking at a projection of 20 years the assumption of linearity is profoundly flawed. Hence the conclusions presented at that meeting are at best misleading. Moreover the transportation business is currently going through enormous disruptive changes (Black Swans). These changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driverless trucks that will upend the road transportation business. • Driverless trains. Mag-lev trains in vacuum tunnels (hyperloop). • Great improvements to train management with the use of modern scheduling software and signaling systems. • Uber-like systems for both freight and passengers. <p>Before forging ahead with a plan that is in my opinion deeply flawed I urge the DRPT to develop a plan that incorporates modern technology.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>



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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</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.</p>	<p>Economics, Mobility, Community Facilities and Services</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>We cannot have a Berlin Wall down the center of Ashland. Businesses would close the college would be divided and at least 12 families will not be able to access their homes. It would destroy the town - we would lose our Ashland Main Street Designation as well. Rethink the Buckingham Branch of better- rethink a rail system that is efficient and serves the East Coast- on 95 or a tunnel system below it. Take time to do a 'European' or Asian like rail system that is something that is to be proud of and that's does not destroy communities! It will cost more but it will be a pivotal transportation change for the better.</p>	<p>Cultural Resources, Property Access, Cost</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>Ashland would be forever changed if the third rail option runs through town. It would destroy business accessibility for much of the town. I haven't even started about Randolph-Macon College what a tremendous eyesore and deterrent for any potential incoming students. It would threaten the accessibility of the athletics fields destroy many of the college campus offices. It would also take away parking which is at a premium around the quaint campus. Please save downtown Ashland no third option is the only option that spares downtown and will enable its survival.</p>	<p>Community Facilities and Services, Parking, Aesthetics</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>As one of the families in the path of the western bypass and a century farm that is a current working farm we are once again voicing our opposition to the bypass option. Although we do not want the third rail option either and would be in favor of a 3-2-3 possibility we feel that all home/business owners in Ashland purchased their properties knowing they live on a rail. That of course does not mean they should have to live with a third rail but there is always the possibility of change. Those of us in the path of the western bypass chose to live outside of Ashland and the railroad tracks. We would like to remain that way. Please choose carefully.</p>	<p>Farnland, Real Estate</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>I am very disappointed that an Eastern track around Ashland is even being considered. This is a highly populated area with Hanover residents who have just purchased new homes. Also the destruction of Washington Lacy Park is unforgivable. Please return your efforts to a Western track through farmland instead of destroying neighborhoods. Thank you!</p>	<p>Parks/Recreation, Farmland</p>



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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>As a business owner on the tracks (over 10 years) I came to appreciate the rare beauty of Ashland. The people are extraordinary. In Ashland the mail carriers are friends with the local priest the doctor the barista the carpenter the teacher and more. It is a diverse and welcoming place to live work and visit. Everyone crosses the tracks. They cross for coffee for books for chicken for daily exercise for conviviality. The walkable tracks/Center street is the beating heart of this small town. It is home to parades races block parties grand & simple homes historic buildings the train station/visitor center the library a college and so much more. There is a sleepy comfort to the rhythmic rumblings of the slow moving trains. The foot and cyclist traffic is as important as the auto traffic to these small businesses. It is a daily occurrence to see kids parents residents and tourists cross the tracks back and forth as they support local businesses and services or as they ride their bikes to school or college. I remember fondly the day a volunteer book brigade formed to hand carry books from the library on one side of the tracks to the new library on the other. The slow moving train enables both sides of the track to breath fluidly together with occasional pause of a passing train. It is not hyperbole to suggest that a third rail would effectively sever the main artery of this beloved town thought by many to be one of the finest small towns in Virginia perhaps even the country. The third rail should not be an option through Ashland It is short sighted. If you want to kill Ashland then go ahead and run a high speed rail through the heart of her. I pray the 3rd rail option is abandoned. The center of I-95 would make a great place for a high speed train through this American town.</p>	<p>Bicycle and Pedestrian, Community Facilities and Services</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>My husband and I moved to Ashland three years ago. I am employed at the Ashland Public Library, and my husband is employed at Randolph-Macon College. Both of our workplaces are located on Center Street, next to the train line that runs through town. If a third rail or a larger rail presence were built through the town, the character of Ashland would be destroyed and Randolph-Macon College would be adversely affected. The college owns land on the west side of the tracks and intends to expand there (growth is vital of a small college to survive in today's economic climate). Also, a third track would remove historical properties (and the HOMES) of several people, and would destroy the walkability of the downtown area. People come from Richmond and Fredericksburg to visit our library and enjoy the quaint downtown area (I am told this every week at the library). Ashland is doing what many municipalities strive to do -- have a walkable, inviting downtown, with many types of housing (affordable apartments, mid-range housing and larger, historical homes). Another rail through town (with or without a wall or fence) would gut the town and take away its walkability. After looking at the alternatives, any route proposed would go through some wetlands (we ARE in a very flat place with many streams and rivers, so that is to be expected). I am an environmentalist, but it looks like some wetlands would have to be destroyed in order to accommodate any of the rail plans that do not go through Ashland. North Carolina has a law where any wetlands that are drained for development must be "made" somewhere else nearby, resulting in net loss of wetlands. While not ideal, this is something the commission may consider.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Economics, Cultural Resources, Wetlands</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>I own a home and a business on the east side of the tracks in Ashland. If the third rail is added, it is my understanding that my home will be destroyed, but the impact to the rest of Ashland would be worse (and likely would prompt me to sell the 100+ year old business if it could survive). I would get fair compensation for my home. The rest of the town would lose many of its supporting businesses and folks will have difficulty crossing the tracks. This will cause people who can to move from the town. It would rather quickly become a lower income area and place a huge burden on the rest of the county for schools and services. Many of the businesses would fail. You must choose the bypass option or the economy and culture of the town will be destroyed.</p>	<p>Displacements Res/Comm, Economics, Real Estate</p>



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Received on DC2RVA project website	You cannot put a third rail through the middle of Ashland - it will kill Ashland. it will destroy the very nature of Ashland. it will kill the businesses along Center Street. Plus, it will divide RMC, which has invested a lot of money to expand to remain in competition with other universities. A bypass route may affect other landowners, but I will not destroy an entire town. A third rail through Ashland will affect so many more people than the landowners whose property the rail runs through. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS!!	Alternatives, Economics
Received on DC2RVA project website	It makes no sense to destroy Ashland, a town of 7500+/-, with a third rail. Particular when 2 other choices affecting much less of the population are available. Let logic prevail please.	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	I vehemently oppose a third rail. I have lived on Center Street all my life. It would DESTROY our unique town!!!	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	I live at 803 S. Center St. and a 3rd rail coming through Ashland would be disaster to our Historic Town. Please choose a by-pass route.	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	THE THIRD RAIL IN ASHLAND WILL ELIMINATE AT LEAST 11 HISTORIC HOMES AND SIX HISTORIC BUSINESS BUILDINGS. IT WILL ESSENTIALLY ELIMINATE TWO NEIGHBORHOODS: BERKLEYTOWN AND S. CENTER ST. IT WILL FUNDAMENTALLY ELIMINATE THE ENTIRE DOWNTOWN AS A FUNCTIONING "MAIN STREET". ASHLAND WILL NO LONGER EXIST AS IT HAS FOR 150 YEARS. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS!	Alternatives, Cultural Resources, Historic Resources
Received on DC2RVA project website	You must choose a bypass! A third rail will be catastrophic to our unique town. I fear the safety, and the detrimental effects of this historic town.	Alternatives, Traffic/Safety



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Received on DC2RVA project website	June 6, 2013 Ashland became a designated Main Street Community for Virginia. I served on Main Street for 6 years and know that through the good work of many people this designation was achieved and as a result Ashland is a designated Tourist destination and we are ON THE MAP for these 28 communities in our state. If we were to have a third rail that does not allow for tourists to easily see our historic sites and walk/drive/bike in our community then we will lose this designation. This would be a true disservice to all the businesses that benefit from tourism and our patrons as well. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS.	Alternatives, Historic Resources
Received on DC2RVA project website	The Trackside Grill Building at 301 S. Railroad Avenue was once the original theater in Ashland Virginia. In 1948 when the Ashland Theater was built, the CAB theater for 'colored only' was established. This historic building was recently in the news along with our Ashland Theater for receiving historic tax credits. We are currently renovating the Ashland Theater which is on the East Side of town. We do not need division that would limit our patrons for using the Theater. Note: The parking lot to enter Trackside Grill restaurant is accessible from Railroad Ave. This business and in fact Ashland History would be destroyed if a Third Rail was built. This is not acceptable. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS.	Alternatives, Historic Resources
Received on DC2RVA project website	Please review plans and eliminate going thru the town of Ashland. You will be destroying an historically significant area and the families living here. You will destroy the economy of a small town America and cause many to lose their jobs. You will sever an academic college and cause grave danger to the students there not to mention the safety of the citizens that would be in the town. A bypass with east or west if the current tracks is the only reasonable plan	Alternatives, Economics, Safety/Traffic
Received on DC2RVA project website	As a long time resident of Ashland I wholeheartedly object to the idea of a third rail and the destruction that will bring to this small town. We have a large number of adults and children who walk, bike and run the Center Street corridor. Visitors come regularly to tour the town and take in the historic homes and public buildings. I support progress and improvements to passenger rail along the Northeast corridor. You have alternatives. A bypass that affects far fewer people and can be operated in a far safer manner is a reasonable solution. YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS.	Alternatives, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Historic Resources
Received on DC2RVA project website	you must choose bypass	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	CHOOSE A BYPASS!!!	Alternatives



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Received on DC2RVA project website	by pass ONLY--- Stop taking tax payer's front yards!!!	Alternatives, Displacements Res/Comm
Received on DC2RVA project website	A third rail through Ashland Virginia will forever change the nature of the town of Ashland and forever impact the lives of the people who live in and love Ashland. Nothing gained from this rail is worth destroying the beautiful and historic town of Ashland. There are alternatives. Choose one!	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	<p>My home (1870) sits about 30 yard from the eastern track in Ashland, as are all the houses on my block as well as others on different blocks I have lived her since the early eighties and have invested my entire residency improving my property - additions, outbuildings, installing an in-ground pool, landscaping, adding central air conditiong, and bringing the kitchen and bathrooms into this century. It is s unimaginable to me that anyone would consider putting a third rail in the middle of an established historic corridor that would destroy property values, upend a striving and thriving downtown, and change the entire nature of a town that represents the true meaning of community. This town is the epitome of what many wish all small towns could be - quaint, yet modern, welcoming, econimcally sound, safe, and affordable. From my Center Street home I see many people walking, running, riding bikes, riding scooters.</p> <p>A high speed rail that would take up our necessary street space (for cars, of course, as well as emergency vehicles) , deny us the necessary and dialy crossing to the "other" side to visit our neighbors and friends, and interfere with our history as well as the aesthic loveliness of Ashland.</p> <p>I have heard comments that some of the potential bypasses will interfere with a state park, where state officials have already stated they will move the park. Really! A state park that is moveable, is considered by some members of the DRPT more important that an entire town!!!</p> <p>A BYPASS IS OBVIOUSLY THE ONLY VIABLE OPTION!!!!</p>	Alternatives, Real Estate, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Safety/Traffic
Received on DC2RVA project website	It's beyond belief that destroying a 150 year old thriving town is even on your radar. Choosing a bypass is your only option.	Alternatives, Historic Resources



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CAC Meeting July 24, 2017
DRPT Passenger Rail Tier II EIS

Received on DC2RVA project website	I grew up and still live on the tracks in Ashland. The same was true for my parents and grandparents. My parents, grandparents, and I have always said that we are proud to have done so. It's truly a magical place. But make no mistake about it, a third rail or the 3-2-3 option will forever ruin this magical place. The history along these rails must be treasured and not destroyed. The only option that is at all realistic or practical is a bypass, preferably through the eastern corridor.	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	You must choose a bypass.	Alternatives
Received on DC2RVA project website	<p>We live on Virginia Street in the Town of Ashland, one block from where the proposed third rail is to be built. My husband and I are both very active citizens and involved in the life of the town and the community. We volunteer a great deal. We have made a wonderful home here and are part of a thriving, growing, healthy, beautiful community. All of us have worked very hard over the past 10-15 years to build and revitalize Ashland. We have something very special here that is recognized throughout the state and country. A third rail will destroy all of that, will destroy our street, our neighborhood, will destroy our town, and will destroy the lives and unique community that we have all worked to build.</p> <p>Precious historic properties (homes and businesses) will have to be acquired and demolished to build a third rail. Real estate values in the town will plummet if a third rail is built. We will lose our Main Street status, which will mean we will lose our burgeoning status as a tourist attraction. Crossings will have to be closed and fences installed to limit the chance of accidents, cutting one side of the town off from the other. More hazardous materials will be transported through the Town, through a highly populated area, especially with the student population at RMC. Overpasses will be built over Vaughn and Ashcake Roads which will demolish more properties and homes including several Habitat for Humanity homes. Our historic African-American neighborhood, Berkleytown, will be destroyed.</p> <p>There will also be disruption if an eastern or western bypass is done, but it will be much less so. And if a third rail is done through Ashland, since Ashland is a cultural and economic hub for the entire area, the property values and quality of life of those to the east and west will also be negatively impacted.</p> <p>DC2RVA must choose a bypass option.</p>	Alternatives, Historic Resources, Real Estate, Safety/Traffic, HazWaste Transport
Received on DC2RVA project website	Please do not put a 3rd rail through Ashland. It will destroy the growing economy and resurging downtown. You must choose a bypass option. Thank you!	Alternatives, Economics



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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>How on earth can the safety of the town be assured when we have no idea what is being carried by the freights now, let alone when the traffic is increased by the rate they predict. It cannot be! But the odds can be cut by NOT adding the 3rd rail.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Traffic/Safety</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>One of the proposed alternatives would create a third track directly through the center of Ashland, effectively removing all access to northbound Center Street and Railroad Avenue. It has been stated that homes and property without access via a side street would have to be purchased, as they would become 'land-locked'.</p> <p>In addition to the loss of a vehicular roadway, this option also would eliminate the Town of Ashland portion of northbound US Bike Routes 1 (Adopted as the initial US Bike Route 35 years ago this month – July 1982) and 76 (aka The TransAmerica Trail) which run together from Ashcake Road to the south to West Patrick Street to the north. In fact, the convergence at Ashcake Road is the initial point where these 2 routes follow a common path, the majority of which occurs within the Ashland town limits.</p> <p>The importance of Bike Routes 1 and 76 to the town of Ashland continues to increase each year and our town was front-and-center at the recent 2015 UCI Road World Championships. The impact of eliminating the current routes or their relocation could have a very damaging impact to the town.</p> <p>You Must Choose a Bypass alternative to protect our neighbors' properties and the current US Bike Routes 1 and 76 and allow Ashland to continue to be a very important weigh-station on these popular and heavily traveled bicycle routes.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Property Access, Bicycle and Pedestrian</p>



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>In response to the proposal that would create a third track through the center of Ashland, effectively removing northbound Center Street and Railroad Avenue and eliminating US Bike Routes 1 and 76 as they travel northward, please comment on the regulations below and why they were not followed and adhered to as part of this process:</p> <p>United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations Signed on March 11, 2010 and announced March 15, 2010 Policy Statement The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems. Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life — transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.</p> <p>Authority This policy is based on various sections in the United States Code (U.S.C.) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in Title 23—Highways, Title 49—Transportation, and Title 42—The Public Health and Welfare. These sections, provided in the Appendix, describe how bicyclists and pedestrians of all abilities should be involved throughout the planning process, should not be adversely affected by other transportation projects, and should be able to track annual obligations and expenditures on nonmotorized transportation facilities.</p> <p>Prohibition of Route Severance The Secretary has the authority to withhold approval for projects that would negatively impact pedestrians and bicyclists under certain circumstances. Key references in the CFR and U.S.C. include: •"The Secretary shall not approve any project or take any regulatory action under this title that will result in the severance of an existing major route or have significant adverse impact on the safety for nonmotorized transportation traffic and light motorcycles, unless such project or regulatory action provides for a reasonable alternate route or such a route exists." 23 U.S.C. 109(m).</p> <p>•V. Planning Requirements The joint planning regulations of FTA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) require States and metropolitan planning organizations to integrate pedestrian and bicycle facilities into all transportation plans and improvement programs. Pedestrians and bicyclists must be provided with a reasonable opportunity to comment on long-range statewide transportation plans and metropolitan transportation master plans.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Bicycle and Pedestrian</p>
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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>I have been a frequent customer of Amtrak, traveling between home in Ashland and work in the DC metro area for 5 years. I concede that the rail is likely over-crowded (having experienced many delays) and I was initially excited at the prospect of "high-speed" rail. As I learned more and even participated in a survey of Amtrak riders conducted while on the train - what is being proposed is NOT high-speed rail but the addition of a third rail that would naturally result in slightly faster travel times (with reduced stops thrown in). The high speed rail campaign is completely misleading - very disappointing, bordering on unethical. As a resident of the town of Ashland I am strongly opposed to a third rail through town- it would completely disrupt the character of the historic area of town and create logistical havoc. I would like to advocate for a true high speed rail system - but since we are years away from that (and you should NOT call this high speed rail- you have fooled casual observers into thinking it is something it is not, ultimately doing yourself a disservice in the trust dept.) there MUST be a by-pass option. running another rail through the current route is not viable. I would also like to suggest that the DC to Richmond project include an effort to make travel more affordable, particularly for those that commute daily. The survey inquired about willingness to pay more if train was more likely to arrive on time or a few minutes earlier – I would be surprised if many respondents were willing to pay the higher price. Commuters/daily users should be granted discount pricing options (what is now offered is not really discounted). I would think the benefits of this to Amtrak and the customers would be significant, increasing ridership and opening up more economic opportunity for the community. Please count my family as strongly opposed to the third rail through Ashland/current route and consider reducing costs for daily commuters both directions along the route.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Capacity, Economics</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>As a lover of Ashland and my childhood hometown, YOU MUST CHOOSE A BYPASS for the train. This is important to the businesses and homes along the train tracks.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>Adding a third rail? And who will benefit from this new high speed rail?</p> <p>It will cut the town of Ashland in half and destroy the town and the businesses. Even the bypass options destroy homes, churches, farms, livelihoods.</p> <p>Again, and who benefits from this new high speed rail?</p> <p>Parallel it with I 95. That is the most logical, less destructive option. It may be costly, but it won't destroy families, towns and peoples' lives.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Cultural Resources, Cost</p>



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>This comment is regarding the Ashland Eastern Bypass. There is significant support for Eastern Bypass options. Please choose one eastern bypass alternative - and carry it through the full planning process. Ideally, you would take the best attributes of each alternative. For example, combine the northern transition from CSX to I-95 from AEB-4 and the southern transition back from I-95 to CSX of AEB-5.</p> <p>Yes, I am asking you to ignore the results of the screening for now, and to come up with the absolute best eastern bypass alternative possible, and leave it on the table until the bitter end, at the point where the final alternative is chosen. It is quite possible that significant impacts with the central or western alternatives may come up as the study moves forward, which may make the eastern bypass look better in comparison. Conversely, some of the issues that led the eastern alternatives to be screened out in Stage II may be easier to mitigate than originally thought. Or perhaps these improvements could be combined with improvements to I-95 itself so that the impacts can be "shared" between two projects.</p> <p>At any rate, I am concerned that this study will seriously compromise its credibility by discarding all the eastern bypass alternatives without analyzing even a single one of them completely, so I suggest you change your approach.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>
<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>Please carefully weigh what will realistically happen to the Town of Ashland should a third rail come through town. Any efforts to minimize or mitigate the impact on the houses and businesses on Center St will also have to deal with safety and traffic concerns. Once these are all taken into account, all of the businesses and houses on Center street will have huge adverse impact, cutting the town in half, killing jobs and homes, and making Ashland overall a less enticing place to live. I am on Parks and Recreation Committee for the town of Ashland, and one of the chief goals of our Parks and Rec master plan is to connect the trails that run around the town. This goal will be nearly impossible to realize with a massive new rail through the center of town, with fewer crossings and modernized to allow for much more freight traffic. The easiest way to maximize pedestrian safety in such a case will be to simply discourage people from crossing the tracks at all. You must choose a bypass. If the DC2RVA high speed rail will be such a beneficial conduit, I hope that the people affected by a bypass will be compensated fairly, so that the larger benefits will be passed on to those who sacrifice for such a project. I don't see how such compensation is possible should the third rail cut the town in half.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Safety/Traffic, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Community Facilities and Services</p>



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CAC Meeting July 24, 2017
DRPT Passenger Rail Tier II EIS

<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>My husband and I bought our first home in Hanover County almost two years ago. From the moment we drove up our tree lined driveway we knew this was going to be the home for the rest of our lives - where we would make endless memories and raise our future children. It was only a few months later that we learned we were right along the route of the Western Bypass for the proposed DC2RVA High-Speed Rail project. This news was devastating.</p> <p>We have poured our heart and soul into the countless renovations we've done to our home and property on our own and we have big plans for our future here. We love our neighbors and they're pretty fond of us too. Many of them have lived here in homes they've built and land they've cultivated for many, many years. We never tire of the peace, quiet, and clean, natural surroundings that always make us smile and be grateful for where we get to call home</p> <p>The DC2RVA high speed rail will cut us off from Ashland, the small, amazing town we call home, will destroy the property value and peacefulness of our new home, and probably most frustrating of all, ruin the lives of those of our neighbors who make their living growing on their land that they pour themselves into every single day. By running the rail through their fields, you are literally slicing their lives in half, which will kill life as they know it and we hope to one day know.</p> <p>Our community, including western Hanover and the Town of Ashland, are rare examples of a life that is too quickly disappearing - where people make a living on the land, spend time outside working hard, and can enjoy fresh air and an escape from the frenetic pace of everyday life.</p> <p>I implore you and those making decisions about the status and path of the rail to put the future "progress" you hold up as the reason for this project aside and revisit the impact you're going to have on the quality of life for those who live in western Hanover and Ashland.</p> <p>I also implore you all to be more transparent about the research you are leaning on as justification for the devastation you will cause and the massive amount of resources you are allocating for this project. I'd like to see proof that people plan on using this as a legitimate, sustainable means of transportation as the project proposes. How much of this is actually to benefit the bottom line of industry? This feels like another example of the government making decisions because they look good, all the while investing resources that need to go elsewhere.</p> <p>Thank you for opening the project up to commentary and for convening an advisory group of representatives of the communities that will be affected by this project. I can only hope that you're doing it with the honest intention of listening and working with the recommendations you're hearing and not plowing forward regardless of what you hear.</p>	<p>Alternatives, Farmland,</p>
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COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CAC Meeting July 24, 2017
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<p>Received on DC2RVA project website</p>	<p>"I have followed this issue from the beginning and live in the route of the proposed Western Bypass. I implore you to eliminate the Western Bypass as an option as the County of Hanover has already requested. I stand with with all of the property owners that would loose their homes or suffer devastating loss in property value and quality of life. The increase in rail service and demand for such service is only proposed, not guaranteed or funded. With that in mind it is outrageous to seize virgin farmland and historic homesites in order to provide for a service that may or may not actually become a reality. The most prudent way to address this issue is to choose a 3-2-3 solution using existing corridors through Ashland. This seems like a solution that would save the farms and properties in the western part of the county AND eliminate the possibility of a 3rd rail through town which the Ashland residents are opposed to. It must be noted that all of the property owners that live on the tracks in Ashland bought there homes with full knowledge that the rail lines were active. I find it unreasonable to assume that they should now have a voice in choosing "HOW MUCH" rail actually runs on the lines. I am not in support of a 3rd rail but I think a 3-2-3 solution is a very reasonable answer considering all that is at stake."</p>	<p>Alternatives, Real Estate, Farmland</p>
<p>Received by mail to DC2RVA project office</p>	<p>Dear Ms. Stock:</p> <p>I am writing in support of the currently delineated alternatives regarding the DRPT's high-speed rail project.</p> <p>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," July 5, 2017, page 1. The Department clearly made the correct decision to reject this possible alternative.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Alternatives,</p>
<p>Received by email to the DC2RVA project.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Doswell can easily be bypassed without damage to their "downtown".</p> <p>What parks would be damaged, and how big are they?</p> <p>What historic structures are at risk? And are they any more or less important than the entire town of Ashland?</p>	<p>Alternatives</p>



COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

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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, 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.



Showing the rich historical and cultural heritage of our town of Ashland, Virginia

June 12, 2017

Emily Stock
Manager of Rail Planning
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
DC2RVA Project Office
801 E. Main Street, Suite 1000
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Comments on High Speed Rail in Ashland: Safety Concerns with Expansion to a Third Track-DC2RVA

Dear Ms. Stock:

We would like to comment as interested parties, both as representatives of the Ashland Museum, a consulting party for the Southeastern High Speed Rail Tier II Environmental Impact Statement, and as residents of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) of the Ashland Alternatives, Segment 13, of the Southeastern High Speed Rail corridor (DC2RVA).

As we discuss below, there are already significant safety concerns to do with the safety in the Town of Ashland. Adding a third track and many more trains will, we believe, create an unacceptable safety situation. This concern cannot be addressed by improvements to the grade crossings or by adding fencing.

We have reviewed the information provided by your office, the DC2RVA.com website and other materials related to safety concerns for the DC2RVA project and believe the following questions should be addressed:

1. Train/Vehicle Collisions in the Town of Ashland. There has been an increase in the number of reported train and vehicle incidents within the last year. Some of these incidents have been recorded by the video camera installed by the organization "Virtual Railfan." A written summary of the events is summarized on the website www.ashlandrail.com blog under the specific post "Losing Count." (The information in that blog post is also provided as **Attachment A** to this letter.) As you can see, the associated YouTube videos are, in some cases, quite dramatic. **Based on the proposed expansion to a third track through the center of Town and Randolph-Macon College, what assurances can be made that the frequency of these hazardous conditions detrimental to the health and safety of the residents of the town, the students at the College and the traveling public will not be increased?** We would also comment as follows:

- a. Based on the historical record, adding fencing along the track would not materially improve safety. None of the incidents of which we have a record that have occurred in the last year involved pedestrians on the tracks. In fact, fencing would have made some of these incidents potentially more serious by blocking the cars on the tracks after they made the wrong turn.
- b. Closing minor crossings such as Myrtle Street and Francis Street could actually make safety worse. All the incidents in the last year have been at England Street or Ashcake Road. Closing the minor crossings would add traffic to those major crossings, thus exacerbating an already untenable situation.

- 2. Highly Hazardous Chemicals on Freight Trains.** Approximately 6% of the freight cars transiting Ashland are tank cars carrying highly hazardous chemicals (HHCs). These chemicals can be flammable, explosive or toxic. Were there to be a release the consequences could be very severe. (These concerns are real concern, as evidenced by the derailment that occurred on April 30, 2014, in Lynchburg, VA, details of which are provided at <https://ashlandrail.com/2016/07/04/the-lynchburg-derailment-2014/>.) As with the above comments to do with vehicle accidents, the likelihood of an event involving HHCs is likely to materially increase due to the presence of a third track and an increase in the number of trains. **We would like to know if a Formal Safety Assessment (FSA) for Highly Hazardous Chemicals has been conducted for trains transiting the Town with the expansion to a third track?** If this study has not been conducted, we believe it needs to be done given the risk of a potential disaster of significant magnitude on whole blocks of the Town should there be a future train/collision. (Approved software that is used in the development of such an Assessment is available from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).)
- 3. Engineering Codes and Structures for Ashland Alternatives through Town.** In our review of the design standards for use in the study of the expansion to a third track, we have not been able to answer the following questions:
- a. **The Selection of Codes and Standards to do with Track Spacing.** The design standards for the spacing of tracks are unclear. We have reviewed pertinent codes and standards to do with track spacing, particularly the information provided at the DRPT site (<http://dc2rvarail.com/>). We have also conducted research using materials from the Library of Congress. The standards for construction of the Western Bypass alternative, plans show a 125 feet right for two future rail lines. In Ashland there is only 75 feet of existing right of way for two rail lines. The addition of a third rail could have a devastating impact on existing structures and public improvements. We carried out various case studies. **Attachment B** shows how an application of these standards could affect the town (the area shaded in orange would no longer be a public right of way). These calculations are preliminary, but they are based on the best information to do with codes and standards that is available to us. **Can you provide clarification regarding the codes and standards to be used for the spacing of existing and future track for the expansion to a third track?**
 - b. **The Outer Edge of Proposed Track Expansion in the Town.** **Attachment C** to this letter includes copies of Figures 3-1 and 3-2 from the Basis of Design Report with the Recommended Separation between Active Rail Lines and Paths (RWT) which illustrate the lack of clarity of the standards and codes being used. Given the close proximity of the potential expansion of a third track to existing residential, institutional and commercial properties in the center of Town, it is critical to have an exhibit which removes any ambiguity on the outer edge of proposed rail expansion in the Town. **Can a clearer representation of the outer edge of the proposed rail expansion be provided with clarification regarding the codes and standards being used in order to illustrate the impacts of construction on the existing buildings and improvements in the Town's National Register Historic District?**
 - c. **The Standards that apply to the Existing Rail lines with the addition of a Third Track.** We would like to know the standards that will be applied to the existing rail lines in the Town with the construction of a new third track. There are provisions under Virginia laws that require any new rail lines to not be constructed with existing grade vehicle crossings. **Will the existing lines be required to be grade separated as we understand the new third track will be required to do? What other standards would change the existing rail lines if a new third rail is constructed?**

6/12/17 Letter from John Hodges and Ian Sutton

Page 3

Ashland Museum to Emily Stock

June 12, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DC2RVA project information that has been provided to date. We hope that you would agree that questions we have raised are vital to the decision making process for the **Third Track Alternative** in order to insure that critical safety issues are addressed. As noted at the beginning, we are concerned that the expansion of the right of way and the addition of a third track through the center of the Town and the College increases the potential for creating seriously hazardous conditions. And in our opinion, constructing a third track and/or closing all at grade intersections to increased volumes of freight/passenger traffic raises the question of the continuation of the Town and College as viable entities.

We appreciate any assistance in answering our questions, and if we can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



John Hodges
Board of Directors, Ashland Museum



Ian Sutton
Risk Management Consultant

Attachments: A - Summary of Recent Vehicle/Train Incidents
B - Example of the Impact of a Third Track on the Center of Ashland
C - DRPT Track Spacing Standards

cc: Jim Foley, Mayor, Town of Ashland
Josh Farrar, Town Manager
Kristin Reihl, Citizen Representative CAC
Paul Davies, Randolph-Macon College
Ellen Wulf, Ashland Museum
Betsy Hodges, Ashland Museum

Ashland Museum

Mailing Address: PO Box 633, Ashland, VA 23005 | Museum Location: 105 Hanover Ave., Ashland, VA 23005
804-368-7314 | ashlandmuseum@comcast.net | www.ashlandmuseum.org

ATTACHMENT A
Summary of Recent Vehicle/Train Incidents

In recent months there have been a startling number of incidents involving vehicles driving on to the rail tracks in the town of Ashland. Some of these incidents led to a train hitting the vehicle; we are lucky not to have had a fatality. All but one of these events involved a car turning on to the tracks. Although adding more safeguards such as lights and horns at the crossings will help, the reality is that these incidents will continue.

Adding a third track and many more trains will make an existing situation totally untenable.

Some of the incidents are summarized in Table 1. Continuing research, including working with *Herald-Progress* reporters, may add to what is presented in Table 1.

1	A	B	C	D
	Date	Incident	Location	YouTube Link
2	9/19/16	Car drives on to tracks while train is approaching. Train on the other track so no collision. Car eventually gets off the tracks.	England St.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f99QtMCzMIk
3	11/27/16	Car drives on to the tracks. Eventually gets off them.	England St.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ_2pl9VpFo
4	1/15/17	Car drives on to tracks. Driver and passenger escape. Car destroyed by the train.	England St.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDjOoCY_7ms
5	1/15/17	Car stuck on tracks, hit by train.	Ashcake Rd.	
6	5/20/17	Cyclist seriously injured when he hits a barrier in the down position. (Train not directly involved).	Francis St.	
7	5/27/2017	Car runs through the gates and is struck by an Amtrak train.	England St.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mDEPPNtmMM

The organization Virtual Railfan (www.virtualrailfan.com) has placed video cameras at the intersection of England and Center Streets. These cameras have recorded dramatic footage of four of the incidents.

A picture is worth a thousand words and a video is worth a thousand pictures. Below are four YouTube hyperlinks to the events listed in Table 1.

6/12/17 Letter from John Hodges and Ian Sutton

CLOSE CALL IN ASHLAND, VA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f99QtMCzMlk>



TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION IN ASHLAND, VA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f99QtMCzMlk>



6/12/17 Letter from John Hodges and Ian Sutton

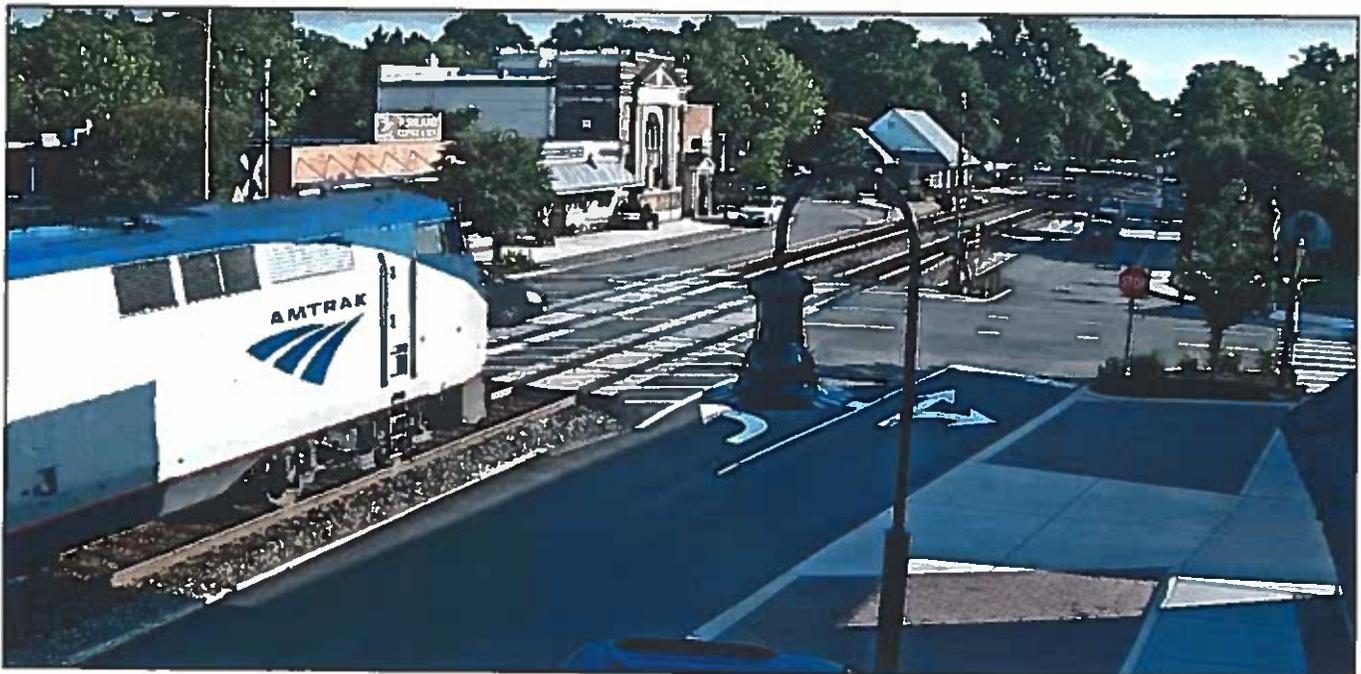
CAR HIT BY TRAIN AT ASHLAND, VA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDjOoCY_7ms



AMTRAK VS. CAR @ASHLAND, VA

<https://youtu.be/4mDEPPNtmMM>



ATTACHMENT B

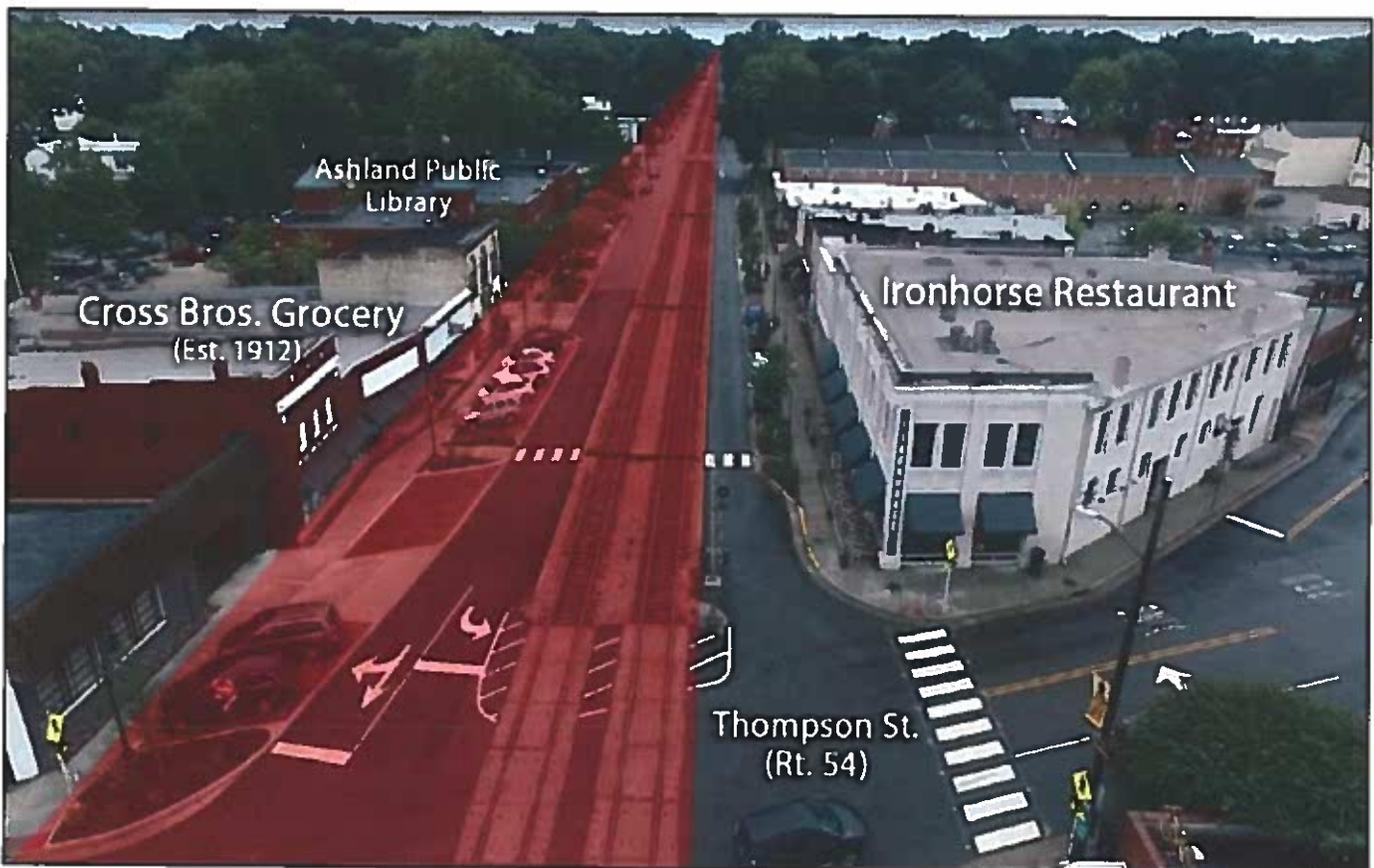
Example of the Impacts of a Third Track on the Center of Ashland

Using the information provided in the DRPT documents (Attachment A) the citizens of Ashland estimated the impact that a third rail would have on the center of Ashland. It was assumed that the existing tracks, which were laid down before the Civil War and in the year 1903 respectively, would have to be upgraded to modern codes and standards for spacing between the tracks and space from the outer edge of the tracks to the first public access point.

Figure 1 is one of the overlay maps that was prepared. The orange color represent the new right-of-way.

(This particular sketch is based on the assumption that a third track would go down the east side of Center St., as shown in early DRPT presentations.)

Figure 1: Right of Way Sketch



It is believed that the above sketch is conservative — the calculations showed that the overlay would actually be greater than shown.

Figure 2 shows some of the measurements that were taken to prepare the overlay sketch.

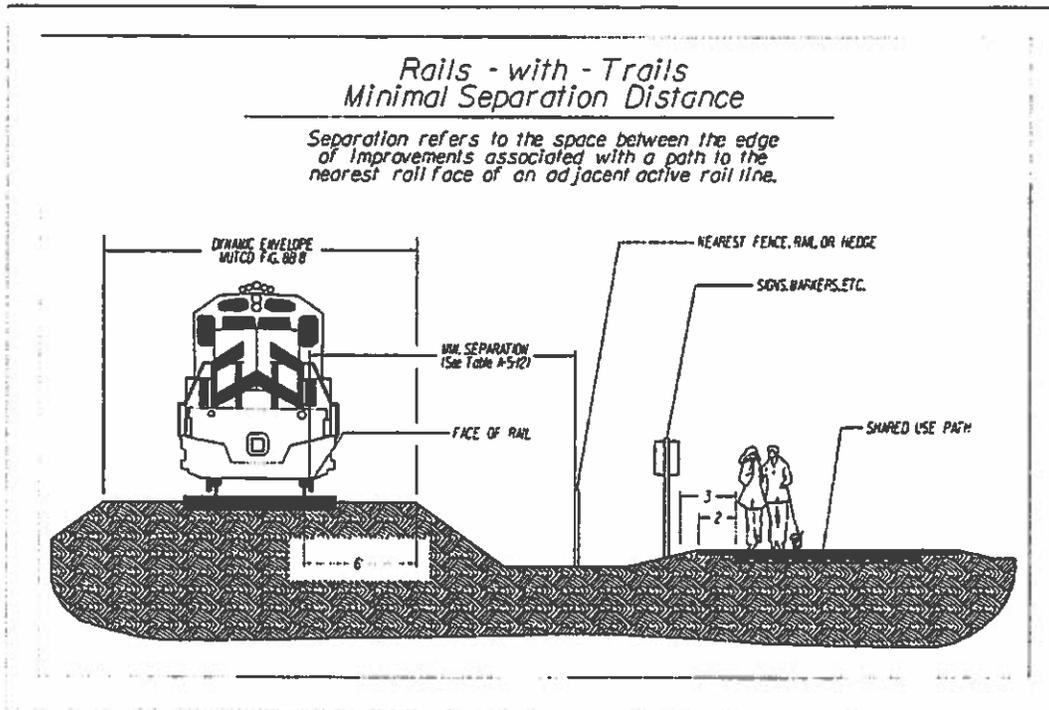
Figure 2: Measurements



If the DRPT would like to see our calculations, please let us know.

ATTACHMENT C
D RTP Track Spacing Standards

HIGHWAY



Source: Adapted from the *VTtrans Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Planning and Design Manual*

FIGURE 3-1: RAILS-WITH-TRAILS MINIMAL SEPARATION DISTANCE

HIGHWAY

Recommended Separation between Active Rail Lines and Paths (RWT)		
Type of Rail Operation	Setting Characteristic	Recommended Minimum Separation
High Volume/High Speed		
11 trains or more per day Max speed over 45 mph	Typical Conditions	25 feet with fence
		15 feet with a solid barrier
	Constrained Areas (cut/fill, bridges, etc)	15 feet with fence or other physical barrier
	Vertical Separation of at least 10 feet	20 feet
Medium Volume/Medium Speed		
Fewer than 11 trains per day Max speed 45 mph	Typical Conditions	25 feet
		15 feet with physical barrier
	Constrained Areas	11 feet with physical barrier
	High Trespassing Areas	11 feet with physical barrier
Low Volume/Low Speed		
Fewer than 11 trains per day Max speed 45 mph	Typical Conditions	25 feet desired
		11 feet minimum
	Constrained Areas	11 feet with physical barrier

Adapted from FHWA Rails with trails Lessons Learned
Source: *VTrans Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Planning and Design Manual*

FIGURE 3-2: RECOMMENDED SEPARATION BETWEEN ACTIVE RAIL LINES AND PATHS