



Town of Ashland

Center of the Universe

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May 1, 2017

Ashland Friends, Neighbors and Community Members,

I write to you today to provide an update on the DC2RVA High Speed Rail project. We had a nice lull in the proceedings for the past five months, but the project is now moving forward. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has resumed editing of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is anticipated to be released in June, 2017. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) has shared the following information:

JAMES R.
FOLEY.
MAYOR

JAMES D.
MURRAY
VICE MAYOR

GEORGE F.
SPAGNA, JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER

STEVEN P.
TRIVETT
COUNCIL MEMBER

KATHLEEN K.
ABBOTT
COUNCIL MEMBER

JOSHUA S.
FARRAR
TOWN MANAGER

ANDREA E.
ERARD
TOWN ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A.
COLLINS
CLERK OF COUNCIL

- The FRA has not granted the DRPT's request that the Ashland portion be pulled out of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a separate and distinct study. However, they have agreed to allow further study of a preferred alternative for the Ashland area which will take place concurrently with the advancement of the Environmental Impact Statement.
- The results of this concurrent Ashland study are not expected to be finished and included in the release of the DEIS in June, which will not contain a preferred alternative for Ashland. Rather, the identification of a preferred alternative will be expected by the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) sometime in late 2017 or early 2018.
- To assist in the study of a preferred Ashland alternative, the FRA has authorized the DRPT to convene a community-based stakeholder group. The stakeholder group will be made up of three representatives from the Town of Ashland, four representatives from Hanover County, three representatives from Randolph-Macon College, three representatives from CSX, and one representative from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- The three representatives from the Town of Ashland will be myself, our Town Manager Joshua Farrar, and Kristin Reihl, who is a Center Street resident and has been active in the No Third Rail group.

Jim Foley
Mayor
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Kristin Reihl
Citizen Representative
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Josh Farrar
Town Manager
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- The current plan is for the stakeholder group to meet once a month for six months starting in May. All of these meetings will be open to the public, but since these are working sessions, public comment will likely be limited at some of the meetings. Dates, times and locations have not been identified yet, but as soon as they are we will alert the community.
- While it is important to follow along with the process we understand there is a lot happening, and your schedule may not permit you to attend all the meetings. We have added a page to the Town website which has been and will continue to be updated throughout the process. Follow along there and let us know if information you would find helpful is missing.
 - www.ashlandva.gov/505/DC2RVA-Information
- Finally, the release of the DEIS in June (without a preferred alternative chosen for Ashland) will launch a 60-day comment period. It will be important for Ashland community members to take advantage of this comment period to express opposition to a third set of tracks through Town, and our concerns for safety and rail traffic congestion. The Town Council and staff will alert the community when the comment period opens.

Thank you so much for your continued interest and participation in this critical process. Please reach out to any of the Town's stakeholders to share your thoughts, ideas and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JRF', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James R. Foley
Mayor
Town of Ashland, VA
The Center of the Universe