

RESOLUTION OF THE ASHLAND TOWN COUNCIL
REGARDING PROPOSED WASHINGTON, D.C., TO RICHMOND,
VIRGINIA, RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

WHEREAS on July 5, 2016, the Ashland Town Council adopted a Resolution requesting that the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) re-examine options for the DC2RVA project so that the citizens of Ashland and surrounding areas would be offered viable options; and

WHEREAS the Town Council rescinded the Town Manager's January 6, 2016 letter recommending the "Western Bypass" because it wanted to explore alternatives in partnership with the Ashland and Hanover County community; and

WHEREAS the Town Council recognizes that, along with the greater Ashland community, there is a responsibility to provide input to the state and federal government to determine a feasible solution to the long-term concerns of crippling freight and passenger rail congestion that will occur with increased use of the rail corridor by CSX Transportation and Amtrak; and

WHEREAS in the spring of 2017, DRPT established the Citizens' Advisory Committee (Committee) comprised of representatives from Hanover, Ashland, Randolph-Macon College and CSX, and the Committee, with expertise and information provided by DRPT, has engaged, for over six months in an analysis of alternatives for achieving the goals of the DC2RVA project for the portion located in Hanover, and recommended the least objectionable alternatives: for "at-grade" in Ashland, the "3-2-3," for "below grade" in Ashland, the "Three Track Trench", and for a bypass the "Western Bypass" (AWB1) with requested modifications; and

WHEREAS the information reviewed by the Committee and DRPT reinforces that any type of a third track constructed "at grade" through Ashland would:

(1) dramatically impact the economic vitality and historic character of the Town and severely restrict vehicular and pedestrian access for many of the existing homes and businesses on Center Street in the heart of town,

(2) restrict access to Randolph-Macon College and fundamentally damage the usability, quality and safety of its historic campus, (3) impose additional restrictions on vehicles and pedestrians moving in the east-west corridors through the Ashland; and

WHEREAS DRPT presented the Committee with an option known as the “Three Track Trench” at the August 28, 2017 Committee meeting, which had not been sufficiently studied and engineered, was not included in the DEIS, and then the Committee was expected to evaluate the option in less than two weeks; and

WHEREAS the Town of Ashland, working with DRPT, quickly scheduled a Town Council work session for the residents, businesses and property owners impacted by the newly presented alternative at which the community quickly deemed the “Three Track Trench” too destructive to be viable due to the devastating effects to residential and commercial properties during construction, the economic loss in the lead-up to, and during, construction, and the fundamental change in character to the entire Town after construction; and

WHEREAS while the Tier II Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) identifies the continued use of two main tracks through Ashland, with one additional track eventually being constructed to the north and south of Ashland, together with the construction of grade separated crossings at Vaughan Road and Ashcake Road, as a viable method for meeting the DC2RVA project’s service and performance goals, the “3-2-3 Alternative;” and

WHEREAS the draft Tier II EIS clearly states that the “3-2-3 Alternative” increases the average vehicle delay for the England Street/Thompson Street crossing from 12 cumulative hours per day in 2015, to 41 cumulative hours per day in 2045, thereby creating the “wall of trains” effect and a project bottleneck; and

WHEREAS the draft Tier II EIS clearly explains that the “3-2-3 Alternative” will fail when it says, “operation simulation for year 2045 estimated that having only two main tracks in Fredericksburg and/or Ashland failed to dispatch (i.e., the operations simulation concluded that the infrastructure had insufficient capacity for the number of trains projected to operate in the corridor in year 2045);” and

WHEREAS the “3-2-3 Alternative” would, in fact, leave a cloud of uncertainty over the Town of Ashland because increased development in the suburban service area surrounding the Town over the next 25 years will severely limit future opportunities for reasonable consideration of bypass alternatives, making a third track through downtown Ashland inevitable; and

WHEREAS the “3-2-3 Alternative” is not viable according to the DEIS, and only postpones an inevitable decision that a third track will go through the center of Town, and thereby ensure the destruction of downtown Ashland.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Ashland Town Council that, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Federal Railroad Administration oppose the “3-2-3 Alternative,” and a third track through Downtown Ashland at grade or trenched, and adopt the “Western Bypass” as the means of achieving the DC2RVA project goals for that portion of the corridor lying within Hanover County, and that the DRPT continue to look for opportunities to mitigate the impact to property owners along the route of that option; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Ashland Town Council that any new station, platform and parking facility on the Randolph-Macon campus is opposed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ashland Town Council requests a reasonable and definitive amount of information and time from DRPT to receive and consider meaningful community input on the following ongoing rail corridor concerns within the Town of Ashland:

- *The design and scale of any pedestrian safety proposals*
- *The design and scale of any barriers, walls, or fences*
- *Any proposals or designs to alter existing at-grade road crossings and pedestrian crossings*
- *Any proposals or designs that include construction of separated grade crossings*
- *Any changes to existing Amtrak passenger service*
- *Any negative impacts to the Ashland Historic District including the Ashland Visitors Center*
- *Any proposals regarding the construction of a new Amtrak station, including location, design, and scale of the proposed facility, platforms, pedestrian crossings, barriers,*

adjacent parking alternatives, and potential loss of existing at-grade road crossings; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED by the Ashland Town Council that, while it is expected the DRPT will make a recommendation in December 2017, and the FRA will have a final record of decision in early 2019, thus ending the current DEIS review process, rail traffic will continue to increase for many years regardless of the record of decision and before any project construction occurs, therefore we strongly request that all community, state, and federal entities continue to collaborate to explore any and all alternatives that limit the impact of the project on the community, and identify viable and minimally destructive alternatives to meet project needs in the Ashland-Hanover portion of the DC2RVA project.

	Vote:
James Foley:	Aye
Steve Trivett:	Aye
George Spagna:	Aye
Kathy Abbott:	Aye
John Hodges:	Aye

Certified to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Ashland Town Council by a unanimous vote on October 20, 2017.



Joseph Collins, Clerk of Council