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September 27, 2016

Jennifer Mitchell
Director
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
600 East Main Street, Suite 2102
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Mitchell:

Thank you for the opportunity for members of the Ashland Town Council to provide public comment last week in Fredericksburg at both the Rail Subcommittee meeting and the full meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (“CTB”) the following day. The Town will continue to utilize every opportunity to reiterate the Town’s strong opposition to a 3rd rail line option routed through the heart of Ashland. The Council is also pleased to learn that the Commonwealth Transportation Board will conduct a special meeting/tour of Ashland and Randolph-Macon College within the next six weeks.

Looking ahead, I envision a constructive role for the Town to play in the DRPT process outlined last week. Namely, The Town is working to develop recommendations for alternatives and to act as a catalyst for solutions to the challenges confronting DC2RVA. Ashland wants to be part of crafting a solution and collaborating with the Department of Rail and Public Transit (“DRPT”), the CTB and stakeholders impacted by this issue.

To that end, I would like to invite you and your team to an informal meeting with myself and one other member of Town Council, as well as representatives of the Town’s administration, Williams Mullen and Randolph-Macon College, ideally before mid-October. Some topics I propose we address are:

1. A thorough preview of the Draft EIS Tier 2 Study routing options impacting the Town of Ashland;
2. Specific details regarding the “3-2-3” option;
3. Specific details related to the forthcoming mandated safety upgrades within the town limits;
4. A better understanding of options which DRPT has considered but is likely to dismiss as not feasible in the Draft EIS; and
5. The feasibility of granting a short delay before any final recommendation is submitted to the Federal Railway Administration.

I recognize that the Town will have another opportunity to weigh in during the public comment period, but earlier engagement is essential in achieving a solution. The Town needs a more complete understanding of the implications of the various alternatives in order to deliver on our commitment. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Jim Foley
Mayor
Town of Ashland