



Town of Ashland

Center of the Universe

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Citizens and Community Members:

I am pleased to share that on December 6th the Department of Rail & Public Transportation (DRPT) has recommended that the Ashland section of the DC2RVA rail expansion project be set aside for further study. While DRPT did provide recommendations for the rest of the corridor, DRPT suggested that Ashland be removed (“de-coupled”) from the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) process. This de-coupling is designed to allow time to find better alternatives.

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FOLEY.
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While this recommendation from DRPT is largely good news, it is not yet time for celebration. This is merely a recommendation for a delay – specifically, the DPRT recommended for “the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to request of the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) the ability to conduct a separate additional study for the Ashland area while proceeding with the DC2RVA project for the remainder of the 123-mile corridor, so as to allow for additional coordination and time to study and identify a preferred alternative for rail capacity improvements in the Ashland area.” Further, a delay does not by itself guarantee that Ashland will not see a third track running through our downtown.

This recommendation is still very much good news. A third track was not the chosen alternative for the Ashland area. The recommendation also shows that all the meetings and communications Town officials, staff, citizens and consultants have had with DRPT and CTB members have made a positive difference. We will continue to remain actively engaged in the process and continue to work with our neighbors, community stakeholders, and DPRT to evaluate and determine an acceptable preferred alternative for the Ashland section. We will remain vigilant that the third track is not ultimately chosen as the preferred solution.

Based on DRPT’s actions to date, I believe we should take them at their word that they will engage in a robust and transparent re-evaluation of all options for Ashland. While they have not yet provided details on what this new process will entail, we remain committed to keeping you up to date. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the issue further, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me at Jfoley@town.ashland.va.us, or Interim Town Manager Joshua Farrar at Jfarrar@town.ashland.va.us. Thanks again for your engagement in the process and trust moving forward.

Sincerely,

James R. Foley
Mayor