

Town Manager's Report October 2016

Projects/Updates:

The primary focus of staff beyond transitioning duties of the Town Manager has been the DC2RVA High Speed Rail project. In an effort to inform the community of the steps taken to date by the Town I've provided a summary of this project only below.

Councilmembers and staff have been working hard to make sure Ashland's interests are well known and protected since passing a resolution on July 5, 2016. So many citizens have reached out to ask "What's going on?" and "How can we help?" I wanted to share this report to inform community what Council, staff and the Town's lobbyist Williams Mullen have been up to since July.

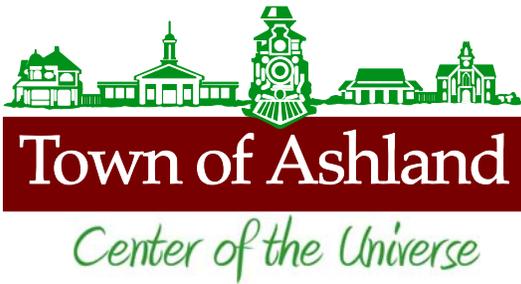
- Staff reached out to a number of firms with the qualifications necessary to help us through this process.
- Mayor Foley and staff interviewed two very well qualified firms.
- On September 6, 2016 the Town Council entered into a contract with Williams Mullen for lobbying services.
- Williams Mullen immediately began reaching out to decision makers in State government including staff members of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Lane, and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB).
- On September 20 Town Councilmembers, citizens, and staff attended the Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting in Fredericksburg, including the Rail Subcommittee meeting.
- On September 21 Town Councilmembers, citizens, and staff attended the Commonwealth Transportation Board in Fredericksburg to provide public comment on the DC2RVA project. This was the meeting at which Secretary Lane initially brought up visiting the Town to see the impact of a possible third rail.
- On September 30, 2016 Mayor Foley sent the attached letter to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Ms. Emily Stock informed the Town's lobbyist in late October that DRPT would be willing to sit down with the Town to discuss the issues raised in the letter only after the Draft EIS report is released in December.
- Throughout the month of October Williams Mullen continued to reach out to State decision makers and work with Town Council members on communication strategies moving forward.
- On October 18th and 19th Town Councilmembers, citizens, and staff attended the Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting in Arlington. Councilmembers and citizens provided comment on the DC2RVA project during citizens input.
- On October 24 the Town posted on our website and social media a letter from the Mayor asking the community to welcome CTB to Town on November 1st. A physical copy of the letter was mailed to property owners along the tracks on October 25.

- Throughout this entire timeframe Councilmembers have been meeting with representatives of Families Under the Rail to explore options that may be palatable to the Town and County residents to the west of Town.
- The Town Attorney has sent a FOIA request to the State requesting a copy of the draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) prior to its official release.
- Councilmembers have also attended Center Street Neighborhood meetings to discuss the project with those citizens most impacted by a possible third rail through Town.
- Throughout this process Town Council members, staff, and our lobbyists have coordinated with Randolph-Macon College.

What's Coming Up

- On November 1, 2016 the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will visit the Town of Ashland to get a better sense of the impact the DC2RVA project would have on the community.
- The Commonwealth Transportation Board will next meet on December 6 and 7 in the VDOT Central Office in Richmond. It is our understanding that this is the meeting at which the recommendations associated with the Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will be presented to the CTB. The Draft EIS is the document which will recommend which rail path the State will recommend to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).
- At some point in December the 45 day public input period will begin. This is the period which DPRT has been saying all along is the most important time for citizens to provide their input.
- Once the public input period has closed the Commonwealth Transportation Board will hold their regularly scheduled meeting in February 2017 where they will vote to approve/recommend the EIS and its recommendations to the FRA (date and location TBD).

JSF – 10/26/2016



101 THOMPSON STREET
P.O. BOX 1600
ASHLAND, VIRGINIA 23005-4600

TELEPHONE (804) 798-9219
FAX (804) 798-4892

September 27, 2016

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

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

CHARLES W.
HARTGROVE
TOWN MANAGER

ANDREA E.
ERARD
TOWN ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A.
COLLINS
CLERK OF COUNCIL

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



Town of Ashland

Center of the Universe

101 THOMPSON STREET
P.O. BOX 1600
ASHLAND, VIRGINIA 23005-4600

TELEPHONE (804) 798-9219
FAX (804) 798-4892

October 24, 2016

Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for all you do to make Ashland such a wonderful community. We often reach out to our citizens to ask for their input, but today I'm reaching out to ask for your help. On November 1, 2016 members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, as well as staff of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, will be visiting Ashland to get a first-hand look at the impact their recommendation on the DC2RVA High Speed Rail project will have on the community. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the Town to show the Board just how devastating a third track through downtown Ashland will be for residents, businesses and tourists.

The day will likely begin with a presentation at the Ashland Theater at 11am. There will not be any public comment but we are hoping there will be time for a Q&A session. They will also do a walking tour of Ashland from the RMC campus down Center Street to around Myrtle Street between 12:30 and 1:30pm. We are actively seeking more information on the logistics of their visit.

My request to you is that we do everything we can to welcome them with open arms and help them to understand what a wonderful community they would be destroying by putting a third rail through the heart of downtown. So if you have the time and resources, spruce up your property, decorate for the holidays, puts out signs saying "Welcome CTB Members!", make a point to be out walking Center Street and Railroad Avenue during that time period, or simply sit on your porch and wave when the various groups go by.

Let's make a positive impression on these decision makers. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to me at (804) 363-4817, or call our Interim Town Manager, Joshua Farrar, at (804) 798-8650. Thanks again for all you do to make Ashland, Ashland.

Sincerely,

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

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
INTERIM TOWN
MANAGER

ANDREA E.
ERARD
TOWN ATTORNEY

JOSEPH A.
COLLINS
CLERK OF COUNCIL



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

DC2RVA Commonwealth Transportation Board Tour of Ashland and Hanover County

ITINERARY -

Tuesday, November 1, 2016 Ashland Theater, 205 England St.

Opening Presentation 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- Tour Overview
- Local Remarks

Break 12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

- Restaurants/sandwich shops located nearby.

Ashland Walking Tour 12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

- Walk along Railroad Ave./Center St. between Lee St. and College Ave.

Hanover County Bus Tour 1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

- Bus to seat CTB members and DRPT staff only. Others will be provided with self-guided bus tour map.
- View potential station location south of Ashland.
- View bypass alternative alignment at various locations west of Ashland.