

## **PUBLIC COMMENT – ASHLAND TO PETERSBURG TRAIL**

“As a citizen of Hanover County, I fully support the concept of an Ashland to Petersburg trail. A trail will enhance outdoor healthy activities in addition to commuting and historical uses. In Ashland it would connect to two national Bike routes which may enhance 'Bike Tourism". I have visited the trails in downtown Lynchburg and have seen the vitality rails bring to an area. Hopefully we can achieve the same here in the Richmond area.”

Tim Shelton, 8-24-20

“As a long-term resident of Hanover County and avid cyclist I am writing in fervent support of the Ashland Petersburg Trail. Many of my friends and family are also active bikers and hikers and would use this trail extensively not only for recreation but for commuting and errands. We'd like to bike more and drive less but the infrastructure is not always supportive of that endeavor. But it could be! I was also a long-term supporter of the Capitol Cities Trail, riding in the fundraising events every year as well as contributing. Once it was complete and available for use more people took advantage of it than ever was anticipated. Virginians are hungry for these types of opportunities to recreate outdoors. If you build it, they will come. Please let me know how I can help make this a reality.”

John Suddarth, 8-24-20

“I am opposed to the use of public funds for this trail and other large projects until more basic needs in the area are met. I believe these funds could be used to much greater effect implementing road signage supporting bicycling throughout our community. There is an absence of respect for the safety of cyclists in the greater Richmond Area. I don't believe most motorists think bicycles should be on the roads, and I believe that most motorists are unaware of the laws both governing and protecting cyclists. I am routinely yelled at, honked at, and/or passed recklessly. I average 4,000 miles per year on public roads, and this is a near-weekly experience for me. I am a safe cyclist predominantly riding by myself as close as practicable to the right edge of the roadway; motorists' sole complaint is my presence on the road. The state does little to create awareness of the laws protecting cyclists, or even suggest that bicyclists SHOULD BE using public roads. A much better use for public funds would be to create awareness through a broad application of road signage. I am including 2 examples below, though I'm certain there are others which are appropriate relative to the VA code. Implementation of this signage on major roads in significant volume will educate the public and create the expectation to see cyclists on the road. And it will send the message to motorists that state and local governments support bicyclists. It might even influence law enforcement to cite

motorists when they see unsafe passes; in my experience, this does not happen. Thank you for your consideration.”

David Conners, Hanover County, 8-24-20

“My wife and I are long-term residents of Hanover County and avid cyclists. With both would like to support of the Ashland Petersburg Trail. Many of our friends and family are also active bikers and hikers and would use this trail extensively not only for recreation but for commuting and errands. We’d like to bike more and drive less but the infrastructure is not always supportive of that endeavor. But it could be! Just look at other cities around the country and the growing support for biking infrastructure. I was also a long-term supporter of the Capitol Cities Trail, riding in the fundraising events as well as contributing. Once it was complete and available for use more people took advantage of it than ever was anticipated. Virginians are hungry for these types of opportunities to recreate outdoors.”

Robert and Lizanne Jones, Hanover County, 8-24-20

“40-mile trail Ashland to Petersburg is a great idea”!

Jeff B., 8-24-20

“Please support the Ashland-Petersburg bike trail. This would be an amazing way to unite our communities while encouraging healthy life styles. I believe this would be a huge improvement to our community. A great way to unite the area!! Thank you for all you do”!!

Becky Collins, Hanover County, 8-24-20

“The Virginia Tourism Authority supports the creation of the Ashland Petersburg Bike Trail. The VTA will support promotions and marketing of the trail.”

Rita McClenny, Director of Virginia Tourism Authority, 8-25-20

“I'm reaching out to express my support of the Ashland to Petersburg bike trail. I believe this link will provide many economic opportunities for residents and businesses up and down the trail, as well as create a much-needed avenue to connect these different communities. Thank you for your efforts with the project”!

Chris Ray, Center of the Universe Brewing Co., 8-25-20

“Sending our support for the Ashland to Petersburg bike trail project. Considering how many people including families would benefit from this we are all for this project.”

Vicki and Nick Gabello, 8-25-20

“Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Virginia Tourism Corporation conducted a statewide tourism development study called Drive 2.0 on what communities should be building as well as promoting. The top asset for both categories was Outdoor Recreation across all 10 regions of Virginia. When Covid-19 hit, the Virginia travel industry was devastated, and people started shifting their preferences for vacations and weekend trips. Rising to the top of what travelers were interested in most was Outdoor Recreation where people could feel safe social distancing. Outdoor recreation, such as the development of a bike trail, has proven to be a tremendous asset for communities pre-Covid as well as during this pandemic. Two examples are the Capital Trail from Richmond to Williamsburg and the Creeper Trail in Abingdon. Simply put, an investment in Outdoor Recreation is a smart move. I hope this information helps shed some light on the potential for the Bike Trail during these times as well as post-Covid Recovery.”

Chris Canfield, Vice President of Virginia Tourism Corporation, 8-25-20

“I just wanted to say, I think this would be wonderful!!! I would support you all in any ways that I could to make this happen. The Capital Trail is a bit far away from me unless I want to drive my bike over to catch the trail. And traffic has increased so much in my area (not to get any better with Wegmans Distribution Center going up around the corner). The only bike riding you can really do anymore is around the neighborhoods. I would be very excited if this were to become a reality.”

Diane Foley, 8-25-20

“We understand that the Authority is considering a project to create a trail from Ashland to Petersburg. This is to let you know that we are in support of this initiative. Thank you for your consideration.”

Diane and Mark Becken, Town of Ashland, 8-25-20

“I support this trail as a means of providing more safe spaces for citizens to bike to maintain their health. In addition, linking Ashland to our neighbors to the south in Petersburg could be potentially beneficial in improving more communication and understanding between the citizens of these communities.”

Delores Dalton Dunn, Town of Ashland, 8-26-20

“As the inaugural meeting of the Central Virginia Transportation Authority approaches, we would like to reiterate the importance of multi-use trails to the health, safety, and economies of our region’s residents and municipalities. One project that we urge you to keep top of mind is the Ashland to Petersburg Trail, which represents an opportunity to create a “spine” linking several disparate trails into one cohesive network. Exemplified by the Virginia Capital Trail not only are multi-use trails a great opportunity for tourism and recreation, but they provide safe and convenient routes for people to walk or bike for the purpose of getting where they need to go. It is important that the CVTA be a positive force in the development of our region’s multimodal transportation network, so we urge you to prioritize the Ashland to Petersburg trail, along with investments in other non-automobile transportation, in order to provide ample choice and improved quality of life to all residents of the Richmond Region.”

Sebastian Shetty, Policy Coordinator, Partnership for Smarter Growth, 8-26-20

“Please support the planned biking/walking trail from Ashland to Petersburg. People already enjoy walking the Trolley line and other local trails. Expanding access to people throughout the central region would be great. In case you missed the article about Richmond in a recent New York Times, I have enclosed a link to the article. The consequences of no green spaces and parks etc. are important to consider in any and all planning and in deciding how to spend tax dollars--for the common good. Here is the name and link to the article that is relevant to your planning.”

Subject: Re: How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/24/climate/racism-redlining-cities-global-warming.html>

Sue Watson, 8-26-20

“I’m writing to encourage you to support the building of the Ashland-Petersburg Trail. I often walk on the Ashland Trolley line portion of this trail and enjoy seeing how the seasons change on this quiet path. I have been watching them build the elevated beginning of the path and look forward to being able to use it to connect to Ashland. I’m also looking forward to being able to safely ride a bike to Richmond from Ashland. Just like the Cap to Cap trail, the Ashland to Petersburg trail will be a resource that many people will enjoy and will continue to showcase the Richmond areas commitment to healthy outdoor activities and sustainable transportation as a 21st century leading city.”

Eve Torrence, Town of Ashland, 8-26-20

"I'm writing in support of the successful completion of the best possible Ashland-Petersburg bike trail. As someone who has enjoyed countless hours on the Capital Trail, and who lives in Ashland, this would be a life-changing addition to our transportation grid. I fully support its completion, and I appreciate all the careful planning that is going into these decisions."

Bruce Torrence, Town of Ashland, 8-26-20

"I am a resident of Ashland, VA. I am writing to you in the hope that you will support the Ashland-Petersburg trail project. I have ridden the existing parts of the trail in Ashland and Henrico in the past. I would love to be able to bike from Ashland to Richmond on the old trolley line route without car traffic. Please support this important project in whatever way you can. Thank you."

Jeff Reihl, Town of Ashland, 8-27-20

"I am writing to add my support to the Ashland to Petersburg Multi-Use Trail project. I can project using this for recreation and shopping, and possibly commuting."

Wat Hughes, Town of Ashland, 8-27-20

"I would like to offer my strong and unequivocal support to the planned Ashland-Petersburg Trail. I often walk my dog along the Ashland Trolley line and dream of riding my bike off-road to William & Mary. I may even use this for commuting to work in downtown Richmond. This trail will be a huge economic driver for the entire central Virginia area. Please make this trail a reality as quickly as possible"!!!

Jim Foley, Former Mayor, Town of Ashland, 8-27-20

"Hello- my husband and I (Brent & Jen Chambers) would like to encourage you to support the Ashland Petersburg bike trail! We used to live in DC and took the many trails there. Our dream when we moved to Ashland was to have a safe bike trail to take us into RVA and encourage bike transportation! The 40-mile trail from Ashland all the way to Petersburg which could also connect to the Cap to Cap trail would be a huge tourism asset for our state! Many small businesses will benefit from your decision to approve the bike trail. Thank you for considering this."

Jen and Brent Chambers, 8-27-20

"I would like to thank and commend all of those involved in this project. This trail will provide a recreation resource for schools, social groups and citizens of our

Commonwealth. In addition, it will create another avenue to boost tourism and to create another revenue stream for our local businesses. In closing, these are the fresh ideas that make Virginia a great outdoor destination. Have a great day and keep up the good work”!

Lawrence “Bobby” B. Brooks Jr., 8-31-20