



COMMONWEALTH *of* VIRGINIA

Office of the

SECRETARY *of* TRANSPORTATION

Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail
Carter Hutchinson, Deputy Secretary of
Transportation

February 17, 2026



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL
AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Background

In 2022, the General Assembly provided funding for the development of trails:

- Up to \$35 million for Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail (SVRT) land acquisition & planning
- In 2023, budget language was adopted stipulating that “any land acquisition by the Commonwealth as part of [SVRT’s] development shall not preclude the consideration of options to maintain rail transportation in the corridor”
- VDOT assessed the constraints, considerations, and costs for constructing a trail alongside the rail line as an alternative to the previously studied rail-to-trail option

Rail with Trail Assessment studied in three phases:

- Phase 1: Alternatives Analysis (March 2025)
- Phase 2: Corridor Assessment (September 2025)
- Phase 3: Assessment Findings (November 2025)

Current Issues

- **December 2025-January 2026 actions at CTB generated public concern regarding process and transparency on the SVRT project**
- **Among issues that require additional clarity: January 2026 CTB Resolution on SVRT does not conform with December 2025 VPRA resolution on SVRT:**
 - **VPRA resolution directed execution of grant agreement with Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation for purchase of the corridor**
 - **CTB resolution directed VPRA to engage in competitive process to review any alternative proposals with a deadline for submissions of February 15, 2026**

Recommendation

- **Rescind 1/6/2026 Resolution**
- **Hold public information meetings as part of completion of Phase 3 Report**
 - Examines the constraints and costs of the rail-with-trail concept and the rail-to-trail alternative

Next Steps

- Proceed with corridor acquisition negotiations with Norfolk Southern
- Schedule three public information meetings consistent with those conducted in March/April 2025 for the Phase 2 report
- Gather public feedback and compile results
- Provide summary of public feedback in finalized Phase 3 Report



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Thank you



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