

# **Appendix G**

## **Federal Railroad Administration Decision Brief**

**Southeast High Speed Rail (Richmond, VA, to Raleigh, NC)**

**Alternatives through Petersburg, VA**

**Decision Brief: Alternatives Considered but Dismissed**

**Prepared for: Federal Railroad Administration**

September 22, 2009

## Purpose

A Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Record of Decision was completed in 2002 for the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) from Washington, DC, to Charlotte, NC. This process identified the preferred corridor and overall project purpose and need. The key elements of the project purpose and need are captured in the following:

- Improving safety and energy effectiveness within the transportation network;
- Reducing the overall air quality related emissions per passenger mile traveled within the corridor;
- Improving overall transportation system efficiency within the corridor, with a minimum of environmental impact;
- Providing the traveling public - particularly special populations such as the elderly and the disabled - with improved transportation choices; and
- Helping ease the growth rate of congestion (air, highway, passenger rail) within the corridor.

The Tier I document did not evaluate specific rail options through the City of Petersburg, VA, and the modeling for ridership and revenue assumed the use of the existing Amtrak station in nearby Ettrick, VA. However, the *Technical Monograph: Transportation Planning for the Richmond–Charlotte Railroad Corridor* published by Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in 2004 included several options that could access the old Union Station in Petersburg, VA.

The Tier II EIS currently underway is evaluating rail alternatives between Richmond, VA, and Raleigh, NC within the preferred corridor identified in the Tier I study. For purpose of analysis, the project is being evaluated in 26 sections, each containing 3 alignment alternatives. The project is using an incremental approach to high speed rail that seeks to utilize the existing rail right of way to the maximum extent practicable, and in many places all three alternatives are concurrent (i.e., the same alignment). Currently, three alignments have been evaluated in the Petersburg area, one on the west side of town, and two through downtown Petersburg via old Union Station.

This document provides additional information to support a decision to either carry forward or dismiss from further consideration the alternatives through downtown Petersburg that provide access to Union Station. It is intended to accompany the alternatives development process for the SEHSR Tier II EIS.

The broad-level analysis provided herein includes a summary of the downtown Petersburg alternatives, a qualitative and/or quantitative description of potential impacts, a qualitative description of engineering constraints, preliminary cost estimates, and other issues where deemed appropriate.

## Petersburg Alternatives Summary

In the Petersburg area, the SEHSR project alternatives are on common alignment heading south through Chesterfield County until Dunlop and then re-join just south of the Appomattox River (**see Overview Map**). This section of railway crosses three jurisdictions (City of Colonial Heights, City of Petersburg, and Chesterfield County).

The VA1 project alternative follows the active CSX A-line from Dunlop, through Ettrick, crossing the Appomattox River on a new bridge adjacent to the existing single track bridge (on the east side), and continues to follow the A-line into Collier Yard. This alternative could serve potential high speed rail station locations near Dunlop, at the existing Ettrick station, near Washington Street, and near Collier.

The VA2 project alternative leaves the CSX A-line at Dunlop and follows the old AAP-line (Appomattox Lead) through Colonial Heights. In this area, the tracks have been removed and the right of way (ROW) has been sold. It then crosses the Appomattox River into downtown Petersburg in the vicinity of old Union Station on a new bridge using the piers from the old bridge. From there, it continues west within, and on the north side of, the existing Norfolk Southern (NS) N-line ROW until curving south on structure to re-connect with the CSX A-line. This alternative could serve potential high speed rail station locations at Union Station, near Dunlop, near Washington Street, and near Collier.

The VA3 project alternative follows the same alignment as VA2 across the Appomattox River and along the NS N-line ROW, until reaching the inactive CSX S-line. At that location, it crosses over the NS N-line on structure to follow the CSX S-line ROW (past old Commerce Street Station) and re-connects to the CSX A-line near Washington Street. This alternative could serve potential high speed rail station locations at Union Station, near Dunlop, near Washington Street, and near Collier.

It should be noted that the original proposal for an alignment serving old Union Station came from the early planning efforts of FRA in the late 1990's. Based on that original alignment, VA2 and VA3 were developed in an effort to minimize overall project impacts to both the human and natural environment, and to avoid potential freight conflicts (from use of shared track) in the downtown Petersburg area.

## Impacts

Proposed rail improvements associated with the downtown Petersburg alternatives (VA2 and VA3) would potentially result in the following impacts.

### *Conformity with Local Plans/Local Support*

Investigations indicate that the alternatives through downtown Petersburg are in conflict with development plans in the region and face local opposition. The SEHSR project team coordinated closely with the cities of Colonial Heights and Petersburg in the development of alternatives VA2 and VA3. Neither city supports the further consideration or selection of the downtown Petersburg alternatives based on the increased impacts versus the more westerly alignment of VA1 (**see Appendix A**).

Representatives from the City of Colonial Heights have consistently expressed opposition to the VA2 and VA3 alternatives since first presented with them in May 2007. Specifically, in their letter dated August

12, 2009, the City expressed opposition to VA2 and VA3 “due to their respective impacts on residential and commercial development currently in existence in the City.” Representatives from the City of Petersburg, while initially expressing interest in a route through downtown, have also expressed concerns about the impacts of the project to historic resources, the existing road network, and overall disruptiveness to the community. In their letter dated August 14, 2009, the City expressed their belief that “the impacts to the several historic properties throughout downtown, including the Battersea Historic site in particular, will be unacceptable to the city.”

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) concurred with the recommendations of the two municipalities (**see Appendix A**). In their letter dated August 24, 2009, DRPT stated that “the VA2 and VA3 alternatives have significantly greater impacts to the local community than the VA1 alternative” and would “cause undue impacts and displacements of Colonial Heights and Petersburg citizens in both residential and commercial developments.”

### *Cultural Resources*

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 provides protection for historic resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These lands can only be used for a federally-funded transportation project if there is no other feasible and prudent alternative, and the project incorporates all possible planning to minimize harm.

The SEHSR alternatives through downtown Petersburg would cross several resources protected by Section 4(f), including Battersea Plantation, North Battersea/Pride’s Field Historic District, and Petersburg Old Town Historic District (**see Cultural Resources Map**). While the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has not yet issued formal determinations regarding the effect of the proposed improvements on these resources, the cultural resource consultants for the project recommended that the VA2 and VA3 alternatives would adversely affect these resources. They recommended that the VA1 alternative would have no adverse effect or no effect on these resources. Informal communications with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources affirm those conclusions. The Section 4(f) impacts for the VA2 and VA3 alternatives, therefore, represent a potential “fatal flaw” in that the VA1 alternative has *de minimis* impacts to Section 4(f) resources. Therefore, when compared to VA2 and VA3, the FRA must choose VA1 as the alternative with the least overall harm to Section 4(f) resources.

### *Residential and Business Relocations*

Due to the sale of the former CSX AAP-line ROW through Colonial Heights and subsequent redevelopment, there are significantly more residential and commercial relocations associated with the VA2 and VA3 alternatives in comparison to VA1. The preliminary relocation estimates for the three project alternatives from just north of Dunlop to Washington Street in Petersburg, VA, are as follows:

VA1 – 42 total relocations\*

VA2 – 123 total relocations\*

VA3 – 103 total relocations\*

\* Estimates of residential versus commercial relocations are not available at this time.

As mentioned previously, the City of Colonial Heights has repeatedly expressed concerns about the relocations, as well as potential conflicts with their plans for future development in this area.

### *Travel Time*

The additional length of the route through downtown Petersburg on VA2 or VA3 (a distance of approximately one mile), combined with the reduced train speed due to the horizontal curvature, would increase travel time compared to the VA1 alternative. The estimated two to four minute increase in travel time is anticipated to result in a decrease in ridership.

The increase in travel time associated with the VA2 and VA3 alternatives compared to VA1 results in reductions to:

- **Trip Diversions** – Currently, within the SEHSR corridor, conventional passenger rail travel times are not competitive with travel by airplane or auto. Meaningful reductions in travel time are necessary to divert travelers from other modes of transportation. Fewer diversions are anticipated as travel time increases.
- **Air Quality** – A number of counties within the SEHSR corridor are presently experiencing air quality impacts from mobile source emissions. The movement of passengers by HSR offers significantly less pollution per passenger mile traveled than other mobile sources. Diverting some of the traveling public from automobiles to trains will aid in reducing emissions throughout the corridor. Decreases in diversions from automobiles (associated with increases in travel time) will reduce the air quality benefits of the project.
- **Energy Efficiency** – Similar to air quality, the energy efficiency benefit of the project is maximized by maximizing diversions from other modes of transportation. Therefore, decreases in diversions from other modes of transportation will reduce the energy efficiency benefits of the project.

### *Freight Conflicts*

Insofar as the VA1, VA2, and VA3 alternatives, as designed and analyzed, are all separated from the NS N-line along the Appomattox River via parallel track and flyovers, there are no freight conflict differences between the alternatives.

As previously noted, however, an early design concept (associated with the VA2 and VA3 alternatives in this area) would have required the SEHSR trains to share the NS N-line along the south side of the Appomattox River. As mentioned, this alternative resulted in the development of VA2 and VA3 due to the impacts to Battersea Plantation as well as operational issues. The Virginia DRPT has expressed concerns about using the NS N-line along the Appomattox River for the early design concept for the VA2 and VA3 alternatives (**see Appendix A**). NS runs several loaded and empty freight trains east-west along this corridor daily. Operational concerns through downtown Petersburg would result from changes in

dispatch control (going from CSX to NS back to CSX) in a relatively short distance, and potential slowdowns. The daily interface of the passenger and freight traffic, with the required change of dispatch control, would increase accident opportunity and reduce overall system safety and efficiency.

### ***Engineering Issues and Cost***

The VA2 and VA3 alternatives through Petersburg have significant construction issues (relative to VA1) due to constraints through downtown Petersburg. These constraints include historic properties and districts, utilities, and the Appomattox River. As described above, the Petersburg Old Town Historic District, North Battersea/Pride's Field Historic District, and Battersea Plantation, all of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, are located adjacent to or spanning the NS N-line. The Appomattox River flows parallel to the existing N-line track and, in two locations, the bank of the river is as close as 35 feet from the existing rail centerline. Access to existing utilities between the railroad and the Appomattox River must also be maintained. For example, Harvell Dam on the Appomattox River has an associated substation adjacent to the railroad approximately 30 feet from the existing rail centerline. Last, through the City of Colonial Heights, the I-95 corridor parallels the existing railroad corridor, and the existing access ramps infringe upon the railroad right of way. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has communicated that future design changes in this area will require further infringement on the existing rail right of way. VA1 avoids these construction issues.

Due to the constraints listed above, retaining walls are being proposed on the VA2 and VA3 alignments to minimize impacts to the extent possible. Along the I-95 corridor in the City of Colonial Heights, retaining walls minimize impacts to the interchange and an adjacent neighborhood. Between River Street and Canal Street in the City of Petersburg, retaining walls are proposed to minimize impacts to the Old Town Historic District and the dam. VA2 and VA3 are both proposed to have a grade separated crossing with the N-line. To minimize impacts, retaining walls have been proposed between the SEHSR and the N-line in the approaches to the flyovers. These retaining walls add extra expense and construction complexity.

Due to the need to maintain utilities between the SEHSR and the Appomattox River, additional service roads are proposed for VA2 and VA3 that are both between the rail and the river, and they cross the N-line west of the CSX A-line. The extra right of way and construction costs associated with these service roads increases the total costs of the two alternatives.

The VA2 and VA3 alternatives also include highway grade separations through the City of Petersburg between River Street and Washington Street. There is only one grade separated crossing proposed along VA2 (at Fleet Street); however, the need for a grade separation at this location necessitates replacement of the existing Fleet Street bridge over the Appomattox River. In order to provide a grade separation at Fleet Street, the bridge must extend over both the rail and the Appomattox River. The result is a road bridge approximately 800 feet long. There is also extensive roadwork associated with the approaches to the bridge. The southern approach to this bridge extends along the CSX S-line rail corridor and through vacant land in the historic district in an attempt to minimize impacts to buildings in the historic district. The northern approach to this bridge is approximately 30 feet higher than the

existing bridge over the Appomattox River and ties to Chesterfield Avenue and College Avenue adjacent to the Virginia State University campus.

In comparison, the VA3 alternative includes two grade separated road crossings between River Street and Washington Street. One will be located at the previously removed bridge at High Street. The second will extend Upper Appomattox Street along the old CSX S-line under the A-line. These additional roads will add extra construction complexity and right of way requirements.

The above noted improvements required for the VA2 and VA3 alternatives results in substantially greater costs than the costs estimated for the VA1 alternative. The preliminary engineering estimates for the three alternatives from just north of Dunlop to Washington Street in Petersburg, VA, are as follows:

VA1 - \$53 million

VA2 - \$107 million

VA3 - \$92 million

## Summary

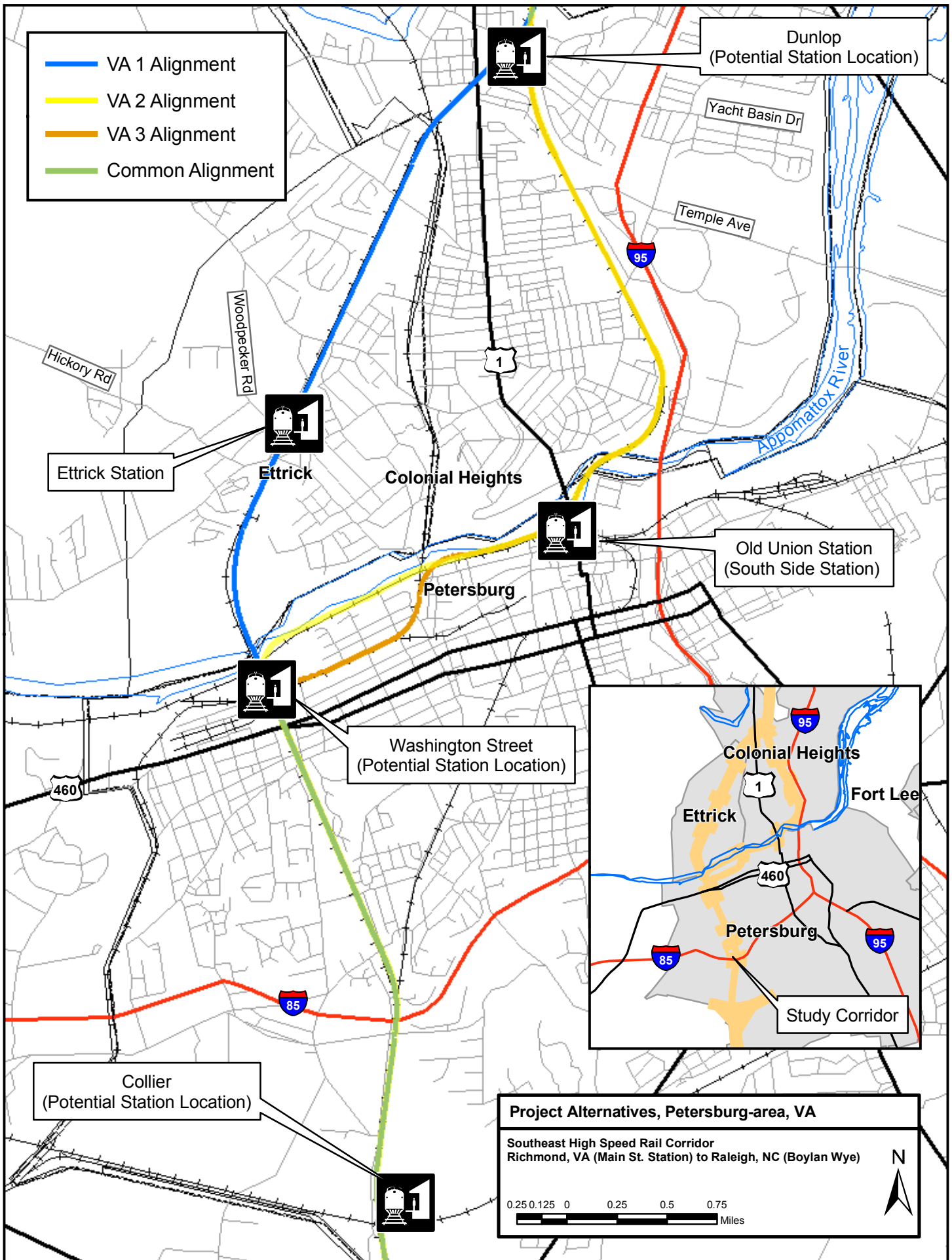
The following table summarizes the qualitative and quantitative information collected to date on the Petersburg alternatives.

Variable	VA1	VA2	VA3
Local Support	Yes	No	No
Cost	\$53 million	\$107 million	\$92 million
Section 4(f) Impacts	No Adverse	Several Adverse	Several Adverse
Section 106 Conflicts	No	Yes	Yes
Relocations	42	123	103
Travel Time	Baseline	Plus 2-4 min.	Plus 2-4 min.
Engineering Complexity	Normal	Increased	Increased

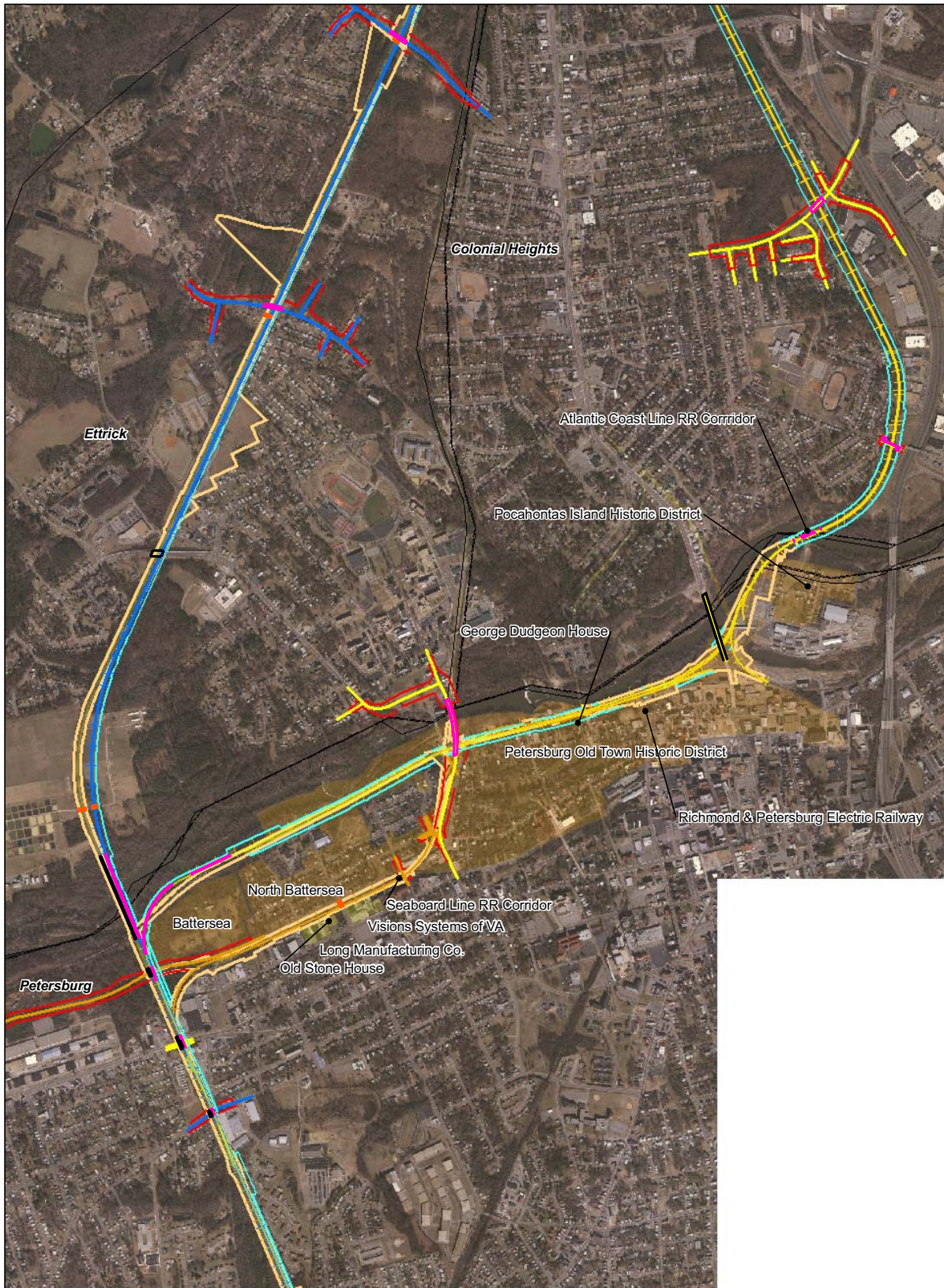
Alternatives VA2 and VA3 through downtown Petersburg fail to support the highest advancement of safety, energy reduction, air quality improvement and system efficiency with minimal environmental impact as required by the stated project purpose and need. These facts, coupled with local opposition, the potential for greater impacts to historic resources, substantial Section 4(f) impacts that do meet the test of legal sufficiency, and substantially higher costs, lead us to request that the VA2 and VA3 alternatives be shown as concurrent with VA1 along the western side of Petersburg, and that the



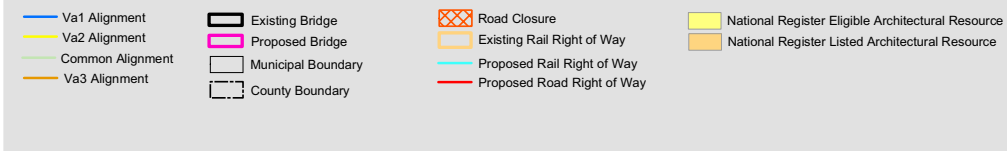
alignments through downtown Petersburg receive no further study and be shown in the DEIS as “alternatives studied but not carried forward.”







## Southeast High Speed Rail, Petersburg Area - Cultural Resources



Prepared: August 4, 2009

PRELIMINARY DESIGN - SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

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Feet

## Appendix A

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# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

CHARLES M. BADGER, P.E.  
Director

DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
600 East Main Street, Suite 2102  
RICHMOND, VA 23219-2416

August 24, 2009

(804) 786-4440  
FAX: (804) 225-3752  
VIRGINIA RELAY CENTER  
1-800-828-1120 (TDD)

John Winkle  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration  
Office of Railroad Development  
W38-145  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Winkle,

Thank you for attending the July 28, 2009 meeting regarding the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) alternatives through Petersburg and Colonial Heights, VA. As you know the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is coordinating with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Rail Division (NCDOT) on the Richmond to Raleigh section for the SEHSR tier II EIS. The states are working closely with the cities and communities along the route to minimize impacts.

We have received and enclosed comments from both the Cities of Petersburg and Colonial Heights. Both Petersburg and Colonial Heights support the SEHSR project and support a station stop to serve the surrounding area. However, they do not support either the VA2 or VA3 alternatives.

It is apparent that the VA2 and VA3 alternatives have significantly greater impacts to the local community than the VA1 alternative. There would be impacts to several historic areas and properties throughout downtown Petersburg, including Battersea Plantation, which are unacceptable to the City of Petersburg. Both alternatives would be disruptive to downtown street systems and access as well as to several redevelopment projects that are both existing and proposed along the VA2 and VA3 routes. VA2 and VA3 would also cause undue impacts and displacements of Colonial Heights and Petersburg citizens in both residential and commercial developments.

The VA1 alternative makes use of the existing CSX corridor west of downtown Petersburg. The VA1 alternative has none of the impacts associated with the VA2 and VA3 alternatives. VA1 provides options for a station to remain at Ettrick or potentially to be relocated to a new Washington Street or North Collier Yard location. As discussed at the July meeting, these latter two locations could easily be served with bus shuttles, either conventional or bus-rapid-transit, between either of these locations and Petersburg's new downtown multimodal transit center nearing completion at Union and Washington Streets.

*The Smartest Distance Between Two Points*  
[www.drpt.virginia.gov](http://www.drpt.virginia.gov)



Mr. John Winkle  
August 24, 2009  
Page two

Operational issues are also associated with VA2 which uses the Norfolk Southern (NS) line along the Appomattox River between Battersea and downtown Petersburg. NS runs many freight trains east-west along this corridor and operational dispatch issues would arise through downtown Petersburg as passenger trains would be routed and dispatched from CSX to NS back to CSX within a relatively short distance, creating potential slowdowns. In addition, DRPT has determined that the Richmond to Hampton Roads Passenger Rail (R2HR) alignment from Norfolk should connect into the SEHSR alignment just north of Collier Yard. This would permit a connection between the R2HR and SEHSR projects that would allow multiple potential station locations along SEHSR and allow the SEHSR process to be unencumbered by the Norfolk connection of R2HR.

Based on the community impacts, local comments and the operational concerns, DRPT requests that the EIS focus on the VA1 alternative, and that VA2 and VA3 identified as alternatives considered but not carried forward. Documentation of the impacts will be discussed in a Decision Brief: Alternatives Considered but Dismissed for the Southeast High Speed Rail (Richmond, VA, to Raleigh, NC) Alternatives through Petersburg, VA to be submitted to FRA by NCDOT. An FRA decision to remove VA2 and VA3 alternatives from further consideration would facilitate the continuation of the federal planning process for high speed rail in the Richmond to Raleigh section.

Thank you again for your continued involvement in the SEHSR project. If you need further information feel free to contact me at 804-786-3963, Christine Fix, DRPT Strategic Planning Manager (804-786-1052), or David Foster, NCDOT SEHSR Project Manager (919-733-7245 x 266).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin B. Page', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin B. Page  
Chief of Rail Transportation

Enclosures (3)  
cc: David Foster, NCDOT



# CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS

P.O. Box 3401  
COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VA 23834-9001  
[www.colonial-heights.com](http://www.colonial-heights.com)

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## Office of the City Manager

August 12, 2009

Mr. Kevin Page  
Director of Rail  
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
600 East Main Street, Suite 2102  
Richmond, VA 23219

Mr. David B. Foster  
SEHSR Project Manager  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1553 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

RE: SEHSR Petersburg Alternatives

Gentlemen:

As a follow up to the meeting held in Colonial Heights on July 28, 2009, please accept this letter as formal notification from the City of Colonial Heights, Virginia, that the City supports the concept of NOT carrying forward any further evaluation of the Petersburg downtown alignments known as VA2 and VA3 in the Tier II EIS. The City of Colonial Heights has always been opposed to VA2 and VA3 due to their respective impacts on residential and commercial development currently in existence in the City. the City supports the concept of NOT carrying forward any further evaluation of the Petersburg downtown alignments known as VA2 and VA3 in the Tier II EIS. The City of Colonial Heights has always been opposed to VA2 and VA3 due to their respective impacts on residential and commercial development currently in existence in the City. We also oppose the additional costs associated with these two alternatives. While we appreciated the City of Petersburg's interest in service to their downtown Union Station, we understand the impacts on historical sites in and around the City of Petersburg that come with VA2 and VA3. We further do not support impact on these historical sites from a preservation and tourism promotion perspective. Therefore, the abandonment of further evaluation of VA2 and VA3 is supported by the City of Colonial Heights.

For the record, the City of Colonial Heights always has, and continues to support the alignment known as VA1 with service for the Southeast High Speed Rail initiative along the current CSXT A-Line.

Mr. Kevin Page and Mr. David B. Foster  
August 12, 2009  
Page 2

We appreciate being involved in the study to-date and in general, support the Southeast High Speed Rail project. If I can be of any further assistance to you on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Anzolut, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard A. Anzolut, Jr.  
City Manager

RAA:eg

cc: George W. Schanzenbacher, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Larry Sams, NCDOT Rail Division





# CITY OF PETERSBURG

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS & PUBLIC UTILITIES

103 W. TABB STREET, PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA 23803

TELEPHONE (804) 733-2328 FAX (804) 732-8003

MBRIDDELL@EARTHLINK.NET

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August 14, 2009

Mr. Kevin B. Page  
Chief of Rail Transportation  
Department of Rail & Public Transportation  
Public Transportation Division  
600 East Main Street, Suite 2102  
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: South East High Speed Rail

Dear Mr. Page:

We enjoyed meeting with you, FRA, NCDOT, and the Planning Director of Colonial Heights on August 28th to review the Southeast High Speed Rail alternatives through Petersburg and Colonial Heights. The meeting was beneficial and informative, and I appreciate the study team continuing to work so closely with the cities and communities along the route.

We first want to reiterate the City of Petersburg's strong support for the SEHSR project, and for a station stop to serve the city and surrounding area.

As you are aware, there has been considerable, and understandable, interest in a downtown station near the city center. There was quite a bit of discussion about perhaps reviving the old Union Station on River Street as a new rail station. The VA2 and VA3 alternatives would facilitate such a location.

As the project has evolved and additional information has become available through preliminary planning and route designs, it is apparent that the VA2 and VA3 alternatives have significantly greater impacts on Petersburg than the VA1 alternative. We believe the impacts to the several historic areas and properties throughout downtown, including the Battersea Historic site in particular, will be unacceptable to the city. Those alternatives would be disruptive to the street systems and access along the northern border of the city, as well as to redevelopment projects that are both existing and proposed along the corridor. They also would result in more displacement of citizens both in residential and business environments.

The VA1 alternative makes use of the existing CSX corridor in the western portion of the city. The VA1 alternative has none of the impacts associated with the VA2 and VA3 alternatives, while still providing good vehicular and pedestrian access to the Petersburg area. It provides options for a station to remain in Ettrick or to potentially relocate to a new location in the West Washington Street or Collier Yard areas. This alignment also provide a convenient connection to a possible Hampton Roads high speed rail via the existing Norfolk Southern corridor that crosses the city and connects to this line just north of Collier Yard. As we discussed, these latter two locations could easily be served by transit, either conventional or bus-rapid-transit, between either of these locations and the city's new downtown multimodal transit center at Union and Washington Streets.

Based on this discussion, we concur with your team's decision to focus future study on the VA1 alternative, while addressing VA2 and VA3 as alternatives considered but not carried forward.

I thank you and the study team for meeting with us several times over the years to present and discuss preliminary designs in our area. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael D. Briddell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael D. Briddell, P.E.  
Acting Director Public Works/Public Utilities

Cc: City Manager  
Planning Director



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

OCT 16 2009

Mr. David B. Foster, PE, CPM  
SEHSR Project Manager  
NCDOT Rail Division  
1553 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

**Re: SEHSR Alternatives through Petersburg**

Dear Mr. Foster:

On July 28, 2009, John Winkle and Dick Cogswell of my staff attended a meeting in Colonial Heights, VA to discuss the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) alternatives through the cities of Colonial Heights and Petersburg, VA. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is the lead Federal Agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is responsible for guiding the preparation of the EIS. Also present at this meeting were representatives from Colonial Heights, Petersburg, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT).

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss elimination of two of the three SEHSR alternatives through Petersburg. The two alternatives, named VA2 and VA3 in the EIS, come south through Colonial Heights, cross the Appomattox River and enter Petersburg. Both alternatives then turn west through Petersburg and could have utilized the existing Old Union Station in downtown Petersburg. The two alternatives continue until they join the third alternative, named VA1, which stays west of both cities and utilizes the existing CSX corridor. All three alternatives then continue south on a common alignment.

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At the meeting, all parties made it clear to the FRA that the VA2 and VA3 alternatives have significant operational, historic preservation, and relocation impacts and were both far more expensive than VA1. In addition, NCDOT questioned whether VA2 and VA3 would meet the Purpose and Need of the project as both would add an estimated five to ten minutes of trip time compared to VA1. NCDOT presented all of these deficiencies in a "decision brief" submitted to FRA on September 22, 2009.

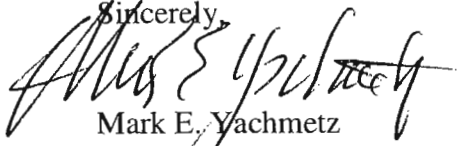


Subsequent to the meeting, both VDRPT and NCDOT sent to FRA letters further clarifying their respective positions that the VA2 and VA3 alternatives should be dropped from further consideration from the EIS. Included with the letter from VDRPT were letters from both Petersburg and Colonial Heights also supporting eliminating the two alternatives. The letter from Petersburg noted that VA2 and VA3 could have potentially served the downtown Union Station but argued that the impacts were too significant and outweighed any potential benefits gained from using this station. The City also felt that a station located along the VA1 alignment would provide sufficient vehicle and pedestrian access to meet the needs of the City.

After reviewing all of the information submitted, FRA agrees that the SEHSR VA2 and VA3 alternatives through Petersburg, VA should not be carried forward for consideration in the EIS. These alternatives should be included in the "Alternatives Considered but Dismissed" section of the EIS and the document should clearly and adequately explain why they are being eliminated.

An identical letter has been sent to Mr. Kevin Page of VDRPT. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Winkle at 202-493-6067.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Yachmetz  
Associate Administrator  
for Railroad Development

cc: Kevin Page, VDRPT



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

OCT 16 2009

Mr. Kevin Page  
Chief of Rail Transportation  
Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
600 East Main Street, Ste 2102  
Richmond, VA 23219

**Re: SEHSR Alternatives through Petersburg**

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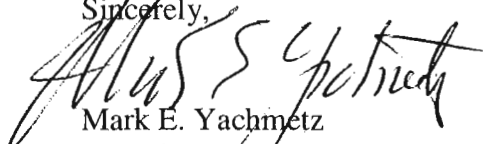
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Sincerely,



Mark E. Yachmetz  
Associate Administrator  
for Railroad Development

cc: David Foster, NCDOT