

Good evening welcome everyone. Thank you for joining us tonight for an informational webinar on the Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail Feasibility Study.

My name is Jennifer Wampler.

I'm the trails coordinator for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and working on this study with others, many of whom are joining us on the call tonight.

To get a better idea of our audience. I'm going to try out a little poll here to find out where people live. Can you tell us where you live?

Okay, I think most of you have responded. I am going to close the poll.

And now I'm going to share those results with everyone. It looks like 38 percent from Shenandoah county, 23 percent from Rockingham, 18 percent from Warren, and then we have 20 percent from elsewhere in Virginia.

For the meeting tonight, we have four speakers and about an hour to go over what we've learned so far with our study. In addition to the material I'll be covering, Kelly McClary will provide some background on the project. Brad Reed with VDOT will share some results from their Metroquest survey, and Brad Shelton with Michael Baker International will provide information on what his team has learned in the field. We also will talk about how you can provide feedback and some next steps.

With only an hour, we won't have time to address questions tonight, but please feel free to type your questions in the question box. I will respond within the month to all your questions, and we'll be creating a frequently asked questions handout to post on the website. The link is shown in blue on this slide. If you prefer to think over your comments, you can always send them to me later by snail mail, email or fax, and my contact information is on this slide. There will also be a recording of this slideshow available on the website if you'd like to share this with others who weren't able to join us tonight.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide information on the feasibility study and gather your input regarding the proposed rail-trail in the Shenandoah Valley from Broadway to Front Royal. Kelly McClary, who's the director of the division of planning and recreation resources here at DCR, will explain why we're doing this study and when it's due.

Hi everyone, and welcome tonight. My name is Kelly McClary. I'm the director of Planning and Recreation Resources with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Back in last fall or in January, in fact, a budget bill was approved. House bill 1800, which is written in front of you today. And what it did was ask DCR and direct DCR to create and evaluate a rail trail from Front Royal to Broadway, and that's approximately 48.5 miles. That study is due November 1st of this year and just some work we've been doing so far in the past six to eight months.

I want to thank our partners today. DRPT as well as VDOT and Norfolk Southern. We've been working together so that we can evaluate that section of rail-trail in Shenandoah County. Also, VDOT has been working on having an engineering company go out and look at the structures and the bridges along the way.

So tonight, you will be hearing from all of our partners and what they've found so far. And one other thing I'd like to mention is that on November 1st our study is going to be due. So after tonight's public meeting and input, we will have an input session for about 30 days. You can send Jennifer Wampler any comments or questions you may have, like she said, via email or letter or phone call for that matter. And we'll take those and respond to those

comments over the next 30 days. Then we'll incorporate any comments that we receive into our study. The study will begin being written sometime in August, and we'll have a draft ready sometime in September and October. And as we said earlier, on November 1st, it's due. So that will go to the general assembly.

But that's the background of why we're completing this study and what we'll be doing so far in the in the next couple months. And from here, I'm going to let Jennifer take it away.

And like I said, I want to thank our partners today, and you'll be hearing more. Parts of this presentation will include a presentation from VDOT and the engineering firm that helped them along the way. Thank you all, and I hope you found this informative.

This map, which was created for the study by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, shows the corridor in green and the towns it passes through in gray. Battlefield areas are highlighted in pink. In addition, you can see the green outlines of Shenandoah River and Seven Bends State Parks on this map. There's a thin yellow line indicating the 252-mile Tuscarora Trail, which is a spur of the Appalachian trail that also connects to the Great Eastern Trail. And it connects the US Forest Service land and National Park Service land on both sides of the Valley.

The rail corridor in green passes very close to the North Fork of the Shenandoah River in some sections, so you can also see the boat ramp symbols on this map in blue. And the bulk of this trail is within Shenandoah County, but the southern tip is in Rockingham, and the northeastern end is in Warren County. VDOT also maintains a web page for this project, and that link is below if you want to read up on their page.

DCR did not receive funding for this study, and so we've relied on assistance from others. VDOT conducted the survey and has contracted with Baker for the engineering work needed for cost estimates. The Department of Rail and Public Transportation is providing technical assistance.

The Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Committee, which was formed in 2016 to develop the vision of transforming the rail corridor into a multi-use trail, pitched in for an economic impact study in 2019. And they've worked hard to get resolutions of support from their membership representing the towns, counties, and the regions that the rail corridor passes through. The Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley has helped with outreach informing landowners and providing materials in Spanish, which you can find on the web link on this page, and Norfolk Southern has given permission to access the right-of-way for the study.

Tonight we're going to go over what we've done so far, community feedback, some of the demographic and market research, potential users, partner capacity and support, some of the environmental concerns, a description of the corridor, and management alternatives. Brad and I have taken the pulse of the community in regards to this potential trail, and we're going to take a few minutes to describe what we've learned.

In January, we held four listening sessions with nonprofits, transportation providers, land managers, and tourism and economic development interests. Across these groups there was widespread bipartisan support for the project, but there's also been some opposition. The Virginia Rail Policy Institute, those members would like to see passenger rail along the line. And there are some farmers who are concerned about interference with farm operations and who may be impacted if land values go up if the eyesore becomes a public amenity.

We've met individually with all the towns and counties to sort of understand their preference for trail design, trail surfacing, and management. And also to discuss where the preferred trailhead locations would be. In terms of design, the main thing people would like to see is a firm, stable and slip-resistant surface. In some of the towns

where they maintain their own roads, they preferred a paved surface just so there would be smooth transitions between the roads and the trail. But overriding, they want to see consistency along the route.

In terms of management, there was some concern expressed for maintaining some local control so that the corridor could be used for utilities in the future. But also a recognition that a centralized authority would have more resources and economies of scale, management efficiency and transparency, and the benefit of experiencing a track record with these types of projects.

Towns do recognize that this project won't be cheap, and they seem willing to put some skin in the game. Although that varies over whether they're providing space for maintenance, equipment, providing the trailheads, providing some financial support, or performing some of the maintenance functions.

Now I'm going to turn it over to Brad Reed, and he's going to go over the survey results.

Good evening everyone, my name is Brad Reed. I'm a planner with the Staunton District of the Virginia Department of Transportation. We serve the Shenandoah Valley to help plan, design, build, and maintain transportation facilities and keep you moving.

So we're really pleased to be helping out on this study effort both with the public survey element here and our assistance and work through Michael Baker International for engineering services.

So part of any feasibility study is understanding what the public thinks of the project and whether or not we're really on the right track. So you know is it feasible? That's an important question to ask, are folks going to use the trail? What are the potential benefits they might see in the trail? And helping us identify any issues that we might need to know about. And that's precisely what this public survey, that was published through the middle of May through the end of June, in both English and Spanish.

This survey was published on the MetroQuest platform, which we use for various planning studies and have had a lot of success. And indeed, our success was resounding for this effort, setting a record actually for survey responses on any VDOT survey that we've performed in the past. So we're very excited. We had over 9200 responses with 5400 typed comments. And we asked folks to provide information about whether or not they'd use the trail, what some of their interests in the facility might be, whether they are interested or not, some of the potential benefits. And then, we actually ask them to mark locations on a wiki-style map to inform us of some additional information at a geographic level.

So here I'm just displaying a summary of information on the geography of where our respondents are coming from. You see, it's slightly different from the responses that we received in our poll here at the beginning of our meeting this evening.

But about 70% of our respondents were located in the Shenandoah Valley, in either one of the counties that the trail directly passes through or in the vicinity.

And then we had about 30 percent who were outside the Valley. 21 percent here elsewhere in Virginia and then nine percent outside of Virginia. And you can see that among the zip codes of the respondents, we had representation throughout the Valley, with 10 percent of responses coming from the Harrisonburg area down through Front Royal and Woodstock and all the way going back up the Valley and then back down to Broadway there on that chart.

So we asked folks to tell us whether or not they would use this path if it were to be built. And this is probably the single most important question on this whole survey.

And we did have a very strong positive response towards indicating that folks would use the trail, with 94 percent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would use the trail if it were to be built.

And 96 percent of respondents reporting that they're interested in the project in general. Which, of course, doesn't necessarily mean that they're supportive of the project, but that they are interested in understanding it more.

And then 86 percent of respondents have used other trails of Virginia, which indicates to me that the cohort of respondents for this survey is largely comprised of individuals who have experience riding on trails and have some appreciation or draw towards those types of facilities.

So that's something to keep in mind.

As far as how folks would use this trail if already built, you can see in the pie chart here on the bottom left that we had the largest percentage of respondents noting that they'd use the trail for either recreation or exercise in green, recreation is in grey, or in yellow there social or family outings. And then with desired activities, walking, biking and running came out really on top.

On this screen, we asked respondents to identify what they felt were the perceived potential benefits of the rail trail if it were to be constructed. Noting six different areas lining the bottom here, with access to destinations, safer places to walk and bike, health and wellness, economic development, improving the quality of life, and increasing tourism.

So among the rankings here, one would indicate the highest-ranking, and five would indicate the lowest ranking. So the lower numbers that you can see here on this chart indicate that they were ranked on average more highly than the other potential benefits. The highest-ranked benefit that we found was safer places to walk and bike, indicating that there right now may not be adequate facilities to support the demand for walking and biking within the study area and within the service area that this trail would run through.

That was followed up by health and wellness. So going on, again, the trend that we saw in the previous slide, with folks using the trail for exercise and recreation.

This is the wiki-style map I referred to earlier. We had an overwhelming number of responses on this map. You can see here we have these four different types of markers; parking, destinations, amenities, and other, that we asked individuals to place on the map, at least three of these markers.

So with respect to parking, it might be a present parking facility that exists today that might be worthwhile to utilize or maybe a location that could be beneficial in the future as something like a trailhead. Destinations, places that are located along the trail that folks would like to visit or be in some way connected to with the trail. Amenities being things like restroom facilities and other being anything else. The majority of our almost 22,000 map marker responses here were in the parking category, 44 percent of responses. That's the category that's arguably the most useful for us at this stage of the game as we try to understand the feasibility, being the keyword of the evening. Understanding where trailheads might be located, what those might look like, what kind of potential right-of-way impacts would be associated with them.

So that was arguably the most relevant point of information on the map here, with a lot of great additional information coming from the destinations, amenities, and other that will help feed information to those who are helping plan this project now and downline. If the general assembly were to to advance it next, oh excuse me, I'll say one more thing on the map there. The clusters here are represented; the colors just mean that there are more

responses in a given area, and the numbers are the actual number of markers on the map.

So in Front Royal at the top right, you'll see there are over 3,300 map markers placed there. Moving south from there, there are about 3,200 in Woodstock, and then coming down at the bottom of the map here, is Broadway on the bottom left with almost 3,000 map markers placed. So again, a very broad distribution across the Valley of responses from our respondents.

So there were, as I said, several thousand comments that we received from everyone. And if some of the folks who responded to this survey are on the call tonight, I want to personally thank you for taking the time to provide this valuable information to us. But those comments have been read through; they're very difficult to summarize, however quickly and easily. So what we've done is develop a word cloud in which the size of the words here represents the frequency in which they appeared within those comments. With us trying to look through and understand what some of the trends were. So you can see, in general, mostly positive responses towards supportive comments towards the construction of the trail for biking and walking in particular.

I will note, however, not all responses were supportive. We had approximately three percent of our respondents who identified that they had concerns about the project for various reasons; either concerned about the use of taxpayer dollars for the project, concerns about the ability to potentially use the right-of-way for other purposes such as freight rail in the future. So this and those representing what is largely the majority response here, which was broad support of the proposed trail project. And with that, I appreciate your time. I'll turn it back over to Miss Wampler.

Thank you, Brad. That's excellent information, and we really appreciate VDOT doing that survey for us really quickly. I want to launch another poll to find out if this path were built which of the following activities would you engage in, and you can click all that apply here.

So most of you have voted. I'm gonna close this out, and I'd like to share it with everybody. So you can see 83 percent would walk a run, 79 would bike, 9 horseback riding, and 19 other. So that might be like electric scooters or electric bikes or skateboards, so thank you all for participating in that survey. We're going to move on to the demographic and market research section of this presentation.

So looking at the walkability and the bike-ped infrastructure, there seems to be a latent demand for bike-ped infrastructure in the Valley. The walkability scores are low between the towns, and the existing biking infrastructure primarily serves higher-skilled users. Bike-ped commute rates are low except in Harrisonburg and Front Royal, where you have a lot of bike-ped facilities, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

In terms of vulnerable populations, there are higher levels of disability in the Valley than in other places in the state, higher levels of linguistically isolated households, and some lower-income households in several areas along the tracks. There's also in the Lord Fairfax Health District higher levels of overweight, obesity, hypertension, and high cholesterol than many other areas of the state. There are over 3,600 households without a car and over 32,000 people 65 and older.

There are four and a half million people within a 90-minute drive, which is indicated by this pink color on this map here, 23.5 million people within a four-hour drive of Shenandoah National Park, which had 1.7 million visitors in 2020. And when you use Google Trends and type in Shenandoah Valley, you get hits from the entire west coast; you get hits from Texas. If you type in Virginia trails, you might get a lot of places on the east coast, but Shenandoah Valley has national appeal.

I'll explain what you're looking at here. This heat map represents people who've downloaded the Strava app to their phone and these lines to pick where they've been recreating, either on their bikes on foot, paddling or doing winter sports. The red lines are where most of the activities are taking place, fading to blue where there's been less activity. Route 42, you can see is a red line probably because there's a bike lane and wide shoulder on this section.

And Route 11, on the other hand, is mostly blue, but there are still riders brave enough to travel this corridor. You can see more activity at the bottom in Harrisonburg, where there are sidewalks and bike lanes, and up in Winchester and Stephens City. At the top of this map, just beyond Short Mountain, you can see some activity in Woodstock.

The feasibility study includes the aggregated and de-identified data provided at no cost from Strava metro. And although this data has been criticized because it represents the more athletic segment of the population. The spandex wearers, but research has shown that the patterns found in this data are reflective of the general population. In Shenandoah County, where we have data for walk, run, jog trips were up 111 percent, and bike trips were up 49 percent in 2020. And these increases were no doubt driven by the pandemic by the closure of Shenandoah National Park and by the opening of Seven Bends State Park. Although activity peaks in May and October, there's consistent activity throughout the spring, summer and fall in the Shenandoah Valley.

In terms of demand for outdoor recreation, every five years, we do the Virginia Outdoors Survey in order to update the Virginia Outdoors Plan. Trails are consistently in the top three most needed recreation opportunities and that is true in both central and northern Shenandoah Valley. In terms of our state parks as a system, we don't have enough state parks to meet demand in Northern Virginia. For example, we've turned people away from Leesylvania State Park in Prince William County every weekend this summer. And our other parks along the Potomac are experiencing similar demand. The two 30 car parking lots at Seven Bends State Park are filling up every weekend when the weather and water conditions are optimal.

Now I'll go over some potential uses for the trail. These things that we heard in our listening sessions that people were interested in doing. Walking, using their strollers or wheelchairs, and I don't need to read all of these, but just to give you an idea. Outdoor classrooms was something people were really interested in. Having some interpretive signage so people could learn about the area.

And there are all kinds of things that could be done as part of special events, whether there are carriage or hayrides, races, fundraisers, historical reenactments, scavenger hunts, and even group fitness on the trail.

And now I'm going to talk a little bit about the partner capacity and support. So as I mentioned, the Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory committee has gotten resolutions of support from nine towns, three counties, two planning districts, and even Harrisonburg, in addition to the nonprofits that are listed here. So there does seem to be a lot of support for the project.

Potential federal partners:

The George Washington Jefferson National Forest is in the mountains on either side of the corridor. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields, the entire corridor is within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. In Strasburg, the corridor goes near the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historic Park and potentially could even be connected to the Shenandoah National Park in Front Royal.

In terms of environmental scoping, there will be some environmental challenges that add to the development and maintenance costs. Karst topography which is carved by underground water on soluble limestone, is characterized by barren rocky ground, caves, sinkholes, underground rivers. There's also a risk of landslides and floods in the

Valley. There's endangered species to consider, especially in the waterways. And trail users can transport invasive species unless steps are taken to avoid doing that.

The towns all have historic districts, and special care must be taken not to impact the qualities of those sites, and some former industrial areas within the corridor may need to be studied to mitigate for pollutants that have persisted.

Now I'd like to turn it over to Brad Shelton with Michael Baker International, who's going to walk us through the corridor.

Thank you, Jennifer. So Michael Baker was brought in to evaluate the feasibility of the Norfolk Southern alignment to convert it to a multi-use path. So really what we were brought in to do is take a look at the conditions on the ground and try to determine what level of work needs to be done to bring this up to multi-use path standards. So as part of that effort, we conducted a number of tasks, including trail segmentation, alignment condition review of actually going out and traversing the alignment, looking at potential locations for trailheads. We also took a close look at where we have roadway crossings.

And also our bridge inspectors went out and looked at all the structures along the alignment. So we'll start with the trail segmentation. And when we have a corridor of this length, which is 48.5 miles, when we have these longer quarters that we're looking at conversion to trail use, we typically want to break them up into what we refer to as segments of independent utility. Now independent utility means that if one of these segments is built by itself, it will still have usability for trail users. And this allows flexibility when it comes to securing funding and phasing construction. So when we develop these segments, we take into account the locations of points of interest along the trail alignment.

We also want to make sure that we're accounting for access points, and along with access points, we want to make sure we have potential parking areas so that folks can easily access the trail. And then we also look at the geography of the area to make sure that where the segments are, they don't run into any geographic constraints. So what we have proposed for this alignment are six segments running from the southwest to the northeast. We start in the town of Broadway up to Cavern Road just outside of Quicksburg, and that's 11.5 miles.

Then Cavern Road to the town of Edinburg, which is nine and a half miles. The town of Edinburg to Woodstock, which is five and a half miles. Woodstock to Toms Brook, which is five and a half. Toms Brook to Strasburg, which is seven miles, and then Strasburg to Front Royal, which is 10 miles. So the other thing that you'll notice is that the lengths of these segments are certainly manageable for someone on a bicycle.

So let's take a look at the segments in more detail. We're going to move from southwest to northeast.

We'll start with segment one, which is from the town of Broadway to Cavern Road just north of Quicksburg. This segment is characterized by being very rural for the most part. We have a lot of open land along this alignment. We have one of our larger structures with the bridge over the north fork of the Shenandoah River just over adjacent Timberville.

The alignment along this section, as you can see from the images, is very clear. There's very little overgrowth along this segment.

As we get closer to Cavern Road on the northern end of this segment, there are a number of attractions, primarily Shenandoah Caverns, as well as some other points of interest that would certainly be of interest to trail users. One of the things that our field team pointed out was that this segment had the best view of the mountains. They said the views of the mountains were absolutely stunning along this segment. And also, a good portion of this segment from Broadway to Timberville follows the North Fork of the Shenandoah, so you have some great river views as

well.

Segment two runs from Cavern Road up to the town of Edinburg to Stoney Creek Boulevard, and this area allows us really good access to the Mount Jackson area and the amenities of Mount Jackson. One thing that we did notice with this segment is it's pretty well-vegetated. We have a lot of grass covering a lot of the alignment. As you can see from that center image, the alignment is completely obscured by the grasses.

So that would certainly need to be cleared. Then we also have structures such as the timber structure you see in Edinburg along this segment. That would certainly require some maintenance.

So for segment three, this runs from Stoney Creek Boulevard to the town of Edinburg, up to court square in the town of Woodstock. Along this segment, the alignment is fairly clear within the towns; however, between the towns, we do have a lot of overgrowth in the form of shrubs and actually some trees in the alignment. So there would be a fair amount of clearing that would need to occur along this segment.

One thing that's interesting with this segment is the alignment is more or less at grade for the entire length of the segment, so that will provide really good options for access, especially in Edinburg and Woodstock.

So segment four runs from court square in the town of Woodstock to Brook Creek Road in the town of Toms Brook.

Once we get into this section, the alignment actually raises up above ground a little bit. Even though the alignment does abut some commercial and residential uses, it's at a higher grade than the adjacent land next to it. We have a lot of open land along this segment, and you will notice, as with the previous segment, we do have a lot of overgrowth, a lot of trees, shrubs and grasses on the alignment, which will need to be cleared.

Segment five is from Brook Creek Road in the town of Toms Brook up to Route 55 King Street in the town of Strasburg. As we start out from Toms Brook and move north, we do have a lot of vegetation covering the alignment; however, once we get north of Fishers Hill, it clears out quite a bit, and the alignment is very clear.

This segment provides really good access to Strasburg, the main street, and the various community amenities in Strasburg. But it should also be noticed that there are a number of roadway crossings that we get in Strasburg. And due to the geography of the area, a lot of those crossings have some have poor visibility. So we will certainly want to take a look at those and come up with recommendations for mitigation.

Interesting features along this segment include a number of rock formations adjacent to the rail alignment, which certainly creates features of interest. And we also have some structures, some that are associated with the railroad activity.

So the final segment, six, this runs from Route 55 and King Street in the town of Strasburg up to the town of Front Royal. It really has two of the statement structures on this segment. We have a bridge over the North Fork of the Shenandoah outside of Strasburg and a bridge, a truss bridge over the South Fork of the Shenandoah as we go into Front Royal.

There's a lot of agricultural land, especially on the southwestern half of this segment. As we get into the northeastern half of this segment, however, it does get quite wooded. So there is a lot of shade along this segment which would certainly be a nice amenity for trail users. Also important to note that you see from the images, the rail alignment is extremely clear. There would not much need to remove much vegetation in this area.



So as part of our fieldwork, we did take a very close look at the at-grade trail crossings. It's critical that we ensure safe crossings where we have potential trail users mixing with vehicular traffic. Along the entire quarter, we have 117 trail crossings, and that includes both public roadways as well as private and commercial driveways.

For the most part, most of the rail crossings are what we would refer to as low volume, where we have very few vehicles traveling along most of these facilities. Typical treatments that we'll be able to take advantage of include signage and pavement markings that would alert both the trail users that you're about to enter a roadway. And to also alert vehicular traffic that they're about to cross an active trail facility. And this image is a good example of what that might look like, and this is from the WO&D trail up in Loudoun.

So here are some examples of the types of roadway crossings that we encountered out in the field. In the upper left-hand corner, we have a commercial residential crossing example. This would be the lowest volume type crossing, and due to that low volume, these are very easy to mitigate with signage and possible markings if necessary. In the upper right-hand corner, we have an intersection crossing example in Mount Jackson.

And the primary concern with these types of crossings is that we need to make sure that any traffic on the road that is parallel to the alignment are able to see the trail users when they make turns into the trail across the trail. So that's the main issue there, is making sure we have good visibility from any traffic that is turning from that parallel roadway. In the lower-left, we have our low volume low-speed crossing types. And this is really the majority of the crossing types that we see out here.

And one thing that you'll note on the Capron Street crossing is there's some curvature to the roadway. We have a lot of tree coverage. There's some geography as well, which really obscures the view of a trail user from vehicular traffic. So we want to make sure that we are mitigating those issues.

And in the lower right, we have our example of a high volume high-speed crossing type. This is the town of Woodstock. This is actually the highest volume crossing of the entire alignment, and this is a four-lane section of Route 42. So for an example like this, we may need to go a little bit beyond just trail markings and signage. There may be a need for some sort of lights or an activated signal, so we'll be taking a look at that as well. But the good news is we don't have many examples like this most of them are low volume crossings.

Also, as part of our fieldwork, we had our bridge inspection team go out and look at all the structures along the alignment. We have 49 total structures along the alignment, 16 of which include long or multi-span structures. And these include steel multi girder bridges, steel two girder bridges, or the steel truss bridge, as you see in the upper left-hand image here. We also have seven single-span structures, which are typically either timber or slab or steel. There's an example of one of those in the upper right-hand corner. And then certainly not as glamorous as those big beautiful bridges over the rivers, but we do have 13 culverts and 13 drainage inlets which are also important to maintain the integrity of the alignment. Those are typically steel, masonry or concrete, and we took a look at those as well.

So when we're looking at the structures, we evaluated them for their conditions by performing a visual inspection. And what we were really looking for were any significant defects, any cracking or spalling on the concrete, and any erosion of the abutments. In addition to looking at the condition, we also took note of what improvements might be required for conversion to handle trail use. And that would include items such as redecking to be able to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic and also safety railings.

So to summarize our findings, we have along the entire alignment about a nine to ten-foot-wide alignment with moderate to steep slopes abutting either side. We do think that the alignment is sufficient for our preferred cross-section, which would be a 10-foot wide trail with two-foot wide shoulders. There's little to no overgrowth south

of the I-81 crossing north of Fishers Hill; however, significant shrubbing and clearing would be required between I-81 and Fishers Hill, where we do have moderate to heavy overgrowth.

This alignment affords multiple access points to the towns and points of interest along the alignment, so we do not think we will have any issues with identifying trailhead locations. We have a number that we are currently evaluating with DCR and VDOT; however, no decisions have been made as of yet. As noted, there are multiple trail crossings that will require various crossing treatments. And we have multiple structures, that while we did not see anything that we would consider a fatal flaw that would prevent it from accommodating bicycle-pedestrian trail usage, there is certainly some maintenance that needs to occur with a number of these structures.

So our next steps are to perform the trail cross-section analysis where we will actually overlay that preferred cross-section onto the alignment. And we will perform the development of construction cost estimates to identify cost ranges for converting the alignment to a multi-use path. We will be providing a range essentially for those cost estimates, and since no decisions have been made yet, we are going to be providing cost estimates for both a paved and an unpaved surface. We'll be looking at those trailhead locations and identifying the requirements of the trailhead locations. And then, we'll also be providing the treatment analyses for the roadway crossings, as well as recommendations for the bridges and structures, as well as cost estimates for those items.

Now I'd like to turn it back over to Jennifer.

Thank you, Brad, for that description and some of those pictures. Those were great pictures, and thanks for sharing those with us. So we're going to do another poll here real quick before we get into management alternatives. Why would you use this trail?

Okay, it looks like most of you have voted, so I'm going to go ahead and close this out and share the results. It looks like for most people, it would be recreation or exercise, 93 percent. 63 percent social or family outings and 20 percent other. 15 percent commuting to work or school. So thank you very much for sharing that information with us, and I will go into our management alternatives.

So this study is not going to conclude who would be the best manager for this project, but we are providing sort of a palette of what the choices could be. This could be federally owned and managed with congressional action. State-owned and that could be state-owned with federal management or state-owned with state management, whether that was VDOT or DCR or even a rail authority. It could be a regional authority like Spearhead Trails down in southwest Virginia. Or it could be managed by a non-governmental organization in partnership with the state like the Virginia Capital Trail. There could be local or regional ownership. There's a regional authority like the WO&D, or it could be managed by a regional commission like the trails down in Roanoke in the Roanoke Valley. Or it could be managed by a board like the Tobacco Heritage Trails managed by the Roanoke River Rail Trails or managed by a non-governmental organization with support from the planning districts like the Appomattox River Trail.

So we will be accepting your comments in Spanish or English until August 21st. You can send them to me. There's my email address, there's my mailing address, and there's also a fax number there.

The draft document is due to the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources by probably September 1st. And then on to the General Assembly by November 1st.

And then, of course, Norfolk Southern is going to have to determine what happens with the line, whether they're going to sell the line.

And the General Assembly accordingly will direct state agencies and assign resources if appropriate.

So thank you all for joining us tonight. Again here's my contact information if you weren't able to write it down before, I'll give you some time.

And we really appreciate the time you've given tonight to learn more about this project.