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VDOT/DRPT AND DCR SEEKING PUBLIC INPUT ON STUDY OF SHENANDOAH VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

STAUNTON – The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) are partnering with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and other stakeholders to determine the feasibility of converting an inactive railroad segment into a 48.5-mile multi-use recreational rail trail in the Shenandoah Valley. The study focuses on an out-of-service Norfolk Southern line in the counties of Rockingham, Shenandoah and Warren.

The study process includes an online survey to gauge interest, need and support for a rail trail project. The survey is designed to gather input from communities along the study corridor as well as visitors to the Shenandoah Valley. The online survey, available in English and Spanish, is open now through June 25, 2021. A link to the survey and additional information about the study may be found at <https://www.virginiadot.org/ShenValleyRailTrail/>.

The endpoints of the study area are the town of Broadway in Rockingham County and the town of Front Royal in Warren County. The rail line also passes through the towns of Timberville, Mount Jackson, Edinburg, Woodstock, Toms Brook and Strasburg. The entire rail line is within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. It passes close to Seven Bends State Park, Shenandoah National Park, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests.

The Shenandoah Valley rail trail study will evaluate existing infrastructure, such as bridges and culverts, consider potential trailhead locations and roadway crossings, estimate construction cost, and outline options and a budget for operations and maintenance. VDOT and DRPT will provide any technical assistance that may be required in developing the cost assessment.

The study will inform a DCR report to be submitted to the Virginia General Assembly by November 1, 2021.

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