

Virginia Bicycling Federation Passes Rails With Trails Resolution

The Virginia Bicycling Federation, along with 25 national, state and local organizations has endorsed a resolution asking Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine to support rails with trails along all major rail projects in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

With concerns for the environment, the economy, and the ability to maintain our Interstate highway system, government is looking at railroads as a key component of our transportation infrastructure for the twenty-first century. Railroads are experiencing an unprecedented level of interest and expansion.

By investing in upgraded infrastructure, government is helping rail companies to improve their levels of service for freight, passenger and multimodal transportation.

Upgraded railways will help reduce the number of cars and trucks on our roads, and decrease air pollution, energy use, and wear and tear to our highways.

The Virginia Bicycling Federation supports this effort.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has already invested over \$60 million in rail projects in Virginia. Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation are seeking billions more state and federal dollars to complete these projects.

Current upgrades include the Crescent Corridor which travels from New Orleans to the Ports of New Jersey. This Crescent Corridor splits in Birmingham, Alabama, with a branch routed along the I-81 corridor in the Shenandoah Valley through Roanoke; and another branch traveling east of the Blue Ridge through Danville, Lynchburg, and Charlottesville, ending in Manassas.

Also being upgraded is the Heartland Corridor, which would connect the Port of Portsmouth with Chicago, following the Route 460 corridor through Southside Virginia.

The Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor would connect Washington DC, Richmond Virginia, and Raleigh North Carolina.

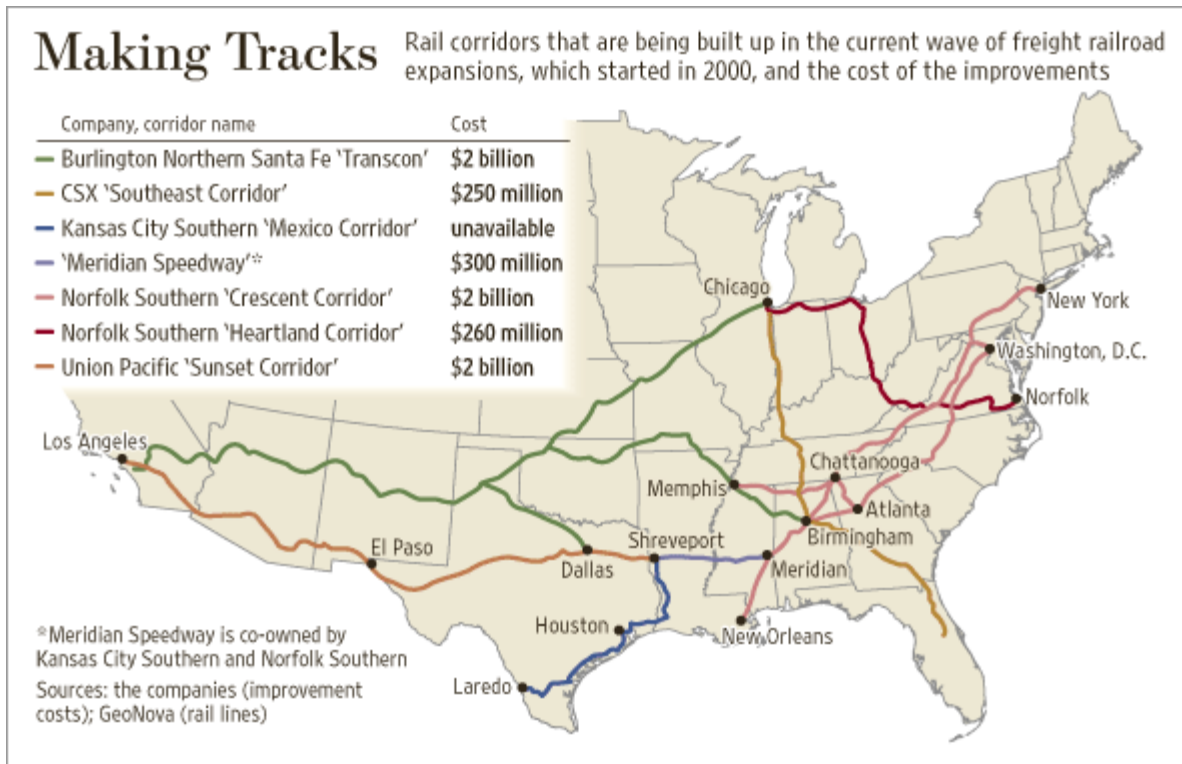
The Virginia Bicycling Federation believes that citizens and taxpayers deserve to benefit directly from these massive government expenditures.

The Resolution asks Governor Kaine to ensure that as these railroad projects are planned and implemented, bike and pedestrian accommodations, rails with trails, are included as a required and integral part of these projects.

Including multi-modal facilities in all transportation projects is consistent with both State and Federal transportation policy.

Rails with trails have proven to be a safe and viable way to offer true multimodal accommodations, and provide facilities for people to walk and cycle throughout their communities.

There are currently 1,184 miles of open trails among 142 different rails with trails projects throughout the United States. Another 75 projects are underway, which will add 905 additional miles of trails when completed.



These projects provide transportation alternatives, promote healthy lifestyles, and encourage exercise in an increasingly obese population. Trails also encourage economic development and tourism.

Asking for these facilities while in their early planning stages is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create thousands of miles of trails connecting communities throughout Virginia and the United States.

Current supporters of the resolution include:

Adventure Cycling Association
Alliance for Biking and Walking
BikeWalk Virginia
Blue Ridge Bicycle Club of VA
Capital Region Land Conservancy
Cycor Sports
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Franklin Freewheelers
Friends of the Rivers of Virginia
International Mountain Biking Association
League of American Bicyclists
Nelson Bicycling Alliance
New River Bicycle Club of VA
Pathways for Radford
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Richmond Area Bicycling Association
Richmond Pro Cycling
Rivanna Trails Foundation
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Three Notched Trail Foundation
Tidewater Bicycle Association
Virginia Bicycling Federation
Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail Foundation
Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club
Virginia Conservation Network
Williamsburg Area Bicyclists

For more information about some of these rail projects, see:

<http://tinyurl.com/varails>

<http://hamptonroads.com/node/278191>

<http://tinyurl.com/rich-dc>