

**A RESOLUTION FOR THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF
PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE EXPANSION**

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is developing its 2026 Statewide Rail Plan that establishes a vision for the future of passenger and freight rail in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has been steadily expanding and improving intercity passenger rail service; and

WHEREAS, the City of Harrisonburg is the urban hub of the Shenandoah Valley, located in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham County MSA with a total population nearing 144,000; and

WHEREAS, the City of Harrisonburg was the 5th fastest-growing Virginia city from 2020 to 2024; and

WHEREAS, James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University have a combined student population greater than 24,000 with anticipated annual enrollment growth; and

WHEREAS, Harrisonburg residents must travel more than 20 miles to access the nearest passenger rail station located in the City of Staunton; and

WHEREAS, the City of Harrisonburg historically benefited from passenger rail service from both the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and Chesapeake Western Railway; and

WHEREAS, Chesapeake Western as a subsidiary of Norfolk Southern owns and operates freight rail in the City limits, and the Shenandoah Valley Railroad operates a private short line from Staunton to the Southern edge of the City limits; and

WHEREAS, the City of Harrisonburg supports development of a comprehensive Virginia multimodal transportation system, which has a prominent gap in passenger rail for the Shenandoah Valley; and

WHEREAS, expansion of sustainable transportation modes such as passenger rail advances the City's Environmental Action Plan's goal of pollutant reduction by providing access to alternative forms of transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Harrisonburg requests for the 2026 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan to reflect local government interest in re-establishment of passenger rail service to Harrisonburg;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Harrisonburg encourages the Virginia General Assembly to request in the upcoming Session for DRPT to study the feasibility of passenger rail service expansion to the Harrisonburg/Rockingham County MSA.

Adopted: September 22, 2026

Mayor

Attest: _____

City Clerk