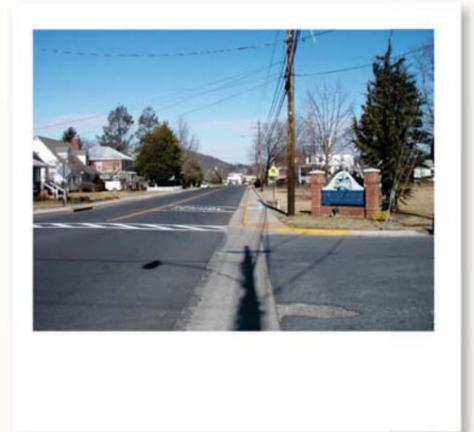
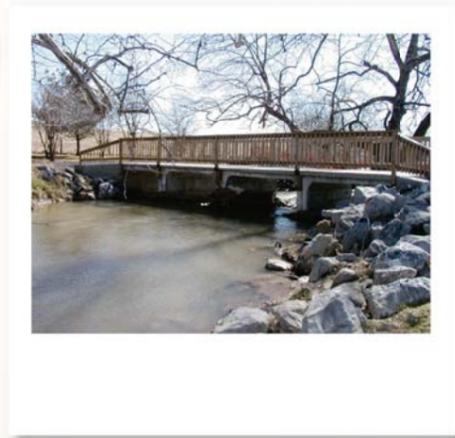


# WELCOME MEETING PURPOSE / PROJECT AREA

## WELCOME

On behalf of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), we welcome you to this Location Public Hearing for the Bridgewater Bypass. This project would connect Routes 257 (Dinkel Avenue) and 257/42 (North Main Street/John Wayland Highway).

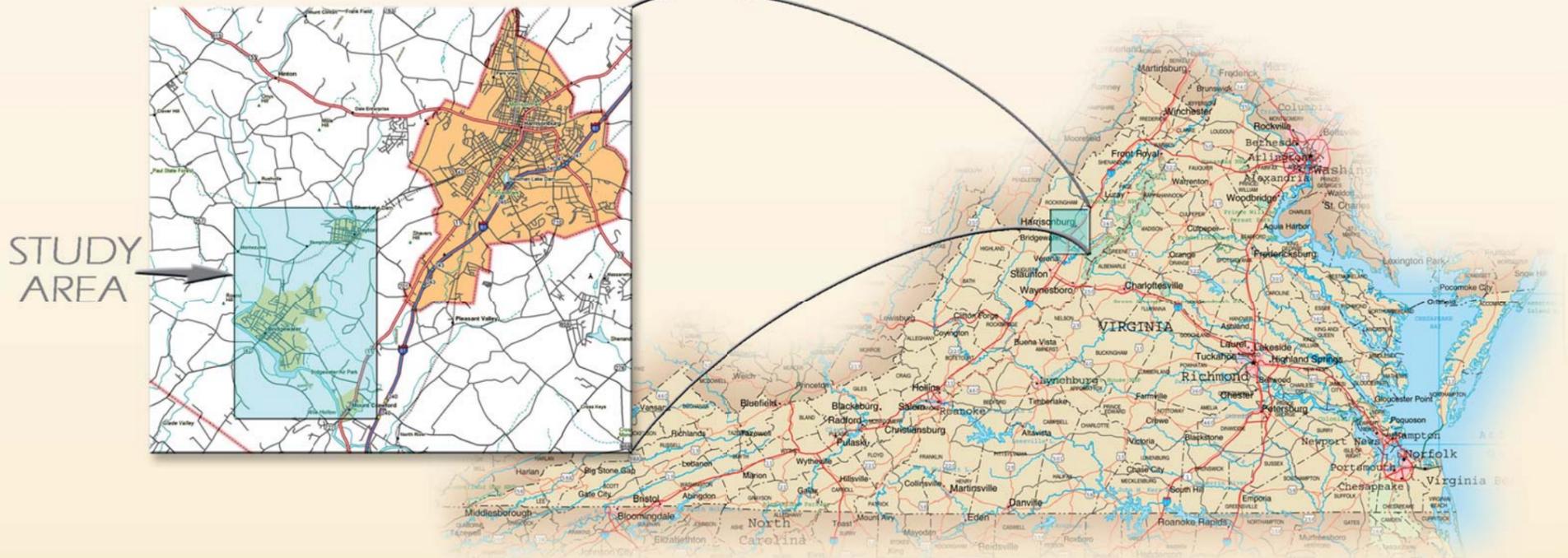


## MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to share with you the findings of the study and to receive your comments on the alternatives, as well as the Environmental Assessment which was prepared for the study. Representatives from VDOT and its consultants are here to answer your questions and listen to your thoughts and concerns.

We encourage and welcome your comments on the materials displayed and other issues you consider important to the project.

Thank you for sharing your time and comments.



# PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEEDS / GOALS

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Provide an alternate route for traffic, especially truck traffic, so it would not have to pass through downtown Bridgewater.

## PROJECT NEEDS

1) Roadway and operational deficiencies in the form of traffic congestion, limited capacity, and inefficient traffic operations.

- Routes 257 and 42 through Bridgewater are characterized by low travel speeds, inadequate geometry (pavement is narrow along some sections) and substantial interference to traffic flows caused by a large number of private entrances and intersecting streets.
- Low speeds and congestion hamper mobility for traffic traveling from points east of Bridgewater to points north of Bridgewater.
- Increasing traffic volumes along Route 257 and the resulting congestion and delays are causing traffic to divert to the parallel Route 1310 (Mount Crawford Avenue).
- Large trucks have difficulty turning at the intersections of Route 42 with Route 257 and Route 1310.

2) Motorist, bicycle, and pedestrian safety.

- Existing developments along Route 257 east of Route 42 (particularly Bridgewater College, a retirement community, and other residential and commercial activity) generate much pedestrian traffic.
- High volume of traffic, particularly truck traffic, is a safety concern because of the vehicular/pedestrian traffic conflicts.



## PROJECT GOALS

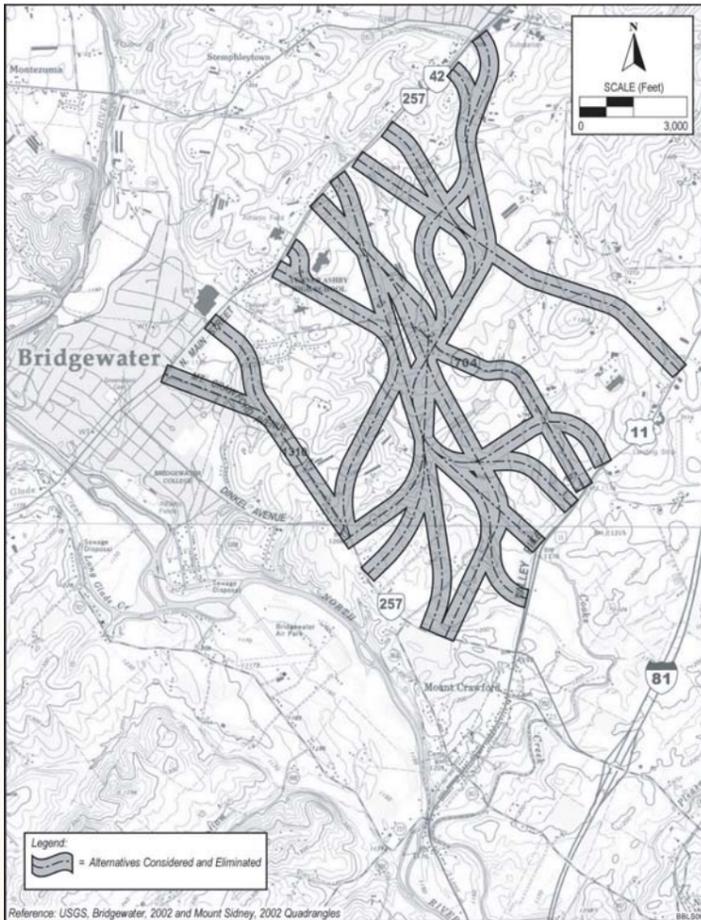
- Enhance connectivity between sections of Route 257 east of Bridgewater and sections of Route 257/42 north of Bridgewater, thereby improving mobility.
- Divert through traffic from existing Routes 257, 42, and 1310 (Mount Crawford Avenue).
- Reduce conflicts between vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle travel on Dinkel Avenue, North Main Street, and Mount Crawford Avenue and reduce conflicts with turning movements.

Both Candidate Build Alternatives A and B satisfy the Purpose and Needs as well as the Project Goals.

# ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

Through the alternatives screening, several concepts and alternatives were eliminated from further consideration and not carried forward for detailed study. Below are the alternatives eliminated and the reasons for their elimination and the three alternatives which were carried forward.

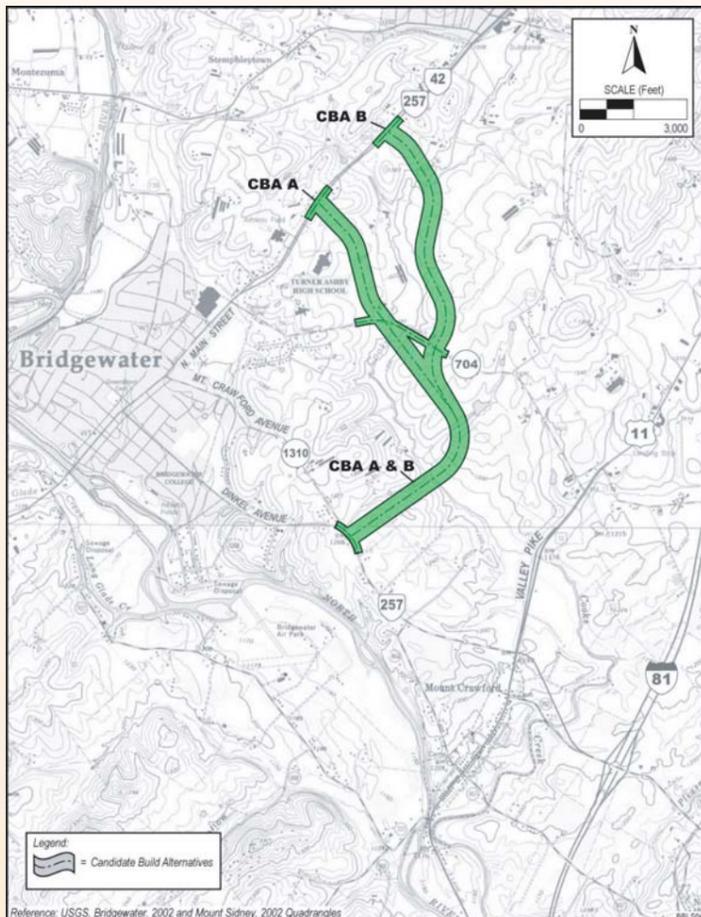
## Alternatives Considered



### Alternative Basis for Elimination

Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative	"TSM" generally means implementation of relatively low-cost actions to improve efficiency of existing transportation systems. Some examples include signal synchronization, turn lanes, access management, operational modifications, flexible work hours, and bicycle / pedestrian improvements. Although such actions are important elements in the overall transportation plan for any urbanized area, there are none that in and of themselves would meet the identified purpose and needs.
Mass Transit Alternative	Mass transit would not satisfy the identified purpose and needs for the same reasons that the TSM Alternative would not.
Widen existing Dinkel Avenue and North Main Street	Would not provide a bypass of the problem areas and would cause excessive disruption to existing development.
Widen Mount Crawford Avenue	Would not provide a bypass of the problem areas and would cause excessive disruption to existing development.
Widen Route 704 between Route 257/42 and Route 11	Agricultural and Forestal District impacts (on east end) and disruption of existing development and a cemetery.
Alignments that join Route 11 north of Route 704	Agricultural and Forestal District and fairgrounds impacts; alignments too circuitous.
Alignments that join Route 11 south of Route 704	Impacts to industrial sites and longitudinal encroachment into Cooks Creek floodplain.
Alignments that join Route 257 between Don Litten Parkway and Route 11	Greater disruption of farmland, skewed crossings of Cooks Creek and floodplain, and impacts to Town of Bridgewater facilities.
Alignments that join Route 257/42 closer to Dayton	Greater disruption of farmland, skewed crossings of Cooks Creek and floodplain, and impacts to Agricultural and Forestal District.

## Candidate Build Alternatives



### Candidate Build Alternative A

Candidate Build Alternative A begins at the intersection of Route 257 and Don Litten Parkway, follows the alignment of Don Litten Parkway, and then proceeds in a northeasterly direction to cross Cooks Creek perpendicularly, then turns northwestward, crossing Route 704, skirting the edge of the Turner Ashby High School complex, and joining Route 257/42 in the vicinity of Herring Lane. The length of the corridor is approximately 2.3 miles. Access to the new road would be controlled; that is, access would be permitted only at intersecting roadways and at property entrances to be determined during final design. At-grade intersections would be constructed at Route 257, Route 704, and Route 257/42. Other major design features would include bridges over Cooks Creek and improvements to Route 704 at the project crossing. **Cost: The total estimated preliminary engineering and construction cost of Candidate Build Alternative A is \$40.8 million (year 2015 advertisement assumed for construction estimate). The estimated right of way and relocation cost is \$20.3 million (year 2015).**

### Candidate Build Alternative B

Candidate Build Alternative B begins at the intersection of Route 257 and Don Litten Parkway, follows the alignment of Don Litten Parkway, and then proceeds in a northeasterly direction to cross Cooks Creek perpendicularly, then turns northwestward. It crosses Route 704 east of Cooks Creek, continues northward, and then turns northwest to again cross Cooks Creek before joining Route 257/42 at a point not quite midway between Herring Lane and the Town of Dayton. The length of the corridor is approximately 2.6 miles. Access to the new road would be controlled; that is, access would be permitted only at intersecting roadways and at property entrances to be determined during final design. At-grade intersections would be constructed at Route 257, Route 704, and Route 257/42. Other major design features would include bridges over Cooks Creek and improvements to Route 704 at the project crossing. **Cost: The total estimated preliminary engineering and construction cost of Candidate Build Alternative B is \$44.4 million (year 2015 assumed for construction advertisement). The estimated right of way and relocation cost is \$12.2 million (year 2015).**

### No Build Alternative

A No-build Alternative is under consideration and is being used as a benchmark to assess environmental impacts attributable to the proposed project. Under the No-build Alternative, there would be no bypass of Bridgewater and existing roads generally would remain in their present configuration. Harrisonburg - Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's financially constrained long-range transportation plan contains only two road projects in Bridgewater. These would be considered part of the future no-build condition with respect to the proposed bypass. One is for reconstruction of 0.2 miles of Mount Crawford Avenue just east of its intersection with Route 257/42 to upgrade the existing road to a standard two-lane urban facility with sidewalk; the other is for preliminary engineering of an additional 0.8 miles of reconstruction of Mount Crawford Avenue. The No-build Alternative would not displace any families, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations, and would not affect any natural, ecological, cultural, or scenic resources. However, this alternative would not satisfy the identified transportation needs.

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

*Environmental impacts have been assessed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An Environmental Assessment (EA) which evaluates the alternatives and their impacts, has been prepared and is available for public review and comment. The environmental impacts associated with the project are summarized on these two boards.*

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### **Agriculture, Prime Farmland, and Soils**

- The federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires assessment of potential conversions of certain farmland to nonagricultural uses. Both CBAs would potentially impact prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. CBA A would displace 59 acres and CBA B would displace 49 acres.
- State law protects Agricultural and Forestal Districts, two of which are located in the study area. Oak Grove Agricultural and Forestal District lies east of CBA B and Dry Fork Agricultural and Forestal District lies north of the northern termini of both CBAs. Neither of the CBAs would require use of any land from either District.
- Forest resources have limited presence in the study area due to agricultural activities and other development.



### **Surface Water and Streams**

- Construction of either of the CBAs would entail two crossings of Cooks Creek by the bypass.
- Neither of the CBAs would be expected to have substantial impacts to floodplains or the natural and beneficial values of floodplains.
- Both alternatives would displace less than one acre of wetlands. All available measures to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands would be implemented where feasible.
- There are no surface public water supplies in the study area.



### **Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat and Wildlife**

- There are no anadromous fish or trout waters or shellfish grounds in the vicinity of the project.
- There are no wildlife or waterfowl refuges in the vicinity of the project.
- Potential loggerhead shrike habitat is located along both build alternatives. Should a build alternative be selected, and if construction is to be conducted during the breeding season (April 1 to July 31), field biologists familiar with shrike habitat would conduct a nesting survey prior to construction, or construction activities within suitable habitat would be restricted during the nesting period.



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### **Land Use and Socio-Economics**

- Rockingham County's Comprehensive Plan designates most of the land within the study area for "community residential" and commercial uses. Residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses also exist, particularly along existing roads and in the Town of Bridgewater.
- The Bridgewater Volunteer Rescue Squad is within the 500-foot-wide planning corridor for both alternatives. However, it is unlikely that this facility would be displaced by the project. Both CBAs would improve the ability to provide emergency services.

- No minority or low-income populations under the purview of Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, would be affected by the project.
- Cooks Creek Arboretum, a Town of Bridgewater publicly owned public park, lies adjacent to Cooks Creek near the western edge of CBA A. No acquisition of land from this park would be required and the project would require no use of park land under the purview of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act.

### **Scenic Byways, and Scenic Rivers, and Open Space Easements**

- No state-designated scenic byways or scenic rivers and no federally designated wild and scenic rivers are located within or near the study area.

- The project would not affect any open space easements held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

## HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Two historic properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are within the Area of Potential Effect (APE).

- Mary Miller House (VDHR #082-0316). Built around 1850, this house is recommended as potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C as a mid-nineteenth-century masonry dwelling that retains a high level of architectural integrity.
- Sundial Dairy (VDHR #082-5120). Built around 1840, this two-story masonry vernacular-style dwelling is recommended as potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C as a mid-nineteenth-century masonry dwelling that retains a high level of architectural integrity.



Mary Miller House



Sundial Dairy

## AIR AND NOISE

- The Bridgewater region is in attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). An air quality analysis showed that the project would result in no violations of the NAAQS.
- Noise analysis performed for the No-build alternative and each of the Candidate Build Alternatives assessed noise levels at 20 receptor locations representing 47 residences, one school, and two agricultural use areas.
- Of the 50 noise-sensitive properties evaluated for CBA A, 13 properties would incur noise impacts under design year 2030 build conditions due to noise levels approaching or exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) impact criterion of 66 dBA. No properties would incur impacts due to substantial increases in noise levels (10 or more dBA over existing levels).
- For CBA B, 13 properties would incur noise impacts under design year 2030 build conditions due to noise levels approaching or exceeding the NAC impact criterion of 66 dBA. One additional property would incur noise impacts based on a substantial increase in noise level of 10 or more dBA over existing level.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- Sites with hazardous materials (sites potentially containing flammable, explosive, corrosive, or toxic substances) in the area are typical of those for a small town and rural agricultural community.
- If contaminated soils are encountered during construction, VDOT would develop and implement appropriate procedures for their proper management and coordinate the removal, disposal, and/or treatment of the soil, as required.
- If contaminated groundwater is encountered during construction, VDOT would implement appropriate specifications for proper management and treatment of the water, as required.

## SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

CATEGORY	IMPACTS	
	CBA A	CBA B
Total Area within Alternative (acres within 500-foot-wide corridor)	153	172
Homes within corridor	15	3
Businesses within corridor	2	0
Farms Potentially Displaced	1	1
Schools within corridor	0	0
Churches within corridor	0	0
Cemeteries within corridor	0	0
Other Community Facilities Potentially Displaced (rescue squads, fire stations, etc.)	0	0
Section 4(f) Property Used (acres)*	0*	0*
Noise Impacts (Number of Receptors Impacted)	13	14
Length of Streams Disturbed (feet)	2,717	2,565
Wetlands within corridor (acres)	0.8	0.6
Floodplains Crossed (acres)	9	7
Historic Properties within Area of Potential Effects (number of properties)	2	2
Forest Land within corridor (acres)	1	0
Potential Loggerhead Shrike Habitat within corridor (acres)	26	41
Prime, Unique, or Statewide-important Farmland within corridor (acres)	59	49
Agricultural and Forestal District Land Used (acres)	0	0
Hazardous Material Sites Potentially Impacted (number of sites)	1	1

\* Based on present information, pending formal determination on boundaries of historic properties.

# SCHEDULE / NEXT STEPS / THANK YOU

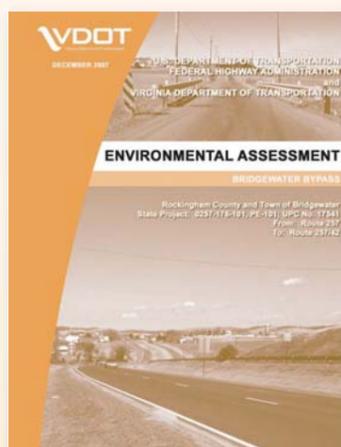
## PROJECT SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT
December 11, 2007	Environmental Assessment approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
January 16, 2008	<b>WE ARE HERE...</b> Location Public Hearing
January 26, 2008	Final day to submit comments on the Alternatives and the Environmental Assessment
April 2008	Commonwealth Transportation Board action
May 2008	Environmental Assessment revised, as appropriate, based on hearing comments and Commonwealth Transportation Board decision
July 2008	Final decision on the Environmental Assessment by FHWA

## NEXT STEPS

The study team will review and evaluate the comments you provide tonight and during the comment period. The comments, along with other information developed during the study, will then be forwarded to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for consideration in reaching a decision on the alternatives. Following the public availability period, the Environmental Assessment (EA) will be revised, as appropriate, to reflect changes in the proposed action or mitigation measures resulting from comments received on the EA or at the public hearing. It will then be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), along with a copy of the public hearing transcript, the recommendation of the preferred alternative, and a request that a final decision by FHWA be made.

Any further project development efforts, such as design, right of way acquisition, and construction, will depend on availability of funding and are not scheduled at this time.



## THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to review the materials presented at this Public Hearing.

Your comments are valuable and greatly appreciated. VDOT will carefully consider all comments received at this hearing and during the comment period.

Written comments must be postmarked or sent electronically **no later than January 26, 2008** and may be submitted in three ways:

### At this Hearing

Submit written comments or make a verbal comment to the Hearing Recorder.

### By Mail:

Submit written comments to:  
 Nicholas Nies  
 Environmental Division  
 Virginia Department of Transportation  
 1401 East Broad Street  
 Richmond, Virginia 23219

### Comments via the Web:

Nicholas Nies  
 Nicholas.Nies@VDOT.Virginia.gov

