

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Environmental Assessment was prepared and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for this project. Copies of the document are available for review here tonight, or it can be reviewed on VDOT's website <http://www.virginiadot.org>. Click on the Projects & Studies header, Bristol, and then I-81 Corridor Improvement Study: Tier 2 I-77/I-81.

In compliance with provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act, information concerning potential effects on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places also is available at tonight's hearing.

GET INVOLVED

Ten days after this public hearing, on October 8, 2011, the public comment period will close. VDOT will review and evaluate any information received as a result of the public meeting. This information, including the hearing summary, will be available for review at the VDOT office address listed below.

VDOT Bristol District
870 Bonham Road
Bristol, VA 24201

After all comments have been addressed, the information received as a result of the hearing will be presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for consideration in reaching a decision on the alternatives. Following the public availability period the 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.

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.

Comments can also be submitted in writing to bristolinfo@vdot.virginia.gov. Information must be postmarked, emailed or delivered to VDOT within 10 calendar days of today's meeting (October 8, 2011) in order to be included in the location public hearing record.

CIVIL RIGHTS

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Bristol District Civil Rights Division at the above address or telephone (276) 669-9907 or TTY/TDD 711.

RIGHT OF WAY AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

Information about right of way purchase is provided in VDOT's brochure entitled "Right of Way and Utilities: A Guide for Property Owners and Tenants." Copies of this brochure are available here from VDOT's Right of way representatives.



I-81 Corridor Improvement Study Tier 2 I-77/I-81 Overlap

Location Public Hearing: Wythe County

September 28, 2011
4:00 - 6:00 PM
Wytheville Meeting Center
333 Community Blvd.
Wytheville, VA 24382

WELCOME

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying potential improvements to address existing and future transportation needs in the I-77/I-81 overlap study area. The study area is generally defined as the area north and south of I-77/I-81 between Exit 72 near the Town of Wytheville and Exit 81. This public hearing is being held to share the findings of the study with you and to provide an opportunity for any person, acting on his/her own behalf or representing a group or governing agency, to give the department comments and/or suggestions on the proposed improvements.

The displays around the room provide information on transportation challenges in the study area, the alternatives being considered, and the impacts of those alternatives. VDOT strives to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in public decisions on transportation projects and

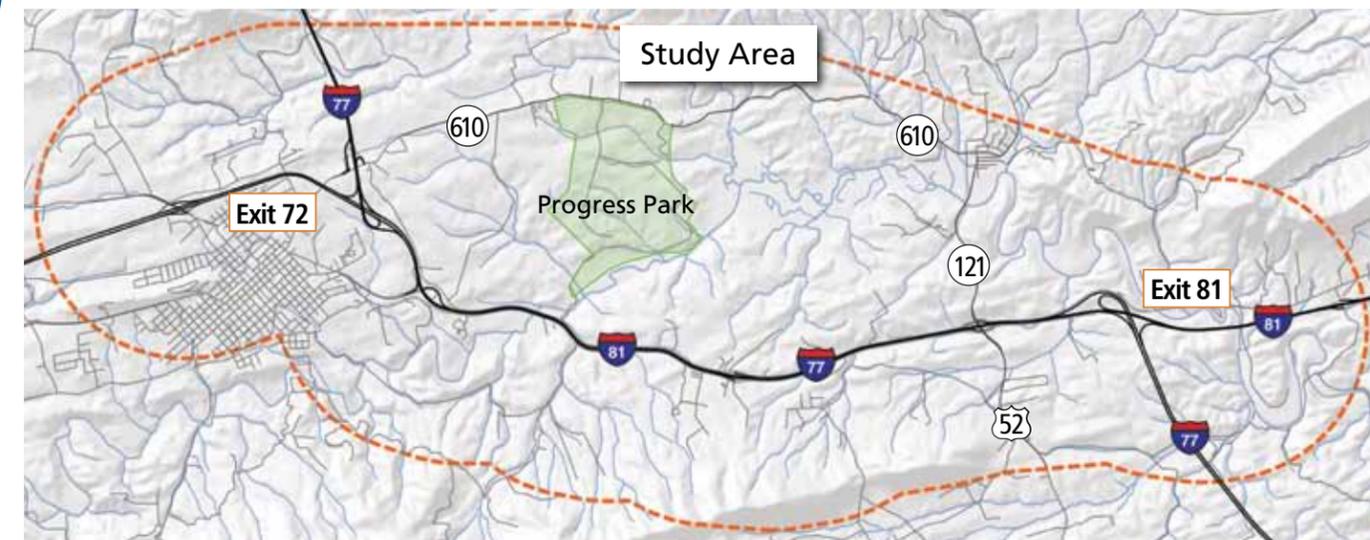
programs affecting them. Representatives of VDOT and its consultants are available to answer your questions and listen to your thoughts and concerns. A comment sheet is included in the handouts for this meeting, and your input is encouraged. All oral and written comments received on this project will be included in a hearing summary for review by VDOT personnel, citizens and other interested parties.

CONTACT INFO

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Virginia Department of Transportation
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276-669-9999

Ms. Lori Snider
Regional Right of Way Manager, Western Region
Virginia Department of Transportation
731 Harrison Avenue
Salem, VA 24153
540-387-5366



PROJECT OVERVIEW/PURPOSE AND NEED

In 2007, FHWA issued a Record of Decision for the Tier 1 I-81 Corridor Improvement Study Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).¹ Building off of the Tier 1 study, which looked at I-81 throughout Virginia, this Tier 2 study looked specifically at the I-77/I-81 overlap study area in greater detail.

Improvements to the I-77/I-81 overlap section are needed to address existing and future transportation conditions, which include:

- Traffic volumes that have doubled over the past 30 years and are expected to double again by 2035.
- Substantial increases in truck traffic.
- Traffic operations at one interchange ramp along the overlap are substandard today. By 2035, substandard traffic operations are expected at the majority of interchange ramps on the I-81 southbound mainline.
- Increased safety concerns due to traffic congestion and substandard roadway geometry.



The following identifies the alternatives carried forward for detailed evaluation:

- The No-Build Alternative, which serves as a baseline for alternatives comparison.
- An alternative on new location.
- An alternative that adds one lane in each direction to the roadway section co-designated for I-77 and I-81 (the I-77/I-81 overlap section).

The Tier 1 Record of Decision approved an improvement concept that consists of a variable lane highway facility (with passenger cars and trucks traveling together) that involves constructing no more than two general purpose lanes in each direction, where needed, to address 2035 traffic demands. Therefore, the range of alternatives considered is constrained by the decision reached in Tier 1 concerning the conceptual improvements to be considered and the location of the corridor. A more detailed discussion of the development of alternatives and the analysis performed is provided in the Alternatives Technical Report or the Environmental Assessment.

CANDIDATE BUILD ALTERNATIVE A

Candidate Build Alternative (CBA) A is an Interstate 81 designation on new location that is immediately north of the I-77/I-81 overlap section. The I-77/I-81 overlap section would then be designated as I-77 only. The new section of I-81 would be a four-lane highway designed to interstate standards. CBA A would include service roads and/or overpasses.

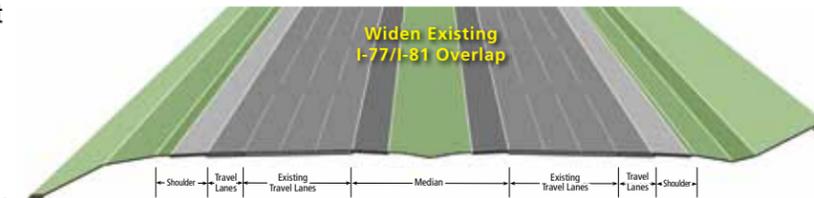
The length of the corridor is approximately 10 miles and the total area within the 500-foot corridor is approximately 460 acres. New interchanges connecting the new alignments at Interchanges 72 and 81 would encompass an additional 780 acres. The proposed alignment would follow rolling and mountainous terrain.



CANDIDATE BUILD ALTERNATIVE B

CBA B would add one travel lane (and additional left/right shoulder width) in each direction on the roadway section co-designated as I-77 and I-81 (the I-77/I-81 overlap section) thereby creating an eight-lane typical roadway section that meets interstate standards. This widening would occur between Interchange 72 and Interchange 81. To accommodate the widened section of roadway in this corridor, design improvements would be developed for the adjacent service roads, entrance/exit ramps at Interchanges 73/77/80, and overpasses. In addition, an existing substandard horizontal curve would be corrected at approximately Milepost 76.0, sight lines would be improved via a rock cut on the inside of a curve at approximately Milepost 74.5, and substandard vertical clearances of structures would be corrected to meet standards.

The length of the corridor is approximately eight miles and the total area within the 500-foot corridor is approximately 450 acres. (It should be noted that much of this acreage is within the limits of the existing corridor.) New interchanges connecting the new alignments at Interchanges 72 and 81 would encompass an additional 490 acres. The proposed alignment would generally remain as it exists today.



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. No-Build roadway conditions are reflective of the expected corridor conditions (during the design year) if no improvements were made to the corridor beyond the minor modifications currently programmed in VDOT's Six-Year improvement program. These improvements include mostly safety upgrades and paving services, which while critical to the long-term viability of the corridor, do little to address current and anticipated capacity needs.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

RESOURCE	CBA A	CBA B
Total Area within Alternative (acres within the 500-foot-wide corridor)	1,240	940
Homes Displaced	33	27
Businesses Displaced	9	13
Farms Displaced	0	0
Schools Displaced	0	0
Churches Displaced	0	0
Cemeteries Displaced	0	0
Other Community Facilities Displaced	0	0
Section 4(f) Property Used (acres)	0	0
Noise Impacts (# receptors impacted)	7	1
Length of Streams Disturbed (linear feet)	10,600	16,850
Wetlands Displaced (acres)	5.86	4.27
Floodplains Crossed (acres)	39	47
Historic properties within APE (# properties)	3	3
Forest Land Displaced (acres)	0	0
Threatened and Endangered Species	0	0
Prime, Unique, or Statewide important Farmland Displaced (acres)	0	0
Agricultural District Land Used (acres)	88	42
Karst Terrain (acres)	11.32	9.5
Hazardous Materials	19	36

¹ The Tier 1 FEIS and Tier 1 Record of Decision are available at http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/bristol/i-77-81_overlap.asp