

WELCOME

US 460 Bypass Interchange and Southgate Drive Relocation

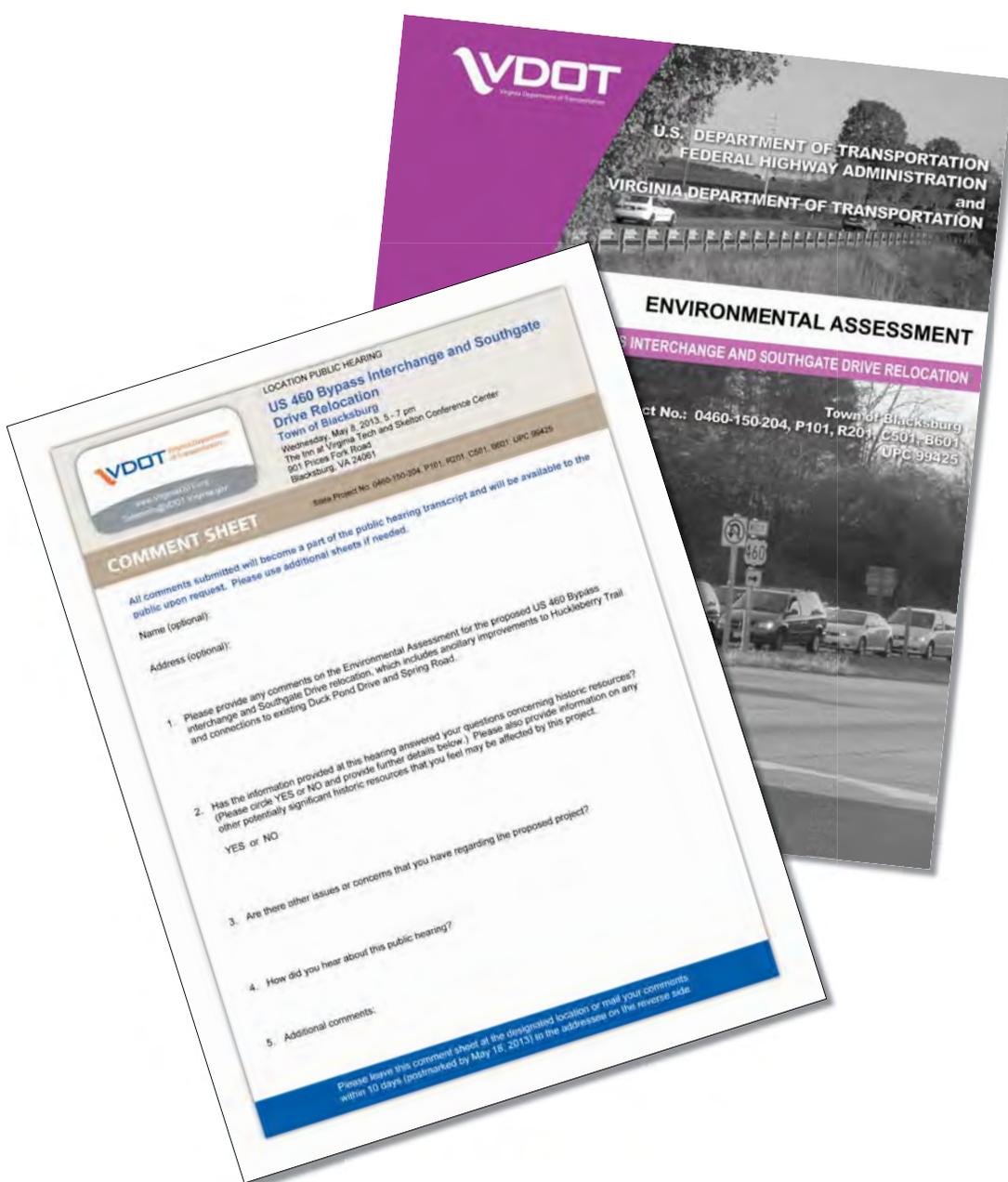
Thank you for attending tonight's Location Public Hearing. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has completed an Environmental Assessment for the replacement and relocation of the existing at-grade intersection of US 460 Bypass and Southgate Drive with a grade-separated interchange. Also included in the project is the relocation of a section of Southgate Drive to connect to the new interchange.

Goals of this public hearing:

- Obtain citizen comments on the Environmental Assessment.
- Share information on the study process and its current status.

Please take the time to examine the information, ask questions, and provide any comments or suggestions you may have. Your input is needed as part of the environmental review process and it is important.

Comment sheets are available for written comments and may be submitted tonight or by postal or electronic mail after the hearing until May 18, 2013. You may also record your comments orally at the designated recording station. All comments received will be reviewed and considered prior to a final decision on the EA.



Thank you for attending.

PROJECT HISTORY

Improvements along the existing at-grade intersection of US 460 Bypass and Southgate Drive have long been a regional priority.

- The Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) completed a study entitled *Analysis for a New Interchange on the US 460 Bypass in the Vicinity of Southgate Drive* (June 2011), which was adopted by the MPO Policy Board on June 2, 2011.
- Planning and construction funding for improvements at the intersection of Southgate Drive and the US 460 Bypass is designated in the MPO's financially constrained *Year 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)*, as amended.
- An interchange in the vicinity of Southgate Drive, along with connections from the interchange to local roadways, is included in the Town of Blacksburg's *2006-2046 Comprehensive Plan*.

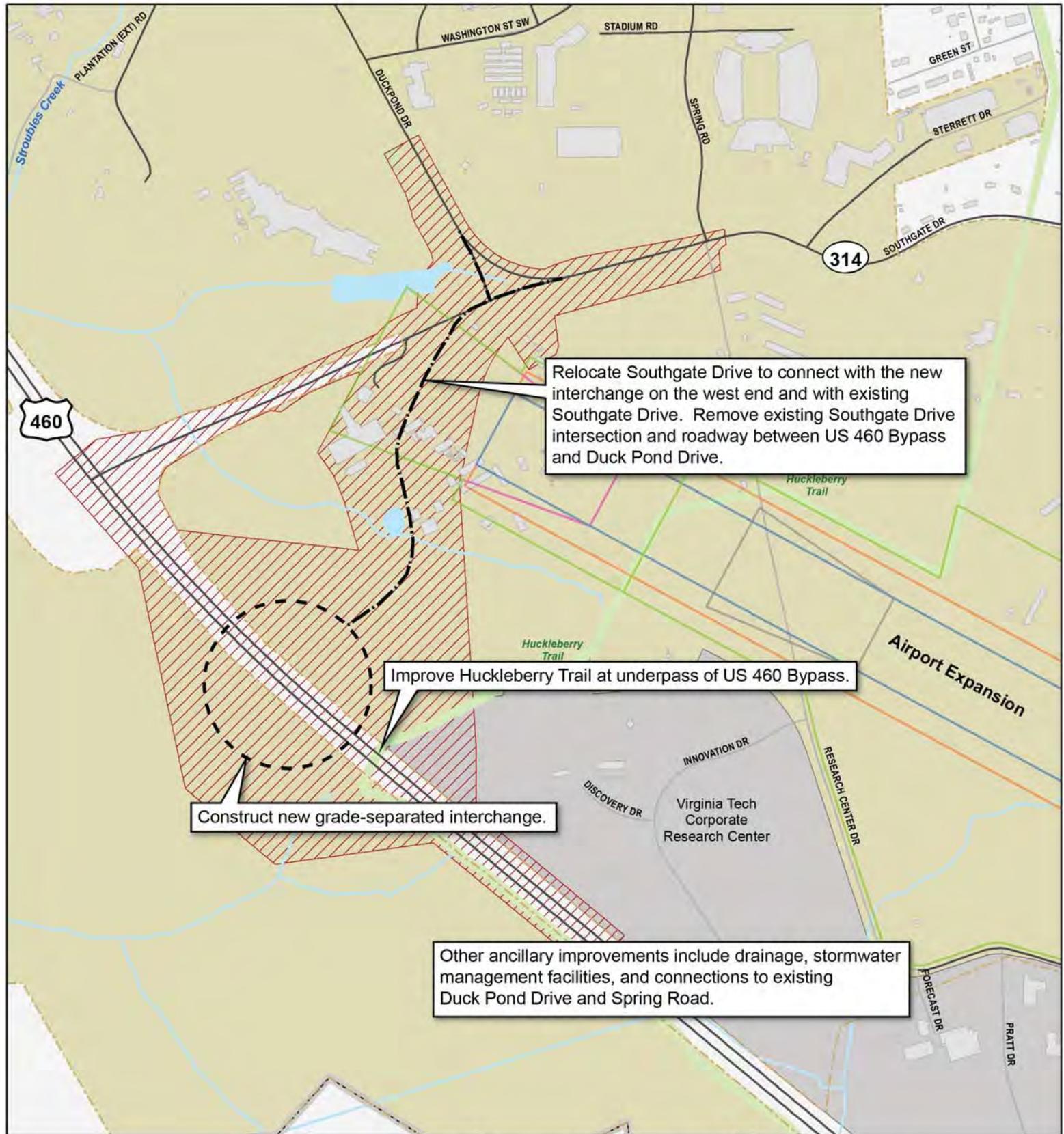
PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- Reduce congestion and thereby improve level of service at the intersection of Southgate Drive and US 460 Bypass.
- Improve safety on US 460 Bypass by improving the existing at-grade signalized intersection that is located between adjacent grade-separated interchanges along a limited-access highway.
- Improve accessibility and mobility to and within the surrounding activity and employment centers within the region.

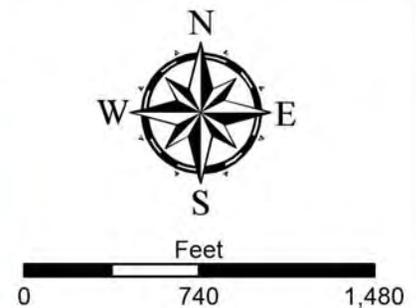


BUILD ALTERNATIVE



Legend

- - - New Interchange
- · - Relocation of Southgate Drive
- Study Corridor



SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Category	Potential Impacts	
	No-Build	Build Alternative
Total Area within Study Corridor (acres)	0	150
Preliminary Estimate of Approximate New Right of Way Needed for the Project, for Illustrative Purposes Only (acres)	0	25
Homes, Businesses, Schools, Churches, Community Facilities within Study Corridor	0	0
Section 4(f) Property within Study Corridor (acres)	0	3.8
Historic Properties Adversely Affected	0	0
Agricultural and Forestal District Land Used within Study Corridor (acres)	0	0
Total Prime/Unique/Statewide/Local Important Farmland within Study Corridor (acres)	0	118
Prime and Unique Farmland within Study Corridor (acres)	0	53
Statewide and Local Important Farmland within Study Corridor (acres)	0	65
Acidic Rock/Soil Area within Study Corridor (acres)	0	0
Number of Streams within Study Corridor	0	3
Length of Streams within Study Corridor (linear feet)	0	2,104
Wetlands within Study Corridor (acres)	0	1
Floodplains within Study Corridor (acres)	0	0
Forest Area within Study Corridor (acres)	0	3
Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species Identified by USFWS that may Occur in the Vicinity of the Study Corridor	0	4
Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species that would be Adversely Affected by Construction of the Project within the Study Corridor	0	0
Hazardous Material Sites within Study Corridor	0	1
Violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards	0	0
Noise Impacts	0	2 future trails



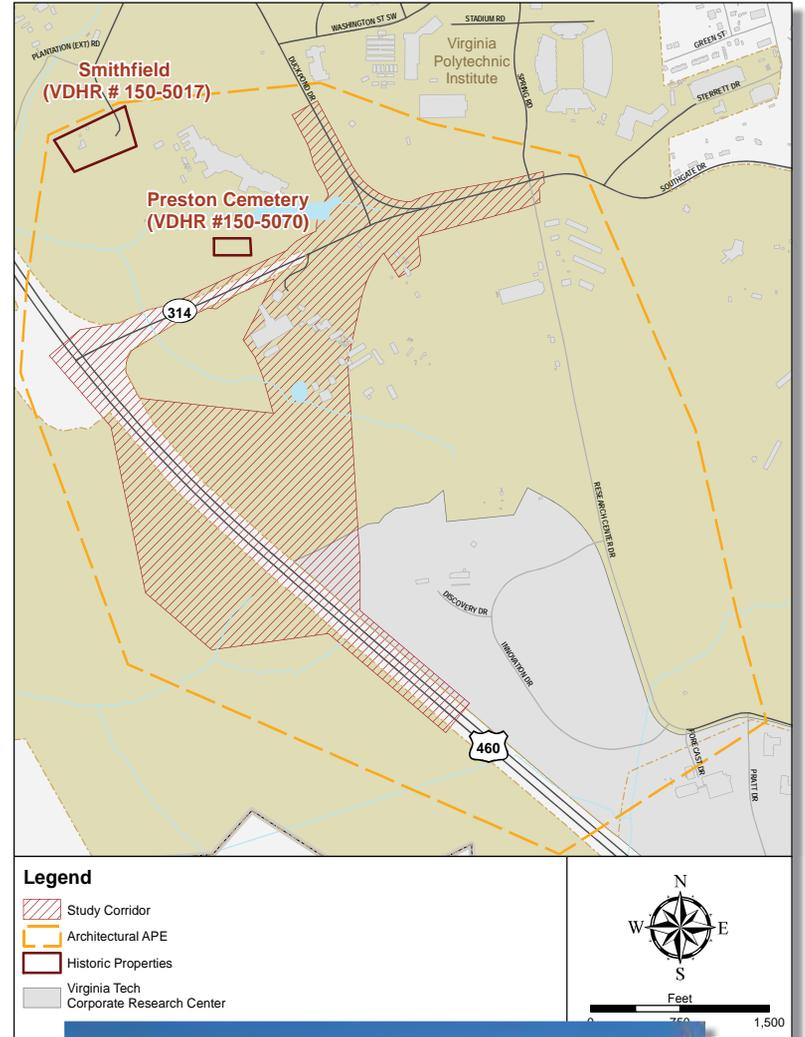
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There are two architectural historic properties within the study's architectural area of potential effects (APE):

Smithfield (VDHR #150-5017), a late 18th century dwelling listed November 12, 1969 on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The Preston Family Cemetery (VDHR #150-5070), which is potentially eligible for the NRHP; however, additional data would be needed to make a definitive determination.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) concurred on March 27, 2013 that the project as currently proposed will have no effect on the two properties listed above. Upon completion of archaeological surveys, additional coordination with VDHR will be undertaken and a formal Section 106 effect determination for the project as a whole will be sought from VDHR.



DE MINIMIS USE OF HUCKLEBERRY TRAIL

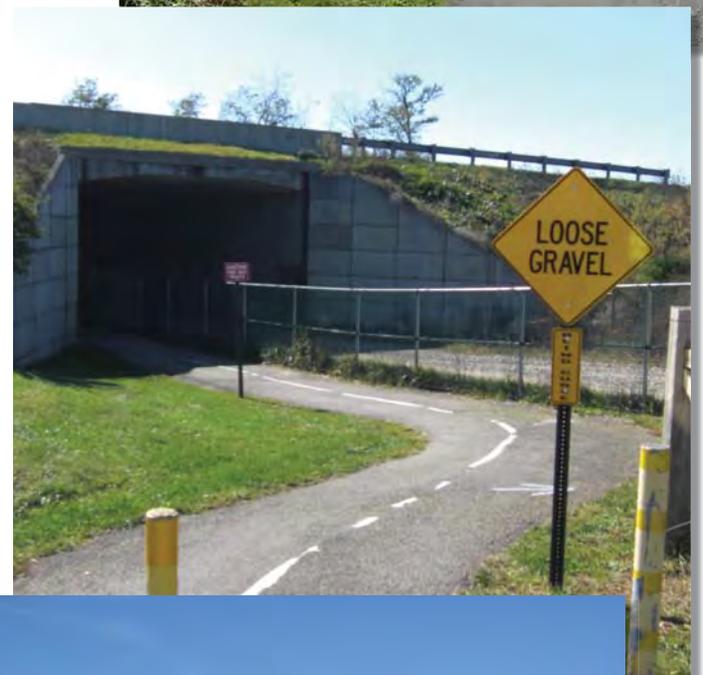
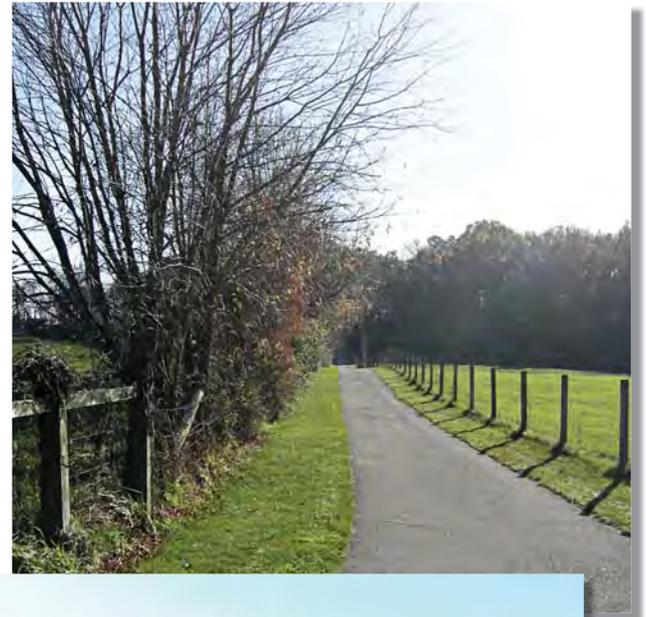
Approximately 3.8 acres of the Huckleberry Trail are located within the study corridor; however, the proposed project would temporarily impact only approximately 0.5 acres of that land. Under Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966, FHWA may approve this transportation project's use of publicly owned land of a public park if the criteria for *de minimis* Section 4(f) involvement have been met.

Under regulations implementing the Act (23 CFR 774), the public is hereby notified that FHWA intends to make a *de minimis* finding with respect to the project's Section 4(f) involvement with the Huckleberry Trail.

The basis for this finding includes the following:

- The project would not permanently interrupt the continuity of the trail.
- Temporary suspensions of pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the trail would last no longer than necessary to complete the construction. Improvements to the trail would be implemented as part of the project, namely, improvements to horizontal curvature and grades on the trail approaches to the underpass that would improve safety and comfort for users of the trail.
- The land disturbed by construction would be fully restored.

Before a final determination is made, we ask for your comments regarding the effects of the project on the activities, features, and attributes of Huckleberry Trail. Officials with jurisdiction over the trail will also be asked to concur that the project does not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify it for protection under Section 4(f).



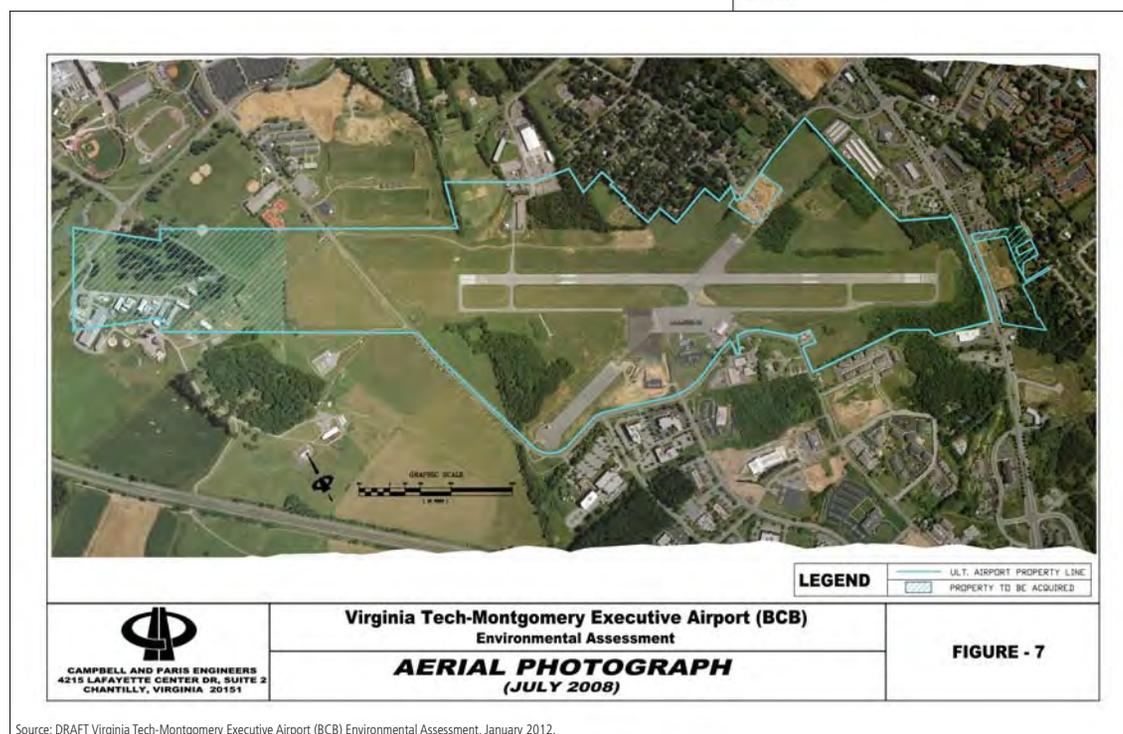
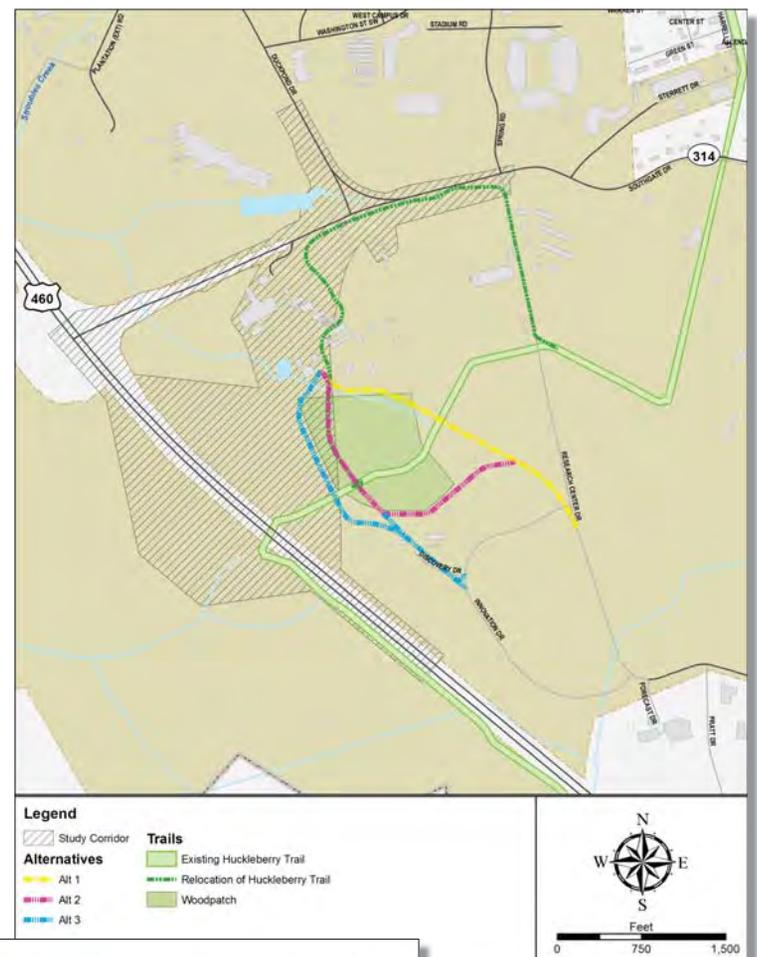
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS – AIRPORT RUNWAY EXPANSION PROJECT

Other future actions within or near the study corridor that affect the same resources as this project include, but are not limited to, the Virginia Tech–Montgomery Executive Airport expansion and runway extension to the east and southeast of the study corridor. The improvements are being planned and designed by the Virginia Tech–Montgomery Regional Airport Authority, in association with the Federal Aviation Administration and the Virginia Department of Aviation.

The improvements include the following:

- Increasing the runway length to better accommodate air traffic.
- Expansion of the runway protection zone (an area off the runway end to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground and to maintain an area clear of incompatible objects and activities).
- Expansion of the runway safety area, terminal area improvements, maintenance facility improvements, and hangar and apron improvements.

The runway extension would require the relocation of portions of Research Center Drive and the Huckleberry Trail. Several alternative alignments are being considered for the relocation of Research Center Drive and the trail would be rerouted around the northwest end of the relocated runway, as shown in the adjacent figure.



Source: DRAFT Virginia Tech-Montgomery Executive Airport (BCB) Environmental Assessment, January 2012.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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 May 18, 2013 and may be submitted in three ways:

At this Hearing:

Put written comments in the designated box or make an oral comment to the court reporter.

By Mail:

Submit written comments to:

Patrick Hughes
Environmental Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

By E-mail:

Send e-mails to:

Patrick.Hughes@VDOT.Virginia.gov

Please reference "US 460 Bypass Interchange and Southgate Drive Relocation Public Comment" in the subject line.



All comments submitted at this hearing and during the comment period will be incorporated in the hearing record, which is available for public review upon request.

SCHEDULE & NEXT STEPS

SCHEDULE

Date	Event
April 4, 2013	Environmental Assessment approved by FHWA for public availability
April 8, 2013	Environmental Assessment made available to the public
May 8, 2013	Public Hearing
May 18, 2013	Final day to submit comments
Early Summer	Environmental Assessment revised, as appropriate, based on comments received
Late Summer	Final decision on the EA by FHWA

Next Steps

VDOT will review and evaluate the comments you provide to us tonight and during the comment period. The Environmental Assessment will be revised as appropriate to reflect changes in the proposed action resulting from comments received. It will then be submitted to FHWA, along with a copy of the public hearing transcript, the recommendation for the project, and a request that a final decision be made by FHWA.

