

Traffic Management Plan Overview

The VDOT traffic management plan for the I-81 In-Place Pavement Recycling Project will employ various traffic control, traffic operations and public outreach strategies to keep traffic moving during construction and reduce the number and severity of crashes within the work zone. This project will reduce the overall time it takes to rehabilitate this section of Interstate 81. A normal project could take 2-3 years and this project will be completed within 3-4 months. The project extends southbound from mile marker 214 to mile marker 217.66.

VDOT examined normal traffic volumes between March and June 2010 from a continuous count station to determine the best opportunities to complete the in-place pavement recycling. A computer simulation model (VISSIM) was developed to determine the impact these closures would have on traffic. Under ideal conditions, traffic backups would be less than ½ mile. The following strategies have been developed to manage traffic during an incident or weather event.

Traffic Control Strategies

The allowable lane closure times run 24 hours-a-day for a five-day period, beginning at 9 p.m. on Fridays and ending at 7 a.m. the following Thursday. There will be no lane closures during weeks containing high traffic volumes on I-81. These periods are Virginia Tech graduation, Easter, and Memorial Day.

The primary detour route takes traffic off of I-81 and follows Route 654 to Route 11. Traffic travels south on Route 11, passing by the entrance to Riverheads High School and Riverheads Elementary School just prior to re-entering I-81. Tractor trailers will stay on I-81, traveling through the work zone and passenger vehicles will be encouraged to use the primary detour on Route 11.

To address the challenges of placing interstate traffic volumes on the primary road and in front of a major school complex with young drivers, VDOT is utilizing a variety of traffic control measures. Law enforcement will be at the school entrance 7-9 a.m. and 2-4 p.m. Flaggers will control traffic at the school entrance with a law enforcement presence that will heighten awareness and defensive driving. Flaggers will also control traffic 24 hours-a-day at Route 654 and Route 11.

Traffic Management Strategies

A secondary detour route has been developed in case of a major incident on I-81 or extensive backups. The secondary detour takes traffic off of I-81 and follows Interstate 64 to Route 340. Traffic travels south on Route 340 and continues south on Route 11 to Raphine. Traffic will re-enter I-81 at Exit 205. A series of scenarios have been developed to manage traffic and the following tools will be used:

- 8 changeable message signs (CMS) will be strategically placed to ensure motorists have time to make route and travel decisions.
- 2 new portable cameras and 8 existing cameras will be used to monitor traffic. These cameras will be available on the internet at www.511Virginia.org.
- 2 CB Wizards will be used to alert truck drivers of the work zone, what lane to use and other needed information.
- An advance warning vehicle will be placed 500 ft in advance of any backups to warn motorists and report extent of delays.
- An on-site tow truck will be placed during day-time hours to ensure disabled vehicles are quickly removed from the area.
- 14 Traffic signals will be remotely controlled to ensure traffic remains flowing during any detours/incidents.

Public Outreach and Communication Strategies

An extensive public Outreach effort was performed to ensure all key stakeholders and the general public are informed of this project. Public outreach includes a dedicated web URL (www.Virginial-81Pave.org) that takes people to the VDOT project page, which includes detour maps, project information and current traffic alerts. The following outreach has been conducted with stakeholders:

- A citizen information meeting was held on March 15 at Riverheads High School to inform the community
- Presentations made to Augusta County School Board, all Riverheads school employees, bus drivers, & students.
- Meetings with community emergency responders and all local Virginia State Police officers.
- Press conference with local media on March 15 to educate media and weekly media briefings (Thursday's)
- Radio ads from Roanoke, VA to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Richmond, VA to alert motorists of the work zone and potential delays.
- Letters were sent to local citizens, General Assembly members, the tourism community, the Virginia Truckers Association, area chambers of commerce, local government officials and the I-81 Corridor Coalition.



Traffic Camera
Images available on www.511Virginia.org.