

Bridgewater Bypass

Location Public Hearing

January 16, 2008
4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Turner Ashby High School

Welcome

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying potential locations for a bypass of the Town of Bridgewater connecting Routes 257 (Dinkel Avenue) and 257/42 (North Main Street/John Wayland Highway). While the project would be located generally north and east of Bridgewater, the study area encompasses the Towns of Bridgewater and Mount Crawford, as well as portions of Rockingham County. The purpose of the proposed bypass is to provide an alternate route for traffic, especially truck traffic, so it will not have to pass through downtown Bridgewater.

PURPOSE OF THE HEARING

The purpose of this hearing is to share with you the findings of the study, to receive your comments on and answer questions about those findings, and to receive your recommendations for a decision. The displays placed around the room provide information on transportation problems in the study area, the alternatives being considered, and the impacts of those alternatives. Representatives of VDOT and its consultants are available to answer your questions and listen to your thoughts and concerns.

BACKGROUND

This study arose out of a perceived need on the part of local officials for a bypass road east of the Town of Bridgewater connecting Route 257 east of the Town and Route 257/42 north of the Town. A concept for such a connector road was contained in the regional transportation plan, known as the Harrisonburg Area Transportation Study (HATS), developed in the 1990s and adopted by local governments. HATS has since been replaced by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's (HRMPO) 2030 Transportation Plan.

The Bridgewater Bypass is included in the "Vision Plan" element of the 2030 Transportation Plan, which includes transportation improvements identified by HRMPO members, citizens, and other parties as being needed to address regional transportation deficiencies. Due to funding constraints, the proposed bypass has not been included in the financially constrained Long Range Plan. However, funding is provided in the short term in HRMPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and VDOT's Six-Year Improvement Program for preliminary engineering and location studies. The bypass is also included in Rockingham County's *Comprehensive Plan for 2020 and Beyond*. An Environmental Assessment has been published and made available for public review and comment.

Please review the maps and displays and share your thoughts by using the comment sheet provided with this brochure. You may leave your comments in the box provided at tonight's meeting. You may also record your comments orally at the designated recording station.

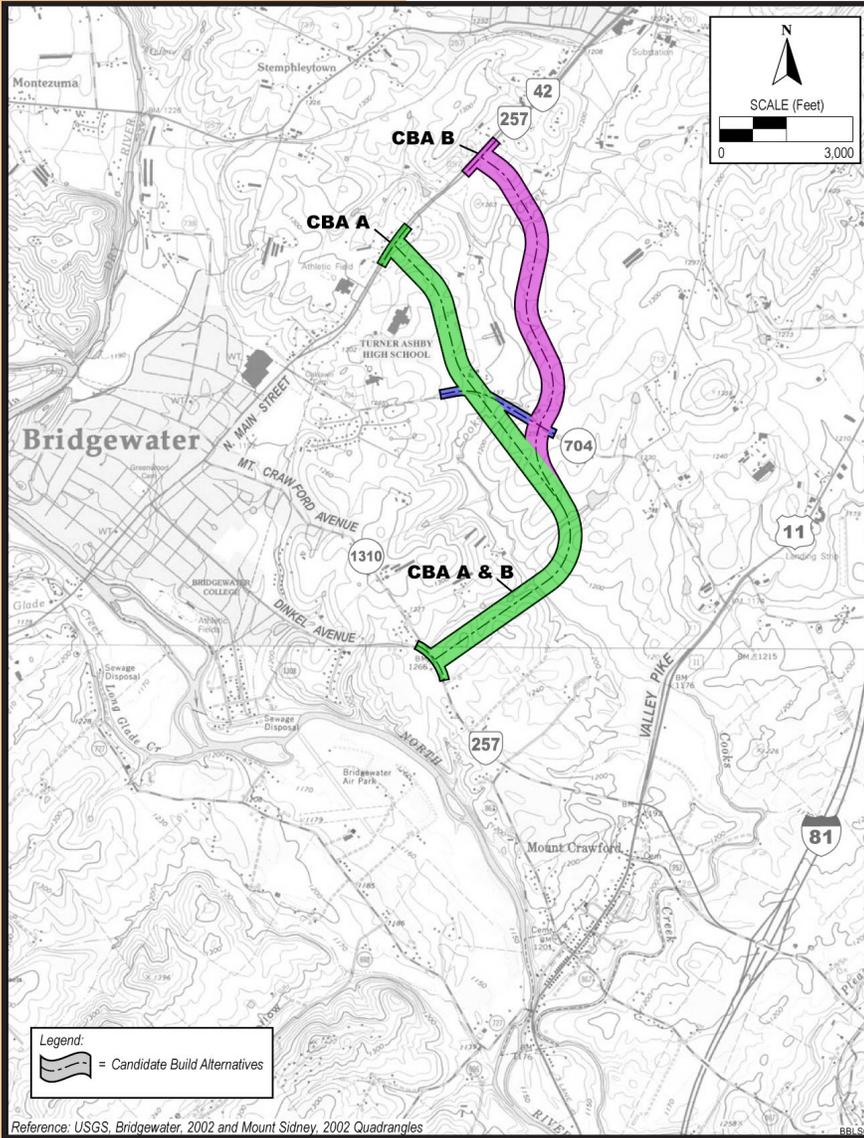
If you are not ready to provide your comments tonight, you may submit them by January 26, 2008 to the following address, which also is preprinted on the back of the comment sheet:

Nicholas Nies
Environmental Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

You also can submit comments by email to Nicholas Nies at:
Nicholas.Nies@VDOT.Virginia.gov

If you need additional information following tonight's meeting, please call Mr. Nies at (804)786-1092.

Candidate Build Alternatives A & B



CANDIDATE BUILD ALTERNATIVE A

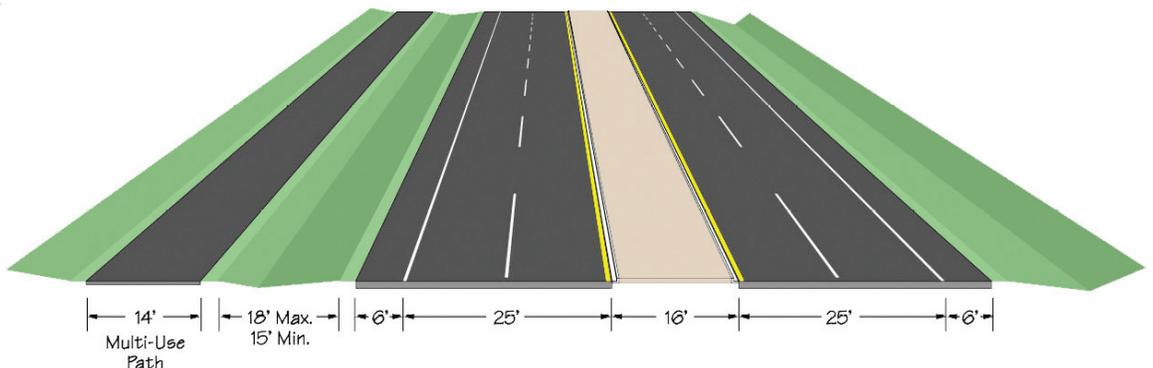
begins at the intersection of Route 257 and Don Litten Parkway, follows the alignment of Don Litten Parkway, and then proceeds in a northeasterly direction to cross Cooks Creek perpendicularly, then turns northwestward, crossing Route 704, skirting the edge of the Turner Ashby High School complex, and 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).

Typical Cross Section

The typical cross section developed for the bypass will provide four travel lanes (as depicted below) with 6' wide paved shoulders and a 16' raised median. For pedestrians, bikes, and horse and buggy travel, a 14' multi-use path, offset from the road is proposed on the west side of the bypass.



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. HRMPO'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.

TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

Daily traffic volumes through Bridgewater (approximately 8,100 on Route 257 and approximately 13,400 to 17,100 on Route 257/42) are becoming heavier. The heavy volume of traffic, particularly truck traffic, is a safety concern because of the vehicular/pedestrian traffic conflicts. Rockingham County's comprehensive plan designates most of the area

north and east of Bridgewater for future development. Traffic volumes also are expected to grow (estimated daily volumes for year 2030 are 11,000 to 16,200 on Route 257; 17,300 to 26,200 on Route 257/42; and 7,200 on Route 1310). Thus, the existing conditions relative to safety concerns and inadequate connectivity and capacity will only get worse.

Summary of Impacts

CATEGORY	IMPACTS	
	CBA A	CBA B
Total Area within Alternative (acres within 500-foot-wide corridor)	153	172
Homes Displaced	15	3
Businesses Displaced	2	0
Farms Displaced	1	1
Schools Displaced	0	0
Churches Displaced	0	0
Cemeteries Displaced	0	0
Other Community Facilities 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 Displaced (acres)	0.8	0.6
Floodplains Crossed (acres)	9	7
Historic Properties within APE (number of properties)	2	2
Forest Land Displaced (acres)	1	0
Potential Loggerhead Shrike Habitat Displaced (acres)	26	41
Prime, Unique, or Statewide-important Farmland Displaced (acres)	59	49
Agricultural and Forestal District Land Used (acres)	0	0
Hazardous Material Sites Impacted (number of sites)	1	1

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 web site at <http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/const-project.asp?ID=480>. 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.

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. After this meeting, information and questions regarding right of way should be directed to:

Bob Ryder
Staunton District Right of Way Manager
Virginia Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 2249
Staunton, Virginia 24402-2249
(540) 332-9128

What's Next?

The study team will review and evaluate the comments you provide to us tonight and during the 10 day 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.

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 Staunton District Office, Civil Rights Division, at the above address or telephone (540) 332-7888 or TTY/TDD 711.