

**Finding of Public Interest for the Use of Design-Build Contracting Method  
I-81 Corridor Safety and Operational Improvements: Staunton, Virginia  
UPC: 84363**

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has an urgent need to complete safety and operational improvements to I-81 in Staunton, Virginia. The proposed project includes the addition of an approximate 6.4 mile Truck Climbing Lane (TCL) in the northbound direction of Interstate 81 from approximate Mile Marker 195.8 (approximately 0.3 mile south of Rte 716) to approximate Mile Marker 202.1 (approximately 1.5 miles north of Rte 710 at Exit 200, Fairfield). VDOT has determined that project delivery via design-build contracting will allow for timely allocation of available funding, will afford an opportunity for competition in the project's procurement and expedite completion.

The benefits of design-build delivery satisfy the following transportation needs:

- VDOT anticipated releasing a task order in conjunction with the referenced I-81 Truck Climbing Lanes under a Public Private Partnership Act (PPTA) procurement, however, the leader of the PPTA team has declined further participation. In order to continue the timely development of the project with appropriate opportunity for competition, the Department has determined the Design-Build project delivery methodology is in the public interest. The proposed Design-Build schedule is as follows:
  - RFQ issued January 2008
  - RFP issued Spring 2008
  - Contract executed Fall 2008
  - Projected completion in Fall 2012
- Timely allocation of available funding. Federal transportation legislation (SAFETEA-LU) includes the following three earmarks totaling \$141.5 million for I-81 in Virginia:
  - \$100 million for "Construction of dedicated truck lanes on additional capacity on I-81" in Section 1302.
  - \$38 million for "Manage freight movement and safety improvements to I-81" in Section 1934.
  - \$3.5 million for "Manage freight movement and safety improvements to I-81" in Section 1702 (Project No. 5050).

Design-build procurement for the I-81 Truck Climbing Lanes in the Staunton District will facilitate the expenditure of earmarked funds, and will facilitate VDOT's commitment to initiate safety and operational improvements to the I-81 Corridor.

I-81 represents a critical component of the transportation network within the both the Staunton District and the state of Virginia. The improvements proposed by this project will ensure compliance with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's October 2006 resolution and provided for a safer and more efficient Interstate system within this region of the Commonwealth.

VDOT has a clear understanding of the project's scope of work. The project has a number of challenges with regard to right-of-way acquisition and coordination with other governmental agencies that pose limited risks to VDOT.

Based on review of this public interest finding and the objective criteria previously adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board regarding the use of design-build contracts, I find that use of design-build contracting for the proposed project is in the best interest of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

*Original with signatures on file in the Innovative Project Delivery Division.*

Recommended for Approval:

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Malcolm T. Kerley, P.E.      date  
Chief Engineer

Approved:

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David S. Ekern, P.E.      date  
Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner