

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS

A key component of the Route 29 Corridor Study was the development of a sustained public outreach campaign that initiated regular and proactive communication between the study team and key stakeholders, including elected officials, transportation experts, and members of the general public, among others. Because of the length of the study corridor and the many communities it impacted, it was important to involve key stakeholders in the planning process from the very beginning of the study. Our primary goal was to clearly explain and define the needs of the overall system-wide planning project and how it fits into the overall local and state planning process. The specific outreach activities utilized to meet this goal are outlined below.

Initial Listening Tour

- Dates:
 - November 2008 – January 2009
- Description:
 - The Route 29 Corridor Study Team attended City Council, Board of Supervisors and other local established workshop meetings for the localities along the corridor. They also contacted Chamber of Commerce organizations to help gather input on the concerns and visions of those who live, work, and travel throughout the corridor.
- Primary Goals:
 - Determine the common goals of the stakeholders throughout the entire corridor.
 - Determine the regional goals of the stakeholders within the major rural and urban regions of the corridor.
 - Determine the local goals of the citizens within each locality.
- Materials:
 - Talking points to be utilized for each meeting along the corridor.
 - “What we Heard” summary documents.

Final Listening Tour Meetings

- Dates:
 - February 3, Chatham Middle School, Pittsylvania County
 - February 4, VDOT Learning Center, Lynchburg District Office
 - February 5, Tye River Elementary School, Nelson County
 - February 9, Albermarle County 5th, St. Office Building
 - February 11, Madison Volunteer Fire Department
 - February 12, Germanna Community College, Culpeper
 - February 16, Warrenton Community Center
 - February 17, Battlefield High School, Haymarket
- Description:
 - Citizens were invited to attend a formal public meeting and provide input for the Route 29 Corridor Blueprint – A Vision for the Future. These meetings were conducted to ensure that everyone had a chance to hear the same consistent messages that were presented to the localities and stakeholders during the initial listening sessions. These meetings also allowed the public to hear “What We Heard” during the initial sessions.
- Primary Goals:

- Present consistent messages to the public so everyone was aware of the study and VDOT's goals and objectives for the outcome of the study.
- Ensure the study team heard from everyone interested in the future of the Route 29 corridor.
- Materials:
 - Talking points to be utilized for each meeting along the corridor.
 - Coordination with VDOT Public Affairs on the location and advertisement of each of the meetings.
- Attendees:
 - February 3, Chatham Middle School, Pittsylvania County
 - 25 attendees
 - February 4, VDOT Learning Center, Lynchburg District Office
 - 29 attendees
 - February 5, Tye River Elementary School, Nelson County
 - 27 attendees
 - February 9, Albemarle County 5th, St. Office Building
 - 44 attendees
 - February 11, Madison Volunteer Fire Department
 - 35 attendees
 - February 12, Germanna Community College, Culpeper
 - 12 attendees
 - February 16, Warrenton Community Center
 - 57 attendees
 - February 17, Battlefield High School, Haymarket
 - 88 attendees
 - **TOTAL: 317 attendees**

Regional Planning Forums

- Dates:
 - March 25, 2009, Chatham Cares – Chatham Community Center, Chatham
 - March 26, 2009, VDOT District Office Auditorium, Lynchburg
 - March 31, 2009, Germanna Community College, Culpeper
 - April 2, 2009, Albemarle County 5th Street Office Building, Charlottesville
- Description:
 - Following the listening tours, the study team organized a series of Regional Planning Forums to help facilitate cross-jurisdictional discussions between community leaders. The forum was organized as a work session, including a brief presentation on the current and potential future conditions of the corridor, followed by a facilitated exercise to explore different visions for the future of Route 29 (regionally and statewide). Attendees considered, as part of a small group session, a vision plan for the future of the corridor that included overall transportation, land use, and multi-modal options. Attendees' input from these workshops was then used to help develop basic policies and direction regarding the corridor's future.
- Primary Goals:

- Explore transportation and land use issues and trade-offs in the Route 29 corridor.
- Develop overall planning guidelines and principles that will be applied to develop specific recommendations (projects, policies, procedures).
- Continue the state and locality conversation on the Route 29 corridor.
- Materials:
 - Advertisement for meeting dates/locations
 - Handout for attendees that summarized the study process, information about the background of the study, and details on how to stay informed.
- Attendees:
 - March 25, 2009, Chatham Cares – Chatham Community Center, Chatham
 - 11 attendees
 - March 26, 2009, VDOT District Office Auditorium, Lynchburg
 - 16 attendees
 - March 31, 2009, Germanna Community College, Culpeper
 - 16 attendees
 - April 2, 2009, Albemarle County 5th Street Office Building, Charlottesville
 - 25 attendees
 - **TOTAL: 68 attendees**

Regular TAC Meetings / Studio Sessions

- Dates:
 - Studio sessions held every two weeks and TAC meetings held monthly.
- Description:
 - In addition to the formal meetings held along the corridor, citizens were invited to attend open work sessions (studio sessions) to express their views on issues being discussed by the consultant team. The studio sessions were consultant coordination meetings that were held periodically at alternate locations along the corridor. Citizens were invited to attend from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Primary Goals:
 - Consultant studio sessions served two very important purposes. One, it allowed the team to get together for a work session and discuss project progress and process, and secondly, and equally important, it allowed PDC members, local government representatives, and other key stakeholders an opportunity to join the study team in the afternoon from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. to discuss the study and offer insight into key issues.
- Materials:
 - Logistical support for VDOT public affairs department in scheduling meetings.
 - Tracked attendance – study team member as well as general public.
- Attendees:
 - Varied depending on meeting date and location; generally consisted of study team members. Some public participation as well.

Route 29 Web Site & E-Bulletin

- Dates:

- Web site created January 2009; regular maintenance for remainder of the study.
- E-Bulletin disseminated every Monday morning from November 10, 2008 to December 21, 2009 (scheduled).
- Description:
 - To maintain the open dialogue with members of the public and local/regional government officials, the study team developed and disseminated regular communication with key study stakeholders, including a project Web site and a weekly E-Bulletin that featured study news, important dates, and additional information about the project. Those interested in the study could submit their comments online, resulting in more than 60 inquiries to date. The E-Bulletin also included an “Ask the Expert” section, which selected a frequently asked question each week and featured the study team’s response.
- Primary Goals:
 - Provide regular and frequent communication with key constituents.
 - Maintain momentum for the study in between meeting dates.
 - Serve as a key communication vehicle for important study news/announcements.

Route 29 Web Site Questionnaire

- Dates:
 - Created and posted to project web site in February, 2009 until close of public comment period (October 20, 2009).
- Description:
 - Seventeen-question open-ended questionnaire that gauged public opinion on a number of issues central to the Route 29 Corridor Study, including safety issues, access management, land use, etc. Survey responses were sent to key members of the study team.
- Primary Goals:
 - Capture citizen input on a number of themes central to the Route 29 Corridor Study, and use respondent’s feedback to help identify key hotspots along the corridor and to help inform the study recommendations.
- Summary of Responses Per Question
 1. *Please tell us how often and for what purpose(s) you travel the Route 29 corridor.*

101 responses were received for this question. The respondents identified that they traveled the corridor from daily within certain parts of the corridor to several times a week or month. They also identified the main purposes for their travel ranged from commuting to and from work, shopping, recreational and leisure purposes, and medical appointments.
 2. *When you travel the Route 29 corridor, how long (in miles) is your normal trip and how long does it normally take (in minutes)?*

102 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents identified that they travel the corridor for approximately 20-30 minutes, typically less than 50 miles. Respondents also cited short trips (5-10 minutes).
 3. *Do you ever utilize transit options available in your area and if so which type (buses, car pools, park and ride lots) and how often?*

102 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents said they do not take public transit. Of those that responded in the affirmative, most cited use of the bus or carpool.
 4. *If transit options are provided in your area, would this be something you would consider using? Why or why not? If yes, what type(s) and how many times per month?*

98 responses were received for this question. Answers were fairly evenly split. Among those that said “yes,” they most often cited desired use of train and/or bus transit. Those that said “no” cited scheduling/job/family constraints with using transit.

5. *From a safety standpoint, how comfortable are you when traveling along the Route 29 corridor?*

101 responses were received for this question. Answers were fairly evenly split. A number of respondents did cite concerns with future growth/traffic further impeding safe conditions on the roadway. Others indicated feeling safe as a driver, but not as a pedestrian or bicyclist.

6. *If there are sections of the Route 29 corridor that make you uncomfortable, where are they and what are your main concerns?*

97 responses were received for this question. In general, many respondents cited safety concerns with intersections and construction projects. The areas most often cited included Charlottesville and Gainesville/Prince William County.

7. *Traffic congestion along Route 29 can occur when traveling through areas that include business, residential neighborhoods, schools, recreational sites, and attractions. Do you feel congestion is an issue that should be addressed as part of this study, and where are your main areas of concern?*

102 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents answered “yes” to this question. The most frequent areas cited included Warrenton, Gainesville, and Charlottesville.

8. *Maintenance of the existing roadway network is extremely important for safety and to maintain the transportation of goods and services. How well do you feel the Route 29 corridor is being maintained, and do you have any areas of specific concern?*

96 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents replied that Route 29 does not have any major maintenance issues and that the road is in overall good condition.

9. *Do you feel the Route 29 corridor currently meets the needs of pedestrians and bicycle enthusiasts? Are there any specific areas along the Route 29 corridor where you would like to see pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, multi-use trails, or bicycle paths?*

104 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents replied that they do not feel Route 29 is a safe place for bicyclists or pedestrians. Many said they do not believe bicyclist or pedestrian facilities would be appropriate for a primary roadway like Route 29. Of those that did show support for bike paths, etc., they tended to cite the Gainesville/battlefield areas as suggestions for potential trails/pedestrian facilities.

10. *Do you feel that the existing transit services are meeting the needs of travelers within the Route 29 corridor, or are there areas where expanded services would be of benefit?*

87 responses were received for this question. Most respondents cited either a lack of knowledge about transit options or felt that the Route 29 corridor should have more public transit options, with the most commonly cited mode being train travel.

11. *How do you feel about the use of vanpool/carpool programs as a means to further provide mobility along the Route 29 corridor?*

91 responses were received for this question. Respondents were fairly evenly mixed in their support for vanpool/carpool services. Many said that it is a good idea to encourage people to carpool, but many others cited rail or bus as a more effective option.

12. *How do you feel about enhancing passenger rail service to Richmond and Washington, D.C., from areas along the Route 29 corridor?*

99 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents were very supportive of rail options along the Route 29 corridor, particularly to Washington, D.C.

13. *New technologies in transportation management, such as advanced signal coordination systems, traffic cameras and variable message signs, offer additional ways to address traffic congestion and incident management. Do you feel that any of these types of new technologies should be considered along the Route 29 corridor?*

99 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents showed support for new technologies, with variable message signs and signal coordination being the two most commonly cited.

14. When you envision the Route 29 corridor in 20 years, what do you see as the best actions that can be taken to address capacity, safety and development within the corridor?

99 responses were received for this question. Common themes which evolved from this question were limiting access to large trucks, considering the use of bypasses to improve traffic flow, and curbing new development.

15. Would you support the localities and the Virginia Department of Transportation adopting new policies and laws to address the number of entrances along the Route 29 corridor?

95 responses were received for this question. The majority of respondents supported the idea of limited access for the Route 29 corridor.

16. From a transportation and land use viewpoint, what is your ideal vision of what the Route 29 corridor should look like in 20 years?

90 responses were received for this question. Although the responses were quite diverse, a number of overall themes emerged, including turning Route 29 into an interstate, protecting the rural nature of the area, with Route 29 designated as a scenic route, maintaining the current look and feel (doing nothing), and improving the corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians.

17. Lastly, is there anything about the Route 29 corridor that has not been covered in this questionnaire that you would like to bring to the study team's attention?

74 responses were received for this question. While many answered "no" to this question, many others provided additional comments, ranging from the benefit of adding lanes to Route 29 to opposition to a bypass in the Buckland area and from the suggestion of integrating efforts on Route 29 with Route 28 to the importance of managing traffic flow.

Citizen Information Meetings

- Dates:
 - September 22, 2009, Danville Community College, Danville
 - September 24, 2009, VDOT Lynchburg District Office, Lynchburg
 - September 29, 2009, Virginia Department of Forestry, Charlottesville
 - October 1, 2009, John Barton Payne Community Room, Warrenton
 - October 6, 2009, Germanna Community College, Culpeper
- Description:
 - The second round of public meetings served as a follow-on to the first series of meetings, where attendees helped the study team create a vision plan for the future of the corridor. During the second series of meetings, the study team reported the themes that emerged during the course of the study and presented the preliminary recommendations that were compiled by the study team.
- Primary Goals:
 - Maintain open communication with key study stakeholders.
 - Help build consensus with various governments and citizens along the corridor on "common ground" recommendations.
- Materials:
 - Advertisement for meeting dates/locations.
 - Handout for attendees that summarized key study recommendations and status updates.
 - Comment sheet for attendees to record their thoughts/reactions to the study progress, specific recommendations, and the public involvement process.
 - Eleven 30x40 color text boards with graphics and one rendering board.

- Attendees:
 - September 22, 2009, Danville Community College, Danville
 - 14 attendees
 - September 24, 2009, VDOT Lynchburg District Office, Lynchburg
 - 66 attendees
 - September 29, 2009, Virginia Department of Forestry, Charlottesville
 - 214 attendees
 - October 1, 2009, John Barton Payne Community Room, Warrenton
 - 60 attendees
 - October 6, 2009, Germanna Community College, Culpeper
 - 68 attendees
 - **TOTAL: 422 attendees**

Meetings – Detailed Description:

All meetings followed the same general format, beginning at 5:00 p.m. (or earlier, depending on attendee interest) with an “open house” format. Upon arrival, attendees were asked to sign in and were provided with a handout on the project, as well as a public comment form. Attendees were encouraged to complete the public comment form and drop it in the sealed box upon their departure, or to complete it at home and mail it back in to the study team by the close date of October 16, 2009.

After signing in, attendees were invited to review the series of text boards providing background on the study, as well as the map boards, which provided general concept recommendations in a visual format. Around 5:30 p.m., Joseph Springer, project manager, led a ½ hour presentation with visual aid, which highlighted the background of the study, the common ground consensus themes, and recommendations relevant to the particular location. Following this presentation, Springer initiated a Q&A session, which typically lasted ½ hour to 45 minutes. The remainder of the meeting, which ended at 8:00 p.m., reverted back to the open house format. Late arrivals were offered a presentation review. In total, 422 people attended the meetings.

The following section provides a summary of the comments received at the public meetings (during the Q&A sessions), as well as written comments compiled from the public comment forms. Note that overall themes have been summarized and highlighted.

Comments Received During Meeting Q&A Session:

Danville – 9/22/09

- Citizen comment that the study is proposing that VDOT have more authority over the corridor, but the local MPOs have some power over VDOT, including veto power for new roads. Citizens had questions about how the two decision-making organizations would work together.
- Citizens had concerns about the proposed alignment around Blairs, and whether possible alternative alignments were considered.
- There were general questions about the Charlottesville area. What was the study proposing in that area?
- Citizens commended the study for the recommendations in expanding the rail corridor to Danville.

Lynchburg – 9/24/09

- Attendees supported the idea of removing the stoplights on Route 29 throughout the state to increase capacity.
 - Citizens asked about the “extra cost of travel” due to the presence of signals throughout the corridor.
 - Citizens inquired about roundabouts and other ways to successfully remove signals.
- Citizens asked about the option of constructing a new limited access road between Altavista and the 29 bypass at the James River.
- Southern Lynchburg bypass alternatives
 - Citizens questioned the source of the information regarding the Southern Bypass alignment.
 - Questions of affected areas
 - Concerned citizens wanted to know what land areas would be affected by the proposed alignments, and when the property owners would be notified of restrictions to their property.
 - Citizens commented that this route may likely not solve the traffic problems it is intended to, and showing it as a potential will have a huge negative impact on property owners.
 - Several citizens felt that the western alignment was generally preferred over the eastern one because it would be easier and faster to build. One citizen advocated that both shown alignments be considered and studied equally.
 - Citizens requested that the alignments be revised to go through “no-use” land rather than valuable farmland and timberland.
 - Citizens also requested that the option of upgrading the existing alignment be considered in the planning scheme.
 - The proposed interchange with 460 may be better suited west of Waterlick Road to reduce construction costs, as a bridge would no longer be necessary
 - Citizens inquired about the cost of building these new alignments.
 - Citizens questioned if the proposed bypass would be built in a piecemeal fashion, as money becomes available. One citizen in particular advocated for building the eastern alignment from south to north.

Charlottesville – 9/29/09

- The Charlottesville MPO identified that it has long endorsed the general recommendations presented in this study, i.e. access management and land use planning integration to minimize impacts on the transportation network. The MPO has also identified short- and long-term transportation plans.
- Citizens generally supported investing in promoting alternative travel modes like high speed rail, bike lanes, and transit instead of building new roads.
- Leonard Sandridge extension alternatives
 - Citizens questioned whether these alternatives would take traffic off of Route 29.
 - Citizens discussed the benefits of the different alternatives. Several citizens endorsed the second and third alternatives, as the longer sections of road would create a greater parallel road system.
 - Utilizing VDOT’s right-of-way acquired for the western bypass:
 - Citizens questioned whether the proposed alternatives align with the acquired VDOT right-of-way, particularly at Barracks Road.
 - Citizens asked about the future of the acquired right-of-way, and the intentions of VDOT to sell or use it. Citizens and officials commented that the right-of-way could be sold back and the profits used for other improvements to Route 29.
 - Citizens also questioned the true need for the road, and whether these alternatives are shown for the sole purpose of using VDOT’s right-of-way.
 - Citizens and elected officials stated that showing these different alternatives in the final report would deplete property values, and requested that these alternatives be removed from the list of study recommendations.
 - Attendees doubted whether these alternatives would qualify for federal funds, and questioned whether the road would ever be built.
 - Citizens had concerns about what the interchange with the 250 bypass would look like and whether traffic on 250 would be able to access the proposed Leonard Sandridge extension.
 - The good intentions of the study are overshadowed by the alignments drawn on the maps. The MPO and Board of Supervisors will almost certainly reject this study.

- Alternative 1:
 - Citizens stated that Georgetown Road and Barracks Road are not designed to handle more traffic, and questioned the rationale behind this alternative.
- Ramp at Hydraulic Rd/250 bypass
 - Citizens questioned the need for this recommendation, and proposed alternative recommendations:
 - Extending 4 lanes to the airport.
 - Citizens stated that this improvement would not provide an alternate route for trucks.
 - Citizens and business owners commented that implementing this recommendation would be essentially building an expressway in the middle of the city, destroying local businesses, the major tax base, the livability of the community, and the land value. This would impact the entire community.
- Citizens asked for clarification on the proposed center-state corridor, and commented on the potential large expense and impacts on historic areas and acquiring land. Citizens suggested making improvements to the existing Route 15 instead of building a new road.
- Citizens asked about resolving conflicts between MPOs and PDCs, especially regarding balancing through traffic and local traffic.
- Citizens asked about whether the University of Virginia gave any input in the study and whether they had any influence on the study recommendations.
- Citizens inquired about the relationship of this study to Places 29, and what the impact Places 29 would have on traffic.
- One citizen commented that Albemarle County has rejected all of the proposed new roads in the last 25 years, forcing all traffic to use Route 29. He encouraged the attendees to change behavior and approve other options.

Warrenton – 10/01/09

- Citizens and elected officials were concerned about the finality of the recommendations. Many felt that it was “too late” in the process and that their concerns would not be addressed. One citizen noted, “these maps have a difficult time of disappearing.” Attendees pressed the importance of resolving issues within the next three months.
- Attendees asked whether other states or localities have a partnership similar to the proposed VDOT/local government partnership.
- Regarding the proposed removal of traffic signals, citizens inquired about the difficulty of this process.
- Attendees expressed strong support for their existing comprehensive plans, and asked that the inconsistencies of the study recommendations with the existing plans be resolved.
- Citizens questioned whether roundabouts would be an appropriate recommendation for this area of the corridor in the process of removing traffic signals.
- Buckland bypass
 - Most citizens were adamantly opposed to this recommendation and asked that it be removed from the list of study recommendations. Many agreed that the bypass would be a bad economical decision because of the difficulties of the topography and acquiring the right-of-way.
 - Attendees felt that the congestion on Route 29 is a product of poor planning on behalf of Prince William County, and that this proposed bypass would ultimately relieve Prince William County of its responsibility to make improvements north of the county line.
 - Citizens preferred that improvements be made to the existing road instead of constructing a new road.
 - Citizens expressed disbelief that this part of the road would have a future demand of 85,000 vehicles per day, noting that this projection is dependent on many assumptions.
 - Citizens questioned the need for diverting traffic west of Gainesville, especially since other improvements are proposed in the area:
 - Widening Route 15 to four lanes is in VDOT’s plan.
 - Route 29 may be widened to six lanes with two flyover ramps.
 - Citizens brought up concerns regarding historical impacts.
 - Citizens discussed development pressures in Prince William County, especially on Route 15.
 - Citizens asked if there was a specific point in time at which the new road would be necessary.

- Citizens inquired about the details of the alignment, including the rationale of choosing Riley Road as the terminus. Property owners wanted to know how and when they would know whether their property would be impacted.
- Citizens asked about bypasses in other jurisdictions, and how many were proposed as part of this study.
- Proposed Route 29 & I-66 Interchange
 - Attendees asked about the purpose of the proposed interchange and the assumed benefits.
- Fauquier County citizens and officials expressed disdain for the recommendations, especially because of the proposed bypass, and felt as though their concerns have not been recognized.
- Attendees wanted to know where and when they would be able to find a copy of the study's final report.

Culpeper – 10/06/09

- Generally, attendees supported making improvements to the existing roadway network instead of constructing new roads. Several citizens commented on the value of “virgin” land and advocated for expanding the existing corridor and preserving the untouched land. Other citizens advocated for focusing investments on rail and transit.
- Citizens wanted to know what “preserving the corridor” entailed. Attendees also asked about the decision-making process, how corridors are identified for preservation, and when the elected officials make the decisions.
- Generally, attendees expressed discomfort with the presented maps, noting that these conceptual maps create momentum to permanently etch these lines onto planning documents.
- Attendees asked for clarification on the proposed legislation, especially the toolkit for local planners and the incentives for distributed networks.
- Center State Corridor recommendations
 - Most of the attendees had negative concerns about the center state corridor recommendations. Most notably, the historic town of Rapidan was not labeled and the shown alignment would go directly through the center of this community. Also the Rappahannock community would be affected.
 - A member of the Orange County Board of Supervisors expressed opposition for the proposed route, stating that it would only exacerbate development projects. She instead supported rail and transit. She expressed that the Board of Supervisors would likely not support legislation for a Corridor Implementation Plan if this alignment is included.
 - Citizens inquired about the reason for possibly building a new road along the railroad corridor north of Orange, when Route 15 already exists and people can use the existing road to travel from Orange to Culpeper.
 - Citizens inquired about the historic and environmental constraints, including the Journey Through Hallowed Ground and battlefields.
 - Several people talked about different alternative alignments:
 - West side or east side around the Town of Orange
 - Bypass around Culpeper
 - Alignment around a failing planned development
 - Attendees wanted to know specific details about the alignment of the center state corridor and which properties would be affected. One citizen asked about eminent domain.
 - Citizens also inquired about the various development-limiting easements.
- Many attendees wanted to see hard data, and expressed disappointment that the data was not presented. Specifically, one citizen wanted to see a table showing travel time under different traffic conditions. Also, another citizen wanted to know about the projections and modeling for the short-term and mid-term conditions.
- Citizens asked about how the study team has accounted for fluctuations in the economy.
- Attendees wanted to know where they could find the previous Route 29 studies, and whether this study would be available to the public.
- Citizens inquired about the cost of this study.

Summary of Comments Received from Public Comment Form:

Public Comment Form Details

- Total questionnaires received at meeting: 30
- Total questionnaires received via mail: 159
- **TOTAL questionnaires: 189**

Attendees were asked to respond “yes” or “no” to the following question for the themes outlined in the chart below:

Do the recommendation themes identified below and presented this evening address the needs and concerns within the project area?

Themes	No Answer/Unsure	Yes	No	Provided additional written comment
Safety	24	20	145	117
Access Management	27	22	140	111
Land Use	24	13	152	111
Mobility	25	20	144	106
Quality of Life/Visual	25	9	155	123
Multi-modal	40	18	131	99

Summary of comments (generated themes) provided with questions:

Safety:

- Dominant theme:
 - Specific concern for the Charlottesville area that Option 1 would increase traffic on Georgetown Road, making it unsafe for pedestrians, bikers, etc.; further, Option 2 would increase traffic near local schools.
- Additional themes:
 - Idea of suggested improvements for safety alleviating the need to build new roadbed on Route 29’s existing alignment (Danville area respondent).
 - Concern that the recommendations do not fully address safety issues.
 - Concern about Hillsdale Road impact.
 - Concern that the study team did not address residential, pedestrian, and school use.
 - Concern that the study did not recommend a bypass around Charlottesville.
 - Concern that there was not enough information provided to adequately judge safety improvements.
 - Concern that the study does not address traffic levels and continuing development; instead, is creating another avenue for congestion.

- Concern that the presentation will not be fully realized.
- Comment that more attention should be paid to secondary roads that feed Route 29.
- Expressed support for safety improvements, with the exception of the Buckland/Gainesville bypass.
- Support for limited access roadway in improving safety.

Access Management:

- Dominant theme:
 - Concern in the Charlottesville area that limited access on Route 29 would push traffic to Georgetown Road, which is already a congested roadway.
- Additional themes:
 - Expressed desire for improving access to and from educational facilities.
 - Concern that Danville area is the only area in the state with no interstate.
 - Concern that the proposed Leonard Sandridge extension would not alleviate traffic problems on Route 29.
 - Concern that the Hydraulic-Route 250 connector would not be viable.
 - Expressed interest in extending Route 15 from Zion Crossroads to Culpeper due to topography.
 - Expressed concern that Charlottesville-area recommendations are not viable.
 - Supported recommendations, suggests legislation changes are necessary.
 - Expressed concern that Culpeper will be limited access, when Charlottesville and Gainesville are not.
 - Expressed support, but noted that focus should be on improving existing corridor by widening versus new construction.
 - Expressed support, but noted concern that failure to apply standards in Gainesville may compromise the rest of the corridor.
 - Concern that Route 29 would become a freeway, bisecting rural areas and local towns.

Land Use:

- Dominant theme:
 - Concern in the Charlottesville area that Options 1 or 2 would place main roads through or adjacent to five neighborhoods and a retirement complex.
- Additional themes:
 - Noted that it is hard to “turn back time” and address land use where businesses already exist. Would like to see future access restrictions.
 - Concern about the potential destruction of businesses and residential areas.
 - Concern that changes will be minimal.
 - Concern for funding bypass plans (dated).
 - Expressed budgetary concerns and support for an interchange at Hydraulic Road.
 - Expressed importance of gaining regional and county support for plans.
 - Concern that plans are not specific enough in this area.
 - Concern that the study team did not research the affected areas sufficiently.
 - Concern that adding bypasses instead of implementing access management standards is inefficient.
 - Concern that additional roads will only lead to increased traffic to the area.
 - Concern that neighborhood traffic in Charlottesville would be dominated by large trucks.

Mobility:

- Dominant theme:
 - Concern in the Charlottesville area that Options 1 or 2 would not increase mobility in the area.
- Additional themes:
 - Concern that suggested improvements in Charlottesville will not adequately address the issue.
 - Concern about increasing truck traffic.
 - Overall concern that recommendations do not address traffic issues on Route 29.
 - Expressed support for removing traffic signals.
 - Expressed support for interstate highway concept.

Quality of Life/Visual:

- Dominant theme:
 - Concern in the Charlottesville area that Options 1 or 2 would negatively impact quality of life for local citizens, have environmental consequences, and reduce local property values.
- Additional themes:
 - Concern that the current or projected improvements to Route 29 would protect the visual qualities of the corridor.
 - Concern over proposed Leonard Sandridge extension.
 - Concern about more roads (and more interstate roads) denigrating the beauty of the corridor.
 - Concern about noise from Route 29 (Barracks Road area).
 - Statement from Orange County that they do not support an alternative road for Route 29 that would dissect the county and denigrate historic and rural areas.
 - Concern about residential and historical areas being affected by study.

Multi-modal:

- Dominant theme:
 - Concern in the Charlottesville area that Option 1 would make it difficult to add sidewalks, bike lanes, etc. without compromising local property owners.
- Additional themes:
 - Concern about relevance of multi-modal options to proposed Leonard Sandridge extension.
 - Suggestion for dual train tracks in east Albemarle County.
 - Suggestion for bike paths.
 - Concern that multi-modal options were not fully discussed.
 - Support for increased rail capacity.

Citizens were also asked to provide additional comments. Of all 189 respondents, 118 respondents provided additional thoughts on the study. From these responses, the following themes were identified:

- Dominant theme:
 - Concern in the Charlottesville area that both Options 1 and 2 would not adequately address the traffic congestion issues in the area and would ultimately negatively affect local citizens; some support shown for Option 3.
- Additional themes:

- Support for idea of local revenue generation for funding options.
- Idea of extending Leonard Sandridge to connect to Rio and Dickinson and moving expressway to directly over Hydraulic Road.
- Concern about proposed Leonard Sandridge extension, particularly Georgetown option.
- Concern that the study lacked specific details.
- Expressed resent at potential impacts on property values.
- Concern about cost of proposed improvements.
- Concern about denigrating rural character of the areas surrounding the Route 29 corridor, as well as concern about the protection of conservation easements.
- Expressed opinion that the answer to congestion is not to build new roadways.
- Support for an interchange at Hydraulic.
- Support for eastern bypass in Charlottesville.
- Support for a western bypass in Charlottesville.
- Concern about a road option through Rapidan.
- Concern about bypass in Fauquier County.
- Concern about Charlottesville area recommendations and the safety impact they would have on school children and other pedestrians.

Attendees were also asked to respond “yes” or “no” to the evaluation questions that addressed the meeting handout, information presented at the meeting, and whether they have felt informed about the project over the past year.

Evaluation	No Answer/Unsure	Yes	No	Provided additional written comment
Handout	34	112	43	37
Meeting Information	39	111	39	32
Informed of Progress	25	25	139	82

Summary of comments provided with questions:

Handout

- Unsure of how recommendations affect road improvements.
- Handout is too general and does not address specific local issues.
- Local maps/information should have been included in handout.
- Concern that local maps were difficult to understand.
- Concern about the use of technical language (i.e. multi-modal, land use patterns, etc.).

Meeting Information

- Support for maps used in presentation.
- Concern that the presentation did not address the entire 219-mile corridor.
- Desire to see data.
- Concern that the Q&A session was not thorough enough (answers lacked specifics).
- Noted that more people would have attended if the presentation had been advertised.

Informed of Progress

- Cited lack of notice, despite having attended previous events.
- Did not have adequate notice for meeting.
- Primarily notified through third-party and not VDOT.

Summary of comments received via email and/or letter:

The public meetings also prompted some citizens to send comments via email and regular mail. In total, approximately 400 emails and 25 letters were sent to the study team (some duplicates). From these emails and letters, the following themes emerged:

- Dominant themes:
 - Recurrent email expressing concern that the study lacks detail; concern that the proposed bypasses (Fauquier County, Eastern Bypass, and Western Bypass) would all contribute to more traffic problems; and concern that the study did not provide adequate local government/general public participation.
 - Expressed concern for “Center State Corridor” from Keswick to Culpeper (Keswick-Orange-Rapidan Road); desire to maintain rural landscape of the area and preserve farmland and historical resources, as well as to protect wildlife/ecosystems in the area.
- Additional themes:
 - Concern about the proposed Buckland Bypass.
 - Support for a bypass in the Charlottesville area.
 - Support for improved rail/public transportation options along Route 29.
 - Opposition to the proposed Leonard Sandridge extension in Charlottesville.
 - Concern about potential cost associated with proposed recommendations.
 - Support for proposed recommendations, particularly concept of limited access.
 - Concern about lack of detail on maps provided at public meetings.
 - Concern about impact to historical areas in Virginia (battlefields, Journey Through Hallowed Ground, Southwest Mountain Historic District, etc.).
 - Suggestion to bring a bypass through Gordonsville and down Route 15.

