



May 10, 2006

DOGWOOD HILL FARMS

R.E.D. No. 4 1882 Keezletown Rd.

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA 22802

To: Commonwealth Transportation Board
 For: Submission at public hearing Thursday May 11, 2006 at Spotswood High School in Penn Laird, McGeheysville Area, Rockingham County.

Subject Southeast Connector.

Gentlemen and Ladies - I have lived and earned a living in Harrisonburg ~~as~~ Rockingham County Virginia, for seventy seven years. For forty of those years I was Chairman ~~as~~ Chief Executive Officer of Rocco Inc., who owned ~~and~~ operated hundreds of vehicles. We always needed road improvements. ~~As~~ Always will.

I am enclosing a copy of Jenny Jones article in Tuesday, May 9, 2006 Daily News Record. I believe this article clearly states our options. I favor the Non Build Option for the following reasons.

I. That is what the Harrisonburg - Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organizations 2030 Transportation Plan ~~and~~ VDOT's six year improvement Program calls for.

II. The expected widening of I 81 will dramatically affect our "need" for a connector.

III. The impact on agriculture, environment, old battlefields and the way we live and ~~earn~~ out living, will be minimized.

IV. In meeting after VDOT meetings over the last ten year large numbers ~~of~~ Rockingham County citizens, have rejected the Connector Concept.

Sincerely,
 R.H. "Twig" Strickles

Study Area Focuses On Southeastern Part Of County

Hearing

FROM PAGE 1
 Transportation Board will review the study and the comments. Then the board will decide whether a connector should be constructed and if so, where it should be located, Myers said.

Connector Options

The study area for the Harrisonburg Southeast Connector focuses on the southeastern half of the county between U.S. 11, U.S. 33 and I-81. It also includes portions of Harrisonburg.

The environmental impact statement includes six alternatives for the road.

■ **No-build:** With this alternative, no connector would be constructed. Instead, spot transportation improvements would be made as outlined in the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2030 Transportation Plan and VDOT's Six-Year Improvement Program, the study says.

■ **Alternative 1:** This alternative suggests building a connector road that would join Bridgewater's I-81 interchange (Mile Marker 257) to U.S. 33 at Cross Keys Road.

This alternative would follow Friedens Church Road and would involve widening the existing South Whitesel Church Road to four lanes, with paved shoulders. The road would remain two lanes along Cross Keys road "to avoid and minimize the effects on the Cross Keys Battlefield," the study says.

This alternative would have "limited access," meaning adjoining properties would have no direct access to the road.

■ **Alternative 2:** This alternative suggests building a connector road that would join U.S. 11, just south of Cecil Wampler Road, to U.S. 33, just south of Boyers Road.

This alternative would involve constructing a four-lane road with a 40-foot-wide median east of Port Republic. It would go from Cecil Wampler Road, cross Pleasant Run, curve northeastward to the intersection of Port Republic Road and conclude at Boyers Road, according to the study.

Run and continue toward Pleasant Valley Road. From there, it would go northward to cross Pleasant Run Road again and then cross Oweola Springs Road and continue to Ridgedale Road to cross Port Republic Road and end at U.S. 33, according to the study.

This alternative would have "controlled access," meaning people would have access to the road "only at intersecting roadways and at property entrances to be determined," the study says.

■ **Alternative 3:** This alternative suggests building a connector road that would join U.S. 33, just south of Boyers Road, to U.S. 11 at Exit 243 on the I-81 interchange.

This alternative, which would involve constructing a four-lane road with a 16-foot-wide median, would follow portions of Greenude and Ridgedale roads but would otherwise be on new locations, according to the study.

The road, which would brush the property where Rockingham Memorial Hospital plans to relocate in Rockingham County, would have "controlled access," meaning people would have access to the road "only at intersecting roadways and at property entrances to be determined."

■ **Alternative 4:** This alternative suggests building a connector road that would join Stone Spring Road, near the Harrisonburg city limits, with U.S. 33, just south of Boyers Road.

This alternative, which would involve constructing a four-lane road with a 16-foot-wide median, would begin at Stone Spring Road and end at U.S. 33.

This alternative would have "controlled access," meaning people would have access to the road "only at intersecting roadways and at property entrances to be determined," the study says.

In addition to the individual alternatives, the study suggests four different combinations that would involve two or more of the alternatives.

Viable Options

While all the alternatives would help relieve transportation issues, each has pros and cons.

Alternative 2A provides the highest average daily traffic volume served, is high in terms of providing relief to area roads and reduces traffic on I-81 and U.S. 33. But it increases traffic on U.S. 11, south of Boyers Road, and Port Republic Road, the study says.

Alternative 3, the study shows, is high in terms of regional traffic served and reduces traffic on U.S. 11, south of Boyers Road, Boyers Road, and I-81. But it is low in terms of reducing traffic on congested roads and increases traffic on I-81S and on U.S. 33, south of Boyers Road.

According to the study, Alternative 4 is ranked in terms of average daily traffic volume served and it offers benefits in terms of reducing traffic on other roads such as Nef Avenue, University Boulevard, East Market Street and I-81N.

VDOT's Southeast Connector project manager was unavailable to comment on which alternative would be best.

Rockingham County Supervisor Doc Floyd has been vocal in the connector study process and says he favors two options — not building and Alternative 4, also known as the Stone Spring Extension.

Floyd said he likes those op-

tions because they would have the least effect on farmland and battlefield lands. Also, he says, the area near Stone Spring Road, which is already under construction, is in need of work.

"That's where the emphasis should be at this time," Floyd said. "That's where the traffic problems are right now."

"I think we should take care of our immediate needs."

Besides, Floyd says, developers including Preston Lakes, the Ken Michael Group, Associated Developers and Rockingham Memorial Hospital, have already offered land and money to support road improvements in the Stone Spring Road area.

Road improvements "were proffered in their requests" to develop, Floyd said.

Kim Sandham of the Community Alliance for Preservation said she agrees that Alternative 4 would be the best option.

"It's the cheapest and the shortest with the least impact on historic landmarks and farmland and it serves the traffic needs here locally," Sandham said. "Hopefully VDOT and others will keep that in mind when they make their decision."

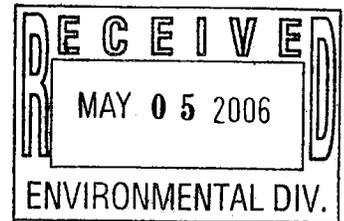
Contact Arny Jones at 574-6236 or arjones@harrington.com

VDOT

Comments on the proposed southeast corridor around Harrisonburg

Robert McFadden, 139 Rosewood Circle, Bridgewater, VA 22812

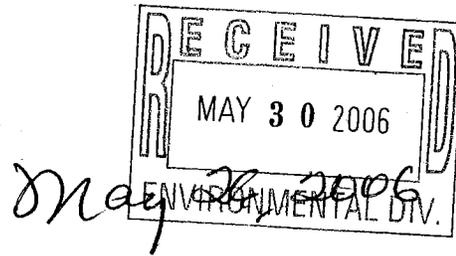
April 19, 2005



- (1) There is a bumper sticker on some cars that read "Better roads, not a beltway." It is a comic commentary on the need for better roads in the area! They want better (?) Roads, but no beltway!! What do they want??? A beltway IS a better road. What's the alternative?
- (2) If they oppose the beltway, why not provide a "drawing" of the alternative? It seems to me that no one can come up with a good proposal to make the Friedens Church Road a "better" road. No one has come up with a proposal to REBUILD that road in such a way that it would serve better the needs of the area. Route 257 from Bridgewater to Mt. Crawford was rebuilt two decades ago; it was straightened and made more travel friendly. Nothing like that seems to be proposed for the Friedens Church road.. That's about the only way to get to Route 33 going around H'burg.
- (3) The Green Valley Book Fair and Auction have had the State pave the road that leads back to their business, but apparently they don't favor a good bypass road for the rest of us. I can continue to drive the Friedens Church road when I get the Shenandoah National Park – or to Keezletown, or to Elkton, or to McGaheysville – but as traffic increases a better road would be more convenient. Also a couple of decades ago, Route 42 from H'burg to Broadway was improved. The people in that area WOULD NOT ALLOW the road to be rebuilt until it was planned as a DIVIDED FOUR LANE HIGHWAY!!! What a contrast to the southeast!
- (4) I'd like to see a proposal for making the Friedens Church road a really good road! How much land would that take from the people who live there now? Would they approve such a proposal? Or do they want to keep things just the way they are?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert McFadden". The signature is written in a cursive style and has a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Mr. Christopher Collins
Virginia Department of Transportation
Environmental Division
1201 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219



Mr. Collins:

My comments concern the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Harrisonburg, Virginia, Southeast Connector Location Study, dated March 23, 2006.

I live at 2801 Osceola Springs Road, zip code 22801, in Rockingham County. The right-of-way for one of the limited -access road alternatives proposed in the study (CBA2) would approach very closely if not impact directly on my residence and farmland. In fact, all other proposed alternatives, except the no build and CBA1 would impact negatively on local road, residences and farmland in the immediate vicinity (1 to 2 miles) of my property.

Contrary to statements contained in the study, development is not "inevitable". The rural character of Rockingham County can be maintained. Planned growth and farming interests can be accommodated without the detriment to either if the needs of both are addressed equally. I believe the study's recommended alternatives do not represent a balanced approach but are too heavily weighted in favor of four lane limited or controlled access roads which do nothing to solve the needs of local traffic much less perceived future cross-county needs and have the undesired effect of negatively impacting the environment. Why do the proposed alternatives have to be located so close to already highly populated areas? A more studied approach would place more emphasis on the redesign of existing rights-of-way that better anticipates future needs rather than contributing to the disruption of current traffic patterns. It is not clear from the study if even the CBA1 alternative is responsive because only average daily traffic statistics are presented. Its only benefit is that it is anchored by an existing interchange and, is further removed from population density. The study does not attempt to consider future estimates of daily traffic between the major traffic generators of Elkton, Bridgewater/Mt Crawford and Harrisonburg which is now recognized by the U.S. Census Department as a standard metropolitan statistical area.

I believe the study recommendations would needlessly sacrifice existing farmland and residential property and do not address the needs of local traffic or properly consider the future needs of the southeast section of Rockingham County as a whole. The most prominent conclusion that can be inferred from the study is that it appears to accommodate commercial interests to the disadvantage of county residents.


Ed and Angela Speshock

Copy: Dee E. Floyd, District 3 Supervisor

Dear Governor Kaine and VDOT Officials:

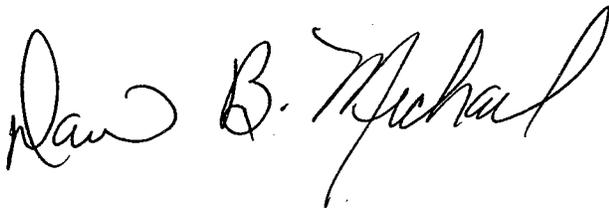
I am writing in regard to the proposed highway plans in Rockingham County. I respectfully ask that you please eliminate the Harrisonburg bypass from I-81 plans, and to look for lower impact alternatives to the bypass. I believe that working within the existing highway systems would be the area's best option.

I am a 43 year old mother of two. For the record, Mr. Kaine, I vote as an independent which means that I often consider myself a Democrat (a rare find in Rockingham County). I, and my children were born and raised on my family's farm just outside of the proposed loop road. It is my belief that there is no healthier a lifestyle or childhood, than to have free rein to explore the out-of-doors in your own backyard, to fish in your own ponds, and to watch and play with baby calves while they frolic. It is my hope that should my children choose to return to the farm to raise their own families, the farm will still be here for them and the lifestyles will not be that different.

In the forty+ years that I've lived in this area, I have watched many changes along the way. While I'll be the first to admit that Harrisonburg's traffic is not fun (especially when JMU students are in town), I do not want to see the bypass roads brought this far out into the county. This area is one of the most beautiful places that I've ever encountered. The scenic views are second to none in this State. You won't find a more beautiful drive than to travel down 33 east and 340 north in Rockingham County, (the mountain vistas, the rolling hills, the cattle in the fields). I live within a mile of the Cross Keys Battlefields and close to the Port Republic battlefields. This area is seeped in history and the tradition of being farm/rural country. Should these proposed roads be built, this area's future will forever be shaped as something other than what it has been. The adage, "If you build it, they will come," applies to more than baseball, Governor Kaine. If we build these roads, urban sprawl will follow. Perhaps that doesn't bother the masses, but I have no desire to live in a more southern "Northern Virginia". For those of us who deeply value the land and the lifestyle, it is extremely troublesome. I have no desire to live within two miles of a Burger King, a Wal-Mart or any other major establishment. I wish to continue walking my little road, listening to the birds singing and the cows grazing versus tractor trailers downshifting, horns blaring and the increased traffic that will come.

My father, who has lived on this plot of land all 60+ years of his life, has prophesied that with the proposed changes and the addition of another ten years, this farm will be gone. If we want the lifestyle that we currently have, we will be gone. Governor Kaine and VDOT, I live within sight of the home where my father lives, my grandparents lived, my great grandparents lived and my great, great grandparents lived (all of which were farmers). It will break my heart to leave this area (more than likely this State) and leave behind my heritage and my children's legacy. Please consider other lower impact alternatives.

Dawn B. Michael
8238 Mill Creek Church Road
Port Republic, VA 24471
(540) 234-8863

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn B. Michael". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name and address.

VDOT PUBLIC HEARING
Harrisonburg Southeast Connector
Spotswood High School
May 11, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

The Harrisonburg Southeast Connector should not be built. This was the overwhelming consensus of the locality six years ago and it is still the consensus of the local community. Instead of spending tens or hundreds of millions of dollars on a limited access highway through our prime farmland and ag-forestal districts, VDOT should be improving the local roadways within the existing highway system to improve the flow of traffic. The problem is not out in the county, but in the city of Harrisonburg and that is where VDOT should concentrate its efforts.

If any of the connector alternatives are adopted, the only one that seems remotely acceptable is alternative 4, adding an extension to Stone Spring Road. This alternative is the most economical of the build options and would have the least impact on the farmland, forests, and historic sites within our county.

Alternative 1 is wholly unacceptable. It would have far too great of an impact on agricultural and forested land and the impact on our waterways has not even been fully evaluated. This roadway would only serve to encourage sprawl growth from Harrisonburg further into the county. Furthermore, it would be too far removed to alleviate any of the traffic congestion in Harrisonburg or the traffic burden on Interstate 81.

VDOT cannot build its way out of our traffic problems by continuing to add highways. We should be examining alternatives such as railways for both cargo and passenger movement. High speed, efficient bus lanes for commuter transportation and in-town traffic would also help, as is being currently practiced in other countries.

Michael Renfroe
6451 Indian Trail Rd.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

May 11, 2006

Edward Kasch
83 Maplehurst Ave
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
540-564-0242

Comments regarding the proposed VDOT southeast expansion:

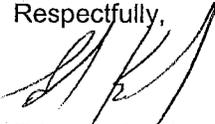
I believe that any highway expansion should be targeted and limited in scope.

The proposal Alternate 1 is too major of a change and will negatively impact the quality of life and character of Rockingham county. Areas that are currently rural will become targets for development, and change the county from one that is mainly rural, to one that will become increasingly developed. This county is already developing too quickly and without adhering to previously accepted plans. Adding a new highway like the Alternate 1 proposal will only lead to additional pressures to further develop the area.

If any new highways are to be put in I would favor Alternate 4.

In addition, there are small projects that would significantly enhance the flow of traffic in Harrisonburg. Two that come to mind are the intersection of Stone Spring Road and South Main Street, and the intersection of Pear Street and South High Street.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Kasch', written over the word 'Respectfully,'.

Edward Kasch

Mary Ely Griffith
1665 Massanetta Springs Rd.
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

May 11, 2006

Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Proposed Beltway around Harrisonburg

To Whom It May Concern:

There is no overriding reason that the proposed beltway should go through the Cross Keys Battlefield area (Alternative 1). Once the Cross Keys Battlefield is turned into a freeway it will never go back to the way it was. Land that is irreplaceable should not be destroyed by a beltway that can be built in a different location.

The beltway should be built in order to optimize emergency vehicle access to the new site of RMH (Rockingham Memorial Hospital). Alternative 2 (Boyer Road) is a much better location for the beltway.

What would it take to get a fair shake for the citizens of Harrisonburg and surrounding area? Do a large number of people need to camp out at VDOT headquarters in order to get the attention of the news media?

VDOT has held public meetings where citizens can go to voice their opinion about the loop road proposal for the Harrisonburg area. I have spoken with many local citizens, but not a single one feels that VDOT is listening to the local people. I've heard people describe these public meetings as "window dressing", and when I have asked specifically what is meant, they tell me that the meetings are just for show, but that VDOT has already made up its mind. These people then follow up by saying that they don't even bother attending these meetings any more. "What's the point of attending? The powers-that-be have already made up their minds."

Here are some other comments citizens use to describe these meetings:

- The meetings are a farce.
- The public meetings are a joke.
- They're holding public meetings so they can technically say they've done it, but it's just a technicality to make it look like they're doing the right thing by the local citizens.
- Public meetings to discuss the loop road? **Follow the money.** Developers want to strike it rich. They see an open field and want to put gas stations, convenience stores, and strip malls on it.

VDOT should be holding truly public meetings where people can voice their opinions, and where their opinions count. Our founding fathers would be turning over in their graves if they could witness the "open public discussion and decision-making" that VDOT is trying to cram down the throats of Harrisonburg citizens.

Do not take our valley paradise and turn it into another Fairfax. We do not want our paradise to become a cancerous urban sprawl.

Sincerely,

Mary Ely Griffith

cc: Gov. Tim Kaine