



Winter 2012

## WELCOME and Thank You for Your Interest

Welcome to the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study for transportation improvements in the Interstate 66 Corridor from U.S. Route 15 in Prince William County to I-495 in Fairfax County. Study newsletters like this will be published regularly to inform you about the study's progress and key findings, and to highlight opportunities for you to offer input.

The study will result in a Tier 1 EIS, which will assist in making decisions about the best program of improvements for the I-66 Corridor. Subsequent Tier 2 studies will evaluate those options in greater detail. Our mission is to study potential transportation concepts to serve existing and future transportation needs in the I-66 Corridor. The study is a joint effort by the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the Federal Transit Administration and is being developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Our team is now identifying transportation needs for the corridor and will incorporate them into a formal statement of Purpose and Need. The Purpose and Need will provide a focused definition of the transportation challenges we will address based on transit and traffic volume data from various sources and other information about the existing transportation network. Additionally, it accounts for input received at the public scoping meetings held in June 2011 and is consistent with local and regional plans.

Essential to identifying the corridor's best program of solutions is the participation and feedback from individuals like you. We encourage you to attend the next set of public meetings in late January and early February (see details below) as well as visit our project website: [www.helpfix66.com](http://www.helpfix66.com).

Thank you for contributing to the study.



### Upcoming Public Meetings and Project Information

#### Tuesday, January 31, 2012

Four Points Sheraton  
10800 Vandor Lane | Manassas, VA 20109  
5:00 - 8:00 PM

#### Thursday, February 2, 2012

Virginia Department of Transportation  
4975 Alliance Drive | Fairfax, VA 22030  
5:00 - 8:00 PM

For those unable to attend, please visit the website for meeting materials and project information. You can email comments to the study team (please reference "I-66 Tier 1 EIS" in your subject line):

- [CG.Collins@VDOT.Virginia.gov](mailto:CG.Collins@VDOT.Virginia.gov)
- [Stephen.C.Walter@Parsons.com](mailto:Stephen.C.Walter@Parsons.com)

#### Project Information

VDOT Public Affairs  
Phone: 800-367-7623  
<http://www.helpfix66.com>

## PROCESS AND MILESTONES



# A Busy and Growing Corridor...

## Snapshot of Fairfax & Prince William County Travel and Growth

The I-66 Corridor is one of the most congested highway corridors in the greater Washington, D.C. region, which itself is the most congested metropolitan area in the nation. (Source: Texas Transportation Institute)

Fairfax and Prince William Counties have experienced enormous growth in recent decades and are projected to continue growing significantly:

- From 2000 to 2010, the population of Fairfax County grew 11.5 percent (112,000 new residents) and Prince William County grew 43.2 percent (120,000 new residents). Prince William was the second fastest growing county in the state during the previous decade. (Source: Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services)
- Fairfax County's 2010 population of 1,081,726 persons exceeded that of eight states – Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming. (Source: Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services)
- Prince William County now ranks #1 in job growth in Virginia and #3 in job growth in the nation. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- From 2010 to 2030, Fairfax County is projected to grow by 200,000 residents and add 160,000 more jobs. (Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments)
- From 2010 to 2030, Prince William County is projected to grow by 140,000 residents and add 57,000 more jobs. (Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments)

### A Commuter's Life

Fairfax County commuters spend an average of 62 minutes traveling to and from work or school each day. Given a standard work year, the average resident spends the equivalent of more than **10 full days (248 hours) commuting** per year.

Prince William County commuters average 78 minutes traveling to and from work or school each day, equivalent to **13 full days (312 hours) spent commuting** per year. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

### I-66 Corridor Traffic Forecasts 2011-2040

By 2040, I-66 will be heavily congested nearly 12 hours every weekday.



# Explaining the Process: What is a Tier 1 EIS?

Compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) is required when a federal action is necessary. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the appropriate level of NEPA document when the action will result in significant impacts. In a tiered EIS approach, broad programs and issues are addressed in Tier 1 analyses, whereas site-specific proposals and impacts are more thoroughly considered in subsequent Tier 2 studies.

The Tier 1 EIS being prepared for I-66 is a fact-based analysis that supports informed decision-making for the area between the Capital Beltway and U.S. Route 15 in Haymarket. It also fosters the ability to make decisions on issues that are ripe for decision and provides a means to preserve those decisions. The Tier 1 study will result in a Draft Tier 1 EIS, a Final Tier 1 EIS and a Tier 1 Record of Decision. Completion of the Tier 1 study will result in decisions on:

- Concepts to be advanced, including transit improvements, transportation demand management strategies and/or roadway improvements. Within these concepts, consideration will be given to managed lanes and tolling;
- The general location for studying future highway and transit improvements in Tier 2 document(s);
- Identification of projects with independent utility to be evaluated in Tier 2 document(s) and evaluated pursuant to other environmental laws; and
- Advancing tolling for subsequent study in Tier 2 document(s).

Tier 2 studies and documentation will be conducted for individual site-specific improvements with independent utility. The number and types of Tier 2 improvements are not yet known. Completion of Tier 2 studies may result in decisions on:

- The specific elements and locations of highway and transit improvements;
- Preliminary design and cost of highway and transit improvements; and
- Likely types and locations of environmental mitigation measures, such as noise barriers.



## Why A Tiered Approach?

### The Benefits of a Tiered Study

- A tiered study allows focus on issues that are ripe for decision.
- A tiered study allows for the development of interim improvements that do not preclude the long-term improvements, which may have a much longer implementation timeframe.
- The study lays the groundwork for the second tier of studies that will focus on the specific details and effects of implementing the individual projects that make up the preferred program of improvements.

# Building a Corridor to Meet Your Needs

Public participation is the keystone to any successful transportation study. Throughout the I-66 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study, residents like you will have opportunities to offer suggestions and call attention to concerns.

The first public meetings were held in June 2011. The goal of the meetings was to gather information and suggestions about the range of issues to be considered in the Tier 1 EIS, including:

- What are the transportation problems and needs?
- What should be considered to address these needs?
- What are the key environmental considerations?

Among the key issues and recommendations raised:

- Congestion between the Capital Beltway and U.S. Route 50
- Improvements that will increase mobility and reduce congestion, including:
  - Extension of transit lines
  - Additional road capacity
  - Conversion of peak-use shoulder lanes to permanent travel lanes
- Minimizing impacts to resources in the corridor

These and other issues assisted us in developing a draft Purpose and Need statement that articulates the goals of this study:

***“Improve multimodal mobility along the I-66 Corridor by providing diverse travel choices in a cost-effective manner. Enhance transportation safety and travel reliability for the public along the I-66 Corridor.”***

The study team will be looking at a variety of metrics or measurements to ensure proposed concepts meet the study’s Purpose and Need. Examples include:

- Travel time reductions, predictability and consistency
- Improved safety along the corridor
- Increased number of mode choices and access

We look forward to receiving your comments on the draft Purpose and Need and hearing your thoughts on how to improve the corridor at the upcoming public meetings.

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