Virginia Department of Transportation

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PUBLIC HEARINGS

Interstate 66 - Outside the Beltway Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement From U.S. Route 15 To I-495

Prince William and Fairfax Counties

Wednesday, March 13, 2013
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Four Points by Sheraton
10800 Vandor Lane
Manassas, VA 20109

Thursday, March 14, 2013
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Luther Jackson Middle School
3020 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

Virginia Department of Transportation | DRPT Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation | U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in this important study. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), are studying the potential environmental impacts of transportation improvement concepts along Interstate 66 (I-66) from US 15 to I-495 (Capital Beltway), a distance of approximately 25 miles.

The study involves the preparation of a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As a Tier 1 document, the Draft EIS represents the first step within a tiered approach. The Tier 1 Draft EIS defines existing and future transportation conditions and needs within the study corridor, identifies a range of transportation improvement concepts that would serve those needs, and evaluates the potential effects of the concepts on the natural and human environment. Following the Tier 1 approval, future Tier 2 NEPA documents will include site-specific quantitative analyses of effects and provide avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Purpose of the Public Hearing

- Provide an overview of the issues evaluated in the Tier 1 Draft EIS,
- Present the ten Build Improvement Concepts under consideration,
- Hear your thoughts about which improvement concepts or combination of concepts best meet the corridor needs, and
- Receive your comments on the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

Your feedback is an important contribution to the study. We encourage you to comment on the improvement concepts under consideration and the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

What We've Heard

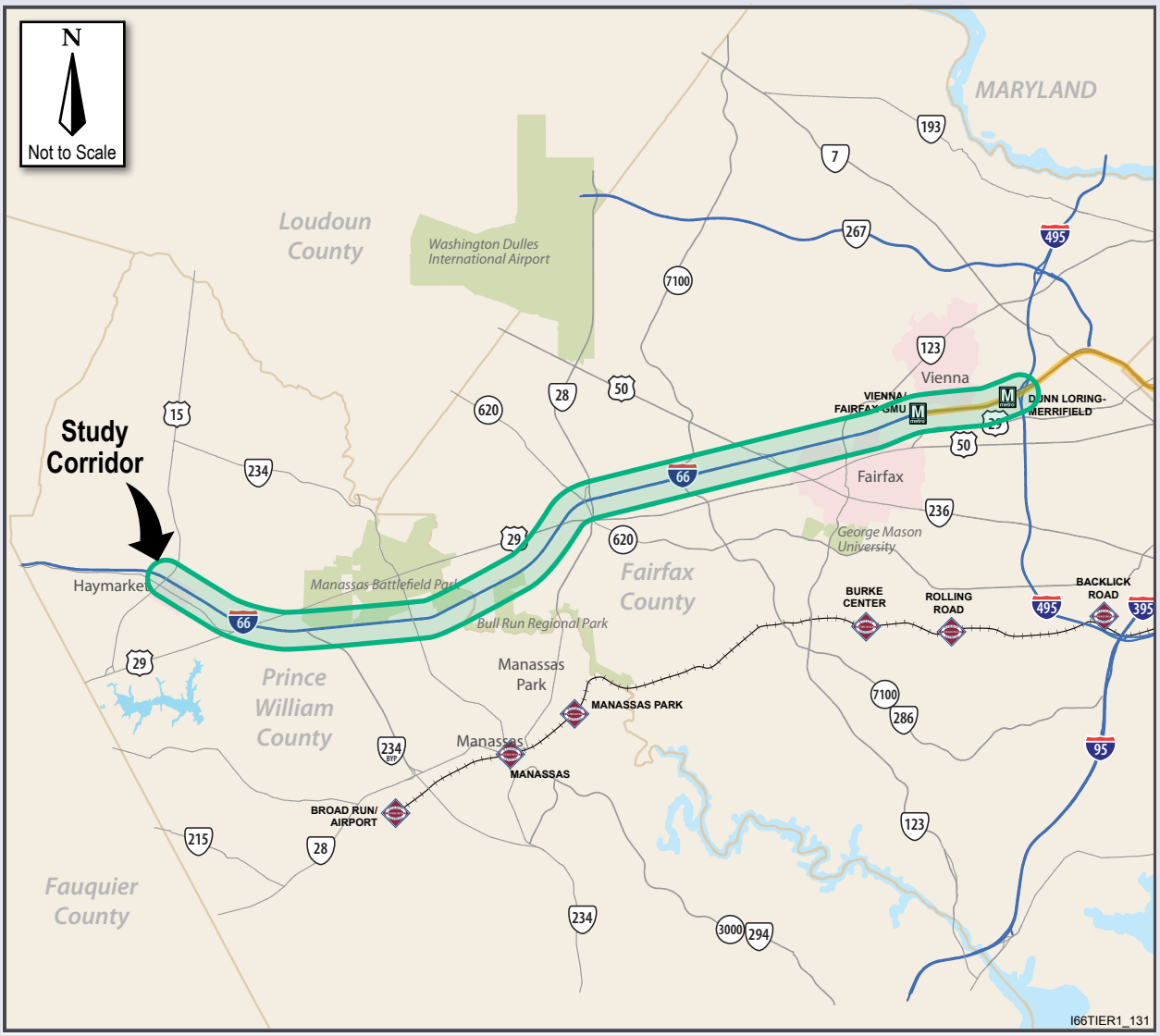
A public involvement program was utilized to provide citizens, interest groups, civic organizations, and businesses the opportunity to express their views throughout the environmental review process for the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Various communication media, including newsletters, brochures, questionnaires, informational videos, and a project website were used to provide information about the project and gather input from citizens and other interested parties. Additionally, citizen information meetings were held in June 2011 and January/February 2012.

The major issues and concerns identified by the public include traffic congestion and safety issues; the need for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel in the region; the need for increased transit service; the need for improved HOV operations and configurations; and potential effects on the environment including noise concerns.

STUDY PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the study is to address existing and future transportation problems on I-66 between US 15 and the Capital Beltway. The study evaluates the effectiveness of both highway and transit improvements in meeting the identified needs. The needs identified in the corridor include: transportation capacity deficiencies, major points of congestion, limited travel mode choices, safety deficiencies, and lack of transportation predictability.

STUDY LOCATION



IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Build Improvement Concepts include corridor-length options that are intended to increase capacity within the corridor, as well as options to increase travel mode choices, improve individual interchanges, address spot safety needs, and enhance travel efficiency.

Ten Build Improvement Concepts that directly address the needs were identified and considered. These concepts, along with the No-Build, are:

1. **General Purpose Lanes:** Construction of additional highway lanes open to all traffic.
2. **Managed Lanes:** Conversion of the existing HOV lane into either a one- or two-lane (in each direction) facility that would operate as a high-occupancy toll facility where only high-occupant vehicles would be exempt from paying a toll.
3. **Metrorail Extension:** Metrorail service extending west from Vienna to either Centreville or Haymarket.
4. **Light Rail Transit:** Light rail service extending west from Vienna to either Centreville or Haymarket.
5. **Bus Rapid Transit:** Separate guideway bus rapid transit extending west from Vienna to Haymarket; service could extend east of Vienna.
6. **VRE Extension:** Extension of existing VRE service from Manassas to Haymarket.
7. **Improve Spot Locations and Chokepoints:** Improvements that address operational constraints at discrete locations (chokepoints) such as individual interchanges or specific junction points within the interchanges (i.e., merge, diverge, or weaving areas).
8. **Intermodal Connectivity:** Availability of a full range of travel modes within the corridor, as well as availability and functionality of connections between travel modes.
9. **Safety Improvements:** Safety improvements that address both location-specific and corridor-wide safety concerns.
10. **Transportation Communication and Technology:** Continued enhancements to Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology for all modes in the corridor, including traveler information, corridor and incident management, transit technology and other proven features of transportation demand management.
11. **No-Build:** The No-Build is a stand-alone concept that serves as the baseline against which the Build Improvement Concepts are measured.

What is a Managed Lane?

Managed lanes are used to manage traffic so that users can benefit from more reliable travel times. Lanes could be managed using tolls and/or vehicle occupancy restrictions (such as HOV). Buses could also travel in these lanes.

The Managed Lanes improvement concept would convert the existing HOV lane into either a one- or two-lane (in each direction) facility that would operate as a high-occupancy toll facility where only high-occupant vehicles would be exempt from paying a toll.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The ten Build Improvement Concepts address the identified transportation needs of the corridor to varying degrees. The following table summarizes the ability of each improvement concept, including the No-build, to meet the project's stated purpose and need.

Evaluation of Improvement Concepts Against Purpose and Need Elements

BUILD IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT	EXISTING AND FUTURE CAPACITY DEFICIENCIES	IMPROVE SPOT LOCATIONS/ CHOKEPOINTS	LIMITED MODE CHOICES	SAFETY DEFICIENCIES	UNPREDICTABLE TRAVEL TIMES
General Purpose Lanes	🟡[1]	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟡
Managed Lanes	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡
Metrorail Extension	🟡	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟡
Light Rail Transit	🟡	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟡
Bus Rapid Transit	🟡	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟡
VRE Extension	🟡	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟡
Improve Spot Locations/ Chokepoints	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢
Intermodal Connectivity	🟡	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟢
Safety Improvements	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢
Communication and Technology	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢
No-Build	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴

Meets Purpose and Need? 🟢 = Yes 🟡 = Partially 🔴 = No

Notes: 1 Fully meeting purpose and need would require a total of 18 lanes for higher volume portions of the I-66 study corridor. The "partial" rating shown here reflects the fact that such a roadway width is impractical and not reasonable.

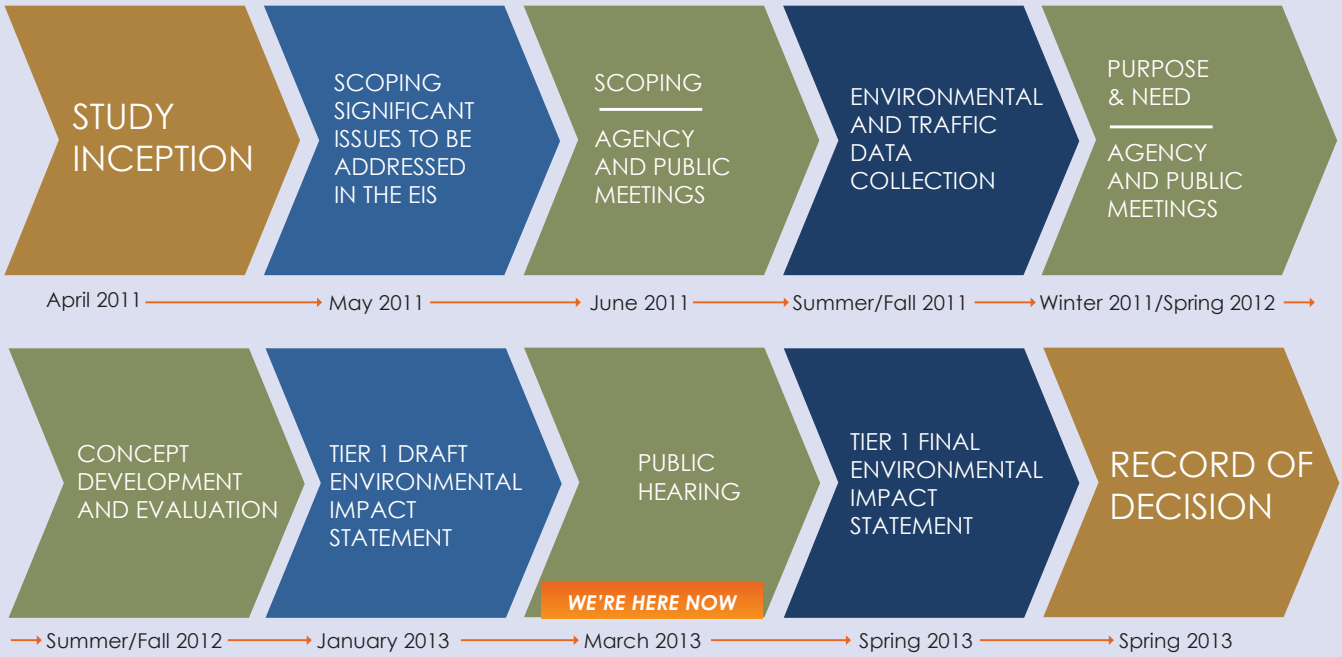
The potential impacts of the improvement concepts on the resources within the human and natural environments of the study area were analyzed at a conceptual level. For purposes of quantifying potential impacts, the ten Build Improvement Concepts were grouped into six general templates (or widths) based on the location and space requirements for implementation. For example, Metrorail Extension or Light Rail Transit could be accommodated in the existing median, while additional lanes would be located outside the existing highway pavement. Interchange improvements would be in the same general area but possibly larger and the VRE Extension would be on a new rail alignment. The following table summarizes the quantitative impacts associated with the concepts. More detailed quantitative, as well as qualitative impacts, are presented in the Draft EIS.

Quantitative Summary of Potential Impacts from Build Improvement Concepts

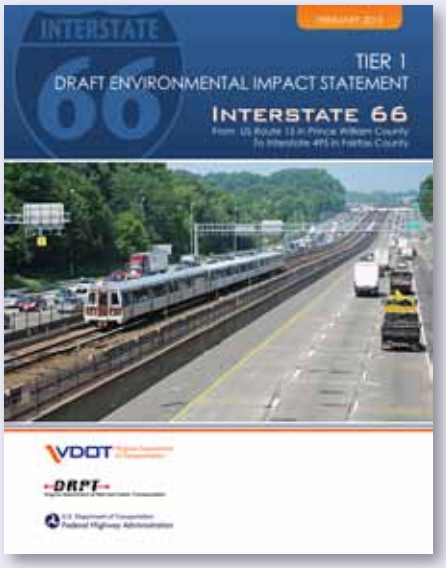
RESOURCE	SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS - QUANTITATIVE FOR BUILD IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS (BASED ON TEMPLATES)					
	MEDIAN	OUTSIDE MINIMUM	OUTSIDE MEDIUM	OUTSIDE MAXIMUM	INTERCHANGE	VRE
Approximate template width:	235 feet	270 feet	295 feet	355 feet	Existing plus 100 feet	100 feet
Social and Economic:						
Residential Relocations	0	1	4	36	14	1
Community Facility Impacts	2	10	10	10	2	4
Business Relocations	0	0	0	4	5	6
Relocations within Minority Census Tracts	0	0	1	14	5	0
Relocations within Low-Income Census Tracts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relocations within Limited English Proficiency Census Tracts	0	0	1	8	4	0
Farmlands *(acres)*	6.5	10.1	13.2	22.4	16.1	<0.1
Public Parks, Recreation Areas, and Open Space Easements *(acres)*	0.9	6.6	12.2	21.2	0.7	0
Historic Properties:						
Architectural Sites	3	3	3	3	1	1
Archaeological Sites	0	1	1	2	2	0
Potential Impacts to Section 4(f) Properties	21.2	32.6	43.5	62.9	41.5	19.5
Hazardous Material Sites	1	2	2	5	1	4
Wetlands *(acres)*	3.6	6.8	9.6	17.4	9.4	7.2
Streams (linear feet)	5,172	6,354	7,636	9,703	5,634	1,048
Floodplains *(100-yr floodplain, acres)*	22.0	28.3	33.2	45.4	15.4	13.5
Natural Heritage Sites *(acres)*	152.8	175.0	190.9	228.7	164.8	14.5

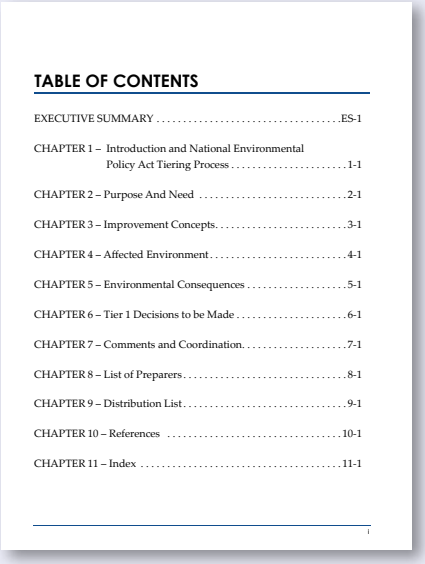
NEXT STEPS

VDOT, VDRPT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will take public comments on the Draft Tier 1 EIS, and address them as part of the NEPA process. The next step will be to present the findings of this study to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The CTB will consider a general location for studying future highway and transit improvements in Tier 2 and which of the improvement concepts to advance for the I-66 corridor. A Final Tier 1 EIS will then be prepared to document the recommended improvement concepts for potential FHWA approval in a Record of Decision (ROD).



TIER 1 DRAFT EIS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW





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An electronic copy of the TIER 1 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT - INTERSTATE 66 is available on the project website:

www.helpfix66.com

Printed copies of the document can be reviewed at:

- VDOT Northern Virginia District Office
- VDOT Prince William Residency Office
- Bull Run Regional Library
- Centreville Regional Library
- Oakton Library

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is an EIS being prepared? What is a Tier 1 EIS?

An EIS is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for all federal projects or actions that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment. The EIS serves as a tool for VDOT, VDRPT and FHWA to make an informed decision based on the improvement concept's ability to meet transportation needs, potential impacts to the environment, and input from the public and other government agencies. A Tier 1 involves the evaluation of broad level programs and issues in an initial Tier 1 analysis followed by more detailed evaluation of specific improvements in subsequent Tier 2 analyses.

Are tolls being considered for the I-66 study?

Yes, tolls are under consideration as part of the managed lanes improvement concept. If a decision is made to advance tolling it simply means that tolling stays on the table as a potential method of funding the project(s). The tolling analysis in this study is not intended to define toll rates, toll methods, identify revenue, determine if tolls will be implemented, or judge whether tolls are "good" or "bad." The analysis will determine the effect of tolls on the traffic associated with the improvement concepts and the compatibility of tolls with the improvement concepts.

How many people will be relocated?

That's a calculation to be answered in Tier 2. It depends on the decisions made in Tier 1 and will be identified in Tier 2 documents. An indication of the range of potential relocations is included in the Tier 1 EIS, and is intended as a means to compare the concepts.

There are problems outside of I-66 itself. Does this study consider problems on Routes 28, 29, or 50, or limitations with Metrorail capacity?

This study, including the travel demand forecasts, recognizes the future travel needs of both I-66 and the surrounding transportation network. However the improvement concepts considered in the Draft EIS are based on the specific purpose and needs of improving I-66.

How are you going to pay for these improvements?

That depends on the improvement concept(s) selected. The process does not require the identification of funding sources in order to approve a Tier 1 EIS. Once an improvement concept(s) is selected, it will be clearer what types of funds and which potential funding sources are needed. This accounts for differences in funding streams for highway versus transit projects.

How does this relate to the inside the Beltway Study?

The studies have been coordinated, but it's important to remember that the purpose of the two studies is very different. This study is being prepared pursuant to a legal and regulatory process (NEPA) and can result in approvals to advance projects to subsequent stages of project development. The study inside the beltway is a planning study not intended to result in regulatory approvals. Because of this, the processes, analyses and decisions are different. However, preliminary concepts from the studies have been recognized as compatible.

If we *don't* pick certain improvement concepts what does that mean for their future? Can they never be improved?

While this process can result in approvals to advance certain improvement concepts and ultimately projects, it does not preclude future study or implementation of those concepts not selected.

GET INVOLVED!

Your Input

Your input will help shape the future of the I-66 corridor. We encourage you to get involved in the study process by reviewing the information presented and by completing a comment form. Comments can be made in one of the following ways by April 8, 2013.

Comment Form:

Drop a completed comment form into the comment box before you leave tonight.

By Mail:

Stephen Walter
Parsons Transportation Group
3926 Pender Drive, Suite 100
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

By Email:

Submit written comments by email to:

I66Tier1EISComments@parsons.com

For additional information, contact VDOT Public Affairs at 800-367-7623

Study website: www.helpfix66.com

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 have questions or concerns about your civil rights in regards to this study or require special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at 800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711.

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