

ROUTE 460 Location Study



A NEWSLETTER TO INFORM, EDUCATE AND INVOLVE THE PUBLIC
SUMMER 2003 • ISSUE 1

INTRODUCTION

This is the first newsletter about the Virginia Department of Transportation's Route 460 Location Study. We hope that you find the information helpful.

VDOT is conducting the three-year study to consider future improvements to Route 460 between Interstate 295 in Prince George County and the Suffolk Bypass (US 58) in Suffolk. The Location Study is just beginning, and is currently



in the study effort called *Scoping*. Your input during the study process will be important as we identify transportation needs, begin developing a broad range of potential solutions to those needs and evaluate the impacts of those solutions. The study area map is illustrated on page 3.

There are many ways that you can provide comments to the study team, or get answers to your questions about the study. The best way to communicate with the team is to attend citizen meetings that will be held at key points throughout the study. The back of this newsletter lists contact numbers and options available.

Project History

The Route 460 Corridor was part of the national "TransAmerica Corridor" designated by Federal transportation legislation in 1991. In the late 1990's Virginia and West Virginia collaborated on a feasibility study investigating transportation improvements between Beckley, West Virginia and Virginia Beach, Virginia. This location study is the next step in the evaluation of potential improvements. Improvements to the corridor are included in the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plans for both the Tri-Cities and Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Additionally, this study is included in the Commonwealth's Six-Year Transportation Plan. The Location Study results in the following information and decision milestones:

- > Identification of alternatives
- > An engineering assessment of alternatives
- > Documentation of environmental impacts
- > Selection of an alternative by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
- > Completion of the NEPA process (described in the following discussions)

Preliminary Purpose and Need for the Project

During the study process, the *Purpose and Need* for the project is developed and documented as part of a *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*. The purpose and need identifies the transportation problems or other needs the project is intended to address and is updated throughout the project. It serves as the basis for the development and comparison of potential solutions. The study team has identified preliminary purpose and need elements based upon the findings of the TransAmerica Feasibility Study (May 1999) and legislative initiatives provided by the Virginia General Assembly. The Virginia Transportation Act 2000 identified the 460 corridor from Petersburg to Chesapeake as a high priority transportation need. In February 2001, the Virginia General Assembly appointed a Communications Committee to monitor the progress of Route 460 improvements. Preliminary elements of the Purpose and Need are listed below:

- > Improve mobility within the corridor
- > Increase capacity to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes
- > Improve safety
- > Support freight movements throughout the corridor
- > Improve hurricane and emergency evacuation



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You are invited to Public Scoping Meetings

Please attend one of the Route 460 Public Scoping Meetings. The meetings will be held at two locations within the study area. Each meeting will be conducted in the same manner and provide the same information. The meeting will be set up in an "Open-forum" style so that you can come and go freely.

Wednesday, August 6th
Windsor High School
24 Church Street
Windsor, VA

Monday, August 18th
Bland Meeting Room, Samuel Bland Building (Police Administration Building)
6600 Courthouse Road
Prince George, VA

*(Intersection of Routes 106 & 616;
Courthouse Road and Laurel Spring Road)*

Meeting times are 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

ROUTE 460 SCHEDULE

Notice to Proceed	Spring 2003
Scoping/Public Meetings	Summer 2003
Purpose and Need	Summer 2003
Alternatives Development	Summer 2003 – Summer 2004
Citizen Participation Meetings	Early 2004
DEIS	Fall 2004
Public Hearings	Early 2005
FEIS and Comment Response	Spring 2005 – Early 2006
ROD	Spring 2006

How the Location Study Process Works

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is an important component of the Route 460 Location Study process. Some components of this process include:

- > Scoping
- > Purpose and Need
- > Alternatives Development
- > Evaluation of Impacts

Scoping provides an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed improvements (see Public Scoping Meeting information to the left). Scoping helps identify the sensitive resources in the study area. It also serves as the basis for identifying and selecting alternatives. The *Purpose and Need* provides the justification for the project. *Alternatives Development* consists of two sub-components, Preliminary Alternatives and Candidate Build Alternatives (CBA). Preliminary Alternatives will be developed and presented at Citizen Information Meetings next year. A wide range of preliminary alternatives will be presented for review and comment. "No Build" and "Transportation Systems Management" options will also be identified. After the Citizen Information Meetings, the Preliminary Alternatives are reduced by applying screening criteria. Public and agency input on screening criteria are solicited prior to and during next year's Citizen Information Meeting. What remains after the screening process are CBA's. After the CBA's have been identified, the study team will conduct an *Evaluation of Impacts*. The resources analyzed include but are not limited to:

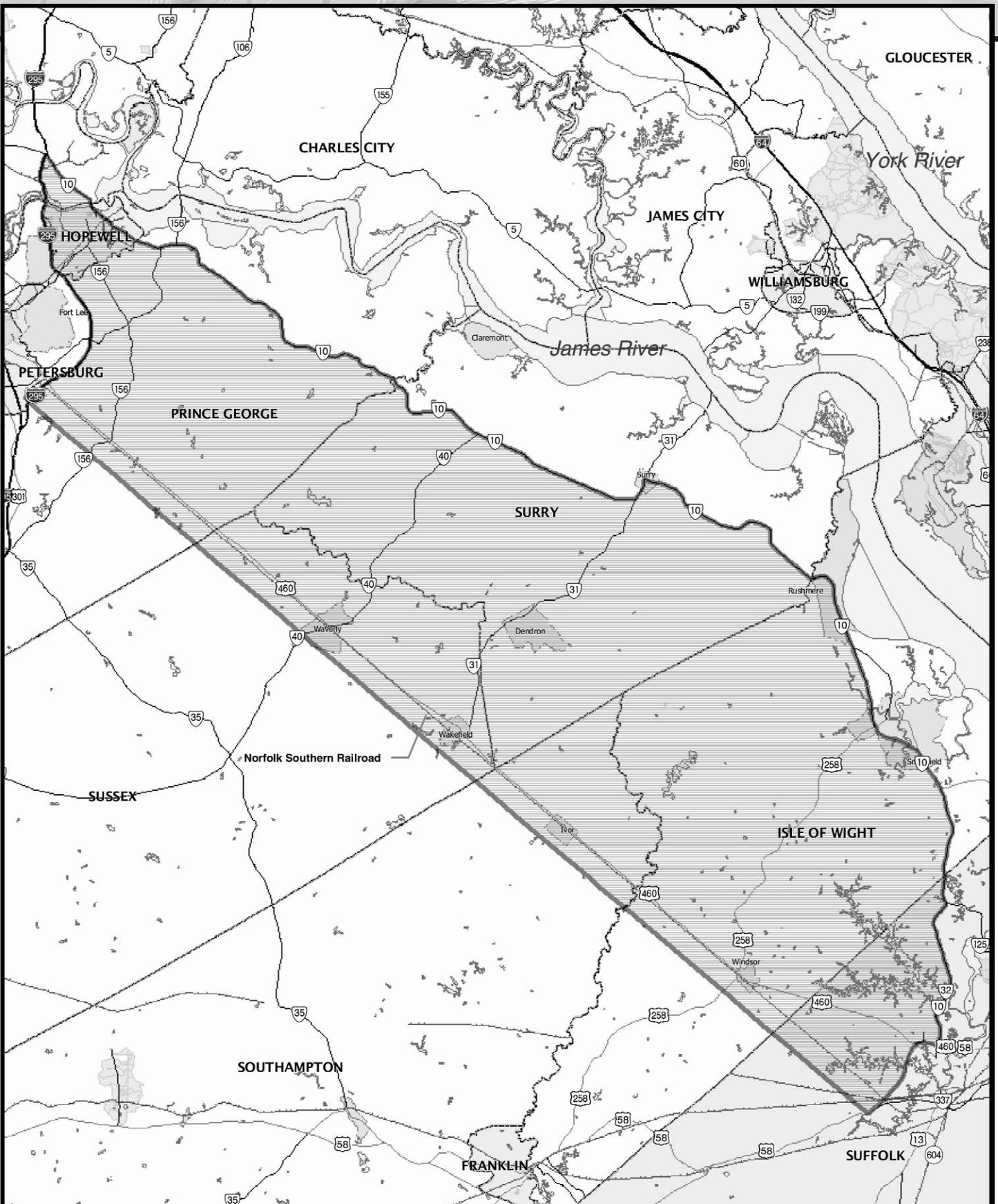
- > Air Quality
- > Historic Properties
- > Hazardous Materials
- > Indirect Impacts
- > Wetlands and streams
- > Threatened and endangered species
- > Noise
- > Park, Recreation and Open Space
- > Social and Economic Impacts

After the resource impacts have been analyzed for each alternative they are documented in the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*.

The DEIS is then made available to the public for review and comment and *Location Public Hearings* are conducted. Once the public hearings are held and the comments are received on the DEIS, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will select an alternative.

After CTB action, the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)* is prepared. The FEIS documents the action of the CTB, responds to substantive comments received on the DEIS and is presented to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). FHWA reviews the final document and issues a *Record of Decision (ROD)*. The ROD is a public document that reflects FHWA's decision, the rationale behind that decision and commitment to monitoring and mitigation.





Route 460 Location Study
Study Area Map

 Study Area



July 2003

ROUTE 460 Location Study

Mr. Chris Collins
Virginia Department of Transportation
1201 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Inside:

- **August 2003 Public Meetings**
- **Study Area Map**
- **Study Schedule**
- **Rt. 460 History**
- **And more**

Route 460 Location Study **Q & A**

Q *Are bike paths or transit being considered in this study?*

A Multiple modes and locations are being considered. It is difficult, at this early stage, to determine which alternatives will best address the transportation problem. While several non-highway alternatives may be part of the analysis, not all will address the larger freight, economic and regional linkage issues to be addressed in the study.

Q *How long will it take to conduct the Study?*

A The Study is scheduled to occur over a three-year period. The study was started in Spring of 2003.

Q *When will anything approved in this Study actually be built?*

A Before any improvements can be made, the environmental process has to be completed, engineering design and construction documents must be prepared and the right of way acquired. As described above the environmental process will take a minimum of three years. Depending upon the location, the type of alternative selected and construction sequencing strategies, the design and right of way acquisition could take five to ten years, assuming funding availability.



Do you have additional Questions or Comments about the Route 460 Location Study?

- **Call VDOT:** 804-225-4249
- **Email VDOT:** cg.collins@virginiadot.org
- **Write to VDOT:** Mr. Chris Collins
Virginia Department of Transportation
1201 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
- **Fax:** 804-786-7401
- **Visit the Study Web site for more information:**
www.virginiadot.org/projects/460.asp