

5. PROJECT COMPATIBILITY

5.1. BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY, REGION AND STATE

As detailed extensively in Tab 4, there are numerous benefits to local communities, Southeast Virginia and the Commonwealth, as a whole, of an improved Route 460. The VCP proposal, in keeping with the endorsed alignment of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, will benefit local and regional economic development, the safety and security of Southeast Virginia, and the personal safety of all users of the roadway.

As outlined in Tab 4, government entities at all levels have endorsed Route 460 improvements - through bills and resolutions as well as long range transportation and economic development plans - as critical to the future success of Southeast Virginia. In addition to the state and federal mandates mentioned above, the VCP proposal is in line with the recommendations of the VTRANS 2025 Multimodal Plan. Among the VTRANS 2025 recommendations supported by the Virginia Corridor Partners Plan are:

- **Recommendation 1** - Substantially raise state investment in transportation in order to maintain the existing system in good, safe condition and expand capacity to meet growing needs. User fees...and greater use of tolling and General Funds must be considered in order to address investment needs and increase system capacity.
- **Recommendation 10** - Projects that connect travel modes will receive increased consideration in modal plans and funding decisions.

In addition to these recommendations, improvements to Route 460 and coordination with activities occurring along the Norfolk Southern rail corridor running parallel to the route offers many other multimodal opportunities that are in line with state plans. Many local governments and regional authorities, including the Virginia Port Authority, have long supported rail in the corridor. The potential for the development of intermodal industrial parks and other similar facilities helps to support both economic development and transportation goals.

5.2. BENEFITS TO VIRGINIA'S ECONOMIC CONDITION

As outlined extensively in Tab 4, Route 460 is an economic lifeline to every city, county and town in its path. Most of the affected localities consider improvements to Route 460 crucial to their ability to remain economically competitive in attracting companies and industries as well as retaining existing private sector investment. Most localities have included such improvements either in long term economic development or transportation plans. If the improvements suggested by the VCP proposal are not completed, the resulting gridlock could prove extremely detrimental to the region's economy.

In addition to local economic development projects, Route 460 improvements are critical to the future of a bedrock industry in Southeast Virginia - the port at Hampton Roads.

The new APM Terminal and the VPA Fourth Terminal at Craney Island in Portsmouth, VA will significantly increase the capacity of the Port of Virginia - a positive development for the economy of the region as well as the Commonwealth. That positive impact will manifest itself in part through a significant increase in the number of new and expanded Warehouse and Distribution Centers throughout the Route 460 footprint.

As was discussed in Tab 4, truck usage percentages for Route 460 are already significantly higher than national averages for similar rural roads and truck traffic is forecasted to grow substantially due to expansions at the Port of Virginia.

The container volume growth of The Port of Virginia has doubled over the last ten years with the past three years recording double digit numbers. Current container volume of the port is approximately two million units. This is expected to exceed four million by 2015 with a projected volume of six million containers by 2025. This translates into the need for approximately twenty to sixty million square feet of warehouse space in the Commonwealth of Virginia and contiguous states. This is projected to result in an increase of almost 7,000 daily trips for commercial truck traffic by 2030 for the 255 port working days each year.

The prospect for improved road and rail access to The Port of Virginia found in the proposal is essential to the acquisition of new port business. This, in turn, will translate into new business investment in the Commonwealth and the mid-Atlantic region generally.

The local economic benefits to an improved Route 460 are detailed extensively in Tab 4. Local economic benefits include improved travel time savings for industries, improved safety for commercial drivers as well as greater potential for economic development investments in the localities lining the corridor. In addition, the Route 460 Relocation Study determined that improvements to Route 460 would result in "the potential for bypassed communities to create more attractive and sustainable downtown districts than would be possible if truck traffic remained on the existing route."

5.3. LOCAL LAND USE AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Coordination with local land use and comprehensive plans is well documented in Tab 4. In addition, VCP will continue to reach out to local officials through our comprehensive communications plan to ensure that local concerns continue to be heard.

From the state standpoint, the DEIS process ensured that the proposal is in line with state and local transportation plans.

The DEIS was developed by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration and it analyzes a number of scenarios relative to Route 460 including three possible roadway locations or Candidate Build Alternatives, a No-Build Alternative and a Transportation System Management ("TSM") Alternative. The DEIS has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration for public availability. Based upon the results of the DEIS, the Commonwealth Transportation Board adopted a resolution on November 17, 2005 approving the location of the Route 460 Improvements.

Prior to the adoption of that Resolution, Location Public Hearings were held in the Counties of Isle of Wight and Prince George for the purpose of considering the location of the proposed improvements. As previously mentioned, several thousand residents along the corridor attended public hearings, submitted written comments, attended scoping meetings, and participated in citizen information sessions to provide input or learn more about the proposed improvements to Route 460. Again, local government support for an improved Route 460 project has also been consistently strong (see Tab 4 for list of supporting localities).

Support for the project can also be found among state legislators as well as members of the U.S. Congress who have worked to secure federal earmarks for the project.

As outlined in Tab 4, Route 460 improvements will have a positive impact on safety, congestion and capacity. According to the Route 460 Location Study the percentage of truck traffic on Route 460 ranges from 18 to 34 percent currently and would grow under the No Build scenario to 30 to 37 percent versus a national average for rural arterial highways of 10 percent.

The new location of 460 would address driver safety concerns that result from the high truck traffic, the high travel speeds and unprotected turning movements under the existing conditions. These conditions would improve for local emergency response vehicles, postal trucks and school buses as well.