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Public Hearing

Interstate 73 Henry County Alternative Environmental Assessment

State Project: 0073-962-F01, PE-101; UPC No. 16596

Federal Project: NH-962-2 (004)

Henry County

March 29, 2011 4 - 6 p.m.

Laurel Park Middle School

280 Laurel Park Ave., Martinsville, VA 24112

Welcome

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying the environmental consequences of the Henry County Alternative (HCA), an alternative alignment to the Adopted Location Corridor (ALC) approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for Interstate 73 (I-73). The HCA is being considered at the request of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and is located east of the City of Martinsville within Henry County.

Purpose of the Hearing

The purpose of this hearing is to share with you the findings of the environmental assessment, to receive your comments on and answer questions about those findings, and to receive your recommendations for a decision. The displays placed around the room provide information on the purpose and need for the HCA, describe the proposed alternative, and summarize the environmental impacts of the alternative. Representatives of VDOT and its consultant are available to answer your questions and listen to your thoughts and concerns.

Background

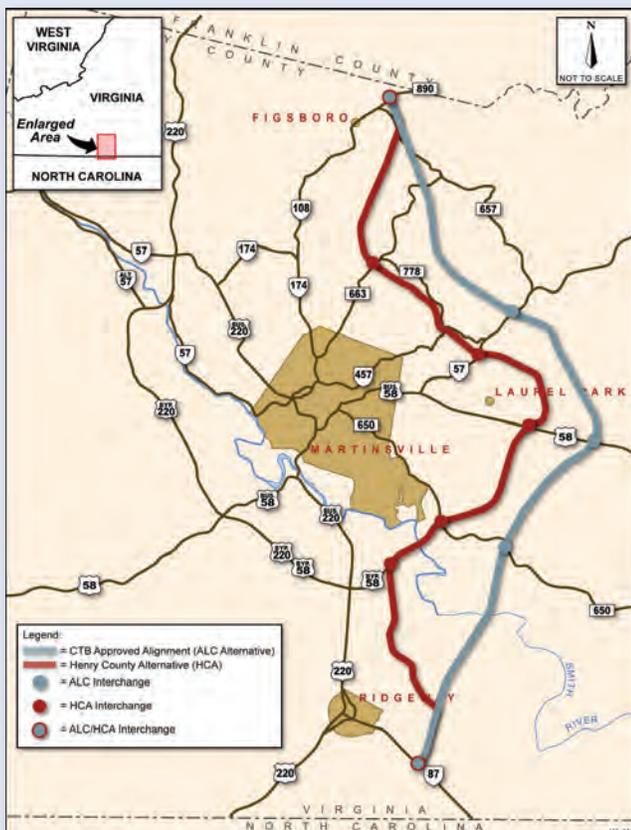


Figure 1. Project Location

In November 2006, the CTB approved the ALC alignment for I-73, followed by FHWA approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and a Record of Decision (ROD) in March 2007. The purpose and need for I-73 included improving the safe movement of people and goods in the U.S. Route 220 corridor, enhancing system linkage and intermodal connections, and providing for the economic growth, economic vitality, and maintenance of existing economic competitiveness in southwest Virginia.

The HCA alignment currently under consideration was presented to VDOT as an alternative to the I-73 ALC by Henry County to improve access to existing and developing industrial areas and to enhance economic development in Martinsville and Henry County.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) is being used as a tool to support a decision on Henry County's request and determine whether a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is warranted in accordance with 23 CFR 771.130(c).

Interstate 73 Henry County Alternative

The I-73 Henry County Alternative extends 21.3 miles from Route 890/108 to Route 87. As shown in Figure 1 on the preceding page, it breaks from the ALC at a point near Figsboro, and from there, the HCA heads in a more southerly direction towards Martinsville and closer to Henry County's Patriot Centre Industrial Park. It is in this general area where an additional interchange is proposed at Route 663 (Barrows Mill Road) to serve local economic development. From there, the alignment generally parallels the ALC approximately one-and-a-half miles closer to Martinsville. In the vicinity of Laurel Park, the HCA ties into the existing U.S. Route 58 Bypass and

U.S. Route 58 interchange and follows the existing U.S. Route 58 Bypass south-southwest for approximately five miles toward the Martinsville Speedway. Improvements would be required to bring this existing facility up to interstate standards, and an additional interchange is proposed at Clover Road to serve the speedway and Martinsville Industrial Park area. The route then heads south-southeast approximately four miles before tying back into the ALC at Flanigan Branch Road, two miles east of the Town of Ridgeway. The interchanges that are proposed as part of the Henry County Alternative are listed in the following table.

Table 1. HCA Interchanges

HCA Interchange	Proposed Configuration
Route 890/108 north of Figsboro	Cloverleaf
Route 663 Barrows Mill Road/Beaver Creek Drive intersection area near Patriot Centre Industrial Park & Patrick Henry Community College	To Be Determined
Route 57 near Route 457 intersection	Diamond
U.S. Route 58 in the vicinity of Laurel Park	Diamond
U.S. Route 58 at Route 650 intersection near Smith River Sports Complex	Diamond
U.S. Route 58 and Clover Road near Martinsville Speedway	To Be Determined
Route 87 north of the Route 750 intersection	Diamond

*Each new interchange location as well as interchange type is tentative at this point and based on preliminary information that is subject to change as the design is refined and the traffic analyses are updated.

The I-73 HCA would be built to meet interstate (freeway) design standards with a four-lane divided highway typical section (two 12-foot lanes in each direction), as shown in the figure below.

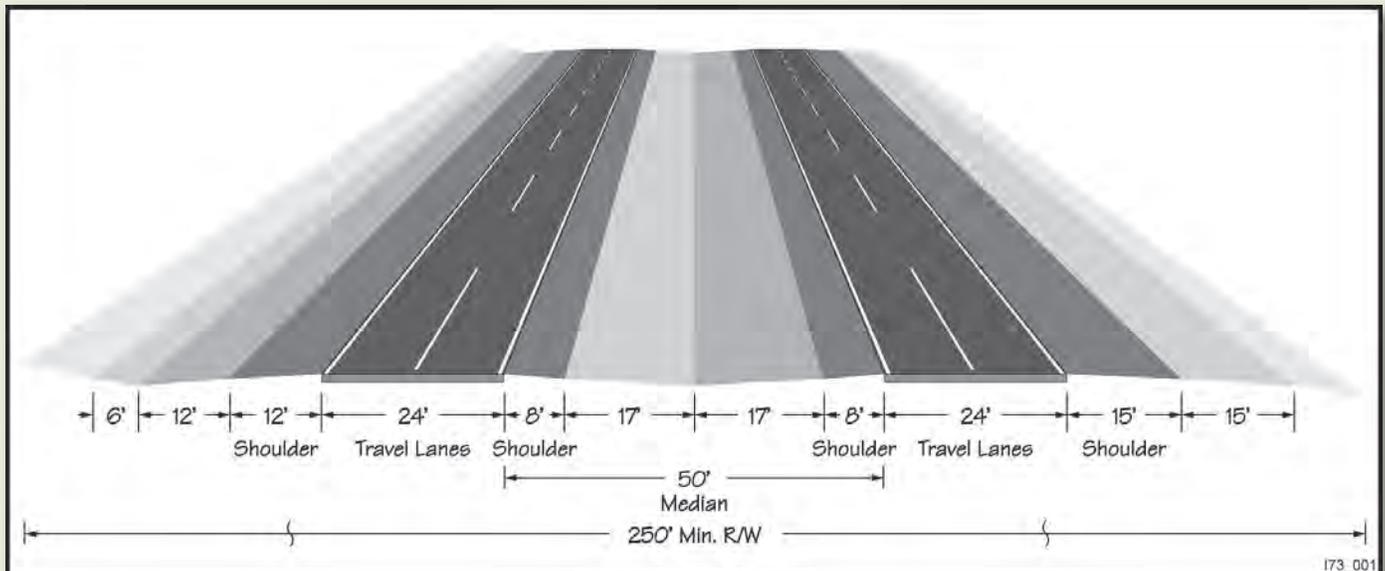


Figure 2. Rural Four-Lane Typical Cross Section

Summary of Environmental Impacts

The table below highlights some of the environmental issues associated with the proposed construction of the HCA. Please see the Environmental Assessment for a full listing of impacts that were considered and additional findings from the environmental evaluation.

Relocations/ Right of Way Acquisition	The HCA would have the potential to impact 178 homes and 8 farms; therefore, relocations may be required. One business and 2 churches are also located within the 600-foot-wide corridor and may be impacted by the project.
Agriculture and Prime Farmland	Approximately 8 farms may be displaced and 123 acres of prime farmland exist in the HCA corridor.
Soils	The HCA corridor crosses approximately 992 acres of moderately to highly corrosive (acid) soil types that could be of some concern to water quality, vegetation establishment, and degradation of road structures if those soil types are exposed.
Parks and Recreational Resources	Fisher Farm Park is the largest park in Henry County, located south of the City of Martinsville and the proposed HCA interchange at U.S. Route 58 and Clover Road near Martinsville Speedway. The original HCA alignment does not impact the Park; however, a proposed realignment to avoid two costly crossings of the Norfolk Southern Railway would use approximately 27 acres of this public park. Richard P. Gravely Nature Preserve is located within a mile of the alignment; however, no adverse effects are expected to this recreational area.
Hazardous Materials Sites	The Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) database search identified six potential hazardous materials sites proximate to or within the HCA corridor.
Waters of the U.S., Including Wetlands	The HCA crosses approximately 6.2 acres of wetlands and 4.4 miles of streams.
Water Quality	Stormwater management facilities would be incorporated into the HCA to minimize long-term effects of the project on water quality.
Public Water Supplies	The HCA would be located closer to the Martinsville Reservoir and Reservoir 6, as well as existing public water and sewer infrastructure as the alignment is located closer to the City of Martinsville and the surrounding developed areas.
Floodplains	Approximately 124 acres of floodplain would be crossed by the HCA. No appreciable changes to 100-year floodplain elevations are expected.
Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat and Wildlife	Impacts to terrestrial and aquatic wildlife would include the elimination of habitat within the limits of construction. Potential impacts to aquatic wildlife may also result from sediment deposition due to stormwater runoff from the construction area. Stream and habitat losses would be compensated through mitigation measures to be developed in consultation with the permitting agencies. Additionally, temporary and permanent stormwater management and erosion and sediment controls would be implemented as part of the project to minimize damages to aquatic habitats.
Forest	Approximately 70 percent of the 600-foot-wide HCA corridor consists of forest cover - deciduous, evergreen, and mixed.
Air Quality	<p>The HCA has been assessed for potential air quality impacts and conformity with applicable air quality regulations and requirements. The project lies in an area that is currently in attainment of all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). As such, regional air quality conformity requirements do not apply. The project does not include or directly affect any roadway whose design year average daily traffic volume, skew angle, or level of service would exceed the threshold criteria specified in the Agreement between FHWA and VDOT (February 27, 2009) for streamlining the project-level air quality analysis process for carbon monoxide (CO). A project level CO analysis is therefore not required.</p> <p>The HCA would meet all applicable air quality analysis and conformity requirements. As such, it would not cause or contribute to a violation or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS. Additionally, best available information indicates that, nationwide, regional levels of mobile source air toxics are expected to decrease in the future due to fleet turnover and the continued implementation of more stringent emission and fuel quality regulations. Nevertheless, it is possible that some localized areas may show an increase in emissions and ambient levels of these pollutants due to locally increased traffic levels associated with the project.</p>
Noise	Noise monitoring was completed at nine sites in the HCA corridor to represent existing noise levels in the study area. For the design year (2035) build condition, the location of the 66-dBA noise contour line was determined for the purpose of characterizing the noise environment along the corridor. Noise impact is predicted to occur in areas of Noise Sensitive Areas (NSA) 2 (Barrows Mill Rd to Route 57) and 6 (Clover Rd to Route 87). In Fisher Farm Park, the areas of frequent human use (i.e., the ball fields, picnic areas, and playground) are beyond the 66-dBA contour line; therefore, noise impact is not anticipated. Additional studies will be necessary during the final design phase when more detailed design information is available.

Environmental Review

An Environmental Assessment was prepared and approved for public availability by FHWA for this project. Copies of the document are available for review here tonight, or it can be reviewed on VDOT's web site at <http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/I73/I73overview.asp>.

Right of Way and Relocation Assistance

Information about right of way purchase is provided in VDOT's brochure entitled "Right of Way and Utilities: A Guide for Property Owners and Tenants." Copies of this brochure are available here from VDOT's Right of Way representatives. After this meeting, information and questions regarding right of way should be directed to:

Lori Snider
Salem District Right of Way Manager
Virginia Department of Transportation
731 Harrison Avenue
Salem, VA 24153
1-800-367-7623

What's Next?

The study team will review and evaluate the comments you provide to us tonight and during the comment period. The comments, along with other information developed during the study, will then be forwarded to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for consideration in reaching a decision on the HCA. Following the public availability period, the Environmental Assessment (EA) will be revised as appropriate to reflect changes in the proposed action or mitigation measures resulting from comments received on the EA or at the public hearing. It will then be submitted to FHWA, along with a copy of the public hearing transcript, the recommendation of the preferred alternative, and a request that a final decision be made by FHWA.

Any further project development efforts, such as design, right of way acquisition, and construction, will depend on availability of funding and are not scheduled at this time.

Civil Rights

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 need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Salem District Office, Civil Rights Division, at the above address or telephone (1-800-367-7623) or TTY/TDD 711.

Get Involved

Please review the maps and displays and share your thoughts by using the comment sheet provided with this brochure. You may leave your comments in the box provided at tonight's meeting. You may also record your comments orally at the designated recording station.

If you are not ready to provide your comments tonight, you may submit them by **April 8, 2011** to the following address, which is also preprinted on the back of the comment sheet:

Angel Deem
Environmental Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1221 E. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

You also can submit comments by email to Angel Deem at:

Angel.Deem@VDOT.Virginia.gov

If you need additional information following tonight's meeting, please call Ms. Deem at 804-371-6756.