

Project Information

Project Name:	Add Truck Climbing Lane, I-81 MM 32.2 - 33.5 Northbound	Federal Project#:	
Project Number:	0081-095-829, C501, P101, R201	Project Type:	Construction
UPC:	116156	Charge Number:	UPC-116156 Act. 6XX
Route Number:	81	Route Type:	Interstate
Project Limit--From:	MM 32.197	To:	MM 33.458
Additional Project Description:	The project will consist of the addition of a truck climbing lane to I-81 northbound from approximately MM 32.2 to MM 33.5 in Washington County. The project is approximately 1.3 miles in length. A retaining wall, RW-2 is required between the interstate and Faris Drive to avoid adjacent roadway impacts.		
Purpose And Need:	The purpose of the project is to improve safety and traffic flow on the acceleration lane and main travel lanes of northbound I-81.		
District:	City/County:	Residency:	
Bristol	Washington	Lebanon	

Date CE level document approved by VA Division FHWA:

FHWA Contact:

Project in STIP: Yes **In Long Range Plan?** N/A-Outside MPO Area

CE Category 23 CFR 771.117: c26

Description of Category: Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (including parking, weaving, turning, and climbing lanes), if the action meets the constraints in paragraph (e) of this section.

Logical Termini and Independent Utility: Yes

Next Phase of Funding Available? Yes

Comments: The proposed auxiliary truck climbing lane is included in the STIP Grouping for Construction: Safety/ITS/Operational improvements; therefore, it meets the fiscal constraint requirements. The project consists of the addition of one (1) 12-foot auxiliary truck climbing lane on the northbound lane of Interstate 81 from MM 32.2 to MM 33.5. The addition occurs within existing VDOT right of way with the exception of approximately 0.28 acres of permanent drainage easements and temporary construction easements.

Typical Section: The proposed typical section for I-81 northbound truck climbing lane (TCL) at MM 32.2 - 33.5 consists of one 12 foot lane with a 12 foot paved shoulder in areas with no guardrail and an additional 4 feet where guardrail is utilized. Also, there is an extended portion of a concrete lined ditch that carries an unnamed tributary to Hutton Creek, which will be cleaned out. The acceleration lane ties into two existing 12 foot travel lanes on northbound Interstate 81.

Structures: There are no structures on the project.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Are Waters of the U.S. present? Yes

Linear Feet of Impact: Approximately 75

Federal Threatened or Endangered Species:

Spruce-fir Moss Spider (*Microhexura montivaga*)-Federal:FE-No Effect
Gray Bat (*Myotis grisescens*)-Federal:FE-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-Federal:FE-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus*)-Federal:FE-No Effect
Spotfin Chub (*Erimonax monachus*)-Federal:FT-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Northern Long-Eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-Federal:FT-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Virginia Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*)-Federal:FE-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect

100 Year Floodplain: None

Regulatory Floodway Zone: Not Present

Public Water Supplies: Not Present

Are any tidal waters/wetlands present? No

Wetlands: None

Tidal Acres of Impact: 0

Tidal Wetland Type: None

Are any Non-Tidal Wetlands Present? No

Non Tidal Acres of Impact: 0

Non Tidal Wetland Type: None

Total Wetland Acres of Impacts: 0

Are water quality permits required? Yes

Natural Resource Comments: Section 7 impacts were coordinated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on 01/24/2021 by the District Natural Resources staff. Project construction was determined as not likely to adversely affect federally listed species or designated critical habitat. To protect federally listed bat species, a time of year restriction for tree removal is required from April 15 to September 15 of any year. Sediment will be removed from a concrete lined ditch that conveys an unnamed tributary to Hutton Creek. The project will be covered by a US Corps of Engineers Regional Permit 11/NW18, as determined by District Natural Resources staff on 02/05/2021. All applicable E&S control measures will be observed.

AGRICULTURAL/OPEN SPACE

Open Space Easements: Not Present

Agricultural/Forestal Districts: Not Present

Source: Project Definition Form

Agricultural/Open Space Comments: A reviewed of the CEDAR dataset for VOF and Agricultural/Forestal Districts indicates there are no Open Space Easements or Agricultural/Forestal Districts within or adjacent to the existing VDOT right of way from MM 32.2 - 33.5 northbound I-81.

FARMLAND

NRCS Form CPA-106 Attached? No

NRCS Form CPA-106 not attached because:

Entire project in area not zoned agriculture.

Alternatives Analysis Required? No

Source: VDOT right of way plans dated 07/01/2020.

Farmland Comments: There are no impacts to farmlands associated with the project.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive Species in the project area? Unknown

There is potential for invasive species to become established along the limits of disturbance of the project during and following construction. Section 244.02(c) of VDOT's Road and Bridge Specifications (2016) includes provisions intended to control noxious weeds (which includes non-native and invasive species).

While rights-of-ways are at risk from invasive species colonization from adjacent properties, implementing the above provisions would reduce or minimize potential for introduction, proliferation, and spread of invasive species. Additionally, the implementation of best management practices for erosion/sediment control and abatement of pollutant loading would minimize indirect impacts to adjoining communities and habitat by reducing excess nutrient loads that could encourage invasive species proliferation.

Invasive Species Comments: VDOT will comply with 244.02 (c) of VDOT's Road and Bridge Specifications (2020) that includes provisions intended to control noxious weeds.

AIR QUALITY

Air Quality Status and Regional Conformity

Jurisdiction Description: This project lies in an area that is currently in attainment with all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). In accordance with 40 CFR Part 93, transportation conformity requirements are not applicable to the project since the project is not located in a nonattainment or maintenance area for any transportation-related criteria pollutant (i.e., ozone, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon monoxide). The following VDEQ air pollution regulations must be adhered to during the construction of this project: 9 VAC 5-130, Open Burning restrictions; and 9 VAC 5-50, Article 1, Fugitive Dust precautions.

Exempt Status

The project is of the type that would be exempt from conformity, as outlined in section 93.126 of the transportation conformity regulation. Therefore, CO, PM, and MSAT analyses are not required for either conformity purposes (per EPA regulation) or NEPA (per FHWA guidance, and VDOT programmatic agreements with FHWA and corresponding protocols specified in the VDOT Resource Document.)

This project is exempt under 40 CFR 93.126- Truck climbing lanes

NOISE

Noise Scoping Decision: Type I - Noise study required

Barriers Under Consideration? No

Noise Comments: A preliminary traffic noise study was completed for the project. The analysis was completed in accordance with the State Noise Abatement Policy that was developed to implement the requirements of 23 CFR Part 772, Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise (July 13, 2011), FHWA's Highway Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Policy and Guidance (December 2011), and the noise related requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Ten residences are predicted to be impacted by traffic noise under the design year (2045) build condition due to build year noise levels approaching or exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). Because design year (2045) build noise impacts have been identified in the noise study area, noise abatement is considered warranted-four noise barriers were evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness. None of the four noise barriers evaluated are considered feasible and reasonable, therefore noise abatement is not recommended for this project at this time.

Once the project design has been finalized, a Final Design Noise Analysis will be completed to reevaluate the noise levels using the final roadway plans, updated traffic data, and land use information. As such, noise barriers that are found to be not warranted during the preliminary noise analysis may be found to be warranted during the final design noise analysis.

RIGHT OF WAY AND RELOCATIONS

Residential Relocations: No

Commercial Relocations: No

Non-Profit Relocations: No

Right of Way required? Yes

Fee Simple: 0

Temporary Easement: 0.12

Permanent Easement: 0.16

Utility Easement:

Amount of Right of Way Acreage: 0.28

Septic Systems or Wells: Not Present

Hazardous Materials: Not Present

Source: VDOT right of way data sheet dated 07/01/2020 and District Hazardous Materials Manager's comments dated 09/20/2019.

ROW and Relocations Comments: There are no relocations associated with the I-81 northbound acceleration lane extension. The VDOT Project Manager's comments dated 09/23/2020 indicate there are no relocations anticipated and minimal right of way will be affected, approximately 0.28 acre. The District Hazardous Materials Manager advised on 09/20/2019 that no impacts are anticipated related to hazardous materials.

CUMULATIVE AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

Present or reasonably foreseeable future projects (highway and non-highway) in the area: Yes

Impact same resources as the proposed highway project (i.e. cumulative impacts): No

Indirect (Secondary) impacts: No

Source: VDOT six year plan

Cumulative and Indirect Impacts Comments: Impacts from present or reasonably foreseeable projects are expected to be minimal. Many proposed highway projects are within existing right of way and have been determined to be PCE or Minimal CE level impacts.

As this project requires only a minimal amount of right of way and has been determined to have no significant environmental impacts, it is not likely to affect or add to impacts from current or future developments. Improvements to traffic flow and alleviation of congestion provided by the additional lane would improve air quality and noise levels. Also, improved safety is primarily a benefit of the improvements as traffic is projected to increase on I-81. Secondary impacts are unlikely to result from the improvements as they are within limited access and would not open up previously undeveloped areas or provide improved access.

In the context of impacts from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, the intensity of the additional impacts of the project are relatively small and should not cause significant cumulative impacts.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Substantial Controversy on Environmental Grounds: No

Source: VDOT Project Manager and VDOT Document Staff.

Public Hearing: Yes **Type of Hearing:** Design Public Hearing

Other Public Involvement Activities: No

Public Involvement Comments: A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for mid-April 2021.

COORDINATION

State Agencies:

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Department of Historic Resources
Department of Conservation and Recreation
DEQ - Waste Division
Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Federal Agencies:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Local Entity:

Other Coordination Entities:

This project meets the criteria for a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.4 and 23 CFR 771.117 and will not result in significant impacts to the human or natural environment.

Documentation of FHWA Review

Project Name: **Add Truck Climbing Lane, I-81 MM 32.2 – 33.5 Northbound**


State Project Number: **0081-095-829, C501, P101, R201**

UPC: **116156**

Based on the preliminary environmental impact information compiled by VDOT, FHWA approved this project as a “minimal” Categorical Exclusion on **10/23/2020**. Based on my review of the Categorical Exclusion documentation submitted by VDOT, I find this information acceptable and sufficient as supporting documentation to support the original “minimal” Categorical Exclusion determination.

Kevin Jones

FHWA- Virginia Division



2/22/21