

Project Information

Project Name:	Add Truck Climbing Lane, I-81 MM 34.1 - 32.9 Southbound	Federal Project#:	
Project Number:	0081-095-095, C501, P101, R201	Project Type:	Construction
UPC:	116172	Charge Number:	UPC-116172, Act. 6XX
Route Number:	81	Route Type:	Interstate
Project Limit--From:	MM 32.880	To:	MM 34.128
Additional Project Description:	VDOT will construct a truck climbing lane on I-81 southbound from MM 32.9 to MM 34.1 in Washington County. The project will require the acquisition of minor amounts of additional right-of-way.		
Purpose And Need:	The purpose of the project is to improve safety and traffic flow on the southbound acceleration lane and main travel lanes on 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 truck climbing lane is included in the STIP Grouping for Construction: Safety/ITS/Operational improvements; therefore, it meets the fiscal constraint requirements. The project construction will consist of the addition of one 12 ft. truck climbing lane on the southbound lane of Interstate 81 from Mile Marker 32.9 to Mile Marker 34.1.

Typical Section: The typical section for the proposed acceleration lane consists of one 12 ft. lane with a 10 ft. paved shoulder in areas with no guardrail and an additional 4 ft. where guardrail is utilized. The acceleration lane ties into two existing 12 ft. travel lanes on southbound Interstate 81.

Structures: There are no structures on the project.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Minority/Low Income Populations: Present with no impact **Disproportionate Impacts to Minority/Low Income Populations:** No

Source: VDOT right of way report and USA Census 2010

Existing or Planned Public Recreational Facilities: Not Present

Community Services: Not Present

Consistent with Local Land Use: Yes

Source: 2015 Washington County Comprehensive Plan

Existing or Planned Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities: Not Present

Source: 2015 Washington County Comprehensive Plan

Socio-Economic Comments: The low income/minority population percentages slightly exceed the county low income/minority population percentage average. There are no relocations, no displacements, no disruption of community, or disruption of emergency services. No minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be disproportionately and adversely impacted by the proposed project. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of E.O. 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23, no further EJ analysis is required.

As the roadway is limited access, there are no existing or planned public recreational facilities, bicycle or pedestrian facilities, or community services present.

The 2015 Washington County Comprehensive Plan lists I-81 widening improvements for this section of the corridor.

SECTION 4(f) and SECTION 6(f)

Use of 4(f) Property: No

Source: Bristol Environmental staff and Western Regional Cultural Resources staff

6(f) Conversion: No **Acres of Conversion:**

4(f) Comments: There are no 4(f) properties impacted by the I-81 southbound truck climbing lane based on a CEDAR Integrator review of 4(f) resources and an associated plan review by District Environmental Document staff on 02/04/2021.

6(f) Comments: There are no 6(f) properties in the project area based on a CEDAR Integrator review of 6(f) properties and an associated plan review by District Environmental Document staff on 02/04/2021.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Section 106 Effect Determination: NO EFFECT

Name of Historic Property:

DHR Concurrence date: None

A Section 106 effect determination of No Historic Properties Present or Affected has been concluded pursuant to Stipulation II.A of the 2016 Federal Programmatic Agreement among FHWA, USACE, TVA, VA SHPO, and VDOT.

Stip. II.A Determination Date: 10/09/2020

MOA/PA Execution Date: None

Cultural Resource Comments: A "No Effect" determination was made by the Western Regional Cultural Resources staff on 10/09/2020.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Are Waters of the U.S. present? Yes

Linear Feet of Impact: Approximately 125

Federal Threatened or Endangered Species:

Spotfin Chub (*Erimonax monachus*)-Federal:FT-No Effect
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
Shiny Pigtoe (*Fusconaia cor*)-Federal:FE-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus*)-Federal:FE-No Effect
Little-winged Pearlymussel (*Pegias fabula*)-Federal:FE-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Fluted Kidneyshell (*Ptychobranchus subtentum*)-Federal:C-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Tan Riffleshell (*Epioblasma florentina walkeri*)-Federal:FE-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Slabside Pearlymussel (*Lexingtonia dolabelliformis*)-Federal:C-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: Not Present

Regulatory Floodway Zone: Not Present

Public Water Supplies: Not Present

Are any tidal waters/wetlands present? No

Wetlands: Not Present

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. Impacts to WOUS will be authorized under a Regional Permit 11/NW18 as determined by the District Natural Resources staff on 02/16/2021. 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: There are no Agricultural/Forestal Districts or Open Space Easements within the project area. The project affects only minor amounts (approximately 0.3 acre total) of additional right of way and temporary easements. District Environmental staff review of the CEDAR Integrator VOF and Agricultural/Forestal Districts layers, on 02/04/2021, showed none of these resources in the project area.

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: GIS and plan review on 02/04/2021 by District Environmental document staff.

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- Adding truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized area.

NOISE

Noise Scoping Decision: Type I - Noise study required

Barriers Under Consideration?

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.

Twelve residences are predicted to be impacted by design year (2045) traffic noise levels that will approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). No impacts are due to substantial increase of noise levels from the existing year to the build year. Because design year (2045) build noise impacts were identified, noise abatement is considered warranted - four noise barriers were evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness. None of the four noise barriers evaluated were determined both feasible and reasonable; therefore, noise abatement is not recommended for the 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: 0.1

Temporary Easement: 0.2

Permanent Easement: 0

Utility Easement:

Amount of Right of Way Acreage: 0.3

Septic Systems or Wells: Not Present

Hazardous Materials: Not Present

Source: VDOT plans dated 07/01/2020 and District Hazardous Materials Manager comments dated 09/24/2019.

ROW and Relocations Comments: The project does not impact any homes or businesses. The VDOT Project Manager advised there is minor fee simple right of way totaling about 0.1 acre and minor temporary easements, totaling approximately 0.2 acre. No detours are required; only temporary single lane closures are anticipated.

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.

As this project 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 auxiliary lane addition would improve air quality and noise levels. Also, improved safety is primarily a benefit of the improvement as traffic is projected to increase on I-81. Secondary impacts are unlikely to result from the project as it is 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 comments dated 09/23/2020

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

Other Public Involvement Activities: No

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

COORDINATION

State Agencies:

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

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 at MM 34.1 - 32.9


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

UPC: 116172

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



2/23/21