

Project Information

Project Name:	Add Truck Climbing Lane, I-81 NB at MM 39.7 to MM 40.8	Federal Project#:	
Project Number:	0081-086-830, C501, P101, R201	Project Type:	Construction
UPC:	116157	Charge Number:	UPC-116157, Act. 6XX
Route Number:	81	Route Type:	Interstate
Project Limit--From:	MM 39.178	To:	41.047
Additional Project Description:	The project consists of the addition of a truck climbing lane on I-81 northbound from approximately MM 39.7 to MM 40.8.		
Purpose And Need:	The purpose of the project is to improve safety and traffic flow on the northbound acceleration lane and main travel lanes on I-81.		
District:	City/County:	Residency:	
Bristol	Smyth	Wytheville	

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 I-81 northbound auxiliary lane construction from approximately MM 39.7 to MM 40.8 located in Smyth County, Virginia, is included in the STIP Grouping for Construction: Safety/ITS/Operational Improvements; therefore, it meets the fiscal constraint requirements. The project construction will add one auxiliary truck climbing lane to the existing two lanes on I-81 northbound for approximately 5600 ft.

Typical Section: The typical section for the proposed auxiliary lane consists of one 12 ft. lane with a 10 ft. paved shoulder in areas with no guardrail and an additional 6 ft. where guardrail is utilized. The truck climbing lane ties into two existing 12 ft. travel lanes on northbound Interstate 81.

Structures: There are no structures on the project.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Are Waters of the U.S. present? No

Linear Feet of Impact: 0

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
Tri-colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*)-Federal:SOC-May affect, Not Likely to adversely Effect
Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus lucifugus*)-Federal:SOC-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? N/A

Non Tidal Acres of Impact: 0

Non Tidal Wetland Type: None

Total Wetland Acres of Impacts: 0

Are water quality permits required? No

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. There are no water quality permits required for the project per the determination, dated 01/19/2021, made by the District Natural Resources staff. 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 review 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 along the project alignment.

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 review dated 02/11/21

Farmland Comments: There are no impacts to farmlands associated with the project as it occurs within existing VDOT right of way.

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 outside the urbanized area

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 noise related requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Four 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 - one noise barrier was evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness. The noise barrier evaluated was determined feasible but not 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? No

Septic Systems or Wells: Not Present

Hazardous Materials: Not Present

Source: Plans dated 02/03/2021, Project Manager 09/24/2020, and District Hazardous Materials Manager 08/04/2020.

ROW and Relocations Comments: There are no relocations associated with the I-81 northbound truck climbing lane addition. The project will not require additional right of way and no hazardous materials impacts are expected.

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 is within existing 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 project 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 within existing right of way and limited access, it 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: Bristol District Document staff and Bristol District Project Manager

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

Other Public Involvement Activities: No

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

COORDINATION

State Agencies:

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

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 NB at MM 39.7 to MM 40.8**

State Project Number: **0081-086-830, C501, P101, R201**

UPC: **116157**

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



2/22/21

FHWA- Virginia Division