

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Interim Report on the Status
of the Proposed Improvements to
U.S. Route 460 between Hampton
Roads and Richmond-Petersburg
Metropolitan Area**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 9

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2005**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

PHILIP A. SHUCET
COMMISSIONER

January 7, 2005

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Members of the General Assembly

Dear Governor Warner and General Assembly Members:

In 2003 the General Assembly passed HB 2543 which requires that VDOT develop a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to solicit proposals for improvements to U.S. Route 460 between Hampton Roads and the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area under the Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA) of 1995. The bill requested VDOT to submit a report on the progress in completing the draft EIS and in soliciting proposals prior to the start of the 2005 General Assembly Session.

I am pleased to transmit a report on the overview and project status of the Route 460 Location Study. The study began in March 2003 and is scheduled for completion in March 2006.

The attached report provides information on the study process, project schedule, and tasks completed by the Study Team. The ongoing efforts for completion of the draft EIS include resource identification, impact assessment, and consistency with federal requirements. Location public hearings and preparation of the Final EIS will follow.

Within 90 days of the Commonwealth Transportation Board's approval of the Draft EIS, VDOT will solicit proposals under the PPTA of 1995. A final report on this study will be provided before the start of the 2006 General Assembly Session.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Shucet", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip A. Shucet

Attachment

cc: Whittington W. Clement

Executive Summary

During its 2003 session, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 2543, enacted as Chapter 953 of the 2003 Acts of Assembly. The Act requires the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to solicit proposals for improvements to U.S. Route 460 between Hampton Roads and the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area under the Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA) of 1995. It also requires that VDOT submit “an executive summary and report of its progress in completing the DEIS [Draft Environmental Impact Statement] and in soliciting the proposals as required above”. This report provides an overview and project status of the ongoing Route 460 Location Study.

The study began in March 2003 and is scheduled for completion in March 2006. The Study Team has completed several important tasks, including project scoping, traffic studies, and identification of problems and potential solutions. Ongoing tasks include resource identification, impact assessment, and completion of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), consistent with federal requirements. Location public hearings and preparation of the Final EIS will follow.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

VDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is conducting a three-year location study to address transportation problems along Route 460 between Interstate 295 in Prince George County and the Suffolk Bypass (US 58) in Suffolk. This report describes progress made in completing the study and in soliciting PPTA proposals for the project, as required by Chapter 953 of the 2003 Acts of Assembly.

1.2 STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Key players in the study include:

- *Virginia Department Of Transportation*

VDOT is conducting the location study. A consultant has been hired to assist with technical studies.

- *Federal Highway Administration*

Draft and Final EISs are being prepared to support permit applications and to qualify the project for federal funding. The Federal Highway Administration is sponsoring this study and serves as the lead federal agency. This agency has approval authority for the EIS and must approve any alternative to address problems along the corridor.

- *Route 460 Communication Committee*

The Communications Committee was established by the 2001 General Assembly through passage of House Joint Resolution 684. The Committee acts as a link among the citizens and businesses of the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area, the Port of Hampton Roads, General Assembly members, and VDOT. Committee members include:

The Honorable John Cosgrove, House of Delegates
The Honorable J. Paul Councill, House of Delegates
The Honorable Johnny S. Joannou, House of Delegates
The Honorable S. Chris Jones, House of Delegates
The Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III, Senate of Virginia
The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, House of Delegates
The Honorable Yvonne B. Miller, Senate of Virginia
The Honorable Frederick M. Quayle, Senate of Virginia
The Honorable Kenneth Stolle, Senate of Virginia
The Honorable Leo C. Wardrup, House of Delegates

Ex-Officio members

Mr. Robert Bray, Virginia Port Authority
Mr. Robert Burnley, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Arthur Collins, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Mr. Dennis Morris, Crater Planning District Commission
Mr. Philip Shucet, Virginia Department of Transportation

- *Crater & Hampton Roads Planning District Commissions*

The Communications Committee met twice in Year 2004. Its next meeting is scheduled for January 13th in Richmond.

1.3 THE LOCATION STUDY PROCESS

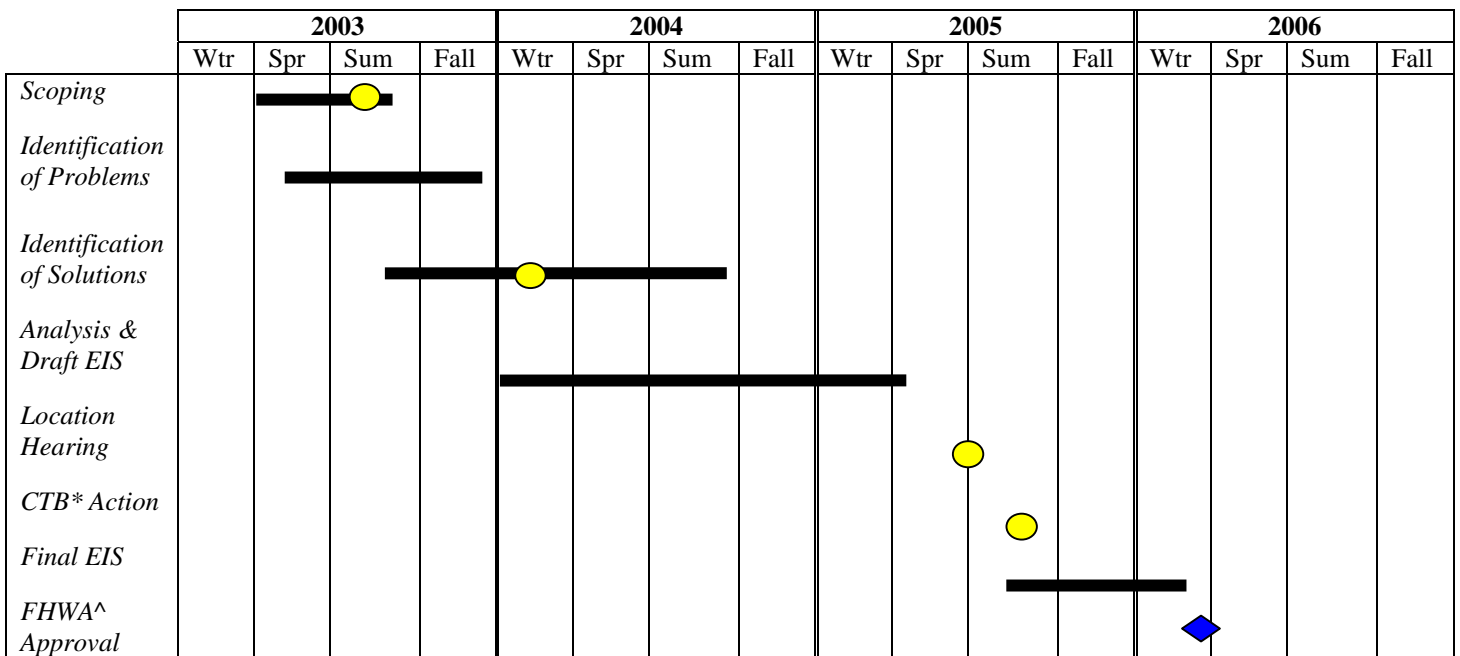
The Route 460 Location Study process includes the following components:

- *Scoping*: Determines the range of issues to be addressed in the study.
- *Identification of Problems*: Documents the transportation problems or needs that the project will address.
- *Identification of Solutions*. Alternative approaches to address the problems.
- *Analysis of Proposed Solutions*
- *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*: Documents results of the study. Upon completion, the Draft EIS is circulated for public and agency review.
- *Location Public Hearing*
- *Commonwealth Transportation Board Action*: Selection of the preferred solution.
- *Final Environmental Impact Statement*: Documents the Commonwealth Transportation Board action, responds to comments received on the Draft EIS and from the public hearing, and is presented to the Federal Highway Administration for its final decision.
- *Federal Highway Administration Approval*: The agency prepares a Record of Decision that documents its decision, the rationale behind that decision, and commitments to monitoring and mitigation.

1.4 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Exhibit 1 provides the project schedule. Completion of the study is scheduled for March 2006.

Exhibit 1: Project Schedule



● Public Meetings ◆ Record of Decision

*Commonwealth Transportation Board ^Federal Highway Administration

1.5 TASKS COMPLETED

The Study Team has completed these tasks:

- Project Scoping
- Traffic Studies and Identification of Problems

Transportation needs identified include: roadway deficiencies; safety; increasing freight shipments; travel delay; hurricane evacuation capability; and strategic military connectivity.

- Identification of Solutions

Solutions to the problems listed above were developed and then evaluated through consideration of public comments, input from stakeholders, and technical review. This process led to the elimination of some alternatives and retention of others for more detailed study in the DEIS. Alternatives currently being studied include three Candidate Build Alternatives (see Exhibit 2). Alternatives 1 and 3 are on new location while Alternative 2 involves major upgrades to existing Route 460 with bypasses around communities. The Draft EIS also will include a Low-Build Alternative, which would provide a lower-cost option to improve safety and traffic flow, and a No-Build Alternative.

1.6 ONGOING AND FUTURE TASKS

The Study Team is currently:

- Completing its analysis of proposed solutions; and
- Preparing the Draft EIS.

In addition to the impact assessment, the Draft EIS will include estimated capital and right of way costs as well as the results of a toll feasibility analysis. After Federal Highway Administration approval of the Draft EIS, the following will occur:

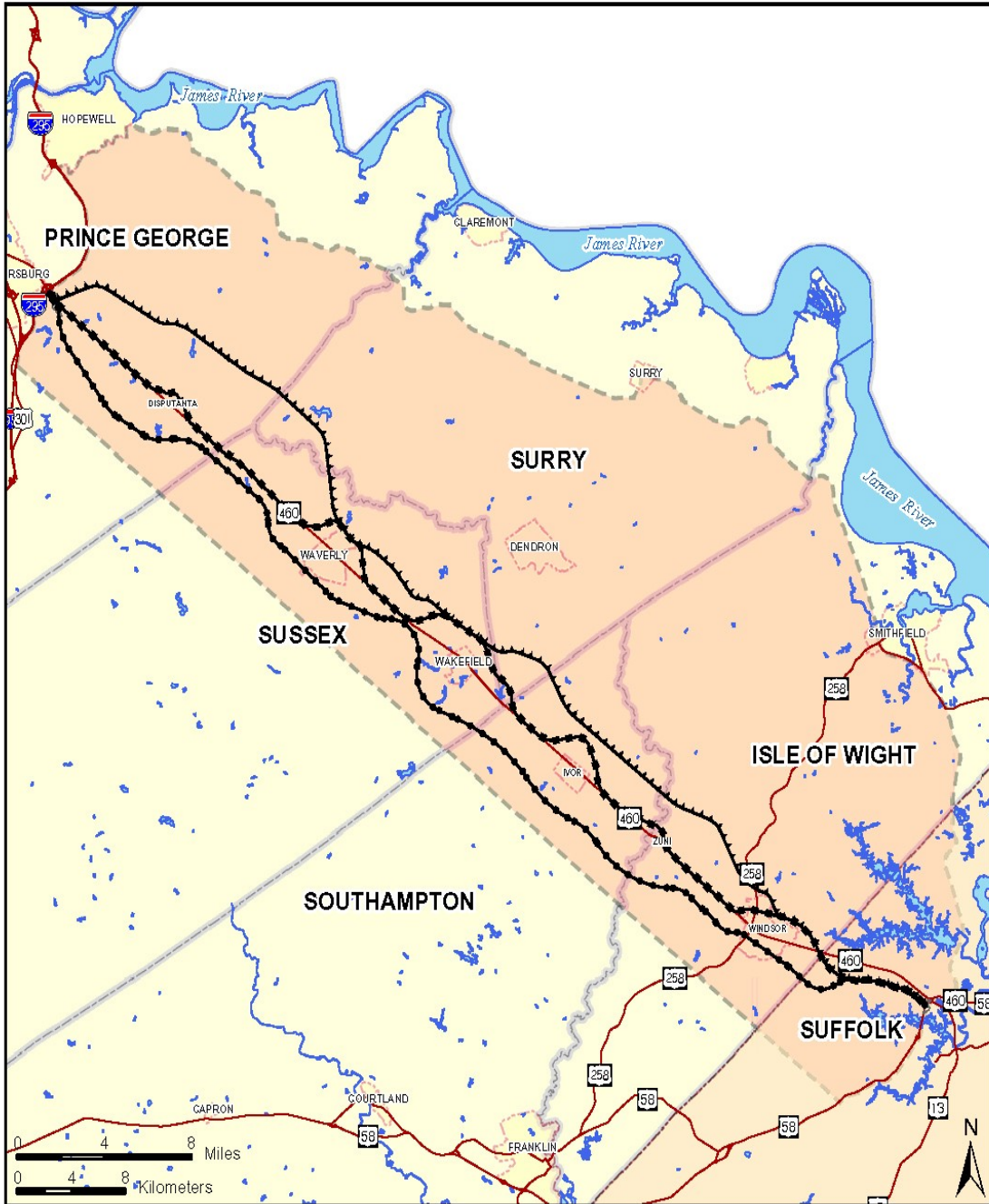
- Location Public Hearings
- Commonwealth Transportation Board Action
- Final EIS Preparation
- Federal Highway Administration Approval

1.7 PPTA REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Chapter 953 of the 2003 Acts of Assembly states:

Within 90 days of the Commonwealth Transportation Board's approval of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the U.S. Route 460 Corridor and related projects between Hampton Roads and the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) shall solicit proposals for improvements to U.S. Route 460 between Hampton Roads and the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area under the Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995 (the PPTA).

If the outcome of the location study process results in a “build” alternative, VDOT will issue a Request for Information within 90 days after the Commonwealth Transportation Board makes a location decision on the project. At a minimum, the Request of Information will:



-  CBA 1
-  CBA 2
-  CBA 3
-  Study Area
-  Existing Primary Highways



EXHIBIT 2
CANDIDATE BUILD ALTERNATIVES

- inform potential private partners that VDOT is considering procurement under the PPTA;
- include a general description of the scope and key issues relevant to the project;
- seek Statements of Interest from private entities that are qualified and experienced in many facets of highway work; and
- provide information and conditions for a Statement of Interest.

Two current requests, issued in November 2004 for a similar purpose, are available on VDOT's website: <http://www.virginiadot.org/business/rfi.asp>.