

**REPORT OF THE**

**INTERSTATE 81 COMMITTEE  
(CHAPTER 837, 2019)**

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



**HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 16**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
2019**





COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
RICHMOND

TERRY L. AUSTIN  
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BUCHANAN, VIRGINIA 24066  
  
NINETEENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
TRANSPORTATION  
APPROPRIATIONS  
COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS  
RULES

December 12, 2019

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
Members of the General Assembly

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

Chapters 837 and 846 of the 2019 Acts of Assembly (2019 Acts of Assembly) established Chapter 36 of Title 33.2 of the Code of Virginia, creating the Interstate 81 (I-81) Improvement Program and Fund and directed the Commonwealth Transportation Board (Board) to establish an I-81 Committee (Committee). The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the Board regarding the development of the I-81 Program (Program) and updates to the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan (Plan). The Board established the Committee May 15, 2019.

The 2019 Acts of Assembly further directed the Committee to review the Plan, which was adopted by the Board on December 5, 2018, as it relates to funding options and prioritization of projects, and conduct regional meetings to seek input from the public and stakeholder organizations on those options. The Committee shall meet four times a year and rotate among Planning Districts 3,4,5,6, and 7. The Committee held meetings in Lexington and Natural Bridge, and received public comment at both meetings. The Committee plans to convene two additional meetings no later than July 1, 2020.

The I-81 Corridor Improvement Fund (Fund) became effective July 1 this year. Sources of revenues for the Fund include a newly-established truck registration fee as well as an I-81 corridor regional fuels tax, and statewide diesel and road taxes. It is estimated that revenues dedicated to the fund will total \$103 million in fiscal year 2020 and will increase each subsequent year reaching an estimated \$163 million in fiscal year 2025. These funds will support the \$2 billion improvement program. Moneys in the Fund shall only be used for capital, operating, and other improvement costs identified in the Program.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has provided a briefing to the Committee outlining the prioritization process for operational and capital improvements, and the draft schedule for delivery of the I-81 Program. The current schedule consists of 16 projects included in the FY2020-2025 SYIP as adopted by the Board in June and an additional 31 projects amended into the FY2020-2025 SYIP in October of 2019. The



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briefing further provided VDOT's approach to prioritization which is a "Smart Scale-like" scoring that considers readiness, constructability, risks and agency input.

The Program assumes a Pay-Go financing scenario with an additional 17 projects to be added in FY2028/29, which will require 21 years for Program completion. Should the General Assembly approve bonding, the remaining 17 projects could be accelerated and Program completion could be achieved in 12 years.

The Committee has reviewed the adopted I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan as well, the I-81 Corridor Improvement Program Plan Progress Report which will be acted upon by the Board on December 11, 2019. The Committee supports VDOT's approach to project prioritization recommendations and seeking bond financing to deliver the Program sooner. Formal action was taken by the Committee recommending approval to the Board. The vote was unanimous on both items.

The Committee remains dedicated to addressing the many needs along the I-81 Corridor and looks forward to continuing to bolster this critical work that will improve the quality of life of those most impacted as well as support the economic vitality of the commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Austin".

Delegate Terry Austin  
Chairman, I-81 Committee



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Members of the I-81 Committee

Delegate Chris Collins, District 29

Delegate Chris Hurst, District 12

Delegate Tony Wilt, District 26

Delegate Terry Austin, District 19

Senator Bill Carrico, Vice Chair, District 40

Senator John Edwards, District 21

Senator Mark Obenshain, District 26

Chair Frank Friedman, Central Shenandoah PDC

Chair Michael Harvey, New River Valley PDC

Chair Dennis Morris, Northern Shenandoah PDC

Chair Tim Reeves, Mount Rogers PDC

Councilman Bill Bestpitch, Roanoke Valley/Alleghany PDC

Dixon Whitworth, Staunton District CTB Member

Jerry Stinson, Bristol District CTB Member

Ray Smoot, Jr., Salem District CTB Member

Ex-Officio

Jennifer Mitchell, Director Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Steve Brich, Commissioner Virginia Department of Transportation

