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**LOCATION PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY**  
**Hubbard Country Club–Southgate Connector**  
**TOWN OF BLACKSBURG**

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Project: U000-150-108, PE-101, RW-201, C-501, B-603

PPMS: 11290

Fr: South Main Street

To: Route 460 Bypass

Length: 2.30 miles

**PROJECT PURPOSE** – To construct a connector from the intersection of Hubbard Street and Airport Road to existing Southgate Drive at Tech Center Drive. This connection would be on new alignment.

**ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED -**

**NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE** – assumes that, except for already-approved projects, the existing roadway network in the project area would remain unchanged. No new roadways or operational improvements would be made to address the current traffic problems under this proposed project.

**BUILD ALTERNATIVE** – provides a build alternative for a new roadway from the intersection of Hubbard Street and Airport Road to existing Southgate Drive at Tech Center Drive. As a part of the Build Alternative exiting Southgate Drive will be improved from Tech Center Drive to Route 460 Bypass, Southgate Drive at the Route 460 Bypass will provide an a grade separated interchange with ramps and bridges over the Route 460 Bypass. The intersections at Duck Pond Drive and Tech Center Drive will be improved and existing Southgate Drive will be cul-de-saced prior to entering the campus from the east.

**TYPICAL SECTION for BUILD ALTERNATIVE –**

Between the intersection of Hubbard Street and Airport Road - Two 12-foot travel lanes, curb and gutter, a 4-foot on street bike lane in each direction and a 10-foot asphalt strip paralleling the roadway on one side located 3-feet behind the curb for pedestrian traffic.

Transition prior to extended Country Club Drive - Four 12-foot travel lanes with a 16-foot raised grass median, curb and gutter, 4-foot on street bike lanes and a 10-foot asphalt strip paralleling the roadway on one side located 3-foot behind the curb.

**TRAFFIC** - The existing section of Southgate Drive is a major collector carrying 10,060 vehicles per day (based on 1995 counts). In the design year 2022, the average daily traffic is projected at 17,900 vehicles per day.

**PUBLIC HEARING –**

TYPE - Location

DATE – June 25, 2001

TIME - 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

PLACE – Blacksburg Recreation Center in the Town of Blacksburg

**ATTENDANCE** – 146 citizens attended

**RIGHT OF WAY** – No families, businesses or non-profit organizations will be displaced as a result of this project.

**ESTIMATED COST** –

Preliminary Engineering	\$ 3.3 million
Right of Way and Utility	\$ 12.4 million
Construction	\$ 18.7 million
Total projected cost	\$ 34.3 million

**ADVERTISEMENT**- early 2005

**COMMENTS RECEIVED** – 167 written and 10 oral comments were received. A petition with a total of 108 signatures was also received.

1. 118 comments expressing concern over the project's impact to the Huckleberry Trail. Currently, no accommodation for the trail is shown on the plans.  
*Consideration will be given to providing for a separation between the proposed roadway and the Huckleberry Trail in the design phase of the project. This will include a review to determine the feasibility of installing a pedestrian tunnel or pedestrian bridge.*
2. 35 comments were received requesting that the alignment be shifted closer to the airport. (This request is repeated in a petition signed by 108 citizens – primarily from the residential area known as Airport Acres.)  
*In the design phase of the project the designer will review the alternatives outlined in the petition to determine if the requested shift in alignment is feasible.*
3. 23 comments suggested that screening between the proposed roadway and the adjacent residential areas be provided.  
*Screening will be evaluated and considered in the design phase of the project.*
4. 6 comments noted a concern about access to the German Club facilities.  
*Access will be provided to the German Club facility as required by Department standards.*
5. 13 comments reflected a concern that the project would adversely impact the Beeks Elementary School.

*The impacts of traffic on the school will be re-evaluated and any safety concerns will be addressed in the design phase of the project.*

6. 3 comments suggested that only the interchange with Route 460 Bypass was needed. *Based on current traffic building the interchange alone will not meet the long-term needs of the traveling public.*
7. 9 comments were received questioning why the project was needed at all when the problem only exists during 6 or 7 football games each year. *A traffic analysis prepared by the Department's Transportation Planning Division indicates that a four-lane facility is needed in order to provide an adequate level of service in the design year of 2022.*
8. 33 comments were received regarding the cul-de-sac on Southgate Drive. The comments were mixed with some for and some against. Those for were in favor of eliminating thru traffic while those against favored the continued access – including emergency access. *The reduction in cut-through traffic through the neighborhoods outweighs the minor inconvenience caused by having to travel on Country Club Drive to the Southgate Connector.*
9. One individual suggested the elimination of the airport runway, replacing it with a parking lot. *This suggestion cannot be considered as a part of this project but would need to be submitted to the Aviation Administration for a ruling.*
10. 25 comments expressed concerns about the extension of Country Club Drive to the Southgate Connector. These concerns are related to those regarding the impact to the Huckleberry Trail and the concern about increased traffic near the elementary school. *The connection is needed to route traffic from South Main Street directly to Southgate as opposed to the indirect routing through the residential neighborhoods that exists today.*
11. Requests to keep the proposed roadway away from Smithfield Plantation were received from three individuals. *The proposed interchange configurations will be evaluated during the design phase of the project and consideration will be given to minimize the impact to the Smithfield Plantation.*
12. 10 individuals requested stoplights be provided at the new intersections. *Traffic signal studies will be performed to determine which intersections require signalization during the design phase of the project.*

13. 2 individuals suggested adding a new road connecting Ellett Road to South Main.  
***Development of a new road connecting Ellett Road to South Main Street is outside the scope of the Southgate Connector project and will be forwarded to the Town of Blacksburg for their planning purposes.***
14. One individual requested that Ramble Road be widened.  
***Widening Ramble Road is an issue that's outside the scope of the Southgate Connector project and has been forwarded to the Town for their planning purposes.***
15. One individual requested that a new roadway be added from Southgate to Warm Hearth.  
***Adding a new roadway from Southgate to Warm Hearth is outside the scope of the Southgate Connector project.***
16. Two comments were received noting the impact to the Turf Grass facility – indicating that the facility will need to be relocated off campus requiring the bussing of students.  
***The Designer will review the alignment and attempt to reduce the impact to the Turf Grass facility in the design phase of the project.***
17. A memo was forwarded to the Department from Virginia Tech. It outlines the concerns of the University Architect.
  - A. The possible extension of the road to the west needs to be considered in context of the likely acquisition of the Heth property by the university and future land uses that will result.
  - B. The determination of the most appropriate alignment for the Huckleberry to Hethwood Trail connection needs to be studied and coordinated as a part of the design of this project.  
***Comments A and B: the extension of the road is outside the scope of this project. We do agree however, that Virginia Tech should be considering the impact that a possible extension will have on their future land uses.***
  - C. Southgate Interchange Issues:
    1. The College of Agriculture and Life Science and the College of Natural Resources have considerable Investments in research activities in the vicinity of the interchange. The most notable of these include transgenic swine research, forestry and wildlife research (in Center Woods) and Dairy Science Center pasture. The ultimate build-out of the interchange as drawn appears to have significant impact to these areas. A more compact configuration will lessen the impact.
    2. The ramp from the 460 By-Pass west bound lanes to Southgate Drive will do little to slow traffic as it enters Southgate and there appears to be only about 800' from the end of the ramp taper to the intersection with Duck Pond Drive. Since Duck Pond Drive will be signalized, allowing traffic to enter Southgate at a relatively high rate of speed presents a safety concern. (As a general rule, we would prefer to see the roads entering campus be configured to promote slower traffic speeds).
    3. Some environmental impact issues include the following:

- The lower stormwater pond (dry pond) will be partially displaced by the ramps in the northeast quadrant of the interchange. Presumably this will result in a relocation of the impoundment area onto existing agricultural teaching and research land.
  - The encroachment of the interchange into Center Woods has considerable negative impact on this stable deciduous forest.
  - The interchange will require additional stormwater management facilities.
  - The interchange as drawn will displace the cross-country trail.
  - The larger the area of the interchange, the more concern there is regarding impact to archeological sites. Related to this is the impact on the view-shed from the Smithfield Plantation.
  - If a more compact diamond or modified-diamond/cloverleaf interchange can be employed, the flyover can be eliminated and the interchange design will be simpler. Such an interchange would be less costly.
  - The overpass bridge should celebrate advanced structural engineering while incorporating some of the traditional campus stonework.
- D. The campus map on Southgate will need to be rebuilt at another location if the ramp configuration is built as currently drawn. That relocation needs to be included in this project.
- E. The landscape character of the Southgate approach to campus via this road will need careful consideration. It should be more like a parkway in character. This will affect many design details including the character of an integrated sign system, fencing, plant materials, configuration of medians, landscaping of views such as into the Vet Med service yard, roadway lighting, pole-mounted traffic signals, etc.
- F. The access to the Dairy Science Center will need to be relocated and the construction of the new access needs to be included in this project.
- G. The impact to the Visitor Center house needs careful consideration. Relocation of the Visitor Center access needs to be included in this project.
- H. There are several significant mature trees (especially four or five ancient white oaks), which must be saved. The most practical approach to this will be to adjust the alignment of the proposed road to avoid these trees. The use of retaining walls/tree wells (With stone veneer) may facilitate this approach.
- I. The alignment and profile of the road needs to be carefully coordinated with plans to expand the Stadium Parking Lot.
- J. There is a great need to create safe pedestrian access from the campus north of Southgate Drive to the existing and proposed recreation fields south of Southgate Drive. A pedestrian overpass is preferred but would have to terminate near to grade on both ends to be successful (without extensive ramps). If this is not feasible, a pedestrian underpass will need to be located and designed so that it does not have the character of a tunnel. There are safety and functional concerns which dictate that the length of an underpass be as short as possible, that it does not have the appearance of "tunneling under the road", that ample day lighting and artificial nighttime lighting is provided, and that the appearance is inviting.
- K. There will need to be further discussion regarding if and at which location Southgate Drive is terminated in a cul-de-sac.

- L. There needs to be study of the alignment of a bike trail paralleling the road and its coordination with existing campus bike trails. From a campus planning perspective it will be preferable to have this trail on the north side of the road in the area of Southgate Drive near the main campus (to the west of Spring Road) and on the south side of the new road to the east of Spring Road. Also, from a campus planning perspective, providing bike trails is a higher priority than providing bike lanes.
- M. The appropriate point of access to the German Club needs to be considered with the road design. This will, be especially critical if Southgate Drive ends in a cul-de-sac.
- N. Likewise access to the Turf Grass Research Center will need to be considered with the road design.
- O. The Huckleberry Trail will need to be maintained and will require a grade-separated crossing of the road. It may be preferable to cross the Hubbard/Southgate road to the north of the Country Club extension in order to avoid a grade separated crossing of Country Club Extension. The comments in Item J. generally apply to this crossing as well. An angled crossing will be much better for the bike trail if an underpass is utilized.
- P. The alignment and profile of the road will need to be coordinated with the recreation field expansion project planned to be under construction later this year.
- Q. The alignment of the road as drawn has unacceptable impact on the Turf Grass Research Center. The road should follow the seam between the Turf Grass Center, Recreation Field area, and Airport property as closely as possible. Likewise the extension of Country Club Drive should follow the alignment of the existing service drive on the Turf Grass Center. A grade-separated crossing of Country Club Extension is needed for Turf Grass Research service/maintenance vehicles.
- R. A storage and operations facility for Virginia Tech Electric Service is currently being designed just south of Country Club Drive and east of the University Storage Facility .The design of this road Including the Country Club Drive extension will need to be coordinated with the Electric Service project.
- S. The road will require the demolition of and replacement of the existing T -hangar. This work will need to be part of the project.
- T. It is desirable to keep the road as close to the airport fence line as feasible along the eastern end of the road so as to minimize land-use impacts.
- U. There is a berm along the north edge of the airport, which serves to buffer some of the airport noise from the adjacent neighborhood. It is important to maintain this noise buffer.
- V. There is also a question about the necessity of building the 4-lane section of this road all the way to Country Club Drive. From a campus planning perspective, it would be preferable to transition to the two-lane section just east of the Stadium Parking Lot.

***The Department will continue to coordinate the design of the project with Virginia Tech and the designer will review, evaluate and implement the above request to whatever degree possible in the design phase for the project and allow for comment by all concerned at the design public hearing and throughout the process.***

**CITY RESOLUTION** - The Town of Blacksburg by resolution dated August 28, 2001 recommended approval of the project as proposed and presented at the public hearing with

consideration of the below noted comments. The Council vote was unanimous in favor of the project. A vote of 7 to 0 was recorded.

1. Where the Huckleberry Trail crosses Hubbard, Southgate and Country Club Drive extensions it shall be grade separated. This should be accomplished with one crossing if possible. Trail users' safety should be considered relative to sharp curves or blind corners. In addition, a bridge is considered superior to a culvert for safety and visibility of the trail.
2. The Hubbard Extension should be a two-lane road section from Country Club Drive to Main Street.
3. Bike lanes and multipurpose trails shall be incorporated throughout the project as per the attached Corridor Committee resolution.
4. Where the proposed Hubbard/Southgate Road alignment is between the airport runway and Airport Acres, the road shall be placed as far away from the Airport Acres neighborhood as possible. Roadway lighting should be minimized.
5. The elevation of Hubbard/Southgate Road should be below that of Airport Acres where possible and where that elevation permits the road to be placed closer to the runway. In addition, in all other locations where the Hubbard/Southgate Road is adjacent to Airport Acres, the elevation of the road should be lower than Airport Acres.
6. Where feasible, and where the Hubbard/Southgate road cannot be lower than Airport Acres, an earthen berm should be placed between the road and Airport Acres. Landscaping should be incorporated into the project in critical areas to screen the neighborhood from the road.
7. Careful consideration and incorporation of pedestrian and traffic safety measures shall be included in the project design, in particular in the vicinity of the Margaret Beeks Elementary School.
8. Existing Southgate Road should intersect the new Hubbard/Southgate Extension at a "T".
9. It is the intention of the Town to prohibit through truck traffic on Hubbard/Southgate per Town Code Section 12-308, and Code of Virginia Section 46.2-1304.

***The Department will continue to work with the Town of Blacksburg during the design phase of the project to address the design issues expressed in their resolution.***

**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS** – approval of the build alternative as proposed and presented at the Location Public Hearing as the alignment to be developed in the design phase for this project with consideration given in the design phase of the project to the comments received relative to design of the project.



# HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COUNTRY CLUB - SOUTHGATE - CONNECTOR

TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

PROJECT: U000-150-108, PE-101, RW-201, C-501, B-603

FROM: SOUTH MAIN STREET

TO: ROUTE 460 BYPASS

LENGTH: 2.3 MILES



Map Not to Scale

Designs Proposed Project

