



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Transportation Board

Shannon Valentine
Chairperson

1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 786-2701
Fax: (804) 786-2940

Agenda Item #6

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

July 21, 2021

MOTION

Made By: Dr. Smoot, Seconded By: Mr. Dodson

Action: Motion carried, unanimously

Title: Approval of Next Phase of the Martinsville Southern Connector Project

WHEREAS, on January 15, 2020, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approved Alternative C of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as the preferred location alternative for the Martinsville Southern Connector Study (MSC), while directing VDOT to analyze whether adjustments could be made to measurably reduce impacts to properties as requested by Henry County and still result in a permissible project; and

WHEREAS, the January 15, 2020 resolution to approve the preferred alternative provided that “the CTB’s decision expires three years after the completion of the Final EIS unless any project resulting from the MSC is fully funded for construction by or before that date, at which point its decision will be rescinded or revised”; and

WHEREAS, in the January 15, 2020, resolution to approve the preferred alternative, the CTB also resolved that any further commitment of funding for a project resulting from the MSC study (MSC Project), whether federal or state, must be approved by the CTB prior to entering into that commitment; and

WHEREAS, following CTB action, in accord with the direction of the CTB and in consultation with the local, federal, and state agencies involved in the National Environmental Policy Act process, VDOT adjusted the preferred alternative to result in fewer property impacts and successfully initiated the permitting process; and

WHEREAS, VDOT is in the process of developing the Final EIS, which will document impacts associated with the preferred alternative as adjusted; and

WHEREAS, in order to request a Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration, a subsequent phase of project development must be identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP); and

WHEREAS, a project must be included in the CTB's Six-Year Improvement Program in order to be reflected in the STIP; and

WHEREAS, VDOT has identified \$2,500,000 for the next phase of the MSC Project development; and

WHEREAS, a recent safety analysis of U.S. Route 220 between the state line and the U.S. Route 58 Bypass supports the location and scope of proposed targeted safety improvements as the next phase of the MSC Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the CTB hereby approves the subsequent phase of the MSC Project, UPC T25548 Route 220 South - Ridgeway Area - Safety Improvements, consisting of advancement of southbound safety improvements in targeted locations to mitigate geometric challenges on existing U.S. Route 220 from the state line to mile marker 3.0, including widened, paved shoulders; shoulder rumble strips; and guardrail installations and upgrades.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that \$2,500,000 is hereby allocated to the subsequent phase of the MSC Project, UPC T25548 Rt. 220 South - Ridgeway Area - Safety Improvements, and the Fiscal Year 2022-2027 Six-Year Improvement Program is amended accordingly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the CTB that the approval of and allocation of funds to the subsequent phase of the MSC Project, UPC T25548 Route 220 South - Ridgeway Area - Safety Improvements, as set forth herein, does not constitute or rise to the level of "any project resulting from the MSC" that will trigger or require the CTB's rescission or revision of its January 15, 2020 decision to approve Alternative C of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement as the preferred location alternative for the Martinsville Southern Connector Study and that said decision to approve Alternative C shall remain unaffected.

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CTB Decision Brief
Approval of Next Phase of the Martinsville Southern Connector Project
State Project Number: 0220-044-052, P101; UPC: 110916/ UPC T25548

Issue: The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) seeks from the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approval of the next phase of project development following the conclusion of the Martinsville Southern Connector Study.

Facts: The Martinsville Southern Connector Study (MSC) Route 220 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was initiated in February 2018 to evaluate potential transportation improvements along the U.S. Route 220 corridor between the U.S. Route 58/220 Bypass and the North Carolina state line.

In its location approval for the preferred alternative for the MSC EIS on January 15, 2020, the CTB directed VDOT to analyze whether adjustments could be made to measurably reduce impacts to properties and still result in a permissible project. CTB also resolved that any further commitment of funding for a project resulting from the MSC (Project) must be approved by the CTB prior to entering into that commitment.

The Draft EIS was developed and made available to the public in March 2020 and evaluated alternatives that accommodate local and regional traffic and address geometric deficiencies and inconsistencies. Following the CTB action on January 15, 2020, VDOT, in accord with the CTB's direction and in coordination with local, federal, and state agency partners, adjusted the preferred alternative to result in fewer property impacts and successfully initiated the permitting process. VDOT is currently in the process of developing the Final EIS, which will document the potential impacts associated with the adjusted preferred alternative.

In order to conclude the National Environmental Policy Act process and request a Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Highway Administration, a subsequent phase of project development must be identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and included in the Six-year Improvement Program (SYIP). VDOT has identified \$2,500,000 to fund the next phase of Project development.

Based on a recent additional safety analysis of the U.S. Route 220 corridor between the state line and the U.S. Route 58 Bypass, VDOT developed a target location and scope of proposed improvements. These improvements are consistent with the MSC EIS and are warranted by the safety analysis.

Recommendation: VDOT recommends that the CTB approve the next phase of the Project, consisting of advancement of southbound safety improvements in targeted locations to mitigate geometric challenges on existing U.S. Route 220 from the state line to mile marker 3.0, to include:

- a. Widened, paved shoulders;
- b. Shoulder rumble strips; and
- c. Guardrail installations and upgrades.

. The recommendation considers the following factors:

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- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that there is no requirement to fully fund the preferred alternative for construction in order to request or obtain a ROD;
- There are significant horizontal and vertical challenges in the southbound lanes of U.S. Route 220 as evidenced by the numerous curve warning signs, chevrons, and truck rollover warning signs; and
- Over a five-year period, from August of 2015 to July of 2020, there were twice as many crashes in the southbound direction compared to the northbound direction. Seventy-one percent of the crashes in the southbound direction were “run-off-road” crashes.

Action required by the CTB: The CTB will be presented with a resolution for a formal vote that will provide for:

- Approval of the subsequent phase of the MSC Project to include the targeted safety improvements outlined above and presented to the CTB on June 22, 2021.
- Addition of this next phase, the MSC Project UPC T25548 Rt. 220 South - Ridgeway Area - Safety Improvements, to the SYIP of projects and programs for Fiscal Years 2022 through 2027.

Result, if Approved: VDOT will proceed with completing the Final EIS, obtaining a US Army Corps of Engineers permit, and seeking a ROD from FHWA. The proposed Project may advance once the ROD is issued.

Options: Approve, deny, or defer.

Public Comments/Reactions: CTB was briefed during its February 2019 and May 2019 workshops. CTB was briefed on public comments on the recommended preferred alternative on December 10, 2019. CTB was also briefed on the study’s status in June 2021. Those presentations are available here: http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/salem/martinsville_southern_connector_study_archives.asp

VDOT held Citizen Information Meetings on May 8, 2018 and January 23, 2019 and a Location Public Hearing on August 15, 2019 relating to the different alignment options under consideration and the recommendation for a preferred alternative to be documented in the Draft EIS. Maps, drawings, and other location studies data were presented for public review at these meetings and citizen comments were received and reviewed. VDOT conducted multiple online surveys supplementing these meetings, as well as an online survey that resulted in nearly 800 responses in Fall 2018 to inform the Purpose and Need of the study.

The public comment period on the Draft EIS was open from March 6, 2020 through September 11, 2020. A public hearing on the Draft EIS was held on September 1, 2020. Over the course of this comment period, including the public hearing, a total of 155 comments were received. Of the comments received, 31 were considered substantive, requiring a response. These responses are to be documented in the Final EIS.