VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FY2008–2013

SIX-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

STAUNTON DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEARING

HELD ON

MAY 31, 2007

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MR. GARRETT MOORE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Garrett Moore. I’m the Staunton District Administrator for VDOT. I’d like to welcome you to our public meeting for the Six-Year Plan in preparation for the 2008-2013 Six-Year Program. Let me give you a little bit of the ground rules here tonight so that we can talk, it seems like we’ve got a better crowd than unusual, and just talk about how things will go. Normally we allow elected officials and representatives of public organizations to go first. However, that is almost all that we have here so I think what we will do this time is go ahead and just go by the numbers of one to ten. I think that would just be simpler because we have a lot more public officials here. With us today we have Commissioner Ekern and also from Culpeper District Mr. Butch Davies who is the CTB member from over in Culpeper District. And I’ll let our gentleman from DRPT introduce himself.

MR. CHIP BADGER: My name is Chip Badger. I’m the Deputy Director for the Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

MR. GARRETT MOORE: And in tonight’s discussion it’s again come up and give three minutes of what you would like to do. I would ask you to be very prompt with that three minutes. What we will do is if you
do go over that we’ll ask you to stop, but at the end of
the meeting if you have more after giving everybody else
the courtesy to get through their presentation we’ll allow
somebody if you do run over to come on up and finish your
presentation. But that three minutes is mainly so
everybody has the opportunity to come up and speak at a
reasonable hour when the crowd is here. We very much
would ask for your cooperation in that. And with that
being said let me go ahead and turn it over to our
Commissioner Dave Ekern who is the senior person here at
the meeting from the department.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Good evening
everybody. And again my name is Dave Ekern. I have the
privilege of serving you as the Commissioner of VDOT. In
tonight’s event at this public comment period on our draft
plan I’m functionally actually in my role as vice-chair of
the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Secretary Homer
who is the chair of that board actually was unable to
attend tonight. He does send his regrets and he does
place a high value on comments that we get on these draft
programs. They are very critical to not only the
department’s discussion but also to the CTB as they adopt
the final program at our July meeting. So these comment
periods are extremely important and particularly important
at this time because of the work of the Governor and the
General Assembly this last session in adopting a new funding bill. That has caused us an opportunity, it’s a good thing, but for those of us who work in the process it gets to be a little bit hair raising because we have to adjust a little bit on the fly. So the program that you are reviewing and commenting on tonight still has some bugs to be worked out of it because of the new funding. That will affect new projects. It will affect an opportunity that we haven’t had for a very long time as instead of talking to you about which projects aren’t going to be there we’re actually starting to hear feedback and have the opportunity to add some work to the program. That’s really a strong message and we’re very excited about that as people who work for you at VDOT and DRPT. With that as Garrett had indicated I would like to also note that Dr. Davis had intended to be here tonight. We were not able to accommodate the schedule. He is extremely active on the board and is eager to hear comments from both this meeting and if elected officials want to talk to him about other aspects of the program he would be glad to visit with you following tonight’s meeting. It is unfortunate and we apologize that we weren’t able to accommodate his schedule. With that I’m going to call names. I’ll call two, the person to speak and then the next one so you can be getting ready, and
we’ll take the testimony. The first to speak is Joseph Paxton, followed by Drew Williams.

MR. JOSEPH PAXTON: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. Mr. Davies. Rockingham County is pleased to see in the proposed budget prepared by VDOT staff that it includes $25,481,000.00 for the Port Republic Road project. As we have spoken I know, Mr. Commissioner, that we have spoken with you several times regarding that project. It’s very important to our community. It has the support of the City of Harrisonburg. It’s the number one priority for the MPO, which includes the county, the city, the towns of Bridgewater, Dayton and Mt. Crawford. It’s also part of a larger road complex that’s going on out in that area. The Southeast Connector which intersects that road at the hospital property is also being worked on at the same time. From my understanding the local government/private developer partnerships that are required in order for the state to be able to move projects forward, the county has been very aggressive in working with RMH and with three other developers in that area to acquire right-of-way. The hospital has actually taken the lead in designing the road from where it intersects with the city, an ongoing project that they have, over to Spotswood Trail and we’re moving forward with that process. We know in the plan that that road is
2013 and beyond. We would like for you to consider and take into account the additional developer funds that are being put in that project and possibly with the collaboration between the state, some second funds that we already have allocated, then we can move that project forward a lot quicker than that. There are also a number of other projects in here that we’re very concerned about. The I-81 safety improvements with the traffic that comes through the City of Harrisonburg and JMU’s campus, we certainly want to tell you how much we appreciate the reworking of Exit 247. The bridge replacements on Airport Road in Mt. Crawford, the Springbrook Road in Broadway, are real important to both one lane bridges and they need to be worked on as quickly as possible. We know that those are out a little ways and hopefully if those funds become available sooner for bridge work we can move those up. Route 820 to Bergton, I know that’s a federal earmark project and that’s the reason why it’s in this budget. We’re going to be working with the local residency to see what we can do to expedite that project. And also the Bridgewater Bypass is in there. One of the groups that wasn’t able to come today and asked for me to pass on to you their comments was James Madison University. Dr. Rose was unable to attend. He had another engagement tonight and he asked that we also express for him his support for
the Port Republic Road project. It’s crucial to the university. There’s a lot of student housing along Port Republic Road all the way out to Boyers Road and so they highly support that project and look forward to those improvements being made because it will improve the safety of that area. We have put together a list of prioritized needs for the board. There are a number of them. Port Republic Road and the Southeast Connector are on there as well as some others. We have copies for each of you. There is also a map that shows the interconnection between the Port Republic Road and the Stone Spring Road projects and that will assist you in your deliberations. And we appreciate your time. Thanks for being here.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Drew Williams, following by John Bishop.

MR. DREW WILLIAMS: Good evening.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Good evening.

MR. DREW WILLIAMS: My name is Drew Williams from the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, and I’m here to represent member communities within Planning District 6 and to encourage your continued support for projects in the Counties of Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, Augusta and Rockingham, along with the Cities of Lexington, Harrisonburg and Waynesboro, and also to include the many towns in our planning district. I would
like to take a few moments to discuss a few important road projects in our area of regional significance. The City of Harrisonburg’s major east to west road project known as the Stone Spring Road/Erickson Avenue project is of critical importance, not just to the city but the entire Rockingham County community. We appreciate your past support of this project, most recently your review and approval of its alignment. As you are aware, the City of Harrisonburg is a member of the Urban Construction Initiative Program and continued support of this project will continue to ensure the value and importance of the Urban Construction Initiative. As the City of Harrisonburg and surrounding area continues to grow the timely completion of this project will help relieve serious traffic congestion in the area, as the project cannot be completed without your support and assistance. The second project I would like to bring to your attention is, as Joe had just mentioned, the Port Republic Road reconstruction project in Rockingham County. Port Republic Road is currently a two lane facility recently enrolled in VDOT’s primary system. The section of road I discuss stretches from the Harrisonburg city limits eastward approximately 1.5 miles and as such this project falls within the urbanized area of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization. It is
critical to ensure this project receives funding in a timely manner. In 2005 Rockingham Memorial Hospital, which serves the Harrisonburg-Rockingham community, announced relocating to a new site along Port Republic Road. With this major development, and along with other development plans currently underway, widening this section of Port Republic Road is vital to the entire community. We appreciate your time and effort to hear comments from the public and again ask for your continued support and funding for the City of Harrisonburg Stone Spring Road project and the County of Rockingham’s Port Republic Road widening project. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: As Mr. Bishop comes forward I’d like to also, I was remiss in my earlier remarks in not recognizing Ms. Barbara Reese, our chief financial officer and soon to take over as Deputy Secretary of Transportation. We appreciate her coming and attending this evening. It’s her staff that does an awful lot of the hard work putting this document together. Mr. Bishop, good evening.

MR. JOHN BISHOP: Thank you, Mr. Ekern, and I thank all of you for this opportunity to speak. My name is John Bishop, and I serve as the transportation planner for Frederick County, Virginia. And I’ve brought forward tonight a resolution passed by the Frederick County Board
of Supervisors which in a nutshell basically is very appreciative of the efforts that have been put in to date to beginning to show planning for Route 37 which has not been in the program for some time. We’re very happy to see that reappear, restoring funds and actually adding additional funds to Route 277. Of course not to be ungrateful I must also point out that we have a number of other projects which continue to need attention. Probably most notably of the unlisted projects would be the Exit 307 relocation to the south of Stephens City and associated improvements to Warrior Drive and the Stephens City Bypass, the widening of Route 7, improvements to Route 11, really some major arteries for our region. Route 37, moving back to Route 37, frankly it was a vision twenty-plus years ago. And as we’ve come through time we’re now at the point where it’s a critical need and continues to be so it’s nice to start seeing some momentum. The board would respectfully request that it be noted that that has been identified as the number one priority, both through the MPO, which has consisted of the City of Winchester, the Town of Stephens City and the urbanized portions of Frederick County. It’s been the number one priority of the Frederick County primary road improvement plans. It’s been the number one priority in our comprehensive plan and on and on for some time and all
of these projects that I’ve mentioned are much needed. I will close by thanking you again for your efforts. And of course I’m sure something you’re going to keep hearing, you know, please do as much more as you are able and as you are given resources to do. I’m going to just go ahead and drop off this resolution for you. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: The next to speak is Supervisor Charles DeHaven, Sr., followed by Tim Stowe. Good evening.

MR. CHARLES DEHAVEN: Gentlemen, good evening. My name is Chuck DeHaven. I’m a member of the Board of Supervisors of Frederick County, and chairman of the Frederick County Transportation Committee. In addition, I serve on the Winchester-Frederick County MPO Policy Committee, and that’s the group I’m speaking for this evening. The Win-Fred MPO requests the Commonwealth Transportation Board address the priorities outlined in its adopted 2030 Transportation Plan with specific attention to the following priorities. One, the Route 37 East corridor. This project is a top priority project in the Win-Fred MPO 2030 Transportation Plan. Frederick County is actively working on better defining the corridor alignment to determine where rights-of-way will be required to be dedicated by private developers and to avoid major existing development. The MPO is also on
record as requesting that VDOT study the Route 37 East corridor as a potential corridor on new location for proposed improvements to the I-81 corridor in the Winchester-Frederick County area. The MPO is very appreciative of the funds that have been allocated to this project in the current draft program and would ask that the CTB continue to commit funds to this much needed project. Two are the I-81 interchange improvements and relocation. The Win-Fred MPO requested the Commonwealth Transportation Board to fund proposed interchange improvements at I-81 interchanges in the Winchester-Frederick County area consistent with recommendations recently adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Relocation of Exit 307, the Stephens City interchange, farther south of associated improvements to Warrior Drive and the Stephens City Bypass as recommended in the Win-Fred 2030 Transportation Plan continues to be a much needed improvement that Frederick County and the Town of Stephens City are actively pursing. In the City of Winchester a new interchange with Battle Drive continues to be a needed outlet for traffic in the southern portion of the city. Item 3 is continued support for Win-Fred MPO local technical assistance projects. The Win-Fred MPO would like to thank VDOT for its planning support of two location projects, the Route 37/Route 11/Shady Elm Road
interchange study and the Route 11 corridor access management study. Continued funding support for future phases of these important projects will be critical to ensure that these projects are implemented successfully. In Item 4 a park and ride lot. There are no park and ride lots currently constructed within the Win-Fred MPO study area. With mounting traffic congestion, air quality concerns and a significant commuter population funding of new park and ride lots is an important investment in providing alternative modes of transportation. The Win-Fred MPO requests that the Commonwealth Transportation Board target funding for the acquisition of land, design and construction of new park and ride lots in the MPO area. One high priority location is on the Route 7 corridor east of I-81. In summary, the Win-Fred MPO would like to thank the Commonwealth Transportation Board for its support of the improvements that are currently underway in the MPO area. The MPO would also respectfully request that the Commonwealth Transportation Board give serious consideration to additional funding of the MPO top transportation priority projects. And we thank you for the opportunity to present recommendations this evening.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Tim Stowe,

followed by C. Lee Lintecum.

MR. TIM STOWE: Good evening. My name is Tim
Stowe and I serve as the town engineer for the Town of Stephens City. And I appreciate the last two speakers making my introduction for me. We’re located adjacent to Interstate 81 at Exit 307 and Stephens City was built with the benefits of the interstate since it was built in the 1960's. And we have a few observations that we think are important to the process. Traffic congestion has become very severe in Stephens City as a result of traffic seeking to get onto and off of Exit 307 for I-81. We see traffic backed up to the point where it often sets through multiple cycles at the traffic signals with intersections being blocked as people attempt to squeak through to avoid setting through another cycle. It’s not uncommon to see road rage demonstrated as drivers become frustrated when they can see the interchange but they just can’t get to it because of congestion. We believe we can do a whole lot better. And, secondly, safety has always been a top priority with VDOT and led to ongoing improvement efforts on 81. We certainly appreciate that. We in Stephens City are equally committed to safety, but we encounter congestion so severe at Exit 307 that it makes conditions on Main Street unsafe for our pedestrians to walk across the street to patronize our businesses in town. Additionally we have our fire and rescue company there half a mile from Exit 307 and they’re concerned about the
response time associated with these emergency vehicles the fact that congestion exists. And, thirdly, Stephens City has been on the forefront of suggesting that the interchange be shifted and the department has adopted those suggestions through various studies that have been completed over the last fifteen to eighteen years. The MPO has also, as was mentioned previously, adopted the relocation of Exit 307 and that’s continued in the long range plan that the MPO has in place. So we’re moving forward on a town basis with our development partners in town to secure rights-of-way for our bypass and to connect to the interchange and to seek construction dollars, developer construction of the bypass that would connect to the interchange. I’m here tonight to ask for your assistance with the interchange as we move forward with this project. With that I will conclude my comments and be glad to give you a copy. Thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you. C. Lee Lintecum, to be followed by Dennis Coffman.

MR. C. LEE LINTECUM: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. The reason I’m here is because Butch sent me an email and said I’d better be here. I’m from Louisa County. I’m the county administrator. We have one project that we’ve been working on for years and have a commercial center located
at Zions Crossroads, which I believe is Exit 136 on 64, and it’s all coming together now. Evidently we picked a good spot because it’s coming together now. And that opens up other challenges to us such that we’re not sure that the interchange can handle it. One of the things that we know is people will be getting off the interstate so it will be backed up. We’ve took the step of putting some local money in. We’re asking developers to also put money in so that we can expedite the project and hopefully persuade the transportation board to help us with some funding on those improvements. That’s critical because the developers and the county want that commercial center to open and traffic will be blocking from 64. The other priority that I would mention which has been a priority for years is a safety improvement to 208 before you get to the bridge that goes over to Spotsylvania County. That was actually in the plan at one time. Public hearings were held, designs were approved and of course the funding went out. And the last thing I would like to do is speak for the Town of Louisa and the Town of Mineral. They are very much connected by Route 22 and that road needs some improvements both in the town and out of the town. And they’ve formed a committee so you will be hearing from them in the future, but I did want to bring that to your attention as we go forward. Like I said, the most impact
that we need now is at Zions Crossroads.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you very much. Dennis Coffman, to be followed by John Staelin.

MR. DENNIS COFFMAN: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you. My name is Dennis Coffman, and I’m the director of facilities, training and development for Rockingham Memorial Hospital. And my responsibility is to oversee the construction of the new hospital and then once that’s constructed to actually physically locate our operations to that site. As Mr. Paxton alluded to, we want to thank you for showing the full funding for Port Republic Road in your current plan. We think that’s a very important project. And we’re also working with some local entities there in conjunction with us where that proposed Stone Spring extension would go across to design that road and do funding of all parts. So we would ask that you consider filling in the gaps between that funding that we were able to do with private entities and what that road would need to be at its completion. One thing we would ask, while we’re very appreciative of the money funding for Port Republic Road, right now our hospital is scheduled to be open in June of 2010. The current project that you have it seems to us it looks like the road construction would begin in 2010 and take about two years so we would ask if you would consider
if any way possible to expedite that particular project so that the road construction would not coincide necessarily with the opening of the new hospital. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you very much. John Staelin, to be followed by Kim Sandum.

MR. JOHN STAELIN: Hi. I’m John Staelin, Chairman of the Clarke County Board of Supervisors. I want to thank Jeff Lineberry, our resident engineer, for his past support over the last few years and also compliment VDOT for its efforts to better coordinate land use planning and transportation plans. It’s been long overdue. We’re certainly not there yet, but at least we’ve taken some steps forward. I don’t see Clarke County listed in this document. We are a small county, only 14,000 citizens, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have needs. We have two major or three major actually commuter highways going through the county and we’ve also been a big implementer of smart growth in Clarke County. I think we’re well known for that, which means that we have growth around our towns. And we have some primary highways, Main Street in Berryville which we’re trying to put all the growth into. Although we’re not county growing very quickly, our transportation needs in those key areas are important to us. I’m going to turn this in. I’m not going to read everything and go through it. Our
improvements are all transportation related and safety related. I’ll just highlight. For example, one of them, the first one, is a small intersection. I mean you’re talking about millions and billions of dollars and this one is much smaller. It’s a small, little area. It is one intersection, Senseny Road, which is 657, and 340. It’s been on the list for ten years. There have been since the year 2000 seventeen accidents, eight people injured, $90,000.00 worth of property damage. And if you’re looking for bits of rubber to make tires from just look at the pavement there, it is covered and constantly lots of skidmarks. Westwood Road intersection with business 7 is the site of four schools. Again we’re trying to have schools where people can walk and we’ve put in a bike path and we’re trying to reduce traffic, but we still have a major intersection there without a light and it needs turn lanes to have a light. It’s a real mess and it’s becoming a backlog and causing a lot of problems. And the third one, another on a commuter highway, another intersection with a secondary road where there have been eight accidents with injuries in a very small amount of time. So those are the kinds of things we’re looking for. And if there are any funds available we certainly hope you will think about us.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you very
much.

MR. JOHN STAELIN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Kim Sumdum.

Sandum. Sandum. My apologies.

MS. KIM SANDUM: That’s all right.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Followed by David Beyeler.

MS. KIM SANDUM: My name is Kim Sandum, and I’m speaking for Community Alliance For Preservation in Rockingham County. It’s a citizens group that was formed about eight years ago over concern related to a bypass around Harrisonburg. There has been a long history and extensive community discussions over that issue. And so I wanted to say first of all that I was glad to see the Southeast Connector option listed in your Six-Year Plan that is supported by the community as well as lots of—the new hospital as you’ve heard, from JMU, et cetera. So thank you for that. But related to that Interstate 81 in Harrisonburg calls for a bypass. The final environmental impact statement proposes two potential new bypasses, one of which is around Harrisonburg. Federal agencies commenting on the draft environmental impact statement have noted that VDOT has failed to evaluate or study the impact on resources from these new bypasses. The study area is only defined for I believe a foot wide outside the
right-of-way. Minor notations about these projects in the DEIS and FEIS the public has been kept largely unaware of these proposals or their impacts and in recent years there has been extensive public outcry against the proposals for Harrisonburg bypasses. The Harrisonburg-Rockingham MPO as they evaluated priorities has rejected a bypass in favor of the Southeast Connector and east-west traffic solutions so it’s disturbing to find a bypass showing back up in the I-81 plans. It doesn’t seem to have support from the local community and we haven’t had the information to evaluate the impacts it will have on our county and the City of Harrisonburg. And related to that is concern that Harrisonburg and Rockingham is split into two of the sections of independent utility which doesn’t make sense for our area to divide a community into two pieces and study one with Winchester and another with Staunton.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you. David Beyerly of Augusta County.

MR. DAVID BEYELER: Beyeler.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Beyeler, Excuse me. To be followed by Edgar Yancey.

MR. DAVID BEYELER: Commissioner, gentlemen.

We appreciate you being here tonight. I’m David Beyeler from Augusta County. I know your job is not easy. There
is never enough funds to go around. Serving on the board of supervisors we know that. But Augusta County has always put fully funded revenue sharing. We put money in rural rustic roads, we put that money up front. And we are, and I’m a little hesitant to say this, but we are the leading county in that. I think we was the first. We also are beginning to use infrastructure money to build roads. This is totally county funds. We’re also using tax increment financing to build roads, we’re getting proffers, but we still don’t have enough as you gentlemen know. Now, we’ve heard about another hospital, and Rockingham needs another hospital. But at Exit 91 and I-64 is our number one priority. We have a hospital there and that is the main exit to the hospital. The largest community, Staunton, Waynesboro, Stuarts Draft and Fishersville basically use that exit. That is our highest traffic count per lane at that intersection in the county and it’s a bottleneck. The traffic count is 16,000 and most of that is in a four hour period. We just completed our comprehensive plan. 12,000 of the 16,000 growth is going to be in or near that area so this is something that’s not going to go away. It’s an area that we want to develop, but we need help there to improve that intersection. Now, there are other items in there and you all can read, we have other needs, but thank you gentlemen
for what you do. And we look forward to getting a little
more money. Let me say one other thing. We have been in
a transition in Augusta County and in that area. And
Kenny Robertson, as most of you know, is leaving Augusta
County. I’m not asking you to replace him. Just give us
someone just as good.

COMMISSIONER DAVID EKERN: We’ll do our
best. Edgar Yancey, to be followed by Bob—sorry, I’m
going to pass up your name. B-O-I-S-T-U-R-E.

MR. EDGAR YANCEY: Good evening, sir. I’m
Edgar Yancey from Rockingham County. I live on the north
end of Indian Trail Road. We need a few improvements I
think and that’s why I’m here to bring it to your
attention. I’m a mile from the north end of it and south
of me about a mile and a half we’ve got a two lane asphalt
road and it runs into a dirt road which ain’t much
different than it was in the horse and buggy days. We’re
getting a lot of people that travel these back country
roads. I’m a farmer and we run into the problem that
basically a dually truck with a cattle trailer behind it,
they’ll pull out almost halfway out of the way and they
expect you to either run up over the bank or run in the
ditch. A lot of times I’ll back up to some of these wider
places. There’s place that two vehicles cannot pass on
that section of road through there. Yet I’ll say a mile
and a half up the road we’ve got a two lane asphalt road
with a yellow line in front of it. I just thought I’d
come and bring it to your attention. We’d like to have
just a little bit, not a whole lot, but just a little
improvement to try to widen that out so the traffic can
get through. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVID EKERN: Thank you, sir.

Bob . . .

MR. BOB BOISTURE: Boisture.

COMMISSIONER DAVID EKERN: I apologize for
that. To be followed by John Hutchinson.

MR. BOB BOISTURE: Thank you very much for
the chance. Bob Boisture of the New Market area. I am
deeply in love with the beauty of this part of the
Shenandoah Valley. I just wanted to offer a long-term
perspective. I would hope that as you all consider this
whole range of issues related to I-81 you would give
serious consideration to some of the options that have
been put forward to divert truck traffic through
intermodal rail or other options. I’ve watched the truck
traffic grow over the last twenty-five years. I don’t
think we could ever build roads fast enough to keep up
with that growth if we don’t take advantage of some of
these other options for long-haul freight. So not a
specific comment on a project. I know you all have given
that serious thought and I just really affirm that and
hope you will continue to do that. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you. John
Hutchinson, to be followed by Douglas Stanley.

MR. JOHN HUTCHINSON: Good evening. My name
is John Hutchinson. I’m from Staunton and I’m here on
behalf of the Shenandoah Valley Network, which is a
network of citizens groups from Rockingham County, Page
County, Frederick County, Harrisonburg, Augusta County and
Shenandoah County. We would like to express our
dissatisfaction with the environmental impact statement
for I-81 with the tolling that it is going to be dependent
on with the expansion of 69% of the interstate to four
lanes and construction of a bypass around Harrisonburg
that will go through the agricultural reserve area of the
county and through the Cross Keys Civil War Battlefield.
The way it will block any future multi-state rail
alternatives to shift truck traffic off the highway and
the way you all are pursuing negotiations with STAR that
don’t include competitive bidding. We hope that you all
will reconsider this and re-open the EIS and make the plan
more to the liking of the 80% of the citizens who
participated in the comment period and asked for a
different kind of plan. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Mr. Stanley, to be
followed by Raymond Wallinger. I’m sorry, Rosemary. This
is not a good night for me.

MR. DOUG STANLEY: Mr. Ekern, Mr. Davies,
Commissioner Ekern, VDOT staff members. Good evening and
greetings from Warren County, Virginia. I’m Doug Stanley,
county administrator. I appreciate the opportunity to
address you this evening. If you notice the smile on my
face it’s because I drove past the new North Fork bridge
that’s under construction and I want to thank you very
much for getting that project funded and moving forward on
time and on budget. In front of you you have a copy of
Warren County’s list of interstate and primary highway
project needs. The Warren County Board of Supervisors
asks that VDOT consider the following future highway
projects starting on page 2 as funding becomes available.
First, establish construction engineering funding, acquire
necessary right-of-way and facilitate the construction of
required turn lanes and signals at the proposed relocation
of the intersection at Route 658 and Rockland Road and 627
and Reliance Road. The relocation of this intersection is
currently planned in the county’s secondary six-year plan.
The intersection lies in the middle of the county’s
growing commercial and industrial corridor and has seen
growth in traffic from about 9,000 vehicles a day in 1995
to over 20,000 currently. The need for these improvements
has further been exacerbated by the shifting of truck
traffic off of Route 17 and 50 and onto I-66, Route 340
and 522. In order to complete this project in a timely
manner VDOT primary funds will be needed to secure
necessary right-of-way and make some improvements along
that primary section. Secondly, improvement of a three
mile stretch of Route 55 East from Front Royal to the
Linden interchange with I-66 to a divided four lane
highway. The project was identified as a priority in the
Front Royal Art Transportation Study which was completed
in 2000 in coordination with VDOT and was unanimously
approved by the board of supervisors on February 15th of
2000. The road is the county’s major commuter route for
thousands of workers traveling to Northern Virginia to
work each day via I-66. It has an average daily traffic
county of over 10,000 vehicles per day. The third project
is consideration of an interchange at Route 66 and Route
606. Warren County and Front Royal are currently served
by two interstate interchanges. A third interchange as
proposed which would serve as an eastern entrance to the
Town of Front Royal. Fourth, make safety improvements to
bring Route 340 South from 619 to 607 up to present
geometric design standards by protecting the scenic
attributes of the roadway as growth continues and traffic
over 340 south of Front Royal and Page continues to
increase. And also, number five, provide additional parking spaces at the county’s two existing park and ride facilities both at Route 340/522 which currently has 238 spaces and at Linden which has 130 spaces or construct additional park and ride lot to meet the growing demand. Many of the new residents moving to Warren County and surrounding jurisdictions between the Northern Virginia area is putting a further crunch on existing spaces. I’d also like you to look at the installation of turn lanes and a traffic signal at the intersection of Route 55East and Route 638. A number of existing and proposed homes along Route 638 is continuing to generate increased traffic utilizing this intersection. And, lastly, establish engineering funding for the Route 340/522 South Fork of the Shenandoah River bridge. The bridge carries over 25,000 vehicles per day and will need to be upgraded in the near future once the North Fork bridge is completed. Thank you for your time and consideration of our interstate and primary transportation needs. I’d also like to take the opportunity to thank Jeff Lineberry and his staff of the Luray Residency for their dedicated service to the citizens of Warren County. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Thank you very much. Our last registered speaker is Rosemary Wallinger.

MS. ROSEMARY WALLINGER: Thank you for the
opportunity to speak. My name is Rosemary Wallinger and I’m here to speak on behalf of Shenandoah Forum, a group of citizens in Shenandoah County focused on issues of growth and development. We work collaboratively within our community to address ways of seeking solutions to the demands of growth and development. I’m not going to go through this, but I am going to turn it in. We are deeply, deeply disappointed in this newest proposal. Please understand I mean no disrespect. Those of us who raise our voices and sound a little terse usually do so because we’re nervous. But one of the key components of constructive collaborative work is listening. As a mediator we open channels for speaking and for listening and we always say it is critical that you demonstrate that you hear as much as it is critical that you say what you feel you need to say. This plan, particularly in regard to the impact it will have on Shenandoah County, has I respectfully say gives no indication that the things we killed ourselves to get out and say last year. We have busy lives like you do. We have families. I have an eighty-seven year old mother. I have a ninety-three year old mother-in-law and a ninety-seven year old father-in-law and we are busy and we take time, as you do, to come to these hearings to say things that we believe are critically important. And we do not believe this
proposal, that you heard any of it with the exception of a truck flyover in this county. The impact of what you propose now is the same. This county is thirty-six miles long. The interstate runs the length of it. We are primarily agricultural. Our agricultural lands lie along this highway. There has to be a more reasonable solution. And for all the reasons here stated we urge you, please, this time give us some indication that you truly do hear the concerns we’re expressing as respectfully as we know how to attempt to express. And thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: That response of Ms. Wallinger was our last registered speaker. I’ll make the call for any speakers from the audience who would like to come forward.

MR. GARRETT MOORE: If we could ask just before you leave if we could get your name and address so we have a record.

MR. J. W. MYERS: Yes, sir. Mr. Commissioner, I’m J. W. Myers. I’m speaking on behalf of M & N Real Estate, LLC. We’re a private landowner in Rockingham County. We will be one of the landowners most impacted by the Port Road widening at the proposed SE Connector. We ask that VDOT and the county officials be mindful when talk turns to the future potential values of the property taken for these projects, that that brings to
us--I mean it’s not just the fair market value of the property today but what that property could be worth in the very near future. That both VDOT and the county officials be mindful that they’re seeking a party to work with them in a willing, collaborative and cooperative manner on these projects to the common good. That VDOT and the county be mindful of our needs as well and be as forthcoming and cooperative as possible to the adverse impact of the landowner on issues such as zoning and road access, specifically to the property not taken for these projects. In that manner any of the land that we might not own that is not taken for these road projects can then be used to the maximum extent possible and retain as much value as possible. And, finally, while there has been mention earlier tonight of the intimate ongoing relationships that have been developed between RMH and the private developers, we have no objection to that to the extent it reduces the taxpayer burden. Be mindful of the individual taxpayers as well that are affected by these projects. Don’t forget that we have hopes, dreams and aspirations as well. And go the extra mile to keep us informed of your plans on an ongoing basis so that we too in a real time manner can make the plans for our land as well. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAVE EKERN: Is there anyone
else from the audience that would like to take the opportunity to put something on the record? If not I want to thank everyone for coming this evening. These pieces of information from the five public meetings that have been held throughout the state will be used as part of the record for consideration as CTB reaches its final adoption of the program. With that thank you very much for coming this evening. We really appreciate it.
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the hearing on the 2008 - 2013 Six-Year Plan of the Staunton District of Virginia Department of Transportation held at the Quality Inn in New Market, Virginia, on May 31, 2007.

The foregoing was recorded by the undersigned and is certified to be a true and correct transcript according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Given under my hand this 6th day of June, 2007, at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

_____________________________
Barbara Brown
Court Reporter