Focus on the Interstate 81 Corridor

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Interstate 81 Corridor: Conduit for Global Commerce

- Freight and passenger growth at Dulles International Airport

- Port of Virginia, where trade with China is increasing at an enormous rate

- Trade with Mexico, Gulf Coast ports, West Coast ports and Canada on highways and rail
I-81 in Virginia

• Stretches 325 miles from Tennessee to West Virginia
  – Connects 21 cities and towns and 13 counties
  – Largely undeveloped and rural (only 25% of population is in an MPO)
  – Dominant land uses are agricultural, pastures and forest

• Serves about 20% of Virginia’s population
  – Since 1970, growth rate was 38% (overall Virginia growth = 60%)

• Two MPOs in 2000; now there are five

• From 1990-2000, labor force growth equal to Virginia’s; since 2000, rate has slowed
  – Largest employment sectors are services, manufacturing, retail trade
  – 24,000 business establishments
  – ¼ of Virginia’s manufacturing workers
  – Value added by manufacturing: $9.6 billion (more than the $8.0 billion in the DC metro area and $7.9 billion in the Norfolk metro area)
Congestion Issues

- I-81 is Main Street; commuting has increased five-fold since the interstate opened
- Due to topography, there are few alternate north-south routes
- Trucks on rolling and mountainous terrain take the space of 4-6 cars
- Congestion: peak times, special events, incidents
- If an incident blocks one lane, then I-81 loses more than half of its capacity in that direction
Corridor Assets: People
Corridor Assets: Colleges and Universities
Tourism Assets: Historic Battlefields and Sites
Tourism Assets: Trails and Topography
Tourism Assets: Parkways and Parks

I-81 Corridor

LEGEND
- College
- Historical Battlefield
- National Battlefield Park
- Appalachian Trail
- Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive
- Population Centers
Major Freight Corridors in Virginia

Note: Thickness of lines denotes relative cargo volume for each mode.
Virginia Freight Challenges and Opportunities

Port capacity and connectivity
Port expansion, local truck and rail access improvements, multistate initiatives (Heartland Corridor)

Highway congestion
Related to auto traffic, Virginia trucks, pass through trucks
Urban area projects, statewide corridor improvements, multistate corridors

Rail capacity and connectivity
Continue to serve needs of port and domestic traffic
Offer potential alternative to highway (I-81 Crescent Corridor, I-95 MAROps)
Multistate coordination is critical.
In 2004, Virginia initiated and hosted first meeting of road and rail officials from I-81 states to share information.
• Four corridor-wide meetings have been held since, including Canada and NS.
• Virginia is a member of I-95 Corridor Coalition, representing all states from Maine to Florida, which performed an early evaluation of I-81 corridor.
• Virginia funded study with Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia – the Latin American Trade and Transportation Study – to address trade with Mexico and Canada.
• Virginia also is participating with Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia in the Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies to continue to address that trade.

Federal government must be a partner.

Partnership and collaboration is essential.
An example is Norfolk-Southern and Virginia.