



Summary of Scoping Process Comments

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I-66

Multimodal Transportation & Environmental Study



Prepared for:



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Introduction

Scoping is an early, open, and on-going process used to identify a range of alternatives and the impacts and significant issues to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The process includes the general public, the Local and Technical Advisory Committees established for the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study, and appropriate federal, state, regional, and local agencies.

Public and agency meetings are an important element of scoping. Public Scoping Meetings were held for the general public on January 22, 23, and 24, 2002, in Centreville, Fairfax, and Manassas, respectively. The meetings in Centreville and Manassas were each attended by approximately 25 people. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting in Fairfax. The meetings involved one-on-one interaction between citizens and study team members, as well as a presentation and display about the history of the corridor, the purpose and goals of the Study, and other information pertaining to the capacity and use of the corridor. An agency meeting held on January 24, 2002, at the offices of the Northern Virginia District of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). A total of 29 representatives of federal, state, regional, and local agencies attended the agency meeting.

The Scoping Process yielded 323 comments, dated on or before the Scoping comment deadline of February 8, 2002. There were 81 different commentors. Most of these commentors (55) were private citizens. Of the private citizens, the highest number of commentors (11) came from the City of Fairfax. A total of 18 federal, state, regional, county, and municipal agencies provided comments. The remaining 8 of the 81 commentors were from interest groups.

There were 4 Scoping comment sources: comments made at the Scoping Meetings, comments made on the Comment Forms available at the Scoping Meetings, comments from Scoping Letters, and comments provided by e-mail. The highest number of commentors (32) used the Comment Forms to provide input.

Recurring Issues from Scoping Process

Recurring issues are grouped into five topical categories: Alternatives, Transportation, Design, Environmental, and Implementation. By a wide margin, bicyclist and pedestrian access was the most frequently raised issue (see Design, First Bullet). The next most frequently raised issues dealt with alternative land use scenarios and transit-oriented development (see Environmental, Land Use Issues, First and Second Bullets).

Alternatives

- Desire to include modal elements previously eliminated from further consideration in the I-66 Major Investment Study (the MIS) in the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study (the Study), such as:
 - Extension of Metrorail service beyond Centreville to Gainesville
 - Provision of Virginia Railway Express (VRE) service to Haymarket
 - Widening of I-66 to Haymarket (with or without High Occupancy Vehicle lanes)
 - Light Rail Transit along I-66 and from the I-66 corridor to Dulles International Airport and other points north and south

Response: Over the course of the alternative screening and evaluation process for the I-66 Corridor Major Investment Study (MIS), a wide range of potential transportation system improvements were considered, but were not retained for more detailed analysis. One of the major modal elements that fell into this category was the extension of Metrorail service beyond Centreville to Gainesville. The rationale for dropping this modal element in the MIS was the relatively small increase in ridership for the extension of Metrorail service beyond Centreville to Gainesville. However, the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study will reassess the year 2025 travel demands for Metrorail service beyond Centreville towards the Manassas area markets to find a feasible and reasonable location for the end- of- line station. The MIS also dropped the extension of Virginia Railway Express (VRE) service from Manassas to Haymarket from further consideration because of its low ridership forecast.

While the MIS did not specifically evaluate widening of I-66 to Haymarket, a similar transportation strategy that was evaluated and not retained was the provision of two barrier-separated High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) 2+ lanes along I-66 to Gainesville and a continuation of the HOV lanes in the median of Route 29 to Route 15. This modal element was dropped from further consideration in the MIS because of its overall mixed performance relative to improvement in peak period highway congestion and because several other strategies with the same modal elements exhibited superior performance.

The MIS determined that two barrier-separated HOV lanes with a terminus near the proposed Tri-County Parkway (i.e., in Fairfax County near the Fairfax/Prince William County border) would be able to accommodate HOV 2+ travel demand until the year 2020. The I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study will evaluate the need for extending this HOV facility further west to Gainesville, based on a design year of 2025.

Several Light Rail Transit (LRT) alignments were considered in the MIS including: 1) from the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Metrorail Station west along I-66, then west along Route 50, and then north along the Route 28 corridor to the Dulles International Airport; 2) from the Metrorail Station west along Route 29 to Route 28, then south to Manassas; and 3) along the Route 28 corridor between Manassas and Dulles International Airport. The rationale for dropping these modal elements from further consideration in the MIS was their overall mixed/poor performance compared to other transportation strategies serving the defined purpose and need for east-west access and mobility.

The I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study will reassess the above modal elements and the MIS findings.

- Desire to include other transportation elements in the Study not considered in the MIS, such as:
 - Transit connections from the I-66 corridor to Tysons Corner
 - Transportation improvements along I-66 east of the Capital Beltway

Response: Two independent studies have investigated connecting the existing Metrorail Orange line to the proposed Dulles Rail extension stations in the Tysons Corner area. First, the Dulles Rail Corridor Study examined a rail connection using the Capital Beltway corridor and, second, the Capital Beltway Rail Feasibility Study examined three rail technologies (Suspended Monobeam, Light Rail, and Heavy Rail) using alignments along Gallows Road or adjacent to the Capital Beltway. These evaluations found that rail within the Capital Beltway corridor is feasible with each rail technology. However, the Dulles Rail Corridor Study determined that an alignment that would allow trains from the Dulles Corridor to continue directly to the west end of the Orange Line would not be warranted due to higher costs and impacts and a smaller than expected increase in ridership over other alternatives being studied. Although transit connections from the I-66 corridor to Tysons Corner are outside the scope of the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study (the I-66 Study), the I-66 Study will document the travel demand between the I-66 corridor and Tysons Corner in the future when the location of the rail and highway elements are better defined in the I-66, I-495, and Dulles corridors.

The easterly limit of the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study is on I-66 at the Cedar Lane overpass just west of the

I-66/I-495 (Capital Beltway) Interchange. Although the concepts for the Capital Beltway that move forward as a result of the Capital Beltway Study are outside the scope of the I-66 Study, they will be included as connection points for the alternatives in the I-66 Corridor outside the Beltway. A transportation analysis of transportation improvements on I-66 east of the I-66/Capital Beltway Interchange is also outside the scope of the I-66 Study and will be performed as a separate environmental and location study. Travel forecasts and concept plans developed in this I-66 Study will serve as input to future separate studies inside the Capital Beltway; however, no additional capacity on I-66 east of the Capital Beltway will be presumed.

Transportation

- Need to resolve the bottleneck at the I-66/Capital Beltway Interchange first

Response: The easterly limit of the Study is on I-66 at the Cedar Lane overpass just west of the I-66/I-495 (Capital Beltway) Interchange. The conceptual engineering and environmental analysis of transportation improvements at the I-66/Capital Beltway Interchange are being performed as part of a separate study. The conceptual design of the I-66 multimodal improvements will be developed to be compatible with the proposed transportation improvements at the I-66/I-495 (Capital Beltway) Interchange.

- Effect of the I-66 multimodal improvements on or from other corridor studies in the study area. Similarly, the need for the I-66 multimodal improvements to physically accommodate the proposed improvements of other corridor studies in the study area

Response: The I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study will coordinate its transportation analysis and conceptual design efforts with other corridor studies in the region. The alternatives assessment will test a range of build scenarios for the improvements that are presently only study projects, and not construct projects, in the regional Constrained Long Range Plan.

- Effect of diverted traffic or induced traffic (from secondary development) caused by the I-66 multimodal improvements on the transportation carrying capacity of roadways that cross I-66 or on the transportation carrying capacity of roadways that are parallel to I-66

Response: The Study will analyze the effect of the I-66 multimodal alternatives on the traffic carrying capacity of roadways that cross I-66 and on roadways that parallel I-66. As part of this analysis, the Study may evaluate induced traffic on study area highways if changes from the regionally adopted land use forecasts are proposed by local jurisdictions based on the alternative I-66 corridor multimodal improvements.

- Effect of the I-66 multimodal improvements on I-66 traffic inside the Capital Beltway

Response: The easterly limit of the Study is on I-66 at the Cedar Lane overpass just west of the I-66/I-495 (Capital Beltway) Interchange. The travelshed of the study, however, will be defined by the appropriate Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) boundaries, such that the area includes 80 to 85 percent of the trips in the I-66 Study Corridor. The travelshed would include a portion of I-66 inside the Capital Beltway. Travel forecasts and concept plans developed in this Study will serve as input to future separate studies on I-66 (including bus and rail transit, ridesharing, and highway modes) inside the Capital Beltway.

- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Issues

- Desire for High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes (with or without peak period pricing)
- Desire for implementation of High Occupancy Vehicle 3+ requirements
- Increased enforcement of HOV usage requirements

Response: VDOT has researched high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and has not aggressively pursued the implementation on its facilities. Responses from potential users of value pricing and HOT lane concepts have not been favorable in Virginia. If regional studies and policy direction dictate in the future, VDOT in consultation with FHWA may consider this concept

Based upon the data, operational goals, and evaluation criteria being used on similar ongoing transportation studies, the I-66 Study will develop a set of traffic operational criteria, such as HOV usage requirements, to aid in the decision on the timing and implementation of new HOV occupancy restrictions in the I-66 Corridor.

The provision and/or accommodation of traffic law enforcement areas in the location and design of the HOV highway facility will be included in the Study. Enforcement of the HOV restrictions and the associated operational costs for the Commonwealth of Virginia State Police will be documented during the Alternatives Assessment. However, implementation of additional enforcement is not a stipulation of the environmental document's Proposed Action or the regional Constrained Long Range Plan because the funding is from other sources in the Commonwealth.

- Cost, ridership, and operational impacts of Metrorail extension on existing Metrorail operations and on proposed Dulles Rail service

Response: The development of the proposed Metrorail extension will be closely coordinated with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) staff and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) to fully understand its impact on transit operations on the rest of the Metrorail system. One of the key elements will be the findings and recommendations of WMATA's soon to

be completed Core Capacity Study. The impact on the merging of the Orange and Blue lines at Rosslyn is a major focus of the operational analysis that will be conducted in this Study. The Study will evaluate the effects of the I-66 multimodal improvements on service characteristics and information such as headways, dwell times, and projected ridership. Examples of impacts to be evaluated include effect on on-time performance, effect on existing stations and infrastructure, and system wide/network impacts of the proposed service.

The Study Team will be coordinating its efforts with the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project team, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and VDRPT to ensure that the potential service impacts at Rosslyn and elsewhere in the corridor are properly identified.

- Desire for implementation of short-term transportation demand/system management strategies, such as express bus service, ramp metering and other Intelligent Transportation System strategies

Response: A number of strategies will be considered as part of the Transportation System Management Alternative in this Study. These strategies will include ramp metering and bus priority on crossing highways, at the I-66 interchanges, and at transit center areas. Additionally, a phasing plan for I-66 multimodal improvements will be developed. The phased implementation may include the interim use of future Orange Line station sites as park and ride locations with express bus services. These options will need to be developed and evaluated as part of the alternatives development process.

Design

- Provisions for bicyclist and pedestrian access adjacent to and across the I-66 corridor in the study area and avoidance of conflicts with proposed bikepaths

Response: As part of the development of the conceptual design of the highway and transit components for each Build Alternative, the Study will assess the need for and feasibility of including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These non-motorized facilities may be adjacent to and/or cross the I-66 Corridor, be around Park and Ride and transit centers, and provide enhanced access to and from Metrorail facilities. The designs will be in conformance with VDOT, VDRPT, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority design criteria. The Study will also determine impacts to both planned and existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and will develop avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, where appropriate.

- Concern about the geographic extent of the conceptual design (*i.e.*, which intersections and roadways will be included in the Study's conceptual design, especially if their carrying capacity is adversely affected by the I-66 multimodal improvements)

Response: The Study will analyze the effect of the I-66 multimodal alternatives on the traffic carrying capacity of roadways that cross I-66, and on roadways that parallel I-66. However, the conceptual design of the study will only include the I-66 multimodal alternatives themselves, as well as intersection improvements required by the design of the interchanges along I-66 or associated with rail station locations. Any intersection or roadway improvements beyond these interchanges would likely become independent design and construction projects.

- Desire for new interchanges along I-66, for example, at Prosperity Avenue

Response: The Study will explore the feasibility of new access to and from I-66 General Purpose and HOV facilities in terms of highway geometric criteria, traffic operations, and impacts to residential and commercial properties, park facilities, schools, and other property.

Environmental

- Impacts to regional air quality emissions from the I-66 multimodal improvements, particularly as it pertains to the I-66 multimodal improvements' compliance with the Constrained Long Range Plan's goal of reducing growth of vehicle-miles-travelled per capita

Response: The transportation analysis will determine the vehicle miles traveled for the No Build and Build Alternatives. This information will be provided to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) to be included in their regional air quality analysis. The Study will prepare a qualitative assessment of the alternatives' potential impact on the regional air quality situation and will report on MWCOC's regional air quality analysis which is expected to examine regional emissions of nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compounds. The ultimate preferred alternative in the corridor will need to be placed in the regional Constrained Long Range Plan and be able to meet fiscal and air quality constraints on a regional basis.

*A microscale analyses of air quality (*i.e.*, an analysis of carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations) will be performed at representative sensitive receptors (*e.g.*, residential, recreational, and commercial areas) later in the Study based on their proximity to the proposed transportation facilities (*e.g.*, park and ride lots and rail stations).*

- Noise impacts to adjacent properties from the I-66 multimodal improvements

Response: The Study will analyze the noise impacts for each of the Build Alternatives as well as the No Build Alternative. This analysis will determine the existing noise levels and predict future noise levels throughout the corridor's length to see if noise impact criteria are approached or exceeded. Where sound barriers are considered to be a reasonable and feasible mitigation measure for addressing noise impacts, they will be incorporated into the recommended improvements. The study will present the locations and preliminary heights and lengths of proposed reasonable and feasible sound barriers within the study area.

- Impacts to parks along the I-66 corridor, especially Eleanor C. Lawrence Park and Manassas National Battlefield Park

Response: The Study will analyze the potential effects from each Build Alternative on both planned and existing parks, recreation areas, and open space easements within the study area, as well as analyze the potential effects from each Build Alternative on historic properties. This analysis will develop avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, where appropriate.

- Impacts on stormwater runoff quantity, on water quality of adjacent surface waters, and on wetlands in the study area and the need to mitigate these impacts

Response: Using information collected in the field and in consultation with the appropriate resource agencies, the Study will analyze the stormwater runoff impacts from each of the Build Alternatives on the watersheds in the study area. The Study will develop a conceptual design that will include the types of stormwater management treatment facilities, their locations, and approximate sizes. The Study will also determine the potential natural resources impacts from each Build Alternative and will present options to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these impacts.

- Land Use Issues

- Relationship between transportation and land use growth patterns and the desire for the Study to examine regionwide alternative land use scenarios
- Desire for the Study to examine integrated land use and transit alternatives (*i.e.*, transit-oriented development)
- Minimization of property takings from and relocations of adjacent residences and businesses

Response: Land use impacts from I-66 multimodal transportation improvements will be assessed in accordance with FHWA and FTA regulations and guidance and in consultation with local jurisdiction planners. The most recent land use and socioeconomic data will be obtained from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' land use inventories and approved cooperative forecasts. The regional data will be supplemented with local and county comprehensive plans and coordinated with local and county planning staff. These sources will be

supplemented and revised, as necessary, when analysis shows that construction of an alternative will affect future land use within the travelshed

The transportation system in the I-66 Corridor cannot be significantly improved without land use impacts in the study area. To the greatest extent possible, and within the parameters of conducting an Environmental Impact Statement, VDOT and VDRPT will take measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on neighborhoods and businesses.

Implementation

- Funding sources for implementation of the I-66 multimodal improvements

Response: The MIS indicated that the total estimated cost of the I-66 multimodal improvements was approximately \$1.3 billion dollars in 1998 dollars. Existing and planned funding sources in the regional Constrained Long Range Plan are presently not sufficient to construct the MIS proposed transportation improvements. Thus the Study must develop more detailed costs with an initial funding and financial strategy for the Build Alternatives. The financial strategy will examine institutional issues as they could potentially affect the funding of highway and transit elements of the alternatives.

- Cost to the communities of increased Metrorail or feeder bus service

Response: The Study will develop the costs of increased rail or transit service on the communities as part of the financial evaluation of the TSM and Build Alternatives. The Study will also evaluate the effects of the Build Alternatives on municipal services, municipal tax revenue, expenditures, and tax base.

- Length of time before implementation of any of the I-66 multimodal improvements and fear that they will be obsolete at the time of implementation

Response: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) mandates that federal agencies prepare a detailed statement on the environmental impacts of major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the environment. The anticipated completion date for proposed I-66 multimodal improvements reflects both the time required to complete the NEPA process and the time required to design, obtain environmental permits, and construct the components of the Preferred Alternative. Assuming continued funding availability, construction of the preferred alternative would be 7 to 9 years from now. This schedule assumes approximately 3 years for this Study, 2 to 3 years for design and environmental permitting, and 2 to 3 years for construction. The Study will take into account current and anticipated transportation and land use development of the corridor through the year 2025. Between now and implementation of the components of the Preferred Alternative, VDOT will continue to undertake minor improvements to I-66.

- Phasing sequence of the transit and highway elements of the I-66 multimodal improvements

Response: The MIS concluded that a multimodal transportation strategy is required to accommodate projected travel demand in the study area. The timing of modal elements included and the extent of the coverage provided may both be phased into service based on funding sources available. The Study will, therefore, examine the financial feasibility and funding options for both the highway and transit elements. The issue of phasing will then require public policy decisions. For example, the Commonwealth of Virginia, local jurisdictions, and WMATA will need to make a policy decision based on the transit element financial plans prepared for the Build Alternatives.

Technical analysis from the MIS showed that certain highway improvements would need to be made to allow the extension of Metrorail in the corridor west of Vienna. Regardless of the ultimate timing of future improvements, a goal of this study is to determine a cross section and facility locations for future improvements that will accommodate the needed rail, bus transit, park and ride, and highway facilities resulting in a preferred alternative.