



Environmental Documentation for Route 28 Corridor Coordination Meeting with FCDOT and NOVA Parks

Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Wednesday, September 12, 2018, 10:00 AM

A Coordination Meeting with Fairfax County Department of Transportation and NOVA Parks representatives was held on the above date and time for the Environmental Documentation for Route 28. Meeting participants are listed below:

Name	Organization	Phone	Email
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Stuart Tyler	Parsons Project Manager	571-437-3098	stuart.tyler@parsons.com
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Joe Springer	Parsons/Traffic	202-775-3493	joseph.s.springer@parsons.com

The discussions are summarized below by agenda topic. Action items are highlighted in **bold** text.

1. Introductions

Meeting attendees introduced themselves (see table above). Stuart indicated that the meeting was held to update Fairfax County on project activities and to apprise NOVA Parks of the recent study efforts. He explained that the current task was a follow-on to JMT's 2017 *Route 28 Corridor Feasibility Study*, which developed alternatives along Route 28 and on either side. Three of the alternatives from that study (2A, 2B, and 4) were being advanced to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase (and later in the meeting, Stuart showed a map of and described these three alternatives to Mike to bring him up to speed; Mike asked if 2B was the Preferred Alternative and Elizabeth clarified that 2B was the highest ranked of the alternatives studied in the Feasibility but Prince William County had not identified a Preferred Alternative at the conclusion of that study).

The current task order represented a fact-finding exercise to get a more precise sense of the level of potential impacts. JMT's study assessed impacts at a high level. As part of the current effort, field surveys have been completed to pin down the limits of environmental resources. Coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has also been completed to identify the level of NEPA document that would be initiated, as further discussed below.

2. Update on Project Activities (PowerPoint slides)

NEPA Concurrence Form

Stuart stated that following discussions with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and FHWA, FHWA concurred that an EA would be an appropriate level of NEPA document at this time. He added that this direction could change if circumstances warrant, depending on the study findings. He said the purpose of an EA is to determine if there are significant impacts, thus the reason to start there as opposed to moving forward first with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

T&E Survey

Stantec mapped species habitat for three federally listed and two state listed threatened or endangered species within the 250-foot-wide corridors of Alternatives 2A, 2B, and 4 (but did not perform species presence surveys). All but the northern long-eared bat are aquatic species. Stuart stated that, within the 250-foot-wide corridors, Alternative 2B had the most acreage of species habitat while Alternative 4 had the least.

Initial coordination has been completed with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to identify listed species potentially occurring in the area, and further coordination will be conducted during the course of the EA. A “may affect” determination will be made initially based on the presence of habitat, and then depending on the outcome of species surveys that will be completed in the next task order (Elizabeth confirmed that the scope of work for the next task order should include species surveys), this conclusion could change to “no affect”, “not likely to adversely affect”, or “likely to adversely affect”.

Wetlands & WOUS

Stuart stated that Stantec delineated wetlands and streams within the 250-foot-wide corridors, finding that Alternative 2B had the highest quantities and Alternative 4 the least. He indicated that the next step would be to shift the roadway templates within the corridors to minimize and/or avoid impacts to these water resources. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is constrained by regulations to approve for permitting only the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) that meets the purpose and need, so the environmental documentation will have to show that all efforts were made to avoid and minimize impacts to streams and wetlands.

Cultural Resources

Stuart summarized that JMT used the American Battlefield Protection Program Study Area to quantify impacts to battlefields, which “represents the historic extent of the battle as it unfolded across the landscape.” He added that the Core Area “represents the areas of fighting on the battlefield.” Unlike the Study and Core Areas, which are based only on historical events, the Potential National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) boundaries (PotNR) “represents the ABPP’s assessment of a Study Area’s current integrity (the surviving landscape and features that convey the site’s historic sense of place)”. The latter will be used to represent the “historic

property” boundaries of the battlefields¹ to assess potential impacts in the cultural resources surveys, which will be documented in the EA.

Archaeology. Dovetail completed a Phase IA survey to assess archaeological potential within the 250-foot-wide corridors. Alternative 2B passes through a larger portion of the undeveloped, high probability area north of Bull Run than Alternatives 2A and 4. Road construction in that area may impact undisturbed Civil War resources. The NRHP-listed Mitchell’s Ford Entrenchments, located within Alternative 2A, also likely contain archaeological components. Due to extensive development along Route 28, Alternative 4 potentially impacts fewer intact archaeological resources than Alternatives 2A and 2B. A Phase I survey will be completed for the Preferred Alternative once selected.

Architecture. Dovetail recommended that none of the neighborhoods surveyed within the corridor are eligible for the NRHP. Only one resource, the Mitchell’s Ford Entrenchments mentioned above, was previously listed in the NRHP and Dovetail recommends that this resource retains sufficient integrity and should remain listed in the NRHP.

Battlefields. Dovetail identified four previously recorded battlefields within the project area: Blackburn’s Ford Battlefield (029-5117), First Battle of Manassas (076-5335), Manassas Station Operations Battlefield (076-5036), and Second Battle of Manassas (076-5190). The alternatives lie within the PotNRs of Blackburn’s Ford and First Manassas. Manassas Station and Second Manassas are located within the project area; however, the PotNRs of these two battlefields are not affected by the alternatives currently being considered.

Regulations protecting historic properties include Section 4(f)², which applies if there is a use (permanent, temporary, or constructive); and Section 106³, which relates to effects on historic properties that may not necessarily involve a direct use of the property. **NOVA Parks indicated that they will be a consulting party in the Section 106 process.** Stuart concluded by indicating that a least harm analysis would be completed during the NEPA phase to determine which alternative would do the least harm while still meeting purpose and need.

¹ “Historic property” is defined in the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s regulations as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. The term includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and that meet the National Register criteria. (36 CFR 800.16 (l)(1))

² Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 requires consideration of parks and recreational areas of national, state, or local significance that are both publicly owned and open to the public; publicly owned wildlife and waterfowl refuges of national, state, or local significance that are open to the public to the extent that public access does not interfere with the primary purpose of the refuge; and historic sites of national, state, or local significance in public or private ownership regardless of whether they are open to the public.

³ Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the effects of federally funded projects on historic properties and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on such projects prior to the expenditure of any federal funds.

Other Sensitive Resources

Stuart presented the information gathered on low-income and minority populations in the study area. He stated that a comparative analysis among the alternatives had not been completed yet, just information gathering. Elizabeth asked what a minority population is. Stuart indicated that a minority population includes citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States who are African-American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian-American, American Indian, or Native Alaskan.

Minority populations were analyzed using 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) data to identify any block groups with minority populations over 50% of the total population, or any block groups with a minority population “meaningfully greater” than the value of the block group with the lowest percentage of minority population within the study area, plus an additional 10 percent of that value (VDOT’s methodology). In the case of this study area, the lowest block group minority percentage is 11.75%. Ten percent greater than this is 12.92%. Those block groups with a minority population greater than 50% of the total population are highlighted in purple in the slide, and those greater than 12.92% of the population but less than 50% are highlighted in light purple.

There are no low-income populations based on Census data; however, there could be localized populations in the area that are not captured in the Census data (additional data gathering will take place as part of the EA).

Exact numbers of residential and commercial relocations have not yet been determined; thus far, numbers have been generated of parcels within the 250-foot-wide corridors that may be impacted by the project. Finally, parks and recreation areas within the corridor have been mapped. Stuart noted that Bull Run Regional Park would likely be one of the more sensitive locations of concern for this project. Bull Run Regional Park is protected under Section 4(f), Section 106, and Section 6(f)⁴.

Stuart mentioned the letter submitted by NOVA Parks during the 2017 Feasibility Study that expressed concerns about Alternative 2B. Mike confirmed that NOVA Parks was opposed to Alternative 2B because it traverses undisturbed areas of Blackburn’s Ford. Stuart indicated that the alternatives were being reexamined as part of the EA and that the alternative could possibly be realigned to more closely follow Old Centreville Road/Ordway Road to minimize impacts.

Stuart concluded by stating that the technical reports, once finalized, would be posted to the project website for review.

⁴ Section 6(f) refers to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program, which was established in 1965 by the federal government to expand public, outdoor recreation space. Section 6(f) provides matching funds in the form of grants to states or municipalities for acquisition, planning, or improvements to public outdoor recreation space. Any property in which LWCF money was used is considered a 6(f) resource. LWCF Act funds were used to improve Bull Run Regional Park, making it a Section 6(f) resource.

Traffic

Joe presented an update on the traffic data collected and processed. He described the locations of the machine counts and the turning movement counts and specified which intersections were carried forward to be studied in more detail. Several years of count data were available for these intersections (2014, 2016, and 2018) that varied in change (and showed both increases and decreases); therefore, a consistent 1% growth rate was applied to grow the counts to the base year of 2018. The turning movement counts were imported to Synchro and the levels of service (LOS) were determined for the 25 intersections carried forward. As shown in the slides, from 2018 to 2040, the LOS worsened, with the majority of the intersections performing at an E or F.

Travel time data was collected for six routes in the study area. This data was processed to identify the routes with the lowest speeds and highest congestion.

Crash data was collected from the TREDIS resource on the Commonwealth of Virginia DMV site. The intersections with the highest number of crashes were Route 28 and Machen Road, Route 28 and New Braddock Road, and Route 28 and Liberia Road. While there were few fatalities given the low speeds and congestion in the corridor, the number of injury and property damage crashes is high.

Joe explained the origin-destination (O-D) data developed using Streetlight (cellular) data (average weekday, average weekend, average day; all months except June, July, and August). The data was developed for the 37 zones in the MWCOG and Prince William County models. Data was shown for internal trips only, with the G5 zone having the most trips to and from. Staff were in the process of mapping the data and making it more user-friendly.

Todd asked when the data was collected, and Joe responded that the data collection effort took place in late May/early June (before school ended). **Todd stated that the results for the intersection of Yorkshire Lane and Old Centreville Road (slide 38, existing LOS B in AM, LOS C in PM) is questionable given the level of congestion he sees there on a daily basis. Joe will check on the data/analysis.**

Elizabeth stated that the descriptions of the travel time runs #5 and #6 should be expanded to better clarify their routes (slide 40).

3. Update from Fairfax County on Route 28 Widening Project

Todd began by providing a summary of the project. Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance (NVTA) funding has been reduced from \$38 million to \$16 million; therefore, while eight lanes is the ultimate configuration (Compton Road to New Braddock Road would be 4 lanes SB and 3 lanes NB, then the 4th lane in the NB direction would be added just before New Braddock Road to make it 8 lanes approaching Route 29), only six lanes will be built at this time. A shared-use path is provided on both sides of the roadway (although it may have been narrowed in the southern section, and **Elizabeth asked for more information on the typical section**) and a 32-foot median is being maintained along most of the corridor, with the median width reducing somewhat where ROW is constrained in the southern section. While HOV has been considered in the corridor, the

group discussed that an HOV lane should not be coded in the travel demand model within Fairfax County.

ROW will be acquired and the design completed for the ultimate configuration, including stormwater management, and the widening to eight lanes would be completed when funding become available. The six-lane widening is being completed to the outside so that the additional two lanes, when constructed, would fall within the median. Two options were being considered at Ordway Road and Old Centreville Road (#1 = improvements at same location; #4 = extend Old Centreville Road south to tie into Ordway Road south of the current T-intersection (and abandon Compton Road between Old Centreville Road and Route 28)). Selection will depend on funding.

Traffic has been updated (2040 No Build, 2040 6/7/8 Hybrid, and 2040 6 lanes); this analysis assumed no changes in the Route 28 corridor within Prince William County. The AM peak has been examined to determine when the six lanes fail, and findings indicate that would be around 2030-2035. A White Paper is being produced to document this analysis and the findings.

Todd summarized that a Categorical Exclusion (CE) was completed for the project:

- No NRHP properties in the corridor.
- A preliminary Jurisdictional Determination (JD) has been obtained from USACE.
- The project avoids Bull Run Regional Park as the southern terminus is the park entrance just north of the Bull Run bridge.
- Most impacts are due to the stormwater management facilities.
- Coordination with utilities is ongoing, with about 50 poles needing relocation.
- Right-of-way strips of about 5 to 10 feet wide will be required from approximately 50-60 parcels.
- Air and noise were completed for the ultimate configuration; some noise walls would be required north of Compton Road.

The schedule is to issue a Design-Build RFQ by December 2018/January 2019, issue an RFP by Spring 2019, and award the contract by the end of 2019, with opening by late 2022/early 2023.

A public hearing will likely be held in January 2019 after the RFQ is issued.

4. Schedule

VDOT is currently reviewing all of the technical reports (and traffic once received), with a turnaround of approximately 30 days.

Mike asked when we would know the Preferred Alternative. The team discussed that a Preferred Alternative, if the analysis steers us in that direction, could be presented at the Public Hearing.

The schedule for the EA, once developed, would be shared with the group.

Links to the Fairfax County and Prince William County projects would be included on each of the project websites.

5. Next Steps

- Finalize technical reports.
- Refine the alternative typical sections and alignments.
- Draft Purpose and Need.
- Prepare scope of work and budget for next task order (EA). Dovetail will be assisting with Section 106 coordination and Stantec will conduct species surveys.
- First Public Information Meeting is expected sometime in mid-November (if enough additional information on the alternatives and their corridor widths has been developed by that time).

Prepared by: Surbhi Ashton

This meeting summary reflects the preparer's understanding of the discussions at the meeting. This summary shall initially be considered as draft, open to comments for a period of five (5) business days beyond the date of initial issuance. If no comments are received within five (5) business days, this meeting summary shall be considered final.