

WELCOME

Coalfields Expressway, Sections I and II

Thank you for attending tonight's Location Public Hearing. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is evaluating changes to the location of Section I and Section II of the proposed Coalfields Expressway (CFX, U.S. Route 121).

The purpose of tonight's meeting is:

- To receive citizen comments on the changes to the location of Section I and Section II of the proposed Coalfields Expressway and the Environmental Assessment completed for Section II.
- To share information on the study process and its current status.



Please take the time to examine the information, ask questions, and provide any comments or suggestions you may have. Your input is needed as part of the environmental review process and it is important.

Comment sheets are available for written comments and may be submitted tonight or by postal or electronic mail after the meeting until August 24, 2012. A VDOT representative is also available to record your comments orally. All comments received will be reviewed and considered by the project study team.

Thank you for attending.

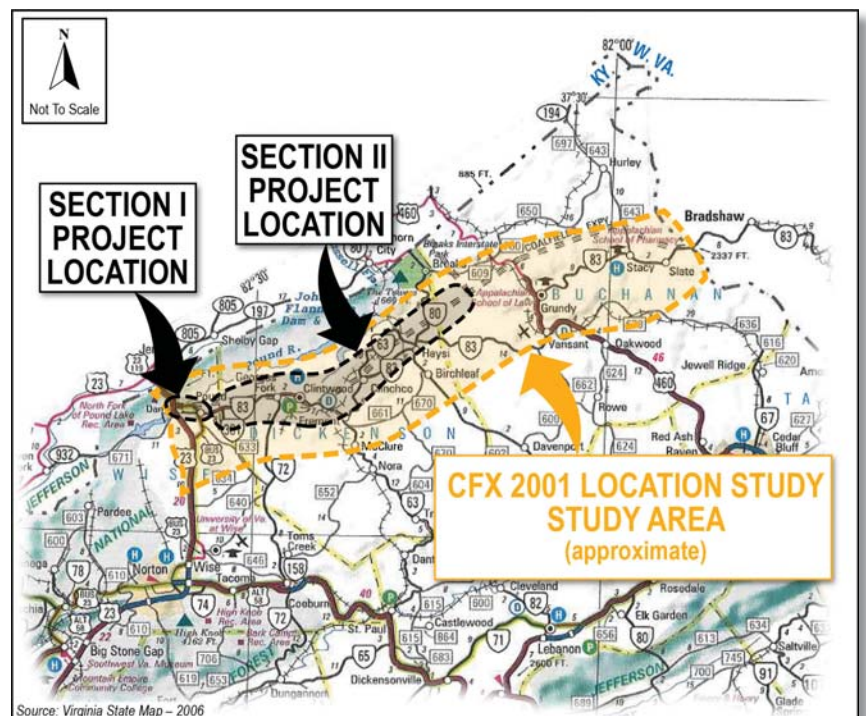
PROJECT HISTORY

- The National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 designated the Coalfields Expressway (CFX) as a congressional High Priority Corridor and included it in the National Highway System.
- In 1998, Congress approved the Transportation Efficiency Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21), which appropriated an additional \$1 million for the planning and design of the CFX in Virginia.
- The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the CFX were completed in 2001. The ROD identified Alternative F1 as the selected alternative and noted that the project would be designed and constructed in numerous phases.
- Under provisions of the Virginia Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA), VDOT's PPTA private partners have proposed revisions to Alternative F1.
- An environmental reevaluation has been completed for the changes to CFX Section I and an Environmental Assessment has been prepared to serve as a reevaluation of the FEIS as it pertains to Section II of the CFX.

PURPOSE AND NEED

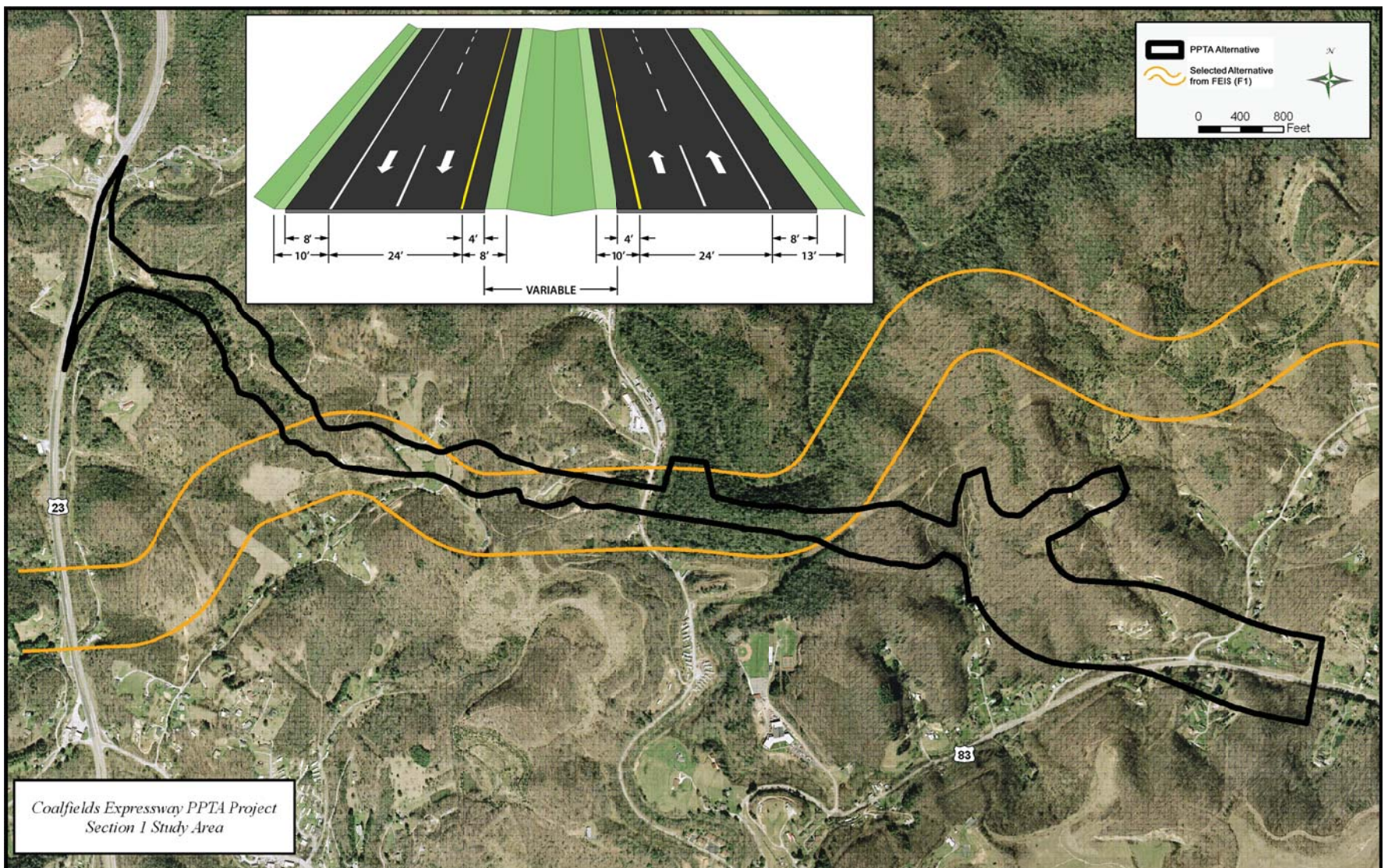
The purpose of constructing the CFX is to address the following needs:

- Improve mobility and safety.
- Support economic development, including tourism.
- Satisfy Congressional initiatives.



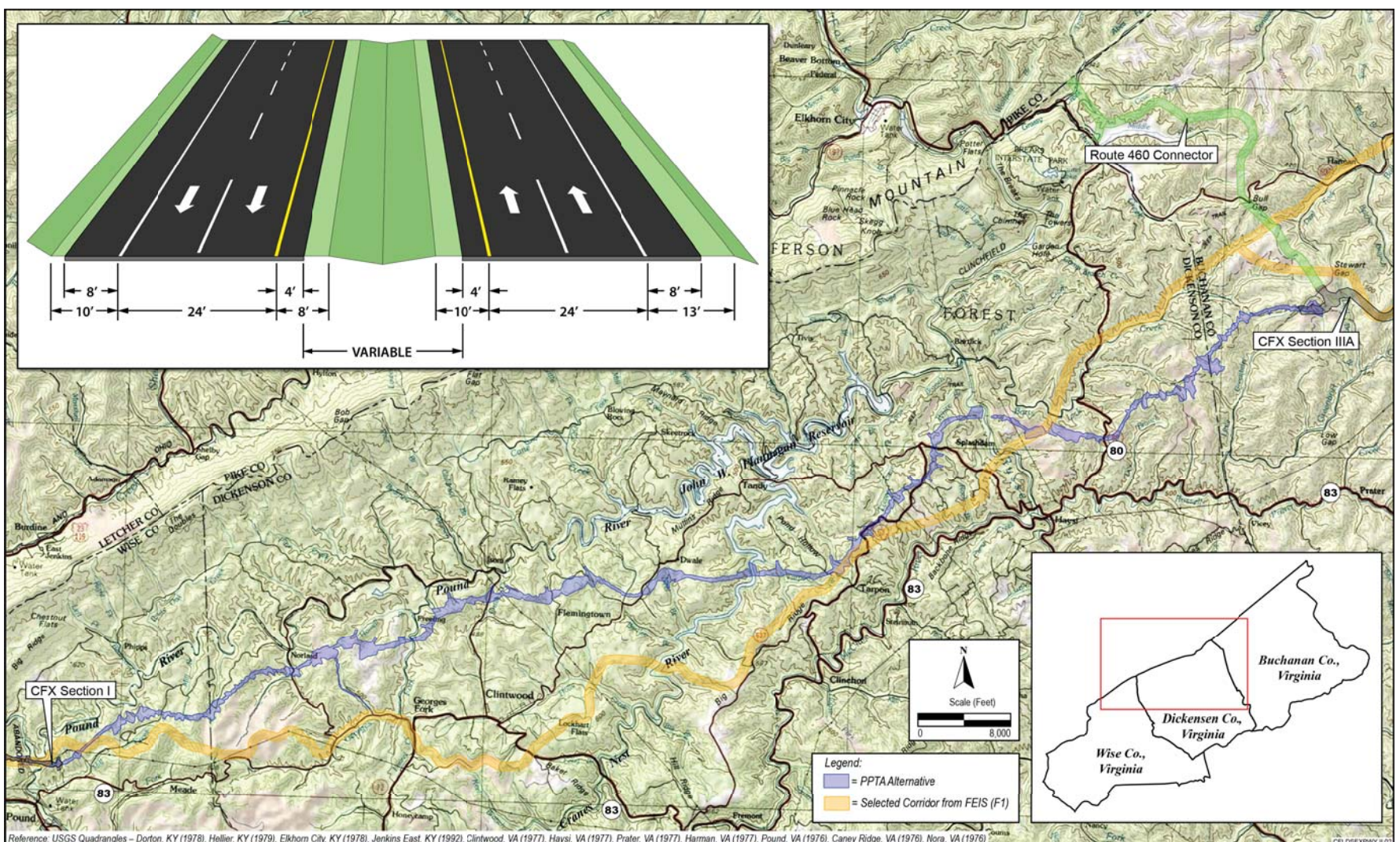
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ROADWAY – SECTION I

The proposed alignment of the PPTA Alternative and Alternative F1 are shown in the figure below, along with a typical cross-section of the proposed roadway. The PPTA Alternative is similar to Alternative F1; however, some shifts are proposed to provide a somewhat straighter alignment and to connect with the nearby Route 83 east of the Town of Pound.



DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ROADWAY – SECTION II

Section II of the CFX is approximately 26 miles long and extends from the east end of Section I near its connection with Route 83 in Wise County to the proposed Route 460 Connector in Buchanan County (where CFX IIIA begins). The CFX would be a four-lane, limited access primary highway and it would be designated as U.S. Route 121. The typical cross-section for the new roadway and the alignments of Alternative F1 and the PPTA Alternative are shown below.



- The PPTA Alternative shifts the proposed CFXII alignment as much as two to three miles.
- The PPTA Alternative is still within the study area considered in the FEIS and crosses similar terrain and involves substantially similar environmental and social conditions as the selected Alternative F1 while also providing a somewhat straighter alignment.
- Shifting the alignment would reduce costs approximately 45% compared to VDOT's traditional design-bid-build process.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - SECTION I

RESOURCE	REMARKS
Traffic / Transportation	The traffic forecast update shows approximately 70% increase in average daily traffic volumes by new design year of 2035 over volumes reported in FEIS for 2020 (from 3,100 to 5,000 vehicles/day).
Relocations	The FEIS reported an estimated 7 residential relocations for Alternative F1 within the corridor corresponding to the modifications assessed in the Reevaluation (i.e., Segment 159 and a portion of Segment 118A in the selected corridor and a portion of Segment 150 in Alternatives A and C). An estimate of 25 residential relocations has been developed for the PPTA Alternative. While an exact estimate of the number of relocations cannot be made until more detailed design work is completed, it is expected that many of the homes and other buildings in the vicinity of the east end of the project can be avoided.
Noise	As in the original analysis presented in the FEIS, the results of the current analysis indicate that future build-condition noise levels outside the proposed construction limits would not approach or exceed the FHWA noise abatement criterion of 67 dBA. Therefore, no noise impacts are expected under this criterion. A detailed noise analysis will be performed during the final design phase of the project using final engineering specifics.
Air Quality	The project is located in area that is in attainment of all NAAQS. While forecasted traffic volumes have increased due to extension of the design year farther into the future, the increases are not substantial enough to meaningfully change the air analysis results from the FEIS. Mobile source air toxics (MSATs) were not evaluated in the FEIS. Based on FHWA's 2006 Interim Guidance on Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents, the project is of a type that would have low potential for mobile source air toxics effects. On a regional basis, EPA's vehicle and fuel regulations, coupled with fleet turnover, will over time cause substantial reductions that, in almost all cases, will cause region-wide mobile source air toxics to be significantly lower than they are today.
Threatened and Endangered Species	No impacts to federally listed threatened or endangered species are anticipated.
Surface Waters	The FEIS reported approximately 1,900 linear feet of stream impacts within segments corresponding to Section I of the Coalfields Expressway. The analysis for this Reevaluation indicates that approximately 9,400 linear feet of perennial and intermittent streams and approximately 700 linear feet of ephemeral channels would be impacted by the project. During the detailed design phase, efforts will be made to reduce stream impacts to the extent practicable. Precise calculations of impacts to waters of the U.S. will be made during the permitting stage of this project. Further, compensatory mitigation measures will be developed in consultation with the permitting agencies to offset unavoidable impacts.
Wetlands	The FEIS reported no wetland impacts within segments corresponding to Section I of the Coalfields Expressway. The analysis for this Reevaluation indicates that approximately 3.6 acres of wetlands would be impacted by the project. This increase can be attributed in part to the more-intensive field identification efforts employed for the Reevaluation as compared with those for the original studies, which encompassed a much larger area and multiple alternatives. Much of the alignment generally follows the path of the original selected alternative, or another alternative that was evaluated in the FEIS but not selected. As the design process proceeds, additional efforts will be undertaken to reduce the wetland impacts to the smallest amount practicable. All unavoidable impacts will be offset by compensatory mitigation to be developed in consultation with federal and state water quality permitting agencies.
Hazardous Waste Sites	A review of Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy databases reveals one inactive coal mine, #12704AA1, in the south central portion of the study corridor. It is possible that other abandoned coal mines or prospects exist in the area. A former surface strip mine operation owned by the Curts Coal Company is located outside the project corridor; however, it is in the general area.
Public Parklands	No publicly owned parks or recreation areas would be affected by the project.
Section 4(f) Evaluation	The project would not require the use of any Section 4(f) properties (public parks or recreation areas, historic properties, or wildlife refuges).
Scenic Byway	Route 23 is a designated Scenic Byway and VDCR requests that the integrity of the scenic corridor should be maintained and recommends landscaping enhancements at the intersection to mitigate construction impacts.
Historic and Archaeological Resources	No historic properties would be affected by the project.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - SECTION II

RESOURCE	REMARKS
Traffic / Transportation	The existing transportation network and travel patterns have not changed. Traffic volume forecasts have been updated.
Land Use	Much of the land within the study area is uninhabited due to the terrain. Residential and commercial activities generally are clustered along existing roads. Although the PPTA Alternative shifts most of the alignment away from the original selected Alternative F1 corridor, the land uses that would be converted to highway right-of-way are similar in character within the two alternatives.
Environmental Justice	Analysis of census data did not reveal any minority populations or low income populations in concentrations higher than their respective counties. Therefore, there are no Environmental Justice populations that would be disproportionately affected by the project.
Relocations	The PPTA Alternative would require approximately 53 relocations. The comparable section of Alternative F1 was estimated to have 95 relocations.
Visual and Aesthetics	The study area is characterized by steep valleys and ridges which are primarily forested. Viewsheds are limited due to the rugged terrain and winding valleys. While the locations of visual effects would be different under the PPTA Alternative as compared to Alternative F1, the character of the effects would be substantially similar.
Topography, Geology, Soils, Mines and Minerals	Designs would take into account the mountainous terrain. Under the PPTA Alternative, through the agreement with the PPTA partners, much of the alignment will have been mined and left graded in preparation for the expressway infrastructure. Coal seams can produce low levels of acid drainage which can prematurely degrade infrastructure.
Farmlands	During preparation of the EIS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reviewed the study area and determined that it did not contain prime farmland. Notwithstanding, lands used for grazing and forage were counted as farmland and impacts to such lands amounted to approximately 99 acres for Alternative F1. A review of NRCS online soils mapping and information shows that approximately 98 acres of prime farmland soils are within the limits of the PPTA Alternative.
Noise	A noise analysis for the PPTA Alternative indicates that Design Year Build (2035) noise levels are anticipated to create a substantial increase in noise at one location, representing one residence. However, due to the mountainous terrain of the project corridor, noise abatement is not considered to be feasible at this time. Within the limits of CFXII, Alternative F1 also would have one noise impact location.
Air Quality	The results of air quality modeling done for the FEIS show that no violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are expected. Since the area and expected use of the facility have not changed, and since the updated traffic volumes are well below the threshold for consideration of quantitative analyses of carbon monoxide and other pollutants, the project is not expected to interfere with the attainment or maintenance of the NAAQS.
Federal Lands, John W. Flannagan Reservoir	Alternative F1 and the PPTA Alternative both would cross the Cranes Nest River arm of the John W. Flannagan Reservoir and federal lands associated with it owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Reservoir encompasses approximately 1,145 acres; the Corps-owned land surrounding it encompasses approximately 8,274 acres. There are 11 recreation areas designated within the Flannagan Reservoir property, none of which would be affected by either the PPTA Alternative or Alternative F1. When applying Section 4(f) to multiple-use public land holdings, only those portions of such lands that function for, or are designated in the plans of the administering agency as being for, significant park, recreation, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge purposes are subject to the provisions of Section 4(f). (23 CFR 774.11(d)). Accordingly, none of the right-of-way through Flannagan Reservoir lands would constitute a Section 4(f) use.
Parks and Recreational Resources	The Cranes Nest River Trail along the east side of the Cranes Nest River would be bridged by either alternative as part of the bridging across the Cranes Nest River. Accordingly, there would be no Section 4(f) use of the trail.
Open Space Easements	According to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR) online database, there are no lands located in the vicinity of the project area that are considered Virginia Outdoors Foundation resources.
Historic Properties	No historic properties would be affected by either Alternative F1 or the PPTA Alternative. This determination has been confirmed by architectural and archaeological surveys conducted within the area of potential effects and coordination with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
Habitat and Wildlife	Primary impacts to wildlife would be the elimination of habitat and the displacement of wildlife utilizing such habitat. The new road would also contribute to fragmentation of wildlife habitat and potential interruption of wildlife movements. Other impacts may occur in the form of road kills as animals migrate or wander across the roadway in search of food and cover. This project would result in the impact of less than one half of one percent of the forest in Dickenson and Buchanan Counties.
Threatened and Endangered Species	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has identified six federally listed threatened or endangered species for the counties within which the project is located or in adjacent counties. A separate technical memorandum provides details on investigation and evaluation efforts with respect to threatened and endangered species.
Waters of the U.S., including Wetlands	Surface waters in the study area consist of two rivers, named streams, unnamed tributaries, wetlands, and ponds. These comprise approximately 63,624 linear feet of streams and 34.53 acres of wetland.
Floodplains	The current proposed corridor crosses three water bodies that have 100-year floodplains associated with them, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
Water Quality	Several streams crossed by the alignment have been identified by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality as "impaired" under provisions of Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act for water quality supporting wildlife, fish consumption, recreation, and aquatic.
Invasive Species	In accordance with Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species, the potential for the establishment of invasive terrestrial or aquatic animal or plant species during construction would be minimized by following provisions in VDOT's Road and Bridge Specifications.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	According to the U.S. Park Service's list of Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers, there are no designated rivers within Virginia or the study corridor. In addition, according to a list published by VDCR, there are no state scenic rivers within the project vicinity.
Hazardous Materials Sites	According to a review of available databases and observations during site visits, there are no National Priority List hazardous material sites or solid waste disposal sites located in the project vicinity for either alternative. None of the sites located within the vicinity of the project pose any special risks or concern and mostly consist of fuel spills that have been closed or remediated. All solid waste material resulting from clearing and grubbing, demolition, or other construction operations will be removed from the project area and disposed of according to regulations.

SCHEDULE & NEXT STEPS

SCHEDULE	
Date	Event
January 8, 2009	FHWA approved the Reevaluation for Section I
June 13, 2012	Environmental Assessment approved by FHWA for public availability
August 13 and 14, 2012	Public Hearing
August 24, 2012	Final day to submit comments
October 2012	Location decision by the Commonwealth Transportation Board
November 2012	Environmental Assessment revised, as appropriate, based on hearing comments and CTB decision
December 2012	Final decision on the Environmental Assessment by FHWA

Next Steps

The study team will review and evaluate the comments you provide to us tonight and during the comment period. The comments, along with other information developed during the study, will then be submitted to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for consideration in reaching a decision on the PPTA Alternative. Following the public availability period, the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Section II will be revised as appropriate to reflect changes in the proposed action or mitigation measures resulting from comments received on the EA or at the public hearing. It will then be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), along with a copy of the public hearing transcript, the recommendation of the preferred alternative, and a request that a final decision be made by FHWA.

Estimated start dates for right-of-way acquisition and construction are shown below:

	Section I	Section II
Right-of-Way	Fall 2013	Summer 2013
Construction	Fall 2014	Summer 2014

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to review the materials presented at this public hearing.

Your comments are valuable and greatly appreciated. VDOT will carefully consider all comments received at this public hearing and during the comment period.

You may leave your comments in the box provided at tonight's meeting. You may also record your comments orally at the designated recording station.

If you are not ready to provide your comments tonight, you may submit them by August 24, 2012 to the following address, which is also preprinted on the back of the comment sheet:

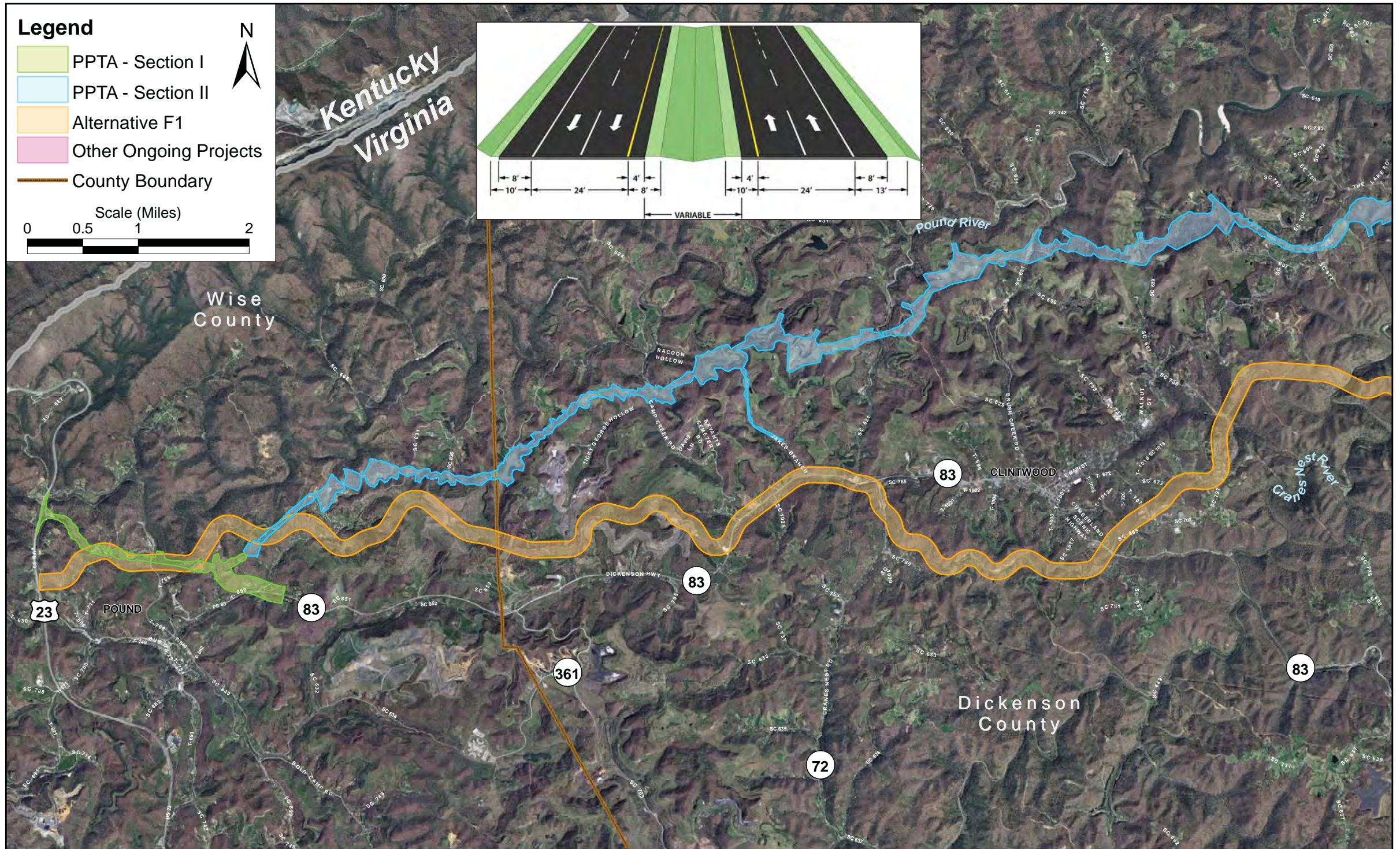
Mr. Michael Russell, P.E.
 District Administrator
 Virginia Department of Transportation
 870 Bonham Road
 Bristol, Virginia 24201

You also can submit comments by email to:

Bristolinfo@VDOT.Virginia.gov

Please reference "Coalfields Expressway Public Hearing Comment" in the subject line.

PPTA AND F1 ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS



PPTA AND F1 ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS

