

ALTERNATIVES & TRAFFIC MEMORANDUM

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

I-64 Improvements: Exit 205 to Exit 234
State Project No.: 00064-800-25632396; UPC 109885
Henrico County, New Kent County, James City County, York County

1.0 Introduction

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is studying the environmental consequences of the proposed widening of Interstate 64 (I-64) from Exit 205 - Route 33/New Kent Highway to 1.15 miles west of Exit 234 – Route 199/646/Humelsine Parkway/Newman Road (MM 204.96 to MM 233.26) from four to six lanes.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the previously approved studies on alternatives included in the NEPA documentation and traffic documentation prepared as part of the purpose and need development memorandum (January 2021), including, traffic forecasting and analysis in support of the preferred alternative. This information will also be used to support the completion of the Categorical Exclusion documentation to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this project.

2.0 Study Area

Figure 1 shows the study corridor for the proposed project. This area encompasses approximately 30 miles along I-64. The widening will take place in the median of I-64 within the existing right-of-way and will avoid impacts to existing interchanges. The widening of I-64 from Exit 205 to 1.15 miles west of Exit 234 will tie into the following recently completed widening project along I-64:

- Widening I-64 from four to six lanes from Exit 200 – I-295 to Exit 205 – Route 33 at the western terminus; and
- Widening I-64 from four to six lanes from approximately 1.15 miles west of Exit 234 – Route 199 to 1.05 miles west of Exit 242 – Route 199 at the eastern terminus.

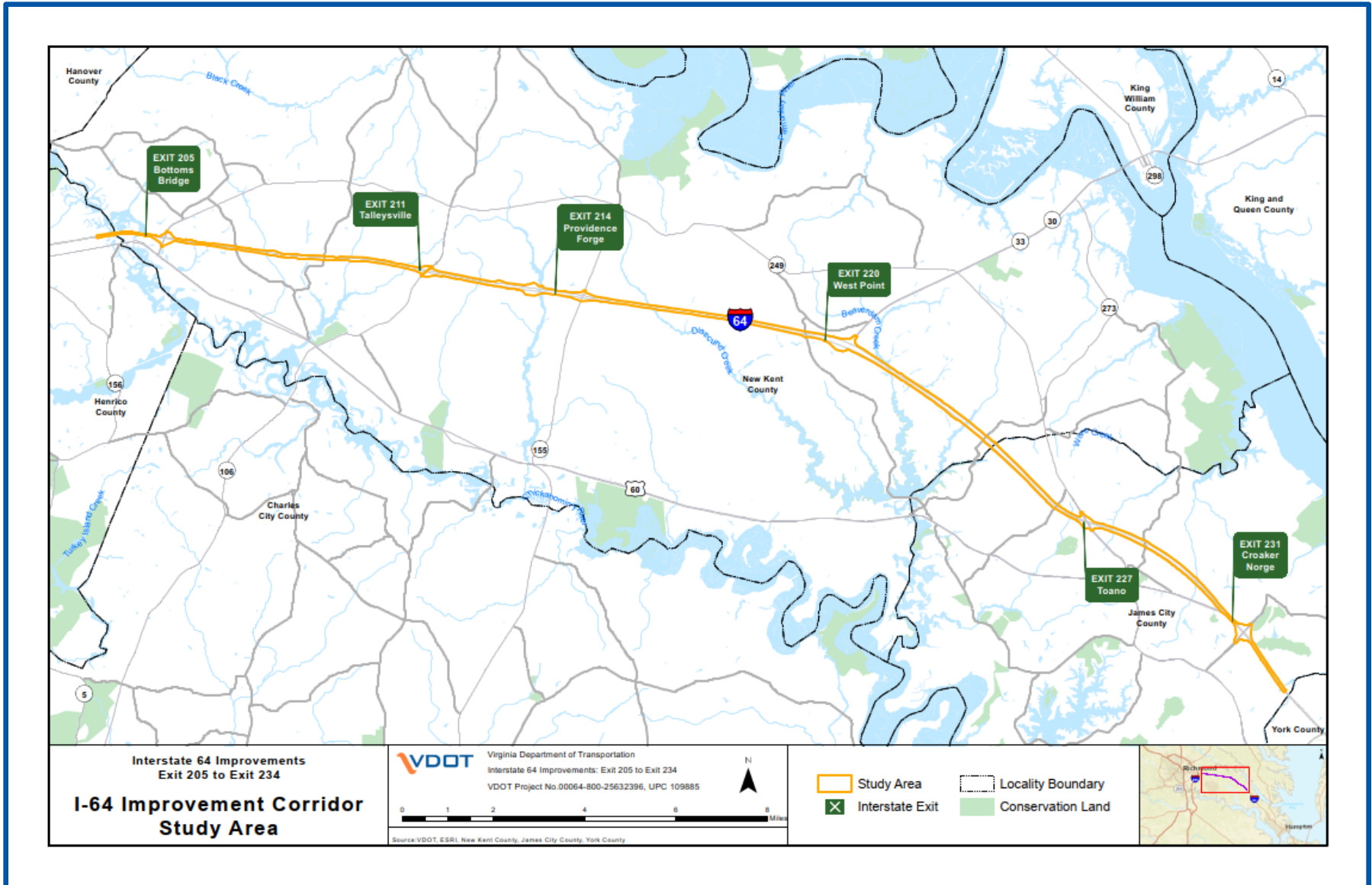
The project scope does not include improvements to the interchanges within the study area, with the exception of improvements to the auxiliary lanes along I-64 at the Exit 205 interchange at the western project terminus. It is assumed that all other auxiliary lanes along I-64 will remain in their current configuration.

Similar to the overall corridor study area, **Figure 2** shows the traffic analysis study (Operational and Safety Analysis Report [OSAR]) area, which only includes the I-64 mainline, including freeway segments, weaves, merges, and diverges. The study area does not include interchange junctions along the crossroads.

3.0 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve traffic operations and safety on I-64 from MM 204.96 to MM 233.26. The I-64 corridor in this area has recurring congestion, including congestion resulting from incidents along I-64, and high crash frequency and severity.

Figure 1: I-64 Improvement Corridor Study Area

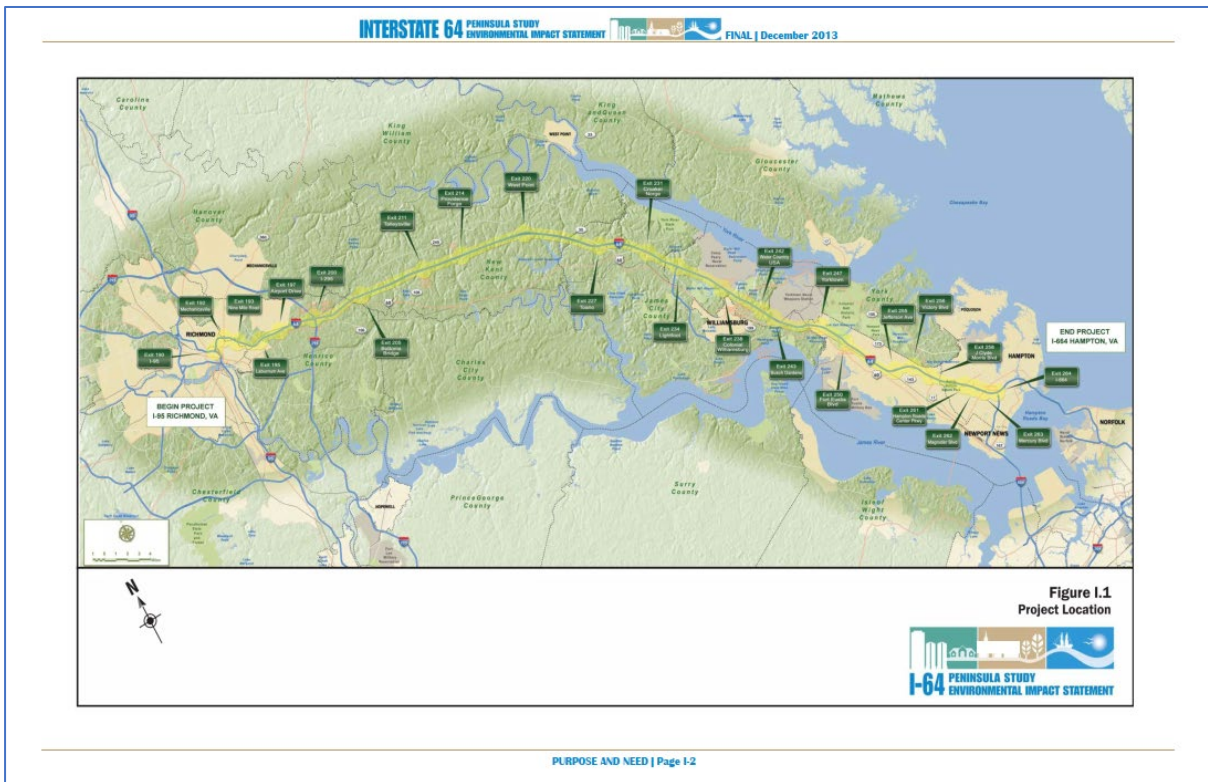


4.0 Previous Documentation

4.1 I-64 Peninsula Study Environmental Impact Statement

VDOT, in cooperation with FHWA, completed a Final EIS in 2013 for the I-64 Peninsula Study. The Final EIS evaluated options to improve 75 miles of the I-64 corridor from Exit 190 at the Interstate 95 (I-95) interchange in the City of Richmond to Exit 264 at the Interstate 664 (I-664) interchange in the City of Hampton (see **Figure 3: Final EIS Figure I.1**). The need elements identified in the Final EIS focused on addressing **capacity**, **roadway deficiencies**, and **safety** (VDOT, 2013).

Figure 3: Final EIS Figure I.1



4.1.1 Study Recommended Improvements

The alternatives retained for detailed analysis in the Draft EIS for the I-64 Peninsula Study included (VDOT, 2012):

- No Build
- Alternative 1A/1B General Purpose Lanes (inside/outside widening in either direction)
- Alternative 2A/2B All Tolled (inside/outside widening in either direction with tolling on the entire facility)
- Alternative 3 Managed Lanes (inside widening in either direction), which could consist of:
 - High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes
 - High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes
 - Express Toll Lanes (ETL)
 - Express Bus Lanes (EBL)

Based on the analysis and public involvement completed for the Draft EIS, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) selected Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative, as documented in the Final EIS. Alternative 1 was within the range of options provided by Alternatives 1A and 1B. Alternative 1 would allow the option to widen to the outside or within the median of the existing corridor – based on the needed number of lanes that were identified along the corridor (VDOT, 2013). Appendix L of the Final EIS also identified a potential phased approach for NEPA approvals of operationally independent sections of the Preferred Alternative.

Consistent with the documentation in the Final EIS, due to funding constraints, corridor length, and comments from cooperating agencies, VDOT and FHWA considered and agreed to phased implementation of the issuance of the NEPA approval. The phased approach was based on the identification of operationally independent sections (including additional supporting analysis, as necessary) and funding availability. Since the issuance of the Final EIS, VDOT has requested and FHWA has provided Records of Decisions (ROD) for the following operationally independent sections of the I-64 corridor based on Alternative 1¹:

- Section I – April 2014 ROD issued
 - Exit 255 to just east of Exit 247 (Yorktown Road/Route 238)
 - 6 miles
 - 1 additional travel lane in each direction
- Section II – June 2015 ROD issued
 - Exit 247 in Newport News to Exit 242 in Williamsburg
 - 7 miles
 - 1 additional travel lane in each direction
- Section III – August 2016 – ROD issued
 - Exit 242 to Exit 234 in York County
 - 8 miles
 - 1 additional travel lane in each direction
- Section IV (referred to as Section A) – January 2017 ROD issued
 - Exit 200 to Exit 205 in New Kent County
 - 5 miles
 - 1 additional travel lane in each direction

4.2 Interstate 64/664 Corridor Improvement Plan Study

As outlined in the Interstate 64/664 Corridor Improvement Plan, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), VDOT, and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) jointly conducted this study, which resulted in the I-64/664 Corridor Improvement Plan (Plan)². The purpose of this plan was “to identify a package of targeted operational, multimodal, and capital improvements that are expected to deliver safer and more reliable travel throughout the I-64 and I-664 corridors in Virginia.” (VDOT, 2021)

4.2.1 Study Recommended Improvements

Improvements recommended by the study include operational improvements, multimodal improvements, and mainline roadway improvements, including widening of existing segments.

¹ As of April 2022, FHWA does not support further completion of phased RODs.

² CTB IOEP Information: <https://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/ioep/default.asp>

Based on the analysis and public involvement completed for the Corridor Improvement Plan Study, the CTB approved the Study's recommendations to support safer and more reliable travel throughout the I-64 corridor.

5.0 Preferred Alternative

VDOT is identifying the Preferred Alternative as: adding one 12-foot general purpose (GP) lane in each direction along the I-64 corridor. The GP lanes will tie into the recently completed widening of I-64 from four to six GP lanes from Exit 200 – I-295 to Exit 205 – Route 33 at the western terminus and the widening of I-64 from four to six lanes from approximately 1.15 miles west of Exit 234 – Route 199 to 1.05 miles west of Exit 242 – Route 199 at the eastern terminus. The new GP lanes will be completed largely within the existing I-64 median. The project scope does not include improvements to the interchanges within the study area, with the exception of improvements to the auxiliary lanes along I-64 at the Exit 205 interchange at the western project terminus. It is assumed that all other auxiliary lanes along I-64 will remain in their current configuration. **Figure 4** shows the existing typical section while **Figure 5** shows the proposed typical section.

Figure 4: Existing Typical Section

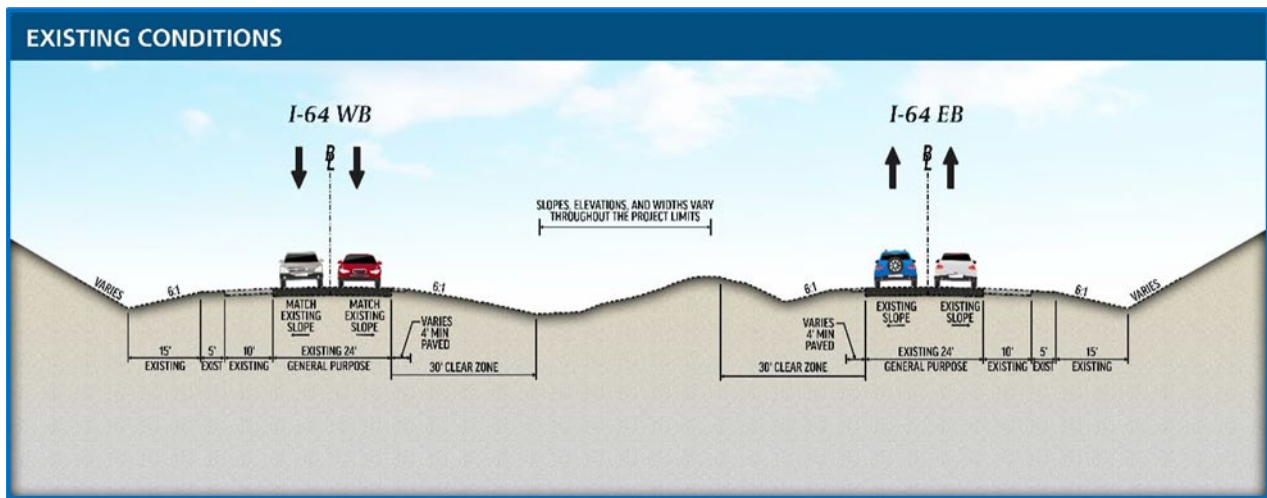
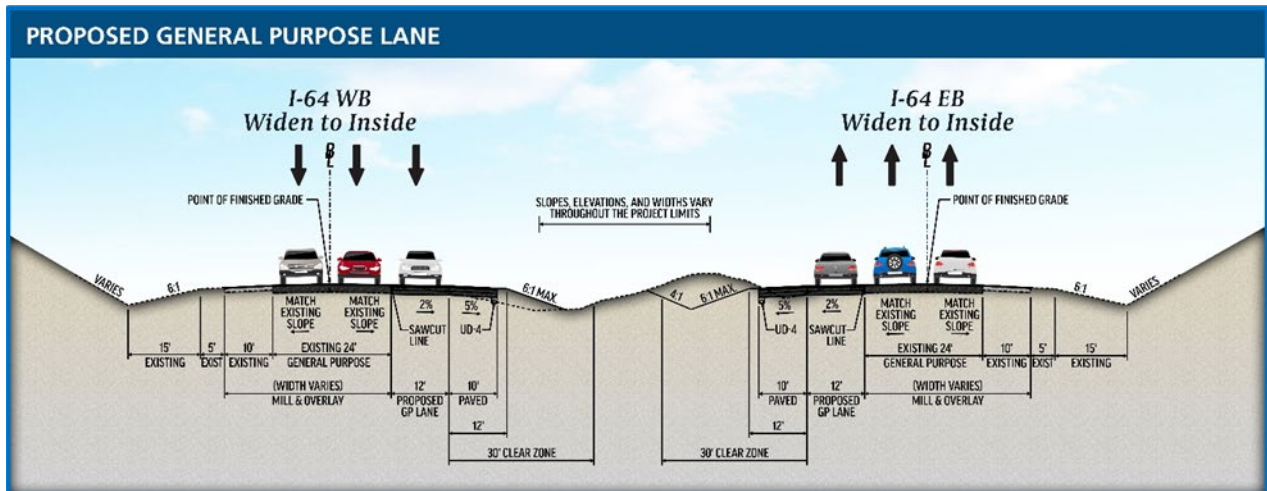


Figure 5: Proposed Typical Section



6.0 References

- American Society of State Highway and Transportation Officials (ASSHTO). 2016. *03 Managing the NEPA Process for Toll Lanes and Toll Road*. Retrieved December 2020 from: <https://environment.transportation.org/pdf/programs/ph03-2.pdf>
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- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2011. *Transportation Planning Requirements and Their Relationship to NEPA Approvals - Supplement to January 28, 2008 'Transportation Planning Requirements and Their Relationship to NEPA Process Completion'*. Retrieved December 2020 from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpr_and_nepa/tprandnepasupplement.cfm