



Bikeway-Walkway Staff Report:

Transportation Work/Tasking:

- ***Draper Mountain Trail System:*** This new trail system is still being planned and alternative construction methods are being evaluated. The folks in Pulaski County are interested in looking at ways to connect this new trail system to the existing New River Trail and other resources.
- ***Trails in Floyd:*** The committee is currently working with the County IDA and has been given the green light to proceed on phase one of the new trail. The IDA expects a hold-harmless agreement, liability insurance, and an adequate parking area constructed near the Phlegar House. The trail coincidentally has been given the name: The Phlegar House Trail. Phase one of the project is on the East side of the property and is approximately three quarters of a mile long.
- ***Radford Transit Committee:*** January 6th the City of Radford hosted a meeting with the consultant and potential stakeholders to discuss the compilation of surveys and review refined recommended routes, service frequencies, and funding scenarios. Based on the survey feedback obtained from the City and University over eighty eight percent (88%) of folks said they would support a new transit service and sixty five percent (65%) said they would use a system if provided. The Committee is anxiously awaiting a final report from DRPT and the consultant engineering firm that summarizes their findings and proposes recommendations. Next steps are to present the information to City council on Monday January 25th for consideration to apply for FY 2011 funding.
- ***Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan:*** The Bikeway-Walkway Committee has begun to redevelop and provide feedback on the contents of the plan revision. PDC staff has continued to work diligently on preparing quality mapping for the 2010 Plan. A small portion of meetings with each jurisdictional office have been completed and excellent feedback to improve the documents contents has been suggested. The new plan will also feature a section devoted to the processes of planning different facility types specifying design and funding resources. As mentioned in the previous plan update the new plan is geared towards identifying existing resources and providing vision for future projects by identifying potential multijurisdictional connections, historical points of interest, schools, and large employment centers. Individual meetings with each local government office will be scheduled to discuss potential future projects and goals.

Transportation Updates:

- ***Rural Long Range Plan:*** Traffic data is still being obtained by the consultant and recommendations to problematic areas attributed to safety and congestion deficiencies are still being evaluated. The first part of the technical document that is intended to be distributed to state and local government offices has been made available for your review. This portion of the document is the foundation for evaluating future improvements to the transportation network in the region. The mapping component and design recommendations are to follow and expected to

be completed by mid February. Once the Rural Transportation Technical Advisory Committee has approved the technical document a public version will be compiled that is intended to summarize the studies findings.

For more information: <http://virginiadot.org/projects/pdf/NRiverV.pdf>

- *I-81 Freight Rail Study*: A draft report of Virginia's Interstate 81 Freight Rail Study was issued today for public comment by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

DRPT, in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, was directed by the Commonwealth Transportation Board in October 2006, and later the General Assembly through the Appropriations Act of 2007, to conduct an I-81 Freight Rail Study in cooperation with VDOT's Multimodal Office and Norfolk Southern Railway to identify short-term rail improvements and to study the potential diversion of truck traffic to rail along the I-81 corridor.

The I-81 Freight Rail Study outlines a strategic approach to maximizing the capacity of freight rail in the corridor and diverting more trucks from highways. A copy of the draft study is available online at www.drpt.virginia.gov/studies/default.aspx.

The study reviewed current and future estimated rail and truck use on I-81 and determined the number of trucks that could potentially be diverted based on several factors that influence freight shipment decisions. Of the potentially divertible trucks, the study estimates a potential truck-to-rail diversion of between 965,000 and 1.6 million truck trips per year by 2035, depending on the adopted strategy.

The study evaluates strategies based on feasibility and potential to divert truck traffic from highways to rail in the I-81 corridor. Included was the consideration of open technology in which trucks and their trailers are rolled onto trains for long haul shipments.

The I-81 corridor in Virginia includes the region defined as the Crescent Corridor. The Crescent Corridor initiative is a Norfolk Southern multi-state initiative to establish a high-speed intermodal freight rail route between the Gulf Coast and the Northeast. The Commonwealth has programmed more than \$95 million to support the development of the initiative. In addition, Virginia is supporting a \$300 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program application to support new intermodal facilities, expansion of existing intermodal terminals and track improvements across the five partner states.

The action plan to maximize feasible truck-to-rail diversion is focused on rail capacity and infrastructure improvements. The study offers the following three recommendations:

- Advance the Crescent Corridor
- Investigate other potentially feasible truck to rail diversion strategies
- Continue to advance improvements identified in the I-81 Tier I Environmental Impact Statement

While the study confirms that rail has a significant role to play in providing congestion relief in the I-81 corridor, highway improvements will also be necessary to accommodate the projected 111-percent increase in truck traffic along the corridor by 2035.

The public is invited to provide comments on this draft study no later than Feb. 10, 2010, using any of the following methods:

- Send e-mail to drptpr@drpt.virginia.gov
 - Write to Public Information Office, DRPT, 600 E. Main St., Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219
 - Fax comments to (804) 225-3752
- *Attendance of Conference/Workshops:* In an effort to obtain new knowledge and information amongst the transportation community, Sharp attended the following conferences and events:
 - *Safe Route to Schools online Skills for Local Program Development:*
 - Designed for people who are directly involved in planning and implementing SRTS programs at the community level. The six-part course provided practical approaches, community-tested processes and tools to develop and implement strategies that do not require physical changes to the environment.
- For more information visit: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/training/>
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