

REGIONAL CONNECTORS STUDY

Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2023

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Attendees:

- **Portsmouth** - James Wright, Carl Jackson
- **Portsmouth Consultant Team (VHB)** – Kirsten Tynch, Brandon McAdams
- **HRTPO** – Pavithra Parthasarathi
- **Project Coordinator** - Camelia Ravanbakht
- **RCS Consultant Team (MBI)** – Lorna Parkins, Chris Largy, Joe Strange, Paul Prideaux (remote)

The meeting was held at 2:00 PM January 18, 2023 in person and via Teams. Agenda is attached. Noteworthy comments are outlined below:

- Portsmouth explained that they had their consultant VHB look at the likely alignment/footprint of a VA-164 widening. The attendees reviewed hard copies and the file was also distributed electronically.
 - VHB's primary assumption was that the additional two lanes would be managed lanes.
 - VHB's drawing adds an express (HOT) lane to the inside. It has allowance for 9' Min Lat Clearance. They assumed a 50' RR R/W and widened to the inside as possible. The most narrow R/W is at east end. VHB looked at possible widening to outside in that area (Wyatt Dr). With the exception of this area, the alignment fits largely within the existing R/W. They did not include any access to the express lanes from the interior interchanges between I-664 and the eastern end. Overall, VHB indicated they did not see any "deal breaker" impacts in their assessment of what could be built without impacts to the adjacent neighborhoods
- Portsmouth noted they are concerned about re-routed trucks during construction impacting neighborhoods, and also the emergency vehicle access in the Wyatt Drive area, resulting from past changes to access when the interchange was built – this is particularly an issue when trains block the at-grade crossing, leaving only one way in and out of the neighborhood.
- The group discussed the managed lane assumption, as HRTPO and MBI have not made this assumption in their respective modeling and analysis of the project. James Wright indicated that their understanding per discussions with Jeff Minnix was that new capacity would need to be managed lanes per the stipulations of the Elizabeth River Crossings agreement with VDOT, which they interpret to extend beyond interstates. Since VA 164 is part of the agreement, Portsmouth assumed the 'worst case scenario' for impacts by analyzing managed lanes.

- Lorna noted that the HRTPO regional model has included only conventional widening of VA 164 to 6-lanes and that the RCS team would look into this. Chris Largy noted that HOT lanes require a separation from the general purpose lanes and also requires some shoulders which widens the cross-section by about 4 feet overall. He also noted that 12' shoulders can also be converted to managed lanes in some cases.
- The group discussed drainage system issues, which neither team has fully modeled. VHB indicated they believe the existing stormwater management could be utilized with some modifications.
- VHB staff noted that bridges may need to be replaced/modified due to the widening, but there could be possible design exceptions for the widening profile to avoid/minimize this impact. If replaced, the impacts could affect side roads into neighborhoods
- The team discussed sound walls which are already very close to neighborhoods. They might have to be relocated/reconstructed and this cost should be included.
- Carl and James pointed out that impacts from large trucks during construction such as paving trucks, as well as impacts on the local economy from the disruption from construction are concerns. One possible strategy is to pay to expedite construction as a means of impact mitigation.
- The group reviewed the VHB drawings first eastbound, then westbound. In addition to the items noted above, they noted that in the western direction they widened to the inside as much as possible.
 - Challenging to end the HOT lanes prior to I-664 (in College Drive area)
 - Needed a certain amount of distance to allow the weaving movement
 - There were some other prohibitions in the area to allow for safe operations
 - Where Wyatt Drive gets very close to VA 164, there would be impacts to Wyatt Drive
- Next, the Michael Baker team discussed what they had assumed and how they approached the conceptual sketch of the VA-164 widening. Based on MPO modeling assumptions, Michael Baker modeled two new general purpose lanes. The team did a 3-D model to lay out the corridor widening and took the VDOT-CWRY (Commonwealth Railway) agreement into account. The intent was to consider where partial widening to the outside might be warranted to test a worst case scenario of community impacts, knowing that in later stages of design, the corridor likely could be tightened up to reduce impacts.
 - Joe Strange and Chris Largy described the CWRY lease agreement which requires consideration of the vertical break between CWRY drainage area and VDOT drainage area. The MBI concept does not encroach on the railroad drainage area.
 - MBI assumed no crash walls because it's a low-speed operation (same as VHB)
 - The team reviewed the typical section, noting that MBI did assume bridge overpass reconstruction as well as reconstruction and slight relocation of noise walls throughout the corridor, all of which is included in the RCS cost estimate.
 - The team noted that while they used a 3D model, it was based on aeriels and GIS data and not survey.
- Chris Largy reiterated that MBI developed worst-case and could go inside a little. The group discussed that with either version of the worst-case scenario, the direct neighborhood impacts are minimal/avoidable, but the indirect impacts as discussed pose concerns.
- With respect to drainage, James noted concerns about possibly adding more water quantity to the city's MS4 permit.
- The group noted that the MBI cross section does not extend as far east as VHB's and discussed how the '164 Connector' would interface with the VA 164 widening
- Lorna reviewed the action items. HRTPO and Michael Baker will look at the Elizabeth River agreement and talk to HRTAC about how to interpret it. If we need to convert to HOT, MBI will reset our sketches. This subject could also impact the Travel Demand Modeling and Operations analysis, which is the greater concern with

respect to scope and timeline. MBI left the hard copy drawing with Portsmouth but will also send a link to download the files.

Meeting Agenda:

- Portsmouth Presentation of Corridor Findings
- RCS Team discussion of corridor concept assumptions and findings
 - VDOT/CSX agreement
 - Project limits relative to I-664 Bowers Hill to College Drive project and VA 164 Connector concept
- Discussion

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