

ATTACHMENT 6A

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Corps of Engineers

Task 2 - We support following a step-wise process for alternatives development, which is discussed at the end of the Task 2 section. Some of these alternatives were previously examined in the Final SEIS for the Hampton Roads Crossing Study. **The study will take that approach.**

On page 8, Task 2.5, the sentence should be corrected to read: The impacts will be based on limits of disturbance. In that same section, wetland mitigation costs should be estimated for both tidal and non-tidal wetland impacts. **Change made.**

Task 3 - Determination of Candidate Alternatives: We support the use of evaluation criteria, presented in a matrix, table or other method that will facilitate comparison between the different alternatives. **The study will take that approach.**

Task 3.2 - We will offer comments on permissibility issues associated with the different alternatives, but the Corps cannot speak for the DEQ, VMRC, or other permitting agencies. These comments will not commit the Corps to any permitting course of action, nor will they be interpreted as endorsement of any particular alternative(s). **This language has been inserted into the scope.**

Also, the Corps can only permit the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative, or LEDPA, and we can't permit alternatives that obstruct or restrict navigation to the CIDMMA, or that will adversely affect other federal navigation projects. **This language has been inserted into the scope.**

Task 3.2(b), third paragraph: A key aspect of the evaluation parameters will be integrated with...(instead of integration). **Change made.**

Task 3.2(d) - Indirect and cumulative effects assessment should be conducted for the various alternatives. **Inserted into the scope.**

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City of Norfolk

We are not supportive of the approach that is being taken. **Working Group has decided to complete the study in a single phase (this is applicable to the comments in the next 2 paragraphs as well).**

These comments are preliminary and do not reflect a complete review. Our approach begins with an expectation that we do not write a “Study Completion” phase at this point. Our desire would be for the Working Group, at an appropriate time, to dedicate a meeting to discussing options for the approach to the remainder of the project, and the identification of Tasks for the next Phase. We do not believe that it is feasible, or necessary, to push this to an HRTPO Board meeting in November.

The approach taken with this Scope is not consistent with desires that we expressed when we asked to disconnect the RCS from the LRTP and create an “appropriate pace” for this project. Linked to that request (which was supported) are several key principles that we still feel are critical to follow.

- Make project involvement for the Working Group participants manageable
- Use a “stepwise” or “tiered” approach to eliminate wasted expenditures on unnecessary analysis.
- Allow the “addition” of items as desired based on knowledge gained during the process. We are exploring new areas of information-seeking that are likely to need adjusting or supplementing along the way, or generate additional questions to be considered.

We did not receive a schedule or fee proposal – these items (especially schedule) are critical to these scope/contract decisions. Notably, evaluating such in smaller chunks (stepwise approach), is one of the items that makes our involvement more manageable. **A draft schedule and budget were not prepared with the draft scope. It was decided to solicit feedback on the scope before developing a schedule and budget so that effort developing those items, which were likely to change, was not initiated until the scope was in better focus.**

The “Urban Planning/Transportation Systems”-oriented approach we are wanting to take (and have been promoting since the inception of this project) demands more investigation of “cross-Hampton Roads” travel markets and sensitivity than what appears to be included. We would want to see additional items in this area, and subsequently have that and other knowledge gained from Task 2, better inform ensuing activities. This should include a “base” alternative including the I-564/I-664 Connector, as a means of forming an understanding of the benefits of the increased accessibility that a new connection would provide. **An unconstrained travel demand model run will be added to the scope so that we can understand the “true” demand between the Peninsula and Southside.**

An early Phase 3 task should be an HCM/FREEVAL analysis of existing conditions (validation), and for the 2045 Baseline scenario. **This is included in Sections 4.8d and 4.8e and can be shown early in the schedule.**

TASK 2 – Development of Preliminary Alternatives

This task seems to contain multiple elements that overlap, and potentially conflict with, products and processes developed in Phase 2, and items contained in other tasks. While the task acknowledges use of existing information, to the greatest extent possible, it would appear to me that:

- the preliminary alternatives already exist (from the SEIS),
- the information that is described, at the level necessary for this “tier”, already exists and is obtainable from VDOT,
- The USACOE has already reviewed these and can offer comments/discussion regarding their impacts.

However named, this task could be boiled down to the Consultant gathering and summarizing this information for discussions within the Working Group, as part of the information base that would support identification of a next tier of alternatives. **A new subtask entitled “Summarize Background Information” has been added to the scope and includes compilation and presentation of existing documentation.**

Task 3.2: Conduct Permitability Assessments

The activities that are reflected in this task are too restrictive. It appears that this effort would completely ignore the benefits side of environmental assessment. It seems to be written to eliminate alternatives – potentially all new water crossings – before there is any “benefits” or “need” considerations even evaluated. **A travel demand model run, and subsequent traffic analysis will be performed on all alternatives in order to see the congestion levels of each. If the congestion reduction is significantly higher than other alternatives, permitability as a sole determining factor may not be used to automatically discard an alternative.**

TASK 4

Microsimulation (VISSIM) is not necessary for most, if not all, of the alternatives analysis. A tiered approach is not only feasible but desirable for the processes of developing, eliminating, and refining alternatives. TDM output can be used for some, HCM and FREEVAL analysis for some (all or partial corridors), and VISSIM if deemed necessary for final differentiations or refinement. **FREEVAL will be used to analyze all alternatives. However, in order to be able to demonstrate congestion relief benefits of a recommended alternative, VISSIM microsimulation models will be developed for the following:**

- Existing PM peak hour (for calibration)
- 2045 PM peak hour for 2045 no-build condition with the selected planning scenario
- 2045 PM peak hour for the Recommended Alternative with the selected planning scenario

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City of Portsmouth

Task 1: Public Engagement Plan

- Please include the Working Group oversight with each HRTPO staff approval. **Change made**
- Please substitute Working Group for “project management team”. **Change made**
- Who is the “Engagement Team”, will this be a subcontractor? **The Engagement team is a subset of the Consultant team. Consultant Team has replaced Engagement team throughout the scope.**
- In addition to print materials, please consider improving your online and social media presence. **This will be emphasized in the revised scope.**
- Portsmouth would like to offer The Churchland Library or Churchland High School as a possible public meeting locations, they are also very close to Western Branch. **The Working Group decided that the Churchland/Western Branch location for public meetings be changed to Chesapeake.**
- The online open house in Task 1.3 is a good idea, Portsmouth has some experience with Virtual Meetings. **No action necessary.**
- Page 4, Paragraph 2 should say “kiosks” not ziosks. **Ziosks will remain.**
- Task 1.4a Please continue to include meeting minutes on your website

Task 2: Preliminary Alternatives

- Please add the JRB, Route 17 and Bowers Hill to your corridor list. **Route 17 and JRB were added to the scope narrative. Bowers Hill is part of identified study segments already so there is no need to state it again.**
- Please consider incorporating the NEPA Merged Process which incorporates other state and federal agencies. **This was deemed inappropriate for this study given that it is not a NEPA study.**
- Please incorporate transit in your design alternative, such as a dedicated lane or tunnel for bus, LRT or BRT. **Transit will be considered as a stand alone alternative or as an element of a roadway alternative.**
- VDOT’s Jamestown Ferry is not a sufficient ferry alternative, please consider larger ferries that carry more vehicles or passenger ferries like the Elizabeth River Ferry. **Not applicable to this study since the operating characteristics (size and headways) of any proposed ferry service would not be part of the scope of work.**

Tasks 4-7:

- Have Tasks 4.1-4.7 been completed yet? Please incorporate a project schedule. **A project schedule will be developed with the next iteration of the scope.**
- Please incorporate a project budget. **A draft project budget will be developed with the next iteration of the scope.**
- Task 6.1 Please change to say “Weekly Coordination with **Working Group** and TPO Staff. **Change made.**

- Task 6.5 There's a stray "t" in line 2. **Change made.**
- The numerical number of meetings with TPO staff and the Working Group is missing (they should be the same) as well as meetings with the steering committee and stakeholders. **No schedule was developed in conjunction with the draft scope of work due to the uncertainty of the scope composition of the next phase. Now that the Working Group has decided to complete the study in on phase, a schedule will be developed, and the number of meetings will be estimated and included in the next version of the draft scope.**
- Please show the cost and fee structure for this Phase. **A budget will be prepared in conjunction with the next version of the scope.**

VDOT

As a collective team in the region, there are numerous highway projects underway, some consideration of shoulder running and HOT lanes, etc.

Before the RCS goes out for public input, there needs to be a briefing, or graphic and educational materials to show the efforts underway to be completed in 2025, and then others can intelligently discuss ideas for RCS in 2045. Is anyone working on this? It's definitely needed. **HRTPO volunteered to create such a map at the September 18 Working Group meeting.**

Comments:

- use charette style public meetings and/or small groups table top style. **Comment has been incorporated into the revised scope.**
- perhaps piggy back on the upcoming fall transportation meeting. **This study's public outreach program will not be initiated until well after this fall transportation meeting, but perhaps in subsequent months study activities can be scheduled closely together with other appropriate events.**
- more social media updates and feedback. **This has been specified in the revised scope.**
- gain working group approval prior to developing planning level cost estimates and models. **Model output and costs are needed in order to help the Working Group decide which alternatives to screen out/advance so gaining Working Group approval of alternatives before those features are developed is inappropriate.**
- narrow the alternatives to 2/3 total. **Study is scoped to consider a minimum of 5 segments, which when combined constitute a minimum of 2 or 3 alternatives. Limiting the scope to 2 or 3 alternatives would not allow the investigation of any new alternatives suggested by stakeholders.**

TPO Staff

- Responses to Portsmouth comments:

- With regards to your comments on the Public Engagement Plan, the word “ziosk” is correct. **So noted.**
- Ziosks, are the little computers that now sit on the tables at restaurants and allow you to play games, pay your bill, order food, etc. from your table. They are also prime for advertising. **So noted.**
- The Engagement Team is the subcontractor. TPO staff is not conducting the public involvement effort for this study. **“Engagement team” has been replaced by “Consultant team” throughout the scope.**
- I agree with you --- the sub consultant should increase their social media presence. **The specifics of such an increase will be incorporated into the revised scope.**

General Comments:

1. “HRTPO” is misspelled as “HRPTO” a number of times throughout the scope. **Changes made.**
2. It’s difficult to tell without the task timelines, but isn’t the plan to assess the permitability of the various alternatives prior to spending a lot of effort and expense on engineering design work, modelling, etc.? **That is the plan.**
3. Study Recommendations – Given that the study’s recommendations (stated to be published under 7.1 Report) are perhaps the most important part of the RCS, it is recommended that the **development** of those recommendations (i.e. when, where, how, with whom) be specified, perhaps under its own subtask. Recommendations are mentioned under 1.3 Engagement and 4.9a Scenario Results Workshops (“provide input on investment, policy, and other recommendations to carry forward from the analysis”). Therefore, recommend either a) adding a subtask for the final development of recommendations, or b) renaming 4.9a (and fleshing out its verbiage concerning development of recommendations) to reflect this “recommendation development” purpose. **Revised scope reflects option b – 4.9b renamed “Recommendation Documentation”. Recommendations will be formulated as an outcome of the Scenario Results Workshop (Task 4.9a) with the Working Group/Steering (Policy) Committee. The consultant team will prepare a summary of analysis results, risks, costs, and public comments on the candidate alternatives so the advantages and disadvantages of each can be understood and used by voting members of the two groups as a basis for recommending an alternative. Wording to this effect have been added to Task 4.9a.**

Specific Comments:

4. Task 1.3a – Will HRTPO be able to view and utilize the mailing list without the software the consultant team intends to purchase in order to maintain the lists? If not, will the software be turned over to HRTPO with the lists? **HRTPO will be able to view and utilize the mailing list software.**
5. Task 1.3b – Please specify the minimum number of meetings of each type in which the consultant team will engage. **Meetings will be specified in the next scope iteration.**

6. Task 1.3c – For a region of 1.7 million people and hundreds of potential outlets, 3,500 rack cards is not enough. Recommend at least 20,000 cards for distribution. **20,000 cards are specified in the revised scope.**
7. Task 1.3d:
 - a. With regard to the four Southside meetings, rather than specifying the Churchland/Western Branch area, recommend replacing with Chesapeake. **The Working Group agreed with this proposal and it is reflected in the revised scope.**
 - b. Please note that all of the meetings must be accessible by public transit. **Inserted into the scope.**
 - c. With regard to the section on online open house or live stream session – the HRTPO does not currently do live streaming or online open house meetings. It is the understanding of HRTPO staff that the consultant team will be conducting the public involvement activities related to the RCS – not HRTPO staff. **Scope revised accordingly.**
 - d. Third paragraph, second sentence – what is meant by “full mailing list and locality networks”? **“and locality networks” was deleted from the scope.**
8. Task 1.3e:
 - a. Please work to address the underserved populations in ways other than having a single EJ symposium. Given the region’s racial diversity, achieving EJ goals may be done by compiling a good database and outlet source for all of the outreach materials.
 - b. HRTPO staff cannot guarantee turnout and attendance for the symposium and recommend the consultant team put its resources to work to ensure this outreach is successful. That said, HRTPO staff will conduct outreach to the ad-hoc EJ Roundtable. **Understood, not scope change necessary.**
 - c. Second paragraph, second sentence – strike “assist HRTPO to”. The consultant team is responsible for conducting all activities mentioned in the paragraph (as opposed to assisting HRTPO). **Change made.**
9. Task 2 – It is important to differentiate between corridors and alternatives in this section. Task 2 describes the five corridors that were not programmed for funding in the HRCS SEIS (I-664, I-664 Connector, I-564 Connector, VA 164, and VA 164 Connector), and then in the next sentence refers to them as five preliminary alternatives. However, some of these corridors (specifically the three Connectors) cannot be standalone alternatives since independently these corridors would be roadways to nowhere. **Scope wording has been changed to reflect comment.**
10. Task 2.5 – ITS systems should be assumed for all freeway alternatives, not only those where HOT lanes are proposed. **Scope now reads “ITS systems along all interstates”.**
11. Task 3.2 – It is unclear why the scope mentions “develop a prioritization tool for the analyzed alternatives” under the Conduct Permittability Assessments task. **This statement has been deleted.**
12. Task 4.8c:

- a. For clarity, recommend that the action title of 4.8c be re-worded (e.g. “4.8c Evaluate Performance of Candidate Projects under Baseline and 3 Greater Growth Scenarios”).
Change made.
 - b. The meaning of the following is unclear:
“The Consultant Team will work with HRTPO staff and the Working Group to identify the most meaningful comparisons [comparisons of what?] (**performance measure metrics**) and will then determine any further iterations to run to explore cause-and-effect [cause and effect of what?] (**variances or observed peculiarities in performance measure metrics**) in performance in Task 4.8c. A maximum of 5 additional iterations will be performed to help isolate cause-and-effect relationships among the drivers [what drivers?].” **Will delete “among the drivers”.**
13. Task 4.8d – Because VISSIM models are so complex and data intensive, the existing study area roadway network that will be included in the VISSIM models should be more defined. What level of the roadway network will be included in the VISSIM models? **We intend to model the interstate system in the study area as well as other key facilities like 164, 17 (James River Bridge to I-664), and US 58/13/460 west of Bowers Hill. The VISSIM models will also include adjacent intersections at interchange locations. The VISSIM models will only be prepared for the PM peak hour for Existing Conditions (for calibration), a 2045 No-Build condition with the preferred scenario, and a 2045 Recommended Alternative condition with the preferred scenario. We are proposing to use FREEVAL to evaluate the same network (minus the adjacent intersections at interchanges) for all alternatives and land use scenario combinations in both peak hours. In addition, we are incorporating Synchro analysis for AM and PM peak hours at 100 intersections into the scope in case some other corridor analysis is desired (Hampton Boulevard?).**
 14. Task 4.8e – Considering that 1) the main evaluation of candidate alternatives is to be conducted under 4.8c above, and 2) the stated purpose of this 4.8e is “to evaluate congestion relief in much greater detail” via microsimulation model VISSIM, a) to avoid confusion between 4.8c and 4.8e (which are currently worded similarly), b) to build on the title of 4.8d (“Develop Microsimulation Models”), and c) for consistent usage of the word “project” (as in titles of 4.8, 4.8a, 4.8b, 4.8c), we recommend that the 4.8e title be re-worded (e.g. “4.8e Further Evaluate Congestion Relief of Candidate Projects (via microsimulation models)”.
 15. As an alternative, in order to avoid confusion with Task 4.8c (Performance evaluation using the travel demand model and additional regional models), Task 4.8d (Develop VISSIM model) and Task 4.8e (Performance evaluation with VISSIM) should be combined. **We eliminated 4.8e and 4.8f and combined them with 4.8d under “Evaluate Traffic Operation Conditions”.**