

# PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

## Basic Project Information

CEID 3608

1. Submitting Agency: VDOT
2. Secondary Agency: Loudoun County
3. Agency Project ID:
4. Project Type:
  Interstate  Primary  Secondary  Urban  Bridge  Bike/Ped  Transit  CMAQ  
 ITS  Enhancement  Other  Federal Lands Highways Program  
 Human Service Transportation Coordination  TERMs
5. Category:  System Expansion  System Maintenance  Operational Program  Study  Other
6. Project Name: **Route 15 Widening**
7. Facility:
 

Prefix	Route	Name	
US	15	James Madison Highway	
		Battlefield Parkway	
VA	661	Montresor Road	
8. From ( at):
 

VA	661	Montresor Road	
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9. To:

10. Description: Reconstruction with added capacity. This two lane road will be widened to four lanes.
11. Projected Completion Year: 2025
12. Project Manager: James Zeller
13. Project Manager E-Mail: James.Zeller@VDOT.virginia.gov
14. Project Information URL: [www.loudoun.gov/Route15](http://www.loudoun.gov/Route15)
15. Total Miles: 3.6 miles
16. Schematic (file upload):
17. State/Local Project Standing (file upload):
18. Jurisdictions: Loudoun County
19. 2018 Baseline Cost (in Thousands): \$33 million cost estimate as of 10/17/2017
20. Amended Cost (in Thousands): cost estimate as of MM/DD/YYYY
21. Funding Sources:  Federal  State  Local  Private  Bonds  Other

## Regional Policy Framework

Questions 22-27 address the goals identified in the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan. Question 28 should be used to provide additional context of how this project supports these goals or other regional needs identified in the Call for Projects.

### 22. Provide a Comprehensive Range of Transportation Options

Please identify all travel mode options that this project provides, enhances, supports, or promotes.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single Driver  | <input type="checkbox"/> Carpool/HOV          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metrorail   | <input type="checkbox"/> Commuter Rail        | <input type="checkbox"/> Streetcar/Light Rail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BRT   | <input type="checkbox"/> Express/Commuter bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Metrobus             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bicycling  | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does this project improve accessibility for historically transportation-disadvantaged individuals (i.e., persons with disabilities, low-incomes, and/or limited English proficiency?) |   |   |

**RESPONSE: VDOT accepted the bike trail proposal in order to advance this road widening project.**

**23. Promote Regional Activity Centers**

- Does this project begin or end in an Activity Center?
- Does this project connect two or more Activity Centers?
- Does this project promote non-auto travel within one or more Activity Centers?

**24. Ensure System Maintenance, Preservation, and Safety**

- Does this project contribute to enhanced system maintenance, preservation, or safety?

**RESPONSE:** The project will degrade preservation and safety.

**Preservation:** Route 15 is a National Scenic Byway in a National Heritage Area (Journey Through Hallowed Ground Region). The project will degrade the historic and scenic attributes of an otherwise-pristine two-lane rural highway in the Catoctin Rural Historic District that has remained the same for many decades. Substantial land from historic properties (Rockland, on the National Register of Historic Places) and one contributing structure to the Catoctin Rural Historic District (the Old Limestone School, now a private home), will be taken as part of the highway expansion.

Safety will be reduced. The project, which changes the designation from a rural 2-lane local access arterial to a 4-lane divided controlled access rural arterial, will reduce safe access for all private drives, roads and entrances along the section of highway. Impacted are working farms which to retain viable need to move farm machinery across and up and down the section of roadway (which will, subsequent to the lane additions, need to negotiate two extra lanes of traffic), visitors to wineries, breweries, regional parks, and equestrian facilities on Limestone School Road—which have no other close access to the highway.

Most traffic from the eastern side of Route 15 makes left-hand turns onto Route 15 toward Leesburg. A controlled access designation eliminates property owners and visitors' ability to make left-hand turns. Property values and business profitability are adversely affected. Affected property owners were not notified of the impending change in designation. It was not a topic of an ongoing, Loudoun County Route 15 Stakeholders Committee group deliberating about improvements to this roadway, nor was its description provided to them.

Where "controlled access" points are located, drivers will have an additional lane of traffic to negotiate to make a left-hand turn off of Route 15 onto a side road/drive/entrance, and two additional lanes of traffic to negotiate to make a left-hand turn onto the highway;

The proposed widening does not include analysis of whether intersection controls such as roundabouts would eliminate the need for expensive widening (because of the increased capacity and multimodal safety that RAB provide).

**25. Maximize Operational Effectiveness and Safety**

- Project is primarily designed to reduce travel time on highways and/or transit without building new capacity (e.g., ITS, bus priority treatments, etc.)?
- Does this project enhance safety for motorists, transit users, pedestrians, and/or bicyclists?

**RESPONSE:** A focus of citizen efforts for decades, with repeated requests to VDOT by citizens, local, and state officials, has been to increase safety along this National Scenic Byway in the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Region. The project ignores these goals. It will not reduce travel time and does not enhance safety for motorists, pedestrians, and/or bicyclists. It will reduce access for property owners, park visitors, and customers along roads, drives, and business entrances, who will have left-hand turning access reduced or eliminated.

**26. Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment**

- Is this project expected to contribute to reductions in emissions of criteria pollutants?
- Is this project expected to contribute to reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases?

**RESPONSE:** It will induce traffic (no studies requested by citizens have been performed) and increase cut-through traffic to adjacent rural areas on narrow two-lane and unpaved roads, including through historic villages already overwhelmed with such traffic documented in local studies. It includes no intersection treatments (such as roundabouts) which would increase safety, access, and congestion reduction—and no study has been done to evaluate whether similar congestion reduction (without inducing traffic) could be achieved for millions less by installing roundabouts (particularly at Montresor Road) instead of a four-lane median-divided controlled access highway. The project is being forwarded without any comprehensive transportation plan for the area and county (a process currently underway). No studies of environmental impacts (emissions, noise, vibrations, reduced fuel efficiency)—requested by stakeholders committee members since September—have been performed by the consultant or Loudoun County or VDOT.

**27. Support Interregional and International Travel and Commerce**

Please identify all freight carrier modes that this project enhances, supports, or promotes.

- Long-Haul Truck     Local Delivery     Rail     Air

Please identify all passenger carrier modes that this project enhances, supports, or promotes.

- Air     Amtrak intercity passenger rail     Intercity bus

**RESPONSE:** It will facilitate regional delivery at a direct cost to local delivery for rural businesses including parks, wineries, breweries, pick-your-own farms, and equestrian facilities.

**28. Additional Policy Framework Response**

Please provide additional written information that describes how this project further supports or advances these and other regional goals or needs.

The project will improve regional north-south mobility between Virginia and Maryland.

**RESPONSE:** The project ends 8 miles south of the Potomac River and the Maryland State Line. Maryland has no short or long-term plans to increase capacity south to the river, particularly at the location of the current 2-lane bridge. There has been no planning or coordination with either Frederick County or the state of Maryland on improvements to the arterial.

## Federal Planning Factors

**29. Please identify any and all planning factors that are addressed by this project:**

- a.  Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

**RESPONSE:** The project will degrade the economic vitality of the rural economy of the area, by reducing safe access to wineries, breweries, equestrian facilities, and other local businesses whose customers require safe and expedited access onto and off of Route 15.

- b.  Increase the safety of the transportation system for all motorized and non-motorized users.

- i. Is this project being proposed specifically to address a safety issue?  Yes;  No

- ii. If yes, briefly describe (in quantifiable terms, where possible) the nature of the safety problem:

**RESPONSE:** It will decrease the safety of the transportation system for all motorized and non-motorized users. Safe access will be reduced because of the “4-lane, divided, controlled access” redesignation.

- c.  Increase the ability of the transportation system to support homeland security and to safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized users.

**RESPONSE:** Four-laning for 3.6 miles further north on a 2-lane highway, and to rural road that becomes a two-lane unpaved road in a rural area does nothing to “increase Homeland Security.”

- d.  Increase accessibility and mobility of people.

**RESPONSE:** Four-laning up to a rural road that becomes a two-lane unpaved road in a rural area does little to “increase accessibility and mobility of people.”

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- e.  Increase accessibility and mobility of freight.

**RESPONSE: The route is plagued by freight hauled in overweight and unsafe trucks that are avoiding inspection stations on other routes. Enforcement is sporadic and ineffective.**

- f.  Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

**RESPONSE: The project, by any measure, degrades, instead of protecting and enhancing, “the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.” It is being advanced prior to the underway process of revising the county’s transportation and land use plan, with no comprehensive analysis of its impact. The project lies in a fragile geologic area, a karst region characterized by sinkholes, voids, and cave entrances, one within feet of the current roadway in the project area. Sinkholes have closed portions of the highway in the past decade. Large sections of the project area are adjacent to streams and are within the floodplain area. Massive mitigation efforts will be required with little return for the investment.**

- g.  Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

**RESPONSE: The project will degrade the local transportation system across and between modes, for people and freight. It will reduce safety and access for local residents and businesses.**

- h.  Promote efficient system management and operation.

**RESPONSE: Given the actual impacts of 29a through g, it does NOT promote efficient system management and operation.**

- i.  Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

**RESPONSE: It will substantially degrade the preservation of the existing transportation system because of reduced access and induced demand.**

- j.  Improve resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.

**RESPONSE: Induced traffic will push congestion further north onto the 2-lane road, reducing reliability of the system at huge cost. Large sections of the project area are adjacent to streams and are within the floodplain area. Massive mitigation efforts will be required with little return for the investment.**

- k.  Enhance travel and tourism.

**RESPONSE: The project will destroy the setting of a National Register of Historic Places property, Rockland, a working farm that has been in the same family for centuries, with acreage on both sides of the road. A mature arbor and trees that protect the site from the roadway will be bulldozed. Another contributing property to the Catoctin Rural Historic District further north in the project zone, the Old Limestone School (now a private residence), 80 feet from the current two-lane rural highway, will either be taken or have a 4-lane highway just feet from its front door. It will reduce safe access for visitors to two regional parks, and numerous wineries, a brewery, pick-your-own farms, and equestrian facilities that are part of the area’s growing rural economy and rely upon the rural and scenic setting to attract tourists to their venues.**

## Environmental Mitigation

30. Have any potential mitigation activities been identified for this project?  Yes;  No

- a. If yes, what types of mitigation activities have been identified?

- Air Quality;  Floodplains;  Socioeconomics;  Geology, Soils and Groundwater;  Vibrations;
- Energy;  Noise;  Surface Water;  Hazardous and Contaminated Materials;  Wetlands

**RESPONSE: Surveys of impacted properties have not yet been conducted; their costs may be substantial. The project lies in a fragile geologic area, a karst region characterized by sinkholes, voids, and cave entrances, one within feet of the current roadway in the project area. Sinkholes have closed portions of the highway in the past**

**decade. Large sections of the project area are adjacent to streams and are within the floodplain area. Massive mitigation efforts will be required with little return for the investment.**

## Congestion Management Information

### 31. Congested Conditions

- a. Do traffic congestion conditions necessitate the proposed project or program?  Yes;  No
- b. If so, is the congestion recurring or non-recurring?  Recurring;  Non-recurring
- c. If the congestion is on another facility, please identify it:

**RESPONSE: The project does not designate intersection solutions and so does not evaluate to what degree congestion reduction could be achieved at substantial cost savings by simply redesigning intersections (for example, replacing the Route 15 bypass/Business Route 15 merge area with a roundabout, replacing the Whites Ferry signal with a roundabout and realigning Limestone School Road with Montresor Road with a roundabout.) Loudoun County requested as early as 2004 that VDOT study the latter alternative. It has not.**

### 32. Capacity

- a. Is this a capacity-increasing project on a limited access highway or other principal arterial?  Yes;  No
- b. If the answer to Question 32.a was "yes", are any of the following exemption criteria true about the project? (Choose one, or indicate that none of the exemption criteria apply):
  - None of the exemption criteria apply to this project – a Congestion Management Documentation Form is required
  - The project will not use federal funds in any phase of development or construction (100% state, local, and/or private funding)
  - The number of lane-miles added to the highway system by the project totals less than one lane-mile
  - The project is an intersection reconstruction or other traffic engineering improvement, including replacement of an at-grade intersection with an interchange
  - The project, such as a transit, bicycle or pedestrian facility, will not allow private single-occupant motor vehicles
  - The project consists of preliminary studies or engineering only, and is not funded for construction
  - The construction costs for the project are less than \$10 million.
- c. If the project is not exempt and requires a Congestion Management Documentation Form, click here to open a blank Congestion Management Documentation Form.

**RESPONSE: This project increases capacity on a segment of a principal arterial. Requested studies on the induced traffic that the increased capacity will invite or the subsequent adverse effects on side roads or points further north have been conducted. Multiple studies note that capacity additions reach previous congestion levels within 5 years. Is \$33 million on a project that will fail in 5 years worth the cost?**

## Record Management

### 33. Completed Year:

### 34. Project is being withdrawn from the CLRP: Yes

### 35. Withdrawn Date: MM/DD/YYYY

### 36. Record Creator: Cina Dabestani

### 37. Created On: 10/30/2017

### 38. Last Updated by: Regina Moore

### 39. Last Updated On: 12/12/2017

### 40. Comments: