

I-40/I-81 Corridor Feasibility Study

Summary of Themes from Technical and Public Stakeholder Meetings, September 4-25, 2007

The following is a summary of the major themes of the questions/comments posed by the technical stakeholders (Metropolitan Planning Organization and Rural Planning Organization representatives) and by various members of the public (including representatives of industry and interest groups).

- Tennessee cannot build its way out of congestion with more lanes. The study needs to examine other, non-traditional ways of reducing congestion.
- Local routes and parallel routes should be improved to encourage commuters to use them rather than the interstate; alternatively, some people expressed concern over creating high capacity arterials through urban areas and thus changing the character of the community.
- Diversion of freight from highway to rail will help congestion and safety.
- Implementation of high speed rail should be considered. The speed of rail shipments needs to be competitive with roads in order to divert enough freight off the roads to make a difference.
- Passenger rail should be considered as part of the rail package, in particular commuter and intercity rail.
- The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) should look to upgrade and improve public transportation in urban areas to assist with improving the capacity of existing roads.
- TDOT should consider what Virginia is doing with I-81 and with their investment in the Crescent Corridor, and should support the Crescent Corridor.
- Supporting Norfolk Southern's (NS's) Crescent Corridor and completing the "missing link" in Tennessee should not be an either/or situation.
- The "missing link" in Tennessee (Trans-Tennessee Corridor) needs to be completed; conversely, the Trans-Tennessee connection is premature for intercity passenger service, and it is not likely to be used by CSX or Norfolk Southern.
- Public funds should be used to upgrade rail facilities.
- Increased enforcement is key to resolving safety issues with trucks on the interstates, i.e., speed and lane restrictions.
- Incident management is an important part of the solution. TDOT should ensure that the various jurisdictions have a clear and coordinated set of standards related to incident management.
- More off-road truck parking areas are needed.

- Diversion of truck traffic to areas outside of downtowns should be a strategy – such as requiring truck traffic to use I-440 and SR-840 in Nashville, or SR-385 or I-240 in Memphis.
- TDOT should consider land use issues in making transportation decisions.
- Various funding mechanisms (traditional and non-traditional) should be considered, including tolls.
- A detailed economic impact analysis should be conducted for the Trans-Tennessee Rail Corridor, as well as for other projects that might emerge from this study.
- This study should consider/ identify commuter behaviors in the current and future world and improve on the existing travel forecast models that are based on past travel behavior.
- The increase in rail freight traffic and its effect on local streets and quality of life in local communities should be considered. Rail bypasses around small towns would help to reduce adverse effects of increased rail traffic in those communities.