

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Roanoke Regional Intermodal Facility

#### About the Project and the Site Selection Process:

**1. Why is an intermodal facility being located in the Roanoke Region?**

The construction of an intermodal facility in the Roanoke Region is part of a multi-state freight rail initiative called the Heartland Corridor. It includes freight rail improvements along the rail line that parallels Route 460 and will reduce current shipping time from Hampton Roads to Chicago by 1.5 days.

The Roanoke region is at the crossroads of two important rail corridors: I-81 and the Heartland Corridor. An intermodal facility in the region will help manage truck traffic on both corridors. The Heartland Corridor project will remove 150,000 trucks per year from Virginia's roads.

**2. What benefits could an intermodal facility bring to the Roanoke Region?**

The results of DRPT's Economic Assessment Report on the Roanoke Region Intermodal Facility conclude that the intermodal facility could provide significant economic benefits for the Roanoke Region. Economic benefits include an increase in annual employment of up to 2,900 jobs and tax revenues of up to \$71 million annually.

Additional public benefits include 189 million gallons of fuel saved, 1.9 million trucks removed from Virginia highways and over 700,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions avoided in the first 15 years of operation.

**3. How does this facility reduce the number of trucks on highways?**

The facility, as part of the Heartland Corridor project, will reduce the number of long haul trucks on area highways such as I-81 and Route 460 by 150,000 trucks per year.

This reduction will be measured by the number of containers hauled at the facility. As containers are shipped by rail instead of truck, there will be less long haul freight traffic on area highways.

**4. Will traffic generated by the intermodal facility negatively impact the surrounding roads?**

VDOT's assessment of the traffic impacts for the intermodal site location concluded that truck traffic generated by the intermodal facility should present little to no impact to surrounding roads.

**5. How many trucks are anticipated to travel to/from the facility?**

The number of short haul trucks serving the facility per day from 2010-2020 will average 87 trucks/day. In 2020 and beyond, the average number of trucks will be 235 trucks/day. The traffic schedule is based on a 5-day work week and a 16-hr day.

Short haul trucks will be bringing freight to and from the intermodal facility, and will travel short distances. Long haul trucks, which are trucks traveling long distances, on surrounding highways will be reduced as part of this project.

**6. Why was DRPT involved in the site review process?**

As part of DRPT's responsibility to protect the investment of public funds in such a facility, the agency reviewed site proposals to determine the best possible site location.

**7. What was DRPT's role in the facility site review process?**

DRPT reviewed the 10 submitted sites to identify the best site location for the application of public funds. DRPT worked in coordination with a variety of industry experts and state agencies including Norfolk Southern, HDR Engineering, the Virginia Port Authority (VPA), the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in addition to representatives from area localities.

**8. Which sites were submitted for evaluation?**

- Blue Ridge Site (Botetourt County)
- Colorado Street Site (City of Salem)
- East End Shops Site (City of Salem)
- Roadway Materials Yard Site (City of Roanoke)
- Elliston Site (Montgomery County)
- Garman Road [Former Virginian] (Roanoke County)
- Garman Road [Former N&W] (Roanoke County)
- Singer Site (Roanoke County)
- Horn Site (Roanoke County)
- Webster Brick Site (Botetourt County)

**9. How were these sites selected?**

DRPT solicited site proposals from area localities along the rail line within the geographic boundaries of the search area and from Norfolk Southern Railway, the operator for the Heartland Corridor project and the owner of rail tracks in the area.

These proposals had to correspond to a set of baseline criteria established by DRPT to ensure that minimal requirements for the Heartland Corridor project would be met.

Ten proposals were initially received from Norfolk Southern Railway. Subsequently, in April 2007, the City of Salem submitted a modified version of the Colorado St. site for review. No other proposals were submitted by area localities.

**10. What specific criteria were used for the basis of site proposals?**

The following criteria applied:

- The proposed intermodal facility must be close to Interstate 81 and allow for reasonably proximate access and egress to the interstate.
- The facility must be located on the Heartland Corridor's rail line between Walton on the western border and the Shenandoah Line Connection on the eastern border. This is necessary in order to ensure a competitive time advantage for freight rail shipments and to maximize the usefulness of this facility to serve the I-81 freight rail corridor.
- The facility must not create the need for additional grade separations, particularly in congested urban areas.
- The facility should be a minimum of 65 acres and of an appropriate configuration and relatively flat in topography.
- To the extent possible, the proposed site should seek to minimize associated roadway costs that might be engendered or necessitated.
- The proposed site should seek to be well-configured from a rail operating perspective to avoid degrading other rail traffic, result in more efficient rail intermodal operation and result in lower relative facility development or facility delivery costs.

**11. How were the sites evaluated?**

DRPT worked collectively with applicable state agencies, industry experts and Norfolk Southern Railway (as the rail operator) to evaluate submitted sites. This evaluation included:

- Initial site proposal review by DRPT for fatal flaws based on the criteria as established by DRPT for Rail Enhancement Funding.
- Information received through public comments during the public comment period
- Site proposal review with respective agencies as determined by DRPT, in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General
- Existing road impact evaluation and road need analysis as conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation
- Site proposal review for ancillary developable land for future distribution center opportunities as conducted by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- Site proposal review for practical application and rail operations as provided by Norfolk Southern Railway

**12. Were public comments considered during the evaluation process?**

DRPT began engaging in a variety of public and agency outreach efforts

in fall 2006. DRPT solicited public comment on the 10 sites submitted for review during a 45-day public comment period and held a public meeting in the region to provide additional opportunities for public comment. In addition, DRPT met with local jurisdictions on various occasions to discuss the project.

All public comments were taken into consideration as part of the site evaluation process.

**13. Were potential environmental impacts taken into consideration when selecting the site?**

DRPT's site review process included a high level environmental evaluation of the three sites which met the majority of the evaluation criteria. The environmental analysis of the Elliston, Garman Virginian and Colorado Street sites took into consideration natural, land use, social and human environmental factors.

Natural environmental factors in the evaluation included review of wetlands, bodies of water/rivers, floodplains, geotechnical and slope stability, and threatened and endangered species.

Land use/social/human environmental factors included review of existing land use, adjacent land use, prime soils and farm lands, residential areas, existing utility and drainage conflicts, potential for contaminated soils, noise, air quality, displacements and current zoning.

**About the Results of the Review Process**

**14. What announcement was made on April 7th?**

DRPT announced the conclusion of the site evaluation process for the Roanoke Region Intermodal Facility, and the recommended site location.

**15. How long did the review process take?**

Approximately 16 months.

Given the project's importance to both the region and the Heartland Corridor initiative, DRPT dedicated significant time and effort to the evaluation of the 10 submitted sites. A thorough review of all sites was necessary to ensure the best investment of public funds and to ensure that local concerns were taken into consideration.

**16. How much did the review cost and how was it funded?**

Approximately \$145,000, which was funded through the existing Rail Enhancement Fund grant for the project, where 70% was provided by DRPT and 30% was provided by Norfolk Southern, per contract terms.

**17. Who was involved in the review process?**

DRPT worked in coordination with a variety of industry experts and state agencies including the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Port Authority, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, HDR Engineering, Norfolk Southern and representatives from area localities.

**18. What was done to ensure that the review process was fair and objective?**

Several state agencies and industry experts were involved in the review process. Any information received directly from Norfolk Southern was evaluated and validated independently by DRPT's consultant, but it was essential to have Norfolk Southern's participation to ensure that sites were evaluated for rail operating feasibility.

The evaluation criteria were established in cooperation with the participating state agencies and industry experts to ensure that a detailed and thorough review of potential sites was conducted.

**19. What is the recommended site location and how much will it cost?**

Based on the results of the site evaluation process, DRPT considers that the Elliston site is the only feasible location for an intermodal facility in the region. The cost is \$35.5 million.

**20. Is this cost within the project budget?**

The project is being constructed in two phases. The project budget is \$18 million for Phase 1 project construction. The \$35.5 million cost for the Elliston site includes the relocation of Cove Hollow Rd and Phase 2 construction, which will bring the facility to full build out. The cost for Phase 1 is \$24.3 million, including \$6.3 million for the relocation of Cove Hollow Rd and \$18 million for Phase 1 construction. The cost for Phase 2 construction is \$11.2 million. Both phases of construction will take place within the existing site footprint.

**21. How will the cost for Cove Hollow Road be covered?**

Norfolk Southern has submitted an application for Rail Enhancement Fund funding to cover the additional cost of the Cove Hollow Rd. relocation for Phase 1 of project construction. The total cost for the road relocation is \$6.3 million and the Rail Enhancement Fund application is for \$4.41 million. The remaining share, or 30%, would be paid by Norfolk Southern. DRPT is currently evaluating this and other project applications for Rail Enhancement Fund funding.

NS anticipates submitting a subsequent application for Rail Enhancement funding to cover the cost of Phase 2 construction, estimated at \$11.2 million, when that portion of the project is ready for construction.

**22. When would the additional funding for Cove Hollow Rd. be available and can construction start without it?**

If the application is approved, the additional funding would be available in July at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Construction could begin prior to July without this funding, since the majority of project funding has been secured.

**23. Why is Elliston the recommended site?**

Through the evaluation of the ten potential sites, DRPT concluded that the Elliston site was the only site that met all evaluation criteria and supported Norfolk Southern's requirements for operational efficiency, safety, service and economy.

In addition, the Elliston site is the lowest cost site at \$35.5 million and it presents the least amount of environmental challenges in comparison to other sites.

**24. Why wasn't the Colorado St. site in the City of Salem recommended?**

The Colorado St. site is on the wrong rail line (the V-line instead of the Heartland Corridor line). The evaluation results indicate that the site has operational challenges that would require significant land acquisition to resolve, and that rail operations would result in the blockage of Union St. for four hours per day without the construction of a new bridge. This bridge would require the taking of multiple homes on both sides of the Roanoke River. The total site cost is \$71.6 million.

**25. Why wasn't the Garman Virginian site in Roanoke County recommended?**

The Garman Virginian site is on the wrong rail line (the V-line instead of the Heartland Corridor line). It lies in a floodplain and would require substantial fill work and environmental evaluation to raise the site out of the floodplain. The site also requires a new bridge over the rail line for Garman Rd. to allow trucks to access the site while a train is stopped in the yard, and the nearby Duiguids Rd. highway crossing would be blocked up to an hour at a time when trains serve the facility. The additional track work at the facility would impact existing businesses, including a property that is a high priority Resource Conservation & Recovery Action facility under the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of the Resource Conservation & Recovery Act. Contaminant cleanup has been initiated but not completed. Power lines and sewer lines are also present and would require relocation. The total site cost is \$52.85 million.

**26. Why weren't any of the other site locations selected?**

The evaluation of the 10 potential sites revealed that seven of the 10 sites contained fatal flaws and did not meet the evaluation criteria. The remaining three sites - Elliston, Garman Virginian, and Colorado Street -

underwent further evaluation.

**27. What are the next steps?**

Governor Kaine's letter to jurisdictions in the Roanoke Region asks them to provide a recommendation in 30 days. Next steps will be determined once their recommendation has been received.

**28. When is construction anticipated to begin and when will the facility open?**

The construction schedule will depend on the recommendation received from localities, in addition to the remaining work to be done prior to construction. Norfolk Southern must complete land acquisition and permitting prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed from DRPT.

Construction is anticipated to take two years to complete.