

Crafting A Better “Purpose and Need” Statement for the Route 28 Corridor Improvements

Projects anticipated to use Federal funding must prepare an environmental assessment that identifies the expected impacts and feasible alternatives. Alternatives must address the project’s “purpose and need.”

For example, an alternative to a proposal to reduce traffic congestion might be to spend the same amount of money to build a new school. However, the environmental analysis will consider only alternatives that reduce congestion; it will not consider all the different ways the money might be spent on schools, fire stations, etc. If a new school or fire station is a higher priority in a community, then elected officials must appropriate the funding to that higher priority via the budget process.

No project will be 100% free of adverse impacts. In the end, a decisionmaker has to assess if the preferred alternative is the most appropriate solution for the purpose and need of the project.

The Route 28 Feasibility Study “Purpose and Need”

The purpose and need of the Route 28 Feasibility Study was narrowed when Prince William County filed a grant application with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA).

According to this Purpose and Need, Alignment 2B (a bypass along Godwin Dr Extended) is not the only solution that would qualify for NVTA funding. Implementation of the [Virginia Department of Transportation’s recent Route 28 Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions \(STARS\) study](#) would also qualify.

A Road-Building Purpose and Need

The purpose of this study is to evaluate alternatives to relieve congestion on Route 28 (Nokesville Road/Center Street/Church Street/Centreville Road) through the City of Manassas, the City of Manassas Park, and Yorkshire area of Prince William County and select a preferred alternative to be included in the County’s long range plans as well as Smart Scale prioritization consideration.

The Route 28 Corridor Feasibility Study has the following key objectives in addition to the project goal. Proposed alternatives will be evaluated and screened against these key objectives.

1. Reduce congestion and improve network reliability on Route 28 from Godwin Drive through Historic Downtown Manassas to Liberia Avenue.
2. Reduce congestion and improve network reliability on Route 28, Centreville Road – between Liberia Avenue and Compton Road.
3. Facilitate the weekday peak period commuter flows between I-66 and the residential communities in Manassas Park, Manassas, and Prince William County.
4. Provide increased opportunities for alternative modes of travel such as travel by bicycles, walking and carpooling/vanpooling.
5. Provide improved access to transit facilities.
6. Identify improvement project(s) that have public consensus.
7. Identify improvement project(s) that avoid or minimize environmental impacts.
8. Identify improvement project(s) that avoid or minimize impacts to existing development.
9. Identify improvement project(s) that complement other Route 28 improvements currently being implemented by VDOT, Fairfax County, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, and Prince William County. These include:
 - a. Widening of Route 28 to six lanes between Godwin Drive and Pennsylvania Avenue. Improvements include adding a dual-turn lane on northbound side.
 - b. Route 28 Phase III – Widening of Route 28 to a six-lane divided facility between Linton Hall Road and Pennsylvania Avenue.
 - c. Widening of Route 28 to six lanes in Fairfax County between Bull Run and Route 29 including intersections improvements and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

If Prince William County had really intended to consider a wide range of options to reduce congestion, the Purpose and Need might have been drafted as follows:

Our Revised “Purpose and Need” to Improve Personal Mobility

The purpose of this study is to evaluate alternatives to increase person throughput on Route 28 between Liberia Avenue in the City of Manassas and Fairfax County, through the City of Manassas Park, and Yorkshire area of Prince William County to Fairfax County and select a preferred alternative to be included in the County and Cities long range plans as well as Smart Scale prioritization consideration.

The Route 28 Corridor Feasibility Study has the following key objectives in addition to the project goal. Proposed alternatives will be evaluated and screened against these key objectives.

1. Improve network reliability on Route 28, Centreville Road between Liberia Avenue and Compton Road.
2. Facilitate the weekday peak period commuter flows between I-66 and the residential communities in Manassas Park, Manassas, and Prince William County.
3. Include transportation infrastructure that supports alternative modes of travel including travel by bus transit, bicycles, walking and carpooling/vanpooling.
4. Identify improvement project(s) that maximize opportunities to integrate land use and transportation elements to revitalize the Yorkshire area.
5. Identify improvement project(s) that have public consensus.
6. Identify improvement project(s) that avoid or minimize environmental impacts.
7. Identify improvement project(s) that complement the widening of Route 28 to six lanes in Fairfax County between Bull Run and Route 29 including intersections improvements and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.