

IMPROVE **81**

I-81 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Speakers Bureau

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Summer 2024

Program Benefits



Enhanced Safety

This program is implementing a series of improvements such as lane and shoulder widening to reduce the rate and frequency of crashes along the corridor.



Reduced Congestion

The program improvements will reduce congestion and improve reliability by adding capacity in targeted areas of the corridor and improving speed of incident clearance to help limit travel delays.



Economic Development

I-81 is the main corridor and key economic artery of western Virginia. These improvements will ensure that goods and services critical to our economy move safely and efficiently through and within the region.

Project Development Process (65* Capital Projects)



* Note – Due to the addition of the southbound Exit 137 to Exit 128 project in Salem District, there are now 65 Capital Improvement Projects within the Program.

Planned Improvements

The **325-mile long corridor** spans three VDOT districts: **Bristol, Salem, and Staunton.**

Localities along the corridor include:

City of Bristol
Washington County
Smyth County
Wythe County
Pulaski County
City of Radford
Montgomery County
City of Salem

Roanoke County
City of Roanoke
Botetourt County
Rockbridge County
City of Lexington
City of Buena Vista
Augusta County
City of Staunton

City of Waynesboro
Rockingham County
City of Harrisonburg
Shenandoah County
Frederick County
City of Winchester



Capital Improvement Projects

There are currently **65 Capital Improvement projects** within the Program. Some of these projects include:

+1

Widening

The addition of a third lane for added capacity and safety. Some projects include the addition of a third lane in both the northbound and southbound directions while some projects include the addition of a third lane in only one direction.



Acceleration/Deceleration Lane Extension

Allows drivers additional time to make appropriate speed adjustments on the entrance and exit ramps before merging into interstate traffic or encountering sharper curves and stop conditions on exit ramps.



Curve Improvement

Installation of static and/or flashing chevron signs to notify drivers of upcoming sharp or challenging curves where crashes are prevalent.

Capital Improvement Projects

There are currently **65 Capital Improvement projects** within the Program. Some of these projects include:



Truck Climbing Lane

An additional lane added to enable trucks to ascend a steep grade at a lower speed while maintaining regular traffic speeds for passenger vehicles.



Auxiliary Lanes

Allows drivers additional time to speed up or slow down when merging on or off I-81. Typically constructed between two interchanges, these lanes help enhance safety by reducing traffic “weaving” between I-81 travel lanes and ramps.



Shoulder widening

Wider shoulder lanes increase safety for the travelling public during emergencies such as flat tire or breakdown, provide recovery area for errant vehicles, and enhance safety for emergency responders.

Operational Improvements

The Program also includes a host of **Operational Improvements** which enhance safety as well as mobility, particularly during emergency events. Examples of operational improvements include:



Digital Message Signs

Digital message boards help to alert drivers in real time of incidents along the interstate and assist with directing them to alternate routes.



Additional Traffic Cameras (CCTV)

The additional traffic cameras assist the Traffic Operations Center during emergency events as well as provide information to travelers via the VA 511 system.



Enhancements to Safety Service Patrol

Additional hours of operations and additional routes help to protect the travelling public during vehicle emergencies, speed up recovery time, and protect incident zones.

Operational Improvements

The Program also includes a host of **Operational Improvements** which enhance safety as well as mobility, particularly during emergency events. Examples of operational improvements include:



Detour Route Improvements

One of the biggest challenges of the I-81 Corridor is the lack of reliable alternative routes. Low cost, high return investments in signal systems and minor geometric improvements help to efficiently move traffic around incidents on the interstate.



Enhancements to Clearance Times

Reducing incident clearance time saves time, money, and enhances reliability along the interstate system. The implementation of a Towing and Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP) and lift-and-tow devices help to clear incidents more quickly to keep traffic moving.

Planned Studies With Potential Future Improvements

The [I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan](#), Section 10, identified three areas for further analysis and potential future improvements based on the outcome of the analyses:



Truck Parking

Appendix I of the I-81 Study Report includes an analysis of truck parking availability along the corridor and identifies deficiencies. The Plan recommends the formation of a task force comprised of representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation, The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, private travel center owners, economic development authorities, trucking associations, and representatives from local and regional governments and planning agencies. The purpose of the task force is to:


- Identify site-specific issues and overcome obstacles to parking development
- Investigate opportunities to fund the expansion of public and private truck parking facilities in targeted locations
- Develop a truck parking information system for public rest areas initially and examine opportunities to partner with the private sector
- Implement mobile technology to assist truck drivers with finding available and reserved parking

The Truck Parking Task Force was formed in August 2020 and has begun the work to serve its purpose.

Planned Studies With Potential Future Improvements


The [I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan](#), Section 10, identified three areas for further analysis and potential future improvements based on the outcome of the analyses:

Speed Enforcement



With specific focus on the northern end of the I-81 Corridor within the Commonwealth, the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan recommends the formation of a task force comprised of members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, Department of State Police, and local law enforcement to determine strategies for enhanced speed enforcement.

Multimodal Improvements



The I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan states that the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation will work through a cooperative process with the railroad industry, Amtrak, local governments, intercity bus operators, and regional planning bodies to fully develop the capital improvement needs to support impactful multimodal improvements along the I-81 Corridor.

Capital Improvement Project Status – Bristol District

• **Completed Projects:**

- **Mile Markers 18 NB & SB, 22, and 68 Curve Improvements**
- **Exit 19 Deceleration Lane Extension (Abingdon)**
- **Exit 26 SB Acceleration and Deceleration Lane Extensions (Emory)**
- **Exit 39 SB Acceleration Lane Extension (Seven Mile Ford)**
- **Bundle project (Exit 39 NB Decel, Exit 39 SB Decel, Exit 43 SB Accel)**
- **Exit 47 NB Acceleration Lane Extension, single phase Design-Build project (Marion)**
- **Auxiliary Lane – Exit 54 SB Entrance Ramp to Smyth Safety Rest Area (South of Rural Retreat)**
- **Exit 67 NB Deceleration Lane Extension (South of Wytheville)**
- **Exit 84 SB Deceleration Lane Extension (North of Fort Chiswell)**

Capital Improvement Project Status – Bristol District continued

- **Completed Projects Continued:**
 - Exit 17 SB Acceleration Lane Extension (Abingdon)
 - Exit 47 SB Acceleration Lane Extension
 - Truck Climbing Lane - Exit 39 NB Entrance Ramp to mile marker 40.6
- **Projects Under Construction:**
 - Exit 72 NB Decel Extension and I-77 Exit 41 to I-81 SB Exit 72 Auxiliary Lane – Design-Build (Wytheville)
 - Auxiliary Lane from Exit 73 to Exit 72 SB (Wytheville)
 - MM 9.7 to MM 8.1 SB Widening to three lanes (Bristol)
 - Exit 32 to MM 33.5 NB Truck Climbing Lane (Washington County)

Capital Improvement Project Status – Bristol District continued

- **Projects Under Construction Continued:**
 - **MM 34 to MM 33 SB Truck Climbing Lane (Washington/Smyth Counties)**
 - **Extend I-77 NB Decel lane and reconfigure ramp (Wytheville)**
 - **Exit 81 SB Decel Lane Extension – Advertised for construction July 9, 2024 (Wytheville)**
- **Upcoming:**
 - **Exit 45 NB Deceleration Lane Extension (Marion)**

Capital Improvement Project Status – Salem District

- **Completed Projects:**
 - Exit 89 NB Acceleration Lane Extension (Pulaski)
 - Mile Markers 172 to 176 NB & SB & MM 88 Curve Improvements
 - Troutville Rest Area SB Entrance and Exit Extension (2 projects) – Troutville
- **Projects Under Construction:**
 - Exit 137 to Exit 141 Widening NB and SB (Design Build, 2 projects) – Salem
 - Exit 143 to Exit 150 Widening NB & SB – (Design Build) Construction Fall 2025 (Roanoke to Troutville)
- **Upcoming Projects:**
 - Exit 128 to Exit 137 Widening NB & SB – Construction 2026 (Ironto to Salem)
 - Mile Marker 116 to Exit 128 Widening NB – Constr. 2027 (Christiansburg to Ironto)
 - Exit 94 SB Acceleration, Exit 105 NB Acceleration, Exit 162 NB Acceleration

Capital Improvement Project Status – Staunton District

- **Completed Projects:**

- Exit 302 NB Accel, Exit 302 SB Decel, Exit 283 SB Accel
- Exit 269 NB Decel, Exit 279 SB Accel
- Exit 291 NB Accel, Exit 296 SB Accel, MM 304 Weigh Station NB Accel
- Exit 205 SB Accel, Exit 205 NB Accel (Raphine)
- Mile Marker 272.3 SB Curve Improvements

- **Projects Under Construction:**

- Exit 221 to Exit 220 SB Auxiliary Lane – (South of Staunton)
- Exit 221 to Exit 225 NB and SB Widening (Design-Build) – Staunton
- MM 299 to Exit 296 SB Widening – Advertised for construction July 9, 2024 (Strasburg)

Capital Improvement Project Status – Staunton District continued

- **Upcoming Projects:**
 - **Weyers Cave NB and SB Truck Climbing Lanes – Advertisement for construction August 2024**
 - **Exit 242 to Exit 248 NB and SB Widening – Construction Fall 2025 (Harrisonburg)**
 - **Exit 313 to Exit 317 NB and SB Widening – Construction 2028 (Winchester)**

Corridor-wide Operational Improvements

- **Completed Projects:**
 - Safety Service Patrol Enhancements
 - Lift and Tow Devices on SSP Vehicles
 - Towing and Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP)
 - Traffic Camera Installations (51)
 - Digital Message Sign Installations (31)
 - Arterial Intersection Improvements (3)
- **Projects Under Construction:**
 - Arterial Signal Improvements (Bristol, Salem, Staunton Districts)
- **Upcoming Projects:**
 - None

Corridor-wide Arterial Improvements

- **Signal upgrades –**
 - **Construction continues while coordinating with localities for signal system integration into VDOT central signal system along the entire corridor.**
 - **Some VDOT owned signal upgrades complete. Construction ongoing for remaining VDOT and Locality signals, completion of entire system by 2025.**
- **Parallel Route upgrades –**
 - **Minor geometric improvement projects to facilitate access to and from I-81 during incidents – construction complete.**

Takeaway Scorecard

		Projects	Status	Anticipated Completion	
Operational Projects		Improved Incident Clearance	✓	Complete	Spring 2021
		Safety Service Patrol Expansion	✓	Complete	Summer 2019
		Additional Cameras (51)	✓	Complete	Spring 2020
		Additional Digital Message Signs (31)	✓	Complete	Fall 2021
		Arterial Upgrades	🚧	Underway	VDOT and Locality signals underway, All complete by 2025
Capital Projects		Completed Projects (35)	✓	Complete	Spring 2022
		Active Construction Projects (14)	🚧	Underway	Varies
		Remaining capital projects (16)	🚧	Upcoming Projects	All complete by 2033

Corridor-wide Communications



CIP and Smart Scale



Work Zone Safety



Staunton Area Widening



Design Build Projects



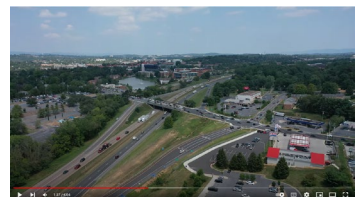
Safety Service Patrol



Strasburg Area Widening



Staunton Area Auxiliary Lane



Harrisonburg Widening



Exit 137 to Exit 141 Widening



Arterial Improvements



Traffic Operations Center/
Customer Service Center



Bristol District Truck Climbing Lanes

Published to date

- 25 videos
- 27 podcasts
- 15 newsletters

Visit improve81.org for more information

Advisory Committee

An I-81 Advisory Committee was established to provide advice and recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) regarding the development of the I-81 Corridor Improvement Plan.

The committee is scheduled to meet a minimum of two times each year at rotating planning district locations along the corridor and report to the Governor and General Assembly each December. The committee has 15 voting members: seven Virginia lawmakers, three CTB members representing the Bristol, Salem and Staunton districts, and the five chairs of the planning district commissions. VDOT's Commissioner and DRPT's Director will serve on the committee ex officio in non-voting capacities.

Advisory Committee Members

Voting Members

- Chair – Delegate Terry Austin, District 19
- Vice Chair – Delegate Tony Wilt, District 26
- Delegate Jason Ballard, District 12
- Delegate William Wiley, District 29
- Senator John Edwards, District 21
- Senator Creigh Deeds, District 25
- Senator Todd Pillion, District 40
- Chair Frank Friedman, Central Shenandoah PDC
- Chair Phil North, Roanoke Valley/Alleghany PDC
- Chair Hil Johnson, New River Valley PDC
- Chair Dennis Morris, Northern Shenandoah PDC
- Chair Randy Pennington, Mount Rogers PDC
- Ray Smoot, Jr., Salem District CTB Member
- Tom Fowlkes, Bristol District CTB Member
- Mark Merrill, Staunton District CTB Member

Ex Officio

- Stephen Brich, VDOT Commissioner
- Zach Trogdon, DRPT Acting Director

Program Funding

In 2019, the General Assembly adopted legislation creating the Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Fund. Revenues supporting the fund and improvements were identified from the following sources:



Regional Fuels Tax



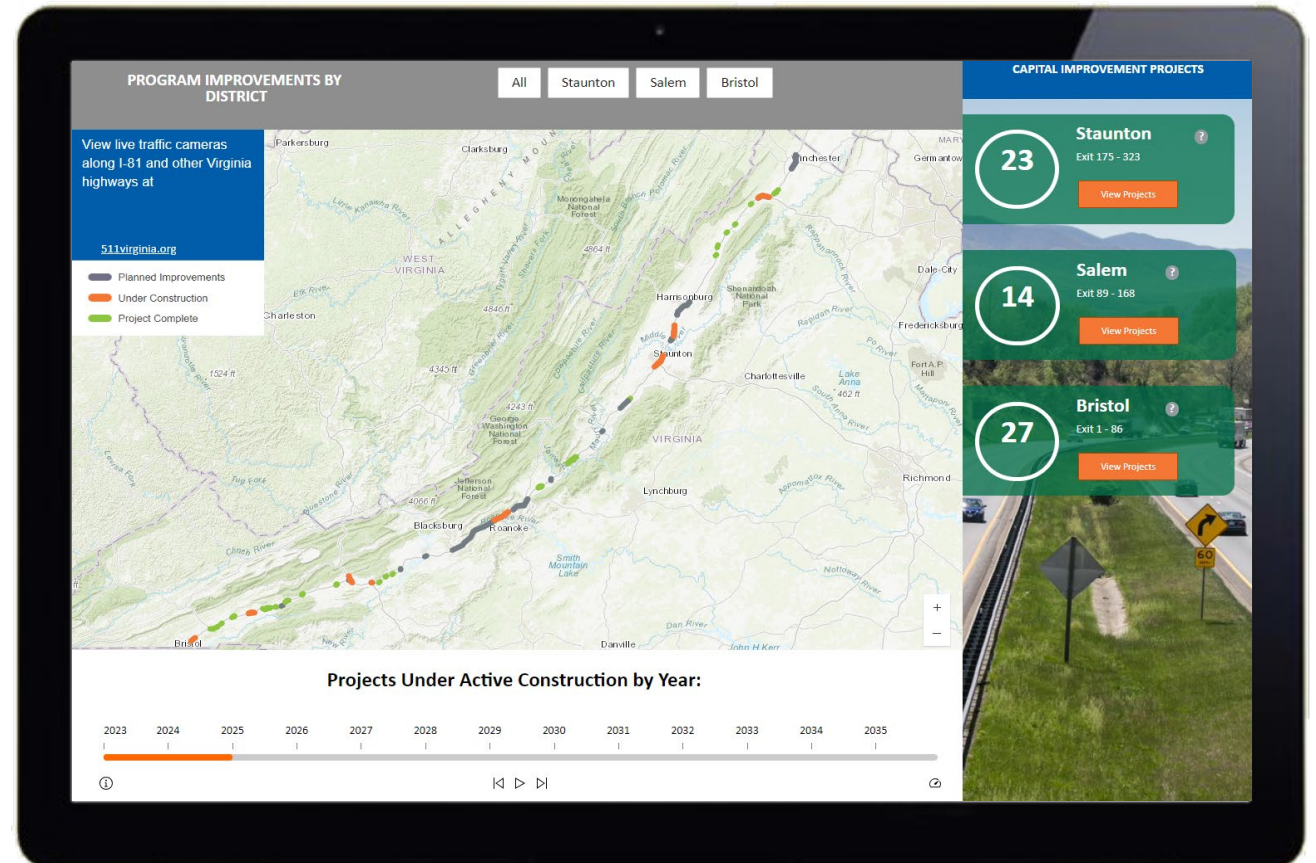
**Interstate Operations
and Enhancement
Program***

*I-81 receives a percentage of the Interstate Operations and Enhancement Program based on the ratio of vehicle miles traveled by Class 6 and higher vehicles.
More information about funding resources is available in the [April 2021 I-81 CIP Financial Update](#).

Schedule

The entire program is anticipated to last until at least 2033, with projects completed at various times. Timing related to specific projects can be found on the website via the interactive map or the [planned improvements](#), [work underway](#), and [work completed](#) pages.

Visit the website: Improve81.org



Contacts

Communications Contacts

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Program Team

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