

Talking Points - VDOT Proposed Replacement/Widening of I-66 Bridge at Broad Run/Chapman-Beverley Mill

VDOT Proposal:

- Under the original 2023 VDOT proposal, all work would have occurred within the existing footprint of the bridge and VDOT stated there would not be a significant increase in the bridge's width.
- The new plan, which calls for full replacement of the bridge and its support structure, is costly and unnecessary, and would have much more drastic implications.
 - Such a replacement will require new pilings and new foundations to be installed, which may require blasting or other excavation impacts. Foundation work near the fragile Chapman-Beverley Mill structure would create vibrations that could put the Mill at risk of significant, irreversible damage.
 - Widening I-66 by 60 feet directly in front of the mill will put the mill at risk.
 - In addition, new shoulders and approaches would be required, all of which will increase the proposed impacts of the new bridge.
- VDOT hasn't addressed the impact on the mill of the construction process and the finished product, as well as vibrations from traffic that will be closer to the Mill once the wider bridge is complete.
- VDOT has made a [Determination of "No Adverse Effect"](#) and sought agreement from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR).
 - PEC asked DHR not to concur with VDOT's determination and to request that the bridge replacement proposal's impacts be reevaluated and that lower impact, more cost effective alternatives be pursued. In response, [DHR sent this letter to VDOT outlining its concerns](#) about the potential negative impacts of the bridge replacement and related work on the Chapman-Beverley Mill.
 - Although [VDOT sent this letter in response to DHR's letter and questions](#), its response does not sufficiently address concerns about the long-term impacts of the wider bridge on the mill or ongoing long-term maintenance requirements and costs.

Points against widening the bridge:

- The length of roadway that will be affected is one-quarter mile long, which will not meaningfully improve traffic flow for commuters west of Haymarket traveling into Washington.
 - The cost for this project far exceeds the benefit to residents; the estimates are almost double the superstructure replacement option.
- Shoulders on bridges are not preferred locations for vehicles to pull off. The bridge replacement and expansion opens the door to a wider I-66 and for the shoulders to eventually become travel lanes in the future, which would put traffic even closer to the historic Chapman-Beverley Mill.
- VDOT claims that the expansion is needed to address Virginia population growth, but research shows population is actually declining, so the rationale for expanding the bridge is not supported.
- Repairing the existing bridge would not require replacing the infrastructure.
 - Alternate engineering opinion has asserted that a full replacement of the bridge is not necessary.
- Complete replacement of the bridge is a costly endeavor on its own, and there is no budget for continued maintenance and annual inspection of the larger structure that would be required.
- The bridge expansion is just the beginning and would open the floodgates to more development and destruction of conservation lands.
 - Thoroughfare Gap is a target for expansion into an industrial corridor, with recent proposals including a highway that would cut through the mountains, a high-voltage transmission line, and railway expansion to Marshall and possibly all the way to West Virginia.