

**Safety and Operational Study of Charles Town Pike (Route 9)
 Blue Ridge and Catoclin Election Districts**

**Focus Group Meeting 1
 Thursday, February 13, 2020
 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

Summary of Questions & Answers

This document summarizes the questions raised by the Focus Group members and responses from Loudoun County representatives. During the meeting, answers were not readily available for some of the questions. Answers have been augmented to include those responses following the original meeting.

Q1. It appears this project’s focus related to operations is on congestion. Are there other goals besides addressing congestion, such as rerouting traffic or preservation of the corridor character?	
A1:	This transportation study's focus is on improving traffic operations and safety on the corridor. The study will look at various elements of operational issues, including queueing, delay, travel speeds, need for turning lanes and intersection control, and the impact of operations on safety. The corridor character will be taken into account qualitatively in the assessment of improvement alternatives. The Loudoun County Travel Demand Model is being used as the basis for development of future traffic projections. That model includes future transportation improvements on Route 9 and on alternate routes such as Route 7 and Route 15. The model estimates how future traffic will be “routed” given those other roadway network improvements, as well as the approved land use in the Adopted Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan.
Q2. Are safety and congestion essentially the same thing?	
A2:	While one can correlate with the other, there is a distinction between the two. Roadway safety is about addressing crash-related problems. A safety study examines existing roadway conditions and includes a review of crash history on the corridor to identify crash trends, including “hot spots” – these “hot spots” are locations where clusters of crashes have occurred. Safety is about preventing crashes. Traffic congestion is about addressing operational issues that are characterized by lower-than-expected travel speeds, long vehicle queues, and longer travel times. An operations study examines existing and future traffic volumes and how traffic flows along the corridor and among the various intersections. It quantifies the level of existing and estimated future congestion, so that improvements can be identified to alleviate existing or future congestion.

Q3. If the Focus Group comes up with a specific improvement that is obviously beneficial, is it possible that this improvement could move forward aside from the typical process?	
A3:	There will be short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations that come from this study. Focus Group input will be sought throughout the study, including during the evaluation of alternatives. Improvements identified by the Focus Group that are within the scope of the study and that are brought forward at a time in the study during which the alternative could be evaluated on schedule, are the type of input the study team would appreciate receiving.
Q4. Has the project team reviewed the crash data relative to other similar corridors in the state?	
A4:	Yes, the study team is in the process of documenting the comparison of Route 9 crashes to other similar corridors in Virginia. Based on preliminary assessment, it appears that Route 9 crash rate is in line with the average for other comparable corridors. However, this is still a preliminary conclusion, and some additional analysis must be completed before the study team can say with certainty how the Route 9 corridor crash rate compares with others.
Q5. Is it possible to get Loudoun County Sheriff Office (LCSO) out on the corridor to increase enforcement?	
A5:	<p>This is input that can be shared with LCSO. One issue is that LCSO cannot enforce speed from a position on private property and lack of public right-of-way to safely pull off is a challenge to enforcement on the corridor.</p> <p>From an enforcement feasibility standpoint, this project will include working with the Sheriff's office on identifying enforcement locations where there is sufficient right-of-way for pull-off areas for enforcement purposes.</p>
Q6. Will this study include the consideration of multi-use trails?	
A6:	<p>As part of this study, bicyclists and pedestrians are considered to the extent that they are impacted by operations or safety. The study considers any crash history involving bicyclists and pedestrians. Any pedestrians or bicyclists crossing the roadway were counted during data collection; that data indicates that there is limited activity involving bicyclists and pedestrians crossing the roadway.</p> <p>With respect to sidewalk and bicycle accommodations, the Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) calls for a multi-use trail on one side of Route 9 in the future. Any such roadway infrastructure improvements recommended by the Route 9 Corridor study would also consider the future multi-use trail in the CTP.</p>

Q7. Will this study include an origin-destination (O-D) analysis?	
A7:	<p>Probe data will be accessed to examine a sample of O-D data for information purposes only. Probe data is information obtained from internet-ready devices that traverse the roadway network, such as cellular phones or connected vehicles. This anonymized sample of data will be reviewed to identify an approximate percentage of vehicles traveling through the area versus more localized trips. It is not envisioned that this information will inform mid- or long-term improvement alternatives, as those will be based on future traffic projections. The Loudoun County Travel Demand Model is the latest source for estimates of future year 2040 traffic projections based on planned roadway network improvements and land use. Therefore, a formal O-D analysis of existing travel conditions is not included in the study scope.</p>