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VIRGINIA AVENUE TUNNEL

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UPCOMING EVENTS & SCHEDULE >>

Impact Assessment	Now – Fall 2012
Public Meeting	Summer 2012
Draft EIS	Fall 2012
Public Hearing	Winter 2012
Final EIS	Spring 2013
Record of Decision	Spring 2013

PROJECT UPDATES

Attendees begin to arrive for the May 21 public meeting.

Virginia Avenue Tunnel Public Meeting Held May 21

On May 21, 2012 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., FHWA and DDOT hosted a public meeting at Nationals Park to provide an update on the Virginia Avenue Tunnel (VAT) project.

During the public meeting, members of the project team discussed the project's shift under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) from an Environmental Assessment (EA) to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), presented the four concepts retained for further analysis under the EIS, and answered questions from members of the community in attendance.

Materials from the public meeting, including a formal presentation, meeting transcript, public comments and project concept board displays, can be found under the Public Involvement and Project Resources sections on **http://www.virginiaavenuetunnel.com**.

The project team discussed the EIS shift and retained project concepts.

A moderated Q&A session was held to address community questions.

Geotechnical and Vibration Field Studies Conducted Along Virginia Avenue

The project team recently began field studies on the geotechnical soil characteristics within the project area, as well as vibration field measurements related to the ambient (existing) sound levels from each of the highway traffic and the rail noise.

The geotechnical boring study examines 29 locations along Virginia Avenue for a combination of factors including soil characteristics, presence of metals and contaminants, ground water levels and water monitoring. This information will help determine the strength of the soil which in turn determines excavation characteristics and groundwater management needs. This study began in early May and is expected to be completed in July.

In addition, a full day vibration field measurement was conducted on May 22 using seismographs installed at three different locations: near the EYA Capital Quarter development, near Marine Quarters, and outside of the northeast tunnel portal near 11th Street, SE. Vibration levels at each location were measured for seven train "pass bys," and background vibration levels without any trains present were also recorded at each site. These vibration measurement results are now being reviewed and analyzed.

The geotechnical boring team at work along Virginia Avenue.

A technician monitors a portable seismograph for the vibration study.

Four Concepts Retained for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Evaluation

At the May 21 public meeting, the project team discussed the four concepts retained for further analysis. As part of the NEPA process these four retained concepts are now considered "Alternatives" and have been numbered from 1 to 4.

- **Alternative 1 (previously Concept 1), the No-Build,** is automatically being carried forward into NEPA environmental review. The tunnel would not be rebuilt under this alternative; however, emergency and unplanned repairs will be required at some point. Existing conditions and ongoing use will require major rehabilitation or replacement of the tunnel in the future.

- **Alternative 2 (previously Concept 2), the Temporary South Side Runaround,** would temporarily route trains in an open trench below street level, south of the existing tunnel. The new tunnel would be built within the existing tunnel envelope using open trench construction.

- **Alternative 3 (previously Concept 5), the Permanent Twin Tunnels,** would involve building one single-track tunnel on the south side of the existing tunnel using open trench construction. The trains would then use that track while the other single track tunnel would be built within the existing tunnel alignment using open trench construction. In this concept trains would not operate through the open trench.

- **Alternative 4 (previously Concept 6), the Rebuild On-line,** would involve reconstructing the tunnel using open trench construction along the existing tunnel alignment. This concept would require operating freight trains within the open trench concurrent with the new tunnel construction.

Additional information about the retained concepts can be found in the May 21 public meeting presentation materials available on the **Project Resources** section of **VirginiaAvenueTunnel.com**.

VIRGINIA AVENUE TUNNEL BACKGROUND

Looking west from the Virginia Avenue Tunnel portal near Garfield Park.

A view of the east portal of the Tunnel.

Owned and maintained by CSX, the Virginia Avenue Tunnel is located in Southeast Washington, DC, beneath the eastbound lanes side of Virginia Avenue SE. By reconstructing Virginia Avenue Tunnel with a vertical height that will allow CSX to operate double-stack intermodal container freight trains, the railroad will be able to expand its capacity to transport freight in an environmentally sensitive manner. Furthermore, because the new tunnel will re-establish a second set of tracks, CSX will eliminate the chokepoint that currently delays all trains traveling through the Washington region.