

WELCOME

Public Informational Workshop

Appalachian Corridor H
PARSONS TO DAVIS PROJECT
State Project X347-H-55.68 00
Federal Project ACNH-0484(290)
Tucker County, WV

September 12, 2022, 4:00-7:00 PM
Blackwater Falls State Park
Conference Center
1584 Blackwater Lodge Road
Davis, WV



Hosted by the
West Virginia Department of
Transportation, Division of Highways
& Federal Highway Administration



Summary of Workshop

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways (WVDOH) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are pleased to host this informational workshop to provide updates and answer questions on the Parson to Davis Project. No formal presentation is planned. Preliminary mapping, project schedule, and other materials are available to review in person as well as online at the link provided at the bottom of this page. This meeting complies with the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requirements.

Summary of Project

The Parsons to Davis Project is an approximately 10-mile, new location, four-lane, divided highway, with partial control of access. The Project begins east of Parsons, at Tucker County Route 219/4 (Mackeyville Road) 0.2 mile south of United States Route (US) 219, which is also the eastern terminus of the Kerens to Parsons Project. The Project ends north of Davis along WV State Route (WV) 93, 1.3 miles east of WV 32, which is also the western terminus of the Davis to Bismarck Project. The highway will help fulfill the goals of improving east-west travel and promoting economic development in the region.

A Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was approved in 2007, but the project was paused because of funding constraints. A Public Informational Workshop was held in 2019 to provide updates on the project. Since 2019, engineering studies, including consideration of options for the Coketon bridge type, the Corridor H/WV 32 intersection, and the Truck Route have taken place. In addition, environmental studies, including surveys for federally listed species, an updated historic resources survey, and an Environmental Justice analysis, are ongoing or have been completed.

Additional Information

Copies of meeting materials are attached to this handout and are available online at the WVDOH's Public Meeting website: <http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment> (linked through code at right).

Commenting

Comments are welcome and are due Wednesday, October 12, 2022. They may be submitted using the comment form provided at the meeting or printed from the website. Additionally, comments may be submitted digitally through the website.



Thank you for attending tonight's workshop!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

- ❖ **Will the location of Corridor H between the towns of Thomas and Davis cut off the connections between the 2 towns?** No. Several interchange options are being evaluated east of WV 32 near the current terminus of the 4-lane roadway with a service road following existing WV 93 accessing Davis and Thomas. The corridor will pass under WV 32 to “tuck” the new 4-lane away from view and reduce noise. As part of the project, a shared use trail will be constructed to connect the Twin towns, and access will be provided from WV 32 to the rail grade that travels east towards Beaver Creek and west toward Pendleton Creek.
- ❖ **What effect will the new corridor have on tourism?** A positive one! Once constructed, Corridor H will become the shortest route while traveling from the west to the Baltimore-Washington area. We anticipate a large increase in visitors passing through our Mountain towns, which will increase revenue for the City of Thomas and Town of Davis.
- ❖ **Will the location of Corridor H negatively impact parks and trails in the area?** No, the opposite. The Preferred Alternative is not in the viewshed of Blackwater Falls State Park. The crossing of the North Fork Blackwater River is over one mile north of the Town of Douglas and will not be visible from Lindy Point or Pase Point Overlooks. In addition, the current design includes natural landscaping techniques that employ earthen berms to reduce the possibility of noise pollution in the area around Blackwater Falls State Park. The design is also taking into account the future plans of Friends of Blackwater to connect the Allegheny Highlands Trail to the Pase Point Trail via a suspension bridge at Douglas Falls, as well as the future plans of the Highlands Trail Foundation to connect the Allegheny Highlands Trail in Thomas to WV 32 via the Dobbin Road Grade.
- ❖ **Will the Project’s Preferred Alternative cross the Blackwater Canyon?** No. The alignment crosses the North Fork Blackwater River two miles north of its confluence with the Blackwater River. All the alternatives for the project, including the northern alignments, cross the North Fork Blackwater River.
- ❖ **What effect will the new corridor have on noise and light pollution?** No substantial effects are anticipated. Although the analysis is currently being updated, previous noise studies found that impacts were not greater than those with the No Build condition which will have increases in traffic on local roadways. Specifically in Thomas, truck traffic from US 219 will be relocated to the corridor or the truck route. No more through traffic of trucks on Front Street! There are several natural barriers that aid in reducing noise from the new alignment for sound, and any lighting would be at the interchange east of WV 32.
- ❖ **How will the construction of US 48 impact the traveling public between Thomas and Davis?** We are currently designing the Thomas/Davis interchange to be located east of WV 32 based on public opinion. Regardless of the location of the interchange, US 48 will cross under WV 32. All forms of traffic will be considered throughout the design process, and impacts to the traveling public will be reduced to the extent possible.
- ❖ **When will the project construction begin?** With the ROPA alignment, construction is scheduled to begin Fall 2024. Any new alignments will add three to four years to NEPA approvals. This schedule would miss the Infrastructure bill as it has an expiration of September 2026.
- ❖ **Will US 48 be visible from Lindy Point in Blackwater State Park?** No. The bridge over Coketon is the most likely point where the corridor might be seen. The WVDOH conducted viewshed modeling, including a drone flown at night from Lindy Point, where it was determined there would be 144 feet of obstruction between the bridge deck and line of sight.
- ❖ **Will the Coketon Colored school site be impacted?** No, the former site is a quarter mile from the corridor, but the WVDOH plans to erect a monument at the Coketon bridge to tell the story of J.R. Clifford and Carrie Williams for visitors to the area to learn of their story.
- ❖ **Is the truck bypass part of the Parsons to Davis Project?** Yes. The new truck route will become relocated WV 32 and the old 32 route through Thomas will become WV 32 Business Route.



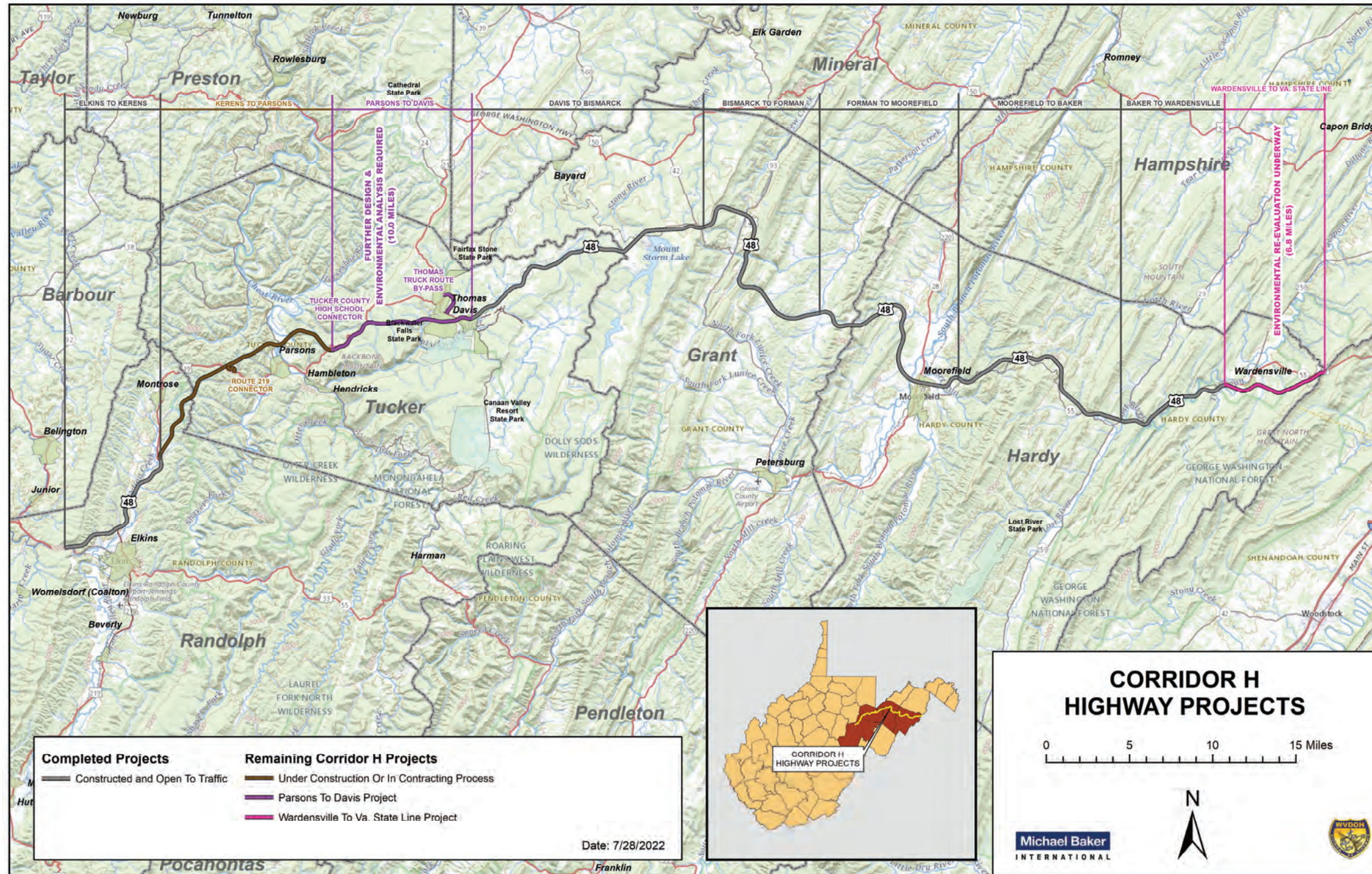
CORRIDOR H OVERVIEW

Purpose and Need:

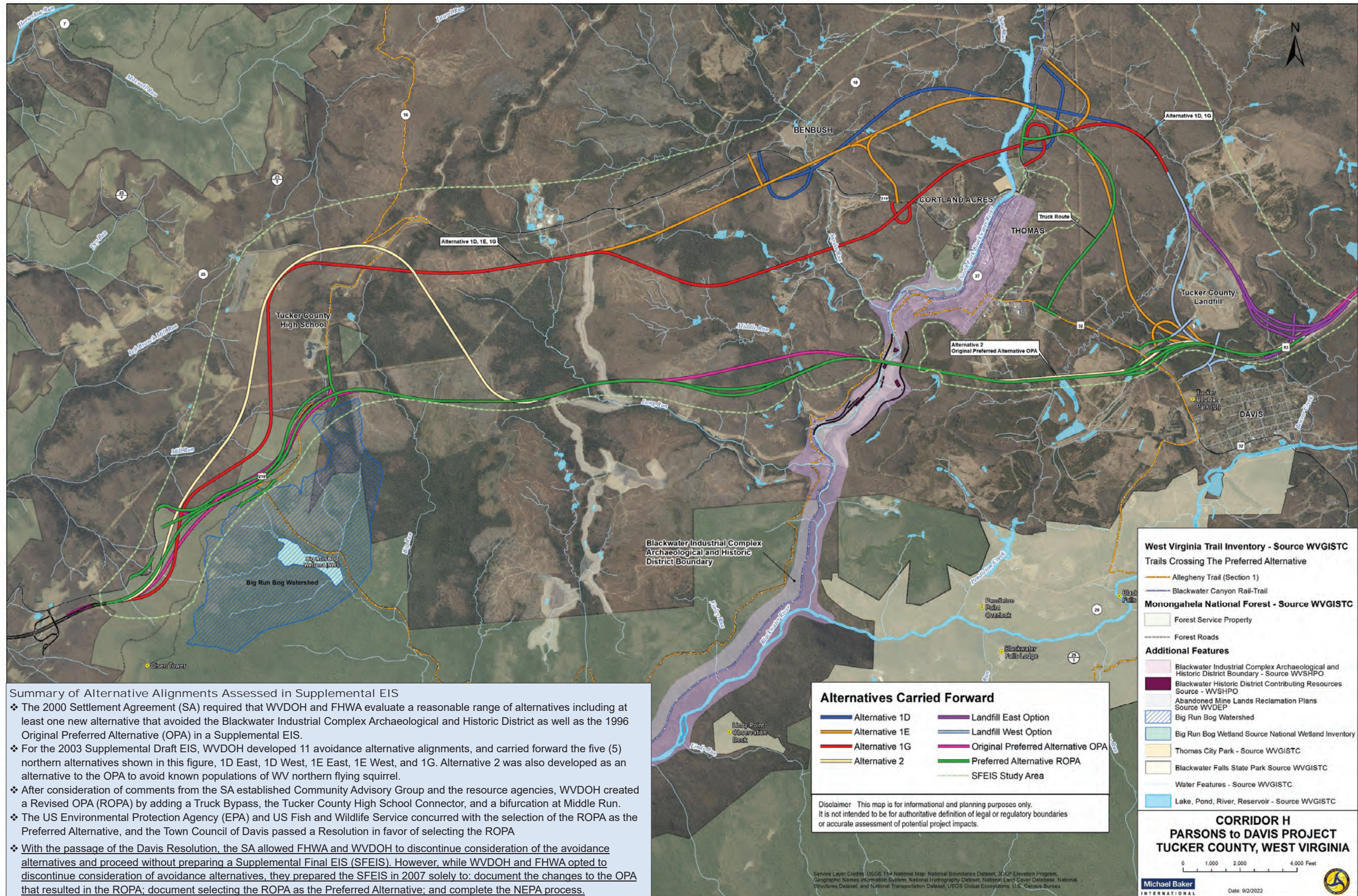
To improve east-west transportation, to promote economic development in the region, and to preserve or improve quality of life.

Timeline:

- 1992-1994: Corridor & Alignment Selection Draft Environmental Impact Statements (EISs)
- 1996: Final EIS & Record of Decision (ROD) issued, identifying a 300-foot wide build alignment as the Preferred Alternative
- 1996- 2000: Legal challenges resulted in a court-mediated Settlement Agreement which divided the Preferred Alternative into nine (9) separate projects & dismissed the Improved Roadway Alternative from further consideration
- 2000-2002: Construction began on the western end of the Corridor, & Supplemental EISs began on the Kerens to Parsons & Parsons to Davis Projects
- Present Status: Only two (2) projects are not currently open to traffic or under construction, as shown at left: the Parsons to Davis Project & the Wardsville to Virginia State Line Project



2007 SFEIS ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENTS

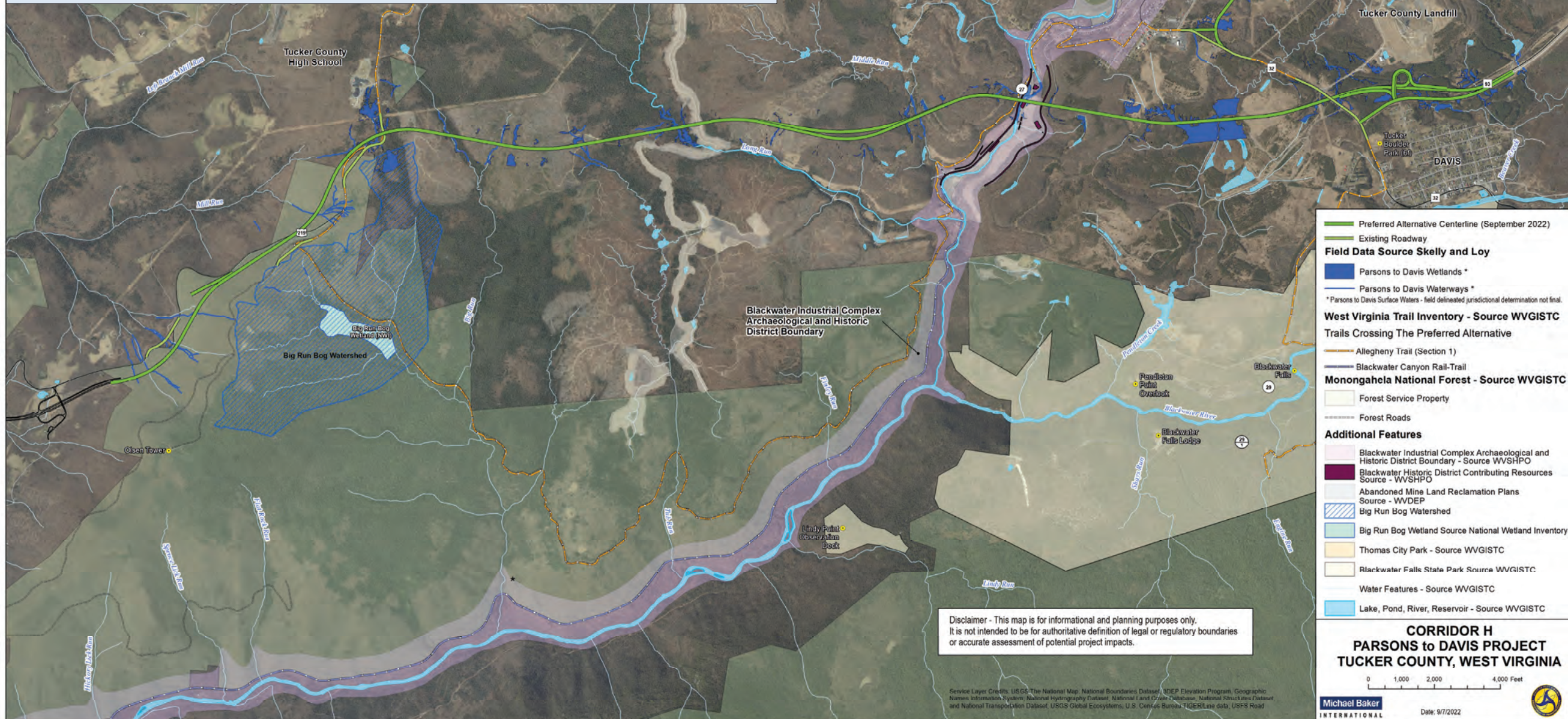


PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

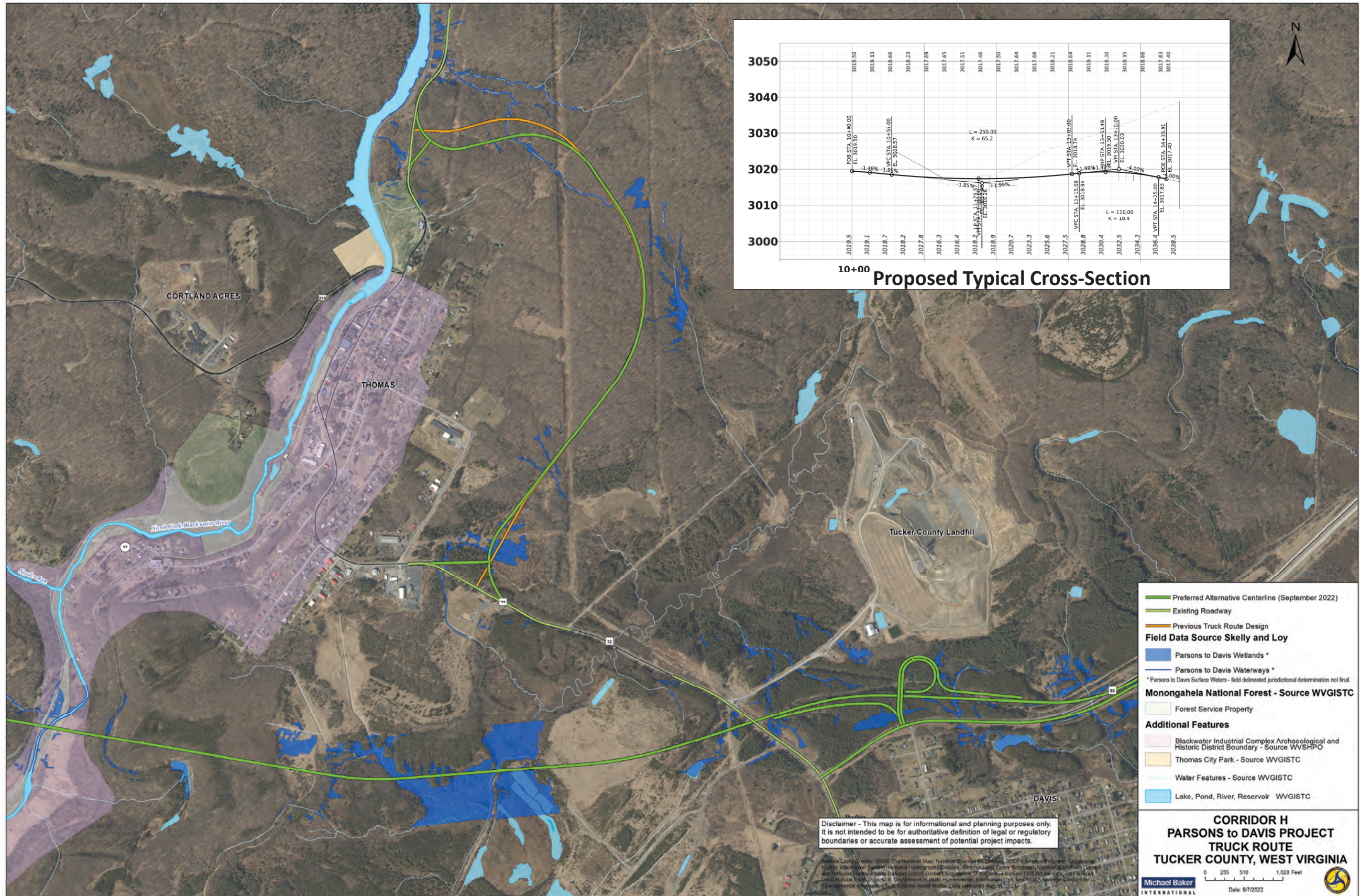
Summary of Project History & Activities Since Previous Public Workshop

- ❖ 2000: Settlement Agreement (SA) identifies the Parsons to Davis Project
- ❖ 2000-2002: Preliminary engineering and environmental studies, resource agency and Community Advisory Group (CAG) coordination, and two Public Meetings
- ❖ 2002-2003: Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) approved by FHWA and circulated for comment, and Public Hearing held
- ❖ 2003-2004: Additional engineering and environmental studies; distribution of a Preferred Alternative Report, accepted by Federal regulatory agencies; passage of a Resolution by the Town Council of Davis supporting the Revised OPA (ROPA).*
- ❖ 2000-2007: Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation completed with the US Fish & Wildlife Service concerning potential impact on the since de-listed WV Northern Flying Squirrel
- ❖ 2007: Supplemental Final EIS (SFEIS) identifying the ROPA as the Preferred Alternative is approved by FHWA and circulated for comment
- ❖ 2008-2016: Implementation of the Red Spruce-Northern Hardwood Ecosystem Memorandum of Understanding & Cooperators Agreement as part of mitigation for both the Parsons to Davis and Davis to Bismarck Projects, which included approximately \$800,000 in funding from WVDOH to the Pharis Knob and Mt. Porte Crayon-Thunderstruck conservation projects.
- ❖ 2019: Public Workshop to announce the re-start of the Parsons to Davis Project
- ❖ 2019-Present:
 - Engineering studies, including consideration of options for the Coketon bridge type, the Corridor H/WV 32 intersection, and the Truck Route
 - Public coordination, including presentations to local governments and the County Historic Landmark Commission
 - Environmental studies, including surveys for federally-listed species; updated historic resources survey; and an Environmental Justice analysis

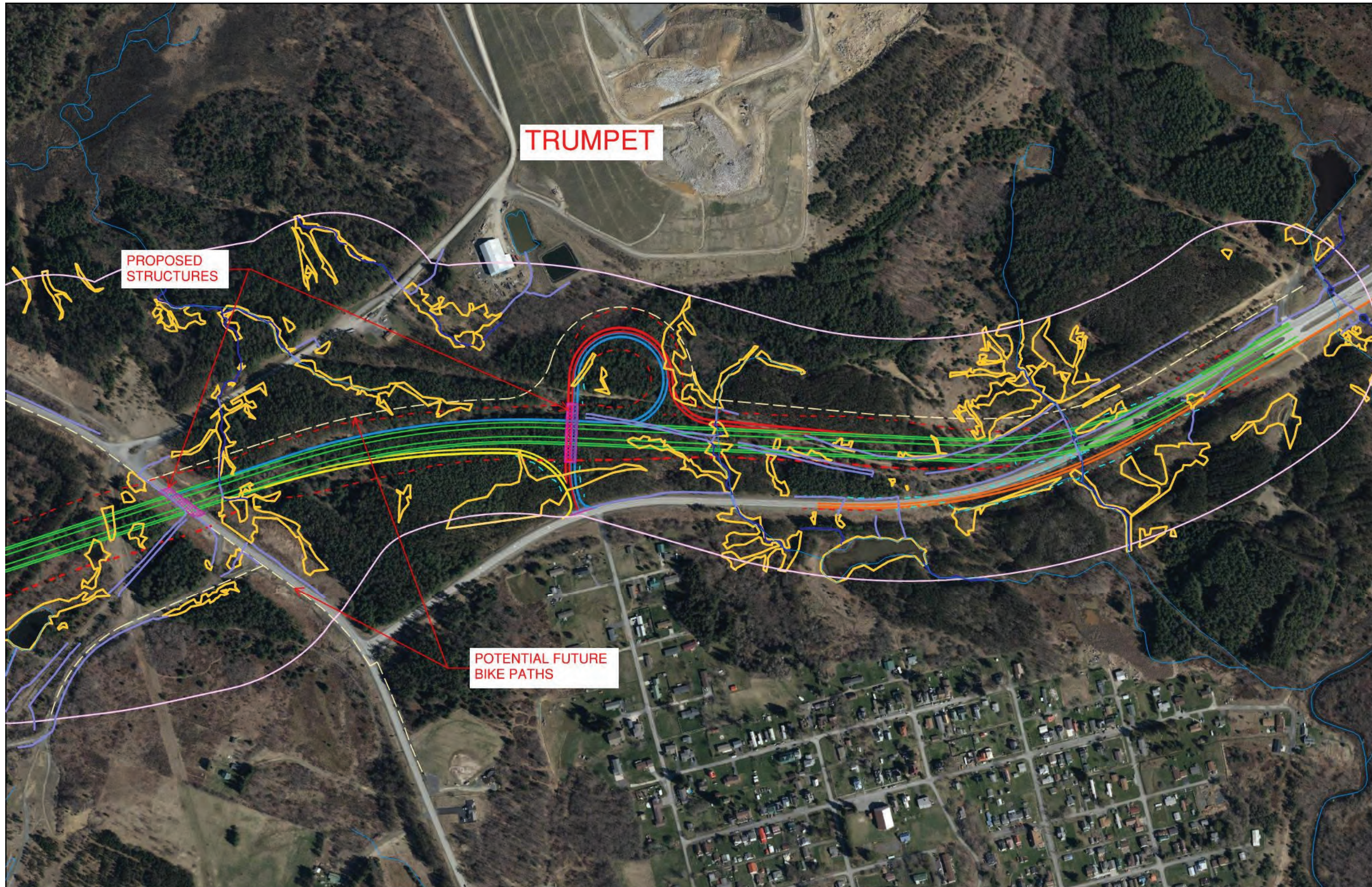
* With the passage of the ROPA-supporting Resolution by the Town Council of Davis, the SA allowed FHWA and WVDOH to discontinue consideration of the avoidance alternatives and proceed without preparing a SFEIS. However, while WVDOH and FHWA opted to discontinue consideration of avoidance alternatives, they prepared the SFEIS in 2007 solely to: document the changes to the OPA that resulted in the ROPA; document selecting the ROPA as the Preferred Alternative; and complete the NEPA process.



IMPROVED TRUCK ROUTE



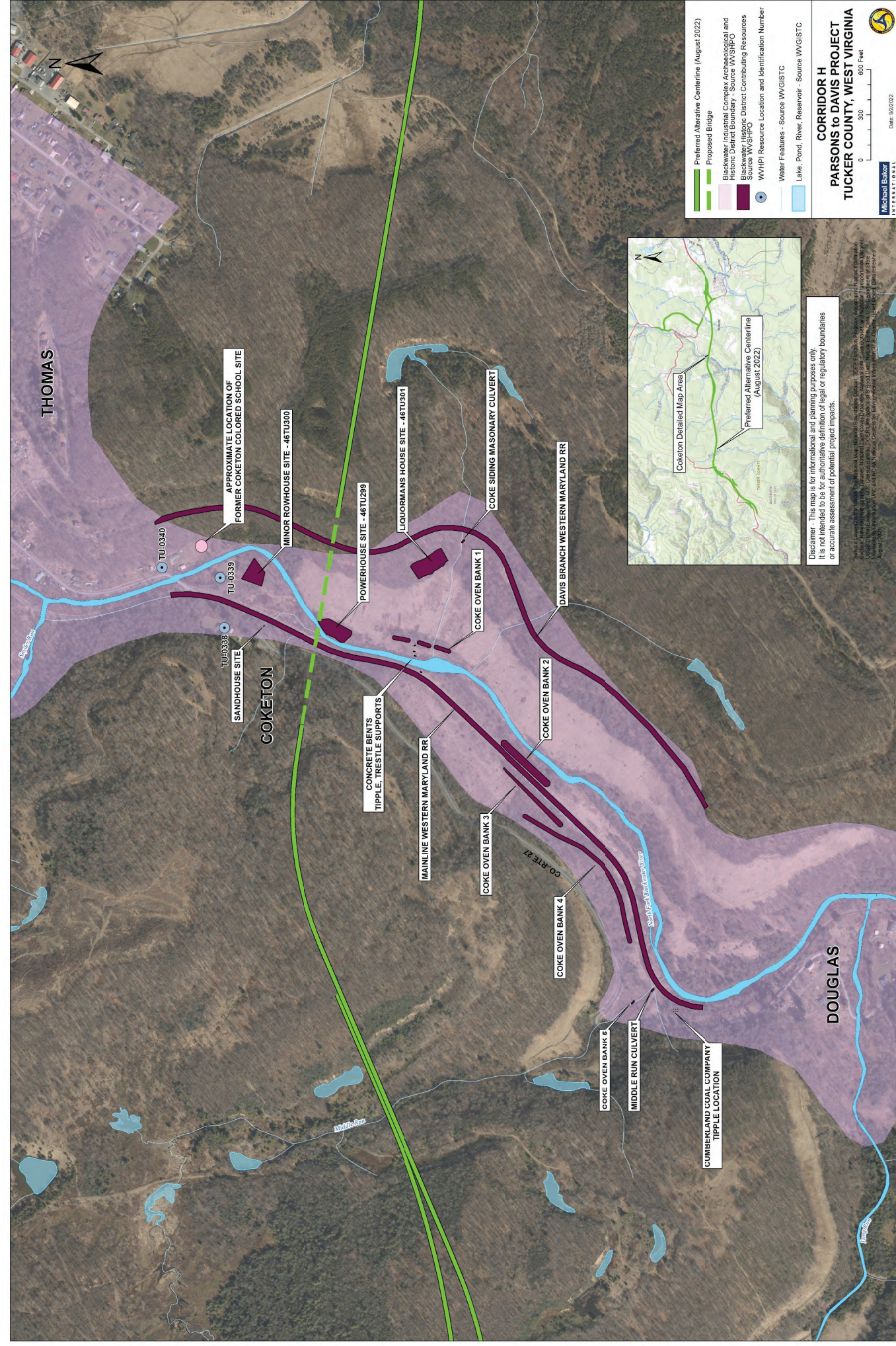
PROPOSED INTERCHANGE FOR WV 32



CULTURAL RESOURCES

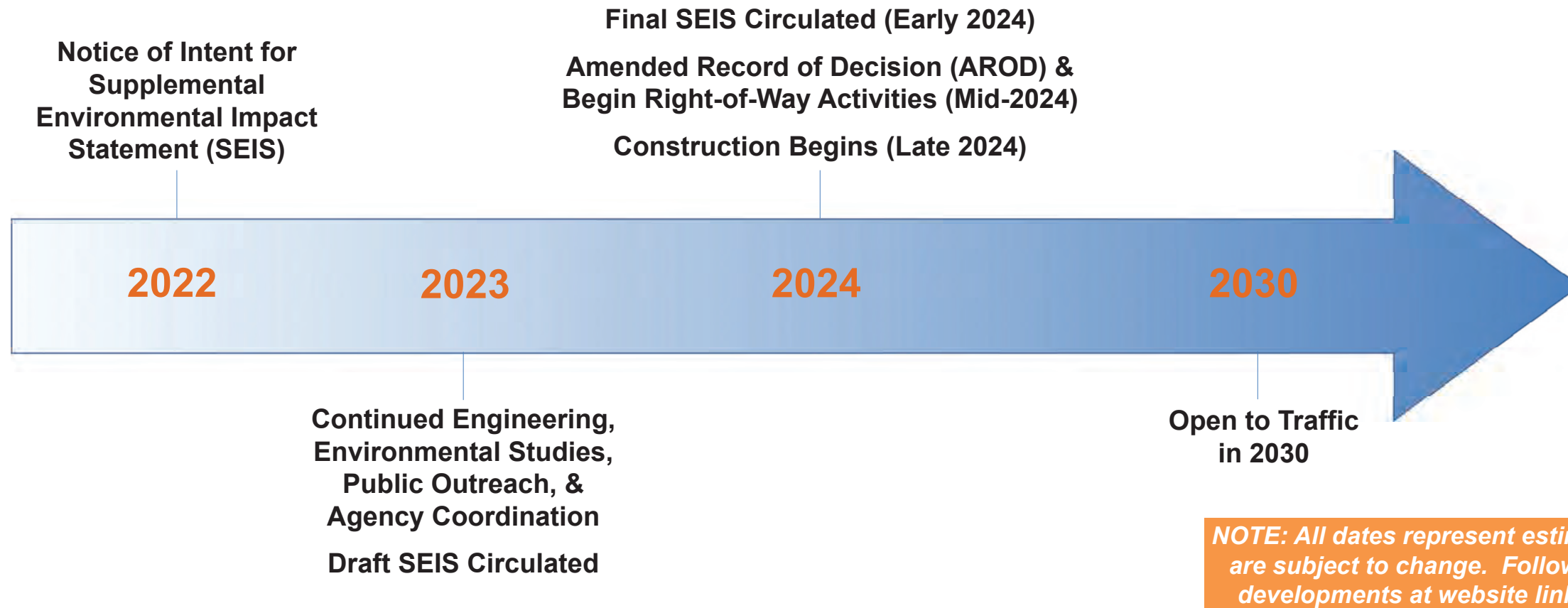
Years of Studies	Individual Historic Resources and Historic Districts	WVSHPO Review and Concurrence	Keeper Review and/or Concurrence	USFS Review and/or Concurrence	Advisory Council for Historic Preservation
1996 - 1999	<u>Determination of Eligibility Studies of all historic (45+ yr. old) buildings and structures (64) in the approx. 2500 sq. mi. Corridor D5 including the Blackwater Avoidance and ROPA study areas for inclusion on the National Register for Historic Places (NRHP); archaeology and historic architectural studies and reports produced for submission to West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (WVSHPO) and Keeper of the NRHP (Keeper)</u>	WVSHPO determines Coketon Study Area eligible for inclusion on the NRHP; and no other resources eligible for inclusion September 16, 1999	NA	NA	NA
1999 - 2001	<u>Additional detailed studies of the Coketon Study Area's 30 historic resources (e.g., ruins of coke ovens, abandoned railroads, tipples, etc.) and Revised Determination of Eligibility Report for the NRHP completed and submitted to the Keeper</u>	NA	Keeper determines that Coketon Study area is part of larger historic and archaeological district Jul 3, 2001	NA	NA
2001 - 2002	Assessment of the Project's effect (direct physical, visual, and noise) on the Blackwater Industrial Complex Archaeological and Historic District (Historic District) and preparation of a Criteria of Effects Report submitted to WVSHPO and Monongahela National Forest for their determinations.	WVSHPO determines that the Project will not adversely affect the Historic District October 30, 2002	NA	Monongahela National Forest finds that the Project will not adversely affect the Historic District October 24, 2002	NA
2004 - 2005	As part of the 2003 - 2007 Supplemental EIS, a Final Criteria of Effect Report was prepared and submitted to the WVSHPO, Monongahela National Forest, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the Historic District	WVSHPO re-affirms its 2002 no adverse effect determination June 23, 2004	NA	Mon Forest re-affirms its 2002 no adverse effect determination April 14, 2004	Informs FHWA that it will have no comment July 20, 2005
2021 - 2022	Updated Determination of Eligibility Studies of 30 previous and "new" historic resources (i.e., resources over 45 years in age since previous survey); studies and reports produced for submission to WVSHPO and Keeper	WVSHPO determines that no new NRHP-eligible properties are present June 24, 2022	NA	NA	NA
1998 - 2005	Archaeology- Historic and Prehistoric Certified DOH and consultant archaeologists conducted approved archaeological surveys on the entire 2500 mi ² D5 Corridor including the Blackwater Avoidance Alignments and the ROPA. These surveys included reconnaissance of 100's of acres as well as excavation of 100's of test pits. Three sites eligible for listing on the NRHP were found in the Blackwater (Coketon) study area.	Agreement with findings February 15, 2000 May 7, 2002 February 17, 2005	NA	NA	NA

NOTES: The Corridor H Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), WV State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the U.S. Advisory Council for Historic Preservation identifies the details for review and comment and the sequence for report submittal, comment and or approval (i.e., concurrence/determination). Thus, "NA," or Not Applicable, is used to indicate that review not required under the PA. The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places is not included in the PA but is asked to comment on eligibility determinations by WVDOH and FHWA.



Parsons to Davis Project - September 12, 2022 - Public Informational Workshop

TIMELINE & COMMENTING



PLEASE SHARE YOUR COMMENTS! THE COMMENT PERIOD ENDS:
OCTOBER 12, 2022

Mail comments to:

Mr. Travis Long, Director Technical Support Division
West Virginia Division of Highways
1334 Smith Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Comments may also be submitted using
the form included with tonight's handout
or online at the WVDOH website:
<http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment>



DATE:

Mr. Travis Long, Director
Technical Support Division
West Virginia Division of Highways
1334 Smith Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

MEETING DATE: Monday, September 12, 2022, 4:00-7:00 PM
LOCATION: Blackwater Falls State Park Conference Room,
1584 Blackwater Falls Road, Davis, WV
SUBJECT: PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP
PROJECT: Corridor H – Parsons to Davis
X347-H-55.68.00
ACNH-0484(290)
Tucker County

COMMENTS DUE BY: Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Please consider the following comments:

(Please print the following information)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATION (IF ANY):

How did you hear about the Public Informational Workshop?

Project Information and Comment Sheets
can be found online at our WVDOH Website at <http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment>.
Under Engineering Projects, Open, and then click Corridor H – Parsons to Davis.