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## **VDOT Selects Private Proposal to Improve Route 28 Corridor**

Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner Charles D. "Chip" Nottingham today announced that he has selected a private team of transportation firms led by Clark Construction Group, Inc., Shirley Contracting Corporation and Dewberry & Davis LLC to improve Route 28 between I-66 in Fairfax County and Route 7 in Loudoun County.

"This is a major milestone for Route 28," said Commissioner Nottingham. "We will begin immediately negotiations for a comprehensive agreement and contract that will allow construction to begin as soon as possible and finish by 2006," said Commissioner Nottingham.

Virginia is the national leader in using public-private partnerships to bring new and innovative funding streams to transportation improvements. The Route 28 Tax District and transportation corridor is at the epicenter of Virginia's success story as a high-growth leader in technology and economic development.

"Dulles Airport, AOL Time Warner, WorldCom, other leading businesses, and tens of thousands of commuters depend on Route 28," the Commissioner added.

The Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA) of 1995 allows private entities to submit proposals to VDOT for transportation improvements. During the summer of 2000, two firms, one led by Clark/Shirley/Dewberry and the other by Fluor Daniel/Morrison Knudsen, LLC (FD/MK), submitted separate proposals to improve the 14-mile corridor.

The Clark/Shirley/Dewberry consortium, officially known as "The Route 28 Corridor Improvements, LLC" proposed upgrading 10 intersections to grade-separated interchanges and widening the roadway from six to eight lanes.

The FD/MK proposal calls for upgrading 10 intersections to grade-separated interchanges and widening the roadway to 10 lanes, four of which would be express high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes.

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Both proposals are in the \$287 to \$383 million range for design, right of way acquisition and construction. VDOT's financial participation will be about \$84.7 million. Tax district revenues will support the bonds.

Following the Commonwealth Transportation Board's conceptual approval of both proposals, the Route 28 Advisory Panel was formed to formally review the proposals. Members included James F. Hayes, Deputy Secretary of Transportation; Leonard S. "Hobie" Mitchel, Commonwealth Transportation Board member; Andrew V. Bailey, VDOT Assistant Commissioner for Operations; Thomas F. Boyd, VDOT Assistant Commissioner for Finance; Frank Gee, VDOT Acting Chief Engineer; and Nick Garber, a University of Virginia engineering professor.

The panel made its final decision based on team qualifications, engineering merit, financial feasibility, public support and compatibility with the existing roadway network. On May 1, 2001, the panel made a unanimous recommendation to Commissioner Nottingham who, pursuant to the Public-Private Transportation Act and implementing regulations, made the final decision.

One concern raised by the panel regarding the FD/MK proposal was the restricted access to the proposed toll lanes. Under that proposal tax district members, who would pay for most of the improvements, would have limited access to the HOT lanes because access points were proposed only at I-66, the Dulles Toll Road and Route 7.

"Congestion pricing and high occupancy toll lanes are innovative funding strategies that may play a promising role in future new highway projects in highly congested areas," said Nottingham. "Today's decision should not be construed as an indication that VDOT is not interested in exploring the use of HOT lanes."

Fairfax County, Loudoun County and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority reviewed the detailed proposals earlier this year and expressed their support for the PPTA concept to accelerate improvements in the corridor.

Route 28 was widened from two lanes to six lanes in 1991 with landowners paying 80 percent of the construction cost. The most heavily traveled section of Route 28 is just north of the Dulles Toll Road with 70,000 vehicles per day. By 2010, the same section is expected to carry 135,000 vehicles per day.

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