

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Go North Corridor H Alliance
go-northcorridorh.org



WV Highways to Consider Northern Route for Corridor H from Parsons to Davis

THOMAS, W.Va.—Concerned citizens say they are encouraged by news that the West Virginia Division of Highways will consider a northern route for Corridor H from Parsons to Davis—avoiding splitting the towns of Thomas and Davis and impacting the Blackwater Canyon area.

The [Go North Corridor H Alliance](https://www.go-northcorridorh.org/) was notified via email by the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration that an upcoming report will include study of “a Blackwater Avoidance Alternative,” a term given to a northern route that has long been advocated by local citizens.

“We who live here know what a wonderful, unique place it is. The many visitors who love coming here and contribute to our local economy understand this too,” said Linda Reeves, owner of The Studio Gallery in Thomas. “We only get one chance at this, and it needs to be a win-win for all of us. We are glad that citizen voices are being heard.”

[A previous study](#) issued for the Parsons to Davis section—the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement—was completed in 2007 but has yet to receive approval from the Federal Highway Administration and is now outdated. A reevaluation of this study is underway and will now include study of a northern route in addition to the West Virginia Division of Highway’s preferred route, known as the Revised Original Preferred Alternative (ROPA).

“We all want protection for one of the state’s most popular state parks, Blackwater Falls, as well as historic sites and a number of popular recreational trails that ROPA would heavily impact,” said Matt Marcus, manager of Blackwater Bikes in Davis.

Understanding the full impact of these two alternative alignments will offer the public more clarity on the project and update consideration of the region’s developing economy and special quality of life.

“Members of the Go North Corridor H Alliance applaud the Federal Highway Administration and the West Virginia Division of Highways for studying a northern route and addressing questions raised by stakeholders during the public comment periods,” said Olivia Miller, board member of the Stewards of the Potomac Highlands.

“A project of this magnitude will forever alter the landscape of Tucker County and our precious public lands, which provide the invaluable benefits of nature to us all,” Miller continued. “Considering the extent of problems and mistakes made during construction of the Kerens to Parsons section of the Corridor, more research is needed to identify the route that will cause the least environmental harm during construction and afterward. I am optimistic that state highway officials will design a route aptly suited for this special area of West Virginia.”

The Federal Highway Administration and West Virginia Division of Highways are developing a Notice of Intent for the updated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The Notice of Intent is expected to be published in the Federal Register later this year.

“We are excited about the opportunity for the Blackwater Avoidance Alternative to be considered, and we're confident that Governor Justice and the Department of Highways will see the wisdom of selecting this route,” said Judy Rood, Director of Friends of Blackwater, Inc. “We look forward to continuing our dialog with the Governor's office and the Department of Highways.”

Go North Corridor H is an alliance of environmental groups, business owners, and residents in Hardy, Tucker, Randolph, and nearby counties advocating for a route that best serves our communities and imparts the least harm on these environmentally sensitive and unique areas of West Virginia. Learn more at go-northcorridorh.org and www.saveblackwater.org

-GO NORTH CORRIDOR H ALLIANCE-

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Overlooking the Blackwater Canyon upstream of the north fork entrance of the Blackwater River.
(Photo by Frank Gebhard)