

Go North Alliance Newsletter. January 2024: Where Will The Final Piece Be Placed?

The alignment for the ten-mile stretch of Corridor H known as the Parsons-Davis section has not been decided. Since neither route, the ROPA or the Northern Route, has reached the stage of final design, now is the time to take a critical look at the two options:

***ROPA (Revised Original Preferred Alignment)** is the option favored by the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH). It's important to understand that the ROPA involves two major road construction projects: (1) Corridor H that will go between the towns of Thomas and Davis and (2) the proposed Truck Route/Thomas Bypass to reroute traffic traveling north and south through Thomas.

ROPA, a four lane divided freeway, will divide the towns of Thomas and Davis with a 40 foot deep, 300 foot wide, mile long road cut. ROPA will cross the North Fork of the Blackwater on a high bridge between Douglas and Coketon. It will be much closer than a northern route to Blackwater Falls State Park and within sight of the Monongahela National Forest Dobbin House trail system. It will go below Route 32 between Thomas and Davis to connect with the interchange of the already-completed section of Corridor H east of Davis. This alignment will handle east-west traffic, BUT it does not take the trucks traveling to and from Route 219 North off the streets of Thomas.

To eliminate heavy trucks off the narrow, historic streets of Thomas, WVDOH proposes an additional road called the Truck Route. This two-lane roadway will take the place of, and be called, WV Route 32. Shaped like a comma, the bypass will begin north of the bridge in Thomas and wrap around the back of Thomas, the cemetery, library and school and then dump trucks onto existing Route 32, across from the Knights of Columbus ball field. Once back on the existing Route 32, truck traffic will continue south and will have to make the left turn at the intersection of Route 93/48 in order to connect with the interchange and completed section of Corridor H, or they will continue south on Route 32 through Davis to Harman.

The following questions need to be asked: Will the Truck Route be constructed before, after or at the same time as the ROPA? Will existing Route 32 need to be widened? During construction what will be the detours and delays for local traffic, school buses, etc. on Route 32 and Route 219?

***Northern Route (Go North):** From Tucker County High School the highway will go north of Thomas and then connect with the already-completed section of Corridor H just east of Davis. Trucks using Route 219 North will get on or off Corridor H at an exit north of Thomas. The Northern Route will make a separate Truck Route unnecessary. This option will keep the vast majority of the trucks off the streets of Thomas, and off of two-lane Route 32 between the towns. A well designed Northern route will avoid the Thomas City Park, water source, and landfill. Most of the increased heavy truck traffic currently going through Thomas are long haul truckers going east/west using Corridor H. Local truck traffic makes up a small fraction of the existing truck traffic we are currently seeing on Route 32 in Thomas. Trucks using Route 219 North to access Davis will have the option of getting on Corridor H to bypass Thomas.