

Roanoke County could encourage more commercial and residential development outside of the city limits, drawing some businesses and investment away from the city. This routing might also affect some homes in the Hunting Hills area.

The other routing variation for the Central West option would have I-73 continue on US-220 only until the Tanglewood Mall at Route 419, where it would then turn southwest and continue through largely open land in southeastern Roanoke County. This routing would have no new interchanges to attract competing development out of the City into Roanoke County. Fewer businesses on US-220 would be displaced by this routing and many of the US-220 businesses would stand to benefit by direct access to I-73. Potential drawbacks might include incursion on parts of the Tanglewood Mall property and possible displacement in the Penn Forest neighborhood in Roanoke County.

- **Central – East Option** - Under this Option, I-73 would split from the current path of I-581 at Elm Ave, running eastward through the Riverland neighborhood. The first interchange to the south would be at Red Valley, some six miles from the city limits. With just one interchange added, this option is likely to be relatively benign in terms of generating local traffic in Roanoke and competing business development outside of the city limits. It would entail minimum displacement of businesses, though it could involve displacement of some residents of the historic Riverland neighborhood. Since it branches from I-581 just south of Elm Avenue, it avoids displacement issues at the Wonju Interchange and on US-220.

❖ 3.3 The West Bypass Alignment

The West Bypass Alignment would branch south from I-81 at Exit 132, near Dixie Caverns, bypassing the city through Roanoke County. Of the two bypass options, the West Bypass would have the most minimal impact on development because only one new interchange would be constructed west of the city. Due to the mountainous terrain, little development is possible along this bypass route. The new interchange would be constructed at US-221. There is no widening of US-221 under the current I-73 alternatives, although it has been proposed that the road be expanded to four lanes as part of a separate project. This road could then serve as a spur into the city, connecting with I-581. In any case, there would be an additional link from I-73 to Roanoke via the US-220 interchange south of the city (near Boones Mill).

The West Bypass would provide the most direct route for traffic on I-73, which connects the Midwestern States with the Southeast. It would strengthen the region's link with Virginia Tech, since travel time to Blacksburg would be reduced. The West Bypass would be less beneficial to traffic moving between I-81 northeast of the City and I-73 south of the City. Some of that traffic could use I-581 as a distance shortcut, adding to the traffic congestion on I-581 which is already expected to be severe by the year 2020.