

Southside Connector

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Southside Connector Distribution Pipeline Project?

The Southside Connector Distribution Pipeline (SCDP) Project is a new natural gas pipeline approximately 9 miles long that runs from Salter Street in Norfolk to Bainbridge Boulevard and South Military Highway in Chesapeake to connect the Hampton Roads region's northern and southern main local gas supply lines. The connection will provide the region with greater access to natural gas and improve customer service.

Why is this project necessary?

The project is necessary to transport more of the gas supply available from the northern region into the South Hampton Roads region. It will improve Virginia Natural Gas' system operations, support continued economic growth, and ensure that all of our customers have access to the most cost-efficient gas commodity prices.

How was the route selected for the SCDP pipeline chosen?

In urban areas, Virginia Natural Gas makes every effort to route its pipelines through existing electrical or utility easements wherever possible. This is an industry best practice as it has the least impact on nearby homes and businesses, is the most environmentally friendly method and provides the best access for pipeline operation and maintenance. While neither the cheapest nor most direct route, extensive evaluation determined it to be the safest and least disruptive option.

If an electrical or utility right of way isn't an option, what else is considered?

The next option is to locate in city rights of way in the absence of any existing easements. This avoids impacting private properties, but loses some measure of protection to the facilities, either due to 3rd party damage or potential requirement for relocation. Carving out a new easement through private property is a last resort in an urban area.

What other factors must Virginia Natural Gas take into account when planning a route in an urban or densely populated area?

There are numerous criteria, including:

- Safety of the public and pipeline once put into service
- Impact to residents and services (traffic control, first responders, etc.) during construction
- Environmental impacts of construction and pipeline operation
- Historical or archeological impact of construction or pipeline operation
- Cost of installation

Is the SCDP part of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) project?

No. The Southside Connector Distribution project is a separate project being funded and built by Virginia Natural Gas to connect the company's main northern and southern pipelines. This connection is needed to get gas from the Peninsula to South Hampton Roads. The SCDP pipeline strengthens system operating pressures to meet the needs of existing customers and supports service to large customers with high demands for natural gas, boosts Virginia Natural Gas system operations, and helps the company support continued economic growth in southeastern Virginia by providing natural gas infrastructure.

What is a pipeline right of way?

A right of way – or easement – is a strip of land on which a property owner grants to another party the right to use the land for a specific purpose – in this case, Virginia Natural Gas' right to operate, maintain and, if necessary, replace or add a natural gas pipeline. During construction, additional temporary space may be needed to accommodate heavy equipment. After construction has been completed, the easement will be restored to its pre-construction condition.



How does the presence of a right of way affect the use of property?

There are a few property owner restrictions that come with a pipeline right of way in order to protect the safety of the pipe. These include prohibitions against erecting structures; doing any kind of excavation, construction or drilling; and planting of trees in the easement.

Are property owners compensated for the right of way?

In addition to compensation received by Dominion Power for the use of the right of way on their property, landowners are compensated by Virginia Natural Gas for use of the same easement.

What additional federal, state or local legal hurdles must Virginia Natural Gas address before construction?

None. Construction is underway.

When will construction for this project take place?

The pipeline is expected to be operational by the 2018 heating season.

What does pipeline construction entail?

Generally speaking, pipeline construction involves the following steps:

1. Surveying the right of way
2. Clearing the right of way
3. Transporting the pipe to the right of way
4. Welding the pipe
5. Digging a trench for the pipe
6. Lowering the pipe into the trench
7. Back-filling the trench
8. Pressure testing the pipe
9. Restoring the right of way to its pre-construction condition.

When feasible, Virginia Natural Gas may also use a technique called directional boring, under streets and parking lots. Underground directional boring avoids the need for open trenches across roads and other surfaces. However, we may need to temporarily close streets in some locations during construction. If that is the case, we'll work with the local jurisdictions to manage traffic control and minimize the disruption to local residents.

What about safety concerns?

Please review our natural gas pipeline safety initiatives.

Will natural gas service be interrupted during construction?

No, existing natural gas service to homes and businesses will not be interrupted during construction. In fact, this project will help Virginia Natural Gas maintain exceptional customer service and meet the needs of new energy intensive businesses that have a high demand for natural gas.

If I have questions, who do I contact?

Call our Work in Your Neighborhood project hotline at:
757.616.7565 or visit virginianaturalgas.com/sconnector

