

James City County Requests for 2009-2014 Six-Year Improvement Program Projects

Introduction

James City County respectfully submits its priority Six-Year Improvement Program Projects. The project list consists of our community's highest priority projects.

Background

James City County and its environs continue to grow rapidly. According to a March 2001 publication produced by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, James City County ranked eighth in the Commonwealth for localities with the highest population growth since 1990. In regard to traffic generation, the 60,000 residents of the Williamsburg area and the local workforce form only part of the picture. During the peak tourist season, an additional 30,000 visitors travel our highways daily. Our present highway system is not adequate to accommodate our future growth, to preserve the quiet charm of Colonial Williamsburg, and to provide safe, convenient access for our many visitors to Busch Gardens and other area attractions. James City County continues to focus on projects that will make great strides toward solving present problems and improving the adequacy of our transportation system for years into the future.

Summary of Projects

The County asks that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) expeditiously complete or accelerate projects that have received partial or full funding. These include the Route 60 East relocation, the widening of Ironbound Road (Route 615), and geometric changes to Monticello Avenue.

Highway Projects

Route 60 East Relocation

The construction of an alternate alignment of Pocahontas Trail (Route 60 East) between the Anheuser-Busch access road and the Newport News City limits is a priority project. This project will serve developing commercial and industrial areas in James City County and the City of Newport News. Total vehicular traffic in this area as indicated by VDOT's average daily traffic volumes exhibited an increase from 1,650 ADT to 12,686 ADT between 1980 and 1998.

The present configuration of Pocahontas Trail produces traffic tie-ups, promotes traffic accidents, and impedes ingress and egress to residents and businesses. Ball Metal (240 employees), Anheuser-Busch Brewery (1,100 employees), Busch Gardens (4,000 employees during peak season), and the Wal-Mart Distribution Center (250 employees) generate high commuter and truck traffic volume in this area. Also, James River Commerce Center (220 acres) is dependent upon good access to attract and retain industrial prospects. The Commerce Center contains the Ball Metal warehouse expansion (180,000 square feet) and Service Metal Fabricators, a business with 95 employees. Although recent improvements at the BASF entrance and several other intersections provide some relief, Pocahontas Trail continues to be a dangerous corridor for both residents and businesses.

In James City County, almost 1,000 acres of industrial land is being actively marketed in this area. The Commonwealth of Virginia has designated approximately 3,500 acres in the Grove area as an Enterprise Zone. The Enterprise Zone seeks to create an improved climate for private sector investment, development, and expansion, thereby improving the overall physical and social conditions within the zone. A new alternate

alignment of Route 60 would dramatically improve access to this area and will allow the County and the Commonwealth to realize the full benefit of the investments made in the Grove area. Recently the City of Newport News and James City County recommended that the project be divided into two sections and VDOT concurred. This should facilitate more rapid progress on the first section.

James City County requests prompt funding for construction of this roadway in two sections: The first section extends from Route 60 at a point east of Blow Flats Road in James City County to the Fort Eustis Interchange in Newport News. It is suggested that the section be constructed in advance of the remaining section. To facilitate more rapid progress, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has recognized the regional significance of the Route 60 East relocation project and has allocated \$13.518 million from its Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) in FY 2002-03, along with an allocation of an additional \$1.729 million in FY 2007 and a projected \$1 million in FY 2008. This money would be used for preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and some construction in both James City County and Newport News. The County requests that VDOT rapidly complete preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisition on the first section in order to protect the right-of-way and allocate a balance of funding to construct that section.

Ironbound Road (Route 615)

The proposed improvements would widen the roadway from two to four lanes between Strawberry Plains Road (Route 616) and the Longhill Connector Road (Route 615) increasing general capacity and reducing congestion.

Proposed improvements vary along the length of Ironbound Road based on the specific needs along each segment. The proposed roadway between Strawberry Plains Road (Route 616) and Monticello Avenue (Route 321) includes new curb and gutter, four-foot bicycle lanes, and a five-foot sidewalk. Between Monticello Avenue (Route 321) and Carriage Road (Route 672), the proposed improvements include a raised median, new curb and gutter, four-foot bicycle lanes, and eight-foot multiuse paths.

The proposed roadway between Carriage Road (Route 672) and Longhill Connector Road (Route 615) includes a center-turn lane, curb and gutter, four-foot bicycle lanes, an eight-foot multiuse path, and a five-foot sidewalk. The Intersection will be improved with additional turn lanes, as warranted by traffic studies. The additional travel lanes, along with improved turn movements, will provide additional capacity, help relieve congestion, and prove a safer roadway. The County desires completion of this project in a timely manner.

Monticello Avenue Geometric Changes

The proposed improvements along Monticello Avenue are between Route 199 and News Road. The improvements will adjust access radiuses and add turn lanes at corridor intersections. After these improvements are implemented, restriping would provide an additional thru lane increasing the capacity of the corridor. Ironbound Connector Road and a small portion News Road next to WindsorMeade will also be widened and restriped.

Route 60 Turn Lanes

Along Route 60 in Grove, between the fire station and Newport News, there are at least nine intersections with secondary streets that do not have left-turn lanes. The addition of turn lanes at these intersections would increase the capacity of the road and decrease the possibility of delay caused by left turns.

Conclusion

James City County respectfully submits its most critical road improvement projects. The County feels strongly that all these projects are crucial to the development of our community. All are supported by the James City County Comprehensive Plan. The County appreciates the Department's difficult task of trying to make too few dollars cover so many needed construction projects, and requests the Department recognize and fund the following solutions to problems of State significance:

- Funding for the construction of Route 60;
- On-schedule completion of the widening of Ironbound Road;
- Monticello Avenue Geometric Changes; and
- Funding for the construction of Route 60 turn lanes.

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