

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: December 11, 2001

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Tamara A. M. Rosario, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: FY 2002-2007 Six-Year Secondary Road Plan

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**Overview**

Each year the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) requests the County to review its secondary roads (those roads with route numbers 600 and above) and to make recommendations on the priority rankings of State funding allocations to those roads with the greatest need for improvement. The County is expected to receive between \$2 and \$2.3 million each year for the next six years for secondary road improvements. The funding schedule does not assume any State revenue sharing funds that, if used by the County, could accelerate projects after 2001. If requested and matched by the County, these revenue sharing funds would be allocated by VDOT at a later time to eligible projects chosen by the County.

**Ranking Process**

Attachment 2 lists the roads that have been considered and their proposed priority rankings. Staff identified these roads as needing improvement based on traffic count data, road conditions, and the Comprehensive Plan. Staff further analyzed and ranked these secondary roads in terms of traffic volumes, accident data, road condition, and geometrics. Attachment 3 lists the roads that are recommended to be included in this year's FY 2002 Six-Year Secondary Road Plan. Attachment 4 is the official VDOT priority ranking and funding spreadsheet. It does not reflect the application of any future revenue sharing funds.

In ranking the projects, four-lane improvements were ranked separately from two-lane improvements. The roads included in the four-lane improvement category are roads that are of standard two-lane design for which the only significant improvement alternative to increase level of service is to widen these roads from two to four lanes. It is important to note that listing the roads in this category does not necessarily mean that these roads will be widened to four lanes in the future. Staff will continue to monitor all of these roads and to evaluate annually their need for improvement. Staff remains hopeful that with the completion of Route 199 and Monticello Avenue, further four-lane improvements will not be warranted for Longhill Road (north of Olde Towne Road) and Ironbound Road (south of Mid-County Park).

The roads in the two-lane improvement category are those roads that are of substandard design and construction. These two-lane roads have traffic volumes that do not warrant an upgrade from two to four lanes; however, due to their condition many of these roads are candidates for intermediate improvements. The County's goal in the past and in this year's staff recommendation is to balance road improvement projects between costly four-lane upgrades and the intermediate two-lane improvements. To accomplish this, staff recommends a continuation of the two highest-ranking four-lane improvements from last year and the five highest-ranking two-lane improvement projects of this year to be included in this fiscal year's Six-Year Plan.

Staff has concern about making significant improvements to roads outside the County's Primary Service Area (PSA) due to the financial costs of substantial upgrades, potential negative impact on the rural character of rural roads, and the possibility of encouraging additional residential development outside the PSA. As an alternative, staff recommends that, where possible, "spot" improvements be made in an effort to address major

road deficiencies. These spot improvements would allow the costs to be kept at a reasonable level and to better preserve the rural character of the road. The proposed improvements to Barnes Road and Mount Laurel Road are examples of such improvements.

## **Summary**

Neither James City County nor VDOT staff recommend any change in the priority of projects from last year's plan. No conditions have changed to warrant new priorities; however, increasing costs have delayed the construction start date of several projects, as detailed in their descriptions below.

## **Description of Projects - In Priority Order**

The following is a list of proposed projects for the Six-Year Secondary Road Plan. This list contains the same projects that were on last year's plan.

### **1. Ironbound Road – Tewning Road to Strawberry Plains Road**

Ironbound Road is planned to be widened from two to four lanes from Tewning Road to the Virginia Power office on Ironbound Road. The four lanes will actually end in the vicinity of Strawberry Plains Road, but the project will include tapers that will extend down approximately to the Virginia Power office. The section of Ironbound Road between Tewning Road and Longhill Connector Road is in the City of Williamsburg. It is expected that this section will also be upgraded to four lanes to link the County's section of Ironbound Road to the four-lane improvement of Longhill Connector Road. This segment of Ironbound Road had an average traffic count of 9,117 vehicle trips per day (vtpd). It is expected that the traffic volumes on this road will continue to grow, particularly with the undeveloped Casey property to the west, undeveloped property on the east side of Ironbound Road, and future development/redevelopment along Monticello Avenue.

The design of this road and the Longhill/Longhill Connector Road will contain extensive pedestrian, bikeway, and landscape improvements. These improvements were originally proposed by the New Town Master Plan and have since been redefined and endorsed by the Crossroads Steering Group. The very high estimated cost of the two projects reflects these design features. Staff is monitoring the costs and may recommend changes in the projects next year, if needed to maintain sufficient funding for other transportation projects. Construction is anticipated to begin in July 2004, rather than in July 2003 as projected in last year's plan.

### **2. Longhill Road and Longhill Connector Road**

All of Longhill Connector Road and the portion of Longhill Road from Route 199 to Longhill Connector Road are planned to be widened from two to four lanes. The 2001 traffic volume on Longhill Connector Road is 5,425 vtpd. To date, VDOT has considered this four-lane project and the Ironbound Road and Longhill Road projects as one project. Without this upgrade, the level-of-service on all of Longhill Road and Ironbound Road may decrease. Staff may have a new recommendation next year. As with the Ironbound Road project, construction is expected to begin in July 2004 rather than in July 2003.

3. Croaker Road - Route 607

This planned two-lane improvement, which is outside the PSA, will occur between Woodland Farms Drive and Croaker Landing Road. This road provides access to Woodland Farms, Sycamore Landing, Ivey Dell, Ware Creek Manor, and the York River Park boat ramp at the end of Croaker Landing Drive. Citizens in this area have voiced support for this planned road improvement in general; however, the final alignment of the road has not been decided at this point. Staff is working with VDOT to identify the alignment alternatives and will evaluate them based upon their impact to surrounding property owners, potential to encourage undesired residential development and to erode rural character, and final cost. All alternatives will incorporate a bikeway. Current estimated costs are higher than those anticipated in past years, and construction is anticipated to start in July 2006, two years later than previously expected.

4. Ironbound Road - between Sandy Bay Road and Jamestown Road

This two-lane improvement would occur on the short segment of Ironbound Road between Sandy Bay Road and Jamestown Road. This segment of Ironbound Road is in poor condition and has poor geometrics (curvature, alignment, elevation, etc.). While a traffic count was not available for this portion of Ironbound Road, the 7,553 count for the portion of Ironbound Road between Hickory Sign Post (Route 629) and Route 5 was used to estimate its volume. Staff estimates that roughly 40 percent of this traffic volume (3,021 vtpd) would use this short segment of Ironbound Road. The construction start date for the project has also slipped two years from May 2005 to May 2007.

5. Barnes Road - Route 601

This project, which is outside the PSA, will address portions of Barnes Road which have poor curves and failing road pavement. VDOT has recommended that this road project be included in the Six-Year Plan. These spot improvements will address the road's major deficiencies while at the same time keeping costs to a minimum, preserving much of the road's rural character, and thus not enhancing the area's attractiveness for residential development.

6. Mount Laurel Road - Route 608

This project will involve improving a segment of Mount Laurel Road from Ware Creek Road (Route 606) to 0.3 miles west of Ware Creek Road. Like Barnes Road, this project will involve improving several bad curves in the road and will not constitute a full upgrading for the reasons mentioned above and because of its location outside the PSA. The expected start date is July 2006, back one year from July 2005.

7. Olde Towne Road - Route 658

Olde Towne Road was first included in the Six-Year Plan last year. This project, which is inside the PSA, will address a portion of Olde Towne Road which has a poor curve and failing road pavement on several shoulders. These places are to be handled through spot improvements. Several of the improvements have already been handled with the construction of a bridge crossing Route 199. This section of Olde Towne Road was regraded and paved making a better transition and lengthy improvement. Additionally, spot improvements will continue to bring the road to more acceptable geometrics and conditions while keeping costs to a minimum.

8. Bikeway Project - Centerville Road - between Jolly Pond Road (south) and Longhill Road

This project, which has been in the County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for several years, will

complete the last section of bikeways on Centerville Road. Bikeways on all other sections were done in conjunction with the road widening project; however, the widening in this section did not include a bikeway because the County did not have an adopted bikeway plan at the time. Like the previous bikeway projects, 80 percent of the cost is Federally funded with the balance funded by the County. Engineering is complete, Federal funding is available, and the project is ready to go to construction. County staff continues to work with VDOT and other agencies to reduce the amount of County match money needed. Therefore, it is recommended that the County Administrator be authorized to approve the addition of non-County funds to the Six-Year Secondary Road Plan in order to offset this 20 percent match requirement.

9 and 10. *Bikeway Projects - Longhill Road and Ironbound Road*

Priority Projects 9 and 10 on the Six-Year Plan are two bikeway projects.

*Longhill Road from Olde Towne to Longhill Connector Road*

*Ironbound Road from Strawberry Plains to Eastern State*

Since the County has elected to go forward with the widening of Ironbound Road, a portion of the Ironbound Road bikeway will be done in conjunction with that project. These secondary road categories are essentially accounts that include all secondary road bikeways that are part of the "Regional Bikeways Program" and include bikeways on Strawberry Plains Road, Sandy Bay Road, and other sections of Ironbound Road and Longhill Road. (The Centerville Road bikeway is not included in either of these line items because VDOT has assigned it a separate project number.) The majority (80 percent) of funding for all of the bikeway projects listed was provided by the Federal government's Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA) funding. The balance of funding is provided by the State Secondary Road Fund and revenue sharing or the County's Capital Improvement Fund. The Longhill Road and Ironbound Road bikeway projects have already received some secondary road funding. As previously noted, it is recommended that the County Administrator be authorized to approve the addition of non-County funds to the Six-Year Secondary Road Plan in order to offset the 20 percent match requirement.

11. *Monticello Avenue (formerly known as Alternate Route 5)*

For financing reasons, this road improvement is included in the proposed FY 2002 Six-Year Secondary Road Plan. Any secondary road funds used on the project will be replaced with Federal STP funds allocated by the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization. Monticello Avenue is a new two-lane facility constructed on a four-lane right-of-way from Governor's Land to existing Monticello Avenue at Ironbound Road. The portion of this road from Ironbound Road to Mid-County Park was constructed as part of the Route 199 project, and the remaining portion opened in December 2001. Staff suggests that this project continue to be placed in the Six-Year Plan to allow for future funding, if necessary.

*Racefield Drive - Route 622*

The portion of Racefield Drive from Preakness Lane (Route 1040) to 0.90 kilometers (km) west of Preakness Lane is planned to be paved. Each year a portion of the County's Six-Year Secondary Road Plan funding is specifically dedicated to improving unpaved streets. Racefield Drive has been accumulating these funds over the last several years. While this project remains in the "unpaved" road category, staff and VDOT are recommending that small amounts of secondary funds be applied to the project in an effort to accelerate its construction. The fact that this road is unpaved and serves quite a large number of homes make it a candidate for secondary road funds. Because only a relatively small amount of money will be committed to this project each year, its inclusion will not affect the funding schedule for the higher priority projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the attached FY 2002–2007 Six-Year Secondary Road priority and funding schedule (Attachment No. 4). On November 5, 2001, the Planning Commission concurred with staff and voted 6 to 0 for approval.

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Tamara A. M. Rosario

CONCUR:

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O. Marvin Sowers, Jr.

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Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Minutes
2. Roads Recommended for Inclusion in the FY 2001 Six-Year Secondary Road Plan
3. FY 2002-2007 Priority Ranking Spreadsheet
4. VDOT Priority List and Funding Spreadsheet