

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 23, 2006

TO: York County Planning Commission
York County Board of Supervisors
James City County Planning Commission
James City County Board of Supervisors
Williamsburg Planning Commission
Williamsburg City Council

FROM: Regional Issues Committee

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Coordination

Staff of the three jurisdictions, including the City Manager and County Administrators, have been discussing actions that could be undertaken to further coordinate the comprehensive planning in Williamsburg, James City County, and York County. For many years the comprehensive planning update cycles in each jurisdiction have been undertaken at different times, and there has been a perception in the community that this has hampered overall coordination between the three jurisdictions. During the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, each jurisdiction typically has communication between the staff about areas of common interest, but this has been at the staff level and could benefit from a more formal coordination structure. The Regional Issues Committee, at its July 25, 2006 meeting, discussed the following actions and recommends that each jurisdiction incorporate them into the upcoming comprehensive plan preparation cycles.

◆ **Comprehensive Plan Update Timing**

One issue has been the differing cycles for the update process in each jurisdiction. In December 2005, York County completed their most recent Comprehensive Plan update. The City of Williamsburg is near the end of their cycle and anticipates adoption in October, 2006. James City County adopted their most recent Comprehensive Plan in 2003, and will begin a new cycle of review of the Plan in 2007, with an anticipated adoption date in late 2008. After the completion of the 2008 James City County Comprehensive Plan review, the Regional Issues Committee recommends that all three jurisdictions undertake a simultaneous Comprehensive Plan review in 2010. In order to accomplish this, Williamsburg would accelerate its cycle by one year. York County would remain on a 2010 cycle, which would require no change. James City County would accelerate their Comprehensive Plan review from 2013 to 2010. The scope of the review for each jurisdiction may require some adjustment from what has been the pattern in the past, depending on the schedule changes. This is particularly likely to apply to James City County, who will be undertaking a Comprehensive Plan review three years earlier than normal.

◆ **Additional Coordination Recommendations**

The RIC also recommends that additional actions be taken to broaden discussions at the Planning Commission level during upcoming Comprehensive Plan reviews. The Planning Commissions are the bodies charged by State law and by local governing bodies to prepare the initial Comprehensive Plan recommendations, which is an extensive and complex process. Since James City County will be undertaking the next cycle of Comprehensive Plan review in 2007 – 2008, the RIC recommends that in mid 2007, the jurisdictions sponsor discussion forums among the three planning commissions. In general, the RIC recommends a three meeting cycle of discussion forums among the planning commissions, with one meeting being a public forum that would be advertised and open to the

general public for comments. The purpose of the meetings would be to fully air any areas that require coordination and potentially joint decision making. The RIC further recommends that in mid 2009, in preparation for the 2010 updates by all jurisdictions, a repeat of the planning commission discussion forums be held.

In addition to these discussions, the RIC recommends that staff of the three jurisdictions attempt to coordinate a data collection for base-line studies, so as to more fully integrate the base-line study content of each comprehensive plan. Examples of this could be in the transportation, population, and economy portions of the Comprehensive Plan.

It should be noted that none of the above suggestions are intended to supersede the authority of the respective planning commissions or governing bodies to make the final land use and policy decisions within their jurisdictional boundaries.

If there are any questions, staff of the Regional Issues Committee or Committee members are available to discuss the recommendations. The Committee requests that each jurisdiction consider the recommendations and report back to the Committee as to their decision.

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