

MEETING NOTES
York 2040 Committee

Monday, April 8, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Public Works Multi-Purpose Room
105 Service Drive, Yorktown, Virginia

Members Present: Gregory “Skip” Brooks, Michael S. King, Montgoussaint “Montee” E. Jons, Richard Myer, Sheila Myers, Jacob Rizzio, Eugene Seiter, Mark Bellamy, Eric Henegar and R. Anderson Moberg

Staff Present: Susan Kassel, Director of Planning and Development Services; Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services; Amy Parker, Senior Planner; Earl Anderson, Senior Planner; Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer; Justin Atkins, Assistant County Attorney; and Victoria “Vicki” Diggs, Clerk

Members Absent: Chad Green, Vivian McGettigan, Cowles “Buddy” Spencer, and Leigh Houghland

Call to Order – Chairman Michael S. King

Chairman King called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. He recognized Board of Supervisors District 2 representative Sheila Noll and welcomed the Committee members and visitors.

Approval of March 6, 2019 Meeting Notes

The March 6, 2019 meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Historic Triangle Comprehensive Plan Transportation Study Presentation – Keith M. Nichols, PE and Sam Belfield of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO)

Mr. Timothy Cross, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services, stated that since the HRTPO traffic study for the Historic Triangle area was seven years old, all three localities had requested that an updated study be completed in conjunction with the impending comprehensive plan update for each locality. He stated that Keith Nichols and Sam Belfield from the HRTPO staff were in attendance to provide information on the Historic Triangle area’s transportation network.

Mr. Nichols stated that because of the close relationship between James City County, Williamsburg, and York County, the three localities are coordinating their respective comprehensive plan updates with assistance from the HRTPO as the plans relate to transportation. As such, he presented the following information on the current traffic conditions as well as those projected for 2040:

- Except for a brief period during the recession, roadway traffic volumes in all three localities steadily increased from 2004 through 2016.
- The traffic figures provided in the study are based on real speed data, which can be converted into traffic congestion numbers, and is provided by INRIX, which extracts data from road sensors, cell phone probes, as well as directly from vehicles.

- Interstate 64 (I-64) is the most heavily traveled roadway, followed by Route 17 and Victory Boulevard.
- Congestion is relatively moderate during the morning commute time; however, several roadways, including portions of Route 199 and Route 17, experience severe congestion in the afternoon.
- Of the three localities, the southeast portion of York County experiences the highest percentage of severe congestion during both the AM and PM peak periods.
- A large amount of roadway funding is being spent on projects in the Historic Triangle, including Segment II of the I-64 widening project, which is nearing completion, and Segment III between the two Route 199 interchanges at Water Country USA and Lightfoot. Funding has also been set aside for the widening of Victory Boulevard between Route 17 and Hampton Highway, and funding is being recommended by VDOT for capacity improvements along of Victory Boulevard east of Hampton Highway as well.
- The projected 2040 daily traffic volumes indicate dramatic increases throughout the Historic Triangle based upon projected population growth. Subsequent to completion of all funded roadway projects, over 100,000 daily trips on I-64 and 86,000 trips on Route 17 are expected in 2040.
- Although congestion is projected to increase for all three localities, York County traffic is expected to significantly increase as its current 9% severe traffic congestion is expected to increase to 40% by 2040.
- The number of crashes has been steadily increasing in York County since the 2008-2009 recession; however, the annual number of fatalities has remained relatively constant.
- The leading cause of fatalities is road departure, followed by distracted driving, and speeding.
- The roadways with a higher EPDO (Equivalent Property Damage Only) crash rate, which weights crashes based on their severity, tend to be in the more rural areas of the County.
- The number of individuals who commute alone to their work place has steadily grown over the years except during economic recessions.
- More than 50% of York County's working residents commute to Hampton or Newport News; most of the 25,039 individuals who work in the County (35%) are York residents, followed by Newport News with 22%.
- Except for the bridge on Route 143 over Queen Creek, which is in poor condition, all other bridges in the Historic Triangle are either in fair or good condition. He pointed out, however, that the bridges in current fair condition will likely be in poor condition in 20 years.

Mr. Sam Belfield addressed truck traffic and sea level rise in the Transportation Study, which included the following information:

- Truck volumes in the Historic Triangle are steadily increasing with I-64 experiencing the highest volumes followed by Route 199, Route 17, and Route 60, respectively.
- Truck volumes passing through the gateways in the Historic Triangle have steadily increased from 2005 through 2017 except for periods of economic downturn; however, Route 460 and Route 58 truck traffic has recently increased, thereby decreasing traffic along I-64 and Route 17.
- The tonnage carried by trucks is also expected to increase by 2040, in some areas by as much as 100%.

- The HRTPO, in collaboration with the HRPDC, in 2016 conducted a GIS-based flooding vulnerability analysis for potential sea level rise and storm surge impacts on roadways in the region by the year 2045. During the analysis, three scenarios were analyzed: 1) sea level rise, 2) two-foot sea level rise plus a 25-year storm surge, and a two-foot sea level rise plus a 50-year storm surge. All three scenarios clearly depicted the southeast portion of York County being more vulnerable to flooding than the rest of the Historic Triangle.

In conclusion, Mr. Belfield stated that he had copies of the maps showing “Potential Submergence of Roadways by 2045” available for Committee members upon their request.

Lastly, Mr. Nichols stated that he expects the study to be completed shortly and provided to the three localities.

In response to Committee queries, Mr. Nichols provided the following information:

- Truck traffic on I-64 and Route 17 might be decreasing because of the growth of warehousing and distribution facilities along Routes 460 and 58.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is currently being considered for the Peninsula, but it is unlikely to come to York County.
- Peak-hour congestion is more severe in the afternoon than in the morning because people make more trips that are not work-related (e.g., shopping, school events, etc.) in the afternoon.
- The Port of Virginia’s reservation system, whereby trucks schedule a time to drop off their freight prior to or at 1 p.m., is working well and is not adversely affecting afternoon traffic. However, it was pointed out that the Port may consider extending its drop-off schedule, which could greatly increase afternoon traffic.
- No technology advancements were included in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan for Hampton Roads; however, the 2045 Plan should be completed by July 2021 and will include several technology advancement scenarios.
- It is estimated that the advent of connected and autonomous vehicles could potentially double the capacity of the highway system.
- The Historic Triangle has not seen a great increase in telecommuting possibly because of the number of military bases in the area and because the Historic Triangle is a tourist destination.

In response to a comment from Chairman King, Mr. Cross stated that although the County roadways are owned by the Virginia Department Transportation, the County can request reflectors along narrow, unlit roadways such as Oriana Road.

Responding to a Committee query, Mr. Belfield stated that the reported Port trends are based upon commodity flow data that was gathered from a number of different sources, using existing data and projected data on a worldwide level.

Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) – Zach Trogdon, Executive Director, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority

Mr. Trogdon thanked Mr. Mark Bellamy for serving on the WATA Board and Ms. Sheila Noll for the Board of Supervisors' support of the Authority. He provided a brief overview of WATA that included the following information:

- James City County Transit began in 1977 and Williamsburg Area Transport, which served York County, City of Williamsburg, James City County, Colonial Williamsburg, and the College of William & Mary, started in 1996.
- WATA was officially established in 2006 and began operations in 2008.
- Although the Authority is a public entity governed by the three localities, it has a partnership with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation as well.
- William and Mary and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) are represented on the WATA Board but are non-voting members.
- WATA is classified as a small urban system and its funding is provided approximately as follows: federal 33%; state 25%; local 25%; and farebox/other 10+%.
- Being classified as a small urban system allows WATA to apply for funds directly from the federal and state governments through the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is the HRTPO.
- With a large service area, WATA concentrates on fixed routes that run at various times and frequencies; however, during commuting times the buses run with greater frequency.
- The Tan line serves the area of Route 7 and the Orange line serves the Merrimac Trail area in York County.
- In July 2017, a demonstration route serving the Lackey area (Route 11) was initiated with three years of funding provided by a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant.
- The number of riders on the Lackey route has steadily increased.
- As WATA moves into the second year of funding for the Lackey route, the WATA Board will need to consider if the route should be continued.
- WATA also provides paratransit service in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which states that door-to-door service must be provided for disabled individuals if their residence is within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a fixed route.
- Automatic passenger counting systems, which are more accurate, have recently been installed in all WATA buses.
- A temporary transfer facility, where four buses converge allowing riders to transfer to a different bus, has been established at the Walmart in northern York County.
- Plans are being considered whereby fares can be paid more easily by tourists and residents alike.
- WATA goals are to continue to develop valuable partnerships; complete important capital projects such as the new WATA facility on Pocahontas Trail and a new transfer station in the Mooretown Road area; and procure improved data for planning purposes.
- WATA challenges include the nationwide shortage of drivers with commercial driver's licenses (CDL); declining ridership, which may be attributable to the improved economy; and uncertain political funding streams.

In conclusion, Mr. Trogdon offered the following responses to Committee queries:

- While WATA serves a wide range of customers, many of the riders are individuals who do not have a license, cannot afford a vehicle and/or gas, or who simply do not wish to drive.
- The 3-year grant for the Lackey route was approximately \$2 million.

- The large buses run on clean diesel fuel and the Authority keeps the fleet up-to-date.
- In an effort to attract more drivers, WATA gives bonuses to employees who can refer eligible CDL drivers to WATA.
- Driverless buses will come in the future.

During a conversation regarding the lack of public transit to the Newport News/Williamsburg Airport, Mr. Trogdon stated that although HRT tried running buses to this site, the service was cancelled because of low ridership. Committee members agreed that the multi-modal transit station on Bland Boulevard in Newport News, which is scheduled for completion in 2021, will help address many of the transportation issues facing the Peninsula.

Yorktown Market Days Public Outreach – Gail Whittaker, York County Public Information Officer

Ms. Whittaker reminded the Committee that in response to their request for venues to engage citizens in the Comprehensive Plan review process, she had secured a table at several upcoming Yorktown Market Days, with the first event occurring on April 27th. She distributed a sign-up sheet and encouraged Committee members to select one of the 2-hour time slots. She stated that iPads, loaded with a SurveyMonkey survey, will be available so that residents can complete the non-scientific survey at the event. Lastly, she stated that land use maps will be available at the table for residents to review and comment on.

Mr. Earl Anderson, Senior Planner, distributed copies of the land use map to the Committee members. He explained that he wanted the Committee members to be knowledgeable of the maps so that they will be prepared to answer citizen questions at the Market Days events. He stated that the land uses designations are from the adopted Comprehensive Plan. He briefly described the various land use designations.

In response to queries, Mr. Anderson stated that some of the land identified as vacant may be farm land, conservation area, etc. However, he pointed out that the map shows the desired future use of the properties, which may not match the properties' current use. Chairman King suggested that the members read the language in the upper right hand corner of the map to gain a better understanding of what the map depicts. He also recommended that the members speak in general terms when conversing with citizens at the Market Days events. In conclusion, Mr. Anderson encouraged Committee members to call or email staff if they have any questions or need further clarification.

Ms. Whittaker stated that email reminders will be sent to those who volunteer to serve at the Market Days events and that a button identifying them as a York 2040 Committee member will be provided. Lastly, she pointed out that Committee members will need to park at York Hall or the County Administration building and walk or ride the trolley to the riverfront.

Mark Bellamy, on behalf of staff, recognized Earl Anderson for his 15 years of faithful service to the County. He congratulated Mr. Anderson and praised him for his excellent work ethic.

Citizen Comment Period

No citizens were present; however, Mr. Cross reported that at the request of a citizen, the senior center has been added to the list of options in the public facilities question on the scientific

survey. He added that the Committee member's suggestions from the last meeting had been incorporated into the survey instrument and that a soft launch of the survey was scheduled for tonight, with the official launch occurring on April 9.

Chairman King reminded Committee members that the next meeting is scheduled for May 1st at the Public Work Multi-Purpose Room.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.