

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** August 4, 2021 (BOS Mtg. 8/17/21)

**TO:** York County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Neil A. Morgan, County Administrator



**SUBJECT:** Walkway and Bikeway Projects

### INTRODUCTION

At the June 1 Board meeting, Planning and Public Works staff briefed the Board on the various bikeway, walkway, and crosswalk projects that are under development. With these twenty projects in the pipeline, not to mention the construction of sidewalks on Ballard Street and Comte de Grasse Street and the striping of bike lanes and widened shoulders on Penniman Road and Cook Road in recent years, I believe we are making tremendous progress toward making York County a much more bike- and pedestrian-friendly community, consistent with the desires of the citizens as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan citizen survey. The Board has demonstrated its support for this initiative with the establishment of a separate line item in the six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) specifically for Active Transportation projects in addition to the Highway and Other Transportation Improvements line item that has traditionally been used to fund these types of projects.

Building on this momentum, staff continues to work to identify opportunities to further expand our bicycle and pedestrian networks throughout the County. Potential projects are evaluated based on a number of criteria, including the following:

- **Utility:** Does the project serve a purpose, such as linking two neighborhoods together, or linking residential areas with shops, schools, parks, libraries, places of worship, etc. that are within a reasonable walking distance, or eliminating a gap between existing facilities? In some cases, the need for sidewalks is as evident as the well-trodden paths along County roads.
- **Community Support:** Do residents and/or businesses along the proposed corridor want a sidewalk or bikeway? Are they willing to donate right-of-way or easements that might be necessary to make that project happen? The most obvious sign of community support is when citizens contact the County or VDOT, as they frequently do, to recommend that sidewalks be built in various locations.
- **Feasibility:** Can the project be completed at a reasonable cost? Are there physical or other impediments that make the project difficult or cost-prohibitive?
- **Compliance with State/Federal Standards:** Projects that will utilize state or federal matching funds must meet the standards and requirements of the applicable

agency, be it VDOT or the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Merely meeting the standards is not enough. In many cases, whether or not a project is approved will depend on how well it scores compared to other projects based on a series of specified evaluation criteria. Moreover, *any* project in VDOT right-of-way, whatever the funding source, must meet VDOT standards.

Once this vetting process is complete and the decision is made to pursue a project, the next task is to decide on a funding strategy. Some projects, especially those that are relatively inexpensive and uncomplicated, can be completed entirely with County funds, while others are good candidates for various VDOT funding programs – such as Revenue Sharing and the TA (Transportation Alternatives) Set-Aside – that enable the County to leverage state or federal funds with local matching funds programmed in the CIP. These programs are discussed below.

York County has been an active participant in the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program since 1991, having been allocated more than \$10 million in state funds over the years to assist in various transportation system enhancement projects that have included new roads, widened roads, landscaping, sidewalks, and drainage improvements. This program, which is available to all Virginia counties, cities, and towns seeking to improve their transportation system infrastructure, is a 50/50 matching grant program, with the locality and VDOT each funding 50% of the project cost. In recent years, the County has placed particular emphasis on utilizing Revenue Sharing to implement various sidewalk projects throughout the County.

The TA Set-Aside is part of the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant program and is intended to provide funding for transportation projects that expand non-motorized travel choices, with a particular focus on pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Competition for these funds is extremely stiff; however, the County has had success in recent years, securing funding for the new sidewalk to be built on the south side of Bypass Road (Route 60) between Route 132 and the City of Williamsburg and, more recently, to build a sidewalk along West Queens Drive between Queens Lake Middle School and the Royal Grant subdivision. This matching grant program requires a minimum 20% local match, with federal funds accounting for the remaining 80%, although localities have an opportunity to contribute more funding toward a project in order to improve its cost-benefit score and thereby enhance its chances of being approved.

The biennial application cycle for both of these programs is currently underway. In the case of Revenue Sharing, localities can apply for up to \$5 million in state funds per fiscal year. A major change to the program was made last year in response to the reduction in state revenues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the allocation of Revenue Sharing funds was moved back four years, which means that any funds approved in the current cycle will not become available until FY 2027 and FY 2028 rather than FY 2023 and FY 2024. TA Set-Aside allocations, on the other hand, will follow the normal schedule; funds approved in the current application cycle will be available in FY 2023 and FY 2024. The maximum allocation is \$2 million per application (\$1 million per fiscal year).

For the current application cycles, I am recommending that the County apply for funding for the following four Revenue Sharing projects and one TA Set-Aside project. Five additional projects are proposed to either be fully funded by the County or postponed until the next application cycle, depending on the availability of funds. These projects are described below.

### **REVENUE SHARING PROJECTS**

- **Goodwin Neck Road Bike Lanes.** This project would add shoulder bike lanes along both sides of Goodwin Neck Road between Wolf Trap Road and Back Creek Park. These bike lanes would connect with the unmarked shoulder bike lanes that were added to Goodwin Neck Road many years ago using RSTP (Regional Surface Transportation Program) funds.
- **Waller Mill Road Diet.** This project would restripe Waller Mill Road between Mooretown Road and Waller Mill Elementary School with shoulder bike lanes on both sides. The existing four-lane section of Waller Mill Road would be converted to a two-lane section to accommodate the bike lanes.
- **Sports Way/Lakeside Drive Pedestrian Enhancements.** This project consists of a series of improvements intended to provide safe pedestrian access to the McReynolds Athletic Center (MAC). The existing sidewalk on the south side of Sports Way at the entrance to the MAC would be extended to Route 17, where a signalized crosswalk would be installed, allowing people to walk across Route 17, to a new sidewalk that will be constructed along the entrance to Heritage Square shopping center terminating at the existing commercial parking lot. From there, pedestrians would be able to walk through the Heritage Square parking lot to Lakeside Drive, where a new sidewalk would be installed between the shopping center entrance and Beechwood Drive. Only the Lakeside Drive portion of this project would be funded through Revenue Sharing; the crosswalk and sidewalk sections at the Route 17/Sports Way intersection would be County-funded.
- **Seaford Road Elevation.** This project would elevate Seaford Road between Sadelia Drive and Rebecca Drive by one to three feet as a resiliency initiative to address recurrent flooding. Although this is not specifically an active transportation project. I have asked staff to incorporate widened shoulders into the project design as an accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians along this quarter-mile segment of Seaford Road in anticipation of future pedestrian friendly initiatives in this area.

### **TA SET-ASIDE PROJECT**

- **Grafton Drive Sidewalk.** This project would extend the existing sidewalk that runs along the west side of Grafton Drive between Falling Spring Run (the entrance to the Grafton Woods housing development) and the Grafton High School/Middle School campus. The sidewalk would be extended approximately 2,000 linear feet to Timberline Loop (the entrance to the Rainbrook Villas housing development), resulting in a continuous sidewalk approximately three-fifths of a mile in length linking four high-

density housing development, containing a combined total of 758 homes, with one another and with Grafton High/Middle School.

### **OTHER POTENTIAL PROJECTS**

Staff is working on several additional projects for which a dedicated funding source has yet to be identified. These projects, described below, could potentially be funded by the County – subject to the availability of funds and approval by the Board – or with regional CMAQ funds, or they could be earmarked for the next application cycle for Revenue Sharing and/or the TA Set-Aside.

- **Battle Road Sidewalk.** This project would install a sidewalk along the south side of Battle Road between Old York-Hampton Highway – where it would tie in to the existing shoulder bike lanes that are commonly used by pedestrians as well as cyclists – and Route 17, where it would connect with sidewalks being built along Route 17. With the completion of this project and the two existing sidewalk projects along Route 17 that are currently under way, there would be a continuous system of walkways linking York High School, the Villas at Yorktown, York Convalescent Center, the Yorktown Library, Nelson’s Grant, Patriots Square shopping center, Yorktown Crescent, Settler’s Crossing, and nearby commercial establishments. This network would include a 1.8-mile loop of the area bounded by Route 17, Battle Road, Old York-Hampton Highway, and the Ft. Eustis Boulevard extension that could serve a recreational as well as a transportation function.
- **Kay Lane Sidewalk.** This project would add a sidewalk extending from the end of Kay Lane, which is located on the south side of Hampton Highway just west of Owen Davis Boulevard, to Coventry Elementary School, where it would tie into existing sidewalks on school property and connect with the multi-use trail that runs along Owen Davis and Coventry Boulevards. There is currently a private right-of-way parcel between the end of Kay Lane and the school property that is undeveloped except for a County drainage ditch.
- **Old Mooretown Road Sidewalk.** This project would provide a sidewalk extending down Old Mooretown Road from Shipwright Loop in the Kelton Station development at the corner of Lightfoot Road and Old Mooretown Road and connecting via a crosswalk to the existing sidewalk on the west side of Old Mooretown Road in James City County.
- **Route 17 Sidewalk/Crosswalk at Battle Road.** This project would construct a sidewalk on the west side of Route 17 between Clairmont Way and the Boulevard Crossing shopping center. It would also include a crosswalk across Route 17 from Battle Road to Clairmont Way, enabling residents of the Clairmont Apartments and Colonial Harbor to walk to the Yorktown Library and, with the completion of the Route 17 sidewalk projects, to York High School and the businesses in Nelson’s Grant and Patriots Square.

- **Wolf Trap Road Bike Lanes.** This project would provide shoulder bike lanes along Wolf Trap Road between Wolf Trap Park and Goodwin Neck Road, where they would connect with existing shoulder bike lanes to the west and the proposed bike lanes along Goodwin Neck Road to Back Creek Park.

**FUNDING**

Cost estimates for all of these projects have been developed by the Department of Public Works staff based on a detailed analysis of the specific project characteristics, including right-of-way, engineering, and construction costs as well as required VDOT fees. These cost estimates, along with the respective federal, state, and local shares where applicable, are shown in the table below. It should be noted that cost data for the Revenue Sharing and TA Set-Aside projects are based on the year of construction and not the current year, so they include an inflation factor automatically calculated by VDOT. The cost estimates for County-funded projects are based on current year dollars.

| <b>PROJECT NAME</b>                    | <b>COUNTY FUNDS</b> | <b>STATE/FED FUNDS</b> | <b>TOTAL COST</b>   |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>REVENUE SHARING</b>                 |                     |                        |                     |
| Goodwin Neck Road Bike Lanes           | \$3,383,000         | \$3,383,000            | \$6,766,000         |
| Sports Way/Lakeside Drive Enhancements | \$321,000           | \$321,000              | \$642,000           |
| Waller Mill Road Diet/Bike Lanes       | \$553,500           | \$553,500              | \$1,107,000         |
| Seaford Road Elevation                 | \$970,500           | \$970,500              | \$1,941,000         |
| <b>Revenue Sharing Subtotal</b>        | <b>\$5,228,000</b>  | <b>\$5,228,000</b>     | <b>\$10,456,000</b> |
| <b>TA SET-ASIDE</b>                    |                     |                        |                     |
| Grafton Drive Sidewalk                 | \$105,800           | \$423,200              | \$529,000           |
| <b>COUNTY/OTHER</b>                    |                     |                        |                     |
| Battle Road Sidewalk                   | -                   | -                      | \$271,700           |
| Kay Lane Sidewalk                      | -                   | -                      | \$50,200            |
| Old Mooretown Road Sidewalk            | -                   | -                      | \$140,900           |
| Route 17 Sidewalk/Crosswalk            | -                   | -                      | \$586,800           |
| Sports Way Crosswalk/Sidewalk Stubs    | -                   | -                      | \$98,600            |
| Wolf Trap Road Bike Lanes              | -                   | -                      | \$1,127,200         |
| <b>County-Funded Project Subtotal</b>  | <b>-</b>            | <b>-</b>               | <b>\$2,275,400</b>  |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                     | <b>\$5,333,800</b>  | <b>\$5,651,200</b>     | <b>\$7,609,200</b>  |

**LONG-TERM PROJECTS**

In addition to the projects previously discussed, staff is working on some more ambitious, longer-term projects that are somewhat conceptual in nature and, because of their size, scope, and complexity, will require significant engineering and design work and stakeholder involvement before they can be submitted for approval of funding under the TA Set-Aside, Revenue Sharing, or SMART SCALE. These projects are described below.

**Birthplace of America Trail.** At the Board’s June 15 meeting, Robert Crum, Executive Director of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and the Hamp-

ton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), briefed the Board on the region's vision of a multi-use trail extending from the Virginia Capital Trail, which runs from Richmond to Jamestown, all the way down the Peninsula – through a portion of York County – to Fort Monroe, and to Virginia Beach on the south side of Hampton Roads. This is a highly ambitious and forward-thinking plan that will require a commitment of many years and many dollars to bring to fruition. As a starting point, the County is working with its regional partners to identify logical segments of the trail that would have utility as stand-alone projects and develop funding strategies for implementation.

**Tabb Greenway.** The adopted Comprehensive Plan lays out a vision of a network of potential greenways extending from one end of the County to the other. As stated in the Plan, greenways can be defined as linear parks, active transportation routes, or other open space conservation areas that provide passive recreational opportunities, pedestrian and/or bicycle paths, and/or the conservation of open spaces or natural areas. A community greenways system can include scenic roads, parks, nature preserves, and cultural or historic areas, and should function to provide linkages between these resources, neighborhoods and/or small commercial nodes. The Comprehensive Plan includes a map showing the approximate routing that the trails might take, using a combination of natural areas and roadside segments, and how the trails could link key public properties such as schools, parks, and government buildings to neighborhoods, shopping areas, and historical and recreational areas. One segment that has particular promise is along the Dominion Energy power easement that runs from Hampton Highway through Yorkshire Downs, Sherwood Forest, and Running Man, across Victory Boulevard and all the way to the Poquoson River and beyond. By voluntary proffer, the developer of the Smith Farms subdivision on Yorktown Road has already committed to building a segment of the trail that would run through the subdivision between Yorktown Road and Mt. Vernon Elementary School for a distance of a little more than one-third of a mile. On the opposite side of Yorktown Road, property recently acquired by HRSD offers the potential for continuing this trail all the way to Victory Boulevard, where it could connect to the shared use path that will be constructed (utilizing a combination of SMART SCALE and regional CMAQ funds) between North Bowman Terrace and Wythe Creek Road in the City of Poquoson.

**Cheatham Rail-Trail.** The Cheatham Annex rail spur runs from Cheatham Annex parallel to Penniman Road almost to Fillmore Drive, where it crosses Penniman Road and extends into James City County, where it crosses Merrimac Trail before connecting to the CSX main line. The Navy owns but no longer uses this 50-foot wide rail corridor; in fact, the Navy has removed the tracks at the various at-grade railroad crossings. This would appear to present an ideal opportunity for a multi-use path to be constructed as a Rails-to-Trails project, if not for the fact that the Navy has indicated in discussions with the County that it currently has no intention of abandoning the rail corridor. Nevertheless, the County will continue to explore alternatives, including the possibility of a “rail-with-trail.” Rails-*with*-trails are different from rails-*to*-trails, in which all rail service has been discontinued or abandoned, tracks and other rail infrastructure are removed, and the entire right-of-way is converted to a shared-use path or trail. Rather, the term “rail-with-trail” describes a shared-use path open and developed for public use that is located on or directly adjacent to an active railroad.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Although the purpose of this memo is largely informational, Board action is required for the proposed Revenue Sharing and TA Set-Aside projects. For both of these matching grant programs, a resolution of support for the projects from the local governing body is required to be submitted to VDOT. For TA Set-Aside projects, a resolution of support from the HRTPO is also required, and I have submitted a request to the TPO for such a resolution. The deadline for submitting both Revenue Sharing and TA Set-Aside project requests to VDOT is October 1, and formal Board endorsement of project requests must occur prior to that date. I recommend adoption of proposed Resolutions R21-106 to endorse the proposed TA Set-Aside project and R21-107 to endorse the proposed Revenue Sharing projects. Both resolutions include a commitment that the County will provide the required local match (20% for the TA Set-Aside and 50% for Revenue Sharing). The recommended \$5.65 million total combined County match will come from appropriated and programmed funding in the Highway and Other Transportation Improvements and Active Transportation accounts in the Capital Improvements Program. Given the long lead time before approval of any new Revenue Sharing projects and the availability of funds (FY27 and FY28), the Board has ample time, through the CIP process, to make any adjustments that may become necessary.

Cross/3496

### Attachments:

- Project Sketches
- Proposed Resolution R21-106 (TA Set-Aside)
- Proposed Resolution R21-107 (Revenue Sharing)