

**York County  
February 6, 2024**

**Maintenance Accomplishments for Quarter**

**Nov 1, 2023 - Jan 31, 2024**

We have completed 346 of 439 maintenance work orders this period with 93 outstanding (79% complete).

Residency Direct Line 757-253-5138 - VDOT's Customer Service Center **1-800-FOR-ROAD (1-800-367-7623)**

**A few recent highlights:**

Cleaned up tree debris from recent storms.  
8,000 LFT ditching on Ship Point and Anchor Rd  
800 LFT ditching on Laurel Path Rd and Pioneer Rd  
Approximately 2 miles sweeping on Route 17/Ft Eustis  
Area wide pothole patching

**Planned Maintenance Projects**

Rte. 134/Rt. 17S: Shoulder Paved Ditch and Slope Repairs

- T.E. Detour received.
- Trying to coordinate this work with Rte. 134 Bridge Rehab Project

Lakeland Crescent Overflow: Lining existing pipes.

- Quick Quote for Spray-liner: Development in progress.

Crawford Road Cross Pipe Replacement – 3 cross pipes – Work starts week of Feb. 5

Bridge Abutment and Erosion Repair @ Coleman Bridge / Water Street. – Mid February start date

Roadway sweeping

**VDOT Administered Projects Update**

**Pilot Mid-Block Pedestrian Crossing Project**

Mid-Block pedestrian crossing on Rte. 60 Bypass East of Country Inn. Construction started mid-August. Project work completed and High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) went live on January 26, 2024. Press release provided.

**Asphalt Paving `23 – Complete November 2023**

Fort Eustis Blvd - Rte. 105 EB & WB from NNCL to Old York-Hampton Hwy (~2.8 miles)  
Kiln Creek Blvd - Rte. 1800 EB & WB from NNCL to Victory Blvd (~1.5 mile) 2 sections  
Village Ave - Rte. 1838 from Victory Blvd to Commonwealth Dr. (~.5 miles) Commonwealth Dr. - Rte. 1839 from Victory Blvd to Oak Mill Lane (~.5 miles)  
Wolftrap Road - Rte. 630 from Rte. 17 to Hornsbyville Rd (~2.3 miles)  
Airport Road - Rte. 645 from Rochambeau Dr. to Mooretown Rd. (~2 miles)  
Yorktown Road - Rte. 706 from Big Bethel Rd to Hampton Hwy. (~1.5 miles)

**Penniman Rd/Government Rd/Roadway Improvements (UPC 16314)**

Improve safety by widening Penniman Road, adding bicycle lanes, adding curb & gutter and realigning Government Rd intersection from "Y" to "T" configuration. Utility relocation is complete, Advertised October 2023 and awarded January 2024. Anticipated start of construction on February 26, 2024. Construction planned completion in August 2025. All R/W Parcel easement cleared.

**Rte. 171 Right Turn Lane Extension (UPC 113633)**

Extend the westbound Victory Blvd. right turn lane at Kiln Creek Pkwy (700 feet) to create a fourth WB (outside) lane to the Walmart entrance. Notice for Willingness for Public Hearing ended Nov 28<sup>th</sup>. It appears that VDOT will perform a Public Hearing for this project in March.

Advertisement November 2024 with award March 2025. Completion late summer of 2025

**Wythe Creek Road Project (UPC 97715, UPC 13427)**

The Wythe Creek Road project is comprised of two projects spanning from the Wythe Creek/Commander Shepard intersection in the City of Hampton to Huntlandia Way in the City of Poquoson for a total project length of 1.8 miles. The project provides a three-lane reversible roadway from Commander Shepard Boulevard to Cary's Chapel Road. Two lanes will be operated in the southbound direction in the AM peak hour, and two lanes in the northbound direction in the PM peak hour. In the off-peak hours, the center lane will operate as a two-way center left turn lane. A new 1,500 feet long bridge will be constructed through the causeway area between Hampton and Poquoson, bringing the roadway surface elevation above the 100-year flood plain. A new signal will be constructed at the Wythe Creek/Cary's Chapel intersection, and existing signals will be modified at the Voyager Drive and Langley Boulevard intersections. The existing roadway over the causeway will be repurposed to a sidewalk/multi-use path and new sidewalks will be constructed to provide a continuous pedestrian facility within the project area. The pavement north of Cary's Chapel Road will be resurfaced. Upon completion, this project will add capacity, reduce congestion, improve pedestrian accommodations, add street lighting, and improve roadway drainage.

Schedule:

- Advertisement: 11/9/2023
- Award: Mar. 2024
- Construction NTP: Nov. 2024
- Construction Complete: Sep. 2027

**Rte. 134 Bridge Rehab over Rte. 17**

The purpose of this contract is to replace bridge deck and approach slabs and minor repairs to superstructure and substructure of existing bridge on Route 134 (Magruder Blvd) over Route 17. The proposed project consists of replacing the bridge deck and approach slab of the Route 134 over Route 17 in York County, Virginia, on existing alignment with minimal approach roadway work. The northbound traffic lane of Route 134 bridge will be temporarily closed during construction and traffic will be detoured to Route 17 South via Victory Blvd (Route 171). Temporary median crossover on approach roadways will be provided to maintain southbound traffic on Route 134 during two phase construction. The bridge is located at 0.2 miles north of Yorktown Road (Route 706), Hampton Roads District. All work will be confined to the bridge

## VDOT Quarterly Transportation Update

deck and lane closures will be needed at times. All lane closures will be in accordance with the approved Limitations of Operations and Maintenance of Traffic Special Provision. This project will be funded with Federal Maintenance funds. The estimated start date is October of 2024 with a completion date in September of 2026

### **Planned Asphalt Paving '24**

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RNS Route #	Route Name	From Desc	To Description
1610	Wilson Drive	Cul-de-sac	Route 797 (Skimino Rd)
1611	Deer Path Road	Cul-de-sac	Route 797 (Skimino Rd)
1612	Forest Lane	Cul-de-sac	Route 797 (Skimino Rd)
1613	Shady Bluff Pt	Route 797 (Skimino Rd)	Cul-de-sac
1615	Phoenix Circle	Cul-de-sac	RTE 646 (Newman Rd)
1690	Tabb Lakes Dr	(Route 1844) Monty Manor	0.01 Mi S Route 134 (Hampton Highway)
1691	Tiger Run	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)
1692	Cub Ct	Route 1691 (Tiger Run)	cul-de-sac
1693	Shallow Lagoon	Cul-de-sac	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)
1694	Heath Pl	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)	Cul-de-sac
1695	Jonathon Junction	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)	180' Prior to Route 1665 (Tristen Drive)
1696	Naurene Ct	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)	cul-de-sac
1697	Tiger Paw Path	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)	Route 1695 (Jonathan Junction)
1698	Gardenville Drive	Route 1763 (Coventry Blvd)	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)
1699	Richard Run / Conway Ct	Route 1699 (Bridgewood Drive)	cul-de-sac
US00017NB	George Washington Memorial Hwy	Paving Joint 0.17 Mi N Rte. 630 (Wolf Trap Rd)	0.03 Mi S Rte. 105 (Fort Eustis Blvd)
1840	Bridgewood Drive	Route 1763 (Coventry Blvd)	Route 1690 (Tabb Lakes Drive)
1841	Leslie Lane	Route 1840 (Bridge Wood Drive)	Route 1840 (Bridge Wood Drive)
1842	Adele Ct	Route 1840 (Bridge Wood Drive)	cul-de-sac
1843	Mid Atlantic Place	Paving Joint 0.01 Mi E Route 17 (George Washington Memorial Hwy)	Route 1840 (Bridge Wood Drive)
1844	Monty Manor	Route 1699 (Richard Run)	Route 1698 (Gardenville Road)
1845	Elise Place	Route 1844 (Monty Manor)	Cul-de-sac
600	Big Bethel Road	Hampton City Line; S/S Hampton Reservoir Bridge	Paving Jt. S of Rte. 134, Hampton Hwy.
602	Fenton Mill Road	0.01 Mi N Rte. 604, Barlow Road	0.01 mi S Rte. 646, Newman Road
602	Fenton Mill Road	Paving Join 0.1 Mi N Rte. 646, Newman Road	0.13 Mi. North of Rte. 1029, J Farm Lane
603NB	Mooretown Road	End divided Hwy. at Raintree Way	0.015 Mi S Rte. 646, Lightfoot Road
603SB	Mooretown Road	End Divided Hwy. @ Raintree Way	0.015 Mi S Rte. 646, Lightfoot Road
603	Mooretown Road	0.01 Mi N Rte. 645 (Airport Rd)	Begin Divide at Rte. 1447 (Raintree Way)
604	Barlow Road	FR-137, E. Rochambeau Drive	0.01 Mi S Rte. 602, Fenton Mill Road
605	Winthrop Road	Route 641 (Penniman Road)	Route 609 (Burnham Road)
607	Harrop Lane	Route 641 (Penniman Road)	Cul-de-sac
608	Catesby Lane	cul-de-sac	Route 605 (Winthrop Rd)
609	Burnham Road	cul-de-sac	Route 605 (Winthrop Rd)
615	Charles Road	Route 658 (Yorkville Road)	Dead End
641	Penniman Road	0.01 Mi N Tranquility Drive/Rte. 199 (Marquis Center Pkwy)	End VDOT Maintenance, Sanda Drive

## VDOT Quarterly Transportation Update

716	Hubbard Lane	Rte. 641, Penniman Rd.	S Abutment Bridge over I-64
725	Dodge Drive	0.01 Mi N Route 641 (Penniman Road)	Route 726 (Semple Road)
726	Semple Road	Dead End	Dead End
727	Nelson Drive	cul-de-sac	Route 752) Sheppard Drive
728	Colonial Ave	Route 716 (Hubbard Lane)	Route 752 (Sheppard Drive)
731	Edale Ave	Route 716 (Hubbard Lane)	Route 727 (Nelson Drive)
752	Sheppard Drive	Route 716 (Hubbard Lane)	Route 727 (Nelson Drive)
753	Glenn Circle	cul-de-sac	Route 752 (Sheppard Drive)
779	Scott Drive	Route 716 (Hubbard Lane)	Route 727 (Nelson Drive)

### **Smart Scale**

#### **SMART18 - Route 17 Widening between Rte 630 and Rte 173 (UPC 111787)**

Widen Route 17 (George Washington Memorial Highway) from 4 to 6 lanes between 1.517 miles north of Route 630 (Wolf Trap Rd.) and Route 173 (Denbigh Boulevard/Goodwin Neck Road). Target adv. November 2026 with Construction starting April of 2027 and completion in October 2029. Scoping phase closed for this project. Design approval was summer of 2022. Public Hearing held on April 28, 2022. CE (NEPA doc) cleared. Partnering with City of NN on shared BMP which will provide cost savings to project.

#### **SMART18 - Route 171 Widening between Route 17 and Route 134 (UPC 111791)**

Widen Route 171 (Victory Boulevard) from 5 to 6 lanes between Route 17 and Route 134 to improve capacity and operational deficiencies at the intersection of Route 17 and Route 171. Preliminary Engineering is underway, Adv. is April 2024, construction starting July 2024 and completion in July of 2025. Willingness period is closed. Design approval package is complete. We are currently in R/W – Utility Relocation phase of project.

#### **SMART20 Route 171 capacity enhancements BTW Rtes. 134 & 1740 (UPC 115509)**

Intersection, turn lane, and shoulder improvements with a shared use path along Route 171 between Route 134 and Heavens Way (Route 1740). Preliminary Engineering started end of 2022. CN early 2027 to early 2028. Currently working on project scope and funding.

#### **SMART22 Airport Rd, Mooretown Rd and Richmond Rd Improvements (UPC 119376)**

Intersection improvements for Airport Rd and Mooretown Rd to include a roundabout. Improve the intersection of Richmond Rd and Airport Rd to include a right only onto Richmond Rd. Richmond Rd will have lane reassignments and U-turn points. Currently performing Pre-Scoping Plan reviews. Advertise March of 2030 and projected completion December of 2031.

**SMART24 I-64 Gap Widening Project** – Design Build Project. RFP advertisement November 2023. April 2024 planned award. Completion November 2027. More info below

**Traffic Engineering Studies**

**Safety Review Route 616 (Patrick’s Creek Road)** - The speed limit for the requested facility was determined to be a statutory 55/45MPH as outlined in §46.2-870 of the Code of Virginia. However, this facility meets the criteria defined as a Residence District per §46.2-100 of the Code of Virginia which has 2,640 feet of residential dwellings and land improved for dwelling purpose. In addition, Route 1128 (Olivia Ct) is defined as a residence district as well. Therefore, pursuant to §46.2-874 of the Code of Virginia, entitled Maximum speed limit in business and residence districts, Traffic Engineering recommends each route be given a statutory speed limit of 25MPH. A SPEED LIMIT 25 sign is in place on the east end of Route 616, a work order will be submitted to Regional Operations Installation and Maintenance to schedule the installation of an additional SPEED LIMIT 25 on the west end.

**Route 1855 (Pungo Turn) York County Intersection Sign Review** - Based on this review, when considering sight distance obstruction, Traffic Engineering recommends that a YIELD sign be installed on Route 1855 (Pungo Turn) at its intersection with Kanawah Run.

**Intersection Review Route 603 (Mooretown Road) at Fire Station #7** - Based on this review, the following is recommended: • Once funding has been identified, pursue a Fire station pre-emption activation system where flashing beacons are activated on Route 603 (Mooretown Road) notifying drivers when emergency vehicles are exiting the station. A preliminary estimate was provided by Department Signal staff and was noted to be 100K. • Residency should remove overgrown vegetation within Department right of way to increase intersection sight distances.

**Land Use (July 1, 2023 – January 24, 2024)**

Plan Reviews	71
Permits Issued	166
Permits Completed	214
Ln. Miles added	0

## **I-64 Gap Segment C Widening**

### **Project scope:**

The I-64 Gap Segment C Widening Project includes the addition of one general purpose lane on I-64 east and west from the New Kent/James City County line to approximately 1.15 miles west of Route 199 (exit 234). This project will be the second of three “Gap” segments that will widen I-64 from four to six lanes from New Kent County (mile marker 204.9) to James City County (mile marker 233.3). The proposed widening will take place in the median of I-64 within the existing right-of-way.

### **Major work items include:**

- 9 miles of I-64 roadway widening and pavement rehabilitation
- 2 bridge widening/rehabilitations (I-64 East/West over Six Mount Zion Road)
- Paving the Lightfoot Park & Ride lot
- Overhead signage and ITS Systems
- Sound Barrier Walls
- Retaining Walls
- Storm Drainage Box Culverts and Pipes

## Benefits

Adjoining segments of the interstate between these two areas are six lanes or greater- hence, it has been deemed “the gap.” This is the stretch of the interstate where drivers put on the brakes - congestion is notorious and continues to grow in the gap –disrupting one of Virginia’s most important thoroughfares.

Adding a third lane in each direction creates an opportunity connector, unifying Richmond and Hampton Roads, growing the economy, improving the environment, and providing equitable opportunities for all. Virginia recognizes the importance of connecting these regions and has steadily invested almost \$600M in this corridor, completing 21 miles of widening in the Newport News area and 5 miles in eastern Richmond. These efforts, combined with the expansion of the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel at over \$3.9 billion and the creation of the Hampton Roads Express Lanes network at over \$900 million, demonstrate a commitment to providing infrastructure that will be a solid foundation to deliver opportunities for all.

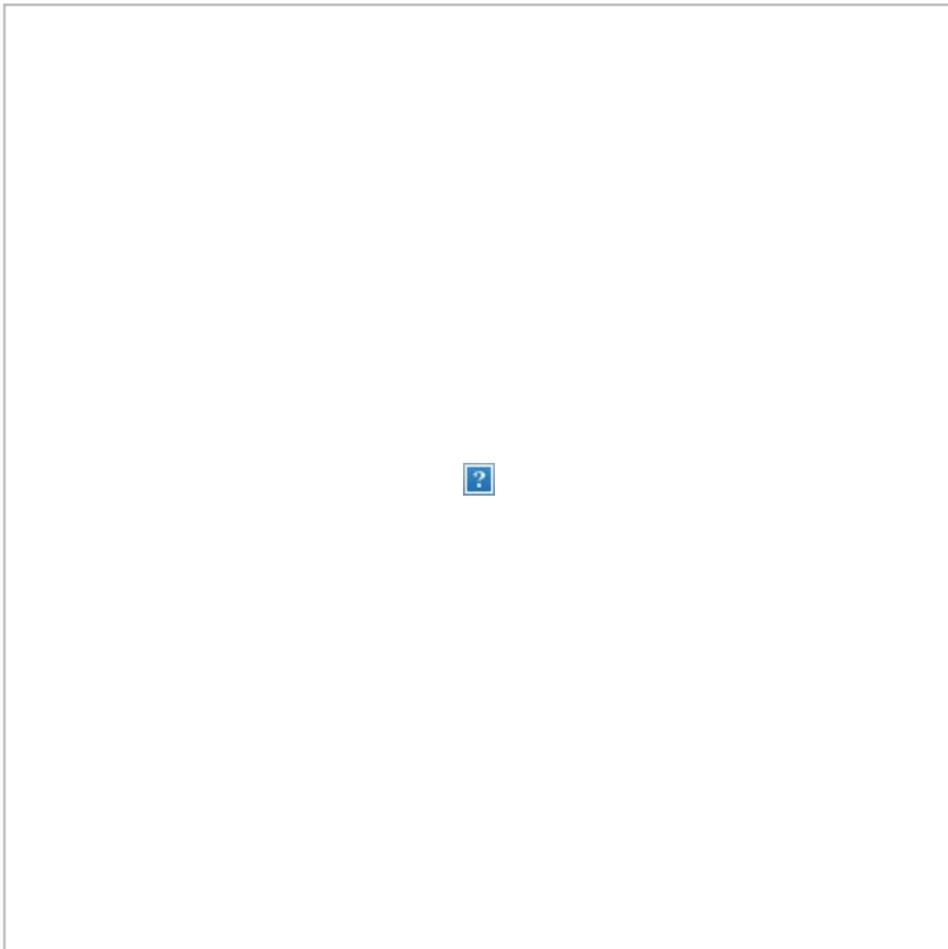
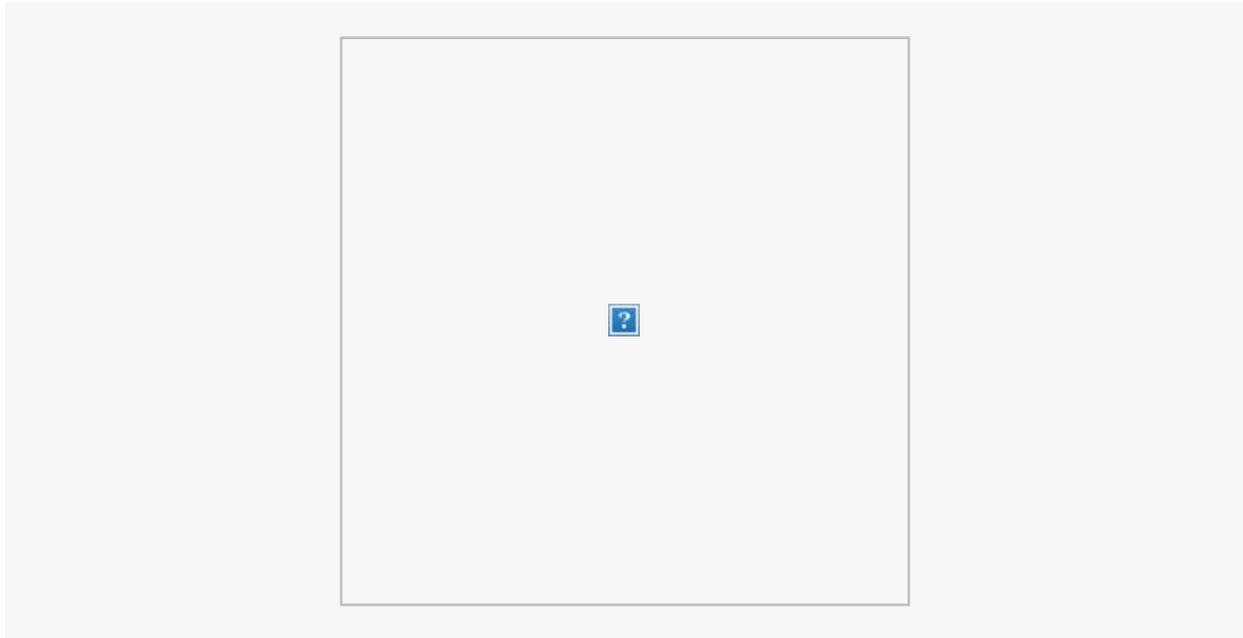
## Major Milestones

### **Estimated Project schedule:**

- Request for Qualifications: July 2023
- In-person Public Hearing: August 24, 2023
- Request for Proposals: Fall 2023
  
- Award Design-Build Contract: Spring 2024
- Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2027

**From:** [The Roosevelt Group](#)  
**To:** [Ingram, Diane](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief  
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February 9, 2024

Headlines - Aerospace & Defense - Budget & Economy - Advanced Tech - Military Installations & Communities - Homeland Security - Transportation & Infrastructure - Biotech & Healthcare - Climate & Development

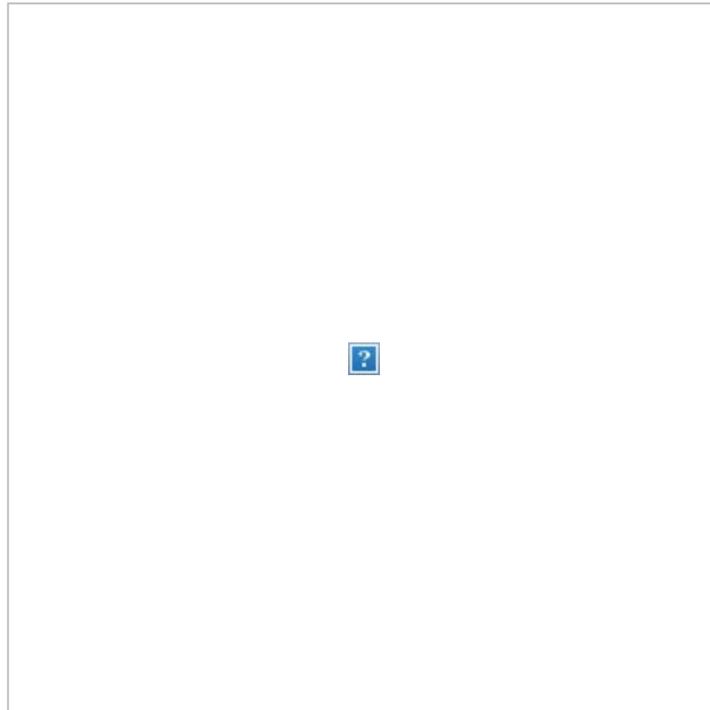
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## Notable Headlines

- [Zelensky Removes His Top General, in Major Shake-Up of Ukraine Military](#)
- [Biden will not face criminal charges for mishandling classified papers, says 'memory is fine'](#)
- [House GOP had lowest win rate on 'party unity' votes since 1982](#)
- [Energy and Commerce Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers won't run again](#)
- [Pakistan elections 2024: Count under way after controversial election](#)

**Worth reading:** [5 key takeaways from the Supreme Court arguments over Trump's 2024 ballot eligibility](#)

## View From The Hill



It was a brutal week in Washington for lawmakers on both sides of the aisle and the Capitol as both House and Senate leadership fell short of successful action on several different priorities. First, in the Senate, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) put up a foreign aid supplemental for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan on the Floor which included the long-awaited border security provisions negotiated by a bipartisan group of senators, including James Lankford (R-OK) and Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ). Most GOP senators

[opposed](#) the bill on the grounds that the border security provisions were not enough to pass muster with the House, former President Trump, or outside conservative organizations, while a handful of progressive Democratic senators opposed the legislation over concerns it was too restrictive of immigration.

It was always apparent that House Republicans were not going to go along with whatever came out of the Senate; however, the blow this week to the package leaves uncertainty around prospects for advancing some version of supplemental funding. While Leader Schumer plans to put a vote up for a “clean” supplemental solely focused on foreign aid, prospects in the House remain dim. The saga has [proven](#) to be particularly challenging for Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who has faced unusually vocal opposition within his own conference over the handling of border negotiations.

In the House, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) and his whip operation, led by Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN), faced dual defeats Tuesday evening when a vote to impeach Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas went down, along with a standalone funding [supplemental](#) for aid to Israel. Republican Leadership was caught off guard during the impeachment vote when a Democratic Member, Rep. Al Green (D-TX), unexpectedly [showed](#) up for the vote after having undergone emergency surgery earlier in the day. Perhaps the most surprising GOP Member to oppose impeachment was Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI), who stated that he did not believe that it was appropriate to lower the bar for impeachment and set a future Republican administration up for similar trouble if Democrats regained control of the House. The House GOP is expected to bring up the impeachment resolution again once Majority Leader Steve Scalise is back in town from undergoing cancer treatment. Scalise has vowed to support the measure.

It was a shorter work week in the House, as Democratic lawmakers [decamped](#) from Washington to the Landsdowne Resort in Leesburg, VA for their annual issues conference, where they heard from President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, and United Auto Workers Union President Shawn Fain, among others. Both parties partake in the annual winter tradition of such a retreat, where they hone messaging and strategy for the year ahead. This year, House Democrats will set their sights on retaking the House majority in November from the razor thin margin currently held by Republicans.

As is typical for this time of year, TRG Core Team members were pounding pavement across Capitol Hill and Federal agencies throughout the course of the week, connecting visiting clients with their state congressional delegations and key executive branch agencies to advance their priorities and build coalitions across government. With more visits planned in the coming weeks, we look forward to welcoming you to Washington soon!

## Aerospace & Defense

### [Supplier bottlenecks threaten US Navy effort to grow arms stockpiles \(DefenseNews\)](#)

If the US is tested in a conflict in the Pacific, where military forces would have to defend Taiwan from a Chinese invasion they would look to target amphibious ships. According to Mark Cancian, who ran a 2022 wargame for the Center for Strategic and International Studies said in this exact scenario China couldn't invade Taiwan without the ships. To overtake these amphibious ships, “forces would have to destroy a protective ring of combatants with air defense and anti-submarine capabilities, as well as decoy ships and

merchant vessels moving invasion forces and their gear.” In order for this to be successful, the Navy would need key munitions and believes it needs to grow their stockpile. Challenges still do exist within the supply chain, but improvements are happening. In the area of torpedoes, top vendors including RTX have moved from redesign to production and have expanded their internal test capacity.

### [In Private Wargame, Low-Cost CCAs Prove Most Popular](#)

#### [Saudi Arabia signs \\$3.2B deal for South Korean air defense systems \(DefenseNews\)](#)

South Korea’s Defense Ministry revealed this week they will export defense systems to Saudi Arabia as part of a deal signed in November 2023. The sale included the sale of “10 KM-SAM Block II medium-range surface-to-air missile systems.” South Korea also sold this weapon to the United Arab Emirates in a deal signed in January 2022. The weapon can intercept both aircraft and missiles, the latter being vital “as Saudi Arabia routinely shoots down ballistic missiles fired by Houthi rebels in Yemen.” The cooperation between these two countries could accelerate an arms trade agenda as many countries in the region face the threats of Houthi rebels. The deal called for a joint committee “to further develop the defense industry and defense technology cooperation between the two countries.”

## **Budget & Economy**

#### [US government debt to top \\$54 trillion in next decade, CBO says \(ABC\)](#)

The US government broke debt records to begin the new year topping \$34 trillion in January. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) forecasts the US to continue to break records over the next decade. By the year 2034 projections indicate the US debt to reach \$54 trillion. The CBO cited an aging population and rising federal health care costs as substantial reasons for the rapid rise in debt. High interests are also having a big impact on the debt. Beginning in 2025 interest costs in relation to the overall economy will be bigger than at any point since 1940. There are some positives as the CBO said the legislation passed during the debt ceiling drama last year will create a smaller budget deficit than originally thought. Our national debt is still spiraling out of control and will be interesting to see if Congress changes course or will continue to blame the other party when out of power.

### [Activision Had Planned Layoffs Before Merger, Microsoft Says \(Yahoo\)](#)

#### [NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory laying off hundreds, citing budget gridlock \(The Hill\)](#)

The budget gridlock in Washington continues to have adverse effects as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California will lay off hundreds of workers. The JPL is managed by the California Institute of Technology and is NASA’s “only federally funded research and development center.” In a statement JPL said, “after exhausting all other measures to adjust to a lower budget from NASA, and in the absence of a fiscal 2024 appropriation from Congress, we have had to make the difficult decision to reduce the workforce through layoffs.” JPL is still focused on its ‘Mars Sample Return’ mission which would return samples from Mars and may answer questions on whether life existed there. The rover to

collect samples is already launched but it does need a way to get the samples home which would cost between \$8 and \$11 billion. The director of the JPL made it clear they are taking this action to protect against deeper cuts.

## Advanced Technologies

### [UN experts investigate 58 cyberattacks worth \\$3B by North Korea \(Reuters\)](#)

UN sanction monitors are investigating dozens of suspected cyberattacks by North Korea that raked in \$3 billion to help it further its nuclear weapons program. The report states North Korea is suspected in 58 attacks on cryptocurrency-related companies between 2017 and 2023. According to the monitors they also see “trends which include North Korea targeting defense companies and supply chains, and increasingly sharing infrastructure and tools. Even considering this report it is unlikely the UN Security Council will increase sanctions. There has been deadlock for the last several years as China and Russia want sanctions on North Korea eased to convince them to return to denuclearization talks. The report, which will be publicly released in its entirety either later this month or next, will raise concerns of North Korea’s capabilities as conflict around the globe increases. North Korea has already supplied Russia with munitions in its war in Ukraine, it is possible North Korea could commit cyberattacks on behalf of Russia.

### [Adopting fast-growing new tech could help companies transition to 4-day workweek \(Fox News\)](#)

### [US engineer contacted China before stealing missile tracking tech, DOJ says \(CNBC\)](#)

Federal prosecutors have charged an engineer who worked at a Los Angeles area company with stealing trade secret technologies developed for use by the US government in space to detect nuclear missile launches and track ballistic and hypersonic missiles. The Department of Justice said the technology was stolen by 57 year old Chenguang Gong and would be “dangerous to US national security if obtained by international actors.” Gong is a native of China and became a US citizen in 2011. The criminal complaint stated that from 2014 to 2022, Gong submitted multiple applications for “talent programs” run by the Chinese government while “being employed by several major US technology companies.” These talent programs are known to identify individuals located outside China who have skills and knowledge that can help transform the economy and bolster its military. US Attorney Martin Estrada said “we will remain vigilant against this threat by safeguarding the innovations of American businesses and researchers.”

## Military Installations & Communities

### [Surviving spouses would get access to Vets job program under bipartisan Senate bill \(Military.com\)](#)

Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) are coming together on legislation that, if approved, would allow surviving spouses to get career counseling from specialists within the Department of Labor’s Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). In a statement Sen. Hassan said, “After the terrible loss of a service member, we must do everything that we can to support their families.” DVOP supplies grants for states

to hire specialists who can provide individualized career placement services for veterans with significant barriers to employment. The program provided specialists to 93% of the more than 44,000 veterans who received help and had an overall employment rate of 56% at the end of 2022. This bipartisan bill comes after policymakers have worked in recent years to reduce the high unemployment rate for military spouses. Studies have shown surviving spouses can have lower incomes for years after their spouses' death "as barriers such as psychological effects and time demands keep them from full participation in the labor force."

### [Troops are still waiting weeks for off-base mental health appointments](#)

[Air Force eyes bringing back warrant officers after decades-long absence \(Military.com\)](#)

**After 65 years the United States Air Force is considering bringing back warrant officers and may begin to create a training program this year. The planning order says that "great power competition" is underscoring the need to resurrect warrant officers, the corps of highly technical service members who are above the enlisted ranks but below the commissioned officer ranks. According to the document, the Air Force "must examine new ways to develop and retain a highly capable, technologically capable corps of air-minded warfighters." If the warrant officer training program is successful it would "effectively deliver foundational training for up to 200 junior WO-1s per year and up to 50 senior warrant officers WO-2s – WO-5s with officers commissions per year to build and sustain a WO corps."**

## Homeland Security

[China, Russia and Iran 'attempting to illegally acquire' US technology, top DHS official says \(Yahoo News\)](#)

The head of a top unit at the Department of Homeland Security says in a new interview that "sensitive" materials are showing up overseas -- in Iranian weapons -- in the latest warning about how U.S. adversaries are believed to be trying to steal American technology. "The Iranian drones that are being recovered on the battlefield in Ukraine, that are being recovered on the battlefield throughout the Middle East, they do have sensitive U.S. communications systems and they have sensitive microelectronics," Jim Mancuso, the assistant director of the Global Trade Division at Homeland Security Investigations, told ABC News. Iran, China and Russia are all "attempting to illegally acquire" U.S. technology, Mancuso said. Homeland Security Investigations is the Department of Homeland Security's law enforcement arm. U.S. leaders have already warned about China trying to cause harm to the country through cyber means -- as well as stealing the United States' intellectual property. Mancuso said adversaries of America are using a "very extensive network" to get U.S. technology out of the country, in violation of export laws.

### [Cyberattack on a Chicago children's hospital has shut down its systems for a week](#)

### [CISA's security checklist for election offices \(Defense One\)](#)

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency unveiled a webpage on Wednesday that provides election security resources to state and local governments, as well as election workers. The launch of the #Protect2024 site comes amid heightened fears of how cybercriminals and nation-state governments may seek to interfere in the 2024 election process through hacking or disinformation attempts. It also comes amid domestic distrust and a loss of faith in electoral systems following widespread claims of voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election that ended in the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. “For years, America’s adversaries have targeted U.S. elections as part of their efforts to undermine U.S. global standing, sow discord inside the United States, and influence U.S. voters and decision making. We expect 2024 to be no different,” the site says. The webpage is geared toward election offices, providing free resources for state and local officials, CISA Director Jen Easterly said in a statement. Those resources include guides on how to set up multi-factor authentication and obtain physical security assessments for election infrastructure. The site also encourages entities to join the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, which became a part of the National Council of ISACs in 2019.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

### [US House to Debate Water Permitting Bill \(Transport Topics\)](#)

Legislation meant to expedite the permitting process for infrastructure projects is on the House of Representatives’ schedule for this month. House Republican leaders indicated that as early as the week of Feb. 12, the GOP-led Creating Confidence in Clean Water Permitting Act would reach the floor of the chamber. Sponsored by senior Republicans on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the bill seeks to update and improve permitting processes included in the Clean Water Act. Specifically, the lawmakers argued the measure would codify existing rules and practices. The committee on Jan. 31 approved the bill by a party-line vote. “The Clean Water Act and clean water support healthy communities and industries across the United States, from farming to fishing to manufacturing,” Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-Mo.) said following the bill’s approval. “Unfortunately, we’ve seen this law weaponized over the years to delay permits and even prevent critical infrastructure and energy projects from moving forward.”

### [Readout of Secretary Pete Buttigieg’s Meeting with Supply Chain Leaders](#)

### [U.S. Department of Transportation launches AI initiative \(Transportation Today\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation recently launched the Complete Streets AI (artificial intelligence) Initiative through the department’s Small Business Innovation Research Program. The initiative will allow small businesses to leverage advancements in AI that improve transportation. There will be multiple phases with the goal of developing new decision-support tools for state, local, and tribal transportation agencies that assist in the siting, design, and deployment of Complete Streets. “Innovation in the AI and transportation sector is happening at unprecedented speed and has the potential to address some of our most pressing transportation challenges,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said. “This funding supports our country’s small businesses and startups to harness cutting-edge technologies, deploy them in local communities, and

make our streets safer.” Complete Street are streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity to destinations. “Complete streets are easier to plan with more complete data,” Dr. Robert C. Hampshire, principal deputy assistant secretary for research and technology and chief science officer, said.

## Biotechnology & Healthcare

### [Lawmakers' retirements risk leaving doctor pay fix unfinished \(Roll Call\)](#)

Physician groups and other advocates for overhauling the Medicare payment system will lose three of their biggest Capitol Hill supporters to retirement next year, raising questions about next steps for long-term changes to the Medicare payment program. Republican Reps. Larry Bucshon of Indiana, Michael C. Burgess of Texas and Brad Wenstrup of Ohio, all members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, have been vocal in pushing for changes to the way Medicare pays physicians. The current system has been fraught with controversy, with doctors complaining their rates don't keep up with inflation and with requirements that payments be budget-neutral, resulting in cuts to doctor pay. Meanwhile, a near decadelong push to embrace value-based care has not panned out. Burgess, Bucshon and Wenstrup, who are all doctors, have become well-known on Capitol Hill for translating wonky Medicare policies and communicating the needs of fellow physicians to their colleagues, carving out a particular niche issue in Medicare physician payments. Burgess and Wenstrup co-chair the GOP Doctors Caucus with Rep. Greg Murphy, R-N.C. “They'll really be missed,” said Margaret C. Tracci, chair of the advocacy council at the Society for Vascular Surgery.

### [US FDA puts hold on Gilead's blood cancer therapy trials](#)

### [Back From COP28, California Climate Leaders Talk Health Impacts of Warming \(KFF Health News\)](#)

Wildfire smoke. Drought. Brutal heat. Floods. As Californians increasingly feel the health effects of climate change, state leaders are adopting sweeping policies they hope will fend off the worst impacts — and be replicated by other countries. Several of them attended the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, known as COP28, late last year, where more than 120 countries signed a declaration acknowledging the growing health impacts of climate change and their responsibility to keep people safe. “Leaders from around the world are coming to these climate negotiations understanding that climate change is both killing and hurting their people,” said Wade Crowfoot, secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency, who represented California in Dubai. In August and September 2020 alone, when dozens of wildfires burned around California, as many as 3,000 older residents may have died from wildfire smoke-related causes, according to estimates from Stanford University researchers.

## Climate & Development

### [Western US lawmakers push to protect watersheds from impacts of wildfires \(The Hill\)](#)

A bipartisan team of lawmakers from Colorado and Utah are urging Congress to help safeguard the nation's watersheds by considering a new bill aimed at expediting the

cleanup of contamination caused by wildfires. The Watershed Protection and Forest Recovery Act, co-sponsored by Sens. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Mitt Romney (R-Utah), would accelerate watershed recovery efforts on federal land, while also protecting private property and water resources downstream. Joining Bennet and Romney in supporting the legislation are Reps. Joe Neguse (D-Colo.), Yadira Caraveo (D-Colo.), Celeste Maloy (R-Utah) and John Curtis (R-Utah). "We need to make it easier for local water managers and the U.S. Forest Service to collaborate to restore the health of our watersheds following a natural disaster," Bennet said in a statement. Watershed recoveries from recent major wildfires, such as Colorado's 2021 East Troublesome and Cameron Peak fires, have faced major slowdowns because the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) existing Emergency Watershed Protection Program applies only to non-federal lands, the lawmakers explained.

## [Biden tightens air pollution limits for deadly soot](#)

### [Record January heat caps world's first 12-month spell above 2.7F](#)

The world just experienced its warmest January on record, marking the first 12-month period in which temperatures averaged more than 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial times, the European Union's climate change monitoring service said on Thursday.

Already 2023 was the planet's hottest year in global records going back to 1850, as human-caused climate change and El Nino, the weather pattern that warms the surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, pushed temperatures higher. "It is a significant milestone to see the global mean temperature for a 12-month period exceed 1.5C above pre-industrial temperatures for the first time," Matt Patterson, an atmospheric physicist at the University of Oxford, said. The previous warmest January was in 2020, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) records which go back to 1950. Countries agreed at United Nations climate talks in Paris in 2015 to keep global warming well below 2C (3.6F) and aim to limit it to 1.5C, a level regarded as crucial to preventing the most severe consequences.

## Next Week's Hearings

### **Armed Service Committee:**

**House:** None listed

**Senate:** None listed

### **Appropriations Committee:**

**House:** None listed

**Senate:** None listed

### **Homeland Security Committee:**

**House:** Thursday, February 15, 10:00am EST: "[Examining Fire Hazards: Lithium-Ion Batteries and other Threats to Fire Safety](#)"

**Senate:** None listed



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