

## 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES & POSITIONS

### PRIORITIES

#### **Interstate 64 Improvements**

##### **– Richmond to Williamsburg**

York County urges the General Assembly to recognize the statewide importance of widening of Interstate 64 to six (6) lanes between Williamsburg and Richmond. Linking the major metropolitan areas of Richmond and Hampton Roads with a continuous 6-lane interstate facility would help alleviate the congested conditions that threaten the viability of the corridor, which is so vitally important to the state economy, the military, the ports, private industry, tourists, and local citizens. The County urges the General Assembly to consider ways to enhance the State revenue made available to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for allocation to vital transportation infrastructure projects in general, and to this one in particular, but not at the expense of taking funding from other local government priorities such as education, public safety and community services.

##### **-Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (HRBT) Expansion Project**

The \$3.66 billion dollar estimate for the HRBT expansion does not cover structural deficiencies in the west bound approach bridge. These deficiencies should be viewed as a maintenance obligation by VDOT. As such it is the County's belief that the cost of this should be covered by the Commonwealth. Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission funds should not be used to correct these deficiencies. York County urges the General Assembly to consider ways to enhance its revenue made available to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for allocation to this vital transportation infrastructure project.

#### **Economic Development - Unmanned Systems Program**

Unmanned Systems and Aerospace has been identified as a priority emerging cluster in the recently released GO Virginia Region 5 Growth and Diversification Plan. York County strongly encourages the Commonwealth to dispose of the Virginia Emergency Fuel Storage Facility (Fuel Farm), located within the County, in a manner that allows prompt development of an unmanned aerial systems hub for research and development. The location and concept have already garnered GO Virginia funding.

#### **Support for Public Schools**

York County supports full state funding for all components of public education including:

- Standards of Quality (SOQ) achievement
- Teacher salary increases
- Special education
- Support staff and operations
- Capital projects and maintenance

York County, like most other local school divisions, funds K-12 education significantly in excess of the SOQ requirements to meet citizen expectations. Also, like localities throughout Virginia, York County has proportionally increased local funding for school operations in recent years due, in part, to inadequate state funding for education as compared to historical norms.

#### **VDOT Maintenance**

York County continues to support and collaborate on the mission of VDOT. Given the trends in sea level rise, land subsidence, and changing weather patterns, York County requests additional funding for VDOT to enhance maintenance of the drainage system within its easements/rights-of-way. These same trends suggest that VDOT should integrate resilient and sustainable practices into its local assistance programs while enhancing funds available for secondary road paving. York County urges the General Assembly to consider ways to enhance its revenue made available to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for allocation to these vital transportation infrastructure projects.

#### **Colonial Behavioral Health Services Initiatives**

Colonial Behavioral Health (CBH) provides a myriad of beneficial community-based mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disability services to York County and its neighboring localities. However, amendments to Section 37.2-500 of the Code of Virginia that were enacted in 2017 will add an array of

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additional services into 2020 to those already mandated for Community Services Boards such as CBH. Only one of those new service mandates was accompanied by an appropriation of funding, leaving an unfunded mandate estimated to be as much as \$200 million. York County supports legislation to amend last year's mandates amendment to include "*subject to the availability of funds appropriate for them*" language, or to either fund or remove the new mandates. Moreover, York County encourages recognition of, and the provision of adequate funding and resources to address, the important and potentially life-saving role that CBH and other CSBs can play in combating the significant opioid epidemic affecting the local area and all parts of the Commonwealth. York County also supports a careful and deliberative process to consider any changes affecting the balance of responsibilities and funding for community-based and state hospital provided services.

### **POSITIONS**

#### **Unfunded Local Mandates**

York County urges the General Assembly to oppose and reject legislation that would impose new unfunded mandates and fiscal responsibilities on local governments or reinstate any "local aid to the Commonwealth" measures. Moreover, the County supports a "First Day of Session Filing" requirement for any General Assembly Bills having a fiscal impact on localities.

#### **Transportation Safety Initiatives**

York County supports the following; legislation to strengthen the ability of law enforcement officers to discern whether violations of the provisions relating to use of handheld personal communication devices in moving vehicles are occurring, amend the Code of Virginia to make seat belt enforcement a primary offense, and amend the code to prohibit the possession of an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle.

#### **Inclement Weather Procedures**

York County supports legislation to provide authority for any local government board or commission to follow the same procedures as set forth for Boards of Supervisors and Planning Commissions regarding the continuation of meetings and rescheduling of advertised public hearings when the chairman determines that weather or other conditions would make travel hazardous. The provisions applicable to Boards of Supervisors and Planning Commissions are set forth in Section Nos. 15.2-1416 and 15.2-2214 of the Code of Virginia.

#### **Local Zoning and Land Use Authority**

York County urges the General Assembly to recognize that local land use decisions are best made by the local governing body, and asks that there be no legislation adopted which further restricts local control over zoning or other land use matters.

York County urges the General Assembly to re-examine the 2016 legislation that added Section 15.2-2303.4 to the Code of Virginia, to clarify and supplement the authority granted to localities to accept voluntary proffers in connection with rezoning actions. The new provisions have created uncertainty, confusion, and apprehension on the part of both rezoning applicants and governing bodies as to the immediate and long-term implications of conditional (proffered) rezonings, to the extent that some localities have contemplated a complete refusal to consider and accept any proffers in conjunction with a residential rezoning application. In fact, a few have actually repealed their ordinances allowing residential rezoning proffers, which surely limit the flexibility of the development community in terms of the plans that can be proposed. The degree of legal uncertainty that has been injected into the conditional zoning process robs both local governments and the development community of a beneficial land use and development management tool.