



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

RICHMOND DISTRICT
2430 Pine Forest Drive
COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VA 23834
www.VDOT.Virginia.gov

Gregory A. Whirley
COMMISSIONER

December 7, 2012

MEMORANDUM

REQUEST FOR DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING APPROVAL

From: Samuel W. Hayes, P.E.
Richmond District Preliminary Engineering Manager

To: State Location and Design Engineer
Attention: Mr. Knouse, P.E.,
Assistant State Location and Design Engineer

Project #: Project: 0711-072-P64, P101, R201, C501, B618
Federal Project #: RSTP-5A27(112)
UPC: 86442
County: Powhatan

In accordance with the statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia and policies of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, a Design Public Hearing was held for the above mentioned project on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at Independence Golf Course, 600 Founders Bridge Blvd., Midlothian, Virginia 23113 located in Powhatan County.

The purpose and need of this project is to improve safety and reduce congestion by widening Route 711, Huguenot Trail, from two lanes to four lanes and to replace the bridge over Bernard's Creek. Bicycle and pedestrian access will be improved by adding bike lanes and sidewalks. The project is 1.17 miles long and is located from 0.4 miles east of Route 288 to 0.1 miles east of the Chesterfield/Powhatan County line.

Citizens were provided the following information in the form of a project brochure:

- The primary purpose of this project is to improve safety and reduce congestion by widening Route 711 from two lanes to four lanes and replacing the bridge over Bernard's Creek. Bike lanes are planned for both sides of Route 711 and a sidewalk will be built on the southern side as part of the project.
- The project will include a 4 to 16 foot raised, grass median which will allow for turn lanes as needed, two 12 foot wide travel lanes in each direction, 4 foot wide bike lanes on each side, curb and gutter, and a 5 foot wide sidewalk on the south side.

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- The design of this project is in compliance with the Stormwater Management Act, stormwater regulations and the annual stormwater management standards and specifications approved by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The construction of this project will conform to the nationwide best management practices, VDOT specifications and special provisions, and the Virginia Department of Soil and Water Conservation regulations.
- Also, during construction, every reasonable effort will be made to protect the environment with respect to dust and erosion control. Access to all properties will be maintained during construction.
- Displays at this meeting show the extent of right of way that may be needed as the project is currently proposed. As the design is further developed, additional easements and right of way may be required beyond what is shown in the preliminary plans. Property owners will be informed of the exact location of the easements during the right of way acquisition process and prior to construction. Currently, there are twenty-three parcels affected by the project.
- Total project cost: \$21 million. Engineering of roadway plans: \$2.4 million. Right of way acquisition and utility relocation: \$2.4 million. Construction: \$16.5 million
- The tentative schedule for beginning construction is February 2016.

Thirty-nine (39) citizens attended the hearing. There were six (6) written and one (3) oral comments received for the record. On the written comments, two (2) supported the project with minor changes three (3) supported the project with major changes and one (1) one opposed the project as a whole.

The following is a summary of the comments which were received as a result of the public hearing and staffs recommended action for each concern:

1. One respondent, Mr. Thomas, wanted to know if the future expansion of the four lane roadway section through the Chesterfield side will impact his property. Specifically, will his property be used for storm water management.

Response: The future storm water management needs for the road widening on the Chesterfield side is unknown at this time. There may be changes to the storm water management regulations when that project is being designed. At this time, it is unlikely that a storm water management basin will be needed on his property.

2. Two respondents reported that the sidewalk is not needed and one reported that it ends in an awkward location.

Response: One of our Value Engineering comments was to remove the sidewalk on the western end of the project where there is no development or foot traffic. As a result of that comment and the Public Hearing comments, we will grade 6 feet behind the curb and gutter on the east side of the project for pedestrian passage but will remove the sidewalk as it goes toward the Rte 288 interchange. As noted by the citizens, sidewalk is not necessary in this location. This revision will reduce the RW impacts by 4 feet where the sidewalk is removed.

3. Two respondents commented that the project should be extended to the east in Chesterfield where the four lane typical section picks up again. Bottlenecking and safety are their concerns.

Response: This project was funded to improve Rte 711 from Rte 288 to the Chesterfield line. We have extended it slightly past the County line at the request of Chesterfield County. They asked us to take the entire 4 lane typical section to the County line so that when they do the widening in Chesterfield, they will not need to cross the County line. They informed us that they

had already acquired the right of way that they thought would be needed for the widening. Chesterfield County will one day complete the widening of Rte 711 for the area referred to that is still two lanes. They do not have the funding yet and it is not currently in their 6-year plan. We do not have the means within the scope of this project to extend this typical section. The proposed design will not create additional bottlenecks of this area or create an unsafe situation for motorists or pedestrians. Please refer to the response to comment #4 below.

4. Two respondents commented that the four lane to two lane transition in front of Brookstone will create a public safety concern.

Response: VDOT's area traffic engineer has reviewed this layout and supports it as it is shown on the public hearing plans for the following reasons: The transition from four lanes to two lanes will not create a safety concern as the turn lanes will be maintained at the Brookstone entrance intersection. With the westbound left turn lane, traffic turning left into Brookstone will have a refuge lane that motorists can safely wait for an acceptable gap in the eastbound traffic. Additionally, the auxiliary (left and right turn) lanes will help in dispersing the traffic on the approaches to the intersection. By removing the turning vehicles from the traffic stream, gaps in the through traffic will be maintained and the motorists traveling through the intersection will not have to slow and/or stop to allow these vehicles to turn. The turn lane configuration reduces the disruption to through traffic caused by turning movements, improving the gaps in the traffic stream along Rte 711.

5. One respondent requested a right turn lane be added out of the Brookstone Subdivision to assist motorists in egress from the subdivision.

Response: VDOT's area traffic engineer has reviewed this layout and does not support a right turn being added out of the subdivision. The addition of right turn lane would allow two cars to wait abreast for gaps in traffic along Rte 711. As the intersection is on the inside of a curve, each car would block the effective sight distance of the other motorist. This would make it difficult for either driver to view the traffic on Rte 711 and determine if acceptable gaps exist in the traffic to enter the roadway.

6. One respondent stated that the addition of east and west bound lanes will result in higher travel speeds in this area and they are concerned about the safety. They are also concerned about the project need and if it complements the development plans fo Powhatan and Chesterfield Counties.

Response: The project purpose is to increase this corridor from two lanes to four lanes to accommodate the projected traffic volume in the area. The speed limit will not be increased as part of this project. The proposed design will mitigate congestion and improve safety by bringing this corridor up to standards for the area and traffic volumes. It matches the development plans of both Counties as Powhatan has already created a four lane roadway section that this project will tie in to. Chesterfield is planning to continue this four lane typical section to the four lane typical section that exists to the east side of the project approximately one mile away.

7. One respondent stated that they would like a wall to be considered to keep the privacy that a berm currently provides. The berm will be impacted by the project widening. This respondent also requests a meeting with the design engineer to discuss options – maybe change the orientation of their driveway to maintain privacy.

Response: The existing berm is located from approximately station 44+00 to station 44+50. The existing berm is 25' wide at its widest point. A portion of the berm (5' to 10') is within VDOT's Right of Way. VDOT Right of Way staff has been on site and has discussed with the property owners their concerns. The project designers discussed an alternate driveway

option with the property owners; however, the property owner wants to maintain a circular driveway. Reconfiguring the circular driveway is restricted because there are wells on either side of the existing driveway. These constraints cause limitations in developing an alternate circular design. The designer briefly discussed a retaining wall and a berm relocation with the property owners but has been unable to determine the best method to replace what is being impacted in like kind. These issues have been discussed with VDOT's Right of Way division and it has been determined that the best way to address the property owner's concerns at this time is for our designers to revisit the design and attempt to reduce the property impacts as much as possible for the next phase of plan development. We will reduce the property impacts by 4 feet by removing the sidewalk and maintaining a graded six foot area behind the curb for pedestrians. Please refer to the response to comment #2 above. We will also increase the cut and fill slopes from 3:1 to 2:1. This will allow us to reduce the berm impacts and to save as many trees as possible on their property. When the Right of Way phase begins, the Right of Way staff will work with the property owners to replace what is being impacted in like kind. If an agreement is made during the negotiation that requires a design change on the plans, we will do that. Otherwise, the owners can be compensated so that they may replace what is being impacted in like kind and to their satisfaction.

8. Brookstone Homeowners Association is concerned about the following additional items, responses follow the concerns:

A. On the west side of the entrance to the neighborhood, there should be a grassy area between the street and the sidewalk. Based upon the drawings, there is ample room in the property right of way to move the sidewalk in order to create this grassy area which will provide pedestrians with greater protection and a sense of security as they walk along this sidewalk.

Response: A 4' buffer space has been added in this area.

B. The sidewalk on the west side of the entrance should curve into the neighborhood so that pedestrians are not forced to cross the entrance in such close proximity to traffic. The sidewalk should then cross and cut through the island to the east side of the entrance. In order to provide a line of demarcation, and to clearly identify the sidewalk for pedestrians and motorists, we would request a cobblestone or paver pathway across the surface of the road and the island. The sidewalk would then curve along the east side of the entrance to where it meets the currently existing pedestrian bridge.

Response: This response also ties to comment E below. Existing conditions have the pedestrian traffic crossing at the front of the island. There are pavers that allow pedestrians to cross on the front portion of the median. There is the possibility of extending the island 10' to 12'. Having the pedestrians cross further back in the median could be more dangerous. Drivers approaching the intersection would expect pedestrians in the vicinity of the stop sign but not away from the intersection.

C. We would request appropriate lighting on top of existing pillars and additional lighting detailing the sidewalk across the island.

Response: The disturbed pillar on this project will be replaced in kind. If there is lighting on the pillar, it will be included. Providing additional lighting at the neighborhood entrance is outside of the scope of this project.

D. We would request curbing on the east side of the neighborhood. The current drawings detail curbing on the west side. For completeness and in order to maintain the property's integrity, curbing should be incorporated into the east side (exiting side) of the neighborhood.

Response: At this point the project is transitioning back to the existing roadway. By adding curb in this area you would be introducing more storm sewer which will need to be removed when Chesterfield County constructs their project.

E. The original plans detail a relatively small decrease in the size of the island. The most recent plans detail a significant decrease in the size of the island. We disagree with the second set of plans. We understand that a small decrease in the size of the island may be necessary, but it is critical that the island extend out into a part of the eastbound turn lane. This provides motorists exiting the neighborhood with greater protection and this maintains the aesthetic integrity of the neighborhood. An island extending into the turn lane is consistent with other developments along Robious Road, including Salisbury. While we do not wish to lose any part of the island, a small loss as contemplated by the original drawings would be acceptable if the other requests detailed herein are agreed to by VDOT.

Response: The portion of the island being removed is on Chesterfield County property. If we can logically do so, we will extend the island 10' to 12'. Any further will be beyond the Route 711 gutter pan. If the median is extended and a cut through works with the road layout, it will be provided if agreeable to Chesterfield County, but it will be close to the median nose to keep the pedestrian crossing in a safe location.

F. Any loss of the existing island will require that the Brookstone entry sign be moved or rebuilt within the island.

Response: The sign should be relocated in kind and should be part of the RW negotiation. If Brookstone has a permit from Chesterfield County that allows their existing sign to be on Chesterfield County property, this will help during the RW negotiation.

G. The HOA has extended significant sums of money on irrigation, including recent modifications/additions which cost in excess of \$5,000.00. The taking of land contemplated by VDOT's proposal, and its impact on the existing irrigation system must be addressed.

Response: Our survey does not locate irrigation systems. This issue should be handled during the RW negotiation; however, the irrigation system is most likely on Chesterfield County property. If Brookstone has a permit from Chesterfield County that allows their irrigation system to be on Chesterfield County property that will help during the RW negotiation.

9. George B. Sowers, Jr. wrote in representation of Riverton Associates, owner of Parcels 012 and 016, and of Winterfield Place Condominium Association, owner of Parcel 014. They are concerned about the following additional items, responses follow the concerns:

A. Plans incorrectly identify Land R Properties as owner of Parcel 014. Winterfield Place Condominium Association is the owner of the Common Element Land that includes the area proposed by VDOT for taking from Parcel 014 for widening of Huguenot Trail Road.

Response: VDOT has asked Mr. Sowers to provide a copy of the deed for transfer. We were unable to find this at the courthouse during our research on 11/28/2012.

B. Request that VDOT realign the centerline of the proposed road to generally follow the centerline of the existing road in order to minimize take and area and damages to their properties.

Response: The property on the north side of Rte 711 across from these properties is protected as a historic 4 (f) property under 23 CFR 774 and we are not permitted to impact it unless there is no other option available. The current design is considered prudent and feasible as it can be constructed in accordance with sound engineering principles, does not generate unique problems for the community, or create costs that reach extraordinary magnitude. The current design meets the purpose and need of the project. VDOT and our consultant design engineers have been actively working with and meeting with Mr. Sowers to review the plans and to work towards incorporating requested alignment changes. We have realigned the roadway a few times to address Mr. Sower's concerns. The alignment cannot be shifted to the north any further than it is currently set.

C. The entrance on Rt. 711 at Station 73+78 located on Parcel 014 and Parcel 015 was approved by VDOT and the Powhatan County Planning Commission (June 5, 2007) and constructed with all turning movements permitted: right turns in and out, left turns in and out. VDOT plans now

show this entrance to be restricted to right turns in and out and left turns in only. I request that VDOT revise the Rt. 711 widening plans to also allow left turns out. If allowing all turning movements for this entrance to Rt. 711 requires some modification in the alignment of the entrance, I am confident all parties involved will cooperate. It appears possible to realign the entrance approximately 112 feet to the east on Parcel 016 to achieve crossover access spacing of 660 feet from Winterfield Road (Station 68+29.88).

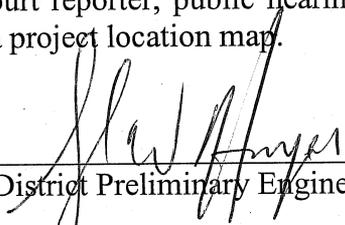
Response: The project is following the Powhatan County Access Design Standards in conjunction with VDOT standards. The cross over & full access entrance spacing for the Route 711 project is 1320 feet. The entrance at station 73+78 is approximately 500 feet from the signalized intersection at Winterfield Road. A full access entrance cannot be provided.

D. Regarding Parcel 012 frontage on Rt. 711 west of Rt. 714 Winterfield Road, VDOT plans now show a raised median across the Parcel 012 after take frontage. Rt. 711 is a Minor Arterial with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. Under VDOT minimum spacing standards, two full access crossovers are permitted on the Parcel 012 frontage. I am requesting that you provide full access crossovers at approximately Stations 61+60 and 54+50 for access to Parcel 012.

Response: The project is following the Powhatan County Access Design Standards in conjunction with VDOT standards. The cross over & full access entrance spacing for the Route 711 project is 1320 feet. Full access cannot be granted at the stations requested. Partial access may be provided after you receive approval for the proposed entrance locations. You can also pursue a design exception to this spacing standard with the proper traffic analysis and documentation.

It is the staffs' recommendation that the major design features of this project be approved as proposed and presented at the public hearing.

Uploaded in iPM for your use in consideration of this project are the public hearing transcript from the court reporter, public hearing comments, environmental document, approved scoping report and a project location map.

Mr.  _____
Richmond District Preliminary Engineering Manager

Date: 12 DEC 2012