



Culpeper

Route 3 Project Task Force Meeting May 6, 2011 VDOT Culpeper District Office

Attending: James E. Rich, CTB member, Culpeper District; William Chase, Chairman, Culpeper Co. Board of Supervisors; Jim Utterback, VDOT District Administrator, VDOT; G. Andrew Hitt, Stevensburg; Gwen Hitt, Stevensburg; Josephine (JoAnne) Russell, Stevensburg; Dick & Leta Scherquist, Salubria, Stevensburg; Zann Nelson; John Giometti, VDOT; Rick Crofford, VDOT; John Cooley, Culpeper County; Lou Hatter, VDOT; Stacy Londrey, VDOT; Brent Sprinkel, VDOT.

Mr. Rich opened the meeting by thanking the members of the Stevensburg community for taking the time to get involved. He stated that “context-sensitive solutions” for road projects are preferable to “cookie-cutter plans.”

Mr. Rich said that a similar process during the improvements to Route 50 in Upperville resulted in a “win-win” solution that resulted in a project that met VDOT’s objectives while also preserving the community. The original proposal for a bypass was much more costly and disruptive to the community, while the final project was more affordable and met everyone’s needs.

Mr. Utterback stated that VDOT’s objective is to build a project that results in a safe roadway. He said that VDOT wants to work with the community to achieve that result while also advancing the project toward construction in a reasonable time.

Mrs. Russell acknowledged VDOT’s previous safety improvements at the Devil’s Jump curve; that the work had met the goal, was done well and was completed quickly.

Several residents asked questions about the distribution of previous crashes, whether they were concentrated in one area.

Mr. Utterback said that the crashes have been mapped and VDOT found that they are distributed throughout the two-lane section.

Mr. Rich emphasized that there is significant concern not just about the fatalities but also the numerous injuries that resulted from those crashes and the effects on people’s lives.

Mr. Crofford briefed the group on the reasons why VDOT has recommended improvements along the existing Route 3 alignment rather than a northern bypass as was previously chosen. He said that the use of federal funds for the project triggered a required evaluation of the project’s effects on historic and cultural resources, known as Section 4(f) and Section 106 reviews. That

review found that the impacts to the Brandy Station Battlefield, which has been expanded since the previous environmental reviews, found the bypass alternative had much more impact on that area than improvements along the existing alignment. Under the federal regulations VDOT is required to choose the alternative with the least effect on the identified historic resources.

Several residents requested that the proposed improvements should address not only motor vehicles but other transportation modes as well, including bicycles and horses. There are also numerous working farms along that section of Route 3 and other vehicles do not always recognize how slow farm equipment is moving when they overtake from behind.

The increase in traffic on Route 663 since the opening of Eastern View High School was also expressed as a concern.

Mrs. Russell stated that residents feel that motorists traveling west see the roadside vista “opening up” as they approach Stevensburg from the east and that they may be inclined to increase their speed as a result.

Mr. Giometti told the group that several changes have already been made as a result of comments received during the public hearing process:

- The speed limit will be reduced to 45 mph through the Stevensburg area
- Crossovers will be added at the Stevensburg Store and at Salubria
- The stormwater retention pond has been relocated away from the spring at Wicked Bottom
- The roadway alignment has been shifted 40-80 feet to the south within the right-of-way to minimize the impacts of the improvements on Hansborough Ridge.

Other suggestions made during this meeting will also be considered by the VDOT project team:

Roadway features

- Ensure that the roadway has shoulders that are adequate to allow the movement of large, slow-moving farm equipment in the right lane
- Ensure that adequate turn lanes and crossovers are provided
- Consider centerline and median rumble strips

Intersections and cross traffic

- Review the design of the Route 663 intersection due to the number of vehicles, especially trucks, crossing there; consider widening the median to provide a refuge for pedestrians and large vehicles
- Consider a roundabout at Route 663 intersection

Traffic calming

- Consider two section designs that clearly differentiate between the village and agricultural areas
- Consider a change to the roadway texture on the approaches to the village area (traffic-calming technique used on Route 50 project)
- Provide “Gateway” landscaping features on the approaches and through Stevensburg for additional visual cues to motorists
- Consider dynamic signs to display speed of vehicles approaching the village area
- Review possible use of crosswalks for pedestrians near the store/retail area

Next meeting: Monday, June 6, 7 p.m., Stevensburg Baptist Church