

September 28, 2009

TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Wythe Creek Road Expansion Project

Improvements to Wythe Creek Road from the intersection of Victory Boulevard to the Hampton City limits, as well as bridge improvements and corresponding improvement to the adjoining roadway in the City of Hampton have long been a priority for the City of Poquoson. Among the most significant reasons for this improvement are the need to establish a viable second ingress/egress corridor for emergency access and evacuation in a severe weather event, to improve traffic safety in the corridor and improve traffic flow to and from the City of Hampton.

As Council may be aware, Poquoson's section of the road improvements, based upon a five lane design, is estimated to cost approximately \$15 million dollars of which \$5 million has been allocated in the VDOT Six Year Plan. Staff has requested updated cost estimates from VDOT as part of the preliminary engineering process which is underway. Given the current prospects for additional funding in light of the Commonwealth's current and projected fiscal constraints, it seems unlikely that moneys sufficient to complete the project using the traditional funding methods will be available. Further, staff is concerned that the regional transportation planning organization and/or the State may reprioritize the existing funding away from this project toward a project deemed more ready to move forward unless there is a viable plan to complete this project within a reasonable time.

In support of this project I have initiated meetings with the City of Hampton, York County and our area's representative to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, Commissioner Aubrey Lane. In addition I have presented our justification for the needed improvement to the working group conducting the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) currently underway with Langley Air Force Base. Each of these preliminary meetings was positive and I look forward over the coming months to continuing to work with these parties as well as other members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and our State and Federal delegation members to seek funding for this project in Poquoson and in support for funds for the related improvements in Hampton.

As staff moves forward with these efforts, I am requesting guidance from Council with regard to the desired roadway configuration. As noted above, the project contained in the VDOT Six Year Plan is a five lane road and the cost estimates are based on this design configuration. Given the funding challenges ahead of us, it is important for staff to understand whether or not this is still Council's preferred design concept or whether a revised concept such as a three lane road with or without sidewalks would be an acceptable alternative. A decision to narrow the design would reduce construction costs, right-of-way acquisition and storm water management requirements.

