

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 14, 2020

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Paul D. Holt, III, Director of Planning and Community Development

SUBJECT: Resolution of Support for Smart Scale Transportation Funding Applications

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### Background

In 2013, House Bill 2313 was signed into law, creating a more sustainable revenue source supporting transportation funding. While passage of this bill enabled the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to add approximately \$4 billion in funding to the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), there are still many transportation needs that cannot be addressed with available revenues.

To find a way to better balance transportation needs and prioritize investments for both urban and rural communities throughout the Commonwealth, new legislation, House Bill 2 (HB2), was signed into law in 2014. HB2 required the CTB to develop and implement a quantifiable and transparent prioritization process for making funding decisions for capacity, enhancing projects within the SYIP. The ultimate goal in the implementation of HB2, now called Smart Scale, is to ensure the best use of limited transportation funds. Transparency and accountability are crucial aspects of this process. Smart Scale projects are evaluated based on a uniform set of measures that are applicable statewide, while recognizing that factors should be valued differently based on regional priorities.

Generally, the prioritization process for the Hampton Roads District evaluates projects in the following factor areas: congestion mitigation (45%), economic development (5%), accessibility (15%), safety (5%), environmental quality (10%), and land use coordination (20%).

The Smart Scale process does not cover all types of projects within the SYIP. There are many other sources of funding including maintenance and rehabilitation, safety, operations, and other federal and state funding categories (e.g., Revenue Sharing, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, Regional Surface Transportation Program).

There are two main pathways to funding within the Smart Scale process, the Construction District Grant Program and the High-Priority Projects Program. These two grant programs were established under HB1887 and approved by the General Assembly in February 2015.

The High-Priority Projects Program (as defined in § 33.2-370) refers to projects of regional or statewide significance that address a transportation need identified for a Corridor of Statewide Significance or a regional network in the VTrans2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan. In this program, projects and strategies are compared to projects and strategies submitted statewide.

The Construction District Grant Program (as defined in § 33.2-371) refers to projects and strategies solicited from local governments that address a need for a Corridor of Statewide Significance, regional network, improvements to promote urban development areas, or safety improvements identified in the VTrans2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan. In this program, candidate projects and strategies from localities within a highway construction district are compared against projects and strategies within the same construction district.

For both programs, projects and strategies are to be screened, evaluated, and selected according to the process established pursuant to Smart Scale. In 2016, James City County successfully secured funds through this process for the Longhill Road Phase I Widening. In 2017, James City County successfully secured funds through this process for the Skiffes Creek Connector. In 2018, James City County successfully secured funds through this process for the Longhill Road Shared Use Path project.

### **Proposed Projects**

This year, James City County intends to apply for Smart Scale funding for two projects:

1. *Pocahontas Trail Corridor Section C/D Improvements* as identified in the Pocahontas Trail Corridor Study; and
2. *Richmond Road, Airport Road, and Mooretown Road Improvements* consistent with the regionally adopted Constrained Long Range Plan.

The first proposed project addresses a portion of the transportation and safety needs along a two-mile stretch of Pocahontas Trail between Fire Station 2 and James River Elementary School. Section C/D of Pocahontas Trail is .46 miles (see Attachment No. 2). This Urban Principal Arterial Roadway has a posted speed limit of 40-45 miles per hour. Currently, there are no designated accommodations for bicyclists and very limited pedestrian connections. The typical roadway cross-section consists of two lanes, no shoulders, and turn lanes at some of the intersections. Roadway drainage is provided by deep open ditches immediately adjacent to the roadway with little to no existing shoulder. There is no access management in place. Because of existing conditions, accidents and breakdowns result in substantial backups and delays with access for emergency responders often impeded. The corridor is also frequently impacted by traffic diverting from Interstate 64 due to congestion. The lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in an area with a mix of residential, transit, and industrial traffic causes conflicts and unsafe conditions for all non-motorized travelers. Due to the deficiencies mentioned above, this project will include much needed safety improvements and accommodations, specifically a continuous center left turn lane, an 8-foot shared use path, a 5-foot sidewalk, curb and gutter, closed drainage, landscaped buffer, roadway/pedestrian lighting, new crosswalks with pedestrian refuge areas, transit stop improvements with bus pull-offs and shelters, and undergrounding of overhead utilities. Such improvements are expected to greatly reduce congestion and to significantly improve traffic flow and safety. The Pocahontas Trail Corridor Study estimates the total project cost (with undergrounding of utilities) at \$34 million, with Sections C/D estimated at \$9.4 million.

The second proposed project would provide improvements to the Richmond Road and Airport Road intersection (see Attachment No. 3). Improvements would also be made in York County to the intersection of Airport Road and Mooretown Road, making this a joint application from the two localities. Improvements to the intersection of Richmond Road and Airport Road would eliminate left-hand turning movements and create U-turn points at Olde Towne Road and Stratford Road. Improvements would also include elimination of the big vertical elevation difference at the railroad crossing, construction of a relocated/improved bus pull-out, and provision of enhanced pedestrian accommodations along project limits. At Airport Road and Mooretown Road, the current signal would be replaced with a traffic circle. The current conditions on this corridor include significant congestion and failing Levels of Service. If funded, the two sets of improvements would work in combination to significantly improve traffic flow, returning most of the turning movements to acceptable Levels of Service (A-C) at both intersections for the weekday AM and PM Peak Hours and the Saturday Peak Hours as well. The cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$8.8 million, although pre-scoping and cost estimate validation are currently underway. There is no funding currently available to the project; therefore, the Smart Scale application would be to fully fund this project.

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Staff recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached resolution expressing support for these projects to be submitted through the upcoming Smart Scale cycle.

PDH/md

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Attachments:

1. Resolution of Support
2. Pocahontas Trail Corridor Section C/D Improvements Location Map
3. Richmond Road, Airport Road, and Mooretown Road Improvements Location Map