

What is Important to YOU? TRANSPORTATION!



What are the hot topics and what do we do with them?

For the past six months, in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan update, the Community Participation Team has been collecting your thoughts and ideas on the issues facing James City County. We have read all the input received, which is available for you to examine at www.jccplans.org, and have developed a list of hot topics that are on your minds. Hot topics were strongly related and many comments crossed categories, but generally included the impacts of growth, community character/quality of life, transportation, economic climate, environment, housing, population needs, and water. To help everyone have a better understanding of these hot topics, what they include, and the next steps of the process, we are going to highlight a new topic each week. **Transportation will be discussed at the Community Conversation on Tuesday, August 19 from 6-9 p.m. at Jamestown High School, 3751 John Tyler Highway.**

What do we mean by "transportation"?

Transportation-related comments spanned a wide array of modes, including pedestrian, bike, rail, and of course roadways. Top on the list was concern over rising congestion, growing numbers and synchronization of traffic signals, and design of necessary improvements along major County corridors due to rising vehicle usage. Included is the desire to maintain appropriate levels of service and safety. To help alleviate vehicular congestion, citizen comments talked about improving the connectivity of bike lanes and sidewalks between residential neighborhoods and centers of business and entertainment. Also mentioned was regional cooperation to develop a light rail commuter system and improve the current public bus system. Comments related to the bus system included revising and adding to the locations of bus stops and increasing the frequency of routes to make travel more convenient.

How does transportation affect my daily routine?

If you've ever traveled down Richmond Road and caught every red traffic light or driven on I-64 during rush hour, you've been affected by this hot topic. Congestion can increase commute times to jobs and schools within our County.

Transportation provides us with individual mobility and shapes our activity patterns. It affects our sense of community, our environment, our economic base, and the manner in which visitors to our community perceive us. Alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and sidewalks, affect the livability and walkability of our neighborhoods and decrease our reliance on vehicles.

Transportation is important in terms of conducting business in the area. In order for industries located within the County to effectively receive supplies and move their finished products, a good network including roads and rail is essential.

How did we get here and how would the Comprehensive Plan address the issue?

An important tool to evaluate the impact of growth on the transportation network within the County will be a transportation model. This model examines the development that has been approved or is in the review process, but has not been built yet and projects how many vehicle trips, etc will be added. **The primary component of the analysis is a look at the capacities of existing roadways, what kinds of improvements may be required when traffic from these developments is incorporated, and whether the land use designations for undeveloped properties needs to be changed to prevent overloading of road capacities at buildout.** The overall analysis will also include a traffic forecast which can be used to plan how to handle future traffic before roadway

conditions become a problem. Finally, the model can be expanded to include other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan including land use, public facilities, the environment, and utilities.

Virginia recently passed several new regulations regarding transportation projects, requirements, and funding sources. It's important to note that most funding for road construction is from the State and Federal governments and is very limited. Numerous County projects have been included in the Virginia Department of Transportation's six year funding plans and only these roads are projected to be improved over that time period. The new State regulations for development proposals and Comprehensive Plans will help provide additional information to assist staff and the public in planning and land use decisions that promote enhanced quality of life for citizens. For example, one new regulation calls for interconnectivity of neighborhoods to allow people to use different routes and reduce some of the vehicles using major roads. Access management will also be looked at in more detail, particularly related to land use designations next to major interchanges. Access management controls the location and design of driveways, median breaks, and intersections to make sure roadways operate and move vehicles as efficiently as possible.



Also incorporated into the hot topic of transportation is the recognition that not all transportation needs can be met by cars. Bikes, sidewalks, and public transit play important roles in moving people that are non-drivers or may want to conserve fuel. [Based on your input in the second round of Community Conversations, this plan update can emphasize the importance of providing these options to citizens and consider making bike and pedestrian facilities for transportation and recreation a rising priority in funding decisions.](#) Diversification of

the transportation network and reduction of vehicle dependence has to be done in small steps incorporating many different techniques. In addition to encouraging alternative transportation, another technique that can reduce overall traffic throughout the County includes promoting more compact development that provides a mix of uses, including employment opportunities, within or nearby houses. If successful, this technique can limit the need for residents to travel on major roads to go to work or the grocery store, thereby cutting back on commuter time and money, and



reducing congestion.

Finally, as with most other hot topics, regional cooperation and coordination is a key component to creating and maintaining a working transportation network. This is equally true for public transportation, cars, bikeways, and sidewalks. [County staff, in addition to the staff of York County and the City of Williamsburg, acknowledges the importance of having comprehensive plans that make sense when looked at from a wider perspective, and have always evaluated their plans in light of what neighboring plans have included.](#) As a result, these three localities have agreed to undertake an official regional comprehensive plan update to be started in 2010. James City County has been a part of numerous conversations already with these neighbors to discuss ideas for land use designations, transportation improvements, pedestrian connectivity, and other items adjacent to the County's borders. There are also broader agencies, such as the Historic Triangle Bicycle Advisory Committee (HTBAC) and the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that aim to foster local government cooperation and state-local cooperation to address problems that expand beyond individual locality borders.

Where can I go for more information?

- 2003 Comprehensive Plan: <http://www.jccegov.com/government/administration/comp-plan.html>.
- James City County traffic count information: <http://www.jccegov.com/planning/traffic-counts.html>
- Center for Environmental Excellence by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO): <http://environment.transportation.org/>
- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT): http://www.virginiadot.org/default_noflash.asp
- Regional Bikeways Map: <http://www.jccegov.com/resources/devmgmt/planning/Bikeways.pdf>
- Williamsburg Area Bicyclists: <http://www.wabonline.org/>
- Williamsburg Area Transport: <http://www.williamsburgtransport.com/>
- Hampton Roads Transit: <http://www.gohrt.com/>
- National Cooperative Highway Research Program report on access management:
http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_548.pdf
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission: http://www.hrpdc.org/TRANS/TRANS_Home.asp
- Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization: http://www.hrpdc.org/TRANS/TRANS_MPO.asp