

County of Spotsylvania

Department of Planning
9019 Old Battlefield Blvd., Ste. 320
Spotsylvania, VA 22553
Phone: (540) 507-7434



MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioner Gregg Newhouse, Planning Commission Chairman, and the Planning Commission

FROM: Jacob L. Pastwik, AICP, Planner III

DATE: June 17, 2020

RE: CPA20-0001: Transportation Element Update, specifically Chapter 3,3A, Appendix B

Chapter 3, Transportation and Thoroughfare Plan

Planning and Transportation staff, working with the Planning Commission and Transportation Committee have reviewed and proposed updates to the Transportation Element (Chapter 3) of the Comprehensive Plan. The draft amendments are attached in redline markup format to clearly identify where amendments have been proposed. Clean versions have also been included in attachments to portray the content as it would appear in final form. Corresponding new draft maps have also been attached. Due to the Chapter's specialized focus, County Transportation staff will be present during the meeting should technical or operational questions arise. The draft Transportation Element was presented to the Transportation Committee on June 13, 2019 and again with updates on March 13, 2020. Planning Commission Work Sessions to discuss the Transportation Chapter 3 and Sub-Chapter 3A occurred May 22, 2018, November 7, 2018, and August 7, 2019. Minutes of those meetings have been attached for reference.

The Transportation Plan has been reviewed and updated considerate of the Code of Virginia, Section 15.2-2223 (attached for reference) that requires a Transportation Plan be developed as an element of the Comprehensive Plan and address a number of transportation related systems including but not limited to roadways, bicycle and pedestrian accommodation, rail, airports, public transportation, etc. The Transportation Plan must also consider Transportation related information such as the acknowledgement of corridors of statewide significance as outlined in Sect. 15.2-2232 (attached for reference).

The 2013 Transportation Plan had a planning horizon of 2030 and recommended transportation system improvements considering existing conditions and future projected population and traffic impact mitigations necessary by 2030. This update now looks to 2040. The Thoroughfare Plan itself has been reformatted to break projects into categories including: New Roads and Extensions; Interstate Projects; Road Widenings and other Existing Road Corridor Improvements; Intersection Improvements.

Now that we are in 2020, the draft document has been updated to reflect changes in Transportation that have occurred since 2013 (with update in 2016). This includes removal of now outdated information with more recent information. As part of the staff review of the Transportation Element considering the Code of Virginia, the draft further expands upon and elaborates on the status of rail and air services in the County. These are valuable transportation alternatives to consider. Staff feels prior iterations of the Comprehensive Plan were “light” on those alternatives. With an enhanced focus on Economic Development intended with this Comprehensive Plan update, greater emphasis has been placed on the current state of rail and air and potential opportunities to consider that give insight into development of the Future Land Use Map and Economic Development goals. Summaries related to Transportation Alternatives as a whole have been enhanced with this draft to include “real world” reporting on the status of such Alternatives available in the County. Staff also see’s value in expanding access to more detailed subject specific information within this iteration of the Comprehensive Plan. A number of new hyperlinks have been proposed to expand the reach and ease of access to information associated with the Transportation Plan. Transportation Plan Goals and Objectives have been generally maintained as part of this update however a number of strategies have been proposed that are aimed at safety, traffic flow, economic development prospects (considerations related to rail access especially), and identification of priority transportation projects based on scoring to strategically focus efforts to improve the transportation network in the County. A more detailed summary of proposed amendments in this update for Chapter 3, Transportation and Thoroughfare Plan are below:

This chapter update has a Planning horizon of 2020-2040, identifies transportation systems improvement projects, initiatives, and establishes policies and strategies related to the transportation systems in Spotsylvania County. The Chapter details/outlines Code of Virginia requirements related to elements that must be included in transportation chapters/elements in Comprehensive Plans and discusses the relationship to other regional and state plans, highlighting Six Year Improvement Program and the Virginia Transportation Plan (VTrans) projects. Corridor studies and project implementation are described. Transportation related assessment on air quality has/is been provided. Transportation alternatives, including Transportation Demand Management, Transportation Systems Management, Rail (Passenger and Freight), Motor Freight, Aviation (including airport accessibility enhancement), Commuter Bus, Park and Ride, Vanpool and Ridesharing, High Occupancy Toll, Local Bus, Teleworking/Telecommuting, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and Bicycle and Pedestrian (with reference to Chapter 3A) options are discussed. Accessibility for Disadvantaged Populations has been considered, giving insight into transportation and land use recommendations to accommodate Disadvantaged Populations consistent with the Code of Virginia, 15.2-2223. Transportation Analysis Tools, such as Transportation Impact Analysis and the Travel Demand Forecast Model are described as well as the various roadway functional classifications (with corresponding map). Traffic safety improvements and Hurricane Evacuation Routes are identified/considered. Corridors of Statewide Significance, including U.S. Route 17 and I-95, and associated transportation projects are described. Transportation Goals with supportive strategies are established, with the Goals being:

- A. Maintain acceptable Levels of Service on public roads.
- B. Ensure that new development does not degrade Levels of Service and mitigates its impact on the transportation network.
- C. Promote alternative modes of transportation and multi-modal facilities to more effectively address demands on the transportation network.
- D. Plan transportation facilities that are environmentally and aesthetically compatible with the character of the County and minimize adverse effects upon historic and environmental resources.
- E. Plan future transportation facilities that are cost-effective and can be implemented in a timely fashion.

- F. Prioritize transportation projects for consistent implementation and clear direction for development patterns.
- G. Protect the function of Corridors of Statewide Significance and Hurricane Evacuation Routes from unnecessary gridlock created by vehicle abandonment, stranding, excessively long queues and backups, food and water shortages due to power failure at critical facilities.

The Thoroughfare Plan is a list and map of roadway improvement projects to a planning horizon through 2040. The Thoroughfare Plan contains recommendations for intersection improvement projects, road widening projects, new roads, and study-based corridor improvements. Updated right-of-way guidance, existing and projected levels of service, and costs estimates are included in the Thoroughfare Plan, specifically the Thoroughfare Plan project table. Corridors of Statewide significance are noted in the Thoroughfare Plan. Changes proposed to the presently adopted Thoroughfare Plan (adopted initially on November 14, 2013 and last updated August 9, 2016), include: For existing roads, differences include addition of 2-lane improvement projects for: River Rd from Bragg Rd to Motts Run Reservoir entrance; Lawyers Rd between Rt 208 and Stubbs Bridge Rd; Thornton Rolling Rd from Rt 17 to Caroline County line; Church Pond Rd from Massaponax Church Rd to Guinea Station Rd; Orange Plank Rd from Rt 3 to Orange County line. 4-lane divided improvement projects have been identified for: Chancellor Rd between Gordon Rd and Old Plank Rd; Gordon Rd between future Spotsylvania Pkwy extension intersection and Smith Station Rd. 6-lane divided improvement projects have been identified for: Salem Church Rd from Rt 3 to Harrison Rd; Leavells Rd between Harrison Rd and Rt 208; Rt 1 between Spotsylvania Pkwy and Caroline County line; Rt 208 and Rt 208 Bypass (Lake Anna Pkwy) from Smith Station Rd to Brock Rd. An 8-lane improvement has been identified along Rt 3 from Harrison Rd to Andora Dr. Courthouse Rd between Partlow Rd and the Rt 208 Bypass is upgraded from a 2-lane improvement to a 3-lane improvement. The 4-lane divided section for the Rt 208 Bypass (Lake Anna Pkwy) and Rt 208 corridor is recommended to continue beyond its current termination point just south of Robert E Lee Dr to the Louisa County line.

All prior new concept facilities (roads) carried over from the existing Comprehensive Plan have been maintained in the draft. In addition to those, new concept facilities (roads) have been identified to include Rt 606 service roads north and south of Mudd Tavern Rd bounded by Rt 1 and the I-95 corridor; Market St extension between Rt 1 and Hood Dr; Spotsylvania Pkwy extension between Smith Station Rd and Gordon Rd; Chancellor Rd extension between Old Plank Rd and Rt 3; Chancellor Rd Spur between Chancellor Rd and Gordon Rd; Houser Drive extension between Houser Dr and Industrial Dr; Business Dr extension from Rt 1 to Market St extension; Lansdowne Rd extension from Tidewater Trail to Russo Dr.

All prior intersection improvement projects carried over from the existing Comprehensive Plan have been maintained in the draft. Additional intersection improvements identified include: Tidewater Trail at Benchmark Rd; Rt 17 at Thornton Rolling Rd; Market St at Spotsylvania Ave; Rt 1 at Market St; Rt 1 at Business Dr; Rt 1 at Hood Dr; Future Market St extension at Hood Dr; Rt 208 at Rollingwood Dr; Rt 208 at Rt 1; Rt 1 at Hudgins Rd; Hudgins Rd at Lafayette Blvd; Salem Church Rd at Harrison Rd; Spotsylvania Mall Dr at future intersection; Massaponax Church Rd at Rt 208; Old Plank Rd at Andora Dr; Old Plank Rd at Chancellor Rd; future Chancellor Rd extension at Rt 3; Gordon Rd at future Spotsylvania Pkwy extension; Smith Station Rd at future Spotsylvania Pkwy extension; Lawyers Rd at Stubbs Bridge Rd; Lawyers Rd at Lake Anna State Park entrance. Freight related intersection improvements have also been recommended within the body of the Transportation Plan. New Interstate Interchange projects have been identified at Harrison Road and in the area of a planned future Interstate crossing south of Spotsylvania Pkwy. Operational Improvements and Studies added to this iteration of the Thoroughfare Plan include I-95 Corridor Intelligent Transportation Systems and Route 208 operational improvements.

Roadway project deletions include removing a completed 4-lane section of Harrison Rd between Old Plank Rd and Rt 3.

Chapter 3A, Trailways Master Plan

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update process staff has also proposed adding a revised and updated Trailways Master Plan (now in draft) as a Transportation Element sub-Chapter (Chapter 3A). The concept of relocating the 2011 Trailways Master Plan from a standalone plan format to one embedded within the Comprehensive Plan was supported by the Planning Commission when presented as a concept at a prior work session on November 7, 2018 (minutes attached for reference). Planning for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are also consistent with Transportation Plan requirements as outlined in the Code of Virginia (Section referenced above). The Trailways Master Plan serves dual purposes within the Comprehensive Plan by addressing both road and/or road corridor based improvements (as a Transportation Alternative), as well as identifying greenway systems intended for the purpose of addressing Parks and Recreation Level of Service as established in the draft Parks and Recreation portion of the Public Facilities Element, endorsed by the Parks and Recreation Commission on April 18, 2019. The Trailways Master Plan generally mirrors the network adopted in 2011 but has been updated to reflect road improvement plans associated with an updated Thoroughfare Plan and changes to Greenway routes with the aim of tying more greenway miles to existing planned roadway improvement projects, resulting in less perceived duplication, less intrusive potential property impacts, greater visibility, and exposure to potential commercial spin-off opportunities. Since 2011 a number of conceptual greenway alignments have been able to be more clearly established resulting from development opportunities, road improvement plans, various design and alignment studies. As part of this update, the draft provides status updates for a number of the planned trailways to highlight various implementation successes since initial Plan adoption. The content of the Plan is meant to “get to the point” and has been streamlined to include a Plan background, descriptions of the scope of the plan, descriptions of the specific greenways and intended user groups, and a map depiction of the network. Road based improvements are linked to the County Thoroughfare Plan improvements and the George Washington Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations help project scoring when Transportation funds are applied for. The Draft Chapter 3A and the associated Trailways Master Plan map have been attached.

The proposed Transportation Sub-Chapter 3A- Trailways Master Plan is intended to replace and update information and planning recommendations initially approved as part of a standalone Trailways Master Plan (approved February 22, 2011). This new iteration of the Trailways Master Plan is proposed to be consolidated into the Comprehensive Plan as a Sub-Chapter under Transportation. Amendments are not intended to and do not result in significant substantive change to the planning recommendations from the 2011 Plan.

The Trailways Master Plan proposes an integrated system of off road greenway trails as well as roadway based improvements to serve multiple non-motorized transportation users including bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian, and others with a focus on creating safer transportation conditions while expanding opportunities for citizens and tourists to enjoy Spotsylvania County's numerous historic, cultural, scenic, recreational, and commercial/ service attractions located throughout the County. The Plan serves to help implement transportation alternatives throughout the County as well as seeks to address Parks and Recreation level of service standards. Implementation is also expected to further promote recreational and historic tourism with direct and spin-off benefits to personal health and economy. The Trailways Master Plan includes an Introduction; Plan history; acknowledgement of other local, state, and national level plans as part of Plan development; enabling legislation; identification of the types of recommended facilities to be addressed; the Trailways Plan and Maps identifying the interconnected system of road based and off road greenway improvements with updates on implementation status since 2011; trail heads; basic design guidelines; goals and objectives.

Substantive changes of note since the 2011 Plan adoption include enhanced emphasis on pairing off road greenway trails with planned road improvement projects. Such changes have resulted in recommendations to shift portions of the Virginia Central Rail (VCR) Trail to Old Plank and/or Chancellor roads and identification of a VCR Auxiliary Trail extending over Interstate 95 via the Harrison Rd Bridge (as part of a planned future widening project) while maintaining the opportunity to implement the trail along the historic railbed near Interstate 95 in the future. An additional auxiliary trail has been identified to serve the East Coast Greenway, a nationally significant trail corridor developing between the State of Maine and Florida along the East Coast. The East Coast Greenway Auxiliary Trail would pair with planned Thoroughfare Plan improvements along Thornton Rolling Rd within the confines of the Primary Development Boundary and extend to include the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Station and connection with a realigned East Coast Greenway and the existing US 1 Bike Route. Implementation challenges in proximity to the Fredericksburg City and Caroline County line warranted a regional exploration to “firm up” the recommended route. The 2011 Plan for Greenways was intended to be flexible and cognizant of community input going forward. Efforts to implement the Plan have not changed but more favorable route options have emerged in some instances as exhibited in the update. In Spotsylvania County, a proposed amended route, supported by the East Coast Greenway Alliance on March 5, 2020 includes utilization of Tidewater Trail in combination with planned road improvements instead of Lee Dr through the Battlefield Park as connection to the City of Fredericksburg, and the existing US 1 Bike Route, including Massaponax Church Rd, Church Pond Rd, and Guinea Station Rd as connection to Caroline County. Planned improvements pair well with the previously approved Deep Run Spur to access a historic site known as “Franklins Crossing”, Thoroughfare Plan road improvement projects, and overlap existing efforts to enhance transportation alternatives in proximity to the County VRE Station and Mixed-Use area there. The prior approved Massaponax Creek Trail has been repositioned to align with future improvements to the Route 17 corridor to the east of Germanna Point Dr and avoiding environmentally sensitive areas and a private golf course. Lastly, concerning the greenway network a small connector trail has been identified to link the Ni River Trail to the Todds Tavern Spur, creating an additional loop in the system.

Recommended road improvement-based bicycle and pedestrian accommodations consider greenways systems planning, the draft County Thoroughfare Plan in the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Chapter, County Greenways Plan (considering regional, state and national plans) and the George Washington Region 2045 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Withheld from the carry-over from the 2011 plan to the draft plan are descriptions of potential implementation methods and the 2011 Trailways Plan Appendix that contributed to the substance of Plan development but are now outdated or unnecessary.

Appendix B

Update to Appendix B includes repealing an outdated inventory of privately-operated Parks and Recreation amenities and replacement with a Transportation related exhibit, meant as a complement to the text update pertaining to Thoroughfare Plan project implementation and prioritization in Chapter 3.