

TRANSPORTATION

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Frederick County has grown significantly in the past two decades in both population and economic development, placing a significant demand upon the Frederick County transportation system. Current County policy follows State Code guidance to ensure that new development offsets its impacts to the transportation system. A significant portion of congested roadways in the County can be linked to by-right development that does not offset its transportation impacts since it is not required by the Code of Virginia. This has had the greatest impact upon Interstate 81 and the primary highways in the County. Primary Highways include Routes 37, 522, 50, 7, 277 and 11.

Based upon the most recent Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) data available (2007) Frederick County has 1663 lane miles of roadway that are part of the state system. As of 2008, VDOT estimates that vehicles traveled 2,966,846 miles per day on Frederick County roadways. This is a 213% increase since 1990. The vast majority of this travel is focused upon the Interstate and Primary system.

It is the County's policy to focus future growth in the Urban Areas, within the boundaries of the Urban Development Area (UDA) and Sewer and Water Service Area (SWSA). In addition, the County has recently taken additional steps to incentivize growth within the UDA by adopting a transfer of development rights (TDR) ordinance which allows by right residential development rights to be sold by landowners in the Rural Areas to landowners inside the UDA. Ultimately, while this results in increased traffic in the UDA, this is still a net financial benefit to the County. This allows the County and State to focus roadway improvements within the UDA as opposed to having to expand roadways throughout the entire county. The Eastern Road Plan is the guide to roadway development/improvements in and around the Urban Areas.

Improvements to secondary roads in the more rural western portion of the county are focused on safety and maintenance as opposed to creating additional capacity. The possible exception to this would be areas where the Comprehensive Plan proposes the development of Rural Community Centers. Capacity and safety improvements to primary roadways in the rural areas will be addressed on an as needed basis.

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As of the year 2000 census, the urbanized portions of Frederick County, Winchester, and Stephens City area reached the population threshold (50,000) that led to the federally required creation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In Frederick County the MPO boundary is concentrated around the development in the eastern section, and along Route 11 to West Virginia in the north and to Stephens City in the South. Staffed by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, the MPO is responsible for creating a long range transportation plan that meets air quality standards. The MPO is in the process of adopting the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, which is expected to be adopted before or shortly after this document.

Recent funding of transportation improvements in Frederick County has largely been accomplished through development proffers and the VDOT revenue sharing program. Whenever possible, the County uses public private partnerships to make improvements. The County is also active in the areas of rail access funding and economic development road access funding. The State's role in transportation funding has been declining over the years and has now reached the point where some federal funds are being used for maintenance with very little new construction taking place. The State has been actively encouraging localities to take on maintenance of their road systems. However, roadway construction and maintenance in Frederick County primarily remains the responsibility of the State and Federal Government. How the County, State, and Federal governments work together to create a long term funding policy for transportation will have far reaching impacts on transportation systems in Frederick County.

FUTURE FOCUS

In the next twenty to thirty years it is expected that a number of key transportation milestones will be reached. The issue of long-term road construction funding must be resolved, which will allow significant transportation system improvements to move forward. Most crucial is the completion of Route 37 east, which is critical for both residential and economic development traffic. Completion of this roadway has been a top priority for Frederick County for many years. The Eastern Road Plan will continue to guide road projects and will evolve to address the long range transportation needs of the County.

The County will encourage the integration of National Complete Streets principles into its transportation practices. Complete Streets are streets that serve all users, not just those using a car. Instituting a Complete Streets policy ensures that transportation agencies routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for drivers, transit users and

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vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as for older people, children, and people with disabilities. These principles aim to balance the diverse needs of all users of the public right of way and promote an integrated, multi modal transportation system. Simply put, following complete streets principles means that the County will consider all potential users of the transportation system when making improvements or constructing new facilities. Complete Street policies will benefit Frederick County as they address important safety, health, and environmental considerations, target special populations, and promote growth and revitalization within the community. Many states, including Virginia and over 200 localities, have adopted some form of complete streets policy.

It is expected that transit will begin to play a larger role in Frederick County's transportation network. This would likely begin with on demand type services for the special needs populations, elderly, and disabled.

As densities increase in the UDA and citizen preferences continue to shift, it is expected that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will continue to increase in importance. The Frederick County School system has recently opened its first elementary school (Greenwood Mill Elementary) with a walk zone, and they plan to continue promotion of this type of school. A Complete Streets policy will also help to move these goals forward.

Finally, with the growth potential of the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County, Frederick County can expect a continuing increase in freight movement via rail and roadways. The development of the County's transportation infrastructure should continue to address transportation improvements that will further the economic growth of the community. This would also include fulfilling the potential of the Winchester Regional Airport.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The benefits to the community of a healthy transportation system are immeasurable. An efficient transportation system leads to communities that are less stressed, healthier, less polluted, safer, and more attractive to economic development opportunities and new residents.

A policy that creates an interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities will lead to a healthier and fitter community as well as increased home values. Removal of cars from the roadway would reduce congestion and air pollution. The mixed use land use pattern promoted by New Urbanism and the Urban Center concept of this Plan furthers promotes these policies.

The transportation system is always a key consideration for business locations. An efficient transportation system will make the County more

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attractive to new businesses and will also keep existing businesses from looking to locate elsewhere. In addition, continued focus in intermodal opportunities (the transfer of goods between different transportation modes such as truck to rail or air) in the area will make the county more attractive to businesses looking to take advantage of rail sidings or locations near the airport. The County's willingness to support both road and rail access funding has already led to increased economic development interest. The result is more jobs for County citizens as well as a more valuable and diverse tax base.

POLICIES / IMPLEMENTATION

As residential and commercial development continues, increasing demands will be placed upon the County's transportation infrastructure. Challenges will continue to be placed on the County by users of I-81 and commuters through the area. Transportation demands need to be addressed while protecting and promoting the goals of the comprehensive plan as a whole. This will include the uses of tools such as context sensitive design and planning/locating roadways with consideration of future planned land uses and types.

The role of Frederick County is to first plan the transportation system and then work with new and existing development to preserve corridor rights of way and implement construction needs. It is the role of the state and federal government along with development to fund transportation improvements necessary to ensure the future health of the County's transportation network.

POLICY: **TO CRAFT AND ADOPT A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ROADWAYS AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING ROADWAYS IN A MANNER THAT MAKES THEM OPEN, AVAILABLE, AND SAFE TO ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION.**

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Match desired form of development to roadway classification to simplify the determination of which roadways receive which treatment. That is, different types of streets for different land uses.
- Support State efforts to implement Complete Streets policies and advance local implementation of complete street policies.
- Work with new development and redevelopment to implement the complete streets policy and transportation plan. This may require analysis and modification of the existing subdivision ordinance.

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- Work cooperatively with the schools division to identify school locations that meet both school and County goals of public access and safe walkability.
- Seek outside funding sources to fill in gaps in order to attach separate segments and create a fully interconnected system.

POLICY: **IMPLEMENT THE ROADWAY PRIORITIES OF THE COUNTY, PRINCIPALLY THE EASTERN ROAD PLAN, AND PARTICULARLY ROUTE 37 EAST.**

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Work with new development and redevelopment to implement the Eastern Road Plan through construction and preservation of right of ways.
- Continue to work closely with VDOT, State and Federal representatives, and any other available revenue sources to increase transportation.
- In the absence of outside funding continue to protect rights of way and move forward on planning transportation priorities.
- Coordinate with the VDOT to make sure the required percentage of maintenance funds to be spent on other accommodations is used on County priorities.
- Maintain the character of the rural roadways in the county while addressing safety issues as they may arise.

POLICY: **IMPROVE UPON EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SERVICE LEVELS IN THE COUNTY.**

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Coordinate with VDOT in the scoping and review of Traffic Impact Analyses.
- Analyze VDOT Access Management standards and, when needed, adopt County standards that are stronger.
- Investigate the creation of a facility standards manual.
- Work with new development and redevelopment to ensure that the trip generation and new movements do not degrade the transportation system, increase delays, or reduce service levels.

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- Coordinate with VDOT, local and state law enforcement, and the schools division to identify and address safety concerns. Coordination to be handled by the Department of Planning and Development and Transportation Committee.
- Work with State officials to bring another General District Court Judge to the area as previously approved.
- Work with State officials to increase financial and staff support to the Sheriff's Department.
- Work with State officials to increase financial and staff support of the State Police Kernstown Barracks.

POLICY: **FIND WAYS TO IMPLEMENT TRANSPORTATION NEEDS WHILE KEEPING THE COST OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY COMPETITIVE. WORK TO ENHANCE USE OF INTERMODAL FREIGHT MOVEMENT WHEREVER POSSIBLE.**

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Create a working group comprised of members from interest groups, staff, and the Transportation Committee to review the form of proffers and develop a preferred approach for developing transportation proffers that will best aid the competitiveness of local industrial sites, while ensuring needed transportation improvements are put in place.
- Coordinate with local business to maximize the use of Economic Development Road Access funding as well as Rail Access funding.
- Actively work with rail carriers through the Economic Development Commission and Industrial Parks Association to maximize the amount of material that is shipped into and out of Frederick County via rail.
- Perform a study to discern where opportunities to bring air freight into the regional airport may be available.
- Work to incentivize and maximize opportunities presented by expansion of the Virginia Inland Port and the new multimodal facility coming to Martinsburg, WV.
- Make use of revenue sharing funds for development of industrial property when the Board of Supervisors determines that it is in the best interest of Frederick County.
- Incorporate the Airport Master Plan into County planning efforts.

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POLICY: IMPROVE THE BEAUTY OF TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AT THE COUNTY GATEWAYS AND ALONG COMMERCIAL ROADWAYS.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Work with VDOT to create roadway design plans that meet standards while beautifying local gateways and commercial corridors.
- Through the Transportation Committee, develop a plan and actively promote corridor beautification. This should include working with local institutions to create more attractive County entrances into their facilities.

POLICY: ENSURE SAFE OPERATION OF FIRE AND RESCUE VEHICLES AND SCHOOL BUSES.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Investigate the existence and potential removal of barriers between neighborhoods that lead to delays in response, particularly for the Greenwood and Millwood companies.
- Promote the adoption of a uniform locking technology acceptable to the Fire and Rescue Department for use on gated and locked emergency access points.
- Analyze driving, road, and parking standards and actively seek Fire and Rescue Department input for driveways and roads to ensure that all approved developments are accessible by fire equipment.

POLICY: PROVIDE COST EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES TO AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL AS NEEDED, FOR THE ELDERLY, DISABLED, AND WORK FORCE.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Coordinate with existing agencies such as Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging and Access Independence to secure outside funding to enhance service to the elderly and disabled in the community.
- Make use of MPO resources to identify areas of most critical need.
- Monitor existing data source updates to determine areas of growing need.

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Frederick County Transportation Committee (TC) is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to review issues in the County including transportation planning, safety, and regional coordination. The TC reviews and provides recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding transportation planning and policy related matters. As staff and the TC work on these items there are a number of agencies with whom they regularly engage including:

- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit
- Federal Highway Administration
- WinFred MPO
- Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

In addition to the above agencies the TC often works with the following groups on different special projects.

- Frederick County Sherriff's Department
- Virginia State Police (Kernstown Barracks)
- Frederick County Fire and Rescue
- Frederick County Public Schools
- Winchester Frederick Economic Development Commission

SUPPORTING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Airport Master Plan
- National Complete Streets Coalition
- MPO 2030 Transportation Plan
- Frederick County Annual Road Plans (Primary, Secondary, and Interstate)
- VDOT Access Management Standards