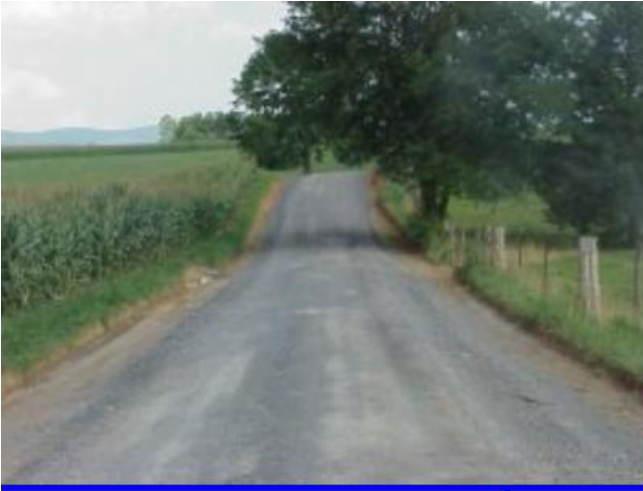


Virginia Department of Transportation's

Rural Rustic Road Program



Prepared by the Local Assistance Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Michael A. Estes, PE, Director
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Foreword

The Virginia Department of Transportation's Local Assistance Division working with the Rural Rustic Road Policy Committee established these **Guidelines for Rural Rustic Roads**. This concept, first enacted by the 2002 Session of the General Assembly of Virginia, is a practical approach to paving Virginia's Low Volume Unpaved Roads. A pilot program implemented in July 2002, demonstrated the success of this program concept. It ensures that we practice environmental and financial stewardship while providing basic paved access to more of our rural countryside. The 2003 Session of the General Assembly amended the legislation to provide that this method be considered as a first alternative for improving all unpaved roads in the future. The Rural Rustic Road Program became effective July 1, 2003. During the 2006 Session, the General Assembly expanded the program by increasing the maximum traffic count on eligible roads. The Local Assistance Division in consultation with the Location and Design Division updated these guidelines effective July 2006.

Special appreciation is expressed to the members of the Rural Rustic Road Policy Committee that initially developed these guidelines.

RURAL RUSTIC ROAD PROGRAM

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Introduction

The Rural Rustic Road Program has and will continue to significantly improve VDOT's ability to pave the vast backlog of unpaved roads in the Commonwealth. The following chart will help guide whether the Rural Rustic Road option is the best alternative for a given road.

Unpaved Road Improvement Program Options

	Unpaved Road	Pave-In-Place	Rural Rustic Road
Roadway Status	The road must already be a state maintained road in the secondary system of state highways. These programs do not apply to the addition and improvement of roads that are privately maintained.		
Traffic Volume VPD = vehicles per day Limitations are based on funding (see below).	50 vpd minimum for unpaved road funds, otherwise no minimum for normal secondary construction funding.	50 – 750 vpd	50 – 1000 vpd
County Government Action and Funding	Project must be in the County's Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) of improvements.	Project must be in the County's Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) of improvements.	Project must be in the County's Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) of improvements. Board must also request the Rural Rustic Road Program be used, by passing a special resolution declaring the road a "Rural Rustic Road."
Land Use Growth Factor	No restrictions.	No restrictions.	The County Board indicates growth and traffic generated by the land are not expected to increase significantly over the next 10 years.
Safety	Safety factors are addressed as part of the project.	Safety factors are addressed as part of the project.	Ideally, a candidate road can be paved as it is without any special needs regarding alignment, drainage or safety issues. For roads with traffic volumes >400vpd, 18 foot pavement is desirable and some typical section improvements may be necessary.
Alignment	Reconstruct as necessary to improve alignment and grade.	Minor changes in alignment may be necessary to address issues.	Generally, the existing alignment should be capable of safely handling the traffic volume and increased speeds that may result from the improved riding conditions.
Drainage	Roadway drainage will be improved, if needed.	Roadway drainage will be improved, if needed.	Existing drainage provisions should be sufficient with minimal improvement. Improvements should be made as necessary to ensure positive drainage.
Right of Way	Abutting property owners will need to provide additional right of way, normally 50 feet in width.	Paving may be done within the existing right of way, but abutting property owners are normally expected to donate additional right-of-way for spot widening, if necessary for safety.	Paving may be done within the existing right of way, which may be a minimum of 30 feet.

GUIDELINES FOR RURAL RUSTIC ROAD PROGRAM
Effective July 1, 2006

The following eligibility criteria apply to the Rural Rustic Road Program:

- ❑ Must be an unpaved road already within the Secondary System of State Highways.
- ❑ Must carry at least 50 but no more than 1000 vehicles per day (vpd).
- ❑ Must be a priority (line item) in an approved Secondary Six-Year Plan, even if the funding source is not from normal, secondary construction allocations.
- ❑ Must be designated as a Rural Rustic Road by the County Board of Supervisors, in consultation with VDOT's Residency Administrator or designee.
- ❑ Must be a road predominately used for local traffic. The local nature of the road means that most motorists using the road have traveled it before and are familiar with its features.
- ❑ Must have minimal anticipated traffic growth. The County Board of Supervisors by resolution will document its commitment to endeavor to limit growth on roads improved under the Rural Rustic Road program and cooperate with the Department through its comprehensive planning process to develop adjacent lands consistent with rural rustic road concepts.
- ❑ Must have a special Resolution designating the road as a Rural Rustic Road by the County Board of Supervisors for each individual road (see page 7).

VDOT Review of Rural Rustic Road Candidate Projects

- ❑ Consider the views of the governing body making the request and of the residents and owners of the adjacent property.
- ❑ Consider the historic and aesthetic significance of such road and its surroundings.
- ❑ Focus on leaving trees, vegetation, side slopes, and open drainage abutting the roadway undisturbed to the maximum extent possible.
- ❑ Improvements along Rural Rustic Roads may be less than minimum design standards. AASHTO's **Guidelines For Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads (ADT <= 400)** should be used for improving existing unpaved roads under the Rural Rustic program.
- ❑ Look for evidence of site-specific safety problems and focus expenditures on those sites. Consideration should be given to appropriate warning signs as needed. In addition to any crash data available, other indicators of safety problems should be considered. Such other indicators may include field reviews to note skid marks or roadside damage, speed data (which may indicate whether speeds are substantially higher than the intended design speed), or concerns expressed by local law enforcement or local residents.

Approval Process

*The Residency Administrator is VDOT's designated representative in dealing with County Boards of Supervisors regarding Rural Rustic Roads.

- ❑ Candidate projects can be initiated when the Board of Supervisors requests the Residency Administrator to evaluate a section of road as a candidate for the Rural Rustic Road program or when the Residency Administrator reviews new proposed unpaved road projects in the approved Secondary Six-Year Plan for eligibility as a Rural Rustic Road project.
- ❑ Residency Administrator advises Board whether an unpaved road project appears to be a good candidate for Rural Rustic Road program.
- ❑ Board of Supervisors designates road as Rural Rustic Road, by resolution.
- ❑ Residency Administrator in consultation with the Area Construction Engineer or Residency Staff Engineer concurs in designation and determines if improvements can be made according to the Rural Rustic Road concepts and advises Board of project concept. The District L&D Engineer shall be consulted for roads with traffic volumes between 400-1000 vpd.
- ❑ If for some reason the Board of Supervisors does not accept the decision from the Residency Administrator after consideration by the District Administrator's office that a road cannot utilize the rural rustic road concept, a final appeal may be sent through the Residency Administrator and District Administrator to the Chief Engineer, for consideration by the Commissioner.
- ❑ Once a road is approved as a Rural Rustic Road, the Residency Administrator requests assistance from other District sections, as needed, in developing the project in accordance with the Rural Rustic Road Guidelines.
- ❑ Scoping documentation submitted showing project as Rural Rustic Road project (either LD-430 package or modified scoping document developed by Programming Division, see page 8).
- ❑ State Environmental Review Process (SERP) initiated and permit determination made by Environmental staff of VDOT (Environmental Requirements for Rural Rustic Roads are summarized on pages 5-6).

***Note:** The Transportation Manager will be VDOT's designated representative in Northern Virginia.

Environmental Requirements for Rural Rustic Road Program

All projects being considered for this program should be reviewed by the Residency Environmental Specialist or District Environmental Staff for consideration of the following:

1. **SERP** (Requires 60-90 days)
 - Is not required if there are:
 - i. No improvements,
 - ii. No horizontal/vertical realignments,
 - iii. No widening, and
 - iv. No acquisition of right of way.
2. **Water Quality Permits** (Requires 1-135 days)
 - Are not required if there are:
 - i. No streams,
 - ii. No water bodies,
 - iii. No wetlands,
 - iv. No water in pipes/culverts/ditches, and
 - v. No intermittent/sometimes dry channels.
3. **Cultural Resources** (Requires 7-30 days)
 - Coordination is required for projects requiring SERP. Coordination for SERP-exempt projects is required if:
 - i. The project requires water quality or other federal permits, or
 - ii. The project is located within a Rural Historic District listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register of Historic Places (or determined eligible for the latter by the Keeper of the National Register), or within one of the Civil War Battlefields listed in the *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* (Staff of the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, 1993) and the *Study of Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia* (National Park Service, 1992). As of June 2006, there were 15 such Rural Historic Districts (in the City of Chesapeake and in Albemarle, Bedford, Clarke, Fauquier, Franklin, Giles, King George, Loudoun, Louisa, Montgomery, Orange, Page, Tazewell, and Warren counties) and 123 such Civil War Battlefields in Virginia.
4. **Threatened and Endangered Species** (Requires 30-135 days)
 - A database search on the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Department of Conservation and Recreation Natural Heritage websites must be conducted by Environmental staff for all projects.
 - No further coordination is required if there are:
 - i. No water quality permits and
 - ii. No threatened and endangered species identified in collections on the databases.
5. **Agricultural and Forestal Districts** (Requires 30-60 days)
 - No coordination is required if there will be:
 - i. No purchase of right of way and
 - ii. No exchange of right of way for work performed by VDOT.
 1. Straight donation of right of way is acceptable.

6. **Virginia Storm Water (VSMP) Permit** (Requires 14 days;)
 - Is not required if there is:
 - i. No clearing, grading, or excavating (earthwork or manipulation of subgrade and shoulders) that results in land disturbance equal to or greater than 1 acre on one project or any combination of adjacent projects.
 - ii. No clearing, grading or excavation that results in land disturbance equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet in Chesapeake Bay localities.

7. **Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan** (Requires variable amount of time)
 - Is not required if there is:
 - i. Less than 10,000 square feet of land disturbance.
 - ii. Less than 2,500 square feet of land disturbance in Chesapeake Bay localities.

8. **Hazardous Materials** (Requires variable amount of time)
 - No coordination is required if there is:
 - i. No obvious signs of contamination within the project vicinity.

Sample Resolution for Rural Rustic Road Project

The Board of Supervisors of _____, in regular meeting on the _____ day of _____, 20_____, adopted the following:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 33.1-70.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, permits the improvement and hard surfacing of certain unpaved roads deemed to qualify for designation as a **Rural Rustic Road**; and

WHEREAS, any such road must be located in a low-density development area and have a minimum of 50 vehicles per day (vpd), and have no more than 1000 vpd; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of _____, Virginia (“Board”) desires to consider whether (*show State Route number and street name*) Route _____, From: _____ To: _____ should be designated a Rural Rustic Road; and

WHEREAS, the Board is unaware of pending development that will significantly affect the existing traffic on this road; and

WHEREAS, the citizens that utilize this road have been made aware that this road may be paved with minimal improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Board believes that this road should be so designated due to its qualifying characteristics and will endeavor to retain these characteristics through its comprehensive planning process; and

WHEREAS, this road is in the Board’s six-year plan for improvements to the secondary system of state highways.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board hereby designates this road a Rural Rustic Road, and requests that the Residency Administrator for the Virginia Department of Transportation concur in this designation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board requests that this road be hard surfaced and, to the fullest extent prudent, be improved within the existing right of way and ditch-lines to preserve as much as possible the adjacent trees, vegetation, side slopes, and rural rustic character along the road in their current state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Residency Administrator for the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Recorded Vote

A Copy Teste:

Moved By:

Seconded By:

Yeas:

Nays:

Signed

Printed Name

Title

SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR RURAL RUSTIC ROADS

Date: / /

County of: <u> </u>	Priority # (200_/0_ SRCIP): <u> </u>
Road Name: <u> </u>	
Project Number: <u> </u>	
UPC/ID #: <u> </u>	
Date of Scoping: <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u>	
From: <u> </u>	
To: <u> </u>	
Length: <u> </u> miles	
FHWA 534 Data Number: <u> </u>	
Existing Right Of Way: <u> </u> ft. in width	
Existing geometrics: <u> </u> lanes <u> </u> feet wide <u> </u> shoulders <u> </u> ft to <u> </u> width, <u> </u> width ditch	
Traffic Count: <u> </u> ADT taken in <u> </u>	
Scope of Proposed Work: <u> </u>	

SERP completed:	<u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u>
Permit determination:	<u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u>
ESC plan review:	<u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u>

PE estimate:	\$ <u> </u>
CN estimate:	\$ <u> </u>
Allocations to-date:	\$ <u> </u>
Expenditures as of <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> :	\$ <u> </u>
Proposed advertisement/start date: <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u>	

County’s Rural Rustic Road Resolution dated / /

Enabling Legislation

§ 33.1-70.1. Requesting Department to hard-surface secondary roads; paving of certain secondary roads within existing rights-of-way; designation as Rural Rustic Road.

A. Whenever the governing body of any county, after consultation with personnel of the Department of Transportation, adopts a resolution requesting the Department of Transportation to hard-surface any secondary road in such county that carries 50 or more vehicles per day with a hard surface of width and strength adequate for such traffic volume, the Department of Transportation shall give consideration to such resolution in establishing priority in expending the funds allocated to such county. The Department shall consider the paving of roads with a right-of-way width of less than 40 feet under this subsection when land is, has been, or can be acquired by gift for the purpose of constructing a hard-surface road.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A of this section, any unpaved secondary road that carries at least 50 but no more than 750 vehicles per day may be paved or improved and paved within its existing right-of-way or within a wider right-of-way that is less than 40 feet wide if the following conditions are met:

1. The governing body of the county in which the road is located has requested paving of such road as part of the six-year plan for the county under § 33.1-70.01 and transmitted that request to the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner.

2. The Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner, after having considered only (i) the safety of such road in its current condition and in its paved or improved condition, including the desirability of reduced speed limits and installation of other warning signs or devices, (ii) the views of the residents and owners of property adjacent to or served by such road, (iii) the views of the governing body making the request, (iv) the historical and aesthetic significance of such road and its surroundings, (v) the availability of any additional land that has been or may be acquired by gift or other means for the purpose of paving such road within its existing right-of-way or within a wider right-of-way that is less than 40 feet wide, and (vi) environmental considerations,

shall grant or deny the request for the paving of such road under this subsection.

C. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections A and B, the governing body of any county, in consultation with the Department, may designate a road or road segment as a Rural Rustic Road provided such road or road segment is located in a low-density development area and has an average daily traffic volume of no more than 1000 vehicles per day. For a road or road segment so designated, improvements shall utilize a paved surface width based on reduced and flexible standards that leave trees, vegetation, side slopes and open drainage abutting the roadway undisturbed to the maximum extent possible without compromising public safety. The Department, in consultation with the affected local governing body, shall first consider the paving of a road or road segment meeting the criteria for a Rural Rustic Road in accordance with this subsection before making a decision to pave it to another standard as set forth in this section. The provisions of this subsection shall become effective July 1, 2003.

D. The Commonwealth, its agencies, instrumentalities, departments, officers, and employees acting within the scope of their duties and authority shall be immune for damages by reason of actions taken in conformity with the provisions of this section. Immunity for the governing body of any political subdivision requesting paving under this section and the officers and employees of any such political subdivision shall be limited to that immunity provided pursuant to § 15.2-1405.

(1973, c. 360; 1977, c. 578; 1985, c. 440; 1997, cc. 715, 729; 1999, cc. 306, 320; 2001, cc. 355, 366; 2002, c. 414; 2003, c. 599; 2006)