

**COVINGTON 2020
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**Developed by the
Transportation Planning Division**

Of the

Virginia Department of Transportation

In Cooperation With

The U.S. Department Of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

&

The City of Covington

November 2001

This report does not constitute a standard specification, regulation or provide a funding mechanism for the included transportation recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The Covington 2020 Transportation Plan was developed as a joint effort between the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the City of Covington. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the existing transportation system and future demand in the City of Covington and to recommend a set of transportation improvements that could best meet existing and future transportation infrastructure needs.

Improved transportation systems are vital to Virginia's and to the local area's economic growth and development. Providing effective, safe, and efficient movement of people and goods is a basic goal of VDOT's transportation program. This guiding principle, together with consideration of environmental issues and local mobility needs, was the basis for the development of this transportation plan.

VDOT will use this plan when evaluating requests from the local governments for specific transportation projects and/or implementing projects that VDOT initiates. This list of recommendations will also be used in the statewide transportation planning process so that the magnitude of transportation needs statewide can be more accurately quantified.

STUDY AREA AND THOROUGHFARE SYSTEM

Covington is located on I-64 approximately 60 miles northwest of Roanoke, Virginia and 15 miles east of the West Virginia border. Covington serves as the county seat for Alleghany County. Major roadways in the City include VA 18, US 60, I-64, VA 154, and US 220. The thoroughfare system consists of approximately 18 miles of roadway within the City, and the City's boundary encompasses six square miles.

The study area for the 2020 Transportation Plan coincided with the boundary line of the corporate limits. Within this boundary line (commonly called a cordon line), a set of specific roadways was selected and designated as the urban thoroughfares. The analysis and recommendations were limited to these urban thoroughfares and any new facilities recommended in this study.

Thoroughfares are defined as facilities that operate as arterials or collector routes. The distinction between functional classifications (arterial, collector, local street) is based on whether the facility primarily serves "through-traffic" or provides direct access to adjacent land. Thoroughfare roadways in cities and towns with populations over 5,000 have an "urban" designation and those in cities and towns with populations less than 5,000 are designated "rural".

Roadways not classified by this system, but deemed important by local governments, may be in the 2020 Transportation Plan as "non-thoroughfare" roadways. Typically, these are planned roadways or improvements that will be built with funds (public or private) other than VDOT funds.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The population of Covington between 1970 and 1990 has been decreasing at a steady rate of about 1.0 percent annually. Since 1990 the population has decreased annually at a rate of 1.4 percent. The Covington population in the year 2000 was approximately 6,303 persons. An estimate provided by the Covington Comprehensive Plan projected the 2010 population to be roughly 5,936 residents, which represents an annual loss of 0.6 percent.

Covington's workforce (1996) is comprised primarily of manufacturing (35%), construction (16%), service (15%), and government (15%) sectors. According to the 1995 Covington Comprehensive Plan, of the total Covington work force, roughly 70 percent live and work in the City. In-commuters to Covington are greater than the number of commuters leaving Covington, increasing traffic volumes on the Covington thoroughfare system.

SUMMARY OF APPROACH AND ANALYSIS METHODS

The development of the transportation plan followed a process that included data collection, review, and analysis. The data collected included information such as traffic counts, police accident reports, roadway geometric inventory data, bridge structural inspection reports, at-grade railroad crossing geometric data, tourism surveys, and goods movement surveys. Review and analysis of this data was combined with a review and analysis of previous transportation and land-use plans and other studies. Furthermore, meetings were held with local staff throughout the study process to gather additional input.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation recommendations are included in the plan as phased recommendations or other recommendations.

Phased recommendations are generally improvements to the VDOT-maintained roadway system and have been phased to establish a basis for prioritization. Phased recommendations are divided into three phases. Phase One recommendations are base year improvements intended to address the most immediate needs of the City. Phase Two recommendations are interim study year (2010) improvements. Typically, these improvements are not needed in the immediate future. However, planning and budgeting for their future implementation may allow them to be in place for the interim study year of 2010. Phase Three recommendations are long-term (2020) improvements that do not have an immediate or short-term need. However, in the long-term, as traffic grows and existing facilities age, their importance will become more apparent. Long-term recommended improvements may also be re-evaluated as this plan is updated to determine if the need for their implementation has been met, or whether they should be deferred into the future again when their need may develop. In some instances, long-term recommended improvements may be removed from the transportation planning effort if their need does not develop or if other circumstances cause a change of priorities in the study area.

Other recommendations focus on parking, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, intercity rail, intercity bus, air travel, transit, paratransit, taxi, and goods movement and may include areas of special concern. These items are not typically funded as part of the urban transportation plan, but may include components addressed by any of the phased recommendations.

PHASED RECOMMENDATIONS

PHASE ONE: BASE YEAR (2001) RECOMMENDATIONS

Roadway Improvements

- There were no base year roadway improvements identified for the City of Covington.

Intersection Improvements

- W Edgemont Drive at S Rayon Drive – Add reduced speed limit and tight-turn warning signs. In addition, provide access control and slight geometric improvements at the Applied Extrusion Technology, Inc. (AET) facility. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$43,000.
- W Jackson Street at S Rayon Drive – Add reduced speed limit and tight-turn warning signs and improve the geometry of this intersection. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$43,000.

Bridge Improvements

- Hawthorne Street - Replace the Hawthorne Street bridge over the CSX railway. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$591,000.

Retaining Wall Improvements

- Chestnut Street – Improve the drainage and reinforce/replace the retaining wall on Chestnut Street at the CSX railway overpass. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$400,000.
- W Jackson Street – Reinforce/replace the retaining wall on W Jackson Street on the west side of the Wal-Mart. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$400,000.

PHASE TWO: INTERIM YEAR (2010) RECOMMENDATIONS

Roadway Improvements

- Covington Truck Bypass – Construct a 4-lane roadway from I-64 to US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) to alleviate heavy truck traffic on US 60/220 (E Madison Street/S Alleghany Avenue). The approximate length of the roadway will be 2.2 miles and the total cost of this project is estimated at \$13,867,000.

Intersection Improvements

- US 60/220 (E Madison Street) at VA 18 (S Carpenter Drive) – Extend the northbound right-turn lane on VA 18 (S Carpenter Drive). The total cost of this project is estimated at \$74,000.
- S Highland Avenue at US 60/220 (S Alleghany Avenue) - Signalize the intersection and add a southbound left-turn lane on S Highland Avenue. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$1,093,500.

PHASE THREE: STUDY YEAR (2020) RECOMMENDATIONS

Roadway Improvements

- US 60/220 (E Madison Street) – Widen and reconstruct US 60/220 (E Madison Street) to urban 4-lane standards from S Highland Avenue to VA 18 (S Carpenter Drive). The length of the roadway is 0.28 miles and the total cost of this project is estimated at \$2,252,900.
- US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) – Widen and reconstruct US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) to urban 4-lane standards from S Highland Avenue to US 60 (S Monroe Avenue). The length of the roadway is 0.12 miles and the total cost of this project is estimated at \$980,100.
- US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) – Widen and reconstruct US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) to urban 4-lane standards from US 60 (S Monroe Avenue) to the north intersection with N Magazine Avenue. The length of the roadway is 1.51 miles and the total cost of this project is estimated at \$12,134,900.

Intersection Improvements

- There were no long-term intersection improvements identified for the City of Covington.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Parking

Parking in Covington consists of both on-street and surface parking lots. On-street parking is common due to limited space available to residential units. Off-street parking is augmented by a number of public and private lots in the downtown area. No parking deficiencies have been identified for the local businesses and residents of the City of Covington, therefore, no additional parking facilities are recommended at this time.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

Although bicycles may be ridden on all streets and highways within the corporate limits of Covington, there are no routes or paths designated specifically for bicycles. No additional bicycle or pedestrian recommendations were identified as part of this plan.

Intercity Rail

The nearest intercity rail stop (un-staffed) is in Clifton Forge, Virginia (11 miles east) on the east-west rail route. A full service station on the same line is located in Prince, West Virginia (87 miles west). Nearest direct access to the north-south line is at Lynchburg, Virginia (91 miles southeast). No formal plans for initiation of rail passenger service have been announced in the region. No enhancements to intercity rail are recommended at this time.

Intercity Bus

Greyhound Lines bus service is located just outside Covington in Clifton Forge (11 miles east) and provides regularly scheduled access to transfers nationwide. No enhancements are recommended at this time.

Air Travel

Commercial air passenger service is offered at two regional airports within 60 miles of Covington. The nearest airport to the City of Covington is the Greenbrier Valley Airport in Lewisburg, West Virginia (32 miles west). The Greenbrier Valley Airport is served by two commercial carriers which offer daily service to Washington D.C., Pittsburgh, Charlotte, and Atlanta. In addition, the Roanoke Regional Airport is located 60 miles south of Covington in Roanoke, Virginia. The Roanoke Regional Airport is served by five commercial carriers, which offer service to several domestic hubs. Airfreight and charter services are available at both of these airports.

Commuter services are offered at both the Roanoke Regional Airport and at the Greenbrier Valley Airport. There are no recommendations regarding air travel at this time.

Transit, Paratransit, and Taxi

The Roanoke Area Dial-A-Ride (RADAR) provides transit service to certain locations within Covington and between Covington, Clifton Forge, and Roanoke. Service is available to all Covington residents. It runs on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM with stops every half hour.

The Covington Senior Center delivers Meals on Wheels to homebound elderly and also provides on-call transportation service for the elderly to fulfill medical, health, and shopping needs. Additionally, private taxi service is available in Covington. There are no recommendations regarding transit, paratransit, and taxi at this time.

Goods Movement

Truck traffic moving through the area tends to use I-64, US 60, and US 220. US 220 is the main commercial corridor in the City of Covington. According to local officials, truck traffic is particularly heavy on those routes. The Covington truck bypass has been recommended to alleviate truck traffic on US 220 (N Allegheny Avenue/E Madison Street) in downtown sections of Covington. Local officials do not see any additional deficiencies inhibiting freight movement and there is no indication of goods movement issues that hinder economic development in the City of Covington.

Tourism

The City of Covington is host to many tourist attractions. The City is designated as a Virginia Main Street Community, is home to a minor league baseball team, and the downtown area is on the National Register of Historic Places. There are also plans to develop a downtown farmer's market, community center, and transportation museum. Currently, no parking, pedestrian, or capacity-related problems have been identified in Covington that would limit tourist activity, therefore, no improvements are recommended.

LOCAL PROJECTS¹

The following local roadways have been identified for improvement by the City of Covington. They are listed to provide continuity and consistency between local plans and VDOT plans.

- US 60 (N Monroe Avenue) at W Main Street – Add a protected left-turn phase to the signal for all legs of the intersection and improve signal timing at the intersection. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$90,000. (Year 2001)
- VA 154 (S Craig Avenue) at VA 154 (S Durant Road) – Add a traffic signal to the intersection. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$180,000. (Year 2001)
- Straighten and remove the dangerous curve on Idyllwild Road from S Forrest Avenue to E Pennsylvania Street to improve the roadway geometry. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$70,000. (Year 2001)

¹ Local recommendations are included for information purposes only and are not necessarily supported by VDOT.

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

An environmental overview was conducted for the Covington thoroughfare roadway recommendations that included widening (providing additional travel lanes) or development of new roadway facilities. The purpose of the environmental overview is to review the environmental impacts of the proposed recommendations, identifying major impacts that would preclude their implementation. To conduct the environmental overview, secondary data from VDOT and other readily available sources was used. Information on the environmental overview methodology can be found in the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report. The following is a brief summary of potential environmental impacts:

- US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) from US 60 (S Monroe Avenue) to S Highland Avenue: Two business frontages potentially impacted.
- US 220 (N Alleghany Avenue) from US 60 (S Monroe Avenue) to N Magazine Avenue: Four businesses and 30 homes potentially impacted.

These estimates are intended to represent the worst-case scenario of impacts. Further evaluation of environmental impacts resulting from each of these recommendations should occur once they are developed in more detail. Local projects included in this plan are for information purposes only and are not necessarily supported by VDOT. Therefore, they were not reviewed as part of the environmental overview. Due to the potential for environmental impacts and the nature of the Covington Truck Bypass, a separate location and environmental study will be necessary. Therefore, the Covington Truck Bypass was not evaluated for environmental impacts as part of this plan. There were no additional environmental features identified at this time that would preclude implementation of any of the recommendations.

LOCAL COORDINATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The development of the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan included several coordination meetings with City staff and a public meeting held with VDOT representatives, City officials, and residents from Covington.

The coordination meetings consisted of a kick-off meeting, an existing conditions meeting, and a draft recommendations meeting. The kick-off meeting, held in July 2000, enabled the project team to discuss with local staff the purpose and scope of the study, the schedule for data collection and plan preparation and the coordination process. The second meeting (existing conditions), held in April 2001, allowed the project team to present the results of the baseline and horizon year traffic analysis and also allowed local staff to communicate desired transportation needs. Finally, at the draft recommendations meeting, held in August 2001, the project team presented and discussed with City officials the draft 2020 Transportation Plan recommendations. From these recommendations, City staff provided input that was then used to draft the final recommendations.

After the series of coordination meetings, a public meeting was held at the Covington City Hall on October 2, 2001. The purpose of this meeting was to present the recommendations to City officials, citizens, and other interested parties, to receive comments on the plan, and to allow the City Council to consider adopting the plan.

PLAN ADOPTION

The Small Urban Area Transportation Plan for the City of Covington was adopted by the Covington City Council on November 13, 2001.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More details on the development of the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan and the study recommendations are available in the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report and at the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan website, <http://www.vdoturbanplans.com/Covington.htm>. Copies of the Technical Report are located at the Covington City Library and the Covington City Hall. They are also available for review at the VDOT Transportation Planning Division at the central office in Richmond, Virginia, at the VDOT Staunton District office in Staunton, Virginia, and at the VDOT Residency office in Lexington, Virginia.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONT D.

Projects included in the Virginia Transportation Development Plan (VTDP) are not part of this recommendations package. The VTDP can be reviewed online at VDOT's website, <http://www.virginiadot.org>.

Information on VTDP projects for the City of Covington can also be obtained by contacting the VDOT Resident Engineer at the Lexington Residency office in Lexington, Virginia (540-463-3108).

COVINGTON TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS²

Route #	Route Name	From	To	Road Segment Length (Miles)	Recommendation	Cost (Yr 2000 \$)	Existing Typical Section (Width)	Recom. Typical Section (Width)	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)		
									Year 2000	Year 2010	Year 2020
	Covington Truck Bypass	I-64	US 220 (N Alleghany Ave)	2.20	Year 2010 construct new 4-lane roadway (truck bypass)	13,867,000		R4D (48')	N/A ³	N/A	N/A
US 60/220	E Madison St	S Highland Ave	VA 18 (S Carpenter Dr)	0.28	Year 2020 widen and reconstruct to urban 4-lane standards	2,252,900	U2 (48')	U4 (48')	16,060	17,700	19,300
US 220	N Alleghany Ave	US 60 (S Monroe Ave)	S Highland Ave	0.12	Year 2020 widen and reconstruct to urban 4-lane standards	980,100	U2 (40')	U4 (48')	16,060	17,700	19,300
US 220	N Alleghany Ave	US 60 (S Monroe Ave)	N Magazine Ave	1.51	Year 2020 widen and reconstruct to urban 4-lane standards	12,134,900	U2 (30')	U4 (48')	9,300	11,200	13,000
	Intersection Improvement	W Edgemont Dr	S Rayon Dr	N/A	Year 2001 add tight-turn and reduced speed limit signage at intersection approaches. Provide access control at AET facility.	43,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	W Jackson St	S Rayon Dr	N/A	Year 2001 add tight-turn and reduced speed limit signage at intersection approaches. Improve intersection geometry.	43,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Bridge Improvement	Hawthorne St	N/A	N/A	Year 2001 replace Hawthorne St bridge over CSX railway	591,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Retaining Wall Improvement	Chestnut St	CSX railway overpass	N/A	Year 2001 improve drainage, reinforce/replace retaining wall	400,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Retaining Wall Improvement	W Jackson St	N/A	N/A	Year 2001 reinforce/replace retaining wall	400,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	US 220/60 (E Madison St)	VA 18 (S Carpenter Dr)	N/A	Year 2010 extend northbound right-turn lane on VA 18 (S Carpenter Dr)	74,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	S Highland Ave	US 60/220 (S Alleghany Ave)	N/A	Year 2010 signalize intersection and add southbound left turn-lane on Highland Ave	1,093,500	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total						31,879,400					

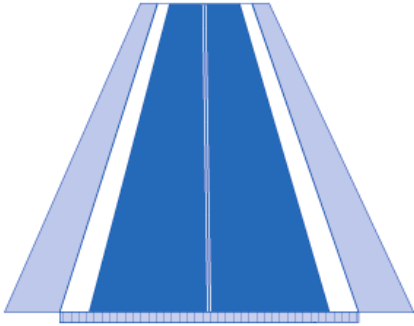
² Only thoroughfare roadways with recommendations are shown. For a complete listing of thoroughfare roadways, please refer to the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report or the Covington 2020 Transportation Plan website, <http://www.vdoturbanplans.com/Covington.htm>.

³ Average Daily Traffic is unavailable for new roads and for roads not currently on the thoroughfare system.

TYPICAL SECTIONS

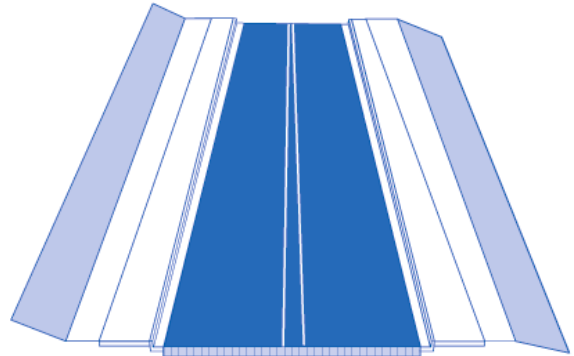
R2

Rural 2-lane roadway with standard shoulders and ditches



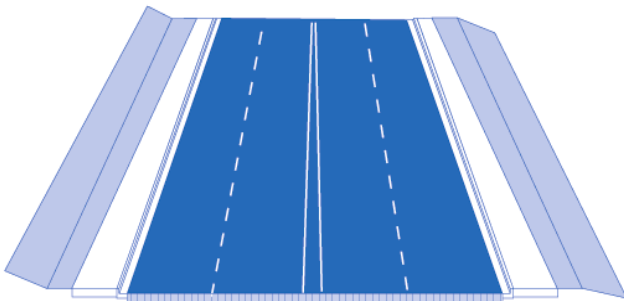
U2

Urban 2-lane roadway with curb and gutter



U4

Urban 4-lane roadway with curb and gutter



R4D

Rural 4-lane divided roadway with standard shoulders and ditches

