

NARROWS 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 Town of Narrows

June 2001

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

INTRODUCTION

The Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan was developed as a joint effort between the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Town of Narrows. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the existing transportation system and future demand in the Town of Narrows 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

Narrows is located just off US 460 in the mountainous section of southwest Virginia and is approximately 70 miles southwest of the City of Roanoke. The Town of Narrows is the second largest town in Giles County. The Town encompasses an area of approximately 1.3 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

Based on the information available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Town of Narrows population was estimated at 2,111 in 2000. The Narrows population has been decreasing at a rate of approximately one percent per year since 1990. A probable factor of the decline in population is the lack of jobs within the Town and the immediate vicinity. With few jobs available for high school graduates, many young adults move to areas outside the Town to find greater employment opportunities. The Celanese Fiber Plant just east of Narrows continues to be a major source of jobs for the locality, but it is difficult to thrive as a community while being dependent on a single employment sector.

In January 1994, the Town of Narrows established an Enterprise Zone, which is a Virginia Community Economic Development Program designed to stimulate business and industrial growth, which in turn would result in neighborhood, commercial, and economic revitalization. Narrows is also the home of the Giles Business Incubator, which is a business resource center committed to the growth and development of new businesses in Giles, and surrounding counties. With these and other programs, the Town of Narrows is working to stabilize the job and population base.

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 Town. 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

- There were no short-term improvements identified for the Town of Narrows.

PHASE TWO: INTERIM YEAR (2010) RECOMMENDATIONS

- Relocate VA 61 (Park Drive) from VA 61 (Monroe Street) to 0.08 miles north of Rowland Street. This section of road will be 0.27 miles long. Currently the roadway has a dangerous curve and has sight distance limitations. The roadway will require the construction of a new bridge over Wolf Creek. The proposed typical section for this improvement is a 2-lane urban roadway with a pavement width of 30 feet. The roadway cost of this improvement is \$506,240 and the bridge cost is \$1,884,960. The right-of-way and utilities cost of this improvement is \$253,120. The total cost for this improvement is \$2,644,320.
- Replace the VA 61 bridge over the New River and US 460 (approximately 0.25 miles in length). The current bridge is 26 feet wide and has a low sufficiency rating. The proposed bridge will be an urban 2-lane typical section with a width of 42 feet to accommodate sidewalks on both sides and curb and gutter. The total cost to replace the bridge is \$5,821,200.

PHASE THREE: STUDY YEAR (2020) RECOMMENDATIONS

- There were no long-term improvements identified for the Town of Narrows.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Parking

There is no lack of parking for the local businesses and residents in the Town of Narrows. On-street and off-street parking is available for most businesses located on both the north and south sides of the New River. With the realignment of VA 61 (Macarthur Lane) in downtown Narrows, additional parking may be provided to serve the local business community. No additional parking facilities are recommended at this time.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

Although bicycles may be ridden on all streets and highways within Narrows, there are no routes or paths designated specifically for bicycles on the thoroughfare system. The New River Valley Planning District Commission has proposed a regional bicycle route plan that includes routes along the thoroughfare system but this plan has not been approved by the Town of Narrows.

Sidewalks are considered an important part of the transportation system for the Town of Narrows. The Town has several sidewalks that are scheduled for repair and improvements. There is also a need to have a majority of the sidewalks brought into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The roadway improvements in this plan include the provision of sidewalks for transporting citizens safely and efficiently.

Intercity Rail

The nearest intercity rail stop (un-staffed) is in Hinton, West Virginia (34 miles north) on the east-west rail route. A full service station on the same line is located in Prince, West Virginia (65 miles north). Nearest direct access to the north-south line is at Lynchburg, Virginia (125 miles east). No formal plans for initiation of rail passenger service have been announced in the region. However, feasibility studies conducted by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation in 1994 and 1997 have investigated initiation of rail passenger service between Bristol, Richmond, and Washington D.C., but did not include Narrows as a proposed station. Stations were proposed nearby in Christiansburg, Radford, and Pulaski. No improvements are recommended at this time.

Intercity Bus

Greyhound Lines bus service is located in Christiansburg, VA (35 miles east) and Pulaski, VA (35 miles south) and provides regularly scheduled access to transfers nationwide. No enhancements are recommended at this time.

Air Travel

Commercial Service

Commercial flights from four regional airports within 150 miles connect Narrows to major hubs. Commercial air passenger service is available at Roanoke Regional Airport (70 miles east by US 460 and I-81); Tri-Cities Regional Airport in Blountville, Tennessee (135 miles southwest by VA 100 and I-81); Smith Reynolds Airport (120 miles southeast by VA 100, I-81, I-77, and US 52) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro, North Carolina (140 miles southeast by VA 100, I-81, I-77, US 52, and I-40). Airfreight and charter services are available at each of these airports.

General Aviation

The closest general aviation facilities are available at the New River Valley Airport, located 25 miles south of Narrows. The Virginia Tech Airport located 30 miles east in Blacksburg also serves the New River Valley.

No additional enhancements to air services are proposed at this time.

Transit, Paratransit, and Taxi

The Senior Center, through the RSVP program, and the Giles County Volunteer Coalition provide paratransit service to the senior citizens of the Town. Paratransit provisions are also available through the New River Valley (NRV) Senior Service, a provider of transportation service to elderly persons and persons with disabilities in the New River Valley. A private cab company provides taxicab service to the citizens of Narrows. No improvements are recommended at this time.

Goods Movement

Area that the Town has identified as having significant truck traffic include: US 460, VA 61 and VA 100. Roadway improvements to VA 61 (Monroe Street/MacArthur Lane) in Downtown Narrows should allow for better truck access to the local business community. Town staff expressed concerns over the dangerous curve on VA 61 (Park Road) between Willow Street and the bridge over Wolf Creek. This problem is addressed with the relocation of VA 61 (Park Road), which straightens out the road. No other roadway deficiencies were identified that would adversely impede the movement of goods within the Town of Narrows.

Tourism

The Town of Narrows has a variety of attractions that draw tourists into the area throughout the year. There are annual events that attract visitors regionally and nationally, such as the Narrows Snowflake Festival, the Fourth of July Celebration, and the Narrows Fall Festival.

Traffic congestion in the town is related to the amount of tourists visiting the town. Most of the traffic problems occur along the three major thoroughfare streets. The major events or festivals that cause traffic problems are the Snowflake Festival and the Fall Festival.

Most tourists use their private vehicles to access the various attractions in Narrows. Tour buses are also used as a means to bring tourists into Narrows for attractions and special events. Currently shuttle service is provided using designated parking areas for major festival events.

No transportation deficiencies were identified that would adversely impede tourism within the Town of Narrows, therefore, no additional tourism related transportation facilities are recommended at this time.

LOCAL PROJECTS

No local roadways have been identified for improvement by the Town of Narrows.

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

An environmental overview was conducted for the Narrows thoroughfare roadway recommendations that included widening (providing additional travel lanes) or development of new roadway facilities. 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 Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report. The following is a brief summary of potential environmental impacts:

- Relocation of VA 61 (Park Drive) from VA 61 (Monroe Street) to 0.08 miles north of Rowland Street: One residential displacement is anticipated. This project will also require an additional crossing of Wolf Creek.
- The proposed bridge replacement over the New River on VA 61: Impacts to the New River and to businesses adjacent to the proposed VA 61 bridge replacement are likely, but cannot be accurately quantified until more details are available on the design of the bridge and its exact location.

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. There were no additional environmental features identified in Narrows that would preclude implementation of any of the recommendations.

LOCAL COORDINATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

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

The coordination meetings consisted of a kick-off meeting, an existing conditions meeting, and a draft recommendations meeting. The kick-off meeting, held in November 1999, 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 August 2000, allowed the project team to present the results of baseline and horizon year traffic analysis and also allowed local staff to communicate desired transportation needs. Finally, at the draft recommendations meeting, held in January 2001, the project team presented and discussed with Town officials the draft 2020 Transportation Plan recommendations. Town 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 Narrows Municipal Building on April 9, 2001. The purpose of this meeting was to present the recommendations to Town officials, citizens, and other interested parties, to receive comments on the plan, and to allow the Town council to consider adopting the plan.

PLAN ADOPTION

The Small Urban Area Transportation Plan for the Town of Narrows was adopted by the Narrows Town Council on June 11, 2001.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More details on the development of the Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan and the study recommendations are available in the Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report and at the Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan website, <http://www.vdoturbanplans.com/Narrows.htm>. Copies of the Technical Report are located at the Narrows Town Library and are available at the Narrows Municipal Building. They are also available from the VDOT Transportation Planning Division at the central office in Richmond, Virginia, from the VDOT Salem District office in Salem, Virginia, and from the VDOT Residency office in Christiansburg, Virginia.

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://virginiadot.org>.

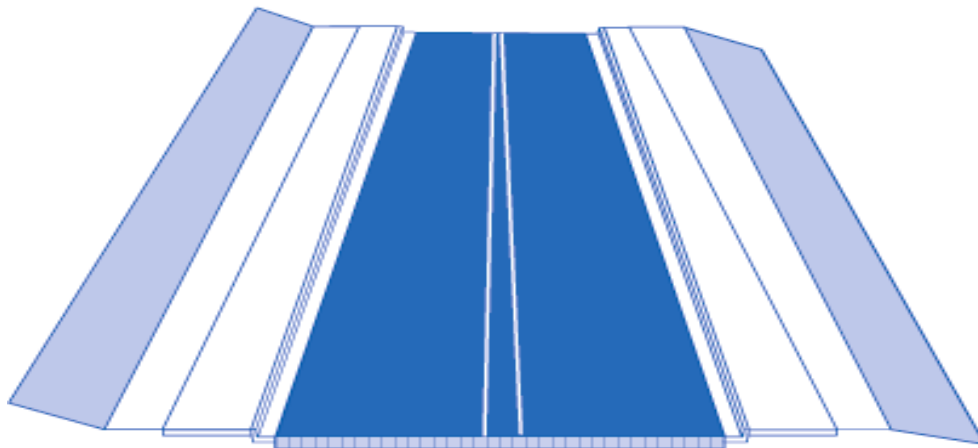
Information on VTDP projects for the Town of Narrows can also be obtained by contacting the VDOT Resident Engineer at the Christiansburg Residency office in Christiansburg, Virginia (540-381-7200).

NARROWS TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS¹

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
VA 61	Park Dr	0.08 Mi. N. Rowland St	VA 61 (Monroe St)	0.27	Year 2010 Relocate VA 61 (Park Dr) to improve safety and geometry and construct new bridge	2,644,320	U2 (24')	U2 (30')	2,550	3,100	3,600
VA 61		SE New River	Franklin St	0.25	Year 2010 construct new bridge	5,821,200	U2 (26')	U2 (42')	4,400	5,300	6,200
Total						8,465,520					

TYPICAL SECTIONS

U2
Urban 2-lane roadway with curb and gutter



¹ Only thoroughfare roadways with recommendations are shown. For a complete listing of thoroughfare roadways, please refer to the Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report or the Narrows 2020 Transportation Plan website, <http://www.vdoturbanplans.com/Narrows.htm>.