

RICHLANDS 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 RICHLANDS**

May, 2001

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

INTRODUCTION

The Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan was developed as a joint effort between the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Town of Richlands. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the transportation system in the Richlands Area and to recommend a set of transportation improvements that could best satisfy existing and future transportation needs. This study identified needs which are based upon capacity, roadway safety, geometric conditions, and land use and presents a set of recommendations that addresses these needs. In addition, a study was conducted to further examine the traffic circulation in the downtown area. The results of this study are reflected in the recommendations and are documented in the technical report. As part of the downtown circulation study, it was determined that the existing one-way street system is functioning well and is projected to operate sufficiently in the future.

Improved transportation systems remain vital to Virginia's, as well as the local area's, continued economic growth and development. The provision for the effective, safe and efficient movement of people and goods is a basic goal of VDOT's transportation program. It is with this basic goal in mind, and with further consideration of environmental issues and local desires, that this transportation plan has been developed.

The Virginia Department of Transportation will use this plan when evaluating requests from the local governments for specific transportation projects and/or for implementing projects that the Department initiates. The list of recommendations will also be used in the statewide transportation planning process in order that the statewide magnitude of needs can be better quantified.

STUDY AREA THOROUGHFARE SYSTEM

Richlands is located in western Tazewell County on US Route 460. The Clinch River winds through the entire town, necessitating several bridges, and the Norfolk Southern railroad parallels US 460 through town. Richlands serves as the center for banking and health care for rural areas to the north and west of town. A finite urban area has been established for purposes of this transportation study, which follows the corporate limits of the Town of Richlands.

Inside the study area limits, a specific set of highways that have been approved by the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Town of Richlands have been selected and designated as the area's urban thoroughfares. The urban thoroughfare system is identified as roads that are functionally classified as collectors or arterials. The subsequent analysis and recommendations will be limited to those designated roadways, with the exception of any recommended facility on new location and those improvements that have been requested by representatives of Richlands on the local unclassified street system. In addition, improvements to the following other modes of transportation have been evaluated: bicycle/pedestrian facilities; intercity rail, bus and air travel; transit, paratransit, and taxi; and goods movement.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Between 1980 and the beginning of this study, the population of the Town of Richlands declined from about 5,800 to 4,600. Population reached a low of 4,450 in 1990 and has been stable since then. Tazewell County had a population drop in the early 1980s, but has rebounded and is projected to grow at close to a one percent annual growth rate in the future.

PHASE I: BASE YEAR ROADWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Front Street

This recommendation is to provide left-turn lanes for the businesses on the north side of Front Street between the Clinch River bridge and the Front Street / Second Street intersection. This recommendation of providing two left-turn lanes can be constructed within the existing right-of-way. The estimated cost of this improvement is \$180,000.

Kents Ridge Road

In concert with the Clinch Street improvements discussed under Local Roadway Projects, the railroad crossing on the northern end of Kents Ridge Road will be lowered to improve the humped crossing. The intersection of Front Street and Kents Ridge Road has capacity concerns in the base year that would be resolved by realigning the intersection with Rockbridge Avenue to create a four-legged intersection with a traffic light. Rockbridge Avenue would be modified from a one-way roadway to a two-way roadway. Total estimated cost of this improvement is \$1,517,000.

Front Street and Second Street

To improve the one-way downtown circulation, street sign improvements will be made along Front Street and Second Street. Traffic signal mast arms will be utilized to mount street signs as well as appropriate no-turn signs (such as no right turn onto Second Street at Suffolk Avenue). The total cost of improving street signs in the downtown area is estimated to be \$28,800.

PHASE II: INTERIM YEAR (2010) ROADWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no Phase II roadway recommendations.

PHASE III: STUDY YEAR (2020) ROADWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

VA 67

Reconstruct Big Creek Road from Kentucky Avenue to a point 0.62 miles southwest of the corporate limits and from a point 0.38 miles southwest of the corporate limits to the corporate limits. These improvements will provide sidewalk facilities on both sides of the road and widen the pavement width. The total length of the improvement is 0.6 miles, and the final urban cross-section will provide a minimum pavement width of 30 feet with curb, gutter, and sidewalks. The total cost of this improvement is estimated at \$1,575,000 (\$1,260,000 for construction and \$315,000 for right-of-way).

Edgewater Street

The segment between the southern corporate limits and Business Route 460 (Front Street) will be widened to a standard two-lane cross section. This will increase the pavement width to a minimum of 30 feet with curb, gutter, and sidewalks. The length of the road is 0.3 miles with an estimated construction cost of \$630,000 and an estimated right-of-way cost of \$157,500.

Veterans Drive Extension - Roadway on New Location

This recommendation is to extend Veterans Drive from its intersection with Second Street to the Richlands Bypass (US 460). This new, two-lane roadway would be approximately 0.3 miles in length at an estimated cost of \$1,700,000 (construction cost of \$250,000; new structure cost of \$1,325,000; and right-of-way cost of \$125,000). This recommendation would help to relieve congestion on Front Street, particularly in the area between the Richlands Bypass and Second Street in the western end of Town. This improvement would include an access break and traffic signal on US 460 Bypass, as an interchange does not appear to be feasible.

OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Parking

On-street parallel parking exists on Front Street and Second Street as well as many of the side streets in the downtown area. Parking is also supplied through privately owned parking lots. A parking analysis prepared by K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. in March 2000 determined that while the perception exists that there is inadequate parking, the parking in the downtown area is well utilized, but not in short supply. As a result of this study, seven alternatives were developed to enhance the parking situation in the downtown area. There are no parking recommendations being made as part of this transportation plan.

Bicycle / Pedestrian

Adequate sidewalks are provided throughout the downtown area, primarily on Front Street and Second Street. Sidewalks are lacking on other roadways with rural cross sections. Pedestrian access will be improved at those roadway locations where widening to an urban cross-section is recommended, such as Edgewater Drive and Big Creek Road, since sidewalks are to be included in the widening. There are no recommendations associated with bicycle access.

Transit, Paratransit, and Taxi

The Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens currently provides paratransit service throughout Tazewell County. No needs or recommendations associated with these modes of transportation were identified in the development of this plan.

Goods Movement

There are no specific recommendations associated with goods movement. However, goods movement would be improved as a result of the roadway recommendations, particularly the elimination of the humped rail crossings.

Intercity Rail, Bus and Air Travel

Currently, there is no passenger rail service, bus service or air service located in, or directly adjacent to, the Town of Richlands. The nearest passenger bus service is available from Greyhound Bus Lines in Bluefield, West Virginia, approximately 40 miles northeast of Richlands. Air travel is available commercially at the Mercer County Airport near Bluefield, West Virginia. In addition, the Tazewell County Airport in Richlands provides general aviation services to Tazewell County. There is no passenger rail service located in Southwest Virginia. No improvements associated with these modes of travel are recommended at this time.

LOCAL ROADWAY PROJECTS

There is one local project of interest to the Town of Richlands involving a road that is not part of the VDOT thoroughfare system. This recommendation is to coordinate with Norfolk Southern Railroad to address the humped rail crossings at Clinch Street. The railroad crossings at both the eastern and western Clinch Street access points to US 460 will be lowered approximately two feet to improve the humped crossings. Estimated construction cost is \$1,000,000 for each improvement for a total cost of \$2,000,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

An environmental overview has been conducted for the roadway recommendations that included widening (providing additional travel lanes) or development of new roadway facilities for the Town of Richlands. The results of the environmental overview were included in the analysis of the recommended improvements for the Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan.

LOCAL COORDINATION & CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The development of the Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan included several coordination meetings with local staff members of the Town and included a public meeting held with VDOT representatives, PDC representatives, Town officials, and residents of Richlands. For information for all thoroughfare roadways, contact the Town of Tazewell or visit the project web site at <http://www.vdoturbanplans.com>.

The coordination meetings consisted of a kick-off meeting, an existing conditions meeting, and a draft recommendations meeting. The kick-off meeting, held in May, 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 November 1999, 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 February 2000, the project team presented and discussed with Town officials the draft 2020 Transportation recommendations. Input was provided by Town staff that was then used to draft the final recommendations.

A public meeting was held at the Richlands Police Department Assembly Hall (the old armory), 1801 Cranwell Drive on April 10, 2001. The purpose of this meeting was to present the recommendations to Town officials, citizens, and other interested parties, and to receive comments on the plan.

PLAN ADOPTION

The Richlands Town Council adopted the Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan at the Council meeting on May 8, 2001.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More details on the development of the Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan and the study recommendations are available in the Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan Technical Report and the Richlands 2020 Transportation Plan website, <http://www.vdoturbanplans.com/Richlands.htm>.

In addition to this 2020 transportation plan for the Town of Richlands, the Virginia Transportation Development Plan (VTDP) also addresses transportation needs. The VTDP is a comprehensive listing of transportation projects scheduled for construction or improvement over the next six fiscal years, as well as anticipated funding allocations. More information regarding the VTDP can be obtained on the Internet at the address <http://www.vdot.state.va.us/proj/projects.html>. VTDP projects in the Town of Richlands are found by selecting Volume 1, then selecting 'Urban System' under the Bristol District. Information on VTDP projects for the Town of Richlands can also be found by contacting the VDOT Resident Engineer at the Bristol Residency Office in Tazewell, Virginia (540-988-2566).

RICHLANDS TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

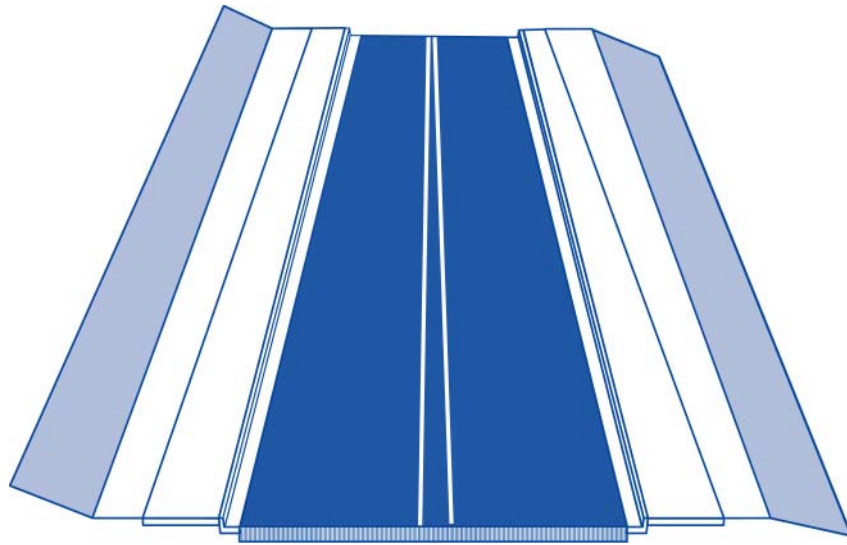
Route	Facility Name	From	To	Road Segment Length (miles)	Recommendation	Cost (Year 2000 \$)	Existing Typical Section (Width)	Recom. Typical Section (Width)	Average Daily Traffic (ADT)	
									Year 1999	Year 2020
US 460	Front Street	WE Clinch River Bridge	Second Street	0.2	Provide left-turn lanes for businesses on north side of Front Street in the base year	180,000	U2 (40')	U2 (40')	18,360	23,230
	Intersection Improvement	Front Street	Kents Ridge Road	N/A	Resolve humped railroad crossing and capacity issues by realigning intersection with Rockbridge Avenue, providing a traffic signal, and modifying Rockbridge Avenue to a two-way roadway in the base year	1,517,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Front Street	Scott Street	N/A	Provide street sign at intersection in the base year	2,880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Second Street	Scott Street	N/A	Provide street sign at intersection in the base year	2,880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Second Street	Suffolk Avenue	N/A	Provide street and no-turn signage at intersection and speed limit sign just west of intersection in the base year	5,760	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Second Street	Railroad Avenue	N/A	Provide street and no-turn signage at intersection in the base year	2,880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Front Street	Railroad Avenue	N/A	Provide street sign at intersection and speed limit sign just east of intersection in the base year	5,760	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Front Street	Allegheny Street	N/A	Provide street sign at intersection in the base year	2,880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Front Street	Floyd Street	N/A	Provide street sign at intersection in the base year	2,880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Intersection Improvement	Second Street	Rockbridge Avenue	N/A	Provide street sign at intersection in the base year	2,880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
VA 67	Big Creek Road	Kentucky Ave	.62 Mi. SW NCL Richlands	0.2	Widen to a standard two-lane cross section in the year 2020	1,050,000	R2 (22')	U2 (30')	5,220	6,600
VA 67	Big Creek Road	0.38 Mi. SW NCL Richlands	NCL Richlands	0.4	Widen to a standard two-lane cross section in the year 2020	525,000	R2 (22')	U2 (30')	5,220	6,600
	Edgewater Street	SCL Richlands	Route 460 (Front Street)	0.3	Widen to a standard two-lane cross section in the year 2020	1,050,000	R2 (16')	U2 (30')	300	350
	Roadway on New Location	Second Street	Richlands Bypass	0.3	Extend Veterans Drive from Second Street to the Richlands Bypass in the year 2020	1,700,000	N/A	U2 (30')	N/A	N/A
	Local Intersection Improvement	Clinch Street (western access to US 460)	Railroad Crossing	N/A	Resolve humped railroad crossing by lowering railroad bed in the base year	1,000,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Local Intersection Improvement	Clinch Street (eastern access to US 460)	Railroad Crossing	N/A	Resolve humped railroad crossing by lowering railroad bed in the base year	1,000,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total*						\$5,788,300				

* The total cost does not include the local intersection improvements since Clinch Street is a local roadway not included on the thoroughfare system.

TYPICAL SECTIONS¹

U2

Urban two-lane roadway with curb and gutter



¹ Recommended typical sections assume 12' wide travel lanes