



CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Community Information Meeting for the Dupuy Avenue Modernization Project Held on July 18, 2012 at City Hall, 201 James Avenue, City of Colonial Heights, VA 23834

A combined community information meeting was held on July 18, 2012 for the Dupuy Avenue and Lakeview Modernization projects, which will be constructed separately. The meeting was held in Council Chambers and a total of 23 citizens turned out to ask questions and provide comments on the two projects. Sixteen people indicated they were interested in the Dupuy Avenue project and seven in the Lakeview Avenue project.

By the end of the comment period that was extended to August 17th, the Department of Public Works had received a total of three written comment sheets, two letters and two citizen survey forms in addition to the oral comments received during the meeting.

Below is a summary of the Department of Public Works' staff responses to questions and comments received at the meeting for the **Dupuy Avenue Modernization Project**:

PUBLIC INQUIRIES AND ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 1. Who should I contact if I have questions or require additional information about this project?**

Please contact the Department the Department of Public Works at 804-520-9334.

- 2. How can we receive more information on this project in the future?**

A copy of all comments, questions and concerns received at the meeting or thereafter and the Department of Public Works' staff responses will be sent directly to each affected property owner. In addition, this information will be posted on the Department of Public Works' Web Page:

(<http://www.colonialheightsva.gov/index.aspx?nid=67>).

Interested parties may also request information by contacting the Department at 804-520-9334.

A public hearing on the recommended design will be held later this year. Before scheduling the hearing, however, staff's preferred design will be presented to City Council for consideration at one of their regular public meetings, which is open to the public. After final endorsement by Council, design plans will be made available to the

public at the public hearing, which will be announced in advance by advertising in the local media. Based on comments received from City Council and at the public hearing, the project staff may make additional design revisions as appropriate. Interested parties are encouraged to attend public meetings and hearings on the project.

FUNDING

3. Is the City providing funding for this project?

The cost of modernizing and improving Dupuy Street is 100% payable with funds awarded to the City through the federal Regional Surface Transportation Program administered by the Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Virginia Department of Transportation . No city funds are being used to pay the costs of engineering, design, construction or enhancement of the street.

However, the City will incur a nominal cost for staff of the City's Department of Public Works, to administer the project. In addition, replacing, bettering or otherwise improving municipal water and sewer infrastructure will be a cost responsibility of the City in its entirety.

4. Can the City use the funding for this project to do something else?

This project was selected through a competitive process administered by the Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of which Colonial Heights is a member jurisdiction. The selection criteria include the project's importance to the region and its ability to improve capacity and safety for intracommunity travel. The funds are being made available solely for these purposes of implementing capital improvements to Dupuy Avenue between Battery Place and the westerly limits of the City. If it were decided for any reason to cancel the project, all expended funds would have to be repaid by the City and the balance of unspent funds returned to the MPO for future reallocation to a member jurisdiction, which may or may not be the City of Colonial Heights.

5. This project is more about using the State and Federal money than what is best for the City of Colonial Heights, the residents and our neighbors Chesterfield County and Virginia State University.

As mentioned in Item 4 above, this project is of regional importance and is a priority for the Tri-Cities MPO and the City of Colonial Heights. While Dupuy passes through an area of the City that urbanized long ago, improvement of public facilities and infrastructure has lagged behind. Clearly, the infrastructure is functionally obsolete and deficient when compared to some other areas of the City. This project will provide modern facilities and infrastructure to mitigate the effects of continued traffic growth and enhance the livability of the neighborhood.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION/FRONT YARD LOSS

6. If you take my front yard, will I get compensated?

The U.S. Constitution and the Virginia Constitution require that a property owner be paid “just compensation” when the government acquires private property. In addition, federal regulations require that an “approved appraisal” be used to develop an amount the agency believes to be just compensation. The regulations also require that the amount offered to the property owner must be at the least the “approved amount” of the appraisal. Further, the regulations require that the City make every reasonable effort to expeditiously acquire real property by negotiation.

7. How long before I know how much yard I will lose?

Preliminary plans showing the proposed street design for the project will be presented at the public hearing later this year. The plans will show the extent of real property acquisition (right of way and easements) needed from each parcel. Based on the input received from the public and from City Council, the city’s consultants are revising the street design to mitigate the impact of street widening. However, it is important to note that certain minimum standards must be met due to statutory and regulatory requirements involved with the use of federal and state funds.

8. Buy houses on one side of the street and then widen as much as you need to on that one side.

The acquisition of entire parcels, whether or not located on one side of Dupuy Avenue or the other would be cost prohibitive and exceedingly disruptive to the neighborhood. The City’s goal is to strike a balance between safely accommodating street users and minimizing the need for acquiring property from any one parcel. Department staff believes that the acquisition of narrow strips from multiple properties on both sides of the existing right of way provides the most cost effective and least disruptive approach to modernizing and widening Dupuy Avenue..

PARKING AND DRIVEWAYS

9. If you take my front yard, there will be no room for parking all of my cars. Also, visitors to my home will have no place to park.

This project is still in its initial development stage; therefore, the individual impacts to property, driveways and parking areas are uncertain at this time. However, as the project design progresses the City will address, to the extent possible, individual property owners concerns related to parking.

10. Can on-street parking be considered?

From a traffic operations and safety perspective, on-street parking is not desirable along a minor arterial such as Dupuy Avenue. An important part of the upcoming design process will be to look at each property individually and to identify the best approach to accommodate off-street parking within the available area on each lot or parcel. Parking configurations may vary by lot. Modifications to existing driveways or the creation of new parking areas may be necessary to mitigate impacts caused by the project.

11. A. Will each resident get a new driveway?

B. Your plan does not have a driveway entrance for 406 and 412 Dupuy Avenue.

C. Your plan does not have a driveway entrance for 404 Dupuy Avenue.

D. I think the city needs to discuss individually the width of the driveways the residents' need. We personally need a double-car spaced driveway.

E. Because of losing parking area in front of our houses, is it possible to widen some of our driveways from single to double access when they are put in with the curb and gutter? Many of us will have to pull multiple vehicles into our front yards for parking because of losing that front area along the road. This means we will be double parking so a double space driveway would serve those losing parking space much better. With the traffic on the street it would also offer the residents a wider, safer avenue for pulling in and out of driveways.

Generally, one new driveway will be constructed to serve each individual parcel. Existing driveways will be modified to connect to the new entrances. It is the intent of project staff to accommodate owners' requests regarding driveway location and width – to the extent possible, consistent with federal and state standards. Department staff and consultants will engage property owners to determine specific needs during preliminary design and the right of way stage of the project.

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

12. Concerned that additional trees and/or light poles will impede the vision of people backing out of their driveways.

The placement of street fixtures and the location of street trees will follow state and federal guidelines related to roadside safety. Through careful design, sight obstructions that would result in safety issues for drivers exiting driveways will be avoided.

13. A storm drain sticks up into the road and should be fixed. (Corner of Battery Place and Dupuy Avenue.)

The project will include a correction for this deficiency.

14. Poor drainage on Dupuy Avenue causes flooding during major storm events.

The project will include the addition of storm water infrastructure, which will lessen the frequency and severity of neighborhood flooding.

15. 25 MPH Speed Sign, walkway, corner of Dupuy and Battery

This comment requires more clarification. Department staff will follow up to obtain more information and investigate. A correction will be implemented as necessary.

16. Does the project have to include bike lanes?

Department staff do not intend to designate a bike lane on Dupuy Avenue as a part of this project. However, in accordance with federal and state recommendations, the project will include a 4-foot wide paved shoulder between the travel lane and curb. This shoulder would not be signed or marked as a bike lane. Federal and state policy direction is to include shoulders on urban arterials such as Dupuy Avenue. Shoulders provide space for some bicyclists but also contribute to reducing the severity of crash frequencies and severity. In addition, shoulders improve drainage, provide partial protection to vehicles turning in and out of driveways and provide storage space for plowed snow.

17. Bike lanes on Dupuy will not be safe for kids to ride on.

A paved shoulder is not intended for use by children in any manner. Sidewalks will be provided for use by people of all ages and abilities.

18. Motorists have to be going excessively over the posted speed limit to get ticketed on Dupuy Avenue.

The project will not change the posted 25 MPH speed limit on Dupuy Avenue. Enforcement of the speed limit is a responsibility of the Colonial Heights Police Department, which periodically monitors vehicle speeds on this street, issuing summons for flagrant violations.

19. A. With all the growth in the area, more lanes will be needed in the future. The proposed improvements are just a temporary fix – why not just build 4 lanes now?

B. From information I have gathered about VSU expanding, it seems as though our street may have to go through two projects over the next 4 or 5 years. They say “widen” Dupuy Avenue on their proposed project and the City says “modernization” on theirs. From what I could gather at the meeting there seemed to be no coordination at this point between the two. So I guess VSU has enough pull to plan to “widen Dupuy” Avenue without city input.

C. I don't think it will help traffic.

D. This plan will not handle the current traffic much less the future traffic with the growth of Virginia State University and Chesterfield County. There needs to be a minimum of 2 lanes in both directions plus turning lanes.

E. This project needs to be planned with Chesterfield County and Virginia State University.

F. Another possibility might be making another road all together or extending Potts Avenue on the old railroad on the West side of Colonial heights.

It is correct that due to anticipated growth and development in the region, overall traffic growth is projected to increase at an annualized 1% rate on Dupuy Avenue each year over life of the project. Consequently, the Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, which includes the City of Colonial Heights, believes it is imperative to improve and modernize this regional urban gateway to accommodate the anticipated traffic growth and to enhance this well-established neighborhood.

As part of the preliminary engineering effort for the project, the city's consultants conducted a detailed study of existing traffic conditions and projected future conditions over the design life of the project. This included an evaluation of whether or not a multi-lane street (that is, 4 travel lanes without a center-turn lane or 4 travel lanes with a center-turn lane) would provide a measurable operational and safety improvement over a two-lane street with a continuous left-turn lane (2 travel lanes and 1 center-turn lane). The results indicate that projected traffic flows would only be negligibly improved with a multi-lane street. This is because congestion and delay on Dupuy Avenue is controlled by the traffic signal at the Dupuy Avenue/Boulevard intersection not by the number of lanes away from the intersection.

In project staff's opinion, the benefit of constructing a multi-lane street (4- or 5-lane) versus a two-lane street with a continuous left-turn lane does not justify a significant increase in the cost of acquiring right-of-way and construction. The cost of building a multi-lane street would not only far exceed the fiscally constrained budget, but also would require the displacement of many owner-occupants and the demolition of many residential structures, significantly altering the character of the neighborhood. Significantly expanding the scope of the project to include construction of a multi-lane arterial would require a significant increase in fund allocations and the time necessary to develop and implement the project.

Department staff agree that due consideration should be given to locating an alternate arterial street to serve South Chesterfield County and VSU. Department staff did participate on the planning team for evaluating the traffic impacts of VSU planned campus expansion. In addition, Department staff has met with Chesterfield County's transportation staff and VSU officials to review and discuss the Dupuy Avenue project and long-term transportation needs for the area.

20. A traffic light needs to (be) put in at Dupuy Avenue, Dupuy Road and river Road.

This intersection is outside the City in Chesterfield County. Department staff have discussed coordination of improvements to be done with the City's Dupuy Avenue project with staff of the Chesterfield County's Department of Transportation. However, determination of the need for signalization and implementation is a matter for others.

21. During events at VSU there is so much traffic on Dupuy Avenue that it is difficult for residents along Dupuy to get out of their driveways.

Periodic increases in traffic volumes generated by VSU events do cause increased congestion on Dupuy Avenue. This project will provide separate space for turning vehicles in the middle of the street outside the travel lanes. This will reduce congestion and provide more gaps in oncoming traffic that residents will be able to safely use not only to exit, but also to enter their driveways.

22. Will VSU's new parking lot feed more traffic onto Dupuy Avenue?

Continued expansion of VSU and its facilities will increase traffic volumes on Dupuy Avenue but so will continued growth in the region. The new VSU parking lot (currently being designed by VSU) will not connect to Dupuy Avenue within the limits of the City. Nevertheless, the City is coordinating with VSU to ensure that their parking lot development is compatible with this project.

23. Will there be traffic back-ups from college students wanting to turn into the new dorms?

Providing a center turn lane along the entire length of the Dupuy Modernization project will help prevent traffic back-ups caused by anyone wanting to make a left hand turn along the corridor.

24. There may be other ways (to) handle traffic such as making Dupuy Avenue one way and Wright Avenue one way. (In other words) Keep existing width of Dupuy Avenue and make it one-way for east bound traffic only. Make Wright Avenue north of Dupuy Avenue one-way for west bound traffic.

Dupuy avenue is classified as an urban minor arterial roadway, which means its purpose is to provide continuity of intracommunity travel while also facilitating land access. Changing the lane use of Dupuy Avenue to a one-way operation would require extensive changes to the existing street system and resulting traffic patterns. This would have several adverse effects to travel and the neighborhood:

- *Conversion of two-way streets to one-way is unaffordable within the constraints of the project budget. To implement such a major change would require*

additional sources of funding and would substantially delay implementation of the project.

- *Through traffic would be diverted onto local residential streets increasing congestion.*
- *Residents on Dupuy and Wright Avenue would be forced to travel out of direction to and from their properties.*
- *Vehicular speeds likely would increase on Dupuy and Wright Avenues*

SIDEWALKS, STREET LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPING

25. A. Modernization of Dupuy Avenue will take up too much land for trees and wider sidewalks.

B. Why does the sidewalk need to 5-feet (wide)? I could find no other 5-foot wide sidewalks in the City?

C. We would like the sidewalk to remain at the same width or at the most be a 3-foot (wide) sidewalk. Why so wide? Where are the other 5-foot (wide) sidewalks in our city located? The foot traffic from the college students does increase during the school session but not enough to warrant taking 2 extra feet of our property, which is already limited. The wide of the sidewalk now is quite adequate. The condition is the only questionable thing about it for safety.

D. We don't need the bike lane, five feet of landscaping and five feet sidewalks. Three feet (wide) sidewalks have been fine for 50 plus years.

The policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into federally funded transportation projects. Therefore, accommodations for people regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation must be objectives of this project.

The U.S. Access Board is the coordinating body for all federal agencies including the USDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. The Board develops accessibility criteria and enforces accessibility standards for federally funded facilities.

The Board has established a five-foot wide sidewalk as the current standard for people of all ages and abilities in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act. Accordingly, VDOT has adopted a five-foot wide sidewalk as its standard. Because the source of funding originates with the federal government and is allocated by VDOT, the City must conform to the current standard for sidewalks.

Recent federally-funded street improvement projects in the City (for example, Ellerslie Avenue and Conduit Road) have implemented five-foot wide sidewalks.

26. A. Lamps - I am concerned about these being window level and very bright. The only other residential street that has these is Arlington and they have a median of trees to cut down on the brightness.

B. I am concerned about the decorative light poles. They are not as high as the light poles we now (have) and I am concerned that with the light poles being lower it will be too bright. The light from the current poles is sufficient. I believe the only other residential street in Colonial Heights that has these light poles is Arlington and the houses are farther away from the poles than ours will be at the completion of the project plus the light to the other side of the street is obstructed because of the trees in the center of the street median.

C. Put taller light poles like we currently have on our street or something more decorative but taller..

The size, spacing, type and location of street lights will be determined at a later stage of design. To the extent possible, street lights will be located to avoid adverse impacts to homes and driveways. Lighting levels will be based on the Illumination Engineering Society's recommendations for residential neighborhoods, which are much less than levels in commercial areas (Boulevard, for example).

27. Will residents be responsible for maintaining the new grassed areas in front of their homes?

Yes, residents are responsible for maintaining their front yards just as they are now.

28. A. Does this project have to include a grassed/landscaped area? Why a 5-foot (wide) planting strip? Eliminating or reducing the width of these features would result in fewer impacts to people's yard.

B. Why a 5-foot (wide) planting strip? I like beautification but we don't have room for this.

C. I do not want the 5 foot (wide) planting strip. To do both a 5-foot (wide) landscape strip is excessive when I do not see this anywhere else in the city.

D. Trees – If we do not have the 5-foot (wide) landscape strip along the road before the sidewalk and only have the sidewalk, my understanding is there will be trees planted in our yards because of not having the landscape strip. There is only room in a few yards to plant trees without causing problems with vision, parking or even potential problems with roots. With most of us losing parking space as it is, this seems like a huge obstruction to most of us. Are the trees required because of federal funding?

E. We have tall trees that border Dupuy Avenue along with a privacy fence. Do not want trees to be cut down.

Separating the curb and sidewalk by providing lateral space for planting trees and locating streetlights helps lessen the negative effects of vehicular traffic on the neighborhood. Provision of a buffer area in residential areas is recommended by federal and state highway authorities. The lateral space itself, trees and streetlights all serve to “buffer” pedestrians, and to some degree residential properties, from traffic noise and pollution. The type, size and number of plantings in the buffer strip would be at the City’s discretion.

While project staff believes inclusion of a buffer strip would enhance the livability of the neighborhood, they are sensitive to the concerns expressed by some residents regarding the loss of “front yard” space. Based on the input received on this subject, staff is proceeding to revise its initial concept shown to City Council and at the community information meeting to narrow the overall width of the proposed cross section as much as possible. This means no gap would be provided between the curb and sidewalk and no planted buffer implemented with the project. Consequently, the sidewalk must vertically deflect (that is, rise and fall) when crossing driveways to maintain accessibility standards. While not the preferred configuration, project staff intends to implement to reduce the width of the street cross section.

UTILITIES

29. A. Recommend that utilities along Dupuy be placed underground.

B. Can the city at least find the money to put utility lines underground from poles to houses. They at least did this when they built the two houses besides us 5 years ago.

C. When crews were surveying the property at 308 Dupuy Avenue the water and sewer line were not marked. These have been installed and do not need to be damaged during this project.

Placing overhead utilities underground is extremely expensive and would be cost prohibitive for this project. However, during the design process, project staff will work with the public service companies (power and telecommunications) to consolidate utility poles in order to reduce the overall number of poles along Dupuy Avenue. However, the final number and arrangement of utility facilities is the sole discretion of the public service companies.

The provision of service laterals to individual customers is the sole responsibility of the public service companies operating in the City under their franchise agreement. Project staff will discuss the feasibility of underground service connections to individual properties with representatives of the public service companies during project development.

OTHER

30. Install no litter signs.

“No Litter” signs are in place on Dupuy Avenue. Project staff anticipates restoring after construction.

CONSTRUCTION

- 31. During construction, worried that traffic will be diverted down Battery Place and make the dust problem worse.**

For the construction of all federal aid projects, City must develop and implement a traffic management plan. The plan provides for work zone traffic control, maintenance of traffic and any detours. The preferred plan would maintain two-way traffic at all times in the work zone on Dupuy Avenue. However, due to the physical constraints and for safety reasons during construction, it may be necessary to temporarily detour traffic around the work zone. At this time, it is not known if traffic will need to be diverted during construction but the comment and concerns about increased dust along Battery Place are noted. Department staff is considering methods of dust suppression on Bruce Avenue.

- 32. How long will the construction period be?**

The City anticipates construction to take between 18 – 24 months and to begin in FY 2014-2015.