

**STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AND  
STAFFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
December 10, 2014**

The joint meeting of the Stafford County School Board and the Stafford County Planning Commission of Wednesday, December 10, 2014, was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by School Board Chairman Nanette Kidby and Planning Commission Chairman Michael Rhodes in the Board of Supervisors Chambers of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rhodes, Coen, Bailey, English, Boswell, and Gibbons

MEMBERS ABSENT: Apicella

STAFF PRESENT: Harvey, McClendon, and Stinnette

Ms. Kidby: Now at this time we don't have a quorum for the School Board; we do have some folks that are still en route. We're not taking any action in this particular meeting; it's for information only so we are going to go ahead and proceed.

Mr. Rhodes: And we do have a quorum of the Planning Commission but I would ask at this moment though if everyone would rise for the invocation and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance that will be led by Ms. Kidby.

DECLARATIONS OF DISQUALIFICATION

Ms. Kidby: At this time, are there any declarations of disqualifications from School Board members as we proceed into this presentation?

Mr. Rhodes: I now would ask from the Planning Commission if there are any declarations of disqualification for the information presentation? Okay, hearing none, Madam Chairman, if I may, I would like to thank you and your fellow School Board members for joining us here this evening for the joint meeting. I'd also like to thank VDOT who's graciously responded to our request for the presentation tonight on the reconstruction of Exit 140 and the widening of Courthouse Road west of Interstate 95. Tonight we will have just under 60 minutes set aside for the presentation and for any questions. We would ask that the members up here, if you could, hold questions... make your notes but hold questions until the end so we can ensure we get through the presentation and then we will take questions; we'll kind of alternate them, group them between the School Board members and the Planning Commission members until we get through all those. Again, we thank all for joining tonight and we thank our guest for presenting. With us tonight from VDOT, as the primary presenter, is Michelle Shropshire. She's the Assistant District Administrator for Preliminary Engineering. Thank you very much for joining us. And she's accompanied tonight by Robert Potea -- is that proper pronunciation? Close? Okay, that'll work. So ma'am, the floor is yours. Thank you very much.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

1. VDOT Presentation - Status update on the reconstruction of Exit 140 and the widening of Courthouse Road west of Interstate 95.

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Ms. Shropshire: Thank you very much. This evening, I've come to brief you on a couple topics. First we're going to talk about the two projects you mentioned, the 630 widening project and the I-95/630 interchange project. We're also going to talk on some general terms about work zones and how we sequence construction for those work zones. As you mentioned, my position at VDOT is the Assistant District Administrator for Preliminary Engineering, and what I'm responsible for is planned development for all of our projects that are in the design phase. I oversee the engineers, the surveyors, the environmental staff, all those people that work on getting those plans together. And as part of that process of getting plans together, we consider from a very early stage in project development of how we're going to build that road and how we're going to maintain traffic while we're building that. It might not seem that way maybe when you're driving through some of those work zones sometimes, but those are all things that we do give quite a bit of consideration to. And that is actually one of the federal requirements we have when we have projects that have federal funds involved. Some of the things that we consider when we are working through the design portion of these projects is, what are the best hours to use for construction. What are the best hours to close lanes, close shoulders? What is the appropriate number of lanes to use? Now, for some roads, that's easier than others if you only have two lanes on a road, then we have to keep those two lanes open. But on other roadways, like I-95 for instance, sometimes you can close one or two lanes depending on the time of the day when you need to do some sort of construction. And I'm sure we've all experienced that here very recently with the Express Lanes that are being built, and some of the other operations, whether it's maintenance projects or other reconstruction projects. Some of the other things that we like to consider are appropriate speed limit for work zones when we're getting ready to build a project. And not just how fast we want someone to drive through those work zones, but how fast we reasonably feel the traveling public would obey that speed limit if we posted it lower during construction because sometimes our drivers might not abide by that speed limit even if we lower it during a construction time period. We evaluate signal timings that we use for during construction periods to make sure they'll be appropriate for when we're actually constructing a roadway. And once the project is actually under construction, we often go back and evaluate our plans that we've made to make sure that those are actually working like we thought they would. And one recent example that I'm sure most of you might be familiar with is the Route 17 widening project that is underway here in Stafford County. That project, we had some detailed plans on how we were going to build that. Some of those have worked out as planned, and some of them have not worked out so well. And so we have been continually out there monitoring that. We've made some modifications, some that have worked well and others that have not. And so that's why you've continued to see VDOT out there working on those signal timings, working on those transitions for those lanes in that work zone, to try to get traffic to flow through that construction project more efficiently now. Anytime we do construction, it does kind of slow some things down that is, you know, standard operating procedure. But we try to do our best to monitor those and keep things moving. So, to kind of move through the presentation a little bit, these are some typical traffic control devices that I'm sure everyone who's driven through a work zone sees. We can use the concrete barrier, we use signs, we use these drums, and we use these variable message boards. And those are things that we use in all of our work zones. The next thing I wanted to do before I start talking more specifically is I wanted to walk us through the 630 widening project just to make sure we're all a little bit familiar with that. And then I'll kind of talk us through exactly how we'd go about building that project. This is starting on the western end of the project of the 630 widening project. As you know, we'll be widening that road from 2 to 4 lanes. And this will be realigning the intersection of Winding Creek Road and Ramoth Church Road so that will align more to a 4-legged intersection, instead of the skewed intersection as it exists today. The project will have a shared use path on the north side of the project. And in this area we will also have a sidewalk on the south side of the project. Now, these slides we are moving toward the east. So this is going to be moving toward Colonial Forge High School and this will be Woodcutters Road on the south side there. We will have a driveway opening for Colonial Forge

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High School. And then on the right side, I guess, of your screen, you will see, and it will be more apparent on the next slide, there will be a signalized intersection. And if I move to the next slide, you can kind of see it to the far left. This is just where are display boards had kind of split between those two. That will be a signalized intersection and that will be for access to the school, and also for the Liberty Knolls proposed subdivision. And then the roadway continues. I will note that the sidewalk that is proposed for the south side of the roadway will end at the Colonial Forge High School area. So, there will be space allowed for sidewalk on that south side of the road but it will not be constructed as part of the project. The shared use path, that is on the north side, which is the top portion of the slide you're seeing, that will continue and be built as part of the project. And that'll be a 10-foot wide shared use path for pedestrians or bicyclists to use. And if we continue moving toward the east, this'll be the intersection of Rockdale Road and Kelsey Road, which those roadways will have some very minor improvements just to make the tie-ins that we need to make. Same through here; we'll be building a new 4-lane section. And then as we continue moving toward the east, this shows the new intersection with the proposed Mine Road improvements. That has a proposed signal at that location. And then this is where the project, as we showed the project at the public hearing, terminated, with some of the reductions that will be taking place with the interchange project. The widening project will actually extend a little bit farther out toward the Austin Ridge area, which I'll pick that up with the interchange project in just a few more slides. But again, this will be 4-lane divided, with that multi-use or shared use path on the north side of the project. This is just the typical section that I've been talking about with the 4 lanes and the shared use path. And these typical sections just quickly show you what the connections look like. Most of the connections have 12-foot lanes, with the exception of the Rockdale and Kelsey Road with have 11-foot lanes, which is pretty typical for the smaller roadways. Now, to talk about how we would typically go about building a roadway that we're increasing from 2 to 4 lanes, our sequence of construction for these types of roadways is we leave the cars on the 2 lanes that are existing and we build the 2 new lanes, which is what this slide is kind of depicting. So, cars drive where they are today and we build the 2 new lanes. If we go to the next phase of construction, we then shift the traffic to the 2 new lanes that we've just constructed and we go back and we tear up the lanes that had been there the whole time and we reconstruct those. And then, the final phase, as we go back and we do the work that we need to do in the middle, and when we have to do the work in the middle, we have to split the traffic between the 2 new sets of lanes that have been constructed. And that's pretty much a typical pattern that we use for any 2 to 4 lane widening. We've used that pattern on Garrisonville Road projects that we've widened, we've used that on the Bragg Road project in the City of Fredericksburg, and on the Route 3 project. We're getting ready to use that same sequencing pattern on the Fall Hill Avenue project that we're getting ready to widen in the city, to just name a few of the projects that you may be familiar with. Now to move onto to talk about the interchange project. I'm not sure how many people have maybe seen this depiction of the interchange. I hope maybe most of you have. This was the drawing that was presented at the public hearing. I can kind of talk us through a few items on this drawing before we start talking about how we go about building this. This is a modified split diamond design -- that's what we call it in the engineering world. It separates the eastbound and westbound movements of Route 630 through the interchange itself. So on the top portion or the northern portion of your screen, that would be the traffic that is heading to the west on Route 630; that would be the existing lanes. And on the lower portion, that would be the traffic heading eastbound on Route 630. This project would realign Austin Ridge Drive to the west slightly over its present location. And it also includes a new intersection with Route 1 adjacent to Hospital Drive. Now I'm sure as you've noticed in the newspapers and other things, that the project has had a budget reduction in the Six-Year Improvement Plan. And so we are working on some modifications to the project. Those have not been finalized but there will be some reductions to this overall footprint. Some of those will impact some of the Park and Ride areas that you see on the project, and some of the other auxiliary roads. And also, as I mentioned earlier, we'll be shifting some of the widening work that you see on the left hand side of your screen, that'll be shifting

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some of that work to the widening project. That's what's being proposed right now to account for those budgetary reductions on the interchange. Now this project, as far as how we would build the project, would be similar in nature to a widening 2 to 4 lanes, but you also notice there's a fair amount of work for this project that is on new location. So when we have projects that have roadways on new location, we would obviously build the portions that are on new location first. So we would be outside of the travel lanes that exist today. So we would accomplish that work first, and then we would be able to shift traffic to those new locations. So, as I mentioned, Route 630 eastbound would be split from Route 630 westbound. We would build that eastbound 630 portion first, and then we'd be able to utilize that to move traffic to that while we made adjustments to the existing Route 630. You'll notice the existing Park and Ride has a new ramp that goes through the middle of it, so that would be another example of we would have to construct the new Park and Ride facility first as a first order of business so that vehicles would be able to utilize that new Park and Ride lot that would be on the west side of the interchange first. Tie-in areas where we have to make the existing road and the new roadways that are under new location tie together; those would have to be done under traffic, under flagging operations, which that's another kind of standard practice that we use for construction. So I have some other slides that we can maybe use for discussion if you have more specific questions here at the end that kind of zoom in on the interchange that show the west side and then the last slide will show the east side, I think, a little bit closer. So, some other things that I just wanted to, in wrap up, talk about in work zones and different things that VDOT can do to assist. When we get ready to put projects under construction, we always have what we call, especially the larger scale projects, a Pardon Our Dust meeting. If you've been watching the paper, we just held one on the Fall Hill Avenue project and that's the way we can alert the public about what we're getting ready to do. And when we have those Pardon Our Dust meetings, we always talk about more specific sequencing of construction for the actual project, and at that time we'll have more details and more specific timelines about when we'll be doing what work in what locations. Other outreach programs that VDOT has is every spring there is a work zone awareness week, which we have in the past done outreach at schools where we can come in and talk to classes, the whole school, whomever, about anything dealing with work zones or just, you know, safe driving habits. That's been a very successful program. We are willing to come out and do meetings to brief about specific projects. And I know in the past we have had very successful outreach with our specific construction staff where they will reach out to whether it's to Fire and Rescue, businesses, or any other interested parties when we have large construction projects when we're getting ready to make major shifts in traffic so that they can alert them to when we're going to change the traffic patterns. I can go back and talk about the 17 project. That's been one that's very successful. We have a pretty big communications plan laid out for the Fall Hill Avenue project that's getting ready to kick off in January of 2015 to talk about what's going to happen there and we'll have to make some shifts in traffic for that project. So, those are all things that we can do to make sure we have kind of a smooth transition and everybody knows what's going to happen with those big construction projects. So, that's all I had for this evening, but I'll be happy to try to answer any questions that you may have.

Mr. Rhodes: Very good. We have a structure; what I think we'll just do is we'll just start from right to left with one or two questions from each person, then we'll just cycle back around -- if you have any. Do you have any Mr. Gibbons? Okay, Ms. Healy? Okay, very good. Mr. Boswell? Mr. English?

Mr. English: Yeah, I've got a couple. The first one, you said you're going to have to modify... when is the modification going to be finished on the one... you said since the budget got cut, when is that modification going to be done?

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Ms. Shropshire: Well, that's ongoing right now. We hope to have the modification complete over the next several months, but that's kind of an ongoing process until we're set on the... until we get the modifications to match the new budget.

Mr. English: And you have no idea how much money they've cut from this right now?

Ms. Shropshire: The budget was cut 35 million dollars.

Mr. English: That's a pretty good chunk, correct?

Ms. Shropshire: Yes sir.

Mr. English: And let me ask you... when do you expect this project to start? The first phase, and I'm assuming the first phase meaning Winding Creek and Ramoth Church. So, when is that going to start?

Ms. Shropshire: The advertisement date for the 630 widening project is April of 2016 right now.

Mr. English: 2016.

Ms. Shropshire: That was... now, adding work to the project from the budget reductions to the interchange will also have some budgetary impacts to that widening project. So we'll have to watch that ad date as well for those budgetary impacts.

Mr. English: So it could be further out.

Ms. Shropshire: It could change that. I'm not saying it will, but it could.

Mr. English: Okay.

Ms. Shropshire: Now, the interchange project itself, it had an ad date in 2016 as well, but with the funding change and how the funding stream is now applied to the project, that ad date is going to change and I don't have a definitive ad date yet.

Mr. English: Okay. I'm on a roll here. In 2016, you say that's the kind of schedule date...

Ms. Shropshire: 2016 for the widening, yes. And I'm not sure; I said April, I don't know if it was April or June now. I'd have to go back and check. So let me check on that before you quote me.

Mr. English: Okay. So, this could be pushed further out, possibility...

Ms. Shropshire: Potentially.

Mr. English: ... and then now, when we say the interchange, 2016 also. So you've got two projects going on, correct?

Ms. Shropshire: The interchange will not go to ad in 2016, no sir. That'll be later.

Mr. English: Okay, so 2016 phase one and then the interchange...

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Ms. Shropshire: Will be after that.

Mr. English: And that could be...?

Ms. Shropshire: That could be, I would say, likely a couple years after that maybe.

Mr. English: So, 2020? 2018?

Ms. Shropshire: Well, maybe... I don't have a firm date on that right now. It depends on when the plans are finalized and the final funding stream comes in.

Mr. English: And when we talk about the project with the 95, there's some concerns too about... because I now the School Board's and I'll let them speak about that, but when you do the interchange, how long will that take to get that project... Say you started today, January 2015 you started; what's the timeline to finish?

Ms. Shropshire: That would likely be a 3-year construction period to build that interchange.

Mr. English: So, you're talking traffic and stuff messed up for 3 years in that area. Well, not messed up.

Ms. Shropshire: I would not use the word messed up.

Mr. English: Impacted.

Mr. Rhodes: It'll just be dust. Just pardon our dust, that's all.

Ms. Shropshire: Pardon our dust.

Mr. English: Yeah, bad choice of words. Okay, so you're looking... so we really don't know when this is going to really happen then.

Ms. Shropshire: I do not have a firm advertisement date, I'm sorry.

Mr. English: Okay. That's it.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay, Ms. Hazard?

Ms. Hazard: I guess going back to the widening part, that one seems to be the one that seems more ready to go, that that 2016 date is at least somewhat firm. So I'm going to have the follow-on question. How long does the widening projects... what kind of timeframe are you thinking for that project? Of start to finish?

Ms. Shropshire: The widening project would likely take, I would estimate between 24 and 30 months to construct. And I don't have a firm construction schedule on that project either, because we haven't developed a construction schedule with production rates yet. I had to guess.

Ms. Hazard: How impacted... and I know you've alluded to this and I know we are asking you the questions that are like, we don't know because of the money but we're still trying to get some idea. The

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linkage of that widening project to the interchange project, are they really sort of separate projects or are they really... do they have to be done in tandem? Like, if the 2016 starts, is the interchange moving to 2018 going to impact kind of the widening project I guess is sort of what I'm trying to figure out. Is it all going to be under construction at one time or is it going to be hopefully phased? We don't know.

Ms. Shropshire: Well, the projects can be built independently or they can be built together. So, one is not a hundred percent dependent on the other.

Ms. Hazard: But there may be efficiencies to building it this way.

Ms. Shropshire: But there could be efficiencies to building both at the same time. It just depends on how the plan development finalizes itself and, more importantly, how the funding stream finalizes itself.

Ms. Hazard: I'll do my last one then I'll turn it to them. I guess because of Colonial Forge sitting right there, I think from a School Board perspective it would be helpful, as you said, you know, I know you all do so much reach out, but I think for the drivers, especially the young drivers but I'll even add the parents to Colonial Forge that I'm hoping as we get to that project that maybe we can reach out with especially that community and really I would almost add the Winding Creek community because they sit right there. And I can tell you, early this year we had some back-up onto Courthouse and I think we've got it, but I just want to make sure we work with you all too to do that. But I think that's going to be a real helpful piece to keeping it safe as we move forward.

Ms. Shropshire: No, and I think those things for outreach are definitely possible to do those.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay, Ms. Kidby?

Ms. Kidby: Just a couple quick ones. The widening project, is it going east to west or west to east?

Ms. Shropshire: Well...

Ms. Kidby: In terms of the project. You've got to start at one end and get to the other, right? Which direction are we going?

Ms. Shropshire: I'm not sure which end they would actually start construction on. That would largely be up to the contractor when the job is bid.

Ms. Kidby: Because that can have an impact on our school clearly.

Ms. Shropshire: Yes ma'am, I understand. And again, that would be largely up to the contractor when they would start their work. So I don't have a definitive answer for which end of the project they would start on.

Ms. Kidby: Okay, other quick question. You talked about reduced speeds during the times that this construction. Typically what do they do? They reduce it by 10 miles an hour? Fifteen? Twenty?

Ms. Shropshire: Typically it's 10 miles an hour if we feel that that is warranted for a certain area. Now, I'm not sure; I'd have to check on the plans to see if that's even being proposed for the Courthouse widening. And I don't have that answer for you tonight but I can check on that. Not all work zones do we lower the speed limit. Some we do, some we don't. It depends on the type of project, the

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construction operation we're doing, how much room we have to build in, and different constraints on the project whether we feel that it's necessary or not.

Ms. Kidby: One more quick question. If you know, during the widening project, are there going to be flags... are there going to be flagmen out there? Or is this going to be just a lane change?

Ms. Shropshire: There would likely be some flagging operations, yes, for some limited operations. But those would be limited to off-peak driving times; that means not during the morning when everybody's trying to get to work or not during the evening when everybody's trying to get home. But yes, there would be some flagging operations that would take place.

Ms. Kidby: Okay. And do you have an idea of when we're going to know the cuts that are being made to the interchange and how that's going to impact the interchange? Just a date -- do you have a general date when that information will be available?

Ms. Shropshire: I don't have a definitive date for when those will be finalized, but we are working on those right now.

Ms. Kidby: Okay, terrific; thank you.

Ms. Shropshire: Thank you.

Mr. Rhodes: Just to confirm, so what I thought I heard is ad date on the widening is around June '16, roughly...

Ms. Shropshire: Sometime in the spring of 2016...

Mr. Rhodes: Roughly... and then your 24/30 month-ish timeframe for the project, is that from the time of the ad date or when does that...?

Ms. Shropshire: That would be from the time they would start... the contractor would start constructing.

Mr. Rhodes: And typically how long is that after the ad date?

Ms. Shropshire: That's usually... from the ad date until that, I'd say 4 to 6 months depending on how long we have the project out for advertisement.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay.

Ms. Shropshire: Some of the larger projects are out for advertisement 60 days; some of the smaller projects 30 days. And then we have some time where we actually have to award the actual contract.

Mr. Rhodes: So, if that holds... I know these are all estimates... if that holds to 6 months and the project's 2 to 2 ½ years, then it's end of '18/mid '19 probably that that widening is done; which smooths out the Winding Creek interchange, which gives widened lanes at least in front even if it doesn't go to anything. That's good; very helpful. I thought I heard you say, and I just want to confirm that the shared use, 10-foot shared use path, would go all the way from Ramoth Church all the way to the end to the interchange.

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Ms. Shropshire: Yes.

Mr. Rhodes: Essentially to the end of the widening project.

Ms. Shropshire: Yes sir.

Mr. Rhodes: That's great. And then, you said you would build two new lanes first. Do you know, have they already done the land acquisition or determined would that be designed north of the existing Courthouse Road or south of the...?

Ms. Shropshire: They have... we're in the right-of-way phase now so we're actually making acquisitions now. Most of the... I can't say for sure, the widening, most of it is to the south side.

Mr. Rhodes: South side?

Ms. Shropshire: It depends on where you are. In some areas it goes to the north, in some areas it goes to the south. It just depends...

Mr. Rhodes: I mean, to construct it all, you need it all on...

Ms. Shropshire: Depending on where we were with the project, obviously our goal was to limit right-of-way acquisitions and impacts to property owners as much as feasible with the widening project.

Mr. Rhodes: Sure. And the last question I had was, you talked about some of the offsets that you're looking at are auxiliary roads. So, like the third to the last slide you had on the presentation... computer please... I was just curious, what are the auxiliary roads? I just wasn't quite clear on that. No, the other way, other direction. Or back one... or any of those. Where are auxiliary roads? What does that refer to?

Ms. Shropshire: Well, speaking with the interchange, the interchange, as it was originally designed, had some new connector roads. You'll see on this screen right now it has a road called Mooney Drive which was to be Jason Mooney Drive that would connect down to the new connection with Route 630 that connects over to Hospital Drive. That's what I was kind of referring to as an auxiliary road.

Mr. Rhodes: So Mooney Drive would be considered an auxiliary road.

Ms. Shropshire: That is a road on new location and that was just the term I was using for a new auxiliary road.

Mr. Rhodes: Oh, okay; that's fair. Is there any others, if you go back one?

Ms. Shropshire: Not really. That was just a term I was using when I was talking about auxiliary roads, I was just using that as a broad term to talk about some other roads that were part of the interchange design (inaudible).

Mr. Rhodes: Really, Mooney is about the only one that's...

Ms. Shropshire: Mooney, there are also some improvements on Venture Drive that is on this slide kind of near the bottom of the screen that kind of gets cut off.

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Mr. Rhodes: Gotcha. Okay, thank you. I was just trying to get context. Appreciate it.

Ms. Shropshire: Yes sir.

Mr. Rhodes: Mrs. Bailey?

Mrs. Bailey: No questions, thank you.

Mr. Rhodes: Ms. Egan?

Ms. Egan: Thank you. Assuming that the widening is going to affect the westbound traffic out of Austin Ridge, making a right out of Austin Ridge, how will it affect eastbound? Cars pulling out making a left-hand turn onto Courthouse Road? Is there going to be a larger impact going eastbound than there is to westbound, or not?

Ms. Shropshire: No. The Austin Ridge intersection will be signalized, as it is today, so there should not be an impact. No.

Ms. Egan: Okay. That was one. This is a constituent question. Would you please explain how the construction projects account for safe commuting routes?

Ms. Shropshire: As I mentioned, we work very hard when we're designing all of our projects to ensure that we have a safe work zone and that we, you know, design lane widths and other features for the work zone to be adequate for the travelling public. So there should not be any issues with that. We just ask people and drivers to be alert in those work zones.

Ms. Egan: Gotcha. And the last portion of that question was, for the overpass -- is that going to be constructed at the same time as the widening or the interchange?

Ms. Shropshire: It is likely that the widening project and the interchange will likely be constructed at two different times.

Ms. Egan: I'm talking about the overpass that's going to take cars from southbound 95 back over to the interchange.

Ms. Shropshire: Any new bridges that will be built with the interchange will all be built with the roadway portion of the interchange at the same time.

Ms. Egan: Okay, okay. That's it, thank you.

Mr. Rhodes: Mr. Coen?

Mr. Coen: Yes, thank you for coming. Just a couple quick questions to sort of keep in that spirit. First off, I understand correctly that the widening of Courthouse Road will stop at Shelton Shop; it won't go all the way to Shelton Shop, it stops at Winding Creek.

Ms. Shropshire: That's correct.

Mr. Coen: Okay.

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Mr. Rhodes: Ramoth Church.

Mr. Coen: Winding Creek on one side, Ramoth Church on the other, yes. You mentioned that there's...

Mr. Gibbons: Is that the first phase?

Mr. Rhodes: Yes, that's the first.

Mr. Coen: Yeah, that's the first.

Mr. Gibbons: I thought it was going out almost to Walpole?

Ms. Shropshire: Not with the current project.

Mr. Gibbons: Thank you.

Mr. Coen: You mentioned that there's no definitive date for when these modifications are going to happen, but I gather that there's probably a rough estimate. Do we have any ballpark of the timeframe doing any of this? Making these determinations? I mean, normally these committees have meetings and they have them set up in advance and with a legislative session going on, etcetera.

Ms. Shropshire: Well, as I said, we're working on the interchange daily to finalize these. So, we're hoping in the next few months to have something finalized and be moving forward with that.

Mr. Coen: And how would the public or a community have access to any of this information? I mean, I know there's a particular board that meets that Mr. Connors is a member of. But, I mean, are these meetings that are held in public, down in Richmond? How would our great staff have any idea of what's going on? I'm assuming there's some public access or public knowledge.

Ms. Shropshire: Well, the external VDOT site does have a projects area under the Fredericksburg District Area that the public can go to for project updates. Obviously the interchange project is a large and very... a project that draws a lot of interest from the public, and any large scale changes that we are making to the project we would obviously hold another public meeting to outline those to the public. So that would be advertised in the newspaper and on our website as we do all of our meetings.

Mr. Coen: Right, so they make the recommendation or they make the idea, then they make it public.

Ms. Shropshire: Yes sir.

Mr. Coen: And then lastly, just so people understand, the normal right now is to drive straight down Courthouse Road between the courthouse and Colonial Forge, Winding Creek, Ramoth Church, all that (inaudible). With this, that will be stopped. And what they'll do is part of this interchange is to have the avenue go up and around so that basically there'll be a stoppage of people being able to go straight through.

Ms. Shropshire: You're correct. The existing Courthouse Road, if you're travelling from the building that we're in tonight down existing Courthouse Road on the slide that you see presented, existing Courthouse Road will have a cul-de-sac just past where the McDonald's location is today. The new roadway for Route 630 will be aligned with Hospital Drive, so it will be to the south, and that will carry

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the traffic movement to the west. So that'll carry the traffic movement all the way out, as you mentioned, out toward Colonial Forge High School and out toward Ramoth Church Road.

Mr. Coen: Right, so... can I ask for computer?

Mr. Harvey: Sure; computer please.

Mr. Coen: Just so that people...

Mr. Rhodes: Back one. One more.

Mr. Coen: I just think it would be helpful so people understand, if you are going to go from anywhere west off of 95 to go over to either the Courthouse, the police station, up and down Route 1, you would come over the new way which is sort of southerly, go over the highway, swing over, come out to Route 1 by the hospital, and then if you were going to want to go to this building, you would have to go up on Route 1 to get to us. Likewise, if you were up, not to give advertisement to McDonald's, but if you wanted to go to the McDonald's that's currently on Courthouse Road, and you had the craving right after you got your car, you'd have to go up and around, down past the courthouse to the dead-end street, the cul-de-sac, and then go back around. I just wanted to make sure, because when I've tried to explain it, usually people need the map because it's conceptually a little difficult. Thank you.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay, thank you. Mr. Gibbons?

Mr. Gibbons: I've got a couple of quick questions. With the recent oil impact, have you all gone back and done research on what the costs would be? I mean, you've gone from like \$110/\$120 a barrel down around \$60. That's got to reduce the costs of the construction.

Ms. Shropshire: Well, we do update our unit costs for construction items on a regular basis.

Mr. Gibbons: So what's the regularity?

Ms. Shropshire: It takes about 6 months for all of those prices to filter down to our actual construction costs, so right now we're not seeing that trend immediately on our bid prices.

Mr. Gibbons: Okay, and the next thing I've got, what concerns me, Mr. Chairman, the most about this, this is the most intense corridor movement of children that we have in the County. And I don't see an impact, or mitigation, planned to come out of this... I'm not speaking for the School Board. But I mean, there's got to be a mitigation plan that is put in effect to move the children. You just can't do a normal road construction, shut down this and shut down that, when you're moving that many children. And I haven't seen nothing in the advertisement, I haven't seen anything in the public. So that concerns me.

Mr. Rhodes: Gotcha.

Mr. Gibbons: So if I could leave that note.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay.

Ms. Kidby: I'm glad you brought that up, Mr. Gibbons, because one of the things that we'll have to consider, particular at the Courthouse Road widening, is the timing. That's why I was asking about the

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speeds. Our transportation group is a fine-oiled machine and the timing of those buses is critical because they have to go from one load to the next. It's going to have a significant impact and we need to have time to be able to understand the significance of that impact and make whatever changes are necessary for transporting students, particularly as they relate to Colonial Forge High School and, to a lesser degree, a couple middle schools that feed along there as well.

Mr. Rhodes: Ms. Healy?

Ms. Healy: Thank you. I just wanted to ask that you coordinate with the School Superintendent and particularly with the transportation staff because I do believe we have a number of children that are on Route 1, that come up Route 1 across Courthouse Road, I know going to, you know, up to the Winding Creek area. And, in addition to that, we have quite a lot of parents that drive their children to school and pick them up. So it's not just the school buses we need to be concerned about. Other School Board members have mentioned the student drivers which, of course, are a big concern as well. But, you know, we have a lot of, what do they call them?, car riders that don't take the bus and it's just amazing how complicated that system is. And our schools have it down and they pick the kids up and they go out. But that could also have a big impact there, particularly you're talking about starting at Winding Creek and that's right in front of our school. So, we would of course have a big interest and to the extent that there's any control over that start date, if we could start in June when school is out, that would give us a little time to get those plans in motion rather than starting earlier in the spring and not having an opportunity to get the plans in place and alert the parents before we start these changes. Thank you.

Mr. Rhodes: Mr. Boswell?

Mr. English: He doesn't, I do.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay, Mr. English?

Mr. English: Two quick questions. Is it possible that you could come back quarterly or let us know quarterly where your stand is as far as give us a report and update quarterly for the Planning Commission?

Ms. Shropshire: Certainly we can come back and give you periodic updates where the projects are.

Mr. English: And I'm sure, in the State of Virginia, you've had a project similar to something like this one, in the state. If you did, do you have some sort of like platform that you did as far as answering these school questions too? How you did that? How you mitigate the impact on the schools? Or is this kind of a unique project because it's right here at the Courthouse area and it's like it is, it's kind of confined?

Ms. Shropshire: I'm not aware of any offhand. Again, as a general rule, all of our work zones are set up to accommodate any traffic that needs to go through them, rather it's a school bus, rather it's an interstate truck that is coming off the interstate, we consider all the different vehicles that have to utilize those work zones.

Mr. English: I didn't know if you might have a template of somewhere else that you've done something like this that would (inaudible).

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Ms. Shropshire: Not immediately, but we have had a number of projects in and around the Fredericksburg District here in recent years that have been in front of or near a number of schools. We have several ongoing right now in the lower end of our district. We have a bridge project in the Tappahannock area in front of a school and other things that we have not had any outstanding issues with.

Mr. English: I know, because this is unique because Courthouse has like 4 schools on it so it's a little different. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay. Ms. Hazard? Anything else?

Ms. Hazard: Just a couple comments. These came from actually our transportation. We're going to make sure that you get to meet Barry because he's great. They did ask about the flagman being used to control traffic during the school transport time and whether, at least coordinating with you all if that's going to be necessary. These were just things that they raised that they wanted to maybe make sure that we had that dialogue. Was there any thought to cameras being installed to monitor incidents in certain spots or not? That was something else that was raised.

Ms. Shropshire: Probably would not have cameras installed on this route to monitor traffic.

Ms. Hazard: Okay. The jersey barriers, they would be used to separate traffic moving in opposite directions? Is that (inaudible)?

Ms. Shropshire: Probably not. It would probably be the drums. It would be the drums. The concrete barrier would be used more frequently on a higher speed facility like I-95 or if we had a large area where we're going to have a large cut, like if we had a large pipe to install or something like that; we wouldn't necessarily just use it to separate two lanes of traffic.

Ms. Hazard: I guess the only other one was about staying in communication and they wanted to sort of come up with a way to communicate to the bus drivers and stuff that they would like to maybe coordinate also with you all on how to coordinate that together. So we'll make sure Barry and you have each other's numbers.

Ms. Shropshire: We can come up with a good plan for that.

Mr. Rhodes: Ms. Kidby?

Ms. Kidby: I'm good.

Mr. Rhodes: I did follow back up -- before the decrease in funding, was there a timeline, length of time for the construction? Had that been estimated on the interchange project before (inaudible)?

Ms. Shropshire: We had still estimated the construction timeline to be about 3 years...

Mr. Rhodes: For the interchange, okay.

Ms. Shropshire: I mean, we didn't have a detailed construction outline, but that was still our estimated timeframe.

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Mr. Rhodes: Thank you. I think you said that before and I'm just now remembering; sorry. And then, if we go to computer please and slide number 3. That taper to the west of Winding Creek and Ramoth Church -- how far does that go? I'm just trying to get a sense of that.

Ms. Shropshire: It's probably about a thousand feet, if maybe under. I'd have to check the plans to get you a definitive answer.

Mr. Rhodes: If you could just get that to staff, that'd be helpful.

Ms. Shropshire: Yes I can.

Mr. Rhodes: I'm just trying to get context of that. Thank you very much; appreciate it. Mrs. Bailey? Ms. Egan?

Ms. Egan: I'm good.

Mr. Rhodes: Mr. Coen.

Mr. Coen: Sorry, just a couple quick questions. To sort of tag onto what Ms. Healy said about the timing of it, if you put it to bid early spring and you start doing stuff in late spring, you're hitting graduation. If you're really doing the digging and whatnot...

Mr. Rhodes: Don't you guys slow them down now.

Mr. Coen: ... into the summer, you're getting back to school night. So, definitely Ms. Healy has an excellent point of communicating with the school. And if memory serves, when this first was being discussing many years ago... way many years ago... one of the things of going to this and rather than keeping Courthouse Road open, was something about the cost of having so many overpasses and whatnot. And so I'm wondering if, in the part of revisiting these modifications or cost reassessments or savings or whatever nice word we want to use, is that being looked at? Because it just seems as though, I don't know, but maybe putting all this in building new overpasses when there's already one there... I don't know. Are they going to fill in all around Courthouse Road so you can't possibly get through? I mean, it might be something to look at rather than all of these, some people have joked that it's sort of mixing bowl light with all these avenues and swings. So, it's just something that might be viewed to be looked at.

Mr. Rhodes: Okay. Well very good, I think our time is coming near. I'll defer to you Madam Chair.

Ms. Kidby: We really thank you. This was extremely helpful and I'd like to speak on behalf of our Board to be able to get this update, and we are very interested in a quarterly update as well. I think that would be very helpful. And the ongoing communication. I really believe these projects are going to benefit Stafford County as a whole, and we appreciate VDOT giving us the opportunity to have these improvements to our roadways here. I'd also like to thank the Planning Commission to inviting us to participate in this. This is very, very helpful for us. It also allows us to be able to do some preplanning and keep our staff up-to-date in terms of what's going on with the roads. Thank you.

Ms. Shropshire: Thank you.

Ms. Kidby: We're adjourned.

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Mr. Rhodes: Very good, thanks.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the joint meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.