



# Memorandum

**To:** Members of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors

**From:** Lemuel Hancock, Director of Community Development

**CC:** Evan Vass, Mandy Belyea, Tyler Hinkle

**Date:** April 12, 2023

**Re:** VDOT Rural Rustic Policy Update

Members of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors:

As you may be aware, our office works with VDOT to review rural roads to be paved as part of the VDOT Six Year Improvement Plan Process and VDOT Rural Rustic Paving Program. To be eligible for the program a road must be unpaved, exist in Shenandoah County, have less than 1,500 vehicles per day travel on the road, and be a publicly maintained road. Up until now, the program has only been open to those who are aware of it and call in to raise a concern about their road not being paved.

The current scoring system addresses the following aspects with the below scoring system:

Traffic	Accidents In Past Three Years	School Bus Route	Houses	Time On The List	VDOT Maintenance Score
1 to 30=1 pt 31-60 =2 pts 61-80 = 3 pts >80 = 4 pts	No = 0 pts Yes = 2 pts	No = 0 pts Yes = 2 pts	0-10= 1 pt 11- 20 = 2 pts 21 - 30 = 3 pts 31+ = 4 pts	1-5 = 1 pt 11 - 6 = 2 pts 17-12= 3 pts >18 yrs= 4 pts	1= Least 2= Average 4= Most

The points are aggregated and then the total score is divided by the total length in order to develop a pro-rated score so that the most valuable and economic routes to pave rise to the top.

In reviewing the roads to be paved based on the most recent scoring system we found a few areas of note in the scoring standards that are worth updating. Below are the main aspects that staff recommends that we update in the scoring standards and ways that we can update such aspects:

**1. Access:**

As mentioned previously, to be eligible at this time, landowners on an unpaved road would need to call in and complain about the road for it to be added to the list. If no one complains then the road is not improved. There are concerns about equal access to the program with this set up as landowners who have lived here for decades and those who are new to the area may have no clue about this paving program and assume that the road will always look the way it does now. We have developed a tool with ArcGIS Model Builder which will run the analysis any time that we need to run it for every unpaved road that is eligible for the program.

To be fair and equal to all landowners in the County, we recommend that we use this tool moving forward and include all eligible roads in the scoring process and not just those who have landowners who have raised concerns about the road.

## **2. Connectivity:**

Roads that end and do not connect to any other public roads serve as publicly owned driveways and do not assist in diverting traffic during accidents or connecting neighbors. Paving roads that serve as connectors between various public roads serve a greater public benefit than paving roads that are dead ends or are cul de sacs.

To improve our transportation network as we pave rural roads and better connect our community, we recommend adding an additional scoring standard that adds five points to roads that connect three or more public roads, four points to roads that connect two or more public roads, and zero points to dead end roads.

## **3. Moving Equipment:**

VDOT has advised us that the cost of moving equipment for paving rural roads can be cost prohibitive and that it is best to do longer stretches of roads or roads in the same area. Since we are planning on including all roadways in the analysis moving forward, this now includes stretches of road that range from 0.1 miles to 2 miles and much more. VDOT has also advised us that on the current costs of paving, we can expect to pave around two miles every year. As of this year, there are 214.2 miles of unpaved roads in Shenandoah County so we can expect all roads to be paved by the year 2130.

To maximize the funds that we are allocated every year, we recommend splitting roads into two categories:

Category A: Roads that are at or over 0.8 Miles.

Category B: Roads that are under 0.8 Miles.

Further, we recommend that the policy is that one or two Category A road(s) are selected as the main road(s) for each fiscal year. The total milage of Category A roads should be subtracted from the standard of two miles. Whatever mileage remains should be applied to Category B roads that scored high in the vicinity of the Category A road(s). If no Category B roads scored high or there is additional mileage, that mileage can be transferred over into future fiscal year paving projects.

## **4. Cost Of Construction:**

All projects are looked at based on being constructed and paved by VDOT contractors. There are instances where a contractor or residents will be willing to pay for the contractor side of costs for paving a road such as seen with the Hamburg Road paving project scheduled for FY 2025.

To capture the value in partnering with private individuals for the construction of public roads, we recommend that any roads that a contractor or residents are willing to pay the contractor side of the costs of paving a road are given priority status. Priority status means that these roads will automatically be moved to the top of the list to encourage public private partnerships and to ensure that the agreement posed by the private individuals can be acted on while it is still on the table.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions on these recommended policy updates to the VDOT Rural Rustic Paving Program.

Respectfully submitted by

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