

Memorandum

To: MPO Policy Board
From: Christine Jacobs, Executive Director, TJPDC
Date: March 26, 2024
Reference: Barracks Road SMART SCALE Application – Alternatives Discussion

Purpose:

VDOT has been leading a Project Pipeline Study along the Barracks Road corridor between Georgetown Road and Emmet Street. The purpose of the VDOT Project Pipeline program is to identify cost-effective solutions to multimodal transportation needs and identify projects that can be considered for funding. Locations are selected for Pipeline Projects based on demonstrated needs as determined through the statewide transportation planning process.

Discussion:

The initial phase of the Project Pipeline process involved a review of the existing conditions based on the indicated state-determined (VTRANS) needs and a public survey. Using this initial data, consultants developed alternatives for improvements that could address the highest priority issues, and a second phase of public engagement was conducted to receive public feedback on the alternative designs.

The MPO Policy Board has indicated a desire to submit pre-applications for one or more projects identified through the Barracks Road Project Pipeline Study. Based on the recent changes to the project eligibility, the MPO could submit one or both of the project bundles listed below:

Bundle 1 (Includes all recommendations from the VDOT pipeline study from Georgetown Road to Emmet Street):

1. Roundabout at Georgetown Road and Barracks Road; including right turn slip lanes for the southbound and westbound approaches; sidewalk and crosswalks are included on each roadway approach.
2. Access Management: Narrows and raises the median and closes existing median crossings along Barracks Road between Georgetown Road and the US 29/250 interchange to accommodate a shared use path along the southside of the corridor.
3. Interchange improvements at both US 29/250 interchanges.
 - a. Preferred Alternative: Hybrid roundabouts at both interchanges. The hybrid roundabouts would allow for a reduction in the number of lanes needed in the eastbound direction to accommodate a shared use path to be constructed along the southside of Barracks Road through the interchange.
4. Continuous Shared Use Path along the south side of Barracks Road from intersection with Georgetown Road to Emmet Street.
5. US 29/250 northbound off-ramp deceleration lane extension.

Bundle 2 (Companion application to Albemarle County submitting for improvements west of the interchanges):

1. Interchange improvements at both US 29/250 interchanges.
 - a. Preferred Alternative: Hybrid roundabouts at both interchanges. The hybrid roundabouts would allow for a reduction in the number of lanes needed in the eastbound direction to accommodate a shared use path to be constructed along the southside of Barracks Road through the interchange.
2. Continuous Shared Use Path along the south side of Barracks Road through the interchange at US 29/250 to Emmet Street.
3. US 29/250 northbound off-ramp deceleration lane extension.

MPO Tech Recommendations:

On March 19, 2024, the MPO Technical Committee voted to recommend that the policy board approve the submission of pre-applications for both Barracks Road bundles with the preferred alternatives detailed above (7 yes votes, 2 no votes, and 1 abstention, with 5 absences). However, the committee wished to express the following concerns and/or considerations:

1. Remove the US 29/250 northbound off-ramp deceleration lane extension as it increases the cost of the project but does not add sufficient benefit. The operations of the preferred interchange improvement would not be affected by the removal of the lane extension; thus, the project may score more competitively with reduced costs.
2. Consider the inclusion of an additional crossing between Georgetown Road and Ricky Road marked as a high-visibility crosswalk to provide crossing access for bicyclists and pedestrians.
3. Consider adding pavement treatments for crosswalks at Georgetown Road.
4. Consider implementing the highest level of pedestrian safety improvements feasibility at the crossings on the on- and off-ramps.
5. Reduce lane widths to a minimum 11 feet, if feasible, to calm traffic and reduce speeds between the roundabout at Georgetown Road and the western most roundabout at the US 29/250 interchange.

VDOT staff will present a summary of the preferred alternatives at the March meeting, and review public feedback heard from the second phase of public engagement.

Recommended Action:

MPO Staff recommends a motion to approve the submission of a pre-application to Smart Scale for both Barracks Road Bundle 1 and Bundle 2 with the preferred alternatives.