



CITY OF SUFFOLK

Department of Public Works/Engineering Division

P.O. BOX 1858, SUFFOLK, VA 23439

PHONE 757-514-7725 / FAX 757-514-7727

November 6, 2020

Ms. Jeanne S. Lauer, Esquire
Inman and Strickler, PLC
575 Lynnhaven Parkway, Suite 200
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452-7350

Dear Ms. Lauer,

Suffolk Public Works is in receipt of your letter dated October 28, 2020 concerning the Nansemond Parkway and Wilroy Road Overpass project and your proposed alternative for consideration. City staff and its consultant have reviewed this proposal and offer the following comments.

The stated purposes of this project are to remove an at grade rail-highway crossing for safety purposes and to enhance the transportation network and its reliability for our citizens in moving within our city. This is one of only two north/south arterial corridors within the City of Suffolk that connect the Downtown Suffolk area with the northern growth area of the city. In order to accomplish this goal, a detailed study was completed of the area and included all geometric requirements along with historic and environmental restrictions. The plan proposed by your client only addresses the rail crossing aspect and does not enhance the arterial capacity of the north-south corridor. Under his proposed plan, the corridor would still be restricted by a very sharp curve at the location of the current traffic signal with no improvements and no traffic control. This curve location could not be softened due to the same reasons the bridge could not be located at this spot; environmental restrictions, historic properties and required geometric standards along with a very large force main.

Your letter also contains a statement that the City's plan includes roadway grades that exceed the maximum standards allowed by VDOT and FHWA and therefore state and federal funds could not be used to construct this project. This statement has been evaluated and it was found that the actual plan grades are a maximum of 7.6% which is within guidelines.

The Public Hearing outreach process as regulated by VDOT and FHWA is under way with an outside meeting having been held on November 5, 2020 at John Yeates Middle School. Additional comments as a part of this process are being accepted until November 20, 2020. Comments may be submitted in writing to Mr. Frank Grubbs, Project Manager via US Postal Service, or on line via email at fgrubbs@suffolkva.us.

All comments are being compiled and will include any received prior to the submission deadline and will be forwarded to VDOT and City Council in the near future. The next step in this process is for City Council to hold a Public Hearing to take comments and authorize city staff to begin acquisition of Right of Way. This City council action has not yet been scheduled but will be announced on line and by posting a notice of the meeting in the newspaper in the near future.

I would note that one item of mitigation that was suggested at a recent public outreach event and is under consideration is for an earthen berm and landscaping to be incorporated adjacent to the equine facility and fields. Additional analysis of this possible aspect is on-going.

Your letter and this response will be included on the project website for public availability.

Should I be able to assist in any way, please feel free to reach out to me. I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert E. Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Robert E. Lewis, P.E.
Assistant Director/City Engineer

pc: Albert S. Moor, II, P.E., Interim City Manager
Deborah J. George, Chief of Staff
L. J. Hansen, P.E., Director of Public Works
Dianne D. Williams, SR/WA, Real Estate Manager for Acquisition
D. Rossen S. Greene, Esquire, Pender & Coward

INMAN & STRICKLER P.L.C.

A T T O R N E Y S A N D C O U N S E L O R S A T L A W

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ROBERT V. TIMMS, JR. • MATTHEW J. WEINBERG • ROS R. WILLIS

October 28, 2020

VIA E-MAIL: dlewis@suffolkva.us/CityAttorney@suffolkva.us
AND U.S. MAIL

Darryll D. Lewis, PE, PMP
Transportation Engineer
Capital Improvement Program Manager
City of Suffolk Public Works – Engineering Division
442 W. Washington Street, 2nd Floor
Suffolk, VA 23434

Helivi L. Holland, Esquire
Office of the City Attorney
442 W. Washington Street
Suffolk, VA 23434

RE: Bridlewood Estates Community Association, Inc.
 Proposed Nansemond Wilroy Overpass

Dear Mr. Lewis and Ms. Holland:

This firm represents the Bridlewood Estates Community Association (“Association”) with regard to the Nansemond Parkway Expansion and proposed condemnation of a portion of the Association’s real property immediately adjacent to the common area Equestrian Center. We very much appreciate the efforts made to date to educate and inform the Association and its residents about the need for the project as well as potential alternatives, and in that spirit respectfully request that Planning reconsider the efficacy of the proposed design in favor of the rough draft alternative enclosed herein.

As you know, the current plan calls for a portion of the road to be placed dangerously close to the areas where equestrian lessons are taught and the horses are stabled and exercised. The impacts, both aesthetically and practically, promise to substantially curtail the community’s use and enjoyment of their homes and associated common areas, including the Equestrian Center. Additionally, preliminary investigation

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Letter to Darryll D. Lewis, PE, PMP and Helivi L. Holland, Esquire
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of the current plan for expansion indicates that the grade of the proposed parkway is too steep to permit federal or state grants to be used to fund the project. However, the design which we respect consideration of suffers from none of these infirmities and the area proposed for condemnation is currently unused and should be far more readily amendable to condemnation.

We would ask that the City defer its current consideration of the Nansemond Parkway in favor of other designs, in consultation with the Association and nearby residents, including, but not limited to, the enclosure.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible. I can be reached by phone or email – please see the information at the bottom of the first page.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours very truly,



Jeanne S. Lauer

JSL;jlh

Enclosure

Cc: Bridlewood Estates Community Association, Inc.

NANSEMOND WILROY OVERPASS

Proposed Alternative Construction October 2020 features:

- Eliminate that portion of the “cut through” road from the proposed new stop light to the merge with Nansemond Parkway/Bridlewood Lane.
- Instead of a turn when the overpass road crosses the track, sweep into a circle similar to many highway exits (referred below as the “exit loop”).
- Where the “exit loop” merges with Wilroy Road, end with a ‘T’-intersection and stop light.
- Have a dedicated right turn and left turn lane for individuals wishing to take the “exit loop.”
- All traffic going from Wilroy to Nansemond and vice versa would continue on the current roads.
- Slightly widen the road width at the current intersection of Nansemond and Wilroy.
- Eliminate the stop light at the current Nansemond Wilroy intersection.
- Move the landscape buffer from the north side of the planned overpass to inside the new “exit loop.”
- Place a barrier blocking Nansemond traffic from crossing the railroad tracks.

Benefits

- Eliminates need to take land from Bridlewood Estates, saving significant funds in land procurement and preserving the nature of this community.
- Avoids potential project delays resulting from Bridlewood acquisition negotiations, followed by potential condemnation hearings and eminent domain challenges.
- Significantly reduces square footage of new roadway (using a total paved width of 50 ft, the linear road length reduction of 1500 ft, results in reduction of 75,000 square feet of paved area) reducing initial construction costs and future maintenance expense.
- If the new “exit loop” is used as part of the grade, would significantly reduce slope for vehicles taking the overpass. This grade currently appears to be on the order of 20-30% (hard to get accurate scale measurements on the pdf, though it looks like about 30-40 ft height change over 100-150 ft). This grade seems dangerously steep and appears to far exceed recommendations of VDOT, FHWA, and AASHTO suggesting a grade limit of 10%. A similar $\frac{3}{4}$ oval off-ramp from 164 West onto Cedar Lane provides a similar height increase with a length of about 900 ft which would be a total grade of about 4.5% for a 40 ft height increase.
- Eliminates interaction with the wetlands and forested area west of Bridlewood Estates.

