



2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

INTENT STATEMENT

Annually the City of Williamsburg adopts, via resolution, a legislative agenda. The purpose of the agenda is to serve as a quick reference for our state and federal legislators concerning the City's position on particular issues facing the nation and state that may impact our locality.

The proposed agenda is intended to be a short listing of specific positions held by the City of Williamsburg which will be the basis of advocacy during the 2020 legislative session. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of issues which the City considers important. During the session, items will be debated which are not included in this agenda and that will not preclude the city taking a position.

PRIORITY ISSUES

I-64 Widening Funds

- **Close the Gap:** The widening of I-64 from Richmond to Norfolk includes multiple segments, all of which are funded and complete or underway with the exception of approximately 28 miles. This gap section is located predominately in New Kent County (MM203-233) and is not located in a Transportation Planning Organization area making it difficult to access funding. The Commonwealth Transportation Board can commit funds to this last piece of a total widening project. The City should request such funds be made available and that the project proceed from east to west. 

Single Use Plastics:

- **Local Option Reduction:** It is estimated that every American uses 320 plastic bags in a year. If this is accurate, the City of Williamsburg is responsible for the use of 4,766,720 bags each year. Data shows that areas where plastic bag use is discouraged through formal local or state legislation experience less plastic bag pollution. The City recognizes that statewide regulation prohibits customized solutions and asks the General Assembly to grant local authority to regulate single use plastics via imposition of a use tax, mandated recycling programs, or prohibition. 

Communication Sales and Use Tax

- **Expanding and Equalizing:** The Virginia Communications Sales and Use Tax was enacted to establish a statewide tax rate and to pre-empt local taxes on communications sales and services. The City supports setting the tax rate at the same level as the state sales tax rate and broadening the coverage of the tax to include audio and video streaming services and prepaid calling cards. 

Local Government Revenues

- **Financial Impact on City Government:** Williamsburg advises the General Assembly that the following areas of state spending are of greatest financial importance to the City of Williamsburg.



- Education: Williamsburg James City County Schools and Williamsburg Regional Library, adequate and appropriate state K-12 funding that reflects the true costs of providing high quality public education
- Transportation: Annual street maintenance allocation
- Public Safety: Police support through 599 funds, new funding sources for state-initiated services and programs like Line of Duty Disability benefits
- Regional Jail: Support for correction officer compensation through the Compensation Board
- Human Services: State Health Department and Behavioral Health programs, and Williamsburg Human Services Department
- Mandated Officials: State support for mandated City and joint City/County Constitutional Officers
- BPOL: Local government revenue neutral tax reform of the Business, Professional and Occupational License taxes (BPOL)
- State Budget: Local government revenues should not be the source for state budget correction, adjustment, or balancing
- Internet Sale of Lodging: Establish that transient occupancy tax applies to the cost paid by the consumer including fees charged by the service

OTHER ISSUES OF FOCUS

Good Governance

- **Redistricting Reform:** Williamsburg supports transparent and non-partisan redistricting reform in Virginia for state legislative and congressional districts to promote more competitive elections and a healthier democracy; and requests that action take place during this legislative session to ensure the constitutional process is complete by the next redistricting occurring in 2021. (See Resolution #14-11)
- **FOIA Exemptions:** Williamsburg opposes any changes in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which eliminates or limits existing exemptions for local government or provides any additional sanctions for violations, other than those currently provided by law.
- **Economic Development:** The City of Williamsburg urges the General Assembly to maintain or increase funding for the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund despite potential budget demands for reduction while increasing support for GO Virginia and local economic development programs.

Transportation Priorities

- **Interstate 64:** Williamsburg urges the General Assembly to continue to make the widening of I-64 from Newport News to Richmond a top priority. The widening should be done with aesthetic sensitivity and effective signage should be installed that indicates that Greater Williamsburg is open for business. Legislative leadership and influence is needed to provide adequate funding for the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to award for the timely east to west Williamsburg to Richmond segment completion. 
- **Passenger Rail on the Virginia Peninsula:** The City supports protecting the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund (IPROC) and funding source, and strongly encourages the advancement of the Tier II Federal Richmond to Hampton Roads Higher Speed Rail Study that focuses on service along the Peninsula and the Southside of Hampton Roads. 

State and Local Partnerships

- **Greater Williamsburg Virginia Workforce Center:** The closure of the Williamsburg Virginia Employment Commission Office in October of 2015 has left job seekers in Greater Williamsburg at a disadvantage. The City recognizes that Hopewell and Hampton are often too far for the newly unemployed to travel for employment assistance. We also acknowledge that co-location of services is ideal. Williamsburg requests that the Commonwealth fund and locate a full time Virginia Workforce Center (one stop) in Williamsburg.
- **William and Mary:** The City endorses the legislative priorities of William and Mary including additional funding for salary increases and need-based financial aid, continued support for the Virginia Research Investment Fund, support for the Whole of Government Center for Excellence and other veteran higher education programs, and state investment in the development of William and Mary’s Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Innovation.
- **Thomas Nelson Community College:** The City supports Thomas Nelson Community College’s capital requests to replace the Diggs, Harrison and Moore Halls on the Hampton Campus and to build the Advanced Integrated Manufacturing (AIM) Center on the Virginia Peninsula. Both capital projects will benefit students, business and industry, and the larger Virginia Peninsula community.
- **James City County:** The City supports the initiatives of its Community Behavioral Health provider, Colonial Behavioral Health. The City urges the Commonwealth to grant a parcel of Eastern State Hospital land, approximately 25 acres, to James City County for a use consistent with the intent of meeting Greater Williamsburg’s low income mental and medical health needs.
- **Colonial Behavioral Health:** The City supports the initiatives of its community behavioral health provider, Colonial Behavioral Health. The City urges the repeal of HB1549 (2017) unfunded mandates or the provision of adequate funding to meet the statutory requirements. 
- **Additional Funding for Tourism:** The City requests the General Assembly identify and commit new funding streams to the Virginia Tourism Corporation (“VTC”) to promote tourism in Virginia.



PARTNER AGENCY SUPPORT

The City of Williamsburg is a member of the Virginia Municipal League, Virginia First Cities, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization. Each of these partner agencies adopt legislative agendas annually. Through the participation in board meetings, annual conferences and committees the City Council and executive management of the City of Williamsburg endorse and support the legislative priorities included in these respective legislative agendas for the 2019 session. When these partner agency agendas advocate for statewide application, the City requests local autonomy for implementation in a manner consistent with local regulation.

Items above marked with partner logos indicate issue overlap and mutual support.

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