



2021



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 2021 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. 

Broadband Programs:

- **Addressing Connectivity:** The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated that broadband connectivity is inhibited in two ways, the availability of infrastructure and affordability. In Williamsburg, infrastructure issues are few, but affordability can be a significant barrier. We need to re-think the provision of internet access and provide new innovative solutions to ensure equitable community service. The City urges the General Assembly to expand the existing broadband development programs, such as the Virginia Access Initiative, to include affordability as a barrier in addition to infrastructure to unserved areas and provide additional funding partnership opportunities for innovative equity of access projects. The Commonwealth should consider modernized communication sales and use tax structure as a statewide funding mechanism for these efforts. Finally, the City urges the Commonwealth to make available CARES funding for such projects as resiliency investments.   
- **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

- **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

- **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 focusing on service along the Peninsula and the Southside of Hampton Roads. A DRPT 2017 study of the cost identified a need of \$24.1 million in 2018 dollars to complete the Tier II review. That study also recommended that further rail funding, in the near term, be dedicated to the Long Bridge and Atlantic Gateway improvements. A January 2020 DRPT presentation indicates Long Bridge has a complete design date of 2021 and a project completion date of 2027. The Hampton Roads Tier II EIS should be a renewed focus for completion. 

State and Local Partnerships

- **William and Mary:** The City endorses the legislative priorities of William & Mary, including (1) Continued financial support from the Commonwealth's coronavirus relief funds, (2) Strengthen the Commonwealth's investment in need-based financial aid, (3) Approval and funding for the Integrated Science Center IV capital project - a key component of W&M's Tech Talent Initiative agreement with the Commonwealth.
- **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 build the Advanced Integrated Manufacturing (AIM) Center on the Virginia Peninsula. Both capital projects will benefit students, business and industry, and the broader Virginia Peninsula community.
- **James City County:** The City supports the initiatives of Colonial Behavioral Health, Olde Towne Medical and Dental Clinic, and James City County. The City urges the Commonwealth to grant a parcel of Eastern State Hospital land, approximately 10 acres, to James City County for a use consistent with providing the greater Williamsburg area with superior mental health, physical health, and dental health care.
- **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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