

New state transportation program approved, paving way for Rappahannock River Crossing

By SCOTT SHENK THE FREE LANCE-STAR | Posted: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 3:00 pm

The state's new prioritization program became official Tuesday—and so did more than \$200 million in funding for projects across the Fredericksburg region.

After the Commonwealth Transportation Board voted on the measure Tuesday in Richmond, state Transportation Secretary Aubrey Layne took a moment to say the group had just taken part in “a very historic vote,” creating “for the first time ... objective measures” to determine which projects are funded.

Also Tuesday, the CTB approved funding for a pavement and bridge program that will pay for major rehabilitation work on the Chatham Bridge.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe spoke to the CTB on Monday about the prioritization program, also known as HB2, and the importance of a strong transportation network.

Transportation is a “key element” in the state's economy and the new prioritization program will help get the right projects funded, the governor said.

The program “takes the politics out of it,” he said. “It's data driven. It's done by metrics.”

He also lauded the planned expansion of electronic toll lanes on Interstate 66 as well as the extension of the Interstate 95 express lanes merge choke point in Garrisonville, which “has caused a tremendous amount of problems.”

The HB2 program will inject about \$1.7 billion in funding for more than 200 projects across the state, including \$205 million for 19 projects across the Fredericksburg District.

Funding for the prioritization projects will be spread out over the fiscal 2017–2022 six-year improvement program.

Fredericksburg District projects on the list range from a major Interstate 95 project to a pedestrian trail bridge.

The Rappahannock River Crossing, which will add collector-distributor lanes parallel to the interstate between U.S. 17 in Stafford County and State Route 3, is the biggest and most expensive local project on the list. The HB2 program will provide \$115.5 million for the \$125 million project.



Chatham Bridge

The state prioritization program allocates \$20 million to essentially replace the top portion of the crumbling Chatham Bridge in Stafford County.

HB2 will also pay for a \$16.6 million commuter lot in the Massaponax area in Spotsylvania County as well as a \$9.7 million lot in Stafford.

The widening of a section of Ladysmith Road in Caroline County is another major project on the list. The program would pay for \$14.1 million of the \$26.6 million project.

On the smaller end of the list is the Virginia Central Trailway bridge project in Fredericksburg. The HB2 funds would provide \$160,000 for the construction of a pedestrian bridge across a branch of North Hazel Run.

The other program approved Tuesday, known as the state of good repair, will bring \$127 million to projects in the Fredericksburg District.

The major project on the list is major rehabilitation work on the Chatham Bridge.

The program allocates \$20 million to essentially replace the top portion of the bridge—the deck, beams, railings and sidewalks, according to preliminary plans. The plans also call for rehabilitating the lower portion of the structure.

Work on the bridge likely will not start until 2020 at the earliest.

Ladysmith Road
widening project in Caroline also made list.