

## Historic Kempsville – Frequently Asked Questions

Aug. 31, 2011

### **General**

#### **Why is the city building a new intersection at Princess Anne, Kempsville and Witchduck Roads?**

Two reasons: To improve traffic and to improve the area around the intersection.

First, traffic at the intersection is sometimes horrible. It can take several light cycles to get through the intersection during rush hour. That's unacceptable. Obviously, the increase in traffic over the years has far outpaced the intersection's capacity to handle it. City engineers have designed a new intersection that will better accommodate the community's needs and will help speed traffic through the area.

Second, we want to create a new sense of place and character in the heart of Kempsville. Kempsville was once a busy village and port. The seat of Princess Anne County was there. It has a rich history that citizens can appreciate. We want to recapture some of that vibrant feel and reflect Kempsville's special place in Virginia Beach history.

#### **Why do you have to move the intersection?**

The new intersection will allow greater visibility and will straighten the approaches on Princess Anne Road and Witchduck Road. Also, the new alignment will allow new road construction outside of the existing intersection. As a result, the project can be completed faster and have less impact on commuters.

#### **Is there a master plan for this project?**

Yes. The City Council approved the Historic Kempsville Area Master Plan on January 24, 2006. You can read it here:

<http://www.ourfuturevb.com/compplandocs/Documents/HistoricKempsvillePlan.pdf>

City Council also has approved the plans for the intersection project. We will post the road plans online shortly.

#### **How does this relate to the city's other plans?**

The Historic Kempsville Area Master Plan is part of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The master plan is fully integrated with other adopted city plans, including the Virginia Beach Outdoors Plan, the Bikeways and Trails Plan, the Newtown Strategic Growth Area Master Plan, and the Pembroke Strategic Growth Area Implementation Plan.

**Is the city building everything that the master plan calls for, or is some of it private?**

The city will build the roads and the public park. Private developers will build all the rest.

**Traffic**

**How will the new intersection improve traffic?**

One of the biggest problems at any intersections is left-turn traffic. At the current intersection, the turn lanes are well beyond capacity. Often, left-turn traffic backs up into the through lanes and clogs the intersection. At present, each leg of the intersection has two through lanes and one small left-turn lane. The new intersection will have two left-turn lanes, three through lanes and one right-turn lane on each leg. That will dramatically increase traffic flow through the intersection.

**Is there a traffic study I can read to understand this project?**

Yes. The city conducted a traffic study in 2004. We will post it online shortly. It has a number of technical details and can be complex, but the gist is this: In 2004, there were 56,000 cars and trucks a day driving through the intersection. By 2032, there will be about 72,000 vehicles. The growing numbers show us that we have to do something sooner rather than later.

**Why not build a flyover instead?**

That idea was discussed many years ago. Neighbors hated the idea and the City Council rejected it. A flyover was considered unworkable for a number of reasons. For one thing, it would completely overwhelm the intersection (think: Military Highway and Virginia Beach Boulevard in Norfolk). It really goes against the needs and plans for local businesses, homes and the historic nature of this area.

**Why not build the 6-lane Kempsville Road all the way to the Chesapeake line?**

That would be great, but we simply can't afford it. The city's Master Transportation Plan calls for this 6-lane corridor, but no road project that big is built all at once. Someday, the 6-lane section will extend from Virginia Beach Boulevard to Centerville Turnpike. Meanwhile, we have to take it one step at a time. With the completion of the intersection project, we will have completed the link between Greenwich Road/Grayson Road and Chief Trail/Fairfield Boulevard.

**If you add more apartments and businesses to the area, won't that just make traffic worse?**

Not necessarily. It depends on the number and type of homes and businesses. The new intersection was designed to accommodate a reasonable amount of redevelopment.

Don't forget, a lot of businesses were already there, where the empty spaces are now. In 2004, the businesses at that intersection generated about 2,000 vehicle trips a day. If they are replaced with only apartments, they would generate about 1,600 vehicle trips a day. That would be a net loss of trips. Adding new businesses would generate more trips.

It's impractical to leave the area completely empty, as one enormous park. That's not going to happen. So our goal is to allow redevelopment – new homes and offices – but at a level that won't make traffic worse.

The key is how you plan and design for existing and future traffic. There are places in Virginia Beach with only a few businesses and homes, and yet they still have traffic backups. Elsewhere, you can find lots of businesses and homes with few traffic problems. The key is design and planning.

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### **Will traffic be blocked or detoured during construction?**

Except for emergency work, lane closures will be during off hours (9 p.m. to 5 a.m. weekdays and on non-holiday weekends) to minimize the effect on commuter traffic. There will be three major construction phases, resulting in a significant realignment of the intersection. Before each realignment, message boards will alert drivers. Information also will be posted on the project's website.

## **Intersection Construction Schedule**

### **When will this be done?**

Construction began in summer 2011. It will continue through late 2013.

## **The Public Park**

### **What's being built where the Pony League baseball fields used to be?**

The city is using the areas not needed for the intersection to handle stormwater runoff. Instead of building just a retention pond, the city is creating a public open space that can serve as a catalyst for future redevelopment. The park will be a more formalized space, like a village green, and will include a bulkheaded shoreline around the pond,

extensive landscaping, walkways, benches, and a pavilion/gazebo as a centerpiece for the area. A concept plan for the park will be posted online shortly.

### **What happened to the Pony League?**

The city helped move the Pony League to a new location – Providence Park at Providence Road and Reon Drive (next to Interstate 64). The 18-acre park cost \$3.65 million to build. It includes two baseball fields, concessions, parking, restrooms and an extensive paved trail.

### **Redevelopment of the Area**

#### **I remember this project was originally described as being similar to Merchants Square in Williamsburg. That's a shopping district. Why do we need housing?**

The master plan compared the vision for the area to Merchants Square, the Yorktown waterfront, Port Warwick in Newport News, and New Towne in James City County. In all these areas, new housing was proposed or there were already enough homes to support walkable districts with shopping and other services.

#### **How will the city decide where to put the new apartments, houses and businesses?**

As with any new development, proposals for new homes and businesses will be made by private developers and evaluated by city staff. The Planning Commission will then make its recommendations and the City Council will have the final say.

#### **How will the city decide what to put on each of the intersection's corners? Is there a timetable?**

The city controls three of the four corners. Besides the public park at the southeast corner, the city has solicited proposals from prospective developers for its other two corners. The remaining corner is owned by a private owner. There is no timetable for deciding what will happen with these corners. The city has not received any proposals from the private owner of the fourth corner.

### **Kempes Village**

#### **Why did the city choose the concept plan for Kempes Village, prepared by the development team headed by Jack Pope, for the southwest corner?**

On November 2010, the city issued a Request for Interest for the sale and development of nine acres there. Two proposals were submitted. One was for a conventional strip

shopping center. The other was the residential plan for Kempes Village. A concept plan for the Kempes Village project will be posted online shortly.

A city staff committee evaluated both proposals and recommended against the shopping center because it was not in keeping with the adopted master plan for the area. That's exactly the type of development we are trying to move away from. In addition, a conventional shopping center would generate far more traffic than new apartments.

### **Won't the Kempes Village project produce more traffic at that already-busy intersection?**

Actually, it would generate less traffic than what was there before – a school, a bank and a small shopping center. Homes usually generate fewer car trips. Previously, that land generated about 2,000 trips a day. The Kempes Village plan would generate about 1,600 trips a day. Commercial development would generate about 4,000 trips. Mixed-use development – the same commercial development plus residential – would generate much more than 4,000 trips a day.

### **Why would the city allow low-income housing there?**

It's not low-income housing. It's workforce housing – apartments for lower-middle-class workers like beginning teachers, police officers, firefighters, secretaries and such. It's part of the city's larger goal to provide housing for all working people in Virginia Beach. That includes senior citizens on fixed incomes.

### **Isn't this too dense for that intersection?**

No. A preliminary analysis shows Kempes Village would generate *less* traffic than the businesses and school that was there previously.

Previous traffic generated: About 2,000 trips a day.

Estimated traffic generated by Kempes Village: About 1,600 trips a day.

## **Kemps Landing School**

### **Why is the city preserving the Kempes Landing School?**

The old building is beloved by many people in Kempesville, especially those who attended school there. The historic building has been around since 1941. The master plan includes a recommendation to preserve the school building.

### **What is proposed for the old school building?**

The Virginia Beach Community Development Corp. plans to preserve the historic character of the school through adaptive reuse. It proposes to create 73 apartments

servicing seniors, people with disabilities and working professionals with incomes up to \$38,000 a year. The CDC is a nonprofit group whose mission is to provide affordable housing for families, seniors and people with disabilities. It owns and manages 350 rental properties.

**Why does the city support affordable housing within the Kempsville project?**

Being able to live where you work contributes to the quality of life – not just for the individual, but for the community as well. When our workforce is able to live where they work, we all benefit. In 2007, the City Council created the Virginia Beach workforce housing program, which encourages private developers to create affordable housing in exchange for slightly increased density. This is the type of housing that is proposed at the old Kemps Landing School.

**Historic Preservation**

**What will happen to the two historic houses near the intersection: Pleasant Hall and the Carraway House?**

Nothing. Both will stay just where they are.

**Won't the redevelopment plan detract from the historic homes?**

Not at all. In fact, the plan calls for preserving the homes and designing new development to complement them.

**Emmanuel Episcopal Church**

**I heard a rumor that the city is going to buy Emmanuel Episcopal Church. Is that true?**

No! That was never part of the plan. We want Emmanuel Episcopal to be a thriving, vital anchor for the heart of "downtown" Kempsville. And it will be.

The city had to take a small piece of church property for the newly aligned Princess Anne Road. The new road will run behind the church, instead in front of it, where it is today. That has caused some concern among church members, understandably. We know some people are upset. We are trying to help the church adjust to the new road alignment.

To that end, we have offered compensation to the church – both property and cash. While we continue to talk about the proper amount of compensation, there is no disputing that the city will fairly compensate the church in some fashion. We're just working out the details.

Meanwhile, please be assured that Virginia Beach wants to create a new, lively, special place in the heart of Kempsville that includes a healthy, thriving Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

## **Cost**

### **How much will all this cost taxpayers?**

\$89.6 million. This includes \$44 million for site acquisition (already done) and \$34 million for construction (under way).

### **Will the city make back any money by selling property for redevelopment?**

Yes. The city acquired about 29 acres for this project and we expect to sell some of it for redevelopment. We expect that will bring about several million dollars in new revenue back to the city treasury.

## **Public information**

### **Will there be public meetings to discuss the project as it moves forward?**

Yes. We will invite the community and interested businesses when we have a new date. We also will post the meetings online and issue announcements when they are scheduled. Stay tuned.

### **Where can I find the Historic Kempsville Area Master Plan online? Where can I see the new road alignment? Where can I find other documents related to this project?**

We are will create a website with all that information. It should go live sometime in September.

### **Can I get information on the project by e-mail as it moves forward?**

Yes. You can join our e-mail list by sending your e-mail to [pakv@vbgov.com](mailto:pakv@vbgov.com).