



Statement to the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization
June 17, 2009
Jordan Bridge Proposal

On behalf of Virginia Beach Vision, I wish to express our support of the Jordan Bridge proposal. We encourage the HRTPO's formal endorsement of the project and their transmittal of that position to the Fifth Coast Guard District.

With a transportation system that is severely challenged by inadequate funding and ageing bridges, tunnels, and roadways, the Jordan Bridge is the second bridge in the Hampton Roads area closed due to deterioration, age and insufficient maintenance. Should this bridge replacement project not move forward, the Elizabeth River may permanently lose this important crossing.

This type of public/private partnership may well become the model for other such private initiatives. Figg Bridge Developers, LLC has offered a proposal that will build the bridge in 18 months and at a cost well below earlier city projections. The bridge replacement will be fully financed at no expense to the taxpayer by leveraging user fees.

Though we appreciate the maritime community's desire to accommodate taller and wider ships along the Elizabeth River, we recognize that the bridge must be built in the footprint already purchased from the City of Chesapeake and codified in state law. This footprint will not allow for greater vertical or horizontal clearance. Further, there are numerous other bridge crossings already in place along the river that are of equal or lesser clearance that would preclude the larger vessels from passing. While the maritime community's goal is laudable, it is simply not practical or affordable.

We must also recognize a greater risk. The developer has a substantial investment in the planning of the replacement bridge and in removal of the old structure. They have received strong support from the City of Chesapeake, area citizens and the state. To sidetrack this proposal would not only impact this project but would also send a negative message to other potential public/private investors. This is a consequence we cannot afford.

We, therefore, encourage your endorsement of the Figg Bridge Developers proposal.

Thank you,

Martha S. McClees
Executive Director
Virginia Beach Vision, Inc.