

December 18, 2001

Mr. Richard Fischer, Chairman  
Solomons Civic Association  
PO Box 178  
Solomons, Maryland 20688

Dear Richard,

Thank you for inviting staff to attend one of your upcoming Solomons Civic Association meetings to discuss the issues that were raised at the July public meeting on future infrastructure needs in Solomons. We look forward to discussing a meeting date with you after the holidays.

In the meantime, we hope that the following information will be helpful. Each problem that was identified by one or more participants at the July meeting is listed on the following pages together with a staff response. We hope that the information provided by staff will help citizens select items from the list that they want to present to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration for further study or funding. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Randi Vogt at 410-535-1600 ext. 336.

Sincerely,

Frank Jaklitsch, Director

c. Board of County Commissioners

## Identifying Infrastructure Needs for Solomons Town Center

Note: Each problem that was identified by one or more participant at the July meeting is listed below together with a staff response. The information provided by staff is intended to help citizens select items from the list that they would like to pursue for further consideration or funding.

### I. Transportation

#### A. Roads/Traffic Control

##### 1. Dowell Road Intersection

Problem: The intersection is dangerous; too close to Rt 2/4.

Staff Response: The intersection has been re-signed as a three-way stop. Additional improvements are being explored, but no other workable options have been found so far.

##### 2. Fire House Exit

Problem: The Firehouse should have a preemption signal.

Staff Response: The State Highway Administration (SHA) would have to agree that a preemption signal is warranted since it is a State roadway and, in all likelihood, the County would have to finance the installation. (Estimated cost: \$60,000)

##### 3. Avondale/Alexander Street

Problem: There is a need to slow down traffic along Alexander Street. Could 4-way stops be installed?

Staff Response: 4-way stops can not be used specifically for speed control. However, traffic calming alternatives can be explored.

##### 4. Patuxent Plaza

Problem: The yellow light at the intersection is dangerous.

Staff Response: The State Highway Department installed this traffic signal in the early 1990's at the request of the Solomons Business Association after two public hearings. Need more information about the current problem.

## 5. Speed Control generally

Problem: Cars travel too fast along all local roads.

Staff Response: Vehicle Law states that the lowest posted speed limit for residential streets is 25 mph unless established by ordinance before 1974. Traffic calming alternatives can be explored.

## 6. Farren Ave/Carls Way

Problem: To address traffic issues, make Farren Avenue and Carl's Way One-way.

Staff Response: The roads can be re-signed.

## 7. Stop Sign under Bridge

Problem: Question whether the sign is necessary.

Staff Response: We have contacted the SHA and they will review the signing to determine if the existing signing is appropriate.

## 8. Intersection in front of CM Museum

Problem: The ramp does not line up with the entrance to the museum, creating an awkward and confusing traffic pattern.

Staff Response: Options at the County level include better directional signs at the museum, reversing the entrance and exit or eliminating the Rt 2 entrance altogether.

## 9. Access to Solomons-Asbury

Problem: There is no way to walk from Asbury to the Food Lion shopping center.

Staff Response: According to SHA, a crosswalk is not possible for safety reasons. The County could recommend that SHA "redesign" MD, 2/4 through Solomons to an urban section, which essentially means lowering the "design speed" of the highway. Specific changes could include reducing lane widths to 11 feet, installing street trees along shoulders and in median, and installing crosswalk pavement markings/pavers.

#### 10. Circle at End of the Island

Problem: No action has been taken to date.

Staff Response: There have been numerous discussions about building a circle at the end of Solomons Island. The state has taken preliminary measurements and determined that a circle is feasible. CBL has included it in its master plan. At this point, however, no funding has been allocated to this project.

#### 11. Use Grid system - not cul de sacs

Problem: The grid pattern of streets is consistent with the character of Solomons (example Avondale); a cul de sac pattern is not.

Staff Response: A grid pattern of streets is permitted.

#### 12. Thomas Johnson Bridge

Problem: The bridge is too narrow.

Staff Response: State Highway owns this causeway. The County can ask SHA to include bridge widening in their highway planning. The County has requested that a second span be evaluated. SHA has responded negatively.

#### 13. One-way Street System in Avondale

Problem: Avondale needs a one-way street system

Staff Response: As we understand it, the main purpose of a one-way street system in Avondale would be to allow room for sidewalks, at least on one side of each street. We have drafted a concept plan for discussion purposes. The guiding principles include: minimizing turning movements on Solomons Island Road, allowing multiple paths through the community, ensuring good access to the church (and parking lot) and the marina; and considering future development potential along the east side of Solomons Island Road.

### B. Bikeways & Sidewalks

Problem: There is a need for designated bike lanes, bike paths and sidewalks throughout Solomons to make the entire community accessible by foot and/or bicycle. Bikeways and sidewalks are recommended in the Solomons Master Plan.

Staff Response: The Board of County Commissioners approved moving ahead with a master plan for sidewalks and bike paths. The Staff is currently preparing a Request for Proposals.

## C. Parking

Problems:

1. There is a need for more public parking on the island.

Staff Response: There are only a few locations left that would be suitable for additional public parking in Solomons and they are currently under private ownership. The County would need to acquire additional land in order to provide more public parking spaces. The existing public parking lot behind Our Lady of the Star Church is currently underutilized. The County has looked into ways to make visitors more aware of this lot and to make it more accessible. Suggestions are welcomed.

2. Public parking should be considered along Farren Avenue, particularly in connection with developing the circle (Item A. #10).

Staff Response: This suggestion could be looked into if and when funding for the circle is authorized.

3. There is a lack of private parking space in Avondale.

Staff Response: See the staff response to Item A #13 above.

## II. Parks and Recreation

Problem: There is a need for more recreational opportunities in and near Solomons.

Staff Response: We have reviewed the recommendations for parks and recreation in the Comprehensive Plan, Solomons Master Plan and the list of suggestions from citizens at the meeting. On that basis, we can provide the following information:

a) The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the following recreational sites and facilities should be in or near (within 5 miles) each Town Center:

- ❑ a town park or "village green" (The Boardwalk, Waterman's Park and Pavilion serve this function)
- ❑ an in-town trail and bikeway system (not yet available, See B. above),

- ❑ an outdoor public facility designed primarily for active team sports (Cove Point Park is less than 5 miles away)
- ❑ an indoor community center (Southern Community Center is less than 5 miles away)
- ❑ an indoor sports complex with swimming pool in major Town Centers only (not available)

b) The Solomons Master Plan recommends developing:

- ❑ a Solomons Center Park, i.e., Solomons Fishing Pier (completed)
- ❑ investigating the removal of Moleys Leg (see III. 2. below)
- ❑ developing a community park, such as at the end of Charles Street. (See A #10 above)

c) Citizens made several suggestions at the Solomons meeting:

- ❑ Playground for children/families. (The playboat that was formerly located in the Waterman's Park is to be replaced)
- ❑ Green open space at intersection of Charles & Patuxent Avenue (This would be eligible for Program Open Space Funding)
- ❑ End of Island - Farren Avenue (See A #10 above)
- ❑ Dog Park (needs further study)
- ❑ Swimming pool (See 2a above)
- ❑ Use Molly's Leg (See III. 2. Below)
- ❑ Better landscaping (need clarification)

### III. Harbor

**Problem:** There is a need for a Comprehensive Harbor Study to include a review of options concerning Molly's Leg, the construction of a breakwater, the need for more moorings and public docking facilities.

**Staff Response:** We concur that these issues should be looked at comprehensively rather than on a piecemeal basis. The Army Corps of Engineers initiated a study of the feasibility of providing storm protection to Solomons Island Harbor in June 1990. A draft report was prepared recommending construction of 700 feet of offshore breakwater at a cost of \$2 million. The report was never finalized due to the County's lack of interest in sharing the cost of construction (\$400,000). The biggest issue was that there is no assurance that what is proposed would actually fix the problem and could create new problems. If this study were to be reactivated, the following would have to take place:

- A new project cost estimate would be requested;

- The project benefits would have to be updated;
- A placement site for approximately 15,000 cyds of dredged material must be identified;
- Real estate requirements related to the placement site must be developed;
- The Project Cooperation Agreement must be updated;
- The environmental document will be re-coordinated with the placement site information.
- All of the above will require a new Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement to be drafted and approved.
- The cost estimates will undoubtedly go up as they are six years old.

#### IV. Utilities

##### Problems:

1. Overhead utility lines should be buried to create a more attractive appearance and help prevent outages.

Staff response: This issue was explored in connection with the construction of the sidewalk along Rt 2 and the cost was deemed to be prohibitively expensive. Utilities in Lexington Park were recently buried at a cost of \$200/ft along the main roadway but soils conditions in Solomons could substantially increase that cost. The cost of connecting individual homes and businesses to the underground utilities could be considerably higher than \$200/ft.

2. Need High Speed Communications

Staff Response: High-speed cable connections should be available to subscribers by the end of 2001 or beginning of 2002 through Comcast.

3. Need Natural Gas hook-up

Staff Response: Natural gas lines run along Rt 2 down to CBL. Anyone who is located off the main highway would need to pay to connect to the main line.

4. Need Lighting on the river walk; in Avondale. Consider gaslights

Staff Response: We have received a concept plan for lighting on the boardwalk, spacing ballard lighting at 25' intervals. This project may be included in the CIP in 2003. Need more input from citizens in Avondale.

## V. Other

### Problems:

1. Need more trashcans in more locations and more frequent pick-up.  
Need animal waste control.

Staff Response: The County currently pays \$19,700 per year for trash pick-up in Solomons. Trash barrels at most sites are picked up every day. The County is not responsible for animal waste pick-up.

2. It would be desirable to have unique street signs in keeping with Solomons' unique character.

### Staff Response:

A basic green and white logo could be designed and placed on the new street signs by the County's Department of Public Works, provided the costs are reasonable. We have acquired from Public Works a 3M Street Sign Pictorial for reference.

3. It would be desirable to minimize the number of State Highway Signs.

Staff Response: Refer to SHA

4. It would be desirable to have more historic site signs.

Staff Response: This could be referred to the Historic District Commission

5. Design a town logo to be used on signage, the water tower and banners.

Staff Response: The Solomons Zoning Ordinance permits banners provided they are sponsored by a governmental agency, recommended for approval by the Solomons Architectural Review Committee and are comprehensively planned and designed to ensure continuity throughout the Town Center.