

Executive summary

Introduction



Residents Are Proud of Their Town

The Town of Louisa Downtown Master Plan was intended to enhance the pedestrian safety, efficiency and aesthetics of the Town's transportation system. Louisa is an active and vibrant community that sits at the crossroads of several state roads. It enjoys a traditional downtown area as well as more modern suburban type development. Because of the proximity of downtown businesses and roads to area neighborhoods, pedestrians are quite active in Louisa. This activity coupled with the increasing vehicular traffic has created a need to resolve conflicts between the two and to study ways to make the transportation system better for visitors and residents who chose to walk, bike or drive.

The process for developing the plan included several stakeholder interviews, public meetings and coordination with Town Council members, the Mayor and town staff.

Goals and Objectives:



The Town Has Great Character and Potential

Goals:

- Enhance and improve pedestrian safety.
- Improve the economic vitality of our downtown.
- Preserve and enhance the historic character and heritage of our town.
- Enhance the beauty of downtown for residents and visitors.

Objectives:

- Implement traffic calming measures such as curb extensions and chokers.
- Remove and relocate utility lines and sign clutter.
- Provide sidewalk connectors and improved pedestrian facilities.
- Renovate decaying infrastructure.



Connections From Past to Present are Strong

- Take back unused asphalt and other spaces for pedestrians, landscape or buildings.
- Encourage infill and strengthening of urban edges.
- Improve façades of downtown businesses.
- Interpret the history of the downtown area through educational signage, markers and events.
- Enhance pedestrian environments with themed landscape and architectural elements.
- Create landscaped gateways and identity and way finding signage.

Common Problems



We Are Ignoring Important Infrastructure

During the inventory and analysis and during meetings with the public and stakeholders, several common problems were identified that needed to be addressed in the master plan. These included:

- Decaying infrastructure.
- Ugly overhead utilities.
- Inadequate accessible pedestrian facilities.
- Narrow sidewalks.
- Speeding.
- Long poorly defined crosswalks and conflicting signal timing.
- Unimproved building façades and lack of architectural control in the historic district.
- Excessive pavement widths.
- Lack of landscape buffers and unkempt expansive parking lots.
- Weak gateway identification.
- Poor access management and multiple business driveway entrances.



Cars and Trucks Rule The Town

Plan Elements

This Master Plan discusses and illustrates several improvements that could be reasonably implemented in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the project. The key elements of the plan include:



Towns Are Made for People

- Reconstructed or new sidewalks where needed.
- Provision of crosswalks and associated accessible curb ramps at key locations.
- Provision of on-street bike routes and bike lanes.
- Construction of traffic calming measures.
- Definition of on-street parking with landscape and curb.
- Definition and establishment of off-street shared parking areas.
- Implementation of a way finding signage program.
- Enhancement of town gateways and signs.
- Construction of new brick sidewalks in the downtown core area.
- Addition of new street trees and landscape areas.
- Removal of overhead utilities and relocation underground or behind businesses where appropriate.
- Installation of period style street lighting with banners.
- Installation of information kiosks.
- Establishment of a visitor center and transportation museum in the downtown area.

Cost

This master plan identifies specific portions or phases of the overall plan that can be implemented as separate projects. Anticipated costs are given for each. Some items are expensive to implement and may take time to coordinate and fund. This includes replacement of curb and gutter along longer stretches of roadway, and placing utilities underground. Utilities are a large part of project cost and in some cases approach half of the overall project estimate. Utilities are a crucial part of the plan and will need to be addressed initially in some projects because they need to be relocated prior to installation of other project elements.

- The project cost estimates are conservative and assume contractor bid prices and include contingencies.
- Actual costs may be less if some elements can be installed by the town.
- Elements such as sidewalks, landscaping, curb modifications, traffic calming measures, crosswalks and pavements provide high impact for the dollar spent.
- Utility relocations have to be implemented before completing streetscape improvements in the downtown area,

such as wider brick walkways, street trees and curb modifications.

- Total project cost could potentially approach \$6,000,000.
- Utility relocation costs are anticipated to exceed \$2,000,000.
- The downtown section from Ellisville Drive to Fredericksburg Avenue including the Courthouse Square Area is anticipated to cost \$3,000,000.
- The Phase I demonstration project is estimated to cost \$250,000.

Funding

The majority of funding for this plan will come from state and federal grant sources. It is the recommendation of this master plan that an aggressive program for identification and pursuit of funding be established. Identification of funding sources and securing funding will be a crucial component to the successful implementation of this plan. Several potential sources and strategies are identified in this master plan.