

Town of Louisa Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is the town considering this project?

In 2001, the Louisa Town Council conducted an inventory on the sidewalks in town, they realized that there were critical areas where no sidewalks existed, and that some sidewalks were either unsafe or failing. The Council developed a master plan that not only addressed the sidewalk problems, but also added other elements of pedestrian safety such as cross walks, traffic calming devices, and signage. The Council then developed a relationship with VDOT to help fund the projects using Transportation Enhancement Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) funds. The process of grant writing and approval is long and arduous, but over the last 8 year, TEA-21 funds have been awarded. A project already completed is the RT 33 sidewalk from Main Street to Pine Ridge Road which included sidewalk, plantings, pedestrian island and crosswalks with appropriate signage.

How much parking are we going to lose?

Parking is a problem in the downtown corridor. The current plan recommended by the steering committee is a zero loss parking plan. That means there will be the same amount of parking after the project as there was before the project. Understandably, with the Bump Outs, the parking has been rearranged and not every store front will have the same parking arrangement when we are done as when we started.

See [The Main Street Parking Plan](#)

To alleviate parking problems during construction and in the long term, the Council has been proactive. First, we are leasing a parking area at the North end on Main Street that is undeveloped as yet. This lot may be used for commuter parking or a lay-down and equipment storage yard for construction. The more equipment we keep off Main St, the less traffic and parking will be impacted. With a nearby lay-down yard, we should also get a better bid price for construction. The second approach was to lease (long term) a parking lot for the public's general use. This lot is located at the corner of Main and Cutler. The lot will accommodate 30 cars and will be available for parking before, during and after construction. Construction vehicles and equipment will not be permitted to use this lot.

Will my taxes have to go up to pay for this?

No, since 2003 the Town Council has been setting aside money to pay our share of the construction in the General Fund reserve. There is no tax increase that can be attributed to this project as we use the General Fund reserves. Also, over the last 6 years, the tax rates have remained steady for our businesses and residents and we have even eliminated a tax, all while setting aside money to pay for this project.

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Who is designing this project?

Dewberry of Richmond is the project engineer. They have a full staff of civil and traffic engineers in Richmond, and the landscape architect is based at the Leesburg office of Dewberry. The actual architectural detail options are being submitted to the Steering Committee and the elements are voted on by the committee.

Has there been any public input before we started this project?

Yes, each of the TEA -21 grant applications required the town to hold a public hearing to receive comments from the public, usually in October of each year. Additionally, in 2001, a Town Hall meeting was held at the Louisa Fire Department to gain public support and comment.

As the design for this project has developed, there have been other public hearings and information sessions. The Town Staff is always available to answer any questions the public has. During the process to allocate money for these projects, Public Hearings have been held during the budget adoption process in May of each year

How long is construction going to take?

We expect construction to be between 12 and 18 months and it will be done in phases. We will require the contractor to do sections at a time completely before moving to the next section. Right now, we don't have the specific phasing plan complete yet but we are working on it.

Are the Parking Meters going to be reinstalled?

That decision has not been made, but the council is looking for comments on replacing the meters, removing the meters or having other types of parking controls in place after the project is complete. Please let us know your thoughts.

How Much will all of this cost?

We expect the project to cost \$2,098,874. VDOT will pay \$1,786,731 and the Town contribution will be \$312,143. These costs include the School St / Church St sidewalk that is almost finished, the Lyde St Sidewalk and the Downtown / Courthouse Square / Elm St portions of the project.

In the current fiscal year (2011-2012) the town will spend \$42,250 and VDOT will spend \$171,000 on the Lyde St Sidewalk and designing the Courthouse Square/Elm Street section of the project. In FY 2012-2013 the expenditures will be \$222,106 from the town and \$1,432,582 from VDOT. You'll note that the match is exactly 20%, that is

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because at the end of the project, we will have over \$548,000 in grant funds available that do not require a town match.