



City Manager's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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River District streetscape project being prepared for bids

Designs for the streetscape improvements along portions of Main Street and Union Street in the River District are final. The next phase will begin in a week to 10 days when the city invites companies to bid on the construction.

Bid specifications are being drafted after the final designs were presented to City Council earlier this week. Bids will be opened and reviewed in mid July. The contract will be awarded in late July, with construction beginning in August.

The streetscape project will focus on Main Street from Memorial Drive and Craghead Street to Floyd Street and on North Union Street from Main Street to Spring Street.

Funds will be used to widen existing sidewalks, install brick pavers, create more visible and safer pedestrian crossings, and provide amenities such as trees, benches and new lighting.

John Schmidt, vice president of the consulting firm Land Planning & Design Associates, envisions restaurant owners and merchants taking advantage of the outdoor space by using a portion of the wider sidewalks for their business.

"The additional space is going to be a great place for them to occupy," Schmidt said.

The sidewalk will be constructed with a six-foot band of tinted concrete along the storefronts, with brick being placed from the band to the curb.

"Merchants could use this band and move partly to the brick," Schmidt said. "You would still have plenty of space to walk."

Also as part of the project, the number of traffic lanes on Main Street will be reduced from three to two by eliminating the center turn lane. This change will allow for the wider sidewalks.

The changes will take place one block at a time. Within each block, construction will take place on one side of the street, and then when completed, work crews will switch to the other side of the street.

Schmidt said construction will take 30 to 45 days to complete on each side of the street, so each block will be disrupted for two to three months total.

“We will maintain a critical path schedule,” Schmidt said. “What that means is the contractor will tell us at any time where they are and how construction is progressing.”

The contractor must maintain access to the front door of each storefront and business during construction. Industrial mats will be used to minimize the amount of dust.

The project will begin on the west side of the 300 block of Main Street, which extends from the intersection of Memorial Drive and Craghead Street to Market Street. The west side is occupied by businesses such as the Gourmet Frog, 316 Cibo’s, and The Venue.

Upon completion, the project will move to the east side, which is occupied by Danville Public Schools.

The project then progresses to the 400 block on Main Street from Market Street to Union Street and then the 500 block from Union Street to Floyd Street.

North Union Street will receive a facelift with the addition of decorative trim on the sidewalks and planting of trees. The existing curbing will be maintained. With this portion of the project being less disruptive, the contractor will be required to shift most of the work to Union Street and off Main Street during the Christmas season.

When finished, each block will have a continuous band of brick, which will be tumbled pavers. Tumbled paving is created by taking regular paving and putting into a machine which vibrates the stones and makes the paving stones look older than they are by giving them a worn look.

The brick paving at intersections will have a darker coloring. Decorative raised flower boxes will be located near street corners. Benches and trash receptacles will be placed there as well.

Tree pits lined by cobblestones will be placed throughout the streetscape. Elm trees that have a high canopy and are urban tolerant will be placed in the pits on Main Street. Crepe Myrtles are planned for Union Street.

The designs take into account the varying character of the blocks, such as whether they are lined by commercial storefronts or by structures such as bank and administrative office buildings. At storefronts, the brick will extend from the concrete band to the curb. Plantings will be located at the curb. At office buildings, the pattern will be flipped, with the brick treatment and plantings against the wall.

A different treatment along the sidewalk also is planned at the site of the former Downtowner Motor Inn, with raised benches being installed.

The total project will take eight to 12 months, depending on the weather.

LPDA is a landscape architecture and planning firm providing services since 1971 for both public and private clients. The company has offices in Charlottesville and Sterling. Its list of clients includes more than 25 cities and counties in Virginia, as well as hospitals, universities, state agencies and U.S. military departments.

The project is estimated to cost \$2.8 million, with half of the total provided by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The streetscape project was determined to be the most feasible public project at this time following a study last year that identified public and private projects to bring new life to the River District. The district includes the downtown and tobacco warehouse areas.

Upon completion of the project, a second phase is planned if funding is available. The second phase will involve the reconfiguration of Main Street from its intersection with Memorial Drive and Craghead Street to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge. The city is in the process of seeking a VDOT grant of \$800,000 to pay for half of the \$1.6 million cost.

However, LPDA is developing designs for the creation of a plaza with a large fountain on Main Street near the bridge. JTI Leaf Services is donating \$400,000 for that project.

For more information on the River District and the development project, visit the city of Danville's website at www.danville-va.gov. For more information on LPDA, visit www.lpda.net.

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