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## **Loth Springs / Ridgeview Park Connector Trail Fact Sheet**

### ***Project History***

The city has been working on a city wide greenway plan since the late 1990's. In 2001, City Council adopted a Conceptual Greenway Development –South River Trail Plan which included a connector trail from Loth Springs to Ridgeview Park. The 2001 plan notes this will be a diverse trail section combining traditional trails, sidewalks and on-street facilities. Key concerns include creating a safe crossing at Arch and Wayne Avenue, finding the most feasible and cost effective route through the Tree Streets and clearly delineating public / private spaces along Cliffside Drive. In 2013, the city worked with the Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) at Virginia Tech to study, in more detail, possible neighborhood impacts, potential routes and detailed analysis of the project area. In October 2016, the city applied for funding through VDOT's Transportation Alternatives Plan (TAP) to hire professional engineers to continue to refine the plans. In the fall of 2017, the city was awarded full funding (\$1,000,000) for the project including engineering and construction through a funding stream known as the "open container" fund. Normally, TAP funds require a 20% local tax dollar match which would have been \$200,000. However, open container funds do not require this match therefore saving the city \$200,000.

### ***Project Timeline***

The city will procure professional engineering services in early 2018. Once a firm has been selected, a detailed field survey will be conducted to identify right-of-way, potential utilities conflicts and preferred routes through the tree streets neighborhood. Citizen meetings will be conducted to discuss various pros and cons of potential routes. Once a final route is determined, engineering plans and a bid packet will be developed. Construction on the connector trail could be as early as fall of 2018 or early spring 2019.

### ***Project Details***

The project is divided into 3 parts. **Part one** is the trail connection from the current Loth Springs trail head, improved pedestrian crossing at Wayne Avenue and river side trail along Rife Road. **Part 2** will be a series of sidewalks and bike sharrows through the tree streets neighborhood terminating near Oak Avenue. **Part 3** will be a wider more traditional trail which follows the abandoned city-owned street, Cliffside Road, terminating at the walk bridge in Ridgeview Park.

### ***What is a greenway?***

Greenways are often referred to as linear open spaces. They frequently follow rivers, streams, scenic roads and abandoned rail roads. Connecting neighborhoods (people), businesses and parks (public spaces) are the core of any successful greenway system. Following the success of the current greenway trail along the South River and the immense popularity of Ridgeview Park, connecting these areas with the safest, shortest and most scenic route for all citizens to enjoy is a priority.

### ***What will this trail / greenway look like?***

The connector trail will be a combination of paved asphalt paths and traditional city sidewalks. Widths will vary depending on location and will be between 5 and 10 feet wide.

### ***Don't greenways increase thefts in neighborhoods?***

Actually, research suggests the opposite is true. The more people walking or biking on a trail serves as a deterrent to would-be thieves. See study below:

Rails to Trail study – Safe Communities

[https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/docs/rt\\_safecomm.pdf](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/rt_safecomm.pdf)

### ***Will my property value decrease?***

Some studies actually show that property values increase after trails and paths are built. See the studies below:

[http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/Trail\\_Study\\_51-property-value-bike-paths-residential-areas.pdf](http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/Trail_Study_51-property-value-bike-paths-residential-areas.pdf)

<http://www.nrpa.org/globalassets/journals/jlr/2005/volume-37/jlr-volume-37-number-3-pp-321-341.pdf>

<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/adjacent/sumadjacent.html>

<http://www.livablebuckhead.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/The-Impact-of-Trail-on-Single-Family-Residential-Property-Values.pdf>

### ***Why build sidewalks in an already established neighborhood?***

Well maintained sidewalks are the bones of great neighborhoods. They play a vital role in the quality of life for citizens and make neighborhoods more livable. Sidewalks are conduits for pedestrian movement, enhance connectivity and promote walking. As public spaces sidewalks, are the front steps to a neighborhood, stimulating social interaction and community pride. See links for more information on sidewalks:

<http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/Sidewalks-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<https://betseybuckheit.com/posts/the-cost-andor-value-of-sidewalks/>

<http://www.pedestrians.org/retrofit.htm>

### ***Will a sidewalk take land from my lawn?***

Most homeowners don't realize how far from the street or curb their private property line actually extends. In most cases, there is enough of a public right-of-way easement to construct a sidewalk without infringing in any way on a property owner's land.

### ***Can this \$1,000,000 be used to help build a new high school?***

The funds come from a grant which Federal and state guidelines designate for alternative forms of transportation such as trails and sidewalks. Additionally, funds are awarded for specific projects and this project was chosen by state officials. The money cannot be used by the city to build a completely different section of trail or sidewalk elsewhere in the city (though there is still leeway on the exact route and design).

### ***How can I stay informed about the project?***

The city will post notices regarding public meetings in the *News Virginian* as well as on the city's website. The Parks & Recreation Department maintains an active Facebook page for the South River Greenway, meeting notices and project updates will be posted on the following site:

<https://www.facebook.com/southernrivergreenway/>