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VDOT gives OK to Front Royal parkway project

By Alex Bridges -- abridges@nvdaily.com

FRONT ROYAL -- State transportation officials gave the green light to fund a road to connect two major routes in Front Royal and Warren County.

Town officials announced last week they received confirmation from the Virginia Department of Transportation that the Commonwealth Transportation Board approved Front Royal's request to help fund the proposed Leach Run Parkway. VDOT will commit \$6 million toward the design and construction of the \$12 million project through the state agency's revenue sharing program, according to Town Manager Steven Burke.

Town Council also heard about the recent confirmation Monday from Jennifer McDonald, executive director of the Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority.

The town and county entered into a memorandum of understanding to agree to share the cost of the Leach Run Parkway based upon the EDA's Fair Funding Formula for projects, Burke stated in the e-mail. Proffers received toward the parkway's construction will offset the cost of the project, according to Burke.

Leach Run Parkway calls for a four-lane, limited-access road from John Marshall Highway to Happy Creek Road. The route would include bicycle lanes and separate pedestrian paths. The

parkway aims to provide a dedicated road that would improve access to the eastern side of Front Royal and areas of Warren County, including Warren County High School.

The parkway also would serve as a connector from Va. 55 (John Marshall Highway) to the Happy Creek Technology Park, according to Doug Stanley, county administrator for Warren County. The EDA owns undeveloped land in the technology park.

"To handle the projected traffic growth and development in the Happy Creek area we need to be able to make this connection," Stanley said Tuesday.

Leach Run Parkway as proposed spans approximately 1.4 miles, according to Stanley. Another shorter section not included in the current revenue sharing project would extend the parkway across the railroad tracks in Happy Creek by way of a fly-over.

As Stanley explained, the town and county began looking at the connector road nearly 20 years ago. The town acquired a portion of the right-of-way needed, according to Stanley. The project picked up steam a few years ago. The town and county asked the EDA to acquire the remaining right-of-way, Stanley said.

Officials expect the final design to take nine to 12 months and construction likely would begin in 2013, Burke stated by e-mail Monday. Stanley explained the project planning also involves studying the environmental impact of the road and the needed bridge over Leach Run.

Stanley also explained that the project funding formula calls for the county to cover 66 percent of the cost while the town would pay 34 percent.

The adjacent Swan Run development also plans to pay \$4 million in proffers toward the project, Stanley explained.

County and town staff plan to meet with the EDA next week to discuss the project, according to Burke. As work on the project moves forward, town officials anticipate a public information meeting on Leach Run Parkway would be held during the final design and construction process.

4 Comments



And....this road is suppose to do what? Seems to me,in my uneducated view,this project goes from nowhere to nowhere. Just how is it suppose relieve traffic?....or.....improve access? Again...seems to me.....that someone thought this would be a good idea or something flashy they could put their name on. Maybe a better project would be to have an interchange with Rt.66 and Shenendoah Shores Road. That could eliminate a lot of traffic from Happy Creek Rd. which now is a speedway for everyone and would provide excellent access to the industrial area for trucks.

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"And....this road is suppose to do what? Seems to me,in my uneducated view,this project goes from nowhere to nowhere. Just how is it suppose relieve traffic?....or.....improve access?"

It will reroute traffic and school buses for the Happy Creek area out of town and onto the proposed parkway to get to the high school on the south side of town. Anyone with a little insight can see that Eastern Warren county is primed and targeted for residential development. This road, and the others to be built in the future, will help facilitate that plan.

Case in point, look at Eastern Loudoun county. 30 years ago, Eastern Loudoun county, west of Route 28 was mostly corn fields, farming, and small pockets of industrial/mixed use. Now it's nearly built out from Ashburn to Leesburg, with many large housing developments of 10 to 20+ thousand homes each, with much of the same type of residents as Warren (commuters who live here and work towards D.C.).

Will Warren turn into another Loudoun? Probably never to that scale, but few more large scale housing developments in Eastern Warren within the next 30 years would not surprise me.

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At least Front Royal is building roads to somewhere, while Strasburg can only build expensive roadblocks that slows you getting anywhere.

Strasburg should take the money they are wasting on main street and build a bypass on the East side of town for the truck traffic going to the industrial area. No, they would rather build

bump outs to further complicate the truck traffic that travels through town.... Beats the hell out of me how they think!

noffy'say | [June 27, 2012 8:45 AM](#) | [Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)



We know that the population in this part of town is going to grow. We know that the Hospital owns property along the route of Leach Run Parkway, and we want to encourage new businesses to bring new jobs to this area. The hospital will bring living wage jobs and maybe even a new medical park. Up-scale housing will be needed. New businesses will be encouraged to locate in the Happy Creek Industrial Park. Spell that "JOBS."

Leach Run Parkway will enable this.

The alternative interchange on Rt 66 is currently not even allowed by VDOT and if we could build it, it would cost about \$40 million (VDOT's estimate). Leach Run Parkway is estimated to cost \$12 million. We want people to be able to get into town to shop and work. We want people from town to be able to get to the new hospital to get treatment and jobs. Leach Run Parkway is a good thing for the town and the county. That's why the town, the county, and the EDA have supported it.

Tom Conkey | [July 4, 2012 7:41 AM](#) | [Report Abuse](#) | [Reply](#)