

Part 6: LANDSCAPING / SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Citizens, businesses, youth groups, civic clubs, and other organizations should be actively encouraged to partner with the Town of Leesburg in beautification efforts that aid in the transition between commercial and residential areas, delineate the Town's boundaries, and point out local attractions and areas of interest. These alliances between the public and private sectors will enhance the Town's attractions and build Leesburg's appeal as an attractive, livable community.

Historical context. A number of local landscaping efforts are underway, with some administered and maintained by the Town, others through the Town's parks and Recreation Department using volunteers, while still other programs existing solely through the efforts and financial support of volunteers.

The Town's Parks and Recreation Department administers the Adopt-A-Spot and Adopt-A-Park programs, which allow town citizens and organizations to participate in beautification efforts. Promotion is somewhat limited, with information available only on the P&R website and in a brochure.

An annual beautification initiative and county-wide clean up campaign is undertaken by the volunteers of Keep Loudoun Beautiful, in which many Leesburg citizens participate. This member-financed and supported organization has a long and distinguished history of eradication of litter throughout the county and Towns.

A recent private sector initiative, the dogwood planting project along sections of the Route 7 - 15 Bypass, has been supported by the Town. A local fundraising effort and contributions by a local nursery generated the financial support to plant over 400 dogwoods in the median of the Route 7 - 15 Bypass. Maintenance of the trees is being supported and paid for with Town funds.

Signage requirements are administered by the Board of Architectural Review, when proposed signage is to be placed in the Historic District. All other signage must pass review of the Town's Zoning Department and is administered by the Engineering Department. Special signage is used for pointing out historical points of interest, such as signs pointing to the Historic District and to Dodona Manor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Landscaping and beautification efforts. The Town of Leesburg should incorporate landscaping as an integral part of residential traffic management and should include landscaping plan requirements in capital projects with the implementation of those plans as funds become available. Neighborhoods should be distinguishable when possible with signage and landscaping amenities, articulating clearly and visually the transition between residential and non-residential areas of the town. Landscaping requirements should be incorporated into residential areas (e.g. Battlefield Parkway median) to assist in alerting drivers and calming traffic as an approach to pedestrian

access areas such as crosswalks. Partnering between the Town and local individuals, businesses and organizations can make this beautification initiative a reality, and can expand the sense of community pride in our Town and within our neighborhoods.

Citizens and local civic groups, student groups and other organizations are frequently looking for community projects. Leesburg's Adopt-A-Spot and Adopt-A-Park programs are good prospects to build alliances with these local groups. The programs are administered through the Parks and Recreation Department, and with increased community awareness and education efforts, can become much more viable and visible around Town. Access to information about these beautification programs should be expanded through the Town's website, through periodic Town mailings to local citizens, and through signage at those spots available for adoption. In addition, the local media can provide outlets for community awareness, through local radio and cable talk shows and public service announcements, and through print exposure. A promotional brochure and speakers' bureau can be used to promote the beautification program opportunities to these civic clubs, service organizations, youth groups, etc.

With more and more citizens seeking easy access and 24-7 information on Town services, a comprehensive website linked from the Town of Leesburg Home Page can provide information on the programs, prospective sites available, current participants and their Adopt-A-Spot sites, and application forms (current site with information: http://parksandrec.leesburgva.org/leesburg_parks/programs.cfm). Cooperative efforts and matchmaking opportunities should be encouraged between businesses and other organizations who may want to donate money and materials with volunteers who are interested in maintaining a beautification spot. Local schools through their horticultural programs (Northern Virginia Community College and Monroe Vocational Technical School) can also partner with the Town on these projects.

Specific landscaping projects should be encouraged in key arterials and entrances/exits to the Town, such as the East Market Street median; West Market Street entrance to Town; Route 15 South near the Bypass; Route 15 North into Town; and the Route 15 North Bypass.

Signage. Signage should be incorporated with landscaping throughout the Town. Neighborhoods should be distinguished by appropriate signage, especially those with a unique historical or cultural nature (e.g. Georgetown). We also propose that the Town's Historic District be delineated as one enters and leaves this unique area, clearly defining to tourists and residents alike that they have reached a special place, and further, that signs welcome visitors at Town entrances and point them to sites of interest such as Dodona Manor, the Thomas Balch Library, Ida Lee Park, etc.

The bike and pedestrian trail network in and around Leesburg should have clear signage pointing to major access areas, sites of interest, parking and bike staging areas, and local restaurants and services, leading pedestrians and bicyclists to the respective commercial areas around the community. A low-cost partnership between the Town and the local commercial sectors could develop a bike/walking tour map of Leesburg utilizing

the local trail network, and pointing out specific sites of historical and educational interest. Specific areas for inclusion of landscaping, when space permits, should be where trails and roadways intersect.

Conclusion. Landscaping and signage are natural partners in any effort to slow traffic and highlight the transition between commercial and residential areas of Town. Expanded community awareness of beautification opportunities can enlist the talents and interest of our citizens in partnership with the Town. The resulting projects will assist traffic calming while adding to the aesthetic value of the local community. These tools are among many outlined in this report that are available to cultivate Leesburg's precious and unique historical assets, and establish precedent for sustaining the Town as a livable community in the 21st century.