



## Evergreen Mill Road Widening Project

# Frequently Asked Questions

Issued October 2021 – Revised March 2022

### **Design Questions:**

#### **What is the Evergreen Mill Road Widening Project?**

In accordance with the objectives set forth in the Town Plan, this project is intended to widen approximately 1.3 miles of Evergreen Mill Road from Heritage High School (south of Battlefield Parkway) to South King Street (Route 15). The existing two-lane road will be widened to a four-lane road with a sidewalk on one side and a trail on the other side. The project will also include associated turn lanes, traffic signal modifications, utility relocations, and installation of curb, gutter, and storm drainage improvements. Originally, the project limits extended from South King Street to Battlefield Parkway but more recently were extended to just past Heritage High School to help address congestion issues at the high school entrance.

#### **What is the purpose of the widening project?**

This project is intended to help improve the traffic flow on Evergreen Mill Road, especially at the traffic signals, and to improve pedestrian connectivity on the roadway.

#### **How can I find out more about this project and receive updates?**

Information will be posted on the Evergreen Mill Project webpage at [www.leesburgva.gov/evergreenmill](http://www.leesburgva.gov/evergreenmill) where you will find presentation materials and recordings from previously held Neighborhood meetings posted, and a place to sign up for email updates concerning the project. In addition, you may contact Karin Franklin, the Town's Project Manager, directly at 703-771-6674 or [kfranklin@leesburgva.gov](mailto:kfranklin@leesburgva.gov).

After completion and review of the major design plan submission, the Town plans to hold another Neighborhood Meeting. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2022.

#### **Will the speed limit change after the project is completed?**

The 35 mile per hour speed limit currently posted for Evergreen Mill Road will NOT change with this project.

#### **Will the utility poles remain, or can they be placed underground?**

After this question was raised during the first Neighborhood meeting, more research was completed which estimated that placing utilities underground could cost more than \$10M and the project budget cannot support this effort. Therefore, undergrounding the power lines is not included as part of the scope for this project and the design plans have focused on limiting the number of poles requiring relocation to help remain within current funding.

### **Can a crosswalk be added at the Alpine or Wallace intersection or near the schools?**

The Town has evaluated options and has determined that a crosswalk can be added at the intersection with Wallace Drive. A raised median is proposed at this intersection offering a safe refuge for pedestrians using this crossing and therefore was determined to be the best location for this crossing.

### **Widening the road could result in more speeding. How will safety be addressed with this project?**

Safety is an important design consideration for this project and the engineer is working to identify available options that would be appropriate and effective for this corridor.

The design has specifically targeted improving the safety in areas at the Battlefield Parkway and South King Street intersections with Evergreen Mill Road where existing issues have been noted, Improvements include signal phasing adjustments with protected left turns and the addition of new turn bays.

To address speeding along the corridor, the Town has reduced the designed lane width from 12 feet to 11 feet which studies have indicated can result in reduced speeds. Driver feedback signs and raised or striped medians will also be incorporated where appropriate. Pedestrian safety will also be improved by moving pedestrians and bicyclists off the roadway by providing continuous sidewalks and trails along the corridor. The addition of curb and gutter and a buffer between the sidewalk/trail and the roadway will further improve pedestrian / bicycle safety. Adding a crosswalk with a pedestrian refuge is also being considered to provide safer connectivity between the subdivisions on either side of the roadway.

### **How will storm drainage and storm water management be handled within the project?**

For most of the corridor, the existing drainage system is open sections with ditches. This project will include curb and gutter with inlets and underground piping to route storm water away from the road. To meet storm water management requirements, the design will consider a combination of dry storm water management ponds and underground storm water facilities to control discharge runoff from the facilities to pre-improvement levels. Five storm water management facilities are proposed for existing Town-owned property, within right-of-way, or within open space parcels.

### **How will my property or HOA property be impacted?**

Impacts to specific properties range from very little impact (temporary construction easements only) to permanent easements and/or acquisition of additional right of way. After the project reaches the 90% design plans the Town will be able to provide better information about particular property impacts. However, definitive impacts will not be fully defined until the project and utility relocation design is complete. Individuals are encouraged to follow up with the Project Manager directly to discuss specific impacts to their property.

### **Will any new signal lights be added?**

The project as presented at the neighborhood meeting on March 10, 2022 does not include any additional traffic signals. The Town conducted an evaluation, called a Signal Warrant,

for both Wallace Drive and Alpine Drive. A signal was not warranted at either location under current conditions or in 2025 when the project will near completion. The evaluation suggested that a signal may be warranted on Wallace in the future year of 2045, however this is based on future projections and will need to be revisited closer to this date. No signals will be added at either intersection as part of this project.

### **How much tree loss is anticipated?**

The project will attempt to limit the impact to existing trees as much as possible, however, it is expected that some existing trees will need to be removed. For capital improvement projects such as Evergreen Mill Road Widening, the Town Zoning Ordinance states that “in no case shall there be a net loss in the number of trees in the area improved”. A tree inventory will be developed to identify the existing trees expected to be lost and the number of replacement trees needed. (Sometimes one large healthy tree can require multiple replacement trees.) The project will include a landscape plan and will try to include all the replacement trees needed. If not all the required trees can be replaced as part of this project, the project will make a monetary contribution to the Town’s tree bank, which provides money to the Town’s Forester to plant trees in other areas of the Town to maintain the Town’s tree canopy.

### **Construction Questions:**

#### **What is the schedule for completion of this project?**

The tentative schedule for project completion is provided below. As we move closer to reaching final design, this schedule may require adjustment.

Design: Present to Spring 2023

Land Acquisition and Utility Relocation: Spring 2023 to Fall 2024

Construction: Spring 2025 to late Fall 2026

#### **Will I be able to get to the schools and my home during construction?**

Access to the houses and schools along Evergreen Mill Road and to the adjacent subdivisions will be maintained throughout the construction. A maintenance of traffic plan will be developed once the design nears final design and more information will be provided at that time.

#### **What does “Utility Relocation” mean?**

Some of the existing above ground utility poles are located close to the roadway and must be moved to new locations to provide space for the improvements. In addition, some existing underground utilities are in conflict with the proposed underground storm piping system. Although the design made every attempt to work around existing utility locations, in some areas, they cannot be avoided and will require relocation. The schedule provides time for the relocation of utilities prior to the commencement of construction.

### **Easement Questions:**

#### **What is an easement?**

An easement allows the Town or a utility company the right to use your land for a specific purpose. The most common easements needed for this project will be for:

- Permanent drainage easements
- Permanent utility easements for power, telephone, or TV cable companies

- Temporary construction easements (note that temporary easements expire at the end of construction)

### **What is right-of-way?**

Right-of-way is property owned by the Town for a public use, such as streets and sidewalks. The Town currently owns right-of-way for the road, however, in some areas, the proposed improvements may extend outside the existing right-of-way and the Town may need to acquire small areas of additional property.

### **Will I be compensated for right-of-way and easements?**

Yes.

### **How will the Town handle impacts to properties?**

The design is attempting to limit impacts to private property as much as possible. However, the addition of two through lanes and extra turn lanes will result in the need for right of way and/or easement acquisition in some areas. As part of the acquisition process, a valuation or appraisal of the needed land rights on each property is prepared to determine the fair market value of the needed right of way and easements. All property owners, where additional land rights are needed, will be contacted and an offer made for the acquisition of these additional land rights. The offer will be by written letter and specify what land rights are needed and include copies of the valuation or appraisal, project plan sheets, conveyance instrument(s), plats, and title report. A meeting will be held with the landowner at their property to go over the project plans and construction details, review the additional land rights being requested on the property, discuss the project impacts to the remaining property, and to answer any questions concerning the project and land acquisition process.

### **The Town just acquired ROW/easements from me for the Battlefield Parkway project. Will more ROW/easements be needed for this project?**

Every attempt is being made during the design process to limit any additional impacts to these properties or need for any additional land rights, and to keep in place the recently installed curb, gutter, sidewalk and storm drainage facilities. More information will be available after 90% plans have been developed.