



## Battlefield Parkway and Route 15 Bypass Interchange Study

# Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Battlefield Parkway / Route 15 Bypass Interchange Project and why is it happening?**

In accordance with the objectives set forth in the new Legacy Leesburg Transportation Improvement Plan, this project will remove the last at grade and signalized intersection on the Route 15 Leesburg Bypass by adding a grade-separated interchange (overpass) for Battlefield Parkway with ramps to access Route 15 Bypass. The project will include a 10-foot shared use path along the north side of Battlefield Parkway and a 5-foot sidewalk along the south side of Battlefield Parkway.

Construction of this interchange will address the following project goals:

- 1) Reduce congestion at the existing at-grade signalized intersection: Drivers through this intersection routinely experience significant congestion. This congestion not only impacts vehicles using Route 15, but also impacts the residents in subdivisions adjacent to Battlefield Parkway and their ability to cross the Bypass during certain peak hours of the day. The traffic analysis for this project indicates that traffic volumes on Battlefield Parkway are expected to be reduced once delays on the Route 15 Bypass are eliminated with the removal of the traffic signal. Currently, vehicles sometimes utilize Battlefield Parkway and other local streets as a short cut to avoid congestion at intersections on the Route 15 Bypass. With reduction in congestion on the Bypass, there will be less incentive for through-traffic to utilize these local streets.
- 2) Improve pedestrian and bicycle access crossing the Bypass: The grade-separated crossing will allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross without interacting with the higher speed, higher volume Route 15 Bypass traffic. The Leesburg Police Department has identified the Route 15 Bypass as one of the most dangerous corridors for pedestrians in Leesburg.

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

Information will be posted on the Battlefield Parkway / Route 15 Bypass Interchange Project webpage at [www.leesburgva.gov/ Battlefield-Rte15](http://www.leesburgva.gov/Battlefield-Rte15). You will find presentation materials and recordings from previously held Neighborhood meetings, 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).

The project's first neighborhood meeting was held virtually on April 28, 2022, where three alternative interchange configurations were presented. A survey was conducted after that meeting for the public to provide input on the alternatives under consideration. A presentation to Leesburg Town Council was scheduled for fall 2022 to present the alternatives under consideration, the

results of the public survey, and hold a public hearing to obtain additional input from interested parties so that Town Council could endorse their preferred alternative to study further. A second neighborhood meeting was held in-person on September 21, 2022 at the Ida Lee Park Recreation Center. A third public meeting was held in spring/summer of 2023 to present a refinement of the Town Council endorsed alternative.

### **Who is paying for this project?**

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (otherwise known as NVTA) provided \$2M to fund the first phase of completing the Interchange Access Report (IAR). The remaining funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) funds will be used to bring the plans to a concept design stage for use to apply for design and construction funding. Additional steps for the project including detailed design, land acquisition, utility relocation, and construction are not yet funded. Completion of the IAR will provide order of magnitude costs for the planned interchange which will be used to apply for the funding needed to move forward with this project. Funding will likely come from multiple sources and may include Town of Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Federal Highway Administration, and others.

### **What kind of interchange is planned?**

The Interchange Access Report (IAR) was completed and approved in April 2024. This study evaluated all possible options, narrowed the options to three types of interchanges and developed a comparison matrix of the three alternatives and the “No Build” option (option to not build an interchange). With input from two public information/input meetings including surveys, the Town Council endorsed the Double Roundabout with At-Grade Pedestrian Crossings in January 2024. More information about the study process and a schematic of the preferred alternative can be found on the project webpage, [www.leesburgva.gov/ Battlefield-Rte15](http://www.leesburgva.gov/Battlefield-Rte15).

### **When is this project scheduled to be constructed?**

Currently there is no schedule established for construction, however, following the completion of the project's IAR, staff discussed internally how to prioritize this project with Edwards Ferry and Fort Evans Roads interchange with Rt 15 bypass. Since the Town has requested but not received any funding for the Edwards Ferry and Fort Evans Roads Interchange (which may be partially due to the large price tag for the project), staff recommended (and Town Council passed a resolution) to pursue County funding for a portion of the cost to design and build the Battlefield Parkway/Route 15 Bypass Interchange project. As the Battlefield Parkway/Route 15 Bypass Interchange project involves minor land acquisition and has a lower price tag; better funding opportunities are expected. Additional funding applications from other funding sources are also planned. If the Town is awarded any funding, Town Council may choose to move this project ahead of the other interchange project.

### **Some of the traffic issues at this intersection are caused by other congestion issues on Route 15 north of Leesburg. Will this project be needed once these other congestion issues are resolved?**

The Loudoun County project to improve Route 15 north of Leesburg is expected to significantly improve traffic congestion on the Route 15 Leesburg Bypass. More information on this project can be found on the project page at <https://www.loudoun.gov/route15northwidening> . Traffic studies indicate that the project will eliminate the northbound traffic queues that regularly occur as far south as Battlefield Parkway. However, the Route 15 North improvements will not address other pedestrian and access issues that currently exist at the Battlefield Parkway intersection.

- The proposed grade-separated interchange will improve safety by allowing pedestrians and bicycles to cross the bypass without interfacing with the high-speed, high-volume Route 15 traffic.
- The proposed interchange at Battlefield Parkway will remove the last remaining traffic signal on the Route 15 Bypass (if the proposed interchange on Route 15 at Edwards Ferry Road and Fort Evans Road has been constructed) and eliminate a choke point on Route 15. Removing the signal is consistent with the Town Plan goal of converting the Route 15 Bypass into a full limited access highway.

### **Will this project result in more speeding? How will safety be addressed on this project?**

The reduction of congestion on the Route 15 Bypass could result in higher speeds on that roadway. However, overall safety will be improved for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles.

- Elimination of the signalized intersection will eliminate conflicts between the higher speed Route 15 traffic and the lower speed Bypass traffic.
- The interchange bridge will allow pedestrians and bicycles to access the other side of Route 15 without crossing the higher speed, high volume bypass traffic. The pedestrian/bicycle crossings will be limited to crossing the interchange ramps.
- Some of the alternatives being considered include traffic calming provisions intended to reduce speeds on Battlefield Parkway.

One goal of the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan adopted March 22, 2022 is to design public streets to accommodate a mix of pedestrians, bikes, transit, traditional vehicles and other forms of mobility. Strategy 4.4.2 of the plan states that the design of streets should prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort in addition to moving cars efficiently. Each alternative for the interchange includes provisions to improve access for pedestrian and bicycles on Battlefield Parkway crossing the Route 15 Bypass.

In addition to the Town Plan goals and strategies, the Town has worked jointly with Bike Loudoun over the past several years to improve the bicycle route network. By improving the Route 15 crossing for bicycles, the project will enhance connectivity between the "Blue Trail" in the Leesburg Bike Trail network and the designated bike lanes on Plaza Street.

### **Why can't we just have an overpass at this location with no traffic from Battlefield accessing Route 15 Bypass?**

The purpose of the interchange as it relates to the Town Transportation Plan is to provide a system that does not put all the traffic into one location to access Route 15 Bypass. An interchange with full access has been included in the Leesburg Town Plan since 1986 and continues to be included in the most recent Town Plan update which was adopted on March 22, 2022.

When traffic movements are prohibited, a more circuitous (indirect) travel pattern is created that can take longer and can cause congestion in other locations. If the access to the Route 15 Bypass from Battlefield Parkway was removed, traffic would be forced to use other access points (Edwards Ferry Road, Fort Evans Road, or Route 15 Business) to access the Route 15 Bypass. This would exacerbate the existing congestion at the Edwards Ferry Road and Fort Evans Road intersections, that is already significant. In addition, there is more potential for U-turn activity in other areas, that were not designed for this vehicle movement, which reduces safety. Making Route 15 Bypass a limited access corridor will help to keep traffic on the bypass rather than cutting through neighborhoods along Battlefield and therefore is expected to improve safety on Battlefield Parkway.

**Why not just build a separate pedestrian bridge/walkway over 15?**

Pedestrian and bicycle safety is one of several goals for the project. Other goals include reducing congestion at the intersection and converting the Bypass into a full limited access highway by eliminating the final traffic signal. Construction of a pedestrian bridge could satisfy the goal of improving pedestrian safety but would not address the other goals.

In the past, the Town has performed studies and obtained public feedback on the potential of constructing pedestrian/bicycle bridges across the Bypass at other locations (near the Edwards Ferry Road and Fort Evans Road intersections, and near the South King Street intersection). Public feedback of those proposed pedestrian/bicycle bridges included concerns that due to the additional length required to meet ADA requirements, there could be a tendency for pedestrians and bicyclists to avoid the bridge and cross the Bypass at the existing intersection, which would be less safe.

Given these previous concerns and considering the estimated cost of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge that would not address some of the goals of the project, this was not considered to be an economically feasible alternative.

**Will new traffic signals be added at Fieldstone Drive and/or Balls Bluff Road?**

At the intersections of Battlefield Parkway with Fieldstone Drive and Balls Bluff Road, traffic counts were obtained in mid-April 2022 and the Town conducted a preliminary analysis to determine if traffic signals are warranted at either of these intersections. For The Balls Bluff Road intersection, the analysis indicated the intersection is not imminently close to meeting the warrants for a traffic signal. The analysis on Fieldstone Drive, however, indicated the conditions were close to meeting the warrants, so the Town conducted new traffic counts and completed an updated analysis and identified that a traffic signal is warranted. The Traffic Signal – Fieldstone Drive and Battlefield Parkway project has been added to the Town's Capital Improvements Program and more information can be found on the project's webpage. [Link to project Webpage](#). When a traffic signal is warranted at either of the intersections, pedestrian signals will be included to allow pedestrians to cross Battlefield Parkway and the side streets.

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

Pre-planning for this interchange project provided the opportunity for the Town to receive substantial right of way during the development of the Exeter and Potomac Crossing developments on either side of Route 15 on Battlefield Parkway. The design will strive to keep all alternatives within the existing right of way wherever possible. It is anticipated that potentially some grading easements and possibly a small strip of right of way for the sidewalk/trails in some areas may be required.

**Will studies be done to analyze the need for sound barriers at this interchange?**

The Interchange Access Report (IAR) completed during this initial phase will have a high-level review and summary of the potential need for sound barriers. A formal noise analysis will be completed during the detailed design phase of the project as part of the environmental document. The noise analysis will be developed following all federal and VDOT requirements. All of the alternatives are expected to have a similar level of potential noise impact. Potential sound barriers would only be constructed as part of the proposed future interchange 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 this one, 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. The project will include a

landscape plan and will try to include all the replacement trees needed within the project footprint. If this is not possible, the project will make a monetary contribution to the Town's tree bank, which provides money to the Town's Urban Forester to plant trees in other areas of the Town to maintain the Town's tree canopy.

**Do all alternatives result in elimination of the Exeter and/or Potomac Crossing monuments/signs?**

It is likely that the community monuments (signs) on both sides of the Route 15 Bypass near the intersection will be impacted by the construction and will require removal or relocation. The Town typically will coordinate with the Homeowners' Associations (HOA) in the removal or relocation of the monuments. However, the relocated monument may not have the same landscaping or footprint as the original based on the space available and would continue to be the responsibility of the HOA to maintain.