

Stringfellow widening approved

Layla Wilder

The widening of Stringfellow Road is approved as long as the Virginia Department of Transportation comes up with a way to include access to Rocky Run Middle School in the project.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors made the decision during its Oct. 15 meeting.

If the access problem to the school isn't fixed, the project will be reconsidered, Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey (R) said.

The supervisors also discussed a 14-foot path to be shared by pedestrians and bicyclists as a compromise to requests from homeowners and the bicyclists.

Supervisors received dozens of requests for a bike lane. After residents complained the lane would take too much land, the transportation department engineered a 14-foot shared path on one side of the road. The other side only has a 12-foot sidewalk.

VDOT engineers are finalizing plans to widen Stringfellow Road between Route 50 and Fair Lakes Boulevard to four lanes and to build a median on it.

Because some residents in that area are concerned about the project's impact on safety and properties close to the road, it has been controversial.

Stringfellow Road connects Interstate 66 and Route 29 and is bordered by county parks, schools and neighborhoods, including the Popular Tree and Greenbriar communities. The road averaged 26,000 vehicular trips a day in 2005 and is projected to average 35,000 by 2033, according to VDOT counts.

VDOT representatives said the widening, which is on the county's four-year transportation plan and is to be funded by the county's transportation bond referendum in November, will make the road safer and improve congestion.

Springfield Supervisor Elaine McConnell (R) said she is concerned that many of her constituents aren't happy with the extra two feet for the shared path. But other board members said the project should also benefit the bicyclists if possible.

Commenting on the importance of bicycle facilities, Board Chairman Gerry Connolly (D) said he thinks the project will benefit everyone.

"I think we can protect both sides," Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D) said.

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