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Tuesday, January 09, 2007

Road improvement plans made available to public at meeting

By Christine Haines, Herald-Standard
09/25/2003

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REDSTONE TWP. - Property owners had a chance Wednesday to look over plans for the Main Street improvement project in Republic.

The plans call for a portion of Main Street to be widened to accommodate bus traffic, curbs and sidewalks to be replaced and the street milled and reconstructed from Route 166 to North Street. The project may also include decorative street lighting and obtaining a vacant service station across the street from the Main Street parking lot for additional parking and to improve the appearance of the corner leading to the Republic business district, according to Dick Widmer, the project engineer.

Andrew French of the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority said the funding for the project will come from the township's Community Development Block Grant money that has been set-aside for the past two years. No local matching funds are required and township supervisor Larry Williams said the property owners will not incur any expenses related to the project.

The project manager, Doug Coffman of Widmer Engineering, said parking spaces on Main Street will be relocated because of the project and flagpole holders will be installed.

"There won't be any parking spaces lost, but they will be readjusted," Coffman said.

Main Street will be widened between Van Kirk and Dunlap streets to permit buses to turn more easily onto Dunlap. Additional storm drains will also be added to the area.

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"We've tried to separate the water so we aren't overloading any of the systems," Widmer said.

At the suggestion of resident John Dorsey, the engineers will look into installing storm drains near North Street to reduce excessive run-off in that area.

Widmer told business owners that their businesses will be accessible throughout the project.

"Any time you have construction, you're going to have a little bit of inconvenience," Widmer said.

Widmer said that metal plates or wood will be put down covering areas where sidewalks need to be poured, providing access to their storefronts.

While there had been some consideration given to moving the utility poles to the back of the businesses, Widmer said there were too many complications with that plan, so the poles will simply be moved back to allow the street to be widened.

"I'm so glad you are widening the road. I can't tell you how many times (vehicle) mirrors have been knocked off," said Patti Keeney of National City Bank.

Her co-worker, Toni Bookshar agreed.

"I think it's something we needed a long time ago. The chamber started this 12 years ago," Bookshar said.

The Republic Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in the development of the current Main Street parking lot, but the chamber has since become defunct.

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