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Design presented for expanded pedestrian mall

By BRIAN BREHM The Winchester Star

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This image shows the conceptual design of an expanded Loudoun Street Mall, which would include a two-block portion of Boscawen Street. City Council voted in January to permanently close that section of Boscawen following a fatal accident in October that claimed the life of a 3-year-old girl at Boscawen's intersection with the pedestrian mall.

Provided by the city of Winchester

A conceptual design of an expanded Loudoun Street Mall has been presented to City Council's Planning and Economic Development Committee.

The forthcoming changes to the pedestrian mall were brought about after an Oct. 8 tragedy where a 3-year-old girl was fatally struck by an eastbound vehicle at the mall's intersection with Boscawen Street. That was the only place on the mall where cars were allowed to cross over Loudoun Street's brick-paved walking surface.

Immediately following the accident, Winchester City Manager John Piper ordered the temporary closing of a two-block portion of Boscawen from Indian Alley to the parking lot behind Rouss City Hall. Three months later, City Council voted to make the closure permanent and directed Public Services Director Perry Eisenach to prepare a design that incorporated the closed portion of Boscawen Street into the Loudoun Street Mall.

"When council decided to close [a portion of] Boscawen a couple of months ago, we knew we had a tall task ahead of us to be able to try to do construction on improvements starting January 4th, 2027," Eisenach told the committee at its meeting last week in Rouss City Hall. "We are still on schedule [and] we have the conceptual design that we're presenting today."

Once a Boscawen/Loudoun design is approved by the full nine-member City Council, Eisenach said city staff will work through September "to finish the design drawings and advertise the project for bid. That will give us enough time to get the contract awarded so that the contractor is ready to go on January 4th."

Eisenach said the selected contractor will need to have the mall expansion "substantially completed" in time for the [100th Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival's](#) Wine Fest, which is scheduled to take place on April 23.

"We feel confident that, unless we get a 10-foot snowstorm, we can meet that schedule," Eisenach said.

The conceptual design presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee last week shows that the closed portion of Boscawen Street would be paved with the same type of bricks and decorated with the same type of tree planters that currently line the Loudoun Street Mall. Additionally, at the soon-to-be-created western and eastern entrances to the mall along Boscawen Street, signs would welcome visitors to Old Town and removable safety bollards would be placed to prevent vehicles from entering. There will also be loading zones at each end of the closed portion of Boscawen to serve the businesses to be added to the pedestrian mall.

Winchester Deputy Public Services Director and City Engineer Kelly Henshaw told the committee that two decorative fountains are planned for installation at the Loudoun/Boscawen intersection that would be known as the Old Town Center Square. More removable bollards would also be placed on the eastern and western sides of the square to prevent delivery drivers from turning onto Boscawen Street after dropping off packages along the mall, and the brick columns already in place on the northern and southern sides of the square would be left intact.

"We're proposing to redo the pavement treatment in that area with something a little different from what we have now, but it will complement the brick and the pavers that are [currently] down there," Henshaw said of the new Old Town Center Square.

The expanded, improved mall would also allow the stores and restaurants in the closed two-block portion of Boscawen Street to offer outdoor seating for customers, Henshaw said.

"That is a major value add for \$85 a year," said Planning and Economic Development Committee member John Fox, referring to the fee for an annual city permit that allows downtown businesses to offer outdoor seating.

Indian Alley, which runs parallel to the western side of the Loudoun Street Mall, could see more traffic as drivers realize they can no longer cross the mall on Boscawen Street. As a safety measure, Eisenach said the northern exit of Indian Alley onto West Piccadilly Street is being converted to right-turn only, and that change may be implemented within the next month.

On the eastern side of the closed portion of Boscawen, Henshaw said a long planter is planned for installation between the brick-paved mall and the parking lot that serves the Feltner Building. Drivers who use that parking lot, as well as the one behind Rouss City Hall, would be able to enter from Rouss Avenue and exit behind City Hall onto the short section of West Boscawen that will remain open to vehicles and intersects with North Cameron Street.

Henshaw said the open portion of Boscawen is proposed to reduce in size to a single lane and reconfigured crosswalks and stormwater drainage pipes are planned for the intersection of West Boscawen and North Cameron.

Even though Rouss City Hall will not be part of the expanded pedestrian mall, the city hopes to take advantage of the upcoming mall renovation by installing brick sidewalks around the building and improving its existing landscaping.

"The sidewalks are in dire need of repair," Henshaw said.

As a final touch, new brick sidewalks and stormwater pipes are also planned for the one-block section of East Boscawen Street that runs between the Winchester-Frederick County Joint Judicial Center and Court Square Autopark.

The three-member Planning and Economic Development Committee voted unanimously to forward the conceptual Boscawen/Loudoun design to City Council, which could take up the matter as early as Tuesday when it meets in Rouss City Hall.

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