

Biotech Research Park Phase III – Leigh Street Streetscape Improvements Project

Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to reduce the roadway cross-section to provide both operational and pedestrian/bicycle improvements along the underutilized E. Leigh Street corridor. Operational improvements include the installation of new traffic signal equipment at the signalized intersections, including modern pedestrian signal equipment, and implementation of new signal timing and phasing. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements include the installation of sidewalks, improved plaza/frontage areas, and the construction of a shared-use path along the northern portion of the proposed roadway. The project will also include streetscaping throughout the project limits to transform E. Leigh Street into an aesthetically pleasing bike/walk corridor and help promote multi-modal transportation along this vital downtown corridor.

Project Background

Currently, E. Leigh Street is predominately a six-lane divided roadway with parking allowed in the outer most lane. To the east of the project corridor, existing E. Leigh Street features a 4-lane divided cross-section with on-roadway bicycle lanes on the outside of both the eastbound and westbound lanes, just east of N. 12th Street. To the west of the project corridor, existing E. Leigh Street features a 4-lane undivided cross-section, west of N. 4th Street. The existing roadside development is a mix of commercial, public, and educational facilities. A fair amount of pedestrian and bicycle traffic already utilize this corridor with the presence of the Greater Richmond Convention Center, several Virginia Commonwealth University buildings, the former Richmond Coliseum arena. The multi-modal traffic is expected to increase as current and future redevelopment in the area occurs.

The proposed E. Leigh Street Streetscape/Biotech corridor improvement project recommends roadway, drainage, utility, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements on E. Leigh Street starting at the intersection of N. 4th Street and extending approximately 3,300 feet to the east, just east of 12th Street. The project proposes the reconfiguration to a 5-lane typical section with two eastbound travel lanes and two westbound travel lanes and a single center lane to provide left turn bays at various intersections within the project limits. The project will also include improvements to various side streets to provide transitions and tie-ins to the proposed E. Leigh Street alignment. Along with the new roadway alignment, the project proposes improvements to the existing drainage system and relocation/adjustments to any impacted existing utilities.

Project Budget and Funding

The project is currently estimated to cost approximately **\$8,114,200**.

Project is a mix of both State and Federal funds and has been approved for State funding through VDOT's Smart Scale program under VDOT UPC 115556 and Federal funding under the Biotech Research Park grant program under VDOT UPC 112105. Project funding is broken down as follows:

<u>UPC 115556</u>	<u>UPC 112105</u>	<u>Total</u>
\$6,608,000	\$886,000	\$7,494,000

Project Schedule

Currently the project is scheduled to be advertised in August 2023 with construction to begin in the fall of 2023.

