LOCAL NEWS

TR won't be just a wide spot in road

Narrower, landscaped Main Street designed for foot traffic, parking

By Angelia Davis
STAFF WRITER
adavis@greenvillenews.com

TRAVELERS REST — A $4 million revitalization project underway in Travelers Rest is designed to attract new businesses and more foot traffic to the city's downtown.

As part of the work, crews are trimming a portion of U.S. 276, which is the city's Main Street, from four to two lanes for traffic and a center turn lane.

When the work is completed in November, U.S. 276 will also be lined with new landscaping, street lights, a park with a water feature, a sidewalk, on-street parallel parking and synchronized traffic signals.

A goal is to create a "true central business district," said Dianna Turner, city administrator.

U.S. 276, a draw for small, specialty shops and services, has been declining over the years largely because of a lack of ample parking for the businesses, Mayor Roy Reynolds said.

The revitalization project will create new parking and help establish the downtown as a destination, he said.

Reynolds said the city wants the downtown to be pedestrian-friendly with the presence of the Greenville Hospital System Swamp Rabbit Tram Trail alongside Main Street.

"It's hard to have a pedestrian-friendly downtown when you have a four-lane highway and people flying through there at 50 to 55 miles an hour," he said.

"Having on-street parking and a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere should help us with a lot of retail up and down U.S. 276."

Turner said it will also slow people down so they can see what folks in Travelers Rest already know, which is "this is a great community."

"What we're trying to do is create this community that people can see just by driving through or stopping and going in to shop," she said. "Now, you might drive through, but you don't see all the great things that are here because you're in too big of a hurry to get through."

Parallel parking spaces are being installed on U.S. 276 and on Old Buncombe Road.

Access into the strip center between Roe and Old Buncombe roads, as well as parking there, has also changed.

Traffic must now enter the center's parking lot from Main Street and exit onto Roe Road. Parallel parking spaces are now in front of the center's shop along with space for thru traffic.

Some merchants said the change is costing them parking spaces and customers.

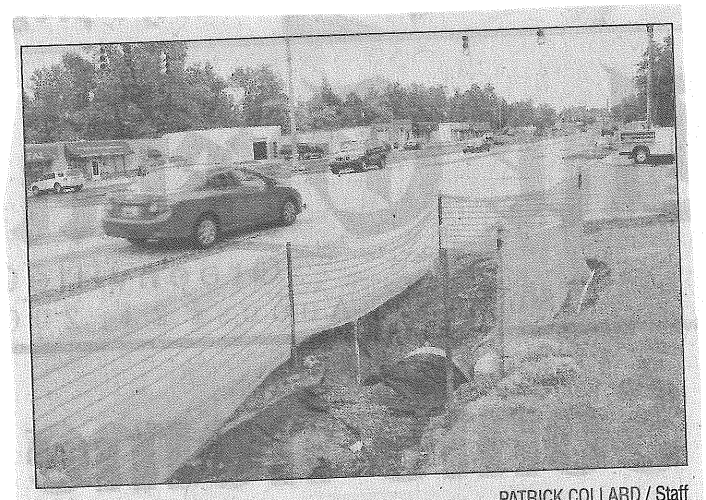
Ray Powell, who has operated his barber shop in the strip center for 39 years, said nobody knows how to get in there and nobody knows how to park.

He is thinking about moving his business.

Susan Buser, executive director of Trillium Arts Centre, also in that strip center, said her group has asked the city, once construction is complete, to put 20- or 30-minute parking spaces so people can access the art or welcome center for short periods of time.

Turner said she knows merchants have been concerned about losing parking. But, she said, the Swamp Rabbit Tram Trail was coming through that area anyway and all of that parking was going away.

"What we did was try to come in and make sense of what would work in there to still allow some parking and certainly to allow traffic through there," she said.



PATRICK COLLARD / Staff

Travelers Rest is redoing Main Street to slow down traffic and create a "true central business district."