

SUFFEROLK

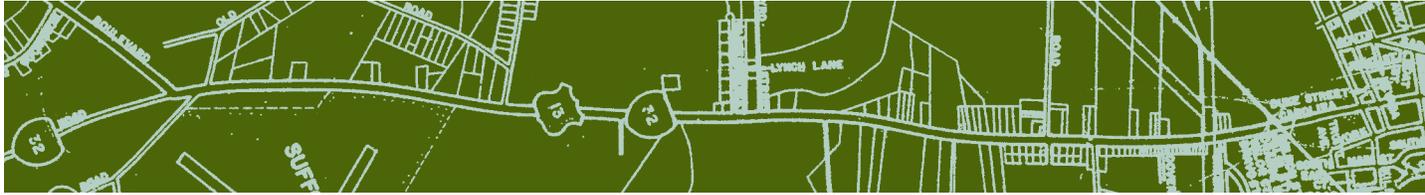


CAROLINA ROAD CORRIDOR *Design Guidelines*



NOVEMBER 2003

SUFFOLK



CAROLINA ROAD CORRIDOR

Design Guidelines

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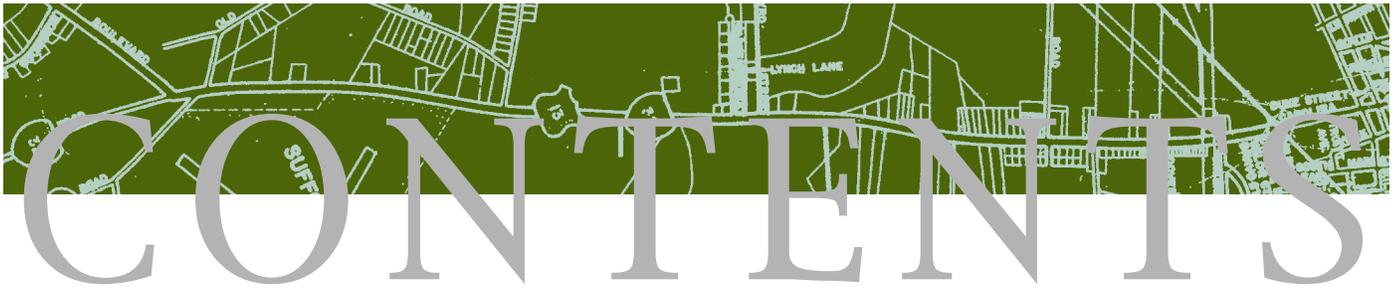
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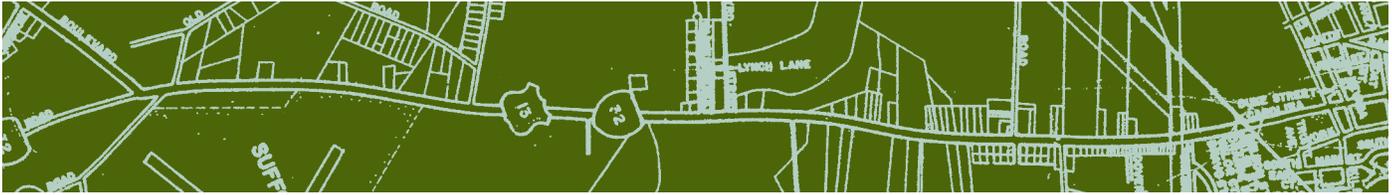
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Background and Scope of Project

In anticipation and support of the continued revitalization of the downtown, the City of Suffolk desires to develop and implement a series of corridor and gateway design guidelines and improvement plans for selected major transportation routes servicing downtown. This plan addresses the Southern Route 13/32 or Carolina Road corridor from Whaleyville to downtown.

In 1998 the City of Suffolk adopted the 2018 Comprehensive Plan (2018 Plan). A major component of the Plan is the Downtown Suffolk Initiatives Plan. Two major obstacles to downtown revitalization were identified in this Plan: 1) the lack of a connected network of streets, and 2) the lack of a coherent vision for the area.

In identifying the key initiative areas, the goal was to focus energy in the

areas where public investment will foster private investment in the future. Recently, design guidelines were completed for the neighborhood area at the north end of the corridor, Hall Place. While the corridor itself has little residential zoning, this important neighborhood is adjacent to the corridor. The corridor joins the downtown area and is an important gateway entrance into this district. Currently, public and private efforts are underway to enhance the downtown and create economic development opportunities. In addition the western leg of the Route 58 bypass has been completed and currently terminates at the Carolina Road corridor, making this corridor an important transportation connection in the City.

This plan addresses issues such as streetscape/landscape, maintenance, access, and paving in the public right of way. Recommendations are made

for short and long term improvements along with implementation strategies.

The following recommendations were made after several meetings with City staff and VDOT representatives. Several driving tours were conducted and a draft set of recommendations were reviewed and edited by all parties.



Goals of the Design Guidelines

Goals were established as a framework for evaluating all of the potential recommendations. These include:

- 1 Enhance entrance and gateway to downtown Suffolk;
- 2 Enhance heritage tourism;
- 3 Strengthen pedestrian connections to downtown and the neighborhoods;
- 4 Create a sense of place and arrival with a distinctive design vocabulary that relates to the existing historic and character-defining design vocabulary of Suffolk.

Existing Desirable Design Features

A number of existing design features where inventoried and noted as positive features that this plan should build on. They include:

1. New entry signs;
2. Historic light poles near downtown;
3. Black color for painting streetscape poles and furniture;
4. Concrete pavers in crosswalks that look like brick and are laid in a herringbone pattern;
5. Attractive street signs.
6. Existing grassy medians
7. Existing sidewalk improvements



New entry signs.



Historically styled lights at overpass

Project Areas

The project area is very large and is comprised of smaller areas with their own distinct character. The one common element in the project area is the road itself. From Whaleyville to the overpass, its size, design, speed and character varies. The challenge is to create a sense of place and continuity for the entire length of the road. To make the task easier, the project area has been broken down into distinct subareas.



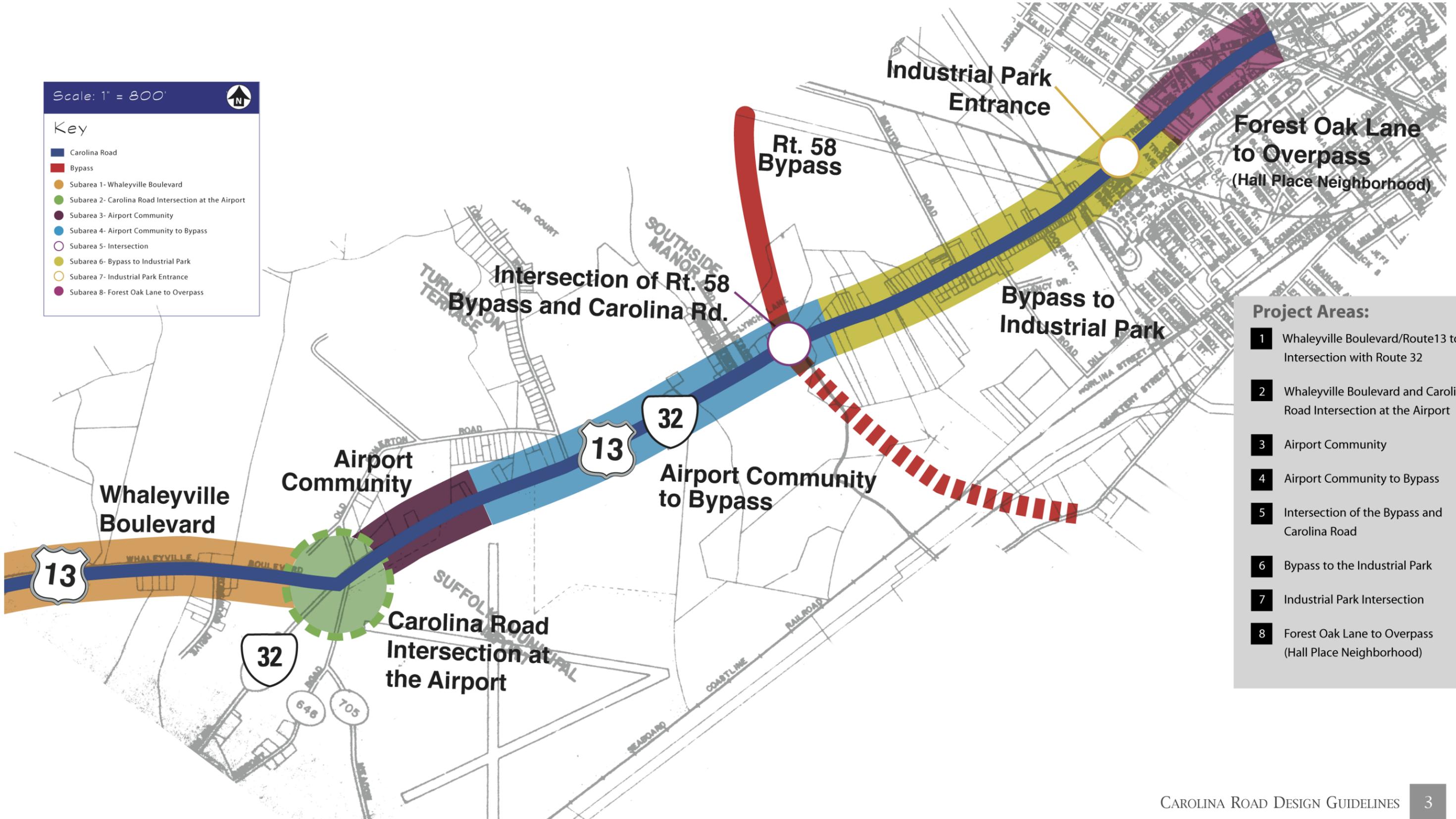
Downtown crosswalks using concrete pavers.



Scale: 1" = 800'

Key

- Carolina Road
- Bypass
- Subarea 1- Whaleyville Boulevard
- Subarea 2- Carolina Road Intersection at the Airport
- Subarea 3- Airport Community
- Subarea 4- Airport Community to Bypass
- Subarea 5- Intersection
- Subarea 6- Bypass to Industrial Park
- Subarea 7- Industrial Park Entrance
- Subarea 8- Forest Oak Lane to Overpass



- Project Areas:**
- 1 Whaleyville Boulevard/Route13 to Intersection with Route 32
 - 2 Whaleyville Boulevard and Carolina Road Intersection at the Airport
 - 3 Airport Community
 - 4 Airport Community to Bypass
 - 5 Intersection of the Bypass and Carolina Road
 - 6 Bypass to the Industrial Park
 - 7 Industrial Park Intersection
 - 8 Forest Oak Lane to Overpass (Hall Place Neighborhood)

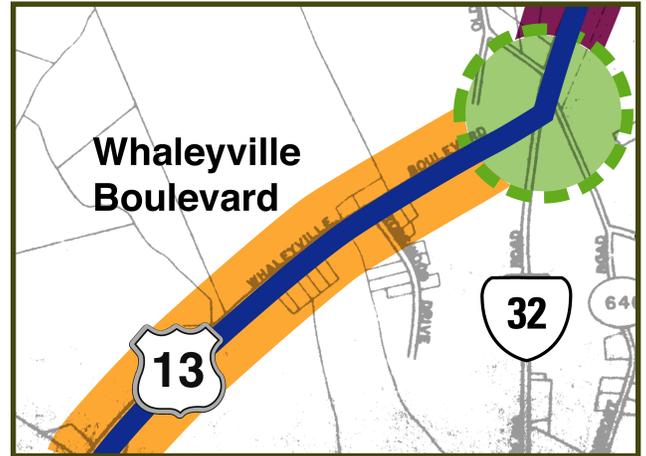


Project Area 1

Whaleyville Boulevard/ Route 13 to Intersection with Route 32



Whaleyville Boulevard looking south from the intersection with Route 32.



Description and Issues

Route 13 is a two-lane rural road that connects Whaleyville to downtown Suffolk.

The area is zoned agriculture and the road is lined with fields, fences and trees. These are very attractive features of the area.

Traffic moves at slower speed due to two-lane design. Road splits into four-lane divided highway before it merges with Route 32, causing traffic to speed up. The posted speed is 55 mph.

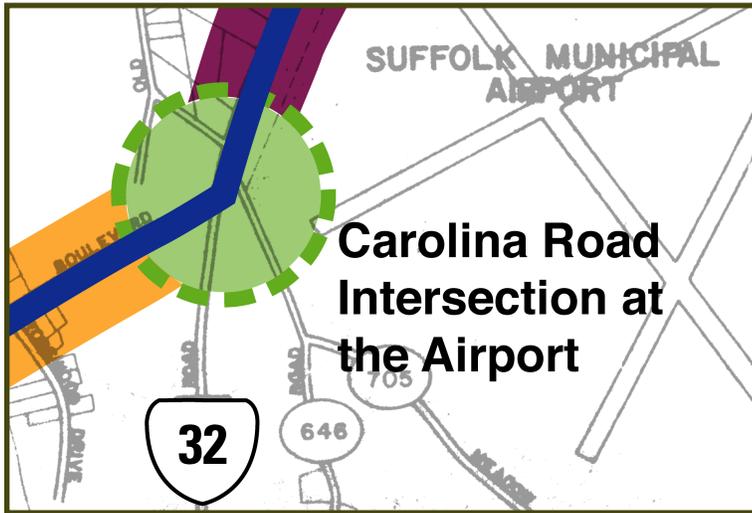
Recommendations

- 1.1 **Shoulders.** The shoulders in this area are narrow and planted with grass. There are few improvements to be made except to keep the area well maintained.
- 1.2 **Median.** Provide median planting according to VDOT regulations where the road splits and becomes a four-lane divided highway.
- 1.3 **Signs.** Begin trailblazing sign system to historic downtown /visitors center at this point because there is a long distance between this entry and the downtown.



Project Area 2

Whaleyville Boulevard and Carolina Road Intersection at the Airport



Route 32/13 looking at entrance to airport



Junction of Route 32 and 13 looking north.

Description and Issues

The road is a four-lane divided highway. Speed limit is posted at 55 mph.

Roadway shoulders are standard rural paved shoulders that vary in width from two feet to larger paved shoulders at turns. There is gravel between the road and grass. There are no curbs.

The Median is narrow and planted with grass. There is curbing at the turn lanes.

In addition to the junction of Routes 13 and 32, the airport road joins this intersection. This road (Rt. 646) crosses Rt 32/13 and continues northwest.

Aside from standard highway signs there are several private signs that need to be replaced or removed. Most notable is a billboard for a gas station advertising gas for 79¢ a gallon. There are backlit, temporary message signs in front of several businesses. The Airport sign was being upgraded at the time of this study.

Mature trees on all sides of the intersection frame the intersection and give it an overall attractive quality. Grass is the primary ground cover.



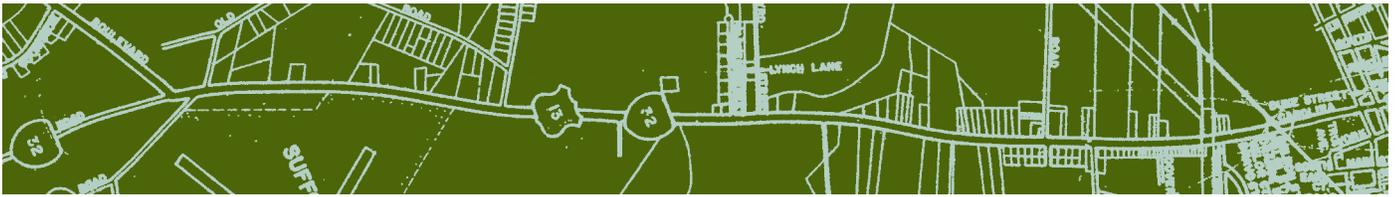
Looking south on Route 32/13 at the Route 646 intersection.



View showing old billboards and signs that need to be removed.



Aerial view showing intersection of Routes 13 and 32.



Airport entrance with suggested improvements.



Existing conditions at airport entrance.

landscaping in intersection islands as well. See further recommendations for islands and medians below.

Recommendations

2.1 Shoulder Treatment and Landscaping. Provide consistent paved shoulder widths along the roadway of at least three feet at right lane. Since mature trees already line the road, focus planting at a lower level to provide color, consistency

and screening for parking areas. Coordination with VDOT and private property owners will be required. Focus special attention at the Airport entrance. Provide an improved entrance with curb and gutter, new street lighting and low scaled landscaping. Use low

2.2 Median. Since the grassy median is very narrow and difficult to mow and maintain, rebuild median with curb and finish with brick-colored concrete pavers. Rebuild traffic islands with curbs and borders of pavers. Plant center of islands with low, VDOT approved, plantings. Rebuild ends of medians with curbs and brick. Plant low landscaping at end of median as colorful entrance to the Airport Community.



Island at the junction of Routes 13 and 32 with suggested improvements.



Existing conditions at the triangle at Route 13 and 32.



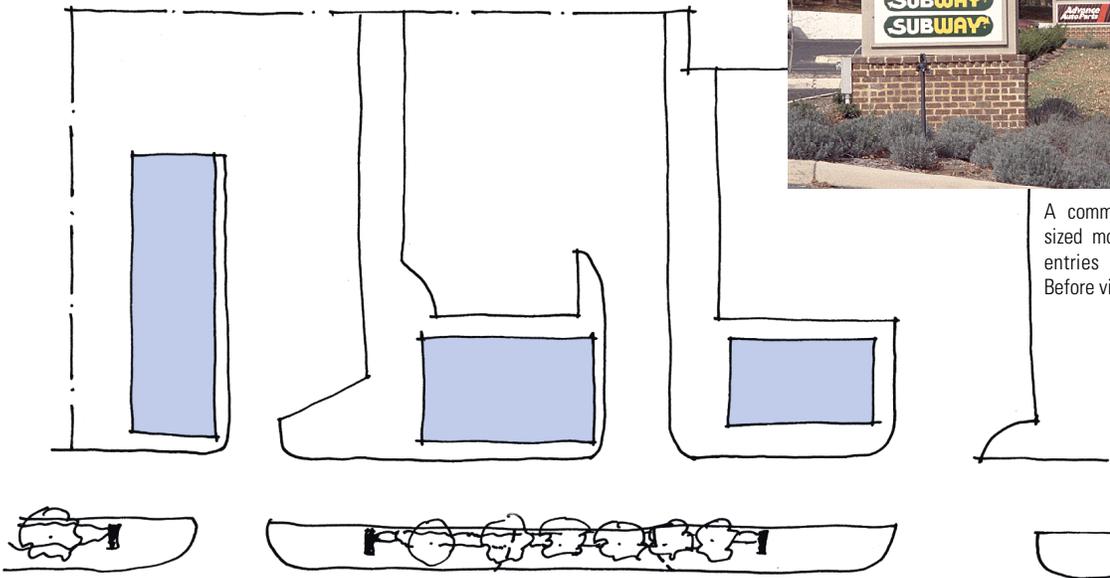
2.3 **Private Site Signs:** Work with private property owners to remove obsolete billboards, signs, and temporary signs. Encourage downsizing signs to monument style signs.

2.4 **Public Signs:** Consolidate route signs onto a single dark background and paint poles black.

2.5 **Private Buildings:** Work with property owners to make improvements to the commercial buildings located in the intersection. There is an opportunity to consolidate entry points and provide landscaping.



A commercial corridor with down-sized monument signs, consolidated entries and added landscaping. Before view (top), after view (bottom).



Private properties can explore consolidating entries and providing more space for ground mounted signs and landscaping.



Project Area 3

Airport Community



Entry sign for the Airport Community.



Description and Issues

This is a small rural commercial area on the four-lane divided highway. The speed is posted at 55 mph. Shoulders are 8 - 10 feet wide to allow vehicles to pull over and access businesses.

A new sign marks the Airport Community. The standard highway mileage sign indicates Downtown is four miles away. There is a blue visitor center sign before the highway sign for downtown. It is too small and is placed next to another blue highway sign, making it very difficult to see.

In front of a number of businesses, there is a grassy shoulder between the road and the building and/or parking lot.

The median is planted with grass. There is no curb which will limit planting opportunities.

There are no sidewalks connecting businesses on the west side of the road. There are not enough businesses on the east side of the road to warrant a sidewalk.

The land on the east side of the road is zoned industrial and consists of small lots lining the road. The airport is located behind these small lots. On the west side, the land is zoned B2 Business.



Typical shoulder condition on the west side of Route 13/32



Mileage sign for downtown.



Existing visitor center sign.



Recommendations

3.1 Shoulder treatment: Ensure that the shoulder is paved the full 8-10 feet in front of businesses to allow for smooth access. Explore adding a sidewalk on the west side of the road.

3.2 Medians: Remove the grass where the median narrows at turn lanes. Replace with curb and pavers. Add low, VDOT-approved plantings to back up the sign and give the Airport Community entrance more character. Drainage will

need to be studied to ensure no problems when a curb is added.

3.3 Signs: Work with private site owners to remove obsolete signs and consolidate signs so that the number is reduced. Fewer signs will allow the remaining signs to be more readable. See illustration p. 10.

3.4 Public Signs: Continue decorative trailblazing sign system for downtown, the visitor's center and other important sites. Consolidate route signs onto solid dark background. Paint poles black.

3.5 Road access from businesses:

Encourage property owners to consolidation vehicular access points in order to have more landscaping along the edge of the road and a neater appearance. See illustration p. 10.

3.6 Private Buildings: Work with property owners to make improvements to the commercial buildings located in the community.

3.7 Lighting: Explore adding lighting in front of businesses for pedestrian use.



View looking north showing median and island improvements.

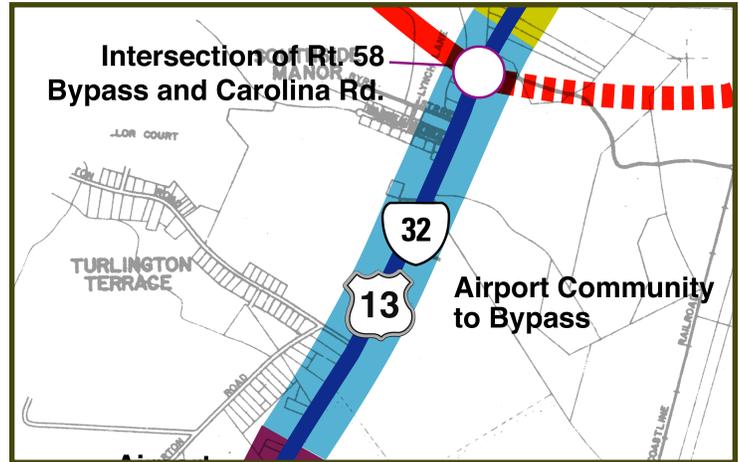


Project Area 4

Airport Community to Bypass



Rt. 13/32 looking north to the new bypass.



Description and Issues

The road continues as a four lane divided highway. Zoning on the west side is commercial B1, B2, or OI. Zoning on the east side is industrial however there are many nonconforming residential uses that line the road.

While the road is very straight and has nonconforming uses, it has very positive visual character primarily because it is sparsely developed and is lined with mature trees.

The paved shoulder varies from two feet to approximately six feet and is in good condition. The remaining right of way is grassy.

The median is finished with grass but has no curb which will limit the available options for median plantings. The grassy median stops at the 7-11 which is also the end of this subarea.

There are few signs.

There are a variety of building types and uses ranging from gas stations to churches and residences. There are few eyesores.



A view of the paved shoulder on the east side of the road showing residential driveways.



Rt. 13/32 looking north. The fence on the right is boundary of the airport property.



Landscaping proposal for shoulder at the airport.

Recommendations

4.1 Shoulders: There is an opportunity for shoulder planting in the right of way that is adjacent to the airport. Currently there is a utilitarian chain link fence and power poles. This would be a good opportunity for attractive planting.

4.2 Median: Since the median has no curb but appears wide enough for additional planting, add new landscaping that will provide color and texture at intervals along the highway. This can provide a lower scale planting to complement the taller trees that line the road and provide visual interest from the automobile since this stretch of road is so long and straight.

4.4 Signs: Continue trailblazing sign system.

4.5 Buildings and Private Sites: Enhance buildings and edge treatments to parking lots when feasible.

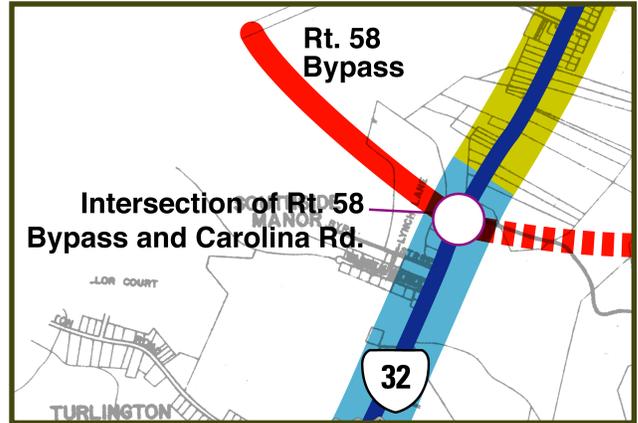


Project Area 5

Intersection of the Bypass and Carolina Road



Rt. 13/32 looking north showing the median that is now turning lanes.



Description and Issues

At this point, the Route 58 Bypass enters Carolina Road. The grassy median was removed at the 7-11 south of the bypass and reoccurs again at the overpass. After the overpass, the grassy median does not reoccur again in the project area. The character of the road encourages cars to move quickly through the area.

The bypass is elevated and has large areas of grass-covered banks.

Recommendations

- 5.1 Road:** The road has recently been paved. Shoulders are narrow except at the overpass.
- 5.2 Median:** Explore low maintenance planting in the median.
- 5.3 Landscaping:** Provide landscaping on the banks of the overpass to create a pleasing entry to this part of town.
- 5.4 Signs:** Continue trailblazer sign system. Encourage removal, replacement and/or redesign of existing private site signs.



The overpass showing grassy median and bank.

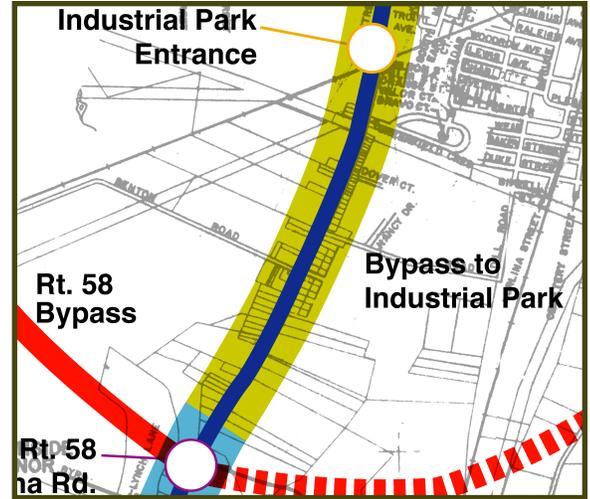


Project Area 6

Bypass to the Industrial Park



High tension power lines near the railroad crossing.



Description and Issues

The road continues to be four lanes with a paved median. The speed is posted at 55 mph and slows to 45 mph after the turn for the truck route.

The zoning along this portion of the Road is primarily industrial with some areas of business zoning. Currently there are a number of houses which are non-conforming uses. The houses are on narrow but deep lots. Each house has a driveway access. The shoulder in front of the houses is narrow and does not provide adequate pull-over space. Drainage occurs in open ditches that run parallel to the road.

There are no sidewalks until the Industrial Park intersection.

The railroad and high tension power lines cross the road in this section, giving the road an industrial feeling.

The median is paved and used as a turning lane. There are very few business entrances along this portion of the road.

Recommendations

- 6.1 Median.** Since there are few business entries, the area is zoned industrial and there are so many non-conforming residences, remove paving and add a planted median with a curb to allow for trees to be planted. Determine several key locations for turn lanes. Pave ends of turn lane medians with pavers.



Before and after showing addition of planted median and lighting.



6.2 Shoulder: Where residences front the road, place drains in conduit and provide wider shoulder for pull-off, curb and gutter. With traffic moving at 55mph, this will provide safer ingress and egress for the existing residences. At the turn for the Truck Route, add conduit and cover ditch. Provide landscaping. Straighten and consolidate the signs.

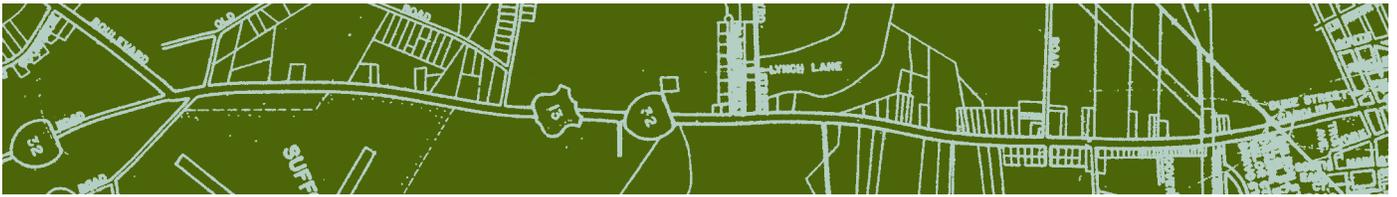
6.3 Median: Replace paved median with a raised landscaped median set within concrete curb.

6.4 Lighting: When the planted median is added, plan for decorative lights to be installed. This will provide be an additional cue that the area is becoming more urban and will strengthen the entry sequence into the downtown.

6.5 Signs: Continue the trailblazer sign system.



Shoulder at the intersection of the truck route before (above) and after (left) suggested improvements.

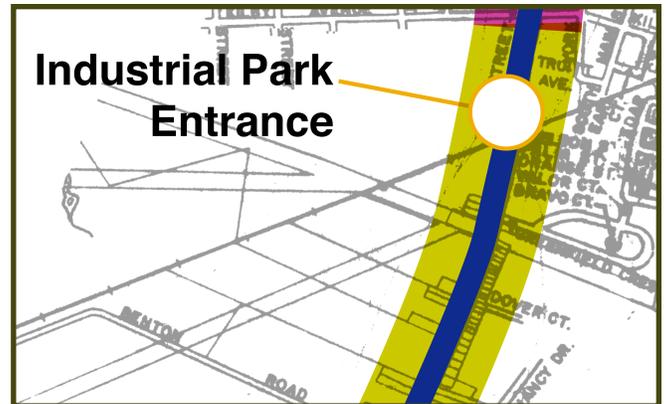


Project Area 7

Industrial Park Intersection



Industrial Park entrance, looking south on Carolina Road.



Description and Issues

Since the entrance to the industrial park was recently built, there are curb, gutter, sidewalks and signals. It has also been landscaped. Handicapped access to the sidewalks is provided.

Recommendations

- 7.1 Median.** Continue planted and lighted median.
- 7.2 Shoulder.** While there are sidewalks, they do not connect to anything. Continue walks so that they connect with the Hall Place neighborhood, to the residential uses south of the entrance, and to the industrial uses inside the Park.
- 7.3 Crosswalks.** Provide stamped and stained crosswalk across the access road to connect the sidewalks.

- 7.4 Signal Poles.** Paint galvanized signal poles black to match the other upgraded light and signal poles downtown.

- 7.5 Lighting.** Provide pedestrian scaled lights along sidewalk north to downtown and south to railroad tracks.



Aerial view of intersection at the industrial park.



Project Area 8

Forest Oak Lane to Overpass
(Hall Place Neighborhood)



Carolina Road looking south.



**Forest Oak Lane
to Overpass**
(Hall Place Neighborhood)

Description and Issues

This area is a mix of residential and business use.

This is an older, more urban area. Sidewalks and handicap ramps are provided because the area is denser and there is more pedestrian activity.

There are no marked crosswalks on side streets or across Carolina road.

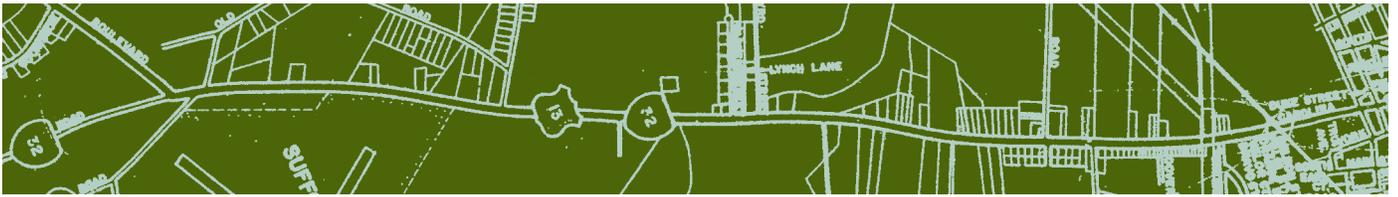
Historic lights end at the bridge to downtown. Cobra head lights continue south down Carolina Road.

Power lines are more visible in this area because the right of way is narrower and there are fewer trees than areas further south on Carolina Road.

The road remains four lane but it is too narrow for a median. However trees have been planted in the right of way next to the sidewalk.



Carolina Road looking north to bridge to downtown.



Crosswalk plan for Carolina Road at the Hall Place neighborhood.

Recommendations

Road: If the traffic counts are greatly reduced due to the bypass consider reducing size of road to two lanes with a planted median, turn lanes, and on-street parking .

Median: Replace concrete median with median finished with concrete pavers.

Sidewalks: Ensure that current sidewalks are well maintained. Add sidewalks on side streets to connect neighborhoods to Carolina Road. If road is narrowed, widen sidewalk and add landscaping to make the sidewalks more pedestrian friendly.

Crosswalks: Add pedestrian crosswalks to join the sidewalks on Carolina Road. Consider adding wide crosswalks across Carolina Road in a few key places where pedestrian travel is the heaviest. Use stamped and stained asphalt.

Landscaping: Efforts have already been made to plant trees along the street. Add trees to median if road design is changed.

Lighting: Add historic style lights along the road in this area.

Public Signs: Continue trailblazing signs.



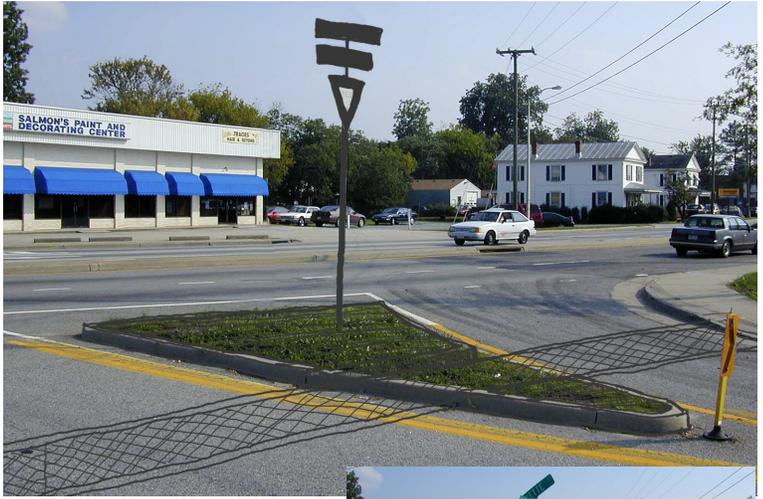
Plan showing scaled-down road and median.



Carolina Road with new pedestrian scaled lighting.



Carolina Road scaled down to two travel lanes with a median and pedestrian scaled lighting.



Triangle before and after new crosswalks.



Carolina Road as it exists and with proposed crosswalks.

An intersection looking across Carolina Road as it is today and with proposed crosswalks.

