



Design Public Hearing **Tuesday, April 18, 2023** **5-7 p.m.**

Project Fast Facts

Cost: \$30,000 estimated for pavement marking and traffic control work directly related to installing the new traffic pattern, and signs.

Speed limit: 35 mph

Traffic count: 13,000-14,000 vehicles a day, on average (2021)

Project Schedule: This traffic pattern would be installed in summer 2024, after the road is resurfaced. Specific dates to be announced in advance.

Why is this design recommended? How does it make travel safer?

Crashes are occurring on Route 360 in Warsaw west of Main Street at a rate that exceeds the state average, indicating there is a safety concern that needs to be addressed. East of Main Street, narrow lanes are also contributing to crashes.

Research has shown that crashes can be reduced 29 percent on a four-lane road carrying 20,000 vehicles a day or fewer if the road's pavement markings are painted to have two travel lanes, with a center two-way left turn lane. This traffic pattern change is informally known as a "road diet."

Road diets exist in numerous locations across the United States, including at more than 35 locations in Virginia. Road diets are installed on Route 3 in the Town of Montross in Westmoreland County, and on Route 33 in Middlesex County.

Anticipated safety benefits:

- Reduces crash rate overall
- Significantly reduces severe crash rate resulting in fatalities and injuries
- Reduces rear-end crashes by eliminating drivers stopping or slowing in left lane to make a left turn
- Reduces angle crashes. Drivers entering Route 360 from side streets and driveways will cross fewer lanes when turning left.
- Reduces head-on crashes by increasing the separation between eastbound and westbound Route 360 traffic
- Traffic calming. Reduces vehicle speeds by average 3-5 mph.
- Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross
- Additional shoulder space for pedestrian and bicyclist traffic, complimenting the town sidewalk enhancements

- Improves sight distance
- Wider travel lanes will reduce mirror side swipes with existing utility poles on larger vehicles & farm equipment.

Will the road have to be widened? Will any properties need to be acquired?

No. This project can be accomplished within the existing footprint of Route 360. No property needs to be acquired for the project.

Route 360 in Warsaw is scheduled to be repaved during 2024. Installing new pavement markings after paving is complete will convert Route 360 to two travel lanes with a center two-way left turn lane. These new lane markings will allow VDOT to address safety concerns quickly, for minimal cost.

What is the crash history on Route 360 in this area?

Crashes are occurring on Route 360 in Warsaw more frequently than on other primary roads in Virginia.

Over the past five years, between 2017-2021, there were 49 reported crashes on Route 360 in the project area, between Route 3 and just west of Gordon Lane. This includes crashes that resulted in injuries, and/or involved at least \$1,500 in property damages. There were no crashes resulting in a fatality over the five-year period.

Most crashes are angle crashes or rear-end crashes. An angle crash can occur when a driver turning right or left collides with another vehicle at an angle. Rear-end crashes often occur when drivers slowing or stopping to make a turn are struck by cars following behind.

Won't the design make it harder to turn out from a side street?

Travelers are expected to have a safer experience turning onto Route 360. Drivers turning left will have fewer lanes to cross. And, all motorists are expected to have improved sight distance to see oncoming traffic with fewer travel lanes.

Is VDOT aware of heavier traffic volumes during the summer months? Will the road diet function during peak travel times/seasons?

Road diets function best in locations carrying less than 20,000 vehicles a day, on average. Traffic volumes in Warsaw are comfortably below this threshold, at around 13,000 vehicles a day, and with traffic volumes expected to be at 18,000 vehicles a day

in 2035. Peak travel occurs in Warsaw during Fourth of July weekend, when there has been a maximum of around 10,000 vehicles a day in the eastbound direction.

Why can't we just install a few traffic signals to help people turn?

Many side streets that intersect with Route 360 in the project area do not connect, limiting the number of vehicles they carry. None of the side streets have traffic volumes that are heavy enough to warrant a traffic signal. Traffic volumes at even the most heavily traveled side street, Washington Avenue, do not meet the threshold for installing a signal.

Installing traffic signals would not be expected to achieve the crash reduction rates anticipated with a road diet. And, the signals would add to driver delay and vehicle emissions on Route 360.

Won't a two-way turn lane in the center create a crash risk?

Drivers turning left onto Route 360 can use the center two-way left turn lane as a refuge area before merging into traffic. Drivers can then wait for an appropriate gap in traffic to merge into the travel lane. Drivers turning into the center turn lane can travel up to approximately 150 feet as they wait.

Crashes that would occur in a center two-way turn lane are more likely to occur at lower speeds, and would be less severe than angle crashes.

Can oversize vehicles and agriculture equipment be driven through a road diet?

Yes. The experience will be similar to traveling along any other two-lane road, and should be an improved experience over driving in the current lanes. The proposed travel lane width after the road diet is installed will vary from 11.5 feet to 13 feet. Current lane width on Route 360 varies from 9-11 feet.

Oversize vehicles or agricultural equipment that requires a wider turn than standard passenger vehicles and trucks can cross over pavement markings, as they do today. No medians or barriers will prevent wide turns for these types of vehicles.

How will people know how to drive through a road diet, especially visitors?

New road signs along Route 360 will direct motorists to navigate the new two-lane configuration, and use the center two-way left turn lane. Additionally, message boards can be placed to alert travelers to the new pattern on a temporary basis. VDOT will also

create and share public information materials on road diets in spring 2024, using fact sheets, videos and social media resources to target area residents and likely travelers in the Warsaw area. We will make these materials available to the local government, as well as residents, businesses and organizations to share.

Additionally, the Virginia Drivers Manual includes information on how to navigate a center two-way left turn lane.

Can this project be canceled? How will my comments be used?

We value comments from the public, including travelers who drive, ride transit, walk or bicycle along Route 360 in the project area. Your observations will assist us in understanding your experience in this corridor. Your comments may lead to additional ideas to promote safety along Route 360, and help with design efforts for this project or a future project.

All comments from the design public hearing will be reviewed by VDOT's district project development engineer before the project design is approved, which is required before the project can advance to construction.