

Sharing Your Voice - Ruritans Join the County's Route 15 Stakeholder Committee and Reach 223 Citizens

The Lucketts Ruritan Club is one of eight civic or business organizations and eleven Home Owner's Associations invited by Loudoun County to participate in the Route 15 Stakeholder's Committee. This Committee is meeting from August of this year through the early spring of 2018 and will give ongoing input to the implementation of two studies commissioned by the County to improve safety, reduce congestion and preserve access to Route 15 north of the Town of Leesburg.

By accepting the County's invitation to participate in this Committee, the Ruritans committed their Club to community outreach. There are hundreds of residents in Lucketts who do not have a Homeowner's Association. At the first meeting of the group in August, Stakeholders were asked to survey citizens regarding changes being considered to the segment of Route 15 that is south of the traffic light at Raspberry Falls and White's Ferry Road. The Ruritan organization immediately set out to gather this information and compile it for the County by the September 14th Stakeholders meeting. A large focus of the outreach effort was insuring that citizens NOT represented by a Homeowner's Association had a voice in the process. Many of the people who regularly support and use the weekly Ruritan Trash and Recycling Collection Service on Saturday mornings are in this group.

A handout explaining the purpose of the County's Survey and the Survey itself were distributed weekly from mid-August through early September at the Ruritan's Saturday morning Trash and Recycling Collection Service. In addition, the Club's website www.luckettsruritan.org was updated as a location to retrieve and return the Survey. To further reach citizens, a postcard mailer was sent the last week in August to all Postal Patrons who receive Lucketts News and Notes with instructions on completing the County Survey.

Local citizens completed 223 Surveys through the Ruritan's process. The following are the tabulated results of the Surveys collected.

Regarding Question A, the priorities for the southern segment of Route 15 were ranked by citizens as follows:

- Congestion Relief - 99.78%
- Safety - 84.08%
- Access to/from Route 15 - 69.73%
- Preservation - 24.66%
- Bike and Pedestrian Facilities - 9.42%
- Beautification - 5.61%
- No Ranking - 5.31% concerns.

Question B asked for citizens to take a position on widening Route 15 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes between Battlefield Parkway and a point north of White's Ferry Road.

- 60.99% Supported Widening
- 16.14% Supported Widening if Concerns Were Addressed
- 21.53% Did not Support Widening
- 1.35% provided position.

More than half of respondents provided detailed comments. Those comments are on display at the Lucketts Community Center and on the Ruritan Club website, www.luckettsruritan.org.

Questions C and D were about options for improving two specific intersections – first, Route 15 and King Street and second, Route 15 and White’s Ferry Road/Raspberry Drive. Each intersection was shown with three potential modifications to safely improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. Respondents were almost evenly split between Grade Separation (41.18%) and Roundabouts (39.17%) for the King Street intersection. Only 18.31% preferred the installation of a traffic signal. 6.28% did not respond to this question. There was more agreement about the installation of a Roundabout at the White’s Ferry/ Raspberry Drive intersection with 64.05% expressing this preference. The traffic signal was the next preference with 18.31% of the votes. Bow-tie Roundabouts received 11.81% preference with 5.83% providing no response.

The last question asked if there would be support for a Phased Approach to these improvements. Respondents overwhelmingly supported this with 86.94% of their votes. Peter Gustafson, the representative from the Ruritan Club to the Committee, presented the survey results at the September 14th Stakeholders meeting. The County’s consultant, Kimley-Horn, is taking this input as well as input from the other Stakeholders and will present their final recommendations for improvements to the southern section of Route 15 to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors on October 19th. The Supervisors must then decide what action to take in this matter and may begin the process of requesting funding to support their decision.

The Ruritan Club will continue the outreach to our community with information from the work of the Route 15 Stakeholder Committee. For more information about the Stakeholder Committee you can go to the County’s website www.loudoun.gov/Route15 or the Ruritan Club website www.luckettsruritan.org.