

Getting Around and Around and Around Blacksburg

The North Main Street Improvement Project, originally scheduled to be completed in spring 2012, is now set to be completed in October 2011!

Already you can see the benefits of the project as you go through downtown. Sidewalks along the College Avenue Extension (Old Main Street) in front of the Cellar Restaurant and extending up Main Street were widened to more than ten feet. Some downtown businesses have already taken advantage by adding outdoor dining in these spaces.

Scenic seating and a gathering space was built across from Alumni Mall. What a great place to watch the Holiday parade in December!

The existing traffic signals at the College Avenue and Turner Street intersections were replaced and a new traffic signal was installed at the Alumni Mall intersection. Now pedestrians can cross Main Street more safely. And it looks really nice!

The final phase of construction involves the completion of the roundabout at the intersection of North Main Street and Prices Fork Road.

So why did the town choose to put a roundabout at the intersection of North Main Street and Prices Fork Road? Basically, it will make the intersection safer, cheaper and cleaner.

According to the Virginia Department of Transportation, roundabouts have been shown to reduce fatal and injury crashes as much as 75 percent. Roundabouts eliminate maintenance and electricity costs associated with traffic signals. This can be as much as \$5,000 a year per intersection. By yielding at the entry rather than stopping and waiting for a green light, the delay is significantly reduced; and fewer delays translate to decreased fuel consumption and cleaner air.

The roundabout is something new to Blacksburg and those unfamiliar with how they work can visit www.blacksburg.gov/mainstreet to view a video on how to drive, walk or bike in a roundabout. Those using the roundabout need to keep these safety tips in mind:

- Always yield to pedestrians who may be crossing the road on your approach to the roundabout.
- Pedestrians, bicycle riders and motorcyclists are often very hard to see, so always watch for them.
- Buses and trucks may need more than one lane to enter or leave a roundabout, so keep clear of them.
- Always yield to vehicles that are in the roundabout.

In October, look for the roundabout to be completely open and ready for travelers to use to get around and around Blacksburg.