

Church Corner Improvement Project – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do we need to improve the Church Corner?

The proposed work on the Church Corner is the completion of the Lyme Street Improvement project, the third and final phase of work that began in 2001.

A number of concerns reflect the uniqueness of this corner. For visitors to Old Lyme, entering from Route 156, the project area is the gateway to the Historic District. The project area also involves two 90-degree turns off/onto Lyme Street, both with limited visibility, which demands extraordinary attention to safety. Two churches are in the project area, generating a significant volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, magnifying safety concerns. And the identification and protection of the South Green – now ragged and timeworn -- is long overdue.

2. What is the accident history at the Church Corner?

Only two accidents have been investigated over the last two years. There have been several occasions, however, when vehicles heading down Lyme Street failed to negotiate the left turn onto McCurdy Road. The proposed improvements should enable motorists to be better prepared for the turn.

3. What improvements are planned?

Proposed modifications to the Church Corner include: pavement regrading and reconstruction, curb placement, drainage relocation, improved and additional sidewalks, marking of pedestrian crossings, and relocation of a private driveway and some utility poles.

4. How did the Church Corner Committee develop its plan?

The goals of the Committee, since its inception, have been to:

- respect the historic character and aesthetics of the area
- improve pedestrian safety
- improve vehicular safety

- preserve existing parking spaces
- protect safe entry/egress to/from church driveways

The plan was developed in a very considered manner, keeping these goals foremost, with attention paid to input from residents, local officials, regulatory agencies, consulting engineers, and advisory groups.

5. What is the cost of the project?

In July of 2008, our engineering firm, Rowley, Hendriks & Associates, estimated the cost of the project at \$518,260. The \$600,000 total estimate provides a 16% contingency.

Project Estimate	\$486,860
Drainage Improvements	\$ 16,400
Utility Relocation	<u>\$ 15,000</u>
Subtotal	\$518,260
16% Contingency	<u>\$ 81,740</u>
Total	\$600,000

Since July, petroleum prices have come down (blacktop), and contractors should provide competitive prices in this economy. However, the actual cost of the project will not be firmed up until we receive bids from contractors.

6. Where will the money come from?

Municipal accounting standards require towns to obtain approval to spend 100% of the cost of a project, even if they have a grant approved. Accordingly, Old Lyme must obtain approval to spend up to \$600,000, even though the Town has been approved for a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (“STEAP”) grant in the amount of \$425,000. If we spent the full \$600,000 (which we do not expect), the Town would spend \$175,000 of Town funds, net of the grant funds.

7. Have Town Boards, Commissions, and officials approved the project?

The project has received approvals from the Fire Marshal, and the Boards of Selectmen and Finance. While the Historic District Commission does not have

jurisdiction over this project, it has continually reviewed the project and contributed valuable input.

8. What is the timetable of the project?

Provided the voters approve, we will finalize and send out bid packages in February. Contractors will return their bids in March and one contractor will be awarded the bid. Drainage work will be accomplished by mid-May and the road reconstruction will begin after the White Elephant sale in July. Thus, the major part of the work can occur during the school vacation. The entire project should be complete in September.

9. Aren't the real beneficiaries of the project the Congregational and Catholic churches?

Lyme Street is a principal town thoroughfare, and all public venues along the street – three schools, one college, Town Hall, the library, shops and galleries, along with the churches – will benefit from the improved and safer Lyme Street.

10. Have resident comments and questions been addressed?

The concerns and suggestions of residents have been considered, and incorporated into the plan wherever possible. Owners of property adjacent to the project have been represented on the Committee by Stanford Brainerd and David Rahr. In addition, there have been two neighborhood meetings and two public information hearings.

11. What specific improvements will be made to the South Green?

One of the Church Corner Committee's objectives was to identify, emphasize and protect the South Green. To that end, no parking will be allowed on or in front of the Green. In an effort to maintain the character of the Church Corner, it was decided to continue across the front of the Green the style of fence and sidewalk currently at the Congregational Church. The driveway that bisects the South Green will be moved eastward in order to eliminate the impression that it is a continuation of Lyme

Street. A row of granite posts linked by heavy chains will be installed from the Congregational Church driveway on the west to approximately 30 feet past the driveway into the Church of Christ the King on the east, with openings for driveways and the sidewalk. Between the granite posts and the road, a bluestone sidewalk will be installed to assure safe walking to and from both churches. A granite curb will mark the edge of the road.

12. Will utility poles be moved and at what cost?

Five utility poles will be moved, and because this is a municipal project, the work will be done at no cost to the town. One pole near the Ames driveway on McCurdy Road will be pivoted on its circumference to increase its distance from the road. The next pole toward the Congregational Church will be moved nearer the corner and protected by the granite curb. Around the corner on Lyme Street, three poles will be moved to align them better with other poles, both on Ferry Road and on Lyme Street. Moving the poles lessens the need for guy wires, which improves the overall appearance.

13. What will be done to Ferry Road and why?

Ferry Road will be widened slightly and delineated to the western boundary of the Congregational Church property. Granite curbs will be installed to that point on the south side, and on the north side of Ferry Road, only as far as the first driveway. Historically significant elements such as the carriage stoop on the FCCOL corner and the ancient curbstone on the northwest corner of Ferry Road and Lyme Street will be protected and incorporated into the improvements.

The northwest and southwest corners of Ferry Road and Lyme Street will be built out to include handicapped access from the sidewalks to the crosswalks. The stop sign on Ferry Road will be moved closer to the intersection for improved visibility. Catch basins will be relocated as necessary. The fire lane will be moved from its present location on Ferry Road to the southwest corner of Ferry Road and Lyme Street.

14. Will the trees be protected from the construction?

The Chair of the Old Lyme Tree Commission is a member of the Church Corner Committee. Trees will be protected during the removal and installation of pavement, installation of granite curbs, relocation of utility poles and placement of sidewalks. A licensed arborist will observe work around protected trees to ensure that work is done according to specifications.

Other questions and concerns? Call or email the First Selectman's office, 434-1605, ext. 212, or selectmansoffice@oldlyme-ct.gov.

#