

# **Frederica Road Realignment: Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Why does Christ Church support shifting the path of Frederica Road?**

Christ Church has been an active and thriving congregation serving the surrounding region for 285 years. Our historic campus is the center of our church's ministry. The project to move Frederica Road will allow our parish to offer welcome and hospitality to parishioners, community members, and visitors for years to come without the safety risks created by lack of parking. It will also make it possible to increase our program and ministry space, and improve the accessibility of those spaces, so that we can adequately gather, educate, and inspire generations of the faithful in the work of the Gospel in this community.

## **What are the safety concerns with Frederica Road as it is?**

Without adequate parking, whenever someone comes to Christ Church's campus for worship, to participate in ministry, or to visit the grounds, they must park along Frederica Road. Pedestrians exiting their cars and crossing Frederica Road regularly have close calls with speeding vehicles. Christ Church has worked to address these concerns for more than a decade. Most recently, Christ Church worked to have flashing lights installed, yet drivers continue to ignore the warning. Some tourists unfamiliar with the area do not see and use the crosswalk, making their crossing even more dangerous. Buses – sometimes as many as six at the same time during peak tourist season – regularly unload into the street because of a lack of adequate parking.

Out of concern for the safety of worshippers, Christ Church has hired off-duty police officers to manage traffic on Sunday mornings and special occasions. Shifting the path of Frederica Road will allow residents and visitors alike to access Christ Church's campus without risk to their personal safety no matter the day or time. It will also make the road safer for drivers as it passes through the church grounds and continues north to Fort Frederica National Monument, Wesley United Methodist Church, Christian Renewal Church, Fort Frederica Presbyterian Church, and our neighbors. In addition to reducing the number of pedestrians crossing the road, the project will improve the curve at Old Monument Road and the intersection at Stevens Road.

## **Is the road impacting the marsh and/or wetlands?**

This project does not impact the salt marsh. It will impact 0.73 acres of freshwater wetlands, and compensatory mitigation credits to satisfy the requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have been obtained. The project will not negatively impact water flow into the wetlands and the marsh following storms.

### **Will the road project require cutting down live oaks?**

Yes. As plans were being drawn up, Christ Church and our planners walked the entire project site with a group of ISA Certified arborists, including the Glynn County arborist. Planners worked to avoid the largest oaks and to aim for dead or previously impacted trees whenever possible. Ultimately, engineering requirements did require the removal of ten large trees, including five live oaks, many of which were in decline. The plan also includes removing associated understory plantings. The road realignment project calls for planting 21 new live oak trees, which will mature over the next century and provide the next generation of tree canopy along the road. In addition, Christ Church will plant many more live oaks as part of the remaining church project that will follow on its property. After all projects are complete, the Christ Church area will have five to six new live oak trees for every large live oak that has been removed during construction. Christ Church is committed to care for these trees so that they thrive for centuries to come. We are installing a well to provide irrigation that will make it possible to keep the trees watered.

We advocated for the project to include extra measures to prevent the construction project from harming the roots of the trees that remain wherever possible. At the church's insistence, the County agreed to include special processes to trim roots where necessary and is also using special materials in the roadbed that will help tree roots stay healthier over the long term.

### **Is the road project destroying historical sites or artifacts?**

No. A regional environmental and cultural resource firm has done a formal survey of historical impact and found that the road is not going to destroy any known or suspected valuable historical sites. A question from a local citizen led to a review of one particular portion of a ditch that is impacted by the road, but both the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office determined that there was "no adverse impact" to that area.

### **How is the Frederica Road project being funded?**

Christ Church has contributed \$1.62 million of the total project cost of \$1.67 million and will cover any cost overruns. Glynn County is paying \$56,000 for improvements to the intersection of Stevens Road and Frederica Road that county leaders chose to add to the project.

The master plan for the Christ Church campus developed in 2017 by Marquis Latimer + Halback suggested that the parish work with Fort Frederica National Monument to help Glynn County seek Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) funds to help pay for shifting the path of Frederica Road. In the spring of 2018, Glynn County, with our help, successfully obtained the federal funding, accepting those funds about a year later.

It quickly became apparent that the timetable associated with use of the FLAP funds would lead to a years-long delay in realizing the safety improvements that the project will provide and would also result in much higher costs for the road shift and subsequent associated projects. In the spring of 2020, Christ Church and Glynn County agreed that Christ Church could provide the bulk of the funds, which would allow Glynn County to complete the project sooner. Despite this change in the funding source, the project still included thorough engineering, environmental and cultural surveying and permitting. Glynn County solicited bids for the project and selected a contractor in early 2021. The land swap between Glynn County and Christ Church that was required for the road to be shifted was completed this summer.

### **What is the Christ Church master plan?**

In 2016, the vestry, which is our church's governing board, began considering how Christ Church could best respond to God's call to serve our community and make room for a growing congregation and its mission. After initially considering the building a parking lot across Frederica Road, we stepped back in 2017 and engaged in a "100 year" master planning project with Marquis Latimer + Halback, a planning and design firm based in St. Augustine, to try to understand the future needs of the church and how we could plan for improvements to our ministry facilities and grounds in a comprehensive way.

As part of the planning process, we gathered data through workshops, surveys and interviews and analyzed our current, short, and long-term needs. Based on the research and feedback from our parishioners, we learned two important things:

- Christ Church does not have adequate space for its many ministries that serve the people of Glynn County.
- We have significant problems with lack of parking and with traffic safety.

Addressing our parking and safety issues was the first priority of a majority of the people who participated in the planning process. As a result, the subsequent master plan helped us determine that we could provide for safer parking, eliminate two blind curves, and better protect our historic assets if the path of Frederica Road, which runs in front of the church, was shifted. The road's new route was envisioned carefully to avoid significant trees.

Shifting Frederica Road will allow Christ Church to create the safe parking we need, eliminate the need for people coming to Christ Church to cross the road between two blind curves, and allow for space to expand our facilities and our mission as we look ahead to the next century.

### **How did the idea to shift Frederica Road originate?**

The idea to move Frederica Road has been floating around the congregation for well over a decade, but no one is quite sure where it originated. Interestingly, when the vestry of Christ Church sought proposals for a firm to conduct the master planning process, all three finalists recommended shifting the road in their final interviews.

### **When has the public had input into this process?**

In August 2017 Christ Church invited our neighbors on Stevens Road and in neighborhoods north of Christ Church along Frederica Road to a town hall meeting during which we explained the master plan and asked for feedback. We passed along the feedback to Glynn County, particularly a concern about increased speeds through the area. We have advocated for signage that monitors speeds and encourages drivers to slow down.

The plan to move Frederica Road was presented by Christ Church leaders and our representatives during public Glynn County meetings in 2017, 2018, and 2020. The final details of the land swap between the county and Christ Church required for the road realignment came before a County Commission meeting on June 3, 2021. In addition to public meetings, the project has been covered by local news outlets, including *The Brunswick News* and *The Islander*.

### **When did Christ Church acquire the land on which the new road is being built?**

Christ Church received nine acres from the Sea Island Company in 1986. At the same time, the Sea Island Company made nine acres available to the United Methodist Church and two three-acre parcels available for a Presbyterian congregation and the Christian Renewal Church, respectively. There was also a two-acre parcel given to Christ Church and the United Methodist Church for the creation of a memorial garden to John and Charles Wesley. The Wesley Garden, as it is known, was dedicated in 1988 and continues to be jointly maintained by Christ Church and Wesley United Methodist Church.

Christ Church is the last of these congregations to develop its parcel. The land we were given in 1986 was to be used for church purposes or otherwise left undeveloped. To accommodate the road project, we swapped a portion of the land with Glynn County in an even exchange. The nature of the exchange ensures that the land is being used for the benefit of Christ Church to make getting to the church safer and more accessible and allow for program and ministry growth in addition to the public safety benefits. The realignment project has full support of the entities that have an interest in the original transfer of the land to Christ Church.

### **Is the road project impacting the Wesley Memorial Garden?**

The road project will encroach eight feet into the southeast corner of Wesley Garden. Based on an agreement made in 2019, the Wesley Garden received an equivalent parcel of land from Christ Church to offset the loss. The crepe myrtle trees within the right of way on that corner are being relocated to the grounds of Wesley United Methodist Church and Christ Church. There are also a few azaleas on that corner that are being replanted elsewhere within the Wesley Garden

### **What will happen to the wooded path that leads from Christ Church to the Wesley Memorial Garden?**

Although shorter, the path will still connect from the sidewalk along the new stretch of road to the Memorial Garden. The markers that Christ Church installed at the entrance to the path will be moved to the new entrance to the path.