Clifton Connects: A Safer Walk to Groceries on Route 60

Residents of Mountain View Apartments in Clifton Forge live within close proximity to a grocery store and pharmacy, but many must walk along the edge of Route 60 to get there. The Town of Clifton Forge and its partners used funding and technical assistance from the Virginia Walkability Action Institute (VWAI) to survey residents, count pedestrians, and install a community-informed demonstration project that created a safer walking connection. Data collected before and after installation will inform a permanent solution that improves safe access to food and medicine.

Team:

This project was led by the Town of Clifton Forge's Director of Planning & Community Development, Maria Saxton, with support from the Alleghany Health District's Population Health Planning & Improvement Coordinator, Emma Duff, and Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission's Director of Transportation Demand Management, Andrea Garland. The extended team included Mountain View and Clifton Woods Apartments, Alleghany County Parks & Recreation, RADAR, Clifton Forge Police Department, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and other local partners.

Goals and Vision:

- Engage residents and collect data through a community survey, site visit, and pedestrian counts
- Test a safer walking connection using a demonstration project and gather feedback on the improvement
- Use community input and observed conditions to support a permanent walking connection

The VWAI Clifton Forge Site Visit.
Source: Horizon 54

Background:

Clifton Forge is a small town in Virginia's Alleghany Highlands with strong access to outdoor recreation. Yet, some in-town corridors remain difficult to navigate on foot. Route 60 is a clear example: Mountain View Apartments, which are subsidized for low-income families, are only about 0.2 miles from a shopping center with grocery and pharmacy resources, yet terrain, limited pedestrian space, and roadway conditions make the walk unsafe. Because many of the residents of Mountain View do not drive, they walk along the edge of the road to be able to get their daily needs.

Building on the Town's previous bicycle and pedestrian safety planning, the VWAI team focused on translating community needs and priorities into a practical improvement. The team surveyed residents, conducted a site walk, collected pedestrian counts, and coordinated with VDOT and local partners to design a demonstration project along the existing Route 60 path. In August 2026, the team installed flexible delineators and refreshed pavement markings to create a safer corridor for residents walking to and from the shopping center.

Residents at the community walk on September 11.
Source: Town of Clifton Forge

On September 11, 2026, the team hosted a community walk with neighborhood residents to experience the demonstration project together and capture feedback in real time. Most respondents felt safer walking separated from the traffic and hope for lighting as the next addition to the path. The Town plans to leave the treatment in place for as long as possible, while continuing to collect resident feedback and assess the condition of the pedestrian corridor. VDOT does not want permanent changes to be made to that stretch of road for the foreseeable future, so the team, the Town of Clifton Forge, and the Department of Public Works will prioritize continued maintenance and data collection.

Residents walking the temporary pedestrian path. Source: Town of Clifton Forge

Outcomes and Impact:

- Demonstrated that adults, children, and seniors walk along the edge of Route 60 to get to and from the shopping center
- Showed through the survey responses, the site walk, and pedestrian counts that residents did not feel safe on their walk along Route 60, with 96% of survey respondents who walk the corridor indicating that they do not feel safe there
- Determined that traffic calming, a pedestrian lane, and better lighting, would make those who already walk feel safer, and increase the likelihood that others would also walk the route (74% of respondents indicated that they would walk this route if there was a permanent pedestrian connector)
- Collected robust pre- and currently collecting post-installation data on community sentiments, pedestrian safety, and traffic speeds to support the installation of permanent infrastructure
- Built momentum for complementary investments, including two new light poles, moving a RADAR bus stop closer to Mountain View Apartments, and additional bus stop signage in the project area
- Strengthened communication among town, state, health, transportation, and resident stakeholders for nimble problem-solving