

# ROUTE 15

## Partner Agency Meeting Summaries

Date: 8/22/2018

**August 13<sup>th</sup> 2:00 – 3:30 - Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO), Loudoun County Fire and Rescue (LCFR), and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) (not in attendance)**

Attendees: Susan Glass, Kelly Griffin – Loudoun DTCI; Stacy Carey – B.O.S. office; Maria Taylor, Nicole Pickrell - LCFR; Greg Ahlemann, RJ Earley – LCSO; Geoff Giffin, Mark Phillips, Sarah Knox – Kimley-Horn

- LCSO – Confirmed similar concerns as discussed before in the November 2017 partner agency meetings. During emergencies, we can't maintain traffic along Route 15 during an incident, typically this requires a full road closure. We try to utilize secondary road detours during incidents, however, tractor trailers must remain on Route 15 due to their size/weight and sometimes results in long waits (typically multiple hours).
- LCFR – Unsure of how Route 15 could accommodate a roundabout through Lucketts. It would need to be designed for the largest vehicle (a ladder truck). It doesn't appear that a roundabout sized to accommodate a ladder truck would fit in Lucketts without impacting existing buildings.
- LCSO – Do either of the concepts consider changing the existing truck restrictions? Specifically, do you anticipate removing or increasing restrictions? Would the road improvements introduce more opportunities for larger vehicles?
  - DTCI – No modifications are proposed or anticipated. Modifications were discussed in the stakeholder committee but were not carried forward. Increasing truck restrictions requires a feasible alternative for heavy vehicles to travel, and none exist in this corridor.
- LCSO – Sheriff's Office has an agreement with PRCS to park at the Lucketts Community Park for truck restriction enforcement.
- LCFR – Desires a 12 foot travel lane width based on the width of fire and rescue vehicles
  - There is turning performance for all driving apparatuses, the largest radius are the non-articulated trucks and ladder trucks. LCFR will send vehicle turning information to DTCI.
- DTCI - Do you have any truck turning/maneuverability challenges along Route 50 in Middleburg and other areas with traffic calming?
  - LCFR - VDOT provides the design to LCFR for review with the completed turning analysis. Mountable curbs usually help and reviewing the turning analysis during design typically helps make the correct decision. Fire trucks can maneuver their way in many situations, but it's not ideal to create difficult situations that don't already exist
- LCSO – Adding shoulders will help in the two-lane sections proposed in the concepts since there is limited room for other improvements.
  - Crashes and the responding fire and rescue vehicles usually require blocking at least two travel lanes for the safety of the individuals at the crash scene as well as emergency personnel. Concepts that maintain two lanes may limit the ability to maintain two-way traffic around a crash or other emergency.

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- LCFR – Reinforced grass shoulders are not perfect or ideal for the large trucks which may have to traverse on them. LCFR and LCSO both prefer paved shoulders but are willing to explore other alternatives.
  - LCSO – The Sheriff’s Office does not push traffic onto grass shoulders. The issue with grass shoulders is the weather, softening of grass shoulders will occur with saturation and vehicles will lose traction and the ability to maneuver and control themselves. Gravel or paved shoulders are far better from a safety and performance standard. You will travel much further on a soft surface such as the stabilized grass shoulder, due to loss of friction, than a paved surface. Paved shoulders are preferred because they enable drivers to have more control.
  - LCFR - If the wheels of a firetruck drop off the pavement onto reinforced grass, there is a chance the truck could tip and roll over. Pavement is preferred for the shoulders from an operations and safety perspective.
  - LCFR shoulder preference
    - Fully paved shoulders (#1 most preferred)
    - Half paved, half gravel (needs to be heavy, deep gravel) (#2)
    - Half paved, half reinforced grass is least preferred (#3)
  - LCFR – median preference
    - Paved median (#1 most preferred)
    - Raised concrete (#2)
    - Grass ditch (#3)
  - LCSO – Having a median which deters traffic from being able to crossover into the oncoming traffic, thereby preventing a head-on collision is preferred. Raised concrete, raised concrete with grass, or a grass ditch large enough to stop a vehicle are the best median features for safety.
    - Raised concrete/grass median (#1 most preferred)
    - Grass ditch (#2)
    - Paved median at-grade (#3)
- LCSO – Lack of lighting is an issue that may contribute to some of the safety issues on the corridor. Being in a rural area there is no ambient light making it very dark along many stretches of Route 15, which makes it is easy for drivers to fall asleep.
  - Increased reflectivity could help, using things such as roadway reflectors and signage.
  - Building roundabouts in this area without lighting will likely lead to people driving through the middle of the roundabout at night.
- Lucketts Bypass Discussion
  - LCSO – Believes it would be beneficial to have a bypass to take the traffic away from the village.
  - LCSO – Will there be different access to the elementary school in Lucketts with the bypass?
    - Response – The intent of the bypass is to remove the commuter traffic volume within Lucketts and improve accessibility with school traffic. This would allow for a traffic calming approach within the village.

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## VDOT, Economic Development, Planning and Zoning, NVTA, DTCl, and the Town of Leesburg

Attendees: Susan Glass, Bob Brown – Loudoun DTCl; Stacy Carey – B.O.S. office; Heidi Siebentritt – Loudoun County Dept. of Planning and Zoning; Kim McCool – VDOT; Tom Brandon – Town of Leesburg; Keith Jasper – NVTA; Colleen Kardasz – Loudoun County Dept. of Economic Development; Geoff Giffin, Mike Harris, Mark Phillips, Sarah Knox – Kimley-Horn

- DTCl – How was the travel time data collected for the existing conditions?
  - Travel time data was collected through the use of floating car runs during the data collection period as well as Google travel time data.
- Economic Development - Was information sent to the non-residential businesses?
  - The Lucketts Business Collaborative is on the stakeholder group to represent those businesses. Also on the stakeholder group are the Lucketts Ruritans who would also have some of these business owners within the group. The businesses also had the opportunity to attend and provide input at the previous public meetings or in the online surveys.
- Economic Development – The Rural Economic Development Committee (REDC) is planning to submit a letter to oppose the widening of Route 15. The Catocin Coalition also plans to submit an alternative design for the Route 15 corridor.
- Economic Development – Were farmers directly contacted during the public process?
  - Individual farmers residing along the corridor have been active throughout the public engagement process and were invited to submit their input at the previous public meetings.
- DTCl - What about Maryland users, were they included in the Public Process?
  - Anyone was welcome to attend the public meetings and participate in the survey. The data showed that input was received from individuals who live outside of Loudoun County, including Maryland.
- DTCl - Would the signal at Lucketts Road and Route 15 still be necessary with the bypass?
  - Not necessarily, that signal could potentially be removed and changed to an unsignalized intersection (stop or roundabout control). By removing truck traffic from the Village, smaller intersection turning radii may be used
- Planning and Zoning – If a signal is placed at Lovettsville Road what is the effect of the queuing on the bridge and south on Route 15?
  - There will be queuing from the bridge regardless of a signal at Lovettsville Road because of the existing signal at Route 15 and Clay Street in Maryland. The signal at Lovettsville Road will provide safer turning movements to and from Lovettsville Road at Route 15.

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- DTCI – It should be noted that the County submitted a Smart Scale application for US Route 15 from Whites Ferry Road to the Maryland State Line, utilizing modified Concept B to ensure the funding requested was the most conservative scenario being analyzed.
- VDOT - How did you choose the alignment of the conceptual Bypass around Lucketts?
  - The bypass is only a planning level alignment and was added to the concept based on public input from the previous meetings. Public opinion results showed that 66% of the public supports analyzing a Lucketts bypass. A bypass on the eastern side of Lucketts can also be explored. If the bypass is advanced, a formal environmental study will be performed and alternative alignments will be considered.
- Planning & Zoning - Where is the environmental study in relation to the design? There is federal money involved with the project, so what is the timing of the design and environmental evaluation? A major concern we are hearing from the public is that a design process is on-going without consideration of environmental impacts.
  - The Safety and Operations Study is a planning study and there is no design taking place at this time. The concepts that have been created are from the public and stakeholder input with the purpose of analyzing them to understand the effects the chosen features have on congestion. If Federal funds are used for design, the environmental process (NEPA Process) would take place in conjunction with the design.
- DTCI – Route 15 is listed on the national highway system, is that something you can implement traffic calming on?
  - VDOT – We will confirm if traffic calming is applicable on a national highway system.
- NVT A - Leesburg recently received NVT A funding for an Interchange Justification Report (IJR) south of the current study area at the Battlefield Parkway and Route 15 intersection. These two efforts should be in sync so that both the studies in the area do not preclude any recommendations of the others.
  - DTCI – Understood, we will work in coordination – with the Town of Leesburg to ensure the studies are in sync.
- Planning & Zoning - Is the idea with the concepts to get rid of the queuing all together?
  - DTCI – The queuing cannot be completely removed based on projected 2040 traffic volumes, the existing two lane bridge, and the traffic signal at Route 15 and Clay Street. Depending on the concept that is selected, the queues will be reduced and/or moved based on the amount of widening, but would still be constrained by the two-lane section of Route 15 in Maryland.
- VDOT – Was there a peak hour versus peak period analysis conducted, and was the peak period adjusted to be longer with future volumes? What about Friday afternoon traffic and was the Friday peak analyzed as well?
  - The peak period was consistent between the scenarios and the full analysis period was run over the course of 3 hours with 2 hours of the analysis being the peak period. A

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comparison of the Friday peak hour and a typical weekday peak hour was performed in the Congestion Report and it was agreed that the weekday peak hour was appropriate for the traffic analysis.

- BOS – The Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG) guidelines are intended to be incorporated into the design process, has anyone partnered on a design project with the JTHG before?
  - Leesburg – For the Route 15 widening in Leesburg, the Town coordinated with JTHG through the design process and addressed their needs primarily through landscaping rather than actual roadway design.
- Planning & Zoning - The roadway is designated as a scenic byway and a designated heritage area, which needs to be considered. We will further review the environmental and historical resources of the corridor to provide more information. It would be good to know what parcels touching Route 15 have current preservation or open space easements beyond what is shown on the existing right of way maps.
- NVTA – The next funding period for projects is July 2019, at that point the County will have the results of the Smart Scale funding prior to the submittal period for NVTA.
- Planning & Zoning – Based on current considerations from the REDC, the least disruptive concept to environmental and historic resources will be most preferred from a preservation standpoint. Concept A is the best option at this point for preserving the resources along the corridor.
- Leesburg – Staff is not authorized to speak for the Town but Concept B appears to benefit the Town most by moving traffic further north. We would like to see Route 15 operate so that it does not impact the traffic in the Town of Leesburg. Concerned that the growth will be higher than the forecasted 0.75% – 1.25% that was used in the traffic analysis
- NVTA –Staff cannot speak for the Authority, but defers to the local process to determine what is best. The relationship between costs and congestion reduction is how NVTA weighs and scores the projects, although several other factors are also considered. Given that, Concept B seems to provide more congestion relief, but Concept A may provide more in relation to the cost effectiveness.
- Economic Development – Do not think it's a Concept A vs B at this point, there are a lot of other considerations to look at and the department is trying to find a balance between this study and what we hear from the REDC. For every negative we hear about widening from a business perspective, we try to think about how much congestion relief could help serve businesses as well by providing easier access.
- VDOT – There has been a lot of hard work on this and a great deal of information was presented, VDOT is not able to make a decision at this point. There are tradeoffs in every project, but it seems that all aspects are being considered.

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## Loudoun County Parks, Recreation, and Community Service (PRCS), NOVA Parks, Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG) (not in attendance), and Bike Loudoun

Attendees: Susan Glass – Loudoun DTCl; Stacy Carey – B.O.S. office; Dennis Kruse – Bike Loudoun; Mark Novak – PRCS; Mike DePue – NOVA Parks; Geoff Giffin, Mark Phillips, Mike Harris, Sarah Knox – Kimley-Horn

- PRCS – the department is currently investigating a reservation on Whites Ferry Road for a potential future trail to the Potomac River. There is an existing gravel path along a portion of Whites Ferry Road which may be utilized as part of the proposed trail.
- Bike Loudoun - Once the reservation takes place, does it go into VDOT jurisdiction?
  - DTCl - No, not unless it's taken as right of way rather than easement. If not taken as right of way, the HOA or PRCS would be responsible for maintenance.
- Bike Loudoun - Is the proposed shoulder in the Route 15 concepts something you can drive on the entire width?
  - KH - The shoulder type has not yet been determined, the public input expressed a preference for an 8' paved shoulder; the second choice was for a 4' paved and 4' gravel shoulder.
- Bike Loudoun – With the number of driveways on the road, the shoulders should be built wide enough to accommodate turning vehicles, removing them from the through lanes.
- Bike Loudoun - Why not include a roundabout at the Stumptown Road and Lucketts Road intersection?
  - Right of way constraints at the intersection do not allow for the proper roundabout size to accommodate for trucks and fire and rescue vehicles without impacting the existing buildings.
- Bike Loudoun - If Lucketts is bypassed can we make the Village a destination where people can walk and bike to? It will be more of an end point and will help from an economic development standpoint.
  - A note will be added on the concept maps to indicate streetscaping and traffic calming in the Village of Lucketts
- NOVA Parks - Do we know if there will be a right of way needed from NOVA Parks to widen Route 15 north to Montresor Road?
  - DTCl – That will be determined during the design phase, but we will work closely with NOVA Parks and other property owners through this process to minimize all impacts.
- Bike Loudoun – We would like to see more natural landscaping involved in the design especially if berms are used to reduce the maintenance and mowing required along the corridor.

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- NOVA Parks – The only two concerns we see with these improvements are access and signage. The roundabout at Montresor Road would improve access to Temple Hall Farm and allow safer access during large events.
- Bike Loudoun – The concepts imply that the proposed trail is on the west side of Route 15. However, the east side would better serve the Village of Lucketts, Balls Bluff, and Temple Hall Farm rather than having bicyclists and pedestrians cross Route 15.
  - DTCI – The concept is for planning purposes only and the trail alignment has not yet been determined. This information you provided along with public input will be utilized in the design phase when the location of the trail would be determined. A note will be added to the concept to depict that no side has been determined for the trail and will be subject to the design and NEPA process.
- Bike Loudoun – Prefers Concept A with the minimal widening of Route 15 and a trail as far north as possible along the corridor.