

Gordonsville Intersections Improvement Study – Project Field Visits with Stakeholders Group and Public	
ATTENDEES: see attachment	MEETING DATE: 2013-03-29 LOCATION: Study Intersections, Gordonsville, VA
MEETING PURPOSE: Alternative Concept Development and to receive input from adjacent property owners	
ATTACHMENTS / HANDOUTS: Meeting Sign-in Sheet Concept Sketch Plans	

MEETING NOTES

South High Street Intersection

- Dan Painter, the VDOT project manager for this study, opened the discussion and briefly introduced the site conditions. Attendees introduced themselves.

Concept 1

- Rob Brander, the VDOT consultant project manager, introduced Concept 1 – a roundabout with an inscribed diameter of 125 feet.
- Mayor Coiner mentioned that people tend to be more careful when driving around the circle. But he remarked that the design of the roundabout positioning should be careful. The approach alignment giving appearance of the straight through movement on Martinsburg Avenue would be undesirable and should be avoided. Stop sign should not be considered being placed at approaches similar to the existing roundabout configuration.
- Rob and Dan explained the driving speed, slow-down effects, elimination of conflicting points and other safety advantages of roundabouts over traditional T-intersections based on FHWA’s research.

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- Mayor Coiner suggested installing raised curbs to protect pedestrians. Dan confirmed that the design usually calls for splitter islands with openings complying with ADA standards. Appropriate warning signs for pedestrians would be installed around the roundabout.
- Several stakeholders reported that trucks run on the curbs when turning at this intersection and they run at 45 mph without compliance with the speed limit. Dan confirmed that VDOT would install signage indicating that they are approaching a roundabout to encourage drivers to reduce their speeds.
- One stakeholder said the speed limit signs need to be installed well in advance of the intersection. They also asked if the speed limit signs with flashing beacons were feasible at this location. Mayor Coiner remarked that installing too many flashing beacons would reduce the value of this device in school zones. Dan replied that VDOT would consider its feasibility.
- It was suggested that the zebra lines (high intensity) crosswalks would be installed at all legs, rather than the standard two lines crosswalk markings. Rob confirmed that crosswalks would be put where they connect to sidewalks, and the design would follow the Town's sidewalk plan.
- Rob continued the explanation of Concept 1. This concept was designed to take most of the required ROW from undeveloped areas and avoid the business parcels.

Concept 2

- Rob explained Concept 2 – a roundabout with an inscribed diameter of 100 feet, which is the smallest desired diameter for urban streets (note that this is different than mini-roundabouts, used within residential neighborhoods). This concept may not be appropriate for this location considering the truck percentages.

Concept 3

- Rob explained Concept 3, which is similar to Concept 1, a roundabout with 125-ft diameter. But this concept would be centered more at High Street, increasing the impact to the business parcels.
- For Concept 3, residents on Stonewall Avenue expressed concern that trucks would make a wrong turn onto Stonewall Avenue and it would be hard for them to turn back. Rob explained that better signage at the roundabout would eliminate most of these situations.
- Residents also expressed concern about the utilities and suggested putting them underground. Dan replied that VDOT would prepare utility relocation plans as part of engineering, but relocating utilities underground would be expensive and might not be feasible as part of this project.

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- Craig Hartman, the BBQ-Exchange restaurant owner and land owner mentioned the runoff issue from the east side of the railroad. Dan replied that VDOT would look at the pipe to see how it would impact the project. It might be a separate project. If the project would have any impact on the drainage, VDOT would fix it.
- For Concept 3, Randy and Shelly Preddy, the owners of the funeral home and adjacent business, were concerned about losing a portion of their business's parking area. When there are large funerals, the demand exceeds the available parking area. Dan replied that VDOT would consider trading any lost space with the landscape area from the existing VDOT ROW, adjacent to the southeast corner of the parcel.
- Dan asked the group about their preliminary impression of Concepts 1 and 3. There were no particular oppositions from the group. Dan also mentioned that VDOT would prefer to acquire only the portion of a lot that is needed to accommodate a project.

Concept 4

- Rob explained Concept 4 – adding a left turn bay on northbound Martinsburg Avenue, shifting southbound Martinsburg Avenue to the west and potentially closing Stonewall Avenue.
- Dan explained why Stonewall Avenue would need to be closed in Concept 4. The intersection would be too close to the High Street/Martinsburg intersection and would create safety issues.
- For Concept 4, residents on Stonewall Avenue expressed their preliminary opposition to this concept because of their concerns about the accessibility of emergency vehicles. Stonewall Avenue is the emergency route into the residential area.
- Stakeholders expressed concern that drivers might accelerate along Martinsburg Avenue without slowing down.
- The funeral home owners asked which way would be stopped. They suggested that southbound Martinsburg Avenue should be stopped to avoid the frequent stopping of trucks and reduce the noise. Dan replied that the main travel direction should not be stopped. Although there is a high volume of turning trucks from High Street onto Martinsburg Avenue, the predominate direction of traffic flow is the through movements on Martinsburg Avenue.
- Residents on Stonewall Avenue stated that they want to keep the street open.
- A stakeholder suggested that the 25 mph speed limit sign on the northbound approach along Martinsburg Avenue should be relocated further to the south to provide better transition into the town.
- **Overview**

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Mayor Coiner said he would prefer Concept 1 because its impacts are on undeveloped land, rather than business parcels, so that each business viability is not impacted. General consensus among those participating was that Concept 1 is the best option.

North High Street Intersection

- Rob Brander opened the discussion and introduced the site conditions – the issues and challenges, including turning radius for trucks, the need for crosswalks and sidewalks. Stakeholders confirmed that there was a decent amount of pedestrians crossing the Gordon Avenue to/from the shopping plaza.

Concept 1

- Rob explained Concept 1 – a roundabout with an inscribed diameter of 125 feet. Main features of this concept include: (1) avoiding the parcel of the commercial building on the north side of Gordon Avenue, (2) having more impacts on the church and school, and (3) avoiding the approaches straight through traffic on Gordon Avenue.
- Allen Smith, the business owner on the north side of the intersection, expressed concern about the capacity of a roundabout to handle future traffic demand. Rob explained that this concept would have similar capacity as a traffic signal.
- Mayor Coiner mentioned that the turning radius for double trailers should be considered in the roundabout design. Rob confirmed that the “Auto Turn” would be performed in the engineering.
- Doug Arnold, the school infrastructure manager, expressed his preference to this concept although it has more impact to the school. He asked that a retaining wall be considered to minimize the land impact of the school parcel. Rob confirmed that engineers would consider that in the more detailed design process.
- Rudy Richardson, one of the church representatives, also expressed support for the roundabout option. He understood that the handicapped driveway would potentially be closed or reconfigured. The church would discuss with VDOT, as the project moves forward, fair compensation such as paving the grass area between the sidewalk and handicapped driveway for increased parking.

Concept 2

- Rob explained Concept 2, which would remain as a traditional T-intersection with turning bay on the westbound approach of Gordon Avenue. The turning radius on North High Street would be also increased. He also mentioned a modified version of this concept, which would shift Gordon Avenue to the south and not touch the existing westbound right turn bay on Gordon Avenue. This concept would convert the eastbound through leg into the westbound left turn lane, and widen the roadway to the south for the new

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eastbound through leg. The roadway would transition back to its original alignment to the east.

- Allen Smith expressed concern about his property losing direct access on Gordon Avenue, which he said is vital to his business. It had been previously mentioned that a potential scenario could include closing this driveway access and creating an inter-parcel connection with the adjacent plaza.
- Stakeholders mentioned that vehicles exiting out of the Food Lion Plaza often have difficulty seeing vehicles in the through lane on Gordon Avenue whenever there is a vehicle in the right turn lane.
- **Overview**

The stakeholders that were present indicated that they favor Concept 1, as it would better serve the long term vitality of the intersection, and would preclude a signal from being installed. General consensus was that Concept 2 (or the modified Concept 2) would address the short term needs, but would mean that a signal would be installed in the long term, which is not preferred.