

TSPLOST 2018 Program
Prince Avenue Corridor Improvements: Project 16

User Group Kick-off Meeting – Draft Minutes
January 13, 2021 10:00 A.M. - <https://youtu.be/FEKydigo-7E>

User Group Members Present: Clint McCrory, Ellen Walker, Peter Norris, Jennifer Rice, Emily Tatum, Brad Griffin, Stephen Bailey, Ilka McConnell, and Jeanne Connell

Members Absent: none

Other Staff Present: Blaine Williams, Josh Edwards, Keith Sanders, Tim Griffeth

Guests: Erik Hammarlund, John Walker, Ernie Boughman,

General Business

Keith Sanders, called the meeting to order at 10:04 A.M., welcomed the members in attendance and thanked them for being present.

Quorum: Established quorum was present.

User Group Actions

Meeting Minutes Review & Approval – Ellen Walker made a motion to approve the December 9, 2020 Minutes and Jennifer Rice seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

User Group unanimously agreed to meet twice each month, instead of once, the second and the fourth Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM. (The new meeting date is the fourth Wednesday of the month.)

No items were added to the agenda.

Presentation of the Potential Project List – Pulled from existing studies – Erik Hammarlund

- Erik shared that the GDOT Project has a new Project Manager: Jonathan Dechko is the new GDOT Project Manager for PI 0013954 - SR 15/Prince Ave. He was going to check on the on-street parking question (he wasn't sure if it was to remain or not). The new Project Manager noted he would have to find out whether or not the on street parking would be re-stripped. T&PW noted that history shows that when GDOT repaved streets with surface parking that ACCGov is required to restripe any of the parking stalls. Since some of the lanes are below standard widths, the question of whether they are going to allow the restriping of parking stalls. The last time Prince was repaved, ACCGov had to change the angle of the parking lanes; causing the loss of several spots.
- Jonathan Dechko will be invited to attend the next User Group meeting. Jonathan noted to Erik that the "approximate" schedule for construction was 2023.
- **Question:** Could the mid-block pedestrian crossings being raised/sloped all the way across Prince.
Response: Raised cross-walks for traffic calming and pedestrian safety are good in the right setting. However, raised cross-walks on a State Route are probably not the right location due to the volume/speed of traffic. Prince is considered an Urban Minor Arterial with a posted speed of the 35-40 mph. We can certainly pose the question to GDOT and most DOT's nationally, for consideration but historically they have not been receptive to those on this type of roadway. There are other ways to make the cross-walk enhanced to call attention to them for driver awareness. The current design does include raised refuge island with hawk signals and striping.

- **Question:** Can we address adding a left arrow on both the Satula and Oglethorpe lights to let all of the cars get through a cycle safely, so that the pedestrians can walk after the people have turned?

Response: One of the recommendations in the traffic engineering study prepared by our team (KHA) included restriping the existing lanes to provide for dedicated left-turn lanes and combined through/right-turn lanes at all cross streets. KHA also suggested the construction of a northbound right-turn lane but recognize this would impact property.

- Restripe the northbound and southbound lanes to reflect one (1) left-turn lane and one (1) shared through-right turn lane
- Consider the construction of a northbound right-turn lane if more land area is acquired

- **Question:** From the Prince Corridor comments many people noted the signage at the Loop was inadequate. Is that something that can be addressed?

Response: Yes, that is something that can be reviewed with GDOT as part of the project or possibly as a stand-alone project. Increased painting and/or signage could be addressed with GDOT when the list of additional items are discussed with GDOT.

- **Question:** Can bike lanes be incorporated into the current lanes or can new bike lanes be added?

Response: Bike lanes on Prince Avenue was discussed again. The traffic engineering study that was done for the corridor that reviewed the possibilities for bike lanes. Based on the volume of traffic the immediate response from the engineers is that we do not have adequate width of pavement to get bike lanes for the full length of Prince. We are continuing to look at typical sections for opportunities to add bike lanes in areas where possible, might require losing some parking or width of lanes.

Idea was presented that perhaps some sort of striping could be incorporated into the right lane to better indicate that bicycles did have the right to use the right lane. Perhaps use of green dashed striping or chevrons to indicate to automobilist that the cyclist have the right to use the right lane. Noted that we will be limited to what GDOT is willing implement and they normally adhere to AASHTO and MUTCD guidelines. Designer will look at what possibly will meet the intent of the comment and adhere to the GDOT guidelines.

- Erik shared three ideas for the potential work at the Talmadge Drive / Park Avenue / Prince Avenue intersection. The options are just initial thoughts/options and are not being presented as proposed options.

- Sheet 1 - Park Ave revised for right-in / right-out movement only. This ties into to the GDOT proposed raised medians and would increase safety for motorist as well as pedestrians.
- Sheet 2 – Park Ave realigned to provide improved intersection geometry with Talmadge. (Requires acquiring a property – but would create some greenspace (or parking) also.) . Discussion Points:
 - Of a few this seemed to be the favored option, even though required property acquisition;
 - It appears to improve the most of the conditions at the current intersection and those that will become when this is a much busier intersection due to being the main hospital entrance and exit
- Sheet 3 – Revise Park Ave to right-in only and one-way north. This would require all traffic exiting Park to go north Boulevard. It would maintain on-street parking and could create a dedicated protected two-way Bike Lane. Discussion Points:
 - This is not the result of a study but is an alternate that the previous Bike/Ped coordinator thought might resolve the Bike/Ped concerns.
 - It is shown making Yonah and Easy Streets as being one way streets.

- Like to be unpopular option with the neighborhoods because it would push a lot more vehicular traffic to Satula and would not allow residents on Park, Yonah, or Easy to easily access downtown.
 - Business driveways need to be decreased,
- Clint discussed the Road Safety Audit (RSA) and sent it out to provide everyone that the pedestrian safety is a big concern. Making the road safer for Pedestrians makes it safer for everyone. Increased bike/ped and vehicular traffic is good for businesses. RAS #1 observation is that the speeds are high. Many of the items identified in the RSA are already being covered in the GDOT proposed project or have been completed:
 - Raised islands and medians to calm traffic. (Three additional locations are being proposed by ACC staff and design team);
 - Upgraded pedestrian facilities (including ramps, equipment, & signage)
 - Install Sidewalks where absent – Completed by ACCGov.
 - One that is not currently being looked at that Clint would like to suggest is the option of installing bulb-outs at as many locations as possible. Installing ramp upgrades would freeze the curb locations.
 - Bulb-outs would take up part of a lane and does require some drainage to be corrected.
 - Bulb-outs do take away from vehicular traffic lanes. They do put safety ahead of level of service.
 - Limiting traffic lanes has been looked at and will have to be further evaluated.
 - ACC would be responsible for this portion of work added to the GDOT project.
 - Erik is going to take a look and see if there are any locations along Prince where they might be appropriate.

Other items in the RSA's top recommendations list that have not been addressed yet include:

- A parking study to determine local needs, should be completed;
 - Closing of excessive driveways.
 - Install bike lanes (has been looked at and discussed previously)
 - Add pedestrian scale lighting
 - Consider road diet, either for entire corridor or portions (has been looked at and discussed previously)
- It was noted that at this early stage of the design, the decisions made through this project will impact the corridor for the next 10-15 years
- GDOT Process Report and Schematics has been approved by GDOT. They are starting work on Construction Plans and then Right of Way plans. GDOT will not be working in a bubble, they have requested that ACCGov provide them input, if we have any to get incorporated or to make sure they are not doing anything that precludes us from doing other work.
- The work that is done now will have impacts for the next 10-15 years. It was noted that taking care of the difficult items now will have lasting impacts for years to come. We have a real opportunity to make difficult choices to demonstrate that we are serious about making the corridor safer for the future.

Assignment for future meetings

- Next meeting is January 27, 2021
- Continue to go through the existing reports and to bring up any additional items and we will continue to develop the potential projects list to take to the public and M&C for approval, then to GDOT.

These minutes are not a transcript of the meeting but instead is a general summary of the key points, ideas, or considerations from the discussion.