



# Virtual Public Meeting

Thursday, January 27, 2022 • 5:30-6:30 PM • WebEx Event

## MEETING OVERVIEW

### Meeting Purpose

- Inform residents, businesses and corridor users about the proposed project on E. Broad St.
- Gather public feedback
- Review project schedule and next steps

### Meeting Attendance

- 41 participants attended the virtual public meeting
- 1 additional comment was received by the end of the comment period on February 29, 2022

### Project Team Attendance

- Amy Rosepiler, Burgess & Niple
- Dan Soroka, Burgess & Niple
- Jud Hines, City of Columbus
- Hannah Webber, City of Columbus (PM)
- Nick Hoffman, MurphyEpson
- Marie Keister, MurphyEpson
- Anthony Dixon, MurphyEpson
- Tammy Boring, ODOT D6
- Angela Jacobs, ODOT D6
- Amy Turner, ODOT D6
- Kelsey Vandia, ODOT D6

### Meeting Summary

A virtual public meeting was held for the E. Broad Street Improvements project on Thursday, January 27, 2022, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. using WebEx event. Meeting attendees were not required to pre-register for the online meeting but were muted upon entry and their video option was not applicable for this event. Attendees were able to post questions and provide comments in the Q&A box during the meeting, and also invited to provide live comments at various points throughout the virtual meeting. For those calling in on a landline or voice only call, a team member would unmute the attendee to ask their questions during the presentation. Most attendees logged on within the first few minutes after 5:30.

The meeting agenda follows:

- E. Broad St. Phase I update
- E. Broad St. Phase II improvements
- The project goals for Phase II
- Streetscape improvements
- Right-of-way Utilities
- Phase II schedule
- Estimated Phase II Corridor

- Interactive discussion
- Next steps

Marie Keister, with MurphyEpson, the public involvement lead and the meeting facilitator, greeted meeting attendees, reviewed meeting logistics and facilitated the meeting. Hannah Webber, the City of Columbus project manager, provided a welcome and brief update about Phase 1 of the E. Broad Street Improvements project. She also answered technical questions about the project. Amy Rosepiler, with Burgess & Niple and the consultant project manager, gave a brief explanation of the project goals for the E. Broad St. Phase II, noting why these improvements are needed and what the potential solutions will be for these improvements.

Dan Soroka, a project engineer with Burgess & Niple, noted there were two proposed options: the no-build (do nothing) and the proposed alternative. He then provided a detailed overview of the proposed alternative, reviewing and describing corridor improvements, through imagery, a typical cross section, and aerial plan view mapping. Dan and Hannah then reviewed right-of-way, utility, projected project cost and schedule for the proposed improvement. Marie wrapped up the meeting with next steps. Officials from ODOT District 6 also attended the virtual public meeting and answered attendee questions.

Meeting participants were able to provide comments at various points during the presentation. A summary of comments and responses during the meeting and received afterwards is shown in the section below. Meeting attendees were invited to provide comments about the project by filling out a Google comment form online or downloading a PDF comment form and sending it back to the city project manager. Public comments were to be received within 30 days (February 28, 2022) and links to both comment form options were posted on the project website. Participants were also given the city project manager's contact info for additional comments and questions. A PDF version of the meeting presentation, video recording, scroll plot and fact sheet were made available to the public on the project webpage at <https://www.columbus.gov/Templates/Detail.aspx?id=2147521991>.

### **Virtual Meeting Comments & Questions (Received during the Virtual Public Meeting)**

The following comments, questions and responses were recorded during the virtual public meeting.

***Question: So, in Phase I, you mentioned the start date and duration, but I did not catch the start date and duration for phase II?***

*Response:* Yes, we have a schedule slide later in the presentation. Hannah what is the estimated time on that?

*Response 2:* The start date for Phase II is tentatively summer 2026 through late 2028.

***Comment: I don't want to take up the other participants' time, but I have the same concern from the last meeting regarding the medians and the inability for safety services to navigate E. Broad during heavy traffic conditions.***

*Response:* Chief Shull, thank you for weighing in. You've expressed concern in the past about the median and emergency response vehicles being able to get to crashes and that sort of thing. Hannah, do you want to address this comment?

*Response 2:* Yeah, I know that we've talked about this on E. Broad Phase I and through our stakeholder meetings as well. We've looked into it. There's not really a great solution to allow your vehicles to traverse a median that won't also let cars do the same thing. The whole goal is to not have cars be able to turn across that many lanes, since that causes crashes. So, where it stands now, the medians with that orange curb are staying in.

We did do some research on whether we have any other locations within the city, particularly around where there is a median around a hospital, and there is one on West N. Broadway by Riverside. That's one we specifically found that was near a hospital where emergency vehicles will need to get to the hospital fairly quickly. There are also some locations on Bethel and Henderson that have pretty long stretches of medians on those larger roads.

Now, what we didn't bring up before is that the proposed plan does have an 8 ft shoulder. So, that will basically add another lane for your emergency vehicles trying to make their way through and for cars to pull over to get out of your way. I don't think that we pointed that out before and when we were looking at Phase I, when we originally presented it, we were looking at a 4-foot shoulder and that has been changed to an 8-foot shoulder. So, that will be the same condition throughout but hopefully that will help (drivers have more room to pull to the right) so your vehicles be able to get to where they are going.

**Question: I live in the Villas at East Point where Broad Pointe Place is the entrance there. And I was just wondering about the grassy area out in front currently. How will that change in the plan? And I have a two-part question, I know the community and businesses pay a fee for the stoplights to the city. Do you see that increasing?**

**Response:** I believe in that area that's where there is landscaping and maybe a privacy wall. There will be a less grassy area. Right now there are no plans to go all the way up to that wall but with the additional lane and that shared use path there, there will be less grassy area in front of that wall but that's the biggest impact that it will have. I think there's also some utilities there that will need to be relocated.

**Comment:** Okay, thank you.

**Response 2:** I don't think that any sort of fee increase (will occur), as there is a maintenance agreement in place that should remain in place with no changes.

**Comment:** Okay, that's great. Thank you very much.

**Response 3:** I wanted to add about the fee and maintenance that Hannah mentioned there. So, I'm assuming that it is a traffic signal maintenance agreement, so that should not change at all. We are replacing the signal, but I haven't personally read that specific maintenance agreement but if it's like most of them then the Villas at East Pointe would be responsible for maintaining that leg of the intersection and in this case with us replacing all of it, it should reduce the long-term maintenance needed on that signal. But I have not read that maintenance agreement to see exactly what it said.

**Comment:** Okay, thank you.

**Question: So, I just wanted to speak to a couple of the points you mentioned a couple of moments ago, specifically to the shoulders. That goes against our basic training for emergency vehicle operation training, we tell our people not to go to the right because that's where the civilians are trained to go. So, we tend to cause ourselves to be put in an accident situation when we go to the right of traffic. We only go to the right as a last-ditch effort, so that's why those turn lanes that we have now are so essential. The other item was the other comparable that were mentioned earlier, none of those to my knowledge experiences the traffic volume that we deal with on E. Broad, though I respect the research done on that, it just doesn't seem to match up to the environment we have here. Also looking back at the traffic incident reports, are you able to show the injury action severity was? Because my experience in running this corridor over the last ten years, in what I call the major injuries - significance accidents have mainly occurred east of Reynoldsburg/New Albany Rd. We had a D.O.A. at Wagner and Broad Street, so I'm wondering if we are trying to fix an issue on minor accidents and we still have the**

**heavier accidents occurring more to the east more frequently, while at the same time creating this traffic issue for us to be able to navigate during rush hour periods to get to and from Mount Carmel East. Because it's going through the entire length of Broad Street, all the way out to the county line. This is really what we are concerned about but once we get down in this spot - we know we are going to have what I call "parking lot conditions" we got to have some way to get around that stuff and those medians are going to hinder us. I'm sorry about bringing that up again but there are just a couple of things we need to make sure there needs to be some alternative other than those raised medians.**

Response: Chief, we appreciate your weighing in on that. Hannah do you want to make any other comments?

Response 2: I'll just add that when I was talking about the shoulders, I meant that the vehicle traffic will be moving to the right using those shoulders and you will be going left of them like normal. So, not to be going against any of your training, there will be more open space for them to maneuver to get out of your way.

Response 3: I think when we met previously, we had mentioned that we would be willing to meet with you and go over some potential solutions or ideas and we still would like to do that. I know that there are a few others on this call that may have offered to be a part of that, so we can still do that, we haven't forgotten about you. I don't want to get bogged down during this meeting, but we can have that follow up discussion.

**Question: The gentleman earlier said something about because of the median vehicles would be able to make a U-turn on Broad Point Place? Did I misunderstand that?**

Response: No, that is correct. So, because we're putting in the median, we will be allowing U-turns at all of the signalized intersections between Taylor Station and Reynoldsburg/New Albany Rd.

Comment: Then I take it you'll have signs up saying so?

Response 2: Yes.

**Question: Okay, one other question I have. The current four lanes two going each direction, are any of those going to be shut down during these phases?**

Response: During construction? Yes, we will. We're still working through our maintenance of traffic for Phase I, obviously we are very early on in Phase II but yes, there will be some lane closures during construction. We will try to limit that as much as possible, if at all possible. We are hoping to maintain two lanes in each direction throughout construction, though there might be times when we have to narrow it a little bit. Now, with our widening we should be able to make that work but again we're still kind of early on in that design.

Comment: Okay, thank you.

**Question: As far as having the option to have that shoulder open, and if you're thinking that vehicles are going to naturally just move to the right to allow a left lane to open for emergency vehicles to get down Broad Street, I do not see that happening. I don't see how people would know in three lanes of traffic to all move to the right to allow one lane to the left open to emergency vehicles. And then thirdly, I was wondering if the chief had any data for us or could he provide any data as to how many runs that we would have gone, let's say from Wagner all the way down to Mount Carmel. How many runs that we are talking about you know, a day, week, a month whatever so we can see what it is that we're really talking about as far as the problem that will occur if we put these medians up, the concrete medians.**

*Response:* So, I think when we have that follow up meeting with the chief - we can certainly invite you to attend. That would be the opportunity to look for that kind of data and if the chief can provide that kind of information and the city can provide some kind of data from their experience in other areas as well.

*Comment:* I can provide some context that might answer that immediately for her. So, it's less about the runs that occur on Broad Street or immediately adjacent to Broad Street, it's more that Broad Street is the main artery to get to Mount Carmel East or to the outerbelt to get to other hospitals. So, it's a collector for all the runs on that east side area, so we would be talking a thousand runs in a year, not just Franklin County but Licking County as well. A lot of Pataskala emergency traffic all the way from Main Street up to Morse Road collects down on to Broad Street to come into Mount Carmel East.

***Question: Is everything already set in stone? Because I'm also concerned about the concrete divider you're putting up because of emergency vehicles. Currently they go down that turn lane and I'm not sure how everybody is going to know to go to the right to get out of the way and I just don't know if everything is set in stone, or if they considered this more.***

*Response:* Well, I appreciate that, I think there is already going to be a meeting to follow up with the chief and if you are interested in that let us know, we can invite you too.

*Comment:* Yes, I'd be interested in attending.

*Response 2:* You asked if it was set in stone. The short answer is no it's not, we are just ending the study phase right now, what you see is what the city and what our design consultant feel was the best solution, but that's the reason we're having this meeting. It's to get input from the public and to get input from the stakeholders. So, you know - this has been brought up by a few folks now and we're willing to have additional discussions about it and maybe working together we can come up with a different solution.

*Comment:* Okay, thank you

*Comment 2:* You're talking about the far-right lane is for emergency access for the emergency responder. Yes?

*Response 3:* No, what Hannah was saying is there will be an 8-foot shoulder, so that you know, when we are all told when we learned how to drive, when an emergency responder is coming you pull over to the right. So, the idea is people will pull over to the right and that will free up the lane closest to the median, the left-hand lane. Now, whether that happens in practice or not of course that's a different issue.

**Question: COTA uses the right lane a lot of times pulls off. Is COTA in this factor?**

*Response:* They have been consulted. I do think this is a concern that we will reach out to them as well.

*Comment:* They are on Broad Street and the demand has picked up considerably I've noticed, so we get a lot of traffic. We do have a bus stop right by our condominiums where the riders seem to leave a lot of stuff behind. But I'm just curious, is part of the traffic patterns considering what's going to happen with COTA?

*Response 2:* I will say that we are coordinating with COTA. To date they haven't indicated that they are going to have any major changes to their bus stops or bus lines. Generally, it will just be where we impact a bus stop and we will relocate the stop in approximately the same location as it is today. That's not to say that it can't change in the future but so far COTA is not indicating any major changes to their routes or their stops in this corridor.

*Comment:* So, they will not be making any improvements once this project is underway or part of the Phase II to improve the type of stops, they have?

*Response 3:* Not to our knowledge but it's pretty early on, so that could change in the future that they decide to possibly add a shelter at a location that's not currently sheltered. But they haven't indicated that to us quite yet.

*Response 4:* Before you ask that next question, I just wanted to say COTA is working with the City of Columbus and looking at a major investment of improved bus services on East Main and so there's a lot of conversation with COTA and the City right now about how to dramatically improve that bus service. So, there's a lot of attention to transit on this side of town.

***Question: I heard that U-turns will be permitted at Broad Point? Are you aware that there is a crosswalk on both sides of that area on that intersection where we have a signal? Is that not going to be a problem if you are going to allow U-turns?***

*Response:* Because it's at a signalized intersection, the U-turns will be able to have their own specific signal where they are allowed. So, that shouldn't have an impact on the actual pedestrian movement. When a pedestrian has the right of way to walk, the U-turns would have a red light.

*Comment:* Okay, I guess what my concern is we're having a lot of vehicles turning around there and coming onto and destroying our property. In fact, within the last month we received \$2,000 worth of damage to our property from a semi. Do you understand where I am going with this one?

*Response 2:* Sir, you are concerned about safety and making sure that pedestrians are safe. Am I on the right track?

*Comment:* And the U-turn concept at that intersection is a concern because it includes a shopping center on one side, and I just see a can of worms being opened up allowing U-turns around at this light. They already have enough crashes in the intersection as it is.

*Response:* We appreciate your comments, and we understand.

### **Public Comments & Questions (Received after the Virtual Public Meeting)**

Following the 30-day comment period which ended Feb 28, 2022, the project team received one comment/question via email which is shown below.

***Comment/Question: Please send me the link to the slide show from last night meeting. I live in the condos on that road the Villas at East Point, we are concerned about the traffic that might be directed into our association and we are planning on putting up a security gate across our entrance this spring. So, this could not be a route for turn arounds. Please clarify if it is the plan for traffic to be coming into our complex in order to go the other way.***

*Response:* Betty, thank you so much for attending the meeting last night! See attached for the presentation from last night, as well as a comment form you can fill out and return to me if you have additional comments. You can also use the link below to submit comments online:

<https://forms.gle/xBGUWNM1mFG6TzXB7>

We'll also be updating the project web site ([bit.ly/EBroad2](http://bit.ly/EBroad2)) to include all of this information, as well as a recording of the meeting, soon.

I can tell you that we will not be directing traffic onto any side streets as a way to turn around. When we were talking about U-turns, we meant that east-bound or west-bound traffic on E. Broad would be allowed to make a 180 degree turn at the signalized intersections to go in the opposite direction. We

won't be directing them to make left or right turns onto side streets to turn around. With the additional lanes that we are proposing on E. Broad, cars will have enough width on E. Broad to complete that 180-degree U-turn. Please don't hesitate to call me if you that doesn't make sense or if you have any further questions. Again, thank you so much for your attendance last night!

### **Prior Public Notification**

The virtual public meeting was announced through several communication methods:

- City media advisory
- City social media posts
- Post cards (mailed to 327 property owners, residents, businesses along E. Broad Street)
- Project website update

## **Follow-up Meeting**

Thursday, February 10, 2022 • 1:00 PM • WebEx

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **Meeting Purpose**

A follow-up meeting was held on February 10, 2022 at 1 pm to discuss the proposed medians in the corridor in more detail.

#### **Meeting Attendance**

- Hannah Webber, City of Columbus Design Project Manager
- Jud Hines, City of Columbus CIP Program Manager
- Ryan Lowe, City of Columbus Traffic Engineering Section Manager
- Dan Soroka, Burgess & Niple Design Engineer
- Kelsey Vandia, ODOT D6 Project Manager
- Jennifer Chamberlain, Far East Area Commission
- Chief Brad Shull, Jefferson Township
- Matt Bruns, Lieutenant, Columbus Fire
- David Baugh, Assistant Chief, Columbus Fire
- Rosemary Hurst, Resident
- Betty Suchland, Resident
- Mark Goodman, Resident
- Rod Rollins, Resident

#### **Meeting Summary**

During the meeting, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) project team went into further detail on the purpose and need of the center medians. Safety is the number one reason for the medians. With the addition of a third thru lane in each direction, in conjunction with the 50 mph speed limit, allowing left turns at unsignalized intersections presents a significant safety risk. In addition to that, the ODOT State Highway Access Management Manual requires that any left turns across three or more lanes be protected-only.

The potential for emergency signal preemption was discussed, with the understanding that DPS would need to establish a city-wide policy regarding emergency signal preemption before anything could be implemented on E. Broad Street. For our projects on E. Broad Street, the presence of the medians will not hinder the implementation of emergency vehicle preemption should the City of Columbus establish a city-wide policy in the future.

Chief Shull shared various options, including purchasing approximately 20 feet of additional right-of way for the length of the project in order to allow for an 8-foot shoulder on either side of the proposed medians. This option was ruled out due to the negative impact the additional right-of-way need would have on the adjacent businesses.

It was also suggested that we move the proposed 8-foot outside shoulder to the inside against the median. With the 50 mph speed limit on E. Broad St, an 8-foot outside shoulder is required. After the meeting, Ryan Lowe and his team looked into the potential of lowering the speed limit on E. Broad Street, which would allow us more flexibility in our typical section design. Jennifer Chamberlain and Chief Shull both expressed support for lowering the speed limit on E. Broad Street. After further research, Ryan's team indicated that the speed limit on E. Broad Street could not be lowered, even with the new ODOT speed zone forms.

Jennifer Chamberlain also asked if we had given any consideration to adding service roads in front of the businesses on either side of E. Broad Street. in lieu of adding additional thru lanes on E. Broad Street. Adding service roads will not make a significant impact on the congestion on E. Broad Street, particularly given the volume of traffic coming to and from I-270.

Finally, we discussed the potential of providing sections of the median with a 2-inch curb versus the proposed 4-inch curb. Chief Shull indicated that this reduced curb height would be most beneficial close to the intersections. After the meeting, we worked with team members from our Construction Division to confirm the viability of this reduced curb. Once the viability of reduced curb height was confirmed, we worked with Danny Soroka to locate the appropriate length of the reduced curb height at each signalized intersection. Our intent was to provide a 150-foot length of reduced curb height at each intersection, but the presence of drives near some intersections prevented that at some locations. The marked up scroll plot that shows the proposed length of the reduced curb height at each signalized intersection can be found by copying the following link into your file explorer and saving the file to your computer.

[ftp://dpsftp:Password4321@tx.columbus.gov/Design/Hannah Webber/E Broad Ph II/Median Edits](ftp://dpsftp:Password4321@tx.columbus.gov/Design/Hannah%20Webber/E%20Broad%20Ph%20II/Median%20Edits)