

Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study

Technical Memorandum #1

Initial Public Meeting Summary

Knoxville, TN

Executive Summary

The public meeting for the Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study was held on Wednesday, October 30, 2019, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Honey Rock Victorious Church in Knoxville.

- Forty-eight (48) percent of the public's comments concerned traffic control and / or roadway connectivity. The community consistently expressed a desire for a direct connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168).
- Pedestrian and bicyclist concerns followed with 18% of the comments. Improved sidewalks, greenways, and crosswalks are key concerns of the public.
- Safety concerns followed with 11% of the comments.
- Only one comment noted congestion, and it concerned the I-40 ramps with Rutledge Pike (SR 1).

For
City of Knoxville
Housing and Neighborhood Development Department
400 Main Street, Room 655
Knoxville, TN 37901

By
Gresham Smith
2095 Lakeside Centre Way #120
Knoxville, TN 37922

Gresham Smith Project No. 44321.00

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1.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING

The public meeting for the Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study was held on Wednesday, October 30, 2019, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Honey Rock Victorious Church in Knoxville. The meeting was held in the multi-purpose room of the facility located at 4113 Holston Drive. The meeting had an open house format. Twenty-one (21) citizens signed in at the welcome table, not including government agency staff. Three primary stations were organized. Each station focused on one of the following topics:

1. Study Area
2. Roadway Traffic and Safety
3. Destinations and Barriers

The primary purpose of the meeting was to inform the public of the project. The public was also asked to identify their primary concerns regarding the project and provide input on the future design of the project. In the open house format, attendees could ask questions of the City's Housing and Neighborhood Development Department staff and consulting team in a relaxed, informal setting. Attendees were encouraged to document their thoughts on post-it notes and place them upon the displays. Figure 1 through Figure 7 provide photographs from the public meeting. Attendees were also encouraged to complete comment cards.

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Knoxville, Knox County**



FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (1 OF 2)

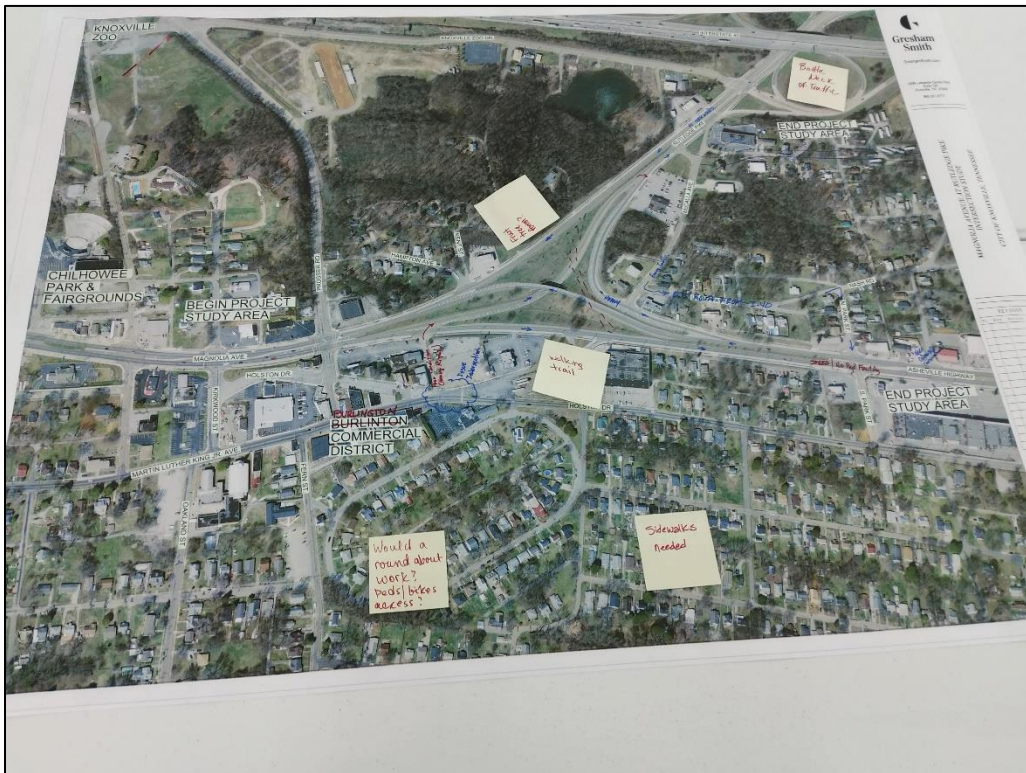


FIGURE 2: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (2 OF 2)

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FIGURE 3: ROADWAY TRAFFIC AND SAFETY DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS



FIGURE 4: DESTINATIONS AND BARRIERS DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS



FIGURE 5: PUBLIC DISCUSSION (1 OF 3)



FIGURE 6: PUBLIC DISCUSSION (2 OF 3)



FIGURE 7: PUBLIC DISCUSSION (3 OF 3)

2.0 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

The public placed 33 comment notes on the displays at the public meeting and submitted five comment cards. Table 1 beginning on page 8 lists each comment received. In Table 1, Gresham Smith categorized each comment by topic. Many comments covered multiple topics. Therefore, there were effectively 62 comments included in the 38 notes left by the public. Figure 8 charts the topics received. Short descriptions of each topic follow Figure 8.

Public Comment Topics

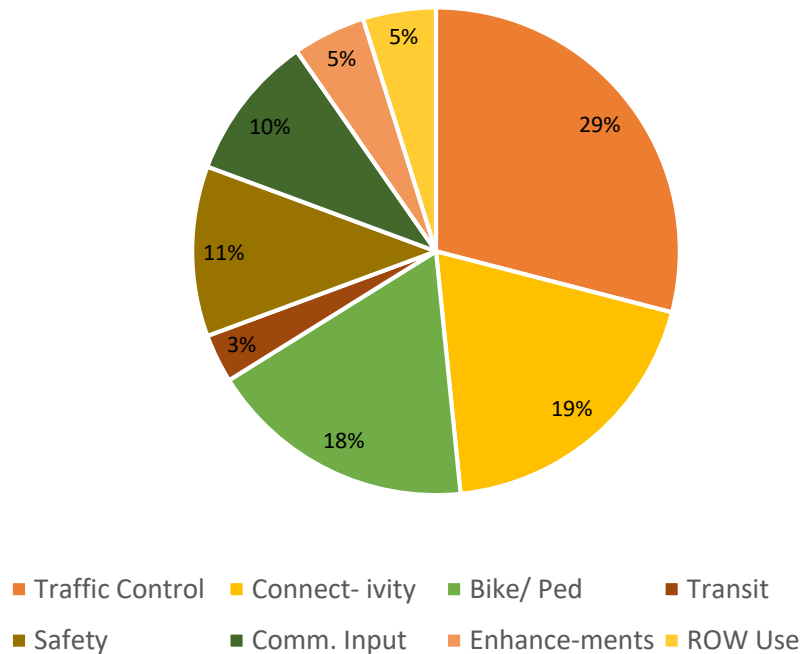


FIGURE 8: PUBLIC COMMENTS BY TOPIC

Magnolia Avenue, Rutledge Pike, and Asheville Highway are all State Routes (SR), under jurisdiction of TDOT. Magnolia Avenue is designated as SR 1, Rutledge Pike as SR 1, and Asheville Highway as SR 168.

Traffic Control (29% of comments). These comments typically involved providing a connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168). This movement is currently not possible without making a U-turn or taking an indirect route along McCalla Avenue and Park Street through a residential area. Other comments grouped under traffic control included those stating a preference for a roundabout, improved access management, and a need for improved signal timing.

Connectivity (19% of comments). These comments included those focused on providing a connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168) and also from Rutledge Pike (SR 1) to the Burlington area / Holston Drive. Any comment grouped under “Connectivity” was also grouped under “Traffic Control.”

Pedestrian / Bicyclist concerns (18% of comments). These comments made direct reference to the need for improved active transportation facilities including sidewalks and greenways.

Safety (11% of comments). These comments focused on safety issues including traffic from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168) that is diverted through a residential area due to the lack of a direct connection, lack of crosswalks, signal timing concerns, and signing / decision point concerns.

Community input (10% of comments). These comments requested coordination with various neighborhood associations and new developments.

Enhancements (5% of comments). These comments requested neighborhood enhancements including a “Welcome to East Knoxville” sign along Rutledge Pike (SR 1), tree preservation, improved wayfinding, and improved landscaping.

ROW use (5% of comments). These comments stated a preference for utilizing the existing interchange right-of-way as greenspace.

Transit (3% of comments). This comment noted a need for Knoxville Area Transit to provide express routes to the Burlington area.

Forty-eight (48) percent of the public’s comments concerned traffic control and / or roadway connectivity. The community consistently expressed a desire for a direct connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168). Pedestrian and bicyclist concerns followed with 18% of the comments. Improved sidewalks, greenways, and crosswalks are key concerns of the public. Safety concerns followed with 11% of the comments. Only one comment noted congestion, and it concerned the I-40 ramps with Rutledge Pike (SR 1).

The complete public meeting summary is provided in the Appendix.

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TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
1	Investigate roundabout.	x	x						
2	Ped/bike concern with roundabout.			x		x			
3	Sidewalks needed.			x					
4	Walking trails desired.			x					
5	Holston Dr./MLK Jr. Intersection an issue.	x							
6	Rutledge Pk. Merge too close to Prosser Rd.	x				x			
7	Need access from Rutledge Pk. SB to Asheville Hwy.	x	x						
8	Heavy traffic in neighborhood to travel from Rutledge Pk. SB to Asheville Hwy.	x	x			x			
9	Traffic speed/lack of crosswalks across Asheville Hwy.			x		x			
10	Need crosswalk across Asheville Hwy.			x					
11	Need sidewalks along Rutledge Pike			x					
12	Accommodate new development to be located south of I-40 and east of McCalla Ave.						x		

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#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
13	I-40 EB Ramps at Zoo Dr. is a bottleneck.	x							
14	Desire different use for interchange ROW (fruit tree forest).								x
15	Coordinate with Burlington Community Association.						x		
16	Preserve greenspace if created by project.								x
17	Prefers a roundabout.	x	x						
18	Greenway along Rutledge Pike desired.			x					
19	"Welcome to East Knoxville" sign on Rutledge Pike.							x	
20	Preserve trees.							x	x
21	Need access from Rutledge Pk. SB to Asheville Hwy.	x	x						
22	Improved connection from I-40 to Asheville Hwy.	x	x						
23	Incorporate Burlington's Vision Plan in East TN Community Design Center.						x		
24	Improved landscaping.							x	
25	Improved pedestrian facilities.			x					

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#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
26	Improved connection between Rutledge Pk. and Holston Dr.	x	x						
27	Need access from Rutledge Pk. SB to Asheville Hwy.	x	x						
28	Improved access control / median opening designs for turns.	x				x			
29	Get input at Town Hall East meetings.						x		
30	Signal timing needs to be checked. Could be safety issue.	x				x			
31	Short decision point for ramps at interstate. Could be safety issue.	x				x			
32	Express routes for KAT needed.				x				
33	Need access from Rutledge Pk. SB to Asheville Hwy.	x	x						
34	Sidewalks, bike lanes, and express bus route needed.			x	x				
35	Prefer roundabout. Improve signal timing and crosswalks. Sidewalks on Rutledge Pike. Coordinate with Chilhowee Park Renovation.	x	x	x			x		
36	Prefers a roundabout.	x	x						
37	Need more sidewalks, improved access between Burlington area and Rutledge Pike.	x	x	x					

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#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
38	How much does this project cost?						x		
Totals		18	12	11	2	7	6	3	3
Percentage		29%	19%	18%	3%	11%	10%	5%	5%

3.0 KEY FINDINGS

Forty-eight (48) percent of the public's comments concerned traffic control and / or roadway connectivity. The community consistently expressed a desire for a direct connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168). Pedestrian and bicyclist concerns followed with 18% of the comments. Improved sidewalks, greenways, and crosswalks are key concerns of the public. Safety concerns followed with 11% of the comments. Only one comment noted congestion, and it concerned the I-40 ramps with Rutledge Pike (SR 1).

The meeting sign-in sheets and public comment cards are included as attachments.