

Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study Technical Memorandum #2 Stakeholder Meetings Summary

Knoxville, TN

Executive Summary

A series of six stakeholder meetings for the Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study were held between January 29 and February 11, 2020. Representatives from multiple city departments, elected officials, business leaders, neighborhood association leaders, and the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) attended.

- Fifty (50) percent of the stakeholder's comments concerned traffic control and / or roadway connectivity. The stakeholders consistently expressed a desire for a direct connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168) and between Rutledge Pike (SR 1) and the Burlington Commercial District.
- In general, the stakeholders prefer a signalized intersection to a roundabout or to the existing interchange.

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

February 17, 2020

[This page left intentionally blank]

Table of Contents

1.0	Summary of Stakeholder Meetings.....	1
2.0	Summary of Comments.....	5
3.0	Key Findings	11

Tables

Table 1:	Stakeholder Meetings.....	1
Table 2:	Summary of Comments.....	7

Figures

Figure 1:	Study Area Display with Comments (TDOT and COK Alt. Transportation).....	2
Figure 2:	Study Area Display with Comments (Elected Officials).....	2
Figure 3:	Study Area Display with Comments (Neighborhood Associations)	3
Figure 4:	Study Area Display with Comments (City Staff).....	3
Figure 5:	Study Area Display with Comments (Architects)	4
Figure 6:	Study Area Display with Comments (Business Representatives)	4
Figure 7:	Stakeholder Comments by Topic	5

1.0 SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

A series of six stakeholder meetings for the Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study were held at the times and locations listed in Table 1. 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. Sign-in sheets from the meetings are provided in the attachments.

TABLE 1: STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Group	Agencies Represented	Location, Date and Time
City of Knoxville Alternative Transportation and TDOT	TDOT Strategic Transportation Investments Division, TDOT Region 1 Traffic, Knox County Schools, Knoxville Area Transit, Knoxville Area TPO	City County Building, 1/29/20, 11:00 AM
Elected Officials	Knoxville City Council, Knox County School Board	City County Building, 1/29/20, 2:30 PM
Neighborhood Associations	Neighborhood Associations	Perk City, 1/29/20, 5:30 PM
City Staff	Knoxville Fire Department, Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Community Development, Traffic Engineering, Housing and Neighborhood Development	City County Building, 2/3/20, 2:00 PM
Architects	East Tennessee Community Design Center	Perk City, 2/4/20, 9:00 AM
Business Representatives	Tennessee Valley Fair, Chilhowee Park (ASM Knoxville), Muse Knoxville, Knoxville Golden Gloves, Zoo Knoxville, Burlington Neighborhood Association, Knoxville ADA Coordinator	Perk City, 2/11/20, 1:30 PM

The primary purpose of the meetings were to inform stakeholders of the project. The meetings opened with a discussion of the purpose of the study, past planning projects in the area, traffic volumes, crash history, bus routes, and findings from the initial public meeting that was held on October 30, 2019. The stakeholders were asked to identify their primary concerns regarding the project and provide input on the future design of the project. Attendees were encouraged to document their thoughts on post-it notes and place them upon an aerial map of the study corridor. Figure 1 through Figure 6 provide photographs of the exhibits with comments.

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**



FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (TDOT AND COK ALT. TRANSPORTATION)



FIGURE 2: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (ELECTED OFFICIALS)

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**

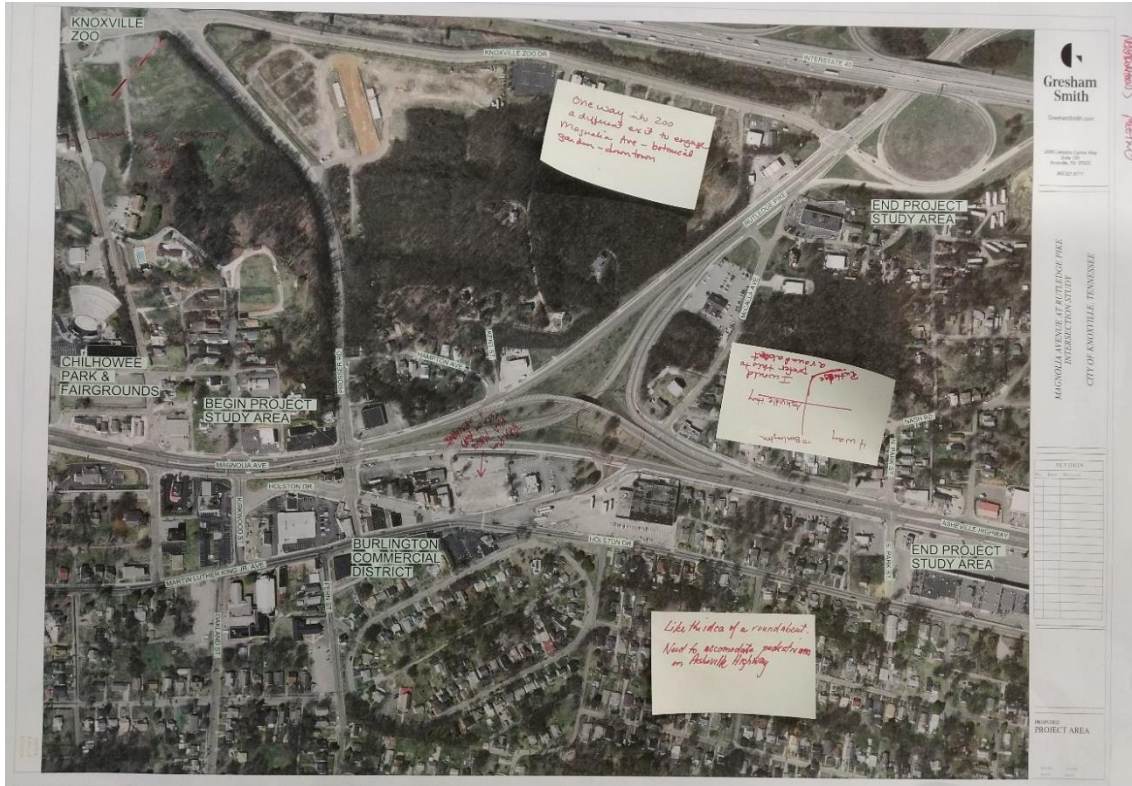


FIGURE 3: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS)



FIGURE 4: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (CITY STAFF)

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**

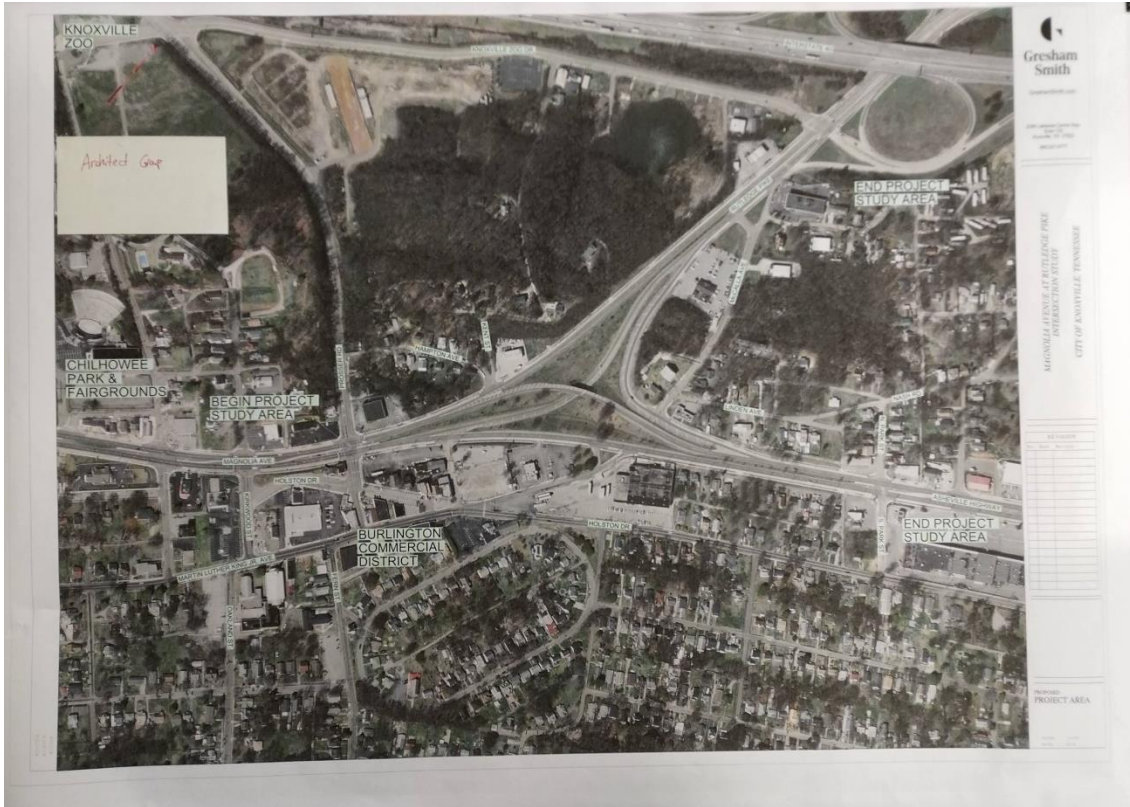


FIGURE 5: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (ARCHITECTS)

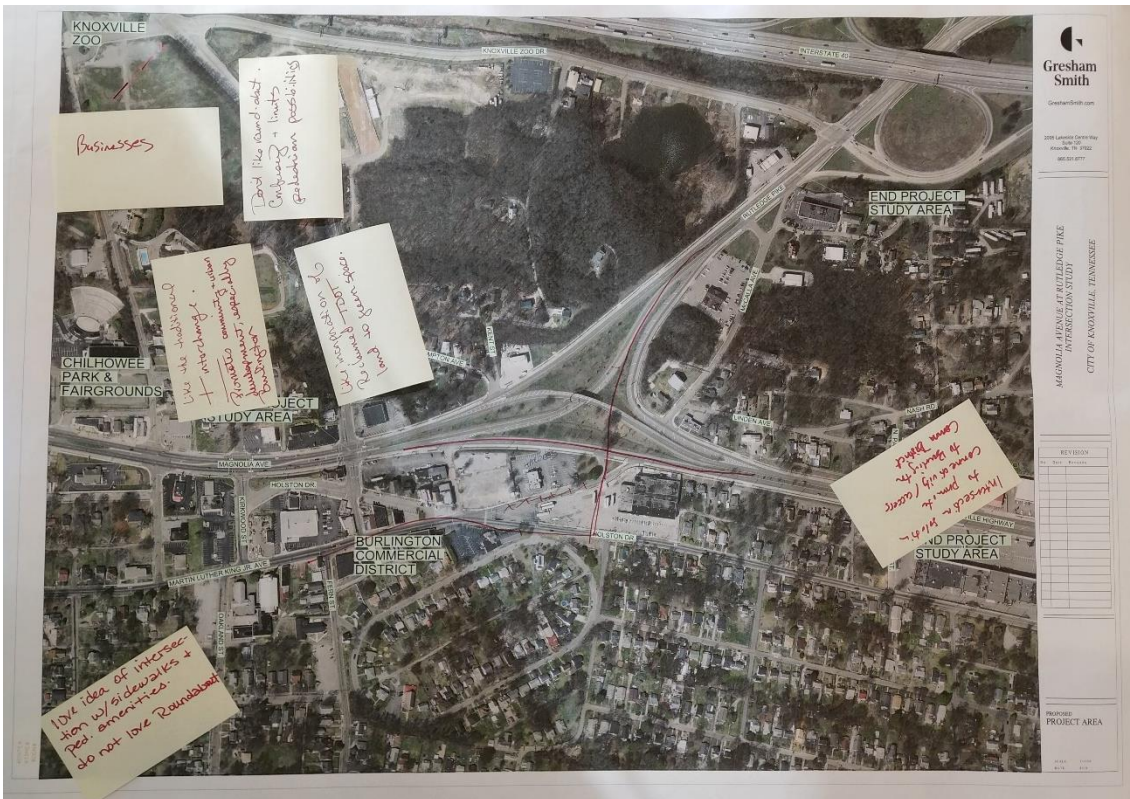


FIGURE 6: STUDY AREA DISPLAY WITH COMMENTS (BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES)

2.0 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

The six stakeholder meetings yielded 28 comments. Table 2 beginning on page 6 lists each comment received. In Table 2, Gresham Smith categorized each comment by topic. Many comments covered multiple topics. Therefore, there were effectively 48 topics included in the 28 comments left by the stakeholders. Figure 7 charts the topics received. Short descriptions of each topic follow Figure 7.

There were two recurring comments that are not directly associated with the Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study, but are noted:

1. At the Neighborhood Association meeting on February 4, it was recommended to make Knoxville Zoo Drive / Timothy Street one-way from Rutledge Pike (SR 1) into the Zoo and Chilhowee Park. Visitors would exit via Magnolia Avenue (SR 1). This would generate traffic into the Burlington Commercial District.
2. Several stakeholders discussed ongoing flooding issues in the area. Gresham Smith noted that an interchange project would accommodate the stormwater drainage within its construction limits, but not an overall improvement for the community.

Stakeholder Meetings Comment Topics

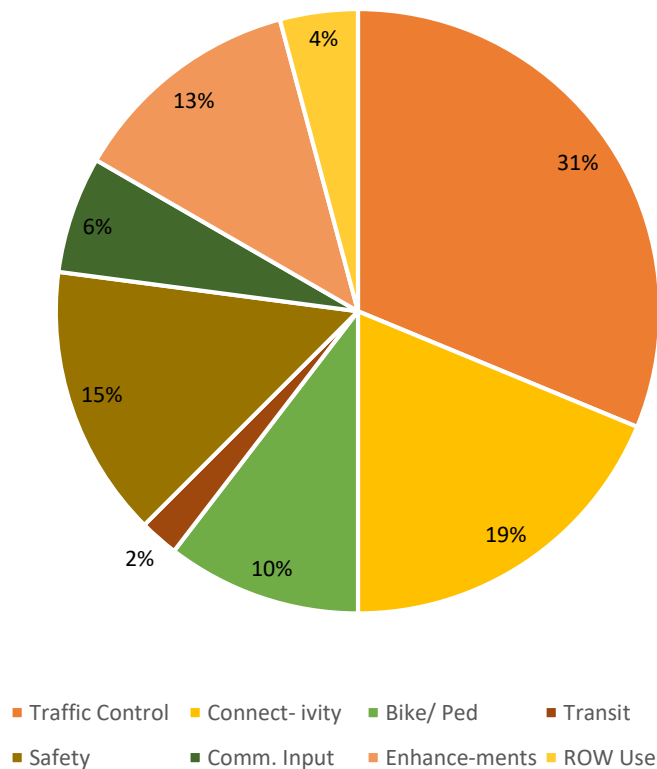


FIGURE 7: STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS BY TOPIC

Traffic Control (31% 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. Most respondents that commented preferred a traditional signalized intersection to a multi-lane roundabout.

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 Commercial District / Holston Drive. Any comment grouped under “Connectivity” was also grouped under “Traffic Control.”

Safety (15% of comments). These comments focused on safety issues including fire and police response times are negatively affected by the lack of movement from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168). Improvement options should include the need to maintain traffic during events at Chilhowee Park (a signalized intersection is preferred to a roundabout) and if a roundabout is selected it must accommodate a fire ladder truck. A preference for buffered bicycle lanes was also expressed.

Pedestrian / Bicyclist concerns (10% of comments). These comments made direct reference to the need for improved active transportation facilities including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and greenways.

Enhancements (13% of comments). These comments requested neighborhood enhancements including improved landscaping, litter removal, and alternative utilization of right-of-way including the removal of a section of Martin Luther King Boulevard and conversion of existing interchange right-of-way to green space.

Community input (6% of comments). These comments requested coordination with various associations and councilmembers.

ROW use (4% of comments). These comments stated a preference for utilizing the existing interchange right-of-way as greenspace and a section of Martin Luther King Avenue for developable land.

Transit (2% of comments). This comment noted transit does not utilize Magnolia Avenue (SR 1) / Asheville Highway (SR 168) because the routes are not currently transit friendly.

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
City of Knoxville Alternative Transportation and TDOT (1/29/20 at 11:00 AM)									
1	Ensure the report describes the missing movement from SB Rutledge Pike to EB Asheville Highway with the existing interchange design.	x	x						
2	This project is currently no funded. It will need to be in the LRTP and /or TIP for State or federal funding.								
3	Need to slow traffic and create frequent and safe pedestrian crossings.			x		x			
4	Transit does not utilize Magnolia Ave. / Asheville Hwy. because it is not transit friendly.				x				
5	A roundabout could provide a place for transit buses to turn around.	x							
6	Providing a full movement intersection may take some traffic off the I-40 / Rutledge Pike Interchange.	x	x						
Elected Officials (1/29/20 at 2:30 PM)									
7	Will the JWP Urban Wilderness project push traffic to Magnolia Avenue?								
8	This area is in an opportunity zone.						x		
9	Send PDFs of meeting exhibits to Councilmember Parker.						x		

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**

#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
Neighborhood Associations (1/29/20 at 5:30 PM)									
10	Trash originating at the weekend flea market next to Hardees blows into the interchange and needs to be picked up more frequently.							x	
11	Like the idea of a roundabout but need to accommodate pedestrians on Asheville Highway.	x	x	x					
12	Prefer a signalized intersection that connects to the Burlington Commercial District to a roundabout.	x	x						
13	Recommends Knoxville Zoo Drive be converted to one-way in, with traffic departing Magnolia Avenue, in order to engage zoo visitors with commercial activity.		x					x	
City Staff (2/3/20 at 2:00 PM)									
14	If roundabout is selected it must accommodate fire ladder trucks. These have a large turning radius. A mountable apron would need to be included in the design.	x				x			
15	Police and Fire desire movement from southbound Rutledge Pike to eastbound Asheville Highway. This would speed response times.	x	x			x			
16	Police noted a standard signalized intersection is easier to control with major events than a roundabout. Major events are common at Chilhowee Park.	x				x			
17	Motorized wheelchair users are common in the Burlington Community. This is a concern with a roundabout.	x				x			

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**

#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
Architects (2/4/20 at 9:00 AM)									
18	Requested the Chilhowee Park Master Plan be sent to them.						x		
19	Landscaped streetscapes are needed to maintain the vision in past planning documents.							x	
20	Buffered bike lanes with delineators are preferred.			x		x			
21	Safe pedestrian access across Magnolia Avenue / Asheville Highway is important.	x		x		x			
22	Interested in one-way zoo entrance at I-40 (as recommended at neighborhood meeting on 1/29/20) to integrate the zoo and Chilhowee Park with the community.	x							
23	Would like to see the diagonal section of Martin Luther King Blvd. removed with an improvement plan. This would improve the Holston Drive Intersection and provide redevelopment opportunities.		x					x	x

**Magnolia Avenue / Rutledge Pike / Asheville Highway Interchange Study
Knoxville, Knox County**

#	Comment	Topic							
		Traffic Control	Connectivity	Bike/Ped	Transit	Safety	Comm. Input	Enhancements	ROW Use
Business Representatives (2/11/20 at 1:30 PM)									
24	Favor a signalized intersection with sidewalks and pedestrian amenities. Do not like a roundabout.	x		x					
25	Intersection solution should promote connectivity / access to the Burlington Commercial District.	x	x						
26	Promote incorporation of reclaimed TDOT ROW to green space.							x	x
27	Prefer a traditional intersection. Solution should promote community and urban development, especially for the Burlington Commercial District.	x	x					x	
28	Do not prefer a roundabout. Believe it will be confusing and difficult for pedestrians.	x							
Totals		15	9	5	1	7	3	6	2
Percentage		31%	19%	10%	2%	15%	6%	13%	4%

3.0 KEY FINDINGS

Fifty (50) percent of the stakeholder's comments concerned traffic control and / or roadway connectivity. The stakeholders consistently expressed a desire for a direct connection from southbound Rutledge Pike (SR 1) (from I-40) to eastbound Asheville Highway (SR 168) and between Rutledge Pike (SR 1) and the Burlington Commercial District. In general, the stakeholders prefer a signalized intersection to a roundabout or to the existing interchange. Safety concerns followed with 15% of the comments. Enhancements related to the appearance and addition of green space followed with 13% of the comments. Pedestrian and bicyclist concerns followed with 10% of the comments. Improved sidewalks, greenways, and crosswalks are key concerns of the public.

The meeting sign-in sheets are included as attachments.