



PI 0017391
Peach County
SR 7/US 341 @ SR 7 CONN
March 4, 2021
Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome
2. Description of Project – SR 7/US 341 @ SR 7 CONN An intersection improvement at E. Church Street to allow traffic to flow on both sides of railroad when gates, lights, and bells are active, or train is present.
3. Introduction of Attendees – GDOT, Peach County, City of Fort Valley
4. Presentation of Design Alternatives – Josh Waddell & Shaun Regan
 - a. Concept A –
 - Positives – Resembles original concept with updates and minor adjustments.
 - Negatives – The Right of Way costs are high, provides some safety concerns, will include needing to replace railroad signals
 - b. Concept B – This layout shifts the left turns south to keep from conflicting with the tracks.
 - Positives – Prevents conflicts with lefts turn crossing railroad, preferred by railroad group, less Right of Way impacts
 - Negatives – Reduces decision times for drivers, removes through movements for westbound traffic on Church St.
 - c. Concept C – Similar to concept B except shifts the entire 3 lane section south
 - Positives – Prevents conflicts with the left turns crossing railroad,
 - Negatives – Completely negates the function of the intersection
 - d. Concept D – Closes the railroad crossing and allows traffic to flow continuously
 - Positives – Has the least amount of impacts to Right of Way and Utilities, provides safety aspects due to the closing of the railroad crossing
5. Open Discussion and Questions –
 - a. **Matthew Kear** – We need to provide information for environmental to show that we have no alternatives except to use the property the historic house is located. We will also need to keep in mind this will require mitigation.
 - b. **Wade Yoder** – What does mitigation consist of? \

Matthew - There are different options we can take and will investigate once we know which alternative we are moving forward with.

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- c. **Tyler Peek** – Traffic ops preference is concept D and moving traffic away from the crossing and provides the benefits of less impacts for all.
- d. **Adam Smith** – Our preferred alternative is concept D and closing the railroad crossing.
- e. **Chief Spurgeon** – Only concern is that it alleviates the traffic problem and they will trust in the experts that our decision is the best path forward as long as we alleviate the traffic issues. He is in support of concept D. Whatever can be done quickest with less impacts to the locals is the best option.
- f. **Adam Smith** – Concept D is the most feasible alternative and the one that can be delivered the quickest and provides a big safety factor by closing the crossing.
- g. **Wade Yoder** – Is in favor of this design but a couple of concerns. He could see potential issues for traffic traveling over the overpass trying to make a right turn to move towards the 5-way intersection being delayed by traffic stopping to make a left hand turn and feels this could cause a bottleneck issue. Locals would appreciate a partnership with railroad in property acquisition and maybe Norfolk Southern placing crossings at Lily Creek crossing with the new high school.
Adam Smith - Other options at the overpass have been discussed including a future roundabout or other options at the overpass. It won't be part of this project but could be a future project.
- h. **April Hodges** – Can we share the layout and discussion of meeting for the commissioners?
Shanda Caldwell -Yes, it will be sent with the meeting minutes.
- i. **Edlin Regis** – With this being preferred alternative, would you see any push back from the community if we close this crossing?
Chief Spurgeon – He does not feel there would be any push back and that once the project is advertised, we will get support. The community feels the project is past due.
Adam Smith – This also facilitates any emergency response situations as well.
- j. **Wade Yoder** – Is there a way we could find out what Norfolk Southern's buy in would be if we go this route.
Frantz Boileau – Has been in contact with Norfolk Southern and they are very much in favor of closing the crossing. He is not sure what they would be willing to do with the City and that would be a separate discussion.
- k. **Frantz Boileau** - Could we receive a letter of support from the County for this project?
April Hodges – She can provide the letter of support from the County.
- l. **Edlin Regis** – Has traffic ops looked at the possibility of adding a left turn lane at the bridge if we move forward with this project?
Shaun Regan – We are showing 14 ft lanes and we could narrow that and there are two 10-foot lanes and could include some striping to let through traffic move and add left turns onto the overpass.

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- m. **Edlin Regis** – Southbound on 341 also need to look at how much traffic will be turning onto East Church Street on the other side of the tracks due to this being an urban area. Especially any truck movements.
Adam Smith – There are alternative routes for trucks to use and we looked at this during the study and understand the concern and we may need to use quick response program to alleviate any issues.
 - n. **Wade Yoder** – One concern is trucks that make a complete stop to turn left may have an issue getting up that hill.
 - o. **Tyler Peek** – We have an ITS project to place changeable message signs and this should start in the next 6 to 8 weeks and it includes a permanent message board for the southbound lanes that will tell drivers when the crossing is blocked and this permanent sign will be left in place to let them know they need to use the overpass.
 - p. **Wade Yoder** – Is there any conversation about an extra lane being placed for people making a right turn on the other side of the overpass to prevent a backup of traffic there.
Tyler Peek – There are some things we can do with striping from the crossing to the overpass. We can do that with striping if it doesn't add any asphalt. If there is a need to add additional asphalt that would need to be looked at in a separate project. The true purpose of this project is to alleviate this intersection. If it is minor it is something that we could achieve with a smaller project.
 - q. **Adam Smith** – There are some benefits with this alternative and it should keep a steady traffic flow so that there is no backup of traffic while the crossing is blocked.
6. Decision – The department will move forward with Concept D (closing the railroad crossing) as the preferred alternative.
7. Adjourn

Attendees:

Shanda Caldwell – GDOT OPD District 3 Project Manager
Josh Waddell – GDOT District 3 Senior Design Engineer
Shaun Regan – GDOT District 3 Civil Engineer 3 Design
Adam Smith – GDOT District 3 Preconstruction Engineer
Tyler Peek – GDOT District 3 Traffic Engineer
Brandon Nash – GDOT District 3 Area 3 Asst. Construction Manager
Frantz Boileau – GDOT Railroad Safety Program Associate
Jill Franks – GDOT Railroad Liaison Manager
Kevin Khoo – GDOT District 3 Pro Civil Engineer 5 Traffic Ops

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Wade Yoder – Peach County Commissioner
Wayne Smith – Peach County Public Works Director
Cherral Dempsey – GDOT OPD District 3 Asst. Program Manager
Edlin Regis – GDOT Railroad Safety Program Asst.
Daniel Trevorrow – GDOT District 3 Asst. Traffic Engineer
Carla Benton Hooks – GDOT Environmental Program Manager Districts 3 & 6
Antoniette Moseley – GDOT OPD District 3 Project Manager
April Hodges – Peach County Asst. County Administrator
Lauren Falvey – GDOT Environmental
Laura Dawood – GDOT Environmental
Matthew Kear – GDOT Environmental
Mayor Barbara Williams – City of Fort Valley Mayor
Eureika Thomas – GDOT District 3 Area 4 Asst. Construction Manager
Chief Lawrence Spurgeon – City of Fort Valley Director of Public Safety

