



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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County Executive

DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS

Department of Engineering & Construction Management

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March 9, 2021

RE: CHRISTOPHER'S CROSSING WIDENING PROJECT VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Minutes from the December 17, 2020 Virtual Public Meeting

The purpose of this mailing is to provide the attached meeting minutes from the December 17, 2020 virtual public meeting. Thank you to all of those who participated and provided questions and comments.

For more information, please contact Elbert Maravilla, Project Manager, at 301-600-3511 or email emaravilla@FrederickCountyMD.gov. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the virtual public meeting of this road improvement project.

By: Frederick County Division of Public Works
Department of Engineering and Construction Management
Office of Transportation Engineering

Christopher's Crossing Widening Project Public Meeting Minutes

On Thursday, December 17, 2020, staff from the Frederick County Office of Transportation Engineering conducted a virtual public meeting concerning the Christopher's Crossing Widening Project.

The meeting began at approximately 7:00 pm and was held through WebEx and Public Input portals. The following were in attendance representing Frederick County government:

Division of Public Works:

Elbert Maravilla, Project Manager	(301) 600-3511
Jason Stitt, P.E., Office Chief.....	(301) 600-2932
Ian Selock, Engineer	(301)-600-1806

Questions regarding the Christopher's Crossing Widening project should be directed to Elbert Maravilla, Office of Transportation Engineering, at (301) 600-3511 or email emaravilla@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide a project update, construction schedule, and opportunity for residents along Christopher's Crossing to ask questions and provide their comments.

The formal presentation began shortly after 7:00 PM. Elbert Maravilla opened with introductions of staff and an update of the road widening project. Elbert and their engineering consultant, A Morton Thomas & Associates (AMT) then presented a number of slides detailing each of the project contact information, project updates, and project schedule. After the presentation was completed, time was allowed for questions and general comments from the group. Following the general question and comment portion, the meeting concluded shortly after 8:00 PM.

Please see the following pages for questions and comments that were provided during the Public Meeting.

Questions and Comments

The summary of questions and comments includes questions phoned in at the meeting and virtual comments provided through the Public Input website. Questions or comments that pertained to the same issue were grouped together and may have been edited or reworded for clarity. Answers follow each question.

A. General Project Questions/Concerns

1. Technical issues during the virtual meeting –

- **I tried numerous times to speak but couldn't get thru. The platform for the public meeting was frustrating. Having the residents call in with you all online made it very cumbersome, lots of delay and feedback. That really didn't work well.**
- **I just want it noted that I waited to public comment during the meeting but was never called upon. Immediately after the meeting ended, I heard a notation on the phone that I was now in the queue and would be called upon next. But the meeting had ended by then.**
- **The meeting platform was pretty terrible. Frustrating. Lost audio after a few minutes.**
- **Tried dial in 3 more times. Spotty audio and could only partially hear some of the people commenting.**
- **I tried typing questions into the message box on the meeting site, and they were never acknowledged. I posted multiple comments in chat and none were read. Also I submitted 5 comments on the site for public view and only one was addressed. I submitted a number of questions by chat but there were no answers provided.**

Our sincere apologies to all who participated in the Christopher Crossing virtual meeting December 17, 2020. It was the first time we used that technology system and it unfortunately was filled with feedback and communication issues. There is a recording of all phone calls and chat comments in the Public Input portal and all are included in the meeting minutes.

- 2. I'm sure everyone who lives in Clover Hill III has noticed tire tracks of cars that have lost control on Christopher's Crossing, and have run onto the grass on the south or the North side of the road. Anyone trying to clear the sidewalk could be killed by a car that loses control and runs onto the sidewalk, especially after snow when the road is likely to be icy and slippery. Traffic moving from Yellow Springs Rd onto Christopher's Crossing is constant and in my opinion, it's just a matter of time before a fatal pedestrian accident will occur if the County doesn't provide an alternative method of maintaining the sidewalk. Why isn't the safety issue being addressed, versus simply referencing the code**

Christopher Crossing currently has an open ditch roadway, which makes it possible for vehicles to use the shoulders and into the grass. Construction of the

sidewalk will incorporate a curb and gutter system which will help keep vehicles in the roadway.

3. **Since we have such low pedestrian volume, I would like to submit that the best alternative solution to the sidewalk maintenance and snow removal, is NOT to build the sidewalk right now. Please delay the sidewalk installation because years of maintenance and snow removal for a very low use sidewalk is an extreme burden to residents when it is not warranted?**

The planned sidewalk is part of a comprehensive development plan of the Christopher Crossing/Monocacy corridor that was coordinated with the State, County and City officials which takes into account future area developments.

4. **With regard to stop signs, it was not stated whether or not a new traffic study would be completed. It was mentioned that they did not predict a new study would change the results, however, I think it is important to collect the data. I would hate for a tragic accident to happen with a pedestrian and after the fact run a study. Please complete another study on a weekday and weekend when roads are clear - not snow covered?**

The Office of Transportation Engineering (OTE) has completed the warrant analysis to determine if four way stops at the Christopher Crossing intersections are needed. Our consultant, A. Morton Thomas & Associates (AMT) collected data on turning movement counts summer of 2019 and conducted the analysis based on the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards. We have concluded that four way stops are not warranted at this time and are unlikely to be warranted in the future.

Based on MUTCD, there are three primary criteria that may warrant All Way Stop Control (AWSC). The Christopher's Crossing intersections at Stone Ridge, Glen Heather and Jordan Valley do not meet these criteria. The AWSC works best when the major and minor streets have similar volumes of traffic. The traffic volume on the minor streets is not high enough to warrant a signal and is too low to install an all way stop.

5. **Do I understand correctly that snow from county property such as the bike path will not be placed on private property?**

Depending on the amount of snow being cleared on a sidewalk or roadway, it is sometimes unavoidable for snow to be pushed outside the right-of-way and into private property.

6. Where will the bike path be placed? Will there be any separation between the bike path edge and private property?

The bike path will be placed on the north/west side of Christopher Crossing. In a typical roadway cross-section, as shown in the plans, there is approximately one and a half foot of separation between the edge of the bike path and the private property line.

7. What are penalties for not clearing the sidewalk?

If the resident does not remove the snow in the allotted time, they may be found in violation of Article I of the County Code. The penalty for violating any part of Article I is a fine of not more than \$500 or 30 days in jail, or both, for each violation. Each day that a violation continues or occurs shall be deemed to constitute a separate offence.

8. Will the agreement with parks and recreation be permanent and be placed in county code so that a year from now responsibility won't get shifted back to property owners?

No, it will not be placed in county code. It is an agreement between County Divisions of Public Works and Parks and Recreation. As a matter of policy, Parks and Recreation maintains all multi-use paths in the County now and in the future.

9. Will the county help property owners by putting up signs that the property adjacent to the bike path is private property?

No.

10. Bike path will be maintained by parks and recreation. Does that mean repairing the bike path after it is worn or damaged by vehicles?

Yes.

11. What if somebody slips and falls down and injures himself on the sidewalk, is it going to be the county's liability or adjacent homeowner's liability if a lawsuit is filed? If someone is injured or killed as a result of trying to clear snow, who's liable the city or the county?

County staff cannot provide answers to your legal question. Please consult an attorney for legal advice.

12. Sidewalk Maintenance –

- **It appears that the sidewalk is the county's property NOT the adjacent homeowner's property. If the county decides to build a sidewalk, then it is the county's responsibility to maintain it including clearing snow on the sidewalk.**
- **It is a burden to have to clear the sidewalk on Christopher's Crossing. We would have to drive a half mile in order to clear it. Why are residents being responsible for snow removal?**
- **It doesn't seem right that adjacent homeowners should be responsible for traveling around the block to clear the snow. It is not correct / fair that people in County, Cloverhill that live next to road, usually behind back yard in a difficult to access area, should be expected to maintain sidewalks and pathways the county wants, but is not required to put in.**
- **Can you please explain why the county do not cover the snow removal for the 5 ft side? This is a real problem for the home owners. I don't believe that I should be responsible for snow removal/maintenance of the bike/shared path since it is not my property. Can HOA take care of this?**
- **Who will be clearing the path and sidewalk at the new road after the circle leading into Clover Ridge?**

The County Code 1-15-4 states that the adjacent homeowners be responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalk. Staff understands the burden this imposes to the homeowners and will continue to work with them and the HOA for a solution that is mutually beneficial to all parties.

The sidewalk near the new roundabout is within Frederick City jurisdiction. It is our understanding based on conversations with the City that this sidewalk is to be maintained by an HOA.

13. I do not believe that the Clover Hill community has participated in a community request for a bike path and sidewalk for Christopher's Crossing widening. What is the source of the requirements for a bike path and sidewalk for the road expansion? Does it originate in the Livable Frederick Guide? Is it part of a larger County wide bike and sidewalk plan? If so, can you provide the reference?

The multi-use path and sidewalk are part of the strategic plan for Livable Frederick and the Bikeways and Trails Plan. It will be connected to the city's sections of multi-use path and sidewalk to enable pedestrian and recreational

users' access throughout the Christopher Crossing/Monocacy Boulevard corridor.

- 14. What is the purpose of the road expansion – relieve congestion or adding for additional traffic? What triggered the need for the road expansion? What are the future load projections for the expansion?**

The purpose of the project is to increase road capacity for expected increases in vehicular volume due to present and future development and growth.

- 15. The Clover Hill Community has seen its residential road structure designed to minimize through traffic by having no direct routes for secondary traffic turn into secondary arteries for traffic. Expansion of main artery roads around Clover Hill have added to the hard to find traffic paths through Clover Hill becoming secondary arteries for traffic and compromising original design. Is there any design criteria considerations to preserve the current traffic design for the Clover Hill Community? Is there a way for the Clover Hill Community to have active consideration to preserve our neighborhood road traffic design included in all the surrounding road expansion projects?**

Staff expects the completion of Christopher's Crossing will reduce the cut-through traffic on the residential streets, or at least not increase it. The evolution of traffic patterns you are describing is mostly related to the general development of the northwest quadrant of Frederick City. The community has opportunities to participate in public hearings or planning commission meetings for the surrounding developments.

- 16. Crosswalk design determination – What are the traffic and topographic considerations that control the current design. What is the design requirement threshold to move to the next level of including a 4 way stop? Is there a Maryland or County standard for crosswalks that control the final design? How close were your traffic estimates to the traffic thresholds of the crosswalk designs**

County staff initiated a traffic study immediately after residents made a request to add all way stop signs on Christopher's Crossing. The resulting warrant analysis concluded four way stops are not warranted at this time and are unlikely to be warranted in the future. Even with a growth factor applied to the observed vehicular, pedestrian, and bike traffic volumes, the warrants are not met. Four way stops are most appropriate when all road users (including vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes) are similarly split between the main legs and minor legs of an intersection and certain minimum volumes are met. The warrant calls for a

60-40 split between major and minor legs of the intersection and minimum volumes equal to or greater than 2400 trips on the main legs and 1600 trips on the minor legs divided among eight hours of a single day. The study observed a trip distribution of approximately 90-10 between Christopher's Crossing and the side streets, and the volumes were approximately 3600/400 over eight hours. While the volume on Christopher's Crossing meets the minimum warrant, the trip distribution and traffic volume on the side streets does not. Anticipated future traffic growth will affect Christopher's Crossing more than the side streets, which would make the distribution even more uneven.

Multi-way stop control may be used to control vehicle/pedestrian conflicts near locations that generate high pedestrian volumes. At the intersections on Christopher's Crossing we did not observe high pedestrian volumes or nearby pedestrian trip generators. The pool is located approximately 0.5 miles from the nearest intersection on Christopher's Crossing and only generates significant numbers of pedestrian trips at certain times of year and/or under certain weather conditions. To justify multi-way stop control, a pedestrian trip generator should be in close proximity to the intersection and routinely attracts large numbers of pedestrians on a daily basis throughout the year.

- 17. Sidewalk and bike path - Moving the bike path to be part of the road may be an option. Most serious bikers like to ride on the roads. Most inexperienced bike riders use sidewalks – Opossumtown Pike for example. Are their Maryland\County guidelines that determine the design for bike paths and sidewalks? There is a bike path why did we need a sidewalk?**

The Frederick County Bikeways and Trails Plan (2017) proposed a "side path" along Christopher's Crossing as part of its recommended Off-Street/Multi-Use Trail plan. While a side path may be used by both pedestrians and cyclists, provision of a separate sidewalk on the opposite side of the road allows some residents to walk along Christopher's Crossing without being required to cross the road..

- 18. A traffic circle is less costly and more effective than a light. Why isn't the County installing a circle instead of a light? Instead of traffic lights, traffic circles should be put in. They have been proven to be less costly and safer. Traffic flow is much better too.**

We will not be installing traffic lights anywhere for this widening project. The only traffic circle we'll be doing is at the Yellow Spring intersection – we will be reconstructing it to add an additional lane.

19. Which side of the road is the bike path and which side of the road is the sidewalk? Does the bike path switch sides past the traffic circle?

The bike path is on the north/west side and the sidewalk is on the south/east side. The bike path does not switch sides at the traffic circle.

20. Why is there a full stop near route 15 and none for Clover Hill? But if it's a major arterial right of way, are there plans to install some stop signs at Glen Heather or Stone Ridge?

There are currently all-way stops on the City's section of Christopher's Crossing near route 15, specifically on Opossumtown Pike and Timber Grove Road. We have reached out to the City traffic engineers and they are planning to remove them and install traffic lights on Opossumtown Pike and remove the all-way stop altogether at Timber Grove Road to maintain continuous traffic flow.

21. Why was the maintenance of the 5ft sidewalk not negotiated at the same time as the 10ft bike path? When do you anticipate having a solution for the maintenance of the sidewalk portion?

The multi-use path and 5 foot sidewalk are two separate issues. The sidewalk is clearly under the County Code for residents responsible for maintenance. The multi-use path specifically does not have its own county code but is under the purview of the Parks and Recreation and they agreed to include them in their inventory.

Staff cannot anticipate a timeline for a solution to the maintenance of the sidewalk as we are still continuing to come up with a solution.

22. There are a lot of families that cross to use the park and I am concerned about speeds. No one now stops at the new crosswalk markers that were recently added. Why do you think this will change in the future? We already have problems getting out of our side of the neighborhood. The only way for us is to cross Christopher's Crossings. If it's a problem now, it's only going to get worse. I have had people blow through the crosswalk 4 times since you painted them. I live west of CC and without stop signs feel it will be very dangerous to cross w/o any stop signs. I must cross CC to get to the community park/pool. You are effectively cutting off people west of CC from their community amenities

The design changes at the intersections will make crossings safer than what it is currently. It will incorporate a curb and gutter system, a grass buffer for the sidewalk/multi-use path, cautionary and advanced warning signs, and an island median refuge.

- 23. It was noted in the March 12, 2020 Warrant Analysis Summary Report Section B that "high pedestrian volumes have not been observed at the Christopher Crossing intersections, and significant growth in pedestrian volume is not anticipated." With this study conclusion, why would the County plan for a 10 foot path and a pedestrian sidewalk? If it is low pedestrian volume, two pedestrian walkways (sidewalk and bike path) would place an incredible maintenance expense and snow removal burden on residents which is not currently justified. I would like to suggest that now is not the time to install a sidewalk. The need has not been shown by the study referenced. Let's consider just the path since you have determined a maintenance plan.**

The study you referenced actually describes pedestrians crossing at Christopher Crossing intersections and not pedestrians walking along the road that will be using the new sidewalk. Most, if not all pedestrians crossing the intersections will be residents utilizing the community center. This volume is not anticipated to grow as there are no foreseeable developments within the community.

- 24. Will there be a speed study to consider safety concerns prior to final approval?**

No, the traffic study is complete and the posted speed limit will remain the same as before – 30 mph – which will make the speed limit consistent with the city section and throughout the Christopher Crossing/Monocacy corridor.

- 25. What will be the impact on the property adjacent to the 5 foot sidewalk?**

In a typical roadway cross-section, as shown in the plans, there is approximately one and a half foot of separation between the edge of the sidewalk and the private property line. This will vary a little bit depending on the proximity of each individual properties with the roadway. Temporary or drainage easements may also be needed on some properties and these easements will be coordinated, negotiated, and properly compensated.

- 26. What is the alternative plan for the 5-foot sidewalk?**

Staff is assuming you meant the maintenance plan for the sidewalk in your question. We are still continuing to work for a solution that will be acceptable to all involved.

- 27. What is the plan for blocking trees along the road adjacent to the homes that back to Christopher's Crossing? Will the county reimburse or replace trees or shrubs or fence that are impacted or removed by the road construction.**

Staff will need to review individual properties to determine if trees will be impacted on their property. During the design phase thus far, efforts were made to minimize impacts to existing trees. However, if trees or fences on private property are impacted, County will either replace them or compensate the property owner.

- 28. Since many of the properties back up to the road, with fences and tree lines, how would the County suggest property owners safely transport snow blowers to their designated section of sidewalk they are required to maintain?**

One of the options in our continuing work towards an acceptable solution to the sidewalk maintenance issue is to provide access in the back of the property to provide a connection for residents to the sidewalk sections.

- 29. What are the criteria for determining crosswalks, stop signs, or stop lights?**

They are determined using the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and County policy. They are also guided by planning recommendations (what do you mean planning recommendation? Recommendation by DPP?) and response to public requests/complaints.

- 30. What artery is the expansion of four lanes providing access to? What congestion is created by the current two lane system?**

The roadway widening project is part of an overall comprehensive plan for the Christopher Crossing/Monocacy Boulevard corridor providing access to the eastern and western sections of the County and City. Traffic study data suggests traffic delays and vehicular road capacity of Christopher Crossing in the near future will worsen if this project is not implemented.

- 31. Last question was is it possible to have those large long smooth, not extremely bumpy speed bumps put on Christopher Crossing. So if you had speed bumps near the intersection that might help make it safer for them to cross. If I could add to that sir, what is the reference or traffic calming policy that doesn't allow speed bumps on arterial roadways?**

County policy does not allow physically diverting devices, like speed humps, on streets that typically serve district sized or regional-sized populations. Major Arterial roads like Christopher's Crossing typically serve regional populations. Roads with volumes over 3500 ADT (Average Daily Traffic) and/or posted speeds over 35 mph are also considered ineligible for speed humps.

32. I believe some resident pointed out that there was an exception made or there was a similar situation at Opossumtown Pike where the county decided to clear the sidewalk as well.

The Opossumtown Pike precedent you mentioned was a one-off solution that was employed in order to install a safe route to school.. It was with an agreement with the County work release program to take over maintenance. We did try to install another sidewalk on the west side of Opossumtown Pike but the residents/HOA would not accept maintenance responsibility and we could not come to another agreement with the County work release program.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Public Meeting. We appreciate you taking the time to let us know your thoughts.

As always, please feel free to contact Elbert Maravilla regarding this project, (301) 600-3511 or emaravilla@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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