
Stakeholder Meeting #3 Minutes

US 29 Corridor Study – Phase 2

October 28, 2021

In attendance:

Lucinda Shannon, TJPDC

Charles Proctor, VDOT

Ben Davison, VDOT

Alan Yost, Greene County

Jim Frydl, Greene County

Kevin McDermott, Albemarle County

Jessica Hersh-Ballering, Albemarle County

Juwhan Lee, Charlottesville Area Transit

Stephen Johnson, Jaunt

Chris Tiesler, Kittelson & Associates

Kylie Caviness, Kittelson & Associates

Tiffany Lim, Kittelson & Associates

Welcome and Introductions

Chris Tiesler and Kylie Caviness (Kittelson) welcomed and thanked the group for attending. The purpose of this meeting was to share the data and feedback from the public meeting and survey, present the operational results of the build alternatives and corridor-wide improvements, and discuss with the group.

Phase 2 Study Schedule

Currently, we are wrapping up with the analysis of conceptual alternatives for the corridor and are moving onto the refinement of the alternatives. We are still anticipating completing the study in February-March 2022.

Public Outreach Recap

Kylie gave a high-level overview from the public meeting held on September 9 and the public survey results. The meeting had a great turnout with an engaging Q&A session afterwards. Lucinda shared that

there were 9 stakeholders (including panelists) and 55 attendees. During the public meeting, the study background, corridor conditions, goals and objectives, and community input were presented. Additionally, the public survey was opened from September 2 to October 1. There were 373 participants.

Public Survey Results

Who did we reach?

Kylie explained the demographic information received from the survey, which shows most respondents were over the age of 30, white, native English-speaking, and from Albemarle and Greene Counties zip codes. Just over half of the respondents have a yearly household income over \$100,000.

Relationship to US 29

Participants could select more than one response for this section of the survey. Kylie shared that most travel within the Charlottesville region and live or work near US 29, with destinations falling into shopping/retail, home, work, and recreational activities.

Transportation Mode

Kylie explained that while over 95% of respondents use a car on US 29, comments reveal that there is a desire for more multimodal connectivity and cars are the only safe and efficient mode of travel on US 29.

Goal Ranking

Kylie shared that the majority of respondents selected Manage Congestion or Improve Safety and Comfort as highest priority, with Increase Multimodal Usability being ranked as lowest priority. The rank is provided below:

1. Manage Congestion
2. Improve Safety and Comfort
3. Support Future Growth
4. Support Economic Development
5. Increase Multimodal Usability

Stakeholder Feedback on Goals Ranking:

- Stakeholders agreed that “managing congestion” and “increasing multimodal usability” are linked together and are not mutually exclusive. Increasing multimodal options can be a method to achieve the top two goals of “managing congestion” and “increasing safety and comfort.”
- Stakeholders note the importance of keeping in mind most of the corridor is rural and there are not many destinations on the corridor. Most people are going the length of US 29/all the way

to Charlottesville. Unless there's a way to provide more transit on the corridor, the corridor will be more vehicle-occupied. Taking transit is safer per passenger mile.

- Stakeholders discuss the importance of pedestrian access. Survey results should be interpreted while keeping in mind what people say about how much they want to walk and what they mean by walking may be two different things. Though there may be no one walking along nearby paths, the importance of pedestrian access via a shared use path or otherwise should not be dismissed with future development along the corridor. There is a shared use path along the Berkmar Drive Extension that doesn't have much visible use, which may be attributed to the lack of awareness of these paths.
- Stakeholders discuss the possibility of implementing parallel road networks (i.e., Dickerson Road to Airport Road) as alternative roads.

Transportation Issues

Participants could select more than one response for this section of the survey. When asked what transportation problems have been observed along US 29, most participants selected traffic congestion and queuing, speeding, and location (or lack) of pedestrian and bike crossings.

Transportation Opportunities

Participants could select more than one response for this section of the survey. When asked what transportation investments would improve the experience of using US 29, the participants shared that most were interested in:

Driving

1. Reduced congestion and queuing
2. Intersection improvements
3. Reduced turning conflicts

Biking

1. *Not* biking along US 29 (17% of these respondents selected more than one answer)
2. More off-street bike facilities
3. Better quality off-street bike facilities

Walking

1. *Not* walking along US 29 (23% of these respondents selected more than one answer)
2. More trails
3. More pedestrian crossings

Transit

1. *Not* using transit (4% of these respondents selected more than one answer)

2. Transit routes and stops closer to home/work/school
3. Transit stop amenities (i.e., shelters, benches, lighting)

Ride Sharing

1. *Not* ride sharing (3% of these respondents selected more than one answer)
2. Park and ride lot with multimodal connections
3. Park and ride lot with lighting

Stakeholder Comments on Survey Results:

- Stakeholders note the survey results provided great information and may have provided some contradictory points. For example, many did not want park and ride lots, but for bicycle opportunities, respondents expressed the need for more parking at trailhead locations.

Intersection Alternative Screening

Kylie then moved into the build conditions analyses and intersection alternatives screening, which involved the use of VJuST. Kylie provided an overview of VJuST high-level screening capabilities, factors, and limitations. All 19 intersections were screened in VJuST. Although all intersections were screened, Kylie explained that it is infeasible given the size of the study area that each intersection would be recommended for redesigns, along with corridor-wide improvements. Kittelson prioritized intersections based on level of operational issues, safety concerns, and network screening to narrow down where we may want to focus improvement efforts within the corridor. Additionally, Kittelson considered the character and nature of US 29, along with its geometric constraints and unique challenges.

Kylie shared three intersections that have been more challenging analyze alternatives for given its context: US 29 at Austin Drive, Boulders Road, and Camelot Drive. These intersections were discussed in further detail following the presentation.

Desired Alternatives and Recommendations

Kylie displayed a list of “focus” segments and intersections based on the prioritization and screening explained earlier in the presentation. The focus areas were listed as:

- Segments
 - Deerfield Drive and Heatherton Drive
 - Dickerson Road and Camelot Drive
- Intersections
 - Matthew Mill Road
 - Frays Mill Road
 - Dickerson Road
 - Austin Drive

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- Boulders Road
 - Camelot Drive
 - Lewis and Clark Drive
 - Airport Road

Kylie then shared the preliminary recommendations Kittelson produced for the corridor, beginning with intersection-specific improvements and ending with corridor-wide improvements. Overall, these recommendations are high-level and subject to change given further analyses, concept development, and cost estimating. These recommendations were discussed in further detail following the presentation.

Intersection-specific recommendations include a roundabout at Matthew Mill Road, RCUT at Frays Mill Road, pedestrian upgrades at Dickerson Road, and modified signals at Lewis and Clark Drive and Airport Road.

Corridor-wide recommendations include a shared-use path on the west side of US 29 for the entirety of US 29 in our study area. ADA-accessible pedestrian crossings are recommended on west approaches at all study intersections (signalized and unsignalized), as well as on north approaches at all signalized intersections.

Next Steps

Kittelson thanked the stakeholders for their time and started the open discussion for feedback.

Stakeholder Comments during the Discussion:

- Stakeholders shared that the Albemarle County owns the property at Austin Drive. It was purchased for a potential future connection of Boulders Rd to US 29.
- Stakeholders discuss the idea of restricting and removing the signal at Austin Drive. The signal was placed there initially when there was no connection at Boulder Road. Since there are other alternatives now, closing and removing the signal may be an option that is worth a warranted analysis to determine its necessity. This idea was supported by other stakeholders.
- Stakeholders discuss the feasibility of implementing a parallel facility from Dickerson Road to Airport Road. Stakeholders from Greene County mention they own property on the north end of the NGIC and have been looking at connections to 29-N to no avail due to the bifurcation of the two roadways. Stakeholder from VDOT notes the problem of funding for a large-scale improvement project. Most of the past projects have been intersection improvements or shared-use paths as the others are cost-prohibited. Kevin also expresses uncertainty of interest in a parallel facility along Dickerson Road given the strong requirements to develop in that area, with Dickerson Road being the border of the restricted area. There does not seem to be a need to increase connections in existing developed neighborhoods.
- Stakeholder at JAUNT notes the need for more delineation. No one wants to live off a highway and most people want to live where they can walk, bike, and take transit. It would be great to deploy one transit mode to a livable space; but in the planning process, spaces need to be

delineated between the spaces that are for place-making and spaces where access is limited for high-speed highways. There is going to be new housing developments along US 29 like Albemarle County.

- Stakeholders asked if potential causes of accidents have been considered while studying intersection alternatives. For Frays Mill Road, many of the crashes are lower speed, rear-end crashes that won't be addressed by implementing an RCUT. Low-cost improvements should be looked at here and there should be a balance between property acquisition and minor reductions in crashes.
- Stakeholders discuss their opinions about long-term solutions vs. "band-aid" approaches at Frays Mill Road. Kevin supports a "band-aid" approach as we are not going to see an explosion of growth at Frays Mill Road. There is a fixed amount of traffic from the minor street approaches. The priority should be on the south of the corridor between Lewis and Clark Drive and Airport Road, where there will be mixed-use and high-density residential development along with the Discovery Park. Bike/ped facilities will also be important in that section of the corridor.
- Stakeholders discuss compatibility of presented alternatives with other highway changes in place. For Matthew Mills Road, concerns were expressed about a roundabout placed there as the roads will likely back up after every cycle if signalized. Stakeholders bring up the idea of a quadrant roadway in that areas as all four quadrants have been rezoned. Stakeholders agree that a quadrant roadway would be of interest to further study and may be very helpful.
- Stakeholder from VDOT ends the discussion with mentions of MPOs updating their long-range plans in the coming Spring. Stakeholders from Greene County mention they are updating their comprehensive plan with interest in parallel roads and transportation access. Interest in the quadrant roadway at the Matthew Mills intersection and planned parallel roads was reiterated for future study.

Attachments: Meeting Presentation, Detailed Survey Results, Build Alternatives Operational Results

Cc: Stakeholders, Meeting Attendees