

Questions and Answers from the Braddock Road Multimodal Improvements Project Online Community Meeting – August 3, 2020

The following is a list of questions from the Summer 2020 community meeting, which was held online. Answers are provided for questions that were not addressed during the session due to time constraints or required further clarification. Questions that were addressed during the meeting are marked as “answered verbally” and can be accessed by watching the recording of the meeting.

Q: How would pedestrian crossings work at Danbury/Wakefield Chapel?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: How are these changes going to improve public transportation availability?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Will the signal operations go to an on demand option at night?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: These changes will only increase speeds. What are we doing to decrease auto-centric solutions?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: I do not see crosswalks on all four sides of the intersections.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Regarding the signaling, please make it give priority to pedestrians.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: What reduces crossing conflicts is decreased speeds. This allows people to react and behave less aggressively.

A: Questions answered verbally.

Q: Did you assess the level of service for people biking and walking in the corridor?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: For the U-turn on eastbound Braddock Rd., to get to Wakefield Chapel Rd., I sometimes see westbound backups at the Wakefield Chapel signal. So, is the U-turn far enough downfield to enable the U -when evening westbound Braddock traffic backs up?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Will improving the underpass eliminate the mud that collects there after storms?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: I support the new changes but want to know if during this construction can the forebay on the north of Braddock road to be constructed at the same time during the massive land disturbance already occurring?

A: Question answered verbally.-

Q: It appears as if solving for level of service results in solutions catered to solo driving solutions. This measurement is outdated. Does the county or VDOT consider *reducing* traffic volume as a success measurement?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Are all of the other spot improvements included, as originally conceived?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: The U-turn arrangement seems clunky and unfamiliar in Virginia (more like a New Jersey "jug handle"). Are there others around that give us an idea of how smoothly it works?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Does the new proposed configuration at the Wakefield/Danbury Forest intersection reduce the overall cross section there?

A: Question answered verbally.-

Q: We'd hoped that a new Danbury Forest would have sidewalks to make it easier to get to and across Braddock. Any chance of that if we keep existing DFD?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: What does VDOT consider in their benefit score?

A: Question answered verbally.-

Q: How is this a multimodal solution? The focus appears to be primarily on solo driving.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: As the project is considering modifications to handle increased traffic volume, where have you incorporated quality of life components such as sound walls? Expectedly, this will increase the sound impacts to the neighboring communities.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Have you thought about transit as a way to score better in Smart Scale?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Will the shared use paths be at-grade or will they follow existing terrain? Especially concerned about north side of Braddock Road.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: The original project placed importance on the inclusion of a park & ride / bus transfer area. I suggest that a P&R / bus transfer project be included under the power lines on the south side of Braddock Road opposite Glen Park Road.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: In previous meetings, we have been told that the project gives no consideration to sound attenuation measures or neighborhood aesthetics. Has FCDOT or VDOT reconsidered? Both sound and appearance have direct impacts on the neighborhoods in close proximity

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: We applaud the decision not to build in the forested floodplain of Long Branch.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Are there adequate bus shelters being planned with solar powered lights?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Could you make the left lane on Braddock Road Westbound as it approaches the left turn onto Burke Lake Rd a left only lane and make the middle lane an optional left or through lane to help more traffic get through to Burke Lake Rd?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: What are the environmental impacts on Accotink Creek and the surrounding area with the changes to Danbury Forest Drive? Can we access that information somewhere?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: What was the cost reduction in Phase One as a result of not asking for a pedestrian overpass in this phase?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: How wide are the proposed travel and turn lanes on Braddock Road?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: What about the other ingress and egress recommendations from subdivisions that were made in the original report?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Many of the bus stops along the corridor have no safe way to cross Braddock Road to reach residences before embarking and after disembarking. Will anything be done to improve these crossings for safety?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: I would second request for "HAWK" or on-demand timing, as it would be safer to get the pedestrians through and out of the intersection.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Is any of the plan financed by Fairfax County, or is this state-funded alone?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: What about bus only lanes during peak times to support bus travel times?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Can you describe in detail the stream impacts that would result from the project at Danbury Forest and the Accotink Creek underpass?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Because of the major presence of long, slow trucks, the intersection improvements at Port Royal Road will also need an extension of the short dual southbound lanes, and a larger NB to EB curb radius.

FCDOT: VDOT's detailed design and traffic analysis will take these issues into account.

Q: As the design goes forward will COVID teleworking reduce commute peak demand on the road and support having a bus only lane during rush hour times

FCDOT: This remains to be seen. There could be increased teleworking in the future, reducing demand; however, we do not expect future demands to be reduced enough so that capacity improvements would not be necessary. In addition, the increased benefits of higher teleworking rates could be offset by lower transit ridership because of COVID-19 or infectious disease concerns.

Q: The presentation outlines the revised proposal benefits, but does not outline the disadvantages or the revised proposals. Should the community be led to believe there are no downsides to these proposals, such as increased neighborhood cut through traffic

FCDOT: We believe, some maneuvers may not be as direct, (like Braddock EB to Wakefield, Danbury to Wakefield, and Danbury to Braddock WB), but overall we believe the improvements benefit the Braddock Road corridor. By improving the capacity of the main roads reduces travel time, which would make cut-through routes less advantageous.

Q: Is the project retaining the mid-block crossing of Braddock Rd between Inverchapel Road and Glen Park Road?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Will there be hawk lighting to indicate a pedestrian is going across?

FCDOT: We have not planned to have a HAWK signal at Wakefield Chapel Road and Braddock Road. This pedestrian crossing will be evaluated again by VDOT for safety. HAWK signals are not recommended for roadway more than 4 lanes wide.

Q: Will there still be a sidewalk from Braddock Road to Stahlway Lane on the east side of Wakefield Chapel Road?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: While it was not part of the proposed redesigns, has there been any consideration for extending the merge lane from 495N onto Braddock eastbound? Currently, the merge lane forces traffic into the through lanes, but the traffic entering the North Springfield community gets right back over to turn in. I imagine it's for emergency pulloffs. Currently, there is a merge lane when the traffic going into North Springfield should be able to go straight. Basically, we get over for about 50 ft and then turn back.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: As you cross Port Royal Rd eastbound in the far right lane, do you enter the shared through/right turn lane or the right turn/southbound turn lane? Hoping to eliminate any possibility of weaving back to the through lane.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Would a HAWK signal be better than a ped overpass?

FCDOT: The Wakefield Chapel Road and Braddock Road intersection is signalized and has pedestrian push buttons which are programmed to provide safe pedestrian crossings. The signal controller has ability to stop vehicular movement conflicting with pedestrian crossings.

The pedestrian overpass is a great solution for safe crossings at high speed roadways with high numbers of pedestrian crossings. It is a large structure, 30-40 feet high, with a large footprint, which can be intrusive in residential neighborhoods. It is best suited for locations like a metro station or bus transfer stations.

A HAWK signal is better suited for mid-block locations close to shopping center crossings. HAWK signals are not recommended for roadway above 4-lanes wide, and the locations where pedestrian overpasses have been recommended are too wide.

Q: Will the U-turn signal only be activated if there is a car in the lane?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: When looking at the VISSIM results comparison, there is a large improvement for intersection delay; however, the mainline throughputs were slightly improved. Were signal timing improvements assumed in the no-build scenario?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Did the design consider adding a dedicated bus lane?

FCDOT: We considered the HOV-2 lanes along Braddock Road as one of the options during our study. We assumed that HOV lanes would be best suited for use by buses and pool vehicles. The HOV-2 option was not selected due to too many signalized intersections and right and left turning vehicular conflicts.

Q: Does the design and price projections for Phase 2 impact getting funding for Phase 1, or will Phase 1 be awarded independently? There are expensive proposals in Phase 2, such as a parking garage, which may not directly benefit those living along the corridor.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: If a cyclist is trying to get from Wakefield Chapel to Danbury Forest, would they need to use the crosswalk or will there be a safe way to get from the southbound right-turn lane over to the westbound left-turn lane? Going straight at a crosswalk is counterintuitive when traffic is turning right.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Can you comment on proposed stormwater runoff controls? Will the project coordinate with DPWES Stormwater Planning Division? Will sacrifice of wooded areas for stormwater ponds be avoided?

FCDOT: Design will be conducted by VDOT, and stormwater will be a major consideration in the design. Questions about specific details concerning the design cannot be answered at this time. We will coordinate with DPWES Stormwater Planning Division and will stress the need to avoid impacts to wooded areas as much as possible.

Q: Does the plan still include a Ravensworth Road widening? The widening would be very disruptive to this residential road.

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Is Ravensworth part of Phase 1? Slide 6 indicates yes, but the rest of the presentation focuses only on Wakefield Chapel and Port Royal. Is the proposed design unchanged for Ravensworth from the original study?

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Necessitating that bikes operate as pedestrians to navigate intersections introduces more dangerous scenarios for car interactions

A: Question answered verbally.

Q: Tom Biesiadny said traffic flow will improve with these improvements, but many examples show traffic throughput decreases over time even after improvements are made. Why not incentivize bus ridership with bus only lanes to increase throughput?

FCDOT: We considered the HOV-2 lanes along Braddock Road as one of the options during our study. We assumed that HOV lanes would be best suited for use by buses and pool vehicles. The HOV-2 option was not selected due to too many signalized intersections and right and left turning vehicular conflicts.

Fairfax County Department of Transportation plans to increase the number of bus routes in the general vicinity of Braddock Road. For more information about future bus planning efforts, please contact our bus route planning section at 703-877-5600.

Q: Can we not use existing lanes for bus only lanes? We do not have to widen to get a bus only lane.

FCDOT: We have not studied conversion of existing lanes for bus only lanes. We assumed, eliminating one travel lane in each directions, along Braddock Road, would cause travel delays and congestion. However, based on our 2040 no-build traffic analysis, the existing cross section cannot handle the demand, and we cannot handle the capacity loss of a lane conversion.

Q: We can add bus lanes by taking away general purpose lanes, no additional lanes/widening necessary. Whether we do it now, or 50 years in the future, it will happen. I would just appreciate the opportunity to be ahead of the problem. The case studies all over the world show that mass transit and bike infrastructure is the solution.

FCDOT: We agree with you on providing mass transit and bike infrastructure in Fairfax County. We have increased our bicycle and pedestrian budget every year. We strive to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities with every project we build.

We are adding a 10 feet wide shared use path on both sides of Braddock Road and upgrading the pedestrian crossings at all intersections between Ravensworth Road and Guinea Road.