

TSPLOST 2018 Program  
Prince Avenue Corridor Improvements: Project 16

User Group Meeting – Draft Minutes

February 24, 2021 10:00 A.M. - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCX5WGZ65bI&feature=youtu.be>

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**User Group Members Present:** Jennifer Rice, Jeanne Connell, Ellen Walker, Forrest Huffman, Mark Ebell, Stephen Bailey, Clint McCrory, Emily Tatum, Peter Norris

**Members Absent:** Ilka McConnell

**Other Staff Present:** Keith Sanders, Derek Doster, Diana Jackson

**Guests:** Ernie Boughman, John Walker, Erik Hammarlund

**General Business**

Keith Sanders, called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M., welcomed the members in attendance and thanked them for being present.

**Quorum:** Established quorum was present.

**User Group Actions**

Meeting Minutes Review & Approval – Ellen Walker made a motion to approve the January 27, 2021 Minutes and Peter Norris seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Meeting Minutes Review & Approval – after some modifications, Mark Ebell made a motion to approve the February 10, 2021 Minutes and Peter Norris seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The following items were added to the Agenda:

- GDOT Concrete Median discussion
- Blue Streets exploration
- Emailed inquiries from User Group – Emily & Mark

**The below is a brief summary of the key discussion items, not a transcript. The full video is available at the above noted YouTube link. The below notes are only to identify the items discussed and the general order of those discussion to make finding the information on the video easier.**

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**Conversations after February 10, 2021 meeting regarding GDOT Medians**

- Jeanne has emailed with GDOT with respect to turning the concrete medians into planting areas, GDOT states that the cost for planting will be borne by ACCGov. She is awaiting final confirmation that they will be installed as planting areas.
- Peter stated that he would like to explore the opportunity for medians to alleviate stormwater issue by allowing stormwater to drain into planted medians and be filtered prior to discharge – blue streets.
- Erik stated that any changes to the approved GDOT Project Concept would have to be initiated through District 1. GDOT would respond to these suggestions. There still time for the ACCGov process as GDOT is still in data collection phase/surveying. Because the Concept is approved, minor changes are likely acceptable, but some changes the User Group is looking at are significant and will not be able to be incorporated without major delays to GDOT's project schedule.
- Keith went through the ACCGov process - User Group will need to compile suggested GDOT changes and recommended changes, hold some public engagement, and submit them to M&C for approval prior to submitting to GDOT. Likely take four months.

## **Benesch – Review of Revised Prince /Talmadge Intersection Improvement – by Erik Hammarlund:**

- A third alternative was presented that sought to realign the intersection (Park with Talmadge) to be safer while mitigating impacts to surrounding businesses.
- One concern is the intersection angle with Park and Prince. This would have to be discussed with GDOT. Sight distance is another issue specifically with Park looking back at downtown. Firehouse Subs would lose 2-3 parking spaces.
- Members of the user group really liked the fact that everyone comes to the same signal. This will become more important safety wise especially with the hospital moving its main entrance to Talmadge.
- Jennifer felt like the crosswalk configuration was unusual as there is no crosswalk on east side.
- Erik wanted to make sure that the User Group knew that this improvement would not be part of GDOT's current project. It would have to be a new project. However, their current project does show the medians in the middle of Prince that reduces a whole lot of left turns and that makes it safer for all users. He also stated that GDOT likes to see crosswalks on all legs of the intersection. He says that is something they would need to look at in moving forward.
- Mark wondered if there is a way to raise the refuge triangle at the slip lane to make the pedestrians more prominent.
- Diana explained that there is something very similar already at the 5 points interchange.
- Keith state that the new parking deck/building entrance is also going to bring more pedestrians to that southeastern corner.
- Erik also suggested that they might reconfigure the right onto Park. With the newer development, this may see more traffic than is seen now.
- Peter wondered if that crosswalk could be made a tabletop similar to one on East Campus & Carleton.
- Erik says this is one to put on suggestions to GDOT; however, GDOT does have concerns with implementing them along arterials.

### **Questions and Responses from User Group Emails:**

*1. Are we treating the new parking deck on Prince (Piedmont College) as a possible public deck, or just a college deck? If it is being considered a possible public deck, has anyone inquired if that is a true possibility? I have heard that it will not become public. (If this is the case, the parking spaces in front of Normaltown are priceless to the business owners, and could hurt businesses, if some are removed.)*

Bruce said that the original intent was for some spaces to be public in non-business hours. Not binding, but it was within their business model. Bruce was going to request updated information from property owner.

*2. I don't think we have discussed the new Piggly Wiggly shopping center at the previous Catholic Church site. Do we know how cars will enter and exit onto Prince?*

Ingress/egress to Piggly Wiggly (Building A) in onto Prince only through one driveway. None onto Pulaski.

Clint asked about 100 Prince TIA, the summary information showed a road diet is not feasible. The original study did not include those summary paragraphs and was quite positive about it.

Mark stated that with the new development that there are going to be a lot of left turns into it as you're traveling eastbound. He wondered if a dedicated left turn lane should be considered over people stopping in the through lane to go left. Should reducing it to 3 lanes be considered it is already 3 lanes beyond Pulaski?

Clint stated that the 3-laning of Dougherty was completed after the 100 Prince TIA, so much of the study data is now not valid. One of the important concepts of the 100 Prince TIA is that this part of the corridor is considered to be an extension of downtown district rather than a corridor to downtown.

Ernie stated that the 2019 traffic counts show less vehicles per day on the Dougherty side than on the Price side. He's already been advocating to Erik that we consider for at least one cross section, some sort of road diet. He will continue to work with Erik on this.

Need to send official final 100 Prince TIA study to Erik. Stephen Bailey is checking with Traffic/Forrest to check with Planning. Benesch did not gather traffic data, but they did look at reducing the number of travel lanes.

*3. I feel like the main problem with Prince Ave is the speed limit. Is it possible to slow it down, once cars hit the ACC road (the Milledge to Pulaski part?) Can we make that slower? If you drive through Elberton, Ga., their version of Prince Avenue has drivers going 35 mph.*

Stephen stated that lowering speeds without data to back it up will potentially cause ACC to lose its ability to enforce it. Similar to what happened to Timothy. The study might actually show that the limit needs to be raised. Stephen will find out about the use of speed cameras along Prince.

*4. Is it possible to do the raised crosswalks in the section of town that is ACC owned: (In front of the Grit, etc.). I will say that we had great speed bumps on Nacoochee Ave a few years ago that slowed down traffic, but, when they re-did our streets, the new bumps are so low that they make no difference.*

Erik to look into the guidelines for speed tables. At 35 mph, he thinks guidelines would allow them to consider it although GDOT is not a generally accepted tool on arterials.

Peter asked whether a material differentiation might be used at Oglethorpe & Prince similar to Broad & College? Or the use of colored concrete to delineate a change in speed and the entrance into Normaltown/local business district? Erik is not confident about the material change.

#### **Other Projects from Previous Studies:**

Need to get out on the table if you go through those other corridor studies, and if there are other options you like that you want to put forth in a list to the public so they can help us prioritize. What other options do you want on the list? You can email those to the group, so we can get them on the table for consideration.

Keith placed the current public engagement surveys created for Lexington Hwy and Atlanta Hwy Corridors on the Agenda. He encouraged the User Group to complete the survey and come back with any changes they'd like to see for the Prince survey.

#### **Assignment for future meetings**

- Next meeting is March 10, 2021
- Get images and costs on fluted poles for the Prince corridor in order to compare the costs against what GDOT has committed to providing.
- Participate in the Public Engagement sites set up for Lexington Hwy & Atlanta Hwy
- Mark Ebell email Q&A
- Creating bike lanes along Milledge to Pulaski – Erie and Erik to present options on March 10th meeting
- Other options for speed calming – Ernie and Erik to provide

*These minutes are not a transcript of the meeting but instead is a general summary of the key points, ideas, or considerations from the discussion.*