Stakeholder Meeting 2 Agenda

Date: September 14, 2017 (6:30-8:30 PM)

Location: Loudoun County Government Center, Lovettsville Room

Facilitator: Joe Kroboth, Director DTCI

Agenda

1. Introductions (5 minutes)
   ➢ Opening remarks from the Board of Supervisors

2. Congestion Report Recommendations (20 minutes)
   ➢ Feedback from Organizations/Groups
   ➢ Presentation to Board of Supervisors October 19, 2017

3. Safety and Operations Study Vision (20 minutes)
   ➢ Feedback from Organizations/Groups

4. Safety and Operations Study Public Input Summary (20 minutes)
   ➢ Themes

5. Safety and Operations Study Key Ideas (50 minutes)
   ➢ Small group discussion (4 groups of 5) (30 minutes)
   ➢ Report back to full group (20 minutes)

6. Wrap up (5 minutes)

Next Meeting: November 16, 2017 (6:30-8:30 PM)

Anticipated Agenda:

➢ Existing Conditions Summary
➢ Concept Development – Safety and Operations Study
Anticipated Meeting Schedule

Public Meeting Round 1 (June/July 2017)

Stakeholder Meeting 1 – August 1, 2017 (6:30-8:30 PM)
- Stakeholder Charter
- Congestion Report Recommendations and Public Input
- Vision and Objectives – Safety and Operations Study

Stakeholder Meeting 2 – September 14, 2017 (6:30-8:30 PM)
- Finalize Congestion Report Recommendations
- Public Input Details
- Vision – Safety and Operations Study

Board Meeting (October 2017) – Congestion Report

Stakeholder Meeting 3 – November 16, 2017 (6:30-8:30 PM)
- Existing Conditions Summary
- Concept Development – Safety and Operations Study

Stakeholder Meeting 4 – January 8, 2018* (6:30-8:30 PM) (tentative)
- Concept development – Safety and Operations Study

Public Meeting Round 2 (February 2018*)

Stakeholder Meeting 5 – March 14, 2018* (6:30-8:30 PM) (tentative)
- Concept assessment and modifications – Safety and Operations Study
- Draft recommendations – Safety and Operations Study

Stakeholder Meeting 6 – May 9, 2018* (6:30-8:30 PM) (tentative)
- Stakeholder recommendation – Safety and Operations Study

Public Meeting Round 3 (June 2018*)

Board Meeting (September 2018*) – Safety and Operations Study

*Note – Future meeting dates subject to change
Public Engagement - Round 1
Summary

August 2017
# Table of Contents

1 Public engagement Information and Format...................................................................................................1-1  
   1.1 Purpose of the Public Engagement ..........................................................................................................1-1  
   1.2 Event Information ....................................................................................................................................1-1  
   1.3 Meeting Format .......................................................................................................................................1-1  

2 Public engagement participation ....................................................................................................................2-1  
   2.1 Public Meeting Attendance ......................................................................................................................2-1  
   2.2 Online Survey Responses .........................................................................................................................2-1  
   2.3 Email Comments ......................................................................................................................................2-1  

3 Results ......................................................................................................................................................3-1  
   3.1 Voting Results ..........................................................................................................................................3-1  
   3.2 Key Themes ..............................................................................................................................................3-3  
   3.3 Public Ideas ..............................................................................................................................................3-5  

4 Next Steps ......................................................................................................................................................4-7  

APPENDIX A: Heat Maps .....................................................................................................................................A-1
1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION AND FORMAT

The Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) presented the Route 15 Congestion Report Findings to the Board of Supervisors (Board) at the May 18, 2017 meeting, which focused on the segment of Route 15 between Battlefield Parkway and Whites Ferry Road. As directed by the Board at that meeting, DTCI has initiated the Route 15 Safety and Operations Study from Whites Ferry Road to the Maryland State Line and has begun the public engagement process for the Route 15 corridor.

This first round of public engagement for the Route 15 Congestion Report and the Safety and Operations Study consisted of three public input meetings, an online interactive survey, a website dedicated to the Route 15 project, and emails.

1.1 Purpose of the Public Engagement

The purpose of the public input meetings and online survey was to gain public input on the following items:

1) **Congestion Report** – provide input on recommendations from the Route 15 Congestion Report to relieve traffic congestion between Battlefield Parkway and Whites Ferry Road
2) **Safety and Operations Study** – provide input on safety and operational issues as well as the long-term vision of Route 15 from Whites Ferry Road to the Maryland state line

1.2 Event Information

The following three public input meetings were held in Loudoun County:

- Meeting 1—Monday, June 26, 2017, 7:00-9:00 pm in the Ida Lee Recreation Center, Leesburg
- Meeting 2—Saturday, July 8, 2017, 9:00-11:00 am in the Lucketts Community Center
- Meeting 3—Saturday, July 15, 2017, 9:00-11:00 am in the Lucketts Community Center

In addition to the three public input meetings, an online interactive survey was conducted between July 12 and July 24, 2017.

1.3 Meeting Format

In order to engage the community, the public workshop was a blend of an open-house and interactive activities. The session began with open-house boards and a brief introduction. This was followed by group roundtable discussions and activities facilitated by Loudoun County and Kimley-Horn Staff. The format of the meeting was altered after the first meeting and the changes are indicated below.

Boards and activities were designed to give attendees an overview of the study and its purpose and need, as well as to collect their feedback on the proposed concepts. The following boards and activities were presented:

- **Open House Boards**: Background information boards were posted around the room for the period of time between when the facility opened and when the introductory presentation began; project team members were present to explain the information and answer questions.
- **Presentation**: This presentation reviewed the project background and purposes, introduced elected officials, and provided a summary of the Route 15 congestion report.
- **Safety and Operations Study Roundtable Discussions and Activities**: Following the introduction, there were two roundtable discussions and activities related to safety and operations on Route 15 which are explained below in more detail.
Corridor Issues and Opportunities and Defining Features: This activity collected input using color coded stickers on a map with accompanying notes describing issues. The activity also collected input on opportunities for improvements. The six sticker categories were Access, Safety, Congestion, Beautification, Preservation, and Pedestrian/Bicycle.

Visioning: This activity collected people’s broad ideas and their vision on what they hope to achieve for Route 15. A comment form was provided to list key words, phrases, or sentences for individuals Route 15 vision.

Congestion Report Recommendations: Each meeting contained a facilitated roundtable discussion in which questions about the congestion report were discussed by the facilitator, followed by an individual feedback process in which the public could give their opinions on the study and recommendations. In Meeting 1, the congestion report was presented during the introductory presentation and a clicker poll was conducted to give the public an opportunity to vote on various topics related to the report. In Meetings 2 and 3, the report was presented after the safety and operations roundtables and an individual survey was used to collect the same feedback as the polling activity in Meeting 1. The polls and surveys collected input on the following topics:

Top Priorities for the Segment: The public was able to indicate their top three priorities from access, safety, congestion, beautification, preservation, and pedestrian/bicycle.

Widening: The public could indicate their level of support for widening Route 15.

Intersection Modifications: The public could indicate the preference for intersection modifications at the Route 15/ Whites Ferry Road intersection and the Route 15 and King Street intersection.

Individual Comment Cards: The public was given the opportunity to give input via individual comment cards. These cards included space for comments on the congestion report, comments on safety and operations of the corridor, and comments on vision for the corridor.

Email Comments: The public was provided with the project website address and project email address to submit comments (route15@loudoun.gov).
2  PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

2.1  Public Meeting Attendance

There were 239 members of the public in attendance at the three public meetings with 12 people attending more than one meeting. These attendees included elected officials, stakeholders, as well as residents, and bicycle advocates.

- The first meeting on June 26, 2017 in Leesburg had 85 attendees
- The second meeting on July 8, 2017 in Lucketts had 93 attendees
- The third meeting on July 15, 2017 had 61 attendees.

Attendees were accounted for either through the sign-in sheet or through individual comment cards and surveys if they chose to fill out their personal information.

2.2  Online Survey Responses

The online survey was distributed online through Metroquest public involvement software. While the survey was live, there were 3029 visitors to the website. At the end of the survey period, 2193 responses were downloaded and the responses were filtered for duplicate responses and incomplete surveys. Initially, responses were sorted by IP address and duplicate IP addresses were identified and evaluated based on timestamps, number of responses, personal information, and answers. This information was used to identify surveys submitted by the same person and 155 survey responses were removed using this method (these are typically individuals who partially filled out the survey but did not complete it and later provided a complete response). Next, responses were filtered by number of questions answered and 32 responses were removed for only having one answer and being incomplete.

Of the 2006 remaining unique survey responses, 635 participants gave personal information such as name, email and address and 71 participants indicated that they attended one of the three public meetings.

2.3  Email Comments

As of August 23, 2017, twenty-nine email comments were submitted via the Route 15 website.
3 RESULTS

All three meetings and the online survey included voting on various topics as well as opportunities to submit comments related to Route 15. The following is a summary of the results from the meetings.

3.1 Voting Results

One component of the meetings and online survey was a vote on certain issues related to Route 15. The following is a summary of the votes from the three public meetings and the online Metroquest survey. Figures 1-4 below summarize the public input votes for each question from the online and public meeting surveys.

Figure 1 below was based on the survey question asking the public to choose their top three priorities for the Route 15 corridor from Leesburg to the Maryland State line. The results show that congestions relief, safety, and access were the top three priorities for the public to be considered during the study and design process.

![Input on Priorities (Top 3)](image)

*Figure 1 - Public Input on Priorities (each individual could pick 3 top choices)*

Shown below in Figure 2, the public was asked to give their position on widening Route 15 from two to four lanes from Battlefield Parkway to Whites Ferry Road and beyond to Montresor Road. The public input was very telling as 76% of votes were in favor of widening, 13% in favor of widening if certain conditions were met, and only 11% opposed the widening of Route 15.
Public Engagement - Round 1 Summary

Figure 2 - Public Input on the Widening of Route 15 from 2 to 4 lanes from Battlefield Parkway to Whites Ferry Road ending near or at Montresor Road.

Figures 3 and 4 below show the results based on preference of intersection modifications at North King Street and Route 15 (Figure 3) and Whites Ferry Road and Route 15 (Figure 4). The results of the North King Street intersection modifications had a majority in favor of a grade separated ramp with 52% of the votes, followed by a roundabout with 34%, and last a traffic signal with 14%. Figure 4 shows that more than half (57%) of the public were in favor of a roundabout at the Whites Ferry Road and Route 15 intersection, 22% were in favor of a traffic signal, and 21% were in favor of a bowtie roundabout.

Figure 3 – Public Input on the North King Street and Route 15 North Intersection Modifications
In addition to the voting activity, both the public meetings and the online survey included a mapping activity where the public could place markers on a map calling out key issues related to access, congestion, safety, beautification, preservation, and bicycle/pedestrian. Comments from this activity are included in the comment analysis below and heat maps generated from the markers can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.2 Key Themes

During the public input process, over 4000 total comments were received and analyzed to develop a list of themes summarizing public opinion about Route 15. The overarching themes (in no particular order) were:

1. **Congestion Relief**—Congestion relief was the most prevalent theme among comments. People are generally frustrated with traffic backups, especially those caused by the signal at Whites Ferry Road and the merge near Battlefield Parkway. One comment noted “Any time after 2PM through 7:30 PM - I schedule my life around not having to travel between those hours.” Another notable congestion related theme is frustration over out of state traffic; there were many comments such as: “Virginians should not give up heritage to move traffic to and from Maryland.”

2. **Safety**—There were a variety of safety concerns related to traveling the Route 15 corridor. Many of the safety concerns identified design elements such as poor sight distance for merges and side streets, lack of safety infrastructure such as lighting, rumble strips, signing and marking, medians, and lack of shoulders for both breakdown situations and for emergency vehicle use when the corridor is at a stand-still. One woman expressed, “As a mother I am terrified if I were to need emergency medical care for my children during AM rush hour.” Other safety concerns pertained to pedestrian and bicycle access, mainly to the schools in the area. There are safety concerns for children walking or biking to and from schools and with bus stops along Route 15 and side roads. Lastly, there were many safety concerns regarding law enforcement such as drunk driving, misuse of turn lanes, passing across centerlines, speeding, and illegal trucks.

3. **Access**—One of the major access issues that consistently came up in public comments was the difficulty of turning movements on and off of Route 15. Left turns onto Route 15 are particularly difficult and there is even more concern for how these movements will be possible if the corridor is widened. There is also
Public Engagement - Round 1 Summary

concern for turning movements of farm tractors and trucks with trailers (especially horse trailers from Morven Park) as well. Another major access concern is that the Point of Rocks bridge is the only Potomac crossing giving Maryland residents access to Virginia and that a new bridge crossing would bring additional access to the region. Lastly, many public comments discussed pedestrian and bicycle access with many people asking for access from Leesburg to the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal Trail in Maryland via Whites Ferry Road.

4. **Environment**—Although environmental issues weren’t necessarily a top priority for the public, there were still a variety of comments about preservation and the environment. Many people mentioned that their property values were decreasing due to congestion on Route 15 and there were also complaints about air quality in surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, there was much concern over the protection and preservation of the roadside berms adjacent to the Big Springs Farm subdivision at Whites Ferry Road as they serve as both safety and noise reduction features.

5. **Land Use and Economic**—Economic comments covered an assortment of issues. One issue that arose frequently was that Loudoun County was losing local business due to congestion. One retired couple expressed, “No longer do we go to Leesburg for an appointment in the morning, nor to a movie in the afternoon. Instead we use doctors and restaurants and theaters in Frederick - all to avoid Leesburg traffic.” Loudoun citizens are also concerned that they aren’t the primary population being served due to the density of Maryland traffic even though they are the taxpayers. Another economic issue that arose in many comments was the frustration over the time value of money that is wasted while sitting in traffic. Land use comments expressed frustration over increased housing development without increased capacity, and included a comment of “Every time we approve another development in the area we are shooting ourselves in the foot.” Lastly, there were economic concerns regarding funding for the projects and the costs of the different options. Many comments indicated that the public was in favor of grade separation at King Street but was very concerned that this option would cost significantly more than other options.

6. **Beautification**—Many comments indicated that beautification was important, but not a priority. The public expressed a desire to preserve the scenic and rural character of the area as much as possible, often referring to the landscape of other roads such as the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Along these same lines, the public generally wanted to prevent development of strip malls and other commercial development along the roadway.

7. **Widening**—Positions on the widening of Route 15 were variable. While most people agreed with widening to relieve congestion, many also expressed concern over widening simply pushing the bottlenecks further up Route 15. Many pointed out that the Point of Rocks bridge is only two lanes so ultimately, there will still be bottlenecking with widening if the bridge is not also widened. Another issue that was expressed is that the widening would just invite even more volume onto Route 15 and the issues would remain unchanged. Lastly, there was concern over which side of the road widening would occur and how right-of-way would be acquired.

8. **Intersection Control**—Intersection control was commonly discussed in public comments. Primarily, there were a lot of comments in favor of the grade separation at King Street. There was also significant discussion of roundabout options. While there was no clear consensus on roundabouts, many people discussed a preference for slower, continual flow of traffic but also concern for confusion on navigating roundabouts, especially two-lane roundabouts. People generally expressed preference for a larger diameter roundabout, especially to ensure maneuverability of larger vehicles, trucks, farm tractors, and trucks with trailers. Lastly, there were many comments asking for realignment of intersections north of
Whites Ferry that are currently offset such as Montresor Road and Limestone School Road as well as Newvalley Church Road and Spinks Ferry Road.

9. **Timing and Phasing**—The last topic commonly mentioned was timing and phasing of the project. Comments expressed a general frustration at the lack of action after previous studies and were generally concerned with how long it would be until changes were implemented. People were okay with taking a phased approach to changes, but did not want long-term construction.

### 3.3 Public Ideas

In addition to comments and opinions about the state of Route 15 and future improvements, the public also proposed a variety of other improvement ideas. These were compiled into four categories in no particular order:

**Multimodal/Travel Demand Management:**
- Add a bike and pedestrian trail
  - Along the west side of Route 15 connecting from Leesburg to Raspberry Falls and Whites Ferry Road
  - Along the east side of Route 15 connecting Leesburg to Whites Ferry Road
  - From Leesburg North to Lucketts
- Create commuter lots and bus routes in Leesburg and North in Maryland to encourage carpooling and “slugging”
- Add sidewalks and trails throughout Lucketts
- Establish a rail connection between Leesburg and Point of Rocks for commuters
- Install a bicycle/pedestrian bridge across Route 15 near the Battlefield Parkway intersection
- Toll traffic traveling into and out of Loudoun County at the Maryland State line
- Provide on-Street bike lanes
  - Along the entire Route 15 corridor
  - From Leesburg to Whites Ferry Road to access the C&O Canal Trail

**Alternative Routes/Bypasses/Corridor Capacity:**
- Create another Potomac River crossing between Route 15 and I-495
- Create parallel side roads to collect local traffic and distribute them onto Route 15 at signalized or roundabout controlled intersections reducing driveway entrances
- Pave Montresor Road
- Widen the Point of Rocks Bridge over the Potomac River to 4 lanes
- Add a Route 15 Bypass of Lucketts
- Widen Route 15 from 2 to 4 lanes from Battlefield Parkway to the Maryland State line
- Widen Route 15 to 3 lanes (3 different ideas were provided)
  - Center lane reversible during peak hours only
  - Center lane reversible permanently
  - Center lane is a permanent Northbound lane

**Safety:**
- Widen the shoulder to 8 feet to allow for emergency vehicle access
- Lower the speed limits along Route 15
- Median divide all of Route 15
- Utilize speed humps and traffic calming measures along the commonly used “cut-through” roadways
- Increase police enforcement of speed and safety violations
- Prohibit passing along the 2 lane sections of Route 15
- Add rumble strips along the Route 15 shoulder and centerline
- Place limits or “ban” trucks using Route 15
• Add more berms and sound walls along Route 15
• Install a low wall or median barrier along the undivided segments of Route 15
• Do not allow school buses to stop along Route 15
• Create better access to communities with acceleration and deceleration lanes along with left and right turn lanes from the side street and left turn lanes on Route 15
• Improve lighting along Route 15 (primarily at intersections)

**Intersection Control:**

• Locations identified for roundabouts
  - North King Street and Route 15 similar to Gilberts Corner
  - Tutt Lane
  - Whites Ferry Road
  - Montresor Road
  - Newvalley Church Road and Spinks Ferry (Combined)
  - Limestone School Road
  - All intersections north of Whites Ferry Road

• Add traffic signal at key locations
• Remove North King Street access to Route 15 North and have all traffic use Battlefield Parkway to access Route 15 Bypass
• Locations identified for grade separated interchanges:
  - Battlefield Parkway (currently shown as interchange in the CTP)
  - North King Street
  - Whites Ferry Road
• Install a left turn lane along Route 15 at Lovettsville Road
• Add median u-turns (also known as Michigan lefts) instead of roundabouts with the entire corridor being right-in/ right-out except at controlled intersections
• Optimize the timing of the signal at Whites Ferry Road and Route 15
• Re-align all cross streets at intersections of Route 15 removing skew and any offsets of the streets
4 NEXT STEPS

As directed by the Board, DTCI staff will present the public input on the Route 15 Congestion Report to the Board of Supervisors at a future meeting. DTCI will also present to the Board feedback from the recently established Stakeholder Committee, which is comprised of representatives from homeowner associations, business and community organizations, and historic preservation groups that are located along the Route 15 corridor. The Stakeholder Committee had its first meeting on August 1, 2017; the group will be meeting several times to identify the issues that the Safety and Operational Study will address and to provide recommendations to the Board.

Additionally, a Partner Agency group is being formed which will be comprised mainly of representatives from federal, state and local government agencies, including Maryland State Highway Administration and Frederick County Transportation. The Partner Agency members will be asked to provide information about their respective agency, review information about the Route 15 Safety and Operational Study and will provide feedback on the proposed improvements.
Figure A-1 – Access Issue Locations Identified from Online Survey and Public Meetings
Figure A-2 – Congestion Issue Locations Identified from Online Survey and Public Meetings
Figure A-3 – Safety Issue Locations Identified from Online Survey and Public Meetings
Figure A-4 – Preservation Issue Locations Identified from Online Survey and Public Meetings
Figure A-5 – Bike and Pedestrian Issue Locations Identified from Online Survey and Public Meetings
Figure A-6 – Beautification Issue Locations Identified from Online Survey and Public Meetings