

Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: September 7, 2021
To: Technical Coordinating Committee
From: Benjamin H. Pingree, PLACE Director
Subject: Summary Minutes for March 22, 2021 TCC Meeting

Committee Members present:

Ken Morris	Ben Pingree
Steve Shafer	Brent Pell
Cherie Bryant	Theresa Heiker
Autumn Calder	Nawfal Ezzagaghi
Greg Slay	Wayne Tedder
Jodie Cahoon	

**substitute*

I. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

II. CONSENT

The TCC is a non-voting committee serving to provide professional advice and technical expertise on Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency projects.

ACTION TAKEN: There were no objections to the presented Consent items or staff recommendations.

1. Approval of the February 1, 2021, Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Option 1: Approve the February 1, 2021, Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Technical Coordinating Committee meeting minutes.

2. Review of the Status Update on Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Infrastructure Projects

Option 1: Concur with the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency April 2021, Status Update on Blueprint Infrastructure Projects.

III. PRESENTATIONS

3. Consideration of a Recommendation for a Substantial Amendment to the Blueprint Northeast Park Project

Megan Doherty provided a brief summary of the substantial amendment to the Northeast Park project including history of actions taken by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and IA Board and the current and proposed site locations. According to the BOCC agenda item, the new location would serve an additional 22,000 residents. The proposed substantial amendment would update the project location and corresponding map in the Interlocal Agreement, to provide for the expenditure of sales tax funds at the new location. The project description would remain unchanged. The Interlocal Agreement required two public hearings on the substantial amendment; they were scheduled for Blueprint Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, March 31, 2021, and the IA Board of Directors meeting, April 8, 2021. Blueprint staff requested a recommendation of approval, to the IA Board, of the substantial amendment.

Ken Morris questioned if the design and engineering contract with Kimley Horn & Associates, could be amended upon IA Board approval of the substantial amendment. Megan Doherty stated that the agenda item provided detailed analysis and benefits for the continuation of the Northeast Gateway design consultants, Kimley Horn & Associates, to include the Northeast Park. However, that modification would require IA Board approval.

Wayne Tedder questioned the flexibility of the project location map, pending technical analysis. Megan Doherty stated that given the best information available, the provided map was the proposed location for the park. Minor adjustments might be achieved through technical and legal negotiations however, major changes would constitute a second substantial amendment. Autumn Calder stated that she expected slight shifts as the project moved through design but not substantial modifications. Mr. Tedder stated he saw no technical objections to the substantial change.

Nawfal Ezzagaghi stated that he reviewed the environmental data from both sites and the proposed location with high-grade terrain and minimal sensitive features is preferred. The original location had gopher tortoises and other wildlife to contend with and was part of the Bradfordville Study Area. Nawfal noted that the proposed location was a much better area to develop a park.

4. Status Update on the Northeast Gateway Project

Dan Scheer provided a brief presentation on the updates to the Northeast Gateway project including the proposed final alignment, intersection options, and greenway.

The proposed roadway alignment was altered to minimize impacts to cultural and historical sites, existing homesteaded properties, and reduce environmental impacts by crossing the floodway at the narrowest point. It further maximized opportunities for a future interchange with Interstate-10. The estimated cost for construction was \$43 million; Blueprint was pursuing a State Infrastructure Bank loan or bond for the project construction.

Nawfal Ezzagaghi noted the Canopy Protection Zone along Centerville Road and questioned how Blueprint intended to approach that segment of the greenway. Dan Scheer stated that the greenway location was yet to be finalized. The amendment to the Comprehensive Plan included language to expand the buffer zone of the Canopy Protection Zone, however, it did not preclude the inclusion of the greenway as a natural surface trail through that buffer zone. It seemed logical that the final alignment of the greenway would be outside of the Canopy Protection Zone but in the expanded buffer however, that would be determined through project design.

Steve Shafer questioned if COT Electric engineering had reviewed the proposed alignment in order to determine impacts to the PUD. Dan Scheer stated that Blueprint worked closely with City Electric on the project; who was also looking at revising the PUD to include the recently located cultural and historical site in the project area.

Greg Slay questioned if trail crossing would be at grade. Dan Scheer confirmed that both the Shamrock Street and Welaunee Boulevard crossings would be at grade.

Wayne Tedder requested that Dan Scheer provide additional detail on the cultural and historical sites for the benefit of the citizens on the Zoom. Mr. Scheer highlighted the area near Testreana Baptist Church and stated that the aerial photography and anecdotal information indicated a cemetery near the Church. Local and state representatives surveyed the site and validated a potential site within the Miccosukee Greenway. Further investigation located a significant portion of the cemetery on the City's PUD; east of the greenway. The report further noted a large scent plume, indicated by cadaver dogs, however, that scent could migrate through root systems and groundwater. The specific site could not be located, however, out of an abundance of caution the site boundaries were based on this field investigation information. The proposed roadway alignment was finalized to be outside of that boundary to ensure no conflicts with the historical site.

Regarding operations at Centerville Road and Shamrock Street South extension connection, Dan Scheer stated that Blueprint proposed a roundabout for efficiencies through the 2045 design year. Furthermore, it minimized impacts to commercial property, created ideal conditions for a future Trailhead in the southeast corner, and provided for safe and continuous operations supported by the Killlearn Homes Association. A roundabout design would impact Celebration Baptist Church property, the Canopy Protection Zone, and increase construction cost by \$1-2 million. Staff also evaluated a signalized intersection; however, it was less efficient operationally through 2045 when compared to the roundabout, and the Canopy Road created sight distance challenges with a signal. The roundabout option allowed for improved site distance through the intersection.

Steve Shafer questioned the impacts to the Canopy Protection Zone if a southbound left-turn lane were included in a signal condition. Dan Scheer stated that it could be considered in the final design. Mr. Shafer cautioned against stating that it minimized impacts to the Canopy Protection Zone until that was considered, as it could be premature.

Greg Slay questioned the design speed through the roundabout. Dan Scheer stated that the roadway speed was 45 mph, but that was metered down to 25 mph, through geometry, at the entrance of the roundabout. Mr. Slay questioned if mid-block crossings were considered, at appropriate distance from the roundabout, for increased pedestrian safety. Mr. Scheer stated that mid-block crossings either north or south of the roundabout, would be in 45 mph speed zones which seemed less desirable than 25 mph through the roundabout. Pedestrian refuge islands would be also be constructed at the roundabout to provide for additional safety precautions for pedestrians. That being said, Blueprint would consider the option in the final design.

Project Engineer, Ryan Wetherell with Kimley Horn & Associates, stated that from an operational and access management perspective, the roundabout provided greater access. Existing driveways on the south side of Shamrock Street presented operational challenges for left turns in and out of Killearn. Whereas the roundabout better accommodated those challenges over the signalized intersection.

Nawfal Ezzagaghi stated that there might be less impact to the Canopy Protection Zone with the signalized intersection; however, it would be a short-term solution. The long-term data seemed to indicate that the roadway would need to be widened in the future to meet traffic demands, which would result in equal or greater impacts anyway. Dan Scheer stated that at the horizon year of 2045, Blueprint did not anticipate any widening necessary in that particular area. However, it could be possible at some point. With that in mind, Blueprint presented the design concept to the Canopy Roads Committee who did not object to a roundabout.

Regarding operations at Welaunee Boulevard and Shamrock Street Extension, Dan Scheer stated that for reasons of safety and traffic efficiency, a roundabout would be the only option proposed to the IA Board. The intersection would be in the middle of a greenfield with no adjacent development. The roundabout maintained efficiency and provided an inherent traffic calming effect. It would be well signed and lit to identify it per Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) standards.

Regarding operations at Welaunee Boulevard, Roberts Road, and Centerville Road, Dan Scheer stated that Blueprint had four options, Option A, proposed a five-leg roundabout. Option B a five-leg signalized intersection, Option C realigned Roberts Road and Option D, the east alignment. Option A would be aligned mainly along the existing conservation easement to avoid impacts to homesteaded properties. Option A also maintained the connection with Pimlico Road, as requested by Leon County School Board, provided continuous operations, and presented no conflicts with pedestrian facilities. Pedestrian safety was of concern; however, there are no existing sidewalks or trails in the area. Mr. Scheer stated that a 5-legged roundabout had a large footprint and right-of-way needs would impact five parcels, including a portion of the St. Phillips AME Church property. He confirmed that cultural and historical sites would not be affected. Lastly, Mr. Scheer noted that one important feature with Option A would be the opportunity to preserve a healthy, 72-inch live oak tree on site.

Dan Scheer stated that Option B, the five-leg signalized intersection presented multiple challenges to operations including lags or delays in signal timing, the tight, acute, and skewed angles of each roadway. Option B would include two dedicated right turn lanes to support operations, would maintain the Pimlico Road connection, and minimize impacts to homesteaded property through a smaller footprint. It was likely that the 72-inch live oak tree could not be saved.

Dan Scheer stated that Option C, Roberts Road realignment, shifted to a four-leg signalized intersection at acute angles, for Welaunee Boulevard and Centerville Road with Roberts Road connecting south of the intersection. It also included the requested Pimlico Road extension. Options C minimized the impacts of the five-leg signalized intersection however, it produced significant impacts to the homesteaded property and right-of-way and construction cost increases to the project.

Dan Scheer stated that Option D, the east alignment, was a recently added proposal that considered continuing Roberts Road east, on its existing path, past the homesteaded property, aligning Welaunee Boulevard through the adjacent non-homesteaded property that held significant wetland areas, and realigning Roberts Road to a stop condition on a curve. The proposed alignment for Welaunee Boulevard would make a hard sweep through the wetlands, producing potentially significant environmental impacts, super-elevated road in the curve, and create geometrical challenges for the Roberts Road intersection. Option D would require additional stormwater facilities to account for additional runoff near the wetlands. Option D had the highest right-of-way costs of all options presented. Mr. Scheer stated that it was a challenging option but one that Blueprint considered because it avoided the homesteaded properties and the conservation easement. Lastly, Option D did not directly support a Pimlico Road connection, but one could be accommodated to the south of the schools.

Autumn Calder noted that it was two years to the month that Blueprint and Kimley Horn teams started working on the evaluation of the alignment alternatives. Staff recommended Option A as it provided greater efficiencies, better driver expectations, and saved the 72-in live oak tree. The wetland impacts and right-of-way costs of Option D were much less exciting. Blueprint staff sought the recommendation of the TCC on the proposed final alignment and proposed operational intersectional alternatives for consideration by the IA Board. There were no objections from members of the TCC.

Greg Slay questioned the proposed radius of the roundabout in Option A. Ryan Wetherell stated that the design team continued to work that point. The largest radius that FDOT would advise for a rural setting would be approximately 120-180 feet. Currently, the design was at 180-feet, which was quite large. The design team felt confident that they could reduce that to 120-feet with a "truck apron" on the inside.

Nawfal Ezzagaghi stressed the importance of avoiding impacts to floodplains and wetlands from an environmental perspective and the additional costs to construct bridges or to mitigate the displacement of floodwater.

Steve Shafer questioned the cons of Option C. Ryan Wetherell stated that from a traffic perspective, Option C was not problematic. There was sufficient distance between the intersections to allow for full movement of traffic off Roberts Road. If the Roberts Road intersection were to shift north, towards Centerville, it could become a right in, right out opening, which would be less than ideal. From a traffic and operations perspective, the acute four-legged, signalized intersection at Centerville Road would be able to accommodate all movements and operate satisfactorily in the future.

Wayne Tedder commended the thorough technical analysis, the importance of environmental awareness, and traffic efficiency. Mr. Tedder questioned if under Option C, Roberts road would be signalized. Ryan Wetherell stated that it would not; the volume of traffic on Roberts was low enough not to warrant a signal. However, left turn lanes would be constructed to move traffic out of the main flow on Welaunee Boulevard. Mr. Tedder stated that had no objections to the staff recommendation.

Greg Slay cautioned against the five-legged intersection stating they should be avoided at all costs. Regarding the roundabout, he encouraged Blueprint to provide the scale to the IA Board. He compared it to the roundabout at Orange Avenue and Jim Lee Road, noting that the proposed Welaunee Boulevard roundabout would be approximately 25-percent larger. He recommended Options A or C. Steve Shafer concurred with Mr. Slay and stated that from a driver expectation perspective, he thought Option C would rate higher than a five-legged roundabout.

Greg Slay suggested evaluating Option C, with the realignment of Roberts Road to the south, and a four-legged roundabout at Welaunee Boulevard, Centerville Road, and Bradfordville Road. Dan Scheer noted that it could be incorporated. Ryan Wetherell stated that Roberts Road would need to shift to the south to accommodate the influence area of the roundabout. Ben Pingree stated that if Roberts was shifted much further south, it could present greater impacts and potentially a whole-take of the property. He supported the investigation however was concern by the impacts to the homesteaded property.

Jodie Cahoon concurred with the evaluations of Options A and C, noting that all of the technical considerations were addressed by staff.

Autumn Calder and Dan Scheer summarized the feedback from the committee and outlined the next steps beginning with a presentation to the IA Board at the April 8, 2021 Board of Directors meeting.

IV. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDAED ITEMS

No public comments were received at the comments@blueprintia.org email address and no members of the public registered to speak at the meeting. With several citizens on the Zoom meeting however, Autumn Calder opened the floor for speakers.

Danielle Irwin spoke on the Northeast Gateway project and her appreciation for Blueprint’s collaboration with the Killearn Homes Association and staff outreach that

provided greater understanding of the alternatives. Ms. Irwin stated that Killearn Homes Association supports a roundabout intersection at the Shamrock and Centerville Road intersection.

V. **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 1:55 pm.