



Larry Hogan, *Governor*
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September 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Dennis L. German
Chief, Community Design Division

FROM: Jared Paper-Evers 
Project Manager, Highway Design Division

SUBJECT: MD 33 from Yacht Club Road to Pea Neck Road
Contract No: TA2865184
FMIS No: TA286A21

RE: Public Meeting Minutes

A Public Meeting for the subject project was held on Thursday, July 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Michaels Middle/High School, 200 Seymour Avenue, St. Michaels, MD 21663.

Over 75 people attended the public informational meeting for the MD 33 (Talbot Street) from Yacht Club Road to Pea Neck Road Urban Reconstruction Project. Attendees included local residents and business owners, local officials from Talbot County and the Town of St. Michaels, and Delegate John Mautz (District 37B).

The following State and local government officials and State Highway Administration (SHA) representatives were in attendance:

Delegate John Mautz	Maryland House of Delegates, District 37B
Joanne Clark	Commissioners of St. Michaels
Roy Myers	Commissioners of St. Michaels
Andy Hollis	County Manager, Talbot County
Jean Weisman	Town Clerk/Manager, Town of St. Michaels
Iyad Isaac	Brudis & Associates
Charlie Coppage	SHA - District 2 - Traffic
Greg Holsey	SHA - District 2 - District Engineer
Bob Rager	SHA - District 2 - Community Liaison
Tom Revelle	SHA - District 2 - Assistant District Engineer (ADE) - Project Development
Walter Rullman	SHA - District 2 - ADE - Right-of-Way
Moreshwar Kulkarni	SHA - Office of Highway Development (OHD) - Community Design Division (CDD) - Assistant Chief

My telephone number/toll-free number is 410-545-8400 or 1-888-228-5003
Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free

Jared Paper-Evers
Marcus Tadros

SHA - OHD - Highway Design Division (HDD)
SHA-OHD-HDD

Mr. Jared Paper-Evers gave a brief presentation (enclosed) outlining the project purpose and need, project history, potential proposed improvements, the scope and schedule of the an interim sidewalk improvement project currently in design, and the next steps in the project development process including the development of a Community Task Force.

A question and answer period followed the presentation. Many attendees were supportive of the project and highlighted the need to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility and address existing drainage issues.

Overall, the community seemed very interested in the project and provided a lot of valuable input. About 30 people signed-up to be a part of the Community Task Force. SHA will schedule the initial Task Force meeting following the Public Meeting.

Issues & Concerns

- A number of community members, including representatives from the local volunteer fire department, emphasized the need to maintain emergency vehicle access along MD 33. They were generally opposed to any raised median islands, bump-outs, or narrowing of lanes and noted that it is already difficult for fire trucks to navigate through Town along MD 33.
- A number of community members who live north and west of St. Michaels noted the high levels of congestion along MD 33 in St. Michaels causing extended commute times and discouraging trips through Town. They emphasized that MD 33 serves as the only through route for communities to the north and west of St. Michaels and that the project should consider the needs of road users using MD 33 for commuting purposes, as well. They emphasized the importance of maintaining and/or improving vehicular mobility through Town and were generally opposed to traffic calming measures, reduction of lane widths, bicycle accommodations and on-street parking. They also requested that SHA extend its public outreach efforts to include communities to the north and west of St. Michaels.
- Community members emphasized the need to improve on-road bicycle safety in the downtown area and some recommended the elimination of on-street parking to improve bicycle safety.
- Some community members were supportive of the extension of sidewalk/hiker-biker trail to businesses along southbound MD 33 south of the Town of St. Michaels while some of the business owners were opposed.

Question & Answer

- Q: Would SHA consider providing some of the \$2.5M in funding allocated for Preliminary Engineering to the Town to spend on projects as the Town is more familiar with local issues such as bicycle safety?

A: The \$2.5M funded for Preliminary Engineering is for SHA's use in designing the project and cannot be allocated to the Town of St. Michaels. SHA has recently updated its bicycle design standards; this project will consider the feasibility of various bicycle accommodations during design including extending an existing shared-use path along southbound MD 33 south of St. Michaels and marked bicycle lanes or shared lanes throughout the project limits.

- Q: What is the driving force behind this project and where is the funding coming from?
A: The project is state funded. The Town of St. Michaels and Talbot County emphasized the need for this project to upgrade sidewalks, upgrade and solve drainage issues, provide pedestrian safety, and ADA compliance.
- Q: Where is SHA getting the land to provide sidewalks, bike lanes, and stormwater management (SWM) facilities?
A: For an Urban Reconstruction project like this, it is not SHA's intention to buy land/houses to build sidewalk. Existing sidewalks are likely in SHA right-of-way or fall under the Town sidewalk ordinance and may be improved without the acquisition of additional property. Additionally, linear SWM facilities will be utilized where right-of-way is limited. The use of large SWM facility (SWM-ponds) is no longer typical practice, but may be used if necessary to provide quantity management for increases in impervious area. If needed, these large facilities would be placed only where open space exists. The construction of new pedestrian facilities outside the Town may require the acquisition of easements in certain locations.
- Q: Some of the businesses along the south side of MD 33 between Pea Neck Rd. and St. Michaels Nature Trail have sidewalks and some don't have sidewalks; how wide is state right-of-way for MD 33 near this section of the road?
A: SHA is currently obtaining plats and deeds and surveying right-of-way lines to determine the location of existing right-of-way lines along MD 33; SHA has received requests from residents and business owners to extend the sidewalk outside the Town limits. SHA will look into the feasibility of providing new sidewalk in these areas during design and whether additional right-of-way or easements will be required.
- Q: Will the stormwater management and storm drainage system design for this project consider the effects of high tide? When a storm hits during high tide, water backs up from the adjacent rivers into the existing storm drain pipes and onto local roads.
A: SHA will evaluate as part of this project, the available options to minimize the effects of high tide on the storm drain system and local roads.
- Q: Is SHA considering cleaning the existing storm drainage system as some of the existing facilities are clogged?
A: SHA intends to clean and improve the existing SHA owned storm drain facilities affected by the project.

- Q: Some of the roadside ditches require cleaning, is there any intention of SHA to clean the roadside ditches?
A: SHA and the Town intend to clean out and maintain roadside ditches located within their respective rights-of-way. Maintenance of ditches located on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.
- Q: Would SHA consider narrowing the road to widen sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety? Specifically, on North Talbot Street between Mill Street and North Street the sidewalk is exceedingly narrow.
A: Shifting the curb towards the roadway to widen sidewalk will be considered during design. Narrowed lanes will still provide sufficient access for emergency vehicles.
- Q: Will SHA reach out and involve residents living to the north and west of the Town of St. Michaels as they are users of MD 33? People living on the north side of Town do not have a vested interest in slowing down traffic as they pass through St. Michaels, people want to go home in a reasonable amount of time.
A: SHA will reach out to residents living to the north and west of St. Michaels and will mail project information and meeting invitations to the residents in those areas.
- Q: What zip codes did SHA send the meeting invitations to? It is important to send project mailing to every address on Bay Hundred because those residents come to St. Michaels to shop.
A: Please provide SHA the zip codes to include in future mailings. *These zip codes were subsequently provided in a comment card.*
- Q: Seems like there will be a lot of details worked out in the Task Force meetings. Will the public have the opportunity to review and comment on the work done by the Task Force?
A: The public will have the opportunity to be part of the project Task Force. SHA will look into ways to provide periodic updates to the public regarding the progress of the Task Force.
- Q: Is the interim sidewalk improvement project funded for construction? How will that affect traffic on MD 33?
A: The interim sidewalk improvement project is funded for design only. The project is anticipated to start construction as early as Spring 2016. The construction schedule is dependent on the allocation of construction funding. The sidewalk and driveway construction may cause temporary interruptions to pedestrian and vehicle traffic on MD 33.
- Q: About 15 years ago in 2002 – there was a discussion about installing a 4 foot wide raised median along MD 33. Will this be incorporated into this project?

A: The installation of median islands will be reviewed with consideration given to providing adequate access to emergency vehicles and farm and commercial vehicles. Providing access to emergency vehicles will take priority.

- Q: What is the project schedule?

A: Given that the project is in the early stages of design, the project schedule is preliminary and is subject to change. Based on the current schedule, the earliest that design could be completed is the end of 2017. A construction schedule has not yet been determined and will be dependent on the availability of construction funding.

General Information Provided During the Meeting

- The Town of St. Michaels is currently conducting a feasibility study to remove or relocate the aerial utility lines along MD 33. SHA will coordinate with the Town during design as these efforts progress.
- Some business owners south of Town indicated that businesses are not interested in being part of the project.
- Largest fire truck width is 101 inches. The fire department is opposed to narrowing of MD 33.
- The presentation given at the meeting will be posted on the project website (<http://apps.roads.maryland.gov/WebProjectLifeCycle/ProjectInformation.aspx?projectno=TA2862120>)
- There is a Talbot County Gateway Ordinance that requires property owners to construct sidewalk along the frontage of their property along MD 33 whenever there is a change in use.
- Some people did not receive the public meeting notifications. They found out about the meeting from the local newspaper.
- It was reported there was a loss of bike festival due to dangers of riding bicycles in the Town - it was suggested to limit on-street parking in the Town.
- University of Maryland stormwater project - University of Maryland is collecting SWM info from people and the Town
- Some attendees mentioned that high traffic volumes and left-turn movements create significant traffic delays between Pea Neck Road and the Maritime Museum and requested a traffic signalization study for this area.
- Delegate John Mautz offered his support to help move the project forward and requested to be a member of the Task Force.
- Town Manager Jean Weisman offered to help disseminate project information via the Town website and mailing list.

If you have any comments, additions, or corrections to these minutes, please contact Jared Paper-Evers, Highway Design Division at 410-545-8400 or by email at jpaper-evers@sha.state.md.us.

Enclosed: Presentation
cc: Project Team Members