



G R E S H A M  
S M I T H   A N D  
P A R T N E R S

## **SR 136 Safety Project Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting #3**

September 15, 2010

### **MEETING NOTES**

P.I. NO.: 0008314  
CSSFT-0008-00(314)  
GS&P Project No. 26340.09

MEETING DATE: September 2, 2010

TIME: 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

PARTICIPANTS: Community Work Group  
Mimi Jo Butler, Marble Valley Historical Society  
Tammy Bell, Marble Valley Historical Society  
Linda Geiger, GA Chapter Trail of Tears  
Buddy Callahan, Business Owner  
Edsel Dean, Property Owner  
Wendell Aenchbacher, Property Owner

Staff Work Group  
Joey Low, Pickens County Land Development  
Kevin McAuliff, Northwest Georgia Regional  
Norman Pope, Pickens County

Project Team  
Derrick Cameron, GDOT Traffic Operations (PM)  
Michael Nash, GDOT Traffic Operations  
Michael Hester, GDOT  
Wes King, GDOT District Six  
Greg Hood, GDOT District Six  
Kent Black, Gresham, Smith and Partners  
Jody Braswell, Gresham, Smith and Partners  
Scott Shelton, Gresham, Smith and Partners  
Ronda Coyle, Gresham, Smith and Partners  
Jill Brown, Edwards-Pitman Environmental  
Lisa Crawford, Edwards-Pitman Environmental

DISCUSSION: CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3

### **A. Introductions**

Kent Black opened the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting and asked the participants to introduce themselves. Kent noted the Public Information Open House (PIOH) would be held later this fall and noted the display board on display would be at the PIOH. Kent also stated each CAC member had an 11 x 17 copy of the display in their packet of information today for their use. Kent stated GS&P and GDOT were excited to present to the CAC a preferred alternative and hoped the CAC would find the alternative addressed the improvements to safety while preserving the corridor's historic and cultural stories.

### **B. Recap of CAC Meetings**

Kent Black summarized the CAC process to date:

1. CAC #1 – February 25, 2010 – Identified historical and roadway stories, identified environmental resources, and discussed crashes and concerns
2. CAC #2 – May 26, 2010 – Identified the five critical areas on the corridor, CAC evaluated and ranked alternatives within the five critical areas and provided feedback

### **C. Scoring Results**

1. Kent Black stated part of GS&P's objectives when designing the alternative was to reduce the number and severity of crashes, address the horizontal and vertical curves, repair the sight distance issues and shoulder deficiencies and reconfigure a substandard intersection.
2. In Area 1, Buddy Callahan suggested an alternative to those presented by GS&P. Mr. Callahan's alternative ranked #1 with the CAC, so GS&P carried forward Buddy's suggestion. GS&P completed a technical evaluation of Mr. Callahan's suggestion to compare to the others.
3. In Area 2, the CAC chose the inside realignment as opposed to the outside realignment as the inside realignment would not affect the Old Federal Road.
4. In Area 3, the CAC chose the 90 degree intersection over a 70 degree intersection and 90 degree intersection with a cul-de-sac. The chosen alternative would alleviate the sight distance issues at Priest Circle and provide for a conventional intersection.
5. In Area 4, the CAC chose the inside realignment over a new alignment with a roundabout. Upon technical evaluation, it was discovered an inside realignment had several fatal flaws, so GS&P merged Area 4 and 5 to create an alignment with a roundabout at the end of the corridor to correspond to the CAC's selection of a roundabout.

#### **D. Technical Evaluation**

1. Jody Braswell explained for Area 1 both Mr. Callahan's suggestion and the roundabout improved safety on the corridor, although the technical evaluation showed the roundabout would increase safety and lower speed level and both alternatives would provide access to Mr. Callahan's store. Jody Braswell noted Mr. Callahan's suggestion also impacted historical resources as well as adjacent properties. The roundabout had no impacts to either properties or historical resources. Buddy Callahan stated numerous people in the community had voiced a concern over a roundabout and potential number of crashes. Mr. Callahan noted several crashes had been witnessed at a roundabout on Cove Road due to people traveling in the wrong direction on the roundabout. Edsel Dean noted that good signage would control this. Kent Black stated educational material would be distributed to Pickens County at the PIOH on how to maneuver in a roundabout. Jody Braswell noted crashes are possible in a roundabout, but fatal crashes should be reduced since all movements are much slower in a roundabout. Derrick Cameron stated there would be signage as well as additional lighting in the proposed roundabout. Derrick Cameron noted that splitting traffic is not viable in this area and does not provide the safety needed per Mr. Callahan's suggestion.
2. Jody Braswell noted CAC members ranked #1 an inside realignment in Area 4. Upon further technical evaluation an inside realignment would be too costly and the curve would remain sharp. Jody Braswell stated another solution would be to straighten the curve and re-align to Old Hwy. 5, thus combining Areas 4 and 5. Jody Braswell noted by realigning the entire movement to Hwy. 515 it would create a continuous movement and reduces the conflicts to Hwy. 515. Plus, the roundabout built mid-stream would slow down traffic. Jody Braswell stated both Area 4 and 5 alternates improved safety, but a new alignment with a roundabout improved safety significantly while enhancing the corridor and preserving historic resources.
3. Mimi Jo Butler inquired if there would be a stop sign at Hwy. 5 going north coming from Talking Rock and if this would become a potentially hazardous area with the other solutions. Kent Black stated traffic volumes at this location are low and GS&P does not believe it to pose a threat to safety. Mimi Jo Butler stated those that utilize the corridor traveling to Ellijay stay on Hwy. 5 and not Hwy. 515. Kent Black noted there would be static signage in the area and perhaps some dynamic signage during construction to direct travelers on how to proceed.

**E. Environmental Update**

Jill Brown with Edwards-Pitman Environmental (EP) stated information regarding the historical and environmental resources on the corridor has been provided to SHPO. SHPO requested an investigation of the cemetery to be completed by GDOT to verify if it is a cemetery or not. The Priest Farm on Priest Circle has been identified as a potential historic resource. However, it is not impacted by the project design. EP is not anticipating any problems with SHPO approval of the proposed alternative.

**F. CAC Commitment and Pledge**

Kent Black reminded the CAC about their agreement to commit to build consensus among the members and assist with public coordination at the PIOH. Kent Black stated the CAC for Pickens County was a pleasure to work with and was a model of the CAC process. Kent Black thanked the members of the CAC and encouraged the members to attend the PIOH and promote the CAC process and share with the public how that GS&P and GDOT worked with the CAC and others to build consensus on an alternative.

**G. Open Discussion**

1. Kent Black was asked what would be the format of the PIOH. Kent Black replied the PIOH is an open house style for approximately two (2) hours with handouts, display boards and sample CAC notebooks.
2. Kent Black was asked how the PIOH would be advertised to the community. Kent Black replied notification would occur by signage on SR 136, legal ads in the local newspaper, CAC member and flyers.
3. Kent Black was asked if the community had to give their comments regarding the project during the PIOH only. Kent Black replied the community would be able to provide feedback with comment cards or they could parlay their comments to a court reporter at the open house. The public also has the option to take the comment card with them and send it in within 10 days of the PIOH or provide comments online through the GDOT website.
4. District 6 stated preference for not altering the state route as currently shown. GS&P will review the layout and revise areas to keep the state route as the through movement.
5. District 6 inquired if the project at Antioch Church Road was still active and GDOT confirmed it was active at the current time.
6. Mimi Jo Butler advised that while the roundabout simulation was very helpful, more people in the community would benefit from a video of an actual roundabout in the area. Mimi Jo Butler noted it would dispel the old wives tales of dangerous roundabouts. Buddy Callahan noted the roundabouts would cause confusion in the beginning and signage would be very important. The CAC recommended GS&P and GDOT video tape the roundabout at Steve Tate Hwy. and Cove Road.
7. Kent Black was asked if a location for the PIOH had been determined. GDOT stated the process of identifying a location for the PIOH had

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not begun and knows the area is limited in meeting space. The CAC suggested holding the PIOH at the technical college or the chamber of commerce.

This represents our understanding of the items discussed at CAC Meeting #3 on September 2, 2010. If you have any questions or comments concerning any of the information contained here, please contact Scott Shelton.

Prepared by: Ronda J. Coyle

RJC