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Ridge Pike, Crescent Ave to Northwestern Ave

June 20, 2016 Public Open House – Questions & Answers

Q: Access to Ridge Pike from driveways is very difficult and seems unsafe to those who live along it. Does the county have responsibility for safety and quality of life? Is there a possibility of connecting to Eagle View?

A: Ridge Pike is a major arterial roadway with more than 30,000 vehicles per day in some sections. Residential driveway users and those entering Ridge from unsignalized entrances will always need to be cautious.

The function of arterial roads is to carry large amounts of traffic over longer distances (mobility); not to provide local access to properties (access). Individual property access is the function of local roads. Generally, traffic signals, if coordinated correctly, can balance the need for mobility and speed with the need for gaps in the traffic that would help provide access from adjacent properties. A gap analysis will be completed as the signal plans are finalized for this section of Ridge Pike. The overall signal plan will try to balance the need for local access while protecting the necessary mobility function of Ridge Pike.

Secondary connections to more local roadways are a good way to alleviate the concerns of residential access directly onto Ridge Pike. This will be considered where appropriate.

Q: The common perception is that the congestion is caused by the lane drop at Holdod's True Value; more important is the timing of the traffic light at Manor Road. Too much time is given to allow left turns onto Manor from Ridge. That additional time is not needed in the PM rush hour. (There were several comments regarding the signal timing at Manor Road—all noting that not enough time is dedicated to Ridge Pike traffic during the rush hours.)

A: After the Public Open House, Springfield Township coordinated with PennDOT to reevaluate the signal timing. The timing was adjusted within a few weeks of the June 20 open house and appears to be operating much better as a result.

Q: Will the new traffic signal at Crescent Avenue lead to large trucks hitting their Jacobs Inhibitor (“Jake”) brakes in order to stop at the new signal?

A: There have been no reports of excessive Jake brake use currently in this or other sections of Ridge Pike; therefore, we do not foresee this will be a major problem.

Q: How do you move people in the cemetery in order to widen the road?

A: Coordination with St. Peter’s Church has begun regarding how to widen Ridge Pike between the two sections of the cemetery. The north side of the cemetery is the historic side and is also the side where St. Peter’s church would like to avoid any impacts. It is likely that the cemetery wall along the south side of Ridge Pike will need to be moved back some distance to allow the construction of the sidewalk. (No additional roadway widening is proposed in this section in order to minimize impacts to the cemetery.)

There are defined procedures for disinterring and moving someone from their resting place, which we will follow throughout the process. Unless the families involved want to move someone to a new location, any relocation would be within the existing cemetery. The pastor and congregation at St. Peter’s Church have been notified of the current plans.

Q: Will the new cemetery wall be similar to the existing wall to preserve the historic character or will it be something new?

A: Our goal is to preserve the existing historic character of the community. The exact design of the wall is yet to be determined but will be coordinated with St. Peter’s Church during the final design phase.

Q: How will the actual construction be completed? Will it be during rush hour? At night?

A: We are not far enough along in the engineering process to determine exactly how construction will be phased and coordinated. When we enter the Final Design phase, we will be working out that issue in order to most efficiently complete the construction with the least impact to the traveling public and adjacent residents/businesses. However, this will be a major construction project and it will impact traffic flow throughout the construction process. There will be additional public information and meetings during Final Engineering to share how this issue will be addressed.

Q: How will the new traffic signal at Crescent Avenue impact Pine Ridge and residents’ desire to enter Ridge Pike from that development?

A: When Crescent Avenue gets the green light, Ridge Pike will have a red light in both directions, which will create gaps in the Ridge Pike traffic if the “Don’t Block the Intersection” signs are obeyed. Some “courtesy gaps” will still be required in order to exit

Pine Ridge during the peak traffic hours. (Residents in the Pine Ridge development also have the option of using other residential streets to access Joshua Road south of Ridge Pike.)

Q: Could you create a split traffic signal to include Pine Ridge Road?

A: Crescent Avenue and Pine Ridge Road are too far apart to be included in a single traffic signal. A separate signal would need to be installed and coordinated with the signal at Crescent.

Q: How will the traffic accident issues west of Crescent Avenue be addressed?

A: Whitemarsh Township is working on a drainage project which will address some of the drainage problems in this area that contribute to crashes. Also, the county will soon begin engineering for the next segment of Ridge Pike between Crescent Avenue and Butler Pike, and we are hoping to address some of these issues in that project.

Q: We are putting a great deal of faith in the adaptive traffic signals to address some of the congestion issues. How can we be assured that the new traffic signals will provide the benefits that are projected?

A: The new traffic signals are being proposed because they are currently needed due to the existing traffic volumes as well as the current crash histories. The goal of the extra lights is to balance the need for safer intersections with traffic flow.

Q: A question was raised about the larger planning efforts to increase the number of east-west roadways in eastern Montgomery County.

A: It is highly unlikely that any completely new roads will be built due to the space required for new roads and the cost of right-of-way acquisitions.

Q: Who are we building the sidewalks for? No one walks there.

A: One of the principle goals of the Montco 2040 comprehensive plan is the expansion of walkable communities throughout Montgomery County. The county is committed to completing sidewalk links along Ridge Pike, which will provide a safe walking environment from Joshua Road to Philadelphia. Currently, children cannot walk or bike to a friend's house, transit users cannot walk to bus stops, and residents cannot stroll down to Friendly's for an ice cream. If sidewalks are built, we anticipate they will be well used. Also, as long as bus routes are provided along Ridge Pike, the county is legally required to address the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for access to public facilities.

Q: There are numerous accidents at or near Crescent Avenue. The speed limit is largely ignored on Ridge Pike. People also use the parking lot of P&I Automotive to make a left turn onto Crescent Avenue. How do we address the speeding and the way people drive?

A. Much of the enforcement for issues associated with traffic speeds and dangerous maneuvers rests with the municipal police. If you see issues, the best move is to report them to your municipality.

Q: Is anything being addressed as far as new construction of transportation facilities based on the amount of development that is planned in the region and the additional traffic that will accompany that development in the future?

A. There are very few locations where we can build a completely new road. The acquisition of right-of-way would be very prohibitive. We did look at reopening some existing roads to more traffic but that raises other problems for the adjacent residents.

One of the goals of the Montco 2040 plan is to provide travel options within our more developed and denser communities. Ongoing development is crucial to the economic well-being of our communities, but the emphasis will be on more walkable and bikeable connections and better connections to available transit services to help alleviate traffic congestion as we continue to grow.

Q: As a transit user, the Route 27 bus provides access to Philadelphia but it is very dangerous currently. With regard to the employees at the Masonic Village, the movement of the bus stop down to Manor Road will make the workers have to walk further to get to the transit they need to get to work or home.

A: The new addition at Masonic Village includes interior walkways that exit closer to Manor Road than previously. The new location of the bus stop at a controlled intersection will be much safer, allow for a pedestrian phase at the traffic signal, and be served by sidewalks instead of requiring the employees to cross Ridge Pike midblock. The county has been coordinating with SEPTA throughout the planning and engineering so far. SEPTA supports the move of this particular bus stop.

**The Montgomery County Commissioners in office at the time of the June 20, 2016 Ridge Pike Public Open House were Josh Shapiro, Chair; Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Vice Chair; and Joseph C. Gale.*