



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2022  
TO: Hugh Saxon – Deputy City Manager, City of Decatur  
FROM: Bruce Landis, P.E., AICP – Landis Evans + Partners Project Manager  
Subject: Atlanta Avenue RR Crossing Improvements  
Workshop #5 Comments Summary

### INTRODUCTION

This memorandum summarizes the feedback obtained from the December 9, 2021 Atlanta Avenue RR Crossing Improvements Workshop #5. Two meetings were held as part of this workshop. The first was a preliminary meeting held in City Hall for bicycling advocates; five people attended. The second (main) meeting was held at the Atlanta Friends Meeting building in Decatur, GA between 4:30 pm and 7:30 pm. There were 79 participants who signed into the main meeting.

Notes were made of the feedback provided at the preliminary meeting. For the main workshop meeting, we collected three types of feedback forms; a final alignment comment form (14 participants responded), a corridor strip map comment form (35 participants responded), and a Reimagine West Howard alternatives comment form (63 participants responded). In addition, participants were invited to comment directly onto an aerial strip map of the Howard Avenue project corridor from Paden Circle to Commerce Drive.

During the two meetings, participants' feedback was received in three ways:

- the notes taken documenting the statements of participants,
- the two comment cards (Final Alignment and Reimagine West Howard implementation concepts), and
- comments made on the Howard Avenue project Corridor Strip Map.

The following sections of this memorandum summarize the feedback obtained from the preliminary meeting and from the main meeting.

### PRELIMINARY MEETING

At the preliminary meeting with bicycling advocates/representatives, the following questions and statements were most prominent:

- Is there a need for the number of turn lanes and decision points provided at the proposed intersection?
- How are we planning to protect the pedestrians crossing West Howard Avenue?
- Will there be LPIs, beg buttons (i.e., pedestrian push buttons), scrambled crossings, protected/dedicated phases?
- The sidewalk on the south side of West College Avenue now has less buffer to the roadway, providing smaller queue space for students.
- Can there be vertical barriers instead of striping to harden the medians?

- How is the bike crossing from College Ave to Olympic Place going to be managed?
- Many drivers use the underpass west of the proposed intersection to cross.

The design team discussed the input with the meeting participants, answered their questions, and noted that many of the actual design recommendations they had are already included in the plans. These include:

- Truck aprons to reduce curb radii,
- Ped heads at all crossings, and
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs).

## MAIN WORKSHOP

At the main workshop, we documented statements made by the public as they viewed the workshop materials. Participants were also able to fill out comment cards for three subject areas: the final intersection alignment, the Reimagine West Howard alternatives, and an overall Howard Avenue project Corridor Strip Map. The following subsections summarize the statements made by participants and the written feedback for each of the three subject areas.

### Final Alignment Graphic

At the workshop, graphics of the final alignment for the railroad crossing and the designs for the intersections at Howard Avenue/Adair Street and College Avenue/Adair Street were available for participants to review. The following statements on these graphics were relayed at the meeting:

- The turn lanes increase the number of vehicular lanes to cross on West Howard Avenue.
- The driveway directly south of the Adair and College intersection will be disadvantaged.
- Signals and signs should prioritize pedestrians.
- Include as much greenspace as possible and maintain it.
- A buffer to sidewalks is needed on the north side of Howard Avenue.
- Pedestrian signals need to be installed at College Avenue.
- Impacts pedestrians on north sidewalk.
- Traffic calming needed for Adair St.
- Bicycle striping needs to be installed or repainted.
- On-street parking at the Atlanta Friends Meeting building is important.
- Asphalt needs to be smoother for riding.

The design team staff at both the preliminary meeting and the main workshop provided responses and answers to comments from participants.

### Feedback from the Final Alignment Comment Forms

Fourteen (14) persons (two persons submitted a response post workshop) used the comment card for the Final Railroad Crossing Alignment. Comments presented at the meeting included the following:

- 4 of the 14 respondents were not in support of the Railroad Crossing alignment. They believe the plan has too many lanes for pedestrians to cross safely and they think the design will be too expensive for



a perceived minor or non-beneficial outcome. In particular, the need for the right turn lane from eastbound Howard Avenue onto the southbound connector across the rail tracks was questioned. The inclusion of the right turn lane in the plans is in response to

- o Observed traffic queuing conditions along Howard Avenue when trains are present at the crossing, and
  - o Feedback from numerous participants at the previous four public workshops who requested the right turn lane to ensure Howard Avenue was not adversely impacted when the rail gates were lowered for a train.
- One respondent indicated that the design will negatively impact his residential property.
  - The other respondents requested considerations such as pedestrian signals and dedicated phasing. They also requested general walk and bike friendly design considerations and seemed to indicate their willingness and/or enthusiasm to use the facilities once these accommodations are made. They also asked to consider traffic flow and volume impacts to the residents. These comments affirmed the approach presented at previous meetings that stated the pedestrian signals in the plans were already enhanced with leading pedestrian intervals and electronic NO TURN ON RED signs at pedestrian crosswalks.

See Appendix A for the consolidated list of comments received.

### **Reimagine West Howard**

Participants were asked to review eight (8) options for design concepts that could be used to better implement a bikeway(s) along Howard Avenue from Paden Circle to Commerce Drive. Comments presented at the meeting included the following:

- Cycle Track Option D seemed to have been selected the most as the number 1 choice followed by the Buffered Bikeway Option B, although the cycle track had significantly more votes.
- Participants like the idea of having greenery but are concerned that whatever option is chosen, the landscaping and vegetation will not be maintained.
- Participants who chose Cycle Track Option D believe it is safest as it provides a buffer on both sides of the street and provides traffic calming with trees in the island.

### **Feedback from the Reimagine West Howard Concept Preference Forms**

Participants used a special comment card to rank the Reimagine West Howard implementation concepts to share their preferences. Sixty-three (63) persons (one person submitted a response post workshop) engaged in the ranking of the eight conceptual Howard Avenue bike/ped alternatives. The data was consolidated by totaling the number of times each alternative was ranked and determining the maximum within each rank. Average ranking scores were also calculated. Table 1 summarizes this evaluation.



**Table 1**      **Howard Avenue Alternatives Ranking**

	Existing		Buffered Bikeway		Cycle Track			
	No Build	Terracotta	Option A	Option B	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
no. of times assigned #1	1	2	2	10	0	4	4	44
no. of times assigned #2	2	2	10	3	1	4	33	4
no. of times assigned #3	1	2	3	5	1	25	7	5
no. of times assigned #4	2	3	5	12	22	4	2	2
no. of times assigned #5	1	9	1	10	6	10	1	3
no. of times assigned #6	4	2	14	2	11	3	6	0
no. of times assigned #7	4	24	4	5	2	0	0	0
no. of times assigned #8	34	7	8	3	5	2	2	2
Overall Average Ranking Score	7.0	6.0	4.9	4.0	5.1	3.6	2.8	1.8

Table 1 shows that Cycle Track Option D (the planter islands) was selected as the participants' #1 choice. Cycle Track Options C and B were selected as the #2 and #3 choice, respectively. Some of the respondents failed to respond to the question as we anticipated, and instead either left panels blank, inserted text instead of a number, or duplicated rankings. This accounts for the discrepancy between the order of preference described by the maximum number of votes for each rank versus the overall average ranking score. However, the Cycle Track Options D, C, and B remain the number 1, 2, and 3 choices respectively by either metric.

The comment form also provided participants the opportunity to make comments on each of the potential alternatives. Of the 63 respondents, 46 provided comments alongside their rankings. The majority of these shared concerns about buffers to the pedestrian and bicycle facilities, especially on the northern side of Howard Avenue. They described a need to retain the northern on-street parking, a need for durable and well-maintained planters or vegetation, if chosen, and a need for more walkable and bikeable facilities.

Many respondents expressed their support of Cycle Track Option D due to the greenspace it provides to the south side which is aesthetically pleasing and provides ample buffer. They also chose this option for the parking it could retain on the north side which further acts as a buffer to the existing sidewalk. The Buffered Bikeway options were also supported but many expressed concerns with driveway conflicts and the removal of on-street parking. Many respondents also expressed their dislike of the existing planters and condition of the existing path and sidewalks.

Appendix B includes all the feedback received on the Howard Avenue alternatives.



### Project Corridor (Strip Map)

An aerial of the overall project area was printed in large format and displayed at tables for the meeting participants so they could make comments and provide recommendations directly onto the aerial.

#### Feedback from the Project Corridor (Strip Map)

Thirty-five (35) persons used numbered sticky dots, with accompanying comment cards, to identify and comment on conditions within areas along the anticipated Reimagine Howard Corridor. The areas, intersecting with either Howard or College Avenue, that had at least two or more comments in its vicinity included Paden Circle, Drexel Avenue, Atlanta Friends Meeting, Adair Street, Olympic Place, Greenwood Circle, Pattillo Way, and Commerce Drive. Commerce Drive had the most comments in its vicinity with 26 comments. Many of the comments support concepts presented in the Project Corridor (Strip Map). A summary of the comments is provided below:

- Paden Circle
  - Buffered bikeway option requires bicyclists to cross if traveling westbound
  - Pedestrian crossing signal is not functional
- Drexel Avenue
  - Small buffer to roadway
  - Pedestrian crossing signal needed on existing midblock crossing
  - Additional western pedestrian crossing and signal needed
- Atlanta Friends Meeting
  - On-street parking needs to be retained
- Adair Street
  - Pedestrian crossing signal needed to cross Howard Avenue
  - Stacking space needed for eastbound to southbound right turns
- Olympic Place
  - Pedestrian/bicycle buttons and crossing signals needed
  - Construction may cause potential drainage problem
- Greenwood Circle
  - Street should be one-way with parking or two-way without parking
  - Pedestrian crossing signal needed across Howard Avenue
  - Existing east-west crosswalk is barely visible to motorists
- Pattillo Way
  - Street should be one-way with parking or two-way without parking
  - Pedestrian crossing signal needed across Howard Avenue
- Commerce Drive
  - Buffered bikeway option requires crossing if traveling westbound
  - Pedestrian crossing signal needed on existing Howard Avenue crossing
  - Additional eastern crosswalk needed
  - Provide adequate space for left and right turns; right turn sometimes encroaches on sidewalk, left turns are tight



See Appendix C to review the map with the numbered dots and all their associated comments.

## APPENDICES

Three appendices are included as separate attachments, these include

- Appendix A: Final Alignment Feedback,
- Appendix B: Howard Avenue Alternatives Feedback, and
- Appendix C: Strip Map Feedback.

All appendices include a digital translation of all comments and include scans of the originally submitted comment cards. Appendix C includes a scan of the strip map with digital translations of the comments attached to each numbered dot.

