



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

J. ERIC BOYETTE
SECRETARY

August 29, 2022

Jonathan Russell
City Manager
City of Washington

Jonathan,

Thank you for meeting with the Department and the Mid-East RPO on August 15, 2022 concerning the 15th Street project U-5860. The following is a description of where the project is currently.

- Work on the project stopped in 2017 after the City rejected the 4-lane concept with a median.
- The City hired Stantec to develop another concept that the City could support. The concept is a 2-lane road with a center turn lane.
- The concept was reviewed by our private engineering firm, HNTB and Dr. Joe Hummer, head of the NCDOT Traffic Management Unit. Both agree that the 3-lane concept will function very poorly. Even using the current level of traffic, the concept would create substantial delays and queuing within the project limits.
- Any upgrades to the corridor will need additional right-of-way.

Other than safety and traffic congestion, there are additional benefits to the City such as:

- Parts of the Stantec design could be included in the project such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and vegetation enhancements
- The medians could have landscaped areas instead of grass if the City agreed to the maintenance

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-Since the City's population is less than 10,000, the new water and sewer utilities would be included in the project at no cost to the City. The utilities would be moved behind the curb and a permanent utility easement would be established. The most current estimate (2021) for this work is ~ \$6.5 million. The replacement of the power lines would also be included in the project at no cost to the City.

-New stormwater pipes would help improve drainage.

The original concept that the Department has shown is the beginning of the design process. There may be issues with the concept that can be discussed and mitigated with the City. However, additional right-of-way will be needed to construct a safer street that will function well and provide an area for the utilities.

The only official correspondence from the City of Washington is in opposition to the project as a whole. The Department stands ready to proceed with design work once we have written communication from the City that supports a design that will accommodate the current and future traffic volumes along 15th Street.

The revised Draft State Transportation Improvement Program has the 15th Street project scheduled for right-of-way/utilities beginning in FY 2026 and construction beginning in FY 2028. There has been much discussion concerning this project over the past several years. If the City of Washington is interested in moving this project forward then it is imperative that a decision is made in the near term to ensure the new schedule can be achieved.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Jeff Cabaniss, PE
NCDOT
Division 2 Engineer

c: project file
Mid-East RPO