

Bannister Road and Blue Ridge: Online Public Meeting Summary

The Kansas City Public Works Department, in coordination with SK Design, Parson Associates, GBA, and Vireo, held an Online Public Meeting for the **Blue Ridge Streetscape Project** and **Bannister Road Corridor Study** via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, from 6 to 8 p.m. A total of 24 people attended via the Teams link or by telephone. Participants included representatives of neighborhood organizations, property and homeowners, City officials and staff, and others. The meeting agenda involved:

- Project overview (10 minutes)
- Blue Ridge Boulevard (50 minutes)
- Bannister Road West (25 minutes)
- Bannister Road East (25 minutes)
- Conclusion and Next Steps

Staff notes and comments from the Teams chat are below.

- **Blue Ridge Boulevard Streetscape Project**

- **Project Overview**

- Tim Burfeind (SK Design) presented on community engagement and design plans for Blue Ridge Boulevard. Then, the meeting was opened up for questions and comments from the public.

- **Q&A and Comments**

The following is an account of questions and comments from the virtual meeting participants during the Blue Ridge Boulevard Improvements portion of the meeting.

- There still seems to be a lot of roadway for pedestrians to cross Blue Ridge Boulevard safely. Where will safe crossings be put?
 - ✓ Safe crossings will be added near the library.
 - ✓ Modified signals may be added at Eastern Avenue. The design team may still need to collect data to warrant a traffic light.
 - ✓ The team will find gaps in traffic for pedestrians to safely cross.
 - ✓ Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) will be consulted to determine if it makes sense to add a traffic light.
 - Michael Kelley expressed concern that the MUTCD is problematic for multi-modal users and there needs to be a push to update it.
 - ✓ A priority is to find opportunities to explore a road diet and pedestrian refuge elements
- Neighbors like the proposed shared-use path, but there is a more need for safety of pedestrians and disabled in the corridor.
- Can you go into more detail about the Old Santa Fe Road interchange? A lot of school buses use that intersection and neighbors have seen them use both directions.

- ✓ Smith Hale Middle School and Santa Fe Elementary are on Old Santa Fe Road.
 - ✓ Curves will be adjusted to accommodate buses.
 - On the section between 91st street and 88th street there are homes on east side. Residents that use the center lane. How will the new plans effect those residents?
 - ✓ Section on Blue Ridge between 87t and Loma Vista meet the City's criteria for reconstruction.
 - ✓ Turn lanes are currently 14-16 feet
 - ✓ Section was constructed in the 80's to be adjusted to six lanes, but now six lanes are not needed.
 - ✓ The street is not centered on the right of way, so when it is reconstructed, it is recommended that alignment be corrected.
 - Currently the east side of the boulevard by the curve has a wide right of way and the west said includes narrow right of way.
 - ✓ From 88th to 91st, the plan does not change the lane width or location of center lane or turn lanes. They will just be adjusted for the shared-use path.
 - ✓ No center median is proposed.
 - ✓ Project team will consult the Federal Highways Safe Pedestrian Program to identify junctures on 5-lane section.
 - ✓ In 5-lane section, raised island can be constructed for pedestrian refuge. It will cut the crossing distance for pedestrians.
 - ✓ Crossing opportunities need to be looked at further before design advances any further.
 - Will trees be planted? Mayor has declared an environmental emergency and trees would help.
 - ✓ Yes, space will be left behind curbs and project team will follow City Forester's Guidelines for planning trees.
 - ✓ Neighbors want to ensure tree roots will not ruin sidewalks or shared-use path.
 - Is there an updated timeline for the project?
 - ✓ Design should be completed in early Spring 2022.
 - ✓ City will pursue federal funding for construction. Mario anticipates it will take multiple runs to go after federal finding to construct the entire length of the project.
- **Takeaways from discussion:**
 - Pedestrian connectivity is the biggest priority.
 - Community concurs with recommendation for sidewalks on the east side and shared-use path on the west from 87th to Bannister.

- **Bannister Road Corridor Study**

- **Initial Presentation**

- Mario Vasquez (Public Works Project Manager) described corridor limits and character (western half versus eastern half).
- Public Comment: Dangerous for pedestrians from Elm Avenue to Robandee Shopping Center.
- Public Comment: Pedestrian connectivity to Blue Ridge is important. There is no contiguous sidewalk along Bannister from Blue Ridge to Hillcrest.
- Dave Mennenga (GBA Project Manager). noted the project team will be moving forward with traffic counts at key intersections.
- Triveece Penelton (Vireo City Planner). shared 'What We've Heard' from results of March 2021 public meeting.
- Mennenga noted the 4-lane road is more appropriate for west end and 3-lane for the east end which is more rural in character.
- Brett Spangler (Vireo Landscape Architect). noted the shared use path is recommended for the north side of Bannister from Hillcrest Road to Raytown Road. This provides a connection to the existing trail (3-Trails Corridor) at Hillcrest Road. At Raytown Road, the shared use path would switch to the south side. This provides a better potential connection to the Rock Island Trail at Norfleet Road and connection to the existing pedestrian facilities at 350 Highway and east into Lee's Summit

- **Hillcrest Road to Lane Avenue (SK)**

- **Design Overview**

- ✓ SK Design working on this west portion.
- ✓ 10' shared use path where possible (limited to 8' in some cases).
- ✓ Railroad bridge constraint – narrowing the drive lanes to allow for shared use path.
- ✓ East of James A. Reed Road – road reconstruction with new 3-lane section.
- ✓ Corridor is more rural in character east of Lane Avenue to 350 Hwy.

- **Q&A and Comments**

- ✓ Public Question: At Railroad Bridge, would curbs come in? SK Design replied the existing 12' wide lanes would be reduced to 11' wide lanes over a longer distance. SK Design comments about corridor improvements:
- ✓ Chat Discussion:
 - A brief restriction in the shared use path width for the RR underpass seems both understandable and tolerable.

- We frequently bike the Blue River paths which have far more traffic than this will ever get, and people have no issues with some of the restrictions at bridges and overpasses, especially with perfect visibility of what is oncoming.
- ✓ Public Comment: Completing the sidewalk on the south side is a neighborhood priority and I'm not seeing this presented. Mario V. replied this will be included in the final report.
- ✓ Public Question: What about sidewalks between James A. Reed Road & Manchester Avenue? SK Design replied that retaining walls may be needed to accommodate the sidewalks.
- ✓ Public Comment: Between Blue Ridge and James A. Reed Road there is no existing sidewalk on the south side.
- ✓ Public Comment: Need to improve the existing facilities before building new.
- ✓ Public Question: Will there be a raised crosswalk at the railroad crossing or any other on-street facilities for biking to calm traffic? GBA replied that the posted speed limit is 40mph and a raised crosswalk would need careful evaluation.
- ✓ Chat Discussion:
 - A raised crosswalk should not be described as an "obstruction". It is a facility which makes it safer for pedestrians.
 - As a bicyclist, I tend to detest bicycle lanes. They collect all the debris and people park in them.
 - If there are opportunities for on-street bike facilities, I think the main priority with them should be on making sure there is physical separation to help keep cyclists separated from drivers.
- ✓ Public Comment: Traffic calming, and speed management needs to be considered.
- ✓ Chat Discussion:
 - Top Priority should be multimodal improvements and traffic calming.
- **Lane Avenue to Highway 350 (GBA)**
 - **Design Overview**
 - ✓ Existing 80' right-of-way. A 4-lane road will be a challenge to fit and require additional costs.
 - ✓ More grading impacts in hilly areas around Monument Gardens.
 - ✓ Extra existing roadway width at neighborhoods allows for minimal disruptions and impacts (east of Raytown Road).

- ✓ Widening of bridge at river needed for shared use path & sidewalk. The other option is to remove or neck down the turn lane to provide for the pedestrian facilities.
 - ✓ Signalized opportunities at east end by 350 Highway to manage traffic.
 - ✓ GBA showed the Norfleet Road 90-degree intersection option and Stubbs Road & View High Drive alternatives.
- **Q&A and Comments**
- ✓ Chat Discussion:
 - I appreciate the signs to slow the traffic going down to Norfleet. Would love the Norfleet intersection to be a 90-degree corner. Would like to see warning lights before the retirement home from both directions
 - ✓ Public Question: What about traffic at View High with the new Paragon Development? Are there concerns about an increase in traffic? GBA replied there is still more data collection to perform to better understand the impacts.
 - ✓ Public Question: Why the 3-lane road section for the east portion (in between the 4-lane to Kansas and the 4-lane to Lee's Summit)? And how do the Raytown Road improvements affect this project? GBA replied that the master plan does show a 4-lane road, but the existing topography of the corridor will limit any future development potential. The 3-lane addresses the needs and priorities with less costs and impacts. Mario V. also replied that we don't to overbuild infrastructure that the city can't maintain.
 - ✓ Chat Discussion:
 - Hickman Mills United Neighborhoods has put in PIAC request for at least 6 years for sidewalks on south side of Bannister Road from Blue Ridge boulevard to James A Reed
 - Bannister should be 4 lanes to Raytown Road