



CITY OF JONESBORO

December 19, 2018

Ms. Patti Lack
4108 Forest Hill Rd.
Jonesboro, AR 72404

Re: Highway 1B (Harrisburg Road) Widening

Dear Ms. Lack:

I have read your certified letter dated December 12, 2018 and I would be happy to address your three concerns/statements:

Other projects within the City of Jonesboro are a higher priority than widening Highway 1B south of Forest Hill Road.

Funding limitations for the Highway 1B project confined the project limits from the intersection of Parker Road to Forest Hill Road. The traffic study performed by a registered professional engineer recommended the construction of a five-lane roadway from the Parker Road intersection to the Lakewood Drive area, transitioning to a three-lane roadway for a short distance and then transitioning to a two-lane roadway. We concurred with the study, and attempted to fund the remaining improvements recommended by the engineering firm. As you know this additional funding failed to pass city council on May 1, 2018.

A lot of unnecessary money was spent surveying the roadway to the Fire Station

While it is true, money was spent surveying the roadway south of Forest Hill to the Fire Station. This money was not wasted. The data will be kept on file and can be used when the multi-use trail is built in that area. As you may know, the City recently received a Transportation Alternative Program grant to install a multi-use trail along Harrisburg Road from East Craighead Forest Road, where the trail, which is currently being constructed ends, to the fire station located on Harrisburg Road. A future phase will extend the trail along the subject area.

The Department is required by the Federal Highway Administration to demonstrate how the proposed improvements will accommodate traffic volumes projected 20 years in the future.

In addition, we have NEVER been told the truth about the funding of this project since December 7, 2017.

I am sure you can see the wisdom in not only building the roadway for current volumes, but also taking into consideration future growth. This is common engineering practice and yes, it is required to take future growth into consideration when using Federal funds. The City's contribution to the project is maxed at \$400,000. The remaining will be funded by State and Federal sources both administered by ARDOT. This has been clear to us, I am sorry you have been confused about this.

Ms. Lack, I understand you do not support the improvements being proposed in this project and you have other improvements in mind, that in your opinion, would address the traffic congestion. In my position as Mayor, I have to trust the professionals that give me recommendations. In this case, the Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation Planning Commission, made up of a board of local citizens, recommended a widening project in this area. Engineers at ARDOT and the Highway Commission concurred with the need. A professional engineering firm performed a study recommending the proposed improvements. The Federal Highway Administration, ARDOT engineers and City engineers concurred with the results of the study. It is clear to me the credentials that I need to trust and the direction we need to move forward in.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 870-932-1052.

Sincerely,



Harold Perrin
Mayor

HP/man

Cc: Craig Light, P.E. – Chief Engineer
Mark Nichols, P.E.-Traffic Operations Engineer

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

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SCOTT E. BENNETT, P.E.
DIRECTOR

October 8, 2018

Ms. Patti Lack
4108 Forest Hill Road
Jonesboro, Arkansas 72404

Dear Ms. Lack:

On behalf of Commissioner Alec Farmer, the following is in response to your letter regarding the Highway 1B (Harrisburg Road) widening project between Parker Road and Forest Hill Road in Jonesboro. This project is funded with 80 percent Federal-aid funds. The remainder of the cost will be funded with State and City funds.

As stated in your letter, the changes in zoning for property in the project area is a topic of concern and that over 1,000 residents have signed a petition in opposition to the rezoning proposal. As a point of clarification, please be advised that zoning issues are outside of the Arkansas Department of Transportation (Department) and the Highway Commission's control. Resolution to this zoning dispute is entirely within the City's jurisdiction. The final determination of the zoning in this area will not affect the design of the project; therefore, it is not considered a pertinent topic for discussion at the project's public meetings.

The Department has been working cooperatively with the City of Jonesboro on the subject project to relieve congestion and improve traffic operations on this segment of Harrisburg Road, which includes the intersection with Parker Road. The current traffic volumes are as follows:

Location	2017 Traffic (Vehicles Per Day)
Harrisburg Road near Parker Road	17,000
Harrisburg Road near Forest Hill Road	12,000

To achieve the level of service as recommended in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Street for an arterial highway such as Highway 1B, two travel lanes in each direction would be needed. Furthermore, in order to provide better access to cross streets and adjacent properties, a center turn lane is also needed, resulting in a

5-lane cross section. In order for this project to be eligible for Federal-aid funds, the Department is required by the Federal Highway Administration to demonstrate how the proposed improvements will accommodate traffic volumes projected 20 year into the future. This is to ensure the appropriate use of Federal tax dollars to adequately serve the existing and future traffic using the highway. You stated in your letter that the cost estimate of \$2.4 million for 0.3 miles seems "outrageous". The current estimated construction cost is \$2.0 million and is based on historical cost data for similar projects in Arkansas. Once the design is closer to completion, a more refined estimate based on plan quantities will be conducted. The high cost for highway construction oftentimes comes as a surprise to those outside of the industry.

Regarding the southern terminus of the project, Forest Hill Road is functionally classified as a Minor Collector, whereas Gladiolus Drive is not functionally classified. Additionally, Forest Hill Road provides connectivity to Craighead Forest Road, another Minor Collector, which connects Highway 141 and Highway 1B. In contrast, Gladiolus Drive only provides access to an apartment complex. With this in mind, and based on the current traffic volumes, additional capacity is needed south of Gladiolus Drive to address turning movements at Forest Hill Road.

Neither the Gladiolus Drive nor the Forest Hill Road intersections warrant a traffic signal at this time. In order for a signal to be allowed on a state highway, the traffic at the intersection has to first meet the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (2009 Edition) warrants. Secondly, the location of the proposed traffic signal has to be appropriate to ensure a balance of access and mobility along the corridor. If a traffic signal does become warranted in the future and the location is appropriate, the City may apply for funding through the Department's Intersection Improvement Program.

It is important to note that the Department has no intention of widening Harrisburg Road south of Forest Hill Road either now, or in the foreseeable future. A significant amount of funding has been budgeted for improvements to other routes in the City of Jonesboro such as widening Highway 1 (South Stadium) from Fox Meadow Lane to Interstate 555 and extending Commerce Drive to complete the connection from Interstate 555 north to Highway 49. These are a few examples of the many capacity needs statewide that are a much higher priority than widening Highway 1B south of Forest Hill Road.

Please be assured that your comments are being heard and considered by the Department. In order to provide sufficient opportunity to receive input from those affected by this project, another public involvement meeting will be held. We will be sure to notify you personally of the location, date and time of the next meeting well in advance.

Ms. Patti Lack
October 8, 2018

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As is the case with all highway improvement projects across the State, the Department may not be able to fulfill the wishes of everyone. But, our goal is to always provide the most benefit to the greatest number of road users possible by producing an appropriate design that will improve safety and reduce congestion within the rules and regulations required for Federal funding eligibility.

Thank you for your interest in Arkansas' transportation system. If you have any additional questions, please advise.

Sincerely,



Scott E. Bennett, P.E.
Director

c: Congressman Rick Crawford
Governor Asa Hutchinson
Highway Commission
Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer
Deputy Director and Chief Engineer
Assistant Chief Engineers
Environmental
Program Management
Transportation Planning and Policy
Governmental Relations Office
District 10
Job 100881 "C" File
The Honorable Harold Perrin, Mayor of Jonesboro
Ms. Erica Tait, Director, Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation
Planning Commission

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SCOTT E. BENNETT, P.E.
DIRECTOR

December 14, 2018

Ms. Patti Lack
4108 Forest Hill Road
Jonesboro, Arkansas 72404

Dear Ms. Lack:

Reference is made to your most recent letter regarding the Highway 1B (Harrisburg Road) widening project between Parker Road and Forest Hill Road in Jonesboro. Your additional questions are addressed below.

1. **Can you tell me when this traffic study was done?**

A traffic study by the City of Jonesboro was completed in July 2017. The Department's annual traffic count for the area was conducted in September 2017.

2. **Where were the traffic counters placed when performing the traffic count in 2017?**

The 17,000 vehicles per day (vpd) traffic count was collected at the intersection of Harrisburg Road and East Parker as part of the City's traffic study. This study also collected counts at the intersections of Harrisburg Road with Gladiolus and Forest Hill.

The 12,000 vpd traffic count was collected during the Department's annual traffic count on Harrisburg Road just south of Medallion Drive.

3. **Who is the individual that can call this project off?**

This project was identified as a need through an array of planning activities such as long range transportation planning, needs and corridor improvement studies, and the strategic highway safety plan, as well as coordination and consultation with local public agencies, stakeholders, and the public. As a result, this project has been included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for Federal Fiscal Years 2019 through 2022 (STIP). Once a project is included in the STIP, it is considered funded.

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Notwithstanding any unforeseen technical difficulties that would obstruct project development, removal of funding for a project included in the STIP would require public involvement along with coordination and consultation with the City of Jonesboro, the Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation Planning Commission, the Federal Highway Administration and the Arkansas Highway Commission. There is not an "individual that can call this project off".

Thank you for your interest in Arkansas' transportation system. If you have any additional questions, please advise.

Sincerely,



Scott E. Bennett, P.E.
Director

- c: Congressman Rick Crawford
- Governor Asa Hutchinson
- Highway Commission
- Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer
- Deputy Director and Chief Engineer
- Assistant Chief Engineers
- Environmental
- Program Management
- Transportation Planning and Policy
- Governmental Relations Office
- District 10
- Job 100881, "C" File
- The Honorable Harold Perrin, Mayor of Jonesboro
- Ms. Erica Tait, Director, Northeast Arkansas Regional Transportation Planning Commission