



Public Engagement - Round 3 Summary

Route 15 Safety and Operations Study

November 2018



Table of Contents

1	Public Engagement Information Background and Format	1-1
1.1	Purpose of the Public Engagement	1-1
1.2	Event Information	1-1
1.3	Meeting Format	1-2
2	Public Engagement Participation	2-1
2.1	Public Meeting Attendance.....	2-1
2.2	Survey Responses.....	2-1
2.3	Email Comments	2-2
3	Results	3-1
3.1	Survey.....	3-1
3.1.1	Concept Preference	3-1
3.1.2	Bypass Preference.....	3-1
3.2	Key Comments and Ideas.....	3-2
3.3	Next Steps	3-3

1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION BACKGROUND AND FORMAT

The Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) presented the Route 15 Congestion Report Findings to the Board of Supervisors (Board) at the May 18, 2017 business meeting, which focused on the segment of Route 15 between Battlefield Parkway and Whites Ferry Road. As directed by the Board at that meeting, DTCI established the Route 15 Stakeholder Committee, which is comprised of representatives from homeowner associations, business and community organizations and historic preservation groups that are located along the Route 15 corridor north of Leesburg. Also in accordance with Board direction, DTCI initiated the Route 15 Safety and Operations Study, which is focused on the segment between Whites Ferry Road and the Maryland State Line, and has conducted a series of public input sessions for the Route 15 corridor.

The first round of public engagement for the Route 15 Congestion Report and the Safety and Operations Study consisted of three public input meetings, an online interactive survey, a website dedicated to the Route 15 project, and emails. Three public input meetings took place on June 26, July 8 and July 15, 2017.

The second round of public engagement was conducted for the Safety and Operations Study and consisted of two open house public input meetings that were held on March 9 and March 10, 2018, an online interactive survey.

A third round of public engagement was conducted for the Safety and Operations Study and consisted of one public open house meeting that was held on September 26, 2018, and an online interactive survey. The following report summarizes the public's preferences for the proposed Route 15 Safety and Operations Study improvement concepts which were obtained from the surveys and comment cards.

1.1 Purpose of the Public Engagement

The purpose of the public input meetings and online survey was to:

Collaborate with the public to review and provide preference on context-sensitive improvement concepts developed through an iterative process working with DTCI staff, performing technical analyses, and utilizing input from the public and stakeholder committee.

1.2 Event Information

The public meeting was held in Loudoun County on Wednesday, September 26, 2018 from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in the Lucketts Community Center. Additionally, an online interactive survey was conducted between September 26, 2018 and October 18, 2018.

Supervisor Higgins' office used social media to publicize the open house meeting and the Route 15 online survey. Notice of the open house was also posted on the County website (<http://www.loudoun.gov/>) and the Route 15 website (<http://www.loudoun.gov/route15>) and was also provided to the Route 15 Stakeholder Committee members to relay to their respective organizations.

1.3 Meeting Format

The meeting format consisted of a presentation given by DTCl staff, display boards, and a written public input survey form. A brief introduction of the meeting format was provided to attendees when they arrived and information boards were placed around the room for review. DTCl staff and Supervisor Higgins gave a brief presentation outlining the study process and reviewed the information on the boards. Attendees were able to view the boards at their leisure. DTCl, Supervisor Higgins and his staff, and Kimley-Horn staff were present to answer questions regarding the information displayed on the boards, the survey, and the ongoing study.



Figure 1 - Members of the public viewing the presentation at the September 26th public meeting at the Lucketts Community Center

The materials were designed to give attendees an overview of the study and its purpose and need, summarize the input received throughout the process, and illustrate the concepts to collect their feedback on the proposed concepts. The following boards were presented:

- **Information Boards:** There were 18 informational boards¹ setup around the room. The boards presented Route 15 background information, the project schedule and process, the Round 1 & 2 Public Input Summaries, and stakeholder and partner agency input for improvements to the corridor. These boards were displayed in the room for the entire meeting; project team members were present to explain the information and answer questions. *Figure 1* above shows members of the public at the meeting observing and discussing the presentation by DTCl and Supervisor Higgins.
- **Input Survey:** Meeting attendees were given a paper survey upon entering the open house meeting (Appendix A contains a copy of the survey). Attendees were encouraged to fill out the survey as they went around the room using the boards to help guide and inform them through the survey questions. The survey also included a comment section provide additional input.
- **Email Comments:** Meeting attendees were provided with the project website address and project email address to submit further comments related to the Route 15 Safety and Operations Study. (route15@loudoun.gov).

¹ The information boards are located at the following link for review: <https://www.loudoun.gov/Route15>

2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

2.1 Public Meeting Attendance

There were **102** attendees at the public meeting. These attendees included elected officials, Stakeholder Committee members, residents, and bicycle and pedestrian facility advocates.

Attendees were accounted for either through the sign-in sheet or through the surveys, if they provided their information. A total of **67** unique survey responses were collected from the meeting. It is noted that not all of the attendees chose to fill out an in-person survey, some may have completed the online survey at a later date.

2.2 Survey Responses

The online survey was accessible through the County's project website. The content of the online survey was the same as the in-person survey, and the display boards were posted online for reference. At the end of the survey period, 1,064 responses were downloaded, and the responses were filtered for duplicate responses and incomplete surveys. Initially, responses were sorted by name; duplicate names were then identified and evaluated based on timestamps, number of responses, personal information, and answers. This information was used to identify surveys submitted by the same person, and 42 survey responses were removed using this method.

Of the **1,022** remaining unique online survey responses, all 1,022 participants gave personal information such as name, email and address.

The surveys from both the public meeting and the online survey platform yielded **1,089** unique responses on which the resulting data in the rest of this report is based. [Figure 2](#) below highlights the amount of participants by zip code within Loudoun County. Over 50% of respondents provided a 20176 zip code, which contains the Route 15 study corridor.

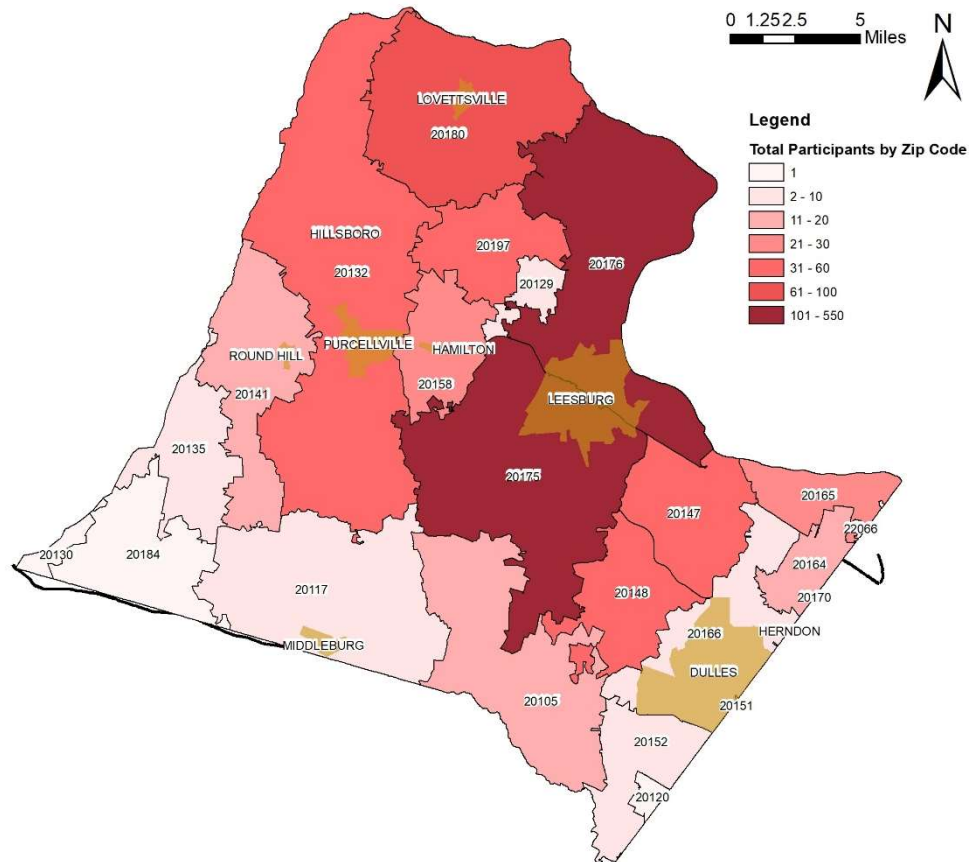


Figure 2: Survey Participant Density Map by Zip Code

In addition to participants from Loudoun County, **24** unique responses from people who live outside the county were recorded. In total, 11 participants listed their residence in Maryland (including Fredericksburg, Hagerstown, Jefferson, Poolesville, Brunswick, Middletown, and Mount Airy), six people listed their residence elsewhere in Virginia (including Fairfax, and Arlington), three people listed their residence in Jefferson County WV, two people listed their residence in Pennsylvania, and two people listed their residence outside of the area. Overall, the number of unique responses from outside Loudoun County represented **2.2%** of the total responses.

2.3 Email Comments

As of October 22, 2018, 11 unique email comments were submitted to the Route 15 website.

3 RESULTS

The following is a summary of the results from the meetings, comment forms, and the online and in-person surveys. The information was compiled by creating a database that combined the online survey data, the in-person surveys, and email comments. As described in Section 2.2, the responses were reviewed to remove duplicate responses.

3.1 Survey

3.1.1 Concept Preference

In the first item of the survey, the statement instructed: *Please check the box next to the concept you prefer most.* Seventy percent (70%) of the survey respondents selected Concept B, as shown in [Figure 3](#) below, showing that a majority² of the respondents would like to see Concept B implemented along the Route 15 corridor. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents preferred Concept A, and twelve percent (12%) of respondents preferred the No-Build concept. It should be noted that two percent (2%) of respondents wrote in other options (such as corridor-wide traffic calming) on the in-person survey which did not reflect any of the choices on the survey, see Section 3.2 for more information.

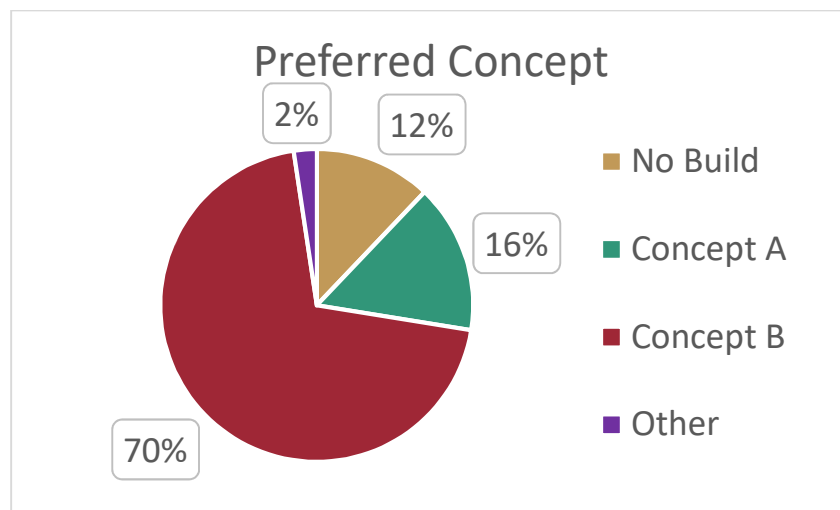


Figure 3: Survey responses concerning "Please check the box next to the concept you prefer most".

3.1.2 Bypass Preference

The second item of the survey instructed: *Please check the box next to the bypass option you prefer most.* [Figure 4](#) shows that the responses for bypass preference showed 49% preferring a Western Bypass of Lucketts, 26% preferring an Eastern Bypass of Lucketts, 19% preferring no Bypass of Lucketts, (5%) preferring both Bypass locations around Lucketts, and (1%) preferring either Bypass location around Lucketts. Based on these results eighty one percent (81%) of public responses would prefer some form of a bypass around the Village of Lucketts.

² It is noted that "majority", when used in this document, denotes more than half (50%) of the respondents.

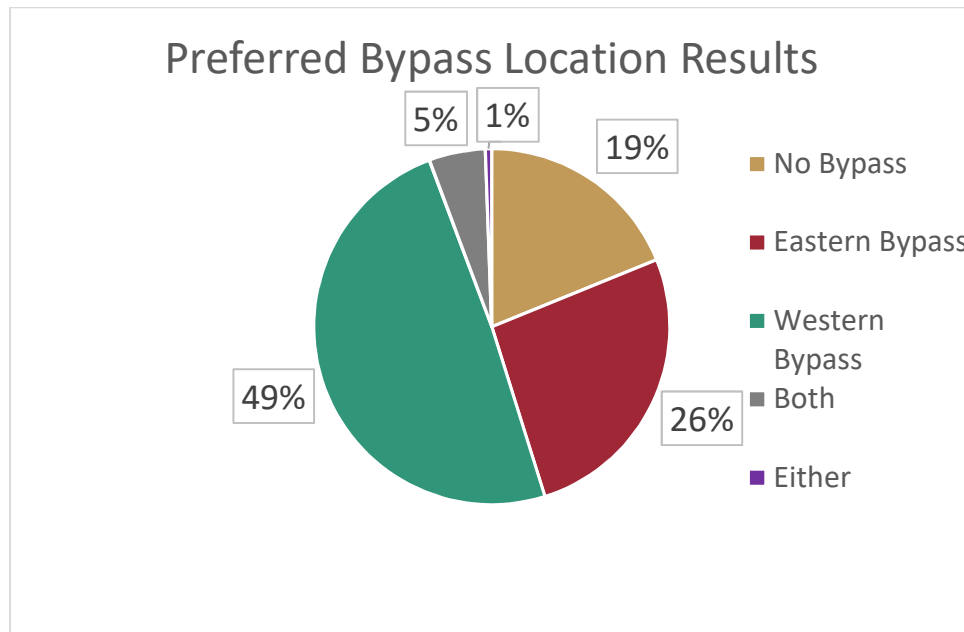


Figure 4: Survey responses concerning "Please check the box next to the bypass option you prefer most".

3.2 Key Comments and Ideas

The following prevailing comments and ideas were identified from the in-person and online survey.

Concept Preference: The majority of public responses were in favor of Concept B which shows widening to four lanes to the Lucketts bypass. Many of the comments and ideas for widening were related to the length and distance of widening and intersection control. Some of the public commented that there was not enough widening with either of the concepts and that the road should be widened to Maryland, while others expressed that no widening should be implemented, and only safety improvements such as shoulders and rumble strips should be built. Other comments that were received regarding the proposed improvement concepts were related to intersection control, most commonly the signal at Whites Ferry Road and Route 15, and expressed the preference for a roundabout at that location. Other comments that were received related to installing roundabouts along the entire corridor and ensuring access to local businesses and residences are maintained.

Bypass Preference: Most of the comments received regarding bypass preference related to location, impacts, and congestion relief. Public comments regarding the western bypass option discussed potential environmental impacts; including concerns for floodplains, the conservancy area, and karst terrain. The eastern bypass comments were primarily related to impacts to the existing residential houses on the east side of Lucketts, the trees/forest behind the elementary school, and the proposed Fire and Rescue Station. Some of the public preferred both bypass options or either bypass option for the potential traffic relief around the Village of Lucketts. Some of the public preferred no bypass and noted that it could detract from local businesses within the Village of Lucketts and allow further development along the new road.

Other: Other comments received from the public for the Safety and Operations Study expressed concern about the need to implement these improvements as quickly as possible to improve conditions on Route 15. As shown in Section 3.1.1 approximately 2% of the public responses were for an option not listed on the survey. The majority of the "Other" responses were for a "Corridor Long Traffic Calming Concept." Additional comments reiterated what was heard in the previous public input meetings, including the request for a new Potomac River crossing to

alleviate traffic on Route 15, and implementing tolls at the Point of Rocks bridge to discourage out-of-state drivers from using the road. Other general concerns were received related to the environmental effects of roadway improvements, including impacts to water and wastewater facilities, natural streams, wildlife, and conservancy areas. Lastly, some of the public comments expressed concern that land lost to development and infrastructure cannot be reversed and might take away from the rural and historic setting along Route 15.

3.3 Next Steps

The Route 15 Safety and Operations Study, including the public input summary, will be presented to the Board of Supervisors upon completion of the study.

Appendix A – Public Input Survey



ROUTE 15

Public Meeting Round #3 (September 26, 2018)

Concept Preference Sheet

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please check the box next to the concept you prefer most.

No Build: ☐

Concept A: ☐

Concept B: ☐

Please check the box next to the bypass option you prefer most.

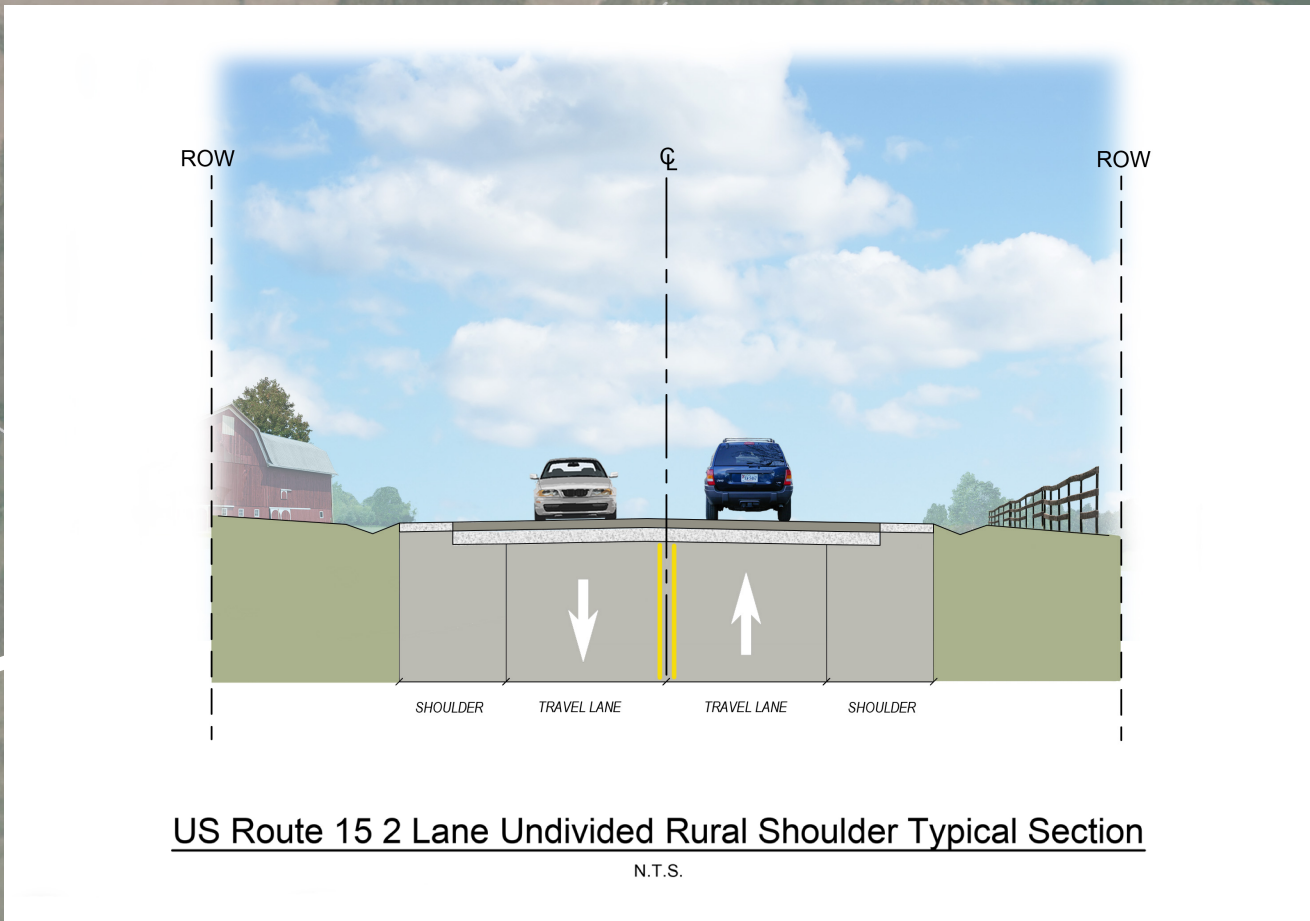
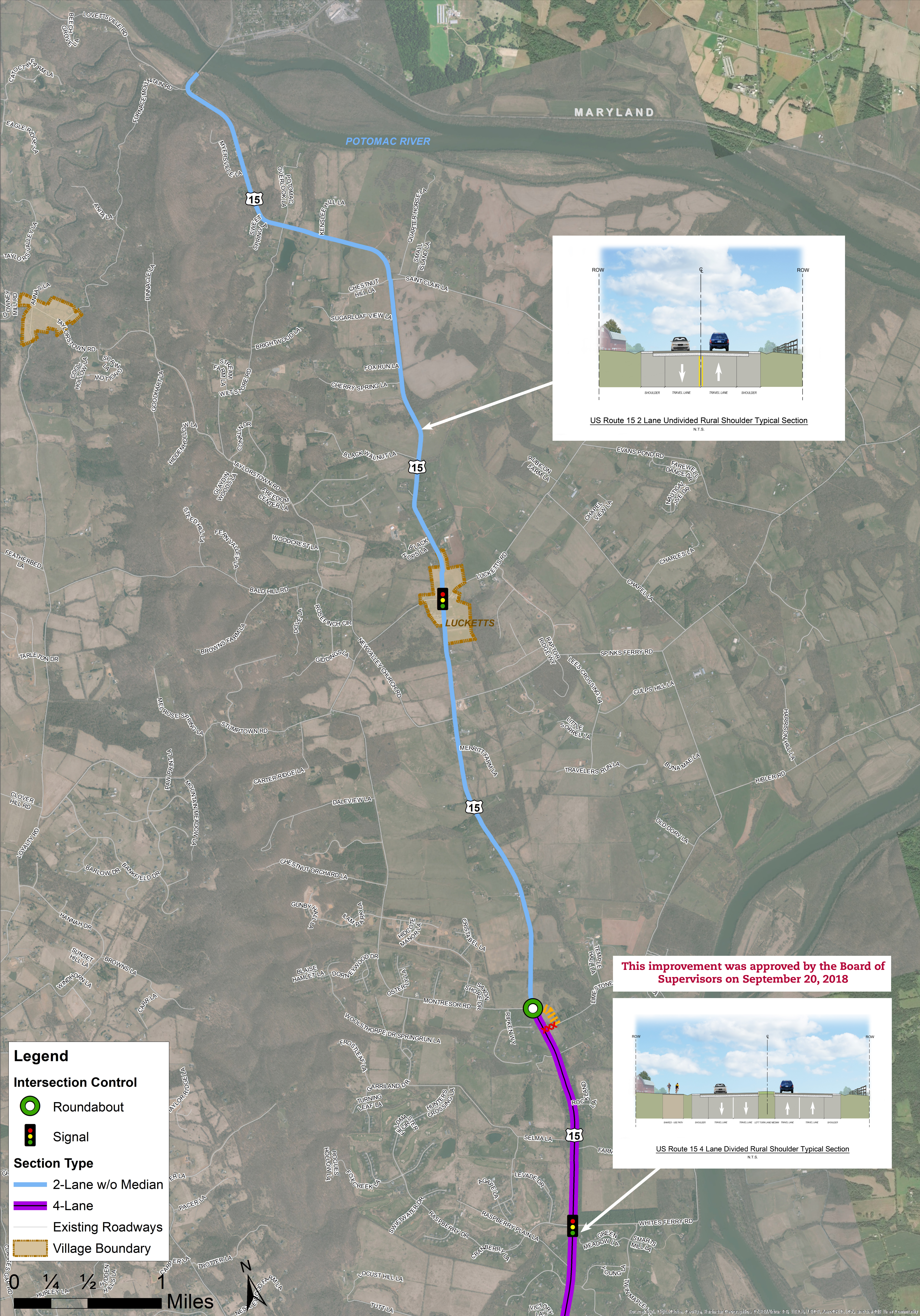
No Bypass: ☐

Eastern Bypass: ☐

Western Bypass: ☐

Comments:

Appendix B –Concept Boards



This improvement was approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 20, 2018

