STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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JENNIFER COHAN
SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

To: File

From: Ahmed M. Abdelmoteleb
Traffic Engineer

Date: October 17, 2016

Location: Murphy Road Lane Diet Project, Wilmington, NCC

Consideration:
Murphy Road is a major collector road in New Castle County. It is less than a mile long and connects Concord Pike to Foulk Road. It currently carries less than 10,000 vehicles per day and has a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The surrounding land use is generally residential, although it becomes commercial near Concord Pike and also near Foulk Road. Traffic volumes have decreased from a peak of over 15,000 vehicles per day in the early 2000s to approximately 9,500 vehicles per day today. Note that although AstraZeneca has significantly downsized, it was also generating significantly less traffic when Murphy Road traffic was at its highest. The Route 141 Spur (now simply Route 141) has diverted significant traffic volumes away from Murphy Road.

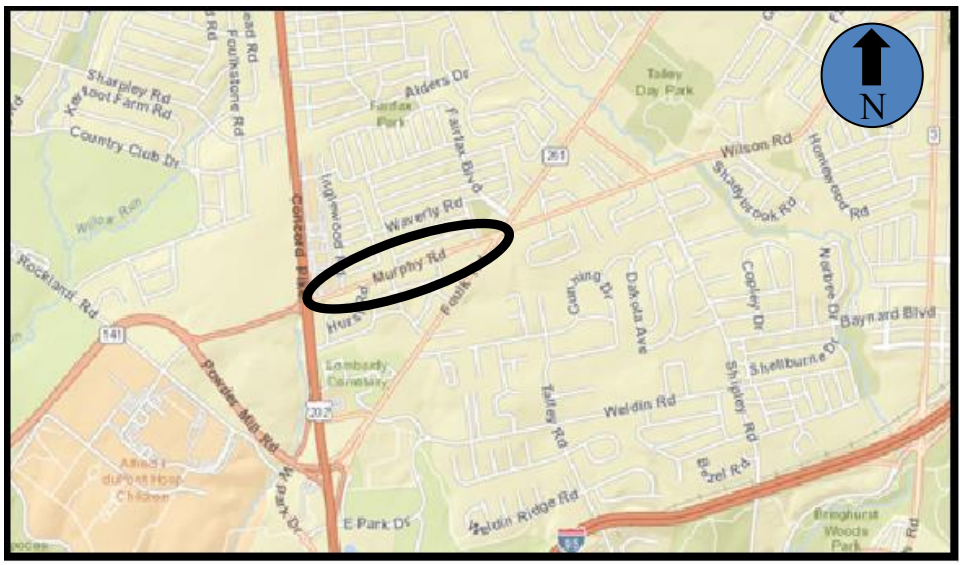
Up until the late 1970s, Murphy Road included one travel lane in each direction and the outside lanes were used for on-street parking. By the 1980s, the on-street parking was eliminated and Murphy Road was converted to two travel lanes in each direction.

During the planning and design of the Blue Ball Properties Project in the early 2000s, DelDOT proposed to implement a "lane diet" on Murphy Road. This would have reduced the travel lanes in each direction from 2 lanes back to 1. There was generally public opposition to this proposal, so DelDOT agreed to put the idea on hold and wait for the completion of the remainder of the Blue Ball Properties Project, including the completion of the Route 141 Spur. Once complete, we would evaluate the impact of the new roadway to traffic flow on Murphy Road.

Since the completion of the Blue Ball Properties Project in 2007, DelDOT has continued to monitor traffic flow and conditions on Murphy Road. Traffic volumes have decreased from a peak of over 15,000 vehicles per day in the early 2000s to approximately 9,500 vehicles per day today. Note that although AstraZeneca has significantly downsized, it was also generating significantly less traffic when Murphy Road traffic was at its highest. The Route 141 Spur (now simply Route 141) has diverted significant traffic volumes away from Murphy Road. At this time, DelDOT is again considering a "lane diet" on Murphy Road. The purpose of this project would be to improve the safety and mobility of all road users along this stretch of road – motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Project Overview:
The proposed roadway would include one travel lane in each direction, a two-way center-turn lane, and one bike lane in each direction for most of the length of the project. The through and turn lanes at the critical intersections with Concord Pike and with Foulk Road would remain unchanged. The traffic volumes can be easily accommodated with the proposed lane configuration, even during peak traffic hours. In addition, traffic flow is expected to be smoother as motorists will not be continually delayed by turning traffic from the middle lanes as they are today.

Crash rates are expected to decrease with the proposed lane diet. The proposed configuration would provide a defined space for bicyclists for most of the corridor. Pedestrian safety is expected to be improved as the buffer between motor vehicles and pedestrians would be increased.



Virtual Workshop:

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) invited local residents, business owners and all other interested parties to view a Virtual Workshop to learn about the proposed Murphy Road Lane Diet Project Concord Pike to Foulk Road. The purpose of the workshop is to present the details of a proposed lane reduction and to solicit input from the public regarding the plans. The workshop was available online for 30 days beginning Wednesday, August 31, 2016.

Interested persons were invited to express their views in writing. **Total of 44 responses were received during the workshop; 17 responses are in favor of the project, 11 responses are concerned about the project and 16 responses are opposed to the project.** Below is summary of the public responses.

- Astra-Zeneca property future traffic will impact the roadway by increasing the delay and reducing the quality of the free flow along Murphy Road.
- The proposed development on Shipley and Silverside Roads, Murphy Road (of Martine's Nursey, Brandywine Country Club, Concord Plaza and Branmar Commons) should remain four lanes until after traffic evaluations can be done at the completion of those projects. Projects include development.
- Don't understand the purpose of removing two lanes of an in-place road.
- Concerns regarding the left turn lane from Murphy Road unto 202 will back up, causing Murphy Road to back up.
- No issues with any vehicles or pedestrians on Murphy Road.
- Concern regarding traffic turning into the shopping center from Murphy Road. Many people turn left into the shopping center just short of Concord Pike. If this turn is removed, it would put more traffic turning onto Concord Pike and then making a quick right. This could be dangerous. If a turn lane is created on Murphy Road then the project looks good.
- Drivers decide to avoid using turning lane when approaching side streets.
- Sacrificing a travel lane in each direction will further congest an already very busy roadway and add to driver frustration.
- Conflicts between the right turn traffic and bikers along Murphy Road.
- Traffic from US 202 would start using pierce road as an alternative to Murphy Road and that traffic in my development would increase creating an unsafe situation for pedestrians.
- Don’t encouraging bicycles on "city" streets.
- Don't allow those people who always prefer multi-lane roads talk you out of doing this worthwhile project. The "road diet" on Philadelphia Pike near Claymont has worked well.
- Supporting measures to limit both speed and volume of Murphy Road traffic.
- Modifying Murphy Road will provide a good option for both walking and biking to get the greenway trails.

Project Timeline:

Design Phase: Design work is completed.
Construction Phase: Construction work to begin in the Spring of 2017.