



Since the first in-person Public Meeting held on July 1, 2021 and in association with the Virtual Public Meeting held from July 1 – July 30, 2021, Beaufort County conducted two additional in-person Public Meetings on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, and on Thursday, October 28, 2021, for the Proposed Alljoy Road Pathway Project, now Proposed Alljoy Road Sidewalk Project. All in-person public meetings were held at Bluffton Recreation Center, 61B Ulmer Road, Bluffton, SC.

This Summary & Recommendation is a publication for the two additional in-person Public Meetings and is building upon the *Alljoy Road Pathway Public Meeting Summary*, available at the following links:

<https://beaufortcountypenny.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Alljoy-Rd-Pathway-Meeting-1-Summary.pdf>

<https://beaufortcountypenny.com/meetings/>

In addition to the in-person meetings, meeting webpages were created to present other alternatives for the proposed bicycle and pedestrian facility on <https://beaufortcountypenny.com/meetings/> for:

- Alljoy Road Pathway Public Meeting: Tuesday, September 14, 2021
- Alljoy Road Sidewalk Public Meeting: Thursday, October 28, 2021

For the public meetings, the overview exhibits were prepared by Infrastructure Consulting & Engineering, PLLC with Alljoy “Loop” and typical section exhibits and other meeting materials prepared by J. Bragg Consulting, Inc.

Meeting Summary:

Time Period:

- Public Meeting 2: September 14, 2021 at 6 pm at the Bluffton Recreation Center, 61B Ulmer Road, Bluffton, SC - In-person meeting hosted by County Councilmember Mark Lawson. Deputy County Administrator Whitney Richland, CPA, CGFM; Capital Projects Coordinator Brittane Fields; and Sales Tax Program Manager Jennifer Bragg, PE were present to answer any questions the public may have about the proposed 8’ pathway on Alljoy Road.
- Public Meeting 3: October 28, 2021 at 6 pm at the Bluffton Recreation Center, 61B Ulmer Road, Bluffton, SC - In-person meeting hosted by County Councilmember Mark Lawson. County Administrator Eric Greenway, AICP; Deputy County Administrator Whitney Richland, CPA, CGFM; Capital Projects Coordinator Brittane Fields; and Sales Tax Program Manager Jennifer Bragg, PE were present to answer any questions the public may have about the proposed 6’ sidewalk on Alljoy Road.

Advertisements:

- Public Meeting 2
 - E-mail Newsletters – sent to: 470 recipients on August 18, 2021
 - Webpage – published on: August 18, 2021
- Public Meeting 3
 - Press Release for Public Meeting on October 18, 2021
 - E-mail Newsletters – sent to: 489 recipients on October 15, 2021
 - Webpage – published on: October 15, 2021





Additional Public Comments:

For Public Meetings 2 & 3, following a brief presentation by Councilmember Lawson, a question & answer session was conducted with verbal comments addressed. The following is a brief summary of comments:

- Request for Summary of Comments from Public Meeting 1/Virtual Meeting:

Alljoy Road e-mail newsletter sent on September 16, 2021 with information on revised Alljoy Road “Loop” exhibit and the Public Meeting 1 & Virtual Meeting Summary. These items were also published to the webpage.

- North Side versus South Side of Road- Why was north side selected?

Initial field investigations were performed by the design team and County when the project was scoped in Fall 2019. From their review, the north side of the road was selected based on:

- Utilities: Minimize impacts as overhead utilities are on the south side
- Mailboxes: Minimize/eliminate disruption as they are on the south side
- Other obstacles such as fencing: These are mostly on the south side
- R/W: existing 75' R/W (37.5' from road centerline) on both sides, except at Loop where it changes
- Trees: Trees appear to be clear from the R/W, and if located within the R/W, the path/sidewalk would be designed to minimize impacts
- Ditches: Deep ditch on south side; north side has shallow swale or shoulder section with a short section of a deeper ditch
- Wetlands: There is a wetland on the south side which would be impacted by a path/sidewalk and there is minimal impact on north side (< 0.5 ac).
- Path/Sidewalk Connectivity: If the path/sidewalk is located on the north side, it would facilitate better connectivity with the proposed path on Burnt Church Road and the future path on Shad Avenue as the users would not have to cross Alljoy Road to continue on the path/sidewalk.

- Environmental Document:

Several had requested an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS is not warranted for this project and it along with two other document types- Categorical Exclusion (CE) and Environmental Assessment (EA) – are part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which governs the environmental process on projects with federal funds. This project is locally funded and will comply with SCDOT’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements for stormwater activities during and after construction, and if a wetland permit is needed, this will comply with USACE permit requirements. This is the required environmental documentation and another document is not warranted.

- Trees:

The County does have a tree policy; however, it does not apply to SCDOT’s R/W. Although it does not apply, the path/sidewalk would be designed to minimize/eliminate impacts to trees. Also tree removal does not warrant an environmental review under state or federal policies. It only applies to local policies.





- **Traffic Analysis:**

A traffic analysis is not warranted for a path/sidewalk. The path/sidewalk is offset from the road and will not affect traffic operations. If there is an intersection change, such as an all-way stop being proposed on Alljoy Road at Shad Avenue or Alljoy Road at Thomas Lawton Drive, then an analysis would be required to determine if it met SCDOT's warrant analysis for an intersection improvement. This would also include other intersection safety features such as rumble strips in advance of an all-way stop.

An at-grade pedestrian crossing would be installed where applicable, such as on Alljoy Road at Shad Avenue intersection where the sidewalk is proposed to cross from the north side to the south side, and may not require an analysis.

- **Traffic Calming:**

Speed humps/bumps are a road improvement project outside of the Sales Tax Program, specifically since they have been requested for the Alljoy Road "Loop". They must also meet SCDOT's Traffic Calming Guidelines, dated 2006. Visit <https://www.scdot.org/business/traffic-calming.aspx> for more information regarding the eligibility criteria for a residential road.

- **Safety:**

This has been mentioned in regards to the residential driveways. Residential driveways are very low volume, and the path/sidewalk will not affect the operations of the driveway or vice versa. If a bicyclist or jogger is in the road, they have equal right of way. For instance, if a car is turning left into their driveway, they should yield right of way to the bicyclist/jogger same as if another vehicle were approaching. This would apply to the path/sidewalk too. Likewise, if a vehicle is exiting their driveway, the bicyclist/jogger has right of way same as a vehicle in the road.

Although the north side may have more residential driveways, it has fewer road intersections. Road intersections have considerably more traffic volumes than a residential driveway. The north side has 7 intersections at Confederate Avenue (2), River Oaks Drive, Palmetto Avenue, River Tree Circle, Shad Avenue, and Thomas Lawton Drive versus the south side with 16 intersections. The north side proposes fewer conflicts since it has fewer intersections.

Also, safety is improved for all users with a separate path/sidewalk as the potential for conflicts between vehicle and bicyclists/pedestrians would be minimal whereas it is currently extremely high since everyone is in the road. Several people commented on past and current incidences between vehicles and bicyclists/pedestrians.

- **Comprehensive Plan:**

The comprehensive plan included a section on the Alljoy Road Community Preservation Plan. Within this plan, it included a section for Multi-use Trails on Alljoy Road, Shad Avenue, and Ulmer Road. The proposed Multi-use trail was a shoulder extension, and if installed by SCDOT's standards, it would be a 4-ft paved shoulder on both sides of the road for bicyclists. This would accommodate pedestrians, but is not ideal nor is it recommended. The 4-ft paved shoulders, at times, has significant impacts if ditches need to be relocated, shoulders widened, mailboxes relocated, etc. The offset path can be designed to minimize/eliminate the impacts.





The pathway, as voted on in the referendum, combines the 4-ft paved shoulders into one 8-ft path, offset from the road. This path width is the minimum width recommended by AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) and current guidance is minimum 10-ft and to only use 8-ft where necessary to avoid an obstacle. The offset path accommodates all users.

The current proposed facility is a 6-ft sidewalk. Although it is not recommended by AASHTO for bicyclists, there are safety benefits as it will contain a minimum 5-ft offset where possible and provides a separate facility to minimize conflicts between vehicles and bicyclists/pedestrians.

- **Connectivity to Other Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities:**

While Shad Avenue and Ulmer Road were included as one project to include Burnt Church Road, the Sidewalk and Multi-use Pathways project has a fiscally-constrained budget of \$10 million. This project category is underfunded by the sales tax program, and project locations have been developed to contain at least one project within the represented council districts. For District 9, Bluffton Parkway Pathway will be completed near the roundabout, and based on the overall budget and comments from the first virtual public meeting, Alljoy Road was selected to proceed into design.

Although Burnt Church Road, Shad Avenue and Ulmer Road were originally selected as a priority project, they were programmed for conceptual design but not programmed to proceed to final design and construction. The County recognized the need for the Burnt Church Road roadway improvements to include the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and this project is being expedited and funded by road impact fees as it was included in the County's 2006 Road Impact Fee Study. For the Burnt Church Road project, the County issued a Request for Qualifications for design services and received proposals on August 31, 2021. They have evaluated the proposals and selected the most qualified consultant team. Once the consultant team is under contract, the Burnt Church Road project will proceed into design, and project-specific public meetings will be conducted for this project. Also, the Burnt Church Road project will include connectivity from the Alljoy Road/Burnt Church Road/Bridge Street intersection along Bridge Street to connect to the Town of Bluffton's proposed improvements.

Shad Avenue and Ulmer Road may be addressed if additional funds are available or potentially combined with another funding source. At this time, Alljoy Road is funded, but there are not enough funds to substitute Shad Avenue and Ulmer Road in its place.

Recommendations:

Based on the comments received, there are more comments supporting pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Alljoy Road. Also, additional coordination has been conducted by Councilmember Lawson with the Alljoy Road community as well as with County representatives, and revised exhibits, incorporating citizens' comments, were published on <https://beaufortcountypenny.com/meetings/> and presented at Public Meetings 2 & 3.

The proposed recommendation is a 6-ft sidewalk offset by a 5-ft grassed shoulder. It will be located along Alljoy Road on the north side from Burnt Church Road to Shad Avenue and on the south side from Shad Avenue to Thomas Lawton Drive.

Another public meeting will be held to present and receive comments on the proposed design once the plans are approximately 65% complete.

