

Route 460 Land Use and Connectivity Study

Carson Road Overview

Carson Road

The most significant feedback received in this Study related to the current condition of Carson Road, Project K. Due to the lack of other viable relief roads, Carson Road currently serves as the alternate route for commuters looking to get out of the Route 460 traffic backups that occur daily. In the public engagement meetings and surveys, speed, safety, and traffic volume on Carson Road were consistently mentioned as the biggest traffic concerns.

Because Carson Road is well known as a cut-through, the goal of recommendations for this road is to improve safety while not creating a more inviting cut-through alternative that will increase the total volume of traffic on Carson Road.

Carson Road is physically challenged with steep topography, a narrow (one lane) bridge, little to no shoulders in some segments, and existing homes and properties along the narrow right-of-way. All of these elements create design challenges for improvement options. While a typical public road realignment project is an easy tool to consider here, there is very little room for an actual realignment to happen without retaining walls, blasting rock, and property acquisition.

Regarding safety, several iterations of improvement options were investigated, including a potential roundabout to reduce speed and provide potential access to a greenway park envisioned for the Glade Creek area. The space needed for a roundabout required a significant amount of land. Numerous public comments were received that rejected the value of such a traffic calming method.

Ultimately, Carson Road modifications should include minor improvements to the road alignment, along with shoulder and road width improvements. The alignment would generally follow the current alignment with modest curvature improvements to increase sight distances. Improvements to the shoulder, including guardrails where warranted, would reduce the danger for motorists that might lose control on Carson Road. Widened roads, though maybe by only one or two feet for each lane, should be accompanied by narrow pavement markings that visually imply slower speeds. This gives the dual benefit of slower and steadier traffic, but with additional paved material (outside the paint) if needed for safety maneuvers.

The significant improvement recommendation for Carson Road is the replacement of the Glade Creek tributary bridge, which should be improved to carry two lanes of traffic.

These improvements will likely include a high degree of environmental scrutiny and mitigation, as well as modest right-of-way acquisition to fit the needed improvements. If built, this improved Carson Road will dramatically increase safety for those traveling it, and modestly increase its capacity, while not becoming a primary route for motorists avoiding Route 460.

