

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** August 10, 2017

**TO:** Transportation Commission

**FROM:** Nick Hutchinson, City Engineer

**CC:** Howard Lazarus, City Administrator  
Craig Hupy, Public Services Administrator  
Cresson Slotten, Systems Planning Manager  
Jenn Nelson, Project Manager  
Eli Cooper, Transportation Program Manager  
Kayla Coleman, Systems Planning Analyst

**RE:** Scio Church Road Improvements - Staff response to the Transportation Commission

**Complete Street Project Design.** The City of Ann Arbor [Complete Streets policy](#) is used as guidance for the Scio Church Road Improvements Project. The design includes separate areas for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicular traffic. This multi-use road section is consistent with and recommended in the City's Non-motorized Transportation Plan. Additionally, data collection; engineering analysis; internal project team discussion; and, public meeting and stakeholder input have been reviewed in determining the appropriate design to best accommodate community interests. The Scio Church Road Improvements design achieves a community interest of reducing impervious surface along a corridor confronted with significant flooding issues while also improving the pedestrian and bicycling environment.

**Stormwater Management:** The Lansdowne neighborhood, adjacent to the Scio Church Road Improvements project limits, has historically experienced significant drainage and flooding issues. Stormwater management and a reduction to impervious surface along the corridor is a major concern to residents in the area, as expressed at two public meetings with stakeholders and area residents during the conceptual design process. Many residents expressed serious concerns regarding drainage and requested all feasible efforts be pursued to reduce the stormwater runoff from the roadway.

Recognizing the community's drainage concerns and seeking to minimize addition of impervious pavement the project design suggests a road diet and reduction in travel lane width to offset additional pavement of the associated road and sidewalk improvements. Impervious area within the project area will be reduced 17%, providing a real benefit to the community by reducing stormwater runoff from the transportation facility. While the residents were disappointed more drainage improvements were not included with the project due to a lack of available funding, they supported the proposed reduction of impervious area.

**Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety:** Though some area residents expressed an interest in buffered bike lanes during public meetings, the wider road width to accommodate the buffered bike lanes was viewed as a lesser priority than overall impervious area reduction. The Transportation Commission feedback at their July 19 meeting pushed for buffered or separated bike lanes despite the added impervious area.

City staff reviewed the potential to include buffered bike lanes as part of the project. As part of the review, the City collected non-motorized traffic counts on two days, during morning and afternoon peak periods, both of which occurred during periods of warm, pleasant weather in an effort to capture accurate bicyclist use of the corridor. Counts revealed low use, with 5 to 12 bicyclists observed riding along Scio Church Road both in the road and on the sidewalks. This is a very low use rate for Ann Arbor, the City with the highest percent of bicyclists in the mid-west region according to statistics compiled by the League of American Bicyclists. The low counts, coupled with a historically low crash history along this corridor (zero reported bicycle crashes from 2012 to 2016) did not warrant the inclusion of buffers for safety reasons.

Staff recognize that buffers can create and represent a more comfortable environment for cyclists, riding along side of automobile traffic. Staff also recognize the importance of providing a safe and comfortable environment for bicyclists. By completing sidewalk gaps as part of this project, cyclists not comfortable riding alongside of automobiles have an off-street alternative by using the sidewalk.