

WV 601 Jefferson Road, US 119 to US 60 Project

Environmental Justice Impacts Analysis – Update for the EA 2017 Addendum

Changes to the Project and Impacts

As presented in the EA issued in 2016, the proposed project was displacing 35 houses and one small business building. With revisions to Preferred Alternative 5, there will be an additional 21 homes displaced, all located in the northern portion of project where housing is more concentrated. No new noise impacts will occur with the changes to the project, as detailed in the Addendum to the EA. Relocations are shown in Figure 1. See the EJ Report in Appendix C of the EA for detailed minority and income data, which are referenced as needed for the discussion below.

In order to fulfill the purpose and need for the project, there must be disturbance near the existing offset intersection between Jefferson Road and Kanawha Turnpike. Comments from the public have also voiced support for bridging both the Kanawha Turnpike and the CSX railroad. In order to solve these problems and still connect the project termini, the widened roadway must displace residences in the Jefferson Park neighborhood, which lies between Kanawha Turnpike and MacCorkle Avenue. With revisions to Preferred Alternative 5 since 2016, the number of relocations in the Jefferson Park neighborhood increased by 21. However, 11 comment submissions, representing 8 homes, requested those relocations. Some of the commenters claimed to be speaking on behalf of additional residents as well. Also, residents of Jefferson Park expressed concern for the vehicular access onto the new road and the safety of pedestrians crossing the new road from their neighborhood. Revisions to Preferred Alternative 5 address these concerns through widening, and incorporating additional shared use pathway and a right-turn-only traffic pattern in the vicinity of the neighborhood.

As shown in Figure 1, most of the additional home relocations (13 of 21) are within Census Blocks that had zero minorities in the 2010 US Census. The remaining eight (8) of the additional home relocations are within the two (2) overlapped Census Blocks that had more than zero minorities in the 2010 US Census:

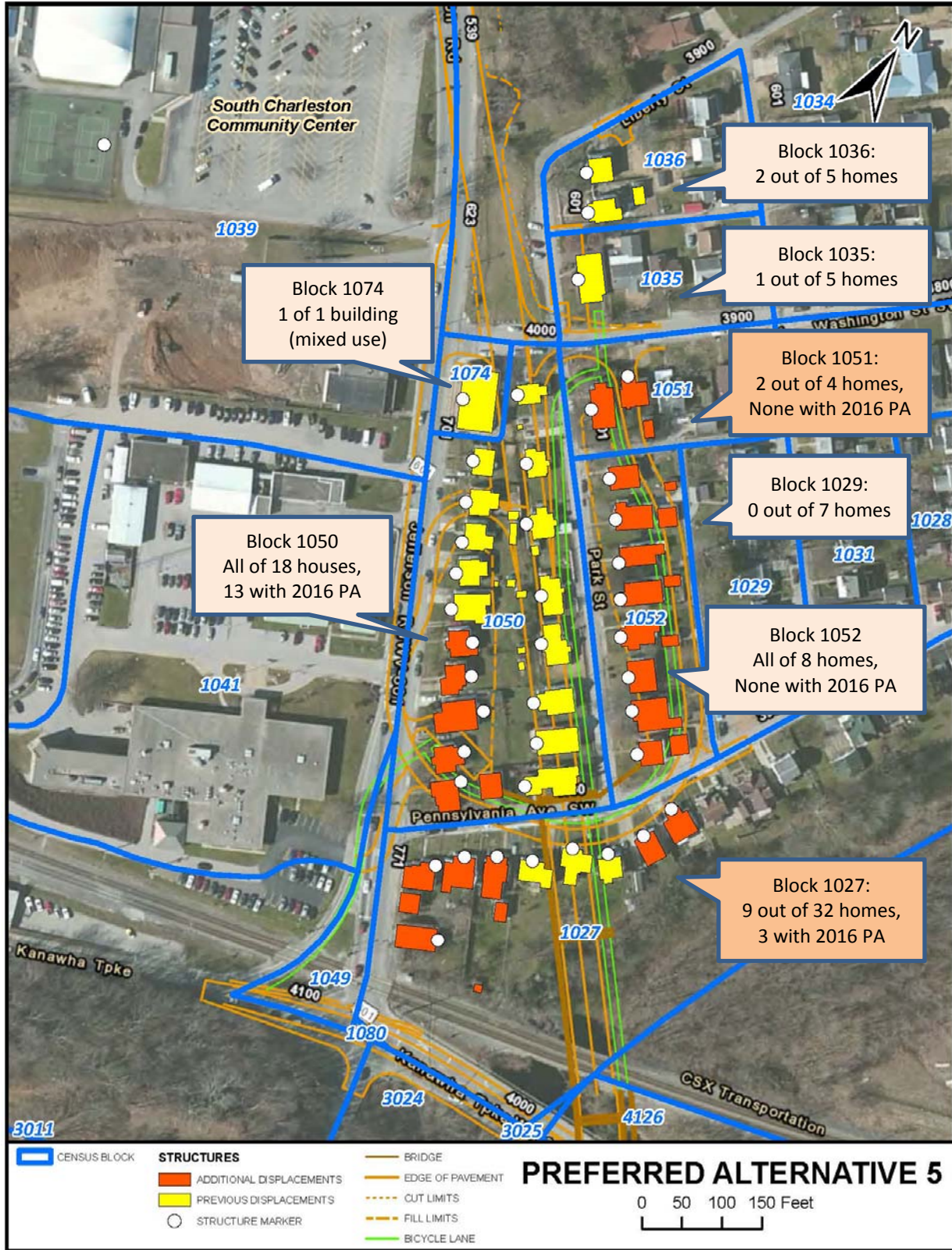
- 1) six (6) additional relocations are within Census Tract 130, Block 1027, along Pennsylvania Avenue, which had 13 minorities in a total population of 58, or 22.4%; and
- 2) two (2) additional relocations are within Census Tract 130, Block 1051, near the corner of Park Street and Washington Street, which had two (2) minorities in a total population of nine (9) in the 2010 Census, or 22%.

No feasible and practicable solution for the project's purpose and need could completely avoid Block 1027, which runs parallel to the railroad track. The 2016 Preferred Alternative 5 included three relocations within this Block. Residents within this Block were among those requesting to be relocated after issuance of the EA. The revised design will relocate those residents, as requested. With regard to Block 1051 along Washington Street, there were no relocations with Preferred Alternative 5 as presented in 2016; however, the 2017 revisions required these relocations for the shift of Park Street.

With regard to low income populations, income data is available at the Census Tract level and all of Jefferson Park is within Census Tract 130. In the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate dataset (ACS), median household income in Census Tract 130 was \$35,690, which is above the DHHS poverty guideline of \$24,250.

According to ACS data, 14% of the population was living below the poverty threshold. (See data tables in the EA's EJ Report).

Of the total 56 relocations, 11 are within Census Blocks that had more than zero minorities in the 2010 US Census, and all are within a Census Tract that had 14% living below the Census poverty threshold. There is a chance that one or some individuals experiencing relocation will be from a minority and/or low-income population.



Source: 2010 U.S. Census. Key:

Blocks with 0% minorities

Blocks with approximately 20% minorities

For those who are displaced, acquisition and relocation will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended. The owner of a displaced residence is eligible to receive reimbursement for the fair market value of the property acquired, as well as moving costs, and will be provided relocation assistance and advisory services together with the assurance of the availability of decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Displaced renters who have rented their apartment/home for at least 90 days before negotiations will be provided with relocation assistance advisory services and compensation, which may be used to rent another housing property or to purchase a home.

In addition to relocations, there will be temporary construction impacts (noise, dust, traffic) in the Project Area during construction, and this disruption will be felt by the Jefferson Park residents as well as residents in the southern part of the project area more than residents in other parts of South Charleston. Contractors will be required to follow WVDOH standards to limit noise and dust problems. A maintenance of traffic plan will be developed and implemented during construction to assure both motorist and construction worker safety. This plan will be developed using guidelines of FHWA, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and WVDOH. Additionally, although construction of the project overall will take place over two years, disruptions in any one area will not last that long.

Potential benefits of the project will serve all of the public and help to offset adverse effects. Benefits include:

- improved efficiency of travel to employment and community centers;
- improved safety with improved flow of traffic;
- improved pedestrian and bicyclist access, which can particularly benefit low income populations for shopping and commuting options;
- improved economic activity, particularly in the Trace Fork shopping area and the WV Technology Park; and
- improved access for emergency response.

WVDOH has afforded opportunities for learning about the project and sharing comments throughout the preparation of this EA, in addition to preparation of a Planning and Environmental Linkage study. For the recent changes to Preferred Alternative 5, WVDOH hosted an additional informational public workshop in February 2017 at the South Charleston Community Center and exchanged personal communications with area residents. Information has also been shared on the WVDOH website.

Conclusions

Although individual low-income or minority persons may experience impact, the proposed project is not likely to cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations as discussed in the Executive Order 12898 regarding environmental justice.

WVDOH has minimized impacts to the extent practicable while fulfilling the project's purpose and need; is implementing mitigation measures for the impacts; and is implementing a public coordination plan to afford opportunities for exchange of information.