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April 19, 2016

Mr. Brent A. Story, P.E.
State Design Policy Engineer
Georgia Department of Transportation
One Georgia Center, 600 W. Peachtree St N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30308

Re: Lumpkin County Roundabouts – Lighting Contracts

Dear Brent,

Lumpkin County has been working with the Department of Transportation on the need for improving safety and increasing traffic flow for some years, and we continue to support the need and the general concept.

Even with the increasing traffic volume, the roundabouts do both, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this.

That being said, Lumpkin County is a relative low tax base county with roughly half of the County being “not-taxed” due to federal and state properties. Lumpkin County, unfortunately, has neither the experience nor the equipment and man power to repair any lighting system associated with the roundabouts, and cannot in good faith assume the liability that would come with committing to the maintenance and repair of the lighting. As presented, the DoT retains the specific power to define the needs for maintenance and the power to define the equipment to be installed.

Lumpkin County is willing to commit to paying the electric energy costs once the projects are complete. If a larger (and mostly unlimited and undefined) commitment is required by the County in order for the project to move forward, then “we cannot do that.” Would it be possible to continue without the lights?

Sincerely,

Chris Dockery
Chairman, Lumpkin County
Board of Commissioners



Lumpkin County, Georgia

Public Works Department

April 1, 2016

Agenda Item:

Letter to GDOT Lighting Agreement

Item Description:

Determination of BOC position on accepting liability for the lighting of 3 roundabouts and letter stating position.

Facts & Historical

Information:

In May of 2014 the BOC signed indication of Roundabout support documents for 2 roundabouts in Lumpkin County (one attached for reference). These roundabouts will be located at the intersection US 19 and SR 60 (Stone Pile Gap) north of town and at the intersection of 52 west and Dawsonville Hwy, west of town. There were 2 associated conditions with each letter of support.

1. *The county will pay the full and entire cost of electrical energy used for any lighting installed and the maintenance thereof (if needed).*
2. *Any maintenance costs associated with the landscaping as approved by the local government and the Georgia Department of Transportation (after construction is complete).*

In December of 2015, the DOT asked the county to sign agreements for lighting assistance for 3 roundabouts. These roundabouts will be located at the intersection of SR 60 (South Chestatee) and Morrison Moore Parkway (south of town), at the intersection of 52 west and Dawsonville Hwy (west of town) and at the intersection of SR 52, SR 115 and Copper Mines Rd. (east of town). A condition of these agreements is that the county is responsible for the operation, maintain and repair of the entire lighting system. These conditions were not included in the original support documents. The BOC signed a modified document that stated that the County would only take responsibility for energy costs for the lighting of the roundabouts.

In Early March, Staff was contacted by the DOT and informed that they could not accept the modified agreement. Staff's response was that it was our understanding that the BOC was not interested in accepting the liabilities outlined in the original agreement and that if the only option was that the county had to agree to all conditions, then the county would not support the construction of the roundabouts. The DOT has requested a letter from the BOC stating their preference as to whether they would rather have the projects canceled or take the responsibility for the operation, maintenance and repairs of the lighting systems when the projects are complete.

Staff Recommendation:

The roundabouts would be an improvement to the intersections which would allow traffic to flow through the intersections more smoothly. Although the construction of the roundabouts would be a benefit to the traveling public, it is staff's opinion that the county has no experience with this type of maintenance and repair and accepting the original agreement, would place liability on the county for operation, maintenance and repair of systems that is not located on county owned property. Staff recommends that the BOC send a letter to the DOT clarifying whether they would take responsibility for the roundabouts and have the projects be constructed or would rather see the projects canceled. Staff realizes that there are other options, but this letter is in response to the options provided to staff by the DOT.