

## **New Signal at the intersection of Belle Meade Boulevard and Harding Place.**

### Summary of Project Progress and Key Dates:

- The Belle Meade Together Plan was adopted in October of 2021. Phase II of the implementation schedule states the following:  
*Belle Meade Boulevard and Harding Place Intersection. Replace standard crosswalks with brick pavers. Install marked pedestrian crossing with median cut at the southern approach. Expand raised median at northern approach to integrate with crosswalk/create pedestrian refuge. Evaluate possibility of prohibiting eastbound north turn. Replace painted triangle with curbed island/ pedestrian refuge. Additional planting and monument signage/branding could be added at corners/ within medians if adequate ROW. Replace span wire signal with decorative mast arm and pedestrian indications.*
- During an April 2024 meeting of the City of Belle Meade's representatives with the Director and Chief Engineer of Metro-Nashville's Department of Transportation and Multi-modal Infrastructure (NDOT), traffic calming strategies and discussion of infrastructure investments that could both modernize the system and mitigate the impact of several new, higher density development projects at various stages of approval just beyond Belle Meade's jurisdictional borders. A signal upgrade project was identified that is needed at the intersection of Harding Place (the City's arterial street) and Belle Meade Blvd. The project would upgrade the traffic signal controllers to be capable of automated, adaptive response, adding the use of traffic monitoring cameras, so that the traffic signal timing would automatically adjust in real time to traffic congestion. Automated, adaptive signals have been proven to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow so that drivers are less likely to look for alternative routes suggested by the apps. In this way, improving the ability for traffic to flow efficiently through Harding Place was identified as a new project and priority for funding because it could help reduce cut-through traffic on Belle Meade's local residential streets. The project would also include upgrading the traffic signals to replace the currently used span-wires attached to wooden utility poles with steel, mast-arms with mounted traffic signals, using LED signal heads with retro-reflective backing which improves visibility at night. Such upgrades would improve traffic flow through the intersection and eliminate some visual clutter from wires. Additionally, mast-arms require less maintenance and are less likely to be damaged or moved by wind.
- An article ran on the front page of the Belle Meade newsletter regarding this project in May 2024.  
*The City of Belle Meade and Nashville's Department of Transportation and Multi-modal Infrastructure (NDOT) are working together on a cost proposal to improve the signalized intersection at Harding Place on Belle Meade Boulevard. The project would include upgrading the traffic signals currently mounted on span-wires attached to wooden utility poles to mast-arm mounted traffic signals, using LED signal heads with retroreflective backing which improves visibility at night, and possibly upgrading the controller cabinet to enable real-time traffic signal timing adjustments. Such upgrades would improve traffic flow through the intersection and eliminate some visual clutter from wires. Additionally, mast-arms require less maintenance and are less likely to be damaged or moved by wind. All over the country, navigation apps such as*

*Waze are directing non-local traffic onto local streets for drivers looking to avoid congestion on preferred routes, including arterials and highways. Belle Meade is not alone in looking for ways to curb this trend which makes our local roadways noisier and less safe for pedestrians. Research shows that one of the best ways to reduce cut-through traffic in neighborhood streets is to improve signal timing at signalized intersections. By ensuring that vehicles are moving efficiently through the signalized intersection on Harding Place, which is the City's main arterial street with the highest daily traffic counts, we can make it less desirable for drivers to look for alternate routes through our residential, local streets. In April, Belle Meade officials and staff met with the Director, Diana Alarcon, and Chief Engineer, Hal Balthrop, of NDOT to discuss strategies for traffic calming and planning cooperatively for the future of transportation infrastructure in and around Belle Meade. In addition to the signalization project, this discussion revealed several opportunities for Belle Meade residents to engage with NDOT on regional plans, including participating in an upcoming Multimodal Master Plan that NDOT will use to create an interactive map that identifies gaps in green spaces and multi-modal pathways and will ultimately be used as a basis for a new 20- year improvement plan. Please look for more information on such opportunities and we will share the information, as it becomes available, in our future newsletters.*

- At the Board of Commissioners meeting July 2024, an interlocal agreement was presented between Metro Nashville and Belle Meade. The benefit of using an interlocal agreement would be two-fold. First, the agreement would allow for the City of Belle Meade to utilize NDOT to manage the design and construction of the Traffic Signal and Intersection Improvement Project, while maintaining full control of the final approval of the design prior to progressing to construction. A secondary benefit is that the Board could direct the City Manager to use this interlocal agreement to obligate the City's remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for this infrastructure improvement on or before the mandated deadline of the end of this calendar year. It is likely that not only would the funds be obligated, but the project itself could be completed by year end. The use of American Rescue Plan Funds for this infrastructure improvement would ensure that the modernization upgrades needed for this traffic signal are completed this year. Alternatively, it is likely that NDOT would upgrade at least the controller cabinet and transition to automated, adaptive technology at some point in the future, but this one signal would be competing for funding with the more than 600 other signals under NDOT's capital improvement plan. It's reasonable to think it would be many more years before the signal equipment would be modernized and upgraded without the City's use of locally available grant funds. The Interlocal Agreement with Metro-Nashville, NDOT for the Traffic Signal and Intersection Improvement Project at Harding Place and Belle Meade Boulevard, with the City of Belle Meade responsible for all costs and expenses associated with the design and construction of the project, with an estimated cost of \$580,000 (\$30,000 for design and \$550,000 for construction). Fiscal Impact Currently, approximately \$750,000 remains in unexpended American Rescue Plan Funding awarded to the City of Belle Meade, which could be used to support this expenditure.

- Belle Meade Newsletter article on front page August 2024  
*Belle Meade's Commissioners recently approved an Interlocal Agreement with Metro-Nashville's Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure to upgrade the traffic signals and crosswalks at the intersection of Harding Place and Belle Meade Boulevard. Design of the intersection improvements will be led by NDOT and consulting engineers from KCI Technologies, who have been additionally working with the City of Belle Meade on projects following the Belle Meade Together Master Plan, including proposed pedestrian safety improvements and traffic calming on Belle Meade Boulevard. The City of Belle Meade will have final approval of the intersection design prior to advertising of bids for construction. The project timeline anticipates completion of these improvements by the end of calendar year 2024.*
  - *Metro Nashville's Mayor and Council adopted Resolution RS 2024-762 approving the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Belle Meade and Metro Nashville, by and through NDOT, for redesign and reconstruction of traffic signalization equipment at the intersection of Harding Place and Belle Meade Boulevard on October 1, 2024.*
- At the October 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting, a scope of service with consultants KCI was approved. The scope of services and compensation associated with KCI Technologies, Inc. (KCI) providing engineering services for the project. Specifically, KCI's role for this project will be to provide traffic signal design services at the intersection of Belle Meade Blvd. and Harding Place. Traffic signal design will include a fully reconstructed traffic signal with pedestrian accommodations for all legs of the intersection. This traffic signal is located within the city limits of Belle Meade and the design will be closely coordinated with the City. Coordination and meetings with NDOT, City of Belle Meade, and other stakeholders will be provided throughout design and construction.
- November 2024 update on project at the Board of Commissioners meeting. Chip Knauf is the project manager with NDOT and is working with consulting engineers with KCI Technologies on design. The Board of Commissioners will have opportunity to comment prior to completion of final design plans for the intersection and will receive final cost estimates for actual construction expenses prior to NDOT awarding construction. NDOT sent an estimated project timeline of 5 weeks for the survey and 6-8 weeks for the signal and intersection design work. Based on this schedule, design would be completed at the end of January 2025 with construction anticipated thereafter.
- December 2024 update on project at the Board of Commissioners meeting. Survey and design work is in progress.
- January 2025 update on project at the Board of Commissioners meeting. Survey has been completed. Design work is in progress and a conceptual design should be available this week.
- February 2025 update on project at the Board of Commissioners meeting. Survey has been completed. Design review is in progress. Belle Meade staff submitted a list of comments on the draft design and coordinated a meeting with Steve Casey and the project engineer to look at the

storm drains in the project area. Working on scheduling someone to present the final design to the Board of Commissioners at a monthly regular meeting. Next step will be for the project to be awarded to a contractor for construction. The Board of Commissioners made a motion that the Historic Zoning Commission make a recommendation on the design of the signal at their March meeting.

- March 11, 2025 – HZC met and deferred consideration of the options for the signal posts/mast arms for the project.
  
- April 8, 2025 – HZC met in a work session and heard a presentation with city staff and Brandon Taylor with KCI Technologies on the options for pole types and finishes available for the mast arms, signal heads, and controller box that will be installed as part of this project. The committee recommended City Commissioners opt for the option labeled “traditional” with an all-black, fluted pole with a clamshell base covering the bolts, a round or ball finial at top of pole; black backplates on the signal heads; and a black, ground-mounted controller box.
  
- **April 16, 2025 – Brandon Taylor with KCI Technologies will be making a presentation on the design plans for the intersection at the Board of Commissioners regular meeting. The Board will consider all aspects on the proposed design for the intersection and signal upgrades. The Commissioners comments will be submitted by the City Manager to NDOT.**