

I want to take this opportunity to thank those whom took the time to reach out to my colleagues, staff and me regarding the eminent domain action that is before us this evening. Given the level of interest that this subject has received, I thought it best to provide some background:

Let us start with the terms “Eminent Domain” and “Condemnation”: These terms do not mean that a property is being taken from the property owner for free. It means the property is purchased after all other negotiations have failed. Those negotiations can fail for a host of reasons, but ultimately, the owner is compensated fair market value for the portion of property being “taken” using independent appraisals and legal oversight.

Also, eminent domain does not mean that the Borough will cease attempting to negotiate a fair and equitable resolution with the property owners. It means that the Borough has opted to start pursuing a “Plan B” **IF, and only IF**, the Borough and the property owner(s) come to such an impasse where the Borough has no other recourse than to exercise its eminent domain rights in order to move forward with Project 1.

Project 1 involves intersection improvements at the Carlisle Springs Road/North Hanover intersection and the Penn and North Hanover Streets 5-point intersection. Over the course of the past 21 months, the Borough has reached agreements with eleven (11) out of the fourteen (14) property owners affected by these two intersections’ upcoming improvements. The three (3) outstanding agreements are: Norfolk Southern, which is being finalized and the two (2) properties being considered for eminent domain this evening.

I asked staff to provide a visual aid of the land in question for this evening’s meeting, but, before staff reviews the map with us, I want to emphasize the following:

- a.) The future roundabout was a decision made by the Borough in conjunction with its connectivity project engineers and PennDOT as a result of the proposed development at the former IAC/Masland site. The roundabout is not a result of the road diet. Significant changes need to be made to the North Hanover corridor to accommodate the proposed traffic at the IAC site once developed. Changes must also be made at the Spring Road and North Hanover Street intersection.
- b.) A traffic light will be installed at Spring Road and N Hanover Street and will prevent motorists from being trapped on the railroad tracks. The travel lanes of North Hanover also need to be realigned. Thus, North Hanover needs widened slightly. Hence, the reason why these easements and rights of way are needed to be acquired by the Borough.

In closing, the Borough of Carlisle has a longstanding history of working collaboratively with stakeholders at the local, county and state levels but more so, working with and among its very own community.

This Council does not take the action of eminent domain lightly. However, my colleagues and I (as well as former Councilors who have sat here) are often faced with policy decisions that are not always popular. But, when faced with such challenges, I can say that my colleagues and I attempt to enact policy that is fair and equitable and consistent with Carlisle’s vision, values and goals. Tonight’s decision is no different- the Carlisle Connectivity Project is a key element of the overall Carlisle Urban Redevelopment Plan, a plan that was devised in response to the Borough’s major manufacturing losses of IAC/Masland, Carlisle Tire & Wheel, and Tyco. Our state, county, and local partners drew upon public input in order to set the objectives of the Connectivity Project to achieve the transportation upgrades that we are now discussing this very evening.

At this time, I will now ask my fellow colleagues if they have any additional comments to add prior to the motion.