FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Critical traffic signal installation at Duplex Road & Port Royal begins today

SPRING HILL, Tenn. – Construction got underway today on the installation of a long-awaited temporary traffic signal at the intersection of Duplex Road and Port Royal Road.

After a 21-month process of appraisals and negotiations with multiple property owners, the City recently acquired property access, with TDOT approval, needed to construct the signal, which is critical to public safety along Duplex Road.

Construction of the temporary traffic light will involve erecting wooden poles along the corners of the intersection and stringing wires for temporary traffic signals across the roadway, which is expected to take about four days, Public Works Director Jeff Foster said. It will be replaced by a permanent signal during the upcoming widening of Duplex Road.

The signal installation will be done primarily between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, and Thursday, Dec. 1, and again during the same daytime work hours Monday, Dec. 5, and Tuesday, Dec. 6. Flaggers will be directing traffic, which will be down to one lane at certain times of day. Please use caution in this area and avoid the intersection if possible during these four days of construction.

Duplex Road Widening Update

This year, the Duplex widening construction officially went into TDOT’s three-year work plan:

http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tdot/attachments/FY_17-19_3_year_program_%283-29-2016%29.pdf

On Sept. 15, 2016, when TDOT Commissioner John Schroer spoke at the Transportation Summit in Franklin, he noted the timeline for new state road construction generally takes about 10 years. This year, 2016, made 10 years that the City of Spring Hill has been working toward this project, and the City is on track to complete the right-of-way purchases before the end of 2016.
so that TDOT can begin construction in mid-2017. TDOT is scheduled to take about 18 months to 2 years for construction.

The City’s top priority in pursuing right-of-way has been to first secure the ROW needed to install temporary traffic signals at any of four key intersections along Duplex Road, including Port Royal Road, Miles Johnson Parkway, Commonwealth Drive and Buckner Lane. Temporary signals will be installed at these intersections as the ROW is acquired.

**Duplex Road Project Background**

Duplex Road (State Route 247) is a state roadway that runs along much of the southern dividing line between the Maury and Williamson County line dividing Spring Hill. Duplex is a narrow, two-lane road with no shoulders, dropping off at its edges to sharp ditches, creating a dangerous traffic situation for the many residential neighborhoods it serves.

In 2017, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is expected to begin construction to widen the full 3.3 miles of Duplex Road to three lanes (two travel lanes and a center turn lane) from Main Street (U.S. 31) to Interstate 65, with a sidewalk on one side and a bike/multi-use path on the other.

The City of Spring Hill has been in the process of working with TDOT to propel the widening project since 2006, which will include installing long needed traffic signals at the four key intersections on Duplex (Port Royal Road, Miles Johnson Parkway, Commonwealth Drive and Buckner Lane).

In November 2012, TDOT stated in a letter to the City of Spring Hill that the installation of traffic signals were warranted at these four intersections. The Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) did not have Duplex widening on its three-year plan at this time. While continuing to work with the MPO to list the project in its three-year plan, Spring Hill officials began inquiring whether there was a way to secure the property right-of-way needed to install the four badly needed traffic signals in advance of the Duplex widening construction. The City inquired whether it could gain property right of entry, or propose a property rental agreement with landowners. City officials were informed by TDOT that, regardless of the intersections meeting signal warrants, there was no other avenue that could be taken outside of purchasing all of the needed right-of-way to install the poles for the signals, according to the requirements of the federal Uniform Right-of-Way Act.

Whenever federal highway funds are spent on any transportation construction project – which will be the case with the state’s construction of the Duplex widening – it requires following the detailed Uniform Right-of-Way Act, required by the U.S. DOT’s Federal Highway Administration.


To demonstrate the City’s shared commitment to the project, the Spring Hill BOMA agreed to put aside $4 million in city taxpayer funds to pursue the acquisition of the state’s right-of-way that would be needed to install the signals and widen the road. That lengthy process started in late 2014. It required hiring a team of people to handle the property acquisitions who must follow a very time-consuming and tedious legal process to acquire each property. It involves
having the properties appraised, locating property owners, tracking down lienholders, negotiating a fair market price, taking proposed sale prices to the BOMA for consideration, making an offer to the property owner, following legal steps to purchase and acquire the property, and legally closing on each property sale.

Many times there are a range of complications that can arise with property acquisition, such as not being able to locate an out-of-state owner; not being able to locate the lienholder; the City having to pay to have bank liens released; not being able to come to an agreed upon negotiated sale price; among other complex real estate and legal issues.

With 210 individual properties to acquire, involving over 200 individual property owners, Duplex Road is the state’s largest undertaking by a single municipality.