



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 21, 2019

Council OKs Neel Schaffer consulting on Mercury Blvd. Phase 2

TDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant funds Mercury Blvd. Sidewalks

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. — The Murfreesboro City Council approved Neel Schaffer, Inc. Thursday (March 21) to provide \$235,870 in professional consulting contract services for the Mercury Blvd. Sidewalk Construction Project. The services are necessary for Phase 2 of the federally funded grant project enhancing pedestrian safety along Mercury Blvd.

Phase 2 will provide enhanced pedestrian safety with a sidewalk system along a section of Mercury Blvd. (US 70/SR 1) from Middle Tennessee Blvd. to Apollo Drive where no sidewalks currently exist. The project will enhance safety by creating a separation between pedestrians and vehicular traffic along the high-volume roadway.

The number of pedestrians killed on U.S. roads in 2018 was the highest in 28 years, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. The association blames the increase on factors that include distracted or impaired drivers, more people walking to work, and more SUVs on the road, which cause more severe injuries in collisions with people. Over the last six years, seven pedestrians have been killed in motor vehicle-related incidents in Murfreesboro.

The City submitted a grant application to the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for 2018. TDOT awarded the grant request in August 2018 and the City approved a contract with TDOT in Sept. 2018. Federal TAP grants provide 80 percent of construction costs with the City responsible for the remaining 20 percent of construction plus the entire cost of engineering, design, utility coordination and Right of Way (ROW).

The sidewalk construction project generally includes the following:

- 1.4 miles of ADA compliant 5-foot minimum sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks on both sides of the route.
- Installation of crossing push button, pedestrian signal indications and marked sidewalks.
- Curb and gutter and ditch section roadway design like Mercury Blvd. Phase 1.

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The Scope of Design Phase of Services for the project includes Mobile lidar data, a Field Survey, Plans, and Engineer's Opinion of Probable Construction cost in accordance with TDOT. Construction phase is anticipated on or before July 1, 2021.

In July 2017, State of Tennessee announced the award of a \$1,027,178 TAP to the City of Murfreesboro for the Phase 1 from Broad Street to Middle Tennessee Blvd. Phase 1 provided a complete sidewalk linkage from SE Broad Street to Middle Tennessee Blvd. along Mercury Blvd. All 7,200 feet of sidewalks are ADA compliant and include pedestrian crosswalks at the signalized intersections along Mercury Blvd. Crossing push buttons pedestrian signal indicators enhance safety along the corridor.

The Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) is made possible through a federally funded program formerly known as Transportation Enhancement and is administered by TDOT. A variety of activities, such as the restoration of historic facilities, bike and pedestrian trails, landscaping and other non-traditional transportation projects, are eligible for grant funds under the program.

The City of Murfreesboro solicited proposals as outlined in TDOT's Local Program Development Office and subsequently received Statements of Qualifications from three firms. After review, staff recommended Neel-Schaffer, Inc. to perform the services. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) <http://www.nashvillempo.org/> added the Mercury Blvd. project to its FY 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Plan.

The City of Murfreesboro conducted a public meeting at Hobgood Elementary School, September 18, 2017, to discuss the purpose, need, and proposed design of installation of sidewalks along Mercury Blvd. (U.S. 70) from Middle Tennessee Blvd. to Apollo Drive (Phase 2). Citizens may contact City Transportation Director Jim Kerr at jkerr@murfreesborotn.gov or by calling (615) 893-6441 for more information.

The City Transportation webpage is accessible at www.murfreesborotn.gov under Transportation.

A project location map of the proposed TAP grant Mercury Blvd. Project area is attached.

Photo and Logo attached:

1. *Mercury Blvd. Project Area Map.jpg*
2. *City of Murfreesboro Logo.jpg*

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