



BURNT CHURCH ROAD SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

PUBLIC MEETING

Beaufort County hosted a Public Information Meeting (PIM3) for the Burnt Church Road Sidewalk Project on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at M.C. Riley Elementary School, 200 Burnt Church Road, Bluffton.

The meeting was advertised through postcards, road signs, and media alerts. Postcards were mailed to the 62 adjacent property owners and ten 24-inch by 36-inch road signs were placed along the approximately 1.3-mile project corridor, informing residents of the upcoming meeting.

The meeting was a drop-in format. Residents were greeted at the gymnasium entrance, checked in at a sign-in table, provided a handout and comment form and directed to the three sets of project displays, which were manned by members of the Project Team. The handout provided the project highlights and schedule, and the large displays depicted the sidewalk design and typical section. A comment box was available and attendees were encouraged to provide their comments by the deadline of March 10, 2026.

Meeting Attendance: 52

Comment Cards Left at Meeting: 25

Comments E-Mailed: 11

Total Comments Received: 36

Project Website: beaufortcountysc.gov/engineering/burnt-church-road-improvements.html

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Based on the input received at PIM3, there is strong overall support for the sidewalk project, as well as very specific concerns related to crosswalks, school access, Lake Linden connectivity, and sidewalk location. Comments received are summarized below.

1. Pedestrian Safety & Crosswalk Needs

This was the most frequently expressed concern and included:

- Requests for **additional crosswalks considerations**, particularly near:
 - Lake Linden Drive
 - Bruin Road
 - Bridge Street
- Desire for **enhanced crossings** (flashing beacons, pedestrian-activated lights)
- Concerns about pedestrian safety



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Response

Crosswalk locations and treatments are being evaluated to improve safety while meeting applicable roadway design standards. The Project Team is reviewing opportunities for additional or enhanced crosswalks, including pedestrian-activated warning devices, as part of the ongoing design refinement. The proposed crosswalk locations and other safety features are being coordinated with the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT). All sidewalk features will be within SCDOT right-of-way and therefore must meet minimum standards and be approved by SCDOT.

2. School Access & Student Safety

Multiple comments focused on:

- Children walking or biking to M.C. Riley Elementary
- Unsafe student crossings near the Burnt Church Road/Bruin Road Intersection
- Requests to:
 - Relocate crossings closer to the school frontage
 - Avoid requiring children to cross Burnt Church multiple times

Response

Student safety and access to M.C. Riley Elementary School are critical for this project. The locations of sidewalks and crossings near the school are being reviewed to minimize exposure to traffic and improve safety for children walking or biking. See response above concerning SCDOT.

3. Sidewalk Alignment & Side-of-Road Concerns

Many comments addressed:

- **Confusion or opposition to sidewalks switching sides of the road**
- Preference for:
 - A continuous sidewalk on one side
 - Avoiding mid-corridor crossings
- Concerns that side-switching creates:
 - Additional risk
 - Reduced usefulness for neighborhoods like Lake Linden



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- Requests to relocate sidewalks away from residential backyards

Response

The proposed sidewalk alignment was selected with the goal of providing safe, continuous pedestrian access between Alljoy Road/Bridge Street and Bluffton Parkway, while minimizing impacts to adjacent property owners. Public feedback regarding sidewalk location has been noted and will continue to inform final alignment decisions.

4. Lake Linden Neighborhood Access

Lake Linden residents consistently raised concerns about:

- Lack of a crosswalk at the neighborhood entrance
- Safety risks for families and children
- Willingness of the HOA to assist with right-of-way if needed

Response

Access to the sidewalk from surrounding neighborhoods, including Lake Linden, is an important consideration. The Project Team is reviewing potential options to improve access and connectivity, including crosswalks or connecting paths, while balancing safety, right-of-way, and design constraints.

5. Speeding & Traffic Behavior

Common concerns included:

- Vehicles exceeding posted speed limits
- Requests for:
 - Lower speed limits
 - Traffic calming
 - Better enforcement

Response

Speeding along Burnt Church Road has been identified as a concern by several residents. While the sidewalk project itself would not change posted speed limits or enforcement practices, pedestrian presence, signage, and crossing improvements



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can contribute to improved driver awareness. The speeding and enforcement-related concerns shared by residents have been provided to the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office and the Bluffton Police Department.

6. Drainage, Lighting & Maintenance

Comments included:

- Existing drainage issues and standing water
- Desire for pedestrian-scale lighting
- Concerns about long-term sidewalk and roadside maintenance
- Questions about who maintains vegetation and removes trash

Response

The sidewalk project will comply with applicable drainage standards to avoid worsening existing conditions. Maintenance of Burnt Church Road and sidewalk will be the responsibility of SCDOT.

7. Property Impacts, Privacy & Security

Some residents expressed concerns about:

- Sidewalks adjacent to backyards and fences
- Reduced privacy and security
- Increased foot traffic behind homes
- Loss of existing landscaped buffers

Response

The Project Team recognizes concerns related to privacy, security, and property impacts. Efforts have been made to minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties and retain vegetated buffers where feasible. Although individual concerns will continue to be reviewed as design details are finalized, the proposed sidewalk is located predominantly within the existing Burnt Church Road right-of-way, which is designated for public travel, access, and infrastructure maintenance (such as utilities).
