

STIP PROJECT No. U-3431 MILLER BOULEVARD/FONTANA BOULEVARD WIDENING HAVELOCK, CRAVEN COUNTY

Local Officials Informational Meeting and Public Meeting Summary

October 3, 2019

Project: STIP Project Number U-3431
Miller Boulevard/Fontana Boulevard Widening
Havelock, Craven County
WBS # 39004.1.1.

Date: Thursday, July 11, 2019
Local Officials Informational Meeting 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Public Meeting 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Place: Havelock High School Cafeteria

Local Officials Informational Meeting

The local officials informational meeting (LOIM) was held at the Havelock High School Cafeteria located at 101 Webb Boulevard, Havelock on July 11, 2019 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Upon arrival, attendees were provided a handout, comment sheet, and Title VI form. The meeting was attended by the following officials:

- Pete Van Vliet, City of Havelock Commissioner
- Jim Khor, City of Havelock Commissioner
- Danny Walsh, City of Havelock Commissioner
- Brenda Wilson, City of Havelock Commissioner
- Jack Veit, Craven County Manager
- George Liner, Craven County Commissioner
- Katrina Marshall, City of Havelock Planning and Inspections Director
- Don Baumgardner, Craven County Planning and Inspections Director
- Will Lewis, City of Havelock Mayor
- Patrick Flanagan, Down East Rural Planning Organization (DERPO)

Cory Grell, HNTB, introduced the proposed project, explaining the purpose and need and the proposed design. The proposed alternatives were presented including a roundabout at the intersection of Lake Road and Miller Boulevard and the reduced conflict intersection (RCI) design. Visualizations of the project and the proposed roundabout were shown. The purpose and need of the project were discussed, noting that a primary objective of the project is to improve safety throughout the project corridor.

The local officials were then invited to speak with the Project Team. Questions/discussion included:

- There were questions regarding the total parcel impacts for each of the alternatives. The project team outlined the visuals for the Alternatives and conveyed the parcel impacts for each of the proposed alternatives.

- Concerns regarding the total costs of each of the alternatives, with many meeting participants stating that the project cost was too high given other infrastructure work in the area (the Slocum Bypass in particular).
- Request to consider having a signal at the intersection of NC 101 and Outer Banks Drive. The project team expresses that signalization options for the entire project area were being examined.
- General questions, comments, and concerns regarding bus queuing and multimodal transportation.
- There was general discussion regarding traffic counts and U-turn feasibility. Specific concerns were raised include various discussions stating that The RCI design along NC Route 101 would cause school traffic (buses) to make U-turns. There was also a discussion regarding the potential re-routing of the bus routes to the south along McCotter Boulevard and Webb Boulevard.
- Comments regarding a concern for tractor trailers, with other comments suggesting that the design option would afford less sharp, wide turns than are currently utilized at Lake Road and Greenfield Heights Boulevard.
- There were general questions and discussion regarding speed limits, with multiple comments suggesting that existing and proposed speed limits were too high for the areas proposed.
- Various requests for new signage were expressed, to outline how the roundabout would be accessed and driven through and what new traffic patterns would be utilized in the area upon the beginning of construction and its completion.
- There were comments and confusion regarding future capacity, with comments expressing that the four-lane section on Miller Boulevard was in response to capacity on the road being reached or exceeded. The project team will continue to communicate the purpose and need of the project and information regarding capacity metrics for the Miller Boulevard intersection and the reasons for the proposal of the four-lane intersection there.
- There was a request to have the school zone properly marked.
- The City of Havelock said that they would be requesting additional sidewalk across the rail road, around the roundabout and also along the north side of Miller Boulevard.
- The City of Havelock requested a left turn out of Belltown Road because the culvert along Woodhaven Road is blown out.
- The City of Havelock requested mast arms at the intersection of US 70.

Public Meeting

Following the LOIM, a public meeting was held at the Havelock High School Cafeteria from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The meeting was an open house format and no formal presentation was given. A total of 110 people signed in during this meeting.

Attendees were invited to take a handout; review maps of the proposed design; speak with the project team; and provide comments on the project. Twenty-six (26) individuals submitted written comments either during the meeting or by mail or email after the meeting and during the comment period, which ended Wednesday, July 31, 2019. General comments expressed during the Public Meeting include:

- Residents of the subdivision along Kenneth Boulevard expressed concern about traffic circulation once the project is built. The RCI will require them to make a right turn out of the subdivision and a U-turn each time they leave the subdivision to go west onto Miller Boulevard. Many residents use Miller Boulevard to avoid traffic on US 70.

- Concern for residents in the Kenneth Boulevard subdivision and on Miller Boulevard who are long-haul truck drivers and park their rigs at home, the U-turns will not accommodate these vehicles.
- Many comments stating that Alternative 2 (Southern Alternative) is too impactful to the 30+ homes on that portion of the project site. Numerous concerns expressed about impacts for residents along Miller Boulevard, particularly on the south side of the road.
- Comments were received stating that Wood Haven Drive was washed out by Hurricane Florence at the culvert over East Prong Slocum Creek, which leaves Belltown Road as the only nearby access point to that neighborhood. This area in its current state, combined with restricting movements at the Belltown Road intersection with Miller Boulevard, would have an adverse effect on the neighborhood.
- Public safety concerns were expressed for patrons of the special education classes at Trinity Presbyterian Church who cross Miller Boulevard to get the church/school – specific concerns were raised on how pedestrians would cross Miller Boulevard when no crosswalks or pedestrian signals are planned.
- Comments suggesting that the Walgreen’s and Papa John’s on the corner of US 70 and Miller Boulevard receive deliveries from Miller Boulevard. The trucks pull in between the two buildings from Miller Boulevard. This is because the trucks are unable to make the right turn from US 70 due to the angle. Concern that Ms. Sophia’s [Richards] Home Daycare will be closed, and on-site parking will be lost, due to proximity of the future road to the house in the project design.
- Requests for heavy new construction and vehicle circulation signage and a “how to drive in a roundabout” campaign when it is completed.
- Comments requesting sidewalk on both sides. Comments expressing a concern for pedestrian street crossings to the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in the area.
- Concern that top-heavy vehicles (including logging trucks) won’t be able to make the curve on the roundabout. General concerns expressed about the truck apron, numerous comments suggested that the design is not conducive to accommodate truck traffic in the area.
- Numerous concerns that the proposed U-turns on Miller Boulevard would not accommodate vehicles larger than passenger sized. Concerns with not adding a left turn to eastbound Miller Boulevard to westbound US 70, combined with no proposed improvements to Jackson Drive (perceived as being too narrow, and therefore challenging for trucks).
- Comments and confusion regarding traffic capacity in the area, with participants stating that current traffic patterns are hard to navigate and time consuming. Discussions regarding proposed traffic circulation for the project yielded mixed levels of support.

Public comment fell into thirty-five (35) general categories or themes, but only seven (7) were mentioned more than once. Table 1 shows the comment themes and the frequency of mentions.

Table 1. Comment Themes

Comment Themes	Frequency of Mention*
Concerns regarding impacts and access for residents and business owners	5 (25%)
Safety concerns (pedestrians, EMS response times, and school buses)	4 (20%)
Finding the project unnecessary or untimely given other area projects	3 (15%)

Table 1. Comment Themes

Comment Themes	Frequency of Mention*
Opposition to the project as a whole	2 (10%)
Opposition and/or concern regarding the proposed U-turns	2 (10%)
Concerns for use and circulation of non-passenger vehicles (trucks, RV's, etc.)	2 (10%)
Proposal for reduction of speed limits	2 (10%)

*Frequency and percentages based upon comments mentioned more than once.

Table 2. Alternatives Preferences

Alternative	Alternative Preferred
Alternative 1 (Symmetrical Widening)	8
Alternative 2 (Southern Widening)	3
Alternative 3 (Northern Widening)	9
Not provided	4
Against all alternatives	3

The most frequent comments provided were either concerns regarding the impact to residents and business owners (25 percent) or concerns regarding safety for pedestrians, children on school buses and EMS navigation and corresponding response times for public safety challenges (20 percent). The commenters opposing the project generally did not feel that the project was necessary given other infrastructure projects and needs in the area or disagreed with aspects of the widening. Other comments expressed concern about the utilization of U-turns and further concerns for oversized and non-passenger vehicles and their traffic circulation as a result of the proposed design. Further comments suggested a reduction in speed limits associated with the proposed design.