US 64 - NC 49 CORRIDOR STUDY
CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT TEAM (CDT) MEETING #2 SUMMARY

August 23, 2004
10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Harrisburg Town Hall

Prepared by: PBS&J

The following attended the meeting:

US 64 – NC 49 Study Team

Jamal Alavi	NCDOT – Transportation Planning
David Wasserman	NCDOT – Transportation Planning
John Adams	PBS&J
Kim Bereis	PBS&J
Jill Gurak	PBS&J
Joel Leisch	PBS&J
Heidi Stamm	HS Public Affairs
Meg Connolly	Land Design
Padam Singh	Land Design
Lewis Grimm	Cambridge Systematics
Don Vary	Cambridge Systematics

Corridor Development Team (CDT) Members

Brenda Moore	NCDOT – Roadway Design
Thad Duncan	NCDOT – Roadway Design
Derrick Lewis	NCDOT – Feasibility Studies
James Dunlop	NCDOT – Traffic Engineering
Laura Cummings	MUMPO
Rebecca Harper	Iredell County (Lake Norman RPO)
Juliet Andes	Town of Cary
Rodger Lentz	Cabarrus County
Terry Bralley	Davie County
Jack Meadows	Siler City
Mayor Calvin Gaddy	Rocky River RPO (New London)
Hal Johnson	Piedmont Triad RPO
Keith Megginson	Chatham County
Pat Strong	Triangle J COG/Triangle RPO
Diane Khin	Town of Apex
Tim Clark	Wake County
Ed Johnson	CAMPO

David Wasserman began the meeting at approximately 10:30 a.m. and asked attendees to introduce themselves. The meeting agenda is attached for reference.

The Study Team covered the following topics in a formal presentation:

- CDT Meeting #1 Recap (Adams)
- Alternatives Evaluation (Adams)
- Definition of Need (Bereis/Connolly/Gurak/Grimm)
- Definition of Alternatives (Adams)
- Travel Demand Model (Vary)
- Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation of Alternatives (Leisch)
- Evaluation Discussion (All)
- Next Steps (Adams)

Heidi Stamm facilitated an open question and answer dialogue between the CDT members and the Study Team. Questions/comments from this discussion are provided below.

Q. When did the traffic surveys (covered in the presentation) take place?
A. The roadside origin-destination (O-D) and video license plate surveys took place in October of 2003. The postcard survey of vehicles passing video survey site #2 took place in October 2003. The travel time surveys between Charlotte and Raleigh and between Statesville and Raleigh took place in November 2003 and February 2004.

Q. How much longer will we continue 5-lane configurations?
A. Five-lane roadway cross-sections are most appropriate when there is a substantial amount of existing or planned commercial development along both sides of a highway. These conditions are generally found in urban and suburban areas. When a major widening of an existing road is being considered, for example from a two-lane to a multi-lane cross section, the provision of a raised median is the generally preferred design option. Any new location, multi-lane facilities should be, by definition, constructed as median divided roadways. In the final analysis, the specific features of any specific highway in the state of North Carolina are defined through a collaborative design process involving NCDOT and the effected local communities.

Q. At what point in the process will we know when to set aside right-of-way? (Concern that the opportunity to preserve this corridor will pass by because of corridor development pressures in some areas).
A. State and local governments corridor protection measures/land use guidelines for consideration will be presented at the next meeting. This information outlines what can be done in this regard under current state law. It is anticipated that this preservation will occur much further on in the project development process. Specifically, more detailed route location, preliminary engineering, and environmental studies would need to be completed before potential right-of-way requirements can be identified.

Q. On the model output slide, why is the LOS in the Apex area "more orange than red"?
A. The land use assumptions used in the model are a critical input to the daily volume forecasts. For this study, Global Insight (GI), an economic forecasting firm, developed year 2025 employment and household forecasts. Cambridge Systematics extrapolated the GI forecasts to 2030. While the process for developing these forecasts is consistent throughout the study area, some area forecasts may be higher or lower than forecasts generated by local jurisdictions. However, the land use forecasts we are using are consistent with the purpose and intent of the study, which is to understand the relative benefits of and need for various roadway investments in the US 64 – NC 49 corridor.

In addition, the travel demand forecasting model used for the analysis was regional in nature, and was developed primarily to estimate intercity and county-to-county travel patterns. The model encompassed virtually the entire state of North Carolina, with each of the 19 counties in our primary study area being represented by a relatively small number of traffic analysis zones, generally 30-40 zones for each county. By contrast, the regional travel demand model used in the Raleigh/Wake County area has something on the order of 300-400 or more traffic analysis zones in each county. Thus, the level of detail between the two models is not directly comparable. With regard to the Apex area and elsewhere in the Raleigh, Charlotte, and Triad regions, it would be expected that the more detailed MPO regional traffic forecasting models would show higher traffic volumes and thus higher levels of congestion, than would the essentially statewide model used on this study.

Q. On the model output slide (with rural and urban facility types and network percentages), why is the percentage higher for VHT operating at LOS F worse for urban area roads?

A. As is typical of most urban areas, traffic tends to find alternative routes to avoid congestion. This shows that the capacity of existing and proposed future facilities is falling behind, per se, in its ability to accommodate the significant increases in travel demand that are projected to occur between today and the year 2030. Basically, traffic congestion in the future will be worse than that observed today, even if all of the E+C projects are completed and open to traffic.

Q. Was an O/D survey conducted for diverted traffic?

A. No, a "select link analysis" was not conducted as part of this scope.

Q. Why do the screenlines for I-85 and NC 49 suggest that so much traffic will be diverted to NC 49 with a Freeway alternative?

A. As noted in the travel time surveys, the current travel times between Charlotte and Raleigh via the NC 49 - US 64 corridor are essentially the same as the travel time between these two areas via the I-85/I-40 corridor. The Freeway alternative assumed improvements to the NC 49 and US 64 corridors that would allow operating speeds of 65 mph over the entire length of the corridor, versus the average operating speed of 50-55 mph that is observed today. With traffic volumes and congestion projected to increase dramatically along the I-85 and I-40 corridors, the travel times along these routes would become longer while those along NC 49 and US 64 would remain the same or decrease from those observed today, thus making the improved NC 49 - US 64 corridor a much more attractive diversion route.

Q. Was there any attempt to correlate the evaluation criteria for "safety" to facility type? Also, did the analysis include accident reductions in the I-85/I-40 corridor as a result of diversion to US 64?

A. Yes, this was considered because 2-lane rural facilities tend to have higher accident rates than do multi-lane highways or freeways, and because congestion, such as that found on existing sections of the Interstate, is often associated with high accident rates. Additionally, the improved horizontal and vertical design standards associated with the Freeway and Expressway alternatives would contribute to safer traffic operations along the corridor. The analysis did not explicitly consider changes in accident rates in the Interstate corridor as a result of traffic diversion to the NC 49 - US 64 corridor.

Q. Why in the evaluation was the E+C scored "better" than a limited access facility and freeway facility in the "Sensitivity to Social Factors"? (Despite the "footprint" associated with the high-speed alternatives, a CDT member felt that a 5-lane section in his respective area creates a "barrier" and that the other alternatives would improve social benefits by shifting conflicting traffic on another facility).

A. Although this may be the case in some areas (i.e. urban areas), the evaluation considered mostly the types of social impacts associated with the right-of-way footprint over the entire length of the

corridor. Thus, any new location facility was assumed to have the potential to be more disruptive to communities along the corridor than the widening and reconstruction of an existing highway.

Q. Functionally, how would access at specific locations be handled if the Expressway Alternative were implemented, especially when there is not a lot of "will" by local governments to limit driveway access? (There was overall concern from several CDT members that not enough can be done to limit driveway access by local municipalities along the entire corridor, resulting in "hot spots").

A. Consolidation and/or maintaining access at specific locations would need to be agreed upon for the Expressway Alternative. This type of detail for the overall corridor(s) has not been conceptualized at this time. Also, how to phase implementation and identifying priority "hot spots" have not been assessed at this time.

This issue is part of why the Strategic Highway Corridor concept was put in place. The idea is that increased mobility will be reached by taking various steps and that there is the potential for a process prototype in the future. The steps will include some means of access management and corridor right-of-way advancement, but will require buy-in and agreement from multiple jurisdictions/agencies. The Department is looking at other states for ideas and how some of their methods could apply and be legislated in North Carolina.

Q. What is the "year horizon" for right-of-way preservation?

A. That has not been determined at this time.

Q. How do we avoid the problem of having to build a "bypass" around a "bypass" because of the amount of time it takes to get these projects realized? Perhaps the vision should go to 2050?

A. The Department could consider an Enhanced E+C Alternative by 2030 with reserved right-of-way for a freeway by 2050. This could include developing an access management strategy with "teeth" for the TIP projects and for the Enhanced projects that are not bypasses. If the 2050 plan is for a Freeway, there will be full control of access. Consequently, if the access is not managed for part or all of the 4-lane sections in the Enhanced E+C, the 2050 plan would resolve the issue.

The need clearly exists for the city, town, and county governments to work closely with NCDOT with respect to right-of-way preservation and improved access management.

Q. How can this work…Isn't this a recipe for disaster? (A concern from a CDT member that "politics will rein".)

A. This is the prototype effort by NCDOT to study a strategic highway corridor in detail. The formal adoption by the NC Board of Transportation of the strategic highway corridors concept and the associated highway facility type definitions will provide a strong basis for allowing these plans to be successfully implemented. It will be important for town, city, and county governments to work closely with NCDOT to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved.

The next CDT meeting is tentatively scheduled for early November. David Wasserman will follow up with the CDT members to determine an exact date, time and location.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

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AGENDA

Agenda Topic	Duration
Welcome & Introductions	
CDT Meeting #1 Recap	10 min.
Presentation	
Alternatives Evaluation Process	5 min.
Definition of Need	60 min.
Definition of Alternatives	15 min.
****Lunch****	30 min.
Travel Demand Model	20 min.
Evaluation Criteria	10 min.
Evaluation of Alternatives	30 min.
Evaluation Discussions	25 min.
Next Steps	5 min.