

I-3306A PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) conducted an Open-House Public Meeting on January 24, 2019 at the Passmore Center – Great Hall in Hillsborough, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information and gather comments on project I-3306A, the proposed widening of 11.4 miles of I-40 in Orange County from I-85 to the Durham County line.

The informal public meeting was conducted from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., during which the public had the opportunity to review project maps and displays, ask questions, provide comments, and discuss the project informally with project representatives. 185 citizens registered their attendance at the public meeting. Participants included residents, property owners, local government employees and officials, and church and local organization representatives.

The public meeting was advertised by the following methods:

- Local newspapers
 - Mebane Enterprise Newspaper – January 16, 23, 2019
 - Durham Herald Sun – January 13, 16, 20, 23, 2019
 - News of Orange County – January 16, 23, 2019
 - Indy Week – January 16, 23, 2019
- NCDOT’s project webpage
- Approximately 4,000 postcard invitations mailed to citizens and businesses in the project area

The following information was provided to meeting attendees at the meeting: A handout describing the project description and benefits, other project effects, proposed typical section, project development process, Public Meeting No. 1 summary, and traffic noise; a synchronized streets handout; a Title VI comment form; and comment sheets for the project (see Appendix B). Spanish language versions of the meeting handout and Title VI form were also available.

Staffed information stations were located around the room and included: Right-of-way Acquisition, Noise Analysis, Congestion Management, and an area for attendees to submit written comments. Informational boards were displayed regarding project impacts, peak hour traffic conditions at the N.C. 86 Interchange, proposed typical section, the project schedule, and Title VI Voluntary Public Involvement.

Two resolutions were received. Orange County provided a resolution opposing NCDOT incursion into the Oosting Natural Area of Duke Forest. The Town of Chapel submitted a resolution opposing Alternative 4A. Additionally, Durham/Chapel Hill/Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) submitted a letter including staff comments. A petition was also received from Carol Woods Retirement Community asking that an effective noise abatement measure be provided for the 635 dwelling units along Weaver Dairy Road as I-40 is widened between Sunrise Drive and N.C. 86.

A total of 188 comments were received as of February 8, 2019. This included comment postcards mailed in by the “Neighbors for Northwood who support Plan B”. Over 100 citizens mailed in 349 postcards.

MOST FREQUENT PROJECT SPECIFIC COMMENTS

The most frequent project specific comments expressed by citizens were the following:

COMMENT CATEGORIES		No.
Supports 4A		0
Supports 4B		131
Neither 4A or 4B		4
Northwood		116
Pedestrian Concerns		27
With 4B, Install Traffic Calming Measures and Noise Abatement		22
Consider Roundabout		10
Noise abatement		47
Miscellaneous Comment		30

CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING REDESIGN

- 1. **Comment:** Convert Exit 266 and Eubanks/N.C. 86 into a large roundabout.

Response: NCDOT considered the use of a roundabout at this location. Geometrically, the existing road and ramp locations would not preclude the design of a roundabout here. The project team had concerns with this type of traffic control for other reasons, mainly the safety and capacity of a roundabout at this particular location. The traffic demands in the design year (2040) at this location are expected to be far greater than the capacity of a single-lane or two-lane roundabout. NCDOT does not recommend roundabouts larger than two lanes due to safety concerns. Furthermore, when roundabouts are over-capacity they tend to lock-up and produce queuing and spillback that is much longer than traffic signals, thereby endangering safe operations on the ramps and the freeway mainline. From a safety perspective, based on research pertaining to converting a signalized intersection to a multi-lane roundabout, our expectation is that a multi-lane roundabout installation would increase crashes. Therefore, a roundabout is not recommended at this location.

- 2. **Comment:** Move the existing N.C. 86 exit to the old N.C. 86 area and run the connecting streets to N.C. 86 through the large apartment complex now under construction between old 86 and N.C. 86. The complex is huge, and all the trees have already been destroyed, so you won't be laying waste to more with the exit and entrance changes.

Response: The suggested roadway improvements are not within the scope of the project, which is to widen I-40 in Orange County. Constructing a new interchange along I-40 would need to originate with a submittal of the project from the Durham/Chapel Hill/Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) and then scored through NCDOT's Prioritization Process before inclusion in the NCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

- 3. **Comment:** Consider adding a loop to I-40 eastbound at the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) intersection that takes traffic northbound. This would relieve traffic from the I-40E exit that wants to go on MLK northbound.

Response: NCDOT investigated the option of providing a loop in the southeast quadrant of the N.C. 86 interchange and aligning the loop terminal opposite Eubanks Road. This option would result in poor level of service at the Eubanks Road intersection with NC 86. Additionally, this option would require the replacement of the bridge over I-40 to accommodate the loop.

- 4. **Comment:** Consider roundabouts, 3 lanes, with synchronized lights.

Response: NCDOT will not recommend the inclusion of a three-lane roundabout due to safety concerns. Based on research pertaining to converting a signalized intersection to a multi-lane roundabout, our expectation is

that a multi-lane roundabout installation would increase crashes. Additionally, a three-lane roundabout would require more right of way resulting in additional property impacts compared to the recommended improvements.

- 5. Comment:** Consider extending Eubanks Road to cross N.C. 86 and become the eastbound merging lane to I-40E.

Response: There is no traffic benefit by realigning the eastbound on-ramp to I-40 opposite Eubanks Road. Additionally, realigning the ramp to the south would impact parking for the Harris Teeter store.

- 6. Comment:** Recommend adjustments to traffic flow off Eubanks Road onto MLK and N.C. 86 to best handle congestion at turnaround on Perkins Road.

Response: Recommended Option 4B has been reviewed further to determine ways to improve traffic flow and efficiency. Suggested revisions to this option include adding an additional right turn lane along the eastbound I-40 exit ramp and synchronizing the signals at Eubanks Road and Perkins Road. Considering these suggested revisions, it is expected that the intersections of NC 86 and the I-40 eastbound ramps, Eubanks Road, and Perkins road will operate at acceptable levels of service with manageable queue lengths in the design year 2040.

- 7. Comment:** It is extremely difficult to turn left onto Whitfield from Erwin. Consider replacing the stoplight at Whitfield and Erwin with a roundabout.

Response: The requested roadway improvement is not within the scope of the project, which is to widen I-40 in Orange County. NCDOT is evaluating this intersection for a potential future project.

- 8. Comment:** Consider swinging Eubanks Road off Millhouse Road or through the present Park N Ride lot and NCDOT have a fly-over over I-40 heading north. Then, have that traffic go onto N.C. 86 further north to relieve traffic farther away from I-40 and Eubanks Road.

Response: The requested roadway improvement is not within the scope of the project, which is to widen I-40 in Orange County. A new project as described above would need to originate with a submittal of the project from the Durham/Chapel Hill/Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) and then scored through NCDOT's Prioritization Process before inclusion in the NCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

- 9. Comment:** The Chief Operating Officer of the Carol Woods Retirement Community states that the area should have received a more appropriate sound barrier during original construction of I-40. After working with NCDOT and others in 2005, they agreed to accept the status quo until the widening of the highway based on an assurance that mitigation would be provided at that time. This is reflected in the letter dated August 17, 2005 from the Lt. Governor's office. During discussion at the public meeting, a letter dated August 18, 2005 was mentioned. He is not finding it in their files and is requesting a copy. He is open to alternatives other than a wall providing that it has real effect.

Response: The August 18, 2005 letter, which has since been provided to the Carol Woods Community representatives, stated that a 1984 noise analysis was performed, and noise walls were not recommended at that time. The letter also stated that when I-40 is widened a noise study will be conducted again in association with the development of the widening project. That noise analysis is currently underway.

- 10. Comment:** Consider a fly-over down to Millhouse Road over by the recycle center and plan for no cut-through option onto Northwood Drive from MLK or Eubanks Road.

Response: The requested roadway improvement is not within the scope of the project, which is to widen I-40 in Orange County. A new project as described above would need to originate with a submittal of the project from the Durham/Chapel Hill/Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) and then scored

through NCDOT's Prioritization Process before inclusion in the NCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

11. Comment: Add bike and pedestrian access on the N.C. 86 overpass.

Response: The bridge which carries N.C. 86 over I-40 will not be replaced under the current project. The bridge is in good condition and the horizontal and vertical clearances are adequate to accommodate the proposed widening of I-40. In order to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the bridge would need to be replaced. When the bridge is replaced in the future, the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be considered.

12. Comment: Extend sidewalk on the proposed right-of-way on southbound MLK from Weaver Dairy Road to the bus stop at Perkins Drive.

Response: Sidewalks will be included along the length of the project pending Town of Chapel Hill agreement and cost participation.

13. Comment: Please make as few changes as possible to the natural landscape along Whitfield Road and MLK.

Response: The proposed improvements in the vicinity of Whitfield Road and N.C. 86 are the minimum necessary in order to accommodate anticipated traffic. Current proposals call for Whitfield Road to intersect N.C. 86 at its current location. Turn lanes will be included as needed for proper operation of that intersection. During final design, impacts along N.C. 86 and Whitfield Road will be minimized to the extent possible, however, some land disturbance along the frontages of those two roads will be necessary to accommodate the proposed improvements. After project construction, NCDOT will implement a landscaping plan for the project in coordination with the local government with jurisdiction.

14. Comment: (1) Westbound 3 to 2 lanes: Bring 3 westbound lanes as far as Exit 261. The right lane then becomes the exit lane for 261. It is an increasing use exit with more and more traffic exiting there and this will continue with several major developments underway. Also, lower the posted speed limit at Exit 261 to 55 or 60. The slowing of traffic there, as well as the natural slowing that occurs up the grade westbound of 261 will ease the rush into the slowed traffic going over I-85 bridge. **(2) Eastbound exit off I-85:** Have the current two lanes at the I-40E/I-85N split continue with the new 3rd lane appearing just post the split to the left side. This will allow slower traffic, less observant drivers, and burdened vehicles then to remain in the lane they are native to and a clear lane for other traffic appearing to the left. Thus, no trucks suddenly must move to the right as well no one seeking a faster route by passing on the right to obtain space and a less frustrating experience in fuller traffic conditions.

Response: Westbound I-40 lane drop at I-85 North: Carrying three westbound lanes to the I-85 interchange allows for more traffic capacity up to the I-85 North exit. The relatively low volume of traffic desiring to exit to I-85 North will not relieve the congestion for the two remaining lanes connecting to I-85 South under this project. Unfortunately, a major improvement of the I-85 and I-40 interchange is not within the scope of this project and its associated funding. As such, a separate project will be required to address the major congestion occurring at this interchange.

I-40 eastbound exit from I-85 North: The introduction of the third eastbound lane to I-40 on the outside allows for more traffic capacity to exit the interchange. Stated potential issues can be addressed with signing and lane striping as determined by traffic engineers.

15. Comment: The MLK/Weaver Dairy intersection is massive and handles substantial highway and school-bound traffic throughout the day. The short distance between this intersection and the smaller intersection at Perkins Road is already stressed at rush hour periods. There is currently no plan to synchronize signals and given that the signals at the MLK/Weaver Dairy intersection routinely short-cycle the time permitted for left hand turns, this seems like an oversight.

Response: Signalization and synchronization of signal timing will be reviewed during final design.

16. Comment: In keeping with the Town of Chapel Hill Tree Protection Ordinance, the final DOT plans must respect that the highest priority for all projects shall be the maintenance and replacement of canopy on-site to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and enhance the quality of life in Chapel Hill. (Appendix A, Article 5.7 of Chapel Hill Tree Protection Ordinance).

- a. The existing mature tree buffer along the South side of Eubanks Road continuing to the West side of MLK Blvd. (i.e. N.C. 86) must remain intact and unharmed during the road widening project.
- b. A raised berm with mature evergreen trees/privacy tree plantings need to be added along the South side of Eubanks Road and the West side of MLK Blvd. to provide visual screening, noise dampening and light filtering. Ideally this berm area and the new trees should be part of the town-owned land and rights-of-way and should not be taken as easements or areas of right-of-way from the private landowners who border these two roads. The berm must be constructed in a way that it does not cause pooling of water or drainage issues.
- c. The widened roads along Eubanks Road and MLK Blvd. will decrease the marketability of the Northwood lots in close proximity. Appraisers reduce the value of properties that are adjacent to larger roads with consistent traffic and especially so when there is little or no protection against the sights, sounds, and smells of moving vehicles.

Response:

- a. Current preliminary design plans would impact part of the tree line that fronts Eubanks Road and N.C. 86. Providing the necessary lanes to accommodate traffic on Eubanks Road and N.C. 86 will require expansion of those two roads resulting in impacts to private property. Impacts to private property will be minimized to the extent possible during final design
- b. The impact to the clearing of existing trees at this location extends for approximately 640 feet long and ranges in width of 0 to 20 feet wide. Based on anticipated proposed right of way acquisition needs, the clearing does not appear to extend to any obvious cleared areas along the backyards of adjacent homes. To construct an effective raised berm as a physical border would require substantial more clearing of trees to accommodate its design requirements.

Many factors contribute to the local real estate market and property values. In general property values increase in areas that have improved accessibility. A decrease in value for some properties could be possible where the roadway alignment extends close to homes. However, it is not possible to predict future real estate values.

17. Comment: Any new street lighting along Eubanks Road and MLK Blvd. will create light pollution and light trespassing into the Northwood neighborhood, which currently has no overhead lighting systems in place. Any new lights added as part of the DOT plan must include light shields to direct the light rays away from the Northwood neighborhood and down onto the new streets only. This required protection also applies to any existing street lights from which new polluting or trespassing light would reach the affected homeowners. 'Warm' or 'filter light' LED light bulb options should be considered for all overhead lights installed as part of this project as these are less disruptive to both nearby humans and animals than 'blue-lights' or 'fluorescent light' bulbs. Blue-rich white light sources are known to increase glare and compromise human vision, especially in the aging eye. These lights create potential road safety problems for motorists and pedestrians alike. In natural settings, blue light at night has been shown to adversely affect wildlife behavior and reproduction. This is particularly true in cities, which are often stopover points for migratory species.

Response: A determination for roadway lighting along the I-3306 corridor has not yet been made. However, it is anticipated NCDOT owned and maintained lighting will be installed at the I-40/NC 86 interchange as part of the project. Department owned and maintained lighting is installed only inside the interchange, therefore no

Department owned lighting will be installed along Eubanks Road or MLK Blvd as part of this project. Should Eubanks and MLK be lighted, the lighting will be provided and installed by the local Utility at the request of the local Municipality. The requested design considerations should be discussed between the Municipality and the Utility if/when lighting is installed along these facilities.

As with any lighting design, NCDOT will make all reasonable efforts to reduce/eliminate spill lighting outside of the interchange right of way that may impact local residents.

18. Comment: Increased traffic and the widened I-40 lanes will bring more noise pollution into the Northwood neighborhood and the northern boundary area in general. The final DOT plans must present as many noise abatement and noise reduction solutions as necessary to mitigate this.

- a. Asphalt as a road surface creates less noise when driven on than concrete roads. As such, the DOT should consider paving the sections of I-40 near the 266 exit with asphalt.
- b. Noise abatement walls along I-40 up against the Carraway Village community will help dampen the increased highway noise for the Northwood neighborhood as well as the other communities of the northern boundary area created by the widening project.
- c. Reducing the speed limit on southbound MLK Blvd. to 35 mph starting at Whitfield Road and northbound MLK Blvd. to 35 mph starting at Perkins Drive will greatly reduce noise pollution. Currently, the speed limit is 45 mph on those stretches of road.

Response:

- a. Pavement selection on a project of this type is driven by cost and constructability issues. However, consideration will be given to a noise-reducing surface treatment for the selected pavement. If concrete pavement is used, noise reducing pavement treatment will be included.
- b. Comment noted. Decisions about recommended noise wall locations are made in compliance with Federal regulation (23 CFR 772) and the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy. First, noise impacts are identified, and where impacts occur, noise abatement is considered. Where noise walls are feasible and reasonable, based on the Traffic Noise Policy criteria, they will be recommended.
- c. NCDOT reviewed the impact on noise levels of reducing the speed limit on southbound NC 86 to 35 mph. Reducing the speed limit on southbound NC 86 from 45 mph to 35 mph between Whitfield Road and Perkins Drive will have a negligible effect on traffic noise. Even if the lower speed limit were consistently enforced, this drop in speed would be expected to result in only a 1-2 decibel reduction in noise level, which is not perceptible to the human ear.

19. Comment: Because of the changes in traffic patterns that will result from the DOT plans, we have serious safety concerns with a higher magnitude of “cut-through” traffic along southbound Northwood Drive.

- a. Install All-Way stop signs at the Hunter Hill Road/Northwood Drive and Autumn Lane/Northwood Drive intersections.
- b. Install Pedestrian signs or General Advance Warning signs on Northwood Drive near the subdivision entrances.
- c. Install Wayfinding signs along Eubanks Road/Northwood Drive.
- d. Install new “DO NOT BLOCK ROAD” sign at the Northwood Drive/ML Blvd. intersection.
- e. Install “No Truck Traffic” signs at the entrances to the neighborhood.
- f. Install “No thru traffic” sign at Northwood Drive/Eubanks Road.
- g. Install “Slow” signs in the neighborhood.
- h. Add a flashing light sign on Southbound MLK Blvd. just north of Northwood Drive to indicate when people exiting Northwood Drive, e.g., “Traffic Entering Hwy”.

Response: NCDOT will coordinate with the Northwood neighborhood to evaluate potential measures to mitigate cut through traffic and improve safety.

20. Comment regarding specific design concerns in Northwood:

- a. We oppose taking of any property from Northwood residents for new right-of-way or easements. Small losses of property may have catastrophic consequences because of impacts to septic fields.
- b. The plan does not appear to be designed with pedestrians and bicycles in mind. This is critical component of Chapel Hill's vision and of what Carraway Village is supposed to be. There should be sidewalks along the West side of MLK Blvd. and South side of Eubanks, and there should be crosswalks at Perkins Drive and other critical places.
- c. Accommodations should be made to allow cyclists and pedestrians to cross over I-40 along MLK Blvd. This currently very dangerous and greatly reduces access to what would otherwise be reasonable pathways. The closest available crossing are miles out of the way along Millhouse Road or Sunrise Road.
- d. The intersection of MLK Blvd. and Northwood Drive needs to be considered. Southbound MLK Blvd. currently has a right turn lane onto Weaver Dairy Rd. Extension. This lane starts at the intersection with Northwood Drive, which already problematic, but adding a right-hand turn lane between Eubanks Road and the MLK Blvd./Northwood Drive intersection will make this worse. The preliminary drawing also seems to eliminate the existing bike lane.
- e. For many residents of Northwood who want to go north when exiting MLK Blvd./Northwood Drive, the most direct route is to U-turn at MLK Blvd. and Weaver Dairy. With the extra lane this will mean cutting across four lanes of traffic. To prevent us from getting locked in, there should be striping and signage telling motorists not to block the intersection.
- f. We agree with the Town of Chapel Hill that there should be a phased rollout of the super street. We believe the linear traffic increase modeled by NCDOT is unrealistic.
- g. The design needs to take into account Chapel Hill's North South Bus Rapid Transit plans, as those are also taking shape at this time. A coordinated design would likely improve both plans and reduce wasted efforts.
- h. The 266-E off ramp should be expanded to increase capacity by adding a new lane (in addition to the slip lane).
- i. Having only one interchange that serves all of northern Chapel Hill and Carrboro is not going to be sufficient. Although we understand that I-3306A is just a widening project, studying the feasibility of adding another interchange, perhaps at Mill House Road, should begin as soon as possible.

Response:

- a. Based on the current preliminary plans, impacts to private property from residences that front Eubanks Road and N.C. 86 are anticipated. Additional right-of-way along those two road frontages may be necessary to accommodate the required lanes necessary to provide reasonable traffic operations. Impacts to private property will be minimized to the extent possible during final design.
- b. The project includes bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The existing bike lanes along N.C. 86 and Eubanks Road will be maintained or rebuilt. Additionally, new bike lanes will be provided along the west side of N.C. 86 from the I-40 eastbound exit ramp to Northwood Drive and along the east side of N.C. 86 from Eubanks Road to the eastbound I-40 entrance ramp. Also, new bike lanes will be provided along both sides of N.C. 86 from Whitfield Road to the bridge carrying N.C. 86 over I-40. Bike lanes will not be included at this time along the bridge carrying N.C. 86 over I-40 because the bridge will not be replaced under the current project. When that bridge is replaced, the inclusion of bike lanes on the bridge will be considered. Crosswalks are recommended across N.C. 86 at Perkins Drive and Eubanks Road. Sidewalks will be included along the length of the project pending Town of Chapel Hill agreement and cost participation.
- c. The bridge which carries N.C. 86 over I-40 will not be replaced under the current project. The bridge is in good condition and the horizontal and vertical clearances are adequate to accommodate the proposed widening of I-40. In order to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the bridge would need to be replaced. When the bridge is replaced in the future, the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be considered.
- d. The right-hand turn lane to Northwood Drive is actually a 300-foot right turn taper lane only. The two through lanes for traffic continuing south on MLK Blvd will transition to the present lane

arrangement between Northwood Drive and the Weaver Dairy Road intersection approach. A 5-foot bike lane is included in the preliminary drawings including all locations of MLK Blvd that includes pavement widening with adjacent concrete curb and gutter. During final design, NCDOT will review this intersection to evaluate options for separating through traffic from the right turn only traffic into Northwood Drive.

- e. Signalization and signage will be reviewed in this area during final design. Additionally, the recent signal upgrade project completed by the Town of Chapel Hill at the intersection of NC 86 and Westminster Drive, will provide a convenient U-turn option for vehicles entering NC 86 from Northwood Drive.
- f. See response below directed to this same comment from the Town of Chapel Hill.
- g. Local transit staff have reviewed the project with regards to accommodating the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system within the project area. NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the Town of Chapel Hill to accommodate the implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit system along the project corridor during the final design of the project.
- h. Following the public meeting, NCDOT reviewed the I-40 eastbound exit ramp intersection with NC 86 to determine ways to improve traffic flow through the interchange area. As a result, an additional right turn lane will be added to the eastbound exit ramp, which will provide the suggested vehicle storage.
- i. Comment noted.

21. Comment: Given the current lack of any physical speed-reduction measures along Northwood Drive (speed bumps, humps, or tables, stop signs, etc.), there is little resistance for drivers to choose to cut through the neighborhood and with them the percentage that will choose to exceed the speed limit. This creates a safety hazard for the residents of the neighborhood.

- a. Reduce the speed limit along the following sections of road:
 - i. Reduce to 35 mph on MLK Blvd. starting at Whitfield Road and continuing to the Town of Chapel Hill town limits.
 - ii. Reduce to 35 mph on MLK Blvd. starting at Perkins Drive and continuing northbound to the I-40 interchange.
 - iii. Reduce to 30 mph on Eubanks Road from Millhouse Road to the intersection of MLK Blvd.
 - iv. Reduce to 20 mph inside the entire Northwood neighborhood, but certainly along Northwood Drive.
- b. Install a Dynamic Speed Monitoring sign along Northwood Drive
- c. Install one or more speed tables along Northwood Drive.
- d. Install two three-way stop signs along Northwood Drive. One at the intersection of Northwood Drive and Hunter Hill Road and the other at the intersection of Northwood Drive and Autumn Lane.
- e. Conduct a traffic study before Carraway Village opens and again after the Eubanks Road/MLK Blvd. intersection redesign is finalized.

Response: NCDOT will review posted speed limits along NC 86 during final design to determine if changes are warranted. NCDOT will coordinate with the Northwood neighborhood regarding safety and speed concerns within the neighborhood.

23. Comment: Is it possible and have you considered actually straightening Whitfield Road and/or making the turn towards NC 86 earlier than its current location such that you could still provide access to the current lots (excluding Duke Forest – we don't necessarily need access to the tract from Whitfield Road) while making use of the ROW DOT already possesses?

Response: During final design, NCDOT will investigate ways to minimize impacts to Duke Forest and adjacent private property, including the suggestion of realigning Whitfield Road.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMENTS

DCHC MPO

24. Comment: Regarding the proposed improvements to the I-40/N.C. 86 interchange:

- a. DCHC MPO staff strongly prefers option 4B due to the limited impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and reduced impacts on the natural lands of Duke Forest; and
- b. The final design should accommodate future Bus Rapid Transit planned for the area, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including but not limited to sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals

Response: NCDOT recommends the implementation of option 4B for final design and construction. This option will be further reviewed for refinement during final design. The final design will accommodate future Bus Rapid Transit planned for the area, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including but not limited to sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals.

ORANGE COUNTY

25. Comment: Orange County Board of County Commissioners calls upon NCDOT to avoid any additional road or construction incursion into the Henry J. Oosting Natural Area in association with redesigning this interchange or widening I-40 now or in the future.

Response: According to available mapping, the Henry J. Oosting Natural Area abuts the NCDOT existing right-of-way along N.C. 86 and Whitfield Road. Therefore, the addition of any lanes along either of those two facilities will require land from the Natural Area. The existing preliminary design will involve adding pavement to a portion of Whitfield Road to accommodate an additional lane there at the intersection with N.C. 86. Additional pavement will also be needed along a portion of N.C. 86 to include turn lanes at Whitfield Road and the interchange ramps. Impacts to the Natural Area will be contained to the N.C. 86 and Whitfield Road frontages. These roadway improvements are the minimum necessary for the operation of the interchange given the amount of traffic that is anticipated. The current proposal represents a substantial reduction in impacts to the Natural Area compared to the option that was reviewed with Orange County officials at the Local Officials Informational Meeting for the project on November 5, 2018. NCDOT will further minimize impacts to the Natural Area to the extent possible during final design.

26. Comment: Orange County Board of County Commissioners requests that NCDOT carefully consider alternatives to disrupting not only this key segment of Duke Forest, but the homes potentially impacted within the Northwood community through options presented on November 5, 2018.

Response: Following the Local Officials Informational Meeting for the project, held November 5, 2018, NCDOT reviewed additional options at the N.C. 86 interchange area in order to reduce potential impacts to Duke Forest and the Northwood neighborhood. The current proposal represents a substantial reduction in impacts to Duke Forest compared to the option that was reviewed with Orange County officials at the Local Officials Informational Meeting. Impacts to Duke Forest are still possible; however, any impacts will be confined to the N.C. 86 and Whitfield Road frontages. An alternative that would minimize impacts to the Northwood neighborhood, Option 4B, was developed and presented to the public at the January 24, 2019 Public Meeting. This option provides a Super Street concept and would not result in any home displacements within the neighborhood. This option could require impacts to private property along the N.C. 86 and Eubanks Road frontages. NCDOT will further minimize impacts to private properties to the extent possible during final design.

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

27. Comment: Minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on neighborhoods surrounding the project.

Response: Comment noted. NCDOT will minimize impacts to neighborhoods surrounding the project to the extent possible during final design. If the acquisition of private property is required, NCDOT Right-of-Way and Relocation procedures will be followed.

28. Comment: Support alternative modes of travel, specifically bicycle and pedestrian.

Response: The project includes bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The existing bike lanes along N.C. 86 and Eubanks Road will be maintained or rebuilt. Additionally, new bike lanes will be provided along the west side of N.C. 86 from the I-40 eastbound exit ramp to Northwood Drive and along the east side of N.C. 86 from Eubanks Road to the eastbound I-40 entrance ramp. Also, new bike lanes will be provided along both sides of N.C. 86 from Whitfield Road to the bridge carrying N.C. 86 over I-40. Bike lanes will not be included at this time along the bridge carrying N.C. 86 over I-40 because the bridge will not be replaced under the current project. When that bridge is replaced, the inclusion of bike lanes on the bridge will be considered. Crosswalks are recommended across N.C. 86 at Perkins Drive and Eubanks Road. Sidewalks will be included along the length of the project pending Town of Chapel Hill agreement and cost participation.

29. Comment: Contribute positively to the character of Chapel Hill.

Response: Comment noted.

30. Comment: Stagger construction improvements on Old N.C. 86 and N.C. 86 so that construction occurs on each road at different times, thereby optimizing vehicular access to I-40.

Response: NCDOT will coordinate project construction to minimize simultaneous construction at both interchanges.

31. Comment: Protect the feasibility of future improvements to Eubanks Road and N.C. 86 for the North South BRT project, as planned by Chapel Hill Transit.

Response: NCDOT will coordinate with the Town of Chapel Hill to accommodate the implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along the project corridor during the final design of the project. The existing preliminary design for the I-40 widening project will not prevent the implementation of the BRT project.

32. Comment: Ensure design that allows for sufficient emergency response.

Response: NCDOT will continue to coordinate with emergency response agencies as the project continues to be developed.

33. Comment: Maintain left turn movements from Eubanks Road onto northbound N.C. 86 as much as possible, potentially as a short-term measure until traffic levels exceed certain thresholds.

Response: The proposed improvements recommended at the N.C. 86 interchange include converting the N.C. 86 intersection with Eubanks Road into a superstreet configuration which would prevent left turns out of Eubanks Road and allow for those movements at a new U-turn bulb-out at Perkins Drive. However, recent traffic studies confirm that while the superstreet configuration at this location will be necessary before the design year 2040, the existing intersection configuration will operate adequately for a few years. Therefore, the superstreet component of the proposed improvements (including the restriction of left turn movements out of Eubanks Road) will be delayed until the year 2025, at which time NCDOT will re-evaluate and construct the necessary intersection improvements. The other roadway improvements proposed at the N.C. 86 Interchange, including the addition of an exit loop in the northwest quadrant and the construction of a slip

ramp from the eastbound exit ramp onto Eubanks Road, will be constructed with the I-40 widening project, I-3306A, in accordance with the STIP schedule.

32. Comment: Widen the eastbound I-40 exit ramp to create an additional lane of traffic exiting onto N.C. 86. This would be in addition to the proposed slip lane from the exit ramp onto Eubanks Road.

Response: The proposed improvements now include an additional right turn lane on the eastbound I-40 exit ramp to aid in traffic flow and vehicle storage.