

**Member Governments**

Town of Carrboro  
Town of Chapel Hill  
County of Chatham  
City of Durham  
County of Durham  
County of Orange  
NC Department of  
Transportation  
Town of Hillsborough

**DURHAM – CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)**

**AGENDA**

**November 22, 2006  
9:00 a.m.**

**City Council Committee Room  
2nd floor Durham City Hall**

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- 1. Preliminaries**
- 2. Adjustments to the Agenda**
- 3. Public Comments**

**ACTION ITEMS**

**4. Approval of October 25, 2006 TCC Meeting Minutes  
(Attachment 4)**

A copy of the October 25, 2006 minutes is enclosed as Attachment 4.

**TCC Action:** Approve minutes of the October 25, 2006 TCC meeting.

**5. Southwest Durham Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan  
(Attachment 5, 5A, 5B)  
Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

The LPA presented changes to the Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan to the TAC at their September 13, 2006 meeting. The TAC requested that an additional public workshop be conducted to address comments from several residents of the Falconbridge neighborhood that the neighborhood had not had adequate notice to participate in the collector street process. The public workshop was conducted on October 10, 2006 at the Creekside Elementary School. In addition, the Town of Chapel Hill conducted a public hearing on the Revised Collector Street Plan on October 18, 2006. The Town of Chapel Hill is scheduled to consider adoption of the plan on November 20, 2006.

Based on the most recent public workshop, the Steering Committee has identified three minor adjustments to the Revised Plan for the TCC to consider. Attachment 5 is a memorandum that summarizes the workshop comments and the proposed adjustments. Attachment 5A indicates the location of these adjustments – the number on the map corresponds with the narrative in the memorandum. Attachment 5B is a copy of the Revised Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan. The full report for the Revised Plan is not attached because it is very

large and no changes are proposed to the report narrative. It is available on the MPO Web site – [www.dchcmpo.org](http://www.dchcmpo.org).

**TCC Action:** Receive update on Chapel Hill's consideration of the plan. If needed, revise the plan and forward the recommendation to the TAC.

**6. 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan  
(Attachment 6, additional handouts to be provided at the meeting)  
Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

At the August 9, 2006 TAC meeting, the LPA presented the schedule for the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (2035 LRTP) as an informational item. The 2035 LRTP schedule designates the TAC to receive the preliminary socio-economic data (SE Data) at the November TAC meeting and to release the SE Data for public comment at their December meeting. Attachment 6 is the Summarized 2035 LRTP Development Schedule. At the November 8, 2006 TAC meeting, the LPA provided a preliminary review of the SE Data Base Year and forecasts, and the DCHC partner agencies met on November 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss the status of the SE Data. In addition, the Interagency Consultation group has met several times to discuss coordination of the timing for approving the new SE data (for the 2035 LRTP), the 2030 LRTP amendment, and the FY2007-2013 MTIP Conformity Determination.

The TCC needs to review the status of the SE Data and the timing for approving these documents to determine how the SE Data schedule needs to be adjusted.

**TCC Action:** Receive update on SE Data and review schedule.

**REPORTS FROM STAFF:**

**7. Reports from Staff  
(Attachment 7, 7A)  
Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

**TCC Action:** Receive Report from staff

**8. Report from the Chair  
Mark Ahrendsen, TCC Chair**

**TCC Action:** Receive Report from TCC Chair

**9. NCDOT Report  
(Attachment 9)  
Jon Nance, Division 5 – NCDOT  
Mike Mills, Division 7 – NCDOT**

Progress Reports for current Division 5 and 7 construction work is provided as Attachment 9.

**TCC Action:** Receive report of Division Engineers

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**10. Recent Newspaper Articles/Legislative Update**  
(Attachment 10)

**11. Schedule for the Public Comment Meetings for the Draft 2007-2013 STIP and the Draft 2009-2015 STIP**  
(Attachment 11)

**PENDING ITEMS**

**MPO Functional Classification of Streets and Roadways  
Regional Priority List Ranking Methodology**

**Adjourn**

**Next meeting: December 27, 2006**

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**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**October 25, 2006**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

- \*Mark Ahrendsen City of Durham/Transportation (TCC Chair)
- \*David Bonk Town of Chapel Hill
- \*Andy Henry City of Durham/Transportation
- \*John Hodges-Copple Triangle J COG
- \*Karen Lincoln Orange County Planning
- \*Dale McKeel Town of Carrboro
- \*Mike Mills NCDOT – Division 7 Engineer
- \*Jon Nance NCDOT-Division 5 Engineer
- \*Felix Nwoko City of Durham/Transportation
- \*Pierre Osei Owusu City of Durham-DATA
- \*Liz Rooks Research Triangle Foundation
- \*Tamra Shaw NCDOT-PTD
- \*Scott Walston NCDOT-TPB
- \*Barbara Weigel Triangle Transit Authority
- Ellen Beckmann City of Durham/Transportation
- Anna Biton Town of Chapel Hill
- Wally Bowman NCDOT-Division 5 Engineer
- Jeff Dayton HNTB Corporation
- Bing Mei ITRE
- Brian Rhodes City of Durham/Transportation
- Chao Wang City of Durham/Transportation
- Scottie Wilkins Granville County
- \*Voting Member

Mark Ahrendsen, TCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

**Preliminaries:**

**Adjustments to the Agenda**

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Action Items:**

36 **Approval of September 27, 2006 TCC Meeting Minutes (Attachment 4)**

37 A motion was made by Karen Lincoln and seconded by Liz Rooks to approve the  
38 September 27, 2006 TCC Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

39 **Southwest Durham Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan (Attachments 5, 5A,**  
40 **5B, and 5C)**

41  
42 Mark Ahrendsen provided an introduction for the Southwest Durham Southeast  
43 Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan, along with the attachments.

44 Andy Henry provided an update to staff. A public workshop was held at  
45 Creekside Elementary School and the comments from the public did not provide any new  
46 issues. On the map on attachment 5B, three proposed modifications to the plan are  
47 indicated. Number 1 is Crescent Drive which Andy does not recommend classifying as a  
48 collector street. The collector street indicated by number 2 is going through a house and  
49 should be realigned slightly. Number 3 concerns a long collector street running along the  
50 George King right of way and about two-thirds of the way south it connects to Crossland  
51 Drive which is an existing stubout. Some individuals said that we should just run the last  
52 thirty to forty feet straight into NC 54. There is about an eight or ten foot difference in  
53 the elevation between George King and NC 54 and Andy is not sure if NCDOT would be  
54 in favor of two T-intersections on NC 54.

55 On November 20, 2006 the Town of Chapel Hill is going to consider the plan  
56 again. David Bonk reported that the Town of Chapel Hill had two issues at the public  
57 hearing. One is the dual bridge crossing south of 15-501, one for the fixed guideway  
58 corridor and the other for the proposed collector street. The Town of Chapel Hill does  
59 not believe this is feasible and this may be the time to correct it, if in fact that crossing is  
60 a collector street. The other issue raised is peripheral to the collector street plan, but to a

61 degree that there was a map in the plan that shows the land use plan for Durham in the  
62 station area. The Town of Chapel Hill raised several concerns among the representatives  
63 about the consistency between the Durham land use plan and the land use needed to  
64 support the proposed transit station. David Bonk stated that Durham needs to explain  
65 how land use plan will support transit. Mark Ahrendsen stated that the land use plan is  
66 adopted. David Bonk stated that the TAC moved the transit corridor based on assurance  
67 that the land use would support the relocated station and it does not. Mark Ahrendsen  
68 stated that the land use plan included a station in the earlier plan. David stated that this  
69 station was not there. David stated that the Town of Chapel Hill may not support the  
70 Southwest Durham Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan based on the concerns  
71 stated above.

72 John Hodges-Copple asked about number 3 on attachment 5B. He asked if the  
73 intersection of Crossland Drive and NC 54 could be a right turn only rather than jogging  
74 on the service road. Andy Henry stated that he is not sure how the intersection will be  
75 designed.

76 Andy Henry stated that a few of the Town of Chapel Hill council members want  
77 to know more about the Durham Unified Development Ordinance. David Bonk asked if  
78 the stub-out roads currently built in the study area extend to the both jurisdictional line  
79 and the property line. If so, can Durham take an action to connect to these roads without  
80 any action being taken by the Town of Chapel Hill? If the stub-out roads do not extend  
81 to the boundary, does it create a gap in the road that can not be built without further  
82 action? David Bonk stated that they will try to resolve some of the concerns expressed  
83 by the public and the council.

84 David Bonk stated that residents of the Oaks are requesting additional money for  
85 traffic calming in the neighborhood when the connections are built. David suggesting  
86 dedicating STP-DA funds for this purpose. David also stated that Town of Chapel Hill  
87 staff are in favor of the connection of Southwest Durham Drive to Meadowmont Lane.

88 David Bonk stated that it would help if Andy Henry could follow up on the issue  
89 of the status of the plan for the piece of property adjoining Kinsale Drive, as well as, the  
90 clarification on the issue of the traffic impact statement. Andy stated that he will also  
91 provide air quality information. Andy will make the necessary changes.

92 **2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) (Attachments 6, 6A, 6B,**  
93 **6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G, 6H, and 6I)**

94  
95 Mark Ahrendsen provided an introduction for the 2007-2013 Transportation  
96 Improvement Program (MTIP), along with the attachments.

97 Ellen Beckmann highlighted the changes on attachment 6 for Division 5. Liz  
98 Rooks expressed concern that T.W. Alexander (U-3309) was being delayed again.

99 Pierre Osei-Owusu stated that on attachment 6A, page 10, project C-4702 needs  
100 to be deleted. Tamra Shaw stated that C-4702 appears to be a repeat, there is no CMAQ  
101 funding for 10 replacement buses, it is CMAQ funding for 5 hybrid buses which is on  
102 attachment 6E, page 26, project C-4927.

103 Ellen Beckmann stated she did not get all the transit project information on the  
104 funding into this draft, but it will be put in over the next couple of weeks.

105 David Bonk highlighted the changes on attachment 6 for Division 7. John  
106 Hodges-Copple stated that we should let NCDOT know that we are shifting funds to the  
107 signal system (U-4704) from Weaver Dairy Road (U-3306). Since this may help with  
108 their cash flow issue, they may be more willing to make a trade.

109           The Town of Chapel Hill and Carrboro both stated they would like to see  
110 something happen along Estes Drive to accommodate bicycles. The Town of Carrboro  
111 has been working on a possible alternative to the proposed widening of Estes Drive  
112 adjacent to North Greensboro Street that would allow for bike/pedestrian access to  
113 connect to Estes Drive east of the intersection with North Greensboro Street and include  
114 widened shoulders or bike accommodations on Estes Drive from that point to Sewell  
115 School Road which is where the moving ahead project ended. The Town of Chapel Hill  
116 has agreed to support the Town of Carrboro's interest. Dale McKeel stated that the  
117 NCDOT is looking to see if there are any construction funds that can be applied to this  
118 project. Dale stated that there is a project in the TIP for bike lanes on Sewell School  
119 Road in 2007 and that we could request applying these funds to Estes Drive.

120           Dale McKeel stated that on attachment 6A, page 28, project U-3100B needs to be  
121 reworded to "SR 1107 (Old Fayetteville Road), McDougle Middle School to NC 54.  
122 Add bicycle lanes, transit facilities, and sidewalks." On page 37, project U-2805 should  
123 read Route City/County "Carrboro and Chapel Hill." The description should also be  
124 changed to read, "Widen to three lanes with bike lanes and sidewalks." Page 38, project  
125 U-2909 should be divided into two phases and add sidewalks and bike lanes. Reword the  
126 description the same as in the previous TIP, similar to the Homestead project.

127           Karen Lincoln expressed she likes the new format but there needs to be a legend  
128 from the funding sources and a header before each type on attachment 6A.

129           Ellen Beckmann stated that they are trying to schedule the one-on-one meetings  
130 the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>. Jon Nance stated that NCDOT is in the process of looking  
131 at all the projects to see if any of the projects that are currently scheduled are going to

132 have a problem before the one-on-one meeting. Jon will check to see when this is  
133 expected to be complete and get back to Mark.

134 Ellen Beckmann mentioned that NCDOT changed the funding source for U-4010  
135 to STPDA to offset the earmark funds dedicated to the American Tobacco Trail (E-  
136 2921E). John Nance explained that because of the state equity formula and because the  
137 earmark did not provide “new” money to Durham, NCDOT needed to offset the earmark.  
138 Felix Nwoko recommended meeting with Mike Stanley to discuss the issue with the  
139 earmark. David Bonk stated that the MPO needs to make a statement to all local  
140 governments that an earmark should not be pursued with a congregational delegation that  
141 is not exempt from the equity formula.

142 David Bonk stated that attachment 6C will need to be revised and updated to  
143 include transit projects. David would like to see a comparison of the 2006-2012 TIP to  
144 the 2007-2013 TIP.

145 A motion was made by David Bonk and seconded by Pierre Osei-Owusu to  
146 recommend the Draft 2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) to the  
147 TAC for consideration with the recommended changes. The motion passed with Liz  
148 Rooks and Scott Walston opposing.

149 **Landscaped Medians for the I-85 Widening Project (I-0306) (Attachment 7)**

150 Mark Ahrendsen provided an introduction for the Landscaped Medians for the I-  
151 85 Widening Project (I-306), along with the attachment.

152 Mark Ahrendsen stated that there might be some cost savings from other parts of  
153 the project enhancements that used STP-DA funds that could be reallocated to the  
154 medians. Wally Bowman, NCDOT Division 5 Engineer, stated that they have been

155 working with the contractor to get an estimate. The original cost estimate was \$200,000  
156 and they have been negotiated the cost down to \$150,000 at this time. Wally asked the  
157 resident engineer's office to look at the DA balances and it appears that there will be  
158 enough funds to cover this supplemental agreement of \$150,000.

159 Dale McKeel asked if there have been any funds expended for either the berm at  
160 Hillandale Commons or the interchange fencing associated with the I-85 project. Mark  
161 Ahrendsen stated that we have not expended any of the funds yet and we will spend them  
162 when we are billed upon the completion. The work has been done and the contractor has  
163 incurred the expense and has been reimbursed.

164 **2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (Attachment 8, additional handouts to be**  
165 **provided at the meeting)**

166  
167 Andy Henry provided an update on the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan,  
168 along with the attachments. Andy has received 2005 base year data from everyone.  
169 There are some things that need to be fixed in the next few months. For Durham, the  
170 total employment looks good, however the distribution of the different types of  
171 employment categories and service were not correct. We have more households than we  
172 have dwelling units. Andy thinks this is related to how student households are defined.  
173 For Chapel Hill, we have more households than dwelling units.

174 The only forecast Andy has so far is from Hillsborough and Durham. He is  
175 missing Orange, Carrboro, Chatham, and Chapel Hill.

176 David Bonk stated that he thought a part of the process was for the local  
177 governments to endorse the projections. John Hodges-Copple stated that the only  
178 technical review required is at the MPO level. David stated that he believes an explicit  
179 statement needs to be made that when the TAC adopts the numbers, their local

180 representatives are in fact signing off on the accuracy of the figures for their jurisdictions.  
181 John Hodges-Copple agrees with David Bonk that it is an excellent idea to request that  
182 each MPO member government have an agenda item related to this at their meetings.  
183 Mark Ahrendsen stated that the local governments can approve it, but the TAC will make  
184 the final decision. Mark stated that as part of the presentation to the TAC we should  
185 mentioned that this is an issue that has been raised and that we want to make sure that  
186 everyone is comfortable with the numbers.

187         Andy Henry stated that we need to have a set of preliminary data for the TAC for  
188 their November meeting. The subcommittee needs to review the data and prepare a  
189 package for the TAC. Felix Nwoko stated that the packets will go out the first of  
190 November so all information needs to be submitted to the LPA staff prior to November 1.  
191 Barbara Weigel asked what are the components of the SE Data that will be released.  
192 Andy stated that it is household population, total employment and employment by five  
193 categories. The income also goes into the model, but traditionally we haven't released it.  
194 Felix Nwoko stated that population is used for the growth curve.

195         David Bonk stated that the schedule for the SE Data is that it goes to the TAC in  
196 November for preliminary review, it is presented to the TAC and released for public  
197 comment in December, and the TAC will approve it in February.

198         Mark Ahrendsen stated that it would be helpful if Andy could send sector maps to  
199 the TCC. Barbara Weigel stated that it would be useful to look at it in terms of travel  
200 patterns, not just geographic boundaries. Mark Ahrendsen stated that travel patterns  
201 would be addressed later in the model.

202 **Triangle Regional Transit Planning (Attachment 9 and 9A)**

203 Mark Ahrendsen provided an introduction for the Triangle Regional Transit  
204 Planning, along with the attachments.

205 John Hodges-Copple stated that the Blueprint project is to do three analyses on  
206 major transit corridors that are already contained in a LRTP, CTP, or local plan: a land  
207 use analysis; a travel analysis, what type of trip was made in the corridor; and a cost  
208 analysis. The other big piece is, given this information, how do you then decide what to  
209 invest in. The committee has been discussing setting up a Blue Ribbon Committee that  
210 would consider these options and come with a regional recommendation. We are setting  
211 up a technical oversight committee that will guide the sponsors in doing a technical  
212 analysis and letters should go out for the first meeting in December. This item will be  
213 addressed at the Joint TAC meeting in November.

214 **2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment (Attachment 10)**

215 Mark Ahrendsen provided an introduction for the 2030 Long Range  
216 Transportation Plan Amendment, along with the attachment.

217 John Hodges-Copple provided an update. Due to the toll road projects, the delay  
218 in TTA, Wendell Falls Parkway, and any delayed projects from the current STIP an  
219 amendment is needed. We are not changing any land use projections and we are not  
220 changing, adding, or deleting any projects. We are just shifting the timing of the projects.  
221 We had the inter-agency consultation meeting and it raised a lot of issues that we thought  
222 had already been addressed. We have a very tight time frame in which to do this  
223 amendment. It will require the MPO to officially put the amendment out for public  
224 comment, adopt the air quality conformity report, and adopt the amendment at the end of

225 the process. All of these requirements must be met by June 20, 2007 because the new  
226 SAFETEA-LU requirements start July 1, 2007.

227 **Triangle Regional Model Update (Attachment 11 and 11A)**

228 Mark Ahrendsen provided an introduction for the Triangle Regional Model  
229 Update, along with the attachments.

230 David Bonk stated that the MPO needs to pay particular attention to this model.

231 David stated that the modeling subcommittee needs to meet and discuss the various  
232 elements of the model. In particular, the committee needs to review the numbers coming  
233 out of the validation process for version 1 to see how wide the gap is and to get an  
234 explanation as to what is being done to tweak the model for version 2 to get acceptable  
235 numbers. Felix Nwoko will get with Joe Huegy, TTA, to schedule a meeting with the  
236 modeling subcommittee.

237 David Bonk stated that the modeling subcommittee and anyone else that is  
238 interested will have a meeting to discuss how the model now handles trip distribution as  
239 opposed to the previous way. John Hodges-Copple stated that a memo needs to be issued  
240 addressing these and other concerns so that TCC members are aware of the status. Mark  
241 Ahrendsen stated that in some ways the model is better and other ways it is not where it  
242 needs to be.

243 Bing Mei, ITRE updated staff on the modeling. John Hodges-Copple asked for a  
244 list of the corridors that the local calibrations will be based on, stating that it would be  
245 helpful information. Mr. Mei stated they will prepare a list for staff. Mark Ahrendsen  
246 stated that staff could review the list and add corridors they believe need to be addressed.

247 **Reports from Staff:**

248 **Reports from Staff (Attachment 12 and 12A)**

249 The report from staff is attached.

250 **Report from the Chair**

251 There was a citizen workshop on the East End Connector on September 26 and it  
252 was well attended.

253 **NCDOT Report (Attachment 14)**

254 Jon Nance, NCDOT Division 5 Engineer, provided an update on the projects.  
255 The Davis Drive project will be let in December. Holloway Street will be let in April  
256 2007. The Hopson Road project will be let in June 2007 and the 15-501 project will be  
257 let in July 2007. I-40/NC-54 project is going well and will be complete by the end of the  
258 year. On the I-40 repairs, the contractor plans to only work on the weekends.

259 The Division 5 public meeting will be December 1 in Person County.

260 Felix Nwoko asked about the CMAQ funding on the NC 54 project and Old  
261 Durham Chapel Hill Road project. Alison Carpenter sent a letter to NCDOT Division 5.

262 Jon Nance will be moving to Raleigh – Chief Engineer’s Office in a new position  
263 of Director of Field Operations. Wally Bowman will be the interim Division 5 Engineer.

264 Felix, Mark, and Barbara Weigel stated thanks for everything you have done for  
265 the MPO and wish you well.

266 Mike Mills, NCDOT Division 7 Engineer, provided an update on the projects. In  
267 regard to language in the municipal agreements, there are language changes that will  
268 apply due to training that NCDOT staff is receiving because of a federal mandate.

269 **Informational Items**

270 **Recent Newspaper Articles/Legislative Update (Attachment 15)**

271 The recent newspaper articles/legislative updates are attached.

272 **Best Workplaces for Commuters Fall 2006 Newsletter (Attachment 16)**

273 The Best Workplaces for Commuters Fall 2006 newsletter is attached.

274 **Adjournment**

275 There being no further business before the Technical Coordinating Committee,

276 the meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC)  
DCHC MPO

**FROM:** Lead Planning Agency (LPA)

**DATE:** November 22, 2006

**RE:** Final Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan  
(CSP)

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**Background**

The TAC conducted a public hearing at their June 14, 2006 meeting to hear citizen comments on the recommended Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan. The TAC requested that the TCC revise the recommended plan based on citizen and TAC comments, and present the revised plan at the August or September TAC meeting. In addition, the Town of Chapel Hill requested that the TAC defer action on the Collector Street Plan until the Town Council conducts a public hearing on the plan. This public hearing took place October 18, 2006, 7PM, in the Chapel Hill Town Council Chambers. The Town of Chapel Hill is scheduled to consider adoption of the plan on November 20, 2006.

Changes to the Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan were made and a Revised Plan was presented to the TAC on September 13, 2006. The TAC requested that an additional public workshop be conducted to address comments from several residents of the Falconbridge neighborhood that the neighborhood has not had adequate notice to participate in the collector street process. The public workshop was conducted on October 10, 2006 at the Creekside Elementary School.

**Results of Public Workshop**

Approximately seventy citizens participated in the October 10<sup>th</sup> workshop. The comments are similar to those collected at the third public workshop and TAC public hearing. Attachment 5A is a compilation of the workshop and other comments (e.g., e-mails sent to Lead Planning Agency) that have been collected as a response to the Revised Collector Street Plan. The following points provide a summary of these comments:

Improved Plan – The Revised Plan is an improvement because it is simpler than previous versions and brings needed infrastructure to the area.

Eastwood Park – The Plan is an improvement in that it provides more protection for Eastwood Park (also known as Celeste Circle). However, Crossland Drive should not be a collector street; the current George King Road alignment should be used all the way to NC 54 instead of using Crossland Drive.

Falconbridge Neighborhood – The Plan will increase traffic in the Falconbridge neighborhood.

The Oaks Neighborhoods – The Plan will encourage cut-through traffic from Farrington Road into the Oaks neighborhoods via Kilkenny Drive and Lancaster Drive. The proposed collector streets that connect with these two streets are too straight, thus encouraging cut-through traffic and excessive vehicle speeds.

Southwest Durham Drive – On the section of Southwest Durham Drive that is north of Ephesus Church Road, the Plan should shift the corridor to follow the creek. Southwest Durham Drive should not connect with Meadowmont Lane especially if it is designated as an arterial road (a designation that excludes the use of traffic calming). Connectivity is inevitable, thus if Southwest Durham Drive is connected to Meadowmont Lane, it should not be designated an arterial road and it should have lower speed limits and traffic calming.

The section of Southwest Durham Drive that coincides with Meadowmont Lane should be included in the upcoming process to adjust the Southwest Durham Drive corridor.

Workshop – Comments on the workshop were mostly positive in that people were glad to have an opportunity to comment on the Revised Plan, although a few did not believe the workshop comments would impact the final Plan. Several people were annoyed with the poor acoustics of the meeting room, which made it difficult to hear comments during the presentation.

### **Chapel Hill Public Hearing**

The Town of Chapel Hill conducted a public hearing for the Revised Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan on Wednesday, October 18, 2007, at 7PM in the Town Hall. The Town Council or Manager may submit a resolution or other correspondence to the DCHC MPO that impacts the Collector Street Plan. Given the short time frame between the Chapel Hill public hearing and the TCC meeting, any such correspondence will have to be distributed at the TCC meeting.

### **Additional Changes**

The Steering Committee has identified the following minor adjustments to the Revised Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan that the TCC needs to consider. Attachment 5B indicates the location of these adjustments – the number on the map corresponds with the narrative below:

1. Crescent Drive – There is a section of the Crescent Drive collector street that is south of Cleora Drive. This dead-end section could be eliminated.
2. Rutgers Place – In the Revised Plan, there is a new east/west collector street alignment that parallels Rutgers Place to the south and connects with Farrington Road. This alignment runs through an existing house, and there appears to be adequate right-of-way on existing roads in the area to connect the proposed collector street with Farrington Road. The proposed east/west collector street could use the northern section of Crescent Drive and Rutgers Place to connect with Farrington Road.
3. Crossland Drive – In the Revised Plan, the north/south collector street connection that uses the Crossland Drive alignment does not connect directly with NC 54 – it uses the NC 54 service road to connect with NC 54 across from Huntingridge Road. This collector street could directly connect with NC 54 not using the service road.

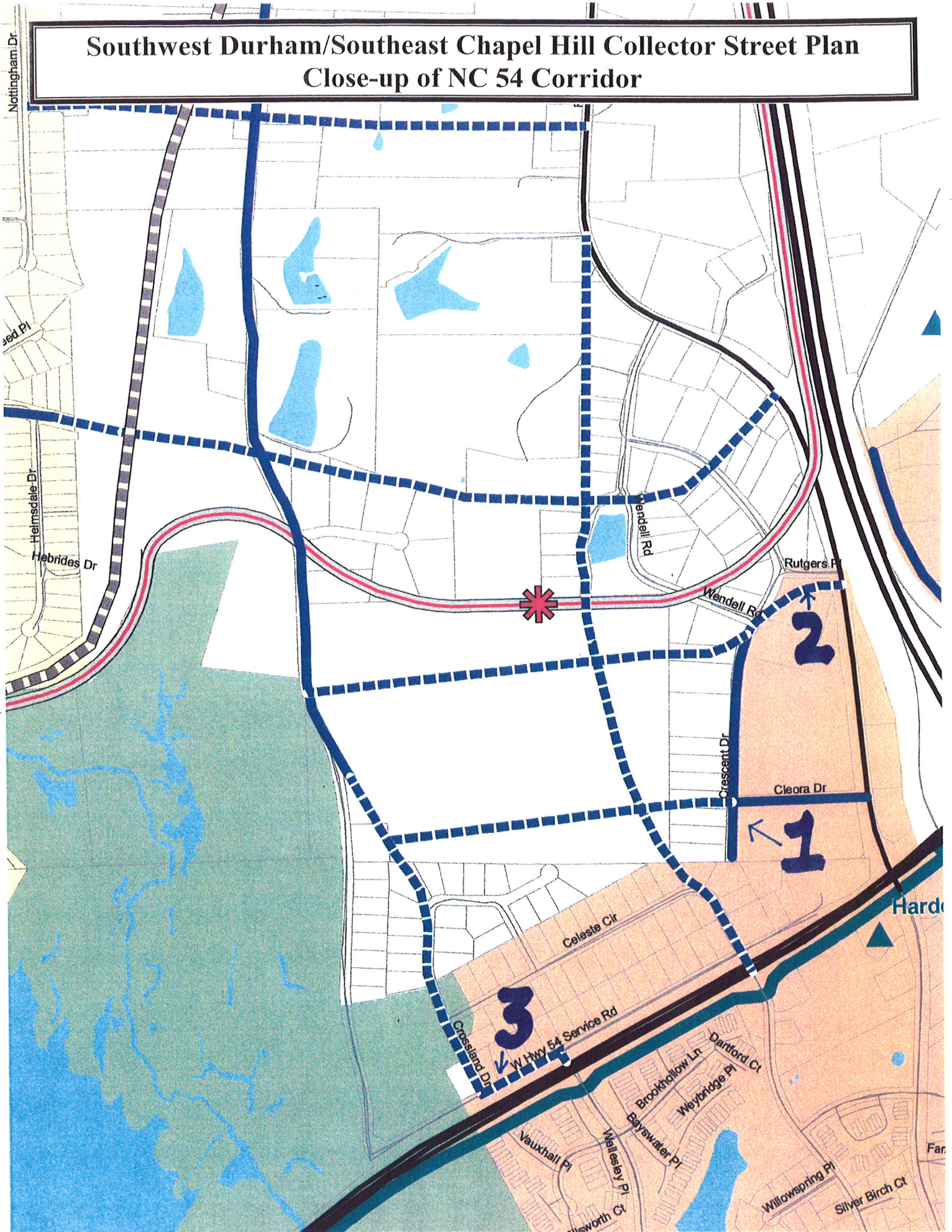
### **TCC Action**

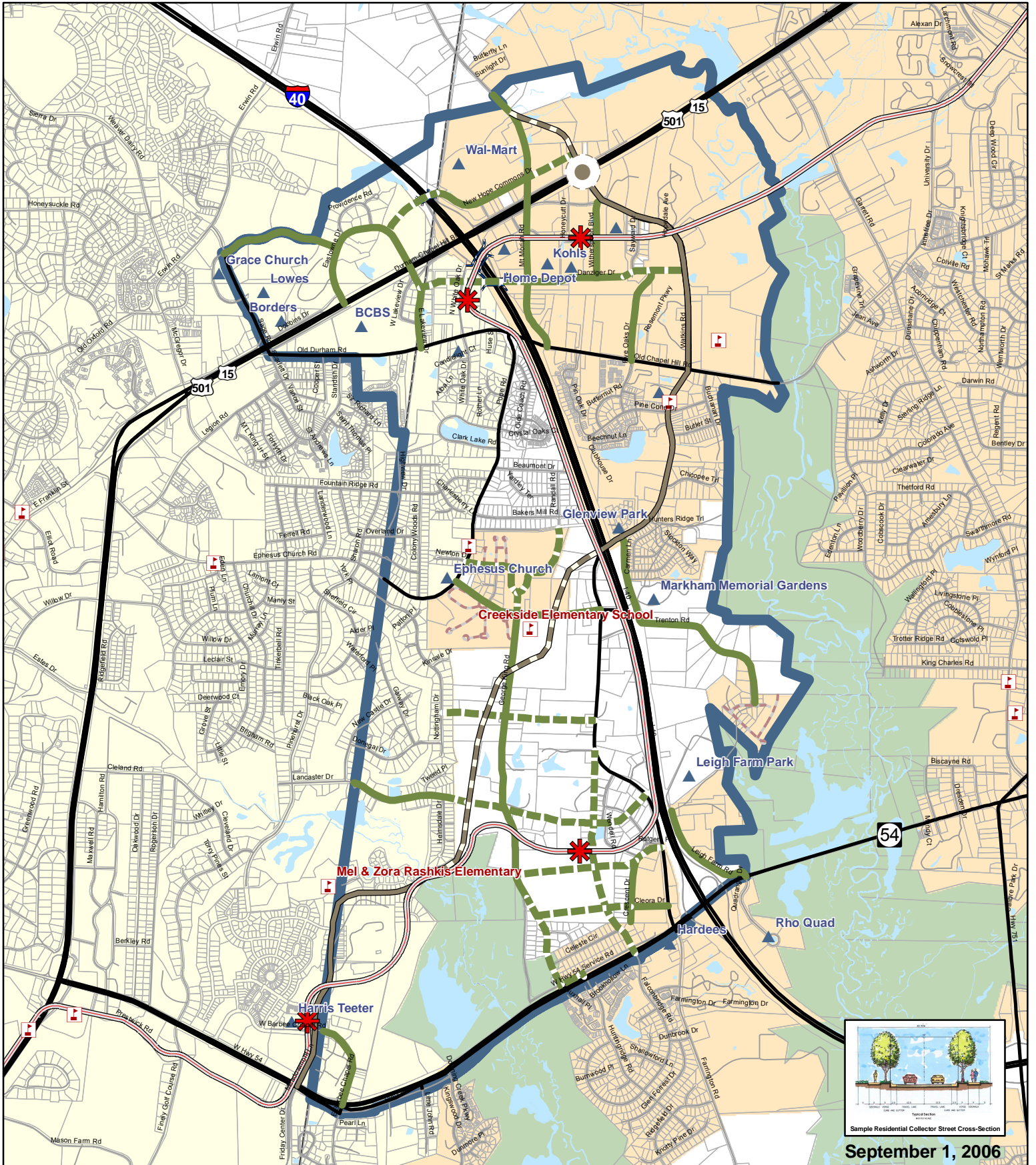
Receive update on Chapel Hill's consideration of the plan. If needed, revise the plan and forward the recommendation to the TAC.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 5A is a map indicating proposed changes to the Revised Plan. Attachment 5B is a copy of the Revised Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan. The full report for the Revised Plan is not attached because it is very large and no changes are proposed to the report narrative. It is available for review upon request to the LPA staff and at [www.dchcmpo.org](http://www.dchcmpo.org).

# Southwest Durham/Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan Close-up of NC 54 Corridor





September 1, 2006

## Southwest Durham - Southeast Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan Revised Draft Recommended CSP Network

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ADD8E6; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Study Area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> County Boundary</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #FFD700; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Durham City Limits</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #FFFF00; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Chapel Hill Town Limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90EE90; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Corps of Engineers Land</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ADD8E6; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Destination Points</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Schools</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Overpass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Proposed Interchange</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Approved SW Durham Drive Alignment</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Southwest Durham Drive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Existing Higher Classification Facilities</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Approved Internal Neighborhood Street</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Proposed Transit Alignment</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Proposed Transit Stations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommended Collector Street**</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #90EE90; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Existing Road to be Classified as Collector*</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px dashed black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Proposed New Collector Streets</li> </ul>
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\* Inclusion in the plan may refer to an upgrade or facility rehabilitation, whether addition of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or landscaping (not necessarily widening).  
\*\* The maps are not precise and do not reflect the actual location or alignment of a proposed facility.



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)  
DCHC MPO

**From:** DCHC MPO Lead Planning Agency

**Date:** November 8, 2006

**Subject:** **Lead Planning Agency (LPA) Staff Report**

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This memorandum provides a summary status of tasks for projects in the FY 2006-2007 Unified Planning Work Program.

- ✓ Indicates that task is complete.
- Indicates that task is ongoing or not complete.

### **2006-07 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Emphasis Projects**

#### **Transit On-Board Survey**

- ✓ Consultant has been selected for the survey.
- ✓ Scoping and contract negotiations have been completed.
- ✓ Kick-off meeting August 8, 2006
- ✓ Survey - in progress.

#### **Travel Time Survey/Speed Study**

- ✓ Consultant has been selected for the survey.
- ✓ Scoping and contract negotiations completed.
- ✓ Field reconnaissance and data collection – in progress.
- Survey to be completed in spring of 2006.

#### **GIS/Data Integration and Automation**

- ✓ Issue RFQ – September 11, 2006
- ✓ Non-mandatory pre-proposal conference – September 25, 2006
- ✓ Receive written proposals – October 15, 2006
- ✓ Consultant short list by October 23-27, 2006
- Consultant short list interviews/references check and city issues Notice of Intent to Award a Contract by October 30-November 13, 2006
- Council approves contract – January 16, 2007
- City issues contract – January 25, 2007
- Notice to proceed – January 29, 2007

**Land-use Model development**

- ✓ Issue RFQ – August 7, 2006
- ✓ Pre-proposal conference – August 29, 2006
- ✓ Receive written proposals – September 8, 2006
- ✓ Consultant short list – September 13-22, 2006
- ✓ Consultant short list interviews/references check and City issues notice of intent to award a contract – September 25-29, 2006
- Council approves contract – December 18, 2006
- City issues contract – December 29, 2006
- Notice to proceed – January 3, 2007
- Consultant submits phase 1 of model including files, model products, and documentation and deliverables – December 2, 2007
- Consultant submits phase 2 of model including files, model products, and documentation and final deliverables – December 15, 2008

**Non-Motorized Model development**

- ✓ Issue RFQ – August 21, 2006
- ✓ Non-mandatory pre-proposal conference – September 6, 2006
- ✓ Receive written proposals – September 21, 2006
- ✓ Consultant short list – September 25-29, 2006
- Consultant short list interviews/references check and City issues notice of intent to award a contract – October 2-6, 2006
- Council approves contract – December 18, 2006
- City issues contract – December 29, 2006
- Notice to proceed – January 3, 2007

**ITS Deployment Plan**

- Two Triangle regional stakeholder coordination meetings held.
- ✓ Update of ITS short range strategies for the 2007-2013 TIP.
- Update of 2007-2010 ITS project – December 2006

**Farrington Road/Stagecoach Road Corridor Study**

- This study would involve the following tasks:
  1. Data collection and analysis
  2. Traffic circulation plan (including a collector street system plan)
  3. Sub-area modeling analysis and forecast of future demand
  4. Alternative evaluation
  5. Recommendation

**MPO Collector Street Plan****Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) / Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Update**

- ✓ Draft schedule – August 2006

**7-Year Transportation Demand Management Program**

- ✓ Contract awarded to UrbanTrans Consultants – September 2006
- ✓ Kick-off meeting – October 23, 2006

### **Regional Transit Infrastructure Blueprint**

- ✓ Establish and convene sponsors and partners teams, agree on detailed task list, responsibilities, products, begin infrastructure and corridor descriptions; begin investment principles - summer 2006
- Finish corridor and infrastructure descriptions; finalize principles fall 2006
- Begin land use, travel and cost analysis - winter 2006
- Finish land use, travel, cost analysis - spring 2007
- Conclude work, issue Blueprint, implement tracking mechanism - summer 2007

### **Chapel Hill/Carrboro/UNC Long Range Transit Plan**

#### **Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (JARC/New Freedom)**

- ✓ Convene Project Planning Team – Completed by September 15
- ✓ Inventory of available human services transportation and public transportation - Completed by October 15
- Assess the transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, persons with limited incomes, and “reverse-commuters.” Identify what the current systems do well and what we need to do better. – First stakeholder meeting to be held November 1, Draft assessment to be completed by December 1
- Prioritize the gaps in service and the areas of redundant services. Identify key performance criteria for evaluating actions/strategies to address the priorities. - Stakeholder meeting to be held by December 15
- Prepare a draft plan document. - Draft plan to be presented to TCC Transit/TDM Subcommittee and the TCC meetings in January
- Final document. - Final plan to be presented at February TAC meeting

### **2005-06 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Emphasis Projects – In Progress**

#### **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Inventory and Action Plan**

- ✓ Execute contract and give consultant Notice-to-Proceed – March 2006 (delayed due to contract issues)
- ✓ Formation of Technical Committee finalized in February 2006.
- ✓ Formation of stakeholder committee (Advisory Committee) finalized in February 2006.
- ✓ Kick off meeting for the study held March 23, 2006
- ✓ Establish Project Team List serve in February 2006

- ✓ Base Year data Collection and Information Gathering to be completed in March-August 2006 (Durham – complete; Orange – in progress).
- ✓ Data Analysis and Projection likely to be completed in (Durham - August 2006; Orange - ?).
- ✓ Determine and quantify historic and existing measures likely to be completed in July-August 2006.
- ✓ Identify new measures to be completed in August 2006.
- ✓ Criteria Air Pollutant (CAP) Analysis anticipated to be completed in September 2006.
- Identify GHG target and model reduction targets anticipated to be completed in December 2006.
- Formulate Action Plan anticipated to be completed in January 2007.
- Recommend reduction targets, strategies and action plan anticipated to be done by January 2007.
- Draft Report likely to be done in January 2007.
- Final Plan anticipated to be finalized in February 2007.
- Plan Adoption (Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Durham City, Durham County, Orange County and TAC) anticipated occurring during the months of February 2006 and March 2007.

#### **Congestion Management System (CMS)/Mobility Report Card**

- ✓ Consultants selected for the study.
- ✓ Data collection for the Mobility Report Card underway
- ✓ Data Collection for the Durham study about 60% complete.
- Data Collection and field inventory to be completed by fall 2006.
- Level of Service analysis anticipated to be completed by fall 2006.
- Development of CMS performance measures and guidelines likely to be completed in June 2006.
- Evaluation of congestion management strategies and development of cost-effective mitigation measures expected to be done by fall 2006.
- Draft CMS State of System Report likely to be done in spring 2007.
- Public Comment and local review in summer 2007.
- Adoption anticipated in summer/fall 2007.

#### **Travel Demand Model Update – Model Revision to Incorporate FTA New Start enhancement**

- ✓ Consultant has been selected to assist the Triangle Regional Model (TRM) Service Bureau at ITRE in the model update.
- ✓ Data collection is complete.
- ✓ Migration of model from Tranplan to TransCad has been completed.
- ✓ Phase 1 (TTA new start model revision) completed in October 2005.
- ✓ Phase II TTA New Start model conversion to TransCad to be completed in August 2006.
- Calibration of 2002 model in TransCad anticipated to be completed in December 2006.

- Validation of 2002 model against 2005 count data anticipated to be completed in November/December 2006

### **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Routine and Other Special Projects**

#### **MPO Environmental Justice (EJ) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan Integration**

- Mandated by federal regulations
- Draft plan to be prepared in 2007.

#### **Update of the MPO Public Involvement Policy**

- ✓ Draft to be ready for August 2006 TAC meeting.
- ✓ Presented at October 2006 TAC meeting for adoption.

#### **MPO Expansion for the next LRTP Update**

- ✓ Initiated dialogue with Person County, Granville County, Butner, Roxboro and Pittsboro – July 2006
- ✓ Met with governing bodies of these jurisdictions – September 2006
- MPO expansion and revision of MOU expected to be completed as part of the 2035 LRTP update.

#### **Public Outreach for the East End Connector Planning and Environmental Study**

- ✓ LPA working on the Public Involvement and Outreach Program for the East End Connector Planning and Environmental Study (NEPA).
- ✓ Development of mailing list database complete.
- ✓ Received project schedule and time line from NCDOT.
- ✓ Newsletter distributed May 2006
- ✓ Speakers Bureau presentations June 2006 – ongoing
- ✓ First public meeting September 26, 2006
- Second public meeting – January 2007

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)  
DCHC MPO

**From:** DCHC MPO Lead Planning Agency

**Date:** November 8, 2006

**Subject:** **Lead Planning Agency (LPA) Staff Report – Long Range  
Transportation Plan**

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**Update on the progress of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

There are two principal elements of the socio-economic data (SE Data) that is input into the Triangle Regional Model (TRM). The 2005 Base Year data collection of population and employment data has largely been completed except for some final checks. The 2035 Forecast for population and employment data has begun and continues with good progress. Based on the current schedule, the TAC will review preliminary data in November, and will be requested to release draft SE Data in December for a 42-day public comment period.

In the next few months, the TAC will adopt a modified Public Involvement Plan that incorporates several new requirements arising from the most recent federal transportation legislation (i.e., SAFETEA-LU). These new requirements are already assumed in the LRTP schedule and work plan. However, the recent decision by the Triangle Transit Authority to discontinue the pursuit of federal New Start funding for the TTA Phase I Rail System might have a significant impact on the LRTP public involvement process. A new blueprint for transit services in the Triangle Region will require extensive public input and education, and this major project will need to be coordinated with the LRTP public involvement process.

**Update on the progress of Triangle Regional Model (TRM)**

The PB consultant team completed the model enhancement work and the final product was delivered on August 31, 2006. This 2002 base year model is now being tested by the TRM Service Bureau, including validation against 2005 data sets and a sensitivity check against 2030 data sets. It is expected that this TRM model will be ready for TAC review in December 2006.

**NCDOT PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN DURHAM COUNTY - 11/1/2006**

County	TIP #	Route	Location Description	Contract Amount	Length	Contractor Name	Resident Engineer	RE Ph. #	Contract Completion	Scheduled Progress	Actual Progress	Estimated Completion
Durham	I-3306B	I-40	WIDENING OF I-40 FROM ORANGE CO LINE TO DURHAM FREEWAY.	\$ 44,790,284.74	10.837 miles	Granite Construction Company	Phillip R. Johnson, PE, PLS	(919) 678-0444	12/14/2003	100%	99.9%	-----
Durham, Wake	R-2906A/C	NC-55	WIDENING OF NC-55 FROM NORTH OF US-64 IN WAKE COUNTY TO CORNWALLIS RD.	\$ 34,668,947.33	11.634 miles	Blythe Development Co	Phillip R. Johnson, PE, PLS	(919) 678-0444	06/01/2006	100%	87.2%	12/31/2006
Durham	I-306DB	I-85	WIDENING OF I-85 FROM WEST OF BROAD STREET TO WEST OF CAMDEN AVE.	\$ 73,297,064.77	4.093 km	Granite Construction Company	Aaron V. Earwood, PE	(919) 560-6857	12/31/2004	99%	98.5%	12/31/2006
Durham	I-306C	I-85	WIDENING OF I-85 FROM EAST OF COLE MILL RD TO WEST OF BROAD STREET.	\$ 66,628,382.65	3.416 km	Granite Construction Company	Aaron V. Earwood, PE	(919) 560-6857	12/31/2006	98.5%	92.0%	12/31/2006
Durham, Wake	R-2000AB/AC	I-540	CONSTRUCTION OF I-540 FROM RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK EAST LIMITS TO I-40.	\$ 68,368,301.43	5.346 km	The Lane Construction Corp.	Phillip R. Johnson, PE, PLS	(919) 733-9499	08/01/2007	87.0%	89.0%	08/01/2007
Durham	2006-RESURF	US-70	1 SECTION OF US-70, AND 27 SECTIONS OF SECONDARY ROADS (2006-DURHAM)	\$ 2,812,923.19	23.42 miles	C C Mangum Company LLC	Bob Shultes	(919) 840-0914	10/28/2006	58.6%	47.9%	12/15/2006
Durham	B-4110	BAHAMA ROAD	BRIDGE NO. 5 OVER MOUNTAIN CREEK ON BAHAMA ROAD	\$ 1,274,113.68	0.152 miles	Dellinger, Inc.	Aaron V. Earwood, PE	(919) 560-6857	12/1/2006	55.0%	18.5%	12/15/2006

**NCDOT PROJECTS FOR LET NEXT 12 MONTHS IN DURHAM COUNTY - 11/1/2006**

County	TIP #	Route	Location Description	Contract Estimate	Length	Contact Engineer	Phone #	Contract Let Date
DURHAM / WAKE	U-4026A/B 2904	R DAVIS DRIVE / NC-54	WIDENING OF DAVIS DRIVE FROM MORRISVILLE-CARPENTER ROAD TO NC 54, WIDENING OF NC-54 FROM DAVIS DRIVE TO MIAMI BLVD	\$ 38,100,000.00	6.363 miles	D. TAYLOR	(919) 250-4016	12/19/2006
DURHAM	U-4010	NC 98	WIDENING OF NC 98 (HOLLOWAY ST) FROM EAST OF US 70 TO EAST OF JUNCTION ROAD	\$ 3,200,000.00	0.369 miles	J. MOORE	(919) 250-4016	4/17/2007
DURHAM	U-4410DB	HOPSON ROAD	NEW ALIGNMENT OF HOPSON ROAD FROM NC-55 TO LOUIS STEPHENS DRIVE	\$ 3,800,000.00	0.587 miles	C. HAIRE	(919) 250-4016	6/19/2007
DURHAM	B-3450 / U-4009 / U-4012	GARRETT ROAD	TWO BRIDGES ON GARRETT RD; SERVICE ROAD NEAR US 15-501 AND GARRETT RD INTERSECTION; US 15-501 FROM NORTH MT. MORIAH RD SOUTH OF GARRETT RD	\$ 17,400,000.00	1.708 miles	C. HOUSER	(919) 250-4016	7/17/2007

12 MONTH TENTATIVE LET LIST MAY BE FOUND ONLINE AT: <http://www.ncdot.org/planning/development/ProjectMgmt/12month/>

PROGRESS REPORTS MAY BE FOUND ONLINE AT: <http://apps.dot.state.nc.us/constructionunit/proglocreport/ProgLocSearch.aspx>

ACTIVE NCDOT PROJECTS LOCATED IN ORANGE COUNTY - DCHC MPO TCC 11/22/06 Attachment 9

County	WBS #	Route	Location Description	Amount	Status
Orange	31393	NC 86 @ Cameron St.	Upgrade signal heads, replace existing pedestrian signal heads with countdown heads and install mast arms	100,000.00	Revised contract advertisement TBD
Orange	31914	NC 86 @ Rosemary St.	Upgrade signal heads, install a protected/permitted left turn phase for NC 86 and install 2 metal strain poles	35,000.00	Compl. schedule 12/31/06- <b>Delayed</b>
Orange	35009.3.2 U-4008	US 15-501 & SR1734 (Erwin Rd.)	Grading, drainage, paving and intersection improvements (Super Street)	4,989,838.30	Const. underway for completion 10/31/07
Orange	36945	SR 1010 (Franklin St.) @ Mallette St.	Upgrade traffic signal and install pedestrian signal heads	110,000.00	Plan revisions by TEB
Orange	37708	SR 1733 (Weaver Dairy Rd.) @ Sedgefield Dr.	Construct left turn lane	150,000.00	Town acquiring R/W and adjusting utilities
Orange	40553	SR 1777 (Homestead Rd.)	Widening for sidewalks and bikeways from SR 1834 (High School Road) to SR 1729 (Rogers Road) and a turn lane at SR 1834	650,000.00	FA const. underway for turn lane w/ signal @ SR 1834 by <b>11/15/06</b> ; POC in 2007
Orange	40683	US 70 @ US 70 Business /SR 1562 (Palmer's Grove Church Rd.)	Install a flasher	20,000.00	<b>Completed 10/9/06</b>
Orange	40955	SR 1734 (Erwin Rd.) @ Sage Rd.	Install a traffic signal with pedestrian signals	65,000.00	Plans received; materials ordered
Orange	41026.3	NC 54 @ SR 1952 (White Cross Road)	Construct a left turn lane	173,000.00	District to design for FA construction
Orange	41059	SR 1727 (Eubanks Rd.) @ SR 1725 (Millhouse Rd.)	Install a traffic signal	30,000.00	Municipal Agreement with Town of Chapel Hill; <b>construction underway</b>
Orange	41096	NC 54 @ SR 2016 (Southern Drive)	Construct a left turn lane on NC 54 westbound	140,000.00	To Board for approval
Orange	7CR.10681.4, etc.	NC 86	Resurface 2 sections of NC 86 and 9 sections of secondary roads		100% compl.; <b>minor shldr construction pending</b>
Orange	7CR.10681.5	Varied	Resurface 3 sections of US 15-501; 7 sections of NC 54; 1 section of NC 751 and 8 sections of secondary roads		Raleigh Let <b>11/19/06</b>
<b>NCDOT PROJECTS CURRENTLY IN 12 MONTH LETTING LIST</b>					
County	TIP #	Route	Location Description	TIP Est.	Est. Let Date
Orange	SI-4807 <b>40249.3.1</b>	SR 1548 (Schley Rd.) @ SR 1538 (New Sharon Church Rd.)	Install center islands with stop signs on SR 1538	60,000.00	Plan revisions for FA const. compl. by 11/21/06
Orange	SF-4907A <b>40740.1</b>	SR 1567 (Pleasant Green Rd.) @ SR 1569 (Cole Mill Rd.)	Improve sight distance	25,000.00	FA const. pending approval of <b>Final TIP</b>
Orange	SS-4907A <b>40715.3</b>	NC 86 @ Cameron St.	Install pedestrian signal heads across the east side of Cameron St.; upgrade vehicular signal heads to 12"	24,000.00	UNC-CH has upgraded vehicular signal heads; <b>funding approved for pedestrian signal heads</b>
Orange/Chatham	R-0942CA	US 15-501	Widen to multi-lane roadway from North of Co. line to South of SR 1994 (Culbreth Rd.)	95,000.00	Contract Complete; signal installation @ Dogwood Acres Dr. by DOT

## Advocates aren't happy with city's pace on walkway

By Ray Gronberg, The Herald-Sun  
November 2, 2006 11:01 pm

DURHAM -- Advocates for the American Tobacco Trail aren't happy with the pace the city's Public Works Department is setting when it comes to getting a key part of the walkway finished and worry that delays will drive up the cost of the project.

Leaders of the Triangle Rails-To-Trails Conservancy have collected 2,398 signatures on an online petition that urges city officials to get on with designing the segment that will go in near the Streets at Southpoint mall, including a bridge that will carry the trail over Interstate 40.

Estimates posted on the city's Web site call for work on the 4 1/2-mile segment to be complete in the spring of 2010.

Before the project can go ahead, officials need to have the required money in hand, a formal agreement with the N.C. Department of Transportation and a contract with the segment's likely designer, the Parsons Brinckerhoff engineering firm, said Lee Murphy, the Public Works Department's engineering manager.

But Murphy can't say exactly when all that will happen, which is what troubles people like Rails-To-Trails Conservancy President Bill Bussey.

Bussey said he and other trail advocates met last month with two senior administrators, Deputy City Manager Ted Voorhees and Public Works Director Katie Kalb, to try to get answers. From his account, few were given.

"Basically, they said go to the city's Web site to check," Bussey said. "I was not impressed with them. It was obvious they did not want to be there."

One thing that's clear is that the project is caught up in a bureaucratic thicket, in part because construction money from the federal government is being channeled through the DOT. Although the funding is there, the state Board of Transportation has to formally release it before much more can happen. City officials hope the board acts before year's end.

Even after the money is in hand, the use of federal funds means "there are numerous and stringent procedures to follow," Kalb and Voorhees said in an Oct. 5 e-mail to City Manager Patrick Baker. "If [they're] not followed properly, the city will not be reimbursed. Those procedures tend to control the speed of the process."

The agreement memo with DOT is another potential roadblock, as the agency's staff will write its first draft. It's an essential document because it will spell out everything Parsons Brinckerhoff will undertake during the design process, Murphy said.

Hiring the engineering firm could also be a stumbling block -- and it's one that has folks like Bussey especially worried.

Bussey said conservancy leaders aren't convinced Parsons will undertake what promises to be a complicated project for the price state regulations would dictate.

Murphy disputes that. The firm can collect no more than 15 percent of the project's cost for design work and another 15 percent for construction management, he said, adding that he doesn't see a problem getting the engineering firm on board within those caps.

Trail advocates are also bothered by the spring 2010 completion estimate, as city officials until July were saying they thought the project could be done by the summer of 2008.

But that estimate predated a move to reassign the project from the city General Services Department and give it to Public Works.

General Services Director Mark Greenspan said Public Works got the job because his department can't keep up with the entirety of the city's \$180 million construction program, and because Public Works has more experience in dealing with DOT to nail down project agreements like the one needed for the trail.

Once the trail project was moved to Public Works, Murphy revised the completion estimate. "I don't know if [2008] was realistic," he said. "The project wasn't even funded."

The one thing that's clear is that the conservancy -- a nonprofit that arranges corporate donations and volunteer labor -- doesn't feel it's getting clear answers from the city government.

Senior city administrators "have this problem about not communicating or not wanting to communicate," Bussey said. "Maybe these folks need to take a Dale Carnegie class about how to win friends and influence people, because they don't have those skills."

URL for this article: <http://www.heraldsun.com/durham/4-784442.html>

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## **I-40 fix will tax budget, patience**

### The DOT isn't saying what it will cost to replace botched concrete lanes with asphalt

**BRUCE SICELOFF, Staff Writer**

The new concrete pavement on Interstate 40 in Durham County was supposed to be good for 30 years, but it went bad fast.

Now, after a year of patching the most dangerous cracks and potholes, the state Department of Transportation is preparing to rip out the bad concrete. All of it.

State officials wouldn't talk Thursday about the details, but it became clear this week that fixing DOT's paving mistakes on I-40 would cost more, take more time and tie up more traffic than they had hoped.

DOT invited contractors this week to bid for the unusual job of removing the top 3-inch layer from the two outer lanes of I-40, in both directions, for 10.3 miles from U.S. 15-501 in Chapel Hill to N.C. 147 in Research Triangle Park. The concrete layer is deteriorating because of mistakes in the paving process. It will be replaced with asphalt.

The new repair plans will be a dreary prospect for commuters who recall daily delays and rush-hour backups during DOT's three-year project to add lanes to I-40.

It is the Triangle's busiest freeway, carrying more than 150,000 cars and trucks every day. A round of minor pavement repairs now under way is limited to Saturday nights and Sundays, but even this weekend work has been disruptive enough to cause hour-long traffic jams.

Lyndo Tippet, the state transportation secretary, and other senior DOT officials declined to discuss or even acknowledge the I-40 repair project. DOT officials did not respond to several requests for interviews or for public records concerning the deterioration of concrete pavement that was applied in 2003 and 2004.

No details were available on how the repair work would be performed, how much it would affect traffic, how long it would take, what it would cost and who would pay for it. One DOT official, pressed in 2005 to estimate the cost of replacing all the failed concrete, suggested a range of \$10 million to \$15 million.

Kenneth B. Spaulding, a Durham lawyer who represents Durham and Wake counties on the state Board of Transportation, said DOT administrators had given him only a little information about repair plans. He said I-40 should be repaired quickly.

"My main concern is safety for the traveling public," Spaulding said Thursday. "I've traveled that road almost every day, and I have run over different crumbling parts of I-40 and run over the potholes as well. Whatever it takes needs to be done, to get that repaired as expeditiously as possible."

There was a sense of urgency in a classified advertisement published Wednesday and a handful of files posted for contractors on the DOT Web site. DOT officials hope to award the contract in March. Interested contractors are asked to respond by Nov. 16.

"Anybody who produces asphalt is going to be interested in it," said Christie B. Barbee, executive director of the Carolina Asphalt Pavement Association. "I would think there would be some very competitive bidding on it."

Motorists on I-40 reported during a hot spell in July 2005 that the pavement was beginning to buckle and break. Chunks of concrete were bouncing on the roadway. Consultants hired by DOT quickly zeroed in on mistakes in the paving job.

I-40 had been built in Durham County in the 1980s, with two lanes in each direction. DOT widened it by adding a third, inside lane in each direction. The original lanes, which became the two outer lanes, were covered with a 3-inch concrete layer called a bonded overlay.

Expansion joints were to be cut across the concrete layer every 22 feet or so, so the slab could expand and contract with changes in the weather.

But DOT failed to make sure the joints were sliced all the way down through the top layer. Instead of bonding with the concrete below, the top layer separated from the bottom layer.

Len A. Sanderson Jr., the state highway administrator, and Tippet acknowledged last year that DOT had failed to add a paragraph in construction documents for the \$45 million contract specifying that the expansion joints must be cut to the full depth of the concrete layer.

But they maintained that DOT officials had given sufficient oral instructions to the contractor, Granite Construction Co. of Watsonville, Calif. DOT and Granite blamed each other for the oversight, and each vowed that the other would pay for whatever repairs were needed.

They compromised in a five-page settlement signed Oct. 17. Granite's responsibility would end after it repaired about three lane-miles of concrete this fall.

Meanwhile, the settlement document said, DOT had determined that "all other areas of the bonded overlay will need to be repaired at a later date."

Staff writer Bruce Sicheloff can be reached at 829-4527 or [bruce.sicheloff@newsobserver.com](mailto:bruce.sicheloff@newsobserver.com).

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Editorial:

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## Wreck at DOT

Leaders of the state Department of Transportation have slapped taxpayers in the face in failing to face up to an I-40 mess

Do not get your hopes up, good people of North Carolina, especially those in the Research Triangle, in expecting officials from the state Department of Transportation to fix the mess on Interstate 40 in Durham County in a timely fashion. Apparently, they're not even concerned about it. That's if you go by their reluctance to respond to requests for comment and for documents pertaining to the unholy disintegration of I-40, something that came to the fore yesterday when The News & Observer reported that bid offers were being solicited.

DOT officials declined comment, refusing to discuss the issue, or even the fact that the repair project was under consideration. It's a dangerous thing to combine arrogance and incompetence, but the DOT doesn't mind taking the risk.

Consider: the department invited contractors this week to bid for the job of removing the top 3-inch layer from two lanes of I-40, in both directions, for 10.3 miles -- from U.S. 15-501 in Chapel Hill to N.C. 147 in Research Triangle Park. There were mistakes in paving, and there are still questions about assigning percentages of the blame (the contractor's goof or a lack of instruction from DOT). But this much is for sure: travelers on the region's busiest freeway are in for goodness knows what kinds of delays and inconveniences, not to mention millions of dollars in expense. And it'll be a while.

The particulars of the dispute will likely be under debate for some time. The original contractor, Granite Construction Co. of California, and the DOT reached a deal that requires Granite to repair about three lane-miles of concrete this fall. The settlement document said DOT would have to have the rest repaired "at a later date."

But when The N&O's Bruce Sicheloff sought comment from DOT, there was none to be had.

So how about this? How about Governor Easley calls DOT Secretary Lyndo Tippet and other officials to his office and explains to them that they work for the public, and thus they don't have any choice when it comes to responding to serious matters such as this

one. Their arrogance is intolerable, and the governor should consider removing some of the brass if that's what it takes to bring this department under rein. Not to mention that the department appears to have made some costly mistakes here.

For example: the DOT didn't put a paragraph in the \$45 million contract with the California company that specified requirements about the work that might have prevented the fiasco now in progress. DOT officials apparently thought they'd given the company "oral instructions" that were sufficient. A kid trading a pair of roller skates knows better than that.

Tippett owes the public an apology on two counts: First, for the fact that mistakes were made on the road, and second, for the stubborn disregard of accountability to the public on his part and that of his subordinates.

It's true that DOT has long been a highly politicized agency -- Tippett is a long-time political supporter of Easley's -- but North Carolinians had hoped that the department was more efficient after the political involvement in decision-making had been curbed a little. Clearly, there's more work to be done.

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## DOT officials unsure of I-40 repairs' impact

BY RAY GRONBERG, The Herald-Sun  
November 9, 2006 12:58 am

DURHAM -- State Department of Transportation engineers had no answers Wednesday when local officials pressed them for information on the likely cost to repair a crumbling section of Interstate 40.

Members of the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee want the information because they're sure the repairs will force the DOT to delay other area road projects, thanks to a legislative "equity formula" that requires the agency to spread construction money around the state.

But acting Division Engineer Wally Bowman sidestepped the question.

"I don't have that," he said in response to prodding from Durham County Commissioners Chairwoman Ellen Reckhow. "I haven't been [given] that information."

The repairs target a 10.3-mile stretch of the interstate that was widened earlier this decade. Soon after the widening was completed last year, engineers noticed that part of the road's concrete overlay was falling apart. That led to the discovery that they and the widening contractor had botched the job by failing to ensure that a series of expansion joints were cut properly.

The error -- traceable to the DOT's failure to spell out the details of the joints' design in the construction concrete, and the contractor's failure to follow subsequent verbal orders -- triggered the crumbling pavement because the overlay can't expand or contract the way it should as the temperature changes.

The DOT now intends to have another contractor remove the faulty overlay and replace it with asphalt paving -- a job that officials said last year could take \$10 million to \$15 million.

But that was a guess only. And since then, the DOT hasn't shared any information with local governments about its estimate of the likely bill.

Reckhow made it clear that she's unhappy with the agency's silence, its part in the botched widening and the likelihood that other projects will be put on hold so it can make good.

"I just find the whole situation troublesome," she said.

The DOT, she added, should find a way to pay for the repairs that won't delay other projects.

"We're basically paying for the road twice, and it's not fair," Reckhow said.

Meanwhile, Bowman said weekend motorists using the eastbound stretch of I-40 in southern Durham face a weekend or two more of bumper-to-bumper delays as the original widening contractor finishes a series of stopgap repairs.

Workers have closed two of the highway's three eastbound lanes each of the past two weekends, causing gridlock that's spilled over onto N.C. 54, the main surface street that runs parallel to the interstate.

"I suspect people are taking alternate routes or changing travel times if they can do that," said Mark Ahrendsen, Durham's transportation manager. "It's amazing the amount of traffic there is [on weekends] even into the evenings, and the impact of going from three lanes to one lane."

The agency's goal is to finish the short-term patchwork by Thanksgiving, Bowman said.

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## Bad I-40 paving spurs discipline

State transportation chief says workers responsible will be fired or demoted

BRUCE SICELOFF, Staff Writer

State workers will be disciplined or fired for a bungled paving job on Interstate 40 in Durham County that requires up to \$30 million in repairs, state Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippet said Thursday.

Much of the money will come from the Federal Highway Administration, which paid most of the original \$44.8 million construction tab to widen a 10.6-mile stretch, he said. The state also hopes to recover money from HNTB, an international engineering firm it hired to inspect the work.

Kenneth B. Spaulding of Durham, a member of the state Board of Transportation, which awarded the I-40 contract, voiced dismay about the extensive repairs needed in the next two years. He said the Triangle economy will feel the drag of construction delays on a stretch traveled by nearly 100,000 cars and trucks each day.

"It's not only going to be inconvenient and create significant congestion, but it is going to have an impact on the economies of our Triangle cities," Spaulding said. "You're going to have people ... make decisions not to go to some of our Research Triangle areas, based on the traffic situation.

"This does not help the free flow of traffic or the free flow of commerce."

The board, appointed by Gov. Mike Easley, sets priorities for the department and approves contracts.

Tippet declined to name the Department of Transportation employees he deemed at fault or say how many there are. Some have left the DOT, he said in a prepared statement, and others who remain "will be subject to suspension, demotion or firing."

He said in a telephone interview that he would probably announce early next week which employees were involved and what action would be taken. Len A. Sanderson, who reports to Tippet as the state highway administrator, did not return calls seeking comment.

The problems began in July 2005 when motorists started reporting cracks and potholes in fresh concrete pavement. A pavement expert concluded that DOT engineers had failed to specify the correct paving process in contract documents and in overseeing construction work. The concrete buckled and broke because it lacked adequate joints designed to allow it to expand and contract in changing weather.

Granite Construction Co. of Watsonville, Calif., the original contractor, did not accept blame but agreed to spend about \$3 million to repair the worst damage. In a settlement signed Oct. 17, Sanderson agreed that Granite's liability will end later this fall when it finishes the last round of weekend repairs.

Tippet said he would change the way the DOT plans and builds highways to prevent more such mistakes.

"One of those changes will make all top-level managers periodically go on-site and inspect these major projects," he said. "That has never been a requirement."

He said DOT engineers did not take enough precautions in 1999 when they chose a concrete paving process called bonded overlay, with which they had little experience. It involved putting a fresh 3 inches of concrete on top of the four original concrete lanes of I-40, built in the 1980s. The two layers were supposed to form a bond strong enough to handle traffic for 30 years.

The DOT had previously used bonded overlay paving only for two small projects, both of which were successful. Tippet said it was risky to use it on the bigger I-40 job.

"It was innovative," he said. "While it might be good for a one-mile project with low risk, I of course question the application in a project of this size."

Tippet issued the state's first comments on the I-40 project since the DOT indicated last week that the needed repairs would cost more, take longer and tie up more traffic than had been expected. The DOT said it was seeking a contractor to replace all the crumbling concrete with new asphalt on the two outer lanes of I-40, in both directions, from U.S. 15-501 in Chapel Hill to N.C. 147 (the Durham Freeway) in Research Triangle Park.

Tippet said he hoped this work would start next spring and be finished by the end of 2007. In 2008, contractors will add a 5/8-inch layer of asphalt to all six lanes of I-40.

He said the repairs could cost between \$18.4 million and \$30 million but said the DOT estimated the actual price at about \$18.6 million. Of that, he said, the federal government will pay about \$14.4 million.

Seth Effron, a spokesman for Easley, said Thursday night that North Carolinians count on the DOT to closely monitor highway projects and public spending.

Officials with Granite Construction, HNTB and the Federal Highway Administration could not be reached for comment Thursday evening.

The state and federal dollars will be subtracted from other highway funds distributed in DOT's seven-county Division Five, which includes Durham and Wake counties, Tippet said. Ellen Reckhow, chairman of the Durham County commissioners, said at a transportation planning meeting Wednesday that Triangle motorists should not have to pay for the DOT's mistakes. "We're basically paying for the road twice," she said, "and it's not fair."

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## Transit corridor study on tap

BY RAY GRONBERG, The Herald-Sun  
November 8, 2006 10:24 pm

**DURHAM** -- Area transportation planners intend to spend the next few months compiling data on potential transit corridors, to set the stage for elected officials to make decisions about how to address the failure of the Triangle Transit Authority's rail plans.

But while they will end up with an idea about what corridors are feasible, they don't know yet how officials from Durham, Orange and Wake counties should go about establishing construction priorities. One suggestion is to secure advice from a specially created blue-ribbon commission, but some officials are wary of that approach.

The technical study should "be done before we go through a political process," said Bill Strom, a Chapel Hill town council member who represents TTA on the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee. "We will lose our credibility as informed, cautious leaders if we start this parallel political process right now."

Strom's advice didn't stop the panel on Wednesday from backing the idea, but it did prompt local officials to say that if planners set up a special commission to gather advice on transit options, they should make sure it checks in early and often with elected officials on both sides of the Triangle.

The point is to make sure that the elected officials most deeply involved in transportation planning can keep tabs on the effort to come up with an alternative to TTA's defunct \$810 million rail link between Raleigh and Durham.

Durham Mayor Bill Bell said officials from the Durham-Chapel Hill planning group and a similar organization in Raleigh hit on the idea of setting up a blue-ribbon commission because they want to make sure that whatever recommendations emerge as officials try to regroup from TTA's decision to stop seeking federal subsidies for the rail project have public support.

Bell indicated that the special commission's membership would be drawn from a variety of groups and institutions that have a stake in seeing the area find a solution to its transportation woes. He did not say who those groups might be.

Durham Transportation Manager Mark Ahrendsen said the discussion of a special commission is still "very preliminary" and should grow clearer after a Nov. 29 meeting between transportation planners from the western and eastern sides of the Triangle.

TTA leaders conceded at the time they halted their quest for federal rail subsidies that the decision would force officials to take a fresh look at plans for regional transit links. The Raleigh-to-Durham project was supposed to be the backbone of a system that was eventually supposed to reach the UNC campus in Chapel Hill.

With that off the table, officials have a chance to look at all the different transit corridors they've identified over the years, decide whether any are worth pursuing and establish them as regional priorities, Ahrendsen said.

Durham County Commissioners Chairwoman Ellen Reckhow said officials have the opportunity to reconsider decisions like those that left Raleigh-Durham International Airport out of TTA's rail plans, and to consider any new ideas that emerge.

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## Keep it rolling

A poll shows interest in mass transit, but Triangle leaders are the ones who have to demonstrate real vision

Credit Mayor Bill Bell of Durham with the most statesmanlike view thus far of the future of mass transit in the Triangle. A poll (for The News & Observer and WRAL-TV) showed significant public interest in rail travel and more mass transit in general, something that's been on the Triangle Transit Authority's drawing board for years. The TTA's dreams have been bruised because federal regulators said there wasn't enough potential ridership to justify funding for a 28-mile, \$810 million commuter train.

In any case, Bell's notion about mass transit is: "We shouldn't let the financing drive the vision. The important thing is to get buy-in from the general public about what kind of system they want, and then go out and try to find the dollars." That's 100 percent right. And it's encouraging to hear veteran state transportation administrator David King, who now heads the TTA, talking in a forward-thinking way and not lingering on the past frustrations. He said, "It's our job to figure out what to do and how to pay for it. They (the public) want us to get on with it. I see a sense of urgency."

Amen to that, too. Talking about mass transit with politicians around here is like trying to get everyone to agree on what to play on the radio in the family car while on a long journey. If enough people are against of Willie Nelson and others don't like Chopin, then the compromise is going to be silence. And a long, boring ride.

Or in the case of mass transit, stalemate. The local pols, a good many of them, have kept only their reading glasses on when it comes to looking at this region's future traffic problems. No foresight. Too expensive, they say. Not enough people yet, they say. People like their cars and won't give them up, they say.

Well, yes, even if cost-efficiency is the measure that really matters, trains are expensive. But more and more Triangle residents are starting to spend way too much time on I-40 and other heavily traveled routes. And they can read the numbers: thousands of new residents moving to the area every year, many of them used to long commutes but hopeful of shortening their travel hereabouts. Who would disagree with the absolute certainty that a booming population is going to create worse and worse traffic on existing roads, even those that have opened recently?

The gasoline situation is iffy as well, and the combinations of wasted time and more expense might well encourage people to use trains or buses.

The point is this: the TTA, state transportation officials, local governments, interested citizens and yes, those reluctant politicians, ought to be looking at all the options for the future of transit.

The good thing, if it can be called that, about the funding setback on federal rail money is that it gives the region a chance to return to square one, study polls, talk to the people about what they want, toss all the ideas out there, and then, as Bill Bell said, focus the vision and find the money.

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## **Road planning short-circuited in Congress**

### **N.C. delegation's add-ons to highway bills often delay or kill projects in state's long-range plan**

PAT STITH, Staff Writer

North Carolina's members of Congress quietly took control of more than \$135 million from the state Department of Transportation last year to help pay for dozens of highway projects they favored.

That means other projects deemed more important by state and local officials must be delayed.

The new projects dictated by Congress didn't have enough support in North Carolina to be included among the 2,337 funded in the state's 2006-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. But some local officials and others hired Washington lobbyists to plead their case for highway money.

The congressional highway spending mandates in the transportation reauthorization bill, called earmarks, usually provide no additional money. They require that existing funds be spent on specific projects.

New projects earmarked by members of the delegation include pedestrian and bike paths in Cary, Durham and Durham County, and roads for a park in Asheville and a university athletic facility in Charlotte.

A road-widening project Concord wanted went from not-on-the-horizon to build-it-in-2009 -- lightning speed for major highway work.

Drivers pay 48.3 cents in tax on each gallon of gasoline they buy in North Carolina -- that's 18.4 cents in federal taxes and 29.9 cents in state taxes. Within broad guidelines set by Congress, the states have traditionally decided how to spend their share of federal gasoline tax receipts. But that is changing.

The growth of earmarks in the transportation reauthorization bill, which Congress considers about every six years, has been remarkable. It raises questions about who knows best how to spend federal highway money: members of Congress, or state and local officials and the highway planners who assist them.

In 1987, the transportation reauthorization bill included 152 earmarks, and President Reagan vetoed it, in part because he considered that too many. In last year's bill, there were 6,371, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense, a nonpartisan budget watchdog.

In North Carolina, highway earmarks in the reauthorization bill now represent 6 percent to 7 percent of the \$4.4 billion in federal money the state expects to get from 2005 to 2009.

Calvin W. Leggett, manager of the state Department of Transportation's Program Development Branch, said there has been some grumbling among local planning groups but, so far, they have all deferred to the congressional delegation and approved the new projects.

"People in Washington make laws," he said. "They make laws about lots of things. Transportation is just a small piece of what they do. What kind of debate's gonna ensue if you ... defy 'em?"

**Rob Peter, pay Paul**

To build projects earmarked by Congress, the state must almost always take money from other plans.

For its Derita Road widening project, Concord got four earmarks totaling \$9.95 million. All that money would have come to North Carolina anyway -- but for other projects. Something had to go. In this case, the widening of Poplar Tent Road in Concord will be delayed at least four years.

Most of the time, there is no way to know which projects are being delayed because of earmarks. Those projects are commingled with other work delayed because of inflation or because of other, more pressing, needs. The draft of the 2007-2013 state Transportation Improvement Program, released in August, identified more than 125 projects the state plans to delay "to assist in balancing funds."

Congressional legislation does not say who earmarked a project, although most North Carolina lawmakers claimed credit for certain projects in news releases. And the legislative language is so vague that it is often difficult to know who is benefiting. An earmark intended for Queens University in Charlotte, for example, does not mention the university.

In one instance, state highway officials couldn't even figure out what they were supposed to do.

The 2004 highway appropriations bill set aside \$200,000 for a study of U.S. 276, which runs through several mountain counties into South Carolina.

"We don't have anything we want to study on U.S. 276, and nobody has come forward and said, 'Why aren't you all studying 276?'" said R. Van Argabright, state Transportation Improvement Program squad leader.

### **Bypassing state DOT**

The increase in earmarks is driven in part by senators and representatives who want credit for highway work and in part by local government officials who want help.

There is not enough money to build all the road projects local officials say they need. That shortage is caused primarily by escalating construction costs, up 44 percent over the past three years, Leggett said.

Rep. G.K. Butterfield, a Wilson Democrat, said he is trying to get whatever he can for his district, which includes traditionally poor areas of northeastern North Carolina.

"For those of us who represent rural communities, it's the way for us to get resources that we otherwise would not get," Butterfield said. "I am going to avail myself of every earmark opportunity that exists and not apologize for it."

Local officials and others, such as universities, are hiring Washington lobbyists, paying fees that can exceed \$100,000 a year and taking their case to Congress. They bypass the elaborate transportation planning process mandated by the federal government and end up killing or delaying other projects in their area.

"When you have an earmark, you've got someone basically short-circuiting that process," said Mark L. Foster, the state transportation department's chief financial officer. Every earmark that doesn't bring in new money fuels the competition for more earmarks.

State Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippet calls earmarks a "flawed" process. There is little he or anyone else outside of Congress can do about it, but the Board of Transportation is trying.

In an effort to restrain earmarks for projects that are not funded in the Transportation Improvement Program, the board adopted a policy last fall that puts local governments and others on notice: If you go to Washington and get an earmark for a project that isn't in the program, or is in the program but hasn't been funded, you're pretty much on your own. You plan it, you engineer it, you build it and you put up the 20 percent match and any other money needed to complete the project.

### **DOT self-defense**

The North Carolina delegation put 115 highway earmarks in the 2005 reauthorization bill. Fifty-four were for projects that were already in the works. Many were requested by the state Department of Transportation -- in self-defense.

For several years, the department has assigned one of its employees to work in Washington, lobbying members of the North Carolina delegation. Part of Caitlin H. Rayman's job, Leggett said, is to ask members of the delegation to earmark projects that the state already intends to build.

"If all they're doing is taking money that North Carolina would get anyway, we would much prefer to set priorities inside North Carolina than to have them set in Washington, period," Leggett said.

Earmarking a project that is already in the state's plans allows the delegation member to claim credit for the transportation work.

### **Local frustration**

Pat Mumford, a Charlotte City Council member who heads the transportation planning committee for Mecklenburg and Union Counties, says the earmarking process is frustrating because it undermines plans made by local and state officials.

Committees such as the one he heads -- there are 17 across the state -- study their area's transportation needs, conduct public hearings and come up with a plan. Those plans are reviewed by the state Board of Transportation and incorporated in the statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

"If we keep doing this, people are going to go straight to Washington to avoid the process," he said. "And that's what we don't want to have happen."

Members of the state's congressional delegation mean well, he said, but they don't understand that they're just "shuffling the deck," moving money from one project to another. Next month, he said, the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization will consider canceling or postponing almost \$20 million worth of projects to pay for earmarks that did not bring new money to the area.

Ed Johnson, director of the metropolitan planning organization that includes Wake and parts of four nearby counties, said the normal funding process is so far behind that communities have started using political action.

"In my mind, it's a sign of desperation and a lack of confidence in the system addressing needs like it ought to," Johnson said.

### **Defending earmarks**

Rep. David Price, a Chapel Hill Democrat who represents all of Durham and Orange counties and parts of Wake and Chatham, said that Democrats, because they are in the minority, have little say about earmarks.

In the 2005 transportation reauthorization bill, he said, he was allowed to earmark \$14.5 million.

"I'm not on the Transportation Committee. ... It would not surprise me if members of the committee, especially the senior members, got more," he said.

Price assigned most of his earmark money to projects in the Transportation Improvement Program: \$8.8 million for Raleigh's Outer Loop, \$1.6 million for the American Tobacco Trail in Durham and Chatham counties and, in a different part of the bill, \$1.3 million for a park-and-ride lot in Chapel Hill.

But he also earmarked \$2.8 million for bicycle and pedestrian trails in Cary, Durham and Durham County. Since those projects were not in the state plan and did not bring in additional money, other projects in the same highway division will have to be delayed to pay for them.

Price said there have been abuses of earmarks. But overall, he defends them, saying Congress should not be an "echo chamber" for the state Department of Transportation.

He said the total of all the earmarks is a "tiny percentage" of the state's federal highway allocation.

"Should a member of Congress have any say in this?" Price asked. "I think the answer is yes."

(News researcher Brooke Cain contributed to this report.)

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News researcher Brooke Cain contributed to this report.

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## **Poll: Commuters want way out of jam In Wake, Durham and Orange, rail was the favored solution**

**BRUCE SICELOFF AND DAVID BRACKEN, Staff Writers**

Although Triangle leaders haven't figured how to cover the big cost of laying tracks and buying rail cars, a poll shows that many residents want commuter trains in the region's future.

In surveys last week, almost 80 percent of those interviewed said the Triangle needed some form of improved mass transit. Roughly 39 percent said the Triangle needs rail. Bus service, carpooling and bike lanes drew less support. Only about 22 percent said none of those are needed.

"I fully support getting a rail system going and encouraging people to use public transportation," Ellen C. Bush, 33, of Durham, who took part in the survey, said in an interview. "We can't keep growing and putting more people on the roads."

The poll, conducted for The News & Observer and WRAL-TV, gauged the opinions of likely voters in Wake, Durham and Orange counties; 600 residents of each county were surveyed.

Controlling growth and traffic congestion were cited in the poll as the region's two most important problems. Education ran a distant third.

The strength of support for trains and other mass transit improvements varied slightly among the counties.

Asked whether they would use a commuter rail system if it were built, 55 percent of survey respondents in Wake and 58 percent in Orange said they were very likely or somewhat likely. In Durham County, 46 percent said they would ride the rails, while 50 percent said they were likely to use a regional bus system.

But State Rep. Paul B. Stam of Apex said he doubted commuter trains could ever draw so many riders in the sprawling Triangle. Construction and ticket costs, funding sources and rail routes were not addressed in the survey. Such details would inevitably limit the appeal of an actual rail system, he said.

"I think a combination of buses and HOV [high-occupancy vehicle] lanes, which include carpooling and vanpooling, could really make a huge dent in traffic congestion at a much lower cost," Stam said. "But people just have sort of an idea what a bus is like, and it doesn't have such a good cachet."

The survey findings come as Triangle mayors, business leaders and planners are rethinking long-range transit plans.

The Triangle Transit Authority in August gave up an 11-year quest for 60 percent federal funding to help build a 28-mile, \$810 million commuter train line linking Durham, Research Triangle Park, Cary and Raleigh. Federal regulators said TTA trains would not attract enough passengers to justify the expense.

Triangle critics called on TTA to look for something else -- such as highway lanes set aside for express buses -- that might serve more riders at less cost.

Several business leaders and elected officials have said they still believe in trains. But they'll take a fresh look at other routes and technologies, and at sources of funds to replace the federal money for which TTA had hoped.

"We shouldn't let the financing drive the vision," Durham Mayor Bill Bell said. "The important thing is to get buy-in from the general public about what kind of system they want, and then go out and try to find the dollars."

David D. King, TTA interim manager, said the survey confirms that residents expect Triangle leaders to solve these problems.

"It's our job to figure out what to do and how to pay for it," King said. "They want us to get on with it. I see a sense of urgency."

Bush said her commute isn't bad -- a 10-mile trip to UNC Press in Chapel Hill, where she works as a copy writer. She carools sometimes and hopes to see more Triangle transit options.

"I'm always conscious of being alone in my car," Bush said, "and surrounded by people who are alone in their cars."

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## Thinking on track

"I think a light rail would be suitable for Raleigh if it ran along existing roads. It should be flexible and appeal to people who work all kinds of shifts."

EDWARD LOCKEHART, 46, of Raleigh owns a car but rides a Capital Area Transit bus to his downtown job.

"A lot of people can't come into Raleigh because they don't have any way to get there. Raleigh has what it needs. Those outer areas don't have anything."

JOAN MAUNU, 45, a Wake County School bus driver who lives in Nash County, says the Triangle must develop transit options

for workers who live on the region's outskirts.

"We can't predict that it's immediately going to help congestion. But in the distant future, congestion will probably be so bad that you'll want to leave your car and ride the rail. For that reason, we need to acquire right-of-way even if we don't build it now."

NED KENNINGTON, 59, of Durham, semi-retired, said the Triangle won't have enough population density to support commuter trains for at least 30 years.

"More roads and some more lanes, that would be good. ... I don't know if too many people would take the train."

STEPHANIE McDADE, 44, a state government worker who lives in Raleigh, says the Triangle would be better off spending money to expand its highways.

"The light rail sort of seemed to me like a good solution. The one thing that really concerns me is what we charge per ride. ... We've got to come up with some kind of mass transit. ... I just don't think we can continue to build more roads."

PAUL B. WHITE, 82, a Cary retiree, says the growing region will need more than automobiles alone.

"Given the lifestyles of people these days, I don't think people are going to be inclined to give up their individual mobility. And for women, I think it's not likely that rail transit is going to work for them. ... They've got too many things to do -- where they're making many stops on the way to work and on the way home and trying to fit too much into their schedule -- so rail would not likely work for them. ... I don't think we have the densities in this area to make it work."

CATHERINE A. HEATH, 53, of West Raleigh, a landscape designer, says trains probably won't work. But the Triangle should study alternatives.

"Rail's great. I've seen it work in Europe. Buses would be good, too, if they actually ran where people would ride them. ... They need to go to the airport if they're going to do [rail transit]. We just need to make sure it's designed so people are going to use it. I had no sense that this [proposed TTA] rail system was going to be anything people would use, going where people need to go to work or go to school."

JIM KELLOCK, 59, of Raleigh, an IBM manager, said rail transit can work.

"I'd like to see those dollars used in other areas that really need them. It looks like we're going to have a school bond defeated. We need to build schools."

We could use those dollars that were going to be diverted to a light rail system."

RON MARGIOTTA, 68, of Apex, a Wake County school board member, says express bus lanes have worked well in other cities and should be considered in the Triangle. Trains are too expensive, he said.

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## **Beltway Toll Plan May Need Va. Funds**

### **Rising Costs Strain Private Partners**

By Eric M. Weiss  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Monday, October 23, 2006; A01

A privately backed plan to build express toll lanes on the Virginia portion of the Capital Beltway, which was promoted as a way to ease traffic without using taxpayer money, has become so expensive that the firms behind the project could require more than \$100 million in public funds to make it work, according to state transportation officials.

The 14-mile Beltway project would be the first section of what is expected to be a network of express toll lanes in the Washington region, and Virginia transportation officials said they are committed to it, although it is unclear where they would find the money.

Virginia's willingness to contribute money to the project is a change of position. The project was designed in 2003 as a public-private partnership, with the state providing some of the funds. But because money for state transportation projects is tight, officials then said they couldn't help. A second private partner signed on to the project, and 18 months ago the firms and state officials announced a plan to widen the highway without public funds.

Virginia transportation officials say the Beltway project, which would add four high-occupancy toll lanes between Springfield and Georgetown Pike, is a good deal even if it requires a considerable amount of public money.

"We are fully committed to building and funding the HOT lanes through a combination of state, federal and private resources," said Pierce R. Homer, Virginia's transportation secretary. "We'll find a way to make this project work. It's too important to the region to do anything less.

"We have an opportunity to obtain a billion-dollar facility with a fraction of that put in by the public sector," Homer added.

Virginia and Maryland leaders have been counting on privately funded highways as a quick, cheap way to ease congestion when there is little public money to build big projects. Now the changes in the Beltway plan, as well as delays in a similar project on Interstates 95 and 395, have politicians and transportation officials wary.

"I think it demonstrates the risks involved in seeing privatization as a panacea," said Gerald E. Connolly (D), chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. "We can't simply hope that the tooth fairy, in the form of the private sector, will make all of our problems go away."

Public investment in the project would call into question the state's control over its spending priorities. The Beltway proposal was not in the state's plans until it was proposed by Fluor Enterprises Inc. in 2003, and any public financing would divert money from projects that have gone unfunded for years.

"These projects come out of the blue, and then they jump to the front of the line," said Stewart Schwartz, executive director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. "We need to ask a lot more questions."

It is unclear where Virginia transportation officials will come up with the money to make the Beltway project a go. All year, state lawmakers have argued over how to provide additional funding for transportation, and a special session of the General Assembly ended last month without a solution.

Virginia officials said possibilities include using surplus money from the general fund or from a continuing state subsidy, although no plans have been formulated.

Fluor and its partner, Transurban Inc., have a separate plan to create 55 miles of toll lanes on I-95 and I-395 between the 14th Street bridge and Spotsylvania County, but the estimated completion date has been pushed back three years, to 2014. Local officials have expressed concern that the project could be delayed further or not be built at all.

Virginia officials also hope to build toll lanes on other major commuter routes, including the Dulles Toll Road and Interstate 66.

Last week, Maryland officials asked the private sector for ideas on creating express toll lanes along Interstate 270 and sections of the Beltway. They are also exploring similar projects on I-95 and around Baltimore.

The lanes in Virginia would be free for vehicles with three or more people; other drivers would pay a toll that would increase with traffic volume. Backers of the plans say "congestion pricing" would virtually guarantee that the lanes won't become congested.

Ronald F. Kirby, transportation planning director for the Washington Council of Governments, said the inclusion of state money would be a major change in the Beltway project and would likely require additional hearings and action by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, as required by federal law. The region's transportation plan currently describes the project as entirely privately financed.

"This is a big change, and people are going to want to comment on it," Kirby said.

State and private officials say projected construction costs have increased by 30 percent since the project was proposed.

"Just because this is a public-private project doesn't mean they are exempted from the normal economic rules," said Malcolm T. Kerley, chief engineer for the Virginia Department of Transportation.

In addition to requiring public dollars, Transurban officials say, the scope of the project could shrink, with some interchanges being phased in later.

Ken Daly, vice president of Transurban, said that the project remains viable but that hard decisions have to be made. "It was an incredibly good project when we first proposed it," Daly said. "Time and events have moved against it."

Homer also said the state is committed to the I-95 HOT lane project. Virginia and company officials say the completion date has been pushed back because of negotiating delays and environmental studies. Under the original schedule, the state and contractors were to sign a comprehensive agreement by February. Both sides are still trying to come to terms on an interim agreement.

The problems with the two projects have made state officials antsy.

"What I'd like to see is to get some dirt moved," Kerley said.

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## **Chapel Hill-Carrboro cyclists await word on 'pitted, potted' road connecting towns**

PATRICK WINN, Staff Writer

One of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area's most heavily biked roads is also one of the most nerve-fraying to cyclists.

On Estes Drive Extension, which connects the two towns, cyclists must perform something of a tightrope act on wheels between North Greensboro Street and Seawell School Road.

The only paved surface out of the traffic lanes is a thin strip -- about a foot wide -- between the white line and the steep, grassy shoulder.

"It's pitted and potted," said Muriel Williman, who bikes the road almost every day. "Even the white line itself is crumbling."

Making bike travel on this stretch safer is a priority for Carrboro officials, said Dale McKeel, the town's transportation planner.

"More than anything else, people ask, 'When will there be bike lanes on Estes?' " McKeel said.

Estes Drive Extension is a state road controlled by the state Department of Transportation. Last year, the department widened the pavement -- and made bike travel safer -- on a section farther down the road in Chapel Hill.

But state transportation officials have not committed to adding bike lanes to the portion of Estes Drive Extension that's in Carrboro. One estimated cost for adding bike lanes and sidewalks to the entire street, according to the department, is \$7.6 million. That accounts for planning, buying private property and construction.

But a larger paved shoulder could possibly be added to parts of Estes Drive's Carrboro portion for about \$400,000, said Jim Hunsinger with the state Department of Transportation.

"Right now, we're still trying to identify sources of funding," Hunsinger said.

Carrboro, which has requested the bike lanes since the late 1980s, would like an answer before it uses its own bond money to add sidewalks in that area.

WHO'S IN CHARGE: Mike Mills, Highway Division 7 engineer, state Department of Transportation, (336) 334-3192; [mmills@dot.state.nc.us](mailto:mmills@dot.state.nc.us)

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## National group urges counties' accessibility

BY EMILY COAKLEY, The Herald-Sun

October 30, 2006 6:28 pm

HILLSBOROUGH -- A national organization is visiting Orange and Durham counties this week to encourage residents to use their cars less.

Representatives of the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, which is based in Washington, D.C., are conducting five workshops on making communities friendlier for pedestrians and bicyclist. The first workshop was in Hillsborough on Monday morning; each of the workshops is sponsored by the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Bob Chauncey, one of the representatives, suggested to the approximately 20 people gathered at Central Elementary School, that it made more sense for communities to improve their local environment before encouraging residents to become more active.

"We can do this. We can build these kind of communities," Chauncey said, adding other cities around the country have integrated bicyclist and pedestrian access.

Chauncey listed several benefits for communities that are friendly for bikers and walkers, including more valuable homes and healthier people. The American Lung Association, he said, recently gave Wake County bad grades for its air quality, for example.

"We've got to make the connection between what goes into our lungs and what comes out of our tailpipes," he said.

There is also a social equity component, Chauncey added. The very old and very young cannot drive, and communities that don't provide other connections, like sidewalks, disenfranchise those people by forcing them to stay home.

Chauncey offered the group several ideas to think about when trying to build a more accessible community.

When planning sidewalks, think about their width and the buffer between them and the road, he said.

Adding benches and other places to sit can encourage people of all ages to get out and about, and the town should consider posting maps to help tourists find destinations. Crosswalks should be visible during the day and night, and putting yield signs in a street can help slow traffic.

Town officials have been trying to build more sidewalks but have had trouble balancing the costs with other town needs.

"The board is very interested in walkability," said Tom Stevens, mayor of Hillsborough, at the workshop. "We also know sidewalks are very, very expensive."

That means the board has to make some hard choices about which sidewalks to fund, he said.

Money has been budgeted this year, though, for a stretch of a little more than a mile of sidewalk on Faucette Mill Road south from Mollie Court, across U.S. 70, down Short Street and continuing south on Nash Street to Eno Street. The sidewalk will run on the west side of the roads.

This proposed stretch will pass by two elementary schools: Hillsborough and Central.

The sidewalk has been designed and soon the town will solicit bids to have it built, said Margaret Hauth, the town's planning director. Once a contract is awarded, installing the sidewalk could take about six months if the weather cooperates, said Michael Neal, a consultant hired to design the project.

The Nash Street sidewalk was selected because it helps connect Fairview to the southern part of town. It also eventually will tie in to the town's proposed Riverwalk project, a 1.5-mile trail along the Eno River.

The planned Nash Street sidewalk will connect with about a block of existing sidewalk at the southern end of Nash Street, and where the street takes a sharp turn into Eno Street is where the Gold Park entrance will be.

Gold Park is the planned mid-point of Riverwalk. When that project is finished, the trail will run from Occaneechee Mountain State Natural Area east to the John Link Government Services Center, and tie western Hillsborough to downtown. The town is in the middle of acquiring properties for Riverwalk.

Chauncey encouraged groups such as the Walkable Hillsborough Coalition, which helped organize Monday's workshop, to host neighborhood walks to help people understand their cause. Cracking the cost issue, he said, will require public support.

Another workshop was scheduled in Carrboro Monday afternoon. Three more workshops are scheduled, two in Durham and one in Chapel Hill.

URL for this article: <http://www.heraldsun.com/orange/10-783270.html>

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**DRAFT 2007-2013 STIP PUBLIC COMMENT MEETINGS  
and  
DRAFT 2009-2015 STIP PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DIV.</b>	<b>CITY/TOWN</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
November 8	10	Concord	Rowan-Cabarrus Community College South Campus I-85/NC 73 (Exit 55 at Trinity Church Road) Building 2 - Room 2224
November 14	7	Greensboro	Guilford Technical Community College Greensboro Campus Continuing Education Center - Room 152 3505 East Wendover Avenue
November 15	12	Dallas	Gaston College Garrison Auditorium Lena Sue Beam Health Science Building 201 Highway 321 South
November 16	13	Morganton	Western Piedmont Community College Phifer Learning Research Center (LRC 120) 1001 Burkemont Avenue
November 17	14	Waynesville	Regional High Tech Center Auditorium 112 Industrial Park Drive
November 20	11	Wilkesboro	Wilkesboro Civic Center 1241 School Street
November 28	1	Edenton	Town Hall - Council Chambers 500 South Broad Street
November 29	2	Snow Hill	Greene County Museum 107 NW 3rd. Avenue
November 30	4	Rocky Mount	City Hall - Council Chambers One Government Plaza (3rd. Floor)
December 1	5	Roxboro	City Hall - Council Chambers 105 South Lamar Street
December 4	9	Clemmons	Village Hall 3715 Clemmons Road
December 12	3	Supply	Brunswick Community College "A" Teaching Auditorium
December 13	6	Dublin	Bladen Community College Auditorium
December 14	8	Laurinburg	City Hall - Council Chambers 305 West Church Street

*ALL MEETINGS 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM*

*REGISTRATION BEGINS 1 HOUR PRIOR TO MEETING*