

NC 54 WEST CORRIDOR STUDY

PHASE 2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

AS OF NOVEMBER 6, 2019

Carrboro Board of Aldermen (synopsis from October 15, 2019 meeting)

- The proposed widening would be through the rural buffer and protected watershed where very little growth and development is anticipated
- Prefer transit improvements to widening of NC 54
- The widening appears to benefit rural Orange County and Alamance County residents to the detriment of Carrboro
- General opposition to the widening of NC 54

Chapel Hill Town Council (synopsis from October 30, 2019 meeting)

- Should NC 54 be widened, the phasing should be adjusted to actual congestion and needs; slowed down in the future if not needed
- Would like to see more defined transit options for this corridor

Public Comments from October 24, 2019 Public Meeting

- Potential for frontage roads?
 - Transit implications, R/W implications
- Induced demand, so why widen road when it won't solve traffic issues
 - Why widen road when goal of DCHC/ others is to reduce VMT
 - Macro/ societal issues of correctly pricing driving & parking
- Coordination between school and Honda plant seems like it could help lessen traffic
- Transit
 - Why widen if no transit demand
 - Potential for BRT in future?
 - Bus operators have stated they want free flow movement for schedule adherence. Widening would facilitate bus movement on NC 54 (response)
- Stormwater/ runoff increases with widening
- Potential of widening lessening traffic on adjacent roadways

Written Public Comments

Dear Mayor and Board of Aldermen,

I attended the meeting a few weeks ago showing the options for 54 W, all of which involve adding lanes and thus insuring increased VMTs in our county. This was at least the third

presentation of this project I have seen, and I remain unconvinced that this is the route to take. A few thoughts:

- 1) The widening is based on a projection to 2045, which shows an increased number of cars, while at the same time Orange County, including CH and Carrboro, are discussing at the MPO level how to reduce VMTs. If our goal is to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled, then why would we approve projects that encourage more of them?
- 2) The widening is based on low Level of Service, but the LOS is only done during peak hours (i.e., commuting traffic). With more resources given to Transportation Demand Management (TDM), perhaps the county could work with employers to try for flex office hours, or to encourage telecommuting one day a week, or incentives to carpool. My understanding (and my own observations) is that LOS during non-peak hours is fine.
- 3) There have been many suggestions for improving safety that have not yet been implemented, and some that have, but the data being used is not reflecting that (eg., two new traffic lights have been installed, but no crash data is available yet). The presumption and the reason for installing the lights is that they will improve safety. Other suggested improvements include better lighting and advance signage for roads (i.e., signs that let one know what the next intersection is), and electronic signs that keep traffic moving at a set speed to keep flow working.
- 4) One of the arguments for this project is safety and prevention of crashes, the highest percentage of which are lane departure (i.e., unsafe passing). I think that technology is going to move much faster than this road project, and by 2045, the safety features of most cars on the road (lane departure warnings, automatic breaking systems, etc.) will do more to lower the crash rate than the infrastructure being presented, which, with its very wide lanes (14' lanes are unnecessary, why do we keep seeing them?)--will only increase speeds.
- 5) Another argument for this project is the new building of businesses on the Mebane end and the commutes between them. Perhaps in the next twenty years we can build some housing that will allow people to live near the places they work, and cut down on many of these long commutes. In fact, for the cost of this project, we could build thousands of affordable units closer to businesses and make this 22 mile commute unnecessary.
- 6) DOT is broke, or that is what we have heard for most of the projects we had ready to go. It would be better use of the resources for all of Carrboro and Orange County to put their efforts and their DOT dollars into projects that promote and facilitate fewer car trips than to approve a \$180 million dollar project like this.

Thanks for listening, and for all you do,

Heidi