

Comment Summary and NCDOT Response to Public Comments – June 2019

Public Meeting

STIP Project No. R-5777C, U.S. 70 improvements to upgrade to Interstate standards, construct grade-separated interchanges and parallel service roads from Thurman Road to the Havelock Bypass

Public Meeting Summary

Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2019
Time: LOIM – 2:00pm to 3:00pm, Public Meeting – 4:00pm to 7:00pm
Location: Tucker Creek Middle School Gym, 200 Sermons Boulevard, Havelock, NC 28532
Attendance: Local Officials Information Meeting – 11, Public Meeting – 167

An open-house public meeting was held to provide the public with information about the conceptual project designs. The meeting was advertised in local newspapers and TV stations, on NCDOT's public meeting website <https://www.ncdot.gov/news/public-meetings>, and by postcard announcements mailed to nearby property owners and current residents. NCDOT and consultant staff were on hand at the meetings to answer questions about the project. In addition, NCDOT Division 2 Right of Way Agents were available to answer questions from impacted property owners and provide information about the right of way acquisition process. Two sets of maps of the conceptual project designs were on display. Meeting attendees were asked to provide comments about the conceptual project designs, the proposed interchanges, and potential property impacts.

Major discussion topics:

- What will be the changes in access to U.S. 70 from my property and how will I get onto U.S. 70?
- What is the project timeline? How long will construction take to complete? What is the timeline comparison of this project to the adjacent projects on U.S. 70 (U-5713, R-5777A&B, and R-1015)?
- What is the purpose of this project?

Minor discussion topics:

- What are the impacts to my property?
- What will the speed limit be of the new road?
- Will the interchanges have U.S. 70 traveling over or under the cross streets?
- How accurate is this wetland mapping? Will that impact the construction of this project?

Public Comments

Comment Period: June 18th to July 18th, 2019

of Comments Received: 10

General

1. Expressed support for this project (4)

Comment noted

2. Request to complete the project as soon as possible (1)

Comment noted

3. Belief the project will increase personal property value (1)

Comment noted

4. Request for public meeting map improvements in the form of larger labels, larger legend, and more landmarks and community features to orient the public (1)

Comment noted

Design

1. Request for 70mph speed limit (1)

NCDOT Division 2 will review and consider this request once further design information is available. The posted speed limit will be set based on design criteria and in conjunction with adjacent NCDOT projects along the U.S. 70 corridor.

2. Stated preference for Fisher Avenue to cross over U.S. 70 (1)

The concepts of raising U.S. 70 over cross streets or raising cross streets over U.S. 70 are both being considered as part of the preliminary design development for the project. Both options and the impacts associated with each will be assessed and a decision will be made prior to the final design stage of the project.

3. Stated preference for Stately Pines to cross over U.S. 70 (1)

The concepts of raising U.S. 70 over cross streets or raising cross streets over U.S. 70 are both being considered as part of the preliminary design development for the project. Both options and the impacts associated with each will be assessed and a decision will be made prior to the final design stage of the project.

4. Comment about drainage concerns and wetland impacts from project in the area of Stately Pines (2)

Hydraulic analysis and designs are a standard part of NCDOT projects. These hydraulic designs will be developed during the final design phase of the project, prior to construction, and will ensure that the project does not result in additional drainage problems to adjacent properties. Additionally, a federal environmental document is currently being prepared for this project and will be completed before construction begins. This document will review the potential environmental impacts of the work to be performed along the corridor and includes, but is not limited to, watershed critical areas, high quality waters, outstanding resource waters, FEMA floodplains and hazard mitigation, and wetland and stream

identification. Coordination with US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, US Forest Service, among others, is involved in the development of this document. Environmental impacts and the minimization of impacts to jurisdictional resources are also a part of the evaluation criteria within the Design-Build process which is expected to be used for this project.

5. Recommendation for service roads to more closely parallel U.S. 70 at the Stately Pines interchange (1)

All service road alignments are developed with the goal of providing a safe roadway for the traveling public and accommodating future projected traffic volumes while also minimizing property impacts to the extent practicable.

6. Question about how far the service road easements extend from the existing service road to the residential properties and if there is a standard number used or if it varies by property (1)

The blue cross-hatched areas shown on the June 18, 2019 public meeting maps represent areas where potential impacts may occur. These areas will likely be reduced once better survey data is available and the project's designs have been refined. The potential impact area was developed by buffering from the centerline of the proposed roadway concepts in a uniform manner.

7. Question about whether there will be rest stops along the project (1)

There are currently no plans to add rest areas along the corridor as part of this project. The addition of rest areas is outside of the scope of this project; however, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is responsible for the development of rest areas along highways and this comment will be passed along to FHWA's North Carolina Division Office for further consideration.

Detour/Construction

1. Request for/hope of lack of disruption in traffic flow along U.S. 70 during construction with particular concern for impacts on the elderly population (1)

Traffic control plans will be developed once the project's designs have been refined. Traffic flow on U.S. 70 will be maintained throughout the period of construction activity, and it is anticipated that no daytime lane closures will be allowed during construction. Additionally, one of the goals of the Design-Build process is to expedite the construction process and minimize the length of the construction period to reduce community disruptions related to construction activity.

Property Impacts Statements or Requests

1. Property impact and no desire to move (1)

Individual property impacts will be assessed once preliminary designs have been prepared. It is NCDOT's desire to avoid or minimize property impacts to the extent practicable.

2. Request to avoid site of historic value (Croatan works on property along Otter Creek – civil war) (1)

Impacts to properties will be minimized to the extent possible during the design process. In addition, as part of the environmental analysis for this project, surveys will be performed in the coming months to determine if there are resources afforded protection by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A summary of this regulation can be found at: <http://www.achp.gov/106summary.html>. In addition, this comment will be passed to the NCDOT archeologist assigned to this project for review.

3. Statement that the design currently shows service roads traveling through Craven County well sites (1)

The project team was made aware of these well sites by Craven County officials during the recent public meetings (June 2019). The project design team is currently working to develop alignments that avoid impacts to these sites.

4. While all other property owners appear to have the ability to travel towards New Bern or Havelock via service roads once they leave their driveways, the property owners in our immediate area on the south side of U.S. 70 nearest the Havelock bypass will only be able to travel towards New Bern. This will add significant mileage to trips to and from Havelock. This is because no access was left for these properties to access the Havelock bypass. In addition when the highway dept. gained signatures from now deceased family members for U.S. 70 improvements, Project 2151, in the 1950s the family was deeded access recorded in Craven County Register of Deeds, such access to be available immediately adjacent to their property which is still owned by family members. Consideration should be given to these circumstances. Our properties include billboards which are leased. These billboards could be brought into noncompliance if more right-of-way is needed. If more right-of-way is needed it could impact several septic systems for properties that have no other suitable areas. We fear the county tax department will continue to tax the properties at highway frontage rates even though the new travel time to access the highway will effectively preclude development for purposes that take advantage of highway access.

Access to U.S. 70 will be maintained via the service road to the new interchange at Stately Pines Road. Right of way and deeded access impacts will be mitigated during the right of way process.

Property Impact Questions

1. How will the project team deal with the relocation of private or family cemeteries affected by the U.S. 70 widening improvements along the service road areas?

The proposed roadway designs will attempt to minimize impacts to cemeteries and graves to the extent practicable. Graves that must be relocated will be moved in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes 65 and 70.

2. Will all property between U.S. 70 and the proposed ramps and/or service roads be considered acquisitions?

Property between U.S. 70 and the new ramps to be constructed will be acquired by NCDOT as part of the right of way process. Property between ramps and services roads though will not necessarily need to be acquired for this project. Individual property impacts will be determined once additional design work is completed.

Property Impacts w/ request for response

1. What does this potential impact mean? Could our property be acquired in the future construction project or is this just meaning it will no longer have any nearby direct access to the highway? Please contact my email to inform me of future possible plans.

Right of way and utility impacts may occur along the frontage of this property; however, it is not currently anticipated that the building on the property will be impacted by this project. Definitive determinations of property impacts will be made once designs have been further developed. As a result of the project upgrading U.S. 70 to interstate standards (Future I-42), full control of access will be provided along U.S. 70. Access to U.S. 70 from this property will be provided at the new interchange at Stately Pines Road via the new service road.