



Meeting Notes

Meeting: Country Club and Buena Vista Neighborhood Meeting
Date/Time: March 4th, 2008
Location: R.J. Reynolds High School
Attendees: 15 Attendees
Anne Morris – Facilitators
David Spainhour – NCDOT Presenter

Agenda Items:

Welcome/Introduction

- Ms. Morris welcomed attendees to the Country Club and Buena Vista neighborhood meeting for the Business 40 Improvement Project.
- The facilitator introduced David Spainhour the NCDOT representative.
- The slide show presentation began.

Community Outreach

- Ms. Morris discussed the outreach process.
- How community outreach has been conducted (door-to-door surveys, neighborhood business surveys, downtown business surveys).
- The canvassing process (19 core neighborhoods were being surveyed).

Project Overview

- Mr. Spainhour gave a brief history of Business 40.
 - ✓ Business 40 is the oldest interstate in North Carolina.
 - ✓ It originally wasn't intended to be an interstate.
 - ✓ Business 40 carries on average 70,000 cars a day.
- Mr. Spainhour discussed why the project is needed.
 - ✓ Business 40 is over 50 years old and is starting to deteriorate.
 - ✓ The bridges have major design problems. (The steel beams are deteriorating; the bridges have clearance issues, etc.)
 - ✓ Business 40's lanes tend to be narrow.
- Mr. Spainhour then provided proposed solutions for Business 40's existing flaws.
 - ✓ All 11 bridges crossing Business 40 will be removed and replaced.
 - ✓ Sidewalks and bicycle lanes will be considered for the roads crossing Business 40.
 - ✓ Drainage on Business 40 will be improved.
 - ✓ Widen Business 40 auxiliary lanes in addition to placing full shoulders.
 - ✓ Reconfigure the entrance- and exit-ramps.

Ms. Morris talked about future plans for the Community Outreach process.

The Business 40 improvement project will be speaking with:

- Large institutions with intranet access.
- R.J. Reynolds

- Wake Forest University
- Winston-Salem State University
- Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center
- Wachovia Bank

The Business 40 Improvement project will be using other forms of community involvement.

- Issue working groups
- On- and Off-ramp surveys
- Neighborhood Meetings
- Corridor-Wide Meetings

The slide show then concluded and the question-and-answer period began.

ASKED QUESTIONS:

QUESTION: Will there be any blasting on the bridges?

Answer: NCDOT is unsure at this point in the project. First we have to focus on the planning process before we start to finalize the plans for the construction.

Q: How was the \$100 million budget created if none of the bridge design has been determined?

A: The \$100 million dollar budget is based on bid costs received for recently constructed facilities. The average cost per unit (concrete, steel, etc.) was multiplied by the amount expected to be used in the project to develop a preliminary budget. A factor for inflation was also added into this budget. As the design phase of the project progresses an actual budget will be developed.

Q: Will traffic capacity on Business 40 be increased once improvements are finalized?

A: Traffic capacity on Business 40 will not be increased. NCDOT is going to use the right-of-way that the State of North Carolina owns for construction. There are a lot of historical buildings next to Business 40 and NCDOT cannot build on the property of these structures. Because of that fact, NCDOT is not going to add lanes to Business 40. This project intends to increase safety and traffic flow on Business 40.

Q: Will there be a speed increase on Business 40 once improvements are finalized?

A: NCDOT believes that speeds on Business 40 will stay the same once the improvements on Business 40 are completed.

Q: How will the function and flow of Business 40 improve after the completion of this project?

A: While commuters aren't going to see an increase in terms or capacity, they will see an increase in the functionality of Business 40 as a result of this project. The auxiliary lane will allow for better on and off roadway movements and will allow for smoother merging. The full shoulder will move guide rail away from the traffic lanes which will also improve the flow of traffic.

Q: How will Business 40 look (in terms of beautification) after completion?

A: NCDOT is unsure of that at this point, because most design has not even begun on the project. However, there is a certain amount of funds that will be set aside for beautification.

Q: Has there been any consideration of building alternate routes prior to the closing of Business 40?

A: The improvements planned for the alternate routes are planned to be completed before the beginning of construction on Business 40.

Q: Has NCDOT looked in alternative routes traveling to and from downtown Winston-Salem?

A: NCDOT is currently in the process of looking at alternative routes with the City of Winston-Salem. The engineering branch of the city will be a part of coming up with alternate route selections. NCDOT also intends to repair Winston-Salem's traffic light system, which will be an integral part of these alternative routes being successful.

Q: How will these relatively small improvements better the city of Winston-Salem?

A: The majority of this project will modernize the infrastructure of Business 40. You will see this modernization in the bridges, in the exit- and entrance-ramps and the pavement. While commuters aren't going to see an increase in terms or capacity, they will see an increase in the functionality of Business 40.

Q: There are a few entrance ramps that are rather dangerous (e.g. Cherry Street), if these cannot be fixed then will they be closed?

A: NCDOT has to make those decisions in order to move forward with the project. If we close the Cherry Street on- and off-ramps, how will commuters access downtown Winston-Salem? So, in our designs, we want to start looking at other ways commuters can access the downtown area (Our planners would potentially envision some of the ramps coming out) if we do decide to completely close some of these ramps.

Q: Will there be funds available to improve the downtown street system?

A: Yes. NCDOT has been looking at the major projects (the traffic light system in the City, the Salem Creek Connector, US 52 improvements, etc.) that need to be implemented prior to us working on Business 40. Those additional improvements are actually factored into our cost estimates.

Q: At what point in the design process will information regarding the removal of bridges and detour routes be made public?

A: We are unsure when those decisions will be available for the public to see.

Q: Will any buildings or structures have to be taken down because of the project?

A: We believe that there, most likely, will not be any buildings that would have to come down because of construction. This is a replacement project, so our goal is to minimize the amount of right-of-way that would have to be purchased for construction.

Q: I own a business on the corner of First and Hawthorne. There was an article in the paper stating that some of the exit ramps would be closed, and if the two year plan is implemented, will that ramp be closed?

A: That exit is actually outside of the project area, so that ramp should not be closed during construction.

Q: It would seem that over the past six or seven months, the volume of traffic has increased. Does NCDOT have any idea as to why this is?

A: There is an estimate that states, by 2025, North Carolina will be the seventh largest state in terms of population. In addition, vehicle mileage has doubled within the last ten years, so the increase in traffic makes sense. So, you are seeing a larger volume of traffic because, the population is increasing and people are driving more which would explain the large influx of commuters.