

BOARD OF ALDERMEN
AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

ITEM NO. (4)

MEETING DATE: April 26, 2005

TITLE: Continued Discussion of the Smith Level Road Improvements Project

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___NO__X__
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Comparison of Options C. Illustration of Options D. Adopted Resolution – March 18, 2003	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale McKeel – 918-7329

PURPOSE

On April 18, 2005, the N.C. Department of Transportation proposed two options for modifying Smith Level Road between Morgan Creek and Rock Haven Road. The Board of Aldermen discussed the two options at its meeting on April 19 and requested a comparison and additional information. A resolution is provided for the Board's consideration (Attachment A).

INFORMATION

Attachments B and C provide a comparison of the two options proposed by NCDOT. The two options are as follows:

- Option A - construct the project using Moving Ahead funds.
- Option B - construct the project through the Transportation Improvement Program process.

Attachment D is the resolution adopted by the Board of Aldermen on March 18, 2003 requesting that NCDOT consider a more modest design for the Smith Level Road project.

FISCAL IMPACT

If Option A is chosen and the Town's share is capped at \$300,000, then the annual payment would be \$60,000 each year for 5 years. Based on preliminary estimates for FY 05-06, a payment of \$60,000 to NCDOT would equate to an additional 0.44 cents on the tax rate. In addition, the Board should be aware that in FY 06-07 the following is programmed:

- The full impact of the sidewalk bond debt service will be realized

- The first debt service payment on the fire substation will be due
- Debt service is programmed for new downtown parking lots based on the adopted CIP
- The operating costs of the new fire station will be in the budget.

These items could potentially add about 8 cents to the tax rate, although every effort will be made to mitigate the impact of these new expenditures on the tax rate. The Town needs to be very cautious in adding additional items not already included in adopted CIP.

On April 19, the Board requested information on the status of the \$300,000 in county funds that have been set aside for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements near the high school. However, these funds have already been committed to elements of the site plan, including a sidewalk on Rock Haven Road and Smith Level Road, and bike lanes, sidewalk, and a bus shelter on the connector street.

If Option B is chosen, Carrboro will be responsible for paying 30 percent of the construction cost for new sidewalks constructed within the town limits or extra-territorial jurisdiction area. However, funding of \$66,300 was included in the sidewalk bond program for the Town's share of providing sidewalk along Smith Level Road.

OTHER ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

If Option A or B is chosen, there are several other issues that need to be discussed with NCDOT staff and addressed as part of the final design for the project. These issues have been raised at public meetings, in meetings with NCDOT staff, and by the Transportation Advisory Board. In conjunction with the final decision about the cross-section, careful consideration of these issues will be needed. The following is a list of some of these issues:

- Include improvements to the operation of the interchange at Smith Level Road and NC 54 Bypass as part of the project.
- Consider extending the right southbound lane across the bridge to Willow Oak Lane, as proposed by the Berryhill neighborhood in its presentation to the TAB.
- Add bikelanes and sidewalks to the east side of the existing bridge over Morgan Creek on Smith Level Road and other bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the vicinity of NC 54.
- Ensure that emergency response and public safety needs are addressed in the design.
- Use recycled materials in all aspects of the project.
- Review the design to ensure a safe and functional pedestrian environment along Smith Level Road.
- Incorporate recommendations from the traffic operations study at the Frank Porter Graham site.
- Coordinate signal timing on Smith Level Road.

- Incorporate additional landscape plantings into the project.
- Replace any fencing removed by the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution receiving the report and indicating a preferred option (Attachment A).

Please note that if the Board is interested in selecting Option A (Moving Ahead), Town staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen request that the project not be removed from the TIP until (1) the Town and NCDOT have executed a municipal agreement for the work, (2) the Town receives detailed estimates of the cost of right-of-way and utility relocation based on a design, (3) the Town receives confirmation that NCDOT funding is available for all construction including the sidewalks and (4) the Town has determined whether funding is available from the Orange County.