

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(4)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: June 19, 2007

TITLE: Review of Revised Plans for Smith Level Road Transportation Improvements

DEPARTMENT: Planning	PUBLIC HEARING: YES _____ NO <u>X</u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Smith Level Road Chronology C. Comments from SLR Task Force D. Comments from the TAB E. Comments from CHCCS	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Adena Messinger – 918-7329 Patricia McGuire - 918-7327

PURPOSE

Transportation Improvements to Smith Level Road have been included in the Town's Local Transportation Improvement Program Priority list for many years. Since 2001, the Town has been actively negotiating with NCDOT regarding the cross section and design elements that are to be included in the project. A revised plan has been provided and was presented to the Board of Aldermen on May 15, 2007 and referred to advisory boards and others for comment. A resolution that outlines comments on the revised plan and other actions is provided for the board's use (**Attachment A**).

INFORMATION

Project U-2803 is included within the recently adopted FY2007-2013 State Transportation Improvement program (TIP), with right-of-way acquisition programmed to take place in FY 2009 and construction in FY 2012. Following a hiatus of nearly a year in the pursuit of agreement regarding transportation improvements (**Attachment B**) for Smith Level Road, local officials and staff met with NCDOT staff on February 27, 2007. At that meeting, NCDOT staff presented revised lane configurations that transitioned from a 4-lane median section with bike lanes and sidewalks just south of the Morgan Creek bridge to BPW Club Road. At that point the project reduced to a three-lane section with center turn lane and continued to Culbreth Road. The segment from Culbreth to Rock Haven consisted of a two-lane section with center turn lane terminating in a signalized intersection with a southbound right-turn lane and northbound left-turn lane at Rock Haven Road. Curb and gutter was included throughout. During the meeting, Mayor Mark Chilton requested that NCDOT investigate the installation of a roundabout at the intersection of Smith Level and Rock Haven Roads. A letter and revised plan were submitted to the Town in April. A single lane roundabout has been incorporated into the design and revised plans submitted for town review.

On May 9th, town staff participated in an interagency scoping meeting on this project related to the preparation of environmental documents. Staff was informed that the project has been placed on an accelerated schedule that, if all deadlines are met, will allow construction to begin in FY 2011, rather than 2012. NCDOT staff offered suggestions concerning refinement of the purpose and need of the project in support of the Town's desire to emphasize pedestrian and bicycle modes.

The Board of Aldermmen reviewed the plan on May 15th and referred it to the Transportation Advisory Board, Smith Level Road Task Force, and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

The revised plan was presented to the Smith Level Road Task Force on May 20, 2007 and to the Transportation Advisory Board on June 7, 2007. The plan was mailed to the Assistant Superintendent of the CHCCS on May 21, 2007.

The accelerated schedule includes a presentation of an agreed upon revised plan at a Citizens' Information Workshop in the late summer. NCDOT is seeking feedback in advance of the workshop. Comments are summarized below, with full details attached (**Attachments C, D, E**).

SLRTF Design Review Comments Summary (Full comments attachment C)

The SLRTF was presented with the revised road design on May 20th. During that meeting, task force members as well as members of the public had an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. The majority of comments concerned the proposed roundabout at the Smith Level Road and Rock Haven road intersection, with safety being the issue at hand. An additional concern was raised regarding the median, which as shown, would restrict the Willow Oak access to the Berry Hill neighborhood to right-in, right-out access.

Four Task Force members met on June 12th to review the design as a group. The final comments from the SLRTF include: a request for clarification of the extent of the sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of the road; safe pedestrian crossing at the roundabout that would include flashing yellow school lights; bicycle activated signals at the signalized intersections; safe pedestrian crossing near the Frank Porter Graham School.

CHCCS Design Review Comments

See Attachment E

TAB Design Review Comments Summary (Full comment attachment D)

The TAB reviewed the revised plan on June 7th. While the TAB supports the inclusion of a roundabout at the Rock Haven intersection, they are opposed to a 4-lane cross section along any section of the project and the inclusion of a 3rd "suicide" lane. They also made recommendations regarding flashing school lights at the approaches to the high school, safe pedestrian crossing near the Frank Porter Graham School, and pedestrian signals at the Culbreth and BPW intersections.

Below are comments that could possibly be forwarded to NCDOT regarding Project U-2803 :

1. Inclusions of pedestrian facilities for the roundabout such as: flashing yellow school lights 100 feet or so before the roundabout during school arrival and departure times, along with painted crosswalks and pedestrian-activated crossing signals.
2. Inclusion of traffic signals at Rock Haven, Culbreth, and BPW that will be sensitive enough to be tripped by bicyclists and that will have pedestrian crossing buttons.
3. Revised cross sections per TAB recommendations.

Additional comments that could be forwarded to NCDOT regarding Smith Level Road, but which refer to a section outside the current boundaries of the Project U-2803:

1. Safe pedestrian crossing for the Frank Porter Graham School.

FISCAL IMPACT

None known at the present time. The transportation improvements expected along Smith Level include bicycle and sidewalk facilities. The construction cost of a portion of sidewalk facilities will be the town's responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen review the comments from the TAB, SLRTF, and CHCCS and adopt a resolution providing comments to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.