

# US 70 Corridor Commission



## COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, November 12, 2009 @ 3:00 PM

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Walnut Creek Country Club, 508 Lake Shore Dr, Goldsboro, NC

1. Welcome – Introduction of Members
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Citizen Comments\*
6. Discussion on Pilot Projects and TIP Project Updates
  - Pilot Projects - Preferred Alternatives
  - TIP and ARRA Projects
8. Treasurer's Report
  - 2009/2010 Budget
9. New Business
10. Next Steps / Next Meeting

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*\* Citizen Comments are opened at the discretion of the Chair*

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*Next meeting: January, 2010, Johnston County (tentative)*

## ATTENDANCE

### **Corridor Commissioners**

#### Carteret

Randy Martin  
Joan Pulley  
Tom Steepy

#### Craven

Mike Avery  
Harold Blizzard  
Steve Tyson  
Danny Walsh

#### Johnston

Berry Gray  
Rick Hester  
Frank Price

#### Lenoir

Russell Rhodes

#### Wayne

Chuck Allen  
Jack Best

### **Agencies**

#### NCDOT Board Members

Hugh Overholt

#### NCDOT Staff

Dwayne Alligood  
Haywood Daughtry  
Neil Lassiter  
Jerry Page

#### NC State Ports Authority

Stephanie Ayers

#### Eastern Carolina Council of Governments

Alex Rickard  
Rob Will

#### Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Mike Rutkowski  
Todd Delk

### **Guests**

Don Baumgardner  
Scott Chase  
Ophelia Davis  
Joe Thomas

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## MINUTES

Mr. Steepy presided as chair for the meeting. He acknowledged that enough members were present to establish quorum and called the meeting to order at approximately 3:10 p.m.

Mr. Steepy opened the meeting with introduction and thanked everyone for their attendance. Members from Carteret, Wayne, Lenoir, Craven, and Johnston Counties were in attendance. Mr. Steepy also introduced new NCDOT Division 2 Board of Transportation member Hugh Overholt and Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter.

Mr. Steepy called for consideration and approval the meeting agenda. No changes were made and Mrs. Pulley moved for approval. Mr. Avery seconded the motion and it was passed. Mr. Steepy called for

consideration and approval the August 2009 minutes. No changes were made and Mrs. Pulley moved for approval. Mr. Avery seconded the motion and it was passed.

Mr. Steepy opened for the floor for Citizens Comments. No comments were made. Mr. Rhodes announced a Public Meeting to be held Dec. 10 in regards to the Skinners Bypass pilot project. He outlined the meeting agenda and stated its purpose to seek local input and address access concerns.

Mr. Steepy gave Mr. Rutkowski the floor to make a presentation of the Skinners Bypass project. Mr. Rutkowski thanked Mr. Rhodes Russell for being a local champion and an active voice in the project. Mr. Rutkowski made a short presentation (see attached). He highlighted the estimated project cost of \$16-18 million when asked by Mr. Walsh. When asked about the project timeframe, Mr. Lassiter stated that the project timeline was currently undecided but that his staff was working on it.

Mr. Delk made a short presentation on the progress on the James City Retrofit Pilot Project (see attached). After the presentation, Mr. Tyson and Mr. Walsh brought up the issue of railroad closure north of the project. They referred to Craven County's effort to consider legislation that would make the crossing exempt from state law requiring school buses to stop at the tracks. They asked about signing options. Mrs. Pulley moved for the Commission to draft a Resolution in favor of the exemption legislation, and Mr. Walsh seconded the motion. Ms. Pulley was advised to look at the RPO's resolution for guidance. The motion passed.

Mr. Tyson addressed comments on the James City project from Craven County. He suggested that plans be developed to look at a similar solution for the next two major intersections to the south (Taberna and Thurman Roads) as a first step. He stated that options in this area would put the project ahead of the growth curve and anticipate traffic from planned high school and junior high school site proposed by the County School Board. He also mentioned economic development and growth implications of a sewer line planned in the area. He stated that using this as an example will allow the Williams and Airport Road interchanges to be built faster and better, and provide NCDOT experience with a new project type. He noted the numerous constraints in the area and that moving the project would provide an opportunity to show as a success.

Mr. Walsh had a question on Crash Rates, particularly for the one way service roads, and asked Mr. Delk to confer with him on an idea.

Mr. Steepy provided a short synopsis on the evolution of the James City project and asked whether we should move down the road to simply be less controversial, when the problem is at Williams and Airport. He and other members talked about a site meeting they conducted in the Food Lion Parking lot and how they discussed that it would take 6-10 years to get this project started and 2 years of construction. He emphasized that the Commission and NCDOT need to act at the studied location. He suggested the Commission draft a Resolution to support the James City feasibility improvements as one alternative to the on-going NCDOT studies as well as move forward with the interim roadway and intersection improvements. The resolution should also support moving forward with the Bypass study. Mr. Tyson stated that the project "is not just softball, but has major business impacts." Mr. Steepy

asked whether it was an issue of business interests vs. consensus. Mr. Allen stated the NCDOT is interested in the retrofit project because of the benefit/cost ratio compared to a Bypass option. Mr. Steepy urged the Commission to keep the project progressing and moving, and for Kimley-Horn to draft a resolution for consideration by the Commission. Mrs. Pulley stressed that it would take NCDOT 8 to 10 years to get ready to proceed with the Bypass project. Mr. Tyson stated that moving the project would help ease community fears about the retrofit. Mr. Steepy stated that the Commission and NCDOT have worked through a process to get everything into this project and stressed that it needs to keep moving.

Mr. Best asked for consideration of getting the Taberna and Thurman intersection into an extended version of the total plan. Mr. Delk stated that those interchanges are part of the retrofit feasibility study being performed by NCDOT and Mr. Rutkowski noted that the NCDOT study would not be to the same level of detail. Further discussion would be needed at our next meeting regarding the need to study the Taberna and Thurman intersections in more detail. Ms. Pulley stated that the school board's sites make the additional intersections an issue now, not just if they happen. Mr. Martin stated that schools make growth happen. He stated the businesses must factor the future traffic disruptions due to long-term congestion vs. short term construction. He warned that the longer the project is put off, the worse the situation the business will be in.

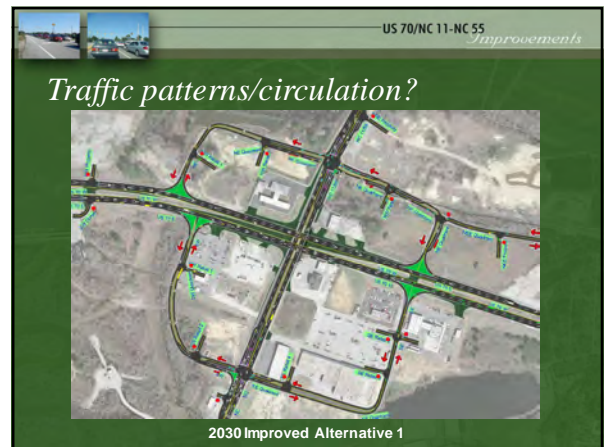
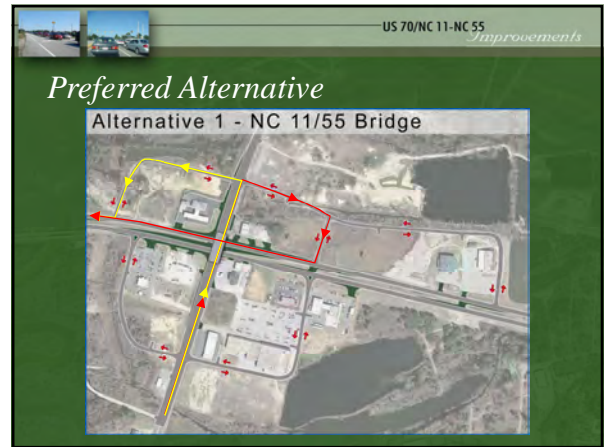
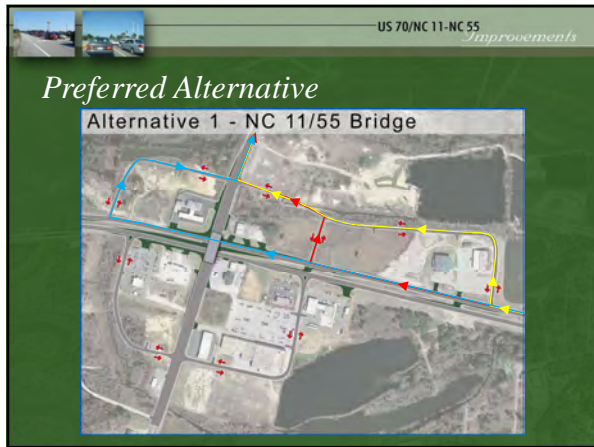
Mr. Steepy asked NCDOT to consider the auxiliary fixes (i.e., simple widening and intersection improvements) proposed in the plan immediately. He stated how the project improves LOS at Williams from F to LOS C/D, and highlighted the local and regional through traffic percentages. Mrs. Davis stressed that the Commission needs to tell the community how you can make it happen construction-wise.

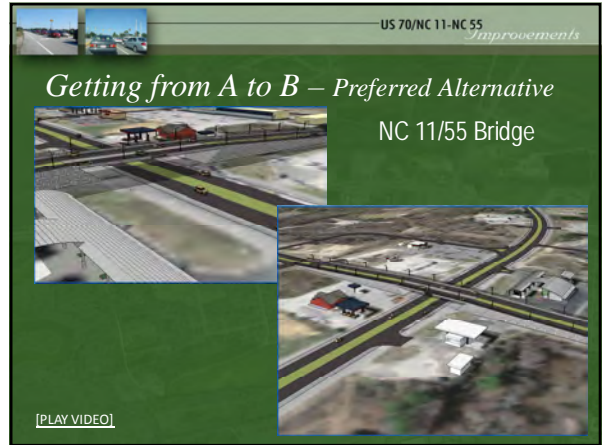
Mr. Baumgardner asked about the future traffic counts and cost figures. Mr. Delk reviewed them from the presentation. Mr. Rutkowski discussed the comparison of the retrofit and bypass options. Mr. Baumgardner stressed that we need to get a success story. Funding options were discussed. Mr. Steepy gave Mr. Tyson a draft resolution for comment and consideration for the next meeting.

Mr. Page provided a TIP Update for the Goldsboro Bypass stating that for Project BA the contractor had completed 70% of the earthwork and the bridges are under construction as of 11/16/09. The right-of-way has been acquired for Projects A & C. Mr. Walsh provided an update on the Havelock Bypass stated that it will be completed in nine years. Mr. Page updated everyone on the W-project at Pine Level, sharing that it is still in the preliminary design phase and that right-of-way acquisition could start in October 2010. It will include two interchanges. The consultant working on the project looks to hold a public meeting by Spring 2010, and construction could begin in 2011. Mr. Alligood reported that the stimulus-funded Crescent Parkway project is 20% done, and projected to open in spring 2014.

Mr. Steepy stated that the next meeting of the Commission is tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2010 in Johnston County. He also asked for volunteers for a budget working group.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.








**US 70 FREEWAY  
FEASIBILITY STUDY:  
JAMES CITY, NC**


**US 17/Trent River to Airport Rd.**

### What We Heard from Work Session #1




- Best to have **two ramp-overs** at Williams & Airport
- Elevated bridge structure with local routes below
- Need to improve Williams Road **connection to Old Cherry Point Road** by acquiring/moving Citgo/McDonalds
- Need for entry points to freeway both east- & westbound for **fire and EMS** to crashes on freeway
- Maintaining good traffic flow and business access during construction

### What Has Happened Since Work Session #1



- Initial Revisions to Plans to Develop Option with Dual Interchanges
- Considerable Coordination and Review with NCDOT, US 70 Corridor Commission, and James City Advisory Group
  - Craven County staff & officials, New Bern staff, NCDOT, business owners, EMS, Airport
- Iterative Revisions to Address Issues Brought Forward by James City Advisory Group

### Preferred Option: Two Interchanges



- Bridges ramping over Williams & Airport Roads
- LOS C/D for interchange (2020)



### Other Design Specifics

- **Service Roads**
- **Terminal Drive**
  - Two-way road from Airport Road to Williams Road
- **Brown Drive**
  - Direct access from neighborhood to Williams Road
  - Improvements to rail crossing within the community




### Freeway Signing





### Freeway Options - Bypass

- **New Bypass from US 17 Bypass at River Bend to Havelock Bypass (17 miles)**
  - **Probable Cost: \$370 M (2007)**
  - Speed Limit: 65-70 mph
  - Travel Time: 18-20 min
  - Access: 2 interchanges
  - **Construction Timeframe: 2025 (earliest)**



### Freeway Options - Retrofit

- **Retrofit US 70 from New Bern to Havelock Bypass (11.3 miles)**
  - **Probable Cost: \$160M (2007)**
  - Speed Limit: 55-60 mph
  - Travel Time: 19-21 min
  - Access: 7 interchanges
  - **Construction Timeframe: 2015 – 2020 (in sections)**



### Pros & Cons of Alternatives

Retrofit	Bypass
+ Lower price tag	+ Less disruptive to James City area
+ Constructability in sections	+ Hurricane route
+ Maintains “pass-by” business	- Higher price tag
- Disruption during construction	- Long-term option
- Not full access	- No short-term traffic relief
- No evacuation alt.	- Numerous environmental impacts
	- Minimal access

### What Happened at Work Session #2



- **Approx. 300 attendees**
- **General concerns more about construction impacts than viability of improvements**
  - Particularly for business impacts
- **Mixed interest in bypass option**
  - General agreement to get bypass in plans at least as long term alternative