



City Of Raleigh *North Carolina*

DATE: April 21, 2011

TO: Property Owners along the Mitchell Mill Road widening project

FROM: Ken Dunn, P.E.

SUBJECT: Mitchell Mill Road widening - response to Corridor Public Meeting comments

A Corridor Public Meeting was held on September 23, 2010 at Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church to present the preliminary design plans to the public. Maps and exhibit boards were available for viewing and all attendees received a project handout. The meeting was conducted jointly by the City of Raleigh and Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. with an informal reviewing of the project maps followed by a brief presentation and wrapped up with a Question/Answer discussion. Participants were encouraged to provide comments on the project, both verbally and particularly in writing.

A total of 50 participants signed in at the Public Meeting. The City of Raleigh received and reviewed 10 comment sheets, emails, or letters regarding the project. The following provides a response to general comments received from residents during and after the meeting:

Summary of General Written Comments and Responses

Concerns with Access Management

Comments

A citizen requested that the light at Single Leaf be staggered with Round Oak Road to allow vehicles from Round Oak Road to make a left turn. The citizen also expressed concern that widening Mitchell Mill Road near Single Leaf Lane will make the distance between Mitchell Mill and Dechart Lane too short and makes it difficult to turn onto Single Leaf Lane from Dechart in the morning.

A citizen stated there are too many scenarios requiring people to have to overshoot their intended turns and be forced to make U-turns on a fast road and is also concerned about reducing the 2 full access intersections into Neuse Crossing Development to one full access and one restricted access. Also, Single Leaf Lane will become very congested and make it more difficult for vehicles coming from Round Oak Road. Allowing left turns from Pinkham Way onto Mitchell Mill would help alleviate Single Leaf Lane.

A citizen living off of Round Oak Road was troubled that she will no longer be able to make a left turn in or out of the neighborhood and would be required to make dangerous U-turns at get home. Longdale Drive is not equipped for the much heavier flow of traffic that will result from people not being able to turn left onto Round Oak Drive. Round Oak Road and Single Leaf Lane should be aligned so a signal can serve both roads, but if that is not possible the signal should be placed at Round Oak Road. The Neuse Crossing

neighborhood has multiple exits and wide traffic-friendly roads. Wake High Meadows neighborhood only has two exits and by restricting the Round Oak Road intersection, the neighborhood will only have one exit.

A citizen living in Wake High Meadows and is concerned that after Mitchell Mill Road is widened his neighborhood will only have one entrance that doesn't require a troublesome U-turn. Longdale Drive will have to serve as the main entrance to the neighborhood and is a small existing road. With the 45 mph on Mitchell Mill Road, the citizen doesn't feel comfortable with having to make U-turns and with hundreds of homes in High Meadows all having to make U-turns, traffic on Mitchell Mill Road will back up.

A citizen expressed frustration about not being able to turn left on to Round Oak coming from Louisburg Road and requested the signal be placed at Round Oak instead of Single Leaf Lane. Concern about the number of U-turns that will be required once Mitchell Mill is widened was also expressed.

A citizen was concerned that there are too many houses along Single Leaf Lane with kids and pets to make it the main entrance to the neighborhood. Neuse Crossing Drive is already a major road and the signal should be installed at this intersection instead of Single Leaf Lane.

A citizen has two driveways along Mitchell Mill Road and would like to access at least one driveway with a cut-through in the median.

Response

One of the most challenging aspects of this project is the development of a functional roadway project that adequately addresses safety on the corridor through access management. Allowing unrestricted access at all points in the corridor does not result in a safe scenario. This is due to the predicted traffic growth on the corridor and the number of lanes required to carry that predicted growth at an acceptable level of service. Many factors are considered when determining what is safe and what presents a danger. Measures such as lowering the speed limit or installing traffic signals do not inherently make a corridor safer. When it comes to installing features for control of access, the safety and mobility of the corridor are examined. In certain situations, after careful study of the situation and the factors affecting its operation, it may be deemed acceptable to allow unrestricted access along a corridor. However, in this case, due to the number of proposed lanes, volume of traffic, and number of access points, it is better to establish a corridor that balances the need for access with the overall mobility of the corridor in an effort to keep all users safe. It is proven that limiting left-turns along a major corridor does improve overall safety and that making right and U-turns do limit the potential number of conflicts for each turning movement. Thus, the preliminary design equitably balances the safety and mobility needs of the project through a combination of left-turns, signalized intersections and median restrictions that are intended to provide the safest and most efficient corridor for all users.

A traffic study was performed for the entire corridor and projected traffic volumes for the year 2035. The projected traffic volumes did not warrant a signal at Round Oak Road. However, the traffic volumes on Single Leaf Lane are significantly greater and warranted a signal. Single Leaf Lane will be modified at the Mitchell Mill Road intersection to provide adequate storage based on the projected volumes. Longdale Drive was also investigated with the study and the existing road is able to handle the projected traffic volumes. The traffic study did not indicate any future problems or queuing issues with the proposed signal arrangement. U-turns are considered a safe movement at 45 mph. As always, the vehicle making the u-turn movement will need to yield to oncoming vehicles.

The City investigated realigning Single Leaf Lane and Round Oak Road; however, this would require a significant realignment, additional right-of-way, and significant costs. At this time, this is not a feasible option. A traffic signal at Neuse Crossing was also investigated, but it was determined this location would be problematic both operationally and from a safety standpoint due to the standing queues on Mitchell Mill Road from US 401 signalized intersection.

Concerns Relating to Noise Impacts and Noise Walls

Comments

A citizen would like a noise study for the homes in Wake High Meadows.

A citizen requests that a noise reduction fence be constructed along the north side of Mitchell Mill Road between Forestville Road and Pinkham Way. Currently, the traffic noise is already high along this stretch and during fall and winter months (when the trees bordering the creek lose their leaves) the noise level increases substantially. With the traffic coming closer to these homes, the future noise level will be intolerable.

Response

Noise walls are not effective along urban arterials like Mitchell Mill Road. The frequent breaks required in a noise wall for driveway openings and side streets will not effectively reduce noise levels.

Concerns Relating to US 401/Mitchell Mill Road Intersection

Comments

A citizen would like the free flowing lane coming from US 401 to Mitchell Mill to be addressed.

A citizen expressed concern for vehicles making U-turns at the intersection of US 401 and Mitchell Mill Road. Since more cars will have to make a U-turn at the intersection the traffic coming from the free flow right turn on US 401 will be slowed down.

Response

The US 401 and Mitchell Mill Road intersection has been reviewed. Individuals making U-turns should have adequate distance for U-turn movements at this intersection without interfering with right-turn traffic flow on US 401. The concrete island on Mitchell Mill Road will be extended to increase the separation between the U-turn and free-flow movements and eliminate conflicting traffic moments.

Concerns Relating to Landscaping

Comments

A citizen wants plants to be limited to North Carolina and Eastern Seaboard native plants. No exotic plants.

Response

The plant list was developed in conjunction with City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation staff to use species that perform well under drought conditions in this area.

Concerns Relating to Widening

Comments

A citizen expressed concern that sidewalk associated with the Mitchell Mill Road widening will be too close to her fence.

A citizen expressed concern about the hill behind the house being removed and a sidewalk placed along the fence. If possible a portion of the hill should be maintained and plants placed as a barrier.

A citizen stated that widening Mitchell Mill Road will obviously increase traffic use and density as well as bring the traffic closer to the McCracken gas storage tanks. The tanks should be relocated because they are an accident waiting to happen. See information previously provided to you for just such a vehicular accident that resulted in many damaged homes.

Response

The impacts to surrounding properties were taken into consideration during design. On average, sidewalks will be approximately 30 feet from the fence line and remain more than 16 feet from the fence at the nearest point. The two filler tanks on the McCracken property are greater than 90 feet from the nearest proposed edge of pavement which is greater than the required 28-foot clear zone distance. All other portable tanks will be relocated within the new limits of the chain link fence around the property accordingly.