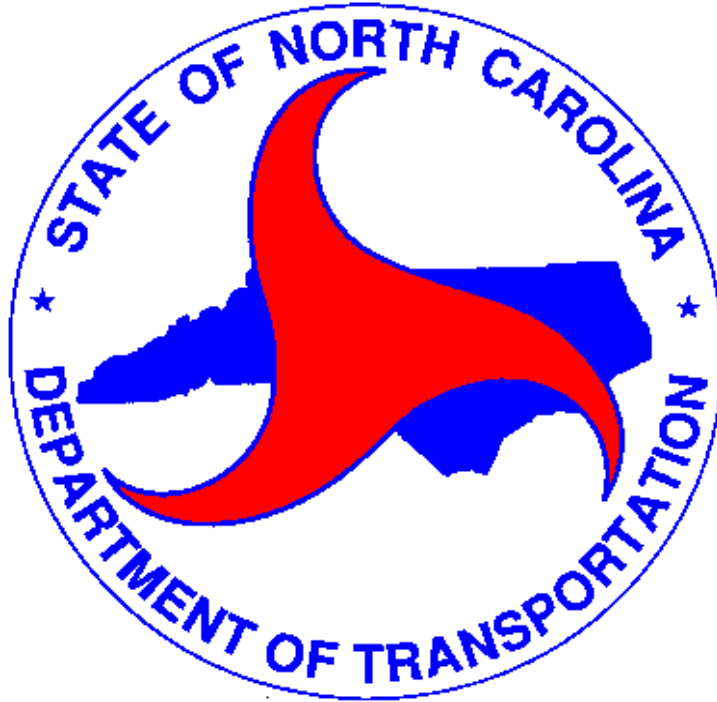

North Carolina Department of Transportation
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH



US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)
FROM 1172 GRANDVIEW DRIVE US 21
ALLEGHANY COUNTY
TIP PROJECT R-4060

JULY 26, 2007

CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)
FROM 1172 GRANDVIEW DRIVE US 21

ALLEGHANY COUNTY
STATE PROJECT NO. 8.2692601
WBS ELEMENT NO. 34605.1.1
FEDERAL AID NO. STP-21(10)
TIP NO. R-4060

PURPOSE OF THE CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

The purpose of the Citizens Informational Workshop is to involve the public in the project planning process. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions about the proposed improvements described in this handout, please inform a representative of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). A comment sheet is provided for you to write down your questions or concerns so that we can keep a record of, and fully consider your ideas, comments, and suggestions.

NCDOT realizes individuals living close to a proposed project want to be informed of the possible effects of the project on their homes and businesses. However, exact information is not available at this stage of the planning process. Additional design work is necessary before alternatives and actual right of way limits can be established. More detailed information will be available at a later date.

Written comments on this project may be left with NCDOT representatives at the Citizens Informational Workshop or submitted through the mail. If additional information is needed or you would like to submit comments after the Workshop, please address your requests and comments to:

Write: Dr. Gregory Thorpe, Manager
Attn: Undrea Major.- Engineer
Division of Highways
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

Call: Undrea Major, Project Planning Engineer
(919)-733-7844 Extension 212

Email: ujmajor@dot.state.nc.us

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND THE PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

PROJECT PLANNING

Planning and environmental studies for this highway project will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The type of document published will be an Environmental Assessment (EA). This document will fully discuss the purpose and need for the proposed improvements, evaluate alternatives, and analyze the project's impacts on both the human and natural environment. Some topics the document will address include:

- Efficiency and safety of travel
- Neighborhoods and communities
- Relocation of homes and businesses
- Economy of project area
- Historic properties and sites
- Wetlands
- Endangered species
- Wildlife and plant communities
- Water quality
- Floodplains
- Farmland and land use plans of project area
- Hazardous materials involvement
- Traffic noise and air quality

Following the completion of the EA, NCDOT will conduct a Public Hearing to review the proposed project design.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's 2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) proposes to construct a two lane facility on US 21 from the SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21, a length of approximately 1.4 miles. See the attached vicinity map.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to reduce congestion on US 21 through Sparta and improve the traffic flow by providing a bypass around the southern perimeter of town. Current traffic volumes consist of approximately 3,400 vehicles per day on Grandview Drive and 11,200 vehicles per day on US 21. The projected traffic volumes are 4,400 vehicle per day on Grandview Drive and 17,600 vehicles per day on US 21 by the year 2030.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

EA	January 2009
Public Hearing	Spring 2009
FONSI	October 2009
Right of Way	FY 2011
Construction	Unfunded

* Denotes Federal Fiscal Year

CURRENT STATUS

Currently, planning and environmental studies are in progress. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is scheduled to be completed in January 2009. The EA will address impacts the proposed roadway widening may have on the human and natural environment.

After completion of the EA, a public hearing will be held at which the alternatives will be presented to the public. At that time, the public will have an opportunity to review a map with the proposed design(s). Factors that may affect the design of this project include engineering criteria and environmental factors such as relocation of homes or businesses, wetlands, historic sites, etc. A form is available from NCDOT representatives if you feel you have, or know of, a structure that has historical significance. The proposed project currently under investigation is described in the next paragraph.

ANTICIPATED RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS

Please note that the designated study corridor does not represent the proposed right of way needed to build the project. The study corridor represents an area large enough to accommodate the proposed project, while allowing the flexibility of altering the design to minimize impacts to existing development and the environment. Until both environmental studies and preliminary designs are completed, specific right of way impacts to individual properties cannot be determined. As planning for the project continues, we will include all comments and suggestions received at this workshop and afterwards to the extent possible. Anticipated impacts to individual properties will be presented at the public hearing, which is expected to be held in the spring 2009.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DESIGN STUDIES

In the coming months NCDOT environmental specialists and survey crews will be studying the project area. During this period, these NCDOT personnel may be on citizens' properties in order to complete their studies. The purpose of these studies is to gather background information that will be used in making recommendations on the proposed project. No decisions on the final design of this project have been made.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

NCDOT provides a number of opportunities for citizen and interest group participation during project planning. Some of these opportunities are listed below:

SCOPING LETTER	Published in N.C. Environmental Bulletin. This letter notifies agencies and groups on the State Clearinghouse mailing list that a project study has been initiated and solicits comments from them.
CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP	Informal meeting with the public. NCDOT staff conduct these workshops to speak one-on-one with citizens about projects. Comment sheets are provided for citizens to write down their questions, comments, and concerns. The number of workshops scheduled for a project depends on the scope and anticipated impact of the project.
DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION	Copies of environmental documents are submitted to the State Clearinghouse for distribution and a notice is published in the N.C. Environmental Bulletin. Upon request, NCDOT will provide copies of the document to the public. Copies are available for public viewing at NCDOT Raleigh and Division offices; the State Clearinghouse office; local government offices, including the local council of government office; and local public libraries.
PUBLIC HEARING	One or more formal public hearings for the public record are held. Format typically involves a short presentation followed by an opportunity for citizens to comment.
CITIZEN LETTER	Citizens are encouraged to write NCDOT and provide information and express concerns regarding proposed improvements. Correspondence from citizens and interest groups is considered during the course of the planning study and is included in the project file.

Environmental Planning Process For Transportation Projects

STEP 1 Describe the Transportation Need

Identify Existing and Future Transportation Needs, Define Study Area, Prepare a Purpose and Need Statement.

WE ARE HERE

STEP 2 Identify Alternatives to Solving the Transportation Need

Prepare mapping. Hold a Citizens Informational Workshop to gather input from project stakeholders, Identify Preliminary Alternatives.

STEP 3 Study the Alternatives that meet Purpose and Need (STEP 1) in detail.

Perform engineering studies and environmental studies.

STEP 4 Publish the Environmental Assessment (EA) document.

The EA outlines STEPS 1 – 3.

STEP 5 Hold a Public Hearing

Present alternatives to the public. This is an opportunity for citizens to comment on the proposed transportation improvements.

STEP 6 Select a Preferred Alternative

Review comments from the public and federal, state, and local agencies on the EA (STEP 4) and transcript from the Public Hearing (STEP 5) select a preferred alternative.

STEP 7 Prepare and publish the final environmental document, the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI describes the selected alternative and summarizes the responses to comments received during the Public Hearing and the EA review period.

FINAL STEPS: Following publication of the FONSI, final engineering design plans are prepared for the selected alternative. The final steps are right of way acquisition and construction of the roadway.

Engineer: Major

**Citizens Informational Workshop
Comment Sheet (Continued)
TIP R-4060**

Was the project adequately explained to you? Yes No

Were NCDOT representatives understandable and clear in their explanations? Yes No
Please explain _____

Were NCDOT representatives courteous and helpful? Yes No
Please explain _____

Were display maps and handouts easy to read and understand? Yes No
Please explain _____

How might we better present proposed projects and address citizen's concerns in future informational workshops? _____

How did you hear about this meeting today? _____

Do you feel that the workshop was adequately advertised? Yes No
Please explain _____

Based on the information provided, were all substantial questions answered? Yes No
Please explain _____

What was the most helpful aspect about the workshop today? What was the least helpful aspect about it? _____

Please indicate any additional comments or suggestions regarding our public involvement process: _____

Thank you for attending the workshop.
Your comments are very important in the planning process.