

ORANGE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

Meeting Date: December 15, 2009

Action Agenda
Item No. 6-e

SUBJECT: Resolution Endorsing the No-Build Alternative for Elizabeth Brady Road Extension

DEPARTMENT: Planning & Inspections

PUBLIC HEARING: (Y/N)

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1. Resolution
- 2. List of Alternatives to Replace Construction of the U-3808

INFORMATION CONTACT:

Karen Lincoln, 245-2580
Craig Benedict, 245-2592

PURPOSE: To consider approving a resolution to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) endorsing the no-build alternative for Elizabeth Brady Road Extension, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Number U-3808.

BACKGROUND: NCDOT released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for TIP Project U-3808 in November, and held an open house followed by a public hearing on the project on December 7, 2009. The DEIS includes detailed studies for four alternatives for the project:

- Alternative 1.. No-Build;
- Alternative 3. An alignment that would pass through the Occoneechee Speedway to extend the road across the Eno River intersecting with NC 70 Bypass at St. Mary's Road;
- Alternative 4. An alignment that would avoid impacts to the Occoneechee Speedway; and
- Alternative 6. An alignment that would avoid a new crossing of the Eno River.

The No-Build Alternative would include other NCDOT programmed roadway improvements and other roadway projects in the area included in the adopted 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) of the Durham-Carrboro-Chapel Hill Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO).

NCDOT will accept written comments through January 7, 2010.

During the five years NCDOT has taken to develop the DEIS, many new developments have occurred in the area that give rise to reassess the need for this project.

The Town of Hillsborough, on November 30, 2009, held a public hearing to obtain public input regarding a package developed by Hillsborough staff of alternative studies and construction

projects to replace the construction of U-3808. Attachment 2 contains Hillsborough's proposed projects to replace U-3808. The alternatives for feasibility studies include:

- Extending Orange Grove Street to US 70A;
- Realigning the intersections of Eno Mountain Road and Mayo Street at Orange Grove Road; and
- Updating the feasibility study for South Churton Street improvements to include an assessment of the recommendations in the Churton Street Corridor Plan.

Orange County's priority list for the 2012-2017 TIP includes the three above-mentioned projects.

The Hillsborough Town Board has considered comments received at the two public hearings and will consider a resolution to endorse the No-Build alternative at its meeting on December 14, 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no direct financial impact of this item.

RECOMMENDATION(S): The Manager recommends the Board approve the Resolution Endorsing the No-Build Alternative for the Elizabeth Brady Road Extension, TIP Project Number U-3808.

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE FOR TIP PROJECT
NUMBER U-3808, ELIZABETH BRADY ROAD EXTENSION

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Number U-3808, the Elizabeth Brady Road Extension; and

WHEREAS, the DEIS contains detailed studies for four alternatives for the project including a No-Build Alternative that would include other NCDOT programmed roadway improvements and other roadway projects in the area that are included in the adopted 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) of the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) but no improvements to Elizabeth Brady Road except for routine maintenance; and

WHEREAS, the DEIS indicates implementation of Build Alternatives 3, 4 or 6 would have greater negative impacts to area physical, cultural and human environments than the No-Build Alternative while reducing traffic delay on Churton Street by only 13% to 23%; and

WHEREAS, Orange County has previously submitted comments regarding the County's concerns with protecting the natural and cultural resources in the vicinity of the Elizabeth Brady Road project; and

WHEREAS, Orange County has participated in several joint endeavors with the Town of Hillsborough to study transportation projects and develop plans recommending projects to address traffic congestion in and around Hillsborough; and

WHEREAS, Orange County has included projects recommended by those joint studies in its priority list requests for programming in the TIP; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Hillsborough has developed a list of alternatives to replace construction of the Elizabeth Brady Road Extension project; and

WHEREAS, NCDOT will consider such things as safety, costs, traffic service, environmental impacts and public comments in making a recommendation for a Preferred Alternative Corridor for preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Orange County Board of Commissioners that Orange County endorses the No-Build Alternative for TIP Project Number U-3808, the Elizabeth Brady Road Extension, and supports programming of roadway improvements in the 2030 LRTP of the DCHC MPO to alleviate traffic on Churton Street in downtown Hillsborough including:

- TIP Project Number R-2825, South Churton Street improvements;

- TIP Project Number U-3436, realignment of the intersections of Eno Mountain Road and Mayo Street at Orange Grove Road; and
- Extension of Orange Grove Street to US 70 A (DCHC MPO priority project number 16).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Orange County Board of Commissioners that Orange County supports redirecting funding for the Elizabeth Brady Road Extension to the attached list of Alternatives to Elizabeth Brady Road, a package of alternative studies and construction projects proposed by the Town of Hillsborough to wholly replace the construction of TIP Project Number U-3808.

Upon motion of Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, the foregoing resolution was adopted this the 15th day of December, 2009.

I, Donna Baker, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners for the County of Orange, North Carolina, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true copy of so much of the proceedings of said Board at a meeting held on December 15, 2009, as relates in any way to the adoption of the foregoing and that said proceedings are recorded in the minutes of said Board.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of said County, this _____ day of _____, 2009.

Clerk to the Board of Commissioners

Alternatives to Elizabeth Brady Road
Draft package of alternative studies and construction projects
to wholly replace the construction of U-3808
November 2009

The intent of this list is to provide a substitute package of transportation studies and improvements that generate reasonable improvements to the levels of service along Churton Street to be seen as a true alternative to the construction of U-3808 by NCDOT. It is the town's desire to have funding wholly reallocated from U-3808 to this list without significant changes to the funding years. Studies can proceed immediately and in parallel with the planning necessary for the projects including construction.

1. Assess the viability of designating an alternate route as an **NC 86 Bypass** – including portions of I-40 and I-85 and the US 70 connector. If this route is viable, funding for necessary signage and any spot safety or small improvements is also included in the package.
2. **Enhanced signage** East, West, and North of Hillsborough to direct through traffic to use the US 70 connector and interstates rather than Churton Street. This includes signage in RTP to direction NC 86 N traffic to the Durham Freeway, I-85, and US 70 Bypass and includes the study of the improvement as well as installation of the signs.
3. Update the **Feasibility Study for the widening of S Churton Street** (TIP R-2825) to include an assessment of the recommendations in the Churton Street Corridor Plan and the potential impacts of the Waterstone Development. This must include an assessment of the viability of the roundabouts and cross-sections recommended in the Corridor Plan as well as updated development and redevelopment forecasts in the corridor. Funding for the construction of this improvement is also requested as part of the package, including the I-85 interchange reconstruction.
4. Update and modernize **I-85 interchange 164** on NC 86. While this interchange is part of the I-85 widening project, this interchange is critical to improved and safe traffic flow in Hillsborough. This request includes funding for the full reconstruction of the interchange and the integration of bicycle and pedestrian features across the interstate.
5. Conduct a **Feasibility Study for the construction of Orange Grove Street** extension to US 70 Business. This must include an underpass of the railroad as well as bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Funding for the construction of this improvement is also requested as part of the package.
6. **Conduct a Feasibility Study for the alignment of Eno Mountain Road and Mayo Street** (TIP U-3436). This route provides in town and local traffic relief to Churton Street and is referenced in both the Orange Grove Road plan and Churton Street Plan. Funding for the construction of this improvement is also requested as part of the package.

7. **Assess the impacts and viability of extending US 70 A** west to connect with Faribault Lane. Funding is only requested for this improvement if the study indicates significant improvements to traffic flows, levels of service, and the connection can be made without significant impacts to the community and other plans.
8. **Community railroad crossing assessment.** In light of plans to straighten a portion of the railroad east of downtown, to double track the route through town, to add commuter rail service, and potentially close crossings, the impacts of these proposals must be studied, the public engaged in the discussion, and a community plan developed for how to best balance all of the interests. This should include a discussion of the Dimmocks Road trestle and its impact on accessibility to Gold Park and Riverwalk. Funding for the construction of these improvements is also requested as part of the package.
9. **A Downtown Traffic Demand Management and efficiency assessment** to include looking at signalization, dedicated left turns, turn lanes, parking, and traffic calming to both improve the flow but maintain community character in the historic downtown core. Funding for the construction of this improvement is also requested as part of the package.
10. Provide additional **operational support funding for an in town circulating bus route** (C-4932) for five additional years in a step-down manner to allow the town and county to absorb the cost and provide a quality service with short headways.