

ORANGE COUNTY PLANNING & INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Craig N. Benedict, AICP, Director

Administration
(919) 245-2575
(919) 644-3002 (FAX)
www.orangecountync.gov



131 W. Margaret Lane
P O Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278



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Marc L. Hamel, Rail Environmental Manager
NC DOT Rail Division
Environmental and Planning Branch
1553 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

Subject: Clarification of 2/22/2013 scoping comment related to the proposed private crossing closures with the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR)/Norfolk Southern (NS) Railway at Byrdsville Road (TIP No. P-4405K) in Orange County

Dear Mr. Hamel:

I recently met with Ms. Julia Byrd and her son regarding the County's comments related to the proposed private crossing closure at Byrdsville Road (P-4405K). In particular, Ms. Byrd was concerned about the details and possible outcome of Comment #1 on page 5 of the County's letter of February 22, 2013:

1. Property owners north of the Byrdsville Mobile Home Park do not have right of access through the proposed private drive exit through the Mobile Home Park. Alternative access for these northern property owners should be considered to the west through the Joppa Oaks development, or improving the private drive and adding it to the state secondary road system. Alternative access through the Joppa Oaks development would also have the benefit of dispersing traffic to multiple connections with NC 86 if the non-authorized earthen barricade at the end of Japers Lane were removed.

Ms. Byrd owns Tax Parcel 9873853851 (the C&J Mobile Home Park) and Tax Parcel 9873960117 (her residence). Other members of her family reside on surrounding parcels. Ms. Byrd and her family are concerned that an alternative access to west that traverses her properties to connect with the Joppa Oaks development would destroy the access to her mobile home park and several of the mobile home sites within the park, the continuing income from which is essential to her livelihood.

Upon further, more detailed review of the maps for the project area, and in light of the complexities of the existing alternatives, I would request that the NC Rail Division consider a different alternative not yet proposed. There is a stream that parallels the rail right-of-way, with up to 200 feet of undeveloped land between the stream and the rail right-of-way. While there is some topography of note in this area, a parallel crossing of this area from Byrdsville Road to intersect with Workman Road might be feasible. This approach could perhaps be done instead of the proposed alternative through Duke Forest and Piedmont Electric, alleviating direct impact to around 22 properties. In this new alternative, residents in the Byrdsville Mobile Home Park would utilize this northern route through Joppa Oaks. This alternative would allow shorter and more direct access to NC 86, and un-barricading the terminus of Jaspers Lane would allow two full access points to NC 86. Some improvements to the angled Walter Clark Drive intersection may still be necessary.

Your consideration of this new route as an alternative to those currently being discussed would be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Craig Benedict, AICP
Director of Planning and Inspections