



Date: March 21, 2011

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager
Through: Theodore L. Voorhees, Deputy City Manager
Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Director
From: Ellen Beckmann, Transportation Planner
Subject: Agenda Item – U-3308 Alston Avenue Widening

Recommendation

The City Department of Transportation recommends that the City Council support NCDOT's proposal to proceed with construction of U-3308, Alston Avenue Widening, using the revised alignment, preserving the Los Primos grocery store and widening more on the east-side of the roadway. Additionally, it is recommended that the City Council request of the NCDOT that the project be initially striped with one through lane in each direction, bicycle lanes, and parking on both sides of the street until the Level Of Service for the intersections consistently falls below Level of Service E during peak hours and cannot be improved through operational changes (such as modifying or retiming the traffic signals). It is recommended that the City Council request that there be flexibility in allowing the cross-section to vary within the corridor if there are logical transition points. Furthermore, it is recommended that the City Council request of the NCDOT that right-of-way acquisition for the properties between Main Street and Taylor Street be delayed as long as possible to allow for the option of using the western alignment should the environmental justice issue associated with the Los Primos grocery store change.

Background

At the March 10, 2011, City Council work session, the City Council received information from City and NCDOT staff on the Alston Avenue widening. At the work session, City Council directed the City Manager to send a letter to NCDOT stating the City's preferences for the project and requesting a response from NCDOT by the March 21, 2011, Council meeting. The letter was sent on March 11, 2011 and is provided as an attachment. The position in this letter is consistent with the recommendation listed above.

Beverly Robinson from NCDOT sent a response to this letter on March 18, 2011 (see attached letter dated on March 17, 2011). NCDOT's letter states that they are considering the City's request but need more time to analyze the traffic forecast before providing a response.

Issues and Analysis

NCDOT has indicated that they intend to hire a consultant to further investigate the impact of the East End Connector on the traffic forecast for Alston Avenue. According to Ms. Robinson it will be at least two months for the results of this analysis to be complete. After this analysis, it is expected that NCDOT would provide a response on whether the interim striping proposal would be acceptable.

The City Council could defer action until a reply has been received from NCDOT or send a response to NCDOT requesting that the project proceed consistent with the above recommendation. If the City Council proceeds with the staff recommendation and NCDOT's analysis does not support the interim striping plan, the project would likely be constructed and striped for two through lanes in each direction as proposed by NCDOT.

Attachments

Attachment A - City of Durham letter to NCDOT dated March 10, 2011

Attachment B - NCDOT letter to the City of Durham dated March 17, 2011