



CONSIDER A RESOLUTION OPPOSING ALTERNATIVE 4A AS A DESIGN FOR MODIFICATIONS TO EUBANKS ROAD AND NC 86

STAFF REPORT

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT
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PROPERTY ADDRESS	BUSINESS MEETING DATE	REQUESTED BY
Northwood Neighborhood – Eubanks Rd – Martin Luther King Jr Blvd	January 30, 2019	Town of Chapel Hill

STAFF’S RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt a resolution opposing NCDOT I-40/NC 86 Interchange design alternative 4A.

ITEM OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is in the design stages of a highway project that would widen I-40 from the I-85/I-40 split near Hillsborough to the Durham County line near 15-501. One component of the project is a re-design of the I-40/NC 86 interchange and surrounding roads. Eubanks Road, which currently intersects NC 86 (Martin Luther King Jr Blvd) very close to the interchange, could see modifications to improve traffic flow and safety. NCDOT has proposed several alternative designs for modifying Eubanks Road. The Council has an opportunity to provide comments and support or oppose each of these alternatives.

The Northwood neighborhood is located south of Eubanks Road and west of Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. An initial design for the project, shared by NCDOT at a public meeting in November 2018, showed a substantial realignment of Eubanks Road that adversely impacted this neighborhood. Under this initial proposed option, the road would be routed south of its current alignment to intersect with Martin Luther King Jr Blvd at Perkins Drive. Following strong opposition to this design, NCDOT examined six alternative designs for I-40/NC 86/Eubanks. NCDOT then presented two of the most feasible alternatives at a Local Officials Meeting on January 14th and a Public Meeting on January 24th.

[The NCDOT project web page¹](#) provides the most recent designs for the I-40 widening project. Maps 4A and 4B (also included as attachments for this item) are the alternative designs for I-40/NC 86/Eubanks. Maps 5 & 6 show the I-40 widening east of NC 86 (near other neighborhoods in north Chapel Hill). The public comment period for the design is open until February 8, 2019. NCDOT is hoping to have the project under construction within the next two years.

Residents of the Northwood neighborhood submitted a [petition to Town Council²](#) on January 16, 2019, advocating against the alternative shown on Map 4A and seeking “an alternative plan that does not destroy neighborhoods, yet still addresses the traffic needs of our communities.”

Staff reviewed the alternative designs for the interchange and provides the observations listed in the section below.

The Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board received a presentation on the concerns of Northwood residents and the staff’s observations at their meeting on January 22, 2019. The Board approved a statement opposing the design shown on Map 4A and recommending that plans for the project follow several principles, including minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. See attached recommendation.

STAFF OBSERVATIONS

Alternative 4A (Map 4A):

This design is very similar to the previous design that realigned Eubanks Road through the Northwood neighborhood. The only difference is that Eubanks Road would turn into a one-way pair, with the westbound traffic routed along the existing Eubanks Road alignment and the eastbound traffic traveling on a new road through the neighborhood. This would be a narrower road than shown in the previous design but would still have serious impacts on several properties and neighborhood in general. This option would improve the traffic level of service (LOS) at the I-40 interchange but would result in a poor LOS at the Perkins Drive intersection.

Key Comments:

- Impacts to the homes and neighborhood are significant

¹ <https://www.ncdot.gov/news/public-meetings/Pages/I-3306A-2018-11-05.aspx>

² <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6986251&GUID=5494C1DE-DEDA-4098-BEEE-D3A7CB231FF9>

- The new road alignment would run very close to the community well for Northwood
- Access to properties abutting the new road would be inconvenient and difficult, particularly those between NC 86 and Eubanks
- Traffic impacts shift from the I-40 interchange to the Perkins Drive intersection
- Staff does not consider this a feasible option

Alternative 4B (Map 4B):

This design maintains Eubanks Road in its current alignment and adds a superstreet on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd just north of Perkins Drive. Eastbound vehicles on Eubanks would be limited to right turns, and those wishing to travel northbound on NC 86 or onto I-40 would make a U-turn at the superstreet turnaround. This option would provide adequate LOS into the 2030s, according to NCDOT.

Key Comments:

- This option would reduce impacts to the Northwood neighborhood
- Staff has encouraged NCDOT to show crosswalks and sidewalks at intersections, including the superstreet
- There would be a retaining wall in front of the Exxon gas station
- Staff finds this option preferable to Alternative 4A

Other Elements of the Project Designs

- Both alternatives include a slip lane directly from the I-40 eastbound off-ramp onto westbound Eubanks Road for vehicles traveling that direction. This lane would not impact the Carraway Village development.
- On the north side of the I-40 / NC 86 interchange, both alternatives include a new loop ramp to accommodate traffic exiting eastbound I-40 onto NC 86. The existing westbound exit ramp from I-40 in the northeast quadrant would be removed. Whitfield Road intersection would be realigned slightly to the south to align with the on-ramp for westbound I-40. These designs would not have significant impacts on the adjacent Duke Forest property and Oosting Natural Area.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution
- NCDOT Map 4A
- NCDOT Map 4B
- Resident Petition
- DRAFT TCAB Recommendation

PROJECT LOCATION

