

**ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION OPPOSING
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
INCURSION INTO THE OOSTING NATURAL AREA**

WHEREAS, Orange County has a longstanding commitment to environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, for more than 30 years Orange County, in partnership with Chapel Hill and Carrboro, has been committed to development according to a joint land-use plan that protects significant natural areas in the central part of the county, including large sections of Duke Forest in area designated as the "Rural Buffer"; and

WHEREAS, the Henry J. Oosting Natural Area, a segment of Duke Forest adjacent to Whitfield Road at the northeast quadrant of the Interstate 40 intersection with NC 86/Martin Luther King Boulevard, is within the area recognized by local governments for protection; and

WHEREAS, the Oosting Natural Area is a Registered Natural Heritage Area, placed in 2004 in the protection program stipulated by the North Carolina Nature Preserves Act, providing crucial connectivity of natural habitats in an increasingly urban and suburban setting across Orange and Durham counties; and

WHEREAS, the Oosting Natural Area was recognized in 1979 by the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) own Planning and Research Branch for "protective measures" during the design and construction of I-40; and

WHEREAS, the Oosting Natural Area, managed by Duke University for "long range ecological research and related activity" since 1959, currently is host to extensive research activities; and

WHEREAS, any environmental assessment conducted by or on behalf of NCDOT that fails to take into account the rare value of the Oosting Natural Area is insufficient and misleading;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Orange County Board of County Commissioners calls upon NCDOT to avoid any additional road or construction incursion into the Henry J. Oosting Natural Area in association with redesigning this interchange or widening I-40 now or in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Orange County Board of County Commissioners requests that NCDOT carefully consider alternatives to disrupting not only this key segment of Duke Forest but the homes potentially impacted within the Northwoods community through options presented on November 5, 2018.

This the 13th day of November 2018.



Mark Dorosin, Chair
Orange County Board of Commissioners