



D U R H A M

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Durham Transportation Division ▪ 101 City Hall Plaza ▪ Durham, NC 27701

22 October 2007

Subject: Comments on TIP Project No. U-4011, Improvements of SR 1959 (South Miami Boulevard) from South of SR 2112 (Methodist Street) to North of SR 1960 (Bethesda Avenue) in Durham

Mr. Jamille Robbins
Human Environment Unit
1583 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

Dear Mr. Robbins,

In response to the Design Public Hearing on September 24, 2007, the Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission submits these comments for your consideration:

1. The adopted Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan and the adopted the Durham Trails and Greenways Master Plan both depict the proposed Page Branch Creek Trail along the east (northbound) side of South Miami Boulevard from approximately the south property line of the Bethesda Elementary School (approx. station 36+50) and continuing north through the end of the project. In accordance with the 1994 NCDOT Policy, "Administrative Action to Include Local Adopted Greenways Plans in the NCDOT Highway Planning Process", the NCDOT should include the design and construction of this portion of the proposed greenway in lieu of the 5' sidewalk currently depicted, to include provision of adequate right-of-way for the Trail. The greenway should be designed as a shared-use path in conformance with AASHTO standards and other requirements of the adopted Durham Trails and Greenways Master Plan, the adopted DurhamWalks Pedestrian Plan, the adopted Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan, the North Carolina Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Guidelines, and City of Durham standards.
2. NCDOT should design the Page Branch Creek Trail to maximize the safety of pedestrian and bicycle users and the security of adjoining properties with respect to location, visibility, and landscaping in conformance with Durham UDO 12.4.1.B. Special attention should be paid to providing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to this section of trail including but not limited to signalized pedestrian crossing(s) of South Miami Boulevard and existing and future traffic from the existing Bethesda Elementary School site (e.g., DR2 and DR3). A signalized mid-block pedestrian only crossing of South Miami is recommended at the southern trail terminus to allow pedestrians on the west side of the road to connect to the trail.
3. The adopted Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan and adopted DCHC MPO Long Range Transportation Plan specifically include 4' bike lanes (both sides) along South

Miami Boulevard, which includes the entire length of this project. The proposed 14' WOLs should be revised to provide a 12' wide right-thru lane and 4' bike lane throughout. Bike lanes adjacent to right turn lanes should be designed per MUTCD and AASHTO guidelines.

4. The adopted Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan and adopted DCHC MPO Long Range Transportation Plan specifically include 4' bike lanes (both sides) along Ellis Road. The section of this road included within this project should be widened to provide these bicycle facilities.

5. Proposed right turn only lanes on South Miami Boulevard are not supported by existing and project traffic counts at the following locations: southbound (SB) Longmont Drive (DR1); SB New Haven St.; northbound (NB) Ambassador Drive; NB DR3 (staff and visitor driveway to Bethesda Elementary School; and NB Bethesda Avenue. It is recommended that any future increase in traffic at the Longmont Drive (DR1) which may warrant a right-turn only lane be paid for by the private developer when and if such projected demand growth occurs. It is also noted that the Design Public Hearing Map does not include existing and projected traffic counts for the Bethesda Elementary School driveway entrances (DR2 and DR3) to support the proposed design elements.

6. Proposed extended radii, high-speed sweep curves at roadway and driveway intersections should be reduced, as they sacrifice pedestrian safety at the expense of only a marginal increase in “operational efficiency” for through motor vehicle traffic alone. Longer radii translate into excessive pedestrian crossing distances, in some cases double the length with tighter radii. The significantly higher motor vehicle turning speeds also endangers pedestrians by limiting driver and pedestrian reaction time, increasing the severity and likelihood of pedestrian death by motor vehicle collision, and displacing the pedestrian crossing out of the sight triangles. The wider pavement also unnecessarily increases ROW acquisition. The wide, sweep radii at the following locations should be tightened: SB Bethesda Baptist Church RIRO; SB Ellis Road; SB Longmont Drive; SB New Haven Street; NB Methodist Street; NB Ambassador Drive; NB DR3; and NB Bethesda Avenue.

7. Proposed typical 3' setback distance from face of curb to edge of sidewalk is too narrow for anticipated pedestrian use along this 50 mph design vehicle speed road, unless a guardrail or other fixed divider is installed. AASHTO and City of Durham standards should be followed, and sidewalk (including greenway section) should be moved back to the ROW.

8. Provide signalized pedestrian crossings at west and north legs of Longmont intersection and all three legs of Ellis intersection. These crossings are required to maximize pedestrian safety while crossing South Miami to the greenway, Bethesda Elementary School, and other destinations.

9. Install full school zone signs and pavement markings as recommended by MUTCD 7.B and 7.C and NCDOT Municipal and School Transportation Engineers.

10. Provide striped pedestrian crosswalks, with associated ADA compliant HC curb cuts, at all driveway and road intersections, regardless of signalization. This includes at-grade cut-throughs at all raised islands (e.g., Bethesda Baptist Church RIRO, Longmont Drive, and New Haven Street).

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 919-286-3827 (or daclever@gmail.com) if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Clever". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "D" and "C".

Dan Clever, Chair
Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory
Commission

cc: Mr. Kenneth Spaulding, N.C. Board of Transportation
Ms. Nina S. Szlosberg, N.C. Board of Transportation
Mr. Mark Ahrendsen, City of Durham, Transportation Division



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

MEMO TO: Post Hearing Meeting Attendees

FROM: Jay Bennett, PE
State Roadway Design Engineer

DATE: February 4, 2008

SUBJECT: Project: 40221.1.1 (U-4011) Durham County
SR 1959 (South Miami Blvd.) from south of SR 2112 (Methodist St.)
to north of SR 1960 (Bethesda Ave.)

Post Hearing Meeting

The post hearing meeting was held in the Roadway Design conference room at 9:00 A.M. on December 3, 2007, to discuss the comments received from the combined public hearing. The combined public hearing was held on September 24, 2007 at Bethesda Baptist Church located at 1914 South Miami Boulevard in Durham. Approximately 32 people were in attendance. People attending the public hearing recognized the need for the improvements.

An **executive summary** of the main issues concerning the project follows. A summary of the major concerns from the hearing and post hearing meeting, with responses, follows the executive summary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this project is to improve the operational effectiveness of SR 1959 (South Miami Boulevard) and the intersection with SR 1954 (Ellis Road), and improve safety for the motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists in the project area.
- The project proposes to widen the existing 4-lane section of Miami Boulevard between SR 2011 (Ambassador Drive) and SR 1960 (Bethesda Avenue) to a 5-lane section with 14' outside lanes for shared vehicle/bicycle usage.
- The project also proposes sidewalks for pedestrians on both sides of Miami Boulevard and Ellis Road. A portion of the sidewalk on the east side of Miami Boulevard will be widened to 8' to accommodate the future Page Branch Creek Trail that parallels this project.
- The intersection of Miami Boulevard and Ellis Road will be improved as much as possible within the scope of this project. The project proposes to add dual left turn lanes and an exclusive right turn lane for approximately 450' along Ellis Road.

- Right turn only lanes provided on the east side of Miami Boulevard into the two entrances of Bethesda Elementary School will also provide safety during the busy morning and evening drop-off and pick-up hours.

MAJOR CONCERNS and REQUESTS

A. City of Durham (Comments Attached))

1. Provide sidewalks on both sides of Miami Blvd. and Ellis Rd.
2. Provide the design and construction for a portion of the Page Branch Creek Trail along the project.
3. Provide 4' bicycle lanes on both sides of Miami Blvd. and Ellis Rd.
4. Eliminate right turn only lanes/tapers at the following intersections; Methodist St., Ambassador Dr., and Bethesda Ave. due to low projected traffic volumes.
5. Reduce radii at street intersections to reduce turning vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian crossing safety.
6. Consider provisions for multi-stage pedestrian crossings at complex intersections, particularly Miami Boulevard and Ellis Road.

RESPONSE

Comments received from the City of Durham during the document stage of this project requested that the project include sidewalks on both sides of Miami Blvd, wide (14') outside lanes for bicycles, mast arms traffic signals with pedestrian equipment, and sufficient right of way and berm width to accommodate sidewalks, street lights, and underground utilities. These comments were reiterated during the scoping meeting for this project, which was held in September 2005.

The project proposes to place sidewalk along both sides of Miami Blvd. and Ellis Rd. for the length of the project. It is understood that the City of Durham and Durham County will participate in the cost of all new sidewalk per the standard agreement with NCDOT.

In response to the City of Durham's requests for 4' striped bike lanes made during the post hearing meeting and to maintain continuity with the existing sections of S. Miami Blvd. to the south and north of this project, the NCDOT Division of Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation recommends 14' outside lanes for bicycle accommodations. Per Tom Norman, Director of NCDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Division, "Project U-4011 will match the existing cross sections on Miami Boulevard at either end of the project, neither of which has designated bike lanes. Since the 0.74-mile length of U-4011 is relatively short and includes intersections and driveways requiring a continuous center turn lane to accommodate frequent turning movements, it is not advisable to stripe designated bike lanes that will not tie to designated bike lanes on either end of the project."

In Durham's 1993 Approved Greenway Master Plan, which was referred to during the document stage of this project, Page Branch Creek Trail is shown as a proposed future trail. Included in that plan, this particular trail is included on a list that specifically excludes it as a greenway, designating it as a trail that is not part of a greenway system. Thus, Page Branch Creek Trail was

not addressed in the document or considered during the design of U-4011. NCDOT is willing to include 8' sidewalks on the east side of Miami Blvd. from approximately the southern most Bethesda Elementary School property line to the end of U-4011, with the City of Durham being responsible for the additional 3' width cost. The proposed 10' berm will be maintained through the 8' sidewalk area to eliminate additional grave sites being affected in the Bethesda Baptist church Cemetary.

NCDOT is willing to eliminate right turn only lanes at low volume intersections provided the Division and Congestion Management concur. We are also willing to reduce the total length of the right turn only storage and taper at NB DR3 (staff and visitor entrance to Bethesda Elementary School) pending NCDOT & Municipal and School Transportation Group's coordination with Bethesda Elementary to possibly reroute the internal school traffic.

NCDOT will investigate reducing radii at street intersections to improve pedestrian safety where possible.

All comments concerning signalization, signing, and pedestrian crossings will be forwarded to the Signals and Geometrics Section.

B. Sandra Moore and Family (Comments Attached)

1. Adding lanes to Miami Blvd. will greatly increase traffic and noise.
2. Serious safety concerns. No speed enforcement in school zone.
3. Moore property is dually zoned with portion adjacent to Miami Blvd. zoned commercial. Widening to the east (proposed) will take a valuable portion of the property and decrease value.

RESPONSE

Traffic noise impacts were considered for noise mitigation. Based on the studies conducted and published in the environmental document provided for the project, traffic noise abatement is not recommended and no noise abatement measures are proposed. The posted speed once the project is complete will remain 45 mph, current posted speed. The project proposes to provide sidewalks on both sides of Miami Blvd. for the entire length of the project, improving safety for pedestrians.

Right of way impacts to adjacent property owners will be minimized to the extent possible.

C. General Comments (Voiced during hearing)

1. Relocation of grave sites directly adjacent to Miami Blvd.

RESPONSE

NCDOT will coordinate with Bethesda Baptist Church in relocating the grave sites that will be affected by the widening of S. Miami Blvd.

If anyone has any questions or comments regarding this information, please inform me or Jason Moore, PE, Project Engineer at (919) 250-4016.

JAB/jt

Attachment

cc: Post Hearing Meeting Attendees

Art McMillan, PE	Highway Design
Jason Moore, PE	Roadway Design
Jeanie Tyson	Roadway Design
Jay Bennett, PE	Roadway Design
Dewayne Sykes	Roadway Design
Dennis Jernigan, PE	Division 5
Wally Bowman	Division 5
Robert Mathes, Jr.	Division 5 Right of Way
Linwood Stone	PD&EA
Steve Brown, PE	PD&EA
Jamille Robbins	Human Environment Unit
Kelly Becker, PE	Regional Traffic Engineer
Clarence Bunting	Congestion Management Section
Dale McKeel	City of Durham