



To: NC 54 Study Team

Date: January 31, 2018

Memorandum

Project #: 38587.01

From: VHB

Re: NC 54 West Corridor Community Workshop Round #1

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Three community workshops were held on successive days from January 23 through January 25 at three locations spread across the NC 54 West corridor: the Rigmor House Event Center, Graham Civic Center, and Carrboro Town Hall. Workshop participants' comments and feedback are summarized below within the themes of participation, development, safety, corridor vision goals, and other issues.

### ***Overall Participation***

The Rigmor House workshop had the highest level of signed-in attendees (33), followed by the Graham Civic Center (24), and Carrboro Town Hall (12). The most feedback forms were submitted during the Graham Civic Center workshop (13), followed by the Rigmor House (8), and Carrboro Town Hall (7).

### ***Development and Preservation***

Workshop participants were asked to identify corridor locations that should change and those that should not. This task was intended to contrast development and preservation areas. The intersection of Lloydtown Road and NC 54 was identified as a change area across the three workshops. Other areas identified for change correlated to the specific workshop's location; the Graham workshop centered on changes to the intersections of Jim Minor Road, NC 119, the I-40/I-85 interchange, Alfred Road; Rigmor House feedback centered on the intersections of Bethel Hickory Grove Church Road, Orange Grove Road, and White Cross Road; and the Carrboro audience addressed the Haw River access point and general wayfinding towards Carrboro.

Areas that were indicated for no-change (interpreted as preservation) largely fell within the corridor's center, between Mt. Willen Road and Bethel Hickory Church Road across all three workshops. These no-change areas were noted for their rural character and watershed protection (OWASA).

### ***Safety Concerns***

Workshop participants indicated safety concerns through an interactive station that collected near-miss collision locations and other unrecorded unsafe roadway conditions. Bethel Hickory Grove Church Road was indicated as an unsafe driving area during both the Rigmor House and Graham Civic Center events. Otherwise, there were geographical breaks for unsafe corridor locations: Rigmor House's feedback focused on the intersections in the corridor's center, while Graham focused on the I-40/I-85 interchange, NC 119, intersections west of Mebane Oaks Road, and high vehicle speed in school zones, whereas Carrboro's participants identified Mebane Oaks Road and Orange Grove Road.

Common safety-related themes across the three workshops included high-speed vehicle passing in no-passing lanes, poor visibility due to trees or vegetation, curved roadway geometry, the sun's position, and turning vehicle conflicts in the roadway and at intersections. Recently installed traffic signals at key corridor intersections (Mebane Oaks Road, Orange Grove Road) were noted and generally praised.

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### ***Corridor Visions and Goals***

Workshop attendees were invited to contribute near-term (2-year) and long-term (20-year) visions corridor improvements. The near-term vision responses were largely similar across the corridor's workshops, as they focused on incorporating all transportation modes, easing congestion through intersection improvements, rural preservation, and protecting sensitive environmental areas. Long-term goals conveyed similar themes across locations, too, that focused on including preserving open space and the rural community's character. There were divisions on other long-term preferences, however: the Rigmor House participants recommended managing development and prohibiting bicycles; the Graham event addressed widening the roadway and providing separated bicycle facilities, and; Carrboro's workshop discussed the implementation of transit and mixed-use development.

### ***Other Issues***

Additional discussions with participants yielded comments that did not fit within the above framework. During the Rigmor House workshop, several participants expressed interest in establishing a Park-and-Ride location in the corridor's center with transit service to Graham and Carrboro and points beyond. Presumably this park-&-ride would be serviced by Chapel Hill Transit. At the Graham Civic Center workshop, participants indicated the need to consider the effect of a new public high school and housing development near the corridor's western end (I-40/I-85 interchange).

### **Next Steps**

Comments and feedback from the first round of community workshops will be combined with entries from the Interactive Online Map and feedback from other engagement events to understand local preferences. These contributions will be evaluated with the study's other research components to offer recommendations for targeted and corridor-wide improvements.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

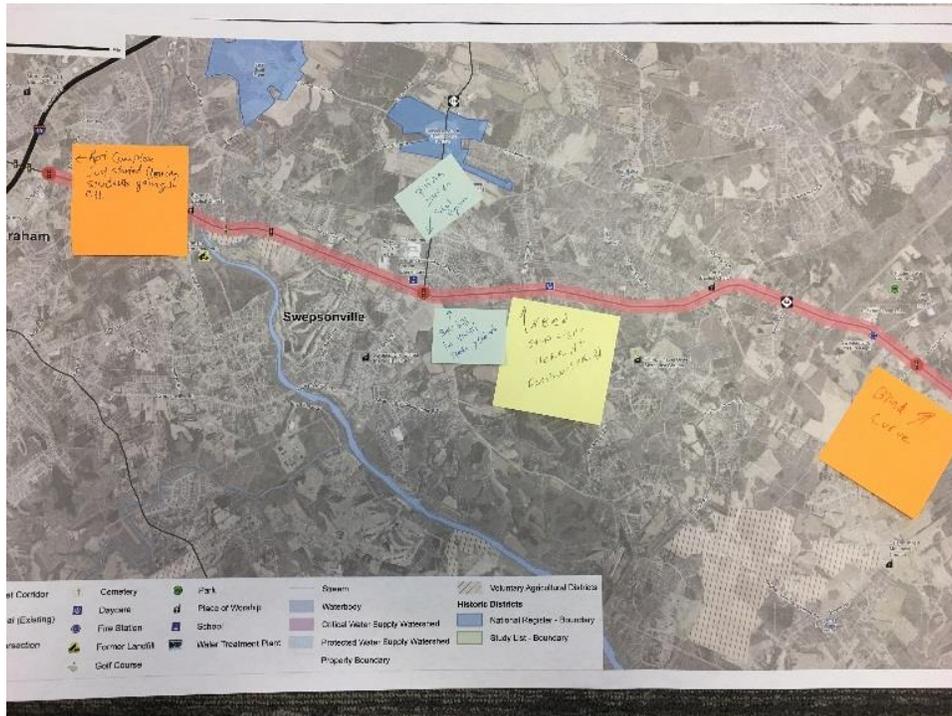
Photos

Attendees – Origins and Destinations

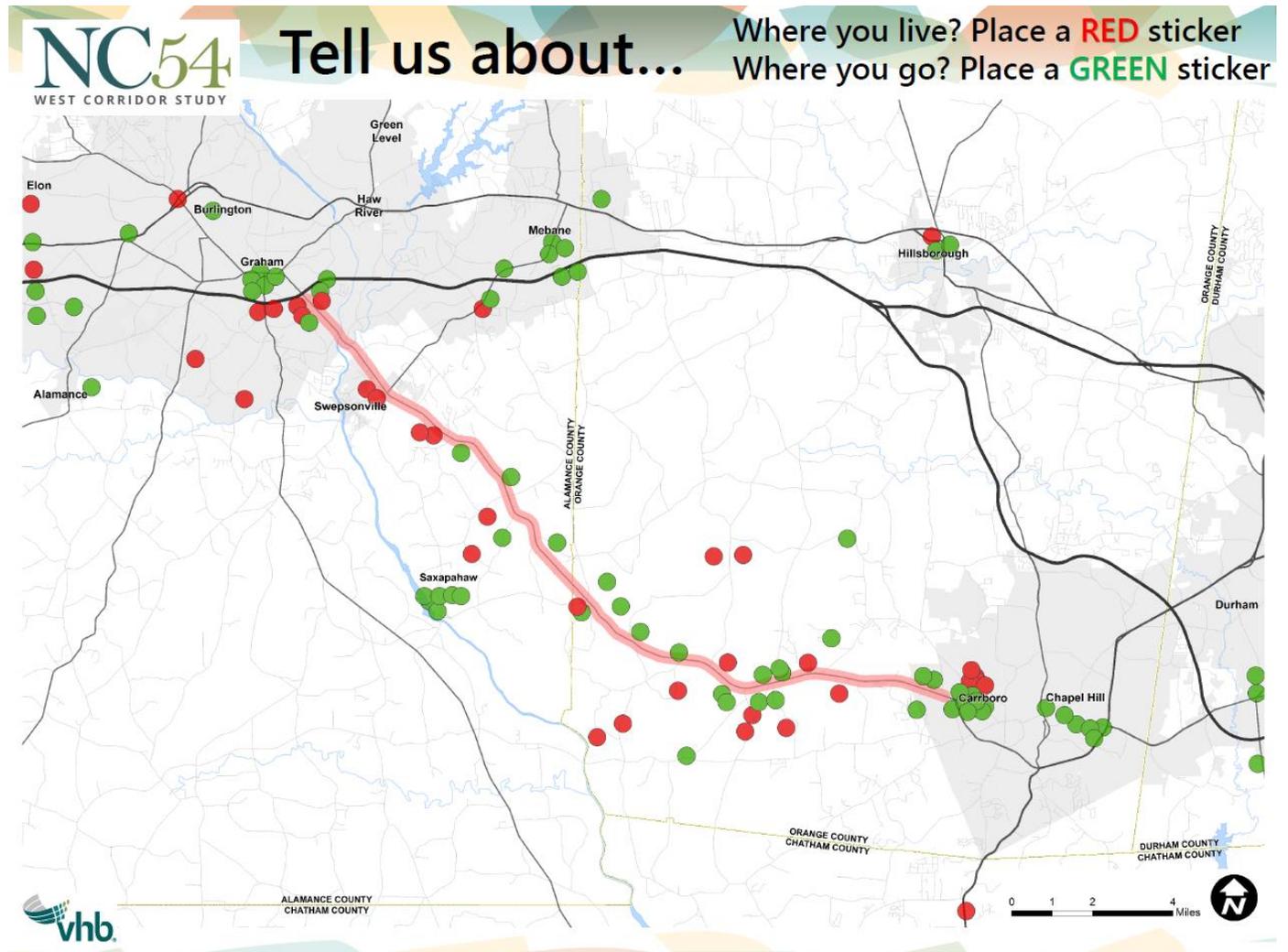
Individual Meeting Summaries

## Public Workshop #1 Photos





## Public Workshop #1 Attendees – Origins and Destinations



## Public Workshop #1 – Individual Meeting Summaries

### Tuesday 1/23 Meeting @ Rigmor House

- **General Attendance**
  - 33 attendees signed in and 8 feedback forms submitted
  - Concerns included the placement of the Mountains-to-Sea hiking trail route near homes and conflicts over privacy, phasing of NC 54 improvements for decisions affecting homeowners' driveways, preservation of rural viewsheds, roadway planning effects on development patterns, and bicycling safety.
- **Development Areas**
  - Areas indicated for change included the intersections of NC 54 at Lloydtown Road, Bethel Hickory Grove Church Road, Orange Grove Road, and White Cross Road.
  - Areas indicated for no change included NC 54 at White Cross Road, Wildcat Creek Road, and Butler Road.
- **Safety Concerns**
  - Areas with noted near-miss collisions included the intersection of NC 54 and Bradshaw Quarry Rd, Saxapahaw Bethlehem Church Rd, Morrow Mill Rd, White Cross Rd, Butler Rd, Dodsons Crossroads, and Bethel Hickory Grove Church Rd.
- **Additional Needs and Requests**
  - Park and Ride at Mebane-Oaks Rd, Lloydtown Road, or Saxapahaw Bethlehem Church Road with busses along NC 54 to Carrboro with stops at major intersections.
- **Other poster comments:**
  - Dangerous passing near Alamance/Durham County line, vehicles travelling in excess of 70 mph, passing into oncoming traffic
  - Rough roadway between Stanford Rd and Orange Grove Rd
  - Bethel Hickory Grove Church Rd – difficult to enter highway from driveway
- **Feedback forms:**
  - Popular destinations included the municipalities of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Graham. Other locations included Piedmont Feed & Garden, White Cross, Saxapahaw, Fiesta Grill, Maple View Ice-cream, and Dodson's Crossroads.
  - Near term (2-year) goals included limiting bicycles, improving bicycle safety, more traffic controls, improved intersection turning movements, reducing speeding and reckless driving, implementing a Park and Ride, preserving community, including transit, widening the roadway, smoothing traffic flow, and preserving the environment.
  - 20-year goals included managing thoughtful development, preserving the route's rural nature, and prohibiting bicycles.

## Wednesday 1/24 Meeting @ Graham Civic Center

- **General Attendance**
  - 24 attendees signed in and 13 feedback forms submitted
  - Concerns over existing traffic signal timing near I-40/85 interchange, especially during rush hours. There were also comments indicating future development pressures on public facilities, including a future high school to be constructed between Kimrey Rd & Cherry Lane, and a proposed residential development (600+ units) near Jones Drive in Mebane.
- **Development Areas**
  - Areas identified for change included NC 54 at Johnson/Riverbend, the City of Graham during peak hours, Jim Minor Road, NC 119, between NC 119 and Salem Church Road, Alfred Road, Salem Church Road, Thorn Rd, and Lloydtown Rd.
  - Areas identified for no change included NC 54 at Mebane-Oaks Road and Butler Rd
- **Safety Concerns**
  - Noted safety concerns included crossing NC 54 near the I-40/85 end of corridor, as well at the NC-119 intersection. There were also comments on the need to reduce speed limits near NC-119 and AW Elementary school (Melville township) and address unlawful vehicle passing near Bethel Hickory Grove Church Rd.
  - Areas with noted near-miss collisions included NC 54 at Johnson & Riverbend, Freshwater Rd, Alexander Wilson Elementary, Mineral Springs Road, Morrow Mill Rd, Thorn Rd to Butler Rd, and Butler Rd.
- **Other poster comments:**
  - NC 199 at NC 54 – School congestion at Alexander Wilson Elementary (7:15 am. 2:45 pm), low visibility eastwards, and high vehicle speeds
  - New Graham Regional Park opened fall 2017 near Alexander Wilson Elementary, and a new high school is in development near the Hawfields neighborhood
  - Freshwater Rd at NC 54 would benefit from a signal
  - Blind curve on NC 54 east of Mt. Willen Rd
  - High speeds on curves near White Cross Rd, especially at night
  - Sharp right turn from NC 54 onto Dodsons Crossroads
  - The new stoplight at NC 54 and Mebane-Oaks Rd “will be very useful”
- **Feedback forms:**
  - Popular municipal destinations included Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Mebane, and Graham. Other noted destinations included Saxapahaw, Fiesta Grill, Haw River Ballroom, local parks, the Kraken, Dodsons Crossroads, Maple View Ice-cream, Reverence Farms Café, Honeysuckle Tea House, and the landfill.
  - Near term (2-year) goals included improving bicycle facilities/safety, improving pedestrian access, reducing commercial truck traffic, improving signalized intersection phasing, add turn lanes, widening, not widening, integrating hiking facilities, preserving natural areas, easing congestion, and implementing transit.
  - Long term (20-year) goals included preserving rural character and open space, implementing transit, widening to 4-lanes, and installing separated bicycle facilities.

## Thursday 1/25 Meeting @ Carrboro Town Hall

- **General Attendance**
  - 12 attendees signed in and 7 feedback forms submitted
  - Concerns included the opportunity for a gateway wayfinding between rural NC 54 and the Town of Carrboro at the Carrboro Town Plaza, wayfinding for inter-county bicycle routes, and the potential conflict for roadway widening in sensitive water resource areas.
- **Development Areas**
  - Areas identified for no change included the corridor portion between NC 119 and Mt. Willen Rd, Cane Creek Park, White Cross Rd at Butler Rd, Mebane Oaks Rd, and the neighborhood at Orange Grove Rd.
  - Areas identified for change included the Haw River Trail Boat Launch, Lloydtown Rd. pedestrian signal, and a wayfinding gateway to Carrboro.
- **Safety Concerns**
  - Noted safety concerns and near-miss collisions included the intersection of Mebane-Oaks Rd at NC 54 during Saxapahaw weekend events, driveway access near Orange Grove Rd, and the tree line between Orange Grove Rd and Butler Rd.
- **Feedback forms:**
  - Popular municipal destinations included Carrboro and Hillsborough. Other destinations included Saxapahaw, Fiesta Grill, Piedmont Feed and Garden, Maple View Farms, White Cross, and the Honeysuckle Tea House.
  - Near term (2-year) goals included improving on-road and separated bicycle facilities, integrating safety and access for all road users, improving intersections and pedestrian signals, incorporating multimodal and asset wayfinding, preserving rural character and existing residents, mitigating storm water, and protecting Cane Creek Reservoir.
  - Long term (20-year) goals included rural area preservation, limiting light pollution, implementing Bus Rapid Transit, bicycle facilities and other modes, and supporting mixed-use development.