



## Memorandum

July 27, 2010

TO: Chatham County Board of Commissioners  
FROM: Transportation Advisory Board  
RE: Comments on NCDOT's draft US 64 Corridor Study

---

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the above referenced project. The TAB reviewed the draft study, heard a presentation on the study and made initial comments at our June 22 meeting, and approved the final comments included in this memorandum at our July 27 meeting.

To begin, it is clear from the report that many people have spent a great deal of time and effort on this study. They all are to be commended.

Our overarching comment relates to the study's fundamental objective – to create an alternate route for vehicles travelling between Raleigh and Charlotte. We feel that the overwhelming importance placed on regional traffic has diminished the focus given to local travel needs. We also feel that by framing the problem in terms of vehicle mobility, the study has been severely limited in its ability to explore all transportation and related solutions. For example, the planned improvements to high speed rail in this same corridor could potentially address most, if not all, of the regional mobility issues.

Our specific comments can be grouped into 4 areas of concern:

- Timeliness of the assumptions that form the basis of the recommendations;
- Insufficient exploration of other modes or travel demand strategies;
- Safety of the proposed superstreet design; and,
- Consideration of other issues directly related to the project.

***Timeliness of the assumptions that form the basis of the recommendations.*** As with any major study, it is understandable that things change even as the study is being completed. In this case, however, there have been two major events that fundamentally impact the study's current and future year assumptions – the global economic downturn and the funding of high speed rail. We believe that the impact of both of these is so great that they cannot be discounted and warrant a full revisiting of the study's assumptions.

***Insufficient exploration of other modes or travel demand strategies.*** As stated previously, framing the problem in terms of vehicle mobility has severely minimized the study's exploration of the potential to utilize other modes, especially transit, as well as travel demand management strategies to address the issue of regional and local mobility. Specifically, the study could have looked at ideas such as high speed rail, reversible and/or high-occupancy vehicle lanes, a parallel transit/HOV facility, and an educational component to alter travel behaviors. These ideas could have at least changed the level or type of highway changes proposed, if not supplanted them.

***Safety of the proposed superstreet design.*** In thinking about the superstreet configuration and from personal experiences, we question whether it is a safer or more efficient option than other intersection configurations. We are concerned about vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians traveling along, attempting to cross, or making a turn at these intersections.

***Consideration of other issues directly related to the project.*** We feel that environmental issues were either not well covered or not well explained. For instance, it is unclear whether the environmental issues discussed in the report are a result of the existing traffic or of forecasted future traffic. We are also concerned about the operational impact to school busses and emergency vehicles in the corridor.

Thank you again for allowing us to comment on this study. Please keep us informed of the status of this report.

mag

Cc: Ben Howell, Chatham County Planner