

To the Board of the Providence Plantation HOA,

This document is in response to questions raised at the HOA meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, regarding the NCDOT presentation on the changes coming to the intersection of Plantation Road and Weddington Road as a result of the construction of the new Weddington Road interchange.

If additional questions arise, please forward them to Warren Cooksey at rwcooksey@ncot.gov.

To begin with, two key documents regarding the Weddington Road interchange are the Environmental Assessment and the Finding of No Significant Impact. As of April 3, 2020, copies of each are available at the following links:

Environmental Assessment (partial copy)

<https://edocs.deq.nc.gov/WaterResources/DocView.aspx?id=119298&undefined&cr=1>

Finding of No Significant Impact

<https://edocs.deq.nc.gov/WaterResources/DocView.aspx?dbid=0&id=67215&page=1&cr=1>

(If a message appears in your browser that cookies must be enabled, click "sign out," which will provide a public login. Click "sign in," then try the document link again.)

Following are answers to questions asked during the presentation.

- 1) When will the traffic signals at Plantation Road be installed? Can they be installed sooner?

The current plan for the traffic signals is for them to be installed such that they will become operational when the additional lanes on Weddington Road are opened to traffic, including the ramps to and from I-485. NCDOT will discuss changing the schedule with the contractor and with Charlotte DOT. Charlotte DOT maintains all traffic signals within the City limits, regardless of whether they are on City- or State-maintained roads.

- 2) Why does the interchange ramp align with Plantation Road? Is there another example of an interchange ramp aligning with a neighborhood road?

A major goal for the design of the interchange was to minimize overall impacts to property owners in the project area. All the design alternatives considered in the Environmental Assessment included aligning the ramp with Plantation Road in accordance with that goal.

Another example of an interchange ramp aligning with a neighborhood road can be found in Raleigh at the interchange of Falls of Neuse Road and I-540.

Traffic exiting the interstate can turn left or right onto Falls of Neuse Road or travel straight onto Thorpshire Drive into the Thorpshire Farm neighborhood.

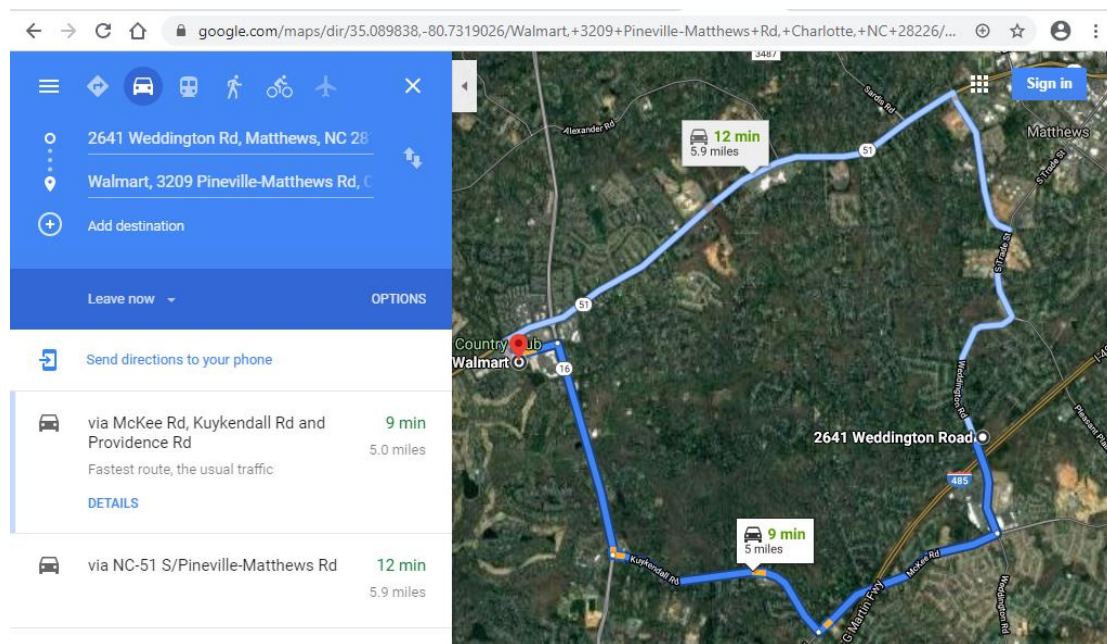
- 3) What safety features will the intersection have when the project is complete?

All four sides of the intersection will have crosswalks, and there will also be pedestrian crossing signals at all four corners.

- 4) What traffic projections are there regarding the project, particularly regarding increased traffic on Plantation Road and Weddington Road?

Unfortunately, the portions of neither of the environmental documents available online address this specific question. The dominant theme is that the Weddington Road interchange will improve the overall roadway network by reducing demand for access to I-485 at Providence Road and at East John Street.

Nothing in the environmental documents appears to suggest that the interchange will add cut-through traffic to Plantation Road. One concern specifically raised at the meeting involved future attempts by drivers to get to the Arboretum by exiting at Weddington Road and cutting through Providence Plantation. To provide a current example, consider that Google Maps currently does not route traffic from near the intersection of Weddington Road and Plantation Road to the Arboretum through the neighborhood. Instead, the directions from Google Maps send drivers either to McKee, Kuykendall, and Providence Roads or north to Pineville-Matthews Road.



Given the current state of directions, it is unlikely that the presence of an interchange at Weddington Road would change future recommendations.

- 5) Will the traffic signals added for the Weddington Road interchange be coordinated with other signals on Weddington?

NCDOT's construction contract includes the necessary infrastructure for the signals to be coordinated. Final determination of the signal timing will be the responsibility of Charlotte DOT.

- 6) What work near the neighborhood is going on now?

The current work is utility relocation.

- 7) Will the bridge be completed before the ramps open?

The ramps will not open until traffic is in its final pattern on the fully-widened bridge. However, there may be cosmetic or other minor issues for the contractor to address after the ramps open.

- 8) How will the widening of Plantation Road and Weddington Road take place when it appears that NCDOT is not acquiring sufficient right of way?

The widening of Plantation Road will add a third lane that will be 12 feet wide. Although at present the asphalt on Plantation Road is about 24 feet wide, there is sufficient existing right of way to add the third lane.

Most of the widening of Weddington Road will occur on the opposite side from Plantation Road, and NCDOT is acquiring sufficient additional right of way to accommodate the widening.

For reference, see the following section of public meeting map #9, which was included in the June 2019 pre-construction open house. The colors most relevant to the question are dark green for existing right of way, light green for proposed new right of way, orange for existing roadway, and yellow for proposed new roadway. Crosshatched light green represents proposed easements, and red indicates proposed new structures such as sidewalks, curb and gutter, and medians. Note how much existing right of way on Plantation Road is available but currently unpaved.

June 2019



- 9) How will EMTs reach the assisted living facility on the other side of I-485 from PP?

The future signalized intersection of the southeastern interchange ramps, Weddington Road, and Plantation Center Drive, will be a full movement intersection, so EMTs (and all other traffic, for that matter) will have access to and from Plantation Road from both sides of Weddington Road.

- 10) Will the sidewalk that will be added to Weddington Road continue across the bridge?

Yes, and more: one side of the bridge will have a 10-foot sidepath, and the other will have a 14-foot multi-use path.

- 11) What will be done to address any increase in cut-through traffic through the neighborhood when the project is complete?

As noted in the answer to the question regarding traffic counts, there is no indication that the interchange will lead to an increase in cut-through traffic on Plantation Road. Should that prove not to be the case, any traffic calming devices or other strategies regarding traffic on Plantation Road will have to be addressed with the City of Charlotte, which is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Plantation Road.

- 12) How will the bridge work be done under traffic?

The contractor will build the east side of the new bridge while traffic continues to use the existing two lanes. When the east side is ready, the contractor will shift traffic to the two new lanes in order to work on the west side of the bridge. Throughout construction, the contractor should maintain a minimum of one lane in each direction available on the bridge.

- 13) What will happen to the curve on Weddington Road to the left of Plantation Road?

The widening of Weddington Road will flatten that curve. The new traffic signals at Plantation Road will also modify the behavior of drivers on Weddington Road.

- 14) What will be the speed limit on Weddington Road?

The posted speed limit will be 35 mph, just as it is today. At the HOA meeting, it was mentioned that the design speed would be 40 mph. It is common practice to design roads to a speed of 5 mph above the posted limit.

- 15) Will the Weddington Road interchange become as gridlocked as the Providence Road interchange?

As of 2018, average annual daily traffic (AADT) on Weddington Road between McKee Road and I-485 was 16,000, whereas 2018 AADT on Providence Road was 43,500 north of I-485 and 63,500 south of I-485. Given the difference in traffic counts, it is unlikely that the Weddington Road interchange will become as gridlocked as the Providence Road interchange.

The Environmental Assessment noted that the Weddington Road interchange is more likely to accelerate development already planned for the area than it is to induce new growth.

- 16) When will construction on the interchange begin and end?

The timing of the start of formal construction is within the discretion of the contractor in accordance with the overall terms of the contract, which currently anticipates that all new infrastructure in the 17-mile project corridor will be open to traffic by late 2022. NCDOT estimates the interchange construction itself will take up to 18 months from the time it starts.

- 17) How will drivers know about the drop from two lanes to one on northbound Weddington Road?.

In such cases, it is common practice to indicate the drop to drivers with a sign as well as arrows in the lane itself. For example, the following image shows the indication of the end of the right lane of Providence Road as it approaches Rea Road:



Cordially,

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