

2023

**US 70 East Corridor Study - Frequently Asked Questions**





## US 70 East Corridor Study

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Background

The Durham-Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is conducting a study of the US 70 corridor from I-885 to the future Northern Durham Parkway (near the Wake County border) with the help of the consulting firm STV Engineers Inc. The study team conducted the initial public engagement with the community from November 2022 to early January 2023. This FAQ document clarifies the intent and process of the corridor study and provides the DCHC MPO response to the most common and important questions from the public engagement process.

#### FAQs

1. [How does the US 70 East Corridor Study connect to previous work led a few years ago by NCDOT regarding this corridor? Were those plans put on hold?](#)
2. [Will the US 70 East Corridor Study be cognizant of the plans being developed for US 70 to the south in Brier Creek? Is U-5518 still on the books?](#)
3. [What does Wake County plan on doing east of the Page Road interchange?](#)
4. [Is a trail for bicycling or walking being proposed?](#)
5. [Who is the main contact at NCDOT over this portion of the US 70 Corridor?](#)
6. [With the forecasting of increased development of residences, how will we handle the feeder streets along US 70 East Corridor? Will sidewalks be included on those streets as a part of any proposed designs? What will happen to the main feeder roads into US 70 East Corridor within this study? \(Ex: sidewalks on Angier to get to 70.\)](#)
7. [Would an overpass over US 70 be better for bicyclists and pedestrians?](#)
8. [Why even worry about cyclists or pedestrians in this area?](#)
9. [If a freeway style design is proposed, then are service roads with bike/ped and overpasses as needed be possible. Isn't that what they are doing on US 1 on Capital Blvd?](#)



10. [There is a current proposal to add a traffic light at Saunders Road and 70. Can that still happen?](#)
11. [Will improvement to US 70 East Corridor as a freeway improve the system as a whole or will a boulevard? Which will provide the best travel demand for US 70 and I-40?](#)
12. [Is the city biased towards the boulevard option from the beginning?](#)
13. [Are there upcoming transit connections that will go from this area to RDU?](#)
14. [How do we have biking and walking and local attractions within the design?](#)
15. [How do you interface with Wake County as you proceed with the US 70 East Corridor Study?](#)
16. [Are the NCDOT plans for the Northern and Southern end of the US 70 East Corridor available for us to review?](#)
17. [How will this study be compared to the NCDOT study for freeway and expressway in determining which concept to move forward?](#)
18. [How are you planning to give drivers options other than freeways? Continuous frontage roads?](#)
19. [Regardless of the outcome, when will something come to fruition? Will we see the results in our lifetime?](#)
20. [Will proposed designs accommodate today's traffic 10-20 years from now?](#)
21. [Is resolving the traffic issues at TW Alexander Drive in Brier Creek within the scope of this project?](#)
22. [How is the major growth in East Durham, especially along the Leesville Rd area and behind the Harris Teeter on TW Alexander, factored into the traffic growth?](#)



## ANSWERS: Previous Plans

1. NCDOT created two options to widen and turn US 70 East into a freeway between Lynn Road in Durham to west of TW Alexander Drive (STIP U-5720). Concept maps were developed, showing two potential options. See the [concept website](#). However, the DCHC MPO revised their long-range transportation plan and removed the roadway widenings and freeway conversation plans out of the long-range plan. [See 2050 MTP](#). When NCDOT had a financial slowdown in their work program, it gave the MPO another opportunity to look at this road. The MPO and the City of Durham expressed concerns with the freeway options proposed by NCDOT because of the lack of ability for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross the corridor, as well as there not being not enough intersections/interchanges for local neighborhoods along to access the road. As a result, the DCHC MPO is exploring other options for to be done on US 70 East, including a boulevard option.
2. The Study Team is coordinating with U-5518 which proposes upgrading the at-grade intersections of US 70 and TW Alexander to an interchange and constructing roadway capacity improvements. U-5518 is currently funded in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). [See the project web page](#).
3. According to the [Capital Area MPO \(CAMPO\)](#) and [DCHC MPO Connect 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan \(MTP\)](#), the Page Road Extension will be extended to Leesville Road. The new road will be 2 lanes and a total of 0.4 miles in length. This project is estimated to be complete by 2050.
4. The Study Team is looking at a variety of options for improving bicycle and pedestrian mobility along and across the US 70 corridor, including a multiuse path along US 70.
5. David Keilson of NCDOT Division 5, serves on the Core Technical Committee (CTT) for the US 70 Corridor Study.
6. Sidewalks can be included along side streets in the vicinity of the intersections crossing US 70, both as part of this project or with the construction required of new developments. Main intersections will be analyzed and designed to best accommodate traffic flow, while also providing safe passage for cyclists and pedestrians that wish to cross US 70 or travel along the corridor.



7. Overpasses/underpasses provide safe bike/ped connectivity across the corridor, but these connections are typically spaced thousands of feet or miles apart and the grade changes required to create the overpass/underpass can create additional burdens on walkers and bikers compared to at-grade crossings.

8. We are having community conversations to understand what the community feels about what should be done to support pedestrians and cyclists in this corridor. Our engagement is meant to learn from the community whether it is a priority or not.

9. At this point, there is no reason to believe that if a freeway design is recommended for the US 70 corridor, that a service road and bicycle and pedestrian facilities (including overpasses) could not be part of the proposed design.

10. Yes, this traffic signal can be included with US 70 as a boulevard section.

11. This study will evaluate several performance measures that might include vehicle travel time, access, bicycle and pedestrian mobility along and across the roadway, and the impact of construction on structures and property. Using multiple measures helps to ensure an approach that is holistic and multimodal, and that can demonstrate trade-offs between different design approaches.

12. The DCHC MPO identified US 70 as a modernization in the most recent long-range plan. See the [2050 MTP](#). A modernization includes vehicle safety and intersection improvements and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, but does not include additional vehicle travel lanes. The MPO wants to understand how a modernization project, such as a boulevard, would function in the US 70 corridor. A delay in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding for US 70 (TIP project U-5720) provided the opportunity to study a boulevard.

13. The study team is not aware of any planned transit connections from the study area to RDU Airport in the short- or long-range plans of local transit agencies.

14. Based on mobile phone data (Street Light data), bicycle and pedestrian movements along the corridor are limited, but indicate bicyclists and pedestrians are crossing US 70 at the existing commercial node at the Miami Blvd/Sherron Road intersection. Based on the initial public outreach, there is a desire for more ability to bike and walk to destinations along the corridor.



15. The study team is currently collaborating with NCDOT on the U-5518 project (US 70 Improvements at TW. Alexander Drive), and is ensuring consistency with the goals for the US 70 corridor study area outlined in the Capital Area MPO (CAMPO -- Wake County's MPO) and DCHC MPO Connect 2050 [Metropolitan Transportation Plan](#).

16. Here are the most current alternatives and plans for US 70 in Durham (U-5720):

- [Improvements to U.S. 70 Proposed Improvements from I-540 to Lynn Road in Durham](#)
- [U.S. 70 Improvements at Brier Creek Parkway & T.W. Alexander Drive](#)

17. This study will focus on a boulevard concept for the US 70 corridor, and will not be re-evaluating the freeway option proposed by NCDOT as part of U-5720.

18. This study will be considering an urban boulevard concept with at-grade intersections and utilizing frontage roads.

19. Identifying and securing funding will be key in implementing improvements along US 70. Recommendations for improvements from this study will be input in to the North Carolina prioritization scoring process to obtain state and federal funding. Other recommendations could include the development of a street network connectivity plan, which would facilitate the construction and right-of-way acquisition for improvements from future developers along the corridor.

20. Traffic forecasts for this project will use a horizon year of 2050.

21. No. [US 70 improvements at Brier Creek Parkway and T.W. Alexander Drive are part of the U-5818 project](#).

22. Projected growth throughout the entire project area is based on a regional land use model that uses-historic growth, future land use, and undeveloped land information. Developments and other roadway projects are reviewed to make sure that they are factored into future traffic growth. The specific areas mentioned, along with many others along the corridor, are accounted for in population and employment growth projections. [See the adopted population and employment map](#).