

Community & Farmland Impact Assessment at NCDOT



Tris Ford

NCDOT-Public Involvement Community Studies



Transportation Planning

- **How long to plan, design, and construct a typical highway in NC assuming funding is available?**

- Average is 12 years, although often longer depending on funding

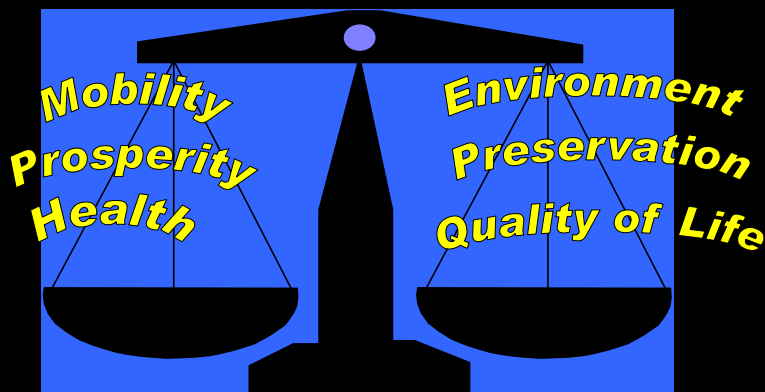


Environmental Laws & Regulations

- ***NEPA / SEPA - National Environmental Policy Act***
- ***FPPA - Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201)***
 - Prime, unique, local & statewide important soils
 - Farm & farm support operations
 - High scores require consideration of impacts in decision process
 - Does not apply to urbanized areas



NEPA / SEPA is a Delicate Balance of all the impacts



NEPA / SEPA is a Delicate Balance of all the interests

- ***Not just NCDOT; often includes FHWA***
- ***Plus***
 - ***USACE***
 - ***EPA***
 - ***USFWS***
 - ***NC DWQ***
 - ***NC WRC***
 - ***State Historic Preservation***
 - ***US Forest Service***
 - ***Local governments, & local & regional trans planning organizations***
 - ***ALL have to agree***



Laws & Regs

- ***State of NC Executive Order 96 (Jim Hunt) - Conservation of Prime Agricultural and Forest Lands***
 - Requires identification & disclosure of Prime Soils impacts
- ***Local VAD / EVAD ordinances***
 - Sometimes requires NCDOT to request Public Hearing – only if specified within local ordinance

Other Laws & Regs

- ***Local farmland preservation ordinances or policies***
- Order of strength – weakest to strongest – in CIA / NEPA / SEPA
 1. VAD
 2. EVAD
 3. Local Farmland Protection Ordinance
 4. VAD / EVAD & Local Ordinance



I-85 Project – Pitts School Road & Barbee Farm (VAD)

- Discovered we had a VAD
- Preferred Alternative impacted the VAD
- Discussed impacts at our Public Hearing
- Requested local Ag Board VAD Public Hearing



I-85 Project – Pitts School Road & Barbee Farm

But ...

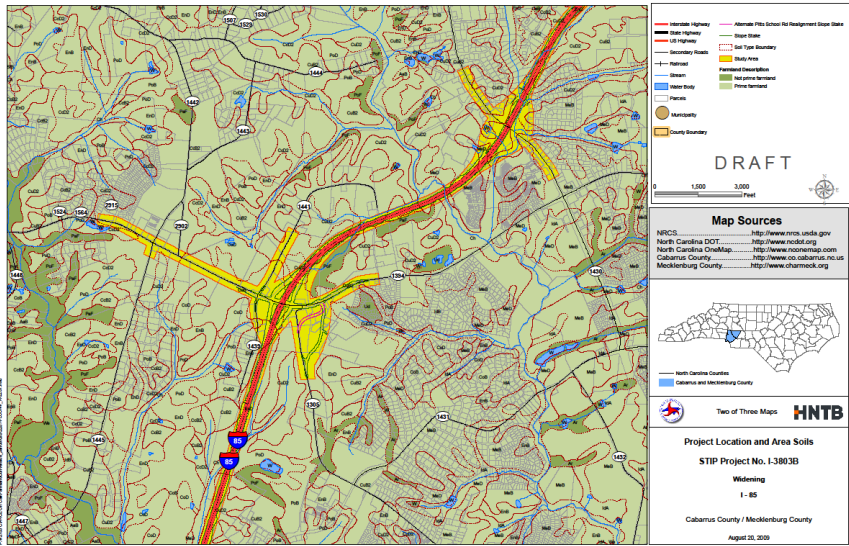
- Not before a whole bunch of people got upset!
- We attended, presented & listened
- Based on VAD presence & public concern about the impacts, NCDOT chose a different alternative alignment
 - that alignment will have a quite sharp, almost 90 degree curve
 - a balance of impacts, benefits, design compromises – ultimately a more context sensitive design



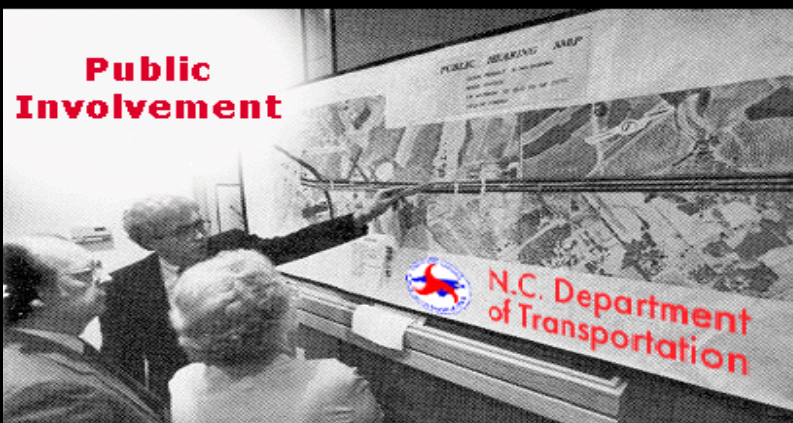
• Farmland Conversion Assessment I-85 Widening – Cabarrus County

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Natural Resources Conservation Service		NRC-CPA-100 (Rev. 1-01)	
FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS			
PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		1. Date of Land Evaluation Request	
1. Name of Project	5. Federal Agency Involved	Sheet 1 of _____	
2. Type of Project	6. County and State		
PART II (To be completed by NRCIS)		2. Person Completing Form	
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FIRM does not apply. Do not complete additional parts of this form.)		4. Acres Impacted / Average Farm Size	
YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>			
5. Major Crops:	6. Farmland Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: %	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FFRPA, Acres: %	
8. Name of Land Evaluation System Used	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System	10. Date Land Evaluation Requested by NRCIS	
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Alternative Corridor For Segment	
		Corridor A	Corridor B
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services			
C. Total Acres In Corridor			
PART IV (To be completed by NRCIS) Land Evaluation Information			
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland			
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted			
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Local Jurisdiction With Taxes Or Higher Relative Value			
PART V (To be completed by NRCIS) Land Evaluation Information Criteria Relative Value of Farmland to Be Converted or Corridor (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)			
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 602.3(c))		Maximum Points	
1. Area in Nonurban Use		15	
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use		10	
3. Percent of Corridor Being Farmed		20	
4. Production Provided by State And Local Government		20	
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared to Average		10	
6. Creation of Nonfarmable Farmland		25	
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services		5	
8. On-Farm Investments		20	
9. Effect Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		20	
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		10	
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS		100	
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)			
Relative Value of Farmland (from Part VI)		100	
Total Corridor Assessment (from Part VI above or a local site assessment)		100	
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)		200	
1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmland to Be Converted by Project	3. Date of Selection	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used?
			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Reason For Selection:			
Signature of Person Completing this Part: _____ Date: _____			
NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor			

Farmland Conversion Assessment I-85 Widening – Cabarrus County



Public Involvement



Public Involvement

- **Several opportunities for PI**
 - Community Information Workshops (1st or 2nd)
 - Public Hearings (1st or 2nd)

These are your opportunities to be heard!

- Read the ads & notices, go to the meetings!
 - VAD owner
 - Ag Board members
 - SCS reps
 - Local planners



VADS & EVADs & Public Hearings

- **Local Ordinance may require a Public Hearing (by local ag board) immediately before condemnation –**
 - *That's too late!!*
 - *For you and for NCDOT!*
 - *Get involved; & stay involved*
- **NCDOT will request PH (if required) during environmental analysis phase**
 - Will not request one if not required by local ordinance
 - Will identify and disclose VADs & EVADs on our own CIW & PH maps and figures

New VADs after the Alignment Decision

- ***New VADs after Project Development***
 - ***NCDOT will comply with state law for PH's***
- ***Highly unlikely that a new VAD or EVAD will affect an alternative decision that has already been made***
 - Some owners adopted VAD's in an effort to stop a project. Years, and millions of \$\$ have gone into planning and design
 - numerous opportunities for input
 - Cost is millions
 - Requires reopening the environmental documents
 - Time to do so is *years*



Takeaway Points

- Attend NCDOT & local long range planning meetings in your community (20 years prior to projects)
- Attend CIWs for projects in your area (3-5 years before construction)
- Read letters to you from NCDOT
- Respond & communicate





Contact Info



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Public Involvement Community Studies

