

SMITH LEVEL
FROM PAGE 1

“It’s too close to all the activity down at the ramps,” said Mike Mills, division engineer for NCDOT. “The spacing is not adequate for full-access movement.”

However, Mills agreed to revisit the traffic pattern, which was included as part of the overall road-improvement plan that the board approved in September 2010.

Board member Jacquie Gist questioned whether NCDOT

had done a study to determine how the traffic pattern would affect safety in the neighborhood, since cars would likely travel through the neighborhood to get to the traffic light at BPW Club Road if they weren’t able to turn left out of Willow Oak Drive.

Mills said they had reviewed the impact, but hadn’t done an in-depth study and would take another look at that.

The project has been in the works for more than 20 years, and has changed shape as board members and residents have negotiated with NCDOT, which is paying for most of the project.

“[Willow Oak Drive] is too close to all the activity down at the ramps. The spacing is not adequate for full-access movement.”

— Mike Mills

The project, which NCDOT officials had previously proposed as a widening of the road to five lanes, now includes:

- installing a sidewalk on the

east side of the road from Willow Oak Lane to Woodcrest Drive and a sidewalk along the west side of the road from the Morgan Creek bridge to Carrboro High

School;

- installing bike lanes along both sides of the road;
- widening the road to two lanes with curb and gutter, divided by a grass median, from the Morgan Creek bridge to BPW Club Road, including a shielded median break allowing left turns from Smith Level Road onto Willow Oak Lane;
- widening Smith Level Road to three lanes, including two travel lanes and a center turn lane, from BPW Club Road to Rock Haven Road;
- installing sidewalks on both sides of Culbreth Road from

Smith Level Road to Rossburn Way; and

- constructing a roundabout near Carrboro High at the intersection of Smith Level and Rock Haven roads.

Last fall, NCDOT officials began ironing out plans for the right-of-ways and easements needed for the project and began contacting impacted residents. They hope to complete acquisition of right-of-ways and easements by September and put the project out to bid in December, with construction to begin in February 2013.

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photo by Gretchen Mathison in front of the Carrboro PTA Thrift Shop

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