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110 Tweed Place  
Chapel Hill, NC 27517

April 10, 2007

Andrew Henry, Sr. Planner  
City of Durham, Transportation Department  
101 City Hall Plaza  
Durham, NC 27701

RE: Concerns with SW Durham Collector Street Plan

Dear Andy,

I support, in theory, the value of collector streets for improving traffic flow from within and between adjacent neighborhoods. As development progresses in the currently undeveloped land supported by Ephesus Church Road to the north, Farrington Road to the east, Route 54 to the south, and 15/501 to the west these new neighborhoods clearly will need access via collectors to major arterials. With that said, I have several concerns regarding the currently proposed transportation plan within this region.

First, the collector street plan appears to rely on an ad hoc implementation and seems disconnected from the overall transportation plan. It overlooks the need to preserve a hierarchal relationship (e.g., arterial, collector, local) between existing and future road networks as development progresses, an essential piece in the puzzle when considering how and when to link new connectors into established neighborhood infrastructures. If congestion and safety on the more major routes are already a problem, ignoring these issues will surely encourage the unintended use of new collector streets as "cut-through" routes by non-residents. Upgrades to the surrounding arterials and major collectors should be planned in conjunction with any new development, to insure increased traffic volumes are accommodated and prevent neighborhood collector streets from becoming interim thoroughfares.

Second, the "approved" SW Durham alignment seems to be untenable. The route appears to require substantial construction through environmentally sensitive wetlands and looks to be perilously close, if not within, land designated by FEMA as a 100-year floodplain. Additionally, numerous properties would be adversely impacted by increased noise, traffic, and pollution generated from this major route cutting directly behind or through established neighborhoods (e.g., Oaks III, Oaks Villas, Meadowmont). Many residents of Meadowmont and the Oaks communities have begun to voice objections to this "approved" alignment. It also seems unlikely the route will ever reach fruition, considering the adverse environmental impact and lack of funding. These issues suggest a more practical and less costly solution should be considered before further development reduces the alternatives available.

Third, funding for upgrades to existing roads, designated as links to new collector streets, has not been addressed. Many of these are in quiet established residential neighborhoods, which currently lack amenities to address pedestrian safety and maintain community aesthetics

essential to mitigate the result of increased traffic. This is especially important for existing roads that pass through popular recreational facilities, such as the Chapel Hill Country Club and trail access to Meadowmont Park, or by school sites and residential properties with little frontage.

Fourth, supporting documentation seems lacking, which makes it difficult to follow the logic behind many of the decisions made to date. For example, why would upgrades to George King Road require such disruption through the Eastwood Park neighborhood? There appears to be undeveloped land just to the north of this community that could allow an eastward connection to Farrington, as well other options that should be considered to avoid this situation. Also absent are current and projected traffic volumes for both the existing and proposed roads, and anticipated future increases as development progresses. Additionally, for the public to fully understand the context of the transportation plan, larger scale maps (e.g., < 1:2500) would be helpful. These ideally should be provided in print format upon request, and illustrate property lines, street names, administrative responsibilities, and destination points (e.g., shopping, businesses, schools, churches, recreational facilities, etc.) in relation to the major roads surrounding the study area (e.g., 15-501, I-40, Rte. 54, Farrington Rd., Pope Rd., Ephesus Church Roads).

I appreciate your time in listening to my concerns and recognize the hard work that the DCHC MPO and related organizations have put into this transportation planning effort. These comments are submitted in good faith to point out some of my concerns, which hopefully can be addressed in future discussions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ruvane". The signature is written in black ink and extends to the right with a long horizontal flourish.

Mary B. Ruvane  
Resident of SW Durham Planning Area