



NEW HANOVER COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & LAND USE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: New Hanover County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Chris O'Keefe, AICP, Planning & Land Use Director
Ken Vafier, AICP, CFM, Planning & Land Use Manager

DATE: April 4, 2017

RE: Northeast New Hanover County Future Transportation Network

In 2015, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) placed a call for special studies to be included in their FY 2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program. County staff submitted a proposal for a future transportation network plan for the largely undeveloped northeastern portion of the County, which was adopted into the budget and UPWP by the WMPO's Board on March 30, 2016.

With the adoption of Plan NHC, the county's urban services boundary was dissolved, and the northeastern portion of the county was re-designated as a community mixed use place type. A plan for a future transportation network will be beneficial to ensure development in this area maintains appropriate connectivity and to provide a guide for future development. An efficient transportation network reduces traffic congestion on major roads by providing alternate routes for local traffic. Additional benefits include reduced local travel distance, reduced travel time in general, and improvements in the provision of emergency services.

The WMPO recently entered into an agreement for services with VHB, a transportation planning and design firm, to perform this study. The proposed scope for the plan includes assessing the existing network function and other conditions; identifying gaps in the existing collector street network; and proposing changes to the existing collector street network. Working closely with technical staff, landowners, and other stakeholders, this project will result in a guiding document with maps, policy recommendations, and potential transportation projects that will lay the groundwork for future development that has a low impact on the environment, supports alternative modes of transportation, and spreads the traffic burden across the transportation network.

Planning staff will serve as co-project managers with the WMPO in this effort, assisting the WMPO in developing a public engagement strategy, leading approximately two public meetings, participating in 2-4 steering committee meetings, and reviewing reports and proposed documents. It is anticipated that the project will kick-off in late April and be complete by September 2017.

Cc: Chris Coudriet, County Manager
Tim Burgess, Assistant County Manager