



# Independence Boulevard Area Plan

## Comments from Citizen Advisory Group Meeting (CAG) #4

Held on April 2, 2009 at 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267

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**Meeting Purpose:** The focus of the meeting was to share and receive feedback on the potential reductions in future right-of-way for Independence Boulevard (U.S. 74) and the design considerations for the edges of the corridor (i.e. buffers, landscaping, etc). Citizen feedback on the potential cross-sections will be used to continue the development of the Independence Blvd. Area Plan that will recommend any necessary changes to the transitional setback, provide direction for future growth and economic reinvestment in the study area.

**Meeting Highlights:** The meeting began with a presentation that re-caped the plan development process to date and explained how advisory group input on the potential cross-sections would assist in the plan development process. The presentation included detailed illustrations and explanations of the elements of the potential cross-sections: 250 feet wide from Briar Creek to W.T. Harris Boulevard and 280 feet wide from W.T Harris to the City Limits. Comments during the discussion focused on citizen concerns about lack of access to businesses along the corridor, the potential for the City and/or the State to acquire property to achieve the desired roadway function and funding for future roadway projects. Additional meeting information is available at [www.charlotteplanning.org](http://www.charlotteplanning.org).

**Meeting Exercise:** Meeting participants were asked to review the potential cross-sections, and provide comments in response to two questions. Below is a summary of their responses.

### Citizen Comments on 250' Potential Right-of-Way From Briar Creek to W.T. Harris Blvd.

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#### Questions #1

Do you think the potential reduction in the proposed right-of-way (ROW) by 100' (existing proposed ROW of 350' to new proposal of 250') will accommodate future transportation needs?

**Response Totals: Yes= 13, No=4**

#### Questions #2

Do you think the potential reduction in the proposed right-of-way (ROW) by 100' (existing proposed ROW of 350' to new proposal of 250') will accommodate future development needs?

**Response Totals: Yes=9, No=6**

#### Additional Comments:

1. This plan is so far off. There is no way this will get funded in the next 30 years. Obviously if you look at this, it took 30 years to widen to 150 ft three miles to Sharon Amity. There is no money to buy out undevelopable property. Better to give to community and developer. Reduce ROW 200 – 225 ft. Still 111 buildings in the setback. Elizabeth Avenue Condos much closer than this. I-77 carries 170k cars a day w/ 2 lanes, in each direction. Indy already wider than that and

doesn't carry that much. I-77 is congested but does not require mass transit and six lanes in each direction.

2. I believe you must start this ASAP. The buffer interval and /or green bike area plan.
3. Where possible – i.e. old coliseum shopping center – increase beyond the 250' in order to create additional landscape / buffer area thereby adding value to the property.
4. Regarding #2...to be determined. It sounds good but I am concerned about developers moving ahead when only BRT is promised. Commit to LRT and let the high quality development that this area needs come in.
5. Move quickly on Independence – must attract retail – remove unsightly existing vacant buildings.
6. Removing traffic lights will increase capacity. Increase from Monroe & Central. Reducing the ROW will encourage more development. Light rail will increase business opportunities. Don't continue what's been done!!!
7. Access still stinks without frontage road or real access, it is all a non-starter.
8. Remove the transitional setback. East Charlotte needs the economic engine of Independence restored. Light rail will foster transit oriented development. We need that economic engine. BRT will not foster TOD. If Independence becomes a freeway, then the connectivity required for TOD will not exist. If the freeway concept is implemented, all business will fail. The east quadrant will suffer. Freeway and interstates are to be newly built, in an area where no current thoroughfare exists. To take a business corridor/ highway; and to slowly convert it to a freeway s unethical and sinister!
9. With no left turns allowed and no road connections from other streets on many properties, development is not possible or feasible.
10. Please remove all Idlewild Apartments, Ashley & Silver Oak to promote business people to come in and build. Those apartment buildings are crime ridden.
11. I have to agree with comments made by group. First do something with empty buildings along Independence before proceeding with the demolishing of the next phase
12. Buy businesses and land on the north side of Independence so the businesses can relocate.
13. This helps more but access will always be a problem and the value of the real estate will continue to diminish.
14. Buy out property owners from Briar Creek to Albemarle Road on the north side. Build buffer walls and grassy areas. Let currently operating businesses move to Central Avenue and Monroe Road.
15. It is very comforting to see the plan in action. I do agree that the development needs to be staged. Ideally, I wish for the section between Briar Creek and Sharon Amity to become primarily buffered greenway with some small business or a recreational facility (like a bowling alley).

## **Comments on 280' Proposed Right-of-Way Beyond Harris Blvd.**

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### **Question #1**

Do you think the potential reduction in the proposed right-of-way (ROW) by 70' (existing proposed ROW of 350' to new proposal of 280') will accommodate future transportation needs?

**Response Totals: Yes= 10, No=3**

### **Questions #2**

Do you think the potential reduction in the proposed right-of-way (ROW) by 70' (existing proposed ROW of 350' to new proposal of 280') will accommodate future development needs?

**Response Totals: Yes=6, No= 5**

### **Additional Comments:**

1. There is no money for widening. This section hasn't been widened to 150 ft yet (nowhere close) Never mind cleaning up the aftermath of undevelopable property. And now there is a plan to double the width of the road. Reduce setback more to 200 – 225 ft ROW. Elizabeth Avenue Condos much closer. If I-77 already carries future forecast of Independence granted I-77 is congested, it won't take BRT/LRT HOV etc. to fix it. Much less widening needed to carry 170k cars a day.
2. Restore all left turn lanes that were on Independence. The City of Charlotte claims that connectivity is a priority. Making Independence a freeway violates this claimed priority. That is an excellent example of how east Charlotte is not being included in the forward momentum the rest of the City is enjoying. See: Connectivity Plan?!?!
3. Access still stinks, without frontage road or real access it is all a non-starter.
4. Access is still an issue for business owners.
5. You need to address Amity Gardens and Coliseum Shopping Center immediately!!!!
6. Move quickly on Independence – must attract retail – remove unsightly existing vacant buildings.
7. With no left turns allowed and no road connections from other streets on many properties, development is not possible or feasible! Buy land and make road a freeway as proposed and needed by NCDOT.