

# Smith Level Road Task Force

Report to Chapel Hill Town Council  
October 22, 2007

# Smith Level Road

- Jointly designated as “rural” with Chapel Hill in order to protect the University Lake watershed
- Small section designated as part of Mountains to Sea bike route
- Serves numerous neighborhoods and apartment complexes and a few businesses
- Gateway between Carrboro and Chatham County

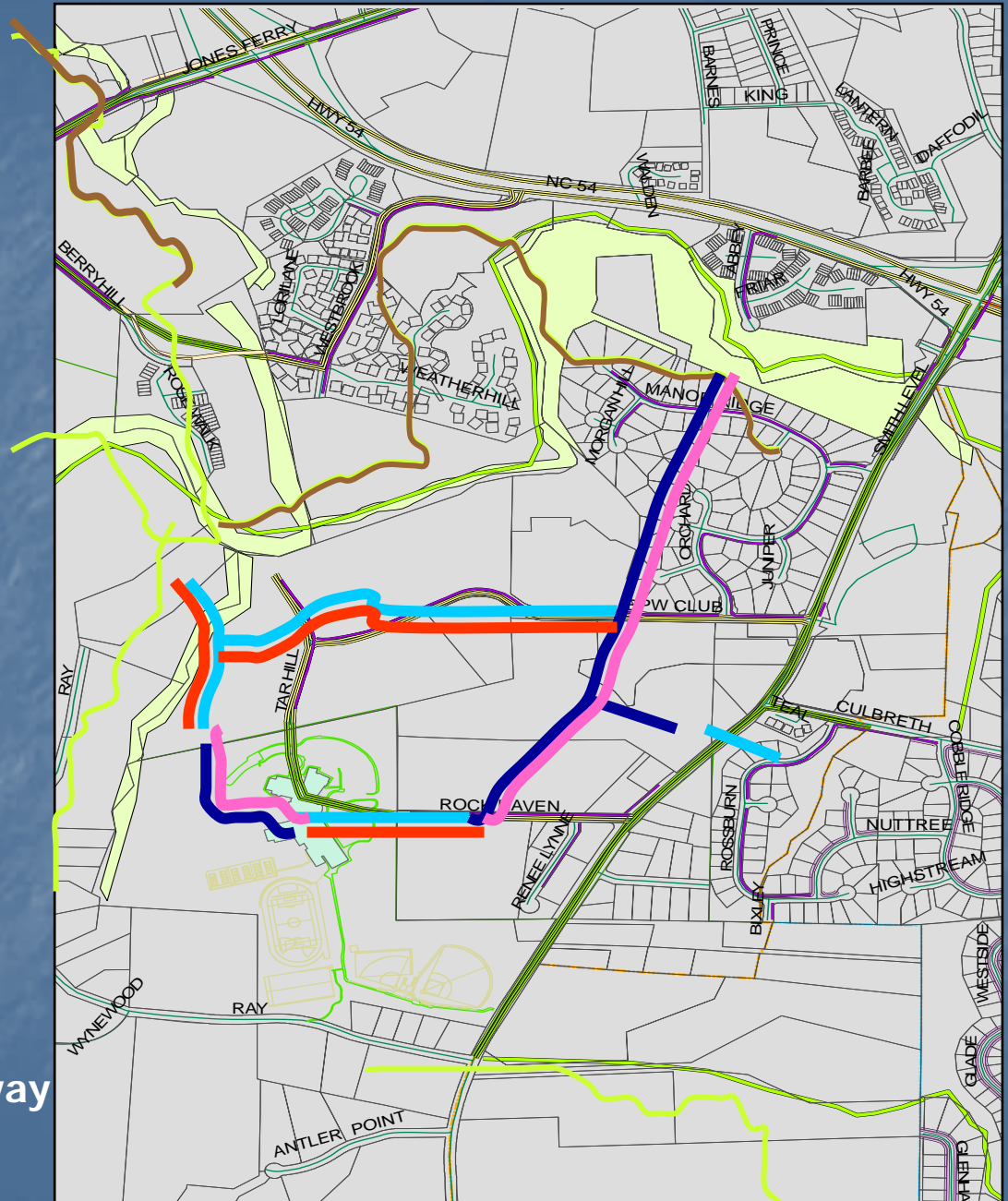
# Task Force Charge

- Gather data on problems that impact traffic and pedestrian safety
- Examine development pressures that impact traffic and the University Lake watershed
- Explore ways to provide safe, non-vehicular use of SLR
- Identify obstacles to transportation improvements



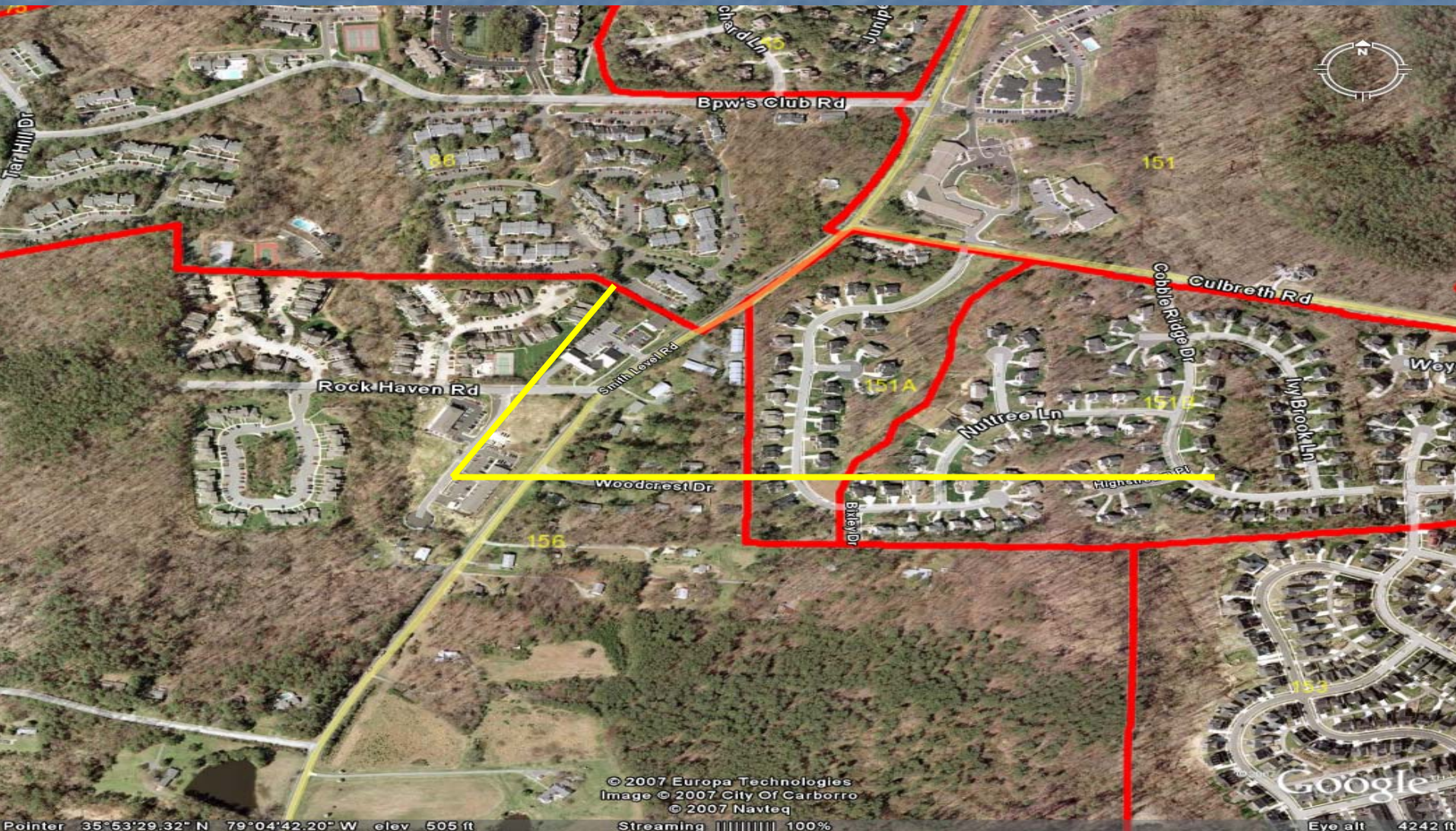
# North Section

- Existing bikelane
- Existing sidewalk
- Proposed bikelane
- Proposed sidewalk
- Proposed Greenway
- Dedicated for Greenway





# Southern Section: Proposed Greenway From Southern Village





# General strategies for improving non-vehicular mobility

- Reduce speed of motor vehicles.
- Reduce volume of motor vehicles.
- Reduce exposure time for pedestrians.
- Improve access and mobility for all pedestrians, especially those with disabilities.
- Encourage walking by improving aesthetics, safety, and security.
- Improve compliance with traffic laws (motorists and pedestrians).
- Eliminate behaviors that lead to crashes (motorists and pedestrians).

# Speeding concerns

- In 2003, nationwide, speeding was a contributing factor in 31 percent of all fatal crashes
  - At 40 mi/h a pedestrian has an 85 percent chance of being killed;
  - At 30 mi/h, the likelihood goes down to 45 percent,
  - At 20 mi/h, the fatality rate is only 5 percent
- One fatality on SLR between 2001-2006

# Truck Traffic

- DOT does not count trucks separately from other vehicles during traffic counts.
- UNC uses Merritt Mining for fill; should expect their truck traffic to remain constant over the next several years.
- DOT will work with municipalities to impose truck restrictions on some roads.



# Chatham Development

Chatham County is expected to grow by approximately 10,000-22,000 new homes within the next 15 years, most of them in the northern section of the county.

# Right of Way

- Approximately 10 feet of easement along each side of the road on the southern section
  - Easement restricts other uses
  - Right of way gives authority to use for road widening, sidewalks, and/or bike lanes
- Steep ditches along much of the road from 15-501 up to Ray Road complicates prospect for bikelanes/sidewalks
- Adding sidewalks requires adding curb and gutter for safety—extends needed right of way out to 15 feet



# Designated Bike Routes

- Mountain to Sea route enters Carrboro from Jones Ferry Road, runs down S. Greensboro, turns onto Culbreth Road.
- DOT and local governments jointly designate certain roadways as bike routes.
- Officially endorsed bike route designations lay the foundation for the addition of bicycle friendly amenities during future road improvements.

# Current Plans- Southern SLR

- Turn lane and signalization have been added as part of the high school development
- Greenway from Southern Village to SLR - planned but not funded
- Morgan Creek Greenway planned – under SLR at Frank Porter Graham Elementary School



# Recommendations for Southern Section

# Slow Down the Traffic

- Reduce speed limit to 35 MPH
- Impose truck restrictions (does not restrict through trucks)
- Enforce speed limit
- Examine possibility of narrowing the traffic lanes by 6" between Rock Haven and 15-501
- Examine the possibility of eliminating one of the two turn lanes coming off of 15-501.
- Request traffic & feasibility study for roundabout at Damascus Church Road and Smith Level



# Improve Access for Non-Vehicular Traffic

- Add Culbreth to 15-501 and from 15-501 to Old Lystra Road as part of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Chatham County's bicycle plans
- Extend & line shoulders from Rock Haven to 15-501
- Explore landowner compacts to provide trail access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Add multi-use path on one side from Ray Road to 15-501

# Additional Recommendations

- Investigate Orange Public Transit route opportunities; request consideration of extension of Chapel Hill transit opportunities
- Until better alternatives are provided, encourage parents to utilize school buses instead of driving.
- Finally, the task force encourages improved public transportation between Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Orange County, Chatham County, and the Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools.



The Task Force respectfully requests that recommendations which fall under Chapel Hill's purview be referred to staff for discussion of feasibility by December.