Alston Avenue (NC 55) in Durham, NC

Context Sensitive Solutions to Support Environmental Justice
• Existing 2-lane road
• Commuter corridor, state route
• Proposed as a multi-lane facility
• Requires removal of some side street connections
• Numerous local access points; historic grid street pattern
• Road traverses historic, low-income, minority and redeveloping areas
• CSS not applied initially; issues raised through CIA process
Demographic Context

- Substantial proportion of low-income residents
- Predominantly minority populations
- Historically African-American neighborhoods
- Rapidly growing Hispanic population
- Youth and elderly considerations
Development Context

- Urban, just east of downtown Durham
- Commercial, residential and public uses
- Several historic districts
- HOPE VI redevelopment
Community Facilities & Services

- Social/community service organizations
- Elementary school
- Community parks
- Churches
- Child care
Retail Environment

- Small restaurants and taquerias
- Convenience stores
- Gas stations
- Large independent grocery
Local Plans

- Evolution of HOPE VI implementation
- NECD Livability Initiative
- Triangle Transit station
- Bull City Connector
Community Impact Studies

- Initial Community Impact Assessment 2003
- Origination of recommendations for use of CSS elements
- CIA addendums addressing EJ and mitigation 2008-2011
- Environmental Justice impacts
  - Barrier effects
  - Community cohesion/neighborhood edge effects
  - Removal of important community service (grocery)
- Commitments captured in FONSI
Grocery Store Impacts

• Proposed design required relocation
• Community survey conducted
• Store highlights
  • Fresh produce, wide meat selection, ethnic foods
  • Unique array of services for low-income and immigrant populations
  • Diverse customer base
  • Substantial revenue for independent grocer
  • Accessed by all modes
• Recurring impacts—last grocery in neighborhood
Food Access Alternatives

- Access to alternate grocers
- Sidewalk and bicycle network/gap analysis
- Range of grocery items available
- Other services provided
Grocery Site Alternatives

- Sites identified by the City
- Detailed site evaluations: parcel size, retail space, parking configurations
- Ped shed analysis
- Influence factors: EJ populations served, access by transit, bicycling and walking, vehicleless households, crime
Durham Rescue Mission

- Main building across from grocery
- Plans for site expansion
- 4-block campus both sides of Alston
- Small community garden
Coordination Process

- City of Durham, NCDOT and FHWA
- State Historic Preservation Office
- HOPE VI developers
- Community leaders
- EJ and LEP populations
- Competing interests
EJ and LEP Outreach

- Meetings in local African-American church and community center
- Small group meetings coordinated with HOPE VI redevelopment efforts
- African-American and Hispanic community leader interviews and coordination
- Community survey outside grocery (bilingual)
- Broad notifications (flyers, postcards, media)
- Translated materials and interpreters
- Use of visualizations
Mitigation/CSS Elements

• Reduced road width, removed some turn lanes to minimize impacts

• Sidewalk treatments, crosswalks and reduced curb radii

• Median landscaping and extended medians

• Design elements to address historic districts

• City coordination for streetscaping, lighting and landscaping
Mitigation/CSS Elements

- Avoidance of grocery store impacts
- Provision of contiguous property to support Durham Rescue Mission campus plans through ROW process
- Phased implementation
  - Full width built; open as two lane with parking and bike lanes
  - Supported by updated traffic analysis
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