



MAYOR

December 7, 2015

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MAYOR PRO-TEM

WOODY WASHAM

COMMISSIONERS

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TOWN MANAGER

ANTHONY ROBERTS

Secretary Nick Tennyson
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1501 Mail Service Center (Mail)
Raleigh, NC 27699-1501

Dear Secretary Tennyson,

As Mayor of Cornelius, I want to thank you for your participation in the recent I-77 Summit at our Town Hall. As you know, our town has been involved in discussions regarding the Managed Lanes project for over six years. To date, our Town Board has unanimously approved two Resolutions that have been forwarded to your Department as well as the Governor with my signature attached – one to postpone the signing of the contract with Cintra and the other to support NC Senator Jeff Tarte's call for the cancellation of the contract. As a former Mayor, I am sure you understand that a Town Board acts as a unified body when decisions are made. I stand with my Board in both of these requests.

As you know, construction has started on the project between Exit 28 and 23. Davidson Mayor John Woods and I recently traveled to the Dallas / Ft. Worth area, at our own expense, to learn first-hand about two Managed Lanes projects constructed and operated by Cintra – the North Tarrant Expressway and the LBJ Expressway. Two critical points came to light from this trip that deserves your attention.

The most important issue is a fatal flaw in the design of the current project. The inability to have truck traffic, both service and long haul, in the Managed Lanes due to inadequate asphalt thickness will be disastrous. Mayor Woods and I discussed this concern with, Michael Morris, Director of Transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Victor Vandergriff, current Texas Transportation Commissioner and David Laney, former Chairman with the Texas Transportation Commission, and they confirmed they would not proceed on a project without the inclusion of truck traffic for all lanes. To me, this is especially concerning given the recent completion of the Norfolk Southern Charlotte Regional Intermodal facility since the north-south corridor of I-77 will become even more critical for truck traffic. In Texas, trucks use the Managed Lanes since they are typically traveling through the corridor and are willing to pay a toll for reliable travel times. If trucks have the ability to use the managed lanes on I-77, this will increase the capacity of general purpose lanes for our local use. Since we all support the ongoing effort for our region to develop into a global economic business hub, this has to be fixed.

In conversations with Bill Thornton, President and CEO of the Ft. Worth Chamber of Commerce and David Berzina, Chamber Executive Vice President, they encouraged an Economic Impact Analysis be commissioned to fully understand the impact of the Managed Lane project being proposed. In Texas, since the completion of the NTE, they have experienced a 35% increase in sales tax revenue along the corridor. Our Town Board is currently being asked to provide input on various design features of the project – including the “ingress and egress” location points from general purpose lanes into the managed lanes. Without having adequate information regarding economic impact, all we can offer is our best guess. If NCDOT truly desires our involvement, we need to be properly informed and collectively work together as a region to provide the best outcome.

In closing, this is the most important issue in our community. Your Department can have significant influence and affect the ultimate outcome of how we move forward in fixing our interstate. I request your thoughtful assessment of options before you.

Best Regards,

Mayor Chuck Travis

cc: Honorable Pat McCrory, North Carolina Governor
Cornelius Town Commissioners