

Please read, take action, and pass along this request to others.

Thanks to all for what you have been doing to question the value of DOT's plans to build an overpass on Eastwood Road at Military Cutoff (they refer to it as U-5710). You have made more people aware of the project and together we have made some progress. Construction has been pushed back and won't go out to bid until September 2027. Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach have both formally raised their concerns and have requested that DOT schedule public meetings. But DOT has ignored those requests so far. Now is **the time for us all to speak up**. Don't allow DOT or elected officials to think that we have given up in our questioning of the project (We have been less vocal in June than we were earlier -- they could assume that we have lost interest). You can help this week in two ways:

Item #1- Much has changed since NC DOT held a public meeting about the Eastwood overpass project eight years ago. We need NC DOT to hold an open **public hearing** in which they present the updated costs, length and details of construction, and what they believe to be the long-term benefits to traffic flow in the intersection and on surrounding roads. And we need them to answer questions from the audience. We need DOT to pick a date and a large venue that's convenient for residents of this part of Wilmington and for folks from Wrightsville Beach – perhaps the New Hanover County Government Center.

How to help: Please email/call Transportation Secretary Joey Hopkins and DOT Chief Engineer Patrick Norman with cc's to Trevor Carroll and Aaron LeBeau and tell them that taxpayers need that public hearing. You can also ask Senator Michael Lee and Representatives Ted Davis and Deb Butler to encourage NC DOT to hold a public hearing. Don't be concerned that you have written to them before. This is a new request about a very specific issue.

NC Department of Transportation

Joey Hopkins, Secretary of Transportation – jhopkins@ncdot.gov 919-707-2800

Patrick Norman, Chief Engineer, - pnorman@ncdot.gov 919-819-1753

Trevor Carroll, Division Engineer, Division 3 – tkcarroll@ncdot.gov 910-341-2001

Aaron LeBeau, Project Manager – arlebeau@ncdot.gov 910-341-2052

State Level Elected Officials

Michael Lee, State Senator, District 7, -- Michael.Lee@ncleg.gov - 919-715-2525

Deb Butler, State Representative, District 18, -- Deb.Butler@ncleg.gov

Ted Davis, State Representative, District 20 - Ted.Davis@ncleg.gov

Among the points you could mention:

- City of Wilmington submitted a resolution on May 20th asking DOT to hold a public meeting.
- Town of Wrightsville Beach submitted a similar request on June 17th.
- There have been calls/emails from taxpayers to state elected officials and NC DOT requesting a public hearing about DOT's U-5710.
- No action to date in regard to scheduling that hearing.
- The last public meeting on the project was back in 2018 and much has changed since then (including the project budget, the completion of the Drysdale Drive extension, the addition of traffic signals on Eastwood Road, etc.).
- We need to hear the DOT's details and rationale for the project and we need them to answer our questions. We are taxpayers and it is our \$81+ million.

Issue #2 – The Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (**WMPO**) is asking for public input for 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP) from now until 5PM on July 25th.

This is an opportunity to get on the record formally suggesting that other projects could accomplish much more with that \$81+ million taxpayer dollars than building an overpass that will simply move most drivers just a couple hundred yards to another traffic light. You might tell the WMPO that you think that many of their planned projects have merit, but you feel that U-5710 requires further review. You might ask that they compare the costs of U-5710 (both dollars and pain to area residents, businesses and visitors during construction) to the limited benefits it can hope to deliver. You might want to name other projects that make more sense for the money, like College/Oleander or others where you experience long waits. You might

point out that the Drysdale Drive extension if put to full planned use would significantly improve level of service for drivers without spending that additional \$81+ million. The important thing is to write and raise doubt about making the Eastwood overpass a priority in the future planning. You can use a subject line of “**Input for 2026-2035 STIP**” and offer your thoughts to the WMPO from now until July 25th at:

wmpo@wilmingtonnc.gov

Thank you for your support in questioning the logic of building U-5710.