

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Board of Commissioners

FROM: Bryan Gruesbeck, Town Manager

SUBJECT: NC 87 Sidewalk (West Street to Pittsboro Elementary Road)

DATE: February 10, 2014

Background: The Board has previously inquired about constructing a new sidewalk on the east side of NC 87 from West Street to Pittsboro Elementary School Road. The segment is identified as a “top priority” in the Town’s Pedestrian Transportation Plan (2009) and appears to be an effective link between an existing sidewalk on West Street and Pittsboro Elementary School Road. Board members expressed concern about the proximity of the proposed sidewalk to the houses. Staff has confirmed that the cost of the new sidewalk construction along NC87 can be assumed by Powell Bill funds.

Staff obtained cost estimates. The first option includes the installation of curb and gutter, a small grass buffer strip and new 5’-wide sidewalk along the east side of NC 87 from West Street and terminating at the intersection of Pittsboro Elementary School Road at a cost of \$61,870. The second option along the same length does not involve a curb/gutter – it moves the sidewalk away from the road and toward the houses at a cost of \$26,900. Constructing curb and gutter is more expensive, but it allows the sidewalk to be placed approximately ten (10) feet closer to street and away from the houses.

DOT safety regulations stipulate that a sidewalk must be placed at least 13 feet from the road with a speed limit of 45mph. A sidewalk can be placed as closer to a road at those speeds if the road has a curb and a small buffer. NC 87 at this segment is currently posted at 35mph.

There are physical barriers. If the sidewalk is placed 13’ from the edge of the street it may come into contact with utility poles and Town water meters. Moving the utility poles would be costly. Likewise, the Town needs access to the water meters and moving them may also be expensive and laborious.

Therefore, if the Board is currently interested in sidewalks on NC 87, Staff recommends the option that does not involve curbs. This option is less expensive and could avoid the utility poles and Town water meters. Staff has asked DOT to consider allowing the sidewalk to be placed eight (8) feet from the edge the street because the road’s speed limit is actually 35 mph.

Attached please find a simple drawing that shows the current option favored by Staff.

Action Requested: Discussion and consideration. Provide direction to Staff, as appropriate.