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Eastern Lincoln Mobility Study holds community workshops

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Lincoln County citizens place stickers on a map of Lincoln County identifying problems and writing possible solutions at the East Lincoln Community Center.

Rachel Miller

As the population of Lincoln County has grown over the years, traffic has become more of an issue for its citizens. In response to this problem, officials of Lincoln County developed the Eastern Lincoln Mobility Study, in May of 2019, with the main goal of collecting data on traffic congestion, configuring alternatives to the identified problems, and putting a plan into action.

The study covers 29 intersections, but mostly focuses on Highway 16 Business, Highway 16 Bypass, Highway 73 and intersections on North Little Egypt Road and St. James Church Road.

The first of two community workshops for the Eastern Lincoln Mobility Study was held on Tuesday at the East Lincoln Community Center.

The voices of concerned citizens filled the community center as discussion began between Lincoln County Planning and Inspections staff, employees from Kimley-Horn, the engineering company involved in the redesign, and those affected by the traffic.

"The goal of the community meetings is to collect input on the community's priorities as well as educating the public," said Andrew Bryant, county planning director.

The community center was lined with printed out posters and models of the traffic. There, participants were given stickers and able to voice their opinion on what mattered to them and where they believed changes needed to be made. Some of the considerations discussed were safety,

connectivity, land use considerations, bypass use, bicycling, cost and implementation, economic development and traffic.

"We're here to listen to the residents for input and correction," said Jonathan Guy, vice president at Kimley-Horn.

One of the residents who came to give her input was Autumn Watson, who was born in Lincoln County 35 years ago and has watched it changed ever since. Her biggest concern was the overdevelopment of Lincoln County and busy intersections.

With long commutes from Denver to Charlotte for work causing her to start and end her day in traffic, Watson came to the community workshop to get more information on the East Lincoln Mobility Study and to share what she thought needed to be changed.

"I am excited to finally see action being done," Watson said.

Once the process of collecting and analyzing data from the study is complete, changes will start to be made, some with short-term and some with long-term solutions.

"These things take years and sometimes decades, but we hope to begin utilizing the results of the study quickly," Bryant said.

To guarantee a holistic view, those involved with East Lincoln Mobility Study want to hear from every party affected by the roads in Lincoln County. For more information on the study or to take the online survey visit www.lincolncounty.org/ELMS.