Pleasant Plains Access Study – Public Outreach Round #1

CAMPO/Town of Apex

Public Comments Received and Responses

Public Comments Received at Public Meeting #1

During Public Meeting #1, attendees were invited to complete hard copy comment forms that solicited input on the meeting stations, including existing conditions and the proposed performance metrics as presented. Twenty-four (24) comment forms were completed and submitted at the public meeting.

Online Public Comment

A web-based public comment form was available on the project's Public Input website (apexnc.org/pleasantparkaccess), which was linked from the Town of Apex website. Comments were accepted from September 2nd to 16th, 2026. A total of 29 responses were received via the online comment form.

Other Comments

The project team also received one email, two (2) hard-copy letters, and one (1) petition with 46 signatories. These submittals were also considered for response.

Public Meeting #1 Comments and Responses

Below is a summary of all comments received and responses to comments, as needed.

Major comment themes:

1. Concerns regarding neighborhood impacts, including:
    a. Detriment to the general character of the nearby neighborhoods,
    b. Concern over potential cut through traffic created by a new access,
    c. And, extent of property impacts (impact to septic fields, full property takes).
2. Questions or concerns regarding multimodal safety and comfort.
3. Questions or concerns regarding the cost of a new access point.
4. Questions or concerns regarding environmental impacts, including flooding and tree coverage/loss.
5. Comments on the overall traffic congestion at the existing park entrance
6. Questions or concerns regarding the emergency response operations of a new access.
7. Comments on the history and process of the park's development.
8. Question about the design of the alignments for access options being considered.
9. Comments about preferences among the access options being considered.
10. Comments on the infrastructure of the park itself.

1. Neighborhood Impacts (*27 comment mentions*)

a. Comments included concerns that the park has degraded the overall character of the nearby neighborhoods, which most described as rural, quiet and safe. There is concern that additional access to the park, specifically in the vicinity of Pleasant Plains Road, will continue this pattern of degradation. Local residents described their nearby properties as family owned and stated that they were long-time residents. (*8 comment mentions*)

The Pleasant Plains Access Study uses performance measures for each potential alternative to establish the final prioritization of the access options. These performance measures include neighborhood impacts, a measure which captures overall likely impacts on the character of the neighborhoods around the park, such as property impacts and increased traffic on neighborhood roads. The study will consider these impacts for each potential access alternative in the prioritization process.

The Access Study also considers the impact of additional access in relation to the classifications on the 2045 Land Use Map and prioritizes alternatives that connect to future land uses that are planned to serve higher population densities. The primary future land use classifications in the Pleasant Plains and Friendship Road areas are Low Density Residential, Rural Transition Residential, and Rural Residential, to reflect and protect the existing rural and agricultural character of these areas. This makes additional access options into these areas less of a priority when compared to those options that directly serve higher density future land uses.

b. Comments included concerns over the potential "cut-through" traffic that a new access to the park could encourage. There is a concern that making a new connection between surrounding roadways would create an attractive route those that may not even be visiting the park, further increasing the number of vehicles using the local roads. (*12 comment mentions*)

The alternatives evaluation process will include projections for this potential new traffic for each access option considered, building on the traffic analysis that is already complete. The likelihood and magnitude of this potential cut-through traffic will thus be considered in the overall evaluation and scoring of a given access option.

c. Comments included concerns over the potential impacts to private property near the proposed improvements, specifically along Pleasant Plains Road and Friendship Road. Many were concerned about the eminent domain process and potential impacts to existing septic fields. (*7 comment mentions*)

This study will determine the feasibility of various new access options, but it is not meant to be a full impact analysis of any given alternative. A future access point is not funded for design or construction. If funding becomes available to further develop an access point alternative, future project phases would further develop the design and evaluate impacts in more detail. Detailed studies of septic fields and well locations are typically conducted in the next planning and design phase, commonly referred to as "preliminary design." For this study, however, the project team has confirmed the presence of both gravity and pump septic systems in the vicinity of potential access

options. The known presence of septic fields along Pleasant Plains Road and along the potential collector street between Pleasant Plains and Friendship Roads and the complications associated with impacts to these systems will be included as a risk factor when evaluating the access options.

Following preliminary design, the project selected to move forward would then go into "final design." At that point, if a project's design requires acquisition of any private property for construction, efforts would be made to minimize those impacts through design. Where unavoidable, responsible government agencies' right-of-way teams will work with property owners individually to complete any purchases. This purchase could include a narrow strip along the frontage of a property or a more significant amount of area; however, in any case, the property owner is paid fair market value for the property.

2. Multimodal Safety and Comfort *(4 comment mentions*)

Comments included concerns that the introduction of additional traffic through a second park access route could create an unsafe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Commenters also noted that multimodal users should be comfortable on the facilities, requesting wide paths if possible.

The Town of Apex and the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) are committed to encouraging safe and connected multimodal options for its residents, with special emphasis in this study because the access options being evaluated connect to a park. Design concepts for each option will include multimodal facilities such as sidewalk, side path, or bike lanes based on road type and context. Additionally, the potential benefits to transit access for each alternative will also be considered.

3. Costs *(3 comment mentions)*

Comments raised concerns about the expected costs of the alternatives and asked questions about potential benefits, including increased tax revenue, that development along these alternatives might bring to the town.

The study is developing planning-level cost estimates for the potential access alternatives being considered. These cost estimates will be a major part of assessing the feasibility and prioritization of each access alternative.

It is possible that additional access to the park will benefit other government entities and developers. The Pleasant Park Access Study is considering these potential benefits by considering potential funding partnerships with developers along each alternative.

4. Environmental Impacts *(4 comment mentions)*

a. Comments mentioned the potential for the project to negatively impact the environment due to tree clearing. *(3 comment mentions)*

Tree clearing is an impact of many roadway construction projects. The Pleasant Park Access Study seeks to minimize the potential impact of tree clearing by including Environmental Impacts as a

performance measure, which considers acreage of tree clearing, in the alternative evaluation process.

b. A comment stated that the potential access options are located in the 100-year flood zone. *(1 comment mention)*

All potential access options for the Pleasant Park Access Study are located outside of existing floodplains; future design phases would incorporate stormwater management best practices along with considerations for green-infrastructure inclusions.

5. Traffic Congestion *(19 comment mentions)*

Many commentors mentioned experiencing congestion at the entrance to the park and at the Pleasant Plains Road and Old US 1 Highway intersection; there were multiple specific mentions about the potential to turn right-on-red from Pleasant Plains Road onto Old US 1 Highway and the overall operations of this intersection.

This study considers known locations that experience congestion and will evaluate congestion relief in the alternative prioritization process. This includes the potential for new traffic to be introduced into or shifted within the roadway network as a result of an additional access to the park, such as cut-through traffic or expected changes in trip patterns.

However, the Pleasant Plains Access Study will not conduct a comprehensive traffic analysis. It is focused on identifying and evaluating viable access options, with consideration given to an option's potential to exacerbate or mitigate the known traffic congestion hotspots. It will not include direct recommendations on how to improve traffic flow on existing roads. Input directly related to traffic operations is being shared with the appropriate Town departments and NCDOT for their consideration.

6. Emergency Access *(12 comment mentions)*

Comments mentioned the pressing need for an additional emergency access option, given the potential for a CSX train to block the current sole access point to the park and specified that additional emergency access needs to avoid the known congestion at the Pleasant Plains Road and Old US 1 Highway intersection.

The Pleasant Plains Access Study's mission is to evaluate additional access in the event of an emergency at Pleasant Park, including ingress for emergency vehicles and egress for park users. The study is being conducted in consultation with input from emergency services including the Town of Apex Fire Department and Police Department. The study will consider the effectiveness of emergency ingress and egress at the park as an important part of the evaluation and prioritization process. Barriers to access, such as congestion at the park entrance, potential blockage by a CSX train or CSX track maintenance, and total route distance from emergency services facilities to the park are all considered in the evaluation process.

7. Process Concerns *(6 comment mentions)*

Comments noted a history of miscommunications and general disagreement between the Town of Apex and the residents of Pleasant Plains Road, Friendship Road and the Kirkwood neighborhood regarding the vision and construction of Pleasant Park. Comments especially expressed frustration that previously stated concerns about the park lacking secondary entrance are only now being addressed, leading these residents to feel that their opinions have not been heard or heeded as part of the decision-making process.

Pleasant Park provides beneficial recreational facilities for Apex residents. However, the Town acknowledges that its operations do attract volumes of park user traffic to the surrounding roadway network, including Pleasant Plains Road. The Town of Apex appreciates the input that has been provided, now and in the past, by those who live near the park and is committed to continue engagement with the public. Specifically in this study, public input is being directly incorporated into the methodology and metrics used to develop performance measures and to inform the alternative evaluation process. Public input will be a major factor in the performance measures evaluation process, which is the basis for comparing the effectiveness and viability of the potential access options.

8. Roadway Network Connection for NC 540 Crossing Alternative *(1 comment)*

One comment asked for clarification on the alignment for the access option that connects across NC 540.

The alignment location for the access option that crosses NC 540, along with all other options, is currently in development. These concept designs will minimize, when possible, impacts to streams and wetlands and will tie to the existing or planned roadway network. The access alternatives presented on maps during the September 2026 public comment period were intended to reflect general locations of where potential alternatives are being considered, rather than representing actual alignments.

9. Comments and Opinions on the Potential Access Options *(3 comments)*

Several comments expressed opinions and preferences about the potential access options or about the park in general.

The September 2026 public engagement phase of the study was intended to gather input on what people think is important when considering a new access option in terms of performance measures and the evaluation process. Once conceptual designs for the alternatives have been developed, the project team will conduct another round of public involvement and will solicit public feedback on which specific alternative(s) the public prefers. These opinions voiced during this comment period will help to inform the alternative development process as the study progresses but are not being tallied and reported at this time.

10. Issues Related to the Operations and Infrastructure of Pleasant Park *(8 comments)*

Several comments mentioned issues related to the infrastructure of the park itself, including the need for shade, traffic circulation and parking concerns; others commented on the operations of the park, such as holding large sporting events.

The Pleasant Park Access Study is designed specifically to evaluate additional access options to Pleasant Park. It does not evaluate the infrastructure or general operations of the park itself. These comments, though, will be shared with the Pleasant Park management staff in the Town's Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources department.