

Months after opening to traffic, widened Mebane Street still not quite done

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A crew from Living Landscapes was out in the rain Thursday afternoon, planting the last of the New Leaf Society trees in the median of the widened Mebane Street, which is still not fully complete.

Construction began in May 2009 to widen the 2.6-mile segment between Chapel Hill and Huffman Mill roads from two lanes to four. Throughout the ordeal, construction crews kept the road open for one-way traffic — first from east to west, then from west to east.

Finally in November 2011, all four lanes of Mebane Street

were open to traffic, but the project is still in its last stage of completion. The New Leaf Society has been simultaneously planting 89 trees in the median between Huffman Mill and Chapel Hill roads, said Nathan Roach, project manager.

“That’s a separate project,” than the DOT’s ongoing widening project, said Mike Mills, division engineer with the N.C. Department of Transportation. He said the stages of the road widening project were approved individually by the DOT in order to open the busy road as soon as possible.

Mills said Yates Construction Company had already completed the pavement, curb and gutter and the DOT had accepted the maintenance of the road itself. “We do that all the time to get the road open,” he said.

Right now, Mills said, the contractor is just finishing “some touch-up stuff.”



He said the company had not finished with seeding and mulching the sides of the road. Also, "He had not done the thermoplastic markings ... because of weather restrictions," said Mills. He explained the material used for markings on the asphalt is very sensitive to cold and had to wait until it got warmer. "If they put it down when it's cold, it'll come back up," Mills said.

He said as soon as these last items are complete, the Mebane Street widening project will be complete. Mills said he had thought the thermoplastic marking would be done by April, but since it's been warmer, it may be sooner. "Once we finally accept it, it becomes DOT's to maintain completely," he said.

Living Landscapes is already finished with the New Leaf Society's beautification project, which planted multiple types of trees, including magnolias and crepe myrtles. "We just finished up with it today," Roach said Thursday.