An aerial photograph of a highway interchange, likely at Blowing Rock, North Carolina. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered and rendered in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a slight drop shadow. There are four white circular markers at the corners of the image, resembling hole punches.

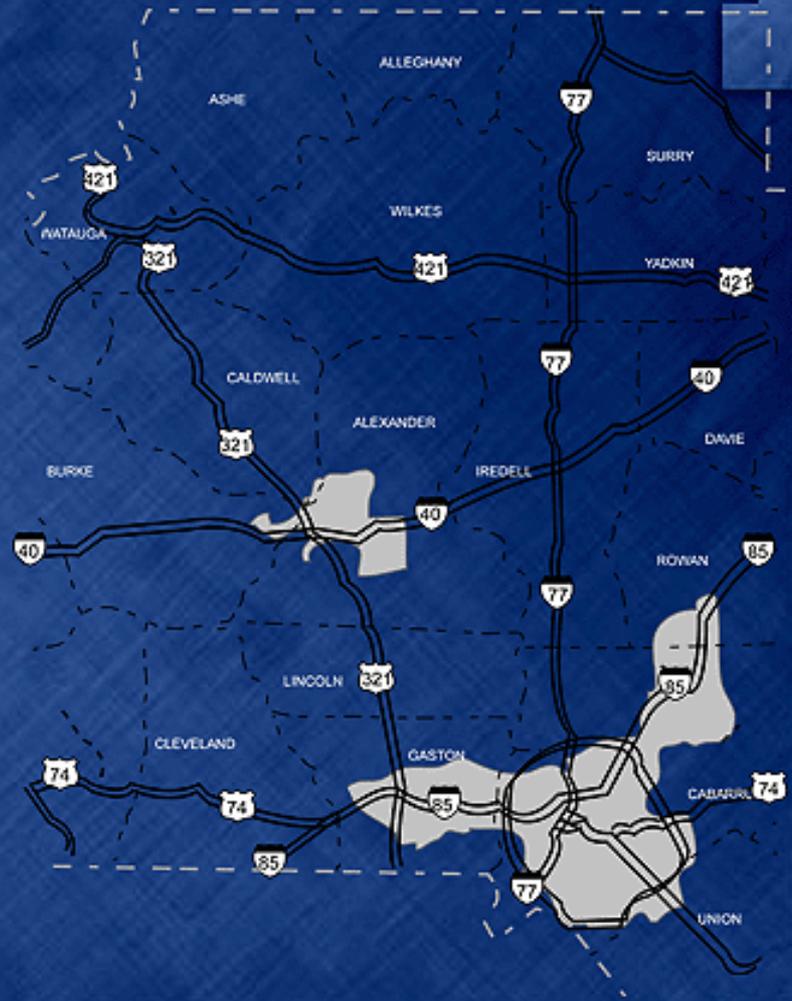
US 321

IMPROVEMENTS

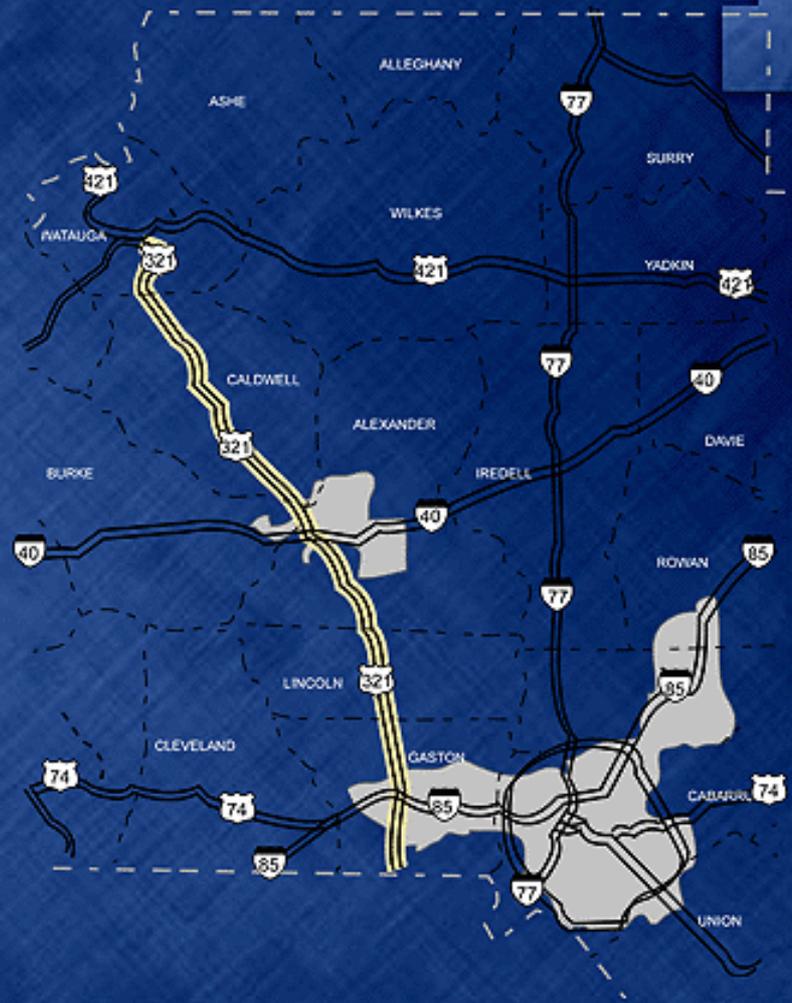
AT BLOWING ROCK

WHERE WE ARE AND
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

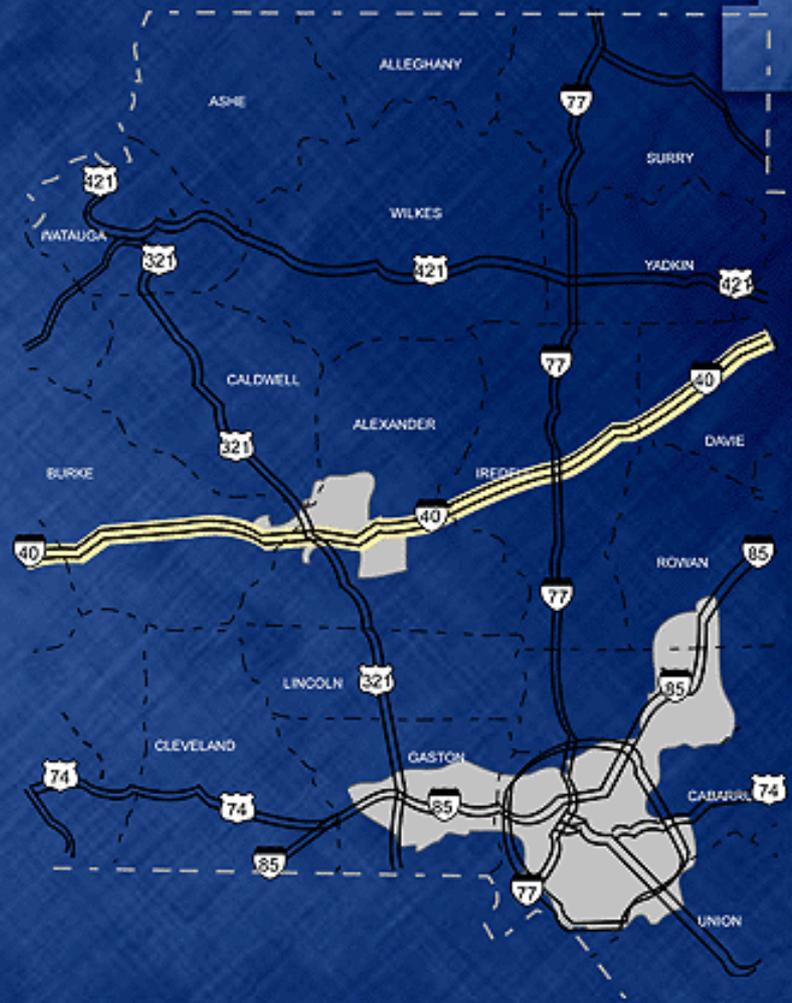
Intrastate Highways



Intrastate Highways



Intrastate Highways

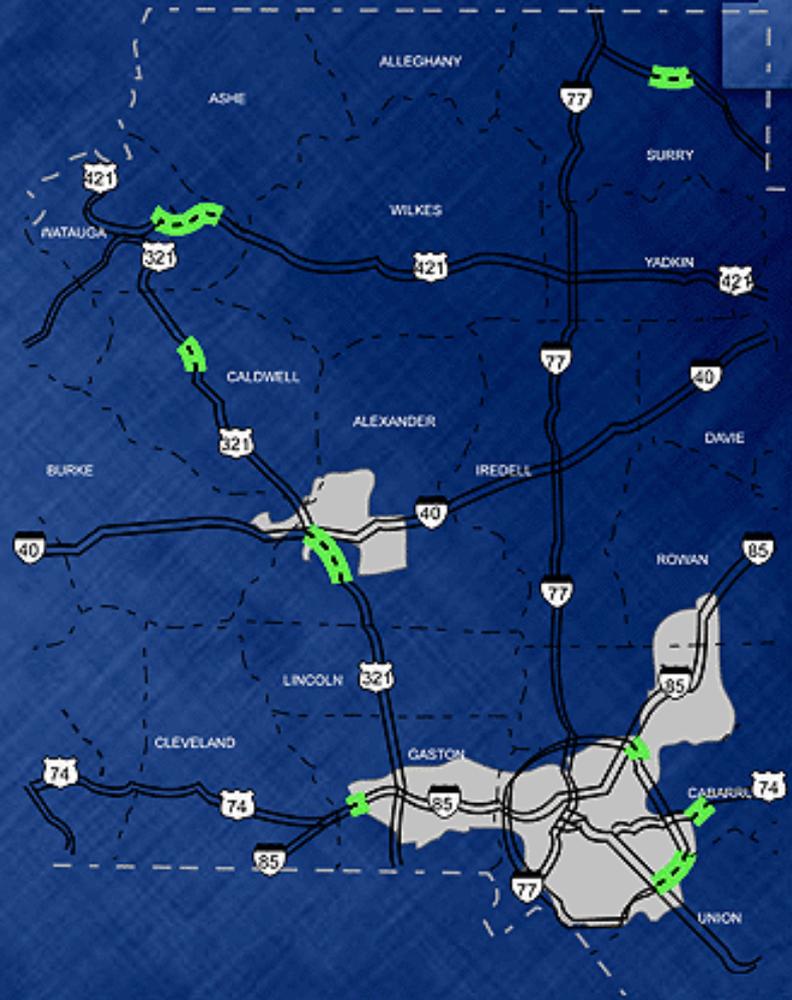


Intrastate Highways



Intrastate Highways

- Construction



Intrastate Highways

- Right of Way
- Construction



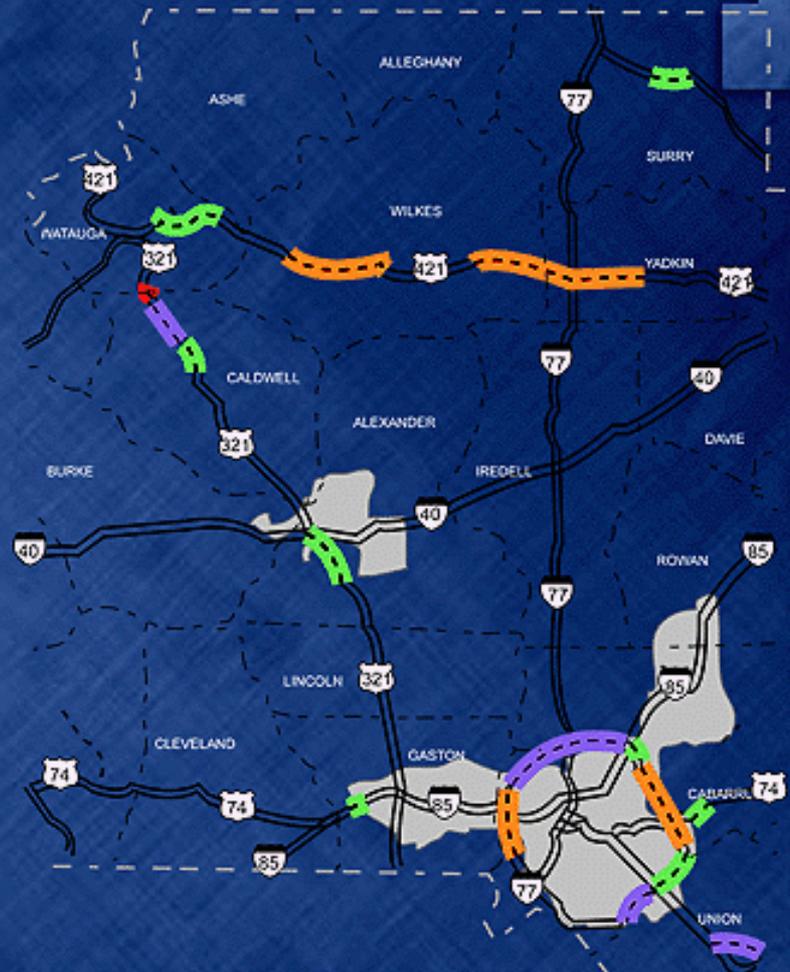
Intrastate Highways

- Design
- Right of Way
- Construction



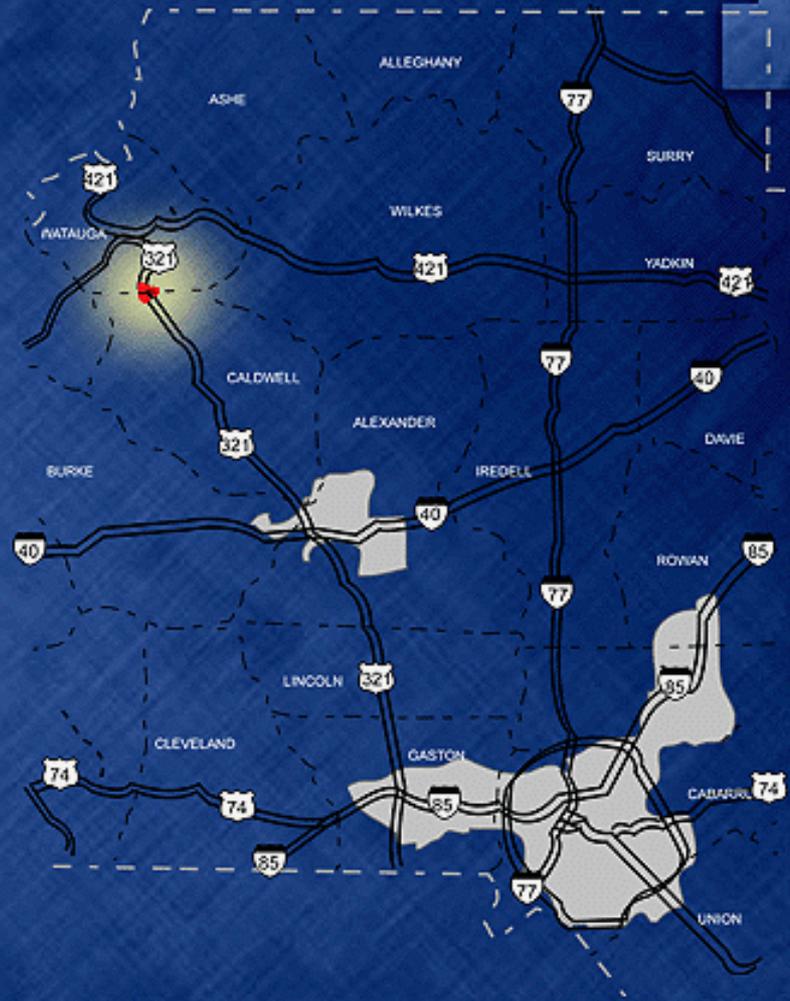
Intrastate Highways

- Planning
- Design
- Right of Way
- Construction



Intrastate Highways

- Planning
- Design
- Right of Way
- Construction



Project History

- 1989 Study Initiated
- 1993 Environmental Assessment
- 1994 FONSI
- 1997 Blowing Rock Bypass Alternatives Study
- 1998 Geotechnical and O&D Studies



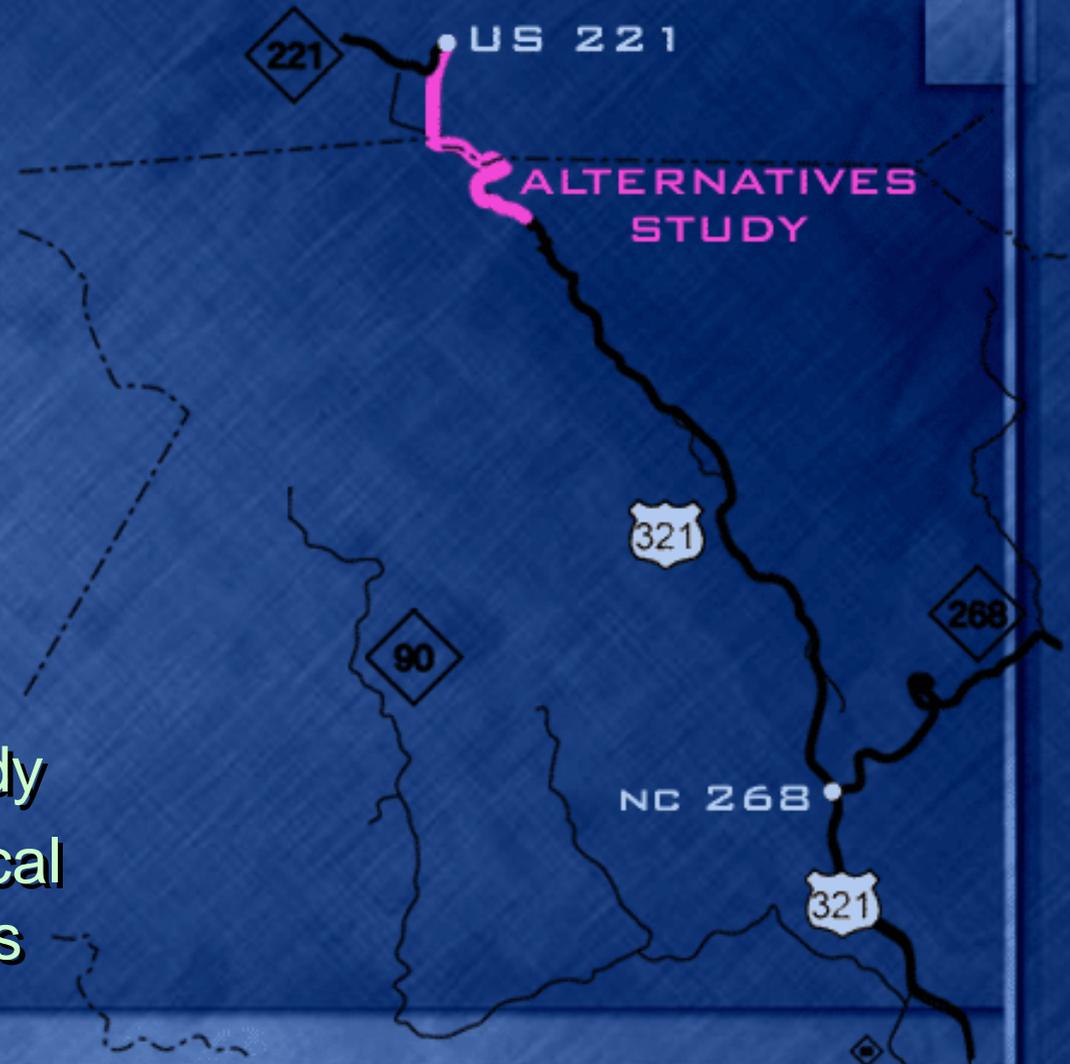
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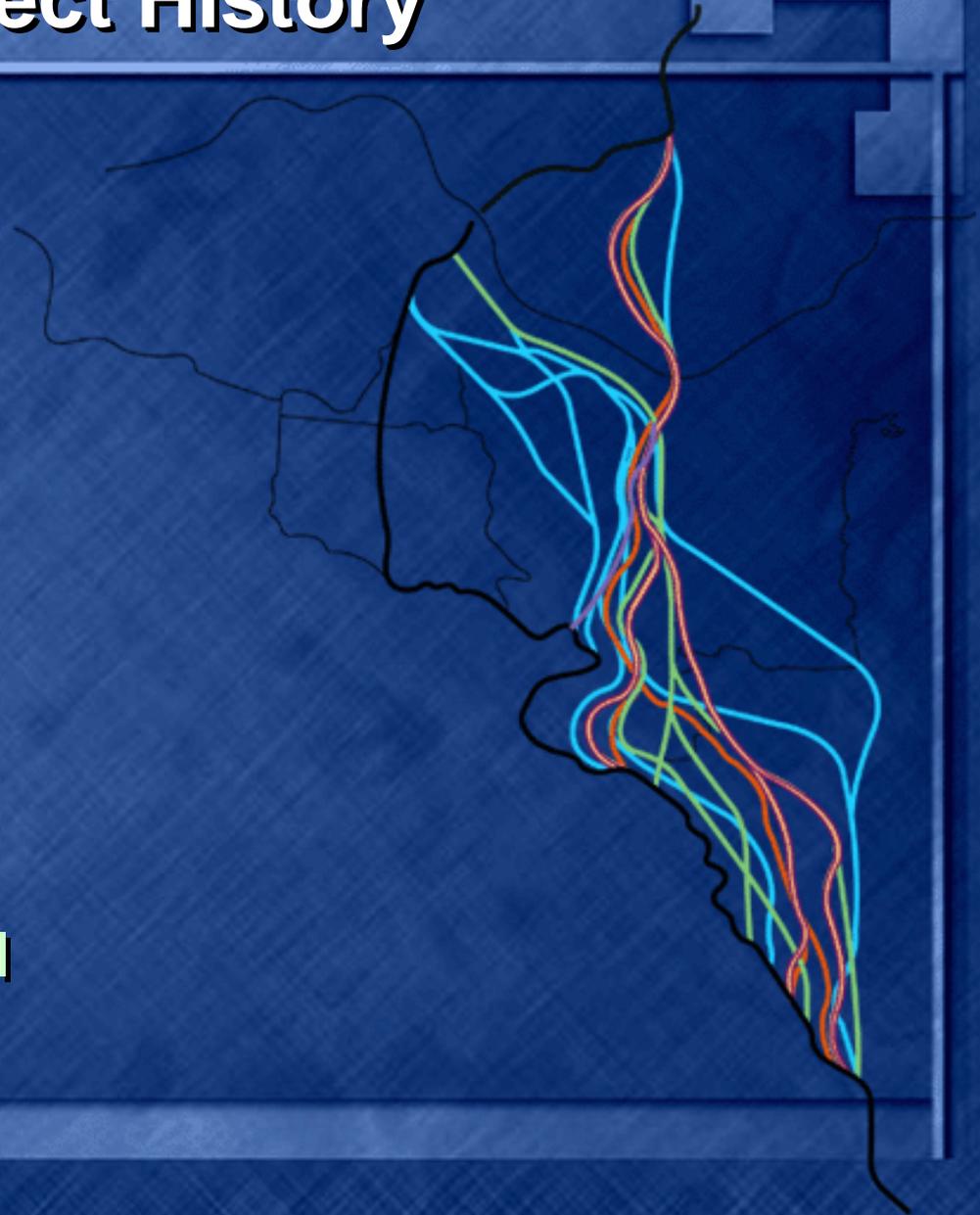
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Project Status

- Widening Alternative
- Four Bypass Alternatives



Project Status

- Widening Alternative
- Four Bypass Alternatives



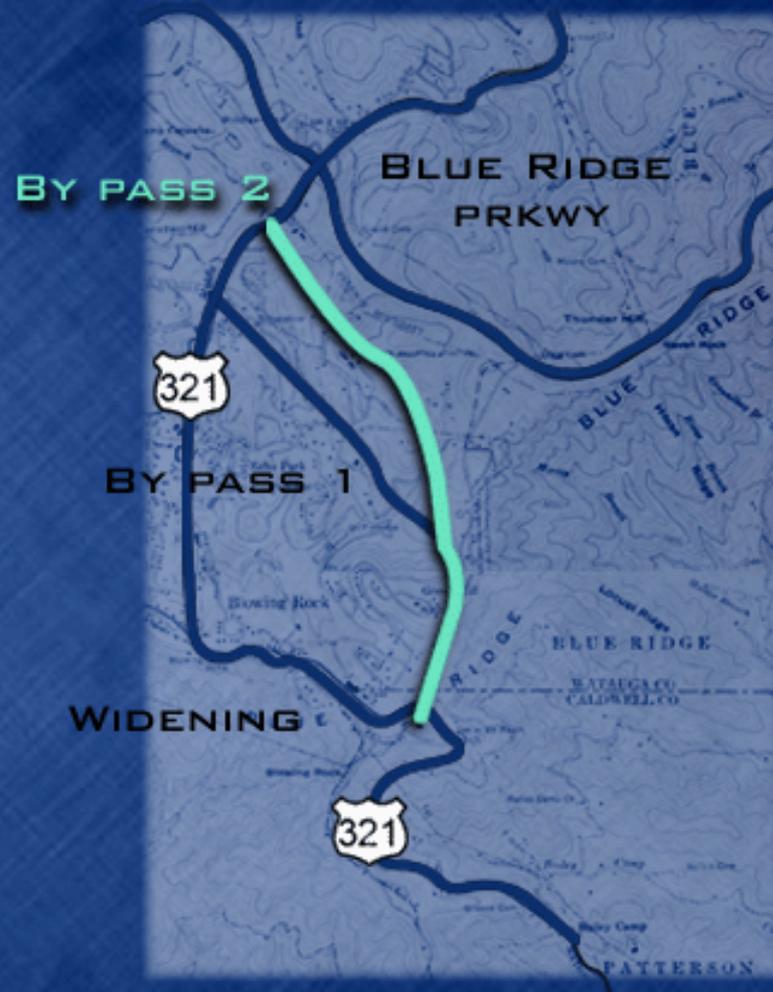
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Project Status

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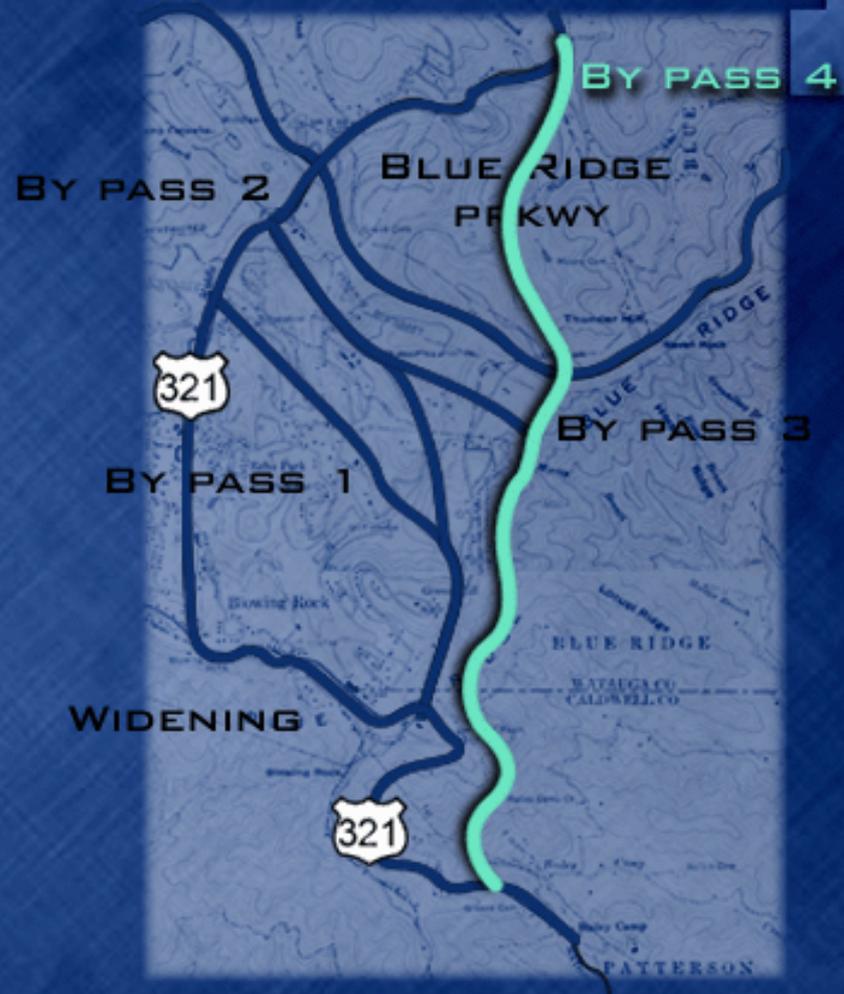
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Project Status

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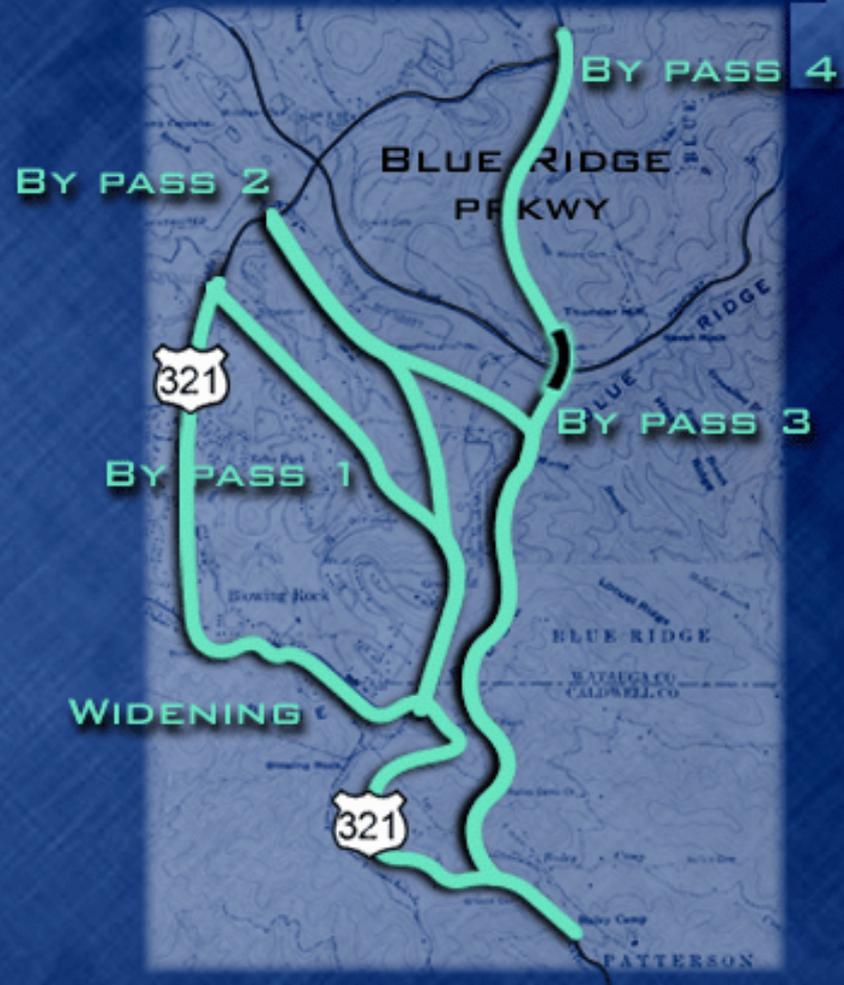
Project Status

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Project Status

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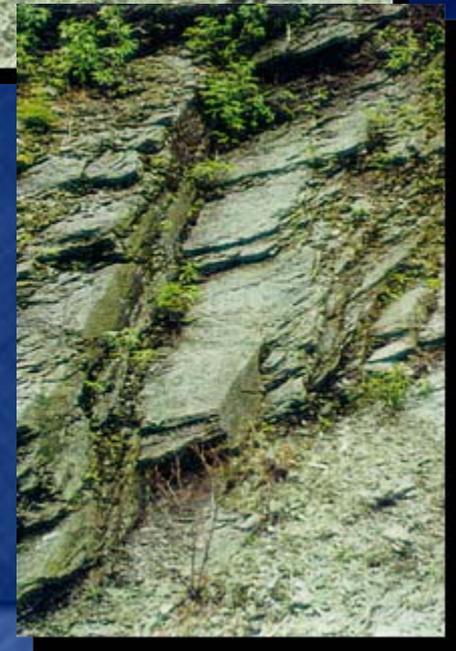
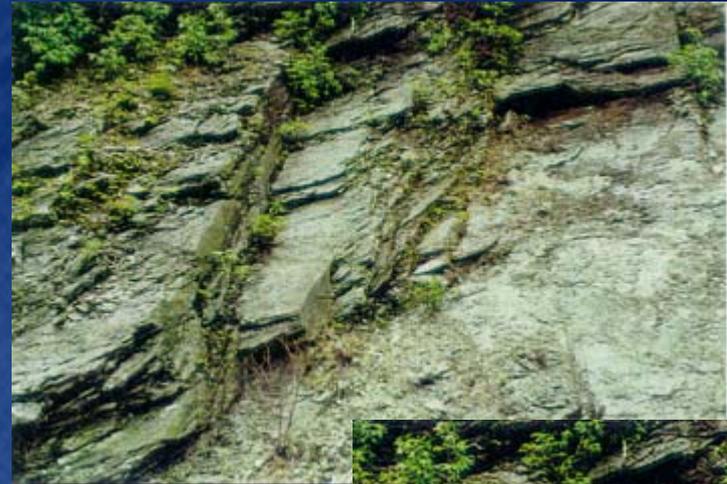


Town Council's Position

ALL BUILD ALTERNATIVES ARE
"UNACCEPTABLE IN ADDRESSING THE
TOWN'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS"

Additional Studies in 1998

- Geotechnical Studies
- Origin and Destination Study



Concerns

- Visual change
- Construction disruption and damage
- Extent of earth moving
- Economic losses
- Displacement
- Through traffic in town & rural countryside
- Natural resource losses
- Long-term value of widening
- Cost

Visual Change



Visual Change



Blue Ridge Parkway Views



Natural Resources



Construction



Traffic Growth



Traffic Counts

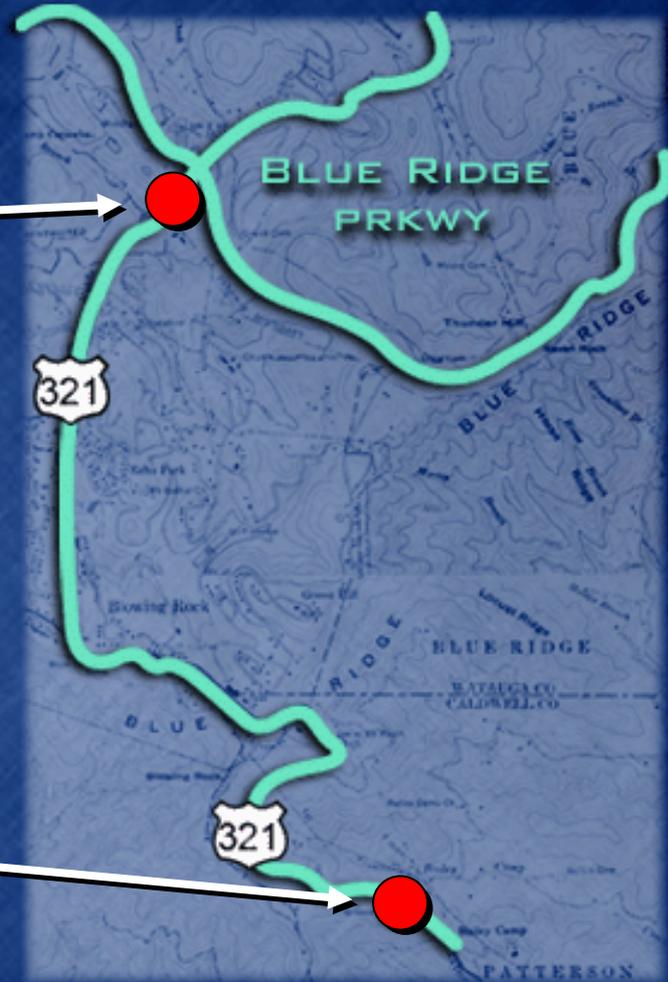
14,200 vehicles

8,800 vehicles

6,600 vehicles



Origin & Destination Survey



Origin & Destination Survey

➤ 5,000 through trips,
including:

- 4,425 passenger vehicles
- 300 medium-duty trucks and buses
- 275 heavy trucks



Through Trip Origins and Purpose



88% from the local region

73% home and work trips

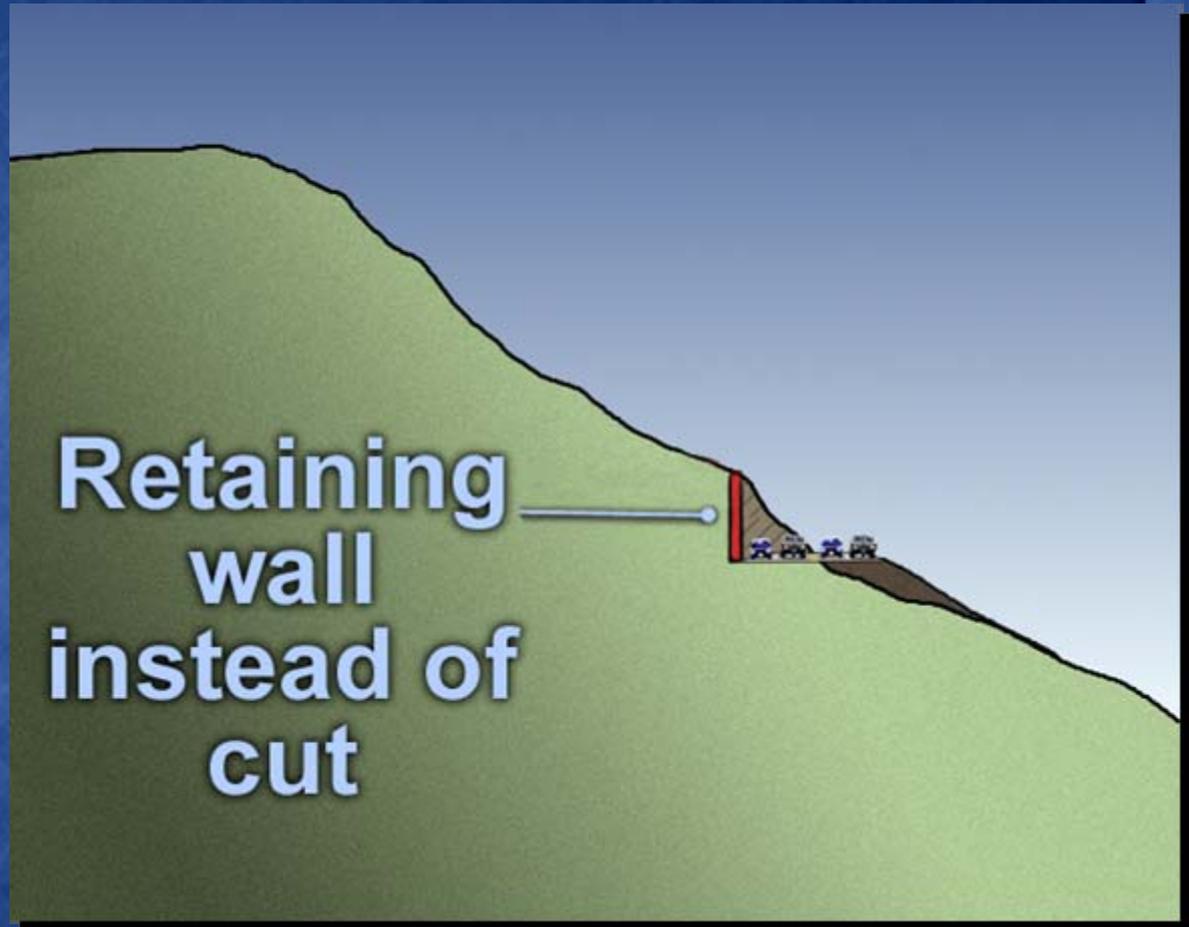
Geotechnical Study

- NCDOT geologists walked all five alternatives
- Mapped exposed geologic features



Geotechnical Study Results

- Cut slopes must be less steep or flatter than originally thought
- Results in greater land disturbance
- Or expensive retaining walls or viaducts



➤ Need for flatter slopes primarily affects alignments marked in green



Downtown
Blowing Rock

US 321

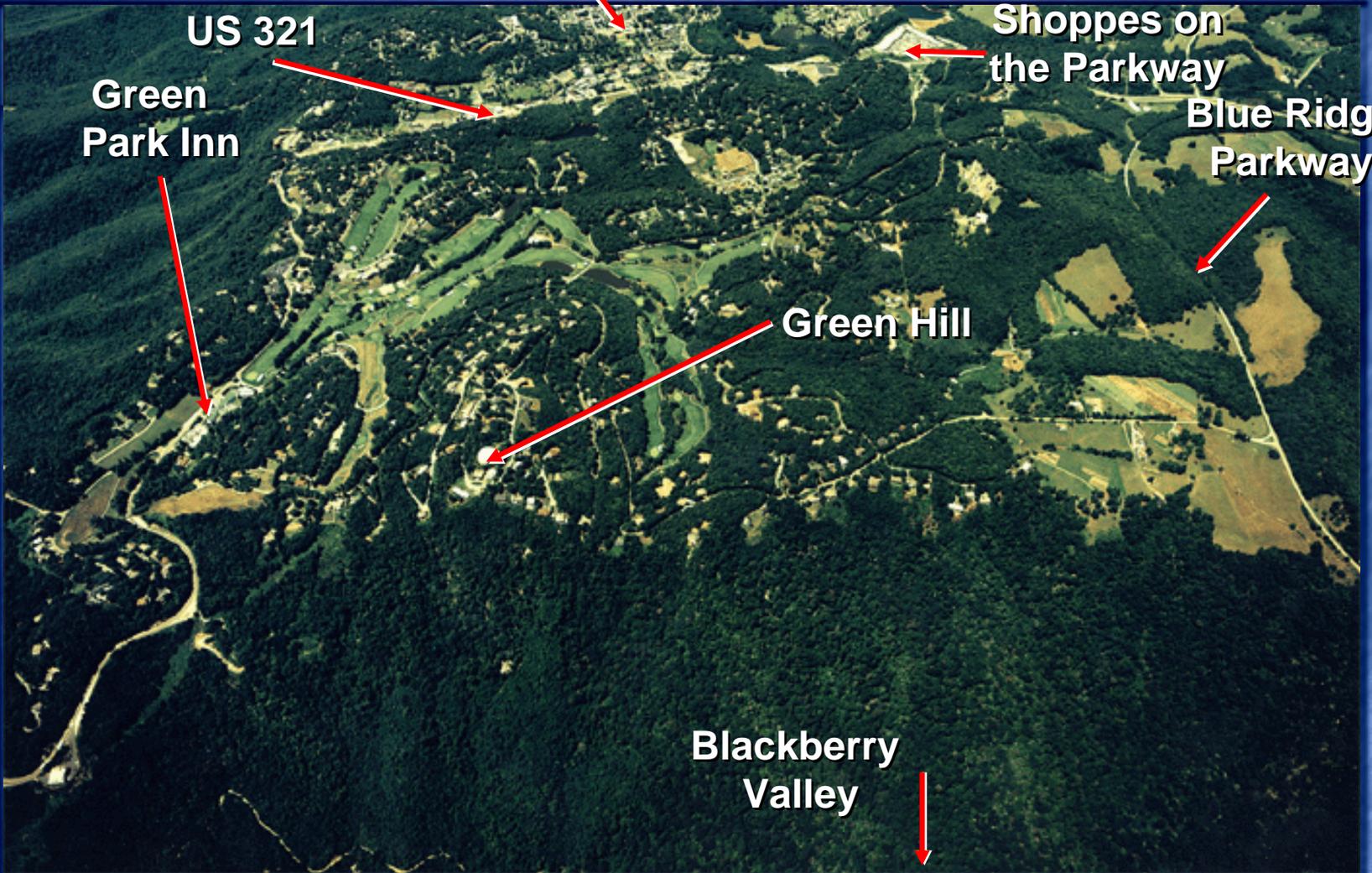
Green
Park Inn

Shoppes on
the Parkway

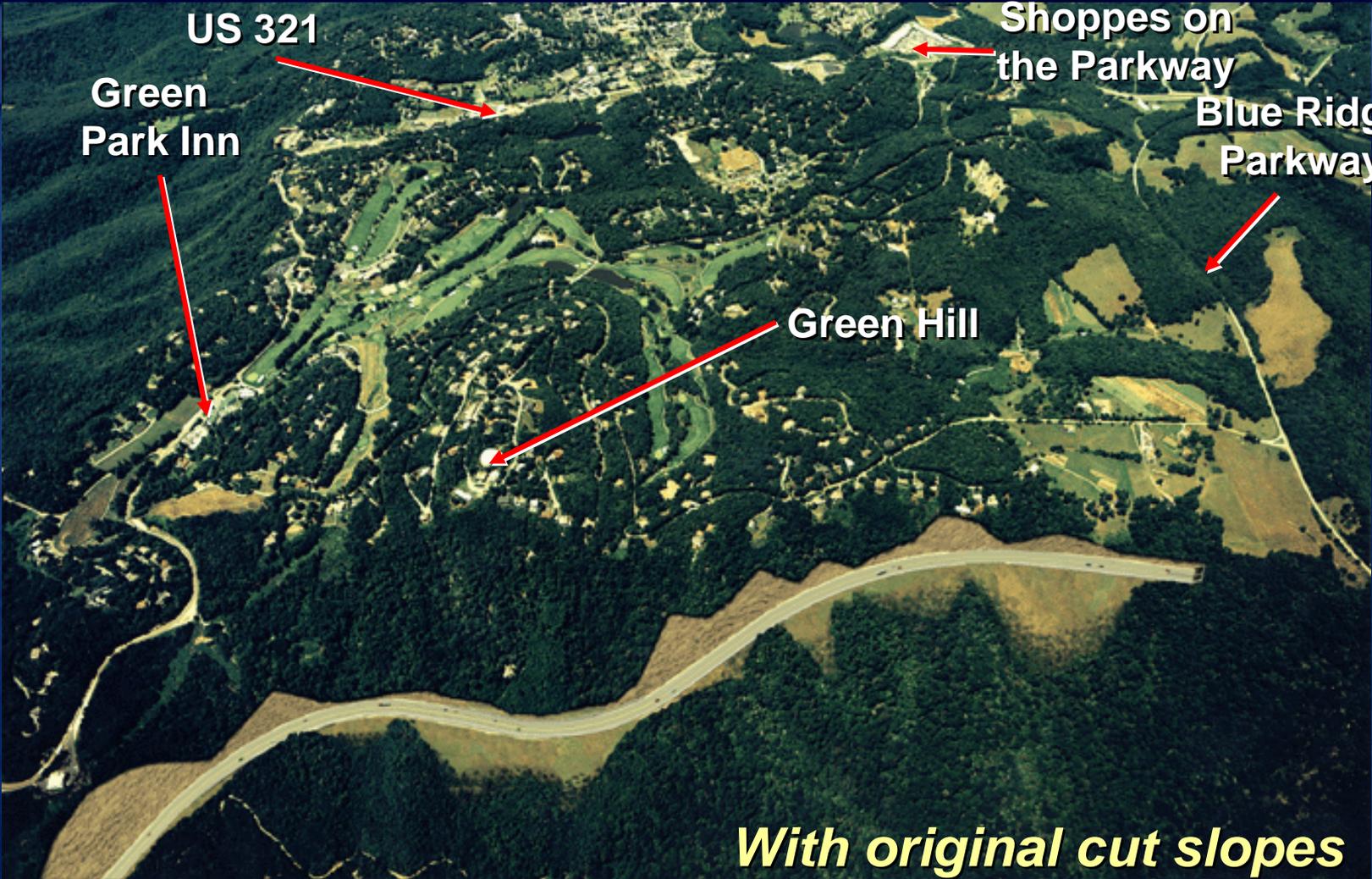
Blue Ridge
Parkway

Green Hill

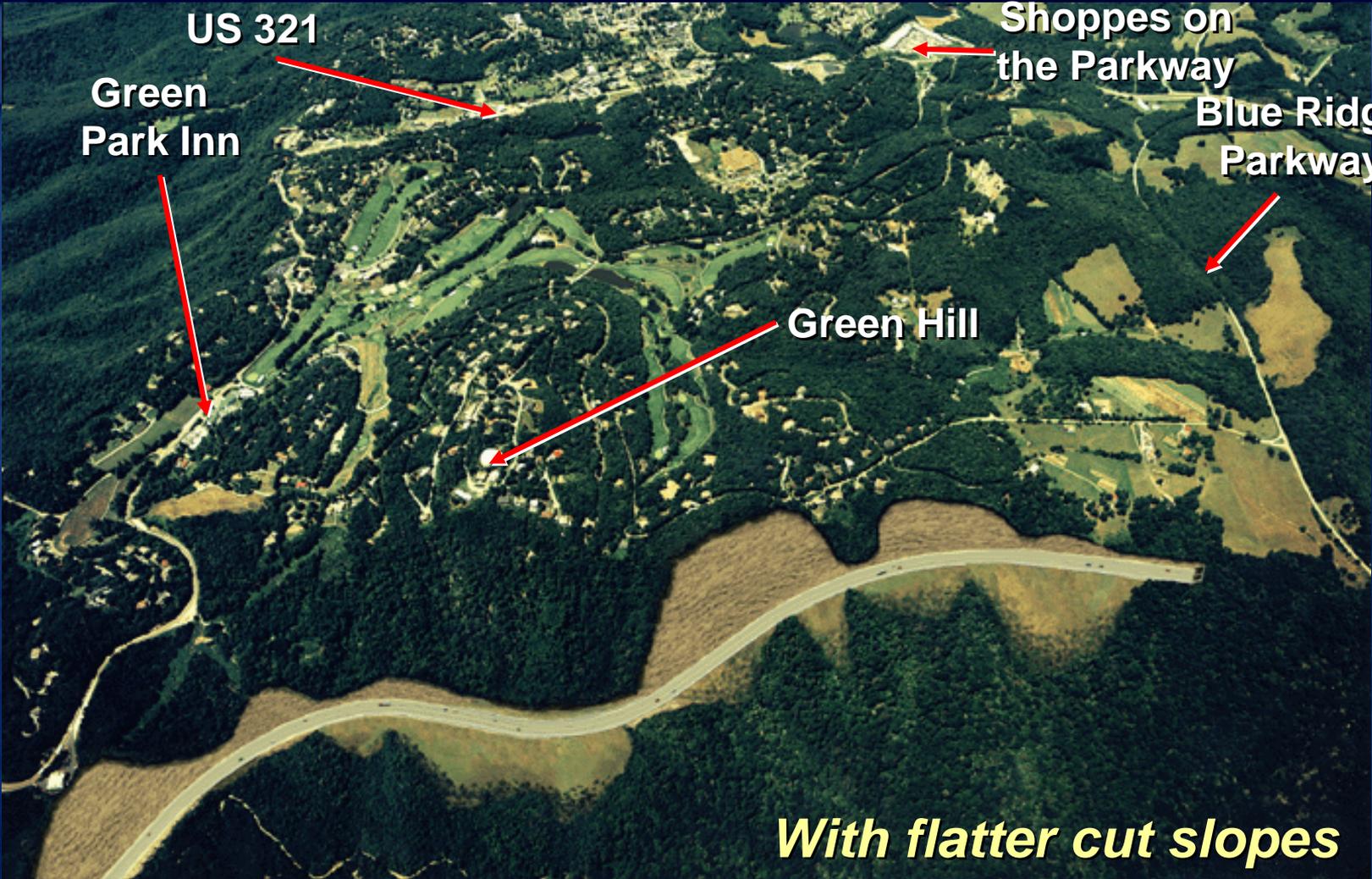
Blackberry
Valley



Bypass 4



Bypass 4



US 321

Green
Park Inn

Shoppes on
the Parkway

Blue Ridge
Parkway

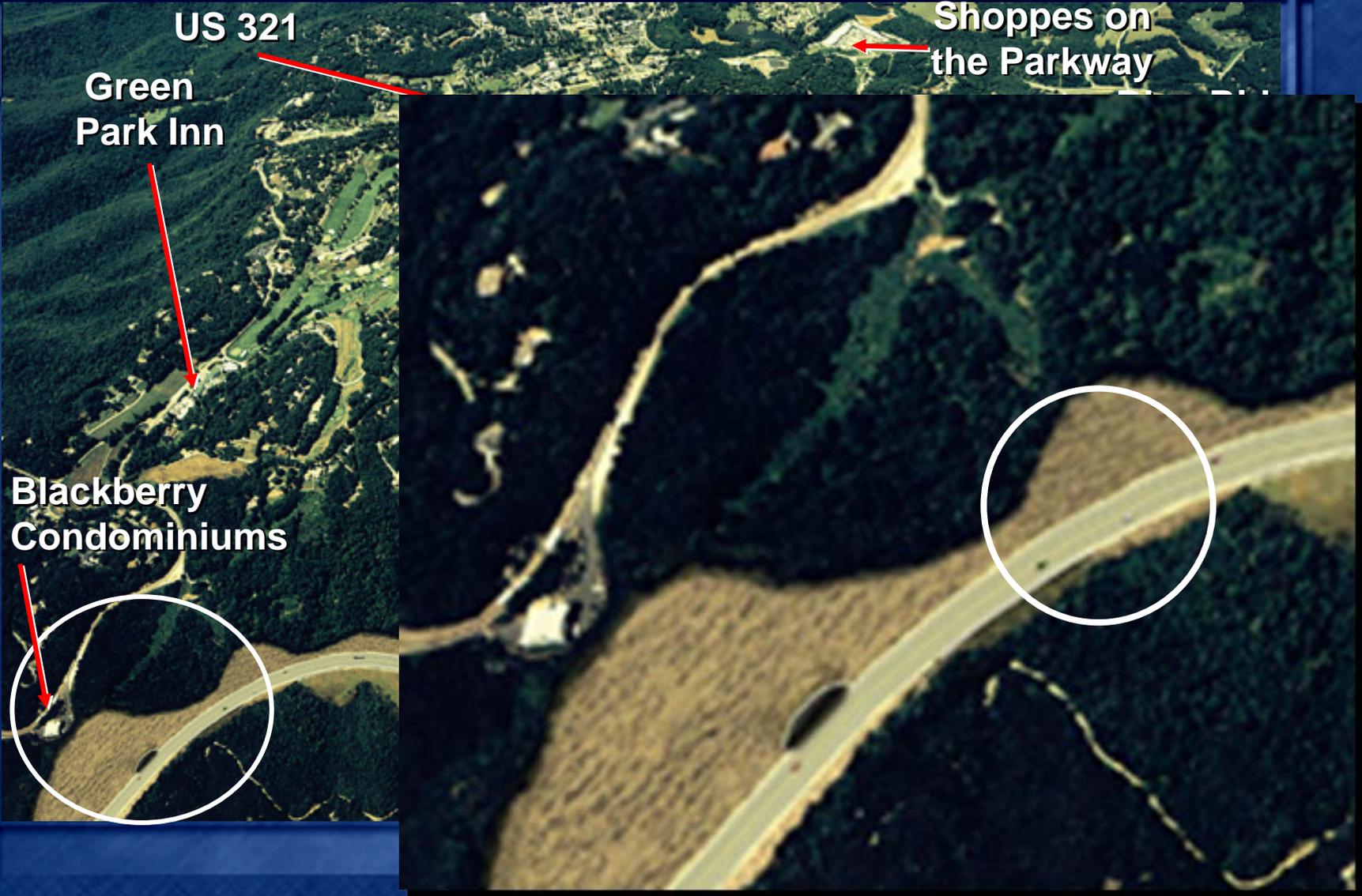
Green Hill

With flatter cut slopes

Bypass 4



Bypass 4



US 321

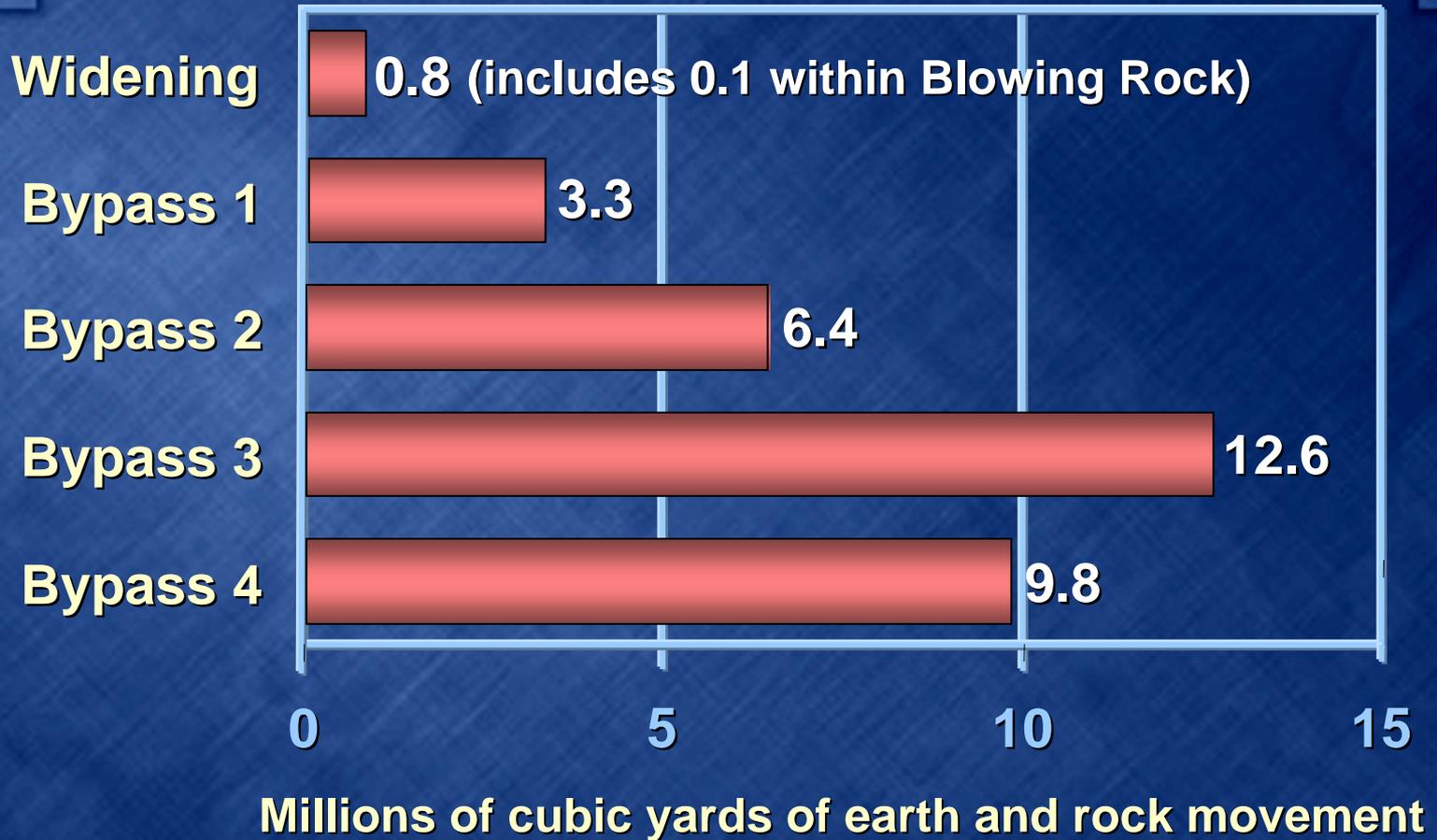
Green
Park Inn

Blackberry
Condominiums

Shoppes on
the Parkway



Earthwork



Cost



Bypass Concerns



What Next?

- Will further study and design for bypass alternatives 2, 3, and 4 result in a bypass project the Department could fund and build?



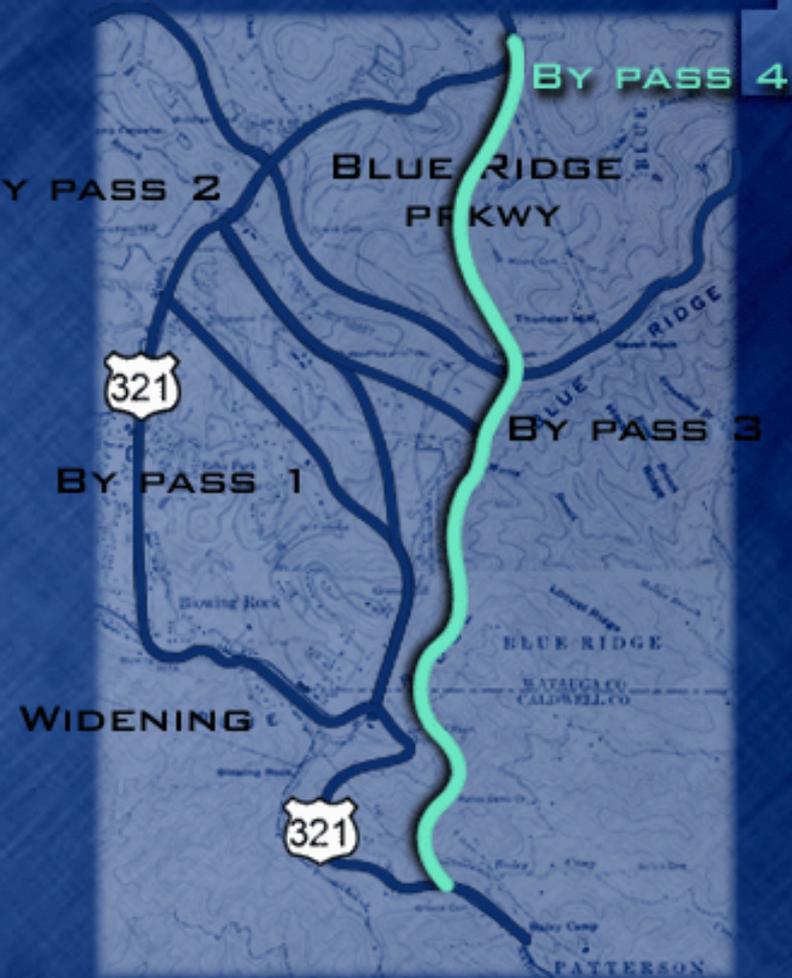
What Next?

➤ Are such studies a prudent use of State funds?



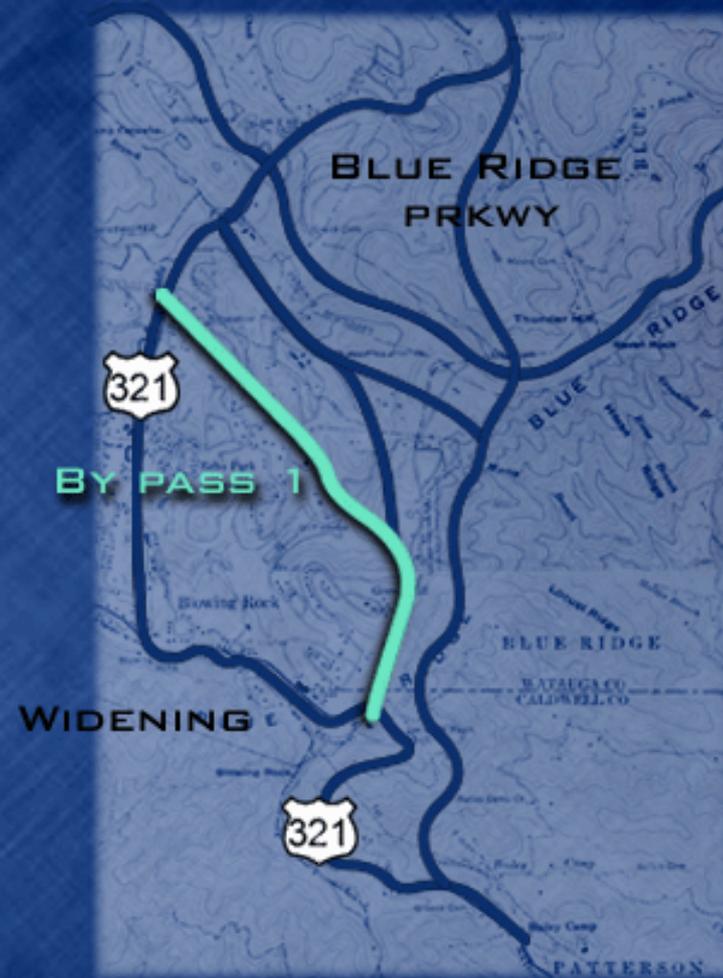
What Next?

➤ Are these alternatives impractical?



What Next?

- The same can be asked of Bypass alternative 1
- But need to evaluate in the project's EIS as a historic resource avoidance alternative



Widening

- Can affect the unique and historic character of Blowing Rock
- Will use a 35 mph speed limit
- Opportunities exist to enhance the widening and make it an asset



Today



Customary Widening



Example of Enhancements























Cost



Enhanced Widening



Draft EIS Alternatives

NCDOT proposes for discussion that:

- EIS studies now focus on the enhanced widening alternative
- Bypass 1 serve as the historic resource avoidance alternative that must be evaluated by Federal law
- Bypasses 2, 3, and 4 be dropped from further consideration

Enhanced Widening

NCDOT would:

- Work with the Town of Blowing Rock to:
 - Develop a construction phasing and management plan
 - Create a widening that is an asset to Blowing Rock

Enhanced Widening

NCDOT will:

- Add historic resource and walkable community experts to the study team
- Fund amenities along the road in recognition of unique and historic character of Blowing Rock



Working Together

We are ready to:

- Move ahead as partners
- Create a showcase project
- Begin construction in 2005

What do you think?

➤ Write a letter:

Norris Tolson

Secretary of Transportation

North Carolina Department of Transportation

PO Box 25201

Raleigh, NC 27611-5201

➤ Call toll-free: 1-877-DOT4YOU(368-4968)

➤ E-mail: BlowingRock321@mail.dot.state.nc.us

➤ World Wide Web:

<http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/BlowingRock321>

By May 10, 1999

PREPARED BY THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF QUADE & DOUGLAS, INC.

