

APPENDIX B7

PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

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1 **Gaston East-West Connector**
2 **STIP #U-3321**
3 **Gaston & Mecklenburg Counties**
4 **Public Hearing**
5 **Forestview High School, Gastonia, NC**
6 **7:00pm June 23, 2009**

7
8
9 **DeWitt:** **Steve DeWitt, Chief Engineer NC Turnpike Authority**
10 **Bass:** **Davis Bass, PBSJ Engineer**
11 **M:** **Male Speaker**
12 **F:** **Female Speaker**
13
14

15 DeWitt: If I could ask you folks to go ahead and take your seats. We'd like to get started.

16 Again, we'd like to go ahead and get started, so if I could ask you to please take
17 your seats and we can go ahead. My name is Steve DeWitt, I am the chief
18 engineer for the North Carolina Turnpike Authority.

19 M: We can't hear you.

20 DeWitt: Can you hear me now? Okay. My name is Steve DeWitt. I am the chief engineer
21 for the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, and we appreciate all of you coming
22 out here tonight. We know this project is of great interest for those of you in the
23 community. We certainly know about this. We know about this. And we are
24 going to talk about this tonight. This is important.

25 This meeting tonight, this public hearing tonight, is your opportunity to
26 voice exactly what you think about the project, about the issues, about the
27 corridor, and anything else that you wish to say about that. And what we are
28 going to do here is go through a brief discussion of the project, make sure you
29 know what the status of it is. We'll talk a little bit about the maps you saw out

30 there to make sure that you have a clarity on what those maps are and what they
31 represent.

32 And then, I think most importantly, is an opportunity for all of you, those
33 of you who wish to, come to the front, speak in the microphone to your
34 community about how you feel about the project. We did have a sign up list out
35 in front. We have roughly 50 people that signed up, and we'll go through that
36 process here in just a moment.

37 Again, this is a public hearing for the Gaston East-West Connector, known
38 locally as the Garden Parkway. What I want to do tonight is talk about the
39 process, what the rules so to speak are that we will follow tonight, give a general
40 project overview, let you have an opportunity for comments, and certainly for you
41 to view maps to give you more sense on what the details are.

42 The introductions, normally we like to introduce a certain group of folks.
43 This is a large audience tonight. We choose not to do that. Normally we
44 recognize local elected officials. We do some of that, but I am not going to do
45 that tonight because of the size and because of the number of folks that are signed
46 up for comments. So we might—wanted to get to that, give you the opportunity
47 to do what we are here for tonight, so we are going to skip that part of it.

48 The ground rules, and this is important, again, this is your opportunity to
49 speak in public to us and to your friends and associates in the community about
50 what you think about this project. There are pros and cons—we're not standing
51 up here deciding what you know is exactly correct. We want to hear all of the

52 issues that you have, and no matter what they are, they are very important for us
53 to hear those.

54 This is not a debate. I will not engage you in some conversation where we
55 agree or disagree about what you are saying. You come up, say what you want to
56 say, and then you will sit down and that is how this goes tonight. If there are
57 some very general questions that we can answer, I do have my technical staff with
58 me here. If we can answer those general questions directly, succinctly, and
59 shortly we will, and we won't get into long, drawn-out explanations about traffic
60 data and stuff like that. If you do have those detailed questions, certainly we had
61 an opportunity earlier today; you can come back tomorrow, the next night, we'll
62 have these maps out here, come and talk to the folks that work with me, talk about
63 those details that are important to you. If you don't get an opportunity tonight or
64 this week, and if you've got one of our citizen summaries, and I'll talk about that
65 here in a minute, our website is there, the email address, it is those kinds of things,
66 we want your comments. We want them whether you think we are going to like it
67 or not, we want to hear it.

68 No debate among the audience, most of the audience—if someone comes
69 up here and talks we expect obviously proper decorum when they are up here.
70 Appreciate them as you would anybody else. Be polite with that. We do have a
71 three-minute time limit. We'll ask you to come up. We'll have a time-keeper. I
72 am not sure where my time-keeper is. Jennifer will find my time-keeper before
73 we start.

74 Again, I already mentioned the sign up list. If you've not signed up, and
75 you are listening tonight and you feel compelled to come up and talk, once we
76 have exhausted the list of those that have signed up, you'll have the opportunity to
77 come up and speak at the microphone. Just so you know, these comments are
78 being transcribed verbatim. We are writing down everything you say. They
79 become a part of the administrative record for this project. More importantly they
80 become part of the decision-making process for this project. So your comments
81 will be recorded verbatim.

82 So very briefly I want to go through a general project overview, talk about
83 the purpose, description of the alternatives, all of those colors you saw on those
84 maps out there. We will talk about what a draft EIS is, what it means for this
85 project in terms of its milestones. We'll talk a little bit about the recommended
86 alternative and then we'll touch on the issues of right-of-way, relocation, for those
87 of you who may not have had a chance yet to ask questions.

88 In 2005 this project became a project to be studied by the Turnpike
89 Authority. The history of this project comes from the local community. It was
90 looked at, or first promoted so to speak in 1989 with a local transportation
91 planning organization. So its basis, if you will, is at the local community and
92 community leaders. It was studied for many years by DOT at various stages. It
93 came to the Turnpike Authority in 2005, as a realization of the funding to build a
94 project in any other way other than tolls was not going to happen.

95 The project study area is the area that we study in great detail to come up
96 with the alignments, all of these colors that you see. We use a series of data to
97 determine wetlands and streams and home impacts and so on. It is South of I-85,
98 west of 485, you can see the boundary on the west side. The project endpoints,
99 this project goes from 485 in the east to I-85 on the west. That is the project that
100 we are studying.

101 A cross-section of this facility, it is an interstate grade facility, so it will
102 look like 485 so to speak. In the environmental document, which is what we are
103 all here to talk about, we show three lanes in each direction of our initial
104 construction. Most likely it will only be two lanes in each direction for a variety
105 of reasons.

106 The project funding, this is not a typical, as I think you know, a funded
107 project through DOT. The bulk of the funding comes through toll revenue bonds.
108 They are municipal bonds sold literally on Wall Street just like the City of
109 Charlotte is selling municipal bonds. As a state agency we will sell those same
110 kinds of bonds, backed by the toll revenue.

111 A TIFIA loan is a loan that comes out of USDOT, very similar to a college
112 loan. It has great flexibility of how you pay it back, and the interest rates tend to
113 be lower than traditional financing. This is something USDOT does to help get
114 projects like this off the ground. State Transportation Improvement funds, these
115 are the funds you typically would see out of NCDOT. There are no funds through
116 the State TIP that are earmarked for construction or right-of-way, anything else

117 other than project development for this project. So when we talk about the
118 funding issue, when we talk about the 321 to I-85 issue, there is no money that we
119 expect to come from DOT under traditional sources of this road. But that is a
120 future discussion.

121 The gap appropriation of the General Assembly last year, I guess, passed
122 legislation on gap funding for a series of toll roads across the state. This gap
123 funding is the amount needed above what the toll revenue is expecting. The
124 amount that the General Assembly agreed to for this project, is \$35 million a year
125 for 39 years. These bonds have a term of roughly 39 years. So that is the length
126 of time that we are talking about and the amount of money that has come out of
127 the General Assembly that is published on this project.

128 Given the funding stream and the many issues with that, I think all of you
129 know that this issue is here. Right now, the way things look, the way our
130 financial plan is and the details that we have of this, it appears that we have
131 sufficient funding to build the project with the financing package that I talked
132 about, from 485 on the east side to 321, which is roughly three-quarters of the
133 way through the project. So our discussion about what the impact on 321 is,
134 when that is open to 321, we've done a tremendous amount of traffic analysis to
135 determine what the impact will be as you head north particularly up through
136 Gastonia. What our numbers are showing, we will be glad to share that data with
137 you if someone is interested in seeing that. There is a very, very minimal impact
138 above Stagecoach Road, if you are familiar with the area, based on what opening

139 to 321 does. So again we can show you that detail in great length tonight. We've
140 done a lot of analysis because of the issues and your concerns that have come out
141 of the community.

142 How much will the tolls cost? Again as we go through our final design
143 and looking at all of the capital costs and the financial plan and so on, the actual
144 toll rate will come out of that process. But right now it looks like most likely the
145 toll revenue or the toll price will be somewhere between 10 to 20 cents a mile.
146 There will be a series of toll collection points across this 20-mile roadway where
147 those tolls will be collected. We will talk about how they will be collected here in
148 just a moment.

149 I think I mentioned this, but once the tolls are paid off, the road becomes a
150 free road. When the bonds are paid off, the toll road becomes a free road and just
151 like any other free road we have in North Carolina.

152 The tolls will be collected through a totally electronic process. If you're
153 used to toll booths and those kind of things, for instance in the Northeast, you will
154 not see toll booths here in North Carolina. It will all be electronic. You go
155 through a transponder that sits on your windshield. You'll have an account set up
156 with us and it will automatically debit that account as you go under the gantry. It
157 has a reader that will tell who you are and you will be charged accordingly. If
158 you don't have a transponder, high-speed cameras will take a picture of your
159 license plate and through DMV records we will send you a bill through that
160 process. We will have reciprocity with other states, so that if someone is say from

161 Virginia and they ride down this road, they don't have a transponder, we take a
162 picture of their license plate, send them a bill. If they don't pay that bill there will
163 be enforcement, reciprocity from other states to ensure that happens.

164 What is a draft EIS or EIS? You've heard a lot about this. An EIS is an
165 Environmental Impact Statement. This is a process that we must follow. This is a
166 federal law.

167 M: Can't hear you. Not loud enough.

168 DeWitt: Okay.

169 M: Speak up.

170 DeWitt: You've heard a lot I think about the draft EIS because that is the stage that we are
171 at right now. There are several stages to this. I'll talk about this, but this is
172 important because this is a major milestone in development of this project.
173 Environmental impact process follows federal laws. It's the National
174 Environmental Policy Act, and because there are federal funds involved in this
175 project, we follow what they call NEPA, National Environmental Policy Act.

176 What is a draft EIS? People have asked this question all night. What is
177 the purpose of this project? And what a draft EIS does, or a EIS, Environmental
178 Impact Statement, the first thing you'll notice is it asks the question, what is the
179 purpose, what is the need of this project? As that purpose and need is defined up-
180 front, the environmental impact process has you go through a very, very detailed,
181 very technical process to show the fact that the purpose and the need of the
182 project is there, the details are there, the justification is there, and so on, to build

183 this project or any different project. So we define is the project needed, we define
184 where the project goes based on all of the maps and the kinds of details you saw
185 out here in the hall, we look at reasonable alternatives. We have looked at why I-
186 85 comes up off it—we have looked widening I-85, we have looked at mass
187 transit options. We've looked at all other reasonable options to what this road
188 would do in terms of transportation improvement for the system of the area that
189 we are talking about.

190 And a very important part of it is just like tonight, concerns come to us
191 and maybe we haven't heard, it is our obligation under NEPA to address those
192 concerns. That is something that we have to do. But more importantly, it is
193 something we want to do as part of good stewards of North Carolina and doing
194 what the General Assembly and others have asked us to do.

195 Who is involved in this project? This is not the Turnpike Authority as I
196 said earlier, who picked this project. There are a lot of people in the background,
197 and organizations that are part of this. The Turnpike Authority is taking the lead
198 because that is where the funding primarily is coming from. NCDOT, the Federal
199 Highway Administration, are both 'tri-partners' if you will with us in this process.
200 This really is a Federal Highway Administration document that we are doing in
201 essence, as partners with them. Many others are involved, environmental
202 agencies, the Corps of Engineers, other state agencies that are concerned about the
203 water quality and so on, are all part of this project development process.

204 Other really key folks that are part of this are the local transportation
205 leaders in your area. Again, that is where this project came from. That is why we
206 are standing up here tonight to talk to you, because we've been asked to look at
207 this project as a result of work that has been done for almost 20 years. Everybody
208 else who has interest in this project is involved. You all are stakeholders. Your
209 opinion matters, whether we agree with it or not, whether we like it or not, your
210 opinion is a very important part of this process and we have to take it into account
211 and we will address it as we go forward. The traveling public, elected officials,
212 anybody else that has any interest at all in this project has a right to comment
213 through this process and we have to take that information into account.

214 The alternatives that we've talked about, I've already touched on this a
215 little bit, but new location alternatives. You've seen a variety of things that are on
216 the maps here. Widen existing roadways, like I-85—there is a lot of detail in this
217 draft EIS talks about that, looks at that, analyzes that, and goes through what we
218 call a screening process to screen out further consideration. Mass transit, multi-
219 modal alternatives, again I've talked about this. Other, what we might call minor
220 transportation improvements, enhancement of signalization, turn lanes in key
221 areas, those kinds of things are all part of those, but as we go through that
222 screening process again, with a long-term—and that is a key part of this—long-
223 term transportation enhancement in this area, it appears the project is justifiable
224 based on the work we've done under the EIS.

225 We started out with 90 preliminary alternatives or alignments that you see
226 on this map. Back in roughly 1996, I think, the local transportation group pulled
227 together a citizen advisory committee and came up with a recommendation for
228 this alignment. We have looked at that alignment very hard and we'll talk about
229 that here in just a minute. Here you can see the corridor that was recommended
230 by that advisory committee.

231 We reduced this down now to what we call 12 detailed study alternatives.
232 Again, all of the colored maps that you see out on the walls up there, and you can
233 see where that citizen's advisory alignment is in relation to those. As a matter of
234 fact it is very close to what we have recommended as the alternative, given where
235 we are.

236 The one area that does depart from that substantially is on the 485 side, as
237 you come across the Catawba River. If you are familiar with the power station,
238 which I am sure most if not all of you are, that alignment that was recommended
239 by the local advisory committee in fact went right through that power plant. That
240 is just sort of an impossibility. So in order to miss that, we looked at options both
241 north and south of that and based on our analysis, the northern route is the most
242 appropriate given all of the balance and the many issues that are here on this
243 corridor.

244 These detailed study alternatives are in all of those colored things that you
245 saw out there on the walls, are evaluated in great detail, very technical detail,
246 looking at all of the human issues, the physical issues, the cultural issues that are

247 out there, and the natural environment are all part of this process. I won't go
248 through this whole slide, but again we look at anything of any note out through
249 any corridor as we develop a transportation project to make sure that we've
250 looked at it and addressed it, and tried to pick the best fit alignment. This is the
251 spinning of all of these things we possibly can to bring a balance to the alignment
252 that comes out as the final transportation solution.

253 Berewick District Park is important because it is a park that has special
254 protections under federal law. Under our recommended alternative, we do in fact
255 have a very slight impact on that park, but it is one we certainly would like your
256 comments on as you make comments on this project.

257 The alternative selection process—and this really brings us to where we
258 are tonight—it is a recommendation that is made based on all the technical
259 evaluations and so forth that we've done as a part of this process. The public
260 hearing comments tonight and two nights from now when we do this again are all
261 a very important part of this process. Based on the comments that we hear, we
262 will either reaffirm that the recommendation that we made so far is in fact the best
263 fit given all the issues, or if the issues are substantial, we will go back and look
264 and possibly pick another segment or segments as part of this study process.

265 So the important key points I think, some gentleman up here just asked me
266 earlier, this is not a vote of the people, this is not a vote of the people in terms of
267 which corridor or which segment to pick, it is a very detailed, very technical
268 process that we go through to get where we are. It is not a political decision.

269 There is no one in Raleigh saying, "Pick this route." That is not the way this
270 works. We are working under federal law, and it is challengeable, or very well
271 could be challenged. We've got to follow the letter of the law and that is what we
272 are doing here. It is based on sound, defensible, technical information. If we
273 stopped in our tracks right now and somebody picked this project up 10 years
274 from now, unless there was massive growth in the area or something else that
275 would change it, the next technical study group that picked up this project would
276 go through the same process and come up with the same evaluation and
277 determination on this route that we have. It has got to be defensible and it is
278 very, very technical.

279 You should have picked up when you came in tonight a citizen's
280 summary. What that summary is, is I'll call it an executive version of the draft
281 EIS, and it is a very succinct, summarized version of what you see in here. Of
282 course, if you don't know an EIS is like four inches thick. There is a great
283 amount of detail in there. And what we tried to do is give you the highlights of
284 that so you can see the corridor, the recommendations, and other elements of the
285 project. Certainly, if you have any questions farther than that, I'll get into that
286 tonight, or you can contact us through our website.

287 What this impact table does—it's in the middle of your handout—it sort of
288 lays out in a high level, gives a lot of technical detail in the background here, but
289 it lays out at a high level all of the issues on those all various alternates as we're
290 starting on this project. And you can go across it and see the number of

291 residences that are impacted—the wetlands, the streams, all those elements—and
292 that gives you some sense of how we try to weave our way through here and pick
293 a route that is in balance of all the issues in the corridor. Again, I think most of
294 you are aware of this, our recommendation at this point is what we call
295 Alternative Nine. And if you haven't seen the maps out there, when you go out
296 there you'll see the purple, the orange, and the purple, if you looked at the colors
297 on the map. I will reiterate and re-emphasize that this is recommended alternate
298 only at this point. We'll hear your comments. We're here to through the process
299 I've already talked about.

300 The right-of-way process this question has come up a lot tonight, and
301 rightfully so. There is a very, very intricate process to go through. Again, it is
302 embedded in federal law. We have to follow certain regulations under what to
303 call the new format. We will contact you if you're going to be impacted, and a
304 right-of-way agent will come and sit down with you, and they'll show you the
305 details of the project. At the right time we will do an appraisal [AUDIO
306 INTERFERENCE]. We'll fix that.

307 The right-of-way agent will contact you. We will hire a private appraiser,
308 just like you would if you were going to sell or buy a piece of property. Private
309 appraisers will come and appraise your property, and we will offer you fair
310 market value for that property. And there's a lot of detail that's going on behind
311 that, but we pay that fair market value. We will pay for things like relocation
312 fees, and so on. But appraisal is made on current market value, so whatever the

313 market is at the time that the right-of-way is purchased, that's what the appraisal
314 is made on.

315 If you are a renter in somebody else's home, we will treat you just like if
316 you owned that house, in terms of relocating you and paying your expenses to
317 move, and the issues that go with that. We have an obligation, morally as well as
318 legally, to explain all the issues to you about relocation, and we certainly will do
319 that when the time comes. We will even pay for just compensation and market
320 value and the elements of that. We do provide relocation assistance for those that
321 would like to have that. We do what we are obligated, again both morally and
322 legally, to provide you comparable housing. We will help you find a home of
323 comparable value that you can purchase or rent, or whatever the cases may be, as
324 part of the process. Moving expenses are paid by us as part of this, and we take
325 into account other things, like your increase in mortgage, interest, and those kinds
326 of things, as you go from a home that you may own today and go into one that
327 may be different from whatever your financial situation is at the time.

328 Again, we want your participation tonight. We're here for a reason.
329 You're here to voice your opinion; we want that opinion, you can come up to the
330 microphone tonight. There's a box outside where you can drop your comments,
331 and we hope you have picked up one of those sheets. I think we ran out of the
332 comment papers or forms. If you want to fill out just a piece of paper, or
333 anything, we can take those comments, or you can send us an email, or call us or
334 come up and talk to us afterward. We are hoping for comments back by July 21st

335 so we can continue on with this process, so we would ask anybody who has an
336 opinion or comments to provide those prior to that day.

337 What happens now? Once this week is finished, we'll go back and we'll
338 go through all the details and listen to the transcript, comments, and so on, and by
339 late 2009, identify the preferred, call it preferred alternative. So we'll go through
340 the recommended to a preferred alternative, and we'll have the final EIS, which is
341 the next step draft, final, etc. We'll have that final draft EIS ready. In 2010, a
342 record of decision is targeted towards October of next year. And we'll begin
343 construction assuming all financing is in place, and things moving ahead in early
344 2011, with opening day some time in 2014.

345 And with that I'd like to introduce David Bass. David is one of our
346 engineers with PBS&J. He's going to go through a brief map review with you, so
347 you know more about the maps that you see out in the hallways.

348 Bass: Thank you, Mr. DeWitt. I'm going to make my way on this stage here so I can
349 point out a couple of things to you. To begin with, this is an extremely large
350 project; it is 20 miles long, from beginning to end. So what we've done is we've
351 tried to divide the project up into area maps, which is the western area maps,
352 central area maps, and eastern area maps.

353 Before we get into the maps, I kind of want to go over a couple of things.
354 We have 12 alternatives still under consideration. Each one of those segments in
355 each area can be divided, as almost like pieces to connect a road from beginning
356 to end. Some of the figures and shapes and line styles that you'll see on the map

357 are some of these listed here. Some of the more important ones are proposed right
358 away, shown in red. Existing buildings will be shaded in sort of a light brown
359 color. And then the proposed pavement is sort of a gray pavement color, and the
360 proposed bridges will be shown as this kind of red shape.

361 What some of that looks like on the map, this is a sort of just a sample of
362 what is looks like. Some of the confusion that I have experienced in explaining
363 some of the maps for some folks this evening is that right-of-way line is shown in
364 red; the corridor boundary here is shown in a colored shade. This is the right-of-
365 way that would actually be needed for the project, not the study boundary.

366 Starting on the east end of the project, at 485, in Mecklenburg County, just
367 south of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport, they have a project going on.
368 The West Boulevard project is going to relocate that a little bit to the south, in
369 association with their roadway construction. Two interchange options are shown
370 at 485, and both of those continue to the west and come to Dixie River Road,
371 where we have an interchange location at both alternatives. Then our first
372 opportunity to go over the Catawba River, we have bridges that span that, going
373 to the north of the Allen Steam Station, and going to the south. At Southpoint
374 Road we have an interchange going to the south, and there is another option up
375 here to the north.

376 Picking up where we just left, it continues across the south fork of the
377 Catawba River, it bridges. Then at South New Hope Road there are interchanges
378 at three different locations. Then they continue until the end segments on the

379 eastern half of the project. Beginning the central area maps, we basically have
380 two corridors. Midway between they criss-cross. We have an interchange here at
381 Union Road, right here's the school where we are having the meeting today We
382 have two interchange options there as well.

383 Moving along to the west, we have interchanges at Bud Wilson; two
384 locations for consideration there. Then at Robinson Road, we have two
385 interchanges for consideration. And then all those corridors come together at 321
386 with the interchange locations at two locations. That concludes the central area
387 maps.

388 M: Can't hear you.

389 Bass: On the western side of the project, it takes a hard veer to the north. We have one
390 interchange location here at Lewis Road. The other corridors continue to the
391 north, starting the interchange locations at the top of the slide at Linwood Road.
392 A little bit closer, looking at Linwood Road, we have three interchange locations
393 there, as well. Some of these involve some relocation of Linwood Road. And
394 then, completing the western area maps, they come together with two interchange
395 options at 29-74, and then completing the entire road with interchange locations at
396 85.

397 To sort of summarize some of the alternatives that we just looked at.
398 There's the color scheme that we just went over, and then highlighting the
399 preferred design Alternative Number Nine, which is the pink, orange, and the
400 lavender colors. And now I'll turn it back over to Mr. DeWitt.

401 [TECHNICAL COMMENTS]

402 DeWitt: What we're going to do now is take that opportunity for you to come to the front
403 and use the microphone. And I'll actually turn it around so you can speak, if you
404 wish, to your neighbors. And we have a list, as I said, of about 50 people who've
405 signed up. And what I'm going to do is call out probably the first three names, so
406 the other two can be prepared to come up. It's a large crowd tonight [AUDIO
407 INTERFERENCE], and you may have a hard time filtering through the aisles, so
408 just bear with us.

409 We have been advised by the school that we've got to be out of here by 11
410 o'clock tonight. If for some reason we don't get to you, you'll be first on the list
411 Thursday night when we do this again. Again, I want to remind you that your
412 comments are being recorded and transcribed and become part of our project
413 record. And when you come up, if you would very loudly say your name and
414 give us your address, so we know who you are when we transcribe your
415 comments. So, the first three: Paul Imrie is first, Harriet Harrison-Armstrong [ph],
416 and Harding Stowe. If you could come in that order.

417 [TECHNICAL COMMENTS]

418 Paul Imrie: (Paul Imrie, 7017 Lakeside Point, Belmont, NC, 28012) I'm speaking this
419 t001 evening on behalf of the SECC, or the Southeast Connector Coalition, which is a
420 group of citizens concerned about several different proposed routes for the
421 Garden Parkway crossing the Catawba and Southfork Rivers. During the months
422 preceding the release of the draft of the environmental impact statement, the SEC

423 [ph] made several environmental safety and economic concerns known to the
424 NCTA and local elected officials. The SECC is grateful that these concerns seem
425 to have been thoughtfully considered in the preliminary route selection by the
426 NCTA. During this public involvement phase of the project, we wish to reiterate
427 our continued concerns over the safety issues around the steam fog situation, and
428 the fly ash drift hazard. Additionally, the increased negative environmental
429 impacts in the southern crossings, as defined by the River Keeper and other
430 groups, need to remain critical points of consideration as this proposal moves
431 forward. In conclusion, the SECC wants to thank those involved for their
432 technical and in-depth analysis of the numerous route options. The SECC, as an
433 organization, does not officially support or oppose the Garden Parkway. The
434 project itself will stand or fall based on its own economic, social and
435 environmental merits. Thank you, and good evening. I forgot, Paul 7017
436 Lakeside Point, and that's a Belmont mailing address.
437 Dewitt: Thank you. Our time-keepers are, there's one right there, there's one right here.
438 They have a card. When they hit that two-minute mark, they'll show you you've
439 got one minute left. And, because of the number of folks that want to talk, we
440 really ask you to limit your time to three minutes. The next name is Harriet
441 Harrison-Armstrong, followed by Harding Stowe.
442 Armstrong: (Harriet Harrison Armstrong, PO Box 468, Belmont, NC, 28012) I am Harriet
443 t002 Harrison-Armstrong. After 20 years plus, the toll road has finally been dropped
444 on us.

445 [TECHNICAL COMMENTS]

446 Armstrong: I have been against, I have been against it the first time I learned about it. Our
447 family has been reared at our home place for over three generations. I have the
448 deed dated 1800. We lived through the Depression and had property, and we
449 worked for our food, and we got along real well. What can you do if we have
450 another depression? Do you have property so that you can raise your food? It
451 could happen again. It's not impossible, and remember, if you will remember it, I
452 cannot understand why the older generation are chosen as the—chosen for
453 destruction of their homes and farms to be uprooted, and their properties close by
454 has recently been bought. No one living on it, not even a house.

455 What have we done to deserve this treatment in our last days? We are
456 really unsettled, upset. You are really upsetting a lot of good people, and dividing
457 our community down. Down where Bethelgin It is only two miles to South
458 Carolina line, and takes about a mile to go shopping, down where the Bethlegin
459 used to be, at the intersection of 274 and 49. Not only has the Gastonia just,
460 there's a lot of expensive homes built on the other, down below us and the people
461 will go to South Carolina to shop, because it's dividing our communities in two,
462 in Belmont and on 274. I have more to say, but I'll get that later, I'll get it later to
463 you. Thank you.

464 [APPLAUSE]

465 DeWitt: Thank you very much for your comments. Harding Stowe? Harding Stowe? Ok,
466 the next three names are Tim Paschall, Tim Gause, and Alex Hall.

467 [TECHNICAL COMMENTS]

468 Paschall: (Address not provided) My name is Tim Paschall. I live at 3709 Princeton
469 t003 Drive, in Gastonia. I've been a resident of Gaston County and Gastonia since
470 1985. Over the past 24 years, I've come to love our community and participated
471 in various activities that have moved our county forward. We've realized a lot of
472 positive growth over this time period, in our region, and we've grown and
473 prospered, even in spite of tough economic times.

474 In order for segments, all segments of Gaston County to continue to grow
475 and prosper in a healthy manner, we need this connection across the Catawba
476 River. We enjoy a good quality of life in Gaston County. However, this new
477 road, without this new road, air quality will likely continue to deteriorate at a
478 more rapid pace. Congestion on I-85 is a problem nearly every day, and it's
479 going to continue to worsen and become more dangerous.

480 While I'm supportive of mass transit alternatives, such options will not
481 solve the challenges we are now facing and continue to face in the proceeding
482 future. It's normal for major roadways to be built in phases. A quick look back at
483 history reveals that I-85 took 13 years to complete across North Carolina, and the
484 part through Gaston County took five years before it was continuously linked in
485 1961 and 1965. My understanding is that the current plan for the parkway is
486 terminating at highway 321. And while this is not ideal, the ultimate goal is the
487 parkway to go by I-85. It's positive first step that should immediately improve

488 traffic patterns and relieve current congestion, as well as shorter driving times
489 between southern Gaston County and Mecklenburg County.

490 I'm hopeful that the appropriate authorities will move ahead as soon as
491 possible to secure the needed right-of-ways between Highway 321 and Interstate
492 85 so that the entire parkway can be completed in a timely manner. I'm certainly
493 sensitive to the homeowners that will be directly impacted, and moving out of
494 one's home and having to relocate is a burdensome process; however, I believe
495 that there's a fair process in place for those directly impacted to be adequately
496 compensated for their property. I respect and appreciate those who're directly
497 impacted and are willing to support the construction of the Garden Parkway.

498 For the good of the entire community, the Garden Parkway needs to move
499 forward now. We should not let this opportunity pass us by, as it may never be
500 available again. Therefore, I certainly hope that we will build the Garden
501 Parkway. Thank you.

502 [APPLAUSE/BOOS]

503 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Tim Gause followed by Alex Hall and Joel Long.

504 Gause: (Tim Gause, 108 Old Dam Way, Cramerton, NC, 28032) My name is Tim Gause.
505 t004

506 I'm the public policy chair for Gaston Regional Chamber, and I am speaking on
507 behalf of the Chamber this evening. First, let me express appreciation from our
508 community, for the depth of the information sessions and the opportunities for
509 other comments. You've been very thorough. A project of this magnitude has
far-reaching lifestyle implications to the community. We don't build roads every

510 day that traverse the county, and we're certainly not accustomed to the idea of
511 paying a small fee to travel a road. So we needed these meetings and these
512 forums to learn and to understand more about our options.

513 We need to recognize that we live and we work in a very different
514 economic era that is more fees-driven; you pay for what you use. And the idea
515 that other travelers passing through Gaston County can help us pay for the
516 connector, so local traveling can be easier and more efficient, is a good
517 investment. So what are the options? Widening I-85 is not an option. We would
518 face 10 years of construction, delays, and lane closings, not to mention that
519 there's no funding for the completion of an I-85 widening. Right now, as we
520 speak, every chamber in the region is pushing to get the 1950s vintage Yadkin
521 River bridge replaced, and there's not enough funding to do that. There is a plan,
522 however, to finance the Garden Parkway, and we know that if the money is not
523 used to build this connector, it will go back to the state, back to the general fund,
524 and it will most likely be used for a project in another area.

525 [APPLAUSE]

526 Doing nothing is not an option. We know that we are going to experience
527 explosive growth in the region, and this is our opportunity to prepare. We
528 continually look at Atlanta as the example of a transportation situation to avoid.
529 NCDOT State Secretary Conti, at a meeting last week in Charlotte, shared that we
530 have one-fourth of the population of Atlanta in our region and we've experienced
531 three-fourths of the congestion that they do. Let me say that again: one-fourth of

532 the population, three-fourths of the congestion. So we need to move forward with
533 the East-West Connector. The concept has been years in the making. If we don't
534 step up now, build this road, the opportunity will be lost, our community will
2 535 suffocate in traffic congestion. And on that note, cars that are sitting idling on the
536 interstate don't improve our economy or our air quality. The regional chamber
537 strongly supports the East-West Connector. We look forward to the next steps in
538 the process. Thank you.

539 [APPLAUSE/BOOS]

540 DeWitt: Next up is Alex Hall, followed by Joel Long [ph]. Alex Hall? Joel Long.

541 Joel Long: (Address not provided) Good evening. My name is Joel Long [ph], and I
t005
542 would like to speak to you tonight on the benefits and, more importantly, why I'm
543 favor of the construction of this highway. My name is Joel Long, and I live at
544 204 Blue Heron Way in Belmont. My name is Joel Long, and I'd like to speak to
545 you tonight on the benefits of the Garden Parkway and why I'm in favor of
546 construction of this highway.

547 I would like to speak to you from a variety of viewpoints, based on my
548 involvement in our community, as a way to show how this investment can
549 positively affect our future. As a lifelong resident of Gaston County, I understand
550 citizens who are against the construction of this road. I respect and appreciate the
551 opposing views and welcome them. Free speech and argument are a key part of
552 our heritage and make us a stronger society. I only ask that we put our aside
553 personal benefit or demise and look beyond next week, next month, and next year,

554 and focus on what this parkway will mean 30 to 50 years in the future of this
555 community.

556 I urge us to pull together as a community, put aside our personal interests,
557 and build this road for the long-term improvement of Gastonia. As a resident of
558 Belmont, I will live within half a mile of this highway. I often leave my home in
559 southern Belmont, and use back roads, cut across New Hope Road and weave
560 through downtown Belmont to access 85, for traveling east of Gaston County.
561 Presently, this drive takes 15 minutes with good traffic and 25 to 30 with bad.

562 This new road will open up access to the existing interstates and also relieve more
1 563 traffic, or more local traffic, on our existing roads during rush hour. This will
564 help the safety of our local roads and make our communities more peaceful on a
565 day-to-day basis.

2 566 As a business owner in Gastonia, I can see the needed long-term boost to
567 our economy this new access to the east will open. This new southern route will
568 pave the way for growth in our county for generations of the future. Think of the
569 impact that I-85 and Franklin Boulevard have on our commerce and trade with
570 communities all around us. These existing old roads have opened up our present
571 through the investments that occurred in our past. The same is true for our future.
572 If our future is going to be bright, we must invest in our structure today. The
573 Garden Parkway will build this future.

574 As a father of two Gaston County Public School children, I urge us to
575 continue to work with the generations that have come before us and improve on

576 the work they have done. For years, I have heard my grandfather's generation
577 called the "Greatest Generation." I have heard the stories of the men who went to
578 Normandy and saved our country. They have truly earned their title. I have
579 watched my father's generation build this county, state, and nation, and marveled
580 at how they humbly went about their business as they accomplished the work of
581 raising families and contributing to a society that's really changed the world.

582 [INDISCERNIBLE]

583 DeWitt: I would ask all of you please to be courteous. Please, we have a time-keeper
584 down here. We'll let the gentleman have his time.

585 Joel Long: I look at my generation and think we are struggling with the continuation of this
586 American dream, how we can remember it and compare it to the generation
587 before us. I believe our children will look back on decisions like this one before
588 us tonight and they will define our generation. This decision is maybe one of the
589 major impact decisions we can make for the improvement of our lives, and more
590 importantly, the generations that follow us. Thank you.

591 DeWitt: Thank you very much.

592 [APPLAUSE/BOOS]

593 DeWitt: Next up is Jim Long [ph], Bob Clay [ph], and Jim Hoffeman.

594 Jim Long: (Address not provided) My name is Jim Long. I live at 206 East Main Avenue
595 t006 in Bessemer City. And I am chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee for
596 Gaston Urban Metropolitan Planning.

1 597 The East-West Connector is only one of the projects we work on at
598 Planning. But it is our top priority. Eight years ago, I questioned the need for this
599 project. As I say now, it is now our top priority. Change is never easy. It is
600 difficult for everyone. It is our responsibility, in planning, to look into the future
601 and forecast our future needs. I have seen the research over the past years. I have
602 seen the model, and it's not a pretty picture. I-85, in a very short time, would
603 become inadequate to move traffic across the Catawba River. It is our future at
604 stake here. In the not too distant future—by the year 2015, I-85 is destined to
2 605 become a parking lot. We will not be able to move people across the Catawba in
606 an orderly fashion. We also must know that in order to move and bring industry
607 into Gaston County, we have to be able to move goods across the Catawba. The
608 East-West Connector is meant to relieve this traffic on 85, so that trucks can pay
609 for their own way to and from the airport.

610 As I said, again, and I want to make this very clear, I have seen the model.
611 I invite you to come take a look at it. In the not too distant future, we will be
612 unable to move traffic and goods across the Catawba River. It is frightening to
613 think that our county will not grow in the future. Thank you very much.

614 [APPLAUSE/BOOS]

615 DeWitt: Bob Clay followed by Jim Hoffeman.

616 Bob Clay: (Address not provided) Good evening, my name is Bob Clay. My wife and I
617 t007 reside at 3617 Bellevue Drive in Gastonia. First, let me say that if my personal
618 residence and my family members are impacted by the chosen route, I will

619 vehemently oppose it. How could you not, should your family home be
620 displaced? How could you not be concerned with the uncertainty of being treated
621 fairly by the state as to the value and the ability to find a new home for your
622 family? There are 358 residences to being impacted that house approximately
623 900 Gaston County citizens. They are passionate about stopping the parkway.

624 They have voiced their opposition professionally, convincing their friends
625 to join their cause. But I'm not one of them. You see, I am one of the balance of
626 205,000 Gaston County residences, comprising over 80,000 households, who will
627 be positively impacted by the Garden Parkway. More particularly, I'm one of the
628 109,000 residents, and 43,000 households that reside south of I-85 in Gaston
629 County. We currently feel the brunt of traffic making its way through our
630 communities, trying to get to major employment centers of our region.

1 631 Who can deny the significant traffic coming from southern Gaston and
632 York County, South Carolina, all trying to get to northeast-bound I-85? The
633 Garden Parkway will, without a doubt, relieve a great amount of this workday
634 traffic and provide a much-needed new east-west corridor. It will ease our ability
635 to get to regional workplaces, the economic engine to provide us jobs, goods and
636 service to our community. It will also provide a much greater access to new,
637 potential Gaston County residents, and the businesses that will be attracted to that
638 new growth.

639 With the parkway being built in phases, it's going to greatly infer debate
640 about the initial termination at Highway 321, the impending truck traffic coming

641 from the intermodal terminal, that will be forced through our historic York
642 Chester neighborhood in downtown Gastonia. Most 18-wheel diesel trucks have
643 seven to 16 forward gears, and from a common sense point of view, I believe they
644 would choose I-485 to 85 until such a time the parkway was completed all the
645 way to I-85.

646 On the other hand, folks coming from points south of us would find this a
647 convenient route. I would think this is exactly the kind of tourist traffic that the
648 retail businesses want, 321 and the downtown retailers will be trying to attract,
649 instead of being bypassed on I-85. So what do we do? This is absolutely a case
650 of dealing with the greater good for the future of Gaston County. This new
651 corridor is a necessity that should have been built 20 years ago.

2 652 All citizens of Gaston County need to be empathetic, and supportive of
653 families and businesses that are being impacted by this corridor. Although their
654 homes cannot be replaced, we all need to stay involved to ensure that they are
3 655 treated fairly, lobby for their support from our local and state officials. We need
656 to rely on the Gaston Chamber of Commerce, with its thousand businesses, and
657 all of the local regional chambers to demand the parkway be completed to I-85.

658 We need to remember that we're all in this together for Gaston County.
659 Thank you for your time.

660 [APPLAUSE/BOOS]

661 DeWitt: Thank you, Mr. Clay. Next up, Mr. Hoffeman [ph] is next.

1
662 Hoffman: (Address not provided) My name is Jim Hoffman. I'm with Daniel Stowe
663 t008 Botanical Garden, and I'm here to show our support for the Garden Parkway and
664 the current recommended alternative. First, let me speak to this as a lifelong
665 resident; in my time before I was at the Garden, I commuted to Charlotte for
666 about ten years, and the need to relieve traffic congestion on I-85 is abundantly
667 clear to me. When I begin working in downtown Charlotte in 1996, the commute
668 home was a relatively painless 30 minutes. By the time I was ready to resign my
669 position there and go to work for the Garden, the ride was getting to be closer and
670 closer to an hour.

671 That was only three years ago. Wrecks and breakdowns become the norm
672 rather than the exception, and everything slows traffic even more. I've only seen
673 glimpses of what it's like now, but certainly the situation on I-85 isn't getting any
674 better. We, the community, can turn a blind eye to the area's growth, but the fact
675 is this: This is a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. Gaston County
676 will continue to grow, whether from its own economic development or as a result
677 of being a residence for people who work across the river. Whether we like it or
678 not, the Belmont Peninsula is a gorgeous place to be; I'm privileged to spend
679 many of my waking hours there.

680 All of southern Gaston County, southeastern Gaston County, will continue
681 to grow. We can ignore that fact or we can participate in an orderly, planned
682 development of the area, to accommodate the growing population, and to protect
683 the environment. At Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, the tickets have doubled in

684 the past four years; we expect that trend to continue as we share this incredible
685 community resource with tens of thousands of school children, families, seniors,
686 and others who crave the cultural and educational value offered by the botanical
687 garden. That's just one more reason to plan for growth instead of simply letting it
688 happen as it will. The parkway will provide direct access to one of the region's
2 689 most significant tourist attractions without further stressing our transportation
690 arteries, and will provide an easier access to other myriad businesses that will
691 certainly benefit.

692 Finally, let me commend the parkway authority on the work it has done.
693 We are fortunate to have a pretty nice piece of property on Lake Wylie, and at our
3 694 core is a deep and abiding concern for the environment. We believe the parkway
695 authority has done an excellent job in researching options, positioning the
696 roadway to limit regional impact, and ensuring a plan that it has the most limited
697 environmental impact possible.

4 698 The region has been presented with a tremendous opportunity as a site to
699 locate a road with access across the Catawba River. If the community does not
700 seize the opportunity now, we will be left largely with unmanaged growth,
701 increasing emission problems, and eventually hazardous roadways. Thank you.

702 [APPLAUSE]

703 DeWitt: Thank you. Next up is Joe Carpenter[ph], followed by a Belmont Optimist Club
704 Board of Directors representative, and Mary Ann Clemmer[ph]. Joe Carpenter

705 first, followed by the Belmont Optimist Club Board of Directors representative,
706 and Mary Ann Clemmer, if I pronounced that correctly.

707 Carpenter: (Address not provided) Good evening, my name is Joe Carpenter. I am a
708 t009 lifelong resident of Gaston County. I live at 414 Velma [ph] Road in Gaston
709 County. I presently serve as one of your county commissioners. This project has
710 been number one on our list, along with the local MPO for many years, and I'll
711 have to take credit or blame—I was part of the initial ones to have a conception
1 712 for this project. The idea was to relieve the congestion, and we saw that the roads
713 on Southpoint, New Hope, Union, and others, people were migrating up to 29/74
714 and 85 to go east and west, and we felt like that we can relieve congestions on
715 these roads with a new bypass around Gastonia.

716 Now, why build the road in the first place? And it's to improve
717 transportation, and that's the basis of what we looked at, is to improve the traffic
718 flow, improve highway safety—where you have more congestion, you have more
719 accidents. Also, one of them had mentioned, just like I-85 when it came through
720 Gaston County, it's part of national security; it's built for our defense in this
721 country to move our military and other personnel. And also, God help me, we
722 never have to have an evacuation route, but if we did, it would be another
723 crossing of the river, in that emergency.

2 724 It's been mentioned before that the flow of the traffic would improve the
725 air quality; we are presently under the gun for not meeting the attainment
726 standards for EPA in air quality. This is one way that we can do that. It also

727 would save fuel for many people traveling less miles. I present, too, that for
728 future generations, it has to do with the livability of Gaston County. The future
729 generations is the only reason that I feel like we need to move forward on this
730 road. We might could get by, but our population—and people have studied this
731 sort of thing, demographics—say if we're going to double, more than double in
732 population by 2030, now, I don't know how you're going to accommodate twice
733 as many people without some improvements on our transportation system.

3 734 We came up with the idea of tolling this road to help pay for it, because, as
735 has been indicated before, the North Carolina Department of Transportation does
736 not have money to do a lot of the roads, and that's the system of taxing our future
737 pay, funding for highways has got to be improved. So I think my time is over, but
738 I thank all of you, and I want to thank the Toll Authority people for what I
739 consider a very thorough study of all of the issues facing the department.

740 [APPLAUSE]

741 DeWitt: Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Next up, representative of the Belmont Optimist Club.
742 Reagan: (Kelvin Reagan, 5003 Graystone Estates Dr, Belmont, NC 28012) My name is
743 t010 Kelvin Reagan. I live at 5003 Graystone Estates Drive in Belmont. I've been
744 asked to come tonight by the Belmont Optimist Club, as their president, to
745 represent them and speak to the turnpike as well as the people here. The Belmont
746 Optimist Club is an international Optimist Club that's been in Belmont for 47
747 years. We've been providing activities to the children—I know we've talked a lot
748 kids and children here—but as development has occurred in Belmont, the

749 Optimist Club has had to turn kids away. We've brought more kids in, but we
750 didn't have anywhere for the kids to go play.

751 Southpoint High School is the only school in the Belmont area that has a
752 football field, and if you've been around pop warner football, you know the
753 Belmont Optimist Club has about 500 kids that are involved in the program.
754 Now, not only do we do football, but we have 12 baseball teams, we also support
755 oratorical stuff and different things through the school system as well as
756 mentoring. And we—in 2004, when we started turning kids away from our
757 program, we decided that there was something that we had to do; we had kids
758 crying because they had to go to other cities to play sports, rather than being able
759 to play with our football program in Belmont.

760 So, our optimist group got together, we came up with a plan, and we
761 worked with Duke Energy to increase a ball field that we had—it's been on Duke
762 Energy property since the early '60s—so our intent was to come in and build a
763 new football field so that we wouldn't have to turn any kids away. And we did
764 that. But we had people like GE and other businesses come in and say, "We want
765 to help. We see what you're doing, and we want to help. We want to make sure
766 these kids have a place to play." So not only did we build a new football field and
767 light it, but we built another baseball field—we did it right beside it. We
768 upgraded the other baseball field. We also irrigated, updated our concession
769 stand, and we were awarded all-stars for this coming weekend because of what
770 we've done at those fields.

771 So what I'm here tonight to do, on behalf of the Belmont Optimist Club, is
772 ask the turnpike to reconsider going through our new fields, because when—if
773 this does happen, then it shuts our program down, and in 46 years, thousands of
774 kids were served in the Belmont area. So we would ask that you reconsider.

775 [APPLAUSE]

776 DeWitt: Next up is Mary Ann Clemmer followed by Miles Hamrick, Sr., and Mary Burris.

777 Clemmer: (Address not provided) Folks, I have as much to lose as anybody sitting in
778 t011 here. I live on a farm at 841 Shannon Bradley Rd. My boys are the sixth
779 generation that have lived on that farm. We have 70 acres that are our farmland,
780 and this route that they've chosen will take every inch of it. I am a 71-year-old
781 widow, but we built this home on our own. I built [INDISCERNIBLE] but the
782 farm is built with love. My only concern is, is we've been here for twenty-some
783 years, and it may happen. My request is that if it's going to happen, move on, but
784 let me enjoy some of the money before I die.

785 [APPLAUSE]

786 But I'm going to ask you—I have sat here, and heard the boos—folks,
787 have you all been listening to what's happening in Iran? People are killed! They
788 would never have this opportunity. Now, respect other people, and listen. Only
789 in America do we have this opportunity. Don't make a joke out of it. Thank you,
790 and I appreciate what everybody is saying, and I appreciate what's happening, but
791 I have as much to lose as anybody. But I am willing to listen, and at least hear
792 and not sit there and boo.

793 [APPLAUSE]

794 DeWitt: Thank you very much. Next up, Miles Hamrick, Sr, followed by Mary Burris,
795 and Johnny Oates[ph]. Miles Hamrick, Sr., are you out there? Mary Burris?
796 Johnny Oates? Robert S. Burford, followed by Ida Rendleman and Reginald L.
797 Floyd, Sr.
798 Burford: (Robert Burford, 1260 Shannon Bradley Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28052) Yes, my
799 t012 name is Robert S. Burford, and I am a business owner of a property located at
1 800 1260 Shannon Bradley Rd, and 85. The property is 22 acres right on that corner,
801 and under DSA Proposal Number Nine, we're right in the middle of the off-ramp.
802 The business has been there for about six years. It has an active payroll of over
803 100 people, the vast majority of which live and spend their dollars in Gastonia. If
804 you know anything about manufacturing plants—and this one is a metal
805 conditioning plant. That does military work, okay, and work for buyers, and lots
806 of other local companies.

807 You realize that they become highly specialized, and not easily moved at
808 all. Under Proposal Nine, clearly, we are dislocated, or relocated, and I would ask
809 that people give careful consideration to the impact of people that work and are
810 affected by the proposal, because they are not here to be able to speak for
811 themselves. When we have to locate, which if we do, there is no guarantee that
812 we can find a comparable facility in Gaston, and then you have to start looking at
813 those in close proximity to South Carolina, and that's not fair. So, you really—
814 when businesses are facing this, generally the local area can suffer, so I ask that

815 careful consideration be given to the employees of relocated businesses such as
816 this one.

817 [APPLAUSE]

818 DeWitt: Ida Randleman? Ida Randleman. Reginald Floyd, Sr. Robert Kellogg will be
819 next.

820 Randleman: (Address not provided) Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ida
821 t013 Randleman. I live at 324 Northwynn Road, that's Matthew Acres. I'm here t
822 speak for some of my neighbors that can't be here because they are tired, older
1 823 people in our neighborhood, and we've been there for 31 years. I was one of the
824 first residents to move into that neighborhood. I don't oppose the road; I oppose
825 the fact that they are making us, now—people ready to retire—move. It's very
826 emotional. I don't oppose the road, but I just don't want to move. But if I have to
827 move, I will move, but we just hope they will consider another route.

828 [APPLAUSE]

829 DeWitt: Thank you. Reginald Floyd, Sr, one more time. Robert Kellogg.
830 Kellogg: (Robert Kellogg, 2409 Payton Dr, Gastonia, NC, 28056) My name is Robert
831 t014 Kellogg, and I reside at 2409 Payton Drive, in Gastonia. Thank you for this
832 opportunity to let my opinion be heard. My name is Robert Kellogg, and I live,
833 work and own property here in Gastonia. As a concerned tax-payer, I claim my
1 834 disapproval of the toll road to nowhere to being built. First, if the allocated
835 moneys must be spent on transportation projects, instead of much needed
836 education funding, as suggested by the DOTs, then why not widen Highway 74?

837 This would by far have a greater impact on the economy, and more for
838 infrastructure, than a toll road that no one will use. If people can't even afford to
839 pay their mortgages or buy gas for their vehicles; what makes the state believe
840 that people would use a toll road that dumps them on an even more congested
841 highway, without even getting them to the original, intended destination of I-85?

842 321 is now—not now, or will it ever be ready to handle semi trucks, RVs,
843 or buses, in large quantities. Unless, of course, there isn't many trucks or buses
844 using the toll road, and in that case, it's not even needed, and will not even pay for
845 itself. Second, I have heard the argument that if Gaston County does not accept
846 this offer, then the money will disappear and the goodwill may not be extended so
847 easily next time. Are we to accept this ill-planned project just to appease Raleigh,
848 and the law makers involved in this deal, or should the state, instead, spend that
849 money honestly, on the good stewards of what fronts what do have for public
850 works?

851 This Gastonia city resident says thank you, but no thank you. In this time
852 of grievous waste, inspecting without thinking, which has led to one of the worst
853 economic downturns in the history of our country, do we really need to add fuel to
854 the fire by wasting tax payer dollars on a road that ultimately leads to nowhere? I
855 don't think so. While we all want economic growth and desire for Gastonia to be
856 a traveler's destination, more convenience stores, gas stations, and adult
857 bookstores is not my idea of growth [APPLAUSE]. What we need in this city is a

858 vision that puts a greater emphasis on education, green technology, and long
859 ranged eco-friendly city planning.

860 The time for short-sighted, ill-planned and politically motivated city and
861 county planning has come to an end. We need leadership, we need vision, and we
862 need common sense from our elected officials. What we don't need is for Gaston
863 County's claim to fame to be a road which is the equivalent to Alaska's infamous
864 Bridge to Nowhere. Thank you.

865 [APPLAUSE]

866 DeWitt: Thank you, Robert. Next up is Marion Beach, followed by Dot Delano, if I've
867 pronounced that correctly, and Matt Vanderbilt. So Marilyn Beach. Dot Delano.
868 Dot Delano, please, is next. Sir? Dot?

869 Delano: (Dot Delano, PO Box 1306, Belmont, NC, 28012) Hello. My name is Dot
870 t015 Delano, and I live at 1306—post office box 1306 in Belmont. It seems that most
871 of the proponents of this project give two, basically two reasons for the road, and
872 that is relief of present and future congestion on I-85 and Highway 74 and
873 potential for economic development along and because of the route. And this is
874 cited also by Belmont's main voice, in the Belmont Banner on June 17th, with the
875 potential benefits of the East-West Connector.

876 These are not reasons, I don't believe, to justify seizing, disrupting, and
877 displacing large tracts of land, for potential benefit. In this case, the government
878 and municipalities benefit at the expense of the public. Former US Supreme
879 Court Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor, is concerned about this in her dissenting

880 opinion in *Kelo versus City of New London* in 2005. It increased travel times and
881 limits on open mobility. It is also not a reason to construct a new thoroughfare
882 through southern Gaston County between southern Gaston and Mecklenburg
883 Counties. Those are local problems and the common good would be better served
884 by local city and county planning of their secondary road system, leaving the state
885 to improve and maintain the primary road system.

886 Senators Dan Clodfelter and Bob Rucho have let cities control their roads,
887 from *The Charlotte Observer*, also June 17. Our supporting senate bill 758 for
888 this purpose. In addition, as of July 1st, they reported that funds will be redirected
889 so that local municipalities can maintain, improve, and widen their secondary
890 road system.

891 If the forecast of traffic volumes are going to be—if the forecast of traffic
892 volumes are going to be highest on the eastern end of the project, that it is not also
893 a sufficient reason to construct a new road system. The traffic problem really is I-
894 85 and 74, and that is a greater urgency. The Route 74 Mecklenburg and Gaston
895 County critically needs to be widened or replaced, and Wilkinson Boulevard
896 really needs to be widened. I-85 needs additional lanes north and south. Bus
2 897 lanes on the interstate [INDISCERNIBLE] starts a long way, the transit stops
898 along the way to be considered. Commuter rail, which probably can complement
899 it with existing railroads would alleviate traffic problems generated by growth.
900 Therefore, the answer is to improve on what you already have and not construct a
901 new road.

902 [APPLAUSE]

903 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Are you Mr. Beach? I owe you an apology. I'm
904 sorry Sir. Marion Beach. Next up will be Matt Vanderbilt [ph].

905 Beach: (Marion Beach, 3458 Boat Club Road, Belmont, NC, 28012) That's all right. I
906 t016 have been preempted. And if I get addled, and lose my place, bear with me. I'm
907 not used to being in front of a group. My name is Marion Beach [ph]. I live at
908 3458 Boat Club Road. And yes, the road will go through my bedroom of the
909 house I've lived in 40 years. So I've got a little bit of skin in the game.

910 I have been looking at one thing. As a business owner, former business
911 owner rather, and a mechanical person, I don't know much about government
912 projects, but I know a little bit about business projects. I am looking at what this
913 will cost. The 2006 figure said \$765 million dollars to take it to 321. We are not
914 even going to talk about the other end because there is no money to build that, so
915 we'll say that right now. The 2009 figures are \$910 million. That is 2009. We
916 don't know what they're going to do when they get around to building it. And
917 have you ever seen any government project that did not have cost overruns? Ah
918 ha.

1 919 This is going to be financed, as I understand, through bonds and other
920 sources. Right now the toll authority rating for the Triangle Expressway in the
921 Raleigh area is BBB-, and that is by Fitch Ratings, similar to Standard & Poors,
922 Moody's, or some other bond rating companies. That's the interest rate. I couldn't
923 find a rate for the current BBB-, but the BBB rating interest rate is 6.85%. As of

924 today, 6/23, that means interest payments for the first year will be \$61.5 million
925 dollars. That doesn't touch the principal, that is interest Now \$25 million is
926 going to come from the State of North Carolina. They've already appropriated
927 that. And they said there is no more available. That leaves \$36 million dollars. I
928 first heard 19 to 21,000 cars a day, for 321, latest numbers say 14,000. And the
929 other night I heard a number for the toll rate so I used the rate of \$2.50, which is a
930 bit more than people would be paying. That is going to raise, at \$2.50, excuse
931 me, at 14,000 cars, that is going to raise our payment. Have you had enough yet?
932 [LAUGHTER].

933 The federal government is going to chip in some; we don't know how
934 much. Let's say they throw in \$100 million dollars. Are they going to do it as the
935 state does, over a 40-year period, which is \$2.5 million a year? Or are they going
936 to do it in a lump sum? If they do it as a lump sum, that will bring the payment
937 down to \$55 million. So the federal government may put in more than that. We
938 don't know. So thank you for your moments, think about your feelings. Thank
939 you.

940 [APPLAUSE]

941 DeWitt: Just as a matter of clarification, the bonds in Raleigh are actually, got them to AA
942 where we are with those. And the secret to this, well it's not a secret, but the
943 financial process here, if we cannot prove to the municipal bond market that this
944 project makes financial sense, it won't get built by us. So we've got to make the
945 business case. There's been a lot of conversation about traffic, how much it will

946 be, where it will go and so on and so forth, but there is a very, very rigorous
947 process we go through to make the case or not, to make this project work
948 financially. If we can't make the business case, the Turnpike Authority will not
949 build this project just want to make that clear.

950 Matt Vanderbilt, followed by Alan Albright and then Nancy Albright.

951 M: What number are you on?

952 DeWitt: I am on number 23 if that's helpful. Matt Vanderbilt followed by Alan Albright
953 and then so on.

954 A. Albright: (Alan Albright, 300 Patrick Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) My name is Alan Albright.
955 t017 I live at Patrick Road, 300 Patrick Road. You may notice they used my house in
956 one of the pictures—they didn't ask for it. They also didn't return my phone calls
957 when I tried to reach them a number of times. But luckily today I did get a call
958 after that.

959 In any case I am an attorney. I've practiced law 35 years in Gaston
960 County. I was raised here and grew on through the public school systems. But I
961 am not representing anyone but myself tonight. Looking at this situation, actually
962 it would be in my best interest to build the highway. I am not taken—I have
963 property in here but it is not fair. It is not proper. The citizens of Gaston County
964 as I have polled them, dealing with a lot of small business people, don't want this
965 road. [APPLAUSE] That is the message we need to take to the Toll Road
966 Commission. The thing that struck me tonight in the presentation that our
967 engineer made to us, was that he said citizens don't make this decision. Don't

968 you believe it. [APPLAUSE] There are politicians in this county that have made
969 decisions. He also said politicians don't make decisions. Don't you believe it.
970 [APPLAUSE] This is an extraordinary situation. Basically, we had a bait and
971 switch.

972 They came out and said that in fact we were going to have a connector,
973 everything they say in print says "connector." A connector connects two points.
974 Every time it came up—and I'm a past member of the Planning Commission of
2 975 Gaston County—it came up running from two points, 485 to 85. The people that
976 approved it, that you're relying on, that say we have done the public support,
977 we've done all of these authorities, all of these changes for you, all of the
978 resolutions that say in fact it goes between the points. It is a bait and switch. If
979 y'all know what it is, I am not going to explain it to the people in Raleigh. But
980 that's what happened.

981 We cannot, we don't need it—look at their records, look at their traffic
982 flows. If we want to keep the cars on I-85 at the lowest level, what is the best
983 choice? The best choice is don't build it. Look at their figures. That is what it
3 984 says. They are now running it through our only historic district. We do not need
985 it. We cannot afford it. [APPLAUSE]. The shortfall of the funding is \$35
986 million a year for 39 years. That means every day if you or anybody else goes on
987 that highway after it is built, the State of North Carolina is paying a \$95,000
988 shortfall. Every day. That is three teachers that could be hired in Gaston County.
989 [APPLAUSE]. And they're going to tell you that doesn't matter. They can't use

990 that funds, they can't use those funds, those are appropriated funds and if they are
991 left they can be re-appropriated other places. [APPLAUSE]

992 Nancy Albright, she is my wife. She is very smart. Much smarter than I
993 am. Runs two businesses, you call her Nancy, I call her boss. [APPLAUSE].

994 N. Albright: (Nancy Albright, 300 Patrick Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) We just celebrated our
t018 995 35th anniversary. We raised two sons in Gastonia and sent them to the public
996 schools and I've spent my whole life here. I am Nancy Albright. I live at 300
997 Patrick Road. I have two frame and art shops and I've had them for 29 years.

998 One of my shops is a stone's throw away from 321 on Second Avenue.
999 About every 10 days I hear a crash. I go out and I look and someone has had an
1000 accident where 321, people coming from the south to the north to 85, they have
1001 accidents. It is at least once every two weeks. I don't know if these technical
1 1002 people that you got checking all this out, maybe someone needs to sit on that
1003 corner and just watch and listen to the accidents that happen. So if we've got all
1004 these cars in down there near Garlock and they are going to come through, that is
1005 just going to add, it is going to go from being a dangerous intersection to a deadly
1006 intersection. In my book that is an environmental impact. [APPLAUSE].

1007 I know my three minutes is almost up, but I think some people are taking
1008 more than three minutes so I am just going to say one more thing. I have a
1009 business in Belmont on Wilkinson Boulevard, the Frame & Art Shop. When I
1010 try—I don't ever go home on I-85 because when you go I-85 south, from Belmont
1011 to Gastonia, the lane—you know where the lane goes from four lanes to three

2 1012 lanes? Everybody stops. Why can't we widen I-85? Makes perfect sense.
1013 [APPLAUSE].
1014 I am a former school teacher, too, and I agree with Alan that I think our
1015 money could be much better spent on—we have a son who is a high school
1016 English teacher—we need more teachers, we need smaller classrooms. I don't
3 1017 think people are going, I don't think some of these people are going to use the
1018 Garden Parkway. They are not going to want to pay the toll, and so they may not
1019 even use it. So if that is what is going to actually pay for it, the tolls, I don't think
1020 it is going to happen.
1021 DeWitt: Thank you very much.
1022 [APPLAUSE]
1023 DeWitt: Next up is Sean Harrington. Then Burdge Monro. I don't know if I pronounced
1024 that correctly. And Mike Withers, Sean Harrington?
1025 Harrington: (Sean Harrington, 224 J and J Lane, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Hi, my name is Sean
1026 t019 Harrington. I live at 224 J and J Lane in Gastonia. This kind of cuts through
1027 where I live there. You've heard a lot of people talk about born and raised here. I
1028 wasn't. And let me tell you why I did come out here. It wasn't to be next to a big
1 1029 road. [APPLAUSE]. Something else, I wasn't notified by the NCTA, but by a
1030 citizen's group. There seems to be a few of you out there. You got one of these
1031 on? These are the people that told me about it, not these people.
1032 By the way, if you look at this, two smaller sections in here: benefits of
1033 the parkway and does my opinion matter—those are the two smallest sections in

1034 there. One of the things they point out is we'll give you what it is that you are
1035 after, what you need, the highest and best used currently, but I'm thinking that
1036 one of the benefits they are not talking about is that land values go up, right?
1037 How about we get that value for the land? [APPLAUSE] [INDISCERNIBLE]
1038 A lot of times, you know, look at this thing and this is the least cost. I
1039 think all of us out here are in the situation, like we are going to go and get
1040 something—is the cheapest thing the best thing to get every time? I don't think
2 1041 so. No. I had an idea that we could just shift the funding from this and widen I-
1042 85. I think other people have said that. It makes a lot of sense. And actually I-85
1043 would still need widening if they ever do connect it. They'll have to widen it to
1044 get those connectors in there. So just go ahead and widen it from three lanes to
1045 four and like somebody said, it is not actually connected to 485. It is not actually
1046 connected to 85. So you get from a small street onto a big highway, get off on a
1047 small street. You want to widen that. If it is a minimal impact to the historic 321
1048 neighborhood, if it's minimal impact, you probably don't need the road in the first
1049 place. [APPLAUSE] And if it is to be a magnet for large businesses, which
1050 everybody here would love to have, I think they would have told us about it, that
1051 these businesses were actually looking into doing this.
1052 And I guess in closing, one of the things my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
1053 the only thing he couldn't stand on this planet, what really got to him getting the
1054 closest to hatred was hypocritical thoughts and means. Some of those would be
1055 what I mentioned, others would be that, you know, along the trail of these

1056 businesses are becoming retail is not the best—retail is not the best employer,
1057 large businesses are. If they are coming in they would have told us, and for the
3 1058 Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, you may have forgotten, but that the crossing
1059 they are talking about, check with River Keeper, it is going to fill up the area at
1060 the lake right there. We won't be able to get access to the lake. Thank
1061 you.[APPLAUSE].
1062 DeWitt: Burdge Monro followed by Mike Withers and LeAnn MacMillan.
1063 Monro: (Burdge Monro, 4647 Benfield Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Hi. My name is
1064 Burdge Monro. I live at 4647 Benfield Road. And the alternate 9 interchange or
1065 connector doesn't really come out on my property; it will be close but it won't
1066 affect it. But what I did think about today was that you know I come from a truck
1067 driving family. So I am, earlier today I was driving up 321, about where the
1068 connector would connect. [INDISCERNIBLE].
1069 [TECHNICAL COMMENTS]
1070 Monro: Okay. So as I was saying, I come from a truck driving family. So earlier today I
1071 t020 went up 321, about where the Alternative 9 Connector would join it, up to 85, and
1072 I had 19 red lights and it took nearly 15 minutes in my car. You cannot go all that
1073 time in your truck. And I wrote this down, and you get a trucks side by side and
1074 they are just going to take mirrors off with telephone poles, they are going to be
1075 hitting each other and everything else. I'd also like to say I work for trucking
1076 transit, and I have talked to some of the mechanics who work for Gastonia Transit
1077 and they've had a problem hitting mirrors for the buses, so drivers were taking

1078 them off. That is a valid expense for the Transit. I would just like to say I oppose
1079 the Parkway. [APPLAUSE]
1080 DeWitt: Mike Withers followed by Lee Ann McMillan.
1081 Withers: (Michael Withers, 4631 Bud Wilson Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) My name is Mike
1082 t021 Withers. I live at 4631 Bud Wilson Road. I work in sales and I travel throughout
1083 Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. I have a lot of
1084 opportunity to see driving on well thought out roads. I have also had the
1085 opportunity to see traffic on very poorly planned roads. I cannot remember a time
1086 that I sat stopped in traffic for long periods of time on 85, either going to or
1087 coming from Charlotte. When there is not a vehicle accident—obviously if there
1088 is a vehicle accident, traffic is going to back up.
1 1089 I do find it interesting because I drive towards Raleigh fairly frequently
1090 and every other city along that path has found a way to widen I-85 [APPLAUSE].
1091 I would like to talk for a brief moment for it, and they've got it, and there is
1092 actually a bypass around Greensboro now. I, too, can't understand why you bring
1093 the—next town right at Gastonia why you can't fix that.
2 1094 I've done a little research on toll roads in our area. I found a website,
1095 www.tollroadsnews.com, did a search on Greenville, because Greenville, South
1096 Carolina has I-185. That also is a toll road, it is called Greenville Southern
1097 Connector. This project is going broke and it is looking for a patient investor to
1098 buy that project. The C2A which is the authority that runs it, is in financial
1099 trouble and heading for default on its debt. The road is now in its seventh year.

1100 Traffic is around 16,000 transactions a day, which is still under half the forecast
1101 34,000 transactions which was the business plan which they justified building the
1102 road on. [APPLAUSE]. The C2A general management says the poor state of the
1103 economy was a major factor in the overestimate. I think we are in that now.

1104 Another reason, the distance is longer on the Greenville Connector than on
1105 85. It is simply too indirect a route to be competitive. Greenville has a population
1106 of 400,000, with Spartanburg and Anderson they have 1.2 million. All of Gaston
1107 County roughly 200,000. If a city that has twice the number of people can't make
1108 the toll road work, how can it work here with significantly less people?
1109 [APPLAUSE].

1110 My last comment is I've seen a large road project built in the state; I-485
1111 in Charlotte is an example. But at least in that project, and it was just very
1112 recently said, they tied two major thoroughfares when they built it. They didn't
1113 try to dump all of these people on 485 onto Highway 51 and let them figure out
1114 how to get back over to 74. Thank you. [APPLAUSE].

1115 DeWitt: LeeAnn MacMillan followed by Mark Tito and Charles Clark.

1116 MacMillan: (LeeAnn MacMillan, 5603 Arrowood Dr, Gastonia, NC, 28056) My name is
1117 t022 LeeAnn MacMillan. I live at 5603 Arrowood Drive in Gastonia, right off of Bud
1118 Wilson Road. I have been trying to revise my statements because I don't want to
1119 be redundant. So if I sound a little disjointed, please bear with me. My very first
1120 comment is if there is minimal impact on 321, and those were your words, sir, that
1121 means there won't be more than minimal use? And that means we do not need

1122 this quote-unquote "Garden Parkway." [APPLAUSE]. There is no way that it is
1123 not going to impact the historic district. You cannot be dumping that many
1124 vehicles as they say there will be onto the historic district and not have some kind
1125 of really negative impact, assuming that is exactly what we are going to do is have
1126 that many vehicles that it is going to be necessary to have this Garden Parkway.

1127 Secondly, we are told that after 39 years that the road will be paid for. If
1128 the slides that they had earlier today when I came to the pre-hearing, one of the
1129 things that they mentioned that the tolls were going to be used for was to quote
1130 unquote "maintain the road." I lived in Pennsylvania. I drove on the
1131 Pennsylvania Turnpike. And for ever and ever and ever, there was maintenance
2 1132 on that road. There will always be a toll on this Garden Parkway because it will
1133 never get paid for because you can't [APPLAUSE]. How are you going to not
1134 maintain this road unless they intend to have potholes so big that you can drive
1135 your car through it?

1136 Okay. I told you that I live on Bud Wilson Road. That means that I live
1137 between Union and 321. We already have a rendering plant and a sewage
1138 treatment plant within a mile of where I live. If you drive down 321—thank you,
1139 sir—if you drive down 321, you will see them right there just before you hit the
1140 line. My question is: Are we the dumping ground for Gaston County? That now
1141 we are going to bypass, on top of everything else?

1142 And the last thing I want to say, and again I don't want to sound too
3 1143 redundant, the Catawba Bridge is in need of repair. We know that. It has got to

1144 be repaired anyway. We can widen it and as you've been saying, widen I-85. We
1145 already have a connector to 485, and it's not going to cost us nearly as much. We
1146 can use the added money for those school teachers that we need, and the last
1147 thought that I want to say is that we have developers, we have builders, and we
1148 have investors that are all in favor of it. These people, for the most part, are not
1149 going to have to worry about losing their houses or hearing the noise.

4 1150 [APPLAUSE] And they're talking about 358 homes that will be impacted.
1151 There's going to be a lot of other people that are going to be negatively impacted
1152 by this, and we're not going to get the first penny of compensation. Thank you.

1153 [APPLAUSE]

1154 DeWitt: Charla Clark[ph], followed by Peter Schuler[ph], and Brett Withers[ph]. I'm
1155 sorry, Mark Tino[ph], did I say Mark Tino? Mark Tino is next. Is Mark Tino
1156 here?

1157 Tino: It's Tino.

1158 DeWitt: Sorry.

1159 Tino: (Mark Tino, 130 Timber Creek Trail, Gastonia, NC 28056) First of all, this is a
1160 t023 personal note for me; I don't have the figures the rest of them given. I've been
1161 born and raised in Gastonia for 47 years. I like the simpleness of Gastonia. I've
1 1162 owned a business for 29 years here, and I am definitely not in favor of this road,
1163 nor will I ever use it. The public, to me, has been left in limbo by this meeting
1164 and is no different than the last. We still don't know exactly anything. Our home
1165 is never going to be affected because it's cutting across the tip, actually. I live at

1166 130 Timber Creek Trail, which is right off of Bud Wilson off of Union, where one
1167 of the connectors is going to run. And I definitely don't like the fact that the
2 1168 appraisal of my home is going to be given on today's bad market appraisal value
1169 is worth whatever your appraiser decides—your approved appraiser decides to
3 1170 appraise it as. I'm worried about the sound barriers; my house is very quiet where
1171 I live. You could never replace that. We raised our children there in that home,
1172 and I expect my grandchildren to be able to come there, as well.

4 1173 And, first, lastly, I had heard—many people say the senators of North
1174 Carolina had bought land in this area, and they are made privy, obviously, to
1175 knowledge that we are not made, and they are part of this advisory committee,
1176 and they should be removed. [APPLAUSE]

1177 DeWitt: Chara Clark.

1178 Clark: (Charla Clark, 207 Colonial Dr, Belmont, NC, 28012) My name is Charla
1179 t024 Clark, and I live at 207 Colonial Drive. I live off of Southpoint Road, a highly
1180 impacted place to begin with, I guess. But I'm here not just representing myself,
1181 and my fellow Gaston residents, but a very good friend of mine is going to lose
1182 her house, and—it's right in the way—and this is something that, we got together,
1183 and we wrote together—they're out of town, can't be here, so I'd like to read this
1184 to you. It's going to be a little re-do, but—

1185 We are not in favor of the Garden Parkway to nowhere. The Cedar family
1 1186 home is one of the many homes that will be taken for this project. This home was
1187 chosen to get away from the hectic city life, and give a safe haven for the

1188 children, the family, and the meager offering that we've heard about tonight for
1189 the homes will not replace them in kind. There is not enough money to finish this
1190 toll road, according to the Turnpike Authority's website itself. Initially, the 755
1191 million that someone else mentioned was quoted and now up to 910 million, and
1192 you're not getting any further than a wonderful, beautiful historic district in
1193 Gastonia on Highway 321. Dumping traffic into the historic York Chester
1194 neighborhood may go on for 20 or 30 years before somebody comes up with
1195 another period of 20 years to decide what they're going to do to finish the end of
1196 it.

1197 And Gaston County, I think takes a great deal of pride in their history, in
1198 the culture, and this is going to be spoiled, which is terrible. The authorities on
1199 the website also states this project will save 20 to 25 minutes between the airport
1200 and Belmont. Well, I've got news for you. I live on Southpoint Road and I can
1201 get to the airport without speeding in 15 to 18 minutes. [APPLAUSE] Also, the
1202 stated one to three minute time saving from Belmont to Gastonia is not worth
1203 paying a toll for. Put the money towards improving 74, that would be grand.

1204 The traffic impact on the road, such as Southpoint Road, and South New
1205 Hope Road will be overwhelming to those who remain and don't have their
1206 homes taken. We currently have the worst air quality on the east coast in the
1207 Gaston/Mecklenburg area, and building this parkway will throw us further over
1208 this danger ozone level. Instead of displacing people, businesses, fouling the
1209 environment further, spending money needlessly, wastefully, let's improve the

1210 present roads that we have, and if that means re-appropriating money that would
1211 be great, and while we re-appropriate it, please put it to the school system.
1212 Please. I'm begging you. Please. Thank you.

1213 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Peter Schuler[ph]. Did I say that correctly?

1214 Schuler: (Peter Schuler, 537 Lake Wylie Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Close enough. Yes,
1215 t025 my name is Peter Schuler. Me and my wife live at 537 Lake Wylie Road, and
1216 yes, our property is on the centerline. But that's not why I'm here to talk to you
1217 tonight; I'm here to talk to you tonight because this road makes no sense. I'm an
1218 engineer by trade, I evaluate these kind of things everyday. Not roads—sewage
1219 treatment plants, water treatment plants. But we don't start a project if we don't
1220 know how we're going to pay for it, meaning the whole project.

1221 What they have studied is to get from 85 to 485, not 85 to 321. The
1222 trips—the number of trips, the tolls, the impacts of the study on the whole road,
1223 not the project as it sits today. As the project sits today it makes no sense. It's a
1224 road to nowhere. I don't know about you, but if I got on that road at the airport
1225 and spent \$2.50 and found myself out on 321, having to drive through 20 traffic
1226 lights to get to 85. I don't know about you, but I'd never do it again. And if I
1227 didn't do it again, that same number of trips a day, that isn't happening. And with
1228 all those trips, there's no money to pay for this. And that's why. That's all I have
1229 to say. Thank you.

1230 DeWitt: Brett Withers[ph] followed by Reginald Floyd, Sr.

1231 Withers: (Brett Withers, 1836 White Cedar Dr, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Good evening,
1232 t026 folks. I'm Brett Withers. I live at 1836 White Cedar Drive in the Forest Park
1233 community. I've resided there approximately two years. Lifelong resident of
1234 Gaston County, Flint Road School Elementary, Grier Junior High, Ashbrook
1235 High School, East Carolina University. I just found out about this project about
1236 two years ago; I'll rewind just a little bit. After graduating East Carolina, I lived
1237 in Charlotte for approximately 20 years. I just relocated to Gaston County about
1238 five or six years ago to help care for my elderly parents. I live in the Forest Park
1239 community; it's very quiet but that's getting ready to change.

1240 This proposed route is going to be within roughly 400 feet of my house, so
1241 it's getting ready to get noisy. For those of you who have traveled, slept in a hotel
1242 room by an interstate highway, you know what that's going to be like, so that's
1243 what I'm looking forward to. None of it was disclosed prior to me purchasing a
1244 home, and that's another issue. I'm nobody special, but I'm here tonight hoping
1245 that my story and your story does mean something to the process. I came earlier
1246 to look at the information, and I walked away very concerned.

1247 I'm concerned because I can tell that this project has a lot of money and a
1248 lot of political backing behind it. There are a lot of super bright minds involved
1249 in the project, and I appreciate Mr. DeWitt's efforts and his staff, but I'm here to
1250 just ask the local officials, and my fellow citizens to not support this project. I do
1251 not think it makes economic sense. I'm a state employee, and just to give you a
1252 quick tidbit, I can speak from first hand experience, the State of North Carolina is

1253 broke. Some of the quick examples I'd use is—thank you—as a state law
1254 enforcement officer, one of the tools of my trade is a cell phone. A year ago,
1255 because of the budget constraints, they took our state cell phones away from us.

1256 Now, that's not a major thing, but it is an example of the mismanagement
1257 of the funds on the state level. Another example is mileage restriction on our state
1258 vehicles. We're out there doing our job one day, and they are basically, if we get
1259 over a certain amount of miles, they'll start busting our chops. The point of this
1260 folks is the State of North Carolina is broke; we don't have 35, 45, 55 million
1261 dollars a year to help support this project. Brighter minds will decide the fate of
1262 whether the corridor is necessary or not, and it may be, and at some point, I may
1263 support it someday. But it's got to stand on its own legs. It's got to be financially
1264 sound, and I'm opposed to the project. Thank you.

1265 [APPLAUSE]

1266 DeWitt: Thank you. Reginald Floyd, Sr., followed by John Lanier[ph], then John
1267 Medlin[ph].

1268 Floyd: (Reginald Floyd, 682 New Castle Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28052) Hello everyone. My
1269 t027 name is Pastor Reginald Floyd, Sr. I live at 682 Newcastle Road in Gaston, North
1270 Carolina. We're all here for the same purposes today but anyway, this is what
1271 I'm thinking. A lot of people I know it will affect a positive way and a negative
1272 way, but I live on Newcastle Road near Shannon Bradley, and I raised our
1273 children there. They're all grown and gone, of course; they've got their own

1274 children. But I don't know this is going to cause us to pull up stakes, so to speak,
1275 or not, but I know that it's going to affect everybody, one way or another.

1276 But we're just all walking by faith, not by sight. You know what I'm
1277 saying? And I know that some are going to be offended, some are going to be
1278 uplifted, but never the less, this is all a price that—what I'm trying to say is that
1279 it's all the name of progress. But I do believe that if we would just widen 74 and
1280 29, and perhaps 85 as well, then things could be more settled. Thank you.

1281 DeWitt: John Lanier, followed by John Medlin, and Tina Medlin[ph].

1282 Lanier: (John Lanier, 377 Lake Wylie Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Good evening. I'm
1283 t028 John Lanier. 377 Lake Wylie Road, Belmont, North Carolina. When the
1284 Turnpike Authority was first put together, we were all told by the media, by the
1285 Turnpike Authority folks, and by the state representatives that this new route was
1286 put together through alternate funding, funding which would be private
1287 investment and Turnpike Authority funding. As we've seen, the road can no
1288 longer be built out to 85. It now stops at 321, and even though it stops at 321, it
1289 cannot be built with the funding as described to the public.

1290 My question to the Turnpike Authority is under what authority are you
1291 using for coding your funds when you're bringing in DOT funds, federal funds,
1292 and a couple different companies. In other words, any funding other than private
1293 funding or the bonding, under what state statute or authority do you have to do the
1294 paying, make the decisions, and do the construction of this project? It seems to

1295 me that the federal funding and the state DOT funding is all supposed to go to the
1296 state DOT.

1297 DeWitt: We have full authority through the General Assembly to do what we're doing.

1298 Lanier: Under what statute?

1299 DeWitt: I can't pull it off the top of my head, but we can certainly—

1300 Lanier: Can you put it up on the website?

1301 DeWitt: We'd be glad to do that.

1302 [APPLAUSE]

1303 DeWitt: John Medlin, and Tina Medlin.

1304 J. Medlin: (John Medlin, 1259 Dorchester Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) I brought my backup,
1305 t029 too. My name is John Medlin. I live at 1259 Dorchester Road, that's off of
1306 Patrick Road. Yes, we are impacted by this project. I was driving home from
1307 Charlotte yesterday on I-85, and I passed a billboard that sits above the ___Mill
1308 on the South Fork River. I believe it was put there by the Chamber of Commerce.
1309 I only got a glance, but it asked the question, "Tired of traffic on I-85?" And the
1310 answer was "Build the Garden Parkway."

1311 Where did they get their name up?? To the average, uninformed
1312 commuter, that billboard would imply that the Garden Parkway is a good thing,
1313 it's going to improve conditions on I-85. That seemed to be good both for the
1314 commuter and for the Turnpike Authority. Stay tuned. In the statement of need
1315 and purpose, the draft environmental impact statement cites the need for reducing
1316 the traffic on existing corridors, and for providing additional east-west access

1317 between Gaston and Mecklenburg counties. The proposed project would provide
1318 that connector, but will it really be used?

1319 Look at the failed toll roads around us. In Greenville, I-85 is a dead-ended
1320 toll road, just like this one, and it's facing bankruptcy. I was in Houston last
1321 week—Texas—and the toll road on the north side of town that's running parallel
1322 to I-45—was desolate. Even [INDISCERNIBLE] on the freeway, furthermore the
1323 projections issued by the Turnpike Authority documented that the project will not
1 1324 solve the I-85 traffic problems. I sat there listening tonight to person after person
1325 standing up here talking about, we're building this to solve a problem. Their own
1326 data clearly says that it will not.

1327 This fine gentleman sitting right here showed me the data for 85 in
1328 Mecklenburg County, where it crosses the river; in 2030, if the project is built all
2 1329 the way to 85, not just stopping at 321. It reduces traffic at that crossing by four
1330 percent. So why are you building it, if it doesn't solve the problem, in fact it
1331 actually gets worse on 321—excuse me—with the project than it is without it. It
1332 would grant us another 60 cars a day, in and out of the county on new roads as a
1333 result of urban sprawl, but where these cars go, they exit on existing roads.

1334 Will there be money to improve these two-lane county roads to
1335 accommodate additional loading? We all know there will not be, not for decades.
1336 Just like the rest of the toll road will not be built because of lack of funding.
1337 Where's the funding for other additional services needed to accommodate the
1338 projected urban sprawl? Sorry I'm running out of time. Schools, water, sewage,

1339 how are we going to pay for this? The answer is that the county will have to
1340 come up with that. Even though the law requires them to do so, the DEIS doesn't
3 1341 even mention the potential impacts of intense suburban sprawl with increased
1342 commuter distance to Charlotte. In fact, the comprehensive analysis of secondary
1343 impacts is practically non-existent.

1344 I can get to the airport from my house, a mile from here, in 25 minutes,
1345 and downtown in 35. It exaggerates. What else is exaggerated? Maybe the
4 1346 financials. And then look at Robinson and Stagecoach Road, where they say the
1347 traffic is going to dump off 321; drive those two main roads back up to 85.
1348 Trucks already do this. So just to reiterate what everybody said, it's not going to
1349 be used the way they are predicting.

1350 DeWitt: Sir, thank you for your comments. I appreciate it very much. Tina Medlin, she
1351 should be followed by Richard Turner.

1352 T. Medlin: (Tina Medlin, 1259 Dorchester Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Tina Medlin. I live at
1353 t030 1259 Dorchester Road. At this point, if you are for this road, either you stand to
1354 make money or you do not understand the facts. [APPLAUSE] I am 100% against
1355 this road, regardless of the route chosen, and I think this road is irresponsible of
1356 the leaders pushing this. I have lived in Gaston County since 1986; I grew up in
1357 Charlotte, but came to Gaston County to get away from the big city. I have
1358 commuted to downtown Charlotte ten of the last 11 years, and although there is
1359 traffic to deal with at peak times, I chose the serenity of the small town, but now
1360 the state and local leaders want to negatively impact that serenity.

1361 It was my choice to live this far from a big city, but if I want to drive so I
1362 can have serenity, then I think that's okay, that's my choice, and I do not
1363 understand why more roads—why they want more roads for economic
1364 development. In the June 18th, 2009 *Charlotte Observer*, it was stated that the
1365 leaders hope to spark development. On September 8th, in the *Gazette*, Senator
1366 David Hoyle said, "You don't build roads for economic development; you build
1367 roads to get from point A to point B." But from the accounts we've heard tonight,
1368 you're not—we're starting at A but we're not getting to B, so I don't understand
1369 how building a road for economic development is okay.

1370 Current citizens need to come first, but we are being neglected at the
1371 expense of the hope of future citizens. We need to focus on the assets that Gaston
1372 County has, the good things that we have, if we want more people here. But if we
1373 want more people here, then we need to be able to provide the schools and
1374 education, and at this point—I had a friend call me on Sunday, and she lost her
1375 job as a teacher, because she's not tenured yet, and yet she, and many others like
1376 her, have lost their job, and yet we want to spend all this money for a road that
1377 goes nowhere. And we can't even take care of the people that are already here.
1378 Thank you.

1379 DeWitt: Thank you. Richard Turner, followed by Nikki Jackson[ph], I think it is, and

1380 David—I can't read it—David Demperio? Richard Turner?

1381 Turner: (Richard Turner, 315 Dogwood Lane, Belmont, NC, 28012) Hi, my name is

1382 t031 Richard Turner. I live at 315 Dogwood Lane, in Belmont. And I have to reiterate

1383 a lot of my notes as we've already touched on these topics. One thing that I think
1384 we need to look at is it really easy to measure what we might gain by what we
1385 might lose, and I think everybody has done a good job capturing these thoughts.
1386 This road may provide some short-term relief, but if we build this road they will
1387 come; development will come. This artery will become congested just as
1388 segments of 485 have. And this was touted as the relief valve for Charlotte meant
1389 for our future, and that's one of the reasons why I'm against this road.

2 1390 The secondary issue is that this road is going to be completely at odds with
1391 Land Use Plans we have developed for Belmont, and our planning/zoning.
1392 [APPLAUSE] [INDISCERNIBLE] When we moved to Belmont some 16 years
1393 ago, just to make a point, because it was a good, quiet community, it's a good
1394 example of small town America. When I-85 was put through it divided Belmont
1395 into halves. where this road—and they're talking four to six lanes so it's
1396 effectively a super highway—this is dividing Belmont into thirds, segmenting the
1397 town, I don't think it's a positive. If you can bear with me for a second, I don't
1398 want to reiterate what everyone else has said.

3 1399 One point I would like to bring up is the air quality. Belmont would be
1400 sandwiched effectively between two super highways. In this document here, it
1401 said that no qualitative and no quantitative means have determined the air quality
1402 to measure, yet somehow the Federal Highway Administration has put us on
1403 notice that due to our air pollution we're at risk of losing highway funds. So
1404 apparently there has to be some way to determine, you know, in cubic feet or

1405 meters or some measure, what effect this road is going to have as far as air quality
1406 in Belmont. I don't understand what you're saying, because there is apparently
1407 some measure to determine the effect; we must have the knowledge from the
1408 turnpikes in New Jersey or Pennsylvania or wherever, what amount of pollution is
1409 brought to the area - you may want to look at this and reevaluate this segment
1410 here.
1411 DeWitt: If you'd like to come up and talk to us afterwards, we can talk a little bit more on
1412 that, about the details.
1413 Turner: I'll also say this--
1414 Man in audience: Put it on the record.
1415 DeWitt: I'm sorry?
1416 Man in audience: Put it on the record.
1417 DeWitt: It's part of the process. We will certainly answer your questions.
1418 Turner: This is a good man to speak to at the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, but I
1419 would say to the opponents, if you do not want this road, then the real thing is to
1420 contact the Federal Highway Administration and voice your opposition. The
1421 further points that as it would develop, you should also contact our state
1422 representatives in the House, and look for someone to possibly sponsor a bill to
1423 re-appropriate these funds to education, and to our teachers that we're losing right
1424 now. These are appropriated funds and they can be redirected. Furthermore, if
1425 you build this road, they will come, and tomorrow they might even to allude to "if
1426 you build it, they will come." But things are not going to come, and I struggle

1427 with this, are the traffic situations in Belmont, like any measure what you might
1428 gain by what you might lose. What we're facing in Gaston County is a critical
1429 situation in our schools; you do all this development, and do you have a
4 1430 corresponding plan of the state to develop some schools to handle the capacity,
1431 because we are at or over capacity in almost all of our schools, elementary
1432 through high school.
1433 DeWitt: Sir, we appreciate your comments. If I read that correctly your time is up.
1434 Turner: Thank you very much.
1435 [APPLAUSE]
1436 DeWitt: Nikki Jackson.
1437 Jackson: (Nikki Jackson, 2979 Lake Front Dr, Belmont, NC, 28012) Hi, I'm Nikki
1032
1 1438 Jackson. I live at 2979 Lake Front Drive. I currently own a piece of property on
1439 Edgewater, which is going to be in visible distance of this lovely highway. A
1440 couple questions that I have as far as all of this goes; you build it, they're going to
1441 come, okay. How does that eliminate air pollution? You move people from one
1442 road to the other; that road develops, the area around it develops. You have
1443 additional traffic to the already overcrowded roads. Not everybody is going to
1444 want to take the road. You're going to have people moving—going up 85, down
1445 74, and you're going to have overcrowding, theoretically, on this road. I don't
1446 really see how that works on the traffic plan.
1447 That doesn't make any sense. If you're going to have the development,
2 1448 they're going to have to get there; most people don't want to pay a toll. They're

1449 going to cut across the 74 & 85, on the already overcrowded roads. There doesn't
1450 appear to be much of a plan to widen either one of those; we don't have any
1451 money, that's what we keep hearing. That's why we're pushing this toll road as
1452 our one chance. But if we don't have any money to widen these, how are we
2 1453 going to have money to widen all those access roads that are supposed to take you
1454 from point A to point B. You're just going to move the congestion; you're going
1455 to move it off of 85 and 74 down to these side roads? I don't understand how
1456 that's supposed to work.

3 1457 Also, I don't understand how the air quality is going to be improved; if
1458 you've got congestion on the interstate, they got to get off of the toll road to go
1459 down the side roads, they're sitting there idling in traffic and stuff, idling on 74 &
1460 85. So you have the same problem. And if this draws, you know, the urban
4 1461 sprawl—if this draws the urban sprawl, you've got to widen the local roads,
1462 where's the money for that coming from? If you can't widen 74 & 85, you can't
1463 widen the side roads. That just does not make any sense to me. That's pretty
1464 much it.

1465 DeWitt: Thank you.

1466 [APPLAUSE]

1467 Demperio: (David Demperio, 549 Lake Wylie Rd, Belmont, NC 28012) My name is Dr.
1468 t033 David Demperio, I'm a chiropractor in Belmont, and I've been a resident of
1469 Gaston County for 25 years. I've been living at my present address for 13 years; I
1470 live at 549 Lake Wylie Road. Peter Schuler is a very smart man, and he's my

1471 neighbor. We've got a tough crowd here tonight. The chickens always sign up
1472 for it. But how many in this room want the parkway? Can I see a show of hands?
1473 Three, or four. Even the Turnpike Authority guys aren't raising their hands.
1474 [LAUGHTER][APPLAUSE] Who really wants this parkway?

1475 Well, the politicians want the parkway. What I'm going to read now—this
1476 is a quote from the *Charlotte Observer*, and you can check it out online, you can
1477 go to the *Charlotte Observer* website, September 7th, 2008. The politicians want
1478 it. Democratic Senator David Hoyle and the Four Star Group stand to make
1479 millions from developing the 327 acres that happen to be in close proximity to the
1480 proposed parkway. This group wants to build high end condos and retail centers,
1481 one of the county's largest retail centers. After buying the property in 2006,
1482 Hoyle casts at least three votes in the General Assembly in advance the highway
1483 construction. He is widely credited as the driving force behind the 1.25 billion
1484 expressway. Republican lieutenant governor candidate Robert Pittenger, who was
1485 elected to the Senate in 2002, was investing in more property along Garden
1486 Parkway Road than this senator David Hoyle. Mr. Pittenger has a stake—has a
1487 stake in some 2,000 acres, and some of that property is in four of the proposed
1488 on/off ramps. I'm not making this up, this is the *Charlotte Observer*, okay.

1489 "Mr. Pittenger began investing in his current Gaston County holdings in
1490 2002, according to the property records. He bought most of his Garden land from
1491 2004 to 2007, when the Parkway was gaining momentum in the legislature.
1492 Thank you. Robert Pittenger and company owns unfilled land in light industrial

1493 areas along I-85, 321, and the proposed Parkway exits. The company also owns
1494 large tracts in Belmont, along the South Fork Catawba River and 220 acres along
1495 Union-New Hope Road, near property lines of Hoyle's Four Star Investors Group.
1496 William Kearn[ph], a Gaston Republican also invested in some of Pittenger's
1497 Gaston County land but recently sold his interest to his son."

1498 The Botanical Garden wants it, because it's going to increase traffic flow
1499 to Stowe Botanical gardens. Who doesn't want it? Show of hands?

1500 [APPLAUSE] Let's take a vote right now. If it's true that the preponderance of
1501 public support is not there, and that that will kill the project, then all we have to
1502 do is stick together, and say we don't want it, send a message to Raleigh, we don't
1503 want it [APPLAUSE]. In closing I want to say the 37 businesses, the two
1504 churches that would be taken don't want it. I venture to say that most of the 348
1505 home owners whose homes will be bulldozed and otherwise negatively impacted
1506 by the road to nowhere, don't want it, and I'm going to coin a phrase called the
1507 Garden Parkway. [APPLAUSE]

1508 DeWitt: Thank you. Daniel Disarro. Debbie Hinkle[ph], and Neil Moore[ph]. Daniel
1509 Disarro, followed by Debbie Hinkle, and Neil Moore.

1510 Disarro: (Daniel Disarro, 5506 Old Farm Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Good evening. My
1511 t034 name is Daniel Disarro, and I reside at 5506 Old Farm Road in Gastonia. I'm
1512 disturbed by the fact that our local elected officials, along with traffic planners in
1513 Raleigh, have been studying traffic patterns, environmental impacts, and
1514 economic factors to determine whether a toll road costing well over a billion

1515 dollars, is feasible, with total disregard to the quality of life for the citizens of
1516 Gaston County. [APPLAUSE] To shave a few minutes of travel time, they are
1517 willing to sacrifice the most natural, undisturbed and pristine areas of our county.

1518 The 35 million dollars a year budgeted by our state is a fraction of the total
1519 cost of this road, yet that is a tremendous amount if re-budgeted to hire back many
1520 of our laid-off school teachers, staff, and administrators, or keeping police officers
1521 in acceptable numbers on our streets. [APPLAUSE] The toll road's first phase of
1522 development, which will end up at US 321, will not reduce traffic, but will, in
1523 fact, increase traffic on our local streets and thoroughfares. The toll road will be
1524 the gateway for urban sprawl. With the convenience of the direct route to
1525 Charlotte, new home building will most likely increase dramatically. Additional
1526 homes result in additional traffic, all of which our local roads will not be able to
1527 handle, and there are no plans to accommodate the increased traffic locally,
1528 leading to and from the toll road.

1529 Not to mention the additional demand that these families will bring to our
1530 schools and other municipal services. The increased traffic at the planned western
1531 terminus of the US 321 will greatly affect the quality of life of those residents of
1532 the US 321, Stagecoach Road, and Myrtle School Road corridors. While the
1533 traffic planners insist the increased traffic on US 321 will dissipate within half a
1534 mile of the western terminus, where will it go? I suggest they Mapquest, and then
1535 we'll see that those three routes come up without any money being spent on the
1536 research.

1537 We are told of additional jobs that the toll road will bring to our county.
1538 I'm leery of this, as well, as our county commissioners have done nothing to
1539 attract business to replace the shrinking textile industry, as they have had decades
1540 to develop an economic plan to do so. The short-term—the handful of short-term
1541 jobs by the Turnpike Authority's own admission; construction jobs, and a few gas
1542 station and convenience store clerk positions that would come available will not
1543 be worth the over \$1 billion dollar investment the project will require.

1544 In closing, I would like to say to the Turnpike Authority, I hope you will
1545 see by the attendance and the outcry of the citizens of Gaston County tonight that
1546 we do not want or need the Garden Parkway, not now, not ever. Please do what is
1547 best for the residents of our county. And to our elected officials, I hope you can
1548 operate a road grader or a cash register, because when your term is up, you will
1549 need a job. [APPLAUSE]

1550 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Debbie Hinkle, Neil Moore, and then David—it
1551 looks like Alenduff[ph]—I can't read the writing very well.

1552 F: What number are we on?

1553 DeWitt: We're on number 44—she's number 42.

1554 Hinkle: (Debbie Hinkle, 469 Patrick Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) I'm Debbie Hinkle. I live
1555 t035 at 469 Patrick Road. I am affected, but years ago, 19 years ago, actually, I was
1556 very pregnant, and went to my first meeting about this road. At that point, my
1557 only concern was that the road was going to go near by schools, and how the
1 1558 children in public schools—I didn't want the pollution from a large highway

1559 going past the schools. I was assured at that meeting that this road was not built
1560 for transportation of the public. This road was built to be a safe way to bring
1561 hazardous materials from the 485 area, which was being built, all the way over to
1562 Harding, where there should be a landfill, but they didn't actually say where the
1563 landfill was going to be. This is what I was told 19 years ago.

1564 Now, they're going to stop the road at 321. Where's that landfill going to
1565 go? I think Mr. Hoyle might know. [APPLAUSE] If you're ever looked it into it,
1566 if you have hazardous material landfill—other counties like Mecklenburg,
1567 Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln—not Gaston, but Lincoln and Catawba Counties—
1568 hazardous materials, if they are put in a landfill in our county, then we receive
1569 monies from them. And what politician doesn't want to up our tax base? So that
1570 is what I was told 19 years ago. Last year, my property tax was reduced by two-
1571 thirds on a piece of property that the road will actually go across. We went to the
2 1572 county offices and had them put our county taxes back up; they said we were the
1573 only people to come in and complain that their taxes were lowered. The reason
1574 why they're doing that is because they don't want to give us any money for our
1575 land. [APPLAUSE]

1576 I don't think that they are concerned about any traffic on this road, except
1577 for large hazardous material trucks, and moving transfer trucks across that land.
1578 They don't care about the transportation of the people. I ask you to use your
1579 educated minds to figure out a way, like a Lynx [ph] track, or a train track, and
3 1580 put up parking garages in different parts of Gaston County, to cut pollution, so

1581 people can get on a fast track to Charlotte, and have around the clock running
1582 trains. That will eliminate hazardous materials and pollution, and it would make
1583 sense, and people that got on that train would have to pay, to park in those garages
1584 would have to pay, and that would pay for it. Thank you.

1585 DeWitt: Neil Moore, followed by David Alenduff and Theresa Thompson.
1586 Moore: (Neil Moore, 1505 Southpoint Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Thank you for being
1587 t036 patient enough to stay with us tonight. Those of you that signed up to speak, or
1588 didn't sign up but would like to, please go to Olympic High School on Thursday
1589 night, the same time schedule, and go sign up. And if you need some additional
1590 information, please go to stopthetollroad.com. You've heard some very eloquent
1591 citizens already address many of the problems that we perceive with this road.

1592 You know, to Mr. Withers' point a moment ago, none of this even considers the
1593 willingness of residents to pay the tolls. They found out in Greenville, South
1594 Carolina that people weren't willing to do so. To fund this, they're going to
1595 borrow and sell revenue bonds, in a shaky financial bond market, where banks are
1596 scared it doesn't get online, much less taking on a municipal project. Their own
1597 projections are clear; the tolls do not pay the cost of the road.

1598 The state has appropriated an additional 35 million for 39 years; again,
1599 that's their own figures. And you've heard some very eloquent alternatives as to
1600 what the state can do with 35 million dollars in 39 years. In this study both
1601 transportation and education enrollment—and they lowered their own projections
2 1602 based on objections from citizens. They brought the traffic impact at the US 321

1603 interchange from 20,000 vehicles a day to 14,400 or more vehicles a day. Yet
1604 they failed to change their financial projection because if you have 5,500 fewer
1605 cars, that's 5,500 fewer cars and trucks paying tolls, which means their toll
1606 revenue projections are less.

1607 Then you would need more money than 35 million a year out of the
1608 general fund to make up the difference. [APPLAUSE] That's conveniently
1609 eliminated. Some of these folks that said this road is going to bring jobs—a lot of
1610 jobs well, if you can serve fast food or work behind the desk at a convenience
1611 store at the interchanges. If you were a business, why would you locate in a land
1612 that costs \$7,000 an acre when there's an office park already developed in the
1613 northern part of the county? Why, if you were a business, would you have your
1614 truck drivers pay tolls to go across southern Mecklenburg, southern Gaston,
1615 through Gastonia, through 19 traffic lights, according to the truck driver, just to
1616 get to I-85, when you can take the six minutes from the airport, you have a little
1617 freight car, six minutes to free Bill Graham Parkway around to 485 to get to I-85,
1618 it's not costing a thing, he doesn't have to hit the brakes.

1619 Why, if you were a business, would you locate an office or distribution
1620 center when there are roads that doesn't connect to all the major highways? And
1621 won't, for decades. Decades. And I love Joe Carpenter and some of these folks,
1622 and they'll be dead in their graves and I don't wish that on anyone, any time soon,
1623 believe me. But these people will be dead in their grave before you can drive
3 1624 from I-485 to—interstate 85 west of Gastonia. Every property if you're west of

1625 321 you've got a cloud hanging. You're going to have trouble selling your land.
1626 How are you going to sell any place for profit when you've got a road on it? You
1627 let these speakers..[INDISCERNIBLE] [APPLAUSE] Well I would say no.

4 1628 We offer solutions, with places for the old and aging bridge on Wilkinson
1629 Boulevard. Widen it. We can expand the Charlotte side of the six lanes and ease
1630 traffic congestion, makes no impact on existing homes or business, and no risk
1631 environmentally as in fact the bridge is already there.

1632 DeWitt: Sir, we appreciate your comments, I'll have to ask the next speaker to come
1633 forward.

1634 Moore: I appreciate your time, too. Two sentences Sir and I'll be complete. The other
1635 alternative is adding an additional lane from Belmont headed west, all the way
1636 through Gastonia. Stated again, you already own the right of way, so no impacts

5 1637 to existing homes or businesses. Or you can put the funding into an express
1638 custom commuter rail. Again, if you didn't speak tonight, please go to Olympic,
1639 have your friends and neighbors send comments to this fine group who are doing
1640 this work, but tell them. Thank you for your time.

1641 DeWitt: David Alenduff. Followed by Teresa Johnson and Richard Rankin

1642 Alenduff: (Address not provided) Good evening. I'm David Alenduff. I live at 5072
1643 t037 Timberline Lane. That's past Eagles Walk- If you drive out of here you might go
1644 up Union Road. There's about 90 homes in our development. I've talked to
1645 many of the residents in our development, and we are in the process of filling a
1646 petition that we'll be presenting when we get to Charlotte. And not a single

1647 person in out of these 90 residences are in favor of this. One of the things that I
1648 thought was interesting tonight, when we started talking about the Gaston East-
1649 West "Disconnecter," was that the information had already been presented on a
1650 handout. It doesn't address the bottleneck that is I-85.

1 1651 If we're going to spend \$1.2 billion dollars or more, and not solve the
1652 problem, and only address 20% of the problem, is that a good use of our money?
1653 I don't think so. I think this thing has been promoted by—we've already heard
1654 the political interests, the developers; I've heard some thinly veiled scare tactics
1655 tonight from business and things—I guarantee—I work for a company that is a
1656 Fortune 100 company; we are going through some hard times, and our entire
1657 corporation is working on a reduced work schedule. There are many people in
1658 this county that are affected by it, layoffs and a loss of income. So people have
1659 tried to close something like this in a vacuum; I don't know what kind of plan
1660 they think they're working on at this point in time, because we've got many other
1661 things—I guarantee there won't be people around to ride this toll road if we don't
1662 get the education in line and fund the things that need to be funded.

2 1663 This is a nice-to-have thing; 85 is not improved. This is a band-aid on the
1664 problem. We're going to spend 1.2 billion, as I mentioned, that's going to
1665 promote urban sprawl, as we already talked about. One of the things that skins
1666 me is about the newspapers, not one word about damaged property values. This is
1667 a project that is closely driven by growth, but we're dumping cars on 321; the
1668 driver is—the road is the—why is the road right up against Gastonia? If we want

1669 to have a growth near us, we should grow out to the road, not grow around it
1670 already.
1671 DeWitt: Sir, we appreciate your comments. I think your time is up. Thank you very
1672 much.
1673 Alenduff: I got another minute here.
1674 DeWitt: I'm sorry.
1675 Alenduff: No one will build near this road; no one has even mentioned that. This is an
1676 example of the old waste-filled roads that have been built for 50 years; it doesn't
1677 work. North Carolina is an example of disjointed approach, the value of applying
1678 strategy on how to build highways. This is a very silent approach—this is a new
1679 day. What we need here is a joint approach between South Carolina, North
1680 Carolina to get this thing out. If they want to really solve the 85 problem, I've
1681 heard one person talk about a joint project to go from 77, cut clear over to 85,
1682 blow off 485, and that whole mess. I'll tell you what; we don't need another road
1683 like this. This is a waste of money. To coin a phrase I think you've heard before,
1684 "You put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig."
1685 DeWitt: Thank you. Teresa Johnson[ph], followed by Richard Rankin[ph]. We've got
1686 Joel Long [ph] listed again; I'm not sure if that's the same Joel Long that spoke
1687 earlier or not. Is there a Teresa Johnson? Richard Rankin.
1688 Rankin: (Richard Rankin, 177 Willowside Dr, Mt. Holly, NC, 28120) I'm Richard
1689 t038 Rankin, and I live at 177 Willowside Drive, between Stanley and Mount Holly,
1690 where my family has lived for many generations, and I'm a parent of three

1691 children, and I'm head of school at Gaston Day School, which is located close to
1692 here. I support the Garden Parkway. The southeastern portion of our county is
1693 already heavily developing. New Hope and Union Road, and Southpoint Road
1694 are already straining under growth. The Garden Parkway will both stimulate and
1695 manage growth. I want Gaston County to plan for our future, and give our
1696 children a better chance to return here and find a job.
1697 The Garden Parkway is a key to a brighter, more prosperous future.
1698 Doing nothing, and rejecting this project has its own set of risks and pains. If we
1699 reject the opportunity for managed growth, part of the pain will be fewer jobs,
1700 more traffic jams, and Gaston County falling further behind. I support the Garden
1701 Parkway project knowing that change is difficult, and progress is not easy, but the
1702 alternative is less opportunities, clogged roads and a poor quality of life. I support
1703 the Garden Parkway because I believe it will be better for Gaston County, and
1704 that's the kind of place that I would like my children to live. Thank you.
1705 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Carl Henderson, followed by Carolyn Sly[ph],
1706 and Don Barkley, I think it is. Carl Henderson, are you here? Carolyn Sly. After
1707 her, it will be Don Barkley.
1708 Sly: (Carolyn Sly, 1412 Gaither Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Can you all hear me? I
1709 t039 probably look like Little Red Riding Hood here, with my little basket, but this
1710 basket contains 5,000 signatures opposing the Parkway. [APPLAUSE] I just
1711 talked with my son who is in Belmont right now, and there's probably another
1712 thousand sitting on my porch. Now, if only 350 homes are going to be impacted

1713 by this, why in the world do we happen to have 5 to 6,000 signatures? You know
1714 why? It's because the businesses, it's because the people who live here, it's
2 1715 because of our rivers, it's because it's dumping on the 321 in York Chester, and
1716 it's not making it to I-85. It's because we're wasting \$1.3 billion dollars in an
1717 economic time when we can't even keep our teachers. What are we thinking,
1718 folks? You know, I have to defer to some friends of mine who work for the
1719 Department of Transportation; right now, they can't even get the funds to
1720 maintain the roads that we have. We can't even complete 485 around Charlotte.

1721 What in the world are we thinking, folks? [APPLAUSE] I have property
1722 on the lake at 1412 Gaither[ph] Road, it's directly in the impact zone, and it's
1723 really interesting, not 20 feet from our mailbox, the property abuts Robert
1724 Pittenger's. Isn't that interesting. Isn't it interesting that the politicians in this
1725 county are going to benefit from this? If anybody happens to want to Google the
1726 real estate plat, and look at the name on that Pittenger property, you might be
1727 surprised to see what it's called. No, actually you probably wouldn't be surprised
1728 based on what we've heard tonight; it'll probably just validate everything you've
3 1729 heard. This is an absolute waste of money, it's a waste of time, it will not
1730 generate anymore economic growth; all it will do is generate pollution, more
1731 environmental contamination than we already have, and waste more money.

1732 Let's get our teachers back, folks.

1733 [APPLAUSE]

1734 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Mr. Barkley?

1735 Barkley: (Don Barkley, 3101 Winston Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) I'm Don Barkley ____,
1736 t040 and I live on 3101 Winston [ph] Road in Gastonia. I may have missed this, but all
1737 the people that are impacted and all the houses, I think even the folks from the
1738 Chamber of Commerce says, we have sympathy for them. Well, actions speak
1 1739 louder than words. Would you state for the record the day that the decision will
1740 be made as to which route?

1741 DeWitt: I can't give you a specific date

1742 Barkley: Well, who can?

1743 DeWitt: It's not that simple ___ of an issue.

1744 Barkley: Well, when you come up with a date, this person might be impacted, and that one
1745 will not be. I mean, you—I think the way you designed this thing, it looks like a
1746 bunch of spaghetti—all these different routes. I mean, I think people deserve
1747 better than that from the State of North Carolina and our elected officials. If not,
1748 let's get some new elected officials, okay?

1749 Now, another thing is, you keep saying 74 is overcrowded. Well, it seems
1750 like to me the City of Gastonia is planning to put flower pots down the middle of
1751 Franklin [ph] and cut it down from six lanes to four. So why is it overcrowded,
1752 and how can you get thorough—let me see—with \$850,000 to make a three-lane
1753 bridge out of a four-lane bridge, going over the railroad? Could you tell me that,
1754 sir, you're out of money. Of course, that is a different project. On the 11th [ph], I
1755 went to one of these meetings out at Rankin Lake talking about the 321/85
1756 interchange, I thought I never would get out of there. When I got back to 321,

1757 southbound traffic is backed up so far you couldn't get under that interstate
1758 bridge, couldn't get on the ramps.
1759 But having greenways is a priority. There's a lot of questions I have for
1760 NCDOT, and if you don't answer them, you say it's a public hearing; well, why
1761 don't we get somebody here that's qualified to answer questions. Now, it's one
1762 thing for this man to know if he is impacted or not impacted, so if he is impacted,
1763 then he can make plans. He may want to sell his house. He may want to move.
1764 He may want to get out of the way. Know that you're holding people up. As far
1765 as this economic development, I've had 85 come through my house years ago,
1766 and you will notice that Gaston County did not get a single frontage road. There
1767 is where your economic development is. That's your interchanges and your
1768 frontage roads.
1769 This thing, it goes around Gastonia, will be a barricade; it will be like a
1770 moat. I don't care what the Chamber of Commerce says about it.
1771 [APPLAUSE]
1772 DeWitt: Next up, it's—I think it's Larry McElva, if I pronounced that correct, followed
1773 by Carl Hanna [ph], and Dave Hoesly.
1774 McElva: (No address given on sign in sheet) My name is Larry McElva, 71 years old
1775 t041 almost, and I'm not for the road. I don't trust most politicians and I'm not for the
1776 road. I, for years and years, I've wanted to live on the river. I like the water,
1777 water sports, boats, fishing. And after 58 years I finally had a house built on the
1778 Catawba River, right off of Tanglewood Cove, off of the Canal Rd. Then I heard

1779 they were going to take my house, go through my house, and I said that's bad.
1780 It's just been built a few years. Then they said, well, we're going to go through
1781 321 Gastonia, curve around and take your 20 acres in west Gastonia, your three
1782 businesses and everything I have. I said, "This is really bad." So Duke Power,
1783 thank you Duke Power saved my house—they're not going to take Duke Power,
1784 never will, and they're not going to take Stowe Botanical Garden, and I respect
1785 the gentleman that works at Stowe; he's still got a job.
1786 This road gets through west Gastonia, will take my 20 acres, it will put 12
1787 people out of business, out of jobs. It will put seven people, including my son,
1788 out of his new home, and, I count myself in there. He said, well, you can replace
1789 your business—I have a muffler/brake shop, had it for 47 years. I have an auto
1790 wrecking yard, salvage yard, junk yard, whatever you want to call it; I've had it
1791 for 60 years. My dad had it, he died 29 years ago, and I still have it. But Gaston
1792 County doesn't like auto wrecking yards. We're an eyesore, we hurt people's
1793 eyes. We buy mint cars and sell them a fender or motor in mint condition, but we
1794 hurt people's eyes. I understand what they mean. They don't want you to have a
1795 \$600,000 house for what it costs and put a salvage yard beside the house and
1796 lower the value.
1797 But we were here long before the houses. If they don't want to build that
1798 \$600,000 house there, don't build it there, but we've been there for 60 years. And
1799 so, they very conveniently are taking my salvage yard, the muffler brake shop, an
1800 auto dealership, and a 2,000 square foot brick home. And not only my salvage

1801 yard, we happen to have four in west Gastonia, that takes up almost a half a mile,
1802 and this road conveniently takes all of four of them, because, you see the City has
1803 been trying to get rid of the wrecking yards for 30 years, and so if they do this
1804 route now, they'll get all of them, and take everything I have, except Duke Power,
1805 thank you for saving my house.

1806 DeWitt: Carl Hanna, followed by Dave Hoesly If I pronounced that right. There are only
1807 two speakers left that have signed up; if anybody else wants to speak when we're
1808 done, you can certainly come to the front and do so.

1809 [TECHNICAL COMMENTS]

1810 Hanna: (Carl Hanna, 125 Westbrook Circle, Gastonia, NC, 28052) You get to be 79
1811 t042 years of age, you'll slow down. If they put that map up on the screen, if I was the
1812 state I would take it. My thinking is, as a Christian—is there anyone here from
1813 Bethlehem Baptist? Raise your hand. They're just probably going to take that
1814 church. Dickies Park Rd took that church about 20 years ago, little brick church
1815 beside Bojangles north of New Hope, and it's gone. I guess Carmax bought
1816 three-fourths of the parking lot for used cars. But the new church down on South
1817 New Hope, below Hudson Boulevard south, that has 2,400 members, I'm told.
1818 We might be a planter church; Baptist church like we did in the old location to us;
1819 they still don't know it was so long ago. But if I was—if my nephew was in the
1820 state highway department, and they designed the interstate around Kings
1821 Mountain [INDISCERNIBLE] I've taken the wrong road, probably wasn't
1822 reading the sign, but they get you around Kings Mountain. Now he's retired from

1823 the state, he's going all over the world with a road design company. But my dad,
1824 my mother, many Pierce relatives [INDISCERNIBLE] Grandmother Hamilton
1825 Pierce [ph]—I just got one minute left as the gentleman said. But I'm in favor of
1826 this because our family could have died in an accident when I was about six years
1827 old, my brother Eugene Hanna was principal at Cramerton [ph] High School, so
1828 he taught some of your children, and baseball. I've been an Optimist and a Jaycee,
1829 a retired principal at Grimes[ph] School, so this is would benefit all of them. I
1830 would not want the highway to take my father's cemetery visitors. But they'll
1831 have to miss that. But we've got to get traffic around, Gaston County—I-85, you
1832 can't do it. You got to build another interstate across the Catawba River—this
1833 highway is going to take my younger brother's \$150,000 home on Southpoint
1834 River, just above the Southpoint Bridge, we can see -I've cut down trees. I can
1835 see the Lower Armstrong Bridge from our pier, where my younger brother, year
1836 and a half younger brother [INDISCERNIBLE].

1837 DeWitt: Sir, we appreciate your comments.

1838 Hanna: We've got to—we just gave away 88 million dollars to a person in Bessemer City,
1839 in the lottery. Where is all the money going from the lottery funds? You voted in
1840 Belmont, the ABC stores, and now you've got all the problems with alcoholics,
1841 you're going to have all the problems of gamble-holics. So, I'd vote for it.

1842 DeWitt: Sir, we appreciate your comments. Thank you very much. David Hoesly [ph], I
1843 think, is the last name I have listed.

1844 Hoesly: (Address not provided) Good evening. My name is Dave Hoesly, and I'm here
1845 t043 tonight to shoot myself in the foot. The reason for that is that I live in a location
1846 in Gaston County that would make it very convenient for me to access Charlotte,
1847 if this road were built, and yet I am also very opposed to the road, because I
1848 believe that it is a consummate waste of taxpayer dollars. [APPLAUSE] There
1849 was a man up here before, I think his name was Mr. Albright, and he reminded us
1850 that we should not believe that the politicians cannot change this. They are, in
1851 fact, our employees; it's not the other way around. We tell them what to do. They
1852 don't tell us what to do.[APPLAUSE]

1853 I also want to ask the gentleman running the meeting if the next time he
1854 runs a meeting like this, he would consider using a subjunctive case in his
1855 discussions, saying that if this road were to be built, rather than when this road is
1 1856 built, because [APPLAUSE] [INDISCERNIBLE] and that a choice might be,
1857 none of the above. We don't have to choose between groups; we can also say,
1858 none of the above.

1859 I've traveled 85 quite a few times across Gaston County, and I've run into
2 1860 a few blocks of traffic, I've certainly seen it and I'm sure you all have. But to
1861 compare that congestion to congestion in Atlanta leads me to ask the question,
1862 what are you smoking? It's not even close. [APPLAUSE] We have to ask
1863 ourselves if truck drivers are stupid, because if you're driving a truck, northbound
1864 on I-85 in the west part of Gastonia, and you have the choice of going south and

1865 then east to pay a toll, or going east and then south around the toll, which one are
1866 you going to select? Pretty obvious to me.

1867 Lastly, we keep hearing the argument being bandied about, "if you build
1868 it, they will come." Well, this kind of projection is brought to us by politicians
1869 and bureaucrats, who also gave us things like the Greenville-South Carolina
1870 Bypass, very financially successful, the US National Whitewater Center—very
1871 successful—the Lynx rail project in Charlotte, very successful. I think I don't
1872 want people spending my money on something based like that. Thank you.

1873 [APPLAUSE]

1874 DeWitt: That concludes our list of persons that signed up. If there's someone that would
1875 like to come up here and speak, please do; if you'll just come up here and form a
1876 line. If you'll come up here and form a line that would be wonderful—remember
1877 to give us your name and your address.

1878 M: Can I be next?

1879 DeWitt: However you fall in line, sir. The three minute time limit is still in place.

1880 Barrett: (Address not provided) My name is Joyce Barrett[ph] and I live on Sparrow
1881 t044 [ph] Dairy Road. I grew up on a 40 acre farm in the Union community, right next

1882 to the Harrison Dairy farm. I, too, was a child of the Depression, and we grew
1 1883 almost all the food we ate. Yes, America, it could happen again. I'm greatly
1884 concerned about the toll road going through our community; the reasons against
1885 this road are many. One is it will take away some of our natural resources, and

1886 agricultural land. There are many small farms and houses with garden plots that
1887 will be wiped out.

1888 Many people will lose their homes and farms, neighbors I have known for
1889 years will have to relocate. Where on earth will they go? The producing of
1890 concrete releases carbon dioxide, which accounts for 80% of total greenhouse gas
1891 emissions. If you don't believe this, read Al Gore's book entitled *An*
1892 *Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming*. Violent storms and tornados
1893 are caused as a result of global warming; just look at the two tornado touch-downs
1894 in Kings Mountain last week, and others all around us. Some of our leaders have
1895 been talking about global warming for years, but what have they done about that?

1896 We need more solar power, wind farms, and underdeveloped land—we
1897 don't need more population growth in our area. It is too populated as it is. Our
1898 emphasis should be on a better quality of life for everyone; clean air, safe water
1899 and food, more walking and biking trails is what we should work for. We don't
1900 need more cars and trucks and cement to pollute the air. We need more
1901 recreational activities for all of our citizens; every child needs to have a chance to
1902 develop his or her talents.

1903 I'm tired of some of our leaders who have no concern for the people they
1904 represent. Some of them are greedy and self-serving. Let's see that the money is
1905 put where it's needed. Repair the roads that are damaged, and improve our
1906 quality of life. Let's all pray about this serious matter. [APPLAUSE]

1907 DeWitt: Thank you very much.

1908 Cezane: (Address not provided) My name is Christine Cezane. I live at 909 Rosewood
1909 t045 Drive in Gastonia. I'm going to be proudly stating that I am from New Jersey,
1910 and I will tell you what the problem with building this road is. I lived up there
1911 twenty-something years of my life before I moved here, and guess what? The
1912 New Jersey turnpike and the New Jersey parkway were all built in hopes of it not
1913 being a toll road. Guess what? That was built in the early '80s and they're still
1914 there, and right now, you travel down that road, you're paying anywhere between
1915 75 cents and \$3.50 to travel on that road.

1
1916 And guess what? There will always be maintaining needing to be done,
1917 no matter how much the weather is done, no matter what is going on; tax payer
1918 dollars are always going to going to those roads. The devices that they want you
1919 to have in your car, they're always malfunctioning, number one. Number two,
1920 you're going to take our taxpayers' dollars to track down the out of state people
1921 that are going to travel on that road, and waste postage to get that 50 cents that
1922 you want for your road that doesn't need to be built? I don't think so.

2
1923 And of course you're going to go ahead and pick now to pay for these
1924 people's land, because the economy is down; that's less money that they would
1925 have to be spending on this land. [APPLAUSE] And another point is, I haven't
3
1926 lived here that long, 485 isn't complete from what I gather, why are we going to
1927 start building another road when you haven't finished this? I'm a family member
1928 of a teacher that works for a Gaston County school; she is at risk of losing her job,

1929 and my family owns a restaurant that's on Union Road, that has been there for
1930 over 30 years; they're going to be affected by this.

1931 They keep high school students, that go to this high school and the
1932 surrounding high schools, off the streets and out of trouble by giving them jobs,
1933 so you're going to risk moving that, and then having more students on the street,
1934 causing trouble, drug trafficking and things like that, that are already going on?
1935 I'm 23 years old, and if I already know that there's going to be a problem with
1936 this; I'm kind of young. Obviously there is a problem. [APPLAUSE]

1937 DeWitt: Thank you.

1938 Robinson: (Dale Robinson, 3832 Robinson Circle, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Hello, I'm Dale
1939 t046 Robinson, and I've lived at 3832 Robinson [ph] Circle off of Robinson Road, for
1940 55 years. We do not need David Hoyle Boulevard number two. [APPLAUSE]
1941 Anyway, there's other jobs here anyway. Why is people wanting to build more
1942 roads for them to come in? Sure, we need it—we need the economy but we got
1943 built every one of our jobs; look at home life, look at all the mills, look at
1944 everything. There's nothing here. I agree we need work, but we do not need to
1945 spend millions and millions of dollars on a highway that we don't have to start
1946 with.

1947 David Hoyle and all his boys is going to benefit from it. I'm sorry about
1948 the park-the garden over there; that's the worst name possible to give that thing is
1949 the Garden Parkway. It is just throwing it right in our face, for the Stowe's to

1950 make more money. If they want to go to a big city, move to Charlotte.

1951 [APPLAUSE]

1952 Simmons: (Amanda Simmons, 921 Carmel Dr, Gastonia, NC) My name is Amanda
1953 t047 Simmons, and I live at 921 Carmel Drive. My subdivision is right down here off
1954 of Union Road. We are right across the street from the Villanova? which
1955 reminds me this road is supposed to take it out. We live in this neighborhood to
1956 be away from the cities, so that my kids can grow up and be a part of a
1957 neighborhood, and be familiar with their neighbors, that they can be safe with,
1958 and this road is going to put a connector right across the street from Union Road.
1959 I don't want my kids around a major highway, which is why I moved into Gaston
1960 County to begin with.

1961 Gaston County has one of the highest unemployment rates in North
1962 Carolina, and you're going to ask us to travel on this road, every day, back and
1963 forth from Gaston County to Charlotte—I work in Charlotte—and some of us
1964 can't even make ends meet now? And you're wanting us to pay an additional fee
1965 to travel on a road that most all citizens in this county don't want? I'm going to
1966 be honest with you; I'm not going to take the toll road to go to Charlotte, because
1967 putting food on my table for my kids is more important than paying for your toll
1968 road, that we don't want, and you can't afford. [APPLAUSE]

1969 Kiser: (David Kiser, 1002 Union New Hope Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Hi, my name is
1970 t048 David Kiser [ph], and I live at 1002 Union New Hope [ph] Road in Gastonia, and
1971 I'm here to sound against the toll road, for many reasons that have been given

1972 here tonight like the gentleman that earlier spoke, who ran the numbers. I'm an
1973 accountant, I've also run the numbers, but mine were a little more generous to the
1974 toll and the Turnpike Authority. I gave them the benefit of lower interest rates
1975 and higher tolls, and just like the gentleman earlier, this thing will not pay for
1976 itself. There's no way in 39, 40, 50 years, with all the maintenance and
1977 everything else that has to be done to the road.

1978 One thing that nobody has mentioned is the business owners; I know
1979 there's a few business owners here tonight that will be affected, their businesses
1980 will be taken away from them, I guess that's the best way to say it—taken away.
1981 Now, I spoke to a gentleman here earlier—he's their consultant or whatever the
1982 Turnpike Authority who said that we don't buy businesses. Well, how do you
1983 determine what you're going to give me for my business? Or the gentleman here
1984 that built a home? Well, we don't buy businesses. So if they've had the business
1985 for 40 years, what do they do? Well, they can go out and sell it, but nobody is
1986 going to buy the business. It's going to be taken by the turnpike, all right. So
1987 you've got a business that you've had for 40 years, you can sell that business out
1988 on the open market, but now you can't. But you might be able to get \$300,000 for
1989 that business. But what's the turnpike going to give you for it? Well, you've
1990 have an acre and a half of land, we'll give you 60,000 for the land; the building is
1991 worth 50,000. Here's your 110,000. Take it, or we'll take it and go to court and
1992 take it. Is that fair? A man who has spent 40 years of his life building his

1993 business, running his business, can he afford to go start a business somewhere
1994 else? No.

1995 That is just no reason that I haven't heard anyone mention that; it's not
1996 about the businesses and what they're going to do to these people, they just put
1997 their life raising their family, had this business their whole life. Think about that.
1998 Thank you.

1999 [APPLAUSE]

2000 Meeken: (Address not provided) My name is Tom Meeken. I live at 5703 South New
2001 t049 Hope Road. That's why I came? But everything that I would have said has
2002 already been said tonight except for one thing, and that is that—a couple of days
2003 ago, I saw a great big full page ad in the Charlotte Observer. I'll show this picture
2004 of it. Road coming all the way from 485 to 85. This is what the voting public
2005 sees this is what they're going to vote on. And then we all know or hope tonight
2006 in this room, the chance of this road actually running all the way to 85 are very
2007 very small. Why are they doing that? To influence the public so that they'll vote
2008 for this road that isn't going to go anywhere. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

2009 [APPLAUSE]

2010 Rodney: (Address not provided) Good evening, my names is Eric Rodney?. I live at
2011 t050 2625 Gordon Best Drive in Gastonia and do own some land off of Bud Wilson
2012 Road and it's in the pathway of the proposed Garden Parkway. I'm going to
2013 throw some numbers at you: \$12 million dollars, \$3.1 million dollars, and
2014 \$40,000 dollars. I live in the city of Gastonia and I don't mean to pick on

2015 anybody, but they are contractually obligated to give the Whitewater Center \$12
2016 million dollars. Reason being the Whitewater Center cannot get by on its own.
2017 The \$3.1 million is money allocated for an aquatic center, \$40,000 is money that
2018 is for proposed wireless internet.

2019 My fear with this Garden Parkway is this opens more doors for the
2020 government to spend our tax money away from SEU [ph]. It's obvious that a lot
2021 of times we don't have sites with how much money is allocated. It's also
2022 painfully obvious that most of the things that the government is in charge of it
2023 runs extremely inefficiently. Another fear of mine is that it's opened the door for
2024 annexation. If we're in the county—I have property in the county, too, but how
2025 do I know the city is not going to come in and take me over? Therefore you're
2026 going to have city taxes. You've got to consider the burden for water and sewer.
2027 I guess the bottom line is, with the monies that have been projected to construct
2028 this roadway, in no way is that the end of the cost in this county for this roadway.
2029 It continues to grow.

2030 [APPLAUSE]

2031 I am against it ___ allocated, and like a gentleman said earlier, why are we
2032 the only section of I-85 for some reason that can't be widened? Thank you.

2033 [APPLAUSE]

2034 DeWitt: Thank you. Is there anybody else like to come up and speak. Sure.

2035 Armstrong: This Garden Parkway sure has tore up everything. Tonight , or this afternoon, my
2036 t051 sister in law was taken to the hospital with chest pains, we don't know what it is,

2037 but if this road is what's behind all of it—what I wanted to mention awhile ago
2038 was about dividing ___. If we had it—if that road was there, it would come in on
2039 us and we had it for generations, and my dad always told us to keep our property
2040 as long as we could, and we are planning to do that. And if that road goes across
2041 and divides our church community, and our whole community, in Belmont, and
2042 Gastonia on Highway 274—also it goes right across there on the speedway; I
2043 don't know what will happen there. And that will tear, is tearing up a lot of the
2044 racers [ph] and the people that go to that type of entertainment, that do not like to
2045 play ball.

2046 And I have a dear friend that died a couple months ago from—she lived
2047 off of I-85. A convict that got loose and wrecked close to her house and he broke
2048 in her house, tied her up in a chair and her husband found her dead in the chair
2049 when he came home. I worked with that girl, and the paper said she was sick.
2050 That girl wasn't sick. But anyway, that's politics, that's how they cover up
2051 things. I'm going to tell you you hear of eminent right domain. I've already been
2052 hit in the eminent right to domain. Duke Power canal took our property down in
2053 the country. [INDISCERNIBLE]

2054 [LAUGHTER]

2055 [APPLAUSE]

2056 It took our property down in the community, our river right-of-way, on
2057 the eminent right of domain and who you are, it's getting ready to take me over

2058 again. I'm going to fight to the bitter end. I'll tell you all my people are
2059 [INDISCERNIBLE]. I just want to leave something with you.
2060 [APPLAUSE]
2061 [INDISCERNIBLE] I pray a lot when I can't sleep at night, and feel bad in the
2062 daytime, or it's on my mind and I can't Help it. Sunday was Fathers' Day, so I
2063 asked him in church on Sunday ___ this is my father's world, so I just answered,
2064 this is my father's world oh let me never forget that though the wrongs seem oh so
2065 strong, God is the ruler here, battle is not done and earth and heaven be one [ph].
2066 Please stop this toll road to nowhere so we can live in peace. Thank you.
2067 [APPLAUSE]
2068 DeWitt: Anyone else choose to come up ___?
2069 M: He said if anybody else wants to speak I'm standing here but God's word says, for
2070 example, the tribulation is coming. I also have helped 900 people and I'm an
2071 ordained minister and I hope to start a new church. God's word says the
2072 tribulation is coming, he said all these things in Mark the 13th chapter are going to
2073 take place, he said all these things would take place during the apostles' lifetime,
2074 and at their death. And 11 of the apostles died a martyr's death, so all of these
2075 things happened during the apostles' lifetime. No man knows, Jesus says, no
2076 angel knows when this tribulation will start, but there will be 10 days, Revelation,
2077 John the Revelator, God's holy __, there will be 10 days of tribulation. So it's
2078 going to happen maybe in our generation. Billy Graham is expecting it.
2079 Thousands of pastors are expecting God to end it all, but then our generation and

2080 our children or our grandchildren—don't think I noticed that it happened in the
2081 apostle generations and every generation for 2,000 years that they went through
2082 some suffering and death I advise you to the best of my ability to get a living will
2083 free of charge at the Gaston Memorial Hospital and get it witnessed by two
2084 people. I joined a Baptist church, and I believe in living wills [ph]. So he might
2085 die of infection at Gaston Memorial Hospital, like so many __. So I believe in
2086 living will and my wife taught in the Triangle [ph] school, Bill Friday School __.
2087 Over in the north __ southwest, she taught there, certain time in '91.
2088 DeWitt: Sir, I appreciate your testimony—
2089 M: All these things are going to happen, so God bless you. And see you in heaven at
2090 the Forestview Southpoint High School.
2091 DeWitt: Thank you very much. Any more comments that anyone would like to share?
2092 Williamson: (Address not provided) My name is Clark Williamson. I live at 27 __. I just
2093 t052 found tonight my house will be taken but it will be several years before it will be
2094 taken. I brought [INDISCERNIBLE] went all the way to 321, stopping right
2095 there, even my house taken all the way. Thing is, go down 321, I've been going
2096 up and down it 60 years now almost, and I'm 60 years old. I've had businesses
2097 on it. My dad had businesses on it. I've traveled it all my life. The traffic is no
2098 better than it was 20 years ago; it's gotten worse, and it's got no better. 85 where
2099 it's at now, on 321, is congested so bad coming from one direction 85 backs up
2100 causing the intersection they should have built and fix it better than what they did.
2101 They need to fix that before they build this highway __. Been going down right

2102 through the main part of Gastonia to finish this that's stupid. I think it's kind of
2103 dumb to stop it right where it's at, even though it's going to take my property.
2104 Finish it out. They need to keep on going if it's going to go ___ keep going, don't
2105 stop until it's done, if you're going to do it. Otherwise do it somewhere else.
2106 Don't stop before 321.
2107 DeWitt: Thank you, sir. if there are no other comments [INDISCERNIBLE] it's 10:10
2108 and I consider the public hearing closed. Again, I thank you for your attendance
2109 tonight.
2110 M: Thank you.
2111 [END RECORDING]
2112

1 **Gaston East-West Connector**
2 **STIP #U-3321**
3 **Gaston & Mecklenburg Counties**
4 **Public Hearing**
5 **Olympic High School, Charlotte, NC**
6 **7:00pm June 25, 2009**

7
8
9 **DeWitt:** **Steve DeWitt, Chief Engineer NC Turnpike Authority**
10 **Morgan:** **Clint Morgan, PBSJ Engineer**
11 **M:** **Male speaker**
12 **F:** **Female speaker**
13
14

15 [INDISCERNIBLE]

16 [OVERLAPPING]

17 DeWitt: Good evening. It's 7:00 and we'd like to get started if you folks could take a seat.
18
19 Everybody hear me in the back okay? Everyone coming in now hear me okay?
20
21 My name is Steve DeWitt I'm a chief engineer at the North Carolina Turnpike
22 Authority. I'd like to welcome you here tonight to the second of two public
23 hearings we're participating in this area to receive public comments for this
24 project. This is a public hearing on just so everybody knows what we call the
25 Garden Parkway, or the Gaston East-West Connector. What we're going to do
26 tonight is talk a little bit about the project, give you some sense of where we are
27 with it. We will talk about the public hearing process. We will give you—the
28 whole reason why you're here is to give you an opportunity to come up, speak to
29 your neighbors and to us about your feelings about the project. And then we're
30 going through, or prior to that, go through the corridor map details just in case
 you don't know, as you walk through. If you've not seen the maps, make sure
 you've seen those and we'll go over some of the details to make sure you know

31 what you're looking at. I'm going to do a brief introduction, I'm not going to get
32 into very deep detail here, but my staff's here on the front row, these folks here
33 are DOT and other organizations that are part of this team that we are very proud
34 of??.

35 The ground rules for tonight, this is really important. This really begins
36 your opportunity to tell us what you think about the project. This is your time and
37 we understand how you feel about that. But really this is your opportunity to
38 come up to the microphone and voice your opinions about the project or about the
39 individual pieces of that project. We are looking for pros and cons. We are not
40 here to advocate the project. We're here to hear your comments, whether you like
41 the project or not.

42 This is not a debate. I'm not going to stand down here and engage you in
43 back and forth; that's not what this is about. This is your opportunity to say what
44 you feel about the project while we're here. We're going to try to answer very
45 general questions if it's appropriate. But we're not going to get into great detail.
46 If you have a specific question about your parcel or packet data or those kinds of
47 things, this isn't really the opportunity to do that. The public workshops that
48 we've been doing in the past week has been the opportunity to do that, if we
49 haven't answered your questions you can contact us here afterwards and we'll do
50 our best to answer those questions for you.

51 I would ask that there is no debate among the audience. Someone may
52 come up here with an opposing opinion to yours, I would I ask that we be polite

53 and that we allow that person to say their piece and then sit down, just as you
54 want someone to be polite to you when you're up here speaking at about whatever
55 it is, in terms of your opinion. There is a three-minute time limit. My time-
56 keeper is right here. What we will do is we will allow you to say—what we want
57 you to do is come to the front, give us your name and your address, and once you
58 do that we will start the time. We'll show you a sign when two minutes have
59 elapsed and you have one minute left and then we'll show you the sign when your
60 time's up, and we would ask that you bring your comments to a close at that time.
61 When you came in this evening there was a list of prompts for you to sign in to
62 speak tonight. We have that list. There's roughly 22 or so signed up. If you have
63 not signed up and you want the opportunity to come up here in the front, once
64 we've exhausted this list, we'll have the opportunity to do just that. If you feel
65 compelled to speak for, say, six minutes, I indicate speak for three minutes as you
66 come up here, and then once I exhaust this list, if you choose to come back up
67 again and finish your comments, you're certainly welcome to do that.

68 You may speak tonight. Your comments are being recorded and will be
69 transcribed verbatim. They become part of the administrative record for this
70 project and more importantly they become part of the consideration to be used as
71 we decide how this project moves forward. I'll go through very quickly some
72 background information on the project, the purpose of the project, some of the
73 detailed study alternatives, and what that means. Talk a little bit about the draft
74 EIS and why that's important in the process that we're under here. The

75 recommended alternative, which I think most of you may be aware of by now,
76 what that is, we'll show that to you. Then we'll talk a little bit about right-of-way
77 and relocation for anybody who may be impacted by the project.

78 But for those who don't know, there's a variety of projects across the state
79 that the General Assembly has charged the Turnpike Authority to study. This is
80 one of those. Our first project is the Triangle Expressway to Raleigh. And we're
81 roughly 20 days from going to bond market to sell bonds for that project and get
82 that one under construction.

83 In 2005, we were asked to study this project by local codes [ph]. We've
84 done that, picked it up gone through some traffic, the revenue analysis, and the
85 environmental one that brings us here tonight to get your comments. The project
86 study area is shown on this map—basically, south of I-85, west of 485. And you
87 can see the boundary on the left side, the South Carolina state line. This is the
88 area that we have studied for alternatives to this project. This is the area we're
89 developing environmental and human issues that exist within the boundaries of
90 the project.

91 This project is from 485 to I-85. This is what's in the environmental
92 document. This is the project that we're studying. We'll talk about phasing here
93 in just a minute. This is the project that we're going to talk about, and it is our
94 intent to continue to focus on this project and to continue to pursue funding
95 through whatever avenues that make sense to bring this project to fruition, from
96 485 to I-85.

97 I apologize for my throat. I'm having problems today. This is a typical,
98 what we call a typical cross-section. This is in essence if you cut the road at a
99 slice and you looked at it. You see how many lanes we're talking about this
100 environmental document that all these maps are showing, shows three lanes in
101 each direction. We will initially build two lanes in each direction, the third would
102 be built for future capacity if it's ever needed. Right of way width, if you've seen
103 the drawings out there, is roughly 300 feet.

104 The project funding comes primarily through tolls, through revenue
105 models of what we sold as municipal bonds, just like the City of Charlotte or the
106 State of North Carolina sell for a variety of reasons. They are backed by the tolls,
107 so they're called toll revenue bonds. TIFIA loan, the TIFIA loan is a program
108 under USDOT that provides a special loan, if you will, for a project, like this one
109 out in the country. State TIP [ph] or Transportation Improvement Funds come
110 from—those are NCDOT funds that come out of the highway fund, the highway
111 trust fund. We are not expected to have any of that type of funding for this
112 project; it is all exclusive of the state TIP funds, except for the latest being used
113 for project development and environmental process that were going through.

114 There has been a special amount of money appropriated by the General
115 Assembly for this project called gap funding. This is the amount of money that is
116 required to build and operate the project, from what we've heard. It's held in a
117 loan, the amount of money that can be produced in tolls is called gap funding.

118 This amount raised by the General Assembly last year is \$35 million a year for
119 about 40 years.

120 I think all of you have probably heard about this, what we're calling
121 project phasing. Given the amount of funding that's available through toll revenue
122 bonds through gap funding, we expect to have sufficient money to build the
123 project to 321 in the short term. In terms of how long it will take to build all the
124 way to 85, we don't have that answer. We don't have a set of source of funding
125 for that, but there are a variety of options that could be used, some of which I've
126 already mentioned, in the future as that's pursued.

127 How much the tolls are going to cost is very much based on a large
128 number of factors. Capital cost for the upfront construction cost and the cost to
129 operate the road long term, so on and so forth. All toll revenues used to finance
130 and operate and maintain this project, the money from this road can't go to some
131 other road in the state, to help finance that road; it all has to stay here. The tolls
132 will typically range from 10 to 20 cents per mile. The legislation in North
133 Carolina says once the bonds are paid off—not the maintenance cost—once the
134 debt on the bonds are paid off roughly in 40 years, then the toll collection system
135 is removed ____. We'll collect tolls through the electronic toll collection system; it
136 will not be the kind of cash booths you might have seen if you go up in the
137 northeast. It will all be done through a transponder-based system, which is a little
138 box that sits in your window. And you can have a pre-setup account with us.
139 What you ride under, what we call the gantry system, there are readers that hang

140 on to that gantry system that will sense the package going under it. It will
141 automatically debit your account. If you don't have a transponder, there's a
142 video, a basic system that will take a picture of your license plate, and through
143 DMV records we will send you a bill. If you live out of state, the reciprocity
144 agreements that will be in place to ensure that out of state folks pay that toll
145 through the video tolling concept.

146 What is a draft EIS or what is an EIS? This is the environmental impact
147 statement. This is this very well detailed study that this project has been under for
148 literally many years now. We picked it up in, roughly, 2005 and picked it up
149 from it had been sort of staggering for some years, and we'll bring it hopefully to
150 fruition here, relatively closer. This environmental process is dictated by federal
151 law, it's the National Environmental Policy Act. All the things that we're doing
152 are very detailed to the law. The process we're following follows that law. What
153 this EIS process does, it answers sort of simply, if you will, it answers questions,
154 such as: Is the project really needed? There's what we call a purpose and need
155 statement in this document. And what we try to do for this environmental process
156 is, in essence, prove that purpose and need to build this project, build that project.
157 Or, in some cases, you end up with a project that is actually a "no-build" or a "no-
158 build project." And that's what this process is all about.

159 It does help define the progress of the project as you go. It helps us look
160 at, or it does require us to look at other reasonable alternatives. If you look at this
161 draft EIS that's on our website, it's been up here this afternoon. You can see

162 other kinds of alternatives that we've talked about or studied here. It also is part
163 of this; we have to address the concerns that are raised by literally anybody that
164 has an interest in the project.

165 Who is involved in this? This is not just the North Carolina Turnpike
166 Authority. This actually is a federal document by the Federal Highway
167 Administration, but as a lead state agency in North Carolina on this project, we
168 are, in essence, putting the EIS together. NCDOT is also serving as a partner in
169 this. All of the environmental agencies you see on the right are a very important
170 part of developing this project—the Corps of Engineers, in-state environmental
171 agencies such as the Division of Water Quality and others, are all key members of
172 developing this project.

173 Who else is involved? Certainly, local folks are very important part of this
174 project. This project actually originated, as all transportation projects do,
175 originated here in the local community, with the municipal planning organization
176 and other groups, as they look at transportation needs around this region. This
177 project is their number one priority in terms of new location type facilities.
178 Residents, property owners, all you folks are certainly an important part of this.

179 The alternative concepts that we have looked at and studied in this
180 document include relocation alternatives, such as you're probably aware of them,
181 like existing roadways like I-85 [ph] is addressed in detail through the EIS or draft
182 EIS. We look at options like mass transit and other modes such as that. Other
183 transportation system improvements rows up and down the corridor, back and

184 forth across the corridor, signalizations, those kinds of things are in here. We
185 started with 90 preliminary alternatives, all these little spaghetti sections, if you
186 will, on this map that show all these different alignments. Back in the early '90s
187 there was a local citizens advisory group that was put together to look at this
188 project and look at a corridor that might make sense from their knowledge of the
189 region and the area and so on. You can see it here in orange.

190 As the project has moved forward we have gotten down to what we call 12
191 detailed study alternatives. These are segments that we studied literally in detail
192 to look at all the issues within those boundaries. You can see that original
193 citizen's advisory committee alignment is still a part of that, and in fact it very
194 closely aligns with the recommended alternative or our recommended alternative
195 that we are showing here tonight.

196 The one exception is the citizens advisory group showed here as it crosses
197 the Belmont Peninsula going through the Allen Steam Station, and we had to
198 move it. We had to study either north or south of that largely because of the
199 issues that relate to the steam station, the many issues that they have there. And
200 you can see the citizens advisory corridor and north and south corridors that we
201 have studied.

202 These detailed study alternatives are evaluated based on all of the things
203 you see, human environment, physical environment, issues like historical
204 structures or properties, endangered species, the many things that we go through
205 to look at these different alternatives and come up with the one that tries to do a

206 best fit by missing the vast majority of those where possible, balancing out all the
207 issues through project coordination.

208 One important part that is protected under federal law are parks such as
209 you see here. We appreciate any comments that you might have on the Berewick
210 District Park. As you can see, there is just a touch of effect by the recommended
211 alternative on that park. If you have any comments, we'd certainly like to have
212 those.

213 The alternative selection process, recommendation of what we've
214 proposed here which is alternative 9, is based on all of the technical factors that
215 I've highlighted here tonight very briefly. This public hearing comment period is
216 very important to us because it will help us either confirm that the alignment that
217 we've picked is the best alignment, or we get sufficient information that makes us
218 go back and look at different segments of the project in terms of where that final
219 alignment goes on.

220 The alternative selection process is not a vote of the people. We don't get
221 a vote of it's x or y or whether it's one or it's two. But we take all the comments
222 and we count them as part of the ballots of the evaluation of all that. The
223 alternative selection process is not a political decision. When I say the alternative
224 selection process I am not talking about the project, I am talking about the
225 corridor for which we recommend. The corridor that we recommend is based on
226 very solid, very technical details that those in the community can certainly see in
227 our environmental document. We follow the rules of federal law to come up with

228 that alternative that we talk about. It really is based on sound, defensible,
229 technical data.

230 If we stopped right now and someone else picked this project up 10 years
231 from now, went through the same process, assuming all things were the same in
232 terms of development and so on, they'd come up with the same solution that we
233 have in terms of Alternative 9. Inside your citizen's summary that you should
234 have picked up when you came in, you see what we call an impact table. What
235 this impact table does, as it is defined, is a summary of the different impacts along
236 each of the different alternatives that we have studied. There's a lot more detail
237 back in the background of this, but you can see in gray shaded—I think it is gray
238 in the chart—the gray shaded area, that is alternative nine. You can sort of make
239 a comparison between many different categories that we looked at—our business
240 relocations, residential locations, wetland impacts, stream impacts, all of the
241 things that go down that list on your corridor. While it is not quite as simple as
242 this, we try our best to balance all of those things out, take all the issues into
243 account, and again find the best fit line with regard to what we're going for in
244 maximum [INDISCERNIBLE].

245 This is our recommended alternative. Again you've seen the maps,
246 you've paid attention to what has happened, you've seen the maps out there, as
247 you go west to east, it is a purple color, it is an orange color, it is a purple color
248 again. Clint Morgan will come up here in just a little bit and give you a little
249 more detail on some of those. The right-of-way process, if you are affected when

250 the final line is chosen, if your home is within that right-of-way, the right of way
251 limits of that corridor, you will be contacted by us and/or our right of way agent
252 will sit down with you, show you the details of the plan, makes sure you know the
253 impact. Once that is done, we'll hire a private appraiser just like you would if you
254 bought a piece of property somewhere, and they would appraise the property and
255 offer you fair market value for the property. One reason tenants are generally
256 treated equally; if you are renting a home and live in that home?? and living
257 expenses, those kinds of things, we will help you find comparable housing, all of
258 that is a part of this right-of-way process. We are very transparent here. We are
259 going to do our best to satisfy you. You are familiar with the rules, the process
260 that we follow, market evaluations and all of the things that go with that. We do
261 provide what we call a—I think it is defined as just compensation for the
262 property. And we provide relocation assistance if you wish to have us do that,
263 then, we certainly would.

264 We do have a process of helping you find comparable housing if you live
265 in a specific house we help you find a comparable house in a comparable area as
266 part of this relocation process. Moving assistance would pretty much be paid by
267 us. Additional compensation is available. If the mortgage rates are X and the
268 mortgage rate at the current time that the house or the next house you buy is say
269 twice X, we would compensate you for the difference in that mortgage interest on
270 that new home.

271 We do very much want your comments. You are here tonight to speak to
272 us. If you wish to do so, you should have picked up the forms outside. If you
273 want to supply written comments to us, in your citizens summary you have a
274 website. You can email us, however you chose to communicate your concerns
275 and issues to us we want you to do that. We are looking for comments by the 21st
276 of July. Once we have all of these comments wrapped up, we will take them, we
277 will evaluate all of them, we will evaluate our alignments and so on, and move
278 forward from there.

279 What happens next, again, we review those comments towards the end of
280 this year. We will identify that preferred alternative. It may or may not be the
281 one you've seen here as we talked about a recommended alternative. Then in
282 2010 we'll have what we call a final EIS. By 2010 will be what we call the
283 record of decision—that basically is the federal action that allows us to move
284 forward with this project with construction. In early 2011, assuming that all of
285 these things fall in place, we sell the bonds, we can start construction of the
286 project which includes the acquisition of right-of-way. And we're projecting late
287 2014 if everything falls into place as the schedule shows, it would open to traffic.

288 With that, I'd like to turn it over to Clint.

289 Clint Morgan: Good evening and thank you for coming this evening. Some of you I recognize
290 from the two days of hearings and I'm glad you came back. We are going to go
291 through a technical review of the maps that you've seen, some of them detailed
292 maybe a little bit more, maybe a little bit less. We want to make sure everyone

293 has the opportunity to go over to see the map, and clearly understand what we are
294 showing you.

295 This is a large project. We divided this up into three different sections,
296 multiple engineers, and four different engineering teams to work on this project.
297 We looked for logical break points, beginning on the Western side we started at I-
298 85 and worked south to 321. That section is referred to as the western area.
299 Moving east, from 321 near Cramerton, close to NC 273, we named it the central
300 section and we picked up there and went all the way to I-485 and that is the
301 eastern area maps.

302 We broke this into three major sections and if you can see there are
303 multiple colors here because this is a lot like a puzzle. You can take some of the
304 blue and mix it with some of the orange and some of the green and you get a
305 complete roadway. This way, you are not locked in to one single route from I-85
306 to 485 or from 485 to I-85. We looked honestly at the best option possible. What
307 you saw was the legend, and you can see the different design alternatives the
308 different things we looked at. You can see how we took each one of these puzzle
309 pieces and fit them together and that is how we came up with our design
310 alternatives.

311 The legends on these maps were very much the same. What you saw was
312 a large color—some of them were yellow. As Steve referred to pink, orange, and
313 I wasn't allowed to call it blue or purple, it had to be cornflower blue. But that
314 was how we distinguished each one of these puzzle pieces. On there you saw red

315 lines, black lines, gray lines, orange lines—the red lines were primarily the right
316 of way lines. That was the area affected directly by the proposed construction.
317 Other items you may see on there were historic properties, wetlands, streams, and
318 parks.
319 This is a blowup of the detailed area. You can see some of the elements
320 we are talking about. You see that orange shading, the gray for the road, the red
321 for the bridges, and the red for the right-of-way lines. In most areas we tried our
322 best to label the roads that were common to everybody and we labeled housing
323 developments for those that weren't quite as familiar with the road system. That
324 takes us all the way to the east side of the project. This is where we are going to
325 start the discussion of the maps.
326 Primary things you want to see is the Charlotte-Douglas International
327 Airport to the north, Berewick District Park as Steve mentioned earlier, and of
328 course the Catawba River. In this area was have one concentrated area where we
329 are tying both—excuse me, all three of the alternates in together. You have two
330 major routes, one going to the north of the steam station, one going to the south of
331 the steam station. First interchange is at Dixie River. The second is at Southpoint
332 Road. Moving on to the west, again you see three clearly defined corridors that
333 we have studied as we cross New Hope Road into 279. We continue to work
334 towards the west. Moving from the eastern maps you can see the colors will
335 change when we come into the central or the mid maps. In this area you'll see the
336 Gastonia Municipal Airport, we did come close to the North Carolina-South

337 Carolina border but again, you can see the multiple colors for the different puzzle
338 pieces that we use to find the best design alternative available.
339 One of the other items of interest in this area is the historic dairy farm and
340 I think it is Carolina Motor Speedway. Through this area we have three different
341 interchange locations. Moving more to the west, you come up to existing US 321.
342 In this area you have the four alternates to the west, four alternates to the east, the
343 major interchange at US 321.
344 Coming down and approaching Crowders Mountain State Park, again the
345 different colors show you clearly where we are moving, in what direction we are
346 heading. Again you see the interchanges at existing 321. The corridors continue
347 more towards the north now and are no longer traveling directly west. You are
348 taking a northern turn towards I-85, away from Crowders Mountain State Park.
349 This is Linwood Road. We do have proposed interchanges at that location. And
350 ultimately the project will tie back into I-85 in the two designated locations here.
351 Again, what we just drove through real fast is the different design
352 elements for each one of these and how they all fit together, the western, the
353 central, and the eastern maps. Through all of these colors, through all of this
354 design study, we have selected this design alternative as the preferred. Excuse
355 me, that is incorrect. The recommended—make sure I get those words correct.
356 Thank you very much.
357 DeWitt: Okay. We are going to start the process of why you are really here, is your
358 opportunity to come to the podium and speak. I do have —22 folks have signed

359 up. I'll call you in order and again you have three minutes. I'll remind you again
360 it is all being transcribed, it becomes a very important part of our process. I will
361 call the first three people who will come up in order and the next two just be
362 prepared to come up and speak. There are timekeepers right here. The
363 microphone is up here; I'd ask you to come stand in front of it and please start
364 with your name. First up is Jim Carpenter followed by John Lowery and then
365 Tim Gause.

366 Carpenter: (Jim Carpenter; PO Box 1789, Monroe, NC, 28111) Good evening. My name is
367 t053 Jim Carpenter. I am president of the Union County Chamber of Commerce in
368 Monroe and was asked to come tonight by my friends from the Turnpike
369 Authority who assure you that this project will be good for your community.

370 We have a similar project that is going to start next year, the Monroe
371 Bypass. It will be an interstate road. It will take traffic off of the current
372 congested 74 and allow the locals to reclaim it. It will also help us to recruit more
373 industry. We are an 85% residential, 15% commercial and industrial and by
374 getting more industry that will help our tax base, keep taxes low.

375 This road, if you noticed, most of the larger cities around North Carolina
376 down to the size of Fayetteville have a circumferential route around. This will do
377 that for Gastonia and greatly relieve your traffic congestion. It will help the
378 Charlotte airport, which Mr. Orr has guided to be one of the finest in the nation.
379 It has an intermodal [ph] terminal that is being built there now. It will provide
380 this region as a distribution center for the next hundred years, and growth is

381 important. I've been to Youngstown and Flint and Detroit and East Saint Louis,
382 which are ghost towns. Again, this is good for your community. It will increase
383 your property values. If you go on 485 east of Pineville, between Pineville and
384 Matthews, you see these half-million to million dollar homes, they are built next
385 to the interstate and people live there and enjoy it. And it will be good for your
386 community.

387 We are excited about our road which will be built next year. This will be,
388 this road is part of a link between Asheville and Wilmington that has been a
389 dream since when I was 12-years-old growing up in Charlotte, I read about it in
390 *The Observer*. Wilmington is the only port on the East Coast not linked to a
391 major city by interstate. That will be accomplished by this road which is being
392 built piecemeal. And that is about all I've got to say. I know the road is going to
393 be built and I think once it is built you'll see property values increase and I have
394 one minute remaining but I'm not going to take all my time because a Baptist
395 preacher told me one time, said saying less was better than _____. Thank you.

396 DeWitt: Thank you. John Lowery? Followed by Steve Gause and then Donny Hicks.

397 Lowery: (John Lowery; 4109 Stoneleigh Place, Gastonia, NC) Good evening. I am John
398 t054 Lowery. I reside at 4109 Stoneleigh Place in Gastonia. I am actually, live in
399 Gastonia but I work here in Charlotte. I am a managing partner of Wealth Plan
400 Financial Partners and we employ about a little over 100 folks here in Charlotte. I
401 am also on the board of directors of Carolina Commerce Bank in Gastonia. The

402 reason that I am here is I want to talk about the, what I perceive to be the value
403 and the benefit of the east-west Garden Parkway connector.

404 First of all, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening
405 and to thank the North Carolina Turnpike Authority for all of your time and effort
406 and research put forth to look into what is best for us and what brings value to our
407 region. So thank you very much for your efforts. In my opinion there is a
408 significant value and benefit for our entire region with the development and
409 construction of the Garden Parkway. This includes not just Charlotte-
410 Mecklenburg County or Gaston County, but also our region which includes
411 Cleveland County, Lincoln County, as well as York County, South Carolina.

412 Having said that, there is one reason that really stands out and touches
413 every person and every family in this region, a great benefit of the east-west
414 Garden Parkway for every single one of us is jobs and the jobs that it will create.
415 I don't think any of us are against jobs. Every person in this region benefits from
416 the jobs created by economic development. We all know that economic
417 development thrives when there are good, hard working and skilled people
418 available to work, combined with an excellent transportation system in place to
419 move talented people and the products they produce easily and expeditiously.
420 Growth in our region is projected to be over 60% in the next 20 years. Economic
421 development is the key to our region remaining competitive in the southeast. The
422 east-west Garden Parkway will help guarantee a bright future for our entire region

423 by creating new jobs and economic development across the region for our people
424 to work for many decades.

425 Interstate 85 is already congested and during peak times it is normal on
426 most days for speeds to be reduced to a crawl and accidents are abundant. You
427 know that. With the Garden Parkway in place, travel times are expected to be
428 much shorter and congestion will be reduced throughout the region while saving
429 fuel and money. This will make our region more attractive to new businesses
430 looking for sites to locate plants and create new jobs for our citizens. There are
431 many of us that currently reside outside Charlotte-Mecklenburg and commute to
432 Charlotte to work and create jobs here that need good roads and transportation.
433 The best way to attract new business is to maintain a good road infrastructure. No
434 one wants to be displaced and there are 375 families that will be compensated at
435 fair market value plus relocation expenses. Thank you.

436 DeWitt: Tim Gause followed by Donny Hicks and Rick Houser, if I pronounced that
437 correctly.

438 Gause: (Tim Gause, no address given) My name is Tim Gause. I am the committee chair
439 t055 for the Gaston County Chapter, Public Policy Committee. I appreciate your very
440 thorough research that you provided us and the opportunity to speak here and
441 allow everyone to express their opinions here this evening. It is a great time for
442 us to share information and ideas and opinions about the east-west corridor. I can
443 relate to why many of you are here. I-85 that goes by Spartanburg and the new
444 connector road that was built several years ago impacted my parents' home. And

445 now I look at it and think of how many thousands and thousands of vehicles pass
446 through there every day that allows an easier way for people to move services and
447 products and equipment and in an easier, safer fashion.

448 The data that the Turnpike Authority often references is a view of what
449 our region is going to look like in the year 2030, which ironically is the year that
450 projects that our population in this region will double. For those who need a
451 visual of what 15 to 20 years is, think of this area just a few miles from here, at
452 Ballantyne, which was nothing more than a huge pine thicket 15 years ago. Or
453 you can just ride over into Lancaster County in the Indian land and you can see
454 real time what the growth and the impact is to that region. NCDOT Secretary
455 Conti in a meeting last week in Charlotte shared that the Atlanta region has a
456 population of 4.1 million and congestion of 60 hours per year per driver. The
457 Charlotte region has a population of 860,000 and an annual congestion of 45
458 hours per traveler. That is right. This says that we have a quarter of the
459 population of Atlanta and experience three-fourths of the congestion that they do.
460 So we know we're going to experience explosive growth, we know that
461 congestion is the enemy of air quality and fuel efficiency, and mobility is the
462 friend of jobs, services, and help the economy. So we need to move forward with
463 the connector.

1 464 This concept has been in the making for years. It is an opportunity that
465 could be lost to other regions in the state who are at this moment competing for
466 these funds. The regional chamber supports the East-West Connector. We

467 respect you. We respect those of you who are going to be impacted by this and
468 we would expect that you be treated fairly. Thank you.

469 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Don Hicks, followed by Rick Houser and Jeff
470 Sperry.

471 Hicks: (Donny Hicks, 620 N. Main St, Belmont, NC 28012) Hi, I'm Donny Hicks, 620
472 t056 N. Main Street, Belmont, North Carolina, representing the Gaston County
473 Economic Development Commission. Our role with the county businesses is
474 improving business retention. As you know we have had to go over our
475 economy on numerous occasions and our employment rate is currently about
476 15%. So our group has some grave concern about our ability to create jobs, retain
477 industries and provide opportunities for people to go to work.

478 We have always supported the Garden Parkway for a couple of reasons.
479 First, I-85 is going to be beyond its capacity in a relatively short period of time. If
480 you go down 85 now, especially in the morning or in the afternoon, you can see it
481 is already close to its known capacity in Belmont. Widening I-85, taking on
482 additional capacity, a future road, it would require an immense amount of work
1 483 replacing all of the interchanges and move railroad bridges where it is crossing
484 now. And it is probably not going to be a very efficient way to increase traffic
485 capacity through the county. We have always been a big supporter of the Garden
486 Parkway, the East-West Connector.

487 The other problem we have is down at US Highway 74, it's too close to 85
488 in Belmont to cross. We only have a couple of thousand feet between the two

489 crossings. That leaves the entire southern part of the county without good access
490 to Charlotte. We also have concerns about air quality, increased congestion, the
491 air quality continues to deteriorate. That has an impact on businesses that you can
2 492 recruit, it has an impact on the ability of the companies in the area to expand and
493 our general health and wellbeing of the community. We're in support of the
494 Garden Parkway and we ask you to continue to support it.

495 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Rick Houser, Jeff Sperry followed by a
496 representative of Belmont Optimist Club.

497 Houser: (Rick Houser, 4004 Foxes Trail, Cramerton, NC 28032) Thank you. My name is
498 t057 Rick Houser. I serve as treasurer for the Gaston Regional Chamber of
499 Commerce. I am also a banker for 25 years. Our board passed a resolution in
500 support of the Garden Parkway but at the same time in our resolution, we ask that
501 everyone be considerate and passionate and fair to all of the property owners
1 502 impacted. We also ask that you consider there are some alternative means in
503 going ahead and securing the right-of-way to complete the road all the way to I-
504 85.

505 I can speak from experience. We had a building in downtown Gastonia
506 that we put up for sale and the City of Gastonia decided they wanted to buy it.
507 Well what happened is once the city comes back and says they are going to buy
508 our building, it took it off the market. We sat there for two years. Just imagine
509 the economic impact we have had. Down to the south New Hope corridor, for the
510 last several years I've seen appraisers come in, I've seen realtors have to make a

511 disclosure that this home may be in the pathway of the highway coming through.
512 So whatever we do, let's go ahead and make a decision, let's go ahead and
513 acquire the right-of-ways and let's be fair to everybody concerned.

514 Now I don't know about you, but I haven't seen much economic stimulus
515 in my line of work. And the chamber's role has been getting the facts out and
516 letting decisions be made. We are not trying to promote this road as a big
517 economic development tool. But I've got to tell you, that with a 21-mile stretch
518 of road, and you are putting over a billion dollars within that timeframe, that
519 money is going to turn over. I deal with people every day that are hurting because
520 of unemployment; 15% in our county. And I was looking at some numbers from
521 the State Banking Commission just last week. In the month of April, 85
2 522 chartered, state-chartered banks had the median pass through percentage of their
523 loans of 18%. Eighteen percent past due loans. My bank performed very well but
524 our chairman is not happy. Well, that 18% of the people go to church with you.
525 Everybody knows somebody who has been affected by this. So I am not saying
526 that I am supporting it just from the standpoint of economic development. But I
527 think that this will be an economic stimulus that we so desperately need right now
528 for all of our friends and neighbors. Thank you.

529 DeWitt: Thank you for your comment. Jeff Sperry followed by a representative of the
530 Optimist Club and Sonia Tremblay if I've got that correct.

531 Sperry: (Jeff Sperry, 4523 Brentwood Drive, Belmont, NC, 28012) My name is Jeff
1 532 t058 Sperry. I live in the Belmeade subdivision in Belmont. As a fairly new resident

533 in Gaston County I would like to commend the Turnpike Authority for its
534 thoughtful and careful research into the positioning of the new Garden Parkway,
535 to limit regional and environmental impacts. Obviously this has not been a hasty
536 process. A lot of people have spent a lot of time studying the best options for this
537 new roadway.

538 My house is not in the path of the Parkway, but the road's not far from it.
539 And it will certainly affect my neighborhood. I moved here from Pittsburgh,
540 Pennsylvania about a year ago and surprisingly yesterday Pittsburgh was named
541 as, by the Environmental Protection Agency, as one of the areas with the highest
542 levels of toxic air pollutants in the United States. A major source of these
543 pollutants comes from cars idling on overcrowded and congested roads. We
544 certainly don't want this type of pollution here. We do not want our cars sitting
545 with their engines idling, backing up for miles because of inadequate
546 transportation systems. Gaston County is an attractive place to work, live, and
547 raise a family. And people are moving here from all over the country.

548 I drive back on route 273 to work every day, and it's been somewhat
549 shocking, the three new residential developments along this road that have
550 appeared since January. And this is just a small fraction of new homes being built
551 all over the county. How will our existing roads handle this traffic? It's clear that
552 our roads and highways are going to become more and more congested. What
553 were once short commutes to work and shopping will become burdensome trips
554 and traffic nightmares. We have to think about our future for our region. The

555 planners and backers of the Garden Parkway are trying to promote an option
556 which looks to our future, a future in which Gaston County can continue to grow
557 in an orderly and plain fashion and still be an attractive place to live. Gaston
558 County also benefits from the amenities offered by close proximity to a major
559 city. And easy access to cultural, sporting, and dining activities is an important
560 aspect for our residents. The population of our area is increasing. We need to
561 think about the best ways to accommodate increased people, increased housing
562 and increased automobiles on our roads. The Garden Parkway provides a way to
563 eliminate congestion that has already started in our region and accounts for future
564 growth.

2 565 Our region has been presented with a tremendous opportunity. As one of
566 the sites selected to install the new roads that include bridge access over the
567 Catawba River. If the community does not seize this opportunity now, we'll be
568 left with compact roads, congested roads, and an increasing pollution problems.
569 Thank you.

570 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Representative of the Belmont Optimist Club,
571 followed by Sonia Tremblay and Harding Stowe. Optimist Club representative?
572 Last call. Sonia Tremblay. I apologize if I mispronounced that.
573 Tremblay: (Sonia Tremblay, 537 Lake Wylie Rd, Belmont, NC 28012) That's okay. Hi, my
574 t059 name is Sonia Tremblay. My husband and I reside in Belmont at 527 Lake Wylie
575 Road. We are opposed to the East-West Connector, or shall we say
576 "Disconnector." And yes, alternative number one that has been recommended

577 means for my husband and I that we would be expropriated. And as the house
578 would be located on the centerline of the new toll road. However, for us, we are
579 confident that we could get a fair price for our house if the road is built in a timely
580 manner. So we oppose the toll road for different reasons, not because it's going
581 to take away our house.

582 First, we want to be, we are supporting our neighbors who have been in
583 Gastonia or Belmont for much longer than we have, and who do not want to lose
584 their house. But first and foremost the reason why we oppose this road is because
585 of larger-scale issues. And those are: there is not enough funding through
1 586 proposed tolls and the project will require taxpayer money for the next fourty
587 years. This defeats the purpose of it being a toll road to start with. And as we
588 have heard earlier, and I'm glad tonight you're mentioning it, but all along those
589 pre-hearings and public hearings this week, it was not clear to most people that
590 the new toll road will not connect to I-85, and this means that it will end for now,
591 and we don't know when it will get built for the rest from 321 to I-85 but for now
592 that means that all those cars that will make it to the end of the road will get
593 dumped on 321.

2 594 If I'm a truck driver, and I end up there once, and I see I have to get
595 through 20 or 24 or 25 traffic lights to get to I-85, I'm not going to do it again. So
596 let's say half of those people are, don't make it to the end of 20,000 or 14,000—I
597 think 14,400 was the last estimate—then why have a toll road to start with?

598 We're going to have even less money and it's going to be even more taxpayers'
599 money to be used to do this road.

600 Yes, I agree there is traffic on, very bad traffic, and I come from Montreal
601 so believe me, this is not bad yet, but I know it's going to get bad, but there are
3 602 better things we can do with our money. We can widen 85. And even though
603 they say it's not possible, we know it is. There are studies out there right now and
604 you can talk to me. that's where ____. We are not against traffic—sorry,
605 progress, like some people may think being against this road may be. We are not
606 against creating jobs; that's not it. We are for intelligent progress that uses our
607 tax dollars in an efficient and financially sound way. Thank you for hearing me.

608 [APPLAUSE]

609 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Harding Stowe followed by Jim Mort and
610 Heather Pierce.

611 Stowe: (Harding Stowe, PO Box 546, Belmont, NC, 28012) Good evening, my name is
612 t060 Harding Stowe from 100 North Main Street in Belmont. I want to start by
613 commending the work that was done many, many years ago. MPO officials were
614 charged with looking forward at the big picture in the county and the region, and
615 recommended planning this road a long time ago. We all use Wilkinson
616 Boulevard, Interstate 85, now 485. I know the same type of planning and debate
617 and opposition went on with those roads, but those roads have become absolute
618 arteries benefiting all the citizens of this community. Where would we be without
619 them? And this road has the potential to be the same thing.

620 Gaston County is changing. Just a few years ago my company that we are
621 liquidating right now employed over 1,000 people in six individual manufacturing
622 facilities. Today, zero. We could operate in Gaston County as an island. You
623 could have a textile mill, a manufacturing facility, and you don't necessarily need
624 everything that you need in terms of this region. You could put it in a small town,
625 you could put it in a big city; it really didn't make any difference. But that's not
626 going to be the future for Gaston County. I would say the most important thing
627 for the future of Gaston County is the linkages and connectivity to Charlotte.
628 Whether we like it or whether we don't, go out into eastern North Carolina, go out
629 and look at the areas that don't have those connections. We need links to
630 Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, and this bridge and this road give us those
631 links. I personally was surprised by the road stopping at 321. I would've loved to
632 have seen it go to 85, but the explanation given on the funding and the fact that—
633 just look at 485; it's built in phases, is to me an honorable and a right explanation,
634 and if we have to wait a little bit longer, that doesn't make the whole project
635 wrong.

636 Finally I want to say I'm not speaking tonight even though I'm president
637 of the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, I'm not speaking for the Daniel Stowe
638 Botanical Garden; I'm speaking for all the citizens of Gaston County in this
639 community that are going to benefit from this project.

640 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Jim Mort, followed by Heather Pierce and I think
641 it's Dan Kincaid if I pronounced that correctly.

642 Mort: (Jim Mort, 611 S. York St., Gastonia, NC, 28053) I'm Jim Mort and I live at 611
643 t061 South York Street, and I've heard a lot of very interesting comments tonight. My
644 background is 38 years of teaching real estate law, directing a college university
645 of 22 campuses, and I say that not as a feather in my cap but maybe to place a
646 little credibility, a word that I've heard often today, market value, the people in
647 this room that will be losing their homes, and of course they would be made
648 market value. I'd like for the person use that term to define it to me and then
649 let's link it to what the state says market value is, because market value today in
650 most cases is based on foreclosure, upside-down properties, not in what the
651 market used to be five years ago. It's acknowledged by everybody in this room
652 that we do have a traffic problem. There's not one person in this room who will
653 not acknowledge that, but I presently—I have talked with the North Carolina
654 Turnpike Authority's communication manager, his name is Beau Memory. Mr.
655 Memory told me that we have, quote, "enough money to bring that expressway up
656 to 321," which means anywhere from—whatever the numbers is—4,000, 15,000,
657 18,000 according to the North Carolina Turnpike's own website, whatever that
658 number is, that number of cars will be forced to exit on 321 and go north to hit I-
659 85 which will drive them from in front of my house, which is on York Street.
660 Right now we don't have enough room for the traffic that's already there; the road
661 is being ruined.

662 Add 5,000 cars per day, let me drop down to another thing: air quality.
663 When we talked about EIS, environmental protection study, or impact study, air

664 quality according to Gastonia's 2020 comprehensive plan, page 10-2, 3 and 4,
665 under air quality, Charlotte, Gastonia, this is a quote: "Charlotte, Gastonia and
666 Rock Hill already rank 10th as the smoggiest metro area in the United States. You
667 talk about traffic problems and problems being created. Put 5,000 to 15,000 more
668 cars down York street? You talk about problems, health problems will double
669 and triple.

670 One last note: all the brochures, all the literature that I've seen from
671 Gastonia, from the City commission and the district commission, historic district
672 commission says that their purpose is to protect—I love the word protect—and to
673 preserve property values, and I can tell you as a real estate broker in two states,
674 licensed and certified instructor, that when you talk market value, 5,000 cars
675 passing through an historic community is not going to preserve the values, but it
676 will decrease property values and we will all suffer over that. To boot, you've got
677 35 million a year for the next forty years; my kids and grandchildren will pay for
678 that mistake. And once this road is approved, I don't know if you heard it, but
679 from the chamber of commerce gentleman, he said, "I know the road is going to
680 be built." I don't know if any of you heard that or not—

681 [SEVERAL SAYING YES]

682 The phraseology and the words seemed to indicate—and I hate to use this—that
683 it's already kind of a done deal. I hate to say that.

4 684 Irreparable damage; why not do the right thing? There's no way to do a wrong
685 thing right. Why not do the right thing, and remember that once this parkway is
686 approved there will be irreparable damage done to this community.

687 [APPLAUSE]

688 DeWitt: Thank you for your time. Heather Pierce followed by Dan Kincaid and Neil
689 Moore

690 Pierce: (Heather Pierce, 120 Henry Chapel Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) My name is
691 t062

692 Heather Pierce and I live at 120 Henry Chapel Road in Belmont, North Carolina.
693 My house will not be taken by your lovely toll road, but it will be within yards of
694 an off-ramp. Therefore my home is worth nothing. What compensation will I get
695 to hear the noise coming from the Garden Parkway and already over-traveled
696 Southpoint Road? As we sit on a hill, we will constantly be in view this toll road.
697 I find it extremely interesting that on the Toll Road Authority's website, they have
698 lowered the estimated numbers of cars traveling on the Garden Parkway, but I've
699 found they failed to adjust the financial portions that match this. Fewer cars on
700 the new toll road will cost more money; it's simple. I'm also confused by the
701 claim of shorter commutes to the airport. We can pay to get on the toll road and
702 drive 20 to 25 minutes, when it only takes us 15 minutes on Wilkinson Boulevard
703 now, it's almost as if someone has not been doing their homework.

704 In no way can you convince me that you've done thorough, and I do mean
705 thorough studies, to preserve and protect the delicate ecosystem of Belmont
706 Peninsula because if you had, you wouldn't be building toll road through it. Our

706 region is in jeopardy already of not meeting clean air standards, and this toll road
707 is not helping our environment. I question the North Carolina Turnpike
708 Authority. If they can't get their facts correct or even be upfront with us. They
5 709 are an entity unto themselves and have no one to check behind them, so they are
710 able to do what they please. State and local officials need to think long and hard
711 about their decisions, because when the reelection time rolls around, boy, I would
712 not want to be in their shoes. By the way, at least 5,000 other people feel the
713 same way I do about the toll road. Those numbers are growing daily. They don't
6 714 want it, either. We have collected 5,000 signatures against the Garden Parkway.

715 [APPLAUSE]

716 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Dan Kincaid followed by Neil Moore and John
717 Medlin. Dan Kincaid? Neil Moore.

718 Moore: (Neil Moore, 1505 Southpoint Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Good evening. I'm Neil
719 t063 Moore, I'm a resident of Southpoint Road in Belmont, and I'm opposed to this
1 720 project. The road as presented to you is a pipe dream and is not being delivered
721 as promised. It's going to stop at 321 for decades. So who is going to use it? Are
722 tourists going to use it? No, because it doesn't connect anywhere. Are locals
723 going to use it? Locals haven't shown any willingness whatsoever to pay a toll,
724 as evidenced by the 5,000 signatures of people in this pathway. They've already
725 made that statement, and as dozens stated too, the night of the hearing, you'll also
726 read about it in editorial letters from opponents in the *Gaston Gazette* and the
727 *Belmont Banner News*. The citizens aren't willing to deal with it, so who is going

728 to use it? The commercial trucks aren't going to use it, by their own statements
729 earlier this week. You've got a closed intermodal yard at Mr. Orr's airport, one
730 of the finest facilities in the country. Why would a trucking company pay tolls to
731 drive west on the parkway to stop at 321 and then they have to go through the
732 city? For six to eight minutes, they can drive for free on 485 or the Billy Graham
733 Parkway, to get on I-85. It doesn't cost them a thing.

734 So they're not going to locate office and industrial facilities there. It
735 doesn't make sense for them. So where are those jobs going to come from? Mr.
736 Hicks, I'm not sure if I'm convinced. So who does want it? Well, that's land
737 developers, it's the real estate community, and construction firms. That's it. We
738 would rather see this money applied to improve the Wilkinson Boulevard bridge
739 on US-74. We already have six lanes to Belmont. For less than one year's gap
740 funding money, the Wilkinson Boulevard Bridge can be replaced and the
741 additional two lanes added on the Mecklenburg side will tie up to Little Rock
2 742 Road. That's just money from gap funding. Saves the taxpayers and citizens of
743 North Carolina, who are already struggling, by the way to make their budget.
744 Save them the money for the next 39 years, or for two to three years of gap
745 funding, you can go ahead and use, and add the additional lanes to I-40, to I-85,
746 from Belmont Abbey west all the way through the county. We would have to
747 replace the bridge at the South Fork River and replace a couple of overpass
748 bridges. Still, far cheaper than 40 years worth or 35 million dollars a year for 40
749 years.

750 I oppose the project. I encourage you to move on and select and apply
751 your efforts to other projects. Thank you.
752 [APPLAUSE]
753 DeWitt: Thank you for your time. John Medlin followed by Robert Burke and Sam
754 Franklin.
755 Medlin: (John Medlin, 1259 Dorchester Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) My name is John
756 t064 Medlin. I live at 1259 Dorchester Road in Gastonia. The draft environmental
757 impact statement issued by the Turnpike Authority says the stated need for this
758 project is a river crossing between Gaston and Mecklenburg, and to reduce traffic
759 on I-85. Will it be successful? I say no, it will not. Their own numbers plugged,
760 the document from your website, says that traffic on 85 will only decrease by
761 8,000 cars by the year 2030, with the project all the way to I-85. So, if it's a
762 whole lot faster, it would be decreasing by four percent. At 321, with the project,
763 its numbers are worse than without. And it puts tens of thousands of secondary
764 road cars that aren't there now. Gaston traffic and Gastonia's Historic District, all
765 right, provides a crossing, but will it be used. You've heard of people talking
766 about bringing goods through the county and jobs and everything else. If it's not
767 complete to 85, where are all those goods going to go? Nobody is going to try to
768 go through it.
769 It may never be complete. Look at I-85 in Greenville. It's going bankrupt
770 right now. What other problems are going to be caused by this project? But
771 they're not being studied by the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It's not

772 looking at secondary impacts. Increased traffic on the secondary roads as
773 mentioned, air quality has been mentioned here. When you've got as many cars
774 plus another 50,000 cars that they're saying are going to use the toll road if it's
775 used. Look at Atlanta's urban sprawl. That's what's going to happen in our
776 future of Gaston County. They say "build it and they will come." Well, that's
777 right. It's gonna be urban sprawl. It's going to be on all those secondary roads,
778 which is going to be real smart.
779 Where's the money for schools, sewer, water, for all this extra
780 development? It's not there. There's none appropriated for any of that. Use the
781 \$1.5 billion dollars worth of gap funding that's going to have to be used for this
782 project to build those roads, to add those other services. Use it for education in
783 this state.
784 All right, so what's not done by this thing? It doesn't provide the bypass
785 like Monroe talked about. They're getting a bypass road. People are going use it.
786 Everyone that wants to go to the beach, lets go around. That's good. This road
787 does not bypass Gastonia, don't you believe it, but it does not access the industrial
788 parks that have been built on the western side of town. So, if you're coming from
789 the airport in these big trucks you're not going to go that way because you've got
790 to go around to get to it. So it doesn't even give you good access to the airport.
791 You're on the wrong side of the airport when you get there.
792 I'm an engineer, and I evaluate the validity of these large projects every
793 day. This project does not make sense. It doesn't solve any traffic problems. It

794 makes air quality and traffic worse in that area, and it will create an additional
795 burden on our county to provide services for the new residents. Make it go away.

796 [APPLAUSE]

797 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Robert Burke followed by Sam Franklin and
798 Susan Denton.

799 Burke: (Robert Burke, 7001 Lakeside Point Dr, Belmont, NC, 28012) My name is
t065 Robert Burke. I live at 7001 Lakeside Point Drive in Belmont. I wasn't going to
800 speak, but I thought I'd come to speak my views on the Garden Parkway project,
801 considering it's going to impact the lives of my family and all my neighbors and
802 our community. What we do today is really going to impact what we have in the
803 Charlotte Metro region, for the rest of our lives and we'd like to stay here.

804
805 A large project like this which requires the taking of private land will
806 always mobilize those in the path. And I think we all understand that, while those
807 who support the project will tend to stay home. This is completely
808 understandable. And I sympathize with all of those who will have to sell their
809 property against their will. I thought I'd speak to one of my family, and the
810 neighbors in my neighborhood who I spoke to about it want the Garden Parkway.

811 The Charlotte metro area has seen meteoric levels of growth in the past
812 two decades. The US Census Bureau listed the Charlotte metro area as the
813 seventh fastest growing metro area in the country last year, in the country. We're
814 growing. And if we don't want to be Atlanta, we need to take care of our
815 infrastructure and we need to do it now. Because growth, you know, even though

816 we're currently in an economic downturn, growth will return. Downturns don't
817 last forever.

818 As citizens, we have to ask ourselves, if we have the infrastructure in
819 place to accommodate future growth, then we need to ensure that we build roads
820 in a responsible manner and ahead of the curve. And this is one way we can do it.
821 If we don't build the toll road now, we're going to be trying to catch up later and
822 it's going to cost taxpayers a lot more money. And contrary to what I've heard
823 here tonight, we are going to reduce our air—we're going to improve our air
1 824 quality with a toll road, because cars are not going to be idling on highways;
825 that's what causes the ozone problems we have, when our cars are idle on a
826 highways. Without the proper regional access, businesses cannot profit, jobs will
827 not be created, entertainment options will be limited, and growth will be stifled. I
828 think we all understand how much Gaston County has lagged all the other
829 bordering counties to Mecklenburg, because of the rivers, because we don't have
830 the access that we need to spur the growth on the west side of the rivers.

831 After reading the draft EIS, I was happy to see that the North Carolina
2 832 Turnpike Authority takes our concern seriously. There's a lot of data in there that
833 took a lot of work. They looked at everything. They looked at the environment.
834 They looked at traffic patterns. If you haven't read it I urge you to make sure you
835 read the whole thing. It takes quite some time. I want to urge all involved with
836 the process to keep the route as recommended in the draft EIS, and move forward
837 as quickly as possible. It's hard enough for citizens to sell their homes in the

838 current market, but when there's an unknown, like a future highway hanging in
839 the air, it becomes especially difficult.

3 840 The road will provide a desperately needed link between Mecklenburg and
841 Gaston County. It will reduce traffic, attract business, create jobs, increase
842 emergency response times, increase property values, and, most importantly,
843 provide a foundation for our continued rise to be the greatest city in the South.

844 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Sam Franklin followed by Susan Denton and Al
845 Brandon.

846 Franklin: (Sam Franklin, 4030 Lochfoot Dr, Charlotte, NC, 28278) Sam Franklin. 4030
847 t066 Lochfoot Drive, Charlotte North Carolina. Six people in a row, the first six all for
848 it. Statistical improbability.

849 DeWitt: I'll just give information. The first six that came up here signed up ahead of time
850 through the internet and that's how [INDISCERNIBLE].

851
852 Franklin: But I'm not here to talk about statistics, I'm here to talk about this road. It makes
853 no sense. I want to reiterate the words that one other gentleman said. There is no
854 right way to make a wrong decision. This road is a wrong decision.

1 855 Reason one, the analysis is all flawed. It's based on a complete
856 thoroughfare to 85; all the announcements are done for that. The cost-benefit
857 ratio is done for that. The plan is to go to 321 [ph]. So they've got the benefits of
858 the toll road, but they got the actuality of the half plan. Now, if you think of it
859 this way, how many of you guys let your high school girl go to Myrtle Beach

860 when she says, "I got a ride, don't know where I'm staying, but I got a ride"?

861 She's got half a plan, not a whole plan. These guys have half a plan, that's it.

2 862 Reason two, it takes you nowhere. Come into Gaston County on this road,
863 where is it going to dump you out? On 485, west of the airport. What's out there
864 now? There's a runway. That's all, nothing. Where is it in the town? West
865 Boulevard. Lots of stoplights and lots of two-lane traffic, lots of slow
866 commuting. But oh, you're not at 85 yet, you're just three miles down the road
867 from where you started, got off at 321, go to south—485, south side of Charlotte.
868 That's a real good idea, if you've ever been around there if you have sense. It
869 takes you nowhere, guys, nowhere.

3 870 It's being driven by people with ulterior motives. Like it or not, North
871 Carolina DOT and turnpike, they don't have a road, they don't have any jobs.
872 Consulting firms, we don't have projects, they don't have jobs to analyze.
873 Politicians and developers, they all have an agenda. They all have taxpayer
874 dollars, they've got an agenda. They've got one goal besides that—to divide us.
875 They've given us 18,000 different options to keep us fighting, whose property to
876 take and whose not, whose value is going to come down, whose going to
877 compensate you for your \$800,000 lakehome that's now worth 250 because a
878 road goes right in front of your house that crosses the lake. Nobody. They want
879 us to fight. We need to unite. I'll say it again. There's no right way to make a
880 wrong decision. Thank you.

881 [APPLAUSE]

882 DeWitt: Susan Denton followed by Al Brandon and David Ferrand.
883 Denton: (Susan Denton, PO Box 168, Belmont, NC, 28012) My name is Susan Denton,
884 t067 and I live near the Lower Armstrong Bridge in Belmont. As a resident of Gaston
885 County, I would like to voice my opposition to this East-West Connector, also
886 known as the Garden Parkway. In these times of stretched budgets and layoffs
887 and financial stress, I feel it is very important that we consider each project and
888 each expense very carefully before we proceed. There is indeed-- this is indeed a
889 time for financial responsibility, and these are my arguments against the project.

890 This is now a road from nowhere to nowhere. There must be a reason for
891 a project. To say we need another road across the Catawba River is not reason
1 892 enough. Who is going to travel from 321 to south of the airport? Why would
893 they? And their projections for the time savings that I've seen make no sense
2 894 whatsoever. I live near South Carolina, and it only takes me 20 to 25 minutes to
895 get to the airport. And to tell me I'll save 20 minutes by going on the toll road is
896 absurd.

897 The river and its watershed, which is our water supply, this is a very
3 898 fragile environment. Wildlife will be adversely affected. There will be runoff
899 and soil erosion that's going to affect our water quality and the habitat. We
900 simply do not need another river crossing, so why risk this?

4 901 The EIS study is not complete, and it doesn't even address the west end of
902 the proposed road. There is no grassroot support for this project. There is no one
903 I know, or have met who plans to use this toll road. It angers me and it bothers

904 me that the support that I have seen so far are from large development projects,
905 some of whom use the proposed road as a selling point, from politicians who
906 actually own property and would benefit financially, and from city officials
907 looking for future developments to fill the city coffers and cause more urban
908 sprawl. And there is no infrastructure to support this.

909 The cost is the big thing; \$911 million dollars and counting, plus another
910 \$500 million sometime somewhere. And then this doesn't take into consideration
5 911 possible future inflation. Another thing, the bonds. I do not think this road will
912 generate \$35 million a year for 40 years. And I want to know what the back-up
913 plan is for the payments on the bonds. I don't want to be the backup plan.

914 Please take this project off the books and don't bring it up again. It is just
915 a bad idea. Also, please consider other alternatives and I am just one person, I am
916 just one person who has chosen to do some research, attend the meetings, get
917 involved and voice my opinion. Don't build it. Thank you for listening.

918 [APPLAUSE]

919 DeWitt: Thank you. Next Al Brandon followed by David Ferrand and Alan Albright.

920 Brandon: (Al Brandon, 24 Bateswood Dr, Greer, SC, 29651) My name is Al Brandon. I
921 t068 live in Greer, South Carolina. You might wonder where that is, that is near
922 Greenville, South Carolina. I am a Gaston County taxpayer, however. I was born
923 and raised in Gaston County and my family, I still have two sisters that have
924 property located off Forbes Road, they'll be near 321 where this thing is going to
925 dump out.

926 We have about 80 to 100 acres of family property that has been in our
927 family for about 100 to 150 years, and we have our own botanical garden on that
928 end of the road. We are concerned about changing the quality of the environment
929 of our property: increased traffic, noise, and congestion, pollution from water
930 runoff on this road. Any time you have cars, you are going to put down oil, you
931 are going to put down rubber, you are going to put down everything else and you
932 are going to have runoff. It is going to pollute the creeks. You are also going to
933 have soil erosion.

934 Another big concern for me is we know we are going to have higher taxes,
935 they are always going to be going up. But they are really going to be going up if
936 we pass this through. More importantly, that is a personal interest on my part.
937 More importantly, North Carolina can't afford this road right now. That is a
938 biggie. They've already told you they've got their plan on the tolls paying for the
939 road, they've got \$35 million set aside for the next 40 years that I would imagine
940 our tax dollars, and I'm one of them, are going to have to pay for. I don't like
941 that.

942 A big problem I have with it also is the fact that they are going to dump all
943 of this traffic onto 321. I don't know how many of you have seen 321, but it is
944 already pretty busy. The only way you can get back to 85 is to go right up
945 through the middle of Gastonia, go through about 19 or 20 stoplights, and that is
946 not going to work. It is not going to work. There is also no money available for

947 any maintenance on the road that is going to start in addition to what has
948 already...

949 I would like to give you a little bit of information. A lot of other
950 information has been shared. I would like to share a little bit more information
951 about our Greenville Connector. I live there, so I know about it. In 2001 it was
952 opened. In 2002 the projected tolls that they would take in each day was \$27,000.
953 The actual for 2002 was \$10,900. In 2007 the projected tolls per day was
954 \$33,000. The actual was \$16,000. In 2008 it is down below that, and that is
955 probably due to the economy, people not wanting to pay the money to go on that
956 road. I haven't used that road more than half a dozen times and I'm telling you,
957 you can go from 385 around to the lower side where 153 is as fast as you can
958 cross that piece of property. So we don't need that road. Thank you.

959 [APPLAUSE]

960 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Next David Fernand followed by Alan Albright
961 and Maria Gosa, if I pronounced that correctly.

962 Fernand: (David Fernand, 119 Dorie Dr, Belmont, NC, 28012) Hi everybody. I'm glad all
963 t069 of us came out. I am Dr. David Fernand. I am an emergency physician. I live at
964 119 Dorie Drive in Belmont. It is a Belmont community subdivision Pinsto
965 Forest. . A lot of people have already stolen some thunder from things I was
966 thinking about saying. I appreciate a lot of the things that people have already
967 said in terms of the environmental impact.

1 968 One thing that I think people haven't mentioned is I think there is going to
969 be a big social impact. When I moved to Gaston County, I moved from the
970 Northeast so I am not a local. But I came from a place where congestion and
971 urban sprawl is commonplace. And when I came here, it reminded me of how my
972 county where I grew up looked when I was a child. It doesn't look like that any
973 more. If this road goes through, the quality of life here is going to take a big
974 downturn.

975 My property is not affected by this. Maybe I will see a property increase,
976 but I don't care. It is not worth what is going to be coming from all these changes
977 that we are going to see increased traffic and increased congestion and just
978 unchecked development. I am not against progress. I just think that it needs to be
979 done intelligently and it needs to be done in a fashion where the infrastructure is
980 built up around it, not all at once a big parkway and then all of a sudden
981 everything else is going to come. We have 600-plus teachers in Gaston County
982 who are going to be out of a job. We can't staff our schools. How are we going
983 to pay for all of this, extra homes and families that are going to come in? And it
984 is just not right for us. This is not the right way to increase development and to
985 increase the economy in the local area. Thanks.

986 [APPLAUSE]

987 DeWitt: Thank you. Alan Albright and Maria Gosa if I'm pronouncing that correctly, and
988 Jerry Orr.

989 Albright: (Alan Albright, 300 Patrick Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28054) Good evening. My name
990 t070 is Alan Albright. I am an attorney in Gastonia. I have practiced in Gastonia for
991 35 years. It is in my economic interest to support this toll road, a picture of my
992 house was taken, it was used, and in one of the beautiful pictures you saw about
993 how nice it is to live in Gaston County. However, I have a couple of perspectives
994 that I have run into that concern me.

995 One is education. I was on the board of trustees for 12 years, chairman for
996 10, of Gaston College. I have been on the Gaston County Planning Commission.
997 I worked at the United Way trying to raise money for the various needs in this
998 county, through campaigns and charity campaigns, when we had difficult times
999 just like now. The problem is that the way this has evolved this is not fair to the
1000 citizens of Gaston County.

1 1001 It basically is a bait and switch. On the early provisions that are referred
1002 to and are the basis for the public support, it was always a connector. It is no
1003 longer a connector. The fact that you are going through now, York Chester, the
1004 largest historic district in the county, means that the environmental statements
1005 which don't consider that at all are invalid. This will come back to haunt them.
2 1006 In the process we have yet to see a member of the authority in any of these
1007 hearings. There is something basically wrong. It is a bait and switch. It is not
1008 needed.

1009 Now the chambers in both meetings recited the same data, and I assume it
1010 may have been prepared by the same people. They have not read the final reports

1011 that John Medlin mentioned. If you look at I-85 as it has been projected by the
1012 Authority, the best thing you can do to keep traffic at a reasonable level on I-85 is
1013 not build this parkway. Amazingly enough, that is what the data shows. They
1014 haven't proven a need.

1015 We can't afford it. We have so many needs, we have got at some point to
1016 set priorities. Now I know it is hard to turn down dollars. You are talking about
1017 \$35 million a year, 40 years, that is over a billion dollars. Every time someone
1018 gets on that highway, every time, it is going to cost over \$95,000 a day in just
1019 funds from the state general fund. That is not the total bonds or anything else;
1020 \$95,000 a day. That is three teachers. It is not fair. We suggest that it be
1021 reassessed.

1022 [APPLAUSE]

1023 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Maria Gosa. Following her will be Jerry Orr and
1024 Glenn Ford.

1025 Gosa: (Maria Gosa, 2037 Southpoint Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Hi, my name is Maria
1026 t071 Gosa. I live at 2037 South Point Road in Belmont. I am not a eloquent as
1027 everyone else and if I talk before a crowd I eventually melt and disappear
1028 completely. But I do want to say that the gentleman before me called it a bait and
1029 switch. In my mind it is similar to shell game. A similar event would be if I were
1030 to raise my child and at 16 said, "Well, this is a good stopping off point, let's let
1031 you go. You've got your driver's license." And for them to stop at 321 is almost
1032 cutting your nose off to spite your face, because you will not get the revenue that

1033 you intend to get and it would just be one of those bypasses where they go, "What
1034 were they thinking." What were they thinking?

1035 One of my major concerns in addition to the fact that it will not be a
1036 followed-through as proposed is also on the summary of the project impacts. You
1037 can tell by the extensive detail that has gone into the issues on the left hand side
1038 of the page that they have looked at every aspect. However, when you get down
1039 to the main focus of living, which is your air and your water quality, they seem to
1040 say things like, "the qualitative assessment," they are not adequately able to
1041 quantify the health impacts for the air quality impacts. You are talking about air
1042 quality being poor because there are people idling, but there is also air quality
1043 impacts whenever there is much more, 8,000 more traffic, cars going through the
1044 area. If you widened 85 instead of cutting through our neighborhoods, I think that
1045 would take care of the air quality there.

1046 What really, really concerns me, and I have one minute, is that nobody has
1047 addressed the table water. Down here it says that we are going to have indirect
1048 effects on water resources are indicated to be very strong. But as far as affecting
1049 our table water, there are a lot of people who have wells. I am one of them. And
1050 they can pipe water to us, though the well—as a symbol of our independence.
1051 And they can't pay for our water bills. They might can pipe city water to us, but
1052 they are not going to—I mean the water is a big deal. The air is a big deal. And
1053 what the gentleman said about our family and raising our families in a wonderful
1054 neighborhood, can you see that disappearing before your eyes? I can.

1055 [APPLAUSE]

1056 DeWitt: Thank you. Jerry Orr followed by Glenn Ford and Ellen Goff, if I pronounced
1057 that correctly.

1058 Orr: (Jerry Orr, PO Box 19066, Charlotte, NC, 28219) First of all, it is not Jerry Orr's
1059 t072 airport. It is the people's airport, I just run it for them. We've been successful I
1060 think over a long period of time and that is because we took the long view. The
1061 long view rewards you all the time.

1062 I will admit to you that I think this plan has a lot of flaws. I don't think
1063 they are fatal flaws, but taking the long view I agree with those people who spoke
1064 in favor of this project. I think it is needed to cross the river. It is needed for the
1065 1 airport. It takes you to the airport. It doesn't take you to the wrong side of the
1066 airport. By the time this road is open we'll all be airport. I do have to say that the
1067 interchange at 485 as depicted in these drawings does not meet the airport's
1068 needs. Thank you.

1069 [APPLAUSE]

1070 M: Thank you. Glen Ford followed by Ellen Goff and Peter Schuler.

1071 Ford: (Glenn Ford, 115 Meek Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Good evening. My name is
1072 t073 Glenn Ford and I am glad I am not the last on the list because I was when I first
1073 walked in, because I was going to dread being the only one up here to keep
1074 everybody in the auditorium tonight. My name is Glenn Ford and I reside at 115
1075 Meek Road in Gastonia, North Carolina. I will start by saying I am a lifelong
1076 resident of Gaston County. I am opposed to this project. I'm not going to reiterate

1077 what other have already said both tonight and also on Tuesday night. But I would
1078 like to bring a few other highlights tonight.

1079 Specifically it's going to start around funding. North Carolina
1080 Turnpike Authority has indicated this toll road will be funded, in part, by the
1081 revenue generated from the toll fees. From what I can tell their data to support
1082 this estimate was gathered pre-2007. Since that time, regional events such as
1083 increase in gasoline prices in Gulf America, across the nation, causing everyone
1084 to rethink their driving habits. On May 23rd, 2008, the Federal Highway
1085 Administration reported the estimated vehicle miles traveled on all US public
1086 roads for March 2008 fell 4.3% as compared to March 2007 travel. This is the
1087 first time the estimated March travel on public roads fell since 1979. And 11
1088 million miles less, in March 2008, and the previous March, listed as the sharpest
1089 yearly drop for any month in the Federal Highway Administration history. Also,
1090 on December 12, 2008, the Department of Transportation reported that Americans
1091 drove 100 billion fewer miles than November, 2007 and in October 2008, that
1092 same year as it started, making it the largest continuing decline of American
1093 driving in history. From the local level, in January 26, 2009, the *Charlotte*
1094 *Business Journal* reported that travel on North Carolina's roads dipped 6% of the
1095 November, 2008, despite easing gasoline prices.

1096 Less cars means less toll fees collected. Given these statistics, I find
1097 it difficult to believe that the collection of tolls will be sufficient to pay for this
1098 toll road. The barriers are funding shortfalls. You can guess who's going to be

1099 left holding the bag to pick up the remainder of that tax--that's right the taxpayers,
1100 you and I. Next one is around I-85, I've heard several comments about the need
1101 to relieve congestion on I-85. In my daily working here, I've driven back and
2 1102 forth between Gaston County and Charlotte, using I-85, since 1987. During that
1103 time period, I've never experienced traffic congestion, unless there was an
1104 accident on the highway. I guess congestion depends on your perspective. If
1105 you've ever driven in New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, San
1106 Francisco, or any other large city, you know that those places have traffic
1107 congestion. We don't have traffic congestion on I-85, I'm sorry. Is Gastonia or
1108 Charlotte as large as any of those cities? Of course not. Are we going to become
1109 as populated as those cities by 2030 or any year thereafter? I don't think so.
1110 Thank you. My time is up.

1111 [APPLAUSE]

1112 DeWitt: Thank you for your comments. Ellen Goff?

1113 Goff: (Ellen Goff, 981 Bonum Rd, Clover, SC, 29710) Good evening. My name is
t074 1114 Ellen Goff. I'm a resident of Lake Wylie in York County. I'm also the Lake
1115 Wylie lake keeper for the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation. And I guess I have
1116 the dubious honor of being the last one tonight, so I'm not going to repeat all the
1117 statements that previous presenters have brought up regarding the environmental
1118 impact. I will say that regardless of what this road represents to many factions
1119 here tonight. We cannot allow the environment in multiple ecosystems,

1120 specifically Lake Wylie and the Catawba River, to be further stressed and
1121 degraded by multiple bridge crossings of the river.

1122 There are many questions regarding the negative environmental
1123 impact of the toll road, both during and after construction. Mitigation for the
1124 impact of this degradation has not even been glanced at in the environmental
1125 impact statement. The Catawba River Foundation's mission is to preserve,
1 1126 protect, and advocate on behalf of the Catawba River and the lakes, streams, and
1127 wetlands within the river basin and for all the wildlife and livelihoods that
1128 depend on the help of this public waterway. We are categorically against this
1129 project and have a detailed written response being prepared for/to the Turnpike
1130 Authority. We need to manage the impact of growth in this region but not at the
1131 expense of the environment and specifically our precious waterway. Whether it's
1132 smart growth or dumb growth, it's not going to be at the expense of the river.

1133 [APPLAUSE]

1134 DeWitt: That concludes a list of those who have signed up. There's an opportunity for
1135 anyone that wants to come to the front, please do. All we ask you to do is just
1136 sort of line up here in front of me.[INDISCERNIBLE]. Again just state your
1137 name and address, that would be much appreciated.
1138 Schuler: (Peter Schuler, 537 Lake Wylie Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) Hello, my name is
t075 1139 Peter Schuler. My wife Sonya spoke earlier. I live at 537 Lake Wylie Road.
1140 Since you heard Sonya talk you already know that the road is going through our
1141 house, but that's not the reason I'm speaking tonight. The reason I'm speaking

1142 tonight—actually, there are several reasons. One of them, for those of you who
1143 haven't been to Lake Wylie Road and the neighborhoods around it, is that every
1144 morning I see either a deer or a wild turkey or a bald eagle. We're not going to be
1145 the only ones that won't be there any more; none of these animals will either.

1146 The other part is, I'm an engineer by trade. I do these kinds of
1147 evaluations all the time. Just because something has been talked about for 20
1148 years doesn't mean that it's needed. This road has been a foregone conclusion in
1149 a lot of politicians' minds for a long, long time. You heard it by the first or
1150 second speaker tonight who basically said, "This road will be built." In their
1151 minds it's a foregone conclusion. But if you look at it, this road originally started
1152 several years ago, not only going to 85, it continued past 85 and went to 321,
1153 connecting north of 85. They decided that didn't make any sense, so they got rid
1154 of that section and they said they'd take it to 85. Then they ran the numbers and
1155 they figured out they didn't have enough money to do that, either.

1156 But if some of you remember meeting in a similar situation to this
1157 about three years ago, when this whole process started, they had already thrown
1158 out all the alternatives. They had said widening 85 didn't make any sense. They
1159 said adding a commuter rail didn't make any sense. It was already made up at
1160 that point that they were going to build a road. Then you started, and you put in
1161 30-some options, yes—oh, I have one minute left—that means that they made up
1162 all these options to evaluate. And if you really read that report, you could put all
1163 those options up on a dartboard, throw a dart, and whichever one you hit is the

1164 route. They are all the same; the impacts on every one of those options are
1165 roughly the same. There is no real difference; it just happens to be the one that
1166 somebody wanted. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

1167 [APPLAUSE]

1168 DeWitt: Thank you. Just so you know there is an NCDOT project that is on the books
1169 to pick up with the interchange on I-85 where this will tie in and go north up to
1170 321 [ph]. If you go on the NCDOT website. I don't know the exact links to get
1171 you all the way down through there, but the project exists that does just exactly
1172 what everyone says.

1173 Medlin: (Tina Medlin, 1259 Dorchester Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) I'm Tina Medlin. I
1174 live at 1259 Dorchester Road. I had not signed up to speak tonight, but after

1175 hearing some of the things, I just couldn't sit there and be silent. All these
1176 numbers that the Turnpike Authority has presented and said, okay, here's the path
1177 that we came up with, how many of you know that politicians stand to personally
1178 gain from this route that has been selected? Which really really bothers me—
1179 because it's like they made the numbers fit the path that they desired. If those
1180 politicians David Hoyle and Robert Pittenger, and they personally stand to gain.
1181 There's like 2,000 acres, I think. And you can see all this public record, you can
1182 see who owns what parcel. There is even a parcel named by Pittenger that says—
1183 it's called "321/74 Bypass." So that's really, that's the actual name of the parcel
1184 on the tax maps.

1185 But also, I wanted to say the second speaker, John Lowery, one of things
1186 that he said, he kept pushing for economic reasons to build this road, except
1187 Senator David Hoyle, who is one of the reasons this whole road got started, he
1188 was quoted on September 8 in the Gazette when he said, "You don't build roads
1189 for economic reasons, you build roads to get from point A to point B." But yet all
1190 the for, the people that are saying they're for this road, they keep talking about
1191 economic reasons. So obviously somebody stands to gain money.

2 1192 Well, my house will not be taken, but yet it will be right beside my house,
1193 and from what I've heard, you don't plan to give me any money. Would you like
1194 to buy my house if this road goes through? I don't think so. I don't think any of
1195 these people that are doing this would want to buy my house. So that right there
1196 is the human factor of the environment that is affecting many other things now.

3 1197 And also you said that you wanted to—that you want good roads. Well, I agree; I
1198 would like good roads too. So fix I-85 or add light rail or mass transit, because
1199 we do not need more roads when we're in a situation like we are, already with
1200 traffic and urban sprawl.

1201 Also this road doesn't have to take your house to affect it negatively, as
1202 I've said. So the environment, the schools and all the things that everybody says,
1203 those are definitely negative things that all affect the taxpayer. Everybody in
1204 North Carolina will be affected negatively if this road goes through not just the
1205 people that have their home taken.

1206 [APPLAUSE]

1207 DeWitt: Thank you. I know you did it before but if you could state your name again.
1208 Denton: (Susan Denton, PO Box 168, Belmont, NC, 28012) Susan Denton, again I live in
1209 t077 Belmont. I just wanted to say one thing, I've heard a lot of people say, "It goes
1210 through my house," or "It impacts my neighborhood." I feel manipulated by this
1211 bouncing around from this route to that route. I think at first they had that
1212 Southern route planned, which was the one closest to my house, and man, there
1 1213 was a lot of instant opposition to that group. So all of a sudden they bounced it
1214 up, and now it's going to be the northern route, but you know, that's not a
1215 guaranteed route. That route could be changed. And they said that. So I want
1216 everybody here to remember one thing: the route that's going to go through is the
1217 one that's closest to your house, and I just think you shouldn't take anything for
1218 granted as far as what they've said. I just wanted to say that.

1219 [APPLAUSE]

1220 DeWitt: Thank you.

1221 Hopkins: (Jim Hopkins, 4863 Verde View Dr, Gastonia, NC, 28056) Good evening. My
1222 t078 name is Jim Hopkins. I live at 4863 Verde View Drive. This road will not affect
1223 my house, but it's going to pass within a few hundred feet of my backyard. But I
1224 wanted to say a few things here. There's been a lot of talk about traffic here
1225 going to 321 and all that; that's true. It's very true. But folks, let's don't also
1 1226 forget, it's also going to be at every single intersection this road will have. All of
1227 them. And let's face it, folks. Our roads are not in appropriate condition, okay?
1228 So all of these roads are going to deteriorate.

1229 Second thing, I don't think this roadway has been completely thought out.
1230 I'll give you just one example. One of these interchanges is on Robinson Road.
1231 You go down Robinson Road, go toward 321, there is a one lane, not one in each
1232 direction, one lane railroad underpass. Right now the people have to go and use
1233 the honor system more or less, to take turns going under this bridge. If we start
1234 letting traffic come off of this interchange, it's just going to back up even worse.
1235 Right now, during the busy times, that road is backed up, out on 321 and
1236 Robinson Road, okay? So let's think about all that.

1237 [APPLAUSE]

1238 DeWitt: Thank you.

1239 Mort: (Jim Mort, 611 S. York St, Gastonia, NC, 28053) Jim Mort again. Briefly the
1240 t079 other night on the news, I don't know how many of you heard this, but yes, made
1241 a bill for the first part of the expressway is estimated to be—this is according to
1242 the institute, according to the North Carolina Turnpike Authority's overview,
1243 6/22/2009, \$910.7 million dollars. And on the news the other night according to
1244 Senator Tony Forest, he said there is a \$4 billion shortfall in North Carolina's
1245 budget at the present time. We're firing teachers; and where are we going to get
1246 the money to pay for this?

1247 One last note: in a letter sent from the mayor of Gastonia that says the
1248 Office of the Mayor, David Marsh [ph] in 2001—old letter. "On behalf of the
1249 citizens of Gastonia allow me to welcome you to the York Chester historic
1250 district, Gastonia's first locally designated historic district." Such a designation is

1251 an honor and a distinction indicating that the community believes the architecture,
1252 the history, and overall integrity of this area are worthy of preservation and
1253 protection. I hope they comply with this. I hope they go along with this.

1254 [APPLAUSE]

1255 DeWitt: Thank you sir. Is there anyone else that would like to speak?

1256 M: I have a quick comment. I don't have a microphone to do it. How many people
1257 t080 here are from Mecklenburg County? I'm surprised. Most of—I went to the first

1258 meeting, and the turnout there was 500-plus. A lot of people are here tonight too,

1259 but it seems like the second meeting—which there are only two—it should be
1260 where the most impact is going to be, not in the county that's not, in my opinion.

1261 It should be in the county of York or Gaston County or another high school or
1262 another venue. So I think that's a little bit unfair, to be honest with you.

1263 DeWitt: Thank you very much. Does anybody else have a comment? I wish you would
1264 come to the microphone and give us your name and address just so we can make
1265 sure it's part of our record.

1266 Menzel: I hate doing that kind of stuff. I was not going to speak tonight, but—

1267 DeWitt: That's okay. We want your opinion.

1268 Menzel: (Marleta Menzel, 8400 Mallaranny Rd, Charlotte, NC, 28278) My name is

1269 t081 Marleta Menzel. I live at 8400 Mallaranny Road. We're actually on this side of
1270 the lake, and lots of neighbors will be affected. It was going to come—or it still
1271 may—right in front of my house. We can imagine what the value of our house

1272 would be then, on the lake. Now it's going to go to my neighbors. I hate that.
1273 I'm going to still see it down the way.

1274 One of my concerns that I haven't heard anyone mention is the—I don't
1275 know if you guys—probably from Gastonia you don't see this, but the ash ponds
1276 over by the steam plant, it's a mess. When you stand on my balcony and look
1277 across where this road is going to go, this ash is so completely thick that you can't
1278 see the steam plant. Now, at one of the meetings, I actually had obtained lots of
1279 pictures. And at one of the meetings, I gave those pictures to—I believe it was
1280 one of your people. And she was like, "Oh, that is really bad." Here's your
1281 picture back. So I don't know if anybody has even thought about that part of it,
1282 has said anything about it.

1283 I talked to Don Scruggs [ph] at the plant yesterday. The ash was really
1284 bad over the weekend again. Whenever there's wind, it's bad. He told me
1285 yesterday they've added yet another basin back there, and they're going to try to
1286 keep it wet [ph], but he went on to say that sometimes they won't be able to. If a
1287 truck breaks down, it needs maintenance; there's going to be a problem with the
1288 ash, and we'll just have to live with it.

1289 And of course I also keep wondering about my child playing out there, on
1290 the dock, and how that affects him, breathing this. And now you're going to add
1291 all these cars on top of it. What kind of accidents are we going to have on this
1292 bridge, with this ash? And has anybody really studied that? I don't think so.

1293 Because I've not heard it brought up again, other than when I handed her a picture
1294 and she said, "Oh, that does look really bad."

1295 So that's my only comment. And I know that probably doesn't help the
1296 people whose houses are going to go. I hate it for everybody. I hate it if I'm
1297 going to be looking at it or if it's going to go in front of my house. It's going to
1298 affect my property value. But anyway, I would like for someone to address that
1299 issue, which had kind of been put under the table, I think, because nobody wants
1300 to hear that there could be a problem now with the ash.

1301 DeWitt: I think there are emissions from the plant that we have studied as we continue this
1302 process. We're aware of the fly ash. We're aware of the steam product that
1303 comes out of the—I lost my train of thought here...that clean the river and cleans
1304

1305 Menzel: Scrubber [ph].

1306 DeWitt: Scrubber. Thank you very much.

1307 Gallant: (Scott Gallant, 4066 Tucker Rd, Belmont, NC, 28012) I too wasn't planning on
1308 t082 speaking tonight, but my name is Scott Gallant, and I live at 4066 Tucker Road.

1309 The recommended route will take my house, whether it does or not, that's yet to
1310 be seen. I am opposed to this Garden Parkway. What else I—they might, we
1311 might have to end up paying for this parkway with taxes. Because as sure as I'm
1312 standing here right now, I will not set up an account with the Turnpike Authority
1313 to drive on the Garden Parkway.

1314 [APPLAUSE]

1315 DeWitt: Thank you.

1316 McMeeken: I'd like to ask a question.

1317 DeWitt: Yes, sir. I believe you should come to the microphone to make sure we capture
1318 you on record.

1319 McMeeken: (Address not provided) My name is Tom McMeeken. I'm against the
1320 Parkway, also.

1321 Audience: I can't hear you.

1 1322 McMeeken: I'm against the Parkway. I'd rather see public transportation put in. But the
1323 t083 question I have is, if you build this parkway, one of the things that Charlotte is
1324 trying to promote, as I understand it, is that they want to be able to put additional
1325 bike pathways, pedestrian ways. You only have to go down the road here to look
1326 at the crossing here, across 485, for Arrow Wood [ph] Road, or 160 or even 49
1327 [ph], and you'll see that it is totally unfriendly to anything but cars. On this
1328 parkway, are you going to have something to accommodate bicycles, especially
2 1329 the bridge that goes over the river? Or is it going to be, again, just car-oriented,
1330 pollution-oriented and no alternatives to provide a means for pedestrians or
1331 anything else?

3 1332 The other thing is, what about the farmers out there? The people that need
1333 to walk under this parkway, the people who live out in the country, or for
1334 animals—are you going to provide tunnels or walkways for these animals to get
1335 from one side to the other, so they can preserve—so we don't lose them all?

1336 Because that's what highways do, they tend to drive the animals away. That's the
1337 question.

1338 DeWitt: We will consider pedestrian pathways, bike pathways, as part of this project. That
1339 doesn't mean necessarily they're going to follow all the way along the Garden
1340 Parkway. But there will be consideration to those anywhere there is a crossing,
1341 and anywhere there's an opportunity that makes sense we will certainly consider
1342 that. As it relates to animal crossings, there will be kinds of things that's common
1343 in the state on roads like this will be put in place. That there are structures called
1344 a culvert, call it a bridge-call it whatever you want-that allow for animal crossings
1345 under the road, if that's appropriate, so, yes, we will consider those things.

1346 McMeeken: What about bikeways going across the bridge?

1347 DeWitt: Depending on what bridge it is. We will consider those things as design
1348 continues.

1349 [INDISCERNIBLE]

1350 Medlin: (John Medlin, 1259 Dorchester Rd, Gastonia, NC, 28056) My name is John
1351 t084 Medlin 1259 Dorchester Road, Gastonia. The residents of Mecklenburg County, I
1352 just wanted to point out one thing. By law, the Turnpike Authority is required to
1353 include local support of this project. If they don't have that, they can't build it.
1 1354 You've heard a lot of your local politicians get up here and talk about being in
1355 favor of it. You see in Gaston County, we've pulled the grassroots, and we're trying
1356 to rally people to tell their local politicians what they think of this project. I urge
1357 the Mecklenburg County residents to do the same thing. If you really care about

1358 what's going to happen to your neighborhood, if you really care about what's
1359 going to happen with your state taxes, and your coworkers, if you care what
1360 happens to their state taxes, whether they live near you or not, rally—let your
1361 local politicians know. Go to our website, and you'll see contact information for
1362 your Mecklenburg County officials, Charlotte officials, your state officials.
1363 You've got to let them know what you think.
1364 DeWitt: Thank you very much. Any other comments tonight? If not, it's 8:52 I'll
1365 consider this public hearing is closed. Thank you for coming.
1366 [END RECORDING]

Appendix B7 – Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t001	1	Public Involvement	During the months preceding the release of the draft of the environmental impact statement, the SECC [Southeast Connector Coalition] made several environmental safety and economic concerns known to the NCTA and local elected officials. The SECC is grateful that these concerns seem to have been thoughtfully considered in the preliminary route selection by the NCTA. During this public involvement phase of the project, we wish to reiterate our continued concerns over the safety issues around the steam fog situation, and the fly ash drift hazard.	The NCTA appreciates the input received from the SECC during development of the Draft EIS. Fog is discussed in Section 3.2.6.2 of the Draft EIS. The area with the most potential for fog and fly ash, as reported by the SECC, is along the Detailed Study Corridors located south of the Allen Steam Station. The Preferred Alternative (DSA 9) is located north of the Allen Steam Station.
t001	2	General Comment	Additionally, the increased negative environmental impacts in the southern crossings, as defined by the River Keeper and other groups, need to remain critical points of consideration as this proposal moves forward.	A comment letter on the Draft EIS from the Catawba River Keeper Foundation was received (Document i-006). Please see responses to Comments 4-13 in the Catawba River Keeper’s letter in Appendix B3 .
t001	3	General Comment	In conclusion, the SECC wants to thank those involved for their technical and in-depth analysis of the numerous route options. The SECC, as an organization, does not officially support or oppose the Garden Parkway.	Comment acknowledged.
t002	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	I cannot understand why the older generation are chosen as the— chosen for destruction of their homes and farms to be uprooted, and their properties close by has recently been bought.	As described in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS, the Preliminary Study Corridors, Detailed Study Corridors, and the preliminary designs within the Detailed Study Corridors, were developed to avoid and minimize impacts to the human, physical, cultural, and natural environments to the extent feasible.
t003	1	Purpose and Need for Action	In order for segments, all segments of Gaston County to continue to grow and prosper in a healthy manner, we need this connection across the Catawba River. We enjoy a good quality of life in Gaston County. However without this new road, air quality will likely continue to deteriorate at a more rapid pace. Congestion on I-85 is a problem nearly every day, and it’s going to continue to worsen and become more dangerous.	As discussed in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose and need of the project is to improve east-west transportation mobility, including across the Catawba River. The project is included in the 2035 long range transportation plans for the region, and these have been found to conform to the State Implementation Plan, which is a document prepared by the NC Division of Air Quality that describes how North Carolina will maintain or achieve compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in non-attainment and maintenance areas. Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS discusses this transportation conformity issue in more detail. Air quality also is addressed in Section 4.2 of the Draft EIS. Traffic operations in 2006 and 2030 without the proposed project are discussed in Section 1.6 of the Draft EIS.

Appendix B7 – Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t003	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	It's normal for major roadways to be built in phases.....My understanding is that the current plan for the parkway is terminating at highway 321. And while this is not ideal, the ultimate goal is the parkway to go by I-85. It's positive first step that should immediately improve traffic patterns and relieve current congestion, as well as shorter driving times between southern Gaston County and Mecklenburg County.	The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County, and this is the project NCTA evaluated in the Draft EIS as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and this is the project NCTA intends to construct as soon as possible. At this time, based on available information, NCTA is planning on initially constructing the entire length of the project, with four lanes from I-485 to US 321 and two lanes from US 321 to I-85. The section from US 321 to I-85 would be upgraded to four lanes by 2035. However, as the commenter notes, large transportation projects are typically constructed in phases, as funding becomes available.
t003	3	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	I'm hopeful that the appropriate authorities will move ahead as soon as possible to secure the needed right-of-ways between Highway 321 and Interstate 85 so that the entire parkway can be completed in a timely manner. I'm certainly sensitive to the homeowners that will be directly impacted, and moving out of one's home and having to relocate is a burdensome process; however, I believe that there's a fair process in place for those directly impacted to be adequately compensated for their property.	The exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. As discussed in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.
t003	4	Purpose and Need for Action	For the good of the entire community, the Garden Parkway needs to move forward now.	The NCTA was created by the General Assembly in 2002 to implement alternative financing methods to pay for, and speed construction of, much-needed roads.
t004	1	Purpose and Need for Action	First, let me express appreciation from our community, for the depth of the information sessions and the opportunities for other comments. You've been very thorough.	Opportunities for public input and comment have been provided throughout the EIS process, as summarized in Section 9.2 of the Draft EIS.
t004	2	Purpose and Need for Action	If we don't step up now, build this road, the opportunity will be lost, our community will suffocate in traffic congestion. And on that note, cars that are sitting idling on the interstate don't improve our economy or our air quality. The regional chamber strongly supports the East-West Connector.	Comment acknowledged.
t005	1	Purpose and Need for Action	This new road will open up access to the existing interstates and also relieve more traffic, or more local traffic, on our existing roads during rush hour. This will help the safety of our local roads and make our communities more peaceful on a day-to-day basis.	As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, overall congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County would be less in 2030 with the proposed Gaston East-West Connector in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Appendix B7 – Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t005	2	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	As a business owner in Gastonia, I can see the needed long-term boost to our economy this new access to the east will open. This new southern route will pave the way for growth in our county for generations of the future.	Gaston County's Comprehensive Plan, which describes a vision for future growth in the county, includes the Gaston East-West Connector (Garden Parkway). Projected land use in the project area, with and without the project, is estimated in the quantitative indirect and cumulative effect analysis prepared for the Preferred Alternative and summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS.
t006	1	Purpose and Need for Action	The East-West Connector is only one of the projects we work on at Planning (Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization). But it is our top priority. Eight years ago, I questioned the need for this project. As I say now, it is now our top priority.	The Gaston MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan has the Garden Parkway (Gaston East-West Connector) as its top priority.
t006	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I-85, in a very short time, would become inadequate to move traffic across the Catawba River. It is our future at stake here. In the not too distant future—by the year 2015, I-85 is destined to become a parking lot. We will not be able to move people across the Catawba in an orderly fashion. We also must know that in order to move and bring industry into Gaston County, we have to be able to move goods across the Catawba. The East-West Connector is meant to relieve this traffic on 85, so that trucks can pay for their own way to and from the airport.	Traffic operations in 2006 and 2030 without the proposed project are discussed in Section 1.6 of the Draft EIS. The purpose and need for the project are described in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of the Draft EIS.
t007	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	You see, I am one of the balance of 205,000 Gaston County residences, comprising over 80,000 households, who will be positively impacted by the Garden Parkway. More particularly, I'm one of the 109,000 residents, and 43,000 households that reside south of I-85 in Gaston County. We currently feel the brunt of traffic making its way through our communities, trying to get to major employment centers of our region. Who can deny the significant traffic coming from southern Gaston and York County, South Carolina, all trying to get to northeast-bound I-85? The Garden Parkway will, without a doubt, relieve a great amount of this workday traffic and provide a much-needed new east-west corridor. It will ease our ability to get to regional workplaces, the economic engine to provide us jobs, goods and service to our community. It will also provide a much greater access to new, potential Gaston County residents, and the businesses that will be attracted to that new growth.	The Preferred Alternative, DSA 9, would meet the project's purpose to improve east-west mobility in southeast Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County (See Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS). As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, overall congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County would be less in 2030 with the proposed Gaston East-West Connector in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Appendix B7 – Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t007	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	All citizens of Gaston County need to be empathetic, and supportive of families and businesses that are being impacted by this corridor. Although their homes cannot be replaced, we all need to stay involved to ensure that they are treated fairly, lobby for their support from our local and state officials.	The preliminary designs for the Detailed Study Alternatives avoided and minimized relocations to the extent feasible. All DSAs would relocate businesses and residences, and the exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. As described in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.
t007	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	We need to rely on the Gaston Chamber of Commerce, with its thousand businesses, and all of the local regional chambers to demand the parkway be completed to I-85.	The NCTA intends to build the ultimate project, from I-485 in Mecklenburg County to I-85 west of Gastonia as soon as possible.
t008	1	Purpose and Need for Action	I'm with Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden and I'm here to show our support for the Garden Parkway and the current recommended alternative.	The Recommended Alternative, DSA 9, was identified as the Preferred Alternative.
t008	2	Visual Resources	The parkway will provide direct access to one of the region's most significant tourist attractions without further stressing our transportation arteries, and will provide an easier access to other myriad businesses that will serve to benefit.	An interchange is proposed on NC 279 (South New Hope Road), north of the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden entrance, which is also on NC 279.
t008	3	Alternatives Considered	We believe the parkway authority has done an excellent job in researching options, positioning the roadway to limit regional impact, and ensuring a plan that it has the most limited environmental impact possible.	Comment acknowledged.
t008	4	Land Use and Transportation Planning	The region has been presented with a tremendous opportunity as a site to locate a road with access across the Catawba River. If the community does not seize the opportunity now, we will be left largely with unmanaged growth, increasing emission problems, and eventually hazardous roadways.	Comment acknowledged. The Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has ranked the Gaston East-West Connector their number one priority.
t009	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I presently serve as one of your county commissioners. This project has been number one on our list, along with the local MPO for many years, and I'll have to take credit or blame-I was part of the initial ones to have a conception for this project. The idea was to relieve the congestion, and we saw that the roads on Southpoint, New Hope, Union, and others, people were migrating up between I-74 and 85 to go east and west, and we felt like that we can relieve congestions on these roads with a new bypass around Gastonia.	The Gaston Area MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan has the Garden Parkway (Gaston East-West Connector) as its top priority. The project will provide a new tolled highway facility that is projected to provide a good level of service (LOS D or better in 2035) east-west through southern Gaston County and between southern Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County. As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, overall congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County would be less in 2030 with the proposed Gaston East-West Connector compared to the No-Build Alternative.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t009	2	Air Quality	It's been mentioned before that the flow of the traffic would improve the air quality; we are presently under the gun for not meeting the attainment standards for EPA in air quality. This is one way that we can do that. It also would save fuel for many people traveling less miles.	The project is included in the 2035 long range transportation plans for the region, and these have been found to conform to the State Implementation Plan, which is a document prepared by the NC Division of Air Quality that describes how North Carolina will maintain or achieve compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in non-attainment and maintenance areas. Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS discusses this transportation conformity issue in more detail. Air quality also is addressed in Section 4.2 of the Draft EIS. As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, overall congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County would be less in 2030 with the proposed Gaston East-West Connector in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.
t009	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	We can up with the idea of tolling this road to help pay for it, because, as had been indicated before, the North Carolina Department of Transportation does not have the money to do a lot of the roads, and that's the system of taxing our future pay, funding for highways had got to be improved.	The Gaston Urban Area MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan includes the Gaston East-West Connector as a toll road. As discussed in Section 1.1 of the Draft EIS, sufficient traditional (i.e. non-toll) transportation funding to build this project is not likely in the foreseeable future.
t010	1	Community Characteristics and Resources	So what I'm here tonight to do, on behalf of the Belmont Optimist Club, is ask the turnpike to reconsider going through our new fields, because when-if this does happen, then it shuts our program down, and in 46 years, thousands of kids were served in the Belmont area. So we would ask that you reconsider.	Duke Power owns the recreational field land and leases it to the Belmont Optimist Club. The NCTA has modified the Preferred Alternative preliminary design to avoid direct encroachment on the expanded Belmont Optimist Club recreational fields. The modified design also avoids two electric power towers. The modified design and the proposed access from NC 273 (Southpoint Road), as discussed in Section 2.3.1 of the Final EIS.
t011	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	I have as much to lose as anybody sitting in here. I live on a farm at 841 Shannon Bradley Rd. My boys are the sixth generation that have lived on that farm. We have 70 acres that are our farmland, and this route that they've chosen will take every inch of it.My request is that if it's going to happen, move on, but let me enjoy some of the money before I die.	The exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. Based on the preliminary design for the Preferred Alternative (DSA 9), the Gaston East-West Connector would directly encroach on 841 Shannon Bradley Road, an approximate 10-acre parcel. As discussed in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t012	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	I am a business owner of a company located at 1260 Shannon Bradley Rd, and 85. The property is 22 acres right on that corner, and under DSA Proposal Number Nine, we're right in the middle of the off-ramp.	The Preferred Alternative would relocate businesses, and the exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. Based on the preliminary design for the Preferred Alternative (DSA 9), the Gaston East-West Connector would directly impact the business at 1260 Shannon Bradley Road. As discussed in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.
t013	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	I'm here to speak for some of my neighbors that can't be here because they are tired, older people in our neighborhood, and we've been there for 31 years. I was one of the first residents to move into that neighborhood. I don't oppose the road; I oppose the fact that they are making us, now-people ready to retire-move. It's very emotional. I don't oppose the road, but I just don't want to move. But if I have to move, I will move, but we just hope they will consider another route.	The property at 3224 Northwynn Road is adjacent to the preliminary design right of way for the Preferred Alternative (DSA 9). The exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. As discussed in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.
t014	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I claim my disapproval of the toll road to nowhere to being built. First, if the allocated moneys must be spent on transportation projects, instead of much needed education funding, as suggested by the DOTs, then why not widen Highway 74?	As discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS, various Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives were evaluated. These Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives included improvements to I-85 and US 29-74. As summarized in Section 2.2.6.5 of the Draft EIS, none of the Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives would meet the project's purpose and need, and consequently, they were eliminated from detailed study. The Gaston Urban Area 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes the Gaston East-West Connector as their number one priority, and the LRTP also includes the widening (from four to six lanes) of the US 29-74 bridge over the Catawba River as a project to be built by 2025.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t014	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	If people can't even afford to pay their mortgages or buy gas for their vehicles; what makes the state believe that people would use a toll road that dumps them on an even more congested highway, without even getting them to the original, intended destination of I-85? 321 is not now, nor will it ever be ready to handle semi trucks, RVs, or buses, in large quantities.	<p>The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County, as described and evaluated in the Draft EIS. At this time, based on available information, NCTA is planning on initially constructing the entire length of the project, with four lanes from I-485 to US 321 and two lanes from US 321 to I-85. The section from US 321 to I-85 would be upgraded to four lanes by 2035.</p> <p>However, in order to respond to concerns expressed prior to, and as part of, the public review process for the Draft EIS, the NCTA studied traffic forecasts for a potential interim project phase ending at US 321. The studies indicate there would be an increase in traffic along US 321 from the Gaston East-West Connector north to Stagecoach Road for a distance of approximately 3/4 mile. Beyond Stagecoach Road, the traffic is estimated to generally be the same with or without the interim project phase. Under both an interim phase for the project and the ultimate project, a corridor-level analysis indicates US 321 would operate under capacity and at acceptable levels of service from Robinson Road to US 29-74 through the year 2030. Therefore, the project would not be expected to have an impact on the Yorkchester historic district.</p> <p>An Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study will be completed as required in order to sell bonds. The study will estimate the traffic volumes and potential revenue at various stages of the project. Investors must be satisfied with the findings of the Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study, or the bonds will not sell.</p>
t015	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	It seems that most of the proponents of this project give two, basically two reasons for the road, and that is relief of present congestion on I-85 and Highway 74 and potential for economic development along and because of the route. ... These are not reasons, I don't believe, to justify seizing, disrupting, and displacing large tracts of land, for potential benefit.... It is also not a reason to construct a new thoroughfare through southern Gaston County between southern Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties. Those are local problems and the common good would be better served by local city and county planning of their secondary road system, leaving the state to improve and maintain the primary road system.	<p>The purpose of the project is presented in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. The Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has identified the Gaston East-West Connector as the number one transportation priority for the region. The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan includes the Gaston East-West Connector, as well as numerous other transportation projects throughout the Gaston urban area.</p>

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t015	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	The traffic problem really is I-85 and 74, and that is a greater urgency. The Route 74 Mecklenburg and Gaston County critically needs to be widened or replaced, and Wilkinson Boulevard really needs to be widened. I-85 needs additional lanes north and south. Bus lanes on the interstate ___ starts a long way, the transit stops along the way to be considered. Commuter rail, which probably can complement it with existing railroads would alleviate traffic problems generated by both. Therefore, the answer is to improve on what you already have and not construct a new road.	The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85 and US 29-74, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5. Various Mass Transit Alternatives also were considered, as discussed in Section 2.2.5 of the Draft EIS. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Sections 2.2.5.1 and 2.2.5.2. The Gaston Urban Area 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes the Gaston East-West Connector as their number one priority, and the LRTP also includes the widening (from four to six lanes) of the US 29-74 bridge over the Catawba River as a project to be built by 2025.
t016	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	This is going to be financed, as I understand, through bonds and other sources.	Funding to construct the project will be from multiple sources over the course of several years. The majority of this project will be funded through the sale of revenue bonds, which will be repaid with the tolls collected along this roadway. The project may also be funded in part by federal credit assistance from the United States Department of Transportation under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act – or TIFIA -- program. STIP funds may be used. Appropriations from the NC Legislature (i.e. “Gap Funding” in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year) are also anticipated.
t017	1	Purpose and Need for Action	The thing that struck me tonight in the presentation that our engineer made to us, was that he said citizen's don't make this decision. Don't you believe it. There are politicians in this county that have made decisions. He also said politicians don't make decisions. Don't you believe it. This is an extraordinary situation. Basically, we had a bait and switch.	Decisions related to the Gaston East-West Connector have been made at several points. The local Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is comprised of local governments, develops and prioritizes transportation projects for the area. The Gaston Urban Area MPO has identified the project as the area's number one priority. The decision on reasonable and feasible alternatives for the project, Detailed Study Alternatives, and the Recommended Alternative, are made through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process by the Draft EIS lead agencies (Federal Highway Administration, NCTA, and NCDOT). The process, data, and analysis results that go into these decisions are summarized in the Draft EIS, and public input and comment is solicited throughout the process.
t017	2	Purpose and Need for Action	They came out and said that in fact we were going to have a connector, everything they say in print says "connector." A connector connects two points. Every time it came up-and I'm a past member of the Planning Commission of Gaston County-it came up running from two	The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County and the NCTA intends to build the ultimate project as soon as possible, based on the availability of funding. At this time, based on available information, NCTA is planning on initially constructing

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
			points, 485 to 85. The people that approved it, that you're relying on, that say we have done the public support, we've done all of these authorities, all of these changes for you, all of the resolutions that say in fact it goes between the points. It is a bait and switch.	the entire length of the project, with four lanes from I-485 to US 321 and two lanes from US 321 to I-85. The section from US 321 to I-85 would be upgraded to four lanes by 2035.
t017	3	Cultural Resources	They are now running it through our only historic district.	As discussed in Section 5.2.2 of the Draft EIS, the project would not have any Adverse Effects on historic resources on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The York Chester historic district, on US 321, is not within the vicinity of the Detailed Study Alternatives, and would not be impacted by the proposed project.
t018	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	One of my shops is a stone's throw away from 321 on Second Avenue. About every 10 days I hear a crash. I go out and I look and someone has had an accident where 321, people coming from the south to the north to 85, they have accidents..... So if we've got all these cars in down there near Garlock and they are going to come through, that is just going to add, it is going to go from being a dangerous intersection to a deadly intersection. In my book that is an environmental impact.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t018	2	Alternatives Considered	Why can't we widen I-85? Makes perfect sense to me.	The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5.
t018	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I don't think some of these people are going to use the Garden Parkway. They are not going to want to pay the toll, and so they may not even use it. So if that is what is going to actually pay for it, the tolls, I don't think it is going to happen.	Based on available information, including the <i>Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined that the project is financially feasible. An <i>Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study</i> , which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. This study will be posted on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t019	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	You've heard a lot of people talk about born and raised here. I wasn't. And let me tell you why I did come out here. It wasn't to be next to a big road. Something else, I wasn't notified by the NCTA, but by a citizen's group. ... One of the things they point out is we'll give you what it is that you are after, what you need, the highest and best use currently, but I'm thinking that one of the benefits they are not talking about is that land values go up, right? How about we get that value for the land?	Comment acknowledged. 224 J and J Lane is on the mailing list, and a postcard notification of the meeting was mailed to Sean or Sarah Harrington at 224 J and J Lane. The value of land is influenced by numerous factors, including surrounding uses, zoning, market conditions, demand, the economy, etc. It is not possible to predict the future value of parcels and/or how the value of specific parcels would change (increase or decrease) just as a result of the project. The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.
t019	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I had an idea that we could just shift the funding from this and widen I-85. I think other people have said that. It makes a lot of sense.	The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5.
t019	3	Water Resources	The crossing they are talking about, check with River Keeper, it is going to fill up the area at the lake right there. We won't be able to get access to the lake.	None of the DSAs would impact existing access to Lake Wylie. The nearest public access area to the DSAs is the Allen Fishing Area. As discussed in Section 3.2.6.1 of the Draft EIS, none of the DSAs would directly impact this fishing area owned by Duke Energy but open to the public.
t021	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I do find it interesting because I drive towards Raleigh fairly frequently and every other city along that path has found a way to widen I-85.	The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5.
t021	2	Alternatives Considered	I've done a little research on toll roads in our area. I found a website, www.tollroadsnews.com, did a search on Greenville, because Greenville, South Carolina has I-185. That also is a toll road, it is called Greenville Southern Connector. This project is going broke and it is looking for a patient investor to buy that project. The C2A which is the authority that runs it, is in financial trouble and heading for default on its debt....It is simply too indirect a route to be competitive. Greenville has a population of 400,000, with Spartanburg and Anderson they have 1.2 million. All of Gaston County roughly 200,000. If a city that has twice the number of people can't make the toll road work, how can it work here with significantly less people?	Based on available information, including the <i>Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined that the project is financially feasible. An <i>Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study</i> , which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. It should also be noted that the populations of Gaston and Mecklenburg County together had a population of approximately 1.025 million in 2006.

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t021	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	My last comment is I've seen a large road project built in the state; I-485 in Charlotte is an example. But at least in that project, and it was just very recently said, they tied two major thoroughfares when they built it. They didn't try to dump all of these people on 485 onto Highway 51 and let them figure out how to get back over to 74.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t022	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	My very first comment is if there is minimal impact on 321, and those were your words, sir, that means there won't be more than minimal use? And that means we do not need this quote-unquote "Garden Parkway." There is no way that it is not going to impact the historic district. You cannot be dumping that many vehicles as they say there will be onto the historic district and not have some kind of really negative impact, assuming that is exactly what we are going to do is have that many vehicles that it is going to be necessary to have this Garden Parkway.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014). The potential interim phase for the project ending at US 321 would not impact the York Chester historic district.
t022	2	Purpose and Need for Action	There will always be a toll on this Garden Parkway because it will never get paid for because you can't.	In accordance with State law (NCGS 136-89.196), upon fulfillment of the revenue bond terms for a project, the NCTA shall remove tolls from the project.
t022	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	the Catawba Bridge is in need of repair. We know that. It has got to be repaired anyway. We can widen it and as you've been saying, widen I-85. We already have a connector to 485, and it's not going to cost us nearly as much.	The Gaston Urban Area 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes the Gaston East-West Connector as their number one priority, and the LRTP also includes the widening (from four to six lanes) of the US 29-74 bridge over the Catawba River as a project to be built by 2025. The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5.
t022	4	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	And they're talking about 358 homes that will be impacted. There's going to be a lot of other people that are going to be negatively impacted by this, and we're not going to get the first penny of compensation.	The preliminary designs for the Detailed Study Alternatives avoided and minimized relocations to the extent feasible. All DSAs would relocate businesses and residences, and the exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. As described in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t023	1	Community Characteristics and Resources	I am definitely not in favor of this road, nor will I ever use it. The public, to me, has been left in limbo by this meeting and is no different than the last. We still don't know exactly anything.	The purpose of the Public Hearings and Pre-Hearing Open Houses was to solicit input from the public prior to selection of the Preferred Alternative so public input can be considered in the decision. Public Hearing Maps, a summary of the Draft EIS, and the Draft EIS were made available at the Pre-Hearing Open Houses.
t023	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	And I definitely don't like the fact that the appraisal of my home is going to be given on today's bad market appraisal value is worth whatever your appraiser decides-your approved appraiser decides to appraise it as.	The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation. Qualified appraisers will be involved in determining the offers NCTA makes to property owners. If a property owner does not agree with the offer, there is an appeals process.
t023	3	Noise	I'm worried about the sound barriers; my house is very quiet where I live. You could never replace that.	A noise analysis was prepared for the project in accordance with NCDOT and FHWA guidance and regulations, as summarized in Section 4.1 of the Draft EIS. Preliminary reasonable and feasible noise barriers are shown in Figure 4-1(a-b) of the Draft EIS. A noise barrier was not identified as feasible and reasonable for homes along Timber Creek Trail. However, houses in this area would experience increases in noise levels with the Preferred Alternative in place.
t023	4	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	The senators of North Carolina had bought land in this area, and they are made privy, obviously, to knowledge that we are not made, and they are part of this advisory committee, and they should be removed.	State legislators were not involved in the preparation of the technical studies and the Draft EIS, nor in the identification of the Recommended Alternative and Preferred Alternative. The National Environmental Policy Act requires an objective evaluation of alternatives and a transparent process that includes public involvement (23 CFR 771.105). The Recommended Alternative and Preferred Alternative were identified based on a balance of cost and design considerations, impacts to the human and natural environments, and input received from agencies and the public, as described in the Draft EIS (Recommended Alternative) and Final EIS (Preferred Alternative). The public, including state and local officials, was informed of the project studies, results, and recommendations through workshops, newsletters, and the project website.
t024	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	This home was chosen to get away from the hectic city life, and give a safe haven for the children, the family, and the meager offering that we've heard about tonight for the homes will not replace them in kind.	As discussed in Section 3.2.3.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.
t024	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Dumping traffic into the historic York Chester neighborhood may go on for 20 or 30 years before somebody comes up with another period of 20 years to decide what they're going to do to finish the end of it.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).

Appendix B7 – Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t024	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	The authorities on the website also states this project will save 20 to 25 minutes between the airport and Belmont. Well, I've got news for you. I live on Southpoint Rd and I can get to the airport without speeding in 15 to 18 minutes.	The travel time savings described in Appendix C of the Draft EIS are projected time savings for the year 2030.
t024	4	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Put the money towards improving 74, that would be grand.	See response to Comment 1 from Mr. Robert Kellogg (Speaker t014).
t024	5	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	The traffic impact on the road, such as Southpoint Road, and South New Hope Road will be overwhelming to those who remain and don't have their homes taken.	The purpose and need for the project is described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. Traffic on some segments of some secondary roads in the project study area may increase, while on other roads or segments traffic may decrease as traffic patterns redistribute to include the presence of the proposed project. Overall, as discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are expected to be less in 2030 with proposed project in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.
t024	6	Air Quality	We currently have the worst air quality on the east coast in the Gaston/Mecklenburg area, and building this parkway will throw us further over this danger ozone level.	The Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill air quality region is a non-attainment area for ozone, meaning the area is exceeding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for this pollutant. The North Carolina Division of Air Quality develops the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to describe how North Carolina will maintain or achieve compliance with the NAAQS in non-attainment and maintenance areas. For transportation resources, the region is evaluated as a whole for conformity with the SIP through the region's long range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs. At this time, the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Long Range Transportation Plan and the Mecklenburg Union MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan have been determined to be in conformity with the State's plans to comply with the NAAQS. The Gaston East-West Connector is included in these long range transportation plans designed to conform to the SIP. This topic is addressed in more detail in Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS.
t024	7	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Instead of displacing people, businesses, fouling the environment further, spending money needlessly, wastefully, let's improve the present roads that we have.	See response to Comment 1 from Mr. Robert Kellogg (Speaker t014).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t025	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	What they have studied is to get from 85 to 485, not 85 to 321. The trips—the number of trips, the tolls, the impacts of the study on the whole road, not the project as it sits today. As the project sits today it makes no sense. It’s a road to nowhere.	The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County, as described and evaluated in the Draft EIS. However, construction of large transportation projects such as the Gaston East-West Connector, I-485 in Charlotte, I-540 in Raleigh, etc., are typically constructed in phases as funding becomes available. Construction phases are determined after the environmental planning phase is completed based on availability of funding. The intent is to build as much of the project in the first phase as possible, with the remainder constructed as soon as possible after that. At this time, based on available information, NCTA is planning on initially constructing the entire length of the project, with four lanes from I-485 to US 321 and two lanes from US 321 to I-85. The section from US 321 to I-85 would be upgraded to four lanes by 2035. However, in order to respond to concerns expressed prior to, and as part of, the public review process for the Draft EIS, the NCTA studied traffic forecasts for a potential interim project phase ending at US 321. The studies indicate there would be an increase in traffic along US 321 from the Gaston East-West Connector north to Stagecoach Road for a distance of approximately 3/4 mile. Beyond Stagecoach Road, the traffic is estimated to generally be the same with or without the interim project phase. Under both an interim phase for the project and the ultimate project, a corridor-level analysis indicates US 321 would operate under capacity and at acceptable levels of service from Robinson Road to US 29-74 through the year 2030. Therefore, the project would not be expected to have an impact on the Yorkchester historic district.
t026	1	Noise	This proposed route is going to be within roughly 400 feet of my house, so it's getting ready to get noisy. For those of you who have traveled, slept in a hotel room by an interstate highway, you know what that's going to be like, so that's what I'm looking forward to.	A noise analysis was prepared for the project in accordance with NCDOT and FHWA guidance and regulations, as summarized in Section 4.1 of the Draft EIS. Preliminary reasonable and feasible noise barriers are shown in Figure 4-1(a-b) of the Draft EIS. A detailed noise study was completed for the neighborhood that includes White Cedar Drive, but a noise barrier was not found to be reasonable and feasible based on guidance in the NCDOT Noise Abatement Policy. However, houses in this area will experience increases in noise levels with the Preferred Alternative in place.
t027	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I do believe that if we would just widen 74 and 29 and perhaps 85 as well, then things could be more settled.	See response to Comment 1 from Mr. Robert Kellogg (Speaker t014).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t028	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	As we've seen, the road can no longer be built out to 85. It now stops at 321, and even though it stops at 321, it cannot be built with the funding as described to the public. My question to the Turnpike Authority is under what authority are you using for coding your funds when you're bringing in DOT funds, federal funds, and a couple different companies. In other words, any funding other than private funding or the bonding, under what state statute or authority do you have to do the paying, make the decisions, and do the construction of this project?	Regarding project phasing, see response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014). The enabling legislation that established the NCTA is in State law NCGS 136-89. In addition to revenue bonds, other funding sources that may be used include federal credit assistance from the USDOT under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, and appropriation from the NC Legislature (i.e. "gap funding") in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year.
t029	1	Purpose and Need for Action	furthermore the projections issued by the Turnpike Authority documented that the project will not solve the I-85 traffic problems. I sat there listening tonight to person after person standing up here talking about, we're building this to solve a problem. Their own data clearly says that it will not.	The purpose and need for the project is described in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of the Draft EIS. The criteria used to evaluate the ability of alternatives to meet purpose and need also are listed in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. As discussed in Section 2.2.7, a New Location Toll Alternative would meet the project's purpose.
t029	2	Purpose and Need for Action	if the project is built all the way to 85, not just stopping at 321. It reduces traffic at that crossing by four percent. So why are you building it, if it doesn't solve the problem, in fact it actually gets worse on 321-excuse me-with the project than it is without it.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t029	3	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	Even though the law requires them to do so, the DEIS doesn't even mention the potential impacts of intense suburban sprawl with increased commuter distance to Charlotte? In fact, the comprehensive analysis of secondary impact is practically non-existent.	In accordance with NCDOT procedure, a qualitative <i>Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment</i> report was completed and included in the Draft EIS in Chapter 7. A <i>Quantitative Indirect and Cumulative Effects Analysis</i> (was prepared for the Preferred Alternative, as summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS.
t029	4	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I can get to the airport from my house, a mile from here, in 25 minutes, and downtown in 35. It exaggerates. What else is exaggerated? Maybe the financials. And then look at Robinson and Stagecoach Road, where they say the traffic is going to dump off 321; drive those two main roads back up to 85. Trucks already do this. So just to reiterate what everybody said, it's not going to be used the way they are predicting.	<u>Regarding travel times.</u> The travel time savings described in Appendix C of the Draft EIS are projected time savings for the year 2030. <u>Regarding financials.</u> Based on the financing plan and available information, including the <i>Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> , available on the NCTA Web site, the NCTA has determined the project is financially feasible. An Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study, which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. <u>Regarding project phasing.</u> See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t030	1	Purpose and Need for Action	On September 8th, in the Gazette, Senator David Hoyle said, "You don't build roads for economic development; you build roads to get from point A to point B." But from the accounts we've heard tonight, you're not-we're starting at A but we're not getting to B, so I don't understand how building a road for economic development is okay.	As discussed in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose and need of the project is to improve east-west transportation mobility, including across the Catawba River. The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County, and this is the project NCTA evaluated in the Draft EIS as required by NEPA, and it is the project NCTA intends to construct as soon as possible.
t031	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	This road may provide some short-term relief, but if we build this road they will come; development will come. This artery will become congested just as segments of 485 have. And this was touted as the relief valve for Charlotte meant for our future, and that's one of the reasons why I'm against this road.	The Preferred Alternative has been designed to adequately carry year 2035 projected traffic volumes, as discussed in Section 2.3.5 of the Final EIS. Development that may occur with and without the project was addressed for all DSAs in the qualitative study titled: <i>Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> . This evaluation is summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. A quantitative indirect and cumulative effects analysis was prepared for the Preferred Alternative to further evaluate the indirect and cumulative effects of the project. This study is summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS.
t031	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	The secondary issue is that this road is going to be completely at odds with Land Use Plans we have developed for Belmont, and our planning/zoning.	The City of Belmont has adopted three versions of its Comprehensive Land Use Map. At the time the maps were prepared, the NC Turnpike Authority had not yet decided on an alignment of the proposed Garden Parkway, so the City of Belmont adopted Future Land Use maps for three options: no Garden Parkway, the northern alignment of the Garden Parkway, and the southern alignment of the Garden Parkway. The Preferred Alternative (DSA 9) is consistent with Belmont's northern alignment Future Land Use map. However, it should be noted that the City of Belmont submitted a resolution (Document g001) that stated they supported another bridge crossing of the Catawba River, but they preferred a middle alignment.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t031	3	Air Quality	In this document here, it said that no qualitative and no quantitative means have determined the air quality to measure, yet somehow the Federal Highway Administration has put us on notice that due to our air pollution we're at risk of losing highway funds. So apparently there has to be some way to determine, you know, in cubic feet or meters or some measure, what effect this road is going to have as far as air quality in Belmont.	Regarding ozone, see response to Comment 6 from Ms. Charla Clark (Speaker t023). Regarding mobile source air toxics (MSATs), the MSAT analysis was conducted in accordance with the <i>Federal Highway Administration Interim Guidance on Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents</i> dated February 3, 2006. Projects requiring a quantitative analysis include projects that have the potential for meaningful differences among project alternatives. The project would not qualify as requiring a quantitative analysis because it would not significantly alter a major intermodal facility, nor would the AADT be in the range of 140,000 to 150,000. The overall approach applied in the MSAT guidance characterizes the trend in MSAT emissions and the difference in MSAT emissions between alternatives, but does not attempt to characterize health risks or microscale impacts, due to the uncertainty associated with available analysis tools. The FHWA's guidance on MSATs was updated in September 2009. The updated guidance is summarized in Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS. The updates did not change the criteria used to determine whether a project should have a quantitative evaluation.
t031	4	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	What we're facing in Gaston County is a critical situation in our schools; you do all this development, and do you have a corresponding plan of the state to develop some schools to handle the capacity, because we are at or over capacity in almost all of our schools, elementary through high school.	Development that may occur with and without the project was addressed for all DSAs in the qualitative study titled: Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment for the Gaston East-West Connector. This evaluation is summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. A quantitative indirect and cumulative effects assessment was prepared for the Preferred Alternative, and is summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS. This study estimates the changes in land use in the study area with and without the proposed project. Planning for schools in Gaston County is conducted by Gaston County Schools. The NCTA coordinated with the school system during preparation of the Draft EIS.
t032	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	I currently own a piece of property on Edgewater, which is going to be in visible distance of this lovely highway.	The Preferred Alternative crossing of the South Fork Catawba River could be visible from some properties on Edgewater Drive. Visual impacts are discussed in Section 4.5.3 of the Draft EIS.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t032	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	They're going to cut across the 74/85, on the already overcrowded roads. There doesn't appear to be much of a plan to widen either one of those; we don't have any money, that's what we keep hearing. That's why we're pushing this toll road as our one chance. But if we don't have any money to widen these, how are we going to have money to widen all those access roads that are supposed to take you from point A to point B. You're just going to move the congestion; you're going to move it off of 85 and 74 down to these side roads? I don't understand how that's supposed to work.	The purpose and need for the project is described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. Traffic on some segments of some secondary roads in the project study area may increase, while on other roads or segments traffic may decrease as traffic patterns redistribute to include the presence of the proposed project. Overall, as discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are expected to be less in 2030 with proposed project in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.
t032	3	Air Quality	Also, I don't understand how the air quality is going to be improved; if you've got congestion on the interstate, they got to get off of the toll road to go down the side roads, they're sitting there idling in traffic and stuff, idling on 74/85. So you have the same problem.	See response to Comment 6 from Ms. Charla Clark (Speaker t023).
t032	4	Land Use and Transportation Planning	And if this draws, you know, the urban sprawl-if this draws the urban sprawl, you've got to widen the local roads, where's the money for that coming from? If you can't widen 74/85, you can't widen the side roads. That just does not make any sense to me.	Traffic on some segments of some secondary roads in the project study area may increase, while on other roads or segments traffic may decrease as traffic patterns redistribute to include the presence of the proposed project. The Gaston Urban Area MPO's long range transportation plan, which includes the Gaston East-West Connector, also considers the entire transportation network of the Gaston urban area. The long range transportation plan identifies and prioritizes transportation projects, including road widenings.
t033	1	Public Involvement	If it's true that the preponderance of public support is not there, and that that will kill the project, then all we have to do is stick together, and say we don't want it ...	Public comment received during the review period is summarized in Section 3.3 of the Final EIS. Comments in support of the project and in opposition to the project were received. The project has the support, through adopted resolutions, of several local entities, including the Town of Cramerton, the Gaston Urban Area MPO, Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce, Montcross Chamber of Commerce, Gaston Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, Gaston 2012, and Gaston Together. The project continues to be the number one priority in the Gaston Urban Area MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t034	1	Other	I'm disturbed by the fact that our local elected officials, along with traffic planners in Raleigh, have been studying traffic patterns, environmental impacts, and economic factors to determine whether a toll road costing well over a billion dollars, is feasible, with total disregard to the quality of life for the citizens of Gaston County. To shave a few minutes of travel time, they are willing to sacrifice the most natural, undisturbed and pristine areas of our county.	Impacts to the human, physical, cultural, and natural environments from the Detailed Study Alternatives are disclosed in the Draft EIS.
t034	2	Other	The 35 million dollars a year budgeted by our state is a fraction of the total cost of this road, yet that is a tremendous amount if re-budgeted to hire back many of our laid-off school teachers, staff, and administrators, or keeping police officers in acceptable numbers on our streets.	The "gap funding" provided by the State Legislature is designated specifically for the Gaston East-West Connector. Only the State Legislature can redirect these funds.
t034	3	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	The toll road's first phase of development, which will end up at US 321, will not reduce traffic, but will, in fact, increase traffic on our local streets and thoroughfares. The toll road will be the gateway for urban sprawl. With the convenience of the direct route to Charlotte, new home building will most likely increase dramatically. Additional homes result in additional traffic, all of which our local roads will not be able to handle, and there are no plans to accommodate the increased traffic locally, leading to and from the toll road.	<p><u>Regarding project phasing.</u> See response to Comment 2 from Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).</p> <p><u>Regarding potential for sprawl.</u> Development that may occur with and without the project was addressed for all DSAs in the qualitative study titled: <i>Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment for the Gaston East-West Connector</i>. This evaluation is summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. A quantitative indirect and cumulative effects assessment was prepared for the Preferred Alternative, and is summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS. This study estimates the changes in land use in the study area with and without the proposed project.</p> <p><u>Regarding traffic on secondary roads.</u> See response to Comment 5 from Ms. Charla Clark (Speaker t023).</p>
t034	4	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	Not to mention the additional demand that these families will bring to our schools and our municipal services. The increased traffic at the planned western terminus of the US 321 will greatly affect the quality of life of those residents of the US 321/Stagecoach Road, and Myrtle School Road corridors.	<p><u>Regarding project phasing.</u> See response to Comment 2 from Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).</p> <p><u>Regarding projected growth.</u> Projected growth and land use in the project area, with and without the project, is estimated in the quantitative indirect and cumulative effect analysis prepared for the Preferred Alternative and summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS.</p>

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t035	1	Air Quality	I didn't want the pollution from a large highway going past the schools. I was assured at that meeting that this road was not built for transportation of the public. This road was built to be a safe way to bring hazardous materials from the 485 area, which was being built, all the way over to Harding, where there should be a landfill, but they didn't actually say where the landfill was going to be. This is what I was told 19 years ago.	The purpose of the project is presented in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. It is to improve east-west transportation mobility.
t035	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	Last year, my property tax was reduced by two-thirds on a piece of property that the road will actually go across. We went to the county offices and had them put our county taxes back up; they said we were the only people to come in and complain that their taxes were lowered. The reason why they're doing that is because they don't want to give us any money for our land.	The FHWA, NCTA, and NCDOT have no involvement or authority in establishing property tax rates.
t035	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I ask you to use your educated minds to figure out a way, like a Lynx [ph] track, or a train track, and put up parking garages in different parts of Gaston County, to cut pollution, so people can get on a fast track to Charlotte, and have around the clock running trains. That will eliminate hazardous materials and pollution, and it would make sense, and people that got on that train would have to pay, to park in those garages would have to pay, and that would pay for it.	As discussed in Section 2.2 of the Draft EIS, a wide range of alternatives was included in the first screening of alternatives, and equally considered for their ability to meet the project purpose based on a set of evaluation criteria described in Section 2.2.1 of the Draft EIS. Only alternatives that meet the project purpose need to be carried forward for more detailed study. The alternatives evaluated in the first screening included Mass Transit and Multimodal Alternatives, and as described in Section 2.2.5, these types of alternatives would not meet the project's purpose and need.
t036	1	Purpose and Need for Action	None of this even considers the willingness of residents to pay the tolls. They found out in Greenville, South Carolina that people weren't willing to do so. To fund this, they're going to borrow and sell revenue bonds, in a shaky financial bond market, where banks are scared it doesn't get online, much less taking on a municipal project. Their own projections are clear; the tolls do not pay the cost of the road.	Based on available information, including the <i>Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined that the project is financially feasible. An <i>Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study</i> , which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. This study will be posted on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t036	2	Purpose and Need for Action	They brought the traffic impact on the US 321 interchange from 20,000 vehicles a day to 14,000 or more vehicles a day. Yet they failed to change their financial projection because if you have 5,500 fewer cars, that's 5,500 fewer cars and trucks paying tolls, which means their toll revenue projections are less. Then you would need more money than 35 million a year out of the general fund to make up the difference.	Toll revenues would be less in earlier years of the project and for an interim phase of the project. When the project is ready to go to construction, the costs may be different than originally estimated due to fluctuating costs for materials, labor, right of way, and environmental mitigation. Available funding from various sources also may be different at the time the project is ready to go to construction. All these factors will influence how much of the project can be constructed in the first phase. The NCTA would prefer to be able to construct the entire project as soon as possible.
t036	3	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	Every property if you're west of 321 you've got a cloud hanging. You're going to have trouble selling your land. How are you going to sell any place for profit when you've got a road on it?	The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation. The NCTA intends to build the entire project as soon as possible.
t036	4	Land Use and Transportation Planning	We offer solutions, with places for the old and aging bridge on Wilkinson Boulevard. Widen it. We can expand the Charlotte side of the six lanes and ease traffic congestion, makes no impact on existing homes or business, and no risk environmentally as in fact the bridge is already there.	See response to Comment 1 from Mr. Robert Kellogg (Speaker t014).
t036	5	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Or you can put the funding into an express custom commuter rail.	The Draft EIS evaluated a range of reasonable alternatives as required by 23 CFR 771.123(c). Section 2.2.5.2 of the Draft EIS discusses mass transit and multimodal alternatives. Multimodal alternatives are defined as alternatives that include the Mass Transit Alternative together with improvements to existing roadways. The primary reason for eliminating mass transit and multimodal alternatives was their inability to meet the project's purpose and need, as documented in the Draft EIS. The lack of financial feasibility was noted in Section 2.2.5.2 of the Draft EIS as an additional reason for finding that these alternatives were not reasonable alternatives.

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t037	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	It doesn't address the bottleneck that is I-85. If we're going to spend \$1.2 billion dollars or more, and not solve the problem, and only address 20% of the problem, is that a good use of our money? I don't think so.	The Preferred Alternative would meet the project's purpose, as stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. Traffic forecasts, traffic operations, and regional travel demand statistics are described in detail in Appendix C of the Draft EIS for the No-Build Alternative, Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, and New Location Alternatives. The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives that include widening I-85 would achieve only minimal improvements to traffic flow on I-85. A widened I-85 (widened to 8-10 lanes) would continue to operate at LOS E and F in 2030. Most improvements to traffic flow achieved by increasing capacity would be offset by the increase in traffic volumes attracted to I-85. Therefore, a substantial investment in adding capacity to I-85 would not result in substantial improvement in level of service.
t037	2	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	We're going to spend 1.2 billion, as I mentioned, that's going to promote urban sprawl, as we already talked about.	Development that may occur with and without the project was addressed for all DSAs in the qualitative study titled: <i>Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> . This evaluation is summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. A quantitative indirect and cumulative effects assessment was prepared for the Preferred Alternative, and is summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS. This study estimates the changes in land use in the study area with and without the proposed project.
t037	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	What we need here is a joint approach between South Carolina, North Carolina to get this thing out. If they want to really solve the 85 problem, I've heard one person talk about a joint project to go from 77, cut clear over to 85, blow off 485, and that whole mess. I'll tell you what; we don't need another road like this. This is a waste of money.	A project of the type referred to by the commenter would be a separate project, independent of the Gaston East-West Connector and with a different purpose. The Preferred Alternative meets the project's purpose, as stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS.
t038	1	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	The southeastern portion of our county is already heavily developing. New Hope and Union Road, and Southpoint Road are already straining under growth. The Garden Parkway will both stimulate and manage growth.	A qualitative indirect and cumulative effects analysis was prepared which provides a qualitative analysis of the potential indirect and cumulative effects from growth associated with the project. This report is summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. A quantitative indirect and cumulative effects analysis has been prepared for the Preferred Alternative and summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS.
t039	1	Public Involvement	basket contains 5,000 signatures opposing the Parkway. I just talked with my son who is in Belmont right now, and there's probably another thousand sitting on my porch.	Petitions submitted to the NCTA are summarized in Section 3.3 of the Final EIS.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t039	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	It's because it's dumping on the 321 in York Chester, and it's not making it to I-85.	See response to Comment 2 from Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t039	3	Other	This is an absolute waste of money, it's a waste of time, it will not generate anymore economic growth; all it will do is generate pollution, more environmental contamination than we already have, and waste more money.	The Gaston East-West Connector has been the top priority of the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for many years, and is considered an important part of the area's transportation network. The projected traffic operations, impacts, and benefits of the Detailed Study Alternatives for the Gaston East-West Connector are disclosed in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS also addresses the human, physical, cultural, and natural environments.
t040	1	Public Involvement	Would you state for the record the day that the decision will be made as to which route?	The selection of DSA 9 as the Preferred Alternative was finalized in October 2009.
t040	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	Now, it's one thing for this man to know if he is impacted or not impacted, so if he is impacted, then he can make plans. He may want to sell his house. He may want to move. He may want to get out of the way. Know that you're holding people up.	The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an agency to study a range of reasonable alternatives to meet a project's purpose and need. This process entails numerous engineering and environmental studies. NEPA also requires the public and agencies be given opportunities to participate and provide input throughout the process. For large projects, the necessary work requires several years to complete. NCTA strives to maintain a reasonable schedule, while ensuring full compliance with NEPA.
t041	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	But we were here long before the houses. If they don't want to build that \$600,000 house there, don't build it there, but we've been there for 60 years. And so, they very conveniently are taking my salvage yard and my brake store, and the dealership, and a 2,000 square foot brick home. And not only my salvage yard, we happen to have four in west Gastonia, that takes up almost a half a mile, and they are conveniently taking all of four of them, because, you see they've been trying to get rid of the wrecking yards for 30 years, and so if they do this route now, they'll get all of them, and take everything I have, except Duke Power, thank you for saving my house.	In the development of the Preliminary Study Corridors and the preliminary designs within the Detailed Study Corridors, impacts to businesses were avoided and minimized where possible (and considering impacts to other resources) since these types of impacts affect right of way costs and can be disruptive to communities. The commenter is likely referring to the salvage yards and auto-related businesses located on US 29-74 where the Preferred Alternative (and DSAs 4, 5, 22, 23, and 27) would cross US 29-74. This area is highly constrained by the presence of Crowder's Creek and its floodplain, wetlands south of US 29-74, large subdivisions (e.g. Matthews Acres and Spring Valley), and limited sections where the project could tie into I-85. All these resources, including businesses, were considered in the development of the alternatives.
t042	1	Community Characteristics and Resources	I would not want the highway to take my father's cemetery visitors. But they'll have to miss that. But we've got to get traffic around, Gaston County-- I-85, you can't do it. You got to build another interstate across the Catawba River.	Comment acknowledged. As reported in the Draft EIS in Section 3.2.6.1, DSA 9 (Preferred Alternative) would not require relocation of any cemetery. Additional information regarding cemeteries and gravesites is addressed in Section 2.5.1.5 of the Final EIS.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t043	1	Alternatives Considered	I also want to ask the gentleman running the meeting if the next time he runs a meeting like this, he would consider using a subjunctive case in his discussions, saying that if this road were to be built, rather than when this road is built, because ... and that a choice might be, none of the above. We don't have to choose between groups; we can also say, none of the above.	Selection of the No-Build Alternative was an option studied as a DSA in the Draft EIS, as described in Section 2.2.2 of the Draft EIS.
t043	2	Purpose and Need for Action	But to compare that congestion to congestion in Atlanta leads me to ask the question, what are you smoking? It's not even close.	The Draft EIS does not compare traffic conditions in the project study area with traffic conditions in Atlanta.
t044	1	Farmland	I'm greatly concerned about the toll road going through our community; the reasons against this road are many. One is it will take away some of our natural resources, and agricultural land. There are many small farms and houses with garden plots that will be wiped out.	The locations of farms and voluntary agricultural districts (VADs) were incorporated into the development of the preliminary new location corridors, and these areas were avoided where possible, taking into consideration other resources in the area. The Preferred Alternative (DSA 9) is one of the alternatives that would impact the least acreage of land in VADs and is one of the DSAs that is expected to have the least indirect and cumulative effects on farmlands. The Preferred Alternative would directly impact one farm. The relocation reports prepared for the proposed project (Appendix F of the Draft EIS) indicate replacement property for farms is available.
t045	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	And guess what? There will always be maintaining needing to be done, no matter how much the weather is done, no matter what is going on; tax payer dollars are always going to going to those roads.	In accordance with state law (NCGS 136-89.196), upon fulfillment of the revenue bond terms for a project, the NCTA shall remove tolls from the project. Maintenance would then be the responsibility of the NCDOT.
t045	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	And of course you're going to go ahead and pick now to pay for these people's land, because the economy is down; that's less money that they would have to be spending on this land.	The exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation. Right-of-way acquisition cannot begin until after the NEPA process is complete and a Record of Decision is signed. The Record of Decision is currently scheduled to be completed in late 2010. Right of way acquisition likely would begin no earlier than early 2011. It is not possible to predict the state of the economy or what market conditions that will exist at the time the right-of-way acquisition begins.
t045	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	485 isn't complete from what I gather, why are we going to start building another road when you haven't finished this?	Numerous projects from the State Transportation Improvement Program are being constructed at any one time. The Gaston East-West Connector was able to be considered for construction sooner due to the use of tolls as a funding source.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t047	1	Community Characteristics and Resources	We live in this neighborhood to be away from the cities, so that my kids can grow up and be a part of a neighborhood, and be familiar with their neighbors, that they can be safe with, and this road is going to put a connector right across the street from Union Road. I don't want my kids around a major highway, which is why I moved into Gaston County to begin with.	Comment acknowledged. However, the project has been planned for locally for many years and is consistent with local transportation and comprehensive plans.
t048	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I gave them the benefit of lower interest rates and higher tolls, and just like the gentleman earlier, this thing will not pay for itself. There's no way in 39, 40, 50 years, with all the maintenance and everything else that has to be done to the road.	Based on available information, including the <i>Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined that the project is financially feasible. An <i>Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study</i> , which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. This study will be posted on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org). Other funding sources that may be used include federal credit assistance from the USDOT under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, and appropriation from the NC Legislature (i.e. "gap funding") in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year.
t048	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	One thing that nobody has mentioned is the business owners; I know there's a few business owners here tonight that will be affected, their businesses will be taken away from them, I guess that's the best way to say it-taken away. Now, I spoke to a gentleman here earlier-he's their consultant or whatever the Turnpike Authority who said that we don't buy businesses. Well, how do you determine what you're going to give me for my business?	All DSAs, including the Preferred Alternative, would impact businesses. The exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation. Information regarding relocation assistance for businesses is provided in NCDOT's brochure, "Relocation Assistance", available on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org/projects/gaston/documents.asp).
t049	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Road coming all the way from 485 to 85. This is what the voting public sees this is what they're going to vote on. And then we all know or hope tonight in this room, the chance of this road actually running all the way to 85 are very very small. Why are they doing that? To influence the public so that they'll vote for this road that isn't going to go anywhere.	See response to Comment 2 from Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t050	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	Another fear of mine is that it's opened the door for annexation. If we're in the county-I have property in the county, too, but how do I know the city is not going to come in and take me over? Therefore you're going to have city taxes. You've got to consider the burden for water and sewer. I guess the bottom line is, with the monies that have been projected to construct this roadway, in no way is that the end of the cost in this county for this roadway.	Zoning and annexation is under the authority of local governments. The NCTA is not involved in those decisions. Local governments are also responsible for the planning of adequate infrastructure for their population.
t050	2	Alternatives Considered	...why are we the only section of I-85 for some reason that can't be widened?	The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5.
t051	1	Community Characteristics and Resources	And if that road goes across and divides our church community, and our whole community, in Belmont, and Gastonia on Highway 274-also it goes right across there on the speedway; I don't know what will happen there. And that will tear, is tearing up a lot of the racers and the people that go to that type of entertainment,	The NCTA coordinated with the operators of the Carolina Speedway and the preliminary design for the Preferred Alternative was modified so that the Speedway could continue operations. These modifications are described in Section 2.3.1 of the Final EIS.
t052	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	85 where it's at now, on 321, is congested so bad coming from one direction 85 backs up causing the intersection they should have built and fix it better than what they did. They need to fix that before they build this highway.	Numerous projects from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are being constructed at any one time. Improvements to the US 321/I-85 interchange is a separate, independent study included in the STIP as project number I-5000. Planning and design for I-5000 are in progress.
t053	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	This road, if you noticed, most of the larger cities around North Carolina down to the size of Fayetteville have a circumferential route around. This will do that for Gastonia and greatly relieve your traffic congestion. It will help the Charlotte airport, which Mr. Orr has guided to be one of the finest in the nation. It has an intermodal [ph] terminal that is being built there now. It will provide this region as a distribution center for the next hundred years, and growth is important. Again, this is good for your community. It will increase your property values.	The project purpose is stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. The purpose of the project is to improve east-west transportation mobility in the area around the City of Gastonia, between Gastonia and the Charlotte metropolitan area, and particularly to establish direct access between the rapidly growing area of southeast Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County. As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congestion vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are projected to be less in 2030 with the Gaston East-West Connector compared to the No-Build Alternative.
t055	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	This concept has been in the making for years. It is an opportunity that could be lost to other regions in the state who are at this moment competing for these funds. The regional chamber supports the East-West Connector. We respect you. We respect those of you who are going to be impacted by this and we would expect that you be treated fairly.	The history of the project is briefly described in Section 1.4.2 of the Draft EIS. The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t056	1	Alternatives Considered	Widening I-85, taking on additional capacity, a future road, it would require an immense amount of work replacing all of the interchanges and move railroad bridges where it is crossing now. And it is probably not going to be a very efficient way to increase traffic capacity through the county.	The Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives, which would include adding capacity to I-85, are discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS. Both toll scenarios and non-toll scenarios for the new capacity on I-85 were evaluated. The reasons why these alternatives were eliminated from consideration are summarized in Section 2.2.6.5.
t056	2	Air Quality	We also have concerns about air quality, increased congestion, the air quality continues to deteriorate. That has an impact on businesses that you can recruit, it has an impact on the ability of the companies in the area to expand and our general health and wellbeing of the community. ... We're in support of the Garden Parkway and we ask you to continue to support it.	<p>The Preferred Alternative would meet the project's purpose stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. It would provide an additional crossing through southern Gaston County and between southern Gaston County and Mecklenburg County that would operate at acceptable levels of service through 2035.</p> <p>As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are expected to be less in 2030 with proposed project in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.</p> <p>The project is included in the 2035 long range transportation plans for the region, and these have been found to conform to the State Implementation Plan, which is a document prepared by the NC Division of Air Quality that describes how North Carolina will maintain or achieve compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in non-attainment and maintenance areas. Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS discusses this transportation conformity issue in more detail.</p>
t057	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	Our board [Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce] passed a resolution in support of the Garden Parkway but at the same time in our resolution, we ask that everyone be considerate and passionate and fair to all of the property owners impacted. We also ask that you consider there are some alternative means in going ahead and securing the right of way to complete the road all the way to I-85.	The resolution from the Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce is included in this Final EIS as Document i002. The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation. The NCTA intends to build the entire project as soon as possible.
t057	2	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	We are not trying to promote this road as a big economic development tool. But I've got to tell you, that with a 21-mile stretch of road, and you are putting over a billion dollars within that timeframe, that money is going to turn over. I deal with people every day that are hurting because of unemployment; 15% in our county. ... So I am not saying that I am supporting it just from the standpoint of economic development. But I think that this will be an economic stimulus that we so desperately need right now for all of our friends and neighbors.	Comment acknowledged. Project construction is expected to bring jobs to Gaston County.

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t058	1	Alternatives Considered	As a fairly new resident in Gaston county I would like to commend the Turnpike Authority for its thoughtful and careful research into the positioning of the new Garden Parkway, of our regional and environmental impacts. Obviously this has not been a hasty process. A lot of people have spent a lot of time studying the best options for this new roadway.	Comment acknowledged. The history of the project is summarized in Section 1.4.2 of the Draft EIS.
t058	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Our region has been presented with a tremendous opportunity. As one of the sites selected to install the new roads that include bridge access over the Catawba River. If the community does not seize this opportunity now, we'll be left with compact roads, congested roads, and increasing pollution problems.	Comment acknowledged. The Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has ranked the Gaston East-West Connector their number one priority. Future year 2030 projected traffic conditions under the No-Build option are discussed in Section 1.6 of the Draft EIS. Air quality is discussed in Section 4.2 of the Draft EIS. Updates to the region's air quality conformity status are discussed in Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS.
t059	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	...there is not enough funding through proposed toll roads and the project will require taxpayer money for the next forty years. This defeats the purpose of it being a toll road to start with.	Based on available information, including the Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined that the project is financially feasible. An Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study, which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. This study will be posted on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org). Other funding sources that may be used include federal credit assistance from the USDOT under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, and appropriation from the NC Legislature (i.e. "gap funding") in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year.
t059	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I'm a truck driver, and I end up there once, and I see I have to get through 20 or 24 or 25 traffic lights to get to I-85, I'm not going to do it again. So let's say half of those people are, don't make it to the end of 20,000 or 14,000 - I think 14,400 was the last estimate - then why have a toll road to start with?	See response to Comment 2 from Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t059	3	Alternatives Considered	We can widen I-85. And even though they say it's not possible, we know it is.	As discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the Draft EIS, various Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives were evaluated. These Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives included improvements to I-85 and US 29-74. As summarized in Section 2.2.6.5 of the Draft EIS, none of the Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives would meet the project's purpose and need, and consequently, they were eliminated from detailed study.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t060	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I would say the most important thing for the future of Gaston County is the linkages and connectivity to Charlotte. Whether we like it or whether we don't, go out into eastern North Carolina, go out and look at the areas that don't have those connections. We need links to Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, and this bridge and this road give us those links. I personally was surprised by the road stopping at 321. I would've loved to have seen it go to 85, but the explanation given on the funding and the fact that-just look at 485; it's built in phases, is to me an honorable and a right explanation, and if we have to wait a little bit longer, that doesn't make the whole project wrong.	The project purpose is stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. The purpose of the project is to improve east-west transportation mobility in the area around the City of Gastonia, between Gastonia and the Charlotte metropolitan area, and particularly to establish direct access between the rapidly growing area of southeast Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County. The NCTA intends to build the entire project as soon as possible, based on available funding.
t061	1	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	the people in this room that will be losing their homes, and of course they would be made market value. I'd like to first use that term to define it to me and then let's link it to what the state says market value is, because market value today in most cases is based on foreclosure, upside-down properties, not in what the market used to be five years ago.	The exact right of way required will be determined during final design, after the NEPA process is completed. The NCTA will follow state and federal regulations and NCDOT policies for right-of-way acquisition and relocation. Right-of-way acquisition cannot begin until after the NEPA process is complete and a Record of Decision is signed.
t061	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Mr. Memory told me that we have, quote, "enough money to bring that expressway up to 321," which means anywhere from-whatever the numbers is-4,000, 15,000, 18,000 according to the North Carolina Turnpike's own website, whatever that number is, that number of cars will be forced to exit on 321 and go north to hit I-85 which will drive them from in front of my house, which is on York Street. Right now we don't have enough room for the traffic that's already there; the road is being ruined.	See response to Comment 2 from Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t061	3	Air Quality	Add 5,000 cars per day, let me drop down to another thing: air quality. When we talked about EIS, environmental protection study, or impact study, air quality according to Gastonia's 2020 comprehensive plan, page 10-2, 3 and 4, under air quality, Charlotte, Gastonia, this is a quote: "Charlotte, Gastonia and Rock Hill already rank 10th as the smoggiest metro area in the United States. You talk about traffic problems and problems being created. Put 5,000 to 15,000 more cars down your street? You talk about problems, health problems will double and triple.	Air quality is addressed in Section 4.2 of the Draft EIS and Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS. Also, see response to Comment 6 from Ms. Charla Clark (Speaker t023).

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t061	4	Alternatives Considered	There's no way to do a wrong thing right. Why not do the right thing, and remember that once this parkway is approved there will be irreparable damage done to this community.	Comment acknowledged. The projected traffic operations, impacts, and benefits of the Detailed Study Alternatives for the Gaston East-West Connector are disclosed in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS addresses the human, physical, cultural, and natural environments.
t062	1	Noise	What compensation will I get to hear the noise coming from the Garden Parkway and already over-traveled Southpoint Road?	Detailed noise analysis was conducted in locations where groups of receptors could benefit from noise abatement. Noise analysis addressed residences that would remain in place following the roadway's construction. The proposed project would raise noise levels in many locations. Noise abatement measures will be implemented where reasonable and feasible according to state and federal regulations and policies. Noise levels in the area of Henry Chapel Road were not projected to rise to the level where homes would qualify for noise abatement.
t062	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I find it extremely interesting that on the Toll Road Authority's website, they have lowered the estimated numbers of cars traveling on the Garden Parkway, but I've found they failed to adjust the financial portions that match this. Fewer cars on the new toll road will cost more money; it's simple.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Neil Moore (Speaker t035).
t062	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I'm also confused by the claim of shorter commutes to the airport. Why pay to get on the toll road and drive 20 to 25 minutes, when it only takes us 15 minutes on Wilkinson Boulevard now, it's almost as if someone has not been doing their homework.	The travel time savings described in Appendix C of the Draft EIS are projected time savings for the year 2030.
t062	4	Air Quality	Our region is in jeopardy already, and it does not meet clean air standards, and this toll road is not helping our environment.	See response to Comment 6 from Ms. Charla Clark (Speaker t023).
t062	5	Other	If they can't get their facts correct or even be upfront with us. They are an entity unto themselves and have no one to check behind them, so they are able to do what they please.	<p>The FHWA and NCTA (a division of NCDOT) reviewed or prepared the information in the Draft EIS and believe the facts stated in the Draft EIS are correct, with the exception of the errata acknowledged in Appendix A of the Final EIS. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FHWA and NCTA have proceeded with the project in a transparent manner. All supporting technical memorandum for the Draft EIS and other studies are posted on the project's website.</p> <p>The FHWA and NCTA must conform to all laws and regulations in developing their projects in accordance with NEPA, including the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and FHWA (23 CFR Part 771 and others).</p>

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t062	6	Public Involvement	We have collected 5,000 signatures against the Garden Parkway.	Petitions submitted to the NCTA are summarized in Section 3.3 of the Final EIS.
t063	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I'm opposed to this project. The road as presented to you is not being delivered as promised. It's going to stop at 321 for decades. So who is going to use it?	Like other large transportation projects such as I-485 and I-540, the Gaston East-West Connector would be constructed in phases. The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County, and this is the project NCTA evaluated in the Draft EIS as required by NEPA. This is the project NCTA intends to construct as soon as possible, based on available funding. It could be expected that a different mix of various trip types would use the Gaston East-West Connector during an interim phase from I-485 to US 321 than would use the Gaston East-West Connector when built to its ultimate end at I-85. Drivers wishing to travel west entirely through Gaston County likely would use I-85, and would not choose to use the Gaston East-West Connector then US 321 to I-85. An interim Gaston East-West Connector built only to US 321 likely would attract more local trips and commuters traveling to/from Mecklenburg County than through traffic.
t063	2	Alternatives Considered	We would rather see this money applied to improve the Wilkinson Boulevard bridge on US-74. We already have six lanes to Belmont. For less than one year's gap funding money, the Wilkinson Boulevard Bridge can be replaced and the additional two lanes added on the Mecklenburg side will tie up to Little Rock Road. ...Save them the money for the next 39 years, or for two to three years of gap funding, we can employ that and use, and add the additional lanes to I-40, to I-85, from Belmont Abbey west all the way through the county. We would have to replace the bridge at the South Fork River and replace a couple of overpass bridges. Still, far cheaper than 40 years worth or 35 million dollars a year for 40 years.	See response to Comment 1 from Mr. Robert Kellogg (Speaker t014).
t064	1	Purpose and Need for Action	The draft environmental impact statement issued by the Turnpike Authority says the stated need for this project is a river crossing between Gaston and Mecklenburg, and to reduce traffic on I-85. Will it be successful? I say no, it will not.	The project purpose is stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. The purpose of the project is to improve east-west transportation mobility in the area around the City of Gastonia, between Gastonia and the Charlotte metropolitan area, and particularly to establish direct access between the rapidly growing area of southeast Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County.

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t064	2	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	What other problems are going to be caused by this project? But they're not being studied by the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It's not looking at secondary impacts. Increased traffic on the secondary roads as mentioned, air quality has been mentioned here. When you've got as many cars plus another 50,000 cars that they're saying are going to use the toll road if it's used.	<p>Indirect (secondary) and cumulative effects were qualitatively evaluated for all DSAs, in accordance with NCDOT guidance, as summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. A quantitative indirect and cumulative effects evaluation was completed for the Preferred Alternative, as summarized in Section 2.5.5 of the Final EIS.</p> <p>Regarding traffic on secondary roads, traffic on some segments of some secondary roads in the project study area may increase, while on other roads or segments traffic may decrease as traffic patterns redistribute to include the presence of the proposed project. Overall, as discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are expected to be less in 2030 with proposed project in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.</p>
t064	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	This project does not make sense. It doesn't solve any traffic problems. It makes air quality and traffic worse in that area, and it will create an additional burden on our county to provide services for the new residents. Make it go away.	<p>The Preferred Alternative would meet the project's purpose stated in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS. It would provide an additional crossing through southern Gaston County and between southern Gaston County and Mecklenburg County that would operate at acceptable levels of service through 2035.</p> <p>As discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are expected to be less in 2030 with proposed project in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.</p> <p>The project is included in the 2035 long range transportation plans for the region, and these have been found to conform to the State Implementation Plan, which is a document prepared by the NC Division of Air Quality that describes how North Carolina will maintain or achieve compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards in non-attainment and maintenance areas. Section 2.5.2.2 of the Final EIS discusses this transportation conformity issue in more detail.</p>
t065	1	Air Quality	And contrary to what I've heard here tonight, we are going to reduce our air-we're going to improve our air quality with a toll road, because cars are not going to be idling on highways; that's what causes the ozone problems we have, when our cars are idle on a highways.	See response to Comment 3 from Mr. John Medlin (Speaker t061).

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t065	2	Other	After reading the draft EIS, I was happy to see that the North Carolina Turnpike Authority takes our concern seriously. There's a lot of data in there that took a lot of work. They looked at everything. They looked at the environment. They looked at traffic patterns.	Comment acknowledged. The Gaston East-West Connector has been the top priority of the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for many years, and is considered an important part of the area's transportation network. The projected traffic operations, impacts, and benefits of the Detailed Study Alternatives for the Gaston East-West Connector are disclosed in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS also addresses the human, physical, cultural, and natural environments.
t065	3	Purpose and Need for Action	The road will provide a desperately needed link between Mecklenburg and Gaston County.	Comment acknowledged.
t066	1	Purpose and Need for Action	Reason one, the analysis is flawed. It's based on a complete thoroughfare to 85; all the announcements are done for that. The cost-benefit ratio is done for that. The plan is to go to 321. So they've got the benefits of the toll road, but they got the actuality of the half plan.	The ultimate project extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County. This is the project NCTA evaluated in the Draft EIS as required by NEPA, and this is the project NCTA intends to construct as soon as possible, based on available funding. At this time, based on available information, NCTA is planning on initially constructing the entire length of the project, with four lanes from I-485 to US 321 and two lanes from US 321 to I-85. The section from US 321 to I-85 would be upgraded to four lanes by 2035.
t066	2	Purpose and Need for Action	Reason two, it takes you nowhere. Come into Gaston County on this road, where is it going to dump you out? On 485, west of the airport. What's out there now? There's a runway. That's all, nothing. Where is it in the town? West Boulevard. Lots of stoplights and lots of two-lane traffic, lots of slow commuting.	The eastern terminus of the Gaston East-West Connector is a system interchange with I-485, and a continuing connection to NC 160 (West Boulevard) east of I-485. Numerous existing destinations can be accessed via I-485 and West Boulevard, including the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (CDIA), the CDIA's planned intermodal facility at the south end of the airport, and numerous employment centers. Although not heavily developed yet, southwestern Mecklenburg County is planned for mixed use west of I-485, and this area would be served by the Gaston East-West Connector.
t066	3	Other	It's being driven by people with ulterior motives. Like it or not, North Carolina DOT and turnpike, they don't have a road, they don't have any jobs. Consulting firms, we don't have projects, they don't have jobs to analyze. Politicians and developers, they all have an agenda....They've got one goal besides that - to divide us. They've given us 18,000 different options to keep us fighting...	The Gaston East-West Connector was identified by the local governments, through the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as the top priority in the area's long range transportation plan. The NCTA and NCDOT do not determine the area's transportation priorities. The twelve Detailed Study Alternatives evaluated in detail in the Draft EIS were identified through an objective, multi-step process described in Section 2.1 of the Draft EIS. In accordance with NEPA, the public was afforded an opportunity to provide input and comment on the preliminary alternatives, as well as the identified of the Detailed Study Alternatives.

Appendix B7 – Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t067	1	Purpose and Need for Action	To say we need another road across the Catawba River is not reason enough. Who is going to travel from 321 to south of the airport?	<p>Transportation issues and need for improved connectivity are supported by information contained in Chapter 1 of the Draft EIS.</p> <p>Traffic volumes projected along the Gaston East-West Connector for the year 2030 are listed in Table 2-5 of the Draft EIS. Updated forecasts for the Preferred Alternative for the year 2035 are listed in Section 2.3.5 of the Final EIS. Travelers who would use the toll road could include a wide range of travelers, including commuters, truckers, and local and through traffic.</p> <p>Regarding project phasing, see response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).</p>
t067	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	And their projections for the time savings that I've seen make no sense whatsoever. I live near South Carolina, and it only takes me 20 to 25 minutes to get to the airport. And to tell me I'll save 20 minutes by going on the toll road is absurd.	The travel time savings described in Appendix C of the Draft EIS are projected time savings for the year 2030.
t067	3	Water Resources	The river and its watershed, which is our water supply, this is a very fragile environment. Wildlife will be adversely affected. There will be runoff and soil erosion that's going to affect our water quality and the habitat.	<p>Numerous permits to protect water resources will be required prior to project construction. The project will require a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the NC Division of Water Quality and a Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers for impacts to streams and wetlands. Mitigation will be required as conditions of these permits. Section 6.4.5 of the Draft EIS describes these permitting issues. The NCTA must also prepare an erosion and sedimentation control plan in accordance with <i>Erosion and Sediment Control Planning and Design</i> (NC Division of Land Resources) and <i>Best Management Practices for the Protection of Surface Waters</i> (NCDOT). These are described in Section 6.2.4 of the Draft EIS. The Preferred Alternative crosses Lake Wylie (the Catawba River, South Fork Catawba River and Catawba Creek), which is subject to Catawba River Buffer Rules. The NCTA must obtain written authorization from the NC DWQ and provide compensatory mitigation (see Section 6.4.5.4 of the Draft EIS).</p> <p>Wildlife is discussed in Section 6.3 of the Draft EIS. Habitat fragmentation was discussed in the qualitative indirect and cumulative effects analysis summarized in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIS. Detailed Study Alternative (DSA) 9, the Preferred Alternative, was noted as one of the DSAs with lesser indirect effects due to already existing habitat fragmentation. As stated in Section 6.3.6.2 of the Draft EIS, the NCTA will coordinate with the NCWRC, USFWS, and USEPA during final design on the feasibility and design of a wildlife passage at Stream S156. In addition, bridge crossings</p>

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
				will be designed to be wildlife friendly when feasible.
t067	4	Other	The EIS study is not complete, and it doesn't even address the west end of the proposed road.	The Draft EIS addresses the ultimate planned project, which extends from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County.
t067	5	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Another thing, the bonds. I do not think this road will generate \$35 million a year for 40 years. And I want to know what the back-up plan is for the plans on the bonds. I don't want to be the backup plan.	An Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study will be completed as required in order to sell bonds. Investors must be satisfied with the findings of the Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study, or the bonds will not be able to be sold.
t068	1	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	We are concerned about changing the quality of the environment of our property: increased traffic, noise, and congestion, pollution from water runoff on this road. Any time you have cars, you are going to put down oil, you are going to put down rubber, you are going to put down everything else and you are going to have runoff. It is going to pollute the creeks. You are also going to have soil erosion.	Numerous permits to protect water resources will be required prior to project construction. The project will require a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the NC Division of Water Quality and a Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers for impacts to streams and wetlands. Mitigation will be required as conditions of these permits. Section 6.4.5 of the Draft EIS describes these permitting issues. The NCTA must also prepare an erosion and sedimentation control plan in accordance with Erosion and Sediment Control Planning and Design (NC Division of Land Resources) and Best Management Practices for the Protection of Surface Waters (NCDOT). These are described in Section 6.2.4 of the Draft EIS. The Preferred Alternative crosses Lake Wylie (the Catawba River, South Fork Catawba River and Catawba Creek), which is subject to Catawba River Buffer Rules. The NCTA must obtain written authorization from the NC DWQ and provide compensatory mitigation (see Section 6.4.5.4 of the Draft EIS). Traffic operations are addressed in Section 2.4.4 of the Draft EIS and noise is discussed in Section 4.1 of the Draft EIS.
t068	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	A big problem I have with it also is the fact that they are going to dump all of this traffic onto 321. I don't know how many of you have seen 321, but it is already pretty busy.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t069	1	Community Characteristics and Resources	One thing that I think people haven't mentioned is I think there is going to be a big social impact. When I moved to Gaston County, I moved from the Northeast so I am not a local. But I came from a place where congestion and urban sprawl is commonplace. And when I came here, it reminded me of how my county where I grew up looked when I was a child. It doesn't look like that any more. If this road goes through, the quality of life here is going to take a big downturn.	Impacts from the DSAs to the human environment are addressed in Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS. As discussed in Section 3.1.2 of the Draft EIS, the population of the project study area is growing and rural areas have been transitioning to suburban uses. The local land use plans for the counties and municipalities in the study area anticipate a transition to a more suburban area. The proposed project is consistent with these local land use plans, as discussed in Section 3.1.3 of the Draft EIS.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t070	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	It basically is a bait and switch. On the early provision that are referred to and are the basis for the public support, it was always a connector. It is no longer a connector. The fact that you are going through now, York Chester, the largest historic district in the county, means that the environmental statements which don't consider that at all are invalid.	See response to Comment 2 from Mr. Robert Kellog (Speaker t014).
t070	2	Purpose and Need for Action	In the process we have yet to see a member of the authority in any of these hearings.	Mr. Steve DeWitt, PE, Chief Engineer for the NCTA, attended all four Pre-Hearing Open Houses (June 22, 23, 24, and 24, 2009) and served as the Hearing Officer for the two Public Hearings (June 23 and June 25, 2009). Ms. Jennifer Harris, PE, Staff Engineer for the NCTA attended all Pre-Hearing Open Houses and Public Hearings. Ms. Reid Simons, Director of Government and Public Affairs, also attended one or more Pre-Hearing Open Houses and Public Hearings.
t070	3	Purpose and Need for Action	If you look at I-85 as it has been projected by the Authority, the best thing you can do to keep traffic at a reasonable level on I-85 is not build this parkway. Amazingly enough, that is what the data shows. They haven't proven a need.	As presented in Table 1-2 of the Draft EIS, under the No-Build Alternative, traffic operations in 2030 on I-85 are expected to be level of service (LOS) F from Exit 13 (Edgewood Road) to Exit 30 (I-485).
t071	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	And for them to stop at 321 is almost cutting your nose off to spite your face, because you will not get the revenue that you intend to get and it would just be one of those bypasses where they go, "What were they thinking."	The ultimate project would extend from I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 in Mecklenburg County, as described and evaluated in the Draft EIS. However, construction of large transportation projects such as the Gaston East-West Connector, I-485 in Charlotte, I-540 in Raleigh, etc., are typically constructed in phases as funding becomes available. Construction phases are determined after the environmental planning phase is completed based on availability of funding. The intent is to build as much of the project in the first phase as possible, with the remainder constructed as soon as possible after that. At this time, based on available information, NCTA is planning on initially constructing the entire length of the project, with four lanes from I-485 to US 321 and two lanes from US 321 to I-85. The section from US 321 to I-85 would be upgraded to four lanes by 2035. An <i>Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study</i> , which will include more in-depth analysis of toll revenue under various scenarios, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding.

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Table B7-1: Public Hearing Transcript Comments

Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t071	2	Air Quality	One of my major concerns in addition to the fact that it will not be a followed-through as proposed is also on the summary of the project impacts. You can tell by the extensive detail that has gone into the issues on the left hand side of the page that they have looked at every aspect. However, when you get down to the main focus of living, which is your air and your water quality, they seem to say things like, "the qualitative assessment," they are not adequately able to quantify the health impacts for the air quality impacts. You are talking about air quality being poor because there are people idling, but there is also air quality impacts whenever there is much more, 8,000 more traffic, cars going through the area. If you widened 85 instead of cutting through our neighborhoods, I think that would take care of the air quality there.	See response to Comment 3 from Mr. Richard Turner (Speaker t030).
t071	3	Water Resources	What really, really concerns me, and I have one minute, is that nobody has addressed the table water. Down here it says that we are going to have indirect effects on water resources are indicated to be very strong. But as far as affecting our table water, there are a lot of people who have wells. I am one of them.	The NCTA, FHWA and NCDOT must obtain a 401 Water Quality Certification from the NCDWQ prior to project construction and will meet all requirements for this permit. As discussed in Section 4.4.2 of the Draft EIS, wells within the Preferred Alternative's right of way would be surveyed prior to project construction. NCTA would purchase these wells and cap and abandon them in accordance with State standards (15A NCAC 2C). Any subsurface contamination would be reported to the regional office of the NCDENR.
t072	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	I will admit to you that I think this plan has a lot of flaws. I don't think they are fatal flaws, but taking the long view I agree with those people who spoke in favor of this project. I think it is needed to cross the river. It is needed for the airport. It takes you to the airport. It doesn't take you to the wrong side of the airport. By the time this road is open we'll all be airport. I do have to say that the interchange at 485 as depicted in these drawings does not meet the airport's needs.	The NCTA, FHWA, and NCDOT coordinated with the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport during development of the functional and preliminary engineering designs. The NCTA, FHWA, and NCDOT continued coordination with the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and Charlotte DOT after the Draft EIS. This coordination resulted in modifications to the Preferred Alternative preliminary design in the I-485 interchange area to accommodate the latest plans for the airport's new intermodal facility and associated changes in the surrounding transportation network. These modifications are described in Section 2.3.1 of the Final EIS.

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t073	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	From the local level, in January 26, 2009, the <i>Charlotte Business Journal</i> reported that travel on North Carolina's roads dipped 6% of the November, 2008, despite easing gasoline prices. Less cars means less toll fees collected. Given these statistics, I find it difficult to believe that the collection of tolls will be sufficient to pay for this toll road.	Based on available information, including the <i>Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector</i> (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined that the project is financially feasible. An <i>Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study</i> , which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. This study will be posted on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org). Other funding sources that may be used include federal credit assistance from the USDOT under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, and appropriation from the NC Legislature (i.e. "gap funding") in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year.
t073	2	Alternatives Considered	I've heard several comments about the need to relieve congestion on I-85. In my daily working here, I've driven back and forth between Gaston County and Charlotte, using I-85, since 1987. During that time period, I've never experienced traffic congestion, unless there was an accident on the highway.	Table C-2 in Appendix C of the Draft EIS lists the projected year 2030 levels of service along segments of I-85 under various scenarios. Without the project (No-Build Alternative), I-85 is projected to operate at Level of Service (LOS) E or F in the peak hours in 2030. This means congested conditions, and stop-and-go traffic.
t074	1	Water Resources	There are many questions regarding the negative environmental impact of the toll road, both during and after construction. Mitigation for the impact of this degradation has not even been glanced at in the environmental impact statement. The Catawba River Foundation's mission is to preserve, protect, and advocate on behalf of the Catawba River and the lakes, streams, and wetlands within the river basin and for all the wildlife and livelihoods that depend on the help of this public waterway. We are categorically against this project and have a detailed written response being prepared for/to the Turnpike Authority. We need to manage the impact of growth in this region but not at the expense of the environment and specifically our precious waterway.	Potential impacts to the Catawba River and mitigation measures are discussed in Sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 of the Draft EIS. The comment letter from the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation is Document i006. Responses to this letter are included in Appendix B3 .
t075	1	Protected Species	One of them, for those of you who haven't been to Lake Wiley Road and the neighborhoods around it, is that every morning I see either a deer or a wild turkey or a bald eagle. We're not going to be the only ones who won't be there any more; none of these animals will either.	Wildlife is discussed in Section 6.3 of the Draft EIS. As discussed in Section 6.3.6.2 of the Draft EIS, a wildlife passage structure for Stream S156 will be studied during final design of the Preferred Alternative, and bridge crossings will be designed to be wildlife friendly when feasible.

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t075	2	Alternatives Considered	But if you look at it, this road originally started several years ago, not only going to 85, it continued past 85 and went to 321, connecting north of 85. They decided that didn't make any sense, so they got rid of that section and they said they'd take it to 85. Then they ran the numbers and they figured out they didn't have enough money to do that, either.	The new roadway extending from I-85 west of Gastonia north to US 321 is a separate, independent project. It is included in the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan as an unfunded project.
t075	3	Alternatives Considered	But if some of you remember meeting in a similar situation to this about three years ago, when this whole process started, they had already thrown out all the alternatives. They had said widening 85 didn't make any sense. They said adding a commuter rail didn't make any sense. It was already made up at that point that they were going to build a road. Then you started, and you put in 30-some options, yes-oh, I have one minute left-that means that they made up all these options to evaluate. And if you really read that report, you could put all those options up on a dartboard, throw a dart, and whichever one you hit is the route. They are all the same; the impacts on every one of those options are roughly the same. There is no real difference; it just happens to be the one that somebody wanted.	Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS summarizes the alternatives development and evaluation process. Improve Existing Roadways Alternatives and Mass Transit Alternatives were evaluated, but determined not to meet the project's purpose and need. These types of improvements would still have merit, however, as separate projects. The difference in impacts amongst the Detailed Study Alternatives can be reviewed in Table S--2 - Summary of Environmental Impacts.
t076	1	Other	All these numbers that the Turnpike Authority has presented and said, okay, here's the path that we came up with, how many of you know that politicians stand to personally gain from this route that has been selected?	See response to Comment 4 from Mr. Mark Tino (Speaker t022).
t076	2	Right-Of-Way Acquisition and Relocations	Well, my house will not be taken, but yet it will be right beside my house, and from what I've heard, you don't plan to give me any money.	The NCTA can purchase only what is needed for right of way for the project.
t076	3	Alternatives Considered	I would like good roads too. So fix I-85 or add light rail or mass transit, because we do not need more roads when we're in a situation like we are, already with traffic and urban sprawl.	In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1502.14) and FHWA guidance and regulations (FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A, 1987 and 23 CFR 771.123), a range of reasonable alternatives (including non-toll alternatives) were rigorously explored and objectively evaluated in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS, including Mass Transit and Improve Existing Roadways. The reasons for eliminating these alternatives from detailed study are described in Chapter 2.

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t077	1	Alternatives Considered	I feel manipulated by this bouncing around from this route to that route. I think at first they had that Southern route planned, which was the one closest to my house, and man, there was a lot of instant opposition to that group. So all of a sudden they bounced it up, and now it's going to be the northern route, but you know, that's not a guaranteed route. That route could be changed. And they said that.	Until the Recommended Alternative (DSA 9) was identified in the Draft EIS, all Detailed Study Alternatives were identified in technical studies and at workshops and small group meetings as equally potential routes. The Draft EIS did disclose (Section 5.7 and Section 2.5 of the Draft EIS) that the Recommended Alternative was only a recommendation, and subject to change based on comments received during the public review period. These comments, documented in this Final EIS in Appendix A, were considered and the FHWA, NCTA, and NCDOT selected DSA 9 as the Preferred Alternative.
t078	1	Land Use and Transportation Planning	But folks, let's don't also forget, it's also going to be at every single intersection this road will have. All of them. And let's face it, folks. Our roads are not in appropriate condition, okay? So all of these roads are going to deteriorate.	Traffic on some segments of some secondary roads in the project study area may increase, while on other roads or segments traffic may decrease as traffic patterns redistribute to include the presence of the proposed project. Overall, as discussed in Appendix C of the Draft EIS, congested vehicle hours traveled and congested vehicle miles traveled in Gaston County are expected to be less in 2030 with proposed project in place compared to the No-Build Alternative.
t078	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	Second thing, I don't think this roadway has been completely thought out. I'll give you just one example. One of these interchanges is on Robinson Road. You go down Robinson Road, go toward 321, there is one lane, not one in each direction, one lane railroad underpass. Right now the people have to go and use the honor system more or less, to take turns going under this bridge. If we start letting traffic come off this interchange, it's just going to back up even worse. Right now, during the busy times, that road is backed up, out on 321 and Robinson Road, okay?	Comment acknowledged. The updated traffic forecasts for the year 2035 take into account this "choke point", and traffic volumes at the Robinson Road interchange were reduced, and the US 321 interchange traffic volumes increased, compared to the 2030 Toll Scenario forecasts. The year 2035 traffic forecasts are described in Section 2.3.5 of the Final EIS. Widening of this underpass would be a separate project.
t079	1	Other	We're firing teachers; and where are we going to get the money to pay for this?	Based on available information, including the Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study for the Gaston East-West Connector (available on the NCTA Web site), and the project's financial plan, the NCTA has determined That the project is financially feasible. An Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue Study, which includes more in-depth analysis, will be conducted prior to selling the bonds that will comprise a portion of the project funding. This study will be posted on the NCTA's Web site (www.ncturnpike.org). Other funding sources that may be used include federal credit assistance from the USDOT under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program, State Transportation Improvement

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SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
				Program (STIP) funds, and appropriation from the NC Legislature (i.e. "gap funding") in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year.
t080	1	Public Involvement	A lot of people are here tonight too, but it seems like the second meeting - which there are only two - it should be where the most impact is going to be, not in the county that's not, in my opinion. It should be in the county of York, or Gaston County or another high school or another venue.	Pre-Hearing Open Houses and Public Hearings were held throughout the project study area. Four Pre-Hearing Open Houses were held in association with the two Public Hearings. The Pre-Hearing Open Houses were held in the northwest part of the project study area at the Gastonia Adult Recreation Center, the central part of the project study area at Forestview High School (also the site of the first Public Hearing), the eastern part of the study area in Gaston County at Southpoint High School, and the eastern end of the study area in Mecklenburg County at Olympic High School (also the site of the second Public Hearing).
t081	1	Other	One of my concerns that I haven't heard anyone mention is the-I don't know if you guys-probably from Gastonia you don't see this, but the ash ponds over by the steam plant, it's a mess. When you stand on my balcony and look across where this road is going to go, this ash is so completely thick that you can't see the steam plant.What kind of accidents are we going to have on this bridge, with this ash? And has anybody really studied that? I don't think so.	DSA 9, the Preferred Alternative, is located along the northernmost corridor across the Catawba River. Fog is addressed in Section 3.2.6.2 of the Draft EIS. As stated in this section, in accordance with NCDOT normal operating procedures, fog-related safety issues will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis after construction, and measures installed where warranted. Duke Power Company LLC has an Air Quality Permit (Permit Number 03757T33 - effective from January 5, 2009 to December 31, 2013) from the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Air Quality (NCDAQ) to operate the Allen Steam Station. Dust and particulate emissions from processes (e.g. flyash transfer, rail car unloading, etc.) and fugitive non-process dust emission sources are regulated in the permit. For example, a condition in the permit states (page 32): "The Permittee shall not cause or allow fugitive non-process dust emissions (i.e., particulate matter that is not collected by a capture system and is generated from areas such as pit areas, process areas, haul roads, stockpiles, and plant roads) to cause or contribute to substantive complaints (i.e., complaints that are verified with physical evidence acceptable to the DAQ)."
t083	1	Alternatives Considered	I'm against the Parkway. I'd rather see public transportation put in.	As discussed in Section 2.2.5 of the Draft EIS, Mass Transit Alternatives were considered, but determined not able to meet the project's purpose and need. However, mass transit could provide additional mode choices for travelers in Gaston County. Both mass transit and roadway improvements are included in the Gaston Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan, and there is a need for both in Gaston County.

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Documents: t001 – t084

SPEAKER NO.	COMMENT NO.	PRIMARY TOPIC	COMMENT	RESPONSE
t083	2	Land Use and Transportation Planning	On this parkway, are you going to have something to accommodate bicycles, especially the bridge that goes over the river? Or is it going to be, again, just car-oriented, pollution-oriented and no alternatives to provide a means for pedestrians or anything else?	During final design, the NCTA will work with local jurisdictions to provide sidewalks and other crossings where appropriate and can be funded.
t083	3	Land Use and Transportation Planning	The other thing is, what about the farmers out there? The people that need to walk under this parkway, the people who live out in the country, or for animals-are you going to provide tunnels or walkways for these animals to get from one side to the other, so they can preserve-so we don't lose them all?	During final design, the NCTA will work with local jurisdictions to provide sidewalks and other crossings where appropriate and can be funded. There is a Project Commitment that during final design, "NCTA will coordinate with the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Catawba Lands Conservancy to identify needed accommodations for any existing and funded greenways that cross the Preferred Alternative. " As discussed in Section 6.3.6.2 of the Draft EIS, a wildlife passage structure for Stream S156 will be studied during final design of the Preferred Alternative, and bridge crossings will be designs to be wildlife friendly when feasible.
t084	1	Other	By law, the Turnpike Authority is required to include local support of this project. If they don't have that, they can't build it. You've heard a lot of your local politicians get up here and talk about being in favor of it. You see in Gaston County, we've pulled the grassroots, and we're trying to rally people to tell their local politicians what they think of this project.	The public and agency comments received on during the Draft EIS public review period are summarized in Section 3.3 of the Final EIS.