



NEWSLETTER ISSUE, APRIL 2014
NCDOT STIP PROJECT NO. I-2513



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The I-26 Connector Project is an interstate freeway project that is being proposed to connect I-26 in southwest Asheville to U.S. 19/23/70 in northwest Asheville. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has programmed this project to upgrade and widen I-240 from I-40 to Patton Avenue, and then proceed northward from Patton Avenue on new location across the French Broad River and connect to U.S. 19/23/70 just south of Exit 25 (Riverside Drive – Broadway – UNC-Asheville). Upon completion, this project will be part of the I-26 Interstate that extends from Charleston, South Carolina, to Kingsport, Tennessee.

The proposed I-26 Connector in Asheville is approximately 7 miles long from the I-40 interchange to Broadway. The project includes:

- Upgrading 4.3 miles of existing I-240 from the I-26/I-240 interchange with I-40 to the I-240 interchange with Patton Avenue, west of the French Broad River.
- Improvements to the I-26/I-240 interchange with I-40 and Brevard Road (N.C. 191), Amboy Road (S.R. 3556), Haywood Road (S.R. 3548/U.S. 19/23 Business) and Patton Avenue (U.S. 19-23) interchanges.
- Construction of the interstate on new location from the Patton Avenue interchange north for 2.6 miles across the French Broad River, tying into U.S. 19/23/70 south of Broadway (S.R. 1781).

The I-26 Connector Project was originally proposed in 1989. After issuing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2008 and holding public meetings, a new priority rating system was implemented by NCDOT in 2010. The new ranking of the I-26 Connector Project was much lower than its previous ranking, and thus, work on the project was halted and the project was placed on hold.

Project development studies for the I-26 Connector were re-initiated in Spring 2012. Since 2012, project alternatives in Section "B" (the new location portion north of Patton Avenue, across the French Broad River) have been modified to avoid impacts to the Emma Road Community and to enhance multimodal connectivity between west Asheville and Asheville.

A new alternative, Alternative 3C, was developed in 2013 to further reduce impacts to the natural and human environments. Alternative 3C is similar to Alternative 3, but has a smaller footprint and connects to U.S. 19/23 further south of the Alternative 3 connection. NCDOT will present all existing alternatives at the Public Meeting scheduled for May 12, 2014.

PUBLIC MEETING

MAY 12, 2014

4:00-7:00 PM

RENAISSANCE HOTEL

GRAND BALLROOM

31 WOODFIN STREET, ASHEVILLE

The purposes of this meeting are to:

- present and receive public comments on all project alternatives including a new alternative, Alternative 3C.
- Present updated roadway design plans that have been modified to avoid impacts to the Emma Road community;
- provide the status of the environmental studies that are currently underway and describe next steps; and,
- announce that a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared to document the updated studies.

This is an informal, open-house, public meeting. You may drop in at any time between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m., see the meeting maps and other materials, meet one-on-one with NCDOT representatives, and provide comments on Alternative 3C or any other aspects of the project.

For more information about the meeting please contact Mr. Michael Wray at (919) 707-6050.

Need Special Services or Assistance for the Public Meeting?

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for persons who wish to participate in this workshop and require special services. Contact Michael Wray at (919) 707-6050 as early as possible for these arrangements.

A Spanish language interpreter will be present. Se Habla Español.

URS
N.C. Department of Transportation
ATTN: Michael Wray
1548 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

I-26 Connector Project

You're invited to attend a Public Meeting.

TIME & LOCATION

May 12, 2014 | 4:00 to 7:00 PM
Renaissance Hotel Grand Ballroom
31 Woodfin Street
Asheville, NC

This meeting has four main purposes:

- Present Alternative 3C.
- Present roadway design plans that have been modified to avoid impacts to the Emma Road community.
- Announce updated environmental studies that are underway.
- Announce the preparation of a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

For more information, please visit the project website or contact NCDOT using the toll-free hotline. Written correspondence can also be mailed or e-mailed to NCDOT or URS Corporation.

Project Hotline – Línea Gratuita del Proyecto:
1-800-233-6315 (English/ Español)

Project Website – Página Web del Proyecto:
<http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/>

N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT)

Michael Wray, P.E. (Project Planning Engineer)

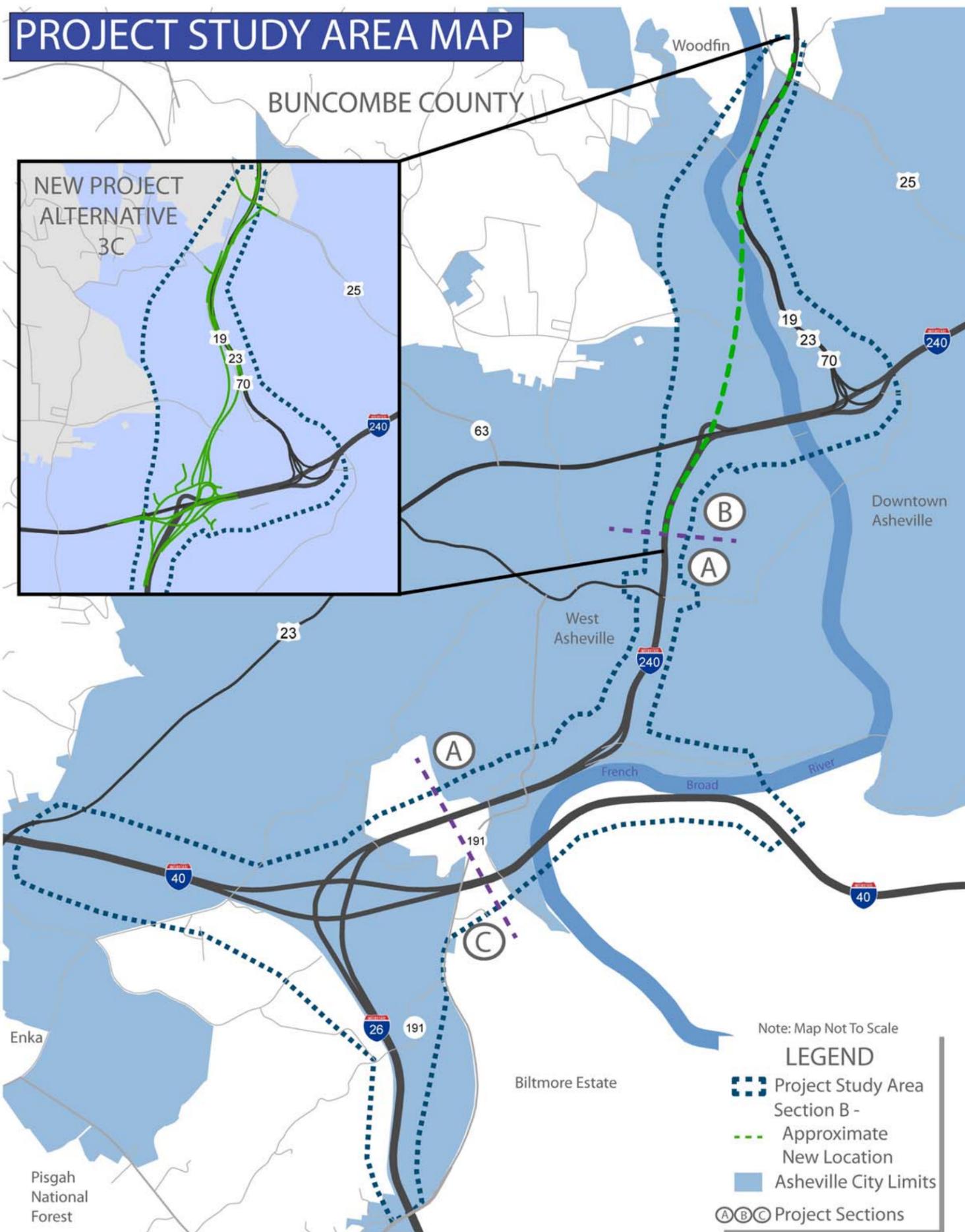
1548 Mail Service Center
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mgwray@ncdot.gov

URS Corporation (NCDOT's Consultant)

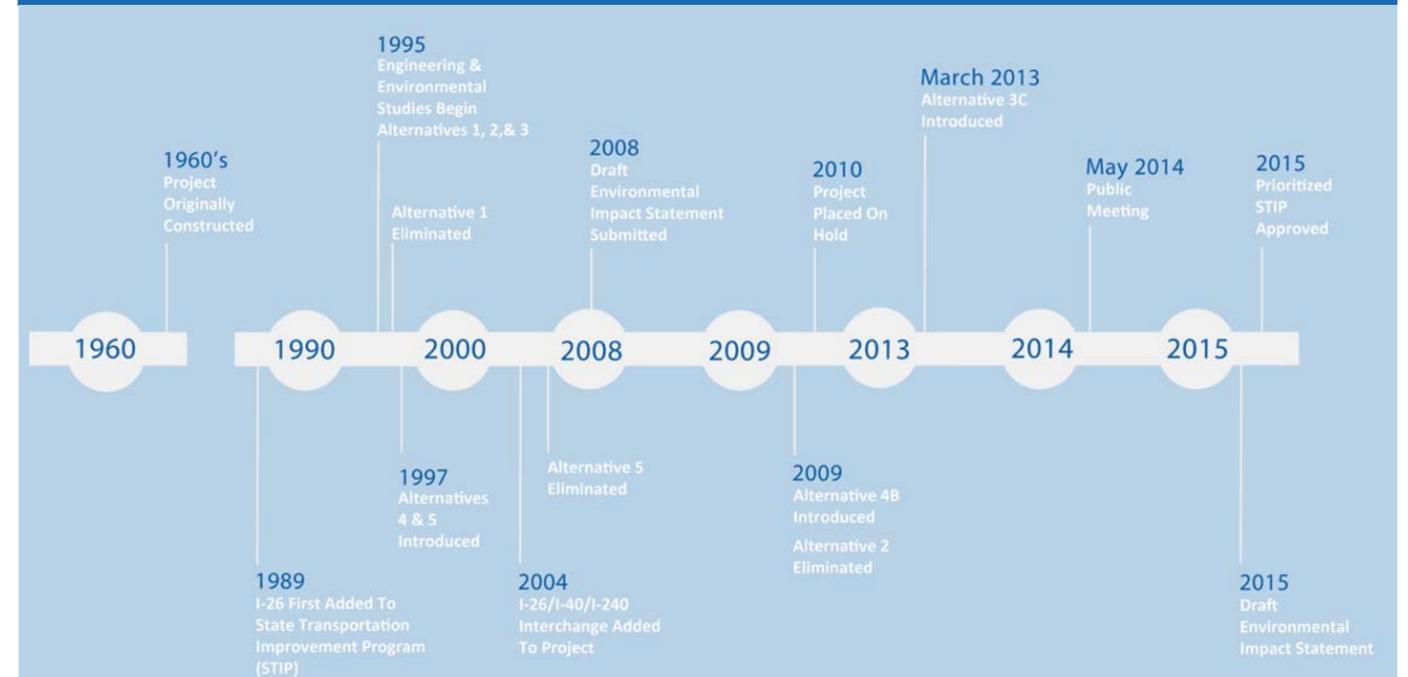
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PROJECT STUDY AREA MAP



PROJECT HISTORY



ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

A new Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the I-26 Connector is planned for release in the Summer of 2015. It will be based on findings from several on-going environmental studies in the I-26 Connector project area. These studies include:

- Community Impact Assessment
- Natural Resources Technical Report
- Traffic Operations Analysis
- Air Quality Analysis
- Traffic Noise Analysis
- Cultural Resource Studies
- Evaluation of Alternatives



OTHER I-26 PROJECTS

NCDOT STIP Project No. A-0010A, U.S. 19/23 (Future I-26) Improvements Project:

NCDOT is proposing to improve approximately 12 miles of U.S. 19/23 from north of I-240 in Asheville to just south of Exit 13 (Forks of Ivy – Stockton Road) near Mars Hill. This project is currently in the early stages of the planning process.

NCDOT STIP Project No. I-4400 / I-4700, I-26 Widening Project:

NCDOT is proposing to widen approximately 22 miles of I-26 from US 25 (Exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40 in Asheville. This project is about to begin the preliminary design process.

I-5504 /Brevard Road interchange project (Exit 33):

NCDOT is proposing to modify an existing partial cloverleaf interchange, primarily to alleviate congestion by increasing the efficiency of the interchange. The project may include the widening of the N.C. 191 (Brevard Road) bridge over I-26.