

# I-26 - Proposed Asheville Connector

## NCDOT TIP Project I-2513

Issue No. 1

March, 1998

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Carolina Department of Transportation proposes building a four-lane freeway connecting Interstate 26 southwest of Asheville to US 19/23/70 north of Asheville. When completed, the freeway will join I-26 near Sams Gap at the Tennessee state line with I-26 southwest of Asheville.

The project involves improving existing Interstate 240 from the Interstates 26/40/240 interchange southwest of Asheville to Patton Avenue and building a freeway on new location from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781) in Asheville.

The project is included in the 1998-2004 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as project I-2513. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in 1999 with construction to follow in 2001.

### PROJECT NEED

The extension of I-26 through Buncombe and Madison Counties northward to Tennessee will route additional traffic along the study corridor through Asheville. A traffic study and capacity analyses of I-240 southwest of Asheville confirms the need for improvements. The existing facility, including the Smoky Park Bridges over the French Broad River, will not accommodate future traffic demands at an acceptable level.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A Phase I Environmental Analysis completed in 1995 determined the study corridor for this project. Since the Phase I analysis, conceptual plans have been developed to determine reasonable and feasible alternatives within the study corridor. These alternatives include: improving the existing roadway southwest of Patton Avenue, and three alignments on new location north of Patton Avenue. Each of the new location alignments cross the French Broad River and tie into US 19-23-70 south of the Broadway Street interchange serving UNC-Asheville.

All alignments will be evaluated based on engineering, environmental and socio-economic factors before selecting a preferred alternative. Other factors include; costs, roadway safety, traffic growth, and maintenance of existing traffic service. Environmental factors include; potential impacts to historic sites, and wetland areas. The socio-economic factors include anticipated impacts to existing homes and businesses.

#### *I-240 Southwest of Patton Avenue*

The capacity analysis indicates existing I-240 will need eight lanes from the I-26 interchange to the I-240/Patton Avenue interchange to accommodate the estimated 2020 traffic. Widening the existing roadway will affect most properties along the route and require the relocation of an estimated 9 businesses and 59 residences.

### *New Location Alternatives*

Three new location freeway alignments were developed from immediately southwest of the I-240/Patton Avenue interchange northward across the French Broad River to existing US 19-23-70. All of these alternatives improve the existing I-240/Patton Avenue interchange before continuing northward along new location. Alternatives 1 and 2 cross the Westgate Shopping Center property and Alternative 3 crosses a portion of the golf course at the Holiday Inn Sunspree. Alternative 1 ties into existing US 19-23-70 adjacent to the Riverside Cemetery. Alternatives 2 and 3 tie into US 19-23-70 between the Riverside Cemetery and Broadway Street (SR 1781). Alternative 1 will require the relocation of an estimated 56 businesses and 20 residences. Alternative 2 will require the relocation of an estimated 52 businesses and 49 residences. Alternative 3 will require the relocation of an estimated 16 businesses and 58 residences.

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### CITIZENS WORKSHOP

On Thursday, April 23, 1998, an informal workshop will be held at the National Guard Armory on Brevard Road near I-240, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Engineers will answer questions and receive comments about the project. The preliminary conceptual plans illustrating the project alternatives will be displayed.

### INFO-LINE

To obtain information and offer comments concerning this project, call:

**1-919-319-8850**

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### PROJECT MAILING LIST

Add your name to the mailing list by contacting:

Asheville Connector  
TGS Engineers  
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975 Walnut Street  
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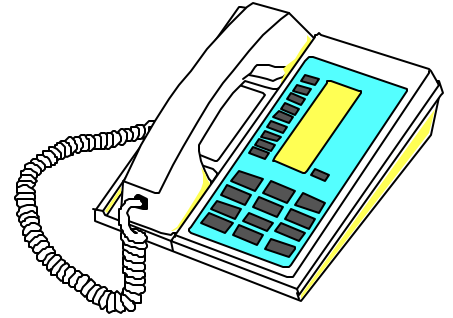
### INFORMATION AND COMMENTS

For more information about this project, or to express any comments or concerns, write to either TGS Engineers or the NCDOT at the addresses below. Please refer to Project I-2513 when writing about the proposed project. All comments and questions will be addressed as soon as possible.

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Project Development and Environmental  
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1-919-319-8850



## PROJECT INFO-LINE

**1-919-319-8850**