

This newsletter is the first of several that will be prepared during the planning process for Carolina Bays Parkway Extension. The purpose of this newsletter is to introduce the local community to the project, notify the community that studies are underway, provide general information about the planning process, and request your input on the project's draft purpose and area transportation needs.

Project Overview

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), propose to extend Carolina Bays Parkway (S.C. 31) from its existing terminus at S.C. 9 in Horry County, South Carolina to U.S. 17 Shallotte Bypass in Brunswick County, North Carolina. SCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project P029554 would extend Carolina Bays Parkway from its current terminus at S.C. 9 in Horry County to the North Carolina state line. NCDOT STIP Project R-5876 would extend Carolina Bays Parkway

from the state line to U.S. 17 Shallotte Bypass in Brunswick County. Carolina Bays Parkway Extension is anticipated to involve the construction of a multilane, full control of access freeway, with part on new location. Full control of access means that access to Carolina Bays Parkway will only be provided via ramps and interchanges. Bridges will be installed at some cross streets and no driveway connections will be allowed.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to improve the transportation network in the study area by enhancing mobility and connectivity for traffic moving in and through the project area.

Traffic volumes on area roadways are expected to increase considerably by 2040. The population within Horry and Brunswick counties has steadily increased along with the number of tourists to the area. Tourists and visitors are important to the economic vitality of both states' coastal counties.

Growth in population, tourism and supporting services has resulted in an increase in mixed-purpose traffic on area roads. The proposed project would improve mobility on existing roadways, benefiting both local and through traffic. This project would provide a more direct route for tourist and coastal truck traffic travelling through the area. As a result, existing transportation routes would be able to convey shorter local trips more efficiently. The proposed project would also provide additional capacity, improving the flow of traffic and lessening delays on area roadways.

Preliminary Project Schedule

A tentative schedule is shown below. Because a number of factors can affect a project's schedule, it may be subject to change.

Public Meetings	<i>Spring 2019</i>
Environmental Document	<i>Spring 2020</i>
Public Hearings	<i>Summer 2020</i>
Select Alternative	<i>Fall 2020</i>
Decision Document	<i>Summer 2021</i>

Right-of-Way Acquisition and Construction

The SCDOT 2017-2022 STIP includes the purchase of property for the extension of Carolina Bays Parkway from S.C. 9 to the North Carolina state line beginning in 2021. Right-of-way acquisition for the portion of the project located in North Carolina is not yet programmed.

The project is not yet programmed for construction.

Stay Informed + Stay Connected

Your comments and questions are important to us, and your input on the proposed project is encouraged. There are many ways you can keep up to date and stay involved:

Web | Visit the project website at www.ncdot.gov/projects/carolina-bays-parkway

Engagement Hub | Participate in project surveys and provide comments via ncdot.publicinput.com

Telephone | Call our toll-free line at 1-866-841-4420, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays

Mail and Email | Contact one of our project representatives:

Ms. Krista Kimmel, P.E. Project Manager N.C. Department of Transportation 5501 Barbados Boulevard Castle Hayne, N.C. 28429 (910)341-2000 khkimmel@ncdot.gov	Ms. Leah Quattlebaum, P.E. Pee Dee Regional Production Engineer S.C. Department of Transportation P.O. Box 191 Columbia, S.C. 29202 (803)737-1751 QuattleLB@scdot.org	Ms. Liz Kovasckitz, AICP Planning Program Manager CALYX, an NV5 Company 6750 Tryon Road Cary, N.C. 27518 (919)858-1808 lkovasckitz@CALYXengineers.com
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Persons who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Aquellas personas que no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan llamando al 1-800-481-6494.

NEPA and Transportation Decision-making

The proposed Carolina Bays Parkway Extension project may utilize federal funds and therefore must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under NEPA, an agency must study the adverse and beneficial environmental impacts of alternatives that meet a project's purpose and need.

An environmental document will be prepared for Carolina Bays Parkway Extension. This detailed report will aid in making decisions about the project, document the findings of detailed studies and provide answers to questions, including the following:

- What transportation problem will the project address? What is the purpose of the project and why is it needed?
- What alternative solutions were considered to address the defined transportation problem?
- What impacts would the alternatives have on the human and natural environments?
- How were the public, environmental resource and permitting agencies, and other stakeholders involved in the project? What input was received?
- What is the preferred alternative?

Go to <https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov> for more information on this topic.

Planning Process Steps

The planning process can be divided into the steps shown below. We are currently in Step 2 of the process. Public involvement is an important component of the planning process and opportunities, both formal and informal, are provided throughout the process so citizens can stay informed and provide input. NCDOT and SCDOT encourage your participation the Carolina Bays Parkway Extension planning process. The project

team is seeking comments from the public, local officials, and resource and regulatory agencies about the study area and the proposed project. Your feedback will help identify important issues, inform the purpose of and need for the project, and identify important project area resources as alternatives are developed.

Written comments can be submitted to one of the project contacts listed on page 4 of this newsletter or via NCDOT's Engagement Hub, which can be accessed at <https://ncdot.publicinput.com/>. Please provide your comments on the project's purpose and need by **December 31, 2018**. All written comments received will become part of the project record.

Carolina Bays Parkway Extension's purpose and need will be reviewed with environmental resource and permitting agencies in the coming months. After the agencies concur on the purpose of and need for the project, preliminary corridor alternatives will be developed and presented at public meetings in the project area. Additional information will be provided as meetings are scheduled and at key project milestones.

Carolina Bays Parkway Extension Preliminary Study Area

The proposed project area is largely comprised of unincorporated areas in Horry and Brunswick counties, but also includes portions of some coastal towns and communities located on the inland side of the Intracoastal Waterway.

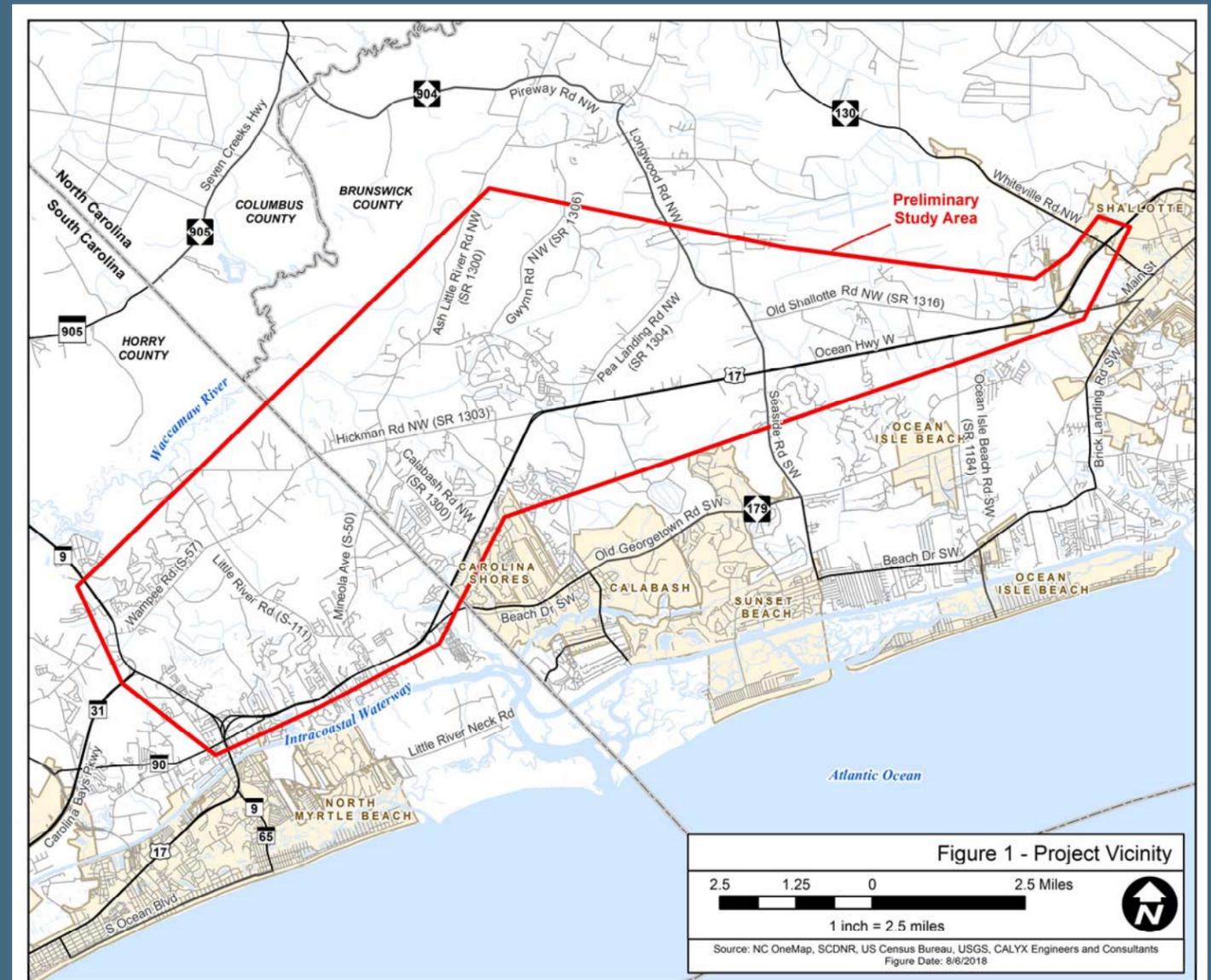
The existing primary road network includes U.S. 17 and various North Carolina and South Carolina state highway and secondary routes. There are no interstate facilities in the project area and access along existing routes is largely uncontrolled.

The Carolina Bays Parkway Extension study area boundary was established with consideration given to the ability to develop a full range of alternatives while

also minimizing potential impacts to important environmental features. From west to east, the project study area is approximately 19 miles long, with approximately five miles located in South Carolina and 14 miles located in North Carolina.

Outlined in red in the map below, the Preliminary Study area is much larger than the actual amount of land that would be directly impacted by the project and is subject to change as more information about the project is collected.

This project is in the early stages of the planning process. Potential corridors have not yet been developed.



Carolina Bays Parkway Extension Major Planning Steps and Milestones

Public Involvement

1. Project Scoping (Initial Data Collection)
2. Identify the Project's Purpose and Need
3. Develop Preliminary Corridor Alternatives
4. Hold Public Meetings
5. Select Alternatives for Detailed Study
6. Prepare Functional Design and Conduct Detailed Environmental Analysis
7. Publish Environmental Document and Conduct Corridor Public Hearings
8. Select Alternative
9. Prepare Preliminary Design, Identify Additional Avoidance and Minimization
10. Publish Final Environmental Document / Decision Document