



Detailed Study Alternatives Selected

We want to update you on the progress of the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Complete 540 study for the Southeast Extension of the Triangle Expressway. The study aims to find the best possible route for completing 540 while minimizing impacts to people, businesses, and natural features within the area.

We understand how important it is to complete the process of identifying the final route for the project as quickly as possible for those who live and work in the project area. Rest assured that we share that same goal.

NCDOT is studying several possible routes to complete 540 from Holly Springs to Knightdale. These routes are shown on the map on the other side of this newsletter. Over the next few months, NCDOT will be conducting studies to determine the route that best meets the purpose of the project while also considering impacts to the human and natural environment. NCDOT expects to complete these studies and recommend the preferred alternative by the fall of 2015.

Studying these routes in detail now will greatly reduce the possibility of having to reconsider any of these routes in the future. Having to go back and consider additional routes after the study is complete would significantly delay selection of the final alternative. In other words, studying all of the potential Detailed Study Alternatives (DSAs) currently under consideration with the same level of detail now is the most effective approach for reaching a final decision as quickly as possible.

In October 2013, NCDOT held three public meetings to present the DSAs recommended by the Federal Highway Administration and NCDOT. We also presented the recommended DSAs to the various state and federal agencies with a stake in the project, and collected feedback from the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), which includes representatives from local

governments within the study area.

Approximately 1,700 individuals attended the public meetings and NCDOT received more than 1,100 comments. The majority of the comments from citizens supported the Orange Corridor and opposed the Purple, Blue, Lilac, or Red Corridors, although there was some level of support and opposition expressed relative to each of the color-coded corridor segments. The most common concerns expressed were about potential impacts to homes and neighborhoods, natural resources, and increased noise and visual impacts. The information that was received from the public did not provide sufficient new information to change the basis for the recommended DSAs. NCDOT will document the public comments in the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), where it will be used in conjunction with information about the potential effects of each option under consideration to identify one preferred route for the project.

CAMPO expressed support for the Orange Corridor. Neither CAMPO nor the environmental resource and regulatory agencies requested dropping any of the corridors prior to a detailed study. NCDOT used this feedback, along with information about the benefits and potential effects of each option under consideration, to determine that more detailed information should be collected for each option before eliminating any of the recommended DSAs from further consideration.

Based on the feedback from citizens, local governments, and state and federal agencies, NCDOT is moving forward to complete the detailed study as quickly as possible, and will include all of the comments in any final decision making process.

NCDOT appreciates your patience and all of the community involvement in this process. We will continue working closely with the communities in the project area to select the best option for the project as quickly as possible.

Next Steps and Comment Process

With the Detailed Study Alternatives (DSAs) now selected, there is much work to be done to complete the next step in the process, which is the preparation and distribution of the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This work will include an analysis of impacts based on more detailed engineering drawings and impact data collected through fieldwork.

NCDOT has established an aggressive schedule for all the study's remaining steps so that the final route location decision can be made as quickly as possible. In order to meet each step in the schedule, the study team

will now be devoting its full attention to the technical studies and Draft EIS preparation.

While your comments and questions are always welcome, the best opportunity to provide your views on the DSAs will be after the detailed studies have been completed and documented in the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS will be widely available to the public for review and will contain important new information on the DSAs. Official comments on this information can be made during the Draft EIS review period, which will include formal public hearings. Once the review period is over, the preferred route location will be selected.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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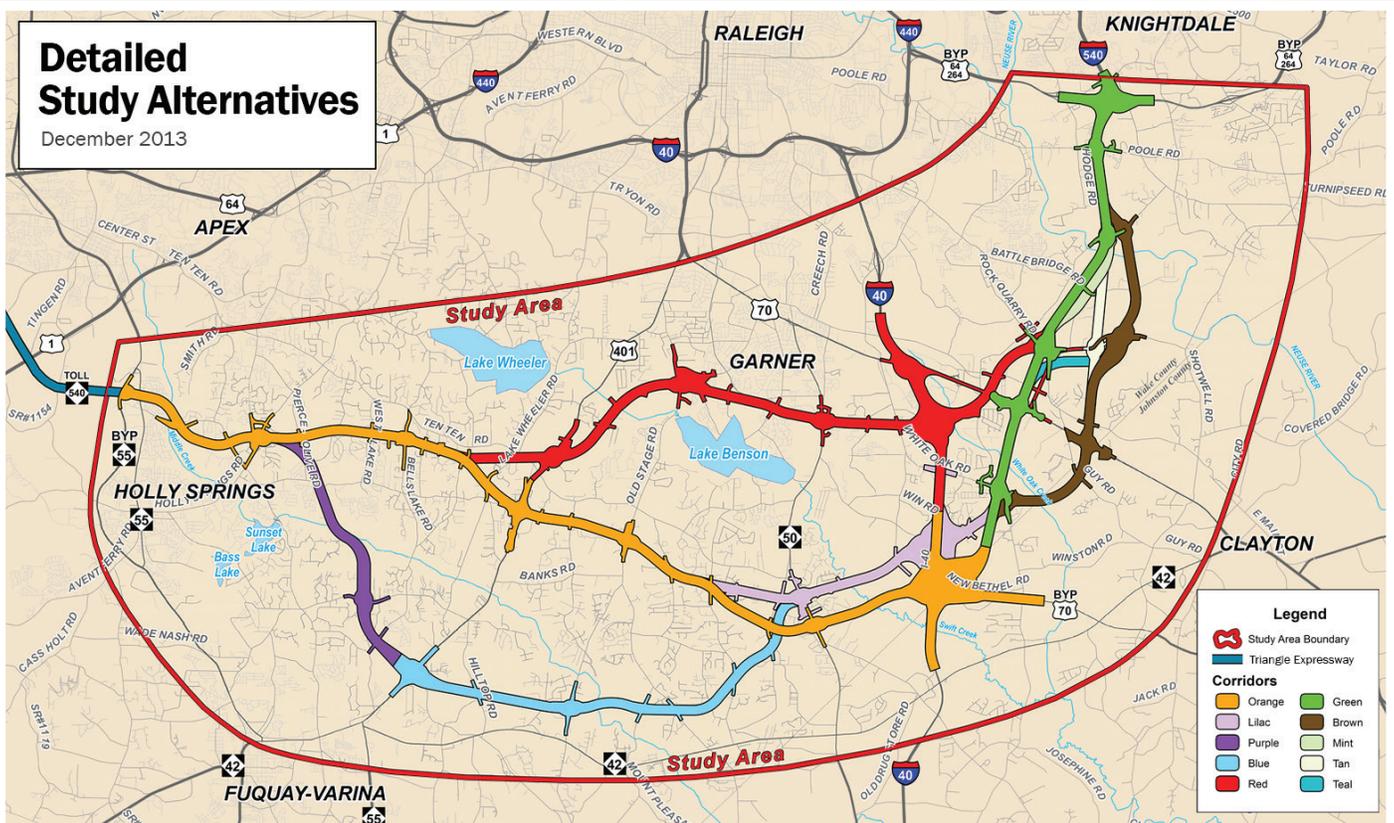
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Note: A larger version of the DSA map is available on the project's website, at www.ncdot.gov/complete540.