

Project Schedule

JANUARY 2009

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and identification of the NCTA-Recommended Alternative will be available for public review. The DEIS will summarize the impacts and costs of the 12 Detailed Study Alternatives.

SPRING 2009

Public Hearings will be held to take comments on the DEIS and project alternatives.

SUMMER 2009

A Preferred Alternative will be selected based on the information in the DEIS and comments from the public and environmental agencies.

SUMMER 2010

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) will be completed for the Preferred Alternative and made available for public and agency review.

FALL 2010

The Record of Decision (ROD) will be completed. This is the final document in the planning process. Right-of-way acquisition and construction will begin only after the ROD is completed.

SPRING 2015

Project open to traffic

 **Schedule subject to the availability of funds**

Project Purpose

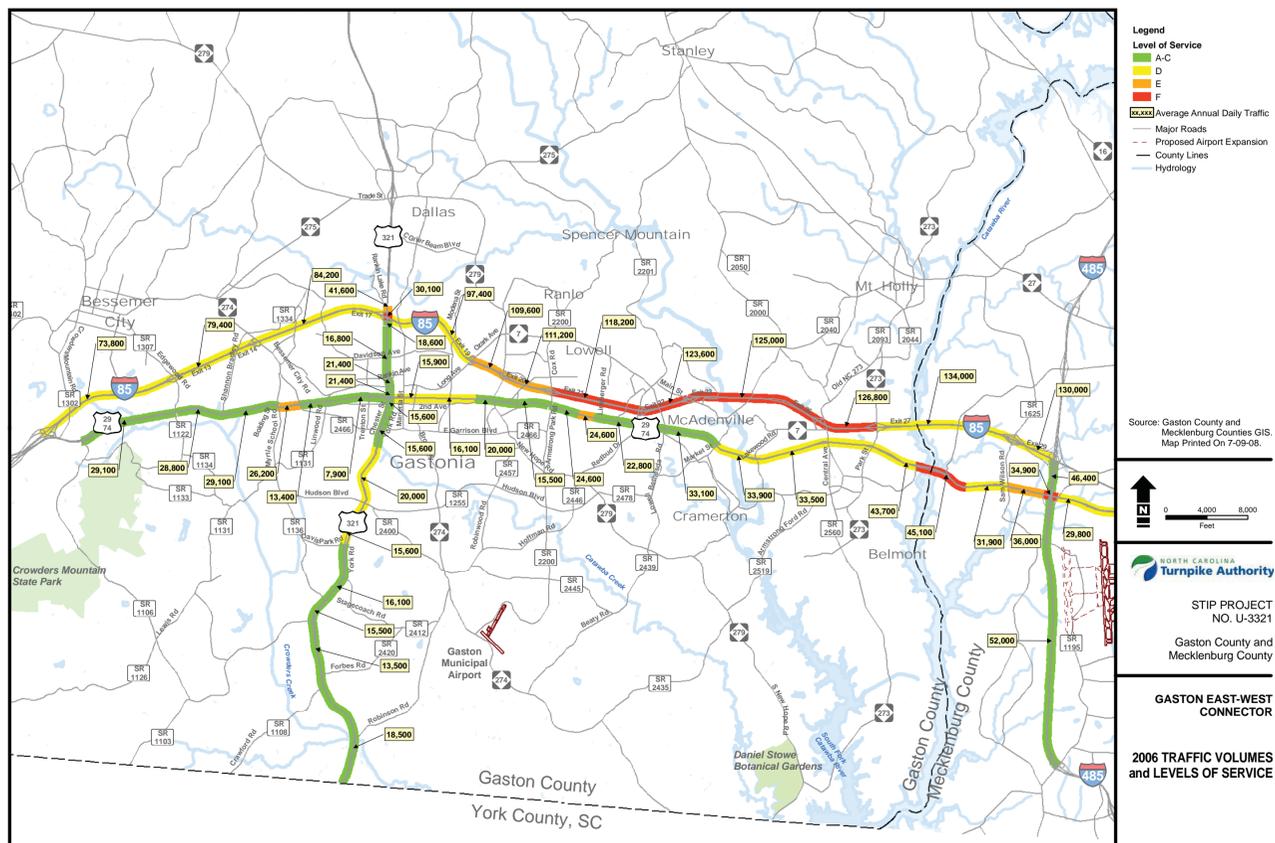
The purpose of the proposed action is to improve east-west transportation mobility in the area around the City of Gastonia, between Gastonia and the Charlotte metropolitan area, and, particularly, to establish direct access between the rapidly growing areas of southeast Gaston County and west Mecklenburg County. This project purpose is based on the following:

1. Need to improve mobility, access, and connectivity within southern Gaston County and between southern Gaston County and Mecklenburg County.
2. Need to improve traffic flow on the sections of I-85, US 29-74, and US 321 within the project study area and improve high-speed, safe, reliable regional travel service along the I-85 corridor.

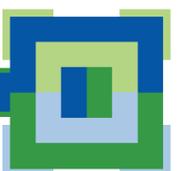
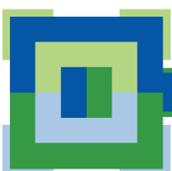
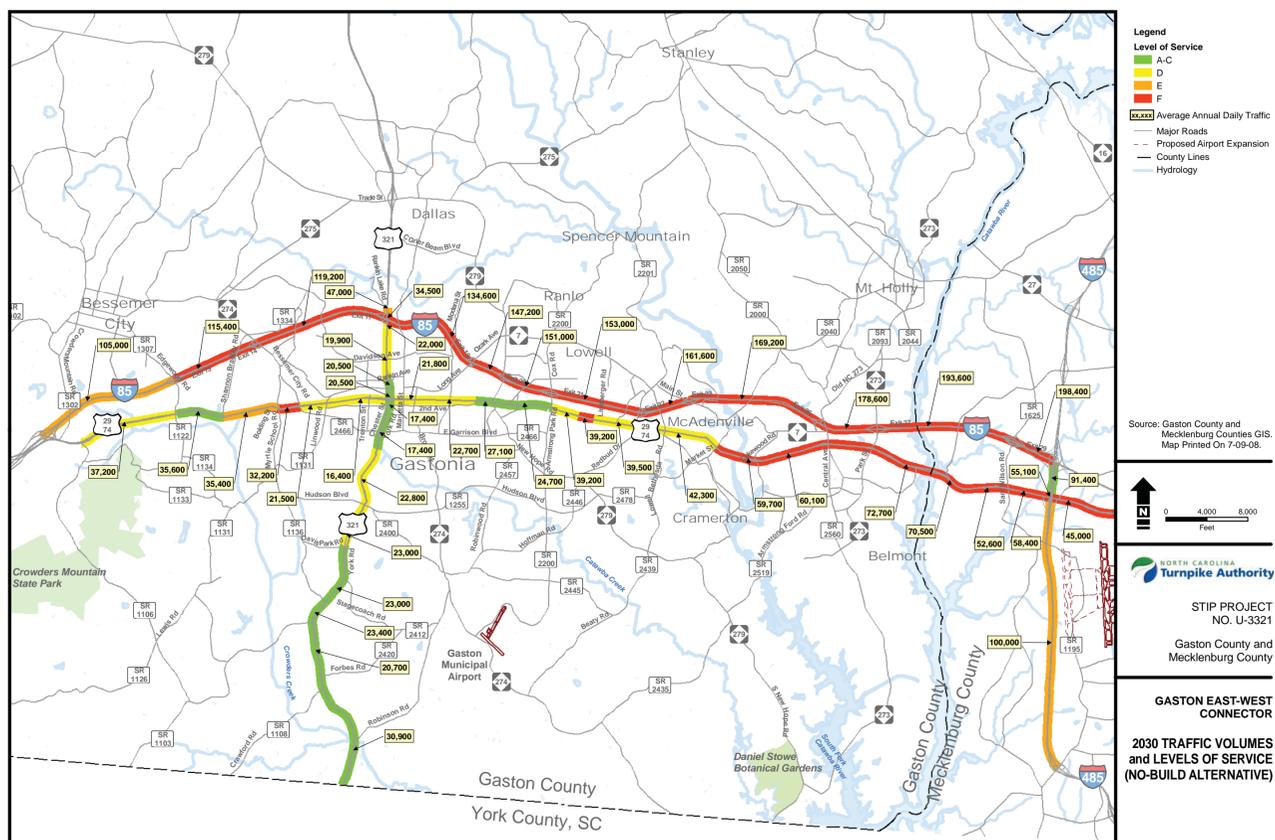
Year 2006 and Year 2030 Traffic Conditions Without the Project

These graphics illustrate the traffic volumes and traffic conditions on I-85, I-485, US 29-74, and US 321 in 2006 and in 2030 without the Gaston East-West Connector. The colors on the maps represent different levels of service (LOS). The level of service is a rating from A to F of the estimated level of congestion on a roadway. LOS A is the best operating condition (free-flow traffic) and LOS F is the worst (substantial slow-downs and delays). As shown in the graphics, congestion on I-85, I-485, and US 29-74 is projected to worsen over the years.

2006 TRAFFIC



2030 TRAFFIC



What's New Since the 2006 Workshops?

1. ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR SEGMENT K1D ELIMINATED FROM STUDY.

Corridor Segment K1D, across the Belmont peninsula, was eliminated from further study, resulting in the elimination of 4 of the 16 original Detailed Study Alternatives shown at the 2006 workshops.

Segment K1D would interfere with a planned landfill necessary for operations at Duke Energy's Allen Steam Station.

2. THE PROJECT IS NOW BEING STUDIED ONLY AS A TOLL ROAD.

Non-toll alternatives are no longer being studied for this project because funding is not available to build the project as a non-toll facility.

3. THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT AND THE ALTERNATIVES SCREENING REPORT HAVE BEEN UPDATED.

These two reports were prepared several years ago. The updates provide the latest traffic forecasts and background information. They are available for download at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/gaston.

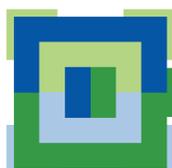
The conclusions do not change in either report.

4. ENGINEERING DESIGNS FOR EACH DETAILED STUDY ALTERNATIVE ARE ON DISPLAY AT TONIGHT'S WORKSHOP.

The right of way for the roadway within each 1,400-foot-wide Detailed Study Alternative Corridor is shown on the large-scale aerial photographs.

5. THE PROJECT INTERCHANGE AT US 29-74 MAY BE ELIMINATED.

The proposed interchange at US 29-74 is close to wetlands and floodplains associated with Crowder's Creek and is also near the proposed interchange at I-85. NCTA would like your opinion on whether this interchange should be retained as part of the project.



Range of Alternatives Considered

The following alternative concepts were retained for continued study.

1. **NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

retained for comparison purposes, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act

2. **NEW LOCATION ALTERNATIVE**

includes 12 corridors currently under consideration

The following alternative concepts were eliminated from further study because they would not effectively serve the project's purpose and need, and Alternative 1 (Improve Existing Roadways) could result in greater impact to the human environment than the New Location Alternative.

1. **IMPROVE EXISTING ROADWAYS ALTERNATIVE**

includes widening and other improvements to I-85, US 29-74, and collector roadways leading from southern Gaston County to I-85

2. **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

includes measures such as computerized traffic signals, intersection improvements, improved signs, etc.

3. **TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

includes ridesharing, HOV lanes, telecommuting, etc.

4. **MASS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE**

5. **MULTI-MODAL ALTERNATIVE**

combinations of mass transit alternatives, transportation demand management alternatives, and minor improvements

