



NORTH CAROLINA
Turnpike Authority



STIP Project No. U-3321
Federal Aid Project No. STP-1213(6)



Gaston East-West Connector
(Garden Parkway)

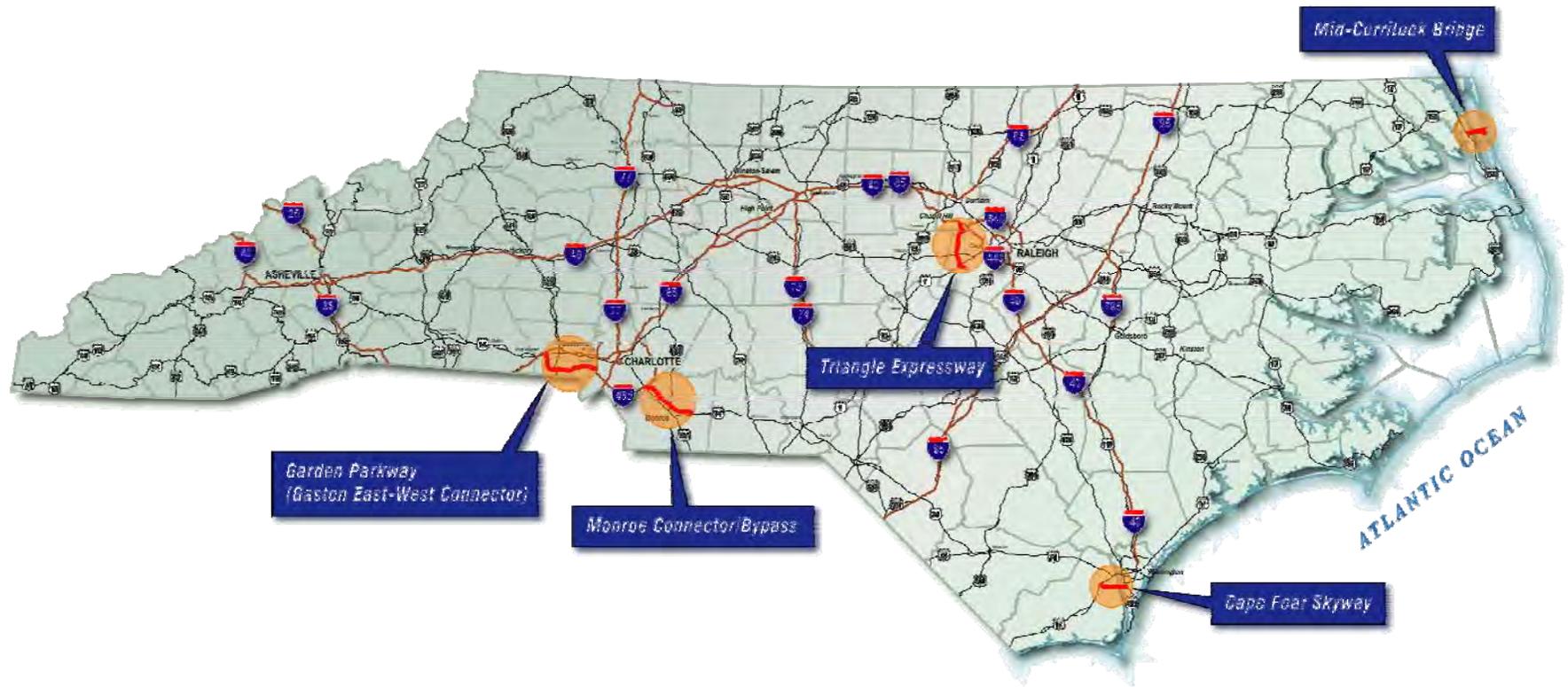
Local Officials Meeting

June 22, 2009



General Project Overview

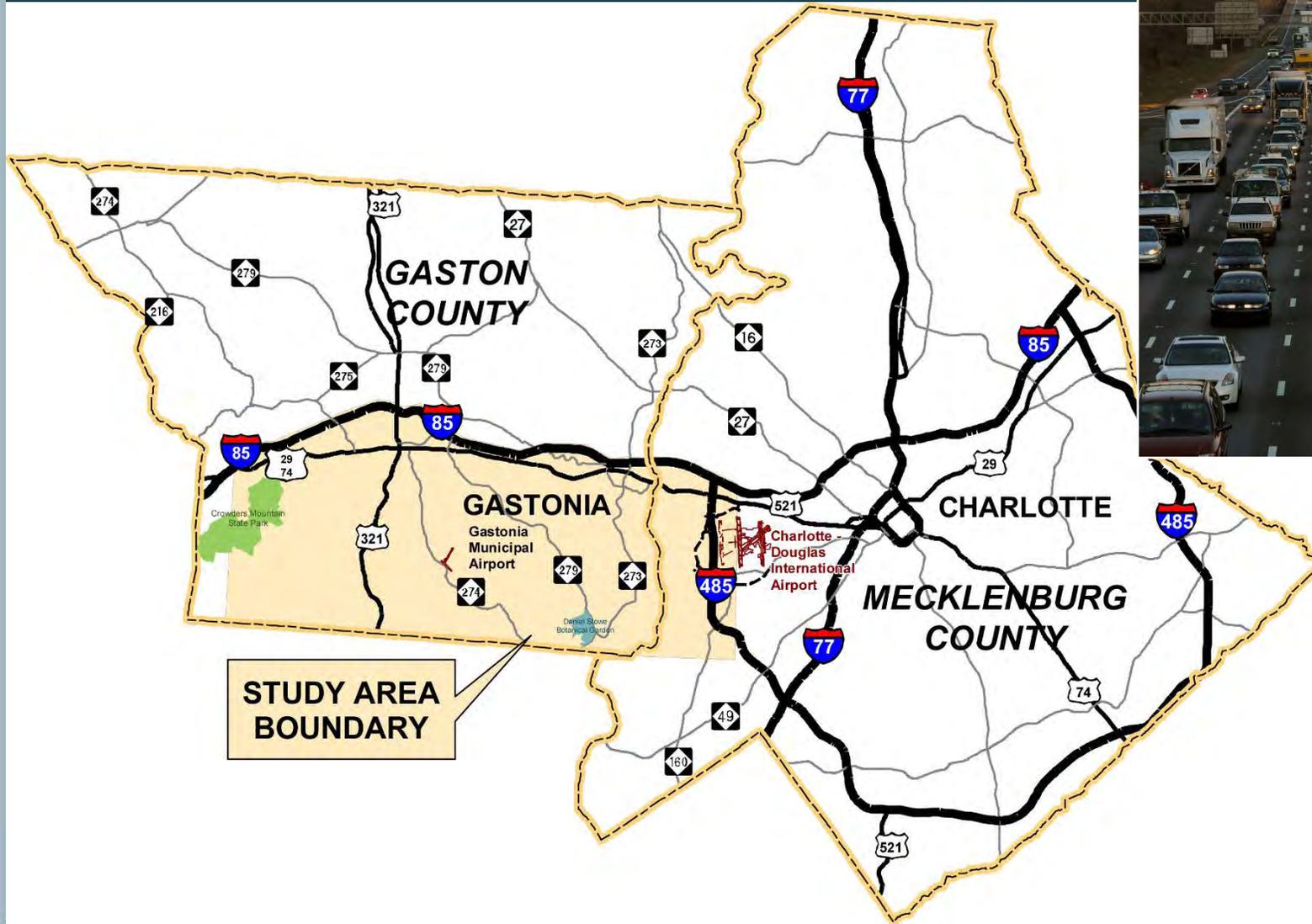
- **Background Information**
- **Draft EIS**
- **Recommended Alternative**
- **Next Steps**



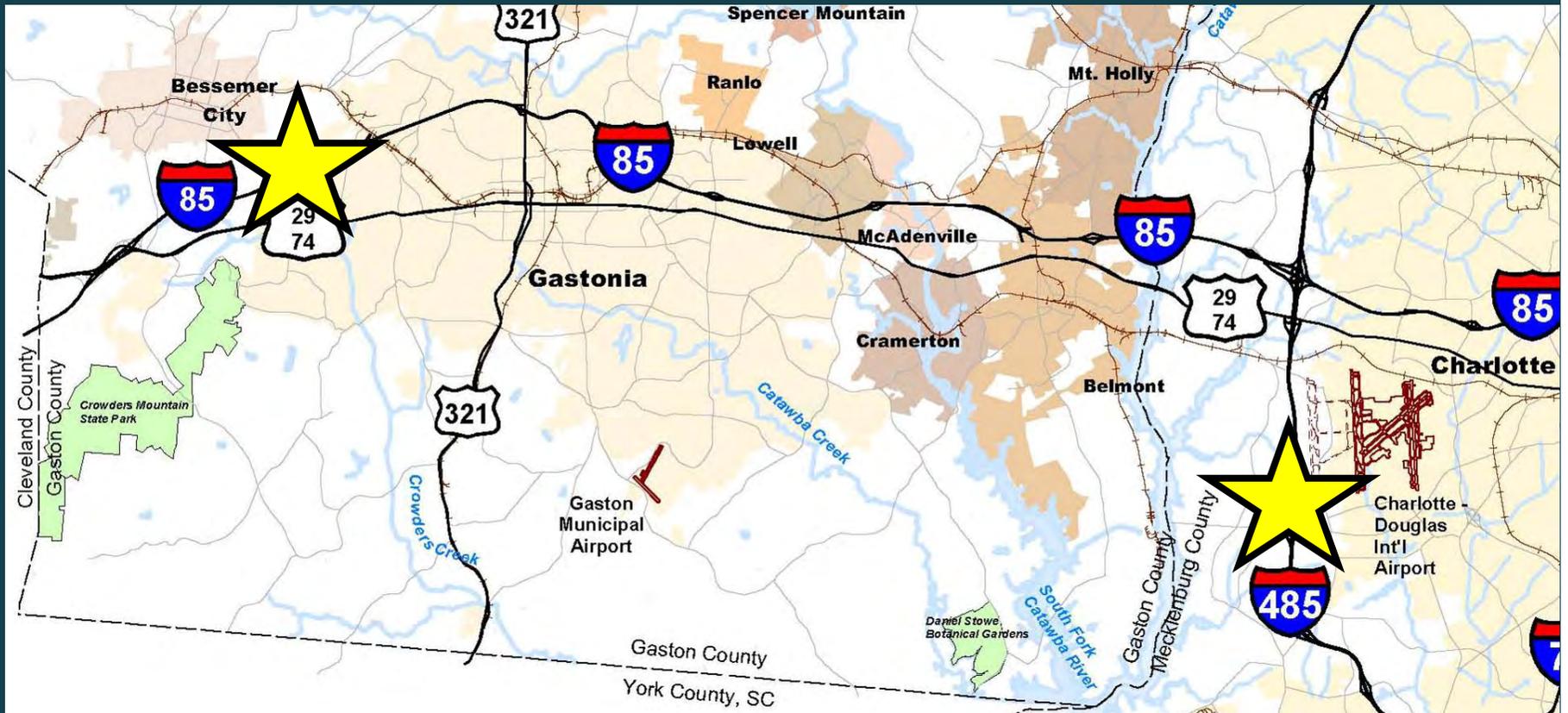
2005 - Garden Parkway becomes candidate toll facility

Gaston East-West Connector

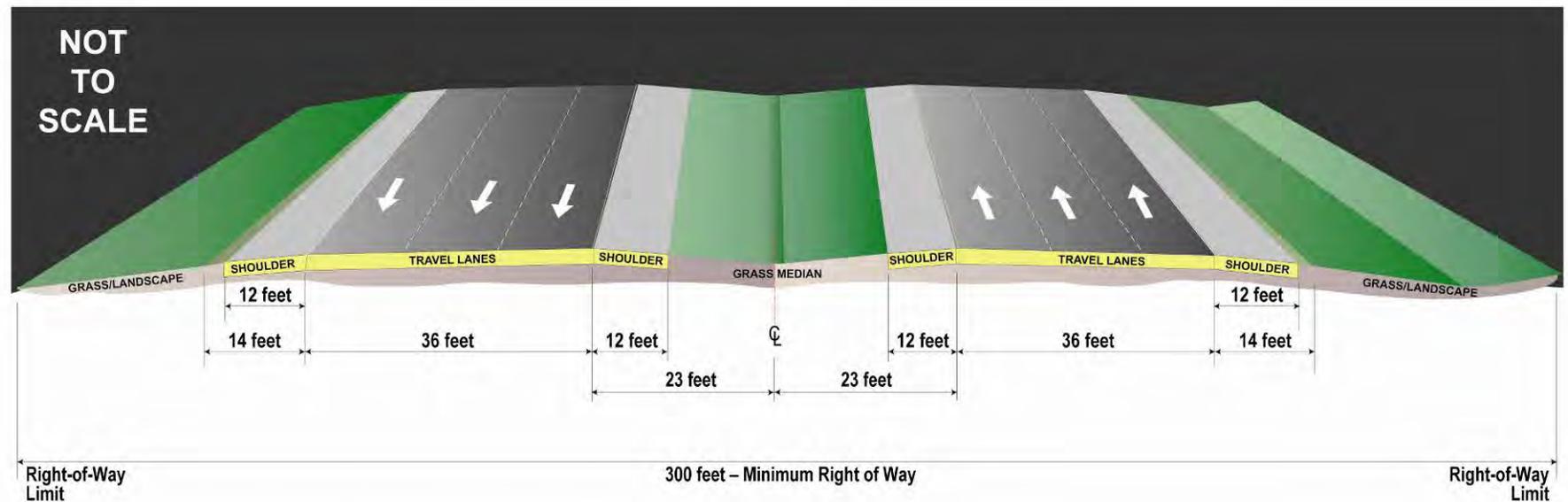
Project Study Area



Project Endpoints



Typical Cross-Section

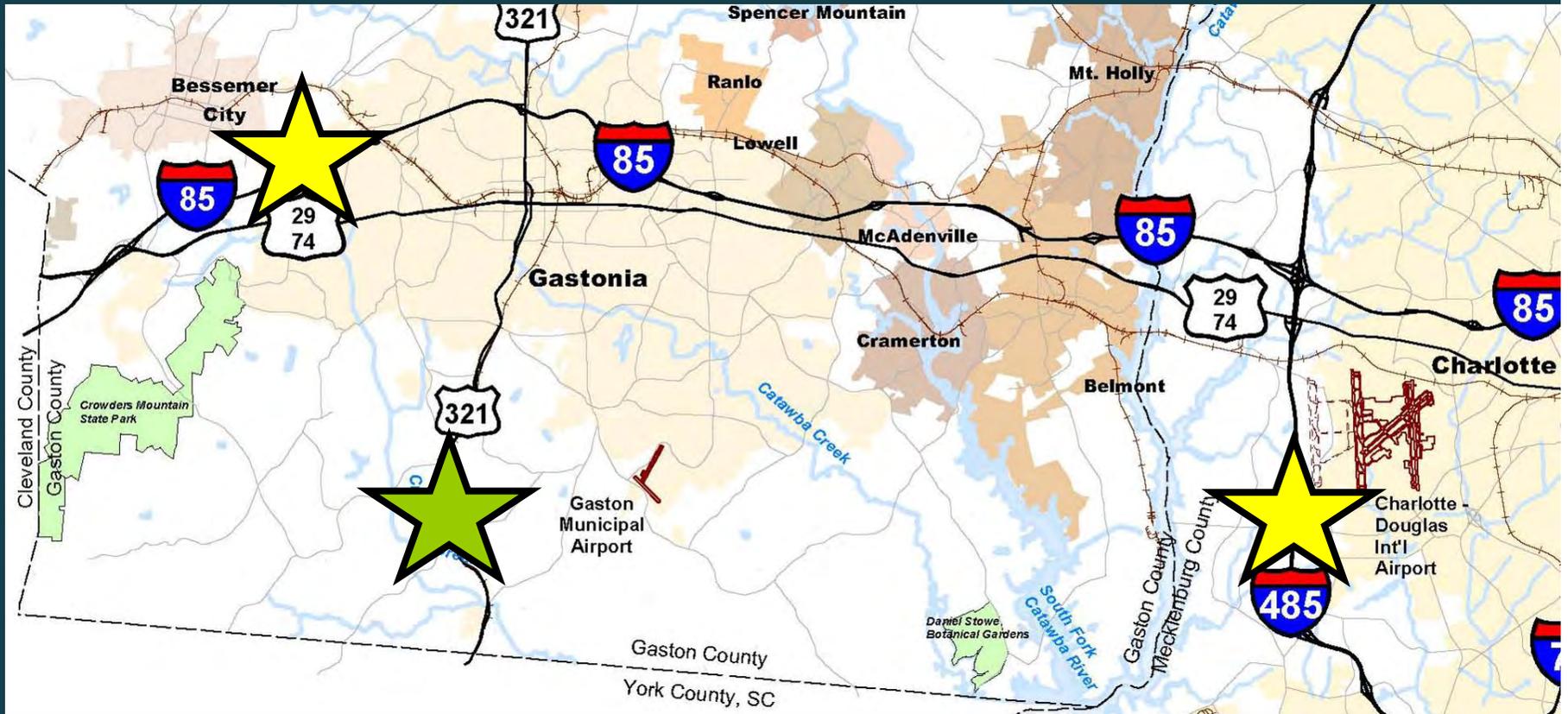


NOTE: Four lanes may be built initially, resulting in a wider grass median. The 5th and 6th travel lanes would be the innermost travel lanes.

Project Funding

- Revenue Bonds
- TIFIA Loans
- STIP Funds
- Gap Appropriation

Project Phasing



Likely first phase – I-485 to US 321

Gaston East-West Connector

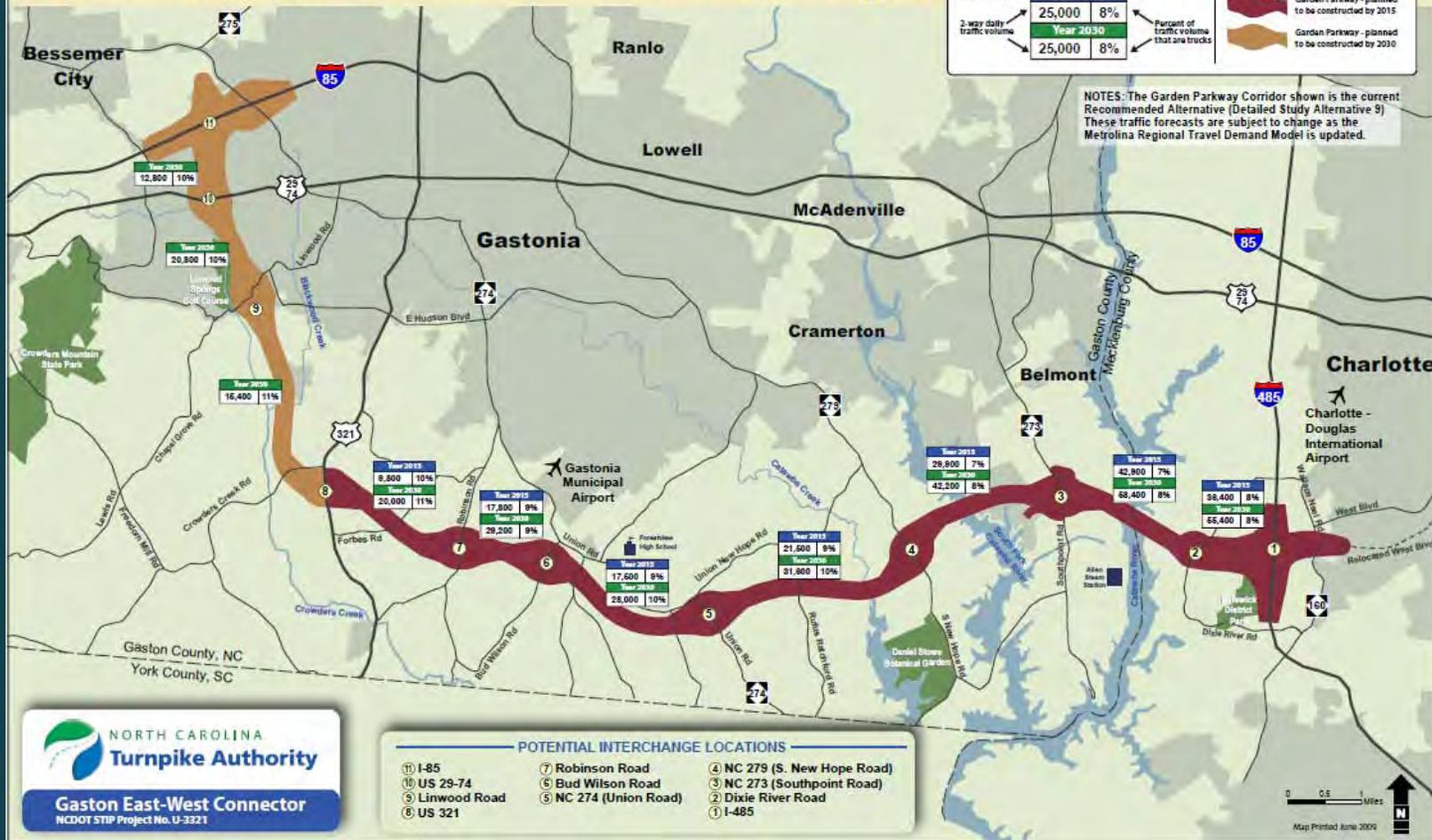
Public Involvement

- Citizens Informational Workshops
 - 2003, 2006, and 2008
- Small Group Meetings
- Project website
- Toll-free hotline
- June 22-25, 2009
 - Open Houses
 - Public Hearings

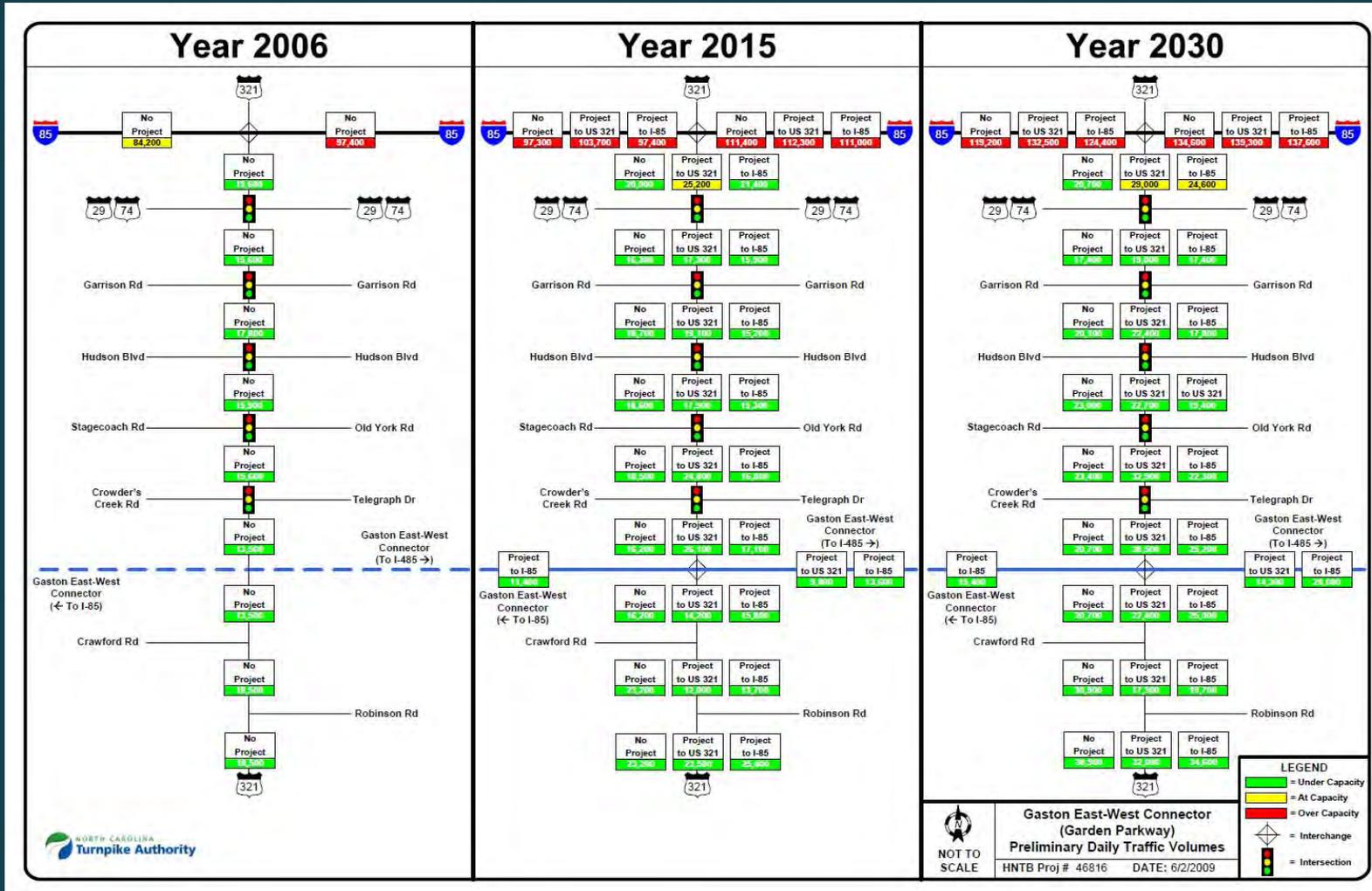


Public Involvement

Gaston East-West Connector (Garden Parkway) Forecasted Daily Traffic Volumes and Truck Percentages



Public Involvement



Gaston East-West Connector

Public Involvement

FAQs Frequently Asked Questions

Garden Parkway
STIP No. U-3321

June 2009

To date, the North Carolina Turnpike Authority has heard from many interested citizens prior to, and as part of, the public review process for the Gaston East-West Connector (Garden Parkway) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS). Brief answers to some of the most frequently asked questions are provided below.

If you have other questions or would like additional information, please email the project team at gaston@ncturnpike.org or call the project hotline at 1-800-475-6402.

PROJECT HISTORY AND STUDIES

How did the project originate?

Projects begin at the local level. In the 1990s, the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization led an effort to develop a corridor for the Garden Parkway to include on their Thoroughfare Plan. Local officials propose roadway projects from the Thoroughfare Plan to be included on the local Long Range Transportation Plan. Local officials set priorities for projects and work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to include projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to receive state and/or federal funds. This project continues to be one of the highest priority funds for this region.

What is a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) and what does it mean?

It is a document based on federal law – the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the potential environmental consequences of their proposal, document their analyses, and make this information available to the public for comment prior to project implementation.

What does the Draft EIS for the Garden Parkway include?

The Draft EIS addresses the following questions: why is a project needed; what are the reasonable alternatives for the project; what are the impacts, both positive and negative, of the 12 Detailed Study Alternatives; and what can be done to mitigate impacts. It also summarizes public and agency coordination.

SCHEDULE AND PHASING

Is the project going to end at US 321?

No. The project limits are from I-485 on the east end to I-85 on the west end. However, construction of large transportation projects such as the Garden Parkway, I-485 in Charlotte, I-540 in Raleigh, etc., are typically constructed in phases as funding becomes available. Construction phases are determined after the environmental planning phase is completed based on availability of funding. Construction of individual phases or segments must have endpoints at an interchange or intersection with another road. The segment from I-485 to US 321 is a likely first phase for the project, but this will depend on funding available at the time the project is ready to be constructed.

The intent is to build the ultimate project from I-485 to I-85 as soon as possible.

The schedule says the project will be open to traffic in 2014. Which part will be open?

The first phase of the project is expected to be open to traffic by 2014. This phase will start at I-485 and extend westward. The most likely western interim terminus is currently US 321, based on current construction prices and what is known about available funding. This may change as the project moves closer to the start of construction in 2011.

Where is the project funding coming from?

Funding to construct the project will be from multiple sources over the course of several years. The majority of this project will be funded through the sale of revenue bonds, which will be repaid with the tolls collected along this roadway. The project may also be funded in part by federal credit assistance from the United States Department of Transportation under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act – or TIFIA – program. STIP funds may be used. Appropriations from the NC Legislature (i.e. "Gap Funding" in the currently approved amount of \$35 million per year) are also anticipated.

How long will it take to build the project?

The first phase is expected to begin in early 2011 and be complete by the end of 2014, which is a total of four years. Other phases will begin when funding is available and the duration of construction will depend on the length and complexity of the segment being built.

How will project construction proceed?

The project is anticipated to be constructed through a Design-Build process. Design-Build is a contracting process where a contractor and designer are hired as a team to complete the design and construct the project under the guidance of the owner (in this case the state of North Carolina – the Turnpike Authority).

TRAFFIC CONCERNS ALONG US 321

If the project ends at US 321, how much traffic will be added to US 321 and will US 321 be able to handle this projected traffic?

It should be noted that the project is being planned and studied from I-485 to I-85. During the period that the project may terminate at US 321, our studies indicate there will be an increase in traffic along US 321 from the Garden



FAQs

Garden Parkway
STIP No. U-3321

Parkway north to Stagecoach Road for a distance of approximately three-fourths of a mile. Beyond Stagecoach Road, the traffic is estimated to generally be the same with or without the project.

Under both an interim phase for the Garden Parkway and the ultimate project, a corridor-level evaluation indicates US 321 would operate under capacity and at acceptable levels of service from Robinson Road (south of the Garden Parkway) to US 26/74 (Wilkinson Blvd) through the year 2030 (the latest year for which traffic forecasts were developed).

The analyses described above were developed using traffic forecasts for the years 2015 and 2030 based on the Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model. Detailed traffic information is available on our website at <http://www.ncturnpike.org/projects/gaston/>.

Will the project send high volumes of trucks through the York Chester historic neighborhood located off US 321?

No. Based on existing truck data and future predicted truck percentages, daily truck traffic along US 321 in the historic district is not expected to increase due to the Garden Parkway (whether it's an interim phase from I-485 to US 321 or the ultimate project from I-485 to I-85).

EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

How can I find out if my property is impacted by the project?

The Corridor/Design Public Hearing Maps show the preliminary engineering designs for the Detailed Study Alternatives (potential corridors for the road derived from a balance of all environmental and public concerns within the area in which the project is expected to go) overlaid on aerial photographs that also show parcel boundaries. In addition to the preliminary right-of-way limits for each Detailed Study Alternative, the Hearing Maps show the wide corridor boundaries where detailed information was collected in order to develop the preliminary right of way. The preliminary design right of way is subject to change as the project moves forward in the process. However, the right of way must stay within the corridor area or additional data collection and new studies would be required.

The Hearing Maps are available as pdfs from the project website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/gaston/deis.asp.

Will the project have a negative impact on the region's air quality?

The project area is part of the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill air quality region (also known as the Metrolina Region). Air quality regions are evaluated to determine if they are meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, lead, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. An area that exceeds the NAAQS for a pollutant is said to be in "non-

attainment" for that pollutant. The Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill air quality region is a non-attainment area for ozone. The region prepares plans to evaluate how it is going to maintain or achieve attainment status for the NAAQS. For transportation sources, the region is evaluated as a whole through the region's long range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs. At this time, the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Long Range Transportation Plan and the Mecklenburg Union MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan have been determined to be in conformity with the State's plans to comply with the NAAQS. The Gaston East-West Connector is included in these long range transportation plans designed to meet and maintain the NAAQS.

What are some of the benefits of the project?

With the Garden Parkway in place, travel times in 2030 are expected to be substantially shorter for many trips. Trips across southern Gaston County are expected to be almost 10 minutes shorter, and trips across the Catawba River are estimated to be 20-30 minutes shorter. In addition, the Garden Parkway would reduce overall congestion throughout Gaston County by 6-7 percent.

ALTERNATIVES

The Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) identified an alignment for the project several years ago. There were several public meetings about this before the MPO finalized their corridor. Was this corridor considered and studied by the Turnpike Authority?

This corridor was considered and evaluated as part of the Preliminary Alternatives for the project. Several segments of the corridor are included as part of the Detailed Study Alternatives. In the Belmont area, the MPO corridor was eliminated from study due to recent facility improvements at the Allan Sisam Station power plant that did not exist at the time the MPO made their recommendation. Duke Energy installed air pollution control equipment, costing approximately \$100 million dollars, just north of the power plant, directly in the path of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's proposed corridor.

Did you consider widening I-85 as an option?

Several options for widening or adding capacity to I-85 were considered as part of the alternatives development and evaluation process, but were eliminated from further study based on the determination that it would not improve travel times, mobility, access, or connectivity between southern Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County, and would result in the greatest construction delays of all alternative concepts. Additional reasons are described in detail in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS, Section 2.2.6.



How will tolls be collected?



Gaston East-West Connector

What is a Draft EIS?



PART 1500—PURPOSE, POLICY, AND MANDATE

- Sec.
1500.1 Purpose.
1500.2 Policy.
1500.3 Mandate.
1500.4 Reducing paperwork.
1500.5 Reducing delay.
1500.6 Agency authority.

AUTHORITY: NEPA, the Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4371 *et seq.*), sec. 309 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7609) and E.O. 11514, Mar. 5, 1970, as amended by E.O. 11891, May 24, 1977).

SOURCE: 43 FR 55990, Nov. 28, 1978, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1500.1 Purpose.

(a) The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our basic national charter for protection of the environment. It establishes policy, sets goals (section 101), and provides means (section 102) for carrying out the policy

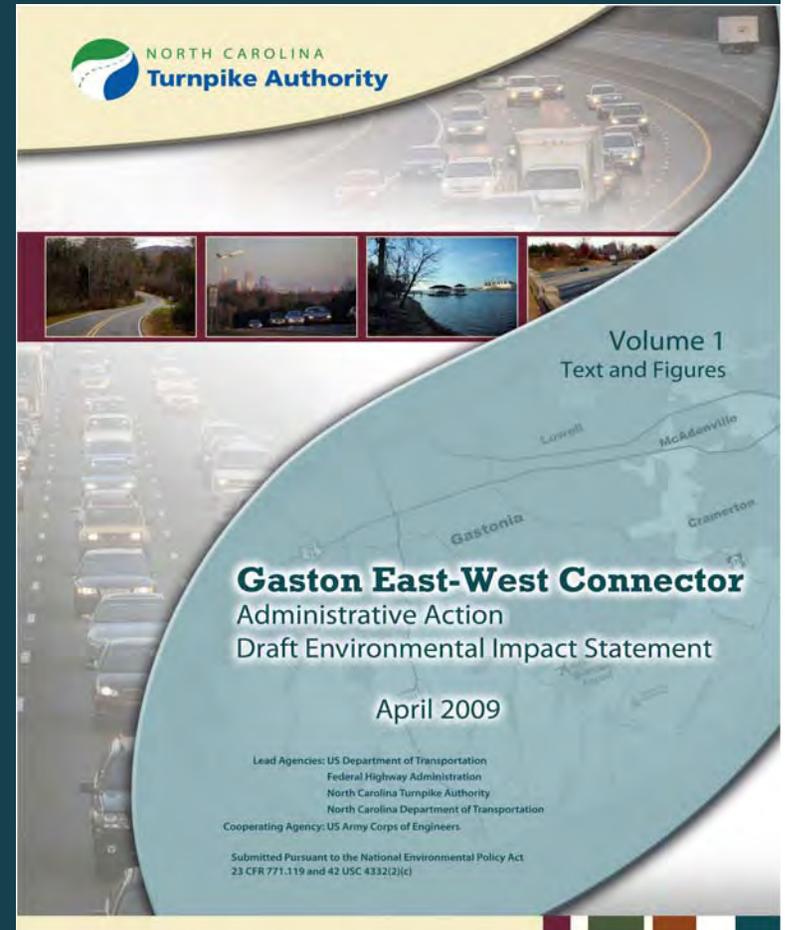
environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. These regulations provide the direction to achieve this purpose.

§ 1500.2 Policy.

Federal agencies shall to the fullest extent possible:

(a) Interpret and administer the policies, regulations, and public laws of the United States in accordance with the policies set forth in the Act and in these regulations.

(b) Implement procedures to make the NEPA process more useful to decisionmakers and the public; to reduce paperwork and the accumulation of extraneous background data; and to emphasize real environmental issues and alternatives. Environmental impact statements shall be concise, clear, and to the point, and shall be supported by evidence that agencies have made the necessary environmental analyses.



Gaston East-West Connector
Administrative Action
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

April 2009

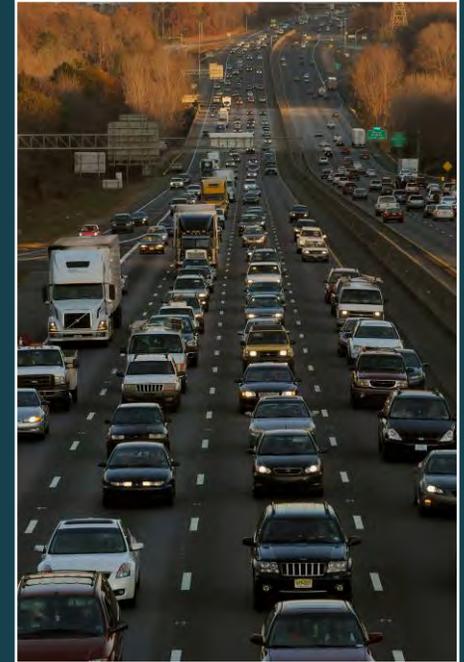
Lead Agencies: US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
North Carolina Turnpike Authority
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Cooperating Agency: US Army Corps of Engineers.

Submitted Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act
23 CFR 771.119 and 42 USC 4332(i)(c)

What is Draft EIS?

Assessment of the Questions:

- Is a project really needed?
- Where should the project corridor go?
- What are reasonable alternatives?
- What are the concerns & can they be addressed?



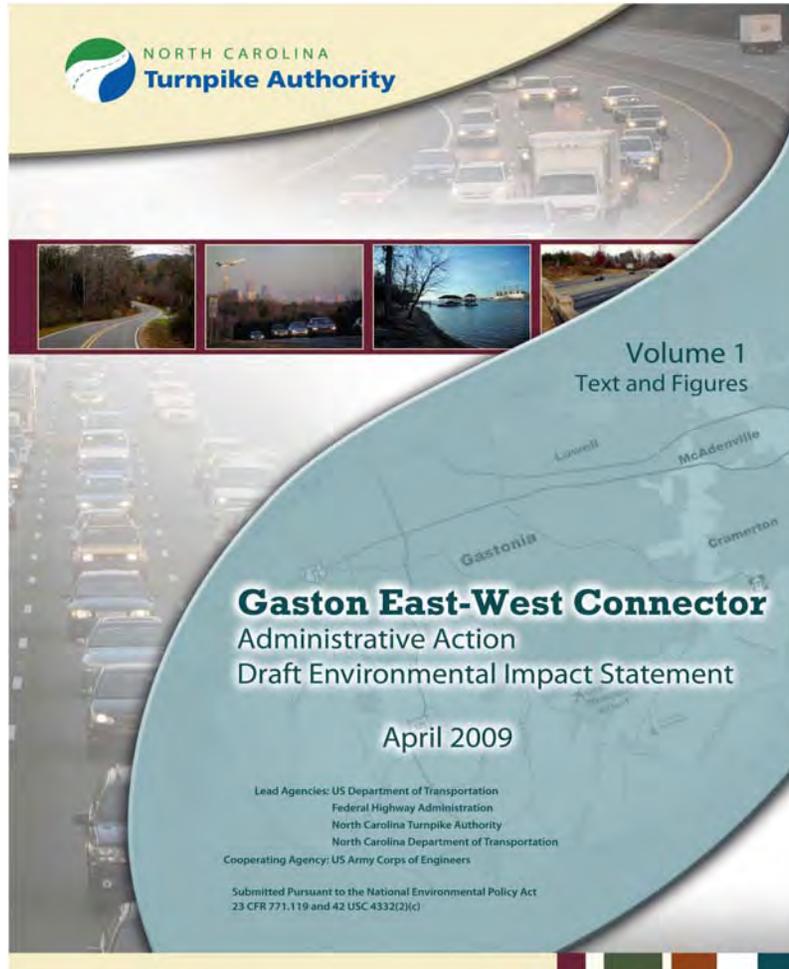
Who is involved in the project?



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**



NORTH CAROLINA
Turnpike Authority



**US Army Corps
of Engineers.**



NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
**CULTURAL
RESOURCES**
WWW.NCCULTURE.COM

Who Else Is Involved?

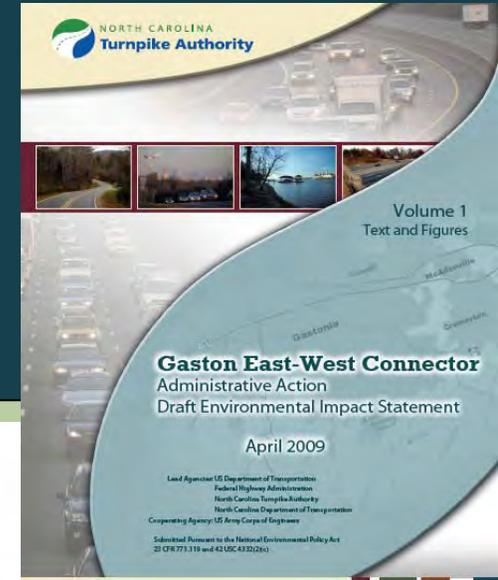
Local Stakeholders

- Residents
- Property owners
- Traveling public
- Local governments
 - MPO(s)
 - RPO(s)
 - Towns, cities
 - Counties
- Elected officials



Gaston East-West Connector Draft EIS

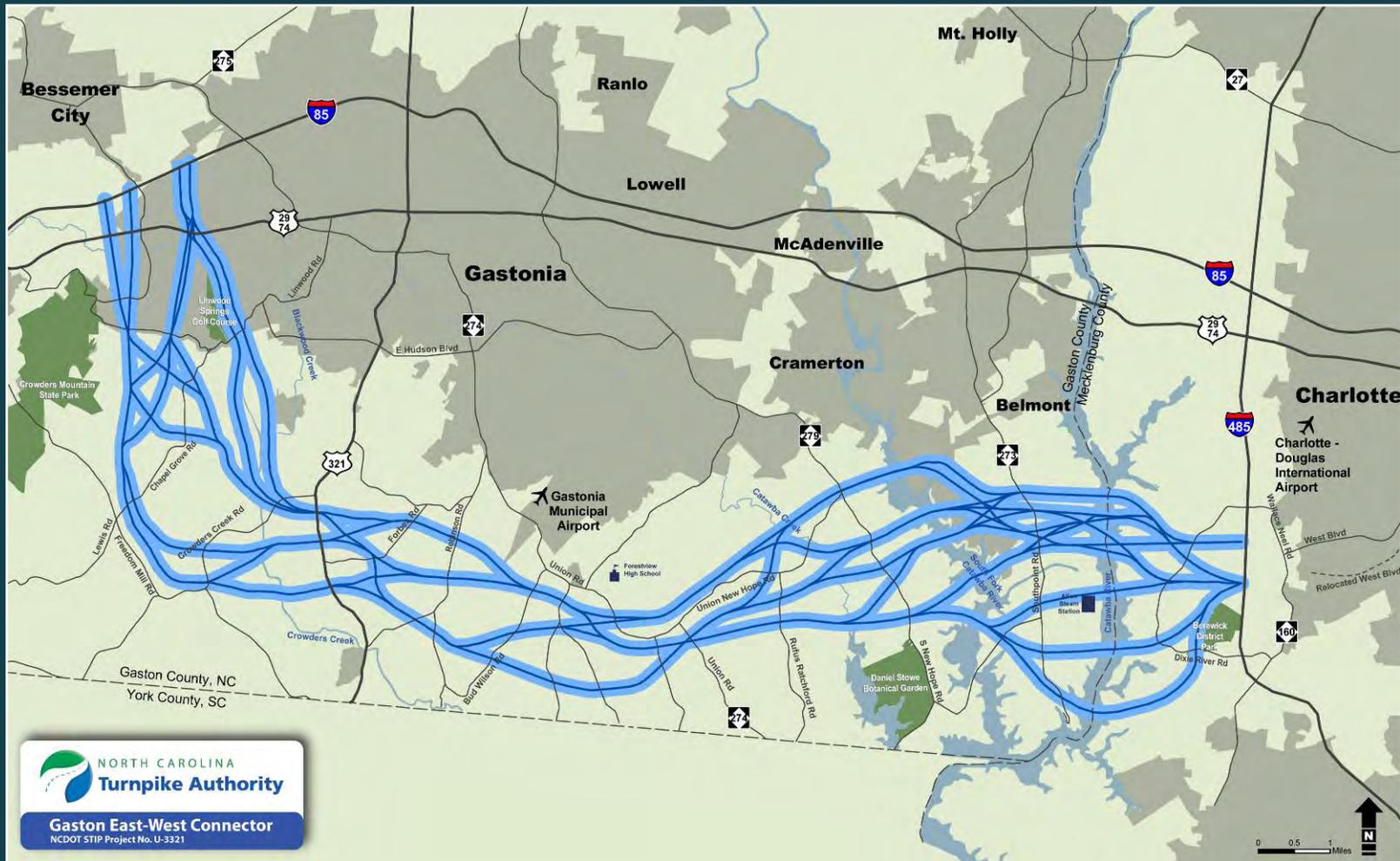
- Approved April 24, 2009
- Lead Agencies:
 - NCTA
 - NCDOT
 - FHWA



Alternative Concepts Considered in the Draft EIS

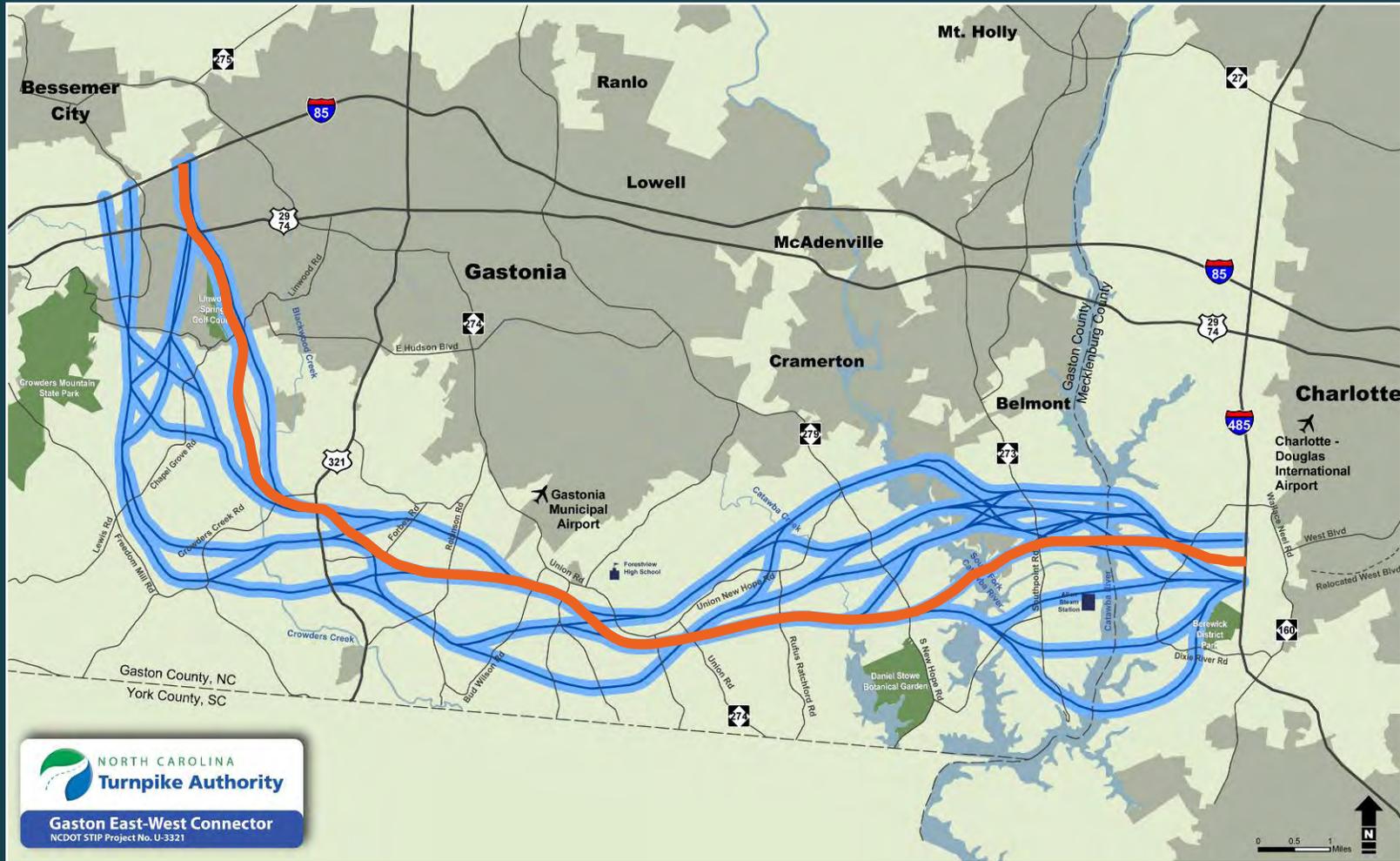
- **New Location Alternatives**
- **Widen Existing Roadways**
- **Mass Transit & Multimodal Alternatives**
- **Minor Transportation System Improvements**
- **Travel Demand Management Alternatives**

90 Preliminary Alternatives



Gaston East-West Connector

GUAMPO Corridor



Gaston East-West Connector

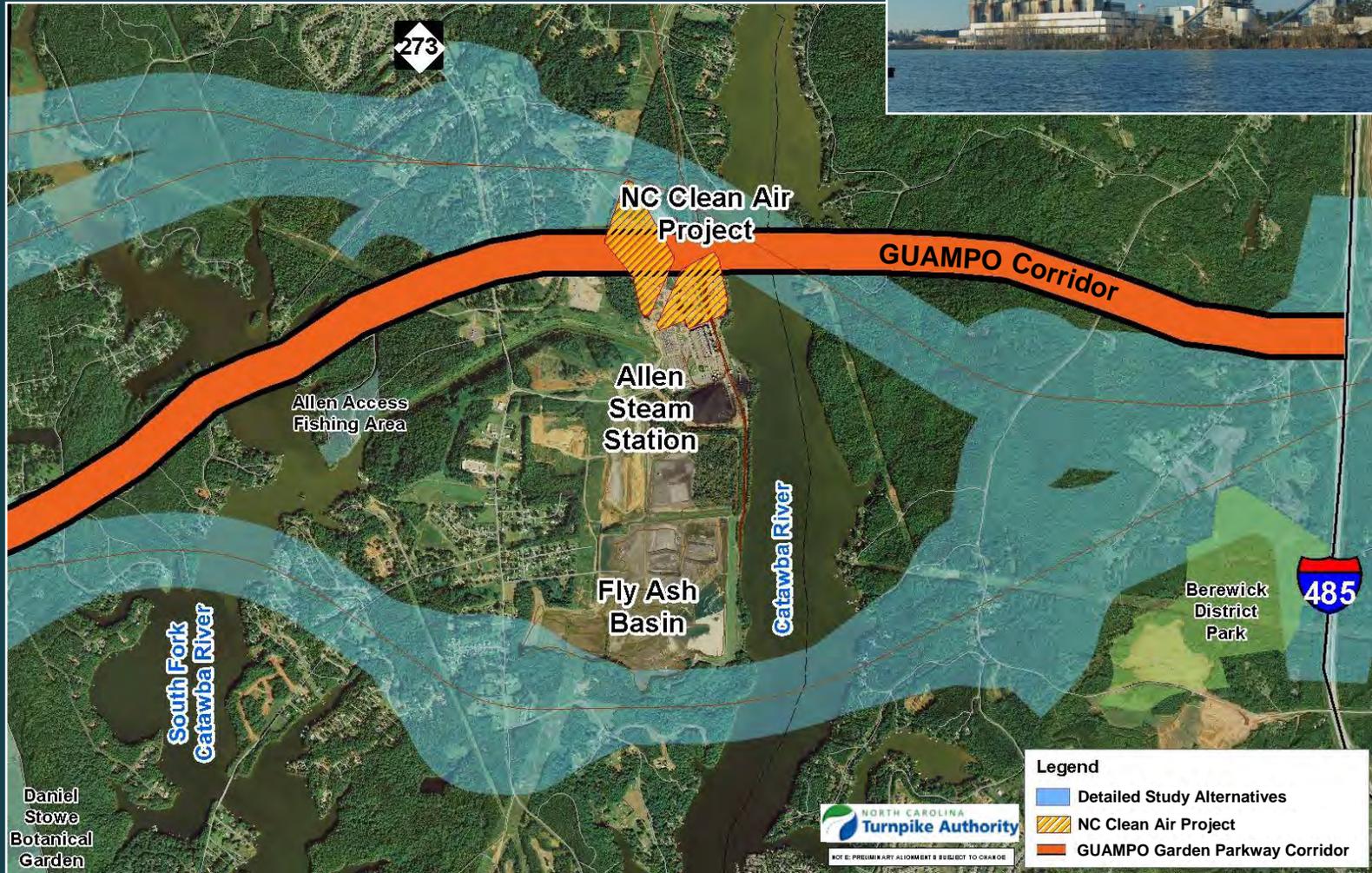
12 Detailed Study Alternatives



 **GUAMPO Corridor**

Gaston East-West Connector

GUAMPO Corridor



DSAs Evaluated By Project Impacts

- Human Environment
- Physical Environment
- Cultural Environment
- Natural Environment



Technical Evaluation of...



- Wetlands and Streams
- Water Quality
- Endangered Species
- Floodplains and Floodways

- Historic and Archaeological Resources
- Noise
- Community Resources
- Relocations
- Air Quality
- Hazardous Materials
- Farmlands



The Alternative Selection Process

- Recommendation made in Draft EIS based on technical evaluation of all factors
- Public Hearing/Comment process provides affirmation -- or -- sufficient justification for changing the recommendation
- Alternative Selection:
 - Not a “vote of the people”
 - Not a political decision
 - Based on sound, defensible, repeatable technical evidence with consideration of all public comments
 - Process dictated by federal law (NEPA)

Summary of Project Impacts

Summary of Project Impacts (an excerpt from the Draft EIS Table S-2: Summary of Environmental Impacts)												
Issue	Detailed Study Alternative											
	4	5	9 Recommended	22	23	27	58	64	68	76	77	81
Length (miles)	21.4	21.5	21.9	21.9	22.0	22.4	23.1	23.3	23.7	21.8	21.9	22.2
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL RESOURCES												
Residential Relocations	377	358	348	373	354	344	359	336	326	384	365	355
Business Relocations	38	33	37	40	35	39	30	26	30	29	24	28
Public Parks Impacted (Berewick District Park)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Private Recreational Facilities ¹ Impacted	2 ^{b,d}	3 ^{b,c,e}	3 ^{b,c,e}	1 ^d	2 ^{b,c}	2 ^{c,d}	2 ^{b,d}	3 ^{b,c,e}	3 ^{b,c,d}	2 ^{c,d}	3 ^{b,c,e}	3 ^{c,d}
Schools ² Impacted	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	2	1	1
Churches with Impacts to Main Buildings	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	0
Cemeteries Requiring Relocation	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Potential to Contain Significant Archaeological Resources	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	Low	Low	High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Potential for Indirect Effects on Farmland	Least	Least	Least	Least	Least	Least	Moderate	Most	Most	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT FEATURES												
Total # of Noise Impacted Receptors	302	271	245	298	267	241	272	231	204	309	278	276
Total # of Noise Barriers	13	11	12	11	9	10	8	6	7	10	8	9
Air Quality Impacts	A qualitative assessment for mobile source air toxics (MSATs) was completed, but current tools and science are not adequate to quantify the health impacts from MSATs.											
Power Transmission Line Crossings ³	14	13	14	14	13	14	18	17	17	17	15	17
Hazardous Materials Sites (all impacts are low to medium severity)	24	23	24	22	21	22	14	12	13	14	13	14
LAND COVER TYPES												
Disturbed/Clearcut (acres) ⁴	552	561	567	544	553	560	513	535	542	514	523	529
Agricultural (acres) ⁴	121	142	177	121	142	177	153	220	256	128	148	184
Upland Forested (acres) ⁴	913	902	882	982	972	951	1,042	1,008	987	965	955	935
Indirect effects on wildlife through habitat fragmentation	Weak to Moderate	Strong	Weak to Moderate	Weak to Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak to Moderate	Strong	Strong
WATER RESOURCES												
Pond Impacts (acres) ⁵	6.3	5.1	4.1	5.1	3.9	2.9	5.5	3.1	2.1	5.5	6.1	3.3
Wetland Impacts (acres) ³	7.4	6.9	7.5	8.8	8.2	8.9	12.1	12.5	13.2	9.7	9.1	9.8
Total Stream Crossings	106	99	91	111	105	97	120	112	103	111	105	97
Total Stream Impacts (linear ft) ⁵	57,344	52,234	48,995	59,053	54,015	50,772	60,244	50,452	47,209	55,469	49,711	47,188
Total Impacts to Catawba River/Lake Wylie Buffers (sq ft) ⁶	4,145	22,590	20,615	4,145	22,590	20,615	4,145	22,590	20,615	4,145	22,590	20,615
Floodplain Crossings	12	13	13	12	13	13	11	12	12	10	11	11
Indirect effects on water resources	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
ENDANGERED SPECIES (DSAs marked with a * have a biological conclusion of "May Affect/Not Likely to Adversely Affect")												
Schweinitz's Sunflower	*	"No Effect"	"No Effect"	*	"No Effect"	"No Effect"	*	"No Effect"	"No Effect"	*	"No Effect"	"No Effect"

1. a) Karyae YMCA Family Outdoor Center – impact to structures, entrance, parking
b) Linwood Springs Golf Course – access change only
c) Carolina Speedway – right-of-way encroachment and impact to parking
d) Duke Energy Corporation recreational fields – right-of-way encroachment
e) Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden – minor right-of-way encroachment

2. DSAs 4, 22, 58 and 76 encroach on Forestview High School's property edge and some parking areas.
DSAs 58, 64, 68, 76, 77, and 81 encroach on Sadler Elementary School property with no impacts to school use or access.

3. There may be one to three individual lines in a power transmission easement. This table reports the numbers of individual transmission line crossings.

4. Acreages calculated within the DSA preliminary design right-of-way limits.

5. Impacts calculated using the preliminary engineering designs construction limits, with an additional 25-foot buffer.

6. Mitigation not required for impacts of less than one-third acre (14,505 square feet).

Recommended Alternative – DSA 9

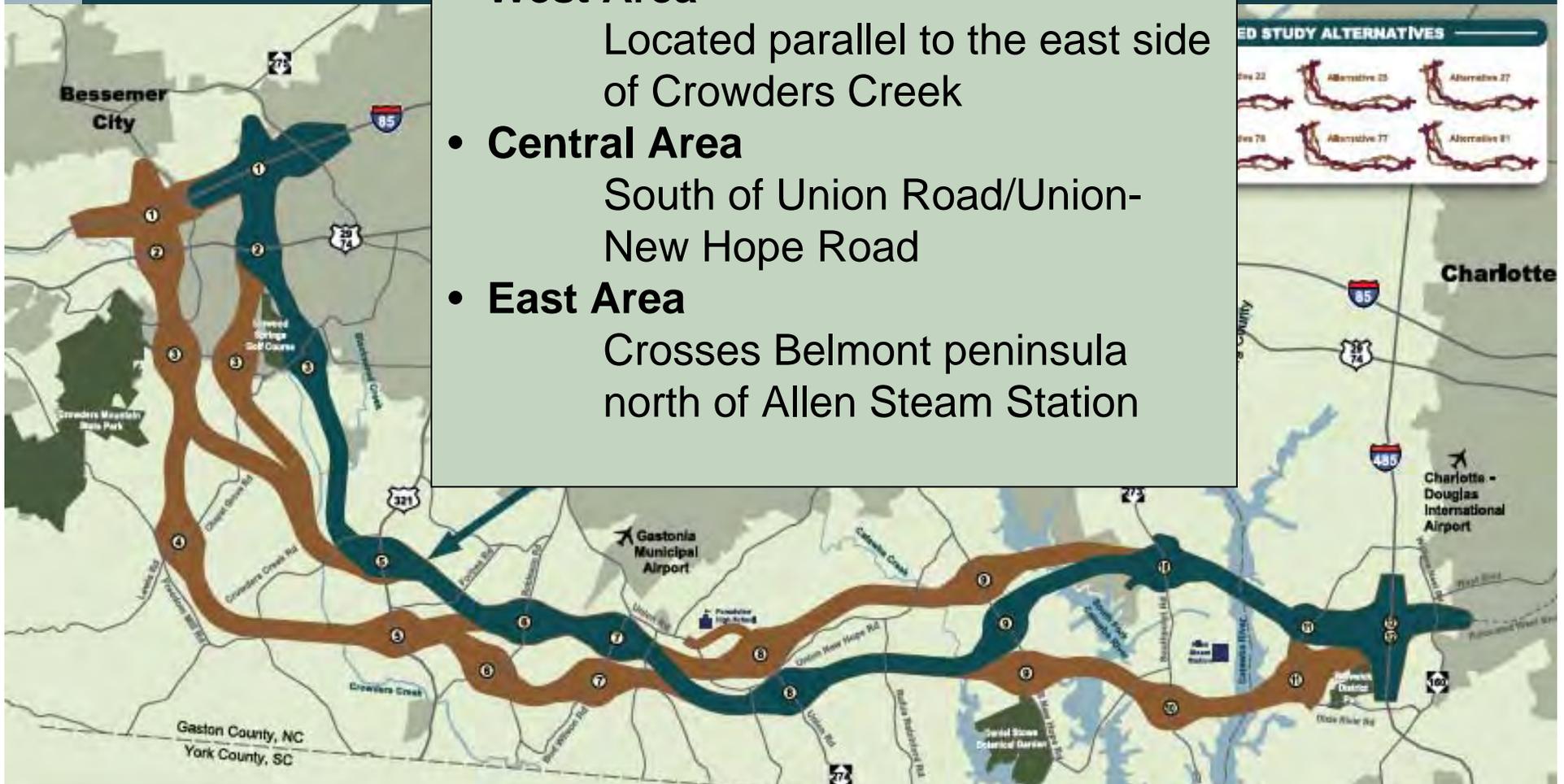


“Recommended Alternative” is only a recommendation.

Gaston East-West Connector

What is Alternative 9?

- 21.9 miles long
- **West Area**
Located parallel to the east side of Crowders Creek
- **Central Area**
South of Union Road/Union-New Hope Road
- **East Area**
Crosses Belmont peninsula north of Allen Steam Station



Why Alternative 9?

Human Environment

- Lower in numbers of residential relocations
- No direct impacts to schools
- No relocation of cemeteries
- Avoids Karyae Park YMCA facility and Pisgah ARP Church
- One of the alternatives farthest from Crowders Mountain State Park
- Does not need right of way from Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden
- Avoids relocation of Ramoth AME Zion Church and cemetery
- One of eight alternatives that require the least amount of right of way from Berewick District Park

Why Alternative 9?

Physical and Cultural Resources

- In middle of range of receptors impacted by noise
- One of the alternatives with the least impacts to Voluntary Agricultural Districts
- One of the alternatives with fewest power transmission line crossings
- Does not require right of way from Wolfe Family Dairy Farm historic property
- Low to moderate potential for important archaeological sites

Why Alternative 9?

Natural Resources

- **Crosses South Fork Catawba River and Catawba River where rivers less navigable**
- **Impacts least amount of upland forest**
- **One of four alternatives with lowest potential for habitat fragmentation effects**
- **Lower in range of impacts to ponds, wetlands, and streams**
- **Fewest number of stream crossings**
- **One of eight alternatives with a biological conclusion of No Effect to Schweinitz's sunflower**

What are the Major “Steps” in the EIS Process?

Draft EIS

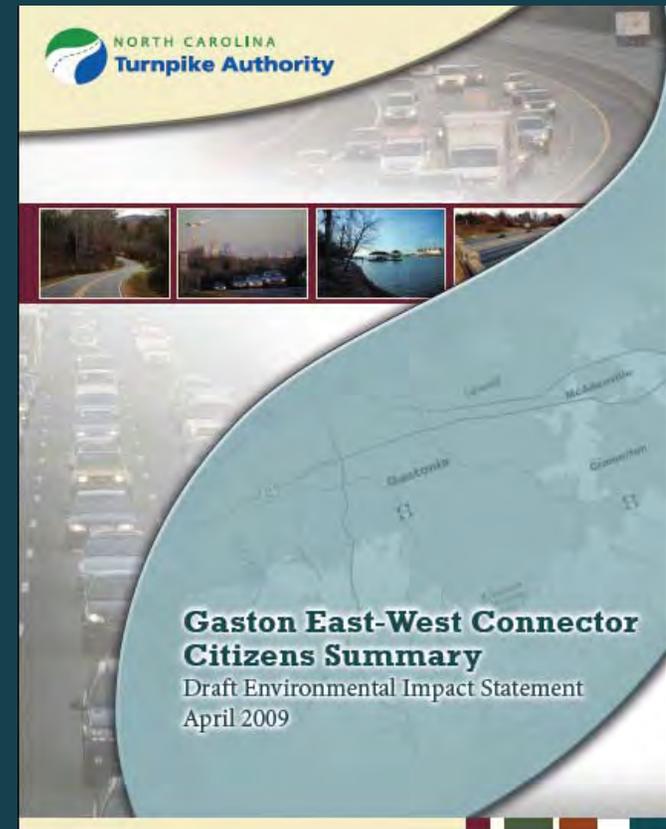
- Recommended Alternative
- Major project milestone

Final EIS

- Preferred Alternative

Record of Decision or “ROD”

- Selected Alternative
- Final route approval



What Does it Mean to Have a Signed Draft EIS?

- Consensus among “Lead Agencies” that NEPA process followed
- Agreement that appropriate studies completed
- Buy-in on the recommendation for the project corridor

Citizens Summary of Draft EIS

- **Brief summary highlighting major topics**
 - **Alternatives**
 - **Impacts**
 - **Costs**
 - **Tolling**
- **Available on our website**

Participate in this Workshop



**Sign up to speak at the
Public Hearings**



**Drop your comments
in the box**



Talk with a team member



E-mail your comments



Mail your comments

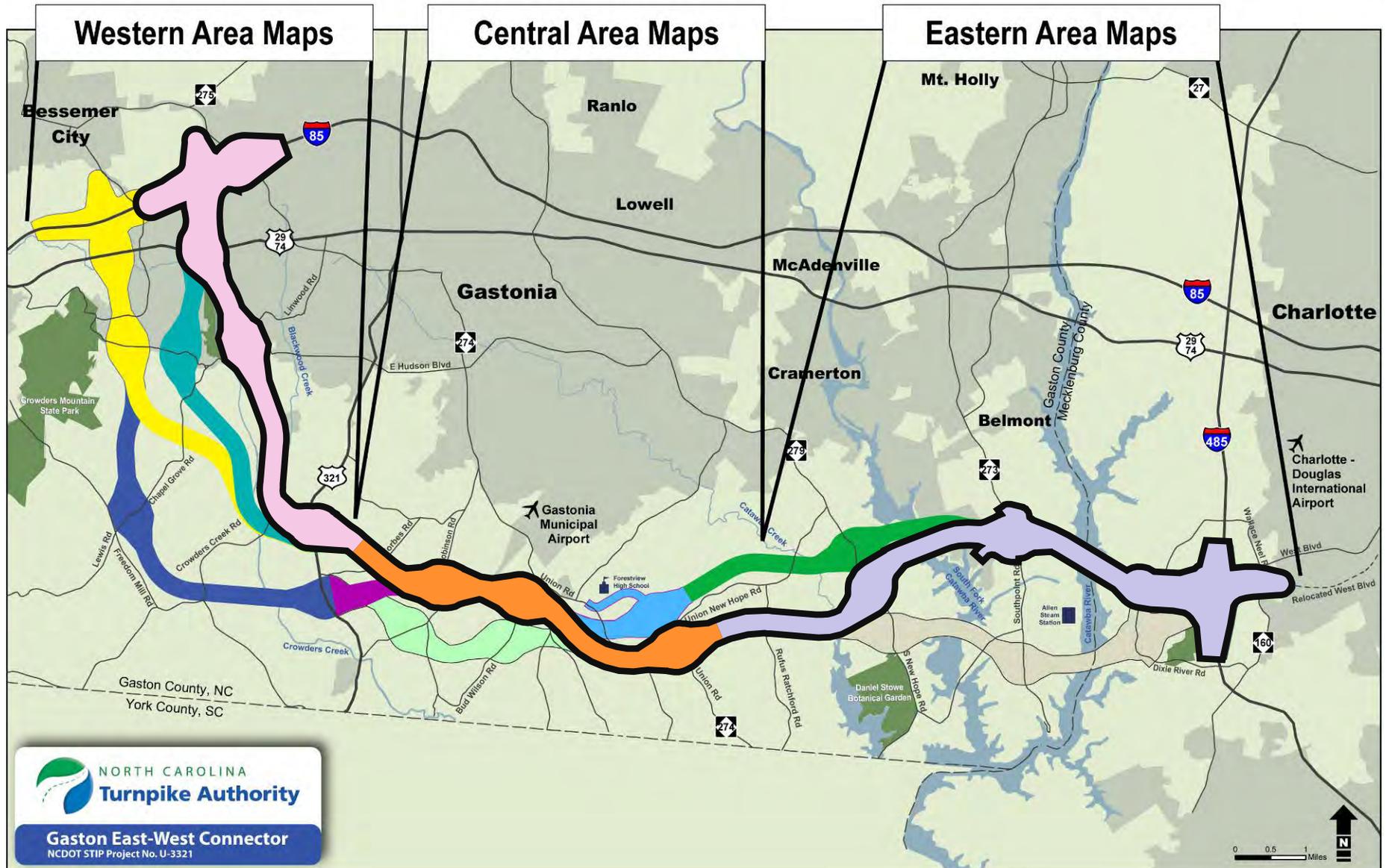
July 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <small>Canada Day</small>	2	3	4 <small>Independence Day</small>
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Comments Due	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

What happens next?

- Review and evaluate comments
- Mid-Late 2009 –
 Identify the Preferred Alternative
- Mid 2010 – Final EIS
- Late 2010 – Record of Decision (ROD)
- Early 2011 – Begin construction
- Late 2014 – Open to traffic

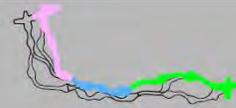
GASTON EAST-WEST CONNECTOR PUBLIC HEARING MAP INDEX



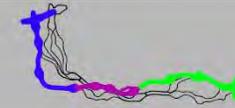
Detailed Study Alternative Legend for Public Hearing Maps

LEGEND

DSA = DETAILED STUDY ALTERNATIVE



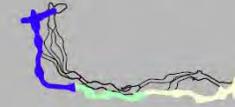
DSA 4



DSA 58



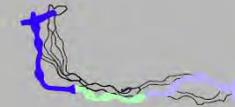
DSA 5



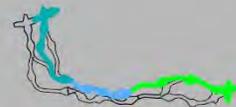
DSA 64



DSA 9



DSA 68



DSA 22



DSA 76



DSA 23



DSA 77



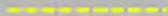
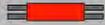
DSA 27



DSA 81

Legend for Public Hearing Maps

LEGEND

	DETAILED STUDY ALTERNATIVES (DSAS) 76, 77 & 81 (SEGMENTS H1A, HX2, J2A, & J2B)
	PROPERTY LINE
	EXISTING ROAD
	PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY
	PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY WITH CONTROL OF ACCESS
	RIVERS, STREAMS, AND CREEKS
	EXISTING BUILDING
	WETLANDS
	HISTORIC PROPERTY
	SUPERFUND SITES
	PROPOSED PAVEMENT
	PROPOSED BRIDGE
	PONDS AND LAKES
	PARKS AND PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES
	CHURCH BOUNDARY
	SCHOOL BOUNDARY

DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: JULY 2008

Public Hearing Maps



Thank you

