

*Garden Parkway
(Gaston East-West Connector)*

*Town of Belmont
November 18, 2008*

STIP Project # U-3321

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Project Financing
3. Open Road Tolling
4. Why is the Project Needed?
5. Project Timeline
6. What is an Environmental Impact Statement?
7. Project Detailed Study Alternatives
8. Question and Answers

North Carolina Turnpike Authority

- Created by the General Assembly in 2002
- Approved five toll projects

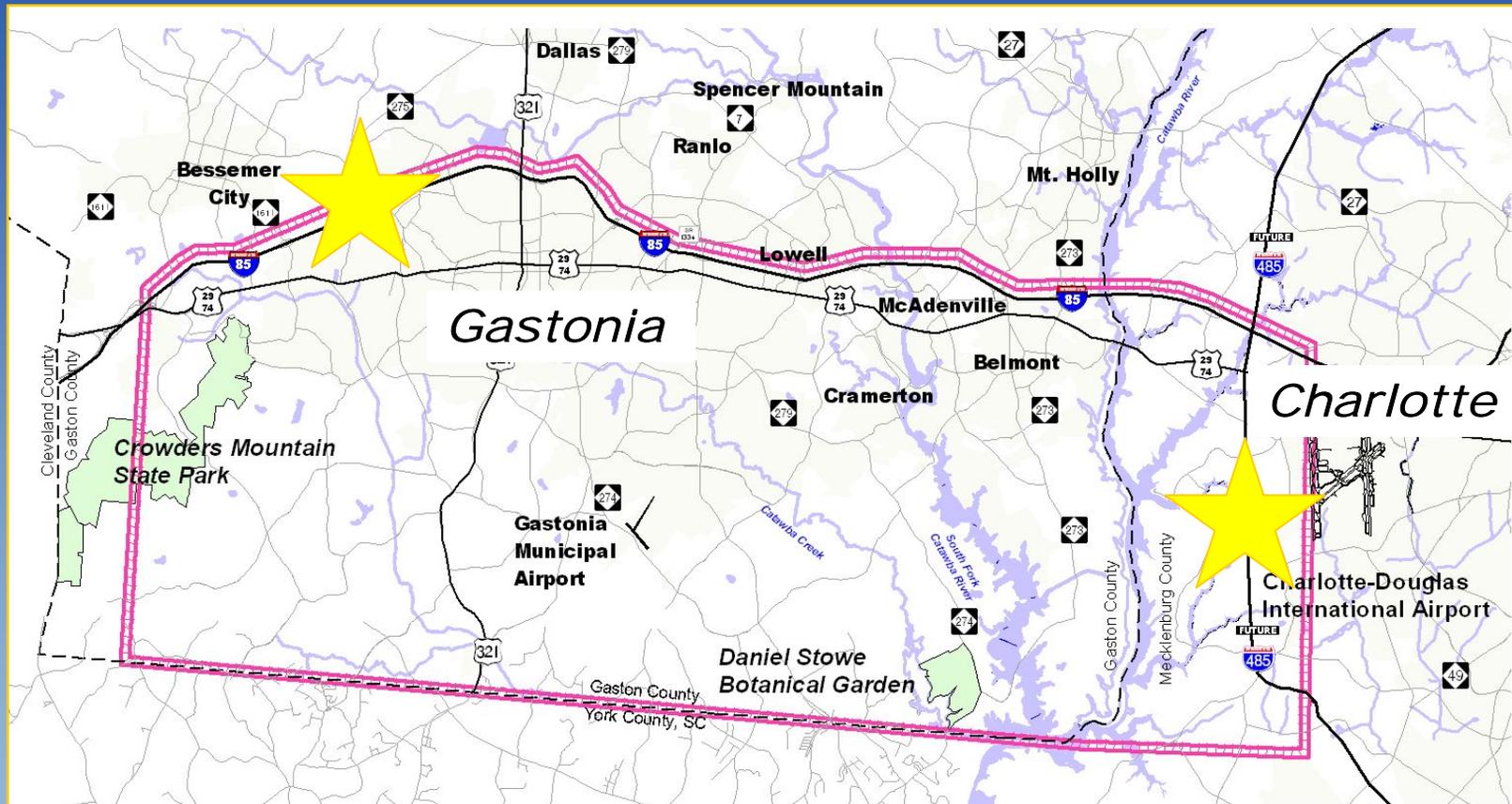
Authorized to:

- ◆ Contract for construction, maintenance and operation
- ◆ Issue bonds
- ◆ Collect tolls and fees
- ◆ Enter into partnership with private entities

Restrictions:

- ◆ No tolls on existing roads
- ◆ Every toll road must have a free alternate route
- ◆ Tolls must be removed once debt is paid

Project Description



The Gaston East-West Connector is proposed to be a new toll road connecting I-85 west of Gastonia to I-485 near the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.

How does a Transportation Project Originate?

It's a Multi-Year Process:

- Local planners identify area needs
- Local Officials propose projects for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (25-year plan)
- NCDOT schedules projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program

Study History

- ◆ **Early 1990s – Need for a new road identified by local officials and named the Garden Parkway**
- ◆ **2001 – NC Dept. of Transportation began studies for the Gaston East-West Connector**
- ◆ **2005 – Gaston East-West Connector adopted by the NC Turnpike Authority as a potential toll road**

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Project Financing Estimates

<i>Total Cost</i>	<i>\$1,255 m</i>
Cost (I-485 to US321)	\$765.4 m
Senior Bonds	\$416.9 m
TIFIA	\$267.2 m
Annual Gap	\$35 m

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Open Road Tolling



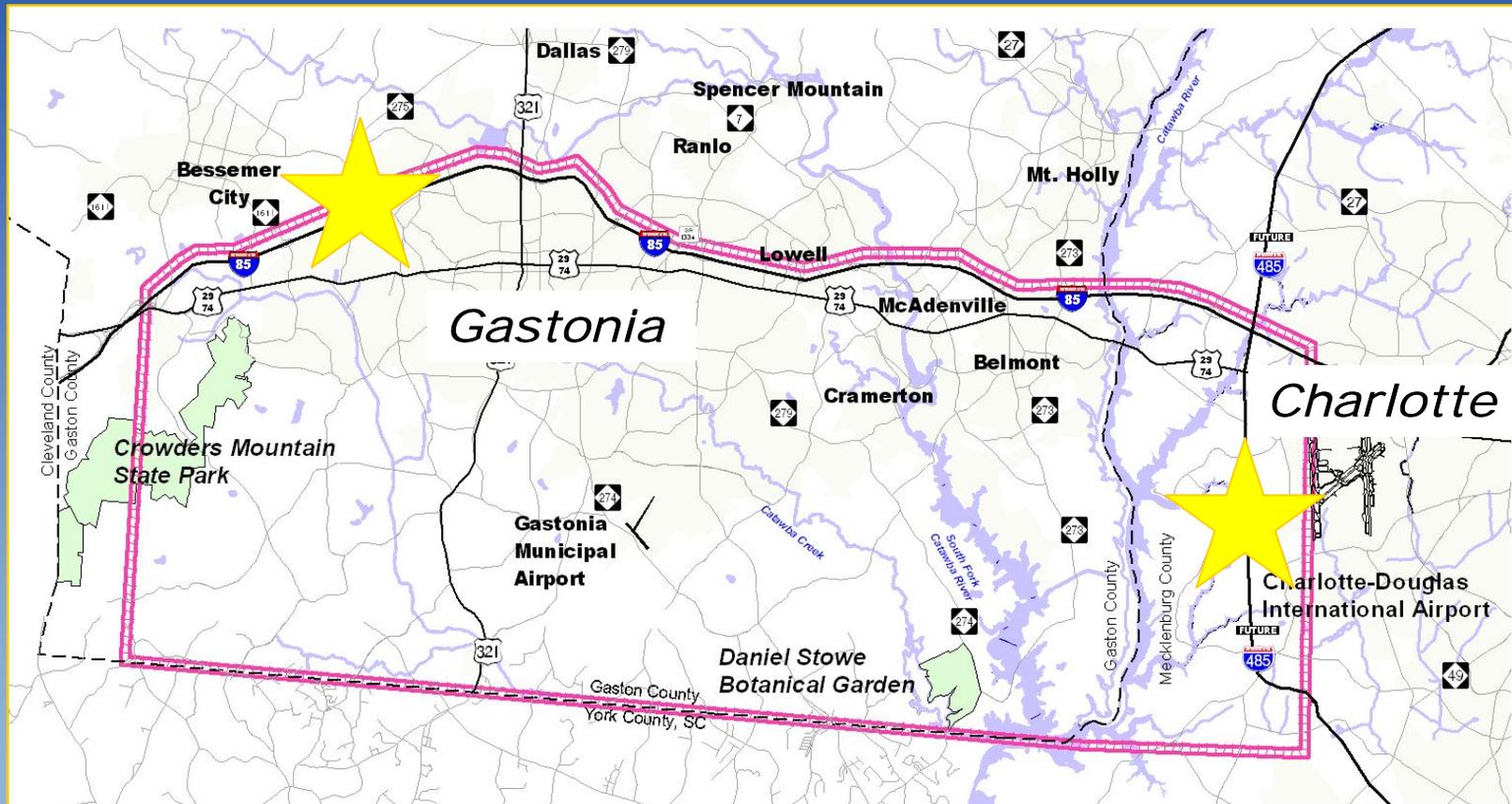
- ◆ No stopping to pay tolls
- ◆ Safer for drivers
- ◆ Charged using electronic transponders or by video license plate imaging
- ◆ Customer friendly, cost efficient, & fewer environmental impacts

Alliance for Toll Interoperability

- ◆ Alliance for Toll Interoperability (ATI)
 - ◆ Incorporated by NCTA in June to establish interoperability standards
 - ◆ Easier for NC motorists to use out-of-state toll facilities
 - ◆ Allows NCTA to hold out-of-state drivers accountable for unpaid tolls
 - ◆ Nearly 30 agencies involved

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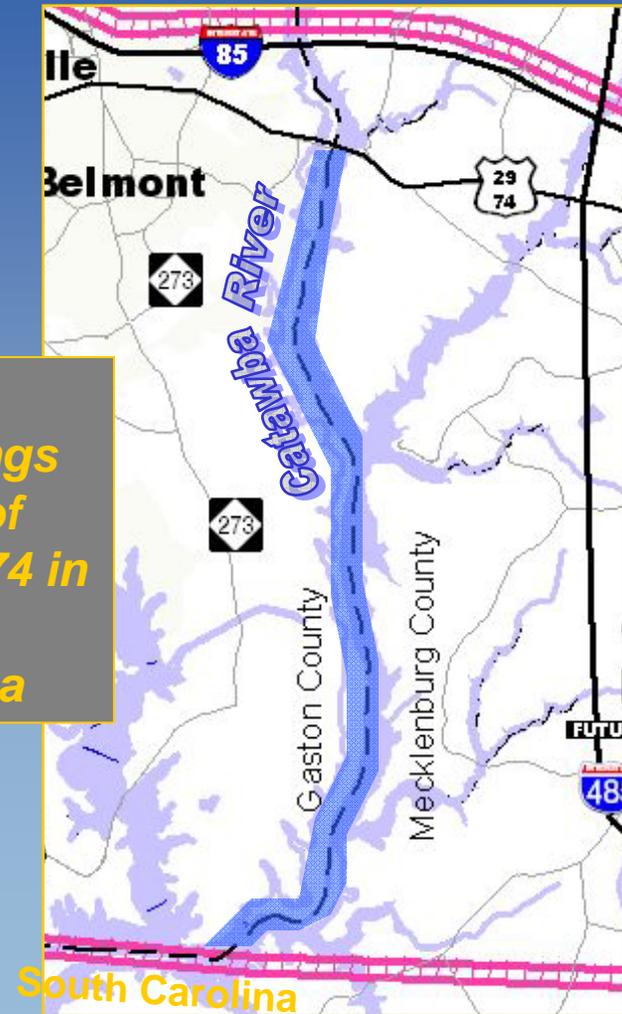
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Lack of Connections Between Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties



***Few continuous
east-west roadways
in southern Gaston
County***

***No
crossings
south of
US 29/74 in
North
Carolina***



*Congestion and
Traffic Flow on
I-85 and US
29/74 Expected
to Get Worse
Through 2030*



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Project Timeline

Financial Feasibility Study for Tolls	October 2006
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	January 2009
Public Hearing	February/March 2009
Select Preferred Alternative	June/July 2009
Final Environmental Impact Statement	May 2010
Record of Decision	October 2010
Award Construction Contract*	December 2010
Project Open to Traffic*	December 2015

* Schedule subject to availability of funding

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*National
Environmental
Policy Act
(NEPA)*



**NEPA applies to projects involving
federal actions**

Environmental Impact Studies

- ◆ Range of Reasonable Alternatives
- ◆ Adverse and Beneficial Impacts
- ◆ Citizen and Agency Participation
- ◆ Required by law and prepared by NC Turnpike Authority, NC Dept of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to help make sound project decisions

Environmental Study Process Steps

- ◆ Verify Purpose and Need
- ◆ Determine Detailed Study Alternatives
- ◆ Perform Detailed Studies
- ◆ Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- ◆ Conduct a Public Hearing
- ◆ NCTA, NCDOT, and FHWA Select an Alternative
- ◆ Prepare and Distribute the Final Environmental Impact Statement
- ◆ Prepare a Record of Decision

Citizen and Agency Coordination Occurs Throughout Process

Detailed Studies - Examples



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



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

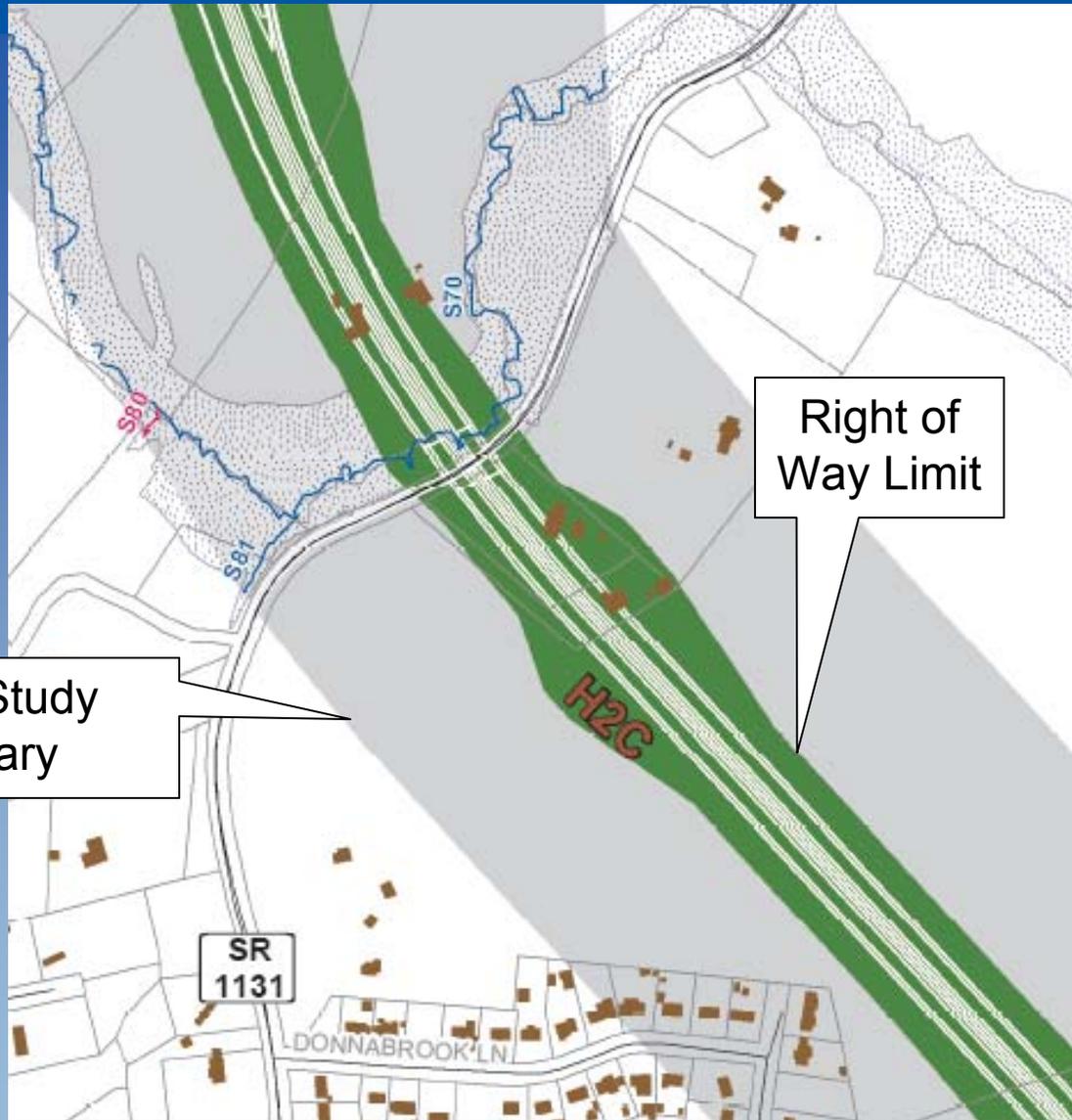


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The 12 Detailed Study Alternatives are shown as 1,400-foot wide corridors

*Example
Highway Right
of Way Inside
1,400-foot Wide
Study Corridor*



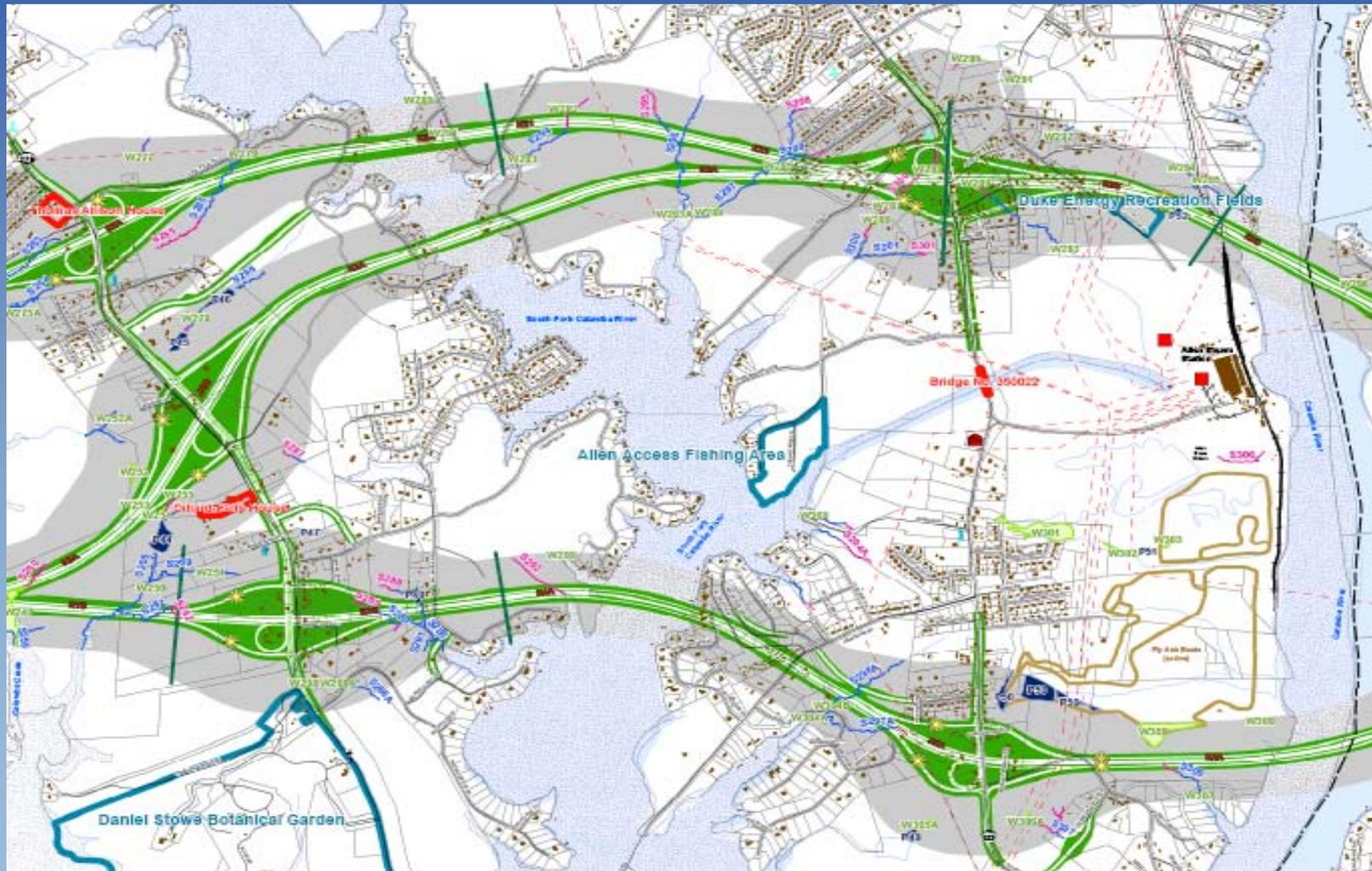
1,400-foot Wide Study
Corridor Boundary

Right of
Way Limit

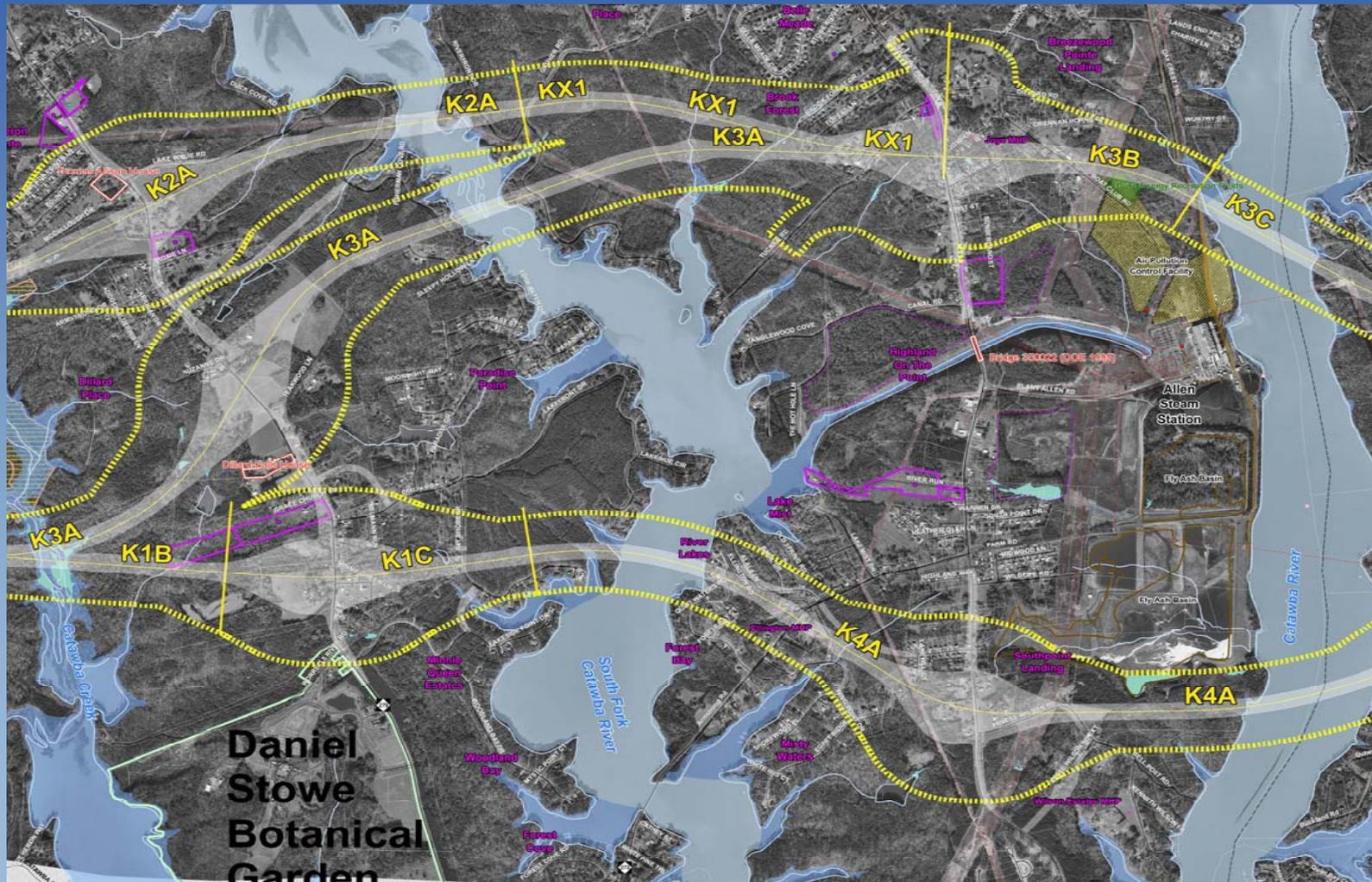
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Belmont Peninsula Area



Belmont Peninsula Area



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Questions?



Contact Information

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