



I-26 Widening Project
 NC Department of Transportation
 ATTN: Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP
 1598 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

<<PROPERTY OWNER>>
 <<CARE OF>>
 OR CURRENT RESIDENT
 <<ADDRESS 1>>
 <<CITY>>, <<STATE>> <<ZIP>>

BE INVOLVED, STAY INFORMED

The purpose of this study's community outreach program is to solicit input from as many residents, business owners, property owners, local agencies, community groups and other stakeholders within the project study area as possible. The goal of this outreach is to involve the public often and share information as it is available. A variety of communication methods are being used to solicit meaningful involvement from the community.

Public participation and feedback are integral to the project development process. By sharing your ideas and concerns, you can help NCDOT identify appropriate transportation solutions for your community. We encourage you to attend the open house and hearing described in this newsletter.

Questions about the public meeting, public hearing, or the project in general may be submitted in any of the following ways:

Website: www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening
 E-mail: alaad@ncdot.gov
 Telephone: 919.707.6072
 Mail: Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP
 1598 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

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

Если вы говорите только по-русски или вам трудно читать и воспринимать информацию на английском, мы можем предоставить вам услуги переводчика. Пожалуйста позвоните по тел. 1-800-481-6494 предворительно до собрания чтобы запросить помощь.



The I-26 Widening Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation have been published by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The document and maps are available online at:

www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening

Paper copies of the Draft EIS and Public Hearing Maps are available for viewing at the locations listed inside the newsletter.

NCDOT and FHWA would like your input and is holding a Pre-Hearing Open House and Public Hearing. The Pre-Hearing Open House is drop-in format, so that the public may review the project with NCDOT representatives informally, any time during the posted meeting hours. The Public Hearing will follow the Pre-Hearing Open House and is a formal process allowing the public to make formal comments. **All comments written or verbal will become part of the project record and are requested by November 14, 2016.**

ABOUT THE PROJECT

What is the project?

The project proposes improvements to a 22.2-mile segment of I-26 from U.S. 25 (Exit 54) near Hendersonville to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville.

Why is this project needed?

The project is needed to:

- improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies, and
- improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

Which alternatives are being studied?

- 6-Lane Widening Alternative—widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction
- 8-Lane Widening Alternative—widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction
- Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative—widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction between U.S. 25 (Greenville Hwy) (Exit 54) and the U.S. 25 (Asheville Hwy) (Exit 44) interchange and widen to four lanes in each direction from U.S. 25 (Asheville Hwy) (Exit 44) interchange to the I-40/I-240 interchange. *This alternative is NCDOT's and FHWA Preferred Alternative.*

PRE-HEARING OPEN HOUSE & PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, October 13, 2016

Biltmore Baptist Church
 35 Clayton Rd, Arden

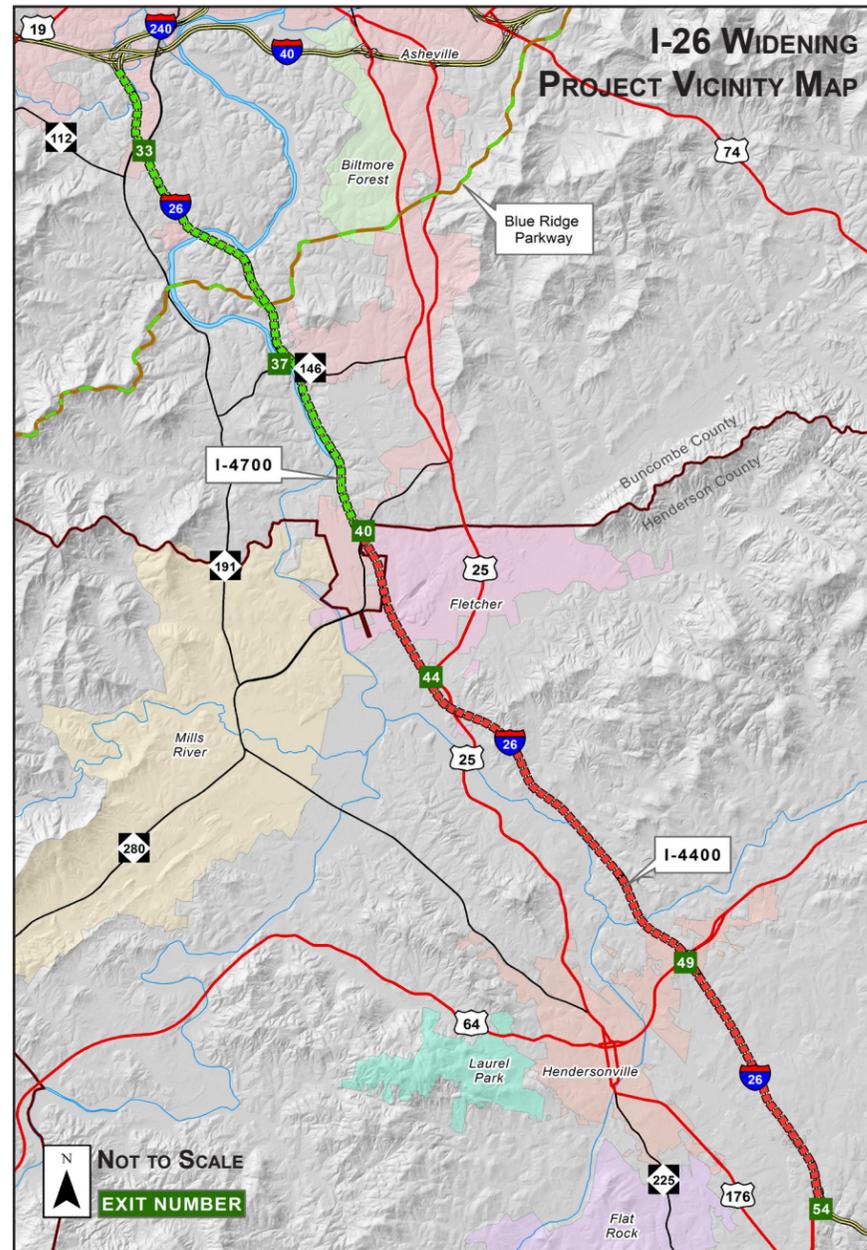
Pre-Hearing Open House: 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: 7:00 p.m.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to participate in these events. To receive special services, please contact the NCDOT by phone at 919-707-6072 or email alaad@ncdot.gov. Please provide adequate notice prior to the date of the meeting so that arrangements can be made.

Wasn't widening I-26 previously studied?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) I-4400 (the 13.6-mile segment from U.S. 25 to N.C. 280) in May 2001. The decision document, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), was completed in January 2002. A lawsuit and resulting judgment in 2003 found that NCDOT should conduct a broader analysis of the cumulative impacts and project limits of the overall expansion of the I-26 corridor. To address the 2003 judgment, the NCDOT added the analysis of the 8.6-mile segment between N.C. 280 and I-40/I-240, STIP Project Number I-4700, into one comprehensive analysis. In addition, per the 2003 court ruling, an Asheville Regional Cumulative Effects Study was completed in June 2014 and its findings were included in the Draft EIS.



PROJECT SCHEDULE*

Publish Draft EIS	August 9, 2016
Public Meeting/Public Hearing	October 13, 2016
Confirm Preferred Alternative	December 2016 / January 2017
Publish Combined Final EIS / Record of Decision (ROD)	Spring 2017
Begin Right of Way Acquisition	Fiscal Year 2018
Begin Construction	Fiscal Year 2020

*Schedule is tentative and subject to change

DRAFT EIS AND DRAFT SECTION 4(f) PUBLIC REVIEW LOCATIONS:

- *NCDOT Division 13 Office - Buncombe County
55 Orange Street, Asheville
- *NCDOT Division 14 - District 1 Office - Henderson County
4142 Haywood Road, Mills River
- *French Broad River MPO / Land of Sky Regional Council
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville*
- *National Park Service - Blue Ridge Parkway
199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville
- *South Buncombe Library
260 Overlook Road, Asheville

- Fletcher Planning and Zoning Department
Fletcher Town Hall
300 Old Cane Creek Road, Fletcher
- Buncombe County Planning Department
46 Valley Street, Asheville
- Henderson County Planning Department
King Street Office Building
100 North King Street, Hendersonville
- Asheville Planning & Urban Design Department
Asheville City Hall
70 Court Plaza, 5th Floor, Asheville
- Hendersonville Planning Department
Hendersonville City Hall
145 5th Avenue East, 2nd Floor, Hendersonville

*The Public Hearing Maps are also available at these locations.

PUBLIC NOTICE ON "de minimis" IMPACTS

All of the Widening Alternatives under consideration for this project would, to some extent, affect park and historic resources in the project's study area. Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 gives special protection to public parks and historic resources. Under Section 4(f) these resources cannot, in most cases, be disrupted by transportation projects unless it can be shown that there are no reasonable and prudent alternatives to doing so. However, the FHWA is provided with a method, known as a "de minimis impact determination," in cases where the official with jurisdiction concurs that the project would not adversely affect the property.

With this newsletter, the FHWA and NCDOT are providing public notice of proposed de minimis impact determinations under Section 4(f) for the I-26 Widening project's potential effects on resources in the study area. These resources include: Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr, and the Mountains to Sea Trail. Under the 8-Lane Widening Alternative McMurray House is also a Section 4(f) de minimis resource. As documented in the project's Draft EIS and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, the potential effects on these resources will not adversely affect their historic or recreational characteristics.

Comments on the proposed de minimis determination may be submitted to NCDOT prior to the end of the comment period, November 14, 2016.

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS NOTICE

The US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, will be issuing a local public notice describing the on-going process in choosing the LEDPA (Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative) for the subject project, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The public notice will be available online at: <http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Permit-Program/Public-Notices/>