

Appendix A

Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan

**Section 6002 Coordination Plan for Monroe Connector/Bypass Project
TIP Projects R-3329 & R-2559**

COORDINATION PLAN

1. Purpose of Plan.

- 1.1. Section 6002 Compliance. This plan is intended to satisfy the requirement for a Coordination Plan under Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU (23 U.S.C § 139) for the Monroe Connector/Bypass project (TIP No. R-3329 & R-2559).
- 1.2. Integration of NEPA and Section 404 Requirements. The process established in this plan is intended to ensure that the requirements of NEPA and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act can be satisfied as part of a single process. Specifically, this plan is intended ensure that, to the maximum extent practicable,
- there is regular communication and collaborative discussion among all agencies that have information, experience, and/or expertise relevant to issues considered in Section 404 permitting;
 - NCDENR can issue Section 401, Riparian Buffer Authorizations, Isolated Wetland Permits, and State Stormwater Permits based on information developed as part of the NEPA process; and
 - the USACE can issue a Section 404 permit for the project promptly following the end of the NEPA process, without the need for supplemental NEPA studies,
 - so that any other required permits or approvals can be obtained without unexpected issues or delays.
- 1.3. Agency Communication. This plan establishes a framework for regular communication among all of the agencies involved in the environmental review process. This communication will include regular agency coordination meetings. These meetings will provide a forum for open discussion and dialogue among agencies. Meetings with one or more individual agencies also may occur as part of this process. When possible, all Participating Agencies will be informed of a smaller meeting to ensure all appropriate parties are included and will be updated after the meeting.

2. Project Initiation

- 2.1. Project Initiation Notice. The environmental review process for a project is initiated when the North Carolina Turnpike Authority submits a project initiation notice to the FHWA. This notice was provided in the form of a letter from NCTA to FHWA on January 5, 2007. A draft Notice of Intent was included with this notice.

2.2. Notice of Intent. A Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project was published in the Federal Register on January 19, 2007. The project initiation notice and the Notice of Intent are attached as Exhibit 1.

3. Project Schedule

3.1. Schedule. The NCTA will prepare a project schedule showing projected dates for completing all environmental studies and permitting. The schedule will conform to SAFETEA-LU time frames for comment periods and the FHWA “Vital Few Goal” of achieving a median time frame of three years for completing an EIS. A draft schedule for the Monroe Connector/Bypass project is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Draft Project Schedule

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Notice of Intent | Winter 2007 |
| Identify Detailed Study Alternatives | July 2007 |
| DEIS | July 2008 |
| Identify Preferred Alternative | November 2008 |
| FEIS | May 2009 |
| ROD | July 2009 |
| Permit Application(s) | August 2009 |
| Let Contract/Begin Construction | December 2009 |

3.2. Agency Consultation. The schedule will be shared with the agencies and discussed at a TEAC meeting. Agency comments will be considered and the schedule may be revised as appropriate.

3.3. Updating Schedules. The project schedule may be revised from time to time by the lead agencies during the environmental review process. Schedule changes will be communicated to all participating agencies and the public. Under the statute, the schedule may be extended by the lead agencies for good cause, and may be shortened only with the consent of Cooperating Agencies.

4. Agency Roles

4.1. Lead Federal Agency. FHWA will be the lead Federal agency. As lead Federal agency in the Section 6002 process, FHWA is responsible for making certain decisions as specified in Section 6002. In addition, FHWA has an overall responsibility for facilitating the expeditious completion of the environmental review process.

4.2. Joint Lead Agencies. NCTA will be a joint lead agency, and thus will share with FHWA the responsibilities of the “lead agency” under the process defined in Section 6002.

NCDOT also will have the status of a joint lead agency; however, NCDOT will primarily have a review/support role in the process, consistent with the Preconstruction Guidelines adopted by NCDOT and NCTA in July 2006.

4.3. Participating Agencies. NCTA will issue letters inviting Federal and non-Federal agencies to serve as Participating Agencies for each project developed under this plan. Participating Agencies include any Federal, State, or local agencies that may have an interest in the project.

4.3.1. Invitation List. Invitations will be sent to Federal and non-Federal agencies that, in the judgment of FHWA and NCTA, may have an interest in the project. A list of Participating Agencies is attached as Exhibit 1 to this plan. Additional Participating Agencies may be added later in the process based on new information, changes in the project, or changed circumstances. Table 2 lists agencies identified as having an interest in the Monroe Connector/Bypass project.

Table 2: Agency Roles

| | Cooperating Agency | Participating Agency |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| US Army Corps of Engineers | ✓ | ✓ |
| US Environmental Protection Agency | | ✓ |
| US Fish and Wildlife Service | | ✓ |
| NC Department of Cultural Resources – Historic Preservation Office | | ✓ |
| NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources | | ✓ |
| Division of Water Quality | | ✓ |
| Wildlife Resources Commission | | ✓ |
| Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization | | ✓ |

4.3.2. Deadline. Invitation letters will specify a 30-day deadline for agencies to respond to the invitation.

4.3.3. Federal Invitees. A Federal agency that is invited to be a Participating Agency will be presumed to have accepted the invitation, unless the agency informs NCTA in writing, by the deadline, that it: “(A) has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project; (B) has no expertise or information relevant to the project; and (C) does not intend to submit comments on the project.”

4.3.4. Non-Federal Invitees. Non-Federal agencies are not required to accept designation; they become Participating Agencies only if they affirmatively accept the invitation. If a non-Federal agency declines or does not respond to the invitation, the agency will not be considered a Participating Agency.

- 4.3.5. No Implied Support. Designation as a Participating Agency shall not imply that the Participating Agency supports a proposed project; or has any jurisdiction over, or special expertise with respect to evaluation of, the project.
- 4.3.6. No Effect on Other Laws. Nothing in Section 6002, or in this Coordination Plan, preempts or interferes with any power, jurisdiction, responsibility, or authority that a Federal, State, or local government agency, metropolitan planning organization, Indian tribe, or project sponsor has with respect to carrying out a project or any other provisions of law applicable to projects, plans, or programs.
- 4.4. Cooperating Agencies. A Participating Agency also may be designated as a Cooperating Agency. The responsibilities of a “Cooperating Agency” are defined in the CEQ regulations and are unchanged by SAFETEA-LU. In general, designation as a Cooperating Agency signifies a somewhat higher level of involvement and responsibility in the environmental review process. Federal, State, or local government agencies can be designated as Cooperating Agencies. As shown in Table 2, the USACE was invited to become a Cooperating Agency. It is recognized that due to other program commitments, Cooperating Agencies will not be responsible for funding or writing portions of the NEPA document.
- 4.5. Local Government Coordination. The Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) will serve as the official local representative for the project. MUMPO staff will be provided the same opportunities for input as other Participating Agencies. Local municipalities will be kept apprised of project developments through their involvement with MUMPO. The following municipalities are represented by MUMPO: City of Charlotte, Town of Cornelius, Town of Davidson, Town of Huntersville, Town of Indian Trail, Town of Matthews, Mecklenburg County, Town of Mint Hill, City of Monroe, Town of Pineville, Town of Stallings, Union County, Town of Waxhaw, Town of Weddington, Village of Wesley Chapel, and Town of Wingate. In addition, NCTA will provide regular updates to the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization, including the Town of Marshville.
- 4.5.1. MUMPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). A NCTA staff member will represent NCTA at MUMPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meetings.
- 4.5.2. Meeting Summaries. Summaries of monthly TEAC meetings will be provided to MUMPO members.
5. Turnpike-Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) Meetings
- 5.1. TEAC Meetings. The principal method for agency coordination on turnpike projects will be Turnpike-Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) meetings, which will be hosted by NCTA. These meetings will be used as a forum for discussing all turnpike projects, including those being studied under other procedures as well as those being studied under Section 6002. All TEAC meetings will be held at the NCTA office in Raleigh, unless otherwise specified in the meeting invitation.

- 5.2. Meeting Dates. The schedule for the TEAC meetings will be determined by FHWA and NCTA after consultation with NCDOT and the Participating Agencies. This schedule will be established, to the extent possible, for 12-month periods. The schedule will be coordinated with NCDOT interagency meetings to avoid or minimize conflicts and minimize travel. Changes to the schedule will be provided to the Participating Agencies as far in advance as possible. The schedule for 2007 is attached as Exhibit 2.
- 5.3. Meeting Agenda and Objectives. The agenda for each TEAC meeting will be circulated via e-mail to all Participating Agencies. The agenda will identify (a) any specific issues that NCTA would like to resolve at the meeting and (b) any specific issues on which NCTA is seeking comments from the Participating Agencies at the meeting.
- 5.4. Meeting Materials. NCTA will post the agenda and materials for each TEAC meeting on a secure web site accessible to all TEAC members. Guidelines for circulating meeting materials are provided below.
 - 5.4.1. Timing of Circulation. To the greatest extent possible, NCTA will post the agenda and materials at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. In some cases, materials will be provided less than two weeks in advance, or will be circulated in the TEAC meeting itself. NCTA will not seek to resolve issues or obtain Participating Agency comments on materials that the Participating Agencies received less than two weeks in advance of the meeting.
 - 5.4.2. Availability of Paper Copies. In addition to posting documents on the TEAC web site, NCTA will make paper copies of TEAC meeting materials available to all attendees at each TEAC meeting.
 - 5.4.3. Large Documents. Documents that would be difficult or time-consuming for agencies to reproduce (e.g., large maps, lengthy bound documents with color, fold-out pages, etc.) will be made available to Participating Agencies in hard-copy format at a TEAC meeting (or by mail two weeks or more in advance) for discussion at a subsequent TEAC meeting. NCTA will consult with the Participating Agencies to determine when this type of distribution is appropriate.
- 5.5. Meeting Summaries. After each TEAC meeting, the NCTA will prepare a meeting summary. The summary will list the attendees, topics discussed, unresolved issues, and action items. The Meeting Summary will be posted in draft form to the NCTA web site for review and comment two weeks in advance of the next meeting. Meetings will be recorded on audiotape; the recording will be used in preparing the meeting summaries. The meeting summaries will be included in the administrative record.
- 5.6. Attendees. Participating Agencies (including Cooperating Agencies) will designate primary contacts for each turnpike project. These primary contacts will regularly attend TEAC meetings. Attendance may vary from month to month depending on the issues being discussed. Primary contacts for the Monroe Connector/Bypass project listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Primary Agency Contacts

| | |
|--|------------------|
| US Army Corps of Engineers | Steve Lund |
| US Environmental Protection Agency | Chris Militscher |
| US Fish and Wildlife Service | Marella Buncick |
| NC Department of Cultural Resources – Historic Preservation Office | Peter Sandbeck |
| NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources | -- |
| Division of Water Quality | Polly Lespinasse |
| Wildlife Resources Commission | Marla Chambers |
| Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization | Bob Cook |

6. Identification and Resolution of Project Issues

- 6.1. Constraint Mapping and Environmental Data. As early as practicable in project development, NCTA will provide FHWA and the Participating Agencies with mapping that shows key environmental resources, communities, topographic conditions, and other constraints in the project area. This mapping also will identify potential conceptual alternatives for the project, to the extent possible. (An “alternative” at this stage will generally be defined as a corridor.) The mapping may be accompanied by other supporting materials. This mapping may be presented to the Participating Agencies over a series of TEAC meetings and/or field meetings.
- 6.2. Field Visits and Agency Meetings. One or more field visits may be held with Participating Agencies to discuss constraints and obtain early input into development of alternatives. Attendees in field visits may be a sub-set of the Participating Agencies, depending on the issues to be discussed on the field visit; however, all Participating Agencies will be informed of upcoming meetings to determine interest in attending. The results of the field visit(s) will be discussed at a TEAC meeting, which will provide another opportunity for agency input.
- 6.3. General Project Issues. Throughout the process, Participating Agencies will be invited to identify issues that need to be considered by the Lead Agencies in preparing the environmental documentation and making project decisions, including issues that relate to the agencies’ ability to approve (or comment favorably on the approval of) any necessary permits for the project. These issues will be referred to as “general project issues.”
- 6.4. Issues of Concern. At any time in the process, a Participating Agency may identify an “issue of concern” as defined in SAFETEA-LU, which is an issue that in the agency’s judgment could result in denial of a permit or substantial delay in issuing a permit.
- 6.4.1. Format. Participating agencies will be strongly encouraged to submit any “issues of concern” in writing to FHWA and NCTA on agency letterhead. Issues of concern submitted in other formats (e.g., e-mail) will also be considered.

- 6.4.2. Timing. Participating Agencies are required by statute to identify any issues of concern “as early as practicable” in the environmental review process, but this determination is based on information provided by the lead agencies. In some cases, it may not be practicable to identify an issue of concern until late in the process. The statute does not set a specific deadline for raising these issues.
- 6.4.3. Request for Comment. At any point in the process, the NCTA may ask the Participating Agencies to state in writing whether there are any issues of concern. If such a request is made, NCTA will consult with the Participating Agencies before setting a deadline for a response. If agreed by the Lead and Participating Agencies, a deadline longer than 30 days could be established.
- 6.5. Monitoring and Updating. NCTA will maintain a list of both “general project issues” and “issues of concern” (if any) identified by the Participating Agencies. Separate meetings may be scheduled to resolve general project issues and/or any issues of concern. Additional issues may be added to the list based on new information or changed circumstances at any point in project development. This list will be posted to the TEAC web site.
- 6.6. Resolving General Project Issues. General project issues that are not resolved among the regular participants in the TEAC meetings can be elevated for consideration by the more senior officials within the relevant agencies. Any agency – Lead or Participating – can invoke the elevation process. The process is intended to be flexible, with specific procedures determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the issue. In general, the elevation process will involve the following steps:
- A TEAC member requests elevation on an issue within the jurisdiction of that agency. This request can be made in a TEAC meeting or in a letter or e-mail to the other TEAC members.
 - The request for elevation is placed on the agenda for discussion at a subsequent TEAC meeting.
 - If the issue is not resolved at that subsequent TEAC meeting, the issue is elevated to more senior officials within the TEAC agencies.
 - Each TEAC member is responsible for identifying the more senior official(s) within his or her agency who will be directly involved in the elevation.
 - The TEAC members will work together to plan the logistics and timing of the elevation process, including any briefing materials or other documents that need to be prepared prior to a resolution of the issue.
- 6.7. Resolving Issues of Concern. Under the statute, NCTA or the Governor may request a meeting at any time to resolve issues of concern. If such a meeting is requested, FHWA will convene a meeting in accordance with SAFETEA-LU to resolve the specified issues of concern. If an issue of concern is not resolved within 30 days after such a meeting, a report must be submitted to Congress and to the heads of certain agencies, as provided in SAFETEA-LU. If such a meeting is not requested, FHWA and NCTA will seek to address and resolve the agencies’ issues of concern as part of normal agency

coordination during the environmental review process. NCTA anticipates that this process will be invoked rarely.

7. Development of Purpose and Need

7.1. Preliminary P&N with Supporting Information. Early in project development, NCTA will prepare a brief preliminary statement of purpose and need – generally no more than one page in length. The preliminary statement purpose and need will be distributed to the agencies. This preliminary statement will be accompanied by supporting information to the extent that it is available. This information will include:

- GIS map of study area (with study area identified)
- Summary of local concerns that resulted in project addition to LRTP and MTIP
- Traffic data related to project needs
- Justification for designation as turnpike project (based on funding needs, etc.)
- Description of how the action will address the need.

7.2. Discussion at TEAC Meeting. The preliminary purpose and need will be discussed with the Participating Agencies at a TEAC meeting. This will provide an early opportunity for agency input into the Purpose and Need for the project. In accordance with Section 6002, the comment period will be 30 days (unless otherwise agreed).

7.3. Determination of Purpose and Need. The purpose and need will be refined, as appropriate, based on input from the Participating Agencies and the public. Refinement of the purpose and need may be a gradual, iterative process that occurs during the alternatives development and screening process. This process will include an opportunity for agencies and the public to comment on the purpose and need as part of their review of the alternatives screening report. (See Part 8.4 and 8.5 below.) The Purpose and Need will be determined by the time of selection of Detailed Study Alternatives.

8. Development and Screening of Alternatives

8.1. Conceptual Alternatives. An initial set of conceptual alternatives will be developed as early as practicable in the process. The conceptual alternatives may be developed concurrently with the preliminary purpose and need statement. These alternatives will be provided to the agencies along with the environmental constraint mapping that provides the basis for identifying issues of concern. (See Part 6.1 above.)

8.2. Alternatives Development. Through agency coordination and public involvement, NCTA will develop a range of preliminary alternatives for consideration. This range may extend beyond the initial set of conceptual alternatives. This effort is intended to be comprehensive and inclusive. NCTA will maintain a summary of all alternatives suggested by Participating Agencies and the public.

- 8.3. Alternatives Screening Report. The NCTA will prepare an alternatives screening report that presents the justification for eliminating alternatives from further consideration, and identifies alternatives proposed for detailed study. The alternatives screening report will be provided to the Participating Agencies and discussed in a TEAC meeting.
- 8.4. Opportunity for Public Input. A summary of the alternatives screening report will be made available for public review and comment. A public meeting (or meetings) will be held in the project area during the public comment period on this report. This comment period will serve as the public's opportunity for involvement in both developing the purpose and need and determining the range of alternatives to be considered in the EIS. A report summarizing public input will be provided to Participating Agencies. Agencies will be given notice of the public meeting and will be welcome to attend.
- 8.5. Opportunity for Agency Input. Participating Agencies will be given a 30-day period to provide additional comments on the alternatives screening report following distribution of the report summarizing public comments. Participating Agencies will not be asked to concur on the alternatives screening report. Participating Agencies will be asked to submit any significant objections to the alternatives screening report in writing to FHWA and NCTA on agency letterhead.
- 8.6. Lead Agency Decision. The Lead Agencies identify the detailed study alternatives based on the comments received from Participating Agencies and the public. In general, the NCTA and FHWA will seek to resolve any issues or concerns regarding the range of detailed study alternatives at this stage of the process. Any issues that are not resolved at this stage will need to be resolved prior to issuance of a Section 404 permit by the USACE. It is incumbent on all Participating Agencies to raise issues, concerns, or comments in a timely manner and to also provide suggestions for resolution.
9. Methodologies and Level of Detail for Alternatives Analysis
- 9.1. Proposed Methodologies. Early in project development, NCTA will prepare materials outlining proposed methodologies for analyzing alternatives. The materials will summarize the methodologies intended to be used for each substantive area within the EIS – noise, air, water resources, traffic issues, secondary and cumulative impacts, etc. Standard procedures will simply be referenced, where applicable. Any modifications to standard procedures will be identified and discussed in more depth.
- 9.2. Opportunity for Agency Input. The proposed methodologies will be developed in consultation with agencies having relevant information, experience, or expertise. For example, the USACE and NCDENR and other Participating Agencies as appropriate will be consulted in developing the methodology for analyzing impacts to aquatic resources; the SHPO will be consulted in developing methodologies for analyzing impacts to historic sites (including both architectural and archeological resources).
- 9.3. Ongoing Coordination. Methodologies for alternatives analysis will be refined throughout the environmental review process. The Lead Agencies will discuss adjustments, as appropriate, with Participating Agencies at TEAC meetings.

9.4. Level of Detail. The Lead Agencies, in consultation with the Participating Agencies, will determine the appropriate level of design detail for preliminary alternatives, for the detailed study alternatives, and for the preferred alternative.

9.4.1. Preliminary Alternatives. The level of design for the detailed study alternatives will be determined in consultation with the Participating Agencies. There is no presumption that any specific level of design is needed; this issue will be determined based on the information needed to allow informed decision-making.

9.4.2. Detailed Study Alternatives. In general, functional design will be used as the basis for comparing the impacts of the alternatives in the DEIS (known as the Detailed Study Alternatives) and will be used for developing the cost estimates presented in the DEIS. A higher level of design detail may be developed for Detailed Study Alternatives in some cases; this issue will be discussed with Participating Agencies in accordance with Sections 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3.

9.4.3. Bridging Decisions. The Lead Agencies, in consultation with USACE and NCDENR (and, if appropriate, other Participating Agencies) will determine bridge locations and approximate lengths for each of the Detailed Study Alternatives. These issues also will be discussed in TEAC meetings with all Participating Agencies.

9.4.4. Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative may be developed to a higher level of detail in the FEIS, in accordance with procedures specified in FHWA/FTA guidance for the Section 6002 process. If phased construction is anticipated, the higher level of design detail may be developed for a portion of the Preferred Alternative. As allowed under Section 6002, the higher level of design detail may be prepared for the purpose of developing mitigation measures and/or for complying with permitting requirements (e.g., Section 404 permitting).

9.5. Lead Agency Decision. If there are disagreements about methodology, or about the appropriate level of design detail, FHWA and NCTA will seek to resolve those disagreements with the agencies having the concern and those with relevant expertise – for example, the SHPO on historic property issues. After consultation, the Lead Agencies will determine the methodology to be used in the NEPA document. The basis for that decision will be documented in the project file and provided to the Participating Agencies.

10. Selection of Preferred Alternative/LEDPA

10.1. Timing for Identifying Preferred Alternative. The following actions will be completed before NCTA submits a Preferred Alternative Report to the Participating Agencies:

- the DEIS has been issued (including a Conceptual Mitigation Proposal) and submitted to the State Clearinghouse;
- a Section 404 Public Notice Request has been submitted to USACE, and the Public Notice has been issued by the USACE;

- a public hearing on the DEIS has been held, and the comment period on the DEIS has ended,

10.2. Process for Identifying Preferred Alternative. The process for identifying a preferred alternative will include:

- the NCTA will prepare an information package containing an impacts comparison matrix, responses to substantive comments on the DEIS that relate to selection of the preferred alternative, and other pertinent information;
- the NCTA will provide the information package to the Participating Agencies at least two weeks prior to the TEAC meeting at which the package will be discussed.
- the Participating Agencies will be given a 30-day period following the TEAC meeting to provide comments on the information package, and there will be a discussion of the alternatives comparison package at a TEAC meeting; and
- if requested by the Participating Agencies, the NCTA will arrange for a field review of the alternatives.

10.3. Preparation of Preferred Alternative Report. The NCTA will prepare a report identifying its preferred alternative and the justification for selecting that alternative. The report will address all applicable regulatory requirements, such as Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act and Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act. The report will be prepared in coordination with FHWA and with input from the Participating Agencies as described in Section 10.2.

10.4. Opportunity for Agency Input. The NCTA will provide FHWA, NCDOT, and all Participating Agencies with a copy of the preferred alternative report. The report will be discussed at a TEAC meeting. Agencies will be provided with a 30-day period to comment on the report after the meeting (in addition to the comment opportunities provided under Section 10.1 above). Agencies will not be asked to concur in this report. Agencies will be asked to submit any significant objections in writing to FHWA and NCTA on agency letterhead.

10.5. Lead Agency Decision. FHWA will formally identify its preferred alternative after considering all comments received from Participating Agencies, including both written comments and comments provided in TEAC meetings.

11. Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation, and Enhancement

11.1. Integration into Project Development. Opportunities to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts, and to enhance the impacted resources, will be considered throughout the process, including during initial development of alternatives. As allowed under Section 6002, the preferred alternative may be developed to a higher level of detail for purposes of developing mitigation measures and meeting permitting requirements.

11.2. Required Compensatory Mitigation. The Lead Agencies will consult with USACE and NCDENR (and other Participating Agencies as appropriate) to determine the type, size, and location of required compensatory mitigation for impacts to waters of the United States.

11.2.1. On-Site Mitigation. The potential for on-site mitigation for impacts to waters of the United States will be considered in the DEIS for each of the Detailed Study Alternatives. This discussion will typically include a discussion of conceptual on-site mitigation locations. The potential for on-site mitigation will be discussed in more detail for the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS.

11.2.2. Off-Site/Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP). Where applicable, the NCTA will coordinate with the Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP) during project development and design regarding the use of credits from the EEP to meet mitigation requirements for impacts to waters of the United States. The EEP also may be used to carry out on-site mitigation on behalf of NCTA.

12. Section 404/401 Permitting and Other Permits/Approvals

12.1. Early Coordination. NCTA will conduct early coordination with the Participating Agencies to identify applicable permitting requirements and to determine the analysis and documentation required to satisfy those requirements. See Parts 6 and 9 above. Permits that may be applicable to this project include:

- Section 404/401 Permits
- Successful completion of Section 7 consultation
- Successful completion of Section 106 process (and Section 4(f), if applicable)
- Air quality conformity compliance

12.2. Comment Opportunities. The environmental review process includes multiple opportunities for comment by Participating Agencies, as described below:

12.2.1. Participating Agencies may submit comments at the monthly TEAC meetings and in other meetings or field visits held during the environmental review process. NCTA will prepare meeting summaries for all substantive meetings with Participating Agencies. The meeting summaries will document comments provided by Participating Agencies.

12.2.2. Participating Agencies also will be invited to provide written comments at various points in the process as noted above. Agencies are encouraged to provide their written comments on agency letterhead; in particular, agencies are strongly encouraged to use letterhead when identifying issues of concern. However, all written comments submitted by agencies, including comments submitted by email, will be accepted and considered in decision-making.

- 12.2.3. If a Participating Agency raises an issue of concern, the Lead Agencies will confer with that agency, and with other agencies as appropriate, to address those issues.
- 12.2.4. Meeting summaries and written agency comments (regardless of format) be considered by the Lead Agencies in decision-making and will be included in the project files.
- 12.3. Jurisdictional Determinations. The NCTA will prepare the necessary documentation to obtain jurisdictional determinations by the USACE (and, as appropriate, NCDENR) for all wetlands and streams within a corridor along each of the detailed study alternatives (unless otherwise determined as part of the discussion of methodologies in accordance with Section 9 of this plan). These determinations will be used as the basis for comparing wetlands and stream impacts in the DEIS. The width of the corridor within which jurisdictional determinations are made will be determined on a project-by-project basis.
- 12.4. Pre-Application Consultation. The NCTA will engage in pre-application consultation, as appropriate, with each agency that is responsible for making a permit decision on the project. For projects requiring a Section 401 and Section 404 permits, the pre-application consultation will include a detailed hydraulic design review.
- 12.5. Request for Public Notice. The NCTA will submit the Section 404 permit application to the USACE at the time the DEIS is issued. This application will typically be submitted prior to identification of a preferred alternative; therefore, it typically will not identify the specific alternative for which the permit is being requested. This submittal will enable the USACE to issue a public notice and to use the FHWA/NCTA public hearing on the DEIS as the USACE's public hearing on the Section 404 application. *[Note: This could be modified on a case-by-case basis.]*
- 12.6. Public Hearing. The public hearing on the DEIS will also serve as the public hearing for the Section 404 permit application. *[Note: This could be modified on a case-by-case basis.]*
- 12.7. Refining the Permit Application. After selection of a preferred alternative, the NCTA will coordinate on a regular basis with the USACE, NCDENR, and other Participating Agencies as appropriate regarding all applicable permit applications for the project. This coordination may occur as part of the TEAC meetings and/or in separate meetings convened to discuss permitting issues. These meetings will include discussions of:
- avoidance and minimization measures
 - compensatory mitigation
 - review of hydraulic design *[the process for this review will be defined more specifically in project-specific coordination plans]*
 - review of stormwater management plans
 - review of final permit drawings

- 12.8. Permit Application and Decision. After the permitting meetings described above, the NCTA will submit an updated Section 404 permit application to the USACE and a Section 401 certification request to NCDENR. Permit applications under other applicable laws will also be filed. All permit applications shall be filed in accordance with the respective agency permitting requirements in place at the time of application. All respective permitting agencies shall forward the permit applications to other agencies for review as required by the respective agency regulations and/or rules.
- 12.9. Permit Decisions. The permitting agencies will consider and act upon the permit applications in accordance with their procedures.
- 12.10. Permitting Delay. If a Section 404 permit (or any other permit or approval) is not issued within 180 days after the FHWA issues a ROD *and* a complete permit application is submitted, the USDOT will be required by Section 6002 to submit a report to the Congress – specifically, to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in the House of Representatives. Reports must be submitted every 60 days thereafter until the issue is resolved. The same requirement applies to other permitting decisions.
- 12.11. Coordination After Permit Issuance. After permit issuance, NCTA will coordinate directly with permitting agencies and others as required by the terms of project permits. Such coordination may include issues such as reviewing final project plans, tracking compliance with permit conditions, and modifying permits to address changes to the project’s design, construction methodology or construction timeframe.
- 12.12. Permitting for Phased Construction. [This is a placeholder. If a phased approach is contemplated for a project, a section will be added here to describe that approach. It will be modeled on phasing as used in the NCDOT Merger agreement.]

Exhibit 1

**PROJECT INITIATION LETTER
&
NOTICE OF INTENT**



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

1578 MAIL SERVICE CENTER, RALEIGH, N.C. 27699-1578

DAVID W. JOYNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 5, 2007

John F. Sullivan, III, P.E.
Division Administrator
FHWA North Carolina Division
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Raleigh, NC 27601-1418

**RE: TIP R-3329/R-2559 Monroe Connector/Bypass
Notification of Project Initiation**

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

In accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) is notifying the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that planning, environmental, and engineering studies for the proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass project are underway. The project is included in the 2006-2012 North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in addition to the Draft 2007-2013 TIP as Projects R-3329 and R-2559. The Monroe Connector project was adopted by NCTA as a toll-candidate project in February 2005, and the Monroe Bypass was added in October 2006. They are now being developed as a single project in a single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

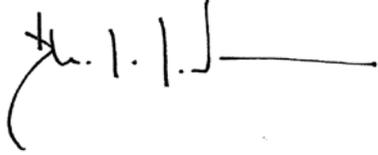
NCTA, in cooperation with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), will prepare an EIS on the proposed improvements in the US 74 corridor between I-485 in Mecklenburg County and the vicinity of the Town of Marshville in Union County. The proposed project is approximately 21 miles in length and is located southeast of Charlotte in the vicinity of the towns of Lake Park, Stallings, and Mint Hill and the cities of Monroe, Indian Trail, and Matthews.

It is anticipated that a Clean Water Act 404 Individual Permit will be required from the US Army Corps of Engineers. NCTA will coordinate throughout project development with the Corps to assure that their concerns are addressed and incorporated into the EIS.

Enclosed, please find a Draft Notice of Intent to begin work on the environmental document for the combined Monroe Connector and Monroe Bypass project. If you have

any questions or would like to discuss the project in more detail, please contact Jennifer Harris at (919) 571-3004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.D. DeWitt", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Steven D. DeWitt, P.E.
Chief Engineer

cc: Ms. Jennifer Harris, P.E., NCTA
Ms. Deborah Barbour, P.E., NCDOT
Ms. Anne Lenart-Redmond, E.I., HNTB

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****Membership Availability in the National Parks Overflights Advisory Group Aviation Rulemaking Committee To Represent Commercial Air Tour Interests****ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), as required by the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000, established the National Parks Overflights Advisory Group (NPOAG) in March 2001. The NPOAG was formed to provide continuing advice and counsel with respect to commercial air tour operations over and near national parks. This notice informs the public of one vacancy (due to completion of membership on May 19, 2007), on the NPOAG (now the NPOAG Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC)) for a member representing commercial air tour operators, and invites interested persons to apply to fill the vacancy.

DATES: Persons interested in serving on the NPOAG ARC should contact Mr. Barry Brayer in writing and postmarked or e-mailed on or before March 1, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barry Brayer, Executive Resource Staff, Federal Aviation Administration, Western-Pacific Region Headquarters, 15000 Aviation Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250, telephone: (310) 725-3800, e-mail: Barry.Brayer@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

The National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (the Act) was enacted on April 5, 2000, as Public Law 106-181. The Act required the establishment of the advisory group within 1 year after its enactment. The advisory group is comprised of a balanced group of representatives of general aviation, commercial air tour operations, environmental concerns, and Native American tribes. The Administrator of the FAA and the Director of NPS (or their designees) serve as ex officio members of the group. Representatives of the Administrator and Director serve alternating 1-year terms as chairman of the advisory group.

The advisory group provides "advice, information, and recommendations to the Administrator and the Director—

(1) On the implementation of this title [the Act] and the amendments made by this title;

(2) On commonly accepted quiet aircraft technology for use in commercial air tour operations over a national park or tribal lands, which will receive preferential treatment in a given air tour management plan;

(3) On other measures that might be taken to accommodate the interests of visitors to national parks; and

(4) At the request of the Administrator and the Director, safety, environmental, and other issues related to commercial air tour operations over a national park or tribal lands."

Members of the advisory group may be allowed certain travel expenses as authorized by Section 5703 of Title 5, United States Code, for intermittent Government service.

By FAA Order No. 1110-138, signed by the FAA Administrator on October 10, 2003, the NPOAG became an Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC). FAA Order No. 1110-138, was amended and became effective as FAA Order No. 1110-138A, on January 20, 2006.

The current NPOAG ARC is made up on one member representing general aviation, three members representing the air tour industry, four members representing environmental concerns, and two members representing Native American interests. Current members of the NPOAG ARC are: Heidi Williams, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association; Alan Stephen, fixed-winged air tour operator representative; Elling Halvorson, Papillon Airways, Inc.; Matthew Zuccaro, Helicopters Association International; Chip Dennerlein, Siskiyou Project; Greg Miller, American Hiking Society; Mark Peterson, National Audubon Society; Don Barger, National Parks Conservation Association; Rory Majenty, Hualapai Nation; and Richard Deertrack, Taos Pueblo.

Public Participation in the NPOAG ARC

In order to retain balance within the NPOAG ARC, the FAA and NPS invite persons interested in serving on the ARC to represent the commercial air tour industry, to contact Mr. Barry Brayer (contact information is written above in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) Requests to serve on the ARC must be made to Mr. Brayer in writing and postmarked or e-mailed on or before March 1, 2007. The request should indicate whether or not you are a member of an association representing commercial air tours or have another affiliation with issues relating to aircraft flights over national parks. The request should also state what expertise you would bring to the NPOAG ARC as related to environmental interests. The

term of service NPOAG ARC members is 3 years.

Issued in Hawthorne, CA on January 11, 2007.

Barry Brayer,*Manager, Executive Resource Staff, Western-Pacific Region.*

[FR Doc. 07-186 Filed 1-18-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement: Mecklenburg and Union Counties, NC****AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed project in Mecklenburg and Union Counties, North Carolina.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. George Hoops, Major Projects Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1418, Telephone: (919) 856-4350 extension 104.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 771, Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, the FHWA, in cooperation with the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) addressing proposed improvements in the US 74 corridor from I-485 in Mecklenburg County to the vicinity of the Town of Marshville, which is east of the City of Monroe (the County seat) in Union County. The proposed project study extends from I-485 in the west to the vicinity of the Town of Marshville in the east and extends north and south of US 74. The proposed action is included in the long range transportation plan approved by the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO).

This study is a combination of two projects previously analyzed by NCDOT, the Monroe Bypass (NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program [TIP] Project R-2559) and the Monroe Connector (NCDOT TIP Project R-3329). The Monroe Bypass study addressed in the US 74 corridor from just west of the City of Monroe to just west of the Town of Marshville. An Environmental Assessment for this project was approved in March 1996, and a Finding

of No Significant Impact was issued in June 1997. The Monroe Connector study previously addressed improvements in the US 74 corridor from I-485 to US 601 in the City of Monroe, where it ended at the proposed Monroe Bypass. A Draft EIS for this project was approved in November 2003; however, a public hearing was never held. In February 2005, the NCTA adopted the Monroe Connector as a toll candidate facility, and in January 2006, the Notice of Intent for the Monroe Connector EIS was rescinded (**Federal Register** Vol. 71, No. 19, page 4958). Subsequently, NCTA adopted the Monroe Bypass project as a toll candidate facility in October 2006. The Monroe Connector and Monroe Bypass projects have been combined into a single project and will be evaluated in a single EIS.

The EIS for the proposed action will consider alternatives for improvements in the US 74 corridor from I-485 to US 74 in the vicinity of the Town of Marshville. Alternatives, including a "No-Build" Alternative (continuation of the existing condition), improving the existing US 74 corridor, and constructing a new location facility, will be considered. Several alternative corridors for a new location facility will be studied. As part of the EIS, NCTA will study the feasibility and impacts of developing the proposed project, in whole or in part, as a toll road.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies. Scoping will occur over a series of meetings with the agencies and citizens informational workshops with the public. Information on the dates, times, and locations of the citizens informational workshops will be advertised in the local news media and newsletters will be mailed to those on the project mailing list. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list, contact Jennifer Harris at the address listed below. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure the full range of issues related to the proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions concerning the proposed action should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above or directed to: Ms. Jennifer Harris, Staff Engineer, North Carolina Turnpike Authority, 5400 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 400, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27612. Telephone: (919) 571-3004.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research,

Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation of Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

George Hoops,

Major Projects Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[FR Doc. 07-196 Filed 1-18-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

[Docket No: FTA-2006-23697]

Public-Private Partnership Pilot Program

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of establishment of Public-Private Partnership Pilot Program; solicitation of applications.

SUMMARY: Section 3011(c) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users ("SAFETEA-LU") authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to establish and implement a pilot program to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of public-private partnerships for certain new fixed guideway capital projects (the "Pilot Program"). This notice establishes and sets forth the definitive terms of the Pilot Program. By separate notice to be published in the **Federal Register** not later than March 31, 2007, FTA will summarize and respond to comments solicited by FTA by notice published in the **Federal Register** on March 22, 2006, at 71 FR 14568. This notice is not a "binding obligation" as defined at 49 U.S.C. 5334(l)(2). This notice is organized into three sections: (1) "Background;" (2) "Overview of Pilot Program;" and (3) "Definitive Terms."

DATES: To be considered in FTA's first quarterly review of applications to the Pilot Program, applications must be received by FTA on or before March 31, 2007. Applications received by FTA between March 31, 2007, and July 1, 2007, will be reviewed in FTA's second quarterly review of applications to the Pilot Program. See "Applications" at section 3(f) of this notice.

ADDRESSES: Applications should be submitted by U.S. Post or express mail to the Federal Transit Administration, c/o the Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Counsel, Room 9328, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Please note that due to security procedures in effect since October 2001 regarding mail deliveries, mail received

through the U.S. Postal Service may be subject to delays. Parties making applications to the Pilot Program should consider using an express mail service to ensure the prompt filing of any applications not filed by express mail.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning the Pilot Program should be addressed to David B. Horner, Esq., Chief Counsel, Federal Transit Administration, by e-mail at David.Horner@dot.gov or by telephone at (202) 689-4464. To read materials on the DOT docket responsive to FTA's notice published in the **Federal Register** on March 22, 2006, at 71 FR 14568, please go to <http://dms.dot.gov> at any time or to the Docket Management System.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

(a) *Objective.* The Public-Private Partnership Pilot Program (the "Pilot Program") is intended to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of public-private partnerships ("PPPs") for certain new fixed guideway capital projects funded by the Federal Transit Administration ("FTA"). In particular, the Pilot Program is intended to study whether, in comparison to conventional procurements, PPPs better reduce and allocate risks associated with new construction, accelerate project delivery, improve the reliability of projections of project costs and benefits, and enhance project performance. The Pilot Program will accordingly study projects that, among other things, utilize methods of procurement that integrate risk-sharing and streamline project development, engineering, construction,¹ operation, and maintenance.² The amount and terms of private investment to be made in such projects will be a significant consideration in selecting projects to participate in the Pilot Program.

(b) *PPPs in General.* As the growth in traditional transportation revenue sources, such as gasoline taxes, continues to decline and transportation operation, maintenance, replacement, and expansion needs and costs increase, transportation agencies are experiencing significant pressure to find ways to

¹ Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users H.R. REP. NO. 109-203, at 936-37 (2005), reprinted in 2005 U.S.C.C.A.N. 452.

² Section 5309(c)(4)(A), which permits the Secretary to approve an application to the Pilot Program if "State and local laws permit public-private agreements for all phases of project development, construction and operation of the project" (emphasis added) indicates that the Pilot Program is intended to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of PPPs for all aspects certain new fixed guideway capital projects, including their operation and maintenance.

Exhibit 2

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2007 CONCURRENCE AND INTERAGENCY MEETINGS

JANUARY 1

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| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

FEBRUARY 2

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MAY 5

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JUNE 6

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JULY 7

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AUGUST 8

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SEPTEMBER 9

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OCTOBER 10

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NOVEMBER 11

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DECEMBER 12

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| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

- State and Federal Holidays
- Interagency Meetings - Mornings
- Eastern Concurrence Meetings
- Western Concurrence Meetings
- Eastern Hydraulics Meetings
- Western Hydraulics Meetings
- NC Turnpike Authority East
- NC Turnpike Authority West - Afternoon
- NC Turnpike Authority East & West

Appendix B

Citizens Informational Workshop



MEMORANDUM

To: Jennifer Harris, P.E. - NCTA

From: Carl Gibilaro, PE

CC: Christy Shumate- HNTB, Anne Redmond - HNTB, Jill Gurak - PBSJ

Date: July 30, 2007

Project: Monroe Connector / Bypass
TIP Project R-3329 / 2559, Mecklenburg and Union Counties

Re: Preliminary Summary of the Citizens Informational Workshop Comment Form

Below is a summary of the 480 comment forms that have been received to date as a result of the June 25th and 26th Citizens Informational Workshops held for the subject project. The questions provided on the comment sheet are listed below along with the top three responses received for each question.

1. Which project development issues are important to you and your community and should be examined in this study? *These might include natural resources (protected species, streams, wetlands), neighborhoods and communities, noise, visual impacts, economic development and land use, cultural resources such as historic sites, etc.*

Top Three Responses

| Number of Responses | Project Development Issue |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 454 | Neighborhoods and Communities |
| 229 | Natural Resources |
| 139 | Land Use |

**38 comment forms had no response to this question.*

2. Based on the maps displayed at the workshops, which alternative do you feel would best serve transportation needs in the US 74 corridor area? Are there additional alternatives that you think should be considered?

Of the responses received, **292** commented “Alternates 1,10,13,18 and 31 follow existing Secret Shortcut as closely as possible, thereby reducing right of way acquisitions and cost.” But many provided new route suggestions or blanket statements such as don’t widen Secret Shortcut Road or Old Charlotte Highway. Others simply stated their desire for the project to stay out of their neighborhoods.

3. What do you perceive are the transportation problems in the US 74 corridor?

Top Three Responses

| Number of Responses | Transportation Problem |
|---------------------|--|
| 372 | Extremely heavy traffic volume |
| 39 | Too many stop lights/traffic signal cycles |
| 23 | Too many commercial trucks |

**42 comment forms had no response to this question.*

4. Do you agree with the proposed project purposes of: 1) Improving mobility, 2) Providing high-speed regional travel, and 3) Maintaining existing property access?

Top Three Responses

| Number of Responses | Agrees with Project Purposes? |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 408 | Yes |
| 33 | No response |
| 12 | No |

5. When you think about the potential impacts of this project, please tell us how concerned you are with each of the following.

| Impact | Very Concerned | Somewhat Concerned | Little Concern | No Concern | No Opinion |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Potential impacts to the environment | <u>81</u> | 56 | 21 | 11 | 3 |
| Potential impacts to local resident | <u>130</u> | 32 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| Potential impacts to local businesses | 46 | <u>89</u> | 25 | 10 | 2 |
| The construction schedule | <u>75</u> | 71 | 24 | 4 | 2 |
| Traffic congestion | <u>105</u> | 56 | 12 | 1 | 2 |
| Growth in the area | <u>92</u> | 62 | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| Project delay | <u>87</u> | 59 | 13 | 5 | 5 |

*The number of responses received for each category are shown in the table above. The number which is in **bold** and underlined is the most common response for each impact.*

6. Do you have any questions or comments regarding charging people who choose to use this roadway a toll to help accelerate its construction and to pay for on-going operations and upkeep of the road?

Top Three Responses

| Number of Responses | Questions/Comments Regarding Tolls |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 31 | Great idea |
| 329 | I do not oppose |
| 17 | I oppose |

**49 comment forms had no response to this question.*

Of the 400 responses to Question #6, 360 responses were clearly not opposed to a toll and only 17 responses specifically stated that they were against tolling. The remaining responses were not specifically against tolling but expressed other concerns such as:

1) Financial burden, 2) Will this be a Toll Road forever or is it temporary?, 3) Concerned that travelers will avoid the road to avoid having to pay toll which will negate the value, 4) Need to restrict heavy trucks to only the toll road area to avoid them using other smaller roads, 5) Great Idea but it might be tough to convince citizens to pay, 6) Discount to local residents and or senior citizens.(7) suggestions to allow residents the option to purchase monthly Electronic passes for ease of use.

7. Other comments or questions (use additional sheets if necessary).

83 comment forms did not include a response to this question. Of the answers received, there were **292** comments forms that said "take Alternate 22 and 30 off the list". This comes from residents of Bonterra Village. There were also **115** comment forms that said "take alternate 18 off the list". This comes from the residents of the Fairhaven Subdivision. Lastly, comments were expressed concerning doing proper planning to avoid another I-485 parking lot which was included on 3 forms and many said, "just do it".

We will continue to update these totals as additional comment forms are received.

Appendix C

Newsletters

NCTA Studies the Monroe Connector / Bypass

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) is studying ways to improve east-west travel in the US 74 corridor from I-485 in Mecklenburg County to just west of the Town of Marshville in Union County.

US 74 and Chamber Drive looking East



US 74 is the primary transportation connection between Union County, the fastest growing county in North Carolina, and Mecklenburg County/City of Charlotte. The existing roadway is operating at or near capacity from I-485 to Carolinas Medical Center – Union at E. Franklin Street. There are 20 traffic signals along this segment of US 74; and over 52,000 vehicles, including a high percent of trucks, use this roadway daily. Previous traffic forecasts predict traffic volumes along US 74 to

increase by over 50% by 2025.

The Monroe Connector/Bypass project is a combination of two projects previously analyzed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the **Monroe Connector** and the **Monroe Bypass**.

Monroe Bypass

NCDOT's Monroe Bypass study addressed improvements in the US 74 corridor from just west of the City of Monroe, around the north side of Monroe, to just west of the Town of Marshville. Environmental and engineering studies for the project were completed in 1997. The preferred alternative was designed as a four-lane divided highway on new location. During the permitting process for the project, concerns were raised regarding impacts to the Carolina Heelsplitter mussel and the project was put on hold in 2001.

Monroe Connector

NCDOT's Monroe Connector study addressed improvements in the US 74 corridor from I-485 to US 601 in Monroe, and replaced the need for the part of the Monroe Bypass west of US 601, known as Section A of the Monroe Bypass. As the name suggests, the Monroe Connector would "connect" the

Monroe Bypass at US 601 north of Monroe to I-485 just east of the Town of Mathews. NCDOT began planning for the Monroe Connector in 1999 and completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2003. In 2005, at the request of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO), the NCTA adopted the Monroe Connector as a candidate toll facility and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was rescinded. The Monroe Connector is included in MUMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan as a toll facility.

Monroe Connector/Bypass

In 2006, MUMPO recommended that the Monroe Bypass and Monroe Connector be combined into a single environmental study and that the combined study be administered by NCTA. The NCTA Board adopted combining the Monroe Bypass with the Monroe Connector in November 2006.

The overall purpose of the project is to improve mobility in the US 74 corridor within the project study area. This would include providing a facility that serves high-speed regional travel, is consistent with Local and State transportation plans, and maintains access to properties along existing US 74.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS !

Two Citizens Informational Workshops Scheduled in June 2007

The workshops will be an open-house format with project maps and other information available for review. You are invited to drop in at any time to either workshop to ask questions and offer comments. NCTA, NCDOT and study team representatives will be present for one-on-one discussions about the proposed project.

These workshops are being held to update interested citizens with the proposed project and to gather input/comments on project purpose and need, project study area, preliminary study corridors and the toll aspect. MUMPO will also be gathering public input on financing options for the portion of the project east of US 601.

1 **Monday, June 25th, 2007**
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

South Piedmont Community College
4209 Old Charlotte Highway
Monroe, NC 28110

2 **Tuesday, June 26th, 2007**
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

NC Cooperative Extension Office
Union County Center
3230-D Presson Road
Monroe, NC 28112

PRESORTED
 FIRST CLASS MAIL
 US POSTAGE PAID
 CHARLOTTE NC
 PERMIT #212



Jennifer Harris, PE
 1578 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1578

Monroe Connector / Bypass

CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOPS

How YOU can get involved...

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NCTA will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to participate in the Citizens Informational Workshops. To receive special services, please contact Ms. Jennifer Harris by phone (919) 571-3000 or email monroe@ncturnpike.org. Please provide adequate notice prior to the date of the meeting so that arrangements can be made.

1 **Monday, June 25th, 2007**
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

South Piedmont Community College
4209 Old Charlotte Highway
Monroe, NC 28110

2 **Tuesday, June 26th, 2007**
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

NC Cooperative Extension Office
Union County Center
3230-D Presson Road
Monroe, NC 28112

For questions or comments about the proposed project, to be added to the project mailing list, and / or receive future newsletters please contact:

Carl Gibilaro, PE,
 PBS&J
 5200 77 Center Drive, Suite 500
 Charlotte, NC 28217
 (704) 522-7275 phone
 cgibilaro@pbsj.com



Jennifer Harris, PE
 North Carolina Turnpike Authority
 1578 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1578
 (919) 571-3000 phone
 monroe@ncturnpike.org



Project Hotline: (800) 475-6402

**NORTH CAROLINA
TURNPIKE AUTHORITY
(NCTA)**

In October 2002, the North Carolina General Assembly established a law creating (General Statute 136-89.182) NCTA. NCTA is authorized to study, develop, construct, operate, and maintain up to nine toll roads in the state. The Monroe Connector/Bypass is one of NCTA's candidate toll roads. A *Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Final Report* was completed in October 2006 and can be found on the project website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe/documents.asp

The law prohibits NCTA from tolling existing roads. Toll revenue may be used by NCTA for administrative costs, project development, right-of-way, construction, operation, maintenance, debt service on revenue bonds, or related purposes.

Toll roads offer a choice. By leveraging private funds to pay for road construction, vital corridors can be built years earlier than if only traditional funds are used bringing much needed congestion relief sooner.

The NEPA Planning Process

The project planning process for transportation projects subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) can be generally summarized into the eight steps listed to the right. Currently, the project is working on **Steps 1, 2 and 3 (highlighted in yellow)**.

Project Schedule

- July / August 2007—Identify Detailed Study Alternatives
- July 2008—Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- November 2008—Identify Preferred Alternative
- June 2009—Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
- July 2009—Record of Decision (ROD)
- August 2009—Environmental Permit Applications

Please visit the project website for project information and updates:
www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe

Preliminary Study Corridors to be Considered

The project development, engineering, and environmental studies for the project are being conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This project has a long history. Several alternatives had previously been evaluated and substantial amounts of data have already been collected. This information will be reexamined, and if determined to still be valid, will be included into this study to minimize duplication of previous work efforts.

In accordance with FHWA guidelines alternatives considered will include:

- **The No-Build or Do Nothing Alternative** (maintains the current condition)
- **Improve Existing Roadway** (improves existing US 74 from I-485 to just west of Marshville by widening, creating a superstreet or converting it to a freeway)
- **New Location/Improve Existing Roadways Combinations** (involves building a portion of the project on new location and improving some combination of existing roadways (US 74, Old Monroe Road or Secret Shortcut Road) for the remainder of the project.)
- **Build a New Highway** (new multi-lane controlled access facility entirely on new location)

THE 8-STEP PLANNING PROCESS

1. **Describe the transportation problem: Identify existing and future transportation problems, define study area, prepare a statement of Purpose and Need.**
2. **Identify alternatives to solving transportation problems: Prepare land suitability map, identify preliminary study corridors, conduct citizens informational workshop(s), select preliminary study corridors for detailed study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).**
3. **Prepare engineering studies: Conduct detailed field studies, prepare environmental analyses of detailed study alternatives.**
4. Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
5. Conduct corridor design public hearing and/or citizens informational workshops to present alternatives and solicit public input.
6. Review comments from the public and federal, state, and local agencies on DEIS and alternatives. Select preferred alternative.
7. Update and refine studies for the preferred alternative. Prepare Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).
8. Prepare Record of Decision (ROD). Conduct design public hearing for preferred alternative.

BEYOND

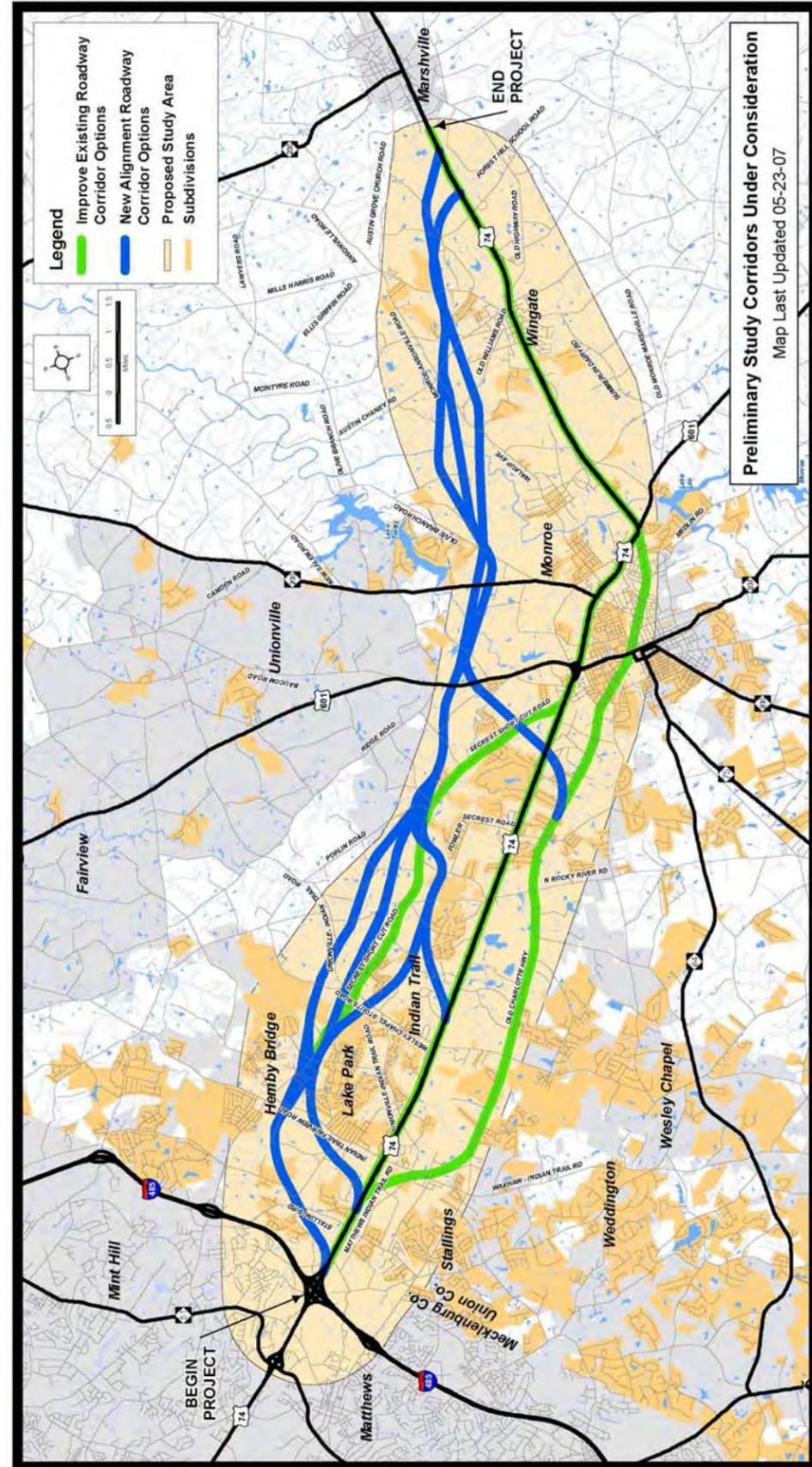
Following publication of the ROD, permits are acquired and final engineering design plans are prepared for the selected alternative, after which, right of way acquisition, utility relocations, and construction of the roadway can proceed.

MONROE CONNECTOR / BYPASS

Project Study Area and Preliminary Study Corridors



NC Turnpike Authority
May 2007



What Happens Next?

Each preliminary study corridor will be evaluated based on its ability to satisfy traffic needs and its potential impacts on the human and natural environment. Based on the evaluation and comments received from the public and local, state and federal agencies, the study team will identify the preliminary

study corridors to be studied in detail in the next step of the process.

In-depth engineering and environmental studies will be conducted on these Detailed Study Alternatives (Step 3 of the planning process). The results of these detailed studies will be

summarized in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Step 4).

Future editions of this newsletter will be prepared to inform you of the project's progress. Additional information can be found by visiting our project website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe.



NCTA Recommends Narrowing Alternatives Considered for Monroe Connector/Bypass

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) is studying ways to improve east-west travel in the US 74 corridor from I-485 in Mecklenburg County to just west of the Town of Marshville in Union County.

NCTA held Citizens Informational Workshops on June 25 and 26, 2007 to update the public on the project, obtain input on the project purpose and need, and introduce alternatives being considered for the project. Maps presented at the June 2007 Citizens Informational Workshops included 45 corridor segments, each comprised of a 1,000-foot wide study area. These corridor segments combined to form nearly 165 alternative routes between I-485 and US 74 near Marshville.

Using a three-step alternatives screening process, NCTA is recommending that all but 16 of the 165 alternative routes be eliminated from further consideration. The remaining 16 alternatives will be studied further as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The alternatives screening process and preliminary recommendations are documented in a Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis report, which is now available for public review and comment.

Maps showing the original study corridors and the results of the alternatives screening can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Alternatives Development and Analysis Process

How were the corridors under consideration for the Monroe Connector/Bypass project developed?

Improvements in this area were studied previously by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in the mid-1990s (east of US 601) and in the early 2000s (west of US 601). As a starting point for NCTA's study, all corridors considered during those previous studies were considered for the current study. A number of potential locations for the Monroe Connector/Bypass have been considered, including new locations, upgrading of existing roads, and combinations of new locations and upgrades. All corridors were shown in a project newsletter and at public workshops in June 2007.

How did public comment contribute to the project studies?

NCTA received more than 1,700 comments on alternatives under consideration, specifically regarding Corridor Segments 18 and 22. These corridors were developed many years ago as part of NCDOT's studies, and now impact large residential areas and other community facilities. Based on these potential impacts, as well as the public comments received, NCTA added Corridor Segments 18A and 22A to minimize direct impacts to these areas.

While public input is an important factor in evaluating alternative corridors, it is not the only consideration. Potential impacts to

natural and cultural resources must also be evaluated. NCTA and the Federal Highway Administration are required by federal law to study a range of reasonable alternatives. Therefore, NCTA has recommended Corridor Segments 18A and 22A be retained for further study, and Corridor Segments 18 and 22 be dropped from consideration.

What is the status of the alternatives screening process?

NCTA has completed the alternatives screening process and recommend 148 alternatives for elimination from further study. NCTA has prepared a report documenting the alternatives screening process and initial recommendations for which corridors to eliminate and which corridors to study further. NCTA has requested input on these recommendations from other members of the Study Team, including federal, state, and local resource and regulatory agencies. In addition, NCTA is seeking public input on these recommendations.

What alternatives are still under consideration and what happens next?

There are 16 alternatives, beginning at I-485 and ending at US 74 near Marshville, that NCTA recommends for further study (see map on page 3 of this newsletter). These alternatives will undergo detailed engineering and environmental studies over the next six to nine months. The results of these studies will be documented in a Draft Environ-

mental Impact Statement, which is scheduled to be available for public review and comment next summer (July 2008). Also next summer, there will be public workshops and a formal public hearing to gather public comments on the remaining alternatives.

Does NCTA have a preferred alternative?

No. NCTA does not have a preferred alternative at this time. A range of alternatives will be evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The preferred alternative is scheduled to be selected in Fall 2008 based on the results of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, comments from members of the Study Team, and additional public input.

How can the public review the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis report?

To review and comment on the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis report, including NCTA's initial recommendations, please visit NCTA's website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe and click Newsletters/Documents on the left. Comments are appreciated by December 5, 2007. NCTA accepts comments at any time during the project study process. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to call the project hotline at 1-800-475-6402 or email monroe@ncturnpike.org.

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Jennifer Harris, PE
 5400 Glenwood Ave, Suite 400
 Raleigh, NC 27612

Monroe Connector/Bypass Project Schedule

- July 2008**
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- Summer/Fall 2008**
Corridor Public Hearing and Identify Preferred Alternative
- June 2009**
Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
- July 2009**
Record of Decision (ROD)
- December 2009**
Award construction contract and begin construction
- 2013**
Project open to traffic



For questions or comments about the proposed project, to be added to the project mailing list, and/or to receive future newsletters please contact:

Carl Gibilaro, PE
 PBS&J
 5200 77 Center Drive, Suite 500
 Charlotte, NC 28217
 (704) 522-7275 phone
 cgibilaro@pbsj.com



Jennifer Harris, PE
 North Carolina Turnpike Authority
 5400 Glenwood Ave, Suite 400
 Raleigh, NC 27612
 (919) 571-3000 phone
 monroe@ncturnpike.org



Project Hotline: (800) 475-6402 Website: www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe

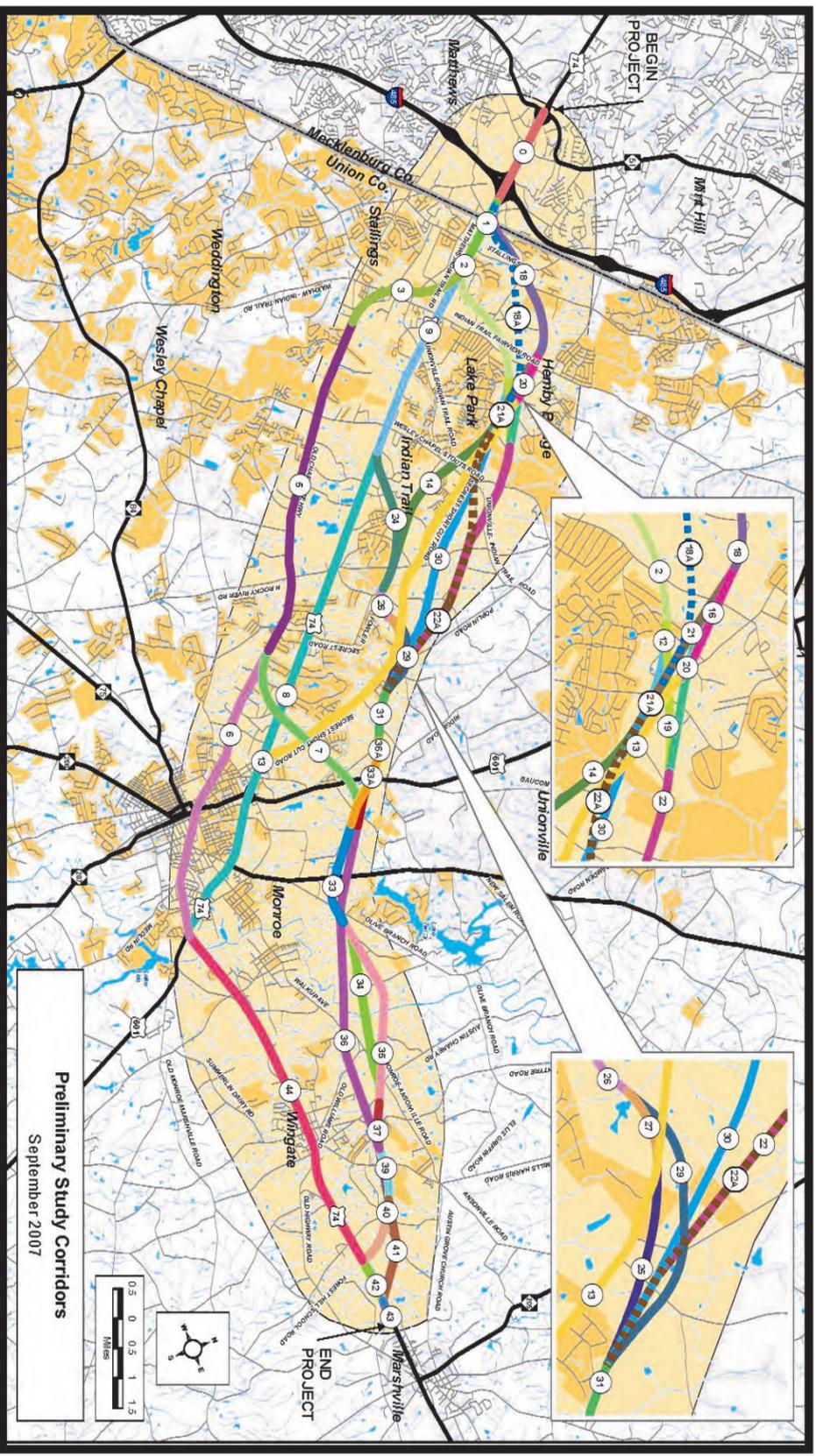
Statement of Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve mobility and capacity within the project study area by providing a facility in the US 74 corridor that allows for high-speed regional travel consistent with the designations of the North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridor system and the North Carolina Intrastate system, while maintaining access to properties along existing US 74. The Statement of Purpose and Need report is available in its entirety on the NCTA website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe.

Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report

To review and comment on the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis report, please visit NCTA's website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe and click newsletters/documents on the left. Please provide comments by December 5, 2007. You can submit comments via email to monroe@turnpike.org or mail correspondence to:
 Jennifer Harris, P.E.
 North Carolina Turnpike Authority
 5400 Glenwood Ave, Suite 400
 Raleigh, NC 27612

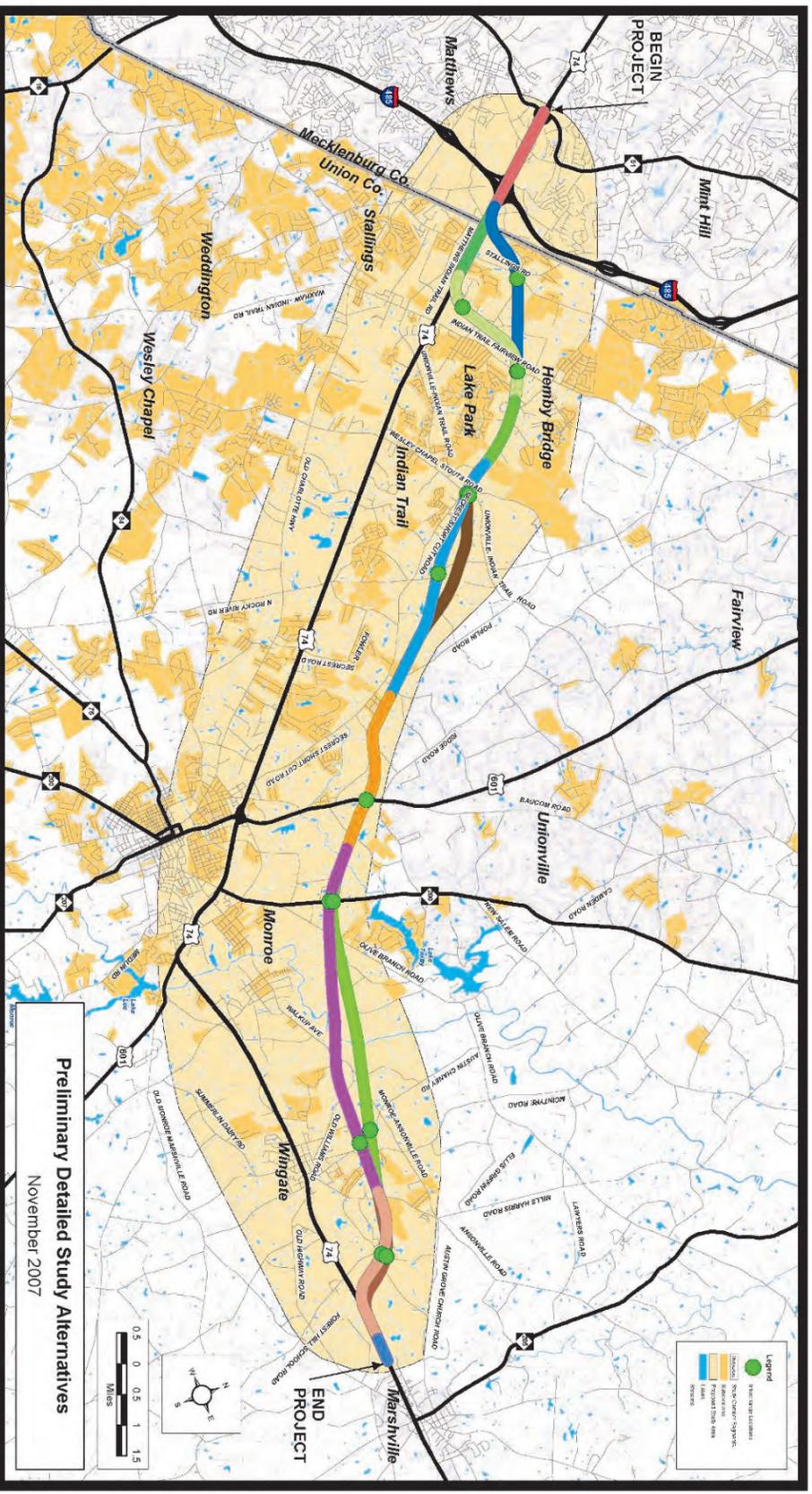
PRELIMINARY STUDY CORRIDORS



This map shows all the preliminary study corridors that entered the alternatives screening process.



PRELIMINARY DETAILED STUDY ALTERNATIVES



This map shows the study corridors that made it through the alternatives screening process and that NCTA recommends for detailed study.

