

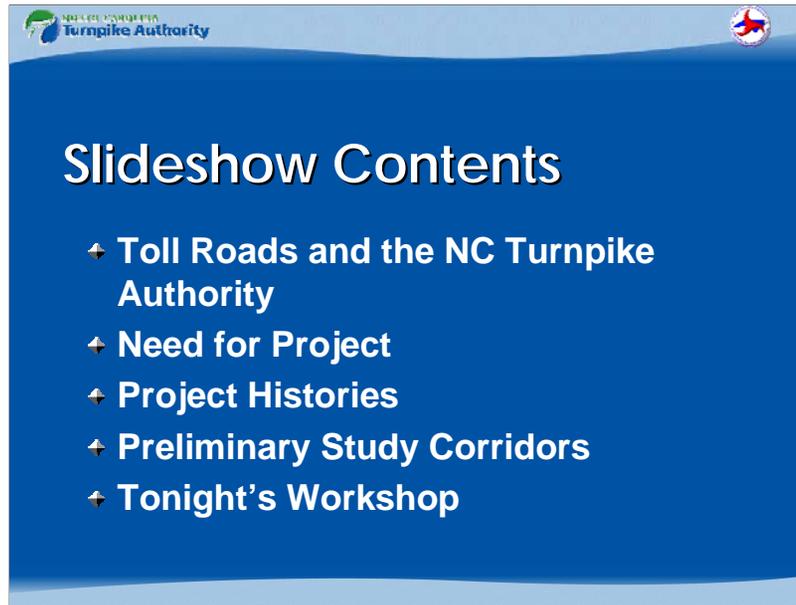


# Monroe Connector / Bypass Citizens Informational Workshop



## Transportation Improvement Program Project R-3329 / R-2559

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority welcomes you to this Citizens Informational Workshop for the Monroe Connector Bypass project.



This short slide presentation:

Provides background on toll roads and the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, briefly describes the need for the project, summarizes the histories of the Monroe Bypass and Monroe Connector projects, and describes the project study area and preliminary alternatives currently under consideration.

At the end of the presentation, you will be provided with information about tonight's workshop and how you can provide comments and input regarding the project.

## Why Toll Roads?

- Conventional funding not sufficient to meet all transportation needs
- 42% increase in population by 2030
- \$65 billion gap between transportation needs and revenues
- Expedite roadway construction
- Provide less congested, higher speed routes

Why consider toll roads?

North Carolina's rapid growth has placed increasing demands on our already stressed transportation infrastructure. That trend is expected to continue in the coming years with an estimated 42 percent increase in population by 2030. Meanwhile, a projected 65 billion dollar gap between transportation needs and revenues during the next 25 years means we will meet less than half of the state's transportation needs.

Thus, North Carolina faces an important choice: find new sources of funding that could speed construction of some critical highway projects, or wait years, perhaps even decades, until traditional funds are available to build non-toll roads.



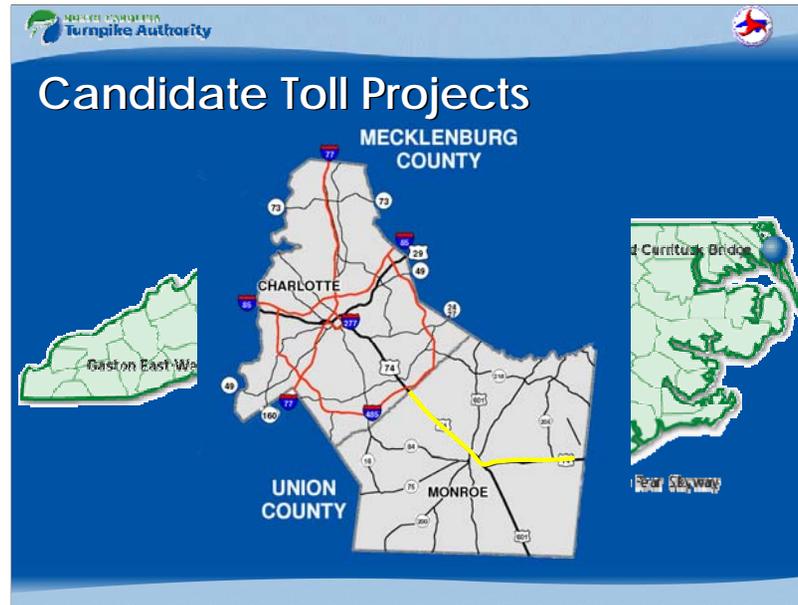
## North Carolina Turnpike Authority

- **Created in 2002 to use alternative financing to pay for roads**
- **Authorized to plan, develop, construct, operate, and maintain up to 9 toll facilities**



The North Carolina Turnpike Authority was created by the General Assembly in 2002 to implement alternative financing to pay for much-needed roads during this time of rapid growth, dwindling resources, and skyrocketing costs.

The Turnpike Authority is authorized to plan, develop, construct, operate and maintain up to 9 toll facilities in the state.



One of the Turnpike Authority's candidate toll projects is the US 74 Monroe Connector / Bypass. US 74 is Union County's primary connection to the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.



US 74 is heavily congested within the project study area from I-485 in Mecklenburg County through Monroe, and traffic volumes are projected to increase in the future.

Traffic flow is further restricted by numerous driveways and traffic signals.

## Project Purpose



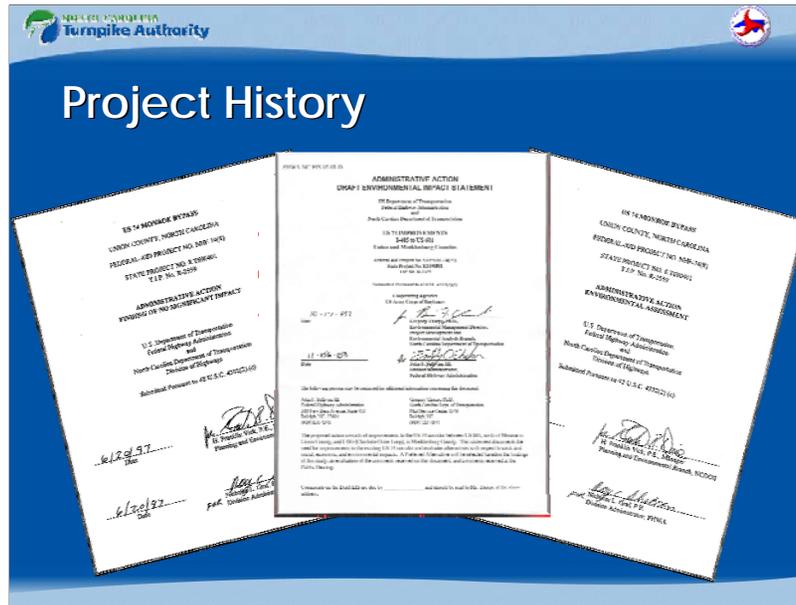
A high percentage of trucks use US 74 daily. Dense development along the US 74 corridor, including various commercial uses, grocery distribution centers, and a rock quarry, contributes to truck traffic.



## Purpose of the Monroe Connector / Bypass

- ◆ **Improve Mobility**
- ◆ **Provide High-Speed Regional Travel**
- ◆ **Maintain Existing Property Access**

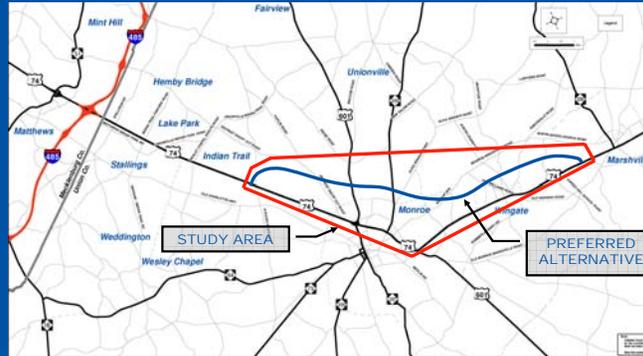
The purpose of the proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass project is to improve mobility within the US 74 corridor study area. This would include providing a facility that serves high-speed regional travel consistent with state and local transportation plans, while maintaining access to properties along existing US 74.



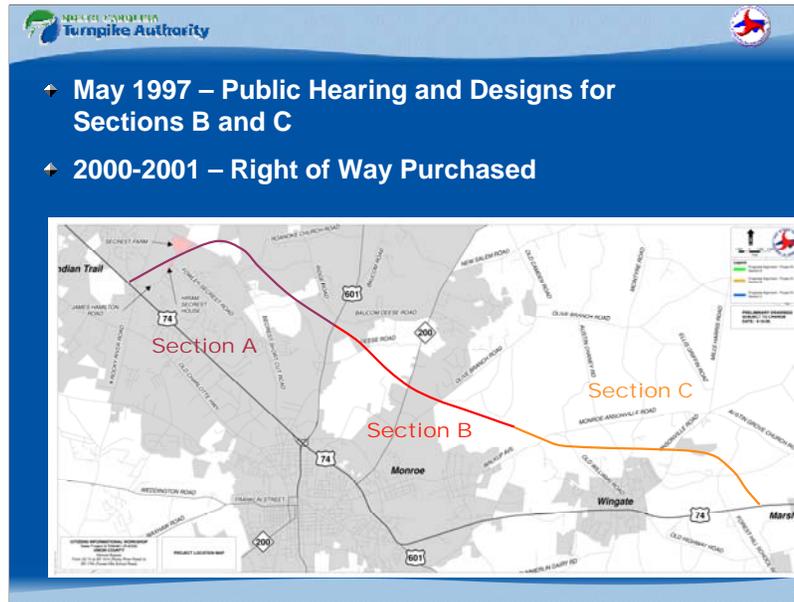
Both the Monroe Connector and Monroe Bypass have been studied before as separate projects and have long histories.

## Monroe Bypass

- ✦ Early 1990s – Studies Began
- ✦ 1997 – Preferred Alternative Selected

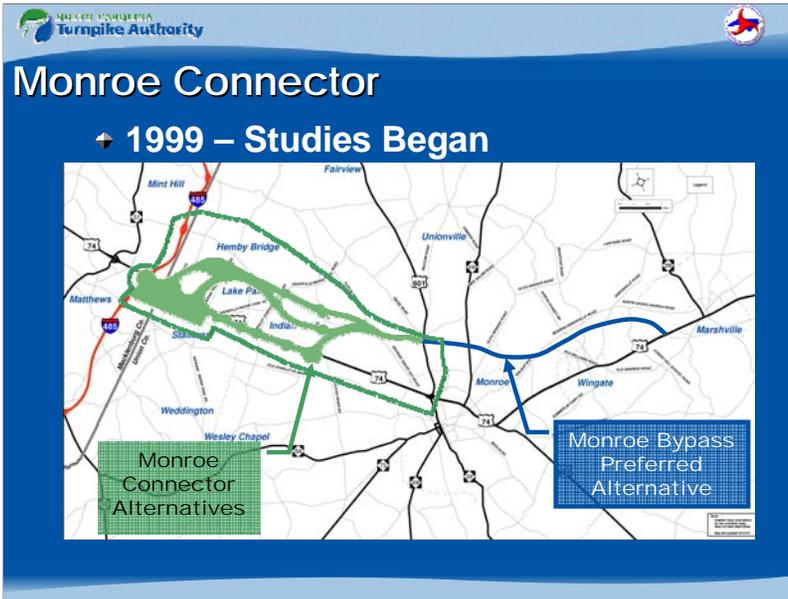


The North Carolina Department of Transportation began studies for the Monroe Bypass in the early 1990s. The planning and environmental process resulted in selection of a Preferred Alternative in 1997.



In May 1997, a Public Hearing was held to present final designs for Sections B and C of the Bypass. Section A was not shown, since it had been put on hold so that the Monroe Connector could be studied.

In 2000 and 2001, right of way was purchased for Sections B and C. However, during the permitting process, prior to construction, issues arose regarding the endangered Carolina heelsplitter mussel, and construction was postponed.



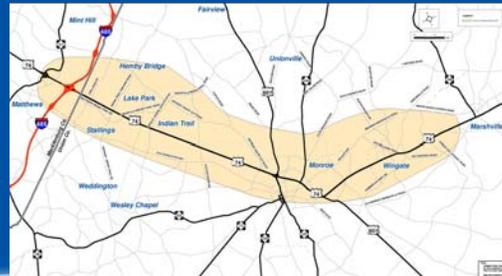
The North Carolina Department of Transportation began the planning process for the Monroe Connector in 1999 to study improvements to US 74 from I-485 to US 601, replacing the need for Section A of the Monroe Bypass.



## Project History

**Sept 2006 – Projects combined**

**Nov 2006 – NC Turnpike Authority Board adopts combined Connector / Bypass project**



In 2006, the Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Department of Transportation, and MUMPO reviewed and recommended that the Monroe Bypass and Monroe Connector be combined into one project, and that an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared by the Turnpike Authority. This request was approved by the Turnpike Authority Board in November 2006, and work began on the new EIS.





# Current Study

**code of federal regulations**

**PART 1500—PURPOSE, POLICY, AND MANDATE**

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

**AUTHORITY:** NEPA, the Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1601) and E.O. 11514, Mar. 5, 1970, as amended by E.O. 11801, May 24, 1977.

**SOURCE:** 49 FR 5590, Nov. 23, 1978, unless otherwise noted.

**§1500.1 Purpose.**

(a) The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our basic national charter for protection of the environment. It establishes policy, sets goals (section 101), and provides means (section 102) for achieving them. It requires that the environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. These regulations provide the direction to achieve this purpose.

**§1500.2 Policy.**

Federal agencies shall to the fullest extent possible:

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

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

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

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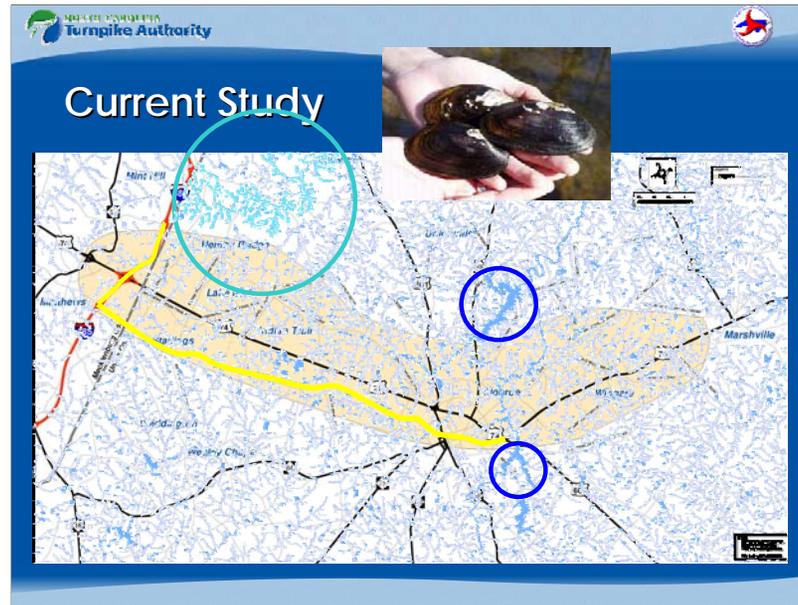
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Due to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, preparation of the EIS for the newly combined Monroe Connector / Bypass project requires a fresh look at possible solutions to the congestion along US 74.

Therefore, in accordance with Federal Highway Administration guidelines, several types of preliminary alternatives are being considered in light of current conditions.

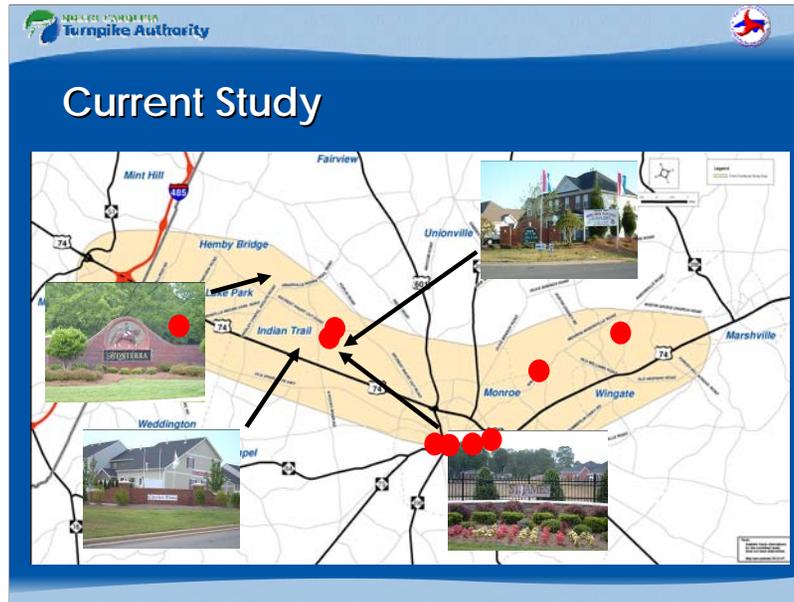
The fresh look at alternatives began with defining the study area boundaries and identifying the natural and human features in the area.



The project study area boundaries generally are I-485 to the west, Marshville to the east, Old Monroe Road to the south and the Goose Creek watershed and Lake Twitty to the north.

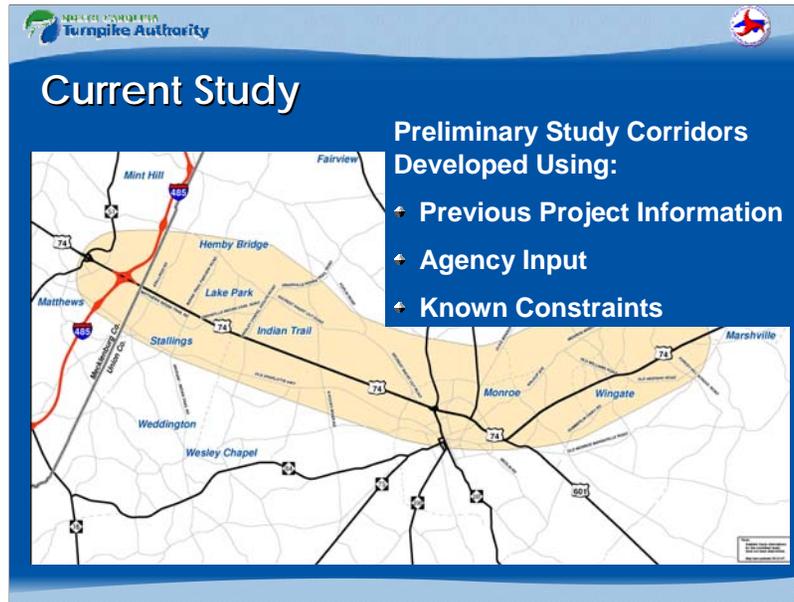
Other natural features in the project area include Lake Lee, a water supply, and numerous streams and floodplains.

Goose Creek contains populations of the endangered Carolina heelsplitter mussel, and will not be directly impacted by the project.



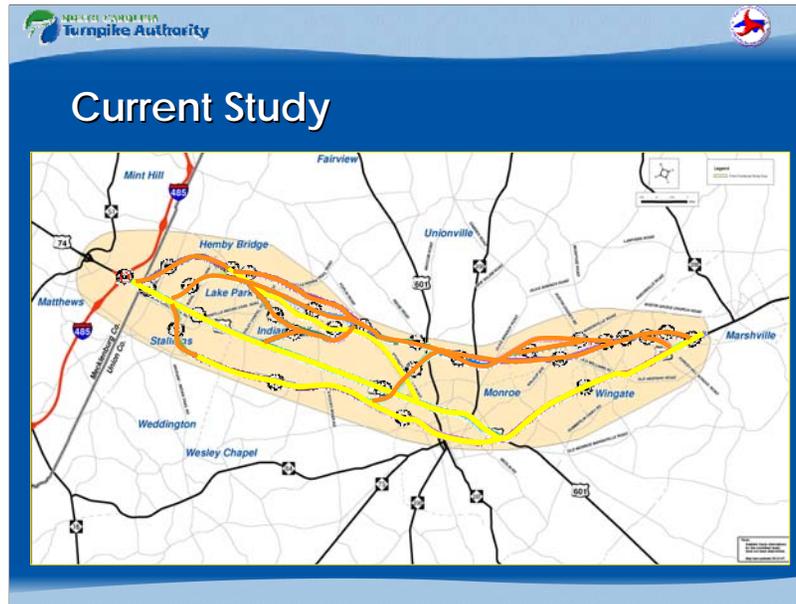
The project area is rapidly developing. Many new subdivisions have been built since the previous project studies were done. New neighborhoods include Charlestown, Arbor Creek and The Villas.

The area also several known historic properties. Historic properties are afforded special protection under federal law.



Formal detailed alignments have not yet been developed within this project study area. However, several preliminary corridors, shown this evening, have been identified for consideration.

The starting point for developing the preliminary corridors was based on information drawn from previous studies; input from local, state and federal agencies; and known constraints within the study area.



The preliminary alternatives include:

the No-Build or Do Nothing Alternative,

Improving Existing US 74; from I-485 to just west of Marshville.

Improving Other Existing Roadways;

Combinations of new location roadway and improvements to existing roadways, and

Building a New Highway

This set of preliminary alternatives will be narrowed down after the workshop to those that will be studied in detail in the next steps of the planning process.



**Preliminary Alternatives will be evaluated for:**

- ◆ **Ability to carry projected 2030 traffic volumes**
- ◆ **Ability to improve mobility and provide high-speed regional travel**
- ◆ **Potential to be tolled**

Preliminary alternatives will be evaluated for:  
their ability to carry projected year 2030 traffic volumes,  
their ability to improve mobility and provide high-speed travel, and  
their potential to be tolled.



## Tolling Options

- **Scenario 1 – entire project tolled**
- **Scenario 2 – tolls west of US 601, no tolls east of US 601**

In the current Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization's long range transportation plan for the region, the Monroe Connector is identified as a toll road, while the Monroe Bypass portion is not.

Because of this, and the possibility that the entire roadway may be tolled, two possible tolling scenarios have been identified. Scenario 1 includes tolling the entire facility. Scenario 2 includes toll collection on the proposed facility west of U.S. 601.

Representatives from MUMPO are present this evening and are requesting public input regarding toll options.



## Decisions About Tolling Affect:

- **Alternatives Studied**
- **Design of Alternatives**
- **When the project is built**

Decisions about what will be tolled will affect the alternatives identified for further study, how those alternatives will be designed, and when the project is built.



## How Much Will Tolls Cost?

- Specific costs not yet determined
- Many factors determine costs
- Toll revenues used for financing, operating, and maintaining roadway
- Tolls typically range from \$0.10-\$0.15 per mile

How much will tolls cost?

A preliminary traffic and revenue study was prepared in October 2006 and is available on the Turnpike Authority's website.

However, specific costs have not yet been determined. Tolls may be based on a number of factors; including the cost of the project, type of toll collection system, travel distance, vehicle type (for example, motorcycle, car, bus, or large truck) and other factors.

All revenues from tolls will be used to cover the cost of financing, operating and maintaining the road. Current legislation requires that when the roads are paid for, tolls will be removed. For a facility of this type, tolls typically range from 10 to 15 cents per mile.

The Turnpike Authority is evaluating different options available for toll collection. An open road transponder-based system will likely be the primary means of collection. This would allow drivers to open an account and drive through the toll collection points without stopping or slowing down.



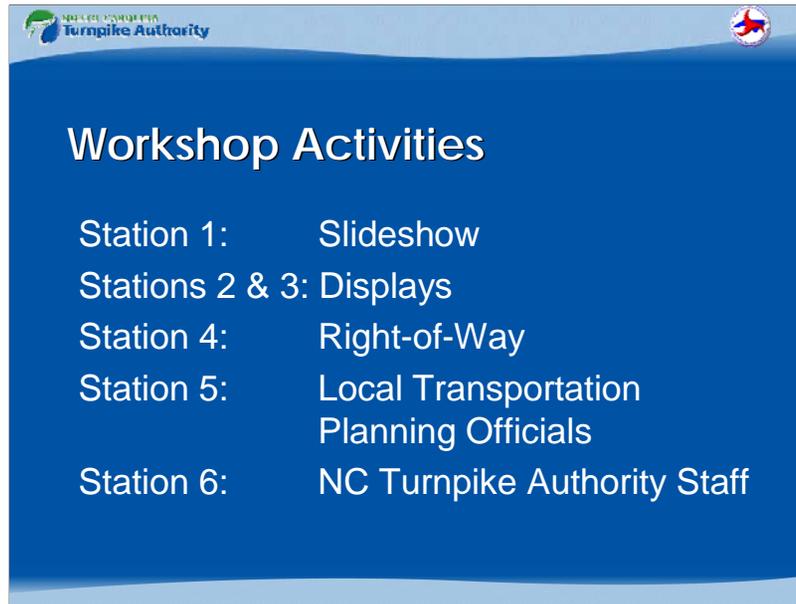
With the potential for continued changes in toll technology, and in light of compatibility discussions with other toll systems, the Turnpike Authority is planning to make a decision on the best system for the Monroe Connector/ Bypass project in late 2007.



## Schedule

- Summer 2008 - Draft environmental document
- Summer 2009 - Final environmental document
- Winter 2009 - Award construction contract
- Winter 2013 - Project open to traffic

The draft and final environmental documents are expected to be completed in 2008 and 2009. If a toll road is selected as the preferred alternative, construction would begin in 2009 and last approximately five years. The Monroe Connector / Bypass would then be open to the public by the winter of 2013.



There are several activities at the workshop this evening – organized into STATIONS 1 through 7. This slideshow is STATION 1.

At STATIONS 2 and 3 you can review maps and displays showing the study area and preliminary corridors. Members of the Project Study Team will be at these stations to talk with you on a one-on-one basis.

Right-of-way acquisition information is available at STATION 4.

Local transportation planning officials can be found at STATION 5. These representatives are here to gather your input on tolling options.

STATION 6 is staffed by the Turnpike Authority. They can answer your questions on project financing, toll operations or other Turnpike related questions.

**Provide Your Feedback**

Station 7:  
Comment  
Forms

**CONTACT INFORMATION (Please Print)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please abbreviate to save paper as much as possible)

How did you hear about the meeting?

Postcard  Newspaper  Friend/family  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments**

Your opinions about this project are important to us. Please use the space below to include your comments or questions. If you need additional space to write, please use additional comment sheets or include your own letter.

1. What project development issues are important to you and your community and should be addressed in the study? Please list or describe additional information collected from any interviews, workshops, neighborhood and community meetings, public hearings, community development and land use, cultural organizations and other organizations, such as school districts, community development and land use, cultural organizations and other organizations, such as school districts, etc.

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2. Based on what you have seen or heard, which alternatives, if any, do you feel would best serve transportation needs in the US 41 corridor area?

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the Study Team with your input at STATION 7. Your input is important to us and will be taken into consideration

FLORIDA Turnpike Authority

# Participate!



Drop your comments off tonight



Mail your comments



Email the study team

Place your comment forms in the drop-boxes located at STATION 7 and the Sign-In table. Otherwise, please email or mail your comments in the next few days. Addresses are on the form. If you know anyone that could not attend the meeting, but would like a comment form, feel free to take extra forms and handouts.



# Thank You!

Please proceed to Station 2

NC Turnpike Authority Website:  
[www.ncturnpike.org](http://www.ncturnpike.org)



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**2 minutes**

NC Turnpike Authority Website:  
[www.ncturnpike.org](http://www.ncturnpike.org)



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NC Turnpike Authority Website:  
[www.ncturnpike.org](http://www.ncturnpike.org)



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NC Turnpike Authority Website:  
[www.ncturnpike.org](http://www.ncturnpike.org)