

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

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DAVID W. JOYNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 5, 2007

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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).

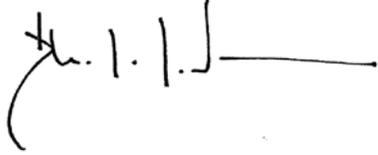
NCTA, in cooperation with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), will prepare an EIS on the proposed improvements in the US 74 corridor between I-485 in Mecklenburg County and the vicinity of the Town of Marshville in Union County. The proposed project is approximately 21 miles in length 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

2007 CONCURRENCE AND INTERAGENCY MEETINGS

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JANUARY 1

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- 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.

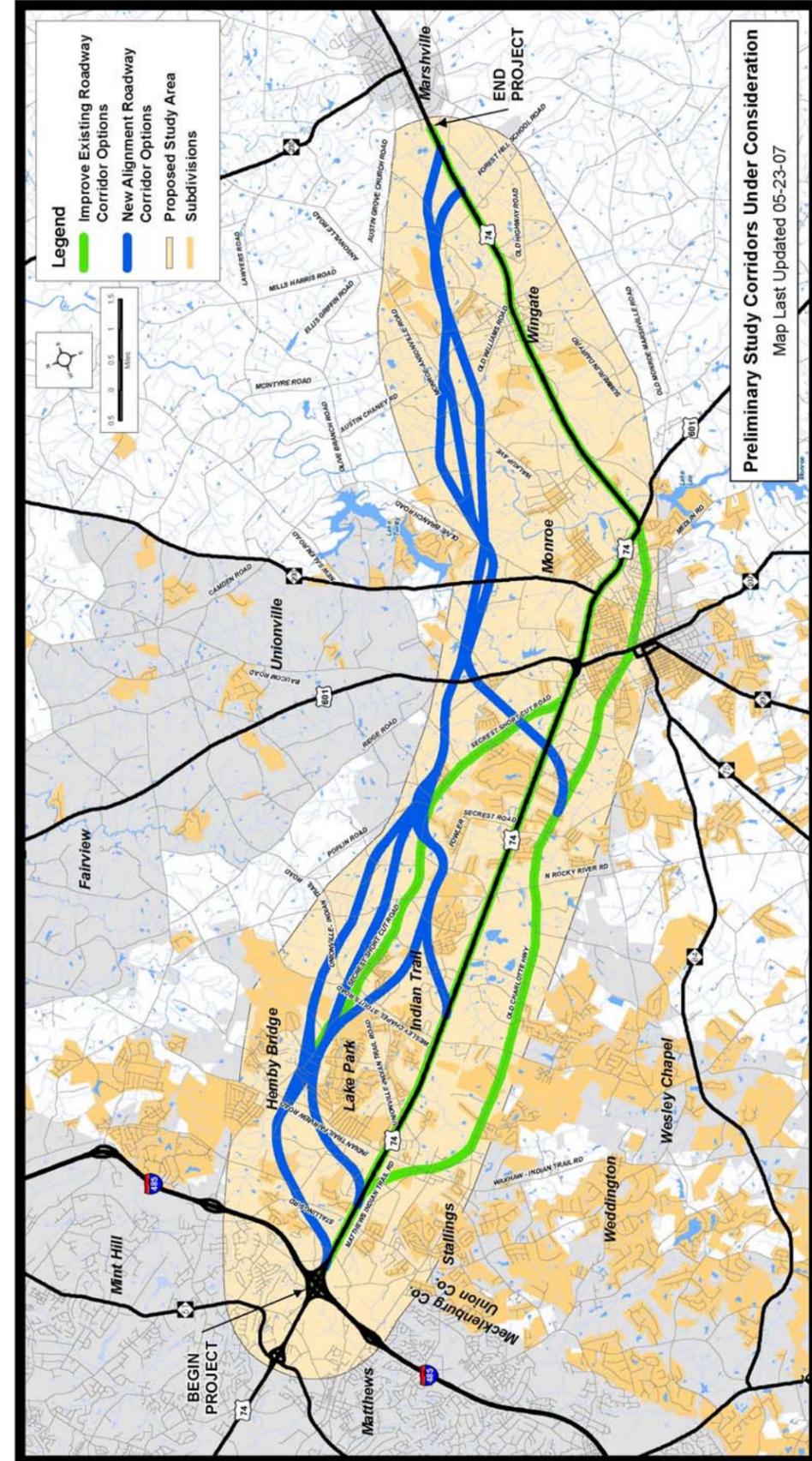
BEYOND

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

NC Turnpike Authority
May 2007

Project Study Area and Preliminary Study Corridors



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.

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



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Monroe Connector/Bypass Project Schedule

- | | |
|---|--|
| July 2008
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) | July 2009
Record of Decision (ROD) |
| Summer/Fall 2008
Corridor Public Hearing and Identify Preferred Alternative | December 2009
Award construction contract and begin construction |
| June 2009
Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) | 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
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(919) 571-3000 phone
monroe@ncturnpike.org



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

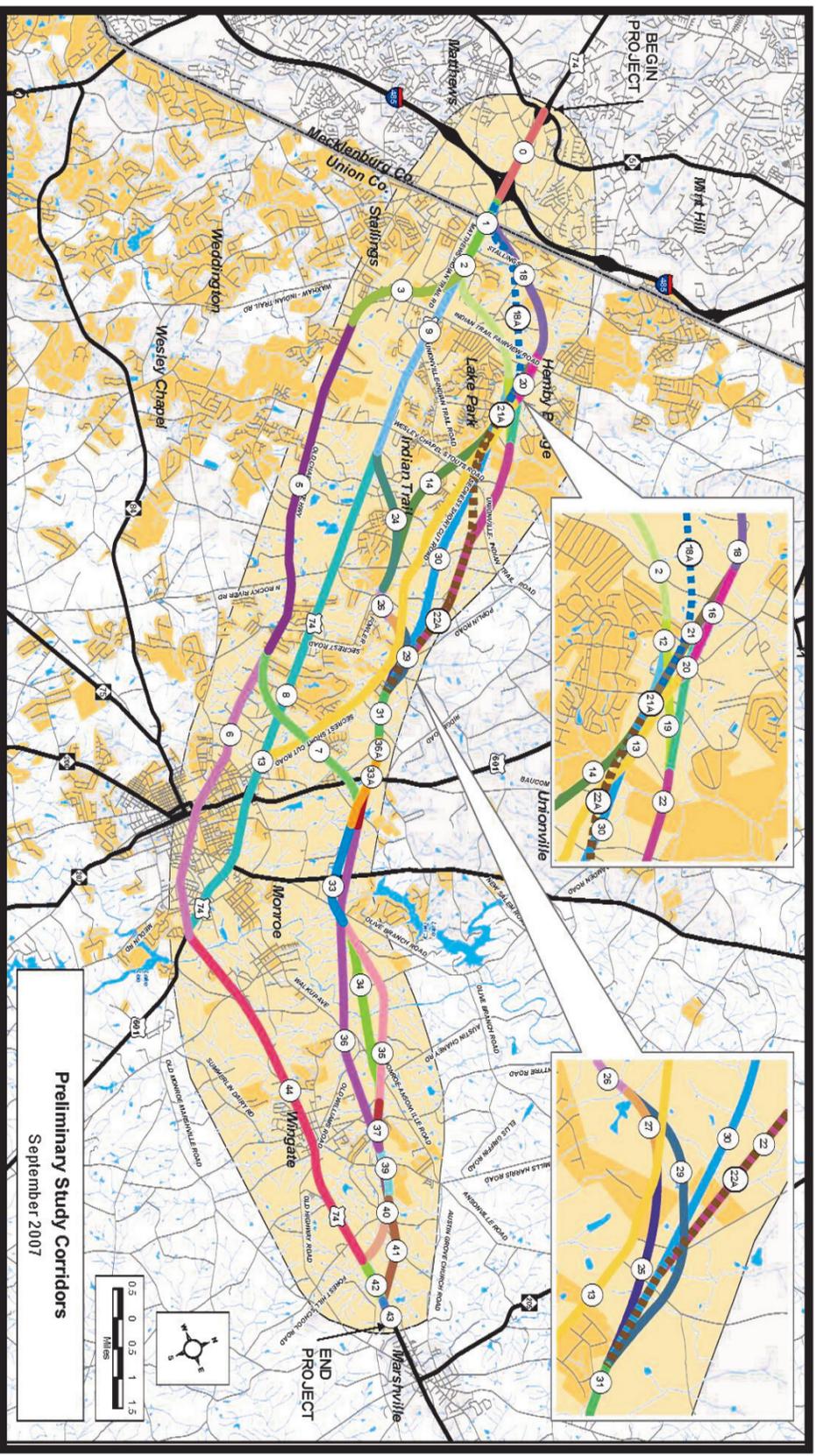
Statement of Purpose and Need

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

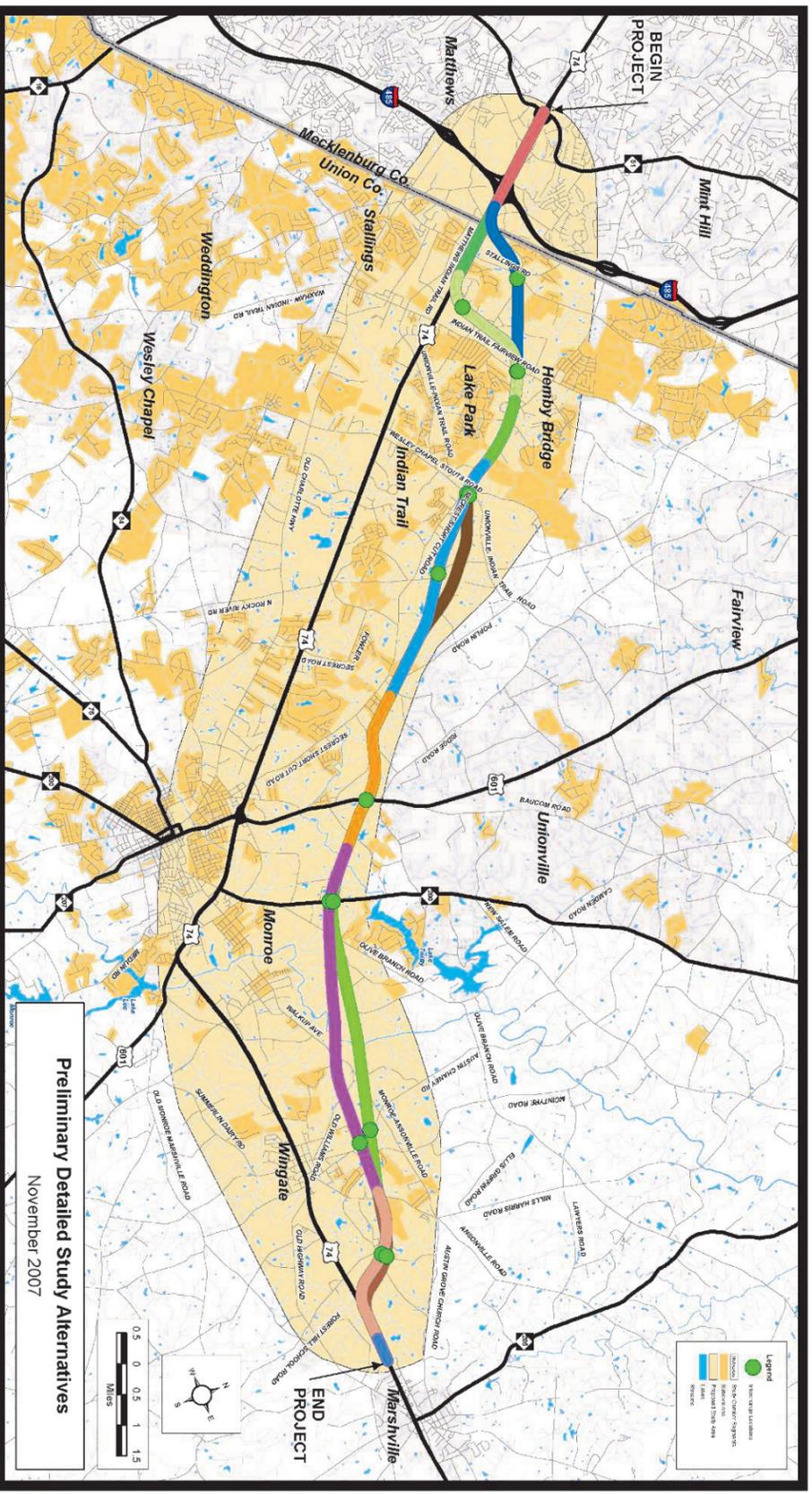
PRELIMINARY STUDY CORRIDORS



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.



Appendix D

Agency Comments and Responses

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4 RALEIGH OFFICE
TERRY SANFORD FEDERAL COURTHOUSE
310 NEW BERN AVENUE
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27601

Date: December 4, 2007

Ms. Jennifer Harris, P.E.
North Carolina Turnpike Authority
1578 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1578

RE: USEPA Comments: Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report
Monroe Connector/Monroe Bypass Toll Project; From I-485 to US 74
Mecklenburg and Union Counties
TIP Project Numbers: R-3329 and R-2559

Dear Ms. Harris:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 Office has reviewed the November 5, 2007, above referenced report from the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the Monroe Connector/Monroe Bypass project. EPA understands that the proposed facility is expected to be a 4-lane, divided highway that would ultimately be re-signed as Interstate 74 between Marshville and I-485 (Charlotte Outer Loop) for an approximate distance of 22 miles. NCTA requested comments from Section 6002 participating agencies by December 5, 2007. The project is not proposed for the NEPA/Section 404 Merger 01 process. EPA's records indicate that the connector portion of the project was previously a Merger 'pipeline' project when with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

The draft alternatives report includes a quantitative geographical information system (GIS) analysis screening of preliminary study alternatives. Ms. Kathy Matthews and I specifically met to review the draft report and discuss the alternatives that EPA believes should be carried forward for further analysis in the NEPA document (i.e., Draft Environmental Impact Statement – DEIS).

Based upon our review of the draft report and the screening information provided, EPA offers the following recommendations. From Table 4-2, there are 25 preliminary study alternatives. However, there are 7 primary alternative corridors (i.e., A, B, C, D, E, F and G) under consideration to be carried forward in the NEPA document with variations included for all but Corridor G (Improve existing for the entire project length). EPA concurs with the NCTA recommendation to eliminate Alternatives E and F, including E1, F1, E2, F2, E3 and F3. These alternatives compared to some of the others have significant impacts to both the human and natural environment and offer no discernible traffic benefits. Similarly, preliminary study alternatives B, B1, B2, B3, D,

D1, D2, and D3 have substantially higher impacts to both human and natural resources compared to the A and C corridor alternatives. EPA recommends that the B and/or D alternatives be eliminated from further detailed study.

As previously discussed as several “TEAC” meetings for this and other turnpike projects, EPA requests that Alternative G be carried forward in the NEPA document as a baseline of comparison to the remaining new location alternatives (Alternatives A and C). EPA recognizes the potentially substantial impacts to businesses along existing US 74. The ‘no-build’ alternative does not meet the stated purpose and need identified by NCTA and FHWA for the proposed project. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and implementing NEPA regulations require that a full range of alternatives be considered. The new location Alternatives A and C, by themselves or compared to the ‘no-build’, do not provide that ‘full range’ that EPA believes is needed for comparison purposes. Some of the ‘ability to meet project purpose and need’ comments that are included in Section 1.2.6, Improve Existing US 74 support this general position.

EPA has identified an environmental concern regarding the typical new location section and the proposed median width of 70 feet and the ‘improve existing’ typical section with frontage roads and a 74-foot median width (Figure 4-2). EPA requests further clarification and justification regarding the need for the proposed expanded median widths in the DEIS.

EPA also has a general comment regarding the presentation of technical data at this preliminary screening level based upon GIS data. Based upon recent conversations, FHWA and other agencies recognize the potential accuracy and precision issues for developing quantitative impact numbers at this stage of planning and using GIS data. Stream impacts are presented to the ‘foot’. NWI wetlands and pond impacts are represented to the ‘tenth of an acre’. Floodplain impacts are also shown in the tables to the nearest foot. EPA believes that this level of accuracy of impacts to natural resources is neither necessary for the purpose of alternative screening nor required for DEIS comparison purposes. FHWA and NCTA might consider reasonable ‘rounding’ to significant estimates at this stage in planning.

Based upon recent correspondence received from the public and NCTA’s response, EPA requests that a detailed analysis and disclosure be conducted regarding air conformity requirements for the combined Monroe Bypass/Monroe Connector projects. As part of this analysis, the NCTA may also need to consider the potential cumulative effects to air quality from the Gaston East-West project (U-3321) which is another potentially large NCTA candidate project, as well as other NCDOT TIP projects proposed in Mecklenburg, Union and Gaston counties (e.g., R-2123CE, R-2248E, R-2248F, R-4902, R-3101, R-2632A, U-2507, U-3603, U-3633, etc.).

This proposed NCTA project might also be a ‘pilot’ for a full quantitative analysis for Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) that are required to be analyzed under Section 202 of the Clean Air Act and are more fully addressed in the Final Rule on Controlling Emissions of Hazardous Air Pollutants from Mobile Sources (66 Federal Register 17229;

3/29/2001). Currently, FHWA's interim guidance includes a very general qualitative analysis and cites that project specific information is unavailable. NCTA has recently stated that the public's concern for MSATs will be further examined in the DEIS.

EPA again requests that a more 'robust' quantitative analysis needs to be conducted for this project, including development of an emissions inventory, obtaining 'near-roadside' baseline monitoring data, and an evaluation of the potential health impacts (including cancer risk estimates based upon published values) for the different detailed study alternatives A, C and G. The quantitative analysis should include the identification of existing and potential 'near-roadside' sensitive receptors, such as day care facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, etc. Please feel free to contact EPA Region 4's Air Toxics Assessment and Implementation Section for further guidance on performing a technically sound, project specific analysis for the 21 MSAT compounds that are found for highway projects.

EPA appreciates the opportunity for early comments on the draft alternatives report and to highlight some of the issues of environmental concern on this proposed toll facility under SAFETEA-LU Section 6002. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 919-856-4206. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Militscher, REM, CHMM
Merger Team Representative
NEPA Program Office - Raleigh

For: Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
EPA Region 4 NEPA Program Office

cc: Steve Lund, USACE
George Hoops, FHWA
Brian Wrenn, NCDWQ



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

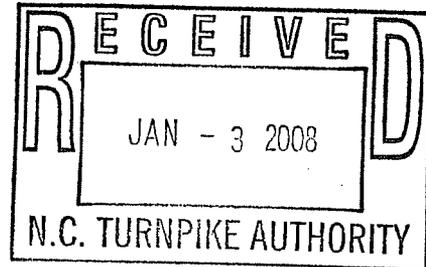
Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History
Division of Historical Resources
David Brook, Director

December 21, 2007

Jennifer H. Harris, PE
NC Turnpike Authority
1578 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1578



RE: Draft Alternatives Development & Analysis Report and Reconnaissance Report on Historic Architectural Resources, Monroe Connector/Bypass, R-3329 & 2559, Mecklenburg and Union Counties, CH03-3581

Dear Ms. Harris:

Thank you for your letter of November 5, 2007, transmitting the draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report. We also received and reviewed the above referenced reconnaissance report, prepared by the Department of Transportation's Historic Architectural Unit, for the same project. Given the relationship of the two documents to one another, we offer our comments in this single letter.

The architectural report correctly lists and describes properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and those previously determined eligible for listing. It also provides a list of three properties with exceptional architectural merit, which were identified as part of a visual survey of 100% of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and would require additional study. Because the survey work was only a reconnaissance level, there may be other properties in the APE that could be eligible for listing under Criteria A, B, or D and were not identified. Once the alternatives for in-depth study are selected, additional architectural survey work may be needed.

As for archaeological resources, we understand that a plan for survey and testing will be developed once a preferred/least environmentally damaging alternative is selected. This is acceptable to us.

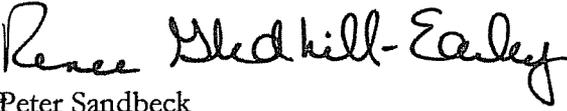
Although the three sites identified for additional study are not on the alternatives map, we understand that this is likely due to the timing of the two reports. However, we would note that the Indian Trail Presbyterian Church, which was previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register is not shown on Figure 4-1a.

At this point in the process of narrowing alternatives, we find that improve the existing and any of the alternatives with an interchange near the Secret Farm and Hiram Secret House are also likely to adversely affect these resources.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,


Peter Sandbeck

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT/OHE
Matt Wilkerson, NCDOT/OHE

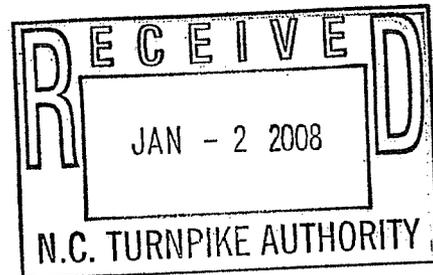


United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Asheville Field Office
160 Zillicoa Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

December 26, 2007



Ms. Jennifer H. Harris, P.E.
Staff Engineer
North Carolina Turnpike Authority
1578 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1578

Dear Ms. Harris:

Subject: Comments on the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report for the Proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass Project, Mecklenburg and Union Counties, North Carolina (TIP Nos. R-3329 and R-2559)

This letter responds to a request for our review and comments regarding the selection of alternatives for detailed study for the subject project. Our comments are provided in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 661-667e), and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) continues to study improvements to US 74 from east of Monroe, North Carolina, to the I-485 Charlotte Outer Loop. We have participated in the NCTA's interagency meetings to discuss various levels of screening to help determine appropriate alternatives to carry forward for detailed study, and the NCTA has held several public meetings and has published a newsletter to gather public input regarding alternatives to study in detail. Currently, the NCTA is proposing to carry forward four primary alternatives (Alternatives A-D) with variations (1-3) of each, which have minor differences from the primary alternatives. Alternatives E, F, and G are proposed to be dropped from further consideration. These three alternatives involve partially or completely improving the existing US 74 route. When viewed at a large scale, the four alternatives that are proposed to remain for detailed study represent one single corridor with three variations.

General Concerns - We are concerned about the direct impacts from new location alternatives to streams, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, and sensitive species in the project area. The current proposal--to study only those alternatives that will be built on new location--greatly limits the opportunity to avoid impacts to the natural environment. The proposed project study corridors contain portions of Richardson Creek, North and South Fork Crooked Creek, Stewart's

Creek, and East Fork Stewart's Creek and their tributaries. Richardson Creek supports populations of native freshwater mussels, including two federal species of concern--the Savannah lilliput (*Toxolasma pullus*) and the Carolina creekshell (*Villosa vaughaniana*). North and South Fork Crooked Creek contain the Savannah lilliput and Carolina creekshell as well as a third mussel that is also a federal species of concern--the Atlantic pigtoe (*Fusconaia masoni*). These populations of the Savannah lilliput are among the few remaining populations of this species in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River basin and are in decline.

Federally Listed Species - The currently proposed project corridors are just south of the Goose Creek watershed, which supports one of ten remaining populations of the federally endangered Carolina heelsplitter (*Lasmigona decorata*) and is designated as critical habitat for the heelsplitter. This population is considered vital to the continued existence of the species. Although there likely will be no direct effects to the Goose Creek watershed associated with the project, we believe there is the potential for indirect and cumulative impacts from development induced by construction of this highway project. Implementing measures to protect the Goose Creek watershed and its habitat are essential to maintaining the heelsplitter in North Carolina. We continue to recommend protective measures as described in our letter dated February 13, 2007, in which we responded to a request for our review and comments regarding the initiation of scoping for this project.

At this time we recommend that Alternative G--improving the existing US 74 corridor alternative--remain an option for study. This alternative minimizes direct impacts to natural resources and is physically the farthest from the Goose Creek basin. Alternative G will likely have the least amount of induced development, and whatever development does result from implementing the project will be concentrated in an already-developed area. Alternative G also provides a more realistic comparison to the new-location alternatives for all impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) than does the no-build alternative. In addition to the proposed set of alternatives, we recommend that at least one alternative eliminate the interchange at US 601. This interchange has the potential to induce development directly in the Goose Creek watershed through improvements to US 601 itself as well as through the growth and development along US 601 that will be facilitated by the new highway.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments at this early stage in project planning. If you have questions about these comments, please contact Ms. Marella Buncick of our staff at 828/258-3939, Ext. 237. In any future correspondence concerning this project, please reference our Log Number 4-2-07-132.

Sincerely,



Brian P. Cole
Field Supervisor

cc:

Ms. Marla J. Chambers, Western NCDOT Permit Coordinator, North Carolina Wildlife
Resources Commission, 12275 Swift Road, Oakboro, NC 28129

Ms. Polly Lespinasse, Mooresville Regional Office, North Carolina Division of Water Quality,
610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301, Mooresville, NC 28115

Mr. Steve Lund, Asheville Regulatory Field Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 151 Patton
Avenue, Room 208, Asheville, NC 28801-5006

Mr. Chris Militscher, Environmental Protection Agency, 1313 Alderman Circle, Raleigh, NC
27603

Mr. John F. Sullivan, III, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, 310 New
Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, NC 27601



Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Coleen H. Sullins, Director
Division of Water Quality

January 11, 2008

Ms. Jennifer Harris, P.E.
North Carolina Turnpike Authority
1578 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1578

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposed Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report for the Monroe Connector/Bypass, Dated November 5, 2007, Union and Mecklenburg Counties, STIP Project Nos. R-3329 and R-2559

Dear Ms. Harris:

This letter is being provided in response to the North Carolina Turnpike Authority's (NCTA) request for comments from the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) for the above referenced project. The purpose of the above referenced project is to improve mobility and capacity in the US 74 corridor from I-485 in Mecklenburg County to the area just west of the Town of Marshville in Union County, for a distance of approximately 20 miles.

Alternatives for the project were developed and then screened to determine whether they had the ability to meet "purpose and need" and whether the alternatives would be "practical and reasonable". Based on this screening process, 25 Preliminary Study Alternatives (PSAs) progressed to the Quantitative Third Screening. Subsequently, as a result of the Quantitative Third Screening, the NCTA is recommending that nine (9) PSAs be eliminated from further study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) due to overall higher impacts than the remaining 16 PSAs.

At this time, NCDWQ is prepared to recommend elimination of Alternatives E and F, including E1, E2, E3 F1, F2 and F3 due to overall substantially higher impacts associated with these alternatives. However, NCDWQ is not prepared to eliminate any other alternatives at this time, including Alternative G and any alternative which incorporates Section 22A (all A and C alternatives).

Alternative G (improve existing US 74 – controlled access highway), as documented in the report, meets the purpose and need of the project. The remaining alternatives, A, B, C and D, appear to represent a single "corridor" with only minor variations in location. Based on this information, NCDWQ does not believe that eliminating Alternative G, at this time, allows for consideration of "all" feasible alternatives, specifically since this alternative continues to meet the purpose and need of the project. As discussed in the meeting on December 5, 2007, it is recommended that a "limited" Indirect and Cumulative Impacts (ICI) evaluation be conducted on the remaining alternatives, including Alternative G, which may provide information that allows for further elimination of additional alternatives.

Stream impacts for Alternatives A and C (A, A1, A2, A3, C, C1, C2 and C3) do not accurately reflect the estimated amount of stream impact due to a proposed interchange which is included in the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MUMPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Currently, Table 4-2 in the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report does not include stream impact estimates for an interchange on this segment at Rocky River Road.

One
North Carolina
Naturally

North Carolina Division of Water Quality
Internet: h2o.enr.state.nc.us

610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301
Mooresville, NC 28115

Phone (704) 663-1699
Fax (704) 663-6040

Ms. Jennifer Harris
Page Two

Additional impacts associated with this interchange would be incurred to the South Fork of Crooked Creek, which is currently on the NCDWQ 303d List for impaired biological integrity. Prior to recommending the elimination of any alternatives, NCDWQ requests that the table be updated to accurately reflect additional stream impacts associated with an interchange on this segment.

NCDWQ appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report and looks forward to our continued working relationship on this project. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Polly Lespinasse at (704) 663-1699.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Krebs
Regional Supervisor
Surface Water Protection Section

Cc: Polly Lespinasse, NCDWQ Mooresville
Brian Wrenn, Supervisor, Transportation Permitting Unit, Raleigh
Steve Lund, USACE Asheville Field Office
Marella Buncick, USFWS
Marla Chambers, NCWRC
Chris Militscher, EPA



⊠ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ⊠

TO: Jennifer Harris, P.E.
North Carolina Turnpike Authority

FROM: Marla Chambers, Western NCDOT Permit Coordinator *Marla Chambers*
Habitat Conservation Program, NCWRC

DATE: January 14, 2008

SUBJECT: Review of the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report for the Monroe Connector/Bypass, Union and Mecklenburg Counties. TIP No. R-3329 and R-2559.

As a participating agency and in accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, staff biologists with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) have reviewed the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report prepared for the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) and have participated in Turnpike Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) meetings regarding the subject project. Screening of preliminary alternatives for the Monroe Connector/Bypass was discussed at TEAC meetings on 15 August 2007, 27 September 2007, 17 October 2007, and 5 December 2007.

NCWRC commented previously on this project, formerly two projects under the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) – the Monroe Bypass and the Monroe Connector, which is now being developed as a toll road by NCTA. If ultimately it does not become a toll facility, the project would go back to NCDOT and it should be noted that the screening process for alternatives would need to be repeated for a non-toll facility as ability to toll was a crucial screening factor in the process.

NCWRC provided information on a number of state and federally listed species inhabiting streams in the project area, such as North Fork and South Fork Crooked Creek, and Richardson Creek, in comments dated 16 August 2002 and 14 January 2004. Although the streams were identified and their 303(d) list status provided, the sensitive nature of the streams was not mentioned and it does not appear these species were fully accounted for in Table 4-2 in the “Natural Heritage Program Occurrences/Sites” screening criteria.

A major concern we have with this report is that the alternatives remaining after the second qualitative screening and those remaining after the third quantitative screening are portrayed as more numerous than they actually are, which makes the analysis more confusing and more complex than need be. The “Relative Segment Comparison Assessment” (section 3.3) looked at four areas where several route options exist to get from one point to another within the same area. While the number of routes was reduced in some areas, each of the four areas carried two route options to the third screening level. Figure 3-13 illustrates the alternatives to be carried to the third quantitative screening, which shows essentially four alternative corridors, however they are portrayed as 25 separate Preliminary Study Alternatives (see Table 3-1) and evaluated in the extensive Table 4-2. After the third quantitative screening, the 16 alternatives proposed to be carried forward for detailed study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) are depicted in Figure 4-5; however, they are essentially minor variations of one alternative corridor, differing only by the similar parallel segments in the four aforementioned areas.

We recommend that the four pairs of similar segments be illustrated as widened areas of the alternative corridors and be analyzed the same as other portions of the alternatives, using a best-fit conceptual design. A different approach would be to put the four pairs of segments through the quantitative third screening first to choose between each pair, and then connect segments from endpoint to endpoint for the analysis between the basic remaining corridors. It appears the basic corridors after the second level screening are widen existing (Alternative G), new location (Alternatives A, B, C, D and variations containing these letters), and two alternatives with both new location and existing roadway segments (Alternatives E and F and their variations).

We would also like to reiterate that segment 26, which has a number of issues including historic resources, should be adjusted westward to provide a best-fit connection to segment 24 in the vicinity of the ridgeline (see email comments dated 10/11/2007). Together segments 26 and 24 provide one of the two connections between the new location and existing roadway portions of the alternatives. We are concerned that essentially one alternative corridor is proposed to be studied in detail and recommend that at least one other viable alternative be carried forward in order to provide a thorough assessment and comparison of potential alternatives. Analysis of more than one corridor may help the public and agency reviewers of the DEIS to support the eventual preferred alternative.

In addition, the following minor comments and suggestions are to assist in completing the final alternatives report:

1. Figures that show alternative segments on a map may need segment labels repositioned for clarity. For example, on Figure 2-5 labels for segments 2 and 13 appear to be located on existing US 74.
2. It is helpful that the color of segments in the figures are consistent throughout the document, however on Figure 3-13 segment 34 changed from green to brown.
3. Section 1.1.1 – the second paragraph is a repeat of most of the first paragraph.
4. Section 3.1 – a word is missing in the last sentence of “Relative Segment Comparison” bullet.

5. Section 3.2.2.3 – in the first paragraph, the reference to Section 3.2.3 likely should be Section 3.3 or 3.3.2 as Section 3.2.3 wasn't found in the report.
6. Section 3.3.2 – the crossings in the second and third bullet under “Comparison” (page 3-8) could be better identified in Figure 3.6.
7. Table 4-1 – “Watersheds” should be “Protected Watersheds” or “Water Supply Watersheds” and the impacts for it, and for “Floodplains”, should be in acres for better comparison.
8. Section 4.2.1 – “Stream Impacts” discussed perennial and intermittent streams separately, however it may be useful to also report total stream impacts.
9. Table 4-2 – footnotes are not defined.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this document. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (704) 984-1070.



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WILMINGTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
151 PATTON AVENUE
ROOM 208
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28801-5006**

CESAW-RG-A

January 11, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR MS. JENNIFER HARRIS, NORTH CAROLINA TURNPIKE
AUTHORITY, 1578 MAIL SERVICE CENTER, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27699-
1578

SUBJECT: Comments on Monroe Connector/Bypass, TIP Nos. R-3329 and R-2559

1. Reference your request of November 5, 2007 for our comments on the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report for the subject project located in Union and Mecklenburg Counties.
2. We have completed our review of this report and offer the following comments in the context of our role as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the project and as a regulatory agency with responsibilities under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended.
3. We would like to see an evaluation of the potential effects of induced and relocated development on aquatic resources of the area prior to dropping all alternatives that involve upgrading all or portions of the existing US Highway 74. We are particularly concerned with the potential effects from relocating large numbers (potentially hundreds) of businesses on streams within the US Highway 74 corridor. This could be accomplished by including an evaluation of potential cumulative effects for the preliminary study alternatives in the quantitative third screening. Alternatively, we recommend that Alternative G (upgrade existing US 74) be carried forward on an interim basis until such time as additional information on cumulative impacts can be developed and evaluated.
4. We concur with the decision to carry the new location Alternatives A-D forward for detailed evaluation. These four alternatives essentially form one corridor with variations of each. There are however, sufficient differences among these variations in residential and business relocations, hazardous materials sites, total linear feet of stream within the right-of-way and potential floodplain impacts to warrant detailed evaluation. As indicated in Item 3 above, Alternative G should also be carried forward at this time.
5. The screening process, as included in this report, is an integral part of the alternatives evaluation required by the 404(b)(1) Guidelines of the Clean Water Act as well as the NEPA process. As such, the entire Alternatives Development and Analysis Report should be included in the Draft EIS.
6. The term "isolated wetlands" has specific regulatory implications under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and should not be used in the report except in this regulatory context (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).

7. If you have any questions, please contact me at telephone (828) 271-7980 or by email at steven.w.lund@usace.army.mil

Steven W. Lund
Project Manager
Asheville Regulatory Field Office



Monroe Connector / Bypass

Mecklenburg And Union Counties

TIP Nos. R-3329 / R-2559

A Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis report was prepared to document the alternatives development, screening and evaluation process used in determining appropriate alternatives for detailed study for the Monroe Connector/Bypass project. The draft report was distributed for review and comment to resource and regulatory environmental agencies, as well as the public. A summary of comments received follows.

Public Review of Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report

The draft report was posted to NCTA's website for public review on November 5, 2007, and a newsletter was distributed to the project mailing list of more than 25,000 names to announce the availability of the draft report and solicit public comment on the alternatives development process and recommended alternatives for detailed study. Public comments were requested by December 5, 2007. However, it was brought to NCTA's attention that a typographical error in the newsletter directed public comments to an incorrect email address. In response to this error, the public comment deadline was extended to December 21, 2007.

During the comment period, the following comments were received:

- 22 inquiries about impacts to individual properties.
- 2 comments regarding improvements needed on US 601 between US 74 and the North Carolina/South Carolina border.
- 1 comment to use NC 218 as the route for the Connector/Bypass.
- 2 emails supporting alternatives that include Corridor Segment 18A.
- 67 emails opposing alternatives that include Corridor Segment 18A.
- Village of Lake Park opposed alternatives that include upgrading existing US 74, including alternatives that include Corridor Segment 2.
- The Town of Indian Trail indicated that Corridor Segments 2 and 22A are inconsistent with local land use plans and expressed concern that Segment 2 would impact the Old Hickory Industrial Park.
- The following localities commented in support of routes that do not include Corridor Segment 18A:
 - Town of Stallings
 - Town of Matthews
 - City of Monroe

In addition, NCTA received a petition with 1,693 signatures and 609 copies of a form letter opposing alternatives that include Corridor Segment 18A.

Agency Review of Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report

Below are comments received from Federal, State, and Local agencies on the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis report distributed for review on November 6, 2007 and discussed at the December 5, 2007 TEAC meeting for the Monroe Connector/Bypass project.

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
1	USEPA	Misc.	EPA understands that the proposed facility is expected to be a 4-lane, divided highway that would ultimately be re-signed as Interstate 74 between Marshville and I-485...	While the facility is expected to be a 4-lane, divided freeway, there are no plans to re-sign it as an interstate.
2	USEPA	Alternatives	EPA concurs with the NCTA recommendation to eliminate Alternatives E and F, including E1, F1, E2, F2, E3, and F3.	Comment noted.
3	USEPA	Alternatives	Preliminary study alternatives B, B1, B2, B3, D, D1, D2, and D3 have substantially higher impacts to both human and natural environments compared to the A and C corridor alternatives. EPA recommends that the B and/or D alternatives be eliminated from further detailed study.	NCTA recommends that the B and D alternatives be retained for further study. Projected impacts for these corridors were lower because conceptual designs for these alternatives did not include an interchange at Rocky River Road; however, once traffic forecasts are received, it may be necessary to consider an interchange in that location.
4	USEPA	Alternatives	EPA requests that Alternative G be carried forward in the NEPA document as a baseline of comparison to the remaining new location alternatives.	Based on agency comments, NCTA will carry forward Alternative G on an interim basis until such time as additional information can be developed and evaluated.
5	USEPA	Typical Section	EPA has identified an environmental concern regarding the typical new location section and the proposed median width of 70 feet and the 'improve existing' typical section with frontage roads and a 74-foot median width. EPA requests further clarification and justification regarding the need for the proposed expanded median widths in the DEIS.	NCTA developed the typical sections for the new location and 'improve existing' alternatives to allow maximum flexibility in the functional designs. It may be possible to reduce these widths as part of the efforts to avoid and minimize impacts of the preferred alternative.
6	USEPA	Report	EPA also has a general comment regarding the presentation of technical data at this preliminary screening level based upon GIS data.... FHWA and	NCTA agrees.

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
			NCTA might consider reasonable 'rounding' to significant estimates at this stage in planning.	
7	USEPA	Air Quality	Based upon recent correspondence received from the public and NCTA's response, EPA requests that a detailed analysis and disclosure be conducted regarding air conformity requirements for the combined Monroe Bypass/Monroe Connector projects. As part of this analysis, the NCTA may also need to consider the potential cumulative effects to air quality from the Gaston East-West project...as well as other NCDOT TIP projects proposed in Mecklenburg, Union, and Gaston counties....	Potential impacts on air quality will be assessed according to the applicable Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) policies and guidance in place at the time of the analysis and disclosed in the Draft EIS.
8	USEPA	Air Quality	This proposed NCTA project might also be a 'pilot' for a full quantitative analysis for Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs)...	Potential impacts on air quality will be assessed according to the applicable FHWA policies and guidance in place at the time of the analysis and disclosed in the Draft EIS.
9	USEPA	Air Quality	EPA again requests that a more 'robust' quantitative analysis needs to be conducted for this project, including development of an emissions inventory, obtaining 'near-roadside' baseline monitoring data, and an evaluation of the potential health impacts (including cancer risk estimates based upon published values) for the different detailed study alternatives... The quantitative analysis should include the identification of existing and potential 'near-roadside' sensitive receptors, such as day care facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, etc.	Potential impacts on air quality will be assessed according to the applicable FHWA policies and guidance in place at the time of the analysis and disclosed in the Draft EIS.
10	NCDCR-HPO	Historic Architecture	...there may be other properties in the APE that could be eligible for listing under Criteria A, B, or D and were not identified. Once the alternatives for in-depth study are selected, additional architectural survey work may be needed.	NCTA will discuss the need for additional survey work with NCDOT and HPO once alternatives for detailed study are finalized.
11	NCDCR-HPO	Archaeology	As for archaeological resources, we understand that a plan for survey and testing will be developed once a preferred/least environmentally damaging alternative is selected. This is acceptable to us.	NCTA will coordinate with NCDOT and HPO once a preferred alternative is selected to develop a plan for surveying and testing for archaeological resources.
12	NCDCR-	Report	..the three sites identified for additional	These sites will be added to the

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
	HPO		study are not on the alternative map...Indian Trail Presbyterian Church, which was previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register is not shown on Figure 4-1a.	mapping.
13	NCDCR-HPO	Historic Architecture	...we find that improve the existing and any of the alternatives with an interchange near the Secrest Farm and Hiram Secrest House are also likely to adversely affect these resources.	Comment noted.
14	USFWS	Alternatives	We are concerned about the direct impacts from new location alternatives to streams, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, and sensitive species in the project area. The current proposal – to study only those alternatives that will be built on new location – greatly limits the opportunity to avoid impacts to the natural environment.	Comment noted.
15	USFWS	ICI	Although there likely will be no direct effects to the Goose Creek watershed associated with the project, we believe there is the potential for indirect and cumulative impacts from development induced by construction of this highway project. Implementing measures to protect the Goose Creek watershed and its habitat are essential to maintaining the heelsplitter in North Carolina. We continue to recommend protective measures as described in our letter dated February 13, 2007....	Comment noted.
16	USFWS	Alternatives	At this time, we recommend that Alternative G—improving the existing US 74 corridor alternative – remain an option for study. This alternative minimizes direct impacts to natural resources and is physically the farthest from the Goose Creek basin.	Based on agency comments, NCTA will carry forward Alternative G on an interim basis until such time as additional information can be developed and evaluated.
17	USFWS	Alternatives	In addition to the proposed set of alternatives, we recommend that at least one alternative eliminate the interchange at US 601. This interchange has the potential to induce development directly in the Goose Creek watershed through improvements to US 601 itself as well as through growth and development along US 601 that will be facilitated by the new highway.	NCTA may evaluate the impacts of eliminating interchanges during impact minimization efforts for the preferred alternative.

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
18	NCDWQ	Alternatives	At this time, NCDWQ is prepared to recommend elimination of Alternatives E and F, including E1, E2, E3, F1, F2, and F3 due to overall substantially higher impacts associated with these alternatives.	Comment noted.
19	NCDWQ	Alternatives	NCDWQ is not prepared to eliminated any other alternatives at this time, including Alternative G and any alternative which incorporates Section 22A (all A and C alternatives).	Comment noted.
20	NCDWQ	Alternatives	The remaining alternatives, A, B, C, and D, appear to represent a single “corridor” with only minor variations in location. Based on this information, NCDWQ does not believe that eliminating Alternative G, as this time, allows for consideration of “all” feasible alternatives, specifically since this alternative continues to meet the purpose and need of the project.	Comment noted.
21	NCDWQ	ICI	As discussed in the meeting on December 5, 2007, it is recommended that a “limited” Indirect and Cumulative Impacts (ICI) evaluation be conducted on the remaining alternatives, including Alternative G, which may provide information that allows for further elimination of additional alternatives.	Based on agency comments, NCTA will carry forward Alternative G on an interim basis until such time as additional information can be developed and evaluated.
22	NCDWQ	Alternatives	Stream impacts for Alternatives A and C (A, A1, A2, A3, C, C1, C2, and C3) do not accurately reflect the estimated amount of stream impact due to a proposed interchanges which is included in the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MUMPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Currently, Table 4-2 in the Draft Alternatives Development and Analysis Report does not include stream impact estimates for an interchange on this segment at Rocky River Road.... Prior to recommending the elimination of any alternatives, NCDWQ requests that the table be updated to accurately reflect additional stream impacts associated with an interchange on this segment.	The interchange at Rocky River Road will be included in all detailed study alternatives for purposes of comparing impacts through the Draft EIS. Impacts associated with this interchange to the South Fork of Crooked Creek will be assessed during detailed studies and discussed at a future agency coordination meeting. After selecting a preferred alternative, NCTA, in coordination with the agencies, may evaluate eliminating this interchange.
23	USACE	ICI	We would like to see an evaluation of the potential effects of induced and relocated development on aquatic resources of the	NCTA will carry forward Alternative G on an interim basis until such time as additional information can be developed

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
			area prior to dropping all alternatives that involve upgrading all or portions of the existing US 74. We are particularly concerned with the potential effects from relocating large numbers (potentially hundreds) of businesses on streams with the US 74 corridor. This could be accomplished by including an evaluation of potential cumulative effects for the preliminary study alternatives in the quantitative third screening.	and evaluated.
24	USACE	ICI	Alternatively, we recommend that Alternative G (upgrade existing US 74) be carried forward on an interim basis until such time as additional information on cumulative impacts can be developed and evaluated.	NCTA agrees.
25	USACE	Alternatives	We concur with the decision to carry the new location Alternatives A-D forward for detailed evaluation. These four alternatives essentially form one corridor with variations of each. There are however, sufficient differences among these variations in residential and business relocations, hazardous materials sites, total linear feet of stream with the right of way and potential floodplain impacts to warrant detailed evaluation.	Comment noted.
26	USACE	Report	The entire Alternatives Development and Analysis Report should be included in the Draft EIS.	The report will be included in the Draft EIS.
27	USACE	Report	The term “isolated wetlands” has specific regulatory implications under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and should not be used in the report except in this regulatory context (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).	This will be corrected in the final report.
28	NCWRC	Misc.	If ultimately it [the Monroe Connector/Bypass] does not become a toll facility, the project would go back to NCDOT and it should be noted that the screening process for alternatives would need to be repeated for a non-toll facility as ability to toll was a crucial screening factor in the process.	Comment noted.
29	NCWRC	Report	NCWRC provided information on a number of state and federally listed species inhabiting streams in the project area, such as North Fork and South Fork Crooked Creek, and Richardson creek in	NCTA will review these comments and incorporate information into the final Alternatives Development and Analysis Report as appropriate.

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
			comments dated 16 August 2002 and 14 January 2004. Although the streams were identified and their 303(d) list status provided. The sensitive nature of the streams was not mentioned and it does not appear these species were fully accounted for in Table 4-2 in the "Natural Heritage Program Occurrences/Sites" screening criteria.	
30	NCWRC	Alternatives	We recommend that the four pairs of similar segments be illustrated as widened areas of the alternatives corridors and be analyzed the same as other portions of the alternatives, using a best-fit conceptual design. A different approach would be to put the four pairs of segments through the quantitative third screening first to choose between each pair, and then connect segments from endpoint to endpoint for the analysis between the basic reaming corridors.	Comment noted.
31	NCWRC	Alternatives	We would also like to reiterate that segment 26, which has a number of issues including historic resources, should be adjusted westward to provide a best-fit connection to segment 24 in the vicinity of the ridgeline (see email comments dated 10/11/2007). Together segments 26 and 24 provide one of the two connections between the new location and existing roadway portions of the alternatives.	Comment noted.
32	NCWRC	Alternatives	We are concerned that essentially one alternative corridor is proposed to be studied in detail and recommend that at least one other viable alternative be carried forward in order to provide a thorough assessment and comparison of potential alternatives. Analysis of more than one corridor may help the public and agency reviewers of the DEIS to support the eventual preferred alternative.	Based on agency comments, NCTA will carry forward Alternative G on an interim basis until such time as additional information can be developed and evaluated.
33	NCWRC	Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Figures that show alternative segments on a map may need segment labels repositioned for clarity. 2. It is helpful that the color of segments in the figures are consistent throughout the 	These comments will be incorporated into the final report.

	Agency	Subject	Comment	Response
			<p>document, however on Figure 3-13 segment 34 changed from green to brown.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Section 1.1.1 – the second paragraph is a repeat of most of the first paragraph. 4. Section 3.1 – a word is missing in the last sentence of “Relative Segment Comparison” bullet. 5. Section 3.2.2.3 – in the first paragraph, the reference to Section 3.2.3 likely should be Section 3.3 or 3.3.2 6. Section 3.3.2 – the crossings in the second and third bullet under “Comparison” (page 3-8) could be better identified in Figure 3.6. 7. Table 4-1 – “Watersheds” should be “Protected Watersheds” or “Water Supply Watersheds” and the impacts for it, and for “Floodplains”, should be in acres for better comparison. 8. Section 4.2.1 – “Stream Impacts” discussed perennial and intermittent streams separately, however it may be useful to also report total stream impacts. 9. Table 4-2 – footnotes are not defined. 	