

APPENDIX K

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS

- Citizens Informational Workshop Comment Form, Handout,
and Local Officials Meeting Minutes 06/25 & 26/07
- Project Newsletters #1 06/2007
- Project Newsletters #2 11/2007

Contact Information [-Please Print-]

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

[-Please remember to include your zip code-]

How did you hear about the meeting?

Postcard Newspaper Friend/Family Other: _____

Comments

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

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.

2. Based on what you have seen tonight, which alternative, if any, do you feel would best serve transportation needs in the US 74 corridor area?

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

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?

5. When you think about the potential impacts of this project, please tell us how concerned you are with each of the following. Please place a check in the appropriate box.

Impact	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Little Concern	No Concern	No Opinion
Potential impacts to the environment					
Potential impacts to local resident					
Potential impacts to local businesses					
That it might be a toll road					
The construction schedule					
Traffic congestion					
Growth in the area					
Project delay					

Other (please explain) _____

6. Do you have any questions or comments regarding charging tolls to help fund its construction and to pay for on-going operations and upkeep of the road?

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

Mr. Carl Gibilaro PE
 PBS&J
 5200 77 Center Dr, Suite 500
 Charlotte, NC 28217
 cgibilaro@pbsj.com
 Ph: 704-522-7275

-or-

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

Please return Comment Form by July 27, 2007

**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

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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.

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.

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Project Hotline: (800) 475-6402

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.

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:

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*Monroe Connector / Bypass Study
Mecklenburg and Union Counties
TIP Project Numbers R-3329 & R-2559
Citizens Informational Workshop - June 25 & 26*

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.

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.

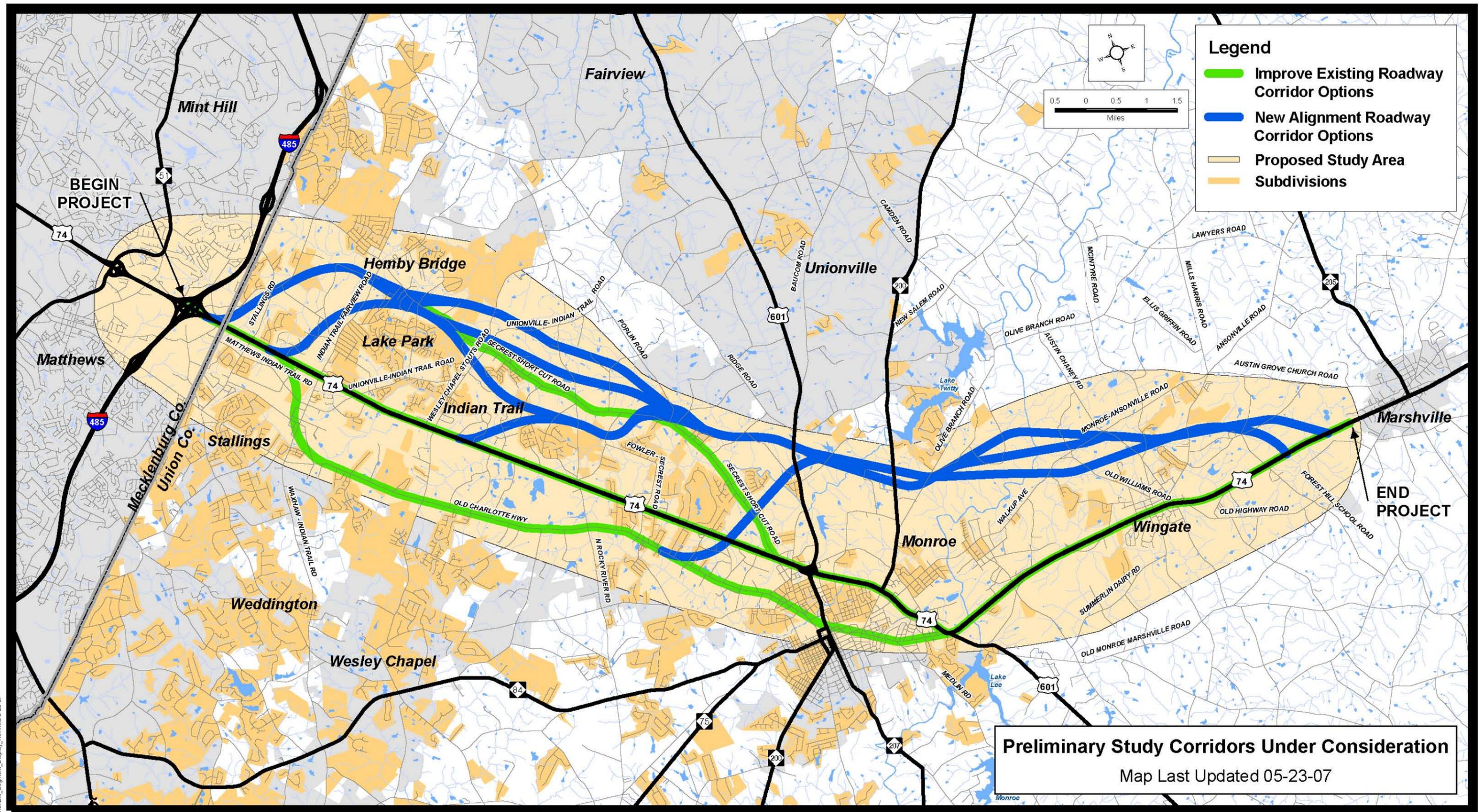
In accordance with FHWA guidelines alternatives considered will include:

- **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*)

MONROE CONNECTOR / BYPASS

Project Study Area and Preliminary Study Corridors





Local Officials Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 25, 2007
10:00 am to 11:55 am
Monroe City Hall - Board Room

Project: TIP R-3329 Monroe Connector – NHF-74(21)
TIP R-2559 Monroe Bypass – NHF-74(8)

Attendees:

NC Board of Transportation

Marion Cowell
Larry Helms

NC Turnpike Authority Board

Bill Lackey
John Culbertson

Anson County

Jarvis T. Woodburn
Andy Lucas
Anna Baucom
Bobby Sikes

Town of Indian Trail

Shelly DeHart

Town of Marshville

Carl Webber

Town of Matthews

Roger Messera
CJ O'Neill
Kathi Ingrish
Hazen Blogen

City of Monroe

Bobby Kilgore
Craig Meadows
Dottie Nash
Wayne Herron
Terry Sholer

John Ashcraft
Mark Donham
P.E. Bazemore
Debra Korb

Town of Stallings

Lynda Paxton
Wyatt Dunn
Al Graham
Brian Matthews

Town of Wesley Chapel

Justin Krieg

Town of Wingate

Tony Maye
Nathel Hailey
Dryw Blanchard

Union County

Roger Lane
Christie Putnam
Amy Helms

Senator Goodall's Office

Frank Feldman

NCDOT

Jack Flaherty
Ed Lewis
Jonathan Parker
Neal Strickland

FHWA

George Hoops

Student

Autumn Smith

Charlotte Observer

Mike Torralba

CDOT

Tim Gibbs

NCTA

David Joyner
Grady Rankin
JJ Eden
Steve Dewitt
Jennifer Harris
Reid Simons
Shannon Sweitzer
Carolyn Johnson

HNTB

Whitt Webb
Anne Redmond
Christy Shumate

PBS&J

Carl Gibilaro
Jill Gurak
Lauren Wolfe
Kim Bereis

Meeting Purpose:

- Update local officials on the status of the Monroe Connector / Bypass project and present materials that will be on display at the Citizens Informational Workshops scheduled for the evenings of June 25th and 26th.

- The meeting was comprised of five sections:
 - Welcome and Introductions – David Joyner, NCTA
 - Project Overview – Steve Dewitt, NCTA
 - Project Financing Options – Grady Rankin
 - The Business of Tolling – Jim (JJ) Eden, NCTA
 - Open Discussion – Reid Simons
- Key points brought up during the presentations include:

Project Overview

- There will be a \$65 billion gap between transportation needs and revenues
- Purpose of the project is to; 1) improve Mobility, 2) provide high-speed regional travel, and 3) maintain existing property access
- Two toll scenarios are being analyzed; 1) toll entire facility and 2) only toll west of US 601.
- Toll amounts have not yet been determined.
- Current project schedule calls for roadway to be open in winter 2013.

Project Financing Options

- A decision needs to be made by mid-2007 on how the road will be funded.
- In the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) there is \$71.7 million allocated for the Monroe Connector and \$114 million allocated toward the Monroe Bypass.
- Tolling both the Connector and Bypass will result in \$30 million being able to be transferred to other projects.
- Tolling only the Connector will result in a \$109 million shortfall plus the additional \$30 million that could have been shifted to other projects.

The Business of Tolling

- Monroe Connector / Bypass will utilize an Electronic Toll Collection system.
- Will allow tolls to be paid without having to stop at a collection booth.
- Aesthetics of the roadway will be an important consideration in the design of the facilities.

Following the presentation an open discussion was held where the officials asked questions about the project, project funding and tolling. Questions asked were as follows:

- 1) **Who regulates / sets the toll rates?** – The NCTA and their board are empowered to set the tolls but lenders have the right to review tolls and help set them.
- 2) **Does the General Assembly have any part of it?** – No. It was also stated that the State of North Carolina would not be responsible for any bonds sold to build the toll facilities.
- 3) **What would trucks pay for a toll?** – They would pay significantly higher than automobiles.
- 4) **How much is allocated in the current TIP and how much extra would be needed to build as a non-toll roadway?** - \$185 million currently available and an additional \$109 million would need to be identified if tolls are not used.
- 5) **If the project is tolled and there is a \$30 million surplus in TIP funds, who makes the decision as to where that money will go?** – NCDOT and MUMPO
- 6) **What about the occasional user who only uses the road once a year go to or from the beach? Will they need a transponder?** – Video technology can be utilized to capture that cars license plate and a bill can be mailed to them.
- 7) **Is there a possibility for free access for people who live there?** – No
- 8) **Will there be volume discounts?** – Yes
- 9) **Will tolls be permanent or will they eventually be removed?** – Current legislation calls for their removal after the bonds are paid off.
- 10) **What is the anticipated life of the bonds?** – 40 years
- 11) **Why is this being studied again? A route has already been chosen.** – The elimination of Section “A” of the Bypass resulted in that project not having a logical endpoint in the opinion of the Federal Highway Administration. The Connector needed to connect to the Bypass to have a logical endpoint. At the request of MUMPO, a decision was made to combine the two projects with its endpoints being I-485 / US 74 and US 74 just west of Marshville.

- 12) **Will any of the routes shown today be eliminated early?** - Some routes will be eliminated later this summer as we identify our detailed study alternatives.
- 13) **Are there any other toll roads that don't have a cash option?** – Yes
- 14) **Won't you lose revenue without a cash option?** – No, in some cases having a cash option actually costs more because the operational costs are more than the revenue that you bring in.

General comments made during the open discussion:

- 1) The aesthetics of the roadway will do a lot for the community and the region.
- 2) US 74 is a dangerous road. The project should be built for safety reasons.
- 3) Tolls are only being considered because of the financial shortfall in being able to build this project.
- 4) The Traffic and Revenue report estimates that 40% to 50% of the traffic on US 74 will be diverted to the Connector / Bypass. This will result in a better ride for those choosing to stay on US 74.
- 5) Those who use the toll road will provide a benefit to those that continue to US 74 by reducing the traffic volumes on that road.
- 6) \$5 to \$6 a day is too much to pay to use the road.
- 7) We don't need all the amenities, we just need roads.

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**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

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

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.

Monroe Connector / Bypass

CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOPS
How YOU can get involved...

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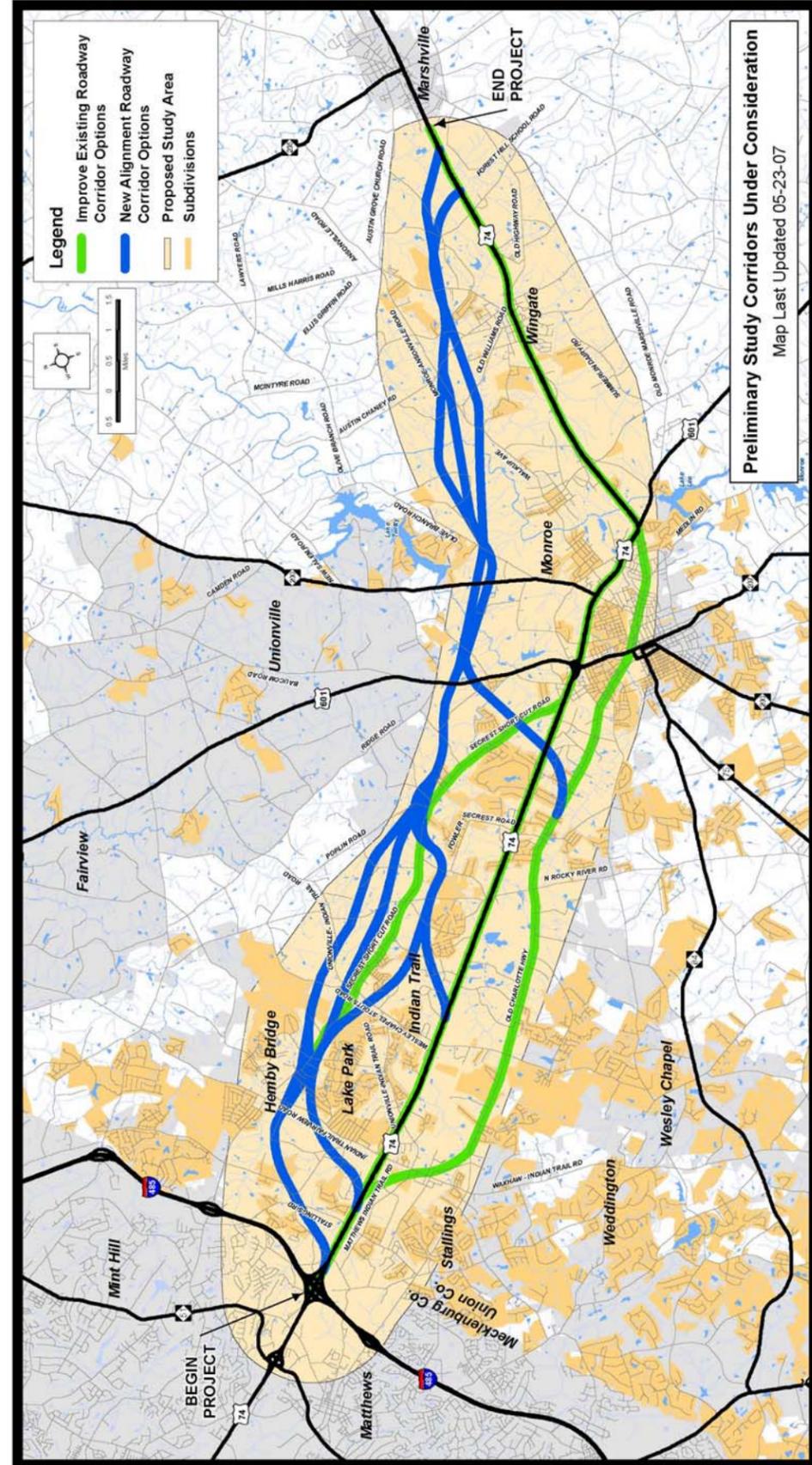
BEYOND

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 21, 2007. NCTA accepts comments at any time during the project study process. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to call the project hotline at 1-800-475-6402 or email monroe@ncturnpike.org.

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5400 Glenwood Ave, Suite 400
Raleigh, NC 27612

Monroe Connector/Bypass Project Schedule

July 2008
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Summer/Fall 2008
Corridor Public Hearing and Identify Preferred Alternative

June 2009
Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

July 2009
Record of Decision (ROD)

December 2009
Award construction contract and begin construction

2013
Project open to traffic



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

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monroe@ncturnpike.org



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

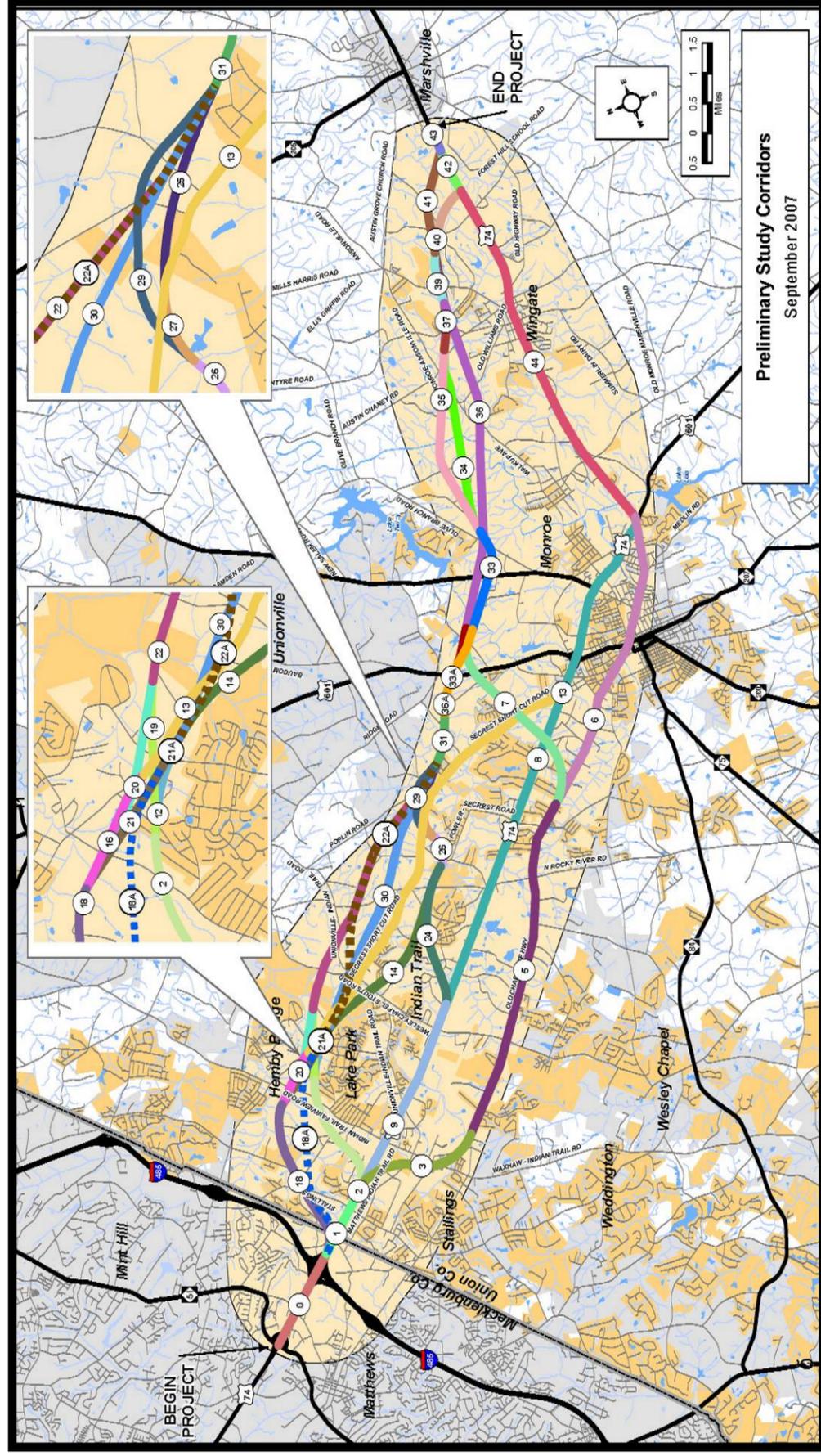
Statement of Purpose and Need

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 21, 2007. You can submit comments via email to monroe@ncturnpike.org or mail correspondence to:
Jennifer Harris, P.E.
North Carolina Turnpike Authority
5400 Glenwood Ave, Suite 400
Raleigh, NC 27612

PRELIMINARY STUDY CORRIDORS

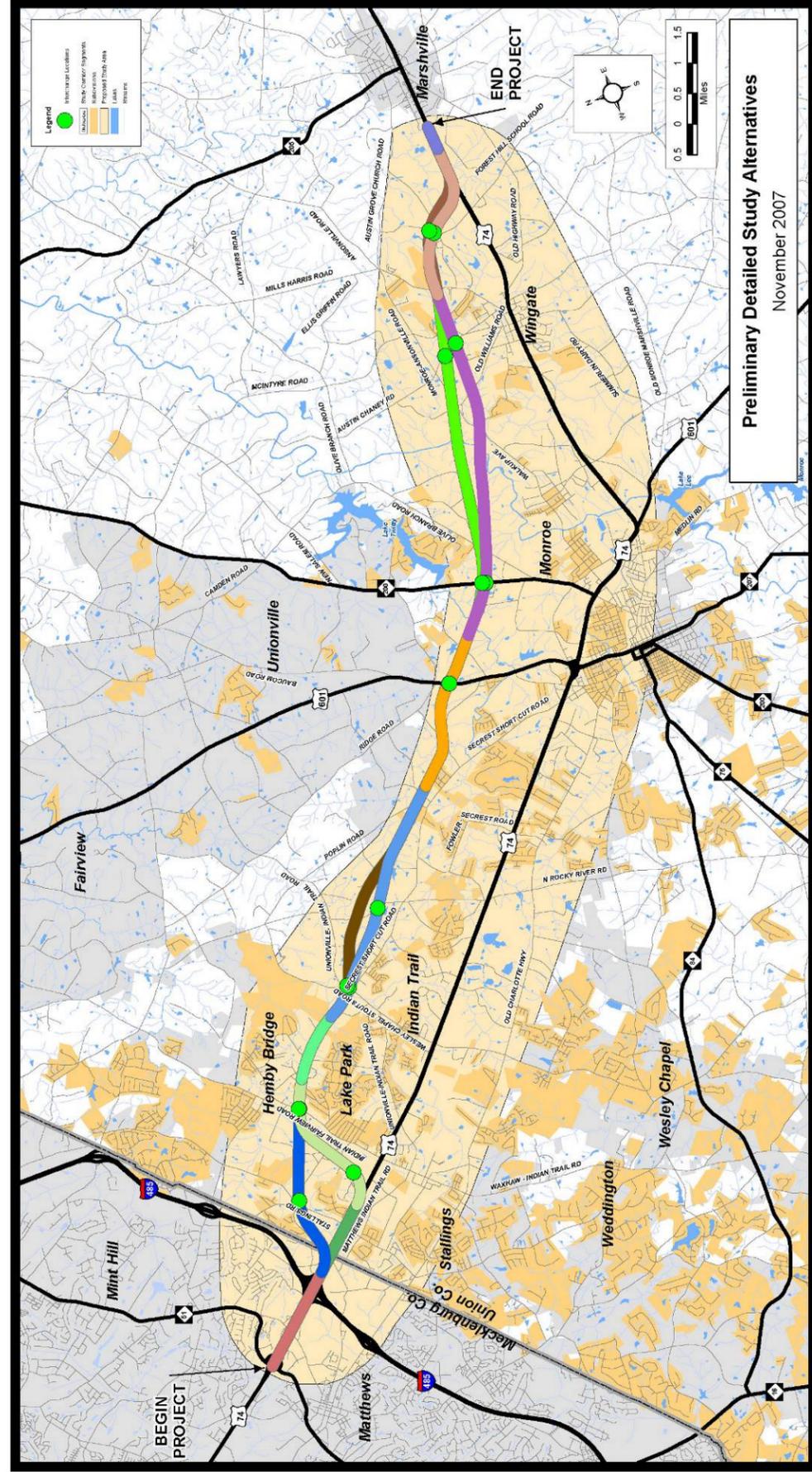


This map shows all the preliminary study corridors that entered the alternatives screening process.



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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.



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