

NC 109 Improvements

Agency Coordination

Procedures for the participation of Federal, state, and local agencies at key decision-making points in the development of transportation projects have been developed. These procedures, which allow appropriate agencies to "have a say" earlier in the transportation development and environmental study process, are being incorporated into the study. The **NCDOT**, the **FHWA**, and the agencies will review, evaluate, and reach "concurrence" on all major project decisions that may result in a significant effect on the human and natural environments.

Four concurrence points are needed from a "project team " of agencies before the project can move forward. The "project team" is comprised of representatives from the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NC State Historic Preservation Office, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Division of Water Quality, local planning organizations, **NCDOT**, and Federal Highway Administration.

The **first concurrence point**, "Purpose and Need," was agreed upon at a September 15, 2004, meeting of project team members. The needs for the project are:

- Capacity Deficiencies
- Above-Average Accident Rates
- Deficient Roadway Geometry

The purpose of the project is to improve safety, traffic flow, and level of service along the NC 109 corridor in the project study area.

The **second concurrence point** is "Selection of Alternatives for Detailed Study". On August 15, 2006, comments received from the public at the November 2005 Citizens Informational Workshops on the five preliminary corridors, along with preliminary assessments of the potential impacts of each corridor, were summarized and presented to the project team. The team then determined that all five preliminary corridors should be carried forward for further detailed study and analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The **third concurrence point** is "Selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)", which is currently scheduled to be held in the winter of 2009. Work to be performed between now and the Selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) includes the following:

- **Detailed Field Surveys**-Includes intensive field surveys for protected plant and animal species, wetlands, and streams within the corridors of the Detailed Study Alternatives.
- **Engineering Studies**-Includes the development of preliminary engineering designs for the Detailed Study Alternatives.
- **Environmental Analysis**-Includes addressing issues such as traffic, land use, farmland, socio-economic factors, residential/business relocations, environmental

justice, air quality, noise, natural resources (wetlands, streams, endangered species), hydraulics, floodplains, archaeological resources, historic resources, hazardous substances/underground storage tanks, visual impacts, and construction impacts.

- **Concurrence Point 2A**-The North Carolina Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Association, and the Project Team will review and agree upon bridge locations and approximate lengths.
- **Publishing of Technical Reports**
- **Publishing a Draft Environmental Statement**-The draft environmental statement will include the purpose and need for the project and summaries of the alternatives analysis, detailed field surveys, preliminary engineering, and environmental analyses. A newsletter will be mailed out announcing the completion of the draft environmental statement.
- **Hold a Pre-Hearing Open House**
- **Hold a Corridor Public Hearing**-The hearing provides a formal opportunity for public comment regarding the Draft Environmental Statement. The hearing will be held in the project area. The time, date, and location will be announced prior to the hearing.
- **Review comments on the Draft Environmental Statement and review the Public Hearing Transcript**
- **Select the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) Concurrence Point 3**- The North Carolina Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Association, and the Project Team will select the LEDPA based upon the results described in the Draft Environmental Statement and input received from citizens and governmental agencies (i.e. local officials, state environmental agencies, and federal agencies).