

**Question & Answers to the  
Mebane Steering Committee Meeting Notes  
October 7, 2004  
TIP Project U-3109  
NC 119 Relocation in Mebane, Alamance County**

The Mebane Steering Committee met on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004 to discuss the NC 119 relocation project. The Wills Duncan Group (WDG) facilitated this meeting and used a “charette” format with 3 separate groups meeting in separate rooms. A facilitator from WDG presented each group with a list of issues to discuss and questions to answer. Discussion items were based on issues raised by steering committee members at previous meetings. This memo will summarize the results of the charette discussions and provide additional information on issues associated with the NC 119 Relocation project.

**GROUP I**

***I-1 “What would opening access within Mebane do to traffic? (i.e. dead end streets).”***

The relocation of NC 119 will improve access to most of the areas located south and west of Mebane as stated in the description of the purpose and need for the project as well as facilitate the north-south movement of through-traffic (including truck traffic) in the Mebane area. In addition, the relocated NC 119 facility is also proposed as a partially-controlled access roadway which will limit access to adjacent properties and cross-streets as necessary to maintain safety standards and optimal traffic flow along the proposed NC 119 corridor. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the relocation of NC 119 would generate a substantial increase in traffic volumes on local streets. Conversely, it is expected that through-traffic currently traveling on existing NC 119 and other local streets would be diverted to the new four-lane facility that provides a faster and more direct route for north-south travel.

There are several intersections planned for the new NC 119 corridor and major crossroads to provide improved access and connectivity to communities located along the proposed NC 119 corridor. In the vicinity of the West End community, new access to the NC 119 facility is proposed via a connection with Smith Drive. Additional street connectivity improvements are proposed within West End including the extension of Corrigidor Road to Roosevelt Street and Tate Avenue. These connections will improve access to the community from the west, and south and provide greater connectivity of streets within the West End neighborhood. The new access may result in a minimal increase in traffic volumes on roadways within the community, however, it is not expected to cause a substantial increase because the new connections via Smith Drive and Corrigidor Road would not offer faster travel times or more direct travel routes than NC 119 related traffic to downtown Mebane, US 70 or other major destinations in the area.

New access to the Fieldstone community could also be considered if the community desired direct access to the relocated NC 119 facility via Fieldstone Drive. However, several residents of the Fieldstone community have expressed great concern about access being provided from the relocated NC 119 facility to their neighborhood.

***I-2 “Have alternate truck routes and truck limitations been studied (alternate highway routes)?”***

The Burlington-Graham Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan studied the roadway network in the Alamance, Burlington and Graham urban areas, including the best ways possible to route truck traffic in and around the area. Regional truck traffic is most likely to use the interstate system. In the project vicinity, I-85 and US 29 are the primary north-south truck routes between Virginia and North Carolina. In the future, I-73 will also serve north-south traffic through the Greensboro area. Therefore, it is likely that most of the truck traffic on NC 119 (or NC 49) have local origins or destinations. The proposed relocation of NC 119 will upgrade approximately 4 miles of roadway which will have limited impact on the overall travel times for truckers. Thus, we do not expect a shift in truck traffic from other truck routes such as NC 49 as a result of this project. There is however, a shift expected in truck traffic and through-traffic from the existing NC 119 facility to the proposed relocation of NC 119 because of faster travel times for north –south travel offered by the new facility.

***I-3 “What impact will the bypass have on Mebane-Rogers Road and schools particularly as it relates to increased traffic from Highway 49 and the new bridge?”***

The study Team used the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Long-Range Transportation Planning model to forecast traffic both with and without the relocation of NC 119. The model shows that current traffic volumes on Mebane-Rogers /Stagecoach Road, west of NC 119 are 3,400 vehicles per day.

The model forecasts 2025 traffic volumes on Mebane-Rogers Road of 12,800 vehicles per day with no relocation of NC 119 and 11,000 vehicles per day with the relocation of NC 119 in place. Therefore, we do not expect traffic to increase on Mebane-Rogers Road because of the relocation of NC 119 and there may be a small decrease in traffic volumes.

If traffic were diverted from NC 49 to the new route, vehicles would probably be travelling to and from I-85. To determine if traffic would shift from NC 49 to the proposed relocation of NC 119, the travel distance was calculated for two travel corridors between the intersection of NC 49 at Mebane-Rogers Road and I-85. The travel distance from NC 49 at Mebane-Rogers Road to the interchange of Jimmy Kerr Road and I-85 is about 4 miles. The distance from the intersection of NC 49 and Mebane-Rogers Road to the interchange of NC 119 with I-85 using Mebane-Rogers Road and the new NC 119 is about 5.4 miles. Because the fastest route for NC 49

traffic to gain access to I-85 is via the Jimmy Kerr interchange, we do not expect any substantial traffic volumes to be diverted to the relocated NC 119. This is also substantiated by the model traffic assignments which include all major routes in Alamance County.

***I-4 “Is this highway best for the whole Mebane community and the State?”***

As is the case with every transportation improvement project, the NC 119 relocation project has advantages and drawbacks. The benefits and impacts of the proposed project will be addressed in the environmental document; however, it is ultimately up to the “decision makers” within Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and NCDOT to use the information presented in the environmental document to determine if the benefits outweigh the costs. The final alignment selected for the relocation of NC 119 will cause the least harm of the alternative alignments that have been studied.

***I-5 “Is this the best location for the bypass?”***

Since the project was originally scoped in 1994, ten (10) study corridor alternatives have been evaluated on the west side of Mebane. Based on field studies, coordination with environmental agencies, public involvement, and analysis of design constraints, NCDOT narrowed the list of viable alternatives to the three (3) current detailed study corridor alternatives which are considered to be the most suitable in terms of meeting the purpose and need for the project and minimizing adverse impacts to the human and natural environments.

The three alternatives being studied in the DEIS are located west of Mebane. The proposed project, located west of Mebane, is depicted in the City of Mebane 2010 Land Development Plan which is intended to guide the community’s growth and development. The growth strategy designations for the project study area indicate that the proposed NC 119 relocation corridor is within the areas specified for “Primary Growth” east of the proposed corridor and south of US 70. The area west of the proposed NC 119 corridor and south of US 70 is designated as an “Economic Development” area. The majority of the land north of US 70 within the vicinity of the proposed NC 119 corridor is designated as a “Rural Conservation” area. These designations indicate that the areas along the southern portion of the proposed NC 119 corridor are envisioned as moderate to high growth areas of primarily industrial and commercial uses. The northern portion of the proposed corridor, most of which is within the water supply/watershed critical area, will remain as low-density development of rural residential and open space.

***I-6 “Will the bypass open the north and west for controlled growth?”***

Controlled growth is likely to result from the proposed project north and west of the Mebane area. This potential for growth and land use change will be addressed in

the Indirect and Cumulative Impacts (ICI) study and will be incorporated into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Access will be limited to major intersections along the proposed project corridor north of US 70 and driveway access will be prohibited within this section of the NC 119 corridor. South of US 70, access along the proposed NC 119 corridor will be provided at the existing and proposed major intersections. Also, development restrictions for the water supply water shed critical area already in place will limit the potential for induced development along the segment of NC 119 between US 70 and White Level Road (SR 1917).

Based on preliminary investigations, it is not expected that the relocation of NC 119 will induce substantial growth north of US 70 because the new route will shorten travel distances between I-85 and White Level Road (SR 1917) by less than one-half mile and travel times will be reduced by only several minutes. The distance between I-85 and White Level Road (SR 1917), traveling along existing NC 119 is about 4 miles. Using relocated NC 119, the distance is 3.6 miles. Thus, although traffic may flow better using the new route, the small reduction in travel distance will result in a small savings in travel time.

**I-7    *Various Questions:***

***Details of Highway***

- 1.) Exact size***
- 2.) Access points***
- 3.) Speed limit***

The typical cross section proposed for the project consists of a 4-lane, median-divided facility with grass shoulders (see Appendix A for typical cross section). The measured edge-of-pavement to edge-of-pavement roadway width (including center median) is 86 feet. The anticipated preliminary right of way width required to construct this type of facility is 150 feet. Access will be limited to major intersections along the proposed project corridor north of US 70. South of US 70, access along the proposed NC 119 corridor will be provided at the existing and proposed major intersections. It is anticipated that the posted speed limit will be 45 mph.

**I-8    *Committee would like to see models used to determine need for highway***

- 1.) vehicles (counts)***
- 2.) projected growth***
- 3.) State needs***
- 4.) Development changes***

The Study Team used the Long-Range Transportation Planning model which incorporates socio-economic data, provided by the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), into the traffic forecasting process. The traffic demand forecasted for the year 2025 uses land use, economic development,

population, employment and housing forecasts for the region to estimated the future travel needs and capacity constraints (see Figures 7-12 in Appendix A). The transportation model shows that for the year 2025 traffic volumes on NC 119/Fifth Street are estimated to be almost twice the current volumes, and will exceed the capacity of the existing two-lane roadway.

The model results also show that relocated NC 119 will relieve congestion on existing NC 119. Current two-way traffic volumes on NC 119/Fifth Street north of Mebane Oaks Road are 15,700 vehicles per day, which is approaching the design capacity of 18,000 vehicles per day for a two-lane, two-way roadway. By 2025, without the proposed relocated NC 119, traffic on this segment of NC 119/Fifth Street will increase to 29,700 vehicles per day, which will exceed the capacity of the roadway. With the proposed relocation of NC 119 in place, Fifth Street traffic for the year 2025 will be 19,800 vehicles per day which exceeds the capacity of a two-lane, two-way roadway. The relocation of NC 119 will provide relief for future congestion along Fifth Street and support the growth forecasted for the Mebane area.

### ***I-9 Infrastructure***

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b><i>1. Relocation</i></b>                 | <b><i>2. Homes</i></b>                                   |
| <b><i>3. Communities</i></b>                | <b><i>4. Utilities</i></b>                               |
| <b><i>5. Open roads</i></b>                 | <b><i>6. Alternatives to overpass(map of Mebane)</i></b> |
| <b><i>7. Grade crossings</i></b>            | <b><i>8. East/West access</i></b>                        |
| <b><i>9. Wells &amp; septic tanks</i></b>   | <b><i>10. Split 3 old communities</i></b>                |
| <b><i>11. Holt St. could be cut off</i></b> |  |

The effects of the roadway improvements on these issues will be addressed in the DEIS.

### ***I-10 Displacement***

#### ***“How many and what is the process”***

This information is not available at this time; however, the number of relocated homes and businesses will be determined once preliminary designs for each alternative are completed. The final relocation report, including the number of homes, business, cultural resources, and rental properties, will be included in the DEIS. The relocation assistance process is included in the Important Project Information Sheet (see Appendix A).

## **GROUP II**

***II-1 “Water Quality – run off concerns; going through critical watershed; drinking water from wells; other existing groundwater, pollutants (source of).”***

NC Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) requires that NCDOT follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to avoid and minimize impacts to water quality during both the design and construction phase of the project. In addition, it is anticipated that this project will require NCDOT to apply for both a State water quality certification permit as well as a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit. These permits require measures to ensure that stormwater runoff from the proposed project does not affect the critical watershed, area drinking water wells, or other existing groundwater areas. Several methods of filtering stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces will be investigated during the hydraulic design phase of the project (see discussion in Question II-2).

***II-2 “Is there any way that the water quality can be protected if the road is built?”***

As stated above, it is NCDOT policy to minimize impacts to water quality. This is done through the use of best management practices (BMPs) in the design and construction phases of a roadway project. These practices are customized to the specific area where the roadway is built. In the case of this project, grass shoulders will serve to filter storm water runoff from the roadway before it enters surface waters in the area. In addition, NCDWQ will most likely require Hazardous Spill Catch Basins in the critical water supply watershed area if the selected corridor encroaches into this area.

***II-3 “Provide water and sewer for residences next to the proposed road with wells and septic systems.”***

In August 2004, the City of Mebane received a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for “Infrastructural Improvements” from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, which they will match with an additional \$120,000 of their own funds, to extend sewer service to portions of the West End community. While this funding is not sufficient to provide sewer services to everyone in the West End and White Level communities, it will reduce existing problems and is viewed as one of several steps in addressing the needs of these communities. The City of Mebane is also in the process of applying for another CDBG “Concentrated Needs” grant that would provide additional funding to extend sewer service, improve existing water lines, improve existing roads, and rehabilitate homes in the West End community. NCDOT has helped to bring the concerns of the citizens in these two communities to the attention of those who are responsible for, and have control over providing a solution to these concerns. NCDOT will either correct or provide compensation for any direct impacts to existing wells or septic systems that result from the proposed project.

#### **II-4 Water Quality**

- *“Proposed route is not the ‘wisest’ route in terms of water quality protection.”*
- *“Can NCDOT become an influential force in helping West End and White Level communities solve their sewer and water well problems?”*

The selection of the preferred alignment for the relocation of NC 119 is based on many factors and considerations including the determination of the alternative that is the “Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative”. The proposed alternative is required to comply with Section 401 water quality standards established by the NC Department of Water Quality and Section 404 requirements for discharging runoff into wetlands and waters of the United States which are governed by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

NCDOT is studying three (3) corridors for the NC 119 relocation in Mebane. Water quality impacts will be one of the many factors that are evaluated during the planning phase for this project. The results of these evaluations will be presented to regulatory agencies and the public. Based on input from all of the participants, the “recommended alternative” that causes the least overall harm will be selected. The process NCDOT follows is designed to select the alternative that provides the best balance between providing benefits to the public and minimizing impacts to the community and environment. Regardless of the selected route, all measures to protect the water quality in and around the project area will be incorporated into the project design.

NCDOT has played, and will continue to play, a role in bringing the concerns of the citizens in surrounding communities to the attention of the local officials who are responsible for water and sewer issues in the Mebane area. As stated above, the City of Mebane has secured a \$400,000 grant, and is adding an additional \$120,000 of its own funds, for the extension of sewer services to the West End community. In addition, NCDOT will either correct or provide compensation for any direct impacts to existing wells or septic systems that result from the proposed project.

#### **II-5 Historic Properties**

- *“Proposed NC 119 Relocation – Alternate #8 does not touch any historic properties.”*
- *“Woodlawn community considers themselves the 1<sup>st</sup> incorporated community in the State.”*
- *“greater noise pollution, air pollution, light pollution, increased urban sprawl, increased crime.”*

Historic resources are recognized by NCDOT as vital community resources. NCDOT works with the State Historical Preservation Office to ensure that these

resources are protected. As part of the Environmental Impact Statement, NCDOT will evaluate all potential historic properties that could be impacted by the proposed alternatives.

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement being prepared for the proposed project, NCDOT will study the effects of noise and air pollution from the proposed project. There is the potential for an increase in light pollution due to the addition of vehicular traffic in areas that are currently not developed or accessible to vehicles with headlights. However, the increase in artificial light pollution generated by such traffic is not expected to be substantial. No artificial lighting (e.g., street lights, etc.) is proposed as part of the roadway project at this time.

The City of Mebane 2010 Land Development Plan indicates that the proposed land uses in the vicinity of the NC 119 relocation corridor are consistent with the nature of the project. The future land use designations indicate that the areas along the southern portion of the proposed NC 119 corridor are envisioned as moderate to high growth areas with primarily industrial and commercial uses. The northern portion of the proposed corridor, most of which is within the critical watershed protection zone, will remain as low-density development of rural residential and open space.

### **GROUP III**

#### ***III-1 “What impact will the bypass have on Mebane-Rogers Road, Highway 49, and school safety?”***

According to the Long-Range Transportation Planning model, traffic on Mebane-Rogers Road will increase substantially regardless of whether NC 119 is relocated. Current traffic volumes on Mebane-Rogers Road are 3,400 vehicles per day which is well below the two-lane, two-way roadway capacity of 18,000 vehicles per day. The model forecasts that by 2025, traffic on Mebane-Rogers Road will increase to 12,800 vehicles per day without relocated NC 119 and 11,000 vehicles per day with the proposed project. Thus, it appears that the proposed project will not increase traffic on Mebane-Rogers Road, but may divert a small amount of traffic away from that route.

The DEIS will contain an analysis of the new intersection of Mebane-Rogers Road with relocated NC 119. If needed, that intersection will be designed with separate left-turn lanes on relocated NC 119, and if needed, separate left-turn lanes on Mebane-Rogers Road. The traffic analysis will also indicate whether there is justification for a traffic signal at the intersection of Mebane-Rogers Road and the proposed NC 119 facility.

***III-2 “Is this highway best for the Mebane community and the State?”***

This project is supported by local officials and is included in North Carolina’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The first step in any road project that has the potential to substantially impact communities is to determine if the project is necessary. NCDOT, regulatory agencies, and the community participate in this process, which produces a statement on the purpose and need of the project. Concurrence between the regulatory agencies, the local officials, and NCDOT on the purpose and need for this project has been reached.

Once the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is completed, NCDOT, working with regulatory agencies and the community, will decide on a preferred alternative. A public hearing is held to invite public participation in this decision. The goal of the process is to develop an alternative that meets the need of the community and the State and that causes the least harm.

***III-3 “Is this the best location for the bypass?”***

See response to I-5 above.

***III-4 “Will the NC 119 bypass open [areas] west and north [of Mebane] for controlled growth?”***

See response to I-6 above.

***III-5 “Traffic models needed?  
Traffic counts?- Based on development changes?  
Growth – how much?”***

The traffic model/counts used by NCDOT in the planning process for this project are based on the existing traffic in the area. The forecasted traffic counts are based on future land development changes detailed in the approved Burlington-Graham land use plan, as well as predicted growth rates in the project vicinity. The traffic projections are developed using the Burlington-Graham MPO Long-Range Transportation Planning Model. That model forecasts traffic using information about future land use, anticipated development patterns, population, employment and housing forecasts (see Appendix A, Figure 7-12 for traffic forecasts).

The 2020 Strategic Plan for Alamance County indicates that the population growth for the county will increase from 130,800 in the year 2000 to approximately 175,620 persons in the year 2020 which is an approximate 34 percent increase over a twenty year period. Employment projections for the county indicate that employment will grow from 64,895 workers in the year 2000 to 87,000 in the year 2020 which is a similar rate of growth as is forecasted for the population.

### ***III-6 “Why not consider other routes that would help with Mebane growth?”***

Since planning studies for the relocation of NC 119 began, ten (10) preliminary study corridors west of Mebane have been evaluated. During the preliminary analysis process, those alternatives were reduced to three detailed study alignments.

There are several other roadway improvement projects addressing growth issues for the Mebane area. The Mebane Oaks Road project (U-3445) involves widening the existing roadway to five lanes from I-85 to existing NC 119 (Fifth Street). This project (which is under construction) will alleviate congestion on the eastern side of Mebane near I-85. The widening of US 70 to a multilane facility between the Haw River Bypass and Mebane City limits (U-2546) is an identified future need on the Thoroughfare Plan, but is not yet funded; therefore, planning studies have not been initiated. T.I.P. Project R-3105 proposes to widen NC 119 from SR 1917 (White Level Road) to NC 62 in Caswell County; however, the project is not funded and therefore no planning studies have been initiated. These projects, along with the NC 119 Relocation project, will improve both north-south and east-west travel within the study area and local traffic circulation in the Mebane vicinity.

### ***III-7 “Factors determining need for 119 bypass?”***

Some of the factors that the local municipality and NCDOT used to determine the need for the relocation of NC 119 in Mebane were the current and future traffic volumes in the area, the current and future land use, access issues pertaining to the I-85 corridor and the northern portion of Alamance County, and current and anticipated future congestion in and around the Mebane area. The relocation of NC 119 will also support economic development along the southern portion of the proposed new corridor, particularly between I-85 and US 70.

The increases in regional population and employment will result in almost a doubling of traffic volumes on NC 119/Fifth Street – from 15,700 vehicles per day in 2004 to 29,700 vehicles per day in 2025. This clearly shows a need for additional north-south roadway capacity.

The NC 119 relocation project proposes a grade-separated crossing of NC 119 over the Norfolk Southern railroad, which will substantially improve safety and emergency access in the project study area. Currently, all crossings of the Norfolk Southern railroad in the study area are at-grade crossings. The only Mebane fire station and EMS station that has a 24-hour paid staff is located north of US 70 and the Norfolk Southern railroad line. If an emergency occurs on the south side of Mebane when a train is passing through, the emergency response services must wait for the train to pass before proceeding to any sites that are located south of the Norfolk Southern rail line. The proposed grade-separated crossing of relocated NC 119 and the Norfolk Southern railroad will provide additional emergency access throughout the Mebane area at all times.

**III-8** *“Size?  
Access points?  
Speed limit – 50?”*

Access will be limited to major intersections along the proposed project corridor north of US 70 and driveway access will be prohibited within this section of the NC 119 corridor. South of US 70, access along the proposed NC 119 corridor will be provided at existing and proposed major intersections. The relocation of NC 119 will provide a grade-separated crossing over the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and US 70. Access to US 70 from the new NC 119 facility will be via a two-way loop ramp with at-grade intersections at NC 119 and US 70. The anticipated posted speed limit will be 45 mph.

**III-9** *“Traffic studies – were other highways considered? North-South corridor?”*

Using the results of the Long Range Transportation Planning model, NCDOT determined that additional north-south capacity would be needed within the Mebane area. However, it should be noted that the traffic model is not an alignment location tool but rather uses distance and travel times in determining the viability of a route. This process is then followed by evaluation of other factors such as the impacts on the physical, natural and human environment to determine the best alignment for the roadway. This study takes all of these factors into account in selecting a final alignment of the route.

**III-10** *Alternatives*

- *“What would opening access within Mebane do to traffic (i.e., dead end streets)?”*
- *“Have truck routes and truck limitations been studied?”*

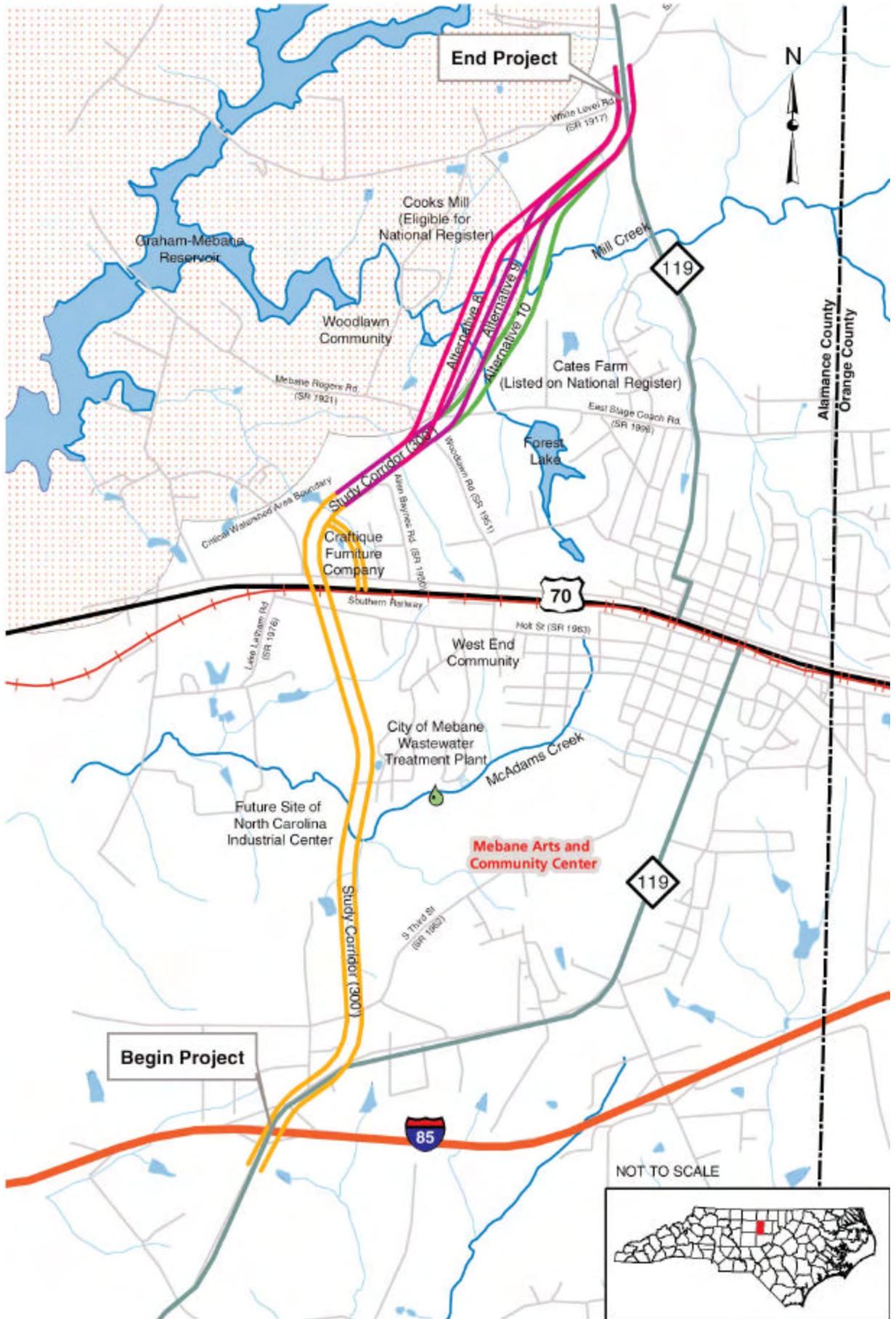
See responses for questions I-1 and I-2 above.

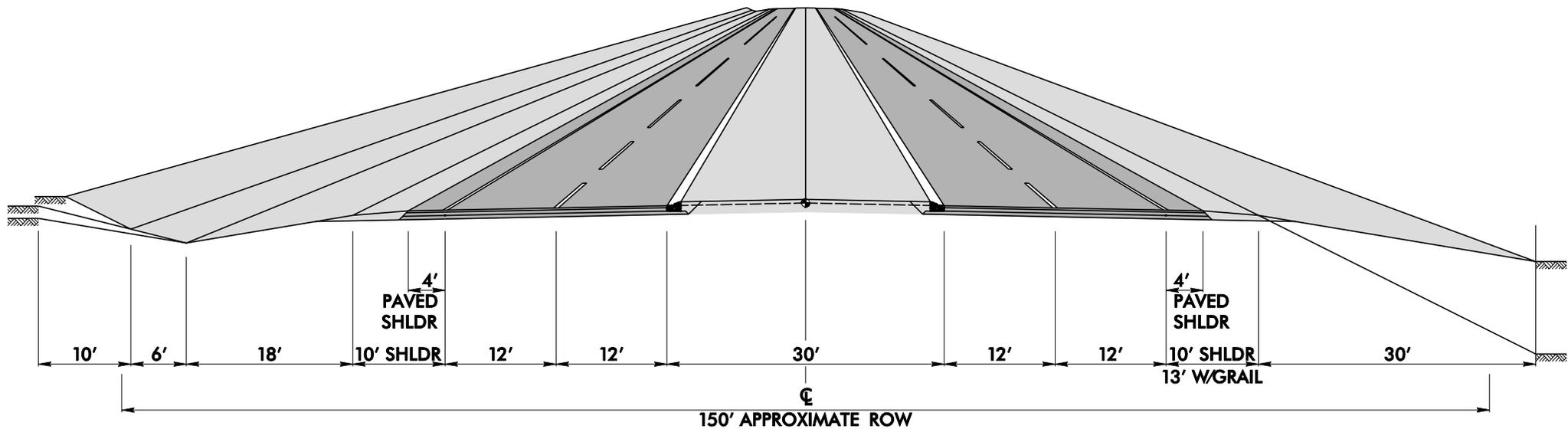
# **APPENDIX A**

## Project Schedule

Actions	Proposed Schedule to Complete DEIS, FEIS, and ROD documents*
Selection of Private Engineering Firm (Buck Engineering & Subconsultants)	February 2004
Determine major stream crossing structures	Spring 2005
Complete draft Environmental document	Summer 2006
Hold design public hearing	Spring 2007
Select preferred alternative	Summer 2007
Complete Final Environmental Document	Winter 2007
Issue Record of Decision (ROD)	Summer 2008
Begin right of way acquisition for Part A – from I-85 to US 70 (current TIP R/W acquisition date is FFY 2006)	Winter 2009 (FFY 2010)
Start construction on Part A (current TIP let date is FFY 2008)	Winter 2011 (FFY2012)
Right of way and construction for Part B – from US 70 to existing NC 119 north of Mebane at White Level Rd.	Post Year

*\*Note: Proposed schedule is assuming no additional alternatives and/or studies will need to be investigated or completed.*





**TYPICAL SECTION NO. 1**

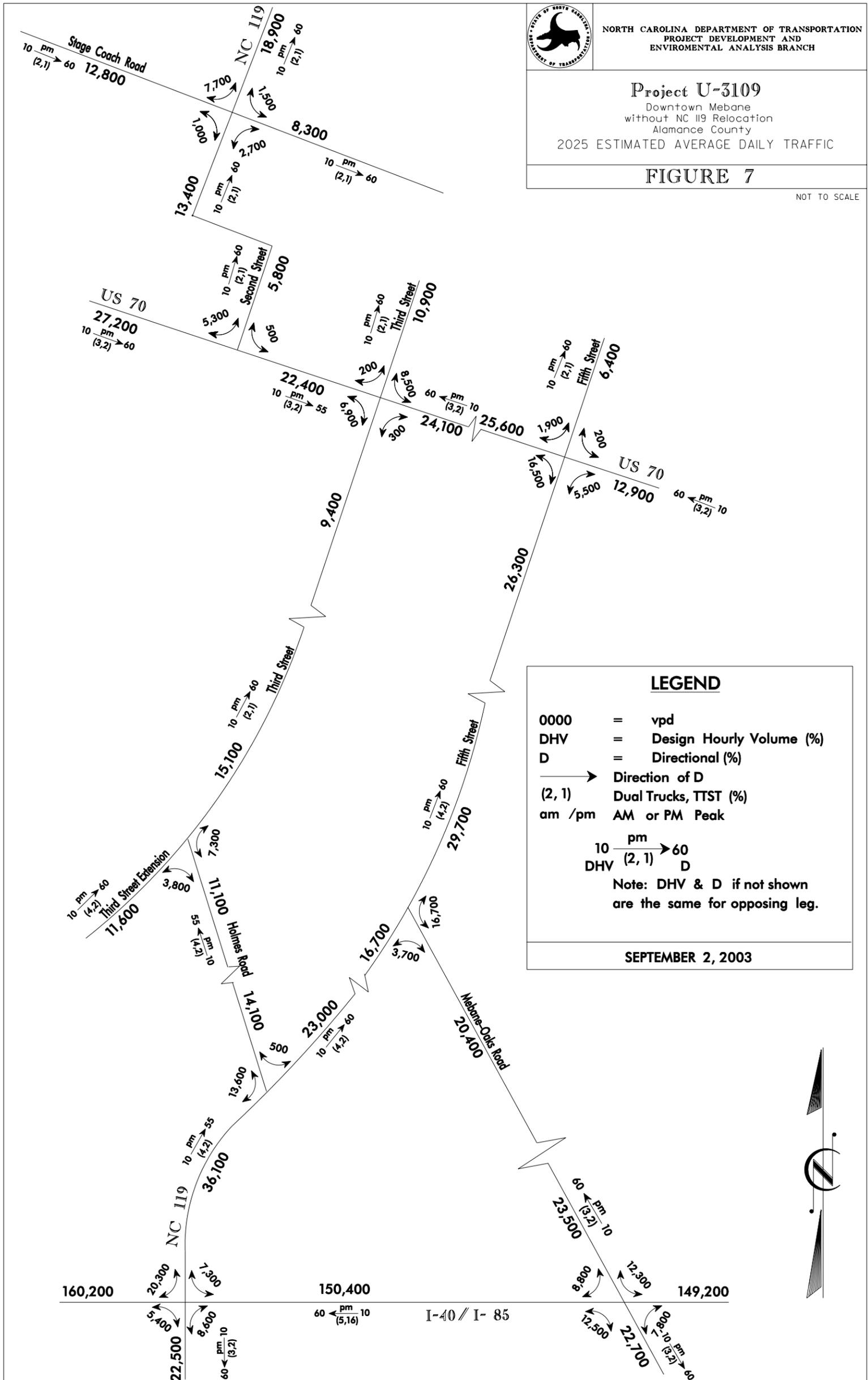


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

**Project U-3109**  
Downtown Mebane  
without NC 119 Relocation  
Alamance County  
2025 ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

**FIGURE 7**

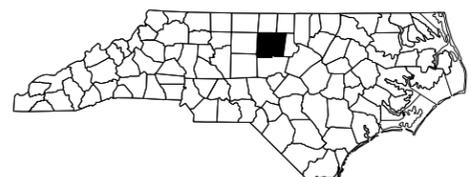
NOT TO SCALE



**LEGEND**

- 0000 = vpd
  - DHV = Design Hourly Volume (%)
  - D = Directional (%)
  - Direction of D
  - (2, 1) Dual Trucks, TTST (%)
  - am /pm AM or PM Peak
- $10 \xrightarrow{\text{pm}} 60$   
 DHV (2, 1) D  
 Note: DHV & D if not shown are the same for opposing leg.

SEPTEMBER 2, 2003





**LEGEND**

0000 = vpd  
 DHV = Design Hourly Volume (%)  
 D = Directional (%)  
 → Direction of D  
 (2, 1) Dual Trucks, TTST (%)  
 am /pm AM or PM Peak

10 <sup>pm</sup> → 60  
 DHV (2, 1) D

Note: DHV & D if not shown are the same for opposing leg.

SEPTEMBER 2, 2003



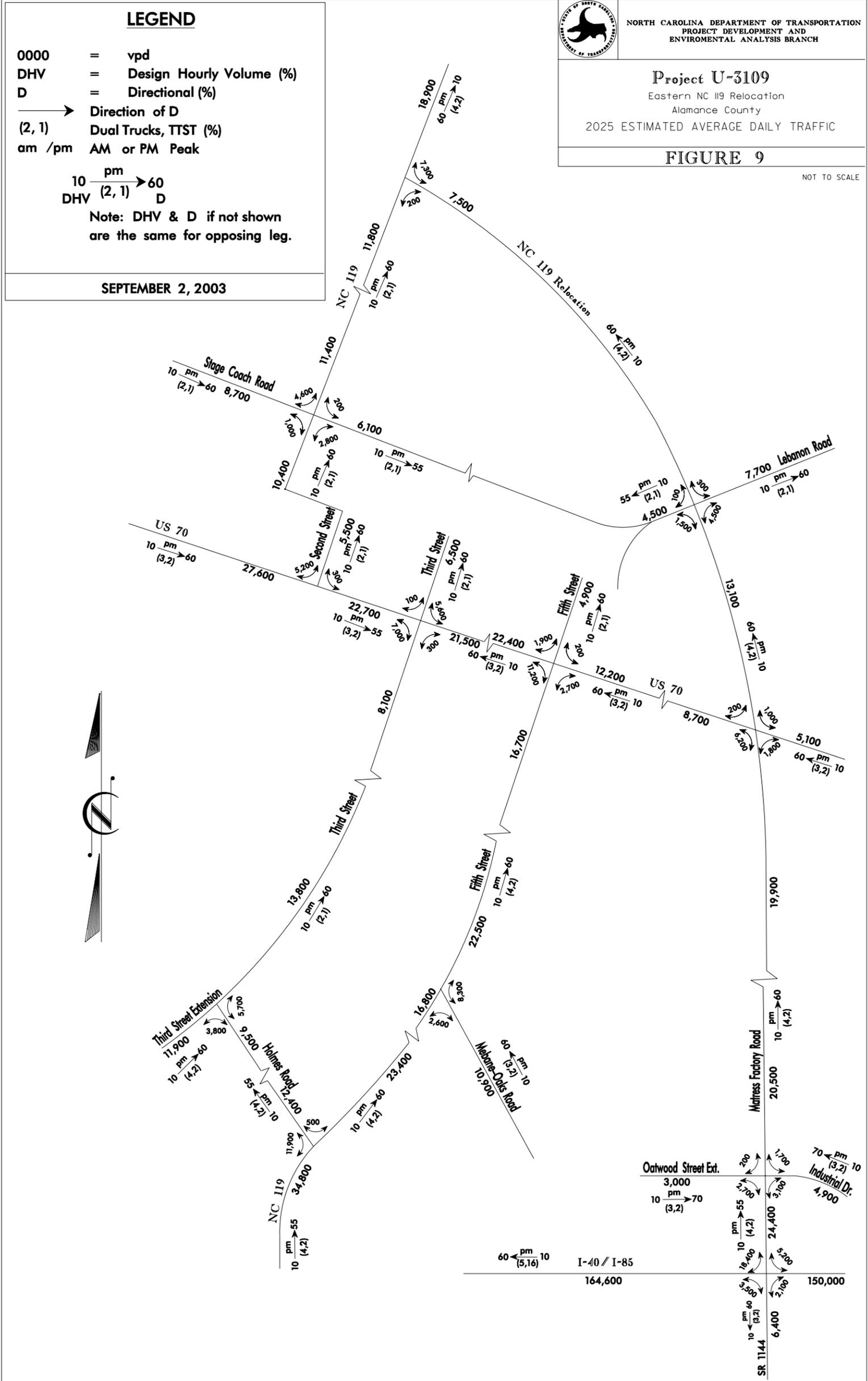
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

**Project U-3109**

Eastern NC I19 Relocation  
 Alamance County  
 2025 ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

**FIGURE 9**

NOT TO SCALE





NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

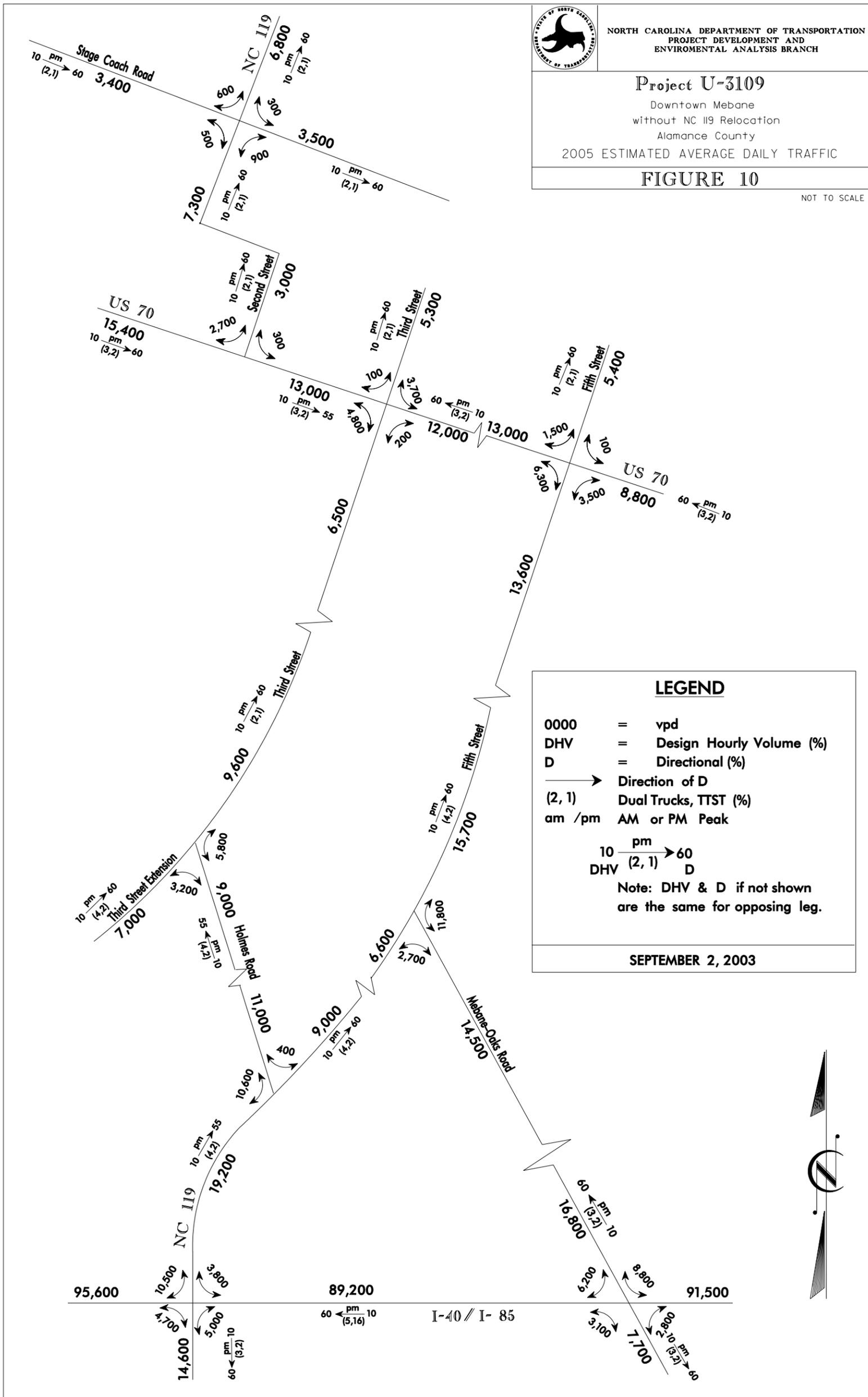
**Project U-3109**

Downtown Mebane  
without NC 119 Relocation  
Alamance County

2005 ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

**FIGURE 10**

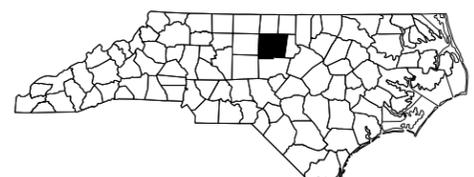
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DHV (2, 1) D
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SEPTEMBER 2, 2003



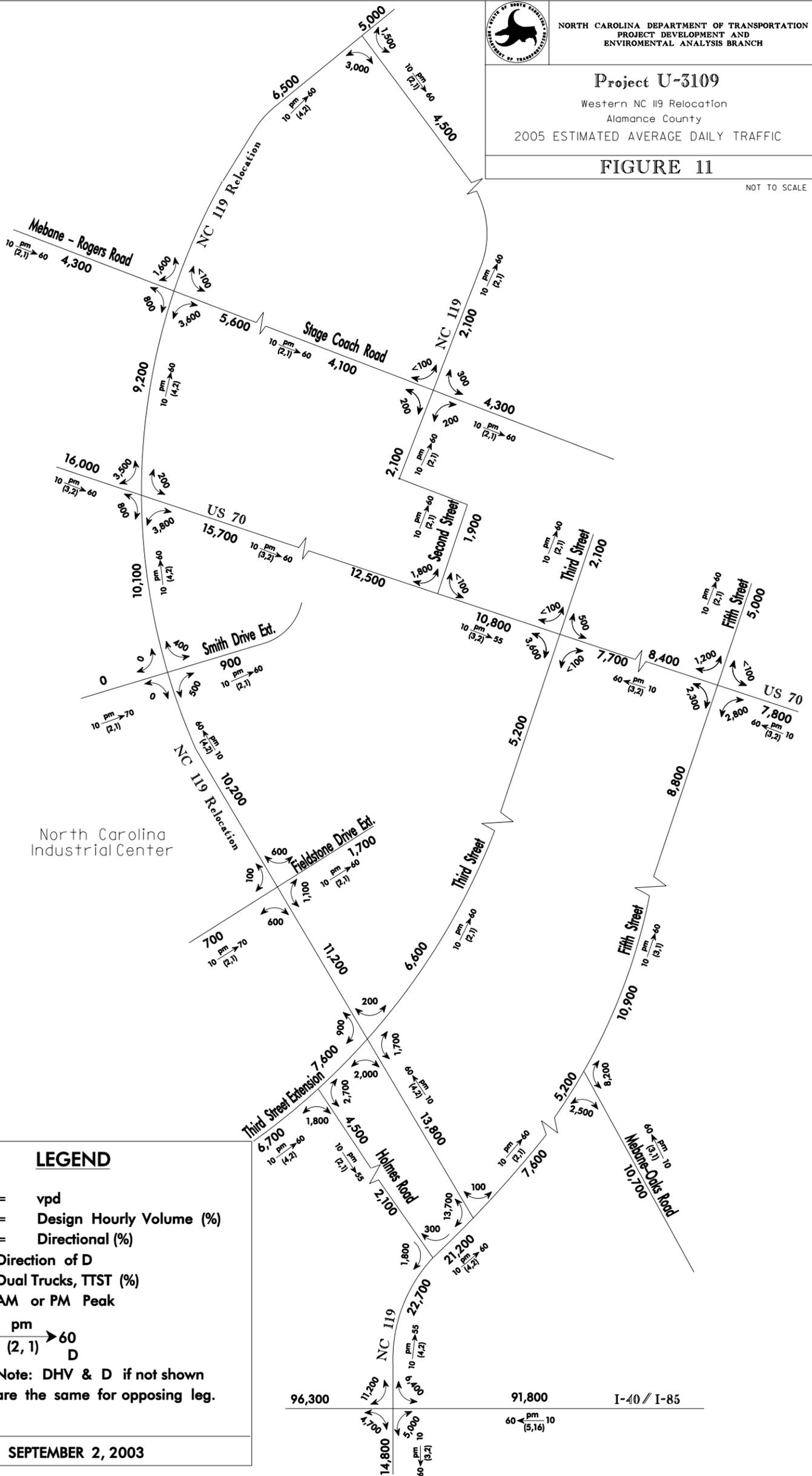


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

**Project U-3109**  
Western NC I19 Relocation  
Alamance County  
2005 ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

**FIGURE 11**

NOT TO SCALE



**LEGEND**

- 0000 = vpd
- DHV = Design Hourly Volume (%)
- D = Directional (%)
- Direction of D
- (2, 1) Dual Trucks, TTST (%)
- am /pm AM or PM Peak
- 10 pm (2, 1) → 60 DHV (2, 1) D
- Note: DHV & D if not shown are the same for opposing leg.

SEPTEMBER 2, 2003



**LEGEND**

0000 = vpd  
 DHV = Design Hourly Volume (%)  
 D = Directional (%)  
 → Direction of D  
 (2, 1) Dual Trucks, TTST (%)  
 am /pm AM or PM Peak

10 pm → 60  
 DHV (2, 1) D

Note: DHV & D if not shown are the same for opposing leg.

SEPTEMBER 2, 2003



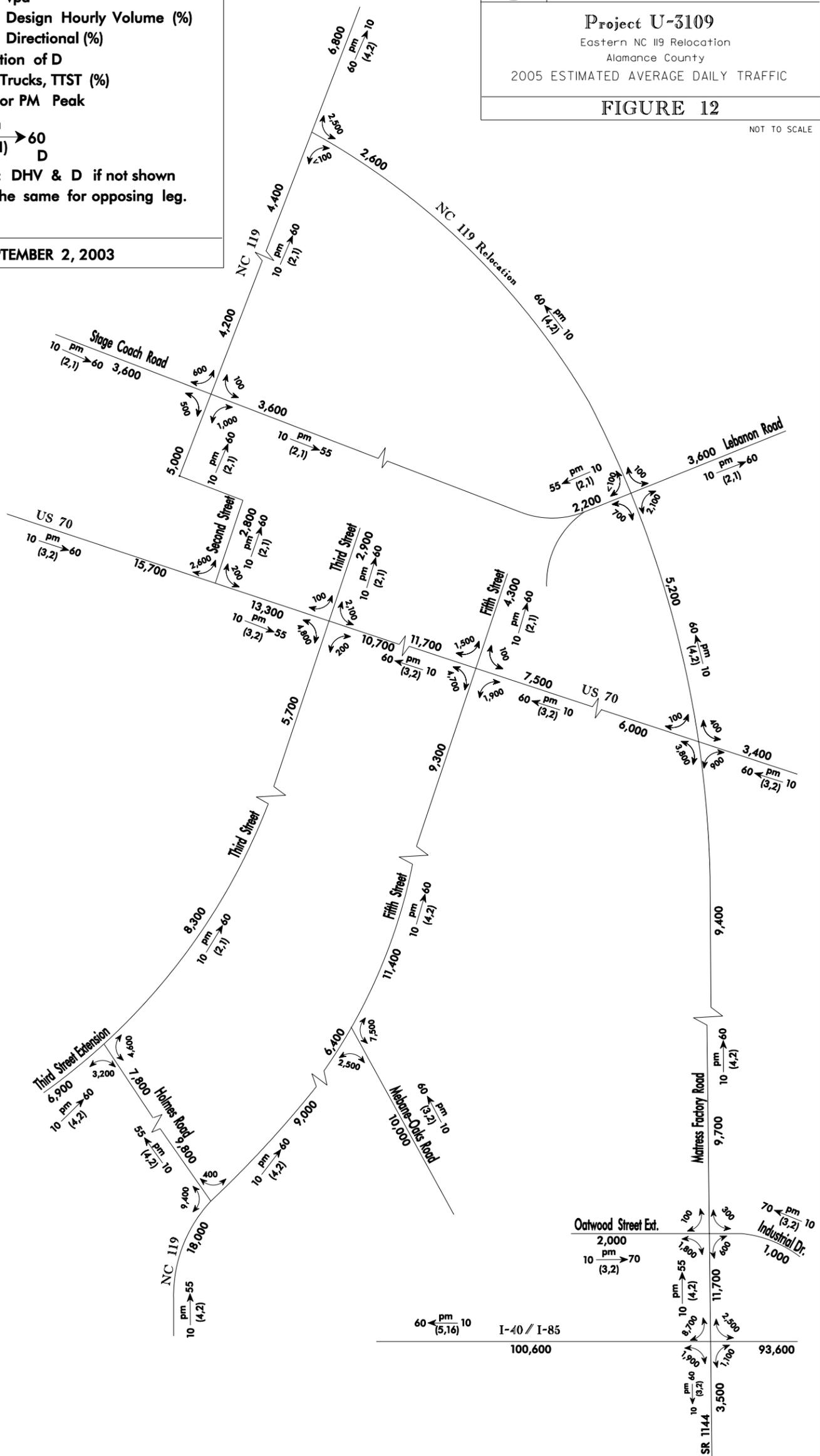
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

**Project U-3109**

Eastern NC I19 Relocation  
 Alamance County  
 2005 ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

**FIGURE 12**

NOT TO SCALE



# Important Project Information

## NC 119 Relocation Project

### TIP Project No. U-3109

#### ***What is the NC 119 Relocation project?***

The NC 119 Relocation Project, also locally referred to as the "Mebane Bypass", is the potential relocation of existing NC 119, from I-85 southwest of Mebane to existing NC 119 just south of White Level Road (SR 1917) north of Mebane in Alamance County. The route being considered is approximately 4.3 miles long. The project is included in the North Carolina Department of Transportation's 2004-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as TIP Project No. U-3109.

The relocation of NC 119 was first presented in the Alamance County Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan in 1990 (now referred to as the Burlington-Graham Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan). In subsequent updates to the plan, the NC 119 relocation has remained among the highest priority projects for the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BG-MPO), which provides guidance on transportation goals and objectives for Alamance County, its cities, towns, and villages.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation initiated planning and environmental studies for this project in 1994 and the first citizens' informational workshop was held in January 1995. Since then, two more citizens informational workshops have been held (June 1996 and July 2003) as well as several small group meetings in various communities. Planning studies in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is ongoing.

#### ***What type of roadway is being considered?***

The cross section being considered for the new roadway is a four-lane median divided facility (two lanes in each direction of travel with a grass median). The proposed facility is **NOT** an interstate, but will be similar to a parkway. Partial control of access is proposed; therefore, access to the facility will be provided at intersecting roads and possibly to adjacent properties along the road. Landscaping in the median may also be provided. Approximately 150 feet of right of way would be required to build the proposed road on new location. A bridge over the railroad next to US 70 is being considered. To limit impacts to properties along US 70, an access road to connect US 70 with the new facility, instead of an interchange with ramps, is being studied.

#### ***What is the Transportation Improvement Program and how does a project get included?***

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the North Carolina Department of Transportation's 7-year plan for the improvement of state-owned and maintained transportation facilities. It includes roads, ferries, public transportation, aviation, and passenger rail projects, and is updated every two years.

The process for adding projects to the TIP begins at the local level. Local roadway needs are identified in a Thoroughfare Plan prepared by the region's Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organization (MPO or RPO) in consultation with NCDOT. Mebane, as well as all of Alamance County, is part of the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BG-MPO). The MPO prioritizes projects in the Thoroughfare Plan, with input from citizens and local officials. Based on the projected availability of funds, the North Carolina Board of Transportation, in coordination with the MPO and RPO's, decides which projects will be included in the TIP.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of the Burlington-Graham MPO, please visit their web site at [www.mpo.burlington.nc.us](http://www.mpo.burlington.nc.us) .

### ***Why is the project needed?***

The proposed relocation of NC 119 would provide Mebane and eastern Alamance County with a primary north/south route to meet both local and regional needs. Additionally, the proposed project would provide safety benefits to local and regional commuters and could potentially encourage economic development.

**Relieve Congestion** - the relocation of existing NC 119 is needed to relieve current and future traffic congestion in downtown Mebane. NC 119 currently serves dual functions of providing the primary regional north-south route through Mebane and the primary north-south access to downtown Mebane (Main Street). Since the early 1990's, the Mebane area has experienced considerable growth due to its proximity to both the Triad and Triangle areas. Predicted growth is expected to overload existing NC 119, a mostly two-lane facility that travels through neighborhoods as well as the Central Business District (CBD) of Mebane. NC 119 runs concurrent with US 70 in the heart of downtown Mebane, with the railroad to the south and many shops and businesses to the north. Widening the existing facility to adequately accommodate future traffic will impact a substantial number of homes, businesses and historic properties in downtown Mebane. The new facility would provide another option for commuters to reach western Mebane or to avoid the CBD, thereby reducing congestion through downtown.

**Provide Access** - the new road will provide access to the local area, including the North Carolina Industrial Center located between I-85 and US 70. The project will also provide eastern Alamance County with a primary north-south route that avoids the CBD.

**Additional Benefits** - The railroad next to US 70 through Mebane is part of the future Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor between Washington, DC and Charlotte, NC. The new facility would provide a bridge over the railroad next to US 70. Currently, all road crossings of the railroad in Mebane are at-grade, causing considerable back ups when a train occupies the tracks. The new road would provide a safer crossing over the railroad.

### ***What is the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor?***

The Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) is one of five originally proposed high speed passenger rail corridors designated by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) in 1992. The corridor was designated as running from Washington, DC through Richmond, VA and Raleigh, NC to Charlotte, NC with maximum speeds of 110 mph. It is part of an overall plan to extend service from the existing high speed rail on the Northeast Corridor (Boston to Washington) to points in the Southeast.

At this time, the selected corridor for the SEHSR utilizes the existing rail line through downtown Mebane. For more information on the Southeast High Speed Rail, please visit their web site at [www.sehsr.org](http://www.sehsr.org) or call the toll free project hotline at 1-877-749-7245.

### ***Why not construct a "Bypass" East of Mebane?***

The Burlington-Graham Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan currently identifies highway needs to the west and east of Mebane. The strategic location of Mebane between two metropolitan areas, the triad to the west and the triangle to the east, shows a strong attraction for traffic to the west and east. Therefore, both western and eastern needs are identified in the Thoroughfare Plan. However, based on traffic forecasts completed for potential western and eastern routes, the western route would be more effective in reducing traffic congestion along existing NC 119. Furthermore, the area northwest

of Mebane is currently more developed than the area northeast of Mebane (in Orange County). Based on projected land use plans, the development trend to the north and west of Mebane is likely to continue. The potential western route will also provide better access to the North Carolina Industrial Center (NCIC). For those reasons, the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization has placed a higher priority on addressing the transportation needs in central and western Mebane.

### ***What is the Current Status of the NC 119 Relocation Project?***

The NC 119 Relocation Project is a federally funded project in NCDOT's 2004-2010 TIP and is referenced as TIP Project No. U-3109. NCDOT representatives are currently conducting engineering, environmental, and community studies to determine the impacts of the various alternatives on the human, physical, and natural environments. A federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be prepared for the proposed project and is currently scheduled for completion in the summer of 2006.

### ***What is an Environmental Impact Statement?***

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a detailed report that describes the impacts of a proposed project on the human and natural environments. Several alternatives are typically evaluated. A team of engineers, planners, scientists, and biologists performs the analyses of the project alternatives.

An EIS is required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 for major projects, programs, or actions that involve federal funding, permitting, or other involvement by a Federal agency. All EIS's prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation include the same five primary chapters: 1) purpose and need for project, 2) alternatives considered, 3) existing conditions in the human and natural environments, 4) adverse and beneficial environmental consequences of the alternatives, and 5) public and agency coordination.

There are three (3) main documents produced in the EIS process. The first document is the Draft EIS (DEIS). The Draft EIS evaluates the impacts of several alternatives in detail. Following a review and comment period for the Draft EIS and a Public Hearing, a preferred alternative is selected. The Final EIS (FEIS) discusses the reasons for the selection of the Preferred Alternative, and responds to the comments on the Draft EIS. Finally, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issues a Record of Decision (ROD) that documents the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

### ***What are the Project Alternatives?***

Since planning studies were initiated for the project in 1994, a total of ten (10) preliminary study alternatives have been developed. Based on coordination with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the public, seven (7) alternatives have been eliminated from further study due to community and environmental impacts. Currently, three corridors are being studied in detail (see vicinity map). The three Detailed Study Alternatives, along with the No-Build Alternative, which is used as a basis to compare the other options, will be evaluated in the Draft EIS. All alternatives considered, including those eliminated early in the study process, will be addressed in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS.

All three Detailed Study Alternatives begin at the existing NC 119/I-85 interchange (Exit No. 153), then continue north to cross US 70 just west of Craftique Furniture Company. Alternative 8 passes through the critical watershed for the Graham-Mebane Reservoir, Alternative 9 passes through the critical watershed area and crosses the historic boundary of the Cates Farm, and Alternative 10 crosses the historic boundary of the Cates Farm but is outside of the critical watershed area. All three Detailed Study Alternatives tie into existing NC 119 just south of White Level Road (SR 1917).

## ***What are some examples of potential impacts to the Natural, Physical, and Human Environments that will be evaluated in the DEIS?***

**Streams and Wetlands** - Permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the NC Department of Environmental Resources, Division of Water Quality (NCDENR-DWQ) will be required for stream and wetland impacts. As a condition of the permits, the NCDOT may be required to compensate for stream and wetland impacts. These measures could include restoring or enhancing degraded streams and wetlands in the project area watershed.

**Floodplains and Floodways** - 100-year floodplains are land areas adjacent to streams that are subject to flooding from a storm of such intensity that it has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. The floodway is the stream channel and adjacent area where the water is likely to be deepest and fastest. This area needs to be free of obstructions to allow floodwaters to move downstream. Bridges and/or culverts needed for the proposed project will be designed so that no increases to the extent and level of flood hazard risk would result from the project.

**Rare and Protected Species** - Federal law (under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended) requires that any action likely to adversely affect a species classified as federally-protected be subject to review by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Other species may receive additional protection under separate laws. Plants and animals with federal classifications of Endangered (E), Threatened (T), Proposed Endangered (PE) and Proposed Threatened (PT) are protected under provisions of Section 7 and Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. *Currently, the USFWS do not have any species listed for Alamance County.*

**Noise** - Computer models are used to predict design year traffic noise levels along the proposed project and additional studies will be done to evaluate areas where noise barriers would be reasonable and cost effective. The final decision whether or not to construct noise barriers will be made following the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

**Air Quality** - Computer models based on projected peak hour traffic are used to evaluate any negative effect on air quality in the area as a result of the proposed project. The project is located in Alamance County, which has been determined to be in compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. This project is not anticipated to create any adverse effects on the air quality of this attainment area.

**Relocation of Homes / Businesses** - Relocation studies will be conducted by the NCDOT Right of Way Branch to estimate the number of residential and business relocations that would be necessary to implement each alternative. Final impacts will not be determined until after the selection of the Preferred Alternative during the final design stages of the project. Displacement impacts would be mitigated through implementation of the NCDOT relocation assistance programs. It is the policy of the NCDOT to ensure that comparable replacement housing for residents and suitable locations for displaced businesses would be available prior to construction of projects.

**Community Impacts** - Community impact assessment is a process that evaluates the effects of a proposed transportation action on a community or communities. The assessment process is an integral part of project planning and development. The assessment of community impacts, along with other relevant environmental impact studies, helps shape project decisions and outcomes. Information gained from this process is used continuously throughout the project to mold the project and to provide documentation of the current and anticipated social environment of the project area with and without the proposed transportation action. Potential mitigation is investigated for unavoidable impacts to communities as part of this process.

Potential effects on neighborhoods and the various communities in the project area are identified during the community impact assessment process and will be evaluated in the Draft EIS. Impacts can be both positive and negative, and are often subjective and difficult to quantify. Community cohesion impacts could include the effects of neighborhood division, social isolation, changes in the community character, increased/decreased neighborhood or community access, and shortened travel times. Input provided by the affected communities play a key roll in identifying these impacts.

**Minority and low-income populations** - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and related statutes, requires there be no discrimination in federally-assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. In addition, a 1994 Presidential Executive Order requires federal agencies to make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on "minority populations and low-income populations". There are three (3) fundamental environmental justice principles: 1) to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations, 2) to ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process, 3) to prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

**Historic Resources** - This project is subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106. Section 106 requires that if a federally-funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation will be given an opportunity to comment. Potential historic architectural and archaeological resources within the proposed project corridor will be assessed and evaluated in the DEIS.

In addition to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act (1966) also affords protection to significant historic properties that may be affected by federally-funded transportation projects.

### ***Who decides if the project should proceed?***

There are multiple points at which the decision whether to proceed with a particular project or not can be made. The initial point at which this decision is considered is at the local level during formation and approval of the local area TIP. Regarding the NC 119 Relocation project, the Burlington-Graham MPO has continued to include the project in the local TIP as a high priority since its inclusion in 1992.

The project will be further considered by the North Carolina Secretary of Transportation, the Division Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration as the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements are completed. At these times, impacts of the project alternatives can be evaluated against the benefits to determine whether or not to proceed with the project.

### ***Who selects the alternative that will be built?***

The NC 119 Relocation project is a federally-funded project. Therefore, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency in charge of the project. FHWA, in consultation with the NCDOT, will select the Preferred Alternative. The FHWA and NCDOT will consider the following when making the decision:

- The information contained in the Draft EIS
- Input received from the public before and during the Draft EIS review period
- Input received from local, state, and federal agencies before and during the Draft EIS review period, including the following:
  - US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)  
NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR)  
NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC)  
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Burlington-Graham Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO)

### ***Why do the Project Development studies take so long?***

Any agency that proposes a project with federal involvement, such as funding, must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under the NEPA, an agency must study the adverse and beneficial impacts of reasonable alternatives that meet the project's purpose and need. This process requires numerous engineering, community, and environmental studies. Also, NEPA requires extensive public and agency involvement. The NCDOT strives to maintain a reasonable schedule for all its projects while ensuring full compliance with NEPA.

### ***How does this project affect me as a property owner?***

You will know better if there is a chance that your home or property could be impacted after a Preferred Alternative is identified. Following the completion of the Draft EIS, a Public Hearing Map will be presented at Citizens Informational Workshops prior to the Public Hearing and at the Public Hearing. The maps will show the preliminary engineering roadway designs within each of the three Detailed Study Corridors. Property boundaries will also be shown on the Public Hearing Map. The exact locations and amounts of property required for rights of way will not be determined until after the Record of Decision.

### ***What is the process for Property Acquisition and Relocation?***

Private property in the path of the selected alternative for the NC 119 Relocation project will be purchased by the NCDOT as right of way. The NCDOT pays fair market value for all property purchased. Licensed real estate appraisers determine a fair market value at the time of purchase. This is the same type of appraisal that is required when selling, buying, or refinancing a property.

For renters and home owners who must relocate because of the project, the NCDOT has several programs to minimize the inconvenience of relocation: relocation assistance, relocation moving payments, and relocation replacement housing payments or rent supplements. The relocation program will be conducted in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and the North Carolina Relocation Assistance Act. A relocation officer will be assigned to the project. The relocation officer will assist homeowners, renters, and owners of displaced businesses, non-profit organizations, and farm operations in searching for and moving to replacement property.