

The establishment of a consensus-based vision for the US 64–NC 49 Corridor is an important planning step in that it provides a long-term, directional goal for all roadway improvements to US 64 and NC 49 within the defined study area. The vision defines the major characteristics of a substantial financial investment and provides the means to build stakeholder buy-in and commitment to major facility modifications and enhancements. The vision also provides an implementation strategy through the identification of a logical sequence of facility improvements, outlining the “evolution” of the corridor from a condition of current physical and operational characteristics to the ultimate facility type. The vision is not defined by a year of achievement, but serves as the beacon on the horizon to guide and direct US 64 and NC 49 roadway improvements with regard to desired physical and operational characteristics.

Based on the results of the alternatives’ evaluation, the Study Team has drawn the following conclusions:

- The E+C Alternative provides sufficient user benefits compared to the investment level and effectively serves a short-term need for safety improvement and capacity enhancement.
- The E+C Enhanced Alternative provides user benefits similar to the Expressway Alternative, but at a substantially reduced cost.
- The Expressway Alternative substantially improves corridor mobility and diverts a good percentage of traffic from the I-40/I-85 Corridor; however, the capital cost is nearly as much as the Freeway Alternative with less overall user benefit.
- The Freeway Alternative provides the greatest mobility improvement and traffic diversion from the I-40/I-85 Corridor, but at the highest capital cost.

It is clear from the alternatives’ evaluation that the Freeway Alternative best satisfies the purposes and criteria of a Strategic Highway Corridor. However, it is also clear that immediate implementation of the Freeway Alternative is not financially feasible. Therefore, it is the Study Team’s and the Corridor Development Team’s recommendation that the Freeway Alternative serve as the “Corridor Vision” with achievement of the vision occurring through a program of the staged implementation of necessary improvements. There is no set time table for achieving the vision. The vision serves solely to provide improvement direction with full achievement of the vision ultimately being a function of operations and safety needs.

While it is not within the scope of this study to develop specific design guidelines, it is the recommendation of the Study Team that the roadway improvements encompassing the vision be developed in context with the surroundings to take advantage of the corridor’s contours and natural beauty. Design elements such as a wide vegetated median, decorative retaining walls and structures, and attractive signing can all be used effectively to blend the facility into its surroundings. Examples of such design elements from the Baltimore-Washington Parkway are shown in **Figure 8.1**.

**Figure 8.1: Baltimore-Washington Parkway**



Implementation steps to achieve the vision are described in the following sections.

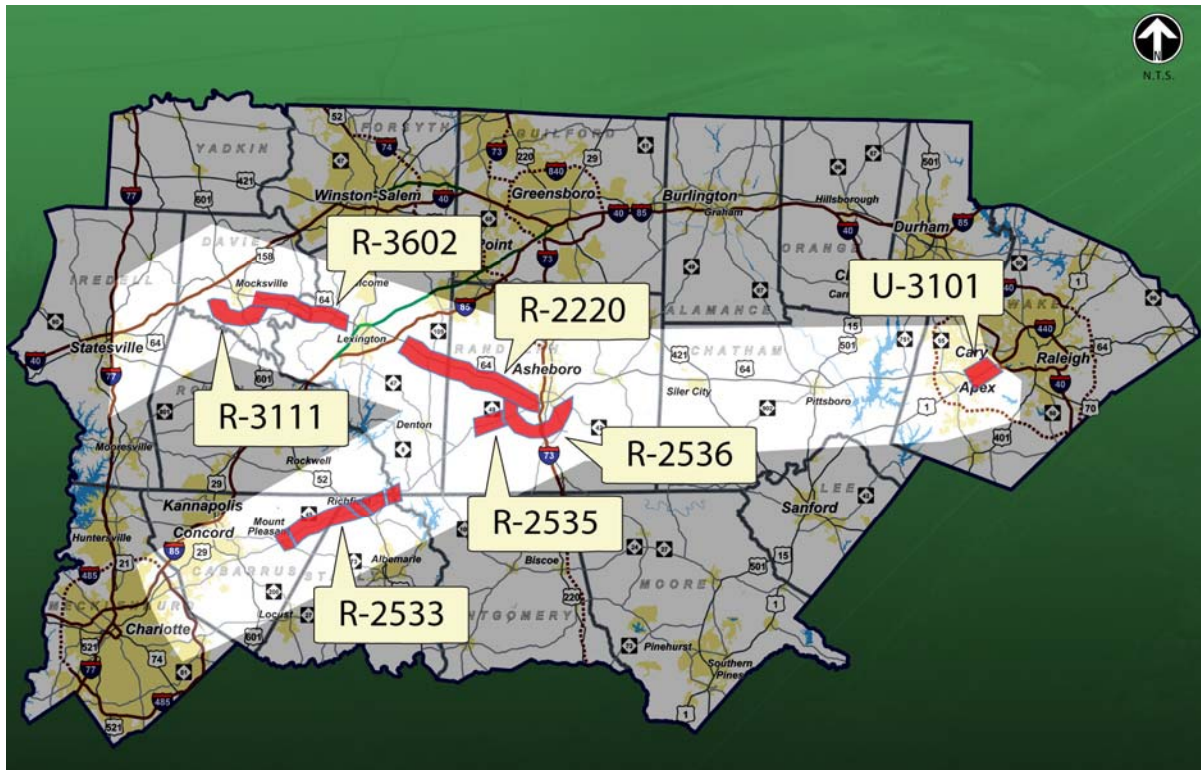
## **8.1 Step 1**

The first step toward the vision is to implement improvements that are presently in NCDOT's TIP (2004 – 2010). These projects are highlighted in **Figure 8.2**. They are important from the standpoint that they address the short-term need for improved safety and additional roadway capacity. While projects R-2536 (Asheboro Southern Bypass) and R-3101 (US 1/US 64 improvements through Cary) are consistent with the Freeway Alternative definition in that they are high-speed facilities with access allowed only via interchanges, the remaining projects with the exception of R-3111 (Mocksville Bypass) are multi-lane (five-lane and /or four-lane, divided) improvements with no control of access. R-3111 is presently described as a two-lane road on an ultimate four-lane right-of-way with access via signalized intersections.



The TIP projects are in various stages of project development. These projects should be reviewed for opportunities to provide consolidated driveways and allow for the conversion of signalized intersections to interchanges without disruption to established project delivery dates. Such project enhancements will improve safety and traffic operations, while advancing the facility closer to the vision of a freeway.

**Figure 8.2: NCDOT 2004 – 2010 TIP Projects on US 64 and NC 49**



In addition to proceeding with current NCDOT TIP projects, an access management plan should be developed and implemented to protect the existing four-lane sections of US 64 and NC 49 between the urban areas from the creation of new driveways and signalized intersections. Where possible, the number of existing driveways should be consolidated into a reduced number of better designed access points.

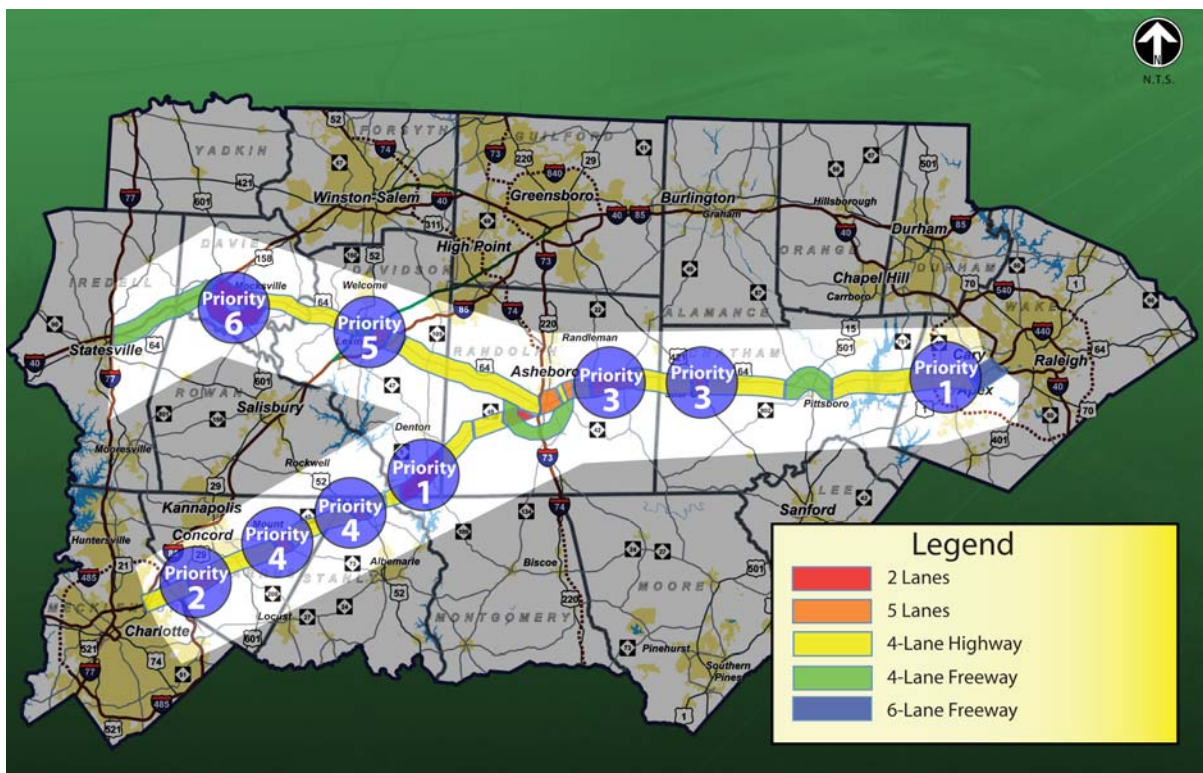
## 8.2 Step 2

The second step in achieving the corridor vision implements those improvements identified for the E+C Enhanced Alternative (see Section 5.2.2). **Figure 8.3** shows these improvement projects along with a suggested implementation priority ranking. All of these projects would be consistent with the Freeway Alternative definition. The greatest travel demand is between



Charlotte and Raleigh. As such, priority projects 1 and 2 should be implemented as soon as possible as they are the most critical in making the US 64–NC 49 route between Charlotte and Raleigh an attractive alternative to I-40 and I-85. Priority projects 3 and 4 further enhance the attractiveness of the corridor by bypassing emerging urban areas. Priority projects 5 and 6 round out the list by improving travel through Mocksville and Lexington. Implementation of these projects would improve the corridor to a combination of a Freeway, Expressway-Type I, and Expressway-Type II. Through careful monitoring of traffic volume, traffic operations, and accidents, the sequence of the remaining projects, 3 through 6, may be adjusted as appropriate.

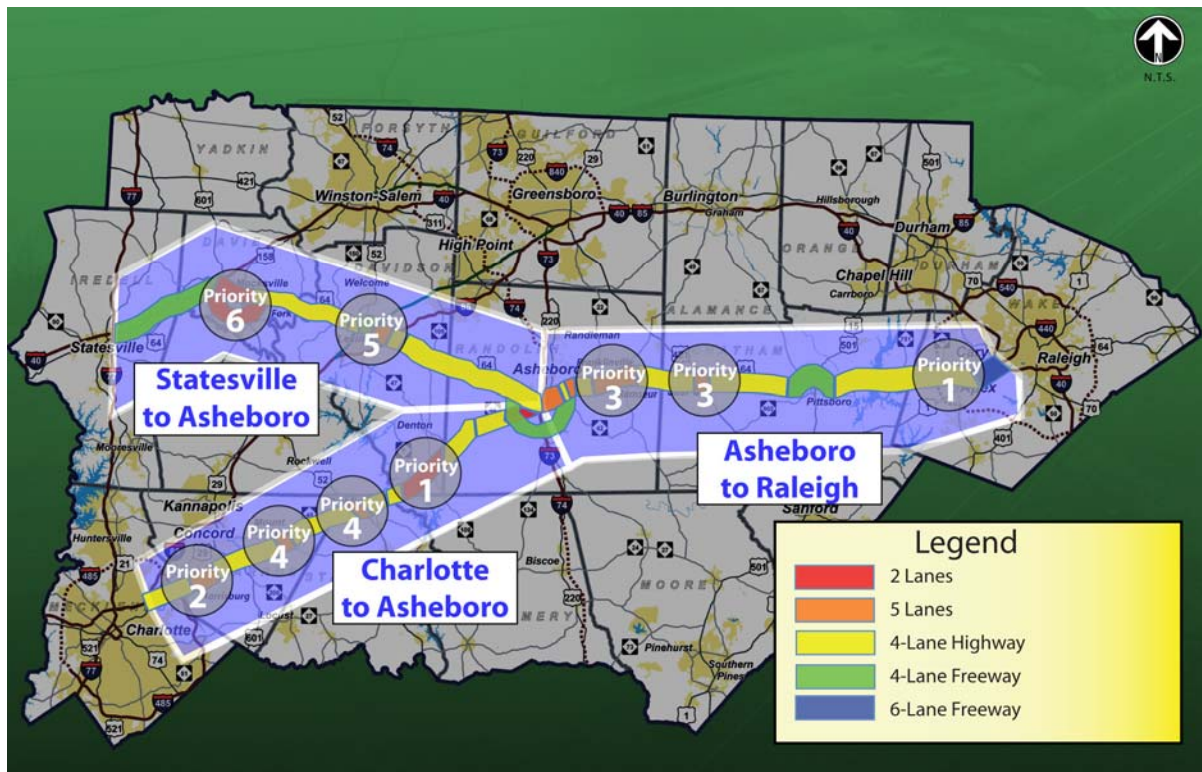
**Figure 8.3: E+C Enhanced Improvements with Priority Ranking**



### 8.3 Step 3

The final step in achieving the vision entails connecting all the “freeway” portions of the corridor. Such improvements may consist of an upgrade of the facility on existing alignment, or may require new location. As defined by the Study Team, there are three major segments of the study corridor. These segments are identified in **Figure 8.4**.

Figure 8.4: Corridor Segments



Given what is known today with regard to safety, traffic volume, traffic operations, and land development, the Study Team envisions segment priority as follows:

- Asheboro to Raleigh
- Charlotte to Asheboro
- Statesville to Asheboro

However, given the long-range nature of these projects, segment priority designations will need to be continuously adjusted through careful monitoring of traffic volume, traffic operations, accidents and land development.

