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# US 64-NC 49 Corridor Study
Charlotte and Statesville to Raleigh

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>ES-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Purpose of Report and Report Organization</td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridors Concept</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 US 64–NC 49 as a Strategic Highway Corridor</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Corridor Study Goal and Objectives</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Corridor Study Process</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.1 Definition of Need</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.2 Definition of Alternatives</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.3 Evaluation Criteria</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.4 Evaluation of Alternatives</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.5 Corridor Vision</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Public Involvement Program</td>
<td>2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Public Involvement Plan</td>
<td>2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Public Involvement Plan Implementation</td>
<td>2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Information Gathering and Documentation</td>
<td>2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1.1 Stakeholder Identification</td>
<td>2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1.2 Database Development and Maintenance</td>
<td>2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Stakeholder Involvement</td>
<td>2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.1 Corridor Development Team</td>
<td>2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.2 Stakeholder Interviews</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.3 Group Outreach Presentations</td>
<td>2-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Public Information Component</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.1 Study Brochure</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.2 Media Relations Plan</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.3 Web Site</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Future Public Involvement</td>
<td>2-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Environmental Justice</td>
<td>2-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Minority and Ethnic Populations</td>
<td>2-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Low-Income Populations</td>
<td>2-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Existing and Anticipated Conditions</td>
<td>3-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Study Area Description</td>
<td>3-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Regional Study Area</td>
<td>3-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study Limits</td>
<td>3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Corridor Overview</td>
<td>3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.1 US 64 – Statesville to Lexington</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS

3.1.3.2 US 64 – Lexington to Asheboro ................................................................. 3-5
3.1.3.3 US 64 – Asheboro to Pittsboro ................................................................. 3-5
3.1.3.4 US 64 – Pittsboro to Raleigh ................................................................. 3-6
3.1.3.5 NC 49 – Charlotte to Asheboro ............................................................. 3-7

3.2 Population ........................................................................................................ 3-8
3.2.1 Existing Population (Year 2000) ................................................................. 3-8
3.2.2 Forecasted Population (Year 2030) ............................................................. 3-9

3.3 Household and Employment Growth ......................................................... 3-14
3.3.1 Household Growth ..................................................................................... 3-14
3.3.2 Employment Growth .................................................................................. 3-15

3.4 Land Use ......................................................................................................... 3-17
3.4.1 Zoning Patterns .......................................................................................... 3-19
3.4.2 Existing Land Use Patterns .......................................................................... 3-20
3.4.3 Future Land Use Patterns ............................................................................ 3-23
3.4.3.1 Iredell County ....................................................................................... 3-24
3.4.3.2 Davie County ......................................................................................... 3-24
3.4.3.3 Davidson County .................................................................................. 3-24
3.4.3.4 Randolph County .................................................................................. 3-24
3.4.3.5 Chatham County .................................................................................. 3-24
3.4.3.6 Wake County ....................................................................................... 3-26
3.4.3.7 Mecklenburg County ............................................................................ 3-26
3.4.3.8 Cabarrus County ................................................................................. 3-27
3.4.3.9 Stanly County ....................................................................................... 3-27
3.4.4 Land Use Plans Compared to Population Projections ....................... 3-27
3.4.5 Economic Development ............................................................................. 3-28
3.4.5.1 Statewide Initiatives ............................................................................. 3-28
3.4.5.2 Local and Regional Initiatives ................................................................. 3-30

3.5 Major Environmental Features ................................................................... 3-33
3.5.1 Water Resources ....................................................................................... 3-33
3.5.1.1 Wetlands .............................................................................................. 3-53
3.5.1.2 Streams, Water Bodies, and Watersheds ............................................. 3-53
3.5.1.3 Water Quality ...................................................................................... 3-54
3.5.2 Natural Heritage Program Sites ................................................................. 3-54
3.5.3 State and Federally Owned Lands ............................................................... 3-55
3.5.4 Hazardous Materials and Superfund Sites ............................................... 3-55
3.5.5 Historic Resources .................................................................................... 3-56
3.5.6 Air Quality .................................................................................................. 3-57

3.6 Transportation Profile ............................................................................... 3-60
3.6.1 Existing Roadway Network ........................................................................ 3-61
3.6.1.1 Interstate Highways .............................................................................. 3-62
3.6.1.2 Non-Interstate Routes .......................................................................... 3-65
3.6.2 Existing Traffic Conditions ........................................................................ 3-67
3.6.2.1 Base Year (2002) Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes ................. 3-67
3.6.2.2 Base Year (2002) Roadway Level of Service .................................... 3-69
3.6.2.3 Base Year (2002) Truck Percentage ................................................... 3-71
3.6.3 Existing Travel Patterns and Characteristics ........................................... 3-72
US 64-NC 49 Corridor Study
Charlotte and Statesville to Raleigh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3.6.3.1 Journey-to-work Data ................................................................. 3-74
3.6.3.2 I-40 and I-85 Video Origin–Destination Survey .......................... 3-76
3.6.3.3 Postcard Survey ................................................................. 3-81
3.6.3.4 US 64 and NC 49 Roadside Origin–Destination Survey .............. 3-86
3.6.3.5 Travel Time Survey .............................................................. 3-98
3.6.4 Safety ....................................................................................... 3-101
3.6.4.1 Highway Safety Improvement Program .................................. 3-101
3.6.4.2 Strip Analysis Data ............................................................ 3-105
3.6.4.3 North Carolina Moving Ahead ............................................ 3-106
3.6.5 Programmed and Planned Roadway Improvements ...................... 3-106
3.6.5.1 TIP Projects Along US 64 and NC 49 ................................. 3-109
3.6.5.2 TIP Projects Along I-40 and I-85 ........................................ 3-110
3.6.5.3 State, Local, and Regional Highway Improvement Plans .......... 3-112
3.6.6 Existing Public Transit Services ................................................ 3-112
3.6.7 Future Transit Services ............................................................. 3-116
3.6.7.1 Charlotte Area Transit System – 2025 Transit System Plan ....... 3-116
3.6.7.2 Triangle Transit Authority – Regional Rail ......................... 3-117
3.6.7.3 The Triad Major Investment Study ...................................... 3-117
3.6.7.4 Other Transit Improvements ............................................. 3-118
3.6.8 Intercity Passenger Bus Service ............................................. 3-118
3.6.9 Intercity Passenger Rail Service ............................................. 3-120
3.6.9.1 Existing Service ............................................................... 3-120
3.6.9.2 Recent Service Improvements ........................................... 3-121
3.6.9.3 Planned Service Improvements ......................................... 3-123
3.6.10 Existing Freight Systems ....................................................... 3-125
3.6.10.1 Railroads ........................................................................ 3-125
3.6.10.2 Trucking and Courier Services ........................................ 3-125
3.6.11 Existing Aviation System ......................................................... 3-126
3.6.11.1 Charlotte–Douglas International Airport ......................... 3-126
3.6.11.2 Piedmont Triad International Airport ............................... 3-128
3.6.11.3 Raleigh–Durham International Airport ......................... 3-128

4 Need for Improvements ....................................................................... 4-1

4.1 Criterion – Mobility ......................................................................... 4-1

4.2 Criterion – Connectivity .................................................................... 4-2

4.3 Criterion – Interstate Reliever ......................................................... 4-3

4.4 Purpose – Foster Economic Prosperity ........................................... 4-4

4.5 Purpose – Protect the State’s Transportation Investment ................ 4-4

4.6 Purpose – Promote Environmental Stewardship ................................ 4-5

5 Definitions of Alternatives ................................................................... 5-1

5.1 No–build Alternative (Baseline) .................................................... 5-1

5.2 Build Alternatives ........................................................................... 5-1

      5.2.1 Existing Plus Committed (E+C) Alternative .......................... 5-4
US 64-NC 49 Corridor Study
Charlotte and Statesville to Raleigh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5.2.2 E + C Enhanced Alternative ................................................................. 5-6
5.2.3 Expressway Alternative .................................................................. 5-7
5.2.4 Freeway Alternative .......................................................................... 5-9

6 Travel Demand Forecasting .................................................................... 6-1
6.1 Methodology ....................................................................................... 6-1
6.2 Model Network ................................................................................... 6-2
6.3 Key Data Inputs .................................................................................. 6-3
   6.3.1 Data Collection ............................................................................. 6-3
      6.3.1.1 Land Use .................................................................................. 6-3
      6.3.1.2 Highway Network ................................................................. 6-3
   6.3.2 Build Highway Network ............................................................... 6-4
   6.3.3 Develop and Implement Model Process ........................................ 6-4
6.4 Model Calibration ................................................................................ 6-4
6.5 Model Output ...................................................................................... 6-5
   6.5.1 Level of Service Comparison ........................................................ 6-5
   6.5.2 Vehicle Hours of Travel at Level-of-Service F ..................................... 6-6
   6.5.3 Screenline Analysis ..................................................................... 6-12
   6.5.4 Traffic Diversion ......................................................................... 6-13
   6.5.5 User Benefits .............................................................................. 6-14

7 Evaluation of Alternatives ..................................................................... 7-1
7.1 Evaluation Criteria and Measures of Effectiveness ............................ 7-1
7.2 Rating Scale ......................................................................................... 7-1
7.3 Evaluation Results ............................................................................... 7-3
   7.3.1 Travel Time Savings ..................................................................... 7-3
   7.3.2 Travel Destinations from I-85/I-40 ................................................. 7-4
   7.3.3 Safety Improvement ...................................................................... 7-5
   7.3.4 Accommodation of Transit Plans .................................................. 7-7
   7.3.5 Development Pattern Impacts ...................................................... 7-8
   7.3.6 Accessibility ................................................................................ 7-8
   7.3.7 Development Opportunity ........................................................... 7-9
   7.3.8 Sensitivity to Environmental Factors ............................................. 7-10
   7.3.9 Sensitivity to Social Factors .......................................................... 7-11
   7.3.10 Transportation User Benefits .................................................... 7-12
   7.3.11 Capital Cost ................................................................................ 7-13
   7.3.12 User Benefit/Cost ...................................................................... 7-14
7.4 Evaluation of Alternatives Conclusions ............................................ 7-15
   7.4.1 Mobility Benefits .......................................................................... 7-17
   7.4.2 Growth Management Benefits ................................................... 7-18
   7.4.3 Economic Benefits ................................................................. 7-18
   7.4.4 Environmental Issues ................................................................. 7-18
   7.4.5 Cost Effectiveness ....................................................................... 7-19
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

8 Corridor Vision............................................................................................................ 8-1
  8.1 Step 1 .................................................................................................................... 8-2
  8.2 Step 2 .................................................................................................................... 8-3
  8.3 Step 3 .................................................................................................................... 8-4

9 Land Use Policy Guidelines ......................................................................................... 9-1
  9.1 The Land Use /Mobility Issue .................................................................................. 9-1
  9.2 Existing Development Patterns and Related Issues.................................................. 9-3
  9.3 Precedents ............................................................................................................. 9-8
  9.4 Policy Guidelines .................................................................................................. 9-14
  9.5 Conclusions ......................................................................................................... 9-24

10 Corridor Preservation Methods .................................................................................. 10-1
  10.1 Why Preserve Corridors? ....................................................................................... 10-1
  10.2 When Should Preservation Efforts Begin? ............................................................... 10-2
  10.3 Communication, Coordination, and Cooperation .................................................... 10-2
  10.4 Methods for Corridor Right–of–way Protection ......................................................... 10-3
    10.4.1 State Corridor Management Program ............................................................... 10-3
    10.4.2 Mapping ......................................................................................................... 10-5
    10.4.3 Police Power Regulation .................................................................................. 10-5
      10.4.3.1 Corridor Management/Preservation Ordinance ............................................. 10-5
      10.4.3.2 Zoning and Subdivision Regulations ........................................................... 10-6
      10.4.3.3 Official Maps .............................................................................................. 10-7
      10.4.3.4 Exactions ................................................................................................. 10-8
      10.4.3.5 Development Moratoria ............................................................................ 10-9
    10.4.4 Early Property Acquisition ............................................................................... 10-9
    10.4.5 Acquisition of Lesser Interest than Fee Simple .................................................... 10-11
      10.4.5.1 Development Easements ............................................................................ 10-11
      10.4.5.2 Options to Purchase .................................................................................. 10-12
    10.4.6 Inducements for Property Owner ...................................................................... 10-12
      10.4.6.1 Transferable Development Rights ............................................................... 10-13
      10.4.6.2 Public/Private Partnerships ....................................................................... 10-13
    10.4.7 Access Management Techniques .................................................................... 10-14
  10.5 Funding Options ..................................................................................................... 10-14
    10.5.1 Federal–aid Reimbursement ............................................................................. 10-15
    10.5.2 State Trust Funds ............................................................................................ 10-15
    10.5.3 State Infrastructure Banks .............................................................................. 10-15
    10.5.4 Income from DOT–owned Land ..................................................................... 10-16
    10.5.5 Value Recapture ............................................................................................ 10-16
    10.5.6 Local Option Sales and Use Taxes .................................................................. 10-16
    10.5.7 State–shared Revenue Sources ...................................................................... 10-17
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.5.8 Impact Fees</td>
<td>10-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.9 Public/Private Partnerships</td>
<td>10-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.10 Special Assessment Districts</td>
<td>10-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5.11 Conventional Financing</td>
<td>10-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.6 Conclusions</strong></td>
<td>10-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.7 Sources</strong></td>
<td>10-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11 Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>11-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Glossary of Terms

## Appendices

- Appendix A – Corridor Development Team Meeting Summaries
- Appendix B – Land Use Category Definitions, Land Use Conversion Table, and Zoning Conversion Table
- Appendix D – Existing Plus Committed Highway Improvement Projects
- Appendix E – NCDOT Facility Type and Control of Access Definitions
- Appendix F – Example Multi-governmental Agreements
- Appendix G – State of Florida Model Ordinance for Protecting Corridors and Right-of-way
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Satisfaction of Strategic Corridors Criteria By US 64–NC 49 Corridor ....................... 1-5

Table 3.1 Household Growth (1990 and 2000) ................................................................. 3-14
Table 3.2 Forecast Household Growth (2000 and 2030) ..................................................... 3-15
Table 3.3 Employment Growth (1990 and 2000) ............................................................... 3-16
Table 3.4 Forecast Employment Growth (2000 and 2030) .................................................. 3-17
Table 3.5 Historic Properties Adjacent to US 64 and NC 49 ............................................... 3-18
Table 3.6 National Ambient Air Quality Standards ............................................................. 3-56
Table 3.7 Environmental Constraints Map – Descriptions of Numbered Features ............... 3-58
Table 3.8 US 64-NC 49 Study Area NAAQS Attainment Status ........................................... 3-60
Table 3.9 North Carolina Roadway Mileage by Facility Type ............................................. 3-61
Table 3.10 Summary of Activity at Roadside Origin–Destination Survey Stations ............... 3-86
Table 3.11 Existing Fixed Route and Subscription Transportation Services Provided by Public Agencies in the Study Area ........................................................................ 3-113
Table 3.12 Current Full-Service and Limited-Service Intercity Bus Stops in North Carolina .... 3-119
Table 3.13 Recent Rail Station Improvements in North Carolina ........................................ 3-122

Table 5.1 US 64 and NC 49 NCDOT TIP (2004–2010) Projects .......................................... 5-4
Table 5.2 E+C Alternative Characteristics .......................................................................... 5-6
Table 5.3 E+C Enhanced Alternative Characteristics ......................................................... 5-7
Table 5.4 Expressway Alternative Characteristics ............................................................... 5-9
Table 5.5 Freeway Alternative Characteristics ..................................................................... 5-9

Table 6.1 Model Calibration Results .................................................................................. 6-5
Table 6.2 Percent of VHT at LOS F (Baseline Alternative) ................................................ 6-6
Table 6.3 Year 2030 Screenline Volumes by Alternative ..................................................... 6-13
Table 6.4 Traffic Diversion from I-40/I-85 to US 64-NC 49 by Alternative Relative to the Baseline Alternative ................................................................. 6-14

Table 7.1 Model Travel Times Between Charlotte and Raleigh (2030) .............................. 7-4
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Strategic Highway Corridors</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Phase 1 Study Process</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Regional Study Area</td>
<td>3-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study Limits</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2000 Population Density</td>
<td>3-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2030 Population Density</td>
<td>3-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Projected Percent Population Change (2000-2030)</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Service Industry Employment Changes (1990 to 2000)</td>
<td>3-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Distribution of Service Employment in the US 64–NC 49 Study Area</td>
<td>3-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Existing Zoning in the US 64-NC 49 Corridor</td>
<td>3-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Existing Land Use</td>
<td>3-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Future Land Use</td>
<td>3-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Constraints Mapping</td>
<td>3-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>NAAQS Attainment Status</td>
<td>3-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Interstate Lanes</td>
<td>3-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Existing AADT Volumes (2002)</td>
<td>3-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Summary 2002 Level of Service Values</td>
<td>3-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>2002 Truck Percentage</td>
<td>3-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>Inter-County, Home-based Work Travel Patterns</td>
<td>3-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>Video Origin–Destination Survey Sites</td>
<td>3-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>Distribution of Traffic Passing Site #1 in Westbound Direction</td>
<td>3-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Distribution of Traffic Passing Site #2 in Westbound Direction</td>
<td>3-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>Distribution of Traffic Passing Site #3 in Eastbound Direction</td>
<td>3-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Distribution of Traffic Passing Site #4 in Eastbound Direction</td>
<td>3-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Distribution of Traffic Passing Site #5 in Northbound Direction</td>
<td>3-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Origins of Vehicles Passing Site #2 in Eastbound Direction</td>
<td>3-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>Destinations of Vehicles Passing Survey Site #2 in Eastbound Direction</td>
<td>3-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Origins of Vehicles Passing Site #2 in Westbound Direction</td>
<td>3-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>Destinations of Vehicles Passing Site #2 in Westbound Direction</td>
<td>3-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>Inter-county Travel Patterns from Postcard Survey</td>
<td>3-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Location of Roadside Origin–Destination Survey Stations</td>
<td>3-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Origins of Eastbound Vehicles Passing the US 64 - Lexington Roadside Survey</td>
<td>3-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>Designations of Eastbound Vehicles Passing the US 64 - Lexington Roadside</td>
<td>3-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>Origins of Westbound Vehicles Passing the US 64 - Lexington Roadside Survey</td>
<td>3-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Destinations of Westbound Vehicles Passing the US 64 - Lexington Roadside</td>
<td>3-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>County-to-County Travel Patterns of Vehicles Passing US 64 - Lexington</td>
<td>3-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roadside Survey Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>Origins of Northbound Vehicles Passing NC 49 - Yadkin River Roadside Survey</td>
<td>3-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.36  Destinations of Northbound Vehicles Passing NC 49 - Yadkin River Roadside Survey Station ................................................................. 3-92
Figure 3.37  Origins of Southbound Vehicles Passing NC 49 - Yadkin River Roadside Survey Station .............................................................................. 3-93
Figure 3.38  Destinations of Southbound Vehicles Passing NC 49 - Yadkin River Roadside Survey Station ................................................................. 3-93
Figure 3.39  County-to-County Travel Patterns of Vehicles Passing NC 49 - Yadkin River Roadside Survey Station ...................................................... 3-95
Figure 3.40  Origins of Eastbound Vehicles Passing US 64 - Siler City Roadside Survey Station ......................................................................................... 3-96
Figure 3.41  Destinations of Eastbound Vehicles Passing US 64 - Siler City Roadside Survey Station ........................................................................ 3-96
Figure 3.42  Origins of Westbound Vehicles Passing US 64 - Siler City Roadside Survey Station ......................................................................................... 3-97
Figure 3.43  Destinations of Westbound Vehicles Passing US 64 - Siler City Roadside Survey Station ........................................................................ 3-97
Figure 3.44  County-to-County Travel Patterns of Vehicles Passing US 64 - Siler City Roadside Survey Station ........................................................................ 3-99
Figure 3.45  Existing Plus Committed Improvements within the Study Area ...................................................................................................................... 3-108
Figure 3.46  Intercity Passenger Rail Routes ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 3-120
Figure 3.47  Freight Rail ........................................................................................................................................................................................................... 3-127

Figure 5.1  Existing Number of Lanes on US 64 and NC 49 ..................................................................................................................................................................... 5-2
Figure 5.2  Typical Two-lane Roadway Section ................................................................................................................................................................................ 5-2
Figure 5.3  Typical Five-lane Roadway Section ................................................................................................................................................................................... 5-3
Figure 5.4  Typical Four-lane Highway Section ................................................................................................................................................................................... 5-3
Figure 5.5  Typical Freeway Section .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 5-4
Figure 5.6  E+C Alternative – Number of Lanes .................................................................................................................................................................................. 5-5
Figure 5.7  E+C Enhanced Alternative Improvement Locations ...................................................................................................................................... 5-7
Figure 5.8  Expressway Alternative Typical Section and Access Plan ........................................................................................................................................ 5-8
Figure 5.9  Freeway Alternative Typical Section and Access Plan ........................................................................................................................................ 5-10

Figure 6.1  Level of Service and Volume Range Map for Baseline Alternative (Year 2030) .................................................................................................... 6-7
Figure 6.2  Level of Service and Volume Range Map for E+C Alternative (Year 2030) ..................................................................................................... 6-8
Figure 6.3  Level of Service and Volume Range Map for E+C Enhanced Alternative (Year 2030) ......................................................................................... 6-9
Figure 6.4  Level of Service and Volume Range Map for Expressway Alternative (Year 2030) ................................................................................................ 6-10
Figure 6.5  Level of Service and Volume Range Map for Freeway Alternative (Year 2030) ........................................................................................................ 6-11
Figure 6.6  Study Area Screenlines .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 6-12

Figure 7.1  Evaluation Criteria ................................................................................................................................................................................................... 7-2
Figure 7.2  Alternatives’ Rating Scale .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 7-3
Figure 7.3  Travel Time Savings MOE and Alternatives’ Rating .............................................................................................................................................. 7-3
Figure 7.4  Travel Diversion MOE and Alternatives’ Rating ................................................................................................................................................. 7-5
Figure 7.5  Safety Improvement MOE and Alternatives’ Rating .............................................................................................................................................. 7-6
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 7.6 Accommodation of Transit Plans MOE and Alternatives’ Rating............................... 7-7
Figure 7.7 Development Pattern Impacts MOE and Alternatives’ Rating .................................... 7-8
Figure 7.8 Accessibility MOE and Alternatives’ Rating............................................................... 7-9
Figure 7.9 Development Opportunity MOE and Alternatives’ Rating......................................... 7-10
Figure 7.10 Sensitivity to Environmental Factors MOE and Alternatives’ Rating ....................... 7-11
Figure 7.11 Sensitivity to Social Factors MOE and Alternatives’ Rating ..................................... 7-11
Figure 7.12 Transportation User Benefits MOE and Alternatives’ Rating ................................ 7-12
Figure 7.13 Capital Cost MOE and Alternatives’ Rating............................................................ 7-13
Figure 7.14 User Benefits/Cost MOE and Alternatives’ Rating................................................... 7-14
Figure 7.15 Alternatives’ Evaluation Matrix ................................................................................. 7-16

Figure 8.1 Baltimore-Washington Parkway.................................................................................. 8-2
Figure 8.2 NCDOT 2004 – 2010 TIP Projects on US 64 and NC 49............................................ 8-3
Figure 8.3 E+C Enhanced Improvements with Priority Ranking............................................... 8-4
Figure 8.4 Corridor Segments..................................................................................................... 8-5

Figure 9.1 Future Development Pattern Based on Current Land Use Plans............................... 9-7
Figure 9.2 Alternative Future Development Pattern................................................................. 9-25
The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting a comprehensive study of the US 64 and NC 49 corridors from Statesville to Raleigh (US 64) and Charlotte to Raleigh (NC 49 and US 64), herein referred to as the US 64–NC 49 Corridor. The 19-county study area is shown in Figure ES.1. The intent of the US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study is to develop an improvement master plan that will enhance the long-term mobility of passengers and freight, foster economic growth and development, relieve congestion on I-40 and I-85, and optimize transportation funding.

Figure ES.1: US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study Area

Phase I of the study consists of a regional assessment of transportation needs and the evaluation of a broad range of alternative roadway investment strategies to meet those needs. The product of Phase I is a corridor vision that defines the improvement design concept (major features and characteristics) and scope (range or extent of the proposed action). Subsequent study phases will address location specific improvements.

North Carolina Strategic Highways Corridor Concept

The North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridors (SHC) concept represents the first major implementation step to be advanced under the update of the state’s Long-Range Multimodal Statewide Transportation Plan. The concept, developed in partnership with the North
Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the North Carolina Department of Commerce, defines a new focus for NCDOT to improve, protect, and maximize the capacity of existing highway corridors deemed critical to statewide mobility and regional connectivity. The SHC concept represents an opportunity for NCDOT in partnership with corridor stakeholders to create a long-range corridor vision. This vision encompasses decision-making consistency, land use and transportation relationships, and roadway design and operational elements.

NCDOT has identified the US 64–NC 49 Corridor as a Strategic Highway Corridor. The US 64–NC 49 corridor is considered to possess the following characteristics consistent with Strategic Highway Corridors criteria:

- Potential to carry significant traffic, including substantial truck traffic.
- Connect existing major activity centers.
- Connect existing and planned Interstate facilities.
- Potential to serve as an Interstate reliever.
- Part of the National Highway System (NHS).

**US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study Goals and Objectives**

The US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study goal and objectives were derived from the broader purpose and goals of the NCDOT Strategic Highway Corridors concept. They were drafted through collaboration between the Study Team and the Corridor Development Team. The Corridor Development Team (CDT) is an advisory committee developed to oversee both technical and non-technical matters. The CDT was comprised of NCDOT staff-level individuals with a comprehensive knowledge of the regional study area, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) staff who work closely within the corridor study area, and local elected/appointed officials and staff who represent a specific municipality along the corridor.

**Study Goal**

“To develop a transportation system consistent with the Strategic Highway Corridors concept definition that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight to and through Central North Carolina while addressing the environmental and economic development opportunities of the public.”

**Study Objectives**

1. Enhance transportation connectivity and mobility.
2. Serve as a reliever to I-40 and I-85.
3. Improve safety.
4. Support regional and local transit plans.
5. Support economic development.
7. Optimize costs and benefits to system users and funding agencies.
8. Be sensitive to environmental and social factors.

The intent of the US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study is to develop a facility “master plan” improvement strategy for the enhancement and long-term preservation of passenger and freight mobility. Phase 1 of the study defines the corridor “vision” (Chapter 8, Phase 1 Report) with a broad implementation concept to achieve the vision. Definition of the corridor vision was conducted in five major steps as outlined below and described in the sections that follow:

- Definition of Need
- Definition of Alternatives
- Development of Evaluation Criteria
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Recommended Corridor Vision

In addition to the corridor vision, Phase 1 of the study also produced the following products, which will support future project phases and continued stakeholder involvement:

- A Problem Statement that describes the need for improvements to the US 64–NC 49 Corridor as they relate to the corridor’s function as a Strategic Highway Corridor. (Chapter 4, Phase 1 Report)
- A description of land use policy guidelines that address land use/mobility issues and may be used to balance land use and transportation objectives in support of the corridor vision. (Chapter 9, Phase 1 Report)
- A description of corridor preservation methods that may be helpful in controlling project costs. (Chapter 10, Phase 1 Report)

**Definition of Need**

The factors and conditions that substantiate the need for a corridor improvement vision are based on an extensive evaluation and assessment of existing and anticipated conditions (Chapter 3, Phase 1 Report) within the immediate US 64–NC 49 Corridor and within the 19-county study area. The existing conditions evaluation included an assessment of demographics, land use, environmental features, and the multimodal transportation system. The factors and conditions have been organized based on the purposes of the Strategic Highway Corridors concept as well as the Strategic Highway Corridors selection criteria as developed by NCDOT and adopted by the North Carolina Board of Transportation.
Criterion - Mobility
Long-distance east-west mobility across the central portion of North Carolina is compromised by the limited number of available high-speed facilities. I-40 and I-85 are the only full control of access facilities traversing east-west across the central portion of the state, which is the most heavily populated and urbanized area of North Carolina. These Interstates carry large numbers of commercial vehicles, short-distance local travelers, and long-distance travelers. Extended periods of congestion are prevalent in the urbanized areas through which I-40 and I-85 pass. The US 64–NC 49 Corridor is the most direct alternative corridor to I-40 and I-85. Origin and destination surveys show that some travelers making long-distance interstate and intercounty trips in and through the central portion of North Carolina appear to be consciously diverting to US 64 and NC 49 as an alternative to using I-40 and I-85. Freight carriers and travelers could benefit from more efficient route options between Raleigh and Charlotte and Raleigh and Statesville.

Criterion - Connectivity
Existing activity centers served either directly or indirectly (via US 421) by the US 64–NC 49 Corridor include Charlotte, Concord, Kannapolis, Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem, Burlington, Durham, Chapel Hill, Cary, and Raleigh. The Corridor also serves the major airports in Charlotte, the Triad, and the Triangle areas. US 64 and NC 49 provide east-west connectivity between north-south Interstate routes in the regional study area. Improvements to the US 64 and NC 49 Corridor would improve connectivity between the major activity centers along and in the vicinity of these routes and to the north-south oriented Interstate routes in the region.

Criterion – Interstate Reliever
Although I-40 and I-85 provide access to numerous cities and activity centers in the region, Interstate mobility from the Raleigh area west to Charlotte and Statesville is hindered by congestion through the urban centers. Presently, I-85 in Mecklenburg County experiences heavy congestion throughout much of the day, with LOS E or F conditions observed during peak travel periods. Heavy congestion levels also were identified along the portion of I-40 between Winston-Salem and Greensboro and along the I-40/I-85 overlap section to the east. Similar high congestion levels are prevalent in the Raleigh/Durham area on I-40.

Travel demand forecasts for the year 2030 anticipate substantial increases in both locally generated and through travel demands on I-40 and I-85. It is unlikely that significant improvements to these facilities will occur beyond those identified in the 2004-2010 NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Over the long term, improvements to alternative travel corridors such as US 64 and NC 49 will be needed to ensure the continuation of adequate regional and statewide mobility. Origin-destination surveys indicate that US 64 and NC 49 are already being used by some travelers for long distance trips, and that drivers appear to be consciously diverting to US 64 and NC 49 as an alternative to using the more heavily traveled I-40 and I-85.
Purpose – Foster Economic Prosperity
Many communities within the US 64–NC 49 Corridor believe that transportation alternatives are vital to their prospective economic initiatives and development needs and serve as the means to becoming more self-supporting with a mixture of residential and commercial/service growth available to encourage a viable tax base. The Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project, also known as the "North Carolina Central Park Project," is a formal effort to develop the region as a major tourism/recreational and cultural/historic destination. With this area lying at the junction of US 64 and NC 49, any improvements to these facilities would serve to further enhance and strengthen the development of the region.

Purpose – Protect the State’s Transportation Investment
There are finite funds available for transportation system improvements throughout North Carolina. Prioritizing needs and having a clear vision of the ultimate function of the US 64–NC 49 Corridor will help direct funds for projects beyond the timeframe of the state’s TIP more efficiently and could help preserve the functioning of the corridor as a major travel facility for the longer term.

Purpose Promote Environmental Stewardship
The NCDOT Environmental Stewardship Policy (February 7, 2002) states NCDOT is “committed to planning, designing, constructing, maintaining and managing an interconnected transportation system while striving to preserve and enhance our natural and cultural resources.” Early planning and an overall vision for the entire corridor, along with the early involvement of local communities and state and federal resource agencies, can provide opportunities for long-term collaboration on preserving and enhancing natural resources in the corridor area and for consideration of how the corridor’s overall vision and the development of individual projects can help preserve the cultural and social values of communities along the corridor.

Definition of Alternatives
A No-build (Baseline) alternative and four Build Alternatives were defined and evaluated during the course of this study. These alternatives address the project’s goal and objectives and encompassed a range of investment options. Each of the alternatives was defined in terms of its primary physical and operational characteristics. Summary descriptions of the alternatives are provided below.

No-build (Baseline) Alternative
Typically, a No-build Alternative is defined as an alternative that incorporates “planned” improvements that are included in the fiscally constrained long-range plan, and/or “committed” improvements such as those in the state DOT’s transportation improvement program (TIP) or local agency’s capital improvement program (CIP). However, the US 64–NC 49 Corridor Study is evaluating the compilation of all of the currently “planned” and “committed” improvements to US 64 and NC 49 as an investment alternative. Therefore, for
the purposes of this study, the No-build Alternative is defined as only the “existing” facility for US 64 and NC 49, which consists of the present physical and operational condition of the facility, plus those improvements that were under construction at the time of the analysis. The remaining transportation network within the study area includes committed and planned improvements as defined previously. Figure ES.2 shows the existing number of lanes and general facility type on US 64 and NC 49.

**Figure ES.2: Existing Number of Lanes on US 64 and NC 49**

![Existing Number of Lanes on US 64 and NC 49](image)

**Existing Plus Committed (E+C) Alternative**
This alternative includes those improvements for US 64 and NC 49 contained in the financially constrained long-range transportation plans of the study area Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the NCDOT TIP, and local government capital improvement programs. Descriptions of these projects are provided in Table ES.1.

**Figure ES.3** shows the number of lanes and general facility types that would result across the study corridor following implementation of all defined elements of the E+C Alternative. Characteristics of the E+C Alternative are provided in Table ES.2.
### Table ES.1: US 64 and NC 49 NCDOT TIP (2004-2010) Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>TIP #</th>
<th>LIMITS</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>IMPROVEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NC 49</td>
<td>R-2533</td>
<td>Harrisburg to Yadkin River</td>
<td>29.3 mi.</td>
<td>Widen to multi-lanes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC 49</td>
<td>R-2535</td>
<td>SR 1174 West of Farmer to Asheboro Bypass (R-2536) West of SR 1193</td>
<td>9.7 mi.</td>
<td>Widen to four-lane, divided facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 64</td>
<td>R-2220</td>
<td>East of I-85 Bus. in Lexington to US 220 in Asheboro</td>
<td>28.5 mi.</td>
<td>Widen to four-lanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 64</td>
<td>R-3111</td>
<td>US 64 East of Mocksville to US 601 West of Mocksville.</td>
<td>6.1 mi.</td>
<td>Two-lane Bypass on four-lane R/W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 64</td>
<td>R-2536</td>
<td>US 64 West to US 64 East.</td>
<td>13.5 mi.</td>
<td>Four-lane freeway on new location with interchanges at US 220, NC 49, and zoo access at NC 159.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 64/ US 1</td>
<td>U-3101</td>
<td>US 64 to South of SR 1313 (Walnut Street).</td>
<td>2.6 mi.</td>
<td>Rehabilitate pavement, additional travel lanes, and modify SR 1313 interchange.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table ES.2: E+C Alternative Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Access</th>
<th>Less than 55 mph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Speed</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-way</td>
<td>Interchanges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signalized intersections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsignalized intersections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Driveway access.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**E+C Enhanced Alternative**

An enhancement of the E+C Alternative would provide for a continuous four-lane, divided facility from Charlotte to Asheboro and from Statesville to Asheboro and on to Raleigh. Major improvement elements of the E+C Enhanced Alternative include the following:

- Implement all TIP projects.
- Upgrading all remaining two-lane segments to four-lane, divided roadways. (Mocksville Bypass (A) and two-lane segment of NC 49 (B) in Davidson County)
- New location of four-lane, divided segments with full control of access around urban areas now planned to have or presenting having five-lane sections. (Harrisburg (C), Mount Pleasant (D), Richfield (E), Ramseur (F), Siler City (G), and Lexington (H) between I-85 Business and I-85)
- Enhancement of the four-lane, divided section of US 64 through Lexington (I) to improve safety and operations.
- Freeway-to-freeway interchanges (free-flowing) at other freeways (J).
- Consolidation of driveways along all existing and committed four-lane, divided segments.
- Conversion of signalized intersections with major crossroads to grade-separated interchanges where appropriate along all existing and committed four-lane, divided segments.

**Figure ES.4** identifies where the suggested improvements to the E+C Alternative would be made to create the E+C Enhanced Alternative. The general characteristics of the E+C Enhanced Alternative are described in **Table ES.3**. The E+C Enhanced Alternative improves
the US 64–NC 49 corridor to a combination of a Freeway, Expressway Type-I and Expressway Type-II, as indicated in the NCDOT Facility Type & Control of Access Definitions in Appendix E.

Table ES.3: E+C Enhanced Alternative Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Speed</th>
<th>55 mph +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-way</td>
<td>250 feet +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Type of Access  | • Interchanges.  
|                 | • No new signalized intersections with removal or bypassing of existing signalized intersections.  
|                 | • Consolidated driveway access. |

Figure ES.4: E+C Enhanced Alternative Improvement Locations

Expressway Alternative
This alternative, consistent with the NCDOT Expressway-Type I facility type definition, would provide a high level of mobility with low to moderate direct access to adjacent land parcels over the entire length of the US 64 and NC 49 corridor. The typical section is a four-lane, divided highway with a frontage or access road along one or both sides, with access to the facility provided via interchanges, unsignalized intersections, or consolidated driveways.
A typical roadway cross section and access plan are shown in Figure ES.5. The general characteristics of this alternative are outlined in Table ES.4.

**Table ES.4  Expressway Alternative Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Speed</td>
<td>55 mph +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-way</td>
<td>300 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Access</td>
<td>• Interchanges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unsignalized intersections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consolidated driveway access.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure ES.5: Expressway Alternative Typical Section and Access Plan**

**Freeway Alternative**
This alternative would provide a high degree of mobility and full control of access over the entire length of US 64 and NC 49, similar to that provided by I-40 and I-85. Access would only be allowed via grade separated interchanges. The typical roadway cross section and
access plan are shown in Figure ES.6. The general facility characteristics for this alternative are outlined in Table ES.5.

Table ES.5: Freeway Alternative Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Speed</td>
<td>65 mph +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of Way</td>
<td>400 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Access</td>
<td>Interchanges only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure ES.6: Freeway Alternative Typical Section and Access Plan

Development of Evaluation Criteria

The degree to which the corridor alternatives achieved the project objectives were determined through the application of evaluation criteria that reflected the objectives. Evaluation criteria were developed in coordination with the Corridor Development Team. The evaluation criteria are defined by measures of effectiveness (MOE), which are the actual data against
which the relative performance of each alternative is evaluated. The resulting criteria, and their associated measures of effectiveness, are presented in Figure ES.7.

**Figure ES.7: Evaluation Criteria and Measures of Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Objective Category</th>
<th>Measure of Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOBILITY BENEFITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Time</td>
<td>Percent reduction in travel time from Charlotte and Statesville to Raleigh vs. baseline condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Diversion I-85 and I-40</td>
<td>Percent Interstate traffic reduction from baseline condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Reduction in accidents using National (and/or Statewide) average accident rates by facility type vs. baseline condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation of Transit Plans</td>
<td>Alternative’s potential to facilitate implementation of transit initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROWTH MANAGEMENT BENEFITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Pattern Impacts</td>
<td>Potential to direct growth consistent with locally desired development patterns and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC BENEFITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Percent change in number of jobs or households within specified travel times to specific destinations vs. baseline condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Opportunity</td>
<td>Potential for improved access to future development that includes major employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to environmental factors</td>
<td>Potential for adverse impact based on facility footprint and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to social factors</td>
<td>Potential for adverse impact based on facility footprint and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COST EFFECTIVENESS BENEFITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation User Benefits</td>
<td>Travel time, operating, and safety cost savings relative to the baseline condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Cost</td>
<td>Estimate of probable cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Benefits / Capital Costs</td>
<td>Calculated ratio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation of Alternatives

As shown in Figure ES.8, the performance of each of the four corridor improvement alternatives was rated as “Good”, “Better”, or “Best” with regard to its degree of satisfaction of each of the defined evaluation criteria. The Build alternatives were compared against the No-build (Baseline) condition. The results of the alternatives evaluation is shown in Figure ES.9.

Figure ES.8: Alternatives’ Rating Scale

A summary of the conclusions drawn from the evaluation of alternatives in Figure ES.9 are presented below. These conclusions were utilized in framing the recommendations for the corridor vision:

- 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.
**Figure ES.9: Alternatives’ Evaluation Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Effectiveness</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Freeway</th>
<th>E+C</th>
<th>E+C Enhanced</th>
<th>Expressway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel Time</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel Diversion - I-85 and I-40</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation of Transit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to direct growth consistent with locally desired development patterns and policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to accommodate adjacent development and opportunities for development that includes major employment centers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent change in number of jobs or households within specified travel times to specific destinations vs. baseline condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Opportunity: Growth and economic benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to environmental factors</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to social factors</td>
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Corridor Vision

The establishment of a consensus-based vision for the US 64–NC 49 Corridor is an important planning step to provide long-term direction 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 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 the 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 the desired physical and operational characteristics of the US 64–NC 49 Corridor.

It is clear from the alternatives’ evaluation that the Freeway Alternative best satisfies the purposes and criteria of a Strategic Highway Corridor. Unfortunately, it is also clear that the near term implementation of the Freeway Alternative is not financially feasible. Therefore, it is the Study Team’s and Corridor Development Team’s recommendation that the Freeway Alternative serve as the ultimate “Corridor Vision” with achievement of the vision occurring through the staged implementation of necessary improvements.

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 ES.10.

Implementation steps to achieve the vision are described below.

Step 1
The first step toward the vision is the implementation of the improvements contained in the NCDOT TIP (FY 2004-2010). Although several of these projects, such as the US 64 Asheboro Southern Bypass and the US 1/US 64 improvements through Cary are consistent with the Freeway Alternative definition, the majority of the other projects are multi-lane widenings of existing two-lane highways with no control of access. 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 have the potential to not only improve safety and traffic operations in the near term, but to advance the facility closer to the ultimate vision of a freeway across the corridor. 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 access points.

Step 2
The second step in achieving the ultimate corridor vision would be to implement those improvements identified as elements of the E+C Enhanced Alternative. All of these projects would be consistent with the ultimate Freeway Alternative. Figure ES.11 identifies these improvement projects along with a suggested implementation priority ranking. Project 1 (near Raleigh) and Project 2 (near Charlotte) 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. 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.
Step 3
The final step in achieving the vision entails connecting all of the “freeway” portions of the corridor. Such improvements may consist of an upgrade of the facility on existing alignment, or may require the construction of a new location facility. As defined by the Study Team, there are three major segments of the study corridor. Given what is presently known with regard to safety, traffic volume, traffic operations, and land development patterns, the Study Team envisions the following priority for segment improvement:

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

Conclusion
NCDOT has recognized the limitations of continuing to widen the Interstates and constructing new roads to facilitate regional mobility and freight carrying capacity that often result in a great expense to the environment and urban structure. With the update to the state’s Long-Range Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, NCDOT has a new emphasis on targeted mobility improvements. The Strategic Highways Corridors concept promotes the need to improve, protect, and maximize the capacity of existing highways deemed critical to
statewide mobility and regional connectivity. It represents an opportunity for NCDOT in coordination with stakeholders to consider long-term visions, decision-making consistency, land use partnerships, and overarching design/operational changes.

It is within this context that NCDOT initiated a corridor study of the US 64–NC 49 Corridor in September 2003 with Phase 1 conducting a regional assessment of transportation needs and evaluating broad alternative roadway investment strategies to meet those needs. The principal products include the following:

- Problem Statement
- Consensus-Based Vision
- Land Use Policy Guidelines
- Corridor Preservation Methods

These four products provide a solid foundation upon which future project development phases can build. Continuing beyond Phase I, NCDOT will use these products to:

- Support the need for improvements to US 64 and NC 49 as they relate to the corridor’s function as a Strategic Highway Corridor.
- Promote continued stakeholder involvement.
- Ensure that improvements are consistent with the overarching corridor vision in terms of design characteristics, operations, and esthetics.
- Work with local agencies to develop land use plans that are consistent with and support the corridor vision.
- Develop a corridor preservation plan specific to US 64 and NC 49.
- Serve as a preface and supporting documentation for improvement projects that enter the environmental document phase.