

Project Development Process *(continued from page 1)*

- STEP 5:** Review comments on the DEIS
Review public comments and hearing transcript
Selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging
Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)
- STEP 6:** Preliminary design refinement
Additional field studies
Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
Record of Decision (ROD)
- STEP 7:** Design Public Hearing

Project Schedule

A tentative schedule is shown below. Because a number of factors can affect a project's schedule, it may be subject to change.

Complete Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Fall 2008
Select Preferred Alternative	Spring 2009
Complete Final Environmental Impact Statement	Fall 2009
Right-of-way acquisition	U-4751: 2012 / R-3300: 2012
Construction	*Post Years

* Post Years means that the allocation of funding is planned for future years. Right-of-way acquisition and construction would begin after 2013.

Contacts for the US 17 Corridor Study

If you need additional information or would like to discuss the project, please contact:

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US 17 Corridor Study

New Hanover & Pender Counties

Citizens Informational Workshops

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will hold two citizens informational workshops for the US 17 Corridor Study in April (see dates below). Attending one of the workshops will provide you an opportunity to learn about the project, ask questions, and offer input to project representatives. The information provided will be identical at both workshops. Citizens may attend the open house style workshops any time between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

April 23, 2007, Monday:
Topsail High School, Cafeteria
17445 US Hwy. 17
Hampstead, NC 28412

April 24, 2007, Tuesday:
Noble Middle School, Cafeteria
6520 Market Street
Wilmington, NC 28405

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to participate in the workshop. If you require special services, please contact Olivia Farr at the email address or phone number shown on page 4 of this newsletter as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Project Description

NCDOT proposes to make transportation improvements to the US 17 and Market Street (US 17 Business) corridors in northern New Hanover and southern Pender Counties. Two North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects, U-4751 and R-3300, are being evaluated as part of the US 17 Corridor Study.

Project U-4751 is included in the 2007-2013 North Carolina State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as an extension of Military Cutoff Road on new location from Market Street (US 17 Business) to the US 17 Wilmington Bypass (John Jay Burney Jr. Freeway). Project R-3300 is included in the 2007-2013 TIP as the US 17 bypass of Hampstead. Both projects are part of the NCDOT's Strategic Highway Corridor (SHC) Initiative. This initiative is an effort to preserve and maximize the mobility and connectivity of the highway corridors that play a critical role in regional transportation.

The purpose of the US 17 Corridor Study project is to improve the traffic carrying capacity and safety of the US 17 and Market Street corridors in the project area.

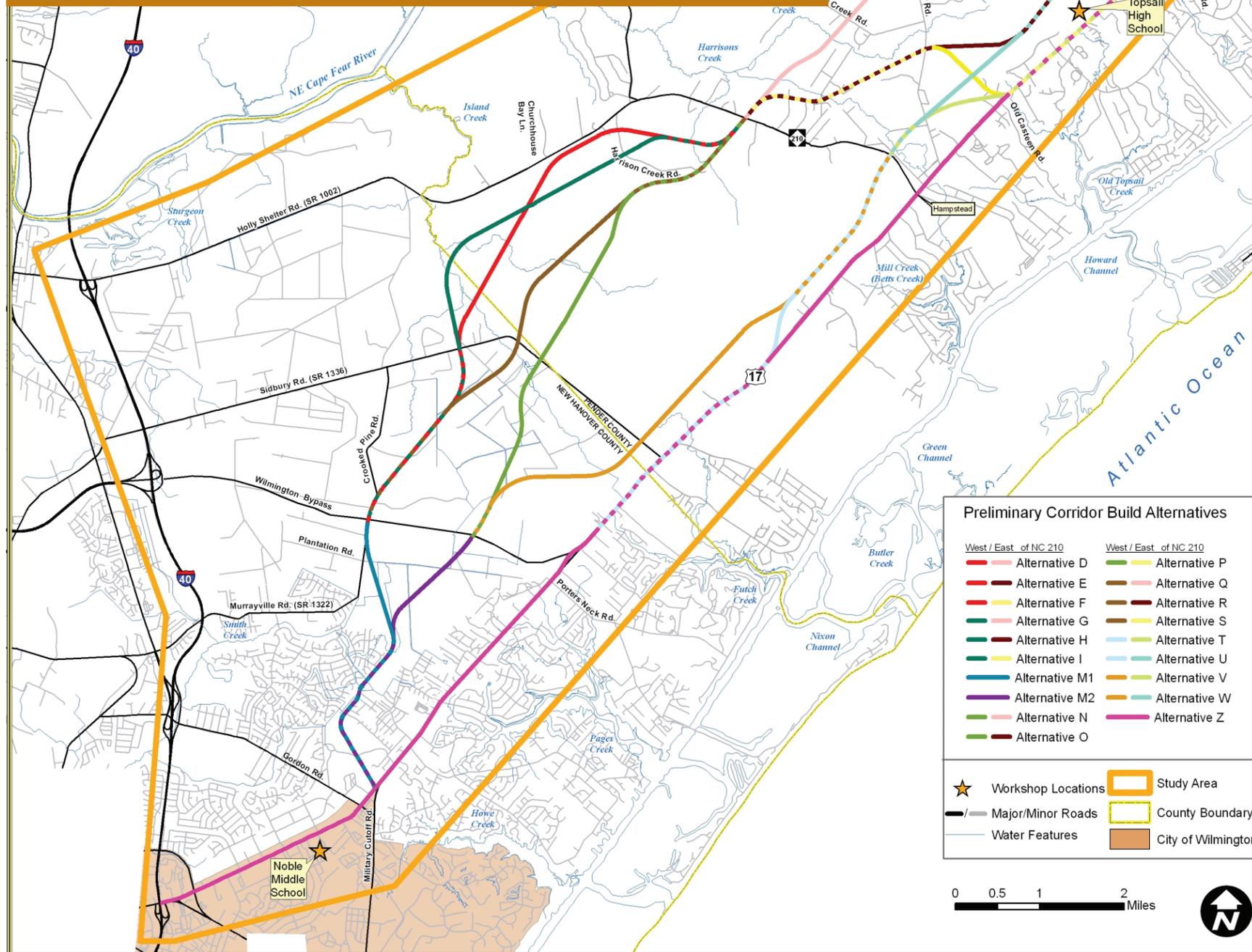
Project Development Process

Any state agency proposing a project that uses public funds and may have a potential environmental effect must comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Under SEPA, an agency must study the adverse and beneficial environmental impacts of alternatives that meet a project's purpose and need, identify the preferred alternative, and discuss the reasons for eliminating each of the rejected alternatives. This planning process is divided into the steps described below. This project is currently in the early stages of Step 2.

- STEP 1:** Data collection and inventory of planning issues
Study area/preliminary corridor development
- STEP 2:** First Citizens Informational Workshop
Documentation of community concerns
Selection of alternatives for detailed study
- STEP 3:** Preliminary design and detailed field studies *(Please note: NCDOT personnel will require access to private property in order to conduct field studies).*
Engineering/environmental analysis
Second Citizens Informational Workshop
- STEP 4:** Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
Corridor Public Hearing

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Potential corridor alternatives were screened for suitability based on several criteria, including meeting the purpose of and need for the proposed project, minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources, and consideration of community features. Geographic information system (GIS) data and modeling, aerial photography and observations from field visits were used in the analysis. Detailed corridor drawings and estimated impacts associated with each of the alternatives will be presented at the Citizens Informational Workshops.



Preliminary Corridor Build Alternatives

There are two build alternatives for Military Cutoff Road Extension (M1 and M2) and 17 build alternatives for the Hampstead Bypass. Hampstead Bypass alternatives include improvements to existing US 17 from their northern termini north to the existing median divided section north of Hampstead.

- Alternative D** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass to US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 14.89 miles.
- Alternative E** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 14.33 miles.
- Alternative F** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 near Old Casteen Road south of Topsail High School; 14.79 miles.
- Alternative G** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 15.01 miles.
- Alternative H** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 14.45 miles.
- Alternative I** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 near Old Casteen Road south of Topsail High School; 14.90 miles.
- Alternative M1** – Begins on Market Street at Military Cutoff Road and ends at the Wilmington Bypass near Plantation Road and Crooked Pine Road; 3.37 miles.
- Alternative M2** – Begins on Market Street at Military Cutoff Road and ends at the Wilmington Bypass approximately one mile west of the US 17 interchange; 3.46 miles.
- Alternative N** – Begins at the Wilmington Bypass approximately one mile west of the US 17 interchange and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School; 13.76 miles.
- Alternative O** – Begins at the Wilmington Bypass approximately one mile west of the US 17 interchange and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School; 13.20 miles.
- Alternative P** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass approximately one mile west of the US 17 interchange to US 17 near Old Casteen Road; 13.66 miles.
- Alternative Q** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 14.32 miles.
- Alternative R** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 13.71 miles.
- Alternative S** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 near Old Casteen Road south of Topsail High School; 14.17 miles.
- Alternative T** – Extends from US 17 approximately 2.75 miles south of NC 210 and ends at US 17 near Old Casteen Road south of Topsail High School; 10.58 miles; includes improvements to US 17 south to the Wilmington Bypass.
- Alternative U** – Extends from US 17 approximately 2.75 miles south of NC 210 to US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 10.63 miles; includes improvements to US 17 south to the Wilmington Bypass.
- Alternative V** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 near Old Casteen Road south of Topsail High School; 12.54 miles.
- Alternative W** – Extends from the Wilmington Bypass and ends at US 17 north of Topsail High School near Long Leaf Road; 12.59 miles.
- Alternative Z (Widen Existing US 17/Market Street)** – Widens existing Market Street / US 17 corridor; 17.06 miles.

Non-Construction Alternatives Will Also Be Evaluated

NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No Build Alternative would not provide any substantial improvements to US 17 or Military Cutoff Road within the study area; only typical maintenance activities would occur.

MASS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE

The project study area will be evaluated for characteristics suitable for implementation of mass transit or enhancement of existing mass transit systems that would improve the traffic carrying capacity and safety of the US 17 and Market Street corridors.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM) ALTERNATIVE

TSM improvements are intended to maximize the efficiency of the present system within the existing right-of-way while minimizing capital outlay. Examples of typical TSM improvements include signal phasing, access control, signing, and minor realignments. It is expected that TSM improvements would improve traffic flow along Market Street, but that Market Street would still operate at an unsatisfactory level of service.