



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

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GOVERNOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**GARDEN PARKWAY OPEN HOUSES AND PUBLIC HEARINGS TO BE HELD
JUNE 22-25**

RALEIGH — The North Carolina Turnpike Authority will hold four Pre-Hearing Open Houses and two Corridor Design Public Hearings June 22-25, 2009 for the proposed Garden Parkway, also known as the Gaston East-West Connector, in Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties.

Pre-Hearing Open Houses are scheduled for:

- Monday, June 22, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Gastonia Adult Recreation Center, 519 W. Franklin Blvd, Gastonia;
- Tuesday, June 23, from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Forestview High School, 5545 Union Rd, Gastonia;
- Wednesday, June 24, from 2:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at South Point High School, 906 South Point Rd, Belmont; and
- Thursday, June 25, from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Olympic High School, 4301 Sandy Porter Rd, Charlotte.

Turnpike Authority representatives will be available at the Pre-Hearing Open Houses to answer questions and receive comments concerning the Garden Parkway. The same public hearing maps and project information will be presented at all open houses and hearings.

Public Hearings will begin at 7 p.m. and are scheduled for:

- Tuesday, June 23, at Forestview High School, 5545 Union Rd, Gastonia; and
- Thursday, June 25, at Olympic High School, 4301 Sandy Porter Rd, Charlotte.

The Public Hearings will consist of an explanation of the purpose of and need for the project, project alternatives, design features, anticipated impacts, the state – federal relationship, and right of way and relocation requirements and procedures. The hearings will be open to those present for statements and comments. Anyone wishing to speak at the hearings may register to do so at the Pre-Hearing Open Houses, immediately prior to the hearings or by calling Pat Puryear at (919) 571-3000 or sending an email to gaston@ncturnpike.org. A three-minute time limit will be imposed for speaking in order to allow a fair opportunity for all those wishing to do so. Additional spoken comments may be received after those who registered have finished their comments.

The public comment period on the Draft EIS and Recommended Alternative is open until Tuesday, July 21, 2009. Public comments can be mailed to Jennifer Harris, P.E., North Carolina Turnpike Authority; 1578 Mail Service Center; Raleigh, NC 27699-1578 or emailed to gaston@ncturnpike.org. Citizens can also call the Project Hotline (1-800-475-6402).

The Turnpike Authority, in coordination with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), proposes to construct the Garden Parkway, which would be a controlled-access toll road extending from I-85 west of Gastonia in Gaston County to I-485 in Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, a distance of about 22 miles. Several alternative corridors for this new location facility are evaluated in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Turnpike Authority, FHWA, and NCDOT have identified Detailed Study Alternative (DSA) 9 as the Recommended Alternative based on a balance of cost and design considerations, impacts to the human and natural environments, and input received to date from agencies and the public.

The Draft EIS, a Citizens Summary and a new Frequently Asked Questions factsheet and traffic diagrams are available on the project website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/gaston. Hard copies of the Draft EIS and Citizens Summary can be found at the following locations: the Gaston County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Departments; the Gaston Urban Area MPO/City of Gastonia; the Belmont Branch, Bessemer City Branch, Gaston County, Lowell Branch, Steele Creek Branch and Union Road Branch libraries; the Turnpike Authority office in Raleigh; the NCDOT Division 10 office in Albemarle and the NCDOT Division 12 office in Shelby.

The Turnpike Authority will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in the workshop. Anyone requiring special services should contact the Turnpike Authority by Monday, June 15, 2009 so that arrangements can be made.

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