



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TURNPIKE AUTHORITY PUBLISHES MONROE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT IN JUST OVER TWO YEARS**
Transportation Agencies Recommend Alternative D

RALEIGH —The Monroe Connector/Bypass Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released today by the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The Draft EIS identifies Detailed Study Alternative D as the Recommended Alternative. The Recommended Alternative is only a recommendation and is not a final decision.

“The Monroe Connector/Bypass project is making great progress with the release of the Draft EIS in just over two years,” said David Joyner, Executive Director of the Turnpike Authority. “The community has been waiting a long time for this project and it couldn’t have happened without innovative financing and the great collaboration between Turnpike Authority staff, the local citizens, FHWA, and NCDOT.”

Each Detailed Study Alternative (DSA) is composed of a series of numbered segments. DSA D includes Segments 2, 21, 30, 31, 36, 36A and 40. The section known as Segment 2 includes the reconstruction of approximately one mile of existing US 74 to include tolled freeway lanes as well as non-tolled frontage roads on either side of the freeway lanes to serve local traffic. In order to minimize impacts to businesses along existing US 74, the current design for Segment 2 includes elevating US 74 with retaining walls. This design concept reduces the footprint of the project and has reduced the business impacts by nearly half compared to other design concepts previously considered. The other sections of DSA D (Segments 21, 30, 31, 36, 36A and 40) would be constructed on new location. These portions of the project depart from US 74 between Stallings Road and Indian Trail-Fairview Road, continue north near the Old Hickory Business Park, and then continue east, north of and parallel to Secret Shortcut Road, with interchanges at Indian Trail-Fairview Road, Unionville-Indian Trail Road, Rocky River Road, US 601, NC 200, Austin Chaney Road, and Forest Hills School Road. The project would tie back into US 74 west of Marshville.

“Public input plays a critical role in the decisions made about this project,” said Joyner. “We look forward to receiving the public’s comments and completing the necessary steps to see this project financed next year, constructed and open to traffic by 2013.”

The Draft EIS and a Citizens Summary are available on the project website at www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe. By mid-April, hard copies will be at the following locations: the Monroe, Indian Trail, Stallings and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Departments; the Monroe, Edwards Memorial, Matthews Branch and Union West libraries; the Turnpike Authority office in Raleigh and the NCDOT Division 10 office in Albemarle.

The Turnpike Authority will also hold several public meetings in the project area to give residents an opportunity to review and comment on the project. Pre-Hearing Open Houses are scheduled for May 18, 19, 20 and 21, 2009. Public Hearings are scheduled for May 19 and 21, 2009. Specific meeting times and locations will be announced on the project website and in public notices in local newspapers.

The public comment period on the Draft EIS and Recommended Alternative is open until Friday, June 5, 2009. Public comments should be mailed to Jennifer Harris, P.E., North Carolina Turnpike Authority; 1578 Mail Service Center; Raleigh, NC 27699-1578 or emailed to monroe@ncturnpike.org. Citizens can also call the project Hotline (1-800-475-6402).

Monroe Connector/Bypass Project Background:

The Monroe Connector/Bypass has been studied for many years. It is a combination of two projects previously analyzed by the NCDOT, the Monroe Connector (I-485 to US 601 in Monroe) and the Monroe Bypass (US 601 in Monroe to US 74 near Marshville). The General Assembly designated it as a candidate toll project and in 2007, local transportation leaders recommended financing the entire project as a toll facility.

The proposed project is a four-lane, controlled-access, toll road approximately 20 miles long and is expected to save travelers about 30 minutes a trip. Estimated cost between \$695 and \$859.5 million, the project will be financed using toll revenue bonds, a federal transportation TIFIA loan and state supported annual gap payments of \$24 million. The Turnpike Authority anticipates selling the bonds and beginning construction in 2010. The project is scheduled to open to traffic in late 2013.

Tolls will be paid through an electronic toll collection system. There will be no toll booths; however customers may pay cash, check or credit card to receive an electronic transponder that will automatically deduct the tolls. For those without a transponder, overhead gantries with high-speed camera imaging systems will capture license plate information and drivers will be billed.

For more information on the Monroe Connector/Bypass log onto www.ncturnpike.org/projects/monroe/

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