The Committee felt specific "experts" needed to present the selected topics, with the following recommendations as to topics and presenters:

- Air Quality Issues – David Hyder as primary and Paul Muller as a possible alternate
- Design Creativity Issues – Fred Craig as primary and Philan Medford as a possible alternate
- Connectivity Issues – Michael Moule
- Transportation/Land Use Connection Issues – Scott Shuford (Whit Rylee and Bruce Black were mentioned as resource persons for these issues)

The breakout table topics were not finalized but will likely include:

- Other Environmental Issues (noise, water quality, etc.)
- Economic Impact Issues
- Traffic Modeling Issues (volume and capacity)
- Betterments

Chairman Bissette introduced the new NCDOT Division Engineer, Dan Martin.

The Committee will reconvene from noon to 2:00 P.M. on Wednesday, May 31 to finalize logistics and format for the Educational Meeting, as well as hear an abbreviated "dry run" for the Educational Meeting. The Committee meeting adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Committee Attendance

Present:

Louis Bissette, Chair
Brownie Newman, Vice-Chair
Leni Sitnick
Ron Ainspan
Yates Pharr
Chuck Pickering
Mike Plemmons
Karen Cragnolin
Bob Shepherd
Betty Lawrence
Susan Ballard
Susan Roderick

Absent:

Gloria Johnson
Tommy Sellers
Debby Vance
Jeff Kelly
Jim Coman
Bradley Hix
Charles Price

Other Attendees

NCDOT and Related Staff:

Drew Joyner, NCDOT
Carl Goode, NCDOT
Thomas Kendig, NCDOT
Ken Burleson, TGS
Dan Martin, NCDOT
Max Phillips, NCDOT

City Staff:

Michael Moule
Scott Shuford
Ron Fuller

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

AGENDA
Wednesday, May 31, 2000
Noon – 2:00 PM

Introductions

Approval of Minutes of May 16, 2000 (handout)

Discussion of Media Plan (handouts)

Discussion of Education Forum – Format (handout)

"Dry Run" of Education Forum Presentations

Discussion of Design Forum – Logistics and Format

Other Items of Business

Next Meeting

Adjournment

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

MINUTES
MEETING – MAY 30, 2000
NOON – 2:00 P.M.

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order. After approval of the May 16, 2000 minutes with one change, Scott Shuford indicated that he had received information that one of the groups represented by the Committee, the I-26 Connector Awareness Group, was planning an extensive public relations campaign. Mr. Shuford expressed concern that this campaign had the potential to not be supportive of the goals of the Committee, especially the need for a unified approach to the public involvement process.

Considerable discussion ensued regarding the need for a unified and coordinated approach centering on issues achievable within the project constraints and possibilities. The Connector Awareness Group's proposed flyer was distributed and discussed, as well as the need for each group to promote public involvement within their "constituency." Chairman Bissette expressed a desire for such promotion to concentrate on bringing the public to the Education Forum and Design Forum rather than attempting to frame the issues from the perspective of the different groups.

Discussion returned to the agenda and Committee members reviewed the proposed press release and advertisement for the upcoming Education Forum. Several suggestions were to be incorporated into these press notices.

The next item discussed was the format for the Education Forum. A matrix was distributed that indicated the topics and approximate time frame allocated to each presenter. A variety of changes were made to the format, including the possible incorporation of additional land use issues into the main part of the program, several changes to the breakout sessions including the addition of a land use session to be facilitated by Whit Rylee. A copy of the revised matrix is attached and incorporated into these minutes by reference.

A short "dry run" of Education Forum topics was presented by various Committee members, NCDOT staff and City staff. Due to the lateness of the meeting, discussion of the Design Forum format was postponed.

The Committee will reconvene from noon to 2:00 P.M. on Wednesday, June 13 to finalize for the Education Forum. The Committee meeting adjourned at 2:00 P.M. Chairman Bissette, Mayor Sitnick, Ron Ainspan and Drew Joyner then participated in a press conference to announce the Education Forum and discuss the public involvement process in general.

Committee Attendance

Present:

Louis Bissette, Chair
Debby Vance
Leni Sitnick
Ron Ainspan
Yates Pharr
Chuck Pickering
Jim Coman
Patty Devers
Bradley Hix
Linda Giltz
Betty Lawrence
Susan Ballard
Susan Roderick

Absent:
Brownie Newman, Vice-Chair
Gloria Johnson
Tommy Sellers
Karen Cragnolin
Jeff Kelly
Charles Price

Other Attendees

NCDOT and Related Staff:
Drew Joyner, NCDOT
Carl Goode, NCDOT
Thomas Kendig, NCDOT
Ken Burleson, TGS
Max Phillips, NCDOT
Mike Penney, NCDOT

City Staff:
Michael Moule
Scott Shuford
Ron Fuller
I-26 Connector Awareness Group:
Philan Medford
Whit Rylee

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

AGENDA
Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Introductions

Approval of Minutes of June 13, 2000

Discussion of Design Forum – Format and Logistics

Discussion of Education Forum – How Well Do You Think It Went?

Other Items of Business

Next Meeting

Adjournment

DESIGN FORUM FORMAT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations to the Community Coordinating Committee have been developed for consideration by CCC Chair Lou Bissette, Vice-Chair Brownie Newman, Greg Gregory, and Curtis Williams based on a conference call meeting with NCDOT officials and City staff on June 21.

GENERAL FORMAT

Three day event consisting of a Thursday evening meeting/social, Friday input sessions, and a Saturday summary session. Dates: July 20, 21, and 22.

THURSDAY

Consensus was not reached on how the Thursday session should be handled. The majority felt that the Thursday evening event should be limited to Coordinating Committee members and the Friday session facilitators and should be geared to orienting the group to the Friday input sessions. There was a minority opinion that the event should be a "social" open to the general public.

FRIDAY

Four 1.5 hour input sessions (times listed below) to be handled as follows:

- Short introduction by Fred Craig
- Breakout into four groups with Mr. Craig serving as a roving facilitator. Groups would be designed around these issues: Patton Avenue interchange design; Other interchange design; Visual and aesthetic issues, including bridge design; Technical issues, including design speed and number of lanes.
- Wrap-up announcement of Saturday's summary session.

Session times:
10:00 – 11:30 AM
1:30 – 3:00 PM
3:30 – 5:00 PM
7:00 – 8:30 PM

SATURDAY

Fred Craig to lead a summary session listing key ideas raised by public input. The Coordinating Committee will meet afterwards (date, time TBD) to evaluate these ideas and pass them on to the City Council and MPO with a recommendation.

Session time: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- Fred Craig, Event Facilitation and Technical Advisor
- Various interchange design experts
- Local landscape architects and architects
- City technical staff including Cathy Ball, Ron Fuller, Michael Moule and Oliver Gajda
- Walter Kulash (invited by the I-26 Connector Awareness Group)

Issues:
Arrangements for local design community participation
How best to utilize Mr. Kulash's expertise

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

MINUTES
MEETING – June 28, 2000
NOON – 2:00 P.M.

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order. He then indicated his need to leave the meeting shortly and turned the chair's duties over to Brownie Newman.

Mr. Newman expressed a desire for the Committee to follow the ground rules agreed upon at its inception with regard to teamwork and mutual respect. Discussion then turned to the Committee's reaction to the Education Forum. It was agreed that the turnout for the Education Forum was outstanding and that considerable good information was transmitted to the public. Discussion further ensued about the effect of Mr. Rylee's presentation and the outspoken behavior of some Committee members on the Forum participants and whether they were in keeping with the Committee ground rules. After considerable discussion, no consensus was reached.

The Committee then considered the format for the Design Forum. After a great deal of discussion, the Committee felt that:

The Friday sessions should be held generally as proposed in a document that reflected the results of a conference call involving Mr. Bissette, Mr. Newman, Mr. Gregory, Reverend Williams, NCDOT staff and City staff members several days prior to the Committee meeting. The Thursday agenda will include optional tours for Design Forum experts and facilitators, as well as an evening meeting where assignments for Friday will be finalized. On Thursday, the activities will include the Coordinating Committee, but not the general public. It was decided to wait on the recommendation of the Chair and Vice-Chair and staff research on the legal responsibilities associated with elected officials as to whether to invite the City Council, County Commission and MPO to Thursday's meeting. The Saturday session will be broadened to include an opportunity for public comment through a breakout session.

There was discussion about the design speed issue and whether it was a foregone conclusion. Additionally, there was discussion about whether the Forum would be a "blank slate" discussion or a reaction to the NCDOT plan. It was agreed that a more open approach would be taken in order to facilitate a wider range of innovative ideas; technical experts would be on hand to evaluate the general feasibility of these ideas in the context of the project.

The Committee requested that the Chair and Vice-Chair meet with Fred Craig, NCDOT staff and City staff to prepare additional recommendations regarding Design Forum format and logistics. The next Coordinating Committee meeting was set for June 11, 2000 in the City Hall Sixth Floor Conference Room from noon until 2:00 p.m.

It was requested that every effort be made to insure that the media cover the meeting, both before and after, in an adequate fashion. It was also requested that a display be set up to allow people to gain more information about the project; comment cards were proposed as a way to get input from those who could not attend the Design Forum.

The June 13, 2000 minutes were approved with one change.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Committee Attendance

Present:

Louis Bissette, Chair
Debby Vance
Roger Derrough
Betty Lawrence
Bradley Hix
Dan Martin
Jeff Kelly
Brownie Newman, Vice-Chair
Leni Sitnick
Greg Gregory
Karen Cragnolin
Mike Plemmons
Chuck Pickering
Curtis Williams

Absent:

Bob Shepherd
Susan Ballard
Yates Pharr
Jim Coman
Susan Roderick
Gloria Johnson
Tommy Sellers
Charles Price

Other Attendees

NCDOT and Related Staff:

Drew Joyner, NCDOT
Max Phillips, NCDOT
Thomas Kendig, NCDOT

City Council:

none

City Staff:

Ron Fuller
Oliver Gajda
Scott Shuford

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

MINUTES
MEETING – July 11, 2000
NOON – 2:00 P.M.

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with one change; Scott Shuford is to meet with Betty Lawrence to determine the exact wording of this change.

Discussion then turned to the Thursday welcoming session. It was felt that bus tours should be offered. Ron Fuller offered to serve as tour guide with buses leaving from Westgate. Tours would be open to the NCDOT staff and consultants as a means of facilitating their knowledge of the Connector corridor.

The Friday sessions were then discussed. After some discussion, it was decided to pursue "uninvolved" facilitators for each area of focus to enhance the sense of neutrality. Each area of focus would also have a scribe to take notes. The issues of safety, maintenance of traffic, and constructability were added to the general issues section.

The Saturday session was reviewed and some minor format changes were made regarding table assignments. Additional discussion ensued regarding expectations for the success of the Design Forum, with it being noted that the sessions represented an attempt to accomplish a great deal in a short period of time.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Committee Attendance

Present:

Louis Bissette, Chair
Debby Vance
Betty Lawrence
Bradley Hix
Ron Ainspan
Leni Sitnick
Jim Coman
Mac Swicegood
Chuck Pickering

Absent:

Bob Shepherd
Susan Ballard
Roger Derrough
Yates Pharr
Curtis Williams
Susan Roderick
Dan Martin
Gloria Johnson
Tommy Sellers
Charles Price
Jeff Kelly
Karen Cragnolin
Brownie Newman, Vice-Chair

Other Attendees

NCDOT and Related Staff:
Drew Joyner, NCDOT
Max Phillips, NCDOT
Thomas Kendig, NCDOT
Ken Burleson TGS
Fred Craig, Parsons-Brinkerhoff

City Council:
none

City Staff:
Cathy Ball
Ron Fuller
Scott Shuford

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

AGENDA
Tuesday, August 16, 2000
Sixth Floor Training Room
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Introductions

Approval of Minutes of July 11, 2000

Discussion of Design Forum – Congratulations!

Discussion of Next Steps

Other Items of Business

Next Meeting

Adjournment

NEXT STEPS – ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Lou Bissette, Brownie Newman and Ron Ainspan met with City staff to discuss the next steps in our coordination process. The following items were identified:

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the alternative alignment developed at the Design Forum receive serious study for inclusion in the project Environmental Impact Statement.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT, FHWA and local citizens work together as a "Committee on Visual Design" to develop ideas for bridge design, signage, overpass design, landscaping and other aesthetic issues that reflect our community's character.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA expedite the development of new and updated traffic models for use on the ultimate design of this project.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA explore engineering and signage options to improve the north-to-east connection of eastbound I-26 traffic with I-40 in an easterly direction as part of this project.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO reflecting the Committee's general consensus that the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity be restored to link neighborhoods while simultaneously exploring traffic calming measures to reduce the vehicular impact on residential streets.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA ensure that the Haywood Road interchange design is community sensitive. To achieve this end, it would be helpful to provide an artist's rendition of what the bridge could look like if only five lanes are utilized and the other two lanes are used for additional landscaping, separation from traffic (pedestrians and bikes), etc.

Report of the Community Coordinating Committee For The Design of the I-26 Connector Through Asheville

As Presented to the Asheville City Council on September 12, 2000 and to the Asheville Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization On September 21, 2000

About the Community Coordinating Committee

The Community Coordinating Committee is a group of Asheville area residents who were assembled to provide a representative range of input on the I-26 Connector project and to coordinate the associated public involvement process. Constituted in April, 2000, the Community Coordinating Committee was charged by the Asheville City Council with developing an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connector projects while simultaneously keeping the project on schedule.

Pursuant to this charge, the Committee organized the I-26 Education Forum on June 15, 2000 and the I-26 Design Forum on July 21 and 22, 2000. These forum events were extremely well-attended and offered the public a significant opportunity to learn more about the Connector project as well as to provide local guidance into the design of the project. Both events were held with the full knowledge and cooperation of the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

Members of the Community Coordinating Committee and their primary affiliations are listed below.

Lou Bissette, Chairman
Asheville Connector
Advisory Committee

Brownie Newman, Co-Chair
Western North Carolina
Alliance

Ron Ainspan
I-26 Connector Awareness

Susan Ballard
Town of Weaverville

Gene Bell
Housing Authority

Jim Coman
Buncombe County

Karen Cragnolin
RiverLink Inc.

Roger Derrough
Westgate Corporation

Bradley Hix
Chamber of Commerce

Bette Jackson
Smart Growth

David Jones
Housing Authority

Jeff Kelley
Montford Resource Center

Betty Lawrence
I-26 Awareness Group

Yates Pharr
Biltmore Farms

Chuck Pickering
The Biltmore Company

Dan Martin
NCDOT – Division 13

Carol Pennell
Public Arts Council

Charles Price
Southeastern Freight Lines

Bob Shepherd
Land of Sky Regional Council

Mayor Leni Sitnick
City of Asheville

Susan Roderick
Quality Forward

Mac Swicegood
CIBO

Tommy Sellers
W. Asheville Business Association

Gloria Johnson
Burton Street Neighborhood

Curtis Williams
Burton Street Neighborhood

Debby Vance
Fairfax Neighborhood

Ruth Chaet
Westwood Neighborhood

Whit Rylee
West End Clingman

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE DESIGN OF THE I-26 CONNECTOR THROUGH ASHEVILLE

Purpose of Report

This report documents the goals identified by public input at the I-26 Connector Design Forum held July 21-22, 2000 in Asheville and recommends that these goals be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement and thoroughly studied as a design alternative in the project Environmental Impact Study.

The goals described are generated from official records of discussion table comments at the forum and summaries of citizen-developed mission statements at the forum wrap-up session. They have been evaluated by the Community Coordinating Committee and recommended for consideration. These goals provide the foundation for a citizen-based design alternative to be given engineering and environmental study both preliminarily and through the EIS. They also provide recommended criteria for EIS evaluation of all alternatives.

Section 1 - Project Goals Identified by the Design Forum

Many facets of the project were discussed at the forum. The themes listed below summarize the most prominent concerns of area citizens. They provide a set of specific goals the community would like to see accomplished through the course of completing the I-26 Connector Project.

We, as a community, want a thorough, full and proper study of an alternative design which will accomplish these goals. At the same time, the community feels strongly that the ultimate completion date for the project should be maintained and expedited, if possible. We are hopeful that building community consensus around the design alternative that best accomplishes these goals will ultimately help expedite the project. Due to the inter-related nature of the issues raised, the immediate proximity of areas to be affected and the need to expedite completion of the work, the strong preference of the Community Coordinating Committee is for these to be addressed as a single project rather than multiple "phased projects."

Key Project Design Goals

1) Separation of local and interstate traffic
2) Matching scale of project to character of community
3) Reunification and connectivity of community
4) Minimization of neighborhood and local business impacts
5) Use of updated traffic modeling software and data
6) Maintenance of compatibility with community's design vision and plans; incorporation of community-selected design features
7) Creation of full interstate movements between I-26 and I-40
8) Minimization of air quality and other environmental impacts
9) Emphasis on safety - during construction and in the design of the final product

Section 2 - Evaluation Criteria

This section restates our community's design goals and establishes a set of criteria, or standards, by which their achievement should be measured.

Evaluation Criteria For:

1) Separation of Local and Interstate Traffic
   A. Eliminate Patton Avenue/Smoky Park Bridges as an Interstate Link
   B. Reclaim land for community use (including expansion of taxable base)
   C. Create Patton Avenue gateway possibilities (which complies with City of Asheville 2010 Plan)
   D. Generate redevelopment possibilities in Corridor in compliance with City's "smart growth" principles
   E. Simplify traffic movements
   F. Create a more convenient and safer driving environment

2) Matching Scale of Project to Character of Community
   A. Be sensitive to the prominence of the highway relative to Asheville's unique topography, landscape and built environment
   B. Recognize the highway's relationship to the river and downtown
   C. Retain the "feel" of a small city in the mountains
   D. Select the lowest design speed compatible with safe and proper functioning of the various components of the highway facility
   E. Consider the impact of highway widening and alignment decisions on property takings and neighborhood division
   F. Do not use a "Jersey barrier" approach to median design; the raised median in the I-240 cut is a much better example of sensitive median design in a constrained space

3) Reunification and Connectivity Of Community
   A. Provide well-defined pedestrian/bicycle facilities throughout the project corridor
   B. Improve opportunities for reconnecting neighborhoods and Downtown with the French Broad Riverfront
   C. Expand accessibility for Hillcrest Community
   D. Create a better local street network (including linkages between West Asheville and Downtown, within Downtown and within West Asheville) to relieve interstate traffic pressure

4) Minimization of Neighborhood and Local Business Impacts
   A. Minimize residential property acquisitions
   B. Limit impact on neighborhood connectivity
   C. Minimize number of businesses needing to be closed or relocated
   D. Prioritize safety and traffic-routing during construction
   E. Maximize opportunities for hiring of local workers for construction of project

5) Use of Updated Traffic Modeling Software and Data
   A. Determine that project scale achieves safe and adequate traffic flow with the minimal number of lanes
   B. Create an opportunity to reinforce and/or redirect land use decisions that relate to transportation
   C. Optimize transportation alternatives (balancing of thoroughfare plan with mass transit, bike/pedestrian, local street grid improvements and other alternatives)
   D. Assess "induced traffic" phenomenon and interrelationship of highway capacity and development patterns

6) Maintenance of Compatibility with Community's Design Vision and Plans
   A. Achieve compatibility with riverfront use and development plans (particularly limiting the loss of riverfront property for highway use)
   B. Achieve compatibility with "smart growth" direction of city planning
   C. Reclaim land for non-highway use
   D. Create recognizable community character in design features
   E. Develop unique and attractive bridge design(s)
   F. Include gateway elements
   G. Include local artists in creating design features
   H. Use quality materials

7) Creation of Full Interstate Movements Between I-26 and I-40
   A. Reduce through-traffic volume (especially trucks) in Asheville central district (I-240)
   B. Enhance driving safety on I-240
   C. Remove interstate traffic (especially trucks) from West Asheville street network

8) Minimization of Air Quality and Other Environmental Impacts
   A. Determine best highway design with least impact on air quality
   B. Protect water quality
   C. Preserve tree canopy and wildlife habitat

9) Emphasis on Safety - During Construction and in the Design of the Final Product
   A. Improve simplicity of design for weaving, merging, and diverging
   B. Segregate local and through truck traffic
   C. Provide for incident management
   D. Alleviate complexity and safety risks of current road and ramp configuration
   E. Provide effective maintenance of traffic flow during construction

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the alternative alignment concept developed at the Design Forum receive serious study for inclusion in the project Environmental Impact Statement.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT, FHWA and local citizens work together as a "Committee on Visual Design" to develop ideas for bridge design, signage, overpass design, landscaping and other aesthetic issues that reflect our community's character.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA expedite the development of new and updated traffic models for use on the ultimate design of this project, including regional air quality modeling.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA explore engineering and signage options to improve the north-to-east connection of eastbound I-26 traffic with I-40 in an easterly direction as part of this project or a simultaneous project. The specific concerns involve limiting commercial truck through-traffic on I-240 and on lesser-classified roadways proximate to residential areas.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO reflecting the Committee's general consensus that the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity be restored to link neighborhoods and the river while simultaneously exploring traffic calming measures to reduce the vehicular impact on residential streets.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA ensure that all interchange design is community sensitive. To achieve this end, it would be helpful to provide artist's renditions of feasible design alternatives for public review.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA seriously examine safety issues in project construction and design including maintenance of traffic during construction and emergency access after construction.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA release any unneeded right-of-way at the completion of this project to the City of Asheville to be zoned and used in accordance with a land use plan to be developed by the City in cooperation with the NCDOT.

- Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA keep the I-26 Connector project on its current or, preferably, an expedited schedule.

Section 3 - Potential Tradeoffs

We realize that the achievement of our design goals involves tradeoffs. While the accomplishment of some of them may reduce construction costs, the accomplishment of others may increase the overall cost of the project. Aesthetic improvements may carry their added costs. In order to produce a separation of Patton Avenue from I-240, there may need to be additional bridging of the French Broad River which carries with it some visual impact. New and improved traffic and air quality modeling, though providing a more accurate picture of transportation system needs, could slow key decisions about capacity and design speed.

In another areas, the selection of a lower design speed to minimize neighborhood impact may affect travel time. Fewer lanes may create challenges to planning for maintenance of traffic during construction. Shrinking the footprint of the highway could result in a more "engineered" highway in terms of landscaped medians and grade differentials between east and west travel lanes.

It is too early in the process to fully understand the costs and benefits of each alternative design for the project. We mention some possible costs we have considered in order to demonstrate our awareness of them, in order to enhance our capability for addressing them, but most of all, in order to express that, despite the potential tradeoffs, we as a community are united in support for achieving our set of project design goals.

Section 4 - Design Forum Background

In December 1999, the Asheville City Council, in response to active and continuing citizen involvement, requested City staff to formulate plans for a community design process related to the I-26 Connector Project that would allow extensive public input while keeping the project on schedule. A month later, the North Carolina Department of Transportation joined the City in this effort by agreeing to incorporate the idea of an I-26 Connector Design Forum into its public involvement program. It was seen as an opportunity to enhance community-wide input from Asheville area citizens to the design of the I-26 Connector. This, in turn, would expand on recent efforts to solicit neighborhood-based involvement.

In April 2000, the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the City of Asheville agreed to create a Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) to guide this public participation in the design process. In addition to planning the design process format, the composition of the CCC would help achieve community consensus in the identification and interpretation of key issues. Representatives from a broad base of community organizations as well as project stakeholders were chosen to comprise the CCC. The design process they selected took place in two stages.

During mid-June, an Education Forum was held to inform the public about project design issues. This was attended by over 300 people who listened to expert presentations and participated in project component breakout sessions.

In late July, an intensive two-day Design Forum was scheduled to draw from the public both general design concepts and specific design ideas. This Forum attracted between 500-600 community residents over the two-day period. It was staffed by representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Department of Transportation, City of Asheville, the American Institute of Architects, and several independent consulting engineers and community mediators. Fred Craig, Vice President of Parsons Brinkerhoff's Ohio office, acted as overall Forum facilitator.

The overwhelming sense from participants was one of appreciation for the privilege of taking part in the process. Repeatedly stated was the fact that this highway project could either impose negative impacts or provide beneficial opportunities for the community. Continuing citizen input to defining design criteria was seen as central to maximizing project benefits while minimizing the costs. This report by the CCC contributes to its ongoing function - that of translating community concerns into specific goals which can be achieved through integration into ultimate project design.

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
I-26 CONNECTOR PROJECT

MINUTES
MEETING – October 31, 2000
NOON – 2:00 pm

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm.

Scott Shuford informed the Committee about the upcoming WECAN Neighborhood Design Workshop and encouraged the Committee members to attend and participate.

Drew Joyner went through the NCDOT response to the CCC recommendations that were also endorsed by City Council and the MPO. During Mr. Joyners' presentation, there was considerable discussion about air quality issues and the I-40/I-26 connection issue.

NCDOT and the consultants presented nine alternative alignments which involved three primary alignment alternatives. These included the following:

1. Variations of the design alternative developed at the Design Forum;
2. A single alternative involving a parallel bridge/bridges located south of the Smoky Park bridges;
3. Variations on a parallel bridge located north of the Smoky Park bridges.

After review of these alternatives, it was decided that the CCC would meet in the near future to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives in a facilitated fashion. The purpose of this meeting would be to provide guidance to NCDOT as to which design alternative(s) should be added to the list of alternatives covered in the EIS.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm.

Committee Attendance

Present:

Louis Bissette, Chair
Ron Ainspan
Susan Roderick
Betty Lawrence
Roger Derrough
Curtis Williams
Karen Cragnolin
Brownie Newman, Vice-Chair
Chuck Pickering
Leni Sitnick
Jim Coman
Gene Bell
Whit Rylee
Bette Jackson

Absent:

Bob Shepherd
Susan Ballard
Debbie Vance
Yates Pharr
Gloria Johnson
Tommy Sellers
Charles Price
Bradley Hix
Ruth Chaet
Dan Martin
Mac Swicegood
Jeff Kelley

Other Attendees

NCDOT and Related Staff:

Drew Joyner
Tom Kendig
Carl Goode
Max Phillips
Ken Burleson and Other TGS staff

City Council:

none

City Staff:

Michael Moule
Ron Fuller
Scott Shuford

Community Coordinating Committee
For the I-26 Connector

Minutes
March 19, 2002
10:00AM
Asheville City Building, 5th Floor Conference Room

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

I-26 Connector Process / Traffic Forecasts

Dan Baechtold discussed the delay in the presentation of the traffic model that resulted from the need to adjust some input data. He indicated that the model would be used to determine the number of lanes. Betty Lawrence questioned determining the number of lanes as a first course of action. The CCC decided to ask NCDOT for clarification.

Interchange of I-40 and I-26

Transportation Board Member Alan Thornburg was introduced by Chairman Bissette. Mr. Thornburg indicated that this interchange was clearly a concern; he recognized the CCC's interest in addressing the interchange; and he felt confident that it could be added to the Connector project. He further indicated that highway trust fund (loop funding) moneys could be obtained for this interchange rather than using equity formula dollars. He explained the equity formula funding that was established in 1989 and distributed to each division. The Lindo Tippett bill was explained by Dan Martin. In response to concerns raised about 19/23 during construction, Mr. Martin indicated that there was a pavement strengthening project that should be complete by 2007. Leni Sitnick expressed concern about hazardous materials and truck speeding. Mr. Martin observed that one truck created the same wear and tear as 9,000 cars. Thanks were given to Alan Thornburg for addressing this much-needed interchange.

I-26 Widening Projects

Dan Baechtold distributed a map showing various segments of I-26 and the status of any proposed widening of each segment. There was some discussion of the I-40/Smoky Park Highway interchange. Mr. Baechtold indicated that funding for the six lane section from the Airport to I-40 was not established. Brownie Newman questioned why six laning was looked at separately in different segments. Dan Martin explained that it was necessary to break such a large project into manageable sections. Betty Lawrence indicated that the Airport to I-40 segment was not on the Priority Needs List.

NEPA/Section 404 Merger Project Team

Dan Baechtold explained that this team has served as the "concurrence point sign-off" and that he served as the MPO representative on the team. He indicated that there was some discussion about adding a CCC member to this team. General discussion ensued about the appropriateness of having a community representative on a technical team. It was indicated that the CCC member appointed to this team, should

that occur, needs to represent the CCC has a whole rather than any specific individual or participating group agenda. Dan Martin explained that the team's purpose was to expedite and more efficiently coordinate the review process. A motion was made by Ruth Chaet and seconded by Ron Ainspan to explore with NCDOT the possibility of having a representative from the CCC on the team. Susan Roderick suggested that the representative should be one of the CCC chairpersons. The motion carried unanimously.

Riverside Parkway Update

City Economic Development Director Mac Williams described the Riverside Parkway project. He discussed the economic development philosophy of promoting infill development and redevelopment of underutilized property that this project would encourage. He indicated that the Riverside Parkway proposal would be studied in the RiverLink urban master plan. He explained some of the potential transportation benefits of the Riverside Parkway project. Karen Cragnolin distributed information about the RiverLink urban master plan. There was strong enthusiasm for the project.

Urban Design Discussion

Ron Ainspan indicated that the Connector project offered a variety of urban design possibilities. He referred to maps prepared by David Hill. He suggested that this be used as one criterion to evaluate the different alternatives for the Connector location.

Portland Transportation Planning

Ron Ainspan described the Portland, OR approach to transportation planning that included air quality and land use as part of the modeling methodology. Mr. Ainspan further indicated that too frequently model results are used to simply dictate the number of lanes required to handle the anticipated traffic volumes. He suggested that the model could be used for planning purposes and that a more balanced approach to allocating resources might be a more appropriate method for addressing the design of the Connector project. Linda Giltz indicated that she was going to Portland in the near future and would work with Mr. Ainspan to further investigate this concept. The CCC expressed enthusiasm for pursuing this idea.

Other Business

It was noted that a larger attendance for future meetings was important. Mr. Bissette indicated that he expected a detailed schedule for the Connector project from NCDOT in the near future.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Attendance

Members Present: Lou Bissette; Brownie Newman; Ron Ainspan; Ruth Chaet; Karen Cragnolin; Linda Giltz; Bette Jackson; Jeff Kelley; Betty Lawrence; Dan Martin; Susan Roderick; Leni Sitnick

Visitors: Alan Thornburg; Mac Williams

Staff: Dan Baechtold; Ed Hutchinson; Robin Nix; Scott Shuford

Metropolitan
Planning
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Minutes
JOINT MEETING
May 8, 2002
Transportation Advisory Committee
Technical Coordinating Committee
City of Asheville Public Works Building

Welcome and Call to Order
Chairman Grimes welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Dan Baechtold introduced Drew Joyner of NCDOT to begin a presentation on traffic forecasts for the I-26 connector project (I-2513).

Presentation by NCDOT

Mr. Joyner provided and update with regard to the I-26 Connector process that has been occurring over the past year and a half. This process includes the following:

- Broadening the project scope include the I 26/I-240/I-40 interchange.
- Adding two alternatives recommended by the CCC.
- Working with the DOT staff to prepare visualization renderings.
- Developing and calibrating the traffic model.

Mr. Joyner indicated that the NCDOT needed help in deciding on the number of lanes for the I-26 project segment between I-40 and Patton Avenue. He went over the schedule for the remaining steps in the process, which are:

- Mid 2004 – Draft EIS developed
- Late 2004 – Public hearing on draft EIS
- Late 2004 – Final alternative developed; public hearing
- Mid 2005 – Final EIS
- 2006 – ROW purchased
- 2008 – Construction begins (including the I-40 interchange)

Mr. Joyner stated that when a decision is made on the number of lanes for this project, and NCDOT receives traffic forecasts, NCDOT will complete a functional design for the project. The purpose of today's meeting is to talk about the recommendation for the number of lanes for the project. One of the ways NCDOT needs help in moving the project along is to make decisions at critical points. This is a critical decision point. Mr. Joyner said that now that the traffic model is complete there is enough information to make a decision on the number of lanes.

Mr. Joyner stated that the mainline projections from the model will be used to produce detailed traffic forecasts for the project. NCDOT will produce one set of traffic forecasts for each of the four alternatives based on the number of lanes selected for the project. This is the normal point in the process where NCDOT will make the decision on the number of lanes. Mr. Joyner stated that if we delay this decision, traffic forecasts will be needed for all of the lane scenarios, which adds work. Even more work is required to do a functional design for each lane scenario. Even if we were to delay the decision another couple of years we would still have the same information to go on. Drew then introduced Beverly Williams of the Statewide Planning Branch of NCDOT.

Ms. Williams thanked Drew for giving an overview of the project. Ms. Williams stated that she is bringing forward two recommendations to the TCC and TAC. The first recommendation is in regard to the traffic model. The model is complete and can be accepted by the community. Local staff developed the land use inputs and the model was developed by the consultant for the MPO. NCDOT reviewed the steps in the model update and the specific traffic information and traffic volumes. NCDOT recommends that the TCC and TAC accept the model. The second recommendation is in regard to the number of lanes.

She then went over the following tables, indicating that analysis of the model illustrates that there is such strong travel demand for the I-26/I-240 segment between I-40 and Patton Avenue that 8 lanes are required to handle the traffic in order to establish an acceptable level of service.

ROAD SEGMENT	EXISTING VOLUMES	TRAVEL DEMAND FOR 2025		
		4 LANES	6 LANES	8 LANES
CONNECTOR	N/A	66,000	69,000	69,000
I-240 (I-26)	52,000	117,000	137,000	143,000

Traffic volumes for level of service "E" for various freeway widths	
4 LANE FREEWAY	69,000
6 LANE FREEWAY	103,500
8 LANE FREEWAY	138,000

By modeling different lane scenarios, the model shows the actual demand for the facility. The eight-lane demand of 143,000 is very close the actual travel demand for that facility. Ms. Williams reported that these demand volumes were compared to historical annual average demand on I-240 over the last 20 years. The annual average percent growth on I240 was 4.18 over the last 20 years. This growth rate is consistent with the projected growth rate over the next 25 years of 4.13 percent per year. The growth in the area and the interstate designation will contribute to the traffic growth.

There were a number of questions for Ms. Williams and the consultants, including:

Jim Coman: Is the information from the model available for distribution? Dan Baechtold and Mark Freeman (Stantec) responded that the information could be provided to anyone that wants it.

Linda Giltz: What provisions are there in the model to account for transit trips? Mark Freeman responded that traffic analysis zones that have transit service were classified as transit accessible and four percent of the trips between transit accessible zones were removed from the model to account for transit trips.

Jim Coman: Is there any written document that accompanies the recommendation? Beverly: No, there isn't.

Someone from the audience made a comment that the model does not really account for multi-modalism because it does not take into account any additional investment in new transit and the model seems to be automobile driven. Mark Freeman explained that the model only takes into account the existing plus committed system, which means that there are only projects that are funded for implementation.

Ron Ainspan from the audience pointed out that the Community Coordinating Committee produced a report in 2000 that was approved by Asheville City Council and the TAC. In the request for updated traffic modeling, the CCC not only asked for an updated travel model, but also asked for NCDOT to look at redirecting land use and optimizing highway alternatives like transit or local road improvements. The CCC seemed to be asking not just for a number and then designing the highway to meet that demand, but to use the number to be able to work with the model to see what we needed to do as a community to get the highway that we wanted. What kind of alternative policies would we have to implement as a community? Mark Freeman responded that all of those things are possible with the model that we have created. Mark said that there are many things that could be tested, but that the growth rate was already conservative and it is not likely that many of the changes would make a difference in highway demand.

Ron Ainspan added that air quality and quality of life issues should be brought to the forefront. Rather than just accepting the numbers, what would we have to do as a community to achieve a different outcome?

Jim Coman stated that the growth projections seemed low, and there is a lot of development activity in the county that impacts I-26. Jim Coman said that there is a lot of concern about the TCC and TAC moving too quickly. Jim made a motion that the TCC delay voting on this issue for about a month so that the community has a chance to digest the recommendations. Chairman Morgan called for a second to the motion. The motion was seconded.

Chairman Morgan asked questions of NCDOT clarifying the schedule for the project including that the draft EIS will not be completed until mid-2004. Drew Joyner said that construction will take about four years. Chairman Morgan called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dan Baechtold indicated that the TAC could either make the same decision informally or take a formal vote. Chairman Grimes made the recommendation to the TAC to delay the vote on this issue. By a raise of hands the TAC agreed unanimously. The group agreed to vote on the issue at the regularly scheduled meeting in June.

Dan Baechtold asked the TCC and TAC if they wanted to hold a special meeting to take public comment on this issue. Dan recommended that a special public hearing in the evening would consolidate public

comments on this issue. TCC and TAC members indicated a preference for holding a public hearing in the evening.

Jeff Burns asked how the level of service numbers were derived. David Wasserman explained that the numbers came from the Florida Level of Service Standards. Jeff asked if the information could be made available and David indicated that they could be made available. Dan Baechtold pointed out that the capacity numbers seemed lower than the Florida LOS numbers. Dan asked if the capacity numbers are on the low end? Mark Freeman responded that the Florida standards actually produced higher capacities than what are normally used in the other method, which is based on the Highway Capacity Manual.

Dan Baechtold asked how many lanes were modeled on 19-23 to the North and I-26 to the South of the project for the model runs. Beverly indicated that the state looked at three different scenarios. NCDOT looked at the E+C network and also took into consideration the long range plans for the area. Ms. Williams indicated that the state modeled a six lane I-26 to the south because the MPO just adopted a TIP amendment for planning and environmental work on that section. Ms. Williams said that the state also modeled a six lane 19-23 to the north because there is a feasibility study on that section, and the MPO has indicated a desire to raise that feasibility study to an actual project. Ms. Williams said that NCDOT compared those results to model runs with less lanes and the numbers stayed in the same range.

Dan Baechtold: Do the rising demand figures from one scenario to the next represent trips shifting off of other streets onto the interstate, or does it reflect people making trips who wouldn't otherwise be making trips, or is it a combination of both? Mark Freeman responded that the delay on the road is based on the volume on the road. Mark said the figures do represent traffic switching from local roads onto that facility as the capacity increases.

Dan Baechtold: Why on a four-lane does the model allow a demand of 117,000 rather than cut off the traffic closer to capacity and send the traffic somewhere else on the network? Mark Freeman: Capacity is based on time delay. The capacity shown is not an absolute capacity, but rather a level of delay that motorists will experience. Another way to think about it is in terms of average speed. So, when the model shows 117,000 vehicles per day on a four-lane highway, the highway is processing that amount of traffic but the speed is equivalent to a "good hard walk." So there is a difference between absolute capacity and level of service.

Holly Jones: So the measure of capacity is more a measure of human aggravation? Mark Freeman, yes it is based on what drivers experience.

Holly Jones: Are the traffic volumes an average for the year? Mark Freeman: Yes it is an annual average daily traffic. Holly Jones asked if seasonal factors are calculated into the model. Mark Freeman responded that annual averages are used to take the seasonal variation out of the process.

Jim Coman asked if DOT has ever looked at an interchange on I-26 at Glen Bridge Road? Beverly Williams: Not to my knowledge. Jim Coman indicated that it might be time to start looking at that possibility. Beverly Williams agreed that the area needs to be looked at. Dan Martin indicated that the airport has requested that DOT look at the possibility of constructing an interchange at that location.

Dan Baechtold restated that the tentative date for the public meeting is Wednesday June 12th. The tentative time for the meeting is 6:30. With no other business the TCC and TAC adjourned.

Metropolitan
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Minutes
Transportation Advisory Committee
City of Asheville Public Works Building
June 20, 2002

TAC Attendees:
Charles Grimes, Town of Biltmore Forest; Eddie Henderson, Town of Fletcher; Holly Jones, City of Asheville; Alan Thornburg, Board of Transportation; Brian Peterson, City of Asheville; Wanda Haynes, Town of Woodfin; Bett Stroud, Town of Weaverville; Pamela Snypes (proxy for Letta Jean Taylor), Montreat; Bill Stanley, Buncombe County; Mike Begley, Town of Black Mountain.

Other Attendees:
Cathy Ball, City of Asheville; Dan Baechtold, Asheville MPO; Beverly Williams, NCDOT-SWP; Dan Thomas, NCDOT-SWP; Drew Joyner, NCDOT-PDEA; Dan Martin, NCDOT Division 13.

Welcome and Call to Order
Charles Grimes called the meeting to order.

I-26 Connector Recommendation
Dan Baechtold presented the background on this issue. This is project number I-2513. Over the last year we have been working with NCDOT on updating our traffic model for the area. The Asheville MPO hired a consultant to update the traffic model. The consultant worked with local staff and the state to review information along the way. The model was completed a few months ago. NCDOT presented the results of that model to this group and to the local community in May. They presented that based on the model runs that they have produced that for an eight lane scenario there would be a demand on I-240 of 143,000 vehicles per day in the year 2025. According to the state's presentation, the capacity of the freeway would be 138,000 vehicles per day at eight lanes. A six lane capacity is 103,5000 and a four lane capacity is 69,000. Based on that information the state has recommended to us that they would like to proceed with studies of an eight-lane cross-section for the portion from I-40 up to Patton Avenue.

Dan continued: This is the portion that follows existing I-240 through West Asheville. This process is an iterative process. Back in the mid-1990s there was consideration of a bypass around Asheville. The decision was made at that time to narrow the alternatives by eliminating the bypass option and focusing the efforts on bringing the project through Asheville and building a new connector across the French Broad River and using the existing I240. That was one iteration of narrowing of alternatives. Now at this point, the state says that based on the information that they have to date, that this is another appropriate time to narrow the alternatives again by eliminating consideration of four- and six-lane options for I-240 in their process from here. The process will be to produce detailed traffic forecasts and preliminary designs and then study the alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The MPO has been asked to give input to that recommendation. We have had a public participation process as a part of this decision. We held a public hearing and had over 300 people attend that meeting. 184 people registered, 88 people signed up to speak, 63 people actually spoke. Dan stated that he has also distributed copies of all the letters received by the MPO.

Dan presented the recommendation from the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The TCC had a lot of discussion about the availability of the new traffic model. The model will be available at the end of

the year. The results of the new model could potentially have results that could inform the project decision. So if the new model comes out and says something very different than information to date, the NCDOT will take a look at it in terms of how it affects this project. The TCC discussed the options that the new model will have to model different scenarios and test transportation planning alternatives. The TCC also discussed the internal study process of NCDOT. The TCC concluded that based on the information that we have at this time, it is appropriate to accept the traffic model. The traffic model has been developed using sound engineering and methods. The TCC voted unanimously to accept the traffic model. The TCC voted to accept the results of the traffic model to proceed with and eight-lane cross-section in the process, with the proviso that if new information becomes available that would indicate doing something different, that that information would be factored into this project.

Dan reported that the TCC clarified their role as the technical committee responsible for technical aspects of the project. The traffic model and the engineering is a very technical issue. There are also larger policy questions about long-range transportation planning and different transportation solutions that could be explored to meet demand. Based on the information that we have to date, and the programs and policies that we have in place, the TCC voted 15 to 1 to proceed as the DOT has recommended, with the proviso that new information will be factored into the process.

Dan reported the results of the Community Coordinating Committee meeting on this issue. The CCC operates by consensus and has produced a lot of good results for this project. The CCC recently met and achieved consensus about how the process should proceed. There was no consensus on the number of lanes for I-26, but the CCC approved the following statement: "Find a way in the process of study to keep the options open on the number of lanes at least until the new model is in place and do that without delaying the project."

Dan reported about the TCC discussion with regard to delay and the process of study. Dan asked for questions from the TAC.

Bill Stanley asked if studying different options would result in delay to the project. Dan Martin responded that any time additional work is done it takes more time. Bill Stanley followed up by asking about the difficulty of planning for eight lanes and then dropping back to six lanes if the new model indicated that six were all that are needed. Drew Joyner responded that there is a lot of engineering work that goes into that and it is not as easy as dropping one lane from each side. It could be done, but it would involve additional design work and planning.

Holly Jones asked if there is a possibility that we would have to go back and redo the design work, why wouldn't we use additional design teams to study the alternatives simultaneously, so we wouldn't have to backtrack and redo the design if new information comes out? Drew Joyner: That assumes there will be changes ahead. Everything in the project process is iterative. Models are updated every few years. NCDOT has a need to make a decision and move on. Additional resources would have to be based on reasonably foreseeable changes.

Mike Begley stated that it is a difference between knowing there will be a delay by studying all the alternatives, versus knowing that a delay might be justified down the road. Mike stated that it doesn't seem like a delay should automatically be built in from the start.

Drew Joyner said that adding more resources would have to be looked at to see if it is reasonable to spend those resources. Drew said that he could not say with certainty that adding more resources would eliminate delay.

Eddie Henderson asked about the modeling process. There are certain foundations that drive the outcome. Will six lanes accommodate the traffic projection? Beverly Williams explained the modeling process and explained the time frame for developing the traffic forecasts. Beverly said that doing detailed forecasts for one scenario will take 2-3 months. To do forecasts for all three scenarios would take 4-6 months.

Dan Baechtold reported additional information from the TCC discussion. Dan said that different inputs into the modeling process can achieve different results. There is a chance that the new model will arrive at the same results as the current model. It could also explore different scenarios. The TCC specifically wanted to make sure that we test alternatives in the new model so that we can see what kinds of transportation planning solutions would have to be done in order to have some impact on the project decision. The model has the ability to test land use and transportation planning scenarios that would produce a different result. This will be an important consideration in the new model.

Brian Peterson handed out some information to the TAC. Brian presented the information: There is a question of whether or not the new model will be different from the current model. Brian presented some concerns about the current model. Brian listed the relevant factors to consider: 1) Traffic volumes – the [Florida Level of Service Handbook] lists a higher capacity than the numbers used by NCDOT. The manual shows that capacity might be higher. 2) The demand model shows an annual increase of 4.4 percent per year. The actual increase over the last four years on I-240 has been 2.2 percent per year. With refined information, the demand number might be lower. 3) The model doesn't take into account the progress of the City of Asheville in the areas of transit, alternative transportation, bikeways, and greenways. 4) The existing model does not take into account population characteristics (the new model will). Asheville has a unique population – retirees, service industry, latino population, tourists, creative folks who work from home – all of those would tend to give a lower number for the travel demand. 5) Asheville has been doing more land use planning along smart growth principles to concentrate growth downtown and along transportation nodes to reduce sprawl and reduce travel from home to jobs. This is not a rejection of DOT's model, just a recognition that the new model might have something substantially different. It doesn't make sense to start by studying for eight lanes for six months and then step back and do something again. It seems like better sense to look at both eight and six lanes and then come back to us, and if the numbers are the same, then we might have to go with the eight lanes. Until we have the new model and can take some of these things into account, it is prudent to include the six lane option. The TCC is here to make a technical decision, but we [TAC] are here to make a public policy decision. Brian asked the committee to recognize the efforts of the City of Asheville to pursue a different vision for transportation – expanding transit, expanding bike paths, changing zoning ordinances and processes to encourage smart growth. The vision for Asheville in 25 years would be different – we don't want to see that many cars on the road putting that much pollution into the air – we want something different. If eight lanes is the only option, people are not going to ride mass transit or live closer to jobs if they can hop on the freeway and make a 30 minute drive into Asheville. There is a public policy decision. The majority of Council has said that their preference is for six lanes - we hope the committee will follow that.

Brian Peterson continued: If we are all concerned about speeding this process up and moving it along, then the last thing we want to do is to generate more controversy. That is part of the problem that happened two years ago. I don't want us to be in that position two years from now to see that six lanes

might work and then have to go back to study it. So let's study it first and get it right. One approach is to look at the lanes and make that decision and then do the design work. I don't think we need to do design work for all of the options. We can make the lanes decision this year and do the design work next year. That is not different from the schedule that DOT is proposing. At the public hearing we heard a lot of comments about the existing congestion. The congestion we have now is not a lanes problem. We have a volume of 52,000 cars. The capacity is 69,000 cars. We have plenty of lanes. The problem is the interchanges are not designed to handle it and we are not managing the problem. Just adding lanes is not going to fix the problem. Members of Council feel that we would like to make an effort to manage growth and manage traffic and if eight lanes is the only option there is a disincentive to even try to do that. I think we can accept the model, but the lane options and transportation scenarios should be studied with both the six and the eight lane options.

Mike Begley said that his first concern is to get on with the project. The process started about 1988. We are talking about concluding the process in 2008 and that is a very long time. Mike Begley said that Brian said that if the numbers came back and justified eight lanes then we would have to think about it. I want some greater commitment on the analysis. Mike Begley: If we new all of the answers, we should be able to make a decision. If we go through a longer process and the numbers show we need eight lanes, but there is still objection, then that leaves me in a quandary. The only reason I would be willing to study both, is if we felt as a group that if the numbers were clear, the decision would be clear. I don't hear that. My concern is that if we came back with clear numbers that justified eight lanes then we would still be going through the same process with folks that just don't want to see eight lanes. I'm bothered if we're doing the planning and only hoping for one result.

Eddie Henderson expressed concurrence with Mr. Begley. Eddie Henderson: There are a lot of concerns with eight lanes. The traffic is there now. I have confidence from an engineering perspective of the DOT's ability to make a fair and hones judgement in whats necessary for this area. If eight lanes is necessary to move the traffic through this area to achieve a thoroughfare plan that keeps people moving and is safe, I think that regardless of what studies are done, there is a point where we agree to disagree. I understand the point of wanting to keep it as rural and beautiful as it can be, I don't think there is gain in delaying the project further. There needs to be a stake driven in the ground at some point saying that this is the right thing to do.

Bett Stroud: "I don't think this is just a decision for engineers, but a value judgement based on the community's wishes. I can't see why any city that's known for its beauty and livability would want to channel through traffic through it. I say let's build six lanes and fix the interchanges and if eight lanes are needed so badly, go for a bypass."

Holly Jones added that we are policymakers and not engineers. Holly Jones asked that technical information be added to the record regarding the presentation from Clay Ballentine on air quality [see minutes from 6/12/02]. That is technical information that cannot be ignored. That has got to be dealt with. Holly Jones: I will go on record to say that if the numbers continue to confirm this model, and if there is not the community and political will to [make changes], I'll vote for eight lanes. The last thing that we need from a public safety and public health point of view is gridlock. It seems like a win-win to keep the options open and study six lanes. We are lucky to have a community that cares about transportation. We need to tap into that. At the end we will have a better product and a better community and our children will be able to breath easier. The data from the asthma attacks and lung disease is technical information I am factoring in. My common sense tells me what approach would delay the project versus what would help move it along. These materials and other information indicates that if this

did go into a legal battle, a prudent and feasible alternative could be six lanes. Then we've looped back around and we would be stuck. And if we're not studying a prudent and feasible alternative, as a policy-maker, I would hope that this group would factor in what the CCC recommends. This a diverse group that came to a consensus to leave the options open. I want to include six lanes in the study at this juncture. As a policy-making body we should be open to studying six lanes and go forward.

Mike Begley asked Dan Baechtold to restate the motion from the TCC. Dan restated the TCC motion. Dan stated that the TAC needed to approve the traffic model for use in this project and in other models until we have a newer model to replace it. The other decision needs to be about the NCDOT recommendation.

Bill Stanley: Shouldn't we follow the recommendation of our technical committee? We've got engineers and we pay them to do it and do it well. I think we ought to listen to them.

Chairman Grimes asked for a motion on the traffic model. Holly Jones asked if accepting the model also meant accepting the capacity numbers? Dan responded that it does because the capacity numbers are factored into the model. Capacity and demand go hand in hand. Bill Stanley made a motion to accept the traffic model. Eddie Henderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Grimes asked for a motion on accepting the eight lanes. Dan restated the TCC recommendation. Dan said that the motion is for allowing NCDOT with proceeding with an eight lane study at this time, but including the proviso of the TCC. Eddie Henderson asked for further clarification that NCDOT would look at additional things between now and the end of the year and if there was a better alternative they would incorporate it. Dan said that the TCC made it clear that they want the new model to test alternatives and to provide answers about tradeoffs. Eddie Henderson made a motion to go with the NCDOT recommendation on the number of lanes (echoing the complete TCC recommendation). The motion was seconded by Bill Stanley.

Brian Peterson made an amendment to the motion that the TAC ask DOT to proceed with both the six lane and eight lane options.

The TAC discussed how to proceed with the motion and the amendment. Holly Jones seconded the amendment. The TAC clarified the amendment. Mike Begley asked if the amendment is the opposite to the TCC recommendation. He expressed concern about approving something substantially different from the TCC. Michael Morgan offered further clarification about the TCC motion.

Holly Jones asked if there had ever been a case when new information came to light and something this major was stopped in its tracks. Drew Joyner responded that it happened with this project in 1998. He also said that there was another project where a model came out with lower traffic numbers and the project was scaled back. Drew said that projects are not scaled back very often but it has happened. Dan Thomas added that the opposite typically happens – that DOT updates projects based on increased traffic volumes. Holly Jones expressed concern about whether it was a realistic possibility that the lanes issue would be reconsidered. Holly Jones: I feel it is important to say study six lanes. This body should take into account the reality of the TCC proviso because there is not a history of [scaling back a project].

Chairman Grimes asked for a vote on the amendment. There were thee votes in favor of the amendment– Holly Jones, Brian Peterson and Bett Stroud. There were seven votes opposed to the motion – Charles Grimes, Eddie Henderson, Bill Stanley, Alan Thornburg, Pamela Snypes, Wanda Haynes, Mike Begley.

Charles Grimes asked for a vote on the original motion. There were seven votes in favor of the motion - Charles Grimes, Eddie Henderson, Bill Stanley, Alan Thornburg, Pamela Snypes, Wanda Haynes, Mike Begley. There were three votes opposed to the motion - Holly Jones, Brian Peterson and Bett Stroud.

TEA-21 Enhancements Grants
Dan Baechtold presented four Enhancements Grants Applications for endorsement by the TAC. The TCC recommended endorsement of the four projects at the earlier meeting. Dan reported that the City of Asheville is the co-sponsor for three Enhancements Grants applications: Clingman Avenue Streetscape and Greenway – Mountain Housing Opportunities is the applicant; New Haw Creek Road sidewalk – City of Asheville, applicant; Pack Square Renaissance – Pack Square Conservancy, applicant. The Town of Fletcher is the sponsor and applicant for the Cane Creek Road Gateway and Greenway. Chairman Grimes asked for a motion endorsing the enhancement grant applications. Eddie Henderson made the motion. Wanda Haynes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment
Ron Ainspan thanked the committee for their willingness to look at this issue and to listen. Ron expressed that the projections are too high. Ron: The modeling process may be fine but there is a question about the inputs to the model. Over the last twenty years things have fueled a lot of increases in traffic that likely will not continue over the next twenty years. If we build eight lanes it becomes a permission slip for cars and trucks to use that corridor. To go from 50,000 cars in that corridor to 144,000 cars is going to be a mistake for this region. We have to do something to get those numbers down and reduce dependence on cars and trucks. It may take fifteen or twenty years but we have got to do something besides the reaction of widening roads. We have to have growth management, travel demand, transit. Models have feedback loops that address this. We have to find a balance – we're not doing it. We are putting most of our resources into just developing road expansion as a response to travel. We need to call on the state to find a way to look at these options and build more balance into the response, and to work on doing that without delay to the project. We need the elements of a comprehensive transportation plan, we need to find out how feasible they are politically, and how effective they are in changing the numbers, and we need to work on funding. Now is the time to start making a commitment and finding the resources for doing what we need to do.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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Technical Coordinating Committee
City of Asheville Public Works Building
June 20, 2002

TCC Attendees: Michael Morgan, Weaverville; Jim Coman, Buncombe County; Jerry Wood, Woodfin; Linda Giltz, LOSRC; Nelson Smith, Biltmore Forest; Ed Hutchinson, City of Asheville; Ken O'Connor, CTAB; Scott Shuford, City of Asheville, Bruce Black, City of Asheville; Dan Baechtold, MPO Coordinator; Mark Combs, City of Asheville; Craig Honeycutt, Town of Fletcher; Pamela Snypes, Montreat; Tony Caudle, Black Mountain; Tom Redinger, Bicycle Task Force; Beverly Williams, NCDOT-SWP; Dan Thomas, NCDOT-SWP.

Other Attendees: Jeff Burns, City of Asheville; Drew Joyner, NCDOT-PDEA;; Cathy Ball, City of Asheville; Mac Magoo, WNC Corridors; Bob Camby, WNC Air Quality Agency;

Welcome and Call to Order
Chairman Morgan called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

I-26 Connector Recommendation
Dan recapped the process of the last year to bring us to this point of recommendation. Over the last year we updated the traffic model. The MPO hired a consultant to do the update. The consultant worked with the MPO staff and NCDOT to do the inputs to the traffic model and produce a result. There were review steps along the way. In May, the NCDOT presented the results of the traffic model showing the demand for I-240 through West Asheville. When modeled as an eight-lane scenario, the demand generated by the model is 143,000 vehicles per day. The capacity presented by NCDOT shows that the capacity of an eight lane freeway is 138,000 vpd; a six-lane capacity is 103,500; and a four lane capacity is 69,000 vpd.

Dan explained that based on the model, NCDOT recommends that we proceed with an eight lane preliminary design for that portion of the connector project. In the mid-1990s the decision was made to narrow down the alternatives by eliminating bypass options and have the connector come through Asheville. NCDOT has presented this as another narrowing down of alternatives, so that we would have the four connector alternatives for the different bridges, and one alternative for the number of lanes, for a total of four scenarios to look at in the Environmental Impact Statement. Based on the data, NCDOT feels it is appropriate to narrow down the alternatives at this point.

Dan stated that there are two decisions before the TCC. One is to accept the traffic model for use and specifically for use in this project. The other is our recommendation for how to proceed with the preliminary design based on the information that we have to date. Both of these would be in the form of TCC recommendations to the TAC.

Michael Morgan asked Beverly about the model update. Michael Morgan: This is a new model. Didn't we go through a delay in order to have this model? Beverly: This is a model update. We used the existing Asheville model and updated the inputs and evaluated the entire model. We delayed about one year to have this technical work done.

Jim Coman: Do we anticipate any other changes to this model? Beverly: This model will stay in place until we have access to the new regional model that is under development and we expect that model to be complete by the end of the year. We would begin working with the new model in 2003.

Dan Baechtold: At what point do you think the new model would be ready enough to produce something that would help inform this project? Beverly: We would be able to draw numbers from the model by the end of the year, but we would like to wait until we can run some scenarios with the new model, rather than immediately extracting data from the new model. We can recommend that as soon as the new model is available we can run detailed forecasts, similar to what we will do for this project; then we can compare the two. I have been looking at the data for the new model and comparing it to the existing model and the two are consistent. We don't expect huge changes between the models.

Dan Baechtold: If the new model does come out with something very different, you would be remiss if you didn't use that information in this project. That is the reason for asking about the timing. If the model does say something different, you would have to do a redesign and basically backtrack? Beverly: Yes. Because projects happen over a long period of time, we have to go back and revisit the project and get new forecasts. That is not inconsistent with what we normally do. As soon as the new model is available, we will look at the comparison and I will share information with this group.

Bruce Black: So this data is in some sense preliminary, and when the new data comes out next year you would revisit the whole question and apply that to the planning? Beverly: What we need to do is establish that this model is an adequate model and that the model gives us results that we can use to continue in the process. I would not want to call that preliminary because that could be misleading. But if there appears to be any inconsistencies in the future about the demand on the facility, we will bring that information to the TCC.

Bruce Black: So the two models appear to be consistent so far? Beverly responded that the modeling areas are very different but the data appears to be consistent. The land use data was reviewed locally and approved. Beverly asked Dan Baechtold for his input on this issue. Dan responded that the methods were consistent with the way local staff produced land use projections for the Stantec model, but the data is hard to compare because the geography is different with each model. But valid methods were used for both models.

Jim Coman: [to Drew Joyner], Am I correct in saying if we were to delay making a recommendation on widening until we get the new model information, that that would delay the project? Drew: Yes it would. NEPA provides guidelines for decision-making in the project process, which is different from the systems planning process. If something new comes out later on and shows something radically different it is very consistent with the way NEPA works for us to go back and look at it. In order to keep the process moving we have to make decisions with the best information that we have available. With every decision, if new information becomes available, then it is our duty to revisit those. We do need to make a decision and continue to move forward.

Scott Shuford: So if we find in the new model that there is a dramatic difference in the traffic that would need to be accommodated, you would downscale it at that point? You've indicated that the eight-lane road is the largest that DOT would build, so if half-a-year from now if the numbers illustrate that a six-lane highway were adequate to handle demand, you would downscale it? Drew: We would revisit it at that time. I can't say what our decision would be, but it would be revisited.

Bruce Black: And that information would come back to the MPO? Drew: The decision we are asking the TAC to make is not something we normally do. We don't normally ask for local blessing on the

number of lanes. It is typically an engineering decision. But because of the controversial nature and the high level of interest, we thought it was prudent and necessary to have more input on this decision.

Mark Combs: I appreciate your willingness to take that input. Would you say that most of the time when you look at new information that is more toward broadening the scope of the project and making it bigger, rather than this. In your experience is it typical to make a project bigger rather than smaller? Drew Joyner: most of the time it is an addition to a project, but we have had cases where we have scaled a project back.

Linda Giltz: What will the capability be to look at alternatives with that model and how that could influence the decision in the end? There has been so much public outcry for looking at alternatives in terms of roads and transit and other things. Could we do some modeling that would change our transit usage, that would improve some other roads and look at what that does to the numbers? Beverly Williams: We will be able to look at a lot of different scenarios. We want to use the new model for our systems planning work and look at the area regionally. We want to look at ways to improve the transportation system. We have to separate that from the project process. The timing is such that the new model is becoming available near the time of the model for this project. The new model is for long-range systems planning and there was never an intent to link that model with this project. We will be doing the things you are talking about with the new model as we look toward our plan update over the next year.

Linda Giltz: But it could have implications for this project. Beverly: It could. The draft EIS will take two years. So of course this model will be something we look at over this time period.

Scott Shuford: So if the new model does illustrate some things that could be done locally or if there were adjustments that needed to be made in the original model that we are trying to make a decision on today, we want to make sure that there is an opportunity to reconsider lane issues associated with this project. Beverly: Yes. It will be there.

Dan Baechtold handed out and explained the report from the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) for the I-26 Connector. Dan explained that the CCC gives input to the TAC, and generally operates by consensus. The CCC recently met and achieved consensus about how the process should proceed. There was no consensus on the number of lanes for I-26, but the CCC approved the following statement: "Find a way in the process of study to keep the options open on the number of lanes at least until the new model is in place and do that without delaying the project."

Dan asked Drew Joyner about the study process and to respond to some of the suggestions that have been made to speed up the process such as dropping a connector alternative or using multiple design teams working independently. Drew Joyner responded that dropping an alternative presents a lot of difficulties because four alternatives have been identified. The NEPA merger team would have to approve eliminating any alternatives. Also, it is difficult to choose which one to drop because they are all viable alternatives. We don't have enough information to drop an alternative, as opposed to this decision where we do have enough information to make a decision on the number of lanes. With regard to multiple design teams, Drew responded that we have to consider whether the cost and staffing issues involved will be worth the new information that we will have. In the NEPA process, we are not likely to have new information two years from now. The issues that have been raised are systems planning level questions.

Dan Baechtold: If it were feasible to have more study times it would potentially save time in the process? Drew Joyner responded that it involves a lot of staff time and cost and it would have to be weighed whether the extra effort would be worth the result in the end.

Scott Shuford mentioned that NCDOT had achieved a lot of things that the community has asked for such as the addition of the interchange and the two new alternatives. Scott Shuford asked about the impact of dropping one of the lane configurations. Scott mentioned that some elected officials have asked if six lanes would work. It does not appear from the numbers that four lanes is feasible. What would happen if the four lane scenario were dropped as far as saving time in the process?

Drew Joyner responded that the schedule depends on how things are done. Pulling in more resources is one possibility, but it would have to be looked into by NCDOT. The schedule is based on current staffing levels. We are comfortable with our recommendation for 8 lanes.

Beverly Williams mentioned that the detailed traffic forecasts would take four to six months for all twelve alternatives. Based on requests to speed up the process, NCDOT has proposed to shorten that time considerably by only evaluating one lane cross-section. The time to create the forecasts is twice as long with two lane scenarios than with one lane scenario. NCDOT is working with a consultant on this task.

Dan Baechtold asked if the new model came out with something drastically different, that the forecasts and the preliminary design are the kinds of things that would have to be redone. Beverly indicated that was correct.

Scott Shuford reiterated the fact that everyone is committed to reducing the amount of time it takes to get this project done. It is a priority for the community and NCDOT. One issue that the CCC raised is that there tends to be resistance when a full range of alternatives has not been reviewed. The six-laning project in Hendersonville is an example. It is being challenged because some aspects of it were not being studied. There is an implication that not studying all alternatives with the lane decision, could result in similar issues. We know that studying all alternatives would not make all objection to the project go away, but it might head off criticism by at least looking at the six and eight lane alternatives.

Drew Joyner responded that some of those issues required a response from a higher level in NCDOT. That is something that factors into the decision-making. NCDOT feels comfortable with the process and the decisions that we are making and the information that is being used.

Jim Coman stated that the issue has become political and the politicians will be making a decision shortly. Jim stated that we are the technical committee and that our decision should be based on technical merit without a lot of political influence.

Dan Baechtold added that there are some strictly technical issues concerning accepting the methods used to produce the traffic model and its results. Another technical issue is saying that from an engineering standpoint, based on the traffic model, that eight lanes are needed. But then when we get into transportation planning as a whole, transit issues, travel demand management, and long-term planning beyond 2025, it starts to get more muddy in terms of whether we are dealing with technical issues or political issues because there are implications for both. There are big policy questions that come up. In the strictly technical part of it we have information to work with. When we get beyond that we start to bring up policy issues that make it more complicated.

Chairman Morgan asked for a motion on the question of whether the traffic model being used is appropriate and should be accepted. Jim Coman made a motion to accept the current modeling as the best that is available now, with the recognition that if modeling comes back with significantly different results it will affect this project. Tony Caudle seconded the motion.

Chairman Morgan asked for a raise of hands in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Morgan asked for a motion on the second issue concerning the design standard of eight lanes that is being recommended by NCDOT to continue their study process. Tony Caudle made a motion that the eight lane cross-section is appropriate for the project, with the proviso that if any additional information comes out of ongoing modeling that leads us to a significant change in the modeling that that will be incorporated into future plans. The motion was seconded.

Chairman Morgan asked for further discussion. Scott Shuford stated that it was important for the TCC and TAC to be in a position to make a decision about what constitutes "significant" in terms of the difference between the two models. Jim Coman stated that when the new model is finished at the end of the year we will be in a position to do that. Scott Shuford said that he wants to make sure that is understood and is part of the motion on the floor.

Dan Baechtold added that the new model will have the possibility to model other scenarios. The model has the capability to have different outcomes. Based on the inputs, it can be the worst-case scenario for traffic demand, or there can be other scenarios that come out of the model. Our process for input into the model and helping develop it is important. Dan mentioned that this is not a part of the motion but it is an important point to be made. Even though the new model is more sophisticated in its capabilities, there is a chance that it will be developed in the exact same way as the first model, or there is a chance that it will have new components.

Beverly responded that the project process will be the same. There will be certain things that are off the table for consideration in the project process. What we can do in the systems planning venue we can look at what it would take to get things more along the lines of what we want and move forward in that direction with other facilities, land use controls, and transit support. Systems planning will help us get different answers for the future and move in that direction. So, we may not get a different answer from this new model because of the constraints of the project process. But we will get an ability to try more things and learn what would work. From that we develop a whole new discussion and how it interfaces with this project process we will have to learn. We will learn how it impacts this project and other projects.

Scott Shuford: That systems level planning is what I'm getting at – to give us an opportunity to see if there are ways to make a "significant" difference using systems level planning. It sounds like the state is o.k. with that as an approach. The minutes should reflect that what constitutes "significant" is a broad reaching component.

Jim Coman called the question. Linda Giltz asked to make one other comment. Chairman Morgan responded that the question had been called. Chairman Morgan asked for a restating of the motion. Tony Caudle restated the motion. Chairman Morgan called for a vote by a show of hands. The motion passed by a vote of 15 in favor and one opposed. One member did not vote.

Metropolitan
Planning
Organization

TEA-21 Enhancements Grants

Dan Baechtold reviewed the process for applying for Enhancements Grants. Dan reported that the City of Asheville is the co-sponsor for three Enhancements Grants applications: Clingman Avenue Streetscape and Greenway – Mountain Housing Opportunities is the applicant; New Haw Creek Road sidewalk – City of Asheville, applicant; Pack Square Renaissance – Pack Square Conservancy, applicant. Craig Honeycutt reported that there is an application from the Town of Fletcher for the Cane Creek Road Gateway and Greenway. Dan Baechtold mentioned that all of these will require the endorsement of the MPO. Scott Shuford moved to recommend all four of the projects. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Linda Giltz announced the new transit services between Asheville and Black Mountain and between Asheville and Hendersonville.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

Community Coordinating Committee
For the I-26 Connector

Minutes
November 5, 2002
1:30 PM
Public Works 1st Floor Conference Room

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order at 1:38 PM.

I-26 Connector Update

Drew Joyner provided an update on the project schedule, including other links on the interstate network (I-40 west of the Connector and I-26 both north and south of the Connector). He submitted materials related to these updates. He also provided a brief update on the lawsuit involving the I-26 widening project south of I-40, indicating that the project is on hold at least until after February 2003 due to the lawsuit.

Mr. Joyner then expressed some concern about the possible historic designation of a portion of the WECAN neighborhood and its potential effect on Alternative 5. He provided a chronology of the designation issue and indicated that the designation, if approved, could possibly eliminate Alternative 5 from consideration. Ron Ainspan asked about the possibility of reviving Alternative 6 (north bridge parallel to the Smoky Park bridges). Mr. Joyner indicated he would investigate. Gene Bell noted the need to replace affordable housing units that might be lost under Alternative 6. Chairman Bissette expressed concern about potential loss of time as additional alternatives are added.

RiverLink Plan Update

Scott Shuford provided an update on the progress of the RiverLink Master Plan, noting that the designers had identified an opportunity connect the riverfront to downtown using a variation of Alternative 5.

The meeting adjourned at 2:34 PM.

Attendance

Members Present: Lou Bissette; Ron Ainspan; Gene Bell; Jim Coman; Linda Giltz; Bette Jackson; Betty Lawrence; Chuck Pickering; Mike Plemmons

NCDOT: Drew Joyner

City Staff: Dan Baechtold; Scott Shuford

3/25/03

Meeting w/ City Staff in Wheeler-Solon R/W office

Attending:	Representing
Ken Burleson	TGS Engineers
Dan Baechtold	MPO / City
Scott Shuford	City of Asheville - Planning
Joe Heard	City of Asheville
Drew Joyner	NCDOT - PDEA
Vince Rhea	NCDOT - PDEA
Anthony Butzel	COA - Traffic

Date: May 1, 2003

Memo To: File

From: J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.

Subject: I-2513

On Tuesday May 29, 2003, Drew Joyner, Vince Rhea and I met with the following City of Asheville staff in Winston-Salem to discuss progress on the subject project:

Scott Shuford
Joe Heard
Anthony Butzek
Dan Baechtold

Drew began the meeting by explaining the difficulties associated with obtaining traffic forecasts from the existing traffic model. Then, I displayed the preliminary alignment for the I-40 interchange and then we discussed the formation of the aesthetics committee.

The City staff suggested several modifications to the project. The first was to eliminate the interchange at I-240 and Haywood Road. Another was to revise Alternate 5 to provide the moves to and from US 19-23 north on the west side of the river, allowing the elimination of the section of US 19-23 along the east side of the river. Mr. Shuford also suggested linking Roberts Street on the east side of the river with the new Patton alignment. Discussions pointed out the elimination of the Haywood interchange would be very difficult and cause delays, as it would require a new configuration of the traffic model and ultimately require FHWA approval. On revising Alternate 5, the suggestions have already been considered and were eliminated from further consideration principally due to increased costs and environmental impacts.

It was noted the aesthetics committee should be formed soon so that discussions concerning median design and bifurcation of the lanes could be finalized.

Community Coordinating Committee
For the I-26 Connector

Minutes
June 27, 2003
10:00 AM
Asheville City Hall, First Floor Conference Room

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Bissette called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. He welcomed the committee members in attendance and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to receive an update from Drew Joyner, Project Engineer with NCDOT. Mr. Bissette turned the meeting over to Mr. Joyner.

Update from NCDOT

Drew Joyner updated the committee on tasks that NCDOT has worked on over the past year, and that they will continue to work on in the coming months. These tasks include:

- **Environmental field studies** – NCDOT continues to conduct field studies on the impacts of the project on the human and natural environment. When the project was expanded to include the interchange of I-40 and I-26, the study area also expanded which required additional data collection.

- **Continuing coordination with TIP Project I-4401** – There is a TIP project to add additional lanes to I-40 between Exit 44 and the I-26 interchange. Part of this project falls with in the study area for the I-26 Connector project. Drew has been coordinating with the project engineers as a part of the study process. A member of the committee asked when the I-40 widening project would be constructed. Max Phillips from NCDOT said that construction was scheduled to start in 2007, but NCDOT is looking at ways to speed up the project.

- **Functional designs for interchange of I-40 and I-26** – Drew reported that Ken Burleson with TGS Engineering has been working on functional designs for the new interchange that was added to the project. There are some preliminary ideas on paper, but the designers do not have detailed traffic forecast data. This process will continue as the State develops better traffic forecast data.

- **Possible historic designation of West End / Clingman neighborhood** – Drew stated that NCDOT has been working with various groups to resolve the issues involved with the possible listing of West End Clingman on the National Register. Drew said that the nomination for the National Register was denied. Luella Heetdecks said that the Keeper of the National Register has agreed to review the nomination again.

Drew Joyner then provided the committee with some background with regard to traffic forecasts for the project. When project planning started, there was an old traffic model that was out of date. Then, the MPO and the State developed an interim traffic model to get traffic forecast data for this project. Drew received these traffic forecasts in the fall of 2002. The traffic model proved to be difficult to work with, and NCDOT had difficulty getting usable traffic forecasts.

Drew stated that there is a new traffic model that was recently developed by MAB Consulting for NCDOT. The new model is based on all the latest assumptions and is the state of the practice. It has many more capabilities than the previous model. The MPO adopted the model in May of this year. Because the new model is available and will provide better data, the State decided it was appropriate to use the new model for the traffic forecasts.

Drew reported that in the next few months the NCDOT will be getting new traffic forecasts from the model. This will require NCDOT to revisit the project schedule. At this time, the impacts to the schedule are not known, but Drew said that by the end of August, he will have a revised schedule.

Drew then asked for questions from the committee. Mac Swicegood asked what NCDOT is doing about the safety problem on the Smoky Park Bridge, and how NCDOT is preparing for the opening of I-26 to Tennessee. Max Phillips responded that NCDOT is installing dynamic message boards and some other measures to warn motorists. There are no physical changes planned at this time. Mac Swicegood also asked if there was a plan to deal with accidents. Max Phillips said that the emergency responders have been meeting about incident management programs.

Lou Bissette asked if a recommended alternative would still be selected in Spring of 2004 according to the previous schedule. Drew Joyner said that several steps of the process had to be completed before that could happen. Namely, the draft EIS must be completed and the State must conduct community involvement.

Several committee members expressed concerns about the impact of the project timeline on existing safety problems.

Brownie Newman asked if there was any chance for advance right of way acquisition to speed up the project. Drew Joyner answered that right of way can't be purchased until a final alternative is selected.

Brownie also asked if the more critical sections of the project could be started first. Ken Burleson responded that the bridge design will be slightly different under each of the alternatives.

Luella Heetdecks asked if any of the alternatives have been ruled out. Drew answered that the process must continue with the four alternatives that have been selected and that none have been ruled out. Drew went on to explain the new NEPA/404 Merger Team process that requires approval of stages of the project by various reviewing agencies. Drew said that NCDOT will select a recommended alternative and then it must be approved by the merger team.

Andrew Euston questioned how the six versus eight lane design plays out in terms of design and complexity, and asked if those differences being considered. Ken Burleson responded that there is not a lot of difference in the design of six and eight lanes.

Andrew Euston also asked about the forecasts from the new model. He asked how the community would be involved in scrutinizing those numbers and making the decision between six and eight lanes. Drew responded that the decision for eight lanes has already been made. The information from the new model will be reviewed over the next few months. Ruth Chaet pointed out that the TAC and TCC added a caveat to their approval of eight lanes that said that they would revisit the issue.

Luella Heetdecks asked how many lanes were proposed for the new Patton Avenue Bridge under alternate 5, and said that six, eight, or ten lanes on that bridge would be too many. Ken Burleson explained that it was too early to know the number of lanes, but that preliminary designs were probably drawn showing a worst case scenario.

Susan Roderick mentioned that air quality is getting worse. Anything that can be done to speed up the idling cars would be helpful. Betty Jackson asked the State to follow up on the suggestion of adding an air quality representative to the merger team. Drew agreed to look into this possibility.

Several committee members re-emphasized the need to address the immediate safety issues on the Smoky Park Bridge.

The committee thanked Drew Joyner for the update. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.

Attendance

Members Present: Brownie Newman; Lou Bissette; Bette Jackson; Mac Swicegood, Ruth Chaet; Susan Roderick; Luella Heetdecks; Jim Coman

City/MPO Staff: Dan Baechtold

NCDOT/Consultants: Drew Joyner; Max Phillips; Ken Burleson

Others: Andrew Euston; Steve Banks

Community Coordinating Committee
For the I-26 Connector

Minutes
December 15, 2003
2:00 PM
Asheville City Hall, Sixth Floor Conference Room

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM. He welcomed the committee members in attendance and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to receive an update from NCDOT. After introductions, Mr. Newman turned the meeting over to NCDOT staff and consultants.

Update from NCDOT

Transportation Board member Alan Thornburg discussed the revised schedule and reviewed the new model, which he referred to as a "state of the practice" model because of its sophistication. Mr. Thornburg noted the model was used to determine the required number of lanes.

Greg Thorpe began with a PowerPoint presentation that illustrated the decision-making process to-date and the next steps that would need to occur. Drew Joyner, Project Engineer, reviewed the project's history and indicated that an aesthetics committee would be established to address appearance issues. Ken Burleson, project consultant, reviewed the revised schedule and noted that there would be three public workshops and one public hearing that would allow opportunity for public comment. The first public workshop would be an I-26/I-40 interchange workshop scheduled for spring 2004. The completion date of the project will stay on track (2012) despite the lengthening of the planning and design portions of the project.

Drew Joyner advised the committee that there would be re-initiation of the newsletter and that the web page for the project would be updated soon.

There was considerable discussion with regard to the number of lanes. CCC members noted the substantial reduction in the projected traffic that is now forecasted under the new model. Mr. Joyner and Mr. Burleson generally described some of the issues and adjustment factors that would require an eight-lane cross-section. It was suggested that NCDOT schedule a special meeting to discuss the rationale for eight lanes with the public; Mr. Joyner agreed that this was a good idea. Mr. Burleson indicated that the model software would be available to City and MPO staff.

Further discussion involved the inclusion in the model of all TIP projects, the bid process for awarding the construction contract and how aesthetics could be included in the bid process, disposal of excess land (generally reverts to adjoining property owners), and the proposed design-build process. Mr. Newman asked what extent visualization would be used; Mr. Joyner indicated that it would be used where appropriate to describe the project.

The committee thanked NCDOT for the update. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Attendance

Members Present: Brownie Newman; Ron Ainspan; Ruth Chaet; Chuck Pickering; Susan Roderick; Luella Heetdecks; Jim Coman; Debbie Vance

City/MPO Staff: Scott Shuford; Rita Baidas

NCDOT/Consultants: Alan Thornburg; Jay Swain; Greg Thorpe; Drew Joyner; Max Phillips; Ken Burleson; Derrick Weaver

Others: Terry Bellamy; Steve Rasmussen

Advisory

I-26 Aesthetics Committee Meeting
July 12, 2004
11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Members Present
Robert Camille
Hedy Fischer
Peter Gentling
Alice Oglesby
Matt Sprouse

Members Absent
Leslie Fay

City Staff
Scott Shuford
Elizabeth Teague
Joe Heard

NCDOT Staff
None

Scott Shuford reviewed the proposed agenda and the Committee members expressed agreement. Mr. Shuford gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee that provided information concerning the history of the Connector project, the goals and achievements of the Community Coordinating Committee, and examples of highway design with an emphasis on aesthetics.

There was discussion about any "boundaries" that the Committee needed to operate under. It was agreed that the Committee had a fairly broad scope so long as its issues had a direct connection to roadway design aesthetics. For example, if the project needed to accommodate a light rail line, it might affect median design. Also, the ultimate lane configuration of the highway might determine edge treatments that affect aesthetics. Bike and pedestrian issues might also play a part in the road's aesthetics.

The Committee acknowledged the desire of NCDOT to quickly determine roadway footprint as part of the overall design process. Concern was expressed over the NCDOT's planter design for the median. NCDOT has agreed to provide a large working map showing an eight foot wide median. Scott Shuford was asked to ensure that topographic information was included on this map. The Committee discussed a variety of ideas to reduce the footprint of the road, including:

- Vertical separation of opposing travel lanes
- Placing portions of the road in a "tunnel" or "channel"
- Avoiding a standard 2:1 slope for roadway edges
- Adjusting median width

TAC – TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTTEE

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Regional Partnership for Transportation Planning

Long-Range Transportation Plan • Transportation Improvement Program •

Highway Planning • Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning • Transit Planning • Air Quality Issues

Public Involvement

AGENDA

July 15, 2004 – 12:10 p.m.

12:10 Welcome and Introductions **Chairman Niehoff**

12:10 Approval of Minutes **Chairman Niehoff**

12:15 TIP Amendment in Division 14 for Interstate Maintenance **Dan Baechtold**

In accordance with the MPO Public Involvement Policy, we advertised this TIP amendment for a public comment period beginning May 27. The comment period closed on July 1. We did not receive any comments from the public.

This project is a request by the NCDOT Division 14 Office to amend the State TIP to proceed with a project to re-stripe Interstate 26 in Henderson and Polk Counties. The Division would begin the project in this federal fiscal year. The project would use Interstate Maintenance funds. Amendments to the State TIP also require an amendment to our Metropolitan TIP. The wording for the TIP amendment is as follows:

***Project I-4751 - I-26**, Henderson-Buncombe County Line (Mile Post 40) to South Carolina State Line. Install 6" paint striping. Construction in FY 2004 - $1,200,000 in IM (Interstate Maintenance) funds.*

The Technical Coordinating Committee recommends approval of this TIP amendment.

TAC Action: Motion to approve MTIP amendment as listed on the agenda.

12:20 TIP Amendment in Division 13 for Interstate Directional Signs **Dan Baechtold**

This project is a request by the NCDOT Division 13 Office to amend the State TIP to proceed with a project to install overhead directional signs for Biltmore Estate and other area traffic generators. The project would use Interstate Maintenance funds. Amendments to the State TIP also require an amendment to our Metropolitan TIP. This project does not require a formal public comment period. The wording for the TIP amendment is as follows:

I-26, I-240, I-40. Install guide signs to Biltmore Estate, Mount Mitchell State Park, and West Asheville at various locations. $200,000 using Interstate Maintenance (IM) funds.

The Technical Coordinating Committee recommends approval of this TIP amendment.

TAC Action: Motion to approve MTIP amendment as listed on the agenda.

12:25 Follow-up to I-26 Connector Public Meeting **Chairman Niehoff**

NCDOT staff and consultants will be available to answer technical questions about the recommendation to provide eight through lanes for traffic on the I-240 section of the I-26 Connector. This discussion will be a follow-up to the public meeting held the previous evening.

TAC Action: No action required at this time.

1:00 Presentation on I-40/Dogwood Road Interchange Greg Shuler, NCDOT

NCDOT Division 13 has prepared a presentation on this interchange project. The project has a completed feasibility study, but is not listed as a project in the TIP. At a previous meeting, the TCC received the presentation and agreed with the recommendations of the NCDOT- Division 13 staff. The TCC recommended a letter of support from the MPO for the recommendations.

TAC Action: 1) Receive NCDOT presentation. 2) Discuss resolution or letter of support of recommendations.

1:15 Long Range Plan Recommendations Dan Baechtold

The CMS Work Group met on June 3, 2004 to discuss approaches, considerations, and recommendations for development of the Long Range Transportation Plan. The LRTP is a federal requirement and must be revised every 5 years. The LRTP will have a have a 25-year planning horizon to 2030. The due date of the Plan is October 1, 2005, so FBRMPO should have a draft for public review and TCC/TAC approval by August of 2005. This gives us about one year to develop the Plan and conduct a public involvement process.

TAC Action: 1) Make recommendations for appointment of Long Range Plan Steering Committee. Direct staff to follow-up on recommendations.

1:20 Discussion of TIP Project R-4430 – Upward Road

1:30 Public Comment (Note: The TAC will not take additional public comment on the I-26 Connector issue at this time).

Adjourn

The Committee developed a list of focus areas and agreed to initially concentrate on those issues that affect roadway footprint. These issues are listed below:

Media design

. Landscaping
. Lighting
. Banners
. Art
. Maintenance
. Tree health

Lighting

. Standard (pole) design
. Lighting of art features
. Light pollution/trespass
. Bridge lighting

2:1 Slope

Vertical separation of opposing lanes of travel

Pedestrian and bike issues

Tunnel/channel concept

. Connectivity
. Economic development opportunities

Art opportunities

. Overpasses
. Tunnel/channel walls
. Bridges
. Sound, retention walls
. Medians

Bridges

Sound walls, retention walls

Perimeter landscaping

Project as a "gateway"

Alice Oglesby distributed photographs of various roadway projects that illustrate excellent design. The Committee listed the following issues critical to reflecting our community character:

- Use of mature vegetation - develop a plant palette to contract grow
- Use of native stone versus concrete
- Local art – tiles
- Local icons
- Water features

The Committee agreed lunch meetings were the most convenient, although the third Monday and First Wednesday of each month were to be avoided. The Committee also agreed to operate without a chairperson, with staff serving as secretary. Mr. Shuford agreed to set the next meeting and to coordinate with NCDOT.

Community Coordinating Committee
July 26, 2004
Sixth Floor Training Room
(9:00 a.m.– 11:00 a.m.)

Members Present	Others Present	Staff Present
Ron Ainspan	Peter Gentling	Anthony Butzek
Gene Bell		Alan Glines
Betty Lawrence		Scott Shuford
Bette Jackson		Elizabeth Teague
		Sasha Vrtunski
		Mac Williams

Scott Shuford opened the meeting at 9:20 am. He asked the Committee to formulate an agenda for the meeting, noting there had been considerable activity recently, including meetings on the 8-lane issue, the I-40 interchange, and I-40 widening. The Committee agreed to discuss the following topics:

- Future of the CCC
- Aesthetics Committee
- Separation of project components
- Number of lanes issue
- I-40 Interchange design

Future of the CCC

Ron Ainspan noted the difficulty of maintaining commitment to a committee like this for an extended period of time. Bette Jackson felt the whole CCC should help determine its future; she suggested encouraging greater participation by promoting this as a topic for the next CCC meeting. Betty Lawrence noted the roles of the CCC to keep the City Council and MPO up to date on the CCC report's recommendations and to keep the NCDOT aware of community interest.

Bette Jackson noted the need to maintain energized leadership. Gene Bell stated that his organization's specific issues of concern had been well-handled and that the success of the process needs to be communicated. He was unsure of the need for the CCC to continue to function. Scott Shuford indicated that an option was to "declare victory and go home." He noted the need to ultimately seek direction from City Council on this matter.

Aesthetics Committee

Peter Gentling, a member of the Aesthetics Committee, updated the CCC, noting that isolation caused by loss of connectivity was a big concern for the Aesthetics Committee.

He indicated the following areas under consideration:

- Possible undergrounding of portions of the project to improve potential for connectivity
- Median landscaping
- Use of natural materials (stone and water features)
- Pedestrian access issues
- Bridge design
- Possible planning for light rail

Scott Shuford went over the Aesthetics Committee membership:

1. Robert Camille, River District Design Review Committee Chair
2. Leslie Fay, West Asheville resident and business owner
3. Hedy Fischer, Planning and Zoning Commission Chair
4. Peter Gentling, Tree Commission Chair
5. Alice Oglesby, West Asheville resident and business owner
6. Matt Sprouse, Landscape Architect

Betty Lawrence asked if the Aesthetics Committee was aware of the CCC report. Mr. Shuford indicated that each member had received a copy since it was the CCC report that called for the creation of the Aesthetics Committee.

Project Separation

Betty Lawrence asked if the I-40 interchange could be separated from the rest of the Connector project. She and other CCC members agreed that the interchange was the least controversial component of the entire project and it could be started without regard to the rest of the project. Anthony Butzek confirmed that the interchange could be designed to accommodate a range of lanes (6 or 8), allowing flexibility to drop or add lanes when the Connector cross-section was decided. Scott Shuford indicated he would approach NCDOT with this concept to determine their support for it. The MPO would be the best group to request this to occur if it was a feasible option.

Lane Number Issue

It was noted that the NCDOT has agreed to review Michael Moule's information and report back to the MPO. Ron Ainspan asked that since only funded projects were included in the model, why were 6-lane sections included? Betty Lawrence expressed an opinion that studying only a single lane option was not legally justified. Elizabeth Teague noted that the model could be used to study the effects of increased transit use, greater connectivity of the local street network, and transportation demand management.

Betty Lawrence suggested funding the Riverway project in lieu of widening I-240. Peter Gentling noted that facilitating traffic facilities sprawls. There was additional discussion of the technical policy and political nature of transportation planning.

I-40 Interchange Design

It was noted that there were no details available at this meeting about the designs proposed by NDCOT for this interchange. Given this circumstance, it was agreed to schedule this item for a future meeting.

Other Business

It was recommended that a lunch-time meeting might improve turnout.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 am

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee Meeting
August 23, 2004
Noon to 2:00 PM

Members Present	Members Absent
Hedy Fischer	Leslie Fay
Alice Oglesby	Robert Camille
Matt Sprouse	Peter Gentling

City Staff	NCDOT Staff
Scott Shuford	Drew Joyner
Elizabeth Teague	Vince Rhea
	Derrick Weaver
	Bob Kopetsky

Scott Shuford distributed the minutes from the AAC's July meeting and asked the NCDOT staff if there were concerns about the committee becoming involved in any of the listed items. No specific areas were identified as problematic or outside the boundaries of the Committee's scope.

There was discussion about the possibility of retaining and sound walls being used for murals, the importance of the Haywood Road bridge as either a community divider or a community uniter, and the Amboy Road connection. Regarding the Haywood Road bridge, Derrick Waever suggested the consideration of a single point intersection to minimize the intersection footprint and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Elizabeth Teague described the greenway connection possibilities along Amboy Road. NCDOT staff identified these two areas as locations where separate workshops would likely need to be held to get a range of public input and ideas.

Alice Oglesby suggested that concept visualization drawings needed to be available at the workshops and NCDOT staff agreed that they would bring their staff experts in this area to the workshops along with 3-D concept plans.

There was discussion of the need to "contract grow" native plantings for the median and roadway edges. Matt Sprouse noted the difficulty in finding sufficient numbers of native plants for a project of this scale. There was discussion of whether the City could be involved in this process, but concern was noted about the potential for project delay that could leave the City with a major investment in plants and no place to locate them. The NCDOT staff indicated they would research how to make contract growing of the plant palette part of the design-build contract; there would be sufficient time for the plants to be container grown to a large enough size if this was contracted for early after the let.

Roadway lighting was discussed. Committee members wanted to confine the lighting to the corridor and minimize light trespass and upward glare. It was suggested that this could be accomplished through the development of performance standards rather than picking particular light fixtures.

Median artwork was discussed and, as long as appropriate design standards were maintained (e.g., break-away poles, etc.), it could be considered. Water features were discussed, including the potential to combine them with stormwater management.

"Trenching" portions of the roadway was discussed in order to minimize the footprint and to allow for future connectivity across the roadway. The Committee expressed a desire to avoid grassed 2:1 slopes, preferring exposed stone at steeper angles to minimize footprint and reflect the natural setting.

NCDOT staff suggested that the Committee begin to develop both general and site-specific objectives for aesthetic issues. These objectives would be forwarded to the designer.

Ms. Oglesby brought up the concept of separating vehicular and pedestrian traffic through multi-level bridges.

NCDOT will investigate the possibility for Committee involvement in the I-40 widening project (I-4401); this project is on a tighter timetable and will occur in the existing right-of-way for the most part so opportunities for aesthetics are more limited. There was a desire by all parties to try to coordinate the two projects to create a seamless look.

The Committee agreed that it would work to refine the issues and do research about design solutions for the issues. These included:

- Bridge and interchange design, including multi-level bridges and "mixed use" bridges
- Plant palette, landscaping, and contract grow
- Lighting
- Water features/stormwater management
- Art, including murals and medians
- Retention and sound walls
- Vertical separation of opposing lanes of traffic
- Placing portions of the road in a "trench" or "channel"
- Avoiding a standard 2:1 slope for roadway edges
- Adjusting median width

The Committee agreed to a list of suggested meeting dates. NCDOT staff suggested that the next meeting should be a videoconference.

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee
October 4, 2004 Minutes
Noon – 2:00 P.M.
Large Conference Room – Fifth Floor of City Hall

Members Present
Leslie Hay
Hedy Fisher

Members Absent
Robert Camille
Peter Gentling
Alice Oglesby
Matt Sprouse

Staff Present
Dan Baechtold
Scott Shuford
Elizabeth Teague
Rick Tipton – NCDOT

There was no quorum so a formal meeting was not held. The members present and staff discussed aesthetic issues involving the I-40 widening project. These issues were determined to include:

- Noise wall color and design, including landscaping
- Perimeter landscaping
- Overpass color and design
- Light posts
- Median divider color and design
- Chain link fencing

NCDOT has agreed to allow the AAC to provide recommendations on this I-40 project as long as those recommendations are received by December 2004. Since the I-40 project will be design-build, Mr. Tipton advised that the greater the specificity that could be provided, the greater the opportunity to include the recommendations in the bid and contract documents. Additionally, he noted that replication in design details would produce economies of scale that would also make it more likely for the recommendations to be implemented.

A summary of the discussion of each are of recommendation is provided below:

Noise Walls – Noise walls, will consist of 20' wide panels of varying heights. The heights will not be known at the time of contract let, but will be developed as the project goes through design. AAC members felt that the walls should include color, structural elements and landscaping. For example, the walls could vary the use of imbedded designs and attached vegetation (vines, pyrocantha, etc.). Color tint could be added to the wall panels during off-site construction and designs could be imprinted during panel construction using plastic or rubber forms. The AAC members discussed using iconic

symbols (e.g., the City Hall feather motif, Urban Trail symbols, etc.) on the panels or abstractions of mountains or a combination of both.

Perimeter Landscaping – There was little discussion of this issue but AAC members felt there would be some opportunity to add landscaping on the perimeter areas.

Overpass Color and Design – Tints could be added to overpass concrete to create attractive coloration that would distinguish these highway features. The AAC members reviewed overpass support designs used in Arizona and other western states and felt there were opportunities to incorporate local icons in these supports.

Light Posts – The bases for light posts will be located in the median and will be larger than the median divider. The shape of these post bases could be distinctive (perhaps octagonal to recall the shape of the City Hall). The lighting itself can be directional so as to minimize light trespass onto other properties. There are opportunities to add posts that would support banners or art work in between light posts.

Median Divider Color and Design – The median divider will be extruded on-site. Again, tinting of the concrete divider could add character to this feature. It was not felt that much else should be done to the divider since it could prove to be distraction to drivers.

Chain Link Fencing – It was noted that coating chain link fencing with green or black colors makes the fencing less visible.

The AAC members suggested that a meeting be set with some local artists to generate ideas for the noise wall designs, especially abstract mountain design. Leslie Fay indicated that she would contact a few who specialized in this type of work.

The AAC members suggested meeting again prior to the proposed October 25th meeting or rescheduling the video-conference meeting with NCDOT.

Assignments:

- Leslie Fay – Arrange for some artists to meet with the AAC.
- Rick Tipton – Provide information concerning light posts used by NCDOT and noise wall location and height.
- Scott Shuford – Work with Leslie Fay to set interim meeting.
- AAC Members – Review Arts Council website; Douglas Ellington icons; materials to be emailed by Scott Shuford.

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee
October 25, 2004 Minutes
Noon – 2:00 P.M.
UNC-A - Teleconference

Members Present
Robert Camille
Leslie Fay
Hedy Fisher
Peter Gentling
Alice Oglesby
Matt Sprouse

Members Absent
None

Guests
Hoss Hailey

Staff Present
Dan Baechtold
Scott Shuford
Elizabeth Teague
Rick Tipton – NCDOT
Greg Shuler – NCDOT
Vince Rhea – NCDOT (via teleconference)
Jeff _____ of NCDOT Roadside Environmental (via teleconference)
Ken Burleson, TGS (via teleconference)

Scott Shuford provided a summary update and described the purpose of today's meeting, including determination of timeliness and noise wall treatment issues.

Alan Glines showed noise wall examples that he found on the FHWA site, and reported on information he got from contacting Scottsdale, AZ:

- Scottsdale used 40' high walls, cast in place with rubberized material
- Re-usable molds cost about $7,000 each a few years ago.
- Molds can be cast to specifications.
- Designs considered highway speeds and local character - the higher the speed the less detailed, the slower the speed the more detailed.
- Included example of two-sided barrier with roadway on one side and greenway on another.

Cost discussion:

- Vince Rhea said that DOT would pay for anything "within what we would normally do" and outside of that the City would likely have to come up with the funds. Doesn't have a figure at this point as to what the amount available is...makes it difficult for Asheville AC to plan.

- Vince asked for a "package" that he could run by his supervisors. Package could be "rough ideas", but exact size, cost estimate, design, in a formal request is better. More we give them up front the better because of time constraints.
- Roadside Environmental has some specifications, and location and height of walls will depend on cut and fill of project site (walls will be at the top of a cut). We will assume 20x10 panels that will slide into a steel upright and be stacked as needed - probably up to 3 panels at highest.
- Budget usually includes some relatively small percentage of overall project cost (overall project cost has increased to upwards of $30 million). Landscaping or plantings may added in later years (e.g., Wildflower Enhancement program) - focus on "hardscape" for now, put available Roadside budget into decorative walls.
- Molds might become NCDOT property to be re-used in the I-2513 (Connector) project.
- Discuss included multiple molds of varyng patterns/design – cost estimate of about $50,000 - $80,000. NCDOT was asked: Can this be part of regular set-aside for roadside treatments?
- Vince and Jeff will check on costs, project budget, and prospect for "hardscape" to be first priority instead of landscape at this point.

Timing:

- I-4401 is design-build which means project will go quickly. Construction should begin this spring.
- Contactor decides when the walls will be installed - usually at the end or the beginning of the project. If at the end of the project we may have more time for the design to be developed.
- Mr. Rhea needs AAC request by mid-December or earlier. He will check into exactly how much detail is needed by mid-December.
- No way to conduct a typical Asheville public involvement process with charrettes, or a competition, etc. – NCDOT needs to know what we want by December in order to include it in the I-4401 project. Since this group is the appointed Aesthetics Advisory Committee, it can "speak for" the community.

Tasks:

- Dan Baechtold and Elizabeth Teague will review plans and estimate location and length of wall; compare to cross sections to get topography
- Leslie Fay, Alice Oglesby, Alan Glines, and Rick Tipton will meet separately and develop design concepts.
- Matt Sprouse and Peter Gentling will get together and develop some landscaping recommendations for filling in areas once panel design and locations are determined
- Vince Rhea and Jeff ____ will check on cost and budget questions, including use of Roadside Environmental funds
- Next Meeting November 15 at 12:00 on Fifth Floor at City Hall.

Memo To: Vincent Rhea J. Rhea, P.E.

From: J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.

Date: November 23, 2004

Subject: NCDOT Branch Staff Coordination Meeting concerning I-2513 and I-4401 Aesthetics Issues

On Monday, November 22, 2004 the following met to discuss the timetable and involvement in the aesthetics issues for the subject projects in Asheville.

Vince Rhea	PDEA
Derrick Weaver	PDEA
Ed Lewis	PDEA OHE
Steve Walker	PDEA OHE
Bobby Dunn	PDEA OHE
Clarence Coleman	FHWA
Bob Kopetsky	Roadside Environmental
David Scheffel	Design Services
Ken Burleson	TGS Engineers
Lonnie Brooks	Structure Design
Drew Joyner	TIP Program Mgr.
Rick Tipton (via phone)	Division 13

Vince explained the purpose of the meeting and asked those attending if they would be interested in involvement with scheduled meetings held with the local aesthetics committee. Ed Lewis, Clarence Coleman and Lonnie Brooks all expressed an interest in attending the videoconference meetings. At Drew Joyner's suggestion, Vince indicated he would have them placed on the committee's email list that is managed by Rita Bias of the City of Asheville. Rita is Scott Shuford's assistant, and she provides emails with notifications and minutes for each of the aesthetic committee meetings.

David Scheffel requested to be notified as early as possible of any aesthetics issues that could alter basic design and right of way requirements. Clarence Coleman asked that no design exceptions be requested for aesthetic treatments unless absolutely necessary and if needed, to provide them as early as possible. It was suggested that Vince provide the City with appropriate guidelines concerning plantings setbacks, and other required design features to help avoid any consideration and request for unacceptable treatments. Bob indicated he would provide planting guidelines to Vince for forwarding to the aesthetics committee.

Funding issues were discussed and Bob indicated he did not know of any project where landscaping funds had been used for noise wall or other hard structure enhancements. Drew indicated there may be other funds available and that Jay Swain and Mayor Worley

will be discussing funding during their upcoming meeting concerning a municipal agreement for I-4401.

Next, the discussions focused on when we need to address the various aesthetics issues. It was noted that TGS will be preparing preliminary plans for the entire project for the environmental analysis and will be preparing the preliminary design for Section B. David Scheffel noted that he needs to know the proposed locations of any screening walls wanted other than the required noise walls. He also needs the proposed locations of other hard structures such as planters and any design specifications concerning appearance features. Roger Rochelle noted any additional features should be brought to the attention of the NCDOT Executive Committee for approvals and indicated the committee would provide timely guidance. Mr. Rochelle also noted that if the City was agreeable to cost saving measures during construction and traffic control, some of those savings might be available for aesthetic enhancements. It was determined that all special plans and issues regarding aesthetics should be developed enough to specify them to the design/build team ten months before advertising the design/build contract. Vince suggested the next item to be addressed by the aesthetics committee should be the appearance of the French Broad River crossing. Drew suggested the aesthetic noise wall designs should be determined and displayed at the public project workshop scheduled for next summer.

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee
January 21, 2005 Minutes
10:00 AM - Noon
City Hall – Fifth Floor

Members Present
Hedy Fisher
Peter Gentling
Alice Oglesby
Matt Sprouse

Members Absent
Robert Camille
Leslie Fay

City Staff Present
Dan Baechtold
Scott Shuford
Elizabeth Teague

NCDOT Staff Present
Cole Hood

Others – Guests
Dian Magie
Adam Cooper
Laurie Lundquist
Dan Milspaugh

After introductions, Dian Magie and Laurie Lundquist gave presentations on highway design projects that incorporated art. In answering questions about their research and experiences, Ms. Magie and Ms. Lundquist advised:

- DOTs across the country and the FHWA typically provide percentages of total project costs to go toward aesthetic design and the arts.
- Artist(s) should be involved as early in the process as possible.
- Make the selected artist(s) part of the public hearing process.
- Select the artist(s) that will comfortable in a "design team" setting.
- Early and extensive collaboration is essential – the artist(s) need to be integral to the design process.
- If possible, use rubberized asphalt in noise-sensitive locations.
- Ed Davis of the NCDOT should be contacted to provide technical assistance and information at an upcoming AAC meeting.

It was agreed that Scott Shuford would contact Vince Rhea of the NCDOT to:

(1) Provide a reminder for NCDOT to provide visualization tools/simulation images, especially perspective views of the bridge, along with any existing design drawings that include route, footprint and topo info.

(2) Submit a request from AAC to include an artist as part of the design team. Also, we need to discuss how the AAC recommendations will be incorporated into the design/build process. Options follow:

- Option 1. - As part of the design/build RFP, specify that an artist be an integral part of the design team. Also as an option, pre-select artists to work on specific elements of the design.

- Option 2 - Include an artist as a part of the selection process for the design/build firm.
- Option 3 - Have design elements defined ahead of release to design-build. Then the design-build contract would be primarily construction drawings and implementation.
- Option 4 - Hire a "Construction Manager At Risk" for oversight of the process for quality control to make sure that all elements are included.

Scott Shuford updated the Committee on the I-40 noise wall negotiations. He confirmed that the AAC was comfortable with the "formal" I-26 Connector median beginning north of the I-40 interchange.

A new meeting schedule was suggested. Information will be provided concerning this schedule.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee
April 11, 2005 Minutes
Noon-2:00PM
UNC-A

Members Present
Robert Camille
Peter Gentling
Alice Oglesby

Members Absent
Hedy Fisher
Leslie Fay
Matt Sprouse

City Staff Present
Dan Baechtold
Alan Glines
Scott Shuford
Elizabeth Teague

NCDOT Staff Present
Ronnie Clark (Asheville)
Vince Rhea (Raleigh)
Bob Kopetsky (Raleigh)
David Hinnant (Raleigh)
Ken Burleson (Consultant)

Others – Guests
None

Vince Rhea indicated that he needed to obtain a reasonably accurate idea of the scale and type of aesthetic enhancements in order to obtain buy-in from DOT's upper management. He wanted to take this step early in the process in order to ensure the Committee's resources and time would be well-spent. He anticipated an updated preliminary design being available for the Committee's use in late May or early June. He felt some features could be expressed as a unit-cost ($per 100 lf, for example) when actual dimensions were unknown. He noted that DOT engineers had determined that bridge piers could be placed in the French Broad River, reducing costs. He indicated that there would be a midsummer workshop for public comments and asked if this might be an opportune time to kick–off public involvement in the bridge concepts. He suggested the Committee look at the Trent River Bridge replacement in New Bern for ideas.

Scott Shuford went over the following list of ideas/areas for aesthetic enhancements prepared by the Committee:

- Amboy Road/Brevard Road intersection - attention to connectivity to River Park from West Asheville, look and feel consistent with that as entrance to river park system
- Possibility of reconnecting a street within West Asheville - either only as ped/bike or to also include vehicles, look and scale in keeping with neighborhoods
- Planted median north of I-40; possible banners or art objects in median as it approaches downtown
- "Signature" bridge or bridges - focused public input to help facilitate design decisions; perhaps the DOT adding an artist/design person to the team from the outset
- Noise walls/retaining walls treated with form liner designs and/or landscaping; perhaps the DOT adding an artist/design person to the team from the outset

- Minimized footprint - avoid 2:1 grassy slopes and use exposed rock and retaining walls where possible; it would be great to create a more "urban" cross-section (think of this as a substantially more attractive I-240 north of downtown - decorated retaining/noise walls providing the "edge" to the project, an "urban landscaped" median, decorated overpasses) as the road moves closer to the downtown

- Opportunities for large-scale landscaping and public art at interstate intersections (I-40, I-240/Patton)

- Art (form liner) incorporated into overpasses, especially at Haywood Road; perhaps the DOT adding an artist/design person to the team from the outset

- Context-sensitive overpass design at Haywood Road - minimize footprint, ped-friendly, art

- Patton Avenue having a "gateway" treatment as it comes into downtown (assuming alternative 5 is ultimately chosen)

Elizabeth Teague asked if the bridge would be designed in-house or bid; she asked if an artist could be included in the design process. Vince indicated that he would find out.

Ken Burleson noted that the differences in the FBR bridge would be minor in each of the 4 alternatives. Dan Baechtold asked if there was an opportunity for some visualization concerning bridge design, if there could be a perspective drawing from different angles showing bridge location, and what might be the timeline for this information. David Hinnant indicated that the DOT could provide concept drawings but it was premature for something photorealistic. Peter Gentling asked if the FBR bridge would be one of the first pieces of the project to be constructed; Ronnie Clark indicated that it would be.

Vince Rhea indicated that the bridge planning timetable would continue on schedule despite the possibility of construction delays. Alice Oglesby asked if the construction delays would allow DOT to consider a design-first process rather than a design-build process. Vince indicated that he would find out.

Robert Camille requested deadline dates for the Committee's work. Ken Burleson indicated that any idea that would INCREASE the road footprint was the most important and was needed first. It was stated that this was unlikely from the Committee's standpoint as there is a preference for a more "urban" and "vertical" edge treatment.

There was discussion about the format for the summer workshop. Elizabeth suggested small group meetings about particular areas such as:

- Amboy/Brevard Roads
- Haywood Road
- Burton Street
- West-End Clingman neighborhood
- Broadway/UNC-A area

Ken Burleson noted that additional street crossings over the interstate were not possible. Robert Camille asked if there could be some investigation about DOT's willingness to transfer air rights above the highway to allow private or public development above the roadway. Vince indicated that he would find out.

Assignments:

Vince Rhea

- Schedule for Committee deadlines
- Bridge concept drawings
- Design-first or design-build
- Transmittal of updated design
- Air rights concept
- Summer workshop schedule

Committee/City

- Estimates of costs and amount of enhancement
- Ideas about workshop format, PR, kick-off of bridge input

A new meeting of the Committee members was suggested prior to another videoconference; Scott Shuford will set this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM.

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee
April 25, 2005 Minutes
Noon-2:00PM
Fifth Floor – City Hall

Members Present
Robert Camille
Hedy Fischer
Alice Oglesby
Matt Sprouse

Members Absent
Peter Gentling
Leslie Fay

City Staff Present
Dan Baechtold
Scott Shuford

The Committee decided to put off discussion of specific aesthetic improvements until maps were received from NCDOT (anticipated in mid-May).

The Committee discussed ideas about the public input meeting NCDOT will hold this summer. Committee members agreed that the AAC should be involved in the NCDOT meeting but that a separate meeting to address aesthetics issues should be held on a different day. The aesthetics issues meeting should have a keynote presentation by Dian Magie of the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design on general highway design aesthetics with breakout sessions on different components of the highway project (e.g., Amboy Road interchange, I-40 interchange, Haywood Road interchange, Patton Avenue interchange, the bridge(s), etc.). The meetings should be held when most convenient for the public; it was suggested that a Friday PM and Saturday format might work well. Mid-August was recommended as the best time since summer vacation would be over for school-age children. Finally, there should be some way to gauge participants' input (a vote or survey instrument) at the conclusion of each session.

There was discussion of the air rights issue. Robert Camille and Scott Shuford will meet with NCDOT District Engineer McCray Coates to discuss. The Committee also suggested taking field trips to key locations along the corridor.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 PM.

I-26 Aesthetics Advisory Committee
June 13, 2005 Minutes
Noon-2:00PM
UNC-A

Members Present
Hedy Fischer
Leslie Fay
Alice Oglesby

Members Absent
Robert Camille
Peter Gentling
Matt Sprouse

City Staff Present
Dan Baechtold
Scott Shuford

NCDOT Staff Present
Greg Shuler (Asheville)
Rick Tipton (Asheville)
Vince Rhea (Raleigh)
Drew Joyner (Raleigh)
Lonnie Brooks (Raleigh)
Jeff Lackey (Raleigh)
Ken Burleson (Consultant)

Others – Guests
None

After introductions, Scott Shuford went over the proposed agenda and the group agreed to follow it.

Status Reports

AAC

- Lighting – 90-degree cutoff fixtures were suggested for all road lighting north of I-40. Vince Rhea is to check about NCDOT and FHWA standards for such lighting. Rick Tipton suggested looking at project 3302, with Jay Stancil being the contact person.
- Timing – Vince indicated that he would look into the NCDOT's timing needs for information from the committee for specific products. Drew Joyner indicated while right-of-way acquisition will likely be delayed until 2009 and construction will likely be delayed until 2012, the planning part of the project would stay on the prior schedule. The project will NOT be design-build. Ken Burleson indicated that the median lengths would likely be 14,800 feet in Section A (I-40 to Haywood) and 6,500 feet in Section B (Haywood to River); the noise wall would likely be continuous along that length. There would be minimal grade changes from existing conditions, except at Amboy where the grade for westbound traffic would drop and the grade for eastbound traffic would increase to accommodate a diamond interchange. The committee agreed to do their best to accommodate the NCDOT schedule. Scott indicated that he would provide general information about the committee's desires to Vince.

NCDOT

- Mapping products to AAC – There was reluctance to share this information prior to the summer workshop. The committee agreed to work off the older maps, using the new information provided by Ken.
- I-40 Project – On schedule for an October 2005 start.
- Workshop – No date set; Leslie Fay recommended a September time to allow the opportunity for the most input.

Meeting Schedule – A suggested meeting schedule for the rest of the calendar year was distributed. NCDOT and the AAC will review and comment. The next meeting will have a presentation on the NCDOT project process prepared by Drew (a one-page summary will be distributed prior to the meeting). Discussion of the workshop will also be part of the next meeting's agenda, along with reports from Vince on lighting and retaining wall types.

AAC Field Trip – Will occur on June 27. The AAC will go over maps prior to making the trip.

Assignments:

Vince Rhea

- Schedule for Committee deadlines
- Project process summary
- Lighting
- Retaining wall types

Committee/City

- Estimates of costs and amount of enhancement
- Prior ideas distributed

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM.

Memo to: File

From: J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.

Subject: October 9 &10, 2006 I-2513 Public Workshop

The North Carolina Department of Transportation held a Citizen's Informational Workshop in Asheville on Monday, October 9 and Tuesday October 10, 2006 to answer questions and receive comments about the entire I-26 Connector project. This informal workshop was held in the ballroom at the Renaissance Hotel located at One Thomas Wolfe Plaza in downtown Asheville. Three time sessions were available for attendance, Monday October 9 from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm and again on Tuesday, October 10 from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm and from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm. The same information was available at each session including a continuous PowerPoint presentation and 2 sets of 1"=100' public hearing type maps showing 4 alternatives in Sections B and C and the proposed improvements in Section A. The City's Aesthetics Committee was present and showed examples of treatments around the US and offered attendees to participate in a survey of public desires for aesthetic treatments for the project. The AIA was also present with a 3 dimensional topo model of the northern end of the project area with the 4 NCDOT Section B alternatives and one developed by their committee presented on construction paper placed on top of the model.

A local officials meeting was held before the first workshop and was attended by approximately 25 officials. They we welcomed by Alan Thornburg the local NCDOT Board member, shown the presentation and given the opportunity to ask questions. Following the local officials meeting, a meeting was held for the Asheville Chamber of Commerce that was attended by approximately 35 persons.

Approximately 110 (100 signed in) attended the first Monday evening workshop and 22 written comment sheets were submitted during this session. Approximately 110 attended the first Tuesday workshop (107signed in) and 15 written comment sheets were submitted during this session with one petition with 7 signatures. Approximately 100 attended the Tuesday evening workshop (93 signed in) and 11 written comment sheets were submitted during this session with one identical petition with 3 signatures.

Total attendance was approximately 320 and a total of 48 written comment sheets were collected at the 3 workshops. Forty-five (45) 8.5x11 color maps of areas of interest were printed from the display maps for attendees during the 3 sessions. The following summarizes the comments extracted from the 48 written comment sheets submitted at the workshop (some sheets contained more than on comment).

21 preferred or supported an alternative to B4 and B5 developed by the AIA group.

20 preferred separating Patton Avenue and I-240.

15 preferred six lanes along Section A.

12 expressed objection to B4 and B5 (but these did not support B2 and B3).

6 preferred Alternate B-5.

6 supported bicycle facilities

5 preferred Section C to be constructed first.

5 generally supported NCDOT's alternatives and the project in general.

5 preferred Alternate F-1 in Section C

4 suggested pedestrian improvements

4 supported accelerating the project

3 preferred Alternate B-4.

3 preferred 8-lanes in Section A.

3 emphasized Aesthetics.

3 opposed the entire project.

3 requested project information.

3 suggested a new alignment.

2 were concerned with non-project related NCDOT issues.

2 expressed traffic noise concerns.

1 requested a 45 mph speed limit.

1 requested to be added to mail list.

1 requested a signature bridge.

1 against Section C Alternate C2.

1 against Section C Alternate F1.

1 preferred Section C Alternate D1.

1 preferred Section C Alternate A2.

1 preferred Section C Alternate B2.

1 wanted trees on Haywood Bridge.

1 requested a narrow median through Section A.

1 concerned truck noise.

1 suggested HOV lanes.

1 expressed air quality impact.

1 suggested a full bypass.

URS

M E M O R A N D U M

To: File 31825626

From: Jeff Weisner, AICP

Date: January 26, 2007

Subject: **State Project 34165.1.1 (TIP I-2513)**
F.A. Project MA-NHF-26-1(53)
Buncombe County
Asheville/ I-240 and New Route from I-26 to US 19-23-70
SHPO Meeting Friday, January 26, 2007 at 10:00 AM

A meeting was held at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office to discuss the determination of effects to historic resources for the subject project. This meeting is a follow up to previous meetings for determination of effects. Attendees of the meeting included representatives from FHWA, SHPO, NCDOT, and the consulting firms of TGS Engineers and URS as follows:

Rob Ayers – FHWA
Donnie Brew - FHWA
Renee Gledhill-Earley – SHPO
Sarah McBride – SHPO
Mary Pope Furr – NCDOT, HEU
Derrick Weaver – NCDOT, PDEA
Vince Rhea – NCDOT, PDEA
Ken Burleson – TGS
Jeff Weisner – URS

Ken Burleson handed out an information packet (attached) that included an effects matrix and photos, preliminary plans, and profiles associated with each historic resource to be discussed. Project effects determinations were discussed for six historic properties: Aycock School, C.G. Worley House, Whiteford G. Smith House, Freeman House, Haywood Street United Methodist Church, and the Biltmore Estate. The following summarizes the discussion of each resource.

West Asheville/Aycock School – **Adverse Effect** - Mary Pope asked about the arrowhead monument located on school property; needs to be researched, and said that it likely needed to be relocated – this can be addressed if alternative is selected. Acreage of property impacts were reduced from original estimates. Mary Pope identified that the West Asheville historic district had a certain ambiance that need to be preserved and the school also contributed to the character of the

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district. HPO asked Mary Poe to write up the school as a contributing resource to the historic district. Avoidance alternatives would be closing of interchange or shifting highway away from the school. Avoidance might be able to be addressed qualitatively, need official determination form FHWA in Section 4(f) coordination.

C.G. Worley House – **Adverse Effect** – right-of-way will follow the proposed noise thereby minimizing property impacts. Opportunities for further minimization of effects can be investigated after selection of a preferred alternative.

Whiteford G. Smith House – **No Adverse Effect** – Alternative 5 has potential to affect this property. A retaining wall constructed within the right-of-way would avoid property takes.

Haywood Street United Methodist Church – **No Adverse Effect -** Alternative 5 has potential to affect this property. Construction of a retaining wall would reduce the amount of property takes and avoid impacting the driveway at the rear of the property.

Freeman House – **Adverse Effect** – Alternatives 2 and 4 impact the house: noise, visual. Determination of eligibility based on rural setting of house.

Biltmore Estate – **Adverse Effect** – use of retaining walls would avoid property take outside right-of-way but visual impact of retaining walls and modification of the I-40 would be a constructive use. There is question about whether the right-of-way is prescriptive or fee simple. With it being an Interstate highway it is likely fee simple. Tax maps show it as NCDOT right-of-way. NCDOT Right-of- way Unit has not made a determination yet. Deed research needs to be done. Regarding Section 4(f) evaluation there could be no de minimis determination.

Action Items

- NCDOT will complete affects determination form.
- TGS will evaluate avoidance alternatives at West Asheville/Aycock School.
- NCDOT will request Right-of-way Abstract to determine ownership of right-of-way through the Biltmore Estate
- A meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible with FHWA to discuss Section 4(f) evaluation.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Files

FROM: Manuel F. Carballo

REFERENCE: Study of the Asheville Design Center's I-26 Connector Proposal Kick-Off Meeting

DATE: October 30, 2007

A Kick-Off meeting was held for the above referenced project on Monday, October 22, 2007 at 2:00 PM at City Hall, Asheville, North Carolina. Agenda and meeting attendees are attached.

Per the agenda:

Meeting called to order at 2:00 PM.

1. Introductions – Went around the table introducing ourselves.
2. Contract
    a. FIGG to prepare monthly invoice and progress report and submit to the City of Asheville.
    b. All communication and coordination between the City of Asheville, Buncombe County and the Asheville Design Center to go through Ken and Manuel.
    c. All communication with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to go through Mr. Vince Rhea with copies to Derrick and Rick.

3. Scope of Work - This portion of the NCDOT project being considered is approximately a two mile connection between two completed segments of I-26 that will run through Asheville adjacent to the French Broad River and downtown. The Asheville Design Center has created a new alternative within the same study area that is currently being considered by the community as a viable alternative that is a more context sensitive solution. Earlier this summer at the request of the Asheville City Council and local state legislators, the NCDOT consultants currently working on the project provided an analysis of the ADC proposal. Although the ADC's proposal was not determined infeasible in the NCDOT report, results of the study identified several concerns. In an effort to address these concerns, the City of Asheville, Buncombe County and The Asheville design Center retained the services of FIGG/LOCHNER to perform an independent analysis as well as proposed schematic solutions that seek to determine the viability of the proposed ADC alternative. The FIGG/LOCHNER team has identified three major tasks for performing the proposed alternate feasibility study:

a. Prepare Design Criteria & Comprehensive List of NCDOT Concerns. One of the primary goals of this meeting is for the FIGG/LOCHNER team to gather the design criteria used by NCDOT on the other alternates as well as to develop a clear understanding of all the concerns previously identified by the NCDOT.
b. Analysis of ADC's Alternative 4B. Once the designed criteria have been established and a comprehensive list of concerns has been prepared, the FIGG/LOCHNER team will analyze alternative 4B.
c. Final Plan Development. The intent of this phase is to evolve the ADC alternative into a complete functional plan that is compliant with FHWA and NCDOT design guidelines.

4. Confirm NCDOT Corridor Design Criteria

- Design criteria for alternate 4b are the same as for all other alternates.
- FHWA requires no design exceptions.
- FIGG/LOCHNER will obtain electronic copies of MicroStation Geopak files from TGS.
- NCDOT will provide via e-mail to FIGG/LOCHNER a copy of the design criteria.

5. NCDOT Concerns Discussion
   - NCDOT's review identified concerns in these areas: clearances (shoulders, over and under streets and railroads), alignment (horizontal and vertical) and capacities (operational).
   - The alternate appears to be non-standard in shoulders offset, clearance between lanes and gradients.
   - On the west side, the bridge over the French Broad River will also have to cross the Smith Mill Creek floodplain, a railroad and a golf course – these are all "physical constraints" relative to footing placement. The structure at this location has a very wide footprint.
   - All alternates end at Broadway in order to compare alternatives equitably. This is necessary for the EIS document even if construction is done in phases.
   - On the east side, there is a landfill running along the French Broad River, the Montfort Area Historic District and a railroad spur (runs along landfill). These three constraints pose horizontal clearance challenges (this condition is illustrated as Section F in the NCDOT Powerpoint presentation to Asheville City Council). North of Section F available horizontal clearance increases.
   - The grade on I-240EB ramp (west side of river) required to provide the necessary vertical clearance over I-26 (at the double deck bridge) is acceptable.

- The profile on I-240WB ramp (west side of river) required to provide the necessary vertical clearance over I-26 (at the double deck bridge) is not acceptable. Unlike the I-240EB lanes, the I-240WB lanes are at the low point of the 6% superlevation prior to passing over I-26. This condition requires a steep grade approaching the double deck structure. There is also a low point on the structure which is unacceptable to the NCDOT.
- If the I-240 ramp profile (west of river) is lowered, the ramp length can be reduced.
- NCDOT does not allow sag profile low points on structures.
- Bridge cross-section approaching double-deck structure is 216 ft. out-to-out including 10 lanes plus shoulders to interstate criteria.
- Operational issues (queue storage and weave distances) were identified at the following locations:
    I. I-240 EB Exit Ramp to Patton
    II. I-240 EB Entrance loop from Patton
    III. I-240 WB Exit Loop to Patton
    IV. I-240 WB Exit to Hill Street
    V. I-240 WB Entrance from Hill Street
    VI. Hill Street Connector
- Cost estimates developed are strictly construction costs. Detour costs are not included.

6. Data Requests
    a. Available MicroStation and Geopak Files for Alternates 4 & 4B (Latest Planimetrics, Design Files, Profiles, Cross Sections, SuperElevation Files) – TGS to provide electronic copies to FIGG/LOCHNER
    b. Available Traffic Forecast for Alternates 4 & 4B. – This data does not exist for alternate 4b, however, hard copy for alternate 4 provided to FIGG/LOCHNER by URS.
    c. Available Traffic Files for Alternates 4 & 4B - URS to provide this data to FIGG/LOCHNER.
    d. Construction Phasing Plan for Alternate 4 – TGS to provide available data to FIGG/LOCHNER.
    e. Construction Schedule for Alternate 4 – This data does not currently exist. Based on past history no less than 36 months. Too early for NCDOT to set construction schedule.
    f. Updated Project Constraints Map for Alternate 4 – URS to provide copy of Draft EIS Chapter 3 to FIGG/LOCHNER.
    g. Conceptual double deck bridge layout (span layouts / pier placement) – NCDOT to discuss internally and advise FIGG/LOCHNER what assumptions were made on structural members sizes and span lengths.

7. Schedule – The independent analysis is to be completed in 90 days with an anticipated notice to proceed given on October 26, 2007.

8. Action Items – see data request section above for assignments.

In addition to the agenda items, the following items were also discussed.

a. TGS did not review the Hill Street Interchange for possible improvements. Their scope of work consisted of evaluating alternate 4b as presented to them.
b. The bridge cross-section approaching the double-deck structure has a 6% superlevation. Vertical separation of the I-240 ramps will be a constraint.
c. Freeman and C.G. Worley Historic Properties are constraints on other NCDOT alternates.
d. Southwest Loop is approximately 500 ft. in length. There is a storage concern.
e. Fiber Optics near Patton is a concern due to the high cost of relocation. This is also a constraint for NCDOT alternates 3, 4 & 5. Overhead Power is a constraint for all alternates.
f. The Railroad on the east side of the river runs about 3 trains per week. Each train has between 3 to 6 cars each which corresponds to 13 to 26 tractor trailers.
g. Buildings to be demolished are included in the land acquisition costs.
h. The intent of the independent analysis is to take the evaluation a step further and investigate possible improvements to the alternate so that it meets FHWA and NCDOT acceptance criteria. The City of Asheville, Buncombe County, Asheville Design Center and the FIGG/LOCHNER team are committed to be in constant communication with NCDOT during this review process.
i. Cost Estimates for Other Alternates – TGS to provide this data and a copy of the electronic spreadsheet to FIGG/LOCHNER as a resource so that estimates developed by FIGG/LOCHNER are consistent with the other alternates.
j. Public Hearing Maps Alternate 4 – TGS to provide electronic copies of the alternate 4 public hearing maps. These maps use the current flood plain data. FIGG/LOCHNER are to use the current flood plain data in order to be consistent with the other alternates, then identify where changes will be made relative to newer maps (currently as draft being reviewed). NCDOT will need to update some of their other alternates to comply with the latest flood plain information.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM

Xc: All attendees
Mr. Vincent J. Rhea, P.E.

FIGG

LOCHNER

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Files

FROM: Manuel F. Carballo

REFERENCE: Study of the Asheville Design Center's I-26 Connector Proposal Progress Meeting

DATE: December 20, 2007

A progress meeting was held for the above referenced project on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 9:00 AM at the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Century Building in Raleigh. A copy of the meeting sign-in sheet is attached. Mr. Ricky A. Tipton, P.E., P.L.S., NCDOT Division Construction Engineer, attended via teleconference. The following is a summary of the major items discussed and the action items identified by the group.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

I. FIGG/LOCHNER discussed the progress of the review of the Asheville Design Center's Alternate 4B and the possible improvements that have been identified and discussed with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and the Asheville Design Center (ADC). The key components of the conceptual alignment, as presented to the group, are as follows:

   A. I-240WB Exit Loop to Patton Avenue
   B. I-240EB Exit Ramp to Patton Avenue
   C. I-26 Mainline Structure Horizontal Alignment
   D. Double Deck Structure Concept over the French Broad River
   E. I-26 Merger with US 19-23 (Montford Historic District)
   F. Hill Street / Patton Avenue / I-240 interchange

The following is a summary of the key items discussed on each component:

A. I-240WB Exit Loop to Patton Avenue

1. The objective of FIGG/LOCHNER's initial review of the I-26 and Patton Avenue Interchange was to develop a concept that satisfies the operational concerns identified by the NCDOT. The concept, developed by FIGG/LOCHNER and offered at this meeting, provides added connection to Regent Park and Holiday Inn Drive and provides a triple left turn on the I-240EB exit loop to Patton as means of addressing the queue storage needs identified by the NCDOT.

2. Another possibility that was discussed was to extend the I-26 Bridge and route the Regent Park traffic to a new connection with Patton Avenue, east of the I-26 Bridge.
3. NCDOT noted that all movements need to be at a minimum a level of service "D".

B. I-240EB Exit Ramp to Patton Avenue

1. FIGG/LOCHNER are evaluating the possibility of revising the I-240EB Entrance Loop in order to shift the I-240EB Exit Ramp further west and therefore minimize or eliminate the impacts on the C.G. Worley House Historic Property.

C. I-26 Mainline Structure Horizontal Alignment

1. Two horizontal alignment alternatives were presented.
   a. The first alternate consisted primarily of a tangent section on the west side of the river with horizontal curves used to cross the French Broad River and tie into the elevated structure concept described in **E.** below. The radii for the horizontal curves used on this alternate were selected on the basis of using the 8% super-elevation charts, a minimum radius of 2320ft which provides for a 6% super-elevation at 60 mph.
   b. The second alignment is characterized primarily by a series of horizontal curves intended to minimize the impact to the Smith Mill Creek and Freeman House Historic Property west of the river and tie into the elevated structure on the east side of the river. The radii on this alignment were selected on the basis of those used on other NCDOT alternatives which appear to be based on the 6% super-elevation chart.
2. FIGG/LOCHNER requested clarification from NCDOT on the use of the 6% and 8% super-elevation charts for the I-26 mainline. NCDOT stated that the 6% super-elevation charts would be allowed for sections of I-26 that are located on a bridge.
3. NCDOT noted that the alternate with the tangent section west of the river has a footprint on the Freeman House that is larger than NCDOT's Alternate 4. In the meeting NCDOT indicated that the impacts the Lochner/Figg concept has to the Freeman and Worley houses needed to be similar to the impacts that the current alternatives have on those properties or they may not be really viable. Within the context of the meeting the term impact needs to be understood as the footprint of the alignment on the historic property.

D. Double Deck Structure Concept over the French Broad River

1. The objective of FIGG/LOCHNER's initial review of the I-240 ramps super-elevation and required radius is to meet the NCDOT's design criteria of 50 mph with 6% super-elevation. The preliminary horizontal alignment for the ADC's Alternate 4b developed by the NCDOT had an 8% super-elevation on the I-240 ramps. With the increased radii required to meet the 6% super-elevation, it was not feasible to tie I-240 back to I-26 in the vicinity of the river crossing. In order to preserve the ADC's objective of minimizing the structural footprint, meet NCDOT's design criteria, and preserve the possibility of a signature structure,

FIGG/LOCHNER developed a concept in which I-240EB becomes a flyover structure (crosses over I-26) and I-26 / I-240WB cross the French Broad River on a single level. The benefits of this concept include:

a. Meets AASHTO's minimum required radii.
b. Preserves the intent of the double deck structure by minimizing the structural footprint.
c. Enhances the ability to explore structural forms (structure depth, span length, and pier shapers) that would be less visually intrusive.

2. NCDOT noted that if a gore area is located over the French Broad River, pier placement and orientation will need to consider skew with respect to the river in order to prevent negatively impacting the river hydraulics.
3. NCDOT raised concerns about the gore area for I-26 NB and I-240EB being located on a bridge. The concern of the excessive rollover between the two alignments since I-26 curves to the left with a 6% super and I-240EB curves to the right with a 6% super. Lochner stated that they would look at the possibility of separating the structures through this area, to prevent having the excessive pavement rollover in the gore.
4. The concern about having the super elevation reach 0% on the bridge was mentioned. Lochner stated that it was very unlikely that spirals could be eliminated on the bridge areas since this design does have curves on the bridge. Lochner stated that in the development of the proposed profile, care would be taken to ensure there would be a minimum of .5% grade in the areas where the super-elevation approaches 0%.

E. I-26 Merger with US 19-23 (Montford Historic District)

1. The objective of FIGG/LOCHNER's initial review of the I-26 merger with US 19-23 is to develop concepts that meet the super-elevation design criteria for structures (6% maximum) and are within the environmental and horizontal clearance constraints identified by the NCDOT. The FIGG/LOCHNER team presented a concept in which the I-26 structure would be extended through the constricted areas until such point where the available right-of-away would make it practical to bring the structure down to grade. In this concept, the I-26NB structure is elevated along the existing US 19-23 median and the I-26SB structure elevated along the area between US 19-23SB and Riverside Drive. The benefits of this concept are:

a. Reducing and possibly eliminating the need for additional right-of-way.
b. Eliminating impacts to Historic Cemetery and railroad right-of-way.
c. Preserving possible use of existing shoulders as temporary traffic lanes for maintenance of traffic during construction.
d. Relocating Riverside Drive and the Railroad Spur unnecessary.

2. FIGG/LOCHNER noted that the termini point shown for the structure is an estimate to illustrate the concept. Use of retaining walls (if cost effective) and structure grade need to be further considered when selecting a logical termini point.
3. FIGG/LOCHNER noted that the structure types shown for the elevated structure were selected to reflect feasible structure types that may be used on the project.

These structure types consist of precast concrete segmental trapezoidal boxes, steel plate girders, and precast concrete bulb-tees. These structure types were used to develop a "generic" clearance envelope that can be used to evaluate vertical and horizontal clearances and that would maximize the flexibility of all the stakeholders in selecting a superstructure type in the future.

4. FIGG/LOCHNER noted that at the request of the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and the ADC, FIGG/LOCHNER are evaluating the potential noise impacts of the elevated structure on the Montford Historic neighborhoods.
5. NCDOT noted that they prefer a 0.5% minimum longitudinal grade on structures.
6. FIGG/LOCHNER noted that design from the I-26 termini point to the Broadway Interchange will be consistent with NCDOT's Alternate 2. In addition, the weave distance for the I-26 and US 19-23 traffic to Broadway is adequate.
7. FIGG/LOCHNER requested that NCDOT advise if there are any future plans on widening US 19-23.

F. Hill Street / Patton Avenue / I-240 interchange

1. The objective of FIGG/LOCHNER's review of the Patton Avenue / Hill Street / I-240 was to address the NCDOT's operational concern noted primarily with the Hill Street Connection traffic storage concerns. Our analysis indicates it is difficult to add an interchange with Hill Street due to the close proximity of the Montford Avenue Interchange. A possible improvement is adding a service road to connect Hill Street with Patton Avenue and Riverside Drive. Another option was presented which added a connection between Hillard Street and Patton Avenue along with connecting Patton Avenue and I-240EB. The City, County, and ADC advised that the first option was more consistent with the objectives of converting Patton Avenue into a future boulevard. FIGG/LOCHNER also noted that this option is also consistent with the NCDOT's Alternate 4 design.
2. NCDOT suggested that it may be beneficial to extend the I-240 bridges past Hill Street. In this manner, Hill Street will go under the bridges and prevent having an excessive steep grade on the relocated Hill Street connection, as currently proposed.

II. The following constructibility concerns were raised by NCDOT:

A. NCDOT needs to maintain traffic on the existing Patton Avenue and I-240 Interchange during construction.
B. There is a significant cut on the I-240EB Exit Ramp to Patton Avenue.
C. The alignments presented to the NCDOT will be elevated over the Norfolk Southern Bridge spanning the Smith Mill Creek Bridge. It is unknown if this is a concern to Norfolk Southern.
D. Traffic control during construction of the elevated structure over US 19-23.

III. The cost estimate for the ADC's alternate will extend to Broadway Avenue (consistent with other NCDOT alternates).

IV. Action Items:

A. NCDOT to review alternate presented and provide comments in a week. FIGG/LOCHNER requested if possible to provide comments by the end of this week.
B. FIGG/LOCHNER to contact Norfolk Southern to inquire about any policies regarding elevated structures over their bridges.
C. NCDOT to provide contact information for Norfolk Southern to FIGG/LOCHNER. Done, Lonnie Brooks e-mailed Manuel contact information on 12/13/07.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

xc: All attendees
Mr. Vincent J. Rhea, P.E. - NCDOT
Ms. Cathy D. Ball – City of Asheville
Mr. Kenneth J. Putnam, P.E. – City of Asheville
Mr. Mike Goodson, P.E., CPESC – County of Buncombe
Mr. Alan D. McGuinn, AIA - ADC
Ms. Stephanie Pankiewicz, RLA - ADC
Mr. Christopher Eller, P.E. – County of Buncombe
Mr. Jay Rohleder, P.E., S.E. - FIGG

FIGG

LOCHNER

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Files

FROM: Manuel F. Carballo

REFERENCE: Study of the Asheville Design Center's I-26 Connector Proposal Progress Meeting

DATE: January 8, 2008

A progress meeting was held for the above referenced project on Friday, January 4, 2008 at 2:30 PM at the City of Asheville 6th Floor Conference Room. A copy of the meeting sign-in sheet is attached. The following is a summary of the major items discussed and the action items identified by the group.

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM.

The City of Asheville commitment to the NCDOT is to submit the study of the Asheville Design Center (ADC) I-26 Alternate 4B on January 18th.

The City of Asheville will include in the January 15th Asheville City Council Agenda an update on the ADC's alternate study. It was also discussed that an update to the County Commissioners on the same date could be possible.

NCDOT stated that they will not know the feasibility of alternate 4B prior to the January 15th meeting. They requested that the following material be included in the January 18th submittal. For the NCDOT to determine the feasibility of alternate 4B, the study needs to address the following items:

1. Functionality. The study needs to include slope limits, grades, capacity analysis and staging plan for project. The construction staging needs to specifically address construction of the Patton Avenue interchange and the I-26 elevated portion over US 19/23.

2. Study needs to demonstrate that the alternate meets the project design standards and movements.

3. Reason to pursue this alternate. Items 1 and 2 above need to be addressed satisfactorily.

According to NCDOT, the impact on the project schedule from the Alternate 4B review time and possible need of incorporation into the draft EIS is unknown at this time. If the alternate becomes feasible they would need to revise the schedule.

NCDOT will need 2 months from the time the study is submitted to complete their review and determine if the ADC's alternate is feasible.

NCDOT is currently working on the other alternates and suggested reviewing alternate 4B concurrently. One possible way to mitigate impacts to the schedule could be including alternate 4B as a supplement to the EIS document, however, NCDOT would need consent from FHWA.

NCDOT does not need cost estimates to commence their review. They will need a rough cost estimate later in the review process. Since alternate 4B incorporates portions of alternate 4, it was agreed that the NCDOT would provide FIGG/Lochner the breakdown of those quantities common to both alternates.

Selection of the preferred alternate is done by a large group of stakeholders that considers in aggregate the environmental impact of the overall project and not just the effect on historic properties. Community support is an important consideration when selecting the preferred alternate.

The NCDOT provided the following preliminary comments:

- The mainline grade at Patton Avenue is approximately 30' below the loop. The construction staging needs to address construction sequence in this area.

- During construction of the elevated portion of I-26 over US 19/23 need to maintain 2 lanes open in each direction with an allowance from 8 pm to 6 am for some traffic control.

- No major concerns with triple left turn on the Patton Avenue Loop. Further review is necessary.

- Traffic analysis needs to consider existing traffic conditions outside of the project limits and prevent creating capacity concerns.

NCDOT anticipates this being one construction project.

LOCHNER stated that the collector/distributor uses a 30'median, however, a 22' median may be considered during preliminary/final design. This would help mitigate the impact on the 4f properties.

The elevated viaduct near the Montford Historic District should not increase the noise level. In the final condition, the elevated structure for I-26 will be splitting traffic and the existing topography (hillsides) will also provide a barrier for any additional noise to extend to the neighborhood.

FIGG stated that contact has been made with Norfolk-Southern (NS) with regards to railroad policies on vertical and horizontal clearances for overhead interstate bridges over

NS bridges. NS has indicated that there are no policies and requested that FIGG provide the proposed horizontal and vertical clearances for NS to review.

For the Asheville City Council update, the following was discussed:

- The council meeting is on January 15th at 5:00 PM.
- NCDOT will check on attending and be available to answer questions on the project schedule.
- FIGG/LOCHNER will have 10 minutes for the presentation. Cathy Ball needs the presentation by January 8th.
- Times for meeting with County Commissioners will be provided by Mike Goodson later.

Action Items:

A. Mike Goodson to advise on dates for Buncombe County update.

B. FIGG to provide Cathy Ball PowerPoint Presentation on January 8th.

C. NCDOT to advise if they will be present on January 15th.

D. FIGG/LOCHNER to submit on January 18th the information requested above in order for the NCDOT to commence review process.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.

xc: All attendees

Staff Report

To: Mayor and City Council Date: January 15, 2008

Via: Gary Jackson, City Manager

From: Cathy D. Ball, PE, Director of Transportation and Engineering

Subject: Update – Evaluation of Asheville Design Center's Proposed Alignment to I-26

Summary Statement: This purpose of this report is to update City Council on the status of the evaluation of the ADC's proposed alignment for the I-26 Connector.

Review: In October 2007, Council authorized staff to contract with Figg Bridge to evaluate the Asheville Design Center's (ADC) proposed alignment for the I-26 connector. The City of Asheville and Buncombe County partnered to pay for these Figg Bridge partnered with Lochner to complete this work by January 18, 2008 as requested by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

A Technical Review Committee (TRC) consisting of two City representatives, two County representatives and two representatives from the Asheville Design Center provided oversight to the process.

The evaluation process included the following:

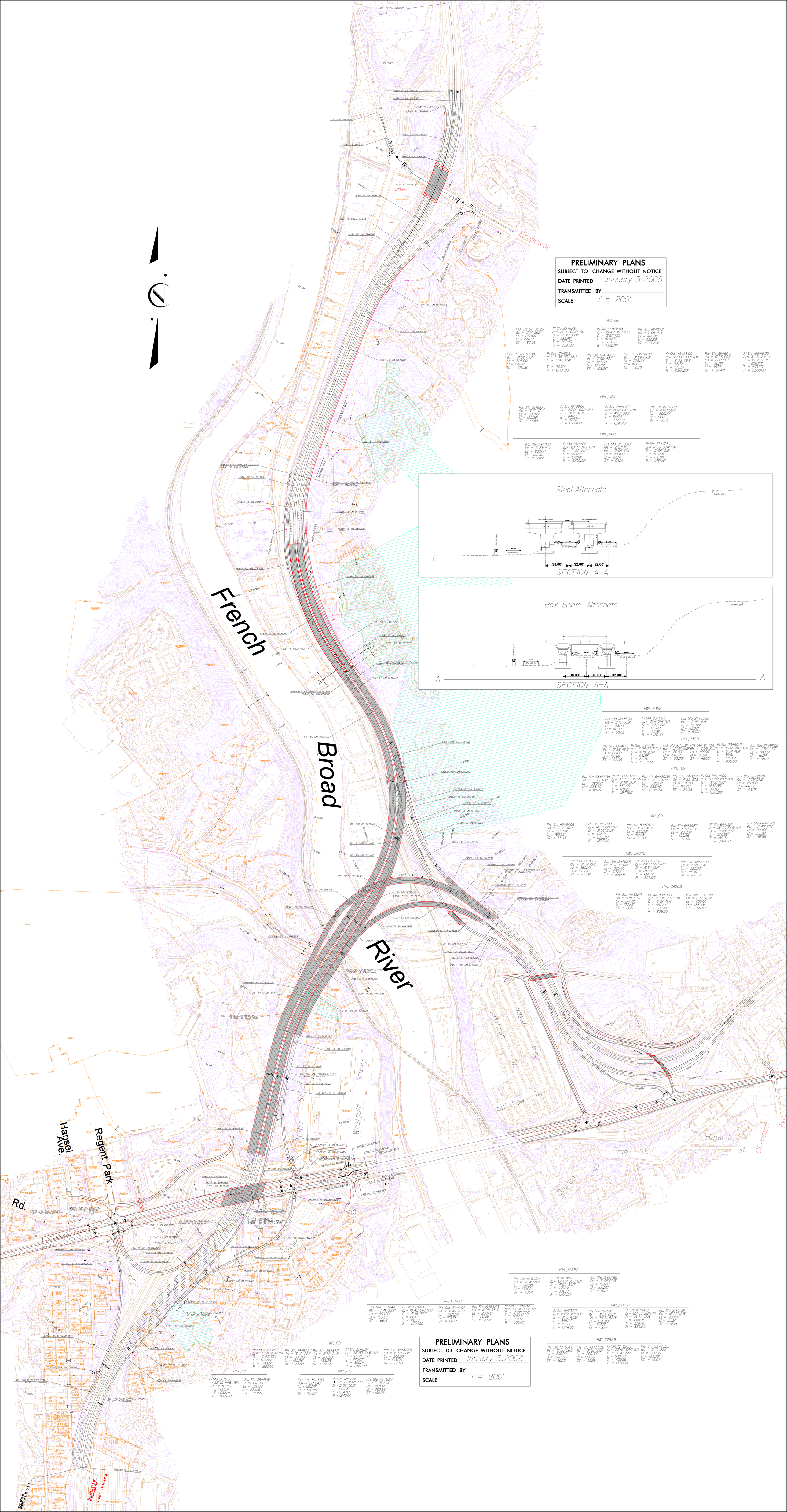
- reviewing the ADC's proposal;
- meeting with NCDOT to evaluate their concerns about the ADC's proposal;
- developing alternative designs to address NCDOT concerns;
- meeting again with NCDOT to review revised design proposal;
- making adjustments with revised design;
- meeting with NCDOT and TRC to propose the final recommended design; and,
- preparing final report to NCDOT for January 18, 2008 deadline.

Figg and Lochner have revised the ADC's design to meet the design guidelines required by NCDOT and FHWA. The revised design appears to accomplish the goals of the original ADC's design. The only goal that was not able to be met was a double-decker design for the new bridge.

At the January 4, 2008 meeting, Figg presented the attached design to NCDOT and the TRC. NCDOT representatives could not see any major problems with the design but stated that they would need to review more detailed design drawings before stating that the design is feasible and should be added to the Environmental Impact Statement for the I-26 Connector. NCDOT representatives wanted specifically for the constructability and capacity issues to be addressed in the final report. NCDOT indicated that it would take them two months to review the report once it is received on January 18, 2008.

Recommendation: Figg will make the attached presentation at the City Council meeting on January 15, 2008. Figg will provide a report to NCDOT on January 18, 2008.

Attachments:
(1) Map
(2) Presentation


PRELIMINARY PLANS
SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
DATE PRINTED January 3, 2008
TRANSMITTED BY
SCALE 1" = 200'
Steel Alternate
SECTION A-A
Box Beam Alternate
SECTION A-A
38.00'
32.00'
32.00'
French
Broad
River
Hansel Ave.
Regent Park
Rd.
Westgate
Pkwy.
Cliff St.
Hazel Mill Rd.
Hazel Ave.
Allison St.
SW View St.
Club St.
Hillard St.
Clingman Ave.
Buxton St.
Broadway
HWL_126
HWL_116A
HWL_116B
HWL_23NB
HWL_23SB
HWL_CD
HWL_240NB
HWL_240EB
HWL_YTRPD
HWL_YTRPC
HWL_YTLPB
HWL_YTRPB

FIGG

LOCHNER
ENGINEERS AND PLANNERS

Study of Asheville Design Center I-26 Connector Proposal

Presentation for Asheville City Council & Buncombe County Commissioners

January 15, 2008

CREATING BRIDGES AS ART®

FIGG

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Project Stakeholders

- *National Highway System - FHWA*
- *State of North Carolina - NCDOT*
- *Local Communities -*
  - > *City of Asheville*
  - > *Buncombe County*
  - > *Asheville Design Center (ADC)*

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Communication is Key

- *Clearly Understanding Stakeholders Objectives and Concerns*
- *Continuous & Successful Feedback of Review Through:*
  - > *Kick-Off Meeting in Asheville*
  - > *Teleconferences and Electronic Data Sharing with Alignment Adjustment Plans in Progress*
  - > *Multiple Interactive Team Progress Meetings*

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Key Objectives - NCDOT

- *Safe and Functional System*
- *Meet Local and Federal Design Standards*
- *Consider Environmental Impact*
- *Meet Operational Requirements*

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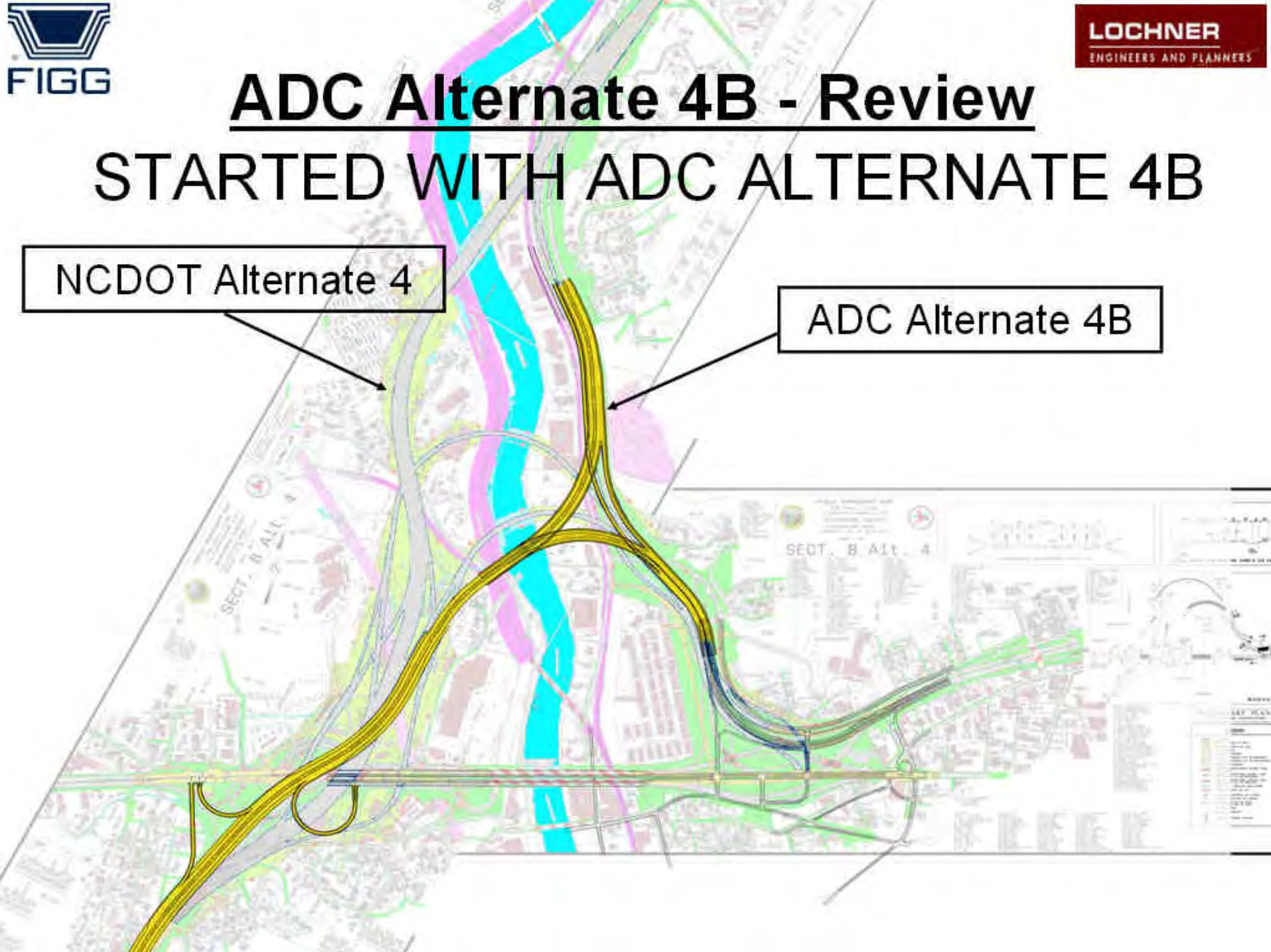
Key Objectives - Asheville

- *Context Sensitive Design - Minimize Footprint*
- *Separation of Local and Interstate Traffic - Separate Existing I-240 and I-26 Traffic from Local Traffic on Patton Avenue*
- *Aesthetics - Opportunity for New "Signature" Bridge over the French Broad River & Overall Project Visual Quality*

ADC Alternate 4B - Review

STARTED WITH ADC ALTERNATE 4B



FIGG

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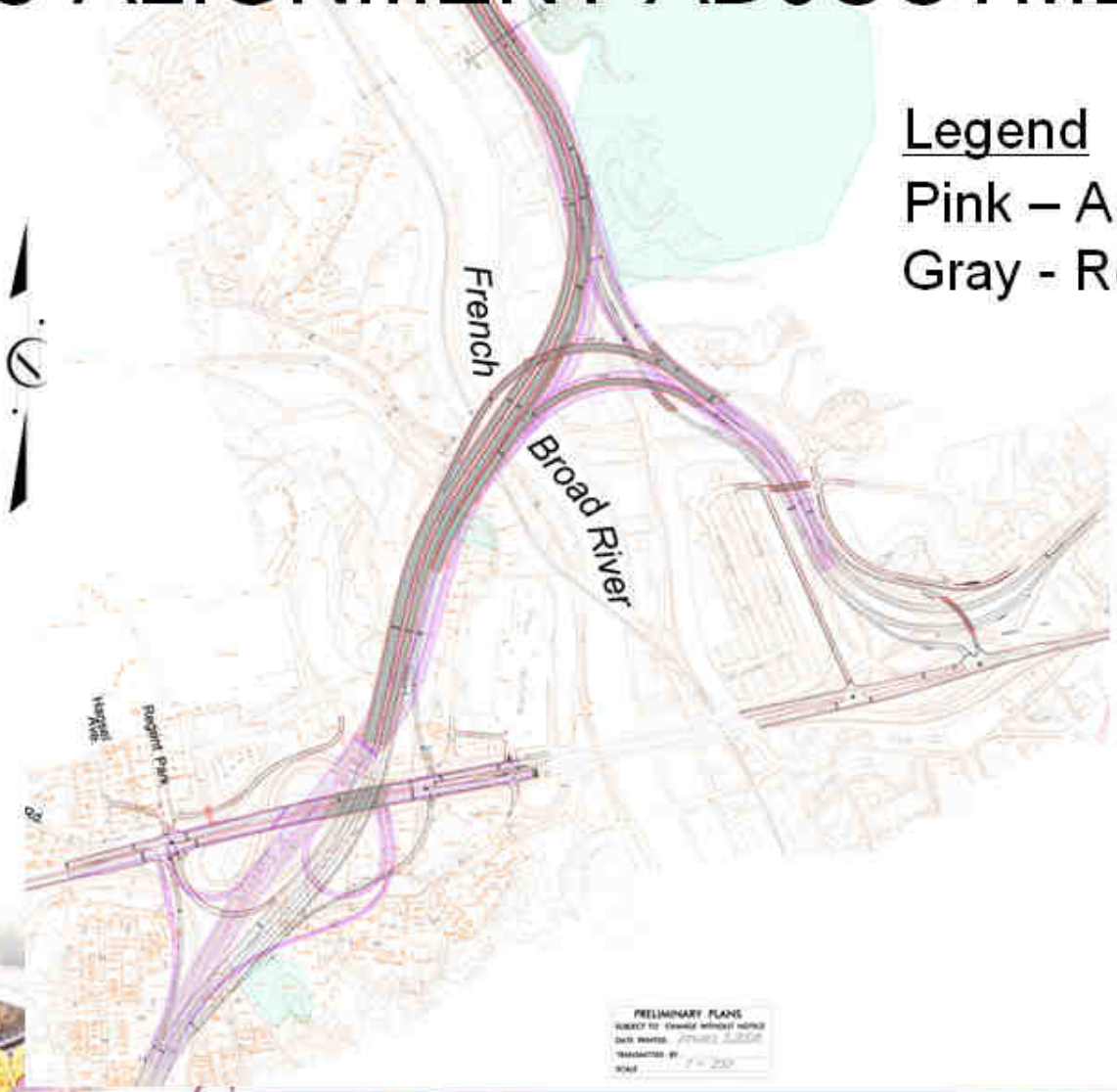
ADC Alternate 4B - Review

- *Horizontal Alignment - French Broad River Crossing*
  - > *Meet Roadway Design Standards*
  - > *Minimize Footprint*
  - > *Signature Bridge Possibility*
- *Merging I-26 with US 19-23 - while Minimizing Footprint with Limited Horizontal Clearance & Close Proximity to Historic Property*
- *Separate Local and Interstate Traffic*
  - > *Patton Ave. & I-26 Interchange*
  - > *Patton Ave. with Hill Street / I-240 / US 19-23*

ADC Alternate 4B - Review

ADC ALIGNMENT ADJUSTMENTS



Legend

Pink – ADC Original

Gray - Revised

FIGG

LOCHNER
ENGINEERS AND PLANNERS

ADC Alternate 4B - Review

- ***Horizontal Alignment - French Broad River Crossing***
  - > ***Meet Roadway Design Standards***
  - > ***Minimize Footprint***
  - > ***Signature Bridge Possibility***
- *Merging I-26 with US 19-23 - while Minimizing Footprint with Limited Horizontal Clearance & Close Proximity to Historic Property*
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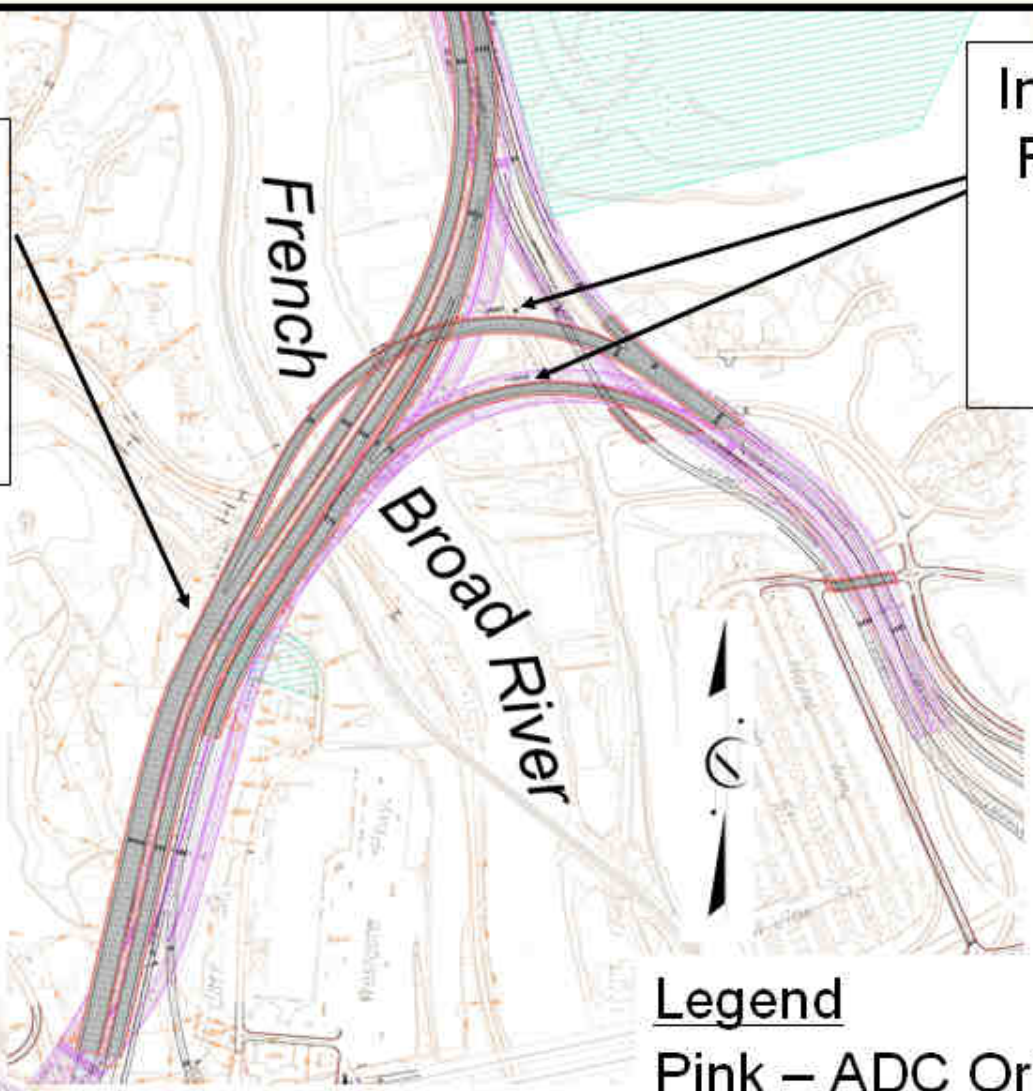
  - > *Patton Ave. with Hill Street / I-240 / US 19-23*

French Broad River Crossing

Increased I-26 Radii to minimum allowed by AASHTO

Increased I-240 Ramp Radii to minimum allowed by AASHTO



Legend

Pink – ADC Original

Gray - Revised

FIGG

LOCHNER
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ADC Alternate 4B - Review

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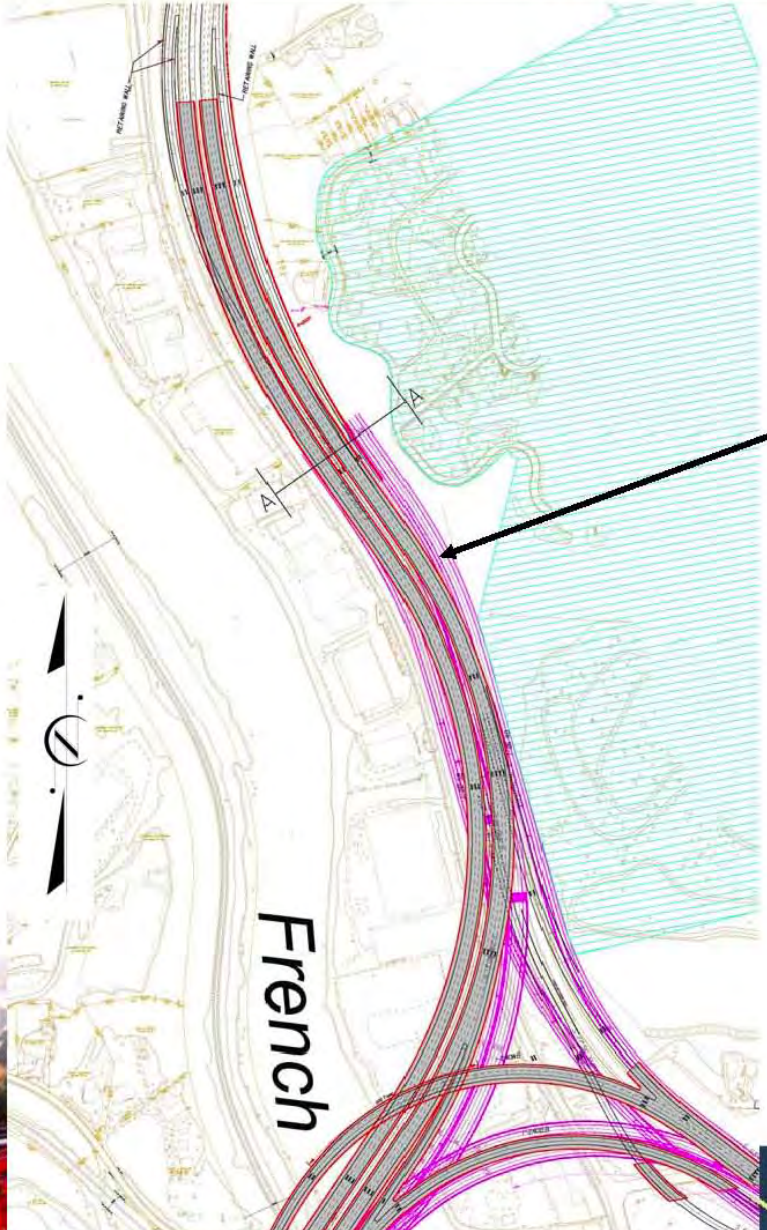
  - > *Patton Ave. with Hill Street / I-240 / US 19-23*

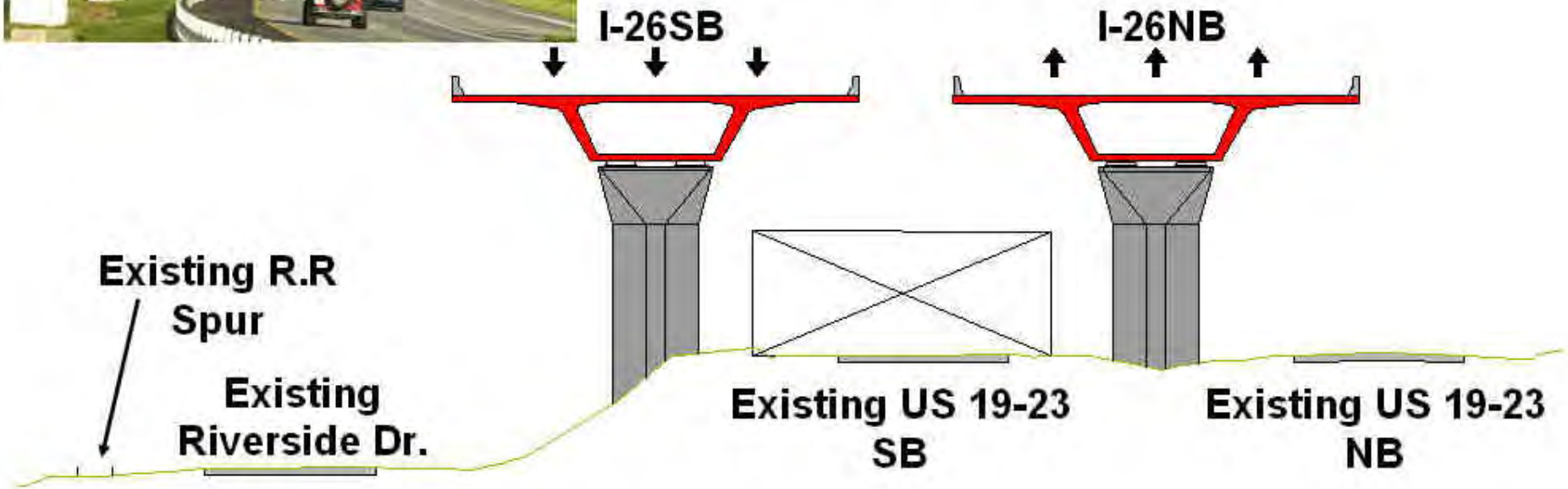
Merging I-26 & US 19-23



Extended I-26 Bridge
Through Constricted Area

Merging I-26 & US 19-23

I-26 Near Montford Historic District Viaduct Concept



Section A-A

FIGG

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ADC Alternate 4B - Review

- *Horizontal Alignment - French Broad River Crossing*
  - > *Meet Roadway Design Standards*
  - > *Minimize Footprint*
  - > *Signature Bridge Possibility*
- *Merging I-26 with US 19-23 - while Minimizing Footprint with Limited Horizontal Clearance & Close Proximity to Historic Property*
- ***Separate Local and Interstate Traffic***
  - > ***Patton Ave. & I-26 Interchange***
  - > ***Patton Ave. with Hill Street / I-240 / US 19-23***

FIGG

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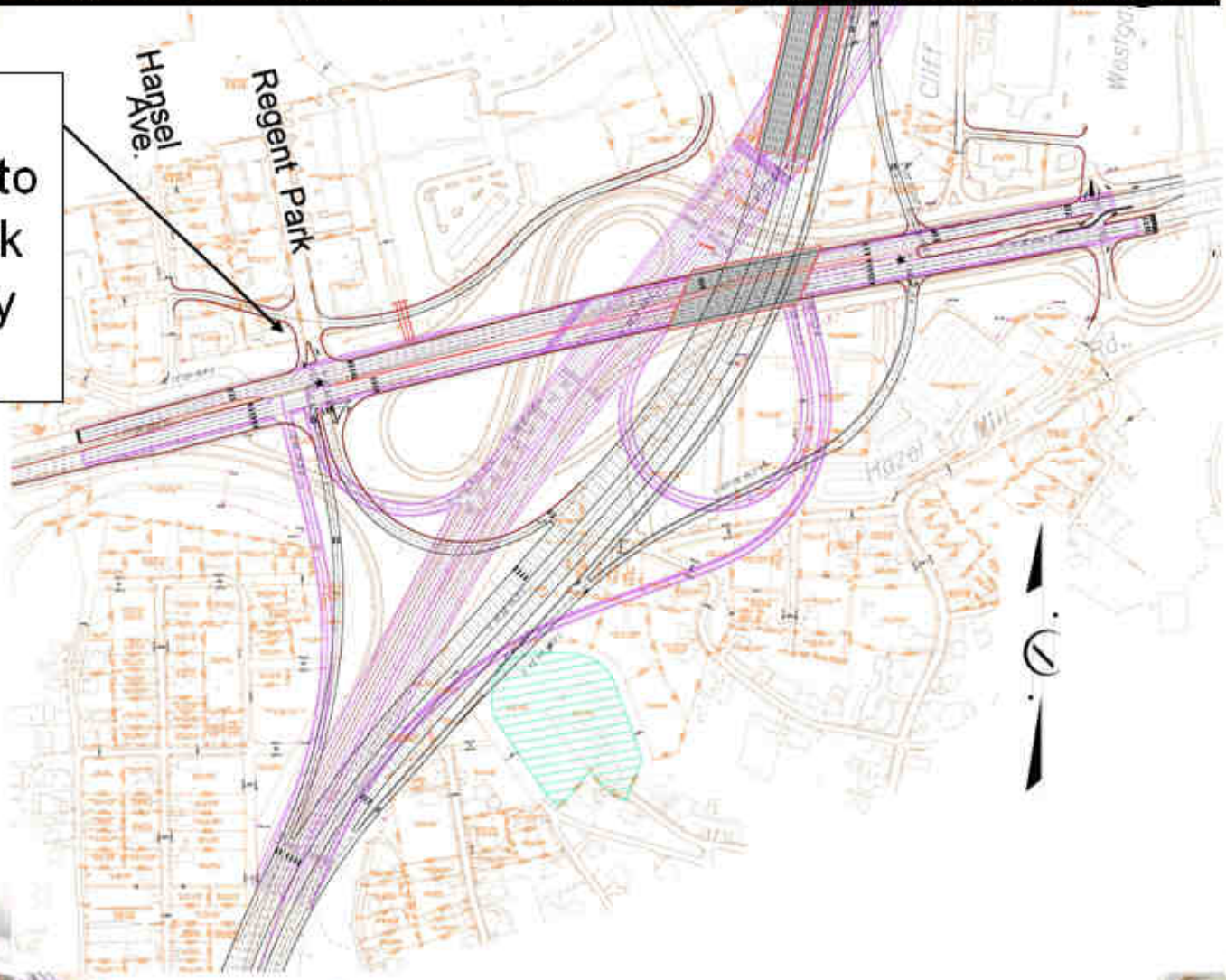
Patton Avenue & I-26 Interchange

Added Connection to Regent Park and Holiday Inn Drive



Patton Avenue & I-240 Interchange

Service Road added to provide connection to Hill Street

ADC ADJUSTED ALIGNMENT RELATIVE to NCDOT ALT. 4

NCDOT Alternate 4

Revised ADC Alternate 4B

REMAINING SCHEDULE

- *Final Report – January 18, 2008*
- *NCDOT Review*

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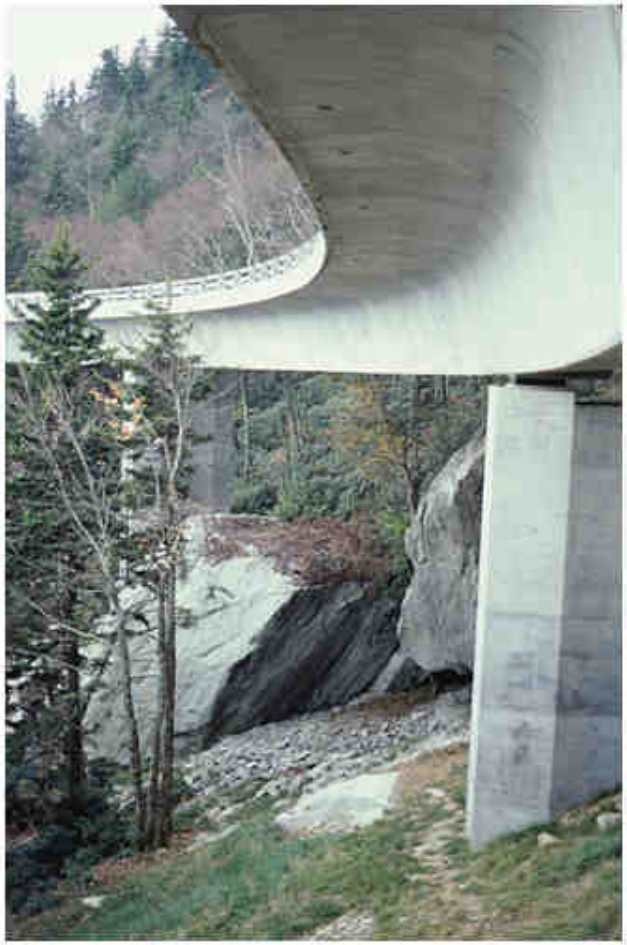
ADC Alternate 4B - Review

QUESTIONS ?



R E C O R D O F M E E T I N G

To: Project File

From: Jeff Weisner

Date: March 17, 2008

Subject: **Report of Meeting, I-26 Connector (I-2513)**
Discussion of issues with development of the ADC Alternative.
March 13, 2008, 8:30 AM, Room 470, NCDOT Highway Building

Meeting Attendees

Jake Riggsbee, FHWA
Donnie Brew, FHWA
Joe Geigle, FHWA
Scott Blevins, NCDOT Roadway Design Unit (RDU)
Cathy Houser, NCDOT RDU
Jay Bennett, NCDOT RDU,
Teresa Hart, NCDOT, Project Development and Environmental Analysis (PDEA)
Derrick Weaver, NCDOT PDEA
Vince Rhea, NCDOT PDEA
Lonnie Brooks, NCDOT Bridge Design Unit
Ricky Tipton, NCDOT Division 13 (via telephone)
Jay Rohleder, FIGG
Brian Eason, HW Lochner
Doug Wheatley, HW Lochner
Ken Burleson, TGS Engineers
Peter Trencansky, URS
Jeff Weisner, URS

Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting was held to discuss and to try to resolve the concerns relating to the operational and design issues identified by the NCDOT Roadway Design Unit in their review of the functional designs of the ADC's conceptual alternative.

Meeting Notes
The meeting was opened with introduction of those in attendance.

Cathy Houser presented a summary of the issues to be discussed which included:

- The two lane collector/distributer for I-26 north bound to I-240 east bound – this is viewed as a left hand exit
- Elimination of a movement at the interchange west of the French Broad River – east bound

Patton Avenue traffic would cross river to go west (north) on I-26.

- Problems with the operation of braided ramps - counter to driver expectation - exit right to go left
- Problems with route continuity

Cathy stated that NCDOT had not checked the design in detail because there needs to be a focus on resolving the greater issues before a full review of the plans is completed.

A lengthy discussion was held among the group to try and resolve the issues. Important points of the discussion included:

- The simplest solution to the braided ramps issue is to include a loop in the southeast quadrant of the interchange west of the river. TGS and NCDOT stated that it had been considered numerous times in the past and was problematic from an impacts standpoint as well as due to concerns with truck rollovers on the tight radius loop.
- Adding a loop would have significant impacts to neighborhoods, businesses and a historic property and would not meet the City's objective of minimizing the footprint of the project.
- None of the alternatives provide all movements at all interchanges but the movement that would not be included from Patton Avenue eastbound to I-26 northbound is the most major movement that is not accommodated.
- Ricky Tipton is concerned that the traffic forecast numbers are too low and that a left turn movement on to I-26/I-240 from Patton Avenue will not be able to handle the traffic.
- URS/TGS have met with Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) and discussed the concerns with the way the model was assigning the traffic in this area. TPB will pay close attention to the coding in the model when developing the new forecasts.
- NCDOT also had concerns with the length of the ramps before they split to I-26 and I-240 and stated that they felt a minimum of 1000 feet was needed for decision making and to provide adequate signing.
- FHWA Headquarters will have final say on operational functions and have the ultimate decision on acceptability of the preferred alternative.
- It is possible that designs for alternatives meet the Green Book requirements yet don't work well operationally, need to take a common sense approach on whether or not to carry an alternative forward.
- Discussion of traffic – Highway Capacity Software (HCS) shows that some weaving movements will work but HCS has anomalies in the analysis of complex traffic operations and we cannot rely on HCS alone, may need to use micro simulation to evaluate traffic operations.
- It is agreed that everyone is committed to working toward an amicable solution; however, the constraints of the project limit the possible solutions.
- The potential for environmental factors to influence alternative selection over operations was discussed. FHWA will study and weigh all the different aspects of the project.
- Modification of Alternative 4 to meet the City's needs was discussed and it was concluded that the ADC alternatives essentially is the modified Alternative 4.
- Use of CORSIM was discussed and the point was made that we need to be careful of contradicting past project decisions that have been determined at earlier stages of project design.
- The sag on the bridge for the braided ramp was discussed – making the grades work is

problematic from a design standpoint. Lochner was going to study this further but it is likely that the solution would be contrary to decreasing the footprint of the project.

- Concerns over constructability and cost are still issues to be addressed, but larger issues have to be worked out first.
- I-240 is identified as a C/D on the ADC alternative but it is actually the I-240 mainline thus I-26 northbound movement functions as a left hand exit.
- Due to the tight footprint of the design, the location of construction staging areas should be considered.
- URS also mentioned that there were concerns with how the proposed triple lefts from Patton Avenue eastbound to I-26/I-240 west (south) bound would be accommodated with the location of the Haywood Street interchange. The weaving section and dropping the lanes would be an important issue such that access to Haywood Street could be maintained.
- Project schedule- the traffic forecast is the critical path, NCDOT's goal is to include the ADC alternative in the public hearing in August if it is determined to be feasible. Pushing past August with the hearing would affect the overall project schedule.
- Functional design of ADC alternative would be presented at the public hearing.

Action Items

- Lochner will further address three potential solutions:
    - The braided ramp (with removing the sag on the bridge)
    - Add a loop to the interchange west of the river in the southeast quadrant
    - Provide the Patton Avenue EB to I-26 NB movement east of the river.
- Lochner will present a schedule to NCDOT
- NCDOT will revise overall project schedule
- After Lochner has finished revising the alternative, NCDOT will conduct a full review of the alternative.

cc: Attendees

R E C O R D O F M E E T I N G

To: Project File

From: Chris Werner

Date: April 16, 2008

Subject: **Report of Meeting, I-26 Connector (I-2513)**
Review of ADC Alternative.
April 16, 2008, 9:30 AM, NCDOT Century Center

Meeting Attendees

Vince Rhea, NCDOT – PDEA
Derrick Weaver, NCDOT – PDEA
Cathy Houser, NCDOT – Roadway Design Unit
David Scheffel, NCDOT – Roadway Design Unit
Jim Dunlop, NCDOT – Congestion Management Section
Steve Kite, NCDOT – Work Zone Traffic Control Unit
Lonnie Brooks, NCDOT – Structure Design Unit
Rick Tipton, NCDOT – Division 13
Ken Burleson, TGS Engineers
Charlie Flowe, TGS Engineers
Brian Eason, Lochner
Doug Wheatley, Lochner
Manuel Carballo, Figg
Peter Trencansky, URS
Chris Werner, URS

Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting was held to discuss the review of the ADC alternative and to try to resolve the concerns relating to the operational and design issues identified by NCDOT, TGS Engineers and URS Corporation. Specific comments on Alternate 4B are attached with additional discussions from the meeting shown below.

Individual Reports

Design Review – Cathy Houser

- There was a concern that the Patton Avenue WB triple lefts to I-26 EB/I-240 WB would result with a false capacity given it is reduced to two lanes prior to the merge. It was noted once drivers became familiar with the lane drop; it would not be fully utilized.
- Jim Dunlop suggested that the intersection of Regent Park Boulevard and Y24 should be located at a minimum the 95th percentile queue length reported from the Patton Avenue and

Regent Park Boulevard signalized intersection. He also suggested this would be a good location to utilize a right-in right-out
- It was recommended that Y25 be terminated with a cul-de-sac as shown in other alternatives.

Design Review – Charlie Flowe
- Mr. Flowe suggested the US 19-23-70 SB profile be designed for 60 mph versus the current design for 50 mph.
- Mr. Flowe had concerns with the US 19-23-70 NB diverge from I-240 as both alignments had 6% superelevation in the opposite direction, which would create an unacceptable rollover.
- Similar to Cathy Houser's attached comments; Mr. Flowe had concerns with several vertical clearances. Lochner noted they assumed a 9-foot super structure depth as a catch-all; however, they will double-check the vertical clearance calculations and provide the results to Vince Rhea.
- Mr. Brooks said he had general concerns with bridging in slip ramp areas.
- Mr. Flowe noted that he understood that this review was performed on functional designs and the majority of his comments would be resolved during the preliminary design stage; however, in order to bring these designs to the preliminary design level and have his comments addressed would require modifications. Mr. Flowe does not think the current designs should be shown to the public given his recommended design revisions may substantially increase the footprint of this alternative.

Peter Trencansky/Chris Werner – Capacity Analysis
- Mr. Trencansky summarized the major comments in the attached URS traffic capacity analysis review.
- URS noted concern with the I-26 EB/I-240 WB proposed 4-3 split at Haywood Road. After further discussion, it was determined the designs would be modified to a 4-2 split resulting with a Type A Weave. Given the complexity of the resulting weaving movements on I-26 EB/I-240WB, concerns still remain. Should it be determined that this alternative be carried on for further detailed study, it is recommended this weaving operation be analyzed using micro-simulation.

Jim Dunlop – Congestion Management Section
- Mr. Dunlop noted the Congestion Management Section's review was a detailed review and provided the group with a copy of the comments.
- Additional general comments included:
    - The proximity of the Resort Drive/Park Boulevard intersection with respect to the Patton Avenue/Regent Park Drive intersection;
    - The Patton Avenue WB triple lefts to I-26 EB/I-240 WB would result with a false capacity;
    - Queuing effects on I-26 EB/I-240 WB as a result of Loop B;
    - Agreement with URS' comments.

Steve Kite/Rick Tipton – Construction Phasing and Constructability
- Mr. Kite noted the bridge concept seemed to be very innovative and buildable.
- Mr. Kite noted if this project were in the alternative development stage he would recommend I-26 should be shifted closer to the river in order to reduce the difficulty in staging the

construction.

- Mr. Kite noted his major concern would be with the cost and time associated with the bridging of Patton Avenue over I-26. It was suggested investigation into the I-26 and Patton Avenue over/under options be reviewed. Mr. Kite suggested there may be a potential for reducing project cost if I-26 could go over Patton Avenue as opposed to the current design.
- It was noted the utility corridor under Patton Avenue will need to be addressed which is a common issue amongst all alternatives.

Lonnie Brooks – Structures Review (no comment handout provided)

- Mr. Brooks had concerns with the pier locations of the proposed bridges. Figg/Lochner noted that Work Zone Traffic Control and Division 13 Construction had previously requested the bridge piers to have a plan view location with cut views to ensure they're not in conflict with I-26/US 19-23 between stations 81+00 (+/-) to 96+00 (+/-). For locations where single stem piers may not be feasible due to potential interferences with existing roads, railroad, utilities, etc. Figg/Lochner proposes to use straddle bents. Figg/Lochner will provide Mr. Brooks with a copy of the preliminary pier location plans.
- Mr. Brooks questioned the pier placement at I-240 WB over I-26 and the area near the gore between I-26 WB and –Y7RD-. Figg/Lochner responded that straddle bents would be considered and offered to develop conceptual level pier layouts for these two locations.
- Mr. Brooks wanted to verify adequate clearance was provided over the Norfolk Southern Railroad bridges. Mr. Carballo that Figg/Lochner has received direction from Norfolk Southern with respect to the vertical and horizontal clearances and will provide NCDOT with a copy of the correspondence.

Ken Burleson – Environmental Impact Review

- Mr. Burleson was concerned with the right of way limits shown near the Burton Street community and recommended minimization efforts be investigated within this area.
- Mr. Burleson recommended the retaining wall shown to reduce impacts to the Worley property be removed to show worst-case conditions until a Geotechnical Review can be performed.
- Mr. Burleson noted this alternative may have more noise impact issues with regards to the Montford area.
- Mr. Burleson then reviewed preliminary impacts comparison of Alternative 4 and 4B, which he provided in the General Environmental Review of ADC Alternative attached.

General Summary discussion

- Mr. Rhea questioned given the concerns brought forward today if this still can be considered a viable alternative. It was suggested that the concerns need to be further reviewed/addressed before it can be determined if this alternative should be carried forward for further detailed study or eliminated.
- Mr. Carballo recommended that Figg/Lochner review today's major comments and provide NCDOT with either revisions or a response. Figg/Lochner will provide these revisions/responses to NCDOT within two weeks of today's meeting. Should all concerns be adequately addressed, then Figg/Lochner will provide functional design quantities of which cost estimates will be requested from NCDOT.
- Mr. Rhea noted the public hearing is scheduled in August and may need to be postponed to

allow for further review of this alternative. Ms. Houser stated that the alternative will need to be developed to the preliminary design level before it is shown to the public.

- If it is determined that preliminary designs will be required, it will later be determine by NCDOT which PEF will complete the work.

Action Items

- Figg/Lochner to address/provide response to today's major comments to NCDOT within two weeks. Major concerns include but are not limited to the following:
    - Figg/Lochner will further investigate the operation of the I-26 EB/I-240 WB weaving movement between Patton Avenue and Haywood Road.
    - Figg /Lochner will remove Hazel Mill intersection and terminate with a cul-de-sac and then see if Patton Avenue/Loop B intersection will operate at an acceptable LOS. Mr. Dunlop noted he was concerned with the cycle length used in the provided analysis, given the adjacent signalized intersections may control.
    - With the removal of the Hazel Mill intersection, Figg/Lochner will re-analyze the Patton Avenue and Regent Park Boulevard/Loop B intersection.
    - Figg/Lochner will evaluate the gore width for the I-240/I-26 split.
    - Figg /Lochner will investigate the rollover issue with the US 19-23-70 NB diverge from I-240.
- There were concerns with vertical clearances in several locations; Figg/Lochner will forward vertical clearance correspondence with Norfolk Southern Railroad to Vince Rhea and Lonnie Brooks.
- Figg/Lochner will also provide Mr. Brooks with a copy of the preliminary pier location plans for previously described.
- The Public Hearing will be postponed until additional study of this alternative has been performed to determine its viability.

cc: Attendees

I-2513 ADC REVIEW 4/16/08

DERRICK WEAVER	NCDOT	DWEAVER@DOT.STATE.NC.US
CHARLIE FLOWE	TGS ENGINEERS	cflowe@tgsengineers.com
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Peter Trencansky	URS CORPORATION	peter_trencansky@urscorp.com
Chris Werner	URS Corporation	christopher_werner@urscorp.com
DOUG WHEATLEY	LOCHNER	DWHEATLEY@HNLOCHNER.COM
VINCE RHEA	NCDOT PDEA	VRHEA@DOT.STATE...
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Steve Kite	NCDOT-WZTCU	skite@dot...
RICK TIPTON	NCDOT · DIV 13	rtipton@dot...

Review of ADC Alternative, TIP Project I-2513

Meeting Agenda

April 16, 2008

Introductions

Individual Reports in the following order:

Cathy Houser/David Scheffel – Design Review

Ken Burleson/Charlie Flowe - Design Review

Peter Trencansky/Chris Werner - Capacity Analysis

Jim Dunlop – Congestion Management Review

Steve Kite/Rick Tipton – Construction Phasing and Constructability

Lonnie Brooks – Structures Review

Ken Burleson - Environmental Impact Review

General discussion of all reviews

Determination of the Viability of the ADC Alternative

Where do we go from here?

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

April 16, 2008

Mr. Brian Eason, PE
H. W. Lochner, Inc.
2840 Plaza Place, Suite 202
Raleigh, NC 27612

SUBJECT: State Project: 34165 (I-2513) Buncombe County
Asheville I-26 from south of the I-26/I-40 interchange to existing US 19-23

Comments on I-2513 Alternate 4B

We have reviewed the revised functional design submittal of March 31, 2008 for I-2513B Alternate 4B. Roadway Design reviewed the design for geometrics and not capacity and have the following comments:

AASHTO recommends that for a major fork, the interior lane should grow from 12' at the beginning of the fork to 24' at the nose. The length of the widening from 12' to 24' should be between 1000' to 1800'. It appears that the ADC design does not accommodate this requirement. In addition, this fork is in close proximity to the on-ramp from Haywood. We have concerns with the operation in this area.

Please show how the additional lanes on Ramp B will impact the design at Haywood. The current design for Haywood Ramp A only has one lane at I-26. We have concerns with the operation of this area.

The acceleration lane for Ramp D (braided ramp) should be extended to 2000' -2400'.

There may be a hyroplaning issue at the I-240WB/US 19-23 NB split which occurs on a bridge. Also please check the rollovers in this gore.

There are several curves that have spirals that are not long enough.

The alignments for I-240EB, -Y7-LPB need to begin with a spiral.

Check the exit for -Y16A- from I-26. The distance to the gore appears too short.

Is there a sag on the bridge for -Y7- Ramp D?

Check the vertical clearances for I-240EB over -Y7- RpD.

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BUILDING AE B2
1000 BIRCH RIDGE DRIVE
RALEIGH NC

Check the vertical clearances for I-240EB over -23SB-.

Regent Park area appears to be an operational problem. The offset intersections for -Y24- and -Y25- may be an issue.

The existing RR bridge is underneath the proposed construction.

Please remove the PCCs by inserting spirals.

Please show the alignment and dashed lane lines for the entire US 19-23 underneath the proposed I-26 bridges.

Sincerely,

Cathy Houser, PE
Roadway Design Project Engineer
CSH/
cc: File

Suite 141
975 Walnut Street
Cary, North Carolina 27511
Phone 919 319 8850
Fax 919 319 6999

April 14, 2008

TGS ENGINEERS

Ms. Cathy S. Houser, PE
Project Engineer – Engineering Coordination
NCDOT Roadway Design Unit
1582 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1582

RE: State Project 34165.1.1 (TIP I-2513)
F. A. Project MA-NHF-26-1(53)
Buncombe County
Asheville I-26 Connector
I-2513B ADC Alternative 4B Review

Dear Ms. Houser:

As requested, we have reviewed the latest functional plan submittal by H. W. Lochner for the referenced alternative. Below is a summary of some of the design problems that we found with the functional plans. While we understand that the plans are functional in nature and we were really trying to emphasize the problems that might be fatal, we performed a fairly thorough review of the plans, profiles, and cross-sections and found a number of problems.

Following is a brief summary of our concerns by alignment:

I-26

- Curve at PI Sta. 61+24.19 – Superelevation should be 6% (5% shown) Spiral in is not long enough for 4 rotated lanes at 6% superelevation.
- Curve at PI Sta. 101+11.49 – Superelevation should be 6%.
- Curve at PI Sta. 109+34.68 – Compound curve with no connecting spiral. Shows superelevation transition from 6% to 7%, both curves could be 6%.

I-240EB

- I-240EB alignment begins as a compounded curve with I-26 alignment. A compounding spiral should be used.
- Curves at PI Sta. 12+45.40, 32+25.53, 52+67.00 – Superelevation shown on the cross-sections and the superelevation shown in the shape files do not agree. The superelevation for 52+67.00 could be 5%.
- Curve at PI Sta. 66+26.29 – The spiral in is too short for 2-lane rotation.
- The profile elevation of I-240EB at station 10+00.00 is incorrect by more than 0.7'. This affects the gore of the major diverge with I-26.
- The bridge over -Y7RPD- has insufficient clearance provided.

- The bridge over –23SB- has insufficient clearance provided.

I-240WB

- Major merge with I-26 – Superelevation at tie-in should be 6% to match I-26. 5% superelevation was carried through the tangent ahead of Sta. 12+50.00 rather than transitioning back to 2%. 5% superelevation in tangent is not a good idea. This causes problems with the gore computations.
- Curve at PI Sta. 26+58.98 – The spiral length is much longer than required.

23NB

- Gore at major diverge with I-240 – Curves breaking in opposite directions each requiring 6% superelevation. This creates a 12% rollover in the decision lane.
- Minor elevation error at Sta. 10+00.00
- There are problems with the transitions shown in the shape file near the end of the alignment.

23SB

- The profile contains a downgrade of 6.7%, which is not acceptable for 60 mph design.
- Spiral at Sta. 25+96.00 – Spiral length should be 160'.
- Curve at PI Sta. 23+60.42 – On the back spiral, the lanes transition at different increments.

Y7RPB

- Curve at PI Sta. 16+00.51 – The spiral lengths are too short.
- There is a minor grade tie error at Sta. 10+00.00
- Gore at I-26 – The gore computations are not within the maximum / minimum elevation differentials.
- There is a minor grade tie error at Patton Avenue.

Y7LPB

- The alignment begins by compounding the I-26 curve. A connecting spiral should be used.
- The superelevation transition shown in the shape file does not agree with the I-26 superelevations.
- Curve at PI Sta. 18+94.12 – The spiral out is too short for the design speed. On the ramp approaching a stop condition, the spiral is probably unnecessary.

- The profile grade tie with I-26 at Sta. 10+00.00 is incorrect by more than 4'.
- There is a minor grade tie error at Patton Avenue.

Y7RPC

- There is a profile grade error of nearly 1' at Sta. 10+00.00. This affects the gore computations.

Y7RPD

- Curve at PI Sta. 26+99.77 – Spirals are too short.
- The gore at I-26 does not fit within the minimum and maximum elevation allowances.

Y7RPD-SLIP

- The gore at I-240 violates 5% maximum rollover.
- The gore at Y7RPD does not fit within the minimum and maximum elevation allowances.

Y24

- The horizontal and vertical alignments tie into the existing roadway with 15 mph curves. While at this point, this roadway is basically a driveway with a poor existing alignment and cross-section, a 15 mph horizontal curve occurring at the same location as a 15 mph crest vertical curve is not a good idea.
- There is a minor grade tie error at Regent Park.
- The typical section indicates 10' lanes. This is better than existing for the hotel driveway, but the facility carries Sam's Club traffic, the western store traffic, and the hotel traffic.

Y25

- The horizontal alignment is designed for 25 mph. Design criteria for city streets was generally 35 mph. 10' lanes with curb and gutter were used. This is Hazel Mill Road, which is not a minor facility.
- There is a minor grade tie error at Regent Park.

Regent Park

There are too many intersections, too closely spaced near the Regent Park / Patton Avenue intersection. There will be operational problems in this area with Hazel Mill

Road traffic, all of Sam's Club traffic, all of the hotel traffic, and the traffic generated by the businesses on Regent Park all traversing this group of closely spaced intersections with no space for queuing.

Y16A

- Curve at PI Sta. 19+09.64 – Spiral back is too short.
- Curve at PI Sta. 21+40.32 – Spiral ahead is too short
- Compound curve used with no combining spiral. No superelevation transition is needed.
- Tie at I26 is an angular exit on the outside of a curve. The exit is introduced with a tangent to the I-26 curve rather than a spiral out to a tangent.
- Minor grade error at Sta. 19+96.39

Y16B

- Curve at PI Sta. 27+47.74 – Spiral back is too short.
- Minor grade error at Sta. 28+99.51
- The gore at I26 does not fit within the minimum and maximum elevation allowances.

In summary, there are some NCDOT policy questions that need to be resolved such as compound curves without combining spirals and the introduction of ramp alignments without spirals. There are numerous minor superelevation inconsistencies that probably don't affect the plan concept. There are minor grade and gore computation errors that probably don't affect the plan concept.

However, there are some major problems that will affect the plan concept. There are a couple of major grade errors. There are insufficient bridge clearances. The diverge point of I-240WB and 23NB will not work as designed. There are spirals that are too short for the number of lanes rotated. There are locations where the design criteria was not met.

While my goal was to review the design alignments and grades and operational reviews were left to others, it does appear that there will be operational problems with the design as presented, along with access elimination for some properties that are otherwise unaffected by the project.

I'll be happy to discuss our findings with you if you so desire. If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss this information further, please call.

Warmest regards,

Charles L. Flowe, PE
TGS Engineers

cc: Mr. J. Kenneth Burleson, PE
Mr. Vince Rhea, PE

URS Traffic Capacity Analysis Review
TIP Project I-2513
ADC Alternative 4B
April 16, 2008

Summary of Major Comments:

- The Loop B maximum 95th percentile queue (or equivalent) is reported at approximately 325' plus required 65 mph to 0 deceleration length of 570'=895'; whereas, the distance from the stop bar to the gore is approximately 817'.
- We have concerns with the operations of a three lane entrance ramp from Patton Avenue and the 4-3 split south at the Haywood Road interchange. The Haywood Road southbound exit ramp currently has one left turn lane and one right turn lane at the ramp terminal; whereas the above design would have a three lane exit, which would require one lane to be dropped prior to the terminal as the Haywood Road typical section will consist of only one thru lane in both the eastbound and westbound direction. The use of a three-lane exit for a service interchange with minimal traffic does not constitute best design practices.
- The location of Resort Drive is less than the 100' driveway stem length required in the Policy on Street and Driveway Access to North Carolina Highways.

General Traffic Capacity Comments:

HCS Analysis

- The Loop B exit consists of a shared thru/exit lane and an exclusive exit lane and is analyzed as a major diverge; however, the HCM classifies a major diverge as all departing roadways being built to mainline standards, whereas this loop would have a significantly reduce design speed. Evaluation as a standard 2-lane diverge would be more appropriate.
- Analysis BFS-1: all other alternatives BFS analyzed using BFFS=65mph versus 70 mph measured FFS; no interchange density input; volume input error for PM.
- Analysis BFS-2: all other alternatives BFS analyzed using BFFS=65mph versus 70 mph measured FFS; no interchange density input.
- Analysis Y7RPD MRG: FFS mainline=65mph; FFS ramp=45mph; adjacent ramp information to be verified.
- Analysis Y7RPDSLIP: adjacent ramp information to be verified.
- Analysis WEV-1: weave length to be verified; heavy vehicle % to be verified; weaving volumes would be similar to Alternative 4 weaving volume assumptions.
- Analysis WEV-3: FFS = 65mph; weave distance to be verified; limitations of software cannot analyze 6 lanes; AM and PM volumes to be verified which would be similar to Alternative 4 weaving volume assumptions.
- Analysis WEV-4: FFS = 55mph.

Synchro Analysis

- The minimum initial time for Patton Avenue should be 12 seconds for Patton Avenue through movements. It won't change the results but is not consistent with NCDOT standards.

- The cycle lengths are a general concern. New traffic forecasts are being prepared that will be used to analyze the entire Patton Avenue corridor. The cycle lengths will be coordinated along the entire corridor. The use of 110 second cycle lengths as proposed may be difficult with an 8-phase signal immediately to the West. The use of half-cycles is acceptable, but would require the 8-phase to go to 220 seconds in this case. A cycle length of 220 seconds exceeds NCDOT recommended maximum cycle length and may result in more substantial queuing along Patton Avenue. This will be further evaluated if the alternative is carried forward for more detailed study.
- Please verify AM volumes are correctly input for Ramp B/Loop B intersection.
- Signalized Analysis: For all other alternatives analyzed, it was assumed the Patton Avenue EB/WB heavy vehicle % per traffic forecast west of I-26 interchange was (6+9)/2=8 thru the interchange.
- Signalized Analysis: Verify heavy vehicle percentages for Regent Park Boulevard.
- Signalized Analysis: Ramp C/D and Patton Avenue intersection NBR is coded with a permitted right turn during phase 7 which is essentially a right turn on red.
- Analysis I-26 and I-240 SB Major Merge: I-240 FFS needs to be verified.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

April 7, 2008

TIP Project: I-2513
Division: 13
County: Buncombe
Description: Asheville - I-240 & New Route from I-26 to US 19-23-70

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gregory J. Thorpe, Ph.D., Environmental Management Director
Project Development and Environmental Analysis
Attention: Vincent J. Rhea, P.E., Consultant Engineer

FROM: Erin M. Hendee, P.E., Plan Review Project Design Engineer
Congestion Management Section

SUBJECT: Review of Capacity Analysis for I-2513

As requested, the Plan Review Group of the Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch has completed a review of the capacity analysis submitted by H.W. Lochner, Inc. Private Engineering Firms (PEF) for the aforementioned project. Based on our review, we have the following comments.

- When submitting the revised capacity analysis, please provide a summary detailing how each of the following comments was addressed.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and Regent Park Road: Based on our findings the northbound right turn volume should be 1,010 not 950 in the AM. Revise and resubmit this analysis.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and Regent Park Road: Based on our findings the westbound right turn volume should be 100 not 40 in the AM. Revise and resubmit this analysis.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and Hazel Mill Road: Based on our findings the northbound right turn volume should be 150 not 80 in the AM. Revise and resubmit this analysis.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and Hazel Mill Road: Based on our findings the northbound right turn volume should be 410 not 250 in the PM. Revise and resubmit this analysis.
- Basic Freeway Segment 1: The PM sheet is labeled as AM.
- Loop B Diverge: Based on our findings the deceleration lane is 2,000 feet not 1,500 feet long.
- Y7 Ramp D Merge: Based on our findings the adjacent ramp is upstream not downstream and is 4,400 feet not 4,000 feet away.

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750 NORTH GREENFIELD PARKWAY
GARNER NC 27529

- Weave 1: Based on our findings the weave length is 1,850 feet not 2,200 feet long.
- Weave 3: Based on our findings the AM sheet is labeled as PM, the non-weaving A-C volume should be 2,316 not 3,476, and the PM sheet is labeled as the AM sheet.
- Major Diverge I-240 WB & US 19-23-70 NB: AM volumes are not included in this analysis. Revise and resubmit this analysis.
- Major Diverge I-26 NB Broadway: Based on our findings the upstream and downstream volumes have been inverted. Upstream volumes should be 4,020 (AM) and 5,270 (PM) and the downstream volumes should be 3,430 (AM) and 4,600 (PM). The number of lanes upstream should be 5 not 3 and the number of lanes downstream should be 3 not 5.

If additional information is required, please contact, Bao Long Le, Plan Review Design Engineer, or me at (919) 773-2800.

EMH/skw

cc: J. J. Swain, Jr., P.E. (Attention: J. M. Teague, P.E.)
S. E. Midkiff, P.E. (Attention: D. G. Weaver, P.E.)
J. A. Bennett, P.E. (Attention: R. D. Allen, P.E., A. J. Moore, P.E.)
J. K. Lacy, P.E., CPM
T. M. Hopkins, P.E. (Attention: A. D. Wyatt, P.E., PTOE, B. K. Mayhew, P.E.)
D. D. Galloway, P.E.
P. L. Alexander, P.E.
C. L. Evans (Attention: E. E. Honeycutt)
J. H. Dunlop, P.E.
R. W. King, P.E.
J. S. Bourne, P.E.
A. R. Cook, P.E.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

April 16, 2008

TIP:	I-2513B
WBS:	34165.1.2
FA Project:	MA-NHF-26-1(53)
County:	Buncombe
Description:	Asheville- New Route from SR North of SR 3548 (Haywood Road) to Existing US 19-23-70

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Mr. Derrick Weaver, PE, PDEA
ATTN:	Vince Rhea, PE, PDEA
FROM:	Steve Kite, PE, Work Zone Traffic Control Project Engineer Ricky Tipton, PE, Division 13 Construction Engineer
SUBJECT:	I-2513B Revised Alternate 4B Constructability Comments

We discussed the constructability issues associated with the revised Alternate 4B design with Mr. Ricky Tipton prior to the meeting held today. As mentioned in the previous memo dated March 5, 2008 and discussed in today's meeting, the current alternative can be built as designed. However, a couple of changes will dramatically reduce the impact to I-26/I-240/Patton Avenue traffic and be potentially less costly.

The first is to consider bridging proposed I-26/I-240 over Patton Avenue. Although, this will generate a change to the vertical alignment, it will eliminate the construction of a 6 lane, on-site detour and approaches. We estimate the on-site detour option is likely to take a year to construct before construction could begin on the proposed Patton Avenue structure and will add both cost and time to the project. While the impact of the on-site detour and associated cross-overs are not readily or easily measured, it is our opinion this pattern has the potential to grid-lock the entire area as well as increase the frequency of crashes.

The option of bridging proposed I-26/I-240 over Patton Avenue all but eliminates the adverse impact to the I-26/I-240/Patton Avenue traffic. Other than installing the girders, which could be done at night and other off peak times, the impacts are minimal. However, we do recognize this option will probably require walls to keep the fill out of the existing roadways, which will add cost to the project.

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1020 BIRCH RIDGE DRIVE
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27610

Another option for consideration is to look at tunneling I-26/I-240 under Patton Avenue. While this is certainly an unusual approach, the existing vertical profile lends itself to be a viable option. Certainly, costs need to evaluated between this option and the one mentioned above, but it would have little impact on the I-26/I-240/Patton Avenue traffic to construct and would be an innovative feature that may enhance the viaduct structure on the northern end of the project. and recommendations.

At the I-26/US 19-23 tie-in, we believe the proposed structure can be built and traffic safely maintained. The Figg engineering group has addressed our previous comments and confirmed proposed interior bents are in locations that don't conflict with the existing traffic patterns. While we're not structural engineers, it appears to us the single Cell Box Beam is likely the best for constructability and maintenance of traffic. Also, we recommend drilled shafts be the preferred method for interior pier construction along I-26/US 19-23 in order to reduce the amount of excavation for footings and reduce/eliminate temporary shoring.

Feel free to forward to all attendees from today's meeting.

cc:
Mr. Ricky Tipton, PE, Division Construction Engineer

General Environmental Review of ADC Alternative 4/16/08

Ken Burleson
TGS Engineers

1. Right of way limits need to be tightened in the Burton Street community to better reflect relocations.

2. The retaining wall to limit impacts at the Worley property will need geotechnical evaluation.

3. Noise impacts to the Montford area are a concern that must be addressed.

COMPARISON TO ALTERNATE B4

1. Historic property impacts will be greater to Freeman property but neither require the house and both are adverse.

2. Historic property impacts will likely be similar to Worley property with both needing wall evaluation to reduce impacts.

3. Community impacts will be similar to the EJ Burton Street community, if the ADC right of way is adjusted.

4. Community impacts of the ADC alternative will be worse to the EJ Westwood community requiring up to 7 more residences.

5. Community impacts of the ADC alternative will be much less to the EJ Bingham Road community avoiding 32 residences including 21 mobile homes.

6. As currently shown, the ADC alternative will require one less church and five less businesses.

7. Noise impacts to the historic Montford area appear to have the potential to be greater with the ADC alternative as it moves traffic closer to the neighborhood.

URS

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Project File (I-26 Connector)

From: Jeff Weisner, AICP

Date: June 23, 2008

RE: ADC Alternative Review Meeting, June 20, 2008, 9:00 A.M.
State Project 34165.1.1 (TIP I-2513)
F.A. Project MA-NHF-26-1(53)
Buncombe County
TIP Project I-2513, Interstate 26 Connector

A meeting was held on Friday, June 20, 2008 in the Board Room at the NCDOT Transportation Building in Raleigh to review the ADC Alternative. Attendees included:

Clarence Coleman, FHWA (Joined at 10:30 A.M.)
Ricky Tipton, PE, PLS, Highway Division 13 (Via Teleconference)
Virginia Mabry, NCDOT Alternative Delivery Unit
Jim Dunlop, PE, NCDOT Congestion Management Section
Erin Hendee, PE, NCDOT Congestion Management Section
Sarah Wicklund, NCDOT Congestion Management Section
Vince Rhea, PE, NCDOT Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
Derrick Weaver, NCDOT Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
Cathy Houser, PE, NCDOT Roadway Design Unit
David Scheffel, NCDOT Roadway Design Unit
Lonnie Brooks, PE, NCDOT Structure Design Unit
Jay Rohleder, Figg Engineering Group
Steve Browde, H. W. Lochner, Inc.
Doug Wheatley, H. W. Lochner, Inc.
Ken Burleson, TGS Engineers
Charlie Flowe, TGS Engineers
Brenda Crumpler, URS
Peter Trencansky, PE, URS
Jeff Weisner, AICP, URS
Chris Werner, PE, URS

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The meeting agenda and attachments (comment letters/memoranda) that were distributed at the meeting are attached and are a part of these minutes.

Following introductions, the meeting got underway with a review of comments that had been submitted from various NCDOT branches, as well as TGS and URS.

Cathy Houser reviewed the Roadway Design Unit's comments and posed several questions.

Jim Dunlop reviewed the Congestion Management Section's comments.

Lonnie Brooks noted that the Structure Design Unit had no comments.

Chris Werner and Peter Trencansky reviewed URS' comments.

Charlie Flowe and Ken Burleson reviewed TGS' comments.

Ricky Tipton spoke to comments for Work Zone Traffic Control and Division 13.

Following review of the comments and discussions about constructability issues of various components of the project, Derrick Weaver said that based on the fact that no fatal flaws had been identified, he felt that NCDOT should move ahead with this alternative. He noted the need for a cost estimate, which could influence the decision. Derrick also noted that the City of Asheville (City) wants to conduct the Public Hearing before the end of August and that it would not be possible to get this alternative to the same level as previously studied alternatives. He said this alternative would be presented as a Corridor Hearing Map/Public Workshop type map. Vince Rhea stated that is important that discussions take place with the City about the design being preliminary and subject to change. Jeff Weisner asked if it will be necessary to have another Public Hearing for the environmental document that will be prepared for the ADC Alternative. Derrick noted the schedule is already blown and there is a need to at least present this alternative to the public at the August Public Hearing, especially since the City and ADC are behind this alternative.

Discussion ensued about transitioning the design work back to NCDOT. Jay Rohleder suggested that it is very important to coordinate closely with the City as this alternative, unlike the previously studied alternatives, has not been introduced to all of the parties at the City such as the Technical Committee. Vince and Derrick noted that it would be important for FIGG/Lochner to help in the transition process. Jeff noted that the alternative still has to go through the NEPA process.

Following discussion between Derrick and Steve, it was decided that the Quantity Estimates would be done by FIGG/Lochner and the Cost Estimates by NCDOT..

At this point (10:30 a.m.), Clarence Coleman arrived. Derrick recapped the meeting discussions for Clarence. Clarence asked what had been decided about this particular alternative. Derrick said that no fatal flaws had been identified and a decision has been made to study the alternative in more detail, noting that a meeting will be scheduled with the City and a cost estimate will be prepared. Clarence concurred that the alternative should be studied in more detail noting that the City has invested money in the development of the alternative. Discussion ensued about the draft document and the timing of the Public Hearing for that document. Clarence indicated that the public should get a strong indication at the August Public Hearing that a supplemental document is being prepared and offered an explanation about the difference in this alternative. He offered another option stating that instead of holding a Public Hearing in August, a newsletter could be developed and sent to the public providing an update on the study and noting that a Public Hearing will be held after the supplemental EIS has been completed. There was some discussion about timelines and Derrick stated that new traffic will be forthcoming in October. He said that all of the alternatives will need to be revamped based on the new traffic data. Clarence noted that as long as NCDOT follows the processes and discloses events to the public, it is okay to delay the document. He also noted that NCDOT should contact the City and if they feel strongly that they want to conduct a Public Hearing prior to the finalization of the EIS for the ADC Alternative, NCDOT should listen to them.

The meeting adjourned at 10:47 A.M.

JCW:bkc

Attachments

Xc: Meeting Attendees
Steve Kite, PE, NCDOT Work Zone Traffic Control Unit

Agenda

ADC Alternative Review
June 20, 2008

Introductions

Discussion of Review comments in the follow order:

- Roadway Design
- TGS Engineers
- URS Engineers
- Structures (if any new comments)
- Congestion Management
- Work Zone Traffic Control
- Division 13

General discussion on the viability of the alternative.

If it is viable, what do we do next?

- Develop rough outline of work to be done and who will do it.
- Discuss the City of Asheville's request for a Public Hearing date in August.
- Develop rough schedule for next phase

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

June 20, 2008

Mr. Brian Eason, PE
H. W. Lochner, Inc.
2840 Plaza Place, Suite 202
Raleigh, NC 27612

SUBJECT: State Project: 34165 (I-2513) Buncombe County
Asheville I-26 from south of the I-26/I-40 interchange to existing US 19-23

Comments on I-2513 Alternate 4B

We have reviewed the revised functional design submittal of June 2, 2008 for I-2513B Alternate 4B. Roadway Design has the following comments:

There may be a signing issue with the multiple lane drops along Westbound Patton Avenue.

There may be a signing issue with no through movement out of Regent's Park. This configuration does not meet driver expectation.

Where is access to the Holiday Inn?

Where is -Y24-? There is a profile but no plan view. Is this a road that was eliminated under this option?

What is the design speed for -Y7RPDB-? It appears there may be a vertical clearance issue along -Y7RPDB-.

Is the existing bridge on Patton over -Y7RPDB going to be maintained or replaced?

Do not break the bridge along 240WB near station 23+00.

Does the weave work on I-26 between -I240WB- and -LPBR-?

This design has 3 instead of 2 lanes on 240WB coming out of town. This requires an extra lane drop on 240WB. Folks in the "slow" lane of 240WB coming from town, will have to merge over twice to get on I-26SB. There is a lane drop along 240WB that may be awkward to the driver due to the sharp curvature.

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Check gore area profiles and vertical clearances.

Comments made on previous review:

The acceleration lane for Ramp D (braided ramp) should be extended to 2000' -2400' before estimates are done.

There may be a hydroplaning issue at the I-240WB/US 19-23 NB split which occurs on a bridge. Need to have hydraulics review that area. Also revise the rollovers in this gore. There is an 08 rollover.

Check the exit for -Y16A- from I-26. The distance to the gore appears too short.

Please remove the PCCs by inserting spirals.

There are several locations where compound spirals are necessary.

Please show the alignment and dashed lane lines for the entire US 19-23 underneath the proposed I-26 bridges.

Sincerely,

Cathy Houser, PE
Roadway Design Project Engineer
CSH/
cc: File

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June 18, 2008

TGS ENGINEERS

Ms. Cathy S. Houser, PE
Project Engineer – Engineering Coordination
NCDOT Roadway Design Unit
1582 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1582

RE: State Project 34165.1.1 (TIP I-2513)
F. A. Project MA-NHF-26-1(53)
Buncombe County
Asheville I-26 Connector
I-2513B ADC Alternative 4B Review

Dear Ms. Houser:

As requested, we have reviewed the latest functional plan submittal by Figg / Lochner for the referenced alternative. Below is a summary of some of the design problems that we found with the functional plans. Many of the comments are redundant from the last review. These comments are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to identify more obvious problems that could change the overall design and footprint of the project. It should be noted that our assessment of insufficient vertical clearances at bridges was based on our estimate of superstructure depths and span lengths and must be verified.

Following is a brief summary of our concerns:

General

- Many, if not most, of the gores do not meeting minimum and maximum elevation criteria. Correcting this will require profile redesign and could cause profiles to violate design criteria.
- Access has been eliminated to the Crowne Plaza Hotel.
- Access has been denied to the remaining buildings along Annie Street (adjacent to –Y7- Ramp C.
- Some of the spirals are somewhat longer than necessary, although not excessively.
- The superelevation transitions shown on the plans and cross-sections are inconsistent from lane to lane and along the alignments. The intent of the design was difficult to follow and therefore difficult to check.

I-26

- Curve at PI Sta. 61+24.19 – Superelevation should be 6% (5% shown).
- Curve at PI Sta. 101+11.49 – Superelevation should be 6%.

- Curve at PI Sta. 109+34.68 – Compound curve with no connecting spiral. The plans show a superelevation transition from 6% to 7%, both curves could be 6%.
- I-26 over –Y7- Ramp DB appears to provide insufficient vertical clearance.
- I-26 NB bridge over –Y16A- appears to provide significantly insufficient vertical clearance.

I-240EB

- I-240EB alignment begins as a compounded curve with the I-26 alignment. A compounding spiral should be used.
- Curves at PI Sta. 12+45.40, 32+25.53, 52+67.00 – Superelevation shown on the cross-sections and the superelevation shown in the shape files do not agree. The superelevation for 52+67.00 could be 5%.
- The profile elevation of I-240EB at station 10+00.00 is incorrect by more than 0.7'. This affects the gore of the major diverge with I-26.

I-240WB

- Lane continuity is an issue. Traffic leaving downtown in the right lane of I-240 WB and remaining on I-240 is forced to move one lane to the left at the lane drop on the bridge over I-26. Traffic leaving downtown in the center lane of I-240 intending to remain on I-240 is forced to move over one lane to the left to avoid exiting at Patton Avenue. Therefore traffic traveling in the right lane in downtown Asheville must move two lanes to the left to remain on I-240.
- Profile tie error at 10+00.00. This affects the gore with I-26.
- The bridge over I-26 appears to provide insufficient vertical clearances.

23NB

- Elevation tie at 10+00.00 has a significant error affecting the gore with I-240 and the US 23 NB elevations through the historic districts.
- Gore at the major diverge with I-240 – Rollover of 8% is unacceptable. Solving this problem will likely increase the footprint of the project and negatively affect the weave area on I-26SB between the I-240WB merge and the Patton Avenue off-ramp.
- The alignment was designed as a ramp rather than as mainline US 19/23. We don't see this as a problem, we did the same thing, this is just pointed out for clarity.

23SB

- This alignment was designed as a ramp, the same as 23SB.

-Y16A- (US 23 SB Lanes)

- A compound curve without a transition spiral was used.
- Spiral is too short for the curve at 24+40.32.
- The exit from I-26 is an angular exit on the outside of a curve. The alignment should begin with a compounding spiral.
- The grade was designed as a ramp for 50 mph.

-Y16B- (US 23 NB Lanes)

- Minor grade tie error at 28+99.51.

-Y7- Ramp DB

- Design speeds vary from 30 mph to 50 mph horizontally. One vertical curve is designed for 30 mph.
- Profile tie error at 10+00, unable to check gore with Patton Avenue.
- It appears that there is insufficient clearance provided at the Patton Avenue (-Y7F-) bridge over Ramp DB.

-Y7 Ramp B

- 25 mph horizontal and vertical design.
- The alignment tie to the mainline should utilize a compound spiral. The current design violates the outside lane width on I-26.
- There is an elevation error at station 15+85.88 (Tie to Ramp DB). With this length of ramp, the gore tie problems and elevation discrepancies may not be readily fixed.
- The acceleration lane merging into Ramp DB is too short for 25 mph merging into 50 mph. Lengthening the acceleration lane will cause problems with the Ramp DB merge into I-26 and consequently the weave at Haywood Avenue.

-Y7- Loop B

- Curve at 27+73.51 is designed for 30 mph.

-Y7- Ramp C

- There is a profile tie error at Patton Avenue.

-Y7- Ramp D

- The curve at 15+84.67 needs to match the 0.06 superelevation required for the I-26 curve.
- The spiral shown for the curve at 26+99.77 is too short for the number of lanes rotated.

-Y7- Ramp D Slip Ramp

- Gore ties do not meet criteria. This may impact the design of this short ramp.

Y25

- The horizontal and vertical alignments were designed for 25 mph. Design criteria for local city streets is generally 35 mph. 10' lanes with curb and gutter were used. This is Hazel Mill Road, which is not a minor local facility.
- There is a grade tie error at Regent Park.

Regent Park

- While improved from the earlier submittal, there are still operational concerns with tying Hazel Mill Road into Regent Park. Queuing needs to be checked to see if the queues from the signal at Patton Avenue block Hazel Mill Road.

-Y7- Loop B / Regent Park Intersection

- Operationally, the intersection is much improved from the earlier submittal. However, the intersection with Patton Avenue will appear to be a major multi-lane intersection to drivers approaching from the Regent Park leg. It will be difficult to adequately sign the one-way / wrong way / do not enter warnings needed to avoid a late-night mistake leading unfamiliar or impaired drivers into wrong-way access onto I-26 SB.

I'll be happy to discuss our findings with you if you so desire. If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss this information further, please call.

Warmest regards,

Charles L. Flowe, PE
TGS Engineers

cc: Mr. J. Kenneth Burleson, PE
Mr. Vince Rhea, PE

Vince:

We have several concerns and most are design detail issues that Charlie will coordinate with Cathy.

The concerns I have noted so far are as follows:

1. US 19-23 NB at the southern end of the Riverside Cemetery appears to be some 25+ feet higher than existing. Difficult to construct while maintaining traffic and staying off Riverside.

2. I see no access provisions for the Crowne Plaza hotel.

3. If I-240 EB is maintained along existing during construction, access to Westgate from I-240EB and Patton EB may not be possible.

4. The I-240 WB lane drops at the Patton exit. Considering the demand of that move that may be OK.

I will be in Asheville tomorrow. You can reach me on my cell if you need me.

Thanks
Ken

----- Original Message -----
From: "Rhea, Vincent J" <vrhea@ncdot.gov>
To: "Ken Burleson" <kburleson@tgsengineers.com>
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 2:22 PM
Subject: ADC Alt Review comments

URS Traffic Capacity Analysis Review
TIP Project I-2513
ADC Alternative 4B
June 16, 2008

General Comments:

- There is a concern with Synchro coding of Patton Avenue and Ramps C/D. Current coding results with the NB ramp C traffic conflicting with the WB right to I-26 SB. Also, the files provided do not utilize origin-destination coding to capture the correct lane utilization. As coded with the conflict, Level of Service is reported better than it would be if the coding were corrected. Once the coding is corrected, this location should be simulated in SimTraffic to determine the effect on upstream intersections, especially the right-in/right-out at Westgate Shopping Center, east of the interchange.
- Signing concern for Regent Park Boulevard Left-turn to I-26 SB movement.

HCS Comments: (note (#) = reference number assigned to analysis for reviewing)

- Basic Freeway Segment Analyses not provided-assumed to be the same as previous submittal.
- I-26 WEAVE -1-NB (#1): please verify heavy vehicle percentages; given this weave analysis has been provided, the major merge (#10) and major diverge (#16) analysis is not required.
- I-26 WEAVE -2- SB (#2): This analysis appears to be the same location as I-26 WEAVE -2- SB PM_I-26-Over (#5)-Please verify which analysis should be used; project description states "I-26 Connector (weave > 2500' see Major Merge Analysis"; however, weave length shown in designs to be approximately 1600'; please verify heavy vehicle percentages; given this weave analysis has been provided and the weave length is approximately 1600', the major merge (#17) and diverge (# 6) analysis is not required.
- I-26SB WEV-PATTON-HAYWOOD (#3): FFS=65mph; analysis should be for a Type A weave; weave length closer to approximately 1500'; AM analysis has PM volumes; PM analysis has AM volumes.
- I-240WB WEAVE-4 AM (#4): FFS=55mph; please verify heavy vehicle percentages; PM BC volume = 220.
- I-26 WEAVE -2- SB PM_I-26-Over (#5): This analysis appears to be the same location as I-26 WEAVE -2- SB (#2)-Please verify which analysis should be used; AM analysis not provided; please verify heavy vehicle percentages.
- LOOP B DIV (#6): Weave analysis (#3) can replace this Diverge analysis.
- Y7RPC DIV (#7): Please verify deceleration length-seems closer to 400'.
- Y7RPD MRG (#8): Mainline FFS=65mph; Please verify acceleration length-seems closer to 1140'; analysis shows adjacent Downstream ramp exists, which should be Upstream (approximately 3850' upstream); Adjacent Downstream Ramp (US 19-23-70 merge with I-26 NB) also exists approximately 4800' downstream-separate analysis should be provided.

- Y7RPDSLIP MRG (#9): Ramp FFS=45mph; acceleration length approximately 1100'; US/DS Ramp analysis not justified for CD Analysis (2-lane facility).
- Major DIV Analysis I-26 NB Broadway (#10): Weave analysis (#1) can replace this Major Diverge analysis; % Heavy Vehicles on Ramp = (4+7)/2=6; Upstream and Downstream terminology reversed; ramp FFS=45mph.
- Major DIV Analysis I-26 SB at HAYWOOD (#11): Weave analysis (#3) can replace this Major Diverge analysis; % Heavy Vehicles on Ramp = (2+6)/2=4; Upstream and Downstream terminology reversed; ramp FFS=45mph; Freeway FFS=65mph; what is shown as Downstream Segment in analysis has an input of 6 lanes versus 5 lanes shown in design.
- Major DIV Analysis I-26NB and I240EB (#13): appears to be the same as Major DIV Analysis I-26NB and I240EB system (#14) minus the information shown in the title block of the input tab; % Heavy Vehicles on Ramp = (6+9)/2=8.
- Major DIV Analysis I-26NB and I240EB system (#14): appears to be the same as Major DIV Analysis I-26NB and I240EB (#13) the information shown in the title block of the input tab; % Heavy Vehicles on Ramp = (6+9)/2=8.
- Major DIV Analysis I-240 WB & US19-23-70 NB (#15): Unable to verify location; therefore, no review possible; appears to be US 19-23-70 NB diverge from I-240 WB; AM volumes not provided in analysis.
- Major MRG Analysis I-26 NB at US19-23-70 (#16): % Heavy Vehicles on US 19-23-70 = (6-10)/2=8.
- Major MRG Analysis I-26 SB at I-240 (#17): Weave Analysis provided (#2 and #5); therefore, major merge analysis not required; I-240 FFS = 55mph;

Synchro Comments:

- Previous review meeting recommended terminating Hazel Mill Road similarly to other Alternatives.
- AM Node 19: EB thru volume should be 1635.
- AM Node 3: WB right volume should be 100.
- Please verify all recommended storage bay lengths match for Design and Synchro. One example that could change the design is for Loop B NB Left: The design shows approximately 450' versus the Synchro coded value of 650'; The lanes are currently developed West of the Loop B bridge over the EB Patton Avenue to SB I-26 Ramp; the values shown in Synchro would require the width of the bridge to be increased.
- For other alternatives Heavy Vehicle % for Patton Avenue interchange area was assumed to be (6+9)/2=8. Intersection #14 NB/SB HV % = (2+1)/2=2.
- Concern over proposed phasing at the Patton Avenue intersection with Ramps C and D: during the NB Ramp C green time, WB to I-26 SB is also coded to be protected at the same time. This coding results with a direct conflict with the NB ramp traffic. Recommend coding this movement similar to the Patton Avenue EB right-turn east of Loop B to Patton Avenue to SB I-26 movement. The origin-destination input should also be utilized to show correct lane utilization.

- In the PM analysis, Ramp C/D intersection with Patton Avenue NBR is coded to have a RTOR, which is not permitted according to NCDOT Congestion Management Capacity Analysis Guidelines.
- Patton Avenue is coded as 45mph; therefore, minimum initials for EB/WB thru should have minimum initial as 12 seconds, with minor movements at 7 seconds. This would then result with the minimum splits for EB/WB thru equal to 12+7=19 seconds, with minor movements at 7+7=14 seconds.
- Please verify all signals include the minimum recommended cycle length per number of phases per signal.
- Concern with amount of queuing in the PM SimTraffic Simulation on Southbound Westgate Shopping Center Traffic.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

June 20, 2008

TIP Project: I-2513
Division: 13
County: Buncombe
Description: Asheville - I-240 & New Route from I-26 to US 19-23-70

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gregory J. Thorpe, Ph.D., Environmental Management Director
Project Development and Environmental Analysis
Attention: Vincent J. Rhea, P.E., Consultant Engineer

FROM: Erin M. Hendee, P.E., Congestion Management Project Design Engineer
Congestion Management Section

SUBJECT: Review of Capacity Analysis for I-2513 ADC Alternative

As requested, the Plan Review Group of the Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch has completed a review of the ADC Alternative capacity analysis submitted by H.W. Lochner, Inc., Private Engineering Firms (PEF), hired by the City of Asheville for the aforementioned project. Based on our review, we have the following comments.

Synchro

- Intersection of Patton and Regent Park (Node 3): Per Congestion Management's capacity analysis guideline, the minimum cycle length for a 4-phase signal is 110 seconds.
- Intersection of Patton and I-240 ramps (Node 7): The northbound right turn should not be permitted during phase 7; this creates a right turn on red scenario. Based on our capacity analysis guidelines, RTOR are not allowed so that a more conservative analysis is generated.
- Intersection of Patton and I-240 ramps (Node 7): There should be a northbound through (combined through and left) with a default volume of 10 cars. This will eliminate the combined phasing of the westbound right turns (phase 8) with the northbound left and right turns (phase 2).
- Intersection of Patton and I-240 ramps (Node 7): To help with congestion on westbound Patton Avenue, use 2 right turn lanes onto I-240 and 2 through lanes. (The existing ramp that will be utilized already has 2 lanes.) We understand this could cause some issues with the two ramps merging before they merge with I-240/I-26.
- Intersection of Patton and Hazel Mill (Node 14): In order to produce optimal analysis at the intersection at the I-240 ramps, please remove this node and use HCS to perform the

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analysis for this intersection. We understand that this will not produce optimal analysis because this intersection has too many lanes per leg.

- Intersection of Patton Avenue and I-26 Loop (Node 19): Based on our findings the eastbound right turn volume should be 560 not 575 in the AM.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and I-26 Loop (Node 19): As previously mentioned, based on our findings the westbound right turn volume should be 100 not 40 in the AM.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and I-26 Loop (Node 19): Based on our findings the eastbound through volume should be 1635 not 1615 in the AM and 1,390 not 1,370 in the PM.
- Intersection of Patton Avenue and I-240 Ramp (Node 7): Based on our findings the westbound right (onto the I-240 ramp) volume should be 820 not 802 in the PM.

<u>HCS</u>

- Y7 Ramp D Merge: As previously mentioned, based on our findings the adjacent ramp is upstream not downstream and is 4,400 feet not 4,000 feet away.
- Weave 1: As previously mentioned, based on our findings the weave length is 1,850 feet not 2,200 feet long.
- Weave 2 PM: Please clarify which analysis should be used, "SB PM" or "SB PM_I-26-Over."
- Weave Patton-Haywood AM: As previously mentioned, based on our findings the AM sheet is labeled as PM, the non-weaving A-C volume should be 2,316 not 3,476 for the AM, and the PM sheet is labeled as the AM sheet.
- Major Diverge I-240 WB & US 19-23-70 NB: As previously mentioned, AM volumes are not included in this analysis.
- Major Diverge I-26 NB Broadway: As previously mentioned, based on our findings the upstream and downstream volumes have been inverted. Upstream volumes should be 4,020 (AM) and 5,270 (PM) and the downstream volumes should be 3,430 (AM) and 4,600 (PM). The number of lanes upstream should be 5 not 3 and the number of lanes downstream should be 3 not 5.
- Major Diverge I-26 SB at Haywood: Based on our findings the upstream and downstream volumes have been inverted. Upstream volumes should be 3,320 (AM) and 5,190 (PM) and the downstream volumes should be 3000 (AM) and 4,750 (PM). The number of lanes upstream should be 6 not 3 and the number of lanes downstream should be 3 not 6.

If additional information is required, please contact, Sarah Wicklund, Congestion Management Design Technician, or me at (919) 773-2800.

EMH/skw

cc: J. J. Swain, Jr., P.E. (Attention: J. M. Teague, P.E.)
S. E. Midkiff, P.E. (Attention: D. G. Weaver, P.E.)
J. A. Bennett, P.E. (Attention: R. D. Allen, P.E., A. J. Moore, P.E.)
J. K. Lacy, P.E., CPM
T. M. Hopkins, P.E. (Attention: A. D. Wyatt, P.E., PTOE, B. K. Mayhew, P.E.)
D. D. Galloway, P.E.
P. L. Alexander, P.E.
C. L. Evans (Attention: E. E. Honeycutt) J. H. Dunlop, P.E.
R. W. King, P.E. J. S. Bourne, P.E. A. R. Cook, P.E.

I-2513 - I-26 Asheville Connector
Sign-In

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Via Phone

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Cyrus Parker	NCDOT Geotechnical Unit
Terry W. Fox	NCDOT Geotechnical Unit
John Pilipchuk	NCDOT Geotechnical Unit
Jay Woolard	NCDOT Work Zone Traffic Control Unit
Lawrence Gettier	NCDOT Work Zone Traffic Control Unit
Carl Barclay	NCDOT Utilities Unit
Betty C. Yancey	NCDOT Right of Way Branch
Donnie Brew	Federal Highway Administration
David Baker	United States Army Corp of Engineers (via teleconference)
Heather Strassberger	French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Ken Burleson	TGS Engineers
Charlie Flowe	TGS Engineers
Jeff Weisner	URS Corporation
Chris Werner	URS Corporation
Peter Trencansky	URS Corporation

An Executive Summary of the main issues concerning the project is as follows:

Executive Summary

- Numerous comments were received supporting Alternative 4B and requesting that NCDOT include it in the Environmental Impact Statement. NCDOT will include Alternative 4B in a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- Comments were received requesting the NCDOT consider an alternative with six lanes in Section A of the project. As shown in the DEIS, a six-lane typical section would not meet the Purpose and Need for the project; therefore is not included as a detailed study alternative.
- Comments were received requesting that the selected alternative for the project separate Interstate traffic from local traffic, especially across the Smoky Park Bridges. NCDOT will continue to evaluate all alternatives included in the DEIS, as well as Alternative 4B, and the separation of local and Interstate traffic will be considered an additional benefit, but will not be a requirement when selecting the preferred alternative.
- Concerns were raised regarding the impacts to residences and business and the effect the project will have on the local economy and tax base. NCDOT will include a more in-depth analysis of the effects on the local economy and the tax base in a future environmental document.
- Comments were received requesting greater emphasis on providing multi-modal amenities such as bicycle, pedestrian and transit solutions. NCDOT will continue to work with the public to provide multi-modal amenities to the greatest extent practical during the final design of the project.

Schedule

Merger 01 Concurrence Point 2/2A Meeting	Fall 2009
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Spring 2010
Corridor Public Hearing Meeting	Spring 2010
Post Public Hearing Meeting	Summer 2010
Concurrence Point 3 (LEDPA) Merger Meeting	Summer 2010
Concurrence Point 4A (Avoidance/Minimization)	Summer 2010
Final Environmental Impact Statement	Early 2011
Record of Decision (ROD)	Summer 2011
Design Public Hearing	Fall 2011

Summary of Comments and Responses

Comments denoted with an asterisk (*) require additional follow-up

Comments Relating to the Purpose and Need for the Project

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that Need for Proposed Action should include: The need to separate interstate and local traffic; the need to minimize impact of the project on existing housing stock; need to align the project with future infrastructure design goals of Western NC communities; and the need to create a safe alternative route to I-40.

Response

Please refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.5.2 of the DEIS where the CCC report and its recommendations are addressed. Many local citizens believe that the separation of local and interstate traffic should be included in the purpose and need. The FHWA and NCDOT considered whether or not to include separation of local and interstate traffic as a need for the project and determined that to do so would limit, or too narrowly define, the range of alternatives that could be evaluated through the NEPA process. The local community has also expressed a desire for the project to address the issue of separating I-240 traffic from Patton Avenue traffic. This issue is addressed the in DEIS and has been considered in the evaluation of alternatives presented in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS. This issue is also addressed in Chapter 8 of the DEIS. While not identified as a specific need for the proposed action, NCDOT, to the extent possible, tries to avoid and minimize impacts to housing stock and business infrastructure. Residential and business relocations are addressed in Section 4.1.1.2 of the DEIS and are considered in the selection of a Preferred Alternative. In the development of project alternatives, NCDOT has considered the design goals of the local community as addressed in Section 2.5.2 of the DEIS. Creating a safe alternative route to I-40 is not an identified need for the proposed action. I-40 is an east-west route while I-26 is a north south route, thus I-26 cannot serve as an alternative route for I-40.

Comment

Janet Barlow, Leah Karpen, Nick Derchak, Julie K. Nicholson, Myra Fuller, Stephen McConnell, Ulana Mellor, Eleanor Johnson, Bryan Rohr, Megan Williams, Amani Duncan, Bess Baird, Joe Minicozzi, Shawn Robins – Received 14 comments voicing support to separate local Patton Avenue traffic from freeway

traffic.

Response

Each of the project alternatives studied in the DEIS would remove I-26 traffic from Patton Avenue, while Alternatives 4 and 4B would remove both I-26 and I-240 traffic from Patton Avenue. The alternatives that remove all interstate traffic from Patton Avenue are seen as providing additional benefits and will be considered along with all other identified effects in determining the Preferred Alternative.

Comment

Richard Laws, Jim Grode – Stated that Alternatives 2 and 3 do not satisfy the stated Purpose and Need for the project as neither one would "increase the remaining useful service of the existing Smoky Park Bridge by substantially reducing the volume of traffic on this vital crossing of the French Broad River," as the Draft EIS calls for.

Response

Comparing the 2030 No build average daily traffic (109,500 as shown on Figure 1-8b of the DEIS) with the 2030 build traffic of Section B Alternative 2 (74,300 as shown on Figure 2-21) and Alternative 3 (72,600 as shown on Figure 2-22) would substantially reduce the average daily traffic on the Smoky Park Bridges by approximately 35,200 and 36,900 vehicles per day, respectively, in the year 2030. This reduction in traffic would support a stated purpose of the proposed action to increase the remaining useful service of the existing Smoky Park Bridges.

Comments Relating to Alternative 4B

Comment

Asheville Design Center, Yuri Koslen, J. Bicking, Connie Bromley, Lillah & Gary Schwartz, Rachel Bliss, Matthew Ryall, David Patterson, Jose Pepi Acebo, Hugh Huntington, Jessica Jacob, Claire Wells, Alison Climo, Mike Vance, Phil Casey, Robert Shepherd, Steve Glosup, Tom Gallaher, Amy McCuin, Clare Hanrahan, Joe Browning, William Chiveis, Myra Fuller, Stephen McConnell, Mark Small, Nancy Ackerman Cole, Susan Daw, Megan Williams, Shirley Schultz, Bob Mellor, Ulana Mellor, Sharon Fahrer, Vic Fahrer, Robert F. Moore, Jean Webb, Florie Rogers, Jim Hefley, Ira Bernstein, Richard T. Hall, Charles W. Davis, Robbie Sweetser, Robert V. McNeill, Lois L. Esposito, James O. Efland, David Pearson, Sage Linden, Janet Barlow, Sharron K. St. John, Hugh Munro, Joe Fioccola, Rod & Bess Baird, Michael N. Lewis, Dan March, Ryan Reardon, Reid Thompson, Lotte Meyerson, Eric Krause, Alesha Reardon, Joan M. Walker, Peter Brezny, Liz Lipski, Lynn Player, Catherine Cope, Reuben E. Moore, Annabeth Schenck, Totsie Marine, Robert Robinson, Winnie Barrett, Kimberly Hodges, Monica Williams, Inge Robert, James Woollcott, Jim Grode, Julie Mayfield, Bruce Emory, Jim Grode – Received 76 comments voicing support for Alternative 4B and requested that NCDOT include it in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Response

NCDOT has accepted Alternative 4B as a viable project alternative which will therefore be evaluated in a supplemental environmental document.

Comment

Grace Harrison, Lew Gelfond & Susan Jensen, Kyle Cogburn, Ric Zeller, Joyce Birkenholz, Robert V. McNeill, Lois L. Esposito, Katherine Rose, Jo Anne Williams, Laurie K. Miller, Jill Tieman, Sage Linden, Marianne Bailey, W.E. Brewer, Edwin Meek, Simon Goldberg, Susan Drakeford, Janice RuBino, David and Carol Swing, Claire Hester, Kathleen Zeren, Ashley Neikirk,) Lloyd Sigman, Virginia Senechal, Jessy Kronenberg, Jim Mulrooney, Reid Thompson, Lotte Meyerson, Eric Krause,

Joan M. Walker, Jonathan Wise, Stephanie Pankiewicz, Cleone Black, Elizabeth Morgan, Gail & Nelson Sobel, James Judd, Joe Masters Emison, James Stone, Charles Meason, Allan Wingfield, Jodi Clere, Digby Groove, Jane Knox, Bette Jackson, Randy Bernard, John & Hazel Robinson, Michael Kohnle, Anne Higgins, Martin Barnes, Phil Schaefer, Dan March, Robert McAfoos, Gerald Green, Daniel Windham, Michael Figura, Samantha Schiffer, Jim Samsel, Peggy Lyle, Carol Stangler, Robert Sauer, Jeffery Hersk, Erin Jasin, Ron & Linda Larsen, Bernadette Wolf, Douglas Campbell, Win Southworth, Stan Cross, Eleanor Johnson, Saundra Cordell, Mary Kathleen Riddle, Williams Megan, Addie Emison, Joe Minocozzi, Ron Ainspan, David Brown, Roger Derrough, Brian Huet, Jim Cavener, Wes Reinhardt (FIRC Group, Inc.), Diedra Case, Mary K. Riddle, Herman Laukford, Jim Grode, Sharron K. St. John, Dan March, Michael N. Lewis, Jim Brown, Wes Reinhardt (FIRC Group, Inc.), Liz Lipski, Catherine Cope, Shirley Schultz, Reuben E. Moore, David Cudlip, Elizabeth Mayes, Wade Saunders, Robert Webb Jr., Oscar Wong, Dr. & Mrs. Michael Justice, James Efland, Kim Granelle, Margaret T. Adams, Julia Williamson, Joe Minicozzi, April Daniel, Brian Burns, Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw, Amina Spengler, Megan Williams, John Webb, David Testa – Received 106 comments that Support Alt 4-B for *one or more* of the following reasons: 1) it separates I-26 traffic from local traffic; 2) it has the smallest footprint (preserves taxable land); 3) the community has shown support for the alternative; 4) because it is better, not bigger; 5) it conforms to the City of Asheville's 2025 Plan; 6) it is cheaper; 7) it uses less bridges; 8) it reconnects Asheville across the river 9) it was developed by engineers who care; 10) it is the smart growth alternative; 11) it is more aesthetically pleasing; 12) it contributes to a more vibrant Asheville; 13) it allows Patton Avenue to be become a gateway to the city; 14) it has less impact on the environment; 15) it has fewer residential and business relocations; 16) it provides more land for urban redevelopment; 17) it increases walking, biking and public transit opportunities; 18) it enhances connectivity on local streets; 19) and it helps to keep Asheville a small town instead of a big city.

Response

NCDOT has accepted Alternative 4B as a viable project alternative which will therefore be evaluated in a supplemental environmental document. Acceptance of the alternative does not preclude it from evaluation per the National Environmental Policy Act nor does it guarantee its selection as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 4B will be evaluated at the same level as the other project alternatives studied in the DEIS.

Comment

Richard Laws, Jim Grode, Jose Pepi Acebo, Laurie Miller - Stated that Alternative 4B still needs further design modifications, in particular, the area where I-26 crosses Patton Avenue should be modified so that I-26 passes under, rather than over Patton Avenue. Also stated that the French Broad River crossing should be redesigned to create a "signature bridge" as suggested by the Asheville Design Center.

Response

The preliminary design of Alternative 4B is based on the design developed by Figg/Lochner under contract to the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. Several modifications were required due to design issues encountered in the more detailed engineering analysis. As this was the plan proposed by the City and County, it was maintained to the greatest extend possible and was seen as the optimal design alternative that was desired for inclusion in the Supplemental DEIS. The design modifications requested seem to be improvements that were likely evaluated in the development of the functional design plans by Figg/Lochner. In an effort to not delay the project, NCDOT did not re-investigate previous design issues as it was assumed that the proposed plan was what was desired by the City and County. Our design consultant is currently checking to see if it is possible for I-26 to go under Patton Ave with alternative 4B. It may be. It is likely however, it would generate the need for additional onsite detours and cause increased difficulty with construction.

Alternative 4B with I-26 going over Patton Avenue will provide more efficient traffic operations on Patton Avenue at the I-26 ramp intersections, improve the weaving operations between Patton Avenue to SB I-26 traffic and the I-26 SB traffic exiting at US 19-23 Business (Haywood Road) and utilize the existing Patton Avenue/I-240 interchange during construction of the I-26 bridge over Patton Avenue.

The development of a "signature bridge" crossing the French Broad River will be coordinated with the Asheville Aesthetics Committee once a preferred alternative has been selected.

Comment

Wes Reinhardt (FIRC Group, Inc.) – Stated that as a representative of the FIRC Group and owner of the Westgate shopping center that he favors Alternative 4B. He stated that Westgate is to be redeveloped and plans are being implemented to build 116 residential units in a 7-story building on the north side of Westgate property.

Response

Comment noted. NCDOT has accepted Alternative 4B as a viable project alternative and it will therefore be evaluated in a supplemental environmental document. Mr. Reinhardt provided NCDOT with a copy of the development plans for this area on March 13, 2009.

Comment

Michelle Pace Wood - Stated that Alternative 4B would be too expensive and that the bridges would be way too high.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

David Patterson – Stated that he was appalled by all of the options after viewing the animations and that Alternative 4B no longer even slightly resembles the original design and intent. Stated that the shear scale and placement of this project is unacceptable and that, he, like many Montford residents, have real concerns about the effect of such a large project on their quiet, historic neighborhood.

Response

The potential affects of Alternative 4B on the Montford neighborhood will be studied in a supplemental environmental document. Potential noise impacts and affects to historic resources will be included in the evaluation of Alternative 4B.

Comment

Jenny & Louis Wilker – Stated that while they like the fact that 4 and 4B separate I-240 from Patton Avenue local traffic they feel that 4B's design puts too much new traffic east of French Broad and at the west side of Montford. Stated they can already hear the trains faintly and US 19/23 traffic in Montford and Alternative 4B's design will disturb the quiet of Montford to a much greater degree. They prefer that the new highway be kept to the west side of French Broad and to keep Montford quiet.

Response

The potential affects of Alternative 4B on the Monteford neighborhood will be studied in a supplemental environmental document. Potential noise impacts will be included in the evaluation of Alternative 4B.

Comment

Leah Karpen – Stated that Alternative 4B looked very complicated and hoped that it could be simplified.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Bret Frk – Stated that as a practicing urban planner/designer in Asheville, resident directly adjacent to the I-26 connector project and board member of the West End Clingman Avenue neighborhood association, that he strongly urges that NCDOT consider "Alternative 4B." Stated that with years of "required" public process and comment, that many times the voices in the community are not heard, falling on deaf ears of a greater process and these voices are sometimes lost to the clamor of prescriptive design standards set forth by conservative design alternatives, and a prescriptive and mandated project timeline. Stated that as it stands today, the project, with the preconceived engineering precedence and conventional engineering solutions, apply a rubber stamp solution to a problem that is more complex than a status quo solution and that the ADC designers, and citizens, have spoken loud and clear that the more intuitive and creative solutions can help lessen the financial, environmental and neighborhood impact of this project. Stated that with clear creativity and massaging of the DOT design standards, a common solution can be achieved with safety, less financial burden, less environmental impact, more pleasing aesthetics, and one which restores the connection to Central and West Asheville. Requested that NCDOT consider a solution that will make a city proud rather than being something which divides a community for generations to come.

Response

NCDOT has accepted Alternative 4B as a viable project alternative which will therefore be evaluated in a supplemental environmental document. Upon selection of the Preferred Alternative NCDOT will further evaluate the designs to determine if avoidance and minimization efforts can be utilized to further reduce the overall footprint and the impacts associated with the project.

Comment

Bruce Emory, Asheville Design Center – Stated that **t**he design of the east side interchange (Alt. 4 & 4B) should be tightened up to save up to five houses in the Hill Street neighborhood and the westbound I-240 lanes could be moved adjacent to the eastbound lanes where both roadways should be narrowed from three lanes to two lanes east of the Patton Avenue ramps. Stated that the westbound on-ramp and eastbound off-ramp could be designed as a typical half-diamond ramp, with right-angle turns where the ramps intersect a cross road that connects to Patton which should allow preservation of the Hill Street neighborhood, as well as providing more land for potential infill development on the north side of Patton Avenue. Also stated that there are other design ideas that they have drawn up that they would like to share with NCDOT as well. and that they understand that there will be more opportunity to work this out as the design moves forward and they look forward to that conversation.

Stated that in Alternative 4B, the west side interchange could be made more efficient by using a diamond ramp arrangement on the west side of I-26 at Patton Avenue, as is done with Alternative 4 and that the weaving problem could be solved by adding a new ramp, for traffic wanting to exit at Patton, from southbound I-26 near Riverside Drive to I-240 westbound near the river crossing; which would have a single right-hand lane to handle all exiting traffic to Patton. The new ramp would take property along Riverside Drive, but this would be offset by smaller right-of-way needs along Patton; also, the Riverside Drive property, which is in the flood plain, will be taken in the future by the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan, which is part of DOT's approved Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Stated that using a diamond ramp layout at Patton could also allow Patton to cross over I-26, as in Alternative 4 which is preferable in terms of urban design, visual impacts, and potential property re-use.

Also stated that in Alternative 4B, the length of elevated structure next to Riverside Cemetery and the Montford neighborhood could possibly be shortened where one option would be to reduce the number of lanes for I-26 to two each way, and eliminate any space between the northbound and southbound roadways. A second option

would be to shift Riverside Drive to the west side of the railroad to create a wider right-of-way for the new highway and allow I-26 to come down to grade further south which would entail taking land in the flood plain that is already programmed for acquisition for the Wilma Dykeman Riverway.

Response

The preliminary design of Alternative 4B is based on the design developed by Figg/Lochner under contract to the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. Several modifications were required due to design issues encountered in the more detailed engineering analysis. As this was the plan proposed by the City and County, it was maintained to the greatest extend possible and was seen as the optimal design alternative that was desired for inclusion in the Supplemental DEIS. The design modifications requested seem to be improvements that were likely evaluated in the development of the functional design plans by Figg/Lochner. In an effort to not delay the project, NCDOT did not re-investigate previous design issues as it was assumed that the proposed plan was what was desired by the City and County. Re-evaluation of alternative design concepts at this point would cause delays to the project in order to fully evaluate these comments. To this end, NCDOT has evaluated the comments at a conceptual level and provides the following responses:

With regard to the design on the east side of the French Broad River, there may be some *limited* potential to tighten up the I-240/Patton Avenue interchange east of the French Broad River during the final design stage of the project. The project terminal location on existing I-240 was selected to keep the project from extending into the series of overlapping interchanges to the east beginning at Montford Avenue. At the tie-in point, existing eastbound and westbound I-240 are not parallel and extending the project westward from that point causes the lanes to bifurcate before they can be brought parallel to one another near Hillcrest. Tightening the interchange in any meaningful way will extend the project eastward, requiring the reconstruction of numerous interchanges along I-240 in downtown Asheville. Considering the cultural and historic issues to be resolved in a reconstruction of I-240 further east toward downtown, this is not a reasonable undertaking for this project. Reducing the lanes on I-240 from 3 to 2 in each direction east of the Patton Avenue exit, when the existing facility immediately east of the project terminus consists of 3 lanes in each direction, is poor design and creates lane continuity and capacity problems for the interstate facility. The concept of a half-diamond interchange at Hill Street was investigated previously. There is insufficient room to provide for queuing between the ramp terminal and Hill Street and the ramp terminal and Patton Avenue. If Hill Street were to be shifted to provide space for queuing and traffic operations, more property impacts would be realized than with the current design.

With regard to the design on the west side of the French Broad River, the ADC proposal to create a connection between I-26 southbound and I-240 westbound on the east side of the French Broad River and use a single diamond ramp exit from I-240 to Patton Avenue carrying all of the exiting traffic from both facilities is an unique concept. There would be no traffic weave, eliminating some of the ramp separation issues and braided ramp requirements of the other alternatives for Section B. There are, however, several problems with the proposal. Some of the more substantial problems are: 1) the traffic exiting from southbound I-26 may cause encroachment problems into Riverside Drive and the railroad or constructability problems for I-26 over US 19-23; 2) the geometry of the exit, along with the distance required to effect the grade change between the two facilities will extend the ramp over the French Broad River requiring an additional bridge and another on-structure ramp merge; 3) this exit would require the relocation of at least three additional businesses along Riverside Drive; and 4) this exit would further encroach on the former landfill east of the French Broad River. Additionally, the introduction of a diamond interchange at Patton Avenue would introduce substantial access problems for existing development and increase the project footprint in the northwest quadrant.

With regard to the length of the elevated structure in the vicinity of Riverside cemetery, six lanes are needed along I-26 to accommodate future traffic demands. In addition, the eventual extension of the I-26 design northward is currently planned in the French Broad River MPO's *Transportation 2030: The Long Range Multi-Modal Plan for Buncombe, Haywood, and Henderson Counties* as a six lane facility. Reducing the number of lanes on I-26 through the elevated section of the facility will create capacity problems on the interstate that will be cost-prohibitive to cure

with a future widening project. Therefore, a four-lane I-26 through the Montford neighborhood is not a feasible option. The second option of relocating Riverside Drive to the west side of the railroad would require the introduction of additional railroad crossings and or grade separations. If the railroad is not relocated, relocating Riverside would require two additional at-grade crossings of the two facilities. This was investigated earlier in the conceptual design of Alternative 1 and found to be resisted strongly by the railroad. Grade separations of the facilities are possible, but very difficult considering the proximity of the two facilities. In addition, grade separations would need to be entirely on structures or would encroach on the existing floodplain and interfere with the redevelopment plans for the area because of the elevation requirements for Riverside Drive. Moving either Riverside Drive or the railroad (or both) westward will also require encroaching into the landfill introducing hazardous material disposal concerns, and increasing the cost of the alternative.

Comment

Western North Carolina Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center – Stated that they urge NCDOT to address in a supplemental Draft EIS the alternative proposed by the Asheville Design Center (ADC) as modified by Figg Engineering and Lochner Engineering during Consultations with the DOT, and make this alternative the Preferred Alternative as this project moves forward.

Stated that the modified ADC alternative now has passed any conceivable test of engineering standards and there can be no question that this alternative is a reasonable alternative that must be addressed in a supplemental Draft EIS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Additionally, both Figg and Lochner considered that the original ADC alternative they presented to the DOT fully met all engineering standards for consideration as an alternative and inclusion in the Draft EIS; however, in an effort to work with DOT, they met multiple times with DOT staff and addressed multiple points the DOT raised, taking the ADC alternative through at least two further iterations to its current modified status. Stated that at this point, DOT representatives committed to Figg and Lochner that the modified ADC alternative, known as Alternative 4B, would be addressed as an alternative in the EIS process, and Board of Transportation member Alan Thornburg made a similar commitment to representatives of the City of Asheville and that if the DOT fails to address this alternative through a supplemental EIS, such action not only would violate NEPA, it would mock the extensive process engaged in by the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and Figg and Lochner and call into question DOT's good faith in engaging in this process.

The Western North Carolina Alliance and the Southern Environmental stated that beyond meeting engineering standards and inclusion in a supplemental Draft EIS, the modified ADC alternative should be chosen as the Preferred Alternative as this alternative has strong support form the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and many members of the public. They further stated that this alternative best meets the goals of the report of the Community Coordination Committee, which was adopted by the City of Asheville and Buncombe County and it is the only alternative that fully meets the Asheville 2025 Thoroughfare Plan. Stated that this alternative will take less land, leaving more land available for development and redevelopment, and will best preserve and augment the tax base of the City and County and it presents the only opportunity to unite all of these entities and the citizens of this region in support of this project design; and the DOT and the FHWA would be foolish not to seize this opportunity to move forward with the modified ADC alternative.

Stated that previous comment letters have included extensive outlines of NEPA requirements for consideration of all reasonable alternatives which the comments will not repeat and that suffice it to say that failure to consider and address the modified ADC alternative in a supplemental EIS, and in the final EIS would be a gross violation of NEPA.

Response

NCDOT has accepted Alternative 4B as a viable project alternative which will be evaluated in a supplemental environmental document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Alternative 4B will be evaluated at the same level as the other project alternatives studied in the DEIS. Selection of Alternative 4B as the Preferred

Alternative (especially prior to full evaluation in a NEPA document) solely on the basis of support from the City of Asheville and many members of the public without considering each alternative's potential effects on the social, physical and natural environments would be a violation of NEPA. The selection of a Preferred Alternative will take into consideration the environmental impacts of each alternative, operation considerations, and input received from the public and regulatory agencies. The Final EIS for the project will address the reasonable project alternatives and will describe the reasons for selection of a yet to be identified Preferred Alternative. It should also be noted that contrary, to the statement that Buncombe County supports Alternative 4B, the County recently passed a resolution in support of Alternative 3.

Comment

Yuri Koslen, J. Bicking, Jessica Jacob, Claire Wells, Alison Climo, Robert V. McNeill, Sage Linden, Reid Thompson, Lotte Meyerson, Eric Krause, Joan M. Walker, Grace Harrison, Lew Gelfond & Susan Jensen, Kyle Cogburn, Ric Zeller, Joyce Birkenholz, Katherine Rose, Laurie K. Miller, Jill Tieman, Marianne Bailey, W.E. Brewer, Edwin Meek, Susan Drakeford, Lotte Meyerson, Cleone Black, Elizabeth Morgan, James Judd, Charles Meason, Gerald Green, Daniel Windham, Michael Figura, Samantha Schiffer, Jim Samsel, Peggy Lyle, Carol Stangler, Erin Jasin, Bernadette Wolf, Douglas Campbell, Win Southworth,) Stan Cross, Kim Granelle – Received 36 comments stating that they feel there are problems with aspects of Alternative 4B; however they urge NCDOT to choose it for the route and then work with their community to resolve aspects that are problematic.

Response

The design of Alternative 4B must be in accordance with AASHTO's *A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System* which states that "The highways of this system (Interstate System) must be designed to ensure safety, permanence, utility, and flexibility to provide for predicted traffic growth." The primary goal for this project is to provide a safe facility that accommodates projected traffic. In the view of NCDOT and FHWA the design criteria for the proposed project is appropriate and any design revisions would need to fulfill the goal of the project. Measures to further integrate the goals and desires of the ADC will be considered further as long as they do not conflict with the requirement of providing a safe facility that accommodates the projected traffic. There may be limited ability to make minor changes to the alternative, however it is not likely, due to the constrained nature of the study area that the design be modified substantially from it current form.

Comments Relating to the Number of Lanes in Section A of the Project

Comment

Yuri Koslen, J. Bicking, Matthew Ryall, Mary Ellen Brown, Hugh Huntington, Jessica Jacob, Claire Wells, Alison Climo, Mike Vance, Leah Karpen, Amy McCuin, Clare Hanrahan, Rhonda Davis, William Chiveis, Megan Williams, Joyce Birkenholz, Katherine Rose, Laurie K. Miller, Jill Tieman, Sage Linden, Janet Barlow, Ryan Reardon, Alesha Reardon, Peter Brezny, Doug Barlow, Totsie Marine, Jason Williams, Kim Granelle, Simon Goldberg, Susan Drakeford, Janice RuBino, David and Carol Swing, Claire Hester, Kathleen Zeren, Ashley Neikirk, Jessy Kronenberg, Wes Reinhardt (FIRC Group, Inc.), Diedra Case, Lu Young, Richard Brown, Margaret T. Adams, Michael McDonough, Connie Bromley, Rachel Bliss, Lara Lustig, Mary K. Riddle, Lillah & Gary Schwartz, Tom Burnet, Lara Lustig, Joe Fioccola – Received 50 comments voicing opposition for the 8-lane cross section through West Asheville included with all previous alternatives.

Response

The typical section for the project was evaluated in Section 2.5.2.2 of the DEIS and shows that no fewer than eight lanes will accommodate the projected future traffic volumes; therefore any typical section with less than eight lanes was not considered a reasonable alternative and was eliminated from further study.

Comment

Asheville Design Center, Bruce Emory, Cleone Black, Elizabeth Morgan, Charles Meason, Donald Barnett, Carol Stangler, Celia Naranjo, Jim Grode, Mary Kathleen Riddle, Amina Spengler, Jeff Huffert, Shawn Robins, Julie Mayfield, Ron Ainspan, David Brown, Roger Derrough, Brian Huet, Donald Barnett – Received 18 comments stating that for Section A, NCDOT has only considered the option of widening the existing road from four lanes to eight. The commentators felt that under NEPA, this is plainly inadequate. Also felt that current traffic projections indicate that traffic loads can be comfortably handled by four lanes throughout the project period and that accordingly, NCDOT must consider alternatives for Section A involving four and six lanes, not just eight lanes.

Response

The typical section for the project was evaluated in Section 2.5.2.2 of the DEIS and shows that no fewer than eight lanes will accommodate the projected future traffic volumes; therefore any typical section with less than eight lanes was not considered a reasonable alternative and was eliminated from further study.

Comment

Kenneth & Una Mullis – Stated that NCDOT should go ahead with the eight lanes of the I-26 connector project because it seems in the long run that it will be the most cost effective way to complete the construction and relieve traffic congestion.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Nick Derchak – Stated that eight-lanes is good.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Margaret T. Adams – Stated that months ago in the Asheville Citizen-Times recommended that I-240 be six lanes with space for two center lanes becoming a median that could be converted, making eight traffic lanes, if ever necessary. She stated that she was pleased to see this reiterated again in the editorial of September 21.

Response

In accordance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System* "Each section of the interstate highway shall be designed to safely and efficiently accommodate the volumes of passenger vehicles, buses, trucks – including tractor-trailer and semi-trailer combinations, and corresponding military equipment estimated for the design year." Therefore, the section of I-240 will be constructed to accommodate the design year volume, which requires the eight-lane typical section.

Comment

Western North Carolina Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center – Stated that for the reasons stated in previous comment letters, the DOT and FHWA are committing an equally gross violation of NEPA in failing to consider alternatives of less than eight travel lanes for Section A of this project. They also state that NEPA requires that, at a minimum, the DOT consider and address alternatives of six travel lanes and six plus auxiliary lanes for Section A.

Response

The typical section for the project was evaluated in Section 2.5.2.2 of the DEIS and shows that no fewer than eight lanes will accommodate the projected future traffic volumes; therefore any typical section with less than eight lanes was not considered a reasonable alternative and was eliminated from further study.

Comment

Amina Spengler – Stated that the reason our state and federal government keeps pushing 8-lanes of traffic is so nuclear waste can be transported to the Savannah River plant. She stated there is a huge plan to take all of the nuclear waste from northeast coming down Highway 81, the Midwest, coming down highway 75, and 26 is a perfect connector to go right down through South Carolina to the processing plant.

Response

The reason that the project is being designed as an eight-lane freeway is in accordance with AASHTO's *A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System* which states that "The highways of this system (Interstate System) must be designed to ensure safety, permanence, utility, and flexibility to provide for predicted traffic growth." The need for eight-lanes is based on meeting the predicted traffic volumes along I-26 in the design year.

Comments Related to the Overall Project

Comment

Michael McDonough – Stated that considering the monetary investment of the action the project should promote the integration of transportation and land use planning.

Response

NCDOT reviewed and considered the project's consistency with local land use plans. The project compatibility with existing land use plans is addressed in Section 4.1.2 of the DEIS.

Comment

Betsey Russell – Stated that she does not support the I-26 connector and that Alternatives 2 and 3 do not take local concerns into account at all. Feels that Alternatives 4 and 4B are slightly better, but feels that 6-lanes would be better than 8.

Response

NCDOT will study Alternative 4B in a supplemental environmental document. As documented in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS, NCDOT considered and evaluated 6-lanes versus 8-lanes.

Comment

Nick Derchak – Recommended that NCDOT minimize the number of bridges.

Response

NCDOT will include the minimum number of bridges necessary for the project. Upon selection of the Preferred Alternative NCDOT will further evaluate the designs to determine if avoidance and minimization efforts can be utilized to further reduce the overall footprint and the impacts associated with the project.

Comment

Vance Reese – Requested that NCDOT make the entrance and exit lanes longer between I-40 and UNC-Asheville.

Response

The designs for all alternatives are being developed based upon current design standards which will provide for increased length to enter and exit the freeway.

Comment

Bruce Emory, Joe Minicozzi – Stated that the project scale and design/construction should match the character of the community. Also requested that NCDOT consider context-sensitive design and that they take advantage of the flexibility by FHWA in developing a "good design that is sensitive to its surrounding environment."

Response

According to the Federal Highway Administration, Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is "a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility." The design criteria for the project was develop in accordance with AASHTO's *A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System* which states that "The highways of this system (Interstate System) must be designed to ensure safety, permanence, utility, and flexibility to provide for predicted traffic growth." The primary requirement for this project is to provide a safe facility that accommodates projected traffic while fitting the context of the existing environment to the greatest extent possible. CSS is a balancing of the prescribed design criteria with the effects on the natural and human environments. NCDOT has strived to provide this balance and in the view of NCDOT and FHWA the design criteria and proposed design alternatives for the proposed project are appropriate and integrate the fundamentals of CSS. Many of the proposed revisions that have been requested would have negative effects on mobility and safety that, in the opinion of NCDOT and FHWA, outweigh the benefits realized from their implementation. FHWA has the final design decision making authority for interstate facilities and any variance from their standards would require their approval.

Comment

Rod & Bess Baird – State that their offices were located in Westgate Shopping Center for many years and that the difficulty of navigation with the current layout is long standing and improvement is needed. Stated that the need for improvement has to be balanced with the need to build community connectivity and that the current highway policies divide the communities they pass through while they connect us to distant places. Stated that the local community cannot be sacrificed for distance travel, particularly as they have to reduce their fuel consumption.

Response

Throughout the project development process project planners and engineers look to identify ways to, at a minimum, maintain community connectivity and, if practicable, provide improved access to community resources.

Comment

Dan March – Stated that he has been a civil engineer for many years and has studied and observed the impacts of interstates that bisect cities. States that Wytheville, Virginia is a good example of what they do not want to happen to Asheville, where I-81 divided the town and encouraged strip development along the exits in town. Stated that the character of the town has been reduced to the lowest common elements of fast food shops, convenience stores, and outlet stores with the older stores, buildings, and areas of Wytheville having been cut off from each other while the center of the city is decaying.

Response

NCDOT recognizes that access to transportation is one of many factors that can influence land use decisions. The potential effects of the project on land use and development are addressed in Section 4.2 of the DEIS. The

City of Asheville is responsible for land use planning within its jurisdiction.

Comment

Scott Miller, Cynthia & Jeff Alleman – Stated that everyone at the public hearing was very helpful.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

David Brown, Roger Derrough – Made a request to evaluate community concerns and perspectives to the highest possible level of decision making in the final design of the connector.

Response

NCDOT has considered community input throughout the project development process and will continue to do so throughout the project development and design process.

Comment

Zac Altheimer – Stated that the arteries and tentacles extending in so many directions reminds him of the highways in Atlanta, but not of larger North Carolina cities such as Charlotte or Greensboro. Feels that it all looks very out of scale for Asheville, as if this highway system should support a city many times larger than ours.

Response

The project is being designed to address projected future traffic capacity needs which include both local and regional growth in traffic. The scale of the project is appropriate to meet future traffic needs and to maintain adequate traffic operations.

Comment

Shirley Shultz – Stated that she would like all of the plans to give access to the River District.

Comment

Response

The proposed action would not adversely affect existing access to the River District. The City of Asheville's current transportation network provides access to the River District. Providing direct access to the River District from the interstate system is not an identified or demonstrated need for or purpose of the project.

Comment

Asheville Design Center – Stated that other major goals in the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) report are: matching the scale of the project to the character of the community; and minimize neighborhood, business, and environmental impacts and that the alternatives as currently designed do not meet these goals. Stated that the alternatives retained for further study should be refined to reflect context-sensitive design principles where the alignment, and especially the interchanges, should fit into the urban framework. Stated that sprawling suburban-type ramps are not appropriate along Patton Avenue and that NCDOT should take advantage of the flexibility that is permitted by FHWA in developing "good design that is sensitive to its surrounding environment" (Flexibility in Highway Design, Federal Highway Administration).

Stated that there appears to be some confusion about the design standards used for the project as The DEIS refers to a 50 mph design speed for the I-240 portion of the project; however, a sheet received from Figg Inc. indicates a design speed of 60 mph for I-240. The ADC requests that NCDOT consider using slower speeds for certain elements of the project, as permitted by FHWA guidelines, in order to reduce the project's footprint in

sensitive areas including the I-240 bridges over the French Broad River in Alternative 4B, and the ramps to and from Patton Avenue in all alternatives.

Response

The *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* includes a discussion of the I-26 Connector project and includes the recommendations from the *Report of the Community Coordinating Committee for the Design of the I-26 Connector through Asheville*. It should also be noted that the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* states that "These goals and strategies typically require separate actions on the part of City Council, City staff, or other boards and agencies; consequently, periodic adjustments to the plan will be necessary to reflect the actual actions that are taken as the goals and strategies are considered, modified, and/or implemented and as circumstances change. To this end, the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* must be considered as a guide for decision-making, rather than the final decision on any particular issue." Therefore the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* is considered a guidance document and consistency with the plan will be evaluated by the project team and taken into consideration when a Preferred Alternative is selected.

The project is being designed to address projected future traffic capacity needs which include both local and regional growth in traffic. The scale of the project is appropriate to meet future traffic needs and to maintain adequate traffic operations. Impacts to neighborhoods, businesses, and the environment are addressed Chapter 4 of the DEIS. Potential impacts of Alternative 4B will be addressed in a supplemental environmental document. NCDOT is familiar with the flexibility in design afforded by FHWA and will work with FHWA to design the proposed action to avoid and minimize impacts to the greatest extent possible. The design speed of 50 mph for the I-240 portion of the project, as stated in the DEIS, is correct. The design of I-240 for Alternative 4B is identical to the design for Alternative 4 which is designed for 50 mph. Therefore, it is unlikely that the design would change from what is currently proposed for either Alternative 4 or 4B.

Comments Denoting a Preference or Aversion to an Alternative (in addition to those comments received on Alternative 4B included previously)

Comment

Buncombe County Board of Commissioners – Provided the minutes from the January 6, 2009 Board of Commissioners Meeting that included a motion to endorse Alternative 3 that was approved.

Response

Comment noted.

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce – Provided a letter stating that the Chamber of Commerce had completed a comprehensive analysis on the four design alternatives including 2, 3, 4, and 4B of Section B of the I-26 Connector project. In its deliberations, the Chamber stated that they dedicated thoughtful consideration to the following criteria in evaluating the design options: 1) Maintain the view-shed along the French Broad River; 2) minimize the impact on the Montford Historic District, the oldest local Historic District in Asheville – particularly related to noise and visual impact to the District and Riverside Cemetery; 3) maintain Westgate Plaza and protection of land value along the west side of the French Broad River; 4) minimize the impact on the developable land along the east side of the French Broad River north of Patton Avenue; 5) maintain the potential of a walkable, pedestrian friendly connection across the French Broad River from east and west; 6) minimize the repetitive local eastbound and westbound travel distance and gasoline consumption; 7) minimize the impact on the east-west skyline with I-26 crossing under Patton Avenue; 8) minimize the environmental impact on the French Broad River and banks of the river; 9) provide future opportunities on the east side of the river to allow for better access to downtown from West Asheville.

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted on November 25, 2008 to recommend the selection of Alternative 3 for Section B in the NCDOT I-26 Connector project. They stated that Alternative 3

meets the requirements of the criteria captured above concerning the quality of life, economic prosperity, protection of the environment, the safety of visitors and local citizens, and the beauty of the Asheville community. The Chamber Board encourages NCDOT to study the existing interchange on the west side of the river for simplification and looks forward to discussing important aesthetics considerations for the project and signature enhancements of the bridges.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Wes Reinhardt (FIRC Group, Inc.) – Stated that he endorses Alternative 4B and opposes Alternative 2.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Michael McDonough – Requests that NCDOT not spend any more time and money looking at Alternatives 2 and 3, because the community will not accept either.

Response

According to the NEPA process, NCDOT is required to consider and evaluate all reasonable alternatives or a reasonable range of alternatives.

Comment

Dennis Hulsing - The owner of Crown Plaza Resort supports a hybrid of Alternative 2 for the following reasons: 1) smaller environmental footprint; 2) less stream impacts (bridges and culverts); 3) shortened project length (miles); 4) fewer interchanges; 5). least amount of tax dollars expended .

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Salvatore M Clarizio Jr, Elizabeth Mayes – Stated that NCDOT should consider reducing focus of study to just Alternatives 4 and 4B.

Response

According to the NEPA process, NCDOT is required to consider and evaluate all reasonable alternatives or a reasonable range of alternatives.

Comment

Scott Shuford, Scott Shuford – Stated that Alternative 4 is better than 4B for the following reasons: 1) private land acquisition is essentially the same for both; 2) community impact is lesser for 4; and 3) Alternative 4 costs less than 4B; 4) Alternative 4B creates an increase visual barrier between portions of Montford and Riverside Cemetery and the French Broad River; 5) Alternative 4B enhances interstate noise potential in the Montford and Riverside Cemetery areas; 6) Alternative 4B creates greater effects on the Hillcrest and Montford neighborhoods; 7) the noise and visual impact of 4B will be greater west of the French Broad River due to Patton Avenue crossing over the interstate; 7) that despite general community desire to separate local and interstate traffic where possible, 4B continues the mixture of 19-23 and I-26 traffic for a significantly longer stretch than Alternative 4,

creating greater noise and visual impacts on sensitive neighborhoods east of the French Broad River; 8) Alternative 4B imposes a visual barrier that effectively transforms historic Riverside Cemetery into "Roadside Cemetery"; 9) Alternative 4B creates a significantly more "structured" approach to the roadway design than Alternative 4; which seems at odds with an oft-stated community desire to have roadways blend into the natural topography and environment to the degree possible and to not create "Atlanta-like" interstate designs and that it is almost as though the ADC design was fabricated solely to create a "signature bridge" opportunity in a location visible from the Smoky Park bridges; the biggest problem is that such a bridge would, due to its scale, overwhelm its surroundings. Mr. Shuford also stated that it seems abundantly clear that Alternative 4B suffers greatly in comparison with Alternative 4 despite the significant community support continues for 4B, which is largely due to its continued promotion by the ADC.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Rachel Bliss, Michelle Pace Wood, Andrew Holcombe, Phil Casey – Stated that they think it is necessary regarding Sections A and C that they take the plan that will cost the least, acquire the least amount of private property, and have the least impact on the environment. Stated that this would mean that Section C, F1 would be the best option and that they were sorry that there are no more than one option for Section A.

Response

According to the NEPA process, NCDOT is required to consider and evaluate all reasonable alternatives or a reasonable range of alternatives. Given the location of Section A, alternatives other than improve existing would have additional impacts to the neighborhoods east and west of I-240 within this vicinity. Regarding Section C alternatives, the selection of the Preferred Alternative for each section will be based upon a full evaluation/comparison of all alternative impacts and will include a review of agency and public comments summary.

Comment

Mary Ellen Brown, Laura Casey – Stated that they support Alternative 4 and 4B because they have been developed by the Asheville community.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Lu Young – Requested that NCDOT approve a plan that makes Patton Avenue and the Smokey Park Bridge a city way and not a part of I-240, either Alternative 4 or 4B.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Thomas Humphrey – Stated that he has a slight preference for Alt 4 over Alt 4B, although it would involve more land it does not have the double-decker roadway.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Ann Hartline – Stated that she thinks Section B Alternative 3 looks good because it avoids multiple bridge building. Also stated that it has one of the highest residential and business relocations and inquired if there is any way to re-examine that impact. Stated that if this is an impact of major multiple bridge building then they may have to look at losing more houses/businesses.

Response

Upon selection of the Preferred Alternative, slight modifications to the design may be made in an attempt to avoid or minimize impacts resulting from the construction of the project.

Comment

Andrew Holcombe – Stated that he would support Alt 2 or 3 for Section B.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Pete Hildebrand, Cecil C. Beumer – Stated that they support Alternative 2 for Section B.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Bruce Emory - Voiced support for Section C alternative F1 because it is a fully functional layout and is much less costly than the other alternatives.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Bob Mellor - Voiced support for Section C alternative C2.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Sharon Fahrer, Vic Fahrer – Stated that they prefer Alternative F1 at location C and with the money that is saved, NCDOT can use it for Alternative 4B.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Joe Fioccola – Stated that for Section C, Alternative A2 is too big, but Alternative C-4 is a good and efficient design (with a half Cloverleaf). Also stated that a full cloverleaf should also be considered and that all full access interchanges should be standardized merges from the right lane and weaves should be minimized.

Response

All interchange configurations were developed based upon existing/future capacity demands as well as design limitations and constraints. Of the current alternatatives being considered, there is no Section C Alternative C-4; according to Mr. Fioccola's description of the alternative as "half cloverleaf," it appears Mr. Fioccola may be referring to Alternative C-2.

Comment

Margaret Penland – Stated that she would prefer the (Section B) Alternative 2, even though it means they would have to move, and that the newest Alternatives 4 and 4B will just surround them with a lot of noise. Ms. Penland stated that Alternative 4B would take a part of their lower pasture and a building with the I-240 ramp being close to house #225. She is concerned about what this will do for them and whether they will be able to sell. Ms. Penland also suggested NCDOT make the decision regarding what is best for traffic flow through the state.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Amani Duncan – Stated that she would be concerned if the alternative that brings more traffic onto Hazel Mill Road and therefore Westwood Place is chosen.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Wes Reinhardt (FIRC Group, Inc.) – Stated that Alternative 2 fails to address the transportation requirements of their area and would have the greatest impact on small business owners. Stated that the West Gate Shopping Center has been a community epicenter, regional landmark and business incubator for 50+ years and will undergo a major redevelopment in 2008/2009 that will transform it into a modern lifestyle center. Furthermore, this mixed-used project is being developed with sensitivity to community and environment with new retail, office and residential components that will have long-term positive economic impacts on our region.

Response

All alternatives carried to this point have been deemed reasonable alternatives regarding the purpose and need for the project. Additionally, the selection of the Preferred Alternative for each section will be based upon a full evaluation/comparison of all alternative impacts which will include impacted businesses. If these plans have been approved by the city, NCDOT should seek to obtain a copy.

Comment

Bryan Rohr – Stated that he supports the plans to keep Westgate shopping mall as it is; a strong community resource and a vibrant link between the City of Asheville (downtown) and west of Asheville.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Joe Fioccola – Stated that Alternatives 2 and 3 do not work to reduce traffic on the Smoky Park Bridges and for that reason should be eliminated from consideration.

Response

All alternatives carried to this point have been deemed reasonable alternatives regarding the purpose and need for the project.

Comment

Asheville Design Center – Stated that it is very important that the Preferred Alternative meet the goals of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) report and the City of Asheville's 2025 Plan which call for separation of local and interstate traffic on the Smoky Park Bridge and that since Alternatives 2 and 3 do not meet the adopted City goals, we recommend that they be eliminated from further consideration.

Response

The *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* includes a discussion of the I-26 Connector project and includes the recommendations from the *Report of the Community Coordinating Committee for the Design of the I-26 Connector through Asheville*. The separation of local and interstate traffic is not included in the list of recommendations included in the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* section discussing the I-26 Connector Project, but is mentioned as strategy to improve and strengthen connections between downtown and surrounding areas. It should also be noted that the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* states that "These goals and strategies typically require separate actions on the part of City Council, City staff, or other boards and agencies; consequently, periodic adjustments to the plan will be necessary to reflect the actual actions that are taken as the goals and strategies are considered, modified, and/or implemented and as circumstances change. To this end, the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* must be considered as a guide for decision-making, rather than the final decision on any particular issue." Therefore the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* is considered a guidance document and consistency with the plan will be evaluated by the project team and taken into consideration when a Preferred Alternative is selected.

Comment

Fredilyn Sison, Karen L. Kellow, David McConville, David Pearson – Received 4 comments stating that Alternatives 2 and 3 do not meet the goals developed through community consensus, so they should not be considered further.

Response

Comment noted. All alternatives carried to this point have been deemed reasonable alternatives regarding the purpose and need for the project.

Comment

Shawn Robins – Stated that Alternatives 2 and 3 are cheaper because they do not address any of the problems on the east side of the bridge and that they simply leave them with the same mess that they have now.

Response

Comment noted. All alternatives carried to this point have been deemed reasonable alternatives regarding the purpose and need for the project.

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that for Section C they prefer alternative F-1 which is the best due to its simplicity and the fact that it consumes less of the landscape. Stated that for Section B: Alternatives 1 and 2 are terrible ideas and that NCDOT should not consider any option that destroys Westgate Shopping Plaza; Alternative 3 does not separate local and Interstate traffic and therefore should be rejected; Alternative 4 is only one of the state's designs which they think is OK because it destroys less houses and disconnects the freeway from Patton Ave and allows reconnection of Westgate and Hillcrest to the city in ways that are bicycle and pedestrian friendly; Alternative 5 and the UEBP Alternative should not be considered because they do not

support the goals of walkability or bikeability in and out to Hillcrest and Westgate and would further separate the Hillcrest community from the city by the addition of additional bridge structures in that area; the ADC Alternative is the best design from their point of view and as opposed to the states Alternative 4, it creates only one new bridge across the river, minimized the new roadway footprint and separates local and interstate traffic.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to Project Development Process

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency - The EPA notes that as soon as NCDOT completes its traffic analysis, the alternative proposed by the Asheville Design Center needs to be formally presented to the Merger 01 team for potential consideration.

Response

The alternative proposed by the Asheville Design Center, now known as Alternative 4B, will be presented to the Merger 01 team once the preliminary design and updated traffic capacity analysis are completed.

Comment

City of Asheville – Stated that the document doesn't fully address the alternative endorsed by the Asheville Design Center (ADC) and that while it is mentioned in several sections of the document, the messages seem to contradict one another and are somewhat confusing. The City of Asheville requests an opportunity to comment on all of the option after the endorsed ADC alternative is added to the document.

Response

The ADC Alternative (Alternative 4B) will be included in a future environmental document and the City of Asheville will have the opportunity to provide comments during the comment period prescribed by NEPA.

Comment

Fredilyn Sison, Karen L. Kellow, David McConville – Stated that this is a huge community redevlopment project and should be planned by a multidisciplinary team of urban planners, landscape architects, architects and including local planning teams.

Response

The project has been developed by a multi-disciplinary team of engineers, planners and environmental scientists, as well as through coordination with numerous regulatory agencies as a part of the Merger 01 process. Additionally, through public involvement opportunities, all comments received are considered and play a vital role in guiding and shaping the outcome of the project.

Comment

David Cudlip – Recommended that NCDOT do a random sample of the users (their customers) and see what they would like. Or, at the least, do a cost-benefit analysis and publish the results in a full-pager in the Citizen-Times. He felt that there should be a true airing among the parties-at-interest, ventilating the pros and cons.

Response

The public involvement process has been structured such that all interested parties are able to provide comments and state a preference for what they would like, with this summary serving as the documentation of the process.

Comment

Robert Webb Jr. – Questioned why there is only one alternative for Section A and felt there should be at least two.

Response

As stated in DEIS, Section A is a best-fit design for the widening and reconstruction of I-240. Having a single best-fit design that minimizes impacts to the human and natural environments is typical for widening and reconstruction projects.

Comment

Michael McDonough - Requested NCDOT to retool the project design team to include other design professionals that are committed to addressing design issues other than highway design. Also requested that NCDOT consider slower design speeds on I-240 to allow better ramps (gateways) and tighter footprints, land planning principles, etc. Also stated that with the modifications by NCDOT and Figg/Lochner, the promising concept of the original ADC Alternative was degraded and now seems no better than Alternative 4. Stated that the work of NCDOT and Figg/Lochner in the winter and spring of 2008 certainly addressed highway engineering concerns, but also completely failed to integrate all the other design issues the ADC highlighted and promoted to the community.

Response

The project has been developed by a multi-disciplinary team of engineers, planners and environmental scientists, as well as through coordination with numerous regulatory agencies as a part of the Merger 01 process. Additionally, through public involvement opportunities, all comments received are considered and play a vital role in guiding and shaping the outcome of the project.

In accordance with AASHTO's *A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System* "The highways of this system (Interstate System) must be designed to ensure safety, permanence, utility, and flexibility to provide for predicted traffic growth." The primary requirement for this project is to provide a safe facility that accommodates projected traffic and in the view of NCDOT and FHWA the design criteria for the proposed project is appropriate and the design revisions required were necessary in order to fulfill the goal of the project. Measures to further integrate the goals and desires of the ADC will be considered further as long as they do not conflict with the goal of providing a safe facility that accommodates the projected traffic.

Comment

Betsey Russell – Stated that she is alarmed to see the public housing complex, Hillcrest, completely surrounded by interstate highways and she agrees with her neighbors that a project of this size must include a more thorough review and planning process, with local urban planners, architects, landscape designers, etc. as part of the team working with DOT. Stated that the impact of what DOT currently proposes is too much for their city and the surrounding neighborhoods and it would be more appropriate for a larger metro area like Raleigh, Charlotte, or maybe Atlanta.

Response

The project has varying levels of effect on the Hillcrest housing complex, including alternatives (Alternative 4 and 4B) that provide improved access and connectivity that allow the complex to be less isolated than it currently is. Additionally, Alternatives 2 and 3 do not include any construction in the vicinity of the Hillcrest housing complex and will not change the existing environment in any appreciable manner.

Comment

Nick Derchak Stated that there were too many alternatives.

Response

In accordance with NEPA regulations "the Draft EIS must discuss a range of alternatives, including all "reasonable alternatives" under consideration and those "other alternatives" which were eliminated from further study." The Draft EIS Alternatives, as well as Alternative 4B, constitute a range of alternatives which are considered reasonable and are appropriate to carry through the NEPA process.

Comment

Asheville Design Center - ADC would like to urge NCDOT to engage again in the public process. Stated that the City of Asheville's Technical Review Committee must be provided an opportunity to review and comment on NCDOT's alterations to the 4B Alternative, as should the Asheville Design Center. Stated that NCDOT's revised Alternative 4B should be presented to the Asheville City Council and the Buncombe County Commissioners as soon as possible to ensure that the alternative considered by NCDOT in its environmental review process is consistent with the intentions of the community.

Response

Copies of the preliminary design plans developed for Alternative 4B by NCDOT have been sent to the City of Asheville for distribution to Buncombe County and the ADC, as a means of soliciting input on the proposed design.

Comment

Michael McDonough – Stated that collaboration has been reluctant and poorly executed and that NCDOT has not facilitated a process or proposed an alternative that promotes consensus. Stated that design decision-making authority has not been offered to local or regional design agencies.

Response

Copies of the preliminary design plans developed for Alternative 4B by NCDOT have been sent to the City of Asheville for distribution to Buncombe County and the ADC, as a means of soliciting input on the proposed design. The next step is to receive comments from the City, County and ADC on the design of Alternative 4B. The Merger 01 project team includes a representative from the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization who serves as voice for the local agencies. While comments relating to design elements are encouraged from local agencies, final design decision-making authority for interstate facilities is held solely by the Federal Highway Administration and will not be delegated to local agencies.

Comment

Megan Williams & Andrew Euston – Stated that Mr. Euston, as an author in 1967 of the original preamble language of the "National Environmental Policy Act of 1969" – its Section 102(2) (A) mandates an interdisciplinary approach to all federally-aided environmental design. They fear that failure to address the transportation facility fundamentals of urban environmental design by a full separation of local and interstate traffic and by the freeing up of the Patton Avenue crossing over the French Broad River gorge only invites, in the final instance, the dreaded prospect of court suits and delays of the regions needed connector.

Response

The project has been developed by a multi-disciplinary team of engineers, planners and environmental scientists, as well as through coordination with numerous regulatory agencies as a part of the Merger 01 process. The National Environmental Policy Act requires all "reasonable alternatives" that meet the purpose and need for the proposed project be evaluated; however NEPA does not require a "full separation of local and interstate traffic"

as it is not included as part of the purpose and need for the project.

Comments Relating to Interchange Locations and Designs

Comment

Amani Lyn Duncan - Voiced opposition to having an interchange at Westwood Place or Hazelwood Drive.

Response

The designs presented to the public showed modifications (with similar traffic patterns) to the existing Hazel Mill Road access to I-240 and Patton Avenue, and none of the alternatives propose an interchange at Westwood Place.

Comment

Joe Fioccola – Stated that the fix to the Hanover St. ramp was a good improvement and that the design reconnecting Amboy Road to Fairfax/Virginia/Brevard was excellent.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Janet Barlow - Voiced support for connecting Amboy Road to Brevard Road without having to get on the expressway.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Tom Burnet, Mike Vance – Requested that NCDOT change Amboy extension to 2 lanes for traffic with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Response

The Amboy Road redesign was developed to accommodate future NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project U-4739, which will widen Amboy Road/Meadow Road to a multilane facility from I-240 to US 25. Additionally, improvements to Amboy Road/Meadow Road are consistent with the French Broad River MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The Amboy Road improvements have been designed to provide 5-foot bike lane in both directions, with 10-foot berms to accommodate pedestrians. At this time, NCDOT has not had a request from the City to provide sidewalks in this location, if a sidewalk were to be requested it would be coordinated based on the NCDOT Pedestrian Policy Guidelines.

Comment

Keith Levi – Stated that he is concerned about the ease of accessing Amboy Road from the proposed Virginia Avenue interchange. He stated that he was told this was proposed to be a right turn only intersection and wanted to know how cars will access Amboy eastbound from Virginia Avenue.

Response

The connection of Virginia Avenue to the extended Amboy Road was included in the design at the request of the City of Asheville to improve connectivity in this area. The spacing requirement for a median opening does not meet current NCDOT policy. Traffic would access Amboy eastbound via other streets in the area. The location of additional access points and median breaks may be evaluated in greater detail once a preferred alternative is selected and the project moves forward into the final design phase.

Comment

Jolene Earnhardt – Stated that she did not understand the impact of extending the Amboy Road extension and questioned why the project would ruin a beautiful city park by adding high volume traffic lanes in an area that children, couples, dogs, and citizens utilize daily and nightly. Requested that the design consider the pedestrian safety when expanding Amboy Road.

Response

According to the DEIS, impacts to Carrier Park would be considered minor and would consist of purchasing right of way from an area which is currently used as Amboy Road frontage parking for the park. According to City of Asheville Park and Recreation officials, future plans for the park call for removal of this parking, given the city has created additional parking areas within the park. The Amboy Road improvements have been designed to provide 5-foot bike lane in both directions, with 10-foot berms to accommodate pedestrians.

Comment

Jeffrey Lawson – Would like to request that Virginia Avenue be blocked at Amboy Road rather than intersect at westbound Amboy Road because the street is already busy and opening the south end of Virginia Avenue would increase dangerous and fast traffic flow. Also stated that the present plan would cost the City of Asheville money to put speed abatement on Virginia Avenue, or else the City risks seeing more accidents on a narrow residential street.

Response

The connection of Virginia Avenue to the extended Amboy Road was included in the design at the request of the City of Asheville to improve connectivity in this area.

Comment

Brett McCall – Stated that Craven Street is not a satisfactory option.

Response

Currently the designs do not show any improvements to Craven Street. The designs presented to the public showed modifications (with similar traffic patterns) to the existing Hazel Mill Road access to I-240 and Patton Avenue, with no interchange proposed at Westwood Place.

Comment

Claudia Nix - Would like to suggest that in Section C when NCDOT puts in the divider on Brevard Road near Hominy Creek Bridge that a space across from the Hominy Road access be included so bicycles traveling toward Haywood Road would have protection while waiting for clearance to make the left turn onto the Hominy Park access.

Response

Comment noted. The connections to greenways and pedestrian facilities is an element that will be studied in greater detail once a preferred alternative is selected and will likely occur during the development of the final design plans.

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that for Section A there is not very much traffic that gets on and off of the freeway at Amboy Road and that this is not a movement that is very important to preserve. Stated that the current design reconnects Amboy Road access to the freeway and down to Brevard Rd and this preserves and enhances the movement from Amboy to Brevard Rd., but with unnecessarily large roadways, a two lane road is

more than adequate to carry the minimal amount of traffic which this road gets. Also felt that a two lane bridge with shoulders should be wide enough for Amboy to cross the freeway and that a six lane bridge seems to be way more than is necessary.

Response

The connection of Virginia Avenue to the extended Amboy Road was included in the design at the request of the City of Asheville to improve connectivity in this area. The Amboy Road redesign was developed to accommodate future NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project U-4739, which will widen Amboy Road/Meadow Road to a multilane facility from I-240 to US 25. Additionally, improvements to Amboy Road/Meadow Road are consistent with the French Broad River MPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Comment

Joe Fioccola – Stated that for Section B Alternative 4 that it would be better if the two new bridges for I-240 traffic were just one bridge double decked instead of going through Appalachian Stove at 329 Emma Street and that it makes good sense that double and even triple decking bridges will have a smaller environmental and stream impact.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to Property Impacts and Right-of-way Acquisition

Comment

Christopher F. Gilbert – Wanted to know if any of the proposed I-26 renovation plans have the potential to impact the properties located at 231 Haywood Street in Asheville North Carolina.

Response

Response provided by Drew Joyner of NCDOT via e-mail on 9/4/08 stating that -"None of the project alternatives directly impact the properties."

Comment

Andrew Holcombe – Stated that it should be very important for homeowners to receive fair market value for their homes.

Response

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act, fair market values are used in the purchasing or acquisition of property.

Comment

Dennis Hulsing (Hulsing Hotels, Inc.) – Stated that he owns the properties located at 1 Resort Drive, The Landing Strip, and also holds a 99-year lease with a 99-year option to renew on the property adjacent to 1 Resort Drive known as "Cooper." Mr. Hulsing stated that he has invested millions of dollars in the new construction and renovation of several projects and all of the construction is almost complete and both Asheville's industry and local communities will benefit from these new facilities. He would like to reiterate his concerns of losing the Crowne Plaza Resort's beautiful views of downtown and the use of the new facilities.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Larry Brookshire (B&B Pharmacy) – Stated that the proposed project would have a substantial negative effect on his business, B&B Pharmacy, and that he hoped that the design could be modified to provide direct access to the parking lot behind his business. He also felt that the impact would be to the entire community as they are the last full service pharmacy in Asheville.

Response

The rear parking lot at the B&B Pharmacy on Haywood Road will have access via Hanover Street. The proximity of B&B Pharmacy building to the proposed exit to Haywood Road does not allow access to the rear parking lot from the western side of the building. Access to this parking lot directly from Haywood Road could be provided east of the building but would require agreement from the adjacent property owner. This can be considered during the preparation of final design plans.

Comment

Lael Gray – Inquired what the impact on the residents of Westover and Hibrighton in the Montford Community in Asheville would be, and how would they be protected or compensated.

Response

Response provided by Drew Joyner of NCDOT via e-mail on 10/16/08 stating that "It appears that none of the alternatives in Section B impact you or your neighborhood. As such, there will be no right-of-way claim, or compensation for any losses, with you or your neighbors as part of this project." There currently are no direct impacts to the neighborhood; however this evaluation does not include a detailed analysis of Alternative 4B which will be included in the Supplemental DEIS. The Supplemental DEIS will alos evaluate indirect impacts to the property such as noise and visual effects.

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that in the DEIS, unless there is a plan to relocate structures, the word "Relocation" should be changed or the labels should include the word "Demolitions" or some similar correctly descriptive word, in order that these labels be factual. The number of properties and associated acreage which will be taken by the government for this project from other entities, both private and public should be included in the EIS as a table. Also the impact of land takings and structure demolitions should be explicitly stated and elucidated.

Response

Comments noted. Per the Uniform Relocation Act, the term "relocation" is commonly used when describing permanent relocation of a tenant as a result of an acquisition of real property, in this case associated with the construction of a project.

Comment

***Revonda Ball** – Stated that her and her parents live at the end of Westwood Place (Parcel #'s 267 & 269) and despite attending the meetings they are still in the dark as to whether the project is going to take their homes or not. They would like to know how the project will affect them.

Response

The properties located at 267 and 279 Westwood Place are located outside of the project corridor study area and will not be directly impacted by this project. Drew Joyner (NCDOT) discussed this with Ms. Ball in a telephone call.

Comment

Joe Fioccola – Stated that excess right-of-way should be returned to the community for redevelopment or park uses.

Response

The re-use of current right-of-way is not determined until after a project is completed and would need to be conducted in accordance with the NCDOT Right of Way Disposal and Control of Access Committees Operating Procedures as detailed at:
http://www.ncdot.org/doh/PRECONSTRUCT/traffic/teppl/Topics/A-02/A-02_op.pdf
Additionally, because this is an Interstate project, approval from FHWA may also be required if federal funds were utilized in the purchase of the original right-of-way. Numerous additional issues could still exist that may be problematic for redevelopment of the reverted property, especially due to the utilities and associated easements remaining in place once the property is transferred if they are not required to be relocated as part of the construction of the project.

Comments Relating to Project Cost

Comment

Joe Minicozzi – Stated that the ADC had community presentations upcoming on design work between Hillcrest/River area and Downtown. Requested additional information, mostly pertaining to cost, including: 1) digital copy of 15-page handout from 9/16/08 meeting, 2) List of quanitities that were used to create the Construction Cost for each Alternative; 3) List of unit prices used to create the Construction Cost for each Alternative, 4) The total number of acres of right-of-way estimated for the ROW cost estimate for each Alternative in Section B. Also provided notice that ADC is meeting with appraiser to discuss real estate costing and valuation used in the land data.

Response

The information requested was provided by Rick Tipton, NCDOT Division 13 Construction Engineer via e-mail on 10/10/2008. Mr Minicozzi and Mr. Tipton have discussed meeting the appraiser, but at this point no meeting has been scheduled.

Comment

Tracy Porshia – Stated that Alternative 4B must cost so much more than the other alternates and inquired if the Design Center was going off of NCDOT numbers or if they were creatively undercosting the Alternative to get things their way.

Response

Prior to NCDOT accepting Alternative 4B as a detailed study alternative, the Asheville Design Center stated that the cost would be less than Alternative 4. Cost estimates developed by NCDOT using the same methodology for alternatives now show that Alternative 4B will have a total construction cost of $365 million, compared with construction costs for Alternative 2 ($157 million), Alternative 3 ($197 million) and Alternative 4 ($308 million).

Comment

Jolene Earnhardt – Requested that NCDOT re-use/move/relocate all the new plantings installed summer 2008 in the I-26 north area between Amboy Road and Brevard Road and that if not done it would be a grave waste of taxpayer money and time, not to mention against the community spirit of Asheville's reduce, reuse, recycle spirit.

Response

Comment noted. Detail related to landscaping and the re-use of existing materials will be coordinated further as final design plans are developed.

Comment

Asheville Design Center – Stated that they question the cost estimates for Alternative 4B that were presented at the September public hearing with the table that shows almost identical right-of-way costs for Alternatives 4 and 4B despite the north end of Alternative 4 taking a large swath of land west of the river and north of Emma Road that is not touched by Alternative 4B, which uses existing DOT right-of-way for its northern section. Stated that they also believe that the design refinements requested could result in significantly lower costs for both construction and right-of-way and they are open to continuing their conversation with Asheville representatives from NCDOT on this, and that they can share their information on property if it will help the conversation.

Response

The right-of-way costs presented at the September public hearing were based on the functional design plans (which did not include right-of-way lines) for Alternative 4B and required some substantial assumptions. The right-of-way costs will be updated based on the approved preliminary design plans and included in future environmental documents. It should be noted that the right-of-way costs are a combination of the costs to acquire the right-of-way for the project and the cost of relocating utilities that will be affected by the proposed project. Due to the extent of construction and age of many of the utilities it was assumed that all alternatives in Section B would likely incur the same utility cost of $37 million.

Comments Relating to Project Schedule

Comments

Michelle Pace Wood, Margaret Penland, Josh Hallinger, Joe Browning, Tracy Porshia, M.C. Williams – Requested that NCDOT move this project in a timely manner so that it is not delayed further and stated that this important project for the region is very much needed.

Donald King – Stated that the project is extremely resented by this community of Buncombe County & Asheville residents and that these projects should have been completed between a decade or two ago. Stated that the project should have been constructed not only for user safety but the finances would have been multi millions of dollars less.

Larry Cornett – Stated that as a resident and business owner for 26 years, he wished the DOT would stop listening to "the greens" and start this project. Also stated he was in favor of taking Westwood and Earth Fare.

Response

Comments noted.

Comment

***Cecil C. Beumer –** Inquired when NCDOT would notify property owners if Section B Alternative 3 was selected.

Response

Vince Rhea (NCDOT) sent a letter on February 5, 2009 stating that the current schedule calls for a selection of a preferred alternative in December of 2009. A newsletter or other public notification will be issued at that time as the outcome is of interest to many people.

Comments Relating to the Construction of the Project

Comments

Robert Shepherd – Stated that major attention must be given by State/Local officials to traffic mitigation during the years of construction.

Sharon Martin – Stated that on behalf of the community it is requested that, as much as possible, that the workforce be from sources from Asheville and the local community.

Lu Young – Stated that West Asheville has again become an economic and residential center vital to Asheville and urges NCDOT to provide, as best as they can, access to West Asheville during the construction of this project.

Response

Comments noted.

Comment

***David Spray –** Stated that their Board of Directors is interested in speaking with DOT regarding their thrift store at 624 Patton (Western Carolina Rescue Ministries). Stated that their location may be of value to NCDOT for staging the project as it includes direct access off of the I-240 Interchange and south side of Westgate, has warehouse space, and parking.

Response

Vince Rhea (NCDOT) sent a letter on February 5, 2009 stating that the use of land for construction staging is made as the project advances further in the design process and is typically at the discretion of the contractor constructing the project.

Comments Relating to Multi-modal Transportation

Comment

Lara Lustig, Leah Karpen, Jonathan Todd Felsen, William Chiveis, Brett McCall, Mark Small, Nancy Ackerman Cole, Susan Daw, Nancy Ackerman Cole, Janet Barlow, April Daniel – Received 10 comments that any design should include provisions for other means of transportation, such as mass-transit, pedestrian and bicycle.

Response

Mass transit options were considered in Section 2.4 of the DEIS. Pedestrian and Bicycle facilities are addressed in Sections 4.1.1.4 of the DEIS. The projects compatibility with transportation plans including transit plans and bicycle and pedestrian plans is addressed in Section 4.1.2.2 of the DEIS.

Comment

Michael Harvey – Stated that it is time for the NCDOT to show that it knows how to develop Context Sensitive Solutions and that it truly embraces multimodalism. Stated that the separation of local from interstate traffic should allow pedestrian, bicycle, and transit features to be included in this project as these features help replace car trips with walking, bicycle, and bus trips, extending the capacity life of the project for vehicular traffic.

Response

While it is true that other modes of transportation can be effective in replacing local single occupancy vehicle trips, it does not adequately address the regional needs for improved system linkage and increased capacity as identified in Section 1.3 of the DEIS. Mass transit alternatives are considered in Section 2.4 of the DEIS and it has been determined that mass transit alternatives would either not be feasible or alone would not attract sufficient ridership to alleviate projected congestion along the project corridor.

Comment

Reuben E. Moore – Stated that the project should facilitate transportation by modes other than single-occupant autos such as walking, bicycle, transit, and carpools.

Response

While it is true that other modes of transportation can be effective in replacing local single occupancy vehicle trips, it does not adequately address the regional needs for improved system linkage and increased capacity as identified in Section 1.3 of the DEIS. Integration of multi-modal improvements have been included in the design and will be further analyzed once a Preferred Alternative is selected and the project moves forward in the design phase.

Comment

Hugh Munro – Stated that the Amboy Road/I-26 interchange needs to have connectivity for pedestrian and bicycle between the French Broad River and the West Asheville neighborhood on the west side of I-26. He feels this should also be looked at for the Patton Avenue interchange and the Brevard Road interchange and he believes that this project should place a priority on making pedestrian and bicycle connectivity of equal concern as vehicular connectivity.

Response

The Amboy road interchange and extension includes a five foot bike lane on both sides of the road and a 10-foot berm to accommodate pedestrians. All alternatives in the B section have been designed to provide pedestrian facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connectivity will be considered with respect to the design of the Brevard Road interchange in greater detail as the project moves forward in the design phase.

Comment

Jim Brown – Stated that it is hard for him to get around on his scooter and bicycle.

Response

Comment noted

Comment

Lynn Player – Commented that as someone who is a bicycle enthusiast in Asheville, that it is important that they have safe roadways to travel by bike. States that Alternative 4B allows the Smokey Park Bridge to connect two sides of their community without merging with an interstate and is positive that choosing 4B would increase bicycling and pedestrian traffic into their downtown. Also stated that they believe there is a need to continue to increase alternative methods of transportation.

Response

Comment noted. The effects of Alternative 4B on bicycle and pedestrian safety will be addressed in a supplemental environmental document.

Comment

Michael Harvey – Stated that airport commerce would be easier to build if people could get there and back on rail and that there were lots of needs to Weaverville and Black Mountain and that NCDOT should use a lane in each direction for commuters so that they can reduce the need for cars downtown.

Response

Mass transit alternatives are considered in Section 2.4 of the DEIS and it has been determined that mass transit

alternatives would either not be feasible or alone would not attract sufficient ridership to alleviate projected congestion along the project corridor.

Comments Relating to Consistency with Existing Plans

Comments

Asheville Design Center – Stated that the current draft EIS does not adequately evaluate the consistency of the project alternatives with the City of Asheville's 2025 Plan (2025 Plan). The ADC stated that though there is discussion on this plan in Section 1.7.4, consideration of the impacts of the Connector with regard to land-use and transportation design in 3.2 1.3 is not quantified and that the DEIS does not consider the cumulative land - use impact of the Connector on the 2025 Plan in Chapter 4.2. The ADC feels that consistency with the City of Asheville's long-term growth plan is a key measure by which the community will weigh these alternative proposals and that the ADC requests that the DEIS be amended to reflect this important information.

Jim Grode - Stated that the Asheville City Development Plan 2025, the City's current master plan, makes recommendations for the area of Section B that appear inconsistent with several of the Alternatives in the Draft EIS and that NCDOT appears not to have adequately considered the consistency of its project with those plans, and he feels that it must do so.

Response

The evaluation of compatibility with existing plans, including the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* it will be expanded in a future environmental document. It should also be noted that the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* states that "These goals and strategies typically requires separate actions on the part of City Council, City staff, or other boards and agencies; consequently, periodic adjustments to the plan will be necessary to reflect the actual actions that are taken as the goals and strategies are considered, modified, and/or implemented and as circumstances change. To this end, the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* must be considered as a guide for decision-making, rather than the final decision on any particular issue." Therefore the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* is considered a guidance document and consistency with the plan will be evaluated by the project team and taken into consideration when a Preferred Alternative is selected.

Comment

Liz Lipski, Catherine Cope – Stated that Alternative 4B is the only alternative that satisfied the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) Report of September 2000, which was adopted by the City of Asheville and the Metropolitan Planning Organization as their official guiding document for the I-26 Connector Project.

Response

According to the *Report of the Community Coordinating Committee for the Design of the I-26 Connector through Asheville* a list of key project design goals is denoted. According to the report, the list of goals "have been evaluated by the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) and recommended for consideration." The goals presented by the CCC will be evaluated by the project team and taken into consideration when a Preferred Alternative is selected. It is also noted that the CCC Report was developed following the Design Forum in 2000 and supported the two alternatives that were developed at the Forum (Alternatives 4 and 5). Therefore, both Alternative 4 and Alternative 4B are consistent with the CCC Report.

Comment

Michael McDonough – Stated that the current alternatives do not meet the NCDOT strategic plan and community goals. The planning/design process and the alternates fail to adequately achieve a "multi-modal and

connected system considerate of local land use plans." No City of Asheville, Buncombe County nor regional planning staff have participated in, nor does there appear to be a land planning process. The planning/design process and the alternates fail to meet this goal and objective. So far, this seems a purely highway project for fast moving cars and trucks. No other modal choices are explored or integrated. The planning/design process and the alternates do not enhance our communities' cultural resources (urban fabric, gateways & neighborhood connections, etc.), and do not propose an interconnected transportation system. Local transportation systems (roads) were only considered with regard to poorly designed vehicle on and off-ramps. There has been little, if any, consideration of land use planning supported by, or already adopted by the City of Asheville (2025 plan, greenways, bicycle plans, etc.). The alternates contain sprawling footprints that unnecessarily remove homes and businesses from the tax base and create isolated and devalued parcels that are disconnected from the urban fabric. There has been little, if any, of transportation and land use planning.

Response

The responsibility for land use planning is under the jurisdiction of the local agencies, such as the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. The DEIS includes an evaluation of the consistency with the approved land use plans in Section 4.1.2.1. The proposed alternatives do integrate multi-modal considerations as evidenced in the numerous bicycle and sidewalk improvements proposed. The integration of transit has been consistent with the plans approved by the French Broad River MPO and do not preclude future options for additional multi-modal improvements within the project study area.

Comments Relating to a Bypass Alternative

Comments

Jose Pepi Acebo – Stated that the best option for their City and regional development would be to merge I-26 and I-40 briefly and run I-26 west of west Asheville which is not in any of the options provided.

M.H. Mixson – Stated that the project should not mix the commuter traffic and interstate traffic so that commuter traffic must compete at the entrance and exit ramps, which is a formula for intolerable congestion and gridlock. Also stated that no plan should bring all the traffic (both interstate and commuter) to a point near the present Smoky Park Bridge because it feeds more traffic into an untenable geographic area causing traffic congestion, tourist confusion and intolerable concentrations of air pollutants. Stated that a proposed northwest bypass highway could be constructed faster and cheaper than the more extensively designed I-240/I-26 plan. Stated that the proposed bypass would be essential to: 1) park and ride strategies; 2) keeping Interstate dangerous "Big Rigs" away from congested traffic areas near the city center; 3) giving commuters to North Asheville and from Northwest Asheville and Leicester a new route, there by freeing up its congestion near the Smoky Park Bridge.

Don Yelton – Stated that he would prefer a loop from the end of Candler around Asheville which would be quicker and easier and not disturb the current traffic flow.

Response

The evaluation of a bypass alternative was evaluated in the *Phase I Environmental Analysis* and is included in Section 2.5.3.1 of the DEIS. It was determined that a bypass alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the proposed project and was eliminated from further study.

Comments Relating to Aesthetics

Comment

Hugh Munro – Stated that he strongly supports aesthetic treatments for all aspects of the I-26 connector project, and would encourage the NCDOT to go out of your way to support them as well. Also stated that he would like

to see the NCDOT support the construction of a structure over I-26 at Haywood Road similar to the High Street Cap in Columbus, OH.

Response

NCDOT will continue to work with the Aesthetic Advisory Committee to incorporate various aesthetic treatments into the project design process.

Comment

Margaret T. Adams – Stated that with regard to the bridge, she would like to call your attention to Columbus, Indiana, a small city half the size of Asheville, containing architecturally significant buildings and that the bridge from I-65 leading into Columbus is arresting and visually pleasant. Stated that she would like something distinctive for their city and that functional can be made extraordinary without great expense.

Response

Comment noted. Bridge structure design elements will be considered after selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Comment

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission - NCWRC encourages Implementation of the City's "smart growth" principles, protection of aesthetic amenities and greenways (existing and proposed), and development of opportunities for public access and recreation. Context Sensitive Solution principles should be employed to compliment and benefit the local community and natural environment important to the community and region.

Response

The proposed alternatives do integrate public access and recreation to the greatest extent possible under the areas that NCDOT has jurisdiction over. NCDOT has had extensive coordination with and will continue to work with the Aesthetic Advisory Committee to incorporate various aesthetic treatments into the project design process.

Comment

Jim Grode – Stated that the I-26 project has the potential to create an eyesore that will have unnecessary environmental impacts and stifle the development of the urban fabric of its area, or it can improve the livability of a city that perennially appears on lists of the best places to live in the country. Mr. Grode further stated that Alternative 4B, with modifications, presents the best opportunity to do the latter.

Response

Comment noted. NCDOT has accepted Alternative 4B as a viable project alternative which will therefore be evaluated in a supplemental environmental document. NCDOT will evaluate ways to further modify the alternative to avoid and minimize impacts to social, physical and natural environments.

Comment

Michael N. Lewis – Stated that Asheville is blessed geographically and Alternative 4B would allow for more pedestrian and outdoor activities in an outdoor setting graced by beautiful mountain vistas. Furthermore, Alternative 4B would allow Asheville to more fully capitalize on its scenic assets in an environmentally responsible way.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Mike Vance – Requested that NCDOT look at increasing the size of plantings to include trees and not just small shrubs at intersections & medians.

Response

Plantings included in the design of the project will be in accordance with NCDOT Planting Guidelines and will be coordinated with the Asheville Aesthetics Committee.

Comment

M.H. Mixson – Stated that Riverlink's efforts for increased beautification and utilization of the French Broad River will be very negatively impacted by the present I-240 expansion plan and that the new bridge to move along the French Broad will detract from the present openness of the area and could provide a problem residence for an increased number of homeless people.

Response

NCDOT will continue to work with the Aesthetic Advisory Committee to incorporate various aesthetic treatments into the project design process and will attempt to minimize visual impacts to the greatest extent possible.

Comment

Resolution signed by 100 Individuals - Resolution in Support of Aestetically Pleasing Bridges over the French Broad River for the I-26/I-240 Project.

Response

Comment noted. Bridge structure design elements will be considered after selection of a Preferred Alternative and will be coordinated with the Aesthetics Advisory Committee.

Comment

Jim Cavener – Requested that NCDOT make a stunning entryway into downtown (on Patton Avenue) from the west.

Response

NCDOT will continue to work with the Aesthetic Advisory Committee to incorporate various aesthetic treatments into the project design process.

Comment

Brett McCall – Stated that they deserve and can find funding for a beautiful bridge and that they need a design that will contribute to the beauty of Asheville for the next 100 years. Additionally stated that, the present I-240 east of the Beaucatcher cut is a travesty, as is the current mess on the Smoky Park Bridge.

Response

NCDOT will continue to work with the Aesthetic Advisory to Committee to incorporate various aesthetic treatments into the project design process. The present I-240 east of the Beaucatcher cut is outside the project study area.

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that in the DEIS the visual effects for Section A should include the impact of views from households and businesses which are not now immediately adjacent to the freeway which will, in the proposed design, now be adjacent. Also stated that mitigation by building of walls to screen noise and

the freeway from the surrounding neighborhoods should be added to the bulleted list of mitigation principles.

Response

Visual impacts in Section A of the project are presented in Section 4.1.3.5 of the DEIS. Possible mitigation measures that will be considered by NCDOT are also described in Section 4.1.3.5 and do not include construction of walls for visual screening. The use of walls for noise abatement is addressed in Section 4.1.3.1 of the DEIS.

Comment

Asheville Design Center – Stated that the new bridge over the French Broad can be an icon for Asheville and it should be designed using techniques which will result in a dramatic, attractive, and cost-effective structure similar to examples including the Cooper River Bridge in Charleston, SC and the Linn Cove Viaduct on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Response

Comment noted. Bridge structure design elements will be considered after selection of a Preferred Alternative and will be coordinated with the Aesthetics Advisory Committee.

Comments Relating to Quality of Life

Comments

Inge Robert – Stated that the scale of the project must match the character of this unique city.

Jen Hoffert, Margorie Vestal – Stated that they like a vibrant rideable, walkable community and are concerned about the quality of life, as they feel that this project is overkill for their little community.

Lara Lustig – Stated that the scale of the highway must match their community size.

Response

The project is being designed to address projected future traffic capacity needs which include both local and regional growth in traffic, as wells as the other identified needs in the purpose and need section of the DEIS. The scale of the project is appropriate to meet future traffic needs and to maintain adequate traffic operations.

Margaret Whiteside – Stated that it would be a good time to move and the project is a really bad idea. Stated that she has owned her house since 1969 and that it would be a good time to move because the project was too close for comfort.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

April Daniel - Prefers to keep Asheville a small town instead of a big city.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to Traffic Forecast and Capacity Analysis

Comments

US Environmental Protection Agency – EPA stated that based upon the Corsim Analysis provided in Section 1.9.2.2 there appears to be little traffic benefit between 6-lanes and 8-lanes of traffic along I-240. Table 1-4 does not fully demonstrate any substantial traffic benefit in average travel time and average speed between the 8 and 6-

lane options for I-240 (e.g. Six lane AM Peak at 388.7 seconds versus Eight lane AM Peak at 363.6 seconds).

EPA is concerned that NCDOT proposes to provide updated traffic forecasts using a new traffic model (see page S-18). The new traffic model forecast should have been conducted prior to the issuance of the DEIS. EPA requests that this updated traffic analysis be conducted prior to the Merger 01 Concurrence point 3 meeting.

Bruce Emory, David Pearson – Stated that the CORSIM analysis showed very little difference in speed or travel time between six and eight-lane options for Section B.

Response

The evaluation of a traffic capacity is detailed in Section 1.9.2 of the DEIS and the determination was made that the most appropriate methodology for assessing the traffic operations for the project is through analytic/deterministic tools such as the Highway Capacity Manual. The 2003 existing conditions model developed in CORSIM was calibrated against travel time runs from December 2004. In order to calibrate the model to match the observed travel times several changes were made to the model, including increasing the base free flow speed to 70 mph and reducing the amount of time required to complete a lane change. The results of the calibrated existing model were that the modeled travel times were within three percent of the observed travel times recorded in the field. The future build models were developed based on the same parameters as the calibrated existing model. Based on the abbreviated analysis undertaken for the proposed project, the need to manipulate the base model during calibration resulted in average speeds that exceed the proposed design speed of 60 mph. This inherent difficulty in simulation modeling resulted in an unreliable method of comparing alternatives, and is not considered adequate for decision making purposes.

NCDOT has decided that the evaluation of the Preferred Alternative utilizing a more robust and complete simulation methodology would be undertaken to verify the results of the HCM analysis. This analysis will be completed once a Preferred Alternative is identified and the results will be included in a future environmental document.

Comment

Bruce Emory, David Pearson – Requested that NCDOT update the DEIS to reflect latest traffic projections.

Response

An analysis of the traffic operations utilizing the latest traffic projections will be included in a future environmental document.

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that if local traffic were separated from interstate traffic, it was unclear whether I-240 would need additional capacity. Also stated that future restrictions on oil supply and other factors may result in significant reduction in the rate of private passenger vehicle use.

Response

Because the section of I-240 between I-40 and Patton Avenue would carry both local and interstate traffic under any scenario (any separation of local traffic would be along the Smoky Park Bridges and Patton Avenue) the need for additional capacity along this corridor is unambiguous.

Comment

Vivian Conley – Stated that traffic congestion on US 19/23 is worsening and that they need a decision soon.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Lillah & Gary Schwartz – Questioned what would be the difficulty with a simple 6-lane in section A, being that the new traffic study projections were considerably less than the original by over 50,000 cars.

Response

The typical section for the project was evaluated in Section 2.5.2.2 of the DEIS and shows that no fewer than eight lanes will accommodate the projected future traffic volumes; therefore any typical section with less than eight lanes was not considered a reasonable alternative and was eliminated from further study.

Comments Relating to Safety

Comment

Donald King – Stated that NCDOT should not bring nuclear waste through Asheville, and that it should be put on the non-existent future beltway. Also stated that the truckers are not wanted in the area of the project nor do the truckers want to be in the area of the project.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Ron Ainspan – Stated that the action should include safety features including the elimination of the left hand merges on the east side of the French Broad River.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to Noise

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency – Stated that the DEIS summary impact table does not include the number of noise receptors impacted by the proposed project (see Table 4-4 in DEIS). Stated that it is unclear if Alternative F-1 has impacts to noise receptors. This issue should be clarified before the next Merger 01 concurrence meeting and Impact tables should be revised to include 'totals' for each of the Alternatives combinations for Sections A, B, and C. The FEIS should provide additional details regarding effective noise barriers for the Alternatives and specify if there is any difference in alternatives and the potential requirements for noise barriers depending upon which alternative is selected. The FEIS should total noise receptor impacts for the Sections, list the number of receptors which will be benefited from noise barriers and include them in a summary impact table.

Response

The noise impacts for Section C, Alternative F1 were inadvertently not included in the DEIS and will be included in all future environmental documents and in information provided to the Merger 01 team. Alternative F1 will result in impacts to 40 residences and three businesses. Future environmental documents will include additional information on the effectiveness of noise mitigation based on the individual alternatives. The benefited receptors for each Alternative are included in the *Highway Traffic Noise Analysis Technical Report*, as appended by reference and will not be included in future environmental documents.

Comment

Amani Lyn Duncan, Amani Duncan, William Chiveis - Requested sound proofing/noise barriers along the

west side of I-240 closest to Westwood Place and Hazelwood Drive.

Response

The current public hearing maps for the project show that a noise barrier will be constructed in the vicinity of Westwood Place for Alternatives 2 and 4. Alternative 3 does not include a noise barrier due to the break in the control of access to provide a connection to Westwood Place. The noise analysis for Alternative 4B has not yet been completed and will be presented in future environmental documents and shown on the public hearing maps at future public involvement sessions.

Comment

Jeff Hoffert, Jen Hoffert – Stated that noise readings in the Sandhill Road area have gone up from 65 average dB pre-wall construction to 72 dB post-wall construction and that hopefully in these plans NCDOT can consider green walls.

Response

The property of the commentator is located on the opposite side (where a noise barrier was not constructed) of I-40 from where the noise barrier was constructed under NCDOT TIP Project I-4401 where the freeway was widened closer the their property. Because noise barriers reflect sound the increase of noise level is not unlikely.

Comment

Lillah & Gary Schwartz, Lara Lustig, Herman Laukford – Stated that they have concerns with sound issues and that it has been pointed out that concrete amplifies sound where green sound barriers absorb sounds.

Response

The use of "green" or absorptive noise walls is detailed in the FHWA publication *A Guide to Visual Quality in Noise Barrier Design* and concludes that "Absorptive barriers have been tested and are in use along highways in Europe and appear to be beneficial in reducing noise levels, particularly in dense urban situations" and "the proposed designs require additional study, including the construction and testing of prototypes, in order to determine the performance and feasibility of these designs." The NCDOT *Traffic Noise Abatement Policy* states that "The steel pile and concrete panel wall is NCDOT's standard noise wall however, NCDOT will consider Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) as long as other criteria are met" and that "Should a local government request that materials be used that are more costly than those proposed by NCDOT, the requesting entity must assume 100% of the additional cost." The use of noise barriers beyond the standard noise walls will be coordinated with the Aesthetics Committee during the development of the final design plans.

Comment

***Jonathan Todd Felsen –** Would like to determine the height of the noise walls for each alternative in the B section and inquired if they will be effective in reducing noise in their neighborhood? Requested what the noise wall height would be for the different alternatives and what the estimated noise (decibel levels) for the different alternatives facing his house. Requested a response.

Response

The preliminary noise barrier heights ranging from 19 to 25 feet were considered feasible, reasonable, and cost effective for the Section B alternatives near the Westwood Subdivision. During the final design phase of the project, a more detailed noise barrier analysis will be prepared to determine the specific barrier height and location for the selected alternative. Preliminary noise results indicate predicted noise levels at receiver B180 (Mr. Felson's property) would reach 66 to 67dBA without noise abatement. With a noise barrier, the noise levels are expected to be reduced by 4 to 9dBA, depending on the alternative and height considered. A letter was sent to Mr. Felson

by Vince Rhea (NCDOT) on March 30, 2009.

Comment

Jeff Herst – Stated that he is concerned about Hanover Street, because the street has already become a semi-slum because of highway noise. Stated that when you leave houses too close to the highway, they become undesirable and are often left vacant. Stated that all houses should be removed from Hanover Street and that this neighborhood will need noise abatement walls.

Response

NCDOT only acquires the property that is required for the construction of the project and would not acquire any property that is outside of the proposed right-of-way and easements required to construct the project. For all alternatives, a continuous noise barrier will be constructed on the west side of I-240 from Haywood Road to Patton Avenue.

Comment

Vic Fahrer – Stated that no discussion was presented for the rationale for selecting the noise measurement locations, as well as the time period when the measurements occurred and the duration of the monitoring period. Also requested if the effect of parallel barriers, which could increase noise levels, was considered in the TNM modeling.

Response

This preliminary analysis identified noise sensitive areas and locations where noise abatement meets the criteria for being reasonable and feasible. The effect of reflection from parallel barriers was not modeled in this analysis. During the final design stage, the design noise analysis may consider the effect of parallel barriers in determining recommended noise barrier heights.

Comment

Amani Lyn Duncan, Amani Duncan – Requested that NCDOT consider noise impacts during construction and that NCDOT not schedule construction at night.

Response

Section 4.1.6.3 of the DEIS addresses noise during construction and states that "NCDOT can also limit work that produces objectionable noise during normal sleeping hours." The determination on the hours of construction are determined during the final design stage of the project.

Comments Relating to a Land Use

Comment

Asheville Design Center, Bruce Emory – Stated that NCDOT should conduct a multi-disciplinary analysis of the land use, urban design, and property tax impacts of the alternatives, that the current DEIS has only a cursory discussion of land use impacts and does not compare the effects of different alternatives. Stated that the DEIS does not address the potential re-use of current highway right-of-way along Patton Avenue in Alternatives 4 and 4B and does not examine opportunities for re-connecting neighborhoods and the local street system. Stated that the DEIS does not analyze the long-term effects of property takings or property re-use on the city's tax base and does not analyze the effect of reduced access to isolated properties.

Response

The assessment of land use impacts as a result of the proposed project will be expanded and the results included in a future environmental document. The re-use of current right-of-way is not determined until after a project is

completed and would need to be conducted in accordance with the NCDOT Right of Way Disposal and Control of Access Committees Operating Procedures as detailed at:
http://www.ncdot.org/doh/PRECONSTRUCT/traffic/teppl/Topics/A-02/A-02_op.pdf
Additionally, because this is an Interstate project, approval from FHWA may also be required if federal funds were utilized in the purchase of the original right-of-way. Numerous additional issues could still exist that may be problematic for redevelopment of the reverted property, especially due to the utilities and associated easements remaining in place once the property is transferred if they are not required to be relocated as part of the construction of the project. The documentation on the economic effect of the proposed alternatives will be expanded in a future environmental document and is mostly proportional to the total number of relocations for each alternative.

Comments

David Pearson – Requested that NCDOT conduct a multi-disciplinary analysis of land use, development, and urban design impacts of all alternatives.

Michael McDonough – Stated that there has been little consideration of the existing or proposed land use planning by the city of Asheville.

Response

The assessment of land use impacts as a result of the proposed project will be expanded and the results included in a future environmental document

Comments Relating to the Economic Effects of the Project

Comment

***Vivian Conley –** Inquired **w**hat the economic burden of relocation will be and what timeframe is the relocation likely to occur.

Response

Vince Rhea (NCDOT) sent a letter on February 5, 2009 stating that all relocations will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act and that assistance will be provided to those required to relocate because of the project. The amount of assistance provided is determined on a case by case basis and depends on many factors including whether the home is rented or owned with the timeframe for relocation varying, but not ypically being less than 3 months. Additional information on relocation assistance can be obtained through the NCDOT Division Right-of-way office.

Comment

***Jen Hoffert -** Would like an answer as to whether her property is going to be purchased before 2011 because she would like to just move on.

Response

Vince Rhea (NCDOT) sent a letter on February 5, 2009 stating that a Preferred Alternative must be selected and a Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration must be issued before the exact right of way needed for the project can be determined with certainty. NCDOT is committed to advancing the project as quickly as the project development process will allow.

Comments

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that the proposed project will have a definite economic impact and that the current version of the DEIS implies that the project may not impact businesses. Stated that the summary

of economic impacts is incomplete and that the economic impacts of spending this amount of money in this way within a community should be mentioned. Additionally, the economic impacts to the household of people who are having their houses torn down and who will be relocated should be mentioned.

Response

The documentation on the economic effect of the proposed alternatives will be expanded in a future environmental document and is mostly proportional to the total number of relocations for each alternative.

Comments

Bess Baird, Shirley Schultz – Stated that the River District is in an important stage of development and is important for one of Asheville's main economic focuses. Stated that Asheville is an arts community and many tourists come there for that reason. Therefore, they feel that the River District should be kept intact.

Response

Potential impacts to the River District will be minimized and avoided if possible.

Comments

US Environmental Protection Agency - EPA notes that under Sections 4.3.1.2 and 4.3.1.4, both entitled "Economic Effects," a duplicate (verbatim) discussion is provided where one does not appear to be necessary. One of the sections should be eliminated in the FEIS.

Response

The redundant section (4.3.1.4) will be deleted in future environmental documents.

Comments Relating to Air Quality

Comments

Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency – Stated that in the DEIS Section 3.3.2.1 Background and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (3-31) - The first sentence of the first paragraph states that the project is located in the jurisdiction of NCDENR. However, in Buncombe County, air quality is regulated by the Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency, one of three local agencies having county-level jurisdiction. NCRAQA also operates the Buncombe County monitoring stations mentioned in the third paragraph. The third paragraph also mentions that the monitored air quality data in Table 3-18 (p 3-32) were obtained from a report available on the NCDENR Division of Air Quality (DAQ) website and that the measurements were for 2002. In checking the cited URL, it was determined that the measurements were for 2000. Given that the Air Quality Analysis was completed in 2006, more recent measurements could have been provided. The last sentence of the third paragraph states that "these recent measurements are within federal and state ambient air quality standards." However, the 8-hour ozone concentration and the annual and 24-hour PM 2.5 concentrations are higher than the corresponding standards shown in Table 3-18. No explanation is provided as to how these levels are within ambient standards. Table 3-18 could be updated to include the 3-hour (secondary) SO2 standard and the newly revised 8-hour ozone standard (0.075 ppm). Also stated that in DEIS Section 4.1.3.2 Air Quality Standards (p 4-12) - No discussion of the procedures, modeling assumptions, receptor locations, results, etc. is presented. Also, no documentation is provided in the DEIS appendices. Inquired if the Air Quality Analysis Technical memorandum (cited in the DEIS) as well as any backup documentation was available for review? Additionally, in Section 4.1.6.4 Air (p. 4-40) - It is mentioned that a permit from the NC Division of Forest Resources would be needed for burning cleared (vegetative) materials within 500 ft. of woodlands. A WNCRAQA burning permit would also be required for burning any machine-piles brush anywhere in the County. Potential asbestos impacts during construction also are not discussed. The demolition or relocation of any buildings or other structures would require a WNCRAQA asbestos inspection and permit.

Response

Comment noted revised information and the most current air quality monitoring data will be included in future environmental documents. The Air Quality Technical Memorandum, outlining the modeling assumptions and procedures, is available for review from NCDOT. All burning will be done in accordance with current air quality permitting requirements. Any asbestos found in the project right of way will be removed prior to building demolition and properly disposed of in accordance with all applicable laws.

Comment

Jim Grode, Jim Grode - Requested that a representatives of the North Carolina Division of Air Quality be on the Agency Review Team and Asheville is already hovering on the brink of nonattainment for ozone, and any significant increases in vehicle miles traveled spurred by this project could tip the balance unfavorably.

Response

All environmental documents are sent to the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), including the Division of Air Quality for review and comment. The Merger 01 project team that guides the project development process includes a representative from NCDENR Division of Water Quality; however the Division of Air Quality is not identified as an agency that takes part in the Merger 01 process. To date the Division of Air Quality has not requested to be a part of the project team for this project.

Comment

Lara Lustig – Requested that air quality considerations be included in impact assessment.

Response

The existing air quality is discussed in the DEIS in Section 3.3.2 and the effects on air quality as a result of the project are included in Section 4.1.3.2.

Comment

Vic Fahrer – Stated that in the CAL3QHC modeling, Patton Avenue is indicated as being on fill 30 feet above grade and 24 feet above the receptors. Also inquired as to why these links modeled as fill rather than "at grade" and why 30 feet above grade was used. Also stated that no discussion was presented on the rationale for selecting receptors and only 30 receptors were used, with just 3 receptors adjacent to any single roadway link at a spacing of about 250 feet between receptors. Additionally, he stated that the receptors along Patton Avenue are about 100 feet from the edge of the road and that with such a sparse receptor network it can not be assured that the highest CO concentrations were determined by the modeling analysis. Mr. Fahrer further stated that the surface roughness used was that for a central business district and more conservative lower values could have been used and would have been more representative of the study.

Response

The CO model was based on the Section B Alternative 4 interchange with I-26 and Patton Avenue, and a 30-foot grade separation was assumed with Patton Avenue crossing over I-26. During the preparation of the FEIS, (once a Preferred Alternative is selected) consideration will be given to determine the model's sensitivity. In the air quality analysis, five receptors were located in each quadrant of the interchange, outside of the controlled access limits where there may be the potential for human activity. These receivers were identified on Figure 4 of the air quality technical report. The surface roughness value was assumed to be central business district due to the presence of commercial properties and proximity to the Asheville central business district. During the preparation of the FEIS (once a Preferred Alternative is identified), consideration will be given to determine the model's sensitivity to a different roughness factor.

Comment

M.H. Mixson – Stated that the most dangerous effect of the proposed project is the chronic carbon poisoning that may occur; which is defined as a carbon monoxide "hot spot" by federal law.

Response

The effects on air quality are discussed in Section 4.1.3.2 and based on a microscale analysis of the project for carbon monoxide, "Comparison of the predicted CO concentrations with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) indicates no violation of these standards" and "This project is not anticipated to create any adverse effects on the air quality of this attainment area."

Comments Relating to Hazardous Materials

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency – EPA notes that there is a "high" severity impact anticipated for the landfill along the eastern bank of the French Broad River (see page 4-17). Sampling and analysis may need to be conducted prior to the selection of a Preferred Alternative and this information should be presented with respect to the alternatives currently under consideration.

Response

Based on the alternatives currently proposed, the landfill on the east bank of the French Broad River should be reclassified as a low to moderate risk. Samples collected during past investigations indicate low levels of contaminates. No areas tested contained contaminates at hazardous levels. Additional testing will be done after the preferred alternative is carried forward. A work plan will be developed based on the final design to address any contaminated material that may be encountered during construction.

Lillah & Gary Schwartz – Stated that as a transportation link for nuclear waste, if a spill occurs 6-lanes should be ample to clean up and that no local person would go anywhere near the spill.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to Water Quality

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency – The EPA stated that efforts should be made to avoid and minimize impacts to Hominy Creek through the use of steeper-grade side slopes, retaining walls, stormwater retention basins, planting of vegetative buffers and other BMPs. Based on EPA's review of the DEIS, all of the alternatives and the overall DEIS received an "EC-1" rating, meaning that some environmental concerns exist that need to be further addressed. The FEIS should include additional information regarding avoidance and minimization measures for streams, mitigation plans, potential measures to minimize impacts to historic properties, invasive plant species issues, relocations and noise receptor impacts. EPA stated that NCDOT and FHWA should consider additional avoidance and minimize measures as well as enhancement measures for stream and wetland impacts beyond what is typically proposed. Because of the potential for large cut and fill heights due to the mountainous topography, NCDOT and FHWA should consider the use of "PAM-Polyacrylamide" and other potentially successful soil erosion and sediment control applications that could greatly reduce turbidity on steeper slopes. This would be in addition to the stone check-dams, silt fencing and other BMP soil erosion and sedimentation practices that NCDOT typically employs on a project. Furthermore, removal of exotic invasive plants along with other riparian buffer enhancements may constitute potential on-site enhancement/restoration opportunities. Any specific plans for on-site restoration enhancement activities or detailed mitigation plans should

also be coordinated through EPA's Wetlands Section. The DEIS does not address the potential presence of acidic rock. EPA recommends that geotechnical investigations be conducted as soon as possible after the selection of the LEDPA in order to identify the potential presence of acidic rock formations. Specific avoidance and minimization plans should also be developed and proposed where exposed rock formations may impact water quality or receiving streams and wetlands.

Response

Once the alignment is chosen and roadway plans are forwarded to the NCDOT Geotechnical Unit then the actual investigation will produce hand samples and rock cores in the cut areas and along foundations for walls and bridges. These will be tested for Net Neutralization Potential (NNP), the indicator for the level and volume of acidic rock, if it exists. The NNP dictates the actual amount of treatment required and will determine the various levels of mitigation. These may include: 1) treatment in place; 2) treatment of rock that has been excavated and used in fill or backfill areas; 3) treatment of very acidic material that would require fully separate and contained areas. The main points to be included in subsequent environmental documentation are that the corridor is not expected to be hot, adequate testing is performed as part of a routine Geotechnical Investigation and treatment does not typically greatly influence the construction of the project (or a redesign of any consequence as it pertains to volumes or alignment). The NCDOT Geotechnical Unit has a good 20 year track record of identifying and mitigating this problem. It is not expected, and the issue will be fully vetted during the investigation phase.

Comment

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) - Division of Water Quality - NCDWQ recommends that prior to completing the avoidance and minimization phase of the project, geotechnical investigations should be conducted to identify the presence of acidic rock. Impacts to areas identified as having acidic rock should be avoided and minimized as much as possible.

NCDWQ also stated that Hominy Creek is class C; 303(d) waters of the State. Hominy Creek is on the 303(d) list for impaired use for aquatic life due to agriculture and urban/storm sewer runoff. DWQ is very concerned with sediment and erosion impacts that could result from this project. DWQ recommends that the most protective sediment and erosion control BMP's be implemented to reduce the risk of nutrient runoff to Hominy Creek. DWQ requests that road design plans provide treatment of the stormwater runoff through best management practices as detailed in the most recent version of NC DWQ Stormwater Best Management Practices.

In Section 4.1.5.4, Surface Water, the document states that the expected effects on surface water of the proposed action will be similar among the alternatives. This is not an accurate statement. The expected impacts, especially for streams, vary significantly depending on the alternative. This statement should be removed or revised to accurately reflect the expected impacts.

Environmental assessment alternatives shall consider design criteria that reduce the impacts to streams and wetlands from storm water runoff. These alternatives shall include road designs that allow for treatment of the stormwater runoff through best management practices as detailed in the most recent version of NC DWQ Stormwater Best Management Practices, such as grassed swales, buffer areas, pre-formed scour holes, retention basins, etc. NCDOT shall address concerns by describing the potential impacts that may occur to the aquatic environments and any mitigation factors that would reduce the impacts.

Sediment and erosion control measures should not be placed in wetlands or streams.

Response

Once the alignment is chosen and roadway plans are forwarded to the NCDOT Geotechnical Unit then the actual investigation will produce hand samples and rock cores in the cut areas and along foundations for walls and bridges. These will be tested for Net Neutralization Potential (NNP), the indicator for the level and volume of

acidic rock, if it exists. The NNP dictates the actual amount of treatment required and will determine the various levels of mitigation. These may include: 1) treatment in place; 2) treatment of rock that has been excavated and used in fill or backfill areas; 3) treatment of very acidic material that would require fully separate and contained areas. The main points to be included in subsequent environmental documentation are that the corridor is not expected to be hot, adequate testing is performed as part of a routine Geotechnical Investigation and treatment does not typically greatly influence the construction of the project (or a redesign of any consequence as it pertains to volumes or alignment). The NCDOT Geotechnical Unit has a good 20 year track record of identifying and mitigating this problem. It is not expected, and the issue will be fully vetted during the investigation phase.

Potential impacts to water quality and possible BMP's to minimize sedimentation and erosion impacts are addressed in Section 4.1.6.6 of the DEIS. NCDOT will use and closely monitor protective erosion and sediment control BMP's during construction of the project to reduce the risk of nutrient runoff to Hominy Creek. The statement in Section 4.1.4.5 as noted in the comment will be removed or revised to accurately reflect the expected impacts.

Comment

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission - NCWRC is concerned about direct and indirect impacts to area waterways and water quality. NCWRC encourages NCDOT and local officials to protect water quality and habitat through the use of LOW IMPACT Development (LID) techniques, growth management, and other mitigation efforts.

Response

These suggestions will be considered in the development of final design plans. It should be noted that land use and development policies are under the jurisdiction of the City of Asheville.

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that in the Summary Section of the DEIS, The final bullet item should be amended to say, "Chemicals, radioactive and other hazardous materials spill during transport". Additionally, one of the impacts mentioned is "Pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers used to plant and maintain highway landscaping." For the record they felt that, State policies and procedures should be changed so that pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers are not used in the maintenance of highways.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to Historic Properties and Archeological Investigations

Comment

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (THPO) – The EBCI THPO accepts the invitation to act as a consulting party on the above referenced Section 106 undertaking(s) as mandated under 36 C.F.R. 800. The project's location is within the aboriginal territory of the Cherokee Middle / Out Towns. Potential Cherokee cultural resources important to the Cherokee people may be threatened due to adverse effects expected from the level of ground disturbance required for this project. At all times the main concern for the EBCI THPO is the possibility for human burials.

According to the information provided, the presence of human remains is a potential throughout all the sites, but especially 31BN825, 31BN826 and 31BN828. In the case of each listed above the EBCI THPO concurs with the archeologist's recommendations that site avoidance should be the first choice in choosing a Preferred Alternative. If this is not feasible, EBCI THPO concurs with the recommendation that "data recovery excavations are recommended to mitigate any impacts caused by construction of the I-26 Connector."

The EBCI THPO concurs with the archeologist's recommendations that "mechanized deep testing would be necessary to search for and evaluate deposits prior to deriving the NRHP-eligibility for the following sites: 31BN867, 31BN868, 31BN870, 31BN873, and 31BN823.

Response

NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the EBCI THPO as a consulting party in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Comments Relating to Permits

Comment

Tennessee Valley Authority – The Tennessee Valley Authority notes that all of the action alternatives would require permits issued under Section 26a of the TVA Act for new bridges and widened bridges across perennial streams and fills in floodplains. Stated that this should be noted in the "Required Permits and Actions" sections in the EIS Summary and Chapter 4.

Response

Future environmental documents will include the need for a TVA permit.

Comments Relating to Energy

Comment

Andrew Holcombe – Requested that NCDOT not overlook the impact of these proposals on the area and that he thinks it is important to keep the overall carbon footprint in mind. Thus, he believes that Alternative 4 and 4B for Section B will end up having a much larger impact.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Donald Barnett – Stated that the USA has passed its peak oil production many years ago, and that the earth has probably passed its peak oil recently. Also stated that more and more people are concerned about air quality and global warming caused by fossil fuels and that the size, speed and number of cars and trucks on our highway will be reduced, not increased by 2030.

Response

Future traffic within the project area is projected to increase. Anticipated future traffic volumes and anticipated levels of service are addressed in Section 2.7 of the DEIS.

Comments Relating to Environmental Justice

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency – Stated that based upon the table and information on Environmental Justice (i.e., Section 3.1.5, Table 4-1, et al.), only Alternative B-3 appears to have a substantial percentage of residential relocations to minority and low-income residences. There are 61 residential relocations and 26 are to minority and low-income residences (43%). Alternative B-2 and B-4 have much lower percentages at approximately 16% and 14%.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

M.H. Mixson – Stated that the current plan may violate the federal laws against bringing a new source of pollution to low income housing areas, namely Hillcrest.

Response

NCDOT is compliant with Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964 and related statutes and Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice. These issues are addressed in Section 3.1.5 and Section 4.1.1.5 of the DEIS. It should also be noted that the effects on air quality are discussed in Section 4.1.3.2 and based on a microscale analysis of the project for carbon monoxide "Comparison of the predicted CO concentrations with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) indicates no violation of these standards" and that "This project is not anticipated to create any adverse effects on the air quality of this attainment area."

Comment

Lu Young – Stated that widening the Interstate will result in 79 residential relocations with the major burden on those least able to handle relocation, the poor and disenfranchised.

Response

Relocations are addressed in Section 4.1.1.2 of the DEIS. It is NCDOT policy to provide assistance to those affected by transportation improvements as required under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended. This Act is intended to ensure that displaced individuals, families, and businesses receive fair, consistent and equitable treatment, and are not affected disproportionately.

Comments Relating to Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species

Comment

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) – Natural Heritage Program – NC Natural Heritage program notes the only rare species that could potentially be impacted by the proposed action is the State Special Concern mole salamander (Ambystoma talpoideum). This species was found sometime between 1997 and 2006, at the pond at hole #3 of the golf course at Crowne Plaza Golf Resort. The proximity of this site to a possible alignment could involve sedimentation into creeks that might impact any pond(s) where this salamander might occur. Though a survey by Wildlife Resources Commission staff was negative in 2006, our Program recommends that NCDOT staff conduct a survey of the golf course ponds, or at a minimum contact the initial observer, Dr. James Petranka at UNC-Asheville, about the project and the salamander location.

Response

NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the DENR and NCWRC throughout the life of the project. Additional surveys for the occurrence of threatened and endangered species and species of State Special Concern, including the mole salamander, within the project study area will be conducted during subsequent phases of the project.

Comment

Mary Steiner – Stated that she is concerned about the highway exacerbating the spread of the "tent worm" caterpillars.

Response

Comment noted.

Comments Relating to the Indirect and Cumulative Effects of the Project

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that the effects of the proposed project on the ability of Asheville and the surrounding communities to implement an effective region-wide mass transportation alternative to private vehicles used should be included. Stated that the creation of a higher capacity roadway may discourage transition by motorists to mass transportation options, since the benefits of shorter time commutes may continue to outweigh other factors. Also stated that the impact of increasing routing options for radioactive and other hazardous materials through our community should be assessed as an indirect and cumulative effect.

Response

The proposed project would not preclude, nor would it have a substaintial effect on the ability to implement a mass transit system. Currently there not any approved plans to implement a mass transit system in the Asheville area and the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* states that the largest obstacles to implementing transit in Asheville are the lack of high density development and "major public perception problem."

Comment

Asheville Design Center – Stated that the DEIS does not address the cumulative impacts of this project combined with the proposed projects to widen I-26 north and south of this project.

Response

The cumulative effects associated with the I-26 projects to the north and south of the proposed project will be addressed in greater detail in a future environmental document.

Comments Regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Comment

Cicada LeFay & Harold Brokaw – Stated that the CCC goals which were approved by City Council should be included in section 1.4.

Under the bulleted item Capacity in the DEIS consider re-writing assumptive statement as follows "In the future, if traffic volumes increase due to population increases, traffic congestion and resulting delays will continue to worsen" and consider the incorporation of the following as potential mitigation factors; 1) If local traffic is separated from Interstate traffic, it is unclear whether I-240 would need additional capacity because it has been shown in studies that the largest volume of traffic on the Smoky Park bridge is local, not interstate; and 2) As the recent local shortage of fuel supplies in the Western North Carolina area has shown, future declines in the availability of fuel and rises in fuel process due to reductions in the worldwide supply of oil, as well as the necessity of humans to reduce fossil fuel consumption due to global climate change, will very likely result in a significant reduction in the rate of private passenger vehicle use per capita, additionally this will be coupled with a corresponding increase in the use of public transportation, for which people in the Western North Carolina region are now planning and implementing.

The third bulleted item in the Summary, Page S-2 Purpose of Proposed Action should be removed as the purpose of this project "To improve the capacity of existing I-240 west of Asheville to accommodate the existing and forecasted (2030 design year) traffic in this growing area."

Check for error on page 1-57 in the following sentence "The improvements, within the study area of the proposed project, that were assumed to be in place by 2030 for the purposes of the traffic capacity analysis are included in Error! Reference source not found."

Stated that in Section 2.4.4, the conclusion that mass transportation is not feasible is not justifiable or supported. Stated that the analysis in the prior sections merely recites existing transportation options and it does not incorporate the mass transit plans articulated into the 2025 plan nor consider other feasible options which could meet some of the purposes of the project. Stated that the fact some of the purposes of the project can be met

though mass transportation is adequate reason to exclude them from the project and an integrated approach would be to include in the analysis and design appropriate mass transit functions so that these opportunities for future mass transit options are maximized.

Section 2.2.1 Design Criteria - Stated that the design speed for the combined I-26/I-240 section should be reduced to 50 mph.

Stated that in Section 4.1.2.2 Compatibility with Transit Plans: This section should contain an analysis of the no build alternative compared with the effect of build options on the development of mass transit within the city and general area.

Stated that Section 4.2 and 4.3.2 (Indirect and Cumulative Effects) should include an analysis of existing hazardous waste transportation including separate analyses of radioactive waste transportation through using existing facilities, then compare with anticipated use subsequent to the implementation of the project.

Response

The goals of the CCC report are not a purpose for proposing the project and are considered to be guidance to be used in the decision making process, thus are not appropriate for Section 1.4. The item in the DEIS that discusses capacity is based on AASHTO's *A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System* which states that "Each section of the interstate highway shall be designed to safely and efficiently accommodate the volumes of passenger vehicles, buses, trucks – including tractor-trailer and semi-trailer combinations, and corresponding military equipment estimated for the design year." The development of traffic projections is based on numerous factors most notably long-term travel trends and the associated driver behaviors. It is not appropriate to change the traffic projection methodology to account for short term variances such as those that have occurred recently. Further, the purpose of the project to improve the capacity of I-240 is an appropriate purpose for the project based on the unsatisfactory traffic operations projected to occur by the design year. Page 1-57 includes an unintentional error and should read "The improvements, within the study area of the proposed project , that were assumed to be in place by 2030 for the purposes of the traffic capacity analysis are included in Table 1-10" The conclusion that mass transportation is not feasible is justifiable and supported as there are no mass transit improvements proposed that would adequately address the purpose and need for the project. The French Broad River MPO's *Transportation 2030: The Long Range Multi-Modal Plan for Buncombe, Haywood, and Henderson Counties*, nor the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* include any defined projects that would address the purpose and need for the proposed project. Conversely, the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* states in the transit section that "substantial changes need to occur in order to increase ridership to the extent necessary to address congestion problems throughout the transportation network." The design speed for the combined I-26/I-240 section of the project has been coordinated with the Federal Highway Administration, who has design decision making authority for routes on the interstate system, and determined to be the most appropriate design speed for this segment. With regard to compatibility of transit plans and the request for an analysis of the no build alternative compared with the effect of build options on the development of mass transit within the city, the no-build scenario includes all transit improvements identified as a financially constrained plan from the French Broad River MPO's *Transportation 2030: The Long Range Multi-Modal Plan for Buncombe, Haywood, and Henderson Counties.* Therefore, the ability of mass transit has already been shown to not be viable. The existing freeway system within the study area of the proposed project is currently being utilized to transport nuclear waste, and it is not likely that the proposed project will have a substantial effect on the routing of hazardous waste.

Comments

Asheville Design Center – Stated that the DEIS needs to be updated to reflect the traffic projections that are scheduled to be completed in October. Additionally, stated that the DEIS does not quantify or compare the amounts of impervious surface for the alternatives nor does it adequately address the integration of other modes, including walking, bicycling, and transit where Alternatives 4 and 4B have opportunities to improve accessibility

by all three of these modes.

Response

An analysis of the traffic operations utilizing the latest traffic projections will be included in a future environmental document. The measure of impervious surface for each alternative is not a measure that is typically included in the evaluation of alternatives as prescribed by the FHWA Technical Advisory *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4 (f) Documents*, thus is not included in the DEIS. The evaluation of compatibility with existing plans, including assessment of bicycle, pedestrian and transit will be expanded in a future environmental document.

Comments Relating to the Environmental Effects of the Project

Comment

***Mary Steiner, Jeff Hoffert –** Stated that the property formerly owned by C. A. Mashburn has over 200 tagged and species rhododendrons and azaleas, and some of them may be rare.

Response

Comment noted. The species are not included on the either of the federal or state listings for endangered and threatened species.

Comment

Jeff Huffert – Stated that Duke has studies showing that with increased carbon monoxide output from the cars going by that certain plants increase in their growth, such as poison ivy.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

Laura Uberbacher – Requested that NCDOT include wildlife crossings underneath the highway because there is a large population of deer, as well as bear and smaller mammals that live in close proximity to the highway.

Response

NCDOT will consider impacts to wildlife as addressed in Section 4.1.5 of the DEIS and the need for wildlife crossing has not been identified for this project.

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency - The DEIS summary impact table (S-1) does not include the terrestrial forest impacts for the different Sections or the Alternatives. Because of the proximity of Hominy Creek to terrestrial communities identified in Table 4-12, EPA strongly prefers Alternative F-1 for Section C. For Alternatives A, B-2 and F-1, there is a total impact of 59 acres of impact to terrestrial forests. The FEIS should include these impacts in the summary table.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment

US Environmental Protection Agency - The DEIS does not specifically address the requirements under Executive Order (E.O. 13112 on Invasive Species or FHWA's guidance on addressing the potential problems associated with roadside invasive plants. In addition to the invasive species noted in the DEIS, EPA's records also

indicate the presence of Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica, syn. Polygonum cuspidatum, Reynoutria japonica) in the project study area, including right-of-way areas along I-240, I-40 and NC 25. EPA requests that NCDOT consider the use of the draft BMPs for Japanese knotwood (as well as some of the other aggressive invasive plant species) that was provided to NCDOT's roadside Environment Unit and Natural Environmental Unit in October of 2007. The FEIS should also specifically address compliance with E.O. 13112 and FHWA roadside guidance on controlling invasive plant species.

Response

The Summary impact table presented in subsequent environmental documents for the project will include impacts to terrestrial communities. The Natural Resources Technical Report and Supplemental DEIS will include a discussion of invasive species and compliance with E.O. 13112.

Requests for Project Information

Comment

***Jose Pepi Acebo –** Requested that NCDOT e-mail a link to the plans and the public hearing transcript to pepi@jbanetwork.com.

Response

Drew Joyner (NCDOT) provided the requested information to Mr. Acebo on February 9, 2009 via e-mail.

Additional Studies Required

Preliminary Design Plans for Alternative 4B

Construction Cost Estimate for Alternative 4B

Right-of-way Cost Estimate (with utilities) for Alternative 4B

Relocation Report for Alternative 4B

Develop Public Hearing Maps for Alternative 4B

Updated Traffic Forecast Memorandum for All Alternatives

Update Traffic Capacity for All Alternatives based on new forecast

Update Preliminary Designs based on New Traffic Capacity Analysis

Update Noise Report for Alternative 4B

Update Air Quality Report for Alternative 4B

Update Natural Resources Technical Report for Alternative 4B

Update Traffic Capacity for All Alternatives based on new forecast

Update Preliminary Designs based on New Traffic Capacity Analysis

Update Indirect and Cumulative Effects for Alternative 4B

Update Community Impact Analysis for Alternative 4B

Update Hydraulic Technical Report for Alternative 4B

Update Cultural Resources for Alternative 4B

Section 106 Meeting on Alternative 4B

Assess Section 4(f) impacts for Alternative 4B

Expand Analysis on Land Use Impacts

Expand Analysis on Economic Effects

Expand Analysis of Consistency with Existing Plans

Preliminary Draft of Interchange Modification Report

Geotechnical/Hazardous Materials Evaluation for Alternative 4B

Section 404/Merger Application

Re-visit Concurrence Point 2/2A

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

If you have questions or comments regarding this information, please contact Doug Taylor, NCDOT Project Engineer, at (919) 250-4016 or Peter Trencansky, URS Corporation (Consultant) at (919) 461-1332.

BKC/pt

Approved By _____
Gregory J. Thorpe, PhD
NCDOT Branch Manager - Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch

Approved By _____
Jay A. Bennett, PE
NCDOT State Roadway Design Engineer

cc: Attendees

MEMORANDUM

URS

To: Project File (I-26 Connector)

From: Christopher Werner, PE

Date: October 13, 2009

RE: State Project 34165.1.1 (TIP I-2513)
F.A. Project MA-NHF-26-1(53)
Buncombe County
TIP Project I-2513, Interstate 26 Connector
Project meeting regarding alternatives' designs

A meeting was held on Thursday October 1, 2009 in the first floor conference room of the City of Asheville Public Works Building. The meeting agenda included introductions, and discussion on the details of the alternatives' design development. Attendees of the meeting are shown on the attached sign-in sheet.

Items discussed are summarized below:

- The meeting was initiated by Cathy Ball, of the City of Asheville thanking NCDOT for attending today in order to discuss the recent design revisions with the City of Asheville, the Asheville Design Center, Buncombe County, and Figg-Lochner.

- Ms. Ball explained the groups' expectations of the meeting were to better understand the effects of modifying the designs so Alternative 4B could be refined to address the needs of the community. Ms. Ball continued by stating that the current consensus of the Technical Coordinating Committee for Alternative 4B, including the City of Asheville, the Asheville Design Center, and Buncombe County, prefer Alternative 4B under Patton Avenue (to be referred to as Alternative 4B Under).

- Charlie Flowe, of TGS Engineers, then reviewed the recent design revisions of Alternative 4B and Alternative 4B Under, by providing the group a handout which detailed specific design changes for all alternatives.
    - The group questioned if the design changes consisted of any negative effects to the Human or Natural Environment Impacts. It was explained to the group that all design changes were developed by trying to accommodate requests made at the September 2009 Public Hearing, accommodating the needs resulting from the capacity analysis, which was revised based upon the recent traffic forecast update, while trying to minimize impacts to known sensitive resources throughout the project. It was also explained that evaluation of all alternatives to be carried forward would be evaluated and documented in the Supplemental Draft

Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) which is scheduled to be signed in April 2010.

  - The group questioned when a decision between Alternatives 4B and Alternative 4B Under would be made and at what point in the study process should comments be submitted to NCDOT regarding the alternatives. Derrick Weaver, of the NCDOT Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch, explained at this point, both Alternatives 4B and 4B Under would be carried forward until both can be further evaluated. Mr. Weaver also explained that NCDOT is currently in the process of updating the supporting technical studies which will be incorporated into the SDEIS. Once the SDEIS is completed, the document will be made available for public review and comment, following with a Public Hearing. Mr. Weaver noted that comments received between now and the completion of the SDEIS will be given consideration, however, NCDOT will formally solicit comments once the SDEIS has been signed.

- Ms. Ball explained that the group is also representing the Montford Community, which has documented concerns that have previously been provided to NCDOT. Specific concerns discussed at today's meeting included:
  - The Montford neighborhood prefers the Alternative 4B Under.
  - The Montford neighborhood suggests adding a retaining wall along the Montford neighborhood so the proposed I-26 could be tied into (or closer) to existing grade further to the south, rather than carrying an elevated section of I-26 further to the north, which they feel could reduce overall project cost and reduce noise impacts to the Montford neighborhood.
  - Mr. Weaver suggested that NCDOT will investigate the potential for utilizing a retaining wall in order to tie the elevated section of I-26 in as soon as possible. Mr. Weaver then discussed some of the details associated with the Noise Analysis and the criteria used for determining noise wall locations. Mr. Weaver noted the Noise Analysis is currently being updated, which will identify locations where Noise Abatement would be warranted. Upon completion of the Noise Analysis, the group requested the results be provided so they may better understand the process and the locations of proposed noise barriers.
- The group also noted there was concern regarding the Alternative 4, Alternative 4B and Alternative 4B Under current designs' which impact five residences along Hill Street. The group felt the alignment of I-240 could be modified in order to avoid impacting these homes.
  - Mr. Flowe explained there were constraints with connecting to existing I-240 within this area; however, he would reevaluate the alignment to determine if there was potential to avoid impacting the referenced properties along Hill Street.
- The group questioned the location for the proposed connector street from Hill Street to Patton Avenue as shown on the designs for Alternative 4, Alternative 4B and Alternative 4B Under. It was explained by the group that the Housing Authority would prefer this connector road be removed and replaced with the extension of Hazel Street, which is within the Hillcrest Housing Complex.
  - Ken Burleson, of TGS Engineers, explained that by extending Hazel Street, several housing units would be impacted and therefore may constitute Environmental Justice issues. NCDOT suggested that coordination with the Housing Authority is

required to determine if there were any drafted or adopted plans for modifying this complex. NCDOT will also investigate the Environmental Justice affects should this connection be made as a part of this project. Mr. Weaver noted finalization of the placement of this connector road could take place after the selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), given there are alternatives that do not show any improvements on the east side of the French Broad River.

- The group questioned how much of an emphasis cost has on the selection of the LEDPA.
    - Mr. Weaver explained that the Merger Team, which consists of multiple resource agency representatives, among others, will review impacts to the Natural and Human Environment initially. If the Natural and Human Environment impacts are relatively similar, then the alternatives' cost may weigh more heavily in selecting the LEDPA.
- The group understood the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) would be the communities' voice as a voting member of the Merger Team. The group was concerned that the City of Asheville and Buncombe County had previously submitted letters of alternative recommendation, which conflicted with one another, and therefore would result with the other cities represented by the MPO making a recommendation for the LEDPA.
    - Mr. Weaver explained that once the SDEIS is out for review, all entities as well as the public will have an opportunity to voice their concerns, comments, and recommendations. It is anticipated these entities will provide their concerns, comments, and recommendations based on the updated information presented in the SDEIS.
- The group questioned if there was potential for pedestrian and bus traffic along the Smoky Park Bridges for Alternatives 4, 4B, and 4B Under.
    - Mr. Flowe explained, based upon the initial capacity analysis, the existing four lanes (in each direction) along the Smoky Park Bridges would not be required for vehicular traffic.
- The group questioned when the Traffic Forecast Technical Memorandum would be completed.
    - Mr. Weaver explained the Traffic Forecast Technical Memorandum would be finalized and available by the end of 2009.
- The group questioned if the draft information to be included in the Traffic Forecast Technical Memorandum questioned the need for 6 lanes versus 8 lanes based upon.
    - Mr. Weaver explained that there was no significant change to the projected traffic along I-26 and therefore the typical section would not be changed.
- The group questioned if the visualizations will be updated based upon the design revisions.
    - Mr. Weaver explained that additional discussion is needed as no determination has been made regarding updating the visualizations.
- The group recommended in the future, the potential bridge design options be shown to the public.
    - Mr. Weaver suggested a graphic could be prepared for future public involvement activities, depicting potential bridge types.

Action Items:

- TGS – to investigate utilizing a retaining wall to tie proposed I-26 into existing as soon as possible.
- NCDOT – to provide results of Noise Analysis to the City of Asheville, the Asheville Design Center, and Buncombe County.
- TGS – to reevaluate I-240 alignment for potential to eliminate Hill Street impacts.
- URS and TGS – to investigate Environmental Justice concerns with Hillcrest Housing Complex connector road.
- NCDOT – to make Traffic Forecast available upon finalization.
- NCDOT – develop graphic showing potential bridge types for future public involvement.

cc: Attendees
File

I-26 Meeting
Sign-In

10/1/09

Name	Organization	e-mail
Cathy Ball	City of Asheville	cball@ashevillenc
DERRICK WEAVER	NCDOT - PDEA	DWEAVER@NCDOT.GOV
VINCE RHEA	NCDOT - PDEA	VRHEA@NCDOT.GOV
Stephanie Pankiewicz	Asheville Design Center	spankiewicz@landdesign.com
MANUEL CARBALLO	FIGG	mcarballo@figgbridge.com
Steve Browde	LOCHNER	sbrowde@hwlochner.com
BRIAN EASON	LOCHNER	beason@hwlochner.com
Jim Samsel	ADC	jim@samselarchitects
Eric Webb	ADC	rwebb@webbins.com
JOHN LEGERTON	ADC	john@legertonarchitecture.com
JAY ROHLEDER	FIGG	jrohleder@figgbridge.com
Chris Werner	URS	christopher_werner@urscorp.com
Bette Jackson	ADC	bettjac@indylink.com
BRUCE EMORY	ADC	emory22@charter.net
Chris Eller	Buncombe County	celler@civildesignconcepts.com
Peter Trencansky	URS	peter_trencansky@urscorp.com
GREG SHULER	COA - PW	gshuler@ashevillenc.gov
ALAN MCGUINN	CITY TRC REP	ALANMCGUINN@CJMD.COM
Ken Burleson	TGS Engineers	kburleson@tgsengineers.com
Charles Flowe	TGS Engineers	cflowe@tgsengineers.com
Rick Tipton	NCDOT	rtipton@NCDOT.GOV
KEN PUTNAM	COA	KPUTNAM@ASHEVILLENC

I-26 Connector – Buncombe County
STIP Project No. I-2513

Project Update Meeting with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County and Asheville Design Center

Friday, February 26, 2010
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
City of Asheville Public Works Building, Room A111
161 South Charlotte Street

1. Current Status of Alternative 4B
   - Alternative 4B - under vs. over
   - Adopted by Merger Team as Detailed Study Alternative

2. Requests to Revise Alternative 4B
   - Shorten Elevated Bridge Section on US 19-23-70
   - Tie US 19-23-70 NB directly into I-26
   - Shift I-240 to the west in vicinity of Hill Street
   - Remove/Relocate Connector Street from Atkinson Street to Patton Avenue

3. Modifications to Alternative 4 and 4B
   - I-26 and ramps shifted west to avoid Freeman House Historic Property

4. Other Requests
   - Request to clarify design speeds
   - Request to update visualization
   - Request to provide noise levels for Montford
   - Request to provide Traffic Forecast when complete
   - Request to evaluate bridge types

5. Open Discussion
   - Discuss any additional concerns

6. Next Steps/Schedule
   - Completion of Supplemental DEIS
   - Corridor Public Hearing
   - Selection of Least Environmentally Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)

MEETING SUMMARY

To: Project File

From: Joanna Rocco
AECOM

Date: October 1, 2015

RE: **Internal Memorandum of FBRMPO Governing Board Meeting**
NCDOT STIP Project I-2513 (I-26 Connector)

Project Team Attendees:

Rick Tipton, NCDOT – Division 3
Kristina Solberg, NCDOT – Division 3
Derrick Weaver, NCDOT – PDEA
John Burris, AECOM
Neil Dean, AECOM
Chris Werner, AECOM
Joanna Rocco - AECOM

The project team attended the September 24, 2015 French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) Governing Board meeting to follow-up with the board regarding project issues discussed at the April board meeting. The project team presented information regarding the proposed greenway, the comparison of the FBRMPO's travel demand models, and project constructability (see attached presentation).

The FBRMPO members noted that they appreciated the presentation and would contact the project team with any questions. John Sullivan noted that the project team is updating the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will be signing the document by the end of September or early October.

I-26 Connector

City of Asheville
Buncombe County
STIP Project No. I-2513

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
Governing Board Presentation

Land of Sky Offices, Asheville, North Carolina
September 24, 2015

I-26 Connector

Agenda

- Introductions and Purpose of Meeting
- Project Status
- Proposed Greenway Discussion
- Travel Demand Model Discussion
- Project Constructability
- Project Schedule and Next Steps
- Discussion

I-26 Connector

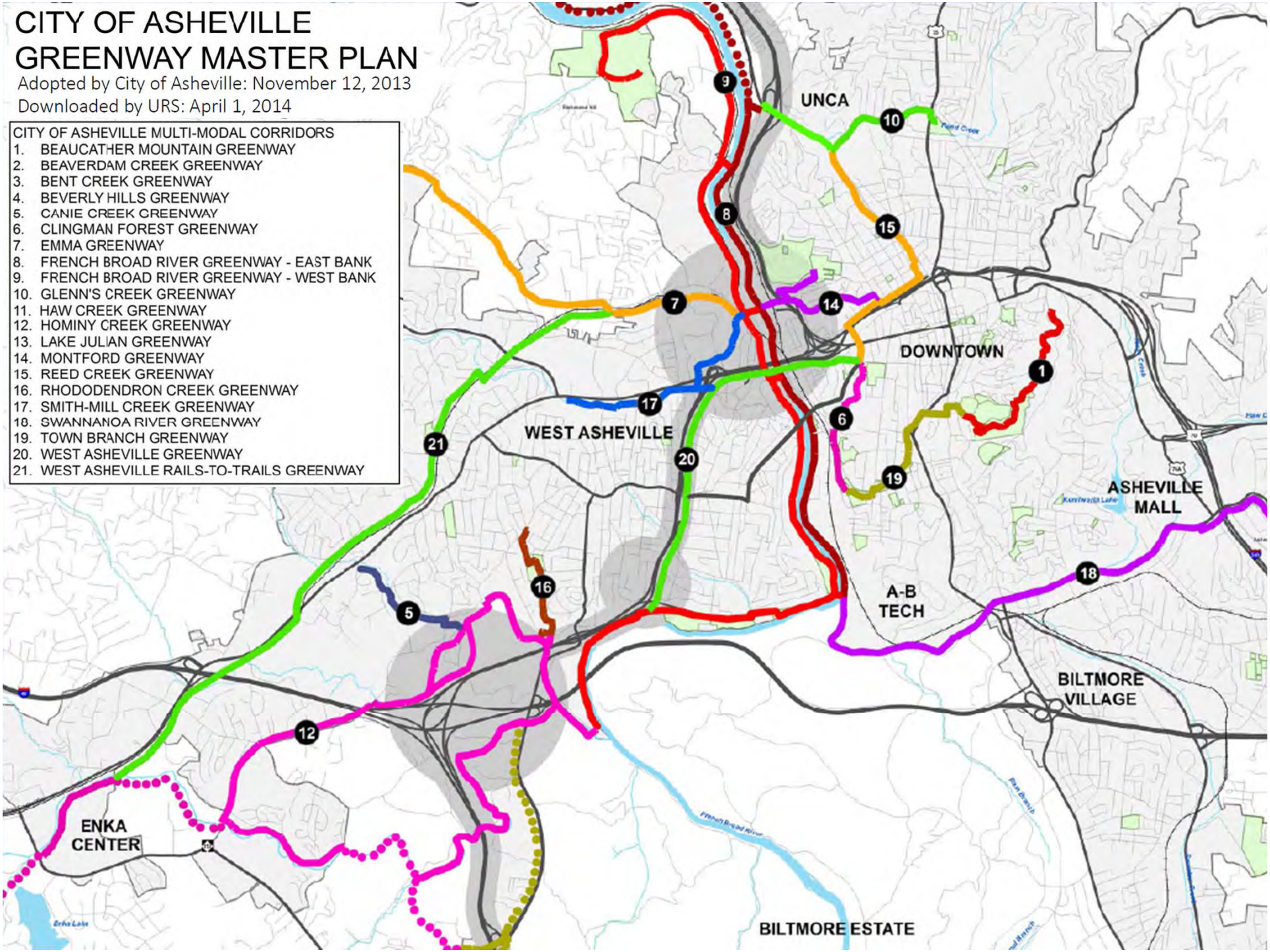
Proposed Greenway

- City of Asheville, North Carolina Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts, & Greenways Master Plan (City of Asheville 2013)
- Consistent with the "West Asheville Greenway", as proposed in 2013 plan
- Begins at Haywood Road, follows the I-26 corridor to merge with Patton Avenue and cross the French Broad River

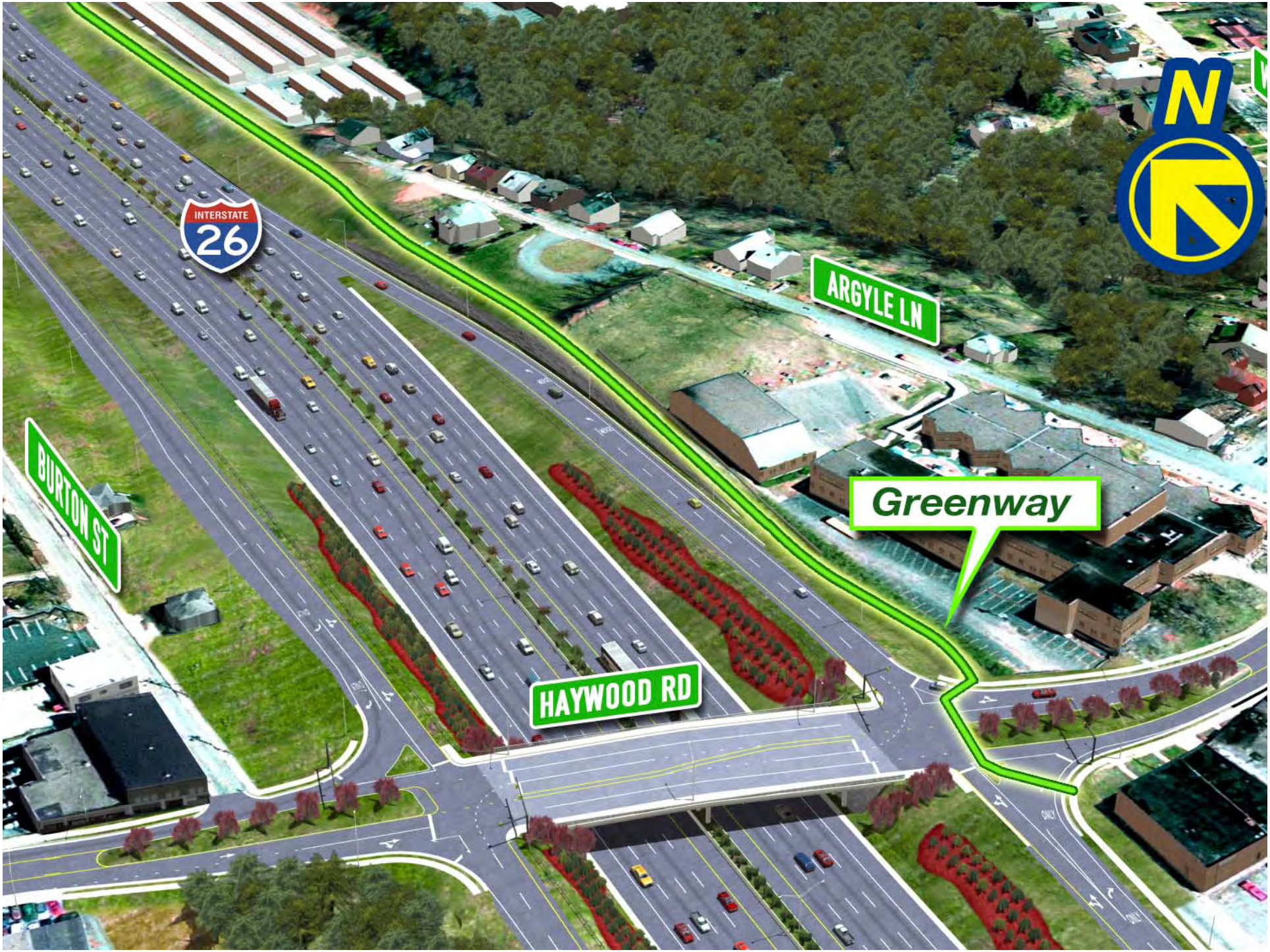
CITY OF ASHEVILLE GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

Adopted by City of Asheville: November 12, 2013

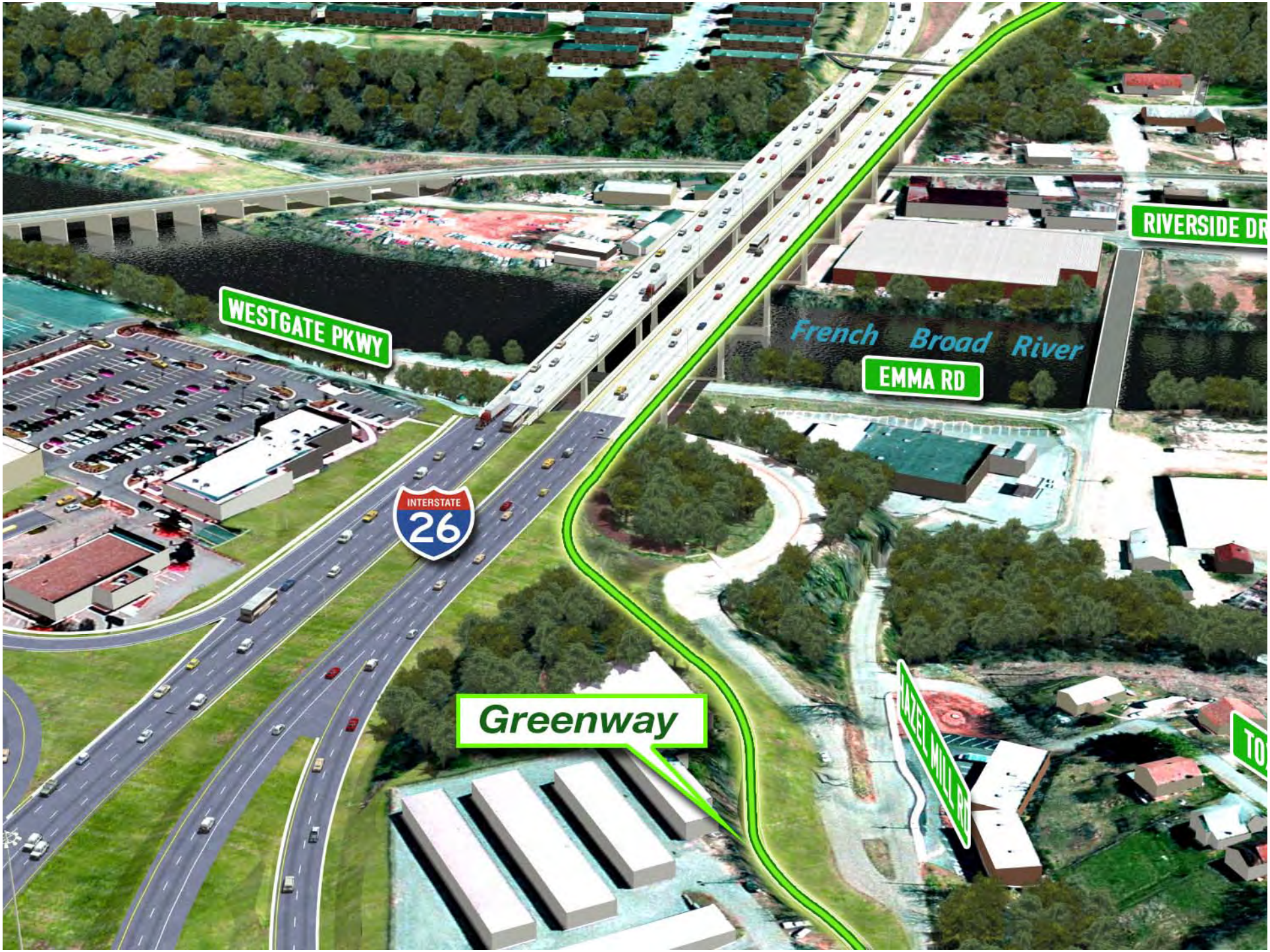
Downloaded by URS: April 1, 2014



Greenway
PATTON AVE
INTERSTATE
26
Westwood
Place
HAYWOOD RD
French Broad River
Asheville
N
INTERSTATE
240
AMBOY RD
French Broad River


INTERSTATE
26
ARGYLE LN
BURTON ST
Greenway
HAYWOOD RD
N

FRENCH BROAD RIVER
HAYWOOD RD
WESTWOOD PL
Greenway
INTERSTATE
26
FLORIDA AVE
HAYWOOD RD


WESTGATE PKWY
INTERSTATE
26
French Broad River
EMMA RD
RIVERSIDE DR
Greenway
AZEL MILL RD

Travel Demand Model Discussion

- 2015 Travel Demand Model to be released 10/2015
- DEIS traffic forecast based upon 2005 Travel Demand Model
- Evaluation between 2005 and 2010 performed when 2010 Travel Demand Model was released
  - Determined differences between 2005 and 2010 travel demand model changes would not effect selection of Preferred Alternative
- Evaluation performed between 2005, 2010 and 2015 Travel Demand Model given 2015 DEIS is complete
  - To confirm model changes would not effect selection of Preferred Alternative

I-26 Connector

VMT Analysis – Base and Future Year VMT

2005 Model	Base Year – 2005	Future Year - 2030
Model Wide	13,211,390	20,542,366
I-2513 Study Area	1,852,781	2,582,160

2010 Model	Base Year – 2005	Future Year - 2035
Model Wide	12,204,778	19,722,204
I-2513 Study Area	1,723,407	2,491,706

2015 Model	Base Year – 2010	Future Year - 2040
Model Wide	14,268,076	21,449,249
I-2513 Study Area	1,862,454	2,698,844

I-26 Connector

VMT Analysis – Compound Annual Growth Rates (CAGR)

2005 Model	2005-2030 CAGR
Model Wide	1.78%
I-2513 Study Area	1.34%

2010 Model	2005-2035 CAGR
Model Wide	1.61%
I-2513 Study Area	1.24%

2015 Model	2010-2040 CAGR
Model Wide	1.37%
I-2513 Study Area	1.24%

I-26 Connector

VMT Analysis – 30-Year Time Period VMT

2005 Model	Base Year – 2005	Future Year – 2035*	Percentage Change
Model Wide	13,211,390	22,438,347	
I-2513 Study Area	1,852,781	2,759,402	49%

2010 Model	Base Year – 2005	Future Year - 2035	Percentage Change
Model Wide	12,204,778	19,722,204	
I-2513 Study Area	1,723,407	2,491,706	45%

2015 Model	Base Year – 2010	Future Year - 2040	Percentage Change
Model Wide	14,268,076	21,449,249	
I-2513 Study Area	1,862,454	2,698,844	45%

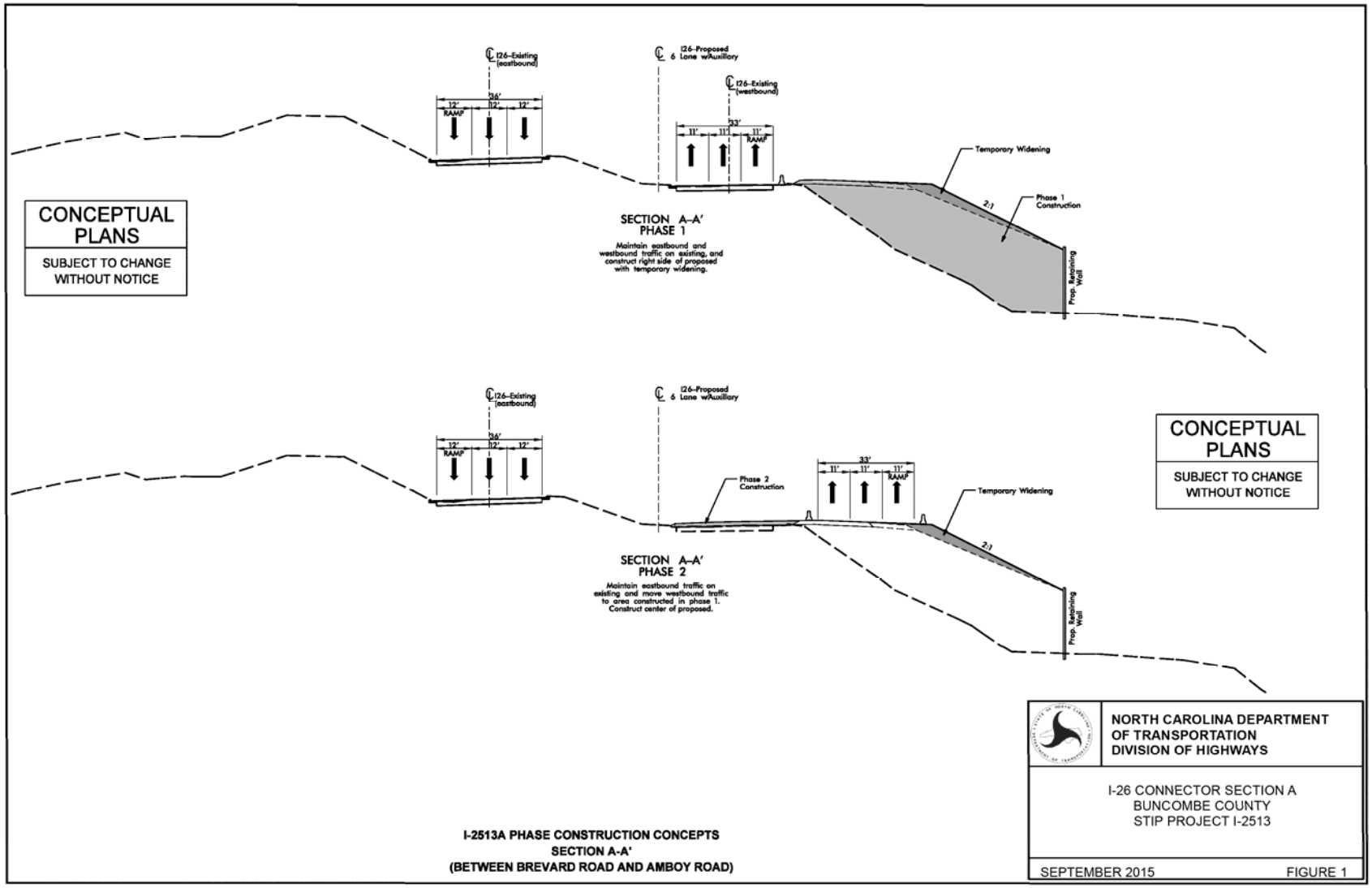
*Grown to 2035 using the 2005-2030 GAGR

I-26 Connector

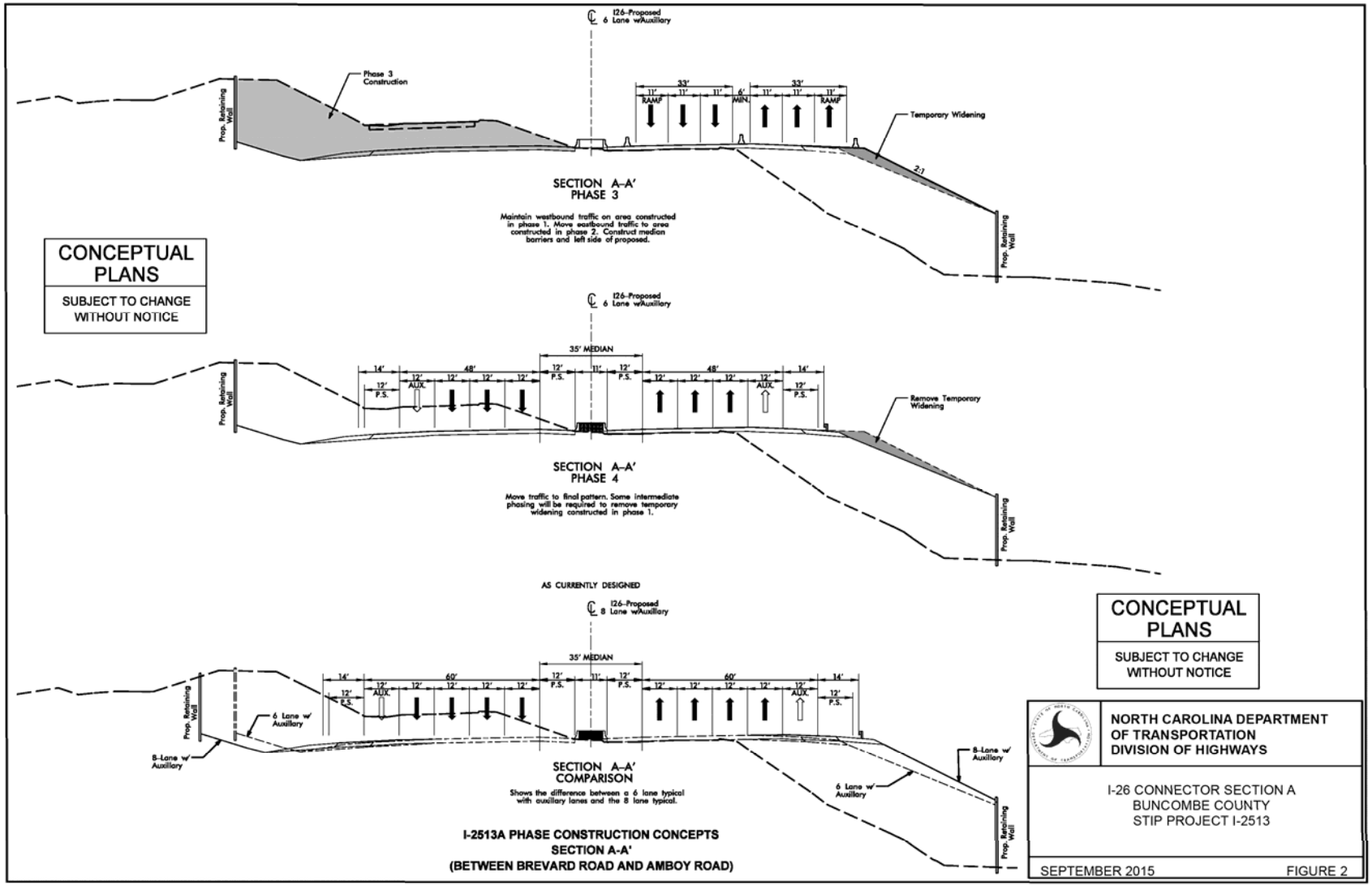
Conclusions

- Current forecast based upon 2005 model
  - Negligible difference in models from overall traffic forecasting perspective
  - Differences between 2005, 2010, 2015 Travel Demand Models would not effect selection of the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative

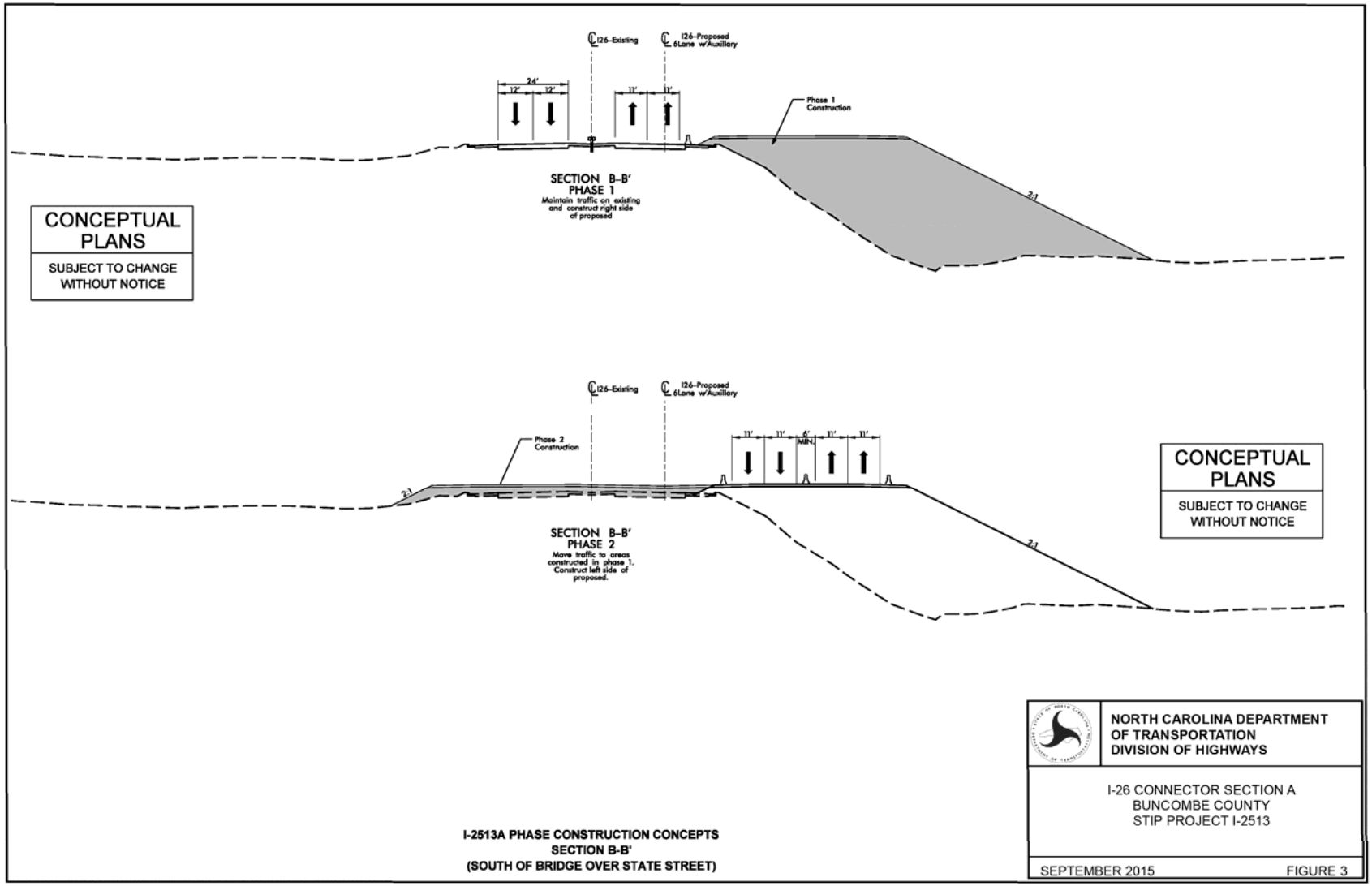
Section A-A (Between Brevard Road and Amboy Road)



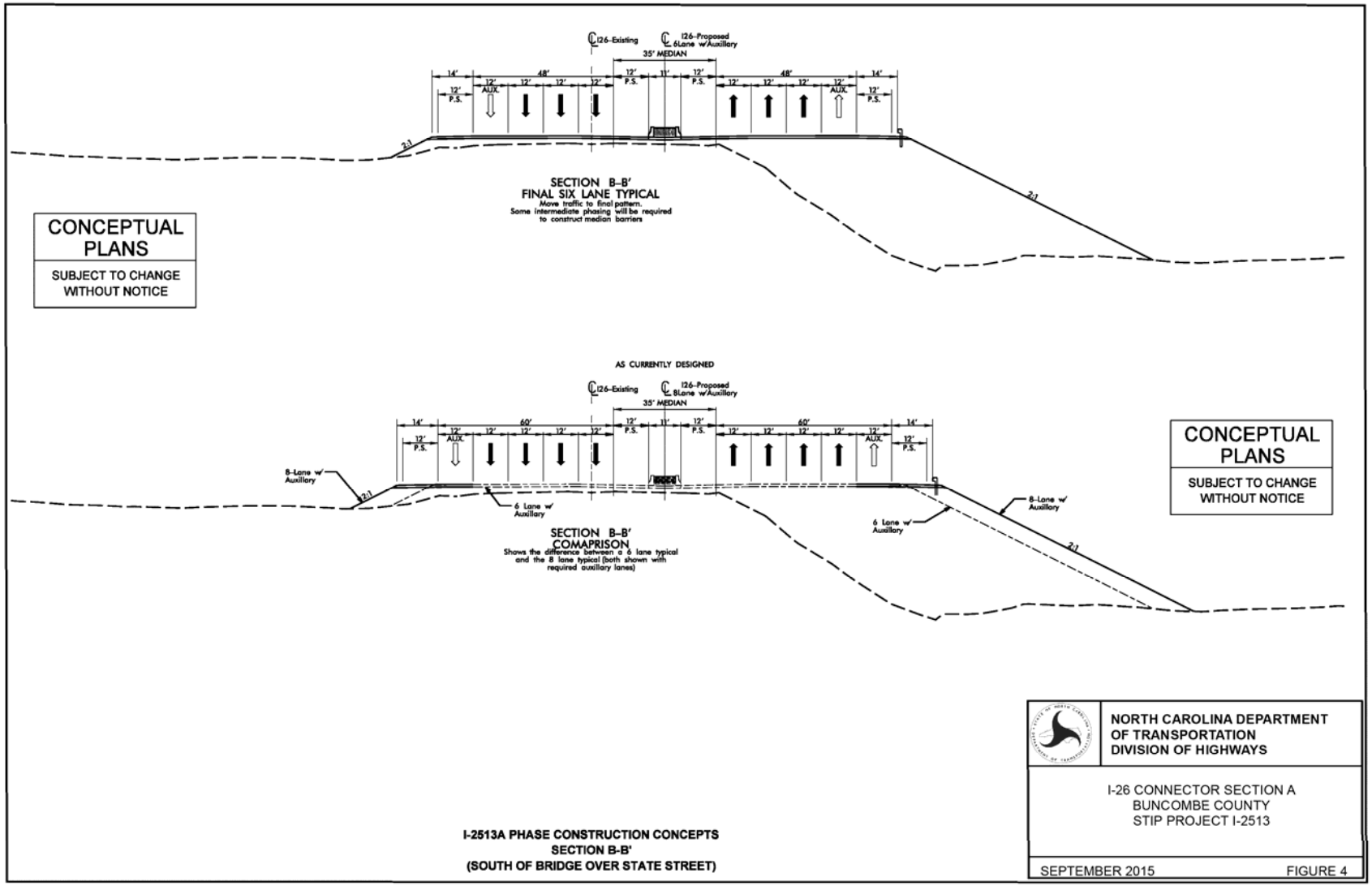
Section A-A (Between Brevard Road and Amboy Road)



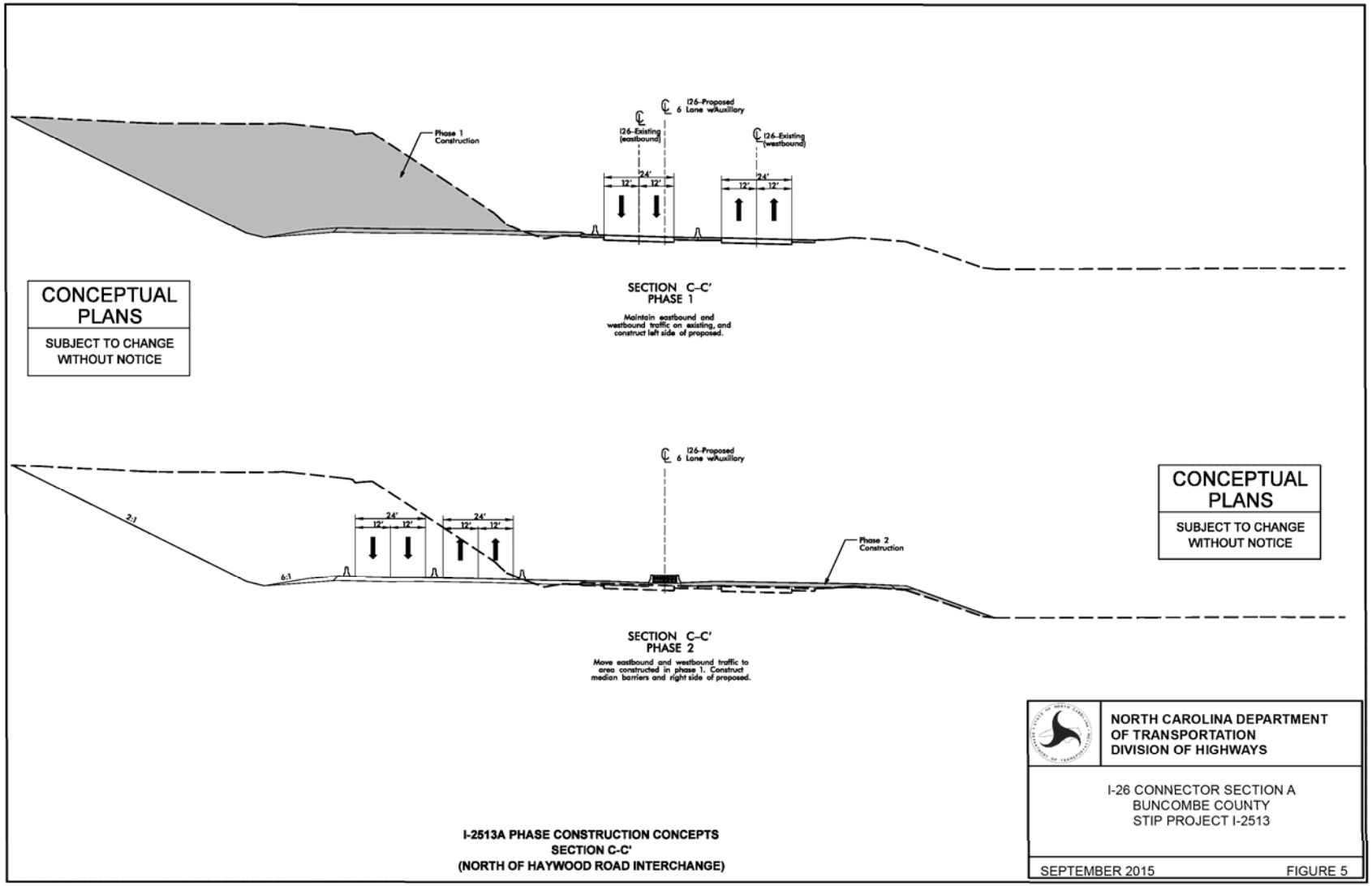
Section B-B (South of Bridge over State Street)



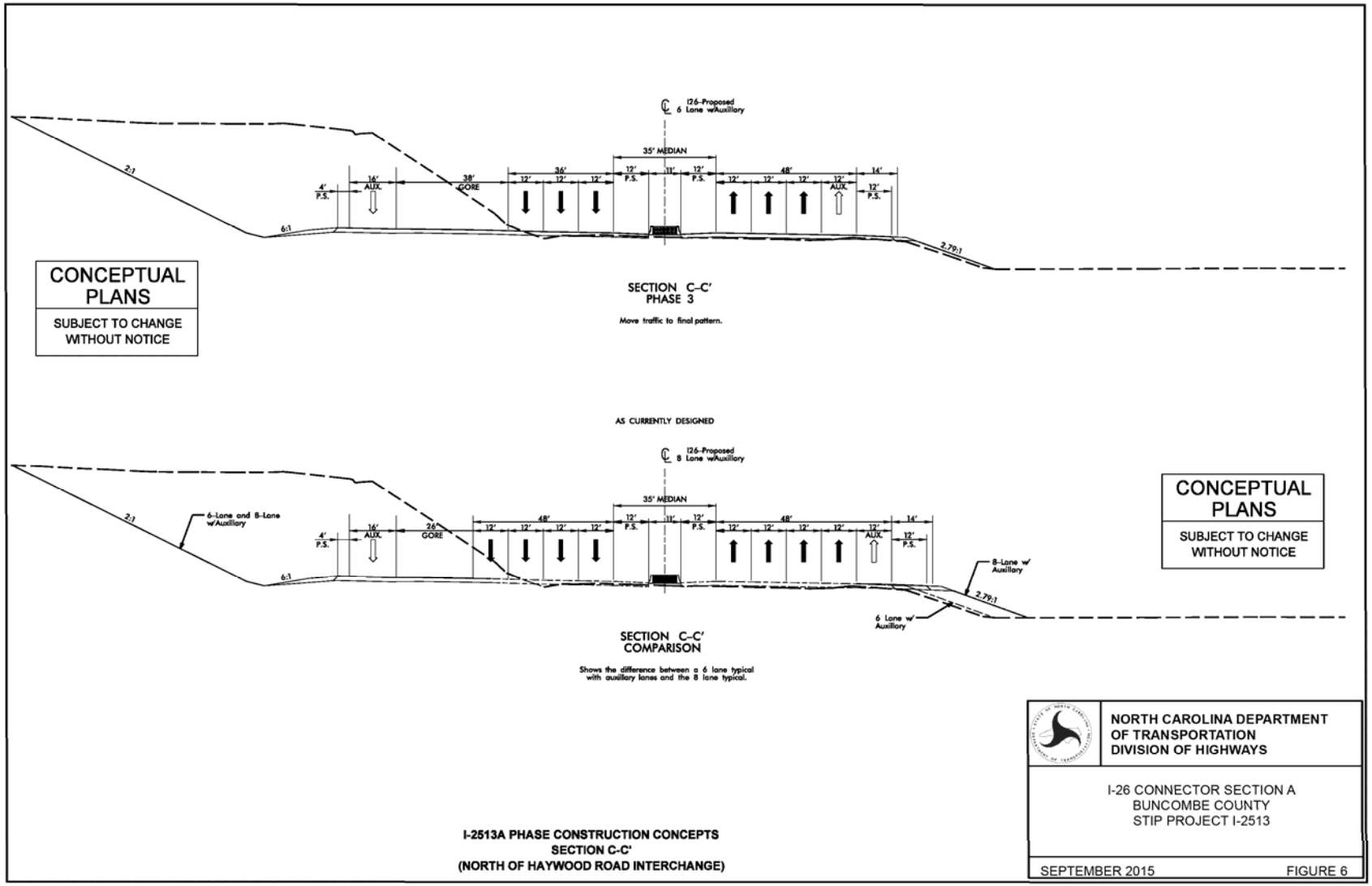
Section B-B (South of Bridge over State Street)

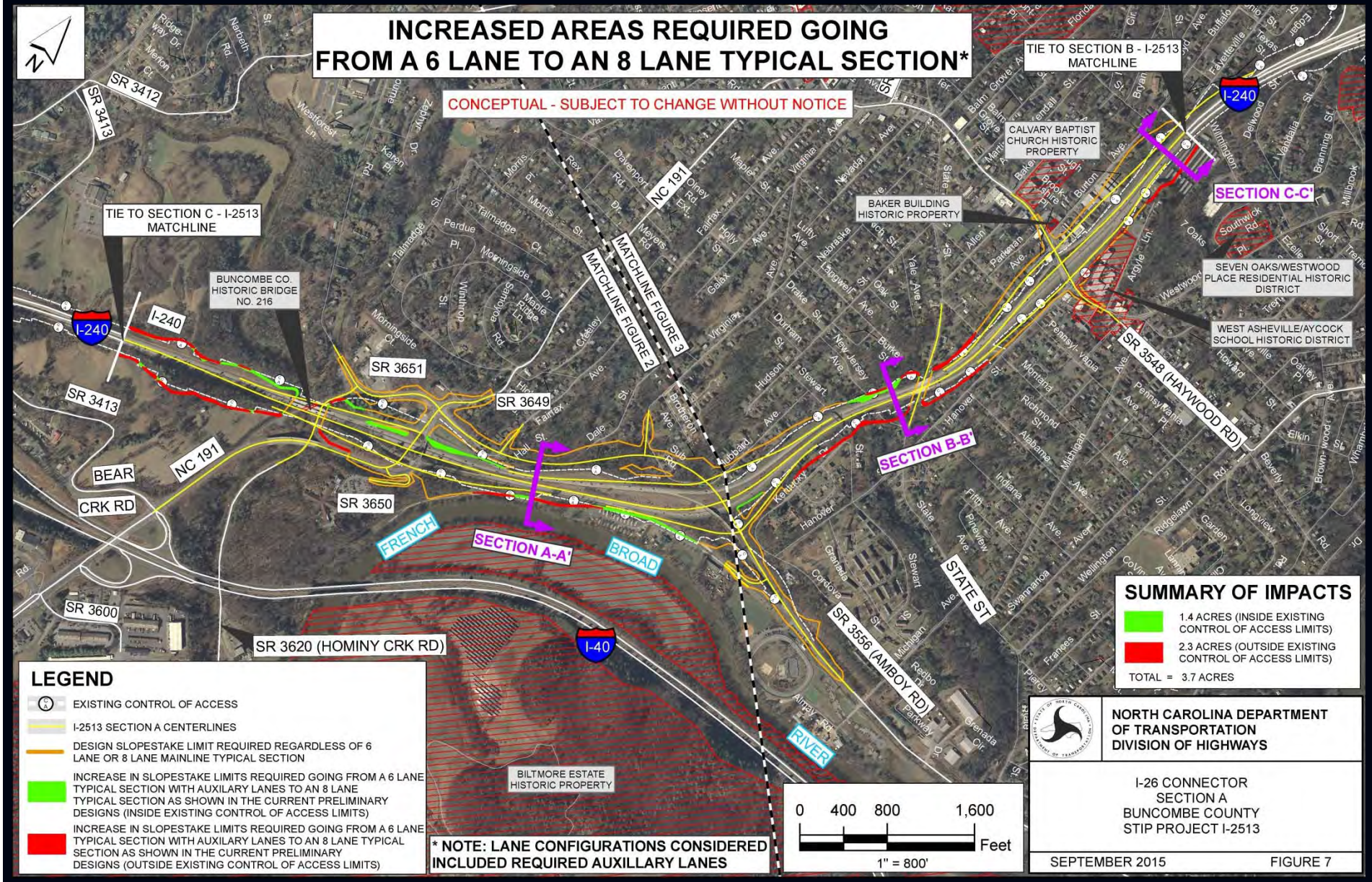


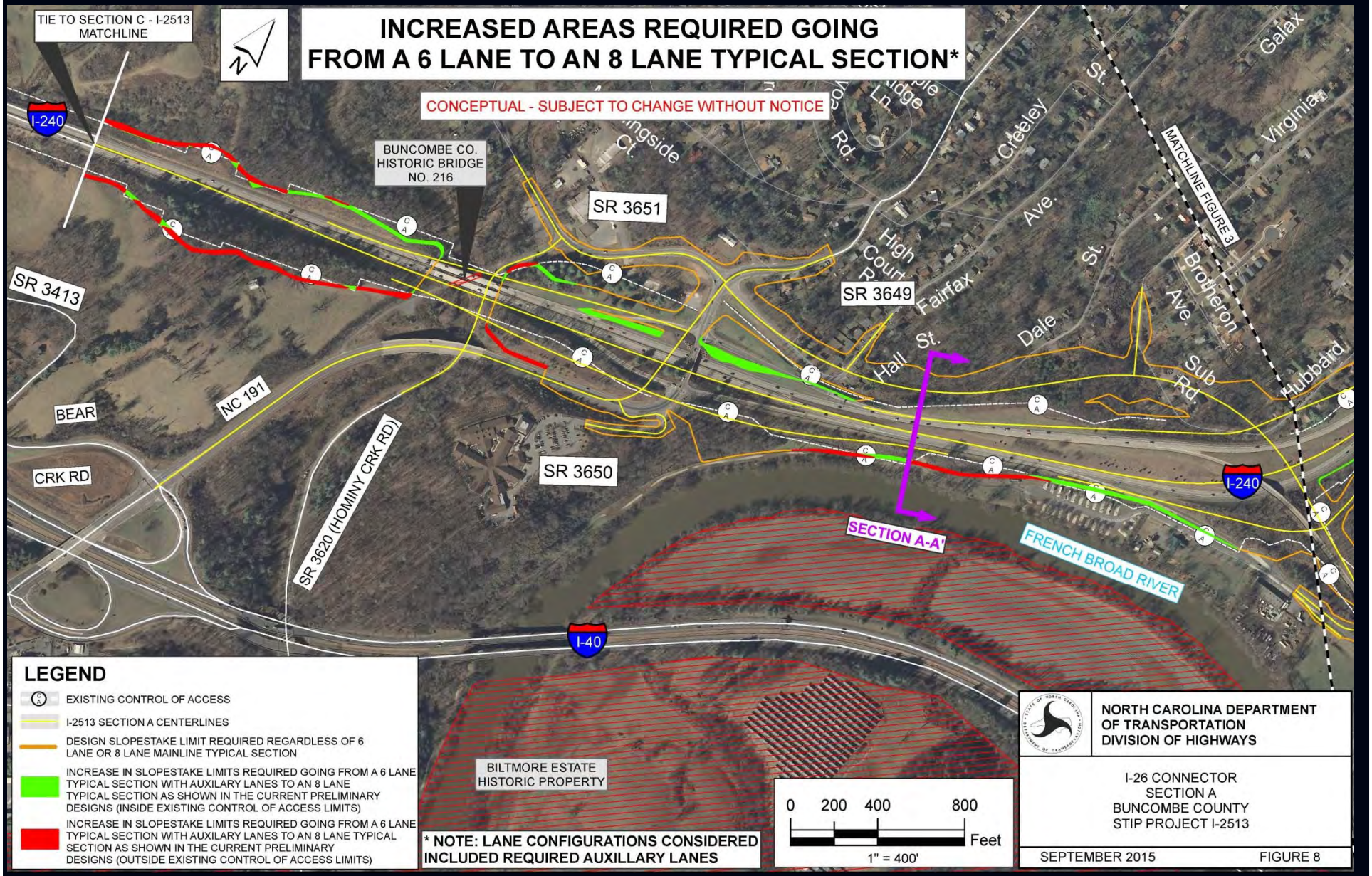
Section C-C (North of Haywood Road Interchange)



Section C-C (North of Haywood Road Interchange)

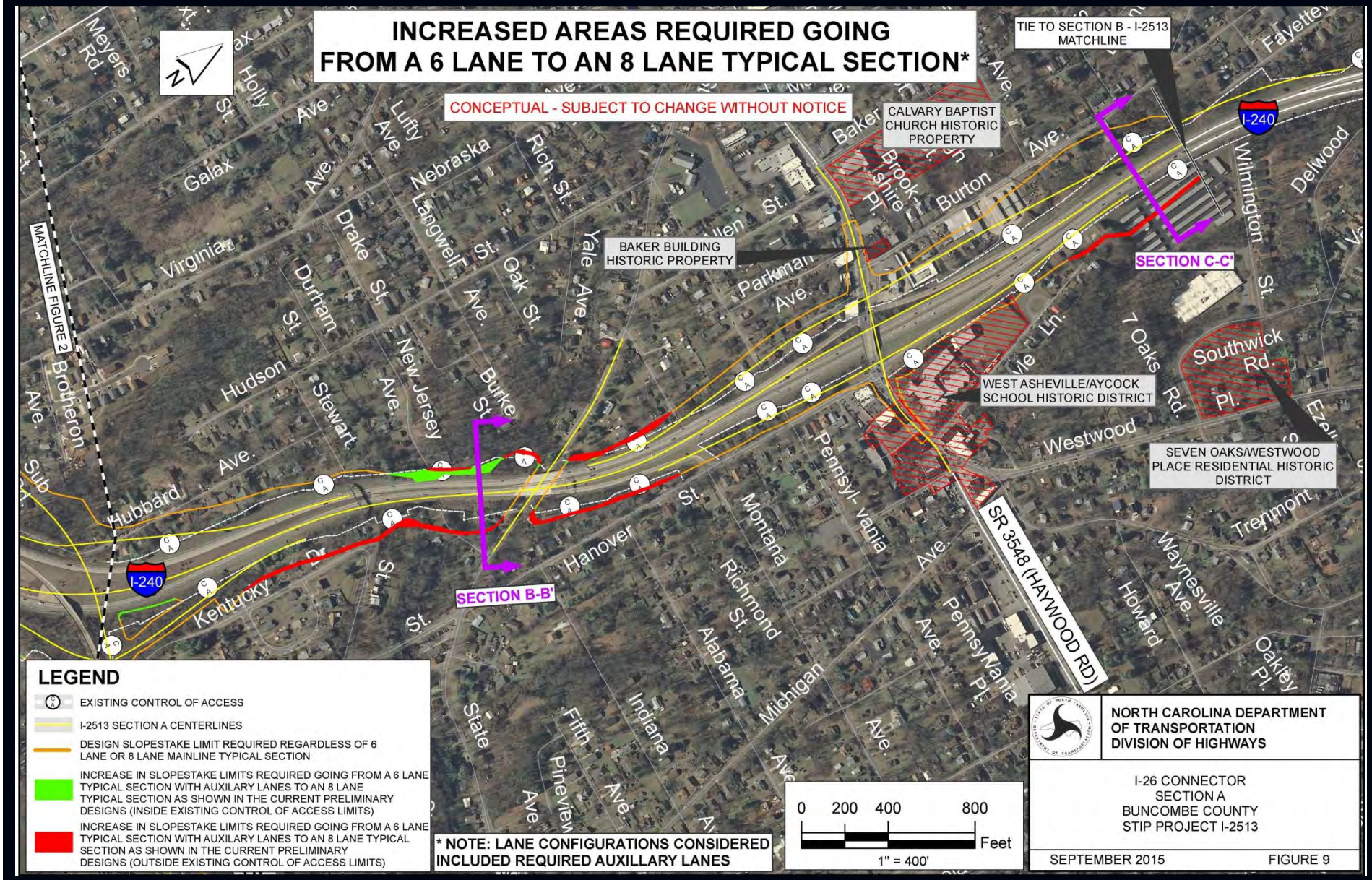



INCREASED AREAS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION*
CONCEPTUAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
TIE TO SECTION C - I-2513 MATCHLINE
TIE TO SECTION B - I-2513 MATCHLINE
BUNCOMBE CO. HISTORIC BRIDGE NO. 216
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORIC PROPERTY
BAKER BUILDING HISTORIC PROPERTY
SEVEN OAKS/WESTWOOD PLACE RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
WEST ASHEVILLE/AYCOCK SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT
BILTMORE ESTATE HISTORIC PROPERTY
MATCHLINE FIGURE 2
MATCHLINE FIGURE 3
SECTION A-A'
SECTION B-B'
SECTION C-C'
I-240
I-40
SR 3412
SR 3413
SR 3651
SR 3649
SR 3650
SR 3600
SR 3620 (HOMINY CRK RD)
SR 3548 (HAYWOOD RD)
SR 3556 (AMBOY RD)
NC 191
BEAR CRK RD
FRENCH BROAD RIVER
STATE ST
LEGEND
EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS
I-2513 SECTION A CENTERLINES
DESIGN SLOPESTAKE LIMIT REQUIRED REGARDLESS OF 6 LANE OR 8 LANE MAINLINE TYPICAL SECTION
INCREASE IN SLOPESTAKE LIMITS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TYPICAL SECTION WITH AUXILARY LANES TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION AS SHOWN IN THE CURRENT PRELIMINARY DESIGNS (INSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
INCREASE IN SLOPESTAKE LIMITS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TYPICAL SECTION WITH AUXILARY LANES TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION AS SHOWN IN THE CURRENT PRELIMINARY DESIGNS (OUTSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
* NOTE: LANE CONFIGURATIONS CONSIDERED INCLUDED REQUIRED AUXILLARY LANES
0 400 800 1,600 Feet
1" = 800'
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS
1.4 ACRES (INSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
2.3 ACRES (OUTSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
TOTAL = 3.7 ACRES
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
I-26 CONNECTOR
SECTION A
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
STIP PROJECT I-2513
SEPTEMBER 2015
FIGURE 7


INCREASED AREAS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION*
CONCEPTUAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
TIE TO SECTION C - I-2513 MATCHLINE
BUNCOMBE CO. HISTORIC BRIDGE NO. 216
I-240
SR 3651
SR 3649
SR 3413
NC 191
BEAR
CRK RD
SR 3620 (HOMINY CRK RD)
SR 3650
I-40
SECTION A-A'
FRENCH BROAD RIVER
BILTMORE ESTATE HISTORIC PROPERTY
MATCHLINE FIGURE 3
Creeley
Ave.
Fairfax
Dale
Hall
St.
Brotheron
Sub Rd
Hubbard
Virginia
Galax
LEGEND
EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS
I-2513 SECTION A CENTERLINES
DESIGN SLOPESTAKE LIMIT REQUIRED REGARDLESS OF 6 LANE OR 8 LANE MAINLINE TYPICAL SECTION
INCREASE IN SLOPESTAKE LIMITS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TYPICAL SECTION WITH AUXILARY LANES TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION AS SHOWN IN THE CURRENT PRELIMINARY DESIGNS (INSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
INCREASE IN SLOPESTAKE LIMITS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TYPICAL SECTION WITH AUXILARY LANES TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION AS SHOWN IN THE CURRENT PRELIMINARY DESIGNS (OUTSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
* NOTE: LANE CONFIGURATIONS CONSIDERED INCLUDED REQUIRED AUXILLARY LANES
0 200 400 800
Feet
1" = 400'
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
I-26 CONNECTOR
SECTION A
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
STIP PROJECT I-2513
SEPTEMBER 2015
FIGURE 8

INCREASED AREAS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION*

CONCEPTUAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS
- I-2513 SECTION A CENTERLINES
- DESIGN SLOPESTAKE LIMIT REQUIRED REGARDLESS OF 6 LANE OR 8 LANE MAINLINE TYPICAL SECTION
- INCREASE IN SLOPESTAKE LIMITS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TYPICAL SECTION WITH AUXILARY LANES TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION AS SHOWN IN THE CURRENT PRELIMINARY DESIGNS (INSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)
- INCREASE IN SLOPESTAKE LIMITS REQUIRED GOING FROM A 6 LANE TYPICAL SECTION WITH AUXILARY LANES TO AN 8 LANE TYPICAL SECTION AS SHOWN IN THE CURRENT PRELIMINARY DESIGNS (OUTSIDE EXISTING CONTROL OF ACCESS LIMITS)

*** NOTE: LANE CONFIGURATIONS CONSIDERED INCLUDED REQUIRED AUXILLARY LANES**

0 200 400 800 Feet

1" = 400'

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

I-26 CONNECTOR
SECTION A
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
STIP PROJECT I-2513

SEPTEMBER 2015 FIGURE 9

I-26 Connector

Next Steps

- DEIS Published 2015
  - Public Hearing and Open House to be held
  - Receive Public and Agencies Comments
  - Select Preferred Alternative
- Utilize 2015 Travel Demand Model
  - Prepare updated traffic forecast
  - Update/refine designs of Preferred Alternative per new traffic forecast and comments received
- Prepare FEIS
  - Include summary of updated engineering and environmental studies per revised designs
  - Summarize public and agency comments

Appendix B3

Records of Public Meetings

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1215 Jones Franklin Road
Suite 203, North Building
Raleigh, North Carolina 27606
Phone 919 851 7144
Fax 919 859 0557

145 West Parker Road (28655)
Post Office Drawer 1359
Morganton, North Carolina 28680-1359
Phone 704 437 4681
Fax 704 433 9146

MEMORANDUM

TGS ENGINEERS

DATE: October 4, 1996

TO: File

FROM: TGS Engineers LMR

SUBJECT: New I-26 Route, Asheville Connector NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

On October 3, 1996, Ken Burleson and Louis Raymond attended a meeting with Cy Stanley for the subject project in Asheville. Cy Stanley is a representative of the Westgate Shopping Center management company who was concerned with any alignments through the shopping center. Cy asked about the right-of-way schedule and any preliminary cost estimates for the new location alternatives.

The general project alignment and new location alternatives were discussed. It was explained that all of the work completed to date is preliminary and subject to change. Preliminary interchange designs were shown for the alignment through the golf course and the shopping center.

Cy believed the alignment through the shopping center should be viewed as unattractive due to the existing soil conditions in their parking lot parallel to the French Broad River. He recalled a geotechnical study Law Engineering had done for them and would try to find it to discourage any alignment through the shopping center.

cc: Joe Westbrook

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 3/10/1998

GROUP: WNC Corridor Assn.

LOCATION: Cornerstone Restaurant

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Ken Burleson, Joe Westbrook

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 20

NOTES: I presented the current project preliminary plans and schedule. We encouraged their participation in the public involvement process.

MEMO TO: File

FROM: J. K. Burleson

REFERENCE: Proposed I-26, Asheville Connector along I-240 from existing
I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC
TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701,
Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

On Tuesday, March 10, 1998, Tom Kendig and I met with several representatives of RiverLink, Inc. at their office in Asheville to discuss the subject project. Attached is a list of attendees.

Karen Cragnolin provided us with a copy of a letter report done for Riverlink by Day Wilburn Associates, Inc. which addresses the potential impacts of the I-26 project on the properties adjacent to the French Broad River. She then showed us a video RiverLink had made to visualize the new location alternatives for the project.

After the video presentation, I was asked several questions concerning the project alternatives and the project's current status. The principal concern I noted was the motor vehicle access between the river and the proposed I-26 Connector. I pointed out the Amboy Road and Haywood accesses would be improved but the existing Hazel Mill Road access near the Smokey Park Bridges is planned to be eliminated due to safety concerns.

Those attending expressed an interest in being involved in the project planning process. I provided both the NCDOT Planning and Environmental Branch and my address so they could submit written comments and concerns regarding this project. I also informed them of an upcoming citizens workshop meeting in April to solicit public input.

cc: Tom Kendig
Karen Cragnolin - Riverlink, Inc.

3/10/98
4:00 p.m.

RiverLink, Inc. Meeting

Name	Representing	Phone #s
Glenn Goodrich	Madison County	704/680-9031
Ricky Silver	RiverLink/Silver Line Plastics	704/252-8755
Bob Cassidy	Silver Line Plastics	704/252-8755
Terry Whitmire	Mountain Housing Opportunities	704/254-4030
Jim Samuel	RiverLink	704/253-1124
Bill Cecil, Jr.	Biltmore Estate	704/255-1776
Scott Dedman	Mountain Housing Opportunities	704/254-4030
Garry Byrns	Appalachian Animations	704/254-1440
Karen Cragnolin	Riverlink	704/252-8474

Memo To: File

From: J. K. Burleson, P.E.

Date: April 23, 1998

Subject: NC TIP No. - I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53) New I-26 route, Asheville connector along I-240 from existing I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County.

On Thursday April 23, a "Citizens Workshop" was held for the subject project from 4 to 7 p.m. at the National Guard Armory on Brevard Road in Asheville. Approximately 500 people attended this informal open-house meeting to view the conceptual plans showing the anticipated right of way impacts of the project. Project location maps, comment sheets and a list to add names to the project mailing list were provided (see attached). Three sets of plans showing all three considered alternatives were displayed. Earl Willis, Thad Duncan and myself from TGS attended as well as Jay Bissett and Tom Kendig from Planning and Environmental. Several representatives from the Division 13 Office including Bill Smart and Joe Buckner attended with numerous (at least 12) representatives from the Division 13 Right of Way Sections including Jack Arledge, Ken Roberts and Larry Wright. Also, due to a scoping field review the next day, several representatives from Roadway Design, Design Services and the consulting firm of Ko and Associates attended and helped the public understand the plans.

Most attending were curious as to the impact on their specific property but offered no serious objection to the project as a whole. A few questioned the earlier decision to widen existing I-240 from I-26 to Patton Avenue instead of providing a "bypass" west of Town. Some were concerned that eight lanes are proposed instead of six for the I-240 widening. Many attending desired noise wall consideration. It was explained to them that noise walls would be evaluated in the environmental impact studies.

Several tenants from the Westgate Shopping Center attended and voiced objection to the access revisions to the shopping center shown with Alternative 3. However, they appeared to favor 3 over 2 which displaces the entire shopping center.

Merchants along Haywood Road were concerned with the maintenance of traffic during construction and were informed traffic service interruptions would be minimized.

Attendees living along Fairfax Avenue which were shown alternatives displaying both a realignment and a dead-ending of Fairfax were mixed in their preference of the alternatives. Some expressed opposition to dead-ending due to emergency vehicle access and vehicles turning around at the end of the street. Earlier, the City expressed no problem with the dead-Memo To

ending alternative which should be more economical due to less relocations and construction cost.

Many attending that were being displaced had questions for the NCDOT Right of Way officials in attendance.

One set of the conceptual plans was left at the Division 13 office in Asheville for future reference.

CC: Tom Kendig

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 10/14/98

GROUP: Leadership Asheville Seniors

LOCATION: Riverlink Office Lyman Street

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Ken Burleson, Tom Kendig

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 30

NOTES: We attended this meeting to inform attendee about the proposed project and participated in a panel discussion concerning growth issues.

MEMO TO: File

FROM: Ken Burleson

SUBJECT: New I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

DATE: January 27, 1999

On Monday January 25, 1999 Tom Kendig, John Schrohenloher and I attended the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods (CAN) Meeting at Trinity Church in Asheville as guests of Ron Fuller. Tom and I explained that we wanted to make direct contact with directly affected neighborhoods to hold meetings to discuss project impacts. Several project opponents were present and the meeting turned into somewhat of a bashing of the project. Tom and I did get the names of several neighborhood group contacts and the CAN directors promised their assistance to provide more contacts as well as maps of the neighborhoods.

MEMO TO: File

FROM: TGS Engineers

SUBJECT: Westwood Place Neighborhood Meeting concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

DATE: April 5, 1999

On Monday, March 29, 1999, Tom Kendig (NCDOT), Tony Bowers (FHWA), John Schrohenloher (FHWA), Ken Burleson and Rich Fontanilla conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the residents of Westwood neighborhood at Westwood Baptist Church on Westwood Place in West Asheville. Gladys Lance, Pat Whitaker, and Larry Wright from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the project mailing list whose addresses are on streets in the immediate neighborhood.

About 70 people from the surrounding community attended. Attending were Greg Arnold, the president of the Westwood Neighborhood Association, who assisted in arranging the meeting and distributing additional notifications in the neighborhood, as well as Brian Peterson, who is the president of the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods, and Gloria Johnson, who is the president of the Burton Street Neighborhood that will also be impacted by the project. Councilman Earl Cobb was the only City official noted in attendance. Pat Skalski, who was a member of the Asheville Connector Advisory Committee, a group formed by NCDOT Statewide Planning during the pilot study that had previously addressed the project, also attended.

Colored functional plans for the three project alternatives showing the project area affecting the Westwood Neighborhood from south of Haywood Road to north of Patton Avenue were displayed. Tom and Ken started the meeting by addressing the three project alternatives and explaining the anticipated impacts to the Westwood neighborhood. Then, the floor was opened for questions before asking for the concerns of the attendees. The principal concerns were listed on a flip chart so that the project team could study and address them at a future neighborhood meeting.

In general, the attendees were very courteous. Most of the attendees were property owners who had lived in the community for some time. The Westwood neighborhood was defined by the attendees as the area bound by Patton Avenue, the French Broad River (Craven Street), Haywood Road and I-240. Many questions regarded vehicle access modifications to both their neighborhood and the Westgate Shopping Center. Many were also concerned with pedestrian

access. Noise abatement was also a major issue of concern. Before the meeting, one attendee handed out a sketch showing his "Alternate 4" proposal for the project which involved another I-240 crossing of the French Broad River to the north of the existing location. The sketch never was mentioned during the meeting, but its attributes were discussed with the gentleman who created it afterward.

Tom explained the project corridor was selected as part of an earlier NCDOT study and that traffic projections required eight lanes along existing I-240 from Patton Avenue to the I-40 interchange. Pat Skalski, who was involved in the earlier NCDOT study, expressed her reservations regarding the project including the traffic projections which call for eight lanes.

The following is a list of the principal concerns of the Westwood neighborhood residents attending this meeting:

Access to Westwood Place. The attendees expressed a fear of additional traffic in their neighborhood during or after project construction and therefore, do not desire a proposed connection to eastbound Patton Avenue with Alternative 3.

Noise abatement. The attendees wanted as much noise abatement as possible. Abatement measures other than concrete noise walls such as earth berms and vegetative barriers or legislation to reduce noise (such as to prohibit trucks from "downshifting" to slow down) were suggested. It was explained that Alternates 1 and 2, contain 36 (2 businesses, 33 residents, and 1 school) locations that meet the NCDOT criteria for noise abatement, and Alternate 3 has a total of 31 (3 businesses, 27 residents, and 1 school) locations eligible for noise abatement. The attendees were informed that high noise walls often require unwanted shading. The desire for noise walls was noted and attendees were informed they would be studied for all eligible locations.

Property values. The attendees were concerned that their property values had decreased as a result of the public knowledge of the impending project. Those to be relocated felt the reduced value would effect their bargaining power with NCDOT. The relocation polices governing right-of-way acquisition were briefly explained referring to the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646), and the North Carolina Relocation Assistance Act (GS-133-5 through 133-18). Brian Peterson offered his legal services to assist relocated property owners in negotiations with NCDOT. In discussions with Tony Bowers after the meeting, it was noted that we need to explain that comparable housing prices could and should be obtained outside the project area during the appraisal phase of acquisition.

Quality of Asheville (living) issues. Attendees requested as much greenspace as possible. They suggested creation of greenways, parks or community centers as part of the project. However, it was noted that no parks or community centers will be affected by the project within the Westwood neighborhood.

Preservation of the Westgate Shopping Center as a viable center. It was explained that Alternatives 1 and 2, require removal of the Westgate shopping center, and although Alternate 3

retains Westgate, it seriously affects the access from Patton Avenue. Most attendees use the center and desire to keep Westgate as it is. It was noted the access modifications to the center may result in the voluntary relocation of the current business tenants to other locations. If Westgate does not remain generally as is, most felt the desire for aesthetics gives favor to the alternatives that remove the center instead of a portion of the golf course at the Holiday Inn Sunspree.

Dust and blasting during the construction of project. It was noted that dust and blasting during the project construction could cause problems for the surrounding community. Methods and specific efforts to reduce dust during construction should be identified. It was asked if blasting would be required, and if so, what efforts to reduce the vibration impacts would be employed during construction.

Construction of Noise Walls before the construction of project. Many attendees desired any noise walls to be constructed before the project to abate construction noise.

Bicycle/pedestrian access on Patton Avenue and Haywood Road. Some attendees questioned the effects of the project on bicycle and pedestrian access especially along Patton and Haywood Road. It was explained the current access along westbound Patton would be kept and extended through the project. Also along Haywood, existing sidewalks will be replaced.

Added Bicycle/pedestrian access along eastbound Patton Avenue. A desire for sidewalks along eastbound Patton from west of I-240 across the project to the Westwood Neighborhood was also expressed.

Concern for the B & B Pharmacy. Many attendees expressed concern about project effects to the B & B Pharmacy at the corner of Haywood and Hanover Street. According to current plans, the building would remain but parking beside and behind the pharmacy would be eliminated to allow the freeway ramp direct access to Haywood Road. A desire for project accommodations to replace parking at the pharmacy was expressed.

Consistency with Haywood Road plans. Some attendees expressed a desire for any improvements at the Haywood Road interchange to be consistent with local plans to improve the area. Also, they were concerned that additional traffic improvements along Haywood Road would be needed to accommodate the project and desired any such improvements occur at the same time as the construction of the I-26 connector.

Aesthetics along new highway (native vegetation). Some attendees desired landscaping along the new I-26 connector especially with native vegetation to improve project aesthetics and also to reduce traffic noise.

Concern about hazardous materials. Some attendees noted and questioned the amounts of hazardous wastes that would be transported along the completed project. Also it was noted that, certain types of hazardous materials, such as explosives, will be used during project construction leading to safety concerns.

Maintenance of turn-arounds. Several attendees noted a lack of maintenance along some of the dead-ended streets and desired assurances that the proposed turn-arounds at the end of these streets be maintained.

Six lanes only. One attendee wrote this concern on the list after the meeting. Six lanes will not properly accommodate the projected traffic in 20 years for the I-26 connector.

Other issues that were discussed included the schedule of project and historical property considerations.

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Why: **To discuss plans to widen I-240 between Patton Avenue and Haywood Road**

When: **Monday, March 29, 1999 at 7:00 pm**

Where: **Westwood Baptist Church**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed.

NCDOT desires to meet with residents that live adjacent to the proposed project that may be directly affected by project implementation. Along with several other neighborhoods, Westwood has been identified as one which could be impacted. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns so they may plan appropriate project mitigation measures to minimize impacts to this neighborhood.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Westwood area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other neighborhoods or business communities along this project.

Mr. Thomas R. Kendig
NCDOT Project Development &
Environmental Analysis Branch
PO Box 25201
Raleigh NC 27611
919-733-7844 Ext. 263

Mr. J. Kenneth Burleson
TGS Engineers
975 Walnut St. Suite 141
Cary, NC 27511
919-319-8850 Ext. 109

MEMO TO: File

FROM: Rich Fontanilla

SUBJECT: New I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

DATE: April 5, 1999

On Monday, March 30, 1999 Tom Kendig (NCDOT), Tony Bowers (FHWA), John Schrohenloher (FHWA), Ken Burleson, and I conducted a public meeting for the residents of Burton Street neighborhood at Wilson Chapel. Approximately 35 people from the surrounding community attended. Tom and Ken addressed the three project proposals and the impact it will have on the community. The following is the list of concerns Burton St. neighborhood addressed:

Traffic increase on Burton St. during construction. Many residents were concerned of the possible increase in motor vehicle traffic during the construction of the I-26 connector. Residents believe that Burton St. will become a thoroughfare as daily commuters try to avoid the construction around I-26.

Retaining walls. Build retaining walls for the residents and businesses that are encroaching the right-of-way for the new I-26 connector.

Dust from construction. Air quality hazards could pose a threat to the surrounding community. Quality control measures need to be implemented to reduce the dust and debris from the construction.

Retain Fayetteville and Burton Streets. These streets will not be removed as a result of the new I-26 connector. They will, however, be impacted to some extent and design improvements need to be considered.

Noise walls. This option and other noise reductions will be considered for the residents that will be affected. For Alternates 1 and 2, a total of 12 (1 church and 11 residents) locations are eligible for noise abatement. Alternate 3 has 7 (1 church and 6 residents) noise abatement considerations.

Oppose widening I-240 (All three proposals). The main opposition from the community was Spiro Aciferis, who owns several properties in the impacted area.

Effect on riverfront of French Broad River. In relation to Burton St. neighborhood, this concern is not a major issue since the French Broad River is not within close proximity to the community.

Compensation for properties with no physical claim. Questions pertaining to this matter and issues concerning right-of-way compensation were answered by the following NCDOT personnel: Gladys Lance, Larry Wright, and Janice Rodgers. The policies for compensation fall under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646), and the North Carolina Relocation Assistance Act (GS-133-5 through 133-18).

Physical relocation of houses. The same NCDOT personnel listed above provided the detailed information on this subject matter. In accordance with the policy listed above, the NCDOT has the following three programs for relocation assistance: Relocation Assistance, Relocation Moving Programs, and Relocation Housing Payments or Rent Supplement.

Blasting. The use of explosives is always very cautious. In accordance with strict federal and state policies, the contracted company handling explosives will implement risk assessment procedures and safety guidelines on the project site.

Other concerns that were discussed included time schedule of project and historical property policy. Most of the residents did not strongly oppose the project, however, many of them wanted a definite time line in for personal planning. Pastor Curtis Williams of Wilson Chapel expressed many of the residents' concerns at the TIP meeting on March 31, 1999. The (former) Friendly Grocery Store located on Haywood St. and Burton St. is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Some opponents of the project who were not from the community were present (David Peterson, H.K. Edgerton and Sara Pearson).

HARA

BURTON ST. NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Why: **To discuss plans to widen I-240 between Patton Avenue and Haywood Road**

When: **Tuesday, March 30, 1999 at 5:30 pm**

Where: **Burton Street Community Center**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed.

NCDOT desires to meet with residents that live adjacent to the proposed project that may be directly affected by project implementation. Along with several other neighborhoods, the Burton Street area has been identified as one which could be impacted. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns so they may plan appropriate project mitigation measures to minimize impacts to this neighborhood.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Burton Street area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other neighborhoods or business communities along this project.

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Mr. J. Kenneth Burleson
TGS Engineers
975 Walnut St. Suite 141
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919-319-8850 Ext. 109

MEMO TO: File

FROM: TGS Engineers

SUBJECT: Burton Street Neighborhood Meeting concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

DATE: April 5, 1999

On Tuesday, March 30, 1999, Tom Kendig (NCDOT), Tony Bowers (FHWA), John Schrohenloher (FHWA), Ken Burleson and Rich Fontanilla conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the residents of Burton Street neighborhood at the former Wilsons Chapel United Methodist Church on Burton Street in West Asheville. Gladys Lance, Janice Rogers and Larry Wright from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the project mailing list whose addresses are along streets in the immediate neighborhood. The meeting location was changed from the Burton Street Community Center to the Church to accommodate a larger crowd.

About 35 people from the surrounding community attended. Attending were Gloria Johnson, the president of the Burton Street Neighborhood Association, who assisted in arranging the meeting and distributing additional notifications in the neighborhood, as well as Brian Peterson, who is the president of the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods. Ron Fuller from the City Planning Department was the only City official noted in attendance.

Colored functional plans showing the three project alternatives affecting the Burton Street Neighborhood from south of Haywood Road to north of Patton Avenue were displayed. Tom started the meeting by welcoming the attendees and explaining the purpose of the meeting which was to collect concerns and determine the community's desires regarding the project. He then explained the project corridor was selected as part of an earlier NCDOT study and that traffic projections required eight lanes along existing I-240 from Patton Avenue to the I-40 interchange. Ken explained the three project alternatives and discussed the anticipated impacts to the Burton Street neighborhood. Then, the floor was opened for questions. The principal concerns were listed on a flip chart so that the project team could study and address them at a future neighborhood meeting.

In general, the attendees were very courteous. Most of the attendees were property owners who had lived in the community for some time. The Burton Street neighborhood was defined by the attendees as the area bound by Patton Avenue, Florida Street, Haywood Road and I-240. Many

questions regarded schedule and relocation procedures. Noise abatement was also an issue of concern.

The following is a list of the principal concerns of the Burton Street community residents attending this meeting:

Traffic increases on Burton Street during construction. Many residents were concerned of the possible increase in motor vehicle traffic during the construction of the project. The attendees were worried that Burton Street will become a thoroughfare as daily commuters try to avoid the construction along I-240.

Retaining walls. Attendees expressed a desire to remain in the community and desired retaining walls to be investigated to avoid the relocation of as many residences as possible.

Dust from construction. Attendees expressed a concern about dust during construction and desired all possible methods to reduce this dust.

Retain Fayetteville and Burton Streets. Attendees expressed a desire to retain both Burton and Fayetteville Streets. Although Burton will not be modified as a result of the project, several residences along the east side may require relocation. The southern end of Fayetteville Street could also be affected regardless of the alternative. None, expressed a desire for Alternate 3 which has the most impact to the community.

Blasting. Attendees expressed a concern about the potential damages from any blasting during construction and desired to know how to be compensated for such damages.

Noise walls. Although reducing relocations was the principal concern, the consideration of noise walls was also wanted. The attendees were informed that high noise walls often require unwanted shading. The desire for noise walls was noted and attendees were informed they would be studied for all eligible locations. Along Alternates 1 and 2 within the Burton Street area, a total of 12 (one church and 11 residents) locations are eligible for noise abatement according to current NCDOT noise policy. Alternate 3 has 7 (one church and six residents) locations eligible for noise abatement considerations.

Oppose widening I-240 (All three proposals). Some attendees, citing that they were uninformed of the NCDOT study which chose the corridor, opposed any of the considered alternatives that widen existing I-240.

Affect on river front of French Broad River. Some attendees desired to know the effects of the project on the river front development plans along the French Broad River which is not within close proximity to the community. This concern was based on the assumption that their community was being disrupted to avoid the river front development plans.

Compensation for properties with no physical claim. Attendees with properties close to the project that are not physically impacted questioned if they would be compensated for reduced

property values as a result of the project. Right of Way personnel explained there was no means of compensating these owners. However, it was noted that noise walls would be considered to reduce noise impacts at eligible locations.

Physical relocation of houses. Attendees questioned whether homes on property required for construction could be moved or new homes could be constructed within the community. One attendee, questioned NCDOT authority concerning property taking. The NCDOT Right of Way personnel provided the information regarding the three programs for relocation assistance: Relocation Assistance, Relocation Moving Programs, and Relocation Housing Payments or Rent Supplement. It was noted that if vacant property could be acquired in the community, it may be possible to move residences that need to be taken for construction.

Most of the residents did not strongly oppose the project, however, many of them wanted a definite time line in for personal planning. One of the attendees, H. K. Edgerton whose sister lives in the community, expressed his opposition to the project as proposed and made reference to law suits to prevent the project.

After this meeting, at the TIP hearing on March 31, 1999, Pastor Curtis Williams of the Wilson Chapel Church where this meeting was held, also expressed many of the residents concerns. However, since the former congregation of his church has relocated, he did not request efforts to be made to allow the existing church building along Burton Street to remain.

BURTON ST. NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Why: **To discuss plans to widen I-240 between Patton Avenue and Haywood Road**

When: **Tuesday, March 30, 1999 at 5:30 pm**

Where: **Burton Street Community Center**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed.

NCDOT desires to meet with residents that live adjacent to the proposed project that may be directly affected by project implementation. Along with several other neighborhoods, the Burton Street area has been identified as one which could be impacted. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns so they may plan appropriate project mitigation measures to minimize impacts to this neighborhood.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Burton Street area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other neighborhoods or business communities along this project.

Mr. Thomas R. Kendig
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145 West Parker Road (28655)
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Morganton, North Carolina 28680-1359
Phone 828 437 4681
Fax 828 433 9146

May 21, 1999

TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: Meeting with Haywood Road Businesses Concerning the I-26 Connector / I-240 widening at Haywood Road

At 3:00 PM on Monday, May 17, 1999, the following project personnel met with the Haywood Road Business Community at the former Aycock School Cafeteria:

Tom Kendig	PD & EA
Missy Dickens	PD & EA
Ken Burleson	TGS Engineers
Rich Fontanilla	TGS Engineers
Mike Lindgren	Design Services
Warren Lamb	Ko & Associates
Mark Acuff	Ko & Associates
Gladys Lance	Div. 13 Right of Way
Pat Whitaker	Div. 13 Right of Way
Larry Wright	Div. 13 Right of Way
John Schrohenloher	FHWA

Approximately 20 people attended. Tom asked all project personnel to introduce themselves and gave a brief history of the project. Ken explained the alternatives and the specifics of the preliminary designs noting the likely changes to Burton Street at Haywood (dead-end or one way in). After the presentation the floor was opened for questions that were dominated by two gentlemen who identified themselves as being with media groups, C&T News Services from Fairview and MD Associates of Weaverville.

Several officials including Tim Amos and Debra Preneta from the Asheville City Schools attended to discuss the plans for access to the former Aycock School parking lot on the west side of the building; Ken introduced these officials to Mike Lindgren, Warren Lamb and Mark Acuff. They discussed the access concerns in the rear of the room before walking outside to see the property while the meeting was underway. Mike planned to discuss the schools request with NCDOT Design officials in Raleigh.

Many of the questions and much of the discussion revolved around the Phase 1 Study done by Statewide Planning. Many felt they were not properly informed during the public involvement efforts and questioned using existing I-240 and the widening to more than 6 lanes. Other than several relocation and appraisal questions for the R/W personnel, very little was noted that would make the project as proposed more desirable in the Haywood Road area. One written comment asking for parking along Haywood was received.

cc: Tom Kendig

Haywood Road Business Meeting

Why: **To discuss plans to widen I-240 between Patton Avenue and Haywood Road**

When: **Monday, May 17, 1999 at 3:00 pm**

Where: **Accelerated Learning Center Cafeteria**
(former Aycock School)
441 Haywood Road

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed.

NCDOT desires to meet with the Haywood Road business owners adjacent to the proposed project that may be directly affected by project implementation. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Haywood Road area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

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Phone 828 437 4681
Fax 828 433 9146

May 21, 1999

TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: I-26 Connector Meeting concerning retaining walls in the Burton Street Community

On Tuesday, May 18, 1999, Tom Kendig, Missy Dickens, Mike Lindgren, Larry Wright, John Schrohenloher, Rich Fontanilla and Ken Burleson met with Gloria Johnson President of the Burton Street Neighborhood Association and Reverend Curtis Williams of the First Church of Asheville also known as Wilson Chapel United Methodist Church. The meeting was at 8:00 AM at the Church located on North French Broad Avenue in Asheville. The purpose of the meeting was to provide Ms. Johnson and Rev. Williams information concerning retaining walls that are being investigated to avoid taking residences in the community at the request of the Burton Street residents.

Ken explained two separate preliminary plans showing walls that are being considered to avoid taking several residences in the community. Wall A, the short wall would avoid the relocation of four residences at the south end of Fayetteville Street, and Wall B a longer wall, would avoid taking those same 4 residences plus 2 more residences and the former Wilson Chapel United Method Church along Burton Street. Ken and Ms. Johnson went over the plans listing owners that would be affected by these walls.

Reverend Williams arrived late and was also shown the preliminary wall plans. He expressed interest in the relocation program asking numerous questions concerning appraisals and programs to assist relocatees. He expressed a desire for an early and collective settlement citing former treatment of the Church and community when the current I-240 was constructed in the 1960's. Larry Wright noted the possibility of early acquisition for individual hardship cases. It was noted the current schedule would result in acquisition in approximately two years if no unforeseen delays occur.

A copy of both wall plans was left with Ms. Johnson. She planned to meet with affected owners to determine if they desired a wall or relocation. Ken informed her he would be in Asheville next week (May 26-28) and would call her to see what had transpired at her meetings.

cc: Tom Kendig

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: Meeting with Burton Street Neighborhood concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: June 28, 1999

At 5:30 PM on Thursday, June 24, 1999, Tom Kendig (NCDOT), Everett Ward (NCDOT), Ken Burleson, and Rich Fontanilla conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the residents of Burton Street Neighborhood at Burton Street Community Center in West Asheville. Special emphasis on the meeting concerned two retaining wall alternatives for the project affecting the Burton Street community. Pat Whitaker and Bob Haskett from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the attached mailing list.

About 18 people from the surrounding community attended. Among those attending were Gloria Johnson, president of Burton Street Neighborhood Association, and Reverend Curtis Williams, pastor of Wilson Chapel United Methodist Church.

Colored functional plans for Alternates 2 and 3 showing the project area affecting the Burton Street Neighborhood from south of Haywood Road to north of Patton Avenue were displayed. Tom and Ken started the meeting by addressing the project alternatives and explaining the anticipated impacts to the Burton Street Neighborhood. A handout was given to all the attendees prior to the start of the meeting. It showed the number of residence, business, and church relocations that would be required by the construction of the project with and without two retaining wall options. Once the retaining wall options and other project parameters affecting the community were presented, the floor was open to the attendees for questions and comments.

The attendees were very courteous. Many attendees wanted to know the time schedule for project alternative selection, right-of-way acquisition, and construction start dates. The residents feel they need this information so they can start their preparations for the relocation procedures for those being affected. Tom answered by saying that he is doing everything he can to speed the decision-making process. He stressed that the Burton community can help this matter by providing clear feedback and concerns to NCDOT on the project. Tom did stated right-of-way acquisition would not happen for at least a year from now.

Rev. Williams's major concern was compensation for the Burton Street community. He stated

the acquisitions in 1964 were not fair and desired a collective negotiation process to ensure all were treated equally. He noted the age and state of mind of many community members and requested the process to be hurried to eliminate stress to these individuals. Noting these factors, he suggested the "unjust enrichment" of the community. He suggested the cost differential between the two retaining walls could be used for this purpose, vaguely noting two other such cases where this had been done on the west coast.

Tom told Rev. Williams that there is no governmental policy that compensation be given to a property owner for an acquisition that took place years ago. Also, according to the Federal and NCDOT Right of Way officials, the acquisition for property is handled on an individual property owner(s) basis–not on a collective effort with an affected community. As for excess funds left over from the construction costs of a retaining wall (if there are any), NCDOT will not channel these funds to the affected community. However, Everett did state that there are certain mitigation benefits that the government could provide. Examples include improving existing neighborhood roads, sidewalks, parks, and community centers.

Another important issue concerning the Burton Street Neighborhood was the preservation of the building once known as Friendly Grocery Store, located on Haywood Avenue. Several small businesses currently occupy this building. The building may be eligible for listing under National Register of Historic Places. To preserve this site, certain proposed design variations at the intersection of Burton Street and Haywood Road may need to be implemented. Tom stated that the plan for the intersection would be only a "right-in" or "dead-in" for Burton Street. A left turn access on to Haywood Road from Burton Street would create congestion problems (due to the proposed signal for I-26 access approximately 40 meters east of the Haywood–Burton intersection).

The attendees feared that such an intersection at Haywood–Burton would make Baker Street a major thoroughfare and create additional traffic congestion on that street. Tom said that is a valid concern and he would research ways to mitigate this issue on Baker Street. Truck access to the businesses on Burton Street was noted as well as poor sight distance at the Burton-Baker intersection.

Once the meeting was over, questionnaires and comment sheets were given to the attendees for any additional feedback they might have at a later time.

cc: Tom Kendig

BURTON ST. NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

(Second Meeting)

Why: **To discuss plans to widen I-240 between Patton Avenue and Haywood Road**

When: **Thursday, June 24, 1999 at 5:30 pm**

Where: **Burton Street Community Center**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), desires to meet with the Burton Street Neighborhood residents that live adjacent to the proposed I-26 connector project that may be directly affected by project implementation. NCDOT is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed.

Along with several other neighborhoods, the Burton Street area has been identified as one which will be impacted. One meeting has previously been held in the Burton Street Neighborhood and some of the concerns identified at that meeting will be addressed. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns so they may plan appropriate project mitigation measures to minimize impacts to this neighborhood.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Burton Street area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other neighborhoods or business communities along this project.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: Meeting with Riverside Drive Business Community concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: July 27, 1999

At 3:00 P.M. on Wednesday, July 21, 1999, Tom Kendig (NCDOT), Ken Burleson, and Rich Fontanilla conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the affected business community along Riverside Drive at the North Carolina National Guard Armory in West Asheville. Norman Medford, Janice Nash, Daryl Roberts, and Gladys Lance from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the project mailing list whose addresses are in the immediate area. Seven people from the surrounding community attended.

Colored functional plans for Alternates 1, 2, and 3 showing the project area affecting the Riverside Area were displayed. Tom and Ken started the meeting by addressing the project alternatives and explaining the anticipated impacts to the Riverside Drive Business Community. It was noted that Alternate 1 is projected to connect with US 19-23-70 in the near vicinity of Riverside Cemetery, which is listed with the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Montford Area Historic District and is therefore no longer a viable alternative. Once the project parameters affecting the community were presented, the floor was open to the attendees for questions and comments.

Many attendees wanted to know the time schedule for project alternative selection, right-of-way acquisition, and construction start dates. Tom indicated that right-of-way acquisition would begin in federal fiscal year 2002. Construction would start in 2003.

There was some concern on the surveying work that was being done in the subject area. Ken addressed the issue by saying the surveyors were for project mapping and not final right-of-way.

The NCDOT Right-of-Way staff provided information to many of the attendees.

Once the meeting was over, questionnaires and comment sheets were given to the attendees for any additional feedback they might have at a later time.

cc: Tom Kendig

I-26 Connector
Riverside Drive Area Meeting

Why: **To discuss plans for the I-26 Connector in the vicinity of US 19-23-70 and Riverside Drive**

When: **Wednesday, July 21, 1999 at 3:00 pm**

Where: **National Guard Armory**
Brevard Road at Shelboure Road near I-240

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue and a freeway on new location will be constructed from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781). Along the new location portion from Patton Avenue northward to US 19/23/70, a freeway is proposed to bridge across the French Broad River, Riverside Drive and the railroads on both sides of the river.

NCDOT desires to meet with the business and commercial property owners along Riverside Drive in the project vicinity that may be directly affected by project implementation. This meeting will focus on the area along Riverside Drive between Hill Street and Broadway Street east of the French Broad River. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Riverside Drive area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: Meeting with Patton Avenue Business Community concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: July 27, 1999

At 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, July 22, 1999, Tom Kendig (NCDOT), Ken Burleson, and Rich Fontanilla conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the businesses along Patton Avenue at the North Carolina National Guard Armory in West Asheville. Norman Medford, Janice Nash, Daryl Roberts, and Gladys Lance from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the project mailing list whose addresses are in the immediate area. At least sixteen people attended.

Colored functional plans for Alternates 2 and 3 showing the project area affecting the Patton Avenue area were displayed. Alternate 2 (Revised) was also displayed which showed intersection improvements on Patton Avenue. The plans for Alternate 1 were not displayed due to the low probability of being selected as a viable final design. Alternate 1 is projected to connect with US 19-23-70 in the near vicinity of Riverside Cemetery, which is listed with the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Montford Area Historic District. Tom and Ken started the meeting by addressing the project alternatives and explaining the anticipated impacts to the Patton Avenue business area. Ken discussed the access problems that the Westgate Shopping Center would incur if Alternate 3 is chosen for final design. Because of the proposed I-26 alignment for Alternate 3, Ken explained the accessibility to the shopping center would be inconvenient from some directions. Tom also noted the additional Alternate 3 impacts to the residences in the Burton Street area. Once the project parameters affecting the community were presented, the floor was open to the attendees for questions and comments.

The attendees were very courteous. Many attendees wanted to know the time schedule for project alignment selection, right-of-way acquisition, and construction start dates. Tom answered that the environmental document will be completed around April 2000 and a public hearing would be held soon after. A single project alternate will be selected after this hearing. He also noted that right-of-way acquisition would begin in fiscal year 2002 while construction would start around 2003.

After the presentation, the NCDOT Right-of-Way staff answered numerous questions from many of the attendees. Federal Express officials were especially interested in the relocation timetable.

Once the meeting was over, questionnaires and comment sheets were given to the attendees for any additional feedback they might have at a later time.

cc: Tom Kendig

I-26 Connector
Patton Avenue Area Meeting

Why: **To discuss plans to construct the I-26 Connector in the Westgate Area of Patton Avenue**

When: **Thursday, July 22, 1999 at 3:00 pm**

Where: **National Guard Armory**
Brevard Road at Shelboure Road near I-240

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue and a freeway on new location will be constructed from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781). Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed.

NCDOT desires to meet with the business and commercial property owners in the vicinity of the I-240 - Patton Avenue interchange that may be directly affected by project implementation. This meeting will focus on the area along Patton Avenue west of the French Broad River to Regent Park Boulevard including the Westgate Shopping Center. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Patton Avenue area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: Amboy Road Area Meeting concerning Project I-2513, The proposed I-26, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: August 23, 1999

On Thursday, August 19, 1999, the following personnel met at 2:30 p.m. at Southern Waterways 521 Amboy Road in Asheville to discuss the project impacts on the Amboy Road Area property owners and the proposed bicycle/pedestrian facility to connect Amboy Road with Hominy Creek Park:

Ken Burleson	TGS Engineers
Rich Fontanilla	TGS Engineers
Tom Kendig	NCDOT PD&EA
Bill Marley	FHWA
John Schrohenloher	FHWA
Zigrida Smith	NCDOT Design Services
David Scheffel	NCDOT Design Services
Oliver Gajda	City of Asheville Public Works
Suzanne Malloy	City of Asheville Public Works
Tom Redinger	TCC–Bikeway Task Force
David Blynt	Buncombe County Recreation Services
Alan Glines	City of Asheville Parks and Recreation
Jim Orr	City of Asheville Parks and Recreation
Elizabeth Teague	Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Monty Wooten	Pedestrian Task Force
Claudia Nix	Pedestrian and Bikeway Task Force
Karen Cragnolin	Riverlink, Inc.
David Donnell	Southern Waterways
Tony Wilson	Wilson's Campground
Max Wilson	Wilson's Inc. Mobile Home Repair

All attendees introduced themselves and Ken briefly explained the project and how it would affect properties in the area. Plans displaying both the partial Amboy interchange and the full interchange being considered were shown.

City officials expressed concern that the I-2513 project would not provide the right of

way and construction of a proposed bike facility along the project. It was explained that the I-2513 project right of way could accommodate a bike/pedestrian facility to the end of the access road serving Wilson's Campground and Southern Waterways. West of this area, the current retaining wall design does not provide an area inside of the existing right-of-way that would be adequate for the construction of a path to extend the bike/pedestrian project to the west. It was noted that such a path must be located at the base of the proposed retaining wall to use the highway right of way. After a brief discussion, officials from NCDOT Design Services explained that the highway right of way at the base of the retaining wall would be adequate to allow for the construction and maintenance of the wall. The cross sections in this area revealed the proposed wall would be constructed on the existing slope in this area. To provide a relatively flat area for a path would require additional grading which would require lowering the elevation of the wall's base. Since this location for the bike/pedestrian facility was suitable to the City, the cross-sections were provided to TGS and we will coordinate with the NCDOT Bicycle Program personnel to determine the design location and additional costs associated with this path.

Both on and off road options were discussed for the bike/pedestrian facility along the access road. The City prefers a separate facility along the side of the access road to the Wilson's Campground and Southern Waterways entrance. It was noted, to avoid requiring additional right of way from these properties, a separate path will need to be located along the north side of the access road.

City Parks and Recreation indicated a desire to combine their proposed entrance to the former speedway property with the access road serving Wilson's Campground and Southern Waterways. Design Services is to provide the plans in this area to the City to facilitate this coordination. It was noted if the full interchange being considered at Amboy Road is developed, the access road entrance to Amboy Road will be further east into the speedway property. The current plans do not reflect this modification to the access road intersection.

FHWA pointed out that the project could provide the adjacent portion of the pedestrian/bike facility only if there were assurances that it would be a reality. Since it is a programmed project (TIP No. E-3608), right of way is the principal obstacle. It was noted that to assure the project, the City should obtain such right of way through the Aston Park property west of the area along existing I-240, and finalize an agreement with the Metropolitan Sewer District to allow joint use of a sewer easement in this area.

The property owners asked several questions regarding the schedule and construction routing of traffic. They appeared to be generally satisfied with the proposed design issues displayed and discussed.

The meeting ended at approximately 4:15 P.M.

Sent 8/10

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memo To: Interested Parties

From: J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.

Date: August 9, 1999

Subject: **Amboy Road Area Meeting** concerning the I-26 Connector along I-240 from existing I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue and a freeway on new location will be constructed from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781). Along existing I-240, widening and reconstructing the interchanges to improve the safety is currently proposed. This project is currently in the planning and early design phase.

NCDOT representatives desire to meet with the business and commercial property owners in the vicinity of the I-240 - Amboy Road interchange that may be directly affected by project implementation. This meeting will focus on the area between Amboy Road and the French Broad River in the vicinity of existing I-240. Of particular concern will be the access to existing properties and businesses in this area and their relationship to a proposed bicycle/pedestrian facility that will link Amboy Road with Hominy Creek Park along the French Broad River. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

The time and location of this meeting will be: **Thursday, August 19, 1999 @ 2:30 PM @ Southern Waterways, 521 Amboy Road**

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Amboy Road area. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: Meeting with Burton Street neighborhood community leaders concerning Project I-2513 concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: October 4, 1999

On Monday, September 27, 1999, at 5:30 PM, Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA), and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) met with Gloria Johnson (President-Burton St. Community Association) and Reverend Curtis Williams (Pastor-First Church of Asheville) at the Fi¹t Church of Asheville to discuss several issues concerning the Burton St. neighborhood.

Tom noted that Alternate 2 is now considered the preferred alternative, which minimizes environmental impacts to the Burton St. community. However, Alternate 3 will be continued to be studied for the environmental document. Tom and Ken also discussed the proposed Alternate 2 retaining wall along the I-26 connector and east boundary of Burton St. neighborhood.

The request list for improvements to the community, which were submitted by Rev. Williams, was also discussed. Tom emphasized that NCDOT and/or the City of Asheville may provide infrastructure-type assistance for the community. Some of these on the request list include the following:

-Fayetteville St. widening and paving
-Renovation of parking lot at community center
-Landscaping at community center
-Handicap access to recreation area at community center
-Neighborhood lighting renovations
-Asbestos and lead paint removal at community center
-HVAC renovation at community center
-Pavement for a new tennis court

It was noted that the sight distance at the intersection of Burton St. and Baker St. needs to be improved and considered as a request for the Burton St. community. Tom recommended that the above requests should be addressed with people of the neighborhood and prioritized.
He also indicated that some of the assistance would be solicited from area businesses.

The meeting concluded at approximately 6:30 PM.

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 9/28/99

GROUP: City Seeds Conference

LOCATION: Wortham Theatre Pack Place

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Ken Burleson

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 100

NOTES: I attended this conference presentation to address concerns about the project and as it relates to urban design and sprawl issues.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: 12/13/1999 Meeting with Montford Avenue Area Residents concerning Project I-2513 concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: December 17, 1999

On Monday, December 13, 1999 at 7:00 P.M., Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA), John Schrohenloher (FHWA), Michael M. Loyselle (FHWA), and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) conducted an I-2513 project informational meeting at the Montford Community Center. The main purpose of this meeting was to give a general project overview to the Montford Area residents and discuss current updates pertaining to the project. Colored functional maps of Alternate 2 and Alternate 3 were displayed. The residents were also given the opportunity to discuss any questions and concerns they might have.

Tom started the meeting by discussing the origins of the I-2513 project. In 1989, the project was added to the 1990-1996 North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). After extensive study and input from both the public and environmental agencies, a preferred corridor alignment for this proposed project was determined. In 1995, NCDOT completed and circulated a Phase I Environmental Analysis for the Asheville Urban Area that included this preferred corridor.

Tom explained that Alternate 2 has been designated as the preferred alternate by NCDOT. He noted several reasons for this decision. Alternate 1 is essentially no longer being considered due to its proposed alignment in the near vicinity of Montford Historic District which includes historic Riverside Cemetery. The two main factors in not choosing Alternate 3 as the preferred alternate are the substantial impacts to the Burton St. neighborhood, and the access problems to Westgate Shopping Center. Alternate 3 would relocate more residencies in the Burton St. and Westwood neighborhoods than Alternate 2. The access plan to Westgate in Alternate 3 is viewed to be inconvenient and troublesome and, therefore, it is assumed the center would eventually suffer. Alternate 3 also has more impacts to the natural environment than Alternate 2

A concern the residents wanted to discuss was the decision to provide eight lanes on proposed I-26/I-240 from I-40/I-240 interchange to Patton Ave./I-240 interchange. Tom noted that the future 20-year design traffic volumes, which were based on the region's projected growth rate, would require eight lanes for an acceptable level of service.

Another concern among the residents was the perceived notion of a substantial noise increase affecting the community. As Tom explained, most traffic traveling on I-26/US 19-23-70 south will veer off onto the new alignment that crosses the French Broad River and connects with existing I-240 and Patton Ave. Many residents felt this new traffic traveling on the other side of the river could cause a substantial noise increase.

Some residents felt that the people of Asheville should utilize other modes of transportation in order to ease congestion and possibly stop the progress of this project. Oliver Gadja, of COA Parks & Recreation and a resident of Montford, talked about how residents should avoid using the interstate as a local route. This could alleviate some of the traffic on the interstate. The main purpose of the interstate road is to serve traffic between states and not as a main route for local traffic.

Twenty-two residents attended and the meeting ended at approximately 9:00 P.M.

I-26 Connector Meeting
Montford Neighborhood Association

Why: **To discuss plans for the I-26 Connector through Asheville**

When: **Monday, December 13, 1999 at 7:00 pm**

Where: **Montford Community Center**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. A four-lane freeway on new location will be constructed from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781). The project will also include widening US 19-23-70 from the new location freeway to Broadway.

NCDOT desires to meet with the residents in the Montford Avenue neighborhood to present conceptual plans for the project. This meeting will focus on the area along US 19-23-70 east of the French Broad River, between Riverside Cemetery and Broadway. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the area near the Montford Avenue Neighborhood. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: 12/14/1999 Meeting with Burton Street Community Leaders concerning Project I-2513 concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: December 16, 1999

On Tuesday, December 14, 1999 at 5:00 P.M., Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA),John Schrohenloher (FHWA), Michael Loyselle (FHWA) and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) met with Gloria Johnson, the President of the Burton Street Neighborhood Association and Rev. Curtis E. Williams the Pastor of the First Church of Asheville at the First Church to discuss project mitigation for the subject project. Alan Glines of the COA-Parks and Recreation also attended since he will be handling coordination with the City.

The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the requests submitted by the Burton Street community in Rev. Williams' letter of October 20, 1999. Tom explained that NCDOT can only provide the community with transportation-related and noise abatement-type services, such as: roadway improvements, street lighting, sidewalks, parking expansion for the community center, new doors and windows for the community center, HVAC for the community center, bicycle racks at the community center, and handicap access at the community center. Other items or services Tom indicated NCDOT may provide are hazardous material removal if identified as part of a Phase 1 environmental assessment for the community center, computers (older models donated from government institutions), and landscaping at the community center. Any requests that require additional property purchase must be further considered before NCDOT commitment. It was noted that the requests for center expansion, recreational enhancements and/or equipment that could be used in other places cannot be provided to the community center as project mitigation.

Alan Glimes was introduced as the City contact for coordination of the mitigation requests for the community center. It was noted that any lands acquired and improvements will become property of the COA and their cooperation will be needed. Tom explained that Alan will develop a sketch plan for the center improvements for the City.

The first request for widening Fayetteville Street was questioned. Gloria explained the desired improvements to Fayetteville Street include new asphalt, the addition of sidewalks, and additional street lighting. It was explained that in order to construct sidewalks and/or street widening measures, the existing right-of-way would have to be determined and if inadequate, more must be acquired through purchase and/or donation. If any of the property owners oppose providing the necessary right-of-way, the widening may not be possible.

As for the second request for a 50-car parking lot, more property would have to be acquired behind the community center than the Barton lot identified. It was noted the owners of the identified property would have to be confronted about the sale or donation of the property. Alan Glimes noted that Bryant St could possibly be widened to accommodate parallel parking if adequate right-of-way is available and will look into ways of providing additional parking.

Since the third request for expansion of the park behind the Center would require property purchase for whatever reason, NCDOT would have to consider this request further.

The fourth request for construction of a handicap ramp can be further considered if adequate property is available and the City desires this addition to the site.

The fifth request for a concession stand with bathrooms is a facility expansion NCDOT will not likely consider as part of project mitigation since it does nothing for transportation improvement or noise abatement.

The sixth request for a gymnasium is a facility expansion NCDOT will not likely consider as part of project mitigation since it does nothing for transportation improvement or noise abatement. The basketball court expansion may be a possibility if grading is needed for other site improvements.

The seventh request for center renovations was also discussed. Hazardous material removal may be possible if an environmental assessment determines such items to be present. Alan noted that he would investigate the possibility of the City obtaining such an assessment for the Center. It was again noted that the requests for enlargements, recreational enhancements and/or equipment that could be used in other places cannot be provided to the community center as project mitigation. However, improvements associated with access and noise abatement could be included as mitigation.

Gloria Johnson inquired about purchasing replacement property prior to scheduled right-of-way purchase. Tom noted that she could acquire replacement property at her own expense prior to her acquisition, but the public hearing on the project must take place prior to DOT providing any advance property acquisition.

In summary, it was noted the improvements requested by the community and provided by the project as mitigation would become the property of the COA and thus would have to have the City's approval and cooperation before NCDOT would provide the necessary funding.

Alan Glimes agreed to attend a January 3, 2000 meeting with the Burton Street Neighborhood Association (NCDOT and TGS Engineers not attending) to discuss plans for the community center.

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: 12/15/1999 Meeting with Asheville Business Leaders concerning Project I-2513 concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: December 16, 1999

On Wednesday, December 15, 1999 at 8:00 A.M., Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA), and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) met with the following officials at the NCDOT Division 13 office:

Name	Organization
Bill Smart	NCDOT
Max Phillips	NCDOT
Dave Porter	Asheville Chamber of Commerce
Mike Plemmons	Council of Independent Business Owners
Mac Swicegood	Council of Independent Business Owners

The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the project with the business leaders, to determine their support for the project and to answer any questions they might have. Functional plans of Alternate 2 and Alternate 3 were displayed.

The business leaders feel the support in the business community is highly favorable for the project. Mr. Swicegood mentioned that his group represents an estimated 50,000 business oriented people. Tom and Ken noted the vocal opposition they had been receiving and the news articles indicating the lack of support by the City Council. The business leaders indicated that many supported the project and asked what the business community could do to show this support. Tom said they can become more actively involved by attending public functions and neighborhood meetings concerning the project. Mr. Swicegood felt holding a design charrette with project opponents would not provide any benefit. Tom also noted that the key business leaders should be part of a design charrette for the project if one is held. It was also noted that since most of the publicity currently being received by decision makers in Raleigh is negative, writing letters to State and City officials in support of the proposed project would be very beneficial to expedite the project.

The business leaders also suggested that also getting the business leaders in the surrounding counties more involved would further expedite the planning process.

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: 3/8/2000 Meeting with Bingham/Emma Road Community concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: March 16, 2000

At 4:30 P.M. on Wednesday, March 8, 2000 Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA), Drew Joyner (NCDOT-PD&EA), Carl Goode (NCDOT), Chris Gatchell (FHWA), Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the affected community of Bingham/Emma Road at the Emma Elementary School in West Asheville. Daryl Roberts and Gladys Lance from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the project mailing list whose addresses are in the immediate area. Twenty-three people from the surrounding community attended.

Tom and Ken started the meeting by addressing the project alternatives and explaining the anticipated impacts to the Bingham/Emma Road Community. Colored functional plans for Alternates 2 and 3 showing the project area affecting the Bingham/Emma Road Area were displayed. It was noted that Alternate 1, which would not substantially impact the Bingham/Emma Road Community, is no longer a viable alternative. Once the project parameters affecting the community were presented, the floor was open to the attendees for questions and comments.

Many attendees wanted to know the time schedule for project alternative selection, right-of-way acquisition, and construction start dates. Tom stated that once the environmental document is submitted and a public hearing is conducted (fall of 2000), an alternative would be selected. The current preferred alternative is Alternate 2, but no final selection has been approved. Tom indicated that right-of-way acquisition would begin in federal fiscal year 2002. Construction would start in 2003.

The NCDOT Right-of-Way staff provided information to many of the attendees. It was noted that once a payment is issued for required property, the affected occupants have 90 days to vacate their premises.

Once the meeting was over, questionnaires and comment sheets were given to the attendees for any additional feedback they might have at a later time.

attach.: Bingham/Emma Road Community meeting announcement
cc: Tom Kendig
Drew Joyner

Bingham/Emma Road Area Meeting

Why: **To discuss plans to for the I-26 Connector between Patton Avenue and the French Broad River**

When: **Wednesday, March 8, 2000 at 4:30 pm**

Where: **Emma Elementary School Cafetorium**
37 Brickyard Road

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow existing I-240 from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, to Patton Avenue. A four-lane freeway on new location will be constructed from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781).

NCDOT desires to meet with residents that live adjacent to the proposed project that may be directly affected by project implementation. Along with several other neighborhoods, the Bingham and Emma Road area has been identified as one which could be impacted. This meeting will focus on the area between Patton Avenue and the western bank of the French Broad River. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project in the Bingham and Emma Road areas. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

Mr. Thomas R. Kendig
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Mr. J. Kenneth Burleson
TGS Engineers
975 Walnut St. Suite 141
Cary, NC 27511
919-319-8850 Ext. 109

TGS **Memorandum To:** File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: 3/9/2000 Meeting with COA-Planning and Mary Clayton (PB) concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: March 16, 2000

At 5 P.M. on Thursday, March 9, 2000 Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA), Drew Joyner (NCDOT-PD&EA), Carl Goode (NCDOT), Chris Gatchell (FHWA), Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) met with the following personnel to discuss the Burton Street community mitigation requests:

Name	Organization
Mary Clayton	Parsons Group
Irby Brinson	COA-Parks and Recreation
Jim Orr	COA-Parks and Recreation
Curtis E. Williams	Burton Street Community
Gloria L. Johnson	Burton Street Community
Alan Glines	COA-Parks and Recreation

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the latest Burton Street mitigation request list with Rev. Curtis E. Williams and Gloria L. Johnson, President of the Burton Street neighborhood association. Prior to this discussion, Tom wanted to emphasize a partnership mentality between the Burton Street Community and the project planning team. This posture would allow the project planning team a better understanding of the community's needs and desires.

Alan showed Ms. Johnson and Rev. Williams the overlay of proposed improvements to the community, which consisted of the following:

-Five foot sidewalks along Fayetteville Street and Buffalo and the connecting streets Texas and Ohio.
-Sidewalks in front of the community center.
-Repavement of Fayetteville Street, Buffalo Street, Edgar Street and the connecting streets Texas and Ohio.
-Parking lot consisting of 24 spaces for the community center along Bryant Street The two properties where the proposed lot is to be located would be purchased.

-Direct access from the proposed parking lot to the center. The property where the proposed access is to be located would be purchased.
-Basketball court expansion to regulation size.
-Conversion of the upper basketball court to a standard size tennis court.

It was noted that the construction of the proposed sidewalks along Fayetteville Street would require front yard space for some of the residencies. Grading for the sidewalks may reduce yard frontage even further. The project planning team wanted to ensure that Ms. Johnson and Rev. Williams clearly understand these requirements. The need for a plan to be developed to visualize the impacts of the sidewalk construction was noted. Once the City determines which side of the streets to provide the sidewalks, photography can be taken and altered to provide such visualization. With such a tool, a meeting should be conducted with the affected property owners individually to determine if they are in agreement with the requests. It was noted that Ms. Johnson was trusted in the community and should accompany project representatives to these meetings.

Rev. Williams desired two additional amenities be placed on the Burton Street list as follows:

-Two buildings in the vicinity of First Church of Asheville on French Broad Avenue to be acquired for use as day-care/half-way house/community center.
-A covered recreational and basketball center should be included. He suggested locating the facility at the intersection of Burton Street and Downing Street. The current property there would have to be purchased.

The project planning team noted these additional requests and the City will finalize their letter to NCDOT with these considerations.

cc: Tom Kendig
Drew Joyner

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TGS ENGINEERS

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: 4/6/2000 Meeting with Fairfax/Virginia Avenue Community concerning the proposed I-26 Route, Asheville Connector along I-240 from I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NC TIP No. I-2513, State Project 8.U843701, Federal Number MANHF 26-1 (53)

Date: April 11, 2000

At 6:30 P.M. on Thursday, April 6, 2000 Tom Kendig (NCDOT-PD&EA), Drew Joyner (NCDOT-PD&EA), Ken Burleson (TGS Engineers), and Rich Fontanilla (TGS Engineers) conducted a public meeting on the subject project for the affected community of Fairfax/Virginia Avenue at Grace Baptist Church in West Asheville. Gladys Lance from the local NCDOT Right of Way office also attended the meeting to answer questions pertaining to right-of-way acquisition. Ron Fuller and Oliver Gadja from the City of Asheville were also present to address questions the residents might have. The attached notification of the meeting was mailed to those on the project mailing list whose addresses are in the immediate area. Eighty-five people from the surrounding community attended.

Drew and Ken started the meeting by addressing the project alternatives and explaining the anticipated impacts to the Fairfax/Virginia Avenue Community. Colored functional plans for Alternates 2 and 3 showing the project area were displayed. Ken focused on two specific plans that would affect the Fairfax/Virginia Avenue Area. One showed the connection of Fairfax Avenue and Virginia Avenue with the proposed extension of Amboy Road. The other plan displayed a cul-de-sac for each street and no connection with Amboy Road. Once the project parameters affecting the community were presented, the floor was open to the attendees for questions and comments.

Many residents did not favor the proposed extension of Amboy Road. Tom noted that this extension would eliminate the existing safety concern of the left-sided merge of Amboy Road with I-240. It would also provide better access to the downtown and French Broad River area, which is slated for future commercial growth.

Most attendees did not want a connection of Fairfax and Virginia Avenues with proposed Amboy Road. They felt the connection would facilitate more traffic (both vehicular and pedestrian) through the neighborhood. With many residents parking on these streets and children playing on them, the attendees believed an increase of traffic would pose a serious safety issue. It was noted that a "right-in/right-out" scenario on these streets with proposed Amboy Road is currently being studied as a way to lessen traffic through the neighborhood.

Some residents felt that a cul-de-sac of Fairfax and Virginia Avenues would make access and maneuvering difficult for emergency vehicles providing services to the residents. A possible scenario the residents expressed would be a "splitting" of Fairfax and Virginia Avenues somewhere near the midpoint of these streets as a way to curtail non-neighborhood traffic. Tom noted these concerns and would be reviewed for further study.

Many attendees wanted to know the time schedule for project alternative selection, right-of-way acquisition, and construction start dates. Tom stated that once the environmental document is submitted and a public hearing is conducted (fall of 2000), an alternative would be selected. The current preferred alternative is Alternate 2, but no final selection has been approved. Tom indicated that right-of-way acquisition would begin in federal fiscal year 2002. Construction would start in 2003.

The NCDOT Right-of-Way staff provided information to many of the attendees. It was noted that NCDOT does not record the market values of properties in the near vicinity of state transportation projects once construction is completed.

Once the meeting was over, questionnaires and comment sheets were given to the attendees for any additional feedback they might have at a later time.

attach.: Fairfax/Virginia Avenue Community meeting announcement

cc: Drew Joyner

Fairfax/Virginia Avenue Area Meeting

Why: **To discuss plans for the I-26 Connector and adjacent areas between Amboy Road and Brevard Road**

When: **Thursday, April 6, 2000 at 6:30 pm**

Where: **Grace Baptist Church (corner of Haywood and Fairfax)**
718 Haywood Road

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), is extending I-26 from the current terminus southwest of Asheville, northward along the US 23 corridor to Tennessee. Through Asheville, the proposed I-26 Connector will follow the existing I-240 alignment from the current northern terminus of I-26 at I-40 and I-240, northeastward to Patton Avenue and a new freeway will be constructed on new location from Patton Avenue northward across the French Broad River to US 19/23/70 south of Broadway Street (SR 1781).

NCDOT desires to meet with residents that live near the proposed project that may be directly affected by project implementation. Along with several other neighborhoods, the area at the southern end of Virginia and Fairfax Avenues will be impacted. This meeting will focus on this area along existing I-240, between Amboy Road and Brevard Road, and the plans affecting Virginia and Fairfax Avenues. Please plan to attend to learn more about the project and let NCDOT know your concerns.

Please note this meeting is to address the portion of the project near the southern end of Virginia and Fairfax Avenues along existing I-240 between Amboy Road and Brevard Road. Street connections at the southern end of Virginia and Fairfax Avenues will be discussed. Most materials and available information will apply to this area exclusively. If your interest is in another area, you may contact one of the NCDOT representatives listed below to receive information concerning other meetings being planned for other business communities or neighborhoods along this project.

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I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 4/12/2000

GROUP: I-26 Connector Awareness Group

LOCATION: City Hall

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Ken Burleson, Tom Kendig, Drew Joyner, Carl Goode, Chris Gatchill (FHWA)

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 20

NOTES: The meeting was to improve relationships and to inform the group about the project and upcoming education and design forums. Encourage their participation through the CCC which was being formed.

Memorandum To: File

From: TGS Engineers

Subject: May 3, 2000 Meeting with I-26 Awareness Group

Date: May 5, 2000

On Wednesday, May 3, 2000, Tom Kendig, Drew Joyner, Carl Goode, Mary Clayton and myself along with Ron Fuller and Michael Moule of the City of Asheville met with the following members of the I-26 Connector Awareness Group (CAG) to discuss conceptual plans prepared for the CAG by Glatting & Jackson that were provided to NCDOT for consideration concerning the I-26 Connector:

Ron Ainspan
Bette Jackson
Betty Lawrence
Roger Derrough
Hugh Huntington
Philan Medford

Drew thanked the group for attending and I described first the pros, and then the cons on the attached evaluation that was given to the group. After going through this evaluation, Tom emphasized that NCDOT was very disappointed in the plan, and that Glatting & Jackson had not contacted NCDOT to obtain the project design criteria or information about any of the design constraints. The group seemed encouraged that the plan had been evaluated and appeared determined to find a plan supporting the ideas of separating I-240 and Patton Avenue traffic across the Smoky Park Bridges. Before adjourning, I pointed out the project design criteria and several design constraints for their consideration.

Attachment

cc: Drew Joyner

I-26 CONNECTOR

Asheville, N.C.

NCDOT TIP Project Number: I-2513

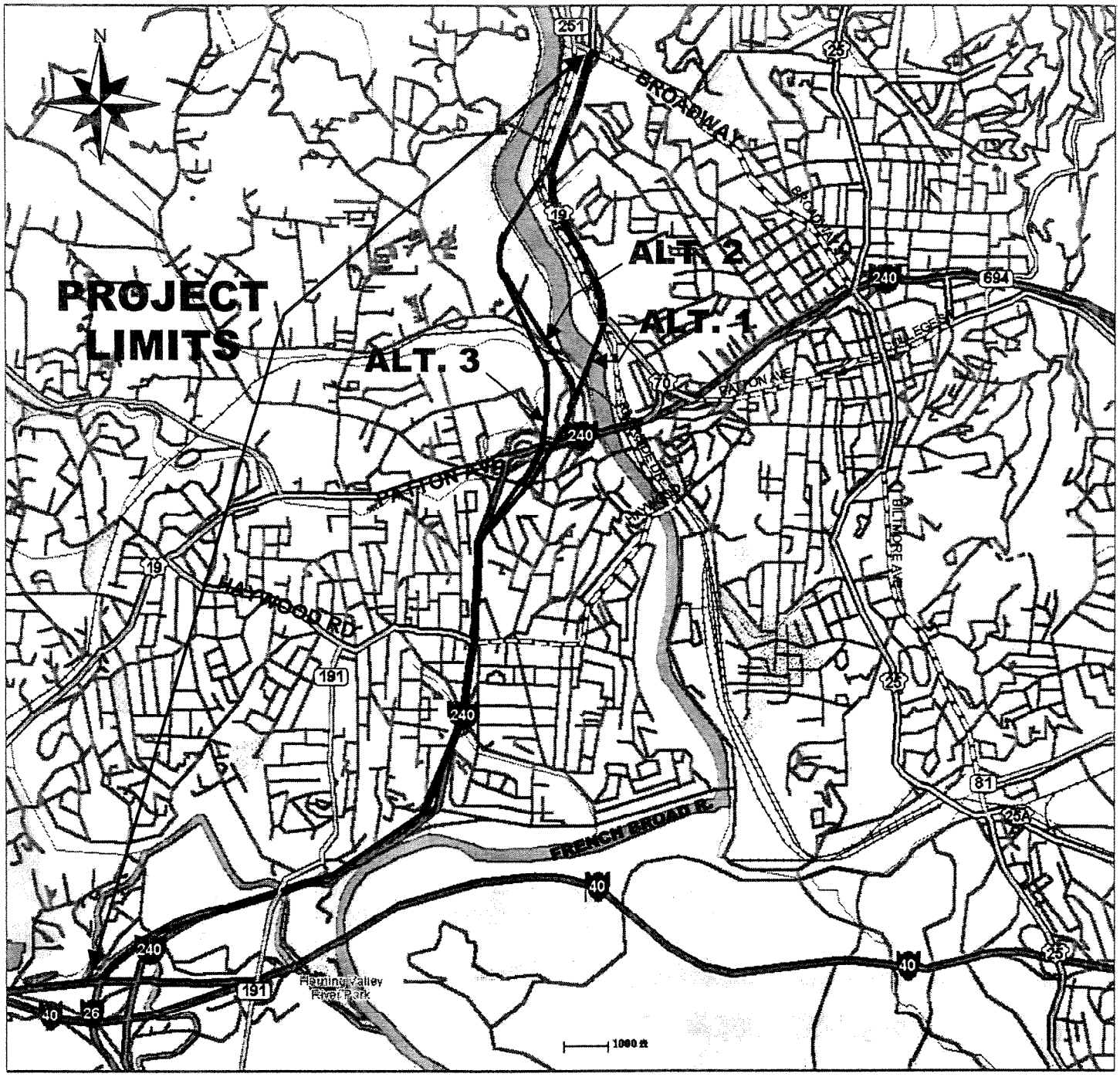
From the I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange
To US 19-23-70 at SR 1781 (Broadway)

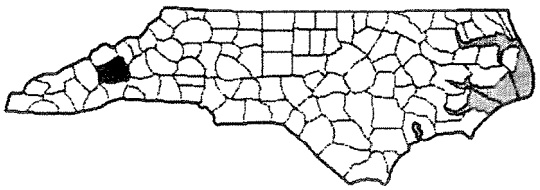
PROJECT EDUCATIONAL FORUM

June 15, 2000
6:30 to 9:30 PM
Lipinsky Auditorium
University of North Carolina at Asheville

Sponsored by:

The North Carolina Department of Transportation,
the City of Asheville,
and the I-26 Community Coordinating Committee





North Carolina
Department of Transportation
Project Development
& Environmental Analysis Branch

I-26 CONNECTOR
ASHEVILLE, N.C.
from I-26 at I-40
to US 19-23-70 at Broadway
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
TIP No. I-2513

May, 2000

Figure 1

I-26 CONNECTOR – ASHEVILLE, N.C.

Project Description and Purpose

The I-26 Connector, NCDOT's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project No. I-2513, begins at the existing I-40/I-240/I-26 interchange south of Asheville, continues northeast along existing I-240 to the vicinity of Patton Avenue, and follows a new alignment from Patton Avenue across the French Broad River to existing US 19-23-70 (see Figure 1). The northern project limit is at the US 19-23-70 interchange with Broadway.

The purpose of the project is to provide a safe highway for I-26 to connect with US 19-23-70 north of Asheville. The proposed route will eventually be signed I-26, which will continue northwest along the existing US 19-23 corridor towards Tennessee through the Sam's Gap project.

The current project schedule calls for completion of the I-26 Connector in 2008. In 2002, the completion of the Sam's Gap project into Tennessee will add traffic to the already-congested Smoky Park Bridges. The proposed I-26 Connector project will divert a large percentage of traffic away from the Smoky Park Bridges, reduce congestion and improve safety along I-240.

Current Status

Several months ago, public concern about the project prompted the City of Asheville to request that NCDOT pursue additional public involvement. The City requested that additional input be gathered from the community as long as it did not delay the project. Partnering with the City of Asheville, NCDOT invited the leaders of the interested business groups, affected neighborhoods, and other public interest organizations to meet and determine the principal issues of concern. To bring the greater community to a consensus, a Community Coordinating Committee was formed. This committee, comprised of representatives from NCDOT, the City of Asheville, and various local interest groups, is conducting this Project Educational Forum to inform all interested citizens about the planning and design details of the project. NCDOT's recommendations, major project features, relevant project issues and an upcoming public Project Design Forum will be addressed. The public Project Design Forum, to allow the community to suggest improvements to the project design, will be held the third week of July also at the UNC-Asheville campus.

Alternatives

Through extensive coordination with the public and local officials, three alternatives have been developed and studied for the project. They are similar in that they widen I-240 from the interchange with I-26/I-40 to the Patton Avenue interchange west of the French Broad River. The major difference between the alternatives is the Patton Avenue interchange revisions and the new-location freeway that will extend northward across the French Broad River. Two of the alternatives cross the Westgate Shopping Center property, while the third crosses part of the Holiday Inn Sunspree golf course.

South of Patton Avenue, all three alternatives upgrade existing I-240 and interchanges from the end of I-26 at the I-40/I-240/I-26 interchange to a location approximately midway between Haywood Road and Patton Avenue. Since the existing I-240 design does not meet current interstate standards, revisions to the median width, shoulder width, and alignment are

planned. Traffic studies indicate the existing I-240 four-lane section will need eight lanes to handle the projected design year traffic without becoming congested. Interchange upgrades are planned to improve entrance and exit ramp lengths and alignments at the Brevard Road, Amboy Road, and Haywood Road interchanges.

The three alternatives extend northward along I-240 to a point approximately midway between Haywood Road and Patton Avenue. Here, the alignment of I-240 must be moved so a new interchange with Patton Avenue can be constructed while traffic is maintained through the area. The new interchange alternatives will eliminate the existing sharp curve along westbound I-240 at Patton Avenue and allow the I-26 Connector to be constructed as a new-location four-lane freeway north of Patton Avenue. This new-location freeway will cross over Emma Road, the Norfolk Southern Railroad, the French Broad River, and Riverside Drive before joining US 19-23-70 south of Broadway.

The new four-lane freeway alignment for Alternates 1 and 2 crosses the Westgate Shopping Center property, while the Alternate 3 alignment crosses part of the Holiday Inn Sunspree golf course. Alternate 1 crosses the French Broad River immediately north of the Westgate Shopping Center Property and connects with US 19-23-70 adjacent to the Riverside Cemetery. Alternates 2 and 3 continue northward along the western side of the French Broad River. The Alternate 2 and 3 alignments bridge the French Broad at the same location and cross Riverside Drive south of the Pearson Bridge Road – Riverside Drive intersection also joining with US 19-23-70 south of the Broadway interchange. The northern project limit for all three of the studied alternatives is the US 19-23-70 interchange with Broadway.

Project studies have determined the Alternate 1 alignment cannot be constructed without impacting the Riverside Cemetery and relocating both Riverside Drive and the Craggy spur of the Norfolk Southern Railway. Due to these problems, Alternate 1 is no longer considered to be a feasible alignment for the project. The estimated costs and the major anticipated impacts for Alternates 2 and 3 are listed in the attached table. The environmental studies and public involvement have resulted in the NCDOT's preference for the Alternate 2 alignment that crosses the Westgate Shopping Center.

Public Involvement

The NCDOT has been studying the project and conducting meetings with community leaders, local interest groups, business groups and the affected neighborhoods for the last ten years to determine the most suitable alignment for this project. In April 1998, a workshop was conducted to show the study alternatives to the public. The NCDOT Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch staff has been conducting smaller local meetings with the City of Asheville, local interest groups, business groups and the affected neighborhoods to explain the project and determine methods to reduce impacts and assure conformance with future area plans. These meetings have resulted in several project modifications to reduce impacts and improve local motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian access to areas along the project. These meetings and modifications have delayed the beginning of construction; however, the completion date has not been delayed.

Project Modifications

Since the initial presentation of the project alternatives at the public meeting in April 1998, the following modifications to be proposed plans have been introduced:

- A bicycle and pedestrian facility is planned to be constructed along the project connecting Amboy Road with a proposed path to Hominy Creek Park along the French Broad River.

- Interchange revisions at Amboy Road are being developed to add the missing moves to and from I-240 East to provide better access to the French Broad River and the planned City park at the former speedway site.

- Consideration is being given to the reconnection of Amboy Road to Brevard Road with an adjacent pedestrian/bicycle path.

- Retaining walls have been added at the Haywood Road interchange to provide driveway access around the west side of the Accelerated Learning Center (formerly Aycock School).

- Revisions at the Haywood Road interchange were made to avoid the demolition of the Former Friendly Grocery, a historically significant structure.

- A retaining wall was added to Alternate 2 at the Burton Street Neighborhood to avoid the relocation of five residences.

- A retaining wall was added to Alternate 2 to avoid the historic C. G. Worley property.

- A sidewalk from the Smoky Park Bridge to Regent Park has been included to improve pedestrian access along Patton Avenue.

- A connecting street has been added to Alternate 2 to allow access from I-26 to Craven Street and the French Broad River area.

- Noise walls have been added along several sections of I-240 to abate traffic noise adjacent to the project.

Current Schedule

The current project schedule calls for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement presenting the engineering analysis, environmental studies and public involvement process to be completed in fall 2000. A public hearing will be held early next year following circulation of this document. After the hearing, one alternative will be selected for design. Design will have to be completed and the right of way purchased before construction can begin. Right-of-way acquisition will begin after design details are developed. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2002. Project construction is scheduled to begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2004. The connector is expected to be completed in 2008.

Project History

- In 1989, the Asheville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) held five workshops to identify overall transportation goals and specific projects in the Asheville area. The I-26 Connector was included. The Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods (CAN) also held 15 informational meetings on the Asheville Connector alternatives throughout the urban area.

- The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) developed the Asheville Urban Area Goals and Objectives in 1991 and formed the Asheville Connector Advisory Committee (ACAC) to consider project alternatives. This group had representatives from 17 neighborhood, environmental and business groups.

- NCDOT completed and distributed a draft environmental analysis for the connector to the MPO and the ACAC in 1993. In September 1993, the ACAC presented their recommendations to the MPO. These recommendations included the selection of the proposed corridor for the route.

- Four more public workshops were held in late 1993 to discuss the connector and other local thoroughfare plan recommendations. In the summer of 1994, two more public workshops were held to discuss the connector and the plan. Then, two more public hearings were held to provide additional public input.

- In April 1995, NCDOT published the final environmental analysis for the Asheville Urban Area. This analysis recommended the proposed corridor for the I-26 Connector. This publication contained signatures and resolutions concurring on numerous issues including the preferred corridor for the I-26 Connector. Those approving the recommendations in this analysis included the City of Asheville, the Towns of Biltmore Forest, Black Mountain, Fletcher, Montreat, Weaverville, and Woodfin, the Buncombe County Commissioners, the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Department of Interior, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and the NC Department of Cultural Resources.

- In late 1995, NCDOT contracted with a private consulting firm to develop conceptual engineering plans and begin environmental studies for the I-26 Connector.

- After two years of studies, three alternatives were selected for environmental analysis within the proposed corridor to connect I-240 to US 19-23-70.

- Since 1997, one project-wide public workshop, eleven neighborhood group meetings, seven special interest group meetings, and numerous meetings with City staff and local officials to present the alternatives and discuss modifications have been conducted. These meetings have resulted in numerous project improvements.

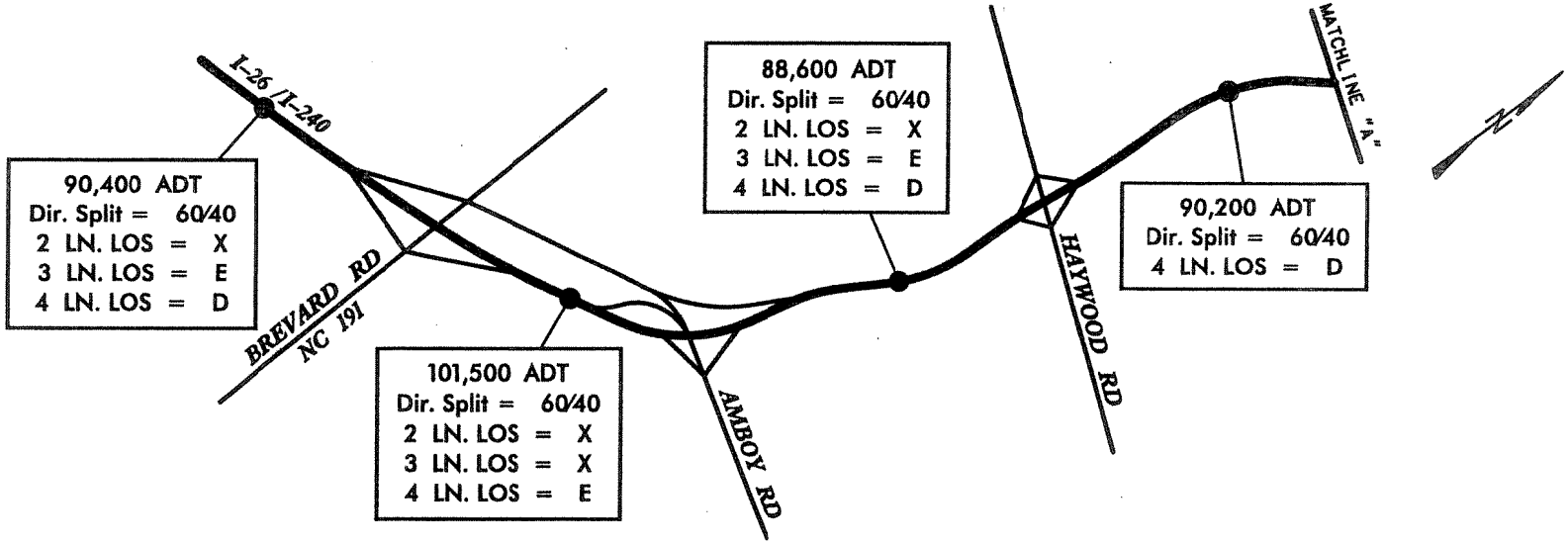
- Early this year, the City of Asheville requested that NCDOT pursue additional public involvement while not delaying the project. A Community Coordinating Committee composed of representatives from NCDOT, the City of Asheville, and various local interest groups, was formed to plan this Project Educational Forum and the upcoming Project Design Forum to be held the third week in July. These meetings will allow the public an opportunity to recommend design revisions for the project.

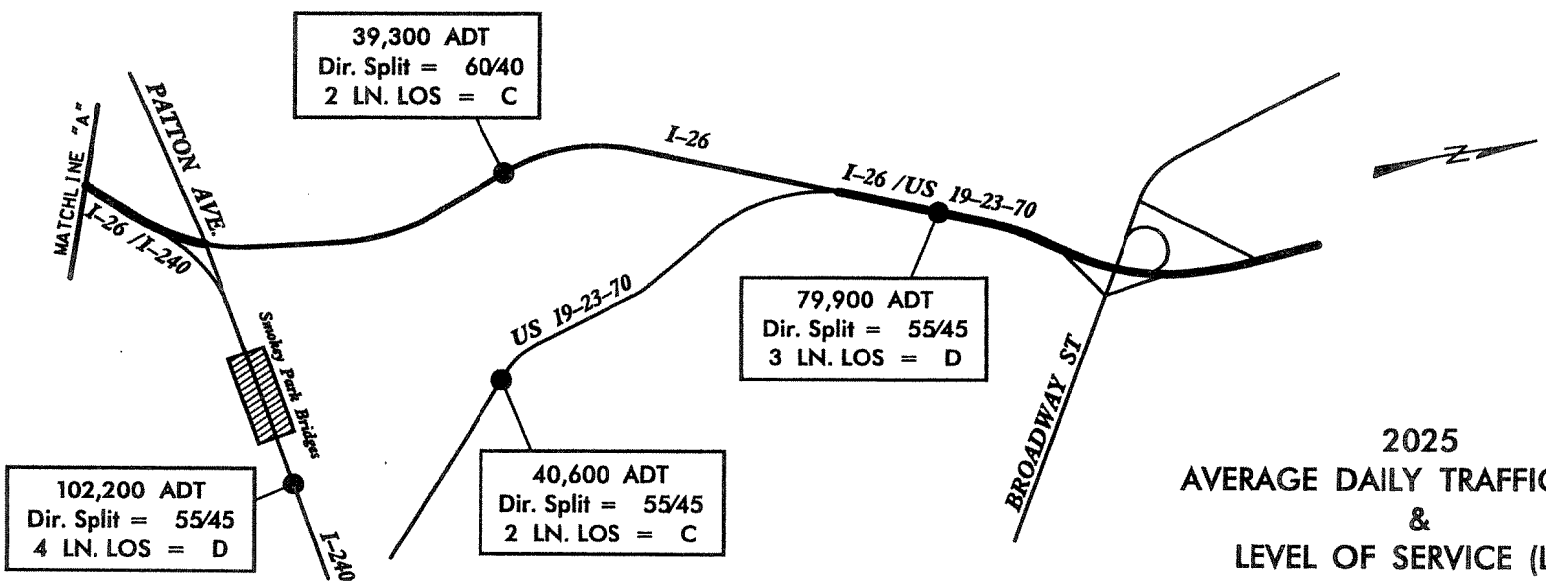
ALTERNATE COMPARISON

	ALT. 2	ALT. 3
Estimated Costs		
Construction	$102,090,000	$113,262,000
Right of Way	$36,626,400	$29,453,800
Total	$138,716,400	$142,715,800
Natural Resources		
Jurisdictional Areas		
Wetlands (Acres)	0.570	0.490
Pond (Acres)	0.025	0.012
Streams (Linear Ft.)		
Culverted	1189.9	2512.1
Relocated	0	2352.5
Plant Communities		
Hardwood Forest	15.7	20.6
Mixed Forest	8.8	10.9
Urban/Disturbed Area	162.6	171.4
Pastoral Area	0.1	0.1
Shrub/Scrub Assembly	0.7	1.3
Historic Properties	0	1
Relocations		
Residences		
South of Haywood	46	46
Haywood to Patton		
Burton	6	29
Westwood	11	13
North of Patton		
Bingham	18	16
Others	18	11
Total Residences	99	115
Churches	1	1
Businesses		
South of Haywood	4	4
Haywood to Patton	6	5
North of Patton	49*	10
Total Businesses	59	19**

* Includes 38 Westgate Shopping Center Businesses

** 17 are common with Alternate 2





2025
AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ADT)
&
LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

May-00

I-26 CONNECTOR
ANTICIPATED RELOCATIONS

Description	Alternate 2 **			Alternate 3 **		
	4 Lane	6 Lane	8 Lane	4 Lane	6 Lane	8 Lane
Residences						
South of Haywood	33	43	46	33	43	46
Haywood to Patton*						
Burton	6	6	6	29	29	29
Westwood	11	11	11	13	13	13
North of Patton **						
Bingham	18	18	18	16	16	16
Others	18	18	18	11	11	11
Total Residences	86	96	99	102	112	115
Businesses						
South of Haywood	1	4	4	1	4	4
Haywood to Patton*	6	6	6	5	5	5
North of Patton**	49	49	49	10	10	10
Total Businesses	56	59	59	16	19	19

* 8 Lanes is only available option to join the two 4-lane interstates in this area
** 4 Lanes is only available option along new location north of Patton Avenue

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS INFLUENCING TRANSPORTATION

General	Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)
Parkland Preservation	Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 1653(f), P.L. 89-670, amended as 49 U.S.C. 303 in January, 1983
Historic Site Preservation	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 470(f) as amended), P. L. 89-665,
Water Resources Preservation	Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (amended 1977) (33 U.S.C. 1251 et. Seq.) and Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands"
Flood Control	Executive Order No. 11998, "Floodplain Management", (41 CFR 26951) 5-4-77. USDOT Order 5650.2 "Floodplain Management and Protection" (44 CFR 24678)
Wildlife Preservation	Section 7 of the "Endangered Species Act of 1973 (amended 1978)", 16 U.S.C. 1536
Air Quality	The Clean Air Act of 1990
Noise Abatement	Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 772

NEWS RELEASE

City of Asheville
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802

For Immediate Release

Contact: Scott Shuford
Phone: 259-5840
Date: July 11, 2000

I-26 Design Forum Organized To Utilize Public Ideas

Asheville, NC.....The I-26 Coordinating Committee, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and the City of Asheville have jointly announced that the I-26 Design Forum will take place on Friday, July 21 and Saturday, July 22, 2000, at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel, 31 Woodfin Street.

The design forum, which is the second event organized by the I-26 Coordinating Committee as part of a public input process, will be structured so that individuals interested in participating can drop by for designated sessions designed to gather ideas on specific elements of the project.

On Friday, July 21, 2000, sessions will be held from:

10:00 – 11:30 AM
1:30 – 3:00 PM
3:30 – 5:00 PM
7:00 – 8:30 PM

After a brief welcome, participants will break into four different groups that will discuss the following issues: 1) Patton Avenue interchange design; 2) Other interchange design issues, including bicycle and pedestrian connections; 3) Visual and aesthetic issues, including gateway issues and bridge and overpass design; and 4) General technical issues, including safety, maintenance of traffic, constructability, design speed and number of lanes. The sessions are

structured so that citizens can attend the one that best fits their schedule. The same information will be discussed in each group in all the sessions.

On Saturday, July 22, 2000, participants will hear a brief summation of information gathered on Friday and will then break into smaller groups to discuss the I-26 Connector Project as a whole. This session will take place from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

According to Drew Joyner, Project Manager for the I-26 Connector, "We hope that participants will attend the forum on both Friday and Saturday. This will give them the best opportunity for input; however, attending on both days is not necessary."

Leading the discussions will be Fred B. Craig, Jr., Vice President and Area Manager for Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas Inc., an internationally known engineering firm that specializes in transportation issues. Craig is an experienced engineering program manager with an extensive track record of developing and executing conceptual and developmental plans for public and private facilities.

Many knowledgeable professionals will be in attendance at the forum. North Carolina Department of Transportation management and staff, representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, top interchange designers, structural engineers, local architects, traffic engineers, and City staff will all be in attendance. These professionals will help to answer questions, provide information, and work with the participants to generate ideas and design changes to improve the project.

"Having the opportunity for such high level participation in the design of this project is definitely an historical event in this community," stated Scott Shuford, City Planning and Development Director. "This has been an excellent partnership between the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the citizens of Asheville."

Information gathered at the forum will be compiled into a recommendations report by the I-26 Coordinating Committee to be presented to the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Asheville City Council. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will use the information where feasible to revise the project.

"We expect this to be a wonderful opportunity for the community to assist in improving the I-26 Connector Project," stated Joyner. "In addition, our commitment to Asheville is to continue to keep the community involved through the various phases of the project."

END

NOTICE OF A CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE I-240 INTERCHANGE WITH BROADWAY AND MERRIMON AVENUE

Project 8.1844301 U-3302 Buncombe County

The North Carolina Department of Transportation will hold the above Citizens Informational Workshop on August 15, 2000 between the hours of 4 PM and 7 PM in the Public Works Building, Rooms A109 & 111, 161 South Charlotte St., Asheville.

Interested individuals may attend this informal workshop at their convenience during the above stated hours. Department of Transportation representatives will be present to answer questions and receive comments relative to the proposed project.

The purpose of this workshop is to present information, answer questions, and receive comments regarding this project during the planning and early design stages of the proposed interchange revision at the I-240 interchange with Broadway and Merrimon Avenue. Information received from the public will be used in conjunction with the environmental document being developed for this project.

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Mr. John Conforti, P.O. Box 25201, Raleigh, NC 27611, phone (919) 733-7844 ext. 208.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to participate in this workshop to comply with the American Disabilities Act. To receive special services, please contact Mr. Conforti at the above address or phone number or fax (919) 733-9794 as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 1/15/2002

GROUP: Asheville COC Trans. Task Force

LOCATION: Chamber Headquarters

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Drew Joyner, Alan Thornburg, Ken Burleson

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 50

NOTES: Project representatives gave a project status and process presentation at this luncheon meeting.

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 05/30/2002

GROUP: Asheville COC

LOCATION: GPI Country Club

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Drew Joyner, Alan Thornburg, Ken Burleson, Janet Diaginasio,

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 40

NOTES: Project representatives gave a project status and process presentation at this evening meeting.

Metropolitan
Planning
Organization

I-26 Public Meeting
June 12, 2002
AB-TECH, Laurel Auditorium

Welcome
Charles Grimes started the meeting promptly at 6:30 p.m.

Information Presentation
Presentation by Dan Baechtold – Dan explained this meeting is being held to obtain public input for the I-26 connector project. More specifically, the purpose of the meeting is to talk about the design of 240 through West Asheville and the number of lanes that will be designed for that part of the project. This is a meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee. Dan gave a brief definition of the MPO, TAC, TCC, and CCC.

Dan reviewed a couple of points about the I-26 connector project and briefly gave an overview of the information that the NCDOT presented to this group a few weeks ago:

In the last couple of years on this project NCDOT has added two new alternatives for the I-26 connector. There are four alternatives out there right now that are under consideration. Two of the alternatives were originally presented a couple of years ago. The other two new alternatives came out of the community based process of giving input to this project. Those four alternatives are going to be looked at throughout the rest of the process to put together an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). There is no decision being made about that part of the project at this time. That decision will be made one to two years down the road as far as selecting those alternatives.

NCDOT has agreed to modify the interchange of I-26, I-40 and I-240 as part of this project and make that a full interchange where no one will have to use Brevard Road to make that interstate to interstate movement. Also, recently there has been an update to the area traffic model. A model is a computer simulation of how traffic flows in the area and what future growth patterns and traffic patterns will be. That traffic model is the basis for NCDOT is using in their recommendation on the number of lanes for I-240.

NCDOT's current anticipated schedule is to complete the EIS draft in the middle of 2004. There would be a public hearing and a final alternative selected at that point. Then they would complete a final (EIS). By 2006 NCDOT would begin buying right of way and in 2008 begin construction.

Dan stated that NCDOT has come to the local community and said that they are recommending that the part of the connector project that travels on existing I-240 through West Asheville (from Patton Avenue down to I-240) be designed as an 8-lane facility. This means 4 travel lanes in each direction with ramps to get off and on at the interchanges. NCDOT has asked for input from the MPO and the TAC. The TAC will take action on that recommendation at their meeting on June 20, 2002.

The basis for NCDOT's recommendation is the traffic volume projections - what the travel demand will be 25 years down the road. It is based on how many residences and businesses will be in the area and the location of those residences and businesses.

Factors to be considered by the TAC – (1) NCDOT recommendation (traffic projections, travel demand); (2) TCC recommendation; (3) community input; (4) community impacts; (5) community goals and (6) project schedule and process.

Dan explained the rules for public comment.

Public comment

Ron Ainspan – represents the I-26 Connector Awareness group. Our group has been engaged in this process for several years. We have spoke with the public, local officials and staff with NCDOT and Federal Highway Administration. That involvement has achieved tremendous results. Through a design forum held in the summer of 2000 and through the work of the CCC for the I-26 connector we have incorporated the consideration of many elements in to this project that will have long term significance. We have included new safety issues by introduction of new alternatives into the EIS process. We have made contributions to the traffic flow for transportation throughout the area by calling for the inclusion of the I-26 and I-40 interchange into the project. We have improved the accuracy by calling for an updated traffic model. All these things are NCDOT did not feel that at the time we started this project should be included. This has been an indication that we really need to work for what we want and we can get it. Our community has needs. We need to improve our air quality. We need to improve our economy. We need to enhance our quality of life and we need to preserve and promote our neighborhood. This project will impact those needs and it literally is a milestone project. The critical choices at this juncture need proper attention and here we are on the brink of the EIS. Last month the NCDOT presented their traffic projections. How were these projections arrived at? What are their functions? Here is an opportunity to look at how accurate they are. Projections for an interstate like this predict what peek hour of traffic is going to be 20 to 25 years down the road. Is that the way we want to go with our transportation policy? We need to think about the way people move, how much they are moving and what else besides an interstate building be done to move those people. TCC members have looked at the CCC report. We want the EIS process to have the opportunity to determine that by considering lane options less than 8 lanes wide. What if we build more highway than we need? There are other issues such as no money for road improvements. I would like to see a press to DOT to build a bridge to travel traffic across the French Broad, but not at the expense of our air, at the expense of our community.

Jerry VeHaun – Emergency Services for Buncombe County. As all of you know today, this afternoon, tomorrow afternoon or any other afternoon that you approach the malfunction junction as we call it (I-40, 240, I-26 connector) or even the Smokey Park bridge, we have problems on a daily bases with accidents. It is a nightmare to Emergency Response. The problem we have, once you have an accident is ambulances, fire trucks and law enforcement have a terrible time getting to the accident scene. This time next year when the connector around Madison County is completed and all that traffic starts coming into Asheville it is only going to get worse. We are going to have an interstate highway that is going to be narrowed down to one lane anywhere you go just to get across Smokey Park Bridge. My opinion in there has been enough delay already with this project. This project should have completed before the segment around Madison County was being completed. This project has been studied to death, its been planned to death. I think that once construction begins we need to do it right. My personal opinion is we need to do all of these things at the same time. Do the 8-lane and 6-lane part and have something that we can live with for the next 25 – 35 years. We have heard a lot about this project and air quality. I think we need to not delay this project any further. We need to have long range planning which certainly DOT has done

with this project. We don't need any more short-term planning or short-term solutions. I urge this committee to recommend that we go ahead with the recommendation of DOT do the 8 lanes. Let's get on with this thing.

Steve Elliott – Fire Chief with Enka-Candler Fire Department. I'm not here to say that Enka-Candler Fire Dept. is in favor of 6 or 8 lanes. I'm here to echo safety concerns that Jerry has expressed particularly on this section of I-240. Having responded to these accidents for approx. 20 years I have seen over last several years that accessibility has become worse and worse. We talk about not planning for the peak traffic time. However, those are the times that give the emergency personnel the hardest time to access the people in need. The signs are another problem. The on-ramp accesses on Amboy Road, Brevard Road, and even Haywood Road are a problem. You have a very short lead in to that 2-lane traffic that is traveling at speed limit. There are a lot of problems with people trying to merge out into traffic moving 60 to 65 miles an hour after they have had to come to a dead stop. You've got 100 yards top to get a running start to get into this traffic. We have had these traffic problems for 10 to 15 years. Now seems to be a logical time to correct some of these problems. We are not recommending 6 lanes or 8 lanes. Basically we are asking for a solution to the emergency problems in these areas. Whatever it would take to correct it.

Clay Ballantine – American Lung Association & Buncombe County Medical Society. (Presentation attached). Against the widening.

Gloria Good – (could not hear). Against the widening.

David McConville – Small business owner on Haywood Road. I want to make a couple of observations about economic development. I think this would absolutely kill what is happening. A lot of people are putting a lot of time and effort into revitalizing Haywood Road. This is overkill that is being pushed. It will seriously hamper the economic development on Haywood Road. The noise pollution will be awful. It's against the community, small businesses around there and the citizens of West Asheville. It is completely unnecessary. They should focus on a sensible design for the connector as well as mass transit. A lot of the data that has been used to justify [the project in Henderson County] has been proven false, so that gives us more reason to seriously consider leaving this part out of the current effort and get moving with the connector and actually live with our air quality.

Rebecca Campbell – a couple of weeks ago I spoke with 2 urban designers who were here for another event. They volunteered that the two things that will destroy Asheville would be an 8-lane I-26 connector and a Super Walmart at the Sayles Bleachery. They said one would corrupt from the East and the other from the West. I myself can think of four reasons why MPO should consider voting against an 8-lane connector: (1) poor air quality; (2) dependency on automobiles which discourages the development of alternative transportation; (3) hidden agenda to use for transporting plutonium and dangerous chemicals (4) finally as referenced by our previous speaker is the democratic process. I urge MPO to consider voting against this plan.

Alan Basist - An 8- lane highway is not the way to revitalize a City that is coming alive. Cited examples of Austin & Cincinnati building massive highways and killing their downtown. Now they are spending billions of dollars to remove them. Look at them as role models. They want to have what we have, a revitalized downtown. [The proposed highway] will produce an unlivable environment. Let's design a City around local livability. Let's encourage people to build and live downtown.

Angela McPhee - Referenced a study she recently read and encouraged committee to vote against more lanes.

John Ager - Scenic Hwy. - Against 8-lanes for air quality and health issues.

Betty Lawrence - Broadway Improvement Project - asking you to ask DOT to fix the interchanges (clapping could not hear) then put more time into studying the options. First, say no to 8 lanes, and second study on a regional basis the alternatives for the whole corridor. This committee has the knowledge to make the right decision concerning how our tax dollars should be used to clean up our air and deal with traffic congestion before we spend hundreds of millions of dollars on pavement. Make no mistake about it; the money to be spent on I-26 is a huge portion of all the transportation money we are going to get in this region for another 10 years or so. We have a heaven sent opportunity to get a handle on air quality planning. We need to ask for the very best that DOT has to offer to help us to try and figure out what just might work to clean up our air and solve traffic congestion. New lanes are just a Band-Aid; they help for a few years. Adding lanes does not solve congestion. 8 lanes are not the preferred solution. Are you going to tame the hungry asphalt beast or are you going to feed it a gourmet meal?

Shawn Robinson - Now is the time to consider what we are going to do with I-26. If we vote now for 8 lanes we will push out any other options that there are. If we push them out now they will never come back. Does anyone want to drive with 143,000 cars? It doesn't matter how many lanes that they have. Now is the time to say we are not going to drive with 143,000 cars, we are going to limit the number of cars on the highway. We are going to encourage people not to get into their cars. I asked this committee what do you want to be remembered for? Do you want to be remembered for creating something bad for Asheville?

Christopher Fielden - Against project because of the air quality it will create. Actually put that money into looking at a way to improve the air quality in Asheville. Help create more transportation options and people will use them.

Deny Plemmons - I'm here to ask you to support the DOT's recommendation and build this connector as quickly as possible. I think this has been a well thought out process and I certainly encourage you to move as quickly as you can before the Smoky Park Bridge becomes the death a day bridge.

R. L. Clark - I live 19-23 N. at the New Stock Road exit. I encounter at least 2 or 3 times weekly traffic backed up toward the Monticello Road exit past New Stock. Folks, with the impending traffic coming into the Smokey Park Bridge area it is going to be an absolute nightmare. The Smokey Park Bridge area must have some attention and it has to have it soon. However, this is just going to be a temporary solution to the problem that we all face. There are plans for an outer loop. All the surveys have been done, my recommendation to this committee is to let's build an expressway, a redesign of the Smoky Park area, and start work immediately on an outer loop.

Bill Reynolds - Has anybody given any thought to what this situation is going to be like if they go with these 8-lanes while the construction is going on? Have they given any thought to that at all? I think we need something like R L said something built outside to take care of the traffic and then do what you have got to do down here. It only takes one little accident to back traffic up all the way past the airport. That's what you are going to have here. You are going to have no alternate route and even with 8-lanes one

accident is going to block the whole thing. This is going to be several years we will have to put up with this if they build the 8-lanes. You better think about the alternate route now and then work on the downtown after you have somewhere else to go.

Ralph Young - Business located next to 19-23 in Woodfin. I came tonight to address a lot of things that have pretty well been covered. Think about the late 40's and early 50's. Whoever it was that had the dream to build the interstate was not thinking 5 or 10 years they were thinking far into the future. Where would we be today if we had not had the interstate system? I have to agree with people who are engineers and have studied it. I go with the DOT.

Ruth Chaet - live in West Asheville. West Asheville will be very badly impacted with 8-lanes. I think that what Betty said we should listen to and vote against the 8-lanes.

Cassandra Childs - I try to commute 3 or 4 times a week on my bicycle from Weaverville to Asheville. I think it would be better to take that extra lane and build with 6-lanes and put that extra lane into improving the bus system. I ride the bus a lot and we could really use improvement there.

Londa Murray - a City Council member for the City of Hendersonville. I would like to remind you of our Resolution No. 01-0542 that we adopted on June 14th of last year. In that resolution we opposed a 6-lane in Henderson County. We are also against this project in Asheville for safety reasons and air quality in our region.

Mac Swicegood - Here on the behalf of CIBO, we are an organization of about 250. We have been involved with this planning process since 1989. We have participated on every committee that we have been invited and asked to be on. We feel like this is a very important infrastructure improvement for our area. It not only affects Buncombe County and Asheville but also affects other counties and concerns. We strongly support 8 lanes and we would even like more.

Mr. Gardner - Asheville Board of Realtors - The Asheville Board of Realtors has gone on record twice in the past three years in support of a timely completion of this project. The Board of Directors of the Asheville Board of Realtors with approx. 1000 members once again strongly recommends a timely completion of I-26 connector suggested by the DOT. The Asheville area has become one of the most highly sought after cities in this country. The only choice in this matter is to move forward as quickly as possible with the completion of 8-lanes.

Cathy Riddle - You cannot go just with projections. For example, our State budget is based on projections. The Broadway project near UNCA was a project that we had to have because all these cars are going to be going through there. Anyone traveling this road can see that it is empty quite a bit of the time and the so-called projections said that this is necessary. I am a little bit skeptical about the projections for 8-lanes. We need to take care of the communities that we are building the roads to connect. There are a lot of options to the 8-lanes - transit has been mentioned. I also believe that if we synchronize the traffic lights then people can get off the highway and keep on going. W also need better signs.

Nancy Khyherdau - Most has already been said. I do want to say something that I know is really unpopular. We are willing to talk about limiting growth but I think we need to talk about our beautiful mountains. We cannot sustain the number of people coming through here or moving here.

Whit Rylee - Representing the West End/Clingman Neighborhood. One thing that I'm working on right now is the redevelopment project in the West End/Clingman neighborhood. Over the past 40 - 50 years the neighborhood has been demolished, houses have burned down, people have moved out into suburbia. We built roads to let that happen, we built roads to encourage that to happen. When we talk about pushing these roads through there is a human cost. People remember these things for generations. Also against 8-lanes for air quality purposes. I hope that you can support a 4 or 6 lane alternative and not support the 8-lanes. I hope that you can support the revitalization of downtown neighborhoods like the West End/Clingman neighborhood.

Lewis Griggs - Lives in West Asheville. If we don't have enough lanes somewhere to carry the traffic coming across Smokey Park Bridge it is only going to get worse. I don't understand why DOT feels like all roads must lead straight through Asheville. Why not build around town. I wonder how many people would come across Smokey Park Bridge during the morning and in the evenings if there was an alternate route going around Asheville? We are here today because evidentially in the past, the future was not on the agenda. I travel the Smokey Park Bridge all different hours of the day and it is a nightmare. I am in favor of considering a bypass around Asheville.

Rick Lutovsky – Represents Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce with approx. 2,000 members. With the opening of I-26 from Madison County coming up here we need to be concerned with the upgrade of 19-23 to the interstate standard. There will be three residences affected if the project goes from 6 to 8 lanes. There will be an additional three businesses affected by the 8-lanes verses 6 lanes. We have the issue of decreasing highway uses by increasing the use of public transportation. It is estimated that between 30 and 40 thousand vehicles per a day would have to be diverted in some way from this 3.19 length for the 6-lanes to work. We have not been able to find a scenerio that realistically achieves those reductions. We share the desires for cleaner air and higher quality of life with everybody here. The question before you, before this group is how to best achieve that within relation to a badly needed highway which we agree needs to be done. So with the information provided it seems clear that 8-lanes for the 3.19 mile length is necessary. The Chamber Board has recommended that you move ahead with the steps that are necessary for the 8-lanes. As a community we also need to all do our share in looking for every way to expedite the planning and the right of way acquisition and the construction. This is one of the most important issues facing us with significant implications for our future growth and development. Once again on behalf of the Chamber Board and its members we urge you to move ahead as quickly as possible to make this happen. We feel the time has come.

Lola Lafey - Lives on London Road in the Shiloh area. I am a bicycle commuter to work. I am here because of the safety concern with 8-lanes. It is already unsafe with the number of lanes we have now. Please keep our safety in mind with this decision.

Craig White - Lives on Sulphur Springs in West Asheville. As a member of the Chamber and owner of a business in West Asheville I am going to have to respectfully disagree with Mr. Lutovsky. We don't believe that changing our neighborhood is going to be good for our local businesses. Other people have explained why 8-lanes is not a good idea. I would just like to remind you that there are some better recommendations on the table. I work as a volunteer facilitator for a lot of public meetings. People have spoken and what they have said plan after plan is that we want bike lanes, we want equal investment in public transportation. We want Smart Growth and clean air and affordable housing and safe neighborhoods and we want to keep our mountains. It's not just these vague statements of what we want

but your citizens have really come forward with some very specific, concrete and common sense recommendations on how we can do those things and how we can pay for them. Those recommendations are on the table. On the other hand we have got the DOT recommendation which folks have pointed out assumes pretty much-unlimited residential sprawl out into the county. Assumes that those folks will be commuting downtown and assuming that they will not be using public transportation but instead single occupancy vehicles. People have said that that is not the Buncombe County that we want. As I see your choice next week, it is between what DOT has recommended based on some data that is questionable and a vision of highways from the 1950's, and what your citizens have ask for and the recommendation that your citizens have made. I think that you have a good democratic process going here. I really hope that you use it.

Ken Michalove - lives at 603 Timber Lane in Asheville. A generation will have passed from the early 90's to the projected completion of the connector in 2008. In the early 90's the City requested that the connector be finished at the same time as the Mars Hill and 19-23 connector is finished. It seems strange now that they are talking about the DOT's formula and asking if they are over projecting. The major roads around Asheville were projected by those same formulas and they are out-of-date. Vote for the 8-lanes and let's get on with construction.

Nathan Ramsey - I would request that you would support the DOT's recommendation. I think that it makes sense from an air quality standpoint. How does it improve air quality to have traffic backed up on a road? Where would we be today if 240 had not been constructed? I think that it is important from an air quality standpoint to do that. I do support the public transportation, I think that most of our citizens do. But that should not be at the exclusion of making common sense difficult decisions. Second, on an economic development standpoint it makes no sense for a business to have their employees sitting in traffic and being bottlenecked. I don't think that it will help this community and that is something that could be a detriment to us all. Finally, I think that most of the citizens in this community whether they show up at public hearings or not, do support this project. Most of them request that the project already be completed today and we need to remember that we are talking about a project that will not be built for 10 years. We are not talking about today's traffic level we are talking about something 10 year into the future. I would respectively request that the TAC support the DOT recommendation.

Mark Zink - Lives in Montford. One of the reasons I moved to Asheville was I was wanting to live somewhere where I could walk or bike. A quality community is only brought about by having people on the streets that say hi to their neighbors. Not people who are isolated from each other by cars. The bottom line is if you build more roads you will have more cars on them. I think all of you realize that we've been building more roads to ease congestion since well before I was born and we have more congestion. If we build it they will come that's the bottom line. We have an amazing town here. We have a walkable downtown, we have a place that people come to because it is charming and it's walkable and people feel good about being in Asheville.

Nelda Holder - I represent the League of Women Voters in Asheville and Buncombe County. The League is a non-profit organization that totally understands participation in decision-making. This public hearing is an example of the continuing public participation regarding the I-26 corridor. Repeatedly large numbers of this community have rallied for planning and information sessions and have spoken out and worked for a design model in the I-26 project which is harmonious and integrates well into the Asheville community. Many options have been discussed in these sessions. An extremely important health issue, which will be affected by this project, is air quality. The quality of our air is already compromised and it

is affecting the physical well being of many of our citizens. A planned expansion of this magnitude should include rigorous modeling and massive support for transportation alternatives, which would reduce the risk of air pollution, not encourage it. At this point and time such a rigorous process has not taken place. It is inappropriate therefore for the TAC to commit to and recommend an 8-lane project at this time. The League requests this committee to request additional documentation of support and allow for alternative transportation planning. This should be accompanied by specific study of the air quality affects of any increase in traffic lanes. This is going to be an expensive project. We simply cannot afford to accept anything less than the best plan possible.

Roger Derrough, Jr. - With the I-26 awareness group. I'm the founder of Earth Fare and on the CCC representing West Gate Shopping Center. I urge the TAC to refrain from being pushed into accepting 8-lanes from DOT. Instead, break the tradition and tell DOT Asheville doesn't need or want an 8-lane I-240. Tell them that you want them to work with your staff and find a way to keep the project on track and do it without 8 lanes.

Jeff Kelley - Read from the Draft Asheville City Plan 2025 that has just come out. Although outside sources contribute some of the pollution, local forces including automobiles and trucks are still a significate factor in pollution problems. Reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle occupanancy and promote bicycling, walking and transit use as a convenient alternative to the automobile. Alternative transportation can be especially affective in reducing the most polluting vehicle trip. I urge you to respect the majority of our citizens and the City of Asheville 2025 plan by voting no 8-lanes for I-240. We do not want it and we do not need it. Now is the time for us to begin the new way of thinking regarding our transportation options and air quality.

Lou Bissette - I'm here tonight really as a private citizen but I would like to represent on Mac Magoo who is the co-chairman of the Western North Carolina Corridors Association. Mac has been working for this community since 1947. He is the one man who is most responsible for our community getting the Farmers Market, the Agricultural Center and the Arboretum. I do want to speak on behalf of the WNC Corridor Association which is a group made up of cities, towns and counties through out Western North Carolina. The Association does support the 8-lanes alternative it urges you to pass that next week. I also serve on the CCC but I certainly can't speak for that group - I don't think anybody can. We have accomplished a lot of things by trying to reach a consensus. I don't think that we are going to reach a consensus on this issue at all. I think we need to build an adequately sized connector and I would urge you to move ahead and approve the 8-lane recommendation of the DOT. If later, when this new traffic model comes in and it turns out that 8-lanes are not required I would suspect that it would be much easier to decrease the number of lanes than to have to increase them at that time.

Kathy Mead - Lives in West Asheville. Opposed to this project because I think that it would have a negative impact on West Asheville. Also opposes because of asthmatic reasons. I think the air quality will suffer.

Mark Ritzenthaler - I came here tonight with an open mind. I agree now with other speakers who say no to 8-lanes because it will generate more use of automobiles.

Leni Sitnick - As a former member of the TAC this is one of the few times that I regret I cannot vote against the 8 lanes. I do oppose 8-lanes. I want to address the issue of bumper to bumper traffic being a nightmare. What is a nightmare is Dr. Ballantine's presentation. Let me remind you of Broadway, and of

the Asheville Mall intersection. We need to put more money into mass transit and alternative transportation. We are spending tax dollars to create roads for people passing through at peek hours, that's what this is all about.

Keith Thomson - Father and small business owner. A couple of points - one is that we have examples of putting all of our eggs into one basket. It will hurt this community, especially the neighborhoods. If we put all of our eggs into the I-26 corridor especially for 8-lanes, this might be cheaper than 12-lanes but it will cost money. One other thing, I ask especially from the folks from the other municipalities consider being a good neighbor to those of us who live in Asheville?

Eva Ritchey - President of Citizen's for Transportation Planning in Henderson County, an organization that advocates for multi-modal transportation planning. Quotes from attached Greenville News article. DOT's proposal is a lose-lose. You will lose your sense of community. You will lose identity, you will lose air quality and Asheville will lose money just like they did in Milwaukee. Here is my question to you - is there vision here among the leaders of Asheville, or will our children be burdened with tearing down an obsolete freeway in 40 years like they are doing in Milwaukee?

Joe Fioccolo - I believe that there are no simple solutions to complex problems. I think we should ask the DOT for other options to the 8-lanes. If they say that there is only one, they are not looking hard enough.

Veronika Gunter - As a stepparent to a child with asthma I ask you to vote against the 8-lanes.

Alan Ditmore - I ask that [you reject] any expansion of the connector. Asheville area is facing a growing crisis. (could not hear)

Cari Common - We do not need 8 lanes. I urge you not to go with 8-lanes.

Christian Woodall - I would like to encourage you to ask DOT for other options besides 8-lanes.

Fred Groce - Member of the Chamber Board. I support the resolution that the Chamber Board approved recently to recommend going ahead with the 8-lane widening.

Michael Morgan – [candidate for State House from Swanannoa]. I would not recommend widening the I-26, I-240 through West Asheville. I have not heard anybody mention tonight that this will not be 8-lanes after they widen the on and off ramps, it will really be 10 lanes and I think that is way too much. Another item not mentioned is using a varied work schedules so that everyone is not traveling the highways at the same time. Use the money that would be going into widening the road to mass transit. People can't use mass transit if it's non-existent.

Andrew Euston - I do not see the evidence that 8-lanes is necessary. (could not hear)

David Berkey - lives in West Asheville. I certainly understand the need to fix the connector. It is a safety issue and very dysfunctional, but we really don't need 8-lanes. Consider something other than that.

Jack Aycock - As long as we have these beautiful mountains people are going to come. We don't want the roads in Asheville to be so impossible that you can't drive your automobile. By refusing to build roads they want us all to live downtown. In favor of 8-lanes

Colleen Durocher - lives in West Asheville. My house is likely to be one of the homes demolished. Against the 8-lanes because of poor air quality and health issues.

Buck Talman - has lived her for 67 years. I'm a CEO of a company that owns a business on Haywood Road in West Asheville. I strongly support the 8-lane process. No one here has addressed really the question of the air pollution that exists right now as a result of slow moving parking lots sitting out there on 26 and 40 in the morning and evenings. If Moses had had to depend on a committee, his people would still be in Egypt.

Julie Furdyna - Lives in West Asheville. As you drive to the beach think of how many times you drive through cities much bigger than ours without 8-lanes. Do we really need 8-lanes? We are saying that we want some alternatives that will reach all the goals. Keep an open mind.

Steve Hendson - Represents S.A. Multiple Use Council. As several people have mentioned there is no question about it - there is traffic coming. If we wait too long it is going to have an impact on our quality of life through out the region. Support the DOT's recommendation of 8-lanes.

David Meek - Lives in West Asheville. If any one would like to see the 2 alternatives from DOT please see me (copies attached). This is literally in my back yard so this is a big concern to me. One point that I would like to point out is an article in the paper that reports that the accident rate was reported incorrectly [for the Henderson County widening]. Instead of being 719 per 100 million vehicles when the actual rate was 44, now this is right in the paper - anybody can see this. Can we rely on incorrect information? Shouldn't we assume that the information is incorrect before making a decision?

Bob Burgin - CEO of Chamber Board, lives in West Asheville. Speaking as a representative for the hospital and also a board member. I feel strongly that we should have a lot of attention paid toward our road system as it currently exists. With the projections I have seen, if we don't have strong land use planning we are not going to be able to let people into our community. From the point of view of emergency vehicles and safety perspective I would like to address the point that if accidents occur on those highways we can not get our emergency vehicles to them. We can't get our emergency staff to the hospital when they are caught in the traffic. I do believe however that we are going to have those people coming into our community that we are going to be having to route around our community weather we build 4-lanes, 6-lanes or 8-lanes. I think that there is a way in which we can process people through our community most efficently with the 8-lanes.

Greg Gregory - Lives in West Asheville. Comparison of DOT projections with actual traffic counts (attached). Traffic models are unreliable. I want to urge you given the track record of models in general, please question the numbers very hard.

Rusty Sivils - The argument that more lanes will let traffic move faster and reduce pollution is bogus. Within 5 years, more lanes will produce more traffic and cause more pollution. If you want to increase Asheville's air pollution you should widen I-240 to 6-lanes. If you want to increase it even more you

should widen it to 8-lanes. If you want to find a real solution you should not widen it at all. Why does DOT want 8-lanes? - Because the mission of DOT is to build roads.

Paul Boehm - I'm in the vacation rental business. I have people come from all over the country and they love it here. If we continue to bring in all this traffic through here people are not going to come to Asheville. If it has to be connected, which 26 does, my idea from what I've seen is to double deck two lanes each way and it has to be for through commercial traffic only. If trucks are coming up from South Carolina on 26 and want to go to Tennessee once they get on they can't stop in Asheville. They have to go through the city. Leave the lanes that are here now for local traffic only.

Copper Coggins - Against 8-lanes for safety issues. (could not hear)

Cindy - Against 8-lanes from a healthcare standpoint.

(Name?) Speaking for Cathy - business partner. Speaking on behalf of West End Bakery. I strongly oppose widening 240 to 8-lanes and do not see any advantage to doing so. I urge you to consider alternates to 8-lanes and ask for further studies and environmental impact for both the physical health for Asheville citizens and the economic viability of our mountain community.

Alan Moore - Lives in West Asheville. I lived in Atlanta for 20 years before coming to Asheville. Every time that DOT widened the expressways by the time that they finished construction they were already over capacity. I expect the same thing to happen here if this is approved and the construction process is completed. I will not be surprised, in fact I will be extremely surprised if this doesn't occur. If by the time it is completed we have exactly the same problems we have now it is just as congested and people will be calling for yet another project to widen it again for exactly the same reason.

George Briggs - Lives in Arden works at the Arboretum. We have so many people coming here for so many reasons. I believe you need to make an improvement right now. I believe DOT will work with you and continue to work with you. I believe that what you have to do is take the action in front of you.

Ron Ainspan - We need to model it now and see what the relative impact is - not throw out the other options and not be able to see what the relative impacts are. A united community will get us a lot further. Let's get the connector functional and leave the lanes option for more study, which is needed.

Charles Grimes closed meeting at 10:20 p.m.

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 06-26-2003

GROUP: I-26 Connector Awareness Group (CAG)

LOCATION: Westgate Shopping Center @ 6pm

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Drew Joyner, Ken Burleson

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 20

NOTES: Project representatives discussed the project status and schedule at this evening meeting.

I-2513 Public Meetings and Presentations Record

DATE OF MEETING: 11/13/2003

GROUP: Asheville Rotary Club

LOCATION: Asheville Country Club

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES: Drew Joyner, Alan Thornburg, Ken Burleson, Greg Thorpe, Jay Swain, Derrick Weaver

ATTENDANCE: Approximately 40

NOTES: Project representatives gave a project status presentation at this luncheon meeting.

I-26 Connector
Project Status

I. Transportation Decision-Making Process

A. High Level Decision-Making Process
1. Systems Planning
2. Identify Concept (Programming in TIP)
3. Project Development
4. Design

B. Transportation Decision-Making Process
1. Show Detailed Process Slide
2. Control by NCDOT/by Others/by Both
3. Systems Planning to Design (Thousand foot view to inches)
4. Loop-backs
5. Where I-26 Connector is Located in the Process

II. Brief History

A. Phased-Environmental Study
B. I-26 Connector Project Development Study
1. Early Project Study
a. Public Workshop
b. Numerous Neighborhood and Small Group Meetings
c. Two Alternatives
2. City of Asheville Asks for Additional Public Involvement
a. Community Coordinating Committee
b. Educational and Design Forums
c. Project Modifications/Improvements

III. Community Coordinating Committee/Design Forum

A. Nine Project Goals from Design Forum
1. Separation of Local and Interstate Traffic

H. Developed Ten Concepts (Section C)
I. Determined Five Preliminary Alternates (C)
J. Conducting Architecturally Historic Resource Studies (C)
K. Conducting Natural Systems Studies (C)
L. Updated Traffic Model/New Model - Generated New Traffic Forecasts
M. Conducting New Capacity Studies (Intersections/Weaves etc.)
N. Obtained MPO Approval of 8-Lane Concept (Section A)
New Model confirms need

V. To Be Completed

A. Indirect and Cumulative Impact Analysis
1. Includes Regional Air Quality Analysis
2. Includes Consideration of Development Inducement (with local input)
B. Final Surveys for All Alternates
C. Develop Design Footprints for All Alternates
D. Quantify Alternate Impacts
E. Develop More Detailed Cost Estimates
F. Determine Preferred Alternate
G. Public Involvement
1. Three Public Workshops – Inter Spring 04 Alts Summer 05
2. Public Hearing

VI. Schedule

A. Conduct I-26 / I-40 Interchange Workshop (Spring 04)
B. Conduct Section B Alternates Workshop (Summer 05)
1. Compare Impacts
2. Compare Costs
C. Complete DEIS (Winter 2005/06)
D. Conduct Public Hearing (Winter 05/06 After DEIS)
E. Select Preferred Alternative (Spring 2006)
F. Complete Final EIS (Winter 2006)
G. Complete R.O.D. (Spring 2007)
H. Conduct Public Workshop (Summer 2007)
I. Complete R/W Plans (Summer 2007)
J. Award R/W – Construction Contract (Spring 2008)
K. Anticipated Completion (2012)

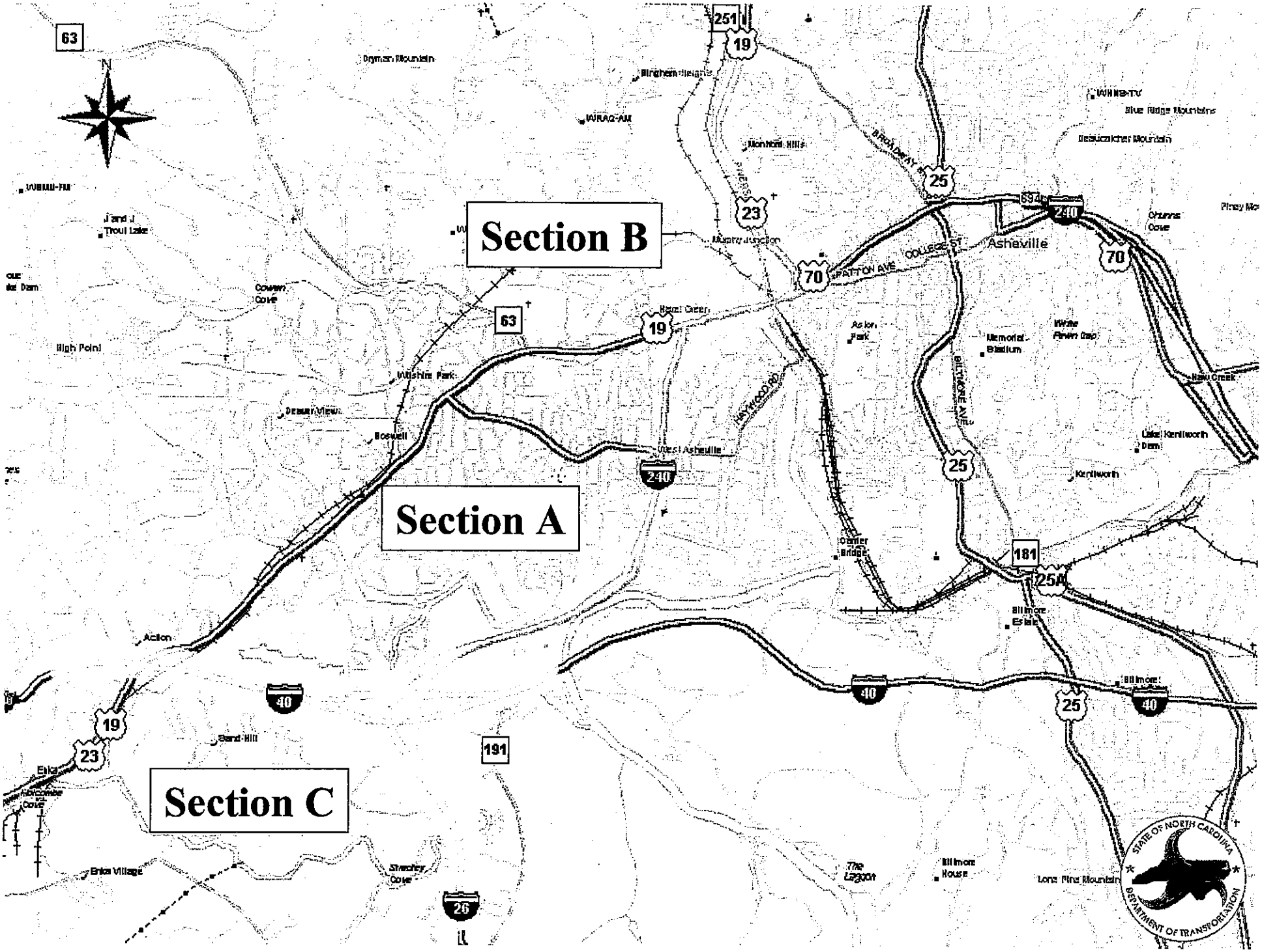
2. Matching Scale of Project to Character of Community
3. Minimization of Neighborhood and Local Business Impacts
4. Reunification and Connectivity of Community
5. Use of Updated Traffic Modeling Software and Data
6. Maintenance of Compatibility with Community's Design Vision and plans; incorporation of Community-Selected Design Features
7. Creation of Full Interstate Movements Between I-26 and I-40
8. Minimization of Air Quality and Other Environmental Impacts
9. Emphasis on Safety – During Construction and in the Design of the Final Product

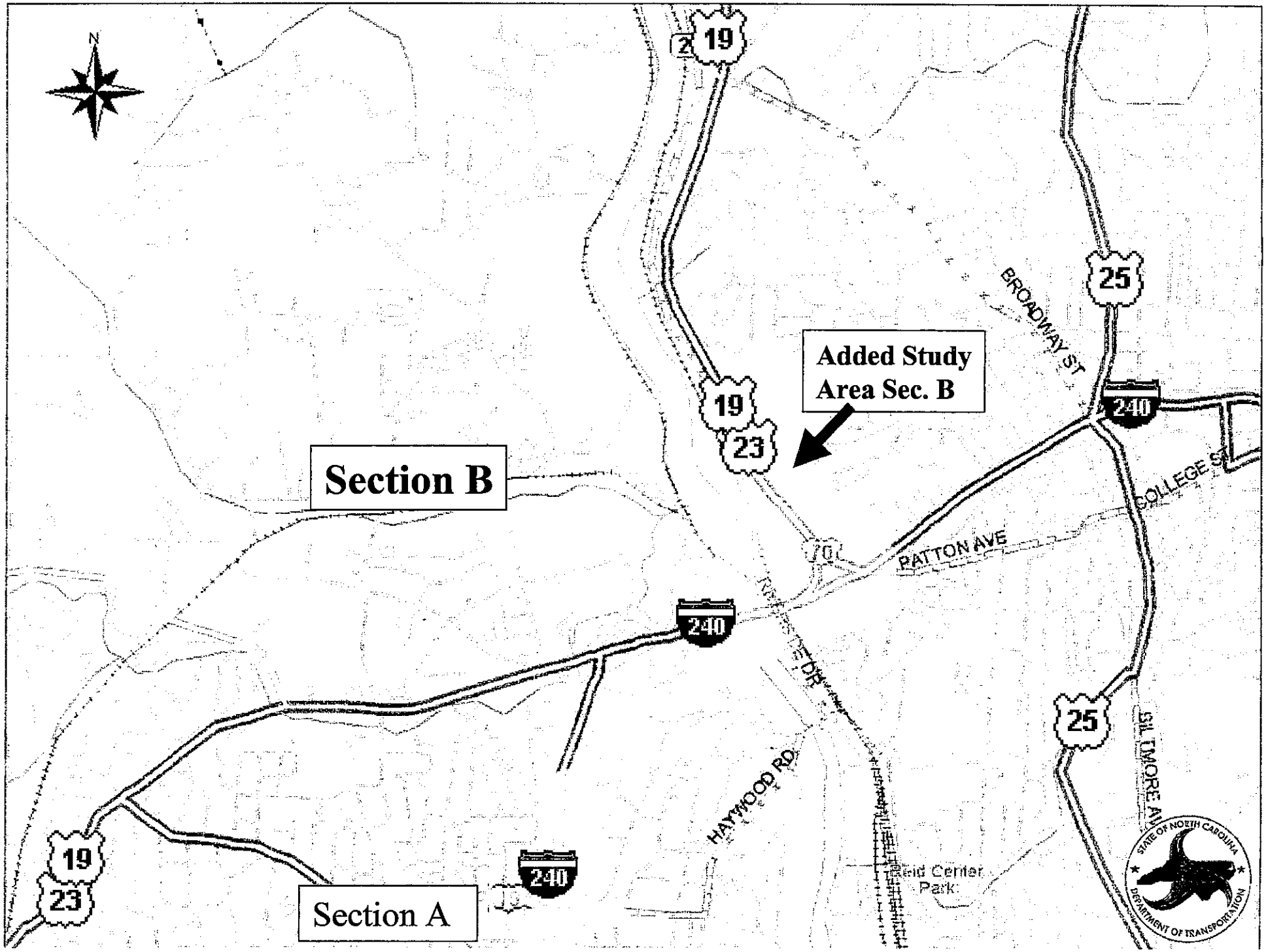
B. Goals Specific to I-26 Connector – Modifications/Improvements to Project
   1. Separation of Local and Interstate Traffic
   4. Reunification and Connectivity of Community
   5. Use of Updated Traffic Modeling Software and Data
   6. Maintenance of Compatibility with Community's Design Vision and plans; incorporation of Community-Selected Design Features
   7. Creation of Full Interstate Movements Between I-26 and I-40

C. Result of Community Involvement – Numerous Project Modifications/Improvements; Much Larger Project

IV. Recent Progress

A. Explain Sections - A (Existing I-240, B (New location) and C (I-26/I-40 Interchange)
B. Developed Over Twelve Preliminary Alternatives (Section B)
C. Determined Two Additional Detailed Study Alternatives (B)
D. Completed Architecturally Historic Resource Studies (B)
E. Completed Natural Systems (Plant, Animal & Water) Studies (Section B)
F. Completed Preliminary Surveys (Section B)
G. Added I-26 / I-40 Interchange Studies (Section C)


Section B
Section A
Section C
Asheville
PATTON AVE
COLLEGE ST
BILTMORE AVE
HAYWOOD RD
Biltmore Estate
Biltmore
Biltmore House
The Lagoon
Long Pine Mountain
Blue Ridge Mountains
Beaucatcher Mountain
Montford Hills
Bingham Heights
Dryman Mountain
WRAQ-AM
WHKW-TV
J and J Trout Lake
High Point
Cowan Cove
Wilshire Park
Desert View
Boswell
West Asheville
Hazel Creek
Aston Park
Memorial Stadium
White Pines Gap
Lake Kentworth Dam
Kentworth
Center Bridge
Acton
Sand Hill
Enka
Enka Village
Strecker Cove
Owens Cove
Piney Mo
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION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Added Study Area Sec. B
Section B
Section A
Reid Center Park
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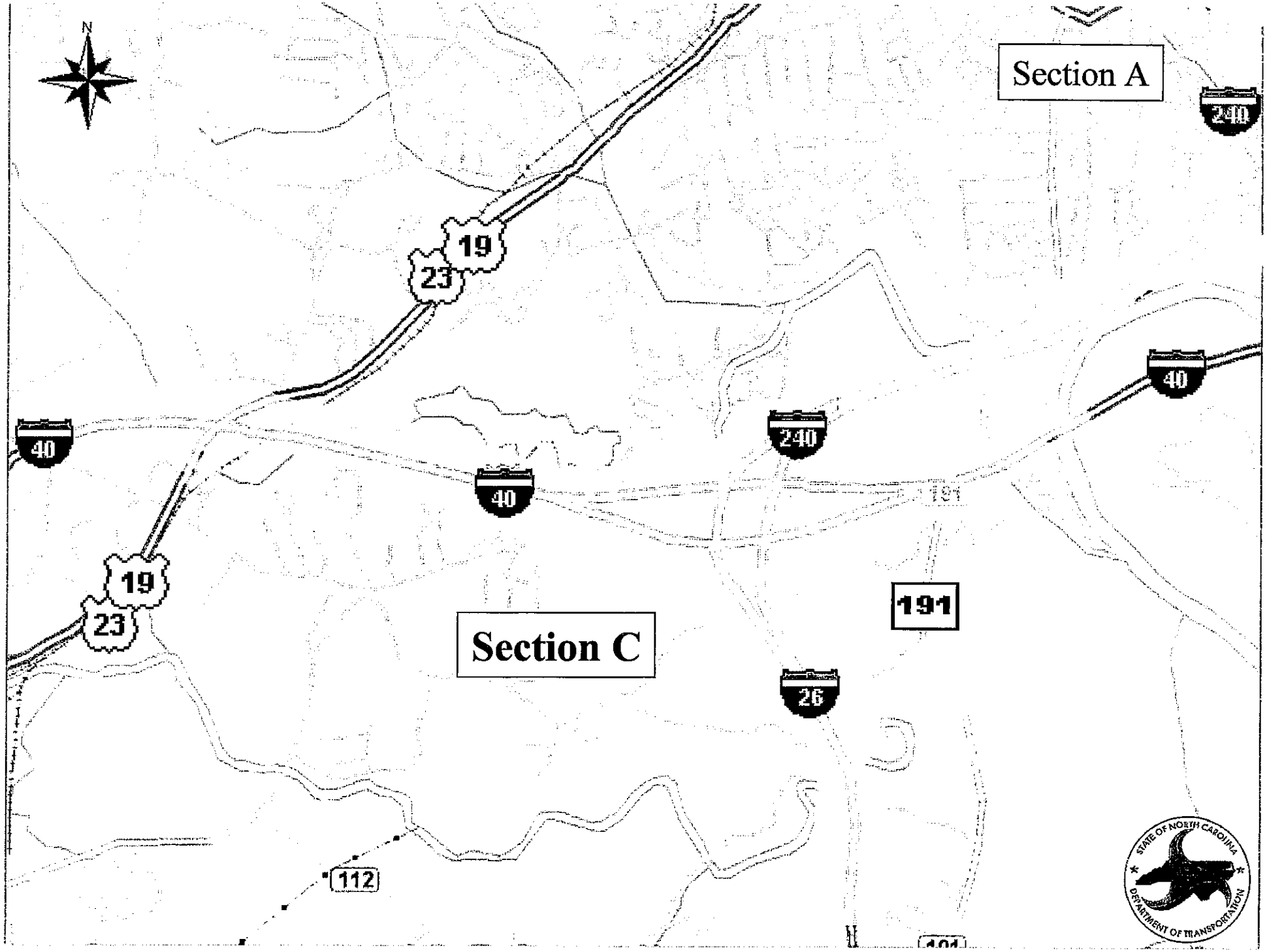
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION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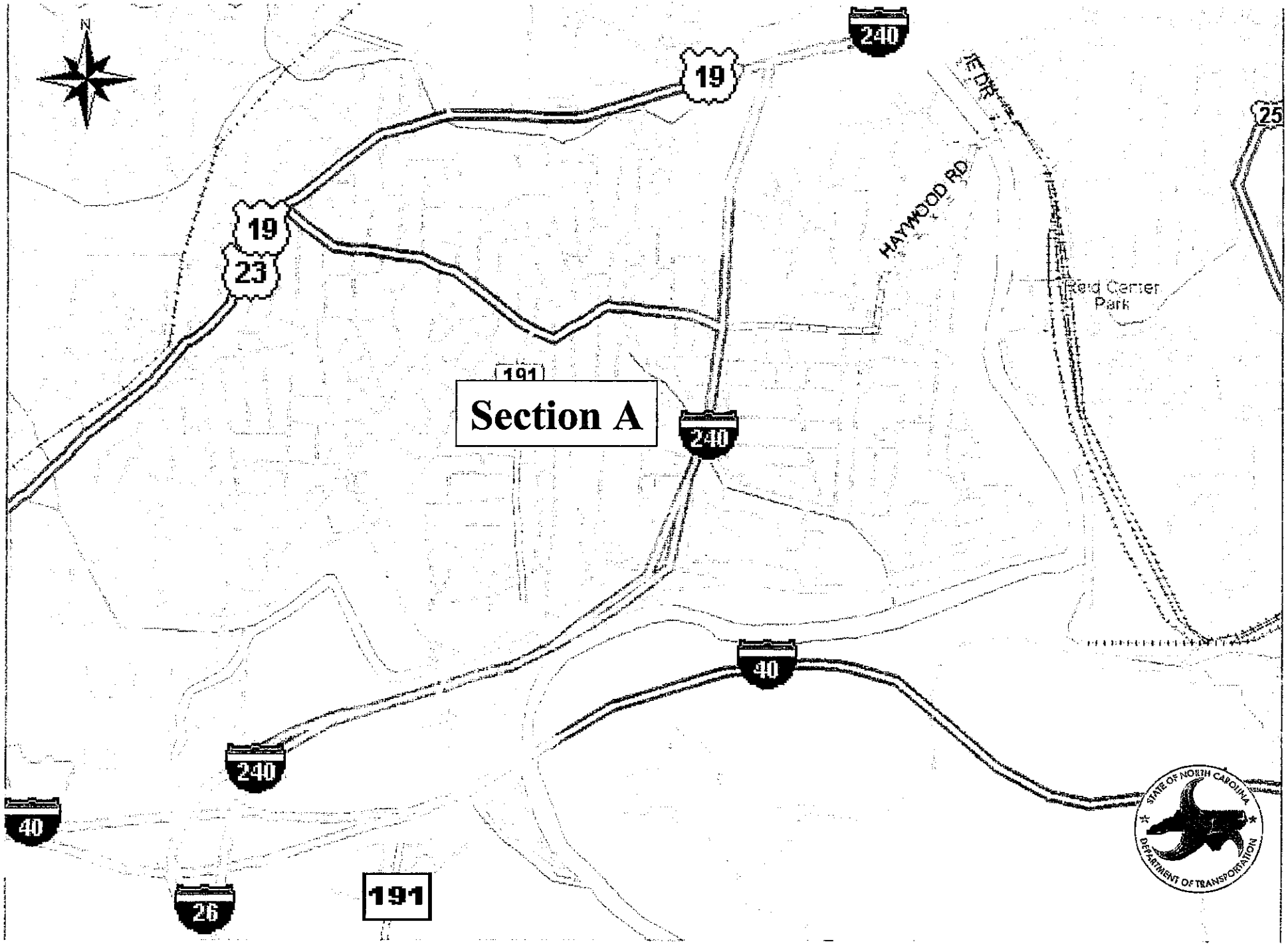
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION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HAYWOOD RD
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Section A
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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Memo to: File

From: J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.

Subject: October 9 &10, 2006 I-2513 Public Workshop

The North Carolina Department of Transportation held a Citizen's Informational Workshop in Asheville on Monday, October 9 and Tuesday October 10, 2006 to answer questions and receive comments about the entire I-26 Connector project. This informal workshop was held in the ballroom at the Renaissance Hotel located at One Thomas Wolfe Plaza in downtown Asheville. Three time sessions were available for attendance, Monday October 9 from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm and again on Tuesday, October 10 from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm and from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm. The same information was available at each session including a continuous PowerPoint presentation and 2 sets of 1"=100' public hearing type maps showing 4 alternatives in Sections B and C and the proposed improvements in Section A. The City's Aesthetics Committee was present and showed examples of treatments around the US and offered attendees to participate in a survey of public desires for aesthetic treatments for the project. The AIA was also present with a 3 dimensional topo model of the northern end of the project area with the 4 NCDOT Section B alternatives and one developed by their committee presented on construction paper placed on top of the model.

A local officials meeting was held before the first workshop and was attended by approximately 25 officials. They we welcomed by Alan Thornburg the local NCDOT Board member, shown the presentation and given the opportunity to ask questions. Following the local officials meeting, a meeting was held for the Asheville Chamber of Commerce that was attended by approximately 35 persons.

Approximately 110 (100 signed in) attended the first Monday evening workshop and 22 written comment sheets were submitted during this session. Approximately 110 attended the first Tuesday workshop (107signed in) and 15 written comment sheets were submitted during this session with one petition with 7 signatures. Approximately 100 attended the Tuesday evening workshop (93 signed in) and 11 written comment sheets were submitted during this session with one identical petition with 3 signatures.

Total attendance was approximately 320 and a total of 48 written comment sheets were collected at the 3 workshops. Forty-five (45) 8.5x11 color maps of areas of interest were printed from the display maps for attendees during the 3 sessions. The following summarizes the comments extracted from the 48 written comment sheets submitted at the workshop (some sheets contained more than on comment).

21 preferred or supported an alternative to B4 and B5 developed by the AIA group.

20 preferred separating Patton Avenue and I-240.

15 preferred six lanes along Section A.

12 expressed objection to B4 and B5 (but these did not support B2 and B3).

6 preferred Alternate B-5.

6 supported bicycle facilities

5 preferred Section C to be constructed first.

5 generally supported NCDOT's alternatives and the project in general.

5 preferred Alternate F-1 in Section C

4 suggested pedestrian improvements

4 supported accelerating the project

3 preferred Alternate B-4.

3 preferred 8-lanes in Section A.

3 emphasized Aesthetics.

3 opposed the entire project.

3 requested project information.

3 suggested a new alignment.

2 were concerned with non-project related NCDOT issues.

2 expressed traffic noise concerns.

1 requested a 45 mph speed limit.

1 requested to be added to mail list.

1 requested a signature bridge.

1 against Section C Alternate C2.

1 against Section C Alternate F1.

1 preferred Section C Alternate D1.

1 preferred Section C Alternate A2.

1 preferred Section C Alternate B2.

1 wanted trees on Haywood Bridge.

1 requested a narrow median through Section A.

1 concerned truck noise.

1 suggested HOV lanes.

1 expressed air quality impact.

1 suggested a full bypass.

Public Involvement Summary
I-2513 Citizen's Informational Workshop
I-26 Asheville Connector
October 9 & 10, 2006

Project Team

NCDOT Staff (Raleigh)
Ed Lewis - Public Involvement
Kimberly Hinton – Public Involvement
Jamille Robbins - Public Involvement
Vince Rhea – Project Development
Derrick Weaver– Project Development
Drew Joyner– Project Development
Scott Blevins – Design Services
Cathy Houser – Design Services

NCDOT Board of Transportation
Alan Thornburg

NCDOT Local Staff (Division 3)
Jay Swain – Division Engineer
Brad Smythe - Division Staff Engineer
Ronnie Clark – Resident Engineer
Greg Shuler – Project Manager
Bob Haskett – Right of Way Team

Consultant – TGS Engineers
Ken Burleston & Team

Resource Materials

- Project Information Sheet Handout
- Project Maps – 3 Sections
  - Section A – I-240 Widening & Safety Improvements
  - Section B – North of Patton Avenue
    - Alternatives B2, B3, B4 & B5
    - New Crossing of French Broad River
  - Section C – I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange
    - Expanded Area
    - Alternatives A2, C2, D1 & F1
- PowerPoint Presentation
  - On Continuous Loop

  - Project History
  - Workshop Layout
  - New Items, i.e. Landscaped Median, Expanded Alternatives
  - Project Schedule
  - Next Steps
  - Right of Way Information
- The City of Asheville's Advisory Aesthetic Committee mandated the Visualization Station - Concept Renderings
  - Haywood Road
  - Haywood Road Bridge on I-240
  - 3 Posters of Bridge over French Broad River
- The BOT allowed the Asheville Design Center (part of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to set up a Station showing a 3D Model of the New Bridge crossing
- State Maps
- Newsletters
  - Current, September 2006
  - Past
- Sign In Sheet
- Comment Sheet
- NCDOT Quick Facts
- Camera – Photo Shots taken (see attachment)
- Newspaper Advertisement - September 8, 2006 through October 5, 2006
  - *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Wednesday's; 9/8, 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4
  - *Black Mountain News,* Wednesday's; 9/8, 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4
  - *Mountain Express,* Wednesday's; 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4
  - *LaVoz Independiente* (Spanish Paper), Thursday's; 9/14, 9/21, 9/28, 10/5

Local Officials Meeting

- October 9, 2006 1pm – 2pm
- Local Officials meeting was well attended. There were about 25 officials. Some officials present were:
  - Mayor for the City of Asheville
  - Asheville City Council Members
  - Buncombe County Commissioners
  - Local City & County Staff
  - BOT – Alan Thornburg: Division Engineer – Jay Swain
- BOT Member began with Introductions, PowerPoint Presentation, ended with Q&A Session
- Local Officials Discussions Summary:
  - The atmosphere was cordial.
  - Although some discussions concerned the 6 lane vs. 8 lane, majority wanted to move forward with the project.
  - Design of New Bridge a topic as well.

Chamber of Commerce Meeting

- October 9, 2006 2pm – 3pm
- Chamber Meeting was also well attended. There were about 35 participants.
- Meeting Format – Introductions, PowerPoint Presentation and Q&A Session
- Chamber Discussions were similar to Local Officials. They also focused on schedule.

Citizen Comment Summary

- Top Comments:
  6 lane vs 8 lane.
- A lot of discussions concerning an AIA alternative that is not one of NCDOT alternatives.
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
- Traffic Noise

Meeting Evaluation

- The meeting had good attendance (320 non-NCDOT participants)
- Fourty-eight (48) written comments were collected at the end of the two day workshop.
- One (1) petition was received in favor of an AIA alignment
- Media was present .
- A project team member staffed the sign in table at all times.
  - This was useful because the team member oriented people to the room lay out.
  - Team member was able to point out Project team members
- Project team members were very helpful in talking to the public.

KDH

I-26 Connector Project
Slide Show Summary Sheets
Asheville, NC
October 2006

I-26 Connector

Project Purpose

To provide a freeway-to-freeway connection between I-26, US 19-23, and I-40.

To provide a direct, multi-lane, interstate link along the existing and future section of the I-26 corridor.

To address identified roadway capacity deficiencies.

To reduce traffic delays and congestion along the I-240 French Broad River crossing.

To increase the remaining useful service of the existing Smoky Park Bridges by reducing the volume of traffic.

To improve the safety of I-240 on the west side of Asheville.

I-26 Connector

Project History

Preferred Corridor Selected - 1995

Environmental Studies and Conceptual Engineering Plans Presented - 1997

Project Design Forum - 2000

Expanded Alternatives Added - 2004

I-26 Connector

Project History - Corridor

Project was identified as a State transportation project in 1989.

The Asheville Connector Advisory Committee presented their recommendations regarding the proposed route in 1993.

NCDOT, State agencies and local areas agreed to the preferred corridor in 1995.

I-26 Connector

Project History - Design Alternatives

Existing land use, cultural and natural resources were inventoried.

Traffic noise and capacity analyses were conducted.

Two design alternatives proposed.

Study noted that 8 travel lanes would be required to meet future demand in the I-240 widening portion of the project (Section A).

I-26 Connector

Project History - Design Forum

Community Coordinating Committee formed in 1999

Project Design Forum held in 2000 to allow interested citizens to get involved with project design

In 2002 a new traffic study supported that 8-lanes were necessary to safely accommodate future traffic

In 2004 additional tools were used to confirm the need for an eight lane section. FHWA concurred with this decision in 2005.

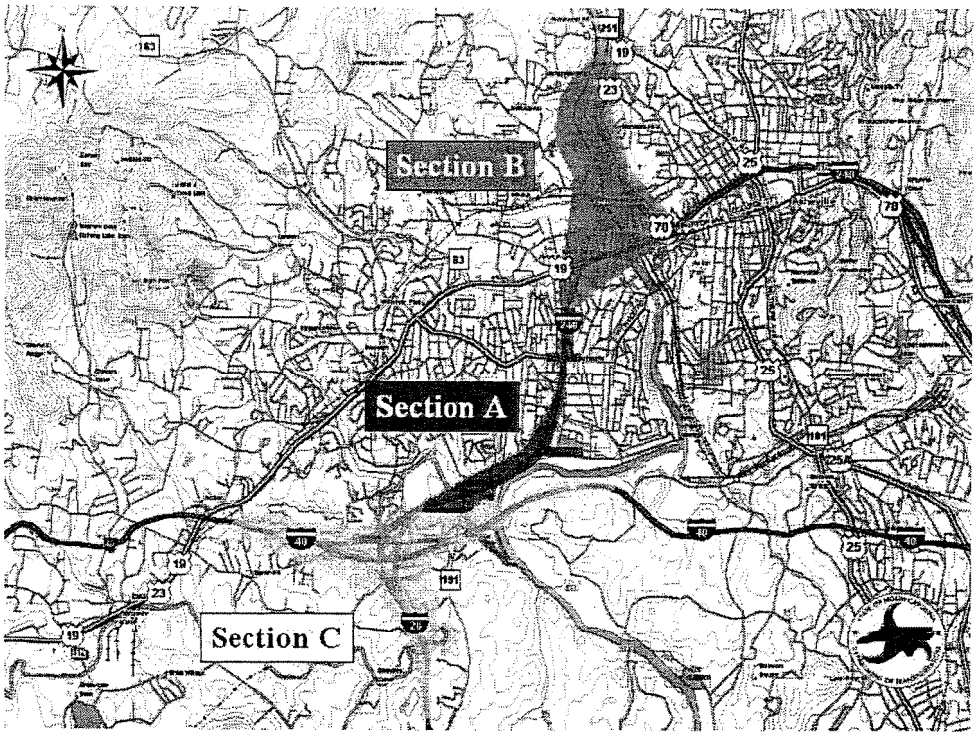
I-26 Connector

Project History - Expanded Alts.

I-26 / I-40 / I-240 interchange in southwest Asheville added to I-26 connector project

Two alternatives added to new location portion of the project north of Patton.

I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Workshop conducted - 2004



I-26 Connector

Workshop Layout - What is what!

2 Identical Map Stations
Aesthetics Advisory Committee
Right of Way Stations
Kid's Zone
Visualization Station
Comment Stations

I-26 Connector

Next Steps

Workshop Comments Reviewed
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Public Hearing
Preferred Design Alternative Selected
Right of Way Acquisition / Construction

I-26 Connector

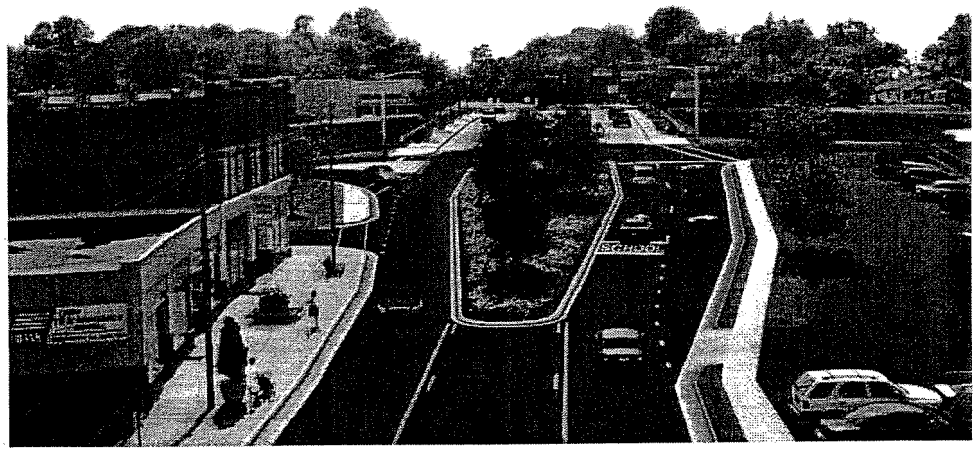
Right of Way Steps

1. Contact affected property owners and conduct property appraisal
2. Provide fair market value for property
3. Offer property owner with relocation assistance and explain procedures

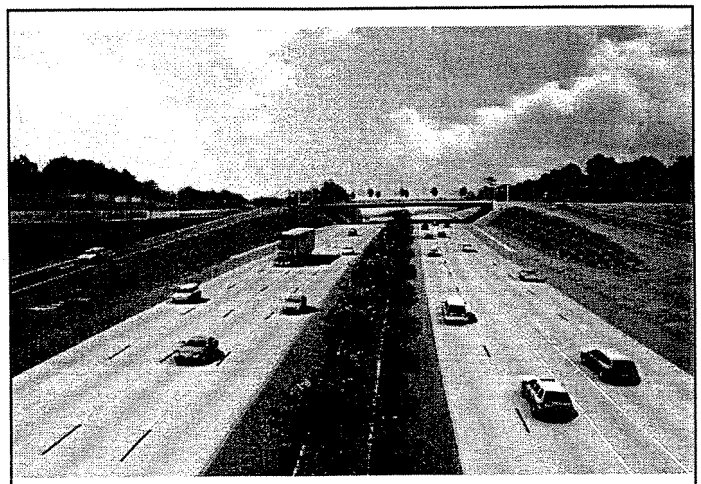
I-26 Connector

Public Involvement Opportunities

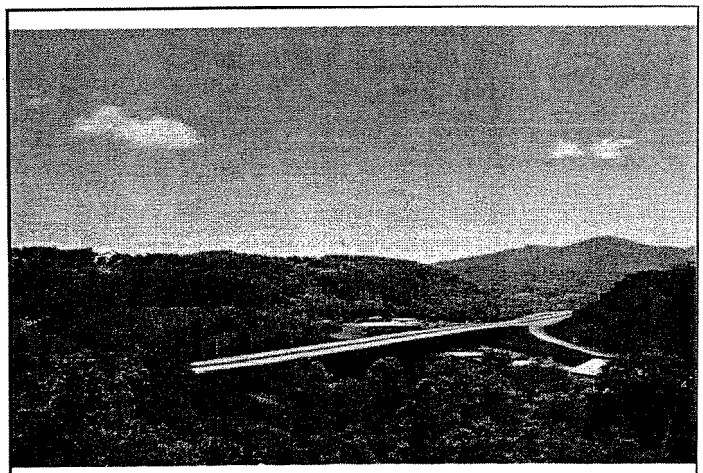
Metropolitan Planning Organization Meetings
Asheville Connector Advisory Meetings
Community Coordinating Committee
Project Educational Forum
Public Design Forum
Small Group Meetings with Neighborhoods and Community Groups
NCDOT Workshops



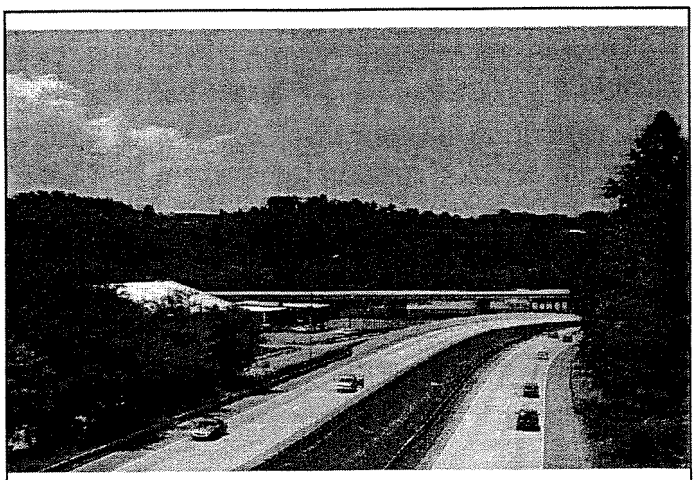
Haywood Road - Concept Rendering



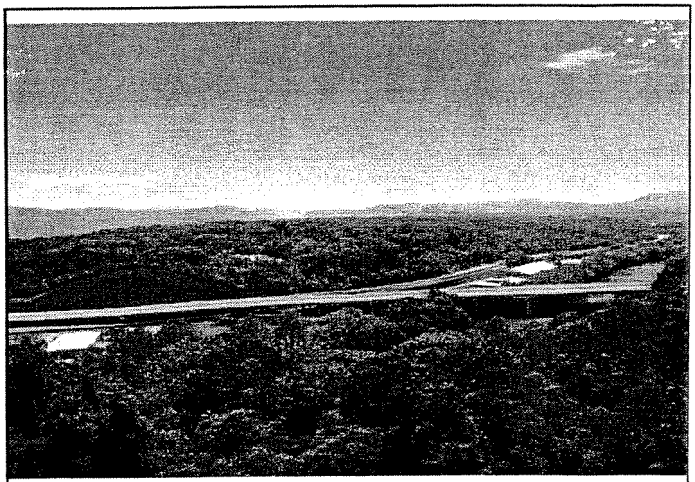
Haywood Road Bridge - Concept Rendering



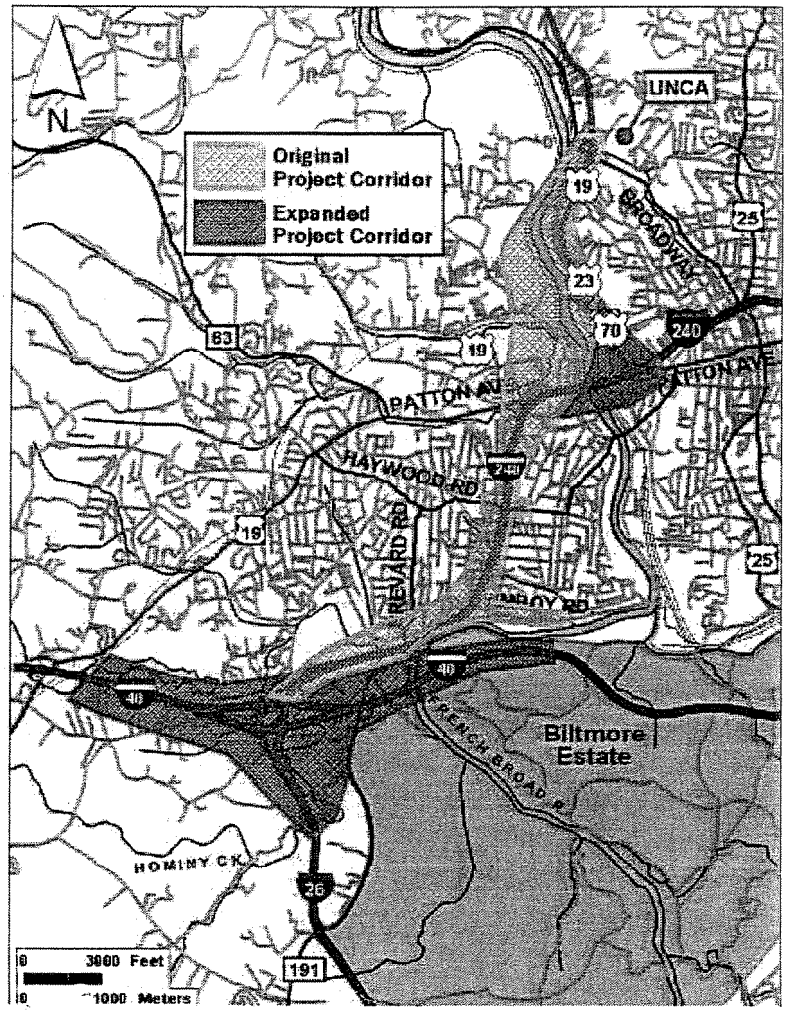
Bridge over the French Broad River - Concept Rendering



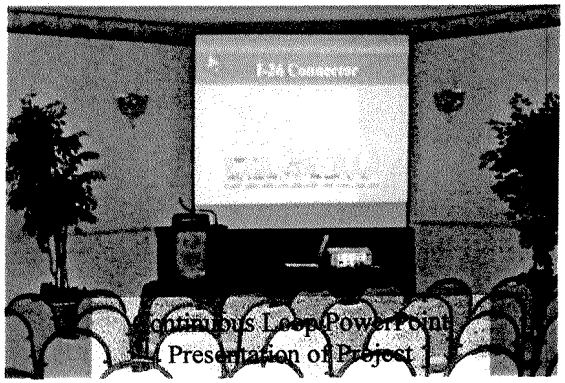
Bridge over the French Broad River - Concept Rendering



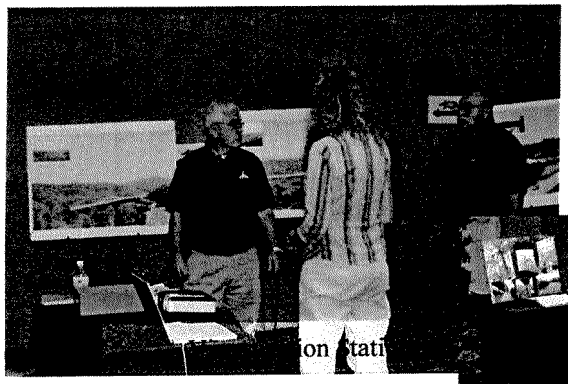
Bridge over the French Broad River - Concept Rendering


N
Original Project Corridor
Expanded Project Corridor
UNCA
19
25
BROADWAY
23
70
240
63
19
PATTON AV
PATTON AVE
HAYWOOD RD
240
19
REVARD RD
MERRIMON RD
25
40
40
BEACH BROAD E
Biltmore Estate
HOMINY CK
26
191
0 3000 Feet
0 1000 Meters

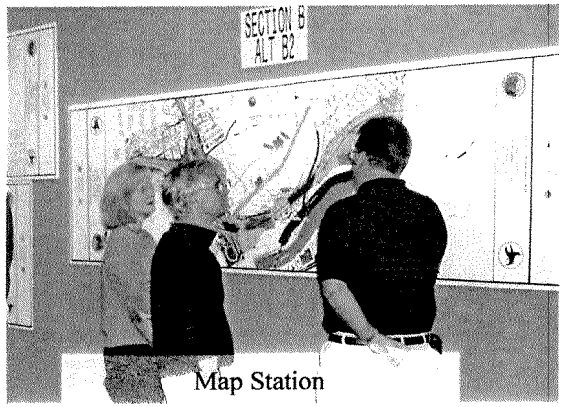
Notes:



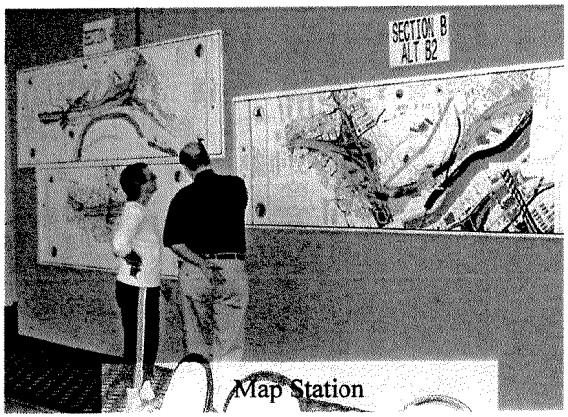
Continuous Loop PowerPoint Presentation of Project


Information Station

Asheville's Aesthetics Committee presentations on left

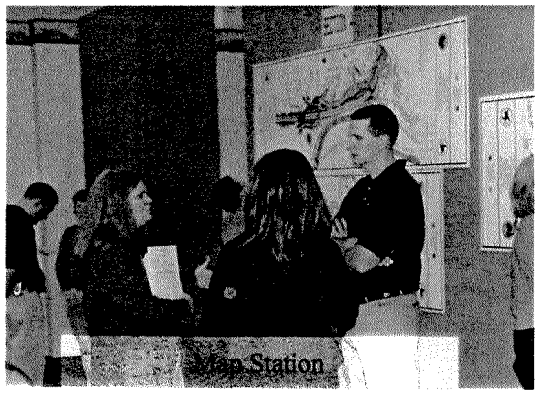


Map Station

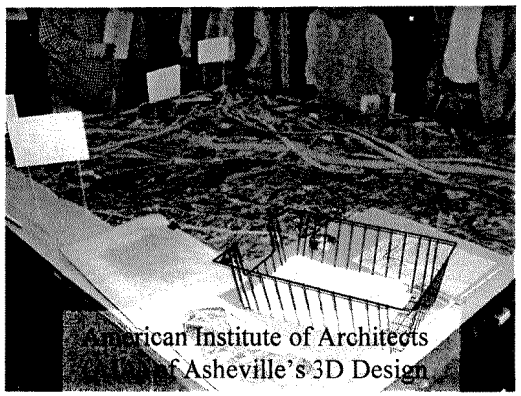


Map Station

Right of Way Station


Map Station

Map & Comment Station


American Institute of Architects Model of Asheville's 3D Design

I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Citizens Informational Workshop

I-26 CONNECTOR (TIP PROJECT I-2513) – ASHEVILLE, N.C.

Welcome. The NCDOT study team is here to listen to your ideas, comments and concerns about the I-40/I-26/I-240 interchange southwest of Asheville. Conceptual plans illustrating three alternatives currently being considered for improvements to the I-40/I-26/I-240 interchange are being displayed for your review. Knowledgeable personnel are available to answer your questions. A comment sheet is attached to the back of this introduction so that you may mail in comments or we will be happy to collect them from you this evening.

The purpose of this informal open-house workshop is to introduce the I-40/I-26/I-240 interchange portion of the project to the local community and give you an opportunity to comment. The improvements to this interchange were added to the I-26 Connector project in response to requests from local citizens that the Department provide the missing Interstate connections between the future I-26 and I-40. Currently, there are not direct connections for vehicles traveling south on I-240 to I-40 East or for those traveling west on I-40 to north on I-240. Improvements to the interchange will add these connections as well as relieve existing congestion and improve safety through this area.

The interchange study area is shown on the attached Figure 1. The attached drawings of interchange alternatives are also displayed here tonight and include:

ALTERNATE A-2, a fully directional interchange configuration for traffic movements between I-26, I-40 and I-240, a westbound collector-distributor along westbound I-40, and a modified diamond interchange at NC 191 and I-40. In the northeast quadrant of the NC 191/I-40 interchange, an entrance ramp loop is provided from NC 191 to I-40 westbound.

ALTERNATE C-2, a semi-directional interchange configuration with loops in lieu of directional ramps for southbound I-240/26 to eastbound I-40, and for westbound I-40 to southbound I-26SB; provides collector-distributors along both sides of I-40 through the I-240/26 and NC 191 interchanges, and along southbound I-26 through the I-40 interchange. A half-clover interchange is provided at NC 191 and I-40. In the northeast and southeast quadrants of the NC 191/I-40 interchange, ramps and loops are provided for access between NC 191 and I-40.

ALTERNATE D-1, a semi-directional interchange configuration with a loop in lieu of a directional ramp from southbound I-240/26 to eastbound I-40, and a conventional diamond-type interchange at NC191 and I-40.

I-26 Connector Project Schedule

The information received at this meeting will be combined with our project studies for the remainder of the I-26 Connector Project. The schedule for upcoming project milestones includes:

A. Conduct Section B Alternates Workshop (Summer 05)

B. Complete Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (Winter 2005/06)

C. Conduct Public Hearing (Winter 05/06, After DEIS)

D. Select Preferred Alternative (Spring 2006)

E. Complete Final Environmental Impact Statement (Winter 2006)

F. Complete Record of Decision (Spring 2007)

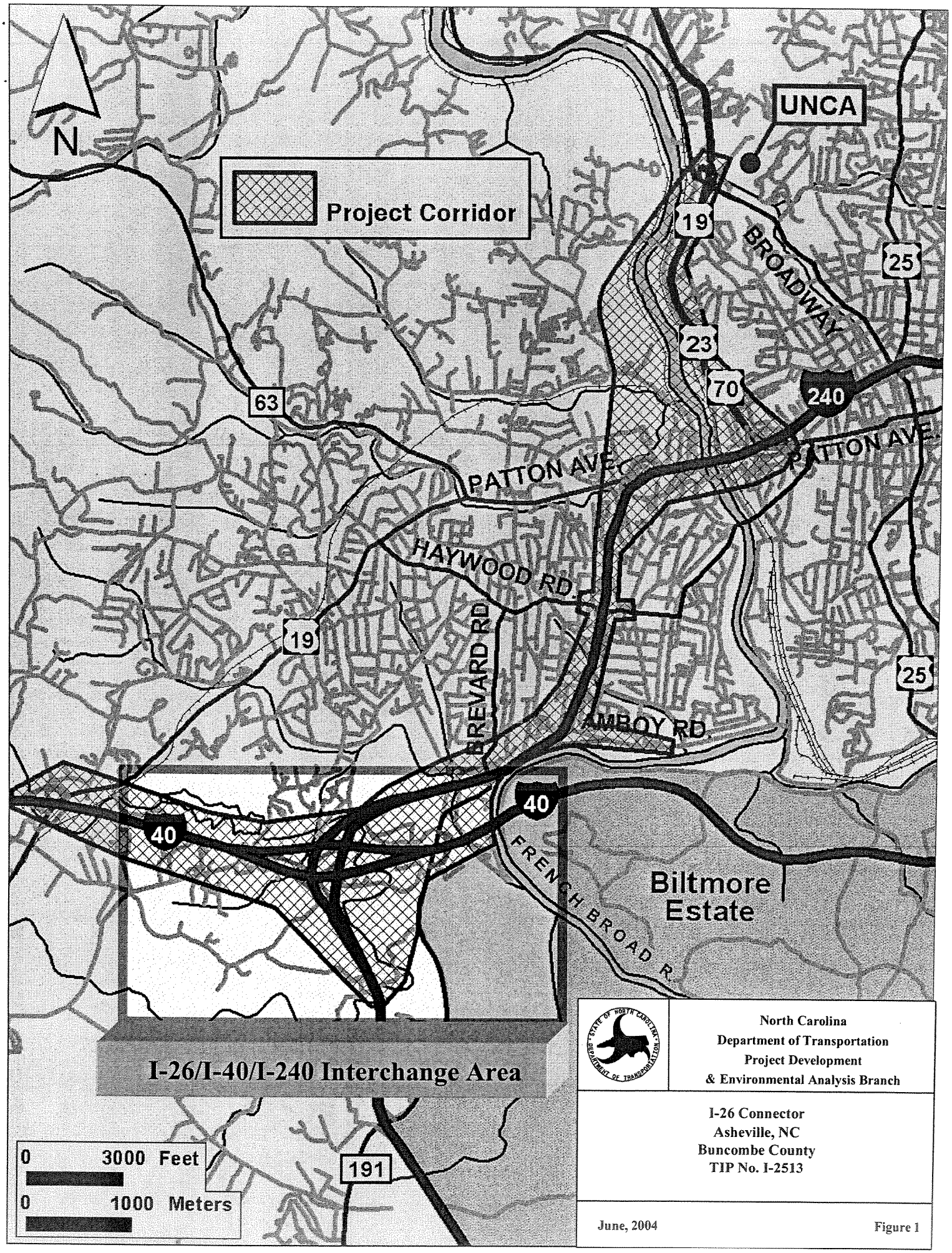
G. Conduct Public Presentation Workshop (Summer 2007)

H. Complete Right of Way Plans (Summer 2007)

I. Award Right of Way – Construction Contract (Spring 2008)

J. Anticipated Completion (2012)

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Mr. Vince Rhea, 1548 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1548, phone (919) 733-7844 ext. 261 or e-mail at vrhea@dot.state.nc.us

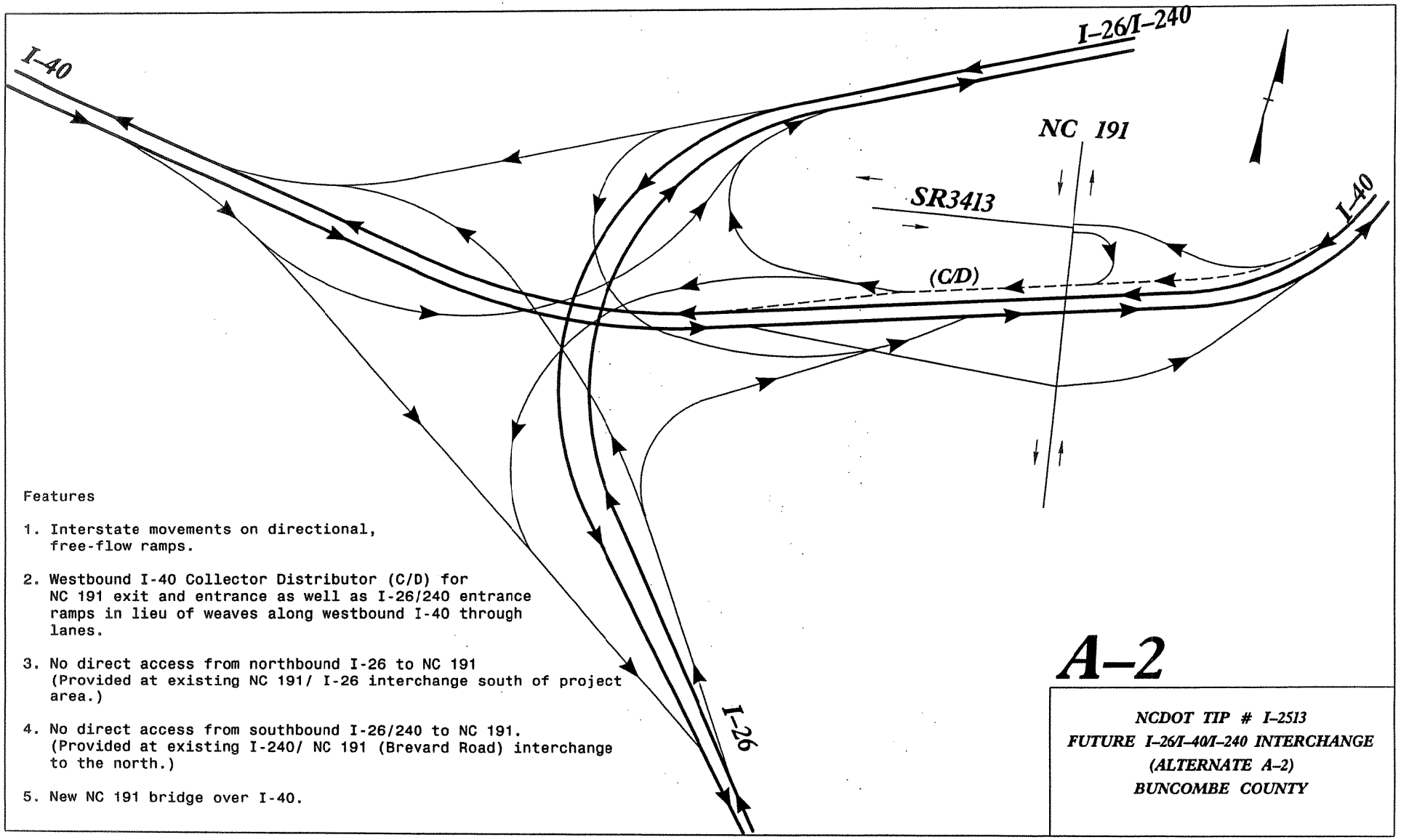


North Carolina
Department of Transportation
Project Development
& Environmental Analysis Branch

I-26 Connector
Asheville, NC
Buncombe County
TIP No. I-2513

June, 2004

Figure 1



Features

1. Interstate movements on directional, free-flow ramps.

2. Westbound I-40 Collector Distributor (C/D) for NC 191 exit and entrance as well as I-26/240 entrance ramps in lieu of weaves along westbound I-40 through lanes.

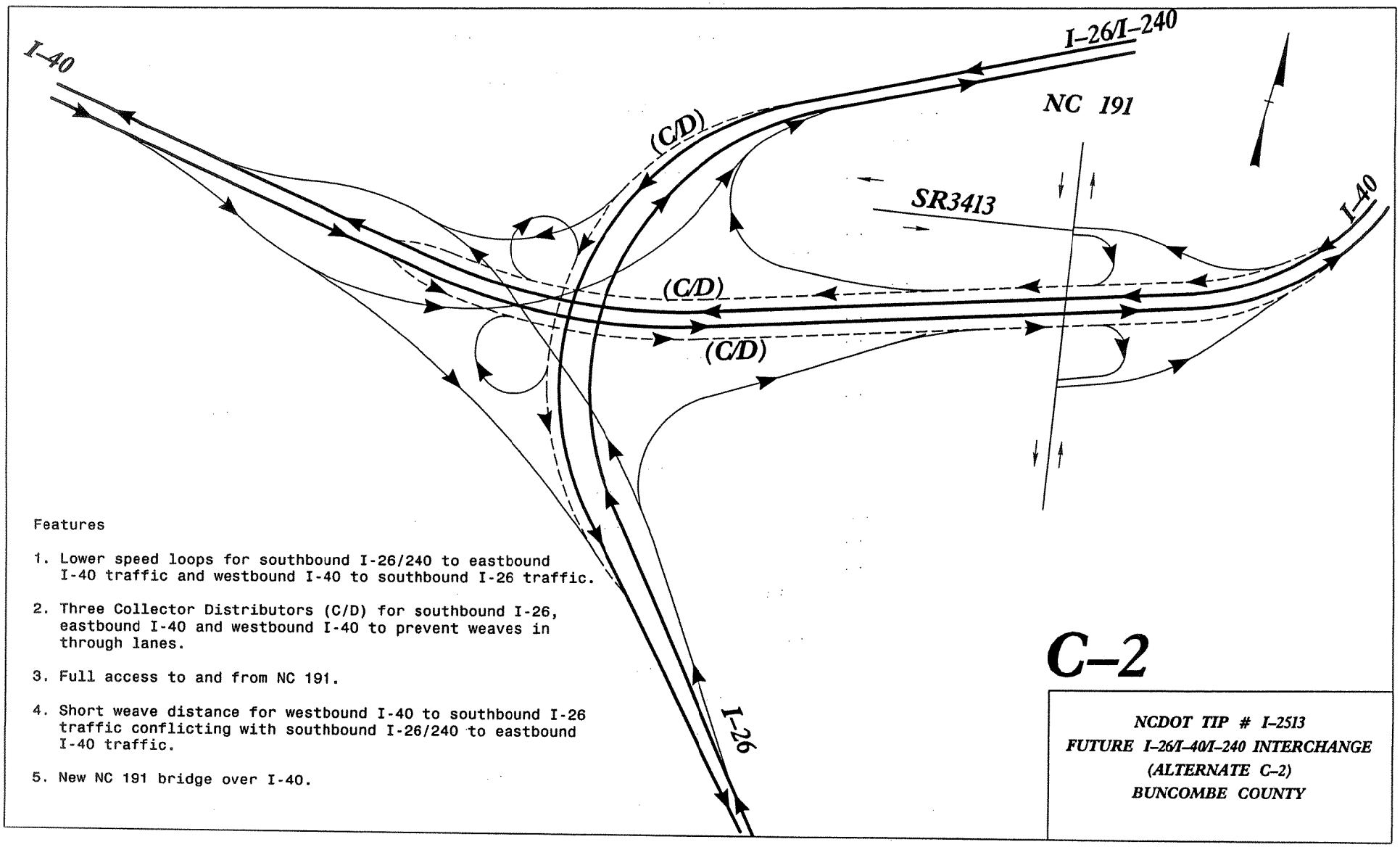
3. No direct access from northbound I-26 to NC 191 (Provided at existing NC 191/ I-26 interchange south of project area.)

4. No direct access from southbound I-26/240 to NC 191. (Provided at existing I-240/ NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange to the north.)

5. New NC 191 bridge over I-40.

A–2

NCDOT TIP # I-2513
FUTURE I-26/I-40/I-240 INTERCHANGE
(ALTERNATE A-2)
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

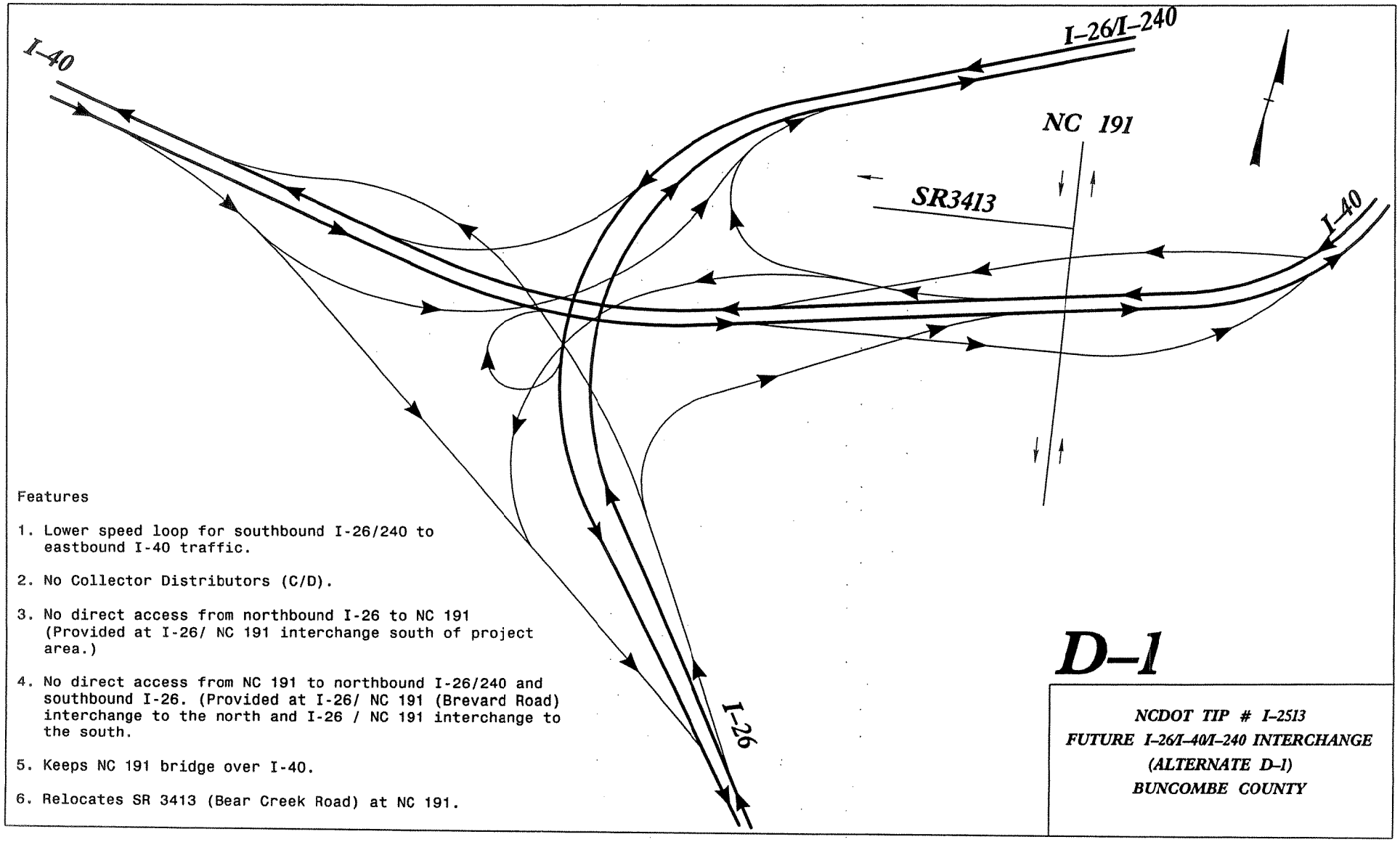


Features

1. Lower speed loops for southbound I-26/240 to eastbound I-40 traffic and westbound I-40 to southbound I-26 traffic.
2. Three Collector Distributors (C/D) for southbound I-26, eastbound I-40 and westbound I-40 to prevent weaves in through lanes.
3. Full access to and from NC 191.
4. Short weave distance for westbound I-40 to southbound I-26 traffic conflicting with southbound I-26/240 to eastbound I-40 traffic.
5. New NC 191 bridge over I-40.

C–2

NCDOT TIP # I-2513
FUTURE I-26/I-40/I-240 INTERCHANGE
(ALTERNATE C-2)
BUNCOMBE COUNTY



Features

1. Lower speed loop for southbound I-26/240 to eastbound I-40 traffic.

2. No Collector Distributors (C/D).

3. No direct access from northbound I-26 to NC 191 (Provided at I-26/ NC 191 interchange south of project area.)

4. No direct access from NC 191 to northbound I-26/240 and southbound I-26. (Provided at I-26/ NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange to the north and I-26 / NC 191 interchange to the south.

5. Keeps NC 191 bridge over I-40.

6. Relocates SR 3413 (Bear Creek Road) at NC 191.

D-1

NCDOT TIP # I-2513
FUTURE I-26/I-40/I-240 INTERCHANGE
(ALTERNATE D-1)
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

I-26 Connector Awareness Group Public Alert

For Info call: 281-3238

or visit www.i26group.org

PUBLIC MEETING

Monday, October 9, 4--7pm
Tuesday, October 10, 11am--2pm and 5pm--8pm
(All sessions will be identical--come when you can and stay as long as you can)
Renaissance Hotel Ballroom, 31 Woodfin St, downtown Asheville

The NCDOT will hold a Citizens Informational Workshop to answer questions and receive comments about the I-26 Connector Project. The focus will be on the four alternate routes for the Connector as it crosses the French Broad River. This is a preliminary step before the DOT chooses its own preferred configuration, scheduled to be announced spring 2007.

PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND

TELL THE NCDOT WHAT IS BEST FOR ASHEVILLE

Study the plans, ask questions and submit written comments.
Written comments become part of the public record and must be addressed by NCDOT.

Some points to consider:

- The I-26 Connector Project is a massive project that will dramatically impact Asheville and our mountain community. The interchange design process is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help ensure the project that best serves the community.
- An optimum design for this interchange could dramatically change land use connecting downtown to the river and to West Asheville. With the right design Asheville could gain acres of valuable land.
- Alternates 2 and 3 make almost no changes to the current traffic pattern that mixes interstate and local traffic.
- Alternate 4, originated at the July 2000 public Design Forum, adds bridges to separate interstate and local traffic at the Smoky Park Bridge interchange. Both Smoky Park bridges are exclusively Patton Avenue traffic.
- Alternate 5 assigns both Smoky Park bridges to I-240. A new bridge to the south carries Patton Ave. traffic.
- All alternates are currently proposed with 8 travel-lanes through West Asheville despite convincing proof that eight lanes are unnecessary.
- Air quality needs to be an important consideration in determining the design speed.
- "None of the above" is an option that can be supported, if the community can get consensus on a better design.

The I-26 Connector Awareness Group exists to facilitate public involvement in the planning and building of the I-26 Connector Project • Our efforts rely on a broad base of local citizens

LET'S MAKE THE CONNECTOR WORK FOR ASHEVILLE!!!

www.i26group.org

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

I-26 CONNECTOR
I-40 to US 19/23/70 North of Asheville

WBS Number 34165.1.1
TIP PROJECT I-2513
Federal Aid No. MA-NHF-26-1 (53)

Buncombe County

Corridor Public Hearing

Grand Ballroom
Asheville Renaissance Hotel
One Thomas Wolfe Plaza, Asheville 28801

Open House 3:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Presentation 7:00 p.m.

September 16, 2008

800 copies of this handout were reproduced at a cost of $896.00 or $1.12 per copy

N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PROJECT INFORMATION PACKET

I-26 Connector (Asheville)
TIP I-2513
Buncombe County

Packet Contents:

- **P**ublic Hearing Format
- **P**ublic Involvement Process
- **P**roject Overview
- **P**roject Funding
- **N**oise Policy
- **R**ight of Way Procedures
- **P**roject Contact Information
- **P**roject Summary of Impacts Table
- **P**roject Map
- **T**ypical Section
- **C**omment Sheet

Public Hearing Format

Tonight's meeting is a continuation of the department's efforts to gather information regarding the I-26 Connector. This is an occasion for the project team to meet you and answer your questions. It is also an opportunity for you to obtain additional information about the project.

Open House

1

The open house is from 3:00 – 6:30 p.m. and is an occasion for you to meet one-on-one with project team members and ask questions as you circulate through the informational stations. There are several information stations with NCDOT representatives to discuss the information with you. Please take time to stop by each station to review the information available.

Public Hearing

2

A presentation regarding the project begins at 7 p.m. You will have the opportunity to provide verbal comments. These are formal proceedings. All proceedings of the public hearing are recorded. **Everyone is encouraged to speak and everyone's opinion is to be respected no matter how divergent they are from your own.**

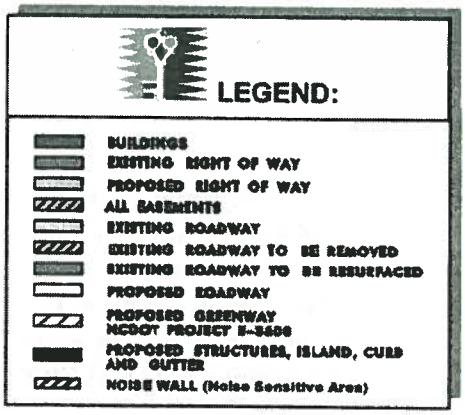
Map Review

3

Maps of the I-26 Connector project are available and will help guide you regarding the project boundaries, sections of the road that will be improved and properties that will be impacted by right of way acquisition. (Note: The existing items on the map, such as property names, can be 3 or 4 years old. There may even be missing buildings, but the design that is proposed is accurate. If there is an existing item that needs to be updated, please let us know on the comment sheet.)

When looking at the maps you will note there is a legend in the bottom left corner. Below are some of the items on the map to which you may want to pay particular attention.

- Brown = existing buildings, i.e. residents and businesses
- Dark green = existing right of way
- Light green = proposed right of way
- Steel gray = existing roadway
- Orange = existing roadway that will be resurfaced
- Yellow = proposed roadway
- Red = proposed structures, i.e. a bridge



4

Comments

Please take a moment to complete the comment sheet, at the end of this information packet. Both written and verbal comments are considered equally by the project team and will be accepted until **October 17, 2008.** You may give your comment sheet to a project team member, drop it in the comment box, located at the sign-in table, or mail it to Mr. Drew Joyner, P.E., Human Environment Unit.

Once the comment period closes, the project team will meet again with NCDOT and federal agency staff who play a role in the project development. In addition to public comment, the project team will also consider safety, cost, traffic service, natural environment, and social impacts when making decisions regarding the next phase of the project.

If an issue merits further consideration, additional assessments and studies may be conducted. Board of Transportation Members and/or the Secretary of Transportation may be consulted, if necessary. **If you wish to receive a copy of the post hearing meeting minutes, please indicate so on the comment sheet.**

Public Involvement Process

NCDOT's Public Involvement Program provides interested citizens the opportunity to gain information about the project and to participate in the planning process. Tonight's open house and public hearing is an important step in the department's transportation development process.

The Public Hearing and Comment Period allows you the opportunity to provide input regarding the Interstate 26 Connector project. Everyone is encouraged to participate by expressing his or her individual opinion. Please note that the project team considers all opinions equally.

The maps displaying the location and design of the project and a copy of the environmental document, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, are available for public review at the City of Asheville, Asheville/Engineering Department, 70 Court Plaza, Room 100-C, Asheville, 28802; and NCDOT Division 13 Office, 55 Orange Street, Asheville, 28801. The maps and document are available online at http://www.ncdot.org/projects/I26Connector.

Project Overview

The study area for the proposed project extends around the western side of the City of Asheville. Asheville is located in Buncombe County entirely within the mountainous region of North Carolina. The City of Asheville is the tenth largest municipality in the state and Buncombe County is the seventh largest county in North Carolina. The project study area is within the planning jurisdiction of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO). The primary purposes of the proposed project are:

• To provide a freeway-to-freeway connection between I-26 south of Asheville and US 19-23 north of Asheville.

• To provide a link in the transportation system connecting a direct, multi-lane, freeway facility meeting interstate standards from the Port of Charleston, South Carolina to I-81 near Kingsport, Tennessee.

• To improve the capacity of existing I-240 west of Asheville to accommodate the existing and forecasted (2030 design year) traffic in this growing area.

• To reduce traffic delays and congestion along the I-240 crossing of the French Broad River, which currently operates at capacity.

• To increase the remaining useful service of the existing Smoky Park Bridges by substantially reducing the volume of traffic on this vital crossing of the French Broad River.

• To improve the safety of I-240 west of Asheville.

This project proposes to upgrade the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange (Section C); widen I-240 between the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange and the I-240 interchange with US 19/23/74A & Patton Avenue west of the French Broad River (Section A); and construct a fully controlled access freeway on new location at the I-240 interchange with US 19/23/74A & Patton Avenue that would cross the French Broad River and merge into the existing US 19/23/70 (Section B). A project map is included on page 13.

The project will be an eight-lane, median-divided, freeway section from the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange to US 19/23/74A & Patton Avenue, which includes four 12-foot travel lanes in each direction. It will include a six-lane, median-divided, freeway section from US 19/23/74A & Patton Avenue to US 19/23/70, which includes three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction. The freeway will have a 12-foot inside paved shoulder and a 14-foot wide outside shoulder (12-foot paved). The median will include both an 11-foot wide raised planter and concrete barrier. The raised planter type median will extend from the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange to the French Broad. A figure showing how a typical section of the proposed project will look is included on page 14.

The proposed project is included in local plans. The long range transportation plan, Transportation 2030: The Multi-Modal, Long Range Plan for Buncombe, Haywood and Henderson Counties (adopted September 2005) , for the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) is developed in accordance with federal planning requirements. The purpose of the plan is to identify transportation improvements and programs to be carried out over the next 25 years. The plan addresses roadway needs, bicycle and pedestrian needs, public transportation, rail, and aviation.

Description of Alternatives

Section C

Section C of the proposed project focuses on upgrading the existing I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange. The existing interchange is a partial interchange with fully-directional movements that provides only six of the typical eight ramp movements included in a freeway to freeway interchange. The existing interchange does not include the movements from I-40 westbound to I-240 eastbound or from I-240 westbound to I-40 eastbound. Additionally, the existing interchange includes two ramps, I-40 eastbound to I-240 eastbound and I-40 westbound to I-26 eastbound that have both left-hand exits and entrances. The study alternatives for Section C include four general interchange types that provide for all ramp movements within the interchange.

Features of Alternative A2 include:

- Fully-directional interchange at I-26/I-40/I-240 with flyover ramps and no loops.
- Reconstruction of I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange to a modified diamond.
- Braided ramps along I-40 eastbound between I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange and I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange.
- Collector-Distributor (C/D) roadway along I-40 westbound from east of I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange to within the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange.
- No access to NC 191 (Brevard Road) at I-40 eastbound for traffic coming from I-26 and I-240. Existing NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchanges on I-26 & I-240 would provide access.

Features of Alternative C2 include:

- Two of the fully-directional flyover ramps for the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange included in Alternative A2 would become loops.
- Reconstruction of I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange utilizing existing configuration.
- Collector-Distributor (C/D) roadway along I-40 eastbound and westbound from within the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange to east of I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange.
- Full access to NC 191 (Brevard Road) along I-40 eastbound and westbound for traffic coming to/from I-26 and I-240.

Features of Alternative D1 include:

- One of the fully-direct flyover ramps for the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange included in Alternative A2 would become loops.
- Reconstruction of I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange to a standard diamond.
- Braided ramps along I-40 eastbound between I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange and I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange.
- No access to I-26/I-240 along I-40 westbound for traffic coming from NC 191 Brevard Road). Existing NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchanges on I-26 and I-240 provides access.
- Braided ramp along I-40 westbound from I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange to within the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange.
- No access to NC 191 (Brevard Road) at I-40 eastbound for traffic coming from I-26 and I-240. Existing NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchanges on I-26 & I-240 would provide access.

Features of Alternative F1 include:
- Maintaining the existing I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange configuration and adding a loop and a ramp to provide for the missing movements.
- I-40/NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange would maintain existing configuration.
- Full access to NC 191 (Brevard Road) along I-40 eastbound and westbound for traffic coming to/from I-26 and I-240.

Section A

Section A includes the existing portion of I-240 from I-40 to Patton Avenue. The I-240 Existing Alignment Alternative includes a best-fit design for the widening and reconstruction of existing I-240 from a four-lane freeway to an eight-lane freeway.

Section B

Section B is the new location section from Patton Avenue to the new bridge crossing the French Broad River. This section will merge with existing US 19-23-70 and continue to Broadway.

Features of Alternative 2 include:
- Upgrading the existing I-240 interchange with US 19-23-74A/Patton Avenue to accommodate the connection for the new location portion of I-26.
- Crosses over the existing Westgate Shopping Center.
- Creates a new crossing for I-26 over the French Broad River, approximately one mile north of the existing Smoky Park Bridges.
- Does not include construction on I-240 east of the French Broad River.
- Does not separate I-240 traffic from Patton Avenue traffic across the Smoky Park Bridges.

Features of Alternative 3 include:
- Upgrading the existing I-240 interchange with US 19-23-74A/Patton Avenue to accommodate the connection for the new location portion of I-26.
- Crosses over the Crowne Plaza Resort golf course.
- Creates a new crossing for I-26 over the French Broad River, approximately one mile north of the existing Smoky Park Bridges.
- Does not include construction on I-240 east of the French Broad River.
- Does not separate I-240 traffic from Patton Avenue traffic across the Smoky Park Bridges.

Features of Alternative 4 include:
- Upgrading the existing I-240 interchange with US 19-23-74A/Patton Avenue to accommodate the connection for the new location portion of I-26
- Crosses over the Crowne Plaza Resort golf course.
- Creates three new crossings over the French Broad River, two slightly to the north of the existing Smoky Park Bridges would carry I-240 traffic and the third, carrying I-26 would be located approximately one mile to the north.
- Separates I-240 traffic from Patton Avenue traffic across the Smoky Park Bridges and includes construction on I-240 east of the French Broad River.

1. After this date, the federal and state governments are no longer responsible for providing noise abatement measures for new development within the noise impact area of the proposed highway project.

2. The criteria (e.g., trigger date) for determining when undeveloped land is "planned, designed and programmed" for development will be the approval of a building permit for an individual lot or site.

3. It is the responsibility of local governments and private landowners to ensure that noise-compatible designs are used for development permitted after the Date of Public Knowledge.

The "Date of Public Knowledge" for the I-26 Connector Project will be the date of the federal Record of Decision.

Right of Way Procedures

The Right of Way acquisition procedure will begin after the final design plans are complete. The proposed right-of-way limits for the project will be staked on the ground so that you will see exactly what needs to be purchased. If your property is affected, the right of way agent will contact you. The agent will gather additional information, answer questions concerning the right of way acquisition procedure and inform you of your legal rights.

Proposed right of way and temporary construction easements will be purchased by the Department in areas needed for grading and drainage. Temporary construction easement typically reverts back to the property owners at the end of construction. Right of way agents are available today to discuss right of way concerns.

As part of the right of way acquisition process the Department must:

- **Treat all property owners and tenants impartially without regard to race, color, religion, sex or national origin;**
- **Fully explain an owner's legal rights;**
- **Pay just compensation in exchange for property rights;**
- **Furnish relocation advisory assistance, in accordance with federal and state regulations; and**

Right of way agents are trained to explain plans and advise you how a proposed highway project will affect your property. The agent will also collect information regarding the property history, accuracy of the property lines and buildings as shown on the plans and property areas. If permanent right of way is required, professionals who are familiar with real estate values will evaluate or appraise your property. The evaluations or appraisals will be reviewed for completeness and accuracy and then the Right of Way Agent will make a

written offer to you. The current market value of the property at its highest and best use, when appraised, will be offered as compensation.

Relocation Assistance

If you are relocated, that is, if your residence or business is to be acquired as part of the project, additional assistance in the form of advice and compensation is available. You will also be provided with assistance on locations of comparable housing and/or commercial establishments, moving procedures, and moving aid. Moving expenses may be paid for you. Additional monetary compensation is available to help homeowners cope with mortgage increases, increased value of comparable homes, closing costs, etc. A similar program is available to assist business owners. The Right of Way Agent can explain this assistance in greater detail.

For your convenience, an informational pamphlet on right of way and relocation assistance is available at the sign-in table. It outlines this process in more detail.

Project Contact Information

If you have any question or would like to send comments regarding the I-26 Connector, please contact:

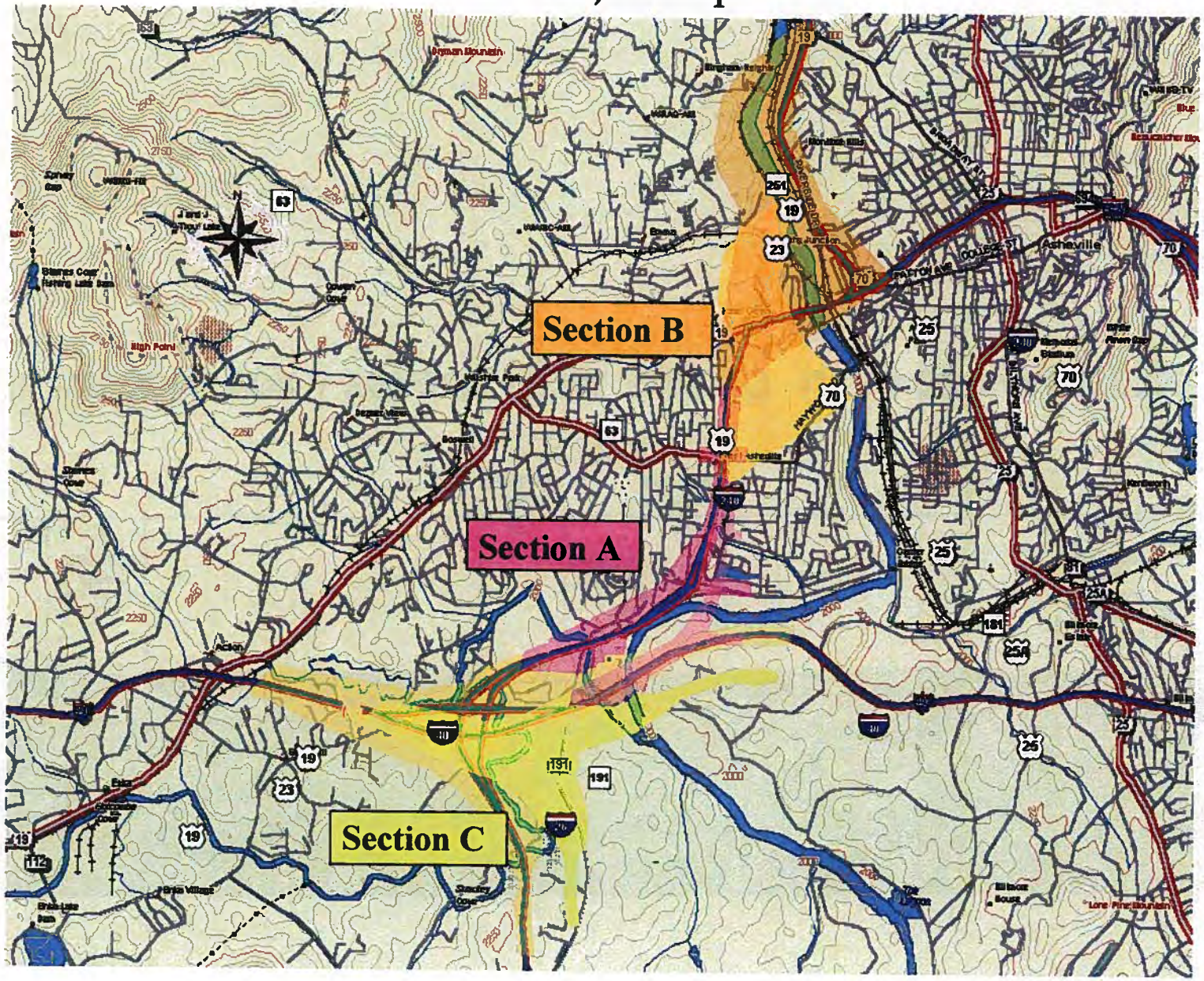
Mr. Drew Joyner, P.E., Unit Head
N.C. Department of Transportation
Human Environment Unit
1583 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1583
Phone: (919) 715-1515
Fax: (919) 715-1522
E-mail: djoyner@ncdot.gov

Summary of Impacts

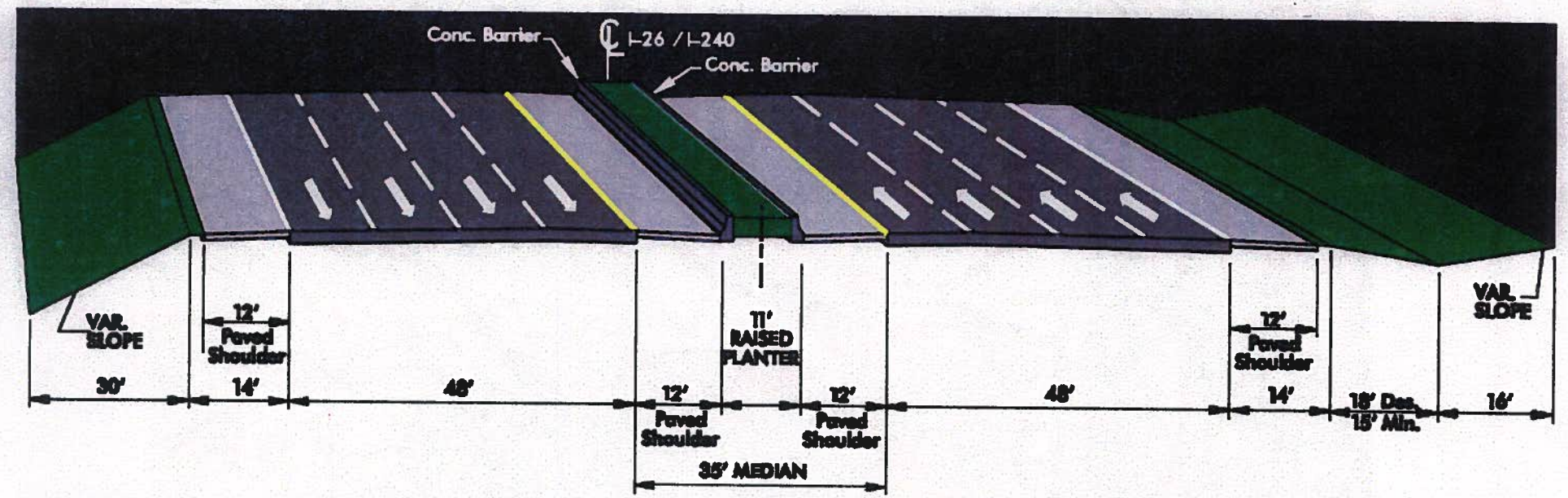
Resource	Section A (Widen I-240)	Section B (New Location across French Broad)				Section C (I-26/I-40 Interchange)			
	Existing Alignment	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 4B	Alt. A2	Alt. C2	Alt. D1	Alt. F1
Length (miles) Total	2.1 I-26	2.6 I-26	2.6 I-26	2.6 I-26	2.6 I-26	2.2 I-26	2.2 I-26	2.2 I-26	2.2 I-26
		0.4 I-240	0.6 I-240	1.5 I-240	1.2 I-240	2.9 I-40	3.2 I-40	2.8 I-40	2.8 I-40
	2.1	3.0	3.2	4.1	3.8	5.1	5.4	5.0	5.0
Bridged Stream Crossings	1	4	5	7	*	13	10	12	7
Culverted Stream Crossings	3	3	5	3	*	1	2	1	1
Stream Impacts (#/linear ft.)	3/620	5/2,321	6/2,767	6/1,864	*	11/1,739	12/2,035	9/1,288	8/850
Wetland Impacts (#/acres)	1/0.01	2/0.17	2/0.06	2/0.08	*	6/1.45	6/1.11	6/0.88	3/0.79
Pond Impacts (#/acres)	0/0	2/0.46	2/0.27	2/0.29	*	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Historic Properties	3	2	1	2	*	2	2	2	2
Residential Relocations	79	44	61	37	*	15	10	15	5
Business Relocations	14	55	75	19	*	1	1	2	0
Schools Relocations	0	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0
Churches Relocations	1	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0
Number of Interchanges	3	3	3	4	*	2	2	2	2
Right of Way Cost Estimate	$ 21,194,000	$ 64,635,000	$ 64,475,000	$ 60,415,000	$60,038,800	$ 8,010,000	$ 7,030,000	$8,380,000	$ 2,154,600
Construction Cost Estimate	$111,000,000	$157,000,000	$ 197,000,000	$308,000,000	$ 365,000,000	$256,000,000	$250,000,000	$ 221,000,000	$139,000,00
Total Cost Estimate	$ 132,194,000	$ 221,635,000	$ 261,475,000	$368,415,000	$ 425,038,800	$264,010,000	$ 257,030,000	$ 229,380,000	$141,154,600

*We are preparing to evaluate this alternative to the same level as the other alternatives. Additional study will be needed before this information is available.

Project Map



Typical Section



TYPICAL SECTION FOR I-26/I-240 FROM I-40 TO US 19-23-74A/PATTON AVENUE

MEMORANDUM

URS

To: Meeting Attendees
&
Invitees:
Senator Tom Apodaca
Representative Susan Fisher
Representative Tim Moffitt
City Manager Gary Jackson, City of Asheville
County Manager Wanda Greene, Buncombe County
Commissioner Chairman David Gantt, Buncombe County
Dr. Tony Baldwin, Schools Superintendent, Buncombe County
Mayor Jerry Vehaun, Town of Woodfin
Town Manager Jason Young, Town of Woodfin
Mark Pierce, URS Corporation – North Carolina

From: Jeff Weisner, URS Corporation – North Carolina

Date: August 20, 2014

RE: Summary of the Local Officials Meeting conducted on May 12, 2014
NCDOT Project No. I-2513: I-26 Asheville Connector Project, Buncombe County, NC

A Local Officials Meeting was held on May 12, 2014 from 2:00 to 3:00 PM in the Renaissance Hotel's Grand Ballroom in Asheville, NC. Approximately 21 local and state officials attended the meeting. The following individuals recorded their attendance.

North Carolina Senate
- Senator Terry Van Duyn, District 49

North Carolina House of Representatives
- Representative Nathan Ramsey

North Carolina Board of Transportation
- Board Member David Brown, Division 13

City of Asheville
- Mayor Esther Manheimer
- Vice-Mayor Marc Hunt
- Councilwoman Gwen Wisler
- Councilman Jan Davis

Buncombe County
- Commissioner Brownie Newman, District 1
- Commissioner Holly Jones, District 1
- Commissioner Joe Belcher, District 3
- Josh O'Conner, Zoning Administrator

- Jon Creighton, Planning & Development Director

Madison County
- Forrest Gilliam, Assistant County Manager
- Commissioner Wayne Brigman

Town of Weaverville
- Councilman Doug Jackson

Land-of-Sky Regional Council
- Lyuba Zuyeva, Transit Program Manager
- Vicki Eastland, RPO Coordinator
- Paul Black, French Broad River MPO Director
- Erica Anderson, Director of Economic and Community Development
- Doug Dearth, MPO Board Vice-Chair

NCDOT Staff Members
- James Dunlop, Congestion Management
- Elise Groundwater, Congestion Management
- Tris Ford, Community Studies
- Drew Joyner, Human Environment
- Anamika Laad, Public Involvement
- Diane Wilson, Public Involvement
- Kevin Moore, NCDOT Roadway Design
- Kristina Solberg, Division 13
- Jay Swain, Division 13
- Rick Tipton, Division 13
- Derrick Weaver, NCDOT Project Development
- Michael Wray, NCDOT Project Development

The objectives of the Local Officials Meeting were to:
- Present a new alternative (Alternative 3C) in Section B
- Present roadway design plan modifications to Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 in order to avoid impacts to the Emma Road Community
- Announce the updated environmental studies and the preparation of a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement to document the updated studies

The Local Officials Meeting began with Mr. Jeff Weisner, URS, providing a general overview of and summarizing the current status of the I-26 Asheville Connector Project. After the initial briefing, Mr. Weisner described the layout of the various stations and information to be presented during the Public Meeting. Local and state officials were then escorted through the stations beginning with a flyover visualization video that presented the proposed project and alternatives being studied, and ending in an adjacent room where the maps of the various alternatives were posted for review. Officials had the opportunity to discuss the project and to ask questions of the NCDOT staff and their consultants.

Questions that were raised during the meeting:

- Based upon the traffic capacity analysis, how many lanes are needed to meet the demand?
- How does the new alternative, 3C, differ from the other Section B Alternatives?
- How much right-of-way will be acquired in Section A to widen the road?
- What will be the impacts to the homes north and south of Haywood Road?
- Will the bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide connectivity across the Capt. Jeff Bowen Bridge and linkage to the planned greenway system?

Burton Street Neighborhood Meeting, June 2014

TIP Project I-2513 (I-26 Asheville Connector Outreach in Burton Street Neighborhood)

Location: Burton Street Community Center, 134 Burton Street, Asheville, NC 28806

Date and Time: 6/30/2014, 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Project Team: Michael Wray, NCDOT
Rick Tipton, NCDOT
DeWayne Barton, Burton Street Neighborhood Association
Sealy Chipley, Chipley Consulting
Jeff Hext, URS Corporation
Paul Himberger, URS Corporation

Approximately 20 meeting participants attended the Burton Street Neighborhood Meeting at the Burton Street Community Center on June 30, 2014. The meeting began with a brief introduction by Michael Wray, who explained the purpose of the meeting and the general format for the evening. Rick Tipton provided a general update regarding the status of the project, focusing on the Burton Street community, and potential impacts of Design Alternatives in the neighborhood. Several residents asked questions about the timeframe of the project, funding status, and the Alternative that City and County officials voted to support (pending the results of the final Environmental Impact Statement expected to be completed by Summer 2015). Rick Tipton indicated right-of-way acquisition is expected to begin in 2018, but he cautioned that this date is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances (ie. the newly developed prioritization process that NCDOT has recently implemented). The following summarizes other questions and comments from residents.

- Multiple residents asked how the community can remain involved as the process continues.
- The community identified their priorities with the development of Burton Street Neighborhood Plan (2010); Residents requested that this plan be taken into consideration as the alternatives are assessed. Major goals include: improve community cohesion, create new community spaces, and improve neighborhood structure for safety and mobility.
- Many meeting participants expressed fatigue over the uncertainty of the highway project: Many residents are not investing in their community because they don't know whether it will remain intact.
- Residents explained that realtors and other land developers are buying property from long-term residents for low prices to profit from expected right-of-way acquisition by NCDOT.
- One resident suggested that a list of houses in the proposed right-of-way should be made available to the public; Staff responded that since there is no final alternative yet, this would be premature. In addition, NCDOT staff indicated that avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures through final design would occur once a final alternative is selected.

After these overarching questions were answered, staff invited residents to examine maps of Design Alternatives for Sections A and B provided by the consultant team. Large maps with building and house

Questions that were raised during the meeting:

- Based upon the traffic capacity analysis, how many lanes are needed to meet the demand?
- How does the new alternative, 3C, differ from the other Section B Alternatives?
- How much right-of-way will be acquired in Section A to widen the road?
- What will be the impacts to the homes north and south of Haywood Road?
- Will the bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide connectivity across the Capt. Jeff Bowen Bridge and linkage to the planned greenway system?

Purpose of Meeting

In a July 1, 2014 e-mail from Mr. Richard Lee (EWANA President) to Mr. Michael Wray (NCDOT) and in accordance with subsequent coordination between Mr. Lee and staff from URS, Mr. Lee requested an outreach meeting with representatives from FHWA and NCDOT. The purpose of this meeting was to allow one-on-one discussions with representatives from EWANA, FHWA, and NCDOT, to receive input from residents of EWANA about this project with respect to their community plans, and to provide updates on the project since the Public Meeting conducted by NCDOT on May 12, 2014.

Topics of Discussion

The following topics were discussed during this meeting or were included in the Comment Forms collected during the meeting, and are presented in the following sections. Copies of the Comment Forms are attached to this Meeting Summary for reference.

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations
- Closure of Hanover Street at Haywood Road
- Community Connectivity via Haywood Road
- Diversion of Traffic from Patton Avenue
- Haywood & Hanover Bus Service
- New Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Noise Walls
- Section A
- Section B - Alternative 3C
- Traffic Accidents
- Traffic Forecasting & Level of Service
- Truck Traffic

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

Several meeting attendees were interested in bicycle and pedestrian accommodations with respect to ingress/egress for the EWANA Neighborhood. They specifically reviewed the City of Asheville Greenway Master Plan and wanted to ensure that the current plan was being referenced during the development of this project.

Mr. Richard Lee, President of EWANA, notified meeting attendees that a TIGER Grant was approved on September 9, 2014 that might provide funding for a greenway on the east side of the neighborhood.

Several meeting attendees noted their approval of the proposed bicycle/pedestrian crossing of the French Broad River on the south side of Patton Avenue.

"The portion of Haywood Road that crosses over I-26/I-240 must be made into a 'greenway' or 'grass zone' or whatever to help reduce the impact of cutting east-west Asheville further in half, and it must accommodate bikes and pedestrians."

Several meeting attendees requested improved accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians on the Amboy Road crossing the French Broad River. This would provide a second outlet from the EWANA Neighborhood and would connect Greenways #8 and #9 on the City's Master Greenway Plan.

One meeting attendee commented that the bridge rail at Exit 2 on I-26/I-240 near B&B Pharmacy is "shin-high" and very dangerous, and asked whether the rail could be raised to the new standard of 45 inches.

Several meeting attendees requested grate inlets with transverse ribs rather than parallel ribs that create a hazard for bicycle riders. They noted several locations including Wellington Street and State Street.

Closure of Hanover Street at Haywood Road

"Just concerned that the closure of Hanover at Haywood will cause more through-traffic to divert to Swannanoa Avenue. Swannanoa Avenue is already a cut-through with cars exceeding the 25-mph speed limit."

Community Connectivity via Haywood Road

"The Haywood Road Bridge is the heart of the EWANA Neighborhood. It provides connectivity between east and west Asheville for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. This is a bicycle and pedestrian corridor. Residents want good walkways and good bikeways."

Diversion of Traffic from Patton Avenue

"The diversion of I-240 traffic off of Patton Avenue is an excellent long-term plan that will keep Patton Avenue from becoming overwhelmed with traffic. In addition, this will open business opportunities for the boulevard that would be created on Patton Avenue."

Haywood & Hanover Bus Service

The Haywood Bus Line reportedly has a high rate of ridership. This bus route serves Hanover Street and the Pisgah View Apartments. "If Hanover Street is to be modified, what will happen to this bus route?" Residents are requesting close coordination between NCDOT and the City of Asheville to minimize disruption to the City's bus lines.

New Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Several meeting attendees asked why the new Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is being prepared before the new traffic analysis is completed. They requested that "the DEIS be postponed until the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization prepares a new traffic model with valid, reasonably-accurate projections."

Noise Walls

"Please give us a noise wall on Hanover Street. The noise is very loud with four lanes of traffic. We have to talk loud to hear ourselves outside now. Eight lanes will be crazy loud, too intrusive." NCDOT representatives noted that the noise wall criteria had changed, and that the Traffic Noise Analysis is currently underway.

Section A

"The Section A Footprint at present would harm Haywood Road's economic renaissance. Four or six lanes should be included as alternatives, not just eight."

Section B - Alternative 3C

"Alternative 3C appears to be the most-expensive option, long-term. Given the rapid growth of Asheville, by the time construction starts, it will most likely be necessary to have I-240 separate from Patton Avenue. If we move forward with Alternative 3C, we will eventually need to redesign and implement traffic across the Patton Avenue Bridge over the French Broad River. The congestion could also have an impact on tourism."

Traffic Accidents

"This area (unspecified in the comment received) averages at least one accident per day."

Traffic Forecasting & Level of Service

On behalf of EWANA, Mr. Lee provided I-240 Traffic Data at Haywood including a graph of forecasted traffic volumes versus existing traffic data. Mr. Lee commented that the proposed traffic trends should look flatter than the NCDOT traffic projections. A copy of the Traffic Data Graph is attached to this Meeting Summary for reference. Mr. Lee also requested that FHWA grant a variance in the required level of service in order to minimize the proposed footprint of the improved highways.

Truck Traffic

Several meeting attendees expressed concern regarding truck traffic through their neighborhood in route to and from the new brewery.

Acknowledgements

Should you have questions or comments regarding this meeting summary, please contact Mr. Michael Wray at (919) 707-6050 or mgwray@ncdot.gov, or Mr. Mark Pierce at (919) 461-1515 or mark.pierce@urs.com.

-End-

URS

URS Corporation – North Carolina
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, NC 27560
Tel: 919.461.1100
Fax: 919.461.1415

MEETING SUMMARY

To: I-2513 Project File

From: Mark Pierce (URS Corporation – North Carolina)

Date: October 2, 2014

RE: Montford Neighborhood Association Small-Group Meeting (September 16, 2014)
I-26 Asheville Connector Project, Asheville, NC
North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Project No. I-2513

Staff from NCDOT and URS conducted a small-group meeting with residents of the Montford Neighborhood Association and other interested parties on September 16, 2014 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Montford Community Center at 34 Pearson Drive in Asheville.

Meeting Attendees

The following eleven individuals recorded their attendance, or were observed to be in attendance, and participated in discussions with representatives from NCDOT and URS:

1. Alice Bissell
2. Kim Borden
3. Brian Elston*
4. Alma Lamb
5. T____ M_____
6. Michael McDonough*
7. Joan Miller
8. Ellen Nultes
9. David Patterson
10. Sue Russell
11. Marsha Stickford*

(*) verbal and/or written comments

The following nine individuals recorded their attendance and represented NCDOT and URS in discussions with residents of the Montford Neighborhood and other meeting attendees:

1.	Tristram Ford	NCDOT Community Studies
2.	Terry Harris	NCDOT Roadway Design
3.	Paul Himberger	URS Corporation – North Carolina
4.	Thomas Meadows	NCDOT Roadway Design
5.	Mark Pierce	URS Corporation – North Carolina
6.	Kristina Solberg	NCDOT Division 13
7.	Rick Tipton	NCDOT Division 13
8.	Diane Wilson	NCDOT Public Involvement
9.	Michael Wray	NCDOT Project Development

A copy of the Attendance Record is attached to this Meeting Summary for reference.

Purpose of Meeting

On or about July 16, 2014, Mr. Brian Elston (Montford Neighborhood Association President), called the Project Hotline and left a message requesting a community meeting with NCDOT. Mr. Mark Pierce (URS) returned the call to Mr. Elston on July 16, 2014. During that telephone conversation, Mr. Elston requested a meeting with

NCDOT similar to the meeting conducted with the Burton Street Community. Mr. Pierce requested potential dates for the meeting that would be suitable for residents of the Montford Neighborhood. In accordance with subsequent coordination, Mr. Elston requested a meeting with representatives from NCDOT during a regularly-scheduled neighborhood meeting on September 16, 2014.

The purpose of this meeting was to allow one-on-one discussions with representatives from Montford and NCDOT, to receive input from residents of Montford about this project, and to provide updates on the project since the Public Meeting conducted by NCDOT on May 12, 2014.

Topics of Discussion

The following topics were discussed during this meeting and are presented in the following sections:

- Consideration and Evaluation of Resources
- Conversion of I-240 from a Freeway to a Boulevard
- HOV Lanes
- Montford Representation by Western North Carolina Alliance
- Project Decisions by the Interagency Team
- Public Housing
- Section B Alternatives

Consideration and Evaluation of Resources

Mr. McDonough noted the importance of the French Broad River and the river valley as a resource, and asked how the crossing of the French Broad River was evaluated amongst the various alternatives. Mr. McDonough also questioned why project alternatives are routed through or near established neighborhoods.

It was noted that alternatives are developed to avoid or minimize impacts to human and natural resources using best-fit alignments. Each alternative is evaluated with respect to a matrix of estimated impacts to the referenced resources. The Interagency Team evaluates the estimated impacts and selects the alternative that will be the least-environmentally-damaging-practicable alternative.

It was further explained that in addition to being evaluated with respect to the river valley, community studies were being undertaken to evaluate the relative impacts borne by each community. Categories include land use, effects on tax base, residential and business relocations, as well as general connectivity to the larger community.

Conversion of I-240 from a Freeway to a Boulevard

Mr. McDonough asked whether I-240 could be “re-envisioned” and converted from a freeway to a boulevard with lower speeds similar to Wendover Avenue in Greensboro. Mr. McDonough pointed out that this would reconnect Hillcrest with the City.

HOV Lanes

Mr. Elston asked whether high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes could be utilized for this area. It was noted that HOV lanes are best-suited for areas with longer distances between access points, and that, even if HOV lanes are implemented, the footprint will be larger because the number of general purpose lanes needed does not decrease.

Montford Representation by Western North Carolina Alliance

Mr. Elston mentioned that Ms. Julie Mayfield, Western North Carolina Alliance, has attended previous meetings, represented the Montford Neighborhood Association, and provided the Association's comments thus far.

Project Decisions by the Interagency Team

A general discussion took place about how project planning and design decisions are made by the Interagency Team, which is comprised of representatives from federal, state, and local agencies that ensure regulatory compliance on this and other NCDOT projects. It was noted that Mr. Paul Black serves on the Interagency Team for this project as the representative of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Public Housing

Ms. Stickford noted that there are several changes to the Asheville Housing Authority (AHA) and funding for Housing and Urban Development projects. It was explained that multiple funding sources are now being combined into one, central, full-funding stream through Section 8. While it is unclear at the moment how this will specifically impact Asheville, conversations have been occurring regarding the potential reconstruction/ rehabilitation of HUD and AHA complexes including the Klondyke & Woodridge Apartments, the Hillcrest Community, and Pisgah View Apartments.

Ms. Stickford further noted that the Hillcrest Community has recently created a homeowners/community association with Mr. Michael Hayes serving as President. Mr. Hayes is also in the beginning stages of establishing a Public Housing Leadership Council and inviting representatives from the other HUD/AHA developments in Asheville.

Section B Alternatives

Mr. McDonough asked about the changes to Alternative 4B since its conceptual design by the Asheville Design Center. It was noted that the concept is the same, but the alternative looks different because interstate design standards were used to set required lane distances and minimum radii for the ramps and loops.

Mr. McDonough also asked whether NCDOT could take the best parts of each alternative considered in Section B and combine them into a new alternative. It was noted that was how the alternatives were initially developed, and eliminated or carried forward for detailed studies.

labels for both Sections were displayed. Smaller, less detailed versions were also provided for the 3/3C and 4/4B alternatives. Because the impacts for Section B's Alternatives 3 and 3C as well as Alternatives 4 and 4B were the same in the Burton Street area, these four design alternatives were combined into two maps (3 and 4). Several other boards were displayed from the May Public Meeting (including Multimodal and Greenways Connectivity boards). During this portion of the meeting, individuals were interested to find out whether their homes were located in the proposed right-of-way for any of the Design Alternatives. Several residents preferred Alternative 4B because it kept more of the neighborhood intact, especially around the Fayetteville Street area. One participant felt that the community would suffer greatly if the road was expanded into the neighborhood as this community was heavily impacted during the original construction of I-240 and Patton Avenue. He felt that the overall community cohesion would be severely reduced.

A number of themes, comments, and concerns were raised and discussed during the map examination portion including:

- The desire to prevent (or minimize to the greatest extent possible) residents from being relocated, as it would be impossible to recreate the social fabric that currently exists.
- The concern that the history of the neighborhood is slowly fading as growth, redevelopment, and sprawl encroach on the neighborhood.
- Concern regarding road closures, continued access to the neighborhood, and the loss of local businesses.
- The uncertainty of the project has kept the community from realizing goals as set forth in their community plan.
- The desire to incorporate elements of the community and potential infrastructure projects within the final design plans of any alternative.
- Many residents indicated that when accidents occur along this section of road (several times a week) the air and noise pollution that results from idling cars and trucks prevents residents from enjoying their outside spaces and contributes to increased health concerns.
- Concern regarding the locations, use, and visual impacts of sound walls, as well as increased noise concerns due to the closer proximity of the road.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

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- Concern regarding the locations, use, and visual impacts of sound walls, as well as increased noise concerns due to the closer proximity of the road.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

In his September 17, 2014 e-mail to Mr. Wray, Mr. McDonough expressed his appreciation for the Montford Small-Group Meeting. Mr. McDonough also requested consideration "of alternative standards for the I-240 footprint east of the Westgate Shopping Center that would allow Alternatives 3 or 3C to be more compatible with community goals." A copy of Mr. McDonough's e-mail is attached to this meeting summary for reference.

Acknowledgements

Should you have questions or comments regarding this meeting summary, please contact Mr. Michael Wray at (919) 707-6050 or mgwray@ncdot.gov, or Mr. Mark Pierce at (919) 461-1515 or mark.pierce@urs.com.

-End-

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Michael
828 252 2153
171 Montford ave Asheville NC 28801
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Appendix C

Relocation and Right of Way Reports

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EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 1 of 3 Alternate
T.I.P. No.:	I-2513B			**ALTERNATE 3**
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 CONNECTOR I-40 TO US-19-23-70 NORTH OF ASHEVILLE			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	25	9	34	10
Businesses	10	14	24	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	2	0	2	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	6	13	10	5

VALUE OF DWELLING				DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE			
Owners		Tenants		For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0	0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	1	150-250	0	20-40M	4	150-250	0
40-70M	2	250-400	2	40-70M	14	250-400	3
70-100M	9	400-600	5	70-100M	34	400-600	9
100 UP	13	600 UP	2	100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
TOTAL	25		9		127+		32+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
X		2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

2. The Christian Church of Hope will be acquired by this alternate.

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

4. See attachment

6. See attachment

8. Last resort housing may be required for some owners as well as tenants depending on available housing at time of relocation.

11. The Asheville/Buncombe County area has a large amount of public housing. However, it does not appear that any public housing units are being impacted by this project.

12. The market is saturated with listings in the area of the project. It is felt that DSS housing will continue to be available for the long-term future.

14. See attachment.

Janice A. Rogers	2/15/2015		5/19/15
Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 1 of 1 Alternate
T.I.P. NO.:	I-2513B		**ALTERNATE 3C**	
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 CONNECTOR I-40 TO US-19-23-70 NORTH OF ASHEVILLE			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	18	5	23	8
Businesses	8	25	33	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	0	1	1	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
	3	9	5	6

VALUE OF DWELLING				DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE			
Owners		Tenants		For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0	0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0	20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	0	40-70M	0	250-400	0
70-100M	6	400-600	1	70-100M	6	400-600	8
100 UP	12	600 UP	4	100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
TOTAL	18		5		81+		28+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	X	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

4. See attachment

6. See attachment

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14. See attachment.

Kevin D. Brandon	9/4/15		10/12/15
Kevin D. Brandon Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 2 of 3 Alternate
T.I.P. No.:	I-2513B			**ALTERNATE 4**

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: I-26 CONNECTOR
I-40 TO US-19-23-70 NORTH OF ASHEVILLE

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	29	17	46	14
Businesses	9	15	24	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	2	0	2	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	6	18	17	5

VALUE OF DWELLING

Owners		Tenants	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	1	150-250	0
40-70M	3	250-400	3
70-100M	7	400-600	8
100 UP	18	600 UP	6
TOTAL	29		17

DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE

For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	4	150-250	0
40-70M	14	250-400	3
70-100M	34	400-600	9
100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
	127+		32+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
X		2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

2. The Christian Church of Hope will be acquired by this alternate.

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

4. See attachment

6. See attachment

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14. See attachment

Janice G. Rogers	2/15/2015		5/19/15
Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 3 of 3 Alternate
T.I.P. No.:	I-2513B			**ALTERNATE 4B**

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: I-26 CONNECTOR
I-40 TO US-19-23-70 NORTH OF ASHEVILLE

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	23	10	33	9
Businesses	8	26	34	7
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	1	0	1	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	1	10	14	8

VALUE OF DWELLING				DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE			
Owners		Tenants		For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0	0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0	20-40M	4	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	1	40-70M	14	250-400	3
70-100M	3	400-600	4	70-100M	34	400-600	9
100 UP	20	600 UP	5	100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
TOTAL	23		10		127+		32+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	X	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

4. See attachment

6. See attachment

8. Last resort housing may be required for some owners as well as tenants depending on available housing at time of relocation.

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14. See attachment

Janice B. Rogers	2/15/2015		5/19/15
Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Section A
T.I.P. NO.:	I-2513			
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 Connector, I-40 to US 19-23-70 North of Asheville			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	29	52	81	0
Businesses	17	0	17	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	1	0	1	1

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
8	10	18	25	20

VALUE OF DWELLING

Owners		Tenants	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	3	250-400	4
70-100M	5	400-600	25
100 UP	21	600 UP	23
TOTAL	29		52

DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE

For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	88	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	112	150-250	80
40-70M	230	250-400	120
70-100M	370	400-600	160
100 UP	500	600 UP	340
	1300		700

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
X		2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
X		7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
X		10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **12 – 18 months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

Please see attached addendum for Remarks

Vivian B. Swanigan	10/10/14		10/15/14
Vivian. B. Swanigan Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 1 of 4 Alternate
T.I.P. NO.:	I-2513C		**ALTERNATE A2**	
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 CONNECTOR FROM POND RD. TO BREVARD RD. I-40 EXIT 44 (ENKA CANDLER) TO JUST EAST OF BREVARD RD.			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	29	21	50	8
Businesses	4	2	6	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	0	0	0	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	0	16	26	8

VALUE OF DWELLING

Owners		Tenants	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	2	250-400	0
70-100M	7	400-600	7
100 UP	20	600 UP	14
TOTAL	29		21

DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE

For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	0
70-100M	6	400-600	8
100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
	81+		28+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	X	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

4. See attachment

6. See attachment

8. Last resort housing may be required for some owners as well as tenants depending on available housing at time of relocation.

11. The Asheville/Buncombe County area has a large amount of public housing. However, it does not appear that any public housing units are being impacted by this project.

12. The market is saturated with listings in the area of the project. It is felt that DSS housing will continue to be available for the long-term future.

14. See attachment.

Kevin D. Brandon	9/8/15		10/12/15
Kevin D. Brandon Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 2 of 4 Alternate
T.I.P. NO.:	I-2513C		**ALTERNATE C2**	
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 CONNECTOR FROM POND RD. TO BREVARD RD. I-40 EXIT 44 (ENKA CANDLER) TO JUST EAST OF BREVARD RD.			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	19	13	32	4
Businesses	4	2	6	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	0	0	0	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	0	4	23	5

VALUE OF DWELLING

Owners		Tenants	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	1	250-400	0
70-100M	3	400-600	3
100 UP	15	600 UP	10
TOTAL	19		13

DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE

For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	0
70-100M	8	400-600	8
100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
	81+		28+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	X	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

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Kevin D. Brandon	9/8/15		10/12/15
Kevin D. Brandon Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 3 of 4 Alternate
T.I.P. NO.:	I-2513C		**ALTERNATE D1**	
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 CONNECTOR FROM POND RD. TO BREVARD RD. I-40 EXIT 44 (ENKA CANDLER) TO JUST EAST OF BREVARD RD.			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	20	18	38	4
Businesses	5	2	7	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	0	0	0	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	0	8	25	5

VALUE OF DWELLING

Owners		Tenants	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	2	250-400	0
70-100M	4	400-600	4
100 UP	14	600 UP	14
TOTAL	20		18

DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE

For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	0
70-100M	8	400-600	8
100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
	81+		28+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	X	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

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Kevin D. Brandon	9/8/15		10/12/15
Kevin D. Brandon Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☒ E.I.S. ☐ CORRIDOR ☐ DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34165.1.2	COUNTY	Buncombe	Alternate 4 of 4 Alternate
T.I.P. NO.:	I-2513C		**ALTERNATE F1**	
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	I-26 CONNECTOR FROM POND RD. TO BREVARD RD. I-40 EXIT 44 (ENKA CANDLER) TO JUST EAST OF BREVARD RD.			

ESTIMATED DISPLACEES

Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities
Residential	18	13	31	4
Businesses	3	2	5	0
Farms	0	0	0	0
Non-Profit	0	0	0	0

INCOME LEVEL

0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
0	0	5	21	5

VALUE OF DWELLING

Owners		Tenants	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	2	250-400	0
70-100M	4	400-600	4
100 UP	12	600 UP	9
TOTAL	18		13

DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE

For Sale		For Rent	
0-20M	0	$ 0-150	0
20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	0
70-100M	6	400-600	8
100 UP	75+	600 UP	20+
	81+		28+

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Yes	No	*Explain all "YES" answers.*
	X	1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	X	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
X		3. Will business services still be available after project?
X		4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	X	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
		6. Source for available housing (list).
	X	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
X		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	X	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	X	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
X		11. Is public housing available?
X		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing housing available during relocation period?
	X	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? **18-24 Months**

REMARKS (Respond by Number)

3. There are numerous small, large and industrial businesses in the neighborhood of this alternate. All will be available after project.

4. See attachment

6. See attachment

8. Last resort housing may be required for some owners as well as tenants depending on available housing at time of relocation.

11. The Asheville/Buncombe County area has a large amount of public housing. However, it does not appear that any public housing units are being impacted by this project.

12. The market is saturated with listings in the area of the project. It is felt that DSS housing will continue to be available for the long-term future.

14. See attachment.

Kevin D. Brandon	9/9/15		10/12/15
Kevin D. Brandon Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E
Revised 7/7/14

REQUEST FOR R/W COST ESTIMATE / RELOCATION EIS

COST ESTIMATE REQUEST ☒ **RELOCATION EIS REPORT ☒**

DATE RECEIVED: 05/11/15 **DATE ASSIGNED:** 05/11/15 **DATE DUE:** 07/17/15

NEW REQUEST: ☒ **UPDATE REQUEST:** ☐ **REVISION REQUEST:** ☐

TIP NUMBER	DESCRIPTION: I-26 connector, I-40 to US 19-23-70 North of Asheville
I-2513B & C	

WBS ELEMENT: 34165.1.1 **COUNTY:** Buncombe **DIV:** 13 **APPRAISAL OFFICE:** 5

REQUESTOR: Michael Wray **DEPT:** PDEA **TYPE OF PLANS PROVIDED:** ____

BASED ON PAST PROJECT HISTORICAL DATA, THE LAND AND DAMAGE FIGURES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE CONDEMNATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE INCREASES THAT OCCUR DURING SETTLEMENT OF ALL PARCELS.

APPRAISER: Telics **COMPLETION DATE:** 10/06/15 **TRANSMITTED:** 10/06/15

	I-2513B Alt 3C		I-2513C Alt A2		I-2513C Alt C2	
TYPE OF ACCESS:	NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒	
ESTIMATED NO. OF PARCELS:	115		123		106	
RESIDENTIAL RELOCATEES:	23	$805,000	50	$1,750,000	32	$1,120,000
BUSINESS RELOCATEES:	33	$2,450,000	6	$375,000	6	$375,000
GRAVES:	-	$-	-	$-	-	$-
CHURCH / NON – PROFIT: Western Carolina Rescue Mission	1	$75,000	-	$-	-	$-
FARMS:	-	$-	-	$-	-	$-
MISC: ____	-	$-	-	$-	-	$-
SIGNS:	-	$-	-	$-	-	$-
LAND, IMPROVEMENTS, AND DAMAGES:	$60,000,000		$23,125,000		$19,750,000	
ACQUISTION:	$1,620,000		$1,325,000		$1,130,000	
TOTAL ESTIMATED R/W COST:	$64,950,000		$26,575,000		$22,375,000	

CONTINUED to PG 2.

	I-2513C Alt D1		I-2513C Alt F1			
TYPE OF ACCESS:	NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☐	
ESTIMATED NO. OF PARCELS:	**120**		**100**			
RESIDENTIAL RELOCATEES:	**38**	**$1,330,000**	**31**	**$1,085,000**		**$**
BUSINESS RELOCATEES:	**7**	**$420,000**	**5**	**$330,000**		**$**
GRAVES:	**-**	**$-**	**-**	**$-**		**$**
CHURCH / NON – PROFIT:	**-**	**$-**	**-**	**$-**		**$**
FARMS:	**-**	**$-**	**-**	**$-**		**$**
MISC: ____	**-**	**$-**	**-**	**$-**		**$**
SIGNS:	**-**	**$-**	**-**	**$-**		**$**
LAND, IMPROVEMENTS, AND DAMAGES:	**$31,000,000**		**$14,500,000**		**$**	
ACQUISTION:	**$1,000,000**		**$1,210,000**		**$**	
TOTAL ESTIMATED R/W COST:	**$33,750,000**		**$17,125,000**		**$**	

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABOVE RELOCATEES INCLUDES THOSE PARCELS WHERE THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION AREAS INVOLVE RELOCATION OF LIVABLE OR BUSINESS UNITS ONLY.

THERE ARE NO FIGURES FOR UTILITY INVOLVEMENT ON THIS ESTIMATE / RELOCATION EIS REPORT AND NO PUE's, AUE's NOR DUE's UNLESS DEPICTED ON PLANS FURNISHED.

NOTES: _____

REQUEST FOR R/W COST ESTIMATE / RELOCATION EIS

COST ESTIMATE REQUEST ☒ **RELOCATION EIS REPORT** ☐

NEW REQUEST: ☐ **UPDATE REQUEST:** ☐ Update to ____ Estimate **REVISION REQUEST:** ☒ Revision to 10/09/2014 Estimate Revision No.: 1

DATE RECEIVED: _____ **DATE ASSIGNED**: _____ **# of Alternates Requested**: _____

DATE DUE: **10/09/2015 ASAP**

TIP NUMBER I-2513A	DESCRIPTION: I-26 Connector, I-40 to US 19-23-70 North of Asheville

WBS ELEMENT: 34165.1.1 **COUNTY**: Buncombe **DIV**: 13 **APPRAISAL OFFICE**: 5

REQUESTOR: Michael Wray & Derrick Weaver **DEPT**: PDEA

TYPE OF PLANS PROVIDED: ____

BASED ON PAST PROJECT HISTORICAL DATA, THE LAND AND DAMAGE FIGURES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE CONDEMNATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE INCREASES THAT OCCUR DURING SETTLEMENT OF ALL PARCELS.

APPRAISER: Fred Barkley (Revisor) **TRANSMITTED**: 10/09/14 **# of Alternates Completed**: 1

COMPLETION DATE: 10/09/14

	A					
TYPE OF ACCESS:	NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☐		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☐	
ESTIMATED NO. OF PARCELS:	157					
RESIDENTIAL RELOCATEES:	81	$2,835,000		$		$
BUSINESS RELOCATEES:	18	$800,000		$		$
GRAVES:	-	$-		$		$
CHURCH / NON – PROFIT:	1	$50,000		$		$
FARMS: (Type)____	-	$-		$		$
MISC: ____	-	$-		$		$
SIGNS:	-	$-		$		$
LAND, IMPROVEMENTS, AND DAMAGES:	$23,865,000		$		$	
ACQUISTION:	$1,825,000		$		$	
TOTAL ESTIMATED R/W COST:	$29,375,000		$		$	

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABOVE RELOCATEES INCLUDES THOSE PARCELS WHERE THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION AREAS INVOLVE RELOCATION OF LIVABLE OR BUSINESS UNITS ONLY.

NOTES: Revised estimate to the original submitted 10/09/2014 done by Daniel Page and J. Rick Wynne of Asheville Appr. Office

REQUEST FOR R/W COST ESTIMATE / RELOCATION EIS

COST ESTIMATE REQUEST ☒ RELOCATION EIS REPORT ☐

NEW REQUEST: ☐ UPDATE REQUEST: ☐ REVISION REQUEST: ☒

DATE RECEIVED: _____ DATE ASSIGNED: _____ # of Alternates Requested: 3

DATE DUE: _____

TIP NUMBER I-2513 B

DESCRIPTION: I-26 CONNECTOR FROM I-40 TO US-19-23-70 NORTH OF ASHEVILLE

I-2513 C

WBS ELEMENT: 34165.1.1 COUNTY: BUNCOMBE DIV: 13 APPRAISAL OFFICE: 5

REQUESTOR: DERRICK WEAVER MICHAEL WRAY DEPT: PDEA

TYPE OF PLANS PROVIDED: _____

BASED ON PAST PROJECT HISTORICAL DATA, THE LAND AND DAMAGE FIGURES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE CONDEMNATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE INCREASES THAT OCCUR DURING SETTLEMENT OF ALL PARCELS.

APPRAISER: RICK WYNNE DANIEL PAGE TRANSMITTED: _____ # of Alternates Completed: 3

ORIGINAL COMPLETION DATE: 3-13-2015

REVISED: 10-09-2015

BY: FRED J. BARKLEY

	I-2513 "B" ALT "3"		I-2513 "B" ALT "4"		I-2513 "B" ALT "4-B"	
TYPE OF ACCESS:	NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒	
ESTIMATED NO. OF PARCELS:	108±		108±		88±	
RESIDENTIAL RELOCATEES:	31	$1,085,000	38	$1,330,000	26	$910,000
BUSINESS RELOCATEES:	20	$3,000,000	21	$3,475,000	22	$3,425,000
GRAVES: NONE INDICATED NOR OBSERVED	-0-	$ -0-	-0-	$ -0-	-0-	$ -0-
CHURCH / NON – PROFIT:	1	$ 50,000	1	$ 50,000	-0-	$ -0-
FARMS: (Type)____	-0-	$ -0-	-0-	$ -0-	-0-	$ -0-
MISC: ____	-0-	$ -0-	-0-	$ -0-	-0-	$ -0-
SIGNS:	—	$ —	—	$ —	—	$ —
LAND, IMPROVEMENTS, AND DAMAGES:		$37,275,000		$39,250,000		$31,525,000
ACQUISTION:		$ 1,445,000		$ 1,420,000		$ 965,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED R/W COST:		$42,825,000		$45,525,000		$36,825,000

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABOVE RELOCATEES INCLUDES THOSE PARCELS WHERE THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION AREAS INVOLVE RELOCATION OF LIVABLE OR BUSINESS UNITS ONLY.

NOTES: _____

REQUEST FOR R/W COST ESTIMATE / RELOCATION EIS

COST ESTIMATE REQUEST ☒ **RELOCATION EIS REPORT** ☐

NEW REQUEST: ☐ **UPDATE REQUEST:** ☐ Update to ____ Estimate **REVISION REQUEST:** ☒ Revision to 04/25/14 Estimate Revision No.: 1

DATE RECEIVED: _____ **DATE ASSIGNED**: _____ **# of Alternates Requested**: _____

DATE DUE: **10/09/2015 ASAP**

TIP NUMBER I-2513B	DESCRIPTION: I-26 Connector, I-40 to US 19-23-70 North of Asheville

WBS ELEMENT: 34165.1.1 **COUNTY**: Buncombe **DIV**: 13 **APPRAISAL OFFICE**: 5

REQUESTOR: Michael Wray & Derrick Weaver **DEPT**: PDEA

TYPE OF PLANS PROVIDED: ____

BASED ON PAST PROJECT HISTORICAL DATA, THE LAND AND DAMAGE FIGURES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE CONDEMNATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE INCREASES THAT OCCUR DURING SETTLEMENT OF ALL PARCELS.

APPRAISER: Fred Barkley (Revisor) **TRANSMITTED**: 10/09/14 **# of Alternates Completed**: 1

COMPLETION DATE: 10/09/14

	3C					
TYPE OF ACCESS:	NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☒		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☐		NONE: ☐ LIMITED: ☐ PARTIAL: ☐ FULL: ☐	
ESTIMATED NO. OF PARCELS:	72					
RESIDENTIAL RELOCATEES:	14	$490,000		$		$
BUSINESS RELOCATEES:	23	$1,810,000		$		$
GRAVES:	-	$-		$		$
CHURCH / NON – PROFIT:	-	$-		$		$
FARMS: (Type)____	-	$-		$		$
MISC: ____	-	$-		$		$
SIGNS:	-	$-		$		$
LAND, IMPROVEMENTS, AND DAMAGES:	$32,750,000		$		$	
ACQUISTION:	$1,100,000		$		$	
TOTAL ESTIMATED R/W COST:	$36,150,000		$		$	

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABOVE RELOCATEES INCLUDES THOSE PARCELS WHERE THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION AREAS INVOLVE RELOCATION OF LIVABLE OR BUSINESS UNITS ONLY.

NOTES: Revised estimate to the original submitted 04/25/2014 done by Daniel Page and J. Rick Wynne of Asheville Appr. Office

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Appendix D

Federal Register Publication of the Notice of Intent

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particular, in that it is an equitable allocation of reasonable dues, fees, and other charges among Exchange members.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received From Members, Participants, or Others

No written comments were either solicited or received.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing For Commission Action

The foregoing proposed rule change has been designated as a fee change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(ii) of the Act [15] and Rule 19b–4(f)(2) [16] thereunder, because it establishes or changes a due, fee, or other charge applicable only to a member. Accordingly, the proposal became effective upon filing with the Commission. At any time within 60 days of the filing of such proposed rule change, the Commission may summarily abrogate such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Electronic Comments

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (*http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml*); or
- Send an e-mail to *rule-comments@sec.gov.* Please include File Number SR–Phlx–2007–50 on the subject line.

Paper Comments

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Nancy M. Morris, Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE., Washington, DC 20549–1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR–Phlx–2007–50. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet Web site (*http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml*). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, NE., Washington, DC 20549, on official business days between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Copies of such filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR–Phlx–2007–50 and should be submitted on or before August 15, 2007.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.[17]

Florence E. Harmon,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. E7–14357 Filed 7–24–07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010–01–P

[15] 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(ii).

[16] 17 CFR 240.19b–4(f)(2).

[17] 17 CFR 200.30–3(a)(12).

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement; Buncombe County, NC

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for the proposed extension of I–26 from I–40 to US 19–23–70, including widening I–240 from the I–26/I–40/I–240 interchange to US 19–23–74 (Patton Avenue), and construction on new location from US 19–23–74 (Patton Avenue) across the French Broad River to US 19–23–70 in Buncombe County, North Carolina.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Clarence W. Coleman, P.E., Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601–1418, Telephone: (919) 856–4350, Extension 133.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal for extending I–26, partly on new location, from I–40 to US 19–23–70 including the I–26/I–40/I–240 interchange. The project is commonly referred to as the I–26 Connector and is intended to provide a link between existing I–26 and US 19–23–70 north of Asheville, completing a gap in the I–26 corridor through Asheville. The project includes upgrading the I–26/I–40/I–240 interchange and improving I–240 (including the interchanges) north to the I–240/US 19–23–74A/Patton Avenue interchange west of the French Broad River. The project also includes construction of a multilane freeway segment on new location from the I–240/US 19–23–74A/Patton Avenue interchange across the French Broad River, merging into US 19–23–70 south of the existing US 19–23–70 interchange with SR 1781 (Broadway). Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected traffic demand and improve connectivity between I–26 south of Asheville and US 19–23–70 north of Asheville. In addition, upgrades are needed on existing interstates within the study area to meet current design standards.

Opportunities have been provided for involvement with the public in defining the project purpose and need and determining the range of alternatives to be considered for the project. Further opportunities for the public to comment on the environmental review process will be provided throughout the remainder of the project development process. From 1989 to 1995, the I–26 Connector was studied as part of the Asheville Urban Area Corridor Preservation Pilot Project in order to develop the Asheville Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan, a long-range regional transportation plan. Extensive public involvement was incorporated to identify overall transportation goals, specific projects in the Asheville area that would fulfill those goals (which identified the I–26 Connector as one of

those projects) and potential corridors for the I–26 Connector. NCDOT published a final *Phase I Environmental Analysis for the Asheville Urban Area* (Phase I Study) in April 1995.

Prior to the initiation of environmental studies in preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a scoping letter soliciting comments on the proposed project was sent in 1996 to the local, state, and federal agencies, by NCDOT. No further scoping actions are planned.

In 1997, the United States Army Corps of Engineer (USACE), FHWA, and NCDOT signed an Interagency Agreement integrating Section 404 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, known as the Section 404/NEPA Merger Process. The agreement requires the establishment of a project team at the beginning of each transportation project and outlines the coordination process with a series of Concurrence Points in order to promote cooperation and coordination during the study process and to ensure compatibility with local, state and federal planning projects and policies.

In addition to the project merger team providing guidance and input, involvement with the public continued with a Project Educational Forum and a separate Project Design Forum in 2000. In the summer of 2004, public informational meetings were held to receive public comments on the functional alternatives presented. The engineering designs for the project alternatives were then presented at Community Informational Workshops in October 2006. Upon completion of the draft EIS, a public hearing will be held, with public notice of the time and place of the hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to the proposed action is addressed and all significant issues are identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions concerning the proposed action should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: July 19, 2007.

Clarence W. Coleman,

P.E., Operations Engineer, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[FR Doc. E7–14353 Filed 7–24–07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement; Graham County, NC

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (Supp. FEIS) will be prepared for the proposed relocation of U.S. 74 from U.S. 129 in Robbinsville to NC 28 in Stecoah, Graham County, North Carolina. The proposed project would be the construction of a four-lane divided highway approximately 11 miles in length. This project is identified as TIP Project No. A–9 B&C.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Clarence W. Coleman, P.E., Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601–1418, telephone: (919) 856–4350, Extension 133.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed relocation is part of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project No. A–9, which includes four different relocation projects, identified as TIP Project Nos. A–9 A, B, C, & D. The ''A'' portion of the project begins in Cherokee County with a proposed terminus in Andrews and extends into Graham County with a proposed terminus in Robbinsville. The proposed relocation from Robbinsville to Stecoah is the ''B & C'' portion of the project. The ''D'' portion of the project begins in Stecoah and extends east into Swain County, terminating in Almond; most of this segment is complete.

An FEIS for the entire A–9 project was completed in 1984. Federal regulations impose a three-year restriction, commencing from the time a document is signed, for action to be taken on a project. If action is not taken within this period, a reevaluation of the FEIS is required. The Supp. FEIS will serve as this reevaluation (40 CFR 1502.9). The FEIS identified a Preferred Corridor for the entire A, B, C, & D corridor from Andrews to Almond. A reevaluation was completed for A–9D (a widening project), while A–9 A, B, & C (the new location portion) was subject to further analysis due to the project's potential impacts. The Supp. FEIS and its associated technical memorandum (indirect and cumulative effects report, air analysis, noise analysis, etc.) are being prepared only for the B & C portion of the project. The A portion of the project is currently unfunded. The project includes a tunnel under Stecoah Gap where an easement will be obtained from the U.S. Forest Service. The project corridor follows the existing NC 143 alignment in some areas; however, the majority of the project is on new location, as is the area through Stecoah Gap. The project also includes several new stream crossings including a bridge over Stecoah Creek.

The purpose of this project is to improve the US 74 corridor throughout the state providing better system linkage, economic and social development, highway capacity, and safety resulting in road user savings from a more efficient highway facility. It will also provide better accessibility with highway connections for Graham County. The proposed US 74 relocation is part of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), which would complete a missing link in the Appalachian Highway Corridor K. In summary, the purpose of the ADHS is to improve the economic conditions of the region by providing the infrastructure necessary for economic and human resource development.

A scoping letter was sent to federal and state resource agencies on December 5, 1995, and an interagency scoping meeting held on January 4, 1996. Additional interagency meetings were held on July 31, 1996, December 9, 1999, January 20, 2004, and September 19, 2006. An interagency meeting is currently scheduled for August 14, 2007. Public involvement has occurred for this project. The first Citizens Informational Workshop was held in two locations to accommodate interests at each end of the entire ABC project study area. The first workshop was held on March 11, 1996, at the Robbinsville High School in Robbinsville; the second was held at the Andrews Community Center in Andrews. The second Citizens Informational Workshop was also held in two locations on subsequent days. The workshop in Robbinsville was held October 28, 1996, at the Robbinsville High School; the second on October 29, 1996, at the Andrews Community Center in Andrews. The third Citizens Informational Workshop was also held on subsequent days in Robbinsville and

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Appendix E

Report of Comment/Response Database

I-26 Connector

1. Purpose and Need

1-1 **Comment**

It is crucial that the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) of September 2000, which includes nine key project design goals, be included in the NC DOT'S Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project, I-2513. This report, created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 21, 2000. Most importantly, the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic, which will result in eliminating the dangerous merging situations that currently exist on the Smokey Park Bridge. Creating a local traffic connection will reunify and connect the community. The scale of the project must match the character of this unique community. The nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report address the purpose and needs of the project and were adopted by the City and the MPO as an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connecter project while keeping the project on schedule. The evaluation criteria were developed specifically to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement. Any Purpose and Needs Statement that excludes the CCC report is incomplete. I thank you for your attention to this matter.

Response

The CCC report of September 2000 and the nine Key Design Goals that it presented were considered in the development of the project Purpose ad Need Statement and the DEIS. Refer to Chapter 1 of the DEIS where the CCC report and it recommendations are addressed. The report recommends that the goals be included in the project Purpose and Need Statement. Although these goals and recommendations emphasize local considerations developed during the planning process, many are considerations that are evaluated during the alternative selection process (refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS). Such considerations should be weighed with other factors and should not be used to eliminate the evaluation of viable alternatives that solve the transportation problem. While the goals were not specifically included in the purpose and need statement, NCDOT understands their importance to the local community. Many local citizens believe that the separation of local and interstate traffic should be included in the purpose and need. The FHWA and NCDOT considered whether or not to include separation of local and interstate traffic as a need for the project and determined that to do so would limit, or too narrowly define the range of alternatives that could be evaluated through the NEPA process. Furthermore, truly separating local and interstate traffic would be in direct conflict with other identified needs such as system linkage. The local community has also expressed a desire for the project to address the issue of separating I-240 traffic from Patton Avenue traffic. This issue is addressed the DEIS and has been considered in the evaluation of alternatives presented in Chapter 2 of this Draft EIS. This issue is also addressed in Chapter 8 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0003 PP0005 PP0010 PP0015 PP0019 PP0021 PP0022 PP0023 PP0026 PP0028 PP0029 PP0031 PP0032 PP0034 PP0035 PP0040 PP0041 PP0042 PP0044 PP0045 PP0047 PP0048 PP0049 PP0050 PP0051 PP0052 PP0053 PP0054 PP0058 PP0059 PP0060 PP0063 PP0064 PP0069 PP0081 PP0083 PP0085 PP0087 PP0088 PP0090 PP0091 PP0092 PP0093 PP0098 PP0099 PP0105 PP0107 PP0110 PP0111 PP0112 PP0113 PP0114 PP0116 PP0117 PP0119 PP0121 PP0122 PP0123 PP0124 PP0125 PP0127 PP0128 PP0129 PP0130 PP0133 PP0135 PP0141 PP0143 PP0145 PP0149

1-2 **Comment**

One of the main needs for I-26 as it passes though the City of Asheville is to replace the current dangerous merging situations on the Smokey Park Bridge. These problems stem from the lack of separation of local and interstate traffic. I believe the Purpose and Needs Statement should specifically include the separation of local and interstate traffic.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0008 PP0074 PP0075 PP0076 PP0079 PP0089 PP0099 PP0100 PP0101 PP0103 PP0106 PP0108 PP0132 PP0139 PP0142

1-3 **Comment**

Do whatever is necessary to separate I-26 and Patton Avenue. This old design would never pass muster today so please correct a long time problem.

Response

Each of the project alternatives studied in the DEIS would remove I-26 traffic from Patton Avenue.

Letter Codes

PP0009

1-4 **Comment**

Thanks for making the I-26 and I-40 connection that was left off of your original plans.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0009

1-5 **Comment**

We need to separate interstate and local traffic.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0016

1-6 **Comment**

I request that the purpose and need statements regarding the I-26 connector project include separation of local and interstate traffic at the existing Smoky Park Bridge. It is a dangerous mix, and the community has to be clear and consistent in requesting this separation.

Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0012

1-7 **Comment**
It is crucial that the report of the CCC of Sept. 2000, which includes nine key goals for project design, be included in the NCDOT's purpose and need statement for the I-26 connector. This report was created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, and was adopted by the MPO on Sept. 21, 2000. MOST IMPORTANTLY, the NCDOT must include THE SEPARATION OF LOCAL AND INTERSTATE TRAFFIC, in order to reunify and connect the community, and must match the scale of the project with the character of this unique community. This feature has been left out of the current draft of the purpose and need statement of Dec. 2007. Any attempt by the NCDOT to ignore the criteria in this CCC report will likely result in a delay of the project.
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0007 PP0013 PP0014

1-8 **Comment**
I consider it vitally important for the local and interstate traffic to be separated in Asheville. The character of the traffic flow has changed drastically since the changing of 19/23 to I-26, with much more tractor trailer traffic. Also, Asheville's population is growing by leaps and bounds with people who are not used to driving in WNC.
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0138

1-9 **Comment**
I am writing to comment about a serious concern concerning the I-26 connector project. One of the main needs of I-26 as it passes through the City of Asheville is to replace the current dangerous merging situation on Smoky Park Bridge. The Purpose and Needs Statement should include SEPARATION of local and interstate traffic.
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0017 PP0018 PP0096

1-10 **Comment**

The nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report address the purpose and needs of the project and were adopted by the City and the MPO as an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connecter project while keeping the project on schedule. Thc evaluation criteria were developed specifically to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement. Any Purpose and Seeds Statement that excludes the CCC report is incomplete.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0022 PP0146 PP0148

1-11 **Comment**

It has been brought to my attention that you are seeking public input on the Purpose and Needs for the I-26 Connector Project in Asheville.

I believe that it is essential that the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) of September 2000, which includes nine key project design goals, be included in the NC DOT'S Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project, I-2513. This report was created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, and was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 21, 2000. I travel I-240/26 daily and the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic, which will result in eliminating the dangerous merging situations that currently exist on the Smokey Park Bridge. It is extremely dangerous merging from Westgate East and trying to cross 4 lanes to get on I-26/19/23 or to leave from Patton Ave downtown and try to get to Westgate. Creating a local traffic connection will reunify and connect the community and make it much safer! I find it also very important that the scale of the project must match our unique community character. The nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report address the purpose and needs of the project and were adopted by the City and the MPO as an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connecter project while keeping the project on schedule. The evaluation criteria were developed specifically to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement. Any Purpose and Needs Statement that excludes the CCC report is incomplete.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0025

1-12 **Comment**

I've been looking at the all of the maps and proposed routes for the I-26 Connector Project (I-2513), and I think it is important for the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (September, 2000), be included in the NC DOT'S Purpose and Needs Statement for the project. I like that this report was created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, and was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The CCC report seems to have considered the importance of creating a local traffic connection in a city that has already been divided by interstate traffic. Due to the

enormity of the project and the dramatic, long-term impact it will have on the lives of so many people, careful considerations need to be made during the planning phase and ALL options carefully considered. This means that a Purpose and Needs Statement that without the CCC report is incomplete.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0027

1-13 **Comment**

As someone who crosses the Smokey Park Bridge at least once daily, it's clear to me that one of the main needs for I-26 is to correct the current dangerous merging situations on the Smokey Park Bridge. I have heard that traffic experts agree that these problems stem partly from the lack of separation of local and interstate traffic. Therefore, I believe the Purpose and Needs Statement should specifically include the separation of local and interstate traffic.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0030

1-14 **Comment**

I live in West Asheville and use the Smoky Park Bridge daily. Please consider the following: One of the main needs for I-26 as it passes though the City of Asheville is to replace the current dangerous merging situations on the Smokey Park Bridge. These problems stem from the lack of separation of local and interstate traffic. I believe the Purpose and Needs Statement should specifically include the separation of local and interstate traffic.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0033

1-15 **Comment**

I believe that the Purpose and Needs Statement should specifically include the separation of local and interstate traffic. Also, that our city is in need of a way to connect our communities on both sides of the river.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0036 PP0097

1-16 **Comment**

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the I-26 connector Purpose and Need Statement to take into account the needs put forth by the Community
Coordinating Committee (CCC) Report of September 20.
The main recommendations of that report were:
1) Separation of local and interstate traffic
2) Compatibility with long term community planning goals stated in adopted plans
3) Incorporation of community-selected design features
4) Minimization of impact on neighborhoods and local businesses
5) Match the scale of the project to the unique character of the City
6) Reunification and connectivity of community

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0037 PP0038 PP0095 PP0104

1-17 **Comment**

As a resident of western North Carolina and truck owner-operator who frequently uses both the I-26 corridor and Asheville's local infrastructure personally and professionally, I think it is crucial that the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) of September 2000, which includes nine key project design goals, be included in the NC DOT'S Purpose and Needs Statement for the 1-26 Connector Project, I-2513. This report was created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, and was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 21, 2000.

Most importantly, the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic, which will result in eliminating the dangerous merging situations that currently exist on the Smokey Park Bridge. Creating a local traffic connection will reunify and connect the community. The scale of the project must match the character of this unique community.

The nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report address the purpose and needs of the project and were adopted by the City and the MPO as an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connecter project while keeping the project on schedule. The evaluation criteria were developed specifically to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement. Any Purpose and Needs Statement that excludes the CCC report is incomplete.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0039

1-18 **Comment**

I urge you to include the September 21, 2000 report of the Asheville/Metropolitan Planning Organization Community Coordinating Committee in NC DOT'S I-2513 Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project. The Asheville report's inclusion of the need to separate local and interstate traffic, and thus greatly reduce traffic on the Smokey Park Bridge, is of great significance to us, both for its effect on local vehicular congestion, and for its potential to allow for pedestrian connection between W. Asheville to downtown.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0043 PP0057 PP0118

1-19 **Comment**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the purpose and needs statement for the I-26 Connector project, and you willingness to allow me a few extra days to submit the comment. I am not a resident of Asheville, but rather of an unincorporated part of Buncombe County. I commute to Asheville daily for work, and I do the majority of my shopping and other activities in Asheville. I travel to Asheville six to seven days per week, so what is done to and for transportation in Asheville affects me daily.

The purpose and needs statement for the I-26 Connector that I found on your website is to “connect I-26 south of Asheville with US 19-23 north of Asheville, relieve traffic congestion on existing I-240 in West Asheville, and enhance regional travel along the I-26 to US 19-23 corridor.” I think that purpose and needs statement includes part of the story, but I do not think it is complete. The purpose and need statement must recognize the need to separate Patton Avenue traffic from interstate traffic, and reconnect Patton Avenue as a main thoroughfare connecting West Asheville and downtown.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0046

1-20 **Comment**

As a resident of West Asheville I'm very concerned about the impact of I-26 construction on the Smokey Park Bridge. Many West Asheville residents are young professionals who work in downtown Asheville but live in more affordable West Asheville. West Asheville is a growing community that needs easy access across the river.

Response

Construction of the I-26 project, once completed, will remove I-26 traffic from the Smoky Park Bridges helping to relieve gengestion on this route to and from downtown Asheville.

Letter Codes

PP0051 PP0085

1-21 **Comment**

Attached is a letter from the Asheville Design Center expressing our concern that the purpose and need statement does not incororate all of the design principles identified in the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) report of September 2000. This report was created by Asheville/Buncombe area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, and was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 21, 2000. With such strong community support, we trust you will consider inclusion of these important design objectives in your revisions to the I-26 project Purpose and Need Statement. Attachment follows:

As representative of the Asheville Design Center (ADC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting quality design in the Asheville region, I am writing to express that our group feels it is crucial that the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) of September 2000, which includes nine key project design goals, be included in the NC DOT'S Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project, I-2513. This report was created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 21, 2000.

The report includes nine key project design goals, but most importantly, the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic on Patton Avenue, particularly across the Smokey Park Bridge. This will obviously help eliminate the dangerous merging situations that currently exist, but it will also allow the development of a local boulevard that can reunify and connect our city with the larger community. We think it is important that the design of the project must match the scale and character of this unique region.

The nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report were developed to specifically address the purpose and needs of the project and were adopted by the City and the MPO as an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connecter project while keeping the project on schedule. These 9 goals were intended for inclusion in the Purpose and Needs Statement. We feel that any Purpose and Needs Statement that excludes the CCC report is incomplete.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0054

1-22 **Comment**

The Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) was a group of Asheville area residents assembled to provide a representative range of input on
the I-26 Connector Project and to coordinate the associated public involvement process. I ask that you incorporate the key design goals listed in the CCC Report in the Purpose and Need Statement. The CCC Report was adopted by both the Asheville City Council and the

MPO. It lists evaluation criteria for each goal. In particular I ask that the following goals be explicitly included:
1) Separation of local and interstate traffic
2) Matching scale of project to character of community
3) Maintain compatibility with community's design vision and plans; incorporation of community-selected design features

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0056 PP0068

1-23 **Comment**

I am writing concerning the Purpose and Need statement for the I-26 Connector project. As a retired transportation planner and Life Member of ITE, I have had considerable experience with the EIS process for transportation projects. I believe that the current Purpose and Need statement is incomplete. It deals only with traffic issues, and does not address a key element of the traffic problem.

The small amount of congestion that currently occurs on I-240 is due primarily to the weaving movements on the Smoky Park Bridge. The sharp single-lane ramps are not ideal, but they are not really the problem. The problem results from the mixing of traffic from Patton Avenue and I-240 in both directions. This results in excessive weaving movements, and considerable confusion and resulting last-minute sudden weaves. The obvious solution to this problem is to separate local (Patton Avenue) traffic from interstate traffic. This should be included as a specific point in the Purpose and Need statement.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0061

1-24 **Comment**

As a 17-year resident of Asheville and an active member of the regional design community, I think it is very important that you hear from me regarding the inclusion of the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) of September 2000, which has nine key project design goals, in the NC DOT'S Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project, I-2513. This report was created by Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and others, and was officially adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on September 21, 2000.

The nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report address the purpose and needs of the project and were adopted by the City and the MPO as
an effective method of gaining extensive public input on the Connecter project while at the same time keeping it on schedule. The evaluation criteria were developed specifically to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement, and thus any Statement that excludes the CCC report would be not only incomplete but also inaccurate. Thank you for all your work on this vital project.

Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0062

1-25 **Comment**
Most importantly, the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic, which will result in eliminating the dangerous merging situations that currently exist on the Smokey Park Bridge. I advise my 2 teenage drivers and visiting guests to avoid those areas because, even when familiar with it, I have often found it a crazy and unsafe place to drive. Creating a local traffic connection will eliminate this safety issue and reunify the disconnected parts of the community.
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0062 PP0136

1-26 **Comment**
As the North Carolina Department of Transportation formulates the "Purpose and Need Statement," for the Interstate-26 Connector, I request that the NCDOT consider the needs of the community as it pertains to the reconfiguration of Interstate-26 and as it is stated in the Community Committee Report. The issue at stake goes beyond reducing the volume of traffic and improving the traffic patterns of the Smokey Park Bridges;...

...The goals set forth in the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) Report are reflections of the needs and desires of the people of the City of Asheville, have been recognized by City and MPO as such, and must take precedent in the development of the Purpose and Need Statement.
The goals set forth address the following issues: the separation of local and interstate traffic; the compatibility with long term community planning goals stated in adopted plans; the incorporation of community-selected design features; the minimization of the negative impacts on neighborhoods and local businesses; matching the scale of the project to the unique character of the City; and the reunification and connectivity of community...

...The purpose of this letter is to speak in advocacy of separating local and interstate traffic with the rerouting of I-26 in a manner which respects the needs and desires of the City of Asheville, and allows for sustainable development to occur; this letter also speaks in favor of the CCC report and requests that the NC-DOT respond holistically to the goals described in this report when constructing the Purpose and Need Statement for the I-26 Connector. Thank You!
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes

PP0065

1-27 **Comment**

The first section is the Summary of Need.
This section should also include the need to remove Interstate traffic from the local traffic crossing the Smoky Park bridge.
Under the sub-section Capacity, if local traffic were to be separated from the Interstate traffic, it is unclear whether I-240 would need additional capacity (ie: more than 4 lanes, two lanes each way). It has been shown in studies that the largest volume of traffic on the Smoky Park bridge is local, not interstate.

This statement about capacity also fails to factor in future declines in the rate of private passenger vehicle use per capita which will occur as a result of the increase of fuel costs due to anticipated reductions in the worldwide supply of oil and the necessity of humans to reduce fossil fuel consumption due to global climate change.

There are several other needs which should be added:
The need to minimize the impact of the project on housing stock and business infrastructure.
The need to align the project with future design goals of the local communities.

The second section is the Purpose of the Action.
I believe that the third statement: "To improve the capacity of existing I-240 west of Asheville to accommodate the existing and forecasted (2030 design year) traffic in this growing area." should be removed. As mentioned above, the need for an increase in the capacity of this roadway is not clear. Simply separating Interstate traffic from local traffic will decrease traffic volumes on the interstates. Also there are likely to be significant decreases in per capita use of private passenger vehicles by the year 2030, due to increasing fuel costs because of reductions in the worldwide supply of oil and the necessity of humans to reduce fossil fuel consumption due to global climate change

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1. Impacts to housing and businesses are addressed in Chapter 4 of the DEIS. Chapter 1 of the DEIS explains the need to increase capacity on I-240 west of Asheville.

Letter Codes

PP0067

1-28 **Comment**

I am writing to urge you to incorporate the report of the Community Coordinating Committee of September 2000 into the NCDOT Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project. Asheville's citizens have actively pursued refinement of the design of the connector to lessen the adverse impact it could have on our Community. We have asked the DOT plan to be revised to protect the integrity of our neighborhoods, to maintain the continuity of our traffic patterns within the community and perhaps most importantly, to seperate local and interstate traffic so that the merge at Smokey Park Bridge will no longer be a nexus of confusion and accidents. My

understanding was that the CCC Report was developed specifically to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement. To leave the CCC report out of the Purpose and Needs Statement will make that document incomplete.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0070

1-29 **Comment**

As a resident of the City of Asheville for nearly 25 years, I have a concern about the current project going forward with the I-26 Connector in my city. The decisions about completion of this project impact how the city grows, serves, and gives access to its citizens, as well as commercial and passenger traffic just "passing through." The Smokey Park Bridge is already a bottle neck. There needs to be provision for a separation of local and interstate traffic.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0072

1-30 **Comment**

I-26 and the French Broad River separates West Asheville from the rest of the city; there is no connection except the busy highway bridge. Separating the traffic should be priority in determining the new configuration.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0077

1-31 **Comment**

This letter is to voice concern about the plans for future I-26 through Asheville. I am worried primarily that an already hazardous road will be made more dangerous for me and my family and my community by further merging Interstate traffic with our already heavy local traffic. It is a truly risky proposition exiting from 19/23 into Asheville, or from 240 onto an Asheville exit already. The plan for merging all future traffic from I-26 with our local town traffic will funnel speeding cars just wanting to "get through" Asheville and on their way with those of us who live here and try to drive in a manner which will ensure our safety as we go about our daily lives. Asheville's highway and exiting systems are already so poorly laid out, without thought to future traffic growth, that compounding it with the plan for I-26 will seriously endanger all of us. As the mother of young children who are my sacred duty to protect, and who are at the mercy in our car of those who drive around us, please rethink the plans for I 26 and come up with a proposal which takes into account Asheville as a community. Thank you,

Response

Construction of the I-26 project, once completed, will remove I-26 traffic from the Smoky Park Bridges helping to relieve gengestion on this route to and from downtown Asheville.

Letter Codes

PP0080

1-32 **Comment**

As the Purpose and Need Statement will be used to compare and evaluate the alternative designs being considered for I-26 Connector, I urge that it be rewritten to call for separating local and interstate traffic on the bridges. It is important to minimize the negative impact on neighborhoods and local businesses in this Asheville community. Creating a local traffic connection will serve to reunify this community.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1. Impacts to neighborhoods and businesses are presented Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0084

1-33 **Comment**

I think it is crucial that the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) of September 2000, which includes nine key project design goals, be included in the NC DOT Purpose and Needs Statement for the I-26 Connector Project, I-2513 in Asheville, NC. This report was generated through consensus at meetings of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) comprised of Asheville area residents, including members of the business community, elected officials, and neighborhood groups. The West End/Clingman Avenue neighborhood, which I represent, was involved in this process.

The evaluation criteria are:

1. Separation of local and interstate traffic
2. Matching scale of project to character of community
3. Reunification and connectivity of community
4. Minimization of neighborhood and local business impacts
5. Use of updated traffic modeling software and data
6. Maintenance of compatibility with community's design vision and plans; incorporation of community-selected design features
7. Creation of full interstate movements between I-26 and I-40
8. Minimization of air quality and other environmental impacts
9. Emphasis on safety during construction and in the design of the final product

Most importantly, the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic, which will result in eliminating the dangerous merging situations that currently exist on the Smokey Park Bridge.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes
PP0090 PP0120

1-34 **Comment**
I am writing to comment on the I-26 Connector project in advance of the development of the purpose and need statement. As a resident of West Asheville, I travel on Patton Ave / the Smoky Park Bridge daily. I would prefer that local and interstate traffic be separated. I am a fan of the alternatives offered by the Asheville Design Center, particularly as they lessen the impact of the connector on our community, physically, environmentally and financially. It is important to me that this project have aesthetic merit, mirror our unique community and not encourage more traffic. Also, I would like for West Asheville to have a better route connecting us to downtown Asheville; one that allows for pedestrians and bicycles.
Please use the Community Coordination Committee report from September 2000 to inform the purpose and need statement. Our community needs a community endorsed solution to the I-26 Connector.
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PP0094

1-35 **Comment**
Please keep in mind several things when considering I-26 .... Very important for you to be sure to separate local and interstate traffic and remember that the community of Asheville is unique and has long term planning goals and the DOT plans need to incorporate community selected design features whereever and whenever possible. The city needs to be connected and not separated by your construction. Please keep in mind neighborhoods and local businesses. Don't make the project so big that it outsizes the size of the city. Don't forget about the CCC report!!!
Thank you so much for your consideration of these concerns.
Response
Refer to comment response 1-1. Impacts to neighborhoods and businesses are presented Chapter 4 of the DEIS.
Letter Codes
PP0109

1-36 **Comment**
I've heard you are asking for citizen input on the purpose and need statement for the I-26 Connector Project in Asheville. Thanks for doing that. There are a number of concerns I have:
1. Separation of local and through traffic would help dangerous mixing.
2. Matching the design of the project to the Asheville style and using community suggestions.
3. As little impact on area residences and businesses as possible.
4. Consideration for community long-term plans.

This is quite a complex project. Thanks for your help in getting it done right.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1. Impacts to neighborhoods and businesses are presented Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0115

1-37 **Comment**

I have lived in Asheville over a year now, but when I first moved here, the drive I most dreaded was anything about going over the bridge that borders the Westgate area. It is confusing and weirdly conceived. Traffic is the worst there. It is also very ugly and is not indicative of the beauty of Asheville.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0131

1-38 **Comment**

I believe strongly that "Purpose and Need Statement" must specifically call for separation of local and interstate traffic. I cross the Smoky Park Bridges traveling east and west on I 26 frequently and each time it's a "white knuckle" event. This is especially true when I'm traveling on I 26 West. I can only imagine the confusion and terror of the I 26 traveler encountering this connection for the first time.

I trust that you will agree to change the "Purpose and Need Statement" so that it is clear that separation of local and Interstate traffic is an urgent need in order to correct the very dangerous situation that exists on the Smoky Park Bridges today for both local and Interstate travelers.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0137

1-39 **Comment**

As a commuter from West Asheville to downtown Asheville, I am writing to say that I believe there is only one sound approach to the I-26 connector, and that is to TOTALLY separate local traffic from the Interstate traffic. I feel I have to take my life in my hands every morning as confused I-26 travelers try to move across multiple lanes of traffic in the shortest span of bridge to make it to the I-26 exit. This is absolutely one of the poorest designs I have ever witnessed.

Response

Refer to comment response 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0140

1-40 **Comment**

As a representative of the City of Asheville Community Coordinating Committee I request that DOT adopt the CCC's Key Project Design Goals listed below:

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE DESIGN OF THE I-26 CONNECTOR THROUGH ASHEVILLE

This report documents the goals identified by public input at the I-26 Connector Design Forum held July 21-22, 2000 in Asheville and recommends that these goals be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement and thoroughly studied as a design alternative in the project
Environmental Impact Study.

The goals described are generated from official records of discussion table comments at the forum and summaries of citizen-developed mission statements at the forum wrap-up session. They have been evaluated by the Community Coordinating Committee and recommended
for consideration. These goals provide the foundation for a citizen-based design alternative to be given engineering and environmental study
both preliminarily and through the EIS. They also provide recommended criteria for EIS evaluation of all alternatives.

Section 1 - Project Goals Identified by the Design Forum

Many facets of the project were discussed at the forum. The themes listed below summarize the most prominent concerns of area citizens
They provide a set of specific goals the community would like to see accomplished through the course of completing the I-26 Connector Project. We, as a community, want a thorough, full and proper study of an alternative design which will accomplish these goals. At the same time, the community feels strongly that the ultimate completion date for the project should be maintained and expedited, if possible. We are hopeful that building community consensus around the design alternative that best accomplishes these goals will ultimately help expedite the project. Due to the inter-related nature of the issues raised, the immediate proximity of areas to be affected and the need to expedite completion of the work, the strong preference of the Community Coordinating Committee is for these to be addressed as a single project rather than multiple "phased projects."

Key Project Design Goals

- Separation of local and interstate traffic
- Matching scale of project to character of community
- Reunification and connectivity of community
- Minimization of neighborhood and local business impacts
- Use of updated traffic modeling software and data
- Maintenance of compatibility with community's design vision and plans; incorporation of community-selected design features

- Creation of full interstate movements between I-26 and I-40
- Minimization of air quality and other environmental impacts
- Emphasis on safety - during construction and in the design of the final product

Section 2 - Evaluation Criteria

This section restates our community's design goals and establishes a set of criteria, or standards, by which their achievement should be measured.

Evaluation Criteria For:

Separation of Local and Interstate Traffic

Eliminate Patton Avenue/Smokey Park Bridges as an Interstate Link

Reclaim land for community use (including expansion of taxable base)

Create Patton Avenue gateway possibilities (which complies with City of Asheville 2010 Plan)

Generate redevelopment possibilities in Corridor in compliance with City's "smart growth" principles

Simplify traffic movements

Create a more convenient and safer driving environment

Matching Scale of Project to Character of Community

Be sensitive to the prominence of the highway relative to Asheville's unique topography, landscape and built environment

Recognize the highway's relationship to the river and downtown

Retain the "feel" of a small city in the mountains

Select the lowest design speed compatible with safe and proper functioning of the various components of the highway facility

Consider the impact of highway widening and alignment decisions on property takings and neighborhood division

Do not use a "Jersey barrier" approach to median design; the raised median in the I-240 cut is a much better example of sensitive median design in a constrained space

Reunification and Connectivity Of Community

Provide well-defined pedestrian/bicycle facilities throughout the project corridor

Improve opportunities for reconnecting neighborhoods and Downtown with the French Broad Riverfront

Expand accessibility for Hillcrest Community

Create a better local street network (including linkages between West Asheville and Downtown, within Downtown and within West Asheville)

to relieve interstate traffic pressure

Minimization of Neighborhood and Local Business Impacts

Minimize residential property acquisitions

Limit impact on neighborhood connectivity

Minimize number of businesses needing to be closed or relocated

Prioritize safety and traffic-routing during construction

Maximize opportunities for hiring of local workers for construction of project

Use of Updated Traffic Modeling Software and Data
Determine that project scale achieves safe and adequate traffic flow with the minimal number of lanes
Create an opportunity to reinforce and/or redirect land use decisions that relate to transportation
Optimize transportation alternatives (balancing of thoroughfare plan with mass transit, bike/pedestrian, local street grid improvements and
other alternatives)
Assess "induced traffic" phenomenon and interrelationship of highway capacity and development patterns
Maintenance of Compatibility with Community's Design Vision and Plans
Achieve compatibility with riverfront use and development plans (particularly limiting the loss of riverfront property for highway use)
Achieve compatibility with "smart growth" direction of city planning
Reclaim land for non-highway use
Create recognizable community character in design features
Develop unique and attractive brldge design(s)
Include gateway elements
Include local artists in creating deslgn features
Use quality materials
Creation of Full Interstate Movements Between I-26 and I-40
Reduce through-traffic volume (especially trucks) In Asheville central district (I -240)
Enhance driving safety on I-240
Remove interstate traffic (especially trucks) from West Asheville street network
Determine best highway design with least impact on air quality
Protect water quality
Preserve tree canopy and wildlife habitat
Emphasis on Safety - During Construction and in the Design of the Final Product
Improve simplicity of design for weaving, merging, and diverging
Segregate local and through truck traffic
Provide for incident management
Alleviate complexity and safety risks of current road and ramp configuration
Provide effective maintenance of traffic flow during construction

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
Make a strong recommendatlon to the City Council and MPO that the alternative alignment concept developed at the Deslgn Forum recelve
serious study for inclusion in the project Environmental Impact Statement.
Make a strong recommendatlon to the Clty Council and MPO that the NCDOT, FHWA and local citizens work together as a "Committee on Visual Design" to develop ideas for bridge design, signage, overpass design, landscaping and other aesthetic issues that reflect our

community's character.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA expedite the development of new and updated traffic models for use on the ultimate design of this project, including regional air quality modeling.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA explore engineering and signage options to improve the north-to-east connection of eastbound I-26 traffic with I-40 in an easterly direction as part of this project or a simultaneous project. The specific concerns involve limiting commercial truck through-traffic on I-240 and on lesser-classified roadways proximate to residential areas.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO reflecting the Committee's general consensus that the bicycle and pedestrian
connectivity be restored to link neighborhoods and the river while simultaneously exploring traffic calming measures to reduce the vehicular
impact on residential streets.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA ensure that all interchange design is community sensitive. To achieve this end, it would be helpful to provide artist's renditions of feasible design alternatives for public review.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA seriously examine safety issues in project construction and design including maintenance of traffic during construction and emergency access after construction.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA release any unneeded right-of-way at the completion of this project to the City of Asheville to be zoned and used in accordance with a land use plan to be developed by the City in cooperation with the NCDOT.
Make a strong recommendation to the City Council and MPO that the NCDOT and FHWA keep the I-26 Connector project on its current or,
preferably, an expedited schedule.

Section 3 - Potential Tradeoffs
We realize that the achievement of our design goals involves tradeoffs. While the accomplishment of some of them may reduce construction
costs, the accomplishment of others may increase the overall cost of the project. Aesthetic improvements may carry their added costs. In order to produce a separation of Patton Avenue from I-240, there may need to be additional bridging of the French Broad River which carries with it some visual impact. New and improved traffic and air quality modeling, though providing a more accurate picture of transportation system needs, could slow key decisions about capacity and design speed.

In another areas, the selection of a lower design speed to minimize neighborhood impact may affect travel time. Fewer lanes may create challenges to planning for maintenance of traffic during construction. Shrinking the footprint of the highway could result in a more "engineered" highway in terms of landscaped medians and grade differentials between east and west travel lanes.

It is too early in the process to fully understand the costs and benefits of each alternative design for the project. We mention some

possible
costs we have considered in order to demonstrate our awareness of them, in order to enhance our capability for addressing them, but most of all, in order to express that, despite the potential tradeoffs, we as a community are united in support for achieving our set of project design
goals.

Section 4 - Design Forum Background
In December 1999, the Asheville City Council, in response to active and continuing citizen involvement, requested City staff to formulate plans for a community design process related to the I-26 Connector Project that would allow extensive public input while keeping the project
on schedule. A month later, the North Carolina Department of Transportation joined the City in this effort by agreeing to incorporate the idea
of an I-26 Connector Design Forum into its public involvement program. It was seen as an opportunity to enhance community-wide input from Asheville area citizens to the design of the I-26 Connector. This, in turn, would expand on recent efforts to solicit neighborhood-based
involvement.

In April 2000, the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the City of Asheville agreed to create a Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) to guide this public participation in the design process. In addition to planning the design process format, the composition
of the CCC would help achieve community consensus in the identification and interpretation of key issues. Representatives from a broad base of community organizations as well as project stakeholders were chosen to comprise the CCC. The design process they selected took place in two stages.

During mid-June, an Education Forum was held to inform the public about project design issues. This was attended by over 300 people who
listened to expert presentations and participated in project component breakout sessions.

In late July, an intenslve two-day Design Forum was scheduled to draw from the public both general deslgn concepts and specific design ideas. Thls Forum attracted between 500-600 community residents over the two-day period. It was staffed by representatives of the Federal
Highway Administration, North Carolina Department of Transportation, City of Asheville, the Amerlcan Institute of Architects, and several independent consulting engineers and community mediators. Fred Craig, Vice President of Parsons Brinkerhoff's Ohio office, acted as overall Forum facilitator.

The overwhelming sense from participants was one of appreciation for the privilege of taking part in the process. Repeatedly stated was

the
fact that this highway project could either impose negative impacts or provide beneficial opportunities for the community. Continuing citizen
input to defining design criteria was seen as central to maximizing project benefits while minimizing the costs. This report by the CCC contributes to its ongoing function - that of translating community concerns into specific goals which can be achieved through integration into
ultimate project design.

Response
Refer to comment response 1-1.
Letter Codes
PC0126

1-41 **Comment**
These comments are submitted on behalf of the Western North Carolina Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) latest newsletter sought comment on the "purpose and need for the project and project alternatives."

Concerning project purposes, these purposes should be expanded to incorporate the project goals set forth in the Report of the Community Coordinating Committee For the Design of the I-26 Connector Through Asheville (2000). This Report represented the consensus of this community about how to proceed with the I-26 Connector and formally was endorsed by both the Asheville City Council and the Buncombe County Commission.

A primary purpose of the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) Report was to infuence the project's Purpose and Need and for the community's goals to be included in the project's purposes. CCC Report at 1. Unfortunately, this has not occurred; the project's purposes do not include any of the goals from the CCC Report. The DOT should remedy this deficiency by amending the "Summary of Need" and "Purposes of Action" in its Draft EIS. The "Smmary of Need" should be modified to include a paragraph titled "Community Enhancement," or something similar, that sets forth the need to incorporate the goals of the CCC Report into the project. The "Purposes of Action" should be supplemented to include the primary goals of the CCC Report.

Chief among these goals of the CCC Report are (1) separation of local interstate traffic; (2) matching the scale of the project to the character of the community; and (3) minimizing neighborhood, business, and environmental impacts. CCC Report at 2. The goals can and should be incorporated into the purposes of the action to guide the development of and selection among altenatives.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.
Response

Refer to comment response 1-1. Impacts to neighborhoods and businesses are presented Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PG0078

1-42 **Comment**

I am sure that by now you have been receiving more letters than you could possibly need regarding this project. As an architect who had an office in Raleigh for thirty years, I am well aware of your very important function within the NCDOT. This is the most important Western North Carolina project in the last fifty years. It is my hope that you will succeed in making this highway/bridge project Governor Easley's legacy to Western North Carolina as he completes his term in office. It will not be to anyone's advantage if it should fail. Thank you for what you do.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0147

1-43 **Comment**

I understand as an old NCDOT/mass transit employee, how highway engineers love to build roads & bridges, however it would seem the last 30 years have not changed NCDOT off of center. What is needed in my opinion is a multi-story parking garage around I-26/I-40/I-240 and I believe the City of Asheville should pay for this instead of building more parking downtown. By allowing this park and ride (multi-modal facility) from the outset would then show that 8 lanes going north are not needed. A ground transportation call-in center located in the garage would allow the necessary van-pooling, car pooling, bus routes (regional) to take place.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0158

1-44 **Comment**

For shame! Your new selection is but half the requirement - it lacks east bank resolution altogether.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0168

1-45 **Comment**

I-2513 needs to be done.

Response

Letter Codes
PP0196

2. Alternatives

2-1 **Comment**

Ever since the early 1990's I have recommended that the I-26 connector should be a ring road around the western part of city of Asheville, not through it. For apparent political reasons this solution was summarily rejected. Instead, the discussions centered around the widening of I-240 and the location of the interchange with US19-23. Any solution afforded by these limited alternatives will ultimately prove hazardous to traffic, borne out by the examples of where interstates are routed through cities. If we don't build a ring road around Asheville now we'll end up doing it 25 years later and at ten times the cost.

Response

Thank you for your email, we always appreciate input from the public. Your comments will be included in the project record. We are currently scheduled to hold a public hearing in the spring of 2008, which will give you further oppurtunity to review the proposed design and comment upon it. There will be notices in the local papers and a newsletter will be sent to everyone on the project mailing list announcing the place and time.

Also refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS where project alternatives are addressed.

Letter Codes

PP0001

2-2 **Comment**

The ADC plans work for the community. Maybe some tweaking is necessary, but the overall idea is sound. Reconnect Asheville across the river. Increase commercial possibilities, reduce the footprint of the highway. Maybe a more community-friendly plan would slow down traffic. Okay, Duh? Is that so bad in the universal flow of things? There are too many communities where a huge increase of lanes has later resulted in an expensive decrease in lanes. Let's err here on the side of conservatism. No reason to force an increase now that could easily demand a reduction later.

Response

The NCDOT is working with the ADC, City of Asheveille, Buncombe County, and their chosen engineering consulting firm to determine if their conceptual alternative can be modified/developed to meet interstate design criteria. Should the ADC alternative be determined to be feasible, it will be studied in detail prior to selection of a preferred alternatives. Also refer to the response to comment 4-1 and to Chapter 2 of the DEIS where project alternatives are addressed.

Letter Codes

PP0004

2-3 **Comment**

I write to urge the NC DOT to give serious consideration to the alternative proposals for the restructuring of the I-26 connector over the French Broad River, as submitted by the Asheville Design Center, for a much more economical, space efficient, logical and reasonable

design for the separation of interstate and local traffic, whether by double-decker bridge or in some other way. The old and current routing has done significant damage to the sense of community in West Asheville and has been totally out of scale in relation to the unique aspects of the community as a whole. The Design Center proposals could greatly help to redress this mistake.
Asheville is a very special community, comparable to Savannah and Charleston in its national and international appeal, and deserves a 'signature' bridge, similar to those in those two cities, for the new I-26 crossing, one that will be easily identifiable as only-in-Asheville. That separation would allow the creation of a grand, monumental boulevard entry for local traffic from West Asheville, along Patton Avenue, incorporating the current interstate bridge into the community as a whole. These proposals have significant support from the business community as well as from both city council and county commissioners, all of whom are being copied with this expression of support.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0006

2-4 **Comment**

The design that runs the new I-26 behind West Gate Center is the best for all concerned. I takes advantage of poorly used and maintained land called a golf course. If you have ever seen it you would know that no serious golfer would play there. It is not a tourist drawing card.

Response

Comment noted. Refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS where project alternatives are addressed. A preferred alternative will be selected after the public has had the opportunity to comment on the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0009

2-5 **Comment**

I am greatly opposed to this present plan which brings the highway expansion so close to our wonderful neighborhood. Please consider other alternatives.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0011

2-6 **Comment**

I would also like consideration of a small alignment footprint that respects and compliments the somewhat urban context, with thoughtful connections that disperse traffic rather than consolidate it, while allowing neighborhoods and destinations on each side of the corridor to remain integrated and cohesive.

Response

Comment noted. Project alternatives will be designed to have as small a footprint as possible while still achieving interstate design criteria.

Letter Codes

PP0012

2-7 **Comment**

Any design should include provisions for other means of transportation, such as mass-transit, pedestrian and bicycle.

Response

The project will be consistent with the Ashville Pederstiran Plan and Draft Bicycle Plan. Other modes of transportation are considered in Chapter 2 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0012

2-8 **Comment**

Please do everything in your power to use the results of the Asheville Design Center process. The people who have devoted hundreds of hours to that project know this city, love this city and want the best. My impression as a journalist covering this I-26 process since the 1990s is that NCDOT tends to have a one-size fits all answer, a box of bridge plans and a commitment to the asphalt companies to use as much as possible.

The ADC plan is cheaper, more elegant, uses fewer bridges, preserves and increases usable, taxable land for the city, and is in every observable way a better plan than any of the options we have been shown by NCDOT. Please don't force an ugly 8-lane down our throats just because you can.

Response

Refer to response to comment 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0016

2-9 **Comment**

It is time for the NCDOT to show that it knows how to develop Context Sensitive Solutions and that it truly embraces multimodalism. The separation of local from interstate traffic should allow pedestrian, bicycle, and transit features to be included in this project. These features help replace car trips with walking, bicycle, and bus trips, extending the capacity life of the project for vehicular traffic.

Response

The NCDOT is not responsible planning, developing, operating or maintaining mass transit systems. These initiatives are typically developed and overseen at a locale level. As of January 2008, there were no development plans incorporating mass transit into the project's purpose and need. Also refer to comment response 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0038

2-10 **Comment**

I am writing you concerning the I-26 connector that is going to be built in Asheville. I am a homeowner who lives literally blocks from the current
and future connector. I would like to offer a very brief account of my transportation habits since moving to West Asheville.

If the roads enabled me to, I could jog to the outer part of downtown (where my job is) in probably about ten minutes. If the roads enabled me
to, I could ride my bike downtown even more quickly. Instead I am stuck to a convoluted and dangerous trek towards downtown. Or I can travel way out of my way, adding a safer but more inconvenient amount of time to my commute. Anyone who lives in Asheville and lives anywhere off of Hazel Mill Road and West Patton, and the hundreds of streets that service these, would have these same issues. There are thousands of people who are in need of a system that suits the needs of the community more completely than the current design(s). It would be unfortunate to miss an opportunity to create a positive change for this community. Whatever the final design, it must support all types of transport.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0020

2-11 **Comment**

Patton Avenue facilities must include reasonable and convenient accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists, who are part of the local traffic. I see pedestrians dodging across interstate traffic on the east side of the Smoky Park bridge with frightening regularity. That is strong evidence of need for pedestrian connections from east to west along Patton Avenue and from a reunited Patton Avenue to the Hillcrest public housing community which is located North and West of the junction of US 19/23 and I-240. This project would indeed be an ideal opportunity to undo the isolation imposed upon the Hillcrest public housing community by the location of US 19/23 and I-240. It is also important that gain in one area is not offset by loss in another – convenient and reasonable pedestrian and bicycle access must be maintained throughout the project area.

Response

Project planners understand that isolation of the Hillcrest Community and pedestrian safety is an issue that should be considered in the development of project alternatives. Refer to Sections 3.1.4, 4.1.1.1, 3.1.4.1, and other sections of the DEIS for discussions of Neighborhoods, Safety, and other issues involving the Hillcrest community.

Letter Codes

PP0046

2-12 **Comment**

Living with the current interchange that involves using the Smoky Park bridge for both interstate and local traffic is a nightmare that must end. However, we do not want to settle for a solution that solves one problem and creates other problems just as serious.

After evaluating all the schemes for solving the troubles at "malfunction junction" the scheme generated by the local working group of architects, engineers and planners is by far the superior plan and the one that best meets all the needs of both the City of Asheville as well as the users of the interstate system. It is simply unacceptable to continue mixing local and interstate traffic on any bridge or roadway that requires the two traffic streams to interact in the normal course of travel. It is dangerous and induces all manner of unnecessary delays in travel. This objective must be a vital part of any scheme that is adopted. Having interstate highways and related interchanges and roadways intrude into the interior of an urban area is extremely destructive of the quality of life under the best of circumstances. We want the locally developed scheme because it does the best job of solving the interstate travel issues. At the same time it solves the needs of the urban community to reclaim the area now consumed by interstate roadways and exchanges, area that we need to reclaim a cohesive community and re-establish the link between our downtown core area and the rapidly developing urban corridor along Patton Avenue west of the Smoky Park bridge.

The current interchange system is a confusing mess that has too much asphalt for the job it does and is far too confusing for those who must use it every day. The new locally generated scheme will be much more compact and straightforward in terms of entry and exit to the interstate systems than any of the others. This is not surprising as local people know how our area works: how people need to travel and how we want to use the road system and urban environment. We strongly urge adopting the new locally generated scheme and proceeding with construction as soon as possible. We want an interstate system that works and a local road system that works and that allows us to reclaim the space now used for interchange just west of the downtown core area. This space is badly needed for urban growth and improvement of the local environment and business and residential need for growth.

The locally generated scheme is the only one that doesn't give us more interstate sprawl. None of the other schemes meet any of our needs for our urban development. None of them really solve the interstate problems and they make the local traffic and development problems worse, not better.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0055

2-13 **Comment**

The project should facilitate transportation by modes other than single-occupant autos: walking, bicycle, transit, and carpools.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0061

2-14 **Comment**

I urge you, both as a concerned tax-paying citizen and as a design professional (architect) with 15 years of working history in the Asheville area to include the following comments in the revised documents in the Purpose and Needs Statement.

1) First priority is to design a freeway interchange that separates local, east/west river-crossing traffic from interstate traffic. This can only be achieved via a (or several) new bridges to serve the new Interstate traffic as the existing Smoky Park bridge is not suited, either by design or alignment for anything but local traffic.

2) Reworking of local lanes to improve community connectivity to the primary urban East/West artery- Patton Ave. including accommodations for bike, pedestrian and rapid transit.

3) Placement and alignment of Interstate structures so as to minimize negative visual impact, for example by staying within the low-ravine property and passing UNDER Patton Ave. to tie-in with the existing low grade of I-240 south of the bridge, thereby reducing noise, pollution, and visibility of thru-traffic.

4) Efforts applied to the new bridge(s) design that is compatible with the scale and character of Asheville and can be admired as a scenic asset to the riverway.

Response

Refer to comment responses 2-2 and 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0066

2-15 **Comment**

The third section is Project Alternatives.

I am sending on the comments which I made previously about the alternatives. I have not re-reviewed the alternatives to see whether they have been changed. If they are the same then all of these comments should still be relevant.

On Section A:

There is not very much traffic that gets on and off of the freeway at Amboy Rd. Your current design reconnects Amboy Rd. across the freeway and down to Brevard Rd. My Recommendation is to eliminate the interchange at Amboy Rd. altogether. Still connect the road across the freeway however, but do not connect up to Haywood Rd. This allows people who want to go onto Amboy from the freeway to get off at Brevard. This allows people who want to get onto the freeway from Amboy to get on at Brevard. I recommend this because it would allow the elimination of on and off ramps at Arnboy and the connection up to Haywood. This can save houses from being bulldozed and it can also be less costly. Please consider eliminating the Amboy interchange, but do connect Amboy across the freeway and down to Brevard Rd.

On Options for Section B:

Option B2: This is a terrible idea. Please do not consider any option that destroys Westgate shopping plaza.

Option B3: This option is overly wasteful and destructive of existing infrastructure. It does not take advantage of existing roadways and destroys way too many houses.

Option B4: This design is the best design from my point of view and the only one which I think is OK. It destroys less houses and disconnects the freeway from Patton Ave. These are essential components which are the most important considerations in my view. I think that the ability of the city to take back the Patton roadway and to reconnect to the Hillside development and to the Westgate shopping plaza in a way that is bicycle and pedestrian friendly make this a good design.
Section C:
I prefer alternative F-1 the best. I like its simplicity. As a frequent driver of I-40 (I pass this interchange daily and will sometimes take I-240 and sometimes I-40 depending upon my destination), the interchanges in this design make sense to me. I also like that this design consumes less of the landscape.
General Comments:
I see that the Draft EIS is now being developed. I think that it is important to include the No Option alternative in your EIS. I also think in addition to the selected 8 lane design, there should be, for comparison, a list of impacts for the same design if implemented as 6 lanes and if implemented as 4 lanes. The reasons for including these comparisons are that the world supply of fossil fuels is declining. Our city will be creating alternative transportation options because of decreasing supplies of fossil fuel as well as the fact that burning that fuel contributes to global warming. By the time the final EIS is created, it may be that the building of an 8 lane freeway will be an obvious waste of money and other resources. It would be good if we could move ahead with less lanes, if it seems appropriate without doing the whole process over again.

Response

An evaluation of the project alternatives is presented in Chapter 2 of the DEIS. The need for an eight-lane typical sections is presented in Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

2-16 **Comment**

Regarding the I-26 Connector Project, I-2513, I have definite concerns that I hope will be addressed in the upcoming meetings. First, since this is an Interstate highway, there must be a separation of local and interstate traffic. If possible, I would like to see local traffic not have to merge onto the Interstate to cross the French Broad River.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0073

2-17 **Comment**

As a land owner adjacent to the proposed I-26 Connector Project going through and over what is now known as I-26 / Patton Avenue, I have concerns with the design of the proposal presented by your department as it may compare to the Asheville Design Center's alternate design. I have been following the Asheville Design Center development of their alternative plan since they were organized last summer. I find their design to be more acceptable as it separates the local and interstate traffic which will result in eliminating the now

dangerous merging situation on or about the Smoky Park Bridge. Their design allows the faster Interstate traffic to flow through our City while allowing the slower local traffic to flow within the community joining the Downtown Commercial District with the communities to the West. I hope you will give consideration to their alternative(s) and will do all within your department's power to separate the fast moving Interstate traffic from the slower local traffic.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0086

2-18 **Comment**

In addition to separating local and interstate traffic, pedestrian and bicycle traffic needs to be accommodated. As is, it is nearly impossible and extremely dangerous to cross to West Asheville using this route unless traveling in a vehicle, effectively cutting off a section of town and businesses from the central part of Asheville. Creating a local traffic connection will reconnect and reunify the community.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0090

2-19 **Comment**

Additionally, I feel strongly that citizens should have the right to walk or bike through the city and that bike paths / sidewalks should be in place under all interstate bridges. One glaring example is that it is not possible to safely walk from Fairview (Hwy 74) to Fairview Road (there is a maze of on and off ramps from I-40 and I-240). The town of Fairview is completely cut off from Asheville without going on an expressway or expressway ramp.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0091

2-20 **Comment**

Please just give us eight lanes of highway around Asheville and six lanes to Hendersonville. No matter where you put the connector it can be no worse than the planning solutions we commonly see coming from the local experts.

Response

Comment noted. Refer to Chapter 1of the DEIS where the number of lanes needed is addressed and to Chapter 2 of the DEIS where the project typical sections for construction alternatives are addressed.

Letter Codes

PP0102

2-21 **Comment**

I think that the alternate design assembled by the Asheville Design Center has many valid points -can't the DOT use their expertise AND work with the local community's vision? Reclaiming the Patton Avenue bridge for local only traffic, eliminating the dangerous intersection with 240 by looping 240 around to tie in to the north, and doing so with the design footprint that takes up LESS asphalt and engineering, impacts less land, and reclaims developable, taxable prime real estate downtown all seem like the most logical solutions. Combining engineering and design to create a signature bridge for Asheville (like Charleston) addresses the need for more than moving traffic-it can create a visual entrance that is in keeping with our unique, aesthetically oriented city. We're not, nor do we wish to be Charlotte or Atlanta!

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0108

2-22 **Comment**

I am a biker, a walker and a driver. I am interested in keeping Asheville as a vibrant community-centered place to live. I believe people need their cars in many cases to get where they are going, and I know from experience that many in the Asheville area are happy to bicycle to their destinations when the routes are safe and car exhaust is minimized. I WANT TO BIKE TO WEST ASHEVILLE on a safe route.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-7.

Letter Codes

PP0110

2-23 **Comment**

These nine Evaluation Criteria of the CCC Report, plus the Asheville Design Center's improvements to the variation on DOT's Alternate Plan 4, demonstrate both the competency and the high levels of commitment this community holds for this project. The Asheville Design Center (ADC) plan calls for a double-decker bridge just north of Westgate Shopping Center, with I-26 and I-240 on separate levels. The design will make the Smoky Park Bridge a local boulevard re-connecting downtown with West Asheville. The plan takes up less land, saves about $150 million, and frees up significant land currently part of the highway configuration on the downtown side of the river.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0120

2-24 **Comment**

I support the alternative plan designed at their own time and expense by local engineers who care.

Response
Refer to comment response 2-2.
Letter Codes
PP0131

2-25 **Comment**
May I respectfully suggest that what Asheville and Western North Carolina really needs are not more investments in roadways, but rather an extension of passenger rail service. NCDOT presently provides some subsidy which makes possible regular daytime passenger rail service between Raleigh and Charlotte. The tax dollars of WNC residents are helping to pay for this service, but we do not get any benefit for it. Presently, when we want to take the train, we must drive ninety miles to Greenville, SC. The northbound Amtrak Crescent arrives after 11PM (if it is even on time), the southbound leg arrives before sunrise (ditto). This is simply unacceptable. Oil prices are going up fast, and motor fuel prices are sure to follow this trend. Given the increasing difficulty and expense in finding and developing new reserves of oil, this trend is unlikely to reverse; more likely, it will accelerate. People will very soon be needing alternatives to private passenger cars. That "very soon" will likely occur within NCDOT's normal planning horizon. As I understand that there are several technical issues that will require several years to extend passenger rail service to Asheville, it is time to bring this project off the back burner and move forward with it now. I understand that the project would also require funding, which is why I am opposing the I-26 connector project; the funds can be better spent on passenger rail. The same energy price increases that drive more people toward energy-efficient passenger rail will be driving more people off the road. It would be a tragedy to spend money that could have been used to provide passenger rail service on yet another roadway project that will end up being under-used. In just a few years time, it is likely that reduced traffic will take care by itself of the problems that this connector project is intended to solve. Forget the connector, let's move forward with passenger rail to Asheville now!
Response
Other modes of transportation are considered in Chapter 2 of the DEIS.
Letter Codes
PP0134

2-26 **Comment**
These comments are submitted on behalf of the Western North Carolina Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) latest newsletter sought comment on the "purpose and need for the project and project alternatives."

Concerning project alternatives, the Southern Environmental Law Center submitted extensive comments dated November 10, 2006, that still apply. The DOT and the draft EIS must give full consideration to the design alternative proposed by the Asheville Design Center (ADC) and also to alternatives of less than eight travel lanes. Indeed, much has occurred since November 2006 that strengthens the case for consideration of these alternatives. Foremost among these developments is an engineering review of the ADC alternative that has found that this alternative is feasible and can be implemented with minor modifications, according to recent news articles.

Response

The NCDOT and FHWA have given careful and deliberate consideration to the comments dated November 10, 2006 submitted by the Southern Environmental Law Center. Each of the comments have been addressed in the DEIS. As stated in response tocomment 2-2, the NCDOT is working with the ADC, City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and their chosen engineering consulting firm to determine if their conceptual alternative can be modified/developed to meet interstate design criteria. Should the ADC alternative be determined to be feasible, it will be studied in detail prior to selection of a preferred alternatives. Also refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS where project alternatives are addressed.

Letter Codes

PG0078

2-27 **Comment**

Sir, May I suggest that the Smoky Park Bridge AND the interchange at its west end be bypassed. This interchange is not bad. It serves its purpose well enough, and when relieved of I-26 traffic, and much local north/south traffic, it should be adequate for a long time. It should be seen as being outside of the Interstate System and not subject to those regulations. 'If it ain't broke don't fix it"

Accordingly, I suggest that I-240 be expelled from the west side of the French Broad River and be joined to I-26 at the north end of the bypass by way of 19/23/70. Some discussion is attached.

[ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED IN ATTACHED PDF.]

Thank you for the new invitation to submit comments and suggestions concerning the proposed I-26 bypass for Asheville. I attended several showings of possible plans for the bypass and was impressed with the one on 9/10/06. The colorful display occupied two long tables and most of the wall space of two large rooms, but my proposed plan was nowhere to be seen. I had handed the idea to some DOT representatives at earlier meeting and mailed it off to your offices at Carey, but I never knew whether it was ignored or lost. That might be due to the fact that I do not represent any local group or organization, but I think the idea should be given some serious engineering study. I suggest a simple, straightforward, uncluttered bypass with no complicated "options". There should, of course, be an off ramp from the north to bring 19/23 to Patton Ave. and one to take 19/23 to I-26 northward. There are those who would attach a major remaking of the whole area just east of the river. Let's discard all of that. If I understand the need for highway funding, this is not a time to splurge.

My general idea boils down to one large question. Does the interchange at Patton Ave. and I-240, just east of the Smoky Park Bridge really require massive rebuilding at huge cost, and a year or two of disruption, or would it be sufficient with some relative minor improvements and a bypass? The bypass I suggest would remove interstate traffic from the interchange and from the Smoky Park Bridge, and also much local traffic, as between south and west Buncombe and such places as UNCA, Woodfin and Weaverville. With that done, the present bridge and adjacent structures might be sufficient for a very long time.

The bypass would begin with a split between I-240 and I-26 in West Asheville about a quarter mile south of Patton Ave. It would veer a bit eastward, overpass Patton Ave. and continue northward through or along side the Westgate shopping center. It would end, as DOT has planned, in a similar split where the bypass would merge with what is now designated 19/23/70.

The interchange at Patton and I-240 seems to me, as a frequent user of the area, to serve its purpose very well. Patton Ave. is, of course, headed into West Asheville's "inner city", a mile long clutter of businesses, and there is often a back up into the interchange. There is a lot of traffic exchange between Patton Ave. and I-240, on the westward running bridge, however straight through I-240 keeps to the right and avoids being entangled with any traffic jam. The last DOT plan I have seen for the area has I-240 mixing with Patton Ave. on the bridge, crossing over and turning left (southward) at the interchange. The present arrangement seems to have an advantage here, but this is the main place where some simple fixing is needed. The right turn-left turn ramp leading to the Patton Ave. underpass is too short, and the turns too sharp. The right turn should begin closer to the west end of the Bridge. How much is that worth if one compares cost with benefits? I don't know. There is an occasional truck wreck, but I haven't heard of anyone being Killed or maimed.

A major reason for the high cost of redoing the interchange is that, as the DOT sees it, I-240 must be rebuilt to conform to the latest interstate specifications. For this reason and others, I suggest that I-240 need not cross the river at all, but be altogether on the east side. Whatever problem the area has should be seen as being outside the Interstate System.

A proposal that has been around for some time, would disconnect I-240 from the Bridge, have it cross the river on a magnificent new bridge and join the I-26 bypass in an interchange just north of the Westgate Shopping Center. I had expected the idea to quietly disappear, or be flatly rejected by the DOT as being awkward, too expensive and unnecessary. However, it keeps reappearing, and lately promoted by persons
connected with the Asheville Design Center. They are no doubt aware that I-240 is already connected to future I-26 by a first class four-lane road currently designated 19/23/70, I propose that this section be eventually designated I-240 and its junction with I-26 be its northwest end. I-240 is heavily used by local commuters, shoppers and commercial traffic. Its actual interstate traffic is understood to be much lighter, but it does provide a valuable short cut link between I-26 and I-40 at exit 53. I recommend we leave it very nearly as is. May I add a postscript below on a slightly different matter?

Priorities.
The latest DOT thinking on the sequence of constructions places high priority on the interchange at I-40/I-26. Drivers looking turn eastward on I-40 expects to find a ramps connecting I-240 to I-40 in that direction. In stead, this connection has been provided by directing traffic to shortcut using Brevard road. This connection is a bit awkward and may be missed by drivers. From Brevard Road drivers find on and off ramps connecting to I-40. A magnificent four-lane was recently finished to carry little old Brevard road over Hominy Creek. Presumably this was to smooth this flow from I-240 to the ramps that connect Brevard road to eastward I-40. Then it turned out that the new bridge was not supposed to be the final solution to this connection! DOT is proposing a complicated, and very expensive, restructuring of this sprawling interchange, and the new arrangement would include ramps connecting I-26/I-240 to eastward I-40.

It may very well be that many years ago the planners for this area opted to use the Brevard Road short cut because they expected it to be lightly used. The way to and from eastward I-40 is to use eastward I-240, and connect to I-40 at exit 54. This is five miles shorter than going by the west end of I-240. Something probably should be done eventually to improve the connection to I-40 for those drivers who find
themselves in West Asheville going the wrong way on I-240. However, I would urge that priority be given to a bypass for the Smokey Park Bridge and its approaches.

I should introduce myself. I am a native of western NC. I was employed by the US government as a physicist in the Washington DC area for 30 years.

Response

Comments noted. Refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS where project alterntives are addressed. Specific bridge design will be considered after selection of a preferred alternative.

Letter Codes

PP0144

2-28 **Comment**

Section A, as shown, cuts off bicycle route on Fairfax, parallel to Brevard Rd. Bicyclists use it as a more suitable route. The Amboy Rd. connector and median cut off this route.

Pedestrian and bike facilities are a must!

Response

Letter Codes

PP0151

2-29 **Comment**

I'm extremely interested in Section C because of our plan for greenway connection from Hominey Crk Park across historic Brevard Rd. bridge to Farmers Market and beyond. Alternative F1 seems least disruptive for our plan. We hope a 10-12 ft multi-use path could be put along Brevard Rd. w/ access to the bridge over I-40 to access the crosswalk into the Farmers Market - a protected 2-way bike lane on the bridge or cantilevered off would be the best.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0193

2-30 **Comment**

On Brevard Rd from Hominy Creek at I-240 Alt. F1 seems to be best alternative - to add a multi-use path (10-12' width) for bikes and ped and connect W. Asheville neighborhoods to Farmers Market and On the Arboretum etc.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0156

2-31 **Comment**

Please make sure you allow for multimodal options (ped and bike) across Smokey Park Bridge.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0157

2-32 **Comment**

The C choice is terrible. Sensible cities are tearing down highways. Why create miles of new concrete. Highways create blight and crime. Asheville is going backwards - we need walkways, more bike paths & greenways. We do not need more roads to attract more cars. We need to improve public transportation with street cars. Asheville is becoming more and more autocentric new highways create new and old problems.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0159

2-33 **Comment**

Prefer options C-F1 and B C3, except on C-F1 the South Bear Creek Road, two 90-degree curves are not 'fixed'. There are numerous accidents every year. The option C D-1 fixes the problem. I suggest incorporating the D-1 South Bear Creek piece into the F-1 option.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0160

2-34 **Comment**

I am in favor of Section B Alt. 3C. It seems to have the shortest distance with less impact on environment and businesses as viewed.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0161

2-35 **Comment**
I would hope we could prioritize multi-moble (sic) access on as much of the revised roads as possible.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0166

2-36 **Comment**
- 3 lanes is enough, 4 is too big
Response

Letter Codes
PP0167

2-37 **Comment**
I am in favor of Alternative 4

Because it frees Patton Ave from any through interstate traffic

Because it does not require the elevated highway running along the river over top of existing roads
Response

Letter Codes
PP0170

2-38 **Comment**
I am in favor of Alternative 4 for the I-26 connector project through Asheville.
Response

Letter Codes

PP0171

2-39 **Comment**
-Prefers Alt 4B
-Separation of local and interstate traffic is a MUST

4B is also relatively compact while most of the other proposals destroy a lot of usable land for the interchanges.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0172

2-40 **Comment**
The current design of Section A with 5 lanes (4+ Aux) is based on outdated models and outdated traffic volume assumptions.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0177

2-41 **Comment**
If you add the bike and ped mulit-use lanes on Section a, B & C this will have a better chance of passing.
If you could start with bike/ped multiuse on Baron Bridge it would help lots of people get across the river and it may help sell plan as a whole.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0178

2-42 **Comment**
This email is in regard to the proposed changes to the Asheville, NC portion of I-26.

As longtime resident of Asheville and a daily traveler over the Jeff Bowen Bridge, I sincerely hope any future changes will improve our ability to cross river on good or by bike. Currently you have to be somewhat insane to cross the bridge as a pedestrian. When riding my bike, I have to detour around to one or two other bridges which increases my commute time substantially. Please consider this when expanding the interstate and realize that there are thousands more like me who wish to be able to cross the river as a pedestrian on Bowen Bridge (formerly Smoky Park Bridge.) Not being able to cross as a pedestrian is contrary to basic human rights and should be a

major consideration of the DOT's planning process.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0183

2-43 **Comment**

How will the selection of a preferred alternative be made? How will costs & benefits be weighed? Will life-cycle and secondary impacts be included? Will compliance with City development plans be considered?

Response

Letter Codes

PP0184

2-44 **Comment**

Build it up to US 25 Exit in Weaverville. This project should have been built ten yeas ago.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0191

3. Noise

3-1 **Comment**

Noise pollution also has serious effects including hypertension increase. I would like to know how much noise and air pollution will increase due to the building and presence of the expansion.

Response

Noise and air quality impacts are addressed in Section 4.1.3 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0011

3-2 **Comment**

Would like a noise study around Montford/Westover Drive.

Like 3C the best.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0154

3-3 **Comment**

I recently reviewed a notice for a upcoming meeting to share information about the subject project. My wife and I own a home in West Asheville just east of I-26 and south of Haywood Ave.. We will not be in town for the upcoming meeting so

I want to ask you some questions by email. Please respond as best you can as well as provide me with any link to additional details on the project.

I have heard that the proposed project will include widening of I-26 closer to my home location, taking out the homes and properties adjacent to Hanover street. This would place the interstate highway even closer to my home than it is now.

Currently the traffic noise is tolerable, however, if the proposed project is built the noise would most likely become a problem situation. This would also have a negative impact to my property value.

A potential solution to the noise issue (to some degree better) would be to construct noise abatement walls that are functional and decorative on both sides of the interstate in heavily populated areas. These are commonly seen in many areas of the country along interstate freeways/highways.

Please don't let the interstate be widened and increase traffic noise without providing these noise abatement walls and considering the negative impact to all the residents living adjacent to this interstate. Without the solution to noise abatement and aesthetics this would be possibly violating environmental regulations. I'm sure the project will have to pass the approval of environmental impact regulations

and not be in violation of any of these regulations. Please tell me what is planned for this noise abatement issue.
I would also like to know about interstate access points to the interstate proposed changes. Will these access points change or move from current access locations?
Please send me a map of the proposed interstate modifications.

Response
Thank you for taking the time to send your comments via email; all mapping alternatives for the proposed project are located at the following website:
http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/
With regards to the noise issue, abatement walls are indeed planned for the affected surrounding neighborhoods. The locations of these walls are included on the mapping provided on the website.
If for any reason you are unable to open the maps, please let me know and I will determine another way for you to view them.
Letter Codes
PP0188

3-2 **Comment**
I currently am in school in florida and rent out my home until I return as a resident.

I will not be able to make it to the Public Meeting., My questions are as follows, these are the same questions I proposed in a City Council meeting back in 2009, and of course got no direct answer:
1. Does NCDOT realize the noise implications to the neighborhoods? What noise barriers will be imposed?

2. Does NCDOT realize the added noise and exhaust pollution that will be added to the neighborhood? What is underway to address this?

3. My home is located at ## Branning Street, what direct implications will this project have on my home and on the surrounding area?

4. Am I in an area that will be directly affected by the construction and need to vacate the home??
For what it's worth, and I realize not much as big money talks, I hope NCDOT realizes this EXPANSION project creates more noise and exhaust pollution to my neighborhood AND hope you will NOT continue with this project.

Leave us alone!!

Response
We appreciate your interest in the I-26 Asheville Connector Project. Representatives from NCDOT and URS reviewed each of your comments and questions related to the Public Meeting conducted on May 12, 2014, and offer the following responses.

1. Jonathan Felsen: Does NCDOT realize the noise implications to the neighborhoods? What noise barriers will be imposed?
Response: Preparation of the Traffic Noise Analysis is underway. Field measurements for ambient noise levels were collected during the middle of June 2014. Results of the analysis will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that is anticipated to be completed and ready for public review by the middle of 2015.

2. Jonathan Felsen: Does NCDOT realize the added noise and exhaust pollution that will be added to the neighborhood? What is underway to address this?
Response: Preparation of the Air Quality Analysis is also underway. Results of the analysis will also be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

3. Jonathan Felsen: My home is located at 72 Branning Street, what direct implications will this project have on my home and on the surrounding area?

4. Jonathan Felsen: Am I in an area that will be directly affected by the construction and need to vacate the home??
Response: Is your home and property located in the southeast quadrant of the I-240/Patton Avenue Interchange at the intersection of Branning Street and Millbrook Road? If so, your property is located within the limits of the Project Study Area, and about 400 feet from the existing highway. The Federal Highway Administration and NCDOT are proposing improvements to the interchange and four alternatives (3, 3C, 4, and 4B) are being studied. The preliminary design plans presented at the Public Meeting on May 12, 2014 are still underway pending the findings of the traffic operations analysis. Therefore, we will not know specific impacts of each alternative until the traffic operations analysis is completed and the required revisions to the preliminary design plans are made. At this point and based upon the preliminary design plans presented at the Public Meeting, Alternative 3 improvements, as currently proposed, are ~200 feet from your property, Alt 3C improvements, as currently proposed, are ~300 feet from your property, Alt 4 improvements, as currently proposed, are ~100 feet from your property, and Alt 4B improvements, as currently proposed, are ~100 feet from your property. NCDOT will keep you apprised as this project continues to develop. You will be invited to future events and will receive all future correspondence.

Please let us know if you want to discuss any of our responses or need more information about the I-26 Asheville Connector Project.

Letter Codes
PP0192

4. Land Use

4-1 **Comment**

We need to maximize the usable land along the Patton Ave. corridor and to bring together West Asheville and the downtown at the river.

Response

Improving transportation and balancing impacts to land uses is difficult and property acquisition is typically needed to provide right of way for the proposed project. Every effort will be made to minimize property acquisition and relocations.

Letter Codes

PP0016

4-2 **Comment**

Property taking should be kept to a minimum. Since the project will be located very close to downtown Asheville, as much land as possible should be saved (or freed up) for denser development. Rural interstate standards should not be applied to this project; slower design speeds and curvatures should be employed in order to conserve land and reduce takings.

Response

Refer to comment response 4-1. Please refer to Chapters 1 and 2 for information on the project traffic analysis and project design criteria.

Letter Codes

PP0061

4-3 **Comment**

In giving their considerations, I would also look forward to greatly reducing the I-26 Connectors foot print through the City. As proposed by your department a great deal of land area will be consumed which could be better used in development giving the City a more valuable economic base.

Response

Refer to comment response 4-1.

Letter Codes

PP0086

4-4 **Comment**

Don't eat up valuable close-in real estate with Atlanta-sized roads. We are constrained enough by our topography to suffer additional losses of real estate to the interstate.

Response

Refer to comment response 4-1.

Letter Codes

PP0122

4-5 **Comment**

As a homeowner, I would love nothing more than to sell my house to the state: it appears that will only happen if Section B - Alt 4B is selected. What can I do to advocate for this option?

Response

Letter Codes

PP0155

4-6 **Comment**

Our riverfront thru section B is becoming a valuable property tax asset for Buncome Co. Reducing the amount of acreage taken off the tax rolls would be appreciated.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0165

4-7 **Comment**

Per MGWray:

Another gentleman, was a representative of the local design team that has worked on this project for years. The comments of his that I jotted down are as follows:

There is a take of a church in section A, and he believes that the design can be shifted to avoid that relocation (Parcel #82)

Response

Letter Codes

PP0180

4-8 **Comment**

I attended the public meeting for the I-26 Connector in Asheville held on May 12, 2014. Thank you of providing this opportunity for public input. Road construction such as the I-26 Connector through Asheville has vast implications on the surrounding city; impacting this city for centuries to come. It is most important to get it right!

To this regard, I strongly encourage either plan 4A or 4B, and even more so the well-considered design developed by the Asheville Design Center. Any plan to reorganize the I-26 Connector without separation of local traffic from interstate traffic as it crosses the French Broad

River will be a failure. Only plan 4A and 4B achieve this.

Please strongly work toward a separate I-26 crossing of the French Broad River.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0189

5. Social Impacts

5-1 **Comment**

We're owners of a property that has been repeatedly identified as potentially in the path of Project # 34165.1.2 I'd appreciate you giving me an update on exactly what NCDOT's latest plans are for this.

Response

At this time we are working on completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and plan to hold a public hearing in Spring of 2008 in Asheville. We will send out a newsletter several weeks before the hearing to everyone on the project mailing list with the time and place. There is a project web site at http://www.ncdot.org/projects/I26Connector/ that has maps of the alternatives currently being considered. There are also hard copies of the maps at the NCDOT Division office in Asheville. The City of Asheville, in a co-operative effort with the ADC is also preparing an additional alternative they will ask NCDOT to consider. If it appears to be feasible it will be shown at the public hearing and included in the alternatives. I would strongly recommend that you attend the public hearing as everything will be on display and we will have many people there to answer any questions you might have. If you are not sure if you are on the project mailing list please send your mailing address to me and I will make sure you are on it.

Letter Codes

PP0002

5-2 **Comment**

I would like to add my comments on the I-26 expansion. Since I live in Montford Hills, on Westover Drive, I live in one of the houses that will be greatly impacted by the proposed plan. I think that increased traffic noise and increased pollution would be extremely detrimental to our wonderful,close community. I think a plan that separated local and interstate traffic and routed heavy interstate traffic away from our Montford Hills neighborhood would be much better.

Response

Environmental consequences of the project alternatives are addressed in Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0011

5-3 **Comment**

Neighborhoods that were fragmented by previous highway construction should be re-connected.

Response

Comment noted. Issue of community cohesion are addressed in Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0061

5-4 **Comment**

Personally, I would like to emphasize that West Asheville, particularly the Burton Street community and the commercial districts, suffered greatly when the I-240 by-pass was constructed originally & divided them. It is vital that we consider alternatives that preserve and reconnect the community. Else will Asheville ever be whole?

Response

Refer to Section 4.1 where community impacts are addressed. Also refer to Section 4.2 where indirect and cumulative effects are addressed.

Letter Codes

PP0113

5-5 **Comment**

New Belgium Brewery trucks (1 every 14 minutes 24 hours a day, every day) are forced up Haywood Rd. through a thriving neighborhood (residential) up to I-26/I-240 to get to Brevard Rd. to get the Sardin Rd. to get to the "Distribution Center" at Sandis/Sandhill. DOT must look seriously at the access of Riverside Drive northerly to get onto Patton Bridge and through to I-26/I-240.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0150

5-6 **Comment**

Guiding Principle - Data drivers must be secondary (i.e.constrained) by values of neighborhood integrity and sustainability, which includes reducing/minimizing carbon impact, multimodal opportunities (bike/pedestrian).

The cost is not only monetary. Eight laning I-26 has a very high cost in destroying neighborhood fabric, driving out multi-modal opportunities and increasing carbon pollution through excessive automobile use.

(8) When property is taken, compensation must be generous reflecting real and current real estate market conditions (not be confined to below market assessed values).

Response

Letter Codes

PP0152

5-7 **Comment**

Please look at Westwood Place in west Asheville needing traffic calming measures in place.

Response

Letter Codes
PP*0195

5-8 **Comment**
I feel that the section A interchange at Haywood Rd is excessive. Exit ramps onto I-240 W takes too much of the neighborhood.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0173

5-9 **Comment**
Detail of Section A including Montana Avenue (Requested map at public meeting).
Response
Good afternoon,
It was good to meet you during the public meeting for the I-26 Ashville Connector project. During the meeting you requested me to send you a project map of the project showing the Montana Avenue area. I have attached pdf file of Section A of the project. You should be able to open the file with Adobe Reader and zoom into your area of interest on Montana Avenue.
You also asked about the typical height of a noise wall. The height of a noise wall is
dependent on several factors including topography and predicted (modeled) noise
levels, but the minimum height along an interstate freeway such I-26, is between 14 and
15 feet.
Thank you for your interest in the project. Please do not hesitate to contact me or
Michael Wray (copied) if you have further questions or comments.
Letter Codes
PP0178

5-10 **Comment**
Per notes from MGWray, project mgr:

One gentleman spoke in depth about the NCDOT's need to shift away from a focus on single occupant vehicles and the roadways that accommodate them, and instead use funding to provide access to multi-modal facilities as much as possible. He was adamant that more impoverished citizens cannot (or will not be able to) afford to drive and that the transportation system will fail if the focus remains as is.
Response

Letter Codes

PP0179

5-11 **Comment**

I have been following this project actively, through Asheville Design Center, and as VP of the Montford Neighborhood Association.

Count me among the other designers and planners who understand enough about urban planning to know that as proposed, the alternatives will significantly degrade our community, on so many levels. I continue to find the lack of urban planners and Landscape Architects on your project team frustrating, as I know that you are supposed to have them as functioning members, and I would hope that they could bring some balance to the overly engineered approach to this transportation project. Let me focus my comments and questions on the I-240 section, since I-26 really boils down to a conduit for freight from Charleston to the midwest, as it was championed at a forum a year or two ago at the Arboretum. The community has been clear, and with consensus, that we don't want a uni-modal highway link across the river. We want Patton ave, lined with businesses and neighborhoods, to stitch West and East Asheville back together again. To that goal, you have given us two heavy-handed alternatives 4/4b, and another alternate that just completely ignores our community goals. 1`. With the completion of the I-26 connector, why is a portion of it still called I-240? Why is this section labeled as two highways? Since I-240 evolves to a shortcut between two different highways (I will call this I-46), rather than an urban loop from I-40, what doest hat mean in terms of the design standars for I-46? We don't want to encourage truck traffic shortcutting through our city, so we don't want it to have the same design standards as I-40 and I-26 right? 2. So what are the design standards for I-46? Obviously, current portions of I-240 near downtown do not meet 60 mph standards; there are even 45 mph speed limit signs posted on the Jersey barrier. Ramps are short, etc. So why can't we all work together and create an acceptable vision for this "highway"? 3. Can we see this I-46 section as an urban boulevard (think Wendover in Greensboro, or Hwy 74/Andrew Jackson Hwy/E Dickson blvd near Kings Mtn), that evolves in response to urban conditions? 4. Wouldn't slowing traffic down allow the footprints to be tightened, and perhaps allow mrore connections to local roads, and allow our tax base to find more development opportunities along this corridor? Wouldln't this lower the cost of all the alterantives? Wouldln't it even allow Alt. 3 to meet our community goals of a non-highway connection over the river? 5. How can we repair the destruction created when your predecessors ended Patton Ave at Clingman ave, replacing it with a sprawling ramp/highway that isolated neighborhoods, and removed valuable land from our community? 6. How can we solve more of our transportation needs OUTSIDE of the highway footprint? 7. Are you aware that cultural/social trends are moving toward walkable, mixed-use communities, and the I-240 portion of this project moves us in the opposite direction? Where is most of the growth and value in your community? I bet it is in the older neighborhoods, where folks purposely avoid the stress and costs associated with commuting and spending so much time behind the wheel of a car.

Response

We are in receipt of your comments submitted during the May 12, 2014, Public Meeting for the I-26 Asheville Connector Project. Thank you for submitting your comments and for participating in the public involvement process for this project. I am writing to let you know NCDOT has been contacted

Letter Codes

PP0185

5-12 **Comment**

Below are my comments on the plans that NCDOT showed at the public hearing on May 12 at the meeting in Asheville NC

- How will selection of a preferred alternative be made?
- Will cost vs benefits be weighed for each alternative in the EIS?
- Will compliance with City development plans be considered in the selection process? As you know, city calls for separation of interstate traffic from local traffic. I-240 not considered interstate traffic? Please consider a design that would separate Patton & I-240 traffic.
- The prior Figg-Lochner plan had a much smaller footprint and conformed to DOT's design criteria. Why did it need to be changed?

Response

We appreciate your interest in the I-26 Asheville Connector Project. Representatives from NCDOT and URS reviewed each of your comments and questions related to the Public Meeting conducted on May 12, 2014, and offer the following responses.

How will selection of a preferred alternative be made?

This project is being developed and studied in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Section 404/NEPA Interagency Merger Process, and is being processed as an Environmental Impact Statement.

The following Detailed Study Alternatives were selected by the Interagency Team on December 15, 2009, and were represented at the Public Meeting:

- Section C Alternatives: A-2, C-2, D-1, and F-1
- Section A Alternatives: Upgrade existing
- Section B Alternatives: 3, 4, and 4-B

A new alternative, Alternative 3-C, was added to the list of Detailed Study Alternatives for Section B since then, and was also presented at the Public Meeting.

Environmental studies are being conducted to evaluate these alternatives with respect to the need for an purposes of this project, the potential impacts to the human and natural environments, compliance with environmental laws and regulations, interagency comments, public comments, and project costs. Results of those studies, the estimated impacts, and project costs will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that is anticpated to be completed and ready for public review by the middle of 2015. The associated roadway design plans will be presented at a Public Hearing that is anticipated to be conducted by the middle of 2015. Comments on the document and design plans will be compiled for presentation to the Interagency Team in order to reach concurrence on the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alterative (LEDPA). After the LEDPA is selected by the Interagency Team, NCDOT will designate its Preferred Alternative, which is generally the LEDPA.

Will cost vs benefits be weighed for each alternative in the EIS?

Yes. They will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Will compliance with City development plans be considered in the selection process? As you know, city calls for separation of interstate traffic from local traffic. I-240 not considered interstate traffic? Please consider a design that would separate Patton & I-240 traffic.
Yes, consistency with local land use plans and with the local and state transportation plans is evaluated for each alternative. Two of the alternatives, 4 and 4B, are being studied with the purpose of separating the I-240 through-traffic from the local traffic, and decreasing volumes on Patton Avenue.

The prior Figg-Lochner plan had a much smaller footprint and conformed to DOT's design criteria. Why did it need to be changed?
I contacted Mr. Charlie Flowe, a roadway design engineer that has served on this project for many years. Mr. Flowe offered the following response to your question:

- "We used the concept to create Alternate 4B. It violated some design parameters and had some constructability issues and grew as we resolved those. It crossed the river much further south than the original 3 alternatives and impacted the Montford neighborhood along US 19-23 far more than the other alts. The biggest difference between the ADC/Figg/Lochner alternative and what developed as Alternate 4 was that ADC crossed the river on a double decker bridge with I-240 above I-26. We had trouble making that geometry work and eventually convinced everyone that it was not practical. We attempted to incorporate the ideas into alternate 4B – moving the crossing to the south, tightening the footprint of the interchange, rebuilding US 19-23 through Montford as I-26, etc. 4B was carried forward for evaluation as a viable alternative."

NCDOT will keep you apprised as this project continues to develop. You will be invited to future events and will receive all future correspondence. Please let us know if you want to discuss any of our responses or need more information about the I-26 Asheville Connector Project.
Letter Codes
PP0186

5-13 **Comment**
Dear Mr. Wray:
I am writing on behalf of the City of Asheville's Multimodal Transportation Commission, an advisory body whose goal is "to assist the City in furthering, advancing and promoting a broad comprehensive and integrative transportation system that incorporates multimodal concepts, including but not limited to transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, greenways, complete streets, and highways." We are encouraged by the positive momentum to incorporate multimodal transportation facilities into the alternatives being evaluated for the I-26 Connector project. The conversations that occurred at many stations during the May 12 public meeting were very positive and we appreciate NCDOT staff, its consultants, and the Division 13 Board Member and Division Engineer speaking in support of multimodal transportation as part of I-26. The I-26 Connector project is an excellent opportunity to enhance all of these modes to create a safer journey for motorized and non-motorized people traveling through and within the City. The City of Asheville, at the request of NCDOT, recently amended its Greenways Master Plan (with approval from the Multimodal Transportation Commission) to include multimodal facilities in the vicinity of the I-26 Connector to bolster the case that these elements are a necessary component of the project. We are also embarking on a citywide Multimodal Transportation Plan that will further refine the city's needs. The Multimodal Transportation

Commission supports continued inclusion of nonmotorized transportation elements as part of the I-26 Connector project and requests that NCDOT consider including this group in discussions about routing and design concepts for multimodal elements of I-26 to help ensure the chosen option reflects the context of Asheville and diversity of our population. Currently, NCDOT's Complete Streets Guidelines do not address the concepts posed by NCDOT for a project integrating multimodal facilities alongside a freeway, nor do they address design elements at interchanges. Further, NCDOT does not currently have design standards for multi-use trails. For these reasons, we request NCDOT work with the City and others in the area to form a working group to focus on these elements. Materials such as AASHTO's recently updated Bicycle Facilities Design Guidelines (which includes more clarity on multi-use trail design); NACTO's recent publications; and ITE's draft publication on incorporating pedestrian and bicyclists needs into interchange design should be used as guides to help NCDOT and other stakeholders gain a better perspective on the nuances of designing for non-motorized system users.

We look forward to working with you to improve multimodal transportation for our City.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0187

5-14 **Comment**

On behalf of the members of the Western North Carolina Alliance, I submit these comments on the latest presentation of alternatives for the I-26 Connector Project. This letter will address proposed bike/pedestrian improvements and the various sections and alternatives in turn.

Bike/Pedestrian Improvements

We very much appreciate the Department of Transportation's (DOT) willingness to work with bike/ped leaders in Asheville to identify improvements that can be incorporated into or otherwise advanced through this project. The bike/ped charrette DOT hosted last year was enormously helpful in advancing these goals, and we hope to continue those conversations in the coming months as the project develops. We are also grateful for DOT's commitment to include bike/ped improvements in all alternatives, and I was pleased to see the rendering of a possible multi-use path that would be added to the Jeff Bowen Bridges should Alternatives 3 or 3C be chosen.

We also support the letter submitted by the City of Asheville's Multi-Modal Transportation Commission and specifically incorporate it into this letter by reference.

Section A

As you know, the Alliance has long had concerns about Section A, namely our strong disagreement with the unusual requirement that this project meet Level of Service (LOS) D; our disagreement with the traffic studies that show that a minimum of eight lanes will achieve LOS D; and DOT's inclusion of only one alternative for Section A.

Taking the second point first, hopefully the new local model better predicts traffic volumes into the future and will reflect a future reality

that makes more sense that DOT's past and current projections. Our main request at this point is that DOT undertake a new analysis using the local model prior to issuing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in case other alternatives are warranted and can be included in the EIS. It maters immensely to the community and to the Alliance that only one alternative is currently offered, and it would benefit everyone if the EIS could include other alternatives and so avoid provoking community outcry and a potential legal fights.

Closely related is the first point mentioned above - the continued inflexibility of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in requiring LOS D for this project. You are likely aware of a letter sent last year by the French Broad River MPO to FHWA on this topic, but I attach it here for your information. The Alliance supports every argument and appeal for flexibility made in that letter. FHWA's stated reasons for denying the request were because it has not come through DOT and because FHWA's regulations require LOS D for urban interstates.

In light of FHWA's position, we request that DOT ask FHWA to consider design flexibility for this project, especially Section A. The attached letter provides justification for flexibility, but we have also recently become aware of an FHWA policy that allows flexibility on LOS D for urban interstates if the project is an interstate improvement rather than new construction. Loretta Barren with FHWA made this policy known at the April 12 meeting of the French Broad River MPO, and it was confirmed to me by Mitch Batuzich at the public meeting on May 12.

While part of this project is new interstate construction, Section A is signed I-26/I-240 and so should be eligible for whatever design flexibility is allowed by FHWA policy. I have recently taken a video of all the signs on I-240/I-26 and on surface roads that intersect it is West Asheville to show the road's plan designation as an interstate, not as a "future" interstate. The "future" designation does not appear until one gets to the Jeff Bowen Bridges. Again, based on the MPO letter and on the fact that Section A is an existing interstate, we respectfully request that DOT ask FHWA to consider design flexibility for at least Section A. The MPO would likely be interested in joining any conversation that arises out of that request and consideration.

To the third point, DOT has repeatedly justified its rejection of other alternatives for Section A based on their failure to meet the purpose and need of the project. IT seems clear, however, that FHWA's own policy might allow for sufficient flexibility that would result in additional alternatives for Section A that also meet the project's purpose and need. Given this, the National Environmental Policy Act would seem to require DOT to pursue a conversation with FHWA about LOS and design flexibility that might result in additional alternatives being included in the EIS.

Section B, Alternatives 3 and 3C
Both of these alternatives are much improved over the earlier Alt. 3 due to their reduced impacts on the Emma community, and we commend DOT for making these improvements. However, these alternatives remain less desirable due to the vastly increased complexity of the road network on the west side of the river and the significant impacts on the Burton Street community. In addition, by separating the east and westbound lanes on Patton Avenue, these alternatives preclude the option of Patton Avenue becoming a gateway from West Asheville into downtown and prevent the Jeff Bowen Bridges from becoming a local boulevard as called for in the Asheville 2025 plan. It seems unclear at this point how the difference in the location of the river crossing will impact Montford. It clearly shifts impacts

on business from the west to the east side of the river, but we will have to see what the EIS says about these impacts to know which crossing location is better from the standpoint of environmental and community impacts.

In short, while these alternatives cost the least, the also increase complexity on the west die of the river, place an enormous burden on one of Asheville's historically African-American communities, and preclude the full implementation of Asheville's long range development plan. When looking at these designs, what comes to mind is that there has to be a way to build the missing segment of I-26 without also complicating the local traffic infrastructure, burdening neighborhoods quite so much, and impeding the City's long range plan.

Section B, Alternatives 4 and 4B
These alternatives do, in fact, address many of the concerns cited for Alternatives 3/3C. They make better use of existing infrastructure on the west side of the river and reduce complexity there, they minimize impacts on Burton Street, and they actually help achieve a major goal of the City's 2025 plan by allowing Patton Avenue to become a multi-modal gateway boulevard that connects West Asheville to downtown. These alternatives also greatly reduce projected traffic on the Bowen Bridges, thus extending the life of the bridges more than Alts. 3/3C. While Alts. 4/4B do require more new construction ramps and bridges over the river, and therefore are more expensive, this also creates more options for local traffic, reduces congestion, and provides alternative routes in the case of accidents. These alternatives also improve connections on the east side of the river by providing Hillcrest a direct connection to Patton Avenue and reducing its isolation.

These alternatives are more expensive because they do more. They are the options that best address the purpose and need of the project while also honoring local plans and minimizing impacts on neighborhoods.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0190

6. Induced Socioeconomic Impacts

6-1 **Comment**

Whatever choice is selected for Asheville, it will profoundly affect development and livability for the next century. Let's not let assumptions based on past mistakes force us into bad decisions for the future.

Response

Comment noted. Refer to Section 4.2 where indirect and cumulative effects are addressed.

Letter Codes

PP0004

6-2 **Comment**

As you have undoubtedly found in your work on this project, Asheville has a strong tourism component to it's local economy. It is important that the community and it's economic base not be scarred by a project that does not compliment the community both in scale and in design.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0046

6-3 **Comment**

...the issue at stake also concerns the condition of future development patterns following the I-26 reconfiguration: neighborhood connectivity, environmental conditions, the future wealth and state of the community.

Response

Refer to comment response 6-1.

Letter Codes

PP0065

7. Air Quality

7-1 **Comment**

I have been told that there are no studies about increased pollution as a result of both the building and the presence of the highway expansion. This is a serious mistake as children and adults who live near busy highways suffer from more asthma and respiratory diseases.

Response

Air quality impacts are addressed in Section 4.1.3 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0011

7-2 **Comment**

The statement should also address other issues that are related to the potential project. It is surprising that in this day there is no recognition of the problem of global warming; instead, the assumption is business as usual, with ever-increasing traffic volumes. Any urban project that is built in the future should attempt to reduce the future volumes of traffic, not simply accomodate future volumes based on past, and now unsustainable trends.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0061

8. Hazardous Materials

8-1 **Comment**

I think that it is also important to include within the EIS information about the impacts of various types of hazardous materials which will travel on the newly designed freeway to compare with the impacts from the types of materials which are currently allowed to travel on the freeway. This should include radioactive materials. Impacts to consider should include possibilities of accidents which cause leakage or spillage of such hazardous materials.

Response

Highway safety is FHWA's and NCDOT's primary concern in the development of any interstate project. Developing the I-26 project with current interstate design criteria should improve safety on I-26 through the Asheville area. The types of materials, hazardous or otherwise, transported on the future interstate is not like to change from what is currently being transported.

Letter Codes

PP0067

16. Energy and Natural Resources

16-1 **Comment**

This statement about capacity also fails to factor in future declines in the rate of private passenger vehicle use per capita which will occur as a result of the increase of fuel costs due to anticipated reductions in the worldwide supply of oil and the necessity of humans to reduce fossil fuel consumption due to global climate change....

...Also there are likely to be significant decreases in per capita use of private passenger vehicles by the year 2030, due to increasing fuel costs because of reductions in the worldwide supply of oil and the necessity of humans to reduce fossil fuel consumption due to global climate change/

Response

NCDOT uses a traffic forecast derived from the traffic model adopted the Asheville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Capacity is addressed in Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0067

16-2 **Comment**

May I respectfully suggest that what Asheville and Western North Carolina really needs are not more investments in roadways, but rather an extension of passenger rail service. NCDOT presently provides some subsidy which makes possible regular daytime passenger rail service between Raleigh and Charlotte. The tax dollars of WNC residents are helping to pay for this service, but we do not get any benefit for it. Presently, when we want to take the train, we must drive ninety miles to Greenville, SC. The northbound Amtrak Crescent arrives after 11PM (if it is even on time), the southbound leg arrives before sunrise (ditto). This is simply unacceptable. Oil prices are going up fast, and motor fuel prices are sure to follow this trend. Given the increasing difficulty and expense in finding and developing new reserves of oil, this trend is unlikely to reverse; more likely, it will accellerate. People will very soon be needing alternatives to private passenger cars. That "very soon" will likely occur within NCDOT's normal planning horizon. As I understand that there are several technical issues that will require several years to extend passenger rail service to Asheville, it is time to bring this project off the back burner and move forward with it now. I understand that the project would also require funding, which is why I am opposing the I-26 connector project; the funds can be better spent on passenger rail. The same energy price increases that drive more people toward energy-efficient passenger rail will be driving more people off the road. It would be a tragedy to spend money that could have been used to provide passenger rail service on yet another roadway project that will end up being under-used. In just a few years time, it is likely that reduced traffic will take care by itself of the problems that this connector project is intended to solve. Forget the connector, let's move forward with passenger rail to Asheville now!

Response

Refer to comment response 2-25.

Letter Codes

PP0134

21. Public Involvement

21-1 **Comment**

In response to the request for public comment I offer the following for your consideration.

This project has a long history and is recognized as needed to correct a bad, and often times dangerous highway situation that has grown as Asheville has grown, and will get worse with the projected growth in this area. Many good and knowledgeable people have worked on this project; with I hope and believe the good intent of solving the highway problem with its related issues.

Various proposals for the project have been put forth which have plus and minuses that are difficult to fully evaluate for anyone who is not very knowledgeable in the subject matter, and who has not been deeply immersed in the project. It seems that even being moderately informed does not fully lead to a truly good understanding of the best way to go.

Please actively listen to and work with local groups who have worked on this project to fairly evaluate options. I believe that having a connector in character with the Asheville area, along with a well functioning highway system, will significantly add to the economy of the region. As there are many things to balance in a project of this magnitude, input from people, who will live with the decisions made for many years to come, is very important.

Response

Public input is very import to project development process and each comment collected through the public involvement process is considered by the project team.

Letter Codes

PP0024

21-2 **Comment**

The evaluation criteria of the CCC report were adopted by the city and the MPO as a means of gaining and expressing public input on the connecter project and were written to be included in the Purpose and Needs Statement. In the name of fairness and the democratic process, I am requesting that they be included.

Response

The evaluation criteria and Key Design Goals of the CCC report have been considered. Refer to Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0119

21-3 **Comment**

We thank you for taking the time to hear the concerns of members of the community here in Asheville. A great part of this process and this proposal is that it has greatly energized members of the community to create solutions and ideas that serve the needs of the commuters who travel through the region as well as the people who live here and value the character of our town. Your time and consideration is greatly valued by those of us invested and enthusiastic about this project.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0141

21-4 **Comment**

You staff was excellent taking the time to explain the different proposals. They were friendly, well informed and very cooperative. Thank you all for the good effort!

Response

Letter Codes

PP0163

21-5 **Comment**

As a realtor focusing in areas that will be impacted by this project, access to information and availability of resources is important to my business. When I have used the project website in the past, the detail in the maps provided are severely lacking in specifics. The maps available here today hold extremely necessary information that must be made available to the public. I understand that some of these are proposals and subject to change.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0164

21-6 **Comment**

-Paul Himberger was very helpful, took all the time we needed to answer all of my questions. I felt valued for having him take the time to talk with me.

I'm very impressed with all of the hard work, dedication everyone is working towards a good and productive outcome.

Rick Tipton was also very patient and helpful. So thanks everyone for taking the time and effort to being here.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0169

21-7 **Comment**

Visualizations online (youtube, etc.)

Response

Letter Codes
PP0175

21-8 **Comment**
I want to see Patton Ave as a Boulevard to allow West Asheville to continue its development.
Response

Letter Codes
PP0176

21-9 **Comment**
My name is *** and I need to express my dismay regarding the public meeting held in Asheville on May 12. I received the notice by mail on May 13! Given that my home is Asheville is very likely to be impacted in a negative way by the proposed changes, I most certainly would have attended if the notice had arrived even a day earlier.

I certainly hope that you intend to hold additional public meetings, and that the timing for those meetings is communicated in a timely fashion.
Response
I sincerely apologize for the late arrival of your notification; we will be holding a formal public hearing sometime next year, so will we make absolutely certain that everyone has ample advance notice. In the meantime, if you have any specific questions or concerns, please do let me know and I will do my best to assist you.

Letter Codes
PP0181

23. EIS Process and Scope

23-1 **Comment**

My impression is that your minds have been made up by whatever or whomever the powers that be regarding the widening I-26 in West Asheville. Unless things have changed recently even the old models of traffic flow prediction, let alone the newer models, don't justify the four lanes in each direction. How about restoring some faith in the publics mind for DOT by not just doing what some decision maker wants done regardless of what the data says and without regard to the impact on people's lives who loose their homes unnecessarily.

Response

Careful consideration has been given to the number of lanes required for the project. Refer to Chapters 1 and 2 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0009

23-2 **Comment**

Please help to move this project in timely manner so that it is not delayed further. This important project for the region is very much needed.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0024

23-3 **Comment**

Asheville also has a high level of citizen participation, and it is important that the local voice is listened to and respected. All of the recommendations of the community coordinating committee that were adopted by the city and the MPO in 2000 should receive consideration in the purpose and needs statement for the project. I recognize that some alternatives were created with those criteria in mind, but I suggest that those recommendations as to purpose and need be included in the formal statement.

Response

The comments and concerns from local communities has been and will continue to be considered throughout the course the project. The recommendations of the Community Coordinating Committee have been considered in the development of the project and the DEIS. Refer to Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0046

23-4 **Comment**

As decision makers for the City of Asheville, North Carolina, the State of North Carolina, and the entire Southeastern Region, it is the NCDOT's responsibility to design and build that which will efficiently and effectively, service current needs of the people, improve the

quality of life, preserve natural resources, and create profitable situations for now and for many years to come. The most effective means of meeting these goals is to follow the goals set forth by the Community Coordinating Committee Report....

...To ignore the contents of the CCC report, would be comparable to ignoring the people of the Asheville community, residents of the State of North Carolina, American citizens, and the democratic process; anything less than aspiring to these goals would be regressive and unsustainable.

Response

Refer to comment response 23-3.

Letter Codes

PP0065

23-5 **Comment**

I believe these goals echo the points conveyed in many community forums and guide-lines painstakingly developed by local citizens on volunteer time, because of a strong local commitment to local quality of life. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to a positive process and outcome of which we can all be proud, and confirmation that our state government is interested in what is best for the citizens, not just the trucking or transportation interests.

Response

Comment noted. Comments received during the EIS process are considered and addressed in the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0066

23-6 **Comment**

I am writing to you as a resident of Biltmore Forest regarding the I-26 connector proposals. I strongly support the principles outlined by the I-26 Awareness Group and the proposal put forward by the Asheville Design Center based on those principles. Highways in urban areas must be designed to relate to the cities they go through. Context Sensitive Design is now part of the vocabulary of many State DOT'S. Some do better than others in implementing CSD. CSD is in the guidelines adopted by the NCDOT. These guidelines should be followed. The impact of the I-26 connector on the future of the Asheville region will be very great. This project should be designed with sensitivity to surrounding land uses, the French Broad River, and to the economic base of the city and county. I urge the NCDOT to review the proposals being put forward by the community and to work cooperatively to make this project a success, one which will be appropriate to the special place that Asheville is.

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0071

23-7 **Comment**

This could be accomplished by incorporating local community suggestions to reconnect the community with a local traffic connection. I understand the period for local comment will close next week. Please consider the feedback from our community before investing tax payer dollars in a solution that may look good on paper but not serve our local business and personal needs.

Response

Please refer to the purpose and need statement presented in Chapter 1 of the DEIS. The comments and concerns from local communities has been and will continue to be considered throughout the course the project.

Letter Codes

PP0072

23-8 **Comment**

I think it is time to get this project off top dead center. The main thing is, stop studying and GET TO WORK on the connector. I'd like to see it done in my lifetime (I'm tuming 70 in April).

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0122

23-9 **Comment**

We appreciate your time and consideration in listening to the concerns of Asheville citizens. This project has tremendous potential for serving
the traffic needs of the community and all that travel through the area while also protecting the character of our town.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0128

23-10 **Comment**

As a person who appreciates the unique beauty of my hometown and who wishes to see this expensive-but-necessary upgrading of the bridge portions of the Connector, I also STRONGLY advocate your cooperation with the Asheville Design Center and the Asheville City Council and the many, many involved citizens of this area who have produced an alternative route for the Connector that would benefit drivers (first and foremost), our heritage, our aesthetics, our economic development, and other aspects that make a city thrive.

Do the right thing. Work with these good people who want to have a DOT project that will make everyone proud!

Response

Refer to comment response 2-2.

Letter Codes

PP0140

24. Quality of Life

24-1 **Comment**

Please scale this project to the unique characteristics of the city. We are having a hard enough time preserving this city's beauty and character; Roadways, as necessary as they are, don't preserve beauty. Please be considerate in your decisions.

Response

Consideration is given to potential environmental impacts through the environmental impact study process and the selection a "least environmentally damaging practicable alternative" (LEDPA). Where possible, adverse project impacts will be avoided. Unavoidable project impacts, will be minimized to the extent possible and mitigated where practicable. Environmental Consequences are addressed in Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0009 PP0101

24-2 **Comment**

To preserve the character of our fine little city, I strongly urge NCDOT to revisit all proposed plans, and to choose the one which will separate the interstate traffic from local traffic.

Response

Comment noted. Prior to selection of a preferred alternative, potential impacts of the project, as document in the DEIS, and comment form agencies and public will be considered.

Letter Codes

PP0017

24-3 **Comment**

This project should reflect the values of the Asheville community as captured in the CCC report of September, 2000, because the Asheville community will have to live with this project for most of a lifetime. It should enhance the quality of life in Asheville.

Response

Comment noted. The project has considered the information provided in the CCC report and will include this consideration in the DEIS. Refer to Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0038

24-4 **Comment**

The scale of the project must match the character of this unique city.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes
PP0062 PP0090

24-5 **Comment**
As an Asheville native, I'm excited about new ideas that have been proposed in connection with plans for I-26. The Community Coordinating Committee report of 2000 calls for separating local and Interstate traffic. Removing Interstate highway traffic from the Smoky Park Bridge would allow development of an attractive local boulevard joining Asheville and West Asheville. It would free up land for public uses other than a highway interchange. These would bring economic benefit and new amenity to what has been a bleak part of town. Greenville and Chattanooga have created delightful, pedestrian-friendly connections to their riverfronts and added public facilities such as museums and theaters to those areas, drawing tens of thousands of visitors every year. Asheville should have the opportunity to do the same. I urge the NC DOT to join in support of the wonderful possibilities your work can offer our community.
Response
Refer to comment response 24-3.
Letter Codes
PP0082

24-6 **Comment**
We are one of the top destinations in the country. We care about good urban design, livable scale, environmental sustainability, connectivity within our community, and the protection of local businesses and neighborhoods through thoughtful, progressive design.
Response
Over the last 12 years NCDOT has worked with the community and citizen groups in the project development process and has incorporated many of the ideas and suggestion received into the development of project alternatives.
Letter Codes
PP0087

24-7 **Comment**
Please do seriously consider keeping Asheville in the lead of innovative, forward moving planning. Don't let us become just another busy city. We want to be a green city, with many modes of alternative transportation, clean energy, green space, and community spirit.
Response
Refer to comment response 24-1.
Letter Codes
PP0110

27. Traffic

27-1 **Comment**

I can tell you from a users point of view that the stretch of highway in question, with entrances, exits on the left and right is difficult to navigate. Traffic congestion is high during a significant amount of time which adds to the reasonably high potential for accidents.

Response

Traffic and congestion is addressed in Chapters 1 and 2 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0024

27-2 **Comment**

As a property owner in Buncombe County I am often crossing the I-26/Patton Ave. bridge and find it alarmingly difficult to maneuver in the speeding traffic as well as quite dangerous. How unrealistic is it to expect people traveling through town on I-26 to pass through our little Patton Avenue bridge?

Response

Completion of the I-26 Connector project would remove I-26 traffic from the Smoky Park (Patton Avenue) Bridges. Chapters 1 and 2 address traffic and freeway operation.

Letter Codes

PP0036

27-3 **Comment**

Capacity should not be over-estimated based on past trends.

Response

Traffic capacity analysis is presented in Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0061

27-4 **Comment**

The statement should also address other issues that are related to the potential project. It is surprising that in this day there is no recognition of the problem of global warming; instead, the assumption is business as usual, with ever-increasing traffic volumes. Any urban project that is built in the future should attempt to reduce the future volumes of traffic, not simply accomodate future volumes based on past, and now unsustainable trends.

Response

Traffic capacity analysis is presented in Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0061

27-5 **Comment**

This section should also include the need to remove Interstate traffic from the local traffic crossing the Smoky Park bridge.
Under the sub-section Capacity, if local traffic were to be separated from the Interstate traffic, it is unclear whether I-240 would need additional capacity (ie: more than 4 lanes, two lanes each way). It has been shown in studies that the largest volume of traffic on the Smoky Park bridge is local, not interstate.

This statement about capacity also fails to factor in future declines in the rate of private passenger vehicle use per capita which will occur as a result of the increase of fuel costs due to anticipated reductions in the worldwide supply of oil and the necessity of humans to reduce fossil fuel consumption due to global climate change.

Response

Traffic capacity and the need for 8 lanes in Section A (I-240) of the project is presented in Chapter 1 of the DEIS. NCDOT uses a traffic forecast derived from the traffic model adopted the Asheville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Letter Codes

PP0067

27-6 **Comment**

I was unable to attend the May 12 2014 meeting.

With Alternate 3C, there is absolutely NO attention devoted to the actual traffic congestion problem that the city of Asheville has. The problem of short lane merging traffic from US 19/23 or future I-26E to I-240 towards Asheville or eliminating traffic issues on the Smoky Park Bridge or Jacksons curve. The local traffic is the real problem here. Is this being addressed?

Response

Thank you for taking the time to comment on the proposed project. The local traffic is definitely an issue that has been and will continue to be studied in depth by NCDOT and various consultants. Your comment, along with all others made by citizens in the area, will be reviewed and discussed as we move forward in the planning process. If you have any further questions or concerns, please let me know.

Letter Codes

PP0182

28. Design, Art, Architecture

28-1 **Comment**
We deserve and can find funding for a beautiful bridge. We need a design that will contribute to the beauty of Asheville for the next 100 years. The present I-240 east of the Beaucatcher cut is a travesty, as is the current mess on Smoky Park Bridge.
Response
Before a bridge design can be determined a preferred alterative alignment must first be selected through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Bridge structure type and design can be considered during the Final EIS and final design phases of the project.
Letter Codes
PP0016

28-3 **Comment**
Having a bridge that accomplishes these goals as a signature bridge that makes Asheville stand out in our beautiful mountains would be such an accomplishment for our city.
Response
Refer to comment response 28-1.
Letter Codes
PP0036

28-4 **Comment**
We need to preserve as much of the natural beauty of the land that we can with the new design.
Reunification and connectivity of community
Incorporation of community-selected design features
The local community wants/longs for/hopes for/ and strongly needs
- A design that relates to and enhances the look and feel of Asheville.
- A beautifully designed bridge that is on the par with other great cities like Chattanooga, Milwaukee, etc.
The scale of the project must match the character of this unique community.
Response
Refer to comment response 28-1.
Letter Codes
PP0022

28-5 **Comment**
I urge you, both as a concerned tax-paying citizen and as a design professional (architect) with 15 years of working history in the Asheville area to include the following comments in the revised documents in the Purpose and Needs Statement.

1) First priority is to design a freeway interchange that separates local, east/west river-crossing traffic from interstate traffic. This can only be achieved via a (or several) new bridges to serve the new Interstate traffic as the existing Smokey Park bridge is not suited, either by design or alignment for anything but local traffic.
2) Reworking of local lanes to improve community connectivity to the primary urban East/West artery- Patton Ave. including accommodations for bike, pedestrian and rapid transit.
3) Placement and alignment of Interstate structures so as to minimize negative visual impact, for example by staying within the low-ravine property and passing UNDER Patton Ave. to tie-in with the existing low grade of I-240 south of the bridge, thereby reducing noise, pollution, and visibility of thru-traffic.
4) Efforts applied to the new bridge(s) design that is compatible with the scale and character of Asheville and can be admired as a scenic asset to the riverway.

Response

Refer to comment responses 1-1. Where practicable and within the scope of the project, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be considered. Visual impacts, noise, and air quality are addressed in Section 4.1.3 of the DEIS. Also refer to comment response 28-1 which addresses bridge design.

Letter Codes

PP0066

28-6 **Comment**

Also, with regard to the current Smokey Park Bridge--I consider this bridge to be an eyesore doing very little to enhance the unique architectural style of our community. I would be in favor of a bridge with a unique architectural design with possibly two stacked tiers of traffic much like is found in California--one level for local traffic and the second level for Interstate traffic. This would prevent the need for local traffic to merge onto the Interstate-26. I would also like to see this bridge have a unique architectural design with a character that enhances our community like the bridges in Charleston, SC, and certainly on a much smaller scale, a bridge like the Golden Gate has done for San Francisco. I realize that the costs of such a bridge would be higher but like with any beautiful piece of unique architecture, in future years, the design would pay dividends. The Biltmore House, the Grove Arcade, and the Parkway are examples of architectural design that enhances our community.

Response

Refer to comment response 28-1.

Letter Codes

PP0073

28-7 **Comment**

Please build us a bridge we can be proud of.

Response

Comment noted.

Letter Codes

PP0101

30. Safety

30-1 **Comment**

I am writing you concerning the I-26 connector that is going to be built in Asheville. I am a homeowner who lives literally blocks from the current and future connector. I would like to offer a very brief account of my transportation habits since moving to West Asheville. If the roads enabled me to, I could jog to the outer part of downtown (where my job is) in probably about ten minutes. If the roads enabled me to, I could ride my bike downtown even more quickly. Instead I am stuck to a convoluted and dangerous trek towards downtown. Or I can travel way out of my way, adding a safer but more inconvenient amount of time to my commute. Anyone who lives in Asheville and lives anywhere off of Hazel Mill Road and West Patton, and the hundreds of streets that service these, would have these same issues. There are thousands of people who are in need of a system that suits the needs of the community more completely than the current design(s). It would be unfortunate to miss an opportunity to create a positive change for this community. Whatever the final design, it must support all types of transport.

Response

Where practicable and within the scope of the project, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be considered.

Letter Codes

PP0020

30-2 **Comment**

As a property owner in Buncombe County I am often crossing the I-26/Patton Ave. bridge and find it alarmingly difficult to maneuver in the speeding traffic as well as quite dangerous. How unrealistic is it to expect people traveling through town on I-26 to pass through our little Patton Avenue bridge?

Response

Improving safety and reducing traffic volumes on the Patton Avenue (Smoky Park) Bridges are stated puposes of the I-26 Connector project. This issue addressed in Chapters 1 and 2 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0036

30-3 **Comment**

I can tell you from a users point of view that the stretch of highway in question, with entrances, exits on the left and right is difficult to navigate. Traffic congestion is high during a significant amount of time which adds to the reasonably high potential for accidents.

Response

Comment noted. The issues of congestion and safety are addressed in Chapter 1 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0024

30-4 **Comment**

Most importantly, the Purpose and Needs Statement must include the separation of local and interstate traffic, which will result in eliminating the dangerous merging situations that currently exist on the Smokey Park Bridge. I advise my 2 teenage drivers and visiting guests to avoid those areas because, even when familiar with it, I have often found it a crazy and unsafe place to drive. Creating a local traffic connection will eliminate this safety issue and reunify the disconnected parts of the community.

Response

Please see response to comment 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0062

30-5 **Comment**

Under the sub-section entitled Safety, there is a sentence which is unclear. It states: "Multiple segments of I-240, west of Asheville, currently have an accident rate for similar North Carolina facilities, demonstrating the need for safety improvements..." It is unclear if the statement means that the accident rate is less, the same or more than the rate on similar North Carolina facilities. If the accident rate is less or the same, then there would seem to be no need demonstrated and this sub-section should be removed from the Summary of Need.

Response

The sentence should read as follows, "Multiple segments of I-240, west of Asheville, currently have an accident rate that exceeds the critical crash rate for similar North Carolina facilities, demonstrating the need for safety improvements along this section of the facility." Please refer to Section 1.3 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0067

30-6 **Comment**

This letter is to voice concern about the plans for future I-26 through Asheville. I am worried primarily that an already hazardous road will be made more dangerous for me and my family and my community by further merging Interstate traffic with our already heavy local traffic. It is a truly risky proposition exiting from 19/23 into Asheville, or from 240 onto an Asheville exit already. The plan for merging all future traffic from I-26 with our local town traffic will funnel speeding cars just wanting to "get through" Asheville and on their way with those of us who live here and try to drive in a manner which will ensure our safety as we go about our daily lives. Asheville's highway and exiting systems are already so poorly laid out, without thought to future traffic growth, that compounding it with the plan for I-26 will seriously endanger all of us. As the mother of young children who are my sacred duty to protect, and who are at the mercy in our car of those who drive around us, please rethink the plans for I 26 and come up with a proposal which takes into account Asheville as a community. Thank you,

Response

Safety is an identified need for the project. Adding capacity and reducing traffic congestion are stated purposes of the I-26 Connector

project and should help to iprove safety with the project study area. Please refer to Chapters 1 and 2 of the DEIS.

Letter Codes

PP0080

30-7 **Comment**

I believe strongly that "Purpose and Need Statement" must specifically call for separation of local and interstate traffic. I cross the Smokey Park Bridges traveling east and west on I 26 frequently and each time it's a "white knuckle" event. This is especially true when I'm traveling on I 26 West. I can only imagine the confusion and terror of the I 26 traveler encountering this connection for the first time.

I trust that you will agree to change the "Purpose and Need Statement" so that it is clear that separation of local and Interstate traffic is an urgent need in order to correct the very dangerous situation that exists on the Smokey Park Brldges today for both local and Interstate travelers.

Response

Please see the response to comment 1-1.

Letter Codes

PP0137

30-8 **Comment**

The reason our state and federal government keeps pushing 8 lanes of traffic is so nuclear waste can be transported to the Savannah River plant. There is a huge plan to take all of the northeast coming down Highway 81, the Midwest, coming down highway 75, and 26 is a perfect connector to go right down through South Carolina to the processing plant.

Response

Letter Codes

DP0234 PP0140

30-9 **Comment**

Build the I-26 Connector Project ASAP. Today would be too late for health and safety reasons.

Response

Letter Codes

PP0174

30-10 **Comment**

I am concerned about increased traffic on Westwood Place due to lack of direct access to Earthfare from I-26 (coming from the South/West).

Response

Letter Codes

PP0162

32. Permitting

32-1 **Comment**

NCDOT is reminded that all impacts, including but not limited to, bridging, fill, excavation and clearing, to jurisdictional wetlands, streams and riparian buffers need to be included in the final impact calculations. These impacts, in addition to any construction impacts, temporary or otherwise, also need to be included as part of the 401 Water Quality Certification Application.

Response

Letter Codes

DS0008

32-2 **Comment**

The 401 Water Quality Certification application will need to specifically address the proposed methods for stormwater management. More specifically, stormwater shall not be permitted to discharge directly into stream or surface waters.

Response

Letter Codes

DS0008

32-3 **Comment**

The magnitude of impacts and streams may require an individual permit application to the Corps of Engineers and corresponding 401 Water Quality Certification. Please be advised that a 401 Water Quality Certification requires satisfactory protection of water quality to ensure that water quality standards are met and no wetland or stream uses are lost. Final permit authorization will require the submittal of a formal application by the NCDOT and written concurrence from the NCDWQ. Please be aware that any approval will be contingent on appropriate avoidance and minimization of wetland and stream impacts to the maximum extent practical, the development of an acceptable stormwater management plan, and the inclusion of appropriate mitigation plans where appropriate.

Response

Letter Codes
DS0008

32-4 **Comment**
If foundation test boring are necessary; it shall be noted in the document. Geotechnical work is approved under General 401 Certification Number 3494/Nationwide Permit No. 6 for Survey Activities.

Response

Letter Codes
DS0008

32-5 **Comment**
While the use of National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, NC Coastal Region Evaluation of Wetland Significance (NC-CREWS) maps and soil survey maps are useful tools, their inherent inaccuracies require that qualified personnel perform onsite wetland delineations prior to permit approval

Response

Letter Codes
DS0008

32-6 **Comment**
The following permits may be needed to comply with North Carolina Law: NPDES, Dredge and Fill Permit, 401 Water Quality Certification.

Response

Letter Codes
DS0010

33. Aesthetics

33-1 **Comment**
NCWRC encourages Implementation of the City's "smart growth" principles, protection of aesthetic amenities and greenways (existing

and proposed), and development of opportunities for public access and recreation. Context Sensitive Solution principles should be employed to compliment and benefit the local community and natural environment important to the community and region.

Response

Letter Codes
DS0009

33-2 **Comment**
The I-26 project has the potential to create an eyesore that will have unnecessary environmental impacts and stifle the development of the urban fabric of its area, or it can improve the livability of a city that perennially appears on lists of the best places to live in the country. Alternative 4B, with modifications presents the best opportunity to do the latter.

Response

Letter Codes
DP0228

33-3 **Comment**
Asheville is blessed geographically. Plan 4B allows for more pedestrian and outdoor activities in an outdoor setting graced by beautiful mountain vistas. Plan 4B allows Asheville to more fully capitalize on its scenic assets in an environmentally responsible way.

Response

Letter Codes
DP0119

33-4 **Comment**
Please look at increasing the size of plantings to include trees and not just small shrubs at intersections & medians.

Response

Letter Codes
DP0031

33-5 **Comment**

Riverlinks efforts for increased beautification and utilization of the French Broad will be very negatively impacted by the present I-240 expansion plan. The new bridge to move along the French Broad will detract from the present openness of the area and could provide a problem residence for an increased number of homeless people.

Response

Letter Codes
DP0252

33-6 **Comment**
Resolution in Support of Aestetically Pleasing Bridges Over the French Broad River for The 1-26/I-240 (petition).

Response

Letter Codes
DP0253 SC0253

33-7 **Comment**
The commented requests a signature bridge over the river. Pay attention to Asheville's Design center and their insired vision.

Response

Letter Codes
DP0012

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Appendix F

Coordination Relating to Section 4(f) *de Minimis*

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Federal Aid #: **MANHF26-1(53)** *TIP#:* **I-2513B** *County*: **Buncombe**

CONCURRENCE FORM FOR ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Project Description: Proposed I-26 Connector in Asheville

On 16 February 2010, representatives of the

- ☒ North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- ☒ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- ☒ North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)
- ☐ Other

Reviewed the subject project and agreed on the effects findings listed within the table on the reverse of this signature page.

Signed:

Courtney Foley — 27 APRIL 2010

Representative, NCDOT — Date

Donald W Bruce — 4-27-10

FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency — Date

Representative, HPO — Date

Renee Gledhill-Earley — 4.27.10

State Historic Preservation Officer — Date

Federal Aid #: **MANHF26-1(53)** *TIP#:* **I-2513B** *County*: **Buncombe**

Property and Status	Alternative	Effect Finding	Reasons
Buncombe County Bridge No. 216 (DE)	Section A All alternatives	No Adverse Effect	The bridge will remain in place and protective measures will be utilized during construction.
Friendly Grocery Store (DE)	Section A All alternatives	No Adverse Effect	There will be no direct impacts to the structure and NCDOT agrees to seek comments from HPO on the final plans of the retaining wall and/or the sidewalk as well as the drainage plans.
West Asheville/ Aycock School Historic District (DE)	Section A All alternatives	**Adverse Effect**	Project requires direct impacts to the property of the Aycock School as well as potential impacts to the existing stone wall, arrowhead monument, and several trees at the school. Additional right-of-way will need to be acquired within the district's boundaries.
Asheville School (NR)	Section C All alternatives	No Adverse Effect	There are minimal right-of-way acquisitions. Taken as a whole, they do not significantly diminish the integrity or significance of the property.
Biltmore Estate (NR, NHL)	Section C All alternatives	**Adverse Effect**	Each alternative requires widening existing Interstate 40 within the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark.
Buncombe County Bridge No. 151 (Great Smoky Mountain Park Bridge) (DE)	Section B Alternatives 3, 4, & 4B	No Effect	There will be no construction activities that directly impact the bridge on the listed alternatives.
C. G. Worley House (DE)	Section B Alternatives 3, 4, & 4B	No Adverse Effect	Each alternative will require some right-of-way acquisition and a permanent underground easement for a soil-nail retaining wall will utilize top down construction. Clearing will only occur to the right-of-way limits.

Initialed: NCDOT CPF FHWA DB HPO PYE

FHWA intends to use SHPO's concurrence as a basis of a "de minimis" finding for the following properties, pursuant to Section 4(f): Asheville School

C.G. Worley House

Federal Aid #: **MANHF26-1(53)** *TIP#:* **I-2513B** *County*: **Buncombe**

Property and Status	Alternative	Effect Finding	Reasons
Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage (NR)	Section B Alternatives 3, 4, & 4B	No Effect	There will be no construction activities that directly impact the house on the listed alternatives.
Haywood Street United Methodist Church (DE)	Section B Alternatives 3, 4, & 4B	No Effect	There will be no construction activities that directly impact the property on the listed alternatives.
Whiteford G. Smith House (NR)	Section B Alternatives 3, 4, & 4B	No Effect	There will be no construction activities that directly impact the house on the listed alternatives.
Freeman House (DE)	Section B Alternative 3	No Adverse Effect	There will be a change in noise levels but not enough to adversely affect the property. No construction activities will directly impact the property on this alternative.
Freeman House (DE)	Section B Alternatives 4 & 4B	**Adverse Effect**	Alignment is not within the property boundary but four new elevated bridges will be constructed that will be visible from the house.
Montford Area Historic District (NR) and Boundary Expansion (DE)	Section B Alternatives 3 & 4	No Effect	There will be no construction activities that directly impact the district on the listed alternatives. Alternatives are on the other side of the French Broad River.
Montford Area Historic District (NR) and Boundary Expansion (DE)	Section B Alternative 4B	**Adverse Effect**	Permanent easements will be needed for construction of earth retaining walls, although there is no right-of-way acquisition. Retaining walls create visual impacts to historic district.

Initialed: NCDOT CPF FHWA DB HPO RSE

City of Asheville, NC

Parks and Recreation

September 12, 2007

Vincent J. Rhea, PE
Project Development Engineer
PDEA Branch
NCDOT
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

RE: *De minimis* impact statement for project I-2513

Mr. Rhea,

It is my understanding that the I-26 connector project will include widening and improvements to exiting I-240 and Amboy Road in the vicinity of Carrier Park. The proposed preliminary plans for this project will effect both the proposed French Broad River Greenway extension (FBRG) and Carrier Park. As these are public recreational facilities, I understand the project is subject to the requirements of United States Code (USC) Title 23 in Section 138 (Section 4(f)), the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), known as Section 4(f) of the DOT Act.

As stated in Section 4(f) of the above, "the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) shall not approve any program or project which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State or local significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge resulting from such use".

It is my understanding that the preliminary plans for the project have been revised to minimize the impacts to the FBRG and Carrier Park. The widening would shift the proposed FBRG slightly southward for a modest portion, but not adversely affect its use. The widening would also encroach into the parking area in front of the Carrier Park restroom facility as well as a short section of the FBRG. The department planned to remove the parking area in the future so it will not adversely affect this function. The State expressed a willingness to remove the parking lot area and landscape it in an attractive manner. The state would work with City staff on the overall design which includes minimizing potential retaining walls that would be required with the widening.

P.O. Box 7148 • Asheville, N.C. 28802 • 828-259-5800 • www.ashevilleparks.org

Access to the existing parking lots north and south of the restroom facility would be maintained.

My staff as well as the Greenway Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has reviewed the preliminary plans and have concluded that the proposed I-2513 project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of Carrier Park and the existing and proposed FBRG. The City expects the State to rebuild and relocate any portion of greenway trail that is negatively impacted by this widening project at the States expense, including, but not limited to re-negotiating easements.

This letter shall not be interpreted as giving consent for the City to enter into land negotiations with the State. City Council approval must be obtained for any land transaction involving City-owned land. Preferably, we would like to approach City Council with land transaction proposals for all properties slated to be effected by the widening project at one time. Lastly, please present the preliminary drawings to Karen Cragnolin, Executive Director of RiverLink, for her comments. RiverLink donated the Carrier Park property to the City and as a courtesy we like to include RiverLink in conversations about future park development.

Sincerely,

Roderick Simmons, Director
City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Department

Cc: Ken Burleson, Al Kopf, Seth Hendler

Suite 141
975 Walnut Street
Cary, North Carolina 27511
Phone 919 319 8850
Fax 919 319 6999

April 20, 2007

TGS ENGINEERS

Mr. Jim Orr, Superintendent
Parks and Public Facilities Division
City of Asheville
Parks and Recreation Department
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802

Subject: New Route, Asheville, NC, I-26 Connector along I-240 from existing I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NCDOT Division 13, NC TIP No. I-2513, BSIP WBS Element 34165.1.2, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

Dear Mr. Orr:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Friday, April 13 to review the proposed modifications to the subject project preliminary plans in order to minimize effects on the Carrier Park and French Broad River Greenway. We have added the driveway connection we discussed and sent Al Kopf a copy of the revised plans with cross sections in the area along Amboy Road in front of Carrier Park.

To keep the project on schedule, NCDOT needs to document your concurrence that the proposed project plans will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of Carrier Park and the existing and proposed French Broad River Greenway. NCDOT will be sending you a letter informing you of the Section 4(f) evaluation procedures necessary for the project use of the park property and greenway alignment.

If you have any questions or I can provide additional information, please let me know as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.
TGS Engineers

JKB:jdw
cc: File

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

April 18, 2007

Mr. Jim Orr, Superintendent
Parks and Public Facilities Division
City of Asheville
Parks and Recreation Department
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802

Subject: New Route, Asheville, NC, I-26 Connector along I-240 from existing I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NCDOT Division 13, NC TIP No. I-2513, BSIP WBS Element 34165.1.2, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

Dear Mr. Orr:

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is writing a Draft Environmental Statement for the I-26 Connector. The project will include widening and improvements to exiting I-240 and Amboy Road in the vicinity of Carrier Park. The proposed preliminary plans for this project will affect both the proposed French Broad River Greenway extension and Carrier Park. As these are public recreational facilities, the project is subject to the requirements of United States Code (USC) Title 23 in Section 138 (Section 4(f)), the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), known as Section 4(f) of the DOT Act.

As stated in Section 4(f) of the above, "the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) shall not approve any program or project... which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State or local significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, or any land from an historic site of national, State or local significance as so determined by such officials unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from such use".

MAILING ADDRESS:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
1548 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1548

TELEPHONE: 919-733-7844
FAX: 919-733-9794

WEBSITE: WWW.DOH.DOT.STATE.NC.US

LOCATION:
TRANSPORTATION BUILDING
1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET
RALEIGH NC

We understand that you have had an opportunity to review the project preliminary plans that have been revised to minimize effects to these facilities. *De minimis* impacts on publicly owned parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges are defined as those that do not "adversely affect the activities, features and attributes" of the Section 4(f) resource. If the City official(s) with jurisdiction over the property will provide written concurrence that the proposed I-2513 project will not "adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify" Carrier Park and the existing and proposed French Broad River Greenway for protection under Section 4(f), the Federal Highway Administration intends to make a *de minimis* finding regarding these facilities. A letter to me stating concurrence would be sufficient.

Please note that the coordination efforts with the City to minimize project impacts to these facilities will be continued throughout the project planning and design process. We will also provide an opportunity for public involvement during the public hearing once the 4(f) *de minimis* documentation requirements are satisfied.

The NCDOT looks forward to working with you and your staff to minimize any effects on these recreational facilities with the proposed project. If I can provide additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Vincent J. Rhea, PE
Project Planning Engineer

Cc: Jake Riggsbee, PE, FHWA
Files

Suite 141
975 Walnut Street
Cary, North Carolina 27511
Phone 919 319 8850
Fax 919 319 6999

April 10, 2007

TGS ENGINEERS

Mr. Jim Orr, Superintendent
Parks and Public Facilities Division
City of Asheville
Parks and Recreation Department
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802

Subject: New Route, Asheville, NC, I-26 Connector along I-240 from existing I-26 to US 19-23-70 in Buncombe County, NCDOT Division 13, NC TIP No. I-2513, BSIP WBS Element 34165.1.2, State Project 8.U843701, Federal No. MANHF 26-1 (53)

Dear Mr. Orr:

The NC Department of Transportation is planning the proposed I-26 Connector which will include widening and improvements to exiting I-240 in the vicinity of SR 3556, Amboy Road. The improvements as currently planned will affect both the proposed French Broad River Greenway extension and Carrier Park near the Amboy Road interchange. As these are public recreational facilities, the project is subject to the requirements of United States Code (USC) Title 23 in Section 138 (Section 4(f)), the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), known as Section 4(f) of the DOT Act. According to Section 4(f) the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT):

> ...shall not approve any program or project...which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State or local significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, or any land from an historic site of national, State or local significance as so determined by such officials unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from such use.

We have identified the park facilities and boundaries as well as the proposed alignment of the greenway and included them on our base plans for the improvements to I-240 and Amboy Road in the area. As a result, we have included several modifications to our plans to avoid these facilities. However, these plans indicate a small amount of right of way and easement will be required from Carrier Park and approximately 300 feet of the proposed French Broad River Greenway extension will need to be reconstructed by our project.

The principal purpose of the scheduled April 13 meeting with you and your staff is to present our preliminary plans with these proposed modifications and to document your comments and suggestions. I have assembled the following questions concerning these facilities that we can hopefully address at this meeting.

1. Were there any LWCF funds used in the development of either of these facilities? (The Land

and Water Conservation Fund Act (Section 6(f)) at 16 USC 460 is a primary funding source of the US Department of the Interior for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition by local governments and state agencies. The National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the program on behalf of the federal government. Authority for the program at the state level is vested in the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor.)

2. Are there any restrictive covenants attached to the deeds for these facilities? If so, we may need to obtain copies of these restrictions.

3. Are there documented future plans for improvements to Carrier Park? If so, we would like to discuss these plans and if possible obtain copies of plans locating any proposed facilities.

4. Of the several routes available, is there an official routing of the French Broad River Greenway through Carrier Park?

5. Has the right of way for the proposed French Broad River Greenway been obtained? If so, was it purchased fee simple or obtained through easement?

6. What are the horizontal clearance requirements for the proposed French Broad River Greenway?

To satisfy Section 4(f), NCDOT must document the coordination with the City to minimize impacts to these facilities. The goal is to obtain and document the City's concurrence that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to these recreational facilities.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to minimize any effects on these recreational facilities with the construction of this important transportation improvement.

If I can provide additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

J. Kenneth Burleson, P.E.
TGS Engineers

JKB: jdw
cc: File

Federal Aid #: **MANHF26-1(53)** *TIP#:* **I-2513** *County*: **Buncombe**

CONCURRENCE FORM FOR ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Project Description: Proposed I-26 Connector from I-40/I-26 in southwestern Asheville to US 19-23-70 in northwest Asheville for total length of approximately 7 miles

On *May 19, 2015*, representatives of the

- [x] North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- [x] Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- [x] North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO)
- [ ] Other

Reviewed the subject project and agreed on the effects findings listed within the table on the reverse of this signature page.

Signed:

Mary Pope Furr — 5/21/2015

Representative, NCDOT — Date

John Bro — 5-21-15

FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency — Date

Renee Gledhill-Early — 5.21.15

Representative, HPO — Date

Property and Status	Alternative	Effect Finding	Reasons
Asheville School (BN1232) NR-Criteria A&C	Section C Alt. A-2	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate cut and fill slope and construct 2 retaining walls. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Does not impact contributing resources but requires reconstruction of small section of soil path/driveway near corner of I-40 and Sand Hill Road. **No service roads be placed on the property.**
	Section C Alt. C-2	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate cut and fill slope and construct 2 retaining walls. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Does not impact contributing resources but requires reconstruction of small section of soil path/driveway near corner of I-40 and Sand Hill Road. **No service roads be placed on the property.**
	Section C Alt. D-1	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate cut and fill slope and construct 2 retaining walls. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Does not impact contributing resources but requires reconstruction of small section of soil path/driveway near corner of I-40 and Sand Hill Road. **No service roads be placed on the property.**
	Section C Alt. F-1	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate cut and fill slope and construct 1 retaining wall. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Does not impact contributing resources but requires reconstruction of small section of soil path/driveway near corner of I-40 and Sand Hill Road. **No service roads be placed on the property.**
Biltmore Estate (BN0004) NR-Criteria A,B,C **National Historic Landmark**	Section C Alt. A-2	No Adverse Effect **4(f) *de minimis*	Small section (less than 1 acre) of new ROW required on north side of I-40 to accommodate cut and fill slopes and the Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Requires minimal tree removal along interstate. Does not impact contributing resources
	Section C Alt. C-2	No Adverse Effect **4(f) *de minimis*	Larger section (about 2 acres) of new ROW required on north side of I-40 to accommodate cut and fill slopes and the Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Requires minimal tree removal along interstate. Does not impact contributing resources.
	Section C Alt. D-1	No Adverse Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements outside the existing APE.

	Section C Alt. F-1	No Adverse Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements outside the existing APE.
Buncombe County Bridge 216 (BN2471) DE-Criterion C	Section A	No Adverse Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the structure despite its location under the new facility. Bridge will remain in place and closed to motorized vehicles.
Calvary Baptist Church (BN4921) DE-Criterion C	Section A	No Effect	No construction work within property boundary. Church parking and access are unaffected.
Baker Building (formerly Friendly Grocery Store) (BN2200) DE-Criteria A&C	Section A	No Adverse Effect	No construction work within property boundary. Sidewalks on sides of building will be reconstructed, as needed. On-street parking spaces in front of structure (Haywood Road) will be eliminated, but access to parking behind building remains unchanged.
West Asheville/Aycock School HD and Expansion (BN1839 and BN5951) NR-Criteria A&C	Section A	**Adverse Effect** ****4(f)** **Noise, visual, parking**	Small portion (less than ½ acres) ROW required at Aycock School parking lot to accommodate cut and fill slope and construct retaining wall. Two-way ramp will be eliminated and screening trees will be removed along west side of classrooms. Some parking spaces may be lost at school and along Haywood Road. The trees and Arrowhead monument on school grounds will be protected during construction. Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at school, but would be a visual impact to school.
William Worley House (formerly C.G. Worley House) (BN2442) DE-Criterion C	Section B Alt. 3	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate a long retaining wall which necessitates a permanent underground easement. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed. Clearing will only be required within the ROW limits. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation.**
	Section B Alt. 3C	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate a long retaining wall which necessitates a permanent underground easement. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed. Clearing will only be required within the ROW limits. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation.**

	Section B Alt. 4	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate a long retaining wall which necessitates a permanent underground easement. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed. Clearing will only be required within the ROW limits. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation.**
	Section B Alt. 4B	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	New ROW required to accommodate a long retaining wall which necessitates a permanent underground easement. Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed. Clearing will only be required within the ROW limits. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation.**
Freeman House (BN2470) DE-Criterion C	Section B Alt. 3	No Adverse Effect with commitments	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the property; however the new facility will be constructed at approximately the same elevation as the house and at an approximate distance of 156' from the structure. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation. NCDOT will also speak with the property owners about the visual impacts of the new facility and discuss landscaping measures.**
	Section B Alt. 3C	No Adverse Effect with commitments	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the property; however the new facility will be constructed at approximately 20'lower than the elevation of the house and at an approximate distance of 40' from the structure. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation. NCDOT will also speak with the property owners about the visual impacts of the new facility and discuss landscaping measures.**
	Section B Alt. 4	No Adverse Effect with commitments	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the property; however the new facility will be constructed at approximately 24'lower than the elevation of the house and at an approximate distance of 67' from the structure. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation. NCDOT will also speak with the property owners about the visual impacts of the new facility and discuss landscaping measures.**

	Section B Alt. 4B	No Adverse Effect with commitments	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the property; however the new facility will be constructed at approximately 30'lower than the elevation of the house and at an approximate distance of 159' from the structure. **Traffic noise analysis indicates that a noise wall could reduce levels at the house and NCDOT will contact the property owners to discuss abatement measures such as a noise wall, storm windows, or insulation. NCDOT will also speak with the property owners about the visual impacts of the new facility and discuss landscaping measures.**
Buncombe County Bridge 323 (formerly Great Smoky Mtn. Bridge) (BN2469) DE-Criterion C	Section B Alts. 3, 3C, 4, & 4B	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the structure.
Southern RR Bridge (BN5928) DE-Criteria A&C	Section B Alts. 3, 3C, 4, & 4B	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the structure.
Montford Area HD (BN0022) NR-Criteria A&C **Local Landmark HD**	Section B Alt. 3	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district.
	Section B Alt. 3C	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district.
	Section B Alt. 4	No Adverse Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district, but a retaining wall approximately 230' long will be constructed along the western boundary.
	Section B Alt. 4B	**Adverse Effect Visual**	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district; however two elevated bridges and a retaining wall approximately 687' long along the western boundary will have visual impacts on the district.
Montford Hills HD (BN1152) DE-Criteria A&C	Section B Alt. 3	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district.

	Section B Alt. 3C	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district.
	Section B Alt. 4	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district.
	Section B Alt. 4B	No Adverse Effect **4(f) *de minimis*	Permanent underground easement required to accommodate a long retaining wall adjacent to Westover Drive
Montford Hills & Hibritren Dr. Expansion (BN2468) DE-Criteria A&C	Section B Alt. 3	No Adverse Effect **4(f) *de minimis*	Small section (approximately 0.03acres) of new ROW required to accommodate cut and fill slopes and the Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Requires minimal tree removal. Does not impact contributing resources.
	Section B Alt. 3C	No Adverse Effect **4(f) *de minimis*	Small section (approximately 0.04acres) of new ROW required to accommodate cut and fill slopes and the Control of Access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Requires minimal tree removal. Does not impact contributing resources.
	Section B Alt. 4	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) *de minimis*	Approximately 0.16 acres of new ROW required to construct and maintain retaining wall along western boundary. **NCDOT will place the Control of Access fencing no more than 15' from the retaining wall to reduce permanent easements and tree clearing.**
	Section B Alt. 4B	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the district.
Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage (BN0195) NR-Criterion C	Section B Alts. 3, 3C, 4, & 4B	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the house.
Whiteford G. Smith House (BN1829) NR-Criterion C	Section B Alts. 3, 3C, 4, & 4B	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the house.

Haywood Street United Methodist Church (BN2212) DE-Criterion C	Section B Alts. 3, 3C, 4, & 4B	No Effect	No construction work or temporary construction easements will impact the church or its parking.

Initialed: NCDOT MPJ FHWA DJB HPO RSE

FHWA Intends to use the HPO's concurrence as a basis for a "de minimis" finding for the following properties, pursuant to Section 4(f):

1. Asheville School (BN1232)
2. Biltmore Estate (BN0004)
3. William Worley House (formerly C.G. Worley House) (BN2442)
4. Montford Hills HD (BN1152)
5. Montford Hills & Hibritren Dr. Expansion (BN2468)

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