

## AGENCY AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT





## MEETING DOCUMENTATION



**Project:** I-4400/I-4700 (I-26)

**Project Job #**41470

**Meeting Location:** NCDOT PDEA Conference Room

**Meeting Date:** December 6, 2005

**Subject:** Merger Screening Meeting

**Present:**

Stacy Baldwin	NCDOT PDEA
Joseph Qubain	NCDOT PDEA
Brian Wrenn	NCDENR DWQ
Angie Pennock	ACOE (via conference call)
Whit Webb	HNTB
Anne Redmond	HNTB
Adin McCann	HNTB

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The Merger Screening Meeting for the I-4400 / I-4700 project was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. in the NCDOT PDEA conference room. Meeting participants are noted above. Major discussion points are summarized below by category and may not be presented in chronological order.

I. Introductions

Mr. Qubain started the meeting by introducing himself, the project, and the attendees. The purpose of the meeting was to determine if the subject project would follow the Merger 01 process. Mr. Qubain stated that Mr. Jake Riggsbee would not be able to attend the meeting. However, Mr. Qubain's met with Mr. Riggsbee earlier to discuss the project. Mr. Riggsbee asked Mr. Qubain to speak on behalf of FHWA at the Merger Screening Meeting. Mr. Qubain then turned the meeting over to the HNTB staff to present the project overview and constraint mapping.

II. Project Overview

Mr. Webb provided an overview of the history of the project. The NCDOT advertised the I-4400 project as a Design-Build project after the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact were completed (May 2001 and January 2002, respectively). The project was legally challenged by several local groups, including the Southern Environmental Law Center. The ruling of the court primarily centered on a few key issues including logical termini, errors in statistical crash data, and whether the EA/FONSI took a "hard look" at indirect and cumulative impacts. The court ruled that the NCDOT should prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the I-26 project corridor, which included I-4400 and I-4700. Additionally, the NCDOT was directed by the court to study the indirect and cumulative impacts of the transportation projects in the general area. As a result of the court ruling, the NCDOT initiated the Cumulative Impact Study to implement a tiered approach to addressing indirect and cumulative impacts in the I-26 corridor. Under this tiered approach, environmental documents for individual TIP projects within the cumulative impact study area will address the indirect impacts. Cumulative impacts, on the other hand, will be discussed generally by referencing the Cumulative Impact Study. The Cumulative Impact Study is a pilot project for the NCDOT.

Ms. Pennock asked is the Cumulative Impact Study would take into account that the mitigation for A-10 project north of Asheville is not yet completed. Mr. Webb stated that the Cumulative Impact Study

## Meeting Documentation (cont'd.)



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does not take into account mitigation of direct impacts. Ms. Pennock stated that there were some good lessons learned from the A-10 project and that they should be kept in mind as this project moves forward.

Mr. Webb also briefly discussed the traffic component of the project. The EA/FONSI discussed widening of the I-26 corridor from a 4-lane section to a 6-lane section with the new lanes being constructed in the existing median. Although HNTB has yet to complete any of the traffic analyses for the project, there is a chance that the updated traffic data may necessitate construction of an 8-lane section, particularly in areas closer to Asheville. It is believed that the Asheville Connector project is proposing an 8-lane typical section. The traffic analyses completed by HNTB will also need to look closely at truck traffic volumes.

### III. Constraint Mapping / Issues

Ms. Redmond reviewed the GIS constraint mapping for the project corridor from north to south. The constraint maps and a summary of the constraint mapping can be found in the Merger Screening meeting informational packet provided to the meeting participants. The constraint mapping was generally compiled using existing NCDOT and State GIS information to show environmental and notable features within and near the project corridor. However, some features were added based on knowledge of the project area, as well as hard copies of local maps. According to information obtained from the SHPO, the Biltmore Estate property boundaries were reduced in January 2005 and no longer extend west of the I-26 corridor. HNTB modified the NCDOT GIS information to reflect this finding.

### IV. Permit Requirements

Ms. Baldwin stated that her initial feeling was that the project should follow the Merger 01 process. Mr. Wrenn stated that it appeared that there were a number of stream crossings in the project corridor. The number of stream crossings, in combination with a couple areas where the corridor is closely paralleling some streams, is of concern to the NCDENR DWQ. Additionally, the project would require coordination with the SHPO for Section 4(f) resources, as well as Wildlife Resources Commission due to the location of the project in a Trout County. Mr. Wrenn suggested that the project at least start out in the Merger 01 process. The project could always be removed from the process in the future if appropriate (e.g., after Concurrence Point 3). Ms. Pennock agreed with Mr. Wrenn's statements. Ms. Pennock also stated that the tabular summary of the potential environmental impacts could easily be revised to show "Medium" or even "High" for jurisdictional stream impacts. Ms. Pennock was also particularly concerned with potential wetland impacts in the area where the I-26 corridor parallels the French Broad River (west of Lake Julian). After hearing Mr. Wrenn's and Ms. Pennock's comments, Mr. Qubain stated that Mr. Riggsbee's comments were very similar in nature. Mr. Riggsbee felt that the project could be kept outside of the Merger 01 process unless there were water quality concerns on the part of NCDENR DWQ and/or the ACOE.

## Meeting Documentation (cont'd.)



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### Other Items

After the Merger Screening Meeting was formally adjourned, Mr. Wrenn and HNTB discussed a few additional project-related items. Mr. Webb asked if Mr. Wrenn could provide some insight as to how NCDENR DWQ would prefer to handle stormwater discharges related to the project. It is believed that many of the existing stormwater outlet pipes discharge directly to the adjacent streams. Mr. Wrenn stated that NCDENR DWQ would need more information from the Wildlife Resource Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service prior to making any definitive decisions regarding stormwater discharges. The NCDENR DWQ prefers treated discharges for High Quality Waters and certain stream classifications. However, due to the topographical constraints, they realize that this is not always possible for projects in the mountains. Mr. Wrenn also stated that NCDENR DWQ would most likely require a quantitative study of the indirect water quality impacts associated with the project.

The foregoing constitutes our understanding of the matters discussed and the conclusions reached. If there are any questions, corrections, omissions, or additional comments, please advise the author within five working days after receipt of these minutes.

# HNTB

**Project:** I-4400 / I-4700

**Subject:** Minutes of Scoping Meeting

**Meeting Date:** 6/13/06

**Meeting Location:** NCDOT Highway Building - Room 470

**Present:**

Stacy Baldwin	NCDOT / PDEA
Joseph Qubain	NCDOT / PDEA
Carla Dagnino	NCDOT / PDEA / NEU
Kris Dramby	NCDOT / PDEA / NEU
Ed Lewis	NCDOT / PDEA / HEU
Bob Deaton	NCDOT / PDEA / HEU
Ricky Tipton	NCDOT / Division 13
Jamie Wilson	NCDOT / Division 14
Jerry Snead	NCDOT / Hydraulics
John Pilipchuk	NCDOT / Geotechnical
Danny Gardner	NCDOT / Roadway Design
James Speer	NCDOT / Roadway Design
Bucky Galloway	NCDOT / TESSB / Traffic Operations and Investigation Sections
Nathan Phillips	NCDOT / TESSB / Congestion Management
Erin Hendee	NCDOT / TESSB / Congestion Management
Tim Williams	NCDOT / TESSB / ITS
Tim McFadden	NCDOT / Alternate Delivery
Lonnie Brooks	NCDOT / Structure Design
Quang Nguyen	NCDOT / Structure Design
Jurek Gedzior	NCDOT / Photogrammetry
Beverly Williams	NCDOT / TPB
Daniel Holt	NCDOT / TPB
John Taylor	NCDOT / Location & Surveys
Barb Mee	French Broad River MPO
Adin McCann	HNTB
Anne Redmond	HNTB
Jeff Dayton	HNTB
Don Bryson	Martin/Alexiou/Bryson

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The following items were discussed during the meeting:

- Joseph Qubain opened the meeting by discussing its purpose and objectives. Everyone then went around the room and introduced themselves as well as the organization they represent. Mr. Qubain explained that comments received today are critical for the environmental document.
- Adin McCann gave information about the background and current status of the project. Some of the key points include:

## Minutes of Scoping Meeting for I-4400 / I-4700 (cont'd)

- The project is located in western North Carolina in Buncombe and Henderson Counties. The total length of the I-26 widening project is approximately 22.2 miles and is composed of two individual TIP segments, I-4700 and I-4400.
- Figure 1 shows the northern terminus of the project near the I-26 / I-40 interchange in Asheville. TIP I-4700 is approximately 8.6 miles in length and is shown in red on Figures 1 and 2. The I-4700 segment ends near the Buncombe County / Henderson County line just north of the airport. At this point, the I-4400 segment, shown in green, starts. The I-4400 segment is approximately 13.6 miles long and continues south to the I-26 / NC 225 / US 25 Connector interchange in Henderson County. This is the southern terminus for the project.
- An EA/FONSI for I-4400 was signed in January 2002. The NCDOT advertised I-4400 as a Design Build project. The low bid for the project was approximately \$83.7 million. However, the I-4400 project was legally challenged by the North Carolina Alliance for Transportation Reform (and others). In July 2003, the Court ruled that the EA/FONSI improperly segmented the project and failed to take a "hard look" at the indirect and cumulative effects of the I-26 corridor expansion. The court mandated that the NCDOT develop an EIS for the I-26 widening. Additionally, as part of the EIS, the NCDOT is also simultaneously conducting a regional Cumulative Effects Study.
- Based on the 2006-2012 NCDOT TIP, I-4700 is programmed for planning and environmental study. I-4400 is also programmed for planning and environmental study only. The TIP shows \$83.7 million for construction of I-4400 in post years.
- The NCDOT recently completed an updated cost estimate for the entire project corridor assuming a six-lane cross-section. This estimate is approximately \$259 million. However, the estimate does not include costs for ROW acquisition. If an 8-lane cross-section is required for the project, the cost estimate will need to be updated to reflect costs for additional travel lanes, as well as possible ROW acquisition costs. According to the I-4400 EA, an 8-lane cross-section may also require extensive modifications to the y-line or parallel facilities.
- I-26 is listed in the North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridor plan as a critical freeway link between Spartanburg, South Carolina and Johnson City, Tennessee. Upon its completion, I-26 will provide a direct, multi-lane, freeway facility meeting interstate standards between the port of Charleston, South Carolina to I-81 near Kingsport, Tennessee.
- General project descriptions and current status as listed in the 2006-2012 NCDOT TIP were provided for the following connecting or adjacent TIP projects:
  - I-2513 – The Asheville Connector project is proposed as an 8-lane facility on existing and new alignment. The I-26 widening project will tie into the Asheville Connector project at the existing I-40 / I-26 / I-240 interchange. As part of the Asheville Connector project, this interchange will be re-designed to accommodate connection of a widened I-26.
  - I-4401 – Construction of an auxiliary lane along I-40 west of I-26. Construction is scheduled for FFY 2006.
  - U-3601 – Widening and upgrade of NC 191 / Brevard Road. Planning and design is in progress and right of way acquisition is underway.
  - R-2813 – Widening of NC 146 / Long Shoals Road. Planning and design in progress with right of way and construction scheduled for FFY 2006 and post years. Ricky Tipton commented that the section of NC 146 from I-26 to US 25 is currently under construction. Portions west of I-26 are scheduled to start construction in December. He also said the interchange of I-26 / NC 146 is proposed as a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) and could be let for design-build in December 2006.
  - R-2214 – Widening of US 25. Part complete and part under construction.
  - R-4430 – Widening of SR 1783 / Upward Road. Planning and design in progress.

## Minutes of Scoping Meeting for I-4400 / I-4700 (cont'd)

- R-505 – Widening and upgrade of NC 225 / US 25 Connector. Planning and design in progress.
- There are 11 existing grade-separated crossings and 8 existing interchanges. Of particular note are the I-26 bridges over the French Broad River, the Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26, and the I-26 bridges over the Norfolk Southern Railroad Crossing.
- According to the I-4400 EA, the existing 4-lane facility was operating at a LOS E in the year 2000. Conditions were anticipated to deteriorate to a LOS F by 2007 if the roadway was not widened. The I-4400 EA also contained projections for the year 2020. These projections anticipated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes ranging from approximately 63,300 vpd on the south end to 76,200 vpd on the north end. However, based on NCDOT Bridge Inspection Reports, the 2004 ADT traffic volumes along the I-4700 segment of the corridor have already reached 64,000 vpd (near Asheville Regional Airport) and 69,000 vpd (near I-40 in Asheville). The bridge inspection reports indicate that the 2004 ADTs for the I-4400 segment range from 48,000 to 50,000 vpd. The NCDOT bridge inspection reports also indicate that the truck traffic percentages along I-26 typically ranged between 16 and 23%.
- As part of the environmental study, updated crash data will be obtained and evaluated to examine the corridor from a safety perspective.
- Special features along the project corridor were discussed from north to south. These features included:
  - Biltmore Square Mall (Figure 1)
  - I-26 bridges over the French Broad River (Figure 1)
  - Blue Ridge Parkway and Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26 (Figure 1) – This project will include replacement of the existing structure to allow for the horizontal clearance required for a widened section. Based on initial comments received from Biltmore Estate personnel, aesthetic design will be a consideration.
  - Lake Julian Power Plant (Figure 1)
  - Asheville Regional Airport (Figure 2) – The Asheville Regional Airport Authority estimates that the number of passengers departing the airport will approximately double between now and 2025. The Airport Authority also expressed an interest in reconfiguring the interchanges near the airport. NC 280 / Airport Road has become a busy commercial corridor to the north of the Airport. At the present time, southbound traffic existing I-26 at the NC 280 interchange backs up onto the exit ramp and I-26. This congestion, combined with the existing grade of I-26 has resulted in numerous accidents.
  - Western Carolina Agricultural Center (Figure 2)
  - Rest Area (Figure 2)
  - Broodmoor Golf Links – public golf course (Figure 2)
  - Park Ridge Hospital (Figure 2)
  - Weigh Station (Figure 2)
- The proposed project will widen I-26. Traffic projections will be updated in order to determine the appropriate cross-sections to meet existing and future travel demand.
- A Merger Screening Meeting was conducted for this project in December 2005. Based on the comments received, the project will be conducted in conformance with the Merger Process. However, if appropriate, the project may be released from the Merger process at a later date.
- A court mandated EIS is being completed for this project. Due to the court ruling, the EIS also includes a Cumulative Effects Study for the I-26 corridor. The EIS schedule is as follows: Draft EIS

## Minutes of Scoping Meeting for I-4400 / I-4700 (cont'd)

- May 2008; Final EIS – June 2009; Record of Decision – September 2009; The Regional Cumulative Effects Study is scheduled for completion in late 2006.
- Based on the I-4400 EA/FONSI and existing NCDOT GIS information, the following environmental concerns were noted:
  - Hazardous material sites – Pond Road Landfill and Highway 29 Dump Site (Figure 1)
  - Water resources – The project is located in the French Broad River Basin. According to the North Carolina 2006 Draft 303(d) List, there are five (5) 303(d) streams in the vicinity of the project: Hominy Creek (Figure 1), French Broad River (Figure 1), Can Creek (Figure 2), Mud Creek / Clear Creek (Figures 2 and 3), and Bat Fork (Figure 3). There are no NC Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) designated trout waters, but there are several NCWRC trout waters. No Water Supply Watersheds, Outstanding Resource Waters, or High Quality Waters are located within approximately 1,000 feet of the study corridor.
  - The project is located within a “Trout County” and will require the concurrence of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). The project is also located in the Tennessee Valley Authority’s (TVA) Land Management District and will require a permit from TVA.
  - Protected species – The I-4400 (May 2001) identified 15 federally protected species. The biological conclusion for each of those species was no effect. There were also mussel surveys conducted in 2001 at various points in the French Broad River downstream of the Cane Creek / French Broad River confluence (Figure 2). Some concerns were expressed during the R-2813 project and again during initial meetings with local planners for this project regarding potential impacts to riparian buffers and the bog turtle in the area of Long Shoals Road. There was also a mention of an existing conservation easement between the French Broad River and I-26.
  - Cultural Resources – The Biltmore Estate (Figure 1) is sensitive to noise from the I-26 corridor. Initial comments from the Biltmore Estate indicate that they would like to see aesthetics considered in the design of the replacement Blue Ridge Parkway structure. The Biltmore Estate representatives have also indicated that the I-26 bridges over the French Broad River can also be seen from the Biltmore House. Other historic resources along the corridor include the Rugby Grange National Register Historic District (Figure 2) and the Sholtz-Cantrell House (Figure 2) which was determined eligible for the National Register in the I-4400 EA (May 2001)
  - Community Resources – There are a number of schools and churches along the Y-line facilities. All appear to be outside of the immediate project area. However, these facilities will be monitored as the study progresses.
- As an EIS, the environmental document will include evaluation of build alternatives, as well as consideration of TDM and/or TSM alternatives. Also, a local contingency may request consideration of a transit alternative.
- I-26 is a heavily traveled corridor, especially with regard to trucking. Maintenance of traffic during construction will be an important consideration.
- Mr. Qubain then asked for input from the different agencies represented at the meeting.
- Kris Dramby (NEU) said that one additional T&E species (the Tan riffleshell) was added to the 2006 Threatened & Endangered (T&E) species list since its last update in March, 2006. The project areas should be re-surveyed to look for T&E species and habitat, especially the Bog Turtle which is located primarily south of the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Carla Dagnino (NEU) added that WRC designated trout streams are High Quality Waters by default.

## Minutes of Scoping Meeting for I-4400 / I-4700 (cont'd)

- Ed Lewis noted that HEU would like to see a good public involvement plan.
- Bob Deaton mentioned that HEU has worked with HNTB on previous projects in the area. As a result, HNTB is well aware of any potential community issues. Additionally, HEU will continue to work with HNTB on the Cumulative Effects Study and the EIS.
- Beverly Williams (TPB) mentioned that a systems planning level analysis is being completed. This information will include mainline and y-line volumes.
- Ricky Tipton (Division 13) said that a new Super Wal-Mart is planned on NC 280 across from the existing shopping center containing Target. The NC 280 corridor is planned to handle large amounts of traffic in the future. The I-26 / NC 146 interchange is currently designed to accommodate an eight-lane section for I-26.
- Lonnie Brooks (Structures) would like to have the NCDOT Structure Unit involved in the coordination with the Biltmore Estate and the National Park Service so NCDOT doesn't commit to building bridge structures that may not be feasible in terms of cost. Mr. Brooks asked about the Section 4(f) impacts. In addition to the Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge, Ms. Redmond stated that the I-26 bridges over the French Broad River could be seen from the Biltmore Estate and might therefore be contained within the Area of Potential Effects (APE). However, Ms. Redmond stated that the Biltmore staff had not mentioned a specific concern regarding aesthetics for this bridge structure. Mr. Brooks also asked if the National Park Service was willing to close the Blue Ridge Parkway during construction. Mr. McCann stated that the initial feedback received indicated that the Park Service would like to maintain traffic during construction. Additionally, Mr. McCann stated that the Park Service would like to explore realignment of the bridge to remove a curve. This might involve some type of a land swap between the Biltmore Estate and the Park Service. Mr. Brooks expressed concern with the idea of an alignment change due to the skew angle of the bridge over I-26.
- Jerry Snead (Hydraulics) discussed the 11 major stream crossings on the I-4700 section. Two of the major crossings (French Broad River and Hominy Creek) have bridge structures. The French Broad River bridges (Str. # 211 and 214) were built in 1967 and have an estimated remaining life of 17 to 26 years. The sufficiency ratings of these bridges are 63 out of 100 and 73 out of 100. The Hominy Creek bridges (Structure # 235 and 238) were built in 1966. There is also an inventoried culvert (Structure #101) at Powell Creek (2 @10' x 10'). There are 8 additional culverts of unknown size that are at least single barrel or larger. All streams are within the French Broad River Basin. Many of the structures are located within the regulated floodway, so coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be required for no rise certification. Coordination and permitting will also be required with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). On the I-4400 section, there are 10 major stream crossings. The bridges over Clear Creek (Str. # 211 and #212) were constructed in 1963 and are located within the regulated floodway. There was also some restoration completed in 1989. The eastbound bridge has a sufficiency rating of 7 out of 100. The bridges over Cane Creek (Str. # 233 and #234) were constructed in 1964, have an estimated 7 to 13 years of life remaining and are located within the regulated floodway. There are (4) four culverts that have been inventoried: Dunn Creek (Str. #150 – 2 @ 8' x 8'), Devils Fork Creek (Str. # 178 – 3 @ 9' x 10'), Featherstone Creek (Str. # 218 – 3 @ 8' x 8'), and Kimsey Creek at its confluence with Cane Creek (3 @ 7' x 7'). Mr. Snead recommended retaining the existing structures and extending to accommodate a widened section. Bridge inventories should be reviewed closely to determine appropriateness of replacing existing bridge structures. Mr. Snead recommended widening to the east side in the area near Mud Creek and SR 1528. Longitudinal encroachment into the floodplain should also be avoided.
- John Pilipchuk (Geotechnical) said written comments will be coming in two weeks. He also noted that the preliminary slopes appear to be 2:1 with no allowance for anything steeper.
- Jurek Gedzior (Photogrammetry) said that a meeting will need to be set up to discuss photogrammetry.

## Minutes of Scoping Meeting for I-4400 / I-4700 (cont'd)

- Nathan Phillips (Congestion Management) said new traffic will be coming soon. He wondered if an eight-lane section would be enough. He mentioned to the group that nothing less than LOS D will be accepted along I-26. This policy was adopted by NCDOT and FHWA with regard to the I-2513 project. The interchanges may have to be reconfigured due to the I-26 widening. A formal letter will be sent to Mr. Qubain very soon. ITS and CCT may also need to be included in this contract with preliminary estimates around \$870,000.
- Bucky Galloway (Traffic Safety) discussed how this area of Western North Carolina is a heavily traveled tourist corridor, especially between spring and fall. He suggested that weekend traffic counts may be beneficial for this project. Mr. Phillips responded that we are not designing for the peak tourist season and thus there would probably not be weekend counts. With regard to the I-4400 project, he thought the reconfiguration of the interchange of US 64 to a diamond was a mistake. He also wondered if Y-line counts are available. Mr. Galloway stated that the NC 280 interchange is at capacity and that NC 280 is over capacity. A SPUI may be appropriate in this area due to its close proximity to the Airport. Mr. Galloway thought that traffic counts along NC 280 and US 64 would also be beneficial information to collect for the study. Mr. Galloway also stated that, in addition to Wal-Mart, more growth is coming along the NC 280 corridor. He mentioned that Biltmore Baptist Church is not shown on the map but may want to be added. It is located along NC 146 west of I-26 and has an approximate congregation of 7,000 people. TC Roberson High School is along NC 146, east of Valley Springs Middle School. He discussed how the local EMS would like 1/10 mile markers, but he is proposing mile markers every 2/10 miles. Mr. Galloway stated that he thought an eight-lane section was needed at least between I-40 to NC 280. Mr. Galloway also asked for rumble strips to be incorporated into the design.
- Jamie Wilson (Division 14) noted that NCDOT owned quite a bit of ROW near the Broadmoor Golf Links golf course and the WNC Agricultural Center and Airport. Some research will have to be done to find out more specific information on this topic. He mentioned that a statewide weigh station feasibility study was recently completed and included some recommendations of the weigh stations on I-26. The EB weigh station is proposed to be closed and the WB weigh station is proposed to be refurbished. Mr. Wilson also mentioned that Balfour Parkway as a replacement to the Clear Creek Connector. This project is in the LRTP but not in the TIP (i.e., unfunded). This road would provide an additional connection to I-26 and has County support. Ms. Williams said that TPB was aware of this project and can provide information in the traffic forecast as an option. He mentioned that many of the sufficiency ratings of the I-26 bridges were due to the fact that no work was completed on the substructures during the rehabilitation process. Consequently, it may be difficult to save some of them. He also commented on the proposed revisions to the US 64 interchange and suggested that this design (diamond interchange) be revisited as well. Mr. Wilson also mentioned that the segment of I-26 between SR 1783 / Upward Road and NC 225 is extremely congested. Traffic backs up onto I-26 from the Upward Road interchange. This, in turn, can cause traffic to back-up onto NC 225 and its ramp to I-26. Mr. Wilson stated the he would like to see this project coordinated with the R-4430 project. According to Mr. Wilson, SR 1783 / Upward Road (R-4430) is scheduled for ROW in October 2006. This could allow for construction to start in October 2008. Mr. Wilson mentioned that there is a wetland mitigation site in the southeast quadrant of the Brookside Camp Road crossing of Mud Creek.
- Daniel Holt (TPB) mentioned that NC 280 is a freight planning corridor south of I-26. He also stressed the importance of the MPO's involvement in the I-26 planning process. Mr. Holt stated that the MPO should be notified well in advance of any public meetings. The MPO policy board presides over a three county region. They can help garner public buy-in and support for this project. They can help with the aesthetics, landscape, etc. Mr. Holt stated that the locals are looking forward to the project meetings and that this project is a sensitive topic in the area surrounding I-26.

## Minutes of Scoping Meeting for I-4400 / I-4700 (cont'd)

- Mr. Lewis (HEU) commented that two public workshops should be held – one at each end of the project. Mr. Lewis recommended a Public Involvement Plan to ensure stakeholder involvement in the process. The plan can be forwarded to everyone so that the opportunities for public involvement are known well in advance. An invitation letter should also be sent to the Division Engineer to keep them involved. They can also forward the letter to other parties involved.
- Mr. Qubain then wrapped up the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation and said that meeting minutes will be circulated via email to all attendees.

Note: After the meeting adjourned, John Taylor from Location and Surveys arrived and provided some comments. He identified a section of the NC Mountains to the Sea Trail (which is part of the National Trail System) along the Blue Ridge Parkway over I-26. The walkways along this facility are not pedestrian friendly. The existing walkways along the bridge are approximately 18” to 24”. There is an existing box culvert along Ferry Road that goes under I-26. Currently, water is starting to seep through the ceiling. This is especially troubling because it is a fill section. He also mentioned that I-4700 was flown approximately three to five years ago. I-4400 should have design surveys completed because the project was originally let for design-build a few years ago. Mr. Taylor stated that there should also be survey data available from the NC 146 / Long Shoals Road project. He also thought that there were some major sewer lines ranging from 21” to 36” in diameter running parallel and along the French Broad River. Ms. Redmond stated that the draft meeting minutes would be emailed to Mr. Taylor for review and comment.

Minutes prepared by Jeff Dayton (HNTB)

*The foregoing constitutes our understanding of the matters discussed and the conclusions reached. If there are any questions, corrections, omissions, or additional comments please advise Joseph Qubain (NCDOT) or Adin McCann (HNTB) within five working days after receipt of these minutes.*

cc: Meeting Participants  
Project File

**MEETING DOCUMENTATION**



**To:** Meeting Attendees  
File

**HNTB Project # 41470**

**From:** David Keiser, HNTB  
Anne Redmond, HNTB

**Subject:** I-4400/I-4700: I-26 Corridor  
EIS Kickoff Meeting  
November 18, 2010, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** PDEA Conference Room 470

**Present:**

Joseph Qubain	NCDOT Project Development & Environmental Analysis
James Bridges	NCDOT Project Development & Environmental Analysis
Donnie Brew	Federal Highway Administration
Whit Webb	HNTB
Anne Redmond	HNTB
David Keiser	HNTB

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A meeting for the restart of the I-26 Corridor EIS was held on Thursday, November 18, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. in PDEA Conference Room 470. Meeting participants are noted above. A copy of the project background, timeline, and project map handouts were provided to the meeting attendees, and are also attached to these minutes. Major discussion points are summarized below by category and may not be presented in chronological order.

I. Introductions & Project Background

Mr. Qubain started the meeting by introducing himself, followed by a brief introduction from each of the meeting attendees. Mr. Qubain provided a handout listing the project background, history, timeline, and the previously developed scoping maps (attached), and provided a brief overview of project.

Ms. Redmond also highlighted a few additional pieces of information: the I-4400 EA/FONSI was developed for 6 lanes (median widening) and there is no environmental document for I-4700, nor was the feasibility study ever finished. It was also noted that the scoping map handouts should be updated to reflect new and completed projects since 2006.

II. Funding Discussion for I-4400/I-4700 & I-2513

The latest STIP I-4400/I-4700 schedule includes right-of-way funding in 2018, based on the latest draft TIP. It was also noted that I-2513 (Asheville Connector) is currently unfunded based on the latest draft TIP, which has implications whether funding for this project is considered “foreseeable”, and may preclude consideration in the I-4400/I-4700 EIS. Mr. Webb noted that if Appalachian funds are made available, this could advance the project. Conversely, Mr. Brewer noted that project A9 could consume

## Meeting Documentation (cont'd.)



**Project:** I-4400/I-4700: I-26 Corridor

**Job #** 41470

**Meeting Location:** PDEA Conference Room 470

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2010

any potential funding for I-2513. Due to these uncertainties, Ms. Redmond recommended initially focusing on the direct impacts of I-4400/I-4700 and address indirect and cumulative impacts later.

### III. Logical Termini & Notice of Intent

Mr. Webb noted that the traffic study will largely determine the logical termini for the project and that this should be considered and analyzed early in the project because of its potential effects. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was issued in 2006 advising that an EIS will be prepared for I-4400/I-4700, which indicated the logical termini of the I-26 study between NC 225 and I-40 near Asheville in Buncombe and Henderson Counties. Mr. Qubain questioned FHWA whether the NOI will need to be republished now with potential changes to the logical termini based on the traffic study. Mr. Brew will investigate whether the NOI must be republished or any changes in logical termini documented in the administrative record.

### IV. Merger Screening and Scoping

The project was previously placed into the merger process due to the number of stream crossings. Merger screening has already been held and is likely not needed again based on the project's merits. However, Mr. Webb stated that there may be value in staying within the merger process, due to the past litigation on this project and the value provided by support from the merger agencies. If the merger process is selected, Concurrence Points 1 & 2 could be processed simultaneously. And since the project was previously scoped, Mr. Brew stated that the project did not need to be re-scoped again. Ms. Redmond noted that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has requested a lead role on the project, and should be involved on the front end of the project during the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Section 106 evaluations.

### V. Design Considerations

The previous I-4400 EA/FONSI recommended widening to 6 lanes within the median, whereas the traffic study may determine that 8 lanes are required, which would require widening to the outside, and therefore a larger footprint or possible changes to the logical termini. Per previous discussions with the Biltmore Estate, the bridges over the French Broad River are visible from the Estate. Also, the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) crossing of I-26 has deficient horizontal geometry, and the bridge lengths must be investigated for adequacy if I-26 is widened to 8 lanes. There was previous discussion with the BRP staff and Biltmore Farms about a potential land swap if the BRP bridge was relocated or widened. The BRP staff indicated a desire to remove or flatten a sharp curve just west of the bridge as potential mitigation.

### VI. Traffic Forecasting

Mr. Qubain will provide the procedure and form for requesting traffic forecasting, and Mr. Keiser will prepare an 8.5"x 11" map of the project, listing Y-lines and interchange coverage needed. Mr. Qubain and Mr. Bridges will discuss internally to determine if NCDOT TPB or HNTB will provide the traffic forecasting update, but the general timeframe discussed was 6 to 8 months, and traffic counts should not be taken during December and the Holidays.

## Meeting Documentation (cont'd.)



**Project:** I-4400/I-4700: I-26 Corridor

**Job #** 41470

**Meeting Location:** PDEA Conference Room 470

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2010

Mr. Webb noted that questions may be raised regarding whether mass transit was included in any traffic modeling as an alternative or adjunct to the project. Mr. Brew noted that no mass transit projects in the project area are currently included in the TIP. Also, it was noted that the percentage of trucks through this corridor is very high, and mass transit would not alleviate this truck congestion. Mr. Brew requested the Level of Service (LOS) on I-4400.

### VII. Photogrammetry

Photogrammetry was previously acquired in 2006, but recently completed projects such as R-2813 (Long Shoals Road) and any other development along the corridor will require updates. Mr. Qubain will inquire on the status of the photogrammetry request through the NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit.

### VIII. Task Orders

Task Order #4 should be prepared to exceed the value of Task Order #3. HNTB was instructed to include Public Involvement in their scope and fee development. Mr. Qubain and Mr. Bridges were to discuss internally whether some of the EIS work would be completed by NCDOT or HNTB – this includes Concurrence Points 1 and/or 2, the Natural Resources Technical Report (NRTP), and Traffic Forecasting.

### Action Items

- Mr. Keiser will verify that I-2513 has been removed from the latest draft of the TIP. This will affect whether I-2513 is considered “foreseeable” as part of the I-4400/I-4700 EIS.
- Mr. Brew will investigate whether the NOI must be republished based on changes to the logical termini, or if this can be documented as part of the administrative record.
- Mr. Keiser will investigate the interchanges to determine if 8 lanes are geometrically feasible at the Blue Ridge Parkway grade-separation, as well as the other project interchanges, including impacts from the completed Long Shoals Road project (request roadway plans for R-2813).
- Mr. Keiser will locate the previous traffic forecast scope and provide to Mr. Qubain.
- Mr. Qubain will provide the procedure and form for requesting traffic forecasting. Mr. Keiser will complete the form and prepare an 8.5”x 11” map of the project, listing Y-lines and interchange coverage needed. Mr. Qubain and Mr. Bridges will discuss internally to determine if NCDOT or HNTB will provide the traffic forecasting update.
- Mr. Brew requested the Level of Service (LOS) on I-4400. Mr. Keiser will review the EA/FONSI and provide the requested LOS.
- Mr. Qubain will discuss photogrammetry needs internally with NCDOT and request.
- Mr. Qubain and Mr. Bridges will determine internally whether to combine CP1 & CP2 into one step on this project (as a pilot project). In addition, PDEA will determine whether the Natural Resources Technical Report (NRTP) and Traffic Forecasting will be conducted by NCDOT or the consulting team. Ms. Redmond/Mr. Keiser will begin preparing the Public Involvement scope and fee, and if

## Meeting Documentation (cont'd.)



**Project:** I-4400/I-4700: I-26 Corridor

**Job #** 41470

**Meeting Location:** PDEA Conference Room 470

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2010

instructed based on NCDOT's internal discussions, develop scope and fee for the other work items listed above.

The foregoing constitutes our understanding of the matters discussed and the conclusions reached. If there are any questions, corrections, omissions, or additional comments, please advise the author within five working days after receipt of these minutes.

## MEETING DOCUMENTATION



**Project:** I-4400/I-4700 (I-26 Widening)

**Project Job #**41470

**Meeting Location:** NCDOT CCA Room 51

**Meeting Date:** September 28, 2012

**Subject:** Merger Screening Meeting Summary

**Present:**

Jennifer Harris	NCDOT PDEA
Undrea Major	NCDOT PDEA
Mitch Batuzich	FHWA North Carolina Division (via telephone)
Amy Euliss	NCDENR DWQ (via telephone)
Lori Beckwith	USACE (via telephone)
Kiersten Bass	HNTB
Paige Hunter	HNTB (via telephone)

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The Merger Screening Meeting for the I-4400 / I-4700 project was held on Friday, September 28 at 10:00 a.m. at NCDOT Century Center Building A. Meeting participants are noted above. The purpose of the meeting was to determine if the subject project would follow the Merger 01 process.

- Mr. Major provided an overview of the history of the project. The NCDOT advertised the I-4400 project as a Design-Build project after the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were completed (May 2001 and January 2002, respectively). The project was legally challenged. The ruling of the court primarily centered on a few key issues including logical termini, errors in statistical crash data, and whether the EA/FONSI took a “hard look” at indirect and cumulative impacts. Mr. Major noted that it was NCDOT’s legal interpretation that the court ruling required NCDOT to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the I-26 project corridor, to include both I-4400 and I-4700.
- The Notice of Intent (NOI) for I-4400 / I-4700 was issued in June 2006.
- Ms. Euliss requested to see more information on the court ruling and a copy of the 2006 NOI.
- The EA/FONSI discussed widening of the I-26 corridor from a 4-lane section to a 6-lane section with the new lanes being constructed in the existing median. Although HNTB has yet to complete any of the traffic analyses for the project, there is a chance that the updated traffic data may necessitate construction of an 8-lane section, particularly in areas closer to Asheville.
- The constraint maps and a summary of the constraint mapping can be found in the Merger Screening meeting informational packet provided to the meeting participants. The constraint mapping was generally compiled using existing NCDOT and State GIS information to show environmental and notable features within and near the project corridor.
- After reviewing the constraint mapping, meeting attendees expressed concern regarding the presence of the Biltmore Estate, French Broad River (trout water and Appalachian Elktoe mussel), and the Blue Ridge Parkway along the project corridor.
- The number of stream crossings, in combination with a couple areas where the corridor is closely paralleling some streams, is of concern to the NCDENR DWQ. Additionally, the project may require coordination with the SHPO for Section 4(f) resources, as well as Wildlife Resources Commission due to the location of the project in a Trout County.
- Concerns were also raised regarding maintaining traffic on the Blue Ridge Parkway during construction of the Parkway’s bridge.

## Meeting Documentation (cont'd.)



**Project:** I-4400 / I-4700 (I-26 Widening)

**Job #** 41470

**Meeting Location:** NCDOT CCA Room 51

**Meeting Date:** September 28, 2012

- It was noted that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) would be based on avoiding and minimizing impacts.
- Some meeting attendees felt that the project should start out following the Merger 01 process and then could always be removed from the process in the future if appropriate.
- Mr. Major indicated that NCDOT has previously streamlined the Merger process through a Modified Merger which includes combining Concurrence Points (CPs).
- Meeting attendees agreed that CP 1 and CP 2 could be combined for I-4400 / I-4700.
- Meeting consensus was that STIP Project I-4400 / I-4700 should start out following the Merger 01 process, and the process should be streamlined when possible.

### *Action Items:*

- *A project schedule and re-initiation package will be assembled and circulated to the project team and meeting attendees.*
- *A copy of the I-4400 EA/FONSI will be circulated to meeting attendees.*
- *Documentation from the I-4400 court ruling will be circulated to meeting attendees.*
- *The 2006 NOI will be sent to meeting attendees.*

The foregoing constitutes our understanding of the matters discussed and the conclusions reached. If there are any questions, corrections, omissions, or additional comments, please advise the author within five working days after receipt of these minutes.



North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
Attn: Dre Major  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

Citizens' Informational Workshop  
I-26 Widening and Improvement  
STIP Project I-4400/I-4700

January 31, 2013  
4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**Your input is important!**



Please join us for the

## I-26 Widening and Improvement Citizens' Informational Workshop

State Transportation Improvement Program Project No. I-4400/I-4700



The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen and improve approximately 22.2 miles of I-26 from US 25 in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County. The purpose of this project is to relieve congestion along the I-26 corridor. NCDOT will hold a citizens' informational workshop for this project on Thursday, January 31, 2013. The purpose of this meeting is for NCDOT representatives to provide information, answer questions, and receive public comments regarding the project. The opportunity to submit written comments or questions will also be available. Interested citizens may attend at any time during the workshop hours. There will be no formal presentation. Anyone desiring additional information may contact Dre Major in the NCDOT Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to participate in the workshop. To receive special services, please call Dre Major by January 24, 2013.

Persons who speak Spanish and do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior to the meeting by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Western North Carolina Agricultural Center

Virginia C. Boone Building

1301 Fanning Bridge Road

Fletcher, NC 28732

**January 31, 2013**

**4:00 PM until 7:00 PM**

Contact Us!

**Dre Major**

NCDOT Project Planning Engineer

1548 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

[ujmajor@ncdot.gov](mailto:ujmajor@ncdot.gov) or (919) 707-6028

*Connecting people and places in North Carolina – safely and efficiently,  
with accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the  
economy, health and well-being of North Carolina.*





# I-26 Widening and Improvement



## From US 25 in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project No. I-4400/I-4700

Citizens' Informational Workshop Handout – January 31, 2013

### Welcome

Thank you for attending the first Citizens' Informational Workshop for the proposed I-26 Widening and Improvement Project. This workshop is provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation to provide information about the project and to obtain public input. You will have an opportunity to review project maps and displays, talk with project team members, and offer your comments.

### Input and Comments

This information packet includes a comment sheet. We look forward to receiving your input. The information that you provide will help identify key concerns and issues regarding the proposed project. Please fill out the comment sheet and submit your comments tonight in the box on the Comment Table. You may also email or mail your comments and/or questions to the study team listed on the comment sheet by March 1, 2013. A Title VI Voluntary Survey is also available for you to fill out.

### Project Information

- ❖ **Project Purpose** – To meet the existing and future travel demand for the I-26 corridor and relieve projected congestion along the project corridor.
- ❖ **Length** – 22.2 miles
- ❖ **2011 Traffic Volume** – 43,600 to 80,000 vehicles per day
- ❖ **2040 Traffic Volume** – 58,900 to 90,500 vehicles per day
- ❖ **Existing Grade Separations:**
  - Crest Road (SR 1803)
  - Tracy Grove Road
  - Dana Road
  - Clear Creek Road (SR 1503)
  - Brookside Camp Road
  - Norfolk Southern Rail Corridor
  - Butler Bridge Road (SR 1345)
  - Glen Bridge Road (SR 3495)
  - Blue Ridge Parkway
  - Ferry Road
  - Pond Road
- ❖ **Existing Interchanges:**
  - US 25 (Exit 54)
  - Upward Road / SR 1722 (Exit 53)
  - US 64 (Exit 49)
  - US 25 / Asheville Highway (Exit 44)
  - NC 280 / Airport Road (Exit 40)\*
  - NC 146 / Long Shoals Road (Exit 37)
  - NC 191 / Brevard Road (Exit 33)\*
  - I-40 / I-240\*

\*Improvements at these interchanges are to be completed under separate NCDOT projects.

### Tentative Schedule

- ✓ Project Initiation / Start of Project Study      Fall 2012
- ➔ Kick-off Citizens Informational Workshop      January 2013
- Project Technical Reports                              2013 – 2015
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement              Fall 2015
- Public Hearing    Winter 2016
- Final Environmental Impact Statement              2016
- Record of Decision                                      2017
- Right-of-Way Acquisition                              2018
- Construction    2020

*Note: All dates are tentative and subject to change.*

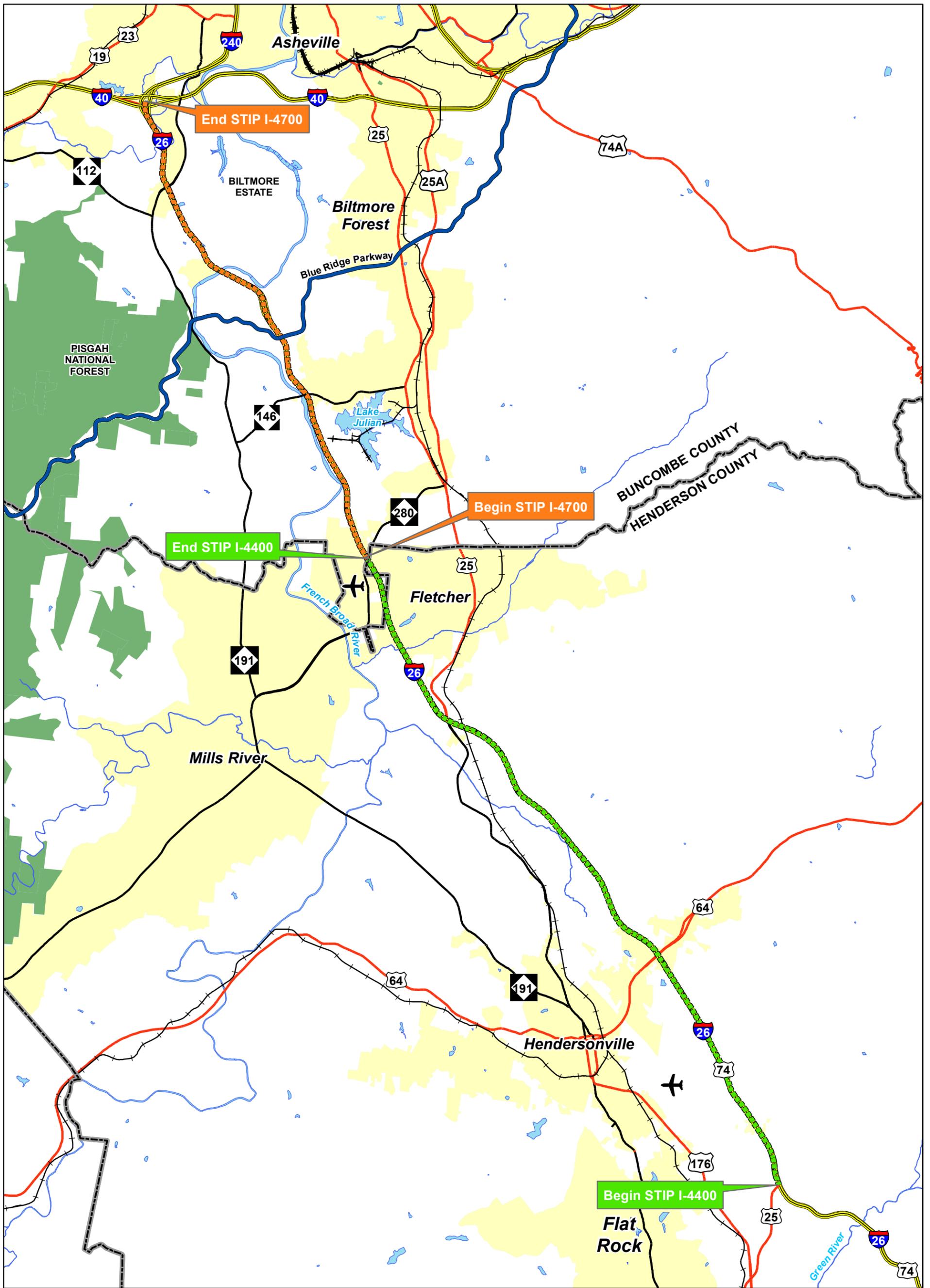
### Estimated Costs

- Right-of-Way \$5.0 million (STIP)
- Construction \$259 million (STIP)

### NCDOT Contact

**Dre Major**  
 NCDOT Project Planning Engineer  
 1548 Mail Service Center  
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1548  
 Email: [ujmajor@ncdot.gov](mailto:ujmajor@ncdot.gov)  
 Telephone: (919) 707-6028

See reverse side for a project location map.



- Legend**
- STIP Project I-4400
  - STIP Project I-4700
  - Interstate
  - US Route
  - State Route
  - Blue Ridge Parkway

- +—+—+— Railroads
- Water Bodies
- ✈ Airport
- Pisgah National Forest
- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundary

**Project Location**  
**STIP Project I-4400/I-4700**  
**Citizens' Informational Workshop**  
**January 31, 2013**





**Project:** STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 (I-26 Widening)

**Subject:** Summary of comments received at Citizens Informational Workshop

**Meeting Date, Time:** 1/31/13, 4:00-7:00 PM

**Meeting Location:** Western NC Agricultural Center – Virginia C. Boone Building, Fletcher, NC

**Summary:** A Citizens Informational Workshop was held on January 31, 2013, at the Western NC Agricultural Center – Virginia C. Boone Building in Fletcher, NC. The purpose of the workshop was to update the public on the status of the project and to provide citizens and stakeholders an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback regarding STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 (I-26 widening). The workshop was an informal format with no formal presentation. Citizens were asked to sign registration sheets and provide their name, address, phone number, and email. A total of 144 citizens signed the registration sheets. At the registration table, citizens were provided with a copy of the handout, a comment form, and a voluntary survey form to aid the NCDOT in meeting data collection and public involvement obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

After signing in, citizens were able to view two large-format maps relating to the project. One map, on an aerial background, was the Project Location; including the project study area boundary, the limits of I-4400, the limits of I-4700, and other relevant STIP projects in the vicinity. The other map was the Environmental Constraints; including the base information from the Project Location map as well as potential constraints in the project area such as water resources, wetlands, hazardous materials sites, parks and forest areas, and schools, hospitals, and places of worship.

Citizens were encouraged to ask questions of the project team and to complete comment forms. A total of 32 comment forms were submitted, either at the workshop or by mail. The consensus of the comments was in favor and support of the project and the expectation that the improvements and widening of I-26 would facilitate improved traffic flow in the area. However, several citizens were concerned about noise resulting from construction as well as the potential for greater noise from increased traffic after project completion. The following summarizes the comments received:

- About 19 comment forms indicated that the project was needed and wanted NCDOT to complete the study process and begin construction as soon as possible.
- About 9 comment forms expressed that the existing noise levels were extremely high and many citizens were concerned that with the addition of additional traffic in the future, noise levels would be excessive without some form of noise abatement measures.
- Three comments were received about the current safety of the I-26 corridor in the project area. Citizens were concerned that safety on the highway would be diminished in the future if additional traffic utilized the highway with no improvements made.
- Two comments received were not in favor of the project; stating that there is not a sustained level of daily traffic to support the project. The citizens stated that they only observed heavy traffic on the highway at morning and evening commute periods.
- Two comments requested that NCDOT consider adding an interchange at the Clear Creek Road crossing in Hendersonville.
- One comment was received for each related to Exits 44 and 49, inquiring if NCDOT was planning to improve or upgrade those interchanges. However, no improvements or upgrades to those interchanges are included in the I-4400/I-4700 project.
- One citizen requested that NCDOT maintain the mountain heritage of the area in the bridge aesthetics.
- One citizen requested that NCDOT incorporate bicycle transport where possible. However, since the project is an interstate facility operating at high speeds, bicycle lanes are not prudent.
- The pastor of Boiling Springs Baptist Church expressed concern that the project may impact the church's parking area if I-26 were widened outward.

### **Meeting Summary – STIP I-4400/4700 I-26 Widening 03/13/13 (cont'd)**

- The Council of Independent Business Owners, Inc. of Asheville submitted a letter in support of the project. The council stated that the project was needed to sufficiently serve the needs of the travelling public and the growth needs for business industry.
- The Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development submitted a letter in support of the project. The partnership stated that it is imperative that I-26 remain safe and uncongested for transporting products, people, and materials which are vital to the economic prosperity of the region.

cc: Project File



## Final Meeting Summary

**Project:** STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 (I-26 Widening)

**Subject:** Project Update

**Meeting Date, Time:** 3/13/13, 8:30 AM

**Meeting Location:** NCDOT Highway Building, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room

**Present:**

Name	Organization	Email Address
Chad Merrill	Blue Ridge Community College	chadm@blueridge.edu
Molly Parkhill	Blue Ridge Community College	mollyp@blueridge.edu
Bob Williford	Henderson County Chamber of Commerce	bob@hendersoncountychamber.org
Bill McKibbin	Henderson Oil Company	mckibbin@hendersonoil.com
Chuck Edwards	McDonald's	chuck@cedwardsgroup.com
Chris Angel	Mountain Credit Union	chrisangel@mountaincu.org
Vincent Rees	Mountain First Bank	vrees@mountain1st.com
Jimm Bunch	Park Ridge Health	Jimm.bunch@ahss.org
Graham Fields	Park Ridge Health	Graham.fields@ahss.org
John Conforti	NCDOT, PDEA	jgconforti@ncdot.gov
Jennifer Harris	NCDOT, PDEA	Jhharris1@ncdot.gov
Undrea Major	NCDOT, PDEA	ujmajor@ncdot.gov
Derrick Weaver	NCDOT, PDEA	dweaver@ncdot.gov
Kiersten Bass	HNTB	kbass@hntb.com

**Summary:** The purpose of the meeting was to provide interested stakeholders with a project update and an opportunity to ask questions regarding STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 (I-26 widening). The following summarizes the topics discussed:

- After introductions were made, the stakeholders present demonstrated their support for the project and inquired regarding the project schedule and when construction would begin.
- NCDOT provided the current schedule for the project (ROW 2018, Let 2020). It was noted that pavement rehabilitation along the corridor is scheduled prior to completion of the widening project (STIP I-4400/I-4700). The schedule and status of improvements to Upward Road (Exit 53) was requested. It was noted that improvements to Upward Road are not a part of the subject project; however, NCDOT agreed to look into that project and provide the meeting attendees with the requested information (see action items below).
- It was noted that a Citizen's Informational Workshop and Local Officials Meeting were held on January 31, 2013. The vast majority of workshop/meeting participants support the project. The primary concern of local residents is construction and traffic noise. The next steps in the project planning process include traffic capacity analysis, development of the purpose and need for the project, alternatives development, and consultation with the regulatory and environmental resource agencies.
- Concern was raised regarding the previous lawsuit filed in 2002 against the environmental document prepared for I-4400. Meeting attendees wanted to ensure that NCDOT properly addresses the courts concerns regarding logical termini and cumulative impacts. NCDOT noted that these issues will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is the most rigorous of environmental documents available under the National Environmental Policy Act, for the project.

## Meeting Summary – STIP I-4400/4700 I-26 Widening 03/13/13 (cont'd)

- Park Ridge Health is located off Exit 44. There are no exits between 44 and 49. Hospital representatives indicated that people who miss Exit 44 have to travel an additional ten miles to reach the hospital. Hospital representatives asked if there have been any discussions regarding the addition of an interchange between Exit 44 and 49. NCDOT noted that an additional interchange is not a part of the scope of the I-4400/I-4700 project.
- Hospital representatives voiced concern regarding construction noise and traffic noise when the project is completed. NCDOT noted that special provisions are required for sensitive noise receptors like hospitals, schools and other public facilities. It was noted that noise levels both during construction and post construction would be addressed in the EIS.
- Blue Ridge Community College representatives raised concerns regarding detour routes during project construction. The representatives requested that NCDOT inform the college prior to construction so that they have ample time to communicate proposed detour routes and additional travel time to their students and faculty.

### Action Items:

- NCDOT consulted with the Division regarding the status of Upward Road. Upward Road improvements are currently under construction and are on schedule. The Division engineer agreed to provide a project update to the FBRMPO TAC/TCC at their next meetings.

cc: Project File

## MEMORANDUM – MEETING SUMMARY

**SUBJECT: STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700 – Duke Energy Coal Ash Plant:**

**MEETING PURPOSE:** To discuss coordination with Duke Energy regarding the I-26 widening project (I-4400/I-4700).

**MEETING DATE, TIME, and LOCATION:** February 4, 2015, 1:00 p.m., Duke Energy, 200 CP&L Drive, Arden, NC Coal Ash Plant Conference Room

### **PARTICIPANTS:**

<b>Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Attendee(s)</b>	<b>Email</b>
NCDOT – PDEA	Dre Major	<a href="mailto:ujmajor@ncdot.gov">ujmajor@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – PDEA	John Conforti	<a href="mailto:jgconforti@ncdot.gov">jgconforti@ncdot.gov</a>
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NCDOT – Division 13	Ricky Tipton	<a href="mailto:rtipton@ncdot.gov">rtipton@ncdot.gov</a>
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NCDOT Division 13	Roger Bryan	<a href="mailto:rdbryan@ncdot.gov">rdbryan@ncdot.gov</a>
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NCDOT – GeoEnvironmental	Cyrus Parker	<a href="mailto:cfparker@ncdot.gov">cfparker@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – Utilities	Steve Trexler	<a href="mailto:sctrexler@ncdot.gov">sctrexler@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT - Geotechnical Engineering	Matt Mullen	<a href="mailto:dmmullen@ncdot.gov">dmmullen@ncdot.gov</a>
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NCDOT – Geotechnical Engineering	Paul Schulken	<a href="mailto:paschulken@ncdot.gov">paschulken@ncdot.gov</a>
FHWA – Preconstruction & Environment	Mitch Batuzich	<a href="mailto:Michael.Batuzich@dot.gov">Michael.Batuzich@dot.gov</a>
FHWA – Operations	Jim Martin	<a href="mailto:James.martin@dot.gov">James.martin@dot.gov</a>
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Duke Energy	James Shapard	<a href="mailto:James.shapard@duke-energy.com">James.shapard@duke-energy.com</a>
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Duke Energy	Laurie Moorhead	<a href="mailto:Laurie.moorhead@duke-energy.com">Laurie.moorhead@duke-energy.com</a>

### **SUMMARY**

It is anticipated that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be published for the NCDOT STIP project I-4400/I-4700 in the spring of 2015. Public meetings will be held for the project late summer/fall of 2015. A Final Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated in the spring of 2016. The current schedule shows right of way acquisition to begin in fiscal 2018 with construction to begin in fiscal year 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss project coordination for the Duke Energy Plant coal ash removal, potential impacts, and coordination with the I-26 widening. The following summarizes the topics discussed:

- NCDOT asked that Duke Energy attend/participate in the I-4400/I-4700 public meetings in anticipation of questions regarding coal ash ponds at the Duke Energy Plant.
- Duke Energy's schedule for coal ash removal is estimated to be complete by 2019. That schedule is tentative and subject to change.
- Duke Energy has to determine if on site projects will be funded for the plant's transmission lines. There are several options for alignment.
  - Option 1: expand right of way in location of existing 115 kV line to relocate the line
  - Option 2: expand right of way and relocate 240 kV line to run parallel with 115 kV line
  - Option 3: expand right of way and relocate 240 kV line to run parallel with 270 kV line
 Duke Energy will determine if this will be a project by March 1, 2015. If the project is approved, completion is anticipated by May 2019. Public meetings would be held in the summer of 2015 showing all options to gather feedback. NCDOT will need to allow for Duke Energy access to transmission line corridor.
- Duke Energy is very concerned that the I-4400/I-4700 limits of construction appear to encroach on the Duke Energy dam. The NC-DENR Land Quality is concerned about potential impacts to the dam and right of way ownership versus easement. All appurtenances of the dam (such as drains) are also considered part of the dam and may extend beyond the toe of the dam. NCDOT is also concerned and will avoid impact to the dam. The toe of the dam will be delineated and a buffer will be established to ensure impact to the dam is avoided. NCDOT (Roadway Design) will coordinate with Duke Energy's Dam Safety Section and NC-DENR will provide input. Widening into the median for I-4400/I-4700 seems to be a viable solution for this section. Vibration from construction should be considered in regards to the dam. If a retaining wall is appropriate, a wall that will allow low impact construction methods is desirable.
- There are 33 groundwater monitoring wells in the I-4400/I-4700 project area. Some monitoring wells may be impacted by the I-4400/I-4700 widening project. CAMA legislation requires the addition of 20 new monitoring wells (currently being installed). Duke Energy will provide monitoring well location and driller's logs of the well installations to NCDOT. The groundwater monitoring wells should be discussed in the EIS. Duke Energy and NCDOT will coordinate to determine impacts and new location of additional monitoring wells.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Duke Energy will provide the meeting attendees list and information to NCDOT
- Duke Energy will attend NCDOT public meeting for I-4400/I-4700
- Duke Energy will provide delineation limits for the Duke Energy Dam
- Duke Energy will provide existing and new groundwater monitoring well locations with driller's logs of the well installations
- NCDOT PDEA/Roadway Design will work to coordinate with Duke Energy on Groundwater Monitoring Well impacts
- NCDOT PDEA will inquire with the NCDOT State Materials Engineer for feasibility of coal ash use as fill material

## Section 106 Consultation meeting Blue Ridge Parkway I-26 Bridge design

June 30, 2016

Conference call

### Participants:

Jack VanDop (FHWA), Lisa Landers (FHWA), Mark Woods (NPS), Beth Byrd (NPS), Mike Molling (NPS), Suzette Molling (NPS), Larry Hulquist (NPS), John McDade (NPS), Renee Gledhill-Earley (NC-SHPO), Mary Pope Furr (NCDOT), Jennifer Harris (HNTB), Jim Martin (FHWA), Felix Davila (FHWA), John Williams (NCDOT), Kevin Moore (NCDOT), Steve Kendall (NCDOT), Cole Hood (NCDOT – Div 13), David Hinnatt (NCDOT), Kat Bukowy (HNTB)

- Brief welcome by Beth Byrd and introductions
- Safety: Discussion of why the 2-3' sidewalk and guardrail cannot be used. Kevin Moore and Jim Martin explained that the 5' sidewalk and guardrail was crash-tested and no sidewalk and guardrail was also crash-tested. However, no testing or data exist for a 2-3' sidewalk and guardrail. Jack VanDop explained that the combination of 2-3' sidewalk could project a vehicle differently into or above the guardrail.
- Cost: Discussion of the cost difference between one or two sidewalks. NCDOT suggested the Blue Ridge Parkway realignment work and a replacement bridge with sidewalk on both sides would add 10% to the total I-26 widening project cost.
- Other guardrails: Does this conform to Blue Ridge Parkway Guardwall Programmatic Agreement (PA)? Larry Hulquist agrees that it does. The proposed guardrail is within the design vocabulary of the Parkway.
- Guardwall details: How much of the 180' guardwall is necessary? Is there anything else that can be done to balance the asymmetry?
- Color: What about the color of the sidewalk? Agreement reached that the color would be the same for the sidewalk, bridge deck, and guardrail.

Renee Gledhill-Earley agreed that one sidewalk is acceptable and wants approaches to minimize asymmetry with flaring approaches, shortened sidewalk (ending at bridge deck), and landscaping. Agreement reached between BLRI, NCDOT, and EFL to minimize asymmetry and change the design of the bridge approaches while keeping a single sidewalk. Specifically, the new design will extend the sidewalk to the end of the approach slab and have a rounded end. The guardwalls will flare out and transition in height to account for the visual difference of the single sidewalk.

The group agreed that Eastern Federal Lands would take the lead on revising the design with NCDOT updating the visualizations. The NPS will submit the design revisions to the SHPO.