

## 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)

---

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.*

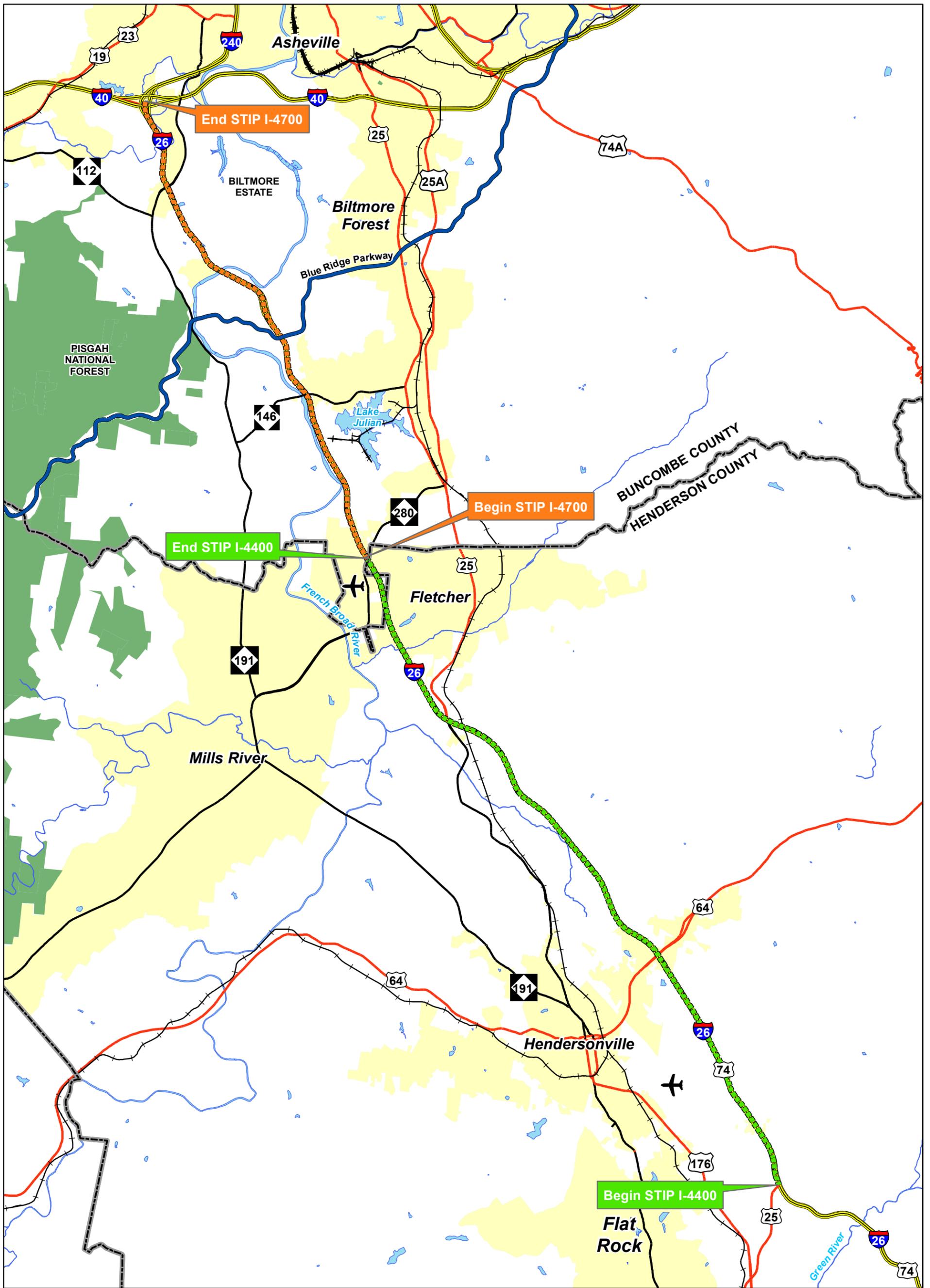
### Estimated Costs

- 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

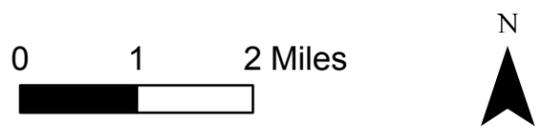
See reverse side for a project location map.



- 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

**PURPOSE AND NEED  
AND  
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED FOR I-26 IMPROVEMENTS**

From US 25 in Hendersonville in Henderson County to  
I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County

Henderson and Buncombe Counties

STIP Project I-4400/I-4700

North Carolina Department of Transportation



**MERGER CONCURRENCE POINTS 1 AND 2**

**June 20, 2013**

[REVISED PER MERGER TEAM COMMENTS]



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes transportation improvements to a segment of the I-26 corridor from US 25 in Henderson County, north to I-40 in Buncombe County. In September 2012, a Merger Screening Meeting was held. The consensus at that meeting was that the project should follow the Merger 01 process but could be removed from the process in the future, if appropriate. As such, this document is intended to include the information necessary for Merger Team members to make a determination for Concurrence Point Number 1: Project Purpose and Need as well as Concurrence Point Number 2: Preliminary Alternatives to be Studied in Detail.

This document includes the following sections: 1) Introduction, 2) Merger Concurrence Point 1 – Purpose and Need, 3) Merger Concurrence Point 2 – Alternatives Considered, 4) Project Schedule, and 5) Merger Project Team Agreement Signature Forms.

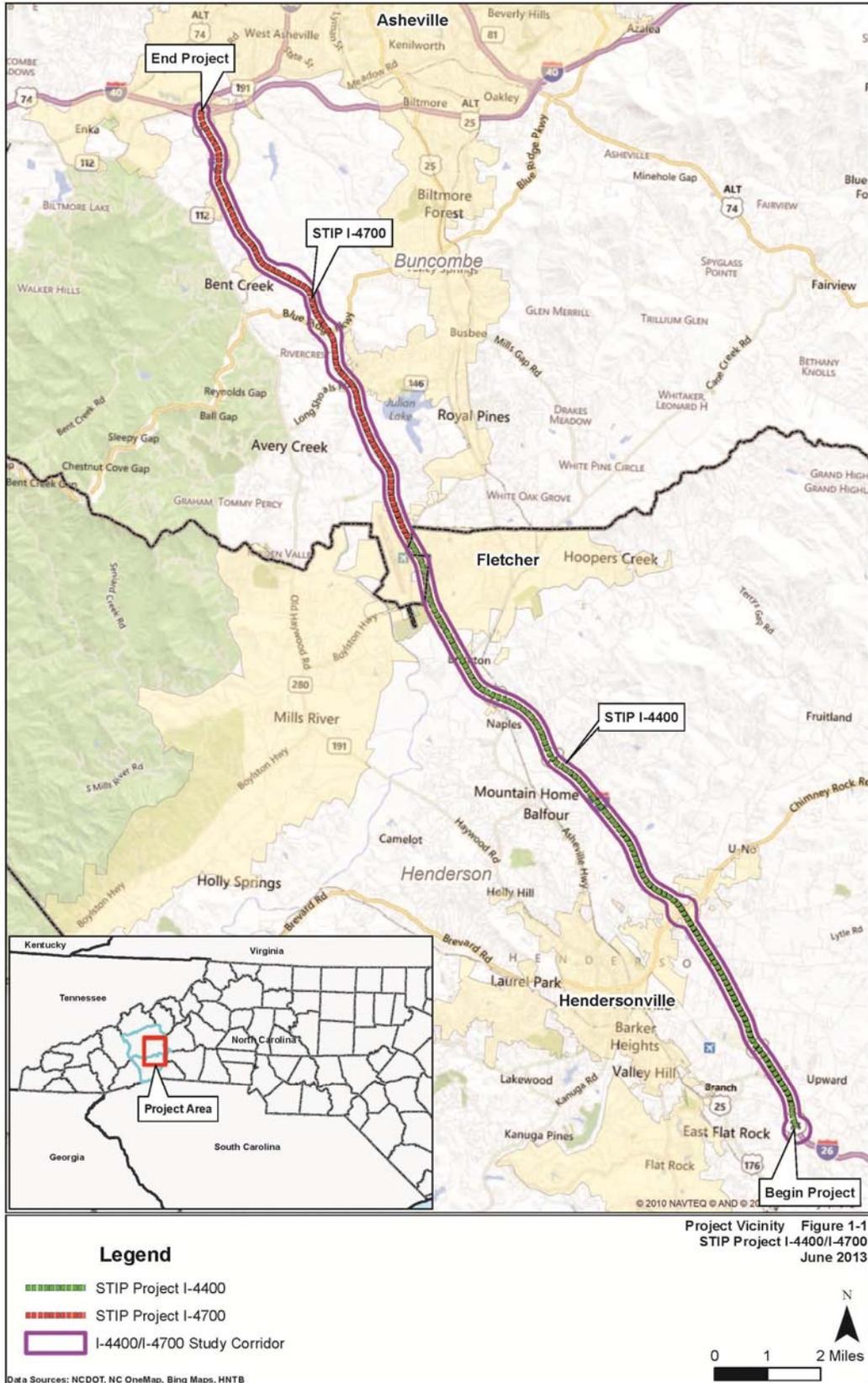
### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

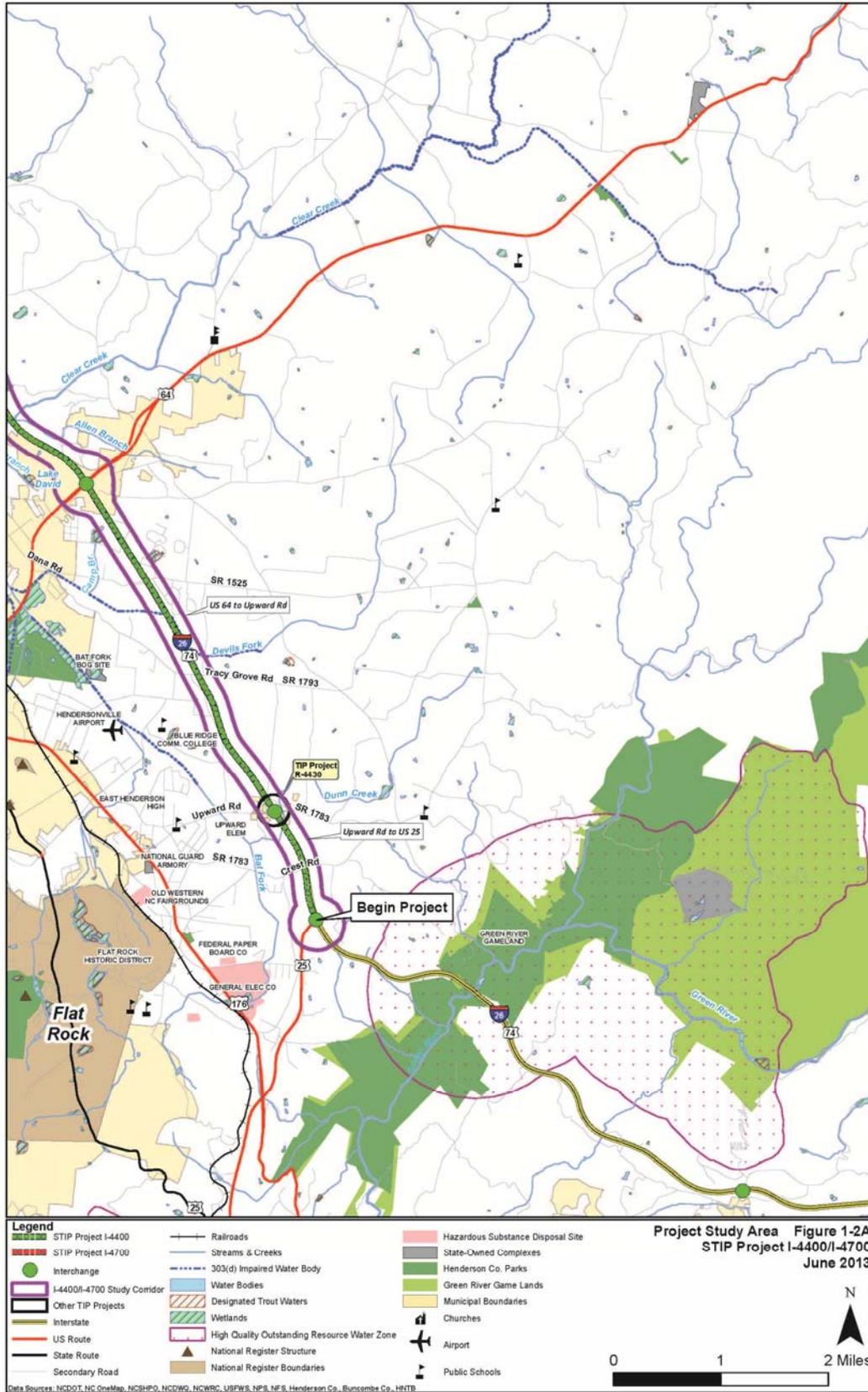
#### 1.1.1 Project Setting

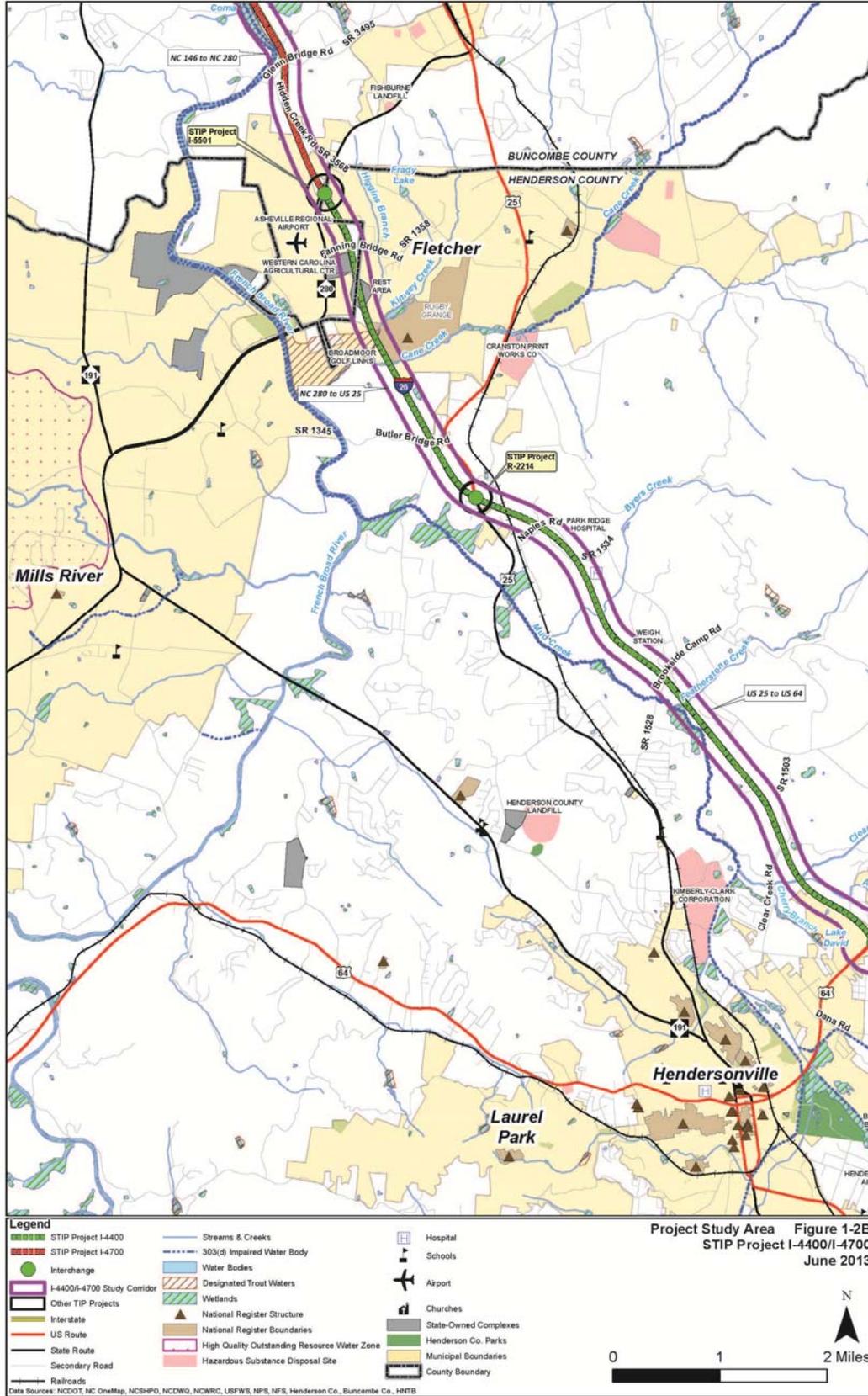
The project is located in northern Henderson County, just south of Hendersonville, and southern Buncombe County, just south of Asheville. **Figure 1-1** shows the general project vicinity. The Town of Fletcher is also in the nearby vicinity. The project study area boundaries consist of a generally 1,400ft wide corridor that follows existing I-26 along its footprint from US 25 in Henderson County, north to I-40 in Buncombe County. Expanded study areas have been included around interchanges incorporated into the I-26 project study as well as expanded study area around the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge, which has also been included in the project study. **Figures 1-2A, 1-2B, and 1-2C** illustrate the project study area.

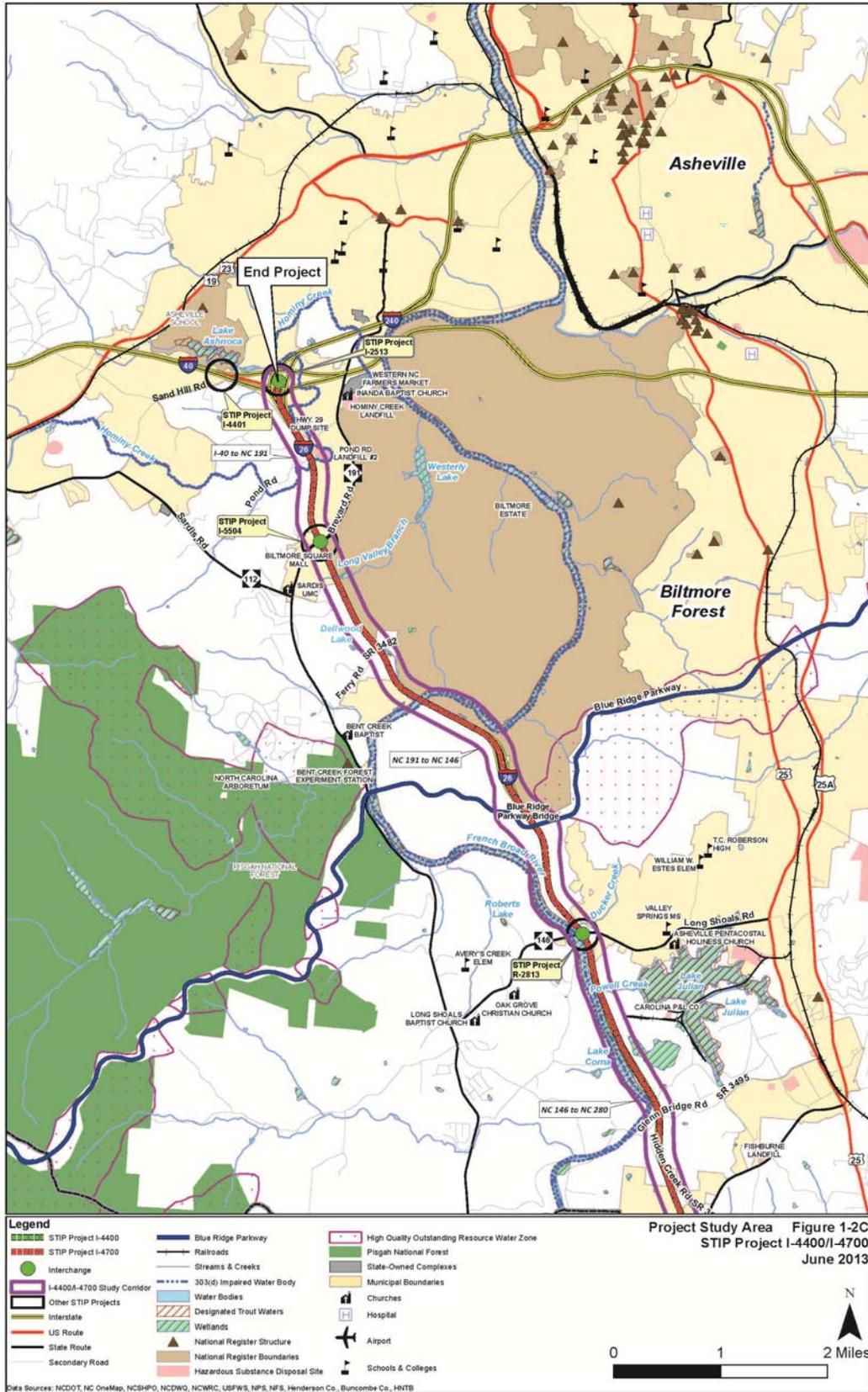
#### 1.1.2 Project History

An Environmental Assessment was completed for STIP I-4400 (the 13.6 mile segment between US 25 and NC 280) in May 2001. A Finding of No Significant Impact was completed in January 2002 and, subsequently, the project was advertised as a Design-Build project by NCDOT. A lawsuit and resulting judgment in 2003 found that NCDOT should conduct a broader analysis of the cumulative impacts and logical termini, or project limits, of the overall expansion of the I-26 corridor. The project was subsequently placed on hold due to financial constraints. However, the growing need for improvements to the I-26 corridor was recognized and the project was reinitiated and included in the Draft NCDOT 2013-2023 STIP. In order to address the 2003 judgment, the NCDOT concluded to combine the analysis of STIP I-4400 with STIP I-4700 (the 8.6-mile segment between NC 280 and I-40) into one comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will address logical termini and cumulative effects in accordance with NEPA.









### **1.1.3 Public Involvement**

The project was reinitiated in late 2012. Public comment was solicited at the first Citizens Informational Workshop held in January 2013. The consensus of the comments was in favor and support of the project and the expectation that the improvements and widening of I-26 in the project study area would facilitate improved traffic flow in the area. An additional Citizens Informational Workshop to gather further public input on detailed study alternatives is anticipated, as well as a Public Hearing after preparation of the Draft EIS.

## **2. MERGER CONCURRENCE POINT 1 – PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **2.1 PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action includes improvements to the approximate 22.2-mile segment of the I-26 corridor from US 25 in Henderson County, north to I-40 in Buncombe County. The proposed action is included in the Draft NCDOT *2013-2023 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)* as project number I-4400/I-4700. The proposed action has also been identified in the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBR MPO) *Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FY 2011-2020*.

### **2.2 SUMMARY OF NEED**

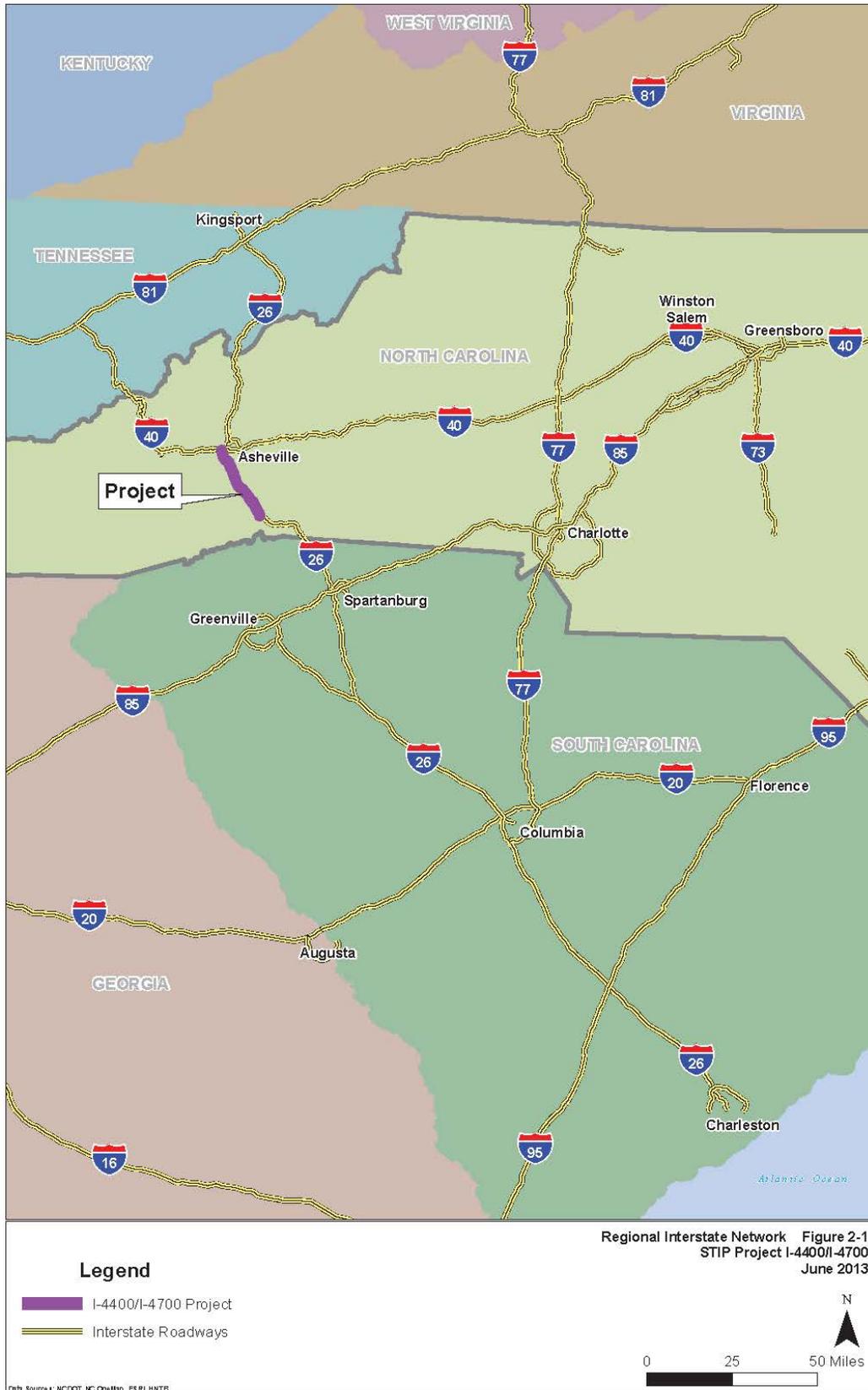
Interstate-26 is a major provider of travel for western North Carolina and the southeastern United States for the movement of both people and goods. **Figure 2-1** shows the I-26 corridor in relation to the regional interstate network. In a local function it serves as the main south-north facility for residents and business as well as providing direct access to the region's airport, Asheville Regional Airport. At the northern end of the project corridor, I-26 provides a connection to I-40, which is the major east-west corridor for the region as well as North Carolina. As a freight corridor, I-26 originates in the nation's fourth busiest container port of Charleston, South Carolina and connects the southeastern United States with the northeast via the connection with I-81 near Kingsport, Tennessee. With its current traffic demand, I-26 is approaching capacity and is anticipated to operate over capacity by design year 2040. The following sections summarize the needs for the proposed action.

#### **2.2.1 Existing and Projected Roadway Capacity Deficiencies**

Currently, I-26 in the study area is a four-lane facility with eleven existing grade-separated crossings and eight existing interchanges. Congestion is high, with sections of I-26 in the project study area currently operating at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) F. As projected traffic volumes increase, more sections of I-26 within the project study area are projected to degrade to LOS F.

#### **2.2.2 Inability to Serve High-Speed Regional Travel Consistent with the Designations and Goals of State and Local Transportation Plans**

The FBR MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has identified improvements to the I-26 corridor in the project study area and considers them high-priority projects. Because of its statewide and regional importance, I-26 has been designated as a Strategic Highway Corridor (SHC) by NCDOT and is part of the North Carolina Intrastate System. Both designations call for this corridor to



serve high-speed regional travel. The existing study area corridor of I-26 is designated as part of the National Highway System's (NHS) Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET). Existing and projected poor LOS along the I-26 project study corridor diminish the roadway's ability to function as part of the STRAHNET.

### **2.2.3 Existing Road Surface Conditions**

The existing section of I-26 along the study corridor in Henderson County from US 25 north to approximately mile marker 50.3 is asphalt, while the remaining portion north to the Buncombe County line is concrete. The project section of I-26 in Buncombe County from the county line north to NC 146 is concrete, while the remaining section north to I-40 is concrete overlaid with asphalt. The existing surface has undergone major rehabilitation twice, including diamond grinding the concrete, with the latest being in 2011. In addition, during past rehabilitation efforts Divisions 13 and 14 replaced slabs and repaired joints. With the current load and volume of traffic, the facility is again showing signs of deterioration. Additional rehabilitation will not suffice for providing a quality facility because of the lack of depth of remaining concrete. Reconstruction of I-26 in the project study area will provide full depth pavement and the quality needed for high-speed, safe, and efficient travel.

## **2.3 SUMMARY OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of the proposed improvements to I-26, from US 25 in Henderson County north to I-40 in Buncombe County, is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall LOS D in the design year (2040), and improve the pavement structure.

## **2.4 EXISTING ROADWAY CONDITIONS**

### **2.4.1 Existing Roadway Characteristics**

Interstate-26 is listed as a freeway on the NCDOT 2004 Strategic Highway Corridor Vision Plan, revised July 2008. The studied portion of I-26 measures a distance of 22.2 miles and runs south-north through Henderson and Buncombe Counties as a four-lane, median-divided, full control-of-access facility between US 25 (Exit 54) in Henderson County and I-26/I-40/I-240 (Exit 31) in Buncombe County. This section of I-26 also carries the US 74 designation. The project area includes eleven existing grade-separated crossings and eight existing interchanges. In Henderson County, I-26 has interchanges with US 25, Upward Road (SR 1722), US 64, US 25 (Asheville Highway), and NC 280 (Airport Road). In Buncombe County, I-26 has interchanges with NC 280 (Airport Road), NC 146 (Long Shoals Road), NC 191 (Brevard Road), I-40, and I-240. The Blue Ridge Parkway has a grade separated crossing but no direct access. The speed limit of I-26 varies from 65 miles per hour (mph) in southern Henderson County to 60 mph in northern Henderson County, into Buncombe County, and up to I-40.

### **2.4.2 Existing Roadway Conditions**

With limited alternative south-north routes, automobile and truck-freight through traffic utilizing I-26 are forced to share the facility with local traffic, creating several areas of congestion during peak travel periods on I-26. The I-26 corridor in the study area experiences a seasonal increase in traffic volume during the summer and fall months as tourists visit the region for recreational activities and fall foliage viewing. **Table 1** lists the 2011 annual average daily traffic (AADT) along the project section of I-26.

Accompanying this 2011 data are the existing capacities, in vehicles per day (vpd), of I-26 freeway sections based upon existing roadway characteristics. The freeway capacities vary minimally through the corridor due to the changes in the free flow speed and truck percentages. The impact of freight movement along I-26 contributes greatly to capacity issues as well as congestion.

### 2.4.3 Projected Conditions

Daily traffic forecast volumes for the year 2040 are based on the French Broad River Travel Demand Model (FBR TDM), adopted March 25, 2010, that takes into account the region’s socio-economic data for employment and household projections, along with historical growth rates. **Table 1** lists current daily service volumes, 2011 AADT in vpd, 2011 LOS, 2011 V/C, projected year 2040 AADT in vpd, projected year 2040 LOS, and projected year 2040 V/C. The majority of the facility currently operates at LOS D or worse, with the entire facility operating at LOS F in the future (2040).

**Table 1: Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes on I-26**

I-26 Section	Current Daily Service Volume (vpd) <sup>1</sup>	2011 AADT (vpd) <sup>2</sup>	2011 LOS <sup>3</sup>	2011 V/C <sup>4</sup>	Projected 2040 AADT (vpd) <sup>2</sup>	2040 LOS <sup>3</sup>	2040 V/C <sup>4</sup>
I-40 to NC 191	62,000	80,000	F	1.29	89,200	F	1.44
NC 191 to NC 146	63,600	74,000	F	1.16	90,500	F	1.42
NC 146 to NC 280	63,600	70,000	F	1.10	81,700	F	1.28
NC 280 to US 25	62,800	55,600	D	0.89	79,300	F	1.26
US 25 to US 64	64,100	51,000	D	0.80	71,800	F	1.12
US 64 to Upward Rd	63,300	47,400	D	0.75	70,100	F	1.11
Upward Rd to US 25	63,300	43,600	C	0.69	73,600	F	1.16

Source: NCDOT TPB, 2/14/2012.

Notes: 1 – Based on Daily Service Volume for level of service E to F threshold from Highway Capacity Manual 2010, Equation 10-5, p. 10-12.

2 – 2011/2040 No-Build AADT, Project Level Traffic Forecast Report TIP Projects I-4400 / I-4700 / B-5178 / I-5501. 3 – LOS – Level of Service.

4 – V/C – Volume to Capacity ratio.

## 2.5 CRASH DATA

With I-26 currently carrying a substantial traffic volume, and projected to carry higher traffic volumes in the future, safety is an important consideration for the project. Without improvements, the number of crashes in this area is expected to grow. Traffic crashes are often the result of deficiencies in the capacity of a transportation facility. Crash data was collected for the project area and consisted of a 30.6-mile section of I-26 from I-40 in Buncombe County through Henderson County to SR 1142 (Holbert Cove Road) in Polk County, which constitutes the approximate project area. The additional area of I-26 from US 25 to Holbert Cove Road was included for the following reasons: 1) to match the I-4400/I-4700 traffic forecast limits, 2) to assess crash rates south of the US 25 interchange, within the immediate interchange influence area, and further south along I-26, 3) to include for potential US 25 Interchange Access Request that would require a safety review to the next adjacent interchange (Holbert Cove Road). The safety review of the I-26 section from US 25 to Holbert Cove Rd is generally consistent with the rest of the I-26 corridor and does not unduly influence crash rates along the corridor. For the reasons presented, the safety review limits are appropriate while differing from the defined project limits. For crash rate purposes this location is classified as an Interstate. There were 1,006 reported

crashes along this segment from July 1, 2009 to June 31, 2012. Of those crashes, 386 involved rear-end collisions. This type of crash is expected to occur where a combination of high traffic volumes and a large number of slowing, stopping, and/or turning movements cause interruptions to the traffic flow. There is a noticeable increase in crashes along the I-26 corridor in the project area during the months of June, July, and October, a result of the additional seasonal traffic utilizing I-26. **Table 2** shows the comparison of the crash rates for the analyzed section of I-26 versus the 2008-2010 statewide rate and the calculated critical rates with a 95 percent level of confidence for a comparable route type and configuration. Current crash rates exceed the statewide crash rates in the fatal category only and do not exceed the critical crash rates in any categories.

**Table 2: Crash Data for I-26**

Rate	Crashes	Crashes per 100MVM	Statewide Rate <sup>1</sup>	Critical Rate <sup>2</sup>
Total	1,006	52.13	78.21	81.55
Fatal	9	0.47	0.43	0.70
Non-Fatal Injury	265	13.73	21.69	23.46
Night	248	12.85	22.26	24.05
Wet	201	10.41	20.08	21.78

Source: Safety Review for TIP I-4400/I-4700, I-26 from I-40 in Buncombe County through Henderson County to SR 1142 (Holbert Cove Road) in Polk County (NCDOT, 8/31/2012).

Notes: 1 - 2008-2010 statewide crash rate for all Interstates. 2 - Based on the statewide crash rate (95 percent level of confidence)

## 2.6 SYSTEM LINKAGE

### 2.6.1 Existing Road Networks

Interstate-26 interchanges with I-85 in Spartanburg, South Carolina, as it continues on to the port of Charleston, South Carolina, and with I-40 in Asheville, North Carolina, on its way to I-81 near Kingsport, Tennessee. I-26 interchanges with US 25, which serves the region as a north-south connection between Asheville, North Carolina, and Greenville, South Carolina and US 64, which serves the region as an east-west connection between I-77 in Statesville, North Carolina, and I-75 near Chattanooga, Tennessee. The intersecting of I-26 and I-40 in Buncombe County form the center of the region's transportation system. These two important freeways interconnect the region and carry the highest percentage of trips passing through the area, while their locations in proximity to populated areas, commercial areas, and the Asheville Regional Airport also serve a significant portion of the local travel demands.

With the region's topography, national forests, and the Biltmore Estate property forcing the transportation system to follow river valley basins south of Asheville, constraints are placed on the regional transportation system that limit its expansion as well as making parallel alternate routes or grid patterns difficult to nearly impossible to develop. Other roads located away from the river valley floor are often very steep with sharp curves, have little to no shoulders, and have limited sight distances. The result is that travel of all types is funneled onto the major roadways, creating areas of congestion during peak travel periods.

These limited roadway connections support the region's agricultural service and tourism industry with connections to major metropolitan centers such as Greensboro and Raleigh, North Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; and ports of call in Wilmington, North Carolina; and Charleston, South Carolina. The National Park Service's 469-mile Blue Ridge Parkway, which connects the Shenandoah

National Park in Virginia to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina with its crossing over of I-26 in Buncombe County, experiences local commuter traffic on some of its sections on a daily basis.

### **2.6.2 Transportation Plans**

In conjunction with the FBR MPO, the NCDOT developed and adopted the MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in 2008. The recommendations in the CTP are based on forecasts of growth and development expected to occur in and around the planning area over the next 25 years. The CTP listed the I-26 corridor from US 25 in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County as a High Priority project for the area. The CTP indicated that *"given the importance of this facility in serving south-north traffic demands, the lack of suitable alternative routes, the large percentage of trucks, and the seasonal peaking of recreational travel, maintaining a high level of service in this corridor is critical both to the safety and comfort of the traveling public, and to the regional economy."*

Prior to the CTP development, a transportation study of the area in and around Hendersonville known as Phase I was developed and approved with the local support by the Henderson County Transportation Advisory Committee. The Phase I plan contained recommended projects in the area of I-26 that could benefit this corridor, including a new facility known as the Balfour Parkway and a multi-lane widening of SR 1006 (Howard Gap Road) that would serve as a local, north-south alternative to I-26. The recently adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the FBR MPO anticipates the I-26 corridor south of I-40 in Buncombe and Henderson Counties to have significant capacity deficiencies in the year 2030. The FBR MPO is evaluating alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel, including \$12 million identified in the LRTP to establish regional express bus-type service in combination with the I-26 corridor.

### **2.6.3 Modal Relationships**

The study area accommodates several integrated modes of transportation. Aside from the freight movement component, these modes utilize facilities that connect to I-26. These connecting facilities link with I-26 via grade-separated interchanges that add to the regional significance of the I-26 corridor.

*Public Transportation* - Asheville Redefines Transit (ART) is the only Buncombe County fixed-route public transportation provider with service within Asheville and, through a connection with Mountain Mobility, to the Town of Black Mountain. Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County's community transportation system, is a rural community transportation program, as it does not operate a fixed route service. As a demand-responsive transportation provider, Mountain Mobility works with ART to coordinate a feeder service to ART's fixed-route service that serves Asheville and Black Mountain, as well as paratransit service to the Swannanoa and Weaverville communities.

Apple Country Transit provides a limited fixed-route and deviated fixed-route service, as well as subscription and dial-a-ride transportation services for citizens of Henderson County. Greyhound Lines, Inc. also provides passenger bus and package express service to the areas of Asheville and Hendersonville.

*Air Service* - The Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) is located nine miles south of Asheville at the I-26 and NC 280 (Airport Road) interchange. Asheville Regional is a class C-3 airport that contains a single 8,000-

foot runway with a full parallel taxiway and 163 acres reserved for terminal use. In 2010, AVL served over 725,000 commercial passengers with a significant amount of general aviation passengers. Currently, the airport is updating its master plan to add retail and commercial land uses to its property.

Route 6 of the Asheville Transit System serves the Asheville Regional Airport seven times a day. Route 6 serves as a connection or transfer between the Asheville Transit System and the Fletcher (Blue Route) Link of Apple Country Transit from Henderson County. The Fletcher route, known as 'The Link', of Apple Country Transit provides service between Hendersonville and the Asheville Regional Airport. The I-26 and NC 280 interchange area allows the two fixed-route transit services in the planning area to link Asheville, Weaverville, Black Mountain, Fletcher, the Airport, and Hendersonville.

*Rail Service* - The Norfolk Southern Corporation controls three major rail corridors that pass through the region to Tennessee, South Carolina, and eastern North Carolina with several short lines of connecting track. Two tracks of Norfolk Southern's 21,300-mile network intersect in Asheville. Passenger rail service is available through AMTRAK in Greenville, South Carolina. NCDOT has adopted a phased plan, with no specified time frame, to extend passenger rail service from Salisbury, North Carolina along the Norfolk Southern track to Old Fort and on to Black Mountain and Asheville.

*Motor Freight Service* - The movement of goods is essential to fueling regional and domestic economic economies. According to information contained in the FBR MPO 2035 LRTP, trucks are the primary freight mode represented in the region. The LRTP notes that the FBR MPO planning area exhibits a unique challenge in regards to freight due to geographical constraints that limit the number of routes available for the transport of truck freight traffic. The LRTP also cites a Traffic Survey report conducted by NCDOT in 2009 that reported Buncombe, Haywood, and Henderson County Interstate Freight Traffic Volume in the region. According to the report, estimated daily truck traffic accounted for up to 17.5 percent of the volume of the I-26 corridor in the project study area within Henderson County and 13.5 percent of the volume of the I-26 corridor in the project study area within Buncombe County. The presence of these trucks in the traffic mix greatly increases congestion and travel times along the I-26 corridor within the study area.

## **2.7 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

### **2.7.1 Population and Employment**

Population data from the US Census Bureau indicate that both Henderson and Buncombe Counties have experienced moderate growth from 2000 to 2010. The population in Buncombe County and Henderson County grew by 15.5 and 19.7 percent between 2000 and 2010, respectively, compared to 18.5 percent in North Carolina. According to population projections provided by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, the population in both Buncombe and Henderson Counties grew at an annual rate of 1.7 percent between 2002 and 2012, which was similar to the State (1.6 percent) during the same time period. The annual population growth rate in Buncombe and Henderson Counties is expected to slightly decrease over the next 20 years, but will continue to grow between 2012 and 2032 (1.3 percent in Buncombe County and 1.4 percent in Henderson County) at a higher annual rate than the State (0.96 percent).

Data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce – Division of Employment and Security (DES) indicates that Buncombe County gained jobs at an annual rate of 0.5 percent between 2001 and 2011, while Henderson County lost jobs at an annual rate of 0.4 percent during the same time frame. The DES also produces labor projections for the Workforce Development Boards (WDB) in North Carolina. The DES predicts a 0.9 percent annual increase in jobs between 2008 and 2018 in the four-county Mountain Area WDB (Buncombe County, Henderson County, Madison County, and Transylvania County). Job projections beyond the year 2018 were not available at the time of this assessment. The services-providing sector employs the largest number of people in the Mountain Area WDB, accounting for 40.9 percent of total employment. The education and health services sector is the next largest employment sector, accounting for 12.1 percent of total employment. Most jobs are located in either Asheville or Hendersonville, and the I-26 corridor in the area provides the main link for commuting patterns.

### **2.7.2 Commuting Patterns**

Most jobs are located in either Asheville or Hendersonville, and the I-26 corridor in the area provides the main link for commuting patterns. Commuting data available from the US Census Bureau for Buncombe County show that approximately 110,365 of workers 16 years and older commute to work. Of those workers, it is estimated that 98,673 utilized roadway facilities by driving alone or carpooling by car, truck, or van.

Commuting data available from the US Census Bureau for Henderson County show that approximately 44,124 of workers 16 years and older commute to work. Of those workers, it is estimated that 40,993 utilized roadway facilities by driving alone or carpooling by car, truck, or van.

### **2.7.3 Growth and Development Patterns**

According to information contained in the FBR MPO 2035 LRTP, growth and development patterns within the area generally reflect growth in both residential areas and service businesses to support this growth. The plan notes that the region is a popular tourist destination and a major destination for retirees and others drawn to the region's high quality of life and natural and cultural amenities.

In Buncombe County, most employment is concentrated in Asheville with some additional development along the I-26 corridor just south of I-40. Many of the land-development changes in Buncombe County have involved residential development, with some additional employment-related development. The LRTP anticipates continued residential and commercial growth in Asheville and along the I-26 corridor south of Asheville.

In Henderson County, most employment is concentrated in Hendersonville with some additional employment in the Town of Fletcher and along the I-26 and US 64 corridors. Many of the land-development changes in Henderson County have involved residential development, with some additional employment-related development. The LRTP anticipates continued residential and commercial growth along the I-26 corridor adjacent to and north of Hendersonville north to Fletcher.

## **2.8 LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The region has experienced a unique economic transition over the past several decades as its traditional focus on the service and tourism industry has been accompanied by a focus on niche businesses in the region as well as a growing influx of retirees.

On a daily basis, tourists use I-26 to access points of interests such as the Biltmore Estate, Pisgah National Forest, Blue Ridge Parkway, the North Carolina Arboretum as well as connecting to I-40 for other destinations such as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Local jurisdictions attempt to regulate their land development while noting these interests and their associated traffic demand.

Buncombe County's land use plan was adopted in March of 1999. The plan was updated in June 2006 and takes into consideration the future widening of the I-26 corridor. It is intended as a guide for future commercial, residential, and industrial development. The plan notes that residential development in Buncombe County has experienced substantial growth. Marketed as a place for active retirees, Buncombe County has experienced a dramatic increase within the housing market for these retiring citizens. This residential growth has triggered a demand for services and has created development pressure that is affecting a number of conditions, including infrastructure. With a variety of mixed land uses along its corridor and concentrations of retail and commercial land uses at interchange locations that are anticipated to increase in density, I-26 serves as a critical connector for these adjacent retail and commercial land uses.

In 2004, Henderson County adopted the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and established an objective to achieve a balance between development and preservation. One of its objectives is to guide public officials in the development and management of growth and infrastructure. The plan notes that transportation is an important topic greatly affecting Henderson County residents and businesses. It also states that Henderson County must take an active role in ensuring that the transportation network adequately serves to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life of Henderson County. According to the plan, commercial land uses exist at I-26 interchanges with US 64 and NC 280 with a significant portion of the adjacent land between these interchanges as residential or undeveloped, but expected to become more developed in the future. Tourism has experienced significant growth in Henderson County over the last twenty years and is expected to maintain this high level, causing additional need for service oriented jobs and placing added demand on infrastructure.

## **3. MERGER CONCURRENCE POINT 2 – ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

### **3.1 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES TO BE CONSIDERED**

The identification, consideration, and analysis of alternatives are key to the NEPA process and the goal of objective decision-making. Consideration of alternatives leads to a solution that satisfies the transportation need and avoids and minimizes adverse impacts to environmental and community resources. This identification and consideration includes a No-Build Alternative, a review of Alternative Modes of Transportation in the project area, Transportation Systems Management and Transportation Demand Management alternatives, and an analysis of a reasonable range of Build Alternatives.

### **3.1.1 No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative is the baseline comparative alternative for the design year (2040). The No-Build Alternative would not provide any substantial improvements to the I-26 corridor in the study area. Only typical maintenance activities would be provided along this section of I-26. The No-Build Alternative would incur neither right-of-way nor construction costs. There would be no short-term disruptions along existing roadways during construction. There would be no disruption to usage of the Blue Ridge Parkway during construction. There would be no impacts to streams, wetlands, or other natural and cultural resources, nor any residential or business relocation. However, the No-Build Alternative would not meet the purposes of and needs identified for the proposed project. It would not increase capacity nor reduce congestion. Although the No-Build Alternative would not reduce congestion, and thereby would not meet the project's purpose and need, the No-Build Alternative is recommended to be retained for additional screening so as to provide a basis for comparing the adverse impacts and benefits of the detailed study alternatives.

### **3.1.2 Mass Transit Alternative**

The City of Asheville's ART provides bus service throughout Asheville and connects with Mountain Mobility to reach Black Mountain. Apple Country Transit provides limited fixed-route and deviated fixed-route service. Buncombe and Henderson Counties provide van transportation service for residents in need of transportation. Passenger rail service is not readily available in the project area. Expanded bus service and new rail alignments would not meet the project's purpose and need and would not be financially feasible within the time horizon under consideration. Therefore, the Mass Transit Alternative is not recommended as a detailed study alternative.

### **3.1.3 Transportation System Management Alternative**

Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative improvements typically involve low-cost, minor transportation improvements to increase the capacity of an existing facility, and do not include reconstructing or adding additional through lanes to the existing highway. TSM improvements on I-26 in the study area, such as ramp termini modifications, acceleration/deceleration lane lengths, and signing upgrades, would not noticeably reduce congestion. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would not meet the project's purpose and need and is not recommended as a detailed study alternative.

### **3.1.4 Transportation Demand Management Alternative**

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Alternatives typically include strategies that result in more efficient use of transportation resources by changing traveler behavior. Typically, TDM improvements do not involve major capital improvements. Such improvements can include staggered work hours, flex-time (employer focused), and ride-sharing. While ride-sharing strategies, including carpools and vanpools, can provide a flexible option to transit for some travelers, the ability of these voluntary programs to substantially reduce traffic volumes on particular roadways is minimal. Although TDM measures would help optimize the efficiency of traffic flow on I-26 in the study area, the highway would remain congested due to the projected high volumes of traffic. As such, the TDM Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project and is not recommended as a detailed study alternative.

### 3.1.5 Build Alternatives

*Build Alternative 1: “Best Fit” 6-Lane Widening Alternative* - Alternative 1 would widen I-26 along the full project corridor to a 6-lane facility asymmetrically at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses. “Best Fit” locations would be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction. The additional traffic lanes would increase capacity and reduce congestion. The Build Alternative 1 – “Best Fit” 6-Lane Widening Alternative would meet the purpose and need of the project and is recommended as a detailed study alternative.

*Build Alternative 2 – “Best Fit” 8-Lane Widening Alternative* - Alternative 2 would widen I-26 along the full project corridor to an 8-lane facility asymmetrically at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses. “Best Fit” locations would be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction. The additional traffic lanes would increase capacity and reduce congestion. The Build Alternative 2 – “Best Fit” 8-Lane Widening Alternative would meet the purpose and need of the project and is recommended as a detailed study alternative.

*Build Alternative 3 – “Best Fit” Traffic Report Recommendations Widening Alternative* - Alternative 3 would widen I-26 as a hybrid of 6- or 8-lane segments at different locations along the project corridor. Widening to 6- or 8-lanes would be asymmetrical at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses and as outlined in the traffic report recommendations in specific areas. “Best Fit” locations would be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction. The additional traffic lanes would increase capacity and reduce congestion. The Build Alternative 3– “Best Fit” Traffic Report Recommendations Widening Alternative would meet the purpose and need of the project and is recommended as a detailed study alternative.

## 4. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following bullets outline the tentative project schedule. These major milestone target dates are preliminary and subject to change.

- Project Technical Reports 2013 – 2015
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement Late 2015
- Public Hearing 2016
- Final Environmental Impact Statement Late 2016
- Record of Decision 2017
- Begin Right-of-Way Acquisition 2018
- Begin Construction 2020

## 5. MERGER PROJECT TEAM MEETING AGREEMENT SIGNATURE FORMS

### 5.1 Concurrence Point Number 1: Project Purpose and Need

#### Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement

Concurrence Point Number 1: Project Purpose and Need

Project Name/Description: I-26, Widen from US 25 in Hendersonville in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County (study area boundary shown on Figures 1-2a, b, c)

TIP Project: I-4400/I-4700

The needs to be addressed by this project include:

- Improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies.
- Improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

The purpose of the proposed improvements to I-26, from US 25 in Henderson County north to I-40 in Buncombe County, is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall LOS D in the design year (2040), and improve the pavement structure.

The Project Team has concurred on this date of **June 20, 2013**, on the above mentioned project purpose and need for TIP Project I-4400/I-4700.

USACE <u><i>April A. Beckwith</i></u>	NCDOT <u><i>Andrea Major</i></u>
USERA <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	USFWS <u><i>Walter L. Justice</i></u>
WRC <u><i>Maisha Chambers</i></u>	FHWA <u><i>Michael J. Gentry</i></u>
DWQ <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	SHPO <u><i>Renee Medkiff-Easley</i></u>
TVA <u><i>Ashley K. Faulless</i></u>	FBRMPO <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
EBCI <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	NPS _____

**5.2 Concurrence Point Number 2: Detailed Study Alternatives Carried Forward**

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement**

Concurrence Point Number 2: Preliminary Alternatives to be Studied in Detail

Project Name/Description: I-26, Widen from US 25 in Hendersonville in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County

TIP Project: I-4400/I-4700

Build Alternative 1 – “Best Fit” 6-Lane Widening Alternative: Alternative 1 would widen I-26 along the full project corridor to a 6-lane facility asymmetrically at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses. “Best Fit” locations will be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction.

Build Alternative 2 – “Best Fit” 8-Lane Widening Alternative: Alternative 2 would widen I-26 along the full project corridor to an 8-lane facility asymmetrically at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses. “Best Fit” locations will be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction.

Build Alternative 3 – “Best Fit” Traffic Report Recommendations Widening Alternative: Alternative 3 would widen I-26 as a hybrid of 6- or 8-lane segments at different locations along the project corridor. Widening to 6- or 8-lanes will be asymmetrical at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses and as outlined in the traffic report recommendations in specific areas. “Best Fit” locations will be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction.

The Project Team has concurred on this date of **June 20, 2013**, on the above mentioned preliminary alternatives to be studied in detail for TIP Project I-4400/I-4700.

USACE <u><i>Shelley A. Beckwith</i></u>	NCDOT <u><i>Andrea Meyer</i></u>
USERA <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	USFWS <u><i>Matthew C. Zornick</i></u>
WRC <u><i>Maria Chambers</i></u>	FHWA <u><i>Michael J. Gentry</i></u>
DWQ <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	SHPO <u><i>Renee Heckhill-Easley</i></u>
TVA <u><i>Ashley Faulstich</i></u>	FBRMPO <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
EBCI <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	NPS _____

**Concurrence Point Number 1: Project Purpose and Need**

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement**

Concurrence Point Number 1: Project Purpose and Need

Project Name/Description: I-26, Widen from US 25 in Hendersonville in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County (study area boundary shown on Figures 1-2a, b, c)

TIP Project: I-4400/I-4700

The needs to be addressed by this project include:

- Improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies.
- Improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

The purpose of the proposed improvements to I-26, from US 25 in Henderson County north to I-40 in Buncombe County, is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall LOS D in the design year (2040), and improve the pavement structure.

The Project Team has concurred on this date of **June 20, 2013**, on the above mentioned project purpose and need for TIP Project I-4400/I-4700.

USACE <u><i>Stephanie A Beckwith</i></u>	NCDOT <u><i>Andrea Major</i></u>
USERA <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	USFWS <u><i>Walker C. Swick</i></u>
WRC <u><i>Masha Chambers</i></u>	FHWA <u><i>Michael J. Gentry</i></u>
DWQ <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	SHPO <u><i>Russell M. Eckert</i></u>
TVA <u><i>Ashley K. Faulstich</i></u>	FBRMPO <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
EBCI <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>	NPS _____

**Concurrence Point Number 2: Detailed Study Alternatives Carried Forward**

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement**

Concurrence Point Number 2: Preliminary Alternatives to be Studied in Detail

Project Name/Description: I-26, Widen from US 25 in Hendersonville in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County

TIP Project: I-4400/I-4700

Build Alternative 1 – “Best Fit” 6-Lane Widening Alternative: Alternative 1 would widen I-26 along the full project corridor to a 6-lane facility asymmetrically at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses. “Best Fit” locations will be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction.

Build Alternative 2 – “Best Fit” 8-Lane Widening Alternative: Alternative 2 would widen I-26 along the full project corridor to an 8-lane facility asymmetrically at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses. “Best Fit” locations will be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction.

Build Alternative 3 – “Best Fit” Traffic Report Recommendations Widening Alternative: Alternative 3 would widen I-26 as a hybrid of 6- or 8-lane segments at different locations along the project corridor. Widening to 6- or 8-lanes will be asymmetrical at locations that “best fit” the current roadway location and surrounding land uses and as outlined in the traffic report recommendations in specific areas. “Best Fit” locations will be evaluated and selected to improve the existing highway alignment, minimize impacts, and accommodate maintenance of traffic during construction.

The Project Team has concurred on this date of **June 20, 2013**, on the above mentioned preliminary alternatives to be studied in detail for TIP Project I-4400/I-4700.

USACE

*Shirley A. Beckwith*

NCDOT

*Andrew Major*

USEPA

*[Signature]*

USFWS

*Malcolm C. Benish*

WRC

*Maria Chambers*

FHWA

*Michael J. Gentry*

DWQ

*[Signature]*

SHPO

*Renee Meddell-Easley*

TVA

*Ashley K. Furlow*

FBRMPO

*[Signature]*

EBCI

*[Signature]*

NPS

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. MERGER PROJECT TEAM AGREEMENT SIGNATURE FORM

##### Merger Project Team Agreement

##### Concurrence Point 2A: Bridging Decisions and Alignment Review

Project Name/Description:

I-26, Widen from US 25 in Hendersonville in Henderson County to  
I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County

TIP Project: I-4400/I-4700

Bridging Decisions: Based on the current preliminary hydraulics design for the existing major drainage structures for TIP Project I-4400/I-4700, the proposed culvert and bridging recommendations are presented in the following table:

SITE	PROPOSED HYDRAULIC STRUCTURE Number, Size, Structure Type, (Additional Length)		
	6-LANE WIDENING	8-LANE WIDENING	HYBRID 6-/8-LANE WIDENING
3	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC (18' [RT]/47' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC (25' [RT]/27' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC (18' [RT]/47' [LT])
4*	Retain 2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC ; add supplemental pipe	Retain and extend 2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (45' [RT]/18' [LT])	Retain 2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC ; add supplemental pipe
7*	Retain and extend 3 @ 9' X 10' RCBC (42' [RT]/20' [LT])	Retain and extend 3 @ 9' X 10' RCBC (42' [RT]/70' [LT])	Retain and extend 3 @ 9' X 10' RCBC (42' [RT]/20' [LT])
10	Retain 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC (0' [RT]/8' [LT])	Retain 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC
11	Remove and replace Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 230'	Remove and replace Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 230'	Remove and replace Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 230'
12	Retain and extend 1 @ 7' x 7' RCBC (18' [RT]/0'[LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 7' x 7' RCBC (26' [RT]/18' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 7' x 7' RCBC (18' [RT]/0'[LT])
13	Retain 3 @ 8' x 8' RCBC	Retain and extend 3 @ 8' x 8' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (32' [RT]/52' [LT])	Retain 3 @ 8' x 8' RCBC
14	Retain and extend 2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (21' [RT]/16' [LT])	Retain and extend 2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (33' [RT]/28' [LT])	Retain and extend 2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (21' [RT]/16' [LT])
16	Remove and replace Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 210'	Remove and replace Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 210'	Remove and replace Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 210'
17	Retain and extend 3 @ 7' x 7' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (20' [RT]/30' [LT])	Retain and extend 3 @ 7' x 7' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (36' [RT]/48' [LT])	Retain and extend 3 @ 7' x 7' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (36' [RT]/48' [LT])
18	Retain 1 @ 6' x 5' RCBC - 66" RCP w/ HW	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 5' RCBC - 66" RCP w/ HW (0' [RT]/8' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 5' RCBC - 66" RCP w/ HW (0' [RT]/8' [LT])
19	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (22' [RT]/27' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (48' [RT]/27' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC; add supplemental pipe (48' [RT]/27' [LT])

SITE	PROPOSED HYDRAULIC STRUCTURE Number, Size, Structure Type, (Additional Length)		
	6-LANE WIDENING	8-LANE WIDENING	HYBRID 6-/8-LANE WIDENING
23	Retain and extend 2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (28' [RT]/0' [LT])	Retain and extend 2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (80' [RT]/24' [LT])	Retain and extend 2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (80' [RT]/24' [LT])
24	Retain 1 @ 8' x 8' RCBC	Retain 1 @ 8' x 8' RCBC	Retain 1 @ 8' x 8' RCBC
25	Remove and replace Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 460'	Remove and replace Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 460'	Remove and replace Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 460'
26	Retain 1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW; 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC (vehicle underpass)	Retain and extend 1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW; 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC (vehicle underpass) (20' [RT]/40' [LT])	Retain and extend 1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW; 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC (vehicle underpass) (20' [RT]/40' [LT])

\*Evaluate bridges at Sites 4 and 7 for the 8-Lane Alternative.

The Merger Team has concurred on this date of February 11, 2015, on the above proposed culvert and bridging recommendations for TIP Project I-4400/I-4700.

USACE

*[Signature]*

NCDOT

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*  
USEPA

*[Signature]*

WRC

*[Signature]*

FHWA

*[Signature]*

DWR

*[Signature]*

SHPO

*[Signature]*

TVA

FBRMPO

*[Signature]*

EBCI

SITE	PROPOSED HYDRAULIC ROUTINE (Number, Size, RT/Left, Type, Additional Length)		
	6-LANE WIDENING	8-LANE WIDENING	HYBRID 6/8-LANE WIDENING
23	Retain and extend 2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (28' RT/0' LT)	Retain and extend 2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (30' RT/20' LT)	Retain and extend 2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (30' RT/24' LT)
24	Retain 1 @ 8' x 8' RCBC	Retain 1 @ 8' x 8' RCBC	Retain 1 @ 8' x 8' RCBC
25	Remove and replace Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 480'	Remove and replace Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 480'	Remove and replace Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L (Min) = 480'
26	Retain 1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW; 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC (vehicle underpass)	Retain and extend 1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC (vehicle underpass) (20' RT/40' LT)	Retain and extend 1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW; 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC (vehicle underpass) (20' RT/40' LT)

\*Evaluate bridges at Sites 4 and 7 for the 8-Lane Alternative

The Merger Team has concurred on this date of February 11, 2015, on the above proposed culvert and bridging recommendations for TIP Project I-4400/1-4700.

USACE [Signature] NCDOT [Signature]  
 USEPA [Signature]  
 WRC [Signature] FHWA [Signature]  
 DWR [Signature] SHPO [Signature]  
 TVA [Signature] FBRMPO [Signature]  
 EBCI [Signature]

## 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>
NCDOT – PDEA – NES	Carla Dagnino	<a href="mailto:cdagnino@ncdot.gov">cdagnino@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – PDEA - NES	Bill Barrett	<a href="mailto:wabarrett@ncdot.gov">wabarrett@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – Division 13	Ricky Tipton	<a href="mailto:rtipton@ncdot.gov">rtipton@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – Division 13	Kristina Solberg	<a href="mailto:ksolberg@ncdot.gov">ksolberg@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT Division 13	Roger Bryan	<a href="mailto:rdbryan@ncdot.gov">rdbryan@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – Roadway Design	Kevin Moore	<a href="mailto:kmoore@ncdot.gov">kmoore@ncdot.gov</a>
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>
NCDOT – Geotechnical Engineering	John Pilipchuk	<a href="mailto:jpilipchuk@ncdot.gov">jpilipchuk@ncdot.gov</a>
NCDOT – Geotechnical Engineering	Shane Clark	<a href="mailto:scclark@ncdot.gov">scclark@ncdot.gov</a>
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>
NC-DENR - DWR	Kevin Barnett	<a href="mailto:Kevin.barnett@ncdenr.gov">Kevin.barnett@ncdenr.gov</a>
NC-DENR – Land Quality Section	Laura Herbert	<a href="mailto:Laura.herbert@ncdenr.gov">Laura.herbert@ncdenr.gov</a>
NC-DENR – Land Quality Section	Melissa King	<a href="mailto:Melissa.king@ncdenr.gov">Melissa.king@ncdenr.gov</a>
HNTB	Eric Seckinger	<a href="mailto:eseckinger@HNTB.com">eseckinger@HNTB.com</a>
Duke Energy	James Shapard	<a href="mailto:James.shapard@duke-energy.com">James.shapard@duke-energy.com</a>
Duke Energy	Ruth Neely	<a href="mailto:Ruth.neely@duke-energy.com">Ruth.neely@duke-energy.com</a>
Duke Energy	Matt Hooper	<a href="mailto:Matt.hooper@duke-energy.com">Matt.hooper@duke-energy.com</a>
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Duke Energy	Brandon Lewis	<a href="mailto:Brandon.lewis2@duke-energy.com">Brandon.lewis2@duke-energy.com</a>
Duke Energy	Sarah Spagnola	<a href="mailto:Sarah.puffer@duke-energy.com">Sarah.puffer@duke-energy.com</a>
Duke Energy	Chelsea Parkinson	<a href="mailto:Chelsea.parkinson@duke-energy.com">Chelsea.parkinson@duke-energy.com</a>
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.



I-26 Widening Project  
 NC Department of Transportation  
 ATTN: Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
 1598 Mail Service Center  
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

<<PROPERTY OWNER>>  
 <<CARE OF>>  
 OR CURRENT RESIDENT  
 <<ADDRESS 1>>  
 <<CITY>>, <<STATE>> <<ZIP>>

## BE INVOLVED, STAY INFORMED

The purpose of this study's community outreach program is to solicit input from as many residents, business owners, property owners, local agencies, community groups and other stakeholders within the project study area as possible. The goal of this outreach is to involve the public often and share information as it is available. A variety of communication methods are being used to solicit meaningful involvement from the community.

Public participation and feedback are integral to the project development process. By sharing your ideas and concerns, you can help NCDOT identify appropriate transportation solutions for your community. We encourage you to attend the open house and hearing described in this newsletter.

Questions about the public meeting, public hearing, or the project in general may be submitted in any of the following ways:

Website: [www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening](http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening)  
 E-mail: [alaad@ncdot.gov](mailto:alaad@ncdot.gov)  
 Telephone: 919.707.6072  
 Mail: Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
 1598 Mail Service Center  
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

*Aquellas personas que hablan español y no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan de la reunión llamando al 1-800-481-6494.*

*Если вы говорите только по-русски или вам трудно читать и воспринимать информацию на английском, мы можем предоставить вам услуги переводчика. Пожалуйста позвоните по тел. 1-800-481-6494 предвзрительно до собрания чтобы запросить помощь.*



The I-26 Widening Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation have been published by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The document and maps are available online at:

[www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening](http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening)

Paper copies of the Draft EIS and Public Hearing Maps are available for viewing at the locations listed inside the newsletter.

NCDOT and FHWA would like your input and is holding a Pre-Hearing Open House and Public Hearing. The Pre-Hearing Open House is drop-in format, so that the public may review the project with NCDOT representatives informally, any time during the posted meeting hours. The Public Hearing will follow the Pre-Hearing Open House and is a formal process allowing the public to make formal comments. **All comments written or verbal will become part of the project record and are requested by November 14, 2016.**

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### What is the project?

The project proposes improvements to a 22.2-mile segment of I-26 from U.S. 25 (Exit 54) near Hendersonville to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville.

### Why is this project needed?

The project is needed to:

- improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies, and
- improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

### Which alternatives are being studied?

- 6-Lane Widening Alternative—widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction
- 8-Lane Widening Alternative—widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction
- Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative—widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction between U.S. 25 (Greenville Hwy) (Exit 54) and the U.S. 25 (Asheville Hwy) (Exit 44) interchange and widen to four lanes in each direction from U.S. 25 (Asheville Hwy) (Exit 44) interchange to the I-40/I-240 interchange. *This alternative is NCDOT's and FHWA Preferred Alternative.*

## PRE-HEARING OPEN HOUSE & PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, October 13, 2016

Biltmore Baptist Church  
 35 Clayton Rd, Arden

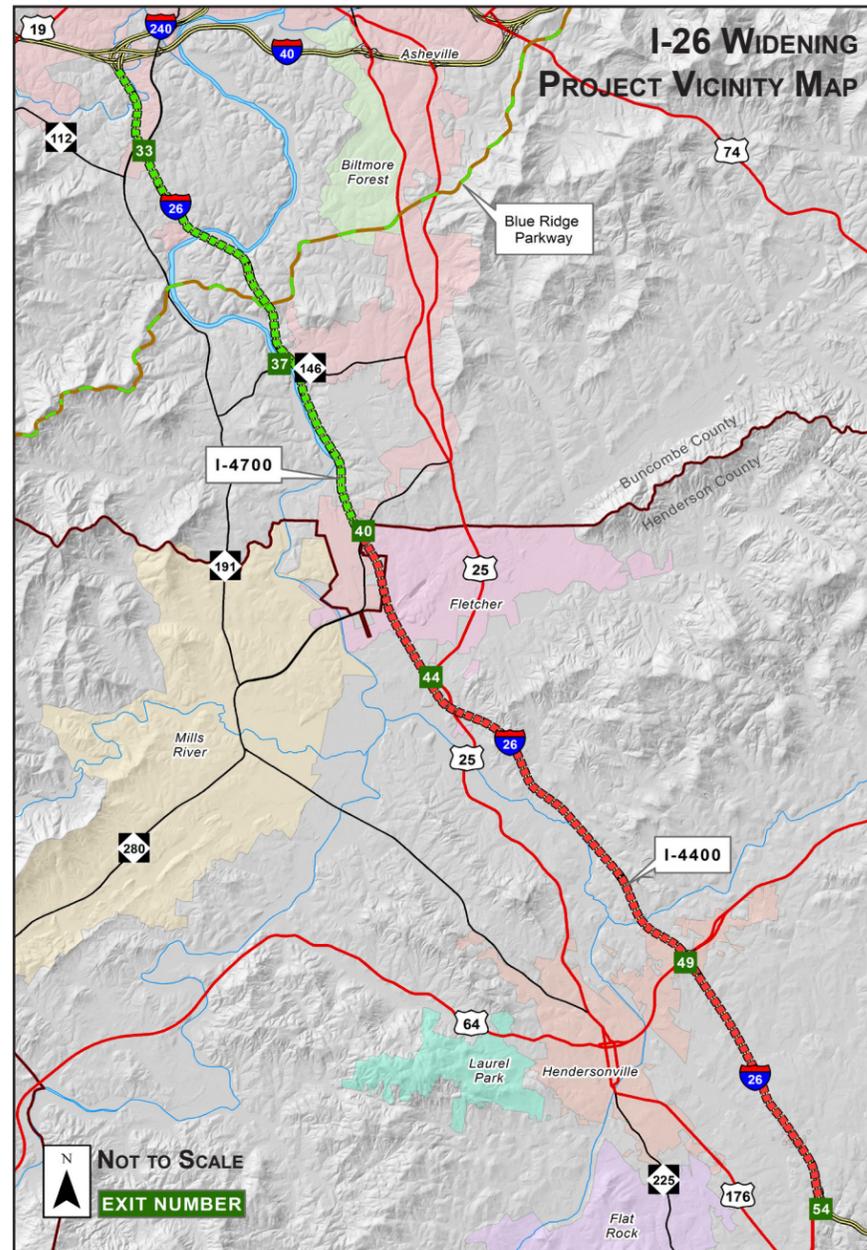
Pre-Hearing Open House: 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: 7:00 p.m.

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to participate in these events. To receive special services, please contact the NCDOT by phone at 919-707-6072 or email [alaad@ncdot.gov](mailto:alaad@ncdot.gov). Please provide adequate notice prior to the date of the meeting so that arrangements can be made.*

**Wasn't widening I-26 previously studied?**

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) I-4400 (the 13.6-mile segment from U.S. 25 to N.C. 280) in May 2001. The decision document, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), was completed in January 2002. A lawsuit and resulting judgment in 2003 found that NCDOT should conduct a broader analysis of the cumulative impacts and project limits of the overall expansion of the I-26 corridor. To address the 2003 judgment, the NCDOT added the analysis of the 8.6-mile segment between N.C. 280 and I-40/I-240, STIP Project Number I-4700, into one comprehensive analysis. In addition, per the 2003 court ruling, an Asheville Regional Cumulative Effects Study was completed in June 2014 and its findings were included in the Draft EIS.



**PROJECT SCHEDULE\***

Publish Draft EIS	August 9, 2016
Public Meeting/Public Hearing	October 13, 2016
Confirm Preferred Alternative	December 2016 / January 2017
Publish Combined Final EIS / Record of Decision (ROD)	Spring 2017
Begin Right of Way Acquisition	Fiscal Year 2018
Begin Construction	Fiscal Year 2020

\*Schedule is tentative and subject to change

**DRAFT EIS AND DRAFT SECTION 4(f) PUBLIC REVIEW LOCATIONS:**

**\*NCDOT Division 13 Office - Buncombe County**  
55 Orange Street, Asheville

**\*NCDOT Division 14 - District 1 Office - Henderson County**  
4142 Haywood Road, Mills River

**\*French Broad River MPO / Land of Sky Regional Council**  
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville\*

**\*National Park Service - Blue Ridge Parkway**  
199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville

**\*South Buncombe Library**  
260 Overlook Road, Asheville

\*The Public Hearing Maps are also available at these locations.

**Fletcher Planning and Zoning Department**  
Fletcher Town Hall  
300 Old Cane Creek Road, Fletcher

**Buncombe County Planning Department**  
46 Valley Street, Asheville

**Henderson County Planning Department**  
King Street Office Building  
100 North King Street, Hendersonville

**Asheville Planning & Urban Design Department**  
Asheville City Hall  
70 Court Plaza, 5th Floor, Asheville

**Hendersonville Planning Department**  
Hendersonville City Hall  
145 5th Avenue East, 2nd Floor, Hendersonville

**PUBLIC NOTICE ON "de minimis" IMPACTS**

All of the Widening Alternatives under consideration for this project would, to some extent, affect park and historic resources in the project's study area. Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 gives special protection to public parks and historic resources. Under Section 4(f) these resources cannot, in most cases, be disrupted by transportation projects unless it can be shown that there are no reasonable and prudent alternatives to doing so. However, the FHWA is provided with a method, known as a "de minimis impact determination," in cases where the official with jurisdiction concurs that the project would not adversely affect the property.

With this newsletter, the FHWA and NCDOT are providing public notice of proposed de minimis impact determinations under Section 4(f) for the I-26 Widening project's potential effects on resources in the study area. These resources include: Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr, and the Mountains to Sea Trail. Under the 8-Lane Widening Alternative McMurray House is also a Section 4(f) de minimis resource. As documented in the project's Draft EIS and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, the potential effects on these resources will not adversely affect their historic or recreational characteristics.

Comments on the proposed de minimis determination may be submitted to NCDOT prior to the end of the comment period, November 14, 2016.

**US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS NOTICE**

The US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, will be issuing a local public notice describing the on-going process in choosing the LEDPA (Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative) for the subject project, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The public notice will be available online at: <http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Permit-Program/Public-Notices/>



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Wilmington District

# PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: September 22, 2016  
Comment Deadline: October 21, 2016  
Corps Action ID #: SAW-2013-01883  
STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700

The Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) regarding a potential future requirement for Department of the Army (DA) authorization to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States associated with the proposed widening and improvement of 22.2 miles of Interstate 26 (I-26) in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, North Carolina, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Nos. I-4400 and I-4700.

Specific alignment alternatives and location information are described below and shown on the attached maps. This Public Notice and attachments are also available on the Wilmington District Web Site at <http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Permit-Program/Public-Notices/>

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and related maps for this project are available on the NCDOT website at <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26Widening/>

**Applicant:** North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
Philip S. Harris III, P.E., C.P.M., Natural Environment Section Head  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

## **Authority**

The Corps will evaluate this application to compare alternatives that have been carried forward for detailed study pursuant to applicable procedures of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344).

In order to more fully integrate Section 10 and Section 404 permit requirements with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and to give careful consideration to our required public interest review and 404(b)(1) compliance determination, the Corps is soliciting public comment on the merits of this proposal and on the alternatives evaluated in the August 2016, FHWA DEIS ( <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26Widening/> ). At the close of this comment period, the District Commander will evaluate and consider the comments received, as well as the expected adverse and beneficial effects of the proposed

road construction, to select the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA). The District Commander is not authorizing construction of the proposed project at this time. A final DA permit may be issued only after our review process is complete, impacts to the aquatic environment have been minimized to the maximum extent practicable, and a compensatory mitigation plan for unavoidable impacts has been approved.

## **Location**

The project is located in western North Carolina in southeastern Henderson County, just south of Hendersonville, and continues west to southern Buncombe County, just south of Asheville. The project corridor is 22.2 miles in length and passes through the Town of Fletcher and the City of Hendersonville in Henderson County, and the southern portion of the City of Asheville in Buncombe County (Attachment 1).

This project is included in the 2016 – 2025 STIP as two projects, I-4400 and I-4700. STIP Project I-4400 is 13.6 miles in length and begins at US 25 (Exit 54) near Hendersonville and extends along I-26 west to NC 280 (Exit 40). STIP Project I-4700 is 8.6 miles in length and extends along I-26 from NC 280 west to the I-40/I-240 interchange. For the remainder of this public notice, STIP Numbers I-4400 and I-4700 will be referred to as “the project.”

I-26 is a major transportation route in western North Carolina and the southeastern United States for the movement of both people and goods. I-26, as a whole, is considered a west-to-east corridor and runs from Kingsport, Tennessee to Charleston, South Carolina. As noted in the DEIS however, I-26 generally runs south-to-north in the project area.

The project study area (PSA) boundary for this project generally consists of a 1,400-foot wide corridor that follows existing I-26 from US 25 in Henderson County, north to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County (Attachments 2-11). The PSA boundary also encompasses interchanges that are included in this project and the Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26.

## **Existing Site Conditions**

I-26 is a four-lane, median-divided, full control-of-access facility between US 25 (Exit 54) in Henderson County and I-40/I-240 (Exit 31) in Buncombe County. This section of I-26 also carries the US 74 designation. The project area includes eleven existing grade-separated crossings and eight existing interchanges. The speed limit varies from 65 miles per hour (mph) in southern Henderson County to 60 mph in northern Henderson County, into Buncombe County, and up to I-40/I-240.

I-26 interchanges with US 25, which serves the region as a north-south connection between Asheville, North Carolina and Greenville, South Carolina, and US 64, which serves the region as an east-west connection between I-77 in Statesville, NC, and I-75

near Chattanooga, Tennessee. The interchange of I-26 and I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County forms the center of the region’s transportation system. These two freeways interconnect the region and carry the highest percentage of trips passing through the area, while their locations in proximity to populated areas, commercial areas, and the Asheville Regional Airport also serve a large portion of the local travel demands.

Due to its predominately south to north alignment in the PSA, I-26 serves south to north traffic through the region. With limited alternate south to north routes, automobile and truck-freight through traffic utilizing I-26 share the facility with local traffic, creating several areas of congestion during peak travel periods on I-26. The I-26 corridor in the PSA also experiences a seasonal increase in traffic volume during the summer and fall months as tourists visit the region for recreational activities and fall foliage viewing.

Current traffic volumes indicate that demand exceeds the available capacity of I-26 in Buncombe County (NC 280 [Airport Road] to I-40/I-240), with this segment of the roadway operating at Level of Service (LOS) F. LOS is a qualitative measure used to describe the operating conditions of a roadway. LOS is generally described in terms of factors such as speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, driver comfort and convenience, and safety. LOS is represented by a letter ranking from “A” to “F”, with “A” representing free flowing conditions and ”F” representing traffic-breakdown conditions. Below is a visual representation of LOS from the August 2016 FHWA DEIS:

LEVEL OF SERVICE	DESCRIPTION
<b>A</b>	Free-flow traffic operations 
<b>B</b>	Reasonable free-flow traffic operations 
<b>C</b>	At or near free-flow 
<b>D</b>	Decreasing free-flow levels 
<b>E</b>	Traffic operations at capacity 
<b>F</b>	Breakdown in vehicular flow 

The segment in Henderson County (US 25 to NC 280) is currently operating at an acceptable LOS D or better. Taking regional population and employment growth into account, the entire roadway corridor from US 25 to I-40/I-240 is projected to operate over capacity (LOS F) in 2040. According to NCDOT, I-26 currently carries substantial traffic volumes and is projected to carry higher traffic volumes in the future; therefore, the number of congestion-related crashes is expected to increase. The approximately 23-mile section of I-26 from the US 25 interchange in Henderson County to the

I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County experienced 2,072 crashes during the five-year time period of March 2011 through February 2016. This crash rate is below the statewide average for similar facility types, when considering total and non-fatal injury crash type categories, but above the statewide average for the fatal crash category. Approximately 66 percent of all crashes occur during the 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. timeframe.

The Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26 is included in the PSA for this project; this bridge is located at Milepost 391.79 on the parkway. An average of 5,000 vehicles per day use this bridge during the visitor season. There is no direct access to I-26 from the parkway.

Land use throughout the PSA is mixed, consisting of large sections of residential areas, commercial and industrial stretches, and agricultural tracts. Residential areas generally consist of single family homes on individual parcels or within subdivisions. Commercial development is largely concentrated near the I-26 interchanges with US 64, NC 280 (Airport Road), NC 146 (Long Shoals Road), and NC 191 (Brevard Road).

Water resources in the PSA are part of the Broad and French Broad river basins (US Geological Survey [USGS] Hydrologic Unit Codes [HUC] 03050105 and 06010105). The French Broad River is a major feature in the region. It bisects Buncombe County and provides a water source for a large portion of the PSA. Due to the topography of the region, most other rivers, streams, and creeks flow into the French Broad River. The Hominy Creek watershed is located in southern Asheville and contains Hominy Creek and South Hominy Creek. South Hominy Creek, the French Broad River, Clear Creek, Devils Fork, Bat Fork, Ivy Creek, Mills River, Mud Creek, and Cane Creek are listed on the NCDWR 2014 Final 303(d) list of impaired waters.

One hundred and seventy-five (175) perennial and intermittent streams, one hundred and fifty-eight (158) wetlands, and fourteen (14) ponds were identified in the PSA for this project. All but three (3) of these streams are designated as cold water streams. The French Broad River in the PSA is a navigable water under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

There are no designated anadromous fish waters or Primary Nursery Areas present in the PSA. There are no designated High Quality Waters, Outstanding Resource Waters, or Water Supply Watersheds (WS-I or WS-II) within 1.0 mile downstream of the PSA. The North Carolina 2014 Final 303(d) list of impaired waters (DWR, 2015) includes the French Broad River, Mud Creek, and Devils Fork; however, none of the streams in the project corridor are listed for either turbidity or sedimentation. The French Broad River (Assessment Unit [AU] 6-(54.75)b) from Mud Creek to NC 146 is listed for fecal coliform. Mud Creek (AU 6-55c2) from Clear Creek to Byers Creek is listed for Fish Community - Fair and Benthos - Fair. Devils Fork (AU 6-55-8-2b) from the first unnamed tributary west of Howard Gap Road (SR 1006) to Johnson Drainage Ditch is listed for Benthos - Poor.

## **Applicant's Stated Needs and Purpose**

### Applicant's stated needs:

- Improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies.

According to NCDOT, sections of I-26 currently operate at levels of congestion characterized by unstable travel speeds with a high level of discomfort to the driver. As projected traffic volumes increase, more sections of I-26 are projected to operate at similar levels of congestion. I-26 is anticipated to operate over capacity by 2040 (design year), hindering its ability to serve high-speed regional travel.

- Improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

The existing I-26 roadway surface has undergone major rehabilitation twice, most recently in 2011. During past rehabilitation efforts, NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14 also replaced slabs and repaired joints. According to NCDOT, the roadway is again showing signs of deterioration and additional rehabilitation will not be sufficient to provide a quality roadway because of the lack of depth of remaining concrete. Reconstruction of I-26 in the PSA is needed for high-speed, safe, and efficient travel.

### Applicant's stated purpose:

The purpose of the proposed improvements to I-26, from US 25 in Henderson County north to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County, is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall LOS D in the design year (2040), and to improve the pavement structure. LOS D is the standard performance goal target used by NCDOT for environmental studies where congestion is one of the needs being addressed.

## **Project Description**

NCDOT proposes to widen and improve a 22.2-mile segment of I-26 from US 25 near Hendersonville to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville by addressing (1) existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies, and (2) insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

## **Detailed Study Alternatives**

The following three (3) Build Alternatives were studied in the DEIS for this project (Attachments 12-21):

- Build Alternative 1: 6-Lane Widening. The 6-Lane Alternative would widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction from US 25 to I-40/I-240.
- Build Alternative 2: 8-Lane Widening. The 8-Lane Alternative would widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from US 25 to I-40/I-240.

- Build Alternative 3: Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening. The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative would widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction between US 25 and the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange and widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from the US 25 (Asheville Highway) to the I-40/I-240 interchange.

As detailed in the FHWA DEIS for this project, although all of the Build Alternatives would reduce congestion and improve pavement structure, the 8-Lane Widening Alternative and Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative would both achieve an overall LOS D in the design year for all freeway segments in the PSA; the 6-Lane Widening Alternative would not provide an overall LOS D.

In addition to the three Build Alternatives, a No-Build Alternative was also retained as a baseline against which the benefits, costs and impacts of the Build Alternatives could be compared. The No-Build Alternative assumed that the transportation network in the PSA will continue to develop as called for in the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), but without the subject project included. The FHWA and NCDOT determined that the No-Build Alternative would not meet the project's purposes.

Because the columns supporting the deck of the Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26 are spaced in such a way that they do not accommodate widening of the I-26 facility under any of the three (3) Build Alternatives, NCDOT and FHWA propose to replace the bridge as part of this project. NCDOT and FHWA have coordinated with the National Park Service (NPS) in the development and evaluation of bridge replacement options. Four (4) options (Attachment 22) for realigning the parkway in conjunction with replacing the existing bridge were investigated in detail. Replacing the bridge on new alignment south of the current structure (Option 4), was identified as NPS's Preferred Option.

The US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange with I-26 was determined to have operational issues in the design year (2040) under the No-Build Alternative. In addition, the 8-Lane Widening Alternative in the base year (2011) and the 6-Lane Widening Alternative in the design year (2040) had operational deficiencies at the southern ramp termini where lanes would be added to or dropped from the existing system at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange. Four alternative interchange designs were developed and evaluated to address these issues. The partial cloverleaf design with a 231-foot loop radius was recommended for further study in combination with the three I-26 widening Build Alternatives.

Impacts to waters of the U.S. for each of the three (3) Build Alternatives that were studied in detail in the DEIS are listed below. These impact estimates were calculated based on functional slope stake limits plus 40 feet.

**Table 1. Stream and Wetland Impacts by Build Alternative**

(source – August 2016 FHWA DEIS)

Build Alternative	Stream Impacts* (linear feet)	Wetland Impacts* (acres)
6-Lane Widening	21,597	4.8
8-Lane Widening	27,241	8.0
Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening	24,650	7.7

\*Impacts are based on functional slope stake limits plus 40 feet.

All of the Build Alternatives would have less than 0.1 acre impact to ponds in the PSA.

Based on the information available to date, including the information contained in the Draft EIS, the FHWA and NCDOT have identified the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction between US 25 and the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange and widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from the US 25 (Asheville Highway) to the I-40/I-240 interchange. The US 25 (Asheville Highway) partial cloverleaf interchange is a component of the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, the Blue Ridge Parkway would be realigned and the bridge carrying it over I-26 would be replaced as part of this project. After the Draft EIS comment period ends, the FHWA and NCDOT will review agency and public comments received, and comments resulting from the public hearing, to reassess and/or reconfirm selection of the Preferred Alternative.

### **Cultural Resources**

The FHWA is the lead federal agency for this project and, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), is the federal agency responsible for making determinations and requesting concurrence with these determinations from the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Additionally, if and when necessary, adverse effects to historic resources will be resolved through execution of a memorandum of agreement.

### Architectural Resources

Nine resources within the PSA were found to be either listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or were considered eligible for listing. The alternatives may require right of way from some of the resources. At meetings on May 19, 2015, and April 26, 2016, representatives of the NCDOT, FHWA, and HPO reached concurrence on the effects of the proposed alternatives on these resources.

**Table 2. Historic Architecture Assessment of Effects**

(source – August 2016 FHWA DEIS)

Property and Status	Widening Alternative	Effect Finding	Reasons
McMurray House (Windy Hill) (HN1904) DE-Criterion C	6-Lane & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Adverse Effect	Access road along west side of property will be temporarily closed during construction, but does not impact access to the house.
	8-Lane	No Adverse Effect with commitments **4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Access road along west side will be permanently closed and requires removal of a row of recently planted trees. Noise at the structure predicted to increase by 5 decibels. Access to the house will not be impacted. NCDOT will contact the property owner to discuss replanting trees and noise abatement measures such as storm windows or insulation.
Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood) (HN1905) DE-Criteria A&C	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Adverse Effect **4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Some small sections of new right of way required on east side of interstate to accommodate cut and fill slopes and the control of access fencing will be relocated as needed in these areas. Requires some tree removal along length of property that borders interstate. Some fill impacts to wetlands adjacent to historic property, but within NCDOT existing ROW. Does not impact contributing resource.
Sholtz-Cantrell Estate (HN0059) DE-Criterion A	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Effect	No construction work within property boundary. Viewshed from house will not be impacted.
Hyder Dairy Farm (HN1906) DE-Criteria A&C	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Adverse Effect **4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Some small sections of new ROW required on both sides of interstate 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 length of property that borders interstate. Does not impact contributing resources. Viewshed from house will not be impacted.
Mountain Sanitarium (HN1907) DE-Criteria A&C	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Effect	No construction work within property boundary.
Rugby Grange (HN0042) NR-Criteria A&C	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Effect	No construction work within property boundary. Some fill impacts to wetlands adjacent to historic property, but within NCDOT existing ROW. Viewshed from house will not be impacted.
Cureton House (HN1912) DE-Criterion C	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	<b>Adverse Effect</b>	Tree clearing adjacent to the property will constitute an adverse visual effect to the property's setting. Further, an expected 3 decibel noise increase, resulting in a 68 db(A) noise level in all build alternatives, will constitute an adverse audible effect.

**Table 2. Historic Architecture Assessment of Effects**

(source – August 2016 FHWA DEIS)

Property and Status	Widening Alternative	Effect Finding	Reasons
Blue Ridge Parkway (NC0001) DE-Criteria A&C	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	<b>Adverse Effect **4(f)</b>	Bridge carrying Blue Ridge Parkway over I-26 will be demolished and replaced with a new structure developed in collaboration with Eastern Federal Lands, Blue Ridge Parkway, NCDOT, NC-HPO, and FHWA.
Biltmore Estate (BN0004) NR-Criteria A,B,C,&D <b>National Historic Landmark</b>	6-Lane, 8-Lane, & Hybrid 6/8 Lane	No Adverse Effect **4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Some small sections 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 along length of property that borders interstate. Some fill impacts to wetlands adjacent to historic property, but within NCDOT existing ROW. Does not impact contributing resources.

\*\*FHWA is using the HPO’s concurrence as a basis for a “*de minimis*” finding for the following properties, pursuant to Section 4(f):

1. McMurray House (Windy Hill) (HN1904)
2. Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood) (HN1905)
3. Hyder Dairy Farm (HN1906)
4. Biltmore Estate (BN0004)

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966

Section 4(f) provides protection to historic properties, public parks, and recreation areas. All Build Alternatives would result in the Section 4(f) use of the Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr, Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST). The 8-Lane Widening Alternative would also result in the Section 4(f) use of the McMurray House. Through consultation with the officials with jurisdiction it was determined that the minor use of the Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr, McMurray House and Mountains to Sea Trail would result in a *de minimis* impact. NCDOT and FHWA will continue to coordinate with the NPS regarding the Blue Ridge Parkway realignment and bridge replacement.

Archaeological Resources

In a letter dated November 18, 2014, the HPO provided concurrence that no additional archaeological survey work is required for the subject project. In a memorandum from the NPS’s Blue Ridge Parkway archaeologist, dated July 22, 2015, it is noted that a pedestrian survey of the Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge replacement Area of Potential Effect (APE) was completed by the NPS. Review of known archaeological sites from the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology (OSA) and the NPS Archaeological Site Management Information System (ASMIS) resulted in the determination that no known sites would be impacted by the proposed bridge replacement and realignment of the parkway.

## Endangered Species

The FHWA is the lead federal agency for this project and is the federal agency responsible for making determinations and requesting concurrence with these determinations from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in accordance with Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The following table contains the federally listed threatened and endangered species for Buncombe and Henderson Counties. It also includes the FHWA's determinations of effect to these species that would result from implementation of the Build Alternatives.

**Table 3. Federally-listed Threatened and Endangered Species in Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

(source – August 2016 FHWA DEIS)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	Habitat Present	County	Biological Conclusion
<i>Alasmidonta raveneliana</i>	Appalachian elktoe <sup>1</sup>	E	Yes	Buncombe <sup>1</sup> and Henderson	No Effect
<i>Epioblasma florentina walkeri</i> (= <i>E. walker</i> )	Tan riffleshell <sup>1</sup>	E	Yes	Buncombe	No Effect
<i>Erimonax monachus</i>	Spotfin chub (=turquoise shiner) <sup>1</sup>	T	No	Buncombe <sup>1</sup>	No Effect
<i>Geum radiatum</i>	Spreading avens	E	No	Buncombe	No Effect
<i>Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus</i>	Carolina northern flying squirrel	E	No	Buncombe and Henderson	No Effect
<i>Glyptemys muhlenbergii</i>	Bog Turtle	T(S/A)	Yes	Buncombe and Henderson	Not Required <sup>2</sup>
<i>Gymnoderma lineare</i>	Rock gnome lichen	E	No	Buncombe	No Effect
<i>Helonias bullata</i>	Swamp pink	T	Yes	Henderson	No Effect
<i>Isotria medeoloides</i>	Small whorled pogonia	T	Yes	Henderson	No Effect
<i>Microhexura montivaga</i>	Spruce fir moss spider	E	No	Buncombe	No Effect
<i>Myotis grisescens</i>	Gray bat	E	Yes	Buncombe	No Effect
<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Northern long-eared bat	T	Yes	Buncombe and Henderson	May Affect Not Likely to Adversely Affect
<i>Sagittaria fasciculata</i>	Bunched arrowhead <sup>1</sup>	E	Yes	Henderson	No Effect
<i>Sarracenia rubra ssp. jonesii</i>	Mountain sweet pitcher plant <sup>1</sup>	E	Yes	Henderson	No Effect
<i>Sisyrinchium dichotomum</i>	White irisette	E	Yes	Henderson	No Effect

**Table 3. Federally-listed Threatened and Endangered Species in Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

(source – August 2016 FHWA DEIS)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	Habitat Present	County	Biological Conclusion
<i>Spirea virginiana</i>	Virginia spiraea <sup>1</sup>	T	Yes	Buncombe <sup>1</sup>	No Effect

E – Endangered

T – Threatened

T(S/A) – Threatened due to similarity of appearance

<sup>1</sup>Historic record (the species was last observed in the county more than 50 years ago)

<sup>2</sup>Species listed as T(S/A) are not biologically endangered or threatened and are not subject to Section 7 consultation and therefore no Biological Conclusion is required.

**Evaluation**

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values (in accordance with Executive Order 11988), land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, the evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the Environmental Protection Agency’s 404(b)(1) guidelines.

**Compensatory Mitigation**

The purpose of compensatory mitigation is to offset unavoidable functional losses to the aquatic environment resulting from project impacts to waters of the U.S. According to the applicant, NCDOT has attempted to avoid impacts to streams and wetlands during development of the preliminary functional designs for the Build Alternatives. This included developing alignments and interchange configurations for the Build Alternatives that avoided these resources as much as possible, while also minimizing impacts to other resources. NCDOT has also tried to minimize the total impacts to these resources by considering bridges instead of culverts over some of the larger streams and bridges over some of the larger and high quality wetlands. NCDOT will continue to seek ways to avoid and minimize impacts in further design efforts of the selected alternative and will investigate potential on-site stream and wetland mitigation opportunities for the selected

alternative. If on-site mitigation is not feasible, mitigation will be provided by the North Carolina Division of Mitigation Services (NCDMS, formerly known as the Ecosystem Enhancement Program or EEP).

### **Commenting Information**

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state and local agencies and officials, including any consolidated State Viewpoint or written position of the Governor; Indian Tribes and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to select the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of a Corps of Engineers Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

NCDOT will hold a public hearing on this project on Thursday, October 13, beginning with an open house from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m., followed by a formal presentation at 7:00 p.m. at the Biltmore Baptist Church, 35 Clayton Road in Arden, Buncombe County. The purpose of this hearing is to provide information about the project and receive public input. Interested individuals may attend the pre-hearing open house at any time during the above hours.

NCDOT representatives will display maps and be available to answer questions and receive comments. Written comments can be submitted at the meeting or later by November 14, 2016. The formal presentation at 7:00 pm will include an explanation of the location and design of each widening alternative, the state-federal funding relationship and right of way procedures. The presentation and comments received will be recorded and included in the alternative selection and design process. The Corps will receive a summary of the public comments.

Written comments pertinent to the proposed work will be received by the Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, until 5pm, October 21, 2016. Written comments should be submitted to Ms. Lori Beckwith, US Army Corps of Engineers, Asheville Regulatory Field Office, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 208, Asheville, NC 28801-5006, telephone 828-271-7980. Written comments can also be submitted by email to [loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil](mailto:loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil)

## Kat Bukowy

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**From:** Jennifer Harris  
**Sent:** Friday, September 23, 2016 12:19 PM  
**To:** Beckwith, Loretta A SAW (Loretta.A.Beckwith@usace.army.mil)  
**Subject:** FW: Blue Ridge Parkway Seeks Public Comment Regarding Bridge Replacement at I-26

FYI - NPS has also issued a news release soliciting public comment....

Have a nice weekend!

Regards,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

 **HNTB North Carolina, P.C. | 100 YEARS OF INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS**

343 E. Six Forks Road, Suite 200

Raleigh, NC 27609

Direct 919.424.0427

Mobile 919.656.7003

---

**From:** Jennifer Harris  
**Sent:** Friday, September 23, 2016 12:17 PM  
**To:** suzette\_molling@nps.gov  
**Cc:** Williams, John L (jlwilliams@ncdot.gov); Laad, Anamika (alaad@ncdot.gov); jarobbins@ncdot.gov; Emily Robinson; Kat Bukowy; rtipton@ncdot.gov; chood@ncdot.gov; klsolberg@ncdot.gov; brianburch@ncdot.gov; kmoore@ncdot.gov; mfurr@ncdot.gov; 'anita\_barnett@nps.gov'; larry\_hultquist@nps.gov; cdagnino@ncdot.gov; wabarrett@ncdot.gov  
**Subject:** FW: Blue Ridge Parkway Seeks Public Comment Regarding Bridge Replacement at I-26

Thank you Suzette.

Once the NPS comment period has closed (October 26, 2016), could you please share the comments received?

Also, will you be posting information about the NCDOT Public Hearing on October 13, 2016 to the "Meeting Notices" section of the NPS webpage?

The screenshot shows the National Park Service website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Find a Park, Discover History, Explore Nature, Get Involved, Working With Communities, Teachers, Kids, and About Us. Below this is a banner for "PEPC Planning, Environment & Public Comment" with sub-links: PEPC Home, Documents by Park, Policy/Links, Park Planning, and Search Documents. The main content area is titled "PROJECT LINKS" and includes a sidebar with links: Project Home, Plan Process, Meeting Notices (highlighted), Links, Document List, and Open For Comment (1). The main content area is titled "Meeting Notices" and features a sub-header "Blue Ridge Parkway » NCDOT Replacement of Parkway Bridge over I-26". Below this, it states: "If meetings are scheduled for this project, notices will be posted here." At the bottom of the sidebar, it says: "A comment period closes in 33 Days, 13 Hours, 47 Min." The footer contains the NPS logo, "nps.gov", "EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™", and a list of links: U.S. Department of the Interior, FOIA, Privacy Policy, Disclaimer and Ownership, USA.Gov, NPS Home, Accessibility, RSS, and NPS.

Thanks again and I hope you have a nice weekend as well.

Regards,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

**HNTB North Carolina, P.C. | 100 YEARS OF INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS**

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**From:** Molling, Suzette [[mailto:suzette\\_molling@nps.gov](mailto:suzette_molling@nps.gov)]

**Sent:** Friday, September 23, 2016 12:05 PM

**To:** Jennifer Harris

**Cc:** Anita Barnett; Larry Hultquist

**Subject:** Fwd: Blue Ridge Parkway Seeks Public Comment Regarding Bridge Replacement at I-26

Jennifer,

please see below the news release sent out today. Thank you and have a good weekend!

Suzette Molling  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
828.348.3432



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Brandon, Leesa** <[leesa\\_brandon@nps.gov](mailto:leesa_brandon@nps.gov)>

Date: Fri, Sep 23, 2016 at 12:01 PM

Subject: Fwd: Blue Ridge Parkway Seeks Public Comment Regarding Bridge Replacement at I-26

To: NPS BLRI All Employees <[blri\\_all\\_employees@nps.gov](mailto:blri_all_employees@nps.gov)>

For Your Information -



**National Park Service**  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Blue Ridge Parkway  
North Carolina, Virginia

199 Hemphill Knob Road  
Asheville, NC 28803

828-348-3400 phone  
828-271-4313 fax

---

## Blue Ridge Parkway News Release

**Release Date:** September 23, 2016

**Contacts:** Leesa Brandon, Public Information Officer, 828.348.3420 or [leesa\\_brandon@nps.gov](mailto:leesa_brandon@nps.gov)

### Blue Ridge Parkway Seeks Public Comment Regarding Bridge Replacement at I-26

(Asheville, NC) – The Blue Ridge Parkway-National Park Service is a cooperating agency with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on the proposed project to widen Interstate 26 in Buncombe and Henderson Counties. The Parkway bridge at Milepost 391.8, that crosses I-26, is proposed to be replaced as part of the widening project.

The spacing of the columns supporting the current Parkway bridge over I-26 does not accommodate the widening of I-26. To accommodate the widened interstate highway, the proposal is to realign Parkway on either side of the new bridge to improve safety and visitor experience, while maintaining the character of the Parkway. The proposed realignment of the Parkway and the replacement bridge is approximately 1,200 feet (or 0.23 mile) in length.

Comments specific to the Parkway bridge replacement may be submitted electronically through the following link: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bridgeoverI-26> through October 26, 2016.

### **Background Information**

The NCDOT and FHWA also serve as the local and lead agencies, respectively, for overall project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended. The overall project's NEPA compliance included preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Section 4(f) Evaluation (DEIS), which was approved by the FHWA in August 2016 and includes preliminary information about the bridge replacement project scheduled to begin in 2019. For more information, visit <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/>.

[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

*The Blue Ridge Parkway, in linking the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks, is dedicated to enhancing the outstanding scenic and recreational qualities of the corridor that it traverses; conserving unimpaired its significant natural and cultural resources, and promoting perpetuity the public enjoyment and appreciation of the central and southern Appalachian Mountains. Learn more about the Parkway at [www.nps.gov/blri](http://www.nps.gov/blri).*

---

### **EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™**

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

**Disclaimer:** This email was sent to [leesa\\_brandon@nps.gov](mailto:leesa_brandon@nps.gov)  
National Park Service-WINVALLE, Winvale, 1012 14th Street NW Fifth Floor, Washington, DC, 20005, United States  
[\[Unsubscribe\]](#).

--  
Leesa Sutton Brandon  
Partnerships & Public Information  
**Blue Ridge Parkway (VA/NC)**  
199 Hemphill Knob Road  
Asheville, NC 28803  
828.348.3420 office  
828.776.0567 mobile



*To connect with and create the next generation of visitors, supporters and advocates*



# STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700 I-26 WIDENING HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

## PUBLIC MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING OCTOBER 13, 2016

*Welcome!*

## Open House and Public Hearing

### Purpose

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is holding a public meeting followed by a formal public hearing for the proposed widening of I-26 from US 25 in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Projects I-4400 and I-4700.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Share information about the project and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the project and its Draft EIS with the NCDOT Project Team.
- Provide a way for the NCDOT Project Team to receive your comments about the project and the Draft EIS.

The meeting will begin with an informal “drop-in” format. Please watch the video presentation and review the handout and maps. Members of the Project Team (we are wearing green polo shirts) are here to answer your questions and discuss the project.

The formal public hearing will begin at 7:00 p.m. Those wishing to do so may make public statements about the project at this time. You can complete the attached comment form and return it to us at today’s meeting, or you may mail or email to them to us later. We request all comments be provided to us by November 14, 2016. All comments received will be considered.

### Your Participation

- 1 Watch the video presentation.**
- 2 Review the maps and graphics.**  
Displays are located around the room and show the detailed study alternatives and impacts.
- 3 Speak with NCDOT Project Team**  
Ask any questions you may have about the proposed project.
- 4 Share your comments.**  
You can do this in several ways including submitting a written comment form or making a formal oral statement. Please send written comments to NCDOT before **November 14, 2016.**

### Inside This Handout:

What is done with the input?	Page 2
Project Development Process	Page 2
Project Purpose and Need	Page 3
Project Description	Page 3
Alternatives Being Considered	Page 3
Location Map	Page 4
Section 4(f) / Historic Properties	Page 5
Right-of-Way Acquisition	Page 5
Costs and Schedule	Page 6
Summary of Environmental Impacts	Page 7
Typical Sections	Page 8

## What is done with input received?

A post-hearing meeting will be conducted after the comment period has ended. NCDOT staff representing Planning, Design, Traffic Operations, Division, Right-of-Way, Public Involvement & Community Studies, and others who play a role in the development of a project will attend this meeting. The project will also be reviewed with federal agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), as well as state agencies such as the NC Department of Environmental Quality. Local government staff may also attend as appropriate. All oral and written comments are discussed at the post-hearing meeting. Most issues are resolved at the post-hearing meeting. The NCDOT considers safety, costs, traffic service, social impacts and public comments in making decisions. Complex issues may require additional study and may be reviewed by higher management, Board of Transportation Members and/or the Secretary of Transportation.

Minutes of the post-hearing meeting will be summarized and are available to the public by noting your request on the comment sheet.

## State-Federal Relationship

The proposed project is a Federal Aid Highway Project and thus will be constructed under the State-Federal Aid Highway Program. Financing of this project will be 80 percent Federal funds and 20 percent State funds through the National Highway System Program. The Board of Transportation is responsible for the selection and scheduling of projects on the Federal Aid System, including their location, design and maintenance cost after construction. The FHWA is responsible for the review and approval of the previously mentioned activities to ensure that each Federal Aid Project is designed, constructed, and maintained to Federal Aid Standards.

## Project Development Process

The proposed project will involve Federal funds and must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under NEPA, an agency must study the adverse and beneficial environmental impacts of alternatives that meet a project's purpose and need. This planning process can be divided into the steps shown below. This project is currently in [Step 6](#) of the process.

1. Identify Purpose of and Need for Project
2. Collect Data on Project Study Area
3. Analyze Preliminary Alternatives
4. Select Detailed Study Alternatives
5. Evaluate Impacts of Detailed Study Alternatives
6. [Publish Draft Environmental Impact Statement<sup>1</sup> and Conduct Public Hearing](#)
7. Confirm/Select a Preferred Alternative
8. Publish Final EIS<sup>1</sup> / Record of Decision (ROD)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Requires FHWA approval.

## Project Website

<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26Widening/>

## Why is the project needed and what is its purpose?

The project is needed to:

- ◆ improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies, and
- ◆ improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating existing road surface conditions.

The purpose of the project is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall Level of Service (LOS) D in the design year (2040), and improve the pavement structure.

## What is the proposed project and where is it located?

As shown on the included map, the project proposes improvements to a 22.2-mile segment of I-26 from US 25 near Hendersonville to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville.

## Wasn't widening I-26 previously studied?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for STIP I-4400 (the 13.6-mile segment from US 25 to NC 280) in May 2001 and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), was completed in January 2002. A lawsuit and resulting judgment in 2003 required NCDOT to conduct a broader analysis, both in terms of the proposed length of the project and how this project, and other projects in the area, could impact development and area resources. For these reasons, NCDOT combined another project (the 8.6-mile segment between NC 280 and I-40/I-240, STIP No. I-4700), with this study.

NCDOT also developed the Asheville Regional Cumulative Effects Study in June 2014. This study evaluated five STIP projects in the Asheville region (A-0010A, I-2513, I-4400/I-4700, I-4759, and I-5504), together to determine how they may impact regional growth, as well as the human and natural environment.

## Which alternatives are being studied?

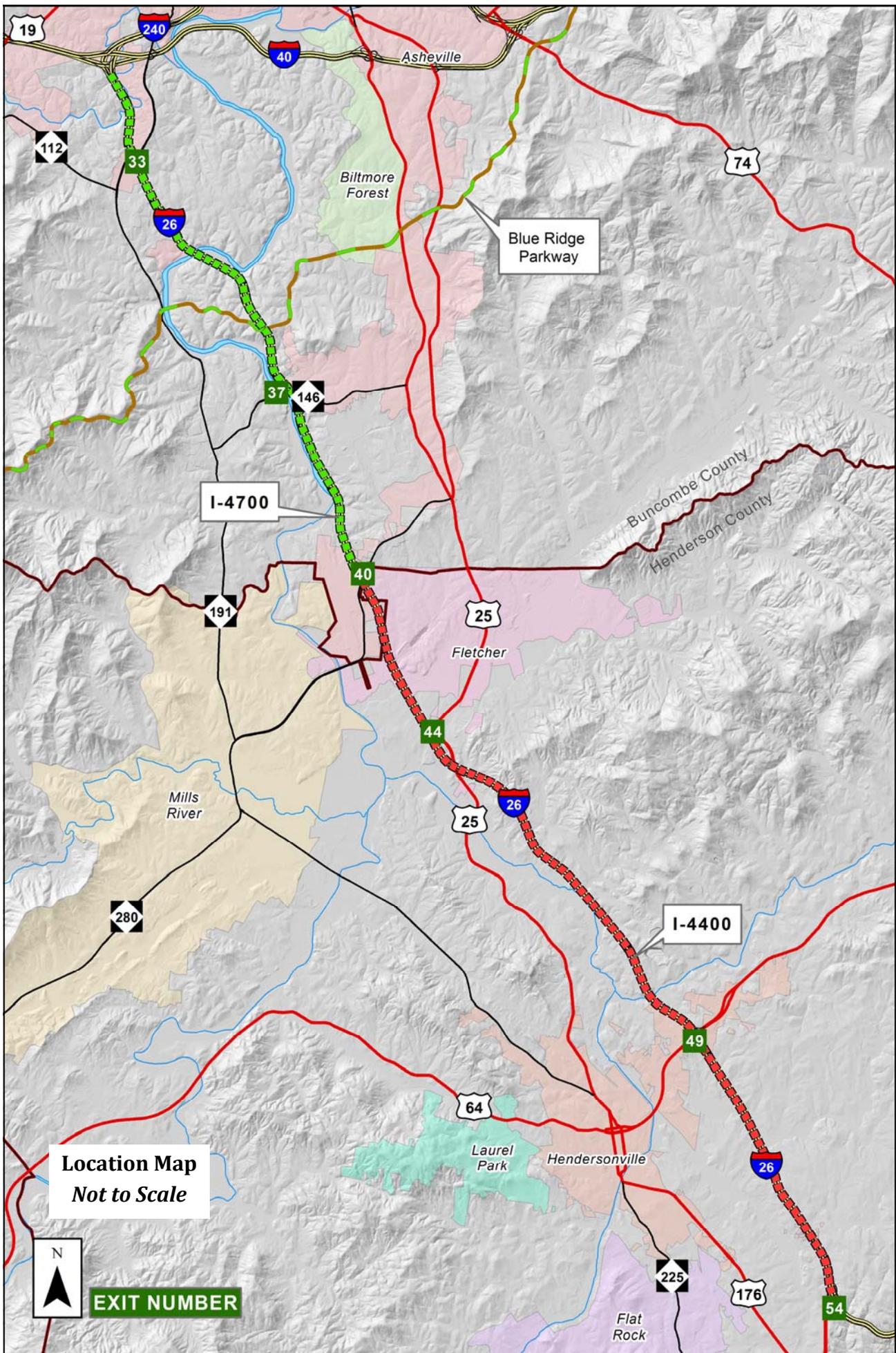
Detailed studies were conducted for three Build Alternatives. All of the alternatives would be designed to best fit within the existing right of way limits, to the extent possible, to minimize impacts.

**Build Alternative 1: 6-Lane Widening.** Widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction from US 25 to I-40/I-240.

**Build Alternative 2: 8-Lane Widening.** Widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from US 25 to I-40/I-240.

**Build Alternative 3: Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening.** Widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction from US 25 (Exit 54) to the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange (Exit 44); widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from the US 25 interchange to the I-40/I-240 interchange. *This alternative was selected by NCDOT and the FHWA as the Preferred Alternative; and they are seeking agency and public comment.*

The US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange (Exit 44) with I-26 was determined to operate poorly in the design year (2040) if no improvements were made. To improve this interchange, a partial cloverleaf design was recommended for further study in combination with the three Build Alternatives.



## What is a Section 4(f) Impact?

“Section 4(f)” is a section of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 that gives special protection to public parks, recreation areas, and historical sites that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Programs or projects that adversely impact these resources are typically not approved unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative that can be found and all planning is done to minimize harm. FHWA is provided with a method, known as a “*de minimis* impact determination,” in cases where the official with jurisdiction concurs that the project would not adversely effect the property.

## What are the Section 4(f) Impacts on this project?

All of the Widening Alternatives affect park and historic resources that are located adjacent to I-26. These include: *Biltmore Estate (National Park Service (NPS) and NC Historic Preservation Office (NC-HPO))*, *Hyder Dairy Farm (NC-HPO)*, *Camp Orr (NC-HPO)*, and *the Mountains to Sea Trail (NPS and NC Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR))*. The 8-Lane Widening Alternative would also have an effect on the *McMurray House (NC-HPO)*. All of the potential effects on these resources will not adversely affect their historic or recreation characteristics.

All alternatives would have an adverse effect on the Blue Ridge Parkway (NPS), as there is no feasible alternative that would allow the bridge over I-26 to remain unchanged.

## Right-of-Way Acquisition

After decisions are made regarding the final design, the proposed right of way limits will be staked in the ground. If you are an affected property owner, a Right-of-Way Agent will contact you and arrange a meeting. The agent will explain the plans and advise you as to how the project will affect you. The agent will inform you of your rights as a property owner. 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. The NC Department of Transportation must:

1. Treat all owners and tenants equally;
2. Fully explain the owner’s rights;
3. Pay just compensation in exchange for property rights; and
4. Furnish relocation advisory assistance.

## Relocation Assistance

If your residence or business is to be acquired and relocated 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.

NOTE: PAMPHLETS SUMMARIZING RIGHT-OF-WAY AND RELOCATION PROCEDURES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE RIGHT-OF-WAY TABLE.

## Cost Estimates

Implementation Phase	6-Lane Widening Alternative	8-Lane Widening Alternative	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative
Construction	\$364,800,000	\$484,500,000	\$431,200,000
Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$9,828,500	\$13,381,500	\$9,311,500
Utility Relocation	\$5,008,760	\$6,281,800	\$5,229,597
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$379,637,260</b>	<b>\$504,163,300</b>	<b>\$445,741,097</b>

### Project Schedule\*

Draft EIS Approved.....August 9, 2016  
 Public Hearing.....October 13, 2016  
 Public Comment Period Ends.....November 14, 2016  
 Preferred Alternative Selection.....December 2016/January 2017  
 Final EIS/Record of Decision Approved.....Spring 2017  
 Funding for right of way acquisition begins.....Fiscal Year 2018  
 Funding for construction begins.....Fiscal Year 2020

*\*Subject to change*

## Local and Regional Transportation Plans

The benefit of the proposed project to the state, region, and community will be primarily by way of improved traffic flow. French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FBRMPO) Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2008 (CTP) and the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) list I-26 corridor as a High Priority project in the area. The traffic forecast modeling for this project is based on the 2035 Regional Transportation Demand Model developed locally by the FBRMPO. Several other projects are planned in the area which together will contribute to the improvement to the transportation network in the Asheville region.

## How is the Blue Ridge Parkway involved?

The spacing of the columns supporting the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 do not accommodate widening of I-26 (needed for any of the proposed Build Alternatives). As a result, the bridge has been proposed for replacement as part of this project. NCDOT and FHWA have coordinated with the NPS in the development and evaluation of multiple bridge replacement options. NPS's Preferred Option, Option 4, realigns and replaces the bridge south of its current location. Please refer to the visualization boards for the proposed Blue Ridge Parkway bridge.

## What impacts are expected?

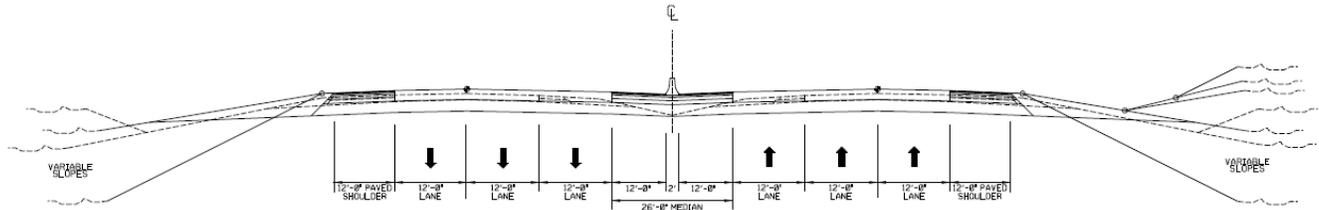
IMPACT CATEGORY	6-Lane Widening Alternative	8-Lane Widening Alternative	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative
<b>Human Environment Impacts:</b>			
Residential Relocations (Minorities)	12(4)	23(6)	18(6)
Business Relocations	1	2	1
Recurring Community / Neighborhood Impacts	No	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton community.	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton community.
Low Income / Minority Populations	No	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.
Cultural Resources (Adverse Effect determined)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House.	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House.	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House.
Section 4(f) Impacts	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway		
Section 4(f) <i>de minimis</i> (effects determined to be minimal based on agency/FHWA coordination)	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), and Mountains to Sea Trail	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), McMurray House (Windy Hill), and Mountains to Sea Trail	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), and Mountains to Sea Trail
Traffic Noise Impacts (# of receptors)	292	339	315
Farmland* (acres)	5.5	24.5	11
Hazardous Materials	Minimal monetary and scheduling impacts.		
<b>Natural Resources Impacts:</b>			
Federal Listed Species Habitat	May affect but not likely to adversely affect the Northern long-eared bat. No effect <sup>1</sup> on other federally listed species in Henderson and Buncombe Counties.		
Jurisdictional Streams <sup>2</sup> (linear feet)	21,597	27,241	24,650
Jurisdictional Wetlands <sup>2</sup> (acres)	4.8	8.0	7.7
Floodplains:			
100-year Floodplain <sup>2</sup> (acres)	30.1	48.2	41.8
500-year Floodplain <sup>2</sup> (acres)	15.5	18.6	17.3
Ponds <sup>2</sup> (acres)	0.03	0.06	0.05

<sup>1</sup> NCDOT will follow NPS mitigation protocol as detailed in the Special Commitments (Green Sheets) and Section 3.8.6.2.2 of the Draft EIS

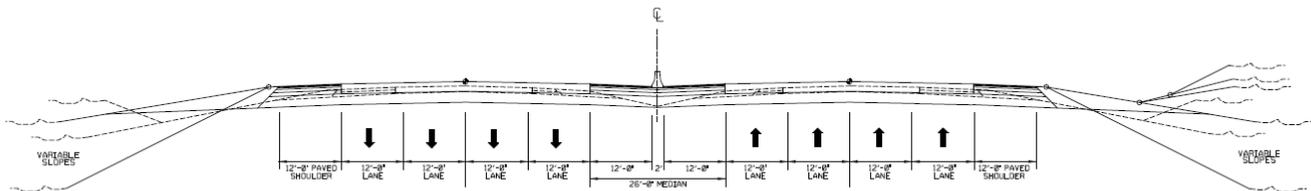
<sup>2</sup>Impacts estimated using aerial photography and include proposed functional slope stake limits plus 40 feet. Avoidance and minimization measures will be evaluated further during final design.

## Typical Sections:

6-Lane Widening Alternative Typical Section



8-Lane Widening Alternative Typical Section



## Draft EIS and Draft Section 4(f) Public Review Locations:

**\*NCDOT Division 13 Office – Buncombe County**

55 Orange Street, Asheville

**\*NCDOT Division 14—District 1 Office – Henderson County**

4142 Haywood Road, Mills River

**\*French Broad River MPO / Land of Sky Regional Council**

339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140,  
Asheville

**\*National Park Service – Blue Ridge Parkway**

199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville

**\*South Buncombe Library**

260 Overlook Road, Asheville

\*The Public Hearing Maps are also available at these locations.

**Fletcher Planning and Zoning Department**

Fletcher Town Hall

300 Old Cane Creek Road, Fletcher

**Buncombe County Planning Department**

46 Valley Street, Asheville

**Henderson County Planning Department**

King Street Office Building

100 North King Street, Hendersonville

**Asheville Planning & Urban Design Department**

Asheville City Hall

70 Court Plaza, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Asheville

**Hendersonville Planning Department**

Hendersonville City Hall

145 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hendersonville

Materials can also be viewed at the project website at <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening>

# TITLE VI PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORM

Completing this form is **completely** voluntary. You are not required to provide the information requested in order to participate in this meeting.

<b>Meeting Type:</b> Pre-Hearing Open House & Public Hearing	<b>Date:</b> October 13, 2016
<b>Location:</b> Biltmore Baptist Church, 35 Clayton Rd, Arden	
<b>TIP No.:</b> I-4400/I-4700	
<b>Project Description:</b> I-26 Widening, Henderson and Buncombe Counties	

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related authorities, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) assures that no person(s) shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any of the Department's programs, policies, or activities, based on their race, color, national origin, disability, age, income, or gender.

**Completing this form helps meet our data collection and public involvement obligations under Title VI and NEPA, and will improve how we serve the public.** Please place the completed form in the designated box on the sign-in table, hand it to an NCDOT official or mail it to the PDEA-Human Environment Section, 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598.

All forms will remain on file at the NCDOT as part of the public record.

<b>Zip Code:</b> _____	<b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Street Name:</b> (i.e. Main Street) _____	<b>Age:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and older <input type="checkbox"/> 30-44
<b>Total Household Income:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$12,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$47,000 – \$69,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$12,000 – \$19,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 – \$93,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 – \$30,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$94,000 – \$117,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$31,000 – \$46,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$118,000 or greater	<b>Have a Disability:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Race/Ethnicity:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	<b>National Origin:</b> (if born outside the U.S.) <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican <input type="checkbox"/> Central American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> South American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____

How did you hear about this meeting? (newspaper advertisement, flyer, and/or mailing) \_\_\_\_\_

For more information regarding Title VI or this request, please contact the NCDOT Title VI Section at (919) 508-1808 or toll free at 1-800-522-0453, or by email at [mlwright4@ncdot.gov](mailto:mlwright4@ncdot.gov).

Thank you for your participation!



Please  
Affix  
Postage

**NC Department of Transportation  
I-26 Widening  
Attn: Ms. Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598**



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

PUBLIC MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING  
OCTOBER 13, 2016

The North Carolina Department of Transportation appreciates your participation in this process. Your comments are important to the project’s success. You may leave this form with us after the workshop, or mail it to the address below.

**Please submit your comments no later than November 14, 2016.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

What best represents your interest in this project?

Resident/Property Owner     Business Owner     Community Group     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

You have seen three Build Alternatives. Which do you prefer?

6-Lane Widening     8-Lane Widening     Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening

Please provide comment on why you like or dislike an alternative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any other comments or questions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide comments about this project to:

Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598  
alaad@ncdot.gov | Fax: (919) 212-5785



Please  
Affix  
Postage

**NC Department of Transportation  
I-26 Widening  
Attn: Ms. Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598**



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

PUBLIC MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING  
OCTOBER 13, 2016

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Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide comment on why you like or dislike an alternative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any other comments or questions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Please provide comments about this project to:

Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598  
alaad@ncdot.gov | Fax: (919) 212-5785



Please  
Affix  
Postage

**NC Department of Transportation  
I-26 Widening  
Attn: Ms. Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598**



# STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700 I-26 WIDENING HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

## PUBLIC MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING OCTOBER 13, 2016

### TRAFFIC NOISE

#### NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy

The NCDOT Traffic Noise Abatement Policy contains provisions that limit state and federal responsibilities for traffic noise reduction to locations where development existed, or for which building permits were issued, at the "Date of Public Knowledge".

The "Date of Public Knowledge" of the location and potential noise impacts of a proposed highway project will be the approval date of the final environmental document.

1. After this date, NCDOT is no longer responsible for providing noise abatement measures for new development within the noise impact area of the proposed highway project.
2. The criteria for determining when undeveloped land is permitted for development is the approval date of a building permit for an individual lot or site.
3. NCDOT encourages 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 this project will be the date of the approved Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).** The FEIS/ROD is currently expected to be completed and signed in spring of 2017.

#### Project Noise Study Areas

Six noise study areas were identified on this project. Within these six areas, ten noise barriers were preliminarily proposed based on the justification criteria in the Noise Policy and will be further studied during final project design. The noise study areas are shown in red hatching on the public hearing maps displayed at tonight's meeting.



Ex. Noise Study Area from Hearing Map, Sheet 4

Once a determination is made on the location of the noise barriers during final design, NCDOT will contact all property owners and tenants who are predicted to receive at least 5 decibels noise reduction due to the proposed barriers. Each owner and/or tenant will be provided a ballot so they can vote their preference for or against the noise barrier. The noise barriers will **not** be constructed unless a simple majority vote by the identified property owners/tenants indicates they **do** prefer noise barrier construction. Therefore, it is very important to vote.



STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON COUNTY  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

**The North Carolina  
Department of  
Transportation**

**Welcomes You  
to  
Tonight's  
Public Hearing!**

**Open House: 4:00 -6:30 p.m.  
Hearing: 7:00 p.m.**



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON COUNTY  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

**The North Carolina  
Department of  
Transportation**

**Thanks You  
for  
Your  
Attendance  
and  
Input!**





STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 WIDENING  
 HENDERSON COUNTY  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) STUDY PROCESS

Opportunity for Public Input Throughout the Process

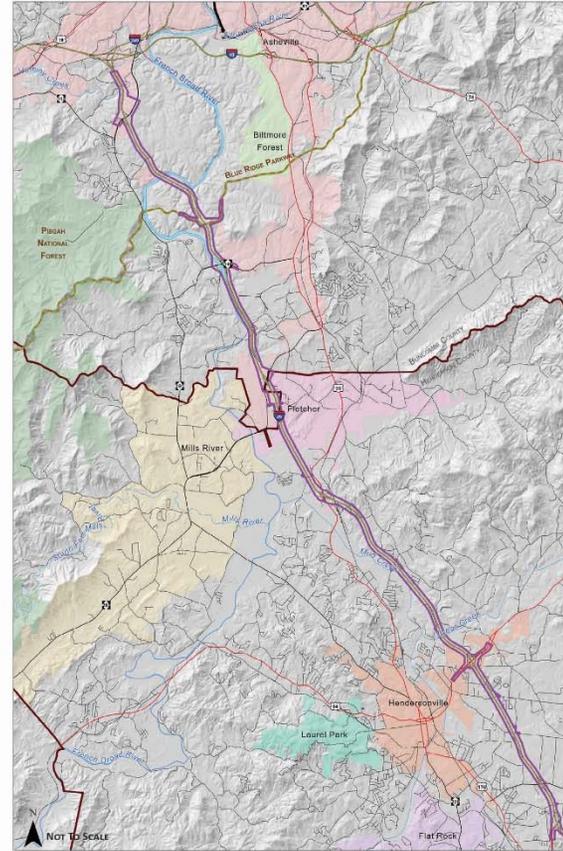
- Identify Purpose of and Need for Project
- Collect Data on Project Study Area
- Analyze Preliminary Alternatives
- Select Detailed Study Alternatives
- Evaluate Impacts of Detailed Study Alternatives
- Publish Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)<sup>1</sup>
- Confirm or Select Preferred Alternative
- Publish Final EIS & Record of Decision (ROD)<sup>1</sup>
- Purchase Right of Way<sup>2</sup>
- Construct Project<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Requires Federal Highway Administration approval  
<sup>2</sup>Assuming project approval and availability of funding



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 WIDENING  
 HENDERSON COUNTY  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY

## PROJECT STUDY AREA





STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 WIDENING  
 HENDERSON COUNTY  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY

## VISUALIZATION

### PROPOSED BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY BRIDGE (EASTBOUND)



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 WIDENING  
 HENDERSON COUNTY  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY

## VISUALIZATION

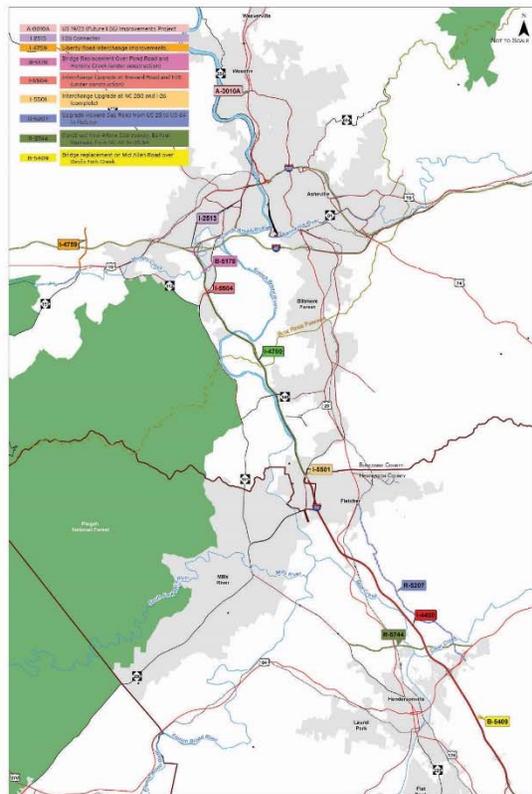
### PROPOSED BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY BRIDGE (WESTBOUND)





STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 WIDENING  
 HENDERSON COUNTY  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY

### OTHER STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP) PROJECTS



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 WIDENING  
 HENDERSON COUNTY  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY



BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY



STIP PROJECTS NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON COUNTY  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

## VISUALIZATION

### PROPOSED BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY BRIDGE (SOUTHBOUND FROM I-26)





STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON COUNTY  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

# VISUALIZATION

## PROPOSED US 25 (ASHEVILLE HIGHWAY) INTERCHANGE PARTIAL CLOVERLEAF DESIGN





# I-26 Improvements

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



Widening and reconstruction from US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to NC 191 (exit 33) in Buncombe County

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** December 13, 2016  
**Time:** 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Place:** NCDOT Structure Design Conference Room C at the Century Center Building A and via GoToMeeting and conference call  
**Purpose:** Post Hearing Meeting  
**Attendees:**

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Felix Davila	FHWA	felix.davila@dot.gov	919-747-7021
Jim Martin	FHWA	james.martin@dot.gov	919-747-7008
Lyuba Zuyeva*	French Broad River MPO/Land of Sky	lyuba@landofsky.org	828-251-7454
Tristan Winkler*	Land of Sky	tristan@landofsky.org	828-251-6622 x138
Ricky Tipton*	NCDOT – Division 13	r티pton@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171 x209
Cole Hood*	NCDOT – Division 13	chood@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171
Brian Burch*	NCDOT – Division 14	brianburch@ncdot.gov	828-586-2141
Ted Adams*	NCDOT – Division 14	tadams@ncdot.gov	828-631-1155
Edward Green*	NCDOT – Division 14	eagreen@ncdot.gov	828-586-2141
Mitchell Bishop*	NCDOT – Division 14	jmbishop@ncdot.gov	828-631-1143
Bucky Galloway*	NCDOT – Transportation Mobility and Safety	ddgalloway@ncdot.gov	828-650-2700
Elise Groundwater	NCDOT – Congestion Management	ekgroundwater@ncdot.gov	919-814-5056
Joseph Hummer	NCDOT – Transportation Mobility and Safety	jehummer@ncdot.gov	919-814-5102
Malcolm Watson	NCDOT – Design Build	mcwatson@ncdot.gov	919-707-6614
Tim McFadden*	NCDOT – Design Build	tmcfadden@ncdot.gov	919-707-6615
Jamille Robbins	NCDOT – Human Environment Section	jarobbins@ncdot.gov	919-707-6085
Mary Pope Furr	NCDOT – Human Environment Section	mfurr@ncdot.gov	919-707-6068
Bill Barrett	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	wabarrett@ncdot.gov	919-707-6103
Neal Strickland*	NCDOT – Right of Way	nstrickland@ncdot.gov	919-707-4364
Doug Askew	NCDOT – Right of Way	daskew@ncdot.gov	252-355-9059
John Williams	NCDOT – PDEA	jlwilliams@ncdot.gov	919-707-6178
Kevin Moore	NCDOT – Roadway Design	kmoore@ncdot.gov	919-707-6287
Brenda Moore	NCDOT – Roadway Design	blmoore@ncdot.gov	919-707-6285
Gary Lovering	NCDOT – Roadway Design	glovering@ncdot.gov	919-707-6271
Tonya Walters	NCDOT – Roadway Design	tmwalters@ncdot.gov	919-707-6334

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Tim Williams	NCDOT – Signals	tjwilliams@ncdot.gov	919-814-4925
Wael Arafat	NCDOT – Structures	warafat@ncdot.gov	919-707-6483
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch	dc sellers1@ncdot.gov	919-707-0978
Ali Koucheki	NCDOT – Utilities	akoucheki@ncdot.gov	919-707-6699
Lee Johnson	NCDOT – Utilities	leejohnson@ncdot.gov	919-707-6991
Eric Seckinger	HNTB	eseckinger@hntb.com	704-208-5351
Jennifer Harris	HNTB	jhharris@hntb.com	919-404-0427
Kat Bukowy	HNTB	kbukowy@hntb.com	919-424-0441
Bradley Reynolds	HNTB	breynolds@hntb.com	919-424-0481

\*participated via telephone

Kevin Moore introduced the meeting and led introductions. Jennifer Harris reviewed the agenda, purpose and goals of the meeting and led the meeting conversation through the comments from the two County Local Officials’ Meetings, Agency/Local Official/Organization comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Public Comments.

### **Henderson County Local Officials’ Meeting Comments**

#### Interchange request at or between Tracy Grove Road and Dana Road

Brian Burch, Division 14, indicated that he was not aware of any plan to add an interchange at that location. However, he could see a benefit to doing so. Before Division 14 would support an interchange they would want to confirm that it is supported by Henderson County and the French Broad River MPO (FBRMPO). Lyuba Zuyeva, of the FBRMPO, indicated that there is not an interchange proposed at these locations on any of its transportation plans. In addition, the proposed Balfour Parkway may influence the location and utility of a new interchange, particularly if it is north of US 64. Division 14 would need the county to confirm its support of an interchange south of US 64. Felix Davila, FHWA, asked if a new interchange would require additional public involvement and Brian Burch agreed that it would. Brian also noted that an interchange at Dana Road would not meet interchange spacing requirements because it is too close to US 64. However, Tracy Grove Road is two miles south of US 64 and therefore a more suitable candidate for a potential interchange. Ricky Tipton, Division 13, noted that a new interchange at Tracy Grove Road would possibly result in traffic volumes on Tracy Grove Road that exceed its current capacity. Lyuba Zuyeva noted that an update to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is scheduled for Spring/Summer 2017 and that this can be considered in the CTP update.

#### US 64 interchange modification

The US 64 interchange with I-26 is within the I-4400B section of the I-26 widening project and is currently unfunded. Additionally, this interchange has been considered for funding as a standalone project (I-4400BA) but is also currently unfunded. The current interchange configuration is a cloverleaf interchange and operates acceptably in the design year based on traffic analysis completed for the project. However, as part of this project, a Partial Cloverleaf B (“ParClo B”) is proposed that would remove two loops and eliminate the back to back weave conditions on I-26 and US 64 thereby improving operations of the interchange. Brian Burch suggested consideration for alternate interchange configurations, such as a single point urban interchange (SPUI). Lyuba Zuyeva noted that the FBRMPO is hesitant to support a SPUI because that interchange configuration is not compatible with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Kevin Moore, Roadway Design, noted that there should be consideration of how traffic with the proposed Balfour Parkway influences traffic at US 64. In addition, the interchange could be further evaluated, at a high level, to consider other interchange types. Joe Hummer noted that a “ParClo B” interchange configuration provides compatibility with bicycles and pedestrians. Bucky Galloway indicated that the US 64

interchange currently operates well but noted that adding the proposed signals (even though they would be two phase signals) on US 64 at the interchange terminals may impact traffic flow on US 64. In addition, the current back to back weave conditions on I-26 and US 64 are a concern. In sum, Bucky wants to ensure that operations at the interchange and on US 64 do not deteriorate. There was support for accommodating bicycles and pedestrians; however, modifying the current interchange just to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians would be a major project that may cause traffic flow problems. Lyuba Zuyeva noted that the Blue Ridge Bike Plan (2013) included US 64 as a priority corridor for bicycle improvements. Pedestrian improvements are recommended in the Hendersonville Pedestrian Plan. Kevin noted that the free flow conditions currently on US 64 are not conducive to bicyclists and pedestrians.

Jennifer asked if further investigation and analysis of different interchange configurations needed to be pursued. It was noted again that the “ParClo B” was a win-win for bicycles and pedestrians and that signals could be coordinated along US 64. Bucky indicated that he would be comfortable with the “ParClo B” once he had a chance to review the supporting analysis. He then suggested that the Final EIS/ROD include the recommendation of the “ParClo B”, as shown on the hearing maps and in the Draft EIS. At such time that this section of the project is funded, the interchange configuration will be reevaluated.

Jennifer noted that the proposed Balfour Parkway interchange, US 25 (Asheville Highway), and US 64 interchange were all being evaluated for an Interstate Access Report (IAR). Kevin suggested keeping the US 64 design as is (“ParClo B”) and then reevaluate it if the proposed Balfour Parkway moves forward and/or if I-4400BA is funded.

Following the discussion of the Henderson County Local Officials’ Meeting comments, Jennifer reviewed the Buncombe County Local Officials’ Meeting, the Open House, and the Public Hearing. She then moved to a discussion on the comments received. Kat Bukowy clarified that the “comment themes” may include multiple opinions from the same person (i.e. someone could have said both “I like the Hybrid design” and “I like the 8-lane design”) and those comments would have been included in each theme.

Bucky noted that it may be prudent to extend the 8-lane widening to US 64. Anecdotal evidence and extrapolating the traffic forecast to year 2050 suggests that eight lanes may be warranted to US 64 in that timeframe. It was noted that this could be reevaluated once this section of the project is funded.

Due to the number of comments received from agencies, officials, and the public and the continued evaluation of design concepts, the US 25 interchange was discussed on its own.

### US 25

Bradley Reynolds summarized the design concepts for US 25 that were included in the *Purpose and Need Traffic Analysis Addendum* (HNTB, 2014) and the Draft EIS. Eric Seckinger noted that the ramps for all of the interchange designs had been altered to come in perpendicular to US 25.

Bradley asked Joe Hummer to describe the synchronized design he suggested during the Value Engineering meeting in August. Joe noted that the main advantages of the synchronized design were staying inside the current interchange footprint; the current left turn volume is low; and that the synchronized interchange would be compatible with bicycles and pedestrians because all crossings are at signals. Bradley noted that the service roads and driveways to US 25 within the synchronized footprint would need to be made right-in-right-out.

Jennifer noted that there is a truck stop just outside of the synchronized interchange footprint and asked for Division 14 perspectives.

Brian Burch noted that there is a high volume of truck traffic on I-26 W (N) that goes to the truck stop. If the synchronized interchange were constructed it would require a large bulb out for U-turns and a large amount of storage. The division is not against the concept, but would like to see additional information and the traffic modeling. The volume of trucks is the main concern.

Division 14 indicated that it would be good to get a truck count at the interchange as the model may not accurately reflect reality with respect to trucks. The US 25 interchange has the last truck stop between South Carolina and Asheville and is therefore heavily used.

Bradley was asked if intermediate drives being converted to right-in-right-out had been included in the modeling of the interchange design concepts. He said that they had not been included.

Bucky voiced his concern about the potential impacts of the synchronized interchange, particularly on businesses and that it may be difficult to get their buy-in.

Mary Pope Furr noted that the synchronized interchange had less impacts, particularly on the Cureton house, a historic resource, and therefore had “no adverse effect”.

Jennifer referenced the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) comments on the Draft EIS and that the USACE would need a compelling reason to support the ParClo design currently shown due to its impacts.

Bradley noted that the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) may not have as many access issues (right-in-right-out), but it does not operate as well as the other concepts. However, it does have the lowest amount of natural resource impacts.

Lyuba Zuyeva asked if the DDI were chosen where would bicycle lanes go? Kevin answered that to put bicycle lanes on the bridge it would have to be widened. Mary Pope asked if the wider bridge was included in the cost. Eric Seckinger answered no, it was only included for the Displaced Left Turn (DLT) interchange concept, which would require a wider bridge. It was concluded that if the bridge was going to be widened due to the improvements being made to the interchange, striped bicycle lanes and sidewalk would be provided on the bridge.

Ricky Tipton asked how wide the existing bridge is and it was answered that it is as wide as or wider than NC 280 (Airport Road) bridge.

HNTB reviewed and provided truck traffic information included in the current traffic forecast. Division 14 provided traffic count information in the vicinity of the interchange.

Brian Burch noted that the public does not like U-turns. The Division would prefer the DDI, but is willing to take a closer look at the synchronized concept.

Mary Pope noted that the DDI would also have a “no adverse effect” on the Cureton House.

Brian asked to see the microsimulation of the synchronized interchange with the additional trucks. Joe Hummer asked that the microsimulation be run again on all concepts.

Daniel Sellers, TPB, was asked if there were any plans for US 25 improvements in this area and he answered that there are not any plans.

Jim Martin, FHWA, noted that the design would really need to consider the geometry of the DDI with respect to trucks.

John Williams asked how pedestrian mobility would be addressed. Bradley noted that they are not included in the model and addressed qualitatively. Kevin noted that there is existing sidewalk on the bridge (only) that would need to be replaced. Under any scenario the bridge would need to be widened to accommodate sidewalk. NCDOT would cover the cost of the sidewalk and widening the bridge. Ricky asked what would be done to get pedestrians to and from the bridge. NCDOT would cover the pedestrian signal heads needed for the DDI. Fletcher would have to share in the cost for providing sidewalk on US 25 (there is currently no sidewalk on US 25 in this area).

A meeting was scheduled with Division 14, Roadway Design, PDEA and Congestion Management to review and discuss the truck traffic information and the traffic simulations.

## **Agencies/Officials on the Draft EIS**

### US 64

There were requests for bicycle lanes or sharrows on US 64. Kevin noted that bicycle lanes are preferred. Lyuba Zuyeva noted that bicycle lanes are recommended.

The US 64 bridge is shown for replacement, but could also be widened.

To accommodate pedestrians, the free flow ramps are proposed to be brought perpendicular to US 64; additionally, the loops could also be improved.

### US 25

In the Blue Ridge Bike Plan, US 25 is shown as a primary bicycle corridor. If the bridge is replaced or widened, it could accommodate bicycle lanes. If it is not widened, then it would only have sidewalk.

### Cane Creek

The bridge over Cane Creek would likely span the entire floodway. NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation would need to vet the greenway and coordinate further with Fletcher to determine if there are additional details on the location of the proposed greenway.

Lyuba (FBRMPO) followed up with the Town of Fletcher regarding the preferred alignment of the proposed greenway (French Broad Connector), which is shown on the Town's Greenway Master Plan map to the south of Cane Creek. The preferred alignment may change in the future, dependent on whether or not Henderson County supports the greenway. The greenway may have to cross Cane Creek to stay within the Fletcher municipal boundary.

### Long Shoals Road

The FBRMPO requested the addition of bicycle lanes if improvements were made to the interchange at Long Shoals Road. No improvements are proposed underneath the interchange bridge and the additional width required for bicycle lanes would necessitate a new bridge. A sidewalk could be accommodated under the bridge over Long Shoals Road however, Ricky noted that the interchange is in the county and therefore there is no town or city that could share in the cost of sidewalk. The outside lanes are currently 14 feet, allowing for bicycles to share the road.

## **Public Comments**

Comment Number 88 - ...*Airport Rd/I-26 Interchange - new bridge has barely relieved congestion on Airport Road - your DOT people should know this - what else is planned to fix this?*

There are no follow-up projects to make additional improvements. Traffic congestion has been improved as a result of implementing the interchange improvement project. Congestion Management was consulted for traffic information in this area. This interchange was improved as STIP Project I-5501, Daniel Sellers with TPB provided the traffic forecast.

Comment Number 29 - ....*there should be another entrance to Biltmore Park maybe between the Long Shoals exit and the BRP overpass to help alleviate the congestion at BP's only entrance.*

An additional interchange on I-26 in this area is not proposed.

Comment Number 2 - ...*DOT should look at adding a secondary off-ramp from I-26 directly into the Biltmore Park area to reduce the traffic issue when motorists come off from I-26 westbound and have to quickly merge over to turn into Biltmore Park....*

This is being addressed with a signal and dual lefts. Ricky asked storage for the dual lefts be made as long as possible.

Comment Number 95 - ...*official request for alterations (to the intersection of Skyland Inn Drive, Schenck Parkway, Long Shoals Road/Highway 146 and the entrance/exit ramps onto I-26) to be included within the scope of the I-26 Connector Project (I-2513). As you know, this intersection often becomes gridlocked which, at times, leads to traffic backing onto I-26 east and west. Therefore, we believe this small increase in the project's scope will have a tremendous benefit for the I-26 Corridor.*

Ricky noted that the ramp onto I-26 yields from the right turn. HNTB is currently working with Congestion Management to review this intersection. However, the proposed design from the person making the comment does not show lane continuity. The City may be able to help with Biltmore Farms internal circulation and flow problems. Division 13 is concerned about how this intersection will affect the NC 146 intersection and interchange with I-26. Bucky suggested a left turn lane on Schenck Parkway to keep the through lane from becoming a defacto left turn lane. Ricky indicated that adding an additional access east of the CVS would likely not improve flow.

HNTB worked with Congestion Management to further assess the Long Shoals Road intersection with Schenck Parkway and considered the proposed design provided by the commenter. Ricky agreed to call Biltmore Farms to request any traffic counts they may have in this area. The proposed design was determined to not function properly and an alternative design was developed.

#### Blue Ridge Parkway Comments

NCDOT has included the bridge location and type identified as the Preferred Alternative by the National Park Service.

#### Comment Number 112 (11) -

Someone commented that left turn lanes should be added at the intersection of Clayton Road and NC 191 (Brevard Road). STIP Project U-3403B will address the traffic issues at this intersection and it is expected to be funded in the forthcoming Draft STIP.

#### Truck Comments

Ricky thinks truck traffic will manage itself. Bucky noted that trucks could be restricted to the right two lanes for an 8-lane section and to the right lane for a 6-lane section. A climbing lane on I-26 (particularly for westbound traffic) could be accommodated in the area of the Blue Ridge Parkway because there is enough right of way and horizontal clearance under the proposed Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 for a 10-lane section. Signing for lane restrictions will need to be included in the Design Build Request for Proposals.

There was a discussion about the weigh stations and if the deceleration and acceleration lanes leading to and from the weigh stations are being improved (lengthened).

Eric measured the existing lengths of the acceleration and deceleration lanes. He determined that the acceleration lane length would be approximately the same as the existing. The deceleration lane length would increase compared to existing.

	Existing Length*	Proposed Length
Acceleration Length	550 – 600 ft	580 ft
Deceleration Length	200 – 220 ft	340 ft

\*Existing length is approximate and measured from aerial imagery.

Is “Weigh in Motion” feasible? Kevin indicated that concept would need to be coordinated with DMV and ITS. Additionally, this is not part of the purpose and need for this project.

Comment Number 26 - *Better design of on-ramps to reduce groups of cars (line of 10 cars moving on to interstate at same time)*

In areas where interchange improvements are proposed, the current design includes acceleration and deceleration ramps that are longer than the current condition.

Comment Number 52 - *Possibly put an emergency vehicle lane right down the middle of the median as well so that first responders can reach those in need and clear the road safely and quickly.*

The current design includes wider bridges on I-26 to accommodate the widening alternatives, (more lanes and wider shoulders); this will aid with EMS response.

Comment Number 52 - *A minimum speed law should also be in place and enforced.....*

There is a minimum speed law currently in effect; however, it is not enforced.

Comment Number 52 - *...I understand the traffic can be busy, but I think part of that has to do with poor sign efficiency and perhaps widening of on/off ramps. The vehicle accidents will happen whether there is 10 lanes or 2 lanes. The approximate difference of \$75.1 (the 6 lane choose version versus the hybrid lane choose) could perhaps be used in other ways to help the flow of direction around the more congested areas of Asheville. (i.e. the joining of Patton Ave. I240 East/West and I26 West junction). I imagine that much better roads signs and earlier heavy traffic signaling could perhaps help some of the congestion.*

In accordance with the Strategic Transportation Investments law (STI), projects are evaluated for funding using the Strategic Mobility Formula which results in the allocation of available transportation funding based on data-driven scoring and local input.

Comment Number 93 - *...The I-26 widening will add to the congestion already in this area. A HARD LOOK should be given to alleviating the bottlenecks on surrounding roadways, specifically: NC 191 from Bent Creek to NC 280 in Henderson County. The connecting roads east-west such as Long Shoals from NC 191 to I-26. Clayton Road from Long Shoals to NC 191. Sweeter Creek from Hendersonville Road to I-40. These roads are already maxed out when I-26 slows down. IF not addressed before the I-26 project occurs then the traffic congestion and back ups will look like an LA interstate rush hour parking lot 24/7.*

The improvements suggested are beyond the scope of this project. Division 13 did note that capacity on the detour routes during construction would need to be considered. Bradley Reynolds noted that corridor signal timing improvements could be made during construction to address temporary shifts in travel patterns.

Comment Number 101 - ...address the incredibly dangerous uphill grade from the Green River/ Peter Guice bridge to US25 Business. Trucks are not lane restricted and very, very often jump to the left lane to pass another truck while only going 40mph or less while car traffic is 60+. The easiest way I can think of is to add a truck lane right after the bridge and let it be the beginning of the 3rd lane of I26W. There looks to be nearly enough room already....

It was confirmed that trucks are restricted over the Peter Guice bridge.

Bucky noted again the need to consider widening to 8 lanes to US 64 at such time that that portion of the project is funded. Felix Davila noted that the number of lanes should be determined based on traffic information.

Division 14 wants a commitment to reevaluate a 6-lane widening and the number of lanes on bridges replaced when the project is funded. When this section is funded and built, detouring traffic to replace the existing pavement may result in more than 6 lanes in this area in order to maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction.

Comment Number 112(13) - disqualify contractors that have limited capability and poor past performance from participating in the bidding process....We have dealt with a poorly constructed I-26 for years that has cost millions of dollars trying to keep it drivable. Get the foundation and drainage designed and implemented that will meet or exceed the projected traffic flow and truck axle weight limits. Add incentives for early completion and large penalties for missed deadlines.

NCDOT uses prequalified contractors in the procurement process.

Comment Number 28 - Would like to see a greenway adjacent to I-26 connecting Fletcher to Asheville.

Bent Creek-Lake Julian Greenway Feasibility Study has been prepared and Buncombe County is seeking funding for implementing the greenway.

Finally, Jennifer reviewed and confirmed NCDOT’s design recommendations as a result of reviewing comments received:

- Proceed with the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening as the Preferred Alternative. Division 13 and 14 agreed.
- At US 25, Division 14 currently prefers the DDI with follow-up on the other design concepts and microsimulations.
- At US 64, the recommendation is to show a “ParClo B”.
- At NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) there will be follow up with Congestion Management to determine if additional improvements beyond an additional left turn lane from Long Shoals Road to Schenck Parkway should be incorporated into the design.

Schedule:

Milestone	NCDOT Schedule
Draft EIS	August 9, 2016
Public Hearing	October 13, 2016
Post Hearing Meeting	December 13, 2016
NCDOT/USFWS Field Meeting	December 20, 2016
Widening Preferred Alternative/Concurrence Point 3 (LEDPA)	January 18 or 19, 2017
Combined Final EIS/ROD	April 2017

Milestone	NCDOT Schedule
I-4400C (US 25 Business (Exit 44) to NC 280 (Exit 40), I-4700A, B (NC 280 (Exit 40) to I-40) - <b>ROW</b>	FY 2018 – November 2017, December 2017
I-4400C (US 25 Business (Exit 44) to NC 280 (Exit 40), I-4700A, B (NC 280 (Exit 40) to I-40) - <b>LET</b>	FY 2020 – December 2019**
I-4400 A, B (US 25 (Exit 54) to US 25 Business (Exit 44)) - <b>ROW and LET</b>	Unfunded/not scheduled

Date Comment Received	Commenter	Title	Comment	Comment Response
10/13/2016	Barbara Volk, Mayor	City of Hendersonville	As Mayor of Hendersonville, I would like DOT to consider the possibility of sidewalks along US-64 over I-26. Because the interchange is proposed to be reconfigured I urge you to consider pedestrians. Even though there are no sidewalks now, people still walk along 64 to get over I-26. I expect this will continue with the new alignment and would like to have a safer way for pedestrians to cross.	
10/13/2016	Bob Davy	Councilman, Town of Fletcher	Would like to have bridge over Can Creek built to accommodate a greenway going under the bridge. Town's long-term plans show connecting Town's greenways with	
10/20/2016	Ritchie Rozzelle	TDM Coordinator, Land of Sky	Together with the MPO, I've been asking around about background info and general support for a comment we're weighing on the I-26 Widening project. I would like to request consideration for a Park and Ride lot included in the project, with a suggested placement near the I-26/Hwy 25 interchange. So far representatives within the Town of Fletcher and Henderson County Government have responded positively to this idea. They like that it would potentially serve commuters heading into Hendersonville on 25 (and an existing Apple Country route) as well as commuters headed north into Asheville. I'm curious whether Div 14 has any historic	From Brian Burch to Jennifer Harris: To my knowledge, we have not considered a Park & Ride or Rideshare Lot at the US 25 Interchange. I have told Ritchie to submit the comments from the Town of Fletcher and Henderson County requesting this to be considered. I believe we should consider this possibility as we move forward in developing the project. I will also need to find out if a local match is required and share this with them.
10/21/2016	Eric Rufa	Planning Director, Town of Fletcher	The Town of Fletcher previously submitted a couple of hand-written comments on the I-26 widening. Another item came up that we needed to submit for consideration after discussion with reps from the Land of Sky and the MPO. We would like to express our support for the idea of a "park and ride" facility somewhere in the area of the	

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1	Brandon Jordan	<p>(1) Do you anticipate a Fall 2019 sell date or will this be a Spring 2020 sell? Also, is there a mailing list for this project that I can sign up for to receive updates?</p> <p>(2) Do you happen to have any preliminary earthwork quantities prepared for I-4400/4700 yet?</p>	<p>*Mr. Jordan, As you noted, the current schedule for the I-26 widening project includes funding for construction beginning in fiscal year 2020 for the section of I-26 between US 25 (Asheville Highway)/exit 44 in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County. A construction schedule has not been developed, but please do provide your mailing address and we can get you added to the project mailing list so you will receive future project newsletters. Additionally, updates regarding the project are periodically posted to the project webpage: <a href="http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening">www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening</a>. Thank you for your interest in this important transportation project and please let us know if you have further questions.</p>
2	Elliot Lunsford	<p>...DOT should look at adding a secondary off-ramp from I-26 directly into the Biltmore Park area to reduce the traffic issue when motorists come off from I-26 westbound and have to quickly merge over to turn into Biltmore Park....</p>	<p>*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: The westbound ramp to NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) will be modified to accommodate a second lane for east bound traffic. NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) intersection with Schenck Parkway will be modified to include two left turn lanes onto Schenck Parkway, two through lanes, and a right turn lane.</p>
3	Eli Ferrari	<p>I-26 should not be widened. Does not help pedestrians or bicyclists and contributes to global warming.</p>	<p>*Thank you for providing your views on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
4	John Yokley	<p>As a resident of Mills River and a frequent avoider of I26 in it's current state, I would support either the preferred alternative (hybrid) or the 8-lane alternative.</p>	<p>*Thank you for providing your views on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project</p>

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		Fiscally, I believe the 8-lane alternative would be cheaper in long run as the need for 4 lanes in each direction will grow as time and project grows in future (certainly needed by 2030). But from a political and feasibility aspect, the hybrid preferred alternative should be pursued to facilitate actual movement on the project. The worst alternative is 6 lanes given the volume of traffic currently. Pursuing this option is the most expensive long term and pretty much guarantees this highway being a perpetual construction zone for the next 30+ years as the need for 8 lanes will be critical before the 6 lanes are finished from I-240 to Hwy 280. This project will also bring more industry to the area.	studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
5	Kelby Cody	I just want to comment on the need for this project. My family and I traveled to Florida and South Carolina multiple times this year. On every trip the worst traffic we experienced was on the Hendersonville stretch of I-26 which is being considered for widening. I have had many others from Western North Carolina tell me the same stories that they travel to other states without having traffic issues, for the most part, and when they return to Asheville there is always an extended delay from Hendersonville until you reach Asheville. Please continue with this project as quickly as possible.	*Thank you for providing your views on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
6	Joe Martin	Will this project be Design-Build or will the NCDOT be sending it out to consultants to bid on the R/W portion of the project?	*The decision was made for this project to be Design-Bid-Build.
7	Anonymous	I-26 should be widened. Supports 6-Lane Widening Alternative. Thinks that the 8-Lane and Hybrid	*The improvements made as part of STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 have the ability to function as stand-alone improvements without forcing

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		Alternatives would push NCDOT to have 8 lanes going through West Asheville (I-26 Connector).	other improvements in the regional roadway network that may have impacts. See Traffic Forecast Comparison for STIP Projects I-4400/I-4700 and I-2513 (I-26 Connector) Memorandum (July 2016).  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
8	Randal Warren	I26 does not need to be widened at all. Roads shouldn't be build to accommodate traffic just at peak travel times and sit empty at most other times of the day. When roads are widened, this encourages more traffic incentives sprawl. People should change their behavior. If they want to travel these roads with less congestion, then they should drive on them at non-peak hours. If they can't change their travel times, then, perhaps, they should reconsider living closer to work or wherever they are traveling. Much of the load that is carried by commercial trucking could be carrier far less expensively and environmentally conscious by trains. Widening roads is not the answer to our transportation issues.	*Thank you for providing your views on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
9	Steven Hardy-Braz	Implement Complete Streets policy.	*Thank you for your comment.
10	William Vine	Because I drive frequently between Hendersonville and Asheville, I fully support the preferred alternative (Hybrid Six/Eight-Lane Widening). I know from personal experience that congestion on I-26, including stop and go, 1) occurs frequently, 2) appears without the interference of accidents, 3) surprises anytime during the day and through 9 pm, and 4) has increased greatly during the 5 years I have lived in Hendersonville. Any	*Thank you for providing your views on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.

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		<p>significant delay or decrease in scope will cripple travel between Buncombe and Henderson Counties as well as throughout the region. Even now I fear travel on I-26 because delays are unpredictable and can interfere with appointments in Asheville, yet has no reasonable alternative. Without the full scope of this project, increased congestion in the future will slow not only traffic but also economic growth in the region. I also know from personal experience that knee-jerk opposition to this project will arise now as before, seek to kill the project by delaying tactics such as incessant court battles and ultimately make this and similar projects cost prohibitive. I fear that a foolish ?compromise? with the opposition will cripple the project, create more pollution from stop and go traffic, waste needed resources and not solve the problem of worsening congestion as the population of the region grows rapidly. I have seen in other areas of the county such attempts at compromise only result in construction that proves inadequate and the need for more court battles, more delays during additional construction, and incremental expense.</p>	
11	Rita Yanz	<p>I would like to make a correction to the address you may have for the Airport Director for the Asheville Regional Airport. The Airport Authority is no longer under the City of Asheville and mail can be sent directly to the Executive Director. The old address, for reference, was 708 Airport Rd, Fletcher, NC. The updated/correct address is:  Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority</p>	<p>*Thank you for providing the updated contact information for the Airport Authority. Please let me know if you have any further comments or questions about NCDOT's I-26 widening project. Address has been updated.</p>

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		Attn: Executive Director 61 Terminal Drive, Suite 1 Fletcher, NC 28732	
12	Anna Eldreth	I travel this section of interstate every single day. I live off of Exit 33 and work in Asheville off of McDowell Street. That section of Highway needs to be widened and needed it 10 years ago. For people not wanting it widen, they must never drive it. Sitting in that traffic and knowing a 15 min drive is going to take you 45 mins to an hour is unnerving. We have the traffic here and we are growing, let our roads grow too. We have an abundance of traffic let's get it moving along a lot easier instead of keeping it slow. When 26 backs up in either direction, then everything else backs up... Hendersonville Road, Brevard Road. Hopefully we all can come to an agreement and widen the interstate. It is well over due!!!!!!	*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County and the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
13	Anonymous	Extend the project from Weaverville (Exit 19) to Hendersonville. I-26 needs to go over the existing Jeff Bowen bridge. Make I-26 east and west 3 lanes each direction from Weaverville to Hendersonville, having a bridge over Patton Ave / 240 so that I-26 is not impacted by local traffic and tourist confusion creating daily problems!	This comment is in reference to the I-26 Connector project and was forwarded to the Connector Team.
14	Anonymous	As a retired law enforcement officer I have witnessed first hand the problems with limited travel lanes and high volumes of traffic on I-26. Serious collisions also block the road, hinder emergency responders and slow down commerce. I can recall back 15 years ago there was talk about this same road widening project,	*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.

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		because I attended some of the meetings. Lets not let special interest or environmental groups slow down or hinder this road project. Build it in the interest of safety as soon as possible with no delay. Don't hold back like you have on the I-26 connector in Asheville. That is a nightmare itself.	
15	B. Rigdon	Make I-26, eight lanes all the way. By the time it is finished may need more.	<p>*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County and the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
16	Beverly Swartzlander	I moved to Hendersonville 3 years ago,traveling to Asheville on I-26 frequently with my grandchildren In my vehicle. This highway is dangerous,particularly the on/off ramps where no one ever yields. One takes their life in their hands being on this road. We watch many cars from other states traveling this stretch of 26, this road does not compare to other roads in Charlotte and triangle areas. Western Carolina has certainly not received money for roads in years! We hope to see improvements soon,the amount of debris on this road only increases the dangers! Rarely do we see police or any enforcement of highway rules. Improvement does not mean a few concrete	<p>*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County and the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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		repairs this road needs additional lanes with better on/off exits in high traffic areas fast! Thanks for asking for input, I look forward to seeing safety enforced and construction of a new road so everyone traveling can feel safe.	
17	Bill Grindstaff, Jr.	Please use the 8 lane proposed plan for this stretch of congested, busy roadway. The plan that includes 8 lanes for the entire extent of the proposed project.	<p>*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County and the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
18	Charles Lord	This is a much needed and LONG overdue project. The overloaded highway is subject to frequent stoppages which lead to a high accident rate. Western NC counts on this corridor as its major N-S route and this project, along with the I-26 connector in Asheville, will be a major boon to the economy in NC. Please give this project your highest possible priority.	<p>*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
19	Chris Ricker	<p>The Hybrid looks like an excellent idea. More lanes may be beneficial in the future but I would not know how to predict the cost/benefit ratio. I know the DOT does that.</p> <p>I like how the 25/26 interchange takes advantage of mostly vacant land!</p>	<p>*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p>

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		Do it!! Thanks!	Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type.
20	Cyndi Massey	I work at elementary school located off Hwy 191 / Brevard Rd and when there is a wreck on I26 (which is daily) traffic diverts onto Brevard Rd and we can't get 6 buses that have 2 runs each in and out of our school....students home! Help!!!!  Also effects special need buses and middle / high school buses.	*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
21	Dwight D Manuel	Widening the highway will not help. Teaching people how to properly drive on an interstate highway would be much more effective. Merging properly, keeping to the right except to pass, the use of turn signals. Paying attention to the road ahead. Ect Ect. Three or four lane filled with untrained drivers is just a wider parking lot.	*Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
22	Gary Christopher	I-26 Widening in Buncombe and Henderson counties, please, please, please get the preferred plan into action immediately. The only thing wrong with this plan is the timeline. *Another* four years before construction begins? Ridiculous! NCDOT has spent more than 10 years on this and still we have only two lanes, and constant traffic tie-ups.	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.

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			Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
23	Gene Crocker	Please, do something about the traffic from Hendersonville to Asheville. It's horrible. The plan for 6 lanes in Henderson County and 8 in Buncombe is in no way an overkill. Something needs to be done asap. I'm surprised there haven't been more accidents with fatalities on that interstate. I have family members traveling that road everyday and I'm concerned for their safety. Thanks for listening...	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
24	Hart Regtmeier	I am an independent consultant and contractor in the Asheville/Hendersonville area and commute back and forth between Asheville and Hendersonville on an almost daily basis. Considering the increase and density of traffic I witnessed over the past 10 years I believe that widening of I-26 between Asheville and Hendersonville is already long overdue. Also considering the before mentioned development of traffic over the past 10 years I raise the question today already whether widening I-26 to 6 lanes with this project probably not being completed until 2025 is wide enough for the future traffic increase over the next 10 years ... !? Being given the opportunity to voice my opinion and concern is greatly appreciated and if I can be of any assistance with moving this project forward to the good of our local economy and the well being and safety of our communities as well as fellow	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>

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		citizens, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time.	
25	James	I think the combination of 6 & 8 lanes is appropriate. My only complaint is that the project is long overdue. I-26 is a safety hazard as well as an inconvenience for anyone who lives in South Asheville.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
26	Jason Gruen	<p>Comments on design are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan for future traffic of 20-25 years</li> <li>- Truck lane restrictions in hilly areas (Airport Road / Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge / between French Broad and 191)</li> <li>- Longer exit ramps</li> <li>- Better design of on-ramps to reduce groups of cars (line of 10 cars moving on to interstate at same time)</li> </ul>	The Traffic Analysis for this project used a build year of 2040.
27	Jason Harris	Please, for the love of all that is holy, please widen I-26 to as many lanes as you possibly can. Don't let it be obsolete the day that it is done. Backward politicians have delayed reasonable progress long enough. It is costing 10 times what it would the multiple other times that this has been discussed. Please, please, please, please, please, don't let these not in my backyard people stop what needs to be done yet again. If it was a viable option, I would sell you my house and let you	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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		run 4 lanes right through the middle of it. I am a native. I have lived here most of my life. Help us, please!!! Let common sense win for a change. Thank you! Jason Harris	Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
28	Jennifer Knox	Would like to see a greenway adjacent to I-26 connecting Fletcher to Asheville.	*A Feasibility Study for a proposed greenway from Bent Creek to Lake Julian was written in July 2015 and is available on the Buncombe County, Parks and Recreation Greenways web page. Further siting of a greenway will depend on funding, permitting, and constructability.
29	John Edward Hally	....there should be another entrance to Biltmore Park maybe between the Long Shoals exit and the BRP overpass to help alleviate the congestion at BP's only entrance.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: The westbound ramp to NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) will be modified to accommodate a second lane for east bound traffic. NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) intersection with Schenck Parkway will be modified to include two left turn lanes onto Schenck Parkway, two through lanes, and a right turn lane.</p>
30	John Stephens	Please ignore all the naysayers and build this thing as wide as you can! The traffic sucks and our city can only grow as big as our roads allow it to! Thanks	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.

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			<p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
31	Joyce Butler	<p>I-26 is in serious need of widening. 8 lanes is probably the way to go. By the time 6 lanes would be finished it would be obsolete. Traffic is terrible and the way Asheville is growing it will only get worse. I honestly believe the majority believes it must be widened soon rather than later. I know the people who travel the highway daily favor widening,</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
32	Kim Hixson	<p>As a resident of Biltmore Park, I was wondering with the widening project, would a noise barrier wall be added from the onramp at Long Shoals to the parkway bridge on the side that borders the neighborhood. Currently the noise from the interstate can be heard easily and especially the large trucks. When we go to widen the road, it would be nice to have a noise wall installed to reduce the traffic noise.</p>	<p>*This area was studied in the Traffic Noise Analysis as part of Noise Study Area 6 and did not meet the criteria in NCDOT's Traffic Noise Abatement Policy for a barrier. Please see <i>Traffic Noise Analysis STIP Project I-4400/I-4700</i> for further details.</p>
33	Kyle Gustafson	<p>This is a major expense to our community, however our roads, highways, and interchanges are far behind the needs of use. Also Western North Carolina has maintained a positive growth rate despite a recession,</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be</p>

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		aging population, and our infrastructure needs expansion. Plus many tourist visiting this area use 26. Therefore we should build for the future and make it eight lanes.	included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
34	Larry Barber	The widening of I 26 and I 40 should have been done 20-30 years ago when they were both repaved. As a community we couldn't escape the construction and the final result was a rebirth of the very same nicely finished roadway we have today. For all the mess and aggravation we went through lets go big for a change and plan for what's to come not what it looks like today. That was the mistake decades ago.	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
35	Lee	Traffic will be slower than ever if this is started right now but it needs to be fixed and this may take a walk up to 4 to 5 years so can you imagine the traffic over the next for five years while the distraction of this new road is being built and less are some alternatives were some traffic can be detoured around lock the people that live locally in the area should take alternate route if that getting on the interstate this is my comment for this thank you	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
36	Leslie Baker	I think that I-26 should be made into 8 lanes. The extra cost will be worth it in less than 5 years at the current growth.	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be

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			<p>included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
37	Michael Bolanos	I think I-26 should be widened to four lanes in Buncombe County and three lanes in Henderson County, I think that is sufficient. Considering most of the congestion is in the Buncombe County area.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
38	Michael Murphy	I moved here over 4 years ago from the NY area and I've noticed how much traffic has increased. I drive I26 practically every day, and the traffic is bumper to bumper some days. Many drivers don't realize the left lane is for passing. Perhaps that is one cause of the snarls. I am in favor of widening I26. I'm not a property owner, so it won't affect me one way or the other. Traffic is going to get worse; the day will come when the highway needs to be expanded.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
39	Mike Hoffman	This project needs to start ASAP, and I am afraid even four lanes won't be enough by the time it is complete. Please just start and finish it so we can move forward after 30 years of waiting.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
40	Pam Gessler	I am sending a comment concerning the widening of I-26 between the Fletcher exit and Brevard Rd. exit. We have definitely needed the road widened for years now. There is a traffic jam at almost any hour of the day between the Fletcher exit and Biltmore Park, sometimes all the way to I-40. I guess there is some controversy about whether or not to make the road 6 lanes or 8. If my 2 cents mean anything, it seems to me that the state can save a lot of money by make all bridges and overpasses wide enough to accommodate 8 lanes so they won't have to be done later at a higher expense. To me, this seems like a good idea no matter how wide the road becomes in the near future.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
41	Pat Gill	I would like to see it widened to eight lanes the entire way. I live on Newstock Rd. and travel south all the time, frequently to Flat Rock. The congestion is	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be

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		considerable and will only get worse. I grew up in CA and dealt with the congestion there and know from experience that as slowly as these interstates are built the traffic should account for future increases as much into the future as possible.	<p>included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
42	Penny Robinson	My husband drives this road every day hauling gas to local gas stations. It is a very hectic drive for him and he complains that there is too many cars and not enough road. I myself have had to go through Asheville (malfunction junction) headed to TN. I got on I26 at exit 44 and 49 minutes later I was at I40. It's horrible. If everyone wants the area to grow, the road has to grow along with that. I think 4 lanes of traffic on each side would be great the closer you get to Asheville.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
43	Philip Rectenwald	I am opposed to the widening of US 26 through the Asheville historic district. The widening will impact neighborhood and historic homes in the Westover drive area. The proposal shown to the residents does not show consideration for the recent development of the area and the widening's impact to the Montfort Historic district.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue. There is another NCDOT project north of the I-26 widening project that is in the area you are referring to in your comments - I-26 Connector and information for this project is available at <a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/</a>.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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			Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the I-26 widening project.
44	Randy Huskins	I drive I26 each day and it is not unusual for a 10 minute to take 30 minutes to an hour just to get home. On top of that every day there are more and more people moving into the area. So the problem is only going to get worse. I think DOT should move forward as soon as possible with its combination plan. It cannot happen soon enough.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
45	Rebecca Lehman	Traffic congestion is getting worse by the week. My preference is to widen to 8 lanes, allowing for future growth. If that isn't financially feasible then the hybrid solution is better than just widening to 6 lanes. The current 4 lane configuration is totally inadequate and often dangerous.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
46	Robert E. Parker	THIS WIDENING PROJECT HAS BEEN NEEDED FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS. IT CAN NOT BE DONE SOON ENOUGH.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p>

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I-26 Widening

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			Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
47	Robert Hall	In the exits 33 - 40 region, we see truckers slowing for the steep grades causing traffic to back up. This is noticed especially when a slow truck tries to pass a real slow truck. Impatient drivers caught in this frequently zoom past when the jam is finally opened, often changing lanes quickly causing accidents. That is when the traffic jam really gets bad!! The hybrid option is best in my opinion, as it provides for increased traffic in Henderson County and will provide slow truck lanes in the Buncombe County area.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
48	Robert Zoellers	very disappointed in the meeting that was held 10-13-16, i got conflicting stories, was told fletcher exit 44 us25 was not part of already funded project, was told they are stopping before the fletcher exit, was told the entrance ramp to i-26 east bound at exit 44 will not have a progressive lane, tried to get simple questions answered an no one could answer me, then after almost 2 hours an alot of walking around i ran into eric an if what he told me was the truth then i am very happy with this project if what he told me about exit 44 is true then i am happy. but in future i would rather have less informants there an get truthful answers to my questions, i live very close to i-26 my property is probably less than 200 ft from road,	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type.</p>

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		<p>but yet people across the us25 road had there names on the noise sheet as i also work at that location an when i am at work it is very hard to hear i-26 traffic over us25 traffic</p> <p>please only have people with knowledge of the project at any future meetings. it will be much more helpful, an they one over the noise was absolutely no help to me at all he didnt even want to talk about it just kept changing subject. it was sad that not many from the community showed up for the information maybe they are all in support of it like me, an if exit 44 new ramps have longer lane for merging onto i-26 i am all for it. love the loop idea. tired of traffic back ups on that bridge with people trying to get onto i-26 also there was one of your personell there that said there was no problems with the traffic flow at i-26 an i told them they were crazy maybe they need to spend some time there personally an see how bad traffic gets snarled all done for now no need for response just wanted to put my 2 cents worth in the good an the bad.....</p>	
49	Roger Norton	<p>I-26 definitely needs to expand. My biggest concern is that no matter how much it is widened, if it goes back to 4 lanes at the Brevard Road exit, everything will still bottleneck and not be worth the money. With any widening, the I-40/I-26 interchange has got to be addressed as part of it.</p>	<p>*The expansion of I-26 in the area between Brevard Road and Pond Road will be constructed as part of STIP Project I-5504. The portion of road that is built within the median and ramp tapers will match existing pavement. The additional pavement will be "striped out" until the remaining portion of I-4700 is constructed.</p>
50	Rush Ferrell	<p>The combination sounds like a great solution. I26 is in serious need of widening and I'd like for as many lanes that can fit reasonably.</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be</p>

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I-26 Widening

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			<p>included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
51	Shane Liddell	<p>If you are going to spend half a billion dollars, make the I-26/U.S. 25 Interchange as wide as possible. Asheville is growing fast!</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type.</p>
52	Taylor McLennan	<p>Possibly put an emergency vehicle lane right down the middle of the median as well so that first responders can reach those in need and clear the road safely and quickly.</p> <p>A minimum speed law should also be put in place and enforced. More often than not congestion is caused by drivers who have no business being on the road. They</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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I-26 Widening

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		go well under the posted speed limit and cause wreck after wreck after wreck. Minimum speed limit will not fix the whole problem, but it may ease some of the pain we all currently feel while this project is discussed.	
53	Ted Blackwell	I am firmly in favor of Alternative 3, the hybrid 6/8 lane plan. If any less is done, it will be obsolete before it is completed. I would suggest that what ever plan is selected, right of way, bridges, and grading be done to more easily accommodate future widening. This will cost more, but in the end will save taxpayer money. I'm told this new I26 project will cost four times what it would have cost when first proposed. And if you can, put it on an expedited schedule, before the current roadway falls completely apart.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
54	Tony Valdibia	My name is Tony I live in Candler but work in Hendersonville. My drive is about 25 miles and it used to take about 35 min on average to get to work. In the last couple of years my average time has increased to about 45 to 50 min to travel the same distance. I hope that you the DOT chooses the widest option. We have to think long term solutions.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
55	Una Mullis	For goodness sake, just widen I26 and stop studying and asking for comments. Do what you as experts think	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the</p>

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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		is the best and move on. The traffic is terrible and won't be getting any better. The back ups are frustrating. You have studied it long enough. Just do it.	I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
56	William E. Carter	I don't care what the hippies in downtown asheville want. I am so sick of congestion in and around asheville. Either build it so big or build the 6 lanes in henderson county and 8 in buncombe. PLEASE DON'T LISTEN TO THE FLOWER CHILDREN IN ASHEVILLE	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
57	Anonymous	NCDOT: I-26 needs at least 8 lanes in Buncombe County. The part passing under the Blue Ridge Parkway is a narrow gap between two ranges. Only three other roads run through. Hendersonville Rd/US 25 cannot be widened anymore without razing hundred of businesses. Because of the constraints, Sweeten Creek (due to its closeness to US 25) and Brevard Rd (due to its closeness to the French Broad River) cannot be widened more than one lane on both sides without serious environmental impacts like a big cut. That leaves I-26. I-26 needs 8 lanes to anticipate this.	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts

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			at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type.
58	Anonymous	Sorry I couldn't attend last night's meeting: I am a 19-year resident of WNC, and a 14 year resident of the WECAN neighborhood. I would prefer the 6-lane option. Highways that have 8 lanes are more "aggressive", and I never want I-26 to become an I-85 or I-95. We need a connector to take through traffic away from Bowen bridge. Bowen bridge needs to become a pedestrian and bicycle friendly bridge that connects two neighborhoods and no longer moves interstate traffic.	*Thank you for your comments. I wanted to clarify that this project is proposing improvements to existing I-26 from US 25 (exit 54) to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville and part of your comments referred to "a connector to take the through traffic away from Bowen Bridge", which is a consideration in another adjacent project that proposes improvements north into Asheville.
59	Bill Hayes	I think the expansion should go past Fletcher exit, at least to Chimney Rock and possibly as far as Upward Road exit. Semis clog up the interstate ... give them access to two right lanes only. Like the entries at Fletcher exit being expanded, I avoided using since the short view is rather dangerous.	*STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 begins at US 25 (Exit 54) south of Hendersonville and extends to the I-40/I-240 interchange south of Asheville. The portion of the project that is currently funded, however, is from US 25 (Asheville Highway) (Exit 44) to the I-40/I-240 interchange south of Asheville.  Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.
66	Larason Lambert	I do like new design for exit-44 -- it's a dramatic improvement from the current interchange.  I do not like the proposed new design for exit 49 [US 64]. The current design's only drawback is the shortness of the acceleration/deceleration lanes, I believe these can be extended by expanding the overall size of the interchange some and deforming the perfect circles of the loops to an asymmetric elliptical form. I feel that installing two additional traffic lights	* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.

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		<p>there would really encumber the flow of traffic on US-64 and create very serious traffic congestion.</p> <p>Lastly, although it's water already over the dam, I do not like the new interchange 37. For it's large area, it does not seem to move traffic very effectively. The new interchange 40 seems to work ok, but I think that traffic making "left turns" does not need to held up by traffic lights. Adding merge lanes for those "turns" would really help.</p>	<p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type. The US 64 interchange will be redesigned to US 64 will be redesigned to move traffic more efficiently using enhanced left turns onto the I-26 ramps and removing two loops.</p>
67	Stephen Buckner	<p>At the Fletcher exit [US 25 (Asheville Hwy)] could the existing bridge be used in the same traffic pattern as the bridge at exit #40, hwy 280. It seems that the bridge would be wide enough and it would not need the loop for a ramp. The clover leaf ramp at the Hendersonville exit is dangerous because people slow way down to go around the loop and it is hard to get to highway speed to merge into traffic.</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type.</p>
68	Susan Brinkley	<p>I am definitely FOR a dramatic widening of I-26, and even for a longer stretch than currently proposed. I moved from Jacksonville, FL to Asheville in 2003 and the biggest traffic jam back then in Asheville was getting stuck behind a tractor on Brevard Rd. or the regular Friday 5pm city-wide traffic jam. Today, it's absolutely ridiculous--anytime of day or day of the</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

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		<p>week. I live in Arden, near the 5pts intersection at Brevard Rd and Glen Meadows and work 5.5 miles north in Ridgefield behind the outlet mall. With traffic on Brevard Rd., it is not uncommon for it to take me over an hour to get home. A lot of that is due to I-26 backups and people not wanting to fool with it. I try to avoid I-26 anytime I go anywhere because you just never know when a 10 minute trip will end up taking an hour or more. Asheville needs to start thinking ahead with road planning because our population will only continue to explode. We have to be prepared. Traffic is making getting around in Asheville extremely unpleasant.</p>	<p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
69	Tom Eutsler	<p>I can't see widening I 26 is worthwhile , when I 26 came thru AVL, the Connector has been by passed for years. This should have been taken care of LONG ago .The bottle Neck is the connector thru AVL !! Why spend moneys to widen I 26?? The connector thru town should have the most PRIORITY.. This would be similar to hooking UP a garden hose to a Real Fire hose! Come look at the traffic on Jeff Bowen Bridge - everyone Jockeying to move over in order to stay on I 26 . I saw 2 wrecks yesterday which is daily occurence! Trafik worse than driving in LA, Calif .. fyi</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
70	Anonymous	<p>Make the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge passing under I-26 iconic. You have a chance to really honor the Parkway and boost tourism. Don't mess it up. Also, why aren't there entrance and exit ramps going onto the Parkway from I-26. Right now Parkway visitors have to go to the next exit creating more traffic than necessary.</p>	<p>*The National Park Service has chosen Option 4 as its preference for the new Blue Ridge Parkway bridge. The bridge will be a segmental concrete box girder with Caltrans Type 80 bridge rail.</p>

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71	Alan Verm	Please widen I 26 at a minimum to the hybrid plan and consider going further north and south. I use this route every day for 14 years. Used to have traffic just Friday. Now every day the interstate is slow especially around airport. The DOT has not kept up with the growth. This is way overdue and everyone knows it. Use our taxes for infrastructure - please! Nothing is more frustrating than sitting on interstate goin 5mph in this great nation. Give us the roads we need and deserve! Thank you. I thought this was going to be done 10 years ago. It is way past time.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
72	Casey	I want to know why this needs to happen. What is going on here? First, where are you proposing this..? I'm so upset! I have a business in downtown Asheville, and if 1-26 goes through... then all those customers who stop in town for dinner won't find my shop. I like that they have to go through town.	<p>*Thank you for your comments. I wanted to clarify that this project is proposing improvements to existing I-26 from US 25 (exit 54) to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville and it sounds like your comments may be about another project that proposes improvements north into Asheville.</p>
73	Charles J. Reece	I travel I-26 from I-40 to exit 44 on a weekly basis and have been shocked that it is a regular traffic jam. Obviously this road widening needs to be fast-tracked to start in 2017 rather than 2020. Build as many lanes as you can, as soon as you can - save a life in the process. That road scares the hell out of me! Thank you.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
74	James Guilfoyle	I am 100% behind the DOT expanding I-26 and it couldn't start soon enough. Heck, I wish we could do it all the way to Weaverville. My only comment about this project is that we look to hire contract companies from North Carolina.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
75	Jay Reese	Why not spend the money reducing the need for the antiquated automobile by building mass transit and bike lanes?	*I-26 accommodates both regional and local traffic. Expanded bus service would not capture the requisite number of trips to reduce congestion along I-26. New rail alignments would not be financially feasible within the time horizon. Due to the facility being an interstate, bicycles are not allowed. Finally, none of these options would also meet the need of repairing the pavement substructure of the road. (DEIS, p 2-1)
76	John Erickson	...I understand the traffic can be busy, but I think part of that has to do with poor sign efficiency and perhaps widening of on/off ramps. The vehicle accidents will happen whether there is 10 lanes or 2 lanes. The approximate difference of \$75.1 (the 6 lane choose version versus the hybrid lane choose) could perhaps be used in other ways to help the flow of direction around the more congested areas of Asheville. (i.e. the joining of Patton Ave. I240 East/West and I26 West junction). I imagine that much better roads signs and	*Improved Transportation System Management, which includes improvements such as ramp termini modification, ramp metering, acceleration/deceleration lane lengths, and signing upgrades, were studied as a part of this project and not found to noticeably reduce congestion. In addition, this alternative would not meet the additional purpose and need of improving the pavement substructure and deteriorating road surface conditions. (DEIS, p 202)

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

*Please note that comments with an asterisk (\*) were provided electronically.*

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		earlier heavy traffic signaling could perhaps help some of the congestion.	
77	Lee Morrow	<p>START CONSTRUCTION TODAY!!!! JUST DO IT!!!! DON'T WAIT ANY LONGER!!!!</p> <p>I AM SO SICK OF THAT ROAD AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO RIDE YOUR BUMPER AND FORCE TRAFFIC TO GO EVEN FASTER. I AM SICK OF NOT BEING ABLE TO CHANGE LANES BECAUSE THERE IS NO SPACE TO GET OVER. AND I AM SICK OF NAMBY PAMBY PEOPLE SAYING WE DON'T NEED IT.....JUST DO IT!!!! NOW!!!!</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
78	Lisa Horton	<p>Regarding the widening of I-26...</p> <p>My family and I live in Hendersonville, and we have to travel I-26 several times per week. It is almost always crowded and dangerous! People drive too fast and totally refuse to obey the speed limit. There are lots of tractor trailers on the interstate. Numerous times, we have suddenly come upon stopped traffic, and we have had to stop unexpectedly. I am so afraid that the tractor trailers and other vehicles coming around the curve or over the hill behind us will not stop in time and crush us! We have already lost one vehicle on I-26 about 4 years ago at the Airport Road exit. A woman traveling ahead of us slammed on her brakes to keep from hitting cars that were backed up onto the interstate at the Airport Road exit ramp. When she swerved, she lost control of her vehicle and spun around and came back toward our vehicle and hit us head on. Thankfully, my husband and I survived the accident with only minor injuries plus one broken</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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I-26 Widening

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		<p>bone. The lady who hit us was taken to the hospital by ambulance. Now we avoid I-26 at all costs! We take the long route using Highway 25 and several back roads to get to Asheville and other places in that direction. The back roads take longer, but we figure we will be even later if we get caught in a standstill on the interstate that sometimes last 30 minutes to an hour. Plus we feel safer on the back roads. We signed up for traffic notifications from WLOS, and almost daily we get a notification that there has been a wreck on I-26 and that traffic is backed up. Please, please do something to widen the road, make it safer and less congested, and hopefully save some lives as a result. We would love to be able to travel I-26 again and get to our destination on time and in one piece. :) Thanks!!</p>	
79	Mike Swartzlander	<p>My wife and I moved to Hendersonville 4 years ago to retire. We chose Hendersonville mostly because our youngest daughter and her family moved to Asheville. So, we travel I 26 between HVL and ASH frequently. We love living here. The absolute worst thing about living here is I 26!! Often now we avoid it by driving 25, which is becoming more crowded all the time. The interchanges are dangerous -- no room to move over when a car is entering. Trucks go 70 or even 80 miles an hour. I have maybe seen one person pulled over for speeding in the 4 years we've lived here. This area is being limited in terms of economic development due to I 26. Please provide this improvement so that we can accommodate all the tourists, as well as all the people moving here to live. Thank you.</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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80	Ron Vaseleski	I support the I26 widening project. The #3 Hybrid option appears the most logical, but I would default to the DOT expertise in this project. Please do not delay as this project is long over due. Thanks.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
81	Scott Orlinski	In support of the most lanes option	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
82	Theodore J. Figura, Jr	I am commenting on the proposed (and funded) widening of I-26 to 8 lanes south of I-40 to the US 25 exit and wish these comments to be entered into the official public comment record. I recognize that this section of I-26 experiences significant congestion periodically and that measures to relieve this congestion are appropriate. However, I find it hard to	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p>

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		<p>believe that 8 lanes is really justified along the full length of Interstate that is currently proposed. I am also wondering whether all options for relieving traffic congestion where it currently develops and is likely to develop in the future have been explored—options such as adding truck climbing lanes, improved shoulders for getting fender benders away from traffic flow, and electronic signage at blind curves to tell drivers if there is congestion ahead and, if not, to maintain speed. A default solution to Interstate traffic congestion of adding more lanes is costly, inefficient, carries negative consequences (particularly with regard to encouraging suburban sprawl), and, as transportation economists have contended for decades with their conclusions being born out in actual experience, the combination of traffic seeking its equilibrium and additional capacity inducing demand results in congestion only reoccurring in many instances.</p> <p>Unless the analyses listed below have already been undertaken in the planning and EIS process, I am recommending and requesting the following be accomplished before final construction is approved and that, if warranted by these analyses showing that less costly and impactful measures can achieve cost effective results, that the construction plans for this project be modified accordingly.</p> <p>1) Congestion patterns along the project route should be thoroughly analyzed and congestion that is due to traffic accidents or road construction should not be the basis for warranting lane expansions. Instead, other</p>	<p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT’s Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>

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		<p>measures, such as improving shoulder so that they can be opened to relieve episodic congestion, should be explored.</p> <p>2) NCDOT should perform engineering analyses to incorporate other congestion prevention measures where feasible as an alternative to adding lanes.</p> <p>3) the analysis for warrants for adding 8 lanes should be applied along the smallest roadway lengths possible so that only Interstate sections that truly warrant 8 lanes are expanded.</p> <p>4) add to the warrant for lane expansion that periods or projected periods of level F congestion exist continuously for at least 15 minutes before the presence of level F congestion is used to warrant lane expansion.</p> <p>5) if funding formulas allow, money saved from reducing the number of lane-miles should be added north of the U.S. 25 interchange be used to extend currently unfunded and warranted lane additions to I-26 south of the U.S. 25 interchange.</p> <p>Besides advocating for the efficient use of scarce highway funds, my concern is the potential impact that the large-scale widening of I-26 south of I-40 may have on future traffic volumes (i.e., that these will increase due to the additional lane capacity) and that this may increase warrants for the expansion of I-240 north of I-40, which expansion (Section A of the I-26 Connector project) has serious negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods.</p>	

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83	Tori Stanton	That area is congested all the time because of the constant construction. I think maybe widening the road one lane on each side would help but not if it is going to cause extreme delays and congestion while the road is widened.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
84	Chuck Archerd	Building now 6/8 or 8 lanes prepares us for the future. 6 lanes is least cost effective over the long term. Do it and do it now. Traffic problems are negatively affecting our quality of life.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
85	Jean Gardiner	Our property is located on 142 E. Prince Road. On your maps you have the road labeled as Lakeview Estate Drive (SR 1895).	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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86	Marcia Bromberg	It's best to do the least necessary to accommodate traffic. Although population and visitors have created a need for widening I-26 it is unlikely that numbers of both will increase at the same rate into the future and, as alternative transportation grows, may even decrease highway demand. Eight lanes anticipates a future that is unlikely to occur.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
87	Michael P. Zollo	This is long overdue. This traffic is killing us. I would like see all but two lanes truck free. They are slowing us down on the hills. Please don't let those jerks from ASSville have input. Some tree hugger going to find a sand gnat and put this project on hold.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
88	Richard Doster	<p>...Airport Rd/I-26 Interchange - new bridge has barely relieved congestion on Airport Road - your DOT people should know this - what else is planned to fix this?</p> <p>Henderson County I-26 rest areas and weigh stations - both sets are overcrowded and are poorly serving travelers and truckers. Lack of adequate scales results in many trucks by-passing scales closed due to back ups. What is your plan?</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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		Truck drivers need adequate rest facilities - rest areas are being overcrowded by trucks seeking to find a spot to rest. This affects everyone's safety. What are your plans?	
89	Michael Gordon	May just as well go with the eight lanes so you don't have to later on. I understand it will be the most expensive option, but I think it is the right thing to do.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
90	Jon and Judy Matheis	As frequent visitors to Asheville we find ourselves wondering if it is worth battling the present traffic situation to come to NC. This plan should be top priority and sped up as much as possible. We favor 8 lanes with no trucks on the inside lanes. This is a large safety issue of great importance. It seems traffic has tripled in the last year.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
91	William M Martin, DVM	I lived in Henderson county for 30plus years.....I have seen that area grow substantially over the years. Yes, I	Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the

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		<p>fully endorse the widening and/or repairing the road. Do not let the naturalists or environmentalists stop the program this time.....please pleas.....</p>	<p>I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
92	Maureen Matthews	<p>I am sorry to write this at at the last minute, but the grief of what may happen forced me to wait as I will weep as I write this letter.</p> <p>I live very near the highway to be widened and the creek to be demeaned. Everyday I walk my dogs down to the creek and see footprints of all the animals that use that source of water. especially now with this drought, it is the main source of water even though it is probably polluted.</p> <p>There is a local crane, called George, that comes often to the water edge to fish, along with raccoons and opossums. The creek is one of the reasons I bought the property . It is a source of beauty for me and has not diminished the property value, but has added to it. I have a swing I use everyday to enjoy the creek and watch the birds bathe.</p> <p>I know the western way of perceiving natural places is that that nothing is there. That there is nothing actually alive, living and experiencing as we do, the it is just a dead , an unimportant place other than as a dumping ground for what is considered more</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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		<p>necessary to our anthropocentric way of looking at the world, as though we are all that matters and can function full steam ahead without an intact natural world.</p> <p>Of course this is not true, as is documented in a dozen ways, but we appear to be unable to change our behaviors, as most of the natural world does to survive and adapt to what is available.</p> <p>Everyday I drive the length of the highway that is to be destroyed. I apologize to every beautiful autumn colored tree I will no longer see, to the grasses that sway as the cars in front pass. to the hawk, owl and crows I see among the trees. When you drive the same route you get to know areas and they are familiar and comforting in a way.....like family....I know them in all seasons, I am grateful for the beauty they provide on my drive.</p> <p>Everyday now as I pass by I know they will be slaughtered and dragged away as if nothing but some financially useful "stuff" were there, not an area with familiar memories for all whom are aware enough to notice...</p> <p>Chances are this is a waste of time, but for the sake of those without a voice, I offer a plea to look more closely at what is to happen and if it was not a choice I believe another way would be found.</p>	
93	S.A. Zuerner	<p>...The I-26 widening will add to the congestion already in this area. A HARD LOOK should be given to alleviating the bottlenecks on surrounding roadways, specifically: NC 191 from Bent Creek to NC 280 in</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be</p>

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I-26 Widening

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		Henderson County. The connecting roads east-west such as Long Shoals from NC 191 to I-26. Clayton Road from Long Shoals to NC 191. Sweeter Creek from Hendersonville Road to I-40. These roads are already maxed out when I-26 slows down. IF not addressed before the I-26 project occurs then the traffic congestion and back ups will look like an LA interstate rush hour parking lot 24/7.	included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
94	Mary Blair	There is a lot more traffic from NC 280 to I-40 so that they need 8 lanes. I think you need to complete the I26 corridor through Asheville before you start on this project.	Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.  Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
95	Lee E. Thomason III Biltmore Farms	[Oral comment] At NC 146 and Schenck Parkway, widen at the second proposed light. Wants two right turns or a free flowing right from Schenck Parkway onto NC 146.  [Email]...official request for alterations (to the intersection of Skyland Inn Drive, Schenck Parkway, Long Shoals Road/Highway 146 and the entrance/exit ramps onto I-26) to be included within the scope of the I-26 Connector Project (I-2513). As you know, this intersection often becomes gridlocked which, at times, leads to traffic backing onto I-26 east and west. Therefore, we believe this small increase in the	Commenter references I-26 Connector and commenter intended to reference I-26 Widening.

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		project's scope will have a tremendous benefit for the I-26 Corridor. [design provided at end of matrix]	
96	Anonymous	The Bridge over I26 needs to be in theme with the rest of the majority of the bridges the blue ridge parkway crosses with ROCK facade and in an arch style. it will also assist in establishing an entrance to Asheville from the south and a memorable marker for those travelling I26. The current design is BORING and not in character with the parkway. Make it unique and in character to the parkway!	<i>Comment received by NPS as part of its public notice. Comments were found by NPS to not be substantive.</i>
97	Crawford Murphy	<p>The I-26 widening as it effects the Blue Ridge Parkway high bridge provides a rare opportunity of design esthetics, Gateway mark to the Blue Ridge Mountains and sustainability meaning minimal steel for minimal attachments only and no Concrete.</p> <p>Thus in simple terms, the bridge should be of creative design reflecting a gateway essence to the Blue Ridge Mountains and advanced engineering reflecting high technology and totally of wood to reflecting respect for the environment.</p> <p>This can be done with Cross Laminated Timber Panels and Laminated members and even some suspension and arch technology for design creativity.</p> <p>I will forward a concept sketch to the local Blue Ridge authorities in a few days for reference. I also offer for our consideration my professional expertise in this field of wood structures and my passion for such a special project.</p>	<i>Comment received by NPS as part of its public notice. Comments were found by NPS to not be substantive.</i>

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98	Anonymous	<p>In projects under NPS jurisdiction, there is almost always a No-Action Alternative that serves the essential function of presenting existing conditions at a site from which various alternatives can be evaluated. The omission here is disturbing, and does serve to propel a dangerous Preferred Alternative unfettered by comparison with existing conditions.</p> <p>"Preferred Alternative"</p> <p>Proposing a curved Parkway Bridge section seems foolhardy and seriously irresponsible. Planners might be quick to cite the celebrated Linn Cove Viaduct as a precedent. However, a factor to consider is that its design, engineering, construction and other unique features raise it to the level of an attraction, so that those traveling are well aware of this special engineering wonder when they arrive.</p> <p>However, to place a curved section of Parkway Bridge here over one of the highest elevations above a major Interstate Highway does seem reckless. For anyone negotiating such a span in curvature without optimal sightlines, caution would seem mandatory.</p> <p>However, this is also a Parkway that experiences simultaneously many kinds of vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles and pedestrians all traversing here. There is a hazardous mix of traffic here in various modes of speed and focus:</p> <p>1) Tourists and recreational drivers viewing the scenery as they pass through are easily distracted from the specifics of the roadway.</p> <p>2) There are bicyclists in physical "overdrive" reaching</p>	<p><i>Comment received by NPS as part of its public notice. Comments were found by NPS to not be substantive.</i></p>

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		<p>the elevation here.</p> <p>3) Motorcyclists expansively throttle through open spaces.</p> <p>4) Local commuters and errand seekers use this as a thoroughfare as a primary short cut route to avoid the many points of urban congestion nearby.</p> <p>5) Pedestrians/hikers often appear unexpectedly, following the roadway or emerging from or entering the Mountain-To-Sea Trail sections.</p> <p>Sharing the road always requires careful negotiation. As is, the current Bridge is an uneasy traversal with various modes present. Alternative 4 is just plain scary.</p> <p>If, as planned, the Southern curve is eliminated, one would easily surmise that speeds would increase and that is not what would be desirable on the Bridge by the time the curve on the bridge is reached. Safety should be the primary concern such a situation. It certainly does not seem so in this planning.</p> <p>The one feature that is a welcome upgrade in the proposal is the higher guard rail on the Bridge.</p> <p>One understands that VA and CBA were invoked by NPS here. While these processes are preferred and then rigorously applied by bureaucrats, the results are all too often undesirable in their impacts on resources and human experience.</p> <p>One certainly disagrees with the bureaucrats here, although it is clear that the major influence/consideration here is the Asheville Commuter Zone, and indeed any disruption of the Asheville Commuter Corridor on the Parkway would</p>	

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		<p>raise a hue and cry that would shake up Hemphill Knob for the duration and after.</p> <p>It seems to have exerted the most weight in the considerations. "The disruption to Parkway visitors and park and concessioner operation, including emergency response times are considered relatively severe impacts." Although one should note that these would be short term. However, collisions, mortality and life-long serious injury are more unacceptable in the long-term.</p> <p>"A new alignment was identified by the NPS as preferential to the existing alignment due to unacceptable impacts to visitors resulting from the traffic detour during construction." It is not unusual for a National Park Unit, INCLUDING the Blue Ridge Parkway, to close a section for construction or repair issues. Indeed, the cited detour would most affect local travelers and the Commuter community. Long distance travelers would simply miss the local Asheville Commuter Corridor section and travel to the higher elevation sections North or South. It is true that bicyclists would experience major disruption for a through-route here in the short term, but the current proposal presents the greater long-term dangers. (NOTE: Safety, which is a major factor, is not the principal consideration). The Document here does not acknowledge that the larger I-26 widening project itself will impact visitors and the local economy during its construction.</p> <p>Suicide Issue</p> <p>The experience of the height of the Bridge has a</p>	

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		<p>definitely enhanced danger component that would offer a trigger situation for those in disturbance. The concern for suicide attempts is understandable given the spatial interface between Bridge and Interstate below. The upgrade for the Bridge guardrail is welcome, but one would welcome more response to input from rangers who have raised legitimate concerns and suggested a stronger physical deterrence. Perhaps the answer is another design alternative, etc. This plan is still in Draft. Why not explore further! Why are we not listening to rangers? This is one of the greatest failings in NPS system management, and here it is again.</p> <p>Highway Corridor Impact</p> <p>The artist rendering of the proposed Bridge in overpass, as seen from the highway, is not "lovely" at all, and if implemented as depicted would incur a severe adverse impact. This would be adverse impact to trail hikers who presently encounter a natural vegetated buffer. The drawing, if thus realized, would provide an eyesore and earsore for those above the chasm. Further, if this barren section planning proceeds as presented, it would indeed impact wildlife, eliminating the field/forest buffer that exists and push back habitat for any number of creatures that might harbor homes further away from the highway. One can understand that such a rendering may represent an emplacement for national security reasons. However, if that is the case, then other sections of the</p>	

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>length of this Interstate widening would receive similar treatment, and one knows that the public is largely unaware of such a substantial impact.</p> <p>The Blue Ridge Parkway interaction and adjustments constitute but one segment of a very complex comprehensive process, but one must note that this is not a public-friendly process. At all. Various critical elements of the plan are scattered to different locations offline and online. One would have to negotiate time and distance greater than would be experienced during any projected disruption to actually get a full informational experience of the plan for the I-26 widening.</p>	
99	Bryan Warren	<p>When the road widening project is completed I would like to see a right 2 lane only set for semi trucks between mm 37 and mm 35 . That area is always a evening nightmare due to trucks trying to pass in left lane only to drop 10 or more below the speed limit which has a domino effect on traffic. This seems to work well on I-40 between mm 37 and 34. Thanks in advance from a concerned persons point of view. Can't wait for this project to be completed we need more lanes in a lot of areas to handle the growing communities in the mountains.</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

*Please note that comments with an asterisk (\*) were provided electronically.*

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
100	Daniel Angerstein	I am very much in favor of the widening of I-26. The hybrid version seems just fine. Count my vote in!	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
101	David Dubis	...address the incredibly dangerous uphill grade from the Green River/ Peter Guice bridge to US25 Business. Trucks are not lane restricted and very, very often jump to the left lane to pass another truck while only going 40mph or less while car traffic is 60+. The easiest way I can think of is to add a truck lane right after the bridge and let it be the beginning of the 3rd lane of I26W. There looks to be nearly enough room already....	*This area from US 25 (Exit 54) to approximately MM 55 is south of the I-4400/I-4700 project area.
102	Elaine	WAY OVERDUE! So ridiculous that it takes 2 hours to get from downtown Hendersonville to Candler every day! Wish it could get started sooner!	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

*Please note that comments with an asterisk (\*) were provided electronically.*

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
103	Heidi Marquart	I own a house in Hendersonville and work in Asheville. I have lived in WNC for almost 10 years. I love it here. My only concern and reason for possibly relocating is the 26 traffic. It has worsened significantly the last few years. The drive is now taking close to an hour to go 25 miles! Please widen the highway.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
104	Jarrod Kendall	I am excited to see the widening of I-26 through Asheville. If the traffic problems continue my wife and I were considering moving away from Asheville because we get off work and we wait in traffic. I believe widening the interstate will help us stay here because we didn't think traffic would get so bad. I am all for the widening and look forward to getting around Asheville easier.	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
105	JoAn	...I would also like to see it a light when you get off the Skyland exit onto Long Shoals (coming from Hendersonville) because when you get off of that exit and you want to get over to go to Biltmore Town Park...	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			<p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: The westbound ramp to NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) will be modified to accommodate a second lane for east bound traffic. NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) intersection with Schenck Parkway will be modified to include two left turn lanes onto Schenck Parkway, two through lanes, and a right turn lane.</p>
106	Marc Manny	<p>The widening of I-26 is need a long time needed I travel everyday twice a day on I-26 between Fletcher exit and I-240 in Asheville and it sucks 10 to fifteen years ago it wasn't that busy but now is crazy. I think the wider the better. 8 lanes is good for me.</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
107	Phil	<p>While you're widening I-26 you need to provide more access to the town of Hendersonville and Dana. I suggest adding an exit at Tracy Grove R's. to alleviate backups on 64 and Upward Rd.</p>	<p>* Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
108	Thomas Weaver, Trails	<p>We would like to see a pedestrian walkway on the new bridge for the Blue Ridge Parkway over I-26 to accommodate hikers on the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail.</p>	<p>*The National Park Service's preferred option, Option 4, for the replacement of the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 includes two</p>

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
	Facilities Mgr, Carolina Mountain Club (CMC)	Are there accommodations being planned for in the bridge design?	10-foot travel lanes, 3-foot shoulders, and a 5-foot sidewalk on one side to accommodate the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.
109	William Hague	<p>The preferred alternative for the US 25 interchange/Exit 44 looks like it will require a substantial amount of ROW for the partial cloverleaf design. Would a DDI interchange not be a less expensive alternative, but one that will still improve traffic flow over the current traditional diamond interchange?</p> <p>Did the traffic analysis for this project ever investigate the need for a truck climbing lane between mile markers 56 and 54, westbound, west of Green River bridge? This is a two-lane segment with an approximately one mile, 7% grade. Tractor-trailers ascending this grade often slow to less than 30 mph, creating congestion as cars are bottle-necked into one lane to pass. While this segment is outside of the project's study limits, it is close enough to the US 25 interchange at Exit 54 and the project study area to consider incorporating it into the future I-4400A widening project. If it cannot be included at this point, it certainly needs to be considered for a separate project, as the out-dated design of this segment of highway can no longer accommodate the greater traffic volume and the longer/heavier trucks of today that were not in use when the facility was constructed 50 years ago.</p>	<p>*NCDOT continues to consider alternate interchange configurations that meet the traffic needs and minimize impacts. Exit 54 to approximately MM 56 is outside of the project study area and was not studied during the traffic analysis.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017. To further reduce impacts at the I-26 and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange the design was modified to a Diverging Diamond Interchange type.</p>

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
110	Martha J. Lanning	Against hybrid. Prefer 6 or 8 lanes. Noise level not too bad at present. Will increase with more lanes.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
111	Joe Sanders	<p>[Would like to see bike lanes on the new BRP bridge.]</p> <p>See extended comments.</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
112	Joe Sanders (2)	<p>My best interest in this project? Community Group, Bicycle Advocate, Touring Bicyclist</p> <p>I prefer and really like the "Hybrid" alternative. This alternative provides the extra widening where the congestion is most likely.</p> <p>But I am dismayed that the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge will not be widened sufficiently to accommodate bicycle lanes. Please note that I am a bicyclists and have used this section of Parkway on my bicycle many</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>times.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If we look at the project from just the "bridge" perspective, the approach from both directions is uphill, with curves, and with limited sight distance. Every time I used this section of the Parkway on my my bike cars would back-up. As a minimum, having bicycle lanes on the bridge would allow a safe place for bicycles to transit the bridge and allow the cars to pass.</li> <li>2. Bicycle Touring is on the rise, and the Blue Ridge Parkway is a perfect bicycle touring destination.</li> <li>3. Bicycle commuting is on the rise.</li> <li>4. The millennial generation is showing a strong preference to live in communities where a car is not an absolute requirement. Some of the fastest growing Cities/Communities are those that have a vibrant alternative transportation infrastructure.</li> <li>5. I understand that the philosophy of the Parkway Administration is that the roadway should be "shared" by all users, however, a bicyclist traveling up a steep hill at perhaps 5 miles/hour while a car is speeding by at 45 miles/hour [or more] hardly makes for a favorable shared experience.</li> <li>6. Climate change seems to have been the theme that the National Park Service has taken very seriously, as we all should! National Parks have started to integrate education and awareness of this subject into their exhibits. Why not incorporate this theme into the Blue Ridge Parkway with an infrastructure that reduces contributors to climate change. A well designed bicycle infrastructure has proven to be the type of amenity that shows 'if you build it they will come!'</li> </ol>	

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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		<p>7. It makes sense to me to at least incorporate bike lanes on the bridge in case bicycle lanes, or even bicycle passing lanes, are ever incorporated on the Blue Ridge Parkway.</p> <p>8. From the Blue Ridge Parkway site:</p> <p>1. "The legislated purpose of the Blue Ridge Parkway, under the Act of June 30, 1936, is to link Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee by way of a recreation- oriented motor road intended for public use and enjoyment. Under the provisions of the act approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), the intended purpose of the Blue Ridge Parkway is to conserve, interpret, and exhibit the unique natural and cultural resources of the central and southern Appalachian Mountains, as well as provide for leisure motor travel through a variety of environments."</p> <p>2. With what we know about how fossil fuel exhaust contributes to climate change,</p> <p>it appears to me that changing the phrase "motor road" to "infrastructure" might change the culture to make the Parkway safer for bicyclists while improving conditions that help curtail climate change. Knowing that automobile exhaust is a strong contributor to climate change, promoting the Parkway as a "motoring" experience seems to conflict with the intended purpose of the Parkway Act in that it is contributing to the destruction of the unique natural resources of the central and southern Appalachian Mountains.</p>	

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		<p>3. Should legislation change to broaden the perspective from a "motor road" to, perhaps, "motor and bicycle infrastructure", having the bridge in place to accommodate this new theme would demonstrate foresight on the part of the National Park Service.</p> <p>4. Since the Parkway traverses only North Carolina and Virginia, I suspect that it would be feasible to get Congress to change the purpose of the Blue Ridge Parkway from "motor road intended for public use and enjoyment" to "environmentally friendly transportation infrastructure intended for public use and enjoyment."</p>	
113	Bill Albright	6-lane will be affordable and add the necessary capacity (8 lanes would be an enormous undertaking) also, the downtown Asheville (Patton Ave.) section of I-26 is a desperately needed project	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
114	Carol Nelson	<i>J Harris: I spoke with Carol Nelson and her mother owns property at 5245 Hendersonville Road and the closest location for any construction related to the I-26 widening project would be at the Butler Bridge Road crossing of I-26 (bridge replacement under the 8 lane widening option). The subject property is "off the map" and is not involved in any improvements related to the</i>	<i>Phone conversation.</i>

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I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Public Hearing October 13, 2016**

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		<i>project. I shared the project webpage for and the portion of the hearing maps in the area of Butler Bridge Road and she seemed satisfied with this information.</i>	
115	Jennifer McLean	<i>J Harris responded: Thank you again for your time this morning. As discussed, your comments pertain to Section A of the I-26 Connector Project (<a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/</a>), not the I-26 Widening Project south of Asheville. I am sharing your comments with members of the I-26 Connector Project team (Michael Wray is the NCDOT project manager, Chris Werner is the project manager with the consulting firm) so they can review and consider your comments. Also, as discussed, I am asking them to add you to the I-26 Connector Project mailing list so you can be notified of future public meetings and receive other informational mailings that are sent periodically.</i>	<i>Phone conversation.</i>
116	Ken Fitch	Minutes of the Post hearing meeting are hereby requested.	<i>Note: Mr. Fitch made comments on the DEIS and those comments that relate to the design of the project are included above.</i>
117	Ruthie Harvey	I am hoping that you can help me with some information regarding the following project: I-4700B (I-26 - NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) to I-40) Can you tell me the status of this project in relation to the design phase and ROW land acquisition phase? Thank you in advance for your help and time!	<i>J Harris responded to this request on November 17, 2016 with the current schedule information and a link to the project website.</i>
118	John H. Lanning and Ben Lanning	I would like to request a noise barrier from the bridge on Dana Rd east for 200 ft or so (to the big advertising sign). It would knock a lot of noise off my brother, mother and me and would not lose any exposure for my neighbor's business. I would also request some	Noise barriers are preliminarily recommended on both sides of I-26, south of the Dana Road bridge and appear to include the properties of Martha, John, and Benjamin and Terri Lanning. Additional noise studies will be completed as project development continues.

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I-26 Widening

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		grading, landscaping for the bank on Dana Road going to the bridge because it always looks like crap. Would be interested in helping with its improvement.	Thank you for your comment.
119	Anonymous	Need educational signage ahead of any construction to alert drivers.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
120	Anonymous	Against 6-Lane Widening, always congested, sometimes before Exit 46 or 44. Sometimes even down to Exit 35 if there's an accident. Signage needed between 44 & 37.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p> <p>Update: NCDOT's Preferred Alternative of the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative was chosen in January 2017.</p>
121	Georgia Herring	Would like NCDOT to explore more uses for permeable pavement on NCDOT projects. On I-240 there are places with quiet pavement. Can we use this [same type of pavement] for this project, river bridge, and Charlotte Street.	Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.

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I-26 Widening

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.
122	Anonymous	Sign right lane for semi-trucks only. [Restrict truck traffic to right lane.]	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
123	Lance, Mary Jean, and Susan Elizabeth	Will there be an additional right of way purchase at the rest area? i.e. Is NCDOT going to acquire more of their property?	There will be no additional right of way purchased for the rest areas.
124	Joseph Walters	Would like NCDOT to use technical features to control aggressive drivers.	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project studies continue.</p> <p>Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
125	Zach Warren	I need to know if the property located at 114 Willow Brook Road Hendersonville, NC will be affected by the widening of I-26. I am in contract on that house to buy.	*The NCDOT and FHWA Preferred Alternative for STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 is the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening. Under this alternative, the subject property at 114 Willowbrook Road in Hendersonville will require an approximate 12-foot minor easement to accommodate

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		If at all possible please respond asap. Thank you for your time.	<p>widening and is in a noise study area and recommended for a noise barrier. The barrier is preliminarily justified and is recommended for construction, based upon criteria defined in the NCDOT Traffic Noise Abatement Policy, contingent upon completion of the project design and the public involvement process.</p> <p>You can view the property location on Public Hearing Map 2, located here: <a href="https://xfer.services.ncdot.gov/PDEA/Web/I26Widening/I4400-4700_rdy_phm-Sheet2_Expanded_White_Space-000.pdf">https://xfer.services.ncdot.gov/PDEA/Web/I26Widening/I4400-4700_rdy_phm-Sheet2_Expanded_White_Space-000.pdf</a> (property 83, on far left side of page on the match line). The Preferred Alternative is the top map. For additional information on the project please visit the website, <a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/</a></p>
126	Dan Mullinix	<p>So, will the project proceed now as planned. The Hybrid 6/8 Lane widening? I get stuck in traffic every day. Bless you and the NCDOT.</p> <p>Is this what construction will be: After considering the purpose and need for widening I-26, as well as the cost, design and impacts on the human and natural environment, NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration identified the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening as the best build alternative – also referred to as the Preferred Alternative.</p>	<p>*Thank you for your interest in the NCDOT’s I-26 widening project in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. The current schedule for the project is to complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision in the Spring. Right of way acquisition is programmed for Fiscal Year 2018, with Construction to begin in Fiscal Year 2020.</p> <p>The schedule and additional project information are available online at <a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26Widening/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26Widening/</a> and I am available to discuss the project with you further.</p>
127	Megan Hill	I was wanting to find out if my property was going to be affected by the I-26 widening project. We did receive a letter regarding a culvert and stream that run through our rental below our house but nothing other than a newsletter for our address. We live at 670 Felmet Rd Flat Rock and are co owners of 692 Felmet Rd (rental property mentioned above) and my In-laws	Thank you for your inquiry on the NCDOT's I-26 widening project between US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County and the I-40/I-240 interchange in Buncombe County. Our design engineer reviewed the location of the properties you mentioned and determined that they are south/east of the I-26 widening project. Previous limits of the project may have included a proposed culvert replacement/extension near your property, thus resulting in the USACE postcard notification; however, no impacts to your properties are currently anticipated.

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		live at 696 Felmet Rd (Darin and Rhonda Hill). Thanks for your time.	Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.

Number	Date Comment Received	Commenter	Comment
1	8/30/2016	Brandon Jordan (1)	I see this project is set for 2020 construction. Do you anticipate a Fall 2019 sell date or will this be a Spring 2020 sell? Also, is there a mailing list for this project that I can sign up for to receive updates?
	11/21/2016	Brandon Jordan (2)	Do you happen to have any preliminary earthwork quantities prepared for I-4400/4700 yet?
2	10/10/2016	Elliot Lunsford	<p>I'm so glad that the widening of I-26 is moving forward. It's way overdue. Until recently, I lived in Arden for over 30 years, and the traffic is atrocious. Large numbers of people commute and we have a large number of tourists and people traveling through. I agree with widening to 8 lanes most definitely from I-40 to Airport Road. If high costs keeps widening from happening between Airport Road and US-25, then I strongly urge the DOT to allow for future expansion if necessary because Hendersonville area traffic can be bad as well. It's been ridiculous that I-26 hasn't been expanded yet as much as Asheville is growing and trying to attract tourists/businesses. I also feel that widening I-26 can reduce traffic nightmares on Hendersonville and Sweeten Creek roads.</p> <p>I'm curious about the Biltmore Park area. That interchange is very busy. I believe that the DOT should look at adding a secondary off-ramp from I-26 directly into the Biltmore Park area to reduce the traffic issue when motorists come off from I-26 westbound and have to quickly merge over to turn into Biltmore Park. The widening project here would be a good opportunity to fix that problem. For a similar setup, consider the Hamilton Place exit in Chattanooga, TN that moves motorists directly off interstate into the shopping center. Part of the issue I've noticed with traffic around Biltmore Park also stems from the geography of the land. That is, trucks have to climb the hill at the same time that people are merging from Long Shoals road onto I-26 West, which creates almost daily congestion. Please fix this soon, and do it right. Make sure whichever construction crew you get actually finishes the job. Hold them accountable and have contingency plans in place. There were critics who complained about the widening in Enka at "Malfunction Junction". I think those critics were proved wrong who thought we didn't need so many lanes. For this project, we definitely need 8 lanes. Thank you.</p>
3	9/29/2016	Eli Ferrari	Another NCDOT boondoggle. How much time will this almost half-a-billion dollar save a motorist? It's currently a 22 minute trip so perhaps the motorist will save 30 seconds? For the same price, Charlotte built their full light-rail line yet NCDOT keeps building highway after highway that will just contribute more to pollution and global warming. And none of this helps bicyclists or pedestrians who don't drive. What a colossal waste of money.
4	10/11/2016	John Yokley	As a resident of Mills River and a frequent avoider of I26 in it's current state, I would support either the preferred alternative (hybrid) or the 8-lane alternative. Fiscally, I believe the 8-lane alternative would be cheaper in long run as the need for 4 lanes in each direction will grow as time and project grows in future (certainly needed by 2030). But from a political and feasibility aspect, the hybrid preferred alternative should be pursued to facilitate actual movement on the project. The worst alternative is 6 lanes given the volume of traffic currently. Pursuing this option is the most expensive long term and pretty much guarantees this highway being a perpetual construction zone for the next 30+ years as the need for 8 lanes will be critical before the 6 lanes are finished from I-240 to Hwy 280. This project will also bring more industry to the area.
5	10/11/2016	Kelby Cody	I just want to comment on the need for this project. My family and I traveled to Florida and South Carolina multiple times this year. On every trip the worst traffic we experienced was on the Hendersonville stretch of I-26 which is being considered for widening. I have had many others from Western North Carolina tell me the same stories that they travel to other states without having traffic issues, for the most part, and when they return to Asheville there is always an extended delay from Hendersonville until you reach Asheville. Please continue with this project as quickly as possible.
6	10/10/2016	Joe Martin	Good morning, my name is Joe Martin, Project Manager with O.R. Colan Associates. I have been following this project for several years and I saw that there is a public meeting being held this Thursday at 7pm. Will this project be Design-Build or will the NCDOT be sending it out to consultants to bid on the R/W portion of the project? Thanks and I look forward to your response.
7	10/11/2016	Anonymous	I live in South Asheville and do feel like I-26 should be widened. That being said, I feel like both the 8 lane and the hybrid alternatives would push NCDOT to make sure the I-26 project would have 8 lanes going through West Asheville, which I don't think it should. Therefore, I would recommend that NCDOT choose the 6 lane alternative since not doing so would make it hard to keep the 8 lane alternative in West Asheville off the table.
8	10/12/2016	Randal Warren	I26 does not need to be widened at all. Roads shouldn't be build to accommodate traffic just at peak travel times and sit empty at most other times of the day. When roads are widened, this encourages more traffic incentives sprawl. People should change their behavior. If they want to travel these roads with less congestion, then they should drive on them at non-peak hours. If they can't change their travel times, then, perhaps, they should reconsider living closer to work or wherever they are traveling. Much of the load that is carried by commercial trucking could be carrier far less expensively and environmentally conscious by trains. Widening roads is not the answer to our transportation issues.
9	9/18/2016	Steven Hardy-Braz	Remaining consistent with NCDOT's Complete Streets policy, it would be very helpful for this project to be built with bilateral sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks and signals, as well as bilateral bike lanes so as to safely permit, promote, and protect all types of users of the shared public roadway.

Number	Date Comment Received	Commenter	Comment
10	10/12/2016	William Vine	Because I drive frequently between Hendersonville and Asheville, I fully support the preferred alternative (Hybrid Six/Eight-Lane Widening). I know from personal experience that congestion on I-26, including stop and go, 1) occurs frequently, 2) appears without the interference of accidents, 3) surprises anytime during the day and through 9 pm, and 4) has increased greatly during the 5 years I have lived in Hendersonville. Any significant delay or decrease in scope will cripple travel between Buncombe and Henderson Counties as well as throughout the region. Even now I fear travel on I-26 because delays are unpredictable and can interfere with appointments in Asheville, yet has no reasonable alternative. Without the full scope of this project, increased congestion in the future will slow not only traffic but also economic growth in the region. I also know from personal experience that knee-jerk opposition to this project will arise now as before, seek to kill the project by delaying tactics such as incessant court battles and ultimately make this and similar projects cost prohibitive. I fear that a foolish ?compromise? with the opposition will cripple the project, create more pollution from stop and go traffic, waste needed resources and not solve the problem of worsening congestion as the population of the region grows rapidly. I have seen in other areas of the county such attempts at compromise only result in construction that proves inadequate and the need for more court battles, more delays during additional construction, and incremental expense. Sincerely
11	9/30/2016	Rita Yanz	I would like to make a correction to the address you may have for the Airport Director for the Asheville Regional Airport. The Airport Authority is no longer under the City of Asheville and mail can be sent directly to the Executive Director. The old address, for reference, was 708 Airport Rd, Fletcher, NC. The updated/correct address is: Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority Attn: Executive Director 61 Terminal Drive, Suite 1 Fletcher, NC 28732
12	10/14/2016	Anna Eldreth	I travel this section of interstate every single day. I live off of Exit 33 and work in Asheville off of McDowell Street. That section of Highway needs to be widened and needed it 10 years ago. For people not wanting it widen, they must never drive it. Sitting in that traffic and knowing a 15 min drive is going to take you 45 mins to an hour is unnerving. We have the traffic here and we are growing, let our roads grow too. We have an abundance of traffic let's get it moving along a lot easier instead of keeping it slow. When 26 backs up in either direction, then everything else backs up... Hendersonville Road, Brevard Road. Hopefully we all can come to an agreement and widen the interstate. It is well over due!!!!!!!
13	10/12/2016	Anonymous	I think that this does need to be addressed. However the bigger issue that needs to be dealt with is that this project needs to extend to exit 19 - from Weaverville to Hendersonville!!!! And I-26 needs to go over the existing Jeff Bowen bridge. Make I-26 east and west 3 lanes each direction from Weaverville to Hendersonville, having a bridge over Patton Ave / 240 so that I-26 is not impacted by local traffic and tourist confusion creating daily problems!!! South Carolina just made this same above mentioned wasteful mistake as they widened I-26, south of Columbia - which needs to be 3 lanes in each direction from I-95 to Columbia. Instead they widened a portion, and 3 heavy lanes of traffic bottleneck back in to 2 lanes causing backups, accidents, and unnecessary road rage. This is more than just a Hendersonville problem!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
14	10/13/2016		As a retired law enforcement officer I have witnessed first hand the problems with limited travel lanes and high volumes of traffic on I-26. Serious collisions also block the road, hinder emergency responders and slow down commerce. I can recall back 15 years ago there was talk about this same road widening project, because I attended some of the meetings. Lets not let special interest or environmental groups slow down or hinder this road project. Build it in the interest of safety as soon as possible with no delay. Don't hold back like you have on the I-26 connector in Asheville. That is a nightmare itself.
15	10/13/2016	B. Rigdon	Make I-26, eight lanes all the way. By the time it is finished may need more.
16	10/13/2016	Beverly Swartzlander	I moved to Hendersonville 3 years ago, traveling to Asheville on I-26 frequently with my grandchildren In my vehicle. This highway is dangerous, particularly the on/off ramps where no one ever yields. One takes their life in their hands being on this road. We watch many cars from other states traveling this stretch of 26, this road does not compare to other roads in Charlotte and triangle areas. Western Carolina has certainly not received money for roads in years! We hope to see improvements soon, the amount of debris on this road only increases the dangers! Rarely do we see police or any enforcement of highway rules. Improvement does not mean a few concrete repairs this road needs additional lanes with better on/off exits in high traffic areas fast! Thanks for asking for input, I look forward to seeing safety enforced and construction of a new road so everyone traveling can feel safe.
17	10/14/2016	Bill Grindstaff, Jr.	Please use the 8 lane proposed plan for this stretch of congested, busy roadway. The plan that includes 8 lanes for the entire extent of the proposed project.
18	10/12/2016	Charles Lord	This is a much needed and LONG overdue project. The overloaded highway is subject to frequent stoppages which lead to a high accident rate. Western NC counts on this corridor as its major N-S route and this project, along with the I-26 connector in Asheville, will be a major boon to the economy in NC. Please give this project your highest possible priority.

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19	10/14/2016	Chris Ricker	The Hybrid looks like an excellent idea. More lanes may be beneficial in the future but I would not know how to predict the cost/benefit ratio. I know the DOT does that. I like how the 25/26 interchange takes advantage of mostly vacant land! Do it!! Thanks!
20	10/14/2016	Cyndi Massey	I-26 needs to be 4 lanes on both sides!!!!....I work at elementary school located off Hwy 191 / Brevard Rd and when there is a wreck on I26 (which is daily) traffic diverts onto Brevard Rd and we can't get 6 buses that have 2 runs each in and out of our school....students home! Help!!!! Also effects special need buses and middle / high school buses.
21	10/14/2016	Dwight D Manuel	Widening the highway will not help. Teaching people how to properly drive on an interstate highway would be much more effective. Merging properly, keeping to the right except to pass, the use of turn signals. Paying attention to the road ahead. Ect Ect. Three or four lane filled with untrained drivers is just wider parking lot.
22	10/12/2016	Gary Christopher	I-26 Widening in Buncombe and Henderson counties, please, please, please get the preferred plan into action immediately. The only thing wrong with this plan is the timeline. *Another* four years before construction begins? Ridiculous! NCDOT has spent more than 10 years on this and still we have only two lanes, and constant traffic tie-ups.
23	10/13/2016	Gene Crocker	Please, do something about the traffic from Hendersonville to Asheville. It's horrible. The plan for 6 lanes in Henderson County and 8 in Buncombe is in no way an overkill. Something needs to be done asap. I'm surprised there haven't been more accidents with fatalities on that interstate. I have family members traveling that road everyday and I'm concerned for their safety. Thanks for listening...
24	10/12/2016	Hart Regtmeier	I am an independent consultant and contractor in the Asheville/Hendersonville area and commute back and forth between Asheville and Hendersonville on an almost daily basis. Considering the increase and density of traffic I witnessed over the past 10 years I believe that widening of I-26 between Asheville and Hendersonville is already long overdue. Also considering the before mentioned development of traffic over the past 10 years I raise the question today already whether widening I-26 to 6 lanes with this project probably not being completed until 2025 is wide enough for the future traffic increase over the next 10 years ... !? Being given the opportunity to voice my opinion and concern is greatly appreciated and if I can be of any assistance with moving this project forward to the good of our local economy and the well being and safety of our communities as well as fellow citizens, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time.
25	10/13/2016	James	I think the combination of 6 & 8 lanes is appropriate. My only complaint is that the project is long overdue. I-26 is a safety hazard as well as an inconvenience for anyone who lives in South Asheville.
26	10/14/2016	Jason Gruen	Interstate 26 widening project needs to be initiated as soon as possible. Traffic is backed up daily and local roads are suffering immensely from spillover traffic and too many trucks. Growth in the area, growth in overall truck traffic, growth in Charleston Port traffic, and growth in tourism have really exposed the issues with this highway Comments on design are below: - Plan for future traffic of 20-25 years - Truck lane restrictions in hilly areas (Airport Road / Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge / between French Broad and 191) - Longer exit ramps - Better design of on-ramps to reduce groups of cars (line of 10 cars moving on to interstate at same time)
27	10/12/2016	Jason Harris	Please, for the love of all that is holy, please widen I-26 to as many lanes as you possibly can. Don't let it be obsolete the day that it is done. Backward politicians have delayed reasonable progress long enough. It is costing 10 times what it would the multiple other times that this has been discussed. Please, please, please, please, please, don't let these not in my backyard people stop what needs to be done yet again. If it was a viable option, I would sell you my house and let you run 4 lanes right through the middle of it. I am a native. I have lived here most of my life. Help us, please!!! Let common sense win for a change. Thank you! Jason Harris
28	10/14/2016	Jennifer Knox	I'd prefer six lanes if it is deemed necessary to expand the interstate at all. In following Greenville, SC's example, an adjacent greenway connecting Fletcher and Asheville should be included.
29	10/13/2016	John Edward Hally	I am completely for the widening project. I work in Hendersonville and live just off of the Long Shoals interchange and my commute most days is horrible. Traffic seems to back up near Airport Road and for no reason except there are just too many vehicles for two lanes. I try taking Highway 25 and that is just as bad with bottlenecks at the Long Shoals/25 intersection and again at the entrance to Biltmore Park. Please proceed with at least one additional lane in each direction. I also think that there should be another entrance to Biltmore Park maybe between the Long Shoals exit and the BRP overpass to help alleviate the congestion at BP's only entrance.
30	10/14/2016	John Stephens	Please ignore all the naysayers and build this thing as wide as you can! The traffic sucks and our city can only grow as big as our roads allow it to! Thanks

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31	10/14/2016	Joyce Butler	I-26 is in serious need of widening. 8 lanes is probably the way to go. By the time 6 lanes would be finished it would be obsolete. Traffic is terrible and the way Asheville is growing it will only get worse. I honestly believe the majority believes it must be widened soon rather than later. I know the people who travel the highway daily favor widening,
32	10/14/2016	Kim Hixson	As a resident of Biltmore Park, I was wondering with the widening project, would a noise barrier wall be added from the onramp at Long Shoals to the parkway bridge on the side that borders the neighborhood. Currently the noise from the interstate can be heard easily and especially the large trucks. When we go to widen the road, it would be nice to have a noise wall installed to reduce the traffic noise.
33	10/14/2016	Kyle Gustafson	This is a major expense to our community, however our roads, highways, and interchanges are far behind the needs of use. Also Western North Carolina has maintained a positive growth rate despite a recession, aging population, and our infrastructure needs expansion. Plus many tourist visiting this area use 26. Therefore we should build for the future and make it eight lanes.
34	10/14/2016	Larry Barber	The widening of I 26 and I 40 should have been done 20-30 years ago when they were both repaved. As a community we couldn't escape the construction and the final result was a rebirth of the very same nicely finished roadway we have today. For all the mess and aggravation we went through lets go big for a change and plan for what's to come not what it looks like today. That was the mistake decades ago.
35	10/12/2016	Lee	Traffic will be slower than ever if this is started right now but it needs to be fixed and this may take a walk up to 4 to 5 years so can you imagine the traffic over the next for five years while the distraction of this new road is being built and less are some alternatives were some traffic can be detoured around lock the people that live locally in the area should take alternate route if that getting on the interstate this is my comment for this thank you
36	10/14/2016	Leslie Baker	I think that I-26 should be made into 8 lanes. The extra cost will be worth it in less than 5 years at the current growth.
37	10/13/2016	Michael Bolanos	I think I-26 should be widened to four lanes in Buncombe County and three lanes in Henderson County, I think that is sufficient. Considering most of the congestion is in the Buncombe County area.
38	10/14/2016	Michael Murphy	I moved here over 4 years ago from the NY area and I've noticed how much traffic has increased. I drive I26 practically every day, and the traffic is bumper to bumper some days. Many drivers don't realize the left lane is for passing. Perhaps that is one cause of the snarls. I am in favor of widening I26. I'm not a property owner, so it won't affect me one way or the other. Traffic is going to get worse; the day will come when the highway needs to be expanded.
39	10/12/2016	Mike Hoffman	This project needs to start ASAP, and I am afraid even four lanes won't be enough by the time it is complete. Please just start and finish it so we can move forward after 30 years of waiting.
40	10/13/2016	Pam Gessler	I am sending a comment concerning the widening of I-26 between the Fletcher exit and Brevard Rd. exit. We have definitely needed the road widened for years now. There is a traffic jam at almost any hour of the day between the Fletcher exit and Biltmore Park, sometimes all the way to I-40. I guess there is some controversy about whether or not to make the road 6 lanes or 8. If my 2 cents mean anything, it seems to me that the state can save a lot of money by make all bridges and overpasses wide enough to accommodate 8 lanes so they won't have to be done later at a higher expense. To me, this seems like a good idea no matter how wide the road becomes in the near future.
41	10/14/2016	Pat Gill	I would like to see it widened to eight lanes the entire way. I live on Newstock Rd. and travel south all the time, frequently to Flat Rock. The congestion is considerable and will only get worse. I grew up in CA and dealt with the congestion there and know from experience that as slowly as these interstates are built the traffic should account for future increases as much into the future as possible.
42	10/14/2016	Penny Robinson	My husband drives this road every day hauling gas to local gas stations. It is a very hectic drive for him and he complains that there is too many cars and not enough road. I myself have had to go through Asheville (malfunction junction) headed to TN. I got on I26 at exit 44 and 49 minutes later I was at I40. It's horrible. If everyone wants the area to grow, the road has to grow along with that. I think 4 lanes of traffic on each side would be great the closer you get to Asheville.
43	10/12/2016	Philip Rectenwald	I am opposed to the widening of US 26 through the Asheville historic district. The widening will impact neighborhood and historic homes in the Westover drive area. The proposal shown to the residents does not show consideration for the recent development of the area and the widening's impact to the Montfort Historic district.
44	10/14/2016	Randy Huskins	I drive I26 each day and it is not unusual for a 10 minute to take 30 minutes to an hour just to get home. On top of that every day there are more and more people moving into the area. So the problem is only going to get worse. I think DOT should move forward as soon as possible with its combination plan. It cannot happen soon enough.
45	10/13/2016	Rebecca Lehman	Traffic congestion is getting worse by the week. My preference is to widen to 8 lanes, allowing for future growth. If that isn't financially feasible then the hybrid solution is better than just widening to 6 lanes. The current 4 lane configuration is totally inadequate and often dangerous.
46	10/13/2016	Robert E. Parker	THIS WIDENING PROJECT HAS BEEN NEEDED FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS. IT CAN NOT BE DONE SOON ENOUGH.

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47	10/14/2016	Robert Hall	In the exits 33 - 40 region, we see truckers slowing for the steep grades causing traffic to back up. This is noticed especially when a slow truck tries to pass a real slow truck. Impatient drivers caught in this frequently zoom past when the jam is finally opened, often changing lanes quickly causing accidents. That is when the traffic jam really gets bad!! The hybrid option is best in my opinion, as it provides for increased traffic in Henderson County and will provide slow truck lanes in the Buncombe County area.
48	10/13/2016	Robert Zoellers	<p>very disappointed in the meeting that was held 10-13-16, i got conflicting stories,</p> <p>was told fletcher exit 44 us25 was not part of already funded project, was told they are stopping before the fletcher exit, was told the entrance ramp to i-26 east bound at exit 44 will not have a progressive lane, tried to get simple questions answered an no one could answer me, then after almost 2 hours an alot of walking around i ran into eric an if what he told me was the truth then i am very happy with this project if what he told me about exit 44 is true then i am happy. but in future i would rather have less informants there an get truthful answers to my questions, i live very close to i-26 my property is probably less than 200 ft from road, but yet people across the us25 road had there names on the noise sheet as i also work at that location an when i am at work it is very hard to hear i-26 traffic over us25 traffic</p> <p>please only have people with knowledge of the project at any future meetings. it will be much more helpful, an they one over the noise was absolutely no help to me at all he didnt even want to talk about it just kept changing subject. it was sad that not many from the community showed up for the information maybe they are all in support of it like me, an if exit 44 new ramps have longer lane for merging onto i-26 i am all for it. love the loop idea. tired of traffic back ups on that bridge with people trying to get onto i-26 also there was one of your personell there that said there was no problems with the traffic flow at i-26 an i told them they were crazy maybe they need to spend some time there personally an see how bad traffic gets snarled all done for now no need for response just wanted to put my 2 cents worth in the good an the bad.....</p>
49	10/14/2016	Roger Norton	I-26 definitely needs to expand. My biggest concern is that no matter how much it is widened, if it goes back to 4 lanes at the Brevard Road exit, everything will still bottleneck and not be worth the money. With any widening, the I-40/I-26 interchange has got to be addressed as part of it.
50	10/14/2016	Rush Ferrell	The combination sounds like a great solution. I26 is in serious need of widening and I'd like for as many lanes that can fit reasonably.
51	10/14/2016	Shane Liddell	If you are going to spend half a billion dollars, make the I-26/U.S. 25 Interchange as wide as possible. Asheville is growing fast!
52	10/14/2016	Taylor McLennan	<p>I-26 needs to be widened ASAP. The amount of traffic is growing exponentially. What should be a 20-30 minute drive has turned into 1 hour+ almost every single day. The longer we wait to widen this stretch of interstate the worse it is going to get. In my opinion, we are already behind the ball on this one.</p> <p>If/when this project moves forward, as many lanes as possible should be built. If a minimum improvement is made, it will help a little bit for just a while. We need to build for the future and to do that, we need 8 lanes. Possibly put an emergency vehicle lane right down the middle of the median as well so that first responders can reach those in need and clear the road safely and quickly.</p> <p>A minimum speed law should also be put in place and enforced. More often than not congestion is caused by drivers who have no business being on the road. They go well under the posted speed limit and cause wreck after wreck after wreck. Minimum speed limit will not fix the whole problem, but it may ease some of the pain we all currently feel while this project is discussed.</p>
53	10/13/2016	Ted Blackwell	I am firmly in favor of Alternative 3, the hybrid 6/8 lane plan. If any less is done, it will be obsolete before it is completed. I would suggest that what ever plan is selected, right of way, bridges, and grading be done to more easily accommodate future widening. This will cost more, but in the end will save taxpayer money. I'm told this new I26 project will cost four times what it would have cost when first proposed. And if you can, put it on an expedited schedule, before the current roadway falls completely apart.
54	10/14/2016	Tony Valdivia	My name is Tony I live in Candler but work in Hendersonville. My drive is about 25 miles and it used to take about 35 min on average to get to work. In the last couple of years my average time has increased to about 45 to 50 min to travel the same distance. I hope that you the DOT chooses the widest option. We have to think long term solutions.
55	10/13/2016	Una Mullis	For goodness sake, just widen I26 and stop studying and asking for comments. Do what you as experts think is the best and move on. The traffic is terrible and won't be getting any better. The back ups are frustrating. You have studied it long enough. Just do it.
56	10/13/2016	William E. Carter	I don't care what the hippies in downtown asheville want. I am so sick of congestion in and around asheville. Either build it so big or build the 6 lanes in henderson county and 8 in buncombe. PLEASE DON'T LISTEN TO THE FLOWER CHILDREN IN ASHEVILLE
57	10/14/2016	Anonymous	NCDOT: I-26 needs at least 8 lanes in Buncombe County. The part passing under the Blue Ridge Parkway is a narrow gap between two ranges. Only three other roads run through. Hendersonville Rd/US 25 cannot be widened anymore without razing hundred of businesses. Because of the constraints, Sweeten Creek (due to its closeness to US 25) and Brevard Rd (due to its closeness to the French Broad River) cannot be widened more than one lane on both sides without serious environmental impacts like a big cut. That leaves I-26. I-26 needs 8 lanes to anticipate this.

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58	10/14/2016	Anonymous	Sorry I couldn't attend last night's meeting: I am a 19-year resident of WNC, and a 14 year resident of the WECAN neighborhood. I would prefer the 6-lane option. Highways that have 8 lanes are more "aggressive", and I never want I-26 to become an I-85 or I-95. We need a connector to take through traffic away from Bowen bridge. Bowen bridge needs to become a pedestrian and bicycle friendly bridge that connects two neighborhoods and no longer moves interstate traffic.
59	10/14/2016	Bill Hayes	I think the expansion should go past Fletcher exit, at least to Chimney Rock and possibly as far as Upward Road exit. Semis clog up the interstate ... give them access to two right lanes only. Like the entries at Fletcher exit being expanded, I avoided using since the short view is rather dangerous.
60	10/14/2016	Carol Owenby	I travel i26 to and from work each day. Yesterday I travel home about 10 MPH and came to work at 10 MPH today. This is awful way to get to work. Anyone that travels this way each day knows we need this road widen very bad, the right lane is so ruff no one wants to be in that lane. The airport exit is backed up each day regardless if there is an accident that slows down the lanes. We need this very bad and it need to be started asap. Widening this will help traffic flow and the bottle neck. Please consider this work as a top priority.
61	10/14/2016	Danny Grooms	Please widen the freakin road!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
62	10/14/2016	Darryl E. Wilder	Do I-26 right the first time - make it 8 lanes - the brevard exit the to the Hendersonville exit.
63	10/14/2016	John Wood	Go for the 8 lanes now rather than having to come back in 10 years to add the additional lane. And what about the 240/26 connection??
64	10/13/2016	Kate Guzy	I'd love to see I-26 widened. The traffic is horrible and there are so many delays during the week! This can cause me to be late to pick up the kids from their schools, late to get to classes, etc. I hope you'll widen soon! Thanks!!!
65	10/14/2016	Ken Ball	The URL listed on the comments page of the Public Meeting handout is not recognized (alaad@ncdot.gov). I went to the NCDOT website to find this comment page. I submitted my comments on another e-mail
66	10/14/2016	Larason Lambert	Thank you for holding the public hearing on the widening of I-26. Alternative 3, the hybrid 6/8-lane widening is by far the most logical option for the long term. My main concern is the design and functioning of the interchanges -- some I like and some I don't. I do like new design for exit-44 -- it's a dramatic improvement from the current interchange. I do not like the proposed new design for exit 49. The current design's only drawback is the shortness of the acceleration/deceleration lanes, I believe these can be extended by expanding the overall size of the interchange some and deforming the perfect circles of the loops to an asymmetric elliptical form. I feel that installing two additional traffic lights there would really encumber the flow of traffic on US-64 and create very serious traffic congestion. Lastly, although it's water already over the dam, I do not like the new interchange 37. For it's large area, it does not seem to move traffic very effectively. The new interchange 40 seems to work ok, but I think that traffic making "left turns" does not need to held up by traffic lights. Adding merge lanes for those "turns" would really help.
67	10/14/2016	Stephen Buckner	At the Fletcher exit could the existing bridge be used in the same traffic pattern as the bridge at exit #40, hwy 280. It seems that the bridge would be wide enough and it would not need the loop for a ramp. The clover leaf ramp at the Hendersonville exit is dangerous because people slow way down to go around the loop and it is hard to get to highway speed to merge into traffic.
68	10/14/2016	Susan Brinkley	I am definitely FOR a dramatic widening of I-26, and even for a longer stretch than currently proposed. I moved from Jacksonville, FL to Asheville in 2003 and the biggest traffic jam back then in Asheville was getting stuck behind a tractor on Brevard Rd. or the regular Friday 5pm city-wide traffic jam. Today, it's absolutely ridiculous--anytime of day or day of the week. I live in Arden, near the 5pts intersection at Brevard Rd and Glen Meadows and work 5.5 miles north in Ridgefield behind the outlet mall. With traffic on Brevard Rd., it is not uncommon for it to take me over an hour to get home. A lot of that is due to I-26 backups and people not wanting to fool with it. I try to avoid I-26 anytime I go anywhere because you just never know when a 10 minute trip will end up taking an hour or more. Asheville needs to start thinking ahead with road planning because our population will only continue to explode. We have to be prepared. Traffic is making getting around in Asheville extremely unpleasant.
69	10/14/2016	Tom Eutsler	I can't see widening I 26 is worthwhile , when I 26 came thru AVL, the Connector has been by passed for years. This should have been taken care of LONG ago .The bottle Neck is the connector thru AVL !! Why spend moneys to widen I 26?? The connector thru town should have the most PRIORITY.. This would be similar to hooking UP a garden hose to a Real Fire hose! Come look at the traffic on Jeff Bowen Bridge - everyone Jockeying to move over in order to stay on I 26 . I saw 2 wrecks yesterday which is daily occurence! Trafik worse than driving in LA, Calif .. fyi
70	10/14/2016	Anonymous	Make the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge passing under I-26 iconic. You have a chance to really honor the Parkway and boost tourism. Don't mess it up. Also, why aren't there entrance and exit ramps going onto the Parkway from I-26. Right now Parkway visitors have to go to the next exit creating more traffic than necessary.

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71	10/14/2016	Alan Verm	Please widen I 26 at a minimum to the hybrid plan and consider going further north and south. I use this route every day for 14 years. Used to have traffic just Friday. Now every day the interstate is slow especially around airport. The DOT has not kept up with the growth. This is way overdue and everyone knows it. Use our taxes for infrastructure - please! Nothing is more frustrating than sitting on interstate goin 5mph in this great nation. Give us the roads we need and deserve! Thank you. I thought this was going to be done 10 years ago. It is way past time.
72	10/16/2016	Casey	I want to know why this needs to happen. What is going on here? First, where are you proposing this..? I'm so upset! I have a business in downtown Asheville, and if I-26 goes through... then all those customers who stop in town for dinner won't find my shop. I like that they have to go through town.
73	10/15/2016	Charles J. Reece	I travel I-26 from I-40 to exit 44 on a weekly basis and have been shocked that it is a regular traffic jam. Obviously this road widening needs to be fast-tracked to start in 2017 rather than 2020. Build as many lanes as you can, as soon as you can - save a life in the process. That road scares the hell out of me! Thank you.
74	10/16/2016	James Guilfoyle	I am 100% behind the DOT expanding I-26 and it couldn't start soon enough. Heck, I wish we could do it all the way to Weaverville. My only comment about this project is that we look to hire contract companies from North Carolina. If we need to spend \$400+ million dollars lets keep the funds in our state. I'm sure like any NCDOT project this will take over a decade and this could employ a lot of tarheel citizens.
75	10/15/2016	Jay Reese	It is the opinion of many forward thinking traffic engineers and transportation advocates that widening the roads only creates more congestion. Why not spend the money reducing the need for the antiquated automobile by building mass transit and bike lanes?
76	10/19/2016	John Erickson	I have lived in Asheville since 2001 and have noticed the build up in traffic over the years. I currently live in North Asheville/Weaverville area, but have lived in the East Asheville area as well for a few couple of years. I travel many times through the I26 East(South) direction near Arden and further down to catch Hwy 74. I also travel many time going West(North) on I26 obviously to get toward my home from downtown Asheville and to go further up towards Johnson City. I think it is reasonable to expand the roadways in this project. However, I think that expanding to 6 lanes (3 lanes each direction) would probably be sufficient. I understand the traffic can be busy, but I think part of that has to do with poor sign efficiency and perhaps widening of on/off ramps. The vehicle accidents will happen whether there is 10 lanes or 2 lanes. The approximate difference of \$75.1 (the 6 lane choose version versus the hybrid lane choose) could perhaps be used in other ways to help the flow of direction around the more congested areas of Asheville. (i.e. the joining of Patton Ave. I240 East/West and I26 West junction). I imagine that much better roads signs and earlier heavy traffic signaling could perhaps help some of the congestion.
77	10/15/2016	Lee Morrow	START CONSTRUCTION TODAY!!!! JUST DO IT!!!! DON'T WAIT ANY LONGER!!!! I AM SO SICK OF THAT ROAD AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO RIDE YOUR BUMPER AND FORCE TRAFFIC TO GO EVEN FASTER. I AM SICK OF NOT BEING ABLE TO CHANGE LANES BECAUSE THERE IS NO SPACE TO GET OVER. AND I AM SICK OF NAMBY PAMBY PEOPLE SAYING WE DON'T NEED IT.....JUST DO IT!!!! NOW!!!!
78	10/18/2016	Lisa Horton	Regarding the widening of I-26... My family and I live in Hendersonville, and we have to travel I-26 several times per week. It is almost always crowded and dangerous! People drive too fast and totally refuse to obey the speed limit. There are lots of tractor trailers on the interstate. Numerous times, we have suddenly come upon stopped traffic, and we have had to stop unexpectedly. I am so afraid that the tractor trailers and other vehicles coming around the curve or over the hill behind us will not stop in time and crush us! We have already lost one vehicle on I-26 about 4 years ago at the Airport Road exit. A woman traveling ahead of us slammed on her brakes to keep from hitting cars that were backed up onto the interstate at the Airport Road exit ramp. When she swerved, she lost control of her vehicle and spun around and came back toward our vehicle and hit us head on. Thankfully, my husband and I survived the accident with only minor injuries plus one broken bone. The lady who hit us was taken to the hospital by ambulance. Now we avoid I-26 at all costs! We take the long route using Highway 25 and several back roads to get to Asheville and other places in that direction. The back roads take longer, but we figure we will be even later if we get caught in a standstill on the interstate that sometimes last 30 minutes to an hour. Plus we feel safer on the back roads. We signed up for traffic notifications from WLOS, and almost daily we get a notification that there has been a wreck on I-26 and that traffic is backed up. Please, please do something to widen the road, make it safer and less congested, and hopefully save some lives as a result. We would love to be able to travel I-26 again and get to our destination on time and in one piece. :) Thanks!!

Number	Date Comment Received	Commenter	Comment
79	10/19/2016	Mike Swartzlander	My wife and I moved to Hendersonville 4 years ago to retire. We chose Hendersonville mostly because our youngest daughter and her family moved to Asheville. So, we travel I 26 between HVL and ASH frequently. We love living here. The absolute worst thing about living here is I 26!! Often now we avoid it by driving 25, which is becoming more crowded all the time. The interchanges are dangerous -- no room to move over when a car is entering. Trucks go 70 or even 80 miles an hour. I have maybe seen one person pulled over for speeding in the 4 years we've lived here. This area is being limited in terms of economic development due to I 26. Please provide this improvement so that we can accommodate all the tourists, as well as all the people moving here to live. Thank you.
80	10/15/2016	Ron Vaseleski	I support the I26 widening project. The #3 Hybrid option appears the most logical, but I would default to the DOT expertise in this project. Please do not delay as this project is long over due. Thanks.
81	10/17/2016	Scott Orlinski	In support of the most lanes option
82	See Extended Comments		
83	10/15/2016	Tori Stanton	That area is congested all the time because of the constant construction. I think maybe widening the road one lane on each side would help but not if it is going to cause extreme delays and congestion while the road is widened.
84	10/13/2016	Chuck Archerd	Building now 6/8 or 8 lanes prepares us for the future. 6 lanes is least cost effective over the long term. Do it and do it now. Traffic problems are negatively affecting our quality of life.
85	10/13/2016	Jean Gardiner	Our property is located on 142 E. Prince Road. On your maps you have the road labeled as Lakeview Estate Drive (SR 1895).
86	10/13/2016	Marcia Bromberg	It's best to do the least necessary to accommodate traffic. Although population and visitors have created a need for widening I-26 it is unlikely that numbers of both will increase at the same rate into the future and, as alternative transportation grows, may even decrease highway demand. Eight lanes anticipates a future that is unlikely to occur.
87	10/13/2016	Michael P. Zollo	This is long overdue. This traffic is killing us. I would like see all but two lanes truck free. They are slowing us down on the hills. Please don't let those jerks from ASSville have input. Some tree hugger going to find a sand gnat and put this project on hold.
88	10/13/2016	Richard Doster	8-lane widening will fix current over-crowding and provide capacity for growth over the next 20+ years. Any construction on I-26 affects traffic flow and disruption. The project should expand the road to 8 lanes now to provide room for future growth and to avoid 2nd disruption. Alternate roads are crowded whenever I-26 traffic is disrupted. Airport Rd/I-26 Interchange - new bridge has barely relieved congestion on Airport Road - your DOT people should know this - what else is planned to fix this? Henderson County I-26 rest areas and weigh stations - both sets are overcrowded and are poorly serving travelers and truckers. Lack of adequate scales results in many trucks by-passing scales closed due to back ups. What is your plan? Truck drivers need adequate rest facilities - rest areas are being overcrowded by trucks seeking to find a spot to rest. This affects everyone's safety. What are your plans?
89	10/13/2016	Michael Gordon	May just as well go with the eight lanes so you don't have to later on. I understand it will be the most expensive option, but I think it is the right thing to do.
90	10/13/2016	Jon and Judy Matheis	As frequent visitors to Asheville we find ourselves wondering if it is worth battling the present traffic situation to come to NC. This plan should be top priority and sped up as much as possible. We favor 8 lanes with no trucks on the inside lanes. This is a large safety issue of great importance. It seems traffic has tripled in the last year.
91	9/25/2016	William M Martin, DVM	I lived in Henderson county for 30plus years.....I have seen that area grow substantially over the years. Yes, I fully endorse the widening and/or repairing the road. Do not let the naturalists or environmentalists stop the program this time.....please pleas.....
92	See Extended Comments		
93	10/25/2016	S.A. Zuerner	This should have been done 15 years ago. Traffic in the south Buncombe area is not only hazardous but log jammed making transiting into surrounding areas unnecessarily difficult and time consuming. The widening needs to account for 30 years of future growth or the project will need that long for people to forget about the hassles it imposed on the residents. The I-26 widening will add to the congestion already in this area. A HARD LOOK should be given to alleviating the bottlenecks on surrounding roadways, specifically: NC 191 from Bent Creek to NC 280 in Henderson County. The connecting roads east-west such as Long Shoals from NC 191 to I-26. Clayton Road from Long Shoals to NC 191. Sweeter Creek from Hendersonville Road to I-40. These roads are already maxed out when I-26 slows down. IF not addressed before the I-26 project occurs then the traffic congestion and back ups will look like an LA interstate rush hour parking lot 24/7.
94	10/25/2016	Mary Blair	There is a lot more traffic from NC 280 to I-40 so that they need 8 lanes. I think you need to complete the I26 corridor through Asheville before you start on this project.
95	10/13/2016	Biltmore Farms	At NC 146 and Schenck Parkway, widen at the second proposed light. Wants two right turns or a free flowing right from Schenck Parkway onto NC 146.

Number	Date Comment Received	Commenter	Comment
95	11/3/2016	Lee E. Thomason III	As a follow up to our discussions during the public meeting regarding the I-26 project, I'd like to submit the attached design as our official request for alterations (to the intersection of Skyland Inn Drive, Schenck Parkway, Long Shoals Road/Highway 146 and the entrance/exit ramps onto I-26) to be included within the scope of the I-26 Connector Project (I-2513). As you know, this intersection often becomes gridlocked which, at times, leads to traffic backing onto I-26 east and west. Therefore, we believe this small increase in the project's scope will have a tremendous benefit for the I-26 Corridor.
96	9/23/2016		The Bridge over I26 needs to be in theme with the rest of the majority of the bridges the blue ridge parkway crosses with ROCK facade and in an arch style. it will also assist in establishing an entrance to Asheville from the south and a memorable marker for those travelling I26. The current design is BORING and not in character with the parkway. Make it unique and in character to the parkway!
97	10/14/2016	Crawford Murphy	The I-26 widening as it effects the Blue Ridge Parkway high bridge provides a rare opportunity of design esthetics, Gateway mark to the Blue Ridge Mountains and sustainability meaning minimal steel for minimal attachments only and no Concrete. Thus in simple terms, the bridge should be of creative design reflecting a gateway essence to the Blue Ridge Mountains and advanced engineering reflecting high technology and totally of wood to reflecting respect for the environment. This can be done with Cross Laminated Timber Panels and Laminated members and even some suspension and arch technology for design creativity. I will forward a concept sketch to the local Blue Ridge authorities in a few days for reference. I also offer for our consideration my professional expertise in this field of wood structures and my passion for such a special project.
98	See Extended Comments		
99	11/4/2016	Bryan Warren	When the road widening project is completed I would like to see a right 2 lane only set for semi trucks between mm 37 and mm 35 . That area is always a evening nightmare due to trucks trying to pass in left lane only to drop 10 or more below the speed limit which has a domino effect on traffic. This seems to work well on I-40 between mm 37 and 34. Thanks in advance from a concerned persons point of view. Can't wait for this project to be completed we need more lanes in a lot of areas to handle the growing communities in the mountains.
100	10/21/2016	Daniel Angerstein	I am very much in favor of the widening of I-26. The hybrid version seems just fine. Count my vote in!
101	11/4/2016	David Dubis	To begin, thank you for the I26 widening project! I do have one request, a relatively small addition to the eastern end of the corridor. My main concern and goal in writing you is to address the incredibly dangerous uphill grade from the Green River/ Peter Guice bridge to US25 Business. Trucks are not lane restricted and very, very often jump to the left lane to pass another truck while only going 40mph or less while car traffic is 60+. The easiest way I can think of is to add a truck lane right after the bridge and let it be the beginning of the 3rd lane of I26W. There looks to be nearly enough room already. I realize replacing the ancient and narrow Green River Bridge will be a nightmare for NCDOT and daily commuters like my wife and myself. I feel that the least expensive, fastest and easiest way to increase overall safety and traffic flow is to simply start the third lane at the bridge. Thank you for your time, and thanks again for the widening project! David Dubis, Columbus, NC.
102	10/23/2016	Elaine	WAY OVERDUE! So ridiculous that it takes 2 hours to get from downtown Hendersonville to Candler every day! Wish it could get started sooner!
103	10/24/2016	Heidi Marquart	I own a house in Hendersonville and work in Asheville. I have lived in WNC for almost 10 years. I love it here. My only concern and reason for possibly relocating is the 26 traffic. It has worsened significantly the last few years. The drive is now taking close to an hour to go 25 miles! Please widen the highway.
104	10/25/2016	Jarrold Kendall	I am excited to see the widening of I-26 through Asheville. If the traffic problems continue my wife and I were considering moving away from Asheville because we get off work and we wait in traffic. I believe widening the interstate will help us stay here because we didn't think traffic would get so bad. I am all for the widening and look forward to getting around Asheville easier.
105	11/4/2016	JoAn	I agree about widening I 26! One of the things I would also like to see it a light when you get off the Skyland exit onto Long Shoals (coming from Hendersonville) because when you get off of that exit and you want to get over to go to Biltmore Town Park, it is terrible to get across! You either have to keep going straight then find a place to turn around, or you have to get off the exit to the left, and again find a place to turn around just so you can be in the left lane to be able to turn to get into Biltmore Town Park. Thank you
106	11/3/2016	Marc Manny	The widing of I-26 is need a long time needed I travel everyday twice a day on I-26 between fletcher exit and I-240 in Asheville and it sucks 10 to fifteen years ago it wasn't that busy but know is crazy. I think the wider the better. 8 lanes is good for me.
107	11/3/2016	Phil	While you're widening I-26 you need to provide more access to the town of Hendersonville and Dana. I suggest adding an exit at Tracy Grive R's. to alleviate backups on 64 and Upward Rd.
108	11/6/2016	Thomas Weaver, Trails Facilities Mgr. CMC	We would like to see a pedestrian walkway on the new bridge for the Blue Ridge Parkway over I-26 to accommodate hikers on the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Are there accommodations being planned for in the bridge design?

Number	Date Comment Received	Commenter	Comment
109	11/7/2016	William Hague	<p>The preferred alternative for the US 25 interchange/Exit 44 looks like it will require a substantial amount of ROW for the partial cloverleaf design. Would a DDI interchange not be a less expensive alternative, but one that will still improve traffic flow over the current traditional diamond interchange?</p> <p>Did the traffic analysis for this project ever investigate the need for a truck climbing lane between mile markers 56 and 54, westbound, west of Green River bridge? This is a two-lane segment with an approximately one mile, 7% grade. Tractor-trailers ascending this grade often slow to less than 30 mph, creating congestion as cars are bottlenecked into one lane to pass. While this segment is outside of the project's study limits, it is close enough to the US 25 interchange at Exit 54 and the project study area to consider incorporating it into the future I-4400A widening project. If it cannot be included at this point, it certainly needs to be considered for a separate project, as the out-dated design of this segment of highway can no longer accommodate the greater traffic volume and the longer/heavier trucks of today that were not in use when the facility was constructed 50 years ago.</p>
110	11/8/2016	Martha J. Lanning	Against hybrid. Prefer 6 or 8 lanes. Noise level not too bad at present. Will increase with more lanes.
111	10/19/2016	Joe Sanders (1)	<p>We have always had a professional and open discussion regarding people using bikes on the Parkway. I hope this discussion is viewed in that same spirit.</p> <p>When I attended the NCDOT session last night I asked if the new Parkway bridge over I-26 would have bike lanes. The DOT engineer said they offered it to the NPS, but NPS turned it down offering that users should share the Parkway.</p> <p>The approach to the bridge is a climb from both directions. Bike lanes could have provided a safe place for backed up cars to pass. Also, as people on bikes using the Parkway increases Congress might find it appropriate in the future to include bike lanes during paving projects.</p> <p>It seems to me that an opportunity may be lost that might be very worthwhile in the future. It would be easier to add room for bike lanes on the bridge now and never use them then to need them in the future and not be able to add them.</p>
111	See Extended Comments		
112	See Extended Comments		
113	11/15/2016	Bill Albright	6-lane will be affordable and add the necessary capacity (8 lanes would be an enormous undertaking) also, the downtown Asheville (Patton Ave.) section of I-26 is a desperately needed project
114	11/16/2016	Carol Nelson	<i>J Harris: I spoke with Carol Nelson and her mother owns property at 5245 Hendersonville Road and the closest location for any construction related to the I-26 widening project would be at the Butler Bridge Road crossing of I-26 (bridge replacement under the 8 lane widening option). The subject property is "off the map" and is not involved in any improvements related to the project. I shared the project webpage for and the portion of the hearing maps in the area of Butler Bridge Road and she seemed satisfied with this information.</i>
115	11/14/2016	Jennifer McLean	<i>J Harris responded: Thank you again for your time this morning. As discussed, your comments pertain to Section A of the I-26 Connector Project (<a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26connector/</a>), not the I-26 Widening Project south of Asheville. I am sharing your comments with members of the I-26 Connector Project team (Michael Wray is the NCDOT project manager, Chris Werner is the project manager with the consulting firm) so they can review and consider your comments. Also, as discussed, I am asking them to add you to the I-26 Connector Project mailing list so you can be notified of future public meetings and receive other informational mailings that are sent periodically.</i>
116	11/1/2016	Ken Fitch (1)	<p>There was some initial public confusion that the NEPA process was only considering the section of I-26 from the US 25 intersection at Mountain Home /Fletcher to the I-240/40 intersection in Asheville.</p> <p>It has been communicated that the NEPA process will also consider the unfunded section from the Mountain Home/Fletcher intersection south to the US 25 intersection near Flat Rock.</p> <p>For clarification:</p> <p>Will this be the sole opportunity for public comment on this southern section of the I-26 corridor, or will another opportunity for public comment in a NEPA process be offered when funding is approved for this section?</p>
116	11/16/2016	Ken Fitch (2)	Minutes of the Post hearing meeting are hereby requested. <i>Additional comments to the DEIS are located in the DEIS Comment Summary .</i>
117	11/17/2016	Ruthie Harvey	I am hoping that you can help me with some information regarding the following project: I-4700B (I-26 - NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) to I-40) Can you tell me the status of this project in relation to the design phase and ROW land acquisition phase? Thank you in advance for your help and time! <i>J Harris responded to this request on November 17, 2016 with the current schedule information and a link to the project website.</i>
118	11/21/2016	John H. Lanning and Ben Lanning	<p>Might as well do the 8 lane all the way through, more and more people are moving here all the time and I-26 is a death trap. I never drive unless I absolutely have to, always take [US] 25.</p> <p>I would like to request a noise barrier from the bridge on Dana Rd east for 200 ft or so (to the big advertising sign). It would knock a lot of noise off my brother, mother and me and would not lose any exposure for my neighbors business. I would also request some grading, landscaping for the bank on Dana Road going to the bridge because it always looks like crap. Would be interested in helping with its improvement. Thanks [signed]</p>



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Jamille Robbins, NCDOT  
**From:** Alyssa Randall, Planning Communities (919.803.6986)  
**Cc:** Ann Steedly, Planning Communities  
**Date:** January 17, 2017  
**Re:** **I-4400/I-4700 Environmental Justice Outreach and Language Assistance Services – Summary and Recommendations**

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This memo summarizes outreach services conducted for STIP Project I-4400/I-4700, improvements to Interstate 26 Bypass in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, in support of a public hearing for the project held by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) on October 13, 2016.

### Demographic Screening

To identify areas with potential Environmental Justice (EJ) populations, a review of current demographic information (American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2009-2013) was completed. This demographic review is presented in the tables in Attachment 1. Census block groups meeting the criteria for EJ and/or LEP are highlighted.

Two Census block group in Henderson County were identified as having a minority population exceeding the EJ threshold, and five block groups were identified as having some level of low-income populations. In addition, notable populations of limited English proficiency Spanish-speaking residents were identified in five block groups.

One Census block group in Buncombe County were identified as having a minority population exceeding the EJ threshold, and three block groups were identified as having some level of low-income populations. In addition, notable populations of limited English proficiency Spanish-speaking residents and other Indo-European-speaking (Russian) residents with potential language assistance needs were identified in three block groups.

Figure 1 in Attachment 2 shows Census block groups in the project area. As described above, the Census block groups at the southern termini of the project have substantially higher low-income populations. Census block groups at both the north end of the corridor and the south end have both low-income and minority populations.

EJ and Language Assistance Resource Contacts

Table 1 lists local contacts made in an effort to refine target outreach areas including low-income, minority, Spanish-speaking and Russian-speaking populations.

**Table 1: Local Contacts**

Organization	Contact Name	Contact Number	Contact Email
French Broad River MPO	Lyuba Zuyeva	828-251-6622	lyuba@landofsky.org
Town of Fletcher/Arden Planning	Eric Rufa	828-687-3985	e.rufa@fletchernc.org
Henderson County Planning	Autumn Radcliff	828-697-4819	autumnr@hendersoncountync.org
City of Hendersonville Planning	David Hazzard	828-697-3010	dhazzard@hvlnc.gov
Children & Family Resource Center	Elisha Freeman	828-698-0674 X 105	elishaf@childrenandfamily.org
Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	Kieran Roe	828-697-5777	kieran@carolinamountain.org
The Family Resource Center at Emma	Norma Brown	828-259-9717	normab@childrenfirstbc.org
Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte-Asheville	Frances Watson	828-255-0146	fcwatson@charlottediocese.org
Buncombe County Planning	Jon Creighton	828-250-4830	Jon.Creighton@buncombecounty.org

Outreach Efforts

A dual-language flyer and a door hanger were developed to advertise the public hearing (see Attachment 4). Information on the public hearing was included in English and Spanish. On Thursday, September 29, 2016, bilingual staff visited the project study area to distribute flyers and door hangers, targeting areas with EJ and LEP populations present. Flyers were distributed to the following businesses, places of worship, and community destinations:

- Ebenezer Penecostal Church (99 McCall St.)
- Los Laureles Grocery (35 P.E.M. Dr.)
- El Paso Two Restaurant (112 Sugarloaf Rd.)
- Taqueria Mexicana El Paso (105 Sugarloaf Rd.)
- Smiley’s Flea Market (5360 Hendersonville Rd.)
- El Toro Restaurant (5360 Hendersonville Rd.)
- Don Taco (5360 Hendersonville Rd.)
- Faith Church International (15 Airport Rd.)
- Saint Barnabas Catholic Church (109 Crescent Hill Rd.)
- Elena’s Mexican Grill (2424 Hendersonville Rd.)
- Carniceria La Preferida
- Latino Heat Mexican Food and Café Food Truck
- Casa Torres Mexican Restaurant (336 Rockwood Rd. #110)

- St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox (5 Park Ridge Dr.)
- Chapala Grocery (2144 Hendersonville Rd.)
- El Rebozo Mexican Restaurant (2270 Hendersonville Rd.)
- Fletcher Library (120 Library Rd.)

Where possible, staff spoke with a store manager or other employees about the project. People generally expressed agreement that improvements are needed on I-26.

Staff also distributed door hangers to approximately 330 individual residences in minority and lower income neighborhoods as indicated by blue points on the map in Attachment 5. Flyers were specifically distributed to the Brickton Community (northwest corner of Butler Bridge Road and U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway)). Staff hung door hangers, but did not speak to any residents of the Brickton Community.

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**Demographic Screening Tables**

<b>Minority Population – Henderson County</b>					
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>White, Non-Hispanic</b>		<b>Minority Population*</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
CT 93.06, BG 1	2,547	2,358	92.6%	189	7.4%
CT 93.06, BG 2	2,212	2,097	94.8%	115	5.2%
<b>CT 93.03, BG 2</b>	<b>2,123</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>68.9%</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>31.1%</b>
CT 93.02, BG 3	2,329	2,018	86.6%	311	13.4%
CT 93.03, BG 3	919	809	88.0%	110	12.0%
<b>CT 93.0501, BG 1</b>	<b>2,582</b>	<b>1,673</b>	<b>64.8%</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>35.2%</b>
CT 93.1, BG 1	1,168	940	80.5%	228	19.5%
CT 93.0501, BG 2	1,664	1,450	87.1%	214	12.9%
CT 93.14, BG 2	683	539	78.9%	144	21.1%
<b>DSA</b>	<b>16,227</b>	<b>13,347</b>	<b>82.3%</b>	<b>2,880</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
<b>Henderson County</b>	<b>108,642</b>	<b>91,222</b>	<b>84.0%</b>	<b>17,420</b>	<b>16.0%</b>

<b>Minority Population – Buncombe County</b>					
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>White, Non-Hispanic</b>		<b>Minority Population*</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>CT 0.12, BG 5</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>69.8%</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>30.2%</b>
CT 0.2101, BG 1	1,458	1,406	96.4%	52	3.6%
CT 0.2203, BG 2	1,592	1,236	77.6%	356	22.4%
CT 0.2204, BG 1	3,633	3,180	87.5%	453	12.5%
CT 0.2302, BG 4	707	579	81.9%	128	18.1%
CT 0.2302, BG 1	2,737	2,409	88.0%	328	12.0%
<b>DSA</b>	<b>10,835</b>	<b>9,304</b>	<b>85.9%</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>14.1%</b>
<b>Buncombe County</b>	<b>244,599</b>	<b>205,639</b>	<b>84.1%</b>	<b>38,960</b>	<b>15.9%</b>

\* Minority population includes all races that are non-white and Hispanic populations that are also White.

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009-2013), Table B03002, "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race."

Poverty – Henderson County							
Geography	Total Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined	Below Poverty Level		Very Poor: Under 50% of Poverty Level		Near Poor: Between 100% and 149% of Poverty Level	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
CT 93.06, BG 1	2,471	403	16.3%	94	3.8%	358	14.5%
CT 93.06, BG 2	2,212	108	4.9%	24	1.1%	113	5.1%
CT 93.03, BG 2	2,123	496	23.4%	119	5.6%	68	3.2%
CT 93.02, BG 3	2,329	242	10.4%	18	0.8%	145	6.2%
CT 93.03, BG 3	919	126	13.7%	-	0.0%	32	3.5%
CT 93.0501, BG 1	2,524	525	20.8%	79	3.1%	347	13.7%
CT 93.1, BG 1	1,168	429	36.7%	196	16.8%	69	5.9%
CT 93.0501, BG 2	1,664	134	8.1%	95	5.7%	22	1.3%
CT 93.14, BG 2	683	218	31.9%	187	27.4%	209	30.6%
<b>DSA</b>	<b>16,093</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>Henderson County</b>	<b>107,466</b>	<b>15,902</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>5,623</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>10,752</b>	<b>10.0%</b>

Poverty – Buncombe County							
Geography	Total Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined	Below Poverty Level		Very Poor: Under 50% of Poverty Level		Near Poor: Between 100% and 149% of Poverty Level	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
CT 0.12, BG 5	689	173	25.1%	150	21.8%	34	4.9%
CT 0.2101, BG 1	1,458	62	4.3%	17	1.2%	30	2.1%
CT 0.2203, BG 2	1,592	395	24.8%	275	17.3%	72	4.5%
CT 0.2204, BG 1	3,633	221	6.1%	129	3.6%	40	1.1%
CT 0.2302, BG 4	707	212	30.0%	1	0.1%	128	18.1%
CT 0.2302, BG 1	2,737	108	3.9%	57	2.1%	185	6.8%
<b>DSA</b>	<b>10,816</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Buncombe County</b>	<b>238,615</b>	<b>39,353</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>16,618</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>25,549</b>	<b>10.7%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009-2013), Table C17002, "Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months."

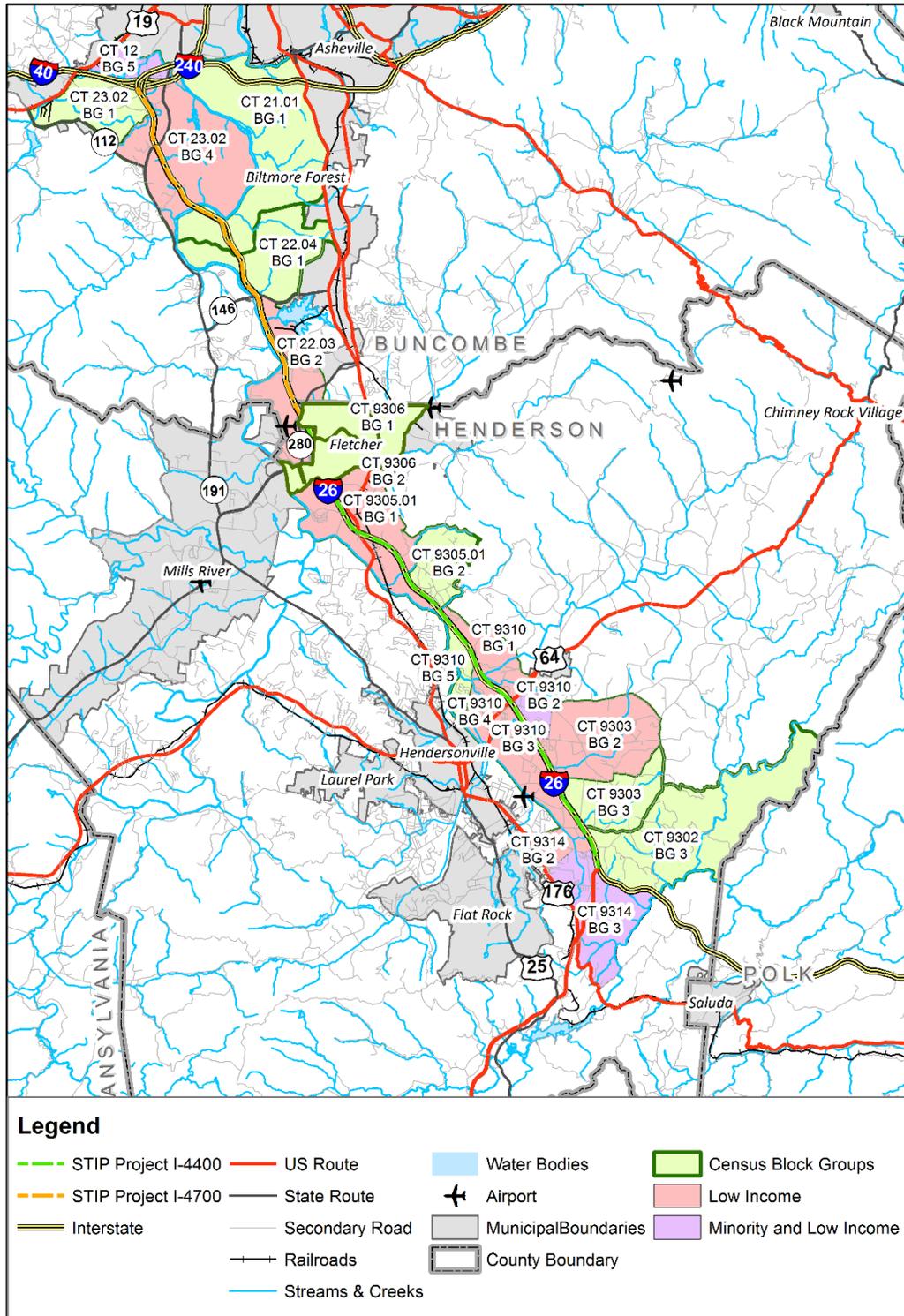
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Henderson County									
Geography	Total Adult Population, 18 years and older	Primary Language Group of Persons Who Speak English Less than Very Well							
		Spanish		Other Indo-Euro		Asian/Pacific		Other	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
CT 93.06, BG 1	2,118	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 93.06, BG 2	1,802	1	0.1%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 93.03, BG 2	1,685	245	14.5%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 93.02, BG 3	1,630	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	13	0.8%	-	0.0%
CT 93.03, BG 3	678	54	8.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 93.0501, BG 1	2,164	281	13.0%	-	0.0%	101	4.7%	-	0.0%
CT 93.1, BG 1	920	43	4.7%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 93.0501, BG 2	1,472	89	6.0%	11	0.7%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 93.14, BG 2	647	116	17.9%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
<b>DSA Aggregate</b>	<b>13,116</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009-2013), Table B16004, "Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over."

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Buncombe County									
Geography	Total Adult Population, 18 years and older	Primary Language Group of Persons Who Speak English Less than Very Well							
		Spanish		Other Indo-Euro		Asian/Pacific		Other	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
CT 0.12, BG 5	500	52	10.4%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 0.2101, BG 1	1,155	8	0.7%	3	0.3%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 0.2203, BG 2	1,222	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	26	2.1%
CT 0.2204, BG 1	2,725	41	1.5%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 0.2302, BG 4	572	35	6.1%	32	5.6%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
CT 0.2302, BG 1	2,102	-	0.0%	162	7.7%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
<b>DSA Aggregate</b>	<b>8,276</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009-2013), Table B16004, "Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over."

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**Figure 1: Census Block Groups**



**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Interview**

**Name:** Jaime Laughter

**Email:** Jaime.laughter@transylvaniacounty.org

**Date:** September 27, 2016

**Organization** (if any): Transylvania County Planning

***Based on your/your organization's work in the community:***

*Are there specific locations or businesses where we should post flyers targeted to EJ populations?*

There is a nonprofit development on Upward Rd in Hendersonville near I-26 that has the Children and Family Resource Center of Henderson County, the free clinic and Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy. That is a little cluster that can help reach some low income/minority populations.

*Are there any other locations we should target to advertise the public hearing?*

For Spanish speaking, the go-to is El Centro (<http://www.elcentrohvl.com>). We had a grouping of the Russian speakers in Mills River that lived in the High Vista subdivision, but I have to say that they were very hard to reach as a population. I typically only interacted with them when they came in for permits and they always seemed to be a closed community, but they may be active in the HOA at High Vista. I would also include a contact with the Town of Mills River. While the border doesn't quite go to I-26, it come all the way to the airport and would be impacted by the project. They have a Town Hall, library and park complex on 191/Haywood Rd that is a central spot. Mills River has a good market for agriculture/horticulture that employs Spanish speaking folks. While many migrant workers are more towards the apple farms on the Flat Rock end this time of year, there is a population still in Mills River working year round at Van Windergarden (multiple sites of greenhouses) and Flavor1st Packing and distribution.

### Interview

**Name:** Lyuba Zuyeva

**Email:** lyuba@landofsky.org

**Date:** September 29, 2016

**Organization** (if any): French Broad River MPO

***Based on your/your organization's work in the community:***

*Are there specific locations or businesses where we should post flyers targeted to EJ populations?*

There are a number of Hispanic Tienda markets and two Eastern European food markets in the area which usually will allow us to put up a flyer or drop off postcards (although the last time I've tried doing this it was for a health outreach item, not for transportation).

*Are there any other organizations we should target to advertise the public hearing?*

Family Resource Center at Emma: Norma Brown with Children First, NormaB@childrenfirstbc.org; there are a lot of Hispanic children attending this school so she does some outreach with parents in the community. More info about this center at <http://childrenfirstcisbc.org/programs/family-resource-center-at-emma/>.

Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte-Asheville Office. They work with Russian-speaking/Ukrainian population. <http://ccdoc.org/volunteer/volunteer-in-asheville>. I think Yelena Gundorin and Marina Gundorin used to work here but I have not touched base with them in a while. Frances Watson is the contact listed online, [fwatson@charlottediocese.org](mailto:fwatson@charlottediocese.org), or 828-255-0146.

**ATTACHMENT 4**  
**Notifications**

**WE WANT YOUR INPUT**

**NCDOT WILL HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING AND  
PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED  
IMPROVEMENTS TO I-26 FROM U.S. 25 (EXIT 54)  
NEAR HENDERSONVILLE TO I-40/I-240  
SOUTH OF ASHEVILLE**

**I-26 WIDENING PUBLIC MEETING  
& PUBLIC HEARING  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016  
PUBLIC MEETING: 4:30-6:30 P.M.  
PUBLIC HEARING: 7:00 P.M.  
BILTMORE BAPTIST CHURCH  
35 CLAYTON RD, ARDEN**

Come review project information and speak with NCDOT representatives during the drop-in Public Meeting. Come to the Public Hearing to make formal comments on the project and its effects on the area.

For questions about the project or meetings, visit [www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/](http://www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/) or contact Anamika Laad, NCDOT Human Environment Section, at (919) 707-6072 or [alaad@ncdot.gov](mailto:alaad@ncdot.gov)

*Spanish and Russian-speaking interpreters will be present.*

**QUEREMOS SU OPINIÓN**

**NCDOT LLEVARÁ A CABO UNA REUNIÓN INFOR-  
MATIVA Y UNA AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA PARA TRATAR  
LAS MEJORAS PROPUESTAS A LA I-26 DESDE LA  
U.S. 25 (SALIDA 54) CERCA DE HENDERSONVILLE  
HASTA LA I-40/I-240 AL SUR DE ASHEVILLE**

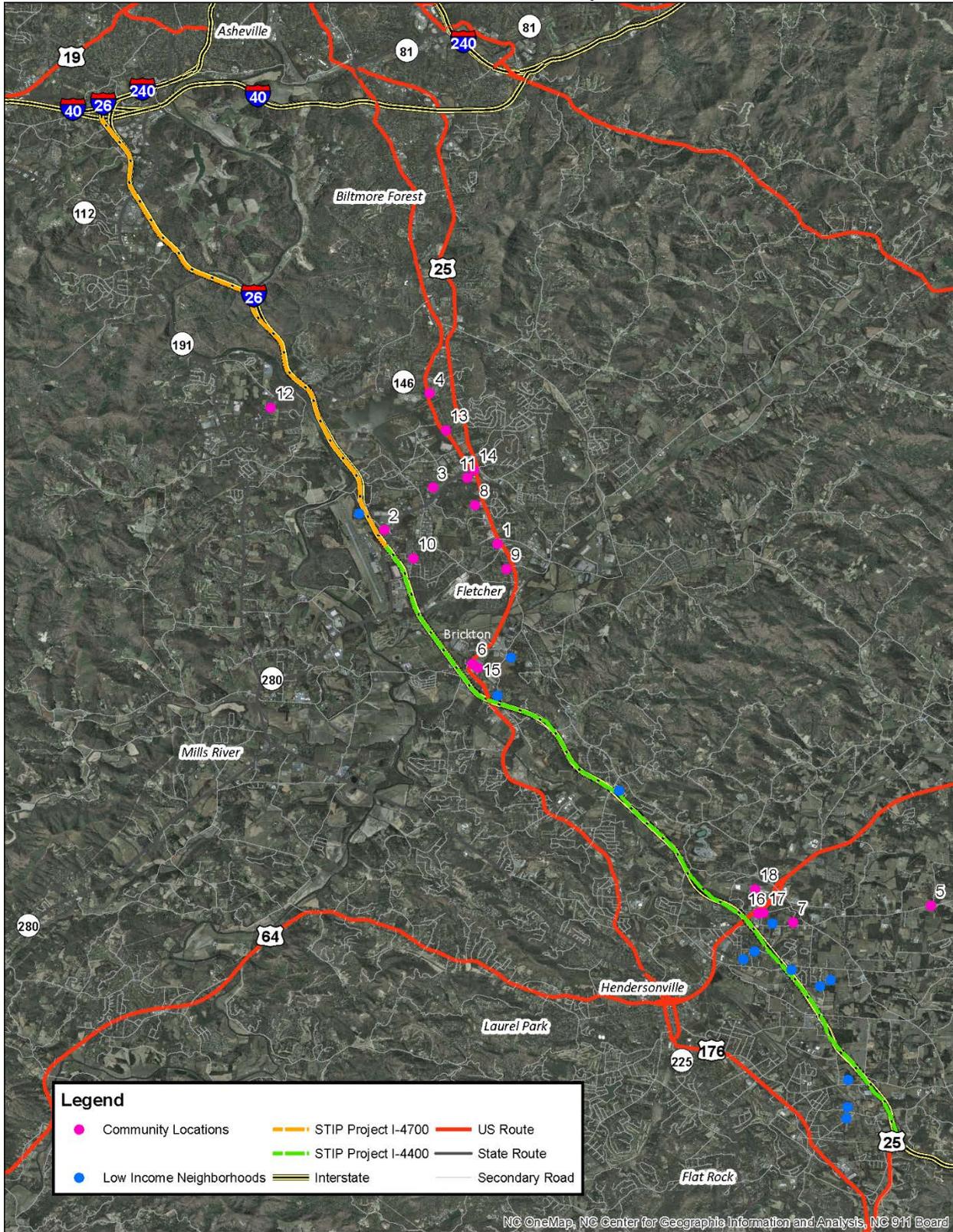
**REUNIÓN INFORMATIVA Y  
AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA-PROYECTO I-26  
JUEVES, 13 DE OCTUBRE, 2016  
REUNIÓN INFORMATIVA: 4:30-6:30 P.M.  
AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA: 7:00 P.M.  
BILTMORE BAPTIST CHURCH  
35 CLAYTON RD, ARDEN**

Venga y obtenga información acerca del proyecto y hable con un representante del NCDOT de manera informal y a cualquier hora durante la reunión. Asista a la audiencia pública y exprese su opinión acerca del proyecto y del impacto que éste podría tener en el área.

Para mayor información sobre el proyecto o las reuniones, visite [www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/](http://www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/) o contacte a Anamika Laad, NCDOT Human Environment Section, [alaad@ncdot.gov](mailto:alaad@ncdot.gov).

*Un intérprete de habla hispana estará presente.*

### ATTACHMENT 5 Residential Outreach Map



<b>Number</b>	<b>Name of Location</b>
1	Ingles Market
2	Casa Torres Restaurant
3	Wal-Mart
4	Chapala Grocery
5	La Montana
6	Flea Market
7	Los Laureles
8	Saint Barnabas Catholic Church
9	Library
10	St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox
11	Faith Church International
12	Russian Bible Society
13	El Rebozo Restaurant
14	Elena's Mexican Grill
15	El Toro Restaurant
16	El Paso Two Restaurant
17	Taqueria Mexicana El Paso
18	Wal-Mart

**From:** Molling, Suzette <suzette\_molling@nps.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, November 03, 2016 9:19 AM

**To:** Jennifer Harris; Michael Molling; Larry Hultquist; Lisa Landers; Anita Barnett Re: DEIS Public Review

**Subject:** Comments (PIN 16296)

Jennifer,

After reviewing again, the No-Build Alternatives for the project will suffice. You can include the comments I sent along with the other comments you received. We won't be responding to the comments we received regarding BLRI, as none as substantive.

Either Larry or Lisa could answer your questions regarding status of items in the MOA.

Thanks,

Suzette Molling  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
828.348.3432



On Tue, Nov 1, 2016 at 3:33 PM, Jennifer Harris <jhharris@hntb.com> wrote:

Hi Suzette,

Thanks for providing these comments.

Regarding the public comment and your email message below about the No-Action Alternative, the Draft EIS and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation did include the No-Build Alternative for the whole I-26 project. We did not call it the “No-Action Alternative”, but the No-Build Alternative has the same meaning (to NCDOT and FHWA). In addition, the Final VA Report (August 2016) only included reference to the No-Build Alternative (page 19-20) but it was in reference to alternatives that avoided impacts to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Mountains-to-Sea Trail:

“Alternatives to avoid the potential impacts to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Mountains-to-Sea Trail were considered and included: the No-Build Alternative, the Mass Transit Alternative and the Transportation System and Demand Management Alternatives. I-26 bisects the Blue Ridge Parkway and Mountains-to-Sea Trail; an avoidance alternative to realign I-26 to a location that would accommodate the widening while avoiding both the Blue Ridge Parkway and Mountains-to-Sea Trail is not feasible. The other alternatives were evaluated and determined to not meet the purpose and need for the project. The 4(f) analysis will incorporate the preferred alternative recommended by this value analysis process as discussed further in the Recommendations section.”

Additionally, the Blue Ridge Parkway Technical Report (July 20, 2016) prepared by NPS and EFL did not mention a No Action Alternative nor a No Build Alternative.

Please let me know if there is anything else that is required (and what is needed) for satisfying the NPS requirements of NEPA Handbook Section 4.3 (B), Section of 1502.14 and CEQ's FAQ #3.

Regarding the other comments, we can include these comments along with the other Draft EIS and Public Hearing comments we received. Is the NPS preparing responses to the comments you received (aesthetics, safety, etc.). If so, please provide the responses so we can include in the Final EIS.

Also, I was wondering about the status of completing the remaining activities included in MOA Attachment B "Work Schedule" for the Blue Ridge Parkway realignment and bridge replacement:

- NPS Design Advisory Board Review (old date November 2015)
- Prepare Final EIS Documentation for Submittal to NCDOT (old date February 2016)

Thank you for your assistance and please let me know if you want to discuss any of this.

Thanks,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

■ **HNTB North Carolina, P.C. | 100 YEARS OF INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS**

343 E. Six Forks Road, Suite 200

Raleigh, NC 27609

Direct 919.424.0427

Mobile 919.656.7003

From: Molling, Suzette [mailto:suzette\_molling@nps.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, November 01, 2016 12:40 PM

To: Jennifer Harris <jhharris@HNTB.com>; Michael Molling <Michael\_Molling@nps.gov>; Larry Hultquist <Larry\_Hultquist@nps.gov>; Lisa Landers <Lisa.Landers@dot.gov>; Anita Barnett <[anita\\_barnett@nps.gov](mailto:anita_barnett@nps.gov)>

Subject: DEIS Public Review Comments (PIN 16296)

Jennifer,

Attached below are the following reports for the public review in PEPC of PIN 16296 (DEIS /Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for NCDOT Replacement of Parkway Bridge over I-26):

1. Content Analysis Report – provides a summary of number of comments per code for the DEIS.
2. Public Comments Report – list of entire correspondence received by each individual/agency during the public review.

Regarding one of the comments on No-Action Alternative, the no action alternative must be described in the document, per NEPA Handbook Section 4.3 (B), Section of 1502.14 and CEQ's FAQ #3. I thought this was already requested but when I looked back through my emails, I didn't see where I sent this even though it was in PEPC.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need anything else. Thank you.

Suzette Molling  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
828.348.3432



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## Kat Bukowy

---

**From:** Yow, Craig <craig\_yow@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 19, 2016 11:28 AM  
**To:** Jennifer Harris  
**Subject:** Bike Lane

Dawn,

We have always had a professional and open discussion regarding people using bikes on the Parkway. I hope this discussion is viewed in that same spirit.

When I attended the NCDOT session last night I asked if the new Parkway bridge over I-26 would have bike lanes. The DOT engineer said they offered it to the NPS, but NPS turned it down offering that users should share the Parkway.

The approach to the bridge is a climb from both directions. Bike lanes could have provided a safe place for backed up cars to pass. Also, as people on bikes using the Parkway increases Congress might find it appropriate in the future to include bike lanes during paving projects.

It seems to me that an opportunity may be lost that might be very worthwhile in the future. It would be easier to add room for bike lanes on the bridge now and never use them then to need them in the future and not be able to add them.

Respectfully,  
Joe Sanders

Dawn's contact information is

Dawn Godwin Leonard  
Community Planner  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
828.348.3434

--

Craig Yow, CFM  
Facility Manager  
Pisgah District, Blue Ridge Parkway  
Asheville, NC  
[craig\\_yow@nps.gov](mailto:craig_yow@nps.gov)  
828-407-5645

## Kat Bukowy

---

**From:** Molling, Suzette <suzette\_molling@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 16, 2016 8:09 AM  
**To:** Jennifer Harris  
**Cc:** Yow, Craig; larry\_hultquist@nps.gov; Williams, John L (jlwilliams@ncdot.gov); Kat Bukowy; Leonard, Dawn  
**Subject:** Re: I-26 widening and Blue Ridge Parkway - National Trails System

Jennifer,

Not sure where the misunderstanding came from, but you are correct, the BLRI is not a National Scenic Trail. Thanks,

Suzette Molling  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
828.348.3432



On Mon, Nov 14, 2016 at 11:32 AM, Jennifer Harris <[jhharris@hntb.com](mailto:jhharris@hntb.com)> wrote:

Hi Craig,

I wanted to follow up with you regarding the National Trails System and our further research pertaining to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

National Trails System trails are designated by name in the National Trails System Act of 2009. There are 30 trails within the system and the Blue Ridge Parkway is not one of them. The trails are split into National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, and connecting or side trails, which provide additional points of access to the previous three types of trails.

National Historic and Scenic Trails include:

Appalachian NST	Potomac Heritage NST	El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT
Pacific Crest NST	Natchez Trace NST	Ala Kahakai NHT
Oregon NHT	Florida NST	Old Spanish NHT
Mormon Pioneer NHT	Nez Perce NHT	El Camino Real de Los Tejas NHT
Continental Divide NST	Santa Fe NHT	Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT
Lewis and Clark NHT	Trail of Tears NHT	Star-Spangled Banner NHT
Iditarod NHT	Juan Bautista de Anza NHT	Arizona NST
North Country NST	California NST	New England NST
Overmountain Victory NHT	Pony Express NHT	Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT
Ice Age NST	Selma to Montgomery NHT	Pacific Northwest NST

On the National Trails map, it appears that all of the National Trails System trails include their status as “Historic” or “Scenic”. The labels are in all caps (i.e. Appalachian National Scenic Trail). In addition, those National Parks, National Forests, Fish and Wildlife Refuges, and Bureau of Land Management lands that the trails go through or near are also labeled as shown in the legend above. The Blue Ridge Parkway is under the National Park System and is designated PKWY and is the same color of green as the other NPS parks (see Great Smokey Mountains NP as a nearby example).



The fact that the Blue Ridge Parkway is not listed in the Act; is not designated as a National Scenic Trail or National Historic Trail on the map; and its labeling is not consistent with other trails on the map leads me to the conclusion that it is NOT a National Scenic Trail.

Please let us know if you have a different understanding about the designation of the Blue Ridge Parkway with respect to the National Trails System.

Thanks,

Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

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343 E. Six Forks Road, Suite 200  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Direct 919.424.0427

Mobile 919.656.7003

**From:** Yow, Craig [mailto:[craig\\_yow@nps.gov](mailto:craig_yow@nps.gov)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 19, 2016 11:32 AM  
**To:** Jennifer Harris <jhharris@HNTB.com>  
**Cc:** [larry\\_hultquist@nps.gov](mailto:larry_hultquist@nps.gov); [suzette\\_molling@nps.gov](mailto:suzette_molling@nps.gov); Williams, John L ([jwilliams@ncdot.gov](mailto:jwilliams@ncdot.gov)) <[jwilliams@ncdot.gov](mailto:jwilliams@ncdot.gov)>; Kat Bukowy <kbukowy@HNTB.com>; Leonard, Dawn <[dawn\\_leonard@nps.gov](mailto:dawn_leonard@nps.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: I-26 widening and Blue Ridge Parkway - National Trails System

Jennifer, Have been working the the National Trail System website and it seems a little tricky to use. From what we are able to find on the site, the new I-26 bridge should not impact any of the National Trail System trails. The Mountain to Sea Trail appears to be the only trail impacted and it looks like it has been covered in the DEIS. Thank you, Craig

On Wed, Oct 19, 2016 at 10:57 AM, Jennifer Harris <[jhharris@hntb.com](mailto:jhharris@hntb.com)> wrote:

Hi Craig,

Thank you again for attending the Open House and Public Hearing for NCDOT's I-26 widening project last week (10/13/2016) - we appreciate your time and assistance!

Per our discussion, I wanted to follow up with you about the Blue Ridge Parkway's inclusion on the National Trails System (<https://www.nps.gov/nts/maps/National%20Trails%20map.pdf>) and find out if there is any additional information the NPS can provide regarding this designation, and in particular anything that should be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the I-26 widening project.



Thanks again for your help.

Regards,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

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--

Craig Yow, CFM

Facility Manager

Pisgah District, Blue Ridge Parkway

Asheville, NC

[craig\\_yow@nps.gov](mailto:craig_yow@nps.gov)

828-407-5645

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# United States Department of the Interior



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
Richard B. Russell Federal Building  
75 Ted Turner Drive, S.W., Suite 1144  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

ER 16/0489  
9043.1

October 20, 2016

Mr. Mitch Batuzich  
Project Development & Environmental Analysis  
NC DOT, 1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

Re: Comments and Recommendations on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the I-26 Widening, Henderson and Buncombe Counties, NC

Dear Mr. Batuzich:

The U. S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and 4(F) Evaluation for the Widening of I 26, Buncombe and Henderson Counties, North Carolina, TIP Nos. I-4400/4700.

The DEIS was prepared by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The National Park Service (NPS) is a cooperating agency and the U S Fish and Wildlife Service has been involved in the review of this project since 2000, has participated as a member of the Merger Team (Merger) since 2002, and will continue to participate in the Merger process as project planning progresses.

The NCDOT proposes to improve a 22.2-mile segment of the existing I 26 from US 25 near Hendersonville to I 40/240 interchange near Asheville. The three build alternatives that are being considered for implementation are: Alternative 1, Widen to Six Lanes; Alternative 2, Widen to Eight Lanes; and the Preferred Alternative, Hybrid 6/8 Lane Widening. The preferred alternative provides for a six-lane section from the southern terminus of the project to the US 25/Asheville Highway Interchange and an eight-lane section for the remainder of the project north, terminating at the interchange of I-40/240. All alternatives include replacing the existing French Broad River (French Broad) and Blue Ridge Parkway (Parkway) bridges over I 26.

## **Federally Listed Species**

Gray Bat - At this time, our comments are focused primarily on federally listed species, in particular, the federally endangered gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*). Table 11, on page 3-25,

provides a list of federally protected species for Buncombe and Henderson Counties. Based on new information, we do not agree with a “no effect” determination for the gray bat. In August of 2016, gray bats were discovered roosting in a bridge over the French Broad in Buncombe County, very near the subject project study area. In addition, two bats outfitted with radio tags were tracked during their nightly foraging to areas across and within the study area of the project.

Gray bats roost, breed, rear young, and hibernate in caves or cave like features (e.g., mines, bridges, culverts) year round and forage on a variety of flying aquatic and terrestrial insects present along streams, rivers, and lakes. They migrate between summer and winter habitat and will use transient or stopover caves or cave like features along the way. We expect the gray bats in this area will soon be migrating to their winter habitat, likely in November, and will return to this area sometime around April 1.

Construction activities to replace the bridge over the French Broad and widen I-26 between the French Broad and the Parkway may result in impacts to gray bats. From north of the French Broad south to the Parkway crossing, the I-26 corridor is remarkable in the amount of tree canopy closure over the interstate, including a large forested median. This forested habitat provides a sound and light barrier from interstate traffic, a water quality buffer for the tributaries in the area that drain to the French Broad, and terrestrial connectivity over the interstate for bats that may cross on the upland rather than flying directly over the river.

Based on the information provided in the DEIS, all of the action alternatives have the potential to adversely affect summer roosting and foraging gray bats. Construction activities and future bridge and highway design and operation can affect bats in a variety of ways. During bridge construction, increases in noise above ambient levels or the use of artificial lighting could cause bats to avoid important travel corridors. If bats are crossing the highway rather than traveling along the river, tree removal to widen the roadway increases the distance bats have to cross without cover and may cause them to avoid important foraging areas south of the French Broad. If bats are currently roosting in the bridge over the French Broad, the replacement bridge should also provide roost areas for bats.

Decreases in water quality from construction activities can impact gray bats by decreasing the abundance of aquatic insects that provide a primary food source. To maintain water quality in the future, the project should minimize the addition of impervious surface area and retain forested buffers along all waterways in order to minimize sedimentation to streams. In addition, post construction stormwater detention and treatment should be provided in the area near the French Broad.

At this time, the Department recommends looking specifically at the corridor from the crossing of the French Broad to south of the Parkway to determine if there are other options that would minimize the footprint of the roadway and maintain or improve habitat for gray bats. Regardless of the alternative chosen, we anticipate that this project will require further consultation as plans are refined and the project moves forward.

In addition to gray bats, acoustic surveys on the Parkway recorded calls consistent with those of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). While this information is preliminary, it further emphasizes the need for comprehensive bat surveys in the project area. Beginning in the spring of 2017, we recommend that surveys be conducted to gather more information regarding the types and extent of structures bats may be using for roosts and the travel routes and concentrations of bats that are foraging in and around the study area. This information will help determine ways to further minimize impacts from project construction and ongoing operations.

Bog Turtle – Table 11, on page 3-25, lists the bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) as not requiring a biological conclusion. While this is technically correct, we recommend protecting known occupied bog turtle habitat in the project area. Currently, the Biltmore Bog is one of two remaining occupied bog turtle sites in Buncombe County. The Biltmore Bog, shown on Figure 6 G, in the DEIS is located between the French Broad and existing I 26 and is labeled a delineated wetland on this figure. Bog turtles are not currently subject to section 7 consultation; however, their numbers continue to decline, and we recommend every effort be made to avoid impacting the Biltmore Bog and its bog turtle population.

#### **Section 4(F)**

There are five, Section 4(f), historic properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) that have the potential to be affected: the Parkway, Mountains to Sea Trail (MST), Biltmore Estate which is a National Historic Landmark, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr.

All Build Alternatives would result in the Section 4(f) use of the Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr, the Parkway, and MST. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) determined that, even though there is use of the land from within historic boundaries, no adverse effects would occur under Section 106 to the Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm and Camp Orr in any of the Build Alternatives. However the SHPO determined that use of the Parkway and MST would be an adverse effect.

Interstate 26 is perpendicular to the Parkway and MST. An avoidance alternative to realign I-26 to a location that would accommodate the widening while avoiding both the Parkway and MST is not feasible. The piers of the existing Parkway Bridge across I-26 are located immediately adjacent to the existing travel lanes, so any widening of I-26 would require their relocation. The MST uses the existing Parkway Bridge to cross I-26.

A Value Analysis Study was conducted by the NPS, in coordination with Eastern Federal Lands Division of the FHWA and NCDOT, that evaluated the Parkway bridge alignment options over I-26 and determined that Option 4 best optimizes public health and safety; maintains or improves visitor experience; and optimizes operations and maintenance efficiency. The NPS recommended Option 4 as the preferred option and the Hybrid 6/8 Lane Widening as the preferred alternative in the DEIS.

I-26 Widening, Henderson and Buncombe Counties, NC - ER 16-0489

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the NCDOT, NPS and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration North Carolina and Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division in June of 2015 (See Appendix G) and agrees to: “coordinate and incorporate requirements of NPS, SHPO, NCDOT and other applicable federal, state and local agencies, utilities, and interested public and private parties”.

As recent as September 19, 2016, the NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) biologists found Indiana bats in the area of potential effect on the Parkway. The following mitigation needs to be included in a separate MOA that is currently being developed: To avoid adverse impacts to Indiana bats, emergent and/or acoustic surveys shall be conducted prior to removal of trees if the work would be conducted between April 15 and August 15; no significant tree removal within 5 miles of known hibernacula between April 1 and November 15.

Minimization and mitigation strategies are currently being identified through continued coordination with NPS, FHWA, SHPO and NCDOT. These stipulations on the project should be documented in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA would be completed and executed prior to the Record of Decision (ROD).

The Department concurs that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using the Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr and the project includes all possible planning to avoid, minimize and mitigate all harm to these resources.

The Department has no objection to the approval of the 4(f) Evaluation for the Blue Ridge Parkway and the MST contingent upon the development and full execution of an MOA which fully describes in detail all of the avoidance, minimization and mitigation efforts for the Parkway and MST.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments. If you have questions concerning Federally Listed Species, please contact Ms. Marella Buncick at 828 258 3939, Ext. 237. If you have any questions concerning the Parkway and Section 4(f) comments contact Anita Barnett, Planning and Compliance Division, Southeast Region at 100 Alabama Street, 1924 Building, Atlanta Georgia 30303; 404-507-5706. I can be reached on (404) 331-4524 or via email at [joyce\\_stanley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joyce_stanley@ios.doi.gov).

Sincerely,



Joyce Stanley, MPA  
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: Christine Willis – FWS  
Michael Norris - USGS  
Anita Barnett – NPS  
Chester McGhee – BIA  
OEPC – WASH



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Asheville Field Office  
160 Zillicoa Street  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801  
October 5, 2016

Mr. John Williams, P.E.  
Project Development & Environmental Analysis  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

Dear Mr. Williams:

**Subject:** Response to **ER 16/0489** - Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Widening of I-26, Buncombe and Henderson Counties, North Carolina, TIP Nos. I-4400/4700

We have reviewed the subject Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and are providing the following comments in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq.) and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to improve a 22.2-mile segment of the existing I-26 from US 25 near Hendersonville to the I-40/240 interchange near Asheville. The NCDOT is seeking comments on three action alternatives: Alternative 1, Widen to Six Lanes; Alternative 2, Widen to Eight Lanes; and the Preferred Alternative, Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening. The preferred alternative provides for a six-lane section from the southern terminus of the project to the US 25/Asheville Highway Interchange and an eight-lane section for the remainder of the project north, terminating at the interchange of I-40/240. All alternatives include replacing the existing French Broad River (French Broad) and the Blue Ridge Parkway (Parkway) Bridges over I-26.

### FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES

**Gray Bat** - At this time, our comments are focused primarily on federally listed species, in particular, the federally endangered gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*). Table 11, on page 3-25, provides a list of federally protected species for Buncombe and Henderson Counties. Based on new information, we do not agree with a “no effect” determination for the gray bat. In August of 2016, gray bats were discovered roosting in a bridge over the French Broad in Buncombe

County, very near the subject project study area. In addition, two bats outfitted with radio tags were tracked during their nightly foraging to areas across and within the study area of the project.

Gray bats roost, breed, rear young, and hibernate in caves or cavelike features (e.g., mines, bridges, culverts) year-round and forage on a variety of flying aquatic and terrestrial insects present along streams, rivers, and lakes. They migrate between summer and winter habitat and will use transient or stopover caves or cavelike features along the way. We expect the gray bats in this area will soon be migrating to their winter habitat, likely in November, and will return to this area sometime around April 1.

**Bog Turtle** – Table 11, on page 3-25, lists the bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) as not requiring a biological conclusion. While this is technically correct, we recommend protecting known occupied bog turtle habitat in the project area. Currently, the Biltmore Bog is one of two remaining occupied bog turtle sites in Buncombe County. The Biltmore Bog, shown on Figure 6 G, is located between the French Broad and existing I-26 and is labeled a delineated wetland on this figure. Bog turtles are not currently subject to section 7 consultation; however, their numbers continue to decline, and we recommend every effort be made to avoid impacting the Biltmore Bog and its bog turtle population.

## **ACTION ALTERNATIVES**

Construction activities to replace the bridge over the French Broad and widen I-26 between the French Broad and the Parkway may result in impacts to gray bats. From north of the French Broad south to the Parkway crossing, the I-26 corridor is remarkable in the amount of tree canopy closure over the interstate, including a large forested median. This forested habitat provides a sound and light barrier from interstate traffic, a water-quality buffer for the tributaries in the area that drain to the French Broad, and terrestrial connectivity over the interstate for bats that may cross on the upland rather than flying directly over the river.

Based on the information provided in the DEIS, all of the action alternatives have the potential to adversely affect summer roosting and foraging gray bats. Construction activities and future bridge and highway design and operation can affect bats in a variety of ways. During bridge construction, increases in noise above ambient levels or the use of artificial lighting could cause bats to avoid important travel corridors. If bats are crossing the highway rather than traveling along the river, tree removal to widen the roadway increases the distance bats have to cross without cover and may cause them to avoid important foraging areas south of the French Broad. If bats are currently roosting in the bridge over the French Broad, the replacement bridge should also provide roost areas for bats.

Decreases in water quality from construction activities can impact gray bats by decreasing the abundance of aquatic insects that provide a primary food source. To maintain water quality in the future, the project should minimize the addition of impervious surface area and retain forested buffers along all waterways in order to minimize sedimentation to streams. In addition, post-construction stormwater detention and treatment should be provided in the area near the French Broad.

At this time, we recommend looking specifically at the corridor from the crossing of the French Broad to south of the Parkway to determine if there are other options that would minimize the footprint of the roadway and maintain or improve habitat for gray bats. Regardless of the alternative chosen, we anticipate that this project will require further consultation as plans are refined and the project moves forward.

In addition to gray bats, acoustic surveys on the Parkway recorded calls consistent with those of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). While this information is preliminary, it further emphasizes the need for comprehensive bat surveys in the project area. Beginning in the spring of 2017, we recommend that surveys be conducted to gather more information regarding the types and extent of structures bats may be using for roosts and the travel routes and concentrations of bats that are foraging in and around the study area. This information will help determine ways to further minimize impacts from project construction and ongoing operations.

We will continue to participate in the merger process as project planning progresses. If you have questions about these comments, please contact Ms. Marella Buncick of our staff at 828-258-3939, Ext. 237, or me, Ext. 223.

Sincerely,



Janet A. Mizzi  
Field Supervisor

Electronic copy to:

Ms. Lori Beckwith, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Ms. Marla Chambers, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Ms. Amy Chapman, North Carolina Division of Water Quality

Ms. Cynthia Van Der Wiele, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Ms. Bambi Teague, Blue Ridge Parkway

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

# FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## RESOLUTION SUBMITTING COMMENTS REGARDING THE I-26 WIDENING PROJECT (I-4400/I-4700) DEIS

WHEREAS, traffic congestion and safety are increasing problems along I-26 through Henderson and Buncombe Counties in western North Carolina; and,

WHEREAS, local and regional residents, commuters, visitors, interstate travelers and commercial freight haulers rely on the route in increasing numbers; and,

WHEREAS, improvements to the I-26 corridor should be minimally disruptive to the local community and should enhance the quality of life for residents and the quality of experience for visitors whenever possible; and,

WHEREAS, members of the community have expressed their strong preference that this project advance to relieve congestion; and,

WHEREAS, a variety of local and regional bicycle, pedestrian and greenways plans exist for the area to be impacted by the I-4400/I-4700 project; and,

WHEREAS, the French Broad River MPO Board has previously adopted a Complete Streets Policy, which includes the following statement:

*“On interstate projects inside FBRMPO planning boundary, the following recommendations and elements shall be considered in the design of all projects: inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations at interchanges to where pedestrian and bicycle safety is given equal emphasis to traffic movement; and inclusion of crossing accommodations in the interstate ROW outside of interchanges at stream crossings or other key crossing points for non-motorized modes of transportation, with particular attention to off-road greenway, bicycle and pedestrian networks that are shown in adopted plans.*”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the French Broad River MPO Board submits for consideration as part of DEIS comments the following recommendations for this project:

- Support for moving forward with design and construction for I-4400/I-4700 in an efficient and timely manner
- As part of interchange redesign for Exit 49/US 64 Four Seasons Boulevard, consider pedestrian accommodations on the redesigned interchange bridge, as recommended in Hendersonville Pedestrian Plan (with the understanding that final design would be subject to local cost share participation agreements), and bicycle lanes as recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan
- As part of interchange redesign for Exit 44/US 25, consider an alternative design that would minimize the footprint of the interchange and impacts to residential and business properties while still providing appropriate capacity for projected traffic
- As part of interchange redesign for Exit 44/US 25, consider bicycle lane accommodation as recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan (subject to local cost share participation,

if needed), and a potential location for a Park-and-Ride lot, as recommended by the regional Transportation Demand Working Group

- At the I-26 crossing over Cane Creek, between Exit 44 and Exit 40, consider allowing for a future greenway alongside Cane Creek to cross under the interstate bridges (as recommended in the Fletcher Greenways Master Plan)
- If the interchange is being considered for redesign at Exit 33/ NC 146 Long Shoals Road, consider bicycle lane accommodation on NC 146 through the interchange as recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan (secondary corridor)

**ADOPTED:** This the 17th day of November, 2016.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Douglas Dearth, FBRMPO Board Chair



\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest, Lyuba Zuyeva, FBRMPO  
Director

# HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1 Historic Courthouse Square, Suite #1  
Hendersonville, NC 28792  
Phone (828) 697-4808 • Fax (828) 692-9855  
[www.hendersoncountync.org](http://www.hendersoncountync.org)

THOMAS THOMPSON  
Chairman  
CHARLIE MESSER  
Vice-Chairman

MICHAEL EDNEY  
GRADY HAWKINS  
WILLIAM LAPSLEY

## RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE I-26 WIDENING PROJECT I-4400/I-4700

**WHEREAS,** pursuant to N.C. General Statute §153, Article 18, the Henderson County Board of Commissioners exercises regulations relating to development within the County's jurisdiction; and

**WHEREAS,** the I-26 widening project is included in the approved State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP); and

**WHEREAS,** the Board is a member of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and supports a transportation planning process in the urbanized area that is comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing, and addresses public safety and local and regional economic needs; and

**WHEREAS,** the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is responsible for designing and implementing projects in the STIP; and

**WHEREAS,** the I-26 widening has been long delayed by design and planning discussions;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Henderson County Board of Commissioners as follows:

1. That the Board reviewed the proposed I-26 widening project I-4400/I-4700 and finds that it is reasonable, in the public interest and it is consistent with the principles and goals of County Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Strategy located therein; and
2. That the Board determines that the proposed I-26 widening project is needed as the current and projected capacities are operating at unacceptable Level of Service.
3. That the Board determines that the proposed I-26 widening project provides for the sound transport of goods and people while balancing property rights and promoting reasonable growth within the County;

Adopted this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of September, 2016.



THOMAS THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN  
HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:



TERESA L. WILSON, CLERK TO THE BOARD

## Kat Bukowy

---

**From:** Jennifer Harris  
**Sent:** Monday, January 16, 2017 1:01 PM  
**To:** 'Eric Rufa'; Lyuba Zuyeva; Johnson, Edward R; Vine-Hodge, John A  
**Cc:** Tristan Winkler; Mark Biberdorf; Kat Bukowy; Eric Seckinger; Williams, John L; brianburch@ncdot.gov  
**Subject:** RE: I-4400/I-4700 - 12/13/2016 Post Hearing Meeting - Cane Creek Greenway Question

Good afternoon,

We have evaluated opportunities for accommodating the Cane Creek greenway based on the current design and information available at this time for the I-26 widening project. Specifically, we considered the feasibility of placing a greenway under the I-26 bridge over Cane Creek. At this time, we have not incorporated any special accommodations to include a greenway, nor did we necessarily do anything to preclude constructing one.

From the limited data we have, it appears that a greenway could fit underneath the proposed bridge with some additional grading and special end bent designs on the south side. Diving into that level of design is beyond the scope of a normal functional design at this stage; however the construction contract documents could contain special provisions to ensure that a greenway could be accommodated, should the Department and the Town reach agreement to do so.

I hope this information is helpful and we look forward to continuing the discussions regarding the greenway as the project continues to move forward. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Regards,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

 **HNTB North Carolina, P.C. | 100 YEARS OF INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS**

343 E. Six Forks Road, Suite 200

Raleigh, NC 27609

Direct 919.424.0427

Mobile 919.656.7003

---

**From:** Eric Rufa [mailto:E.Rufa@fletchernc.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 22, 2016 4:20 PM  
**To:** Williams, John L <jlwilliams@ncdot.gov>; Lyuba Zuyeva <lyuba@landofsky.org>; Johnson, Edward R <erjohnson2@ncdot.gov>; Vine-Hodge, John A <javinehodge@ncdot.gov>  
**Cc:** Jennifer Harris <jhharris@HNTB.com>; Tristan Winkler <tristan@landofsky.org>; Mark Biberdorf <M.Biberdorf@fletchernc.org>  
**Subject:** RE: I-4400/I-4700 - 12/13/2016 Post Hearing Meeting - Cane Creek Greenway Question

John,  
Just a couple other comments...

While this section of greenway is on our Master Plan, it has not been planned with great detail. I can speculate that having the trail on the south side of the creek will not be a problem. More often than not, we work with Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy on greenways and I doubt there would be the need for much involvement from Henderson County gov't... Most likely, we and/OR CMLC would end up working directly with property owners and DOT on

encroachment agreements. And costs would probably end up skyrocketing if we had to consider another ped bridge over the creek to get back to the north side...

We appreciate your consideration in trying to fold this into the I 26 plans. Let me know if you have other questions...  
Eric Rufa

---

**From:** Williams, John L [<mailto:jlwilliams@ncdot.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 22, 2016 3:38 PM  
**To:** Lyuba Zuyeva; Johnson, Edward R; Vine-Hodge, John A  
**Cc:** Jennifer Harris; Eric Rufa; Tristan Winkler  
**Subject:** RE: I-4400/I-4700 - 12/13/2016 Post Hearing Meeting - Cane Creek Greenway Question

Thanks **Lyuba**,

I'm pretty sure we wouldn't expend resources unless that greenway location is resolved but we can check existing vertical and horizontal clearances to see if there's enough space.

**Jennifer**, do we have enough information from any of the available sources (survey, roadway or hydraulic info) to get an idea of how much space might be available in the proposed design accounting for the fact that we'll need to maintain the private drive on the southeast side of the bridge shown in the images below?

If the answer to the previous questions is that it's an unknown quantity and might require expenditure beyond what we'd build anyway, we'll ask the Bike Ped Unit to vet the project to see if it meets the attached guidelines. **John**, please wait until we see if there might be enough space with the existing design before expending any effort on your end.

We're awfully close to a lot of folks being gone till New Year's so we may need to pick this up then.

-John W.



LOOKING SOUTH FROM PRIVATE ROAD

---

**From:** Lyuba Zuyeva [<mailto:lyuba@landofsky.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 22, 2016 10:03 AM  
**To:** Williams, John L; Johnson, Edward R  
**Cc:** Jennifer Harris; Eric Rufa ([e.rufa@fletchercnc.org](mailto:e.rufa@fletchercnc.org)); Tristan Winkler  
**Subject:** RE: I-4400/I-4700 - 12/13/2016 Post Hearing Meeting - Cane Creek Greenway Question

John and Ed-

I followed up with the Town of Fletcher regarding the preferred Cane Creek Greenway alignment at the location where it crosses under I-26, and currently the preferred alignment is shown on the side of Cane Creek—labeled as French Broad Connector on the Greenway Master Plan map posted at [http://www.fletchernc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Greenways\\_Aug\\_2008-1.pdf](http://www.fletchernc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Greenways_Aug_2008-1.pdf)

The preferred alignment might change in the future, subject to whether Henderson County would be supportive of the greenway. There is a chance that the greenway might have to cross over to the north side of Cane Creek to remain in Fletcher municipal limits.

Eric—please chime in if I am misrepresenting something.

Thank you all,  
Lyuba

**Lyuba Zuyeva, AICP**

FBRMPO Director

339 New Leicester Hwy., Suite 140 • Asheville, NC 28806

o: 828.251.7454 • f: 828.251.6353

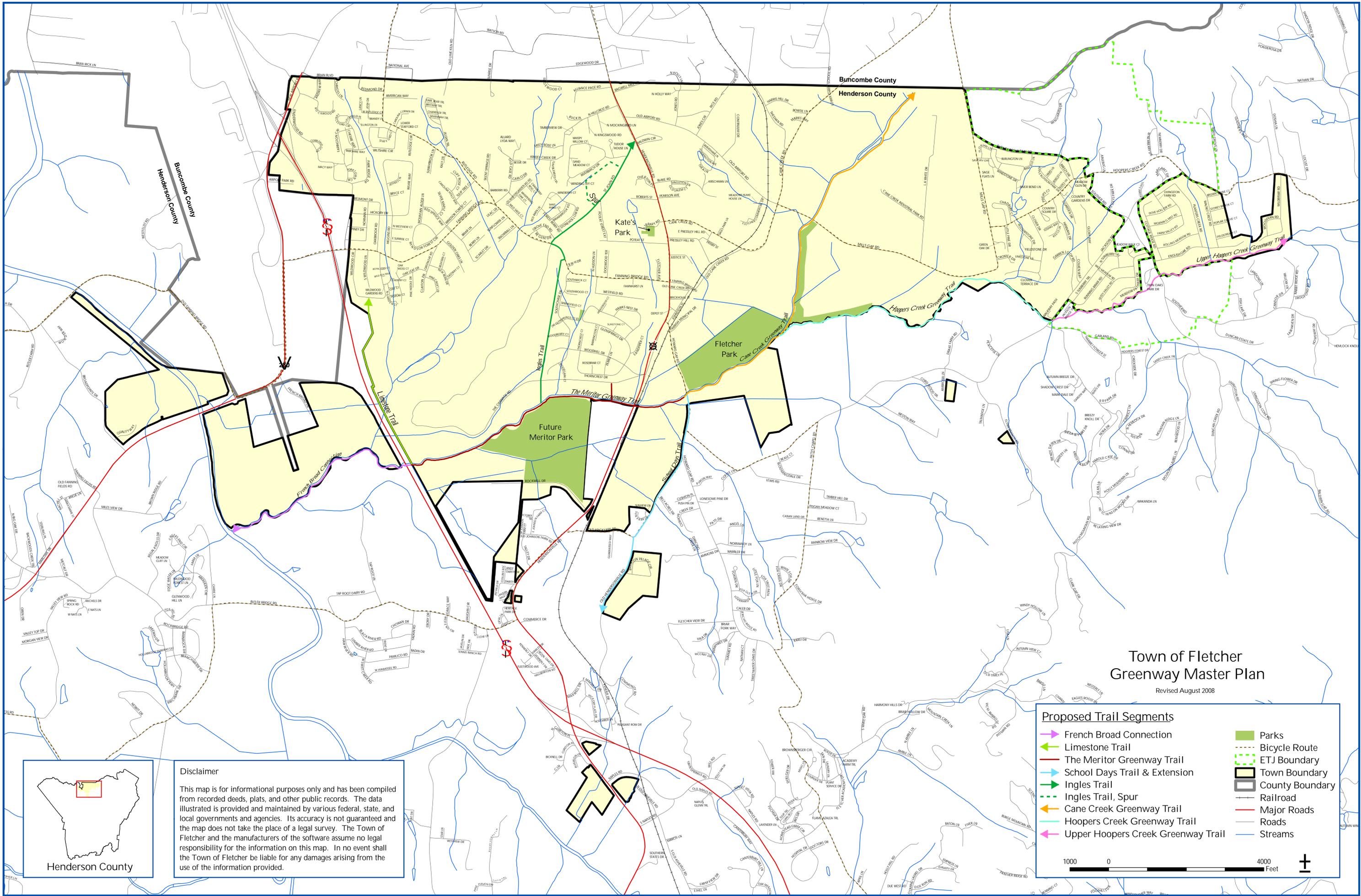


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# Town of Fletcher Greenway Master Plan

Revised August 2008

**Proposed Trail Segments**

- French Broad Connection
- Limestone Trail
- The Meritor Greenway Trail
- School Days Trail & Extension
- Ingles Trail
- Ingles Trail, Spur
- Cane Creek Greenway Trail
- Hoopers Creek Greenway Trail
- Upper Hoopers Creek Greenway Trail

- Parks
- Bicycle Route
- ETJ Boundary
- Town Boundary
- County Boundary
- Railroad
- Major Roads
- Roads
- Streams



**Disclaimer**

This map is for informational purposes only and has been compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records. The data illustrated is provided and maintained by various federal, state, and local governments and agencies. Its accuracy is not guaranteed and the map does not take the place of a legal survey. The Town of Fletcher and the manufacturers of the software assume no legal responsibility for the information on this map. In no event shall the Town of Fletcher be liable for any damages arising from the use of the information provided.

CITY COUNCIL:  
BARBARA G. VOLK  
Mayor  
STEVE CARAKER  
Mayor Pro Tem  
RON STEPHENS  
JERRY A. SMITH, JR.  
JEFF MILLER

# CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE

*The City of Four Seasons*

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
JOHN F. CONNET

OFFICERS:  
JOHN F. CONNET  
City Manager  
SAMUEL H. FRITSCHNER  
City Attorney  
TAMMIE K. DRAKE  
City Clerk

November 21, 2016

N.C. Department of Transportation  
Attn: Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh NC 27699-1598

Dear Ms. Laad:

Enclosed please find a resolution supporting the widening of I-26 in Henderson and Buncombe Counties (STIP Project I4400/I-4700). This resolution was formally adopted by the Hendersonville City Council on November 3, 2016. We request that this resolution be placed in the record and forwarded to the appropriate parties associated with this project.

In addition, the City of Hendersonville requests that NCDOT consider the following:

1. The City Council is concerned about the proposed design for the I-26/Four Seasons Boulevard interchange. They would request that NCDOT re-evaluate the design to ensure that it provides the safest and most efficient flow of traffic at this critical Hendersonville intersection.
2. The improvement of pedestrian access along Four Seasons Boulevard is a high priority for the City of Hendersonville. The current design of the interchange restricts access between two large commercial centers and we believe the best time to address this issue is during the reconstruction of the interchange as part of this project. Therefore, the City Council requests that NCDOT consider improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the I-26/Four Seasons Boulevard interchange.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (828) 233-3201.

Sincerely,



John F. Connet  
City Manager

CC: Mayor and City Council  
Ed Green, Division Engineer  
Land of Sky MPO  
Henderson County TAC

145 Fifth Ave. E.  
Hendersonville, NC 28792-4328

jconnet@cityofhendersonville.org  
www.cityofhendersonville.org

Phone: 828.697.3000  
Fax: 828.697.8645

**A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE INTERSTATE 26 WIDENING PROJECT  
THROUGH HENDERSON COUNTY**

- WHEREAS,** the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen Interstate 26 through Henderson County; and
- WHEREAS,** NCDOT held an open house and public hearing for the Interstate 26 Widening Project I-4400/I-4700 on October 13, 2016; and
- WHEREAS,** Interstate 26 is a major transportation artery through our community for residents, businesses and visitors; and
- WHEREAS,** the City of Hendersonville is a member of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and supports a transportation planning process in urbanized areas that is comprehensive, cooperative and continuing, and addresses public safety and local and regional economic needs; and
- WHEREAS,** the City of Hendersonville asks NCDOT to reexamine all possible alternatives for the intersection of Highway 64/Interstate 26.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Hendersonville fully supports this widening project and encourages NCDOT to begin as soon as possible.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Hendersonville to be affixed.

Adopted this third day of November 2016.

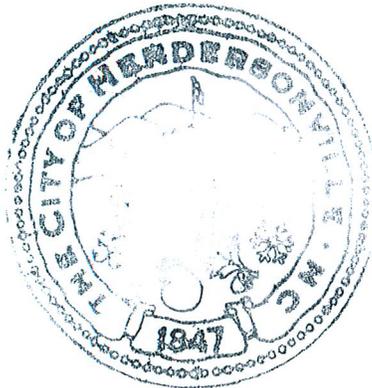


Barbara G. Volk, Mayor  
City of Hendersonville

Attest:



Tammie K. Drake, City Clerk



**From:** Lee Thomason [<mailto:lthomason@biltmorefarms.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, November 03, 2016 11:11 AM

**To:** Tipton, Ricky A

**Cc:** Cecil, Jack

**Subject:** I-26 Connector Project (I-2513), Long Shoals & Schenck Parkway

Rick,

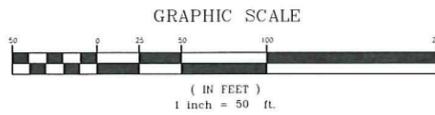
As a follow up to our discussions during the public meeting regarding the I-26 project, I'd like to submit the attached design as our official request for alterations (to the intersection of Skyland Inn Drive, Schenck Parkway, Long Shoals Road/Highway 146 and the entrance/exit ramps onto I-26) to be included within the scope of the I-26 Connector Project (I-2513). As you know, this intersection often becomes gridlocked which, at times, leads to traffic backing onto I-26 east and west. Therefore, we believe this small increase in the project's scope will have a tremendous benefit for the I-26 Corridor.

Is it acceptable to only send this to you or should I post this to the DOT website? Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Lee

Lee E. Thomason III  
Vice President  
Biltmore Farms, LLC  
(828) 209-2000



WGLA Engineering, PLLC  
 Consulting Engineers & Land Planners  
 NC License No. P-1342  
 214 N. King Street  
 Hendersonville, North Carolina 28792  
 (828) 887-7177  
 wglacorp.com



Revisions

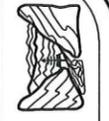
date:10/16  
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 drawn: KHC

sheet

CONCEPTUAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS  
 SITE PLAN

BILTMORE PARK ENTRANCE  
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY  
 NORTH CAROLINA

WGLA Engineering, PLLC  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS & LAND PLANNERS  
 HENDERSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA



I-26 and NC 146 (Shoals Road) Interchange  
Ramp Terminal Improvements  
Option 1 (Phase 1)



I-26 and NC 146 (Shoals Road) Interchange  
Ramp Terminal Improvements  
Option 2 (Phase 2a)



I-26 and NC 146 (Shoals Road) Interchange  
Ramp Terminal Improvements  
Option 2 (Phase 2b)



# SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

Telephone 828-258-2023

22 SOUTH PACK SQUARE, SUITE 700  
ASHEVILLE, NC 28801-3494

Facsimile 828-258-2024

October 21, 2016

An exact copy of these  
comments were also submitted  
to NCDOT on 11-14-2016.  
Only one copy is provided.

## ***Sent Via Electronic-Mail and First Class U.S. Mail***

Ms. Lori Beckwith  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Asheville Regulatory Field Office  
151 Patton Avenue  
Room 208  
Asheville, NC 28801-5006  
loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil

Re: Comments on I-26 Widening, Corps Action ID #: SAW-2013-01883,  
STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700

Dear Ms. Beckwith:

These comments are submitted on behalf of MountainTrue in response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' ("Corps") request for public comment on the I-26 Widening Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS").

MountainTrue is a § 501(c)(3) non-profit public interest organization dedicated to protecting the natural heritage and environment of Western North Carolina. MountainTrue's members live and work in the project area, regularly drive the project corridor, use and enjoy the French Broad River and its tributaries, and own homes and businesses impacted by the proposed project. MountainTrue administers the French Broad Riverkeeper program, which monitors and advocates for protection of the French Broad watershed from a variety of threats, including pollution from runoff, road projects, and development.

Overall, MountainTrue understands the need to improve and expand I-26 south of Asheville. MountainTrue's members, like most others in the Asheville region, have endured significant traffic jams in this area, and MountainTrue does not doubt that this situation will deteriorate as our region continues to grow, prosper, and draw visitors from around the world. Our comments are thus limited to two issues: 1) our ongoing concern that this project, like the I-26 Connector, is improperly segmented in violation of NEPA; and 2) the North Carolina Department of Transportation's ("NCDOT") flawed impacts analysis related to rebuilding the I-26 – US-25 interchange.

**1. The Project Remains Improperly Segmented in Violation of NEPA**

In this project, NCDOT proposes to widen 22.2 miles of I-26, from just south of Hendersonville to just south of Asheville. At the same time, though under different project numbers, NCDOT is proposing to expand and enhance I-26 through Asheville and to the north of Weaverville. If allowed, over 40 miles of primarily four-lane highway will be expanded to six-to-eight lanes, with some stretches even wider due to near continuous auxiliary lanes. As noted in our comments on the I-26 Connector project (SAW-2004-9986803) last year, MountainTrue maintains that these projects are improperly segmented in violation of NEPA, depriving the Corps and the public of a full understanding of the impacts of expanding I-26 and limiting the range of alternatives available in these artificially divided segments. Rather than repeat these points and related concerns in detail, we attach and incorporate by reference our comments to the Corps and NCDOT on the I-26 Connector DEIS.

The I-26 Widening DEIS and associated documents do not assuage our segmentation concerns. As our comments made clear, our main concern was that widening in one segment forces widening in adjacent segments, and vice versa. This interdependency violates CEQ's and FHWA's regulations on segmentation, especially FHWA's prohibition against actions that "restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements." 23 C.F.R. § 771.111(f); *see also* 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.4(a), 1508.25(a). While the main text of the I-26 Widening DEIS acknowledges these regulations, it does not rebut or even discuss our concern that widening south of Asheville will force widening through Asheville (and vice versa). *See* DEIS at 1-3. 1

Two memoranda associated with and referenced in the DEIS do no better. HNTB's *Logical Termini and Independent Utility* memorandum for this project merely states without explanation that "improvements to other facilities do not restrict consideration of alternatives" in this project. HNTB Corp., *Logical Termini and Independent Utility – STIP Project: I-4400/I-4700*, at 5 (July 23, 2014). But NEPA requires more than just "say-so." HNTB also prepared a traffic forecast comparison with the I-26 Connector in an effort to support its contention that this project has independent utility—i.e., to show that the I-26 Widening project would serve a purpose even if the I-26 Connector project is not completed. HNTB Corp., *Traffic Forecast Comparison for STIP Projects I-4400/I-4700 and I-2513* (July 29, 2016). But even taking that study at face value, independent utility is only one of the three segmentation factors in FHWA's regulations. *See* 23 C.F.R. § 771.111(f). The fact remains, as explained in detail in our attached comments, that these projects are improperly segmented because they foreclose reasonable alternatives in adjacent transportation projects—widening one forces reciprocal widening in the other, foreclosing a smaller footprint throughout the corridor.<sup>1</sup> 1

We raised this issue with NCDOT nearly one year ago, but to date have received no response. Instead, NCDOT doubles down here, proposing another expansion without

<sup>1</sup> Part of the reason for this is that, as noted in our prior comments, the traffic forecasts for one project assume the adjacent expansions are completed, inflating demand throughout the corridor. So, just as the "build" forecasts for STIP No. I-2513 assumed this project was built, the "build" forecasts for this project assume that STIP No. I-2513 is built. *See* HNTB, Corp., *NCDOT STIP No. I-4400/4700 Purpose and Need Traffic Analysis*, App'x B, at 4 (Sept. 2013). 1

acknowledging—let alone resolving—the concern that these three projects (STIP Nos. I-4400/I-4700, I-2513, and A-0010A) are improperly segmented in violation of NEPA. This segmentation deprives the Corps and the public of the information they need to evaluate these projects and, more importantly, forecloses smaller, less impactful alternatives.

## 2. *NCDOT Failed to Consider the Negative Impacts of Its Preferred I-26 – US-25 Interchange*

2 In addition to widening the interstate, NCDOT proposes rebuilding the I-26 – US-25 interchange. NCDOT considered four alternatives for this rebuilt interchange and selected the largest alternative—a partial cloverleaf with 30 mph design speed loops—as its preferred alternative. Unfortunately, the DEIS and associated documents do not discuss or compare the negative impacts associated with NCDOT’s preferred alternative, yet again depriving the Corps and the public of the information they need to evaluate these alternatives, and yet again in violation of NEPA.

2 CEQ’s NEPA regulations refer to the alternatives analysis as the “heart” of the impact statement, and mandate “present[ing] the environmental impacts of the proposal and the alternatives in comparative form, thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decisionmaker and the public.” 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14. For the US-25 interchange alternatives, the DEIS makes no attempt to present or compare the human or environmental impacts of the four alternatives considered. *See* DEIS at 2-6 – 2-7. Rather, it discusses only cost and operational concerns. *Id.* This is plainly inadequate.

2 In its discussion of the interchange alternatives, the DEIS references and relies on HNTB’s *Purpose and Need Traffic Analysis – Addendum* (October 2014) for this project. But that document also fails to present, compare, or consider the negative human and environmental impacts of the various interchange alternatives. In this regard, its conclusion on the interchange alternatives is telling: “Based solely on operational performance, the partial cloverleaf designs are recommended for further environmental study to assess their impacts.” *Id.* at 36 (emphasis in original). In other words, the negative impacts were not studied, and the recommendation to move forward with the partial cloverleaf designs was based solely on performance—meaning how well the interchange alternatives moved traffic. There is no indication in the DEIS that NCDOT followed through on the recommendation “for further environmental study.” Rather, the DEIS notes only that the study recommended the partial cloverleaf designs, and then selects the larger of the two partial cloverleaf designs without any discussion of this choice or the broader choice to eliminate the less impactful, smaller interchange designs. *See* DEIS at 2-7.

The limited information available suggests that this oversight is not a mere technicality. Figure 8.1 in HNTB’s *Purpose and Need Traffic Analysis – Addendum* shows an image of the four interchange alternatives considered. These images appear to demarcate nearby private property and a visual estimate of the amount of property NCDOT would need to acquire for each alternative.<sup>2</sup> The preferred alternative—the partial cloverleaf with 30 mph design speed loops—takes the most property, and the other partial cloverleaf design, which has smaller, slower

<sup>2</sup> Map Sheet 3 of NCDOT’s public hearing maps shows the proposed right-of-way needed for NCDOT’s preferred interchange alternative, and it largely correlates with Figure 8.1.

design-speed loops, takes somewhat less property. In contrast, the diverging diamond interchange and the displaced left turn interchange designs do not appear to require any taking of private property.

The DEIS relocation reports indicate that rebuilding the interchange with NCDOT's preferred partial cloverleaf will require 11 relocations: ten residential and one business. *See* DEIS , App'x E, at 3.<sup>3</sup> And both the DEIS and HNTB's report note that all four interchange alternatives will improve performance in peak hours (neither document suggests that the diverging diamond or diverted left turn will fail or perform inadequately). *See* DEIS at 2-7; HNTB's *Purpose and Need Traffic Analysis – Addendum*, at 36. The choice is thus not between alternatives that fail or succeed to meet the purpose and need, nor is it between alternatives that perform slightly better or worse but have similar impacts. Rather, the choice appears to be between alternatives with modest performance differences but stark differences in impacts. NEPA requires studying and disclosing these impacts—not just the private property taken, but also the comparative environmental impacts—so that the public and agencies involved can consider and comment on them. NCDOT's failure to do so is a glaring and significant omission that must be cured.

2

### Conclusion

MountainTrue acknowledges the congestion challenges south of Asheville and is eager to work the Corps, NCDOT, and other resource agencies to find the least environmentally damaging practicable alternatives to these challenges. But such efforts are stymied by improper segmentation and inadequate information and analysis on the project's impacts. We thus request that the Corps urge NCDOT to fix these flaws in the DEIS to bring it in compliance with NEPA and ensure the public has the information it needs and is entitled to under the law.

Sincerely,



Austin DJ Gerken

cc: Julie Mayfield, MountainTrue

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<sup>3</sup> These 11 relocations account for almost all of the 13 relocations associated with the six-lane widening alternative.



# I-26 Widening

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County including Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26

## Section 404/NEPA Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement Concurrence Point 3 LEDPA/Preferred Alternative Selection

- Meeting Date:** January 18, 2017
- Time:** 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Place:** NCDOT Century Center Building A, Structure Design Conference Room C
- Project:** I-26 Widening in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, Federal Aid Project No. NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9, WBS No. 34232.1.1/36030.1.1, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14
- Purpose:** Achieve Merger Team concurrence on Concurrence Point (CP) 3, LEDPA/Preferred Alternative Selection, for the proposed I-26 Widening

### Agenda

This meeting is being held to:

- Review the comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and from the Public Hearing held on October 13, 2016.
- Review the proposed impacts for the Build Alternatives.
- Reach concurrence on the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)/Preferred Alternative.

### Previous Merger Team Meetings and Concurrence Points Reached

The Merger Team reached concurrence on the Purpose and Need Statement (CP 1) and Detailed Study Alternatives (CP2) on June 20, 2013 and Bridging Decisions and Alignment Review (CP 2A) on February 11, 2015.

### Project Study Area

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400 begins at US 25 (Exit 54) near Hendersonville and extends along I-26 west to NC 280 (Exit 40). STIP Project I-4700 extends along I-26 from NC 280 west to the I-40/I-240 interchange. **Figure 1** shows the general project vicinity.

## Project Description

The project proposes to improve a 22.2-mile segment of Interstate 26 (I-26). The project is located in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, beginning just south of Hendersonville and ending just south of Asheville. Three Build Alternatives are under consideration and were presented in the Draft EIS.

**Build Alternative 1: 6-Lane Widening.** The 6-Lane Alternative would widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction from US 25 to I-40/I-240.

**Build Alternative 2: 8-Lane Widening.** The 8-Lane Alternative would widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from US 25 to I-40/I-240.

**Build Alternative 3: Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening.** The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative would widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction between US 25 and the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange and widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from the US 25 (Asheville Highway) to the I-40/I-240 interchange.

All of the alternatives would be designed to best fit within the existing right of way limits for I-26; however, some areas of additional right of way are needed for any of the Build Alternatives.

The US 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard/Chimney Rock Road) and US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchanges would also be improved as part of this project. The US 64 interchange would be modified to a partial cloverleaf "B" design, which would improve traffic congestion as well as providing compatibility for pedestrians and bicyclists. The US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange would also be reconfigured; the Draft EIS included information for a proposed partial cloverleaf design, but additional options are being evaluated in order to reduce impacts to the human and natural environments.

The columns supporting the bridge deck of the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 are spaced in such a way that they do not accommodate widening of the I-26 facility (for all Build Alternatives). As a result, the bridge has been proposed for replacement by NCDOT and FHWA as part of this project. NCDOT and FHWA have coordinated with the National Park Service (NPS) in the development and evaluation of bridge replacement options. Four options for realigning the Blue Ridge Parkway in conjunction with replacing the existing bridge were investigated in detail. These options include an option that would replace the existing bridge on new alignment to the north, two options that would replace the existing bridge on new alignment to the south, and an option that would reconstruct the existing bridge. Two bridge types were considered, segmental concrete box girder and steel-plate girder. The NPS conducted a Value Analysis evaluation of the seven original options for realigning the Blue Ridge Parkway and replacing the bridge over I-26, and studied four in detail. According to the *Draft Value Analysis Study* (January 2016), Option 4 best optimizes public health and safety; maintains or improves visitor experience; and optimizes operations and maintenance efficiency. As a result of these analyses, the NPS recommended Option 4 (**Figures 2 and 3**) as the NPS's preferred option. For additional information, see Draft EIS Appendix H for the *Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge Over Interstate 26: Conceptual Alternatives, Impact Topics Considered, Environmental Consequences, VA/CBA Study Factors* (Eastern Federal Lands/NPS, March 3, 2016) and Draft EIS Appendix I for the *Draft Value Analysis Study* (January 2016).

## Preferred Alternative

The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative was identified as NCDOT and FHWA's Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing based on information available and consideration of purpose and need, cost and design, and human and natural environment impacts. As indicated in the Draft EIS, the FHWA and NCDOT will review agency and public comments received on the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing to reassess and/or reconfirm the Preferred Alternative.

## **Summary of Public Involvement**

Participation from the public, elected officials, government agencies and other stakeholders in the decision-making process for this project has been encouraged.

Project materials, including newsletters, the project website, and the announcement of public meetings have been made available to all stakeholders, as well as made publicly available through advertisements and media releases. Small group meetings, including local officials' meetings have also been held.

The Draft EIS was signed on August 9, 2016 and distributed to local, state and federal agencies. A project newsletter was mailed to citizens in the study area in September 2016. The newsletter described the project, the build alternatives, and the potential impacts, as well as announced the Open House Public Meeting and the Public Hearing. Newspaper advertisements and media coverage also announced the public involvement opportunity. In addition, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service published public notices of the project and solicited feedback.

Following the release of the Draft EIS there have been two local officials' meetings, an Open House Public Meeting, and a formal Public Hearing; all held on October 13, 2016. These meetings presented the three Build Alternatives in the Draft EIS, as well as the two interchange improvements (US 64 and US 25 (Asheville Highway)), and the realignment and proposed replacement Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26. At the meetings, NCDOT solicited feedback from stakeholders and the public on the alternatives, potential impacts noted in the Draft EIS, noise, and project next steps. Materials presented at the meetings are available at the project website: [www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/](http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/)

## **Summary of Comments Received on the Draft EIS or from the Public Hearing**

Eight written comments and six recorded oral comments were collected during the Open House Public Meeting. The formal Public Hearing began at 7:00 p.m. A formal presentation with information about the project was given. One person spoke following the presentation; however, the comment pertained to another project, STIP Project I-4759, Liberty Road/I-40 Interchange.

The comment period for all comments, agency and public, ended November 14, 2016. Agencies that submitted comments on the Draft EIS are listed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Comments Received on the Draft EIS**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Date Letter Submitted</b>
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	10/4/2016
National Park Service (NPS)	9/22/2016
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)	9/22/2016
Tribal Historic Preservation Office	11/3/2016
US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	11/7/2016
US Department of Interior (USDOI)	10/20/2016
US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)	10/31/2016
US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	10/5/2016
NC Department of Parks and Recreation (NCDPR)	9/16/2016 and 9/29/2016
NC Department Waste Management – Federal Remediation Branch	9/6/2016
NC Department Waste Management – Solid Waste Section	9/16/2016

**Table 1: Comments Received on the Draft EIS**

Agency	Date Letter Submitted
NC State Clearinghouse	9/16/2016
NC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	10/4/2016
Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency (WNCRAQA)	10/17/2016
French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO)	11/7/2016

Comments on the Draft EIS were also received from other entities. Comments centered on the proposed alternatives, environmental justice communities, historic resources, impacts to the gray bat and Indiana bat, impacts to streams, impacts to the Mountains to Sea Trail, noise, air quality, hazardous materials, floodplains, construction impacts, and homeland security.

The following is a summary of comments received from agencies and other entities pertinent to the selection of a Preferred Alternative follows.

*FBRMPO* – Recommended as part of the redesign of US 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard/Chimney Rock Highway) that pedestrian and bicycle accommodations be included.

*USACE, FBRMPO, Others* – At the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange (Exit 44) the proposed partial cloverleaf has a large amount of impacts despite being the best operationally. Consideration needs to be given to a reduced footprint with fewer overall impacts. In addition, this interchange/roadway is recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan for bicycle lane accommodation.

*Others* – The 8-Lane Widening and Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternatives are not supported due to their requiring right of way acquisition of Biltmore Estate property. Suggests reducing impacts with alternative treatments including retaining walls and limiting grading impacts to within the existing right of way.

*USEPA* – The 6-Lane Widening Alternative would potentially avoid and minimize some of the impacts to aquatic resources.

Other comments were received from members of the public, local government officials, and organizations through November 29, 2016. As previously stated, eight written and six oral comments were received during the meeting. Including these comments, a total of 124 people submitted comments, four people submitted multiple comments (these comments are counted as one comment), during the comment period. The comment period ended November 14, 2016; however, additional comments were received and recorded through November 29, 2016.

In addition to the comments provided, Henderson County (September 21, 2016), the French Broad River MPO (November 17, 2016), and the City of Hendersonville (November 3, 2016) also provided resolutions (attached) stating their support for the I-26 Widening project. The French Broad River MPO and City of Hendersonville made additional caveats within their resolutions that are captured in their comments included in the following tables.

General comment themes were distilled where possible and those that were recurring are included in the table below. Some commenters had multiple comment themes. For example, if someone commented that he/she prefers the 8-lane widening alternative or the hybrid alternative, both themes are included in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Recurring Comment Themes**

Comment Theme	Frequency
Supports widening	21
Supports 6-Lane Widening Alternative	6
Supports 8-Lane Widening Alternative	26
Supports Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative	22
I-26 should not be widened	8

**Summary of Impacts**

**Table 3** is a summary of impacts as shown in the Draft EIS, which included a proposed partial cloverleaf design for the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange improvement. Additional interchange options are being evaluated for the US 25 interchange improvement to determine their ability to meet current and future traffic demands and reduce impacts. Information regarding traffic operations and potential impacts of these options is included in **Tables 4** and **5**. Additionally, new information regarding the federally endangered gray bat is now available and the Biological Conclusion of “No Effect” for that species included the Draft EIS is being reevaluated in coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Table 3: Summary of Impacts by Build Alternative**

IMPACT CATEGORY <sup>1</sup>	6-Lane Widening	8-Lane Widening	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening
<b>Human Environment</b>			
Residential Relocations (Minorities)	12 (4)	23 (6)	18 (6)
Business Relocations	1	2	1
Grave Site Relocations	0	0	0
Disrupts Neighborhood & Community Cohesion	No	No	No
Recurring Community / Neighborhood Impacts	No	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton community.	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton community.
Low Income / Minority Populations	No	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.
Cultural Resources (Adverse Effect determined)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House
Section 4(f)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway.		

**Table 3: Summary of Impacts by Build Alternative**

<b>IMPACT CATEGORY<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>6-Lane Widening</b>	<b>8-Lane Widening</b>	<b>Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening</b>
Section 4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm and Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), and Mountains to Sea Trail	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), McMurray House (Windy Hill), and Mountains to Sea Trail	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), and Mountains to Sea Trail
Visual Resources / Characteristics	No	No	No
Traffic Noise Impacts (# of receptors)	292	339	315
Air Quality	No	No	No
Farmland <sup>2</sup> (acres)	5.5	24.5	11
Hazardous Materials	Minimal monetary and scheduling impacts.		
<b>Natural Resources Impacts</b>			
Federal Listed Species Habitat	May affect but not likely to adversely affect the Northern long-eared bat (NLEB). No effect <sup>3</sup> on other species in Henderson and Buncombe Counties.		
Jurisdictional Streams (linear feet)	21,597	27,241	24,650
Jurisdictional Wetlands (acres)	4.8	8.0	7.7
100-year Floodplain (acres)	30.1	48.2	41.8
500-year Floodplain (acres)	15.5	18.6	17.3
Ponds (acres)	0.03	0.06	0.05
<b>Indirect and Cumulative Effects</b>	<p>Based on this assessment of the currently identified project alternatives, STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 is not expected to have a notable indirect effect on land use in the FLUSA. Potential land use effects as a result of STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 are somewhat tempered by the fact that the project is not expected to provide any new access or opportunities for traffic exposure to properties in the FLUSA, and will generate marginal travel time savings.</p> <p>Some amount of regional cumulative impacts can be expected for notable cultural, community, water quality, and natural habitat features. This is due to features having minimal incorporation in local planning protections and/or policies. The Cumulative Effects Tool indicated that cumulative effects were rated as a medium level of concern as a result of the reasonably-foreseeable transportation projects in the region.</p>		

<sup>1</sup> Impacts based on functional proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet.

<sup>2</sup> Includes all types of farmland: prime, local and statewide importance. Does not include Urban Areas as designated by the US Census 2015, per the FPPA.

<sup>3</sup> NCDOT will follow NPS mitigation protocol as detailed in the Special Commitments (Green Sheets) and Section 3.8.6.2.2 of the Draft EIS.

**Table 4: Measure of Effectiveness at US 25 (Asheville Highway) and I-26 Interchange**

Impact Type	No Build		Design Concept 1		Design Concept 2		Design Concept 3		Design Concept 4		Design Concept 5	
			Partial Cloverleaf		Partial Cloverleaf with Design Exception		Diverging Diamond Interchange		Displaced Left Turn		Synchronized Interchange	
MOE	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	7233.0	7805.1	14860.0 (105%)	14853.7 (90%)	14660.3 (103%)	14656.8 (88%)	13888.0 (92%)	13854.2 (78%)	14253.2 (97%)	14345.5 (84%)	14778.2 (104%)	14716.0 (89%)
Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT)	2303.5	2052.6	309.2 (-87%)	310.6 (-85%)	305.9 (-87%)	303.5 (-85%)	540.1 (-77%)	549.7 (-73%)	348.6 (-85%)	318.6 (-84%)	329.0 (-86%)	335.5 (-84%)
Mean System Speed	5.0	5.8	48.9 (873%)	48.7 (735%)	48.8 (870%)	49.1 (743%)	28.5 (468%)	27.9 (380%)	41.7 (731%)	45.8 (686%)	45.7 (810%)	44.7 (668%)
Total System Delay	2186.7	1928.1	74.6 (-97%)	75.8 (-96%)	74.0 (-97%)	71.7 (-96%)	325.0 (-85%)	335.1 (-83%)	129.0 (-94%)	97.8 (-95%)	95.5 (-96%)	103.1 (-95%)
Travel Time (northbound)	4.01	3.56	1.16 (-71%)	1.16 (-67%)	1.12 (-72%)	1.08 (-69%)	3.35 (-16%)	2.79 (-22%)	1.26 (-69%)	1.51 (-58%)	1.20 (-70%)	1.07 (-70%)
Travel Time (southbound)	3.57	4.21	1.38 (-61%)	1.27 (-70%)	1.35 (-62%)	1.22 (-71%)	3.14 (-12%)	3.70 (-12%)	3.28 (-8%)	2.00 (-53%)	1.16 (-67%)	1.44 (-66%)
Through Trips (northbound)	293	354	454 (55%)	566 (60%)	449 (53%)	566 (60%)	393 (34%)	479 (35%)	431 (47%)	558 (58%)	449 (53%)	566 (59%)
Through Trips (southbound)	390	334	553 (42%)	441 (32%)	560 (44%)	438 (31%)	427 (10%)	346 (4%)	498 (28%)	428 (28%)	561 (44%)	438 (31%)

I-4400/I-4700 Traffic Analysis Addendum (October, 2014)

**Table 5: Potential Impacts by Proposed US 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange Design Concept**

Impact Type	Design Concept 1	Design Concept 2	Design Concept 3	Design Concept 4	Design Concept 5
	Partial Cloverleaf	Partial Cloverleaf with Design Exception	Diverging Diamond Interchange	Displaced Left Turn	Synchronized Interchange
Stream (linear feet)	2,246	2,005	1,306	1,517	1,548
Wetland (acres)	0.20	0.23	0	0.1	0.1
Pond (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Terrestrial Communities (acres)					
Maintained / Disturbed	28.9	26.9	19	22.8	16.3
Montane Oak-Hickory Forest (acidic subtype)	7.2	6.6	4.8	6.7	7.2
Montane Oak-Hickory Forest (white pine subtype)	7.9	4.8	2.0	2.5	2.8
Acidic Cove Forest	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.1
Parcel (acres/number)	21.3 / 41	13.8 / 27	4.6 / 14	7.6 / 25	9.2 / 39
Building (number)	32	18	4	5	15
Estimated Construction Cost	\$8,800,000	\$7,100,000	\$3,300,000	\$4,800,000	N/A

Impacts based on functional proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet; Costs estimated by NCDOT 3/23/2015; N/A – Not Available

Prior to the release of the Draft EIS, NCDOT evaluated four interchange design concepts including two partial cloverleaf options (with and without design exception), a diverging diamond interchange and a displaced left turn interchange. The partial cloverleaf (without design exception) was presented in the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing. Following the release of the Draft EIS, NCDOT conducted a Value Engineering Study on the subject project. Joe Hummer introduced an additional interchange configuration option, the synchronized interchange, for the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange. The design configurations are shown in **Figures 4** through **9**. The measures of effectiveness of each of the configurations and the potential impacts are shown in **Tables 4** and **5**.

The costs in **Table 6** include the BRP bridge and realignment and the \$8.8 million for the partial cloverleaf configuration at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange presented in the Draft EIS. The cost for the other potential interchange configurations is shown in **Table 5**.

In its Draft Value Analysis Study, NPS noted that the construction cost for its preferred alternative, Option 4 (realignment and concrete segmental bridge), is \$19.8 million.

**Table 6: Estimated Cost of Build Alternatives**

	<b>6-Lane Widening</b>	<b>8-Lane Widening</b>	<b>Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening</b>
Construction Cost	\$364,800,000	\$484,500,000	\$431,200,000
Right of Way Cost	\$9,828,500	\$13,381,500	\$9,311,500
Utility Cost	\$5,008,760	\$6,281,800	\$5,229,597
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$379,637,260</b>	<b>\$504,163,300</b>	<b>\$445,741,097</b>

# HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1 Historic Courthouse Square, Suite #1  
Hendersonville, NC 28792  
Phone (828) 697-4808 • Fax (828) 692-9855  
[www.hendersoncountync.org](http://www.hendersoncountync.org)

THOMAS THOMPSON  
Chairman  
CHARLIE MESSER  
Vice-Chairman

MICHAEL EDNEY  
GRADY HAWKINS  
WILLIAM LAPSLEY

## RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE I-26 WIDENING PROJECT I-4400/I-4700

**WHEREAS,** pursuant to N.C. General Statute §153, Article 18, the Henderson County Board of Commissioners exercises regulations relating to development within the County's jurisdiction; and

**WHEREAS,** the I-26 widening project is included in the approved State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP); and

**WHEREAS,** the Board is a member of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and supports a transportation planning process in the urbanized area that is comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing, and addresses public safety and local and regional economic needs; and

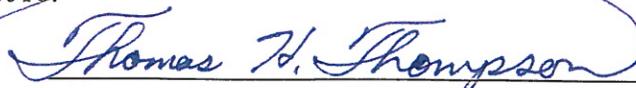
**WHEREAS,** the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is responsible for designing and implementing projects in the STIP; and

**WHEREAS,** the I-26 widening has been long delayed by design and planning discussions;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Henderson County Board of Commissioners as follows:

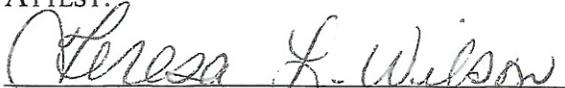
1. That the Board reviewed the proposed I-26 widening project I-4400/I-4700 and finds that it is reasonable, in the public interest and it is consistent with the principles and goals of County Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Strategy located therein; and
2. That the Board determines that the proposed I-26 widening project is needed as the current and projected capacities are operating at unacceptable Level of Service.
3. That the Board determines that the proposed I-26 widening project provides for the sound transport of goods and people while balancing property rights and promoting reasonable growth within the County;

Adopted this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of September, 2016.



THOMAS THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN  
HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:



TERESA L. WILSON, CLERK TO THE BOARD



CITY COUNCIL:  
BARBARA G. VOLK  
Mayor  
STEVE CARAKER  
Mayor Pro Tem  
RON STEPHENS  
JERRY A. SMITH, JR.  
JEFF MILLER

# CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE

*The City of Four Seasons*

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
JOHN F. CONNET

OFFICERS:  
JOHN F. CONNET  
City Manager  
SAMUEL H. FRITSCHNER  
City Attorney  
TAMMIE K. DRAKE  
City Clerk

November 21, 2016

N.C. Department of Transportation  
Attn: Anamika Laad, AICP-CTP  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh NC 27699-1598

Dear Ms. Laad:

Enclosed please find a resolution supporting the widening of I-26 in Henderson and Buncombe Counties (STIP Project I4400/I-4700). This resolution was formally adopted by the Hendersonville City Council on November 3, 2016. We request that this resolution be placed in the record and forwarded to the appropriate parties associated with this project.

In addition, the City of Hendersonville requests that NCDOT consider the following:

1. The City Council is concerned about the proposed design for the I-26/Four Seasons Boulevard interchange. They would request that NCDOT re-evaluate the design to ensure that it provides the safest and most efficient flow of traffic at this critical Hendersonville intersection.
2. The improvement of pedestrian access along Four Seasons Boulevard is a high priority for the City of Hendersonville. The current design of the interchange restricts access between two large commercial centers and we believe the best time to address this issue is during the reconstruction of the interchange as part of this project. Therefore, the City Council requests that NCDOT consider improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the I-26/Four Seasons Boulevard interchange.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (828) 233-3201.

Sincerely,



John F. Connet  
City Manager

CC: Mayor and City Council  
Ed Green, Division Engineer  
Land of Sky MPO  
Henderson County TAC

145 Fifth Ave. E.  
Hendersonville, NC 28792-4328

jconnet@cityofhendersonville.org  
www.cityofhendersonville.org

Phone: 828.697.3000  
Fax: 828.697.8645

**A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE INTERSTATE 26 WIDENING PROJECT  
THROUGH HENDERSON COUNTY**

- WHEREAS,** the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to widen Interstate 26 through Henderson County; and
- WHEREAS,** NCDOT held an open house and public hearing for the Interstate 26 Widening Project I-4400/I-4700 on October 13, 2016; and
- WHEREAS,** Interstate 26 is a major transportation artery through our community for residents, businesses and visitors; and
- WHEREAS,** the City of Hendersonville is a member of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and supports a transportation planning process in urbanized areas that is comprehensive, cooperative and continuing, and addresses public safety and local and regional economic needs; and
- WHEREAS,** the City of Hendersonville asks NCDOT to reexamine all possible alternatives for the intersection of Highway 64/Interstate 26.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Hendersonville fully supports this widening project and encourages NCDOT to begin as soon as possible.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Hendersonville to be affixed.

Adopted this third day of November 2016.



Barbara G. Volk, Mayor  
City of Hendersonville

Attest:



Tammie K. Drake, City Clerk



# FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## RESOLUTION SUBMITTING COMMENTS REGARDING THE I-26 WIDENING PROJECT (I-4400/I-4700) DEIS

WHEREAS, traffic congestion and safety are increasing problems along I-26 through Henderson and Buncombe Counties in western North Carolina; and,

WHEREAS, local and regional residents, commuters, visitors, interstate travelers and commercial freight haulers rely on the route in increasing numbers; and,

WHEREAS, improvements to the I-26 corridor should be minimally disruptive to the local community and should enhance the quality of life for residents and the quality of experience for visitors whenever possible; and,

WHEREAS, members of the community have expressed their strong preference that this project advance to relieve congestion; and,

WHEREAS, a variety of local and regional bicycle, pedestrian and greenways plans exist for the area to be impacted by the I-4400/I-4700 project; and,

WHEREAS, the French Broad River MPO Board has previously adopted a Complete Streets Policy, which includes the following statement:

*“On interstate projects inside FBRMPO planning boundary, the following recommendations and elements shall be considered in the design of all projects: inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations at interchanges to where pedestrian and bicycle safety is given equal emphasis to traffic movement; and inclusion of crossing accommodations in the interstate ROW outside of interchanges at stream crossings or other key crossing points for non-motorized modes of transportation, with particular attention to off-road greenway, bicycle and pedestrian networks that are shown in adopted plans.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the French Broad River MPO Board submits for consideration as part of DEIS comments the following recommendations for this project:

- Support for moving forward with design and construction for I-4400/I-4700 in an efficient and timely manner
- As part of interchange redesign for Exit 49/US 64 Four Seasons Boulevard, consider pedestrian accommodations on the redesigned interchange bridge, as recommended in Hendersonville Pedestrian Plan (with the understanding that final design would be subject to local cost share participation agreements), and bicycle lanes as recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan
- As part of interchange redesign for Exit 44/US 25, consider an alternative design that would minimize the footprint of the interchange and impacts to residential and business properties while still providing appropriate capacity for projected traffic
- As part of interchange redesign for Exit 44/US 25, consider bicycle lane accommodation as recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan (subject to local cost share participation,

if needed), and a potential location for a Park-and-Ride lot, as recommended by the regional Transportation Demand Working Group

- At the I-26 crossing over Cane Creek, between Exit 44 and Exit 40, consider allowing for a future greenway alongside Cane Creek to cross under the interstate bridges (as recommended in the Fletcher Greenways Master Plan)
- If the interchange is being considered for redesign at Exit 33/ NC 146 Long Shoals Road, consider bicycle lane accommodation on NC 146 through the interchange as recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan (secondary corridor)

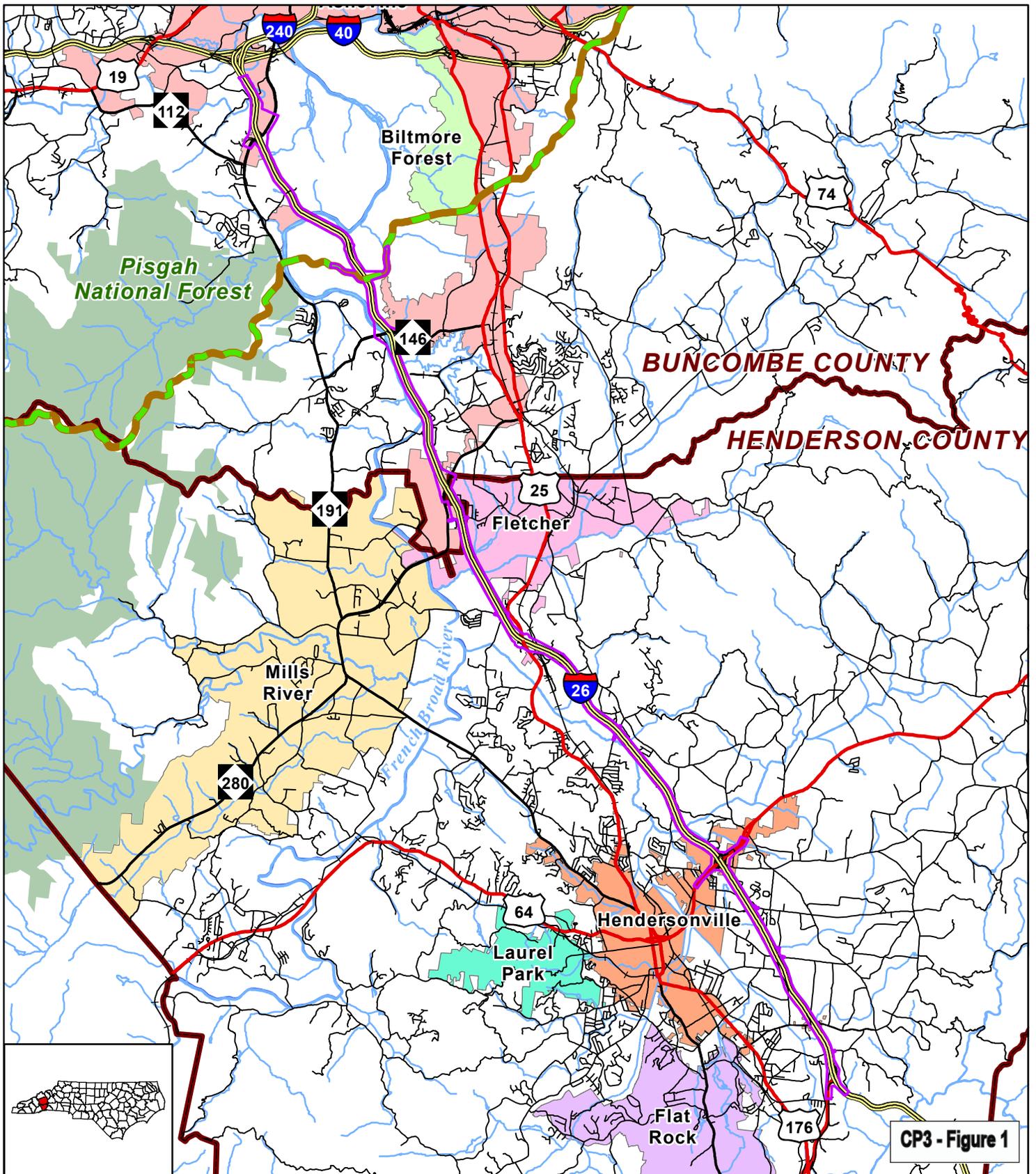
**ADOPTED:** This the 17th day of November, 2016.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Douglas Dearth, FBRMPO Board Chair



\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest, Lyuba Zuyeva, FBRMPO  
Director

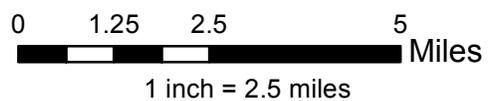


CP3 - Figure 1

**Legend**

- Study Area
- Interstate
- US Route
- NC Route
- Secondary Road
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Railroad
- Stream
- Water Body
- County Boundary

**Figure 2 - Study Area**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Buncombe and Henderson Counties**



Sources: NCDOT, NCOneMap, HNTB

Date: 2016





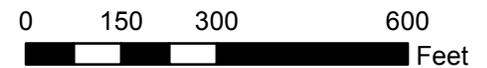
**CP3 - Figure 2**

**Figure 5 - Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) Bridge Options  
STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening  
Buncombe and Henderson Counties**

**Legend**



- Study Area
- Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP)
- Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST)
- Interstate
- BRP Option 1
- BRP Option 4 (NPS' Preferred)
- BRP Option 5
- BRP Option 7



1 inch = 300 feet

N





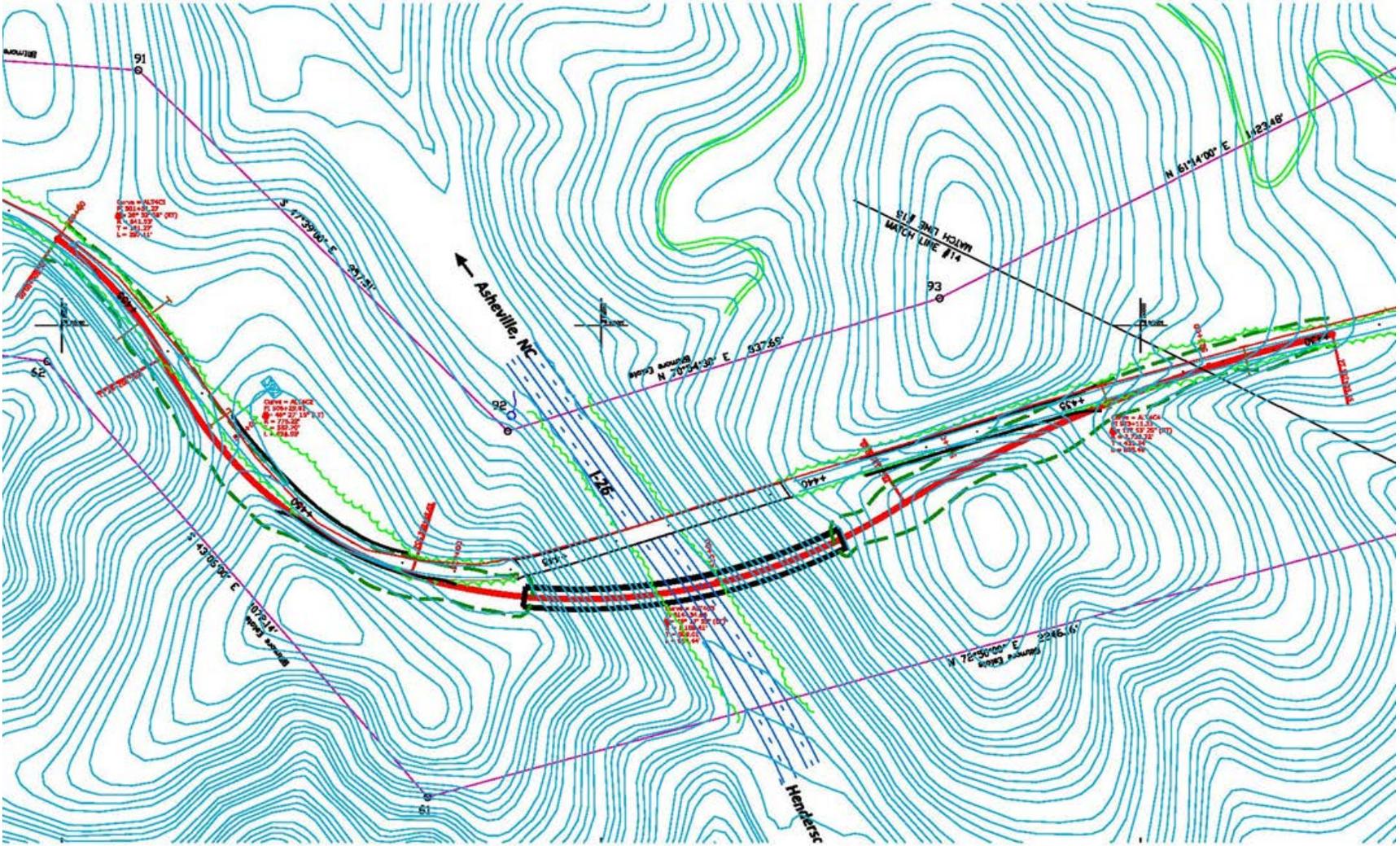
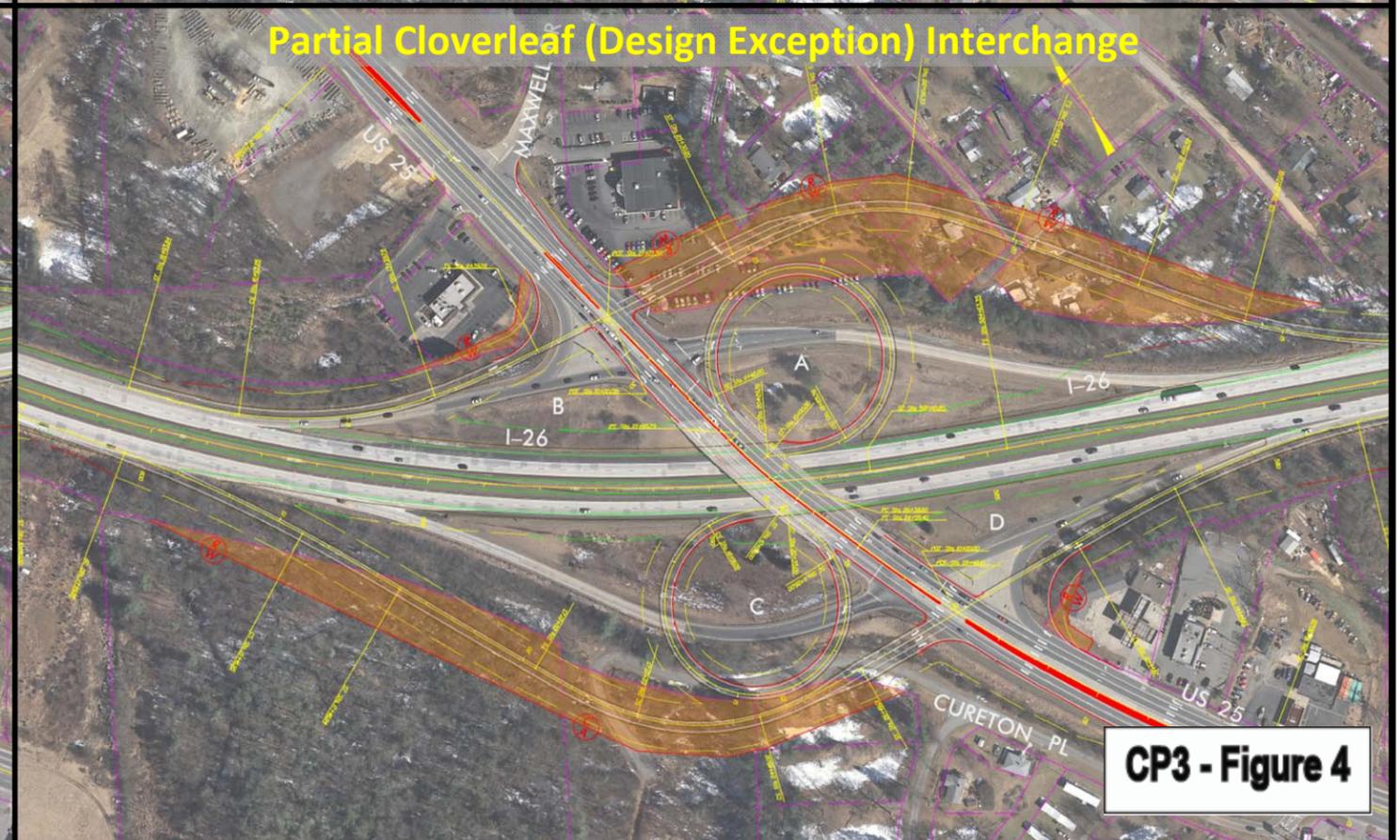
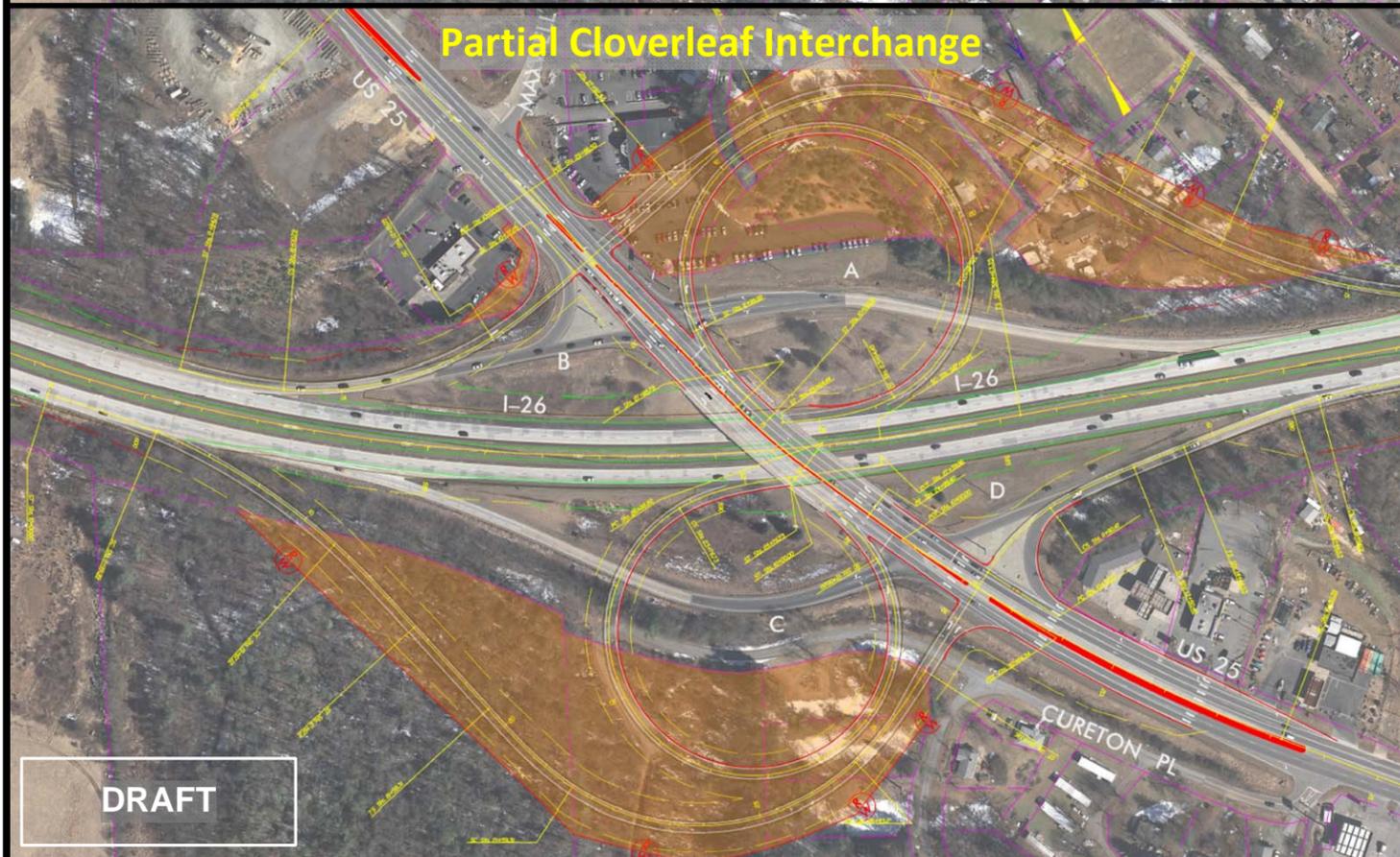
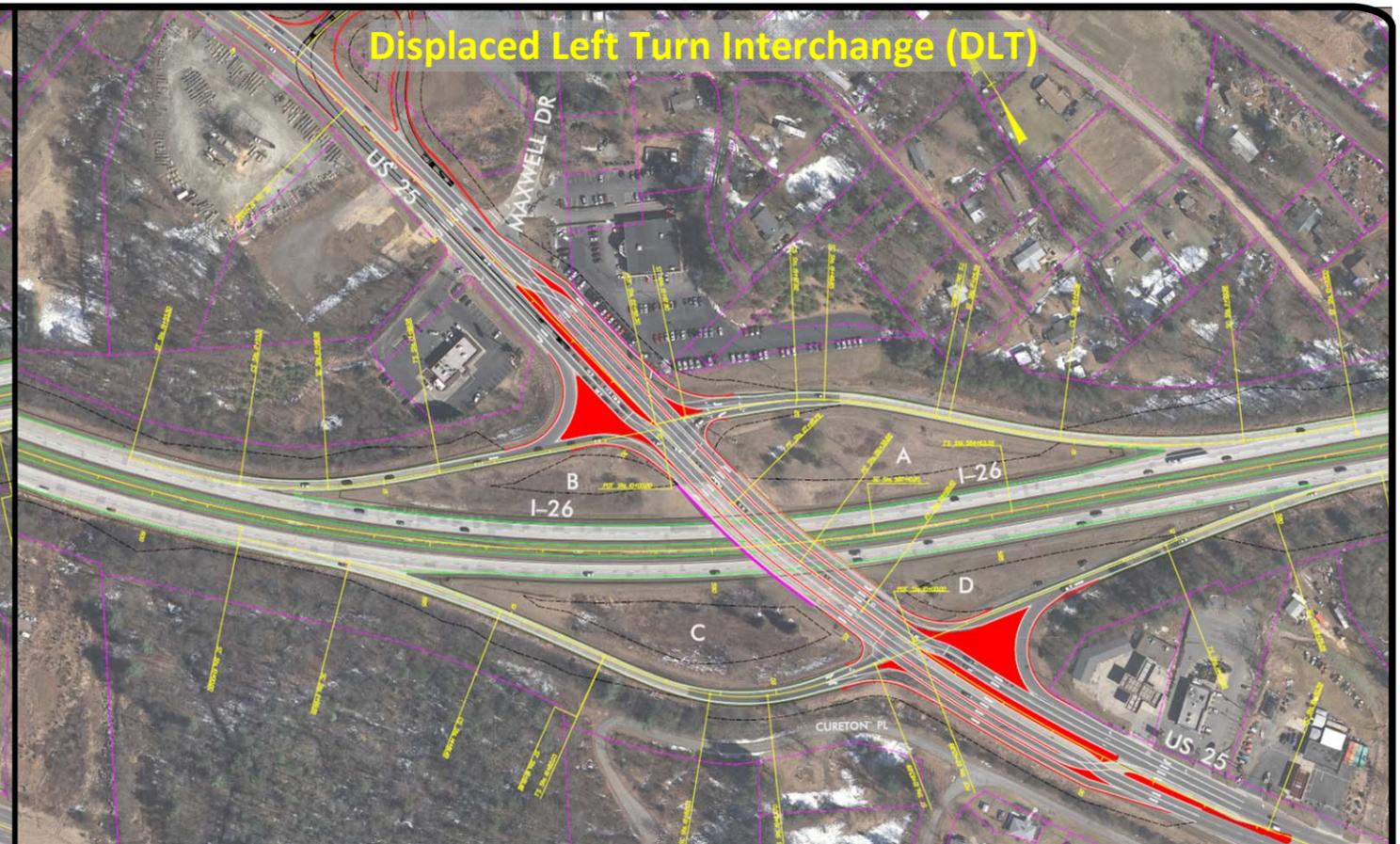
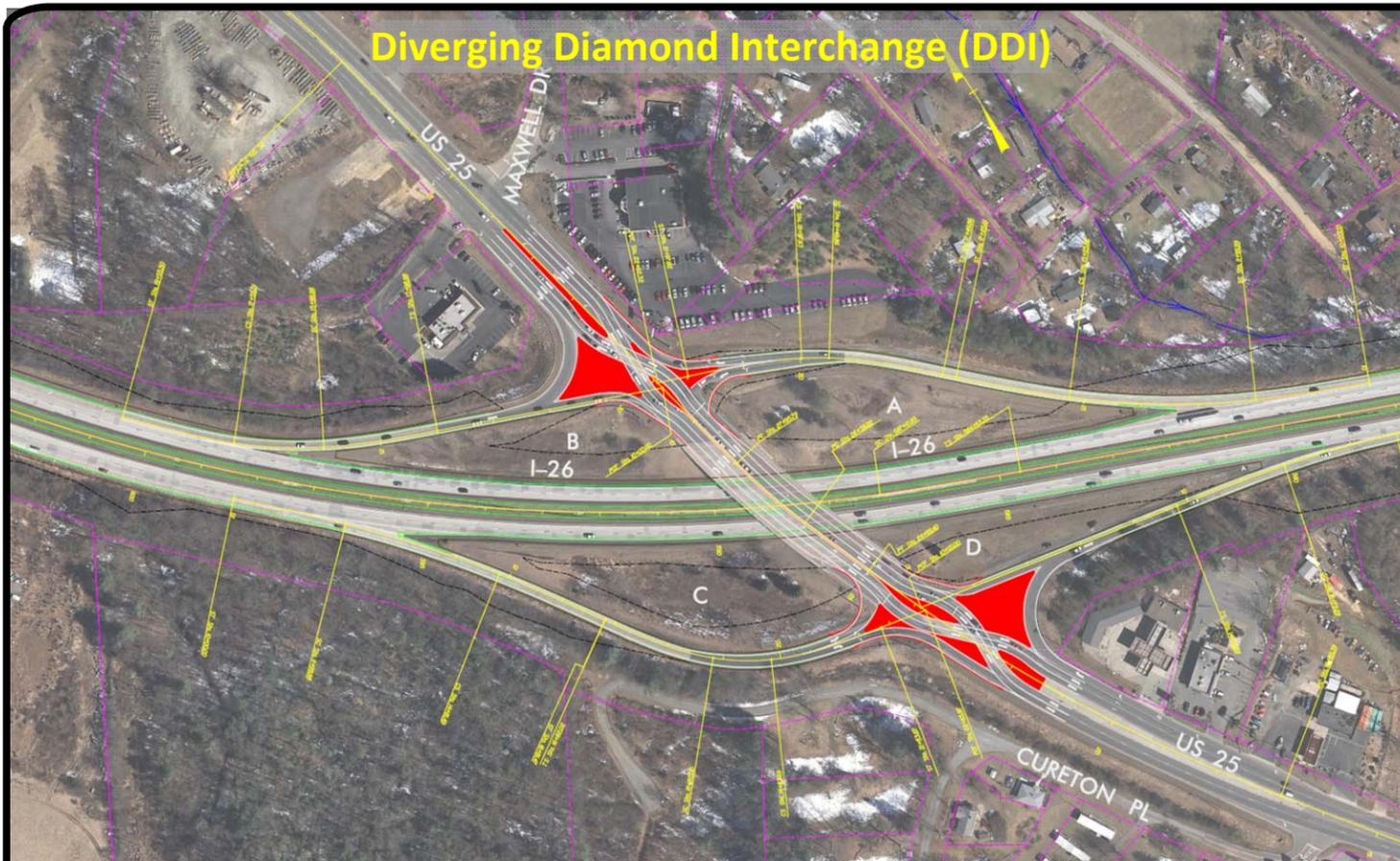


Figure 3: Alignment 4

CP3 - Figure 3





DRAFT

CP3 - Figure 4







25

26

26

MAXWELL DR

OLD HENDERSONVILLE HWY

CURETON PL

# DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE

0 125 250 500 Feet

## Legend

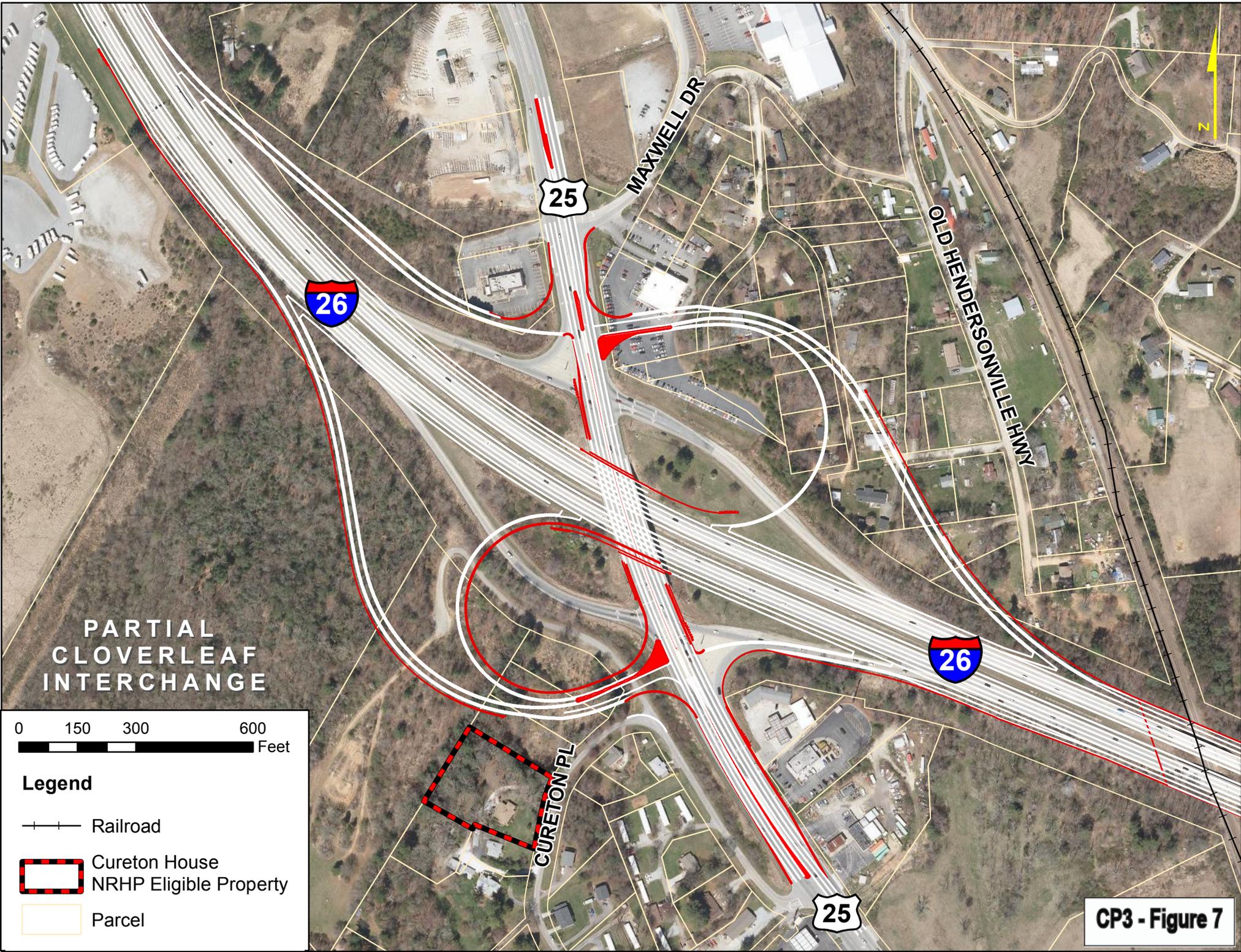
- +—+— Railroad
- ▭ Cureton House NRHP Eligible Property
- ▭ Parcel

CP3 - Figure 5

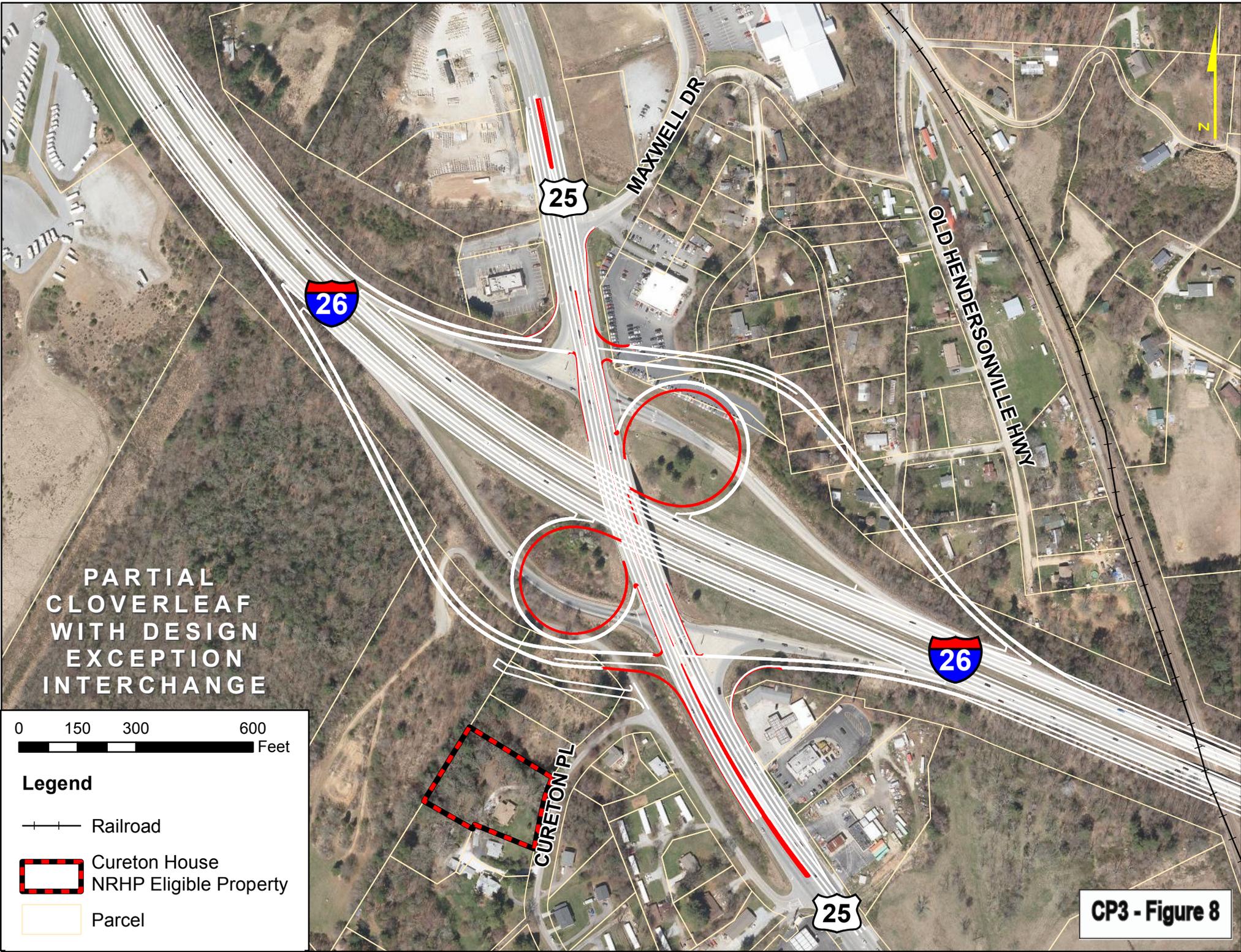








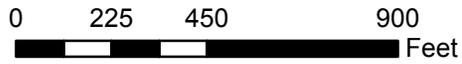








# SYNCHRONIZED INTERCHANGE



## Legend

-  Railroad
-  Cureton House  
NRHP Eligible Property
-  Parcel

CP3 - Figure 9



**From:** Jennifer Harris  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2017 10:53 AM  
**To:** DOT PDEA INTERAGENCY MEETING CALENDAR;  
**Subject:** RE: I-4400 and I-4700: I-26 widening: Divisions 13 and 14: Henderson and Buncombe Counties  
**Attachments:** 03 - I-4400 I-4700\_Traffic Forecast Comparison for I-4400 I-4700 and I-2513 Memorandum\_July 2016.pdf; 01 - I-4400 I-4700 Logical Termini and Independent Utility\_July 2014.pdf; I4400 I4700\_AGHPO\_091714.pdf; I4400 i4700\_AGHPO\_102214.pdf; I4400 I4700\_AGHPO\_111914.pdf; PIN 16296-Trip Report I-26 bridge replacement.docx

Good morning,

I wanted to provide some additional information to everyone regarding comments the USACE received on their Public Notice, which Lori Beckwith and I discussed this week.

1. Information regarding logical termini and independent utility for the project is contained in Appendix A (Technical Reports and Supplemental Materials) of the Draft EIS (on the DVD in the back cover of the printed Draft EIS). There are 2 memos - I-4400 I-4700 Logical Termini and Independent Utility (July 2014) and I-4400 I-4700\_Traffic Forecast Comparison for I-4400 I-4700 and I-2513 Memorandum (July 2016) - available. I have also attached these to this email for quick access.
2. Information regarding potential impacts to Biltmore Estate is included in the Draft EIS in Chapter 3 (Sections 3.2, 3.3) and Chapter 6. Biltmore Estate is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a National Historic Landmark. The Biltmore Estate historic resource includes property in ownership by Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Farms, Inc. Impacts to the Biltmore Estate historic resource will consist of small sections of new ROW and/or easement for cut and fill along steep slopes where necessary, but will be restricted to areas of previous ground disturbance associated with earlier I-26 construction. This has been determined a No Adverse Effect for Section 106 and a *de minimis* impact for Section 4(f). Furthermore, the small sections of new ROW and/or easement are contained within the property owned by Biltmore Farms, Inc.
3. Comments from the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma (UKB) included the recommendation for a cultural resources inventory. Information regarding archaeological review for the project is included in the attachments. We will continue to coordinate with UKB to ensure they have the information regarding the archaeological review of the project.
4. NCDOT is continuing to evaluate the proposed US 25 interchange improvements. The Draft EIS included information for a proposed partial cloverleaf design, however additional options are being evaluated in order to reduce impacts to the human and natural environments. The results of this evaluation will be shared with the Merger Team at a future meeting where overall avoidance and minimization for the project is discussed.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss these topics or any other aspect of the project in advance of the CP3 Merger Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 18, 2017 from 3:00 PM-5:00 PM.

Regards,  
Jennifer

**Jennifer Harris, P.E., CPM**

Senior Project Manager

**■ HNTB North Carolina, P.C. | 100 YEARS OF INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS**

343 E. Six Forks Road, Suite 200

Raleigh, NC 27609

Direct 919.424.0427

Mobile 919.656.7003



# I-26 Improvements

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



Widening and reconstruction from US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to NC 191 (exit 33) in Buncombe County

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** January 18, 2017  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
**Place:** NCDOT Structure Design Conference Room C at the Century Center Building A and via online meeting/conference call  
**Purpose:** Concurrence Point 3 (CP 3) Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) Merger Meeting

**Attendees:**

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Felix Davila	FHWA	felix.davila@dot.gov	919-747-7021
Loretta Beckwith	USACE	loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil	828-271-7980 x223
Kevin Barnett*	NCDEQ DWR	kevin.barnett@ncdenr.gov	828-296-4657
Cynthia Van Der Wiele, PhD	USEPA	VanDerWiele.Cynthia@epa.gov	919-450-6811
Marella Buncick*	USFWS	marella_buncick@fws.gov	828-258-3939 x237
Marla Chambers*	NCWRC	marla.chambers@ncwildlife.org	704-984-1070
Renee Gledhill-Earley*	NC HPO	renee.gledhill-earley@ncdcr.gov	919-807-6579
Lyuba Zuyeva	French Broad River MPO/Land of Sky	lyuba@landofsky.org	828-251-7454
Tristan Winkler*	French Broad River MPO/Land of Sky	tristan@landofsky.org	828-251-6622 x138
John Williams	NCDOT – PDEA	jllwilliams@ncdot.gov	919-707-6178
Beverly Robinson	NCDOT – PDEA	brobinson@ncdot.gov	919-707-6041
Ricky Tipton*	NCDOT – Division 13	rtpipton@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171 x209
Cole Hood*	NCDOT – Division 13	chood@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171
Brian Burch*	NCDOT – Division 14	brianburch@ncdot.gov	828-586-2141
Edward Green*	NCDOT – Division 14	eagreen@ncdot.gov	828-586-2141
David McHenry*	NCDOT – Division 14	dgmchenry@ncdot.gov	828-586-2141
Elise Groundwater*	NCDOT – Congestion Management	ekgroundwater@ncdot.gov	919-814-5056
Tim McFadden	NCDOT – Design Build	tmcfadden@ncdot.gov	919-707-6615
Mary Pope Furr	NCDOT – Human Environment Section	mfurr@ncdot.gov	919-707-6068
Bill Zerman	NCDOT – Hydraulics	bzerman@ncdot.gov	919-707-6755
Carla Dagnino	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	cdagnino@ncdot.gov	919-707-6110
Bill Barrett	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	wabarrett@ncdot.gov	919-707-6103
Chris Manley	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	cdmanley@ncdot.gov	919-707-6135

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Email address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Kathy Herring	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	mkherring@ncdot.gov	919-707-6128
Roger Castillo	NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch	ricastillosantamaria@ncdot.gov	919-271-7036
Daniel Sellers	NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch	dc sellers1@ncdot.gov	919-707-0978
Gary Lovering	NCDOT – Roadway Design	glovering@ncdot.gov	919-707-6271
Heather Wallace	Calyx Engineering	hwallace@calyxengineers.com	919-858-1812
David Bass	HNTB	dbass@hntb.com	919-404-0460
Eric Seckinger*	HNTB	eseckinger@hntb.com	704-208-5351
Jennifer Harris	HNTB	jharris@hntb.com	919-404-0427
Kat Bukowy	HNTB	kbukowy@hntb.com	919-424-0441

\*participated via telephone

Jennifer Harris (HNTB) introduced the meeting and led introductions. She then reviewed the agenda, purpose and goals of the meeting, discussed the alternatives, and led the meeting conversation through the comments from the Agencies/Local Officials/Organizations on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). She reviewed the agencies that had submitted comment letters and discussed comments received that were relevant to choosing a Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA).

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) submitted a request that the US 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard/Chimney Rock Highway) include accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian use. NCDOT has agreed to a ParClo “B” at this interchange that would accommodate those users.

Jennifer noted that several agencies and organizations had provided comments regarding the size and impacts of the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange. She noted that NCDOT was working on additional design options at the interchange to lower the impacts to the human and natural environment.

FBRMPO also noted that a bicycle lane accommodation is recommended in the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan. NCDOT has agreed to consider bicycle use in this area when re-designing the interchange.

A comment provided to US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on behalf of the Biltmore Company/Biltmore Estate/West Range, LLC, noted that “The Biltmore Estate does not support any alternative that would require acquisition or impacts to lands within the Estate and outside of existing right of way.” The location of the necessary right of way acquisition was determined by NC Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to be a No Adverse Effect to the Biltmore Estate National Historic Landmark. However, it is a Section 4(f) *de minimis* use of the property. This is discussed in Section 3.2.4.1 of the Draft EIS.

Among its comments, the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) noted that the 6-Lane Widening Alternative would potentially avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. Cynthia Van der Wiele, PhD (USEPA) noted that USEPA had provided many comments and Jennifer acknowledged that they had been received and would be responded to, but the comments germane to CP 3 were being presented.

Following the pertinent agency comments for determining LEDPA, Jennifer noted that the majority of public comments supported the widening, although there was no clear “winner.” She then reviewed the impacts summary table presented in the Draft EIS, particularly the relocations, streams, and wetlands. The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative (Hybrid) falls between the 6-Lane Widening and 8-Lane Widening Alternative. Cynthia noted that for environmental justice purposes the “minor relocations” affected the Brickton community, which was previously

impacted in the original building of I-26. NCDOT will try to further minimize impacts to the community.

Jennifer continued with a discussion of the proposed design options at US 25 (Asheville Highway). The two options under consideration are the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) and the Synchronized Interchange, put forth during NCDOT's Value Engineering study. The USEPA asked how new the Synchronized Interchange concept is and if it has previously been used. The concept is a superstreet design, which is not new, its use on an interchange is new. John Williams (NCDOT – Project Manager) noted that if this concept goes forward more public involvement will be conducted, particularly to properties along the interchange. USEPA noted that I-26 has heavy truck traffic and that the DDI is a proven concept, not requiring U-turns.

Rick Tipton (NCDOT, Division 13) asked for clarification on the location of the Brickton community. The community is located in the vicinity of Butler Bridge Road (Public Hearing Map Sheet 4).

Lori Beckwith (USACE) asked if the cost estimates (shown in the PowerPoint and in the Draft EIS) included the cost of wetland and stream mitigation. NCDOT responded that they did not. Carla Dagnino (NCDOT-NES) asked if these costs were included in materials discussed at the CP 2 meeting. It was not but was provided for the crossings discussed at the CP 2A meeting. Lori made a general request that this be included in standardized cost estimate tables going forward. Cynthia agreed.

Cynthia asked if tribal consultation had been conducted. Jennifer noted that an archaeological evaluation had been done and that NCDOT is checking to see if additional coordination with them is needed.

Felix Davila (FHWA) asked if it was fair to say that because the 6-Lane Widening Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need if it could be eliminated as a potential LEDPA. Lori said yes.

Lori further stated that because the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange redesign is part of all of the proposed alternatives it is not an alternative by itself. She requested that it be looked at closely during CP 4A. Jennifer noted that she added a caveat to the CP 3 form that US 25 (Asheville Highway) options would be addressed at CP 4A.

Marella Buncick (USFWS) asked if the 6-Lane Widening Alternative does not meet Purpose and Need she is not sure if additional right of way information would be necessary. Marella noted that the 8-Lane Widening Alternative would need to have as minimal a footprint as possible if the 6-Lane Widening Alternative is not an option. She recalled a conversation she and Cole Hood (NCDOT Division 13) had regarding the use of retaining walls in certain areas. Marella noted that she did not have information regarding the gray bat, which contributed to her uncertainty in choosing a LEDPA. Lori asked if she could concur with a LEDPA if minimization was discussed during Section 7 consultation and at CP 4A.

Rick asked Marella if having the difference in the 6-Lane Widening and 8-Lane Widening Alternative distances across I-26 would help. Eric Seckinger (HNTB) clarified it is possible to overlay the 6-Lane and 8-Lane Alternative slope stakes and measure the difference between the two. Marella said that that was not what she was looking for exactly. Rick said that she would need to look at the slope stakes relative to where trees are cleared. Marella said that she would want the slope stakes for the cleared versus uncleared amount to be minimized. The area of concern is between NC 191 (Brevard Road) and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Marella believes that it will be a small percent difference, however, if it is "too high" she may abstain from concurring on CP 3 and signing the concurrence form.

Renee Gledhill-Earley (SHPO) asked if the 6-Lane Widening Alternative does not meet Purpose and Need then did that force everyone to the 8-Lane Widening Alternative. NCDOT clarified that if the 6-Lane Widening Alternative is being discussed as eliminated due to it not meeting Purpose and Need then the 8-Lane Widening Alternative and the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative

remain. This is because the 6-Lane Widening Alternative only meets the Purpose and Need for the southern half of the project (I-4400) and not the entire project.

Renee noted that she does not like leaving the US 25 (Asheville Highway) portion of the project “on the table”, but is fine concurring with the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative as the LEDPA.

Marla Chambers asked if the Purpose and Need goal of Level of Service (LOS D) in the design year should be re-visited. The meeting participants did not discuss reevaluating the project purpose and need.

Lori noted that choosing LEDPA now does not preclude other options for minimization under Section 7. That there are two alternatives from which to choose a LEDPA and that the one with fewer impacts is the Hybrid and therefore to her, the LEDPA. An opportunity to further reduce the alternative footprint will be at CP 4A, Avoidance and Minimization.

Marella asked for data on the amount of clearing to help substantiate the LEDPA from her perspective. This information can be limited to the area between NC 191 (Brevard Road) and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Beverly Robinson (NCDOT PDEA) noted that Marella was not physically present to sign today, but may be willing to concur once she receives the information.

Rick suggested looking at the slope stakes for both the 6-Lane and the 8-Lane Widening Alternatives and calculating the area. Marella then asked what the distance (linear feet) from tree clearing to tree clearing would be. John asked what intervals she would want this measured. Marella was uncertain but agreed to the areas where right of way was being added and would then re-evaluate.

John asked if everyone was prepared to sign for concurrence. Cynthia noted that NCDWR had not provided their input. Kevin Barnett (NCDWR) noted that his internet was down and he was unable to view what everyone was discussing. However, when he regained internet access he would review the materials, ask any questions he has, and sign.

Felix clarified that Marella wants additional information, but thought she would concur on the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative as the LEDPA. Marella noted that once she has information, at worst she would abstain.

Rick asked Marella if she wanted the distance measured at 500-foot intervals. Marella noted that she wanted a line with the 6-Lane Widening Alternative and a line with the 8-Lane Alternative over an aerial so she could see what it’s going to look like. HNTB agreed to make a sample and send to Rick and Marella prior to evaluating the entire area of interest.

Cynthia noted that the USEPA attorneys pointed out that the 6-Lane Widening Alternative meets the Purpose and Need for 80 to 90 percent of its length. Jennifer replied that only 12 of the 22 miles of the project length meet the LOS D measure under the 6-Lane Widening Alternative. Lyuba Zuyeva (FBRMPO) requested that figures showing the LOS in 2040, with a table for explanation, for the 6-Lane Widening Alternative, 8-Lane Widening Alternative, and the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative be developed. HNTB agreed to prepare these additional figures.

NCDOT, FHWA, USACE, and FBRMPO signed the concurrence form. USEPA, USFWS, and NCWRC agreed to sign once the additional requested information has been provided. NCDWR confirmed that he would review the materials from the meeting and then sign.

January 18, 2017

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement**

**Concurrence Point No. 3 – Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)**

Project Name/Description: I-26 Widening, US 25 in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County  
STIP Project No.: I-4400/I-4700  
WBS No.: 34232.1.1/36030.1.1  
Federal Aid Project No.: NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9

The Merger Team met on January 18, 2017 and concurs with the selection of the following alternative as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700:

- 6-Lane Widening Alternative
- 8-Lane Widening Alternative
- Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative

Note: Additional discussions regarding the US 25 interchange improvements will occur at the future Concurrence Point No. 4A meeting.

Federal Highway Administration

*Felix D. [Signature]*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

*Ann Beckert*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

*Cynthia F. Vander Walle*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*Michelle [Signature]*

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

*Maria Chamberlain*

N.C. Division of Water Resources

*Kevin [Signature]*

State Historic Preservation Office

*Renee Meckhill-Early*

French Broad River MPO

*[Signature]*

N.C. Department of Transportation

*John Williams*

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

*Holly Maust*



# I-26 Improvements

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County including Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26

## MEETING SUMMARY

- Date:** July 5, 2017
- Time:** 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Place:** NCDOT Traffic Engineering Greenfield Branch Conference Room (Room 161) and via WebEx/conference call
- Purpose:** To discuss the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange improvement options (Diverging Diamond Interchange and Synchronized Interchange) and associated traffic operations, costs and impacts

**Attendees:**

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Felix Davila	FHWA	felix.davila@dot.gov	919-747-7021
Cole Hood*	NCDOT – Division 13	chood@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171
Brian Burch*	NCDOT – Division 14	brianburch@ncdot.gov	828-586-2141
Bucky Galloway*	NCDOT – Transportation Mobility and Safety	ddgalloway@ncdot.gov	828-650-2700
Elise Groundwater	NCDOT – Congestion Management	ekgroundwater@ncdot.gov	919-814-5056
Joseph Hummer	NCDOT – Traffic Management Unit	jehummer@ncdot.gov	919-814-5040
Jim Dunlop	NCDOT – Congestion Management	jdunlop@ncdot.gov	919-814-4936
Eric Seckinger*	HNTB	eseckinger@hntb.com	704-208-5351
Jennifer Harris*	HNTB	jhharris@hntb.com	919-424-0427
Kat Bukowy	HNTB	kbukowy@hntb.com	919-424-0441
Sravya Suryadevara	HNTB	ssuryadevara@hntb.com	919-424-0485
Elizabeth Harris*	HNTB	eaharris@hntb.com	704-208-5359
David Bass*	HNTB	dbass@hntb.com	919-424-0460

\*Participated by phone

Kat Bukowy (HNTB) opened the meeting with introductions. Sravya Suryadevara (HNTB) then explained the traffic analysis and compared the results of the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) type and the Synchronized Interchange (SI) type. The driveways along US 25 (Asheville Highway) on the north side of the interchange have very low volumes and the driveways along the south side of the interchange have slightly higher volumes. The heavy vehicle traffic is also higher on the south side and it is predominantly due to the high truck volumes headed to the truck stop. Cureton Place also has a fairly high level of heavy vehicles. For the interchange and Naples Road intersection, the forecast traffic volumes were used in the analysis while the turning movement volumes collected were used for all the driveways. Overall, both interchange types work; however, the SI type works slightly better during the peak hours.

Brian Burch (NCDOT – Division 14) noted that the SI works better in the peak hours, but his concern was still the trucking industry. Bucky Galloway (NCDOT – Transportation Mobility Safety) stated that he

would be ok with the SI option if NCDOT could get local buy-in/support. Jennifer Harris (HNTB) noted that this would require additional public involvement/outreach.

Cole Hood (NCDOT – Division 13) commented that the DDI at the NC 280 (Airport Road) interchange had a lot of incidents where left turning trucks sideswipe the guardrail due to the tight turning radius. Cole asked if, as part of this project, NCDOT could review the Airport Road interchange and improve the turning radius.

Jim Dunlop (NCDOT – Congestion Management) noted that he supports the SI type. He also asked about the difference in cost between the two interchange types. Eric Seckinger (HNTB) noted that the SI type includes widening the bridge and the approaches along the roadway, whereas the DDI does not require widening.

Jim suggested plotting the turning radii for trucks in the DDI given the problems at Airport Road. Cole also mentioned a capacity issue at Airport Road. Bucky noted the need for a before-and-after lane utilization study. David Bass (HNTB) asked if the merge lane on the ramp was already in place prior to the gore and Bucky said that no, it was needed.

Jennifer asked if an IAR would be required. Because the ramps end before the gore, it was determined that no IAR would be required for either interchange type.

Jim asked where the difference came from in impacts between the DDI and SI. He expected the impacts to be relatively similar. Kat stated that she would review the impacts and provide additional information to the group\*.

Brian asked about additional outreach. Jennifer noted that the entire mailing list would need to be notified as well as additional targeted outreach, particularly at the truck stop. It was asked how long the additional outreach would take and three months was suggested.

It was generally felt that NCDOT would have to explain “how much better” the SI was to the DDI and “if it is better enough”. Jim noted that for any public involvement the differences between each would need to be shown. Jennifer suggest showing one interchange type on the design public hearing map and having information on the second as a station at the Design Public Hearing (DPH). Jim asked if the two types should be shown to the MPO as a representative of the public. Jennifer noted that the FBRMPO’s comments on the design had been about property and relocation and natural resources impacts, both of which have been reduced.

Brian noted his concern that if the SI type was chosen the agencies would not approve due to higher natural resources impacts\*. Joe Hummer (NCDOT – Traffic Management Unit) noted that it is easier to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic with the SI type. Jim noted that accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrian to cross US 25 would need to be included in the design. Joe requested that David and Eric check to ensure that the DDI does fit on the current bridge.

Jim suggested pushing forward with the DDI type unless, during a review of the truck turning radii, the ramps are pushed out. He felt that overall the DDI type would have more public support. He felt that there should be a station at the DPH that showed the evolution from ParClo B to DDI.

Bucky asked if Maxwell Drive would be closed. Jim said yes. Bucky then asked if a leftover would be provided to the Hardee’s. Jim noted that it would be a very difficult movement for northbound traffic. This may be revisited following public involvement.

Felix Davila (FHWA) stated his concern regarding public involvement and noted that the newsletter had errors. Jennifer clarified that the DPH would occur before the Record of Decision was signed. Felix stated that he was no longer concerned.

**Action Items:**

- HNTB will review the truck turning radii for the DDI type to determine if the ramp termini need to be modified at US 25.
- HNTB will provide the updated Traffic Analysis Results Summary which include the US 25 Corridor Network MOEs.
  - This document is attached.
- \*HNTB will review the natural resources impacts for the DDI and SI.
  - This task is complete. In reviewing the two designs, it was determined that the design of the DDI was more refined than that of the SI design. The SI design was brought up to the level of the DDI, which brought in the slopestakes along the ramps; which served to more accurately reflect the impacts. The impacts were measured based on the slopestakes plus 40 feet. As expected, the revised impact calculations show negligible to no difference between the two interchange types, with the exception of the Maintained/Disturbed natural community. The impact table below has been updated accordingly.

Please note that the parcels, relocations, and costs do not change as they are not based on slopestakes, but on proposed right of way.

**Potential Impacts by Proposed US 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange Design Concept**

<b>Impact Type</b>	<b>Partial Cloverleaf Interchange<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Diverging Diamond Interchange</b>	<b>Synchronized Interchange</b>
Stream (linear feet) <sup>1</sup>	2,246	1,375	1,375
Wetland (acres) <sup>1</sup>	0.2	<0.1	<0.1
Pond (acres) <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0
<b>Natural Communities<sup>1</sup></b>			
Maintained / Disturbed (acres)	28.9	40.6	42.3
Montane Oak-Hickory Forest (acidic subtype) (acres)	7.2	9.5	9.5
Montane Oak-Hickory Forest (white pine subtype) (acres)	7.9	2.2	2.2
Acidic Cove Forest (acres)	3.5	2.9	2.9
Parcel (number/acres) <sup>2</sup>	41 / 21.3	11 / 1.6	21 / 3.2
Relocations (number) <sup>2</sup>	32	0	0
Signs (number) <sup>2</sup>	-	1	5
Estimated Construction Cost <sup>3</sup>	\$8,800,000	\$6,500,000	\$7,600,000
Estimated Right of Way Cost <sup>3</sup>	\$4,536,500	\$1,170,500	\$2,298,250

<sup>1</sup>Impacts based on functional proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet;

<sup>2</sup>Impacts based on proposed right of way;

<sup>3</sup>Costs estimated by NCDOT. Partial Cloverleaf estimates provided in the Draft EIS (8/2016). Diverging Diamond and Synchronized Interchange estimates provided 4/26/2017 and 6/19/2017.

- HNTB will review the newsletter
  - This task is complete and the revised newsletter and website text will be added to the project website.

## Project Schedule

Milestone	Schedule
<b>NEPA</b>	
Final EIS*	August 2017 – tentative schedule for completion; FHWA plans to issue combined Final EIS/ROD
CP 4A	September/October 2017
Biological Assessment	November 2017
Biological Opinion from USFWS (gray bat)	April 2018
Record of Decision (ROD)*	May 2018
<b>Design (I-4400C, I-4700A, I-4700B)</b>	
25% Designs	3 separate submittals (Aug-Sep 2017)
4B Meeting	December 2017
Design Public Hearing	December 2017
Hydraulic Designs	3 separate submittals (Feb-Mar 2018)
FDFI Meeting	May 2018
Final ROW Plans	July 2018
PLFI Meeting	February 2019
Final Plans	April 2019
LET	July 2019

\*A draft version of the Final EIS/ROD was provided to NCDOT and FHWA for review on 6/22/2017; comments are requested by 7/14/2017. The impacts included in that draft included those for the Diverging Diamond Interchange option. *These will be changed based on the refinements described above.*

## Interstate 26 and US 25 Highway Interchange Traffic Analysis Summary Results

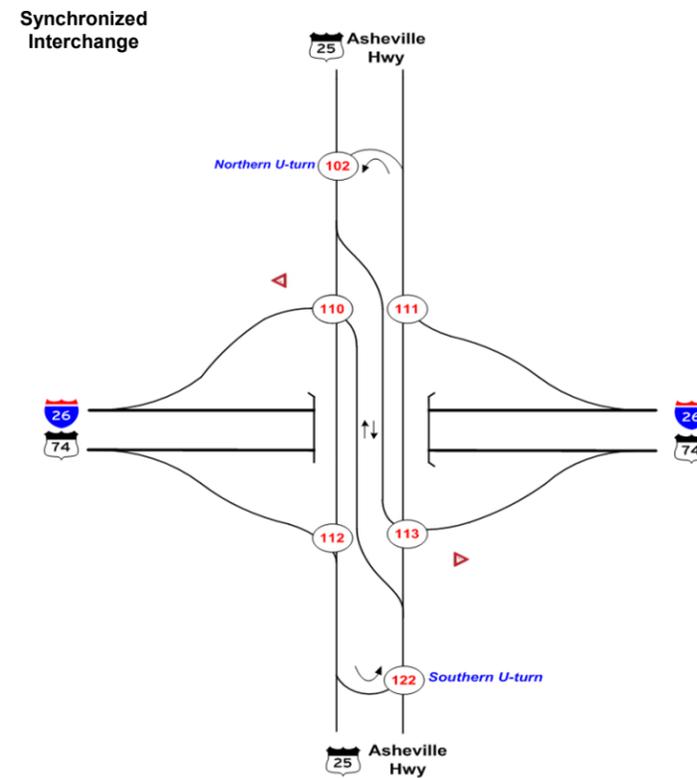
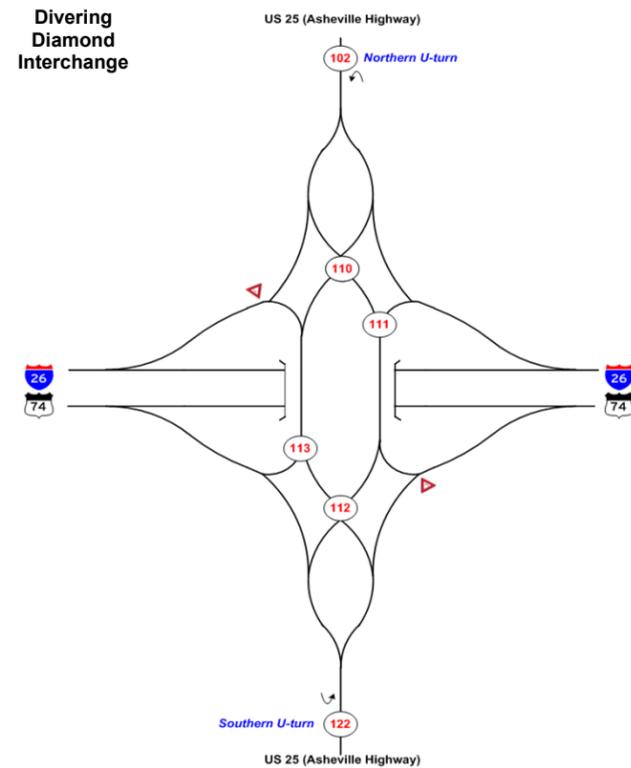
2040 Network MOE Summary Results	Diverging Diamond Interchange		Synchronized Interchange	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
MOE				
Trips Completed	13,235	13,338	13,417	13,513
Trips Queued	99	27	39	0
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	18,566	18,673	18,902	19,004
Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT)	548	519	478	431
Network Speed (mph)	33.9	36.0	39.6	44.1
Network Delay (Hours)	207	186	179	135
Delay Per Vehicle (Seconds)	56	50	48	36

*\*Please note that I-26 freeway section is also included in the network under both scenarios*

2040 US 25 Corridor		DDI		Synchronized Interchange	
MOE	Direction	AM	PM	AM	PM
Trips Completed	Northbound	614	823	656	846
	Southbound	721	577	798	614
Average Travel Time (min)	Northbound	3.77	3.70	2.00	2.01
	Southbound	4.66	3.84	2.59	2.26
Average Travel Speed (mph)	Northbound	17.3	17.7	32.4	32.2
	Southbound	13.9	16.9	25.0	28.7

2040 Signalized Intersection Control Delay Results		Diverging Diamond Interchange						Synchronized Interchange					
ID*	Intersection Name	Cycle Length		95th % Worst Control Delay (sec/veh)		Equivalent LOS <sub>s</sub>		Cycle Length		95th % Worst Control Delay (sec/veh)		Equivalent LOS <sub>s</sub>	
		AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
102	US 25 and US 25 NB U-turn	160 sec	160 sec	7.9	6.2	A	A	75 sec	65 sec	7.1	6.5	A	A
110	US 25 and I-26 WB On-Ramp	160 sec	80 sec	38.4	41.1	D	D	75 sec	65 sec	25.5	21.4	C	C
111	US 25 and I-26 WB Off-Ramp	160 sec	80 sec	1.0	0.1	A	A	75 sec	65 sec	10.9	9.3	B	A
112	US 25 and I-26 EB Off-Ramp	160 sec	80 sec	44.7	30.2	D	C	75 sec	65 sec	32.5	11.3	C	B
113	US 25 and I-26 EB On-Ramp	160 sec	80 sec	27.7	8.1	C	A	75 sec	65 sec	17.6	13.7	B	B
122	US 25 and US 25 SB U-turn	160 sec	80 sec	10.9	6.4	B	A	150 sec	130 sec	10.1	7.3	B	A
124	US 25 and New Naples Road / Skyland Drive	160 sec	160 sec	27.5	44.0	C	D	150 sec	130 sec	23.3	22.9	C	C

*\*Please refer to the maps below for intersection location based on ID number*





## I-26 Widening

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County including Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26

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### Section 404/NEPA Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement

#### Concurrence Point 4A

#### Avoidance and Minimization

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	October 11, 2017
<b>Time:</b>	10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
<b>Place:</b>	NCDOT Century Center Building B, Hydraulic Design Conference Room
<b>Project:</b>	I-26 Widening in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, Federal Aid Project No. NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9, WBS No. 34232.1.1/36030.1.1, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14
<b>Purpose:</b>	Achieve Merger Team concurrence on Concurrence Point (CP) 4A, Avoidance and Minimization, for the proposed I-26 Widening

#### Agenda

This meeting is being held to:

- Review the proposed improvements for the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)/ Preferred Alternative and summarize the impacts as disclosed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- Discuss proposed measures to Avoid and Minimize impacts of the proposed action.
- Reach concurrence on Avoidance and Minimization for the Project.

#### Previous Merger Team Meetings and Concurrence Points Reached

The Merger Team reached concurrence on the Purpose and Need Statement (CP 1) and Detailed Study Alternatives (CP 2) on June 20, 2013; Bridging Decisions and Alignment Review (CP 2A) on February 11, 2015; and Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)/Preferred Alternative (CP 3) on January 18, 2017.

## Project Study Area

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400 begins at US 25 (Exit 54) near Hendersonville and extends along I-26 west to NC 280 (Exit 40). STIP Project I-4700 extends along I-26 from NC 280 west to the I-40/I-240 interchange. **Figure 1** shows the general project vicinity.

## Project Description

The project proposes to improve a 22.2-mile segment of Interstate 26 (I-26). The project is located in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, beginning just south of Hendersonville and ending just south of Asheville.

## Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed improvements to I-26 is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall level of service (LOS) D in the design year (2040), and to improve the pavement structure.

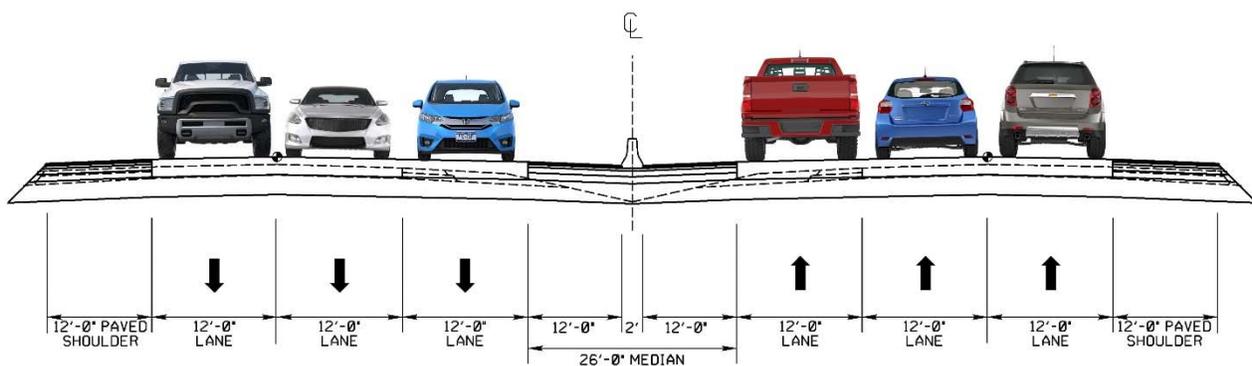
## Proposed Improvements

NCDOT proposes to widen I-26 to three lanes in each direction between US 25 and the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange and widen I-26 to four lanes in each direction from US 25 (Asheville Highway) to the I-40/I-240 interchange. This is also known as the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative or the Preferred Alternative and was chosen as the LEDPA at the January 2017 Merger Meeting. The widening will be designed to best fit within the existing right of way limits for I-26 to the extent possible; however, some additional right of way will be required.

### Typical Sections

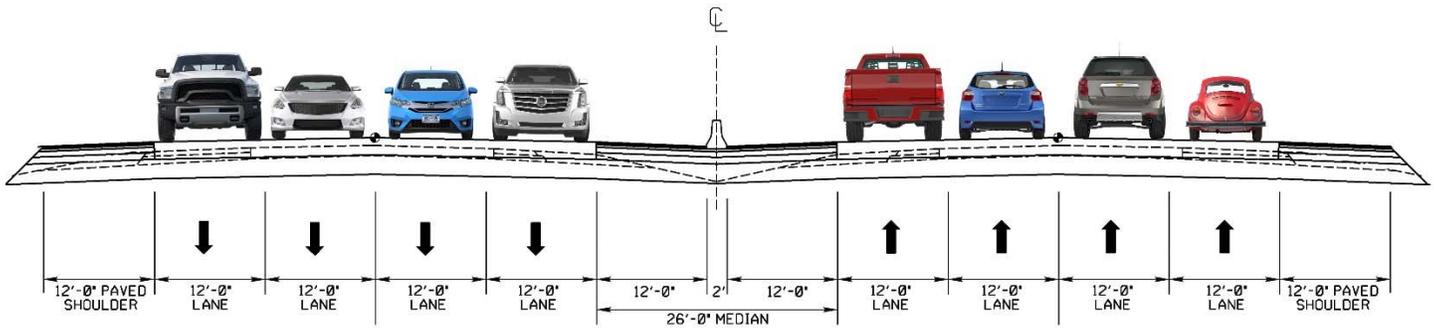
As shown on Inset 1, the proposed typical section for the six-lane section, from US 25 to US 25 (Asheville Highway), of the Preferred Alternative consists of three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction, with a 26-foot median that includes a median barrier wall.

#### Inset 1. 6-Lane Typical Section



As shown in Inset 2, the eight-lane section of the Preferred Alternative, from US 25 (Asheville Highway) to I-40/I-240, includes four lanes in each direction, with a 26-foot median that includes a median barrier wall. However, there are two areas where the northbound and southbound lanes separate and the median width varies.

## Inset 2. 8-Lane Typical Section



The typical width of the outside shoulders for both the six and eight-lane sections is 14 feet; 12 of the 14 feet will be paved. In locations with guardrail, the outside shoulder width is wider.

### *Interchange Modifications*

As part of the Preferred Alternative, the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange will be re-designed to a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) type. The US 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard/Chimney Rock Road) interchange would also be improved as part of this project.

The majority of the interchanges along the project would not be modified in a notable way for the six-lane section of the Preferred Alternative; most modifications would be made on the eight-lane section. Ramp acceleration and deceleration lanes would be shifted outward to accommodate the widened roadway and will be tied back into existing ramp alignments.

### *Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge*

The columns supporting the bridge deck of the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 are spaced in such a way that they do not accommodate widening of I-26. As a result, the bridge has been proposed for replacement by NCDOT and FHWA as part of this project. NCDOT and FHWA have coordinated with the National Park Service (NPS) in the development and evaluation of bridge replacement options. NPS has chosen Option 4, as its Preferred Option, which would replace the bridge to the south of the current bridge on new alignment, using a segmental concrete box girder bridge type with Caltrans Type 80 bridge rail. The bridge would have two ten-foot travel lanes, three-foot shoulders, and a five-foot sidewalk on the north side (Parkway west) to accommodate the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) as noted in the *Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge Over Interstate 26 Technical Report* (NPS, July 2016).

### *Structures*

Of the 28 stream crossings along the study corridor, four are bridges, 15 are major culvert crossings (conveyance greater than or equal to a 72-inch pipe), and nine are 66-inch pipes. Of these 28 structures, 13 are recommended for replacement or modification, two crossings are no longer part of the project, and the remaining 13 sites will be retained. **Table 1** below shows structures recommended for replacement for the Preferred Alternative as agreed to at CP 2A.

There are also 13 structures, nine bridges and four interchanges, carrying roads over I-26 within the study area. Seven of the bridges will be replaced including: Crest Road, Clear Creek Road, Brookside Camp Road, Naples Road, Butler Bridge Road, Fanning Bridge Road, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**Table 1: Hydraulic Structures Concurred with at CP2A for the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative (Preferred Alternative/LEDPA)**

Site Number <sup>1</sup>	Station	Route	Stream Information							Existing Structure	Preferred Alternative	
			Stream Name NRTR Map ID	NCDWR Stream Index Number	Mitigation Ratio	Perennial/ Intermittent	Stream Length (ft)	Stream Class	Drainage Area (sq mi) [acres]	Number, Size, Structure Type (Existing Length)	Recommended Structure (Additional Length)	Cost Estimate – Culvert Extension (Bridge)
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400A</b>												
3	-L- 79+09	I-26	UT to Dunn Creek SV	6-55-8-1-1	2:1	P	725	C	0.28 [178]	1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC (240')	Retain and extend (18' [RT])/0' [LT])	\$100,000 (\$1,573,000)
4	-L- 90+32	I-26	Dunn Creek ST	6-55-8-1-1	2:1	P	845	C	2.58 [1,649]	2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC (354')	Retain existing; add supplemental pipe <sup>2</sup>	\$248,000 (\$1,501,000)
7	-L- 208+70	I-26	Devils Fork SAJ	6-55-8-2	2:1	P	2849	C	6.80 [4,351]	3 @ 9' X 10' RCBC (220')	Retain and extend (42' [RT])/20' [LT])	\$285,000 (\$1,645,000)
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400B</b>												
11	-L- 334+69	I-26	Clear Creek SBD	6-55-11-(5)	2:1	P	908	C	44.30 [28,352]	Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L = 220.14'	Remove and replace; L (Min) = 230'	(\$3,577,000)
12	-L- 407+69	I-26	UT to Mud Creek SBG	6-55	1:1	P	1,433	C	0.46 [296]	1 @ 7' x 7' RCBC (266')	Retain and extend (18' [RT])/0'[LT])	\$40,000 (\$2,436,000)
14	-L- 500+94	I-26	Byers Creek SBU	6-55-13	2:1	P	1219	C	2.42 [1,550]	2 @ 8' x 8' RCBC (156')	Retain and extend; add supplemental pipe <sup>2</sup> (21' [RT])/16' [LT])	\$285,000 (\$1,070,000)
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400C</b>												
16	-L- 669+02	I-26	Cane Creek SCW	6-57-(9)	2:1	P	878	C	83.80 [53,632]	Dual 3 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L = 198.25'	Remove and replace; L (Min) = 210'	(\$3,876,000)
17	-L- 682+68	I-26	Kimsey Creek SCY	6-57-22	2:1	P	960	C	2.49 [1,594]	3 @ 7' x 7' RCBC (236')	Retain and extend; add supplemental pipe <sup>2</sup> (36' [RT])/48' [LT])	\$521,000 (\$2,151,000)
18	-Y12- 11+44	SR 1358	UT to French Broad River SDH	6-(54.5)	1:1	P	82	B	0.14 [88]	1 @ 6' x 5' RCBC - 66" RCP w/ HW (540')	Retain and extend (0' [RT])/8' [LT])	\$43,000
<b>STIP Project Number I-4700A</b>												
19	-L- 800+81	I-26	UT to French Broad River SDC	6-(54.5)	2:1	P	961	B	0.36 [228]	1 @ 6' x 6' RCBC (220')	Retain and extend; add supplemental pipe <sup>2</sup> (48' [RT])/27' [LT])	\$380,000 (\$2,236,000)
23	-L47001- 897+06	I-26	Powell Creek SDN	6-62	2:1	P	470	C	5.06 [3,240]	2 @ 10' x 10' RCBC (264')	Retain and extend (80' [RT])/24' [LT])	\$390,000 (\$2,322,000)
<b>STIP Project Number I-4700B</b>												
25	-L47002- 1076+40	I-26	French Broad River	6-(54.5)	2:1	P	893.5 <sup>3</sup>	B	678.00 [433,920]	Dual 6 - Span RC Deck Bridges; L1 = 440.9' L2 = 453.4'	Remove and replace; L (Min) = 460'	(\$8,074,000)
26 <sup>4</sup>	-L47002- 1151+85	I-26	Long Valley Branch SFN	6-75	1:1	P	44	C	0.25 [158]	1 @ 66" SPP w/ HW; 1 @ 14' x 14' RCBC [vehicle underpass] (220')	Retain and extend (20' [RT])/40' [LT])	\$171,000 (\$2,665,000)

<sup>1</sup> Minimum Supplemental Pipe Size is 48 inches.

<sup>2</sup> Site number referred to in the Hydraulic Technical Memorandum (HNTB, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> This is the average of the length of stream determined on both banks under the French Broad River bridge.

<sup>4</sup> Wetlands are only present at Site 26.

## Summary of Impacts from the Draft EIS

**Table 2** is a summary of impacts as shown in the Draft EIS (August 2016), which included a proposed partial cloverleaf design for the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange improvement. Following the publication of the Draft EIS, public meeting, and comment period, the Merger Team chose the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative as the LEDPA (January 2017) and NCDOT revised the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange to a DDI form.

**Table 2: Summary of Impacts for the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS (August 2016)**

IMPACT CATEGORY <sup>1</sup>	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening
<b>Human Environment</b>	
Residential Relocations (Minorities)	18 (6)
Business Relocations	1
Grave Site Relocations	0
Disrupts Neighborhood & Community Cohesion	No
Recurring Community / Neighborhood Impacts	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton community. <sup>1</sup>
Low Income / Minority Populations	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.
Cultural Resources (Adverse Effect determined)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House <sup>2</sup>
Section 4(f)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway
Section 4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), and Mountains to Sea Trail <sup>3</sup>
Visual Resources / Characteristics	No
Traffic Noise Impacts (# of receptors)	315 <sup>4</sup>
Air Quality	No
Farmland (acres)	11
Hazardous Materials	Minimal monetary and scheduling impacts.
<b>Natural Resources</b>	
Federal Listed Species Habitat	May affect but not likely to adversely affect the Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) <sup>5,6</sup> . No effect on other species in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. <sup>7</sup>
Jurisdictional Streams (linear feet) <sup>8</sup>	24,650
Jurisdictional Wetlands (acres) <sup>8</sup>	7.7
100-year Floodplain (acres) <sup>8</sup>	41.8
500-year Floodplain (acres) <sup>8</sup>	17.3

**Table 2: Summary of Impacts for the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIS (August 2016)**

IMPACT CATEGORY <sup>1</sup>	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening
Ponds (acres) <sup>8</sup>	0.05
<b>Indirect and Cumulative Effects</b>	<p>Based on this assessment of the currently identified project alternatives, STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 is not expected to have a notable indirect effect on land use in the FLUSA. Potential land use effects as a result of STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 are somewhat tempered by the fact that the project is not expected to provide any new access or opportunities for traffic exposure to properties in the FLUSA, and will generate marginal travel time savings.</p> <p>Some amount of regional cumulative impacts can be expected for notable cultural, community, water quality, and natural habitat features. This is due to features having minimal incorporation in local planning protections and/or policies. The Cumulative Effects Tool indicated that cumulative effects were rated as a medium level of concern as a result of the reasonably-foreseeable transportation projects in the region.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Following the publication of the Draft EIS, NCDOT determined that the Brickton community will not be affected by the project as documented in the project file and the Final EIS/ROD.

<sup>2</sup> Following the decision to revise the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange design to a Diverging Diamond Interchange SHPO and FHWA agreed that the project would have “no effect” on this property.

<sup>3</sup> Following the publication of the Draft EIS, NCDOT was informed that the French Broad River Paddle Trail is a Section 4(f) resource.

<sup>4</sup> Following the publication of the Draft EIS, NCDOT adopted the 2016 Noise Policy and Guidance. An Updated Traffic Noise Report (HNTB, 2017) followed this guidance, and determined that there are 399 impacted noise receptors.

<sup>5</sup> NCDOT will follow NPS mitigation protocol for the NLEB as detailed in the Special Commitments (Green Sheets) and Section 3.8.6.2.2 of the Draft EIS.

<sup>6</sup> May affect, not likely to adversely affect; however, NCDOT has determined that the proposed action does not require separate Section 7 consultation because the proposed action is consistent with the final Section 4(d) rule.

<sup>7</sup> Following the publishing of the Draft EIS, a gray bat roost was found near the project by USFWS and NC WRC and NPS recorded potential Indiana bat calls in the vicinity of the Blue Ridge Parkway. NCDOT is preparing a Biological Assessment (BA) for the threatened and endangered species in the project area. This is documented in the project file and will be included in the Correspondence and Response to Comments in the appendices to the Final EIS/ROD.

<sup>8</sup> Impacts based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet.

## **Avoidance and Minimization**

The following discussion and tables identify ways in which NCDOT has avoided and minimized to reduce impacts to the human and natural environment throughout the project development process.

Impacts are calculated based on preliminary design slope stakes plus 25 feet. Preliminary design for the I-26 Widening project was completed on LIDAR mapping and incorporates horizontal and vertical design elements and cross sections. The preliminary designs do not include hydraulic design or utilities design, which will be completed during the final design phase. Utility conflicts are mostly limited to interstate crossings, as opposed to parallel services.

The current designs presented at CP4A incorporate avoidance and minimization measures to the human and natural environment, including threatened and endangered species and jurisdictional streams and wetlands, for the entire project length. The following discussion and data tables quantify the reductions

of jurisdictional impacts from the incorporation of the avoidance and minimization measures summarized above. Once hydraulic design, utilities design, and geotechnical recommendations are complete, there may be further minor refinements at CP4B–30 Percent Hydraulic Review and CP4C–Permit Drawing Review for each project section.

The proposed project minimizes impacts to resources to the extent practicable based on current information and design. However, it is not feasible to completely avoid impacts to Waters of the US, cultural resources, and properties, as well as meet the purpose and need of the project. NCDOT is proposing a best fit widening that includes widening into the median to the maximum extent practicable, which results in avoidance and minimization of impacts and results in a reduced footprint for the overall project. By widening into the median, opportunities for vertical and horizontal changes and alignment shifts are limited and were determined not to be practicable. NCDOT has also reduced slope stake limits from the standard 4:1 to 2:1 slope stake limits to further avoid and minimize impacts. Further, NCDOT selected the DDI at the US 25 Interchange which has fewer impacts than the ParCloB and Synchronized Interchange (discussed below).

The reductions to jurisdictional impacts are as follows (*Note: Reductions to impacts are the difference between current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet and current design with 2:1 slope stake limits plus 25 feet. Slope stake limits plus 25 feet are used at CP4A*):

- By reducing the slope stake limits from 4:1 to 2:1, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized impacts to streams by approximately 10,000 feet,
  - o Avoided impacts to 19 wetlands (approximately 1.2 acres),
  - o Minimized impacts to wetlands by approximately 9.6 acres including approximately 2.6 acres to wetland WCH (Biltmore Bog), and
  - o Avoided impacts to two ponds (>0.1 acre).
- By selecting the DDI design at US 25 (Asheville Highway) instead of the ParClo B design, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized approximately 890 feet of stream impacts, and
  - o Minimized approximately 0.2 acre of wetland impacts.

Additional avoidance and minimization measures to the human environment include:

- NCDOT minimized the number of Residential Relocations from 18 (ParClo B) to 8 (DDI) and Business Relocations from 1 (ParClo B) to 0 (DDI).
- NCDOT minimized the design footprint at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange was determined to have “no effect” to the Cureton House property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the Section 404/NEPA Merger Team to identify avoidance and minimization measures to all waters of the U.S. and ensure that major hydraulic structures associated with the project are designed and installed to minimize negative impacts to stream stability (and therefore, water quality) to the extent practicable at CP4B and CP4C.

### *US 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange*

Following the publication of the Draft EIS, the public and agencies expressed an interest in NCDOT considering other options that would reduce impacts compared with the current partial cloverleaf design for the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange. NCDOT conducted a Value Engineering Study following publication of the Draft EIS and a concept for a Synchronized Interchange was put forward. NCDOT chose to study the Synchronized Interchange and the DDI interchange types. Although the

Synchronized Interchange performed slightly better than the DDI in the traffic analysis, it would also require replacement of the current bridge, which would increase cost, and the Division felt that the U-turn movements would be undesirable for the heavy truck traffic at the interchange. Therefore, NCDOT chose to revise the interchange to a DDI interchange type. **Table 3** shows the impacts of the Partial Cloverleaf option presented in the Draft EIS and the DDI.

**Table 3: Potential Impacts for Preferred Alternative by Proposed US 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange Design Concept**

Impact Type	ParClo B Interchange	DDI	Percent Difference
Stream (linear feet) <sup>1</sup>	1,966	1,075	-58.6
Wetland (acres) <sup>1</sup>	0.2	0	-100
Pond (acres) <sup>1</sup>	0	0	-
Natural Communities <sup>2</sup>			
Maintained / Disturbed (acres)	34.7	34.0	-2.0
Montane Oak-Hickory Forest (acidic subtype) (acres)	6.6	5.6	-15.2
Montane Oak-Hickory Forest (white pine subtype) (acres)	6.5	2.1	-67.7
Acidic Cove Forest (acres)	3.0	2.9	-3.3
Parcel (number/acres) <sup>3</sup>	41 / 21.3	11 / 1.6	-73.2 / -92.5
Relocations (number) <sup>3</sup>	11	0	-100
Signs (number) <sup>3</sup>	-	1	+100
Estimated Construction Cost <sup>4</sup>	\$8,800,000	\$6,500,000	-26.1
Estimated Right of Way Cost <sup>4</sup>	\$4,536,500	\$1,170,500	-74.2

<sup>1</sup> Impacts based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 25 feet;

<sup>2</sup> Impacts based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet;

<sup>3</sup> Impacts based on proposed right of way;

<sup>4</sup> Cost estimated by NCDOT: ParClo B estimate (8/2016) (included in Draft EIS); DDI estimate (4/26/2017 and 6/19/2017).

### *Cultural Resources*

The Cureton House property, located at 48 Cureton Place, was avoided with the DDI design type at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange. The NC Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and FHWA determined that the project would have “no effect” on this Section 106 resource.

### *Farmland Resources*

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) requested that the farmland soils be recalculated in their comments on the Draft EIS. The farmland impacts were re-assessed for the alternatives. **Table 4** shows the reassessed farmland impacts based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet.

**Table 4: Potential Farmland Impacts**

	<b>6-Lane Widening Alternative</b>	<b>8-Lane Widening Alternative</b>	<b>Preferred Alternative Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative</b>
Prime Farmland	1.4	3.5	3.6
Farmland of Statewide Importance	1.4	3.2	2.3
Farmland of Local Importance	17.7	22.4	22.4
<b>Total:</b>	20.5	29.1	28.3

The Preferred Alternative may convert approximately 28.3 acres, based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet, to non-farmable use. This area is approximately three percent of the project area, most of which is in an US Census Bureau designated Urban Area. This land is currently not farmland, and though heavily wooded, is not in timber production. It is expected that as the design is refined the amount of impacted farmland soils will be reduced. It is not expected that this project will affect the likelihood of future farming along the I-26 corridor. Furthermore, the assessed area received 48 points, which is below the 160-point threshold for recommended mitigation by NRCS.

*Natural Resources*

Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known occurrences of rusty-patched bumble bee, tan riffleshell, Spotfin chub, spreading avens, Carolina northern flying squirrel, rock gnome lichen, swamp pink, small whorled pogonia, spruce fir moss spider, bunched arrowhead, mountain sweet pitcher plant, white irisette, Blue Ridge goldenrod, or Virginia spiraea. Therefore, these species are not listed for minimization efforts.

**Appalachian elktoe (*Alasmidonta raveneliana*)** – Endangered – May Affect Likely to Adversely Affect – NCDOT is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and will submit a Biological Assessment (BA) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. A recent survey of streams near the project study area found two individuals upstream and downstream of the I-26 bridge over the French Broad River. Three Oaks was contracted by NCDOT for both the field surveys and the species discussion in the BA.

**Bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*)** – Threatened due to similarity of appearance T(S/A) – The proposed current design attempted to reduce impacts to the Biltmore Bog by utilizing guardrail and 2:1 fill slopes. This minimization measure limits the extent of the project’s slope stake limits to the greatest practicable extent. It is also important to note that the current impacts are based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus a 25-foot buffer. The actual impacts will be based on a more refined design’s slope stake limits plus a 10-foot buffer. The greater refinement will reduce the calculated impact area in the Biltmore Bog.

**Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*)** – Threatened – May Affect Not Likely to Adversely Affect – As noted in the *US 25 NRTR Addendum* and reviewed in the *NRTR Addendum 4*, the nearest NLEB hibernacula record is 11.5 miles away and no known NLEB roost trees occur within 150 feet of the project area. NCDOT has determined that the proposed action does not require separate consultation because the proposed action is consistent with the final Section 4(d) rule, codified at 50 CFR 17.40(o). However, NCDOT has agreed to limit tree clearing to between August 15 and May 15 within 0.25 mile of the Blue Ridge Parkway, as required by the agreement with the NPS and USFWS.

**Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)** – May Affect Not Likely to Adversely Affect – The Indiana bat is not federally listed in Buncombe or Henderson County. However, NCDOT has agreed to avoid adverse impacts to Indiana bats within the boundaries of the Blue Ridge Parkway. This commitment is to conduct emergent and/or acoustic surveys prior to removal of trees if construction occurs between April 15 and August 15. Further, no significant tree removal can occur within 5 miles of known hibernacula between April 1 and November 15.

**Gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*)** – Endangered – May Affect Likely to Adversely Affect – NCDOT is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and will submit a Biological Assessment (BA) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Calyx Engineers was contracted by NCDOT to perform a survey of the structures within the study area to determine if there was evidence of the gray bat. The field survey included 24 bridges and 18 culverts (at least 5 feet high and 200 feet long) within the project study area. The findings were reported in the Structures Survey Report, and determined that only one structure, the Long Shoals Road bridge over the French Broad River, is a bat roost. The evidence found at this structure indicates that bats may be using this bridge infrequently for night roosting. No maternity roosts were found during the survey.

In addition to the structure survey, Calyx has also performed an acoustic survey. The acoustic survey report will be finalized November 2017.

Streams and Wetlands

**Figure 2** shows streams and wetlands within the limits of the current design proposed slope stake limits. Impacts to streams and wetlands have also been developed based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus an additional 25 feet.

**Table 5** shows the reduction in impacts from reducing the US 25 (Asheville Highway) design footprint from a Partial Cloverleaf B (ParClo B) to a DDI. This comparison is based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 25 feet.

**Table 5: Comparison of Potential Impacts to Jurisdictional Features for the Preferred Alternative by Interchange Type**

	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening with ParClo B Design (SS+25')	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening with DDI Design (SS+25')	Percent Difference
Jurisdictional Streams (linear feet)	19,415	18,541	-4.5
Jurisdictional Wetlands (acres)	4.82	4.66	-3.3
Ponds (acres)	0.05	0.05	0
FEMA Floodplain			
100-year Floodplain (acres)	30.4	30.4	0
500-year Floodplain (acres)	17.6	17.6	0

**Table 6** compares the individual stream impacts for the I-26 with ParClo B design at US 25 (Asheville Highway) and the I-26 with DDI at US 25 (Asheville Highway). The comparison is of the current design

proposed slope stake limits plus an additional 25-foot buffer. The table also includes a column that tabulates current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet; however, the jurisdictional impacts reported at CP4A are based on current design with 2:1 slope stake limits. Although a project commitment has been added for Beck Creek, implementing *Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds*, no impacts to this stream or its tributaries are anticipated.

**Table 6: Comparison of Stream Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Stream	MAP ID	NCDWR Index Number	Perennial (P)/ Intermittent (I)	Best Usage Classification	Mitigation Ratio	Stream Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ft) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)				I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)			
							Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS)	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS+25')	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS)	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS+25')	Mitigation Cost
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400A</b>														
<b>Broad River Basin (HUC 03050105)</b>														
UT to Beck Creek	SA	9-29-27	P	C-Tr	2:1	80.2	3.0	\$2,389	40.1	\$31,625	3.0	\$2,390	40.1	\$31,626
<b>French Broad River Basin (HUC 06010105)</b>														
UT to Dunn Creek	SS	6-55-8-1-1	P	C	1:1	318.7	151.6	\$59,722	250.5	\$98,686	151.6	\$59,721	250.5	\$98,686
UT to Dunn Creek	SQ	6-55-8-1-1	P	C	2:1	477.2	—	\$0	147.9	\$116,532	—	\$0	147.9	\$116,524
UT to Dunn Creek	SW	6-55-8-1-1	P/I	C	1:1	917.6	274.2	\$108,016	666.7	\$262,664	274.2	\$108,022	666.7	\$262,664
UT to Dunn Creek	SV	6-55-8-1-1	P	C	2:1	185.3	14.6	\$11,512	76.6	\$60,357	14.6	\$11,512	76.6	\$60,357
Dunn Creek	ST	6-55-8-1-1	P	C	2:1	27.7	—	\$0	0.6	\$494	—	\$0	0.6	\$494
UT to Dunn Creek	SY	6-55-8-1-1	I	C	1:1	163.0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0
UT to Dunn Creek	SZ	6-55-8-1-1	P/I	C	1:1	854.6	—	\$0	234.0	\$92,197	—	\$0	234.0	\$92,192
UT to Dunn Creek	SAA	6-55-8-1-1	I	C	1:1	173.5	63.6	\$25,059	143.5	\$56,555	63.6	\$25,058	143.5	\$56,554
UT to Bat Fork	SAH	6-55-8-1	P	C	2:1	34.6	—	\$0	14.8	\$11,699	—	\$0	14.8	\$11,700
UT to Devils Fork	SAE	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	111.6	22.2	\$8,763	111.6	\$43,965	22.2	\$8,762	111.6	\$43,965
UT to Devils Fork	SAB	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	1,768.6	144.6	\$56,966	1,581.2	\$622,980	144.6	\$56,960	1,581.1	\$622,973
UT to Devils Fork	SAI	6-55-8-2	I	C	1:1	54.7	14.1	\$5,545	39.5	\$15,559	14.1	\$5,545	39.5	\$15,559
UT to Devils Fork	SAC	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	92.9	25.0	\$9,846	77.1	\$30,368	25.0	\$9,846	77.1	\$30,368
UT to Devils Fork	SAL	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	138.4	26.0	\$10,250	94.3	\$37,144	26.0	\$10,250	94.3	\$37,144
UT to Devils Fork	SAO	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	113.4	10.9	\$4,280	59.8	\$23,553	10.9	\$4,280	59.8	\$23,553
Devils Fork	SAJ	6-55-8-2	P	C	2:1	1,793.1	75.0	\$59,098	1,091.1	\$859,821	75.0	\$59,096	1,091.1	\$859,811
UT to Devils Fork	SAM	6-55-8-2	I	C	1:1	25.9	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0
UT to Devils Fork	SAN	6-55-8-2	P	C	2:1	12.4	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0
UT to Devils Fork	SAP	6-55-8-2	P	C	2:1	76.7	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0
UT to Devils Fork	SAW	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	75.5	34.1	\$13,445	60.5	\$23,826	34.1	\$13,445	60.5	\$23,826
UT to Devils Fork	SAV	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	24.2	—	\$0	7.4	\$2,917	—	\$0	7.4	\$2,917
UT to Devils Fork	SBW	6-55-8-2	I	C	1:1	75.4	—	\$0	75.4	\$29,692	—	\$0	75.4	\$29,692
UT to Devils Fork (West)	SAR	6-55-8-2	P	C	1:1	54.8	10.6	\$4,169	38.2	\$15,046	10.6	\$4,170	38.2	\$15,046
UT to Camp Branch	SAS	6-55-8-2-1	P	B	1:1	90.0	13.3	\$5,229	54.6	\$21,519	13.3	\$5,229	54.6	\$21,519
UT to Camp Branch	SBL	6-55-8-2-1	I	B	1:1	143.9	36.6	\$14,411	137.1	\$54,023	36.6	\$14,411	137.1	\$54,024
UT to Camp Branch	SAX	6-55-8-2-1	I	B	1:1	101.4	19.0	\$7,504	66.4	\$26,177	19.0	\$7,504	66.4	\$26,174
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400B</b>														
UT to Allen Branch	SAZ	6-55-11-14	P/I	C	2:1	251.7	84.9	\$66,919	236.7	\$186,482	84.9	\$66,921	236.7	\$186,481
UT to Allen Branch (West)	SBA	6-55-11-14	I	C	1:1	41.7	—	\$0	25.8	\$10,150	—	\$0	25.8	\$10,150
UT to Allen Branch (East)	SBA	6-55-11-14	I	C	2:1	26.0	—	\$0	10.7	\$8,405	—	\$0	10.7	\$8,405
Clear Creek - BRIDGED	SBD	6-55-11-(5)	P	C	2:1	555.8	—	\$0	422.1	\$332,631	—	\$0	422.1	\$332,628
UT to Mud Creek	SBG	6-55	P	C	1:1	1,154.3	79.5	\$31,332	449.0	\$176,911	79.5	\$31,326	449.0	\$176,911
UT to Mud Creek	SBF	6-55	P	C	1:1	261.7	36.4	\$14,331	169.0	\$66,593	36.4	\$14,330	169.0	\$66,593
Featherstone Creek	SBP	6-55-12	P	C	2:1	74.3	1.9	\$1,466	41.0	\$32,312	1.9	\$1,466	41.0	\$32,312
UT to Mud Creek	SBO	6-55	P	C	2:1	83.3	7.6	\$5,991	51.9	\$40,916	7.6	\$5,991	51.9	\$40,916

**Table 6: Comparison of Stream Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Stream	MAP ID	NCDWR Index Number	Perennial (P)/ Intermittent (I)	Best Usage Classification	Mitigation Ratio	Stream Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ft) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)				I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)			
							Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS)	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS+25')	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS)	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS+25')	Mitigation Cost
UT to Mud Creek	SBI	6-55	P	C	2:1	193.1	28.2	\$22,260	88.5	\$69,737	28.2	\$22,260	88.5	\$69,737
UT to Mud Creek	SBS	6-55	I	C	1:1	55.4	55.4	\$21,811	55.4	\$21,811	55.4	\$21,811	55.4	\$21,811
UT to Byers Creek	SBV	6-55-13	P	C	2:1	225.1	41.8	\$32,977	176.2	\$138,870	41.8	\$32,978	176.2	\$138,872
Byers Creek	SBU	6-55-13	P	C	2:1	124.9	36.7	\$28,938	89.2	\$70,318	36.7	\$28,938	89.2	\$70,318
UT to Byers Creek	SBT	6-55-13	I	C	1:1	223.1	19.7	\$7,770	191.7	\$75,549	19.7	\$7,770	191.8	\$75,550
UT to Byers Creek	SCB	6-55-13	P	C	2:1	79.1	2.4	\$1,901	42.7	\$33,637	2.4	\$1,901	42.7	\$33,637
UT to Byers Creek	SCA	6-55-13	P	C	2:1	80.0	6.3	\$4,952	49.2	\$38,748	6.3	\$4,951	49.2	\$38,748
UT to Byers Creek	SCD	6-55-13	P	C	2:1	125.7	6.9	\$5,401	110.7	\$87,204	6.9	\$5,400	110.7	\$87,203
UT to Mud Creek	SCH	6-55	I	C	1:1	57.3	10.2	\$4,001	38.7	\$15,234	10.2	\$4,000	38.7	\$15,234
UT to Mud Creek	SCM	6-55	I	C	1:1	46.7	—	\$0	6.1	\$2,385	—	\$0	6.1	\$2,385
UT to Mud Creek	SCN	6-55	P	C	1:1	876.4	397.5	\$156,612	705.6	\$278,002	397.5	\$156,614	705.6	\$278,002
UT to Mud Creek	SCK	6-55	P	C	2:1	344.3	87.3	\$68,770	139.2	\$109,652	87.3	\$68,770	139.2	\$109,652
UT to Mud Creek	SCI	6-55	P	C	2:1	205.9	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0
UT to Mud Creek	SCL	6-55	P	C	2:1	146.2	54.3	\$42,810	101.6	\$80,047	54.3	\$42,810	101.6	\$80,046
UT to Mud Creek	SCO	6-55	P	C	2:1	647.7	504.8	\$397,748	575.8	\$453,692	—	\$0	22.0	\$17,346
UT to Mud Creek	SCP	6-55	I	C	1:1	149.6	104.4	\$41,132	133.5	\$52,604	—	\$0	—	\$0
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400C</b>														
UT to Mud Creek	SEN	6-55	P	C	2:1	341.0	93.8	\$73,879	190.1	\$149,814	—	\$0	335.5	\$264,399
UT to Mud Creek	SCR	6-55	P	C	1:1	136.6	129.9	\$51,182	136.6	\$53,806	60.3	\$23,760	92.6	\$36,473
UT to Mud Creek	SCQ	6-55	P/I	C	2:1	595.6	546.2	\$430,383	576.4	\$454,235	408.7	\$322,070	433.7	\$341,761
UT to Mud Creek	SCT	6-55	P	C	2:1	386.3	201.0	\$158,384	354.0	\$278,955	75.8	\$59,729	191.1	\$150,625
UT to Cane Creek <sup>2</sup>	SCU	6-57-(9)	I	C	1:1	218.7	87.9	\$34,644	183.4	\$72,249	87.9	\$34,644	183.4	\$72,248
UT to Cane Creek <sup>2</sup>	SCX	6-57-(9)	P	C	2:1	789.1	107.3	\$84,578	738.9	\$582,262	107.3	\$84,564	738.9	\$582,261
Cane Creek <sup>2</sup> - BRIDGED	SCW	6-57-(9)	P	C	2:1	411.0	41.7	\$32,830	201.2	\$158,571	41.7	\$32,830	201.2	\$158,570
UT to Kimsey Creek	SCZ	6-57-22	P	C	2:1	96.7	15.2	\$11,965	40.6	\$31,990	15.2	\$11,965	40.6	\$31,990
Kimsey Creek	SCY	6-57-22	P	C	2:1	336.4	55.2	\$43,503	121.2	\$95,476	55.2	\$43,503	121.2	\$95,476
UT to Kimsey Creek	SDR	6-57-22	I	C	2:1	213.5	213.5	\$168,256	213.5	\$168,256	213.5	\$168,256	213.5	\$168,256
UT to French Broad River	SDH	6-(54.5)	P/I	B	1:1	624.7	273.2	\$107,628	483.1	\$190,356	283.0	\$111,518	500.3	\$197,131
UT to French Broad River	SDI	6-(54.5)	P/I	B	1:1	357.4	254.9	\$100,432	342.3	\$134,875	254.9	\$100,433	342.3	\$134,875
UT to Higgins Branch <sup>3</sup>	SZY	6-57-22-2	I	C	2:1	334.5	162.0	\$127,641	294.6	\$232,120	162.0	\$127,641	294.6	\$232,120
<b>STIP Project Number I-4700A</b>														
UT to French Broad River	SDD	6-(54.5)	P/I	C	1:1	587.7	135.1	\$53,247	587.7	\$231,571	135.1	\$53,244	587.7	\$231,571
UT to French Broad River	SDC	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	139.1	44.2	\$34,798	102.5	\$80,794	44.2	\$34,797	102.5	\$80,797
UT to French Broad River (West)	SDE	6-(54.5)	P	B	1:1	58.7	16.8	\$6,626	43.0	\$16,939	16.8	\$6,626	43.0	\$16,939
UT to French Broad River (East)	SDE	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	71.1	30.8	\$24,248	56.1	\$44,213	30.8	\$24,248	56.1	\$44,213
UT to French Broad River	SDF	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	106.8	61.9	\$48,740	91.0	\$71,731	61.9	\$48,740	91.0	\$71,732
UT to French Broad River	SDG	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	68.9	43.0	\$33,905	68.9	\$54,296	43.0	\$33,904	68.9	\$54,296
UT to French Broad River	SFX	6-(54.5)	I	B	2:1	84.0	47.3	\$37,302	72.6	\$57,185	47.3	\$37,301	72.6	\$57,184
UT to French Broad River	SDK	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	120.7	48.9	\$38,520	75.1	\$59,142	48.9	\$38,519	75.1	\$59,143

**Table 6: Comparison of Stream Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Stream	MAP ID	NCDWR Index Number	Perennial (P)/ Intermittent (I)	Best Usage Classification	Mitigation Ratio	Stream Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ft) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)				I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)			
							Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS)	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS+25')	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS)	Mitigation Cost	Stream Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ft) (2:1 SS+25')	Mitigation Cost
Powell Creek	SDN	6-62	P	B	2:1	145.6	53.0	\$41,789	111.1	\$87,517	53.0	\$41,789	111.1	\$87,516
<b>STIP Project Number I-4700B</b>														
UT to French Broad River (West)	SDU	6-(54.5)	P	B	1:1	30.0	—	\$0	14.2	\$5,577	—	\$0	14.2	\$5,577
UT to French Broad River (East)	SDU	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	113.6	34.4	\$27,075	72.7	\$57,292	34.4	\$27,075	72.7	\$57,288
UT to French Broad River	SDV	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	72.4	25.5	\$20,082	55.3	\$43,592	25.5	\$20,082	55.3	\$43,591
UT to French Broad River	SDW	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	78.0	25.3	\$19,975	59.9	\$47,213	25.3	\$19,974	60.0	\$47,292
UT to French Broad River	SDX	6-(54.5)	P/I	B	1:1	2,207.1	399.6	\$157,444	1,043.2	\$411,017	399.6	\$157,443	1,043.2	\$411,014
UT to French Broad River	SEU	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	18.3	10.6	\$8,336	18.3	\$14,442	10.6	\$8,336	18.3	\$14,442
UT to French Broad River	SEW	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	107.4	12.8	\$10,109	37.9	\$29,828	12.8	\$10,109	37.9	\$29,828
UT to French Broad River	SEV	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	58.8	16.8	\$13,213	43.7	\$34,458	16.8	\$13,214	43.7	\$34,459
UT to French Broad River	SDY	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	72.0	2.3	\$1,815	22.5	\$17,764	2.3	\$1,815	22.5	\$17,764
UT to French Broad River	SEQ	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	146.5	24.2	\$19,070	74.5	\$58,671	24.2	\$19,070	74.5	\$58,671
UT to French Broad River	SED	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	130.6	9.4	\$7,425	66.7	\$52,526	9.4	\$7,425	66.7	\$52,526
UT to French Broad River	SEF	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	520.3	368.1	\$290,087	505.3	\$398,189	368.1	\$290,083	505.3	\$398,189
UT to French Broad River (West - roadside)	SEE	6-(54.5)	P	B	0.5:1	18.8	18.8	\$0	18.8	\$3,706	18.8	\$0	18.8	\$3,706
UT to French Broad River (East)	SEE	6-(54.5)	P	B	1:1	407.0	—	\$0	347.0	\$136,736	—	\$0	347.0	\$136,734
UT to French Broad River (West)	SEE	6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	0.9	—	\$14,824	—	\$0	—	\$14,824	—	\$0
French Broad River - BRIDGED		6-(54.5)	P	B	2:1	355.3	178.7	\$140,813	279.2	\$220,015	178.7	\$140,813	279.2	\$220,013
UT to Dellwood Lake	SFG	6-69	P	C	2:1	2,733.8	495.8	\$390,719	2,010.0	\$1,583,848	495.8	\$390,715	2,010.0	\$1,583,846
UT to French Broad River	SFO	6-(54.5)	I	B	2:1	161.6	13.3	\$10,493	56.7	\$44,691	13.3	\$10,493	56.7	\$44,691
UT to Dellwood Lake	SFI	6-69	I	C	1:1	83.3	—	\$0	7.3	\$2,884	—	\$0	7.3	\$2,884
UT to Dellwood Lake	SFR	6-69	P	C	2:1	54.2	27.8	\$21,928	46.0	\$36,286	27.8	\$21,929	46.0	\$36,286
UT to Dellwood Lake	SFQ	6-69	P/I	C	1:1	235.7	43.7	\$17,233	96.8	\$38,133	43.7	\$17,233	96.8	\$38,133
UT to Dellwood Lake	SFY	6-69	P	C	2:1	36.8	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0	—	\$0
UT to Long Valley Branch	SFP	6-75	P	C	1:1	80.0	22.7	\$8,934	50.0	\$19,711	22.7	\$8,934	50.0	\$19,712
Long Valley Branch	SFN	6-75	P	C	1:1	43.8	24.9	\$9,797	43.8	\$17,247	24.9	\$9,797	43.8	\$17,247
UT to Long Valley Branch	SFM	6-75	I	C	1:1	414.3	29.1	\$11,450	382.0	\$150,512	29.0	\$11,441	382.0	\$150,511
<b>Total:</b>						28,812	6,951	\$4,308,627	19,415	\$11,649,977	5,926	\$3,565,326	18,541	\$11,024,287

<sup>1</sup> Impacts calculated based on current design proposed 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet (SS+40) to demonstrate a substantive avoidance and minimization measure implemented prior to the Draft EIS. This includes the ParClo B design at US 25 Interchange.

<sup>2</sup> Impacts calculated based on current design proposed 2:1 slope stake (SS) limits or current design proposed 2:1 slope stake limits plus 25 feet (SS+25).

<sup>3</sup> This stream is designated as a "cold water" stream for purposes of mitigation.

<sup>4</sup> No mitigation ratio has been provided or agreed to for this stream, therefore a 2:1 mitigation ratio was applied.

**Table 7** compares the individual wetland impacts for the I-26 with ParClo B design at US 25 (Asheville Highway) and the I-26 with DDI design at US 25 (Asheville Highway), chosen for the Final EIS and ROD. The comparison is of the current design proposed slope stake (SS) limits and current design proposed slope stake limits plus an additional 25-foot buffer. The table also includes a column that tabulates current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet; however, the jurisdictional impacts reported at CP4A are based on current design with 2:1 slope stake limits.

**Table 7: Comparison of Wetland Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Wetland ID	NCWAM Classification	Hydrologic Classification	NCDWR Wetland Rating	Wetland Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ac) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)		I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)	
					Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400A</b>								
WE	Headwater Forest	Riparian	29	0.02	<0.01	0.01	<0.01	0.01
WI	Headwater Forest	Riparian	33	0.02	—	0.01	—	0.01
WH	Headwater Forest	Riparian	27	0.07	—	0.02	—	0.02
WK	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	79	0.38	—	0.02	—	0.02
WG	Non-tidal Freshwater Marsh	Riparian	34	0.09	0.01	0.06	0.01	0.06
WM	Headwater Forest	Non-Riparian	38	<0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WW	Headwater Forest	Riparian	34	0.07	—	0.07	0.05	0.07
WN	Headwater Forest	Riparian	30	<0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WP	Headwater Forest	Riparian	38	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WO	Headwater Forest	Riparian	34	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04
WX	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	16	0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WV	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	16	0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WAA	Headwater Forest	Riparian	64	0.49	0.06	0.28	0.06	0.28
WAI	Headwater Forest	Riparian	32	0.05	<0.01	0.02	<0.01	0.02
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400B</b>								
WAJ	Headwater Forest	Riparian	32	0.12	—	—	—	—
WAG	Headwater Forest	Riparian	28	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WAH	Headwater Forest	Non-Riparian	47	0.01	<0.01	0.01	<0.01	0.01
WAM	Headwater Forest	Non-Riparian	47	0.01	—	0.01	—	0.01

**Table 7: Comparison of Wetland Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Wetland ID	NCWAM Classification	Hydrologic Classification	NCDWR Wetland Rating	Wetland Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ac) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)		I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)	
					Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')
WAP	Headwater Forest	Non-Riparian	47	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
WAT	Headwater Forest	Riparian	28	0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WAY	Headwater Forest	Non-Riparian	38	0.01	—	—	—	—
<b>STIP Project Number I-4400C</b>								
WBC	Headwater Forest	Riparian	38	0.22	0.13	0.16	—	—
WBG	Headwater Forest	Riparian	51	0.55	0.18	0.44	0.18	0.44
WBF	Headwater Forest	Riparian	32	<0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WBI	Headwater Forest	Riparian	44	0.27	—	0.03	—	0.03
WBK	Headwater Forest	Riparian	30	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WBT	Headwater Forest	Riparian	42	0.05	<0.01	0.01	<0.01	0.01
WBL	Headwater Forest	Riparian	32	0.04	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WBN	Headwater Forest	Riparian	32	0.05	—	—	—	—
WBP	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	40	0.39	0.01	0.17	0.01	0.17
WBQ	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	40	0.15	—	—	—	—
<b>STIP Project Number I-4700A</b>								
WFD	Headwater Forest	Riparian	24	0.01	—	—	—	—
WBV	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	69	2.14	0.33	1.16	0.33	1.16
WBR	Headwater Forest	Riparian	77	0.23	0.14	0.20	0.14	0.20
WBU	Headwater Forest	Riparian	77	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.07
WBW	Non-tidal Freshwater Marsh	Riparian	65	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.09
WCB	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	24	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WCC	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	48	0.22	—	0.04	—	0.04
WCE	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	48	0.11	<0.01	0.05	<0.01	0.05

**Table 7: Comparison of Wetland Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Wetland ID	NCWAM Classification	Hydrologic Classification	NCDWR Wetland Rating	Wetland Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ac) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)		I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)	
					Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')
WCG	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	78	0.46	—	—	—	—
<b>STIP Project Number I-4700B</b>								
WCH <sup>3</sup>	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	78	3.36	0.04	0.39	0.04	0.39
WDV	Headwater Forest	Riparian	37	0.07	—	0.02	—	0.02
WCU	Headwater Forest	Riparian	43	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WCV	Headwater Forest	Riparian	43	0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WCT	Headwater Forest	Riparian	43	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WCS	Headwater Forest	Riparian	43	0.05	—	0.02	—	0.02
WCQ	Headwater Forest	Riparian	43	<0.01	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WCW	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	69	2.78	0.41	1.14	0.41	1.14
WDR	Headwater Forest	Riparian	30	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WCZ	Headwater Forest	Riparian	43	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
WDA	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	69	1.16	—	0.05	—	0.05
WFG	Headwater Forest	Riparian	21	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
WEA	Headwater Forest	Riparian	51	0.01	—	—	—	—
WEL	Headwater Forest	Riparian	48	0.12	<0.01	0.04	<0.01	0.04
WDZ	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	38	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.07
WDY	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	38	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WEG	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	31	0.11	—	<0.01	—	<0.01
WET	Headwater Forest	Riparian	52	0.08	<0.01	0.06	<0.01	0.06
WEU	Headwater Forest	Riparian	52	<0.01	—	—	—	—
WEV	Headwater Forest	Riparian	52	0.01	—	—	—	—
WEW	Headwater Forest	Riparian	52	0.11	—	—	—	—

**Table 7: Comparison of Wetland Impacts for I-26 Widening**

Wetland ID	NCWAM Classification	Hydrologic Classification	NCDWR Wetland Rating	Wetland Impacts <sup>1</sup> (ac) (4:1 SS+40')	I-26 Widening Draft EIS Impacts Including ParCloB Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)		I-26 Widening Updated Impacts Including DDI Design at US 25 (Asheville Highway)	
					Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS)	Wetland Impacts <sup>2</sup> (ac) (2:1 SS+25')
WER	Headwater Forest	Riparian	38	0.01	—	—	—	—
WEE	Non-tidal Freshwater Marsh	Riparian	47	0.30	—	0.01	—	0.01
WZZ	Headwater Forest	Riparian	N/A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Total Riparian:				14.75	1.52	4.78	1.44	4.62
Total Non-Riparian:				0.05	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04
Total Impacts:				14.80	1.58	4.82	1.45	4.66
Riparian Mitigation				—	\$108,961	\$343,063	\$107,658	\$331,518
Non-Riparian Mitigation				—	\$12,946	\$12,946	\$12,946	\$12,946
Total Mitigation				—	\$121,907	\$356,009	\$120,604	\$344,464

<sup>1</sup> Impacts calculated based on current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet (SS+40) to demonstrate a substantive avoidance and minimization measure implemented prior to the Draft EIS. This includes the ParClo B design at US 25 Interchange.

<sup>2</sup> Impacts calculated based on current design proposed 2:1 slope stake (SS) limits or current design proposed 2:1 slope stake limits plus 25 feet (SS+25').

<sup>3</sup> WCH is also identified by USFWS and NCWRC as the Biltmore Bog, with habitat for the Bog Turtle (T(S/A)).

When using 4:1 slope stake limits plus a 40-foot buffer, two additional ponds are impacted. The amount of pond impacts increased by 0.02 acre to 0.07 acre, when using 4:1 slope stake limits plus a 40-foot buffer.

*Summary of Impact Avoidance and Minimization*

**Table 8** shows a comparison of impacts determined in the Draft EIS and the minimization or avoidance of those impacts at the present time. As the designs are refined, it is expected that stream and wetland resource impacts, for example, will also be reduced.

**Table 8: Comparison Summary of Impacts for the Preferred Alternative from the Draft EIS to Present**

<b>IMPACT CATEGORY<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening in Draft EIS</b>	<b>Preferred Alternative Refined</b>
<b>Human Environment</b>		
Residential Relocations (Minorities)	18 (6)	8 (2)
Business Relocations	1	0
Grave Site Relocations	0	0
Disrupts Neighborhood & Community Cohesion	No	No
Recurring Community / Neighborhood Impacts	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton community. <sup>1</sup>	No
Low Income / Minority Populations	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.	Yes; not disproportionately high and adverse.
Cultural Resources (Adverse Effect determined)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway and Cureton House	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway
Section 4(f)	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway	Yes; Blue Ridge Parkway
Section 4(f) <i>de minimis</i>	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), and Mountains to Sea Trail <sup>2</sup>	Yes; Biltmore Estate, Hyder Dairy Farm, Camp Orr (Camp Pinewood), French Broad River Paddle Trail, and Mountains to Sea Trail
Visual Resources / Characteristics	No	No
Traffic Noise Impacts (# of receptors)	315 <sup>3</sup>	399
Air Quality	No	No
Farmland (acres)	11	28 <sup>4</sup>
Hazardous Materials	Minimal monetary and scheduling impacts.	Minimal monetary and scheduling impacts.
<b>Natural Resources</b>		
Federal Listed Species Habitat	May affect but not likely to adversely affect the Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) <sup>5, 6</sup> . No effect on other species	May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect the gray bat and Appalachian elktoe. Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) <sup>5, 6</sup> . No

**Table 8: Comparison Summary of Impacts for the Preferred Alternative from the Draft EIS to Present**

IMPACT CATEGORY <sup>1</sup>	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening in Draft EIS	Preferred Alternative Refined
	in Henderson/Buncombe Counties. <sup>7</sup>	effect on other species in Henderson/Buncombe Counties. <sup>7</sup>
Jurisdictional Streams (linear feet) <sup>8</sup>	19,415	18,541
Jurisdictional Wetlands (acres) <sup>8</sup>	4.82	4.66
100-year Floodplain (acres) <sup>8</sup>	41.8	30.4
500-year Floodplain (acres) <sup>8</sup>	17.3	17.6
Ponds (acres) <sup>8</sup>	0.05	0.05
<b>Indirect and Cumulative Effects</b>	<p>Based on this assessment of the currently identified project alternatives, STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 is not expected to have a notable indirect effect on land use in the FLUSA. Potential land use effects as a result of STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 are somewhat tempered by the fact that the project is not expected to provide any new access or opportunities for traffic exposure to properties in the FLUSA, and will generate marginal travel time savings.</p> <p>Some amount of regional cumulative impacts can be expected for notable cultural, community, water quality, and natural habitat features. This is due to features having minimal incorporation in local planning protections and/or policies. The Cumulative Effects Tool indicated that cumulative effects were rated as a medium level of concern as a result of the reasonably-foreseeable transportation projects in the region.</p>	<p>STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 is not expected to have a notable indirect effect on land use in the FLUSA. Potential land use effects because of STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 are somewhat tempered by the fact that the project is not expected to provide any new access or opportunities for traffic exposure and will generate marginal travel time savings.</p> <p>Some amount of regional cumulative impacts can be expected for notable cultural, community, water quality, and natural habitat features. This is due to features having minimal incorporation in local planning protections and/or policies. The Cumulative Effects Tool indicated that cumulative effects were rated as a medium level of concern as a result of the reasonably-foreseeable transportation projects in the region.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Following the Draft EIS, NCDOT determined the Brickton community will not be affected. This will be fully documented in the Final EIS/ROD.

<sup>2</sup> Following the Draft EIS, NCDOT was informed that the French Broad River Paddle Trail is a Section 4(f) resource.

<sup>3</sup> Following the Draft EIS, NCDOT adopted the 2016 Noise Policy and Guidance. An Updated Traffic Noise Report (HNTB, 2017) followed this guidance, and determined that there are 399 impacted noise receptors.

<sup>4</sup> NRCS commented on the Draft EIS with request that farmland impacts be recalculated. Impacts were reassessed using the current preferred alternative design proposed slope stake limits plus 40 feet. Correspondence with NRCS will be included in the Final EIS/ROD.

<sup>5</sup> May affect, not likely to adversely affect; however, NCDOT has determined that the proposed action does not require separate Section 7 consultation because the proposed action is consistent with the final Section 4(d) rule.

<sup>6</sup> NCDOT will follow NPS mitigation protocol for the NLEB as detailed in the Special Commitments (Green Sheets) and Section 3.8.6.2.2 of the Draft

**Table 8: Comparison Summary of Impacts for the Preferred Alternative from the Draft EIS to Present**

IMPACT CATEGORY <sup>1</sup>	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening in Draft EIS	Preferred Alternative Refined
------------------------------	---------------------------------------	----------------------------------

EIS and the Indiana bat, which will be included in the Final EIS/ROD. Correspondence with NPS is in the project file and will be included in the Final EIS/ROD.

<sup>7</sup> Following the publishing of the Draft EIS, a gray bat roost was found near the project by USFWS and NC WRC and NPS recorded potential Indiana bat calls near the Blue Ridge Parkway. NCDOT is preparing a Biological Assessment (BA) for the threatened and endangered species in the project area. This is documented in the project file and will be included in the Correspondence and Response to Comments in the appendices to the Final EIS/ROD.

<sup>8</sup> Impacts based on current design proposed slope stake limits plus 25 feet.

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement  
Concurrence Point No. 4A – Avoidance and Minimization**

Project Name/Description:	I-26 Widening, US 25 in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County
STIP Project No.:	I-4400/I-4700
WBS No.:	34232.1.1/36030.1.1
Federal Aid Project No.:	NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9

The Merger Team met on October 11, 2017 and concurs with the following avoidance and minimization measures for STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700:

Section 404 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- NCDOT reduced the slopes from 4:1 to 2:1. In so doing, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized impacts to streams by approximately 10,000 feet,
  - o Avoided impacts to 19 wetlands (approximately 1.2 acres),
  - o Minimized impacts to wetlands by approximately 9.6 acres including approximately 2.6 acres to wetland WCH (Biltmore Bog), and
  - o Avoided impacts to two ponds (>0.1 acre).
- NCDOT selected the DDI design at US 25 (Asheville Highway) instead of the ParClo B design. In so doing, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized approximately 890 feet of stream impacts, and
  - o Minimized approximately 0.2 acre of wetland impacts.

*(Note: Reductions to impacts are the difference between current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet and current design with 2:1 slope stake limits plus 25 feet. Slope stake limits plus 25 feet are used at CP4A.)*

Human Environment Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- NCDOT minimized the number of Residential Relocations from 18 (ParClo B) to 8 (DDI) and Business Relocations from 1 (ParClo B) to 0 (DDI).
- NCDOT minimized the design footprint at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange was determined to have “no effect” to the Cureton House property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Additional Avoidance and Minimization Measures:

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NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the Section 404/NEPA Merger Team to identify avoidance and minimization measures to all waters of the U.S. and ensure that major hydraulic structures associated with the project are designed and installed to minimize negative impacts to stream stability (and therefore, water quality) to the extent practicable at Concurrence Point 4B – 30 Percent Hydraulic Review and Concurrence Point 4C – Permit Drawing Review.

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Federal Highway Administration \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \_\_\_\_\_

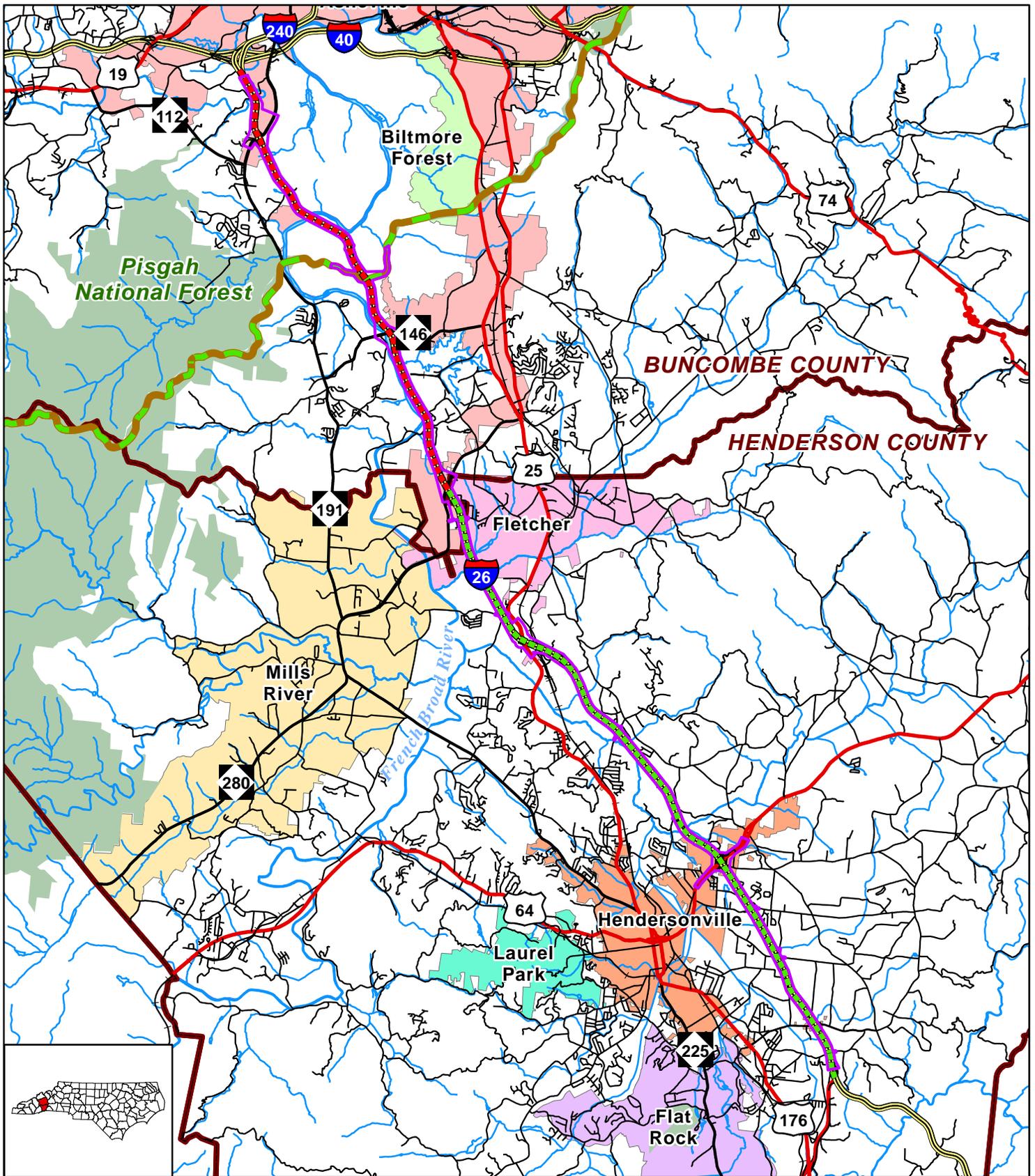
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission \_\_\_\_\_

N.C. Division of Water Resources \_\_\_\_\_

State Historic Preservation Office \_\_\_\_\_

French Broad River MPO \_\_\_\_\_

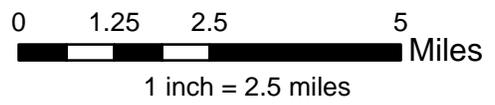
N.C. Department of Transportation \_\_\_\_\_



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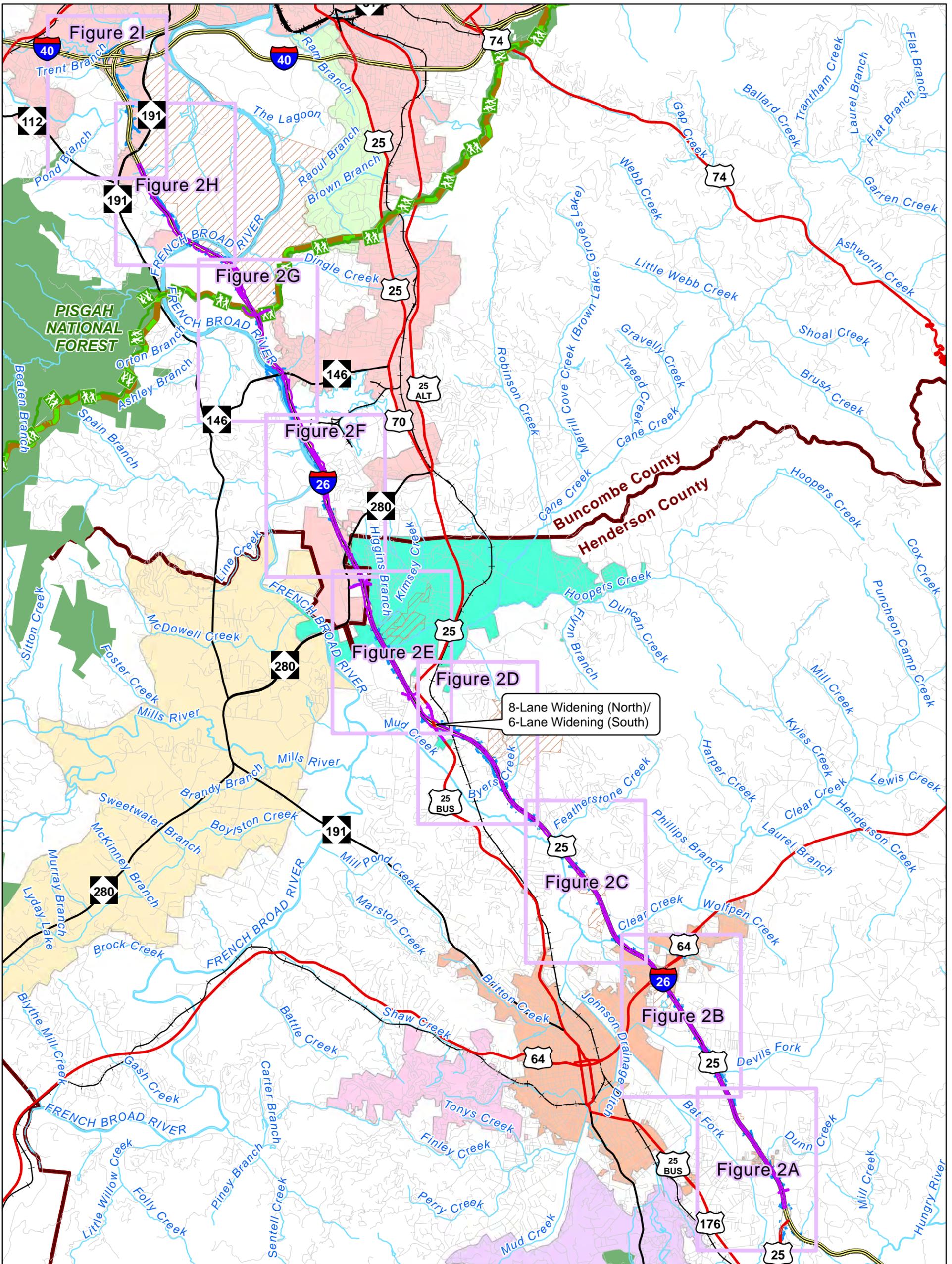
- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Study Area  |  Secondary Road     |
|  STIP I-4400 |  Blue Ridge Parkway |
|  STIP I-4700 |  Railroad           |
|  Interstate  |  Stream             |
|  US Route    |  Water Body         |
|  NC Route    |  County Boundary    |

**Figure 1 - Study Area**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**



Sources: NCDOT, NCOneMap, HNTB

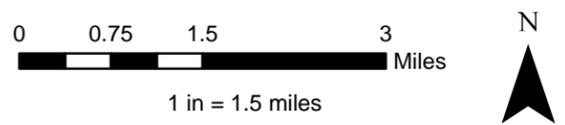
Date: 2017



- Legend**
- Functional Slope Stake
  - Interstate
  - US Highway
  - NC Highway
  - Road
  - Blue Ridge Parkway
  - Mountains-to-Sea Trail
  - Railroad
  - Delineated Stream
  - Stream
  - Delineated Wetland
  - Delineated Pond
  - Water Body
  - National Register of Historic Places Property
  - Pisgah National Forest
  - County Boundary
  - Asheville
  - Biltmore Forest
  - Flat Rock
  - Fletcher
  - Hendersonville
  - Laurel Park
  - Mills River
  - Saluda



**Figure 2 - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**



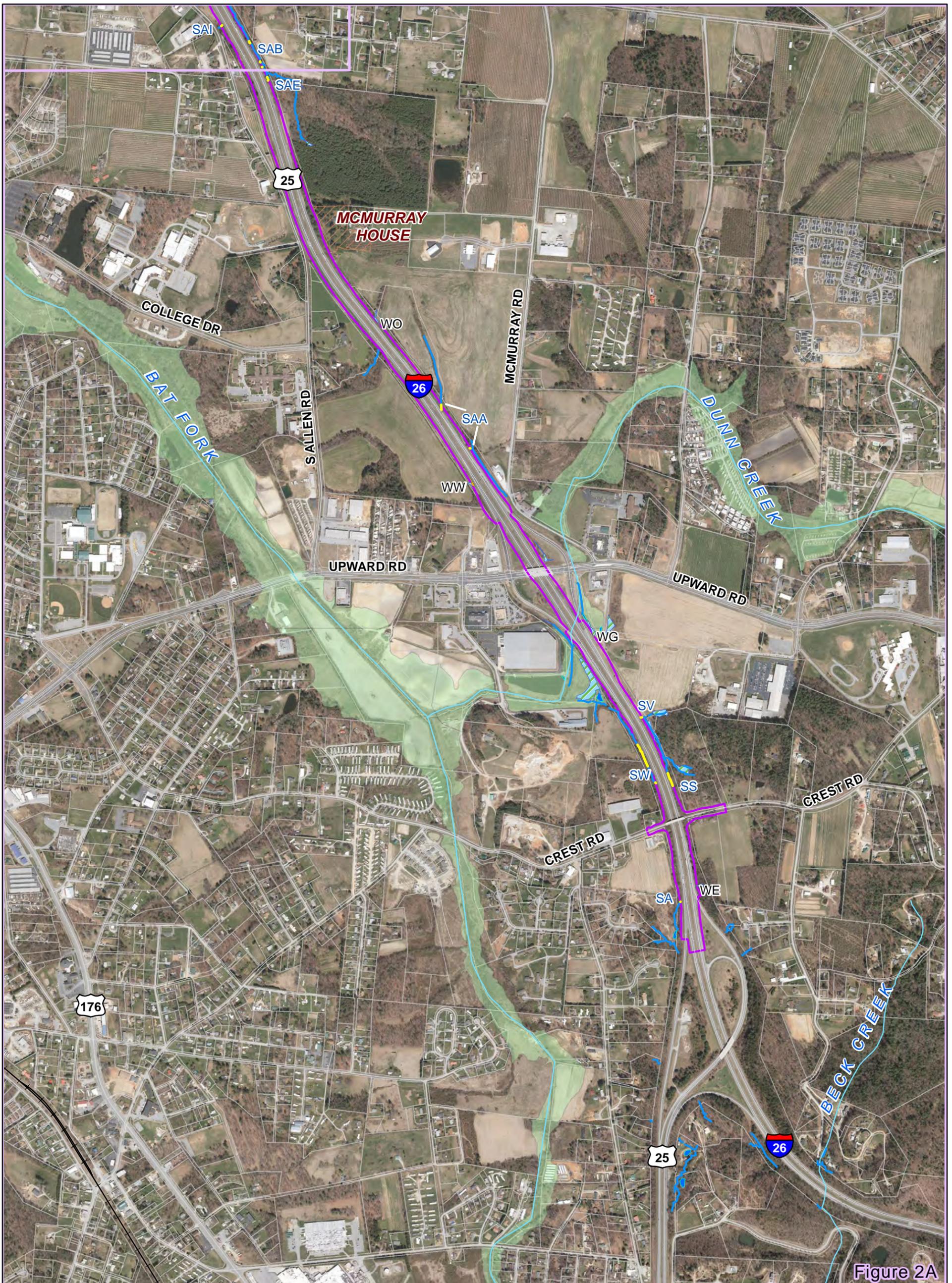
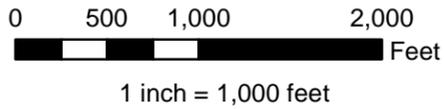


Figure 2A

**Legend**

- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | <b>FEMA Flood Zone</b>       |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

**Figure 2A - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**



Sources: Buncombe and Henderson Counties, NCDOT, NCOneMap, HNTB Date: 2017



Figure 2B

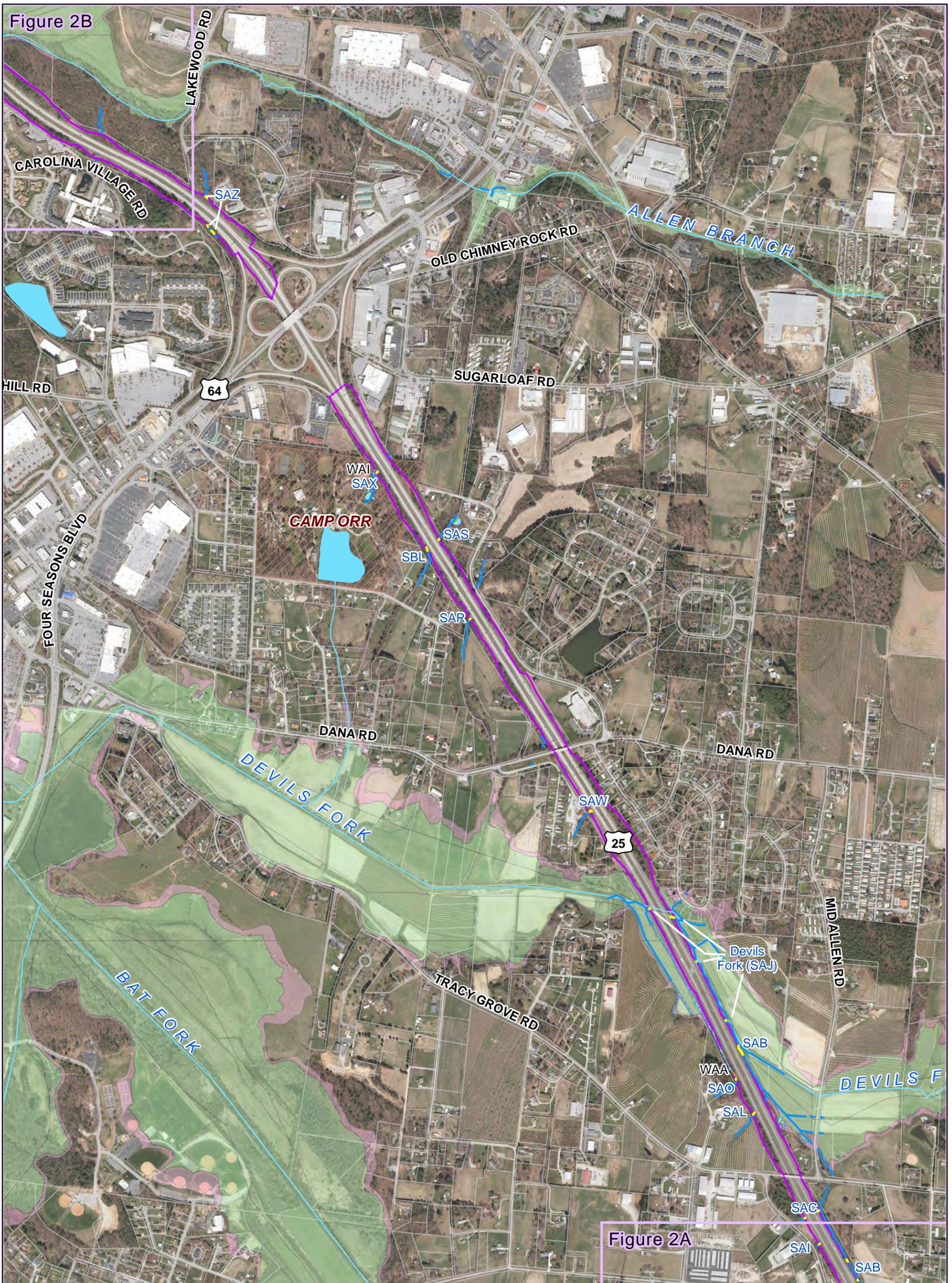
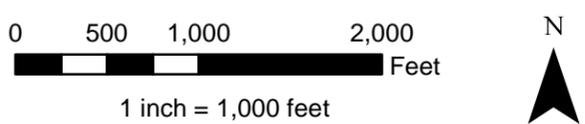


Figure 2A

**Figure 2B - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

**Legend**

- Functional Slope Stake
- SS Stream Impact
- SS Wetland Impact
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- National Register of Historic Places Property
- Delineated Stream
- Delineated Wetland
- Delineated Pond
- Road
- Railroad
- Stream
- Water Bodies
- FEMA Flood Zone**
- Zone A, 100-year Floodplain
- Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain
- 500-year Floodplain



Sources: Buncombe and Henderson Counties, NCDOT, NCOneMap, HNTB Date: 2017

Figure 2C

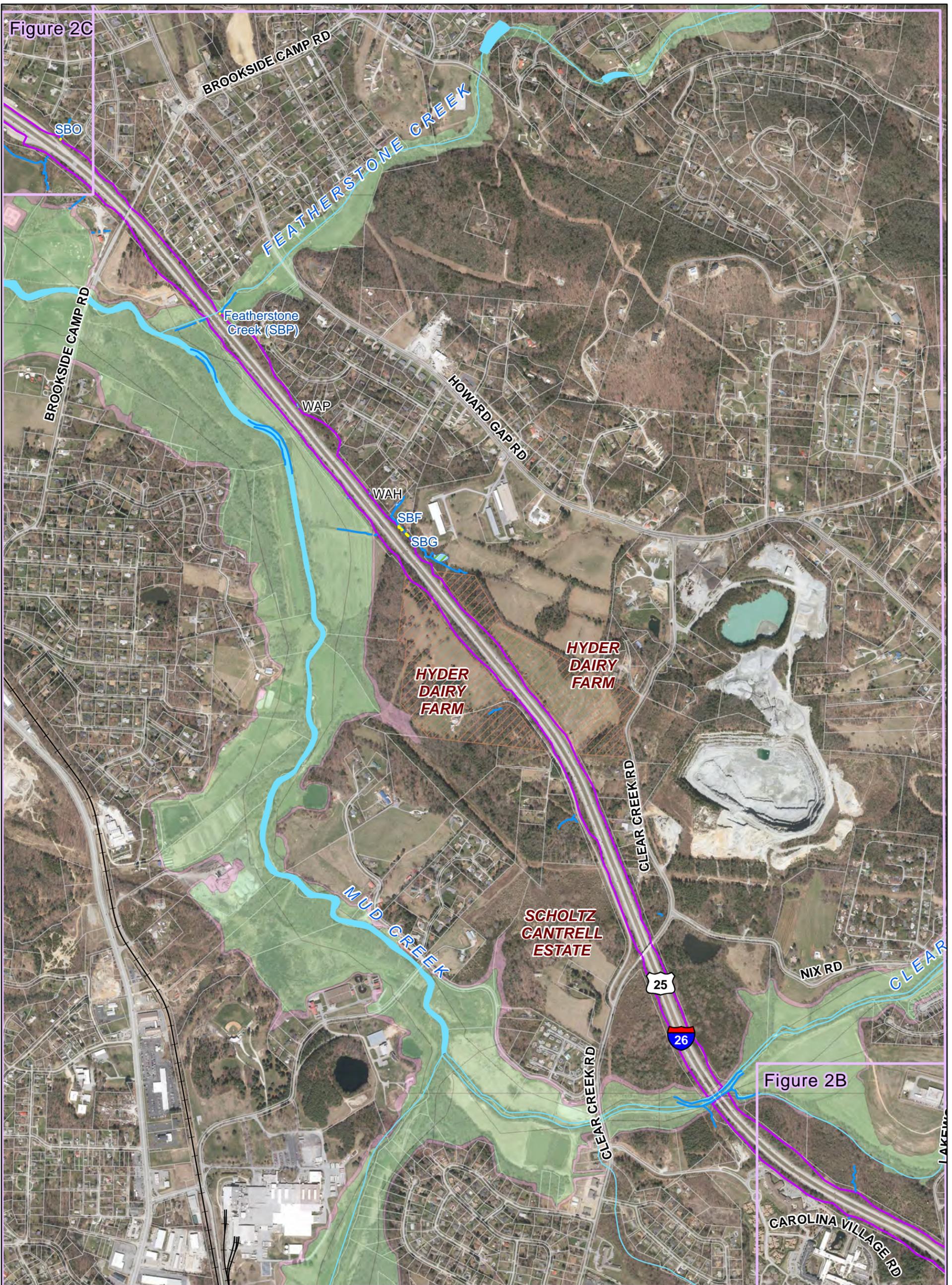


Figure 2B

**Legend**

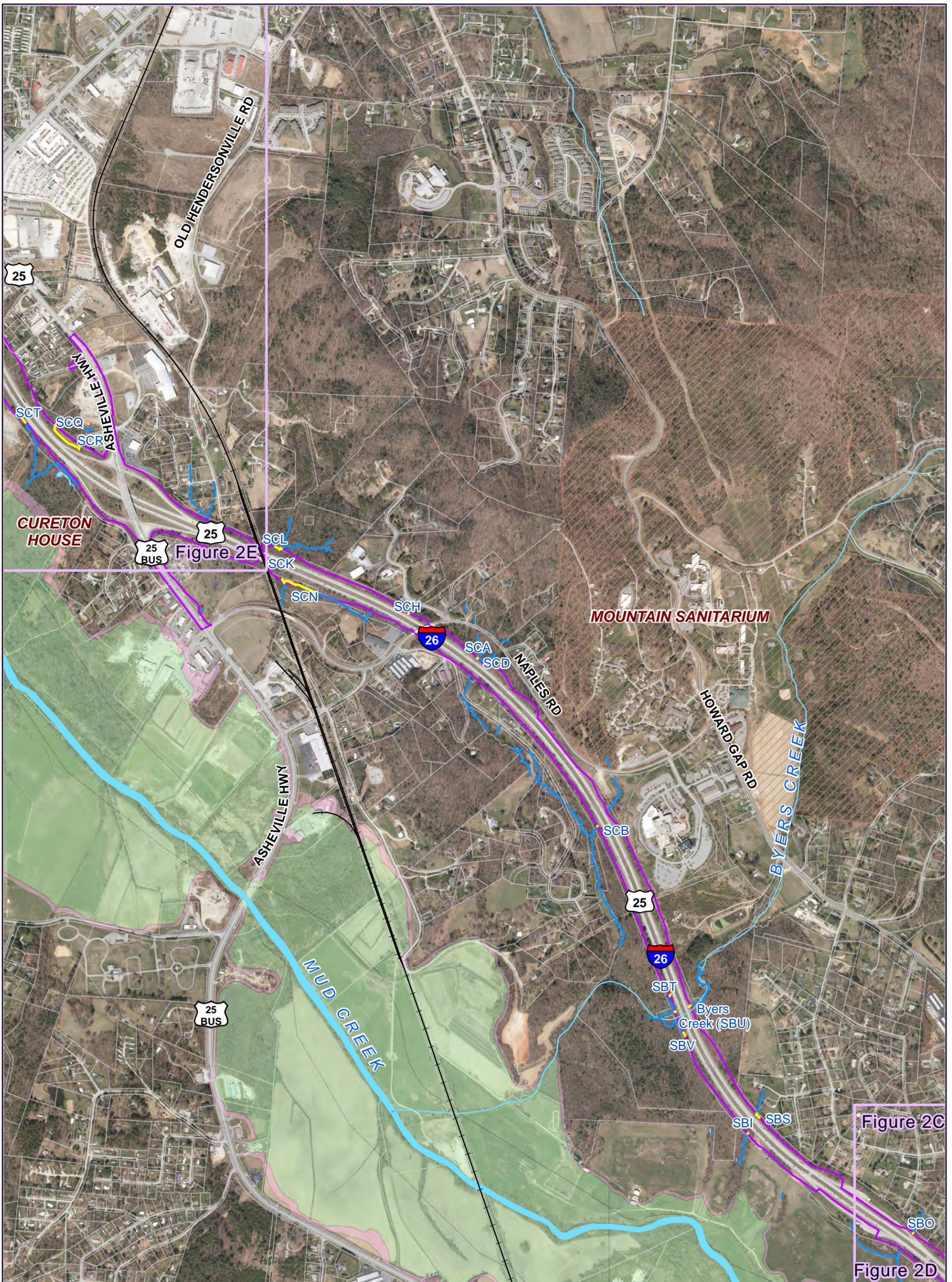
- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | <b>FEMA Flood Zone</b>       |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

**Figure 2C - Stream and Wetland Resources  
STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening  
Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

0 500 1,000 2,000  
Feet

1 inch = 1,010 feet

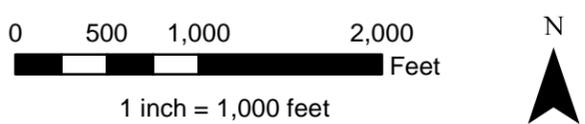




**Legend**

- Functional Slope Stake
- SS Stream Impact
- SS Wetland Impact
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- National Register of Historic Places Property
- Delineated Stream
- Delineated Wetland
- Delineated Pond
- Road
- Railroad
- Stream
- Water Bodies
- FEMA Flood Zone
- Zone A, 100-year Floodplain
- Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain
- 500-year Floodplain

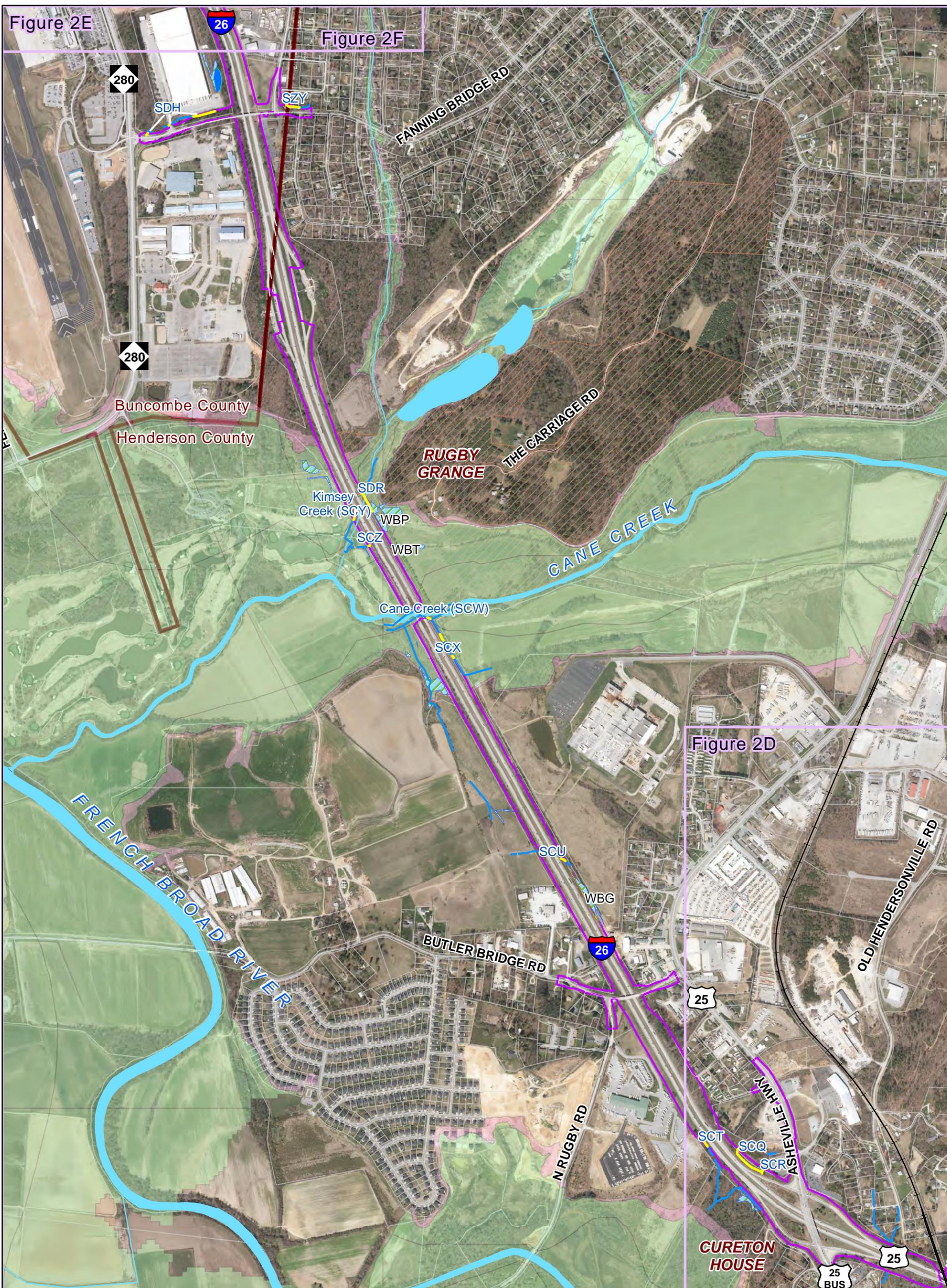
**Figure 2D - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**



Sources: Buncombe and Henderson Counties, NCDOT, NCOneMap, HNTB Date: 2017

Figure 2E

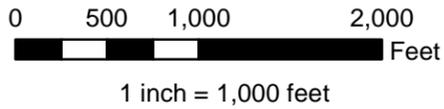
Figure 2F



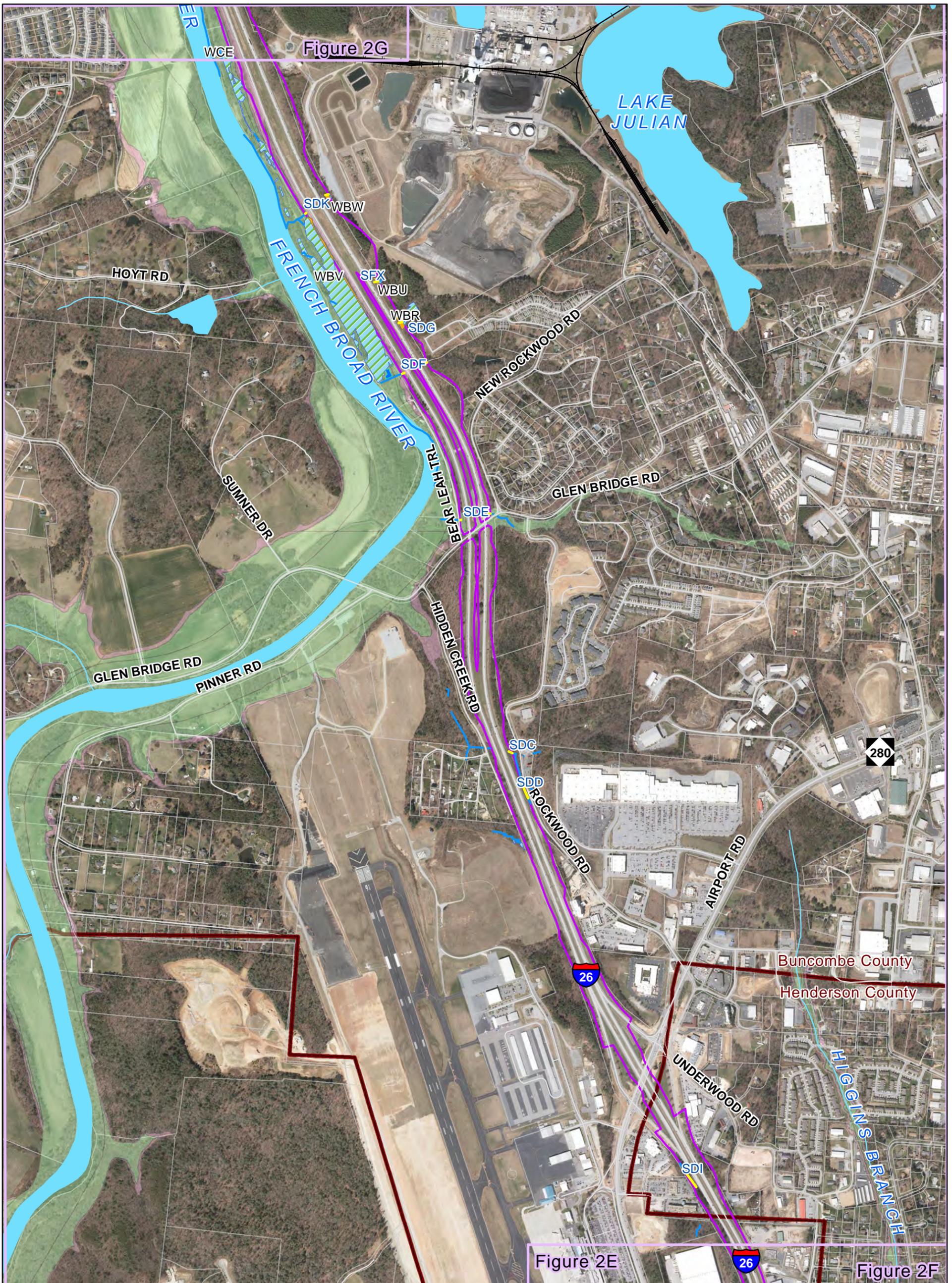
**Legend**

- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | FEMA Flood Zone              |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

**Figure 2E - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**



Sources: Buncombe and Henderson Counties, NCDOT, NCOneMap, HNTB Date: 2017



**Legend**

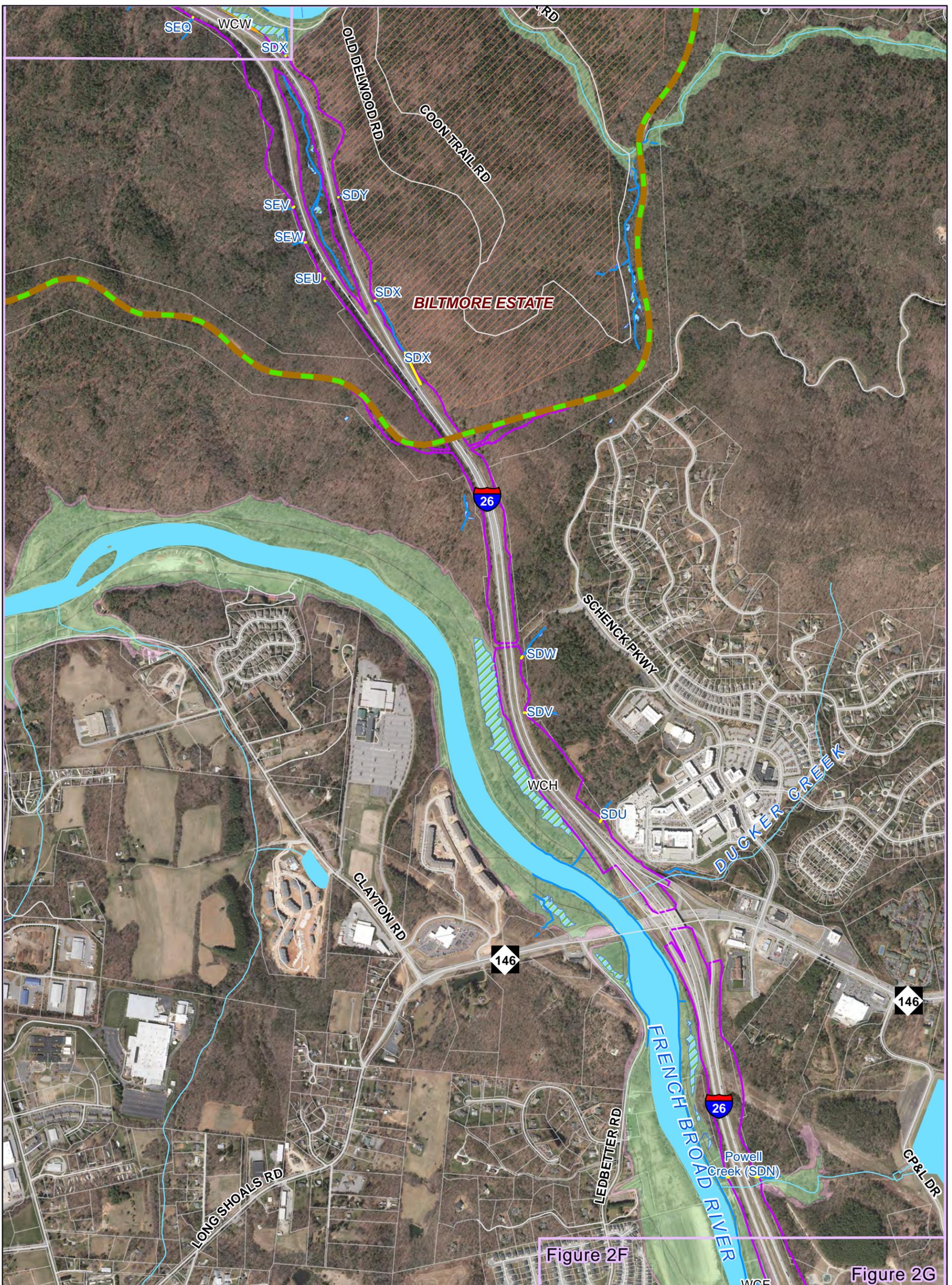
- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | <b>FEMA Flood Zone</b>       |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

**Figure 2F - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

0 500 1,000 2,000  
 Feet

1 inch = 1,000 feet





**Legend**

- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | <b>FEMA Flood Zone</b>       |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

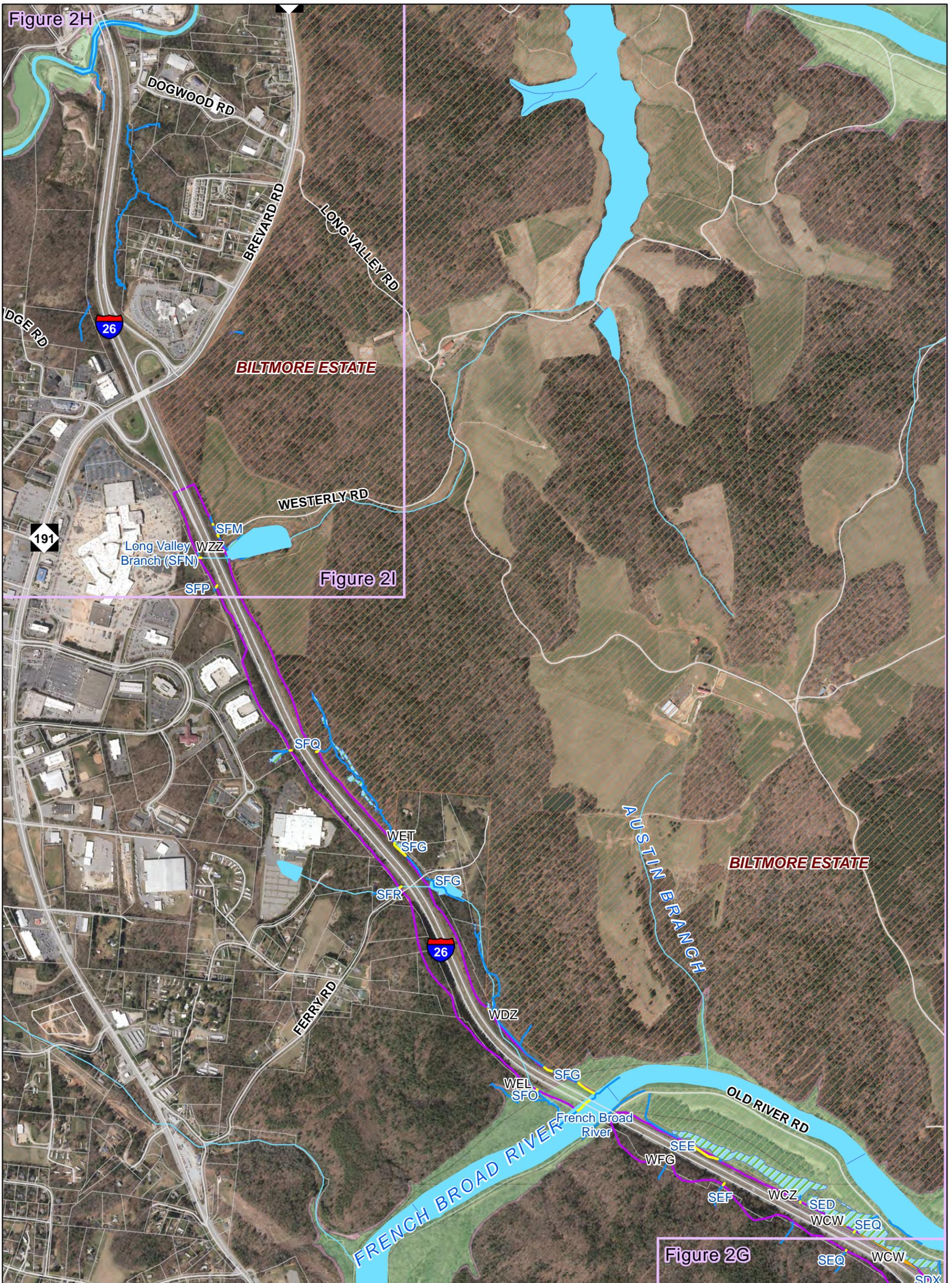
**Figure 2G - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

0 500 1,000 2,000  
 Feet

1 inch = 1,000 feet



Figure 2H



**Legend**

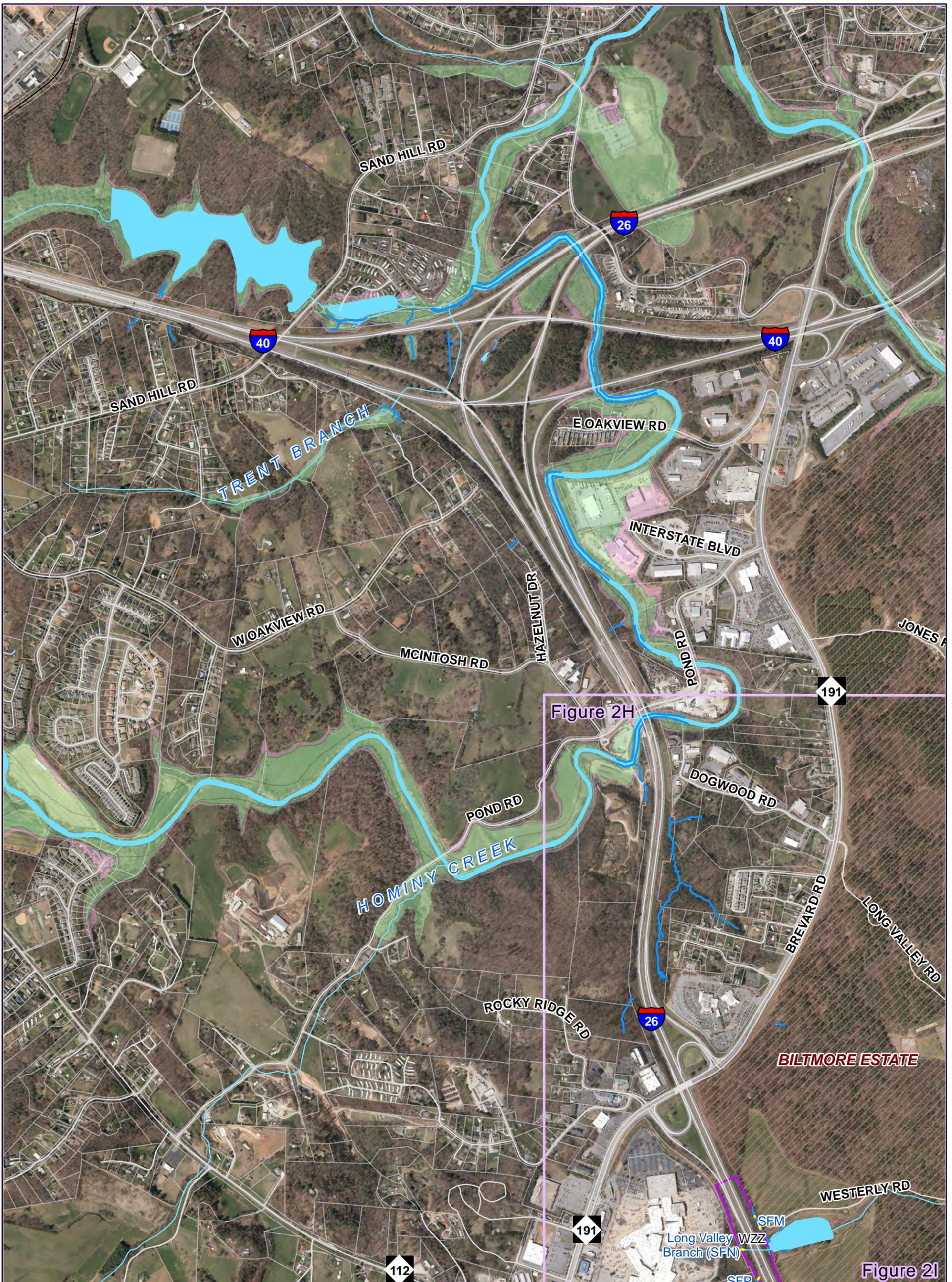
- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | <b>FEMA Flood Zone</b>       |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

**Figure 2H - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**

0 500 1,000 2,000  
 Feet

1 inch = 1,000 feet





**Legend**

- |   |                    |                              |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Functional Slope Stake                        | Delineated Stream  | Stream                       |
| SS Stream Impact                              | Delineated Wetland | Water Bodies                 |
| SS Wetland Impact                             | Delineated Pond    | FEMA Flood Zone              |
| Blue Ridge Parkway                            | Road               | Zone A, 100-year Floodplain  |
| National Register of Historic Places Property | Railroad           | Zone AE, 100-year Floodplain |
|   |                    | 500-year Floodplain          |

**Figure 2I - Stream and Wetland Resources**  
**STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700**  
**I-26 Widening**  
**Henderson and Buncombe Counties**



1 inch = 1,000 feet



October 11, 2017

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement  
Concurrence Point No. 4A – Avoidance and Minimization**

Project Name/Description:	I-26 Widening, US 25 in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County
STIP Project No.:	I-4400/I-4700
WBS No.:	34232.1.1/36030.1.1
Federal Aid Project No.:	NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9

The Merger Team met on October 11, 2017 and concurs with the following avoidance and minimization measures for STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700:

**Section 404 Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

- NCDOT reduced the slopes from 4:1 to 2:1. In so doing, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized impacts to streams by approximately 10,000 feet,
  - o Avoided impacts to 19 wetlands (approximately 1.2 acres),
  - o Minimized impacts to wetlands by approximately 9.6 acres including approximately 2.6 acres to wetland WCH (Biltmore Bog), and
  - o Avoided impacts to two ponds (>0.1 acre).
- NCDOT selected the DDI design at US 25 (Asheville Highway) instead of the ParClo B design. In so doing, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized approximately 890 feet of stream impacts, and
  - o Minimized approximately 0.2 acre of wetland impacts.

*(Note: Reductions to impacts are the difference between current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet and current design with 2:1 slope stake limits plus 25 feet. Slope stake limits plus 25 feet are used at CP4A.)*

**Human Environment Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

- NCDOT minimized the number of Residential Relocations from 18 (ParClo B) to 8 (DDI) and Business Relocations from 1 (ParClo B) to 0 (DDI).
- NCDOT minimized the design footprint at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange was determined to have “no effect” to the Cureton House property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Additional Avoidance and Minimization Measures:**

---

NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the Section 404/NEPA Merger Team to identify avoidance and minimization measures to all waters of the U.S. and ensure that major hydraulic structures associated with the project are designed and installed to minimize negative impacts to stream stability (and therefore, water quality) to the extent practicable at Concurrence Point 4B – 30 Percent Hydraulic Review and Concurrence Point 4C – Permit Drawing Review.

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October 11, 2017

Federal Highway Administration

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*Felix Davila*  
11/22/2017  
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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DocuSigned by:  
*Lori Beckwith*  
11/22/2017  
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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

11/22/2017

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

DocuSigned by:  
*Marella Bunnick*  
11/22/2017  
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N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

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*Marla Chambers*  
11/22/2017  
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N.C. Division of Water Resources

DocuSigned by:  
*Kevin Barnett*  
11/22/2017  
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State Historic Preservation Office

DocuSigned by:  
*Renee Gledhill-Earley*  
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French Broad River MPO

DocuSigned by:  
*Lyuba Zayeva*  
11/22/2017  
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N.C. Department of Transportation

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*John Williams*  
11/22/2017  
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**STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES**

The N.C. Department of Transportation proposes widening I-26 from U.S. 25, south of Hendersonville, to I-40/I-240, south of Asheville. The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening was selected as the Preferred Alternative in January 2017. The Preferred Alternative includes improvements to the U.S. 64 and U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) interchanges. NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration would like your input and are holding a Design Public Meeting on **Monday, April 16, 2018 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Biltmore Baptist Church (Terrace Hall), 35 Clayton Road, Arden, NC.** The meeting is drop-in format so that the public may review the project with NCDOT representatives informally, any time during the posted meeting hours. No formal presentation will be given. An opportunity to submit comments will be provided at the meeting or you may submit them by phone, email, or mail by **May 1, 2018.** All comments received will be taken into consideration as the project develops.

**For additional information, contact:**

Wanda Austin, P.E.  
NCDOT - Division 14, Project  
Development Engineer  
(828) 586-2141 | [whaustin@ncdot.gov](mailto:whaustin@ncdot.gov)

Cole Hood, P.E.  
NCDOT - Division 13, Project  
Development Engineer  
(828) 251-6171 | [chood@ncdot.gov](mailto:chood@ncdot.gov)

Kat Bukowy, AICP  
HNTB North Carolina, P.C.,  
NCDOT Project Consultant  
(919) 424-0441 | [kbukowy@hntb.com](mailto:kbukowy@hntb.com)

NCDOT provides auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for disabled persons who wish to participate in meetings. Anyone requiring special services should contact Caitlyn Ridge at 919-707-6091, [ceridge1@ncdot.gov](mailto:ceridge1@ncdot.gov), so that arrangements can be made.

*Aquellas personas que hablan español y no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan antes de la reunión llamando al 1-800-481-6494.*

*Если вы говорите только по-русски или вам трудно читать и воспринимать информацию на английском, мы можем предоставить вам услуги переводчика. Пожалуйста позвоните по тел. 1-800-481-6494 предварительно до собрания чтобы запросить помощь.*



**STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700**  
**c/o Kat Bukowy, AICP**  
**343 E. Six Forks Rd, Ste 200**  
**Raleigh, NC 27609**

**IMPORTANT!**  
**PLEASE READ!**

<<NAME>>  
OR CURRENT RESIDENT  
<<ADDRESS>>  
<<CITY>>, <<STATE>> <<ZIP>>

*Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.*



## STIP PROJECT Nos. I-4400/I-4700 I-26 WIDENING HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

### Welcome!

The N.C. Department of Transportation is holding this public meeting for the proposed widening of I-26 from U.S. 25 in Henderson County to I-40/ I-240 in Buncombe County, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/ I-4700.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Provide updates about the project since the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation.
- Share information about the design of the project.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the project and the design with the NCDOT Project Team.
- Provide a way for the NCDOT Project Team to receive your comments about the design.

This meeting is “open house” format. There will be no presentation. Please review the handout and maps. Members of the Project Team are here to answer your questions and discuss the project.

A comment sheet is included at the end of this handout. You may complete the form and return it during the meeting or you may mail or email it to us later. We request all comments be provided **by April 30, 2018**. All comments received will be considered and become part of the project record.

### Project Purpose and Need

This project is needed to:

- improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies, and
- improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating road surface conditions.

The purpose of the project is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall Level of Service (LOS) D in the design year (2040), and improve the pavement structure. The LOS of a roadway is the measure of its traffic carrying ability. LOS ranges from A to F, much like a standard school grading scale, “A” being the best scenario with unrestricted maneuverability and operating speeds, and “F” being the worst scenario where travel on a roadway is characterized by “stop and go” conditions.

# Project Schedule

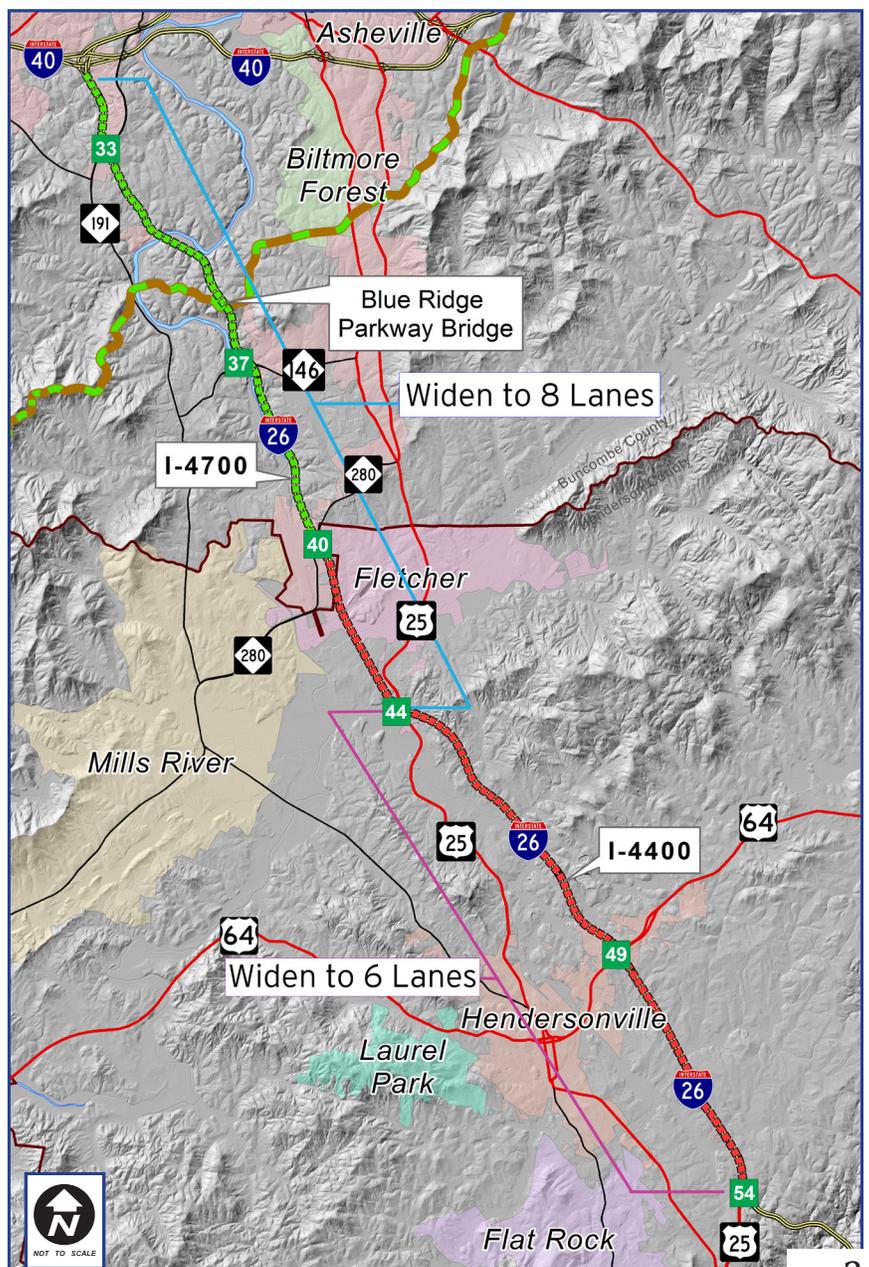
Draft EIS Approved .....	August 2016
Public Hearing .....	October 2016
Preferred Alternative Selected .....	January 2017
Design Public Meeting .....	April 2018
Final EIS/Record of Decision Approved .....	June 2018*
Funding for Right of Way Acquisition Begins .....	Fiscal Year 2018*
Funding for Construction Begins .....	Fiscal Year 2019*

*\*Subject to change*

## Preferred Alternative

NCDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other resource agencies, chose the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative as the Preferred Alternative and Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) in January 2017. The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative is the Preferred Alternative because it meets the Purpose and Need of reducing congestion, with a goal of a Level of Service (LOS) "D" in the design year (2040) and has fewer overall impacts.

I-26 from U.S. 25, south of Hendersonville, (Exit 54) to U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) (Exit 44) will be widened to six lanes. From U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) (Exit 44) to I-40/I-240, I-26 will be widened to eight lanes.



## Blue Ridge Parkway

To accommodate the 8-lane widening, the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 will also be replaced. The National Park Service chose to replace the bridge on new alignment, south of the existing bridge. The new bridge will also include a sidewalk on the north side of the bridge.

The Mountains to Sea Trail will have minor adjustments where the trailheads are relocated to the new crossing of the Blue Ridge Parkway. In addition, a parking pull out will be located on the eastern side of the bridge.



*Visualization traveling westbound on the proposed Blue Ridge Parkway bridge.*

## U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange Improvements



The red shapes and lines in the figure are proposed concrete islands and guardrail for safety and guidance.

NCDOT considered two interchange options to reduce the proposed footprint of the U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange, the Synchronized Interchange type and the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) type. NCDOT has chosen to revise the interchange from a Partial Cloverleaf B (ParClo B) type, shown in the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing, to the DDI type.

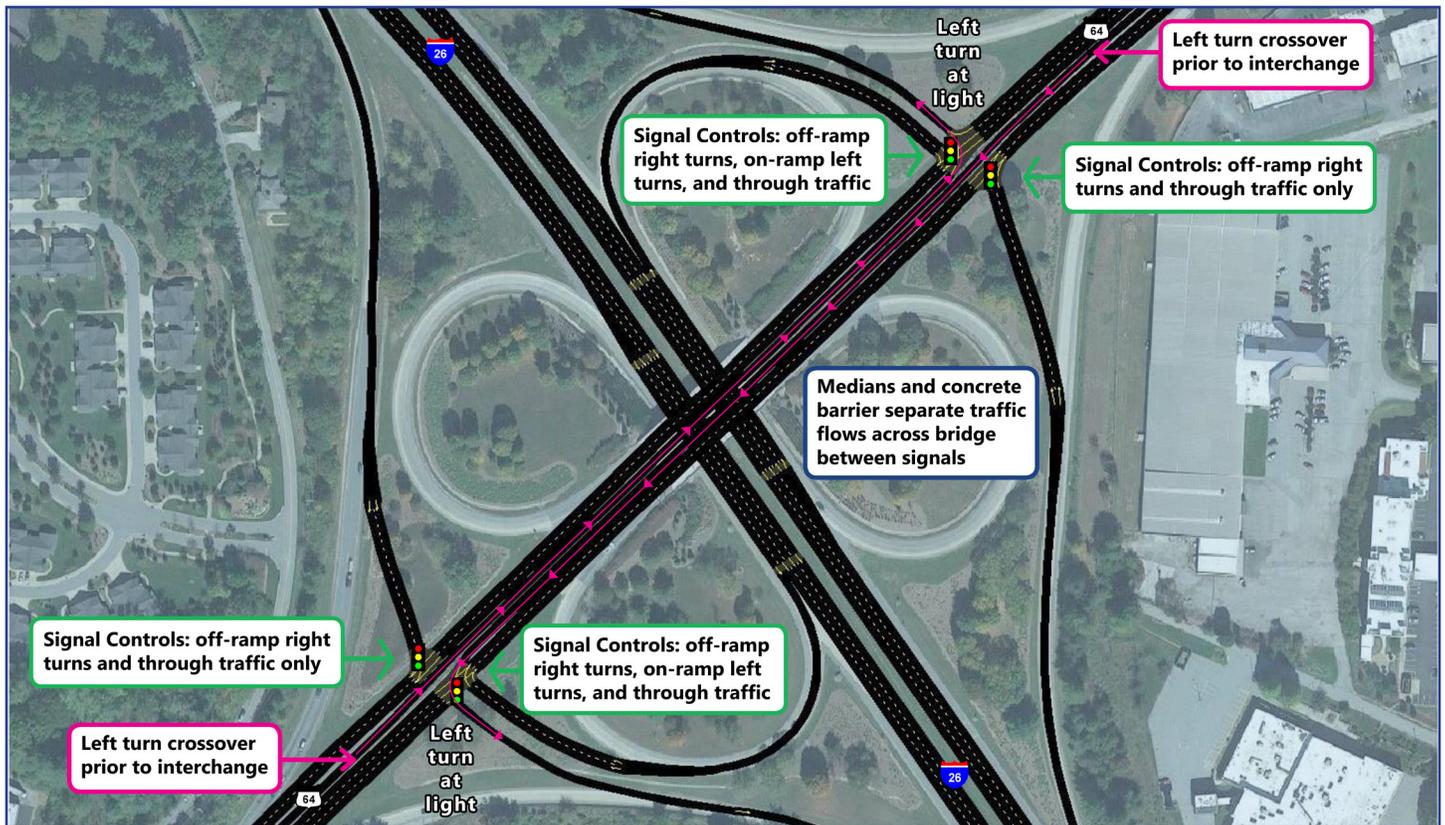
By comparison, the DDI reduces the number of relocations from 11 (under the ParClo B) to 0 and the number of impacted parcels from 41 (under the ParClo B) to 11 or by 73 percent. Other reductions were found in impacts to streams, wetlands, and natural communities, as well as cost.

The DDI type is the same as the one at N.C. 280 (Airport Road), Exit 40. At this interchange motorists would have the option to go left or right when exiting I-26. However, motorists going through the interchange to get onto I-26 would experience a traffic shift to the left over the interchange.

Please see NCDOT's DDI Visualization at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD-0QnUILOQ>

# U.S. 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard) Interchange Improvements

NCDOT considered local input requesting improvements to the I-26 and U.S. 64 interchange. To improve mobility through the interchange, the existing full cloverleaf interchange will be upgraded to an interchange type called a Partial Cloverleaf B with Enhanced Left Turns. This design will keep two of the existing loop ramps to exit I-26 and make all exiting vehicles turn right onto U.S. 64 from the freeway exits. This design will also create opposing left-turn lanes upstream of the interchange for traffic turning onto I-26. These lanes are designed to more efficiently move all traffic patterns through the interchange. This design also provides accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on U.S. 64 through the interchange.



## Protected Species

In addition to the gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*), the Appalachian elktoe (*Alasmidonta raveneliana*) was also discovered within the project study area. Both are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as endangered species and are subject to Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act. Coordination between NCDOT, FHWA, and USFWS is on-going and formal consultation will occur before the final environmental document is issued.



## I-26 Bridge Over the French Broad River

As part of the I-26 widening, the bridges carrying I-26 over the French Broad River, as well as Cane Creek and Clear Creek and other roads, will be replaced. The I-26 bridge over the French Broad River will be replaced in place over a period of approximately four years. **NCDOT will keep the river open for the majority of the time and provide a safe passage lane for river users.** River passage may be temporarily closed during construction/demolition activities that are unsafe for river users. These closures are expected to occur at night. River users will be alerted to the construction/demolition of the bridge and the safe passage lane through signage, traditional and social media, and other communication methods.



*Bridge Safety Concept Drawing*

### Right of Way Acquisition

After decisions are made regarding the final design, the proposed right of way limits will be staked in the ground. If you are an affected property owner, a Right of Way Agent will contact you and arrange a meeting. The agent will explain the plans and advise you as to how the project will affect you. The agent will inform you of your rights as a property owner. 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. NCDOT must:

- Treat all owners and tenants equally;
- Fully explain the owner's rights;
- Pay just compensation in exchange for property rights; and
- Furnish relocation advisory assistance.

### Relocation Assistance

If your residence or business is to be acquired and relocated 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.

NOTE: PAMPHLETS SUMMARIZING RIGHT OF WAY AND RELOCATION PROCEDURES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE RIGHT OF WAY TABLE.

## Cost Estimate

Implementation Phase	Cost
Right of Way Acquisition	\$16,000,000
Utility Relocation	\$5,229,597
Construction	\$460,775,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$466,020,597</b>

Costs are as shown in the Current STIP and subject to change.

## Be Involved, Stay Informed

Thank you for attending tonight's public meeting. Your thoughts and questions are important to us. There are many ways you can reach us.

Comment Form - You can fill out the attached comment form tonight and leave it with us, or you can submit it by mail or email to the contacts below.

**Please return comments by April 30, 2018.**

Website - For more information about the project, and to find documents and the maps shown at today's meeting visit our website at:

**[www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening](http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening)**

Call, Email, or Write to the contacts below:

Wanda Austin, P.E., CPM  
NCDOT - Division 14,  
Project Development Engineer  
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whaustin@ncdot.gov

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Project Development Engineer  
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Kat Bukowy, AICP  
HNTB North Carolina, P.C.,  
NCDOT Project Consultant  
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Sylva, NC 28779

55 Orange St.  
Asheville, NC 28801

343 E. Six Forks Rd, Ste 200  
Raleigh, NC 27609



AFFIX  
POSTAGE  
HERE

Attn: Kat Bukowy  
HNTB North Carolina, P.C.  
343 E. Six Forks Road, Suite 200  
Raleigh, NC 27609

# TITLE VI PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORM

Completing this form is **completely** voluntary. You are not required to provide the information requested in order to participate in this meeting.

<b>Meeting Type:</b> Design Public Meeting <b>Location:</b> Biltmore Baptist Church, Terrace Hall, 35 Clayton Road, Arden	<b>Date:</b> April 16, 2018
<b>STIP No.:</b> I-4400/I-4700 <b>Project Description:</b> Proposed widening of I-26 from US 25, south of Hendersonville, in Henderson County to I-40/I-240, south of Asheville, in Buncombe County.	

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related authorities, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) assures that no person(s) shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any of the Department's programs, policies, or activities, based on their race, color, national origin, disability, age, income, or gender.

**Completing this form helps meet our data collection and public involvement obligations under Title VI and NEPA, and will improve how we serve the public.** Please place the completed form in the designated box on the sign-in table, hand it to an NCDOT official, or mail it to the Environmental Analysis Unit, 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598.

All forms will remain on file at the NCDOT as part of the public record.

<b>Zip Code:</b> _____ <b>Street Name:</b> (i.e. Main Street) _____	<b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Total Household Income:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$12,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$47,000 – \$69,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$12,000 – \$19,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 – \$93,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 – \$30,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$94,000 – \$117,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$31,000 – \$46,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$118,000 or greater	<b>Age:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and older <input type="checkbox"/> 30-44
<b>Race/Ethnicity:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	<b>Have a Disability:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>National Origin:</b> (if born outside the U.S.) <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican <input type="checkbox"/> Central American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> South American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____

How did you hear about this meeting? (newspaper advertisement, flyer, and/or mailing)

For more information regarding Title VI or this request, please contact the NCDOT Title VI Section at (919) 508-1896 or toll free at 1-800-508-1886, or by email at [sddickens@ncdot.gov](mailto:sddickens@ncdot.gov).

Thank you for your participation!



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**N.C. Department of Transportation**  
**1598 Mail Service Center**  
**Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1598**



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700

I-26 WIDENING

HENDERSON COUNTY

BUNCOMBE COUNTY



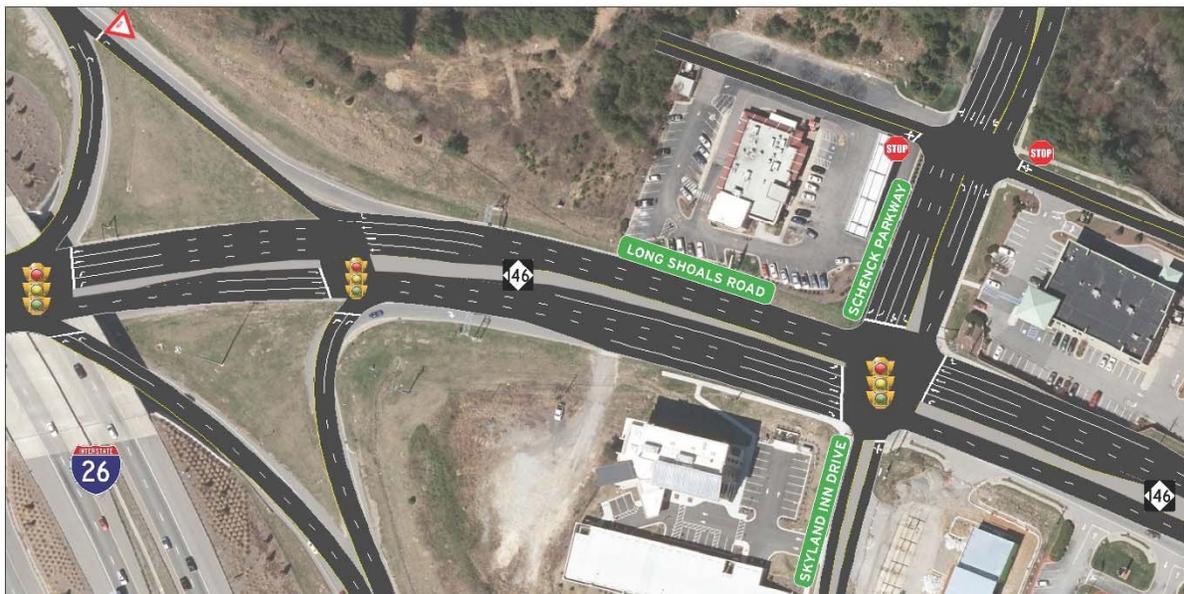
STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700

I-26 WIDENING

HENDERSON COUNTY

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

# LONG SHOALS ROAD (NC 146) AND SCHENCK PARKWAY CONCEPTUAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS



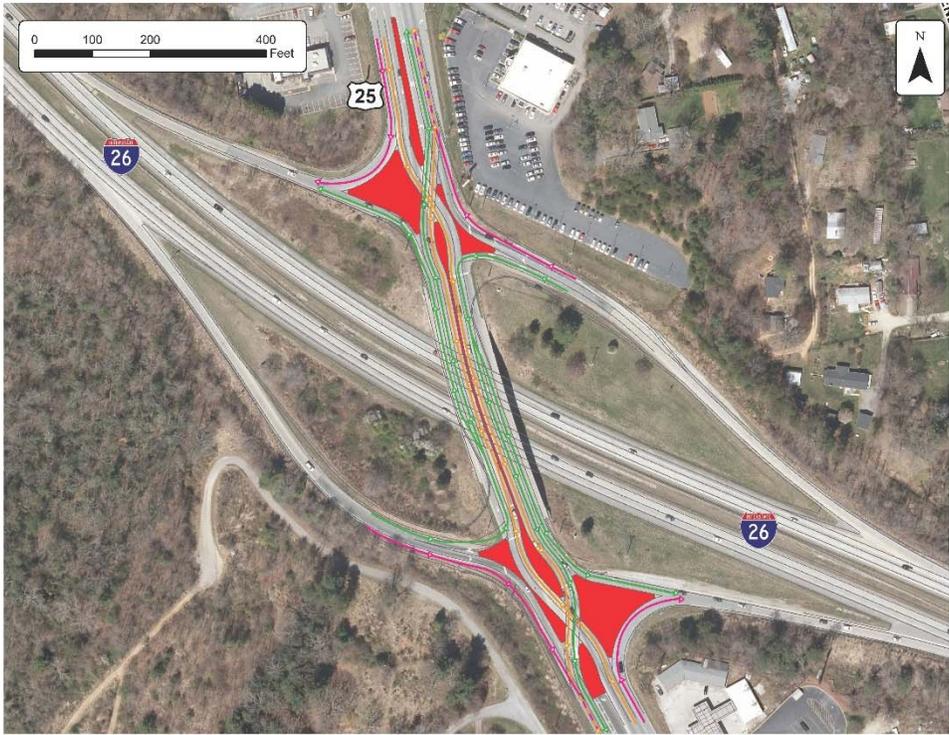


STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700

I-26 WIDENING

HENDERSON COUNTY  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

- Key:
- Thorough Travel
  - Left Turn
  - Right Turn
  - Proposed Concrete Island and Guardrail



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700

I-26 WIDENING

HENDERSON COUNTY  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

# I-26 BRIDGE OVER THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER

## PROPOSED SAFETY CONCEPT ILLUSTRATION





STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700

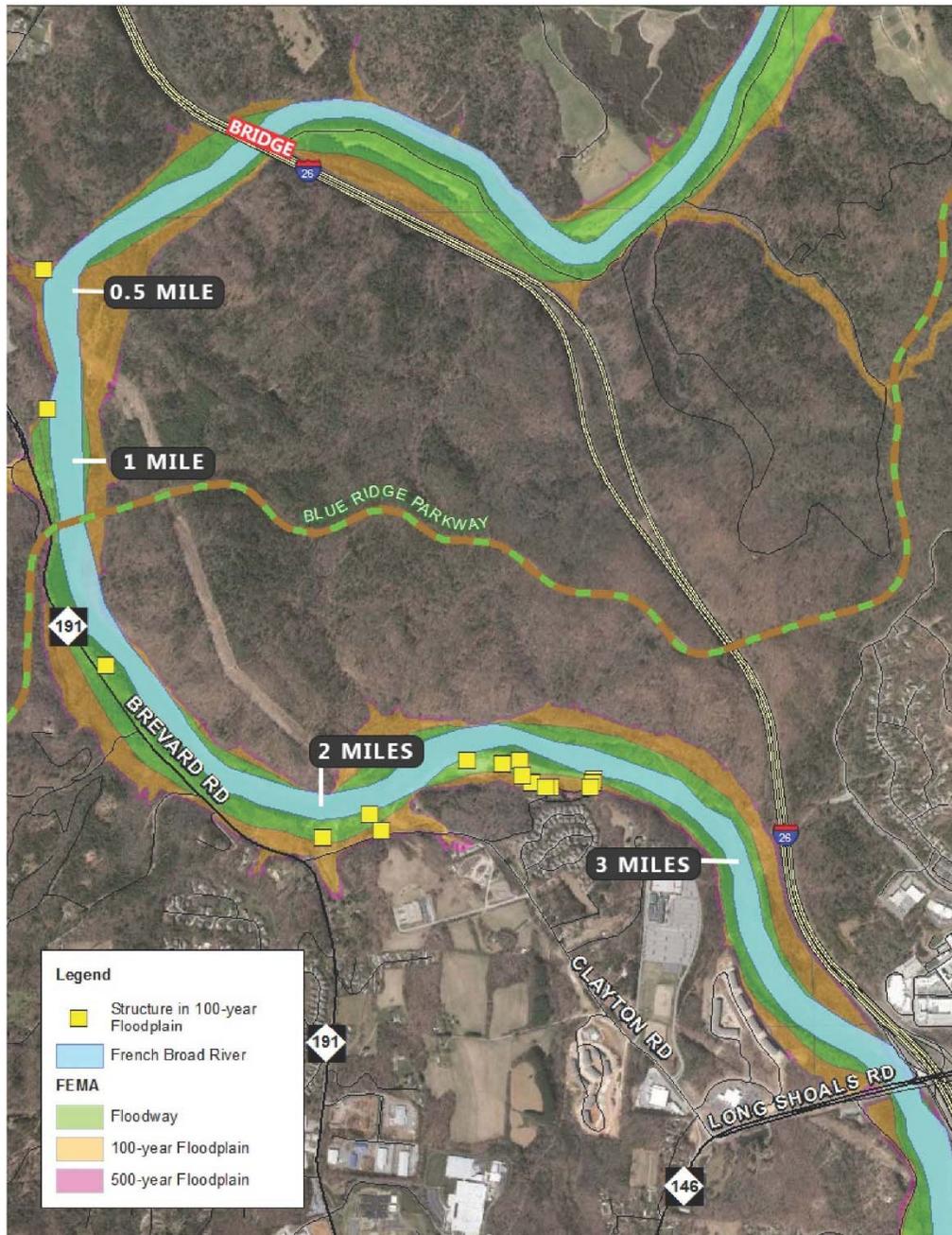
I-26 WIDENING

HENDERSON COUNTY

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

# I-26 BRIDGE OVER THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER

## STRUCTURES WITHIN THE 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN



**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
1	Rick Owenby 4/16/2018	Richard Owenby called today with questions about what is going to be taking place at his property (703 Dana Rd, Hendersonville). I believe is main concern is whether his whole property (including house) is going to be taken or if just a portion of his property. It sounds like he has seen different maps over time. I directed him to the newest maps and he said he had seen them already. He is unable to attend the meeting tonight, so he would like one of you to call him to discuss the project with him. Can one of you please give him a call by the end of the day tomorrow? His number is 828-6220-3435.	Thank you for sending me the figures that the law firm sent you. It appears that they are based on the proposed 8-Lane Widening Alternative and do not reflect decisions made after the Public Hearing in October 2016. In January 2017, NCDOT confirmed the Preferred Alternative as the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative. I-26 will be widened to six lanes from US 25 (Exit 54) to US 25 (Asheville Highway) (Exit 44); from US 25 (Asheville Highway) to I-40/I-240, it will be widened to eight lanes. The current meeting map, based on the latest designs and shown on Monday, April 16, 2018 at the public meeting, does not show that any right of way is required from your property, #130. Current right of way is shown in dark green; if right of way was required, it would be shown in light green. The red hatching denotes that you are also in an area being studied for potential noise abatement.
2	Don Streb 4/27/2018	Being a resident of Carolina Village since last July I have lived through the summer, fall, winter, and now starting into the spring season. The message here is that regardless of the density of the foliage, tourist traffic, local traffic, and the constant thunder of semi-tractor trailers, not even to mention all other factors, the decibel of noise from Interstate 26 into all areas of Carolina Village in a real nuisance and disturbance to a pleasant way of comfortable living. Please take into consideration an unbiased and accurate level of noise from the proposed highway expansion when planning for a wall to insure a noise breaker for the 700 anticipated seniors who will be living here.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
3	Don Taws 4/30/2018	I was told that you are the one to write concerning the daily noise level coming from I-26. My wife and I live at Carolina Village, in Hendersonville and would like the NCDOT to consider putting up a sound barrier where the road comes so close to the Village. Most of the residents are elderly, and it is very annoying to hear the constant	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		rumble and noise from the heavy traffic. We would appreciate the State looking into this.	feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
5	Bill Ramsey 4/16/2018	This project is vital to the economy of Henderson county. We have lived here and used this section of I-26 since 1989. It has become more dangerous and congested each year. There seem to be no time slots during the day and evening hours when traffic is moderate. Please move on this with urgency.	Thank you for your comments.
6	Brian Schultz 4/16/2018	I own the house at 47 Wildwood Circle, Fletcher, NC. I went to the meeting tonight and am very distraught. I just spent my life savings on this home, and after living here for 5 months now, I have grown accustomed to the non-stop grinding of gears, brakes and engines that living 30 yards off of a major highway provides. Trucks line up a stones throw my fence and run their engines on the on ramp from the rest stop all night. I can never have the windows or doors open at any time of the day for any reason. I have gotten used to this and realized that this purchase is on me. I was told tonight this area does qualify for noise protection, except it will not happen because it is not cost effective. Further towards Asheville a few miles, there are houses many times further from 26 than my house, where the noise cannot be as bad, and they are getting a wall. I'm begging for consideration for the NCDOT to do something about this project that will not worsen my quality of life and further devalue my investment. I cannot picture trucks lined up all night right behind my fence. The noise is bad throughout the entire neighborhood...it is not just those of us on 26. Thank you for listening.	Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed. Response 2: Thank you for your inquiry regarding STIP Project I-4400/I-4700, the proposed I-26 Widening. You are correct. The right of way adjacent to your property is already owned by NCDOT (dark green) and they do not require any additional property (light green) per the Meeting Maps shown at the Public Meeting (below).
	Brian Schultz	Hi. I own lot 384 on 26 widening project. At the meeting last night, I was told the rest area on ramp would move back towards my backyard. On the map I only see dark green there which is supposed to be the preexisting ramp. Can you clarify? Thanks	Thank you for your inquiry regarding STIP Project I-4400/I-4700, the proposed I-26 Widening. You are correct. The right of way adjacent to your property is already owned by NCDOT (dark green) and they do not require any additional property (light green) per the Meeting Maps shown at the Public Meeting (below).
7	Ann Babcock 4/17/2018 (Connect Buncombe)	Thanks for attending the public hearing last night and listening to citizen concerns. I will begin my comments by letting you know that I am a member of Connect Buncombe, a greenway advocacy group. Buncombe County has a Master Plan for Trails and Greenways, adopted by the County Commission in 2012. It has garnered wide support from one end of the county to the other. We hope that NCDOT considers this plan and the supporting "feasibility studies" when designing widening projects. Members of Connect Buncombe attend every DOT public meeting where we can give input to the draft plan and ask that safe greenway access and development be considered along with road widening when possible. We do not always feel that DOT listens to our concerns. For example: The new Hwy 191 bridge over I-26 includes sidewalks and a bike lane along the bridge but will not be safe for families and kids riding out to the NC Arboretum. A pedestrian bridge, although expensive, would have been far more	Thank you for providing your views on the NCDOT's I-26 Widening project, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>appropriate. Use of the culvert going under I-26, far less expensive than a bridge, would have worked as well. Transportation includes more than vehicular traffic. Walking and biking are becoming more attractive means of transportation and we should encourage that. Please consider our Master Plan in all phases of planning for DOT projects if simply to allow for future greenway projects</p>	
8	<p>Jeff Egolf 4/17/2018</p>	<p>Thanks for your time this afternoon on the new NCDOT plan for I26 exit 44 and especially our interest, the west side of I26 along Cureton Rd and Pl., Egolf Properties #s 311, 312, 313 and 314. We think we understand the three options with possibly some modifications. The one option we would like to explore further would be to preserve the paved access road across property #313 to property #314 and to maintain ownership and use of property #313. Our understanding is that engineering would have to inspect to insure the elevations, drop offs, ditch line, existing water line etc. Would allow for that. If you could facilitate that process, we could certainly definitively express our hopefully positive opinion. Our desire is to have a commercially usable and attractive whole tract without involving excessive Eminent Domain although we do understand that possibly some property may be taken. And as we indicated, our property #314 could certainly be accessed and used for depositing clean spoil dirt. That could benefit all as we do have some elevation situations there. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any questions. And thank you again for the open discussion.</p>	<p>Last evening, Ted and I met with Mr. Egolf and the HNTB Roadway Design Engineer to discuss the issue contained in this email. We committed to investigating this situation to determine what could be done to reduce the permanent taking of right of way. Could you please forward this to your design team for their further handling?</p>
9	<p>Dean Headly 4/18/2018</p>	<p>I attended the I-26 update at Biltmore Church last night. I want to share some feedback and concerns about an area that is related to that larger project. I'm referring to the Brevard Road intersections at 1) Long Shoals and 2) Clayton. 1) I realize there are some property line/easement issues or challenges, but that intersection is a major bottleneck. We need a</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in the NCDOT's I-26 Widening project, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. The area that you are referring to is part of STIP Project U-3403B, proposed</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>short term and long-term solution. The I 26 projects without a short-term solution will make for miserable living for those of us over here.</p> <p>2) because we have to avoid the Long Shoals Brevard Road intersection many of us try to use Clayton, but it is at times impossible to turn left onto Brevard Road from Clayton. I'm happy to provide further information/commentary and to share with others as you wish.</p>	<p>improvements to NC 191 (Brevard Road) from NC 146 to north of the Blue Ridge Parkway, which is in the environmental and engineering studies phase now and is programmed for funding for right of way in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and construction in FY 2023. The NCDOT Project Manager is Derrick Weaver, cc'd. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project.</p>
10	Jerry Kain 4/17/2018	<p>I live in Henderson County within 1/2 mile of I-26, just south/east of the Upward rd. exit #53.</p> <p>I would like to request that DOT consider placing "No Engine Break or (Just Brake) usage along this corridor. The truck noise is considerable around our neighborhood as I'm sure is the case along any hilly sections of I-26 in both Buncombe and Henderson counties. Thanks for your consideration!</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your comments on the NCDOT's I-26 Widening project, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Your comments will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. Please let us know if you have any further comments or questions regarding the project</p>
11	Mary Pohl 4/17/2018	<p>Is there any information you could share from last night's public meeting regarding I-26 widening?</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in the I-26 Widening project, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700. Information about the project can be found on the project website: <a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/</a>. I am attaching a copy of the handout provided at Monday's meeting. Please let me know if you need additional information or have any questions.</p>
13	Farrah Calloway 4/18/2018	<p>Thank you for taking correspondence regarding the I-26 expansion. It is my understanding that a noise study was conducted years ago in my neighborhood, Wildwood Circle. It is also my understanding that it was determined that a minimal number of houses were affected by such noise; therefore, building a noise-reducing wall was not warranted nor did it justify the cost. I can assure you that I am most certainly affected by the traffic noise constantly. When I moved in to my home in 2009, I</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction</p>

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>was well aware that I would be subjected to some traffic noise living in close proximity to the interstate. But keep in mind there is a reason an expansion is being considered to I-26--TOO MUCH TRAFFIC! The population census has doubled--or tripled even--in our area in nine years' time and the dysfunctional interstate system is evidence of that--it cannot support the growing numbers. With the increased traffic comes traffic jams. This means I am hearing traffic noises for longer periods of time. When the interstate does widen, it will be closer to my home and be even louder and will most certainly decrease the value of the homes in our neighborhood. I implore you to consider the needs of me and my family-- North Carolina tax-paying citizens. Consider the burden of trying to get my 6 year old child to sleep soundly through the night only to be awakened by the interstate traffic. We want a sound barrier.</p>	<p>of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.</p>
14	Seth Mclennan 4/18/2018	<p>Good morning. My wife and I bought our home at 55 Wildwood Cir, Fletcher 1/7/16. We had sold our condo much faster than we expected so we had to find something quickly. At that time there was not much to choose from and the prices were beginning to skyrocket. We chose our current home as it had everything on that list in our limited budget with the exception of being near I-26. We did our homework, looked / read the DOT web page regarding the widening and observed the chances for a getting sound barrier wall were quite positive. At this last meeting on 4/16/18, I was informed that there is a whole new board / team and they think there are not enough people effected in my neighborhood to warrant the cost of a sound</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this</p>

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>barrier wall. Your studies may conclude the information you want them to however many of my neighbors who are "benefited" but not "impacted" have noise issues and would like a sound barrier wall. This will cause all of our home values to decrease and reduce our quality of life. It would be nice to have my 5-year-old daughter sleep through the night and not wake up at 3-4 am scared of the highway noises. We now have a 6-week-old baby boy we are concerned about as well. I'm glad the money is being spent near the river etc. and benefit our many tourists but we do LIVE here and pay NC taxes and should not be pushed aside. Thank you for your consideration.</p>	<p>noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.</p>
15	Seth Mclennan 4/24/2018	<p>Will these tests be done at the quietest time for the DOTs benefit or at a time that has normal and not stopped traffic? Would proper sound barrier vegetation be planted if a wall is not constructed?</p>	<p>NCDOT uses traffic conditions that result in the loudest traffic noise. The noise model assumes a mix of cars, medium trucks, and heavy trucks moving at highway speeds to obtain the worst noise hour. Plant material is not an effective barrier for noise abatement and federal funds are not allowed to be used for that purpose. NCDOT may install landscaping for aesthetic purposes, but it would not be effective for noise reduction.</p>
16	Seth Mclennan 4/25/2018	<p>When will the new sound study begin/end</p>	<p>NCDOT uses traffic conditions that result in the loudest traffic noise. The noise model assumes a mix of cars, medium trucks, and heavy trucks moving at highway speeds to obtain the worst noise hour. Plant material is not an effective barrier for noise abatement and federal funds are not allowed to be used for that purpose. NCDOT may install landscaping for aesthetic purposes, but it would not be effective for noise reduction.</p>

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
17	Patrick Runyan 4/18/2018	Hello my name is Patrick Runyan, I would like to voice my concern over the expansion of I-26. I live in the Wildwood subdivision off of Fanning Bridge rd. close to the airport. There really needs to be a barrier/noise wall built when the road goes to 6 lanes. We have enough noise as it is with the road now. Adding even more traffic will make it worse. I really hope this wall will be considered. If what I read is true, other neighborhoods getting a wall that are not as close to the road as us? Please build the wall for people who need it.	Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.
18	Luke Withrow 4/18/2018	I was wondering if my home will be impacted by the I-26 widening project. Is there a map showing the current stretch of the "4 B Alternative"?	Thank you for contacting us about the project. I believe your question pertains to the I-26 Connector project (I-2513) not the I-26 Widening project south of Asheville (I-4400/I-4700). I am sharing your comments with members of the NCDOT I-26

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			Connector Project team (Michael Wray and Derrick Weaver) so they can answer your question.
19	Chris Moore 4/19/2018	I have attached two comment forms regarding the sound barrier wall around mile marker 50 eastbound on I-26 (just south of Dana Rd bridge). We own all the property adjacent to the proposed wall (off Meadowlark Lane) which includes a mobile home park. The mobile home park has enough dwellings to increase the population density such that it warranted a noise impact study. After speaking with representatives at the public meeting, it is clear that the property owner's vote outweighs the tenants' votes by a 4:1 margin. That said, we are strongly opposed to the wall and will vote as such. The folks at the meeting advised us to submit a comment form and let you know the situation here so that maybe you can avoid the costs of further studies at this location.	Thank you for providing your view on STIP Project I-4400/I-4700, I-26 widening. Your comments will be included in the project record. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study along the entire project corridor in accordance with the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (attached) and in compliance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). If a noise wall is found to be reasonable and feasible at this location, a vote will occur, and you will be able to vote against the wall as our representatives explained at the meeting.
20	Cindy Warren 4/19/2018	I represent Lamar Outdoor Advertising and have attached some comments per the public meeting at Biltmore Church 4-16. We have two items: We own a parcel with a billboard identified as possible ROW acquisition. We have three billboards possibly affected by potential sound walls. We are committed to working with all parties on this project to preserve our business interests in keeping with a cooperative spirit with all agencies involved.	Thank you for contacting us regarding the location of Lamar's billboards in relation to the I-26 widening project. I am copying the project team with your emails attached, so that you can coordinate necessary easements and/or relocations as practicable. Please let me know if you have additional questions.
21	Cindy Warren 4/19/2018	Proposed ROW acquisition Pin # 9652-21-3286 160 Butler Bridge parcel is owned by Lamar Outdoor. We have a billboard on that parcel. We want to do everything we can to keep our billboard display on that parcel and want to work with the DOT in the event the ROW will be taken with our billboard as is. We just want to stay in business there and look forward to creative solutions to that end. We also have billboards that may be affected by proposed sound walls.	Thank you for contacting us regarding the location of Lamar's billboards in relation to the I-26 widening project. I am copying the project team with your emails attached, so that you can coordinate necessary easements and/or relocations as practicable. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

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22	Roberta Lott 4/20/2018	<p>I am a concerned property owner that will be greatly affected by the decision to take a large part of my backyard leaving my home exposed on the I26 with no sound barrier. I have lived here over 20 years. This is the only home my children know. My septic tank is in the backyard, which depends on that area to work properly. We have nowhere to go. the cost of living is sky high and we are unable to buy another home at this cost. My neighbors are very upset and concerned. We are going to lose our property value by \$100,000 and our lifesaving/retirement plan.</p> <p>I/We are requesting that you start the STIP Project No.1-4400 after the Dana bridge. This will save our property values and you will not have to replace the bridge overpass of Dana road. This will be cost-effective for the state and help the property owners keep there home and values without the state paying for the right of way. Please reconsider this plan and protect NC Carolinians' property. We are taxpayers and hard-working families. I will welcome a visit and you could see the devastation that will affect many residents in the Willowbrook Community.</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, the proposed widening of I-26. Your comments will be included as part of the project record. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, a project must have logical beginning and ending points. Therefore, the project's logical termini begin at US 25 (Exit 54), south of Hendersonville, and end point is I-40/I-240 south of Asheville. However, the construction of this project is phased in different segments. The portion that includes Dana Road is in I-4400A, which is currently unfunded into the future in the Current STIP. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.</p>
23	Roberta Lott 4/24/2018	<p>I do not understand this statement "The portion that includes Dana Road is in I-4400A, which is currently unfunded into the future in the Current STIP." Does this mean it is not going to happen because of the funding or the budget is not approved until July 2018? Please clarify this statement. I am desperately trying to figure out my home situation. Thanks, Roberta</p>	<p>To further clarify, NCDOT projects go through a project prioritization process each year, based on the Strategic Transportation Investments law passed in 2013. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the result of that process. The STIP identifies the transportation projects that will receive funding during a specified 10-year period (currently, FY 2018 to FY 2027). NCDOT has broken up funding for the construction of STIP Project No. I-4400 in three segments, A, B, and C. Segment A, from US 25 (Exit 54) to US 64, is not funded in the STIP, which is updated approximately every two years. Although the STIP is subject to change, there is no plan for funding this segment (I-4400A) over the next 10-year period.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

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24	Roberta Lott 4/24/2018	I am shocked because my husband went to the meeting and he was told a complete different story and he was provided information. An attorney has contacted all the homeowners with images of the road going through each property owner's backyard. Thanks Roberta	
25	Patricia Viverette 4/20/2018	Hello, my name is Patricia Viverette and I live at 106 Willowbrook Rd. in Hendersonville, just off Dana Rd. I recently purchased this house on March 26th and then found out about the possible acquisition of property that is connected to the right of way for I-26. I have not received any letter concerning this, but all of my neighbors have. You all may have notified the previous owner, William Robinson, which is deceased...or his daughter, Tammy Sama. I just wanted to be sure you all were aware of the change in ownership of this property and I would like to know if I can get any further information. I was not able to attend the public meeting in Asheville since I was sick. Just need to know if this will affect my property and if so, how much. I had plans of a privacy fence, but I guess I should hold off until I have more information.	Good morning. Thank you for letting us know of the change in ownership. The portion of the project adjacent to your property is currently not funded. The Department only has conceptual plans for this section. Therefore, impacts to your property is unknown at this time. Should I-4400A receive funding in the next funding cycle, the concepts will be further developed. Feel free to contact me should you have any other questions.
26	Brittney Poppell 4/23/2018	Is the most recent public meeting handout available for project I-4700, I-26 Widening?	Yes, this information is on the Project website. <a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/</a>
27	Raymond Gragg 4/24/2018	Dear Kat.....I am a resident of Wildwood and I think that we should be considered for a wall. In the winter, you can hear the I-26 when the leaves are not on the trees. It does not make sense why we would not have a wall once the expansion is done.	Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach

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			<p>certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.</p>
28	<p>Kerry &amp; Pamela McBride  4/24/2018</p>	<p>Wildwood Community needs a privacy wall. We have needed a sound barrier for a decade. There is a truck weigh station just before our neighborhood (Wildwood). After the trucks leave the truck stop many of them park over night on the side of the highway 26 which is just beyond our backyard. The noise from Interstate 26 as it relates to Wildwood Community is already nearly unbearable. The resale value of our property will be greatly diminished as a result of a 8 lane highway with no sound barrier for our family.</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic</p>

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			<p>Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.</p>
29	<p>Renate Pacheco 4/24/2018</p>	<p>Hello, I am writing this email as a very concerned home owner. My address is 45 Wildwood Circle, Fletcher, NC 28732 My house backs up to interstate 26. The noise level from the 4 lane traffic is almost unbearable presently. I am very concerned that the state will not provide a noise barrier like a wall. There are many children and pets that live on this street. The expansion of I26 to 6 or 8 lanes will greatly increase the noise level. Presently I can hear the noise when I am inside my house with the doors and windows closed. My dogs and I will be GREATLY DISTRESSED by the noise coming from the increased traffic and closeness of the interstate to my house with the doors closed. My dogs and I will be GREATLY DISTRESSED by the noise coming from the increased traffic and closeness of the interstate to my house. I am requesting that you consider a noise barrier like a wall between my house and the interstate that you will be widening.</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A</p>

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			noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.
30	Kate Coons 4/25/2018		Thank you for speaking with me earlier regarding the I-26 Widening project, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700. Your property, Auto Advantage, is shown as parcel #350 on the meeting map screen capture below. The light green shown within your property boundary is proposed right of way. This amounts to approximately 0.26 acre. The design is currently being finalized and this amount may change as the design is refined. Right of way acquisition for this portion of the project is scheduled to begin in June 2018. Please let me know if you need any additional information.
31	Kate Coons 4/25/2018	Thank you so much, this was very helpful. In looking at this map, I see a light green area in some of our other property. It's across the street right behind parcel #362. Would it be possible to see a map of that area along with an estimate of the amount of land affected? Thank you again for all your help.	Your property is shown as parcel #364 on the meeting map screen capture below. The light green shown within your property boundary is proposed right of way. This amounts to approximately 0.84 acre. The design is currently being finalized and this amount may change as the design is refined. Right of way acquisition for this portion of the project is scheduled to begin in June 2018. Please let me know if you need any additional information.
32	George & Loretta Giuffre	My wife and I are residents of Carolina Village, which is on the Westside of I26 at exit 44 in Hendersonville, NC. Our Medical and Care Centers are virtually next to the Highway. We live in a	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project

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	4/26/2018	cottage close to these buildings and are buffered from the highway noise... only minimal. Highway I26 is heavily travelled 24 hours per day with many trucks – this noise never abates. During the day, with other background noise, the highway noise is always there, but not as apparent. At night, especially at bed time, with the windows closed, is when we become more aware of the highway noise, and it is bad. Considering that we have approximately 100 patients in the Medical and Care centers and an additional 420 residents in cottages and apartments, and in the process of adding more cottages and apartments to house an additional 150 residents, this is the time to add a sound barrier. With a population, soon to be near to 700, we hope you give this issue your urgent consideration. Consider the age of our resident population, approximately 5 individuals 100+ 170 individuals 90+. 190 individuals 80+	record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
33	Sue Hatch 4/26/2018	I am writing to urge you to provide sound barriers for the I 26 projects in Hendersonville. I am a resident of Carolina Village, and already the traffic noise is loud, and frequently disturbing. As traffic increases (and probably speeds up) with the widened road, it will only become worse. Please provide a sound barrier between the highway and our 520 residents. We are all senior citizens, and I believe we deserve the same consideration as residents in several less densely populated areas for whom you are providing sound barriers.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
34	Sue Hatch 4/29/2018	I am writing to urge you to provide sound barriers for Carolina Village as part of the I 26 widening projects. The Village is immediately adjacent to the highway. With its current 520 residents (which will become 700 next year) it is undoubtedly one of the highest density residential areas to be affected by the project. I believe this should be a major factor in determining where sound barriers will be installed. We, the residents of	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT

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		Carolina Village, urge you to put up sound barriers between us and the highway.	Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
35	William McLane 4/27/2018	My apartment faces I 26 and with 4 lanes, the traffic noise is not pleasant. Please put sound walls when you pass by Carolina Village	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
36	Bob Ragan 4/26/2018	I want to express my personal concerns with regard to the noise impact of the I-26 widening on my residence and hope you will consider some form of sound mediation as a part of the project.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
37	Jane Ragan 4/26/2018	On behalf of myself and the 500 current residents (and the 200 anticipated new residents) living with minimal distance between our homes and the I-26 new lanes of bustling and very noisy traffic, I strongly urge you to RE-EVALUATE the decision to refuse a sound-mediating wall adjacent to our properties. WE DESPERATELY NEED SOUND MEDIATION!	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
38	Charlotte Shipley	I invite you to join me on the balcony near my apartment at Carolina Village for a cool drink and a conversation. Strike the	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-

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	4/26/2018	last part. It will not be possible to converse comfortably on that balcony or on others at this lovely residential retirement community. The reason is that traffic on I-26 is loud enough to drown out the spoken word. The current 520 residents here will be nearly 700 by 2019. Widening the highway is a necessary route to progress and we don't oppose it but we ask: PLEASE ASK NCDOT TO RE-CONSIDER A SOUND BARRIER IN THE VICINITY OF I-26 AND HWY 64. INCREASED USAGE OF I-26 WILL ADD TO THE ALREADY UNDESIRABLE SOUND POLLUTION FOR A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SENIOR CITIZENS AT CAROLINA VILLAGE. PLEASE HELP US!	26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
39	Evelyn Uhrlass 4/27/2018	As a resident of Carolina Village - bordering the proposed widening - I would suggest that a SOUND STUDY should be conducted - and frankly, I am surprised that one has not previously been done. This affects over 500 residents. I appreciate your attention to this.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
40	Robert Anderson 4/27/2018	My wife and I have been residents of Carolina Village for nearly five years. All this time, the noise from I26 has been a nuisance. With the coming widening of I26 in Henderson Cty. particularly, we fear noise will be even more of a problem. Please include a sound barrier as part of this project.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
41	Nancy Campbell 4/27/2018	I live in a senior community – Carolina Village – in Hendersonville. This facility is directly beside I-26, currently has 520 residents, soon to be over 700 residents. These residents live in	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project

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		independent apartments & cottages while others live in the care/medical center. At present the noise from I-26 is extremely loud and will only become worse with additional traffic. We seriously need to be considered – put at the top of the list – for noise abatement walls. Your attention would be greatly appreciated.	record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
42	Ann Destremps 4/27/2018	With the widening of I-26 just north of Exit 49 in Henderson County, the noise level near this heavily populated area will greatly increase. There will be over 600 Carolina Village residents adversely affected by the noise level. We strongly urge the DOT to erect a noise-abatement wall in this area. It is the right thing to do.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
43	Kohlan Flynn 4/27/2018 Carolina Village President	I am the President of the 20 member Board of Directors for the Carolina Village Continuing Care Retirement Center (CCRC). I wish the NCDOT would see the necessity of a “sound barrier” along the West side of I-26 (from the intersection with US 64 northward to Clear Creek) to protect the 700 residents from the interstate traffic noise.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
44	John Hemenway 4/27/2018	We appreciate widening interstate 26 next to Carolina Village; however, there should be a sound barrier wall constructed between Interstate 26 and Carolina Village (just before highway 64). This should have been originally approved along with the road widening project. Lets keep our Carolina Village pleasant and quite for us elderly citizens.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
45	James & Sharon Hurley	We are writing in regard to the widening of I-26 at the intersection of US-64 in Hendersonville. We are residents of Carolina Village, a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) adjacent to I-26 just north of US-64. We are currently 520 residents with an ongoing expansion that will result in 700 residents. The noise level is very high now and with the widening of I-26 will only increase. We have two requests: 1. The current I-26 is immediately adjacent to the Carolina Village property. Please do not add another lane closer to our property, thus taking away the existing narrow margin separating Carolina Village from the highway. 2. Please consider the installation of a sound barrier wall along the Carolina Village property to reduce the current noise level from the highway. That would greatly improve the noise level associated with I-26 for the 700 elderly residents of Carolina Village.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
46	George & Shirley Lamb 4/27/2018	We are residents of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. This is a Continuing Care Retirement Center located adjacent to I 26. We can see both eastbound and westbound traffic from our apartment. The noise level from traffic on I 26 is bad. We think that the highway needs to be widened and the need for a noise barrier is essential. The noise level will become even louder as time passes.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
47	Veronica Ledford 4/27/2018	I have been living at 53 Wildwood Circle for thirteen years. I was told that there was going to be a soundwall up from the date of purchase. My children and I have been woken by oversized truck's noise and vibrations, from parked idling jackbrakes, hornsblowing, and rumble strips. The holidays increase traffic noise along with morning traffic. The turn around is behind my	Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		<p>home for Emergency Response. Patrol officer at least every Sunday will sit there and sirens and excel rating several times. The sirens from fire trucks, ambulances, due to several wrecks at airport road, and several behind my home. If you try to eat on the porch you must holler in order to have a conversation. The noise pollution decreases the value of the home. Adding more lanes causes more noise pollution and a safety and health concern. Health concern and safety more wrecks, closer to home and much louder for body to rest at night. This being said, and the evidence of noise pollution being a health/safety issue there is no doubt that this soundwall needs to be built to protect the community and not only a pass through traffic who is only there for seconds, but our community is there constantly.</p>	<p>require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.</p>
48	Carol Lovett 4/27/2018	<p>My husband and I live at 1035 Carolina Village Road, Hendersonville, NC 28792. Carolina Village is a continuing Care Retirement Community at the intersection of I-26 and Route 64. Because I-26 will be widened to six lanes, it is very important that this community be protected with a sound barrier.</p>	<p>Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria as defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.</p>

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
49	Marian Lowry 4/27/2018	Carolina Village residents have heard about the plans to widen I-26 near Exit 49. We know plans have been amended for 12 families who are affected. How about 520 residents soon to be 700? Carolina Village was in this location before I-26 became the busy thoroughfare it is now. Trees no longer offer a sound barrier. Please, please construct a sound barrier when I-26 is expanded.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
50	Helen Palmer 4/27/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. We have been told about the I-26 widening project, to be started in 2019. I feel that the impact will be less for many people if DOT puts up noise barriers on either side of 26 along the border with Carolina Village and the businesses on the other side of the road. Some kind of berm or concrete wall would help dissipate the noise levels,.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
51	Nancy Randall 4/27/2018	Hello; my name is Nancy Randall - 21 White Quail Trail, Hendersonville, NC. When I first moved into Carolina Village, I was surprised that I could hear heavy traffic/trucks on I-26. Now that further construction here has removed many trees; I can see I-26 and the traffic noise is loud and constant. While I understand and agree with the need to widen I-26, I feel the noise level will increase even more.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
52	Louis & Judith Santiago 4/27/2018	We are residents of Carolina Village concerned about the impact of traffic generated by the widening of I-26. The construction process will be very disruptive, but we hope current plans can be modified to include a sound wall at US 64 and I-26. We realize that hanging traffic patterns is difficult, and no option will satisfy	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor,

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		everyone. Still, we hope that some sound barrier can be erected to protect the many seniors (520 now, perhaps 650 when our expansion is completed in 2019) in our community. Thank you for your attention to this matter	including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
53	Louis & Judith Santiago  4/27/2018	Thank you, Kat Bukowy, for responding to our message addressed to Anamika Laad. We trust that the NCDOT noise analysis of Project I-4400/I-4470 will conclude that a sound wall is needed to protect the numerous residents and staff of Carolina Village. Louis and Judith Santiago	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
54	Bobbie Seeman  4/27/2018	The proposed widening of Interstate 26 and route 64 will create a tremendous amount of traffic noise in the area which is just outside of Carolina Village. Please put in a sound barrier when this project is completed. Thank-you, Bobbi Seeman	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
55	Al Smith  4/27/2018	I live in Carolina Village and within 120 yds of east-bound I-26. I already hear both directions of truck noise and know it will get worse as the highway is widened and traffic grows. Please plan to add a noise wall on the Carolina Village side of I-26	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
56	Roberta Swanson  4/27/2018	We are anticipating the widening of I-26. However, I do have one concern. I am one of the 550+ residents of Carolina Village whose property is adjoining I-26 in Hendersonville. The sound of traffic is a steady sound at present, and we understand that a sound barrier is not presently in the plans for the new construction. I would urge you to include a sound wall in your plans. Many of our elderly and ill residents find the constant traffic noise distressful. Please include a sound wall on I-26 in Hendersonville especially between Clear Creek Rd. and 64. Carolina Village residents will appreciate it!	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
57	Roberta Swanson  4/28/2018	I am one of the 550+ residents of Carolina Village whose property adjoins I-26 in Hendersonville, NC. The sound of I-26 traffic is a steady drone at present--before the widening project even takes place. We understand a sound barrier is not presently in the plans for the new construction. This is a concern. Many of our elderly and ill residents find the constant traffic noise distressful already. I strongly urge you to include a sound wall on I-26 in Hendersonville, especially between Clear Creek Rd. and US 64. Carolina Village residents will appreciate it!	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
58	Jim & Nancy Wert  4/27/2018	I'm writing to request a sound study along Interstate 26 adjacent to Carolina Village as plans for widening I-26 are finalized. With the additional traffic when the project is completed, the noise level will increase even more than it is already. A barrier should have been installed years ago but that oversight has left over 500 current residents subject to the extremely loud and annoying sound of trucks and automobiles using I-26. This unpleasant traffic noise will become a greater issue when the current expansion project is completed next year as nearly 700 residents will be subjected to this unpleasant rumble. Please reconsider a sound barrier adjacent to the Carolina Village development.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
59	Herb Young 4/27/2018	I am a resident at Carolina Village in Hendersonville located directly on the North West corner of this intersection and we presently have a great deal of "NOISE" coming from IS 26 and believe that this will increase with the widening and increased traffic. We request that you review this problem and add a "NOISE BARRIER" along this section of the highway when the widening work is done. We would appreciate it very much. As it is we hear constant noise from the traffic and it will only get worse. At the construction of the widening to 6 lanes is the time to install the barrier.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
60	Fran Ackley 4/28/2018	I am an 88-year-old resident of Carolina Village, a residential community of more than 500 residents in Hendersonville, NC. Carolina Village is expanding at present and by late 2019 may have about 700 residents. My husband and I moved here to a very small apartment nearly three years ago after being involved as volunteers in this community for a number of years, contributing our energy and talents to our fellow neighbors as we chose this as our retirement years home. Our apartment faces Four Seasons Blvd. and currently we can see the signage relating to I-26. We chose to give up our home and move here to plan for our advancing years so as not to be a burden to family members who live distances away nor a burden to our community as our future health care needs might require. We continue to volunteer as we can to make Hendersonville a safe and caring community for all and are blessed to do so. Change comes and "progress" is inevitable and we. Accommodate to that as others have had to do before us. So, we understand the need for expansion of I-26, but we do have concerns for the noise that extra Vehicles will bring. We have a number of residents who are in the Care Center or the Medical Center and for whom a quiet setting is a real need. Most residents here have in their working years contributed much to the quality of Hendersonville and	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

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I-26 Widening

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		Henderson County. Please put into plans for widening I-26 the inclusion of adequate, sufficient sound barriers that parallel Carolina Village. Thank you for reading my heartfelt and honest comments.	
61	William Eadie 4/28/2018	This is a request to please put up absorptive sound barriers along the STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700 -- I 26 Widening. These barriers are the more modern and far superior barriers when compared to the older concrete sound barriers. We are scheduled to move into a Carolina Village apartment being built along I-26 in this section. We are Senior Citizens who will not benefit in any way from the 24-hour sound of busy traffic on this section. We may reconsider moving there when the apartment is completed the summer of 2019 due to the noise factor. We would deeply appreciate anything you can do to expedient the building of absorptive sound barriers.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
62	Georgia Hemenway 4/28/2018	I can hardly believe that you would conclude that the area around Carolina Village should be denied a sound barrier. Already the noise is at a high level. Noise is not likely to be diminished in the future. I sincerely hope that you will reconsider your decision about this matter. I am a resident in Carolina Village. Nearly everyday I try to walk outside on the campus for two or more miles so I am very aware of that which I am writing.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
63	Stephen Hogenboom 4/28/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village retirement community located adjacent to I-26 at the Exit 49 interchange. At present, the noise level due to traffic on I-26 is so high as to make outdoor activity unpleasant, especially during peak travel hours. Heavy trucks routinely use compression breaking near the interchange. During warm weather we are virtually forced to keep our windows closed because the noise interrupts conversation necessitating excessive use of air-conditioning. Sleep is interrupted. When the	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT

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I-26 Widening

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		highway is widened the conditions will be even worse. A sound mitigating wall between the Carolina Village campus and the highway will be badly needed.	Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
64	Grace Poli 4/28/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village Retirement Community, we've been told the the Dept of Transportation is not considering sound barriers for the stretch of highway adjacent to our complex. Our Assisted Living and Medical Center are right off of I-26 and the noise of the 18 wheelers during the day is bearable but but at night its intolarable; especially when they brake. I know whereof I speak for I slept in my husband's room at the Medical Center when he was there the last weeks of his life.Please, insist on sound barriers to help our residents in these two facilities plus those cottages off of I-26. We shall be eternally grateful to you.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
65	Bobbie Seeman 4/27/2018	The proposed widening of Interstate 26 and route 64 will create a tremendous amount of traffic noise in the area which is just outside of Carolina Village. Please put in a sound barrier when this project is completed. Thank-you, Bobbi Seeman	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
66	Kay Williams 4/28/2018	I am addressing the issue of a sound wall at Hwy 64 East and I 26. I am resident at Carolina Village where over 500 senior citizens reside. We are already affected by the noise on I 26. With the additional lanes being added to I 26 we are really going to be impacted by the noise. Please consider a sound wall to help us have a quieter and more peaceful	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		place to live.	
67	Dwight Bozeman  4/29/2018	Concerning the planned Interstate 26 expansion alongside the Carolina Village in Hendersonville. The existing 4-lane highway is already bothersome noisy to Village residents who live closest to it. This includes residents in the assisted living and nursing facilities which are adjacent to it. Note that the Village now is building additional residential units with a capacity for 170 persons. This will bring the overall Village population up to appx. 690 residents. As the planned 2 additional lanes of traffic are certain to further increase the noise level, and the noise and stress it brings with it, I appeal to the relevant authorities to include a Sound Wall in the highway expansion project.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
68	Hannelore Bozeman  4/29/2018	As a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC, I am concerned about the additional noise a widened Interstate will bring. For this reason, I strongly support a sound barrier to help shield us from some of it.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
69	Gibson Campbell  4/29/2018	Carolina Village is a retirement facility including independent living facilities as well as medical and long-term care facilities. Currently there are nearly 500 total occupants of this facility and nearly 200 addition occupants will be added in less than two years. The property borders I-26 and the noise is a constant roar. With the widening of I-26 that noise will almost certainly be made worse. Please give serious consideration to including noise abatement walls along the section of I-26 west of exit 49 (the	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT

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I-26 Widening

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		intersection of I-26 and highway 64). Surely this high-density population will place noise abatement here at the top of your list.	Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
70	Robert Cannon  4/29/2018	I live in Carolina Village, a retirement community located adjacent to I-26 near the US 64 interchange. Approximately 500 people live here, including some in a nursing home located very close to the highway. Many of these people already hear noise from I-26 and will hear more when the it is widened to three lanes. I request that our area be studied for noise abatement before the project has been finalized.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
71	Sarah & Chuck Emel  4/29/2018	This is a request to please put up absorptive sound barriers along the STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700 -- I 26 Widening. These barriers are the more modern and far superior barriers when compared to the older concrete sound barriers. We are scheduled to move into a Carolina Village apartment being built along I-26 in this section. We are Senior Citizens who will not benefit in any way from the 24 hour sound of busy traffic on this section. We may reconsider moving there when the apartment is completed the summer of 2019 due to the noise factor. We would deeply appreciate anything you can do to expedient the building of absorptive sound barriers.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
72	Sue Harrington  4/29/2018	This Email is in support of a sound wall on I-26 in Hendersonville, NC by Carolina Village. Seniors have been paying taxes for decades. Now we pay taxes for things that we don't even get benefits for. Please show respect for seniors by having a sound wall by Carolina Village.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
73	Marguerite Martin 4/29/2018	Lane widening of I-26 will produce even more road noise for Carolina Village Residents. Current noise is already a nuisance. Please provide sound barrier for this community.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
74	Mike McLane 4/29/2018	If you lived where I do, you would put the sound barriers in at Hendersonville	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
75	Amy Pace 4/29/2018	Carolina Village, a continuing care retirement community of over 500 residents (soon to exceed 600) has been located on a former dairy farm adjacent to I-26 in Henderson County for almost a half century. Independent living units, an assisted living facility, and a skilled nursing facility are all quite close to the freeway. Noise from the interstate has increased exponentially over this half century, particularly from large transport trucks. I prefer the 6-lane alternative because it will prevent traffic from being routed any closer to the health facility than at present. I speak as an 18-year resident of Carolina Village in her mid-80s. My apartment faces I-26 directly, and I find the 24-hour per day traffic and its sound that increases each year distracting and disturbing. I certainly feel that widening the road on either side, thus bringing traffic closer to our health facility, and/or failing to provide some	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

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Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		type of sound barrier is a real disservice to those who have earned some peace and quiet. it would seem that a community of several hundred retirees deserves at least the same consideration as small clusters of homes along the route who, in the present plan, are provided with sound barriers.	
76	Kevin Parries  4/29/2018	I am the Executive Director of Carolina Village, a retirement community, located in Henderson County, NC. Our community borders I-26 where the proposed changes have been suggesting to expand the interstate from four lanes to six. First, I want to say that I am not opposed of the expansion of I-26 and feel that it is way overdue. My concern along with the 520 residents that reside in this community is the sound from vehicles using I-26. It already has a negative impact on my resident in their golden years. I know this has been a big concern for those who live here and our elected officials. We are in the process of expanding our community to meet the needs of older adults in Henderson County. I have attached a map with the new areas identified by a yellow highlight. I was here when they were on my property doing the sound testing and I would like for that to be reviewed again. During the original process the gentleman entered the building and took readings. I discussed how the building were constructed and how the interstate impacts our resident outdoor living. As you can tell a large area on the attached map was never studied during the original review. I would ask that my property be reviewed again and consider a sound barrier be placed on I-26 along our property line. Thank you for your consideration and assistance. I would invite you to come back to our site and review any area that you feel necessary. If you have any questions you can reach me at the number below or my direct number is 828-233-0611. I hope you have a wonderful day.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
77	Kenneth & Jean Patterson	We live in Carolina Village, an active senior's community in Hendersonville, NC. We, at Carolina Village, endure a great deal	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
	4/29/2018	of traffic noise from I-26 and are concerned about the addition of two lanes that extend along the border of our property. Our Care Center and Medical Center we feel are especially vulnerable, housing seniors who are ill or who need assistance for daily living. We also have apartments and cottages that will be adversely affected by the additional traffic noise. We urge the Department of Transportation to consider the addition of a sound barrier when the additional lanes are added in order to protect the serenity of our Village. Thank you for your interest and support in this matter.	26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
78	Hilda Roberts 4/29/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. I live in a Woods Cottage (#37 Lark Spur Dr.) and can assure you that the noise from I-26 is constant. I would be happy for you to visit me at my home, sit on my patio or stay in either bedroom for a night. My home is farther from I-26 than either the Care Center, Medical Center, and particularly the new apartments, cottages, and hybrid homes which are currently under construction. I am requesting that DOT re-test the noise levels in various areas of Carolina Village. I would also request that you factor in the additional noise that two additional lanes of traffic will entail.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
79	Hilda Roberts 5/1/2018	I sent an e-mail to a different lady a couple days ago relative to the need for a noise barrier bordering Carolina Village - Exit 49B on I-26. I live in Carolina Village - 37 Lark Spur Drive. I invite you to sit in my living room or to spend the night in one of my bedrooms. I'm certain the homes of other residents are similar. In addition, you are probably aware of the massive construction project now underway here. Upon completion of that project, the population of this senior living facility will number 700-plus. Please consider approving the noise barrier as you plan for the widening of I-26.	I received your email from Ms. Lad and responded this morning. The email is attached. As I noted in the email, . NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
80	Charles & Pat Sproles	are two residents of the 525-current people living at Carolina Village with property boundary on I-26 in Hendersonville, NC. We	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
	4/29/2018	need a sound barrier as the widening will bring more lanes adjacent to our property. We are building cottages and apartments that will increase to 720 people in 2019. The noise from the interstate has always been bad, but with the widening will come more lanes and more noise. Please consider noise barrier for our property and residents.	26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
81	Byron & Tamara Terrell  4/29/2018	We are Resident/Property Owners (Lot No. 397 on DOT Map Roll No. 4 for the above project), and we spoke with you at the recent meeting at Biltmore Church. We do fully support this project. However, we understand that after DOT’s noise study identified a need for noise abatement on our street, DOT changed its policy so that the fifteen residences on our street (Wildwood Circle), two residences on Wildwood Lane, and the New Boiling Springs Baptist Church no longer qualify for noise abatement in this project. It appears that five of these residences on the Circle will now border an 8-lane highway with Rest Area on/off ramps only 200-400 feet away. We are also concerned that the original study did not identify an additional eleven homes that are on the East side of Wildwood Circle where the noise levels are not significantly different from those on the West side of the Circle since this is a very narrow street. With noise levels almost intolerable now with the existing highway, we are appealing for a new study and/or a further review in DOT’s policy so that the total of around 26 homes plus the above Church can qualify again for some type of noise abatement. From the map scale, it appears that all of these residences and church sit within about a 1600-1800-foot length of highway, so the residential density is significant. We would like to add that we have already installed new windows, doors and insulation in our 37-year old house, which is one of DOT's suggestions in the handout we received at the recent meeting at Biltmore Church.	Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - “Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise”). These documents require that traffic noise analyses be performed for all “Type I” projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
			the project and if a noise wall along Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed.
82	Mary Ballard 4/30/2018	My husband and I live in a retirement community which borders I-26 close to exit 49. There are about 500 people living here. We need a sound wall!	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
83	Edith Clark 4/30/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village – and respectfully request that a ‘sound barrier wall’ be built between I-26 and the Carolina Village property. Otherwise the noise from I-26 will be very detrimental to myself and many other residents at Carolina Village.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
84	Ken Fitch 4/30/2018	Project maps have not been provided to the Public Library for public review as promised.	Thank you for your interest in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, I-26 widening. The maps presented at the Public Meeting on April 16, are available for viewing at the Henderson County Main Library at 301 N. Washington St, Hendersonville. They are also available on the project website at <a href="http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening">http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening</a> . Please let me know if you need any additional information.
85	Ronale Korner 4/30/2018	As a resident of Carolina Village, I have great concerns about the vehicle traffic moving along I-26. It’s not good now and adding	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		two more lanes will not make it better. Surely you could consider adding some kind of sound barrier to ease the traffic noise. There are 500 people living here now and after expansion there will be 700.	26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
86	Shanti Kudva 4/30/2018	My husband and I are residents of a cottage in Carolina Village, a Continuous Care Retirement Community in Hendersonville (Henderson County) NC. We are just off Exit 49B off I-26. There are over 500 residents in this community for the elderly, which will increase to 700 in the summer of 2019 when the construction of new apartments and cottages is completed. Almost all of us moved here to have a reasonable quality of life and because of the health care available in the Medical Center and Care Center at Carolina Village. This is a non-profit facility with a Board of Directors, an active Residents Council, and a staff of hundreds. Right now, we have 6 residents who are over 100 years old, more than 100 residents in their nineties and 300 or more in their eighties. The quality of our existence is deeply impacted by DOT's plans. Many of us have used our life's savings to live here. While I recognize the need for the project, I am deeply concerned and disappointed that the negative impact on Carolina Village has not been considered. I respectfully ask that an effective sound barrier be made part of the plans as you proceed with the project. We need to be shielded from the noise of traffic to live out our lives here with reasonable peace and tranquility. Many residents here are too feeble physically and/or mentally to protest, but they will suffer if DOT moves forward without regard for the elderly who live in Carolina Village. Thank you for taking this request for a sound barrier into consideration as you proceed with the project.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 Widening

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
87	Bruce & Ann Murray 4/30/2018	As a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, I would appreciate if you would consider a sound barrier at US 64.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
88	Jeanne Reno 4/30/2018	I am a resident at Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. The property abuts I-26. Currently I hear the traffic from I-26 inside my apartment. In order to sleep at night, I must turn on a fan before retiring. The white-noise of the fan masks the swooshing of trucks. With the widening of I-26, the noise level will increase - both during construction and afterwards due to the resulting increased traffic volume. Therefore, I request that sound deadening barriers be built between I-26 and Carolina Village. Failure to do so will be detrimental to my health.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
89	Janet Bostwick 5/1/2018	A sound barrier is crucially needed as a part of the I-26 widening project Nos. I-4400/I-4700 Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Carolina Village in Hendersonville is a retirement community of senior citizens and the present level of noise coming from I-26 , as it is today, prevents outdoor and fresh air enjoyment because of the high level of noise coming from I-26. Unfortunately, this noise level will be increased with the I-26 widening. Please consider the importance and crucial need of a sound barrier.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
90	Linda Bruton 5/1/2018	I am a retired school science teacher who has had my name on a list for almost two decades to go to Carolina Village. As my name has finally reached the top of the list, I have only one reservation. That reservation is that I-26 has increased in traffic for the last several years to the point that it will be widened in	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor,

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		the near future. We will desperately need a buffer wall plus vegetation to buffer the noise and air pollution for all of these older citizens that have worked so hard and saved for years to have a more comfortable end life. Yes, that is me plus hundreds of others. Without a buffer wall and plants, our investment in this community will depreciate immensely. Please help us and think of our lives as well as yours possibly in the future.	including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
91	Linda Bruton  5/1/2018	Thank you so much for your rapid response to my letter. I would also know what, if anything, you are doing about air quality in that area? Elderly people are often compromised with lung function. Are you addressing the issue of air pollution and especially since the trees, scrubs and other vegetation in the area of Carolina Village have been cut. The buildings are in open view to the road now.	Reducing congestion, the purpose of the project, will have an air quality benefit due to reduced fuel consumption and reduced emissions. However, the air quality was not modeled for this project, so I cannot give you any quantitative data.
92	Jeanne Porter  5/1/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village and am concerned about a friend and others who will be moving here in 2018 or 2019. They will move into new residences that are incredibly close to I-26 and will have to deal with the traffic noise. I heard about an Absorptive Barrier that would possibly be very helpful in blocking out traffic noise. This barrier would help ALL of Carolina Village. We are so hoping this could be done for our popular CCRC. Thank you for your consideration.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
93	Constance Watkins  5/1/2018	I am a resident of Carolina Village and am concerned about a friend and others who will be moving here in 2018 or 2019. They will move into new residences that are incredibly close to I-26 and will have to deal with the traffic noise. I heard about an Absorptive Barrier that would possibly be very helpful in blocking out traffic noise. This barrier would help ALL of Carolina Village. We are so hoping this could be done for our popular CCRC. Thank you for your consideration.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
94	Constance Watkins  5/1/2018	I'd prefer the 6-lane widening as I understand you will be using the median to widen the road. If you widen the road to 8-lanes, irt will be much closer to our buildings. I think a sound barrier needs to be erected between I-26 and Carolina Village because the amount of highway noise we hear in our apartments when the window are open or when we sit outside. When we walk outside, around the beautiful grounds, the highway noise is continuous. A sound barrier wall will reduce the noise we hear. Highway noise has been shown to increase stress, which Carolina Village residents can attest to as well as health issues including cardiovascular disease. Because of these direct results of the amount of noise from I-26 in Carolina Village, I am strongly asking you to erect a sound barrier wall between I-26 and Carolina Village.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, proposed I-26 widening. Your comment will be included in the project record and considered as the project continues. NCDOT is conducting a noise analysis of the entire project corridor, including Carolina Village. If an area is determined to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined in the NCDOT Noise Policy (attached), it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
	Stephanie Smith  5/2/2018	I am concerned about how much if my property will be taken for this project and how much my property value will decrease. I recently refinanced my home and had an appraisal. I do not want to be at risk of losing the equity in my home which could cause me to be unenviable position of being “flipped upside down” with my mortgage! This causes me great concern! Also, due to the astronomical cost of real estate in Henderson County I cannot afford to purchase a home elsewhere.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project I-4400/I-4700, the proposed widening of I-26. Your comments will be included as part of the project record. Based on the most current design shown on the meeting maps at the Public Meeting on April 16, no part of your property at 134 Willowbrook Road (#77 on the screenshot below) is needed for right of way acquisition. Area required for right of way is shown in light green, such as on parcels #73 through #76. The red hatching indicates that you are in an area being studied for noise abatement measures. The construction of this project is phased in different segments. The portion that includes your property is in I-4400A, which is currently unfunded into the future (past 2027) in the Current STIP. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
95	Stephanie Smith	I emailed this to you last night from my iPhone, but I wanted to scan it to you this morning from my office. I am sorry I did not	The construction of this project is phased in different segments. The portion that includes your property is in I-4400A, which is

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
	5/2/2018	send it by April 30th, it was an oversight on my part. However, I still wish for my concerns to be considered and included because they are very valid. Thank you.	currently unfunded into the future (past 2027) in the Current STIP. Please let me know if you have any additional questions. The construction of this project is phased in different segments. The portion that includes your property is in I-4400A, which is currently unfunded into the future (past 2027) in the Current STIP. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
96	Stephanie Smith  5/2/2018	I really appreciate you taking the time to reply to my email. I was really concerned because I missed the 04/30 deadline. Thank you so much for the updates. I am pleased to hear that my property is not included, but I am still concerned for our community and I am glad that a study will be done for the noise factor. The noise was actually another one of my concerns, although I am accustomed to a certain level of highway noise now. I was also concerned about the embankment on the state property beyond the State's fence line that borders the back of my (our) property and if there would be some type of noise reduction/retaining wall (of sorts) that will protect us from the highway (traffic, vagrants/drifters, noise, etc.) since the highway will be closer to our property now. Again, I really appreciate your very timely response. Thank you so much. I will try to stay on top of this matter in the future. Unfortunately, I have not been able to attend any of the meetings.	Because I-4400A is not currently funded, design has not advanced to a point where we can definitively say what will occur adjacent to your property. Design will not advance until the project is funded. NCDOT reviews the STIP every two years and uses Project Prioritization to determine funding for projects. This section may be funded in the next round of prioritization (next year), which means construction would occur within the next ten years. Information on the project can be found at the project website: <a href="https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/">https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening/</a> Please let me know if you have additional questions.
97	Pastor Strurgill	I am the pastor of Boiling Springs Baptist Church 1291 Fanning Bridge Rd. Fletcher NC. I heard that a decision had been made not to build a sound barrier for the I-26 project. I hope you will strongly reconsider. With only 4 lanes it is impossible to have a conversation in our parking lot. We use the open grass area several times a month for games and activities and any increase in the noise level at all will make that impossible. We have two RV/camping sites that are used approximately 200 nights a year. The noise from the interstate, as it is, can be heard inside most	Thank you for providing your views on the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700, I-26 widening. Your comments will be included in the project record. At the present time no decision on noise abatement measures has been made. NCDOT established the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy (policy) to comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding traffic noise (found in Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 - "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise"). These documents require that traffic

**Responses to Comments from the Design Public Hearing April 16, 2018**

Number in Matrix	Name	Comment	Comment Response
		RVs at levels that are disturbing to sleep. PLEASE install a sound barrier wall so that we can continue outside activities at our church.	noise analyses be performed for all "Type I" projects, which are essentially all projects involving construction of new highways or widening existing highways. NCDOT uses computer models to predict future noise levels along highway projects and, when the predicted traffic noise levels reach certain thresholds, we investigate methods for reducing this noise. Any noise reduction methods must remain within the constraints of the feasibility and reasonableness criteria defined within our policy, which is attached. NCDOT completed a Traffic Noise Report in June 2017 for the proposed widening of I-26. This report identified this area (Fanning Bridge Road and adjacent Wildwood Circle) as noise sensitive and predicted traffic noise impacts (i.e. future noise levels with the project in place would be 66 dB(A) or more). A noise wall was then analyzed for this area and preliminarily found not to meet the reasonableness criteria in our policy. This is because the quantity of noise wall for the homes benefited by a wall exceeded what is allowed. The results of the 2017 noise study are preliminary and subject to change. NCDOT is conducting a more detailed noise study using the final design of the project and if a noise wall along Fanning Bridge Road and Wildwood Circle is ultimately found to meet the feasibility and reasonableness criteria found in our policy, it will be constructed. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.
98	Hugh Lipham 5/10/2018	I am writing to support the I-26 widening through Asheville. I drive part of section I-4700 on a regular basis and welcome an improvement.	Thank you for providing your views on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, I-26 Widening. Your comments will be included in the project record and will be considered as the project moves forward. If you have any questions, please let me know.



# I-26 Improvements

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



Widening and reconstruction from US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to NC 191 (exit 33) in Buncombe County

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## MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** April 16, 2018  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Biltmore Baptist Church, 35 Clayton Road, Arden  
**Purpose:** Local Officials Informational Meeting and Design Public Meeting

*Meeting materials (e.g. handouts, comment sheets, etc.), sign in sheets, and comments are included as an appendix to this summary.*

### Local Officials Informational Meeting

The Local Officials Informational Meeting (LOIM) was held in Terrace Hall at Biltmore Baptist Church on Monday, April 16, 2018 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Seventeen representatives from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO), Henderson County, Buncombe County, City of Hendersonville, Town of Fletcher, City of Asheville, Asheville Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority (GARAA) attended the meeting. Kat Bukowy (HNTB) presented a brief PowerPoint presentation highlighting the changes to the project since the Public Hearing held in October 2016. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to ask questions and view the meeting maps. One request for a copy of the PowerPoint presentation was made by Vijay Kapoor, Asheville City Council Member. No other comments were received.

### Design Public Meeting

The Design Public Meeting followed the LOIM in the same location and was held from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. One hundred seventy-six (176) attendees signed in to the meeting. Attendees were invited to review a handout on design changes, view displays and maps of the project, and speak with project representatives. Stations at the meeting included a simulation of the proposed Enhanced Left Turns at the US 64 and I-26 interchange; information regarding the construction and demolition of the French Broad River bridge, information on traffic noise, and a station staffed by RK&K representatives for the Balfour Parkway (STIP R-5744). Nineteen (19) meeting attendees also signed in at the Balfour Parkway station; however, there were also some attendees who chose not to sign in at this station.

Prior to the meeting Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements were met by Planning Communities, who put door hangers on doorknobs in 16 neighborhoods and eight businesses to let people know

about the meeting. One person was provided with language services at the meeting. Planning Communities memo of their activities is included in the Appendix.

Meeting attendees and the public were invited to submit comments on the subject project through April 30, 2018. Comments were received and considered through May 10, 2018. Of the 142 comments received, 17 were submitted at the meeting. Although some people submitted multiple comments, they were only counted once. Each comment was reviewed and comment themes noted. Common themes included concern for traffic noise, greenway needs, and the explicit approval of the project.

The majority of the comments, 99, came from Carolina Village retirement community residents requesting noise abatement. Carolina Village is near the I-26 and US 64 interchange. Ten other comments, also requesting noise abatement and privacy barriers, came from the Wildwood neighborhood, which is near Fanning Bridge Road and the westbound I-26 rest area. The property owners located near a proposed noise barrier near mile marker 50 (Meadowlark Lane) are opposed to the construction of a wall.

Eight comments requested that right of way for the proposed Bent Creek Lake Julian greenway be reviewed and added as part of the project. There were also comments expressing concern over the amount of right of way acquisition that may be needed and the devaluation of property near the interstate. A Lamar Outdoor Advertising representative provided information and requested coordination regarding property acquisition and easement. Other comments noted the need to upgrade the roadway network around I-26 prior to construction, so that the roads are not over-capacity as people detour around the construction.

MountainTrue provided a letter expressing their appreciation for the measures NCDOT has taken to minimize impacts to communities and the environment, including the reduced footprint at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange. An expression of support was also given to the protective measures being implemented at the French Broad River for the endangered species as well as for river users.

Biltmore Estate, through its law firm, provided a certified letter and email copy. The letter expresses concern for the impacts of widening I-26, though it states that Biltmore is not opposed to the project. The concerns expressed pertain to the potential need to temporarily move a stream (SEE) onto Biltmore property; the management of stormwater; noise pollution; light pollution; preservation of the aesthetic and visual quality, character, and experience of the Estate; and security and operation.

# Appendix

Report on Canvassing [for LEP] -  
Planning Communities

Handout

Local Officials Informational Meeting  
Sign In Sheets

Design Public Meeting Sign In Sheets

Design Public Meeting Comment  
Matrix

Letter - MountainTrue

Letter - Biltmore Estate

## Report on Canvassing for NC Department of Transportation in Asheville

On Monday, April 9, 2018, two interpreters traveled to Asheville to do canvassing for the NCDOT in order to publicize the public meeting on April 16, 2018 about the widening of I-26. They were given an updated list of 18 businesses and 15 neighborhoods that extended North, from the Arden area, down south to the Hendersonville area, based on canvassing for a prior public meeting in October 2016. Along the way, the team managed to identify and visit, apart from the listed locations, an additional 8 businesses and 1 neighborhood. They identified and visited those locations because they perceived, by company name and/or the surrounding area, that those were primarily Spanish-speaking locales.

The following details are attempts to visit 26 businesses in the area:

- 17 received flyers personally, and the team attempted to speak to the manager/owner of each business, and those attempts were for the most part successful.
- Both Wal-Marts, the Library, and Ingles Supermarket agreed to post the flyer on a bulletin-board of some sort.
- 7 businesses were unlisted. They were: *Carniceria La Preferida*, *Los Amigos Tire Shop*, *Bakeries USA*, *Estrella Fresh Produce*, *Tellez Velazquez Handyman*, *Productos Mexicanos Guerrero*, and *Taqueria Mexico*.

Details of the 9 “unsuccessful” businesses are as follows:

- 4 visited restaurants were closed on Mondays: *El Rebozo Restaurant*, *Casa Torres Restaurant*, *El Toro Restaurant*, and *Tacos Azteca Restaurant*. Flyers were left at the door of those four restaurants.
- 3 visited churches were locked/unoccupied: *Faith Church International*, *St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox*, and *Iglesia Cristiana Manantial (unlisted)*. Flyers were left at the door of the churches.
- Smiley’s Flea Market was closed throughout the whole week.
- Los Laureles Supermarket could not be found at the address given.

Of the 16 neighborhoods that were visited, most attempts were successful. The team went door to door and left flyers either on cars or on door knobs. In two cases, the team left additional flyers at a main office. In four cases, the team left additional flyers at communal mailboxes. In addition, the team successfully canvassed at an unlisted location, *Clear Oak Road*, which was near *Taqueria Mexico*:

- When canvassing the neighborhood at 11 Pony Express, the team visited the main office about halfway through and were told that they were no longer allowed to go door-to-door. However, they accepted flyers at the office and agreed to post on a bulletin-board.
- Brickton Village Circle appeared to be a moderate-income level apartment complex. The team canvassed and left flyers in the mailboxes.

- 37 Hannah Grace was a small neighborhood that appeared to have just been demolished; there were no standing houses.
- When the team arrived to canvas the neighborhood at 196 W. Prince Rd., the team was threatened with a gun. The team left the area and did not canvas that neighborhood nor the nearby neighborhood, 108 Dania Rd.
- For a safety rule, the team did not canvas particular houses with threatening signs such as “Keep Out” or “You are in Range”.



## STIP PROJECT Nos. I-4400/I-4700 I-26 WIDENING HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

### Welcome!

The N.C. Department of Transportation is holding this public meeting for the proposed widening of I-26 from U.S. 25 in Henderson County to I-40/ I-240 in Buncombe County, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Nos. I-4400/ I-4700.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Provide updates about the project since the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation.
- Share information about the design of the project.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the project and the design with the NCDOT Project Team.
- Provide a way for the NCDOT Project Team to receive your comments about the design.

This meeting is “open house” format. There will be no presentation. Please review the handout and maps. Members of the Project Team are here to answer your questions and discuss the project.

A comment sheet is included at the end of this handout. You may complete the form and return it during the meeting or you may mail or email it to us later. We request all comments be provided **by April 30, 2018**. All comments received will be considered and become part of the project record.

### Project Purpose and Need

This project is needed to:

- improve existing and projected roadway capacity deficiencies, and
- improve insufficient pavement structure and deteriorating road surface conditions.

The purpose of the project is to reduce congestion, with a goal of achieving an overall Level of Service (LOS) D in the design year (2040), and improve the pavement structure. The LOS of a roadway is the measure of its traffic carrying ability. LOS ranges from A to F, much like a standard school grading scale, “A” being the best scenario with unrestricted maneuverability and operating speeds, and “F” being the worst scenario where travel on a roadway is characterized by “stop and go” conditions.

# Project Schedule

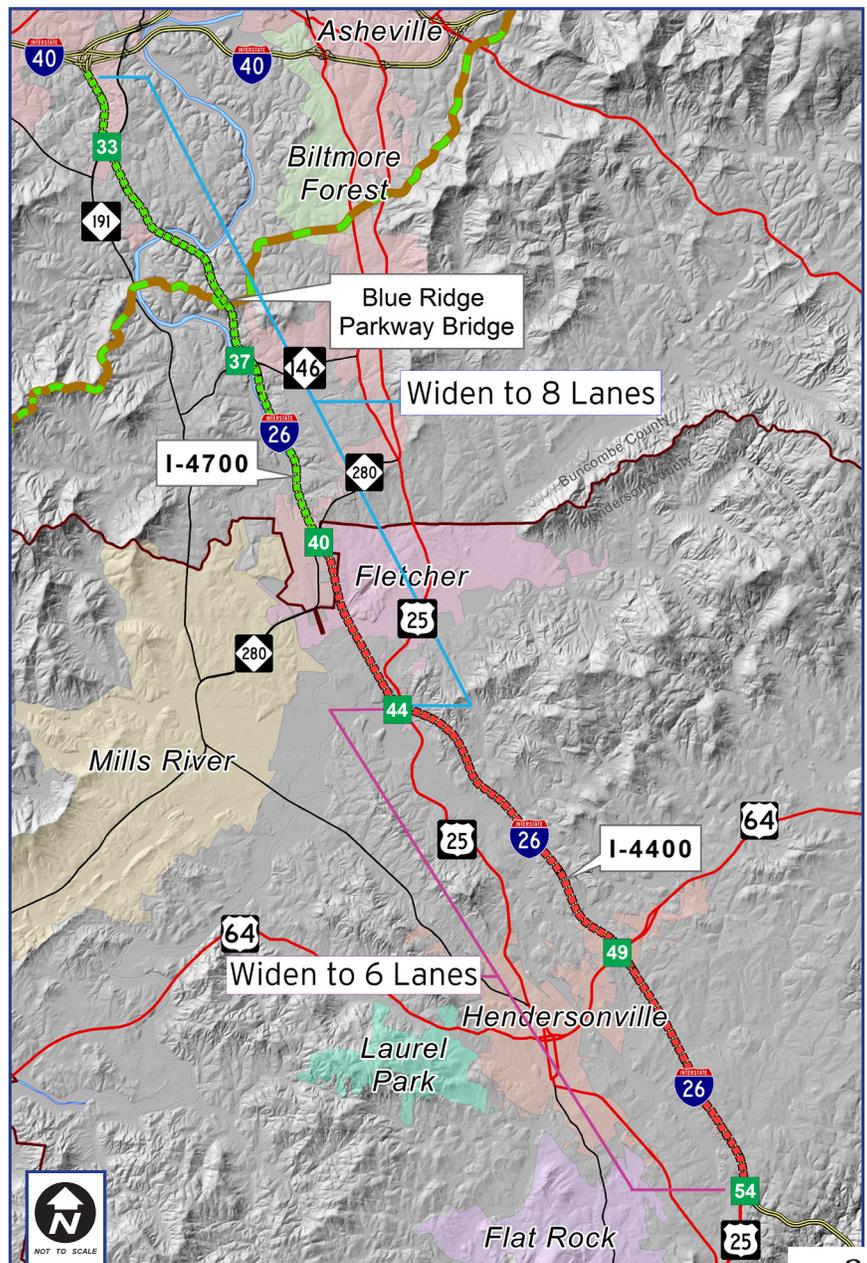
Draft EIS Approved .....	August 2016
Public Hearing .....	October 2016
Preferred Alternative Selected .....	January 2017
Design Public Meeting .....	April 2018
Final EIS/Record of Decision Approved .....	June 2018*
Funding for Right of Way Acquisition Begins .....	Fiscal Year 2018*
Funding for Construction Begins .....	Fiscal Year 2019*

*\*Subject to change*

## Preferred Alternative

NCDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other resource agencies, chose the Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative as the Preferred Alternative and Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) in January 2017. The Hybrid 6/8-Lane Alternative is the Preferred Alternative because it meets the Purpose and Need of reducing congestion, with a goal of a Level of Service (LOS) "D" in the design year (2040) and has fewer overall impacts.

I-26 from U.S. 25, south of Hendersonville, (Exit 54) to U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) (Exit 44) will be widened to six lanes. From U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) (Exit 44) to I-40/I-240, I-26 will be widened to eight lanes.



## Blue Ridge Parkway

To accommodate the 8-lane widening, the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 will also be replaced. The National Park Service chose to replace the bridge on new alignment, south of the existing bridge. The new bridge will also include a sidewalk on the north side of the bridge.

The Mountains to Sea Trail will have minor adjustments where the trailheads are relocated to the new crossing of the Blue Ridge Parkway. In addition, a parking pull out will be located on the eastern side of the bridge.



*Visualization traveling westbound on the proposed Blue Ridge Parkway bridge.*

## U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange Improvements



The red shapes and lines in the figure are proposed concrete islands and guardrail for safety and guidance.

NCDOT considered two interchange options to reduce the proposed footprint of the U.S. 25 (Asheville Highway) Interchange, the Synchronized Interchange type and the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) type. NCDOT has chosen to revise the interchange from a Partial Cloverleaf B (ParClo B) type, shown in the Draft EIS and at the Public Hearing, to the DDI type.

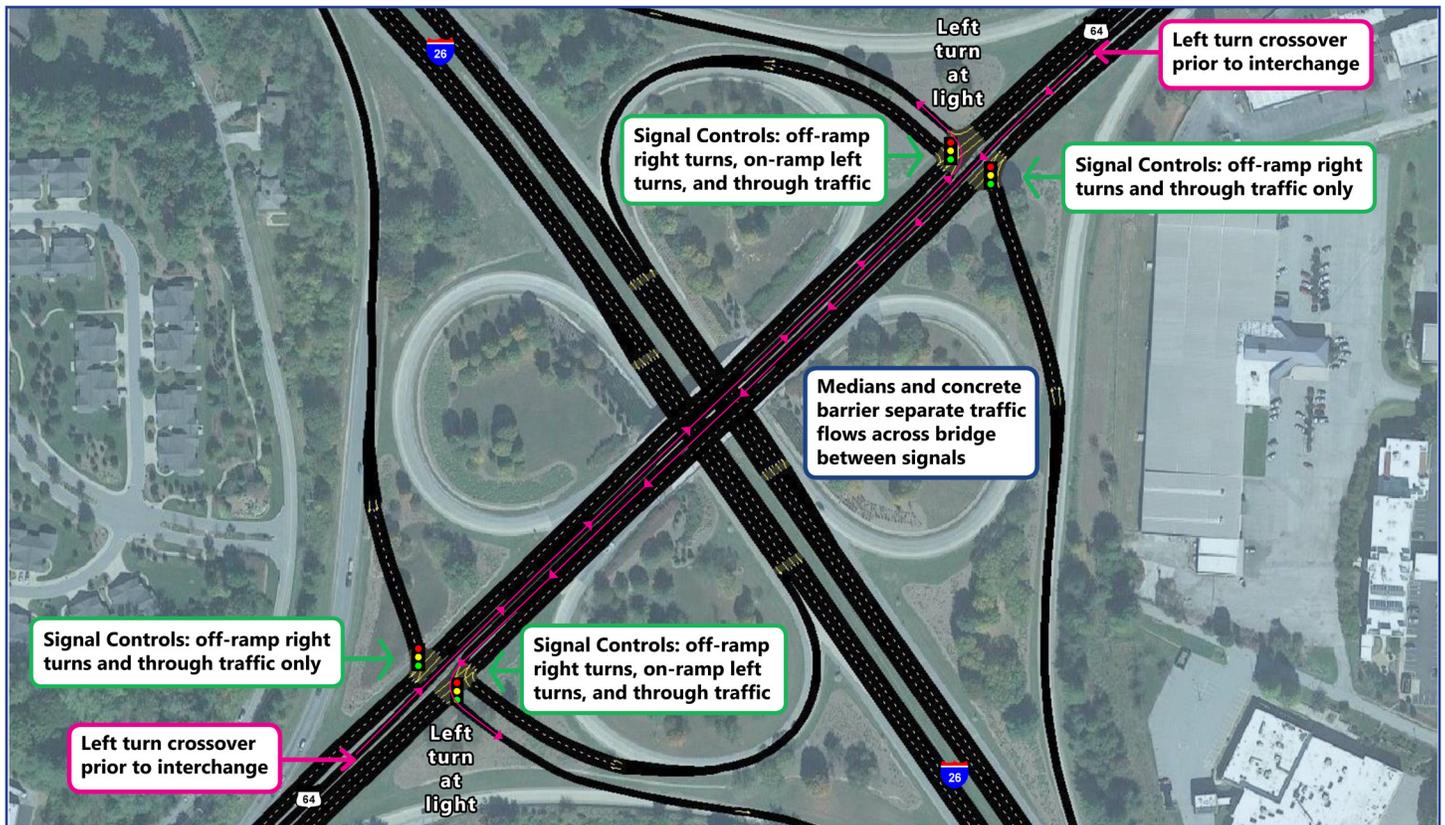
By comparison, the DDI reduces the number of relocations from 11 (under the ParClo B) to 0 and the number of impacted parcels from 41 (under the ParClo B) to 11 or by 73 percent. Other reductions were found in impacts to streams, wetlands, and natural communities, as well as cost.

The DDI type is the same as the one at N.C. 280 (Airport Road), Exit 40. At this interchange motorists would have the option to go left or right when exiting I-26. However, motorists going through the interchange to get onto I-26 would experience a traffic shift to the left over the interchange.

Please see NCDOT's DDI Visualization at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD-0QnUILOQ>

# U.S. 64 (Four Seasons Boulevard) Interchange Improvements

NCDOT considered local input requesting improvements to the I-26 and U.S. 64 interchange. To improve mobility through the interchange, the existing full cloverleaf interchange will be upgraded to an interchange type called a Partial Cloverleaf B with Enhanced Left Turns. This design will keep two of the existing loop ramps to exit I-26 and make all exiting vehicles turn right onto U.S. 64 from the freeway exits. This design will also create opposing left-turn lanes upstream of the interchange for traffic turning onto I-26. These lanes are designed to more efficiently move all traffic patterns through the interchange. This design also provides accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on U.S. 64 through the interchange.



## Protected Species

In addition to the gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*), the Appalachian elktoe (*Alasmidonta raveneliana*) was also discovered within the project study area. Both are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as endangered species and are subject to Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act. Coordination between NCDOT, FHWA, and USFWS is on-going and formal consultation will occur before the final environmental document is issued.



## I-26 Bridge Over the French Broad River

As part of the I-26 widening, the bridges carrying I-26 over the French Broad River, as well as Cane Creek and Clear Creek and other roads, will be replaced. The I-26 bridge over the French Broad River will be replaced in place over a period of approximately four years. **NCDOT will keep the river open for the majority of the time and provide a safe passage lane for river users.** River passage may be temporarily closed during construction/demolition activities that are unsafe for river users. These closures are expected to occur at night. River users will be alerted to the construction/demolition of the bridge and the safe passage lane through signage, traditional and social media, and other communication methods.



*Bridge Safety Concept Drawing*

### Right of Way Acquisition

After decisions are made regarding the final design, the proposed right of way limits will be staked in the ground. If you are an affected property owner, a Right of Way Agent will contact you and arrange a meeting. The agent will explain the plans and advise you as to how the project will affect you. The agent will inform you of your rights as a property owner. 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. NCDOT must:

- Treat all owners and tenants equally;
- Fully explain the owner's rights;
- Pay just compensation in exchange for property rights; and
- Furnish relocation advisory assistance.

### Relocation Assistance

If your residence or business is to be acquired and relocated 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.

NOTE: PAMPHLETS SUMMARIZING RIGHT OF WAY AND RELOCATION PROCEDURES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE RIGHT OF WAY TABLE.

## Cost Estimate

Implementation Phase	Cost
Right of Way Acquisition	\$16,000,000
Utility Relocation	\$5,229,597
Construction	\$460,775,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$466,020,597</b>

Costs are as shown in the Current STIP and subject to change.

## Be Involved, Stay Informed

Thank you for attending tonight's public meeting. Your thoughts and questions are important to us. There are many ways you can reach us.

Comment Form - You can fill out the attached comment form tonight and leave it with us, or you can submit it by mail or email to the contacts below.

**Please return comments by April 30, 2018.**

Website - For more information about the project, and to find documents and the maps shown at today's meeting visit our website at:

**[www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening](http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i26widening)**

Call, Email, or Write to the contacts below:

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**STIP PROJECT Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES**

The N.C. Department of Transportation appreciates your participation in this process. Your comments are important to the project's success. You may leave this form with us after the meeting, or mail it to the address below.

**Please submit your comments no later than April 30, 2018.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

What best represents your interest in this project?

Resident/Property Owner

Business Owner

Community Group

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any comments or questions you have on the project:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail or e-mail comments to:  
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kbukowy@hntb.com  
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AFFIX  
POSTAGE  
HERE

Attn: Kat Bukowy  
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# TITLE VI PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORM

Completing this form is **completely** voluntary. You are not required to provide the information requested in order to participate in this meeting.

<b>Meeting Type:</b> Design Public Meeting <b>Location:</b> Biltmore Baptist Church, Terrace Hall, 35 Clayton Road, Arden	<b>Date:</b> April 16, 2018
<b>STIP No.:</b> I-4400/I-4700 <b>Project Description:</b> Proposed widening of I-26 from US 25, south of Hendersonville, in Henderson County to I-40/I-240, south of Asheville, in Buncombe County.	

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related authorities, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) assures that no person(s) shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any of the Department's programs, policies, or activities, based on their race, color, national origin, disability, age, income, or gender.

**Completing this form helps meet our data collection and public involvement obligations under Title VI and NEPA, and will improve how we serve the public.** Please place the completed form in the designated box on the sign-in table, hand it to an NCDOT official, or mail it to the Environmental Analysis Unit, 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598.

All forms will remain on file at the NCDOT as part of the public record.

<b>Zip Code:</b> _____ <b>Street Name:</b> (i.e. Main Street) _____	<b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Total Household Income:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$12,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$47,000 – \$69,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$12,000 – \$19,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 – \$93,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 – \$30,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$94,000 – \$117,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$31,000 – \$46,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$118,000 or greater	<b>Age:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and older <input type="checkbox"/> 30-44
<b>Race/Ethnicity:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	<b>Have a Disability:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  <b>National Origin:</b> (if born outside the U.S.) <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican <input type="checkbox"/> Central American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> South American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____

How did you hear about this meeting? (newspaper advertisement, flyer, and/or mailing)

For more information regarding Title VI or this request, please contact the NCDOT Title VI Section at (919) 508-1896 or toll free at 1-800-508-1886, or by email at [sddickens@ncdot.gov](mailto:sddickens@ncdot.gov).

Thank you for your participation!



Please  
Affix  
Postage

**Attn: Caitlyn Ridge**  
**N.C. Department of Transportation**  
**1598 Mail Service Center**  
**Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1598**



Local Officials Informational Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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Mark Bendorfs	Town of Fletcher	mb.bendorfs@fletcherna.org	687-3985



Local Officials Informational Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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Design Public Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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Pauline Brooks	331 Fairfax Ave Asheville NC 28806	-	828 620 0710



Design Public Meeting  
April 23, 2018

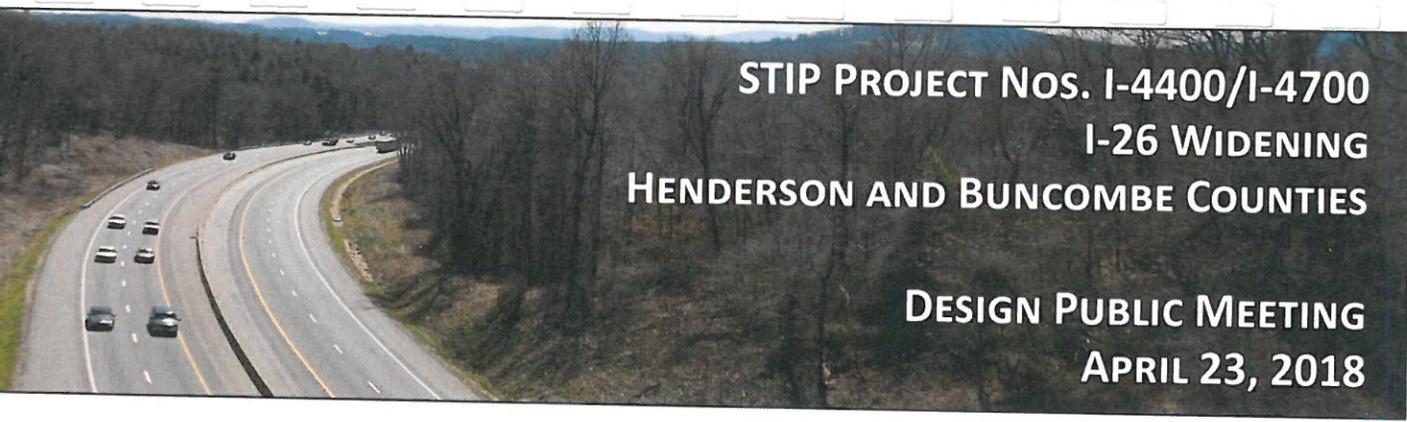
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Design Public Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

DESIGN PUBLIC MEETING  
APRIL 23, 2018

**SIGN IN SHEET**  
**PLEASE PRINT**

NAME	ADDRESS (including zip code)	EMAIL
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Design Public Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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Boston Shope	Hendersonville NC		
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Design Public Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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+1 Larry & Holly Mims	140 Henderson Ridge Ln <sup>H'ville</sup> , NC 28792		828-551-8022
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+1 Sharon + Thomas	133 Ferris Rd <sup>Ashburn</sup> NC 28806	1340tmb@gmail.com	828-777-4113
William Erickson	316 Magnolia Dr <sup>Hendersonville</sup> 28792	berickson@Frontier.knowledge.com	828 693 5992
Julie Mayfield	29 N. Main St #610	julie@mountaintrve.org	828-271-4544
Mike Calhoun	35 Deer Run Dr	mick401@gmail.com	828-277-7778



STIP PROJECT NOS. I-4400/I-4700  
I-26 WIDENING  
HENDERSON AND BUNCOMBE COUNTIES

DESIGN PUBLIC MEETING  
APRIL 23, 2018

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NAME	ADDRESS (including zip code)	EMAIL
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	1514 EMAN SC, SEWA, NC <sup>28791</sup>	
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Larry Smith	35 Hoyt Rd Arden NC <sup>28704</sup>	larrysmith1@gmail.com
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April 23, 2018

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Barb Zimmerman	306 Village Greenway, Flat Rock NC		
Lewis Icehower	Hendersonville NC		
Cindy Freeman	176 Carolina Bluebird Loop	cindyinashville@gmail.com	
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Ramey Hershey	51 Driftstone Circle Arden, NC 28709	ramher@yahoo.com	



Design Public Meeting  
April 23, 2018

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Bill HARPER JR	CAROLINE DR H-VILLE		828 692-1124
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Ron LEATHERWOOD	97 Linda Ann Dr. Flat Rock NC	rleatherwood@charter.net	828-421-4516
Brian Schultz	47 wildwood circle Fletcher	beschultz@yahoo.com	828-273-0703
Faye Mathis	36 Pine Lane	fayemathis@spectrum.net	828-667-5143



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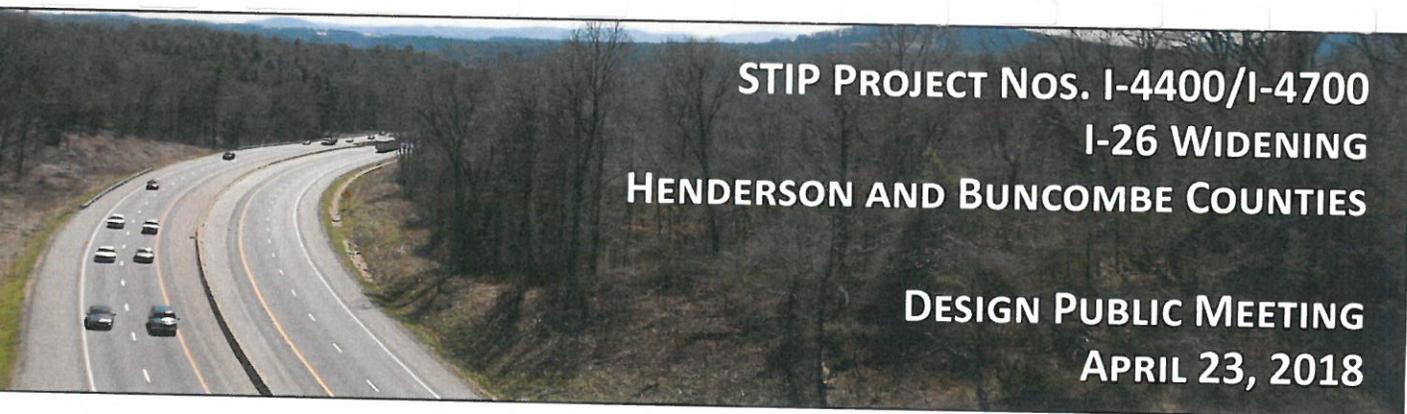
DESIGN PUBLIC MEETING  
APRIL 23, 2018

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Wanda B. Skaug	110 WOOD GLEN CT ARDEN 28704	NONE
Whitey Worsham	6042 Ashvills Hwy Andersonville	germanaugbellsouth.net
Ashley Wilson	243 School Rd, E Asheville, NC 28803	Boatsetc.auw@gmail.com
Rohit Eato	839 FIFTH AV W. Hville 28739	homerdel@gmail.com
Mel Scholl	616 Wickhams Fancy DR, Candler 28715	mel.scholl@outlook.com
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Eugene Wilson	Candler		828 467-9404
Keith & Vicki Tweed	Atkins A Arden		828-423-9831
Cindy Warren	11 Glenn Bridge Rd Arden	cwarren@comcast.com	828-687-4000
JERRY ISRAEL	24 Fishermill Rd		684-2031



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DESIGN PUBLIC MEETING  
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NAME	ADDRESS (including zip code)	EMAIL
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Richard Johannsen	1701 BREVARD Rd Arden 28704	tricky_dick@msw.com
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Sharon Henderson	970586	
Lauren Queen	1594 E. Main St. Sylva	lqueen@ncdot.gov
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Cheryl Bowler	1965 BREWER RD	
Lucy Bowler	1965 Brewer Rd Arden, NC 28704	



STIP I-4400/I-4700  
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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/16/2018	Katherine Cross			Greenways are an integral part of this plan		1		
4/16/2018	Brian Schultz	1		The noise in my backyard from the highway and rest area is already not tolerable. I can NEVER have the windows open. Trucks park right behind my house and run their engines all night. Accelerating out of the rest stop, and brakig into the opposite side shake my house. I can not imagine moving this closer to my property as is proposed. Please consider a wall. There is no quality of life in my house as is.	1			property devaluation, right of way acquisition
4/16/2018				Hi Kat..I own the house at <b>47 Wildwood Circle, Fletcher, NC</b> . I went to the meeting tonight and am very distraught. I just spent my life savings on this home, and after living here for 5 months now, I have grown accustomed to the non stop grinding of gears, brakes and engines that living 30 yards off of a major highway provides. Trucks line up a stones throw my fence and run their engines on the on ramp from the rest stop all night. I can never have the windows or doors open at anytime of the day for any reason..I have gotten used to this and realized that this purchase is on me. I was told tonight <b>this area does qualify for noise protection, except it will not happen because it is not cost effective</b> . Further towards Asheville a few miles, there are houses many times further from 26 than my house, where the noise can not be as bad and they are getting a wall. I'm begging for consideration for the NCDOT to <b>do something about this project that will not worsen my quality of life and further devalue my investment</b> . I can not picture trucks lined up all night right behind my fence. The noise is bad throughout the entire neighborhood...it is not just those of us on 26. Thank you for listening				
4/17/2018				Hi..I own lot 384 on 26 widening project. <b>At the meeting last night I was told the rest area on ramp would move back towards my backyard. On the map I only see dark green there which is supposed to be the preexisting ramp</b> . Can you clarify? Thanks				
4/16/2018	Keith and Victoria Tweed			Although it will be a hassle to live through, it is <b>very much needed to accommodate traffic</b> concerns. Thank you for being thorough and conscientious of the public's concerns.			1	
4/16/2018	Charles and Joyce Mason			<b>Looks real good. Go with it</b>			1	
4/16/2018	Marcia Bromberg			I continue to be <b>frustrated that planning does not proactively include accommodations for future greenways</b> . In this section of highway a feasibility study exists for including greenway both nearby and crossing under or over the highway. Yet no creative planning has been done to facilitate the future project. "Talking to the county" does not take into account expectations of citizens' expectations. I expect more from planners and engineers.		1		
4/16/2018	Ryan Cole (Skyland Fire Chief)			To reduce traffic accidents on I-26, <b>please create truck lane from Exit 33 to Exit 37 east and west bound. To reduce traffic accidents continue to evaluate additional options for Schenk entrance. To provide emergency access, please continue to maintain emergency crossovers.</b>				emergency crossovers, truck lanes, Schenck entrance
4/16/2018			1	I have along with the 1000+ older adults that live in a retirement community along I-26 in Hendersonville are very concerned about the noise impact we already incur with I-29 and what it will be when it expand. We believe <b>the interstate should expand but would like a sound wall to deter the noise</b> from cars and trucks.	1		1	

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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/29/2018	Kevin Parries		1	I am the Executive Director of Carolina Village, a retirement community, located in Henderson County, NC. Our community borders I-26 where the proposed changes have been suggest to expand the interstate from four lanes to six. First, I want to say that <b>I am not opposed of the expansion of I-26 and feel that it is way overdue.</b> My concern along with the 520 residents that reside in this community is the sound from vehicles using I-26. It already has a negative impact on my resident in their golden years. I know this has been a big concern for those who live here and our elected officials. We are in the process of expanding our community to meet the needs of older adults in Henderson County. I have attached a map with the new areas identified by a yellow highlight. I was here when they were on my property doing the sound testing and I would like for that to be reviewed again. During the original process the gentleman entered the building and took readings. I discussed how the building were constructed and how the interstate impacts our resident outdoor living. As you can tell a large area on the attached map was never studied during the original review. I would ask that my property be reviewed again and <b>consider a sound barrier be placed on I-26 along our property line.</b> Thank you for your consideration and assistance. I would invite you to come back to our site and review any area that you feel necessary. If you have any questions you can reach me at the number below or my direct number is 828-233-0611. I hope you have a wonderful day.	1		1	
4/16/2018	Lynn Brooks			The intersection of <b>Clayton Rd as it "T"s into SH191 is a safety hazard</b> that has become much more of an issue with increased traffic from I-26 when there's an accident or back up. Because of a blind curve on SH191 just south of the intersection, cars traveling north on 191 coming around the curve often come close to hitting cars trying to turn left off of 191 onto Clayton Rd. Every afternoon traffic is bumper to bumper at that intersection.				Clayton Rd/NC 191 intersection
4/16/2018	Seth McLennan	1		We bought this house in a challenged market as far as soaring home prices. This house fit our needs perfectly but we bought it based on the hopes a sound barrier wall will be built. My 5 year old daughter can't stay asleep and I'm sure will soon effect my 6 week old son. <b>Please keep the wall in the plans for the I-26 project!!</b> Thank you.	1			
4/18/2018				My wife and I bought our home at <b>55 Wildwood Cir, Fletcher</b> 1/7/16. We had sold our condo much faster than we expected so we had to find something quickly. At that time there was not much to choose from and the prices were beginning to skyrocket. We chose our current home as it had everything on that list in our limited budget with the exception of being near I-26. We did our homework, looked / read the DOT web page regarding the widening and observed the chances for a getting sound barrier wall were quite positive. At this last meeting on 4/16/18, I was informed that there is a whole new board / team and they think there are not enough people effected in my neighborhood to warrant the cost of a sound barrier wall. Your studies may conclude the information you want them to however many of my neighbors who are "benefited" but not "impacted" <b>have noise issues and would like a sound barrier wall. This will cause all of our home values to decrease and reduce our quality of life.</b> It would be nice to have my 5 year old daughter sleep through the night and not wake up at 3-4 am scared of the highway noises. We now have a 6 week old baby boy we are concerned about as well. I'm glad the money is being spent near the river etc and benefit our many tourists but we do LIVE here and pay NC taxes and should not be pushed aside. Thank you for your consideration.				
4/24/2018				Will these tests be done at the quietest time for the DOTs benefit or at a time that has normal and not stopped traffic? Would proper sound barrier vegetation be planted if a wall is not constructed?				
4/25/2018				When will the new sound study begin/end				
4/16/2018	Mel Scholl			I am part of Connect Buncombe Greenway advocacy group. We are trying to get the <b>Buncombe Co. Greenway Master Plan implemented.</b> We would like to try to incorporate our Master plan along with the I-26 expansion. <b>Specifically part of I-26 right of way near Asheville Outlets and a bit south of that. Also to facilitate bike and pedestrian crossing near the Long Shoals bridge to Lake Julian.</b> It is a difficult area and we need a safer solution to getting to Lake Julian.		1		

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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/16/2018	Terry Scholl			Please <b>remember walker and cyclist</b> . As a hiker I need a safe path on BRPW. This looks to be part of your plan. Thank you. However the path or access across I-26 at Long Shoals does not look safe. Cyclist especially need safe roadways. <b>Does this plan support your (NCDOT) greenway master plan-feasibility study?</b> If not will you provide an alternative that is equally safe?		1		
4/16/2018	Craig Mosley			A key aspect/consideration for this project is to assure that regional/county non-motorized transportation plans are not disrupted and even better enhanced. For example Buncombe County wants to <b>extend greenways in the central area to the south toward the airport passing the outlet mall, Brevard Rd businesses, NC Arboretum and Biltmore Park</b> . Similarly Henderson Co. wants to <b>connect Westfelt Park to Fletcher Park using the Cane Creek corridor</b> . Therefore the <b>new I-26 bridge needs to allow space for peds/bicyclists</b> . Longer term Buncombe and Henderson Co.'s desire an interconnected network of greenways which should not be negatively impacted by this project.		1		
4/16/2018	Margie Zack			<b>Design I-26 Bridge over French Broad River to have 1) lower level for greenway and pedestrians or 2) side bridge for greenway/pedestrians</b>		1		
4/16/2018	Doug and Linda Bailey			<b>Please assure</b> that in hilly and mountainous sections of I-26 (even after expansion to 6 and 8 lanes) that <b>trucks are required to remain in the right two lanes</b> . There is some remaining confusion regarding if the finished I-26 project will result in 8 lanes as far south as US-25 (Exit 44) or will decrease to 6 lanes south of NC-280 (Airport Rd)				trucks
				<i>(page 1 )</i> Highway Improvements Needed Prior to Beginning I-26 Widening Project: A significant amount of traffic uses the following routes as alternates when I-26 traffic is backed up between Exit 40 (or beyond) and I40/I240 interchange. When construction starts on I-26 these alternate routes along with I-26 will become parking lots unless something is done NOW. Following are the MINIMAL <b>improvements needed to these alternate routes</b> prior to beginning the I-26 widening. We definitely do not want projects on these alternate routes occurring simultaneously with the I-26 project. <b>US-25A - Sweeten Creek Road:</b> These improvements can be completed quickly at minimal cost and with minimal impact on adjoining property. Any right-of-way needed will be a part of the planned future improvements for US-25A. <b>1. Install left turn lane for southbound traffic as Pensacola Avenue interchange. 2. Install left turn lane for southbound traffic at Royal Pines Drive interchange. 3. Install left turn lane for both southbound and northbound traffic at Rosscraggon Road interchange. 4. Install left turn lane for both southbound and northbound at Rathfarnham Road interchange. 5. Expedite completion of Mills Gap Road interchange improvements.</b> (The best scenario would be to expedite completion of all proposed improvements to US-25-A - Sweeten Creek Road prior to beginning I-26 widening project. <b>NC 191 - BRevard Road 1. Install left turn lane for southbound traffic at Clayton Road interchange.</b> For improved safety, install at least a caution light, if not a red light, and cut back the bank on the southbound side of brevard Road around th blind curve at this dangerous intersection to improve sight distance <b>2. Install left turn lane on Clayton Road at the NC-191/Brevard Road interchange. NC-112 - Sardis Road -</b> (This would be a bonus project) <b>1. Expedite completion of proposed widening project from NC-191 to US-23.</b> During rush hour in the evenings, traffic often backs up in the left lane of northbound Brevard Road well past the Hot Spot Market (more than 1,400 ft) trying to make a left turn onto Sardis Road. This is magnified when traffic on westbound I-26 is backed up to the Long Shoals exit which is now a nearly daily event. <b>US-25 - Hendersonville Road 1. Synchronize red lights to keep traffic moving.</b> Existing traffic signal programming results in very long lines of backed-up traffic, frustrated drivers, preventable accidents, and wasted gas, particularly during rush hour. An example: during <i>(end page 1)</i>				

\*Red text is the substantive portion of the comment.

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4/16/2018	Ken Ball			<p>(begin page 2 ) evening rush hour, traffic often backs up from Lambeth Drive (Wal-Mart entrance) beyond the Blue Ridge Parkway to the entrance to Carolina Day School (approximately 4,000 ft). From Lambeth Drive southbound all the way to Mills Gap traffic is stop and go. More than stop and go (just short of 1 mile with no less than 8 non-synchronized red lights). Just yesterday while traveling this stretch of road with light traffic on a Saturday afternoon, w=out of 4 traffic signals the first was red, the 2nd green, the 3rd red, and the 4th green in 1,166 ft. Why??? Only slightly better conditions exist southbound all the way through Fletcher especially at adjacent interchanges like Buck Shoals Road and Airport Road which are 780 feet apart. One turns green while the other turns red. Frustrating! 2. <b>Sections of Hendersonville Road have been repaved but others need to be.</b> There are many, many places where the pavement has been dug up for repairs to utilities or some other reason and "patched" leaving the pavement very uneven. Example: in front of Wal-Mart, near Lambert Drive, pavement in the northbound lane is a mess. Who is responsible, the contractor or the NCDOT engineer whose job it is to see that repairs are done correctly??? In other places (end page 2 )</p> <p>(begin page 3 ) the pavement has sunk either because of poor backfill (with only dirt) or from poor sub grade. 3. Raise manhole covers to the same grade as the street surface when repaving. They make risers for this purpose which also reduces damage to the adjoining asphalt. Finally, disqualify all contractors that have limited capability, that are stretched too thin, or have exhibited poor past performance from participating in the bidding process. Beware of "low ball" bids are guaranteed to result in many "change orders" and heartaches for the project manager, the traveling public and North Carolina taxpayers. We have dealt with a poorly constructed I-26 between Long Shoals (Exit 37) to approximately mile marker 50 for years and years which has resulted in the expenditure of millions of maintenance dollars trying to keep it driveable. Get the <b>foundation and drainage designed and implemented on the new I-26 that exceeds the projected traffic flow and truck axle weight limits</b> (we all know axle weight limits will increase over time). <b>Add contractor incentives for early completion and specify large BONDED penalties for missed deadlines.</b> We all know about the recent debacle of the Pond Road Bridge project on I-26 which is exactly what you can expect when you go with the low bidder. Let's get it right this time. (end page 3)</p>				Need improvements to other routes in the network that would be used to bypass I-26 construction.
4/16/2018	Penny Freeman			<p><b>Concerns about I26 overflow traffic overwhelming the already dangerous intersections: 1) Clayton Road at Hwy 191/Brevard Rd and 2) Long Shoals Rd at 191/Brevard Rd.</b> Both intersections need: SPOT Safety Funds to a) provide dedicated left turn lanes on Brevard Rd. b) <b>provide turn lane/red light/round about for Clayton Rd left turn onto Brevard Rd/Hwy 191</b> c) Long Shoals needs left turn lane light onto Brevard Rd d) <b>Round about needed for crazy intersection: 191/Glen Bridge Rd/Avery's Creek Rd/Hwy 191/Community Road.</b> These Brevard Rd improvements needs to be done before I-26 project! Traffic will be diverting to Brevard Rd to avoid I-26 traffic during projet. <b>Thank you for your investment of SPOT safety money to improve traffic flow during I26 widening.</b> P.S. At meeting I spoke to Jay Swain + Randy McKinney about these concerns.</p>				Need improvements to roads that would be used to bypass I-26 construction.
4/16/2018	Richard Johannsen			<p><b>Clayton Rd is a cut-through to NC 191 when there is either construction or an accident on I-26.</b> NC 191 at Clayton Rd is a blind curve without a stop. Traffic turning onto Clayton Rd from 191 can not see traffic coming @ 45mph. Traffic turning also causes a backup. We have had numerous accidents there due to the existing I-26 project. This is a major safety issue. <b>A temp. light needs to be installed to gate traffic from Clayton into 191 and from 191 to Clayton during this project.</b> We can not turn into our property or leave our project due to traffic conditions. We own property on both sides of NC 191 @ Clayton and <b>we are unable to safely move our equipment to farm the side of the property except in the early hours on weekends.</b> Someone will be killed during the I26 project as they cut through Clayton Rd unless signals are added at Clayton and NC 191.</p>				Improvements to Clayton Rd/NC 191 intersection. Difficulty moving farm equipment back and forth across this intersection.
4/13/2018	Bill Ramsey			<p><b>This project is vital to the economy of Henderson county.</b> We have lived here and used this section of I-26 since 1989. It has become more dangerous and congested each year. There seem to be no time slots during the day and evening hours when traffic is moderate. <b>Please move on this with urgency.</b></p>			1	

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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/17/2018	Ann Babcock			Thanks for attending the public hearing last night and listening to citizen concerns. I will begin my comments by letting you know that I am a member of Connect Buncombe, a greenway advocacy group. Buncombe County has a Master Plan for Trails and Greenways, adopted by the County Commission in 2012. It has garnered wide support from one end of the county to the other. We hope that NCDOT considers this plan and the supporting "feasibility studies" when designing widening projects. Members of Connect Buncombe attend every DOT public meeting where we can give input to the draft plan and ask that <b>safe greenway access and development be considered along with road widening when possible. We do not always feel that DOT listens to our concerns.</b> For example: The new Hwy 191 bridge over I-26 includes sidewalks and a bike lane along the bridge, but will not be safe for families and kids riding out to the NC Arboretum. A pedestrian bridge, although expensive, would have been far more appropriate. Use of the culvert going under I-26, far less expensive than a bridge, would have worked as well. Transportation includes more than vehicular traffic. Walking and biking are becoming more attractive means of transportation and we should encourage that. <b>Please consider our Master Plan in all phases of planning for DOT projects if simply to allow for future greenway projects.</b>		1		
4/16/2018	Jeff Egolf			Thanks for your time this afternoon on the new NCDOT plan for I26 exit 44 and especially our interest, the west side of I26 along Cureton Rd and Pl., Egolf Properties #s 311, 312, 313 and 314. We think we understand the three options with possibly some modifications. <b>The one option we would like to explore further would be to preserve the paved access road across property #313 to property #314 and to maintain ownership and use of property #313.</b> Our understanding is that engineering would have to inspect to insure the elevations, drop offs, ditch line, existing water line etc.would allow for that. If you could facilitate that process we could certainly definitively express our hopefully positive opinion. Our desire is to have a commercially usable and attractive whole tract without involving excessive Eminent Domain although we do understand that possibly some property may be taken. And as we indicated, <b>our property #314 could certainly be accessed and used for depositing clean spoil dirt.</b> That could benefit all as we do have some elevation situations there. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any questions. And thank you again for the open discussion.				Egolf property access improvements at/near Cureton Road and Cureton Place. (Per Brian Burch this is under review)
4/17/2018	Dean Headley			I attended the I-26 update at Biltmore Church last night. I want to share some feedback and concerns about an area that is related to that larger project. I'm referring to the <b>Brevard Road intersections at 1) Long Shoals and 2)Clayton.</b> 1) I realize there are some property line/easement issues or challenges but that <b>intersection is a major bottleneck.</b> We <b>need a short term and long term solution.</b> The I 26 project without a short-term solution will make for miserable living for those of us over here. 2) because we have to avoid the Long Shoals Brevard Road intersection many of us try to use Clayton but it is at times impossible to turn left onto Brevard Road from Clayton. I'm happy to provide further information/commentary and to share with others as you wish.				Brevard Rd/Long Shoals intersection, Brevard Rd/Clayton Rd intersection
4/17/2018	Jerry Kain			I live in Henderson County within 1/2 mile of I 26, just south/east of the Upward rd exit #53. I would like to <b>request that DOT consider placing "No Engine break" or (Jake Brake) usage along this corridor.</b> The truck noise is considerable around our neighborhood as I'm sure is the case along any hilly sections of I26 in both Buncombe and Henderson counties. Thanks for your consideration!				trucks
4/17/2018	Mary Pohl			Is there any information you could share from last night's public meeting regarding I-26 widening?				seeking info

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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/18/2018	Farrah Calloway	1		Thank you for taking correspondence regarding the I-26 expansion. It is my understanding that a noise study was conducted years ago in <b>my neighborhood, Wildwood Circle</b> . It is also my understanding that it was determined that a minimal number of houses were affected by such noise; therefore, building a noise-reducing wall was not warranted nor did it justify the cost. I can assure you that I am most certainly affected by the traffic noise constantly. When I moved in to my home in 2009, I was well aware that I would be subjected to some traffic noise living in close proximity to the interstate. But keep in mind there is a reason an expansion is being considered to I-26--TOO MUCH TRAFFIC! The population census has doubled--or tripled even--in our area in nine years' time and the dysfunctional interstate system is evidence of that--it cannot support the growing numbers. With the increased traffic comes traffic jams. This means I am hearing traffic noises for longer periods of time. When the interstate does widen, it will be closer to my home and be even louder and will most certainly decrease the value of the homes in our neighborhood. I implore you to consider the needs of me and my family-- North Carolina tax-paying citizens. Consider the burden of trying to get my 6 year old child to sleep soundly through the night only to be awakened by the interstate traffic. <b>We want a sound barrier.</b>	1			
4/18/2018	Patrick Runyan	1		I would like to voice my concern over the expansion of I-26. <b>I live in the Wildwood subdivision</b> off of Fanning Bridge rd. close to the airport. There really <b>needs to be a barrier/noise wall built</b> when the road goes to 6 lanes. We have enough noise as it is with the road now. Adding even more traffic will make it worse. I really hope this wall will be considered. If what I read is true, other neighborhoods getting a wall that are not as close to the road as us ? Please build the wall for people who need it.	1			
4/18/2018	Luke Withrow			I was wondering if my home will be impacted by the I-26 widening project. Is there a map showing the current stretch of the "4 B Alternative"? My home is: 200 Westover Drive Asheville, NC 28801 Any assistance you can provide will be much appreciated!				Asking about impacts from I-26 Connector project.
4/24/2018	Chris and Mark Moore			<p>I have attached two comment forms regarding the sound barrier wall around mile marker 50 eastbound on I-26 (just south of Dana Rd bridge). We own all the property adjacent to the proposed wall (off Meadowlark Lane) which includes a mobile home park. The mobile home park has enough dwellings to increase the population density such that it warranted a noise impact study. After speaking with representatives at the public meeting, it is clear that the property owner's vote outweighs the tenants' votes by a 4:1 margin. That said, <b>we are strongly opposed to the wall and will vote as such</b>. The folks at the meeting advised us to submit a comment form and let you know the situation here so that maybe you can avoid the costs of further studies at this location. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. <i>(Written comment: Chris Moore)</i> <b>I am opposed to a sound barrier wall on the eastbound side just south of Dana Rd bridge. I own my home and live adjacent to the proposed wall. I (and my family) own a business here that would be negatively affected by eliminating our exposure to passing traffic.</b></p> <p><i>(Written comment: Mark Moore)</i> <b>I am opposed to a sound barrier wall on the Eastbound side of I-26 just south of the Dana Rd bridge.</b> I own the mobile home park located on Meadowlark Lane and the business (4x4 Country) also located on Meadowlark Lane. A wall would seriously impact our business as we rely on visibility from the interstate to advertise our products. <b>We paid for an encroachment permit in order to remove the existing berm and maintain the grass so that we have visibility from I-26.</b> Removing the berm has vastly increased our business. After speaking with folks at the public meeting, I understand that since I own all the lots in the mobile home park that my vote will trump the tenants' votes. I was asked to submit a comment to you in order to make you aware tha I do not want a wall, and that I intend to vote no on the sound wall - and that might save the state the trouble and money of further studies.</p>				opposed to noise wall for visibility of business

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4/19/2018	Cindy Warren			I represent Lamar Outdoor Advertising and have attached some comments per the public meeting at Biltmore Church 4-16. We have two items: We own a parcel with a billboard identified as possible ROW acquisition. We have three billboards possibly affected by potential sound walls. We are committed to working with all parties on this project to preserve our business interests in keeping with a cooperative spirit with all agencies involved. (Written comment; includes maps ) Proposed RW acquisition PIN #9652-21-3286 160 Butler Bridge. Parcel is owned by Lamar Outdoor. We have a billboard on that parcel. We want to do everything we can to keep our billboard display on that parcel and want to work with the DOT in the event the ROW will be taken and interfere with our billboard as is. We just want to stay in business there and look forward to creative solutions to that end. We also have billboards that may be affected by proposed sound walls - PIN #964348654000 Buncombe County PIN #9579807008 Henderson County				Property acquisition concern.
4/23/2018				Thanks for the call this am. Please see the attached comments I sent to Kat Bukowy last week. Upon review, I realized we actually have a third sound wall area of concern in Henderson County that I neglected to include in my original comments. Please see PIN #9579711235 and 9579714211. Lamar has easements from the Moore's for the three billboards located on those parcels. Thank you for returning my call, and I look forward to being of assistance in any way in order to achieve the best result for all concerned. (includes comment above as attachment)				
4/20/2018	Roberta Lott			I am a concerned property owner that will be greatly affected by the decision to take a large part of my backyard leaving my home exposed on the I26 with no sound barrier. I have lived here over 20 years. This is the only home my children know. My septic tank is in the backyard, which depends on that area to work properly. We have nowhere to go. the cost of living is sky high and we are unable to buy another home at this cost. My neighbors are very upset and concerned. We are going to lose our property value by \$100,000 and our lifesaving/retirement plan. I/We are requesting that you start the STIP Project No.1-4400 after the Dana bridge. This will save our property values and you will not have to replace the bridge overpass of Dana road. This will be cost-effective for the state and help the property owners keep their home and values without the state paying for the right of way. Please reconsider this plan and protect NC Carolinians' property. We are taxpayers and hard-working families. I will welcome a visit and you could see the devastation that will affect many residents in the Willowbrook Community.				Concerned about property acquisition.
4/24/2018				I do not understand this statement "The portion that includes Dana Road is in I-4400A, which is currently unfunded into the future in the Current STIP." Does this mean it is not going to happen because of the funding or the budget is not approved until July 2018? Please clarify this statement. I am desperately trying to figure out my home situation.				
4/25/2018				I am shocked because my husband went to the meeting and he was told a complete different story and he was provided information. An attorney has contacted all the homeowners with images of the road going through each property owner's backyard.				
4/18/2018 4/23/2018	Brittney Poppell			Is the most recent public meeting handout available for project I-4700, I-26 Widening? I see the maps and the public notice from the April 16th public meeting but not the handout.				requesting information
4/24/2018		Raymond Gragg			I am a resident of Wildwood and I think that we should be considered for a wall. In the winter, you can hear the I-26 when the leaves are not on the trees. It does not make sense why we would not have a wall once the expansion is done.			
4/19/2018	Renate Pacheco	1		I am writing this email as a very concerned home owner. My address is 45 Wildwood Circle, Fletcher, NC 28732 My house backs up to interstate 26. The noise level from the 4 lane traffic is almost unbearable presently. I am very concerned that the state will not provide a noise barrier like a wall. There are many children and pets that live on this street. The expansion of I26 to 6 or 8 lanes will greatly increase the noise level. Presently I can hear the noise when I am inside my house with the doors and windows closed. My dogs and I will be GREATLY DISTRESSED by the noise coming from the increased traffic and closeness of the interstate to my house. I am requesting that you consider a noise barrier like a wall between my house and the interstate that you will be widening.	1			

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Apr-18				I am a property owner. My house is next to I26. The noise is almost unbearable at present from the 4 lanes I26. The increase in noise from 6-8 lanes and/or noise coming closer to my yard will be EXTREMELY distressing to my dogs not to mention myself. I would hope that you would at least <b>put up a noise barrier wall!!!</b>				
4/16/2018	Rick Owenby			Richard Owenby called today with questions about what is going to be taking place at his property (703 Dana Rd, Hendersonville). I believe his main <b>concern is whether his whole property (including house) is going to be taken or if just a portion of his property.</b> It sounds like he has seen different maps over time. I directed him to the newest maps and he said he had seen them already. He is unable to attend the meeting tonight so he would like one of you to call him to discuss the project with him.				Property acquisition concern.
4/18/2018				Please let me know as soon as possible about status. Please use E-mail for all information. Thank you, have a great day. <i>(includes images of mailing from attorneys)</i>				
4/19/2018				Can you please fax me the detail map for the I-26 project for my property at 703 Dana Road, Hendersonville NC 28792. I cannot open the map you sent me because of the format. My fax number is 828-595-2594. Thank you.				
4/x/2018	Robbie Sweeter			Very interested in working w/ NCDOT to <b>provide for greenway multi-use path</b> on west side of I-26 between Hwy 191/I-26 interchange southward to French Broad River/I-26. This is a very important greenway connection at this narrow pass between the river, Hwy 191, and mountain topography to connect central Buncombe to south Buncombe and counties south.		1		
4/x/2018	Miles Oscar Olson	1		This project will greatly affect my neighborhood, as I'm sure many others, and living behind 26 no more than a mile from the closest rest area is loud and stressful enough. If this project is to serve the community and make a difference then you should prioritize the comfort of your local residents here. <b>We need a noise abatement barrier for the neighborhood of Wildwood.</b> I'm also <b>concerned about how much of my land is being taken for work on Fanning Bridge Road, Fanning Bridge does not need to be any wider...but if it's for sidewalk I can see the reasoning.</b> Thank you	1			Only widen Fanning Bridge Rd if it's for sidewalks.
4/x/2018	Samantha Henderson	1		Where I am located, there are a line of trees in my backyard that give some privacy <b>from the rest stop.</b> My concern is with the expansion, it would push this closer to the backside of my house and diminish what privacy we have. It is important to me to have those <b>trees for privacy.</b> The rest stop that lies behind my yard is already loud enough with the trucks that stop there. I wake up early for work every morning and my fiance works third shift. Its imparitive that he gets proper rest during the day. <b>My concern would be the rise in noise levels</b>	1			Privacy from rest area
4/x/2018	Whitey Worsham			You <b>can not turn on to Dawley Drive if you going North on Hwy 25 using the turn lane.</b> You have to turn from the fast lane or get on turn lane then back up to island to be able to turn. The <b>island needs to be shorten or removed to make turning on Dawley Drive safe.</b> Give it a try I think you will agree. <i>(letter includes two black and white street-level photos of intersection)</i>				Current island blocks a left turn onto Dawley Drive from US 25
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Rosemary Lloyd		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> We <b>need a sound barrier to shut out noise from I-64</b> so we will not have loud traffic noise.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Alice Pfirman		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> Consider a study for a <b>Sound Barrier on I-26 at property for Carolina Village.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Florence Hunter		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> I would like a <b>sound wall to be built along Hwy 26 by Carolina Village.</b> We now have 520 residents and this number is going to increase within next couple of years. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Harry Williams		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> I would appreciate <b>considering a wall for some noise protection.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Agnes J. Jones		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> <b>Need sound wall along Carolina Vill. Property adjacent to I-26.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Catherine M. Howell		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> As a member of Carolina Village I <b>would like to see some kind of noise control on I-26 at NC 64.</b>	1			

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Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Barbara H. Miller		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) My "village" is adjacent to I-26 and the <b>noise is very unsettling</b> with all the traffic on I-26. There are now 550 residents here - we are expanding - There will be over 700 elderly folks here - we can't have I-26 any close to us - there isn't any room. <b>Another exit - other than Rt 64 - would be good to take traffic around our city - between Fletcher and Hendersonville and rejoin RT 64 west of the city - perhaps Horseshoe.</b>	1			Propose an interchange between Fletcher and Hendersonville that connects to US 64 west of Hendersonville.
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	George and Joanne Lofquist		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) There are 500+ (soon to be 700+) elderly people living in Carolina Village right next to I-26. Without 2 sound barrier the last years of these elderly will be miserable. The sound is so bad now that few of them venture out for walks. <b>With more lanes it will be intorable without a sound barrier.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Helen M. Rapp		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) Please <b>provide a sound barrier</b> to prevent/lessen traffic noise to Carolina Village property.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Florence Wood		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) The 6-lane widening would not require additional land to widen the road but 8-lane widening would require land on each side. I-26 is close to Carolina Village Medical Center and care center. <b>Sound barriers should be along alrea adjacent to Carolina Village.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Velma S. Rymer		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) <b>Prevent traffic congestion. Sound barrier is badly need at Carolina Village.</b>	1			Concern for traffic congestion
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	John F. Rymer		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) <b>Prevent traffic congestion. Sound barrier is badly needed at Carolina Village.</b>	1			Concern for traffic congestion
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Ruth Piland		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I am very interested in a <b>sound barrier to protect this community.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Pauline Corn		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) <b>Need sound barrier next to Carolina Village</b> as we are so close to I-26 - noise level is very bad. We thank you for your consideration.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	T. Ann Bauer		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I live in Carolina Village, which parallels I26. Noise from traffic on I-26 when it is widened will be unbearable. I ask that you <b>create a wall - sound barrier - on both sides of I-26 near where it intersects with US 64 bridge.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Patricia F. Sproles		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I am one of 525 residents at Carolina Village - <b>we have needed a sound barrier since traffic on I-26 borders our property.</b> Now with additional lanes we will have increased traffic noise. We also are adding 190 additional housing under construction. We need a noise barrier! Thank you for your attention to this matter.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Charles A. Sproles		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I am a resident of soon to be (2019) 720 residents at Carolina Village. We <b>need a sound barrier</b> with the added traffic of more lanes on I-26. Sound barrier has been requested (for many years).	1			
4/29/2018				We are two residents of the 525 current people living at Carolina Village with property boundary on I-26 in Hendersonville, NC. We <b>need a sound barrier</b> as the widening will bring more lanes adjacent to our property. We are building cottages and apartments that will increase to 720 people in 2019. The noise from the interstate has always been bad, but with the widening will come more lanes and more noise. Please consider noise barrier for our property and residents.				
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Shirley Retzsch		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) <b>Please provide a noise barrier of some sort.</b>	1			

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Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Ann Destremps		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) With the widening of I-26 in Henderson County, we strongly urge the DOT to <b>erect a noise barrier on the west side of the highway north of exit 49</b> . The area abuts land where over 600 residents will be exposed to the increased noise of a 6-lane highway. The noise level is bad now. With this expansion, the health and well being of these residents will be even more adversely affected without your steps to mitigate the noise. We are depending on you and your Department to make the right decision; a decision in favor of a noise abatement wall along the property of Carolina Village.	1			
4/27/2018				With the widening of I-26 just north of Exit 49 in Henderson County, the noise level near this heavily populated area will greatly increase. There will be over 600 Carolina Village residents adversely affected by the noise level. We strongly urge the DOT to <b>erect a noise-abatement wall</b> in this area. It is the right thing to do.				
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Kay S. Williams		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I have a <b>real concern that a sound wall is not going to be included at the Hwy 64 and I26 interchange</b> . We already are affected by the noise of I26 and it will only increase - Please address this concern and help us have a quieter community. We currently have 500+ residents and in the near future will have 170 more. The additional construction will have resident who will really impacted by this noise!	1			
4/28/2018				I am addressing the issue of a sound wall at Hwy 64 East and I 26. I am a resident at Carolina Village where over 500 senior citizens reside. We are already affected by the noise on I 26. With the additional lanes being added to I 26 we are really going to be impacted by the noise. Please <b>consider a sound wall</b> to help us have a quieter and more peaceful place to live.				
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	June Ogden		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I <b>request a sound barrier wall</b> between I-26 and Carolina Village property.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Joann M. Milliken		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) I would like to <b>encourage a structure along I-26 to reduce the noise</b> for Carolina Village residents.	1			
Received by HEU 4/30/2018	Sandy Butler		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) We would <b>request a sound barrier between I-26 and Carolina Village property</b> .	1			
4/27/2018	Donald Streb		1	Being a resident of Carolina Village since last July I have lived through the summer, fall, winter, and now starting into the spring season. The message here is that regardless of the density of the foliage, tourist traffic, local traffic, and the constant thunder of semi tractor trailers, not even to mention all other factors, the decibel of noise from Interstate 26 into all areas of Carolina Village in a real nuisance and disturbance to a pleasant way of comfortable living. Please take into consideration an unbiased and accurate level of noise from the proposed highway expansion when <b>planning for a wall to insure a noise breaker</b> for the 700 anticipated seniors who will be living here.	1			
4/30/2018	Don and Jeanette Taws		1	I was told that you are the one to write concerning the daily noise level coming from I-26. My wife and I live at Carolina Village, in Hendersonville and would like the <b>NCDOT to consider putting up a sound barrier</b> where the road comes so close to the Village. Most of the residents are elderly, and it is very annoying to hear the constant rumble and noise from the heavy traffic. We would appreciate the State looking into this.	1			
4/20/2018	Patricia Viverette			Hello, my name is Patricia Viverette and I live at <b>106 Willowbrook Rd. in Hendersonville</b> , just off Dana Rd. I recently purchased this house on March 26th and then found out about the possible acquisition of property that is connected to the right of way for I-26. I have not received any letter concerning this, but all of my neighbors have. You all may have notified the previous owner, William Robinson, which is deceased...or his daughter, Tammy Sama. I just wanted to be sure you all were aware of the change in ownership of this property and I would like to know if I can get any further information. I was not able to attend the public meeting in Asheville since I was sick. <b>Just need to know if this will affect my property and if so, how much</b> . I had plans of a privacy fence but I guess I should hold off until I have more information. Thank you for your time. You may respond to this email, and/or call my cell phone listed below.				Concern for right of way acquisition.

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4/23/2018	Kerry and Pamela McBride	1		<b>Wildwood community NEEDS a privacy wall.</b> We have needed a sound barrier for a decade. There is a truck weigh station just before our neighborhood (Wildwood). After the trucks leave the truck stop <b>many of them park over night on the side of the highway 26 which is just beyond our back yard.</b> The noise from Interstate 26 as it relates to Wildwood Community is already nearly unbearable. <b>The resale value of our property will be greatly diminished as a result of a 8-lane Hwy with no sound barrier for our family.</b>	1			Property devaluation
4/26/2018	George and Loretta Giuffre		1	My wife and I are residents of Carolina Village, which is on the Westside of I26 at exit 44 in Hendersonville, NC. Our Medical and Care Centers are virtually next to the Highway. We live in a cottage close to these buildings and are buffered from the highway noise... only minimal. Highway I26 is heavenly travelled 24 hours per day with many trucks – this <b>noise never abates.</b> During the day, with other background noise, the highway noise is always there, but not as apparent. At night, especially at bed time, with the windows closed, is when we become more aware of the highway noise, and it is bad. Considering that we have approximately 100 patients in the Medical and Care centers and an additional 420 residents in cottages and apartments, and in the process of adding more cottages and apartments to house an additional 150 residents, this is the time to add a sound barrier. With a population, soon to be near to 700, we hope you give this issue your urgent consideration. Consider the age of our resident population, approximately: 5 individuals 100+. 170 individuals 90+. 190 individuals 80+	1			
4/26/2018	Sue Hatch		1	I am writing to urge you to <b>provide sound barriers</b> for the I 26 project in Hendersonville. I am a resident of Carolina Village, and already the traffic noise is loud, and frequently disturbing. As traffic increases (and probably speeds up) with the widened road, it will only become worse. Please provide a sound barrier between the highway and our 520 residents. We are all senior citizens, and I believe we deserve the same consideration as residents in several less densely populated areas for whom you are providing sound barriers.	1			
4/29/2018				I am writing to urge you to <b>provide sound barriers for Carolina Village</b> as part of the I 26 widening project. The Village is immediately adjacent to the highway. With its current 520 residents (which will become 700 next year) it is undoubtedly one of the highest density residential areas to be affected by the project. I believe this should be a major factor in determining where sound barriers will be installed. We, the residents of Carolina Village, urge you to put up sound barriers between us and the highway.				
Received by HEU 5/1/2018				Please <b>provide sound barriers</b> between the highway and Carolina Village. Our 520 residents deserve protection from the increased noise levels				
4/26/2018	William McLane		1	My apartment faces I 26 and with 4 lanes, the traffic noise is not pleasant. <b>Please put sound walls when you pass by Carolina Village</b>	1			
4/26/2018	Bob Ragan		1	I want to express my personal concerns with regard to the noise impact of the I-26 widening on my residence and hope you will <b>consider some form of sound mediation</b> as a part of the project.	1			
4/26/2018	Jane Ragan		1	On behalf of myself and the 500 current residents (and the 200 anticipated new residents) living with minimal distance between our homes and the I-26 new lanes of bustling and very noisy traffic, I strongly urge you to RE-EVALUATE the decision to refuse a sound-mediating wall adjacent to our properties. <b>WE DESPERATELY NEED SOUND MEDIATION!</b>	1			
4/26/2018	Charlotte Shipley		1	I invite you to join me on the balcony near my apartment at Carolina Village for a cool drink and a conversation. Strike the last part. It will not be possible to converse comfortably on that balcony or on others at this lovely residential retirement community. The reason is that traffic on I-26 is loud enough to drown out the spoken word. The current 520 residents here will be nearly 700 by 2019. Widening the highway is a necessary route to progress and we don't oppose it but we ask: PLEASE ASK NCDOT TO <b>RE-CONSIDER A SOUND BARRIER IN THE VICINITY OF I-26 AND HWY 64.</b> INCREASED USAGE OF I-26 WILL ADD TO THE ALREADY UNDESIRABLE SOUND POLLUTION FOR A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SENIOR CITIZENS AT CAROLINA VILLAGE. PLEASE HELP US! Thanks for your consideration.	1			
4/26/2018	Evelyn Uhrlass		1	As a resident of Carolina Village - bordering the proposed widening - I would <b>suggest that a SOUND STUDY should be conducted</b> - and frankly, I am surprised that one has not previously been done. This affects over 500 residents.I appreciate your attention to this.	1			

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Design Public Meeting Comment Matrix

Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/27/2018	Robert Anderson		1	My wife and I have been residents of Carolina Village for nearly five years. All this time, the noise from I26 has been a nuisance. With the coming widening of I26 in Henderson Cty. particularly, we fear noise will be even more of a problem. <b>Please include a sound barrier as part of this project.</b>	1			
4/27/2018	Nancy Campbell		1	I live in a senior community – Carolina Village – in Hendersonville. This facility is directly beside I-26, currently has 520 residents, soon to be over 700 residents. These residents live in independent apartments & cottages while others live in the care/medical center. At present the noise from I-26 is extremely loud and will only become worse with additional traffic. We seriously need to be considered – put at the top of the list – for <b>noise abatement walls</b> . Your attention would be greatly appreciated.	1			
4/27/2018	Kohlan Flynn		1	I am the President of the 20 member Board of Directors for the Carolina Village Continuing Care Retirement Center (CCRC). I wish the NCDOT would <b>see the necessity of a “sound barrier”</b> along the West side of I-26 (from the intersection with US 64 northward to Clear Creek) to protect the 700 residents from the interstate traffic noise.	1			
4/27/2018	John Hemenway		1	We appreciate widening interstate 26 next to Carolina Village; however, there <b>should be a sound barrier wall constructed</b> between Interstate 26 and Carolina Village (just before highway 64). This should have been originally approved along with the road widening project. Lets keep our Carolina Village pleasant and quite for us elderly citizens.	1			
4/27/2018	James and Sharon Hurley		1	We are writing in regard to the widening of I-26 at the intersection of US-64 in Hendersonville. We are residents of Carolina Village, a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) adjacent to I-26 just north of US-64. We are currently 520 residents with an ongoing expansion that will result in 700 residents. The noise level is very high now and with the widening of 1-26 will only increase. We have two requests: 1. The current I-26 is immediately adjacent to the Carolina Village property. <b>Please do not add another lane closer to our property</b> , thus taking away the existing narrow margin separating Carolina Village from the highway. 2. Please <b>consider the installation of a sound barrier wall</b> along the Carolina Village property to reduce the current noise level from the highway. That would greatly improve the noise level associated with 1-26 for the 700 elderly residents of Carolina Village. Thank you for your consideration of this request.	1			Does not want the road closer to Carolina Village.
4/27/2018	George and Shirley Lamb		1	We are residents of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. This is a Continuing Care Retirement Center located adjacent to I 26 .We can see both eastbound and westbound traffic from our apartment. The noise level from traffic on I 26 is bad. We think that the highway needs to be widened and the need for a <b>noise barrier is essential</b> . The noise level will become even louder as time passes.	1			
4/27/2018	Vernoncia Ledford	1		I have been living at <b>53 Wildwood Circle</b> for thirteen years. I was told that there was going to be a soundwall up from the date of purchase. My children and I have been woken up by oversized trucks noise and vibrations from parked, idling, jack brakes, horns blowing, rumble strip. The holidays increase traffic noise along with morning traffic. The turn-around is behind my home for emergency response. Patrol officer at least every Sunday will sit there and sirens and exelcerating several times. The sirens from fire trucks, ambulance, Mama (mission) due to several wrecks at Airport road, and several behind my home. If you try to eat on the porch you must holler in order to have a conversation. The <b>noise pollution decreases the value of the home</b> . Adding more lanes causes more noise pollution and a safety and health concern. Health concern and safety more wrecks, closer to home and much louder for body to rest at night. This being said, and the evidence of <b>noise pollution being a health/safety issue there is no doubt that this sound wall needs to be built to protect the community</b> and not only a pass through traffic who is only there for seconds, but our community is there constantly. <i>(includes pictures of trucks parked)</i> This is five trucks parked. If they aren't supposed to be there and no one is going to enforce – Please put up a sound wall. The black truck bottom left is where I have experienced a truck on fire, and another truck who hit a drunk driver causing Mama to land on the interstate. Also another wreck with a firetruck – car slamming into it responding to another wreck. The loud noise from wrecks near Airport Road --- Aggressive drivers blowing horns and engine noises. Yes, each time we are woken with the loud sound from the crash.	1			

STIP I-4400/I-4700  
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4/27/2018	Carol P. Lovett		1	My husband and I live at 1035 Carolina Village Road, Hendersonville, NC 28792. Carolina Village is a continuing Care Retirement Community at the intersection of I-26 and Route 64. Because I-26 will be widened to six lanes, it is very important that this community be <b>protected with a sound barrier</b> . Thank you for your attention.	1			
4/27/2018	Marian P. Lowry		1	Carolina Village residents have heard about the plans to widen I-26 near Exit 49. We know plans have been amended for 12 families who are affected. How about 520 residents soon to be 700? Carolina Village was in this location before I-26 became the busy thoroughfare it is now. Trees no longer offer a sound barrier. Please, please <b>construct a sound barrier</b> when I-26 is expanded.	1			
4/27/2018	Helen Palmer		1	I am a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. We have been told about the I-26 widening project, to be started in 2019. I feel that the impact will be less for many people if DOT <b>puts up noise barriers</b> on either side of 26 along the border with Carolina Village and the businesses on the other side of the road. Some kind of berm or concrete wall would help dissipate the noise levels,. Thank you for considering this point of view.	1			
4/27/2018	Nancy Randall		1	When I first moved into Carolina Village, I was surprised that I could hear heavy traffic/trucks on I-26. Now that further construction here has removed many trees; I can see I-26 and the traffic noise is loud and constant. While I understand and agree with the need to widen I-26, I feel the noise level will increase even more. I have seen many <b>concrete barrier walls</b> along large highways that are both attractive and <b>effective at helping to block noise and provide protection</b> . As we are also a senior retirement community, we would benefit as well in physical protection. Please consider some form of noise barrier along I-26 nearing the Hendersonville-Hwy. 64 intersection.	1			
4/27/2018	Louis and Judith Santiago		1	We are residents of Carolina Village concerned about the impact of traffic generated by the widening of I-26. The construction process will be very disruptive, but we hope current plans can be modified to <b>include a sound wall at US 64 and I-26</b> . We realize that hanging traffic patterns is difficult, and no option will satisfy everyone. Still, we hope that some sound barrier can be erected to protect the many seniors (520 now, perhaps 650 when our expansion is completed in 2019) in our community. Thank you for your attention to this matter,	1			
4/28/2018		Thank you, Kat Bukowy, for responding to our message addressed to Anamika Laad. We trust that the NCDOT noise analysis of Project I-4400/I-4470 will conclude that a <b>sound wall is needed</b> to protect the numerous residents and staff of Carolina Village.						
4/27/2018	Bobbi Seeman		1	The proposed widening of Interstate 26 and route 64 will create a tremendous amount of traffic noise in the area which is just outside of Carolina Village. Please <b>put in a sound barrier</b> when this project is completed.	1			
			1	Please <b>have a sound barrier placed between Carolina Village and the widening of Interstate 26</b> and route 64 in Hendersonville NC. The traffic there is very noisy and will get worse once this proposed widening is completed.	1			
4/27/2018	Al Smith		1	I live in Carolina Village and within 120 yds of east-bound I-26. I already hear both directions of truck <b>noise and know it will get worse</b> as the highway is widened and traffic grows.	1			
4/27/2018	Roberta Swanson		1	We are anticipating the widening of I-26. However, I do have one concern. I am one of the 550+ residents of Carolina Village whose property is adjoining I-26 in Hendersonville. The sound of traffic is a steady sound at present, and we understand that a sound barrier is not presently in the plans for the new construction. I would urge you to <b>include a sound wall in your plans</b> . Many of our elderly and ill residents find the constant traffic noise distressful. Please include a sound wall on I-26 in Hendersonville especially between Clear Creek Rd. and 64. Carolina Village residents will appreciate it!	1			
4/28/2018		I am one of the 550+ residents of Carolina Village whose property adjoins I-26 in Hendersonville, NC. The sound of I-26 traffic is a steady drone at present--before the widening project even takes place. We understand a sound barrier is not presently in the plans for the new construction. This is a concern. Many of our elderly and ill residents find the constant traffic noise distressful already. I strongly urge you to <b>include a sound wall</b> on I-26 in Hendersonville, especially between Clear Creek Rd. and US 64. Carolina Village residents will appreciate it!						

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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
4/27/2018	Jim and Nancy Wert		1	I'm writing to request a sound study along Interstate 26 adjacent to Carolina Village as plans for widening I-26 are finalized. With the additional traffic when the project is completed, the noise level will increase even more than it is already. A barrier should have been installed years ago but that oversight has left over 500 current residents subject to the extremely loud and annoying sound of trucks and automobiles using I-26. This unpleasant traffic noise will become a greater issue when the current expansion project is completed next year as nearly 700 residents will be subjected to this unpleasant rumble. <b>Please reconsider a sound barrier adjacent to the Carolina Village development.</b>	1			
4/27/2018	Herb Young		1	I am a resident at Carolina Village in Hendersonville located directly on the North West corner of this intersection and we presently have a great deal of "NOISE" coming from IS 26 and believe that this will increase with the widening and increased traffic. We request that you review this problem and add a "NOISE BARRIER" along this section of the highway when the widening work is done. We would appreciate it very much. As it is we hear constant noise from the traffic and it will only get worse. At the construction of the <b>widening to 6 lanes is the time to install the barrier.</b> Thank you for your consideration in this matter.	1			
4/28/2018	Fran Ackley		1	I am an 88 year old resident of Carolina Village, a residential community of more than 500 residents in Hendersonville, NC. Carolina Village is expanding at present and by late 2019 may have about 700 residents. My husband and I moved here to a very small apartment nearly three years ago after being involved as volunteers in this community for a number of years, contributing our energy and talents to our fellow neighbors as we chose this as our retirement years home. Our apartment faces Four Seasons Blvd. and currently we can see the signage relating to I-26. We chose to give up our home and move here to plan for our advancing years so as not to be a burden to family members who live distances away nor a burden to our community as our future health care needs might require. We continue to volunteer as we can to make Hendersonville a safe and caring community for all and are blessed to do so. Change comes and "progress" is inevitable and we accommodate to that as others have had to do before us. So we understand the need for expansion of I-26, but we do have concerns for the noise that extra Vehicles will bring. We have a number of residents who are in the Care Center or the Medical Center and for whom a quiet setting is a real need. Most residents here have in their working years contributed much to the quality of Hendersonville and Henderson County. <b>Please put into plans for widening I-26 the inclusion of adequate, sufficient sound barriers that parallel Carolina Village.</b> Thank you for reading my heartfelt and honest comments. <i>(immediate follow up message)</i> : Mistake in previous 'send': Our apartment faces I-26. Four Seasons Blvd is the exit from I-26 that we take to enter the property of Carolina Village.	1			
4/28/2018	William and Jacqueline Eadie		1	This is a request to <b>please put up absorptive sound barriers</b> along the STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700 -- I 26 Widening. These barriers are the more modern and far superior barriers when compared to the older concrete sound barriers. We are scheduled to move into a Carolina Village apartment being built along I-26 in this section. We are Senior Citizens who will not benefit in any way from the 24 hour sound of busy traffic on this section. We may reconsider moving there when the apartment is completed the summer of 2019 due to the noise factor. We would deeply appreciate anything you can do to expedient the building of absorptive sound barriers.	1			
4/28/2018	Georgia Rae Hemenway		1	I can hardly believe that you would conclude that the area around Carolina Village should be <b>denied a sound barrier.</b> Already the noise is at a high level. Noise is not likely to be diminished in the future. I sincerely hope that you will <b>reconsider your decision about this matter.</b> I am a resident in Carolina Village. Nearly everyday I try to walk outside on the campus for two or more miles so I am very aware of that which I am writing.	1			

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4/28/2018	Stephen B. Hogenboom		1	I am a resident of Carolina Village retirement community located adjacent to I-26 at the Exit 49 interchange. At present, the noise level due to traffic on I-26 is so high as to make outdoor activity unpleasant, especially during peak travel hours. Heavy trucks routinely use compression breaking near the interchange. During warm weather we are virtually forced to keep our windows closed because the noise interrupts conversation necessitating excessive use of air-conditioning. Sleep is interrupted. When the highway is widened the conditions will be even worse. <b>A sound mitigating wall between the Carolina Village campus and the highway will be badly needed.</b>	1			
4/28/2018	Grace V. Poli		1	I am a resident of Carolina Village Retirement Community, we've been told the the Dept of Transportation is not considering sound barriers for the stretch of highway adjacent to our complex. Our Assisted Living and Medical Center are right off of I-26 and the noise of the 18 wheelers during the day is bearable but but at night its intolerable; especially when they brake. I know whereof I speak for I slept in my husband's room at the Medical Center when he was there the last weeks of his life. Please, <b>insist on sound barriers</b> to help our residents in these two facilities plus those cottages off of I-26. We shall be eternally grateful to you.	1			
4/30/2018				Thanks for the quick response.				
4/29/2018	Dwight Bozeman		1	Concerning the planned Interstate 26 expansion alongside the Carolina Village in Hendersonville. The existing 4-lane highway is already bothersomely noisy to Village residents who live closest to it. This includes residents in the assisted living and nursing facilities which are adjacent to it. Note that the Village now is building additional residential units with a capacity for 170 persons. This will bring the overall Village population up to appx. 690 residents. As the planned 2 additional lanes of traffic are certain to further increase the noise level, and the noise and stress it brings with it, I appeal to the relevant authorities to <b>include a Sound Wall in the highway expansion project.</b>	1			
4/29/2018	Hannelore Bozeman		1	As a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC, I am <b>concerned about the additional noise a widened Interstate will bring. For this reason, I strongly support a sound barrier to help shield us from some of it.</b>	1			
4/29/2018	Gib Campbell		1	Carolina Village is a retirement facility including independent living facilities as well as medical and long-term care facilities. Currently there are nearly 500 total occupants of this facility and nearly 200 addition occupants will be added in less than two years. The property borders I-26 and the noise is a constant roar. With the widening of I-26 that noise will almost certainly be made worse. Please <b>give serious consideration to including noise abatement walls</b> along the section of I-26 west of exit 49 (the intersection of I-26 and highway 64). Surely this high-density population will place noise abatement here at the top of your list.	1			
4/29/2018	Robert Cannon		1	I live in Carolina Village, a retirement community located adjacent to I-26 near the US 64 interchange. Approximately 500 people live here, including some in a nursing home located very close to the highway. Many of these people already hear noise from I-26 and will hear more when the it is widened to three lanes. <b>I request that our area be studied for noise abatement</b> before the project has been finalized.	1			
4/29/2018	Sara and Chuck Emel		1	This is a request to please put up absorptive sound barriers along the STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700 -- I 26 Widening. These barriers are the more modern and far superior barriers when compared to the older concrete sound barriers. We are scheduled to move into a Carolina Village apartment being built along I-26 in this section. We are Senior Citizens who will not benefit in any way from the 24 hour sound of busy traffic on this section. We may reconsider moving there when the apartment is completed the summer of 2019 due to the noise factor. We would deeply appreciate anything you can do to <b>expedient the building of absorptive sound barriers</b> .	1			
4/29/2018	Sue Harrington		1	This Email is in <b>support of a sound wall on I-26</b> in Hendersonville, NC by Carolina Village. Seniors have been paying taxes for decades. Now we pay taxes for things that we don't even get benefits for. Please show respect for seniors by having a sound wall by Carolina Village.	1			
4/29/2018	Marguerite Martin		1	Lane widening of I-26 will produce even more road noise for Carolina Village Residents. Current noise is already a nuisance. <b>Please provide sound barrier for this community.</b>	1			
4/29/2018	Mike McLane		1	If you lived where I do, you would <b>put the sound barriers in at Hendersonville</b>	1			

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4/29/2018	Amy Pace		1	Carolina Village, a continuing care retirement community of over 500 residents (soon to exceed 600) has been located on a former dairy farm adjacent to I-26 in Henderson County for almost a half century. Independent living units, an assisted living facility, and a skilled nursing facility are all quite close to the freeway. <b>Noise from the interstate has increased exponentially over this half century</b> , particularly from large transport trucks. I prefer the 6-lane alternative because it will prevent traffic from being routed any closer to the health facility than at present. I speak as an 18-year resident of Carolina Village in her mid-80s. My apartment faces I-26 directly, and I find the 24-hour per day traffic and its sound that increases each year distracting and disturbing. I certainly feel that widening the road on either side, thus bringing traffic closer to our health facility, and/or failing to provide some type of sound barrier is a real disservice to those who have earned some peace and quiet. <b>it would seem that a community of several hundred retirees deserves at least the same consideration as small clusters of homes along the route who, in the present plan, are provided with sound barriers.</b> Thank you for your careful consideration of the needs of our community	1			
4/29/2018	Kenneth and Jean Peterson		1	We live in Carolina Village, an active seniors community in Hendersonville, NC. We, at Carolina Village, endure a great deal of traffic noise from I-26 and are concerned about the addition of two lanes that extend along the border of our property. Our Care Center and Medical Center we feel are especially vulnerable, housing seniors who are ill or who need assistance for daily living. We also have apartments and cottages that will be adversely affected by the additional traffic noise. We urge the Department of Transportation to <b>consider the addition of a sound barrier</b> when the additional lanes are added in order to protect the serenity of our Village. Thank you for your interest and support in this matter.	1			
4/29/2018	Hilda Roberts		1	I am a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. I live in a Woods Cottage (#37 Lark Spur Dr.) and can assure you that the noise from I-26 is constant. I would be happy for you to visit me at my home, sit on my patio or stay in either bedroom for a night. My home is farther from I-26 than either the Care Center, Medical Center, and particularly the new apartments, cottages, and hybrid homes which are currently under construction. <b>I am requesting that DOT re-test the noise levels in various areas of Carolina Village. I would also request that you factor in the additional noise that two additional lanes of traffic will entail.</b>	1			
5/1/2018		I sent an e-mail to a different lady a couple days ago relative to the need for a noise barrier bordering Carolina Village Exit 49B on I-26. I live in Carolina Village - 37 Lark Spur Drive. I invite you to sit in my living room or to spend the night in one of my bedrooms. I'm certain the homes of other residents are similar. In addition, you are probably aware of the massive construction project now underway here. Upon completion of that project, the population of this senior living facility will number 700-plus. <b>Please consider approving the noise barrier as you plan for the widening of I-26.</b>						

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4/29/2018	Byron and Tamara Terrell	1		We are Resident/Property Owners (Lot No. 397 on DOT Map Roll No. 4 for the above project), and we spoke with you at the recent meeting at Biltmore Church. We do fully support this project. However, we understand that after DOT's noise study identified a need for noise abatement on our street, DOT changed its policy so that the fifteen residences on our street ( <b>Wildwood Circle</b> ), two residences on Wildwood Lane, and the New Boiling Springs Baptist Church no longer qualify for noise abatement in this project. It appears that five of these residences on the Circle will now border an 8-lane highway with Rest Area on/off ramps only 200-400 feet away. We are also concerned that the original study did not identify an additional eleven homes that are on the East side of Wildwood Circle where the noise levels are not significantly different from those on the West side of the Circle since this is a very narrow street. With noise levels almost intolerable now with the existing highway, we are <b>appealing for a new study and/or a further review in DOT's policy so that the total of around 26 homes plus the above Church can qualify again for some type of noise abatement.</b> From the map scale, it appears that all of these residences and church sit within about a 1600-1800 foot length of highway, so the residential density is significant. We would like to add that we have already installed new windows, doors and insulation in our 37-year old house, which is one of DOT's suggestions in the handout we received at the recent meeting at Biltmore Church.	1			
4/30/2018	Mary Ballard		1	My husband and I live in a retirement community which borders I-26 close to exit 49. There are about 500 people living here. <b>We need a sound wall</b>	1			
4/30/2018	Edith L. Clark		1	I am a resident of Carolina Village – and respectfully <b>request that a 'sound barrier wall' be built</b> between I-26 and the Carolina Village property. Otherwise the noise from I-26 will be very detrimental to myself and many other residents at Carolina Village.	1			
5/1/2018	Ken Fitch			Project maps have not been provided to the Public Library for public review as promised.				request for information
4/30/2018	Ronald Korner		1	As a resident of Carolina Village, I have great concerns about the vehicle traffic moving along I-26. It's not good now and adding two more lanes will not make it better. Surely you could consider <b>adding some kind of sound barrier to ease the traffic noise.</b> There are 500 people living here now and after expansion there will be 700.	1			
4/30/2018	Shanti Kudva		1	My husband and I are residents of a cottage in Carolina Village, a Continuous Care Retirement Community in Hendersonville (Henderson County) NC. We are just off Exit 49B off I-26. There are over 500 residents in this community for the elderly, which will increase to 700 in the summer of 2019 when the construction of new apartments and cottages is completed. Almost all of us moved here to have a reasonable quality of life and because of the health care available in the Medical Center and Care Center at Carolina Village. This is a non-profit facility with a Board of Directors, an active Residents Council, and a staff of hundreds. Right now, we have 6 residents who are over 100 years old, more than a 100 residents in their nineties and 300 or more in their eighties. The quality of our existence is deeply impacted by DOT's plans. Many of us have used our life's savings to live here. <b>While I recognize the need for the project, I am deeply concerned and disappointed that the negative impact on Carolina Village has not been considered.</b> I respectfully <b>ask that an effective sound barrier be made part of the plans</b> as you proceed with the project. We need to be shielded from the noise of traffic in order to live out our lives here with reasonable peace and tranquility. Many residents here are too feeble physically and/or mentally to protest, but they will suffer if DOT moves forward without regard for the elderly who live in Carolina Village. Thank you for taking this request for a sound barrier into consideration as you proceed with the project.	1			
4/30/2018	Bruce and Ann Murray		1	As a resident of Carolina Village in Hendersonville, I would appreciate if you would <b>consider a sound barrier at US 64.</b>	1			
4/30/2018	Jeanne Reno		1	I am a resident at Carolina Village in Hendersonville, NC. The property abuts I-26. Currently I hear the traffic from I-26 inside my apartment. In order to sleep at night, I must turn on a fan before retiring. The white-noise of the fan masks the swooshing of trucks. With the widening of I-26, the noise level will increase - both during construction and afterwards due to the resulting increased traffic volume. Therefore <b>I request that sound deadening barriers be built</b> between I-26 and Carolina Village. Failure to do so will be detrimental to my health.	1			

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4/30/2018	Constance Watkins		1	I'd prefer the 6-lane widening as I understand you will be using the median to widen the road. If you widen the road to 8-lanes, it will be that much closer to our buildings. <b>I think a sound barrier needs to be erected between I-26 and Carolina Village</b> because the amount of highway noise we hear in our apartments when the windows are open or when we sit outside. When we walk outside, around the beautiful grounds, the highway noise is continuous. A sound barrier wall will reduce the noise we hear. Highway noise has been shown to increase stress, which Carolina Village residents can attest to, as well as health issues including cardiovascular disease. Because of these direct results of the amount of noise from I-26 in Carolina Village, I am strongly asking you to erect a sound barrier wall between I-26 and Carolina Village.	1			
5/1/2018	Janet Bostwick		1	<b>A sound barrier is crucially needed</b> as a part of the I-26 widening project Nos. I-4400/I-4700 Henderson and Buncombe Counties. Carolina Village in Hendersonville is a retirement community of senior citizens and the present level of noise coming from I-26 , as it is today, prevents outdoor and fresh air enjoyment because of the high level of noise coming from I-26. Unfortunately this noise level will be increased with the I-26 widening. Please consider the importance and crucial need of a sound barrier.	1			
5/x/2018		<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> Carolina Village in Hendersonville is a retirement community of senior citizens and the present level of noise coming from I-26, as it is today, prevents outdoor and fresh air enjoyment because of the high level of noise coming from I-26. Unfortunately this noise level will be increased with the I-26 widening. <b>Please consider the importance and crucial need of a sound barrier.</b>						
5/1/2018	Linda Anderson Bruton		1	I am a retired school science teacher who has had my name on a list for almost two decades to go to Carolina Village. As my name has finally reached the top of the list, I have only one reservation. That reservation is that I-26 has increased in traffic for the last several years to the point that it will be widened in the near future. <b>We will desperately need a buffer wall plus vegetation to buffer the noise and air pollution</b> for all of these older citizens that have worked so hard and saved for years to have a more comfortable end life. Yes, that is me plus hundreds of others. <b>Without a buffer wall and plants, our investment in this community will depreciate immensely.</b> Please help us and think of our lives as well as yours possibly in the future. Thanks ahead for your attention and help.  Thank you so much for your rapid response to my letter. I would also know what, if anything, you are doing about air quality in that area? Elderly people are often compromised with lung function. <b>Are you addressing the issue of air pollution and especially since the trees, scrubs and other vegetation in the area of Carolina Village have been cut.</b> The buildings are in open view to the road now.	1			air pollution
5/x/2018	Robert Cope		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> <b>6 lanes are only an interim measure. Hybrid lanes will be confusing - in addition to the current I-26/40/240 confusion. A very substantial sound wall is absolutely required opposite Carolina Village.</b> I-26 noise is already very intrusive on the property now considering the high numbers of commercial trucks that operate 24/7. New construction will only increase the volume of trucks - and noise. This is a vital quality of life issue for a large continuing care facility!	1			6 lanes on I-26 is not enough. Changing from 6 to 8 lanes will increase confusion.
5/x/2018	Deborah J Cope		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> <b>If 6 lane, it may not be wide enough by the time the project is complete;</b> if hybrid, it might be confusing for the many senior citizens living in the area. There <b>needs to be a sound wall erected in front of Carolina Village property.</b> Already we can hear the 18-wheeler trucks, especially, and with more traffic the noise will only increase.	1			
5/x/2018	Franklin C. Shields		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> As a resident and after many silencing trees have already removed I want to state that before or along with the installment of 2 extra lanes to Hwy 26 <b>it will be imperative to install a silencing wall</b> at least southbound when planning to and widening Highway 26 southbound to make life easier on us neighbors who cannot move out of thway.	1			

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Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
5/1/2018	Jeanne Porter		1	I am a resident of Carolina Village and am concerned about a friend and others who will be moving here in 2018 or 2019. They will move into new residences that are incredibly close to I-26 and will have to deal with the traffic noise. <b>I heard about an Absorptive Barrier that would possibly be very helpful in blocking out traffic noise. This barrier would help ALL of Carolina Village.</b> We are so hoping this could be done for our popular CCRC. Thank you for your consideration.	1			
5/1/2018	Stephanie Smith			I am <b>concerned about how much of my property will be taken for this project and how much my property value will decrease.</b> I recently refinanced my home and had an appraisal. I do not want to be at risk of losing the equity in my home which could cause me to be in the unenviable position of being "flipped upside down" with my mortgage! This causes me great concern! Also, due to the astronomical cost of real estate in Henderson County I cannot afford to purchase a home elsewhere.	1			Concern for devaluation of property.
5/2/2018				I really appreciate you taking the time to reply to my email. I was really concerned because I missed the 04/30 deadline. Thank you so much for the updates. I am pleased to hear that my property is not included, but I am still concerned for our community and I am glad that a study will be done for the noise factor. The noise was actually another one of my concerns, although I am accustomed to a certain level of highway noise now. <b>I was also concerned about the embankment on the state property beyond the State's fence line that borders the back of my (our) property and if there would be some type of noise reduction/retaining wall (of sorts) that will protect us from the highway (traffic, vagrants/drifters, noise, etc.) since the highway will be closer to our property now.</b> Again, I really appreciate your very timely response. Thank you so much. I will try to stay on top of this matter in the future. Unfortunately, I have not been able to attend any of the meetings.				
5/x/2018	R. LaVerne Allingham		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> It will help with the sound from I-26 for Carolina Village, if you <b>build a sound barrier wall.</b> It gets very loud at night which affects our sleep.	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Gene G. Burrell		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> Having lived here for four years we have seen a dramatic increase in traffic. Traffic will continue to increase in the future, which will justify an eight lane widening. The increased traffic flow on I-26 has created <b>te need for a sound wall along Carolina Village</b> property line adjacent to I-26. The traffic continues throughout the night, thereby causing interruption of people's sleep and rest. The wall is needed from approximately the entry to Carolina Village extending presently to the care center.	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Mary Ann Burrell		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> having lived here four years we have seen a sizeable increase in traffic. This increase in traffic will increase in the future; which will justify an eight lane widening. Need for sound wall: The increased traffic flow on I-26 has created a need for the sound wall along Carolina Village property line adjacent to I-26. The traffic continues throughout the night, hereby causing interruption of peoples' sleep and rest from approximately the entry point to Carolina Village extending presently to the care center. The new units being constructed along Carolina Village Rd to the south will experience similar disturbances as they are completed and occupied. <b>This will necessitate extending the wall to approximately Clear Creek Rd.</b>	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Norman Irvin		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> <b>I prefer that the road not be so close to Carolina Village because of the road noise that we will get.</b>	1			Does not want I-26 widened to the west.
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	John/Maj-Britt Coulter		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> <b>There is a need for a 6 line highway. We would like a sound barrier wall passing by Carolina Village.</b> We need 6 lanes or more. <b>We need a sound barrier</b> wall along Carolina Village.	1		1	
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Dave and Lee Marquardt		1	<i>(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing )</i> We both <b>urge that a sound barrier be built</b> to protect our village from all the constant noise pollution - there are hundreds of us that call this special place home - - we may be senior citizens but we can still hear the relentless traffic noises. This is a major concern to have to live with - please help. Thank you!	1			

STIP I-4400/I-4700  
Design Public Meeting Comment Matrix

Date Received	Name	Wildwood	Carolina Village	Comment	Noise	Greenways /bike ped	Explicit Approval	Other
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Elizabeth A. Johnson		1	Too much exposure to increased traffic. I hope you are able to establish a berm or otherwise the traffic noise will be unbearable. Bad enough now. We are too close!	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Shirley M. Gray		1	Requesting a noise barrier along I-26. It is already noisy along Carolina Village and the widening of the interstate will increase the noise level! There are over 500 residents here.	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Virginia Dale Thompson		1	Too much change in Henderson Co				
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Valerie J. Lehr		1	You do not have plans for barrier walls to shield more than 500 residents from sounds on route 26. Even now sounds create a disturbance when #26 is only a 4-lane highway. More residences are now being built and the number affected by noise will increase to 700. Please consider sound barriers along 26 to benefit all the residents of Carolina Village.	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Dorothy J. Managan		1	I know road does need to be wider. Please install sound barriers for I-26 alongside our community building project. We will have 700 people residing in our buildings. Carolina Village is located right near Exit 49 on I26. Thank you!	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Beverly Creely		1	We need a "sound barrier" to protect residents from I26 noise and expansion.	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Gail E. Andrzejewski		1	Any expansion impacts the lives of Carolina Village Residents. We need noise abatement - sound barrier walls. Living in an upscale retirement community is affected by the noise level coming from the highway. We would gratefully appreciate the building of sound barrier walls. It would give us a peace outside we no longer can enjoy.	1			
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Andrew J. Andrzejewski		1	Hybrid were needed, so as to make a lesser impact on the present environment and residential areas. The area in our community would be impacted by increase in sound pollution affecting the residents of Carolina Village. Sound barriers are of utter necessity. We are already in need of sound barriers in our present situation.				
Received by HEU 5/1/2018	Roy Hatch		1	There should be a sound barrier as the noise is already disturbing	1			
5/x/2018	Charles M. Horne		1	(comment was submitted on comment sheet from October 13, 2016 Public Meeting and Public Hearing ) A noise barrier would be necessary with more traffic; some move to get away from noise when the window was open. With twice the traffic with 6 lanes. Maybe 8 is time but not in my life time.	1			
Received by HEU 5/03/2018	Nona Schnook		1	I 26 interstate junction + 64 Four Seasons is a very busy and noisy road and greatly affects us at Carolina Village. Please do a noise barrier to help keep the level of noise to a minimum. Big problem for us, as the road widening is necessary.	1			
Received by HEU 5/03/2018	Ladd B. Fields		1	Please put a sound reduction barrier to reduce the I 26 traffic noise. There is no relief day or night.	1			
Received by HEU 5/03/2018	Ellen H. Fields		1	Please put a sound reduction wall to reduce the I 26 traffic noise. Even with the windows closed the noise is constant day and night.	1			
5/7/2018	Cody Sturgill	1		I am the pastor of Boiling Springs Baptist Church 1291 Fanning Bridge Rd. Fletcher NC. I heard that a decision had been made not to build a sound barrier for the I-26 project. I hope you will strongly reconsider. With only 4 lanes it is impossible to have a conversation in our parking lot. We use the open grass area several times a month for games and activities and any increase in the noise level at all will make that impossible. We have two RV/camping sites that are used approximately 200 nights a year. The noise from the interstate, as it is, can be heard inside most RVs at levels that are disturbing to sleep. PLEASE install a sound barrier wall so that we can continue outside activities at our church.	1			
5/10/2017	Hugh Lipham			I am writing to support the I-26 widening through Asheville. I drive part of section I-4700 on a regular basis and welcome an improvement.			1	
4/25/2018	Kate Coons			In looking at this map, I see a light green area in some of our other property. It's across the street right behind parcel #362. Would it be possible to see a map of that area along with an estimate of the amount of land affected? Thank you again for all your help.				Property acquisition concern.
4/26/2018				Thank you so much for your help and your quick responses. You've been most helpful.				
		10	99		109	8	7	



May 1, 2018

Kat Bukowy, AICP  
HNTB  
343 E. Six Forks Road  
Raleigh, NC 27609

RE: I-4400/I-4700, I-26 Widening Comments

Dear Ms. Bukowy,

On behalf of MountainTrue, thank you for hosting the public meeting on April 16 and for continuing to involve the public in this process. In an effort to memorialize our thoughts as this project advances, we submit the following comments:

- We appreciate NCDOT's effort to stay within the existing I-26 right-of-way wherever possible to minimize the footprint and impact to communities and the environment.
- We appreciate the project revision at Exit 44 to the smaller footprint and highly efficient diverging diamond design which will reduce the impact to homes and businesses.
- We encourage NCDOT to utilize all available measures to protect the French Broad River and endangered species in the project area during construction.
- We appreciate NCDOT working with recreationalists and commercial outfitters to accommodate river users during the project, especially concerning the bridge replacement over the French Broad River.
- We appreciate NCDOT funding a \$900,000 study on endangered gray bats in the region.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to public engagement around this project, and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or news as the project advances.

Sincerely,

*Gray Jernigan*

Gray Jernigan  
Southern Regional Director

CC: Brian C. Burch, P.E., North Carolina Department of Transportation

# ROBERTS & STEVENS

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Re: Comments on the I-26 Proposed I-26 Widening  
NCDOT STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700B

Ladies and Gentleman:

This letter constitutes the comments by The Biltmore Company and West Range, LLC, (collectively "Biltmore") on the North Carolina Department of Transportation's ("NCDOT") proposed widening of I-26 between the Blue Ridge Parkway north to the current NCDOT Project at the intersection of Highway 191, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700B. (The "I-26 Widening Project"). Biltmore has a substantial interest in this Project because The Biltmore Estate ("the Estate") runs adjacent with and abuts the Project for most of its length on the east side of I-26. Biltmore is not opposed to the project, but is concerned about the impacts of the widening of I-26 on the Estate. As discussed in greater detail below, Biltmore requests it be consulted and included in discussions with NCDOT and its design engineers about storm-water drainage, sound/noise pollution, light pollution, and other factors that impact the historical, aesthetic, and natural qualities and experiences that are critical to the Estate.

## **Introduction**

Biltmore owns and operates the Biltmore Estate, a 6,950 acre estate in Asheville, North Carolina, that is designated a National Historic Landmark. The Estate was conceived and built in the 1890's by George Washington Vanderbilt, who envisioned an entirely self-supporting European style country estate. The grounds, gardens, and forests of the Estate were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape architect who designed New York's Central Park and the grounds of the United States Capitol. For many years, the 250 room Biltmore House served as a private residence, but since opening to the general public in 1930, it has grown into a significant destination and experience for nearly 1.4 million visitors annually and continues to provide a substantial economic boost to the regional economy.

In addition to the Biltmore House, the Estate includes thousands of acres of forests, miles of landscaped 19<sup>th</sup> century carriage roads and trails, open space, and gardens. There are many iconic locations on the Estate where guests can enjoy, in quiet solitude, the vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains or the beauty of the French Broad River, which bisects the Estate -- much the same as Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests did over a century ago, without intrusions from the outside world. In addition to the guests who tour the Estate by automobile, many guests enjoy horseback riding, running, cycling, and hiking on the Estate. The Estate also operates an active cattle, sheep, and produce farm, a large nursery, a vineyard, and the most highly visited winery in the United States. The Estate's focus on agricultural and forest sustainability is central to providing a rejuvenating oasis for Biltmore guests to enjoy.

Once guests pass through the main entrance to the Estate, they leave behind the daily noise and hurried lifestyles of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and enter a place of beauty and tranquility and a life-style from a by-gone era. Biltmore makes extraordinary efforts to protect and enhance this experience for its guests, locating and designing activities and services on the Estate in a way to ensure that its guests can enjoy the quiet, solitude, and beauty unique to the Estate. The Estate is divided by the French Broad River, and I-26 marks the western boundary of the Estate. In addition to hikers who roam the western part of the Estate, the Estate's equestrian center is located there and horseback trail riding in that area is popular and frequent.

## **Potential Impacts to the Estate**

Biltmore requested and has received from HNTB, NCDOT's engineering firm for the Project, design plans designated as "Incomplete Plans" for that part of the I-26 Widening Project that runs adjacent to the Estate. From these, Biltmore can identify the following areas of concern:

A. Taking of Estate property through formal condemnation: Based on the plans submitted to date, we understand there is one area where NCDOT is considering a formal taking of Biltmore property. This area is immediately south of the French Broad River and is shown on Sheet 38 of the Plans.<sup>1</sup> Our understanding is that NCDOT is evaluating whether, during

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<sup>1</sup> Biltmore has not been notified about any other areas where NCDOT plans to either permanently or temporarily take Biltmore property for this project. If NCDOT has plans for any such takings, Biltmore requests the

construction, to temporarily move a well-established and stable jurisdictional stream that currently flows within NCDOT's existing right-of-way onto the Estate. Biltmore opposes the moving of this stream onto the Estate and requests that NCDOT find an alternative way to manage the construction of the Project within the boundaries of the existing right-of-way. The existing stream course (in excess of 6 feet in depth) and the nature of its current stability strongly supports that NCDOT use all efforts to utilize this location, even if it requires installation of a permanent RCP solution and covering the ditch. Biltmore is extremely concerned about the integrity, and maintaining same, of the existing earthen "dam" structure that runs parallel with the stream and I-26 and separates the existing stream course from Biltmore lands. Any penetration or cut through this dam may cause extensive damage to Biltmore in the future.

If NCDOT insists on pursuing this taking, Biltmore would require the following:

1. NCDOT will need to perform a complete archaeological and cultural resource investigation study/report for the area of direct impact and an area- as required by statute- in areas adjacent to the construction activities. Biltmore shall be provided a copy of this report for their review and records, as shall the State Office of Historic Preservation and US Army Corps of Engineers.
2. Any portions of the stream that are relocated or re-constructed or any other taking required shall be reviewed in detail and approved in writing by Biltmore, prior to construction and shall be designed and built in such a manner as to become an interim solution and in such a manner as to handle pre-existing and post-construction anticipated flows without causing immediate or future maintenance requirements or stream degradation. Prior to construction and replacement of the bridge being complete, this temporary diversion must be permanently located back to its original alignment and the temporary diversion route re-established back to its prior, original condition, or better.
3. The final design, size, shape, and impacts associated with the proposed temporary "skimmer basin" filled with Class 1 Rip-rap, shall be subject to review and approval by Biltmore prior to construction commencing.

B. Management of storm water run-off and discharges onto the Estate. Sedimentation, erosion, and water quality damage on the Estate resulting from the Project are significant and serious concerns. Based on the Plans provided to Biltmore, there are a minimum of fifteen (15) storm-water discharges that will flow toward or onto the Estate. Many of these discharge points or areas are immediately adjacent to and abut the property line separating the Estate from NCDOT's right-of-way. This is concerning because there will be a considerable additional amount of surface water being captured and routed from the widened I-26, which includes a sharp increase of impervious surfaces, onto the Estate. As many as seven (7) will discharge directly into jurisdictional wetlands that lie in part, or whole, on Biltmore Estate lands. Additionally, during construction, which is schedule to last at least three years, there will be many exposed slopes within the right-of-way that present high risks of run-off, erosion, and the

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opportunity to review those areas before final plans are prepared and discuss how any such takings could be avoided.

transmission of soils and sediment fines onto the Estate. Run-off and erosion from these activities present a high risk of damage to the Estate. With respect to these risks, Biltmore requests the following:

1. NCDOT will work and consult with Biltmore on the required Erosion Control Plan that NCDOT is required to develop and implement to minimize, if not eliminate, damages to the Estate resulting from run-off during construction. For construction efforts that ultimately do impact or encroach outside of the I-26 right-of-way and onto the lands of Biltmore, Biltmore will prepare revegetation and stabilization plans for the affected areas and NCDOT shall complete these efforts at its sole cost and to the satisfaction of Biltmore.
2. Prior to final design approval, NCDOT will provide Biltmore with all storm water calculations associated with each discharge point into the associated drainage areas that will potentially impact the Estate. NCDOT will work with Biltmore to ensure that any storm water flow onto the Estate will not result in damage or injury to the Estate.

C. Noise pollution. Biltmore has not seen any analysis or evaluation of the impact from the increased traffic that will result from the widening. Federal law dictates that NCDOT analyze traffic noise impacts for this project. See 23 C.F.R. 772.11(a)(1). NCDOT is required to perform "[a] traffic noise analysis . . . for . . . [e]ach Activity Category of the NAC [Noise Abatement Criteria] listed in Table 1 *that is present in the study area*. *Id.* at 772.11(c)(2) (emphasis added). There are four "Activity Categories" identified for which a traffic noise analysis is required. Category A is the one which applies to the part that abuts the Biltmore Estate:

This activity category includes the exterior impact criteria for lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities are essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose. Highway agencies shall submit justifications to the FHWA on a case-by-case basis for approval of an Activity Category A designation.

Id. at 772.11(c)(2)(i).

As noted above, the Estate strives to protect and enhance for its guests the experience of serenity and quiet that existed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a setting unlike any other in the United States. There is no purpose for the Estate that is higher or more important than the opportunity for its guests to escape to a place that offers the experience described by Category A of the Noise Abatement Criteria.

Biltmore requests that NCDOT either provide Biltmore with its traffic noise analysis for the parts of the Project that border the Estate or that it contact the Biltmore to discuss having this analysis performed. Specific concerns -- without being able to ascertain actual facts from the traffic noise study to be provided -- relate to those portions of the interstate that may require air-

breaks to be utilized by trucking and construction vehicles to manage speed. There does not appear to be any references, to date, for signage restricting such uses and events. Sections of the widenings along the edge adjacent to the Estate that run 300 feet from either end of fill slopes within the right-of-way are of significant concern because of the lack of noise mitigation of any kind.

D. Light pollution. Biltmore has seen no information regarding the impacts of lighting from increased traffic or whether NCDOT will be installing lighting on the stretch of I-26 that borders the Estate. Biltmore is concerned about both direct and indirect light from the highway that may affect the quality of a dark star-lit night on the Estate as well as any lighting that may be directly seen from the Estate. Biltmore requests that NCDOT include the Estate in the consideration of appropriate measures to abate light pollution onto the Estate from the highway. Biltmore further requests that it be actively involved in discussions with NCDOT of lighting and abatement measures along I-26 in the area impacting the Estate.

E. Preservation of the aesthetic and visual quality, character, and experience of the Estate. Because of the Estate's status as a National Historic Landmark, NCDOT is required to undertake analysis that will minimize the impact to the aesthetic, cultural, and historic experience offered by the Estate. These impacts include, but are not limited to, the concerns outlined above. As with the foregoing, Biltmore requests that it be fully involved in the design of the widening to minimize and mitigate the adverse impacts to the Estate from the widening of I-26.

F. Security and Operations. One section of the Project, shown on Sheet 38, provides direct road access into the Estate. Other sections potentially could allow for trespassing by foot. Throughout the time of construction, NCDOT will need to maintain sufficient security to ensure that no trespassing will occur on the Estate from the right-of-way and work/construction areas. NCDOT will need to maintain the existing security gate and turn-around area on the Estate located at the end of Old River Road under the I-26 bridges over the French Broad River. Similarly, NCDOT will need to ensure the Estate's continued use of Old River Road along the edge of the French Broad River during all periods of construction - specifically as it relates to horseback riding, bike riding, and security and maintenance operations. Finally, there is fencing down the property line separating the Estate from the right-of-way. NCDOT will need to maintain the integrity of that fencing during construction and notify Biltmore of any areas where the fencing is damaged or non-functional.

## **Conclusion**

The I-26 Widening Project impacts the Biltmore Estate perhaps more than any other single property along the project route. Biltmore does not oppose the Project, but as discussed above, there are a number of significant, actual, and potential impacts to the Estate that need to be considered and addressed. Biltmore requests that NCDOT provide the necessary data and information so that the parties can discuss how these impacts may be minimized if not eliminated. We look forward to the dialogue with NCDOT about these important issues.

Very truly yours,

ROBERTS & STEVENS, P.A.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Lachicotte Zemp, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

F. Lachicotte Zemp, Jr.

LZ/ak

cc: (by email only)  
William A.V. Cecil, Jr.  
Diana C. Pickering  
George W. Pickering, II  
Stephen H. Watson  
John S. Stevens  
Vince D. Childress



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Jamille Robbins, NCDOT

**From:** Mehri Mohebbi, Planning Communities

**Cc:** Ann Steedly, Planning Communities

**Date:** July 6, 2018

**Re: I-4400/I-4700 April 2018 Design Public Meeting Environmental Justice Outreach and Language Assistance Services – Summary**

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This memo summarizes outreach to minority, low-income and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations conducted for the STIP Project I-4400/I-4700, improvements to Interstate 26 Bypass in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, in support of a design public meeting for the project held by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) on April 16, 2018. The April 16, 2018 design public meeting was the second public meeting for this project. The first public meeting was held on October 13, 2016 and similar outreach was conducted at that time. The demographic data from this prior outreach remained valid given the time between the first and second public meeting; therefore, the previous outreach summary, including demographic information is attached to this memorandum.

### **Outreach/Flyering Efforts**

On Monday, April 9, 2018, flyering was conducted on behalf of NCDOT to publicize the April 16 public meeting about the widening of I-26. A dual language flyer and door hanger were developed to advertise the public meeting (see Attachment 2). The outreach effort targeted areas with minority, low-income and LEP populations and community facilities present. The overall area extended from Arden in the north to south of Hendersonville (see Attachment 1), and was developed based on similar canvassing for the prior public meeting in October 2016. The team visited a variety of business and community facilities, as well as residential areas, including locations visited previously. Additional locations were identified to visit during canvassing because the company name and/or the surrounding area indicated that those were potentially Spanish-speaking locations.

The following details document attempts to visit businesses in the area:

- 17 received flyers personally, and the team attempted to speak to the manager/owner of each business, and those attempts were for the most part successful.
- Two Walmarts, the Fletcher Library, and Ingles Supermarket agreed to post the flyer on a bulletin-board of some sort.
- 7 businesses were visited that were not previously identified or listed. They were: *Carniceria La Preferida, Los Amigos Tire Shop, Bakeries USA, Estrella Fresh Produce, Tellez Velazquez Handyman, Productos Mexicanos Guerrero and Taqueria Mexico.*

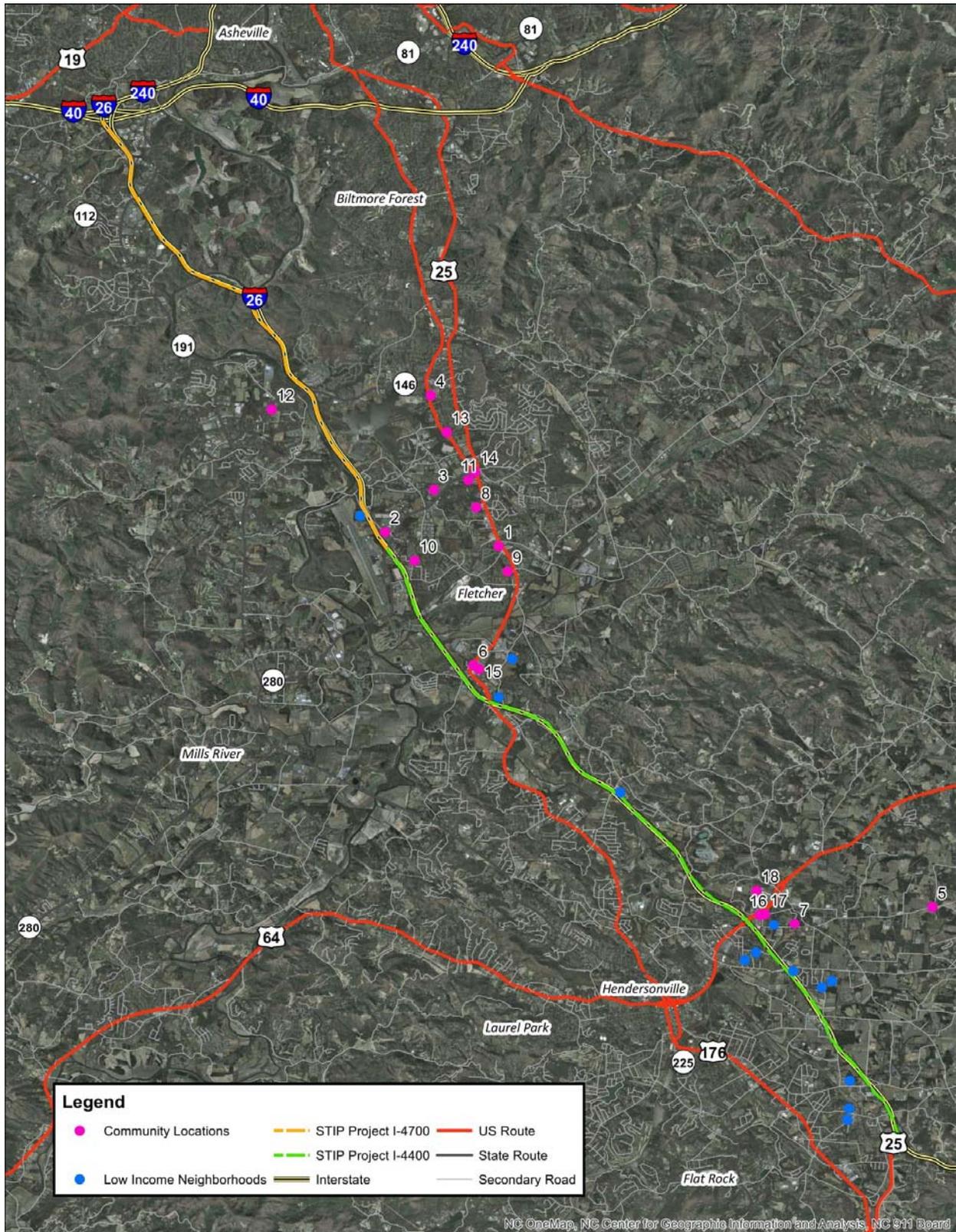
- 4 restaurants were closed: *El Rebozo Restaurant*, *Casa Torres Restaurant*, *El Toro Restaurant* and *Tacos Azteca Restaurant*. Flyers were left at the door of those four restaurants.
- 3 churches were locked/unoccupied: *Faith Church International*, *St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox* and *Iglesia Cristiana Manantial (unlisted)*. Flyers were left at the door of the churches.
- Smiley's Flea Market was closed.
- Los Laureles Supermarket could not be found at the address available.

Of 16 residential neighborhoods identified as potentially low-income and/or minority, most canvassing attempts were successful. The team went door to door and left flyers either on cars or on door knobs. In two cases, the team left additional flyers at a main office. In four cases, the team left additional flyers at communal mailboxes.

The following details unique considerations at select locations:

- During canvassing the neighborhood at 11 Pony Express, the team visited the main office about halfway through and was told that they were no longer allowed to go door-to-door. However, they accepted flyers at the office and agreed to post on a bulletin-board.
- Brickton Village Circle appeared to be a moderate-income level apartment complex. The team canvassed and left flyers in the mailboxes.
- 37 Hannah Grace was a small neighborhood that appeared to have just been demolished; there were no standing houses.
- When the team arrived to canvas the neighborhood at 196 W. Prince Rd., the team was threatened by an individual brandishing a gun. The team left the area and did not canvas that neighborhood or the nearby neighborhood, 108 Dania Rd.
- For safety reasons, the team did not canvas particular houses with threatening signs such as "Keep Out" or "You are in Range".
- The team successfully canvassed at an additional residential area along *Clear Oak Road*, which was near *Taqueria Mexico*.

### ATTACHMENT 1 Residential and Business Outreach Map



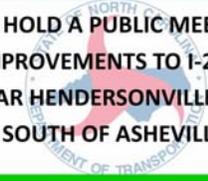
**List of Community Locations** - refer to the Attachment 1 map

1. Ingles Market
2. Casa Torres Restaurant
3. Walmart
4. Chapala Grocery
5. La Montana
6. Flea Market
7. Los Laureles
8. Saint Barnabas Catholic Church
9. Fletcher Library
10. St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox
11. Faith Church International
12. Russian Bible Society
13. El Rebozo Restaurant
14. Elena's Mexican Grill
15. El Toro Restaurant
16. El Paso Two Restaurant
17. Taqueria Mexicana El Paso
18. Walmart

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**Dual Language Public Meeting Notification Flyer**

**WE WANT YOUR INPUT**

NCDOT WILL HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO I-26 FROM U.S. 25 (EXIT 54) NEAR HENDERSONVILLE TO I-40/I-240 SOUTH OF ASHEVILLE



**PUBLIC MEETING**  
**I-26 WIDENING**  
**MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2018**  
**4:00 - 7:00 P.M.**  
**BILTMORE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**35 CLAYTON Rd, ARDEN, NC**

Come and review project information and speak with NCDOT representatives, in any time during the published hours of the public meeting.

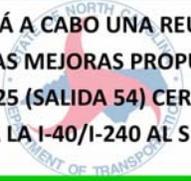
For more information about the project or meetings, visit [www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/](http://www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/) or contact Caitlyn Ridge, NCDOT Public Involvement & Community Studies Section at [ceridge1@ncdot.gov](mailto:ceridge1@ncdot.gov)

*Spanish and Russian-speaking interpreters will be present.*

Если вы говорите только по-русски или вам трудно читать и воспринимать информацию на английском, мы можем предоставить вам услуги переводчика. Пожалуйста позвоните по тел. 1-800-481-6494 предворительно до собрания чтобы запросить помощь.

**QUEREMOS SU OPINIÓN**

NCDOT LLEVARÁ A CABO UNA REUNIÓN PÚBLICA PARA TRATAR LAS MEJORAS PROPUESTAS A LA I-26 DESDE LA U.S. 25 (SALIDA 54) CERCA DE HENDERSONVILLE HASTA LA I-40/I-240 AL SUR DE ASHEVILLE



**REUNIÓN PÚBLICA**  
**SOBRE AMPLIACIÓN DE LA I-26**  
**LUNES, 16 DE ABRIL DE 2018**  
**4:00 - 7:00 P.M.**  
**IGLESIA BAPTISTA BILTMORE**  
**35 CLAYTON Rd, ARDEN, NC**

Venga y obtenga información acerca del proyecto y hable con un representante del NCDOT de manera informal, en cualquier momento, dentro de las horas establecidas de la reunión pública.

Para mayor información sobre el proyecto o las reuniones, visite [www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/](http://www.ncdot.com/publicmeetings/) o contacte a Caitlyn Ridge, NCDOT Public Involvement & Community Studies Section a través de [ceridge1@ncdot.gov](mailto:ceridge1@ncdot.gov)

*Intérpretes de español y ruso estarán presentes en las reuniones.*

*Aquellas personas que hablan español y no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan de la reunión llamando al 1-800-481-6494.*



## I-26 Widening

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County including Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26

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### Section 404/NEPA Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement

#### Concurrence Point 4A, Revised

#### Avoidance and Minimization

- Project:** I-26 Widening in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, Federal Aid Project No. NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9, WBS No. 34232.1.1/36030.1.1, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14
- Purpose:** Achieve Merger Team concurrence on Concurrence Point (CP) 4A, Avoidance and Minimization, for the proposed I-26 Widening

The Merger Team met to discuss the subject project and Avoidance and Minimization Measures (Concurrence Point 4A) on October 11, 2017. The Merger Team concurred with the Avoidance and Minimization Measures on November 22, 2017.

At the request of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), CP4A is being revisited to notify Merger Team members of updates to State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Projects I-4400/I-4700, I-26 widening, since the November 2017 CP4A concurrence. This package includes: impacts and avoidance and minimization measures determined for the Biological Assessment submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on July 16, 2018 and the description of and impacts to jurisdictional features from the rest areas on I-26, south of Fanning Bridge Road (SR 3539) overpass in Henderson County, which have been added to the project.

#### Rest Areas

The rest areas along I-26, south of Fanning Bridge Road (SR 3539) overpass in Henderson County, will be reconstructed as part this project (see Figure 1). The rest areas are currently undersized based on the current and projected use they receive and the ramps need to be brought to current interstate standards. The renovations will include the reconfiguration and expansion of the site, parking areas, and primary building site. The direct environmental impacts will be contained within the existing property, but will include grading, vegetation and tree removal, and expanded impermeable surface. Mitigation for these impacts will include, but are not limited to, contained site stormwater runoff, erosion control (during construction), the inclusion of permanent bio-retention and hazardous spill basins, re-establishment of vegetative buffers, and the development of site landscaping that will include

landscape trees, turf, and recreational/sitting areas (for the traveling public). The facility, once complete, will have continued maintenance to monitor the improved storm water controls, sustained growth of the vegetative buffers, and matured development of the landscape.

There is one jurisdictional stream, S1, at the rest area on westbound I-26.

**Table 1. Impact to Jurisdictional Feature Stream S1**

Stream	MAP ID	NCDWR Index Number	Perennial (P) / Intermittent (I)	Best Usage Classification	Mitigation Ratio*	Stream Impacts	Mitigation Cost
UT to Higgins Branch	S1	6-57-22-2	P	C	2:1	114 ft	\$89,753

\*A 2:1 mitigation ratio was assumed. This ratio is subject to change.

No other jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. are located within the rest areas.

Designs for the rest areas are currently under development. To ensure a conservative assessment of potential environmental effects, NCDOT is anticipating that the entire rest area will be cleared and regraded for the expansion of the rest area facilities and parking. This clearing will consist of approximately 4.1 acres of trees from the I-26 westbound rest area and 5.1 acres of trees from the I-26 eastbound rest area.

### **Biological Assessment**

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) entered into informal consultation with NCDOT following the discovery of gray bats (*Myotis grisescens*) near the project study area in August 2016, following the signing of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Surveys conducted during the 2017 summer field season revealed a high amount of bat activity along the French Broad River, particularly at the I-26 bridge crossing. In late September 2017, an undocumented occurrence of the Appalachian elktoe (*Alasmidonta raveneliana*) was found downstream of the I-26 crossing of the French Broad River.

The biological conclusion presented in the Biological Assessment (BA) for the gray bat and Appalachian elktoe is “May Affect Likely to Adversely Affect”. Three additional species are known or assumed to be present within the project study area: bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*), Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), and Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*). No conclusion of effects is required for the bog turtle due to its status as “Threatened due to similarity of appearance.” The biological conclusion for both the Indiana bat and NLEB is “May Affect Not Likely to Adversely Affect.” The project is not anticipated to have direct or indirect effects to the Indiana bat. Further, the USFWS is not requiring consultation for this species for this project. Although it is unlikely that NLEB would roost in trees within the wooded areas of the project due to the increased levels of disturbance from light and noise created by passing vehicles, the National Park Service (NPS) prefers to exercise caution and assume presence of NLEB. The project is not anticipated to have direct or indirect effects to NLEB.

### **Biological Assessment: French Broad River**

Because the I-26 bridge over the French Broad River is of high importance to both the gray bat and elktoe, as well as being critical to the widening of I-26, NCDOT accelerated the design process to better

determine potential impacts on protected species. Detailed information can be found in the *I-26 Bridge Over the French Broad River Construction and Demolition* report (HNTB, 2018).

## DESIGN

As part of the widening of I-26, the existing pair of two-lane bridges that carry I-26 over the French Broad River will be replaced with one new structure that will provide a total of eight travel lanes. NCDOT's preferred bridge design is a three-span structure. The initial bridge design called for a four-span structure, which would have required three bents in the river. The existing center bent would have been unavoidable and would require drilling a new bent through the existing spread footing into the rock below. Construction of this design would require causeways and restrict the free-flowing river width to approximately 56 feet for the length of time to construct the bridge. This design would take approximately 3.25 to 4.25 years to build. In comparison, the preferred three-span design requires only two bents in the river and avoids all existing foundations, including the center bent. Under this design the center bent will be removed. The three-span structure requires smaller causeways to build, thereby increasing the free-flowing river width. Construction time is expected to be three to four years.

In addition, the existing bridge drains directly into the river, whereas the new design will direct discharge to stormwater structures.

## CAUSEWAYS

Due to its location, there is limited access to the I-26 bridge over the French Broad River. The surrounding area is forested in all quadrants. The property adjacent to NCDOT right of way on the east side of I-26 is part of the Biltmore Estate, a National Historic Landmark. In addition to this historic property, there are several streams and wetlands in three of the four quadrants. There is insufficient area between the toe of slope and the top of the river bank to allow construction vehicle passage under the bridge to reach the existing interior bents in the river. The water depth is relatively shallow, approximately 3 to 6 feet, which limits the use of barges. Finally, there is some uncertainty regarding whether the existing structure is only on spread footings or if there are piles within the existing bents.

Considering these constraints work bridges and causeways were considered. Work bridges were considered and rejected because:

- Three separate bridges (one for each construction phase) would be required.
- The existing high rock line and bedrock restricts ability to drive piles, thereby requiring them to be drilled.
- The drilled piles for the work bridges would need to be larger and back-filled with concrete. This leads to a higher risk of wet concrete getting into the river.
- Drilled piles would need to be set every 30 feet.
- Removal of drilled piles post-construction would be difficult.

Causeways were considered and their design was refined over time and in consultation with USACE, USFWS, and NC Department of Water Resources (NCDWR). Using causeways instead of work bridges would:

- Allow for continuous construction and the minimum amount of time to construct the bridge.
- Provide a more stable surface from which to perform construction.
- Reduces the potential for downstream debris.
- May reduce the amount of tree clearing required to get materials to the river.

Understanding that causeways would restrict the flow of the river, NCDOT considered and/or adopted the following measures to reduce/minimize impacts. Specific information pertaining to causeway stages

and hydraulics can be found in the *I-26 Bridge Over the French Broad River Construction and Demolition* report.

- Considered and rejected using pipes in the causeway due to safety concern for river users during construction.
- Considered putting causeway in and removing it as needed, but determined it would increase: construction time, disturbance to the river, amount of debris in the water, and overall impact to elktoe.
- Originally proposed the causeway (Stages 1A, 2A, 3A) to be 75 feet in the river from each side. Refined to 52.5 feet and 62.5 feet with extensions to reach the interior bents.
- The causeway on the End Bent 1 side of the bridge will be fully installed in Stage 1 and removed as work progresses.
- With agreement from USACE, NCDWR, and USFWS a final Stage 4 was added with an “L” extension into the middle of the river to reach the existing center bent for complete removal. This extension allows the free-flow area of the river to be 67 percent whereas the initial plan reduced the free-flowing river to 28 percent.
- Causeway extensions were reduced to align with bents, not encapsulate them.
- Used 1:1 slopes to reduce size of causeway, instead of the originally proposed 2:1 slopes.
- USACE’s Hydrologic Engineering Center’s River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) modeling of the causeways was conducted to determine the effects of the causeways on the river.

NCDOT has committed to the following avoidance and minimization measures for the use of the causeways during construction and demolition of the I-26 bridge over the French Broad River:

- Causeways will be used instead of multiple work bridges that would require drilled piles, be time intensive, and add an additional obstacle in the air.
- The design of the causeways has been refined to allow for a maximum free flow area of the French Broad River. The first causeway concept allowed for only a 28 percent free flow area of the river at its largest size. The design was refined and at its largest size the causeways will allow a 51 percent free flow area.
- Causeway material will be added/removed as needed for each stage to minimize footprint over the length of the project.
- To minimize disturbance to the riverbed, all readily detectable causeway material will be removed to the extent practicable, while removing as little of the original riverbed as possible.
- Causeway extension (Stage 4) will be sloped to allow water to flow over top; reducing overall impact to channel flow
- NCDOT shall require the contractor to use clean stone for the construction of the causeways. This will minimize unnecessary sediment input into the river.
- Causeway material will be removed to the extent practicable and either disposed of off-site or used in areas that require permanent stone protection after project completion. NCDOT shall also require that concrete barriers (barrier rail) be placed along the downstream edge of each causeway to limit the downstream movement of causeway material during high flow events.
- Construction fabric will not be used under the causeway material, because it tends to tear into pieces and float downstream during removal.
- With the exceptions noted for the drill rig and crane, all construction equipment will be refueled outside the 100-year floodplain or at least 200 feet from all water bodies (whichever distance is greater) and be protected with secondary containment. During crucial periods of construction and demolition, when the drill rig and crane cannot be moved, the drill rig and crane can be refueled while inside the 100-year floodplain provided that spill response materials (such as spill

blankets and fueling diapers) are used during the refueling. Hazardous materials, fuel, lubricating oils, or other chemicals will be stored outside the 100-year floodplain or at least 200 feet from all water bodies (whichever distance is greater) and not in a Water of the U.S. Areas used for borrow or construction by-products will not be located in wetlands or in the 100-year floodplain.

- Any equipment that is placed on the causeways will be removed any time throughout a work day when the water level rises, or is expected to rise overnight, to a point where the equipment could be flooded, or during periods of inactivity (two or more consecutive days). The only exception to this measure is that the drill rig and crane may be left in place for periods of inactivity; however, they must also be removed if the water rises, or is expected to rise, to a point where the drill rig and crane could be flooded.
- NCDOT will require the contractor to use new or steam-cleaned equipment to access causeways that are under water if these causeways are utilized for removal of existing bents in under-water conditions.
- NCDOT will commit to requiring its contractor to have clean, non-leaking equipment, diapers on-site for each causeway, and spill kits located at each causeway.

### ACCESS ROADS

Access roads will be used to reach the causeways. Initially, the two-lane access roads were located in the southeast and northeast quadrants only. Upon further analysis it was determined that these roads were insufficient for the use of large and heavy construction vehicles. Large trucks, from dump trucks to trucks hauling drill rigs and cranes, would have two options for returning to I-26, they would either have to reverse up the access road or turn around near the river and drive up facing oncoming I-26 traffic. Reversing a vehicle of that size up a slope is not feasible. If a truck were to go up the slope facing oncoming I-26 traffic, it would need to use all of the available laneage on I-26 to perform a U-turn, and reach highway speed. This would require stopping traffic, which could only be done at night, extending the time it would take to construct the bridge. The two access roads were redesigned and a second option of an access road in each quadrant was also studied.

The two-quadrant access roads were re-designed with a U-turn bulb in the right of way. Although this eliminates the U-turn directly on I-26, it presents a safety hazard to drivers in the lanes nearest the access road as it will appear that a truck is coming towards traffic, into traffic (as it turns), or is immediately alongside traffic and in a short length must reach highway speed while merging into this traffic. This is an untenable situation for both the driver of the truck, as well as the traveling public. Finally, under the two-quadrant option, one truck may be exiting while another truck is attempting to enter (i.e. one slowing down while another is trying to speed up) the construction area/access road creating a hazardous situation for anyone in the vicinity. The four-quadrant option allows for a single lane access road in each quadrant. The construction vehicles will enter and exit with the flow of interstate traffic. NCDOT prefers the four-quadrant design for safety and reduced impacts to adjacent streams and wetlands.

The impacts of the two-quadrant and four-quadrant design are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Access Road Impacts to Streams and Wetlands**

	<b>2 Quadrant Revised</b>	<b>4 Quadrant</b>
Direct Stream Impacts (ft)	SEF – 102 SFO – 108	SFO - 55

**Table 2. Access Road Impacts to Streams and Wetlands**

	<b>2 Quadrant Revised</b>	<b>4 Quadrant</b>
Direct Wetland Impacts (ac)	WDA – 0.01 WEL – 0.07	WEL – 0.04
Temporarily Piped Stream (ft)	SEE – 450 SFH – 355 SFO – 53	SEE – 106 SFG – 662

NCDOT has made the following commitments to minimize the impacts of the access roads:

- Temporary retaining walls will be used on the outer edges of the access roads to reduce impacts to adjacent forested land and jurisdictional features.
- Footprint for access roads will not extend beyond permanent project footprint.
- In coordination with USACE, Streams SEE and SFG will be temporarily piped during bridge construction and demolition. A revegetation and stream monitoring plan shall be developed for Streams SEE and SFG. The revegetation and stream monitoring plan shall be approved by the USACE and will commence once the bridge construction and demolition are complete and the pipe is removed. Monitoring, to observe vegetation success and stream stability, will take place for a minimum of three years after construction. *This also avoids impacts to Biltmore Estate property.*

### HYDRAULICS

Impacts of placing causeways in the river were modeled using HEC-RAS. For this project, HEC-RAS models were constructed to represent conditions during mean hydraulic events and during 100-year flood events at stations along the French Broad River, predominantly upstream of the I-26 bridge.

Using the Flood Risk Information System (FRIS) database provided by NCEM, nine residential structures are within the 100-year floodplain from the I-26 bridge over the French Broad River to the Long Shoals Road bridge over the FBR, approximately 3.2 miles upstream. Aerial photography suggests an additional eight structures may also be in the 100-year floodplain. During a 100-year flood event all structures would be flooded under existing conditions. Due to the temporary causeway (Stage 1A, 2A, 3A) an additional increase of approximately 10 inches in flood water would occur to the structure located approximately 0.6 mile upstream. The temporary ‘L’ causeway (Stage 4) would increase flood water by approximately 3 inches for the structures located approximately 0.6 mile upstream.

Complete results of the HEC-RAS models are shown in *I-26 Bridge Over the French Broad River Construction and Demolition* report (HNTB, 2018). The greatest change in Water Surface Elevation (WSE) during a mean storm event when the causeway is in place during Stages 1A, 2A, and 3A is an increase of approximately 9 inches approximately 106 feet upstream of the causeway. Similarly, under Stage 4, the maximum WSE during a mean storm event would increase from existing by approximately 7 inches. The maximum increase in WSE during a 100-year storm event compared to existing would be approximately 1.5 feet with causeway Stages 1A, 2A, and 3A in place and 6 inches with Stage 4 in place. These maximum WSEs also occur 106 feet upstream of the causeway location.

As the area under the bridge is reduced by the causeway and temporary causeway extensions, the velocity of the water passing through the bridge opening is expected to increase. The most notable increase in velocity, as well as the greatest velocities in general, occurs downstream of the causeway for all models.

By definition, there is a 1 percent probability that a 100-year flood will occur during any one year period. It is not possible to predict the duration of the water level for a flood event since there are an infinite number of precipitation durations and intensities that can cause the water level to rise. For these reasons, smaller variations to the mean WSE with the causeway in place are more likely to have an effect on French Broad River habitat over the projected three to four years of construction. A mean hydraulic event would cause an increase in WSE 0.02 miles (approximately 106 feet) upstream of the causeway (RS 8280) of approximately 9 inches for the majority of the construction duration (Stages 1A, 2A, 3A). This increase is less than the average seasonal WSE, which varies by more than 1 foot at this location on the French Broad River. Consequently, the 9-inch rise is considered insignificant in its effect on the Appalachian elktoe and its habitat. At RS 8280, as WSE increases, the velocity decreases. During mean hydraulic conditions the velocity decreases less than 1 foot per second, which is also considered insignificant in its effect on the mussel.

NCDOT has committed to monitor and minimize the hydraulic effects of the causeways on the French Broad River. These measures include geomorphology monitoring:

- To ensure bridge construction at the French Broad River crossing will not result in substantial changes to channel stability (scour, erosion, etc.), NCDOT will conduct river channel monitoring at the I-26 bridge construction site to document the morphological condition at the French Broad River bridge site and to evaluate the impacts of construction and temporary causeways on river habitat. Monitoring activities will consist of the following:
  - Surveying the French Broad River channel bathymetry and riverbanks before and during the construction of the I-26 crossing (approximately 3.5 years). Mapping will occur before construction and then every quarter during construction, with one final survey after the causeways are all removed, and will cover at least 100 feet upstream and 250 feet downstream of the causeway locations.
  - A complete digital terrain model (DTM) of the stream bed and banks from each survey conducted will be prepared. NCDOT will retain an experienced firm or staff members to analyze the DTM and compile a final report to be submitted to USFWS.
  - If monitoring at the French Broad River reveals excessive bank erosion, bank instability, or sedimentation associated with the bridge replacement, NCDOT will work to identify the cause and will make improvements to address the problems in a timely manner.

### *SEDIMENT AND EROSION CONTROL*

Because this project occurs in a watershed containing the elktoe, NCDOT will implement erosion control measures that exceed the standard Best Management Practices (BMPs), incorporating the Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds (DSSW) [15A NCAC 04B .0124 (a) – (e)], regardless of the NCDWR stream classification. The sediment and erosion control plans shall adhere to the DSSW where applicable within the existing and proposed right of way for the following areas:

- From the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge to the northern terminus of the project.
- For portions of the project within 1 mile and draining directly to streams that are identified as NCDEQ and/or NCWRC designated trout streams.
- For portions of the project within 1 mile and draining directly to streams where aquatic threatened or endangered species are present.

In addition, NCDOT policy dictates that Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) will be demarcated due to the presence of elktoe. Consequently, these streams require a 50-foot buffer zone from top of bank. The access roads parallel to I-26 westbound in the northeast and southeast quadrants are within 10 and

30 feet of jurisdictional streams SFG and SEE, respectively. NCDOT initially considered temporarily moving the streams. However, this would require temporary easement from the Biltmore Estate. In coordination with the USACE, to stay off Biltmore Estate property, NCDOT shall temporarily pipe streams SEE and SFG during bridge construction and demolition. USFWS and USACE will have the opportunity to review the design of the sediment and erosion control (SEC) measures for Streams SEE and SFG. A revegetation and stream monitoring plan shall be developed for Streams SEE and SFG, to observe vegetation success and stream stability. The revegetation and stream monitoring plan shall be approved the USACE and will commence once the bridge construction and demolition are complete and the pipe is removed.

To monitor the effectiveness of SEC devices NCDOT will provide two construction project inspectors, one of I-4400 and one for I-4700 to monitor SEC devices for the life of the project. Inspection will occur daily for construction associated with the I-26 bridge replacement over the French Broad River. For the remainder of the project, the standard inspection schedule (weekly, or after a rainfall event of one-half inch or greater) will apply. The Roadside Environmental Unit of NCDOT also has Field Operations Engineers that perform compliance inspections of the erosion control devices a minimum of twice a month during the life of any project. These inspections are generally more frequent on projects within an endangered species habitat.

NCDOT has also committed to:

- NCDOT will install a rainfall data logger at the river to continuously monitor and record rainfall events.
- NCDOT will self-report to USFWS any sediment/erosion control device failures that result from excessive rainfall events (exceeding a 25-year storm event). The NCDOT inspector will report any failures to the Division Environmental Officer, who will contact the agency within 24 hours. If there are any failures in SEC measures, NCDOT will meet with resource agencies and work to adaptively manage SEC devices for future storm events while construction continues.
- The erosion-control plan will be in place prior to any ground disturbance for the French Broad River bridge replacement. When needed, combinations of erosion-control measures (such as silt bags in conjunction with a stilling basin) will be used to ensure that the most protective measures are being implemented.

### *STORMWATER CONTROL MEASURES*

NCDOT has developed stormwater commitment guidance, which will apply at crossings of the French Broad River and any portion of the NCDOT stormwater conveyance system draining to an outfall discharging to the river within the NCDOT right-of-way (Appendix H).

NCDOT will prepare a stormwater management plan (SMP) that implements structural and non-structural post-construction stormwater BMPs to the maximum extent practical (MEP), which is consistent with the Department's NPDES Post-Construction Stormwater Program. The goal of the SMP is to provide long-term protection for federally-listed species that depend on the French Broad River for their survival. To demonstrate attainment of the MEP standard, NCDOT commits to the following set of guidelines for preparation of the SMP:

NCDOT recognizes that the Appalachian elktoe is sensitive to excessive amounts of silt, nutrients, and heavy metals. Therefore, when preparing the SMP, NCDOT commits to using a hierarchical BMP selection process, which is optimized to treat silt, nutrients and heavy metals. At each discharge location outside of the 100-year floodplain, the hydraulics engineer will evaluate the feasibility of installing either an infiltration basin or a media filter as described in NCDOT's BMP Toolbox. If one

of these BMP types is a feasible option, then NCDOT commits to including it in the SMP. If an infiltration basin or a media filter is not feasible because it would either affect forested habitat for MYGR or because of site constraints (e.g. topography, high water table, etc.), then NCDOT commits to providing a description of these constraints in the SMP as supporting information for selecting a BMP. In such cases the hydraulics engineer will select another BMP type from NCDOT's Toolbox that is feasible. Preference will be given to water quality swales, vegetative conveyances, vegetated filter strips, and preformed scour holes (PSHs). In flat, bottomland terrain, PSHs will be used to the maximum extent practical to eliminate outfalls by converting concentrated flow into distributed flow, thus maximizing infiltration and evapotranspiration of the runoff.

The presence of two endangered species – one terrestrial (MYGR) and one aquatic (Appalachian elktoe) – within the project area presents unique stormwater management challenges. Optimizing BMP selection for one species may be suboptimal or even detrimental to the other. Because of this unique situation, NCDOT will commit to evaluating the use of emerging BMP technologies that the Department has not yet published in its BMP Toolbox. These emerging BMP technologies are as follows:

- Bioswales
- Bioembankments
- Biofiltration conveyances
- Soil improvement to maximize infiltration

Because design standards have not yet been formally approved by NCDEQ for inclusion in the BMP Toolbox, the hydraulics engineer will be required to consult with the State Hydraulics Engineer and obtain prior approval before proposing one of these BMP technologies in the SMP.

The stormwater commitments described above will meet the need for more stringent guidance for the ESAs. It is expected during the design phase that additional coordination and clarification of these stormwater BMPs will occur through consultation with the NCDOT Stormwater Group.

### *FRENCH BROAD RIVER USE*

NCDOT understands that the French Broad River is not only habitat for a large variety of species, but that it is also the water source for the City of Asheville and that it serves as a recreational and businesses resource as well. NCDOT developed a communication plan specific to the construction and demolition of the French Broad River bridge. This plan focuses on specific activities to alert river users to the hazards of bridge construction and will be appended to a larger communication plan for the entire I-26 widening project. Items in the Communication Plan include:

- holding small group meetings;
  - Held March 21, 2018 for Henderson County Commissioners,
  - Held April 10, 2018 for Buncombe County Commissioners and Asheville City Council, and
  - Held April 11, 2018 for river businesses and local civic organizations.
- placing signage upstream and downstream of the construction zone at boat accesses beginning at the headwaters in Rosman and continuing to Hominy Creek River Park, downstream of the causeway, in addition to placing a sign at Mills River Park boat access on Mills River; and
- alerting river users, equestrians, and bicyclists through various traditional and social media outlets of construction schedules, including closures and other pertinent information.

Because the French Broad River is regularly used for recreation, it cannot be closed for the life of construction. There are no options for portage due to the location of the bridge. The nearest public access is at Bent Creek River Park, 1 river mile upstream of the I-26 bridge, and the next public access is

at Hominy Creek River Park, approximately 5.2 river miles downstream of the bridge. The distance by road between these two locations is 5.9 miles on NC 191 (Brevard Road). This is not a feasible portage option. It would be possible to provide boat access at the bridge; however, this would require users to walk through an active construction zone. This was deemed to be less safe than leaving the river open to water traffic throughout construction.

To protect river safety, NCDOT shall provide a safe passage lane for river users. This lane will be located in the center of the river away from the causeways for the majority of the bridge construction. In the final stage, Stage 4, the safe passage lane will shift to the right side of the river, near end bent 1, away from the center bents being removed. This stage is expected to last approximately four weeks. NCDOT shall use a floating navigational aid to guide river users to the safe passage lane.

NCDOT shall commit to including a rigid, non-drooping, catchment device on the overhead structure from south of Old River Road to the opposite side of the river to prevent material from falling on river users, equestrians, bicyclists, or in the water. NCDOT shall place steady-state red lights that are solar-powered on the causeways to alert river users to their location. Generators will not be used to provide power. These lights will be atop permanent structures, such as a pole, on each causeway for the duration of the project. The contractor will be responsible for maintaining these lights at all times during construction, replacing them as necessary.

It is expected that there will be times when the river and Old River Road must be closed for the safety of river users, equestrians, and bicyclists due to the type of work being done (e.g. setting girders, removal of bent caps). These closures are not expected to last more than two days and are expected to occur predominantly at night. Care will be taken to not close the river during known peak business times, particularly the Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day weekends.

### **Biological Assessment: Additional Commitments**

NCDOT has made additional commitments that will minimize impacts from the project on federally-listed species.

#### ***TREE CLEARING***

Tree clearing between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Brevard Road (NC 191) will be minimized to every practicable extent to preserve as much of the mature woody vegetation as possible in this area. No trees will be cleared beyond what will be necessary to establish the permanent project footprint and temporarily pipe stream SEE and establish associated SEC devices.

Because the project includes construction on NPS land that might be within habitat that is suitable for the endangered Northern long-eared bat (NLEB), tree clearing shall be allowed only between August 15 and May 15. In the event that any NLEB roost trees are documented within 0.25 mi. of the project area, regardless of the time of year, the NPS will seek consultation with the USFWS before work proceeds.

Because the project includes construction on NPS land that might be within habitat that is suitable for Indiana bat, emergence and/or acoustic surveys shall be conducted prior to removal of trees if the work would be conducted between April 15 and August 15. No significant tree removal within 5 miles of known hibernacula can occur between April 1 and November 15.

#### ***REVEGETATION***

For the portion of the project from the Blue Ridge Parkway overpass to the northern terminus of the project, NCDOT will develop a revegetation plan that incorporates native woody and/or shrubby vegetation, as appropriate, for areas outside of the final slope stake limits disturbed during

construction. The revegetation areas will be visually monitored following planting by NCDOT. The monitoring shall be conducted annually for a minimum of three years after final planting. Photo documentation shall be utilized to document the success of the vegetation and a report shall be submitted to the USFWS within sixty (60 days) post monitoring.

NCDOT will invite USFWS and USACE to review the design of the SEC measures for streams SEE and SFG, as well as the revegetation and monitoring plan.

#### *LIGHTING AND NIGHT TIME CONSTRUCTION*

The portion of I-26 between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Glenn Bridge Road (SR 3495) roughly parallels the French Broad River, and it is assumed that the gray bat uses this area for foraging and commuting. Therefore, to minimize disturbance to gray bat in this area between April 15 and August 15, all construction-related lighting will be limited to whatever is necessary to maintain safety in active work areas between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Glenn Bridge Road, excepting the existing brightly lit area associated with the NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange. Any lighting used for construction on the river or adjacent wooded area will be indirect.

To minimize potential impacts to lactating gray bat females and their pups, between June 1 and August 1, NCDOT will commit to restrict the construction contractor to no more than 28 total nights of work, and no more than four consecutive nights within a two-week period.

Lighting used for construction will be limited to whatever is necessary to maintain safety standards, and will only be directed toward active work areas.

#### *AGENCY COORDINATION*

NCDOT will invite representatives from USFWS, USACE, and NCWRC to the pre-construction meeting for the proposed project, as well as to all subsequent field inspections prior to construction, to insure compliance with all special project commitments.

NCDOT will provide USFWS with the SEC plan and allow 15 days for review.

NCDOT will provide USFWS with the French Broad River bridge demolition plan and allow 15 days for review.

NCDOT will invite all resource agencies to review the demolition plan and will be notified prior to start of demolition so they may have a representative on site.

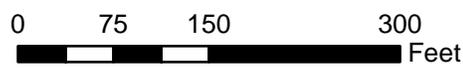
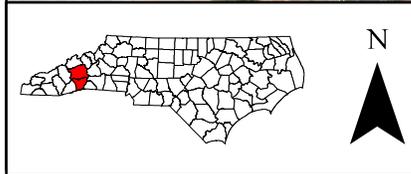
NCDOT will contact USFWS if new information about the gray bat is discovered, as it relates to the project.

NCDOT will report any dead bats found on the construction sites.



Figure 1: I-26 Rest Area Conceptual Design and Stream Impact  
 STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
 I-26 Widening  
 Henderson and Buncombe Counties

Sources: NCDOT REU, NC OneMap, Buncombe County GIS, and Henderson County GIS



July 31, 2018

**Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement  
Concurrence Point No. 4A – Avoidance and Minimization**

Project Name/Description:	I-26 Widening, US 25 in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County
STIP Project No.:	I-4400/I-4700
WBS No.:	34232.1.1/36030.1.1
Federal Aid Project No.:	NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9

The Merger Team met on October 11, 2017 and concurred with the following avoidance and minimization measures for STIP Project No. I-4400/I-4700 on November 22, 2017:

*Section 404 Avoidance and Minimization Measures*

- NCDOT reduced the slopes from 4:1 to 2:1. In so doing, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized impacts to streams by approximately 10,000 feet,
  - o Avoided impacts to 19 wetlands (approximately 1.2 acres),
  - o Minimized impacts to wetlands by approximately 9.6 acres including approximately 2.6 acres to wetland WCH (Biltmore Bog), and
  - o Avoided impacts to two ponds (>0.1 acre).
- NCDOT selected the DDI design at US 25 (Asheville Highway) instead of the ParClo B design. In doing so, NCDOT:
  - o Minimized approximately 890 feet of stream impacts, and
  - o Minimized approximately 0.2 acre of wetland impacts.

*(Note: Reductions to impacts are the difference between current design with 4:1 slope stake limits plus 40 feet and current design with 2:1 slope stake limits plus 25 feet. Slope stake limits plus 25 feet are used at CP4A.)*

*Human Environment Avoidance and Minimization Measures*

- NCDOT minimized the number of Residential Relocations from 18 (ParClo B) to 8 (DDI) and Business Relocations from 1 (ParClo B) to 0 (DDI).
- NCDOT minimized the design footprint at the US 25 (Asheville Highway) interchange was determined to have “no effect” to the Cureton House property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

*Additional Avoidance and Minimization Measures*

NCDOT will continue to coordinate with the Section 404/NEPA Merger Team to identify avoidance and minimization measures to all waters of the U.S. and ensure that major hydraulic structures associated with the project are designed and installed to minimize negative impacts to stream stability (and therefore, water quality) to the extent practicable at Concurrence Point 4B – 30 Percent Hydraulic Review and Concurrence Point 4C – Permit Drawing Review.

**Avoidance and Minimization Measures for STIP Project I-4400/I-4700 CP4A Revised:**

Following the October 11, 2017 concurrence meeting, NCDOT further developed the subject project to include the following avoidance and minimization measures for the addition of the rest areas along I-26 and the federally endangered gray bat and Appalachian elktoe.

## *Section 404 of the Clean Water Act Avoidance and Minimization Measures*

### Rest Areas

Replacement of rest areas along I-26 will impact approximately 114 ft of stream S1.

### Replacement of the I-26 bridge over the French Broad River

- Three-span bridge design:
  - o Reduces number of bents in the water.
  - o Does not require a center bent.
  - o Requires a smaller causeway to build.
  - o Reduced time to construct.
- Four-quadrant access road
  - o Safer for both construction workers and the traveling public.
  - o Use of temporary retaining walls to limit impacts to natural resources and Biltmore Estate.
  - o Footprint of the access roads will not extend beyond the project footprint.
  - o To reduce potential sediment and erosion caused by southeast and northeast access roads NCDOT shall temporarily pipe streams SEE and SFG, respectively, during bridge construction and demolition. USFWS and USACE will have the opportunity to review the design of the Sediment and Erosion Control (SEC) measures for Streams SEE and SFG. A revegetation and stream monitoring plan shall be developed for Streams SEE and SFG. The revegetation and stream monitoring plan shall be approved by the USACE and will commence once the bridge construction and demolition are complete and the pipe is removed. Monitoring to observe vegetation success and stream stability will take place for a minimum of three years after construction.
- Causeways will be used for construction and demolition.
  - o Do not require drilled piles.
  - o Reduces time to build the I-26 bridge to 3 to 4 years.
  - o Removes an obstacle in the air (eliminating impediment to gray bat flight).
- Causeway design and use.
  - o Increased amount of river free flow area at maximum causeway construction from an initial 28 percent to 51 percent in the current design.
  - o Minimization of causeway during each stage by adding/removing material.
  - o Causeway extension (Stage 4) will be sloped to allow water to flow over top; reducing overall impact to channel flow.
  - o For bank stability and to prevent scour, one layer of rock will be left behind until the end of construction/demolition.
  - o To minimize disturbance to the riverbed, all readily detectable causeway material will be removed to the extent practicable, while removing as little of the original riverbed as possible.
  - o NCDOT shall require the contractor to use clean stone for the construction of the causeways. This will minimize unnecessary sediment input into the river.
  - o All stone will be removed and disposed of off-site, or the stone can be used in areas that require permanent stone protection after project completion. NCDOT shall also require that concrete barriers (barrier rail) be placed along the downstream edge of each causeway to limit the downstream movement of causeway material during high flow events.

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- Construction fabric will not be used under the causeway material, because it tends to tear into pieces and float downstream during removal.
- With the exceptions noted for the drill rig and crane, all construction equipment will be refueled outside the 100-year floodplain or at least 200 feet from all water bodies (whichever distance is greater) and be protected with secondary containment. During crucial periods of construction and demolition, when the drill rig and crane cannot be moved, the drill rig and crane can be refueled while inside the 100-year floodplain provided that spill response materials (such as spill blankets and fueling diapers) are used during the refueling. Hazardous materials, fuel, lubricating oils, or other chemicals will be stored outside the 100-year floodplain or at least 200 feet from all water bodies (whichever distance is greater) and not in a Water of the U.S. Areas used for borrow or construction by-products will not be located in wetlands or in the 100-year floodplain.
- Equipment that is placed on the causeways will be removed any time throughout a work day when the water level rises, or is expected to rise overnight, to a point where the equipment could be flooded, or during periods of inactivity (two or more consecutive days). The only exception to this measure is that the drill rig and crane may be left in place for periods of inactivity; however, it must also be removed if the water rises, or is expected to rise, to a point where the drill rig and crane could be flooded.
- NCDOT shall require the contractor to use brand new or steam cleaned equipment to access causeways that are underwater if these causeways are utilized for removal of existing bents in underwater conditions.
- Construction minimization measures include:
  - NCDOT shall include language outlining the staged construction/ demolition in the construction contract.
  - NCDOT shall provide USFWS with the Sediment and Erosion Control plan and allow 15 days for review.
  - The SEC plan shall be in place prior to any ground disturbance. When needed, combinations of erosion control measures (such as silt bags in conjunction with a stilling basin) will be used to ensure that the most protective measures are being implemented.
  - NCDOT shall commit to retain one dedicated inspector for each project section (I-4400, I-4700) to perform SEC inspections. Inspections of erosion control devices adjacent to the bridge will be completed daily by the Construction Project Inspector.
  - When constructing drilled bents, a containment system will be developed so that substrate material does not enter the river. Any material by-product will be pumped out of the shaft to an upland disposal area and treated through a proper stilling basin or silt bag.
  - Construction of new bridges will be accomplished in a manner that prevents uncured concrete from coming into contact with water entering or flowing in the river.
  - NCDOT shall commit to requiring its contractor to have clean, non-leaking equipment; diapers on-site for each causeway; and spill kits located at each causeway.
  - Activities in the floodplain shall be limited to those needed to construct the proposed bridge and remove the existing bridges.
  - All construction equipment will be refueled outside the 100-year floodplain or at least 200 feet from all water bodies (whichever distance is greater) and be protected with secondary containment. During crucial periods of construction and demolition, when the drill rig and crane cannot be moved, the drill rig and crane can be refueled while inside the 100-year floodplain provided that spill response materials (such as spill blankets and fueling diapers) are used during the refueling. Hazardous materials, fuel,

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- lubricating oils, or other chemicals will be stored outside the 100-year floodplain or at least 200 feet from all water bodies (whichever distance is greater), not in a Water of the U.S., and preferably at an upland site. Areas used for borrow or construction by-products will not be located in wetlands or in the 100-year floodplain.
- The Contractor shall be required to prosecute the work in a continuous and uninterrupted manner from the time he begins the work until completion of each phase of structure construction, demolition and completion. The Contractor will not be permitted to suspend his operations except for reasons beyond his control or except where the Engineer has authorized a suspension of the Contractor's operations in writing.
  - In the event that the Contractor's operations are suspended in violation of the above provisions or it is determined the Contractor is not deemed to be pursuing the work in a continuous manner in accordance with his submitted and approved schedule, the sum of \$1,000 per day will be charged the Contractor for each and every calendar day that such suspension takes place. The said amount is hereby agreed upon as liquidated damages due to extra engineering and maintenance costs and due to increased public hazard resulting from a suspension of the work. Liquidated damages chargeable due to suspension of the work will be additional to any liquidated damages that may become chargeable due to failure to complete the work on time.
- Construction activity at night.
    - The amount and type of lighting used for all construction activities will be minimized to the extent practicable.
    - To minimize potential impacts to lactating females and their pups, between June 1 and August 1, NCDOT will commit to restrict the construction contractor to no more than 28 total nights of work, and no more than four consecutive nights within a two-week period.
    - Lighting used for construction will be limited to whatever is necessary to maintain safety standards, and will only be directed toward active work areas.
    - NCDOT will place solar-powered, steady-state red lights on the causeways to alert river users to their locations. Generators will not be used to provide power.
  - Demolition of the existing bridge:
    - After removal of existing bents, natural substrate will not be used as backfill.
    - Removal of the existing bridge shall be performed so as not to allow debris to fall into the water. If debris is dropped in river, it will be immediately removed.
    - All resource agencies will be invited to review the demolition plan and will be notified prior to start of demolition so they may have a representative on site.
    - NCDOT shall provide USFWS with the French Broad River bridge demolition plan and allow 15 days for review.
  - Sedimentation and Erosion Control
    - Implementation of NCDOT's Best Management Practices for the Protection of Surface Waters (BMPs) will minimize impacts to water resources during the pre-construction, construction, maintenance, and repair situations.
    - Use of Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds [15A NCAC 04B .0124 (a) – (e)]
      - From the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge to the northern terminus of the project.
      - For portions of the project within 1 mi. and draining directly to streams that are identified as NCDEQ and/or NCWRC designated trout streams.

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- For portions of the project within 1 mi. and draining directly to streams where aquatic threatened or endangered species are present.
  - Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be defined by a 50-ft. buffer zone on both sides of jurisdictional streams measured from top of streambank, in which the following shall apply:
    - The Contractor may perform clearing operations, but not grubbing operations until immediately prior to beginning grading operations.
    - Once grading operations begin, work shall progress in a continuous manner until complete.
    - Erosion control devices shall be installed immediately following the clearing operation.
    - Seeding and mulching shall be performed on the areas disturbed by construction immediately following final grade establishment.
    - Seeding and mulching shall be done in stages on cut and fill slopes that are greater than 20 feet in height measured along the slope, or greater than 2 acres in area, whichever is less.
    - All sedimentation and erosion control measures, throughout the project limits, must be cleaned out when half full of sediment, to ensure proper function of the measures.
  - NCDOT shall install a rainfall data logger at the French Broad River and other sensitive locations to continuously monitor and record rainfall events.
  - NCDOT shall commit to self-reporting SEC device failures to USFWS that result from excessive rainfall events (intensity that exceeds 25-year storm event).
  - NCDOT shall commit to channel morphology monitoring.
  - If monitoring at the French Broad River reveals excessive bank erosion, bank instability, and sedimentation associated with the bridge replacement, NCDOT will work to identify the cause and will make improvements to address the problems in a timely manner.
- Stormwater Control
  - NCDOT will prepare a stormwater management plan (SMP) that implements structural and non-structural post-construction stormwater BMPs to the maximum extent practical (MEP), which is consistent with the Department's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Post-Construction Stormwater Program.
  - NCDOT recognizes that suitable Stormwater Control measures for one species may be detrimental to another and therefore resolves to coordinate BMPs with the State Hydraulics Engineer and USFWS.
- Minimization of impacts to French Broad River users:
  - NCDOT shall develop a Communication Plan, specific to the construction and demolition of the French Broad River bridge, to inform stakeholders.
  - NCDOT shall require the contractor to use a catchment system to avoid having construction/demolition debris fall on river users, equestrian and bicyclists using Old River Road, or in the water.
  - NCDOT shall use a floating navigational aid to direct river users to the "safe zone" of the river, away from construction.
  - NCDOT shall place steady-state, solar-powered red lights on the causeway to alert river users to its location. Generators will not be used to provide power.
  - NCDOT shall place signs at river inputs upstream and downstream of the construction zone to alert river users to the I-26 bridge construction.

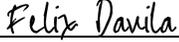
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*Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act Avoidance and Minimization*

Commitments listed under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act are also commitments in the Biological Assessment (BA). Additional commitments in the BA include:

- Minimization of light from vehicles by using 42-inch solid, concrete, "Jersey barrier style" guardrail.
- Minimization of tree clearing by using a "best fit" design that includes widening in the median to the extent practicable.
- Tree clearing between the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge over I-26 and NC 191 (Brevard Road) will be minimized to the extent practicable.
- No trees will be cleared beyond what will be necessary to establish the permanent project footprint.
- Because the project includes construction on NPS land that might be within habitat that is suitable for Indiana bat, emergence and/or acoustic surveys shall be conducted prior to removal of trees if the work would be conducted between April 15 and August 15. No significant tree removal within 5 mi. of known hibernacula can occur between April 1 and November 15.
- Between April 15 and August 15, all construction-related lighting used for construction will be limited to whatever is necessary to maintain safety in active work areas between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Glenn Bridge Road, excepting the existing brightly lit area associated with the NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange. Any lighting on the river or adjacent wooded area will be indirect.
- Coordination between the NCDOT, NPS, and FHWA will continue during the design and construction of the project to minimize impacts to Blue Ridge Parkway operations and visitor experience as well as the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. (Section 106 MOA, signed May 30, 2018)
- Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) of FHWA will develop a re-vegetation/landscaping plan to re-establish native vegetation and provide for a continuous visual experience for the trail and Blue Ridge Parkway user. (Section 106 MOA, signed May 30, 2018).
- From the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge to the northern terminus of the project, NCDOT will develop a revegetation plan that incorporates native woody and/or shrubby vegetation, as appropriate, for areas outside of the final slope stake limits disturbed during construction.
- Revegetation areas will be visually monitored following planting by NCDOT. The monitoring shall be conducted annually for a minimum of 3 years after final planting. Photo documentation shall be utilized to document the success of the vegetation and a report shall be submitted to the USFWS within sixty (60 days) post-monitoring.
- NCDOT will contact USFWS if new information about the gray bat is discovered, as it relates to the project.
- NCDOT will report any dead bats found on the construction sites.

Federal Highway Administration

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

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*Marla Chambers*  
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N.C. Division of Water Resources

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State Historic Preservation Office

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French Broad River MPO

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N.C. Department of Transportation

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# I-26 Widening

STIP Project Nos. I-4400 & I-4700



US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40 in Buncombe County including Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26

## Section 404/NEPA Merger Project Team Meeting Agreement

### Concurrence Point 4B

### 30 Percent Hydraulic Design Review

**Meeting Date:** August 14, 2018

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Place:** NCDOT Division 13 Conference Room, 55 Orange St, Asheville

**Project:** I-26 Widening in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, Federal Aid Project No. NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9, WBS No. 34232.1.1/36030.1.1, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14

**Purpose:** Achieve Merger Team concurrence on Concurrence Point (CP) 4B, 30 Percent Hydraulic Review, for I-4700 A and B

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Felix Davila	FHWA	felix.davila@dot.gov	919-747-7021
Loretta Beckwith	USACE	loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil	828-271-7980 x4223
Marella Buncick	USFWS	marella_buncick@fws.gov	828-258-3939 x237
Lyuba Zuyeva	French Broad River MPO/Land of Sky	lyuba@landofsky.org	828-251-7454
Tristan Winkler	Land of Sky RPO	tristan@landofsky.org	828-251-6622 x138
Kevin Barnett	NCDEQ DWR	kevin.barnett@ncdenr.gov	828-296-4657
Marla Chambers	NCWRC	marla.chambers@ncwildlife.org	704-244-8907
Roger Bryan	NCDOT – Division 13	rdbryan@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171 x221
Randy McKinney	NCDOT – Division 13	rmckinney@ncdot.gov	828-298-0080
Brendan Merithew	NCDOT – Division 13	bwmerithew@ncdot.gov	828-257-6171

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Steve Cannon	NCDOT – Division 13	slcannon@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171
Ted Adams*	NCDOT – Division 14	tadams@ncdot.gov	828-631-1155
Wanda Austin	NCDOT – Division 14	whaustin@ncdot.gov	828-631-1148
Josh Deyton	NCDOT – Division 14	jbdeyton@ncdot.gov	828-488-0902
David McHenry*	NCDOT – Division 14	dgmchenry@ncdot.gov	828-586-4043
Mike Patton	NCDOT – Division 14		
Richard Hensley	NCDOT – L&S Region III	rhensley@ncdot.gov	828-667-9616
Bill Barrett*	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	wabarrett@ncdot.gov	919-707-6103
Marissa Cox*	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	mrcox@ncdot.gov	919-707-6135
Carla Dagnino*	NCDOT – Natural Environment Section	cdagnino@ncdot.gov	919-707-6110
Mark Staley*	NCDOT – Roadside Environmental	mstaley@ncdot.gov	919-707-2948
Kevin Moore*	NCDOT – Roadway Design	kmoore@ncdot.gov	919-707-6287
Kevin Fischer*	NCDOT – Structures	wkfischer@ncdot.gov	919-707-6514
Kat Bukowy	HNTB	kbukowy@hntb.com	919-424-0441
Matt Foster	HNTB	mfoster@hntb.com	919-424-0460
Aaron Castro	HNTB	acastro@hntb.com	816-527-2492
Jeff Hess	HNTB	jhess@hntb.com	704-208-5363
Joe Olson	HNTB	jsolson@hntb.com	919-424-0480

\*attended by phone

Following introductions, Kat Bukowy (HNTB) stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 30 percent hydraulic plans for the I-4700 portion of the project. She noted that while the project limits are from US 25 south of Hendersonville to I-40/I-240 south of Asheville, the design limits terminate at approximately NC 191 (Brevard Road). I-4700 will tie into other projects, like I-5504, the reconstruction of the NC 191 (Brevard Road) interchange and will only include resurfacing and striping.

Marla Chambers (NCWRC) voiced her concerns regarding wildlife crossings on I-26. Kat noted the numerous culverts and bridges along the project that are likely used by animals to cross the road. In addition, this project will widen largely to the median and, as Marella Buncick (USFWS) also pointed out, the forested areas along the sides of the interstate will largely remain undisturbed. Kat stated that only 6 percent of the total crashes between July 1, 2009 and June 31, 2012 were attributable to deer. Because this project is a widening and not on new location it is not expected to have a substantial impact on wildlife travel patterns.

Marla and Marella both expressed their concerns for water quality impacts to the French Broad River as a result of increased stormwater from the additional impervious surface created by the widening. Kat and Matt Foster (HNTB) mentioned the commitments made in the Biological Assessment to use Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds (DSSW) for any stream directly connecting to the French Broad River. These streams are also designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (requiring a 50-foot buffer from construction) according to NCDOT policy. In addition, NCDOT Hydraulics unit has committed to looking at innovative ways to treat post-construction stormwater discharges. It was agreed that it would be optimal for the hydraulics and stormwater plans to be coordinated from this point forward.

Aaron Castro (HNTB) then led the group through the plan sheets of the proposed hydraulic design for each jurisdictional stream and wetland. Comments on particular streams or wetlands were:

Sheet 8 (Sta. No. 889 (EB)) Stream SDC – Flows directly to the French Broad River; is approximately 4 feet from a house, needs bank stabilization; USFWS asked if there was an opportunity for stream mitigation? USACE and NCDWR indicated no, but it may be an opportunity to stabilize the bank with plantings.

Sheet 10 (Sta. No. 914 (WB)) Stream SDE – Aaron noted that this is a FEMA crossing and that during storm events water flows down Glen Bridge Road instead of through the pipe under the road. The plan is to connect all of the pipes and direct flow through the pipes and into the stream channel. Stormwater will be discharged to a headwall/wingwall.

Sheet 11 (Sta. No. 932 (WB and EB)) Stream SDF – Aaron noted that the pipe for this stream will be collared and extended. Marella asked if the stream is currently perched. Aaron noted that it is at the outlet end.

Sheet 12 (Sta. No. 938 (WB)) Stream SDG – Marella noted that something may need to be done to accommodate additional flow. Lori Beckwith (USACE) noted that this stream may have an indirect effect on wetland WBR (EB). It was also noted that scour pads may be used to redirect the flow. Concern expressed as to whether or not the scour pads would cause erosion. It was suggested that this site be looked at in the field.

Sheet 13 (Sta. No. 952 – 964) – USACE asked about major structures from CP2A meeting. HNTB will send out the summary from CP2A (attached) and will look at the perched stream in this area.

Sheet 14 (Sta. No. 973) – The pipe at this location would be 24 inches. It was suggested that it be armored for stormwater.

Sheet 15 (Sta. No. 984) – Label bank stabilization and include on the summary sheet.

Sheet 18 (Sta. No. 1027) – Stream SDU will have rip rap on banks. May need protection if there is additional flow from toe protection. The same was noted on the outlet side of the pipe. It was noted that there is scour around the pipe and it should be filled in with rip rap.

Sheet 18 – 20 (Sta. No. 1029 – 1052) – Wetland WCH (Biltmore Bog) – questions were raised as to why widening is toward the bog rather than away from it. Request to look at each location of where the impacts are and to minimize further if possible.

Sheet 20 (Sta. No. 1043) – Question asked as to where the bore pit will be located for the pipe at this location.

Sheet 23 (Sta. No. 1083) – Will need to explain that the cut slope in this area will be filled, the Intermittent portion of Stream SDX will be moved into a ditch and will then tie to the Perennial portion of the stream. HNTB will add 3 outlet protections on the bank. Look for ways to lessen the amount of flow into SDX, be as creative as possible to avoid erosion.

Sheet 24 (Sta. No. 1105) – Although there is an outfall pipe to this wetland (WCU), no impacts are shown.

Lori asked if streams piped during construction would be included on plans. Randy McKinney (NCDOT – Division 13) stated that they would be included in the contractor's plans.

Lori noted that submitting the permit application for this project between mid and late December would likely cause a delay in review due to the holidays.

Action Items:

- HNTB will provide a summary sheet of impacts

- HNTB will determine if wetland WEL will be dewatered as a result of temporarily piping stream SFO.
- Lori will forward an email she sent to Dre Major with her concerns at CP2A for HNTB to review and address.
- NCDOT Location and Surveys will revise the FS file to remove extraneous "JS" labeled streams.
- HNTB will revise the plan sheets so that only jurisdictional streams are labeled JS.

Follow up on Action Items from August 14, 2018 meeting:

- NCDOT directed HNTB not to provide a summary of impacts because the hydraulic design has not been approved.
- Wetland WEL is above stream SFO and therefore cannot be dewatered when SFO is temporarily piped.
- NCDOT Location and Surveys revised the FS file to remove the extraneous streams and HNTB has revised the plan sheets to only show jurisdictional streams with the label JS. In addition, HNTB has labeled each stream and wetland with its ID from the NRTR.
- Lori forwarded the email she sent to Dre Major with her concerns at CP2A. HNTB has reviewed the email and offers the following:

Site 7 – This is located in I-4400A and will be addressed when that project moves forward.

Site 12 – This is part of I-4400BB. The confluence of the two incoming streams at the upstream end of this culvert will be addressed during hydraulic design for this segment of the project.

Site 17 – This triple cell, 7' x 7' reinforced concrete box culvert (RCBC) is part of I-4400C. The addition of sill in 1 barrel or a floodplain bench constructed in the right bank will be investigated as part of the hydraulic design of this segment.

**Site 23** – This dual-cell, 10'x10' RCBC is part of I-4700A. The addition of a sill in one barrel or a floodplain bench will be investigated to address over-widening in this culvert.

**Site 24** – This single cell, 8'x8' RCBC is part of I-4700A. However, there are no plans for any improvements to the structure or any areas upstream or downstream of the culvert. The RCBC will simply be retained.

*Because the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting did not complete the 30 percent hydraulic review for I-4700, the meeting was continued on September 19, 2018.*

**Meeting Date:** September 19, 2018

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Place:** NCDOT Division 13 Conference Room, 55 Orange St, Asheville

**Project:** I-26 Widening in Henderson and Buncombe Counties, Federal Aid Project No. NHF-26-1(62)23/IMNHF-026-1(86)9, WBS No. 34232.1.1/36030.1.1, STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700, NCDOT Divisions 13 and 14

**Purpose:** Achieve Merger Team concurrence on Concurrence Point (CP) 4B, 30 Percent Hydraulic Review, for I-4700 A and B

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Felix Davila*	FHWA	felix.davila@dot.gov	919-747-7021
Loretta Beckwith	USACE	loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil	828-271-7980 x223
Marella Buncick	USFWS	marella_buncick@fws.gov	828-258-3939 x237
Lyuba Zuyeva	French Broad River MPO/Land of Sky	lyuba@landofsky.org	828-251-7454
Kevin Barnett	NCDEQ DWR	kevin.barnett@ncdenr.gov	828-296-4657
Marla Chambers*	NCWRC	marla.chambers@ncwildlife.org	704-984-1070
Roger Bryan	NCDOT – Division 13	rdbryan@ncdot.gov	828-251-6171 x221
Randy McKinney	NCDOT – Division 13	rmckinney@ncdot.gov	828-298-0080
Ted Adams*	NCDOT – Division 14	tadams@ncdot.gov	828-631-1155
David McHenry*	NCDOT – Division 14	dgmchenry@ncdot.gov	828-586-4043
Mitchell Bishop	NCDOT – Division 14	jmbishop@ncdot.gov	828-586-2144
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Jennifer Martin*	NCDOT – PMU	jd martin4@ncdot.gov	919-707-6050
Craig Lee	NCDOT – Hydraulics	cjlee@ncdot.gov	919-707-6708
Randy Henegar	TGS Engineers	rhenegar@tgsengineers.com	919-773-8887 x114
Kat Bukowy	HNTB	kbukowy@hntb.com	919-424-0441
Matt Foster	HNTB	mfoster@hntb.com	919-424-0460
Aaron Castro	HNTB	acastro@hntb.com	816-527-2492
Jeff Hess	HNTB	jhess@hntb.com	704-208-5363
Joe Olson	HNTB	jsolson@hntb.com	919-424-0480

\*attended by phone

Kat Bukowy opened the meeting with introductions. Matt Foster (HNTB) began the meeting by reviewing the purpose of the meeting and the agenda. Matt noted that there are 61 proposed outfalls, but he has not tabulated the existing number.

Marella asked if stream SDX could be monitored through construction as part of the commitments to monitoring in the BA. This monitoring would be similar to the monitoring of Long Branch on the US 19 project. Her biggest concern for the project is what will change. Kat explained that NCDOT is partnering with USGS to monitor streams before, during, and after construction, in addition to the geomorphology study of the French Broad River. HNTB will ask if additional streams can also be monitored.

Lori asked about the sills and baffles previously mentioned on the major structures. These were discussed further at the end of the meeting.

Matt then led the group through the proposed hydraulic design beginning with Sheet 28.

Sheet 28 – Stream SEF turns and flows into wetland WDA prior to the beginning of SEE. Location and Surveys will fix this on the FS file. Matt Foster noted that a team had been in the field and inspected the pipe that carries stream SEE under Old River Road on Biltmore Estate and outfalls into the French Broad River. Craig Lee (NCDOT) noted that a pre- and post-construction evaluation would need to be conducted to determine if the pipe is appropriately sized. Marella noted this stream should also be monitored and proposed doing so on the edge of NCDOT right of way and then somewhere past the erosion control. Randy McKinney (NCDOT) suggested that it may be prudent to pay Biltmore Estate to replace the pipe, assuming it needs to be replaced. Kevin Barnett (NCDWR) noted that monitoring needs to be conducted both upstream and downstream before, during, and after construction and also immediately after storms to provide value.

Kevin also noted that two of the pipes on Sheet 28 appear to be directly discharging into surface waters. Randy Henegar (TGS Engineers) stated that this was to mitigate the velocity. Kevin disagreed. Craig noted that the plans show an outlet to rip rap and that existing pipes currently outfall directly to the stream and that this will be addressed at every opportunity. Kevin noted that it is standard language in the 401 permit and that the application will need to point out where the pipe outfall directly to surface waters cannot be avoided and why. Every location needs to separate out and show where water treatment is being provided.

Matt noted that energy dissipaters could be used on pipe outlets to reduce the velocity of the water. Marella noted that because all of the discharge is stormwater it needs to be a lower velocity when arriving at the stream for stability. Lori asked if the dissipaters will be in the stream. Craig stated that the dissipater would be attached to the outlet of the pipe outside the top of bank and any rip rap beyond the energy dissipater would be embedded in the stream and streambank to provide stabilization and would not restrict the flow of the stream.

Marla noted that stream SEE currently flows into a concrete box and that there is no passage potential for this stream. She asked if the stream could be reestablished by redoing the inlet to the previous channel and allowing passage. Craig noted that in the final design there would be two pipes to also pick up water from behind the retaining wall, which would prevent reestablishing the stream channel.

Sheet 29 – Kat noted where stream SFG would be temporarily piped during construction. Marella requested monitoring of this stream. Stream SFO would also be temporarily piped with a spring box. Marella requested monitoring of stream SFO and SFH during construction and when the streams are restored. Kevin stated that for compliance, stream SFO would need to be monitored before its confluence with SFH.

Matt noted that the pipe at approximately Station 1166 may “buck grade” to outfall at 2904. The pipe at 2901 with outfall to SFG would not exist and flow would instead be sent to 2903, then to 2904. This would reduce impacts to stream SFG and would provide an outlet that would allow for some level of stormwater treatment before entering the French Broad River.

Roger Bryan noted that a recent television news article had announced the sale of the property in the northwest quadrant of the I-26 bridge and French Broad River. Streams SFH and SFO and wetland WEA and WEL are located on this property.

In addition, any “retain” labels for pipes outside of the right of way will be deleted (e.g. 36” CMP for SFH-P).

Sheet 30 – No comments.

Sheet 31 – Marella requested monitoring on SFG near station 1197, as well as additional points prior to its outfall at the river. There is opportunity for treatment at the outfall of 3111. The rip rap at outfall of 60” welded steel pipe (3122) needs to be shown. Bore pits in this area will be challenging. A temporary pipe for SFG-P will likely need to be added to set bore equipment on the pipe.

Sheet 32 – Meeting proposed with Matt Lauffer, Craig, Randy H, Matt F, and Mark Staley regarding the monitoring of stream SFG, which is on Biltmore Estate property in addition to other monitoring locations.

Randy M noted his preference for using flowable fill for all pipes, rather than removing them.

There were no comments on Sheets 33 and 34.

Matt returned to Lori’s request for sills and baffles. Of the five sites listed (see page 4), only two are in I-4700, Sites 23 and 24.

Site s on Sheet 15, the 10x10’ RCBC that carries Powell Creek (SDN) will be extended. Rip Rap can be used to restrict the low flow to one barrel and will allow a floodplain bench to be established naturally over time.

Site 24 is on Sheet 18, the 8x8’ RCBC that carries Ducker Creek (SDT) may be extended to accommodate ramp widening. If so, the perch will be corrected when it is extended.

Finally, Marla noted that the structures being replaced on I-26 should be animal passage friendly. The control of access fencing at the bridge over Biltmore Farms access road should direct animals under the bridge and not across the highway.

The following are action items from the meeting:

- HNTB will work with Location and Surveys to correct the FS file.
- CP4C – Permit Drawing Review will be held October 10, 2018. [This meeting was postponed.](#)
- HNTB will insure that all cut and fill lines along with outlet protection symbols are shown on the final plans.



# I-26 Widening

STIP Project Nos. I-4400/I-4700  
Section 404/NEPA Merger Meeting  
Concurrence Point 4C  
November 20, 2018



US 25 (exit 54) in Henderson County to I-40/I-240 in Buncombe County  
including the Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over I-26

**Meeting Date:** November 20, 2018  
**Time:** 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
**Place:** NCDOT Division 13, HQ Conference Room, 55 Orange St, Asheville

**Meeting Attendees:**

Name	Agency	Email address	Phone
Loretta Beckwith	USACE	loretta.a.beckwith@usace.army.mil	828-271-7980 x4223
Marella Buncick	USFWS	marella_buncick@fws.gov	828-258-3939 x237
Claire Ellwanger	USFWS	Claire_ellwanger@fws.gov	828-258-3939
Kevin Barnett*	NCDEQ DWR	kevin.barnett@ncdenr.gov	828-296-4657
Marla Chambers	NCWRC	marla.chambers@ncwildlife.org	704-984-1070
Lyuba Zuyeva	French Broad River MPO/Land of Sky	lyuba@landofsky.org	828-251-7454
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Natalie Chan	HNTB	mchan@hntb.com	919-424-0493
John Blancett*	HNTB	jblancett@hntb.com	826-527-2539

Those who participated by phone are marked with an asterisk (\*).

Kat Bukowy (HNTB) began the meeting with introductions, a brief review of the project, the purpose of the meeting, and the anticipated agenda for the meeting. Matt Foster (HNTB) began with a review of the Avoidance and Minimization Measures taken to date. Lori Beckwith (USACE) asked about rip rap in shown in the streams. Matt F stated that rip rap is to be embedded in the stream. Roger Bryan (NCDOT) and Yates Allen (NCDOT – Division 13) noted that material, such as rock, sand, or core fiber could be added to allow the rip rap to silt in more quickly. Roger also noted that where there were scour holes they would be filled with rock, then fabric, and then other materials to allow them to silt in as quickly as possible.

Matt F. reviewed the different types of impacts that were noted in the plans including stream relocation, channel change, pipe, and bank stabilization. Lori noted that stream relocations are considered a full take. Channeling a stream to rip rap is different than a stream relocation.

Matt F. also noted that NCDOT will be using energy dissipaters on many of the stormwater pipes to reduce the velocity of the water before it outlets into a stream or wetland. Marla Chambers (NCWRC) asked if it would be enough to have the energy dissipaters at the ends of the pipes. Matt Lauffer (NCDOT – Hydraulics) noted that in addition to the energy dissipater there would be approximately 5 feet of rip rap at the end of the pipe to further reduce velocity between the energy dissipater and the stream.

Matt F. then began a review of the impacts to the jurisdictional waters. The following is a list of sites that were discussed in further detail.

Site 4 – Matt F. explained the current flooding problems at this location and the need for an additional 66” pipe. Marella asked if NCDOT has accounted for the dissipation considering that these pipes will be smooth steel. Later in the meeting Matt L. explained that there is very little calculable difference between the use of steel v. concrete.

Site 6 – Roger noted that the current 66” CMP would not be able to hold the new conveyance. Permanent rip rap was proposed at the outlet; however, this site flows to a 45” arched pipe under a private drive. Matt L. noted that NCDOT could not add conveyance. Matt F. noted that Glenn Bridge Road is currently overtopped diverting water down the existing road which then flows back to the same outlet location. The supplemental pipe was added to decrease the flooding along Glenn Bridge Road without adding additional drainage area to the outfall. Craig Lee (NCDOT – Hydraulics) noted that this site would need to be reevaluated. Randy Henegar (TGS Engineers) and Craig Lee noted that the overall plan sheet and the detail were inconsistent and the stream protection is shown differently, one shows it in-channel and one on the banks.

Sites 7, 8, and 9 – the supplemental pipe shown on Permit Drawing Sheet (PDS) 17 and 18 needs to be included on the detail PDS 19 and 20. Roger noted that the supplemental pipes would be 1 foot higher than the retained pipes.

Site 11 – Lori asked how wetland WBV would not be dewatered. Matt L. noted that the supplemental pipe was added for high flow events. Matt F. stated that the existing pipe to the wetland would be lined and retained and the rip rap at the outlet was added to prevent scour.

Craig asked if Division 13 was ok with the addition of the energy dissipaters and was there enough room to construct them because no additional hatching is shown and therefore the dissipaters would need to

be built from the slope. Randy Henegar (TGS Engineers) noted that there should be enough room to place the energy dissipaters between the fill slope and the stream.

Site 18A – Randy McKinney (NCDOT – Division 13) requested that the largest rock size be used when protecting the wing walls.

Site 18A – Marella Buncick (USFWS) expressed concern about the conservation easement area at the inlet end of Site 18A. No impacts at this end and therefore a non-issue.

Site 19 – Marla Chambers (NCWRC) asked if the minor impacts at this site, which is at wetland WCH (also known as the Biltmore Bog), could be avoided. Minimization has occurred to the maximum extent practicable, primarily slopes have been steepened to 1.5:1 or 2:1.

Site 20 – Matt F. noted that this site is unusual because the stream will be more in line with the proposed pipe, which will be buried deeper than the existing pipe. The proposed pipe will then become the primary pipe and the existing pipe will become the supplemental pipe during high flow events. Marla asked if NCDOT would need to fill the existing to a bench. Roger stated that if NCDOT needs to fill more than proposed, it will be assessed in the field.

Site 21 and 22 – Marla asked about wildlife being able to use the road passing underneath the I-26 bridge. This road is currently a road on private property, Biltmore Farms. There is a gate/fencing put up by the landowner. NCDOT control-of-access fencing will tie into the bridge abutments.

Site 29 – NCDOT requested that coir fiber matting and wattles be used, instead of PRSM. Matt F. noted that the coir fiber matting can be used in many locations, however on steep slopes Class I or II rip rap would be used in lieu of PRSM if it meets the guidelines for shear stress.

Site 28 – This site to be revised to add a channel change in addition to temporary impacts.

Jeremy Goodwin (NCDOT – REU) asked what the temporary clearing would be. Natalie Chan (HNTB) responded that it was Method II or hand clearing. Jeremy noted that a strip of 10 feet needed to be added at the toe of slope. NCDOT agreed that 10 feet or to the right of way line would be shown for temporary impacts. Lori noted that the type of temporary impact (e.g. compaction) should be noted as well as the restoration method. Restoration would need to be monitored for 5 to 7 years. It was agreed that Sites 11, 19, 22, and 32 would be reviewed. In further discussions with NCDOT, at wetland areas a strip up to 12' wide or to the right of way line would be shown as mechanized clearing and reseeded after construction. These additional impacts will be added to the permit plans and the summary tables

PDS 63, pipe profile – Marla asked if the pipe was suitable for fish passage. Roger noted that fish were unable to pass now and would not be able to in the future. Photos of this stream were shown.

Site 34 – Needs to be reviewed. After further review, the pipe extension will be rotated to fit the existing stream and reduce the impact of stream relocation

Site 37 – Lori asked that NCDOT make sure the proposed design not dewater wetland WCZ. NCDOT noted that some check dams could be added. The FS file and the WET file need to be correlated to determine the end point of Stream SEF.

Site 39 – The inlet needs to be stubbed out into the stream. Surface drainage needs to be addressed. An inlet pipe or a berm ditch outlet will be evaluated to intercept the surface drainage.

Site 43 – Show all of wetland WDZ on the plan set.

PDS 90 – Address a non-JS pipe and lateral ditch. A junction box and outlet pipe along with a short section of ditch will be added to direct flow to a non-jurisdictional water.

Site 47 – Concern raised that the temporary impacts may dewater the wetland adjacent to SFQ.

After the sites were reviewed the group moved to address concerns over Sediment and Erosion Control not previously discussed. Roger noted that the Erosion Control Plans are incomplete. Matt L. briefly discussed the agreements with FIMAN to monitor the before/during/after of the French Broad River, as well as additional 2D modeling of the causeways, and an agreement with USGS for geomorphological monitoring.

Roger and Randy noted that the outreach to the river businesses and organizations had been successful. Roger noted that a new business was opening for the 2019 season, Beer City Tubing. Kat noted that they would be added to the Communication Plan.

### **Action Items**

- HNTB to address comments and update the plan set and impact summary sheets.
- Marella asked for a summary of where and which streams or wetlands have energy dissipaters. Kat will provide this information.
- Label all pipes conveying jurisdictional streams as buried or not buried.
- Update ditch details to show rip rap as keyed-in and label the natural channel bed as the top of the rip rap.
- Add Detail for toe protection for Site 1
- Evaluate downstream structure at Site 6
- Replace pipe collars with junction boxes as needed, particularly where pipes can be aligned with jurisdictional stream or in areas where the type of pipe is changing.
- Verify that the 66" pipe at Site 31 is not buried due to potential head cuts on a long steep pipe.