

North Carolina Department of Transportation
PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTATION FORM
STIP No. I-5507

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- a. Consultation Phase: Construction
- b. Project Description: I-485 (Charlotte Outer Loop)
I-77 south of Charlotte to US 74 (Independence Blvd)
Add one Express Lane in Each Direction
Mecklenburg County
- c. State Project: 43609.1.1
Federal Project: NHS-0485(30)
- d. Document Type: Type III CE 8/16/18
Date

II. CONCLUSIONS

The above environmental document has been reevaluated (as required by 23 CFR 771. It was determined that the current proposed action is essentially the same as the original proposed action. Proposed changes, if any, are noted below in Section III. It has been determined that anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts were accurately described in the above referenced document(s) unless noted otherwise herein. Therefore, the original Administration Action remains valid.

III. CHANGES IN PROPOSED ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Project Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes the addition of one express lane in each direction on I-485 (Charlotte Outer Loop) between I-77 south of Charlotte and US 74 (Independence Boulevard). The project is approximately 17 miles in length, and is in southern Mecklenburg County. According to the previously approved Type III Categorical Exclusion (CE), the purpose of the project is to provide a reliable travel time option (45 mph minimum average speed) during peak demand periods along I-485 between I-77 and US 74. STIP No. I-5507 was let in conjunction with STIP No. R-0211EC and U-4714AB; however, the projects are addressed with separate NEPA documentation and permits. Reference Figure 1 for an overview of the project study area.

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Changes in Proposed Action

The project design has been refined since the Type III CE was approved in August 2018. Four design modifications have been identified and are discussed below. These modifications will occur within the study area previously analyzed in the 2018 CE.

Westinghouse Boulevard Interchange

Westinghouse Boulevard currently runs under I-485 with a grade separation. The Preferred Alternative described in the 2018 CE included an express lane direct connect ramp from the median of I-485, over the inner lanes, to/from Westinghouse Boulevard (on the north side of I-485). The approved Alternative Technical Concept (ATC) eliminates the direct connect ramp on the north side of I-485 and includes an express lane direct connect ramp from the median of I-485 to/from Westinghouse Boulevard. This configuration reduces the amount of right-of-way acquisition, minimizes property impacts, eliminates the relocation of a cell phone tower, and reduces wetland impacts. Figures 2 and 2A compare the “preliminary” design and slope stakes (from the 2018 CE) to the “current” design and slope stakes (based on the new ATC).

McMullen Creek Greenway

In refining the project design since the 2018 CE was prepared, it became apparent that the existing McMullen Creek Greenway would be shifted 10 to 12 feet towards the creek (west) to accommodate the I-485 bridge abutment slope protection. This greenway shift does not result in impacts to streams or wetlands. NCDOT will coordinate with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation prior to bridge construction over the existing McMullen Creek and McAlpine Creek Greenways regarding accommodations for greenway users during construction. Figure 3 shows the proposed design in this area.

Johnston Road Interchange

The Preferred Alternative in the 2018 CE would require a small amount of right-of-way in the southwest quadrant of the Johnston Road interchange to accommodate new structures for use as express lane direct connect ramps to/from the median of I-485. The approved ATC modifies the express lane direct connect ramp so that access from Johnston Road uses the existing flyover bridge, which would be widened to accommodate the revised access. The design modification in this area does not result in a change in wetland impacts and results in an increase of approximately 29 linear feet (lf) of stream impact as compared to the 2018 CE. Figure 4 compares the “preliminary” design and slope stakes (from the 2018 CE) to the “current” design and slope stakes (based on the approved ATC).

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US 74 (Independence Boulevard) Interchange

NCDOT Division 10 requested that a 105-foot median be designed on I-485 immediately to the west of US 74 (Independence Boulevard). The design included in the 2018 CE includes a 26-foot median in this area. The design change was needed so to not preclude a future Direct Connector from US 74 to the I-485 median. The design modification in this area results in additional 123 lf of stream impacts beyond those included in the 2018 CE. Figures 5 and 6 compares the “preliminary” design and slope stakes (from the 2018 CE) to the current design and slope stakes.

Environmental Consequences

The design modifications mentioned above will occur within the study area defined in the 2018 CE and are expected to result in a reduction of 0.38 acre of wetland impacts and an increase of 152 lf of stream impacts.

Jurisdictional Resources

The design change at the Westinghouse Boulevard interchange results in a reduction of 0.38 acre of wetland impacts as compared to the 2018 CE. Stream impacts in this area are similar to the current design included in the 2018 CE.

The design change at the Johnston Road interchange results in an increase of 29 linear feet of stream impacts as compared to the 2018 CE. Wetlands impacts in this area are similar to the current design included in the 2018 CE.

The design change at the US 74 (Independence Boulevard) interchange results in an increase of 123 linear feet of stream impacts as compared to the 2018 CE. Wetlands impacts in this area are similar to the current design included in the 2018 CE.

Based on current design, a Section 404 Individual Permit is not anticipated for this project; however, the US Army Corps of Engineers hold final discretion as to what permit will be required. If a Section 404 permit is required, then a Section 401 Water Quality Certification will also be needed from the NC Division of Water Resources.

Federally Protected Species

There are six federally protected species in Mecklenburg County. The biological conclusions for the listed species included in the 2018 CE are not expected to change as a result of the design modifications.

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Community Resources

The design modifications are not expected to result in additional impacts to EJ and LEP communities.

IV. LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

NCDOT will implement all practical measures and procedures to minimize and avoid environmental impacts.

See attached Greensheet.

V. COORDINATION

Design-Build Unit personnel have discussed current project proposals with others as follows:

- John Jamison, Environmental Policy Unit
- Erin Cheely, Environmental Analysis Unit

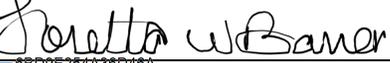
VI. NCDOT CONCURRENCE

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 FOR
GA084B476412222
Design-Build Unit

7/3/2019

Date

VII. FHWA CONCURRENCE

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Federal Highway Administration
Division Administrator

7/8/2019

Date

H. Project Commitments

**STIP Project I-5507
I-485 (CHARLOTTE OUTER LOOP) EXPRESS LANES
From I-77 to US 74 (Independence Boulevard)
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County
Federal Project No. NHS-0485(30)
WBS No. 43609.1.1**

NCDOT Division 10:

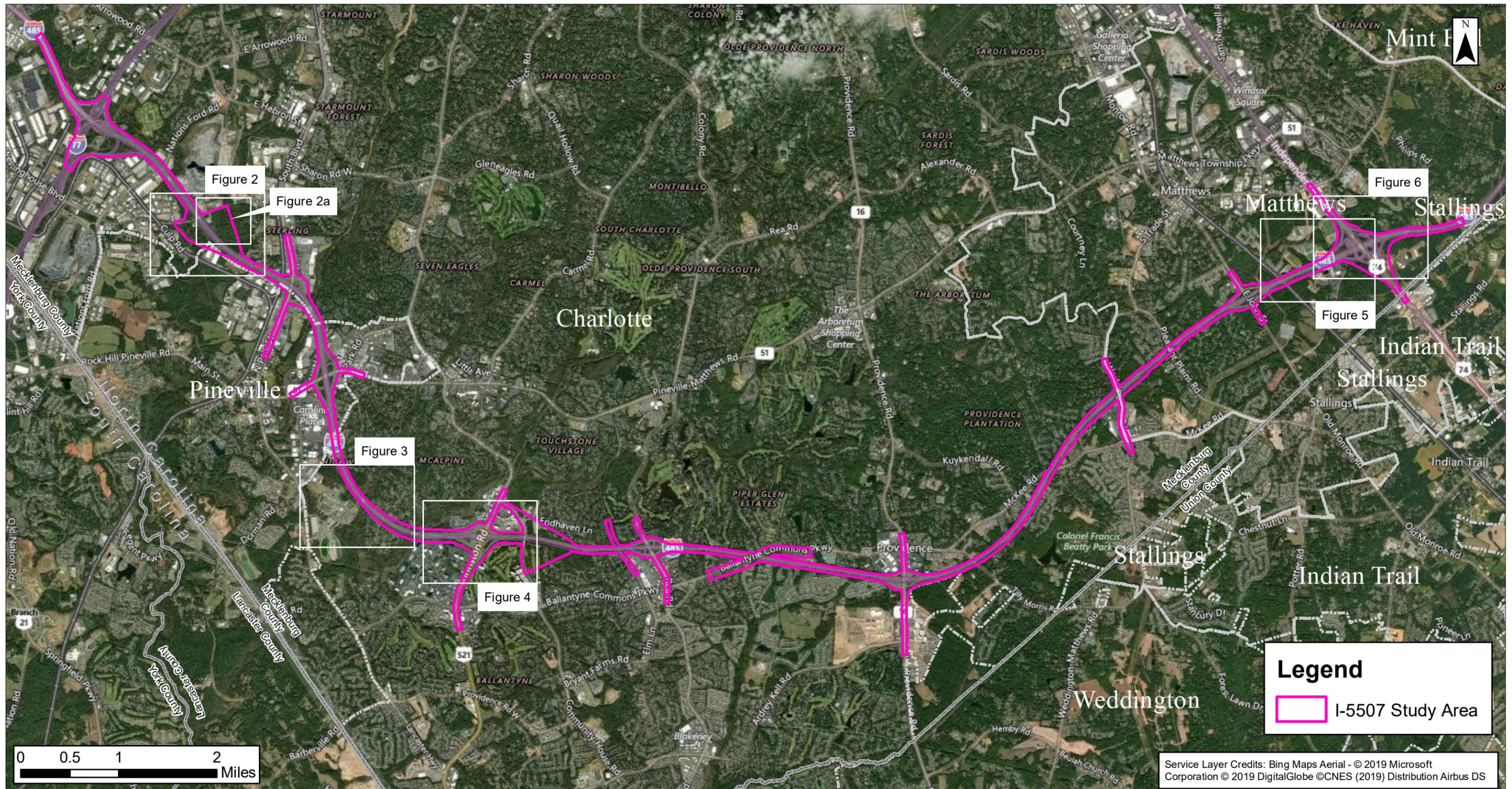
- There are several planned greenways (along Sugar Creek, Kings Branch, and Little Sugar Creek) under development in the project study area. NCDOT Division 10 will coordinate with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation and the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization regarding project scheduling and/or design requirements necessary to accommodate these greenways.
- NCDOT Division 10 will coordinate with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation prior to bridge construction over the existing McMullen Creek and McAlpine Creek Greenways regarding accommodations for greenway users during construction.
- This project involves construction activities on or adjacent to FEMA-regulated streams. Therefore, the Division will submit sealed as-built construction plans to the Hydraulics Unit upon completion of project construction, certifying that the drainage structures and roadway embankment that are located within the 100-year floodplain were built as shown in the construction plans, both horizontally and vertically.
- NCDOT Division 10 will coordinate prior to construction with Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to allow for necessary planning regarding mass transit routes/schedules and commuter programs in the project area.
- Site 31MK273** (Cemetery at John Dinkins Farm) is the surviving remnant of a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places. No project activities are to take place within the limits of the cemetery, including but not limited to the staging/storage of materials and/or equipment and vehicles. If Site 31MK273** is impacted in any way, additional consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission will be required. ***(The design is staying within the existing right-of-way and will not impact the Cemetery at John Dinkins Farm).***

NCDOT Hydraulics Unit:

- During final design, the NCDOT Hydraulics Unit will coordinate with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services Department and NC Floodplain Mapping Program for approval of any Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and subsequent Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). ***(There is no CLOMR/LOMR required as part of this project).***

City of Charlotte / NCDOT Local Programs Management Office:

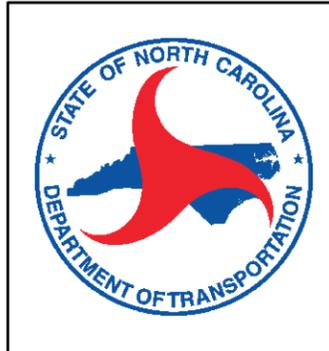
- The City of Charlotte and NCDOT LPMO will complete a municipal agreement prior to construction for additional pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on bridges to be replaced carrying arterial or local streets over or under I-485 in the project area.



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Legend
 I-5507 Study Area

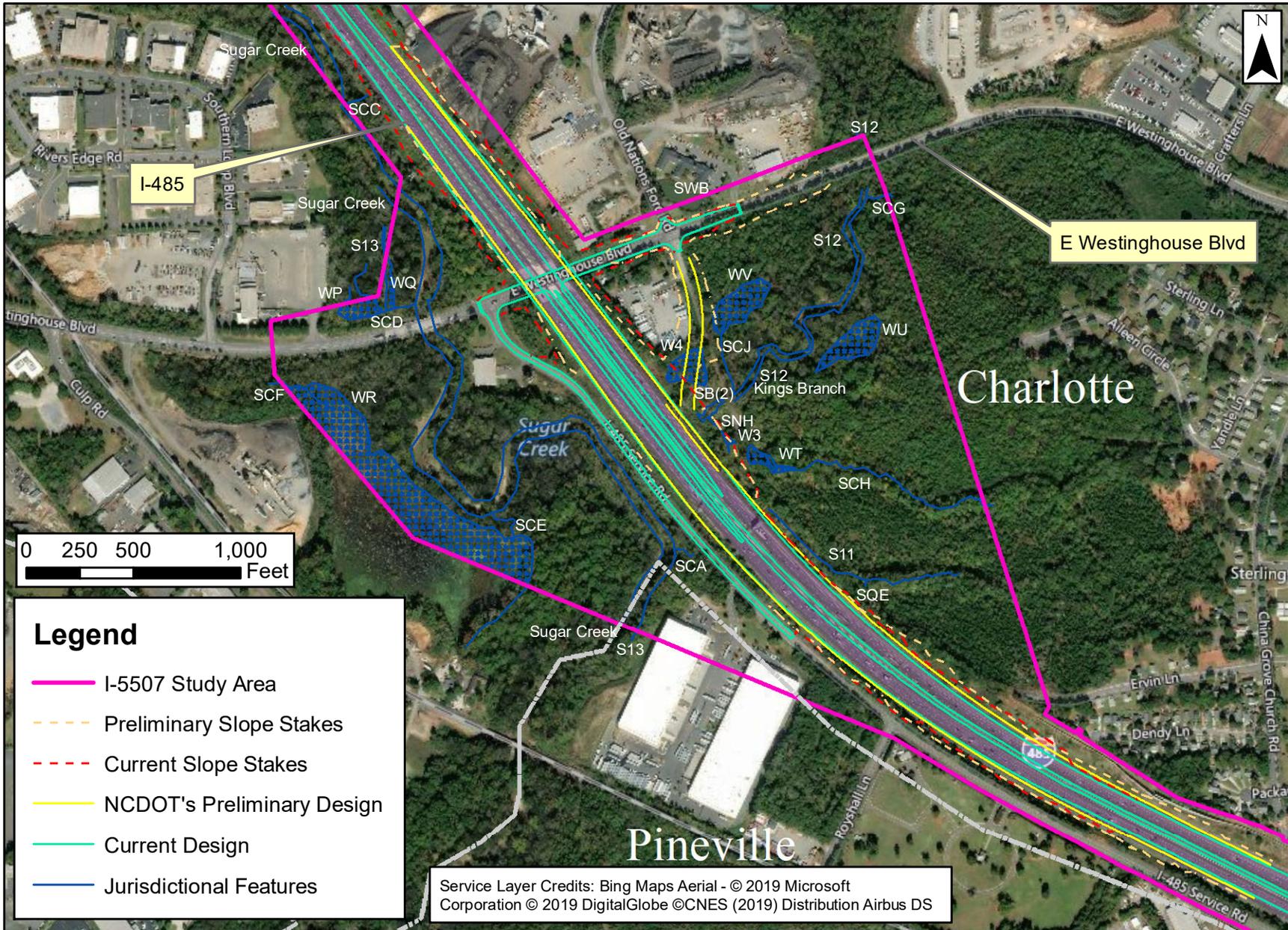
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I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes NEPA Consultation: Overview Map

Figure 1

March 2019



I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes
 NEPA Consultation:
 Design Modifications at E Westinghouse Blvd

Figure 2

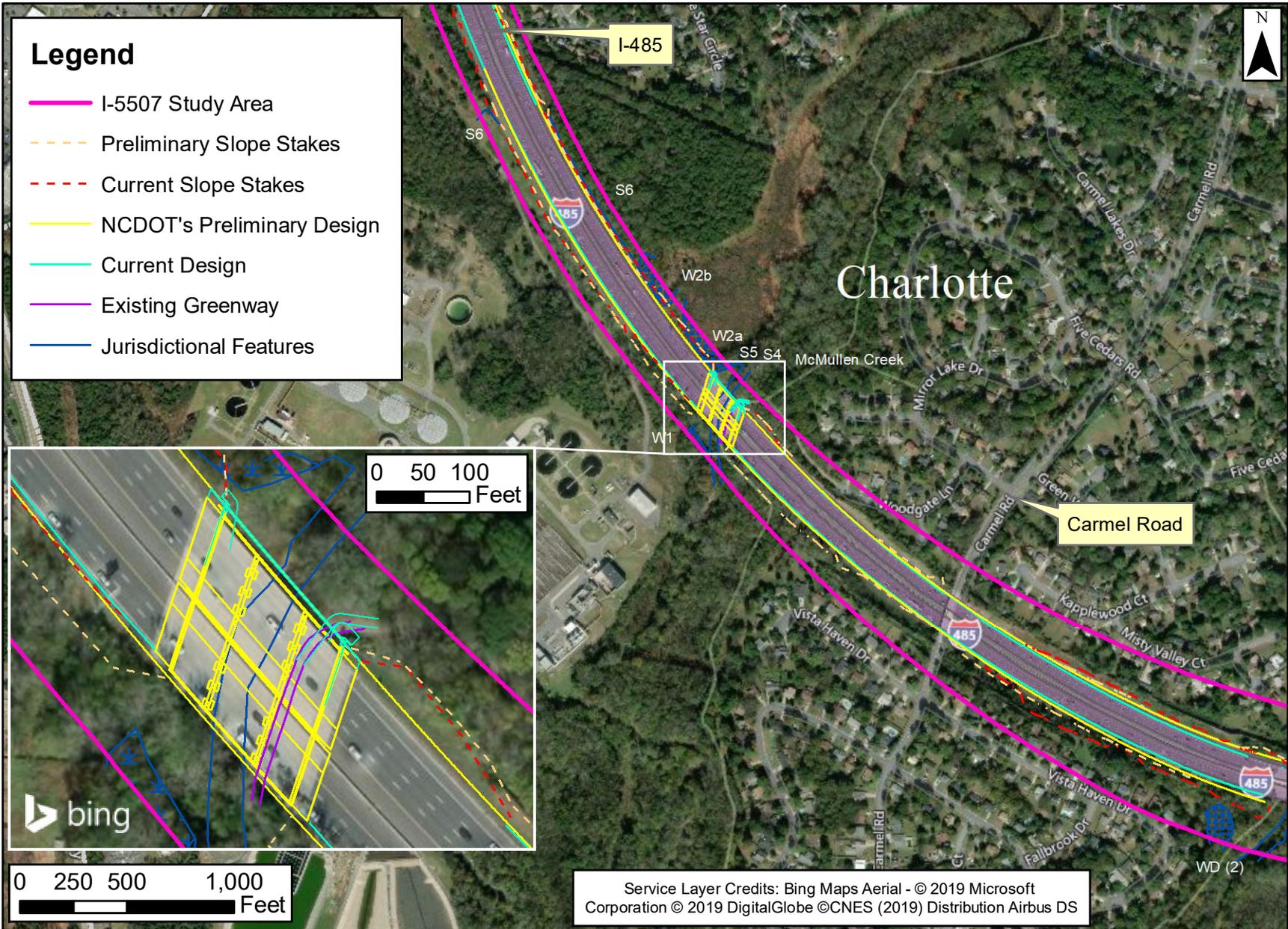
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I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes
 NEPA Consultation:
 Design Modifications at E Westinghouse Blvd

Figure 2a

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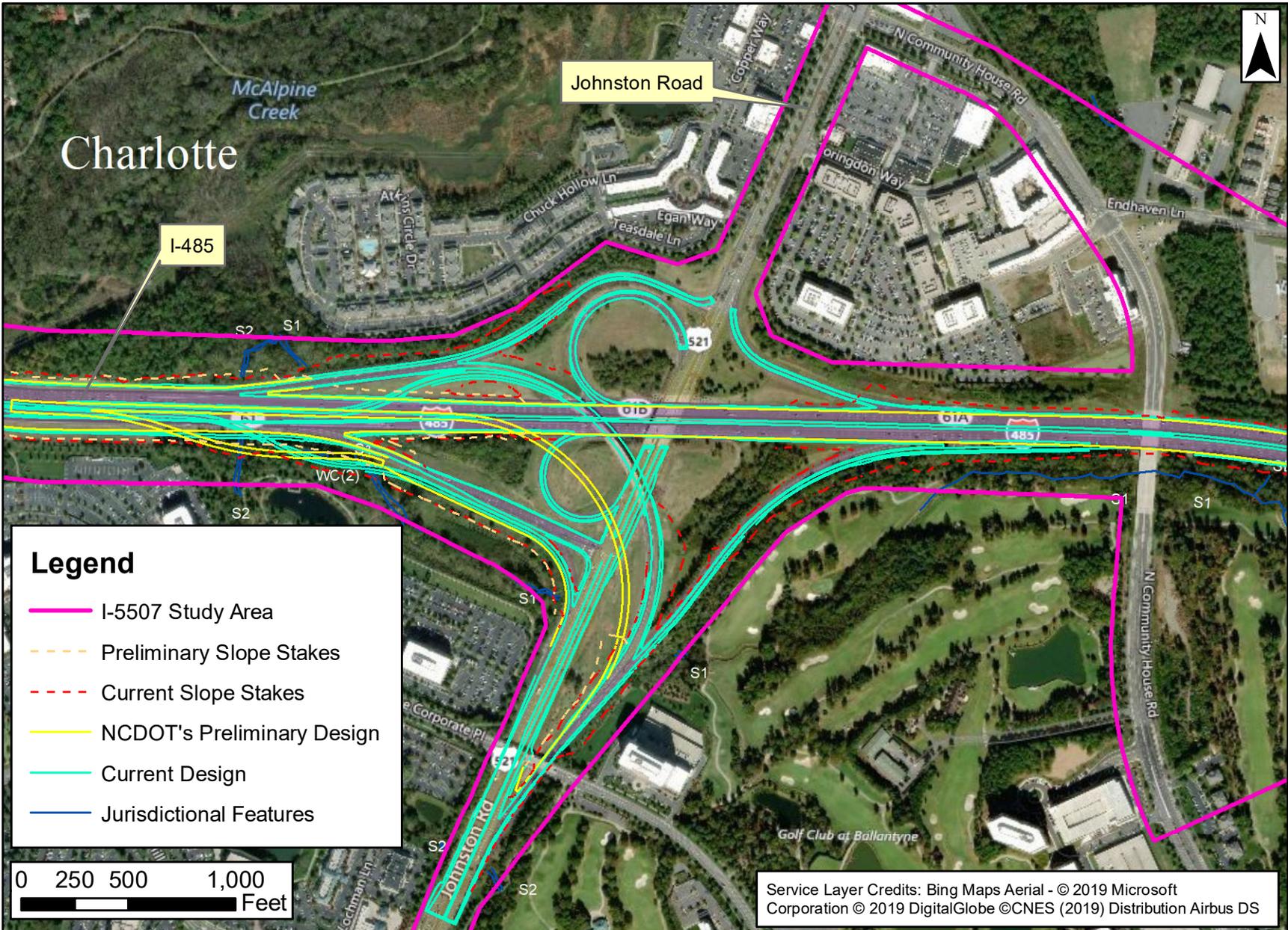


I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes
 NEPA Consultation:
 Design Modifications at McMullen Creek

Figure 3

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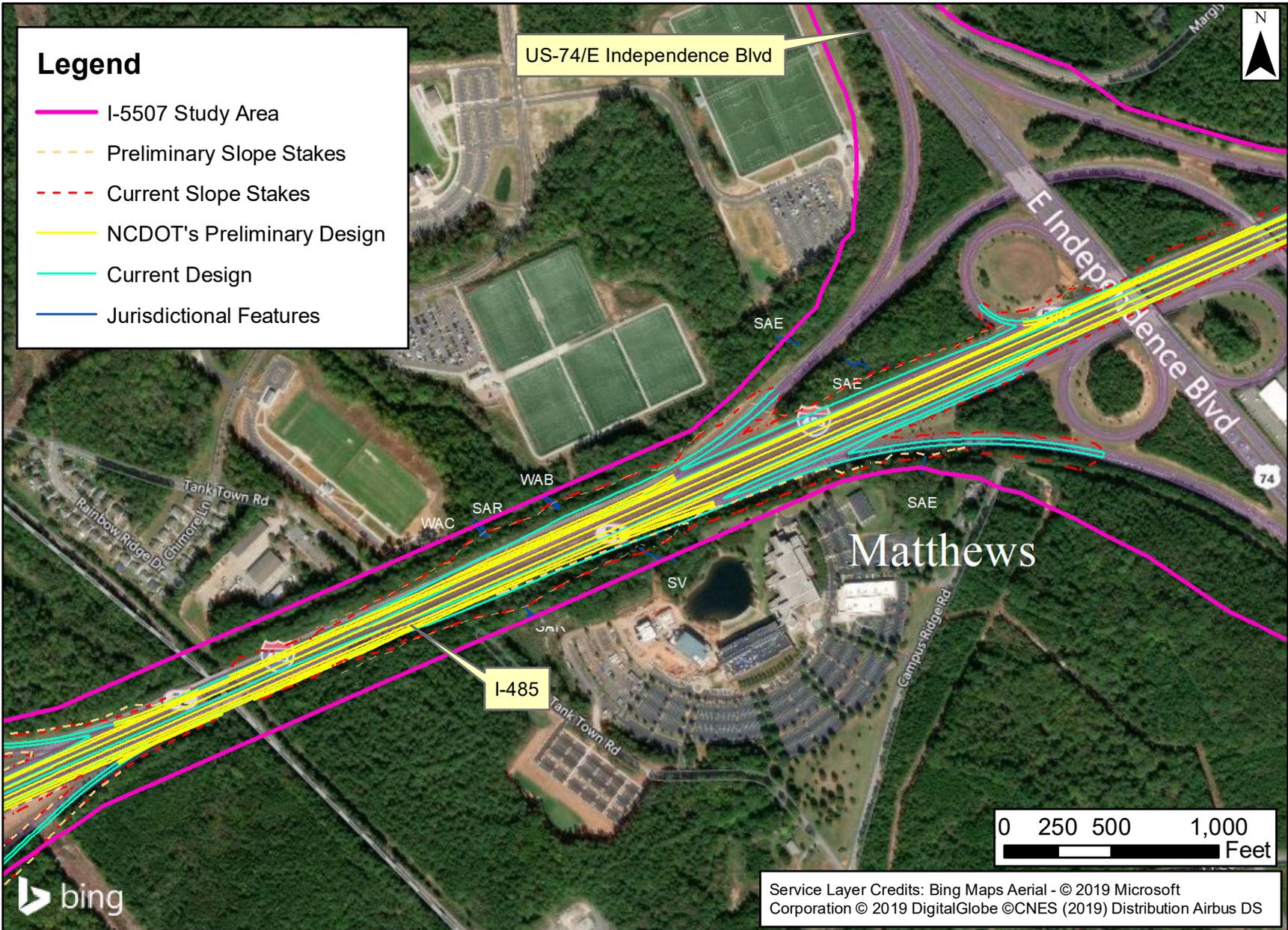




I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes
 NEPA Consultation:
 Design Modifications at Johnston Road Interchange

Figure 4

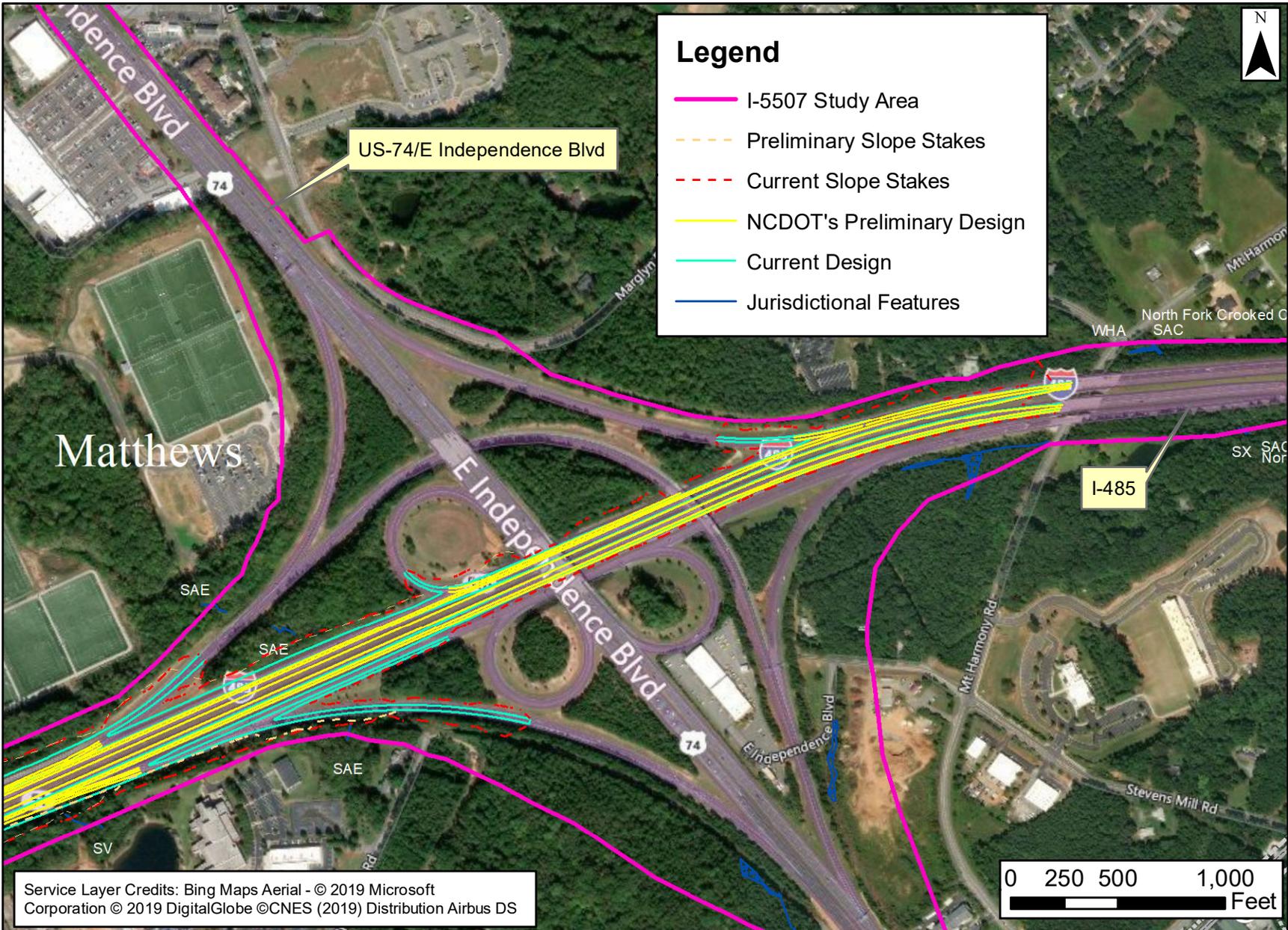
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I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes
 NEPA Consultation:
 Design Modifications on I-485 near US-74 interchange

Figure 5

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I-5507 I-485 Managed Lanes
 NEPA Consultation:
 Design Modifications on I-485 near US-74 interchange

Figure 6

March 2019

