

External Scoping and Section 404/NEPA Merger Project Team Meeting

Concurrence Point No. 1

July 20, 2017

Balfour Parkway

From NC 191 to US 64

Henderson County, North Carolina – Division 14

STIP Project No. R-5744

WBS No. 50201.1.1

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the purpose of and need for the proposed project. Concurrence will be requested.

Project Description

The NCDOT proposes to construct Balfour Parkway, a new location roadway, from NC 191 to US 64, in Henderson County. Based on the 2008 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and 2014 Feasibility Study, the proposed Balfour Parkway is envisioned as a four-lane, median-divided roadway (expressway or parkway), approximately 4.6 miles long. The posted speed limit for Balfour Parkway is anticipated to be 45 mph or 55 mph with a design speed of 50 mph or 60 mph. The roadway will have either limited or partial control-of-access and is anticipated to include:

- a new intersection or interchange with NC 191;
- a new interchange with US 25 Business (Asheville Highway), which would also provide a grade-separated crossing of the Blue Ridge Southern railroad tracks¹;
- a new interchange with I-26/US 25²; and
- a new intersection or interchange with US 64.

Project Study Area

Consistent with the project limits noted in the 2014 Feasibility Study, the 2008 CTP, and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the proposed study area allows room to study new-location route options that link NC 191 to US 64 (a length of approximately 4.6 miles), north of Hendersonville. The study area extends to the north to allow room to study new-location routes north of the conceptual alignment that was originally developed in the 2014 Feasibility Study. Although potential route options to the south are not considered feasible, the study area extends to the south to encompass the No Build route through downtown Hendersonville.

The study area stretches beyond NC 191 and US 64 (west and east, respectively) to incorporate potential interchanges with these roadways. The study area also takes into account a potential interchange with I-26 and related improvements that may be needed to accommodate the existing NCDOT truck weigh station (north of Hendersonville).

The Henderson County Landfill / Stoney Mountain area (west of I-26) and the Vulcan Materials Quarry (east of I-26) include considerable constraints that have the potential to substantially increase impacts and costs. They are unlikely locations for potential alignment options and have therefore been excluded from the area considered for a new-location route. However, impacts to these properties that may extend beyond the footprint of the proposed project will be considered.

¹ The railroad tracks are generally parallel to US 25 Business through the project study area.

² US 25 was recently resigned and may differ from references noted in prior reports.

Project Status and Schedule

The project is included in the Draft 2018-2027 STIP as Project No. R-5744:

- Section A (NC 191 to US 25 Business) - unfunded
- Section B (US 25 Business to I-26)
- Section C (I-26 to US 64) - unfunded

The STIP has allocated \$8,000,000 for right-of-way acquisition, \$500,000 for utilities, and \$39,200,000 for construction, with \$1,000,000 in prior years cost. Including unfunded costs, the total project cost is \$157,800,000. Right of way acquisition is planned to begin in fiscal year (FY) 2022 and construction is currently scheduled to begin in FY 2024.

Need for Project

The need for the proposed project is based on the following existing and projected conditions:

- ***Lack of east-west connectivity in Henderson County***

Local topography has focused both development and major transportation facilities into a number of parallel corridors, running generally northwest-to-southeast. I-26 concentrates traffic, as well as development, at a few interchanges and creates an additional east-west barrier to travel across Henderson County. US 64, which is routed through downtown Hendersonville along one-way streets, is the primary route for east-west travel through the area and is becoming increasingly congested. The combination of NC 191, US 25 Business, and US 64 also provide a route for east-west travel.

A limited number of additional roadways allow vehicles to travel east-west through the area; however, these indirect routes include local roads, lower travel speeds, two-lane roadways, multiple turning movements, and an at-grade railroad crossing.

- ***Truck traffic in downtown Hendersonville***

Large trucks traveling east-west must travel along downtown Hendersonville's one-way streets. Based on current traffic volumes, more than 1,000 trucks travel through downtown Hendersonville per day. Hendersonville's Comprehensive Plan states that citizens identified cut-through truck traffic as a significant challenge facing the downtown.

Project Purpose

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve east-west vehicular mobility in Henderson County by providing a connection (with limited control of access) between NC 191 and US 64 north of Hendersonville that reduces trip length.

Screening Criteria

The following performance measures explain how alternatives that meet the Purpose stated above will be evaluated. Specifically, alternatives considered for the project must:

- reduce trip length by at least 1 mile *(as compared to the No Build Alternative, which includes NC 191, US 25 Business and US 64 through downtown Hendersonville when considering the same project termini)* and
- achieve a minimum level of service D *(for intersections overall and the mainline during peak hour, design year conditions).*

Other Benefits of the Project

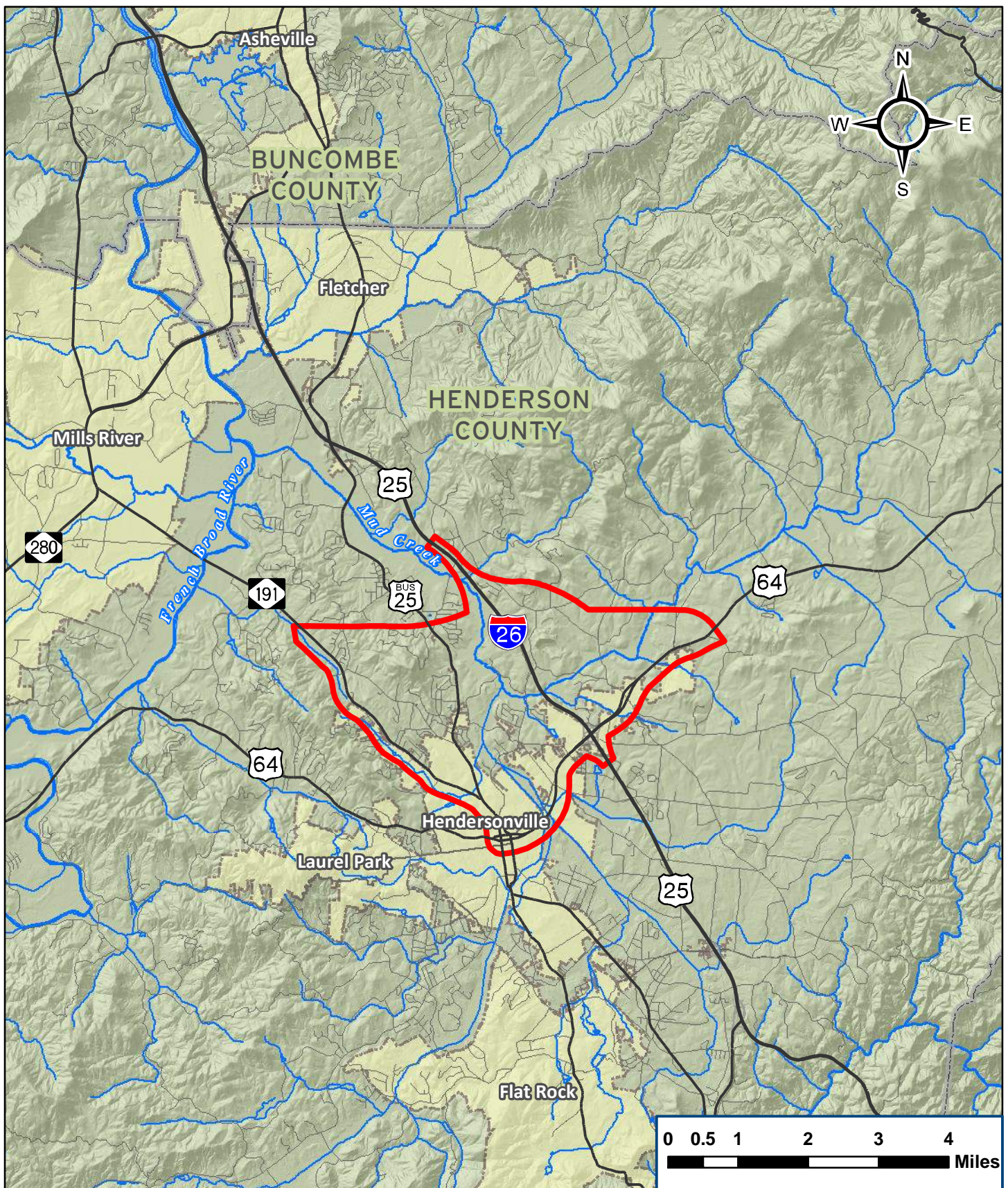
Additional benefits of a proposed connection between NC 191 and US 64 include reduced travel time and a potential reduction in the volume of heavy trucks traveling through downtown Hendersonville.

Figures

- 1 Vicinity Map
- 2 Study Area Map

Attachments

- Project Data Sheets
- USGS Quad Map
- Summary of External Scoping Responses

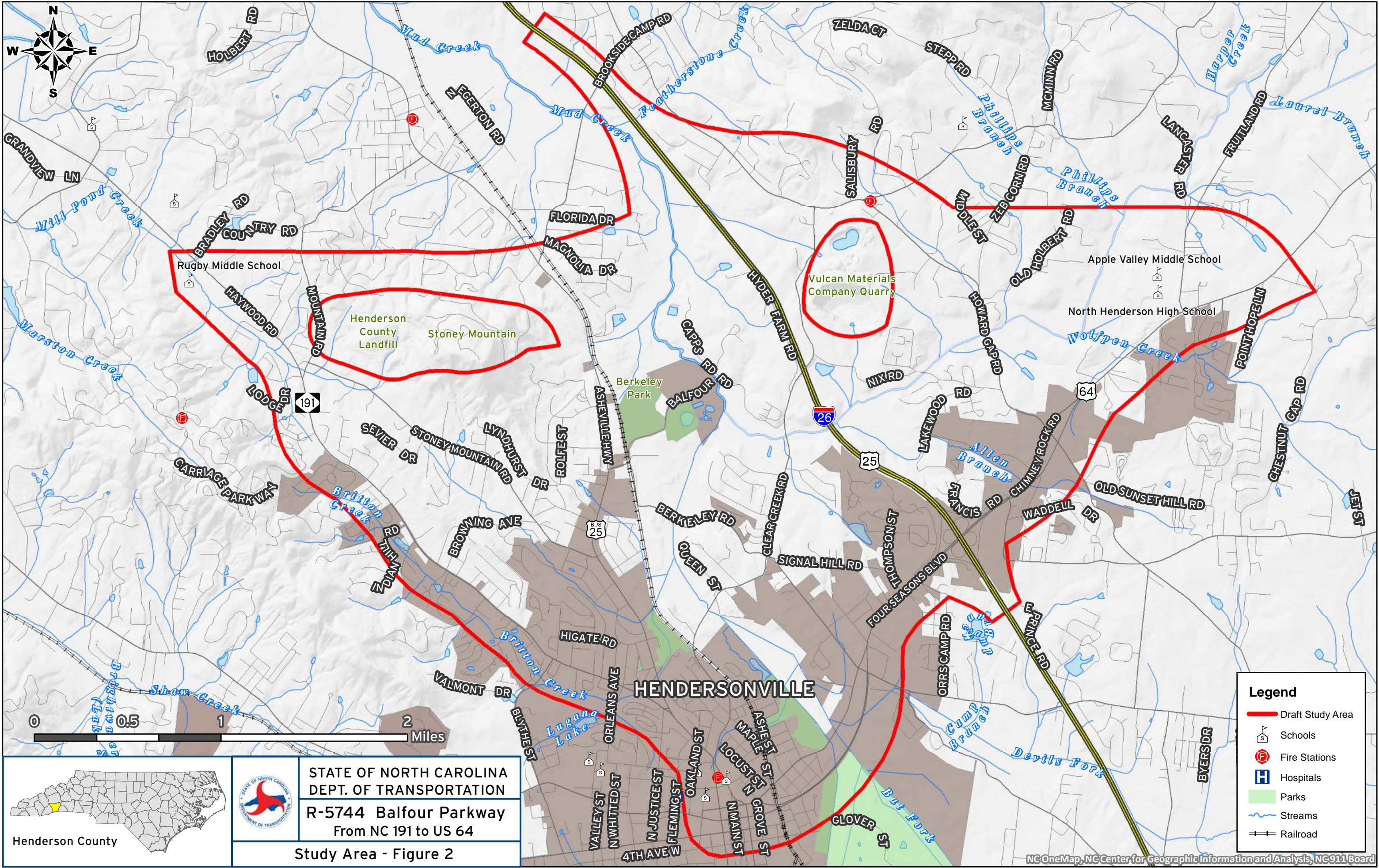


- Draft Study Area
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
R-5744 Balfour Parkway
From NC 191 to US 64

Vicinity Map - Figure 1



Henderson County

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

R-5744 Balfour Parkway
From NC 191 to US 64

Study Area - Figure 2

PROJECT DATA SHEET

Date: 10/12/2016
Rev.: 6/27/2017

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| TIP No.: R-5744 | County: Henderson |
| Federal-aid No.: N/A | WBS No.: 50201.1.1 |
| NCDOT Division: 14 | Scoping Meeting Date: 7/19/2017 |

Project Description:

- Length: Approximately 4.6 miles
- Termini (US Hwy / SR): NC 191 to US 64
- MPO / RPO: French Broad River MPO
- NEPA / 404 Merger Candidate? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
- General Description of Project:

Balfour Parkway – NC 191 to US 64. Construct new four-lane roadway.

Design Data (Existing Conditions):

The No Build alignment follows NC 191, US 25 Business, and US 64.

- **Functional Classification:**
NC 191 – Other Principal Arterial
US 25 Business – Other Principal Arterial
US 64 – Other Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial (northeast of Fruitland Road)
- **Strategic Transportation Corridor:** I-26 is a Strategic Transportation Corridor.
- **CTP Designation** (Facility Type):
NC 191 – Boulevard Needs Improvement (NC 280 in Mills River [northwest of study area] to proposed Balfour Parkway), Major Thoroughfare Needs Improvement (proposed Balfour Parkway to US 25 Business)
US 25 Business – Major Thoroughfare
US 64 – Major Thoroughfare (US 25 Business to I-26 interchange), Boulevard (I-26 interchange to Howard Gap Road), Boulevard Needs Improvement (Howard Gap Road to Fruitland Road), Major Thoroughfare Needs Improvement (Fruitland Road to Gilliam Road [northeast of study area])
- **Type of Access Control:** Varies
- **Typical Section:** Varies, typically two to five lanes
- **Right of Way:** Varies
- **Posted Speed:** Varies, typically 35 mph to 45 mph; 20 mph through downtown Hendersonville

- **Structure Inventory (bridges, RCBC, Walls, etc):**

- NC 191, Bridge No 64 over Britton Creek, functionally obsolete
- US 64 Westbound, Bridge No. 133 over Southern Railroad, functionally obsolete
- US 64 Eastbound, Bridge No. 130 over Southern Railroad, functionally obsolete
- US 64, Bridge No. 139 over Mud Creek; US 64, Bridge No. 167 over Devils Fork Creek
- US 64, Bridge No. 183 over I-26
- US 64, Culvert No. 189 over Wolfpen Creek

- **Other TIP Projects in the Area (Draft 2018-2027 STIP)**

- **R-2588B:** NC 191, SR 1381 (Mountain Road) to NC 280 south of Mills River. Widen to multi-lanes. ROW 2020, Construction 2022. [Section A – US 25 to SR 1381 (Mountain Road) is unfunded.]
- **R-5207:** SR 1006 (Howard Gap Road), US 25 in Fletcher to US 64. Upgrade roadway. Sections A and B are complete. Section C from Jackson Road to US 25 is in ROW. Construction 2019.
- **W-5506:** NC 191, SR 1381 (Mountain Road) to north of SR 1365 (North Rugby Road). Construct a three-lane section, extend right turn lane into West Henderson School, revise and install guardrail at various locations, construct entrance to Rugby Middle School on new location, and construct paved shoulders. ROW in progress, Construction 2017.
- **I-4400:** I-26. US 25 (Exit 54) to NC 280 (Exit 40). Widen to add additional lanes. Section A – US 25 (Exit 54) to US 64 (Exit 49), unfunded; Section B – US 64 (Exit 49) to US 25 Business (Exit 44), ROW 2024, Construction 2026; Section C – US 25 Business (Exit 44) to NC 280 (Exit 40), ROW 2018, Construction 2019.
- **I-4700:** I-26. NC 280 (Exit 40) to I-40 at Asheville. 8.6 miles. Add additional lanes. ROW 2018, Construction 2019

- **Railroad Involvement:**

One rail line is located within the study area:

The railroad is generally parallel to US 25 Business through the study area. The US 64 crossing of the railroad tracks in downtown Henderson is grade separated. A grade separated Balfour Parkway crossing is proposed.

Watco Transportation Services Railway operates the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad, a short line with three branches that feed into Norfolk Southern's terminal in Asheville. Approximately 2 trains per day utilize the single track through the study area.

Long Range Plan History:

2005 – Balfour Parkway was included in the French Broad River MPO's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan as a Tier 3 Project (2021-2030)

2008 – The *Comprehensive Transportation Plan for French Broad River MPO and Rural Areas of Buncombe and Haywood Counties* (CTP) includes Balfour Parkway (NC 191 to US 64, construct 4-lane expressway) as a “highest priority” project

2010 - French Broad River MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan recommends Balfour Parkway: construct new 4-lane Expressway from NC 191 north of Stony Mountain Road (SR 1383) to US 64, north of Nix Road (SR 1513) in Hendersonville [Tier III Project: 2026-2035]

2015 – French Broad River MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan recommends Balfour Parkway: construct new 4-lane Expressway/Parkway from NC 191 north of Stony Mountain Road (SR 1383) to US 64, north of Nix Road (SR 1513) in Hendersonville [Horizon Year 2026-2030]

Traffic Data (AADT):

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Current Year | 2016 | NC 191 10,500-13,200 vpd | US 25 Business 25,900-27,000 vpd | US 64 18,800-43,800 vpd |
| Design Year | 2040 | 19,000-23,900 vpd | 37,000-39,200 vpd | 23,900-55,500 vpd |
| Source of Traffic Data: | Traffic Forecast for NCDOT STIP Project R-5744, RK&K, October 2016 | | | |

Cost Estimates:

| | Construction | Right-of-Way | Utilities | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| TIP Estimate (Draft 2018-2027 STIP) | \$39,200,000 | \$8,000,000 | \$500,000 | \$157,800,000 |
| Current Estimate | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |

Includes \$1,000,000 in prior years cost and \$109,100,000 unfunded cost.

Project Schedule:

| | | |
|------------------------|---------|------|
| Environmental Document | EA | 2020 |
| | FONSI | 2021 |
| Right-of-Way | FY 2022 | |
| Let | FY 2024 | |

Draft Project Need: Please refer to the Concurrence Point #1 Handout.

Draft Project Purpose: Please refer to the Concurrence Point #1 Handout.

Design Data (Proposed Conditions):

- CTP Designation (Facility Type): Expressway
- Type of Access Control: Limited
- Typical Section: four-lane, median divided
- Right of Way: 250 feet
- Posted Speed: 45 mph or 55 mph (design speed of 50 mph or 60 mph)

The following initial alternatives have been developed by NCDOT:

(either from Internal Scoping Meeting, CTP, or Feasibility Study)

2008 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

The CTP proposes an expressway on new location from NC 191 to US 64, north of Hendersonville. The alignment would terminate to the west at NC 191 via an intersection or interchange near Mountain Road. A proposed interchange with US 25 Business (Asheville Highway) would also provide a grade-separated crossing of the railroad tracks. A new interchange with I-26 is proposed near Clear Creek Road. To the east, the alignment would terminate at US 64 near Fruitland Road, with the type of intersection to be determined.

Potential alternatives that improve existing routes may need to be studied in detail, in addition to new-location route options and consideration of other required alternatives.

2014 Feasibility Study (FS-1214B)

The Feasibility Study proposed to construct a new route (Balfour Parkway) from NC 191 to US 64, a distance of approximately 4.6 miles. Two cross-sections were investigated:

- Four-lane divided expressway section on 250 feet of right of way.
- Four-lane divided rural parkway section on 250 feet of right of way.

The conceptual alignment identified in the 2014 Feasibility Study is similar to the CTP alignment. It was found that the four-lane divided shoulder section would be able to accommodate the projected 2035 design year traffic volumes at an acceptable level of service.

The project is not envisioned as a loop roadway and has not been identified to extend further than the current limits.

In addition to the conceptual alignments noted in the CTP and Feasibility Study, new location route options to the north, which avoid the Henderson County Landfill facility, Stoney Mountain, and the Vulcan Materials quarry site, will be explored.

New location route options to the south of the prior conceptual alignment are:

- not considered feasible due to the proximity of the existing I-26/US 64 interchange (Exit 49) and related traffic safety and operational concerns, and
- not considered prudent due to the potential for increased impacts to Clear Creek, Berkeley Ball Park (listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)), the Hendersonville Wastewater Treatment Facility, and the Division of Mitigation Services (formerly the Ecosystem Enhancement Program) Clear Creek Mitigation Site.

Preliminary Study Area* Resources Inventory Table

*The table below lists resources in the portion of the study area where new-location alignments are more likely to be developed. This "initial fieldwork area" is outlined in yellow on the corresponding Environmental Features Map. Additional detail for resources along existing roadways in the study area (NC 191, US 25 Business, US 64) will be documented if it is determined that existing alignment alternatives are to be carried forward for detailed study.

| Resource/Measure | Applicability/Resources in Study Area |
|--|---|
| General Project Information | |
| Length of project (to tenth of miles) | Approximately 4.6 miles |
| Potential Interchange Locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NC 191 – US 25 Business (Asheville Highway) – I-26/US 25 – US 64 |
| Cultural Resources | |
| National Register (NRHP) or eligible sites (DOE) and districts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Moss-Johnson Farm (NRHP) – Sholtz-Cantrell Estate (DOE) – Hyder Dairy Farm (DOE) |
| Other historic sites (#) | 12 sites were identified as potentially eligible for the NRHP (to be evaluated) |
| Human Environment | |
| Community facilities: | |
| Churches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – La Capilla de Santa Maria [St Mary's Chapel] (186 St Mary's Drive) – Mt Pisgah Lutheran Church (2606 Chimney Rock Road) – Ebenezer Baptist Church (2557 Chimney Rock Road) – Moore's Grove United Methodist Church (2575 Chimney Rock Road) – Stanford Chapel A.M.E. Church (553 Salisbury Road) – Mt Zion Baptist Church (314 N Clear Creek Road) – Central Baptist Church (2479 Howard Gap Road) – Fletcher Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses (2374 Howard Gap Road) – Fellowship Baptist Church (2231 Howard Gap Road) – Stoney Mountain Baptist Church (3301 Asheville Highway) – Apple Valley Church of God (2822 Chimney Rock Road) |
| Cemeteries | – 10 (4 cemeteries are associated with potential historic sites) |
| Schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rugby Middle School – Apple Valley Middle School – North Henderson High School |
| Other facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mountain Home Fire & Rescue, Station 2 <p>The following facilities are partially within the initial fieldwork area (adjacent to the Henderson County Landfill):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Henderson County Animal Shelter – Henderson Co. Recycling Center / School Bus Garage – NCDOT Maintenance Yard |
| Residential Properties | Yes – numerous residences |
| Business Properties | Yes – numerous businesses |
| Parks, Open Space, Greenways, Game Lands, Land and Water Conservation Fund Properties, etc.) (#) | <p>0 – Known</p> <p>The Henderson County 2020 Comprehensive Plan indicates conceptual greenway corridors along Mud Creek and Clear Creek.</p> |
| Special populations | Low-income and/or minority populations are present |

| Resource/Measure | Applicability/Resources in Study Area |
|--|--|
| Natural Environment | |
| Named Streams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear Creek – Featherstone Creek – Mill Pond Creek – Phillips Branch – Mud Creek [303(d)] – Wolfpen Creek (126 total streams including UTs) |
| Wetlands | Approximately 31.3 acres (78 wetlands) |
| Critical Water Supply Watersheds | None |
| Riparian Buffer rules apply | Local buffer rules apply to all perennial waters |
| Identified Critical habitat/species under Endangered Species Act (ESA) | None |
| Wetland Mitigation Sites | Mud Creek mitigation site (40.1 acres) |
| Physical Environment | |
| Suspected/known Hazardous Material sites (#) | 14 – Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) 1 – Superfund site 1 – landfill |
| Other Infrastructure | 1 – Power Transmission line easement The Hendersonville Wastewater Treatment Plant is partially within the initial fieldwork area. |
| Active agricultural operations | Yes |
| Voluntary Agricultural Districts (#) | 6 properties (104 acres) |

NOTE: This table contains draft information based on initial GIS, desktop review, and site visits. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the Environmental Features Map and USGS map.

Sources

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). <http://www.fbrmpo.org/>

French Broad River MPO. 2015. 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

<http://www.fbrmpo.org/metropolitan-transportation-plan-mtp/>.

French Broad River MPO and NCDOT. 2008. *Comprehensive Transportation Plan for French Broad River MPO and Rural Areas of Buncombe and Haywood Counties*. https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CTP-Details.aspx?study_id=French%20Broad%20River.

Henderson County. <http://www.hendersoncountync.org>.

Henderson County Comprehensive Plan. 2009. <http://www.hendersonvillenc.gov/comprehensive-plan>.

Henderson County GoMaps GIS. <http://www.hendersoncountync.org/gis/gomaps.html>

Henderson County Greenways Master Plan.

<http://www.hendersoncountync.org/agendas/October%203,%202005/DI.C.pdf>

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) – Division of Water Resources. 2014 Integrated Report.

<https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=dc44280272e4ac49d9a86b999939fec>

NCDEQ – Natural Heritage Program. 2016. <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/nhp/database-search>.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Bridges Map.

<https://ncdot.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=db3b56c3228743b3811e36761393d661>

NCDOT Functional Classification.

<http://ncdot.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?layers=029a9a9fe26e43d687d30cd3c08b1792>.

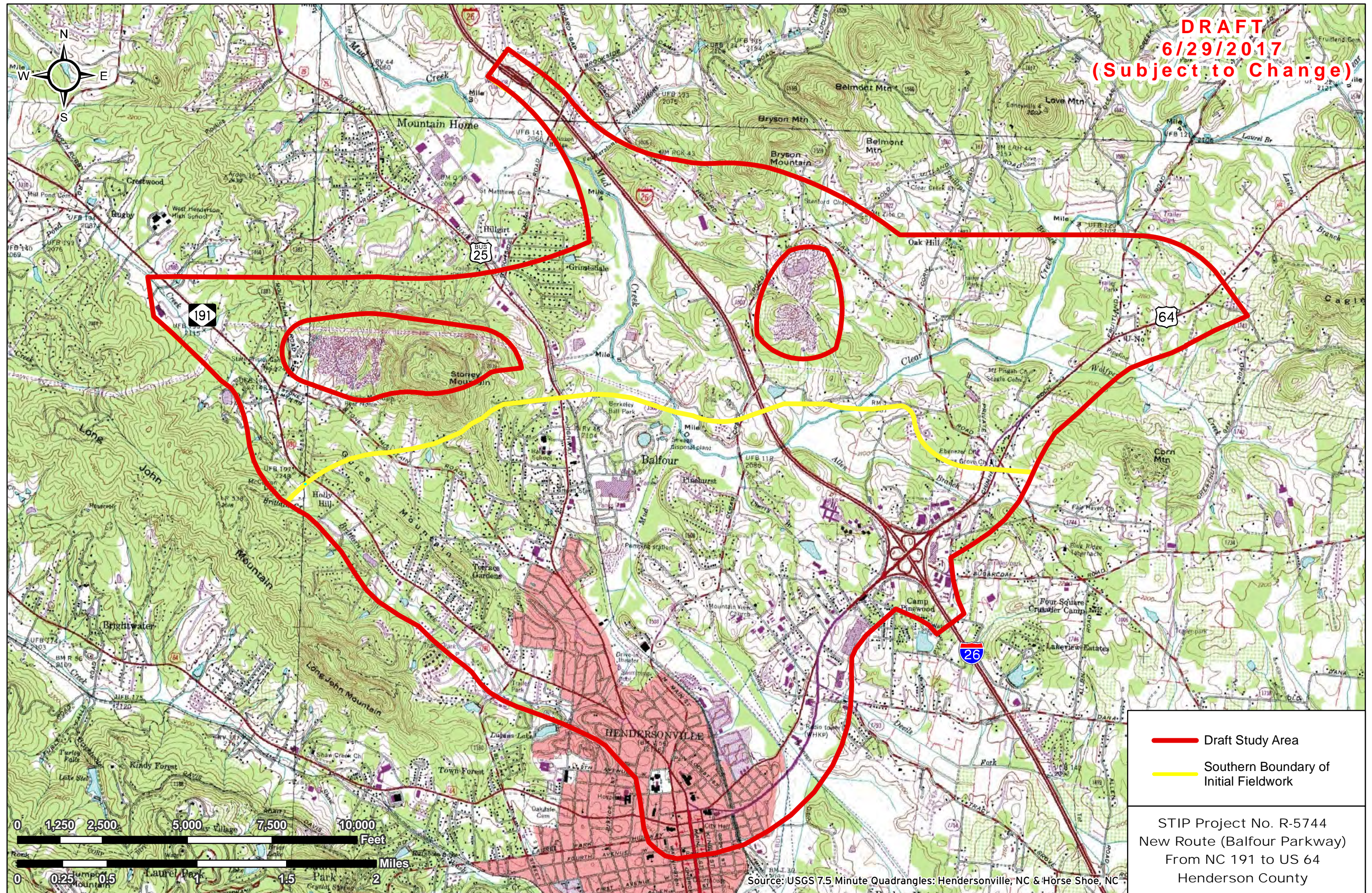
NCDOT Strategic Transportation Corridors.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/NCTransportationNetwork.aspx>

NC State Historic Preservation Office. HPOWEB GIS Service. <http://gis.ncdcr.gov/hpoweb/>.

Watco Companies. <https://www.watcocompanies.com/services/rail/>.

DRAFT
6/29/2017
(Subject to Change)



- Draft Study Area
- Southern Boundary of Initial Fieldwork

STIP Project No. R-5744
New Route (Balfour Parkway)
From NC 191 to US 64
Henderson County

Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangles: Hendersonville, NC & Horse Shoe, NC

Balfour Parkway

Summary of External Scoping Responses

Formal coordination with various federal, state, and local agencies began with the distribution of the scoping letter in October 2016. The following project-specific comments were provided:

| |
|--|
| USEPA |
| The EA should include a section addressing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change. The EPA recommends the EA estimate the direct and indirect GHG emissions that would be caused by the project. The EA should also include consideration of future climate scenarios and how they may affect the proposal and its potential impacts. The project design should incorporate measures to improve resiliency to climate change, where appropriate. |
| There are a number of hazardous waste facilities (RCRA) and toxic release inventory (TRI) facilities located along the main roads within the project study area. |
| Several streams have water quality concerns: Clear Creek, Mill Pond Creek, and Mud Creek are all listed on the Section 303(d) list of impaired waters; Featherstone Creek and Wolfpen Creek and their tributaries are located within the project study area. Please note the FEMA flood hazard zones and wetlands associated with these jurisdictional stream features. |
| There are significant populations of low income, linguistically isolated, less than a HS education located along the US 25 corridor. The over age 64 demographic is in the 80 – 90th percentile on the low end and reaches a maximum of 95 – 100th percentile throughout the entire study area. Public outreach should be mindful of these demographics and aim to be inclusive so that all can participate in public workshops and meetings. EJ issues also concern how the roadway project impacts these demographic groups environmentally. |
| TVA |
| The project will not require a Section 26a permit from the TVA; therefore, TVA involvement in the project is not required. |
| City of Hendersonville |
| The City of Hendersonville's Wastewater Treatment Plant on Balfour Road is located along the southern edge of the corridor. |
| Development activity along N. Main Street and Clear Creek Road is increasing. Development pressures are increasing in this general area. |
| Four Seasons Boulevard (US 64 east of downtown to I-26) is nearing capacity and "the sooner this project can be constructed the better it will be for the City of Hendersonville and NCDOT." |
| Henderson County |
| County facilities adjacent to the Henderson County Landfill include the school bus storage facility and the county transfer station. Also in the area is a large residential subdivision on the south side of Stoney Mountain called The Boulders. County staff made the developer aware that Balfour Parkway could be in the vicinity of their subdivision. |
| The county's Transportation Advisory Committee Chair offered the following information related to the project history: "The Balfour Parkway was developed as a solution to the "Clear Creek Connector" that failed to come into being because of certain environmental concerns at the time. It was to have |

connected the bridge across the interstate at Clear Creek with the intersection of US 25 and 191 north of downtown Hendersonville. This would have included a new interchange at Clear Creek. In addition to planning concerns the property available for the roadway began to develop and we saw acquisition costs skyrocketing. Jon Laughter, a city councilman at the time, proposed that we move the outer road further out of town and take advantage of the undeveloped land along that proposed corridor as less costly. It also offered a way to direct traffic onto a limited access roadway connecting the major arteries (US 25, US 64 E&W and 191) without forcing traffic through downtown Hendersonville.”

Tribal Historic Preservation Office – Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (THPO-EBCI)

The THPO-EBCI accepts the invitation to participate as a consulting party in compliance with 36 CFR 800.

The THPO-EBCI requests that a Phase I archaeological survey be completed within the 4.6 mile scope of the project. The proximity of the study area to the French Broad River and its tributaries raises concerns for the possibility of finding buried cultural resources, including archaeological deposits and graves.

NC Natural Heritage Program

A query of the NCHHP database indicates there are records for rare species, important natural communities, natural areas, or conservation/managed areas within the proposed project boundary and/or potentially present within a one-mile radius of the project area.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission

Trout resources are not expected; however, several listed aquatic species may be impacted by the project. The Blotched Chub (*Erimystax insignis*), Federal Species of Concern and State Threatened; Banded Sculpin (*Cottus carolinae*), State Threatened; and the Creeper (*Strophitus undulatus*), State Threatened occur in Clear Creek. The Blotched Chub also is found in Mud Creek.

Sediment and erosion control will be important to minimize impacts to rare species and prevent further degradation of area streams. We recommend sediment and erosion control measures that adhere to the Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds and strong stormwater treatment be incorporated into the project. Curb and gutter should be avoided.

Secondary and cumulative impacts to the natural resources in the project area are a major concern for this project and should be well addressed in the environmental document. Development along the new roadway will certainly occur and should be managed in a way to avoid negative impacts to water quality and fish and wildlife resources. The environmental document should detail protective measures in place for the project area. A four-lane roadway fragments the habitat and travel corridors used by wildlife. Special efforts to minimize habitat fragmentation and incorporate wildlife crossings should be used to provide a safer roadway for motorists and wildlife.

NC Division of Parks and Recreation

Several Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund park sites are located in Hendersonville. Patton Park and William H. King Memorial Park are in the study area, but outside the “initial fieldwork area.” (A map was provided.)

NC Department of Public Safety – Emergency Management

The proposed project includes encroachment within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) of numerous streams and rivers. Please refer to the North Carolina Flood Risk Information System. North Carolina EO 123 directs NCDOT to coordinate with and follow the FHWA floodplain management requirements which are found in EO 11988. Please coordinate with Dr. David Chang, NCDOT Hydraulics, to determine if proposed crossings are eligible to fall within the MOA between the NCDOT Hydraulics Section and the NC Floodplain Mapping Program.

NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch

The project is included in the FBRMPO 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), horizon years 2026-2030. NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch would like to be included in the project planning process. In addition, the MPO staff, Lyuba Zuyeva and Tristan Winkler, would also be valuable to the planning process. Brian Burch, Division 14 Project Development Engineer, should also be included in the planning process.

A traffic forecast for this project was recently completed for NCDOT by RK&K that should be reviewed by the Project Development Engineer.

NCDOT Rail Division

This project crosses the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) W-line. The W-line runs from Asheville (milepost (MP)W 0) to East Flat Rock (approximately 4 miles south of Hendersonville at MP W 24.0) with mileposts increasing from north to south. The W-line carries approximately 2 freight trains per day at speeds up to 10 mph. No passenger service currently exists on the line and is not being considered for the future. There are two private at-grade crossings included in the “initial fieldwork area.”

Being that the railroad is currently grade separated from the existing highway US 64 by a bridge, for safety reasons this office highly recommends that only a grade separation be considered in order to maintain the grade separation between the roadway and the railroad. Railroads typically like to preserve enough space under any new bridge to add a future track; however the Rail Division is of the opinion that future track would not be needed. It's not known how much additional future freight may be experienced by Blue Ridge Southern, especially if thru-rail service to Spartanburg, SC is resumed. Vertical clearance over the track needs to be 23'.

Please coordinate with Kevin Fischer of the NCDOT Structures Management Unit and Kris Moland, Chief Engineer of Blue Ridge Southern Railroad during the environmental document process and prior to any preliminary design work, to determine: any information associated with the new structure and gain access to railroad R/W.