



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**.

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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 Statement¹ and Conduct Public Hearing](#)
7. Confirm/Select a Preferred Alternative
8. Publish Final EIS¹ / Record of Decision (ROD)¹

¹ 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?

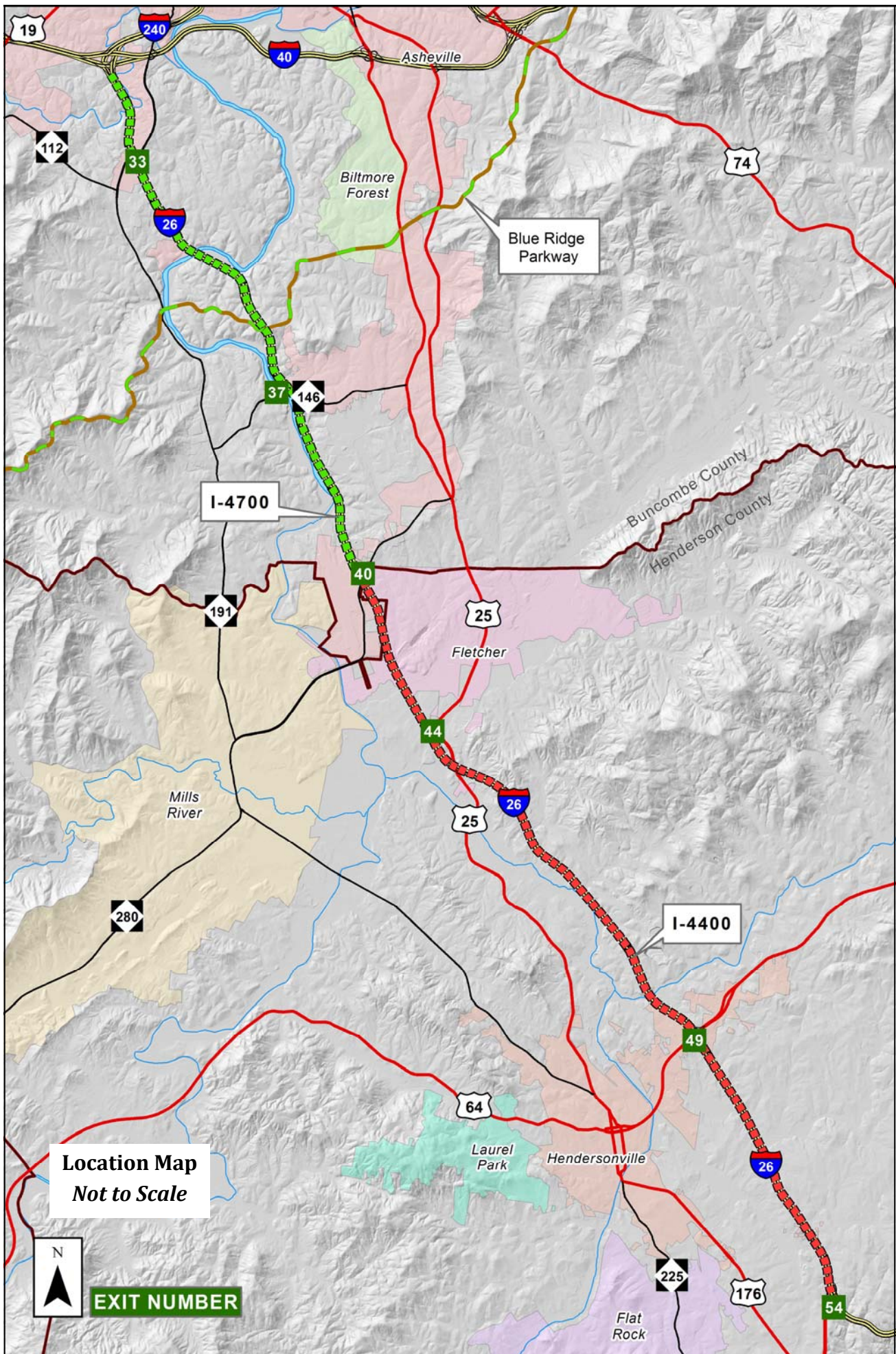
Detailed studies were conducted for three Build Alternatives. All of the alternatives would be designed to best fit within the existing right of way limits, to the extent possible, to minimize impacts.

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
Total	\$379,637,260	\$504,163,300	\$445,741,097

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?

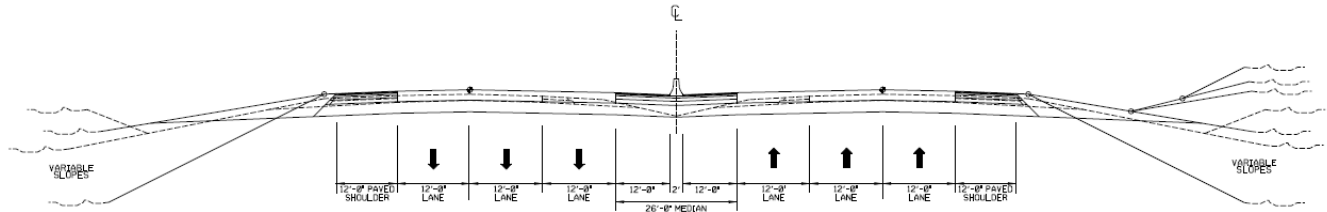
IMPACT CATEGORY	6-Lane Widening Alternative	8-Lane Widening Alternative	Hybrid 6/8-Lane Widening Alternative
Human Environment Impacts:			
Residential Relocations (Minorities)	12(4)	23(6)	18(6)
Business Relocations	1	2	1
Recurring Community / Neighborhood Impacts	No	Yes; minor relocation impacts to Brickton 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.		
Natural Resources Impacts:			
Federal Listed Species Habitat	May affect but not likely to adversely affect the Northern long-eared bat. No effect ¹ on other federally listed species in Henderson and Buncombe Counties.		
Jurisdictional Streams ² (linear feet)	21,597	27,241	24,650
Jurisdictional Wetlands ² (acres)	4.8	8.0	7.7
Floodplains:			
100-year Floodplain ² (acres)	30.1	48.2	41.8
500-year Floodplain ² (acres)	15.5	18.6	17.3
Ponds ² (acres)	0.03	0.06	0.05

¹ 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

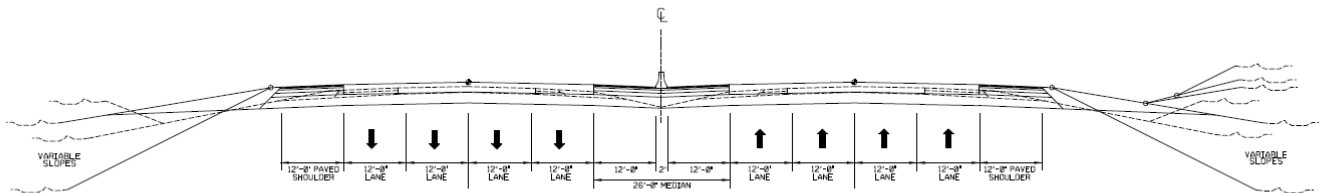
²Impacts estimated using aerial photography and include proposed functional slope stake limits plus 40 feet. Avoidance and minimization measures will be evaluated further during final design.

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, 5th Floor, Asheville

Hendersonville Planning Department

Hendersonville City Hall

145 5th Avenue East, 2nd 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.

Meeting Type: Pre-Hearing Open House & Public Hearing	Date: October 13, 2016
Location: Biltmore Baptist Church, 35 Clayton Rd, Arden	
TIP No.: I-4400/I-4700	
Project Description: 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.

Zip Code: _____	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Street Name: (i.e. Main Street) _____	Age: <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
Total Household Income: <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	Have a Disability: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Race/Ethnicity: <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): _____	National Origin: (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.

Thank you for your participation!



Please
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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



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