

MID-CURRITUCK BRIDGE STUDY

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT FOR DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT TECHNICAL REPORT

WBS Element: 34470.1.TA1
STIP No. R-2576
CURRITUCK COUNTY
DARE COUNTY

Prepared by
Parsons Brinckerhoff
909 Aviation Parkway, Suite 1500
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560

for the

North Carolina
Turnpike Authority
Raleigh, North Carolina

October 2009

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 1.0 | 1994 TO 1998 MID-CURRITUCK BRIDGE STUDIES AND REVIEW | 1 |
| 2.0 | SCOPING AND AGENCY COORDINATION..... | 2 |
| 2.1 | NEPA/Section 404 Merger Team Meetings | 2 |
| 2.1.1 | July 12, 2001 Meeting | 4 |
| 2.1.2 | August 16, 2001 Meeting | 4 |
| 2.1.3 | May 8, 2002 Meeting | 5 |
| 2.1.4 | July 24, 2002 Meetings | 5 |
| 2.1.5 | August 20, 2003 Meeting | 5 |
| 2.2 | Turnpike Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) Meetings | 6 |
| 2.2.1 | December 15, 2006 Meeting | 6 |
| 2.2.2 | January 17, 2007 Meeting | 6 |
| 2.2.3 | April 18, 2007 Meeting..... | 6 |
| 2.2.4 | May 23, 2007 Meeting | 7 |
| 2.2.5 | May 31, 2007 Meeting | 8 |
| 2.2.6 | June 20, 2007 Meeting | 8 |
| 2.2.7 | July 10, 2007 Field Trip | 9 |
| 2.2.8 | July 18, 2007 Meeting | 10 |
| 2.2.9 | September 19, 2007 Meeting | 10 |
| 2.2.10 | November 14, 2007 Meeting | 11 |
| 2.2.11 | February 5, 2008 Meeting | 12 |
| 2.2.12 | April 8, 2008 Meeting..... | 12 |
| 2.2.13 | May 6, 2008 Meeting | 12 |
| 2.2.14 | July 8, 2008 Meeting | 13 |
| 2.2.15 | October 7, 2008 Meeting | 13 |
| 2.2.16 | June 10, 2009 Meeting | 14 |
| 2.3 | Agency Coordination on Technical Documents | 15 |
| 2.3.1 | Statement of Purpose and Need..... | 15 |
| 2.3.2 | Alternatives Screening Report..... | 16 |
| 3.0 | CITIZEN AND LOCAL OFFICIALS INVOLVEMENT..... | 17 |
| 3.1 | Citizens Informational Workshops and Public Review of Project-Related Reports..... | 17 |
| 3.1.1 | July 2004 Citizens Informational Workshops..... | 18 |
| 3.1.2 | February 2008 Citizens Informational Workshops..... | 18 |
| 3.1.3 | Public Review of Statement of Purpose and Need and Alternatives Screening Report..... | 19 |

Table of Contents (concluded)

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 3.2 | Local Officials Meetings | 22 |
| 3.2.1 | July 15, 2004 Local Officials Meetings | 22 |
| 3.2.2 | June 2, 2005 Joint Local Officials and Environmental Agencies Meeting | 22 |
| 3.2.3 | October 26 and 27, 2005 Local Officials Field Trip | 23 |
| 3.2.4 | February 26 and 28, 2008 Local Officials Meetings | 23 |
| 3.3 | Local Government Resolutions and Comments | 23 |
| 3.3.1 | The Albemarle Commission | 23 |
| 3.3.2 | Currituck County | 24 |
| 3.3.3 | Town of Duck | 24 |
| 3.3.4 | Town of Nags Head | 24 |
| 3.3.5 | Town of Southern Shores | 24 |
| 4.0 | OTHER PUBLIC OUTREACH | 25 |
| 4.1 | Newsletters | 25 |
| 4.1.1 | Summer 2004 Newsletter | 25 |
| 4.1.2 | October 2008 Newsletter | 25 |
| 4.2 | Toll-Free Project Information Line | 25 |
| 4.3 | Web Site | 26 |
| 4.4 | Small Group Meetings | 26 |
| 4.4.1 | March 27, 2002 Meeting | 26 |
| 4.4.2 | July 18, 2002 Meeting | 27 |
| 4.4.3 | March 31, 2004 Meeting | 27 |
| 4.4.4 | October 12, 2009 Meeting | 28 |
| APPENDIX A: STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS | | A-1 |
| APPENDIX B: CITIZENS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS | | B-1 |

Stakeholder Involvement for Draft Environmental Impact Statement Technical Report

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that addresses the full range of alternatives and issues important to the selection of a preferred alternative can be accomplished only in consultation with those who have a stake in the decision. This technical memorandum describes the scoping process, agency coordination process, and public involvement activities, as well as the key issues and pertinent information received through these efforts during preparation of the DEIS.

1.0 1994 to 1998 Mid-Currituck Bridge Studies and Review

The Mid-Currituck Bridge Study began in mid-1994 with an alternatives study. A DEIS evaluating several alternatives for improving access and traffic service to the Currituck County Outer Banks was approved in 1998. The 1995 Notice of Intent (NOI) and the 1998 DEIS were rescinded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2008 (*Federal Register* Vol. 73, No. 107, page 31733). A new NOI was issued soon after (*Federal Register* Vol. 73, No. 116, page 34065).

In association with these earlier studies, two public hearings were held in Aydlett and Corolla in Spring 1998 to allow area citizens an opportunity to comment on the findings presented in the 1998 DEIS. During these hearings, several citizens spoke in opposition to the proposed bridge. Environmental resource and regulatory agencies also expressed opposition to the bridge project. The primary concerns were the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the bridge project on the natural environment in the project area and its environs, as well as the direct impacts in the community of Aydlett on the mainland. Since the 1998 DEIS and its review, there have been several important developments, which resulted in the decision to withdraw the original NOI. They included:

- Expansion of the project area (as defined in the current project's *Statement of Purpose and Need*; Parsons Brinckerhoff [PB], October 2008);
- Refinement of the *Statement of Purpose and Need*;
- Re-evaluation of potential detailed study alternatives in an *Alternatives Screening Report* (PB, December 2008); and

- Creation of the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) and the inclusion of a Mid-Currituck Bridge as a part of its responsibilities.

2.0 Scoping and Agency Coordination

Scoping is designed to encourage early participation of the public, elected officials, and interested governmental agencies in the decision-making process. The scoping process is intended to be a collaborative and cooperative process considering views from parties who will be affected by or who have an interest in a proposed project.

Initially, the scoping process provided a mechanism to inform the public and governmental review agencies that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was being prepared for the project. The scoping process now also includes input from the public and government agencies. This input helps to define project alternatives to be examined, identify potential impact types, and establish the goals and objectives to guide the evaluation of the alternatives. For the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study, the public was involved in scoping through Citizen Informational Workshops and small group meetings. Governmental agencies were involved in the scoping process through National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Section 404 team meetings, Turnpike Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) meetings, and local officials meetings. There are no public environmental assessments or other environmental impact statements that are being or will be prepared that are related to but are not a part of the scope of the impact statement for the Mid-Currituck Bridge.

2.1 NEPA/Section 404 Merger Team Meetings

The NEPA/Section 404 merger process was developed under an agreement between the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), FHWA, the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), and other state and federal environmental resource and regulatory agencies. From 2001 to 2006, while under the responsibility of NCDOT, the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study was coordinated through this process. The Mid-Currituck Bridge Study Merger Team included representatives from the following environmental resource and regulatory agencies in addition to NCDOT and FHWA:

- USACE;
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA);
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Raleigh Field Office;
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS);
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources—State Historic Preservation Office (HPO);

- North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR);
 - Division of Coastal Management (DCM);
 - Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF);
 - Division of Water Quality (DWQ);
 - Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC); and
- US Coast Guard (USCG).

NEPA/Section 404 Merger Team meetings allowed for early formal involvement in the project development process for state and federal environmental resource and regulatory agencies. Participating agencies were those that have an interest in the issuance of USACE dredge and fill permits for wetland and stream impacts under the terms of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The NEPA/Section 404 merger process is a streamlining effort that helps to avoid duplication of effort between the NEPA and Section 404 processes, since the USACE must meet the requirements of NEPA in order to issue a dredge and fill permit under the Clean Water Act. The NEPA/Section 404 Merger Team meetings provided an opportunity for participants to formally concur with key decisions in the NEPA impact assessment process so that project decisions are not revisited during the application process for a USACE permit.

The merger process includes the following concurrence points:

1. Concurrence on purpose and need;
2. Concurrence on the alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the environmental document;
- 2A. Concurrence on the approximate length of any proposed bridges to minimize impacts to wetlands and streams and preliminary alignment review for each detailed study alternative;
3. Concurrence on the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA);
- 4A. Concurrence that all efforts were made to avoid and minimize harm to jurisdictional resources (streams and wetlands) to the maximum extent practicable;
- 4B. Concurrence on the 30 percent complete hydraulic design; and

4C. Concurrence on permit drawings after the hydraulic design is complete and prior to the Section 404 permit application.

Concurrence Points 1, 2, and 2A occur prior to the release of a draft document (typically either an Environmental Assessment or DEIS). Concurrence Points 3 and 4A occur after public and agency review processes for a draft document. Concurrence Points 4B and 4C occur during project final design.

The sections that follow describe the six NEPA/Section 404 Merger Team meetings related to the development of the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study. At the time these meetings occurred, the project was the responsibility of NCDOT. An interim agreement related to Concurrence Point 1 was reached as a result of these meetings. Minutes for these meetings are included in Appendix A.

2.1.1 July 12, 2001 Meeting

The purpose of the first NEPA/Section 404 Merger Team meeting was to discuss the planned direction of the new (i.e., post-1998 DEIS) Mid-Currituck Bridge Study planning studies and to receive comments and feedback from key NCDOT staff in order to develop a project work plan. Issues discussed at the meeting were:

- NC 12 through Duck is one of the major bottlenecks into the Currituck County Outer Banks, with the highest traffic flow during the summer weekend;
- It had been assumed that the area was at 43 percent build-out, but it was later determined that development in Currituck County (as of 2001) is already up to 46 percent build-out and development is continuing at a moderate to rapid pace;
- Water supply is a limiting factor on development;
- Currituck County needs to be more accessible by reducing travel time;
- Development trends in Currituck County; and
- Secondary and cumulative impacts to natural resources.

2.1.2 August 16, 2001 Meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to announce that the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study had been reactivated (since it was placed on hold following agency and public review of the now rescinded 1998 DEIS). Issues discussed at the meeting were:

- The overall impact of the project on the Currituck Sound fisheries and not just the marshes and swamps;

- Funding for long-term beach renourishment;
- Roadway deficiencies and traffic flow in the project area;
- Essential Fish Habitat provisions; and
- Management goals for Currituck Sound.

2.1.3 May 8, 2002 Meeting

The main objectives of this meeting were to seek concurrence on a Statement of Purpose and Need. Issues discussed at the meeting were:

- A proposed Statement of Purpose and Need and the appropriateness of including hurricane evacuation in the statement;
- The hurricane evacuation analysis spreadsheet model (prepared by a consultant for NCDOT in 2000) and its results and reasons why the results differed from those presented in the 1998 DEIS; and
- The basis for population and traffic projections.

Concurrence was not reached.

2.1.4 July 24, 2002 Meetings

Two meetings were held on this day. The primary purpose of the morning meeting was to watch a presentation by the consultant that prepared a spreadsheet hurricane evacuation model in 2000 for use by NCDOT on this and another project on the Outer Banks. The issues discussed at the meeting focused on the model and its underlying assumptions. The afternoon meeting discussed further the hurricane evacuation model and other potential refinements to a Statement of Purpose and Need.

2.1.5 August 20, 2003 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was again to discuss a Statement of Purpose and Need, including the appropriateness of including hurricane evacuation as a part of the statement and the model being used to determine hurricane clearance times. The need to account for potential project-generated development and to revise the 2000 hurricane evacuation model also was discussed. NCDOT, FHWA, and USACE concurred with the language of a Statement of Purpose and Need as presented to the Merger Team (see minutes in Appendix A), but none of the other agencies concurred. Ultimately the Merger Team concurred with a three point purpose and need that included hurricane evacuation provided the need could be supported by empirical data. The project then was placed on hold until NCDOT could arrange for the development of a new hurricane

evacuation clearance model to provide the empirical data. The model was completed in September 2005.

2.2 Turnpike Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) Meetings

The project was adopted by NCTA in 2006. Rather than the NEPA/Section 404 merger process used by NCDOT to coordinate with and gain approval from environmental resource and regulatory agencies, NCTA chose to prepare a Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan under the terms of Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible Transportation Equity Act-Legacy for Users (SAFTEA-LU). The Project Coordination Plan establishes a process by which NCTA and FHWA will coordinate with agencies and the public throughout the project development process. Under the terms of the Project Coordination Plan, agencies are invited to participate in regular coordination meetings called Turnpike Environmental Agency Coordination (TEAC) meetings. Unlike the NEPA/Section 404 merger process, NCTA will not seek concurrence from the agencies on project milestones; however, agencies are expected to identify any issues of concern during the project development process that would result in substantial delay or denial of a permit approval. The project's final Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan, as well as invitations and agreements to participate, are included in Appendix A. The following sections summarize the TEAC meetings held for the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study. The minutes of the TEAC meetings also are included in Appendix A.

2.2.1 December 15, 2006 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan, including the project-specific plan for the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study.

2.2.2 January 17, 2007 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to provide a brief update on the project and to answer questions. Questions asked related to when a Statement of Purpose and Need would be finalized, what would happen related to financing if the widening existing roads were the preferred alternatives, the status of the toll traffic and revenue study, traffic design year, sea level rise and its impact, and hurricane evacuation.

2.2.3 April 18, 2007 Meeting

The purposes of the meeting were: to provide an update on the analysis of possibly including hurricane evacuation as an element in a Mid-Currituck Bridge Study Statement of Purpose and Need; to present the conceptual alternatives; and to provide the first and second tier of alternative screening criteria. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Hurricane evacuation model completed in 2007;
- Hurricane evacuation clearance times forecast based on that model;
- Proposed conceptual alternatives, including widening existing roads alternatives; and
- Proposed alternatives screening process.

Handouts 1, 2, and 3, included in Appendix A, were distributed at this meeting.

2.2.4 May 23, 2007 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a draft Statement of Purpose and Need, conceptual alternatives, and the analysis of conceptual alternatives. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- The three elements of a proposed Statement of Purpose and Need, traffic flow, travel time, and hurricane clearance time;
- Two widening (ER1 and ER2) and three bridge (MCB1, MCB2, and MCB3) alternatives;
- Six bridge corridor alternatives (C1 to C6); and
- The Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan.

Questions asked related to:

- Hurricane clearance times with a contraflow lane;
- Travel characteristics of a three-lane versus a four-lane bridge;
- Determination of bridge termini (including why not others further north or south);
- NC 12 widening location assumptions;
- Travel time with and without a bridge;
- Evacuation clearance times for a bridge versus widening alternatives;
- Use of a ferry instead of a bridge;
- The reason for the decision to not focus solely on the summer weekday in considering traffic flow;
- The legislative mandate for 18-hour hurricane evacuation clearance time; and

- Permitting issues.

Handout 4, included in Appendix A, was distributed at this meeting.

2.2.5 May 31, 2007 Meeting

This meeting discussed the same items as the May 23, 2007 meeting for several agency representatives that could not attend that meeting. The meeting minutes for the May 31, 2007 TEAC meeting are combined with the minutes for the May 23, 2007 TEAC meeting in Appendix A. Questions discussed at this meeting related to:

- Point of safety assumed in the hurricane evacuation model's evacuation times;
- A desire for a field visit to view the proposed alternatives (which was agreed to and held on July 10, 2007);
- Study area for the hurricane evacuation plan;
- Reasons bridge corridors further south were eliminated;
- Whether the use of reversible lanes for hurricane evacuation was considered;
- High displacements associated with widening NC 12 to four lanes in Dare County;
- Water service on the Outer Banks;
- Colonial water bird usage of marsh islands;
- Project financing; and
- Permitting issues.

2.2.6 June 20, 2007 Meeting

The purposes of the meeting were: to address and finalize comments and concerns on project purpose and need; to provide additional data and answer questions regarding alternatives; to distribute another draft of the Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan; and to provide logistical and preparatory information regarding the July 10, 2007 field visit. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Purpose and need wording;
- Ferry service as an alternative;
- Highway improvement alternatives (with a Mid-Currituck Bridge and without a bridge), their potential impacts, and their capability of being funded;

- Outcome of June 7, 2007 meeting with Currituck County officials;
- Contraflow lane management for hurricane evacuation;
- Traffic volume and levels of service differences between the alternatives; and
- Need for secondary and cumulative impact assessment.

Handouts 5, 6, and 7, included in Appendix A, were distributed at this meeting.

2.2.7 July 10, 2007 Field Trip

On July 10, 2007 the NCTA hosted a field trip for the TEAC, providing an opportunity for its members to view the project area's natural and cultural resources in the field. The following observations were made by the participants:

- Mainland
 - The C5/C6 bridge corridor appears to be the least desirable because it would fragment a more contiguous tract of Maple Swamp (large blocks of uninterrupted forest are important for bears, migratory birds, etc.), and also would affect more of the bay forest that is listed as a Significant Natural Heritage Area.
 - The design of the US 158 interchange needs to be examined to look for opportunities to minimize impacts to Great Swamp.
 - Would a bridge that would replace existing Aydlett Road be a possibility?
 - Preservation of the large loblolly bay community south of Aydlett Road in Maple Swamp was of high interest as a mitigation option.
 - Improving or enhancing the hydrologic exchange between areas in Maple Swamp north and south of Aydlett Road would be a possible mitigation activity.
- Outer Banks
 - Opinions were expressed that the bridge corridors being considered were preferred in the following order:
 1. C1/C3/C5 bridge corridor but adjusted south to avoid bridging marsh.
 2. C1/C3/C5 bridge corridor unchanged.
 3. C2/C4/C6 bridge corridor because it would bridge both Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) marsh and maritime forest wetlands.

- The C1/C3/C5 bridge corridor was preferred because it would affect less wetland (CAMA marsh, freshwater marsh, and maritime swamp).
- The C1/C3/C5 bridge corridor wetland impacts could be substantially reduced with a slight adjustment to the south (coastal fringing wetland is very narrow and disturbed with invading phragmites).

The bridge corridors referenced are shown and described in Handouts 2 and 4 in Appendix A. A summary of the July 10, 2007 field trip also is included in Appendix A.

2.2.8 July 18, 2007 Meeting

The purposes of the meeting were to present a revised draft Statement of Purpose and Need and receive initial agency comments and questions, as well as to present the analysis of conceptual alternatives and answer questions. The group also discussed highway improvement and bridge corridor alternatives and their merits, functional design plans for the alternatives, funding constraints, and the hurricane evacuation statute. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- The 18-hour hurricane evacuation clearance time as a legislative mandate;
- Sources of transportation funding;
- Reasons for relocations (property take only versus property and building take);
- Toll revenues and demographics of toll users;
- Design features of alternatives that might be altered to reduce impacts;
- Which alternatives should be dropped from further consideration based on screening results; and
- Definition of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) habitat.

NCTA agreed to investigate several of the questions raised at the meeting. Handout 8 was distributed at this meeting. A revised version of Handout 8 based on meeting comments is included in Appendix A.

2.2.9 September 19, 2007 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss responses to questions raised at the July 18 meeting and included in agency letters sent to NCTA (see Appendix A) following that meeting. The NCTA also presented its recommendation for alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the DEIS. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Ferry alternatives;
- Hurricane evacuation findings;
- Storm water runoff from a Mid-Currituck Bridge;
- SAV mitigation;
- Detailed study alternatives and the need to assess non-bridge alternatives in detail in the DEIS (which were not included in NCTA's recommendation);
- Need for assessment of secondary and cumulative impacts with widening alternatives even if a widening alternative is not one of the detailed study alternatives; and
- Uncertainty that a bridge project could be fully funded by tolls.

A revised Handout 8, as well as Handouts 9 and 10, were distributed at the meeting (see Appendix A). Handout 9 responded to agency comments and Handout 10 presented the NCTA's recommendation for detailed study alternatives.

2.2.10 November 14, 2007 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results of environmental field studies, including SAV mapping, wetland delineations, and tree surveys in Maple Swamp. An assessment of three potential US 158/Mid-Currituck Bridge interchange configurations and seven potential NC 12 bridge termini locations based on suggestions made by agency representatives at the July 10, 2007 field trip also was presented. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Growth areas and potential growth areas for SAV;
- Wetland boundaries;
- Sampling method for the Maple Swamp tree survey;
- Performance, cost, and environmental concerns of the proposed corridors;
- Historic resources surveys; and
- Positive and negative attributes of the individual US 158 interchange and NC 12 termini options for the proposed bridge.

Handout 11, included in Appendix A, was distributed at the meeting.

2.2.11 February 5, 2008 Meeting

The purposes of the meeting were to prepare for distribution of the draft *Alternatives Screening Report* (PB, 2008) and provide an overview of upcoming Citizens Informational Workshops. The status of a Statement of Purpose and Need and the merits of a 2-, 3-, and 4-lane Mid-Currituck Bridge also were discussed.

2.2.12 April 8, 2008 Meeting

The purposes of the meeting were to present a draft Statement of Purpose and Need and a draft Alternatives Screening Report, and to review public comments from the February 2008 Citizens Informational Workshops. The agency representatives were asked to review and provide comments on a revised draft Statement of Purpose and Need and a draft Alternatives Screening Report prior to the May 2008 meeting. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- The need to address sea level rise in the DEIS; and
- A draft Statement of Purpose and Need and a draft Alternatives Screening Report were not available for public comment at the February 2008 Citizens Informational Workshops. NCTA indicated that a separate citizen review period would be provided (see Section 3.1.3).

Handout 12, included in Appendix A, also was distributed at the meeting.

2.2.13 May 6, 2008 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss agency comments on the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and draft Alternatives Screening Report, which had been provided to the agencies at the April 8, 2008 TEAC meeting. Written comments were received from USEPA and NCDENR-DWQ in advance of the May TEAC meeting (see Appendix A). Also discussed were a planned Public Private Partnership Predevelopment Agreement for a project developer/contractor/financier and a May 7, 2007 Industry Forum to present the project to prospective developers, contractors, and financiers.

Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Concerns related to the system efficiency component of the purpose and need, which was new to this draft Statement of Purpose and Need;
- Concerns related to the dropping of alternatives from the alternatives to be studied in detail in the DEIS because sufficient funding was not available; and
- Public comments on the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and draft Alternatives Screening Report.

A revised Section 6002 Project Coordination Plan also was distributed for comment at the meeting.

2.2.14 July 8, 2008 Meeting

The first purpose of the meeting was to discuss NCTA's responses to agency comments on the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and draft Alternatives Screening Report. It was agreed that NCTA would drop system efficiency as a component of the draft Statement of Purpose and Need. It was also agreed that alternatives ER2 and MCB2 would be evaluated in detail in the DEIS in addition to MCB4, which was recommended in the draft Alternatives Screening Report. The second purpose of the meeting was to discuss the scope of work for ER2 and MCB2. Specific issues discussed during the meeting related to scope included:

- SAV impact assessment;
- Wetlands delineation findings presentation and mitigation opportunities;
- Indirect and cumulative impacts on the non-road accessible portion of the Outer Banks;
- Potential for development on the mainland near the bridge terminus at US 158;
- NC 12 drainage issues;
- Documentation on why bridge corridors further south were dismissed early in the alternatives screening process;
- Private funding sources ability to finance improvements on existing roads;
- Addressing financial feasibility in the DEIS; and
- Addressing construction phasing in the DEIS.

Handouts 13, 14, and 15, included in Appendix A, were distributed at the meeting.

2.2.15 October 7, 2008 Meeting

The purposes of the meeting were to present East Carolina University's work on the indirect and cumulative effects (ICE) assessment and discuss design concepts for detailed studies of the MCB2 and ER2 alternatives. Specific issues discussed during the meeting included:

- ICE process and study area spatial boundaries;
- Activities potentially causing ICEs;

- Land suitability and future land use;
- Economic development study and impact analysis;
- The need to include mitigation in the ICE assessment;
- NC 12 drainage study;
- Construction cost increases; and
- The status of the planned Predevelopment Agreement.

Handout 16, included in Appendix A, was distributed at the meeting.

2.2.16 June 10, 2009 Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on DEIS preparation and to discuss the potential for inclusion of an additional Mid-Currituck Bridge mainland approach road design option (Option B) in the detailed study alternatives being evaluated in the upcoming DEIS. The following items were discussed at the meeting:

- Selection of Private Partner. NCTA has selected the Currituck Development Group (CDG) as the private partner for the Mid-Currituck Bridge project. CDG will not be responsible for the NEPA process. NCTA, with the assistance of Parsons Brinckerhoff, will continue to guide the project through the NEPA process.
- DEIS and Technical Reports. Based on coordination with FHWA, the DEIS will be a smaller document that will be more reader friendly to the public. Details on the purpose and need, alternatives screening, affected environment, and environmental consequences will be presented in technical reports. A hard copy of the DEIS will be provided to TEAC members, along with a compact disc (CD) containing the technical reports. Hard copies of technical reports also will be provided upon request. Handout 17, included in Appendix A, was distributed for this discussion.
- MCB2 and MCB4 Mainland Approach Road Design Options. The mainland approach road to the Mid-Currituck Bridge incorporates a bridge through Maple Swamp (Option A). NCTA proposed a new, second design option (Option B) that would involve: removing Aydlett Road; restoring Maple Swamp in the Aydlett Road right-of-way; placing Aydlett Road traffic on the bridge approach road which would pass through Maple Swamp on fill instead of a bridge (with provisions for maintaining the swamp's hydrology and wildlife passage); and providing access to Aydlett from the bridge approach road. The toll plaza would be placed in Aydlett. Tolls would be collected electronically, but there would still be provision of cash lanes for approximately 10 years. With Option B, there would be approximately 600 acres within Maple Swamp that would be "landlocked" (would not have access to a

public road). NCTA would seek to buy, preserve, and restore timbered land within these 600 acres. With Option A, 230 acres of landlocked parcels would be purchased.

NCTA anticipates there will be comments and concerns with this new option from the residents of Aydlett. NCTA has informed a County Commissioner and the County Manager that NCTA is considering this design option. The reason for adding this design option is cost. Based on then current estimates, Option B could save the project \$60 million, even after accounting for purchasing and preserving the approximately 600 acres in Maple Swamp.

TEAC representatives agreed that NCTA could add Option B as a detailed study design option. Handout 18, included in Appendix A, was distributed for this discussion.

The need for a follow up TEAC meeting was discussed. USEPA requested that a follow up meeting occur prior to submission of the DEIS. NCDENR-DCM suggested that TEAC may want to have someone from the Natural Heritage Program come to the next meeting to talk about Maple Swamp. It was discussed that Charlan Owens (District Planner with NCDENR-DCM in Elizabeth City) would be good to have at the meeting to discuss the CAMA land use plan as it relates to indirect and cumulative effects.

2.3 Agency Coordination on Technical Documents

The NCTA requested comments on the April 2008 drafts of the Statement of Purpose and Need and the Alternatives Screening Report. These documents were distributed at the April 8, 2008 TEAC meeting. Written comments were received from: USACE; USEPA – Region 4; NCDENR – DMF; NCDENR – DWQ (Transportation Permitting Unit); NCDENR – DCM; NCDENR – WRC; and the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources – State HPO. Comments were discussed at the May 6, 2008 TEAC meeting and summarized by agency in Handout 14. In addition, NCTA sent a letter to TEAC meeting participants on July 2, 2008, to inform the agencies of NCTA’s decision to remove the statement “providing a new transportation link” from the Statement of Purpose and Need, as well as the decision to include ER2 and MCB2 as detailed study alternatives in the DEIS, in response to agency comments. A summary of the principal agency comments on the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and the draft Alternatives Screening Report is presented in the following sections. The agency comment letters, May 6 TEAC meeting minutes, July 2008 NCTA letter to the agencies, and Handout 14 are included in Appendix A.

2.3.1 Statement of Purpose and Need

In general, agency comments on the April 2008 draft Statement of Purpose and Need requested that the statement “providing a new transportation link” be removed as a

purpose of the project because the agencies are concerned that this statement would eliminate all potential alternatives except the bridge alternatives. The agencies did not want this to be the case because they believe that there are other reasonable alternatives besides a bridge alternative. The following are specific comments provided by the agencies:

- There is an “Issue of Concern” with the fourth item in the April 2008 draft Statement of Purpose and Need. It was requested that the NCTA remove “providing a new transportation link” from the Statement of Purpose and Need.
- Recommended that the NCTA remove the final need, “The absence of a connecting link between the Currituck County mainland and the Currituck County Outer Banks results in inefficient, out-of-direction travel, and is inconsistent with the State’s officially adopted transportation system plans.” This should not be a need by which alternatives are measured.
- In the revised Statement of Purpose and Need, the list of planned improvements in Section 1.7.3 should include TIP Project No. U-3815. This project would upgrade the intersection of US 64 and NC 345 near Manteo in Dare County.
- The final purpose and need of this project was not established prior to the selection of the detailed alternatives.
- The addition of the following project need was noted: “The need to improve system efficiency by providing an additional link between the Currituck County mainland and its Outer Banks.” The agencies believe that this additional statement narrowly defines the project need and dictates a new location alternative.

2.3.2 Alternatives Screening Report

Agency comments on the April 2008 draft Alternatives Screening Report noted that there should be a full range of alternatives compared as part of the NEPA documentation. The agencies believe that a non-bridge alternative should be studied in the DEIS to fully assess direct and indirect impacts and to have a full range of feasible and comparable alternatives for public review. The following are comments provided by the agencies:

- The ER2 alternative should be retained for detailed study. The reasons why included: its potential for less wetland, habitat, and natural resource impacts; a desire to have a non-bridge alternative for detailed study; and a disagreement that its slightly higher displacements, poor affordability, and lesser travel benefits are not suitable reasons for its elimination.
- The agencies expressed concern over the consideration of affordability as a criterion for selecting detailed study alternatives. Agencies believe that feasibility from an

economic standpoint should not be a part of the decision because none of the alternatives considered that offered substantial travel benefits had sufficient committed funds to cover the full cost of the project.

- It was requested that MCB2 be carried forward in the DEIS because it has much greater system traffic improvement benefits than MCB3 or MCB4.
- The agencies recommended that MCB3 be eliminated as an alternative for further study because its hurricane clearance times are the worst of the alternatives. MCB3 would not have additional system benefits over MCB4 other than a cost savings of \$7 million. Additionally, it was stated that the scope and components of the MCB3 and MCB4 alternatives are nearly identical.
- It was indicated that alternatives ER1 and MCB1 are not reasonable and could be eliminated based on higher potential impacts to the human and natural environment and higher (more than double) capital costs than the other alternatives.
- It was stated that avoidance and minimization begins with alternative selection and continues through the selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative (LEDPA). If the NEPA process concludes that impacts on resources in Currituck Sound, especially fishing and wildlife, are significant with the bridge alternatives, but all non-bridge alternatives were dropped prior to NEPA review, then the 401 Water Quality Certification application would require that a non-bridge alternative be evaluated in detail to ensure that proper avoidance and minimization of impacts has occurred.

3.0 Citizen and Local Officials Involvement

3.1 Citizens Informational Workshops and Public Review of Project-Related Reports

The Citizens Informational Workshops provided an opportunity for the general public to discuss the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study and its findings with members of the study team. Citizens Informational Workshops were held in July 2004 and in February 2008 (see Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). The agendas were informal and the public was invited to attend at any time during a three-hour period, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The general public also was given the opportunity to review and comment on specific project-related reports (see Section 3.1.3) that were released in April 2008.

3.1.1 July 2004 Citizens Informational Workshops

Three Citizens Informational Workshops were held on July 15, 21, and 22, 2004 to:

- Present and discuss study requirements, activities, and schedule; and
- Present and discuss a Statement of Purpose and Need.

The Citizens Informational Workshops were held in Corolla (July 15, 2004) at the Hampton Inn, in Southern Shores (July 21, 2004) at the Pitts Center, and in Poplar Branch (July 22, 2004) at Griggs Elementary School. At these meetings, 194 persons registered their presence. On display were several boards which summarized the history of the project, a Statement of Purpose and Need, the study process and schedule, and the traffic study findings. Representatives from the study team were present to discuss findings, receive comments, and answer questions. Copies of the workshop handouts are included in Appendix B. Comments were requested and received at all three workshops. Key issues raised by the citizens in their comments were:

- Traffic projections seemed to be based on simplistic assumptions;
- Concerns about property values and community cohesion and quality of life within the Town of Southern Shores should NC 12 be widened;
- Support for the bridge for public safety reasons and as a hurricane evacuation route;
- Opposition to the widening of NC 12 through the Towns of Southern Shores and Duck and points northward;
- Opposition to the Mid-Currituck Bridge because of belief that it would accelerate growth and cause more traffic problems;
- Belief the bridge should be “decoupled” from the other highway improvements being considered and studied separately; and
- Concerns about the cost of the bridge.

3.1.2 February 2008 Citizens Informational Workshops

Three Citizens Informational Workshops were held on February 26, 27, and 28, 2008 to:

- Provide the public an opportunity to learn about the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study; and
- Provide the public an opportunity to discuss project concerns and issues with the study team.

The Citizens Informational Workshops were held in Corolla (February 26, 2008) at the Hampton Inn, in Southern Shores (February 27, 2008) at the Pitts Center, and in Poplar Branch (February 28, 2008) at Griggs Elementary School. At these meetings, 568 persons registered their presence. On display were several boards which summarized the proposed project alternatives. Representatives from the study team were present to discuss findings, receive comments, and answer questions. Copies of the workshop handouts are included in Appendix B.

A total of 104 comment forms were received from the three workshops (61 from Corolla, 22 from Southern Shores, and 21 from Poplar Branch). A summary of the comments is included in Appendix B. Key issues raised by the citizens were:

- Reduction of traffic congestion;
- Improved hurricane evacuation;
- Enhanced access to the Outer Banks and mainland, as well as their associated services and economic bases;
- Concerns about the natural resources in the area;
- Concerns about historic and archeological resources in the area;
- Concerns that habitat and wildlife would be threatened by construction of a bridge; and
- Concerns that the bridge would cause a reduction in the visual and aesthetic quality of the area.

3.1.3 Public Review of Statement of Purpose and Need and Alternatives Screening Report

On April 7, 2008 the NCTA released a draft Statement of Purpose and Need and a draft Alternatives Screening Report for the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study. These documents were delivered to project area municipal offices in Currituck, Corolla, Kitty Hawk, Southern Shores, and Duck, and posted on the project web site. Stakeholders were notified of the release of these documents through a postcard mailing (see Appendix B) and via the project web site.

A total of 65 public comments were received. These comments were submitted by e-mail, conventional mail, and telephone, as well as by formal comment sheets distributed through the project web site. A summary of the comments is included in Appendix B. The October 2008 newsletter sent to citizens on the project mailing list to discuss the final decisions related to the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and the detailed study alternatives is also included in Appendix B. Ten public comments specifically

referenced the draft Statement of Purpose and Need or the draft Alternatives Screening Report. These comments are summarized in the following two sections. Additional general project comments received are summarized in a third section.

3.1.3.1 Statement of Purpose and Need-Related Comments

Five citizens made comments that specifically referenced the draft Statement of Purpose and Need. Several of these comments included questions regarding the methodology used for numbers cited in the report. These comments included:

- Two comments that inquired about methodologies used for population statistics. These comments asked for clarification of who was included in population counts and how population was projected.
- Two comments that contested the stated traffic congestion problems. These comments argued that traffic congestion is infrequently experienced and does not constitute a need.

These commenters generally opposed construction of a Mid-Currituck Bridge. One comment was a general statement of approval for the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and the project. One comment disputed the right of communities outside of Currituck County to have input for this study and did not want a copy of the report to be available in those locations south of the county line.

3.1.3.2 Alternatives Screening Report-Related Comments

Eight citizens made comments that specifically referenced the findings of the draft Alternatives Screening Report. These comments generally opposed construction of a Mid-Currituck Bridge. Comments included:

- One comment was a general statement of approval for the draft Alternatives Screening Report and the project.
- One respondent that felt that noise, visual, and community cohesion impacts to the Town of Aydlett were neglected in the draft Alternatives Screening Report. It was suggested that the environmental impacts be minimized by utilizing a corridor through a former shooting club (now “The Currituck Club,” a developing subdivision).
- One respondent noted that billboards that she owned adjacent to US 158 near the proposed interchange with the bridge were not included in the assessment of business impacts in the draft Alternatives Screening Report.
- One respondent, a mainland Currituck resident who resides on the land where the proposed bridge interchange with US 158 would occur, felt that the trumpet

interchange design would have less impact than the “Y” interchange design because the “Y” interchange could interfere with drainage.

- One respondent felt that traffic patterns support inclusion of widening existing roads alternatives because drivers that use the proposed bridge would still contribute to traffic in Southern Shores and Duck as they use NC 12 to access shopping and restaurants.
- One respondent misinterpreted the draft Alternatives Screening Report and thought that the NCTA was recommending widening of NC 12 through Southern Shores and Duck. This respondent requested that the NCTA reconsider that recommendation.

3.1.3.3 General Project Comments

The majority of comments received (47) expressed a preference for and/or against various project alternatives. These comments included:

- Comments in favor of a bridge alternative noted that a bridge would improve accessibility and reduce traffic congestion, travel time, and fuel costs. Enhanced hurricane evacuation capacity also was a frequently cited benefit of a bridge.
- Several comments noted that the bridge would not actually completely solve the area’s traffic congestion problems.
- Several respondents expressed opposition to the bridge because of direct displacement of property.
- Some comments stated concern that habitat and wildlife would be threatened by the construction of a bridge and the resulting increase in automobile traffic.
- Some respondents noted concern that a bridge would encourage over-development and commercialization of the Outer Banks. They frequently cited the need for growth management.
- There were concerns that the bridge would impact neighborhoods and communities. Some of these comments referred to the direct impacts of bridge landings, while others referred to the indirect impacts of increased automobile traffic.
- There was concern that the bridge would provide easy access to criminals that would take advantage of empty houses on the Outer Banks during the off-season.
- There was concern that the bridge would cause a reduction in the visual and aesthetic quality of the area.
- There was considerable concern that widening roads would damage the distinctive community character.

- Several respondents noted that they felt widening the existing roads would have negative impacts on the economy of the area, as it would deter tourists from visiting the area.
- Some comments stated preference for improvement of existing roads. Several comments noted opposition to alternatives that included improvement of existing roads.
- Several comments were in favor of the No-Build Alternative and explained that traffic congestion was primarily a problem during summer weekends, and that this limited problem is an acceptable inconvenience considering the proposed alternatives.
- One comment requested that bicycles be included in the planning of a Mid-Currituck Bridge. This respondent cited a NCDOT study that found that investment in bicycle facilities on the Outer Banks resulted in positive economic impact. The respondent suggested that inclusion of bicycle facilities on a bridge would lure greater numbers of tourists to the Outer Banks.

3.2 Local Officials Meetings

3.2.1 July 15, 2004 Local Officials Meetings

Two separate meetings for local officials from Dare and Currituck counties were held on July 15, 2004 in association with the July 2004 Citizens Informational Workshops. At both meetings the project team delivered a presentation, accompanied by a slide show, which provided a summary of the study activities, the planned study area, the traffic flow analysis, and the planned Statement of Purpose and Need. The slides used in the presentation and summaries of the two meetings are presented in Appendix B. The focus of the comments received from the local officials was on collaboration with environmental resource and regulatory agencies.

3.2.2 June 2, 2005 Joint Local Officials and Environmental Agencies Meeting

A joint meeting with local officials and environmental resource and regulatory agencies was held on June 2, 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how these groups might work together during the study process. Participants included: local elected officials from the Towns of Duck and Kitty Hawk; the Town Managers of Southern Shores, Duck and Kitty Hawk; the Currituck County Manager; a planner from Dare County; NCDENR – DCM; NDENR – DWQ; NCDENR – WRC; USFWS; USACE; FHWA; and NCDOT. No additional joint meetings were held because NCTA and

FHWA decided that they were not needed. The minutes from this meeting are presented in Appendix B.

3.2.3 October 26 and 27, 2005 Local Officials Field Trip

Representatives from Kitty Hawk, Southern Shores, Duck, and Currituck County, as well as the private group “Build the Bridge – Preserve Our Roads” attended. The trip began with a pre-meeting on October 16 to discuss issues to be addressed in project studies and concerns raised by regulatory agencies. Discussion points over the two day trip included: pedestrian/bicycle crossings and facilities on NC 12, development trends, impacts of an interchange at the intersection of US 158 and NC 12, storm water runoff along NC 12, hurricane evacuation, potential end points for a Mid-Currituck Bridge on the Outer Banks, the potential for extending NC 12 into Virginia, and the desirability of not providing access to a Mid-Currituck Bridge from the community of Aydlett.

3.2.4 February 26 and 28, 2008 Local Officials Meetings

Two separate meetings for local officials from Currituck and Dare counties were held on February 26 and 28, 2008 in association with the February 2008 Citizens Informational Workshops. At both meetings the project team delivered a presentation, accompanied by a slide show, which provided a summary of the study activities, the findings in a draft Statement of Purpose and Need, and the results of the preliminary alternatives analyses. The slides used in the presentation and a summary of the two meetings are presented in Appendix B. The primary focus of the comments received from the local officials was on the cost of tolls on tourists, public/ private financing, and the impacts of widening alternatives on the local communities.

3.3 Local Government Resolutions and Comments

Official project-related resolutions were received from The Albemarle Commission, Currituck County, and the Towns of Nags Head and Southern Shores. A letter also was received from the Town of Duck commenting on detailed study alternatives recommendations presented at the Local Officials Meetings on February 26 and 28, 2008. These resolutions and the letter are summarized below and included in Appendix B.

3.3.1 The Albemarle Commission

On April 2, 2008, the Albemarle Commission adopted a resolution in support of a Mid-Currituck Bridge. The Commission found that construction of a Mid-Currituck Bridge would insure safety and have a positive impact on Currituck County’s Land Use Plan and Transportation Plan in light of: increased numbers of residents and visitors to the Currituck County Outer Banks; a single current means of ingress and egress to the

Currituck County Outer Banks; significant summer traffic congestion; and increased congestion during hurricane evacuation.

3.3.2 Currituck County

On March 3, 2008, the Currituck County Commissioners adopted a resolution indicating their strong support of the construction of a Mid-Currituck Bridge. On October 19, 2009, the Currituck County Commissioners adopted a resolution indicating their opposition to prohibiting left turns at the Waterlily Road/US 158 intersection, their preference for Mid-Currituck Bridge mainland approach road design Option A, and their opposition to Option B.

3.3.3 Town of Duck

In a letter dated March 19, 2008, the Town of Duck indicated that they were pleased hurricane evacuation was included in the draft Statement of Purpose and Need and that they did not believe widening existing roads would meet the project's purpose and need. Regarding potential detailed study alternatives, they indicated that the diversion of through trips by a Mid-Currituck Bridge would make for a safer bicycle and pedestrian environment along NC 12 in Duck. They also expressed concern about property impacts associated with right-of-way acquisition for a three-lane NC 12, indicated widening on NC 12 would not be in keeping with the Town's land use plan, and indicated their preference for alternatives MCB3 and MCB4 as detailed study alternatives.

3.3.4 Town of Nags Head

On April 9, 2008, the Town of Nags Head Board of Commissioners formed a Board consensus to support the recommendation of the NCTA on the proposed Mid-Currituck Bridge. The Board supported only studying bridge alternatives and suggested eliminating the widening of NC 12 north of US 158 from consideration. The Board agreed that hurricane evacuation is an important justification for the project. The Board felt that a bridge alternative would reduce the number of vehicle trips through the Town of Duck.

3.3.5 Town of Southern Shores

On March 8, 2008, the Town of Southern Shores Town Council passed a resolution supporting a Mid-Currituck Bridge, financing the bridge through tolls, and opposing the widening of NC 12 in Southern Shores.

4.0 Other Public Outreach

The NCTA also implemented several other public outreach efforts to keep the public informed about the project and its status. These included newsletters, a toll-free project information line, a web site, and small group meetings.

4.1 Newsletters

The NCTA maintains a mailing list of people who own property along the bridge corridor and NC 12 and of other stakeholders interested in the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study. Two newsletters were prepared and mailed to the approximately 10,900 individuals and organizations on the project mailing list.

4.1.1 Summer 2004 Newsletter

The NCTA mailed a newsletter to everyone on the project's mailing list in the summer of 2004. It is included in Appendix B. The newsletter introduced the purpose of studying bridge corridor alternatives and presented the corridors under consideration. The newsletter also indicated how to contact the study team, including via a toll-free project information line (see Section 4.2).

The newsletter invited community groups and other stakeholders to call or write if they wanted additional information or to provide comments on the project. It also announced the three Citizens Informational Workshops held on July 15, 21, and 22, 2004. The newsletter was also available at these workshops.

4.1.2 October 2008 Newsletter

The NCTA mailed a second newsletter to everyone on the project's mailing list in October 2008. It is included in Appendix B. The newsletter introduced the alternatives selected for detailed study, discussed potential public/private funding partnerships, summarized comments from the February 2008 Citizens Informational Workshops, and displayed the project timeline. The newsletter also indicated how to contact the study team, including via a toll-free project information line (see Section 4.2). The newsletter invited community groups and other stakeholders to call or write if they wanted additional information or to provide comments on the project

4.2 Toll-Free Project Information Line

A toll-free project information line (1-800-961-5465) was established for the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study in 1994 and continues to be maintained. It enables the public to

talk directly to senior members of the study team in order to obtain answers to their questions about the project and make comments at any time during the study.

4.3 Web Site

The NCTA established a project web site for the Mid-Currituck Bridge Study (<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/mid-currituck-bridge/>). The web site is accessed through the internet and provides information that is updated regularly on all aspects of the project, including:

- Newsletters and Citizens Informational Workshop handouts and displays;
- Project-related announcements;
- The October 2008 revised Statement of Purpose and Need;
- The April 2008 draft Statement of Purpose and Need;
- The April 2008 draft Alternatives Screening Report;
- Mid-Currituck Bridge Study schedule; and
- Study team contact information.

The web site also allows citizens to submit their comments and questions about the project via e-mail. Members of the study team respond directly to these comments and questions.

4.4 Small Group Meetings

The NCTA invites community groups and other stakeholders to arrange small group meetings with the study team. This provides an opportunity for citizens to obtain additional information and provide comments on the project. Small group meetings have been conducted with several stakeholder groups, including the following: Duck Civic Association, citizens from the Town of Southern Shores, Build the Bridge – Preserve Our Roads, Inc., and the Aydlett community. The following sections summarize these meetings. Meeting minutes are included in Appendix B.

4.4.1 March 27, 2002 Meeting

On March 27, 2002 a small group meeting was held from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. with the Duck Civic Association at the Duck Fire Station on NC 12. Local media also attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the

project to the group, including project history, current status, and future NCDOT plans, as well as to answer questions. The following issues were discussed during the meeting:

- Hurricane evacuation;
- Traffic congestion;
- NEPA/404 Merger Process; and
- Community impacts within the project corridor.

4.4.2 July 18, 2002 Meeting

On July 18, 2002 a small group meeting was held from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. with citizens from the Town of Southern Shores at the Pitts Center. Approximately 215 people attended the meeting, including the public, Town officials, and representatives from the local media. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the status of the project. The following issues were discussed during the meeting:

- Widening NC 12 to four lanes;
- Safety along NC 12;
- Traffic forecasts; and
- Hurricane evacuation.

At the meeting, some citizens gave attendees the opportunity to sign their petition requesting that NC 12 not be widened to four lanes.

4.4.3 March 31, 2004 Meeting

On March 31, 2004 a small group meeting was held from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. with the Build the Bridge – Preserve Our Roads organization. Local elected officials and media also attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the status of the project to the group. The following issues were discussed during the meeting:

- Hurricane evacuation;
- Community cohesion along NC 12;
- Preserving the charm and character of the Town of Southern Shores;
- Traffic congestion; and

- Speed of decision-making and project schedule.

4.4.4 October 12, 2009 Meeting

On October 12, 2009 a small group meeting was held beginning at 6:30 p.m. with representatives of the Aydlett community. Representatives of the nearby Church's Island community and other persons interested in the project also chose to attend. Local officials also attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide representatives of the Aydlett community with information about the Option B Mid-Currituck Bridge mainland approach road alternative and obtain comments on the alternative as it relates to its impact on the Aydlett community. Option A also was presented and discussed.

Most of the comments were directed to concerns about the impact of Option B on the Aydlett community, including impacts on their way-of-life and the potential for drivers to change their mind about using the bridge just before the toll plaza and use roads in the Aydlett community to return to US 158. Citizens also felt that Option B contradicted previous promises that there would be no access between the bridge project and Aydlett.

Church's Island representatives expressed their opposition to the prohibition of left turns at the US 158/Waterlily Road intersection that as of the date of the meeting was associated with Option A.

Citizens also asked general questions about the project and responded to a query from NCTA representatives regarding the types of boats they see using Currituck Sound.