

NC Transportation Network/Strategic Transportation Corridors Regional Meetings and Statewide Webinar Comments Overview

A series of eight meetings across North Carolina and one statewide webinar were conducted to present draft recommended Strategic Transportation Corridors. The schedule of meetings included:

- May 7, 2014 - Edenton and Kinston
- May 12, 2014 - Kernersville and Kannapolis
- May 13, 2014 - Wake Forest and Lumberton
- May 19, 2014 - Sylva
- May 20, 2014 - Morganton
- June 10, 2014 - Statewide webinar

Invitations to participate were distributed by email to leaders of transportation facilities and agencies (such as transit systems and airports), chambers of commerce, tourism attractions, counties, cities, economic development and agricultural organizations, and others with an interest in transportation. A total of 256 people participated in the meetings and webinar and there were 127 written comments submitted by 84 people or organizations during the meetings and comment period. The following is a breakdown by category of written comments received:

- Missing Corridors – 50
- Methodology – 25
- General – 17
- Request for Information – 16
- Presentation – 14
- Remove Corridor – 5

Discussions were similar at all meetings and the webinar. The following provides more detail about comments made and submitted.

Missing Corridors

The largest number of comments dealt with highway corridors that were not identified on the proposed STCs. In some cases, such as US 17, the corridor is already included, so it is assumed that the commenter was simply reinforcing the need to show that facility as an STC. Corridors mentioned during meeting discussions and those submitted in writing are listed below, with the number in parenthesis following the corridor identification representing the number of separate comments submitted about that corridor.

- US 158, generally through NE NC, east of Henderson(19)
- US 52 (Stanly and Anson counties) (8) (Note: US 52 in Davidson and Forsythe Counties, with pending conversion to I-285, also called for, below)
- NC 24-27 (8)
- US 601 (8)
- NC 13/NC 17 & NC 168 (6)
- US 17 (Williamston to Hampton Roads, VA) (3) (Note: US 17 was identified as a Statewide STC in proposed mapping)
- US 74W/US 74E/I-74 (I-26 to Wilmington) (4) (Note: US74/I-74 was identified as a Statewide STC in proposed mapping)
- Urban Loops (I-485 and I-277 in Charlotte) (2)
- Mid-Currituck Bridge (2)
- NC 133 (2)
- US 15/501 (Pittsboro to Sanford) (2)
- US 64 (Asheboro to Lexington)
- US 64 (western NC)(Note: this section of US 64 comprises Appalachian Development Highway System Corridor A; other comments have called for inclusion of all ADHCs.)
- NC 87 (Elizabethtown to Wilmington)
- Highways on the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) – Corridors A, K and W (Note: Corridor K was identified as a Regional STC in proposed mapping)
- US 221
- STRAHNET Connectors in Wilmington (US 117/Shipyard Blvd and North 23rd Street)
- I-74 Forsyth County
- US 441 North
- NC 60
- NC 107
- US 421 (Wilmington to Dunn)
- NC11/NC903/NC 24 (Greenville to Fayetteville)
- NC 11 (north to US 64)
- US 501 (I-85 to Roxboro)
- US 158 in Piedmont Triad area
- NC 86
- US 52 (I-85 to I-40)

Methodology

Nearly all methodology comments focused on the following aspects of the process used to identify Strategic Transportation Corridors (STC):

- An explanation is needed regarding why the team did not evaluate all 55 Strategic Highway Corridors (SHC).
- Methodology does not seem to be sufficiently multi-modal
- There is no clear difference between statewide and regional scoring, enough to demonstrate significance; consideration should be given to scoring adjustments
- There needs to be a provision for including future roadways and interstates in the analysis
- The rationale for treatment of traffic volumes in rural and urban areas is not clear, and does not seem to make a good “mobility” case.
- There should be coordination with other states, to ensure consistency with their strategic corridor planning efforts, or at least to understand them (Note: this was a consideration in developing the “Connectivity” element.)
- Visitor counts rather than sales receipts should be the data used to evaluate tourism centers. Using sales receipts favors urban areas.
- There are missing elements that should be considered (rail lines, Greer (SC) inland port, hurricane evacuation, planned large developments, shallow draft inlets)

General

There were several comments that do not fit into any other category. These were received both in writing and verbally at meetings. There were some frequently heard issues that fall into this category, including:

- The relationship of STC to STI or other funding mechanisms needs to be more transparent and understandable.
- NCDOT needs to have an established process for updating and/or revising STC
- Areas identified by the NC Department of Commerce as Tier 1 for economic development purposes (i.e., economically depressed areas) cannot achieve criteria thresholds because they do not have roads as do other areas of the state where STC exist; these areas need interstates and new roads for economic development

Several comments also noted the relationship between the environmental process and this effort.

Request for Information

There were several specific, individual questions about corridors or scoring of corridors. There was one request heard frequently both at meetings and during the webinar, and on written comments; this was that the data used to identify and score the corridors be made available to individuals and agencies.

Presentation

Again, there were some requests for specific elements to be included on the presentation maps. However, there was one comment heard frequently and consistently throughout this process about using different nomenclature in presentation materials to differentiate between STC and STI.

Remove Corridor

There were a handful of requests to remove corridors from consideration. These include:

- Corridor H (Future I-74) through the Green Swamp to Brunswick County
- NC 86 in Orange County (Note: NC 86 was not identified as a STC)
- Exchanging US 321 as a STC for US 421 from Boone, NC to Johnson City, TN

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