**Sample Merger Packet:**

**CP 2, Detailed Study Alternatives Carried Forward**

**Widening Project with Competing Resources**

INSTRUCTION SHEET – DELETE THIS PAGE BEFORE FINALIZING THE PACKET

This CP2 Merger Packet Example and Guidance is to be used for all projects in Merger.

This instruction sheet is intended to assist the writer and should not be included with the CP2 Merger Packet submittal. For additional information please see the [Merger Guidance.](https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EPU/Merger/Documents/Merger-MOU.pdf#page=45)

**Hidden Text/Guidance**

This document uses the “Hidden Text” feature of Microsoft Word to assist the writer in in the creation of a CP2 Merger Packet. Hidden text can be enabled and disabled by going to File > Options > Display and then check/uncheck Hidden text. It is highly recommended you enable the guidance text if this your first time working in this document.

The purple hidden text explains the type of information needed.

The red Example Text sections provide example language. This language is not intended to be copied and pasted exactly as stated and should be modified to change the specifics as it pertains to your project.

The blue text are hyperlinks to guidance.

**Format**

Use text formatting (i.e. font, size, bold, italics, etc.) specifically as presented in this template. Follow the header and footer format as shown.

**DETAILED STUDY ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD**

Insert STIP Description

Example TextI-240 Upgrade and Improvements

Insert County (ies)

Example TextBuncombe County

Insert STIP Project No.

Example TextSTIP Project U-4739

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Insert Division Number

Example TextDivision 13

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**MERGER CONCURRENCE POINT NUMBER 2**

***Insert Meeting Date/Time***

**Insert Table of Contents (if desired)**

**Figures**

Vicinity Map

Study Area Map

Environmental Features Map

Detailed Study Alternatives

**1. Introduction**

**This section should provide information such as the Lead federal agency and primary points of contact for the project. Also state the purpose of the meeting and if one or multiple concurrence points are being addressed.**

Example TextLead federal agency: US Army Corps of Engineers

Primary points of contact for the subject project are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Name** |
| Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) | Linda Cane |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) | Claire Patterson |
| North Carolina Department of Water Resources (NCDWR) | Clint Monderer |
| North Carolina Department of Transportation | Jo Abbott |
| HNTB | Jane Montgomery |

The purpose of this meeting is to reach concurrence on CP 2 and define the Project Study Area.

**1.1 Project Description**

This section should use the STIP description to introduce the project, provide the start and end points, the length of the project, and the project identification. It should also introduce Figure 1, the project vicinity map.

Example TextThe North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is evaluating proposed improvements to upgrade the I-240 corridor from south of the I-26/I-40/I-240 interchange through the I-240 interchange with US 19/23 74A/Patton Avenue west of the French Broad River so that I-240 can be redesignated as I-26. NCDOT is proposing upgrading the corridor to accommodate the amount and types of future traffic. NCDOT is also proposing to upgrade the I-240 interchange with US 19 23 74A/Patton Avenue to provide an interstate highway to interstate highway interchange for I-240 and future I-26. See **Figure 1** for the project vicinity.

**1.2 Cost Estimate and Merger Plan**

This section should provide a basic schedule and cost information. The project schedule should be discussed in context with the proposed Merger Plan for the project. In this section, hyperlink the phrase “Merger Plan” and link it to the location in which current merger plan for the project resides (i.e., SharePoint). Based on agency review and comment, either before or during the meeting, potential changes to the Merger Plan will be discussed in Section 8.

Example TextThe proposed project is included in the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) *2035 Long Range Transportation Plan* (2035 LRTP) and its 2016-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The proposed action is also included in the NCDOT’s 2016-2025 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and included within the NCDOT Strategic Transportation Corridor (STC) Network. The current costs for the project as estimated in the current STIP are shown in Table 1. The proposed project schedule is included in Table 2 and is based on the Merger Plan. The schedule and cost estimates are draft and subject to change.

**Table 1. 2018-2027 STIP U-4739 Cost Estimate**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Phase | Estimated Costs |
| Prior Years Cost | $1,200,000 |
| Right of Way | $1,200,000 |
| Utilities | $600,000 |
| Construction Total | $20,000,000 |
| **Total** | **$23,000,000** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2. STIP Project U-4739 Milestone Targets** | | |
| **Milestone** | **Anticipated Format** | **Schedule**\* |
| Concurrence Point 2A | Virtual/Packet Concurrence | April 2020 |
| Public Meeting | Virtual Meeting | October 2020 |
| Concurrence Point 3/4A | Virtual/Packet Concurrence | May 2021 |
| Categorical Exclusion | Electronic Distribution | July 2022 |
| Begin ROW Acquisition |  | August 2024 |
| Begin Construction |  | August 2026 |
| \*tentative, subject to change | | |

**2. Summary of CP 1 Project Purpose and Need**

**2.1 Identified Needs**

This section should include a summary of the deficiencies this project is proposed to address, as agreed upon at CP 1.

Example TextThe need for this study can be described as follows:

As concurred upon in the CP1 Merger Meeting, the Need for this project is to improve system linkage, improve traffic capacity in anticipation of higher volumes of traffic, and to improve roadway deficiencies on I-240.

**2.2 Proposed Purpose**

This section should describe the purpose of the project, as agreed upon at CP 1.

Example Text The primary purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade the Interstate corridor from I-26 south of Asheville through the US 19-23 interchange to meet design standards for the Interstate system.

**3. Project Study Area**

If changes have occurred to the Study Area since CP1, those changes should be discussed here. The study area should be shown on a figure and referenced in this section.

Example Text The Project Study Area is shown in Figure 2 and there have been no changes to the study area since CP 1.

**4. Summary of Alternatives Considered**

This section should briefly describe alternatives considered and alternatives eliminated. For more complex projects with multiple alternatives, descriptions and design criteria may be presented in an appendix to the merger packet.

Example Text

**4.1 No Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative only includes minor restoration activities to ensure the safety, maintenance, and continued operation of the existing highway. It does not require additional right of way or any improvements to the highway that would generate impacts to human or natural resources. Although it will not provide increased mobility and connectivity required to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, the No-Build Alternative will be carried forward to provide a basis for comparison with other alternatives carried forward for detailed study for this proposed action.

**4.2 Build Alternative**

The Build Alternative would widen sections I-240 West of Asheville from S. Bear Creek Rd to Sand Hill Rd. The existing three-lane roadway would be widened to a four-lane highway to accommodate 2040 traffic volumes identified in the 2019 Traffic Forecast prepared by Finley Engineering. The newly widened roadway would increase travel carrying capacity and improve roadway conditions on I-240 to meet current design standards for the Interstate system. This alternative meets the requirements of the projects Purpose and Need and therefore will be carried forward for detailed study.

**4.3. Alternatives Eliminated**

* **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Alternative**
  + Alternative will not improve traffic capacity or provide increased mobility and connectivity required to meet the Purpose and Need of the project. Therefore, the TDM Alternative will not be carried forward as a detailed study alternative.
* **Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative**
  + Alternative does not improve connectivity and mobility required to meet the Purpose and Need Statement for this project. Therefore, the TSM Alternative will not be carried forward as a detailed study alternative.
* **Upgrade to Current FHWA Interstate Standards**
  + According to the Asheville 2018 Traffic Forecast prepared by Finley Engineering, this alternative will not provide an increase in traffic capacity or provide improve system linkage required to meet the Purpose and Need of the project. Therefore, this alternative will not be carried forward as a detailed study alternative.

**5. Analysis of Build Alternatives**

This section should provide a table of impacts to environmental features analyzed in the project corridor of each alternative being carried forward.

Example Text Table 3 shows environmental features within the Project Study Area of each alternative being carried forward. Measurements were quantified using a slope stake limit of 40 feet. Streams and wetlands represent field delineated resources, though they have not been verified by the agencies at the time of this report.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3. Resource Presence in Project Study Area1** | | |
|  | | **Build Alternative** |
| Length (mile) | | 5.7 |
| Wetlands (acre) | | 47 |
| Streams (feet) | | 9,423 |
| Floodway | | 17 |
| Floodplain (acre) | 100-Year | 11 |
| 500-Year | 8 |
| Parcels | | 229 |

1Measurements quantified using slope stake limit of 40 feet

**6. Summary of Public Involvement**

**This section should include a summary of any public involvement held to date.**

Example Text A postcard announcing the start of the project was sent out on January 28, 2021. The postcard included contact information for the Project Team. To date, four calls and one email has been received. All support the project in principle. One respondent requested that a multi-use path be considered for SR 1781 (Broadway). A virtual public meeting will be held in the fall of 2020 to meet USACE permit requirements prior to the proposed LEDPA determination.

**7. Avoidance and Minimization**

**Include all documented avoidance and minimization measures discussed to-date. Use AMM Guidance from *At ALL Merger Concurrence Points and key design meetings.***

Example Text During project scoping the Project Study Area boundary was chosen in order to avoid impacts to nearby floodplains.

# **8. Merger Plan Review/Next Steps**

**This section should include a brief discussion of next steps. If packet concurrence is achieved, the Project Manager will make needed changes to the plan based on agency comment and update the plan on the project SharePoint site.  If a meeting is held, there should be a discussion about the draft Merger Plan and any changes that will be made based on agency input during the meeting.**

Example Text Based on the proposed Merger Plan for the project, NCDOT proposes the next Merger Meeting will be CP 2A (Bridging Decisions and Alignment Review). Prior to the next Merger Meeting, NCDOT will complete the Hydraulic Planning Report. It is anticipated that the CP 2A meeting will be held in three months; Merger Team members will be notified of any changes that require a revision of this timetable.