**Sample Merger Packet:**

**CP 3, Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA)/ Preferred Alternative Selection**

**Widening Project**

INSTRUCTION SHEET – DELETE THIS PAGE BEFORE FINALIZING THE PACKET

This CP3 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 CP4A Merger Packet submittal. For additional information please see the [Merger Guidance](https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EPU/Merger/Documents/Merger-MOU.pdf#page=49).

Hidden Text/Guidance

This document uses the “Hidden Text” feature of Microsoft Word to assist the writer in in the creation of a CP2A 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.

**LEAST ENVIRNOMENTALLY DAMAGING PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (LEDPA)/ PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE SELECTION**

**Insert STIP Description**

Example Text U.S. 158 Road Widening

**Insert County (ies)**

Example Text Forsyth County and Guilford County

Example Text STIP Project R-2577

North Carolina Department of Transportation

**Insert Division Number**

Example TextDivisions 7 and 9

****

**MERGER CONCURRENCE POINT NUMBER 3**

***Insert Meeting Date/Time***

Agenda (if desired)

Insert Table of Contents (if desired)

Figures (included with packet)

Vicinity Map

Environmental Features Map

Alternatives Overview Map

Project Area Photos (optional)

**1. Introduction**

**This section should provide information such as the Lead federal agency and primary points of contact for the project.**

Example TextLead federal agency: US Army Corps of Engineers

Primary points of contact for the subject project are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Name** |
| Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) | Sharon King |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) | Henry Osborne |
| North Carolina Department of Water Resources (NCDWR) | Jenna Faust |
| North Carolina Department of Transportation | Jo Merger |
| HNTB | Jane Merger |

The purpose of this meeting is to reach concurrence on the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (CP3) for the subject project.

**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) proposes to widen approximately 18.8 miles of U.S. 158 (Reidsville Road) to a multi‐lane facility, from the existing multi‐lane section north of U.S. 421/I‐40 Business in Winston‐Salem, Forsyth County, to U.S. 220 in Stokesdale, Guilford County. The proposed project is included in the 2018‐2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as project number R‐2577.

U.S. 158 is currently a mostly two‐lane, undivided facility with no control‐of‐access within the majority of the project study area. U.S. 158 is designated as a Rural Principal Arterial and provides a link between I‐40 in Winston‐Salem and U.S. 220 north of Greensboro. The proposed project would upgrade U.S. 158 to a four‐lane, median‐divided facility with a combination of no control‐of‐access and partial control‐of‐access. See Attachment A for a map of the project vicinity (**Figure 1**) and study area boundary.

**1.2 Project History and Merger Plan**

This section should briefly state the project’s history to-date and include the previous concurrence point decisions. 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).

Example Text The project is in the 2018-2027 NCDOT STIP that was approved by the NCDOT Board of Transportation on September 1, 2018, and most recently revised March 1, 2020. Right-of-way (ROW) and Construction funding are scheduled for 2022. The current STIP cost estimate is presented 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 R-2577 Cost Estimate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Phase** | **Cost Estimate** |
| Right of Way | $3,218,000 |
| Utilities | $500,000 |
| Construction | $38,546,000 |
| **Total**\* | **$42,264,000** |
| \*Includes $1,000,000 in prior years costs.  Note: cost estimates are subject to change. | |

**Table 2.** STIP R-2577 Project Schedule\*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Milestone** | **Format** | **Anticipated Date** |
| Categorical Exclusion | Electronic Distribution | October 2020 |
| CP 4A | Virtual Meeting/Packet Concurrence | December 2020 |
| CP 4B | Virtual Meeting | February 2021 |
| CP 4C | Virtual Meeting | April 2021 |
| Begin ROW Acquisition |  | June 2022 |
| Begin Construction |  | June 2022 |

\*Tentative, subject to change.

1.3 Past Merger Meetings Summary

This section should briefly discuss past merger meeting dates and public involvement efforts (if applicable). Note any major changes that may have occurred between meetings.

Example Text

* **CP 1:** Merger Meeting held on August 14, 2007 ‐ concurrence reached.
* **CP2**: Merger Meeting held on February 17, 2009 ‐ concurrence reached.
* **CP 2A**: Merger Meeting held on September 29, 2015- concurrence reached.
* **Public Involvement:**
* Citizens Information Workshops (CIWs) were held in April 2006 – one in Walkertown and one in Stokesdale. Purpose of CIWs was to introduce project to public and get comments.
* CIWs were held in April 2012 to present preliminary study alternatives under consideration.
* Design Public Meetings (DPMs) were held in April 2018 to give the public and local officials the opportunity to review maps of the Detailed Study Alternatives (DSAs). Nearly 700 members of the public attended the meetings, and 168 written comments were received.
* A post‐DPM meeting was held on November 30, 2017 to discuss and address comments received from the public.

The Design Public Meeting Maps showing the DSAs can be viewed at the following locations:

R‐2577 Alternative 1A (Northern Bypass):

<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/US158ReidsvilleRoad/download/old‐hollow‐brinkley‐map.pdf>

R‐2577 Alternative 1B (Southern Bypass):

https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/US158ReidsvilleRoad/download/us158‐nc68‐map.pdf

<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/US158ReidsvilleRoad/download/eversfield‐i73‐us220‐map.pdf>

R‐2577 Alternative 2 (Southern Widening):

<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/US158ReidsvilleRoad/download/athens‐i73‐us220‐map.pdf>

**2. Purpose and Need of the Project**

It is helpful to state the purpose and need of the project. The LEDPA chosen needs to meet the purpose and need of the project.

Example TextThe Purpose of the project is to improve the traffic carrying capacity and level‐of‐service (LOS) along U.S. 158, within the project limits. The project Need stems from existing transportation deficiencies along this section of U.S. 158 that will cause additional travel delays, increase the potential for accidents, and contribute to the inefficient operation of motor vehicles.

**3. Detailed Study Alternatives and Impacts**

**This section should discuss the designs of the detailed study alternatives carried forward from CP 2 and any major hydraulic structures concurred on at CP 2A for each alternative. A table showing the impacts to the human and natural resources should be included (Alternative Impacts Comparison Table). This section may also include NCDOT’s preferred LEDPA/Preferred Alternative.**

**For the Alternative Impacts Comparison Table, wetland, ponds, buffers and other impacts should be calculated to the nearest tenth of an acre, streams to the nearest linear foot. Make sure a note in the table states what your impacts were calculated from, i.e., slope stake limits plus 25 feet.**

Example Text

| **Table 3.** Summary of Impacts | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resource** | **Alternative 1A (Northern Bypass)** | **Alternative 1B**  **(Middle Bypass)** | **Alternative 2**  **(Southern Widening)** |
| Schools | 1 (Ravine Academy) | 2 (Ravine Academy and Agnes Elementary) | 1 (Besser Elementary) |
| Existing and Proposed Greenway Crossings | 1 (Cow Horn-Newer River Paddle Trail) | 1 (Cow Horn-Newer River Paddle Trail) | 1 (Cow Horn-Newer River Paddle Trail) |
| Places of Worship | 1 (St. Bartholomew) | 1 (Beth Meyer Synagogue) | 4 (Beth Meyer Synagogue, Holy Hopes International Fellowship, St. Bartholomew) |
| Major Utility Crossings | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 100-year Floodplain and Floodway Crossings | 1 (Duckabush River) | 1 (Duckabush River) | 1 (Duckabush River) |
| Stream Impacts\* (Linear Feet) | 2,440\*\* | 1,120\*\* | 1,230\*\* |
| Stream Crossings (Number) | 10 | 7 | 8 |
| Wetland Impacts\* (Acres) | 8.2\*\*\* | 7.9\*\*\* | 13.1\*\*\* |
| Wetland Crossings (Number) | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Stream Mitigation Sites | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Prime Farmlands / Farmlands of Statewide Importance (Acres) | 121.3 / 29.8 | 104.6 / 29.9 | 85.2 / 22.7 |
| Estimated Residential Structures Impacted | 88 | 61 | 163 |
| Estimated Business Structures Impacted | 10 | 14 | 22 |
| Hazardous Materials Sites | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Potential Low Income Population Impacts | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Potential Minority Population Impacts | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Conservation Easements | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Recreational Areas/Parks (no.) | 1 (Cow Horn-Newer River Paddle Trail) | 1 (Cow Horn-Newer River Paddle Trail) | 1 (Cow Horn-Newer River Paddle Trail) |
| Historic Properties (no.) | 1 (Kellen-May) avoids direct impacts (E) | 1 (Kellen-May House) avoids direct impacts | 3 (Vanderhorst Store, Huger-Marion House, Oakwood Historic District) (L) |

\* Impacts calculated based on slope stake limits plus an additional 40 feet.

\*\* Stream impacts reported to the nearest 10 feet

\*\*\* Wetland impacts reported to the nearest 0.1 acre

E= Eligible for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

L= Listed in NRHP

**4. Preferred Alternative/LEDPA**

**This section should describe NCDOT’s Preferred Alternative based upon the impacts and associated design for the project. The rationale for this decision should be clearly stated noting it meets the purpose and need of the project, the degree of environmental impacts of each detailed study alternative and fulfills the statutory mission and responsibility according to NEPA and Section 404. Consideration of any other relevant information, such as public feedback, should also be included.**

Example TextNCDOT is recommending Alternative 1B, Southern Bypass, as the LEDPA. Alternative 1B has the following:

* Provides Operational alignment advantages (better horizontal alignment)
* Avoids stream mitigation site easement
* Avoids conservation easement
* Fewest stream and wetland impacts
* Fewer farmland impacts
* Requires fewest residential property impacts
* Fewest historic architecture impacts

For this reason, NCDOT is recommending Alternative 1B as its Preferred Alternative.

**5. 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 TextBased on the Merger Plan for the project, NCDOT proposes the next Merger Meeting will be CP 4A (Avoidance and Minimization Measures). Prior to the next Merger Meeting, NCDOT will complete impact analyses based on refined designs and reduced slope stake limits. It is anticipated that the CP 4A meeting will be held in six months; Merger Team members will be notified of any changes that require a revision of this timetable.

**Attachments**

**It may be helpful to include attachments to the end of the packet such as agency concurrence documents, public meeting summaries and tables showing each jurisdictional resource within each alternative, their characteristics, quality rating and impact within each alternative. May add any photos in this section.**