

October 3, 2026

NEPA Scope of Work – PREFERRED SCENARIO

This project will build upon the Ocracoke Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study Scope of Work and complete the environmental review, agency coordination, consultation, and documentation necessary to support implementation of long-term transportation resilience improvements for Ocracoke Island. The Tiered EIS will evaluate ferry terminal relocation and improvement alternatives, NC 12 adaptation strategies, Hatteras Basin modifications, and associated transportation system improvements necessary to maintain long-term access to Ocracoke Island while supporting future project-specific environmental reviews for complementary multimodal transportation investments for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, transit improvements, advanced air mobility improvements, and parking expansions and mobility hub-type improvements at the Swan Quarter, Cedar Island, and/or Hatteras Island Ferry terminals.

1. Project Management and Grant Administration

This task will provide overall project management, grant administration, interagency coordination, schedule management, budget management, quality control, document management, and administrative record development necessary to support completion of the Tiered EIS and associated environmental compliance activities. The task will establish project governance and clearly define roles and responsibilities among NCDOT, NPS, FHWA, and the consultant team. Project management activities will be coordinated with completion of the NFWF-funded Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study to ensure continuity between the planning and NEPA phases of project development.

Memorandum of Agreement

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NCDOT and NPS will be developed to establish:

- | Lead agency responsibilities,
- | Project oversight procedures,
- | Environmental review responsibilities,
- | Administrative record responsibilities,
- | Review procedures,
- | Coordination expectations for completion of the Tiered EIS.

Project Management Plan

A Project Management Plan will be developed and maintained to guide completion of the Tiered EIS and associated environmental compliance activities. Project management activities will include configuration and maintenance of a Project ATLAS Workbench to support environmental review, track project decision-making, organize environmental resource information, document alternatives screening results, support agency coordination activities, and provide a centralized platform for project team collaboration throughout development of the Tiered EIS. The Project ATLAS Workbench will be maintained throughout project development and updated as information becomes available through alternatives refinement, technical investigations, agency consultation, and environmental review activities. The project management plan will also include:

- | Roles and responsibilities of FHWA, NPS, and NCDOT (based on Agency MOA)
- | Cooperating and participating agency coordination procedures
- | Administrative record management
- | Schedule management
- | Quality assurance procedures
- | Public communication procedures

Project Management Team Meetings

A project kickoff meeting will be conducted with NCDOT, NPS, and the consultant team to review the scope of work, schedule, administrative record procedures, decision-making process, and project objectives.

Up to 50 Project Management Team meetings will be conducted during the 3.5 year project. Meetings will include representatives from NCDOT, NPS, and the consultant team and will focus on project status, budget management, risk identification, key decisions, and upcoming milestones.

Administrative Record

An administrative record will be maintained throughout the project and will document information considered in agency decision-making and environmental review. The administrative record will include technical studies, consultation records, public comments, agency correspondence, concurrence documentation, meeting materials, draft and final environmental documents, and decision memoranda. The administrative record will support environmental decision-making, legal sufficiency review, and defense of the Tiered EIS if challenged. The administrative record will follow all NPS requirements and will include:

- | Agency correspondence
- | Concurrence documentation
- | Communication Logs
- | Consultation records
- | Decision memoranda
- | Project files
- | Public comments
- | Technical reports
- | Environmental documentation

Deliverables:

- | Project Management Plan
- | NPS-NCDOT Memorandum of Agreement
- | Administrative Record
- | Monthly and quarterly progress report
- | Monthly project management team meetings.

2. Community + Stakeholder Engagement

The Ocracoke Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study Scope of Work, which is scheduled to be completed concurrent with tasks included in this Scope of Work includes extensive public engagement focused on identifying transportation needs, developing alternatives, and building consensus regarding long-term transportation

access solutions. This task builds upon those efforts and provides the public involvement activities necessary to support environmental review and agency decision-making through completion of the Tiered EIS. Activities conducted under this task will focus on the alternatives advanced into environmental review, environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, agency consultation processes, and identification of a preferred alternative.

Public Scoping + Open Houses

Following publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register, a formal scoping process will be conducted to identify issues requiring detailed analysis in the Tiered EIS and solicit public input on the Purpose and Need Statement, alternatives proposed for detailed study, environmental resources, methodologies, and other issues relevant to future agency decision-making. The scoping process will also satisfy public and agency involvement requirements associated with the environmental review process.

Public scoping activities will include:

- | Up to four open house meetings
 - Ocracoke Island
 - Hatteras Island
 - Mainland Hyde County
 - Mainland Carteret County
- | One virtual scoping meeting to provide opportunities for participation by seasonal residents, visitors, property owners, businesses, and other interested parties who may not be able to attend an in-person meeting
- | Development of displays, exhibits, maps, alternative graphics, handouts, comment forms, and informational materials
- | Publication of meeting notices and availability of scoping materials through NCDOT's project website
- | Management of public comments through NPS's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) system

Comments received will be documented, evaluated, and incorporated into preparation of the Tiered EIS.

Draft EIS Review + Public Hearings

Following publication of the Draft EIS and Notice of Availability (NOA), a formal public review process will be conducted, consistent with NPS and FHWA requirements. The review process will provide opportunities for agencies, tribes, residents, businesses, visitors, and other interested parties to review the findings of the Draft EIS and provide comments on the alternatives, environmental consequences, mitigation measures, and preferred alternative.

Public review activities will include:

- | Up to four public hearings
 - Ocracoke Island
 - Hatteras Island
 - Mainland Hyde County
 - Mainland Carteret County
- | One virtual public hearing or virtual information session to supplement in-person hearings and provide opportunities for participation by off-island stakeholders
- | Hearing displays and exhibits
- | Court reporter services and preparation of hearing transcripts
- | Management of comments through the NPS PEPC system
- | Publication of hearing notices and Draft EIS availability notices through the project website and other media outlets

The Draft EIS will be available for public review during a comment period anticipated to be 45 days, consistent with the EIS review process. All comments received through PEPC, hearing testimony, written correspondence, and agency submissions will be incorporated into the administrative record and addressed in preparation of the Final EIS.

Final EIS Waiting Period

Following publication of the Final EIS and Notice of Availability, the project will enter the required waiting period prior to issuance of the Record of Decision. During this period, the Final EIS and responses to comments will be made available to agencies, stakeholders, and the public through the project website and PEPC platform.

Activities will include:

- | Publication of Final EIS availability notices
- | Continued availability of project materials through the NCDOT project website
- | Maintenance of the administrative record
- | Coordination with NPS regarding responses to agency and public comments

The Final EIS waiting period is anticipated to be 30 days prior to issuance of the Record of Decision.

Virtual + Ongoing Engagement

The Comprehensive Study concludes prior to completion of the Tiered EIS process. Ongoing engagement activities will maintain public awareness and transparency between completion of the Comprehensive Study and issuance of the Record of Decision. These activities are not intended to create additional formal public comment opportunities beyond the scoping and Draft EIS review periods, but rather to ensure that project information remains accessible throughout environmental review.

Activities include:

- | Maintaining and updating the NCDOT project website
- | Posting project updates, notices, technical memoranda, meeting materials, environmental documents, and project milestones
- | Maintaining project mailing lists and stakeholder contact databases
- | Coordination with local and regional media outlets regarding key project milestones
- | Responding to routine project inquiries and requests for information
- | Maintaining project information within NPS PEPC as appropriate

Deliverables

- | Updated Public Involvement Plan
- | Public Scoping Open House materials and documentation
- | Scoping Report
- | Public Hearing materials and documentation
- | Public Comment Database (PEPC)
- | Public Hearing Transcripts
- | Public Involvement Summary for inclusion in the Tiered EIS
- | NCDOT Project Website

3. Alternative Development and Refinement

The Ocracoke Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study (Comprehensive Study) is anticipated to establish a planning-level Purpose and Need, develop transportation system alternatives, complete conceptual engineering and planning-level environmental screening, evaluate lifecycle costs and benefits, and identify alternatives appropriate for advancement into environmental review. This task will build upon the Comprehensive Study and provide the additional analyses, technical investigations, and alternative refinement necessary to support preparation of the Tiered EIS. The task is intended to bridge the gap between the planning-level products developed through the Comprehensive Study and the more detailed alternative definitions, environmental analyses, and agency decision-making required under NEPA.

Consistent with NEPA requirements and the NCDOT Merger Process, this task will document the alternatives evaluated during the Comprehensive Study, identify the alternatives appropriate for advancement into detailed environmental review, and develop the information necessary to support Concurrence Point 2 (Alternatives Carried Forward). The alternatives advanced through this task will form the basis of the Tiered EIS alternatives analysis and environmental consequences evaluation

Review of Comprehensive Study Alternatives

The project team will review planning products developed through the Comprehensive Study to establish a foundation for the Tiered EIS. This review will evaluate the assumptions, screening criteria, engineering concepts, operational strategies, and environmental information developed during the study and determine how those products may be incorporated into the Tiered EIS process. The review will focus on alternatives developed through the Comprehensive Study and the supporting information used during alternatives evaluation, including conceptual engineering, lifecycle cost estimates, benefit-cost analysis, resilience assessments, environmental screening, and agency and public input.

Particular attention will be given to the assumptions associated with:

- | Access strategies for Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the Village of Ocracoke
- | NC 12 adaptation strategies
- | Nature-based solutions and resilience strategies
- | Ferry terminal improvement and/or relocation alternatives
- | Ferry departure and arrival schedules
- | Hatteras ferry basin modifications
- | Dredging requirements and other in water work maintenance/construction needs
- | Passenger ferry service concepts
- | Personal vehicle management strategies
- | Multimodal transportation improvements
- | Aviation and Advanced Air Mobility concepts

The review will confirm that planning products generated through the Comprehensive Study remain consistent with the Tiered EIS Purpose and Need and establish a framework for transition into environmental review.

Alternatives Screening and Carry-Forward Documentation

Alternatives developed through the Comprehensive Study will be reviewed in the context of the Tiered EIS Purpose and Need and screened to identify alternatives appropriate for detailed environmental analysis. This effort is not intended to duplicate the alternatives evaluation completed through the Comprehensive Study. Instead, it will provide the formal

documentation necessary to support future agency decision-making, satisfy NEPA alternatives requirements, and support NCDOT Merger Concurrence Point 2.

Consistent with FHWA and Tiered EIS guidance, the screening process will:

- | Document alternatives considered during the Comprehensive Study
- | Describe the screening methodology and evaluation criteria
- | Identify alternatives eliminated from detailed study
- | Identify alternatives carried forward into detailed Tiered EIS evaluation
- | Document the rationale supporting those decisions
- | Establish the alternatives framework for detailed environmental analysis

The range of alternatives advanced into the Tiered EIS is anticipated to include:

- | No Action Alternative
- | Up to four action alternatives

Alternatives carried forward into detailed evaluation will represent integrated transportation system alternatives rather than individual transportation projects. The screening documentation will be developed in a manner that supports NCDOT Merger concurrence and incorporation into the Tiered EIS. Environmental screening information, alternatives screening results, technical investigations, and alternatives refinement activities will be documented within the Project ATLAS Workbench to support comparison of retained alternatives, maintain consistency between planning and environmental review products, and facilitate agency review and concurrence activities

Additional Technical Investigations

Additional investigations will be completed for alternatives carried forward into detailed study to supplement information developed through the Comprehensive Study and support alternatives refinement and environmental analysis.

GEOTECHNICAL SCREENING

NCDOT's Geotechnical Engineering Unit will complete a geotechnical screening assessment for retained alternatives and supporting infrastructure improvements. The assessment will review available geotechnical information and evaluate constructability considerations associated with:

- | Ferry terminal improvements or construction
- | Ferry basin improvements
- | Basin and channel dredging concepts
- | NC 12 adaptation strategies
- | Potential bridge structures
- | Causeways

The assessment will identify anticipated geotechnical conditions, potential constraints, constructability considerations, and future investigation needs. This assessment will be based on a review of past geotechnical investigations conducted for bridges near the study area, including the **Marc Basnight Bridge, Pea Island Bridge, and the Rodanthe Jug Handle Bridge**. The review will summarize anticipated subsurface conditions in the study area. NCDOT's Geotechnical Engineering Unit will use the NCDOT [Geotechnical Investigation and Recommendations Manual](#), *AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specifications*, and miscellaneous FHWA geotechnical-related publications as guides. This effort will build upon

the conceptual geotechnical screening completed through the Comprehensive Study and support environmental review and alternatives evaluation.

HYDRAULIC AND COASTAL PROCESSES ANALYSIS

NCDOT's Hydraulics Unit will perform coastal hydrodynamic 2D modeling that will account for sea level rise and identify water levels and velocities at proposed bridge locations and a wave model to develop bridge height criteria for proposed scenarios through 2100. Preliminary bridge scour considerations will also be developed that will inform future design. Modeling approaches will follow procedures outlined in *HEC 25, Highways in the Coastal Environment – 3rd Edition*

HATTERAS BASIN BATHYMETRIC SURVEY AND NAVIGATION ASSESSMENT

A bathymetric survey and navigation assessment will be completed to evaluate existing conditions and operational requirements associated with changes to the Hatteras Basin required for the retained action alternatives. The assessment will evaluate:

- | Existing basin depths
- | Navigation constraints
- | Dredging requirements
- | Vessel maneuverability
- | Hatteras ferry basin modifications
- | Larger vessel accommodation requirements
- | Ramp size to accommodate different vessel classes
- | Facilities relocation needs (i.e. Operations building and Maintenance Facility)
- | Sedimentation and maintenance dredging implications

The assessment will support refinement of ferry service alternatives and evaluation of transportation system performance associated with retained alternatives.

NATURAL RESOURCE SURVEYS

Field investigations and environmental resource evaluations will be completed to support environmental review and future consultation requirements. Activities may include:

- | Wetland delineation
- | Stream delineations
- | Threatened and endangered species habitat assessments + species surveys
- | Submerged aquatic vegetation assessments
- | Essential Fish Habitat assessment

Results of wetland delineations and aquatic resource investigations will be submitted through the USACE Regulatory Request System (RRS) for a jurisdictional determination. Information developed through the jurisdictional determination process will support alternatives refinement, Merger Concurrence Point 3, future Section 404 permitting, and development of the Natural Resources Technical Report.

ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Archaeological surveys will be conducted to identify archaeological resources within areas potentially affected by retained alternatives and provide information necessary to support environmental review and future agency consultation activities. The level of investigation will be sufficient to identify known and previously unidentified archaeological

resources, evaluate potential constraints associated with retained alternatives, and support alternatives refinement and environmental analysis. Activities may include:

- | Records review and background research
- | Review of previously recorded archaeological sites and investigations
- | Development of archaeological survey methodologies and work plans
- | Coordination regarding Areas of Potential Effects
- | Phase I archaeological investigations
- | Archaeological field surveys within areas potentially affected by retained alternatives
- | Preparation of site forms, mapping, and supporting documentation
- | Evaluation of archaeological resource sensitivity
- | Identification of archaeological constraints and opportunities to avoid impacts through alternative refinement

Information developed through archaeological investigations will be used to support alternatives comparison, environmental consequences analysis, alternative refinement, and future cultural resource coordination activities. Results will be incorporated into the Tiered EIS and used to identify archaeological considerations associated with retained alternatives. Consistent with the Tiered EIS approach, investigations will be completed at a level sufficient to support environmental decision-making while recognizing that additional project-specific investigations may be required during final design and permitting.

Alternative Definition and Refinement

Alternatives advanced into detailed study will be refined and documented to establish a consistent basis for environmental review and alternatives comparison. The Comprehensive Study will develop transportation system alternatives at approximately 25 percent design and evaluate location, service model, and multimodal transportation considerations. This task will refine those concepts and clearly define the infrastructure, operational, and transportation components associated with each retained alternative.

Alternative refinement will establish assumptions and design concepts necessary to support detailed environmental analysis. Alternative refinement will focus on transportation infrastructure and operational components anticipated to be evaluated within the Tiered EIS, while maintaining sufficient flexibility for future project-specific environmental review of supporting multimodal transportation improvements advanced through subsequent NEPA documents.

FERRY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS

As applicable, each retained alternative will define:

- | Ferry basins
- | Bulkheads
- | Dredging and in water maintenance/construction
- | Turning basins
- | Maintenance dredging requirements
- | Shoreline stabilization
- | Nature-based shoreline protection
- | Ferry slips
- | Vehicle loading ramps and staging areas
- | Passenger loading facilities
- | Maintenance berths
- | Dolphins and navigation aids

- | Operations buildings
- | Maintenance buildings
- | Employee housing facilities
- | Facility support equipment and infrastructure, including emergency generators and water and wastewater systems
- | Ticketing facilities
- | Vehicle staging and stacking areas
- | Parking facilities
- | Utility systems
- | Fueling systems
- | Security infrastructure

NC 12 COMPONENTS

As applicable, each retained alternative will define:

- | Roadway realignments
- | Elevated roadway segments
- | Causeways
- | Bridge structures
- | Utility relocation corridors
- | Nature-based shoreline protection
- | Access roads
- | Beach access accommodations
- | Cape Hatteras National Seashore access modifications
- | Emergency access provisions
- | Resilience and adaptation elements
- | Right of Way Needs
- | Bicycle and Pedestrian Opportunities
- | Staging Areas, phasing, and detours

TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS

As applicable, each retained alternative will define:

- | Ferry fleet assumptions
- | Vessel requirements
- | Ferry service frequencies
- | Passenger ferry operations
- | Freight transportation strategies
- | Vehicle access management strategies
- | Emergency access provisions
- | Visitor access strategies
- | ORV access assumptions
- | Recreation access assumptions
- | Utility accommodations
- | Multimodal strategies to support ferry and roadway operations (incorporating NCDOT's complete Streets Policy and process)

The alternatives developed through this task will provide the basis for environmental consequences analysis and alternatives comparison within the Draft EIS. Consistent with recommendations regarding Tiered EIS development, alternatives will be developed to a level sufficient to support informed decision-making.

Alternatives Evaluation

Following completion of alternatives screening, technical investigations, and alternative refinement, retained alternatives will be evaluated to support preparation of the Draft EIS and subsequent agency decision-making regarding alternatives carried forward through the Tiered EIS process.

The evaluation will build upon information developed through the Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study and incorporate findings from environmental investigations conducted under this task. Results of this effort will be documented in the Draft EIS Alternatives and Environmental Consequences chapters and will support Merger Concurrence Points 2 and 3 and the identification of a preferred alternative.

Deliverables

- | Alternatives Screening and Carry-Forward Technical Memorandum
- | Geotechnical Screening Technical Memorandum
- | Hydraulic and Coastal Processes Technical Memorandum
- | Hatteras Basin Bathymetric Survey and Navigation Assessment Technical Memorandum
- | Archaeological Survey Technical Memorandum
- | Field Investigation Documentation

4. Merger Process + Agency Coordination

This task will establish and implement a coordinated environmental review process that integrates the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), agency consultation requirements, environmental permitting considerations, and the NCDOT Merger Process to support efficient project delivery and timely environmental decision-making. The task is intended to build upon planning-level coordination completed during the Ocracoke Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study Scope of Work and provide the formal agency coordination, consultation, and concurrence activities necessary to support completion of the Tiered EIS and future project implementation. The project will utilize the long-standing agency relationships established through NCDOT's Merger Process and will incorporate One Federal Decision principles, early issue resolution, and concurrent reviews wherever practicable.

Consistent with the preferred Tiered EIS approach, this task will focus on transportation system improvements associated with ferry terminal infrastructure, Hatteras Basin modifications, dredging requirements, and NC 12 resilience improvements while establishing a framework for future environmental review of complementary multimodal improvements advanced through subsequent project-specific NEPA documents.

Agency Coordination Plan + Early Agency Scoping

An Agency Coordination Plan will be developed at the initiation of the Tiered EIS process. The plan will establish the framework for agency participation throughout project development and define communication protocols, consultation responsibilities, review procedures, schedules, and key decision points. The Agency Coordination Plan will be consistent with the environmental review process requirements of 23 USC 139 and will be used to guide coordination among NPS, FHWA, NCDOT, regulatory agencies, tribes, and other governmental partners throughout completion of the Tiered EIS.

The Agency Coordination Plan will:

- | Establish agency roles and responsibilities
- | Define opportunities for agency review and input
- | Establish coordination procedures and communication protocols
- | Define consultation schedules
- | Establish procedures for issue resolution
- | Develop an environmental review schedule coordinated with the Merger Process and Tiered EIS schedule
- | Identify opportunities to integrate permitting reviews and environmental consultations into the NEPA process

Early agency scoping meetings will be conducted to obtain agency input regarding the Purpose and Need Statement, alternatives proposed for detailed study, environmental resources requiring detailed evaluation, technical methodologies, consultation requirements, and permitting considerations. Information obtained through agency scoping will be used to refine the Tiered EIS scope of analysis and identify potential issues requiring early resolution.

Cooperating and Participating Agency Invitations

Following preparation of the Agency Coordination Plan and publication of the Notice of Intent, invitations will be issued to agencies in accordance with 23 USC 139. Agency invitations will describe the proposed project, identify anticipated roles and responsibilities, and provide opportunities for agencies to participate in the environmental review process.

Potential agencies may include:

- | Federal Highway Administration
- | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- | NOAA Fisheries
- | U.S. Coast Guard
- | North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
- | North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
- | Hyde County
- | Dare County
- | Carteret County
- | Albemarle RPO
- | Other agencies identified through project scoping

Agency responses, participation status, and coordination responsibilities will be documented in the administrative record and incorporated into the Agency Coordination Plan.

Tribal Notification + Consultation

Consistent with NPS responsibilities for government-to-government consultation, NPS will initiate consultation with federally recognized tribes with an interest in the project area. Project staff will support consultation activities through development of materials, meeting support, documentation, and coordination. Consultation activities will be coordinated with Section 106 consultation and development of the Tiered EIS.

For cost-estimating purposes, consultation activities will include:

- | One consultation meeting with each of the following tribes: Catawba Indian Nation, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, and Tuscarora Nation
- | Follow-up correspondence and consultation support as needed

Consultation documentation will be incorporated into the administrative record and used to support Section 106 compliance and development of the Tiered EIS.

Merger Process

The project will utilize the NCDOT Merger Process to streamline environmental review, build agency consensus, and reduce the risk of project delays associated with late-stage regulatory concerns. The Merger Process integrates NEPA, Clean Water Act permitting requirements, and resource agency reviews into a coordinated decision-making framework and establishes formal concurrence points at key project milestones.

The project will support completion of:

CONCURRENCE POINT 1 (PURPOSE AND NEED)

Building upon planning-level work completed through the Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study, agencies will review and confirm the Tiered EIS Purpose and Need Statement and project study area. The concurrence package will include supporting technical information, planning studies, transportation needs, resilience considerations, and agency and public input.

CONCURRENCE POINT 2 (ALTERNATIVES CARRIED FORWARD)

Following completion of Task 3, agencies will review alternatives screening results, alternatives proposed for advancement into detailed environmental study, and alternatives proposed for elimination from detailed consideration. The concurrence package will document alternatives considered, alternatives carried forward, and the rationale supporting those decisions. Concurrence Point 2A may be required if any of the alternatives carried forward include bridges.

CONCURRENCE POINT 3 (LEDPA)

Following development of environmental impact information, agencies will review alternatives with a focus on impacts to waters of the United States, wetlands, aquatic habitats, and resources relevant to future Clean Water Act permitting decisions. Activities will support identification of a Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) and coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

CONCURRENCE POINT 4A (AVOIDANCE + MINIMIZATION)

Following identification of a preferred alternative, agencies will review proposed avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. Activities will support future permitting, consultation, and implementation.

One agency concurrence meeting is assumed for each concurrence point, together with preparation of supporting concurrence documentation and issue-resolution meetings as necessary.

Agency Consultation

Environmental consultations will be initiated early and conducted concurrently with development of the Tiered EIS whenever practicable. Consultation activities will support development of the Draft EIS, completion of environmental compliance requirements, and preparation of future permit applications and implementation activities. Consistent with the Tiered EIS framework, consultation activities will occur at a level sufficient to support corridor-level decision-making while establishing a framework for additional project-specific environmental reviews, permitting, and design activities.

SECTION 106 CONSULTATION

Section 106 consultation will be conducted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act and will build upon information developed through environmental investigations and alternative refinement activities. Activities will include:

- | Development of Areas of Potential Effect
- | Historic resource evaluations
- | Archaeological investigations as needed
- | Effects determinations
- | Consultation with SHPO
- | Consultation with tribes
- | Consultation with other consulting parties
- | Development of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures if necessary

For planning purposes, assume up to three Section 106 consultation meetings. Consultation outcomes will support Draft EIS preparation and future project development activities.

SECTION 7 ESA CONSULTATION

- | Consultation will be conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries regarding threatened and endangered species and critical habitats. Consultation activities may include:
- | Effects determinations
- | Species habitat assessments
- | Development of consultation packages
- | Biological Assessment preparation
- | Informal consultation
- | Formal consultation if required

For planning purposes, assume:

- | Up to three coordination meetings with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- | Up to three coordination meetings with NOAA Fisheries

Consultation outcomes will support completion of the Draft EIS and future permitting activities.

SECTION 4(F) COORDINATION

Coordination with Officials with Jurisdiction will be conducted regarding parks, recreation areas, historic properties, wildlife refuges, and other resources protected under Section 4(f). Activities may include review of alternatives, evaluation of avoidance alternatives, minimization measures, and documentation needed to support future Section 4(f) determinations.

Assume up to two Section 4(f) coordination meetings.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT COORDINATION

Coordination will occur with the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management to support future consistency determinations. Activities will evaluate consistency of retained alternatives with North Carolina coastal management policies and identify issues requiring additional analysis.

Assume up to two Coastal Zone Management Act coordination meetings.

ADDITIONAL AGENCY COORDINATION

Additional coordination meetings may be conducted as necessary to address permitting, consultation, issue resolution, resource concerns, alternatives refinement, or agency review comments.

Assume up to ten additional agency coordination meetings throughout project development.

Deliverables

- | Agency Coordination Plan
- | Participating and Cooperating Agency Invitation Letters
- | Agency Scoping Materials and Meeting Documentation
- | Tribal Consultation Documentation
- | Merger Concurrence Point 1 Package
- | Merger Concurrence Point 2 Package
- | Merger Concurrence Point 3 Package
- | Merger Concurrence Point 4A Package
- | Section 106 Consultation Documentation
- | Biological Assessment
- | Section 4(f) Evaluation Documentation
- | Coastal Zone Management Coordination Documentation
- | Agency Consultation Tracking Database
- | Agency Meeting Summaries and Correspondence

5. NEPA Document and Environmental Compliance

This task completes the Tiered Environmental Impact Statement (Tiered EIS) and associated environmental compliance requirements necessary to support a Record of Decision for long-term transportation and resilience improvements serving Ocracoke Island. The Tiered EIS will evaluate transportation system alternatives advanced through Task 3 and refined through the agency coordination and consultation activities completed in Task 4. The Tiered EIS will focus on transportation infrastructure and operational improvements necessary to maintain resilient access to Ocracoke Island while supporting future tiered environmental reviews for complementary multimodal improvements.

Consistent with the preferred scenario, the Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study is anticipated to establish planning-level purpose and need, complete alternatives development, advance alternatives to approximately 25 percent design, complete planning-level environmental screening, and identify alternatives suitable for advancement into NEPA. This task builds upon those planning products and completes the environmental review, consultation integration, impact analysis, public review, and federal decision-making processes required for implementation of transportation infrastructure improvements.

The Tiered EIS approach is intended to support implementation-ready decisions regarding ferry terminal infrastructure, Hatteras Basin modifications, dredging requirements, and NC 12 resilience improvements while allowing future project-specific environmental reviews for supporting multimodal transportation improvements.

Notice of Intent

Following completion of preliminary coordination activities, a Notice of Intent (NOI) will be prepared and published in the Federal Register to formally initiate the Tiered EIS process. The NOI will notify agencies, tribes, stakeholders, and the public of the environmental review process and provide information regarding opportunities for participation throughout

development of the Tiered EIS. Publication of the NOI initiates the formal EIS process and begins the environmental review schedule established through the Agency Coordination Plan.

The NOI will include:

- | Purpose and Need summary
- | Preliminary project description
- | Preliminary alternatives description
- | Anticipated environmental issues
- | Anticipated permits, reviews, and consultations
- | Environmental review schedule
- | Public involvement opportunities
- | Participating and cooperating agency information
- | Project contact information

Scoping

Scoping activities initiated through Tasks 2 and 4 will be summarized and incorporated into the Tiered EIS process. Scoping results will be used to confirm the Purpose and Need Statement, establish the range of alternatives carried forward into detailed evaluation, identify environmental resources requiring detailed study, and define methodologies for environmental analysis. Agency comments, tribal comments, and public comments received during the scoping period will be documented and considered during preparation of the Tiered EIS.

A Scoping Report documenting agency and public input received during the NOI comment period will be prepared.

Purpose and Need Statement

The Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study is anticipated to establish a planning-level purpose and need for improved transportation access, resilience, and mobility. Building upon that planning-level work, the Tiered EIS will develop and document a formal Purpose and Need Statement suitable for federal decision-making and environmental review. The Purpose and Need Statement will establish the transportation problems to be addressed, define the objectives of the proposed action, and provide the framework for alternatives evaluation and selection of a preferred alternative.

The Purpose and Need Statement will address:

- | Maintenance of essential transportation services
- | Long-term transportation access to Ocracoke Island
- | Ferry system resilience
- | NC 12 resilience and reliability
- | Emergency response and evacuation
- | Freight movement
- | Access to and from Ocracoke Village
- | Access to Cape Hatteras National Seashore
- | Climate adaptation and resilience

Draft EIS

The Draft EIS will evaluate retained alternatives advanced from Task 3 and document the environmental consequences associated with each alternative. Consistent with Tiered EIS principles, the analysis will focus on

issues ripe for decision while avoiding unnecessary project-level design detail that is more appropriate for future environmental reviews.

ALTERNATIVES CHAPTER

The Draft EIS will document:

- | Purpose and Need
- | No Action Alternative
- | Retained Action Alternatives
- | Alternatives considered but dismissed
- | Alternative screening process
- | Alternative development process
- | Alternative refinement activities
- | Transportation infrastructure components
- | Transportation operations assumptions

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Affected Environment chapter will build upon inventories and planning-level environmental screening conducted through the Comprehensive Study and incorporate additional information developed through Tasks 3 and 4.

Natural environment topics may include:

- | Wetlands
- | Surface waters
- | Coastal waters
- | Floodplains
- | Water quality
- | Threatened and endangered species
- | Critical habitat
- | Essential Fish Habitat
- | Submerged aquatic vegetation
- | Fisheries resources
- | Shoreline processes
- | Sediment transport
- | Erosion
- | Shoaling
- | Climate change
- | Sea level rise
- | Coastal hazards

Human environment topics may include:

- | Land use
- | Community characteristics
- | Population demographics
- | Environmental Justice
- | Community cohesion
- | Tourism and economic activity

- | Freight movement
- | Public services
- | Emergency response
- | Visitor access
- | Visitor experience
- | Recreation access
- | Scenic resources
- | Cultural resources
- | Historic resources
- | Section 4(f) resources
- | Utility infrastructure

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Environmental Consequences chapter will compare retained alternatives using the environmental comparison framework established in Task 3 and evaluate direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with each retained alternative. Environmental consequences analyses will be based upon:

- | Information developed through the Comprehensive Study
- | Additional technical investigations completed in Task 3
- | Agency consultation activities completed through Task 4
- | Resource inventories and field investigations
- | Alternatives definition and refinement

A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) will be prepared in accordance with NCDOT practices to evaluate the effects of retained alternatives on the residents, businesses, institutions, and visitors that rely upon transportation access to and within Ocracoke Island. The CIA will build upon the Community Access Needs Assessment developed through the Ocracoke Comprehensive Transportation, Access, and Resilience Study Scope of Work and will provide a detailed evaluation of community-level impacts associated with retained alternatives. The assessment will document existing community conditions, identify populations that may be disproportionately affected by transportation changes, and evaluate the social and economic consequences of retained alternatives. Findings from the CIA will support comparison of retained alternatives, identification of mitigation measures, environmental justice evaluation, and preparation of the Draft EIS Environmental Consequences chapter.

A Natural Resources Technical Report (NRTR) will be prepared to document existing environmental conditions, field investigations, and anticipated impacts to natural resources associated with retained alternatives. The NRTR will support development of the Draft EIS, Biological Assessment, Section 7 consultation, Clean Water Act review, and agency coordination activities. Resources evaluated may include wetlands, surface waters, floodplains, submerged aquatic vegetation, Essential Fish Habitat, threatened and endangered species, critical habitat, water quality, fisheries resources, coastal processes, and other natural resources identified through project scoping and consultation.

The Environmental Consequences chapter will form the primary basis for comparison of alternatives and identification of a preferred alternative.

MITIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

The Draft EIS will identify avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for potential environmental impacts and document environmental commitments associated with retained alternatives. Mitigation measures developed through

Section 106, Section 7, Section 4(f), Coastal Zone Consistency, and other consultation processes will be incorporated as appropriate.

Draft EIS Review

Following internal review and approval by NPS, the Draft EIS will be filed, and a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published. The Draft EIS will be available for agency, tribal, stakeholder, and public review during a minimum 45-day review period. Public hearings described in Task 2 will occur during the Draft EIS review period. Comments received through PEPC, written correspondence, hearing testimony, and agency review will be compiled and documented as part of the administrative record.

The Draft EIS review process will include:

- | Internal NPS review
- | NCDOT review
- | Cooperating agency review
- | Participating agency review
- | Publication of NOA
- | Public review period
- | Public hearings
- | Comment collection and management
- | Development of comment response matrix

NCDOT Special Use Permit and/or Right-of-Way Permit Applications

Implementation of transportation infrastructure improvements evaluated through the Tiered EIS may require authorization from the National Park Service for permanent and temporary use of lands within Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Transportation infrastructure, utility facilities, construction staging areas, dredging activities, shoreline stabilization features, ferry terminal facilities, and related improvements may require one or more authorization mechanisms prior to implementation. Documentation requirements, application procedures, and approval pathways will be coordinated with NPS throughout development of the Tiered EIS to ensure that environmental analyses, engineering information, and consultation activities provide the information necessary to support future authorization requests. Transportation infrastructure evaluated through the Tiered EIS will be developed to a level sufficient to inform future NPS authorization decisions while remaining consistent with the planning-level nature of the Tiered EIS.

Activities may include:

- | Coordination with NPS regarding land authorization requirements
- | Evaluation of potential authorization pathways
- | Identification of information required to support future authorization requests
- | Development of conceptual exhibits and mapping to support future applications
- | Compilation of environmental compliance documentation needed for future authorizations
- | Coordination regarding Special Use Permit requirements, Right-of-Way authorization requirements, easements, or other authorization mechanisms as applicable to retained alternatives
- | Development of supporting materials for future NPS review and approval processes

Final EIS

Following completion of the Draft EIS review period, comments received from agencies, tribes, stakeholders, and the public will be analyzed and responded to, consistent with NPS guidelines and processes. The Final EIS will document changes resulting from agency coordination, consultation, environmental analysis, and public review and will identify a preferred alternative for implementation.

The Final EIS will include:

- | Responses to comments
- | Updated environmental analyses
- | Updated consultation status
- | Refined mitigation commitments
- | Preferred Alternative
- | Environmental commitments
- | Monitoring commitments

Final EIS Review

Following approval by NPS, a Notice of Availability will be published for the Final EIS. The Final EIS will be available for agency and public review for a minimum 30-day waiting period prior to issuance of a Record of Decision. The Final EIS review process will include legal sufficiency review and completion of any remaining agency consultation activities.

Activities include:

- | NPS review
- | NCDOT review
- | Cooperating agency review
- | Legal sufficiency review
- | Publication of Final EIS NOA
- | 30-day waiting period

Decision Documents

FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

Pursuant to NPS requirements, a Floodplain Statement of Findings will document the evaluation of floodplain impacts associated with the selected alternative, identify avoidance and minimization efforts, and document the basis for permitting occupancy or modification of floodplain areas.

WETLAND STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

A Wetland Statement of Findings will document impacts to wetlands associated with the selected alternative and summarize avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures considered during project development. Wetland findings will be coordinated with permitting and consultation activities completed under Task 4.

NON-IMPAIRMENT DETERMINATION

NPS will prepare a Non-Impairment Determination evaluating whether implementation of the selected alternative would impair park resources or values. The determination will be built upon environmental analyses and consultation results developed throughout the Tiered EIS process.

COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

A Coastal Zone Consistency Determination will be coordinated with the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management and will document consistency of the selected alternative with North Carolina's approved Coastal Zone Management Program and applicable coastal management policies.

RECORD OF DECISION

The Record of Decision (ROD) will document NPS's final decision regarding the selected alternative and summarize the basis for that decision. The ROD will identify the selected alternative, document environmental commitments and mitigation measures, summarize consultation and coordination activities, document how comments were addressed, and establish the framework for advancing subsequent design, permitting, and implementation activities. The Record of Decision will identify transportation infrastructure and operational elements approved for future implementation and identify those multimodal elements requiring subsequent tiered environmental review. The ROD will be issued no sooner than 30 days following publication of the Final EIS.

Deliverables

- | Notice of Intent
- | Scoping Report
- | NPS Purpose and Need Document
- | Community Impact Assessment
- | Natural Resources Technical Report
- | Draft EIS
- | Draft EIS Comment Response Matrix
- | Final EIS
- | NPS Special Use Permit and/or Right-of-Way Permit Support Documentation
- | Floodplain Statement of Findings
- | Wetland Statement of Findings
- | Non-Impairment Determination
- | Coastal Zone Consistency Determination
- | Record of Decision