



US Army Corps
Of Engineers
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: July 25, 2013
Comment Deadline: August 25, 2013
Corps Action ID # SAW-2007-1386
TIP Project No. U-4751 and R-3300

All interested parties are hereby advised that the Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) has published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register to prepare a Supplement of the July 2011 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the North Carolina Department of Transportation project U-4751 and R-3300 which begins at Military Cutoff Road in Wilmington and extends around Hampstead and ties back into Highway 17 below the Holly Shelter Gamelands in New Hanover and Pender Counties. The main purpose of the proposed project is to improve the traffic carrying capacity and safety of the US 17 and Market Street corridor in the study area. The Draft supplement will address changes in the project resulting from community input and necessary design changes to create a functional project. These changes include new lanes and an interchange between Topsail High School and the terminus of the project near Holly Shelter Gamelands. These changes were not discussed or conceptualized in the release of the DEIS and thus it is necessary to produce this Supplement of the Draft to solicit public input before the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Specific plans and location information are described below and shown on the attached plans.

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
c/o Dr. Gregory J. Thorpe, PhD, Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
1551 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1551

Authority

The Corps will evaluate this project to compare alternatives that have been carried forward for study pursuant to applicable procedures under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344).

In order to more fully integrate Section 404 permit requirements with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and to give careful consideration to our required public interest review and 404(b)(1) compliance determination, the Corps is soliciting public comment on the merits of this proposal. This comment period is offered to generate discussion points to be addressed in the Supplement DEIS. The District Commander is not authorizing construction of the proposed US 17 improvements at this time. A Department of the Army permit could be issued, following a complete review of

the proposal for compliance with our regulations and related laws, including assurance that impacts to the aquatic environment have been minimized to the maximum extent practicable and a compensatory mitigation plan for unavoidable impacts has been approved. The final Supplement DEIS will further discuss the changes in project development which has occurred to date and the public will have an opportunity to comment on the Supplement once finalized for publication. This Supplement document is expected for release in late Summer or early Fall of 2013.

Location

For project U-4751, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to extend Military Cutoff Road as a six-lane divided roadway on new location from its current terminus at US 17 (Market Street) in Wilmington north to an interchange with the US 17 Wilmington Bypass (John Jay Burney Jr. Freeway). Limited and full control of access is proposed. For project R-3300, NCDOT proposes to construct the US 17 Hampstead Bypass as a freeway mostly on new location. The US 17 Hampstead Bypass may connect to the proposed Military Cutoff Road Extension at the existing US 17 Wilmington Bypass and extend to existing US 17 north of Hampstead. The project is more specifically located around Latitude 34°21'57" N (R-3300) and 34°15'54" N (U-4751) and Longitude 77°42'43.2" W (R-3300) and 77°17'9.6" W (U-4751).

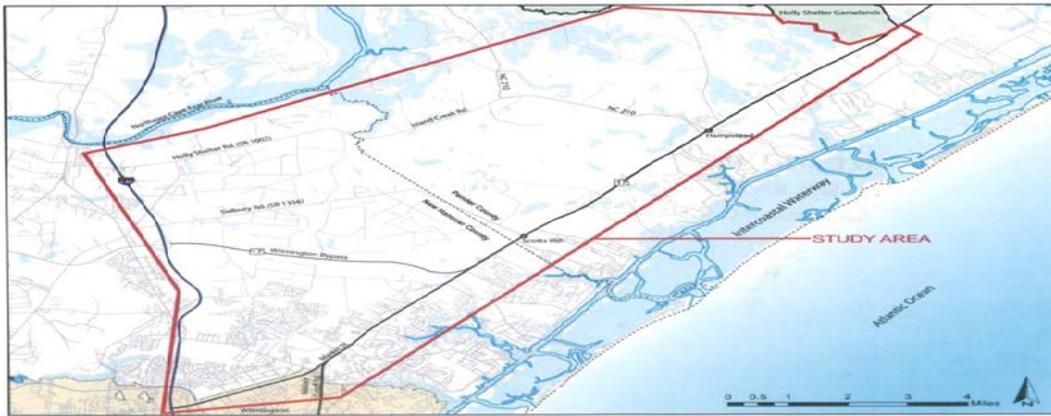
The project vicinity and study area are shown in Figure 1. The study area boundaries roughly follow I-40 to the west, the Northeast Cape Fear River to the north, Holly Shelter Game Land to the east and existing US 17 to the south.



Figure 1
PROJECT VICINITY
 US 17 Corridor Study
 NCDOT TIP Nos. U-4751 and R-3300
 New Hanover and Pender Counties



North Carolina
 Department of Transportation



Applicant's Stated Purpose

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve the traffic carrying capacity and safety of the US 17 and Market Street corridor in the study area. The stated needs to be addressed by the proposed projects include; traffic carrying capacity, safety issues, and transportation demand.

The purpose and need for this project was agreed upon by federal, state, and local agency representatives in September 2006.

Project Description

In order to meet the stated purpose and need of the project a number of alternatives were considered and studied. Alternatives considered for the proposed project include the No-

Build Alternative, the Transportation System Management Alternative, the Travel Demand Management Alternative, the Mass Transit Alternative, and the build alternatives, including the Improve Existing Alternative.

Preliminary build alternatives were established through an evaluation of suitability mapping based on available socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental resource data. Preliminary build alternatives that met the purpose of and need for the proposed project and with the least impacts to the human and natural environments were identified as detailed study alternatives. The detailed study alternatives selection process incorporated recommendations made by federal and state environmental regulatory and resource agencies and comments received from two citizens informational workshops held in April 2007.

Project alternatives were further refined as more comprehensive information was obtained through detailed field studies and environmental analysis.

Upon release of the DEIS and subsequent public input meetings a Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative was selected and further studied, Alternatives M1 and E-H.

Alternative M1

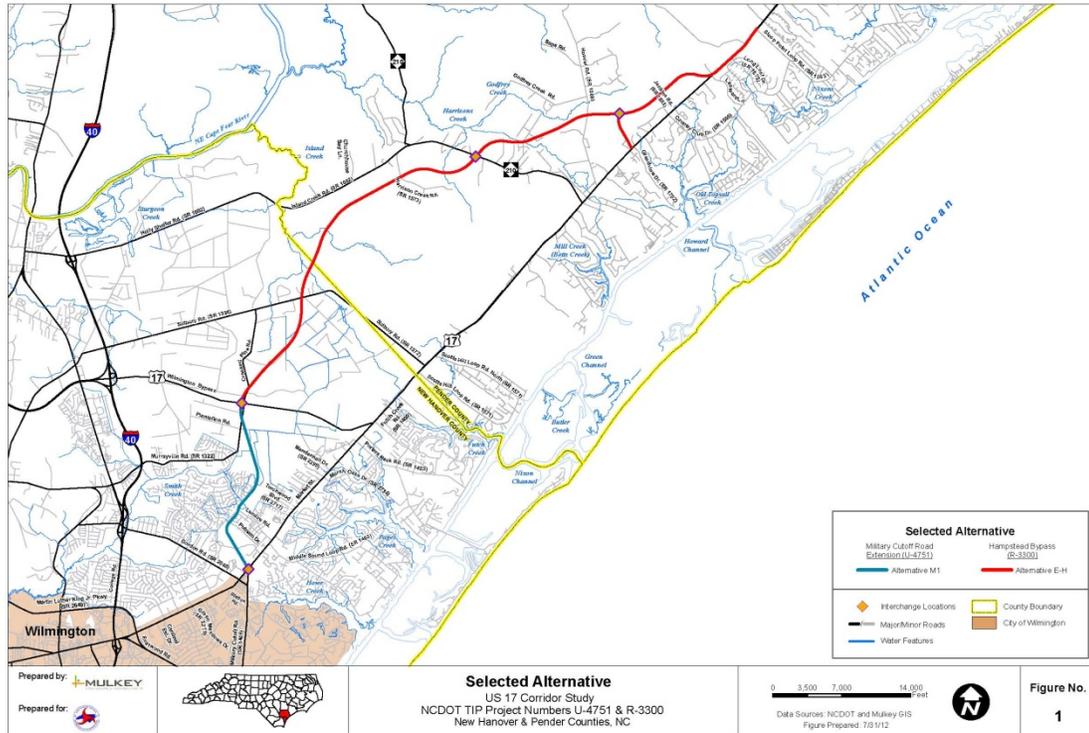
Alternative M1 begins at a proposed interchange at Military Cutoff Road and Market Street. The alternative extends north through vacant County property between the two sections of Ogden Park and residential areas. Alternative M1 turns northwest and ends near Plantation Road and Crooked Pine Road at a proposed interchange with the US 17 Wilmington Bypass, approximately midway between I-40 and Market Street. The City of Wilmington adopted a Transportation Official Corridor map for the proposed extension of Military Cutoff Road on August 8, 2005. Alternative M1 follows the adopted corridor map alignment.

Alternative E-H (Combination of Alternatives E and H)

Alternative E-H begins in New Hanover County at a proposed interchange with the US 17 Wilmington Bypass, approximately midway between I-40 and Market Street. The alternative extends northwest past Sidbury Road into Pender County. Land use between the bypass and Sidbury Road is mostly undeveloped property. Alternative E-H turns to the northeast and continues to a proposed interchange with NC 210 east of Island Creek Road.

From its interchange at NC 210, Alternative E-H extends northeast across several minor roads that include lightly developed residential areas and through undeveloped forested areas. Alternative E-H crosses Hoover Road north of South Topsail Elementary School and continues northeast through undeveloped property to a proposed interchange with realigned US 17 approximately 0.7 mile west of Grandview Drive. Alternative E-H continues north behind the Topsail School complex and then turns east to tie into existing US 17 near Leeward Lane. Alternative E-H continues north on existing US 17 to Sloop Point Loop Road.

See image below:



As the selected alternative was being further designed the aforementioned changes (additional lanes and an additional interchange) were added to the project plans. These changes are driving the decision to produce a Supplement DEIS in order to get public input.

Commenting Information

This notice announces that our Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplement DEIS for this project has been published in the Federal Register on July 25, 2013 and can be found on the Federal Register website:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=FR>. After connecting with the website, click through the dates to July 25, 2013. Click on “Corps of Engineers Department”; and locate the Hampstead Bypass U-4751/R-3300 project under “Notices”. Again this Supplement DEIS is expected to be complete and released in late Summer or early Fall 2013.

As disclosed in the Notice of Intent, any written comments pertinent to the proposed work and preparation of the Supplemental DEIS, as outlined above, will be received by the Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, until August 25, 2013. Comments should be submitted to Mr. Brad Shaver, Wilmington Regulatory Field Office, 69 Darlington Ave., Wilmington, North Carolina 28403-1343, or (910)251-4611, or brad.e.shaver@usace.army.mil.