



Balfour Parkway – STIP Project No. R-5744

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Project Development & Environmental Analysis (PDEA) Unit
Attention: Ms. Jennifer Fuller, PE, NCDOT-Central Project Delivery Team
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Your comments, participation and input are important!

Following the February 27, 2018 public meeting, **the comment period was extended to April 30, 2018** for this stage of the planning process. We appreciate the input that has already been provided and look forward to receiving additional comments.

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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Project Information

Project information can be found at the following website:
www.ncdot.gov/projects/BalfourParkway

For Spanish Language Assistance:

Aquellas personas que hablan español y no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan llamando al 1-800-481-6494.



Balfour Parkway

Proposed new location roadway from N.C. 191 to U.S. 64 north of Hendersonville

STIP Project No. R-5744

This newsletter is the second of several that will be prepared during the planning process for Balfour Parkway. The purpose of this newsletter is to review project information, provide an update on the planning process that is underway, and address some of the questions frequently asked about the project.

Project Description

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has begun project development, environmental and engineering studies for Balfour Parkway, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project Number R-5744. Balfour Parkway is a proposed four-lane, median-divided roadway that would provide a new interchange along I-26 at least one mile north of the existing U.S. 64 interchange with I-26. **The primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve east-west vehicular mobility in Henderson County by providing a connection (with limited control of access) between N.C. 191 (Haywood Road) and U.S. 64 (Chimney Rock Road), north of Hendersonville.**

Balfour Parkway is one of a number of projects indicated on local and regional transportation plans to address needs for the area. In addition to Balfour Parkway, other improvements may be needed to solve all the traffic operational issues for the overall network. Balfour Parkway is an important part of the overall system.

Project Planning Process & Schedule

The proposed project is following a process outlined by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Potential impacts on the human and natural environment along with the public's need for safe and efficient transportation will be evaluated and documented in an Environmental Assessment. Major milestones in the NEPA planning process are outlined below.

Public involvement is an important part of the planning process and NCDOT appreciates your input. Over the next several months, the project team will meet with local elected officials, resource agencies, and other stakeholders. Comments and input received will be considered to select alternatives for detailed study and design. The preferred alternative will be selected following a public hearing, which is currently scheduled for Fall 2019.

	Major Milestones	Timeframe
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	Project Scoping (initial data collection)	Complete
	Identify the Project's Purpose and Need	Complete
	Develop Preliminary Alternatives	Complete
	Hold Public Meeting	Complete
	Select Alternatives for Detailed Study & Design	Spring 2018 to Summer 2018
	Conduct Detailed Environmental Analysis	Summer 2018 to Summer 2019
	Prepare Environmental Document	Summer 2019 (FY 2020*)
	Hold Public Hearing	Fall 2019
	Select the Preferred Alternative / Approve Environmental Decision Document	Late 2020 (FY 2021*)
	Start Purchasing Property (right-of-way acquisition)	FY 2022* Section B (U.S. 25 Business to I-26)
	Begin Construction	FY 2024* Section B (U.S. 25 Business to I-26)



*The State's fiscal year (FY) begins July 1 and ends on the following June 30. For example, FY 2020 begins July 1, 2019 and ends June 30, 2020.

We appreciate hearing from you!

Thank you for participating in the planning process for Balfour Parkway! The February 27th public meeting at the Cascades Mountain Resort was attended by more than 750 people. We regret to hear that many more were unable to attend due to the long line to enter the facility or other reasons. Your comments about the February 27th meeting will help us to plan future meetings that better accommodate everyone. Some suggestions we have heard are:

- **Have more than one meeting date.**
- **Use a larger room and a longer time-frame, with more staff to answer questions.**
- **Provide a format for people to more easily have turns to ask questions and speak with the project team.**
- **Continue public involvement and focus on stakeholder groups (such as neighborhoods) and Henderson County officials.**

What we've heard so far

To date, comments have been submitted by approximately 200 people. These include comment sheets, emails, letters, and phone calls. While some have expressed support for the project, the project team understands that many people have serious concerns about potential impacts to homes, neighborhoods, property values, and wildlife.

The project team is reviewing comments and responding to questions as quickly as possible. Please be patient as we compile all the feedback.

At the conclusion of the comment period, the project team will post a summary of comments, questions and answers to the questions on the NCDOT's Balfour Parkway website. The summary will also be shared with Henderson County, the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization and the City of Hendersonville.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of the project? The proposed project will benefit residents and motorists within the study area and outside of the study area, providing an important part of the future transportation network. Improved east-west vehicular mobility serves local traffic, commuters, emergency services and through traffic with a more direct route and enhanced connectivity to I-26, U.S. 25 Business, U.S. 64, N.C. 191 and other intersecting roadways. NCDOT is working toward the development of solutions that provide needed long-term transportation benefits for the public overall while avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impacts as much as possible.

Why not widen/utilize existing roads instead of constructing Balfour Parkway? A limited number of roadways allow vehicles to travel east-west through the area. These indirect routes include local roads, lower travel speeds, two-lane roadways, multiple turning movements, and an at-grade railroad crossing. U.S. 64 combined with U.S. 25 Business and N.C. 191 also provide a route for east-west travel. A number of impacts would be associated with improving existing roads to provide a four-lane roadway without driveways and safely achieving a 45 MPH posted speed limit. Replacing Balfour Parkway with improvements to existing roads would not address the need for the project and would not be consistent with the local transportation plans for this area, which include the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Instead of Balfour Parkway, will you consider a roadway connecting Mills River to Fletcher with a new interchange on I-26? A roadway connecting Mills River to Fletcher, approximately eight miles north of Hendersonville, would not achieve the same purpose as Balfour Parkway or eliminate the need for the Balfour Parkway. The "Mills River-I-26-Fletcher Roadway" proposal is not consistent with the area's Comprehensive Transportation Plan or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. These plans take into consideration a regional system of proposed transportation projects.

My home is located in one of the 1,000-foot wide corridors. Will my family be relocated? The actual right of way width would be approximately 250 feet wide. Specific homes that could be relocated will not be known until more detailed roadway design is complete. The project team is working very hard to eliminate corridors and narrow down alignment alternatives to avoid homes and neighborhoods and displace as few residents as possible. Every effort will be made to develop the proposed roadway with context-sensitivity, limiting residential relocations and other negative impacts. The number of residential relocations will be far fewer than the number of homes in the 1,000-foot corridors.

Will homeowners get fair compensation if their home is purchased? There are laws in place to protect residents (such as the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act (1970)) and relocation assistance to find appropriate housing. The NCDOT's right-of-way and/or relocation agents will coordinate with impacted property owners and residents to identify their needs and determine eligible payments. Through the relocation assistance program, residents will be given help to reduce the impact of relocating families/individuals in an effort to make relocation as easy as possible. Programs include Relocation Moving Payments, Relocation Replacement Housing Payments, and Relocation Assistance. The NCDOT's right-of-way and/or relocation agents will be able to answer more specific questions once design plans are at a more detailed stage.

Are there sufficient funds to fairly pay homeowners for the homes that may be affected? Yes, the project's budget includes funds for property and relocation costs. In addition to fair market value, home owners may be eligible for a purchase supplement to meet reasonable costs necessary to purchase a comparable replacement home; increased mortgage interest costs; and other expenses.

How does a road get built?

Years of extensive planning, study and work occur before the NCDOT begins building a roadway. In the initial Planning step, NCDOT assists municipalities and regions develop long-term plans that identify area transportation needs and priorities. For Henderson County, several regional transportation plans laid the groundwork for the Balfour Parkway project. The project was locally conceived, studied, and prioritized as being needed to improve east-west mobility.

Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The area's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was adopted in 2008 by NCDOT, following adoption at the local and regional level. The CTP is a long-range multi-modal transportation plan that addresses needs over a 25-year period. The CTP recommends Balfour Parkway as one of several "highest priority" projects, as well as a number of other transportation improvements for Henderson County.

2040 French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) is the federally required transportation planning agency charged with conducting a comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process for the region. The FBRMPO is a partnership between local and state governments. The 2040 French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was adopted in 2015. Unlike the CTP, the MTP is fiscally constrained, meaning it only includes projects that can be paid for and constructed by 2040. The MTP recommends Balfour Parkway as a new four-lane expressway from N.C. 191 to U.S. 64 in Henderson County.

For more information about the full process, visit the following website: <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/roadbuilt>