

Chairman Gantt and Commissioners:

This email is intended to provide information about alternative alignments for the I-26 Connector. For several years, as Asheville's Planning and Development Director, I served as the staff liaison to the Community Coordinating Committee (co-chaired by Lou Bisette and Brownie Newman) and the I-26 Aesthetic Advisory Committee, so I have fairly significant background on the project. My interest in the project has recently prompted me to examine the four alternative Connector alignments using NCDOT visualization tools.

Certainly, you have heard a lot about the advantages of one alternative over another. Unquestionably, the alternative developed by the Asheville Design Center has a smaller footprint as measured by right-of-way required to accommodate the Connector. How developable the land "saved" under this concept is open to some debate due to topography, access and railroad impacts, but that is an issue I have not evaluated. I anticipate additional information will be provided to you with regard to the transportation advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, including such information as distance traveled, separation of local and interstate traffic, and other factors, so I haven't covered those issues. I have not examined the potential to convert right-of-way east of the French Broad River to private use; to my knowledge, there is no definitive answer from NCDOT about release of this right-of-way and there is no particular difference between either of the two alternatives that separate I-240 and Patton Avenue traffic on the east side of the River (Alternatives 4 and 4B). Finally, I have not considered safety concerns such as roadway icing or traffic movements as these are outside my area of expertise.

In the attached pdf file, what I have done is to evaluate the four alternatives under consideration by NCDOT based on their impact on several key areas that apparently have not been extensively considered in prior presentations on this project. These areas include:

- Impact on Westgate Shopping Center
- Impact on Patton Avenue west of the French Broad River
- Impact on the Hillcrest neighborhood
- Impact on Montford/Riverside Cemetery
- Cost impact
- Bridge impact

To prepare this assessment, I used the visualizations and other data available on the NCDOT website to examine impacts on these areas of concern. My (largely visual) impact evaluation is provided in the attached pdf file, converted from a PowerPoint presentation. To view the pdf file, you may have to rotate the perspective by selecting "View" and "Rotate View," then clicking on "Clockwise" to get to a landscape mode. I apologize for any inconvenience that this causes.

I hope you find this information useful as you consider which alternative Connector alignment best serves our community.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Scott Shuford