

2005 meeting. The ACT members voted seven to one to accept these changes in the alignment of the U.S. Route 501 crossing. The SCDOT opposed these changes.

### 3.3 Comparison of the Two Crossings of the Little Pee Dee River

Table 1 below compares the impacts of the two proposed crossings of I-73 over the Little Pee Dee River.

| Table 1<br>Comparison of Impacts of Crossings |                                 |  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
|   | Vicinity of Crossing            |  |
|   | S.C. Route 917<br>(Alts. 3 & 6) | U.S. Route 501<br>(Alts. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, & 8) |
| Minimize Habitat Fragmentation                | Yes                             | No   |
| Floodplain Encroachment                       | 83.5 acres                      | 157.4 acres                                  |
| Wetland Impacts                               | 57.8 acres                      | 88.8 acres                                   |

At the U.S. Route 501 crossing, habitat fragmentation was minimized in the swamp and floodplain; however, some fragmentation of the riparian habitat adjacent to the Little Pee Dee River would still occur. The crossing at S.C. Route 917 minimizes fragmentation by paralleling an existing roadway. The U.S. Route 501 crossing would have 74 more acres of floodplain encroachment in the Little Pee Dee River swamp and 31 more acres of wetland impact than the proposed S.C. Route 917 crossing. See Figure 3.

This comparison of the Little Pee Dee River crossings shows that Alternatives 3 and 6, which runs parallel to S.C. Route 917, are more prudent and feasible than Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8, which cross at the U.S. Route 501 location.

### 3.4 Comparison of the Preferred to Other Alternatives Considered

**3.4.1** The **No Build Alternative** would not impact a Section 4(f) resource, however, the No Build would not provide the interstate link between I-95 and the Myrtle Beach region. Failure to provide this link would lead to the loss of projected economic opportunities, the potential loss of tourism due to in-season congestion for tourists visiting Myrtle Beach, no improvement in local traffic congestion, longer travel times, the loss of the multimodal opportunities provided by the corridor, and no improvement in hurricane evacuation. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

#### 3.4.2 Comparison to Alternatives that Impact Other Section 4(f) Resources

**Alternative 1** would have the most relocation of residents and businesses (121). It would have the highest costs, \$1.498 billion, \$202 million more than the

Preferred Alternative, and would impact 418 acres of wetlands or 34 acres more than the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 1 would have the potential for negative visual impacts to the Galivants Ferry Historic District. It would also impact a Section 4(f) resource within the study area. The athletic facility at the Aynor High School is available for public recreational use and would be considered a Section 4(f). Therefore, Alternative 1 would not be prudent or feasible alternative to the Preferred Alternative.

**Alternative 4** would have the highest wetland impact of all the alternatives at 497 acres. The cost would be \$1.404 billion, which is \$108 million more than the Preferred Alternative, and could impact the Datwyler Rubber Facility, one of the largest employers in the County located at U.S. Route 76 and U.S. Route 501.

Alternative 4 would have the potential for negative visual impacts to the Galivants Ferry Historic District. It would also impact a Section 4(f) resource within the study area. The athletic facility at the Aynor High School is available for public recreational use and would be considered a Section 4(f). Therefore, Alternative 4 would not be prudent or feasible alternative to the Preferred Alternative.

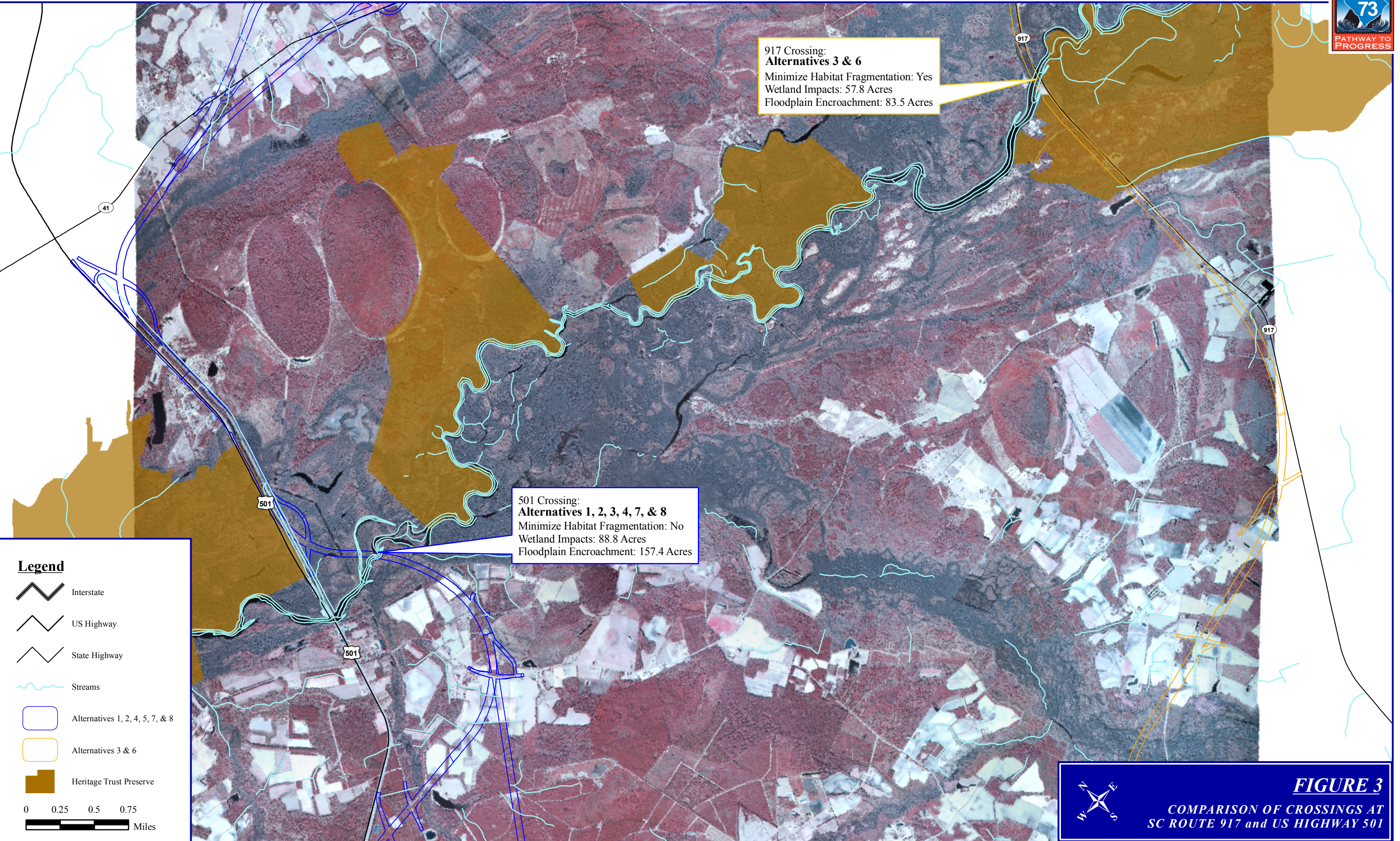
**Alternative 8** would have the highest cost of all the alternatives at \$1.596 billion, \$300 million more than the Preferred Alternative, and the highest number of total residential and business relocations at 116. It would also have the highest impact to farmland, 2,155 acres, and relocate 3 churches. This alternative impacts 64 more acres of wetlands than the Preferred Alternative and impacts the Gateway Industrial Park.

Alternative 8 would have the potential for negative visual impacts to the Galivants Ferry Historic District. It would also impact a Section 4(f) resource within the study area. The athletic facility at the Aynor High School is available for public recreational use and would be considered a Section 4(f). Therefore, Alternative 8 would not be prudent or feasible alternative to the Preferred Alternative.

**Alternative 6** would impact the same Section 4(f) site, the Vaughn tract of the Little Pee Dee River Heritage Preserve, as the Preferred Alternative. However, this Alternative would cost \$112 million more than the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 6 would also have 29 acres more wetland impacts and farmland impacts (1,835 acres) than the Preferred Alternative. It would also relocate three churches within the study area - the Dothan Baptist Church, the New Memorial Temple of Christ, and the Spring Grove Baptist Church.

Alternative 6 would also be in proximity to the Bethea Historic District, which was likely to result in visual impacts to this district. Alternative 6 would also







impact a portion of the Gateway Industrial Park, an important tri-county business development, located immediately south of I-95.

This alternative would not be a prudent or feasible alternative to the Preferred Alternative since it would have substantially higher construction costs (more than \$112 million), cause the relocation of 3 churches, impact more farmlands, have more wetland impacts (29 acres), and impact the same Section 4(f) site.

### **3.4.3 Comparison to Alternatives with No Impact to Section 4(f) Resources**

**Alternative 2** would have no Section 4(f) impacts. It has one of the highest costs of all the alternatives, \$1.548 billion, which is \$252 million more than the Preferred Alternative. It would potentially have visual impacts to two historic districts, one at Galivants Ferry and the other at the Bethea Property. This alternative would relocate three churches, the Dothan Baptist Church, north of I-95, the New Memorial Temple of Christ, at the interchange of I-73 and U.S. Route 501, and the Spring Grove Baptist Church, just south of where this alignment crosses S.C. Route 917.

This alternative would impact the Gateway Industrial Park, located just south of I-95. It would have approximately 60 acres more of wetland impacts than the Preferred Alternative. These impacts would include a new crossing of Buck Swamp. Farmland impacts at 2,009 acres would be 301 acres higher than the Preferred Alternative.

This alternative would not be a prudent alternative to the Preferred Alternative since it would have substantially higher construction cost (more than \$250 million), cause the relocation of 3 churches, impact more farmland, and have more wetland impacts.

**Alternative 5** would have low wetland impacts (413 acres), but still 29 acres more than the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 would have no Section 4(f) impacts. The cost for this alternative would be \$1.436 billion, about \$140 million more than the Preferred Alternative. It is one of two with the highest potential farmland impacts (2,136 acres), which is 428 acres more than the Preferred Alternative. It would also result in a relatively high number of relocations (98).

Based upon coordination with the SHPO, this alternative would also be expected to have the potential for negative visual impacts to the Galivants Ferry Historic District.

This alternative would not be a prudent alternative to the Preferred Alternative since it would have substantially higher construction costs (more than \$140 million), impact more farmland, have 10 more relocations, and have more wetland impacts (29 acres).

**Alternative 7** - Alternative 7 would cost \$1.362 billion, \$66 million more than the Preferred Alternative. It would also have a high number of wetland impacts, 492 acres, which is 108 acres more than the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would have the most floodplain impacts of all the alternatives (299 acres more than the Preferred Alternative).

It would impact a potentially eligible National Register of Historic Places archaeological site near Marion and might have visual impacts on the Galivants Ferry Historic District. It would also impact the Winburn Road community.

This alternative would not be a prudent alternative to the Preferred Alternative since it would have higher construction costs (more than \$60 million), impact more farmland and floodplains, and have substantially more wetland impacts.

#### **4.0 RESPONSE TO AGENCY COMMENTS ON THE DEIS 4(f) EVALUATION**

The EPA commented that Preferred Alternative could potentially visually impact the Ketchuptown Store which is eligible for the NRHP. The SHPO has determined that the Preferred Alternative would have no visual impacts to the Ketchuptown Store because the distance between the Preferred Alternative and the historic resource (860 feet) would not create an adverse visual impact (see SHPO letter in Appendix A).

The FSW commented that the 4(f) evaluation in the DEIS does not demonstrate that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to avoid the 4(f) resource. A discussion demonstrating that all the other alternatives other than the Preferred Alternative were not prudent and feasible and that all possible planning measures to minimize harm to the resource were utilized was addressed in Section 3 of this document.

The FSW commented that a comparison of the entire alignments to demonstrate no prudent and feasible alternative provided exaggerated differences. Comparisons of the segments of the alignments that avoid the 4(f) resource have been shown in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this document.

The SELC felt the 4(f) limitation was relaxed for Alternative 3 and stated that equal treatment should be given to relaxing the 4(f) limitation on Alternative 7. A discussion of Alternative 7 is included in section 3.4.3 of this document which demonstrates why this alternative is not prudent.

The SELC commented that no “truly unusual factors” or “unique problems” exist with the other alternatives and therefore Alternative 3 should not be selected as the preferred. A discussion of the factors and problems that make each of the other seven alternatives not prudent and feasible is included in Section 3 of this document.

## **5.0 COORDINATION**

The I-73 project has been developed with ongoing coordination with resource and regulatory agencies and officials having jurisdiction over Section 4(f) resources that may be affected. Archaeological and historical reports were coordinated with the South Carolina SHPO for determinations of eligibility and effects. Reviews of parks, recreational areas, and refuges have been coordinated with agencies and officials having jurisdiction over these resources.

As the alternatives were developed, the Agency Coordination Team (ACT), including representatives from SCDNR and SHPO (as part of SCDAH), met regularly between 2004 and 2006. Alignment shifts for the proposed alignments were discussed with the ACT, including changes made at the Little Pee Dee River crossings, which affected the Vaughn Tract of the Little Pee Dee River Heritage Preserve. SCDNR stated that approval from the Heritage Trust Advisory Board would be required in order to go through a Preserve tract. These ACT meetings are described in Chapter 4.

SCDOT presented the proposed crossing of the Little Pee Dee River at S.C. Route 917 to the Heritage Trust Advisory Board on August 2, 2006. Additional meetings were held between SCDOT and SCDNR to discuss options for mitigation and/or a compensation package for the proposed impacts to the Heritage Preserve property. A presentation was made to the Board of the Department of Natural Resources on April 20, 2007. After extensive negotiations, the agencies reached an agreement on mitigation for the property. The agencies agreed to use a 10:1 ratio for mitigation of the impacts. For the 30 acres of property impacted by the project, SCDOT would provide monetary compensation, which SCDNR would use to locate and purchase replacement property. The agencies agreed on a value of \$2,500 per acre for the 300 acres, totaling \$750,000.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 3) would have the lowest wetland impacts (384 acres) and avoids a new crossing at Buck Swamp. It has the lowest construction cost (\$1.296 billion), the lowest farmland impacts (1,708 acres) and impacts the least wildlife habitat acreage (831 acres). Floodplain impacts are also the lowest at 94 acres.

Based upon the above considerations, there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the Vaughn Tract of the Little Pee Dee River Heritage Preserve, and the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Preserve resulting from such use.