



## CHAPTER 4. AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The FHWA and SCDOT developed a three-tiered approach for involvement, which included agency involvement through the formation of the ACT, special interest and local involvement through the Stakeholder Working Group, and public input through meetings, mailings, a website, and the public information hotline. The public, agencies, and other interests (such as local and county organizations) had unprecedented project involvement through this process.



### 4.1 Public Involvement

#### 4.1.1 How was the public engaged in the project?

The public has been involved extensively throughout the project. Several public meetings were held. The meetings included scoping meetings and information meetings:

- Public Scoping Meeting - September 18, 2004;
- Public Scoping Meeting - September 21, 2004;
- Public Information Meeting - March 8, 2005;
- Public Information Meeting - March 10, 2005;
- Public Information Meeting - March 22, 2005; and,
- Public Information Meeting - May 3, 2005.

A telephone hotline and a website have been available since June 2004 for the public to view information and comment on the project. Community information meetings were also held throughout the project study area in an effort to reach out to minority populations and other community groups.

#### 4.1.2 What happened at the Public Scoping Meetings?

Public scoping meetings were held to gather comments and input from the communities during the early stages of the project. The meetings allowed the public to provide input on issues and resources that could be considered during alternative development. There were two public scoping meetings for the project. The first meeting was held in Mullins, South Carolina at the Marion County Vocational Education Center on September 18, 2004. At the meeting, FHWA and SCDOT were available to explain the project and





answer questions. There were four stations set up in the room, which included maps of the project study area, the purpose and need for the project, an area to specifically record the issues and concerns with the project, and maps showing constraints (such as wetlands and historic resources) that were known in the project study area. A total of 152 people attended, with 146 individuals filling out issue and comment sheets. Each person attending the meeting was requested to complete an “Issues Survey” that asked the public questions about how they felt about the project. They were also given a “Comment Card” to fill out information about the overall quality of the meeting and provide demographic information (see *Community Information Analysis Technical Memorandum*).

The second meeting on September 21, 2004 at Conway High School in Horry County was set up in the same format. One-hundred and fifty people attended this meeting, and 105 people completed the issue surveys and comment cards.

In total, 72 percent of the respondents who completed the issue surveys and comment cards at the scoping meetings supported the construction of I-73. Only six percent were against the construction, while the remainder were undecided (eight percent) or did not provide an answer (14 percent). By far, the highest percentage of people viewed the interstate’s potential to provide a positive impact on the economy through job creation, as the most important issue. Other issues that were important to the respondents were the provision of improved transportation connections and the potential reduction in travel time during hurricane evacuations. Minimizing impacts to natural and historic resources was also important to the respondents, but was not as high of a priority as the economy, transportation connections, and hurricane evacuation.



#### ***4.1.3 What took place at the Public Information Meetings?***

Once preliminary corridors referred to as “Potential Alternative Corridors” were developed, another series of public meetings was held to provide information and seek public input on the potential corridors. A public information meeting was held in each of the three counties in the project study area. Comment forms were distributed and could be returned at the meeting or via mail. The first meeting was at Dillon County High School on March 8, 2005. At this meeting, 141 people attended and 22 left comments during the meeting. The comments included concerns about alignments, in relation to using existing routes, in terms of access to businesses and residences along the road, and relieving

traffic congestion. Some of the other respondents stated that they would like the interstate to be constructed as soon as possible. Others felt the project was good because it was needed in economically distressed areas. Respondents were also concerned about dividing family farms and the impacts to prime and unique farmland in the project study area.



On March 10, 2005 a second public information meeting was held at Myrtle Beach High School in Horry County. A total of 235 people attended and 49 left comments at the meeting. The use of U.S. Route 501 was favored by some respondents and opposed by others. Those who were in favor of using U.S. Route 501 felt it would be the least destructive because it was already constructed and the right-of-ways were already in place. In addition, they felt that road impacts to local businesses and residences are already occurring, so there would be no major increase of impacts. Other respondents opposed the use of U.S. Route 501 because it was already congested and favored a new road, so that U.S. Route 501 would be primarily left for local traffic use. Respondents also opposed the use of U.S. Route 501 because construction would take longer, and there would not be an additional evacuation route

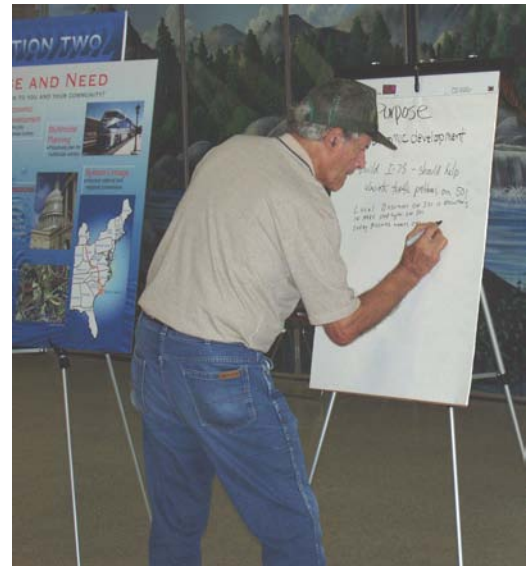
or major highway to and from the Myrtle Beach region. Respondents were also concerned with loss of residences, historic sites, wetlands, and family farms. Most wanted the interstate to avoid small communities and towns such as Aynor, Cool Spring, Ketchuptown, and Galivants Ferry. In general, some felt that the interstate was needed and believed it was a tremendous asset and addition to the community. Respondents suggested that the multimodal planning element of the project be removed to reduce the right-of-way necessary. There were also suggestions to make it a six-lane road with tollbooths and to locate the interstate farther to the south.

The third public information meeting took place at Aynor High School on March 22, 2005. Six-hundred and twenty people attended this meeting, and 194 of them submitted a comment form. The general sentiment from the public who commented was to avoid Aynor as much as possible. Many comments showed the public was concerned with the potential impacts of I-73 and how it would affect their culture and way of life. Approximately 40 comments were against relocating or having their farms split due to the project. Many suggested moving either north or south of Aynor. Forty-five comments wanted the road located south of Aynor and crossing the Little Pee Dee River at Gunter's Island because the respondents believed it would be less populated and would impact less people. Five comments were against a more southern route because of environmental concerns. Sixty-five comments suggested looking at more northern corridors such as S.C. Route 9. Some people were in favor of using U.S. Route 501 because it would minimize impacts to people and the environment where it was already in place. Others were against using U.S. Route 501 because the road was already congested and an additional route would provide more relief for traffic congestion.





The fourth public information meeting took place at Marion County Vocational Education Center on May 3, 2005. A total of 263 people attended this meeting, and 39 people left comments. Most comments were opposed to alignments in close proximity to their homes. Many were in favor of the interstate based on the hope it would enhance economic development, help attract new businesses, and alleviate high unemployment rates in Marion and Dillon Counties. Some wanted to see the project avoid farms, historic homes, and churches. Other respondents would rather their property be taken by the road than to live beside the interstate. Some respondents felt that U.S. Route 501 should be used because it is an existing route and would potentially have lower impacts. Others suggested looking at S.C. Route 9 or S.C. Route 38 for a possible route in that area. Comments also suggested a more southern route to the beach because they believed that it would be more logical and reduce impacts. Several comments suggested the route follow existing corridors to minimize impacts and protect rare and high-quality plant communities. Some respondents felt that swampy areas should be taken instead of farms and homes. A few respondents also brought up the idea of having frontage roads on one side and to make sure that the crossing at the Little Pee Dee River was wide enough that future widening would not be needed immediately.



A total of 1,259 people attended the public scoping and information meetings while 1,023 comment cards were received based on these meetings. Comments varied from support for the project because of its potential for bringing in new businesses and creating job growth to opposition due to the concerns of splitting family farms and disrupting community cohesion.

#### *4.1.4 How were local governments involved?*

The SCDOT has had extensive communication with many federal, state, county, and local elected officials throughout this project. In order to assist these elected officials, the Project Team has performed a variety of activities to provide information and answers to these officials. The Project Team has endeavored to provide periodic project information and updates to elected officials.

Comments received included correspondence from Dillon County indicating they preferred an alignment that would pass closest to the City of Dillon (refer to letters from Dillon County Council, dated February 28, 2006, Dillon County Development Board, dated March 1, 2006, and the tri-county Gateway Industrial Park Board, dated March 1, 2006, Appendix B). The Marion County Administrator, in two letters dated March 6, 2006, and March 27, 2006, (refer to Appendix B) requested consideration for the County's proposed "inland port" when considering the routing of I-73. The routes that start farther south on I-95 are in closer proximity to this proposed project. Marion County Council, in a resolution dated March



14, 2006, specifically requested “that the I-73 Committee review any and all possible plans for construction of I-73 which would reduce the impact to the Temperance Hill Community of Marion County.” (refer to resolution in Appendix B).

Horry County in a letter dated March 13, 2006, (refer to letter in Appendix B) reported a unanimous vote against the route that crossed at Galivants Ferry and extended southeast along U.S. Route 501 through Aynor. The Town of Aynor voted unanimously (refer to letter dated March 21, 2006, in Appendix B) to oppose the route that would be constructed along existing U.S. Route 501 at Galivants Ferry and through Aynor. Letters were also received from the Horry County School Administration (refer to letters dated April 6, 2005, April 12, 2005 and January 27, 2006, Appendix B) that expressed opposition to the segment that would go through Aynor along U.S. Route 501 and requested consideration of the school attendance zone boundary when designating a corridor for I-73. Comments received at the public information meetings included those from a large number from people opposing this route. The SCDNR and USFWS also expressed opposition to this segment.

A total of six petitions have been received for the proposed project. The Temperance Hill community has objected to the alternatives that would come in close proximity to their community (refer to two petitions from Temperance Hill community; one, from Ebenezer Southern Methodist Church, dated March 28, 2005, signed by 43 people and a second, signed by 161 people dated February 27, 2006, in the *Public Involvement Technical Memorandum*). A petition signed by 229 residents opposing alternative alignments that went through their community was received from the Bluff Road/Penderboro Community. Consideration of the school attendance zone boundary when designating a corridor for I-73 was requested in a petition signed by over 900 citizens of Horry County (refer to letter dated January 16, 2006 that came with an attached petition, Appendix B and *Public Involvement Technical Memorandum*). A petition signed by 258 people was received from the “residents living in the Northern Potential Corridor of the Southern Project” requesting that I-73 not be routed through the northern corridor from I-95. The Citizens of the Southern Route, comprised of residents of the Latta area, submitted a petition dated March 20, 2006, with 20 signatures (refer to *Public Involvement Technical Memorandum*) requesting that this route, the southern route, not be used and that a northern route for I-73 be chosen.

#### ***4.1.5 How did the FHWA and SCDOT reach out to communities?***

Communities were engaged throughout the public involvement process. In addition, the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) process was implemented to better understand the communities and to collect their opinions and comments on the proposed project. Several methods of community outreach were used in the project study area based on preliminary community information, including demographic characteristics. The CIA process was customized to each county and/or community based on their specific needs. A letter mailed to members of the Stakeholder Working Group to initiate the CIA, explained the process and offered an opportunity to participate. Surveys were also distributed throughout the project study area in various outreach methods discussed below. A total of 6,488 surveys were distributed in communities throughout the project study area and 989 were received.



*How was Horry County included in the CIA process?*

Based on Horry County's active participation in the public involvement process prior to the CIA, intensive outreach techniques were determined to be more effective in other areas to collect community information and opinions. Surveys were mailed to residents within the two zip codes that encompassed the portion of Horry County located in the project study area. In total 4,372 surveys were mailed that requested information about community characteristics and comments on the project (refer to Community Impact Analysis Technical Memorandum for sample survey).

Packets were also developed for fifth grade students at Aynor Elementary School in order to discuss the project with their parents (refer to *Community Impact Analysis Technical Memorandum* for sample survey). A total of 90 students received survey packets that were customized for the Aynor area, which included a map that focused on the surrounding community. No surveys were received back from this distribution.

*How were Dillon and Marion Counties included in the CIA process?*

Review of the census data showed large concentrations of minority and low-income populations within Dillon and Marion Counties. Community outreach techniques were developed to target these historically underserved populations.

A minority liaison was designated to work in coordination with local ministers to provide information about the project and receive input, guidance, and assistance in identifying other local leaders and members of their congregations. Through these church contacts, the Project Team was invited to attend a church meeting at Westin Chapel in Latta on Tuesday, November 15, 2005. At church services on the preceding Sunday, this meeting was announced by leaders of minority churches throughout Dillon and Marion Counties. Approximately 35 people attended the meeting where one-on-one interviews were conducted, extra surveys were distributed, and general questions about the project were answered. The importance of community input was emphasized at this meeting.

The Project Team was also invited to attend the District African Methodist Episcopal meeting on Sunday, November 20, 2005. Over 115 church leaders and members were in attendance. The minority liaison briefly presented the project, stressing the importance of community involvement and participation. Many attendees took surveys to distribute to their congregations.

In addition, school packets were developed for schools in Dillon and Marion Counties. Survey packets were distributed to 5th grade classes at the following schools:

- 260 students at Gordon Elementary in Dillon;
- 250 students at Marion Intermediate School in Marion;
- 164 students at Palmetto Elementary in Mullins; and,
- 50 students at Rains Centenary Elementary in Rains.



School surveys were customized for each individual school and included a map that focused on the surrounding community. A total of 276 responses were received from the distribution, including 129 from Dillon, 73 from Marion, 48 from Mullins, and 26 from Rains. An effort was made to distribute surveys to the fifth grade classes at elementary schools in Latta, and announcements were made in churches about upcoming public meetings. There was a low response from these outreach methods, so, in order to gain information from the town, an additional 882 surveys were mailed to residents along the two postal routes within the downtown area. A total of 63 surveys were received from the mailings.

#### *What additional outreach was done?*

For all three counties, communities were identified that lacked survey responses. The Project Team visited Zion, Ketchuptown, Emanuelville, and Temperance Hill and conducted one-on-one interviews and distributed surveys at each residence. Approximately 300 surveys were distributed door-to-door in these communities and 120 door-to-door surveys were conducted. Visits were also made to local convenience stores and gas stations to acquaint locals with the project and surveys were left for distribution to customers. A total of 32 interviews were conducted during the field visits, and 34 surveys were received from this effort.

#### *What were Community Information Meetings?*

In addition to the public scoping and public information meetings, there were also several community information meetings. These meetings were held to reach out to the minority communities, as well as the local and county entities with interest in the project. The meetings were held mainly for citizen's groups and churches. At the meetings, representatives from the Project Team would discuss the project and then take questions. The same presentation boards with the purpose and need, issues and concerns, study area map, wetlands map, and constraint map that were used at the public information meetings were available for people to view at the meetings. A list of the meetings is found in Table 4.1 (page 4-8).

#### ***4.1.6 What other forms of information were available to the public?***

The project website, ([www.i73inSC.com](http://www.i73inSC.com)), included information about the history of the project, the purpose and need for the project, along with maps of the project study area. The website also contained important information concerning the times and locations of upcoming public meetings. The public was able to provide input or ask questions about the project. The website has received over 57,354 visits since March 2005 and 225 comments and questions have been received thus far. The *Public Involvement Technical Memorandum* contains copies of the web pages that were posted on the website and its updates.

The project telephone hotline, 1-866-I73-inSC (1-866-473-4672), allowed the public who could not attend meetings or did not have internet access to be involved in providing input on the project. When the number was dialed, an informational message played that explained the project and gave the most up-to-date information concerning the time and location of public meetings. This message was updated ten times from its inception until April 24, 2006. At the end of the message, the hotline allowed for



**Table 4.1  
Community Information Meetings  
Interstate 73 EIS: I-95 to the Myrtle Beach Region**

Organization and Location (County)	Date	Number of Attendees
Rotary Club Myrtle Beach, SC (Horry)	March 18, 2005	approximately 35
Rotary Club Marion, SC (Marion)	May 9, 2005	approximately 45
Rotary Club Latta, SC (Dillon)	May 10, 2005	approximately 25
St. John A.M.E. Church Marion, SC (Marion)	May 10, 2005	29
Bethel A.M.E. Church Brittons Neck, SC (Marion)	May 12, 2005	27
St. Paul Baptist Church Mullins, SC (Marion)	May 24, 2005	24
Rotary Club Mullins, SC (Marion)	May 26, 2005	approximately 30
Society of Professional Surveyors Pee Dee Chapter of South Carolina (Florence)	June 6, 2005	16
North Eastern Strategic Alliance Meeting Columbia, SC	June 14, 2005	approximately 30
Cherry Hill Baptist Church Conway, SC (Horry)	June 27, 2005	3
St. Matthews Missionary Baptist Church Cool Springs, SC (Horry)	June 28, 2005	19
Mt. Pigsah Baptist Church Conway, SC (Horry)	June 30, 2005	10
Freemont Missionary Baptist Church Longs, SC (Horry)	July 13, 2005	28
Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church Bucksport, SC (Horry)	July 14, 2005	36
Cherry Hill Baptist Church Conway, SC (Horry)	July 18, 2005	25
Winyah Bay Focus Group Georgetown, SC (Georgetown)	July 19, 2005	13
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church Latta, SC (Dillon)	August 15, 2005	17

messages to be recorded to provide input or ask a question. A total of 82 people left comments and questions.

#### 4.2 Agency Involvement and Coordination

From the beginning, FHWA and SCDOT recognized that agency involvement was a vital component to the success of the project. Executive Order 13274, signed in 2002, directs federal agencies to promote environmental stewardship in transportation projects and expedite environmental reviews of high-priority





transportation infrastructure projects. The FHWA and SCDOT, recognizing the goals and policy of Executive Order 13274, wanted a more efficient, teamwork-oriented approach to the agency involvement process to promote environmental stewardship and streamline environmental reviews. As a result of this modified approach, the ACT was formed.

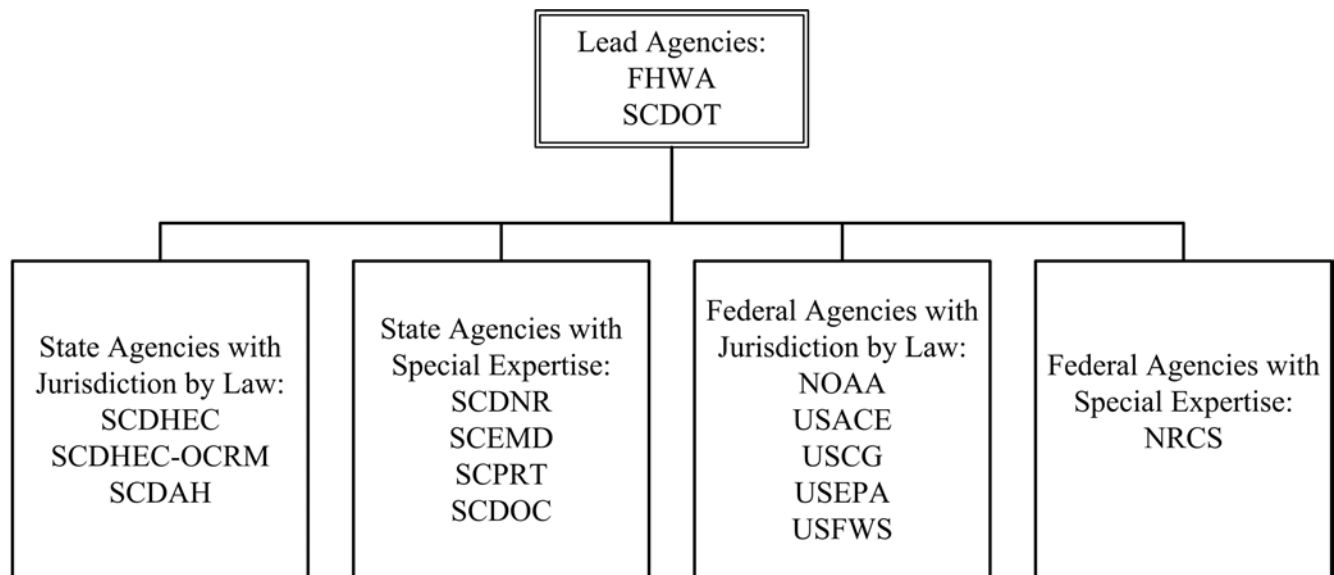
#### 4.2.1 What is the Agency Coordination Team?

The ACT is a group of representatives from state and federal cooperating agencies that provided input and helped make decisions throughout the project.

The ACT is an enhancement of the cooperating agency process found in 40 C.F.R. §1501.6. Lead agencies, in this case, the FHWA and SCDOT, are those with the primary responsibility for the project. The lead agencies can invite other agencies that have special expertise or jurisdiction by law over a resource to be a cooperating agency. Due to the large project study area and array of resources, FHWA and SCDOT invited NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCPRT, SCEMD, USACE, USCG, USFWS, and the USEPA to be cooperating agencies on this project.

The ACT enhanced the cooperating agency process by allowing extensive agency involvement and collaboration on the project. The main goals of the ACT were the following:

- To increase agency involvement;
- To reach decisions by consensus;
- To improve efficiency of the NEPA process;
- To meet or exceed agency mandates; and
- To improve communications and relationships between agencies.





#### 4.2.2 How did the ACT contribute to the project?

The ACT has been involved from the initiation of the project, providing input on many aspects of the project. Several major decision points that the ACT was involved in included defining the purpose and need, developing alternatives, evaluating the alternatives, giving input on the preferred alternative, and determining the mitigation needed to adequately offset impacts. The ACT met on a regular basis for meetings, workshops, and a field trip. ACT members agreed to have a two week notice of each meeting. At that time an agenda, meeting objectives, and handout materials were distributed. During the meetings, ACT members were informed of the latest updates on the project, discussed issues they had with the project, made decisions by consensus voting, and worked together to come up with the best alternatives for the project. In the end, the ACT process resulted in an improved and more informed decision, while incorporating agency comments and input into the process early, rather than after a draft EIS was completed.

##### ACT Project Milestones

**July 30, 2004: Formation of the ACT**

**December 9, 2004: ACT consensus reached on Purpose and Need of project**

**September 7, 2005: ACT consensus reached on Reasonable Alternatives for the draft EIS**

**January 19, 2006: ACT consensus reached to add two alternatives to the Reasonable Alternatives for the draft EIS**

#### 4.2.3 Were there any meetings with agencies prior to the formation of the ACT?

All previously mentioned agencies were formally invited by letter to be cooperating agencies and members of the ACT. Meetings prior to the first ACT meeting were held between the Project Team and NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, and USEPA to discuss the project. The initial meetings between these agencies and the Project Team pertained to the formation of the ACT, and occurred in May and June of 2004. The agencies received a brief overview about the project, as well as an anticipated level of involvement as cooperating agencies and as members of the ACT. The Project Team also met with the SCEMD on June 7, 2004, to discuss how the project might affect hurricane evacuation. The discussion included the possible scenarios of lane reversals, message boards, and traffic cameras to facilitate more efficient evacuation. The SCEMD suggested contacting the hurricane evacuation model developer, along with SCDOT Traffic Engineers and Emergency Traffic Management, for input on roadway design to aid hurricane evacuation. In addition to these meetings, the project was presented to the Southeast Natural Resources Leaders Group on July 13, 2004.

#### 4.2.4 Who participated in the ACT meetings and contributed to the project?

Each agency designated representative(s) to be ACT members and to give input on the project. The ACT had a total of 37 members from 15 state and federal agencies. Several members were involved for only a portion of the ACT Process and were replaced by other representatives from their agency. Each agency had only one vote in the ACT Process. A list of ACT members is found in Table 4.2.



**Table 4.2**  
**Agency Coordination Team Members**  
**Interstate 73 EIS: I-95 to the Myrtle Beach Region**

Member	Agency	Member	Agency
Shane Belcher	FHWA	Bob Perry	SCDNR
Hamilton Duncan	FHWA	Leo Rose	SCDNR
Patrick Tyndall	FHWA	Ralph Willoughby	SCDNR
Stephania Bolden*	NOAA-NMFS	Ed West	SCDOC
Prescott Brownell	NOAA-NMFS	Wayne Hall	SCDOT
Kay Davy*	NOAA-NMFS	Mitchell Metts	SCDOT
Christy Fellas*	NOAA-NMFS	Wayne Roberts	SCDOT
Jocelyn Karazsia*	NOAA-NMFS	Berry Still	SCDOT
Ronnie Feaster	NRCS	Jon Boettcher	SCEMD
David Kelly	SCDAH	Charles Harrison	SCPRT
Richard Chinnis*	SCDHEC-OCRM	Steve Brumagin	USACE
William C. Eiser	SCDHEC-OCRM	Tina Hadden	USACE
Quinton Epps*	SCDHEC	Travis Hughes	USACE
Rheta Geddings	SCDHEC	Randall Overton	USCG
Robert "Hop" Ridgell	SCDHEC	Brodie Rich*	USCG
Ron Ahle*	SCDNR	Kacy Campbell*	USEPA
Susan Davis*	SCDNR	Bob Lord	USEPA
Ed Duncan	SCDNR	Ramona McConney	USEPA
Greg Mixon	SCDNR	Mark Caldwell	USFWS

\* Participated for part of the ACT Process

#### 4.2.5 When did the ACT meetings occur and what happened at the meetings?

The ACT team met regularly during the project. The following pages summarize the ACT meetings, sub-committee meetings, workshops, and a field visit that took place between 2004 and 2006. A list of the agencies that participated in each meeting is found in Table 4.3 (page 4-12). A few meetings outside of the ACT did occur, mainly to address specific agency concerns or issues, for information exchange, special expertise, and methodology for evaluating certain resources.

##### June 30, 2004 to July 1, 2004 ACT Meeting

The kickoff meeting of the ACT was held on June 30, 2004 and July 1, 2004. The ACT helped define the project study area to exclude the Great Pee Dee River floodplain by using the eastern boundary of the floodplain as the west and southwest borders of the project study area. U.S. Route 378 and U.S. Route 501 on the south and southeast, and the North Carolina state line for the northeast and north, and the Interstate 95 for the northwest and western borders for the project study area (refer to Figure 1-2, page 1-3). Members then listed goals for the project, which ranged from enhancing public safety to protection of wetlands and cultural resources.



**Table 4.3**  
**ACT Meetings and Attendance**  
**Interstate 73 EIS: I-95 to the Myrtle Beach Region**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Agencies Attending</b>	<b>Number of Representatives</b>
June 30, 2004 and July 1, 2004 Kickoff Meeting	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, SCEMD, USACE, USCG, USFWS, and USEPA	20
July 7, 2004 NEPA and 404/401 Process Merger Sub-committee Meeting	FHWA, SCDHEC, SCDOT, USACE, and USEPA	6
August 12, 2004 Scoping Meeting	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCEMD, SCPRT, USACE, USCG, USEPA, and USFWS	16
September 23, 2004 Methodology Meeting	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USCG, USEPA, and USFWS	16
November 18, 2004	FHWA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USCG, USEPA, and USFWS	16
December 9, 2004	FHWA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	12
March 24, 2005	FHWA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	17
April 21, 2005 NEPA and 404/401 Process Merger Sub-committee Meeting	FHWA, SCDHEC, SCDOT, USACE, and USEPA with NOAA, SCDNR, and USFWS providing input	16
May 17-19, 2005 Project Field Tour	FHWA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, USCG, USEPA, and USFWS	14
June 16, 2005 Indirect and Cumulative Effects Workshop	FHWA, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USEPA, and USFWS	13
July 27, 2005	FHWA, NOAA, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCEMD, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	20
August 24, 2005	FHWA, SCDAH, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS.	15
September 7, 2005	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	15
November 14, 2005 NEPA and 404/401 Process Merger Sub-committee Meeting	FHWA, SCDHEC, SCDOT, USACE, and USEPA	12
December 15, 2005	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	14
January 19, 2006	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	16
March 2, 2006	FHWA, NOAA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, SCPRT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	16
April 19, 2006	FHWA, SCDAH, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS	13



Each agency representative gave a presentation on issues their agency felt were important in the project study area. Some of the issues the agencies discussed included the following:

- protecting federally-listed and state species of concern;
- the economic impacts of tourism to the Myrtle Beach area as well as South Carolina;
- bridge and culvert replacement;
- streamlining and timeliness of NEPA and Section 401/Section 404 permit process; and
- preservation of heritage preserves, Carolina bays, and historic resources.

A draft Process Agreement was developed and distributed to the ACT for review. This document explained the goals of the ACT, its procedures, and the dispute resolution process and can be found in the Public Involvement Technical Memorandum. ACT members were asked to vote on decisions. A consensus of the voting was used to make decisions, and when a party disagreed with the outcome, there was a dispute resolution process that could be used to resolve the issue.



There were two levels to the dispute resolution process. The first level involved focused discussion between the ACT members to attempt to resolve the issue. If there was no resolution at this point, then the issue would move to the second level of the dispute resolution process. At this point, the issue would be elevated to higher authorities in the respective members' agencies for discussion and resolution. Once a decision was reached, written statements of the decision and the rationale behind it would be prepared and distributed to the ACT for review and approval. If a consensus was reached and not elevated, or if the elevation process was satisfactorily concluded, the concurrence was reached. Concurrence letters were issued by each agency at the major decision points of the project, such as the interagency coordination process, purpose and need, the preferred alternative, and mitigation.

#### July 7, 2004 ACT NEPA/Section 404 Sub-committee Meeting

The ACT formed a sub-committee to specifically handle the NEPA/Section 404 process merger. The FHWA, SCDHEC, SCDOT, USACE, and USEPA were members of this sub-committee because they were the lead agencies or had jurisdiction by law over the resources needing a permit.

The sub-committee first met on July 7, 2004 via conference call and discussed the merger of the NEPA and permit (Section 401 and Section 404) processes. The sub-committee also discussed the appropriate time to submit the request for a jurisdictional determination. The USACE suggested reviewing soil data, aerial photography, and NWI mapping to identify wetland areas for preliminary review at the early stages of the project. The USACE stated that FHWA and



SCDOT had already initiated the pre-application consultation required during the permitting process. The sub-committee discussed the application process and the USACE stated that the initial application can include a range of reasonable alternatives. The USACE went on to state that once a preferred alternative was identified, the permit could be modified, as necessary, and another public notice would not be necessary. As for public notices, the SCDOT wanted to publish the public notice simultaneously with the notice of availability of the document. The USACE agreed to check the statutory requirements to determine if this would be viable.

#### *August 6, 2004 Meeting with SCDAH*

The Project Team met with the SCDAH on August 6, 2004. Discussions were held on how to evaluate cultural resources in the project study area during the preliminary analysis of alternatives. The SCDAH agreed with using an archaeological predictive model to help develop alternatives for the project. SCDAH also wanted architectural field surveys on the reasonable alternatives. SCDAH agreed to provide information from previous work completed in the project study area for a predictive model. A full archaeological survey would be completed for the preferred alternative. Mitigation was also discussed, and SCDAH suggested that mitigation for impacts could be offset by the lead agencies funding some countywide surveys. As a result of subsequent meetings, the SCDOT did fund the countywide surveys as a separate initiative. FHWA discussed the Tribal consultation process for the project. The Tribes would be invited to be a consulting party, so that they could provide input and any information they may have concerning possible tribal resources in the project study area. SCDAH requested to attend any meetings between the FHWA and Tribes.

#### *August 12, 2004 ACT Scoping Meeting*

The second ACT meeting was held on August 12, 2004. The draft Process Agreement was discussed and revised. The ACT members were asked to send a concurrence letter approving the Process Agreement. It was announced that the Notice of Intent was issued on August 9, 2004, and public scoping meetings were to be held on September 18 and 19, 2004, (Appendix D).

ACT members focused on issues that were important to their respective agencies at this meeting. Many different issues were brought up, including water quality, wildlife, habitats, floodplains, wetlands, historic and cultural resources, and visual and noise impacts. The ACT developed a full list of issues that would be considered during the development of the alternatives.

#### *September 1, 2004 Meeting with USACE*

The Project Team met with the USACE to discuss the methodology for wetland delineation. The agencies discussed the use of the NWI mapping for initial screening, followed by screening the reasonable alternatives with infrared photography, ground-truthing, and an ACT field review. It was agreed that the wetlands impacted by the preferred alternative would be delineated using a Global Positioning System with sub-meter accuracy.



September 23, 2004 ACT Meeting

The ACT held its third meeting on September 23, 2004. The members discussed the purpose and need for the project. The FHWA expressed the need to have a balance between meeting the project's purpose while minimizing impacts to the environment. The ACT agreed that there should be a very clearly defined purpose statement for the project. Members discussed system linkage, economic



development, tourism promotion, congressional intent, hurricane evacuation, multimodal planning, and environmental sensitivity. The CAT was demonstrated and the ACT learned how the CAT would be used for developing alternatives. (A full explanation of how the CAT works can be found in Chapter Two.) The ACT selected layers, "weighted" the layers, and assigned numerical values to features within the data layers utilized by the CAT. The ACT also designated features as constraints, which would be avoided while developing alternatives. Members reached a consensus on the values.

November 18, 2004 ACT Meeting

The fourth ACT meeting was held on November 18, 2004. Continued discussion was held on the draft purpose and need statement. The primary needs for the project were determined to be system linkage and economic development, and the secondary needs were identified as hurricane evacuation, relieving local traffic congestion, and multimodal planning. The purpose statement was revised to state: "To provide an interstate link between I-95 and the Myrtle Beach region to serve residents, businesses, and tourists while fulfilling congressional intent in an environmentally responsible and community sensitive manner." The ACT also discussed preliminary corridors generated by the CAT.

December 3, 2004 ACT CAT Workshop

The SCDAH and SCDNR attended a workshop on December 3, 2004 about the CAT. The details of operation of this tool were explained and it was used to complete runs proposed by the SCDAH and SCDNR.

December 9, 2004 ACT Meeting

The ACT had its fifth meeting on December 9, 2004. After minor revisions, the ACT members approved the purpose and need statement for the project by consensus. The ACT discussed potential corridors and seven were recommended for further analysis. ACT members also recommended that additional aerial photography be acquired where the corridors would cross



the Little Pee Dee River, along U.S. Route 501, as well as in the vicinity of the Conway Bypass for further analysis.

*December 16, 2004 and January 7, 2005 Meetings with SCDNR*

The SCDNR met with the Project Team to discuss the agency's concerns about using the NWI mapping for preliminary evaluation of alternatives and the elimination of a segment by the ACT from further analysis. On January 4, 2005, SCDNR submitted a letter to SCDOT about the concerns it had previously discussed with the FHWA and SCDOT and distributed it to the ACT. Subsequently, the FHWA and SCDOT met with the SCDNR on January 7, 2005 concerning the same issues. The SCDOT gave a formal response to the SCDNR's concerns on January 12, 2005 and copied the ACT members.

*March 24, 2005 ACT Meeting*

On March 24, 2005, the ACT held its sixth meeting. The corridors that the ACT had previously approved for further analysis had been evaluated for constructability by engineers. The ACT was presented this information, along with demonstrations of how the proposed revisions would change the impacts to resources. Most revisions had resulted in only minor differences from the original corridors. The ACT was also informed of the additional project alternatives that were being evaluated



based on suggestions by the public as a result of the public information meetings.

The ACT members discussed potential mitigation sites. SCDOT presented a potential mitigation site, the Haulover Tract, which would be available for purchase as a component of the mitigation. The ACT discussed this mitigation site, and, by consensus, decided not to recommend to the SCDOT to purchase it at that time. Some members felt that it was too early to discuss mitigation because it may cause bias and influence the outcome or decision of a preferred alternative. Others thought that mitigation should be discussed when the amount of impacted acreage was known.

The ACT also discussed the upcoming field trip to the project study area. Members identified sites of interest, such as major stream and river crossings, sand ridges along the eastern side of the Little Pee Dee River, Carolina bays, and Galivants Ferry.





April 21, 2005 NEPA/Section 404 Sub-committee Meeting

The second meeting of the NEPA and Section 404/Section 401 process merger sub-committee was on April 21, 2005. The FHWA, NOAA, SCDHEC, SCDNR, SCDOT, USACE, USEPA, and USFWS were present. The members discussed how to merge the NEPA and permit processes (Section 401 and Section 404). In order to use the EIS for permit processes, the USACE stated that the EIS needed to address FHWA and Section 404 guidelines. The USEPA and USACE stated the permit application needed to contain adequate information on both natural resource and human resource impacts. The USACE and SCDHEC both discussed the one year timeline for 401 certification and how that may be a problem if the lead agencies submitted the permit too early in the process. SCDHEC stated that if all the information was not provided to them within one year of the public notice, then the permit would be denied. USACE and SCDNR suggested issuing a public scoping notice for the permit application when the DEIS was made available. This would give the agencies and the public more information on potential impacts, which would allow them to offer more substantive comments on the permit application. The SCDOT asked the USACE what information should be put in the public notice for scoping. The USACE responded by stating information on corridors, routes, and preliminary information on impacts should be included. In addition, the USACE stated the general typical section, purpose and need, background information, and details concerning how the ACT selected the reasonable alternatives would be important to add in the public notice.

April 22, 2005 Meeting with SCDNR

The Project Team met with the SCDNR to discuss the agency's concerns about the CAT. At this time additional analyses were completed at the request of the SCDNR with new waypoints and endpoints, as well as different assigned values to layers.

May 17, 2005 to May 19, 2005 ACT Field Tour

The seventh ACT meeting was a field trip of the project study area on May 17-19, 2005. The project study area was reviewed by boat, on foot, and by van. The ACT visited areas including Galivants Ferry, the Little Pee Dee River, segments of existing roads, and Carolina bays that were within the project study area.



June 1, 2005 Meeting with SCDNR

The SCDNR met with the Project Team to conduct additional analyses using the CAT. The agency requested to use the CAT with different values for upland evergreen forests and to also use different starting and ending points. The FHWA and SCDOT completed the analyses during this meeting and discussed the results with the SCDNR.



#### June 16, 2005 ACT Meeting

ACT members met for their eighth meeting on June 16, 2005 for an indirect and cumulative effects workshop. The different types of impacts were explained and an explanation was provided for cumulative impacts. The responsibilities of the FHWA regarding indirect and cumulative impacts were also presented. The ACT members learned that the FHWA is not responsible for mitigating the effects of indirect impacts since it does not have control over them, but is responsible for including the effects in the EIS.

#### July 27, 2005 ACT Meeting

The ninth ACT meeting was on July 27, 2005. A presentation was given of the remaining segments and the combinations of the segments that could comprise the possible alternatives to be further evaluated in the DEIS. A discussion followed about the segments and the advantages and disadvantages of each in terms of impacts to resources. The ACT members were also presented with the initial criteria for locating interchanges along the corridors. FHWA and SCDOT based the criteria on the purpose and need and stated that any future interchanges would be separate actions and would be required to follow the NEPA process.

#### August 24, 2005 ACT Meeting

At the tenth ACT meeting on August 24, 2005, the ACT members continued their detailed discussion of segments for developing the alternative routes. Members discussed each set of competing segments and voted to eliminate or to further analyze them. The ACT reached consensus to eliminate 18 segments and keep 16 segments for further analysis.



#### September 7, 2005 ACT Meeting

The eleventh ACT meeting took place on September 7, 2005. Based on the remaining segments from the prior ACT meeting, there were ten alternatives derived and presented to the ACT. All alternatives meet the purpose and need equally, so the ACT used the impacts to resources to eliminate possible alternatives. The Project Team recommended eliminating three alternatives due to their relatively higher impacts to resources. ACT members discussed all alternatives and voted on each individually. Based on consensus voting, four alternatives were eliminated from further analysis in the DEIS.

#### November 14, 2005 NEPA/Section 404 Sub-committee Meeting

The members of the NEPA and Section 404/Section 401 process merger sub-committee with regulatory authority by law met on November 14, 2005, to discuss the NEPA process. The FHWA, SCDHEC, SCDOT, USACE, and USEPA attended. Based on the comments received



at the initial ACT scoping meeting, the participating agencies originally requested that the ACT provide consensus on a preferred alternative prior to the DEIS being issued and the public hearings. The USEPA expressed concern about the ACT voting on a preferred alternative without having the DEIS available for review. After discussing their position, agencies agreed that a vote would not be requested from the ACT on a preferred alternative until the DEIS had been issued and public hearings had taken place. It was agreed that the FHWA and SCDOT would designate a preferred alternative for the DEIS.

The group then discussed the next steps in the NEPA/Section 404 processes. The members decided that the FHWA and SCDOT submit the permit application based on the preferred alternative in the DEIS to the USACE. Next, the sub-committee decided the FHWA and SCDOT would hold public hearings while the USACE concurrently issued the joint public notice for the permit. The FHWA and SCDOT would request the ACT provide consensus on a preferred alternative and the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. The USACE said it would defer taking a position on the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative until they took action on the permit application. Once detailed fieldwork was completed, along with the necessary revisions to the DEIS, the FHWA and SCDOT would issue the FEIS which would include a mitigation plan. The FHWA would issue a Record of Decision and the USACE would subsequently issue a permit decision.

#### December 15, 2005 ACT Meeting

The ACT held its twelfth meeting on December 15, 2005 and the FHWA presented the results of the meeting held on November 14, 2005. The process for the project would be changed due to regulatory requirements of the permitting agencies. In the new process, the DEIS would be published with the applicant (FHWA and SCDOT) preferred alternative designated. Public hearings would be held and then ACT consensus would be requested on a preferred alternative. FHWA and SCDOT explained that they would be forthcoming with the ACT about their reasoning and methodology for selecting the preferred alternative. The ACT unanimously agreed to change the process.



Mitigation was also discussed in this meeting. A conceptual plan of mitigation would be developed for the DEIS and it would have both preservation and restoration components.



Categories of mitigation were discussed, along with types of mitigation that would fit within each category. The FHWA and SCDOT asked that any mitigation ideas be provided so that they could be inventoried for further review by the ACT.

Alternatives for the project were discussed in detail based on the most current information available. A reasonable alternatives summary matrix was explained in detail, with discussion about the values for each category. The matrix would be further refined as more data became available. NOAA and SCDNR requested a re-evaluation of an alternative that was previously eliminated. It was agreed that the information for the eliminated alternative would be distributed to the ACT members. However, it was also decided that if any ACT member wanted the eliminated alternative to be considered in further detail, that the member would have to follow the dispute resolution procedure in the Process Agreement.

#### *January 19, 2006 ACT Meeting*

The ACT held its thirteenth meeting on January 19, 2006. At this meeting, a new alignment for the alternatives crossing the Little Pee Dee River near S.C. Route 917 was discussed. This new alignment would cross the Little Pee Dee River parallel to S.C. Route 917. Originally, the alignment was not considered because it would impact a SCDNR Heritage Trust Preserve along the Little Pee Dee River. However, this alignment was proposed again because it would result in less habitat fragmentation. The SCDNR stated that in order to go through the Preserve, approval would be required from the Heritage Trust Board of Trustees. The ACT voted, and agreed by consensus to pursue moving the crossing to the existing crossing, with the understanding that the Heritage Trust Board would have to approve this. Another adjustment to the alignment was proposed by the SCDNR to straighten an alignment just east of the Little Pee Dee River crossing at U.S. Route 501. This adjustment would have the road cross Dawsey Swamp, an outstanding resource water, just once, instead of twice. The ACT voted and reached consensus to straighten the alignment in this area.

Prior to this ACT meeting, the USEPA and NOAA both elevated the issue of reinstating Alternative 7 that had been previously eliminated in September, 2005 by the ACT. The ACT dispute resolution process was used for this issue.

The ACT members that elevated the issue were first allowed to present their views, after which other members were allowed to state their views on the issue. USACE stated that it would also like to reinstate Alternative 8 that was eliminated at the September 2005 ACT meeting. USACE stated it was concerned that by only analyzing seven of the eight possible combinations and by reinstating the one with the highest potential wetland impacts, that the EIS process may be viewed in a negative light.

SCDOT proposed either to keep the 6 alternatives currently under evaluation, or instead of adding only the one other alternative to make a total of seven, have all eight alternatives, so that all possible combinations of the segments were analyzed.



A vote was requested to reinstate both Alternative 7 and Alternative 8 into the alternatives under consideration. The ACT, by unanimous consensus, voted to reinstate both alternatives.

The indirect and cumulative impacts strategy was presented to the ACT for review and comment (refer to the *Indirect and Cumulative Technical Memorandum*). An overview was given on how the strategy was developed and what resources were used in the process.

SCDNR made a presentation for a tract of land that could be used as mitigation for the project. This parcel was located in and adjacent to the project study area and contains a diversity of wildlife and historic resources. Following the presentation, most agencies were in support of considering it as a mitigation option.

The ACT also discussed the new question and answer format for the EIS. The ACT was given a high-level outline of the EIS, and asked to provide any comments on the outline to the Project Team.

#### February 10, 2006 Meeting with SCDHEC-OCRM

The Project Team met with SCDHEC-OCRM on February 10, 2006 and gave the agency an update on the project.

#### February 23, 2006 Meeting with SCDAH

The Project Team met with SCDAH on February 23, 2006 to discuss the results of the aboveground historic resources survey. A proposed Bethea Rural Historic District, composed of two plantation homes, tenant houses, a schoolhouse, a cemetery, store, mill, outbuildings, and barns, was discussed. The property was significant to the local and regional history of the area. If SHPO determined the property was eligible for listing as a rural historic district, then a field trip would be needed to set the boundaries of the district.

Two other possible historic districts were found during the survey, one was located south of Marion, and another was located in Ketchuptown. SCDAH was unsure of whether these two possible areas should be considered districts or not, and stated that a field review would be needed prior to making a sound determination.





*March 2, 2006 ACT Meeting*

The ACT met for its fourteenth meeting on March 2, 2006 and was updated about the project. SCDOT stated that they were continuing to receive feedback and petitions from the public about the project. Some municipalities and County Councils in the project study area had passed resolutions supporting certain alternatives (refer to Appendix B for resolutions). The development of an “inland port” north of the City of Marion and its possible cumulative impacts were also discussed at the meeting.

The FHWA updated the ACT concerning the designation of I-73 as a toll facility and how it would be addressed in the DEIS. The S.C. General Assembly had passed a resolution stating that tolls may be installed to pay for the road. The FHWA decided that the DEIS would be done as a non-tolled road. This would result in the worst-case scenario for the project, reflecting higher impacts to natural resources than if the road were tolled. If the road is tolled in the future, a NEPA re-evaluation would be done to identify potential impacts of toll plazas and infrastructure.

SCDAH gave an update on the proposed Bethea Rural Historic District.

The indirect and cumulative impacts strategy was discussed in detail at this meeting. Revisions were discussed and made at this time by the ACT. Once these revisions were made, it was understood that this was the final strategy and only the issues of potential historic districts and the inland port would be modified as more details became available.

*March 14, 2006 Meeting with SCDAH*

SCDAH met with the Project Team on March 14, 2006 to further update the status of the newly proposed historic districts in the project study area. The Project Team, SCDAH, and SCDOT had completed a field review of the possible historic districts to determine eligibility. SCDAH stated that while there were possibly eligible structures at both Ketchuptown and Marion, neither of these areas qualified as eligible historic districts. The proposed Bethea Rural Historic District, however, was eligible, and would more than likely become a historic district within the year.

*April 19, 2006 ACT Meeting*

The ACT met on April 19, 2006 for its fifteenth meeting. SCDOT explained the process for announcing the preferred alternative. A comprehensive meeting with the ACT, stakeholders, elected officials, and others with interest in the project would be held at the end of May. At this time, the preferred alternative would be announced and the DEIS would be signed by the SCDOT and FHWA. Following the announcement, public hearings would be held in June.

ACT members received an update about the Bethea Rural Historic District and its revised boundary. The alignment and interchange for Alternatives 2, 6, and 8 were being re-designed around the new boundary and impacts would be calculated for the alternatives. SCDOT explained the complexity of the new interchange design at I-95 due to the existing interchange of I-95 and S.C. Route 34.



The ACT was informed about a field visit with the Project Team and the USACE to check wetland areas that were in question. The USACE stated that the methodology the Project Team was using for verifying wetlands was sound. There were some changes to the amount of wetlands that were impacted by the project, and this was updated in a matrix and re-distributed to the ACT.

Some of the ACT members (SCDHEC, SCDNR, USACE, and USFWS) had met to discuss the project alternatives to determine which were preferred. The SCDHEC and USACE could not take a position on this matter due to their regulatory authority over the project. However, the SCDNR and USFWS stated that they supported Alternatives 3, 5, and 7 because they did not cross Buck Swamp, they had reasonable wetland impacts, they used existing roadways to some extent, and they connected farther east on S.C. Route 22. Other agencies were asked if they had opinions on any alternatives. The SCDAH stated that it preferred Alternative 3 due to its avoidance of both the Bethea Rural Historic District and the Galivants Ferry Historic District. The SCDOC stated that it disliked alternatives that would directly impact the I-95 Gateway Industrial Park (Alternatives 2, 6, and 8) since it is a three-county investment for economic development in the region.

### 4.3 Stakeholder Working Group Involvement

#### 4.3.1 What was the Stakeholder Working Group?

The Stakeholder Working Group was composed of volunteers from state, local, and county governments, along with businesses and non-government organizations that had an interest in the project. They were to provide input to the FHWA and SCDOT regarding the project. They were also to provide information about the project to their constituencies.

#### 4.3.2 What Happened at the Stakeholder Working Group Meetings?



The first Stakeholder Working Group meeting was held on September 16, 2004 in Dillon, South Carolina. There were 30 attendees at the meeting from various local and county governments, non-government entities, and citizens' groups. At this meeting, the attendees were given a short presentation on the project and the possible issues and concerns surrounding it. They were asked for input on what issues were important to them. There was a wide range of comments received from the attendees, which included impacts to the economy, environment, schools, wetlands, and land use of the areas. Other comments raised concerns about the project route, size of the right-of-way, safety design of the road, toll booth possibilities, and planning for the future needs of the area.



The next Stakeholder Working Group meeting was held on February 24, 2005 in Conway and 26 people participated at this meeting. The attendees were given an overview of the alternative corridor development process and the CAT software program was explained. The meeting allowed participants to help identify natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, churches, cemeteries, landfills, parks, and hazardous material sites that may be present in the project study area that needed to be avoided. Participants also received answers to the questions they posed at the prior meeting concerning possible impacts and design of the project.

## 4.4 Tribal Involvement

### 4.4.1 How was Tribal Consultation handled for this project?

Federal agencies have requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act to consult with Native American Tribes before undertaking actions that may have effects on historic properties of religious or cultural significance. The FHWA and SCDOT made a good faith and reasonable effort to identify and contact Tribes that may have such properties in the project study area. The FHWA, as the lead federal agency, gathered information about the federally-recognized Tribes that may have had interest in the project study area.

During the project scoping process, the FHWA sent letters to 16 Tribes listed in Table 4.4, including the Cherokee, Shawnee, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, Chickasaw, Catawba, and Tuscarora Nations describing the project, its location, and requested any information on sites or resources in the area (a copy of the letter is located in Appendix E). The letter included a project study area map and fact sheet about the project. The FHWA offered funding for Tribal members to travel to South Carolina to meet about the project and to provide updates about the project as it became available. An e-mail was sent in November of 2004 to again inform the Tribes about the project. Of the seven Tribes that responded to the initial letter and e-mail, the Jena Band of the Choctaw Indians stated that they had no interest in the project. The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation responded by stating they had no interest in the project because it was outside of their traditional territory. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma originally stated it did not want to meet with the FHWA, but did want to be included on future mailings. In future correspondence, the Choctaw Nation asked to be removed from future mailings concerning the project. The Catawba Tribe, Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Tuscarora Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma expressed that they were interested in the project. Follow-up communications were attempted with the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the Tuscarora Nation, and have not been successful as of yet. The project was discussed with the Keetoowah Band of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and their Tribe will be included in future mailings.

The Project Team met with the Catawba Indian Tribe on September 17, 2004 and February 11, 2005 to discuss the project. The project study area was presented, as well as the current status of the project. The Catawba Tribal Historic Officer requested that the Tribe be able to review the preferred alternative once it was selected.





**Table 4.4**  
**Tribal Consultation Process**  
**Interstate 73 EIS: I-95 to the Myrtle Beach Region**

Scoping Letters to Tribe Chiefs (sent September 2004)	Follow-up Email to Tribes (sent November 2004)	Response Letters or Communications from Tribes	Consultation	Further Updates
Shawnee Tribe of OK	Shawnee Tribe of OK	Expressed interest in the project	FHWA has attempted to contact Tribe for further consultation, with no success as of 4/2006	Updated Tribe October 2005
Catawba Tribe of SC	Catawba Tribe of SC	Expressed interest in the project	Met with Catawba Tribal Historic Officer on 9/17/04 and 2/11/05 about project	Updated Tribe October 2005
Cherokee Nation of OK	Cherokee Nation of OK	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Choctaw Nation of OK	Choctaw Nation of OK	Initially expressed interest; however, follow-up call on 10/12/05 stated that they had <b>no interest</b> in the project.	No further consultation needed	No further update needed
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Expressed <b>no interest</b> in the project	No further consultation needed	No further update needed
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of OK	Eastern Shawnee Tribe of OK	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Jena Band of Choctaw Indians	Jena Band of Choctaw Indians	Expressed <b>no interest</b> in the project	No further consultation needed	No further update needed
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians	Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Muscogee (Creek) Nation	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Poarch Band of Creek Indians	Poarch Band of Creek Indians	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Tuscorara Nation	Tuscorara Nation	Expressed interest in the project	FHWA has attempted to contact Tribe for further consultation, with no success to this point	Updated Tribe October 2005
Shawnee Tribe	Shawnee Tribe	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Seminole Tribe of FL	Seminole Tribe of FL	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
Seminole Nation of OK	Seminole Nation of OK	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
The Chickasaw Nation	The Chickasaw Nation	No response from Tribe as of 4/2006		Updated Tribe October 2005
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians of OK	United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians of OK	Expressed interest in the project	Wanted to be included on future mailings and updates	Updated Tribe October 2005 and May 2006



In addition to the Tribes that expressed interest, the FHWA will continue to update the Tribes that have not yet responded to the initial letter or e-mail. Tribal consultation has been and will be an ongoing process throughout the project.

#### ***4.5 What other Public Involvement Meetings were held?***

The FHWA and SCDOT also made themselves available during the process to meet with special interest groups to discuss the project and receive feedback. Interest groups were included in the Stakeholder Working Group, but also requested meetings with the lead agencies. Representatives from the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League (SCCCL), Dillon County Economic Development Board, and Coastal Carolina University attended and observed some of the ACT meetings.

The Project Team met with the SELC and SCCCL on November 10, 2004 to discuss the purpose and need of the project. The SELC and SCCCL had concerns about the purpose and need and also suggested more emphasis be placed on the project being a connection from I-95 to Myrtle Beach. Concerns were raised by SELC and SCCCL with regards to providing a future right-of-way for high speed rail within the current project footprint as a need for the project. The SELC and SCCCL were also concerned with economic development in the region as a project need.

The project was presented to the Winyah Bay Focus Group on July 19, 2005. This focus group consists of government and non-governmental entities such as the SCDNR, USFWS, SCCCL, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The SELC and SCCCL met with the Project Team concerning the indirect and cumulative impacts of the project on November 4, 2005. The Project Team explained how the indirect and cumulative impacts would be addressed in the DEIS. The SELC also asked about the time period for the analysis and the Project Team explained the timeline would include the past five years and all reasonably foreseeable future actions when analyzing cumulative impacts.