



3.2 Communities

3.2.1 How many communities compose the project study area?

Nineteen communities have been identified in the four counties within the project study area, which include Dillon and Marlboro Counties in South Carolina, and Richmond and Scotland Counties in North Carolina. These 19 communities are described in this section along with the potential impacts from the proposed project.

3.2.2 What is a community impact assessment?

A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) focuses on early and continuous gathering of information from communities and other sources as input into transportation decision making throughout project development, design, mitigation, and construction. The CIA process contributes to and strengthens transportation decision making with the goals of:

- Formulating projects that are based on community values;
- Identifying community issues/concerns early and accommodating community needs in project planning, where feasible; and,
- Ensuring human values and concerns receive consideration with other environmental impacts during project development.

A CIA should consider items of importance to people such as mobility, safety, economic effects, relocation, and separation. Aesthetics is another important issue to people and is addressed in reference to each community that was identified during the CIA, as well as a general discussion concerning potential noise impacts.

Community Impact Assessment

Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is a process to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on communities and their quality of life – the human environment.

FHWA's Community Impact Assessment, A Quick Reference for Transportation

Community

A “community” may be defined by the geographic boundaries of a region, a municipality, or a neighborhood, as well as specific social characteristics that members may have in common, such as religious, political or ethnic affiliation.

Community Impact Assessment Handbook, prepared by Center for Transportation Research for Florida Department of Transportation

In addition, the CIA should keep community goals in mind when identifying potential alternatives and analyze both the positive and negative impacts, as well as the magnitude of potential impacts. This variation is due to the differing degrees of sensitivity toward a particular issue or impact (i.e., an impact may be perceived by one community as adverse, but might be tolerated or desirable to another).

The CIA for this project involved gathering information from communities in the project study area that was used to define



CIA Process

The Community Impact Assessment Process involved:

- gathering information to define communities;
- developing an understanding of community values and issues;
- gauging opinions about the project; and,
- determining potential impacts.

communities, develop an understanding of community values and issues, gauge opinions about the project, and determine potential impacts.

3.2.3 How were communities identified within the project study area?

Communities and residential developments were identified using topographic maps and aerial photography of the project study area, which were later field verified (refer to Figure 3-6). To better define and understand the communities in the project study area, several methods were used to collect information from local

residents. The methods used for each area were based on preliminary information, including 2000 U.S. Census Data, to determine the demographic characteristics of the counties. Based on review of U.S. Census Data, field surveys and public involvement, it was determined that non-English speaking populations composed between 1.8 and 4.5 percent of the population in the four counties; therefore, all surveys were written in English.²³

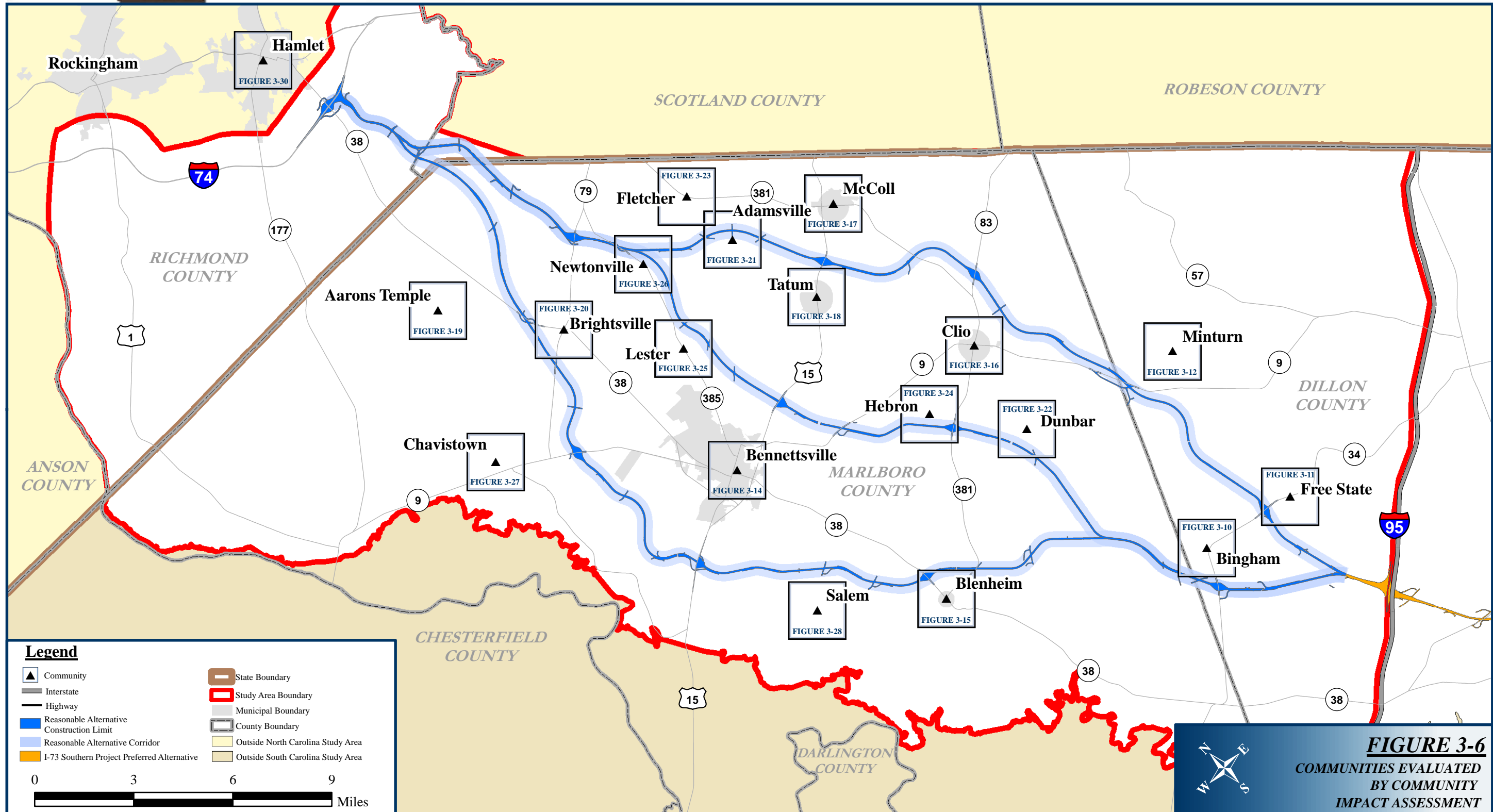
At the public information meetings, citizens were requested to define their own community on a large aerial photograph. Comments from the public information meetings were reviewed to learn more about the character of the communities and the concerns of the residents. In addition, surveys were mailed to residents within four zip codes in Marlboro and Richmond Counties that covered the project study area. Survey packets were also distributed to fifth grade classes at schools within the entire project study area. In specific areas where no survey responses had been collected, door-to-door interviews were conducted or surveys were mailed to additional postal routes. The methods used to obtain community input are explained further in Chapter 4 under Public Involvement (refer to Section 4.1, page 4-1).

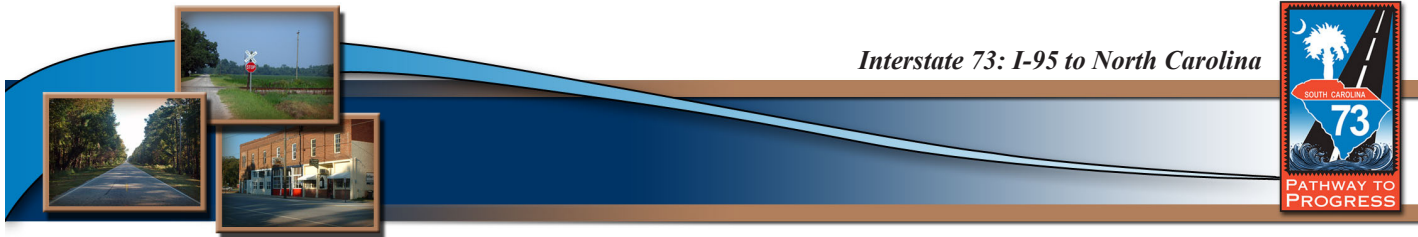
Communities in proximity to the Build Alternatives were evaluated. The community boundaries used in the EIS were defined by survey respondents who



CIA Process at the Public Information Meetings

²³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census.





associated themselves with a particular community as well as information gathered from public information meetings (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34).

A summary of the direct impacts to communities by the Build Alternatives can be found in Table 3.8. As shown in Table 3.8, Alternative 1 would impact the least number of communities but would have the highest number of relocations within communities. Alternatives 1 and 2 would have no church relocations, while Alternative 3 would displace one church. Alternative 2 would have the highest number of business relocations within communities, while Alternative 1 would have the highest amount of impacted noise receivers. Alternative 3 would have the lowest number of relocations within communities, but would have the highest number of visually impacted communities as well as the highest number of communities where travel patterns/accessibility would be impacted.

A discussion of the communities and how they may be potentially impacted by the Build Alternatives is below, followed by a summary table of direct impacts to each community by the Build Alternatives at the end of this section (refer to Table 3.13, pages 3-100 to 3-101).

**Table 3.8
Total Impacts to Communities in Project Study Area by Alternative**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2 (Preferred)	Alternative 3
Residential Relocations within Communities	66	27	19
Business Relocations within Communities	2	6	4
Church Relocations within Communities	0	0	1
Impacted Noise Receivers within Communities	6	3	1
Visual Impacts within Communities	6	8	9
Minor Changes in Travel Patterns/Accessibility within Communities	3	4	5
Potential Community Cohesion Impacts within Communities	1	2	3
Total Number of Communities Impacted	8	11	10



Dillon County

3.2.4 What are the characteristics of Dillon County?

Dillon County, South Carolina, was founded in 1910 and named after James W. Dillon. Located in the northeastern portion of the state, it contains a total of 405 square miles (refer to Figure 3-8). Swamps and rivers kept this portion of the state isolated for many years, but the construction of a railroad in the nineteenth century brought increased development.²⁴

Dillon County is primarily rural in character, with scattered low-density residential development. Higher density residential development, commercial, and industrial land uses are concentrated within and surrounding the incorporated urbanized areas of Dillon and Latta.

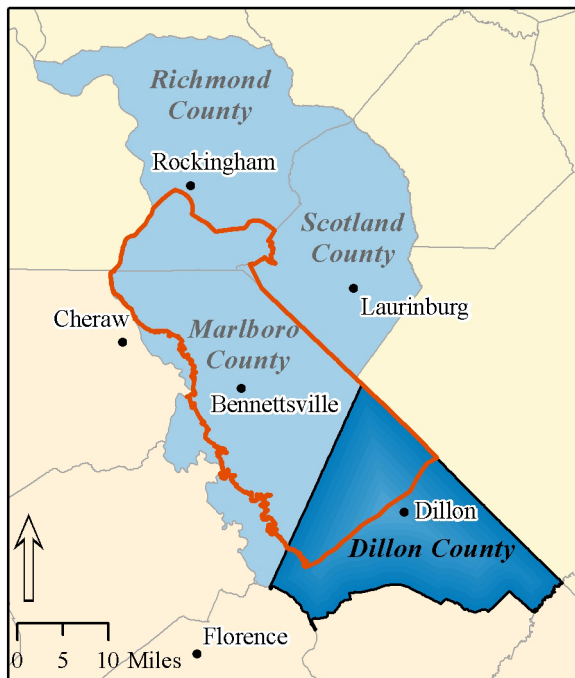


Figure 3-8 Dillon County

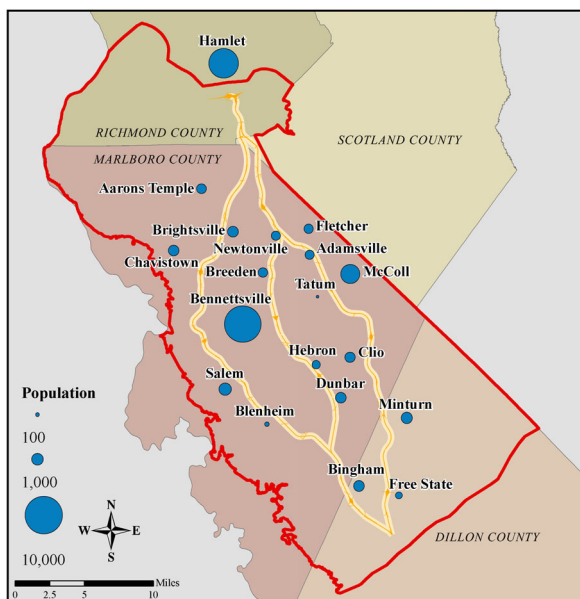


Figure 3-9 Community Populations in Project Study Area

Library services for cities, towns, and communities in the county are provided by the Dillon County Library, located in the City of Dillon, while healthcare services are provided by McLeod Medical Center, also located in Dillon.

The communities in the Dillon County portion of the project study area include Bingham, Free State, and Minturn (refer to Figure 3-7). The demographic characteristics of these communities, based on 2000 U.S. Census Data, are shown in Table 3.9 (refer to page 3-35). The communities in Dillon vary with respect to population, with Minturn having the highest number of residents at 931, while Free State has the lowest population at 338 (refer to Figure 3-9). The percent of minority population also varies between communities with Bingham having the lowest percentage of minority populations while Minturn has

²⁴ South Carolina Reference Room, Dillon County Webpage, <http://www.state.sc.us/scsl/dil.html> (December 11, 2006).

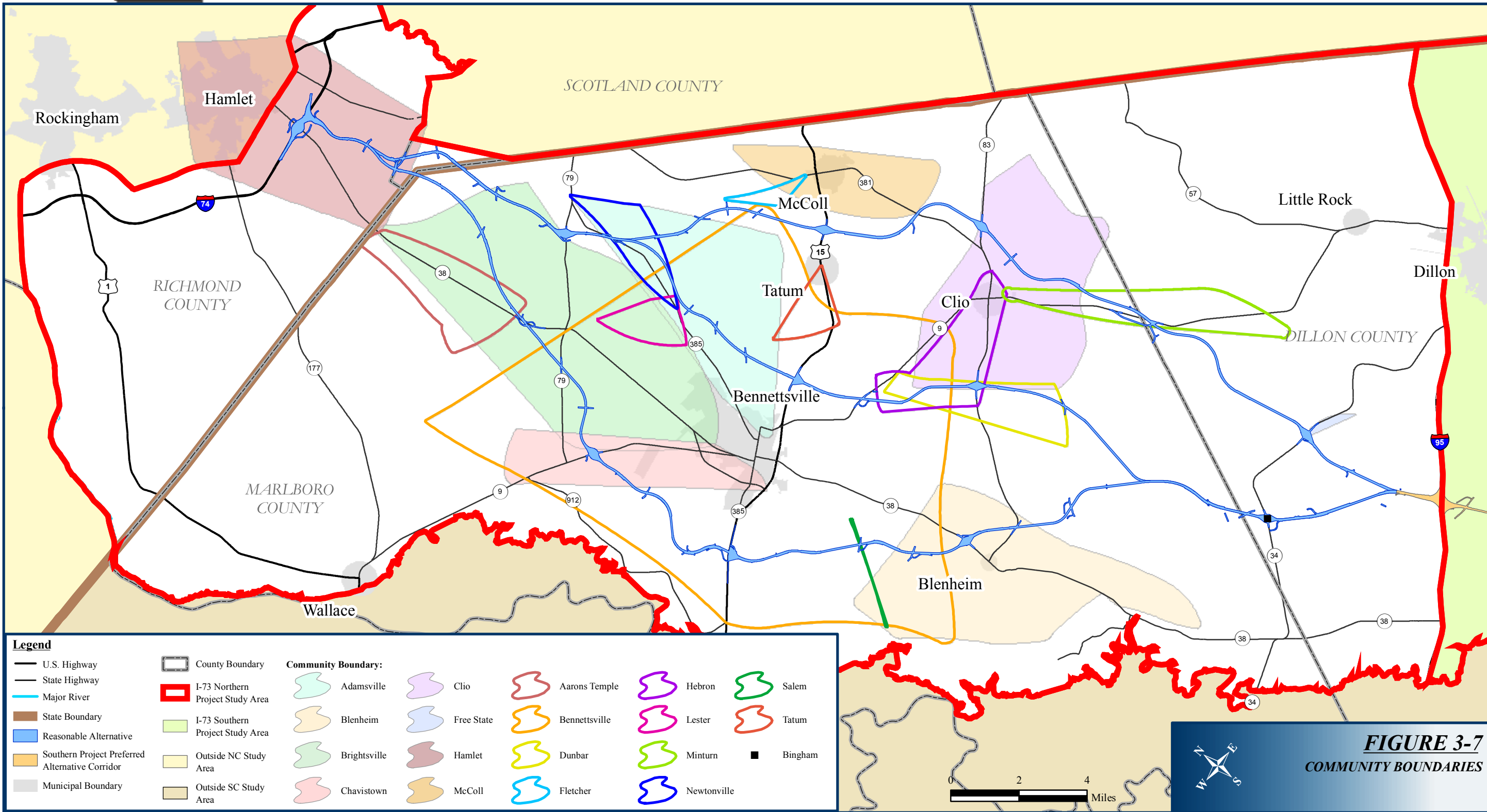


FIGURE 3-7
COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES



**Table 3.9
Demographic Characteristics of Communities in Project Study Area**

	Population	% Minority	% over 65	% Households w/ school-age children	Lived in residence over 10 years
Dillon County Communities					
Bingham	856	36%	8%	36%	43%
Free State	338	49%	7%	39%	48%
Minturn	931	75%	10%	35%	30%
Marlboro County Communities					
Bennettsville	9,425	65%	15%	28%	47%
Blenheim	137	57%	20%	16%	60%
Clio	774	64%	14%	25%	40%
McColl	2,498	34%	11%	31%	40%
Tatum	69	25%	23%	25%	50%
Aarons Temple	715	54%	11%	31%	36%
Adamsville	643	52%	15%	30%	52%
Brightsville	831	46%	11%	35%	57%
Chavistown	866	44%	11%	33%	38%
Dunbar	833	69%	12%	34%	49%
Fletcher	643	52%	15%	30%	58%
Hebron	486	52%	17%	23%	50%
Lester	621	51%	12%	29%	40%
Newtonville	643	52%	15%	28%	52%
Salem	1,098	37%	8%	33%	50%
Richmond County Communities					
Hamlet	6,018	38%	17%	28%	49%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census.

the highest. The percentages of the population over 65 in the communities are similar, ranging from seven to ten percent, while the percentage of households with school-age children is also similar, between 35 and 39 percent. A higher percentage of residents in Bingham and Free State have lived in their residences over ten years when compared to the community of Minturn.

Table 3.10 (page 3-36) lists the economic characteristics of communities in Dillon County. The median household income for communities ranges from just under \$26,000 in Bingham to over \$36,000 in Minturn. The percent below poverty level ranges from 22 percent in Bingham to 31 percent in Minturn and Free State. The percentages of households with no vehicle are similar in the communities, with seven to eight percent of the households having no vehicle available. The



**Table 3.10
Economic Characteristics of Communities in Project Study Area**

	Median HH Income	% below Poverty level	Household w/ no vehicle	Median value of owner occupied homes
Dillon County Communities				
Bingham	\$25,982	22%	8%	\$29,600
Free State	\$27,917	31%	7%	\$61,400
Minturn	\$36,500	31%	8%	\$46,400
Marlboro County Communities				
Bennettsville	\$22,389	27%	26%	\$57,700
Blenheim	\$26,667	16%	27%	\$36,900
Clio	\$25,313	29%	30%	\$50,200
McCull	\$22,015	32%	20%	\$47,100
Tatum	\$21,750	8%	21%	\$45,000
Aarons Temple	\$28,750	27%	12%	\$49,500
Adamsville	\$36,500	17%	2%	\$55,300
Brightsville	\$35,600	17%	11%	\$32,308
Chavistown	\$30,063	26%	6%	\$47,200
Dunbar	\$25,326	37%	28%	\$40,500
Fletcher	\$35,500	23%	2%	\$55,300
Hebron	\$29,375	22%	13%	\$64,400
Lester	\$22,441	22%	17%	\$44,300
Newtonville	\$36,500	17%	2%	\$55,300
Salem	\$29,306	18%	9%	\$41,100
Richmond County Communities				
Hamlet	\$29,013	22%	17%	\$54,500

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census.

median value of owner-occupied homes varies greatly between communities. Homes in Bingham average \$29,600, while the median value of owner-occupied homes in Free State is \$61,400.

3.2.5 How would Dillon County be impacted by the proposed project?

All of the Build Alternatives pass through Dillon County, near the communities of Bingham, Free State, and Minturn, which are rural areas (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34). Based on six surveys received from these communities, a majority of the respondents do not support the I-73 project, nor do they like the idea of I-73 being built in the area (100 percent). Additionally, 70 percent felt the project would have a negative impact on their community.



Dillon County has seen little growth in its population or economy over the last 20 years. The percentages of residents living below the poverty level are 10 percent higher than the state level and 12 percent higher than the national level (refer to Chapter 1, page 1-22).

Based on comments from Dillon County residents received through survey responses, submitted during public meetings, or in letters to SCDOT, respondents felt that the I-73 project would unavoidably disrupt their way of life, farmlands, and the rural settings of their communities.

3.2.6 What are the characteristics of communities located within Dillon County and how would they be impacted by the proposed project?

3.2.6.1 Bingham

Location

Bingham is located approximately 10 miles northwest of Dillon at the intersection of S.C. Route 34 and Butler Road (Road S-886) (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34, and Figure 3-10).

Community Characteristics

There are several residential areas and one convenience store, the Bingham Grocery. Three active churches are located in the community: Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist, Mt. Sinai Free Spirit Church, and the Manning Chapel Methodist Church. Bingham also has a baseball field located on Ball Park Place (private road). Based on 2000 U.S. Census Data shown in Tables 3.9 and 3.10 (refer to pages 3-35 and 3-36), Bingham has a 36 percent minority population and 22 percent of the population lives below the poverty level.

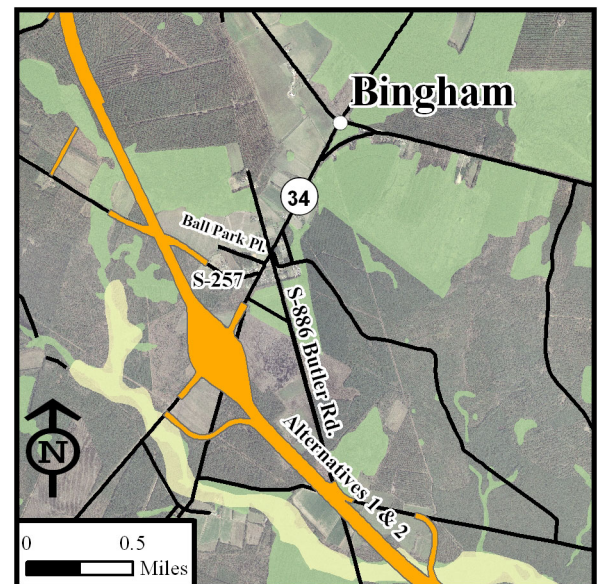


Figure 3-10 Bingham

No community surveys were received from the community of Bingham; therefore, a survey-defined community boundary was not determined (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34). Instead, the earlier defined community boundaries based on aerial photography, topographical maps, and field verifications were used to determine impacts from the Build Alternatives.



Community Cohesion, Relocations, Noise Impacts, and Visual Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would cross through the community while Alternative 3, located over two miles east of the community, would not impact Bingham. Alternatives 1 and 2 would pass just west of the main residential areas of Bingham, which are located near the intersections of S.C. Route 34, Road S-257, and Butler Road (refer to Figure 3-10, page 3-37). The main residential areas would remain intact, and no physical barrier would be created that would interfere with community cohesion or social interaction.

Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in the relocation of three residences, (one vacant, one house, one mobile home) at the proposed interchange with S.C. Route 34. No churches or businesses in Bingham would be impacted by the proposed project, nor would any noise receivers. Alternatives 1 and 2 would be located in mainly wooded areas west of Bingham, and as such, changes to the visual landscape or rural character would be minimal.

Access and Travel Patterns

Travel routes along S.C. Route 34 and Road S-257 would be maintained and not impacted by Alternatives 1 and 2. Access onto I-73 would be provided at an interchange with S.C. Route 34.

Special Populations

No transit-dependent, disabled, or elderly populations were identified in the portions of the community being traversed by Alternatives 1 and 2, and it is unknown at this time if these populations would be specifically affected.

Projected Development

Historically, there has not been an appreciable amount of change that has impacted the Bingham community. Based on land use modeling, no development is anticipated as a result of the No-build or Build Alternatives.

Summary

Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in the relocation of three residences, no churches or businesses. No noise receivers would be impacted, and changes to the visual landscape would be minimal.

Bingham Direct Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Three residential relocations
- No business or church relocations
- No visual or noise impacts
- No changes in accessibility/travel patterns

Alternative 3:

- No impacts anticipated

Projected Development in Bingham

No induced growth is anticipated from the No-Build or Build Alternatives in Bingham.



Alternative 3 would not have any direct impacts to Bingham. No indirect impacts would be anticipated from the Build Alternatives to the community of Bingham.

3.2.6.2 Free State

Location

Free State is located approximately eight miles northwest of Dillon at the crossroads of Centerville Road (S-38) and S.C. Route 34 West (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34, and Figure 3-11).

Community Characteristics

There are several residences and a community store, Bert's Country Store. The Free State Independent Church and the Pine Hill AME are active churches within the community, and both are located on Centerville Road. The Oak Grove Fire Department provides emergency services to Free State. The community is approximately half minority, and 31 percent of the population lives below the poverty level, based on the 2000 U.S. Census Data presented in Tables 3.9 and 3.10 (refer to pages 3-35 and 3-36).

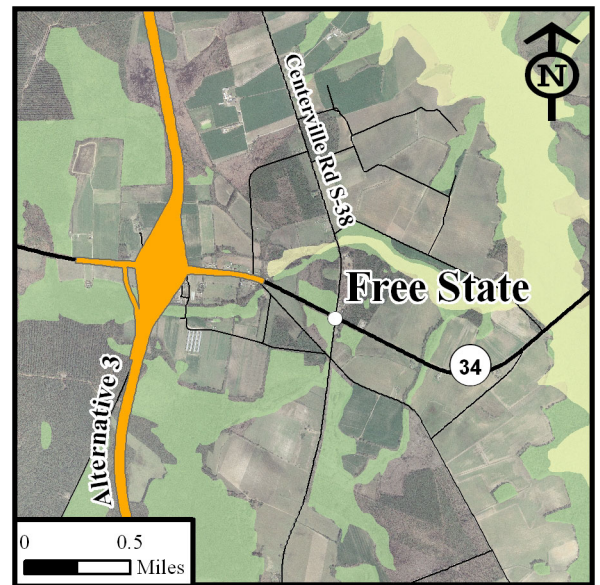


Figure 3-11 Free State

One community survey was received from Free State. The respondent felt the community was close-knit and had a small-town character, where he/she sometimes interacted with his/her neighbors. This respondent also stated that he/she liked the neighborhood and felt it was safe. In addition, the survey respondent stated that he/she ranked his/her quality of life as high. While this respondent did not have other family members in the community, he/she had been living there for approximately 40 years.

Community Respondents' Opinions on Proposed Project

The respondent was familiar with the I-73 project, but did not support it being built in the area, stating that it would have a negative impact upon the Free State community. The survey respondent was least concerned about jobs during road construction, new stores, restaurants, businesses with long-term jobs, and faster routes to nearby communities. The issues of changing the rural way of life, additional noise and air pollution, more traffic in the community and living too close to an interstate appeared to be most important to this respondent. The respondent did not indicate a preference for any of the Build Alternatives.



Community Cohesion, Relocations, Noise Impacts, and Visual Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not impact the Free State community, being located to the west of the defined boundaries (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34). Alternative 3 would pass through the extreme northwest limits of the rural community of Free State; however, community cohesion is not anticipated to be adversely affected since most residences are located in two areas, along S.C. Route 34 and at the intersection of S.C. Route 34 and Centerville Road (refer to Figure 3-11, page 3-39). Alternative 3 has the potential to create a physical barrier, but it is located northwest of these residential areas, and would not divide the community nor would it prevent

residents from interacting with each other. The barrier impact would be minimized through continued access along S.C. Route 34 to the east and west of I-73. It is not anticipated that any other roads within the community would be modified or closed. Due to the rural and agricultural nature of the community, the construction of Alternative 3 and interchange at S.C. Route 34 may affect the visual landscape and the rural character of the community.

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would not displace any residences or businesses; however, Alternative 3 would displace one church, The Community House of Prayer, from within the Free State community. No noise impacts would occur from the Build Alternatives; however, Alternative 3 may impact the visual landscape and rural character of the community.

Free State Direct Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2:

-No impacts anticipated

Alternative 3:

-No residential or business relocations

-One church relocation

-Possible visual landscape impacts

-No noise impacts

-No changes in travel patterns/ accessibility

-Could minimally impact community cohesion

Access and Travel Patterns

Travel patterns within and between the developed areas of Free State are not anticipated to be impacted due to primary travel routes being maintained. Access to shopping, entertainment, and medical facilities available in Dillon would not be affected, as local residents would be able to continue to use the existing travel routes to reach those destinations. Direct access to I-73 would be via the interchange with S.C. Route 34 west of Free State with Build Alternative 3. Vehicular and pedestrian access to community services and facilities would not be altered or hindered, nor would the routing of emergency vehicles.

Special Populations

Specific disabled, non-driving, or transit-dependent populations have not been identified in the portion of Free State crossed by Alternative 3, and therefore, it is unknown at this time whether these populations will be affected by the proposed project.

Projected Development

Historically, there has not been an appreciable amount of change that has impacted the Free State community. Land use studies did not anticipate any development to occur in the community,



as defined by the community survey, with the No-Build Alternative or any of the Build Alternatives. There may be a potential for development near S.C. Route 34 due to its interchange with Alternative 3. However, because of the lack of available infrastructure at this location, growth could be limited. In general, land use changes for this community are not anticipated.

Projected Development in Free State

No induced growth is anticipated from the No-Build or Build Alternatives in Free State.

Summary

Impacts to the Free State community are not anticipated to occur with Alternatives 1 and 2. Alternative 3 would require the displacement of one church, which could be positive or negative depending on the church's perspective and needs, and may cause impacts to the visual landscape of the community.

3.2.6.3 Minturn

Location

Minturn is a small residential area approximately nine miles north of Dillon that stretches along Minturn Road (S-17) from S.C. Route 9 to Sherman Court (S-17-333) (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34, and Figure 3-12).

Community Characteristics

There are several residences, a baseball field, the Minturn Community Center, a community store, and two active churches, the Minturn Grove Baptist Church and the Reedy Creek Presbyterian Church. An active cotton gin is located at the intersection of Minturn Road and Cotton Gin Road (S-17-134) and an airstrip is located in the area for crop dusting operations. The community is serviced by the Reedy Creek Volunteer Fire Department. As shown in Tables 3.9 and 3.10 (refer to pages 3-35 and 3-36), Minturn is primarily a minority community, with one-third of its population living below the poverty level.

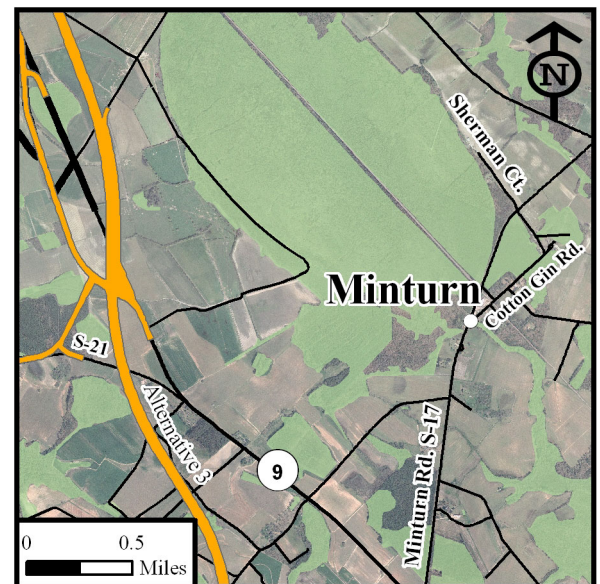


Figure 3-12 Minturn



Based on 11 community surveys, all of the respondents of the Minturn community feel as though it is a close-knit community with a small-town feel, where 83 percent of respondents say they often interact with their neighbors. Most respondents like their neighborhood, feel safe, and rank their quality of life high. All of the respondents have other family members living in the community and 66 percent of those are providing care for a relative. The average length of residency among survey respondents is 34 years (individual surveys range between 10 to 65 years).



Minturn Baseball Field

Community Respondents' Opinions on Proposed Project

All of Minturn respondents were familiar with the I-73 project. Of those respondents in Minturn, none were in favor of I-73 being built in the area or thought that it would have a positive impact on the community. Residents in this area had many concerns, including the following:

- neighbors or businesses moving from the area;
- changing the rural way of life;
- increased danger for children getting to school;
- increased traffic; and
- additional air pollution or noise as a result of living too close to an interstate.

The potential benefits of the proposed project (such as more convenient routes in and around the community, additional jobs during construction, and the possibility of new stores and restaurants) appeared to be less important to respondents. All respondents from Minturn expressed concern about I-73 negatively affecting the farmland in the area. The majority of respondents preferred the route west of Bennettsville (Alternative 1).

The Project Team met with 24 people from the Minturn Community on January 9, 2007. During this meeting, a crossover from Alternative 2 to the terminus of Alternative 1 at I-95 was proposed by the community members of Minturn. This crossover was taken into consideration by the Project Team and further analyzed. Once analyzed, it was found to have lower impacts to wetlands, relocations, farmlands, and communities. This crossover was incorporated into the current Alternative 2. A petition was received from the Minturn community with 106 signatures



stating that the Minturn community favored the route to the west of Bennettsville (Alternative 1) as their Preferred Alternative. The community’s second choice for the I-73 route was the central route that incorporated the requested crossover route (Alternative 2).

Community Cohesion, Relocations, Noise Impacts, and Visual Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would avoid the survey defined community boundaries of Minturn, while Alternative 3 would border the west of the community (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34).

The Minturn area is rural and mainly agricultural, and sparse residential development of the community is located along S.C. Route 9, south of Clio. Therefore, Alternative 3 is not likely to divide or isolate neighbors from each other or impact community cohesion. Since the community is rural and agricultural, the proposed project may affect the visual landscape of Minturn.

Minturn Direct Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2:
-No impacts anticipated

Alternative 3:
-No residential, church, or business relocations
-Possible visual landscape impacts
-No noise impacts
-Accessibility may be affected during construction

None of the Build Alternatives would result in the displacement of any residences, churches, or businesses in the Minturn community. There would be no noise impacts from the Build Alternatives; however, Alternative 3 may affect the visual landscape and rural character of Minturn.

Access and Travel Patterns

Alternative 3 would parallel S.C. Route 9 for less than 0.25 miles to the east, from Clio to the Dillon County line. S.C. Route 9 would be realigned for approximately 1.2 miles near the intersection with Road S-21 (refer to Figure 3-12, page 3-41). Access along S.C. Route 9 would be maintained over Alternative 3 at this location. Road S-21 would not cross Alternative 3, but would be connected to S.C. Route 9 with a new frontage road to maintain access. The realignments to S.C. Route 9 and S-21, along with the addition of a new frontage road may change travel patterns slightly but overall access within the area would be maintained. Vehicular and pedestrian access to community services and facilities are not anticipated to be altered or hindered, nor are the routing of emergency vehicles.

Special Populations

Specific elderly, non-driving, or transit-dependent populations were not identified in this community. 2000 U.S. Census Data shows that the percentage of persons with a disability in this area of the county is higher than the statewide average. It is unknown at this time if any of these populations in Minturn would specifically be affected.



Projected Development

Historically, there has not been an appreciable amount of change that has impacted the Minturn community. Currently there is a community store and residential development located in Minturn.

Projected Development in Minturn

No-build Alternative: < 1 acre of growth
Alternative 1: No induced growth
Alternative 2: 12 acres of induced growth
Alternative 3: 33 acres of induced growth

Based on land use modeling, minimal development (less than one acre) is expected to occur in the community with the No-build Alternative. The land use modeling also predicted that the Build Alternatives were likely to add between 12 and 33 acres of new development in Minturn. The interchange of S.C. Route 9 and Alternative 3 may encourage some development at this location, but it may be limited due to lack of available infrastructure. In general, land use changes for this area are not anticipated.

Summary

For all the Build Alternatives, there would be no relocations and no noise impacts. Travel patterns along S.C. Route 9 and Road S-21 would be altered but access would be maintained. Travel patterns on these roadways may be temporarily affected during construction by Alternative 3 and impacts to the visual landscape may occur due to the presence of an interstate facility.

Marlboro County

3.2.7 What are the characteristics of Marlboro County?

Marlboro County, South Carolina, is located in the northeastern part of the state and contains a total of 485 square miles (refer to Figure 3-13). It was originally part of the Cheraws District, one of seven districts formed in 1768 by the South Carolina Government.²⁵ The district was composed primarily of what is now Marlboro, Chesterfield, and Darlington Counties, as well as parts of Lee and Florence Counties. In 1785, after the American Revolution, the Cheraws District was split into three counties, Marlboro, Darlington, and Chesterfield, and then the district was later abolished in 1800. Marlboro County was named after John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, a commander in the British Military in the early 1700s.²⁶ Prior to the Civil War, the production of cotton made the area wealthy. The county received an economic boost when the railroad arrived in the 1870s, allowing cotton growers to ship their goods to mills and markets farther away.²⁷

²⁵ Carolana Website, "A History of the Cheraws District," http://carolana.com/cheraws_district_sc.html (December 19, 2006).

²⁶ Marlboro County, South Carolina Genealogy and History Website, <http://sciway3.net/proctor/marlboro/> (December 19, 2006).

²⁷ Marlboro County Government Website, History Webpage, <http://www.marlbocounty.sc.gov/history.htm> (December 19, 2006).



Marlboro County is predominantly rural in character, consisting of low-density residential uses with a large agricultural base. Beyond the Bennettsville urban area, residential development is widely scattered throughout the county. The majority of undeveloped land in the County is used for agricultural purposes. Library services are provided for the county by the Marlboro County Public Library, located in Bennettsville. Most of those living in the county travel to Bennettsville to purchase the majority of goods and services.

Cities and towns in Marlboro County that are within the project study area include Bennettsville, Blenheim, Clio, McColl, and Tatum. The communities of Aarons Temple, Adamsville, Brightsville, Chavistown, Dunbar, Fletcher, Hebron, Lester, Newtonville, and Salem are located in the Marlboro County portion of the project study area (refer to Figure 3-6, page 3-31).

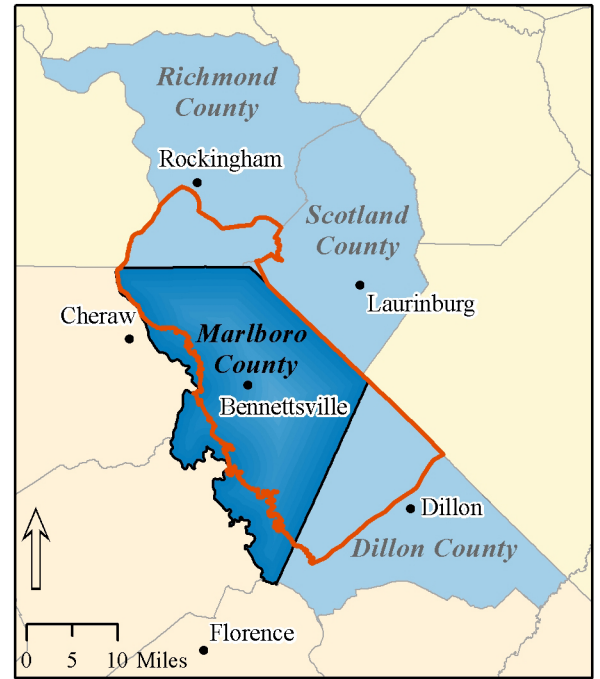


Figure 3-13 Marlboro County

The demographic characteristics of cities, towns, and communities in Marlboro County are shown in Table 3.9 (refer to page 3-35). Bennettsville is the major population center of the county, having 9,425 people residing within the city. The Town of McColl along with the community of Salem have populations over 1,000 people, while the Town of Tatum has the smallest population with 69 residents. The percentage of the population that is minority in cities, towns, and communities ranges from 25 percent in Tatum to 69 percent in Dunbar. Tatum has the highest percentage of the population over 65, while Brightsville has the highest percentage of households with school-age children. Many of the cities, towns, and communities have a high percentage of the population residing at the same home for over ten years.

Table 3.10, (refer to page 3-36), shows the economic characteristics of cities, towns, and communities in the project study area, based on 2000 U.S. Census Data. With the exception of Tatum, all cities, towns, and communities have over ten percent of their population living below the poverty level, with the community of Dunbar having the highest percentage at 37 percent. The median household incomes vary between \$21,750 dollars in Tatum to \$36,500 in Adamsville and Newtonville. The percentage of households with no vehicle also varies between two percent in Adamsville, Fletcher, and Newtonville to 30 percent in Clio. The median value of owner occupied homes also varies, ranging from \$32,308 in Brightsville to over \$64,000 in Hebron.



3.2.8 How would Marlboro County be impacted by the proposed project?

All Build Alternatives pass through Marlboro County near many cities, towns, and communities, including: Aarons Temple, Adamsville, Bennettsville, Blenheim, Brightsville, Chavistown, Clio, Dunbar, Fletcher, Hebron, Lester, McColl, Newtonville, Salem, and Tatum (refer to Figure 3-6, page 3-31). Based on survey data, a majority of Marlboro County residents appear to support the I-73 project. Of the 504 surveys received from Marlboro County, 59 percent of respondents liked the idea of I-73 being built in the area and only 25 percent did not like the idea, with the remainder being undecided. Only 29 percent of those responding felt the proposed project would have a negative impact on their community.

Marlboro County has seen little growth in its population or economy over the last 20 years. The percentages of residents living below the poverty level are slightly higher than state and national levels (four percent and five percent higher, respectively, refer to Chapter 1, Chart 1.8 on page 1-23). Responses from 247 surveys indicate that individuals who live within the city limits of Bennettsville showed the strongest support for the I-73 project. Sixty-nine percent of respondents who live within the city boundaries of Bennettsville like the idea of I-73 being built, while 16 percent did not like the idea, and the remainder was undecided. Only 18 percent of those responding from the City of Bennettsville felt the project would have a negative impact on their community.

In contrast to those respondents in Bennettsville, the 257 respondents living in the smaller towns and communities within the Marlboro County portion of project study area were divided in their support of I-73, with 48 percent supporting the interstate being built in the area, 34 percent not supporting it, and the remainder was undecided. Residents in rural areas were more concerned about potential impacts the project could have on their communities. Only 24 percent of rural respondents felt the project would have a positive impact on their community while 39 percent felt that it would have a negative impact to their community.

A Public Information Meeting was held in Marlboro County on September 7, 2006, at Bennettsville Middle School. Approximately 417 individuals attended the meeting and 108 comments were received. Overall, 92 percent of the comments received at the Public Information Meeting were generally in favor of construction of the proposed project. Comments provided on survey responses, submitted during public meetings, or in letters to SCDOT indicate that urban area respondents feel that economic growth, new industries and jobs are needed in their communities. Many respondents in smaller communities in the County were concerned that the I-73 project would have a negative effect on the agricultural industry in the county and unavoidably disrupt their way of life.



3.2.9 What are the Characteristics of Cities and Towns located in Marlboro County and how would they be impacted by the Build Alternatives?

3.2.9.1 *Bennettsville*

Location and History

Bennettsville was established in 1819 and named for then Governor Thomas Bennett. It is located in the central portion of Marlboro County at the intersection of U.S. Route 15 and S.C. Route 38 and is the county seat (refer to Figure 3-7, page 3-34, and Figure 3-14). In 1865, during the Civil War, the city was captured and occupied by Union Troops, with most notably the Jennings-Brown House being used as the Union's headquarters.²⁸ The city's economy was boosted when the railroad line arrived to the area in the 1870s. As a result, several Victorian and Greek Revival architectural style homes were built during this time.²⁹



Figure 3-14 *Bennettsville*

Community Characteristics

The City of Bennettsville offers many community services and facilities including the Bennettsville Chamber of Commerce, the Community Center, the Fitness Center, and the Bennettsville Tennis Complex. In addition, Bennettsville is home to a popular recreational area, Lake Paul Wallace, which offers fishing, swimming, boating, and a jogging track. The City of Bennettsville Fire Department provides fire and rescue to approximately 9,425 citizens while the Marlboro Park Hospital provides healthcare services. Other services in the area include the Marlboro County Jetport – H.E. Avent Field. There are 53 churches located in Bennettsville, listed in Table 3.11 (refer to page 3-48). Most respondents of the community surveys stated they generally shop and use healthcare services in Bennettsville, or the nearby cities of Rockingham or Laurinburg, North Carolina, and Florence, South Carolina. Based on 2000 U.S. Census Data, almost two-thirds of the population is minority and 27 percent lives below the poverty level (refer to Tables 3.9 and 3.10, pages 3-35 and 3-36).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Marlboro County, South Carolina Genealogy and History Website, <http://sciway3.net/proctor/marlboro/> (December 19, 2006).