



## Memorandum

**To:** Meeting Attendees

**From:** John Page, Parsons Brinckerhoff

**Date:** November 19, 2004

**Subject:** Replacement of the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge (Bridge No. 11) over Oregon Inlet, TIP Project No. B-2500, July 26, 2004 NEPA/404 Merger Team Co-Chairs Meeting to Discuss the Addition of the Parallel Bridge Corridor to the SDEIS

### Attendees:

Gail Grimes (NCDOT)  
Brian Yamamoto (NCDOT)  
John Conforti (NCDOT)  
Earlene Thomas (NCDOT)  
Mike Bryant (USFWS)  
David Franklin (USACE)  
Bill Bilddlecome (USACE)  
Ron Lucas (FHWA)  
Emily Lawton (FHWA)  
Tom Durham (FHWA)  
John Hennessey (DENR)  
John Page (PB)

The meeting was in the PDEA conference room at the Parker-Lincoln Building in Raleigh, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the inclusion of the Parallel Bridge Corridor in the Bonner Bridge Replacement Study SDEIS.

The following thoughts were expressed by the various meeting participants regarding the inclusion of the Parallel Bridge Corridor in the SDEIS:

- Gail Grimes said that NCDOT wanted to update the Parallel Bridge Corridor alternative from the 1993 DEIS rather than create a new alternative in response to the desire of the Currituck County Commissioners that a replacement bridge terminating at the north end of Hatteras Island be assessed in the SDEIS. The long-term maintenance of NC 12 will be assessed as a component of the Parallel Bridge Corridor. A design life of 75 years for the bridge and NC 12 maintenance is being considered. NC 12 maintenance could include: structures, beach renourishment (including where to obtain the sand), moving NC 12 west, and hardened structures. These are the options we can expect now and others may present themselves when studied. Terminating the bridge in the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (PINWR) within the existing right-of-way will be considered. To do this, the bridge across Oregon Inlet may need to be closed for a year while the old southern terminus is removed and the new one built. During that time, the island would be served by a ferry. The county and its citizens want a full evaluation of the Parallel Bridge Corridor alternative. The NCDOT will formally document both the positives and the negatives of



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this alternative. The team will look at the effect on NCDOT funding. The addition of this alternative will delay the Bonner Bridge project another year. Gail noted that the county is willing to take the risk that Bonner Bridge might deteriorate to the point that it would be closed to traffic before the new bridge is completed.

- David Franklin noted that new information received from Dare County, the Governor, and citizen input caused us to go back and revisit the Parallel Bridge Corridor alternative. He asked Mike Bryant if he thought a bridge in the Parallel Bridge Corridor would be compatible with the PINWR's management plan. David asked if the potential for an island breach due to a storm would be considered. David said that we were lucky to have had a good borrow source for the Hurricane Isabelle breach since it would have taken the NCDOT two years to build a bridge. Borrow sources would need to be assessed with beach nourishment and NC 12 dune maintenance alternatives.
- Mike Bryant said that if the NCDOT considered the Parallel Bridge Corridor, they could not consider it in isolation from the vulnerable road (i.e., NC 12) because this would set the stage for future non-permittable requests. However, it would be alright to put the 1993 DEIS bridge alternative in the SDEIS if the NCDOT looks at the entire road. Mike said he made 17 comments on the 1993 design in his letter commenting on a 1998 draft of the FEIS. These will now need to be addressed. He will need NEPA documentation in order to make an official compatibility determination. Mike said that if NC 12 leaves the existing right-of-way, the compatibility process would be triggered. Mike said that his letter on the FEIS included informal comment on the likelihood of a bridge ending in the refuge being compatible with management plans. Every road relocation outside the existing right-of-way will need a compatibility determination and is likely not to be permittable. Mike noted that they have permitted emergency NC 12 relocations, but a harder line will be taken when relocations are part of a permanent solution. Alternatives that continue the use of the existing right-of-way are permittable. Mike agreed that if the NCDOT can provide the Merger Team with new information, and if it is necessary to study the Parallel Bridge Corridor, then it should be studied. Mike noted that in the future they will study alternative access options if the long bridge corridor is implemented. Mike asked that Congressman Jones be provided any new assessment of alternatives.
- Brian Yamamoto noted that beach nourishment is Dare County's stated preference for maintaining NC 12.
- John Conforti suggested that NCDOT add back the Parallel Bridge Corridor alternative and extend the study area. John said the study should look at a range of NC 12 restoration alternatives (e.g., beach renourishment, dune construction, road relocation, and viaduct). John asked if there were permanent sand borrow sources.

In deciding how to obtain concurrence from the rest of the Merger Team on adding the Parallel Bridge Corridor, the following was discussed:

- John Conforti indicated that he had called the rest of the Merger Team and they seemed agreeable to adding the Parallel Bridge Corridor to the SDEIS.



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- John Hennessey said that he would agree to add the Parallel Bridge Corridor to the SDEIS with an NC 12 maintenance component. John asked for a packet containing a detailed explanation to refer to when approving the addition of the alternative.
- Bill Biddlecome asked that the NCDOT include in their request to revisit Concurrence Point 2 a reference to the process for revisiting the concurrence point.
- David suggested that the NCDOT circulate the project description and if everyone is fine with it, then there would be no need for a meeting of the Merger Team. He said it should include a map.
- Mike stated that there must be something in the administrative record of the project. Gail said that the analysis of the Parallel Bridge Corridor will be a thorough and complete study.
- Gail indicated that she thought an e-mail with a pdf map would be adequate to provide the information the Merger Team needed for concurrence.

The participants agreed that the NCDOT would distribute information on the new alternative and the reasons why it should be added to the SDEIS. They would seek concurrence without calling a Merger Team meeting.

**file no.:** 3301-2.7.2

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