

2. Recommendations

This chapter presents recommendations for each mode of transportation in the 2019 Columbus County CTP as shown in Figure 1. More detailed information on each recommendation is tabulated in Appendix C.

The complete street policy and concepts were utilized in the development of the CTP. NCDOT adopted a "Complete Streets¹" policy in July 2009. In August 2019, the NC Board of Transportation unanimously adopted a resolution in support of implementing amendments to the Complete Streets Policy, including an Implementation Guide supporting the Complete Streets Policy. The policy directs the Department to consider and incorporate other modes of transportation when building new projects or making improvements to existing infrastructure. Under this policy, the Department will collaborate with cities, towns and communities during the planning and design phases of projects. Together, they will decide how to provide context-sensitive transportation options needed to serve the community consistent with local vision. The benefits of this approach include:

- making it easier for travelers to get where they need to go;
- encouraging the use of alternative forms of transportation;
- building more sustainable communities;
- increasing connectivity between neighborhoods, streets, and transit systems;
- improving safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

Complete streets are streets designed to be safe and comfortable for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists and individuals of all ages and capabilities. These facilities generally include sidewalks, appropriate bicycle facilities, transit stops, right-sized street widths, context-based traffic speeds, and are well-integrated with surrounding land uses. The CTP recommendations include multi-modal projects as documented in the problem statements within this chapter. Refer to Appendix C for recommended cross sections for all project proposals and Appendix D for more detailed information on the typical cross sections.

2.1 Unaddressed Deficiencies

The following deficiency was identified during the development of the CTP but no reasonable solution was identified through the CTP planning process.

US 74 BUSINESS/US 76 BUSINESS (Jefferson Street)

US 74 Bus/US 76 Bus (Jefferson Street), in Whiteville, from 200 feet west of James Street to Franklin Street (SR 1953) is currently near capacity and is projected to be over capacity in 2045. It is currently a 2-lane roadway with a center turn lane west of Lee Street. This is the primary east-west corridor through Whiteville. Lack of local support and the proximity of Section 4(f) properties make widening this section of roadway impractical. This roadway segment is in the core of downtown Whiteville where the existing gridded roadway network provides alternate routes when this segment experiences congestion.

¹ For more information on Complete Streets, go to: completestreetsnc.org

2.2 Implementation

The CTP is based on the projected growth for the planning area and actual growth patterns will likely differ from those anticipated. As a result, it may be necessary to accelerate or delay the implementation of some recommendations identified in this plan.

Initiative for implementing the CTP rests predominately with the policy boards and citizens of Columbus County and its municipalities. As transportation needs throughout the state exceed available funding, it is imperative that the local governments in the planning area aggressively pursue funding for priority projects. Projects should be prioritized locally according to the Cape Fear RPO's adopted Prioritization Methodology in order to compete for State and federal funding. Refer to Appendix A for contact information on regional prioritization and funding. Local governments are encouraged to use the CTP to guide land-use development and protect corridors for the recommended projects. It is critical that NCDOT and local governments coordinate on relevant land development reviews and all transportation projects to ensure proper implementation of the CTP. Local governments and NCDOT share the responsibility for access management and the planning, design and construction of the recommended projects.

Recommended improvements shown on the CTP map represents an agreement of identified transportation deficiencies and potential solutions to address the deficiencies. While the CTP does propose recommended solutions, it may not represent the final location or cross-section associated with the improvement. All CTP recommendations are based on high level systems analyses that seek to minimize impacts to the natural and human environment. Prior to implementing projects from the CTP, additional analysis may be necessary to meet the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the North Carolina (or State) Environmental Policy Act² (SEPA). During the NEPA/SEPA process, the specific project location and cross section will be determined based on environmental analysis and public input. This CTP may be used to support transportation decision making and provide transportation planning data in the NEPA/SEPA process.

All funded projects would go through a final design phase in the project development process. This involves the preparation of detailed plans, which includes roadway, structures, hydraulics, erosion control, traffic management, signing and pavement markings, signals, geotechnical, and pavement. After design, any necessary acquisition of right-of-way and relocation of utilities would occur, followed by construction, operation, and maintenance of the project.

2.3 Problem Statements

The following pages contain problem statements for each recommendation, organized by CTP modal element. The information provided in the problem statement is intended to help support decisions made in the project development process.

² For more information on NCEPA applicability, go to:
connect.ncdot.gov/resources/environmental/lists/environmental%20compliance%20content/dispform.aspx?ID=5

HIGHWAY

US 74, Local ID: COLU0001-H

US 74 is recommended to be updated to interstate standards from the Robeson County line to the Brunswick County line. This recommendation is consistent with the NC Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan, which recommends upgrading US 74 to Freeway (I-74) from Wilmington in New Hanover County to the Monroe Bypass just east of Charlotte in Union County. US 74 is a Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) route, a hurricane evacuation route, and Strategic Transportation Corridors H and U. The NC Freight Plan identifies US 74 as a NC Priority Highway Freight Network route, and the portion in Columbus County is identified as part of Critical Rural Freight Corridor #7. In addition, I-74 is Congressional High Priority Corridor #5, which is designated as a Future Interstate generally following US 74 from Rockingham, North Carolina “to the South Carolina State line in Brunswick County.” The project is recommended to reduce travel times between Wilmington and Charlotte, accommodate significant projected growth in highway freight traffic to and from the Port of Wilmington, improve hurricane evacuation clearance times, and eliminate the existing at-grade intersections. NOTE: I-6011—US 74 upgrade to interstate standards from NC 41 near Lumberton to US 76 near Chadbourn—is currently programmed in the FY 2020-2029 STIP for right-of-way acquisition to begin in FY 2027. Construction is currently unfunded.

The proposed upgrade to interstate standards includes construction of a portion of the corridor known as the Delco Bypass³ partially on new location from approximately NC 11 to east of the Brunswick County line. Proposed interchanges are recommended at Old Boardman Road/Macedonia Church Road (SR 1506); Hallsboro Road (SR 1001); Chauncey Town Road (SR 1735); NC 214 (Sam Potts Highway); NC 11/Livingston Chapel Road (SR 1843), and at the proposed extension of NC 87. Proposed grade separations are recommended at Old Lake Road (SR 1740), Blacksmith Road (SR 1800), and Water Tank Road (SR 1824).

The following proposed interchanges and grade separations are all programmed and funded in the FY 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program:

- R-5797 interchange at Old Boardman Road (SR 1506). Construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2021.
- R-5749 interchange at Hallsboro Road (SR 1001). This project is currently under construction with estimated completion in FY 2021.
- R-5820 interchange at Chauncey Town Road (SR 1735). Construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2022.
- R-5819 grade separation at Old Lake Road (SR 1740). Construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2022.

³ see Express Final Conceptual Design SPOT ID: H090287AE at connect.ncdot.gov/site/scoping/H090287AE

The majority of the proposed recommendations come from the following Feasibility Studies: Feasibility Study (FS) 9903A for the upgrade of the US 74 corridor to interstate standards from Whiteville to Leland, FS 1106B for the upgrade of US 74 to I-74 from Lumberton to Whiteville, FS R-3436 Reevaluation for I-74 from Lumberton to the SC state line, Express FS H090287 for the upgrade of the US 74 corridor to interstate standards from SR 1700 (Red Hill Rd) to the Brunswick County line. Resolutions of support to upgrade US 74 to interstate standards along the existing alignment have been drafted and adopted by a number of counties, municipalities and transportation planning and civic organizations along the corridor such as: Cape Fear RPO, Wilmington MPO, Brunswick County, Town of Burgaw, Town of St. James, Town of Surf City, City of Whiteville, and Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.

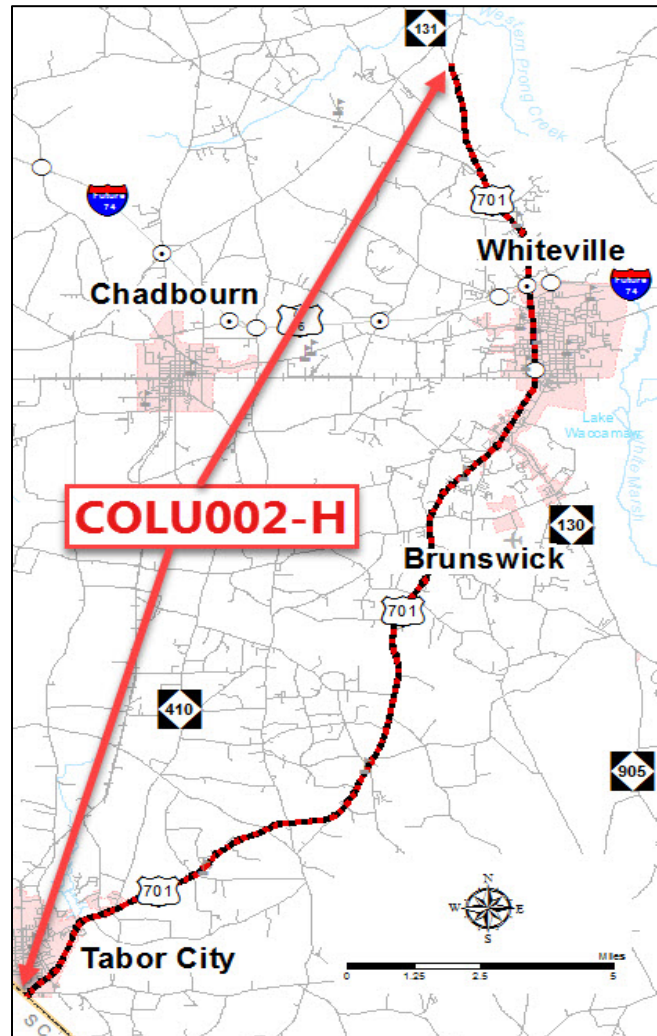
Identified Problem

US 701 is over capacity from Virgil Street (SR 1437) to Hay Street in Whiteville. The roadway experiences significant periods of peak congestion in summer months. The roadway is currently approaching capacity in the Tabor City area from Richard Wright Road (SR 1151) to the South Carolina state line and south of Whiteville from Pleasant Plains Church Road (SR 1166) to near Dogwood Avenue.

By 2045, traffic volumes on US 701 in the Tabor City area are expected to exceed roadway capacity from Vinegar Loop Road (SR 1313) to the South Carolina state line, as well as in Whiteville from Virgil Street (SR 1437) to Hay Street.

NOTE: R-5020A—Widen US 701 to multi-lanes from south of Pleasant Plains Road (SR 1166) to Virgil Avenue (SR 1437) project is programmed in the FY 2020-2029 STIP and construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2024.

R-5020B—Widen US 701 to multi-lanes from Virgil Avenue (SR 1437) to north of US 74/US 76 Bypass in Whiteville project is programmed in the FY 2020-2029 STIP and construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2021.



Justification of Need

US 701 is the primary north-south corridor connecting the County's two largest municipalities—Whiteville and Tabor City. It experiences periods of significant traffic congestion, in particular during the summer season as motorists use this route to travel to and from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. US 701 also connects to US 74/US 76, the county's primary east-west corridor connecting with I-95 to the west and to the metropolitan area of Wilmington to the east. During peak travel periods, traffic often backs up onto US 74 at the US 74-76/US 701 interchange, creating safety concerns. Also, the intersection of US 701 and US 74 Business (Washington Street) experiences the highest crash volumes in the county.

Vehicular traffic is expected to increase through the 2045 planning period. Seasonal traffic during the summer holidays and many weekends causes even more congestion on an already congested route. There is a need to improve mobility along the corridor. At the same time, there is a need for intersection improvements along the corridor to allow drivers improved access to easily get on or off US 701.

US 701 is a regionally tiered route in the NC Multimodal Investment Network (NCMIN). The NCMIN stratifies modal systems into three tiers of decreasing statewide and increasing local importance: statewide, regional, and subregional. The NCMIN reflects the state's overall development and sustainability goals.

R-5020, the widening of US 701 Bypass in Whiteville, is scheduled to begin construction in 2021. Widening is considered to be necessary to relieve current and future congestion on the roadway such that a minimum Level of Service (LOS) D can be achieved in order to help keep traffic moving and improve safety. The facility's current capacity ranges from 13,800 vehicles per day (vpd) to 17,800 vpd, and the proposed capacity is 49,000 vpd.

CTP Project Proposal

Project Description and Overview

The proposal (COLU0002-H) is to widen existing two lane segments and convert five lane segments of US 701 to a uniform, four-lane divided boulevard from NC 131 north of Whiteville to the South Carolina state line. The project would increase overall capacity and help to improve mobility and safety along the corridor.

Natural & Human Environmental Context

Since the upgrade of the roadway is predominantly on the existing right-of-way (ROW), the environmental impact would likely not jeopardize development of the project. Property would likely need to be acquired to obtain the necessary ROW.

Linkages to Other Plans

The upgrade of US 701 to a boulevard is consistent with the *2014 Tabor City CTP*.

Multi-modal Considerations

There are several existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the corridor. Pedestrian signals and crosswalks are located at US 701 and Burkhead Street, crosswalks at Virgil Street, and a pedestrian underpass at Walter Street. Also, the city of Whiteville has agreed to fund construction of sidewalk for the entirety of R-5020, the widening of US 701 Bypass in Whiteville, where there is no existing sidewalk.

NC 87, R-2561

TIP Project R-2561 proposes to widen NC 87 from a two-lane facility to a four-lane divided facility from the Elizabethtown Bypass in Bladen County to US 74/US 76 in Columbus County. This route is a Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) Connector on the National Highway System (NHS), a NC Priority Highway Freight Network route in the NC Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan, and Strategic Transportation Corridor K. The proposed project is approximately 30 miles in length, of which approximately 7 miles are located in Columbus County.

R-2561 is segmented into three parts. R-2561A is from Elizabethtown Bypass to Elwell Ferry Road (SR 1730) in Bladen County. R-2561B is from Elwell Ferry Road (SR 1730) in Bladen County to NC 11 in Columbus County. R-2561C is from NC 11 to US 74/US 76 in Columbus County.

R-2561C is included in the FY 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety, mobility, and reduce travel time along the corridor. The project development process is underway and alternatives are being evaluated, including widening through Riegelwood or constructing a Riegelwood bypass on new location. The acquisition of right-of-way and utilities are currently scheduled to begin in 2029. Construction is currently unfunded.

R-2561CA is the construction of an interchange at the intersection of NC 87 and NC 11. This project is programmed in the current FY 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program. Construction is scheduled to begin in FY 2021.

R-2561A and R-2561B, located mostly in Bladen County, are not funded in the current State Transportation Improvement Program.

NC 242 (Cerro Gordo Bypass), SPOT ID: H184020

This project proposes to construct a two-lane roadway on new location from NC 242 (Haynes Lennon Hwy) north of Cerro Gordo to SR 1352 (Cherry Grove Road) south of Cerro Gordo, including a grade-separated crossing of the RJ Corman rail line. The proposed bypass would be roughly 1.65 miles long with a recommended posted speed limit of 55 mph.

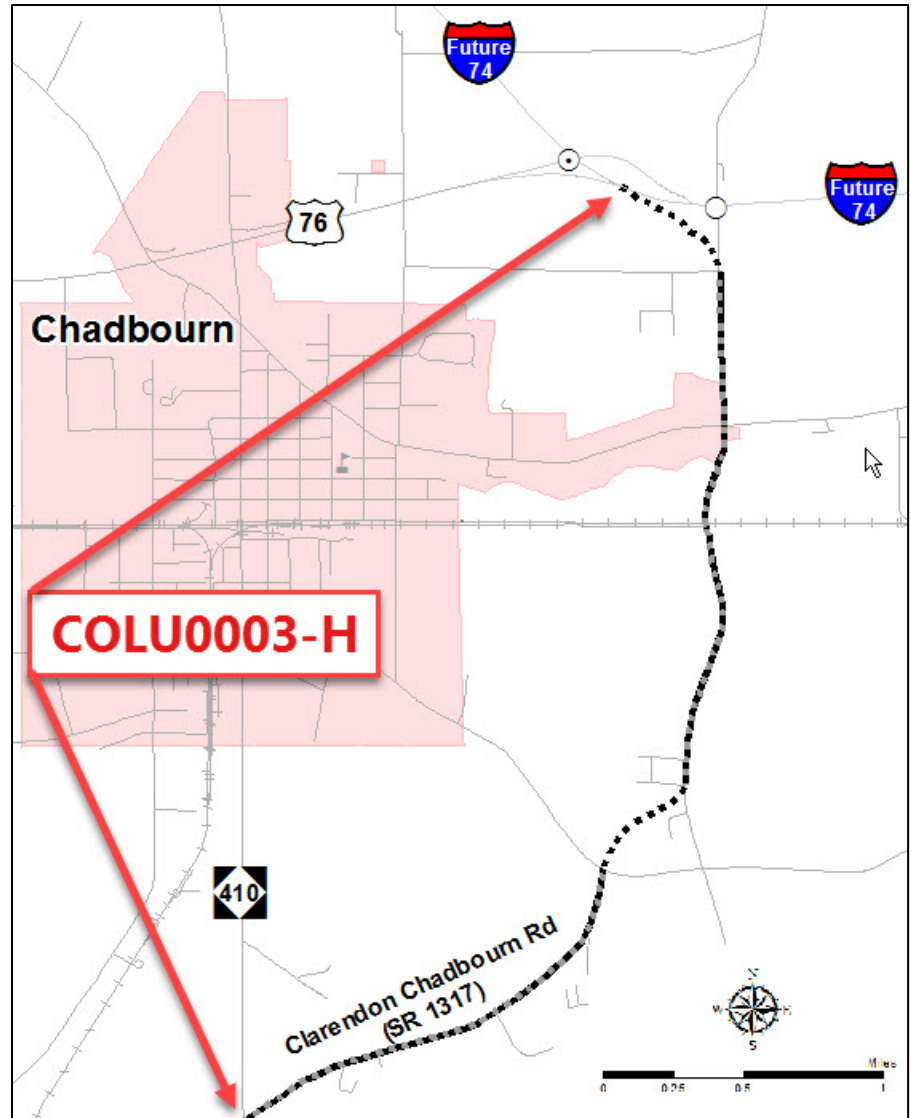
The primary purpose of the proposed project is to provide a north-south route between US 74/US76 and the South Carolina state line. As area roads continue to experience an increase in traffic volumes to and from the Myrtle Beach area, the proposed project will create an alternative travel route that will provide mobility, safety, connectivity and also help to ease current traffic congestion on area roads resulting from seasonal traffic.

Identified Problem

Seasonal traffic is causing congestion on NC 410 (Joe Brown Hwy) in Chadbourn. Presently, NC 410 is approaching capacity in Chadbourn and is expected to be nearing or over capacity by 2045 from US 74/NC 130 to Institute Street (SR 1317).

Justification of Need

NC 410 is currently a two lane facility in Chadbourn from US 76 (Andrew Jackson Highway) to 3rd Avenue and three lanes from Thompson Street to Smith Street. The increase in vehicular traffic in Chadbourn will be mostly due to through traffic as drivers head to and from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and other destinations south.



Average annual daily traffic (AADT) for the base year ranges from 7,500 to 11,000. 2017 AADT was also analyzed—this validated the current recommendation proposed. Chadbourn has also expressed interest in re-establishing on-street parking on NC 410 and constructing an NC 410 Bypass would assist in this effort. Based on the historical growth, vehicular traffic is expected to increase through the 2045 planning period. In 2045, the AADT is projected to range from 11,000 to 15,000.

CTP Proposal

The CTP proposal SPOT ID: H170044 (COLU0003-H) provides a bypass route for those traveling through Chadbourn. The CTP recommendation is proposed in four segments which make up the Chadbourn Bypass. They are:

1. **US 74/76 Interchange:** Upgrade the interchange on US 74 at US 76 to enable exit ramps to Peacock Road (SR 1005)
2. **Peacock Road (SR 1005):** Utilize the existing roadway from the US 74/76 interchange to a new connector road north of Old Pine Log Road (SR 1429)
3. **New Connector Road:** A new two-lane connector road from Peacock Road (SR 1005) to Old Pine Log Road (SR 1429) at Clarendon Chadbourn Road (SR 1317)
4. **Clarendon Chadbourn Road (SR 1317):** Utilize the existing two lane facility from Old Pine Log Road (SR 1429) to NC 410

Relationship to Land Use Plans

The land use along the new facility is zoned as residential and agricultural. The interest of the Town of Chadbourn is to create a balanced, flexible, and economically viable pattern of land development within the Town of Chadbourn's planning jurisdiction. The Town of Chadbourn can mitigate any negative impacts of new travel patterns around the Central Business District by maintaining residential and agricultural zoning along the bypass corridor and minimizing commercial development outside of the Central Business District.

Multi-modal Considerations

No multi-modal recommendations are proposed along the project corridor; however, establishing an NC 410 Bypass is expected to enable the existing NC 410 within the Chadbourn town limits to be designated as NC 410 Business and allow Chadbourn to work with NCDOT to make the roadway more pedestrian-friendly and to potentially reintroduce on-street parking in the Central Business District.

NC 904--US 701 Business (Hickman Road)/Complex St Realignment, R-5952

US 701 Business in Tabor City begins at the intersection of US 701 Bypass at East 5th Street and continues southbound on Hickman Road through the Tabor City Central Business District to the South Carolina state line.

The proposed project relocates the portion of US 701 Business (Hickman Road) from Sandwall Street to the South Carolina state line.

It is recommended to relocate this section to meet with the US 701 Bypass just north of Complex Street. Complex Street (SR 1305) is a minor thoroughfare that connects motorists to US 701 Bypass and US 701 Business (Hickman Road). It also realigns the existing intersection in order to improve the sight distance. Complex Street (SR 1305) and US 701 Bypass intersect at a skewed angle. The relocated facility would be a two-lane major thoroughfare.

The town has expressed safety concerns with the US 701 Bypass & Complex Street (SR 1305) intersection. One main concern is the northern sight distance on Complex Street (SR 1305). The other concern is the nearby US 701 Bypass and US 701 Business merge just south of the state line. The North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Transportation, Mobility & Safety (TMS) Division has records of twenty-one crashes at the US 701 Bypass & Complex Street (SR 1305) intersection from 2014 to 2018.

Included in the project proposal is the conversion of the remaining US 701 Business (Hickman Street) to a local road, which starts at Sandwall Street and dead ends at the South Carolina border. This local road would also have bicycle and sidewalk access. The remaining portion of Complex Street (SR 1305), west of the US 701 Bypass, would become the ramps for the proposed interchange. The realignment would improve mobility and safety in the southern portion of the Tabor City planning area.

The purpose of this project is to reroute NC 904 traffic to the proposed alignment and interchange. With a proposed grade separation at US 701 and NC 904, it is anticipated that traffic operations on US 701 Bypass would improve, producing an estimated travel time savings of 73,000 hours over a 10 year period.

This project is programmed in the 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program, with right-of-way acquisition scheduled for FY 2025 and construction beginning in FY 2027.

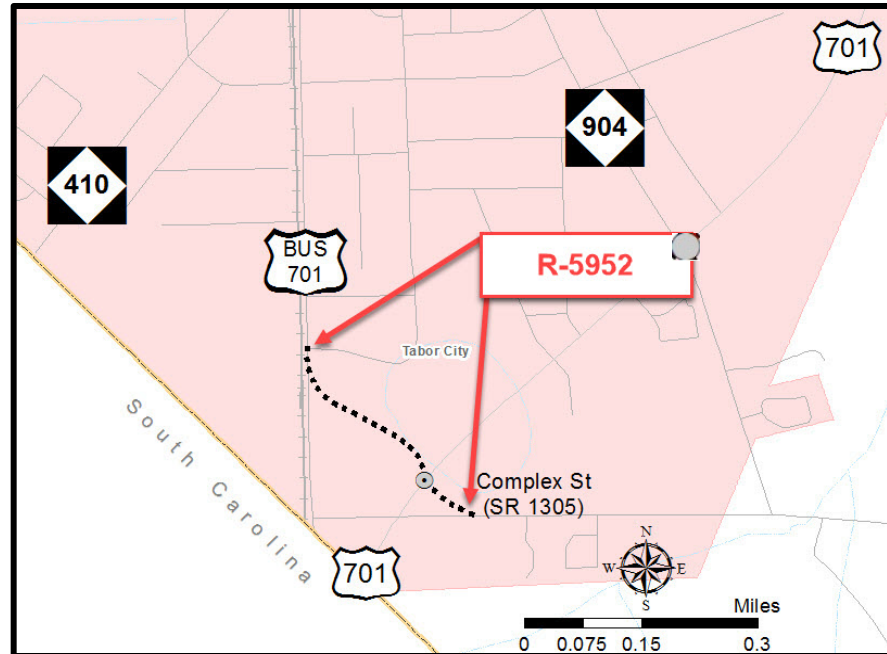


Figure 10A: US 701 BYP and US 701 BUS (Hickman Road) Merge



Figure 10B—Project proposal for Figure 10A currently under study subject to change (NOT FINAL)

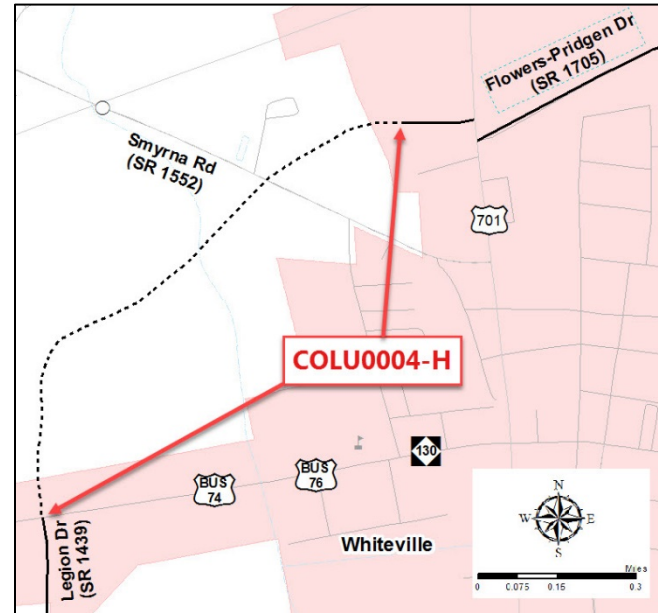


Identified Problem

Presently, there is limited north-south connectivity on the west side of Whiteville. The primary purpose of this proposal is to improve connectivity and increase mobility and accessibility by providing an additional north-south connection west of US 701.

Justification of Need

Several major public facilities are located on the west side of Whiteville, including the Columbus County Bus Garage, NCDOT Driver's License Office, Columbus County Department of Aging, Columbus County Sheriff's Office, Legion Memorial Stadium, and Columbus County Public Transportation Department. The proposed connection is intended to improve access to all of those agencies and reduce congestion and crashes at the intersection of US 701 (JK Powell Blvd) and US 74 Business (Washington/Jefferson St). The project is also intended to benefit the Columbus County Transportation On-Demand Service and Greyhound Intercity Bus Service, which stops in Whiteville twice a day.



CTP Project Proposal

The proposed project (COLU0004-H) is to construct a new two-lane extension of Legion Drive (SR 1439) from its current terminus to US 701.. It is recommended that the proposed project be segmented at Smyrna Rd (SR 1552) in order to better reach the ultimate goal of completing the project. Local decision makers are strongly encouraged to explore the option of using local funds to construct the segment from Legion Drive (SR 1439) to Smyrna Road (SR 1552). Constructing the segment of Legion Drive from Smyrna Road (SR 1552) to US 701 may not be necessary until the property bisected by the corridor is developed. This segment of Legion Drive may be constructed through the subdivision and development process.

Relationship to Land Use Plans

The future land use along the corridor is classified as rural residential, office & institutional, and commercial mixed use.

Multi-modal Considerations

No recommendations for bicycle, pedestrian or fixed-route public transportation facilities are proposed along the proposed project, as it is located primarily outside of Whiteville's municipal limits.

Hallsboro Road (SR 1001) Realignment, Local ID: COLU0005-H

Hallsboro Road (SR 1001) is a minor thoroughfare that connects motorists to US 74/US 76, NC 214, and NC 130. The CTP project proposal (COLU0008-H) recommends realigning Hallsboro Road (SR 1001) and Soles Road (SR 1972) intersection in order to improve north-south connectivity and allow free flow traffic on Hallsboro Rd.

Old Tram Road (SR 1213) Realignment, Local ID: COLU0006-H

Old Tram Road (SR 1213) is a minor thoroughfare that connects motorists to NC 905. The CTP project proposal (COLU0009-H) recommends realigning Old Tram Road (SR 1213) and Poley Bridge Church Road (SR 1212) intersection in order to improve connectivity and sight distances.

Midway Road (SR 1435/SR 1459) Realignment, Local ID: COLU0007-H

Midway Road (SR 1435) is a minor thoroughfare that connects motorists to US 74/US 76/NC 130 and Old Pine Log Road (SR 1429). The CTP project proposal (COLU0007-H) recommends aligning the offset intersection at Georgia Pacific Rd (SR 1436) in order to improve connectivity and mobility for north-south travel.

Minor Improvements (Modernization)

The following facilities are considered narrow roads recommended to be upgraded to standard geometrics (See Appendix D).

US 76, LOCAL ID: COLU0008-H: from Hamer Street to Cerro Gordo Town Limits.

US 76, LOCAL ID: COLU0009-H: from Fair Bluff Town Limits to South Carolina line.

NC 410, Local ID: COLU00010-H: from Bladen County line to US 74.

NC 410, Local ID: COLU00011-H: from Clarendon Chadbourn Road (SR 1317) to US 701.

NC 904, Local ID: COLU00012-H: from Fair Bluff Town Limits to Carolina Road (SR 1303).

NC 904, Local ID: COLU00013-H: Complex Street (SR 1305) to Brunswick County line.

NC 905, Local ID: COLU00014-H: NC 130 to South Carolina line.

Will Inman Road (SR 1006), Local ID: COLU0015-H: from NC 904 to the eastern Tabor City planning boundary.

Old Stake Road (SR 1300), Local ID: COLU0016-H: from Canal Street (SR 1367) to Emerson Church Road (SR 1310).

Ten Mile Road (SR 1308), Local ID: COLU0017-H: from Emerson Church Road (SR 1310) to the northern Tabor City planning boundary.

Emerson Church Road (SR 1310), Local ID: COLU0018-H: from Old Stake Road (SR 1300) to Ten Mile Road (SR 1308).

Fronis Strickland Road (SR 1347), Local ID: COLU0019-H: from NC 904 to the South Carolina State line.

Cherry Street/Cherry Grove Road (SR 1352), Local ID: COLU0020-H: from Rough and Ready Road (SR 1004) to W. Railroad Street (SR 1403).

Hinsons Crossroads (SR 1356), Local ID: COLU0021-H: from US 76 to NC 904.

W. Railroad Street (SR 1403), Local ID: COLU0022-H: from Cherry Street (SR 1352) to Church Street (SR 1407).

Church Street (SR 1407), Local ID: COLU0023-H: from W. Railroad Street (SR 1403) to US 76.

Hallsboro Road (SR 1001), SPOT ID: 171624: from US 74/76 to NC 130—widen to 32' typical section (two 12' lanes with 4' paved shoulders) along SR 1001 Hallsboro Road. Work to include widening right-of-way to 100 feet, improve roadway geometrics and intersection safety improvements.

Minor Improvements- Planned Bond Referendum (Modernization)

The following facilities are curb and gutter improvements that are proposed by the town of Tabor City for modernization as growth occurs. These facilities are planned to be improved through a local bond referendum.

Anderson Street, Local ID: COLU0024-H: from Garrell Street to US 701 Business (Hickman Road).

Bell Street, Local ID: COLU0025-H: from NC 904 (Pireway Road) to US 701 Business (Hickman Road).

East Eighth Street, Local ID: COLU0026-H: from Stake Road (SR 1300) to North Main Street (SR 1304).

Heath Street, Local ID: COLU0027-H: from Jones Street to Stake Road (SR 1300).

Jones Street, Local ID: COLU0028-H: from US 701 Business/NC 410 (East 5th Street) to Heath Street.

Live Oak Street, Local ID: COLU0029-H: from NC 904 (Pireway Road) to Williams Street.

Orange Street, Local ID: COLU0030-H: from US 701 Business/NC 410 (East 5th Street) to East 4th Street.

Railroad Avenue (SR 1425), Local ID: COLU0031-H: from Elm Street to Chadbourn Town Limits.

Stake Road (SR 1300), Local ID: COLU0032-H: from US 701 Business/NC 410 (East 5th Street) to East 8th Street.

West Fourth Street, Local ID: COLU0033-H: from Lewis Street to Bay Street.

Williams Street, Local ID: COLU0034-H: from US 701 Business/NC 410 (East 5th Street) to Live Oak Street.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION & RAIL

A public transportation and rail analysis and assessment was completed during the development of the CTP. Columbus County Transportation (CCT) provides demand-response community transportation in the County. Greyhound provides intercity bus service between Charlotte and Wilmington. Greyhound's only bus stop in Columbus County is in Whiteville at the Columbus County Transportation Building on Legion Drive (SR 1439). In addition to Charlotte and Wilmington, the Greyhound route serves Lumberton, Fayetteville, Laurinburg, Rockingham, Wadesboro, and Monroe. Cities like Wilmington, Lumberton, and Fayetteville offer passengers access to additional Greyhound destinations and passengers can access Amtrak passenger rail and MegaBus from Fayetteville.

Two railroads are operating in Columbus County. RJ Corman Railroad owns and operates its Carolina Lines (RJCS) in western Columbus County. It connects from Chadbourn to Tabor City and southward to Myrtle Beach and from Chadbourn to Fair Bluff and westward to the CSX interchange in Mullins, SC. The railroad received a TIGER grant to rehabilitate the lines and is making significant progress. CSX owns and operates its SE line through the eastern part of Columbus County. That line is a Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET) route serving the Port of Wilmington and the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU).

Proposed Southeastern Passenger Rail, Local ID: COLU0001-R

Southeastern Passenger Rail Service is proposed for construction and implementation of service running from Raleigh to Wilmington via Selma and Fayetteville using the NS H Line, CSX A Line, and CSX SE Line. It is also a Passenger Program (#3.4 SENC Service Extension) in the State Rail Plan, planned for implementation in 2020-2035.

Proposed Whiteville to Malmo Rail Reestablishment, Local ID: COLU0002-R

An abandoned rail line from Whiteville to Malmo is proposed for reestablishment between the RJ Corman Line and CSX for delivery through the Port of Wilmington. This is a strategic economic development opportunity to complete a link in the state freight rail network. This new link could enable greater frequency and quantity of cargo shipments to the Port of Wilmington which could precipitate cost savings, enhance market access, and generate other supply chain efficiencies that would benefit North Carolina industries and the overall economy. In particular, this access could serve an industry seeking to export biomass for use in the international energy market in Whiteville. The interested firm is expected to employ 200 employees, which would correlate to approximately 500,000 tons of biomass produced annually. Several rail alternatives were studied. Please refer to NCDOT Project FS-1706A for the full report.

Proposed Tabor City Train Depot Building, Local ID: COLU0003-R

The proposed project includes the construction of a new train depot building in downtown Tabor City on a parcel of land on Main Street between 5th and 6th Street. This depot would be located on the existing RJCS (ACH) rail line.

It is part of a Master Plan to revitalize the downtown area of Tabor City to create jobs and increase tourism. The purpose of the new building will be to service trains which will depart from Conway, SC and arrive in Tabor City to bring in tourists.

The proposed train depot building will be designed in a traditional train depot style. It is estimated that the construction of the new train depot building will create approximately 17 new jobs in Tabor City and increase local revenue through tourism. The addition of this train depot is expected to increase retail spending locally and through tourism and has the potential to attract new businesses in the area.

Proposed Conway to Tabor City Passenger Rail, Local ID: COLU0004-R

This proposal is part of a Master Plan to revitalize the downtown area of Tabor City to create jobs and increase tourism. The passenger rail service would depart from Conway, SC and arrive in Tabor City to bring in tourists. As part of the Master Plan, Tabor City will also plan several street improvements, improve several parks in the area, and rehabilitate several buildings in order to attract tourism. The idea is that a train will depart from Conway, SC and arrive in Tabor City around midday with a layover of 90 minutes to two hours before returning to Conway. The train is estimated to carry approximately 12,500 adults annually a year by the fourth year of operation. There is also the potential for excursions hosted by the Tabor City community. It is estimated that a locally-operated excursion train ride, which would leave Tabor City and return to Tabor City without stopping, could carry approximately 5,000 adults annually.

Proposed Grade Separations

COLU0005-R: CSX (SE) Line at NC 11.

COLU0006-R: CSX (SE) Line at Sand Hole Rd (SR 1846).

COLU0007-R: RJCS (ACH) Line at the proposed NC 410 bypass along Peacock Rd (SR 1005).

COLU00078-R: RJCS (AC) Line at the proposed Cerro Gordo Bypass.

Proposed Fixed Bus Route, Local ID: COLU0001-T

Currently, there are no fixed route bus services within Columbus County. Whiteville is the only area expected to be feasible for fixed-route bus service within the planning period, due to costs and supply and demand. Many residents in Columbus County commute to Whiteville each day for work, shopping, county offices, medical appointments, and other purposes.

The proposed project recommends that Columbus County Transportation pursue development of a fixed route bus service in Whiteville, serving destinations like: SECC, County Courthouse, City offices, downtown, Post Office, etc. Refer to the Public Transportation & Rail CTP Map (Figure 1, Sheet 3B) for more information.

Proposed Multimodal Connector Facility, Local ID: COLU0002-T

The intermodal connector service is existing. Customers can currently drive (and park), take demand response transit, walk, bike, etc. to the CCT office, where they can catch the Greyhound to Wilmington, Lumberton, Fayetteville, or Charlotte. However, an upgrade is proposed to expand the existing building to include a waiting room, restroom, vending area, and ticket kiosk.

BICYCLE

According to the *WalkBikeNC North Carolina Statewide Pedestrian and Bike Plan*, bicycling has been part of transportation in North Carolina for more than 100 years. Bicyclists helped champion North Carolina's "Good Roads" movement in the early 1900's. Formal planning for bicycle accommodation in North Carolina began with passage of the Bicycle and Bikeway Act in 1974. The Columbus County CTP will help continue bicycling as an alternative form of transportation.

Many of the recommendations in this plan came from the 2017 Cape Fear Regional Bicycle Plan (capefearcog.org/regionalbikeplan). The recommended bicycle map includes several improvements needed to provide adequate, safe, and desirable facilities for use by bicyclists. The bicycle facilities provide connectivity and access to key destinations in and around the county and municipalities such as schools, park and recreation facilities, retail, grocery, and others.

In accordance with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), roadways identified as bicycle routes should incorporate the following standards as roadway improvements are made and funding is available:

- Curb & gutter sections require at minimum 5 foot bike lanes or 14 foot shoulder lanes.
- Shoulder sections require at minimum 4 foot paved shoulders.
- All bridges along the roadways where bike facilities are recommended shall be equipped with 54 inch railings.

Refer to CTP mapping (Figure 1, Sheet 4) and Appendix C for more information.

PEDESTRIAN

The Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan⁵ includes North Carolina’s vision statement for walking and biking: “North Carolina is a place that incorporates walking and bicycling into daily life, promoting safe access to destinations, physical activity opportunities for improved health, increased mobility for better transportation efficiency, retention and attraction of economic development, and resource conservation for better environmental stewardship of our state.”

Two notable highlights are the newly built Lake Waccamaw spillway pedestrian bridge and the planned sidewalk extensions along the US 701 Bypass (JK Powell Blvd) widening project (R-5020) in Whiteville.

The recommended projects on the Columbus County CTP pedestrian map identify pedestrian improvements identified through the CTP planning process and from the 2015 Whiteville Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, the 2015 Tabor City CTP, and the 2010 Chadborn Safe Routes to School Action Plan. The recommended projects for Columbus County will aid in meeting North Carolina’s vision for pedestrians.

Refer to CTP mapping (Figure 1, Sheet 5) and Appendix C for more information.

MULTI-USE PATH

The NCDOT envisions that all citizens of North Carolina and visitors to the state should be able to walk and bicycle safely and conveniently to their desired destinations with reasonable access to roadways. On-road bicycle facilities serve a specific purpose, as do sidewalks, but multi-use paths offer a unique combination of the two. They cater to both modes of transportation, while typically offering an off-road, safer, more recreational experience.

The purpose of the recommended multi-use paths in Columbus County is to provide an adequate, safe, and desirable facility that both pedestrians and bicyclists can use for local connectivity within the planning area.

Refer to either the Bicycle CTP map (Figure 1, sheet 4) or the Pedestrian CTP map (Figure 1, Sheet 5), and Appendix C for more information.

⁴ For more information, go to: ncdot.gov/bikeped/walkbikenc