



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

J. ERIC BOYETTE
SECRETARY

09/07/2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC, 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to provide this letter expressing our agency's financial commitment to the **Replacing Aging and Poor Infrastructure to Drive Sustainability (RAPIDS)** project. As described in the 2022 Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant application, we are confident this project will help ensure efficient movement of vehicles, while mitigating systemic safety issues.

NCDOT has inspected and evaluated the current bridge and found that is undergoing structural degradation and is classified in poor condition. There is a dire need to replace the current NC 48 Gaston Road Bridge. The new bridge will offer the following benefits to the community:

- **Preserve the Community Life** - For over 100 years, bridges at this location have played a vital role in the everyday life of residents – getting them to and from work, shopping, education, recreational services, etc. The closure of the current bridge in a failure scenario would have a catastrophic impact to these communities in terms of mobility and accessibility, economic opportunities, and quality of life.
- **Improve Safety** - The new bridge will have a useful life of 100 years and will meet geometric design standards, including wider shoulders and higher railings for bicyclists and pedestrians. RAPIDS include new sidewalks and safety elements around the paper mill area.
- **Avoid Significant O&M Costs** - A new structure reduces the annual operating and maintenance costs and the frequency of unscheduled repairs.
- **Achieve Network Efficiency** - More efficient infrastructure improves surface transportation network mobility, reliability, and connectivity to the region, in addition to emergency response time.
- **Improve Economic Competitiveness** – The **project supports long-term growth in high quality employment in an area with low-income populations, as well as supports land use plans which increase the productivity of land at this specific location in a sustainable manner.**
- **No Construction Detour** - The new bridge will be built on a new location to the east of the current structure, which allows for the current bridge to remain in use during construction. This will negate the need for an offsite detour, which would be too long and not feasible.

Mailing Address:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION
1514 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH, NC 27699

Telephone: (919) 707-4200
Fax: (919) 733-9247
Customer Service: 1-877-368-4968

Website: www.ncdot.gov

Location:
1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET
RALEIGH, NC 27601

Secretary Pete Buttigieg – Replacing Aging and Poor Infrastructure to Drive Sustainability (RAPIDS) Project

Page 2 of 2

09/07/2022


NCDOT is seeking \$22,160,000 in FY 2022 BIP grant funding, matched by \$7,590,000 from the State Highway Trust Funds funding. This project is not in the current Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as it was planned to be fully state funded and was programmed internally for 2025. Upon award, NCDOT will include RAPIDS in the STIP. RAPIDS meets the goals and criteria identified in the following planning document:

- 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Northampton County (2021)
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan/ Halifax County (2012)
- NC State Logistics Plan (2008)
- NC Moves 2050 Plan
- NC Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan
- NCDOT Resilience Policy

Expected annual operation and maintenance costs for RAPIDS will be minimal with no major repairs, maintenance items, or deck replacement over the initial 20 years of its lifecycle. NCDOT is committed to the long-term maintenance of our infrastructure assets and conducts regular maintenance on our assets to ensure they remain in a state of good repair. NCDOT allocates funding to budget maintenance activities and plans to allot the appropriate amount to maintain the RAPIDS project.

If NCDOT can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919)707-4320 or via e-mail at sjking@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Stephanie King
Chief Financial Officer