

105 S. Long Street
Post Office Box 339
East Spencer, North Carolina
28039



Telephone: (704) 636-7111
Fax: (704) 639-7734
Website: www.eastspencer.gov

"HOME OF HERITAGE & PROMISE"

January 22, 2025

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

Subject: Certification of Financial Contribution RAISE Application:
DESIGN Project (Developing an East Spencer Interchange for a Growth Nexus)

Dear Secretary Duffy,

The Town of East Spencer wishes to express its full support for the DESIGN application under the United States Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. The DESIGN project seeks \$25 million in RAISE funds to allow the TOWN to replace the existing overpass on McCanless Road with an interchange in Rowan County, North Carolina.

The DESIGN represents a crucial opportunity to address the long-term transportation and economic challenges facing the Town, which is both a Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC) and an Area of Persistent Poverty (AoPP). East Spencer is located in the Concord, NC 2020 Census-designated Urban Area, although parts of the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction are just outside the area.

East Spencer has worked with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to progress concepts for the proposed improvements. In 2023, NCDOT completed a Traffic Operations Analysis of the proposed interchange as well as potential design criteria and conceptual designs for two potential build alternatives, right-of-way (ROW), utility and construction cost estimates and an Interchange Access Report. These reports are included as supplemental materials at the project website:

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/RAISE2025-EastSpencer/Pages/default.aspx>

The project would construct a Partial Cloverleaf Interchange at I-85 and SR 2114 with a standard intersection at the southbound ramp terminal. The design would retain the existing I-85 structure. Construction activities would generally be limited to developing ramps and merge lanes. The Town will administer the grant, and NCDOT will provide construction oversight and be responsible for the maintenance of the facility post-construction.

This project is a key to addressing East Spencer's long-term transportation barriers. The Town is historically predominantly African American. Like many similar towns, East Spencer was largely cut off from nearby communities by railroads and Town Creek to the east and west and by a lack of access to the south, the Town relied on a single connection (Long Street), the town has suffered.

There have been a number of failed businesses which has left the Town without substantial revenue to provide basic goods and services. The DESIGN project will enable East Spencer to address many of its long-term challenges. Town residents will benefit from more direct access to I-85. This access will reduce traffic on Long Street, reduce demand on the aging facility and make bicycle and pedestrian use less problematic.

Providing an economical access point to I-85 will open up the East Spencer Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to sustainable light industrial development. This assessment is not conjecture; there are currently 15 million square feet of industrial space under development along the I-85 corridor, highlighting the opportunities improved access will provide. In addition, with interchange funding in place, the Town can pursue electronic vehicle charging stations and improved bicycle and pedestrian access through the project area, improving access to both employment opportunities and Hanford-Dole Elementary School. This grant represents an opportunity to transform East Spencer and break the cycle of disinvestment, and open pathways to economic prosperity for its residents.

To that end, the Town of East Spencer will fund the DESIGN application in the amount of \$14,980,340 (2024\$) towards a successful RAISE grant from the following funds:

- Town of East Spencer Loan - \$3,500,000
- TIFIA Program Loan - \$1,500,000
- Town of East Spencer Funds - \$4,980,340
- NC Legislative Grant - \$5,000,000

Thank you for your consideration of the DESIGN project for the 2025 RAISE Grant.

If the Town of EAST Spencer can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (704) 636-7111 ext 8.

Sincerely,



Michael Douglas
Town Manager