

# Project Readiness File

## A. Planning & Constructability

The Town, the Rowan-Cabarrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (Rowan-Cabarrus MPO) and NCDOT have coordinated extensively on this project. The results of the NCDOT Express Design study are included on the project website. The Express Design includes a right of way estimate, a draft Interstate Access Report (IAR) as well as cost estimates and a preliminary environmental review. The Project is included in the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the MPO as a potential interchange.

NCDOT owns the right-of-way (ROW) for I-85. The Town and Rowan County own several parcels, as shown on the map below. During the design phase, the Town will seek to minimize ROW needs, including reducing impacts to structures to the extent practicable. No special ROW approvals or permits will be needed.



Figure 1. Anticipated ROW Limits

It is anticipated that the project can be constructed without off-site detours. There would be temporary lane closures during construction or ramp entries on McCanless Road. In the preliminary Interstate Access Report (IAR), “The traffic operations of the transportation system were evaluated on a system-wide level ... The analysis shows that the proposed design will have similar freeway operations along the I-85 corridor as the No-Build Alternative, with LOS C or

better along the freeway, however, there are improvements in LOS and delay at the adjacent interchanges.

The analysis of the crossroads, including the ramp terminals, was evaluated to determine if the existing infrastructure had the ability to collect and distribute traffic to and from the interchange. The analysis shows that the proposed design will maintain adequate operations or improve the operations at the signalized and unsignalized intersections on the crossroads within the study area.”

The analysis also found that, “All access points to and from the Interstate facilities connect to public road and provide connections for all movements through each interchange. The proposed design for the interchange modification meets or exceeds all current standards for the Interstate System.” NCDOT does not anticipate any design exceptions for the project.

**B. Proposed Schedule**

The project schedule is shown in Table 1. The schedule is based on a December 2026 obligation date. Activities/milestones that have been completed are located in the project supplemental materials website.

Activity or Milestone	Start Date	Completion Date
Preliminary Environmental Review	January 2023	March 2023
Geometric Layout	January 2023	March 2023
Preliminary Utility Estimate	January 2023	June 2023
Preliminary Construction Estimate	January 2023	April 2023
Traffic Operations Technical Memorandum	January 2023	May 2023
Interstate Access Request (IAR)	January 2023	July 2023
Preliminary ROW Estimate	August 2023	September 2023
Project listing in STIP*	August 2025	NA
Pre-NEPA Public Involvement	October 2025	December 2025
NEPA Documentation (Categorical Exclusion) includes Section 106 and Section 7 Reviews	January 2026	January 2027
ROW Plans Complete	September 2027	July 2028
ROW Acquisition	September 2027	December 2028
Final Design	October 2028	March 2029
Updated IAR	January 2029	May 2029
Section 401/404 Permits	May 2029	December 2029
Utility Relocations	December 2029	December 2030
Construction	January 2031	January 2034

\*-upon notification of award

- a. *Environmental Risk Assessment (capital projects only)*

### C. NEPA and Permitting

NCDOT conducted a preliminary screening as part of the Express Design review. The desktop review found no historic resources two intermittent/ephemeral unnamed tributaries to Town Creek, and one pond in the anticipated project study area (as shown in Figure 1). Further design will determine if any structures are impacted. As East Spencer provides water and sewer infrastructure to the study area, no relocations due to septic system impacts are anticipated. The new facility will be designed to avoid impacts to Hanford-Dole Elementary school and it is anticipated that no offsite detours will be required. The project is anticipated to be developed as a Categorical Exclusion with an updated Interstate Access Report (IAR) prior to construction.

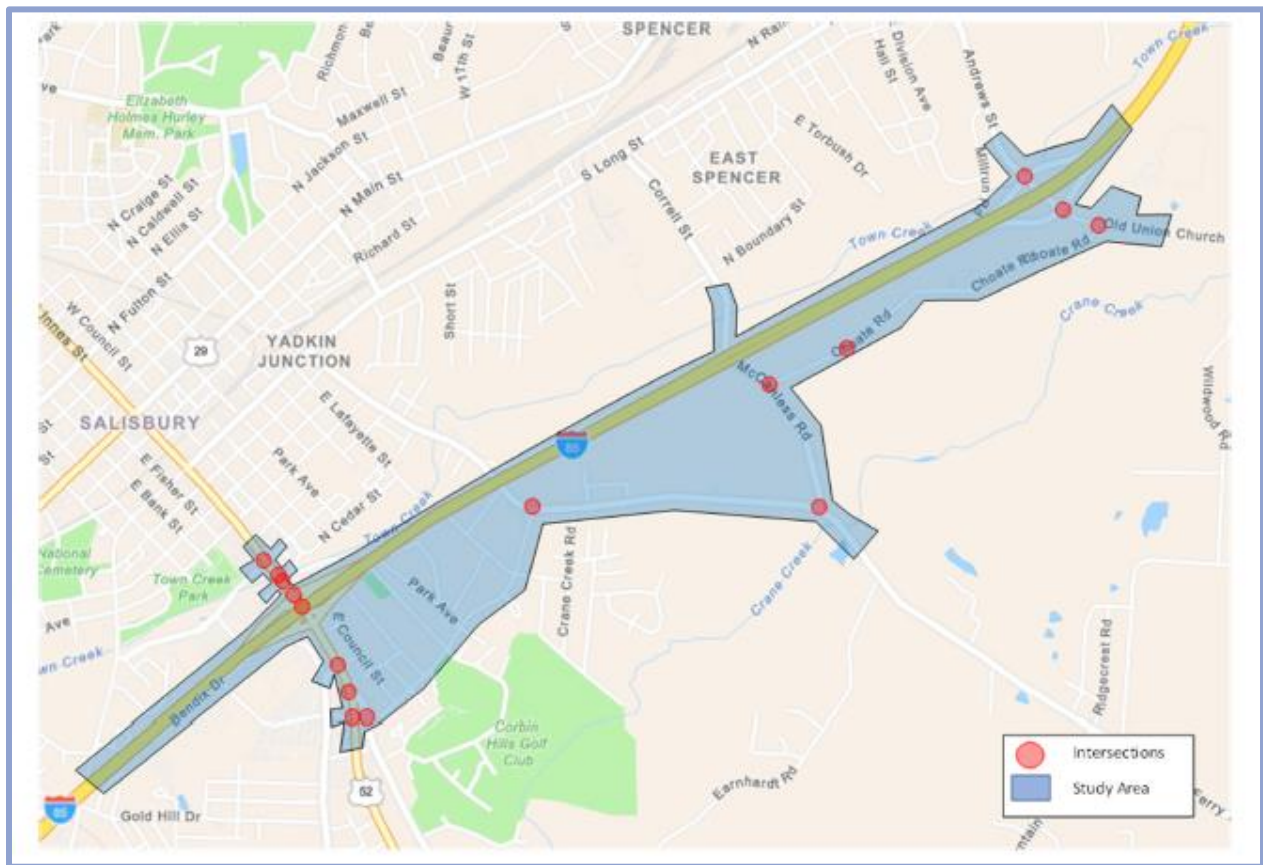


Figure 2. Express Design Study Area

The Town of East Spencer will ensure that assessments for endangered species, including endangered bats, are conducted and that any anticipated tree clearing activities are consistent with current US Wildlife Service moratoria. The project does not include anadromous fish waters. The Town will coordinate with NCDOT throughout project development.

Field delineations will be conducted to determine impacts to streams, wetlands, and surface waters and, if necessary, permits will be developed under Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act. The project team will coordinate with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the North Carolina Division of Water Resources, and the Federal Highway Administration during project development to ensure permitting and the IAR do not impact the project schedule.



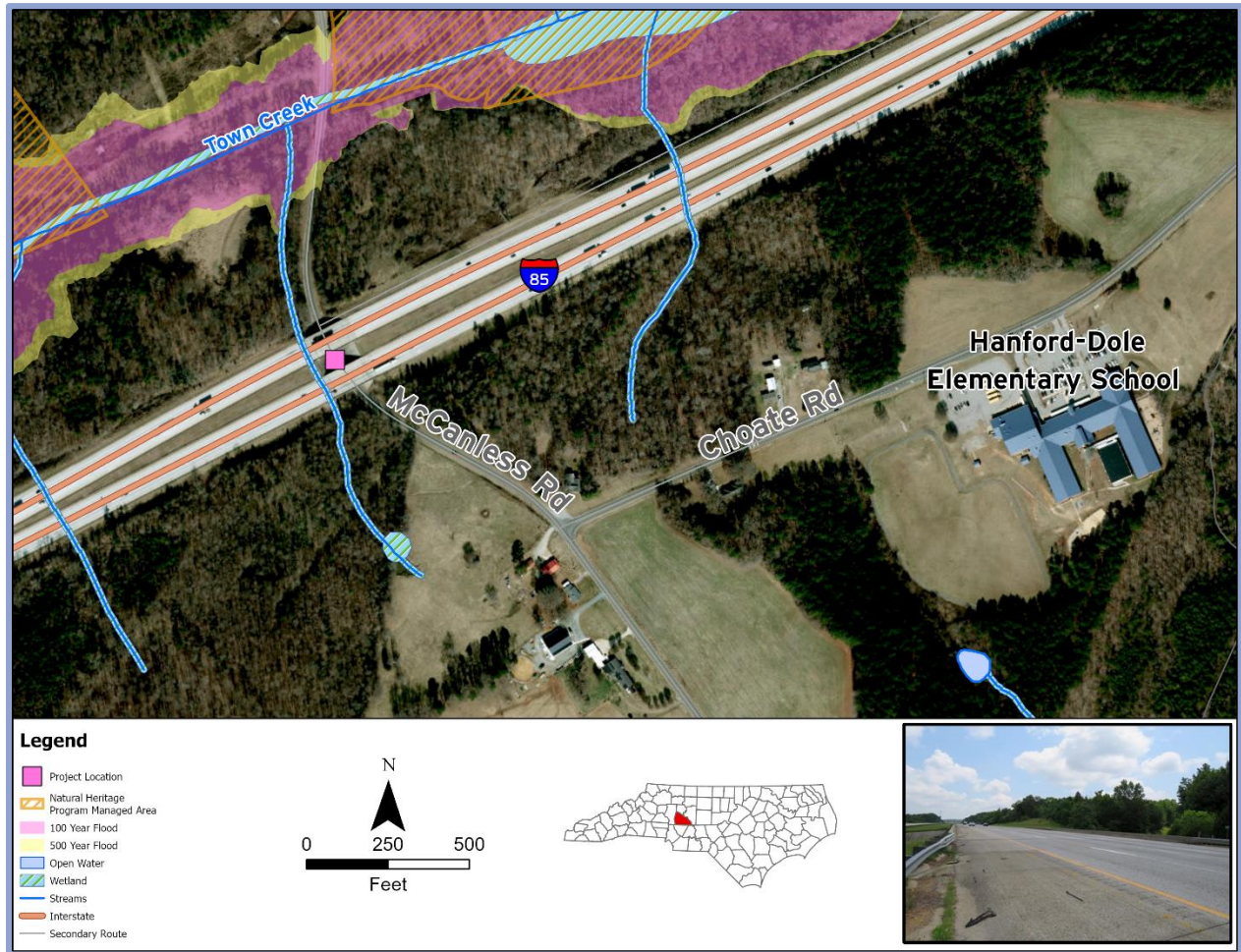


Figure 3. Environmental Features Map

#### D. Project Support

The Town has long supported the DESIGN project, as has Rowan County leadership. In [April 2022](#), the Rowan County Board of Commissioners gave county staff the approval to pursue funding for the feasibility study and to request funding from the North Carolina General Assembly. Chairman of the Board Greg Edds stated that the interchange would generate economic development in East Spencer and would provide a more direct route to Dan Nicholas Park and High Rock Lake. Upon award of the RAISE grant, the Town of East Spencer will hold a series of pre-NEPA meetings to gain additional public input to inform project development.

#### E. Risk and Mitigation

The Town and their partners have taken a number of steps to minimize risks during project development including conducting an environmental screening and developing Express Designs.

The designs show that the DESIGN project is constructable and provides a reasonable estimate of the ultimate costs of the project.