



# BRIDGES NOT BARRIERS

A Collaborative Bridge Bundle Replacement Project

## PROJECT READINESS

Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program

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## Project Readiness

### Planning and Constructability

#### STIP/TIP/TTIP/TAM Plan

The Peach Orchard Road, Robinson Church Road, Austin Grove Church Road, Mountain Creek Road, and Penninger Road structures have been assigned project numbers in the NCDOT Bridge Maintenance Improvement Plan (BMIP). In the event of a successful BUILD application, funding for the replacement projects will be reflected in both the TIP and STIP.

#### Consistency with Other Plans

These bridge replacements advance NCDOT's mission to maintain a safe travel environment for families and visitors. The [NC Moves 2050 Plan](#) identifies several goals including supporting a future where small towns and rural communities grow and are more connected to each other and urban centers, and one where innovation drives growth and economic mobility. This project actively serves to connect rural communities to each other and surrounding urban centers and implements innovative water level gauges to increase user safety and the ability to better resist hazardous environmental events. The project is also aligned with the [NCDOT Transportation Asset Management Plan \(TAMP\)](#) as it will help maintain the bridge infrastructure condition in the area. Additionally, as discussed in the **Merit Criteria Section**, the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) hosts a comprehensive database of existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities called the Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Network (PBIN). According to PBIN, five bridges have existing or proposed bicycle or pedestrian facilities adjacent to the proposed bridge replacement projects including existing sidewalks along Peach Orchard Road west of the proposed bridge location, proposed sidewalks along Robinson Church Road and a proposed multi-use path runs along Reedy Creek under the bridge, a proposed multi-use path along Salem Creek plus a proposed multi-use path along Traywick Farm Road/Austin Grove Church Road west of the bridge location, a proposed sidewalk east of the Austin Grove Church Road bridge location, a proposed multi-use path along Meadow Branch terminating 0.1 miles south of the Monroe-Ansonville Road Bridge location with opportunities to connect and continue this multi-use path along Meadow Branch, and finally a proposed multi-use path along the East Fork of Twelve Mile Creek near the Shannon Road Bridge. The project will bring all the structures to NCDOT standard, including the addition of, or widening of, paved shoulders. This will provide space for motorized and non-motorized users, supporting the accessibility goals of these existing and proposed multimodal facilities.

#### Freight Plans

Freight connections are critical to the movement of goods throughout the state of North Carolina. While none of the bridges are along North Carolina Priority Highway Freight Network (NCPHFN) roadways, seven of the bridges are within five miles of designated NCPHFN roadways including I-485, US-74, US-601 and NC-49. These bridges serve as important connections for goods movement entering rural communities. The [North Carolina Statewide Freight Plan](#) highlights the importance of bridge conditions and supports the NCPHFN. This



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includes monitoring load restrictions, deteriorating bridge conditions and making improvements as necessary to maintain a state of good repair. This project will address load restriction issues and improve the substandard condition of seven bridges within five miles of designated NCPHFN roadways, supporting the state freight network and freight movement.

### Property Acquisition / Right-of-Way (ROW)

Right-of-way acquisition has not started, and BUILD program funding is anticipated to be used in the acquisition of ROW. ROW needs will be identified during conceptual design, but some ROW acquisition is anticipated on these projects due to increased footprint and realignments. Typically, impacts are limited to five parcels or less per bridge from adjacent property owners. No additional permits are required. NCDOT has extensive experience navigating the ROW acquisition process in accordance with 49 CFR 24, 23 CFR 710 as detailed in the NCDOT Right of Way Manual. NCDOT has committed to minimizing negative impacts and disruption to the surrounding community and maintaining cohesion.

### Construction Techniques and Phasing

To streamline the letting process, the fifteen structures are being grouped into four different bundles based on location that will follow similar but separate schedules. Group 1, which includes the bridges that have already begun preliminary engineering, will follow a traditional Design Bid Build schedule while the remaining bundles will utilize an Express Design-Build construction technique. The bridge groups are as follows: **Group 1:** Robinson Church Road Bridge, Austin Grove Church Road Bridge, Old Mountain Creek Road Bridge, Penninger Road Bridge; **Group 2:** Mills Road Bridge, Robinson Road Bridge, Lockhart Road Bridge; **Group 3:** Bridge Port Road Bridge Bogger Hollar Road Bridge, Bridge Road Bridge, Peach Orchard Road Bridge; **Group 4:** Potters Road Bridge, Stack Road Bridge, Monroe-Ansonville Road Bridge, Shannon Road Bridge

### Proposed Schedule

Figure 1: Group 1 Project Schedule

	2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<b>BUILD Agreement</b> November 2026												X																
<b>Design/NEPA</b> April 2027 – April 2028																												
<b>Permits/Approvals</b> April 2028 – January 2029																												
<b>Right-of-Way Acquisition</b> April 2028 – April 2029																												
<b>Construction</b> September 2029 – October 2030																												
<b>Obligation Deadline</b> September 30, 2030																												X



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## A Collaborative Bridge Bundle Replacement Project

Figure 2: Group 2 Project Schedule



Figure 3: Group 3 Project Schedule



Figure 4: Group 4 Project Schedule



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### NEPA and Permitting

#### NEPA Status, Class of Action, and Milestones

Four out of the fifteen structure replacements have been assigned project numbers and are being evaluated by the SEPA process, as they are entirely state funded. If federal funding becomes available, these projects would be evaluated in accordance with the NEPA process. Based on NCDOT's experience with similar projects, it is anticipated that these structures will be evaluated as Categorical Exclusions.

NEPA has not started and would be anticipated to begin in Q2 2027 for Group Q4 2026 for Groups 2, 3, and 4. Design and NEPA are expected to take 12 months for Group 1 and six months for the remaining groups.

#### Permits, Approvals, and Coordination with USDOT/FHWA

The project requires a North Carolina Division of Water Quality 401 Water Quality Certification and Stormwater Certification, in accordance with Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 as amended by the Clean Water Act of 1977 and the Water Quality Act of 1987. Permitting is anticipated to begin in April 2028 for Group 1, and July 2027 for Groups 2, 3, and 4. NCDOT will coordinate extensively with FHWA and other parties in the completion of NEPA and obtain a NEPA class of action. NCDOT will continue coordination throughout implementation of the project.

### Project Support

#### Public and Agency Involvement Process and Results

NCDOT maintains communication with local stakeholders, including the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO), Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO) and the Centralina Regional Council, through attendance at their local meetings, newsletters, the NCDOT website, and NCDOT social media platforms. NCDOT Division 10 will continue this communication and will bring all bridge designs before local stakeholders before progressing into right-of-way acquisition and construction. Should a BUILD award be granted, the project will progress through NEPA and will undergo extensive public and stakeholder engagement. The Counties, Municipalities, emergency response departments, school districts, and local businesses within Division 10 prioritize maintaining their bridges in a state of good repair and accessibility for their low income and rural communities. They have expressed support for this project. Letters of support can be found in the Letters of Support Attachment.

### Risks and Mitigation

NCDOT has formalized a [Risk Management](#) process that applies to all agency projects. This process prescribes continuous actions to mitigate risk throughout the project lifecycle and has proven effective at keeping major projects on schedule and within budget. **Table 1** identifies risks to the project and presents mitigation measures that have been or will be undertaken.



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**Table 1 | Potential Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies**

#	Risk	Description	Mitigation Strategy
1	Rising Costs	Costs associated with the project increase more quickly than anticipated.	Every effort will be made to maintain accurate cost estimates reflecting market volatility during final design. NCDOT is an experienced recipient of federal funds.
2	Schedule Adherence	Project elements such as design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction take longer than anticipated and delay project completion.	An effort has been made to develop an early project schedule using industry best practices which will be updated on a regular basis. Should an announcement be issued in Q2 of 2026, construction is anticipated to begin in Q4 2028 and Q3 2029 respectively.
3	Public/Stakeholder Scrutiny	Stakeholders and the public raise concerns about the project during design and/or construction.	NCDOT will maintain continual communication with the community throughout project design and installation using a variety of outreach methods, including newsletters and social media.
4	Familiarity with Federal Funds	Project partners unfamiliar with program development and delivery requirements miss key steps, dates, or conditions.	The project is being administered by NCDOT, which has extensive experience with Federal programs and procurement standards. NCDOT will monitor the project throughout the process to ensure successful delivery of the project.

### Technical Capacity Assessment

The NCDOT is an experienced recipient of U.S. DOT funding and understands the Federal process associated with programs such as BUILD. NCDOT received a \$110 million in Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) funds to replace Alligator River Bridge on US-64 between Tyrell and Dare Counties. Federal aid was approximately 38 percent of the total capital cost of \$289.5 million. Construction began in January 2025.

The project is being administered by the NCDOT which has experience with federal programs and procurement standards. The NCDOT regularly adds new projects to the STIP and coordinates with the CRTPO, CRMPO and the Centralina Regional Council to ensure alignment between local TIPs and the STIP. NCDOT will monitor the project to ensure the projects are programmed in the STIP and TIP with on schedule with a buffer between funding obligation and the BUILD obligation deadline.

