

PROJECT DESCRIPTION FILE

Town of East Spencer I-85/SR 2114 Interchange Construction Project

website: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/BUILD2026-EastSpencer/Pages/default.aspx>

BUILD Grant Request:	\$25,000,000
Other federal funds:	\$ 4,200,000
Non-federal match:	\$10,780,340 (27%)
Total Project Cost:	\$39,980,340

The Town of East Spencer, North Carolina, in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Rowan County, NC, is seeking \$25 million in BUILD capital funds for the conversion of McCanless Road (SR 2114) from an underpass to an interchange on the eight-lane I-85 corridor in Rowan County, North Carolina, which according to NCDOT data has an average annual daily traffic count of 83,500 vehicles on this portion of the interstate.

The project, 75 percent of which is located in a designated rural location – pursuant to the DOT’s BUILD Grant Project Location Verification mapping tool (see Figure 2) – 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).

The location of the project is shown below (Figure 1):

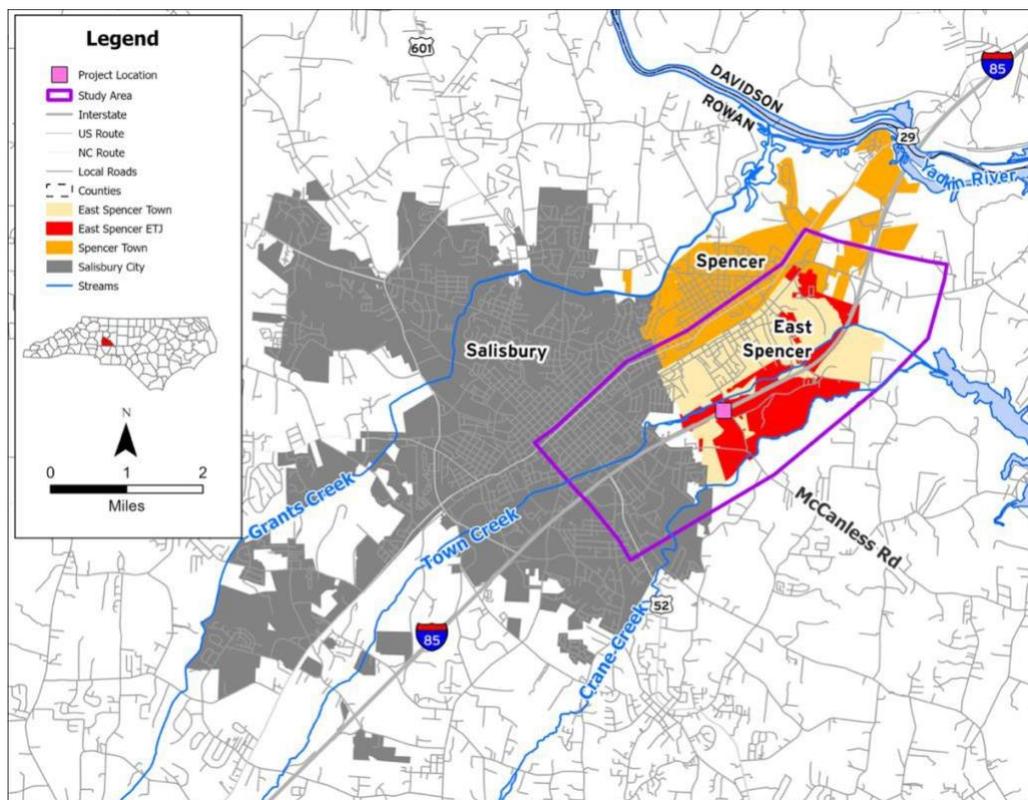


Figure 1

The following are the key components of the project:

- Construction of a partial cloverleaf interchange at the intersection of I-85 and SR 2114
- Construction of a standard intersection at the southbound ramp terminal.

The project's current cost estimates are based on conceptual designs (roughly 15 percent plans) that were completed in 2023. These designs are based on existing aerial photography. Once BUILD funding is secured, 60 percent plans will be developed to complete the environmental document and right of way (ROW) determinations.

The project's federal funding will be matched with \$10,780,340 (27% of the total project cost) provided by the Town of East Spencer and a North Carolina Legislative Grant (a commitment letter from the Town is included in this grant application). The Cabarrus Rowan Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO) has committed to providing \$4,200,000 in federal pass-through funding from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program for the project's preliminary engineering activities. In addition, the Town of East Spencer began discussions in December 2025 to file a Letter of Interest with DOT's Build America Bureau for a \$5 million TIFIA direct loan instrument, which would be added to the project's funding portfolio.

East Spencer, in partnership with NCDOT and Rowan County, have completed significant preliminary work on the project. 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) acquisition, 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/BUILD2026-EastSpencer/Pages/default.aspx>.

The 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 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 improved bicycle and pedestrian access through the project area, improving access to both employment opportunities and the nearby 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.



Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the location of the project area with an overlay of the Concord, NC Urbanized Area, using the DOT’s BUILD Grant Project Location Verification mapping tool. 75 percent of the project is located outside of the boundary of the urbanized area and is, therefore, classified as a rural project, pursuant to the BUILD grant notice of funding opportunity.

Figure 3 shows the anticipated footprint for the project, with a conservative ROW assumption (largest potential footprint with areas of potential disturbance shown in red). 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.

Figure 3 shows the anticipated footprint for the project, with a conservative ROW assumption (largest potential footprint with areas of potential disturbance shown in red). The project would construct a Partial Cloverleaf Interchange at I-85 and

In addition to the merit criteria included in the BUILD grant NOFO, the project will also address Secretary Duffy’s department-wide priorities: (1) Safety; (2) Innovation; (3) Accessibility for families; with young children and (4) Shovel ready projects.

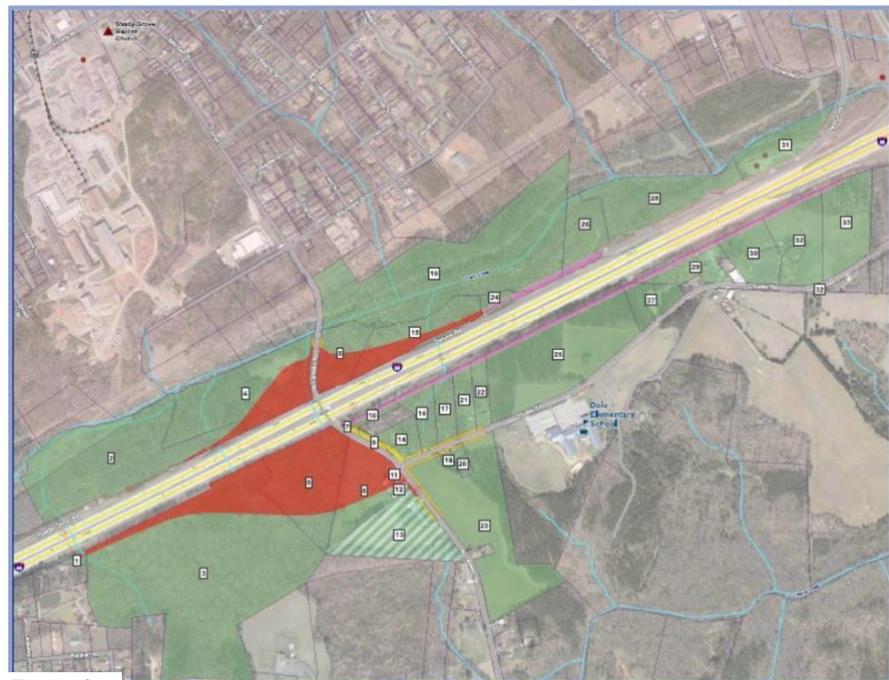


Figure 3

Pertaining to safety, the project will greatly improve safety through the construction of the interchange that will reduce truck traffic on heavily-used local arterials and allow area residents an additional option to access I-85 for jobs, goods and services. Reducing this traffic will also provide a safer, less congested facility for bicyclists and pedestrians (for more information, see the discussion on the Safety Merit Criterion). For the Secretary’s innovation priority, the Town of East Spencer has begun discussions in December 2025 to file a Letter of Interest with DOT’s Build America Bureau for a \$5 million TIFIA direct loan instrument, which would be added to the project’s funding portfolio.

Addressing the Secretary’s priority for projects that improve accessibility for families with young children, the project will greatly enhance accessibility for the Elizabeth Hanford Dole Elementary School, which is located at 465 Choate Road, which is within the project area. The Hanford Dole School is named for former United States Senator Elizabeth Hanford Dole and has 398 students enrolled in classes from Pre-K to 5th Grade (as of the 2024-25 school year).

Additionally, the project will significantly enhance safety and efficiency for pregnant families in the region by providing direct access to the regional transportation network, drastically reducing travel times to critical medical facilities. Historically, the Town of East Spencer has been isolated by natural and man-made barriers, forcing residents to rely almost exclusively on Long Street for regional travel. The new I-85 interchange at McCanless Road (SR2114) will alleviate this congestion and offer a more reliable route to Novant Health Rowan Medical Center in Salisbury, the county's primary provider of maternity services.

By diverting heavy commercial traffic away from local roads and creating a streamlined path to I-85, the project minimizes the risk of delays during time-sensitive obstetric emergencies and prenatal appointments.

Finally, for the Secretary’s priority for projects that can “turn dirt quickly,” this project has engaged in significant preliminary planning work with key partners NCDOT, Rowan County, and CRMPO that has resulted in an Interstate Access Report and funding for pre-construction activities pledged by CRMPO that will allow the project to move quickly to the construction phase.

Opportunity Zone

The East Spencer I-85/SR2114 Interchange Construction Project is located within a qualified Opportunity Zone: OZ #37159050800 in Census Tract 508.