

PROJECT READINESS FILE

A. Planning & Constructability

The Town of East Spencer, Rowan County, the Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (CRMPO) 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 and is listed on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as project #H190956.

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. The Town is actively working with the remaining parcels that are privately owned and a list of these parcels with the status of negotiations is attached to this grant application and may be accessed here: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/BUILD2026-EastSpencer/Pages/default.aspx>.



Figure 1

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 2027 obligation date.

I-85/SR 2114 Interchange Project Schedule		
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 2026	NA
Pre-NEPA Public Involvement	October 2026	December 2026
NEPA Documentation (Categorical Exclusion) includes Section 106 and Section 7 Reviews	January 2027	January 2028
ROW Plans Complete	September 2028	July 2029
ROW Acquisition	September 2028	December 2029
Final Design	October 2029	March 2030
Updated IAR	January 2030	May 2030
Section 401/404 Permits	May 2030	December 2030
Utility Relocations	December 2030	December 2031
Construction	January 2031	January 2033

** - upon notification of award*

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. 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.

EXPRESS DESIGN STUDY AREA

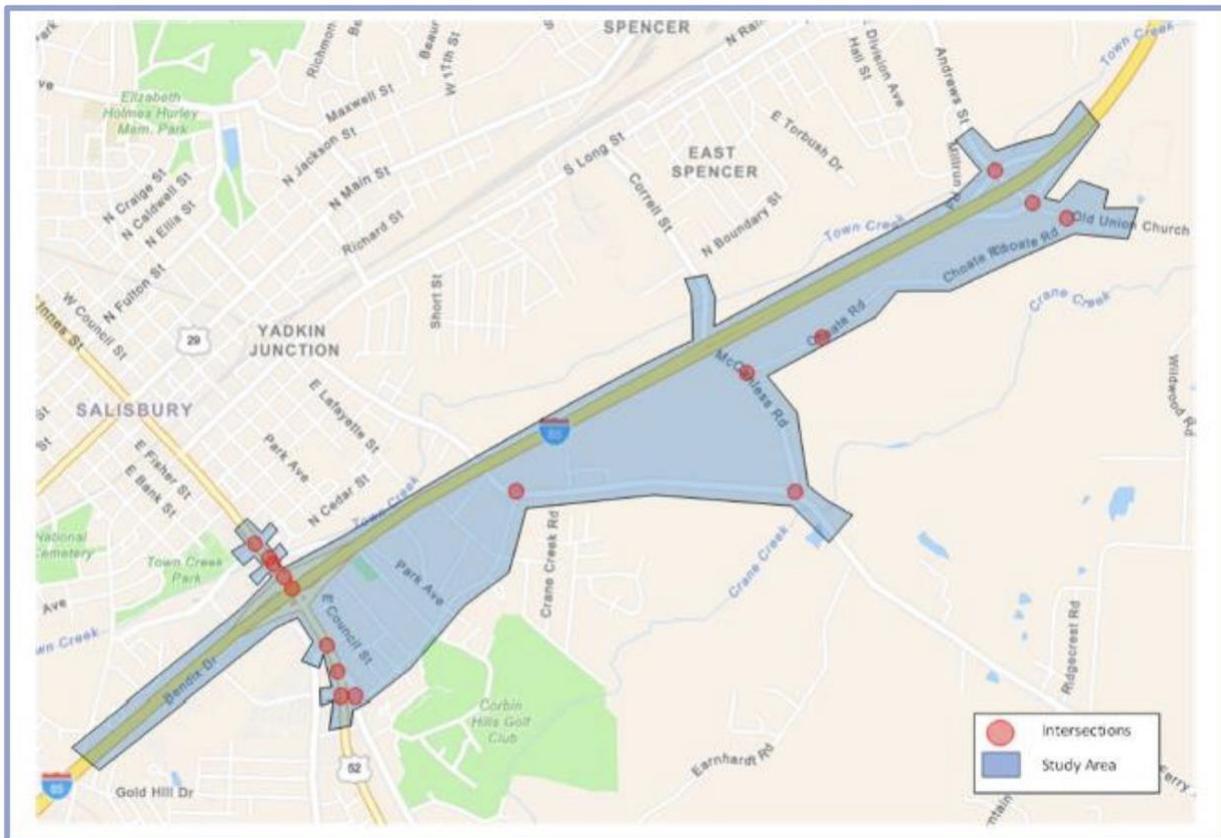


Figure 2

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP

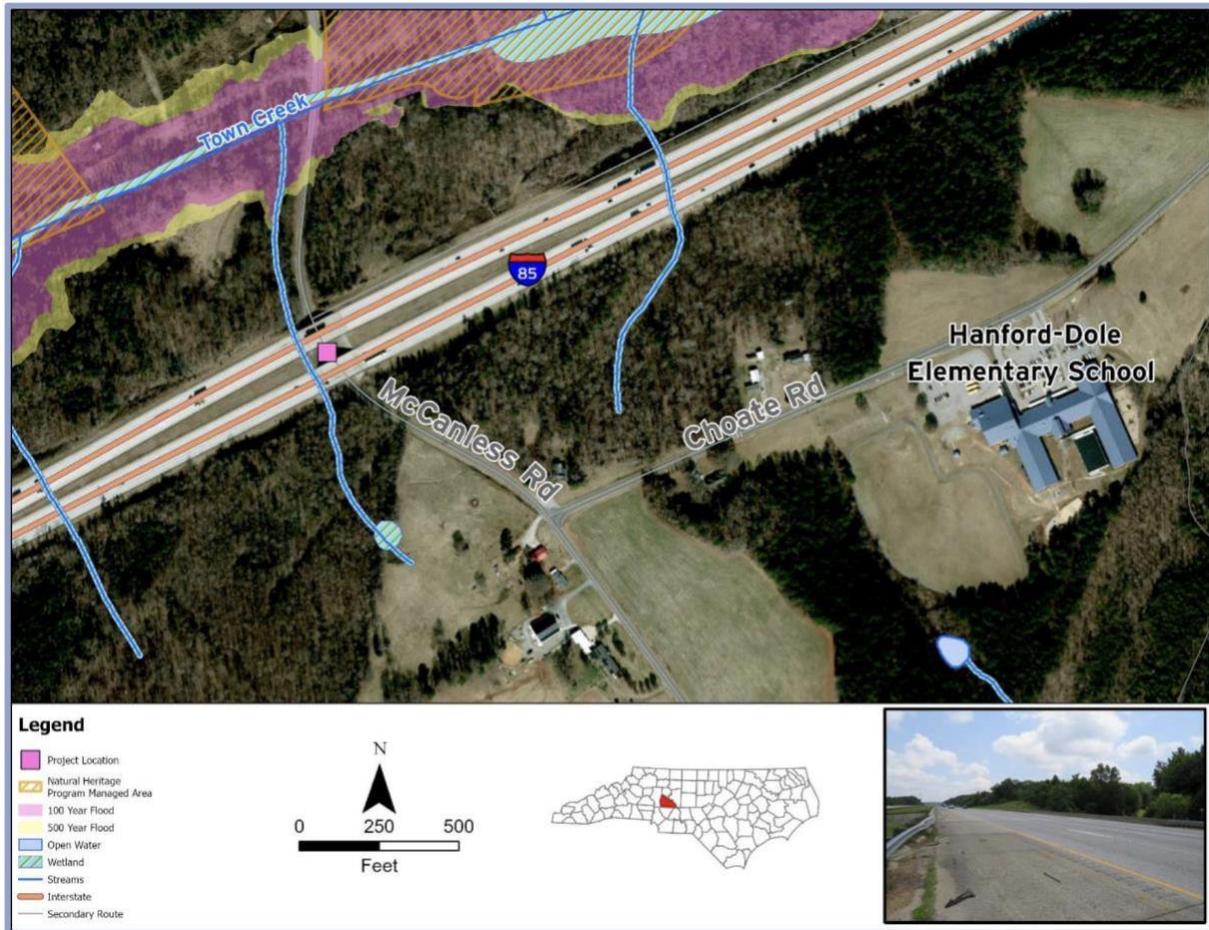


Figure 3

D. Project Support

The Town has long supported the 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.

F. Technical Capacity Assessment

The Town of East Spencer has experience as a careful steward of federal and state grant monies for projects that have been completed recently or are nearing completion. The following chart shows examples of recent federal grants administered by the Town that are nearly complete or now ready for construction.

Grantor Agency	Amount of Grant	Project Description	Status of Project
CDBG-I	\$1,200,000	Repair of water/sewer lines	Completed in 2024
CDBG-NR	\$750,000	Home Rehabilitation	On-going

Build America, Buy America

The project will be fully compliant with the requirements of the Build America, Buy America Act and will seek no waivers for equipment or materials funded in this project.

Benefit Cost Analysis

The analysis resulted in a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 3.10 and a \$91.2 million net present value of benefits. This is considered a “high” economic analysis rating (the project’s benefits will exceed its costs with a BCR of at least 2.0). East Spencer has concluded that these benefits reasonably justify the cost of the project.

Capital Costs	Project Costs (NPV \$2023)	Total Net Benefit	Total Net Benefit (NPV \$2023)	Benefit-Cost Ratio
\$39,900,000	\$29,453,934	\$181,775,250	\$91,214,980	3.10