

New Bern Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Steve Tyson
Chairman

John Kirkland
Vice-Chairman

October 30, 2017

Secretary James H. Trogdon, III
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1501 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1501

Dear Secretary Trogdon:

On behalf of the New Bern Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, I would like to express our support of the proposed I-95/US 70 Innovative Technology and Rural Mobility Corridor Improvements. This investment in the infrastructure of Eastern North Carolina will have a long-lasting, positive impact on the economy, mobility, and safety of the region.

The I-95 section of the Project will increase safety, bring key portions of the facility into a state of good repair and up to current design standards, add capacity and increase the flow of traffic on this national artery in North Carolina. These improvements will ensure connections between the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, military installations, and international ports on the eastern seaboard are maintained and enhanced.

The US 70 (future I-42) portion of the Project completes the last two remaining gaps between I-40 and the eastern terminus of the Havelock Bypass to bring the entire stretch of road up to freeway standards. This will be the culmination of a decades-long effort to develop this facility to serve Eastern North Carolina both economically and in times of need, as US 70 serves as an evacuation route during severe storms.

The plan to install the conduit and fiber backbone within the project's right of way along these portions of I-95 and US 70 will enable service within these critical corridors. This infrastructure improvement will provide capacity for current and future needs, allow for modernization of public safety centers, and provide the environment for connected and autonomous vehicles, among its many benefits.

While each component of the Project can stand alone, the greatest benefits are realized when the two investments are jointly made. The ITS features included in the Project would facilitate detours when adverse circumstances close I-95 for hours at a time. The communications coverage provided with US 70 and I-95 could easily be extended to include the southern portion of US 117 between I-40 and US 70. Collectively, by wiring this "triangle" near the center of I-95 as it traverses the state, NCDOT would have the ability to analyze and manage traffic capacity in real time using the IT enhancements in response to crash and natural hazard events.

The New Bern Area MPO covers the majority of Craven County, including a large corridor of current US Highway 70. The MPO along with NCDOT has been diligent in submitting improvements to this corridor through the existing SPOT process. We were able to get Statewide funding for a 3.5 mile stretch of this corridor that will be upgraded in the next two years to freeway standards.

For these reasons, I submit our letter of support on behalf of the New Bern Area MPO TAC. We strongly support the I-95/US 70 Innovative Technology and Rural Mobility Corridor Improvements project and the North Carolina Department of Transportation's application for federal INFRA Grant funding to accelerate its construction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Maxey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'y' at the end.

Kimberly Maxey
MPO Administrator
New Bern Area MPO