



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

J. ERIC BOYETTE  
SECRETARY

05/22/2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC, 20590

Subject: Certification of Financial Contribution 2022 MPDG Application:  
Strengthening Transportation Evacuation Resilient Lifeline by Improving  
the Network's Grid Project ("STERLING Project")

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) wishes to express its full support for the STERLING application under the United States Department of Transportation's Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. STERLING seeks MPDG funds to allow NCDOT to maintain critical connections to the Outer Banks by replacing the currently deficient Alligator River Bridge connecting Tyrrell and Dare Counties and installing broadband access along US 64 from I-95 to the Outer Banks.

The State of North Carolina understands the importance of maximizing the safety of residents and tourists visiting the Outer Banks, especially during tropical system events. In 2005, the North Carolina General Statute 136-102.7 set a goal of 18 hours for the evacuation travel clearance time for the Outer Banks based on a 24-hour warning and watch timeframe. In 2019, NCDOT developed the "Proposed US 64 Corridor Improvements Hurricane Evacuation Reevaluation" report. The report indicated that, despite an increase of the goal to 30 hours due to better hurricane forecasting, the US 64 clearance time for the 2040 no build alternative was 34.2 hours. While the proposed Alligator River Bridge Replacement does not increase lane capacity, it does eliminate the potential issue of the movable bridge conflict and potential maintenance issues through the construction of a fixed span that is grade separated from the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW).

The Alligator River Bridge replacement, including some adjustment of US 64, will be constructed on new alignment approximately 4.6 miles in length and slightly north of the existing facility. The preferred alternative was a result of the investigation of six alternatives and is considered the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). The alignment shift allows for continued use of the existing bridge during

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construction. In addition, the offset precludes interference of the swing span operation, permitting navigation traffic to be unimpeded.

STERLING will also provide much needed broadband access to thousands of North Carolina residents along US 64 from its intersection with I-95 to NC 12 on the Outer Banks. These improvements will not only benefit residents now, but it will also prepare northeastern North Carolina for automated/connected vehicles, improve hurricane evacuation times, and provide critical information to drivers, improving safety along the US 64 corridor.

The ability to use MPDG funds to offset some of the substantial costs of STERLING will expedite replacement of the bridge and offer a substantial reduction of future operations and maintenance costs for NCDOT. Without these funds, another stopgap renovation of the aging structure will be required in two to three years.

The STERLING Project is reflected in our mission statement:


*Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.*

To that end, the NCDOT will fund the STERLING application in the amount of \$64,000,000.00 (YOES) towards a successful MPDG grant from the non-federal, state funds.

Thank you for your consideration of the STERLING project for the 2022 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program.

If NCDOT can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919)707-4320 or via e-mail at [sjking@ncdot.gov](mailto:sjking@ncdot.gov).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Stephanie King  
Chief Financial Officer