



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

J. ERIC BOYETTE
SECRETARY

08/17/2023

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

Subject: Certification of Financial Contribution 2023 MPDG Application:
Maximizing our Rural Economy on I-74 ("MORE I-74 Project")

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) wishes to express its full support for the MORE I-74 application under the United States Department of Transportation's Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. MORE I-74 seeks MPDG funds to allow NCDOT to improve surface transportation and economic opportunities in rural eastern North Carolina by upgrading 9.8 miles of US 74 from east of Hamlet in Richmond County to west of Laurinburg in Scotland County to interstate standards, which will bridge the gap between existing sections of already designated Interstate 74.

NCDOT recognizes the importance of growing rural economies by improving highway corridors to strengthen the movement of freight goods and services. The MORE I-74 Project will support the region's long-term economy by providing the workforce and residents of southeastern North Carolina with improved highway facilities, improving safety, providing access to opportunities for rural communities, and shoring up critical transportation routes to improve the movement of people and goods.

In addition, the MORE I-74 Project will benefit many residents in these rural communities across eastern North Carolina, including minority, low-income, and historically disadvantaged populations in the project area.

By strategically connecting existing segments of I-74 and bringing the existing MORE I-74 corridor to interstate standards, this project will provide much needed investment to economically uplift and bring system redundancy to underserved communities in south central North Carolina. The MORE I-74 Project aims to strengthen the supply chain and promote the production and transportation of products created in America by providing a

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reliable and timely connection to existing and future major employment centers. These connections will help achieve the Administration’s goal of fostering economic vitality in rural areas as part of the Investing in America agenda.

Three components will upgrade the existing four-lane divided freeway to interstate standards. Mainline outside paved shoulders will be full depth, widened to 12-feet, and include rumble strips; mainline inside paved shoulders will be full depth, widened to 4-feet, and include rumble strips; and the roadway surface will be improved through milling the old pavement down to a subbase and applying a fill of new asphalt. In addition, the Future I-74 will bypass the Laurel Hill Census Designated Place, reducing barriers in this community and providing a safer option for both residents and travelers alike.

MORE I-74, a designated Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will also become an attractive place for other future investments, such as electric vehicle charging stations, and will bolster these other improvements by being a major east-west, interstate-designated corridor.

This project is currently programmed in the NCDOT 2024-2033 *State Transportation Improvement Program* (STIP) as Project No. I-6055 and is funded for preliminary engineering, which has begun. The ability to use MPDG funds to offset some of the substantial costs will accelerate construction for this essential corridor.

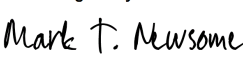
The MORE I-74 Project is reflected in our mission statement:

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 MORE I-74 application in the amount of \$66,447,200.00 (2023\$) towards a successful MPDG grant from the non-federal, state funds. Thank you for your consideration of the MORE I-74 project for the 2023 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 mnewsome2@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:


Mark T. Newsome
Chief Financial Officer
North Carolina Department of Transportation