



290 Legion Dr.
Whiteville, NC 28472-3079
910-641-3929 (B) Fax 910-642-6338
joy.jacobs@columbusco.org

Columbus County Transportation

October 2, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project - Promoting Resilient Operations for
Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

This letter is to express the strong support of Columbus County Transportation for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina. The project will improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. These improvements will help the roadway to better handle heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders and travelers.

Flooding is a recurring issue along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during heavy rainfall events. Improving the bridge crossing would reduce flooding in the area and allow rainwater to recede more quickly after heavy rainfall events. As a result, the project would help reduce road closures, improve access to downtown Whiteville, and provide more reliable travel for all roadway users during and after heavy rainfall events.

Specifically, for Columbus County Transportation, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- The flooding in this area cuts off access to several businesses that are needed in Columbus County. One of which is Monarch, which provides mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities services for individuals here in Columbus County. This also prevents the employees that work at those businesses from being able to get to work.
- When this area is flooded our drivers have to use alternate routes that cause longer travel time for some of our passengers who may be trying to get to work or doctors' appointments on time.
- Having to take longer routes means we also use more fuel which is an additional cost to the county transportation system that already operates on limited grant funding.

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The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County as a region. I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow North Carolina DOT to advance and complete this important project, providing lasting benefits to the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, and southeastern North Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of this meritorious grant and your commitment to our nation's critical transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joy Jacobs", written in a cursive style.

Joy Jacobs, Director
Columbus County Transportation