US 701 BUSINESS (MADISON STREET) AT SOULES SWAMP PROJECT

NCDOT, Priority 7

LETTERS OF SUPPORT



OCTOBER 2026

US 701 Business (Madison Street) at Soules Swamp

FY 2026 PROTECT

Letters of Support Summary

Local & Regional Stakeholders

Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization Sam Boswell, Director

City of Whiteville Terry Mann, Mayor

Columbus County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Joan McPherson, President

Columbus County Economic Development Commission Dylan Bowen, Director

Columbus County Partnership for Children, Selena B. Rowell, Ed.D., Executive Director

Families First Vickie S. Pait, Executive Director

Whiteville License Plate Agency Inc. Pamela Merritt, Owner

Multimodal

Columbus County Transportation Joy Jacobs, Director

Private Sector

Anthony's Italian Restaurant Anthony Grippi, Owner

The Chef and the Frog Annie Slama, Owner

Clark's Auto Glass, LLC Dewey C. Dowless, Owner

Farmacy on Main Sandra Sellers, Owner

JL Powell and Company John S. Fisher, Owner

JWK Thompson Family LLC John E. Thompson Jr. and Sarah B. Thompson, Owners

Mall Barber Shop Jerome Rooks, Owner

Mercantile on Madison John Thompson and Camela Thompson, Downtown Whiteville Property Owners and Business Operators

Mr. Postman Print Shop, LLC Jonathan Medford, Owner

Penn's Grill Helen B. Holden, Owner and Operator

Sophie's Cafe-Bistro Guillaume Slama, Owner

Southeast Properties of Columbus LLC Kenneth M. Barnes Jr., Owner

Sugar & Spice Dancewear and Ladies Boutique Tricia Bowen, Owner

T² General Contractors Michael Thompson, Owner/President

Vann Underwood Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram Stephen V. Underwood III, General Manager

What a Burger Sammy Jacobs, Owner

Whiteville Family Pharmacy, Angela R. Soles, PharmD, Owner/Pharmacist

Emergency Responders

Whiteville Fire Department David Yergeau, Chief

Education & the Arts

Columbus County Arts Council Sally Mann, Director

North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Denise Young, Ed.D., Director

Southeastern Community College, Dr. Chris English, President

CAPE FEAR
RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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 the Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization (RPO) 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.

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,

Sam Boswell

Sam Boswell
Cape Fear RPO Director

Sean D. Martin
City Manager
Heather Dowless
City Clerk

317 South Madison Street
PO Box 607
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-642-8046
whitevillenc.gov

Terry L. Mann
Mayor
Jimmy Clarida
Mayor Pro-Tem
Tim Collier
Council Member
Joshua Harris
Council Member
Vickie Pait
Council Member
Linda Smith
Council Member
Kevin G. Williamson
Council Member

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 the City of Whiteville 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 the City of Whiteville, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- 701 Business is the main connector of the City's downtown business district to other major business developments. Frequent flooding of the area causes the closure of this road, limiting access to our business community.

MAIN STREET AMERICA
2025 Accredited

MAIN STREET

- The flooding of this major thoroughfare limits access to not only the business community but also causes the use of more indirect routes for the City's emergency services, causing delays in critical response times. This becomes a hardship not only for the citizens in our southern City limits, but also the citizens from the southern end of the entire County.

- During flooding events, once 701 Business is forced to close, it shifts traffic to 701 By-Pass, the only other north-south outlet in and out of the City. This causes additional congestion and extreme traffic delays. This excessive congestion also contributes to major delays in response times for the City's emergency services.

- The project would help alleviate frequent flooding of commercial properties in proximity to the Soules Swamp area. These businesses have experienced reoccurring damage due to the water backup.

- Closure of 701 Business affects 60% to 70% of the City's business community, causing lost revenue because of business closures, as well as employees missing work.

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,

Terry Mann, Mayor
City of Whiteville

MAIN STREET AMERICA
2025 Accredited

MAIN STREET

Columbus County
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& TOURISM

Joan McPherson
President

Paul Todd - Chairman
Todd's Clothing

Board of Directors

Jessica Andrews
First Citizens Bank

Amber Bellamy
Columbus County DREAM Center

Emily Cross - Chair Elect
Vineland Station Depot

Cynthia Ellis
TDA Representative

Dr. Chris English
Southeastern Community College

Pam Hardy
Duke Energy

Stephanie Miller
Columbus Regional Healthcare System

Chuck Nance
Brunswick Electric Membership

Morris Pridgen
County of Columbus

Donna Smith
PNC Bank

Yolanda Stringfield
State Employee Credit Union

Ricky Thomas
Civic Federal Credit Union

Chassica Ward
Carolinas Staffing Solutions

Ex-Officio Members

Dylan Bowen
Col Co Economic Development

Terry Mann
Mayor, City of Whiteville

10-05-2026

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 the Columbus County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism 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 the Columbus County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

Our Chamber office is located on Madison Street in downtown Whiteville, so we experience the effects of flooding firsthand. Hurricanes Matthew and Florence demonstrated the devastating impact major storms can have on our downtown, but flooding is not limited to record-breaking hurricanes. Flash flooding and extended periods of heavy rain can also make Madison Street and surrounding streets difficult or impossible to travel.

- Our Chamber office is located on Madison Street in downtown Whiteville, so we experience the effects of flooding firsthand. Hurricanes Matthew and Florence demonstrated the devastating impact major storms can have on our downtown, but flooding is not limited to record-breaking hurricanes.

Columbus County
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& TOURISM

Joan McPherson
President

Paul Todd - Chairman
Todd's Clothing

Board of Directors

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Chassica Ward
Carolinas Staffing Solutions

Ex-Officio Members

Dylan Bowen
Col Co Economic Development

Terry Mann
Mayor, City of Whiteville

Flash flooding and extended periods of heavy rain can also make Madison Street and surrounding streets difficult or impossible to travel.

- As the organization serving businesses throughout Columbus County, we hear directly from business owners when flooding occurs. We hear their frustration and despair as they deal with lost customers, lost sales, employees unable to get to work, road closures and the financial difficulties that follow. For many small businesses operating on narrow margins, the loss of even a day or weekend of business can be significant.
- A business does not have to take on water to suffer the effects of flooding. When Madison Street, Lee Street, Franklin Street, US 701 Business, the US 701 Bypass or other connecting routes are affected, customers and employees may be unable to safely reach downtown businesses. Reliable access is essential to the economic health of our downtown and the businesses that have invested here.
- Reliable access is also a matter of public safety. Flooded or blocked roads can affect the ability of emergency personnel to reach residents, employees, customers and visitors or transport someone who needs immediate medical attention. In an emergency, minutes matter.
- Whiteville is the county seat and an important center for employment, healthcare, government services, shopping, dining and other necessities for residents throughout Columbus County. Reliable access into and through Whiteville is important not only to approximately 5,000 city residents, but to approximately 50,000 residents across our largely rural county.
- From an economic development standpoint, resilience means protecting existing investment as well as attracting new investment. Our businesses employ local residents, support families, contribute to our tax base and invest in our communities. Addressing recurring flooding helps protect those businesses and strengthens confidence in downtown Whiteville as a place to work, visit, invest and do business.

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,

Joan McPherson
President
Columbus County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Columbus County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
601 South Madison Street
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-642-3171

Columbus County

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Discover Columbus County

October 1st, 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 – PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Columbus County Economic Development Commission, I am pleased to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project in the City of Whiteville.

The Madison Street Bridge is an important connection for residents, businesses, emergency responders, and visitors. The proposed project would extend the existing bridge and add a second bridge over Soules Swamp, improving the roadway's ability to remain accessible during heavy rainfall and flooding events.

Recurring flooding along Madison Street can result in roadway closures and limited access to downtown Whiteville. This project would help reduce flooding impacts, improve mobility, and provide more reliable access to downtown businesses and services.

From an economic development perspective, reliable transportation infrastructure is essential to supporting local businesses, attracting investment, and maintaining a strong and resilient community.

The Columbus County Economic Development Commission respectfully encourages the U.S. Department of Transportation to support funding for this important project and its long-term benefits to Whiteville and Columbus County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dylan Bowen

Director of Economic Development for Columbus County

127 West Webster St - Whiteville, NC 28472
Telephone 910-640-6608
WWW.COLUMBUSFORINDUSTRY.COM
EDC@COLUMBUSCO.ORG

109 W. Main St.
Whiteville, NC 28472

Columbus County
Partnership for Children

Telephone: 910-642-8226
FAX: 910-642-8494

October 5, 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 Partnership for Children 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.

Columbus County Partnership for Children has experienced significant flooding on two separate occasions in the past. We have lost furnishings, equipment, files, important records, books and other resources that allow us to serve the children and families in our community.

For **Columbus County Partnership for Children**, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- Madison Street is a critical transportation corridor for families, children, early childhood educators, childcare providers, healthcare professionals, and community partners who access services and programs throughout Whiteville.

- Recurring flooding and road closures along Madison Street and the downtown area of Whiteville disrupt access to essential services for young children and families, including early childhood education programs, family support services, developmental screenings, health appointments, and other resources that are vital to school readiness and healthy child development.
- Reliable transportation routes are essential for the Partnership's staff, board members, service providers, and community partners who travel throughout the county to support children and families. Delays caused by flooding can affect program delivery, attendance at meetings, training opportunities, and timely access to services.
- The project would provide more dependable access to downtown Whiteville, where many agencies and organizations work collaboratively to serve families. Improved connectivity would strengthen coordination among education, health, and social service providers.
- During severe weather events and emergency situations, maintaining access across Madison Street is vital for emergency responders, healthcare providers, and families seeking assistance. The project would enhance community resilience and improve access to critical services when they are needed most.
- Thousands of children and families across Columbus County benefit directly and indirectly from the programs, services, and partnerships supported by Columbus County Partnership for Children. Ensuring reliable access to Whiteville's transportation network helps these families reach educational opportunities, childcare programs, healthcare services, and community resources without unnecessary interruption.
- By reducing flooding-related disruptions, the project would support economic stability for working families who rely on dependable transportation to access employment, childcare, and essential services, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more resilient community.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents an important investment in public safety, transportation reliability, and the long-term resilience of our community. Columbus County Partnership for Children strongly supports this project and its potential to enhance access to essential services, improve emergency response capabilities, and strengthen the quality of life for residents throughout Columbus County.

Thank you for your consideration of this important infrastructure improvement.

Sincerely,

Selena B. Rowell

Selena B. Rowell, Executive Director
Columbus County Partnership for Children

COMMITTED TO SERVING THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

FAMILIES FIRST, INC.

October 5, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersy 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 Families First, Inc. 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 Busies) 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, business, 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 Families First, Inc. the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

• Access to critical services: Families First, Inc. provides essential services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault throughout Columbus and Bladen Counties. Reliable access to our offices is particularly important because many of the individuals we serve are experiencing a crisis and may be seeking assistance to safely leave an abusive situation. When flooding closes the roadway and isolates the downtown area, it can prevent or significantly delay survivors from reaching our offices and accessing safety planning, advocacy, emergency assistance, transportation, housing assistance, and other critical services. Families First has also experienced flooding at our own office on two occasions, resulting in closures lasting several weeks while we recovered and restored our operations.

• Significant impact on nonprofit operations and revenue: Families First also operates a downtown thrift store, which generates essential unrestricted revenue to support our domestic violence and sexual assault programs. During previous major flooding events, the store was forced to close for more than two weeks, and 100% of its inventory was lost due to flood damage. These losses directly reduce the resources available to provide services to survivors and their children. During the two major flooding events in 2016 and 2018 alone, Families First lost more than $10,000 in anticipated revenue. Additional revenue has been lost as a result of smaller flooding events and repeated closures.

• Disruption of transportation and access throughout the community: When flooding occurs in this area, the downtown district can become effectively isolated from other portions of the community. A significant rainfall event—even one occurring over a relatively short period of time—can make the bridge and surrounding roadway impassable. This disrupts normal traffic patterns, restricts access to businesses and essential services, and creates significant hardship for residents, employees, customers, and visitors. The duration of these disruptions can range from several hours to multiple days and, in more severe circumstances, substantially longer.

• A public safety and community resilience concern: The full economic and human cost of these flooding events is difficult to quantify. The impacts extend beyond lost business revenue to include missed work, interrupted services, lost inventory, transportation barriers, and delayed access to essential resources. For Families First, the consequences can be especially serious because the people we serve may already be facing circumstances involving immediate threats to their safety and well-being. A transportation route that becomes impassable can mean that a survivor cannot reach an advocate, obtain emergency assistance, access shelter or other resources, or safely leave an abusive environment when help is needed.

For these reasons, Families First, Inc. considers the proposed bridge improvements to be a critical investment in the safety, accessibility, economic vitality, and long-term resilience of our community. We strongly encourage support for NC DOT's federal grant application and believe that addressing this recurring flooding problem will provide substantial and lasting benefits to the residents, businesses, nonprofits, and visitors who rely upon this vital connection.

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 Nations's critical transportation system.

Sincerely,

Vickie S. Pait

Vickie S. Pait
Executive Director

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 Whiteville License Plate Agency Inc 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 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 Whiteville License Plate Agency Inc, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by allowing full access to our business, which is crucial to the motoring public in our county.

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

transportation system.

Sincerely,

Pamela Merritt, Owner

Whiteville License Plate Agency Inc

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.

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,

Joy Jacobs, Director
Columbus County Transportation

Specializing In Italian Food
Anthony's
ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Island of Sicily
606 South Madison Street
Whiteville, NC

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 Anthony's Italian Restaurant 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 better handle heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders, and travelers.

As a downtown Whiteville business, we have seen firsthand the devastating impact flooding can have on our community. Hurricanes Matthew and Florence brought extraordinary flooding to Whiteville and Columbus County, but our flooding problems are not limited to record-breaking hurricanes. Flash flooding and extended periods of heavy rain can also create serious problems along Madison Street and surrounding streets in downtown Whiteville.

For Anthony's Italian Restaurant, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project is very real:

- Access to our business can be affected even when our building itself does not flood. During significant rainfall events, Madison, Lee, and Franklin Streets can become difficult or impossible to travel from multiple directions. Customers may be unable or unwilling to navigate flooded or closed roads to reach our restaurant.
- US 701 Business and the US 701 Bypass are critical transportation routes for our customers, employees, and the larger community. When flooding affects these routes and connecting streets, the impact extends well beyond a single intersection or business. It disrupts movement into and through downtown Whiteville and affects access for people traveling throughout Columbus County.
- Reliable access is a public safety issue. One of our greatest concerns is what could happen if a customer, employee, or nearby resident experiences a medical emergency during a flood. Minutes matter in an emergency. Flooded or blocked roads should not stand between someone needing immediate medical attention and the emergency personnel trying to reach them or transport them to care.

Specializing In Italian Food
Anthony's
ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Island of Sicily
606 South Madison Street
Whiteville, NC

- Flooding has a direct economic impact on our employees and their families. Anthony's employs approximately 10 to 15 people who depend on their weekly wages and tips to help support their households. When customers cannot reach downtown, or employees cannot safely get to work, the financial impact is felt immediately. In an economically challenged area, the loss of even a shift or two can matter greatly to a working family.
- Downtown businesses depend on dependable transportation infrastructure. Restaurants and other small businesses cannot thrive if customers question whether they can safely and reliably reach downtown whenever heavy rain is in the forecast. Improving the Madison Street crossing would provide greater confidence and accessibility for the businesses that continue to invest in downtown Whiteville.

This project is important not only to Anthony's Italian Restaurant or the businesses located along Madison Street. Whiteville's approximately 5,000 residents and Columbus County's approximately 50,000 residents depend on reliable transportation to reach their jobs, medical care, businesses, schools, groceries, and other necessities of daily life. They deserve transportation routes that remain as safe, accessible, and dependable as possible during periods of heavy rainfall.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and the long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County as a region. For those of us who operate businesses here, it also represents an investment in our employees, our customers, and our ability to continue serving this community.

I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow the North Carolina Department of Transportation 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 application and your commitment to our nation's critical transportation system.

Sincerely,
Anthony Grippi
Owner



THE CHEF & THE FROG

605 S Madison St
Whiteville, NC 28472
(910) 640-5550

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

Whiteville, October 5, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

Vineland Hospitality Group, **LLC,** dba **The Chef & The Frog** , would like to express the strong support of 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 **The Chef & The Frog**, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- **US 701 Business/Madison Street is a critical artery for our business and for the local economy.** Most of our customers are from outside the immediate area and rely on this route to reach us. It is also the primary access used by many of our suppliers. Every time flooding closes or restricts the road, customers are unable to reach us and deliveries are delayed or disrupted. The resulting loss of business, spoiled or delayed goods, and uncertainty place a real financial burden on a small business like ours.
- **Flooding has become such a routine threat that we have permanent sandbags positioned at our doors.** They are an unfortunate but necessary part of operating a business here—a constant

reminder that another storm can threaten our ability to open, serve our customers, and protect our property. After years of repeated flooding, we should not have to consider this normal.

- **This project would provide more than physical flood mitigation; it would provide a sense of security and hope for the future.** Knowing that meaningful steps are being taken to address a problem that has repeatedly threatened our businesses and our community would allow us to invest and plan with greater confidence, rather than wondering each time a major storm approaches whether we will be able to recover once again.
- **Our restaurant has become an important part of the fabric of Columbus County.** We employ 12 people and have built a business that serves not only as a restaurant, but as a gathering place for the community. We host many of the county's important celebrations and life events, including rehearsal dinners, bridal and baby showers, birthday and retirement parties, funeral gatherings, and other community events. Protecting the infrastructure that allows businesses like ours to survive is ultimately about protecting the economic and social vitality of the community we serve.
- **The financial toll of each flood is becoming increasingly difficult for us to sustain.** With every major flooding event, we face significant losses, followed by the often exhausting process of dealing with insurance companies that look for ways to limit or avoid paying for the damage and business interruption we have experienced. After 17 years in this location, we have invested an enormous amount of time, money, and effort into building our restaurant and becoming part of this community. But each flood takes another piece of that investment away. We have always managed to rebuild and keep going, but the losses are becoming so substantial that we honestly do not know how many more times we can do it. We are resilient, but resilience has its limits. Without meaningful flood mitigation, we worry that one day the next flood could simply be the one from which we cannot recover.

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,

Annie Slama

The Chef & The Frog
605 S Madison St, Whiteville, NC 28472
www.ChefNC.com

910-640-5550 x2

CLARK'S AUTO GLASS, LLC

123 E. COMMERCE STREET
WHITEVILLE, NC 28472
910-642-0134
910-642-9716 fax

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 CLARK'S AUTO GLASS, LLC 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 CLARK'S AUTO GLASS, LLC, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:
• The US 701 Business, Madison Street Bridge Expansion project, would greatly reduce the risk of flooding our business as well as other downtown business owners. Therefore keeping downtown open for business & not closed up for months at the time trying to clean up from being flooded from inches to several feet of floodwaters.
• This project would also greatly improve emergency access, regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, or community resilience.

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,
Dewey C Dowless, Owner
Clark's Auto Glass, LLC

SWS, LLC

PROPERTIES: 815 S. MADISON ST.
703 S. MADISON ST.
121 W COMMERCE ST
127 W. COMMERCE ST
810 CLIFTON LANE
Whiteville NC 28472

* 5 properties

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 Pandy Dog LLC dba Jerry's Sandwich Shop 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.

The importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

***Preserves the community identity and feel, allowing businesses to prosper, property values to be maintained and jobs to be provided.**
***Recurring flooding, roadway closures, travel delays,**
***The project would improve emergency access, regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and community resilience.**

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,
SANDRA SELLERS, OWNER

TEE BOX BAR & GRILL

804 S. MADISON ST WHITEVILLE NC 28472

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 Pandy Dog LLC dba Jerry's Sandwich Shop 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.
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***Preserves the community identity and feel, allowing businesses to prosper, property values to be maintained and jobs to be provided.**
***Recurring flooding, roadway closures, travel delays,**
***The project would improve emergency access, regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and community resilience.**

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,
Jeremy Sellers, Owner

POLISHED SALON & NAILS

108 E. Main St Whiteville NC 28472

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 Pandy Dog LLC dba Jerry's Sandwich Shop 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.

The importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

***Preserves the community identity and feel, allowing businesses to prosper, property values to be maintained and jobs to be provided.**
***Recurring flooding, roadway closures, travel delays,**
***The project would improve emergency access, regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and community resilience.**

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,
SANDRA SELLERS, OWNER

FARMACY ON MAIN

110 E. Main St Whiteville NC 28472

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 Pandy Dog LLC dba Jerry's Sandwich Shop 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.

The importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

***Preserves the community identity and feel, allowing businesses to prosper, property values to be maintained and jobs to be provided.**
***Recurring flooding, roadway closures, travel delays,**
***The project would improve emergency access, regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and community resilience.**

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,
SANDRA SELLERS, OWNER

JL Powell & Company

135 E Main Street

Whiteville NC 28472

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 JL Powell & Company 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 (US701 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.

Why the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Matters to JL Powell & Company

JL Powell & Company owns 18 buildings in downtown Whiteville NC; many located on or near Madison Street. The project would directly benefit the 15 business owners who lease from the company and their customers, as well as 14 residents living in two of the company's buildings, our employees, and me. Recurring flooding and road closures, causes damage to property once inside the business, causes lost income, and prevents emergency responders, business owners, customers, and residents from safely entering or leaving the area. By reducing these disruptions,

the project would significantly improve access, safety, and economic stability along Madison Street and throughout Downtown Whiteville NC.

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,

Owner, John S Fisher

JL Powell and Company

JWK THOMPSON FAMILY LLC

115 West Main Street | Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

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:

On behalf of JWK Thompson Family LLC, I am writing to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina.

JWK Thompson Family LLC owns and manages property in downtown Whiteville, including 115 West Main Street, which contains 15 residential apartments as well as ground-floor commercial businesses. We also manage several other commercial properties in the downtown area. Because our properties, residents, tenants, employees, customers, and prospective businesses depend on reliable access to downtown Whiteville, recurring flooding and roadway closures have a direct impact on our operations and the people we serve.

Flooding is not an abstract concern for our company. 115 West Main Street has flooded on multiple occasions, and we have incurred significant expense repairing and restoring downtown buildings after these events. Beyond the direct property damage, flooding slows movement throughout downtown, disrupts access for people traveling to work and patronizing local businesses, and creates additional challenges for attracting businesses and leasing vacant office and commercial space.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project would improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. Improving this crossing would help the roadway better accommodate heavy rainfall and flooding events, reduce roadway closures, and allow floodwaters to recede more quickly.

For JWK Thompson Family LLC, the benefits would extend well beyond our individual properties. More reliable transportation corridors would improve access for our residential tenants, commercial tenants, employees, customers, emergency responders, contractors, and visitors. It would also strengthen the ability of downtown Whiteville to retain existing businesses, attract new businesses, fill vacant commercial and office space, and support continued private investment.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents an important investment in transportation resilience, public safety, economic activity, and the long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. As a downtown property owner and manager that has experienced repeated flooding and the substantial costs associated with recovery, JWK Thompson Family LLC strongly supports NCDOT's efforts to secure PROTECT Grant funding for this project.

I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for the funding necessary to advance and complete this important project. Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to strengthening our nation's critical transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

John E. Thompson Jr. and Sarah B. Thompson, Owners
JWK Thompson Family LLC
115 West Main Street
Whiteville, NC 28472



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 – PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I am writing as the owner of Mall Barber Shop in Whiteville to support the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project.

Madison Street is part of the daily routine for many of my customers. They use it to get to work, run errands, visit local businesses, and come downtown for their haircuts.

My customers make appointments and plan their days around them. Some come before work. Some come after work. Parents bring their children in before school, a ball game, or a family event. Many of my customers have been coming to my shop for years and have a regular day and time for their haircut.

When Madison Street floods, those simple trips can become difficult.

A customer may have to take the US 701 Bypass or another route to get downtown. That can add time to the trip and make someone late for an appointment. Some may decide to reschedule rather than deal with the traffic and flooding.

For a small business, missed appointments matter.

The effect also reaches beyond my shop. Someone coming downtown for a haircut may stop at another business while they are here. They may eat lunch, shop, get gas, or take care of another errand. When people have trouble getting downtown, other local businesses lose that business too.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion would help by making this part of Madison Street less vulnerable to flooding.

For my business and my customers, that would mean:

- Fewer cancelled or missed haircut appointments when heavy rain causes flooding.
- An easier trip for parents bringing their children downtown.
- Better access for customers coming before or after work.
- A more dependable route for customers who live outside downtown and use Madison Street to reach my shop.
- Easier access for employees and local business owners.
- More people able to get downtown and support other businesses while they are here.

A barber shop depends on regular customers. We depend on people being able to get through town.

I've been part of the Whiteville community for a long time. I know the people who come through my door, and I know how much they value having local businesses they can count on. Keeping Madison Street open and easier to travel helps all of us.

I support the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project and ask that it be considered for PROTECT funding. Improving this crossing would help customers get to their appointments, help businesses keep their doors open, and make it easier for people to continue using downtown Whiteville.

Thank you for considering this project.

Sincerely,

Jerome Rooks
Owner
Mall Barber Shop
Whiteville, North Carolina

October 5, 2026

JOHN & CAMELA THOMPSON
Downtown Whiteville Property Owners & Business Operators

Mercantile on Madison | Mercantile Curiosities
Trigon Investments, LLC | Trigon, Inc.

718 S Madison St
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-640-7346 | trigoninc78@gmail.com

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 — PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

We are writing to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in Whiteville, Columbus County. We are John and Camela Thompson, owners of properties at 718, 723, 810, 812, 814, and 816 South Madison Street, Whiteville NC 28472, and we operate four businesses in downtown Whiteville- Mercantile On Madison, Mercantile Curiosities, Trigon Inc. and Trigon Investments LLC.

The project would improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. These improvements would help the roadway better withstand heavy rainfall and flooding, keeping a vital connection open for residents, businesses, employees, customers, vendors, emergency responders, and visitors.

Flooding along Madison Street and downtown Whiteville has a serious effect on our businesses and the people who depend on them. When flooding forces, us to close, we lose business. In some cases, buildings require extensive repairs or full remodeling, and merchandise is damaged or lost. Recovering from repeated flooding takes a heavy financial and emotional toll and makes it harder for small businesses to keep going.

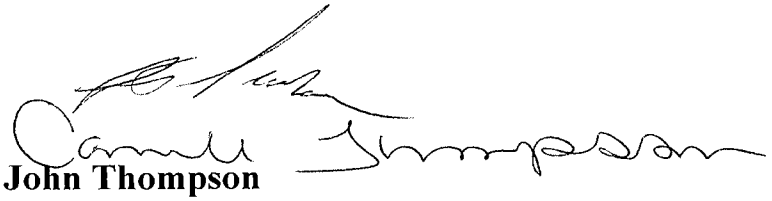
For our family, businesses, tenants, and the vendors we serve, this project matters because:

- We operate four businesses in downtown Whiteville and employ more than 15 people. Reliable access to Madison Street helps our employees get to work and our customers reach us.
- Mercantile on Madison occupies approximately 22,000 square feet, and Mercantile Curiosities occupies approximately 14,000 square feet. Together, these businesses provide space for more than 140 small businesses.
- Flooding and resulting closures affect more than our own operations. They can interrupt sales and income for the many small businesses that rely on our locations to reach customers.
- One of our properties, at 816 South Madison Street, includes six apartments on the upper floor. The residents depend on reliable access along Madison Street to travel to and from their homes.
- Flood-related building damage and product loss can require costly repairs, remodeling, and replacement inventory. Repeated losses make it increasingly difficult for us and the small businesses we support to continue operating.
- Improved flood resilience would help maintain access to downtown, support local jobs and economic activity, and provide a more dependable route for customers, vendors, deliveries, apartment residents, and emergency responders.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project is a strategic investment in transportation resilience, public safety, mobility, and the long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. We respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow NCDOT to advance and complete this important project.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our nation's transportation system.

Sincerely,



John Thompson
Camela Thompson
Downtown Whiteville Property Owners and Business Operators

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 Mr. Postman Print Shop, LLC, a business located in downtown Whiteville, 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 Mr. Postman Print Shop, LLC, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- Improving access to our business. US 701 Bypass is the lifeblood of downtown Whiteville. It is important that we have access to our business to mitigate damages, but also for us to be able to run our business operations.

- Recurring flooding in our downtown has been a major disruption to our local economy. It affects our community immediately during times of crisis, but it also has a lasting impact when entrepreneurs choose not to invest in downtown because of this flooding.

- This project would improve emergency access, regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and community resilience by providing our community with vital infrastructure.

- Our print shop serves our community with signage, decals, apparel and paper printing which often serve as a way for local government, schools, non-profits, and businesses to provide printed communication in times of crisis. It is important that we remain available to serve our community in that capacity.

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,
Jonathan Medford, Owner
Mr. Postman Print Shop, LLC

Rolling Penns Food Inc

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 — PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I am writing to urge your strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project in Whiteville, Columbus County. As the owner of Penn's Grill, a downtown Whiteville restaurant, and a former member of the Whiteville City Council, I have seen firsthand how essential dependable transportation access is to our businesses, residents, visitors, and emergency services. This project is not simply a future improvement; it is an urgent investment in the safety, resilience, and economic vitality of our community.

The project would extend the existing bridge and add a second bridge where Madison Street (U.S. 701 Business) crosses Soules Swamp. This critical connection provides access to downtown Whiteville and serves people traveling throughout the area. Heavy rain and flooding can quickly disrupt that access, forcing closures, creating lengthy detours, delaying emergency response, and making it more difficult for residents and workers to reach their destinations. These disruptions place an immediate burden on families, businesses, first responders, and anyone who depends on Madison Street as a reliable route.

For Penn's Grill and other downtown businesses, dependable access is essential every day. Customers must be able to reach downtown, employees must be able to get to work, deliveries must be completed, and visitors must feel confident that they can travel safely through the area. When flooding or bridge closures interrupt those connections, the effects are felt throughout the local economy. A resilient bridge system would help keep businesses open, protect jobs, support downtown investment, and reduce the economic losses caused by avoidable disruptions.

The project's benefits would extend well beyond individual businesses. Improved transportation reliability would strengthen access for residents, schools, healthcare providers, public safety agencies, and emergency responders. It would provide a safer and more dependable route for the entire community while helping Whiteville and Columbus County prepare for increasingly severe weather and future transportation challenges.

As a former council member, I understand that local resources alone are not sufficient to address a project of this importance and scale. The PROTECT grant is essential because it would provide

the federal partnership needed to move this long-awaited resilience improvement forward. Without this funding, the community may face continued vulnerability, recurring closures, and escalating costs associated with delays, emergency repairs, and lost economic activity. Federal support now would help prevent those future costs while delivering lasting benefits to the people and businesses of Whiteville.

I respectfully urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to give NCDOT's PROTECT grant application its strongest consideration and to help advance the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project without delay. This investment would protect a vital transportation connection, strengthen our local economy, improve public safety, and enhance the long-term resilience of our entire community.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to transportation improvements that protect communities and support economic opportunity.

Sincerely,



Helen B. Holden

Owner and Operator
Penn's Grill



616 S Madison St
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-640-5055

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

Whiteville, October 5, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

Patou, **LLC,** dba **Sophie's Café-Bistro**, would like to express the strong support of 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 **Sophie's Café-Bistro**, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- **US 701 Business/Madison Street is essential to Sophie's Café-Bistro.** Our customers come from Whiteville and the surrounding communities, and many of them depend on this road to reach us. It is also an important route for our food and supply deliveries. When flooding makes the road difficult or impossible to use, customers stay home, deliveries are delayed, and a small business like ours immediately feels the financial impact. Even when the water recedes, the disruption can continue for days.
- **We have reached the point where preparing for flooding has become part of our normal business routine.** We keep sandbags readily available near our entrances because we know that another significant storm can quickly turn into another threat to our business. Having them there every day is more than a practical precaution—it is a constant reminder of how vulnerable our downtown businesses remain.

- **A project that addresses the underlying causes of flooding would give us something we have not had in a long time: confidence in the future.** We can prepare for a storm, but we cannot prepare indefinitely for repeated disruptions, closures, property damage, and lost business. Meaningful flood mitigation would allow us to spend less time worrying about how we will get through the next storm and more time focusing on growing our business and serving our community.
- **Sophie's Café Bistro is a small business, but we are an important part of the local business community.** We employ seven people and provide a place where neighbors, families, visitors, and local professionals can gather for a meal, a cup of coffee, or simply a conversation. Like many small businesses in Whiteville, our success is closely tied to the health and accessibility of downtown. Protecting the roads and infrastructure that connect us to our customers is therefore not simply an investment in a bridge or a flood-control project—it is an investment in the businesses, jobs, and community that depend on them.
- **The financial aftermath of each flood is becoming increasingly difficult to absorb.** In addition to the damage and business interruption itself, we repeatedly find ourselves fighting with insurance companies over coverage and reimbursement, with insurers looking for ways to limit or avoid paying for losses that we believe are directly related to flooding. The costs associated with each major flood are substantial, and after absorbing loss after loss, we have to be honest about how long a small business can continue operating under these circumstances. We are resilient, but resilience is not unlimited. Without meaningful action to reduce the flooding itself, we fear that eventually the financial burden will become more than we can survive.

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,

Guillaume Slama

Sophie's Café-Bistro
616 S Madison St
Whiteville, NC 28472
www.IloveSophies.com

910-207-2182

SOUTHEAST PROPERTIES OF COLUMBUS LLC

433 S. Madison St. • Whiteville, NC 28472 • kenny@mysoutheastrealty.com

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 **Southeast Properties of Columbus LLC** 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 better handle heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders, and travelers.

As a local property owner and business operating from **433 S. Madison Street**, we see firsthand the importance of Madison Street to Whiteville and Columbus County. Madison Street is an important connection between downtown Whiteville, the hospital and medical area, local businesses, residential neighborhoods, and the surrounding community.

The importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project to our company and community includes:

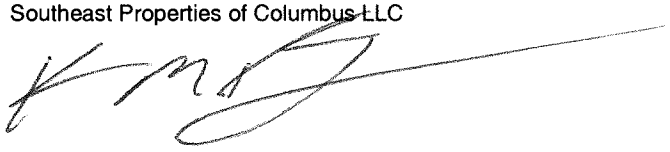
- **Reliable access to downtown Whiteville.** Our business is located directly on Madison Street, making dependable access important to our operations, tenants, customers, visitors, and neighboring businesses.
- **Reduced disruption from flooding.** Heavy rainfall and flooding can interrupt traffic and make access to downtown properties and businesses more difficult. Improving the Soules Swamp crossing would help reduce these disruptions and allow floodwater to recede more quickly.
- **Improved emergency and medical access.** Madison Street provides an important connection through Whiteville, including access toward the hospital and medical community. Reliable routes during severe weather are especially important for emergency responders and residents needing medical services.
- **Support for downtown economic activity.** Reliable access encourages customers, employees, visitors, and continued investment in downtown Whiteville. Resilient transportation infrastructure is important to the continued vitality and growth of our downtown.
- **Long-term community resilience.** Columbus County has experienced significant impacts from hurricanes and major rainfall events. Improving this crossing is a practical investment that will help Whiteville remain accessible and functional during future severe-weather events.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and the long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. I respectfully urge full consideration and support for funding that will allow NCDOT to advance and complete this important project.

Thank you for your consideration of this grant application and your commitment to strengthening our nation's critical transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Kenneth M. Barnes Jr.
Southeast Properties of Columbus LLC



Sugar & Spice Dancewear and Ladies Boutique

730 S. Madison St

Whiteville NC 28472

October 5, 2026

Dear Secretary Duffy

This letter is to express the strong support of Sugar & Spice Dancewear and Ladies Boutique for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge expansion project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina. As a business owner, I feel that this project will improve the Madison Street 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. Flooding is a recurring issue along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during heavy rainfall events. Downtown business owners have worked hard to keep their businesses going. Improving the bridge crossing would reduce flooding in the area and allow rainwater to recede more quickly. I think 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 Sugar & Spice Dancewear and Ladies Boutique, the importance of the

Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can help roadway closure, travel delays, and it would improve emergency access to the downtown area. The employees, and customers would benefit from this Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project.

The Madison street Bridge Expansion project represents a strategic investment in transporation 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 transporation system.

Sincerely,

Tricia Bowen, Business Owner

Sugar & Spice Dancewear and Ladies Boutique

T² GENERAL CONTRACTORS

817-B South Madison Street | Whiteville, NC

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:

On behalf of T² General Contractors, I am writing to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina.

T² General Contractors is headquartered at 817-B South Madison Street in downtown Whiteville, placing our business directly within the area affected by recurring flooding and associated roadway closures. While our building itself has not flooded, we have seen firsthand the effects that heavy rainfall and flooding have on the streets, businesses, properties, and overall accessibility of downtown Whiteville.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project would improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. Improving this crossing would help the roadway better accommodate heavy rainfall and flooding events, reduce roadway closures, and allow floodwaters to recede more quickly.

For T² General Contractors and the properties and businesses we serve, this project is particularly important because:

- Our office is located directly on South Madison Street, and street closures caused by flooding require our employees and construction crews to reroute, creating delays and reducing accessibility throughout downtown.
- T² currently supports an operations team and construction workforce of approximately seven people who regularly travel between our Whiteville office, suppliers, clients, and active construction projects throughout the region.
- We manage and maintain multiple properties in the downtown Whiteville area, including apartment properties that have experienced flooding as well as property at 115 West Main Street. Reliable access during and following major rainfall events is important for responding to these properties and assisting the people and businesses we serve.
- Downtown Whiteville continues to attract retail businesses and private investment. Recurring flooding and roadway closures affect not only individual properties but also customer access, business activity, emergency response, and confidence in the continued growth of the downtown district.
- Improving the Madison Street crossing would strengthen the resiliency of downtown Whiteville's transportation infrastructure and provide more dependable access for residents, businesses, contractors, emergency responders, and visitors.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents an important investment in transportation resilience, public safety, economic activity, and the long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. As a business headquartered directly on Madison Street and actively involved in maintaining and improving properties throughout the downtown area, T² General Contractors strongly supports NCDOT's efforts to secure funding for this project.

I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for the PROTECT Grant funding necessary to advance and complete this important project.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to strengthening our nation's critical transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Michael Thompson
Owner/President
T² General Contractors
817-B South Madison Street
Whiteville, NC

501 S Madison St.
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-642-2000
www.vannunderwood.com

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 Vann Underwood Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram 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 Vann Underwood Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- **Improved Access to Downtown:** The 701 Business bridge expansion would provide improved access to the downtown area, local businesses, and residential neighborhoods. Without the bridge expansion, access would remain largely dependent on the 701 Bypass, limiting traffic flow and making it more difficult for residents, customers, and visitors to access the downtown area.
- **Supporting the Local Business Community:** The 701 Business bridge expansion is critical to the continued growth and success of our local business community. The project would provide citizens and travelers with more convenient access to Madison, Lee, and Franklin Streets. Approximately two-thirds of our employees travel from the southern portion of the city and county to reach work each day, making reliable and convenient access across 701 Business particularly important to our business and employees.
- **Flood Mitigation and Emergency Access:** The project could help address flooding concerns associated with Soules Swamp during periods of heavy rainfall, tropical storms, and other significant weather events. Flooding in this area has caused substantial damage to businesses and properties surrounding downtown, negatively impacting both the number of businesses operating in the area and the customers who are able to access them. In addition to addressing flooding concerns, the bridge expansion would provide emergency response crews with an additional route between the northern and southern portions of the city. Maintaining multiple access routes is critical during severe weather or other emergencies. If the project is not completed and emergency responders are dependent on a single route, that route could become inaccessible, potentially preventing emergency personnel from reaching residents and businesses when they need assistance most.

- **Encouraging Downtown Growth and Investment:** The project would help create the conditions necessary for continued growth and revitalization in the downtown area. Business owners, developers, and investors need confidence that their businesses and investments will be accessible to customers, employees, and visitors. The 701 Business corridor and this bridge expansion are essential pieces of that infrastructure. Improving access and maintaining reliable traffic flow will help strengthen the downtown area and support its long-term economic growth.
- **A Critical Investment in Our Community:** The 701 Business bridge expansion should be viewed as more than a transportation project. It is an investment in the accessibility, safety, economic development, and long-term viability of our community. Our businesses, employees, residents, and emergency services depend on reliable connectivity, and moving this project forward is essential to maintaining that connectivity.

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,

Stephen V. Underwood III, General Manager

Vann Underwood Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram

The Honorable Sean Duffy

Secretary, U.S Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E

Washington, DC 20590

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

Dear Secretary Duffy :This letter is to express the strong support of What A Burger 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 Through 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. Specifically, What A Burger, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following.

Business (US 701) is the life blood to downtown Whiteville. The continuation of heavy rain and flooding reduces the element stores closing employee and travel. The improvement would allow the heavy rain and flood water to flow more freely and reduce the risk of the city flooding. The Madsion Steet Bridge Expiation 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 you full consideration and support for funding that will allow North Carolina DOT to advance and complete these important lasting benefits to the Coty of Whiteville, Columbus County and southeastern North Carolian.

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

Sincerely,

Sammy Jacobs

What a Burger

Whiteville Family Pharmacy

Angela R. Soles, PharmD
Owner/Pharmacist

801 S. Madison Street
Whiteville, NC 28472
910.642.4188
Whitevillefamilyrx@gmail.com

October 5, 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 – PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I am writing on behalf of Whiteville Family Pharmacy to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in Whiteville and Columbus County.

The Madison Street (US 701 Business) bridge over Soules Swamp is an important part of getting people in and out of downtown Whiteville. Extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge would help this section of Madison Street better handle heavy rainfall and flooding and, most importantly, help keep the road open when our community needs it most.

Flooding along Madison Street is something our community has dealt with repeatedly during periods of heavy rain. For us as a pharmacy, this is more than an inconvenience. Our patients need to be able to get to the pharmacy to pick up their medications, talk with our pharmacists, receive vaccinations, and take care of other important healthcare needs. Many of the people we serve are older adults or have ongoing health conditions, so being able to reliably get their medications is especially important.

This project would make a real difference for Whiteville Family Pharmacy and the people we serve by:

- Keeping access to essential medications more reliable. Our patients depend on us for medications they need every day. When flooding closes roads or makes travel difficult, getting to the pharmacy can become much harder.
- Helping our older and more vulnerable patients. Some of our patients have limited mobility or rely on family members and caregivers for transportation. Having a dependable route into downtown Whiteville is important for them.
- Helping us remain accessible during severe weather. Flooding can affect our employees, patients, deliveries, and day-to-day operations. Improving the bridge would make it easier for our pharmacy and other downtown businesses to continue serving the community.
- Improving access for emergency and healthcare needs. When someone needs a medication urgently, every extra delay matters. A more reliable route through this area would benefit patients, emergency responders, and other healthcare services.
- Supporting downtown Whiteville businesses. Whiteville Family Pharmacy is a locally owned business located on South Madison Street. We are proud to be part of the Whiteville community, and we know how important it is for residents to have dependable access to the businesses and services located downtown.
- Reducing the impact of detours and road closures. When Madison Street is affected by flooding, people may have to use the US 701 Bypass or other alternate routes. This adds time and makes it more difficult for patients, employees, deliveries, and emergency services to get where they need to go.
- Making Whiteville better prepared for future flooding. Improving this bridge would not only address a current problem, but would help make our community more resilient when heavy rainfall and flooding occur in the future.

Whiteville Family Pharmacy has been part of this community for generations, and we see every day how important reliable access to local businesses and healthcare services is to the people of Whiteville and Columbus County. Keeping Madison Street open and accessible is important to our patients, our employees, our business, and the community as a whole. We respectfully ask that you give this project full consideration for PROTECT funding so that NCDOT can move forward with the Madison Street Bridge Expansion. This project would make a meaningful difference in keeping people connected to downtown Whiteville, improving access to essential services, and helping our community remain accessible during severe weather.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work to support safer and more reliable transportation infrastructure in communities like ours.

Sincerely,

Angela R. Soles, PharmD

Angela R. Soles, Pharm.D.
Owner & Pharmacist-in-Charge
Whiteville Family Pharmacy
801 S. Madison Street
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-642-4188

Whiteville Fire Department

David Yergeau, Sr
Fire Chief
120 East Columbus Street
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-642-3112
910-770-5088
dyergeau@ci.whiteville.nc.us

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

Re: Support for Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Whiteville Fire Department, I am pleased to offer my strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's application for funding through the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program for the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina.

This project will improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge structure and constructing a second bridge. These improvements will significantly enhance the corridor's ability to accommodate heavy rainfall and flooding events, ensuring that this critical transportation link remains accessible to residents, businesses, emergency responders, and travelers.

Flooding is a recurring challenge along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during severe weather events. The proposed bridge expansion will improve drainage capacity, reduce flood impacts, and allow stormwater to recede more quickly following heavy rainfall. These improvements will help minimize roadway closures, maintain access to downtown Whiteville, and provide more dependable transportation routes during and after adverse weather conditions.

From the perspective of the Whiteville Fire Department, this project is particularly important because:

- Recurring flooding frequently results in roadway closures, travel delays, and the need to reroute emergency vehicles via the US 701 Bypass. These conditions can increase response times and limit direct access to residents and businesses located beyond flooded roadway segments.
- The project will improve emergency response access and reliability while enhancing regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and overall community resilience.

- Residents, visitors, and business owners will benefit from improved emergency services access, ensuring that fire, rescue, and emergency medical personnel can respond more quickly and efficiently during emergency situations.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, public safety, economic vitality, and the long-term sustainability of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. By reducing flood-related disruptions and improving critical infrastructure, this project will provide lasting benefits to our community and the surrounding region.

I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this PROTECT Grant application and your support for funding this important project. Thank you for your commitment to strengthening our nation's transportation infrastructure and enhancing the safety and resilience of communities across the country.

Sincerely,

David Yergeau
Fire Chief
Whiteville Fire Department

columbus county
ccac arts
council

Post Office Box 291 Whiteville, NC 28472 910-640-2787

October 2, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Columbus County Arts Council in downtown Whiteville, North Carolina. I write this letter in strong support of the City of Whiteville for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in the city of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina. This project would bring great improvement to Madison Street (US 701 Business), which is the main street of our Downtown District. This bridge crosses 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 has become a recurring issue along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during heavy downpours, tropical storms and hurricanes. Improving the bridge would reduce flooding in the area and allow rainwater to recede more quickly after heavy rainfall.

To summarize the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project is as follows:

- Madison Street connects the Downtown Business District. Frequent flooding events cause closures of Madison Street as well as other side streets, limiting access to our business district.

- If there is an emergency in the business district, Emergency Services must use a more indirect route to administer care or transport to hospital, delaying critical response time.
- Once flooding occurs, 701 Business is forced to close, shifting all traffic to 701 By-Pass, the only other north-south outlet in and out of the city. This causes congestion and confusion, especially for out-of-town travelers.
- The project would help alleviate frequent flooding of commercial properties near Soules Swamp. Our Arts Council has flooded twice in the past 10 years.
- Closure of 701 Business affects over 60% of the businesses in our Downtown District, causing hardship for both business owners and employees due to missed days of work.

Thank you for considering this grant application and for your commitment to our nation's critical transportation infrastructure.

I respectfully request your support for the funding needed for the North Carolina Department of Transportation to advance and complete this essential project. The Madison Street Bridge Expansion will deliver lasting benefits to the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, and southeastern North Carolina.

Respectfully,

Sally Mann

Director, Columbus County Arts Council

NORTH CAROLINA
Museum of Natural Sciences

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 **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences at Whiteville** 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 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. Improving the bridge crossing would reduce flooding and allow rainwater to recede more quickly. As a result, the project would help reduce road closures, improve access to downtown Whiteville, and provide more reliable travel during and after heavy rainfall events.

Specifically, for the **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences at Whiteville**, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- The museum plays an important role in science accessibility for residents of Whiteville and surrounding small, rural communities, bringing hands-on science education and programming directly to communities that may have limited access to these opportunities.
- The project would ensure consistent and reliable access to the museum, supporting tourism and economic activity in Whiteville and the surrounding region. Last year, the museum drew nearly 16,000 visitors, more than three times Whiteville's

population, who also support local businesses, restaurants, and other community services.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and the long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. 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,

Denise Young

Denise Young, Ed.D.
Director

Southeastern
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

September 30, 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:

On behalf of Southeastern Community College, I am pleased to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina.

We understand and are excited about these improvements to Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp, which include extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. These improvements will help the roadway better withstand heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders, students, employees, and visitors.

For Southeastern Community College, reliable access to transportation is essential to our ability to serve students and the communities of Columbus County and throughout Southeastern North Carolina. The Madison Street corridor provides an important connection to downtown Whiteville and the surrounding community. Recurring flooding and potential roadway closures can create challenges for students, employees, and visitors traveling to and from the College and can affect access to businesses and services throughout the area.

Specifically, the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project would:

- Improve reliable access to downtown Whiteville and the surrounding areas for SCC students, employees, visitors, and community partners.
- Help reduce the transportation disruptions associated with heavy rainfall and flooding.
- Improve access for emergency responders and provide a more resilient transportation connection for the community.
- Support continued economic activity and connectivity in downtown Whiteville and throughout Columbus County.
- Strengthen the community's ability to maintain essential transportation access during and following severe weather events.

Southeastern Community College is committed to supporting the educational, workforce, and economic development needs of Columbus County and the surrounding region. A resilient transportation network is an important part of that mission, allowing our students and employees to travel safely and reliably while supporting the businesses, industries, and communities we serve.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and the long-term vitality of Whiteville and Columbus County. I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow the North Carolina Department of Transportation to advance and complete this important project.

Thank you for your consideration of this grant application and for your commitment to strengthening our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris English
President
Southeastern Community College