

PROJECT READINESS

NCDOT has a proven track record of delivering large-scale projects quickly. NCDOT controls and maintains over 9,200 signals in the State, which is one of the largest inventories of State-owned signals nationwide.

NCDOT is prepared for the approvals and permits, as well as NEPA class of action and status, public involvement, ROW acquisition, and risk and mitigation strategies.

State and Local Approvals Support

NCDOT has included letters of support on the [project website](#) which indicate State and local support for the overall grant application and respective match contributions.

NEPA Class of Action

NCDOT anticipates that WALK NC improvements will be subject to a Categorical Exclusion (CE) review to satisfy NEPA, which will be completed alongside project design.

ROW Acquisition Plans

NCDOT does not anticipate ROW will be needed to assist WALK NC, however there may be some acquisitions needed to fill sidewalk gaps. NCDOT Divisions will follow NCDOT and Federal procedures for acquiring real property for transportation projects.

Potential project risks and mitigation strategies include:

- **NEPA Delays:** This approval will require NC State Historic Preservation Office documentation that historic resources will not be affected as the project passes through historic districts; documentation from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will need to confirm that no rare/endangered species will be affected. As WALK NC is planned to occur primarily within the existing ROW, these documentation requirements are not expected to delay the NEPA compliance review. Only minor, temporary, and permanent easement acquisition is anticipated. NCDOT expects a final CE decision for WALK NC by the beginning of 2024.
- **Cost Overruns:** Contingency costs have been built into the budget for landscaping, lighting, ROW acquisition, final design, construction, and environmental documentation.



Crosswalk in Wilson, NC without pedestrian countdown signal heads

Public Involvement Plan

As the project design is finalized, NCDOT will work with the local Divisions and cities/towns to host a walkability audit where new pedestrian countdown signal heads and crosswalks will be installed. This will provide an opportunity for residents to note any additional safety concerns that could be incorporated as part of WALK NC or future projects. All printed materials that will be shared about the project and walkability audit will be printed in both English and Spanish and will be accessible for all ages and abilities. NCDOT will also conduct specific outreach to the Lumbee Tribe in Robeson County, as many of the Lumbee call Lumberton home and live in areas where WALK NC improvements will be made.

If any ROW acquisition needs to occur as a result of the project, NCDOT will work with property owners to provide a fair compensation and discuss other potential impacts of the project. Affected property owners will be contacted directly by NCDOT to learn more about the project before construction.

Technical Capacity

As a State agency, NCDOT, the applicant, regularly partners with Federal agencies to deliver quality infrastructure projects across the State. NCDOT will deliver the project by bundling the improvements across each Division and partnering with local agencies to coordinate on utility relocation, public education, and traffic control during construction. Within NCDOT, the Office of Civil Rights promotes and ensures equal access and equal opportunity for customers and employees participating in North Carolina transportation programs that receive federal funding. NCDOT has extensive previous experience with

managing Federal grant awards to help the communities in North Carolina plan for and implement various transportation improvements. In August of 2022, NCDOT was awarded \$3.4 million in RAISE grant funding to support the planning and preliminary design of mobility hubs in seven growing communities along the proposed S-Line Transit route. Under previous Federal grant programs, NCDOT has been awarded Federal grant dollars to successfully manage a multitude of projects such as the construction of Raleigh Union Station (2012 TIGER grant award, \$21 M) and 27 miles of I-95 widening and improvements (2019 BUILD grant award, \$22.5 M). Additionally the Governor of North Carolina has designated NCDOT as its principal authority and administrator of the Federal Transit Administration's transit funds for projects in the rural and small urban areas of North Carolina. Specific to the WALK NC project, NCDOT will interface with all required Federal agencies, including but not limited to FHWA, to ensure the compliance with all applicable design standards, such as ADA requirements, ROW acquisition, as well as compliance under NEPA.



Community engagement in Siler City, NC

Project Schedule

WALK NC will be ready to begin final design and project implementation when awarded. WALK NC is currently in preliminary design. The project schedule is illustrated below. It is anticipated that WALK NC improvements will be completed by the third quarter of 2027.

NCDOT is aware of and will meet all requirements in the RAISE NOFO related to obligation and expenditures.

	2024				2025				2026				2027			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Design	[Blue shaded area]															
Row and Utilities							[Blue shaded area]									
Construction								[Blue shaded area]								

...
 Division 2: 42 signals
 Division 4: 57 signals
 Division 5: 32 signals
 Division 6: 18 signals
 Division 8: 31 signals
 Division 9: 48 signals

...
Obligation deadline
 June 30, 2027.

Functional Design

The **Functional Design** will include confirmation of site-specific design elements, preparation for signal and sidewalk design needs, identification of needed environmental approvals, and ROW acquisitions per site.

Public Engagement

Public Engagement will include hosting walkability audits at the identified sites for pedestrian countdown signals in each WALK NC city/town. These walkability audits will include agency staff and community engagement specialists and residents. The total budget for public engagement for this project is \$200,000, which has been incorporated into the price estimate for each signal in accordance with this tailored public engagement strategy.

Environmental Approval

The **Environmental Approval** will include any necessary approvals identified in the Functional Design phase, though NCDOT anticipates this will mostly involve execution and review of a NEPA categorical exclusion.

Signal and Sidewalk Designs and Updates

Signal and Sidewalk Designs and Updates will include the updates to signal designs, sidewalk designs, pavement marking plans, and other plans as necessary. Ultimately, this work will also include the updating of the NCDOT Signal Plan of Record.

Easement and ROW Acquisition

The **Easement and ROW Acquisition** is scheduled to occur concurrent with the Signal and Sidewalk Designs and Updates. Since the WALK NC improvements are all proposed at State-owned signals, NCDOT does not anticipate a significant need for easement and ROW acquisition. Any needed acquisitions (to close sidewalk gaps, move utilities, etc.) will be identified in the Functional Design phase and will be executed prior to bidding the work.

Design and Bid Document Approval and Bidding

Design and Bid Document Approval and Bidding will include necessary jurisdictional approvals of design documents and bid documents, and the bidding of WALK NC improvements. These approvals and project bids will be bundled by each NCDOT Division for implementation in line with division contracts and bidding processes.

Construction

Construction is the longest and most cost-intensive individual portion of the project and is adjusted based on current (2021) project delivery times and workload. This estimate assumes delivery and workload consistent with or more impacted than base year 2021 and assumes a 12-month delivery cycle for 30 signals.