

Welcome to the Ferry Tolling Listening Session

Help Shape Ferry Tolling Implementation in North Carolina

The North Carolina Ferry Division is preparing for the implementation of tolls on all ferry routes beginning January 1, 2027, as required by state law. We are seeking input from residents, businesses, commuters, visitors, and community stakeholders to help guide implementation decisions.

Your feedback will help inform recommendations related to:

- ***Toll collection methods***
- ***Customer experience***
- ***Commuter and priority pass programs***
- ***Payment options***
- ***Terminal operations***



How to Participate Tonight

- 1 Visit each information station
- 2 Review project information
- 3 Talk with staff and subject matter experts
- 4 Complete the survey
- 5 Submit comments before leaving

This public meeting will be conducted as a drop-in open house and will not include a formal presentation or public hearing.



Why is this happening?

Tolling Is Now Required by State Law

A recent legislative requirement (G.S. 136-82) directs NCDOT to implement tolls on all North Carolina ferry routes.

Public input will help shape:

- ☒ How tolling is implemented
- ☒ How customers pay
- ☒ How passes are administered
- ☒ How impacts to communities can be minimized
- ☒ What information customers need

This public process is **not** deciding whether tolling will occur.



Legal Requirements

- Tolling all ferry routes
- January 1, 2027 implementation date



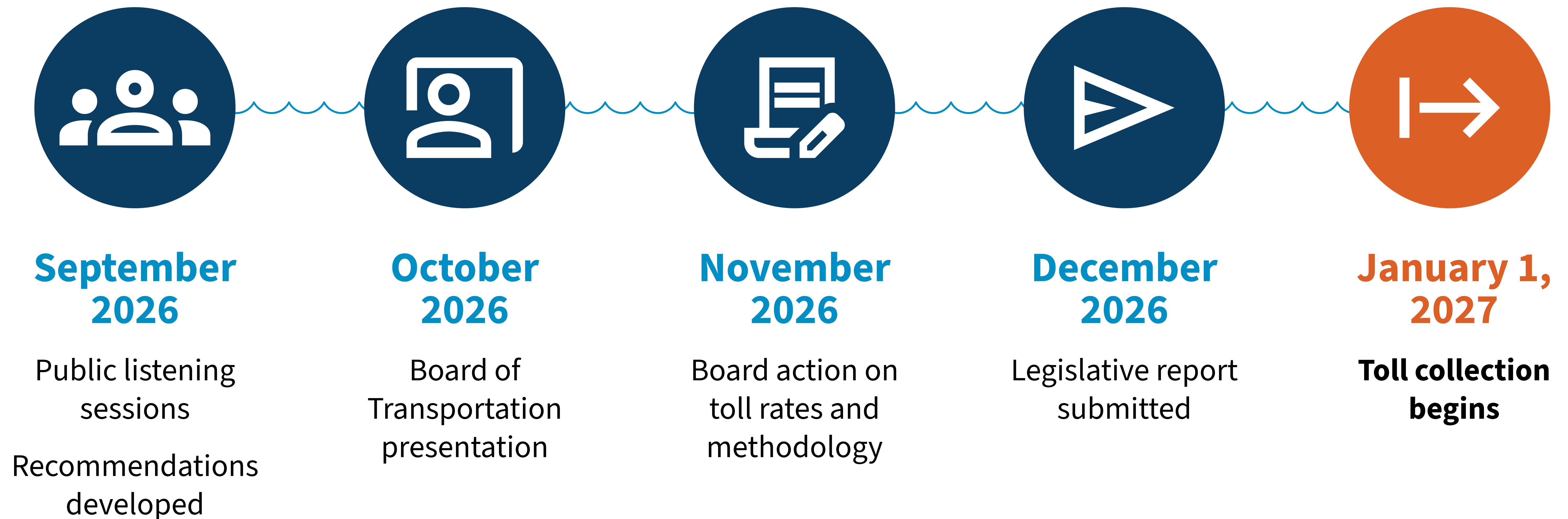
Open for Discussion

- Toll rates
- Payment options
- Pass program administration
- Customer service practices
- Terminal operations



Project Timeline

How We Get to January 1, 2027



NCDOT Ferry System Overview

A Vital Transportation Network

The North Carolina Ferry System is the **second-largest state-operated ferry system in the nation.**

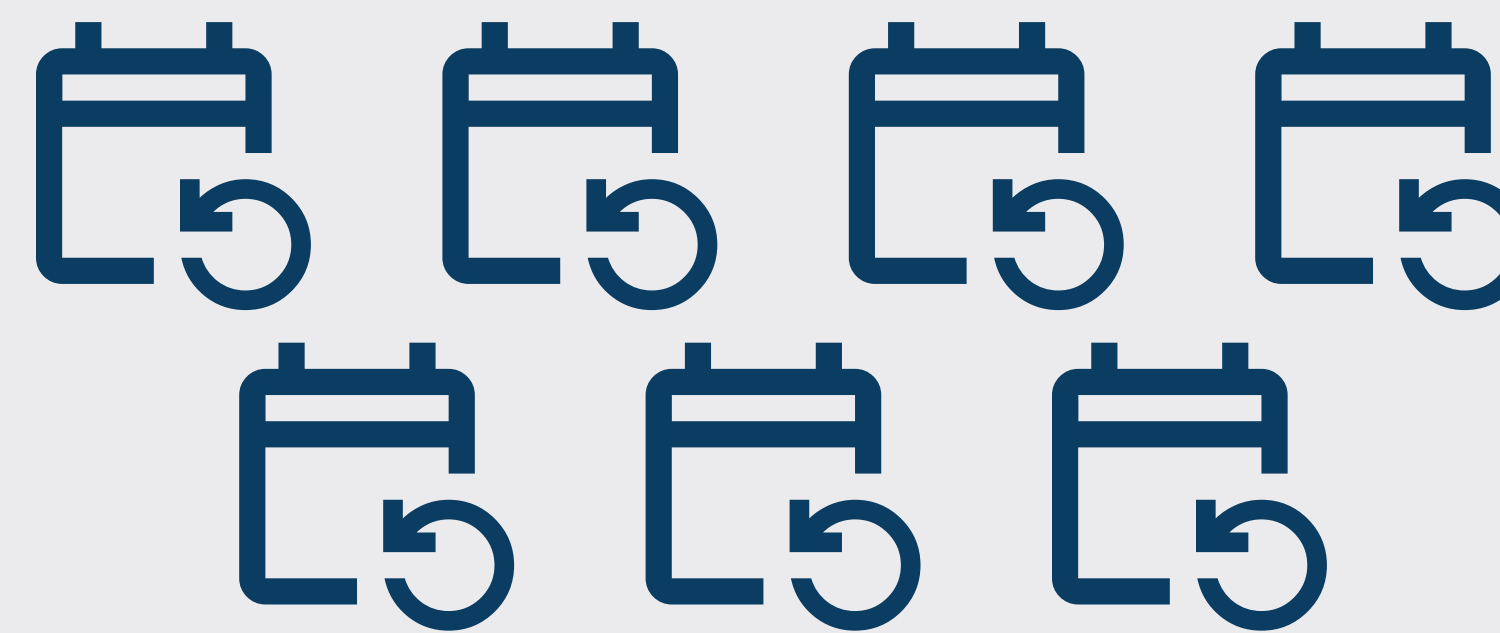
24/7

Operations 24 hours a day,
365 days a year

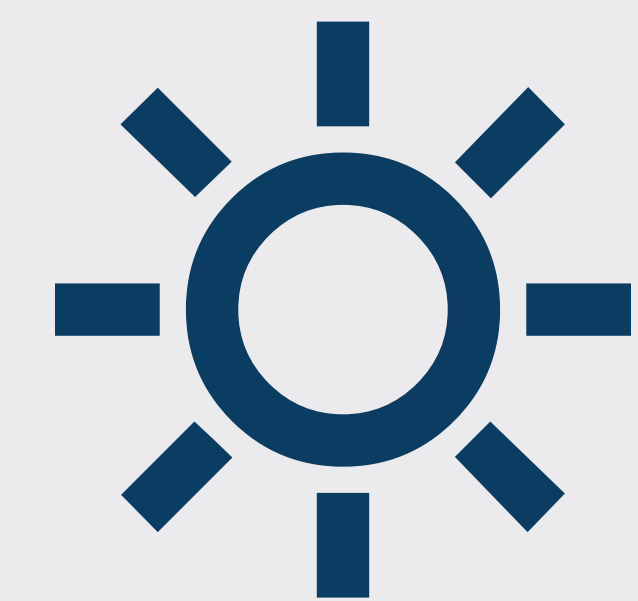
SYSTEM HIGHLIGHTS



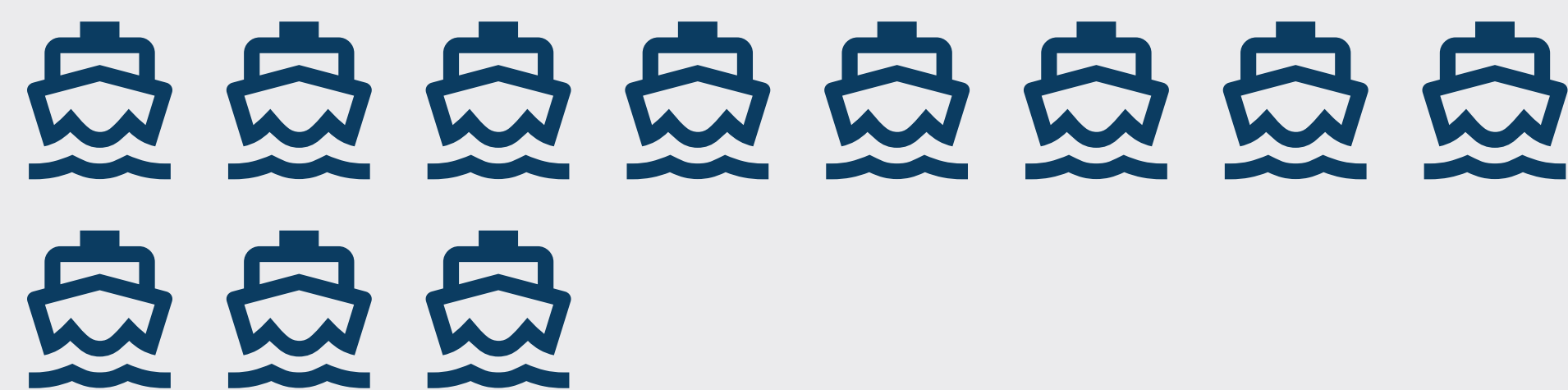
23 Ferry Vessels



7 Year-Round Vehicle
Ferry Routes



1 Seasonal Passenger
Ferry Route

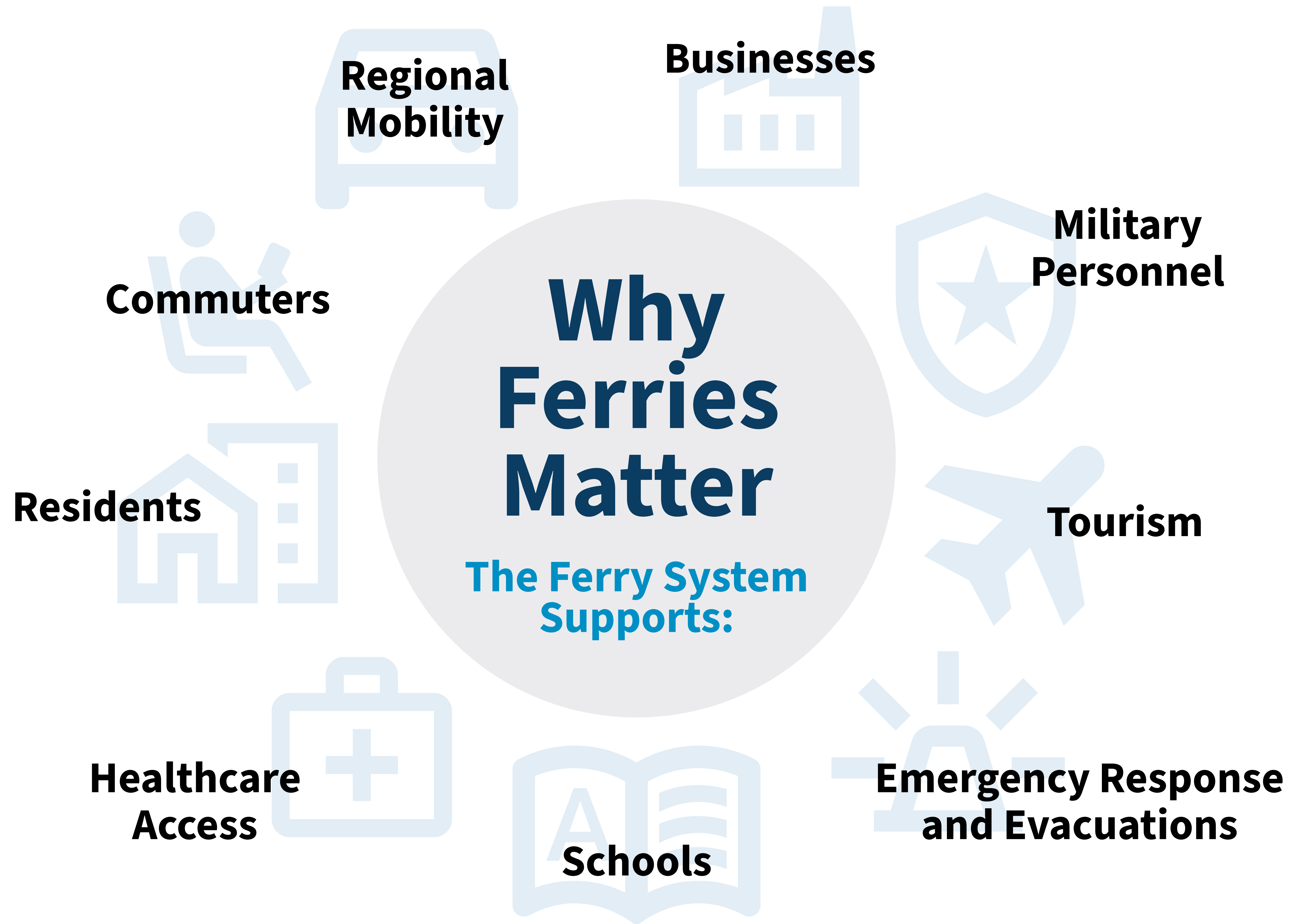


11 Support Vessels

more than

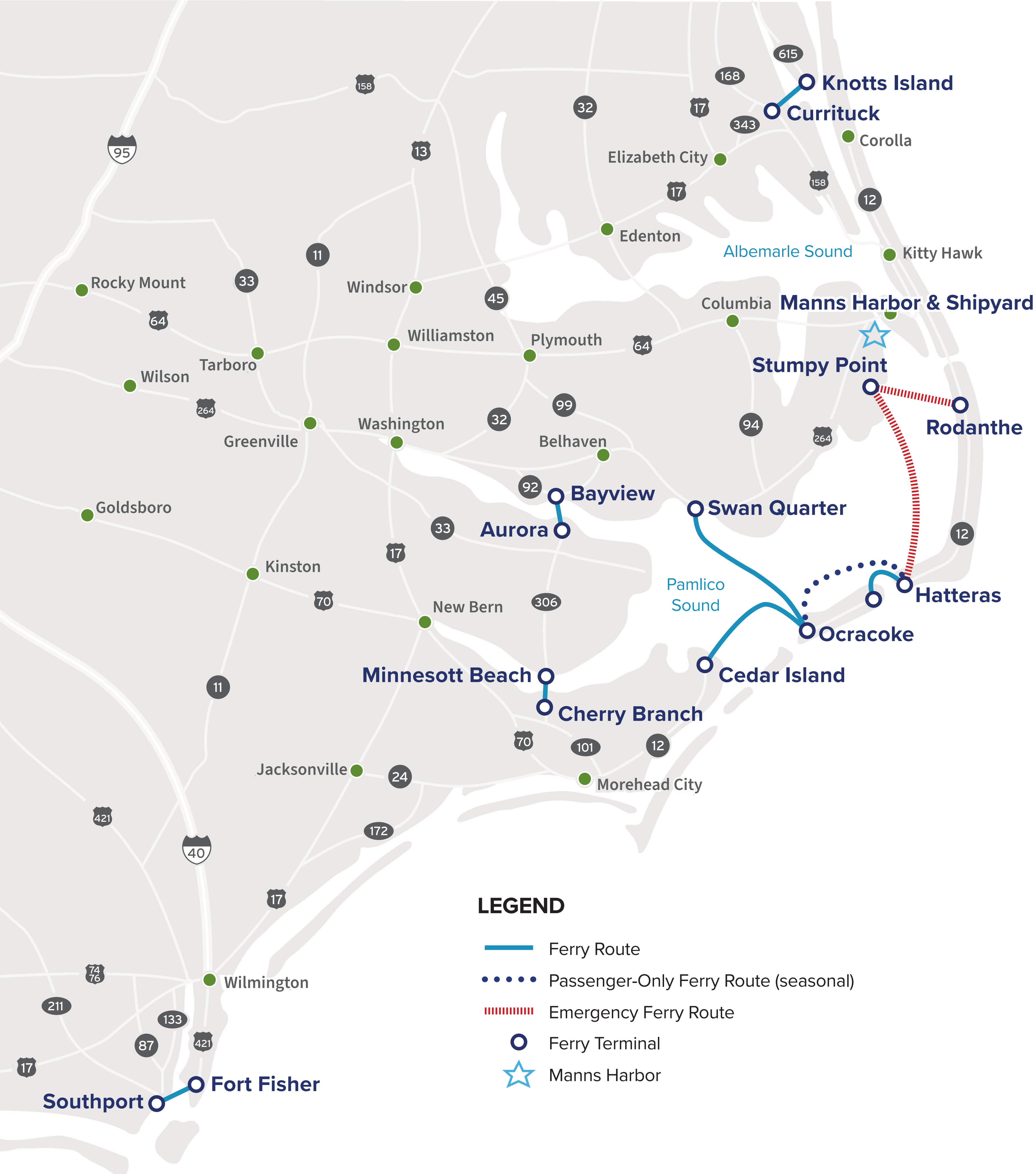
1.47million Annual
Passengers





Ferry Routes Across North Carolina

Routes and Communities Served



Currently Tolled

- *Hatteras-Ocracoke Passenger Ferry*
- *Cedar Island-Ocracoke*
- *Swan Quarter-Ocracoke*
- *Southport-Fort Fisher*



Currently Not Tolled

- *Currituck-Knotts Island*
- *Bayview-Aurora*
- *Hatteras-Ocracoke Vehicle Ferry*
- *Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach*



Who Uses Ferry Service?

Every Route Is Different

Ferry customers include:



Daily Commuters



School-age Children



Island Residents



Small Businesses and Vendors



Military Personnel



Visitors and Tourists

The mix of customers varies significantly by route.

EXAMPLES



Aurora-Bayview

92%

Resident Riders



Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach

80%

Resident Riders



Hatteras-Ocracoke

82%

Visitor Traffic

Because communities use ferries **differently**, implementation decisions may affect routes **differently**.



How the System Works Today

Current Ticketing and Reservations

Tolls are currently collected on the Cedar Island-Ocracoke, Swan Quarter-Ocracoke and Southport-Fort Fisher vehicle ferry routes. Riders also pay a toll on the Hatteras-Ocracoke passenger ferry.

Starting January 1, 2027, tolls will be collected on the Currituck-Knotts Island, Bayview-Aurora, Hatteras-Ocracoke and Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach vehicle ferry routes.

On currently tolled routes, customers may:

- Purchase tickets at terminal ticket booths
- Pay by cash or credit card
- Make reservations on applicable routes online or at terminal ticket booths
- Purchase annual commuter passes
- Purchase vendor passes where available

The existing ticketing and reservation system will help inform future toll collection methods.



CURRENT TICKET PRICES

Southport-Fort Fisher

Pedestrians, Bikes, Motorcycles: \$1-3
Standard Vehicle: \$7
Vehicles Over 20 feet: \$14-28

Cedar Island, Ocracoke, Swan Quarter

Pedestrians, Bikes, Motorcycles: \$1-10
Standard Vehicle: \$15
Vehicles Over 20 feet: \$30-45

Hatteras-Ocracoke Passenger Ferry

Pedestrians: \$7.50 (one way)
Bikes: \$1



Residential Commuter Passes

Coastal area residents who frequently use North Carolina ferries can purchase a prepaid pass that allows them an unlimited number of ferry trips on any route.

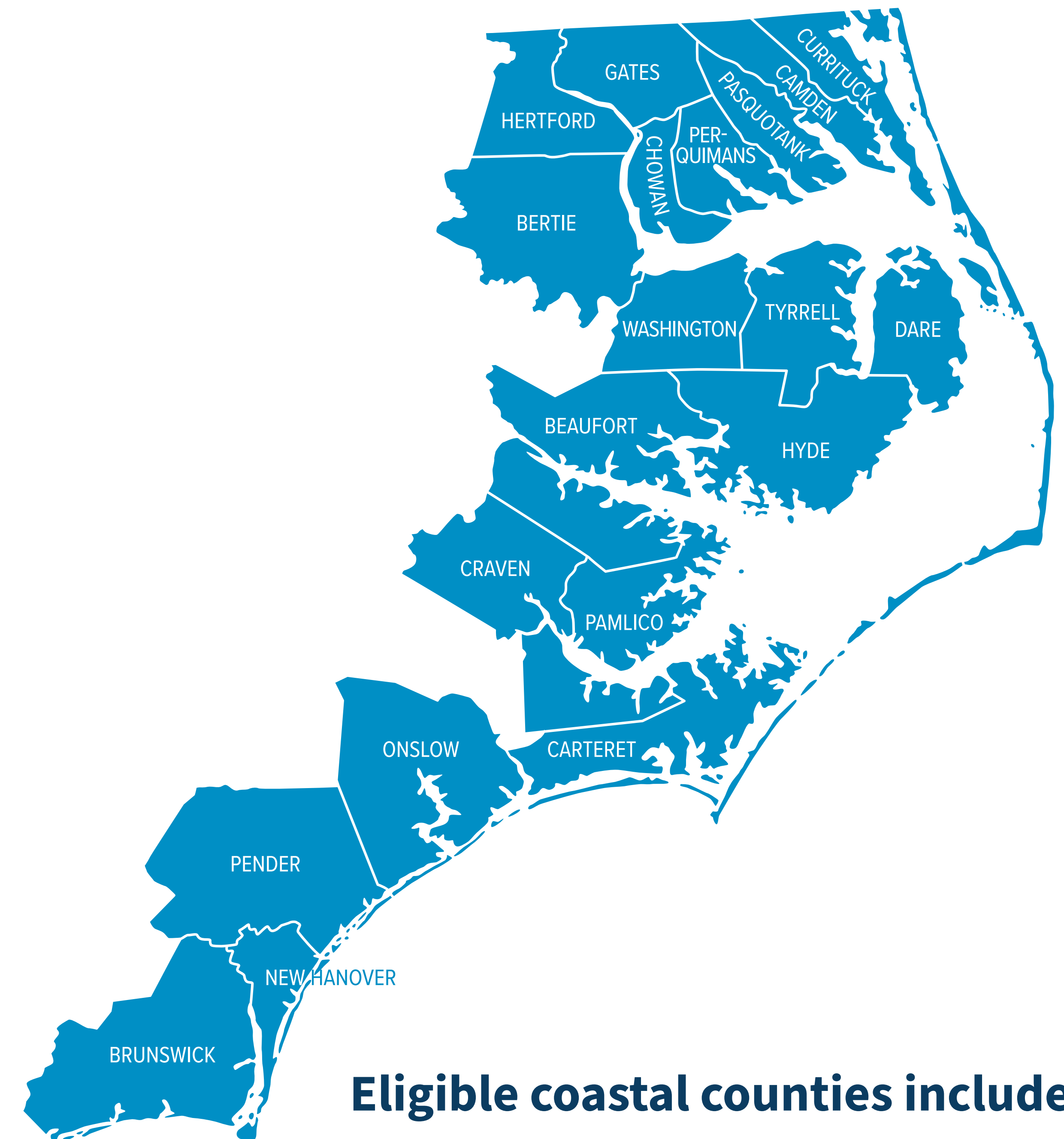
New legislation (G.S. 136-82) identifies specific eligibility requirements and a fixed cost for commuter passes.

DETAILS

- Commuter passes cost \$150 for a single vehicle
- Commuter passes can be purchased in person at any terminal
- Starting later this year, commuter passes will be available to purchase online
- Commuter passes will be affixed to the inside windshield of the traveler's vehicle
- Valid for one (1) year from date of purchase

ELIGIBILITY

Ferry commuter passes are available only to **residents of designated coastal counties and active-duty military personnel.**



Eligible coastal counties include:

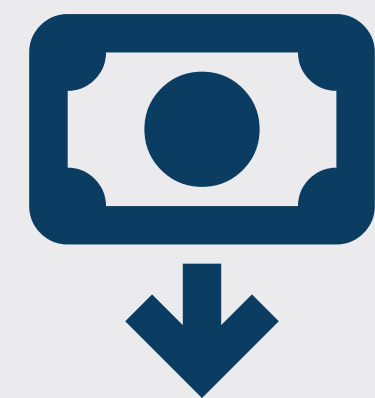
Beaufort, Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington.



What NCDOT Is Evaluating

Building a Future Toll Collection Program

The project team is evaluating:



**Payment
Options**



**Customer
Accounts**



**Toll
Rates**



**Toll Point
Locations**



**Staffing
Needs**



**Pass
Administration**



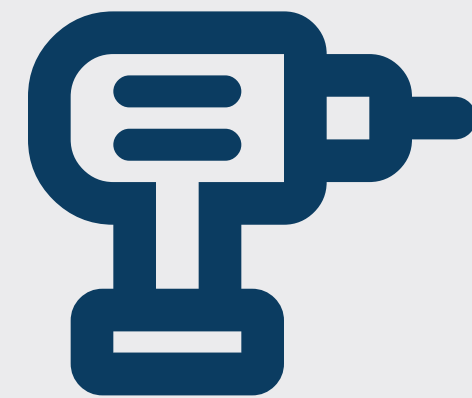
**Customer Support
Processes**



**Reporting
Capabilities**



**Refund and Dispute
Procedures**



**Infrastructure
Improvements**

The goal is to identify solutions that balance **customer convenience**,
operational efficiency, and **cost** within the confines of the law.



Supporting Ferry Operations Into the Future

Vessel Replacement and Long-Term Sustainability

Ferry vessels represent a major long-term investment. By law, revenues collected go to supporting ferry vessel replacements. The Ferry Division continues evaluating future vessel replacement strategies to maintain reliable service across the state.

Topics under review include:



Every dollar spent on tolls goes back into the Ferry program for vessel replacement.



**Fleet Replacement
Schedules**



**Funding
Approaches**



**Long-Term
Infrastructure Needs**



**Operational
Sustainability**





Currituck-Knotts Island

Connects North Carolina's Mainland with Knotts Island

- Operates as both a commuter and tourism route
- 62% of ridership is composed of permanent residents
- Main route for children traveling to and from school each day

In FY 2024-25:



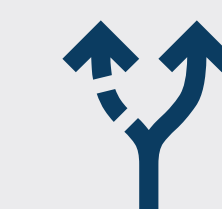
Transported
44,869
passengers



Transported
14,917
vehicles



Ferry
Crossing Time **30**
minutes



Alternative
Route by Car **53**
minutes





Aurora– Bayview

Connects the towns of Aurora and Bayview across the Pamlico River

- Operates primarily as a commuter route
- 92% of ridership is composed of permanent residents
- Serves employees commuting to the Nutrien phosphate facility in Aurora

In FY 2024-25:



Transported
44,665
passengers



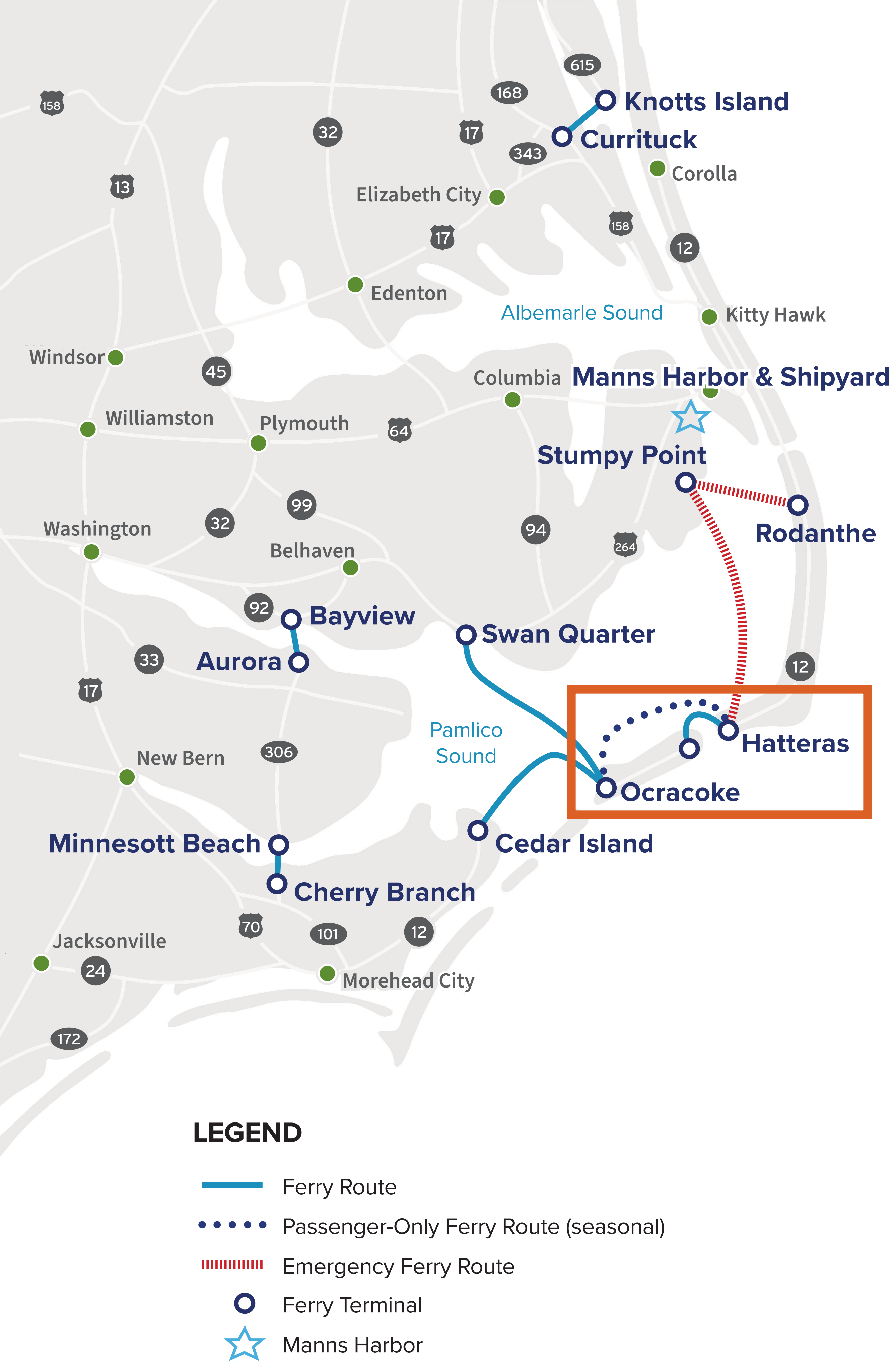
Transported
33,314
vehicles



Ferry
Crossing Time **30**
minutes



Alternative
Route by Car **70**
minutes



Hatteras–Ocracoke Vehicle Ferry

Connects Hatteras Island and Ocracoke Island across the Pamlico Sound

- Operates largely as a route for tourism
- 82% of ridership is composed of visitors

In FY 2024-25:



Transported
434,176
passengers



Transported
189,047
vehicles



Ferry
Crossing Time **70**
minutes



Alternative
Route by Car **None**



Cherry Branch– Minnesott Beach

Connects the towns of Havelock and
Minnesott Beach across the Neuse River

- Operates primarily as a commuter route
- 80% of ridership is composed of permanent residents
- Serves civilians and military personnel commuting to and from Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point

In FY 2024-25:



Transported
332,558
passengers



Transported
206,337
vehicles



Ferry
Crossing Time **20**
minutes



Alternative
Route by Car **62**
minutes

