

Mid-Currituck Bridge Project



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Questions? Comments?

We look forward to your continued participation in this project. You may write or call the project team at any time with questions, comments, or concerns. For project-specific information, please contact:

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Visit the project web site at:
www.ncturnpike.org/projects/Mid_Currituck

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Introduction

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) has narrowed the range of alternatives under consideration for the Mid-Currituck Bridge Project to three alternatives, including one widening existing roads alternative (ER2), a Mid-Currituck Bridge alternative (MCB4), and a combination of a bridge and widening existing road alternative (MCB2). These alternatives will be evaluated in detail in the Mid-Currituck Bridge Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The decision on these detailed study alternatives was based on a rigorous comparison of a wide range of alternatives and involved input from you, the public, environmental resource and regulatory agencies, and local governments. Inside this newsletter, you will find a description of the alternatives and the reasons they were chosen for more detailed study. There will be an opportunity for further comment on the detailed study alternatives when the DEIS is released for public review and comment in 2009.

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NCTA Solicits Public Private Partnership for Mid-Currituck Bridge

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) Board of Directors and the NC General Assembly authorized the NCTA to seek proposals from private sector firms interested in furthering the development of the Mid-Currituck Bridge Project. The proposed Mid-Currituck Bridge will be North Carolina's first venture into the world of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for major transportation infrastructure. The NCTA has chosen to utilize the procurement method known as a "Pre-Development Agreement" for this project. With a Pre-Development Agreement, the NCTA will procure a development partner consisting of investors, designers, and construction contractors. In November 2008, the NCTA will select a pre-development partner.

The services provided by the partner will focus on the evaluation of the bridge alternative during the environmental study process and support the negotiation of a long-term construction, financing and operating and maintenance agreement in the event a bridge alternative is selected as the preferred alternative in the environmental study process.

Project Timeline

Financial Feasibility Study	Completed
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Early 2009
Final Environmental Impact Statement	Mid 2009
Record of Decision	Late 2009
Award Project Contract	Early 2010
Project Open to Traffic	2013

Be sure to check the project web site to read about the results of recent traffic and market surveys conducted in the project area.

www.ncturnpike.org/projects/Mid_Currituck

Alternatives Selected for Detailed Study

The proposed project includes improvements in the Currituck Sound area between US 158 near Barco and NC 12 near Corolla in Currituck County. The purposes of the proposed action are:

- To substantially improve traffic flow on the project area's thoroughfares (NC 12 and US 158);
- To substantially reduce travel time for persons traveling between the Currituck County mainland and the Currituck County Outer Banks; and
- To substantially reduce hurricane clearance time for residents and visitors who use NC 168 and US 158 during a coastal evacuation.

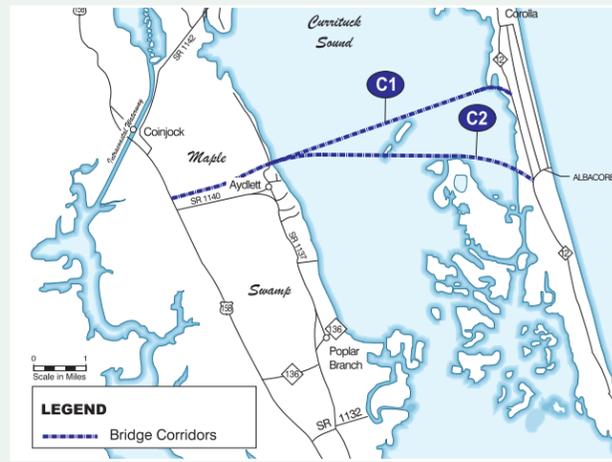
A wide range of alternatives for meeting the project's purpose and need were considered. These included alternatives that improve existing roadways (NC 12 and US 158) without building a new bridge, as well as alternatives that involve building a new Mid-Currituck Bridge with and without improving existing roads. In addition, alternatives included a range of non-highway improvement alternatives, including the no-build alternative, a ferry system across Currituck Sound, expanding transit service, shifting rental unit start times, transportation demand management (TDM), and transportation systems management (TSM). The range of alternatives was presented for public comment at Citizens Informational Workshops in February 2008 and in an April 2008 Alternatives Screening Report. All alternatives were evaluated on their ability to meet the project's purpose and need, their contribution to system efficiency, their potential natural resource and community impacts, estimated cost, and their potential to be funded.

Based on the results of this screening analysis, as well as comments received from the public and environmental resource and regulatory agencies, NCTA will evaluate three alternatives in detail in the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):

	ER2	MCB2	MCB4
Objective:	Achieve maximum transportation benefits using the existing roadways while minimizing impacts to communities along NC 12	Achieve full benefit of Mid-Currituck Bridge and existing road improvements while minimizing impacts to communities along NC 12	Achieve maximum transportation benefits using a Mid-Currituck Bridge and limited existing roadway improvements
Include a Mid-Currituck Bridge?	No	Yes, with two alternative bridge corridors to be assessed (C1 and C2)	Yes, with two alternative bridge corridors to be assessed (C1 and C2)
Extent of US 158 Widening (Wright Memorial Bridge to NC 12)	6-8 lane superstreet*	6-8 lane superstreet*	None
Extent of Additional Outbound Lane for Hurricane Evacuation on US 158^	NC 168 to Wright Memorial Bridge (25 miles)	NC 168 to Mid-Currituck Bridge (5 miles)	NC 168 to Mid-Currituck Bridge plus Wright Memorial Bridge to NC 12 (6.5 miles)
Extent of Three-Lane NC 12 Widening	US 158 in Dare County to just north of Hunt Club Drive in Currituck County	US 158 in Dare County to just north of Hunt Club Drive in Currituck County	None
Extent of Four-Lane NC 12 Widening in Currituck County	From just north of Hunt Club Drive to just north of Albacore Street	From just north of Hunt Club Drive to Mid-Currituck Bridge Intersection	From Seashell Lane to Mid-Currituck Bridge Intersection

* A superstreet is one where entering sidestreet traffic cannot turn left or go straight. Motorists must turn right and utilize regularly spaced U-turn opportunities.
 ^ Options to accomplish this include adding a third northbound lane on US 158 or using the center turn lane as a third northbound evacuation lane.

In addition, two bridge alignments are being considered with both the MCB2 and MCB4 Alternatives – Corridors C1 and C2. On the mainland, C1 and C2 share a single approach corridor, which parallels the north side of an existing power line easement north of Aydlett Road (SR 1140). On the Outer Banks, C1 and C2 have different termini – C2 is in the Albacore Street (SR 1402) area, and C1 is approximately 2 miles north of Albacore Street (SR 1402) at the Corolla Bay Subdivision.



Comment Summaries

In February 2008, Citizens Informational Workshops were held in three locations around the Currituck Sound and more than 550 people attended. The project team presented two alternatives that focused on improving existing roads (ER1 and ER2) and four alternatives that included constructing a new bridge between the Currituck County mainland and Outer Banks with various existing road improvements (MCB1, MCB2, MCB3, and MCB4).

More than 350 comments were received from residents, property owners, employers and local officials. The comments emphasized the need to reduce traffic congestion, improve the ability to evacuate the area in the event of a hurricane or other emergency, and enhance access between the Outer Banks and mainland.

A majority of the comments stated a preference for the bridge alternatives. Many commented that a new bridge would best address the area's transportation needs. Other comments also stated concerns about the bridge alternatives' threats to the area's natural resources and their impact to the Aydlett area on the mainland.

Local government resolutions were passed by Currituck, Dare, and Camden counties, as well as several towns throughout the project area. These resolutions provided nearly unanimous support for the bridge alternatives and urged the dismissal of any alternatives that featured road widening as a primary improvement.

Some comments also requested consideration of bridge corridors both north and south of the current bridge corridor locations being studied further. These had been considered, and NCTA reevaluated them in light of the comments received; however, for reasons noted in the Alternatives Screening Report, these options are not considered feasible. The No-Build, Ferry, and other non-highway improvement alternatives received little support.

