



# Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Preservation Project

Dec. 20, 2023

## FAST FACTS

- Built in 1969, the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge is a 3,000-foot-long steel vertical-lift bridge over the Cape Fear River.
- It is considered functionally obsolete, which means its design is not up to current standards (ex: lane, shoulder widths).
- It is safe and in fair condition; inspected daily.
- The cost to maintain and operate the moveable span structure is about \$500,000 per year.
  - The cost is expected to continue increasing every year.

## PRESERVATION PROJECT

### Details

- The project consists of replacing the existing grid deck and support beams underneath the deck.
- Unlike previous deck replacements, crews must remove and replace the support beams, which if not in place, the bridge would not be safe for drivers.

### Timeline

- NCDOT began alerting WMPO over the summer that the project was needed due to the status of the bridge, and gave a detailed presentation about the project, stating could begin in January, pending material availability.
- On Nov. 30, the \$7.1 million contract was awarded to Southern Road & Bridge LLC.
- This schedule is intended to minimize travel impacts during the busy summer tourism months and hurricane season while addressing the critical need for repairs.
- Temporary lane closures on both sides of the bridge are anticipated to begin Jan. 11.
  - Crews will begin with outside lanes, then switch to inside lanes.

- This will allow crews to safely build a platform and a barrier before work begins.
- Based on material availability, both eastbound lanes (into Wilmington) are anticipated to close Jan. 28 when work is scheduled to begin.
- Once complete with the eastbound lanes, the closure will shift to the westbound side.
  - Crews will not need to remobilize, so the westbound lane closures are expected to be shorter.

### Detour

- Detour routes during eastbound closures: Isabel Holmes Bridge, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and College Road; or I-140.
  - DriveNC.gov will be updated with detour information; the closure and detour also will be reflected on GPS apps.
  - NCDOT will use message boards to alert drivers of the best route.
  - Trucks will not be allowed to use Third Street.

### Next Steps

- NCDOT will provide updates, send press releases and post on social media pages regularly.

### Bridge Replacement Analysis

- WMPO passed a resolution in Feb. 2022 for NCDOT to study all viable options for a bridge replacement project.
- To date, NCDOT has completed a Traffic and Revenue Study and applied for a large federal bridge grant.
- NCDOT is providing WMPO information so they can make the most informed decision on replacing the bridge.
- NCDOT is not advocating for a particular path forward, and per state law, any toll project must be approved by local planning organization.