

CAPE FEAR CROSSING PROJECT

Brunswick and New Hanover Counties

STIP Project Number U-4738



NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO. 2—APRIL 2014—DETAILED STUDY ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVES SELECTED FOR DETAILED STUDY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has selected 12 alternatives for detailed study. These alternatives include 2 alternatives that will upgrade existing US 17, 4 alternatives on new location, and 6 new location and upgrade existing “hybrid” alternatives. These alternatives were selected for their potential to fulfill the purpose of the project while minimizing impacts to the human and natural environment. The Detailed Study Alternatives are shown on the maps included with this newsletter (see page 3). The decision on the alternatives for detailed study was based on a rigorous comparison of a wide range of alternatives and involved input from the public, the environmental resource and regulatory agencies, and local governments.

Prior to selecting the Detailed Study Alternatives, NCDOT reviewed all public comments received from the March 2011 Citizens Informational Workshops and revised and refined the potential route options where feasible. Impacts for the potential route options were calculated for resources such as residential and business relocations, archaeological sites, historic properties, parks, churches, schools, buildings, hazardous materials sites, mitigation sites, floodplains, wetlands, streams, utilities, and threatened and endangered species.

The Cape Fear Crossing Project is being developed following the NEPA/Section 404 Merger Process, which is established to streamline project development and permitting. By following this process, local, state, and federal agency representatives meet to discuss the project and make decisions at major milestones during project development. The purpose of this is to allow for collaborative decision-making in order to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for impacts to the human and natural environment, while meeting the safety and mobility needs of the traveling public.

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Why Is This Project Needed?

The project is needed to address:

- Traffic Capacity Deficiencies
- North Carolina Port Access

What Is the Project's Purpose?

To improve traffic flow and enhance freight movements beginning in the vicinity of US 17 and future I-140 in Brunswick County across the Cape Fear River to US 421 near the Port of Wilmington in southern New Hanover County.

URS
 NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

ATTN: Joanna Rocco
 North Carolina Department of Transportation
 C/O URS Corporation
 1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
 Morrisville, NC 27560

Cape Fear Crossing Project



Project Hotline – Línea Gratuita del Proyecto:
1-800-233-6315 (English/Español)

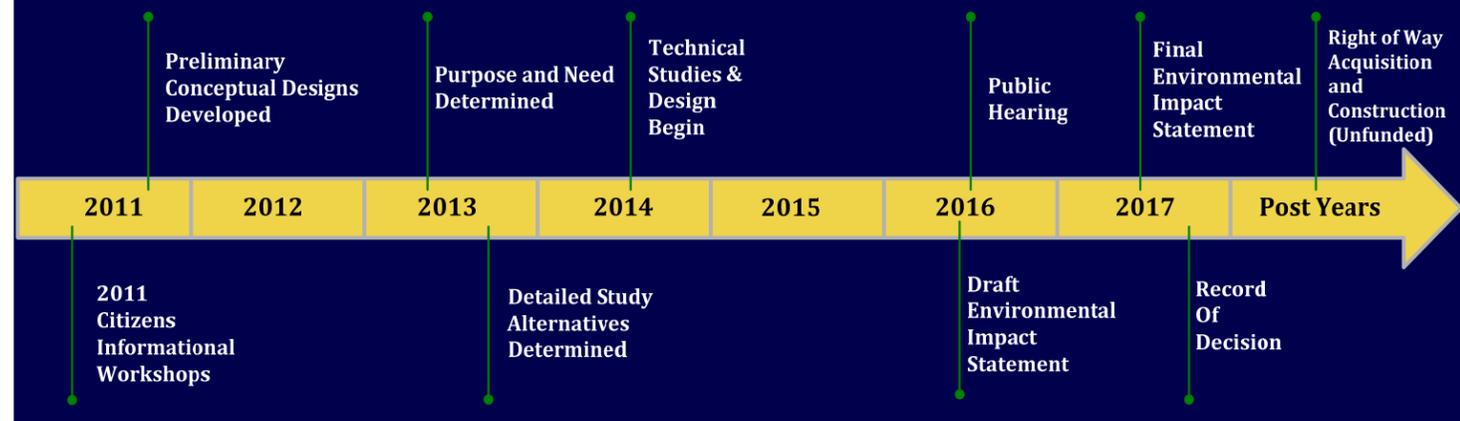
Project Website – Página Web del Proyecto:
<http://www.ncdot.gov/projects/capefear/>

Project Manager—URS Corporation
 Joanna Rocco
 1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
 Morrisville, NC 27560
 capefear@ncdot.gov

Project Manager—NCDOT
 Jennifer Harris, P.E.
 1548 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, NC 27699-1548
 capefear@ncdot.gov

For more information about the project, please visit the project website, or contact Joanna Rocco (URS) using the toll-free hotline. Written correspondence can be provided to Joanna Rocco or Jennifer Harris.

PROJECT TIMELINE



Connecting people and places safely and efficiently, with accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy, health and well-being of North Carolina.

WHERE ARE THE ALTERNATIVES LOCATED?

The 12 alternatives selected for detailed study are shown on the maps on page 3. Descriptions of each alternative are below. All alternatives will include a new bridge crossing of the Cape Fear River. Interchanges are proposed at I-140, US 17, NC 133, River Road, and US 421. For the upgrade existing alternative, and the hybrid alternatives that include upgrading existing US 17 for most of its length, interchanges are proposed at I-140, US 74/76, NC 133, and US 421.

New Location Alternatives (alternatives built on new location and do not use any existing roads):

Alternative B: This alternative begins at I-140 and crosses US 17, travels between the Brunswick Forest and Mallory Creek developments, and crosses the Cape Fear River to terminate at Shipyard Boulevard.

Alternative C: This alternative begins at I-140 and crosses US 17, travels parallel to Wire Road, and crosses the Cape Fear River to terminate at Independence Boulevard.

Alternatives M Avoidance and N Avoidance: These alternatives begin where I-140 ends on US 17, avoiding the Snee Farm/Stoney Creek subdivisions, travel south of Brunswick Forest, and cross the Cape Fear River to terminate at either Independence Boulevard (Alternative M Avoidance) or Shipyard Boulevard (Alternative N Avoidance).

"Hybrid" Alternatives (alternatives that include constructing new location roadway as well as upgrading existing US 17):

Alternative G/Q: These two alternatives begin where I-140 ends on US 17, upgrade existing US 17 for approximately two miles, then continue on new location between the Brunswick Forest and Mallory Creek developments, and cross the Cape Fear River to terminate at Independence Boulevard. Alternative G and Alternative Q follow the same alignment, but Alternative G will be designed as a freeway for its entire length, while Alternative Q will be designed as a standard widening along US 17 and a freeway on its new location portion.

Alternative I/T: These two alternatives begin where I-140 ends on US 17, upgrade existing US 17 for approximately two miles, then continue on new location parallel to Wire Road, and cross the Cape Fear River to terminate at Shipyard Boulevard. Alternative J and Alternative T follow the same alignment, but Alternative J will be designed as a freeway for its entire length, while Alternative T will be designed as a standard widening along US 17 and a freeway on its new location portion.

Alternative V (freeway and standard widening option): This alternative will include upgrading US 17 to the US 17/US 421 interchange, then travel south along Eagle Island on new location to terminate at US 421 just north of the Port of Wilmington. This alternative will have two options: it will be designed as a freeway with service roads and interchanges and as a standard widening with access remaining similar to how it is today.

Upgrade Existing Alternative:

Alternative F/P: These two alternatives include upgrading US 17 from where I-140 ends on US 17, to US 421 in the City of Wilmington. The alternatives will be designed as a freeway (Alternative F) and as a standard widening (Alternative P).

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The next step in the planning process will be to develop engineering designs for the Detailed Study Alternatives, which will include interchanges at the main roads, overpasses at the minor roads, and major service roads to provide access to properties adjacent to the Detailed Study Alternatives. Once the designs have been prepared, multiple technical studies will be prepared to identify the direct and indirect effects each Detailed Study Alternative will have on the human and natural environment. These technical studies include analysis of impacts to the community (socioeconomic impacts, environmental justice, etc.), cultural resources (historic properties and archaeological resources), natural resources (water quality, wetlands, streams, etc.), land use, air quality, and impacts from traffic noise, among others. The outcome of these studies will be summarized in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which will be used to help determine the Preferred Alternative for the project.

Once the Detailed Study Alternative designs and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement have been prepared, both will be available for review by the public and local, state and federal agencies. NCDOT will then hold a Public Hearing. The Public Hearing will include a formal presentation that will give the public the opportunity to ask questions, give formal statements, and comment on the project.

