



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
Department of Transportation

# I-77 South Express Lanes

Industry Forum

September 2, 2025

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina

# Welcome & Opening Remarks

---

**Joey Hopkins**

Secretary

**Chris Peoples**

Chief Operating Officer

## Project Team



**Ashurst**

Legal Advisor

**HNTB**

Program Manager /  
Commercial Advisor

**KPMG**

Financial Advisor

**RS&H**

Design / Environmental Advisor



**Stantec**

Traffic & Revenue Advisor

## North Carolina P3 & Tolling Legislative Authority

- NCDOT is authorized to enter into agreements with private entities to design, build, finance, operate and maintain transportation infrastructure projects, and to finance these projects through tolls and other/alternative financing methods authorized by law.
- NCDOT is currently allowed six P3 projects.
  - Three project slots are filled: I-77 North Express Lanes, Mid-Currituck Bridge, I-77 South Express Lanes.
- NCDOT may assign its power to fix, revise, charge and collect tolls to a private entity through a P3 contract.
- NCDOT may act as a conduit issuer for private activity bonds to the extent the bonds do not constitute a debt obligation of the State.
- Toll projects in NC must be approved by the local planning organization.



[N.C.G.S § 136-18: Powers of Department of Transportation](#)

[N.C.G.S § 136 Article 6H: Public Toll Roads and Bridges](#)

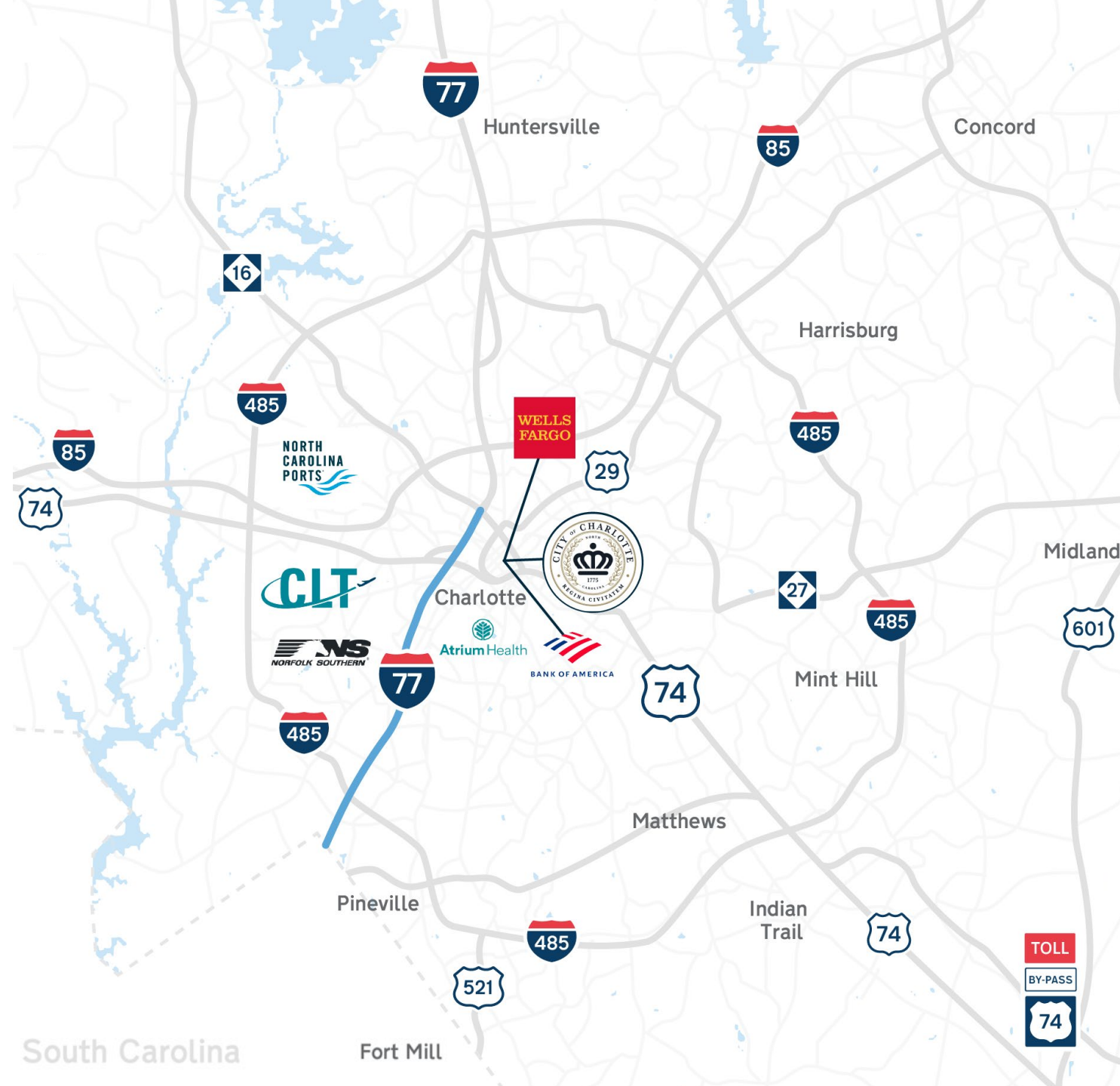
## Charlotte Region Economic Indicators

- 14 counties
- Population: 2.9 million
  - 20% population growth since 2010
  - Projected population growth of 12% by 2030
  - Projected population of 4.3 million by 2050
- Gross regional product: \$220 billion
  - 1.6 million total jobs
  - 16% labor force growth since 2010
  - 3.9% unemployment rate
- The Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) is one of the top 10 most connected airports in the world



## I-77 Corridor

- I-77 is the major north-south interstate in the Charlotte region and serves as the main gateway to Uptown Charlotte.
- I-77 corridor services central, western NC and southern US for movement of people and goods.
- I-77 is at or approaching capacity and is anticipated to operate over capacity through the design year (2050).
- Crash rates for I-77 South are 2.5x higher than the statewide average for urban interstates.

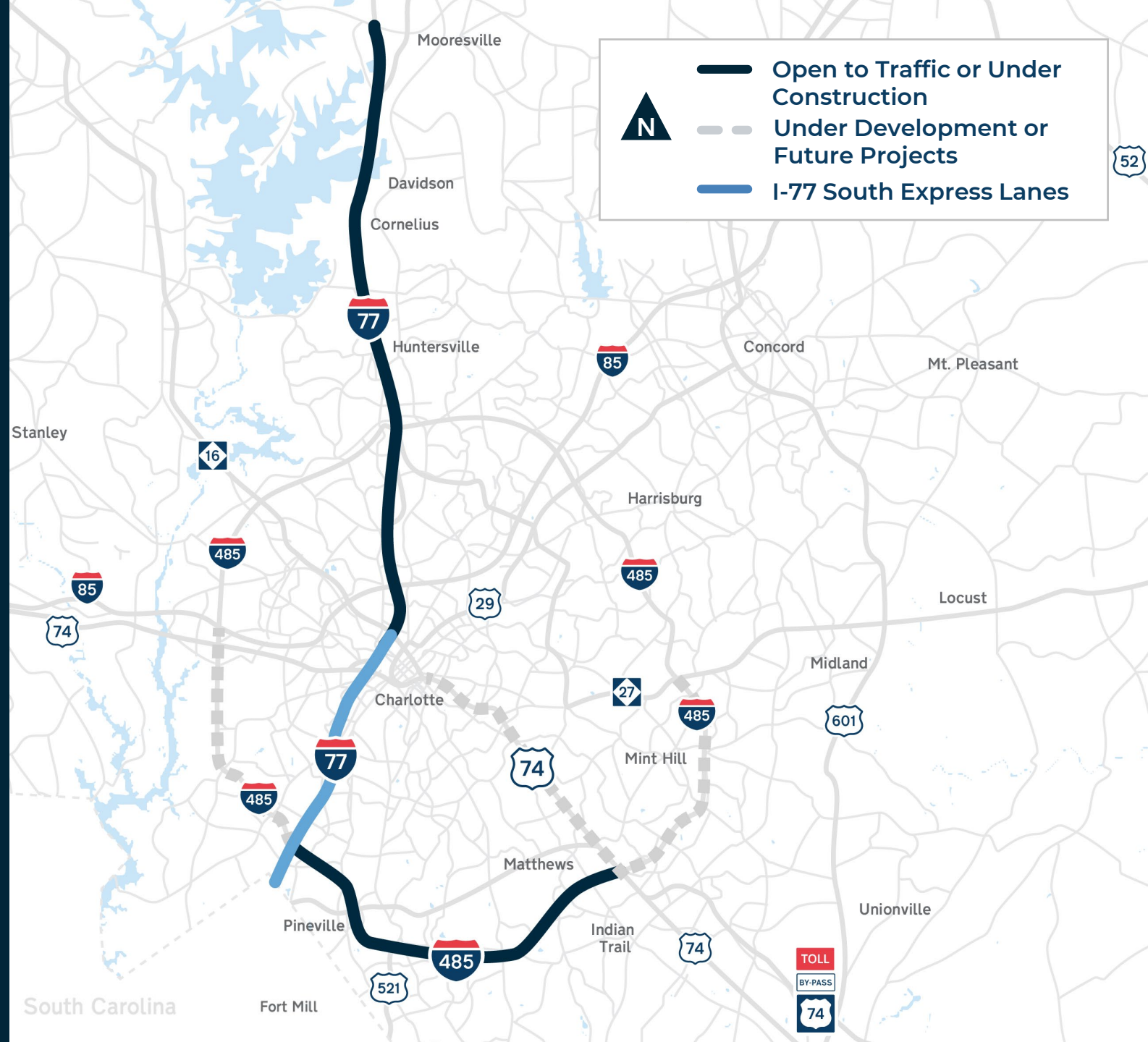




# Charlotte Express Lanes Network

## Fast Lanes Study

- Initiated in 2007 and was a joint effort of the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO), City of Charlotte, NCDOT and SCDOT.
- Identified a network of express lanes including the I-77, I-485 and U.S. 74 corridors.
- In 2010, CRTPO adopted a resolution supporting the Fast Lanes Study.



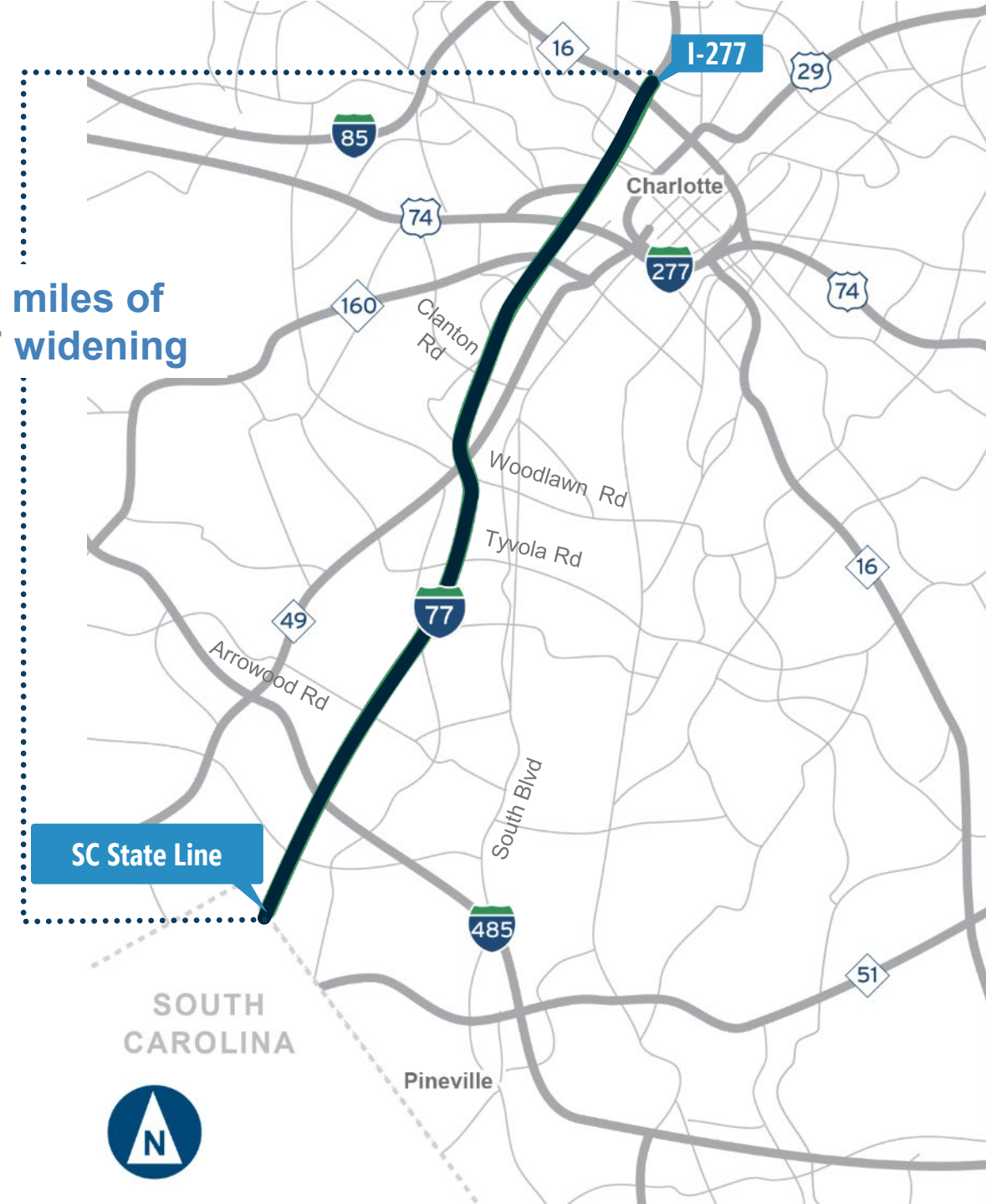
## Project Overview

- Last widened in 1990s, from four-lanes to six-lanes.
- STIP Project I-5718<sup>1</sup>:
  - The addition of express lanes or general purpose and express lanes.
  - Reconstruction of interchanges and non-interchange bridges.
  - Addition of access points and direct connectors to the express lanes.
- Total Project Cost (YOE<sup>2</sup>): \$3.2 billion
- Environmental Assessment is ongoing.
  - FONSI anticipated in late 2026/early 2027.

(1) Per state law, NCGS §136-89.183(a)(2), toll projects in North Carolina must be requested/approved by the local planning organization

(2) Year-of-expenditure

**11 miles of  
I-77 widening**





## Project Goals

Increase driver  
safety

Accelerate project  
delivery

Optimize state /  
regional / local  
public funding  
contribution

Improve travel  
time reliability  
and manage  
congestion

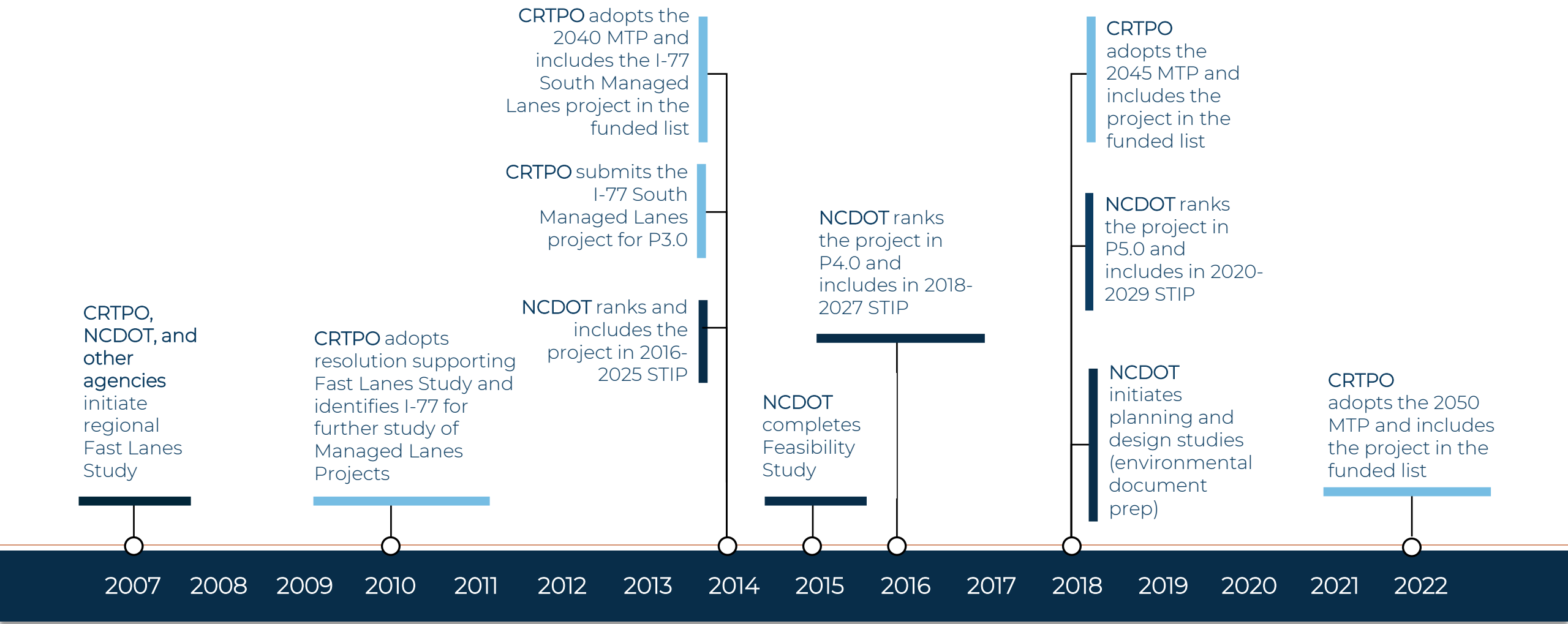
Prepare the  
corridor for future  
growth

Optimize toll cost  
/ benefits

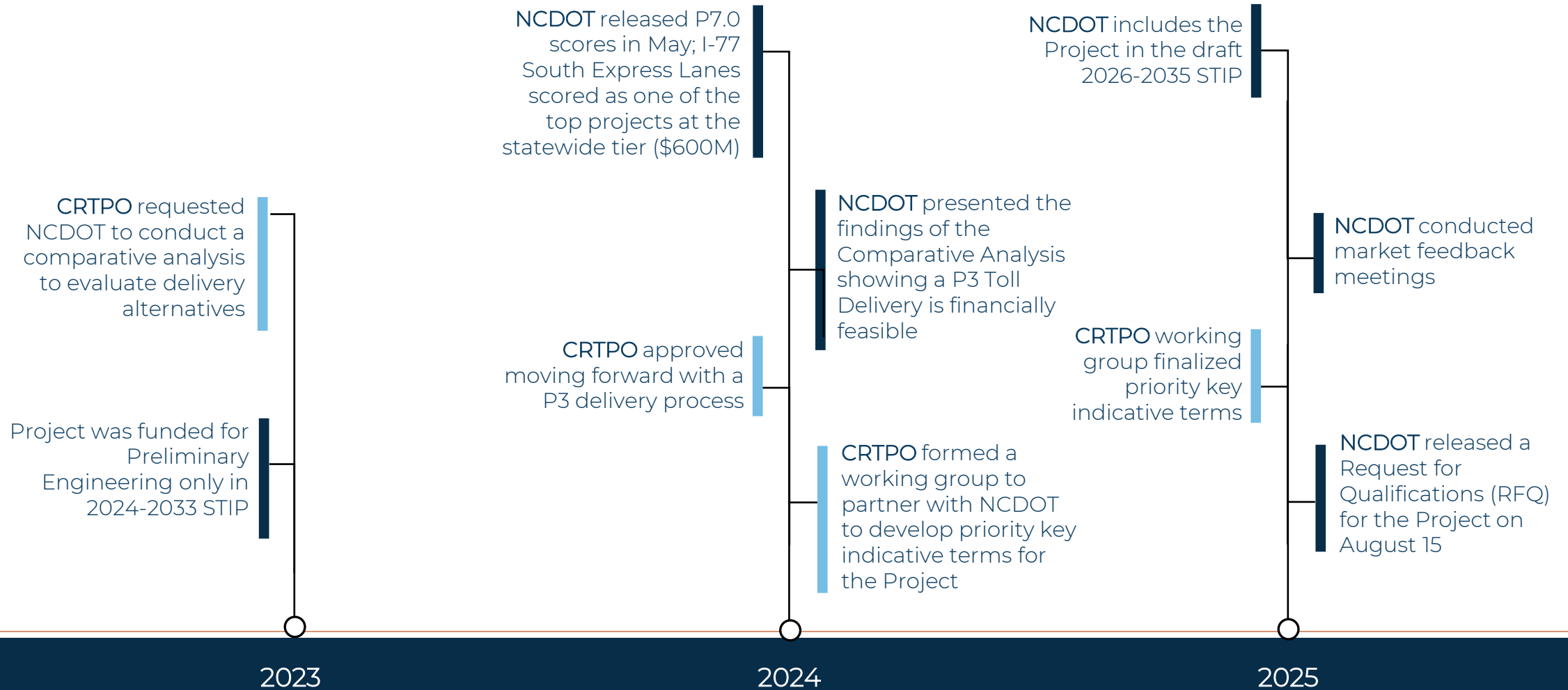
Engage the  
community &  
minimize  
construction  
impacts on  
residents & local  
business

Enhance economic  
competitiveness of  
the region

# Key Milestones

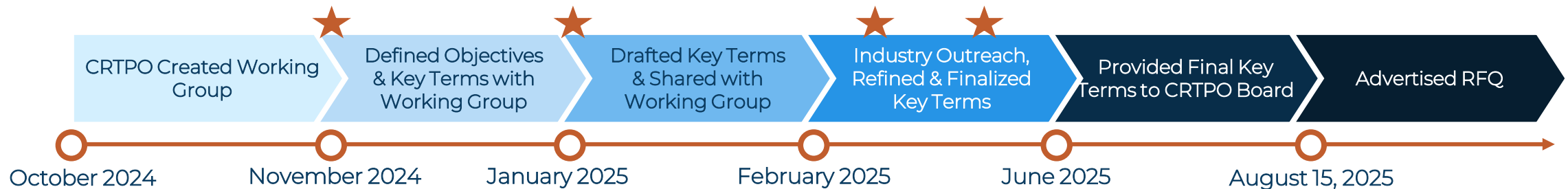


## Key Milestones



## CRTPO Working Group Overview

- In October 2024, CRTPO requested NCDOT to move forward with a P3 delivery process for the I-77 South Express Lanes.
- CRTPO created a working group to partner with NCDOT to develop project objectives and priorities to inform indicative terms.

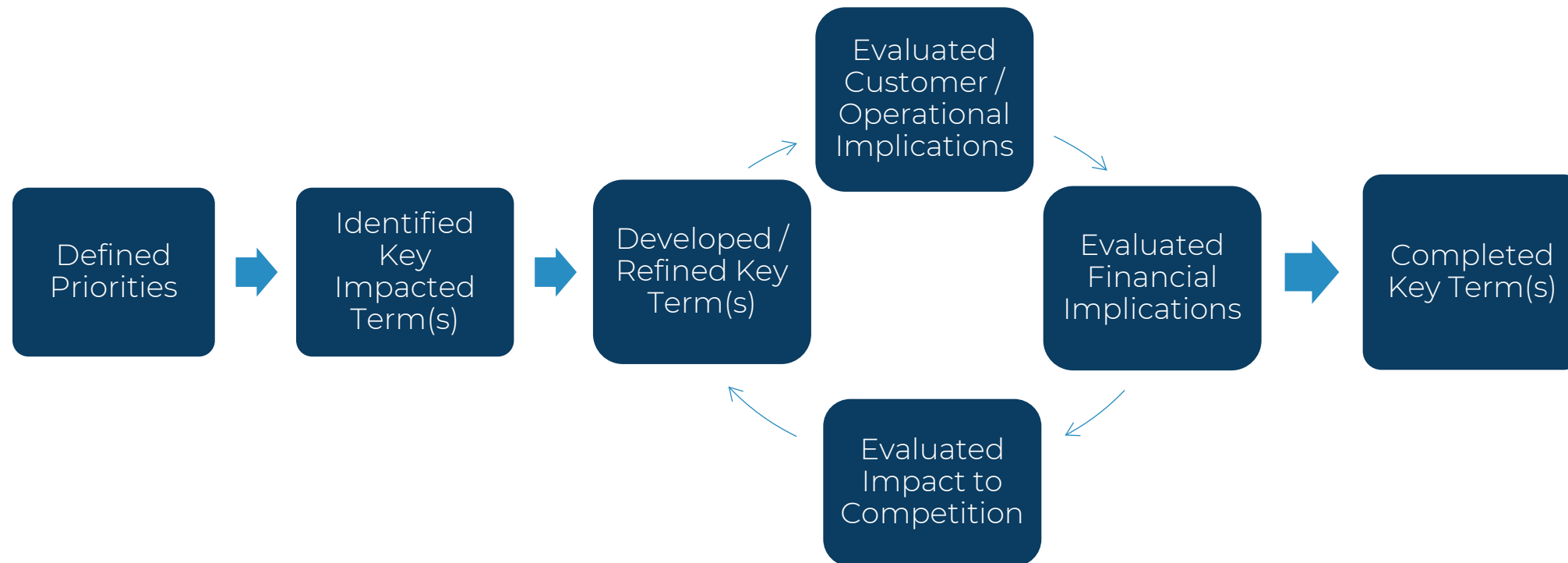


★ = Working Group Meeting

## CRTPO Working Group Key Term Development Process

Iterative process requiring coordination between NCDOT, CRTPO and the market.

- Process designed to ensure effective solution that leads to a viable project.




## CRTPO Priority Key Terms


- 1 Toll Rates  
(Regime to encourage Express Lane Utilization)
- 2 Capacity Expansions
- 3 Operations Review and Amendment
- 4 HOV 3+
- 5 Large Commercial Vehicles
- 6 Toll Discount for Low-Income Residents
- 7 Markings/Lighting on Express Lanes Facility
- 8 Corridor Access for Emergency Vehicles
- 9 Transit Usage of Express Lanes for Free
- 10 Performance Reporting
- 11 Transparent Toll Rates
- 12 Toll Rates During Emergency Declarations
- 13 Real-Time Road Condition Updates for the Express Lanes
- 14 Real-Time Transit Information System for the Express Lanes
- 15 DBE Outreach

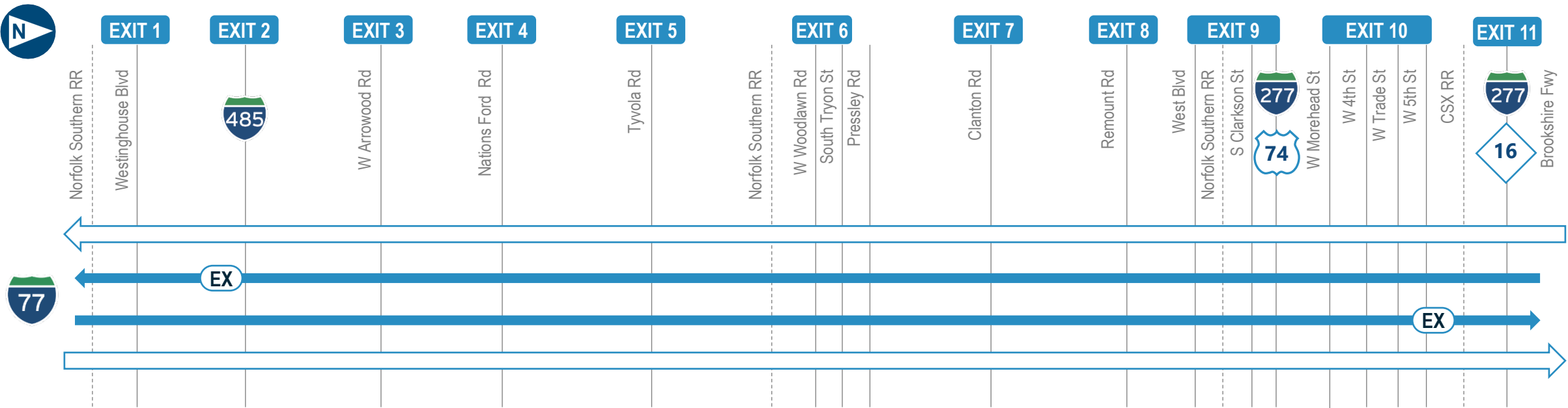


# Proposed Improvements

LEGEND

 General Purpose Lanes

 New Express Lanes



Rebuild Interchanges



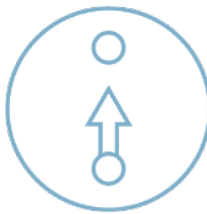
Rebuild Non-Interchange Bridges



Add Express Lanes or  
General Purpose + Express Lanes

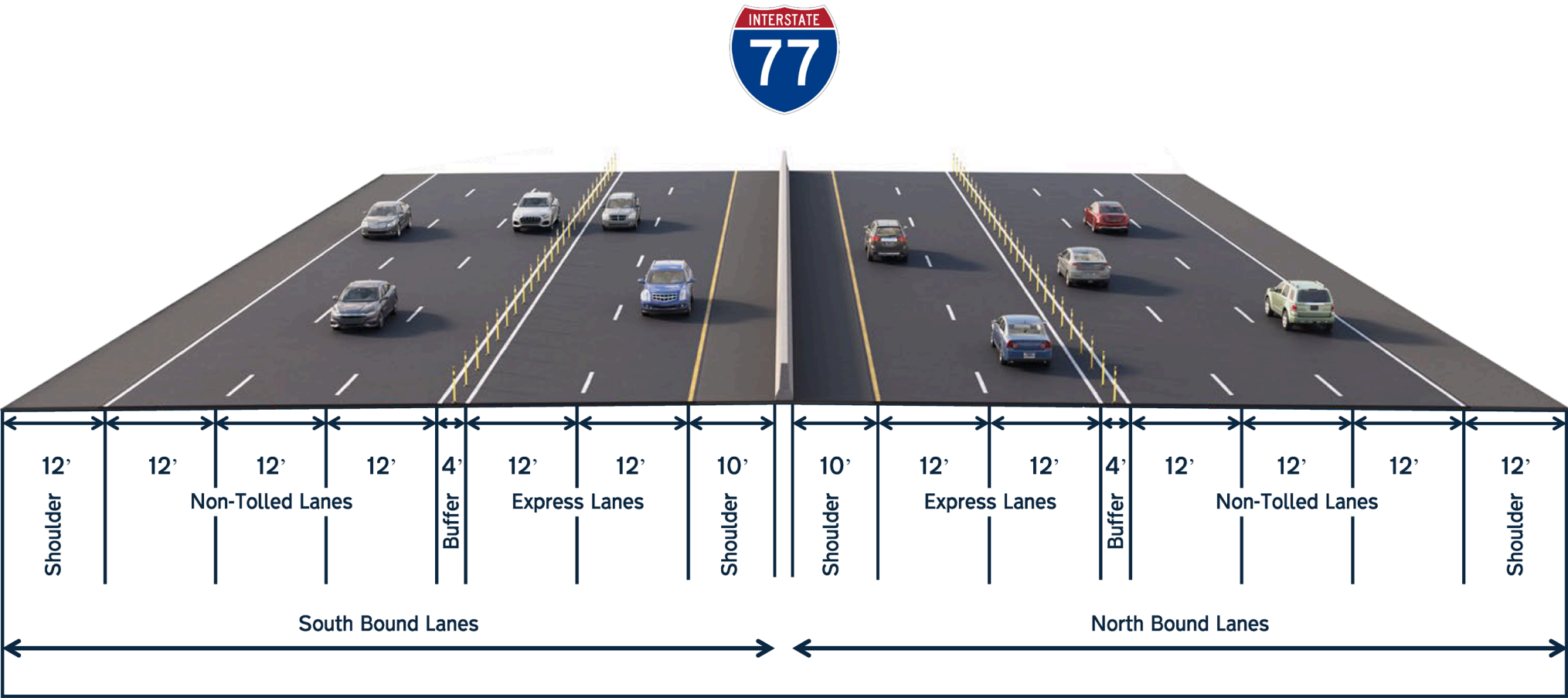


Add Access Points



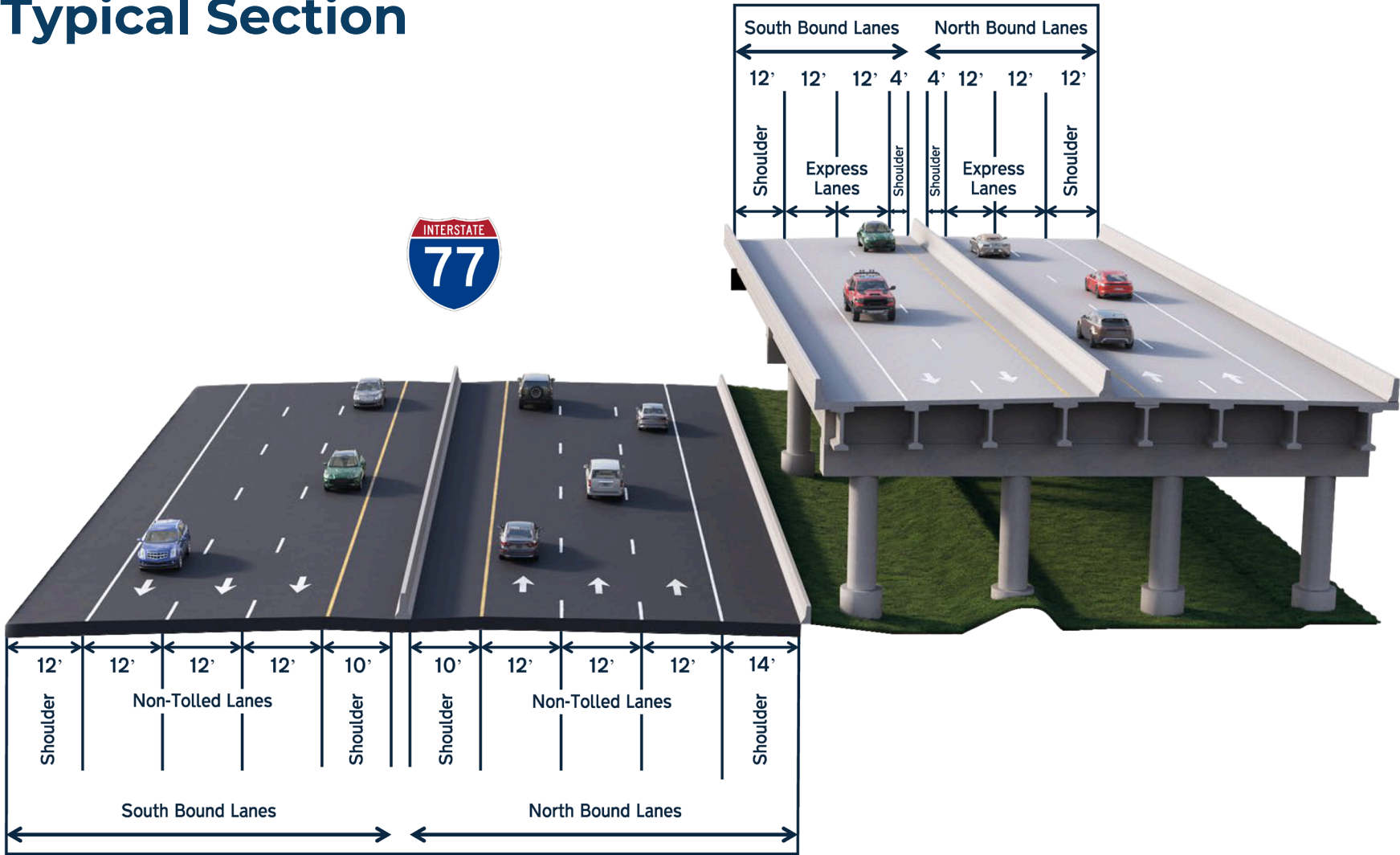
Add Direct Connectors

# At-Grade Typical Section



Artistic rendering for illustrative purposes

# Elevated Typical Section



Artistic rendering for illustrative purposes

# Project Responsibilities

NCDOT	Developer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contracting Entity</li><li>Project Sponsor and Manager</li><li>Tolling Authority</li><li>Commercial Back Office System</li><li>Customer Service Operations</li><li>Collections Processing and Enforcement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Design</li><li>Construction</li><li>Financing</li><li>Roadway O&amp;M</li><li>Roadside Toll Collection System</li><li>Operational Back Office System</li></ul>

- Construction Quality Approach: Owner verification

## Risk Allocation

- Contract will allocate risk in line with current market precedent around relief and compensation events (including mitigation and risk share) and other key risk topics such as:
  - Permitting and NEPA reevaluation
  - Submittals
  - Right-of-way acquisitions
  - Geotech
  - Utility coordination and relocation
  - Rail coordination
  - Hazmat
  - Construction materials cost indexation
  - Lane closures
  - Non-compliance regime
- Toll collection risk is anticipated to be taken by NCDOT.
- Indicative term sheet including high level risk positions will be provided on September 5.

## O&M Responsibility

### Construction

- The Developer will be responsible for operating and maintaining all lanes during Construction.

### Operations

- The Developer will be responsible for operating and maintaining the express lanes except for snow and ice removal.
- The Developer will be responsible for operating and maintaining the general-purpose lanes in exchange for an additional annual O&M fee.
  - After the first five years, NCDOT has the option to take back O&M responsibility on the general-purpose lanes.
  - NCDOT will retain responsibility for major maintenance on the general-purpose lanes.



## Tolling Approach

- The North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA), a business unit of NCDOT, will provide the commercial back office system, customer service and billing.
- The Developer back office system will transmit transactions to NCTA's back office system and be compensated the transponder rate.



# Tolling Approach

## Developer Responsibilities

Roadside Toll  
Collection  
System (RTCS)



Operational  
Back Office  
System (OBO)



- Dynamic tolling
- Transaction pricing
- Image processing
- Traffic monitoring
- OBO system interface to NCDOT CBO system



## NCTA Vendor Responsibilities

Commercial  
Back Office  
System (CBO)



Customer  
Service Center  
(CSC)



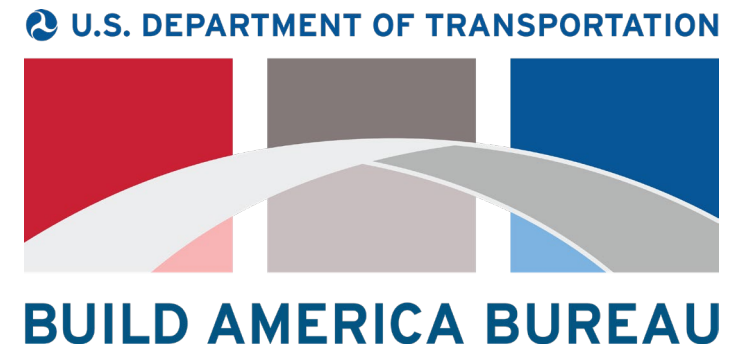
- Revenue management
- Financial reconciliation & reporting
- Customer account management & support
- Collections & customer notifications
- System integration

# Tolling Policies

Vehicle Access and Tolling Information
<p><b>Toll-Exempt Vehicles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emergency response vehicles</li><li>• Declared HOV 3+ vehicles</li><li>• Transit vehicles (including buses and micro transit)</li><li>• Motorcycles</li></ul>
<p><b>Toll Eligible Vehicles:</b> passenger cars and large commercial vehicles (up to FHWA Class 10)</p>
<p><b>Toll Discounts:</b> developer will be required to implement and administer a discount program to provide eligible low-income users with a number of free or discounted trips on the express lanes.</p>
<p><b>Toll Rate Setting Methodology:</b> includes two levels of toll rate caps to better align toll rates with express lanes utilization.</p>

## Financing Considerations

- Developer will be responsible for structuring and securing non-recourse financing to support upfront construction.
  - Could include Developer equity and debt.
- NCDOT, in coordination with the USDOT Build America Bureau, plans to pursue:
  - A TIFIA loan which would be made available to the Developer, and
  - A Private Activity Bond (PABs) allocation.
- Proposers must provide financing commitments with compliant proposals and will be responsible for closing on the commitments at Financial Close.



# RFQ Evaluation Criteria & Additional Items

Technical Qualifications	Financial Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technical / Project Delivery Experience of Equity &amp; Major Non-Equity Members</li><li>• Experience of Key Technical Personnel</li><li>• Management Approach &amp; Team Structure</li><li>• Stakeholder Experience &amp; Engagement</li><li>• Project Delivery Narrative</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financing Experience of the Equity Member(s)</li><li>• Equity Member(s) Investment Track Record</li><li>• Experience of Project Finance Manager</li><li>• Project Financing Narrative</li></ul>

- Shortlisted Teams: three to four
- Payment for Work Product: not to exceed \$12.5 million
- Payment & Performance Security: targeting 30%

## Procurement Website & Schedule

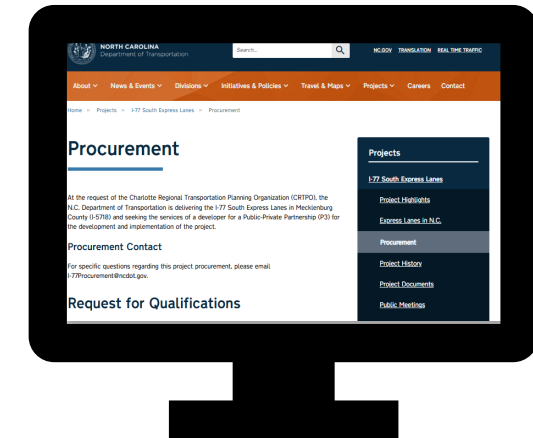
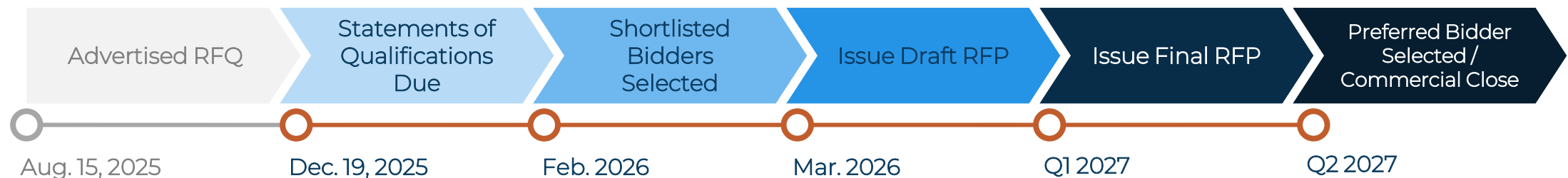
### Procurement Website:

[ncdot.gov/projects/i-77-south-express-lanes/Pages/i-77-south-procurement](https://ncdot.gov/projects/i-77-south-express-lanes/Pages/i-77-south-procurement)

### Materials to be posted on procurement website:

- Link to access RFQ and related documents:
  - Reference Information Documents
  - Responses to Questions Received
  - Addendums
- Shortlist Announcement

### Schedule:





# Closing Remarks

---

**Patrick Norman**

Chief Engineer



[ncdot.gov/projects/i-77-south-express-lanes](https://ncdot.gov/projects/i-77-south-express-lanes)