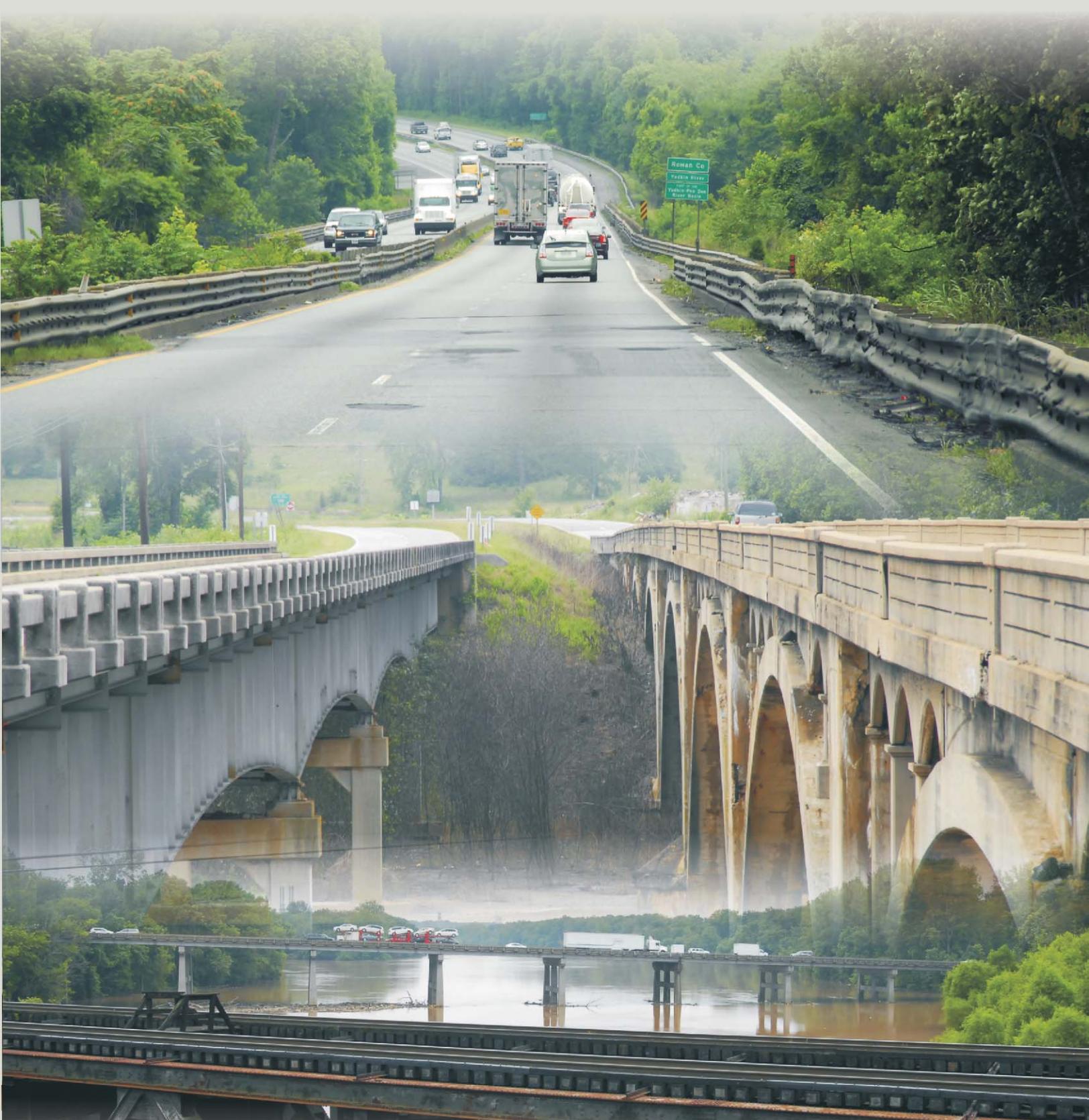


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
I-85 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT and YADKIN RIVER CROSSING PROJECT



Take a virtual tour of this project at
www.ncdot.gov/recovery/i85corridor





PROJECT QUICK FACTS

Project Details

* Will upgrade 6.8 miles of I-85 in Davidson and Rowan counties, including widening from four to eight lanes, realigning the roadway to eliminate sharp curves and improving interchanges.

Will replace three major deteriorating bridges over the Yadkin River, including the one on I-85, to improve mobility and safety.

* Will also complete rail improvements in vicinity of I-85 to increase track speed by 45 percent and accommodate future rail needs, including the implementation of high-speed rail and the addition of new freight tracks.

* Estimated project cost is more than \$300 million. Expected to take three years to complete under two design-build contracts.

* Has potential to create or sustain more than 7,000 jobs. Both Rowan and Davidson counties qualify as economically distressed areas under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965.

I-85

I-85 is the most direct and heavily traveled route between Richmond and Atlanta.

* The 6.8-mile stretch of I-85 included in the project currently carries nearly 70,000 vehicles per day.

* Daily traffic counts are projected to increase to 144,000 by 2030.

* Commercial trucks represent about 26 percent of the traffic along this stretch.

* The total crash rate for this stretch of I-85 is about 77 percent higher than the average crash rate for comparable roadways across the state while the fatal crash rate is 80 percent higher. The goal of this project is to reduce both crash rates by 75 percent.

* I-85 has already been widened north and south of the proposed improvement project. Widening and improving this stretch will alleviate bottlenecks that occur between adjoining sections and improve traffic flow along the entire corridor.

Yadkin River Bridge

* Constructed in 1955 on I-85 at the Rowan/Davidson County line.

* Only interstate crossing of Yadkin River between Charlotte and Greensboro.

* Has sufficiency rating of 33.9 on a 100-point scale.

* Rated in poor condition and classified as structurally deficient (having elements that need to be monitored and/or repaired) and functionally obsolete (outdated in design).

Has remained in operation due to ongoing maintenance work, but if not replaced in the near future, a multi-million dollar rehabilitation would be required to keep it open to traffic.

* Closing the bridge would impact mobility, disrupt interstate commerce, impair emergency response and inhibit regional economic development.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The I-85 Corridor Improvement Project includes comprehensive upgrades to the highway, bridge and rail infrastructure located along a vital stretch of I-85 in North Carolina's Triad region. It plays a critical role in not only addressing current transportation needs, but also in meeting the travel demands of the future.

Highway Improvements

The project includes widening a 6.8-mile section of I-85 from four to eight lanes from north of Long Ferry Road (Exit 81) in Rowan County to U.S. 29-52-70/I-85 Business (Exit 87) in Davidson County. Interchanges throughout this portion of I-85 will be improved to aid traffic flow and reduce driver confusion, and the

interstate will be shifted east to eliminate sharp curves on either side of the existing bridge over the Yadkin River.

Bridge Improvements

A total of nine bridges and culverts will be replaced, including the bridge that carries I-85 over the Yadkin River. The current bridge will be replaced by two parallel bridges that will span not only the Yadkin River, but also the North Carolina Railroad tracks located north of the river. The new bridges will address concerns with the existing Yadkin River bridge, including its narrow shoulders and outdated design.

The project also includes replacing the parallel bridges on U.S. 29/70 North and South with a single two-

lane structure. NCDOT is currently working with Davidson County to reach an agreement regarding preservation of the historic Wilcox Bridge on U.S. 29/70 South.

Rail Improvements

The project encompasses a number of rail improvements aimed at increasing track speed and capacity for both passenger and freight trains, including realignment of the existing North Carolina Railroad tracks that cross under I-85 to remove a sharp curve.

Replacing the dual parallel bridges over the tracks will also facilitate the future implementation of high-speed rail, an initiative to increase train speeds to make traveling by rail a competitive alternative to flying or driving.

A Critical Link

The I-85 Corridor Improvement Project will complete a comprehensive overhaul of a critical stretch of I-85 in North Carolina's Triad Region, including replacement of the narrow and outdated Yadkin River Bridge. One of the Southeast's most heavily traveled highways, I-85 provides vital connections to population and business centers along the East Coast.



The cost of the project, including all highway, bridge and rail components, is expected to exceed \$300 million.

NCDOT plans to complete the I-85 Corridor Improvement Project under two design-build contracts, which allow project teams of designers and contractors to simultaneously conduct design and construction to expedite completion. Once these contracts are in place, NCDOT expects the project will take about three years to complete. The project cost is estimated at more than \$300 million.

NCDOT officials are completing all preliminary steps needed to award the design-build contracts for the project by the end of 2009, subject

to the availability of funding. Department staff continues to re-evaluate all aspects of the project to ensure that it will be completed as economically as possible while achieving its overarching goals of improving safety and mobility along the route.

NCDOT has worked closely with local stakeholders to complete agreements pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. The department continues to work with Davidson County in securing an agreement to preserve the historic concrete arch bridge on U.S. 29/70 over the Yadkin River.



Looking North on I-85 at beginning of project area, near Long Ferry Road (Exit 81).





PROJECT PURPOSE

This project will improve safety and mobility across multiple modes of transportation along the I-85 corridor, as well as support continued economic development and commerce activities.

Safety

Over the recent three-year period ending December 31, 2008, 564 crashes were reported along this stretch of I-85. The total crash rate is about 77 percent higher than the average crash rate for comparable roadways across the state.

Traffic currently approaches the I-85 bridge over the Yadkin River on a sharp curve at high speed. To correct this issue, the project includes shifting the road east to provide a better transition on and off the new bridge over the Yadkin River. The new bridge will also address other safety issues, including the narrow shoulders and outdated design of the current bridge. Interchanges throughout this stretch will be improved to aid traffic flow and reduce driver confusion.

Bridge Condition

The I-85 Yadkin River bridge was constructed in 1955. It has a sufficiency rating of 33.9 on a 100-point scale, is rated in poor condition and classified as structurally deficient (having elements that need to be monitored and/or repaired) and functionally obsolete (outdated in design). Along with the I-85 bridge, both bridges carrying U.S. 29/70 over the Yadkin River are rated in poor condition and classified as structurally deficient.

Mobility

I-85 is the most direct and heavily traveled route between Richmond and Atlanta, and it plays a central role in regional, statewide and interstate mobility. It is a critical north-south corridor along the East Coast and provides strategic connections to other interstate routes including I-95, I-77 and I-26. This portion of I-85, including the bridge over the Yadkin River,

currently carries nearly 70,000 vehicles per day, with daily traffic counts projected to increase to 144,000 by 2030. Trucks represent an unusually high percentage, about 26 percent, of the traffic along this stretch.

The proposed project will relieve congestion and improve traffic flow along I-85 while providing access and connectivity for area residents and businesses. Mobility also will be improved with the removal and reconstruction of interchanges and service roads.

Emergency Management

The Yadkin River bridge is one of just a few major crossings of the Yadkin River in this region of the state, and the only interstate crossing of the river between the Charlotte Metro Region and the Winston-Salem/Greensboro Triad Region. In the event of an emergency evacuation or matter of national security, I-85 is critical to providing access and moving people to safety.

Now, more than ever, is the time to complete the I-85 Corridor Improvement Project. Faced with declining revenues and increasing costs, NCDOT has not been able to afford this more than \$300 million project and continues to seek funding to help make it a reality.

PROJECT PURPOSE CONTINUED

Continuity

I-85 has already been widened north and south of the proposed improvement project, and its completion would alleviate bottlenecks that occur between adjoining sections. With eight lanes to the south and six lanes to the north, this 6.8-mile four-lane section of I-85 hampers traffic flow and triggers significant traffic disruptions anytime an accident occurs or when highway and bridge maintenance work needs to be performed.

Commerce

The presence of a high-quality transportation infrastructure, including convenient access to major highway corridors and reliable travel time, is important to businesses and plays a critical role in attracting and maintaining economic opportunities.

If the project is not completed and the I-85 bridge over the Yadkin River is closed to traffic for any reason, it would result in significant disruption of commerce and tourism industries in North Carolina and along the East Coast. The only existing alternative to I-85 through this area is U.S. 29/70, a four-lane route that runs through the Town of Spencer and downtown Salisbury.

This stretch of I-85 is located in Davidson and Rowan counties, both of which have experienced significant increases in unemployment rates due to traditional manufacturing job losses over the past few years and qualify as economically distressed

areas under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965.

NCDOT is ready to advertise the design-build contracts for this project as soon as funding becomes available, immediately creating jobs in the road and bridge construction industries as well as opportunities for private engineering firms.

According to data from the N.C. Department of Commerce, the project has the potential to create or sustain more than 7,000 jobs, and a cost/benefit analysis of the project indicates that the benefits of the project would be about 12 to 17 times its cost. It is expected to increase the nation's economic output by about \$1 billion and raise disposable income in the state by about \$250 million during the construction period alone.

Rail

The rail improvements included in this project are an important part of ongoing efforts to improve both passenger and freight rail throughout the Southeast. The implementation of high-speed rail lines remains a national priority as highway congestion continues to grow and emphasis is placed on finding cost- and fuel-efficient travel alternatives.

A review by the U.S. Department of Transportation concluded that the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor, which would run along I-85, would produce more revenue than any other proposed corridor, with each dollar spent to build and operate it generating \$2.54 in public benefit. It is also the only proposed corridor that would potentially

cover its operational costs exclusively through fare revenue.

Rising Costs

NCDOT has experienced rapid inflation in construction costs, 80 percent since 2002. This inflation limits how far money will go and drives up overall project cost. The current economic climate is making it even more challenging to fund costly projects, with a projected loss of \$1 billion in state transportation revenue sources over the next three years. Given these trends, the longer projects are delayed, the more difficult they become to complete.

Economical Labor

The current budget situation is resulting in project bids that fall well below NCDOT estimates as contractors compete for a smaller number of available contracts. However, this is a temporary economic environment and completing this project now, as opposed to later, may help reduce the overall cost of the contracts as well as generate needed jobs and economic development.



Close up view of deteriorated shoulder on approach to Yadkin River Bridge on I-85 North.



PROJECT SUPPORT

This project has received significant public support from communities, business leaders and citizens throughout the state. The following is a list of communities and business leaders who have written in support of this project.

(as of July 14, 2009)

Letters of Support from Local Communities (35)

- * Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce
- * Alamance County Board of Commissioners
- * Archdale
- * Bermuda Run
- * Cabarrus-Rowan Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- * Charlotte
- * Charlotte Regional Partnership
- * Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce
- * Concord
- * Davidson
- * Davidson County Board of Commissioners to President Obama
- * Davidson County Board of Commissioners to Secretary LaHood
- * Davie County Economic Development Commission
- * Gaston County Board of Commissioners
- * Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- * Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
- * Greater Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce
- * High Point
- * High Point Chamber of Commerce
- * High Point Metropolitan Planning Organization
- * Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization
- * Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce
- * Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments
- * Piedmont Triad Council of Governments
- * Piedmont Triad Partnership
- * Regional Transportation Alliance
- * Rowan County Chamber of Commerce

- * Salisbury-Rowan Economic Development Commission
- * Shelby
- * Thomasville
- * Thomasville Area Chamber of Commerce
- * Union County Chamber of Commerce
- * Vance County Schools
- * Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- * Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education

Resolutions of Support from Local Communities (37)

- * Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce
- * Asheboro/Randolph Chamber of Commerce
- * Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners
- * Cherryville
- * China Grove
- * Cleveland
- * Concord
- * Davidson County Board of Commissioners
- * Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- * Granite Quarry
- * Greensboro Chamber of Commerce/Greensboro Partnership
- * Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- * Harrisburg
- * Kannapolis
- * Kernersville
- * Kernersville Chamber of Commerce
- * Landis
- * Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce
- * Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners
- * Midland
- * Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments
- * Oak Ridge
- * Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation
- * Piedmont Triad Partnership
- * Piedmont Triad Rural Planning Organization
- * Pleasant Garden

- * Randolph County Board of Commissioners
- * Randolph County Economic Development Corporation
- * Rockwell
- * Rowan County Board of Commissioners
- * Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- * Salisbury
- * Spencer
- * Thomasville Area Chamber of Commerce
- * Trinity
- * Union County Chamber of Commerce
- * Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Letters and Resolutions of Support from Local Business Leaders (25)

- * APAC Atlantic Inc., Thompson-Arthur Division
- * Belk Stores Services Inc.
- * Carolinas AGC
- * Hendrick Motorsports
- * Morgan, Herring, Morgan, Green, & Rosenblutt LLP
- * North Carolina Bankers Association Letter
- * North Carolina Bankers Association Resolution
- * North Carolina Farm Bureau to President Obama
- * North Carolina Farm Bureau to Secretary LaHood
- * North Carolina Hospital Association
- * North Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities
- * North Carolina Motorsports Association
- * North Carolina Poultry Federation
- * North Carolina Railroad Company
- * North Carolina Research Campus
- * North Carolina State Ports Authority
- * North Carolina Trucking Association
- * Old Dominion Freight Line
- * Penske Racing
- * Professional Engineers of North Carolina
- * R & R Transportation, Inc.
- * Royal Crown Leasing Inc.
- * Speedway Motorsports Inc.
- * Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
- * Winston-Salem Business Inc.