

The Yadkin River Bridge: I-85 in North Carolina Davidson & Rowan Counties

Source: North Carolina Turnpike Authority

Bridge History

- * The 880' long bridge was constructed in 1955.
- * It is constructed of steel girders with a reinforced concrete substructure.
- * The bridge deck is concrete with an asphalt overlay.
- * Utilizing FHWA bridge rating definition(s) the bridge is classified by NCDOT as "structurally deficient" which means it is in relatively poor condition, or has insufficient load-carrying capacity. The insufficient load capacity could be due to the original design or to deterioration. It does not mean that the bridge is necessarily unsafe.
- * According to NCDOT evaluations, the bridge is structurally sound. It has been well maintained.
- * The bridge is located on a major interstate corridor with approximately 25% heavy truck traffic.
- * The bridge is narrow with very limited shoulder width.

Bridge Replacement History and Options

- * The bridge was on schedule to be replaced by NCDOT through a design-build contract in 2003.
- * The project would have included the bridge plus roughly six miles of reconstruction and widening of I-85.
- * Issues regarding several historic river crossing locations delayed the project as resolutions were sought. Clearance of these issues was imminent when funding issues arose.
- * A severe funding shortfall in 2003 – and continuing today – resulted in insufficient funds for the project (estimated cost in 2003 - \$200,000,000) and the project was removed from the letting list and the 7-year TIP.
- * In February 2007, local and state elected officials, as well as community leaders asked the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) Board to study the project for toll feasibility.
- * In the 2007 session, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation to support studying the project for toll feasibility, environmental considerations, etc.
- * The NCTA completed the preliminary Toll Traffic & Revenue Study in June 2007.
- * The financial analysis – which takes the results of the Traffic and Revenue Study and combines it with a detailed analysis of the project costs – including capital, operating, maintenance, and capital reserve costs – will be complete by the end of 2007.
- * The project appears to be a strong tolling candidate based on NCTA's initial financial evaluation.
- * The main issues with tolling this project:
 - o The political and community sensitivity to tolling an existing interstate highway
 - o The ability to use only electronic tolling technology (i.e. no cash lanes requiring people to stop and pay tolls)
 - o Potential diversions of traffic, especially trucks, on local roads to avoid paying tolls.