

Resolution



Town of Carolina Beach
Town Council

RESOLUTION NO. 24-2315

Resolution of Support for the City of Wilmington's Application for the U.S. Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant for the Replacement of the 4th Street Bridge and the Pine Grove Drive Bridge

LEGISLATIVE INTENT/PURPOSE:

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Bridge Investment Program (BIP) is part of a larger suite of discretionary federal funding authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIP), which aims to significantly improve and/or rebuild America's infrastructure across all fifty states and U.S. Territories. The funding programs offered by the DOT and its agencies is historic in terms of the large size of the awards, with the BIP offering up to \$100 million per award. As such, applicants will be evaluated by the FHWA in terms of how each proposed project addresses issues such as climate change, resiliency, equity, safety, and accessibility, among other concerns. The BIP grant addresses these issues, funding the replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection of bridges that are registered on the Federal Highway Administration's National Bridge Inventory (NBI) and in a particular State of Good Repair. NBI Bridges which are designated as being in either Poor condition, or in Fair condition, but will fall into Poor condition within three years are eligible for the grant program.

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington (City) has identified two of such bridges—the 4th Street Bridge and the Pine Grove Bridge—both of which are currently rated in Fair condition but will fall into Poor condition within three years. Each bridge replacement will align with current DOT standards and be designed with improved safety, accessibility, mobility, and climate change concerns for all potential road users.

WHEREAS, the 4th Street Bridge is a three span bridge that was built in 1950 with a design loading rate of 25 tons. Since 2016, the load bearing capacity of the bridge has been steadily restricted and is now at 10 tons. This means that the bridge can no longer accommodate buses and emergency response vehicles. The replacement of the 4th Street Bridge was marked as a high priority item in the City's Bridge Asset Management Plan and is to be replaced with a new three span bridge.

WHEREAS, in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the replacement of the 4th Street Bridge is being coordinated with the potential future extension of passenger rail. This passenger rail will pass under 4th Street Bridge, and will develop alongside the first phase of the City's Downtown Trail project. The identified project area within the City is a Historically Disadvantaged Community and an area of Persistent Poverty, and the improvement would contribute to providing greater economic vitality to the neighborhood, with enhanced multimodal access for residents who do not have cars and primarily use transit or walk. All three projects will therefore act in concert to provide the surrounding neighborhoods and the greater Wilmington region with improved access to local businesses, houses of worship, jobs, medical facilities, and home.

WHEREAS, the Pine Grove Bridge was built in 1976 and is currently an approximately 60 linear foot cored slab bridge over Hewlett's Creek. High traffic volumes and deterioration of the substructure has degraded the bridge over time. It is anticipated that continued deterioration will result in future load restrictions.

WHEREAS, maintaining a high level of service on this primary north-south corridor for the City of Wilmington, towns of Carolina Beach and Kure Beach, and the southern portion of unincorporated New Hanover County is essential to provide emergency services access for nearby Fire Station and EMS facilities, in addition to

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connectivity to medical, commercial, and residential areas along the Pine Grove Drive corridor and beyond. Future load restrictions on the bridge would impact emergency response times as well as force additional traffic to South College Road. As such, the City considers the replacement of the Pine Grove Bridge as a high priority item, as is reflected in the Bridge Asset Management Plan.

WHEREAS, the new structure that will replace the current Pine Grove Drive bridge will be an approximately 600 linear foot bridge spanning the coastal wetlands. The proposed bridge will have an increased load capacity, allow for the removal of the existing causeway and consequently provide an environmental benefit through the natural restoration of coastal wetlands. The longer and higher bridge will also improve the vertical clearance from the water surface to the low chord of the bridge. This will address concerns about future sea level rise due to climate change in addition to improving access to the navigable channel under the bridge. A 10' multi-use path will be implemented on the bridge to facilitate future connection of the Greenville Loop Trail to the Masonboro Loop Trail, which will allow residents and guests of the region improved access to area amenities.

WHEREAS, the proposed BIP grant funding will be an integral part of transforming the existing bridges to better serve the needs of the City's residents and visitors from a variety of angles that will address safety, mobility, accessibility, the environment, resiliency, among other pressing issues.

WHEREAS, this project is vital to the emergency preparedness and economic vitality of not only Wilmington, but the greater Wilmington metropolitan area.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT, the Town of Carolina Beach is hereby in support of the City of Wilmington's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program for the 4th Street Bridge and Pine Grove Bridge replacement projects.

ADOPTED, this 24th day of September 2024.

TOWN OF CAROLINA BEACH

Albert L. Barbee, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberlee Ward, Town Clerk