



VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY AND COMMENT RESPONSES

Version 1.0
March 8, 2021



150 South York Street
Gastonia, North Carolina, 28052



Gannett Fleming

*Excellence Delivered **As Promised***

1 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 900
Raleigh, North Carolina, 27603

Table of Contents

Summary of Virtual Public Input Opportunity	1
Summary Results of MetroQuest Survey	2
Existing Conditions	2
Transportation Needs (Chart 2)	3
Transportation Priorities	5
Transportation Amenities & Design Considerations.....	6
Demographics and Location.....	6
Summary of Written Comments	8
Virtual Public Input Opportunity Comment Responses	9
Project Need	9
Transportation Modes	9
Potential Impacts	10
Design Considerations.....	13
Improve Existing.....	15
Schedule.....	16
Attachments.....	18

List of Charts

Chart 1. “Does traffic congestion slow your travel between Gaston, Mecklenburg and York counties? How many extra minutes does congestion add to your trip on average?”	2
Chart 2. “The following transportation needs have been identified for this project. Please select the three that are most important to you.”	3
Chart 3. “How often would you use the Catawba Crossings as a primary route between Gaston, Mecklenburg and York counties if it were constructed?”	4
Chart 4. “Several priorities are listed on this page. Please show us what’s important to you by allocating the 20 stars below to what you believe are the most critical priorities.”	5

List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Design Preferences, MetroQuest Survey.....	6
Table 2. MetroQuest Survey Respondents by Zip Code	6
Table 3. Summary of Demographic Information, MetroQuest Survey.....	7
Table 4. Nearby Transportation Projects	15

Attachments

Meeting Announcement Postcards
Fact Sheet
Written Comments

Summary of Virtual Public Input Opportunity

The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) invited the public to comment on the Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study between January 6 and February 4, 2021. The GCLMPO distributed approximately 500 email invitations on the morning of January 6, 2021. The emails included an English and Spanish language postcard and Fact Sheet (attached). This email list included individual emails maintained by the GCLMPO and the City of Belmont. The Project Team¹ and various project stakeholders agreed to forward the invitations to their email distribution lists and post the announcement to their websites and social media accounts. The public comment opportunity was also advertised as a media release and on GCLMPO's social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter.

While electronic outreach was the primary means of communication, the GCLMPO also printed English and Spanish-language postcards and placed them at multiple locations in the project area, including:

- Byrum's Grill – 4606 S. New Hope Rd., Belmont
- Cramerton ABC Store – 4701 S. New Hope Rd., Belmont
- South Point Market and Grill – 1901 South Point Rd., Belmont
- Lake Mart – 2333 South Point Rd., Belmont
- Dixie Grill – 9115 Dixie River Rd., Charlotte

Additionally, Bloomfield Estates, a mobile park home located at 3714 Walkers Cover Trail, Charlotte, distributed English and Spanish-language postcards via an eblast to their residents.

The public was instructed to visit the Project Webpage (www.catawbacrossings.com), review project materials and provide feedback. Spanish translation of the Project Webpage was also available. Five thousand six hundred ninety-six (5,696) first time visitors were recorded on the Project Webpage between January 6 and February 4, 2021 with 13,411 total site visits traced to 5,815 visitors (2.31-page views per visitor). The Project Webpage included an introductory video, corridor map, and various information about the feasibility study goals and objectives and the preliminary need and purpose statements. The five-minute introductory video, housed on the GCLMPO YouTube channel, was viewed 1,807 times during the public comment period. The video script was translated to Spanish and available in closed captions.

The public was encouraged to provide written feedback via an online MetroQuest survey (catawbacrossings-demo.metroquest.com/) or by email (info@catawbacrossings.com). The MetroQuest Survey was also translated to Spanish. One thousand one hundred seventy-five (1,175) individuals took the MetroQuest survey which consisted of a variety of questions including current travel behavior and experiences, transportation needs, and priorities and preferences to consider in the development of the Catawba Crossings Project.

¹ Including Town of Cramerton, City of Gastonia, Gaston County, Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO)

Summary Results of MetroQuest Survey

None of the survey questions were mandatory and individuals could choose to skip questions if they chose to. Respondents could only answer a question one time. Several questions asked respondents to select multiple answers (e.g., select top three priorities), thus resulting in larger numbers of answers. In this summary, the total number of respondents per question is recorded in parenthesis and frequency of answers provided as a percentage of total respondents for that question.

Existing Conditions

- Approximately 43% of respondents (1,133) indicated that I-85 currently serves as their primary route between Gaston, York and Mecklenburg Counties; approximately 26% of respondents identified Wilkinson Boulevard as their primary route.
- Most respondents (1,093) indicated that they travel across the Catawba River daily (38%), with another 30% indicating that they travel across the river a few times a week. Approximately 15% of respondents indicated that they travel across the Catawba River more than twice a day.
- 66% of respondents (1,033) indicated that they felt they must travel “out of their way” to reach one of the Catawba River bridges.
- 82% of respondents (1,024) indicated that congestion slows their travel between Gaston, York and Mecklenburg counties by more than ten minutes (Chart 1).

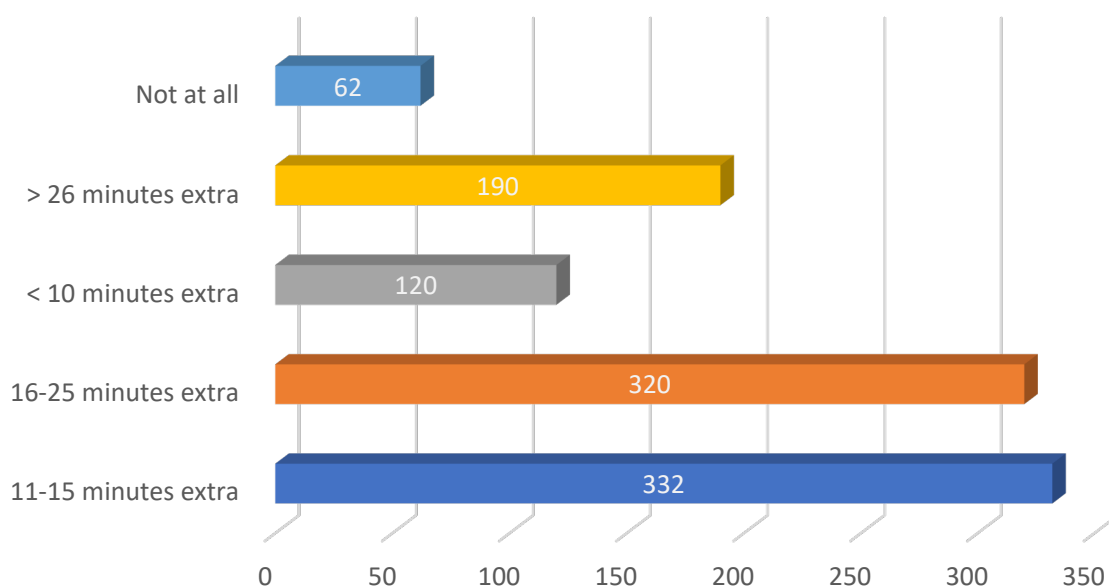


Chart 1. “Does traffic congestion slow your travel between Gaston, Mecklenburg and York counties? How many extra minutes does congestion add to your trip on average?”

Based on this survey question (1,024 respondents), congestion adds approximately 16 minutes to the average person’s commute between Gaston, Mecklenburg, and York counties. In a week’s time, an average person could spend about 1 hour and 20 minutes in traffic. That same person would spend approximately 64 hours in traffic per year.

- The top three conditions which contribute to congestion identified by respondents (2,934) were too few alternate routes (24%), population growth (22%), and too many cars (19%).
- When asked whether trips were reliable – that is you generally know how long it will take to travel between the three counties – respondents (1,063) were split with approximately 49% answering yes and 51% answering no. However, when asked if their trips are reasonable, approximately 32% of respondents (1,058) answered yes and 68% answered no.

Transportation Needs

- The top three transportation needs selected by respondents (2,941; Chart 2) were:
 - Infrastructure for current and future planned growth (24%)
 - Transportation options / alternative routes (23%)
 - Connectivity, e.g., improve the transportation network (22%)

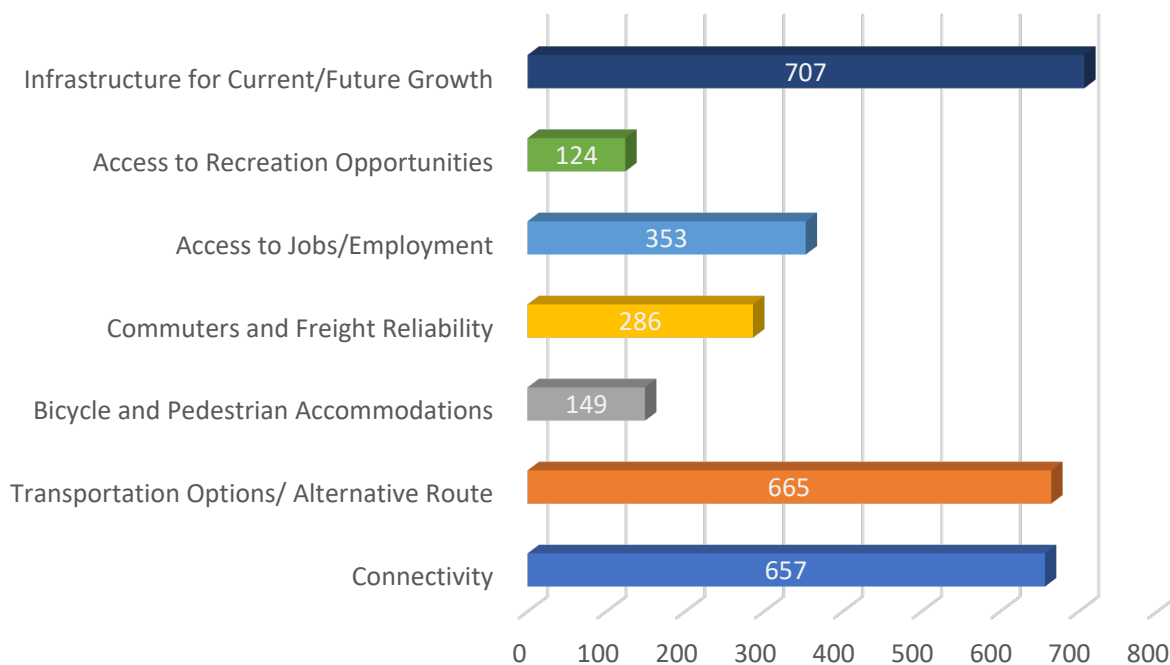


Chart 2. “The following transportation needs have been identified for this project. Please select the three that are most important to you.”

- The top three active transportation needs selected by respondents (2,386) were:
 - Accommodate commuter / long distance use (29%)
 - Safety (21%)
 - Neighborhood connections (14%)
- One hundred twenty-seven (127) respondents entered 152 “other” transportation needs into an open comment field. These responses were categorized into common themes (explained in more detail below). The top three common themes were:
 - Transit (17%) and Public Transportation (7%)
 - Public comment tended to identify the need for rail-based transit specifically, i.e., commuter rail, light rail.

- Another 7% of responses indicated a need for “public transportation” more generally, which was interpreted to include bus service as well.
- Taken together, transit and public transportation represented 24% of “other transportation need” expressed by respondents.
- Improve Existing (22%)
 - This theme covers three distinct public sentiments:
 - improve existing *instead of* pursuing the Catawba Crossings,
 - improve existing *before* pursuing Catawba Crossings, and
 - ensure the Catawba Crossings Project includes necessary improvements to existing facilities to ensure safe and efficient traffic operations.
- Alternate Route (7%)
 - An alternate route is needed to ease congestion and increase access.
- Environment / Conservation (7%)
 - The Project needs to take into consideration the natural and human environment and seek opportunities to further local conservation / preservation efforts.

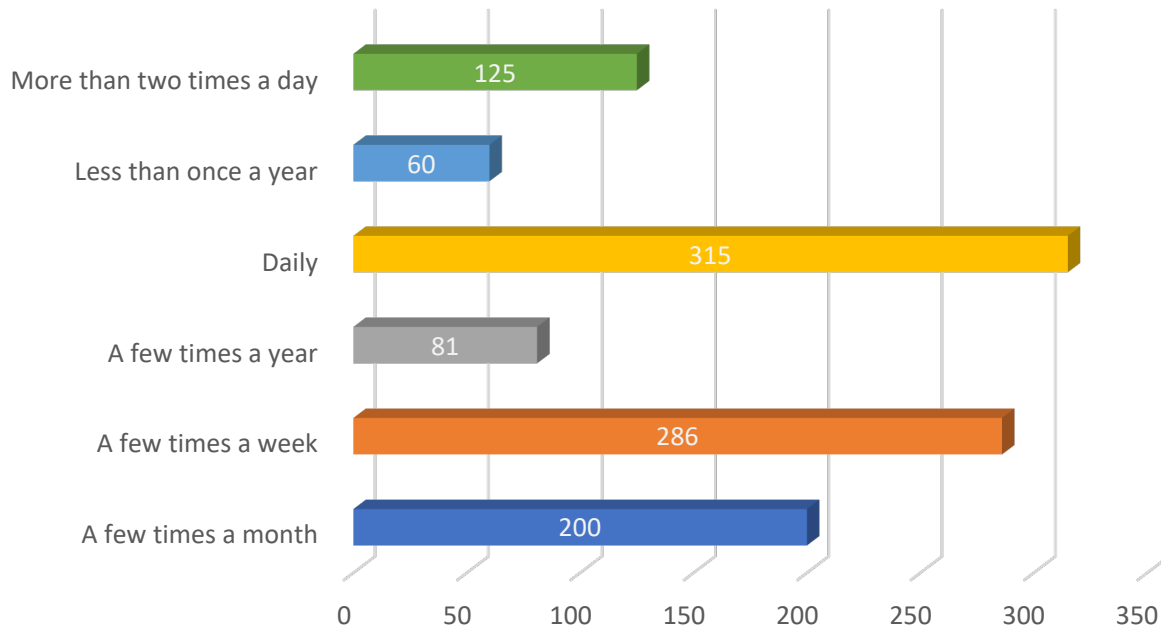


Chart 3. “How often would you use the Catawba Crossings as a primary route between Gaston, Mecklenburg and York counties if it were constructed?”

When asked how many times an individual would hypothetically use the Catawba Crossings if it were built, approximately 30% of 1,067 respondents said they would use it daily; 27% said a few times a week; and 19% said a few times a month.

Transportation Priorities

Respondents were given eight topics to assign importance to and were asked to allocate 20 points among them (Chart 4). A total of 18,950 points were allocated by respondents. The top three priorities were:

- Reduce traffic congestion (29% of points)
- Improve connectivity (15%)
- More reliable travel time (15%)
- Better access to jobs and amenities (11%)

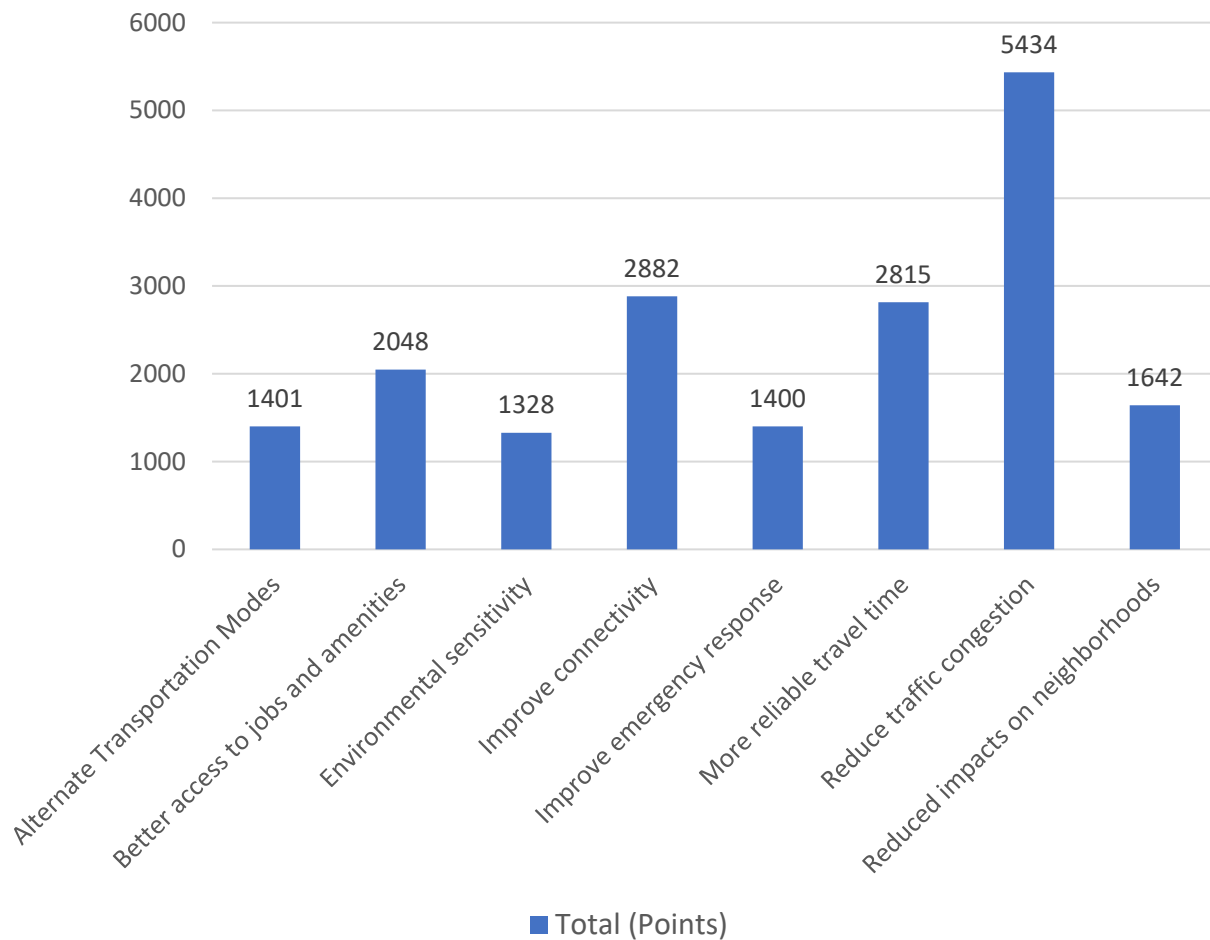


Chart 4. "Several priorities are listed on this page. Please show us what's important to you by allocating the 20 stars below to what you believe are the most critical priorities."

Transportation Amenities & Design Considerations

Respondents were asked to rate their preference for design components and amenities within five categories: vehicular, bicycling, pedestrian, recreation access, and design / aesthetic. The following chart ranks the provided answers from most preferred to least:

Table 1. Summary of Design Preferences, MetroQuest Survey

Ranking	Transportation Category				
	Vehicular	Bicycling	Pedestrian	Recreation Access	Design / Aesthetic
1 (Highest)	Travel lanes	Separated multiuse path	Multiuse path	Greenway trail	Street lighting
2	Grade-separated crossings	Bike only lanes	Grade separated crossings	Passive space	Wayfinding signage
3	Signalized intersections	Buffered bike lanes	Crossing opportunities	Kayak / Canoe launch	Landscaping
4	Technology ready	Striped bike lanes	Sidewalks	Fishing area	Signature design
5 (Lowest)	Transit	On-street bike lanes	Signalized crossings	Boat ramp	Public art

Demographics and Location

The MetroQuest survey concluded with a series of optional questions about the respondent, including age, race or ethnicity, sex, and number of cars in a household. These results are summarized in Table 2 below. Respondents were also asked to provide a zip code to place the comment geographically and an email addresses to be added to the project distribution list.

Forty-three (43) unique zip codes were entered into the MetroQuest survey. Twenty-one (21) of the 43 zip codes were attributed to a single respondent each. The table below enumerates those zip codes with 10 or more respondents.

Table 2. MetroQuest Survey Respondents by Zip Code

Zip Code (Principal City, State)	Number	Percent of Total
28012 (Belmont, NC)	476	53.0
29710 (Clover, SC)	151	16.8
28056 (Gastonia, NC)	68	7.6
28278 (Charlotte, NC)	40	4.4
29745 (York, SC)	25	2.8
28054 (Gastonia, NC)	24	2.7
28032 (Cramerton, NC)	23	2.5
28120 (Mt. Holly, NC)	15	1.7
Others	79	8.5
Total	898	100

Table 3. Summary of Demographic Information, MetroQuest Survey

Category	Number*	Percent of Total
Age		
65 years +	110	12.4
45 - 64 years	389	44.1
25 - 44 years	378	42.8
18 - 24 years	6	0.7
Total	883	100
Sex		
Prefer not to say	41	4.6
Male	444	49.8
Female	407	45.6
Total	892	100
Race or Ethnicity		
White	760	86.5
Prefer not to say	82	9.3
Other / Mixed	10	1.1
Native American	2	0.2
Hispanic / Latino	8	0.9
Asian / South Pacific Islander	4	0.5
African American	13	1.5
Total	879	100
Number of Cars in Household		
More than 3	118	13
3	218	24
2	518	57
1	55	6
Total	909	100
* Respondents were not required to enter responses in any field, therefore the total number is different for each category.		

Summary of Written Comments

The GCLMPO received 509 written comments during the public comment period (attached). Three hundred ninety-one (391) written comments were collected from the MetroQuest platform. MetroQuest survey respondents could enter written comments at multiple places throughout the survey. There was only one direct question and open comment field included in the survey for “other” transportation needs (152 comments discussed in Transportation Needs on pgs. 3-4).

The GCLMPO received 116 comments via email during the comment period. One written comment was received via the Project Facebook page and one via YouTube in association with the introductory video.

All written comments were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and reviewed. Keywords were identified within each comment and recorded. These keywords were then assigned to one of six comment themes that emerged. It was not uncommon that a single comment addressed two or more comment themes.

Six major comment themes were identified:

- Project Need
- Transportation Modes
- Potential Impacts
- Design Considerations
- Improve Existing
- Schedule

GCLMPO reviewed each comment. The responses that follow are intended to address the main topics of concern expressed by the public in general. Responses were crafted with the best available, current information.

*The public was not specifically asked to express support or opposition to the Catawba Crossings Project. However, 129 written comments clearly voiced an opinion with the following results:
100 in support and 29 opposed to the Catawba Crossings Project.*

Virtual Public Input Opportunity Comment Responses

Project Need

Alternate Route - There are approximately 10 miles between the Wilkinson Boulevard (US 74) Bridge and the York Road (SC 49) Buster Boyd Bridge. Commuters between these Catawba River bridges must travel north or south to cross the river, contributing to longer travel times and more congestion on local streets and these existing river crossings due to commuters and through-traffic sharing lanes with local traffic. By providing an alternate route, the Project is expected to reduce travel times for a considerable number of people, including both commuters and local traffic.

Congestion - The Catawba Crossings Project would alleviate some of the congestion in southeast Gaston County by providing an alternate, and more direct route to Mecklenburg County for commuters and through-traffic. The alternate route to cross the Catawba River would mean that commuter and through-traffic will not need to share the local roadway network for such long distances. For example, commuters from York County, SC will not have to travel the Belmont Peninsula and through Downtown Belmont to reach a route to / from Mecklenburg County and Charlotte.

Access - The Catawba Crossings Project would improve access to local businesses and regional employment centers. The Project would also increase access to a variety of destinations and services, including but not limited to Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT), medical services, educational opportunities, and recreational resources. The Project would likewise improve emergency response access to the area. The Project could also improve the access and availability of delivery services to the area.

“Wilkinson and I-85 need relief from vehicular traffic and the southern portion of Gaston County needs an alternate route since Highway 49 in SC and both the I-85 and Wilkinson Blvd. highways are not convenient. Most of the growth in Gaston Co. is occurring in the Southeast quadrant of the county and small, secondary roads must be used to access the major crossings into Mecklenburg county. This puts undue pressure on the secondary road infrastructure.”

Emergency Response & Safety - The Catawba Crossings Project is expected to improve congestion and reduce delay on the area roadway network by dispersing traffic to an alternate route to cross the Catawba River. The projected travel benefits that would be enjoyed by the public would equally benefit emergency responders. As a result, emergency response times would be expected to improve. This is of particular importance considering the proximity of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport, a major port of entry to the region, located at the east end of the Catawba Crossings Project.

Transportation Modes

Commuter - In general, public comment favored the Project as a benefit to commuters. Commuters into and out of Charlotte make up a significant portion of daily trips through the project area. These commuters seek the quickest and most direct route that connects their residence to their place of work and various other services.

The Catawba Crossings Project has the potential to significantly reduce travel times for commuters and local traffic and reduce the distance commuters need to travel to access I-485 and other regional

transportation facilities. By providing an additional Catawba River crossing, commuters will have an alternate route to access employment centers more quickly in Mecklenburg County.

Bicycles and Pedestrians - The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study is evaluating the inclusion of multimodal components in the design to safely accommodate local, and potential long-distance use of the corridor by cyclists and pedestrians. This evaluation includes a review of and coordination with local multimodal plans for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, trails, and greenways. The Project Team is coordinating with the Carolina Thread Trail as well to explore mutually beneficial arrangements for non-motorized transportation.

In general, public comment supported safe bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. On-street bicycle lanes were not well received with most comments on the subject prioritizing vehicular traffic on the roadway with bicycles accommodated on a separated and/or protected path.

The intent of this Project would be to include connections for all modes of transportation where it makes sense. This feasibility study will make recommendations for the type(s) and location(s) of multimodal facilities, like sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multiuse paths, along the project corridor. These recommendations will be revisited in the next phase of project design.

Transit - The GCLMPO is coordinating with local transit providers in the development of this study to evaluate the feasibility of utilizing the Catawba Crossings as a transit corridor. Currently, the potential for bus service on the Catawba Crossings is the most feasible option, expanding Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) bus routes into southeast Gaston County via the River District in western Mecklenburg County. It is important to note that the Wilkinson Boulevard (US 74) corridor has been identified by CATS as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the [LYNX Silver Line](#) to extend light rail into Gaston County. While this feasibility study will not evaluate the inclusion of light rail on the Catawba Crossings Project, the purpose of this study is to not make decisions that preclude transit options in the future.

Long-term transit planning is also in progress for the greater Metrolina Region with Centralina Regional Council's [CONNECT Beyond](#) initiative. CONNECT Beyond will define a bold regional transit vision and plan that provides real mobility solutions and opportunities for residents and visitors across two states and 12 counties.

The Southeast High-Speed Rail Project (SEHSR) is also under development. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently announced the Greenfield Corridor Alternative as the Preferred Alignment for the Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor. The Greenfield Corridor Alternative traverses southern Gaston County. How this corridor may interact with the Catawba Crossings has yet to be seen; but it is on the planning horizon and will be further evaluated moving forward.

Potential Impacts

Traffic Impact - The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study includes a review of the projected traffic impacts of the Catawba Crossings Project on the surrounding roadway network to identify problems that may arise in the transportation system with and without the project. The future year for this project's analysis is 2045. The 2045 traffic volumes are based on the travel demand model and account for planned (i.e., funded) transportation projects and approved developments (e.g., residential subdivision).

The study area for the traffic analysis consists of intersections along the primary north-south and east-west corridors in the vicinity of the Catawba River. Potential traffic impacts to S. New Hope Road (NC 279) and South Point Road (NC 273) in Gaston County were mentioned most frequently by commenters.

S. New Hope Road (NC 279) - The Catawba Crossings project is planned to begin at S. New Hope Road as a T-intersection.

The GCLMPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) (Revised March 2019) identifies S. New Hope Road as a boulevard in need of improvement south of Titman Road. NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) project number U-5821 is funded to widen S. New Hope Road between Titman Road and Union New Hope Road.

There are currently no funded projects to widen S. New Hope Road south of Union New Hope Road. However, the GCLMPO recognizes this as a need and has submitted the widening of S. New Hope Road from Union New Hope Road to the SC state line in NCDOT's current round of prioritization. It is unknown at this time whether or not the project will receive funding.

"I am not in favor of this project. South New Hope Road is not capable of handling all the extra traffic. This project would change the surrounding rural charm of the community and add tremendous pressure on existing roads. This will not improve the area for the people who live in the [South New Hope Road] area."

South Point Road (NC 273) - The Catawba Crossings Project plans to connect to South Point Road in Belmont. The feasibility study will evaluate at a high-level what that connection, or intersection, may look like.

The GCLMPO CTP identifies South Point Road as a boulevard in need of improvement south of Nixon Road. The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) also identifies the need for widening South Point Road between Armstrong Road and Nixon Road; however, this improvement is not funded.

There are currently no funded projects to widen South Point Road. However, the GCLMPO recognizes this as a need and has submitted the widening of South Point Road from Henry Chapel Road to R.L. Stowe Road in NCDOT's current round of prioritization. It is unknown at this time whether or not the project will receive funding.

There are several developments planned along South Point Road, including but not limited to the new Belmont Middle School.

South Point Road serves as a primary route for both North Carolina and South Carolina commuters traveling between northern York County/Belmont Peninsula and Mecklenburg County. With another crossing over the Catawba River, a portion of that commuter traffic would be expected to shift onto the Catawba Crossings rather than continue along South Point Road toward Belmont and Wilkinson Boulevard. An additional crossing over the Catawba River would also be expected to change directional traffic patterns along South Point Road as residents who currently travel northbound along South Point Road toward Wilkinson Boulevard and I-85 may instead travel southbound along South Point Road toward the Catawba Crossings. Based on preliminary traffic analysis results, the Catawba Crossings Project

demonstrates a benefit to travel times and delay along South Point Road north of the Catawba Crossings corridor as well as a benefit to the regional transportation network.

"I believe the crossing should focus on moving as many people as possible in an orderly fashion. This area is already overwhelmed with traffic due to the lack of foresight in the transportation department. We are inundated with new residential developments with no consideration given to infrastructure. New Hope Road needs to move to a minimum of four lanes, the two lane stretch from the Gastonia city limits to the SC line is absolutely atrocious. The crossing cannot come soon enough."

Environment and Community Character - This Feasibility Study will include a screening of potential impacts to the human and natural environment based on conceptual design plans. The goal of the screening will be to understand whether resources are present or absent and their location in relation to the project corridor. In-depth analyses will be conducted in the next phase of project development in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

While impacts to the human and natural environment are expected for any development project, roadway designers will continuously attempt to avoid negative impacts first, minimize negative impacts second, and finally explore options to mitigate adverse impacts. In the next phase of project development, the quality of resources will be assessed and the potential for direct impacts evaluated. An impact analysis will include the potential for indirect and cumulative impacts, as appropriate.

The project area is characterized as suburban to rural in character and is currently experiencing significant growth – which is projected to continue. The Catawba Crossings Project is being developed with the community context in mind. The proposed boulevard section is compatible with the existing setting, and this feasibility study is evaluating methods and approaches to make the corridor a part of the community, both in Gaston County, as well as Mecklenburg County.

The Project Team recognizes the importance of Lake Wylie and regional recreational resources as character-defining features within the local communities and intends to continue to take these into consideration as this study progresses. The proposed new bridges will be designed to accommodate recreational navigation on Lake Wylie in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Right of Way & Relocation - The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study will produce conceptual right of way limits for the purpose of generating a planning-level cost estimate. Conceptual design is not completed on field surveyed data. Therefore, the features and attributes of the physical environment, e.g., elevations, are not highly accurate – but are sound enough for planning purposes. Further, conceptual design does not study site-specific details to explore ways to minimize right of way impacts. These steps are taken in subsequent stages of roadway design. Conceptual designs are preliminary and subject to change.

The right of way impacts in the feasibility study phase of project development are purposefully “generous” – that is, designs intentionally show more right of way impacts to achieve a conservative cost estimate. Right of way is very expensive and – if the project is programmed for design and construction (see **Schedule** on pgs. 16-17) – the NCDOT will minimize right of way needs throughout design. Any right of

way claims would be processed according to NC State Law and [NCDOT procedure](#). Further, as federal funding will likely be used to design and construct this project, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (the Uniform Act) will prevail.

It is also important to recognize that the Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study is evaluating a 1,000-foot corridor for planning purposes. The proposed boulevard would be considerably more narrow, likely 200-foot or less. Further, this study would not preclude the evaluation of alternative alignment corridors in later phases of project development.

Economy - The Catawba Crossings Project is expected to benefit local and regional economic opportunities by better connecting people to jobs and creating the infrastructure to attract new jobs and more efficiently move goods. In general, delay is a constraint on the economy – freight moves more slowly, and employees are delayed in traffic; this lost time equates to unrecoverable costs. Some potential benefits include:

- Commercial freight can move more efficiently because of less congestion. Consumer goods can reach their destinations more quickly, a benefit to the manufacturer, the transporter, the consumer, and the environment.
- A more reasonable and reliable commuting time may open additional opportunities for employees to select places of employment and for employers to locate a business.
- In conjunction with local land use planning and zoning regulations, the Catawba Crossings has the potential to attract economic development in southern Gaston County and western Mecklenburg County, bringing jobs and services closer to residents and consumers.
- Local businesses would benefit from improved access to goods and customers.

Design Considerations

Corridor Location - The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study is evaluating the feasibility and potential benefits associated with a boulevard facility within a locally established corridor. The corridor serving as the baseline for this Feasibility Study is based on the alignment identified as the “Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative” (aka LEDPA) for the Gaston East-West Connector, or Garden Parkway, between S. New Hope Road and I-485. A notable difference between the Catawba Crossings and the previous corridor is the route the Catawba Crossings takes as it passes the planned River District in Mecklenburg County.

Local governments have negotiated the reservation of right of way for the Catawba Crossings as part of some approved development plans in Gaston County. The location of the bridges over the South Fork Catawba River and Catawba River were closely coordinated with resource and regulatory agencies throughout the Garden Parkway Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and were considered permissible at that time. Therefore, the Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study considers these bridge locations the most feasible locations. It should be noted that the previous environmental study evaluated and discarded several other alignment alternatives.

The corridor location as defined in this Feasibility Study *does not* preclude the evaluation of alignment alternatives in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in later planning and engineering work.

The Catawba Crossings is a section of a larger “Gaston Southern Bypass” which remains in GCLMPO’s [Comprehensive Transportation Plan](#) (CTP). As it relates to a future western extension, the Catawba Crossings should not unduly constrain the future analysis of such an extension.

Local Connections - The Catawba Crossings Project is planned to include full-movement intersections with all major intersecting roads, including S. New Hope Road, South Point Road, I-485 on- and off-ramps, and Steele Creek Road. Other intersections with the Catawba Crossings would be evaluated in the next phase of design.

This feasibility study includes a review and coordination with local multimodal plans for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, trails, and greenways. The intent of this Project will be to include connections for all modes of transportation where appropriate. This feasibility study will make recommendations for the type(s) and location(s) of multimodal facilities, like sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multiuse paths, along the project corridor.

Intersection Options - This Feasibility Study is intended to identify what types of intersections may work based on the projected traffic volumes in 2045. It is not the intent of this study to determine the final intersection configuration or design, though recommendations may be made. Additional traffic and engineering studies will be conducted in future phases of the project to make such determinations.

Multiple intersection configurations and “treatments” are being considered for the proposed intersections along the Catawba Crossings corridor such as conventional, or standard intersections, and unconventional, or innovative, intersections. Conventional intersections are typically three or four-leg intersections that include stop signs, traffic signals, or roundabouts. Unconventional intersections are typically intended to maximize traffic efficiencies and improve intersection safety beyond conventional intersections. North Carolinians are beginning to see a growing number of unconventional intersection configurations such as:

- Reduced Conflict Intersections (RCIs) along US 74 in Indian Trail, NC
- Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) at NC 16 and Mount Holly-Huntersville Road in Charlotte, NC
- Quadrant Left Intersection at NC 73 and US 21 in Huntersville, NC
- Single Loop Intersection at NC 200 and Waxhaw Highway in Monroe, NC

Each intersection type has benefits and drawbacks as they relate to how much traffic they can safely accommodate and the degree to which they can be improved in the future to accommodate more (or less) traffic.

Interchange connectivity is also being considered along the Catawba Crossings corridor at I-485. Interchanges separate traffic on different roadways (typically an interstate or highway) with a bridge. This allows through-traffic on the major roadway to continue without stopping (or slowing). Interstate exit ramps are one of the most common types of interchanges. Interchange configurations vary greatly depending on the desired degree of separation of movements, which can impact the overall capacity and longevity of the interchange. As such the degree to which they can be improved in the future to meet changing traffic needs is also impacted. Worth noting is that an interchange allows “main line” traffic to proceed unhindered but requires two intersections (opposed to one) on the secondary route.

I-485 Interchange and West Boulevard - This Feasibility Study will continue to evaluate the proposed interchange with I-485. The current concept includes a “split-diamond” interchange configuration (e.g., I-

77 at W. Trade Street and W. 5th Street; I-485 at Prosperity Ridge, Prosperity Ridge and Benfield Roads). It is more appropriate to think of this as an expansion of the existing West Boulevard interchange as opposed to a “new” interchange.

The GCLMPO is aware of the plans to extend West Boulevard and is coordinating with the River District, City of Charlotte, and the Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT). The current concept is intended to “split” traffic between West Boulevard and Catawba Crossings, which would serve different types of local and regional trips.

“I feel strongly that improvement/widening needs to be made to both I-85 and Wilkinson bridge. People that live in Belmont and south Gaston County do so knowing that travel to other counties may take longer. It is expected. I am strongly opposed to a third bridge destroying nature and wildlife when improvement could be made to the existing structures.”

Improve Existing

Several transportation projects are currently planned or underway to improve existing intersections and corridors in Gaston and Mecklenburg counties. **Table 1** summarizes some of the major transportation projects nearby.

Table 4. Nearby Transportation Projects

Project Sponsor	Transportation Project	Description	Schedule (fiscal year)
NCDOT	U-6038	Adaptive signal system on US 74 from NC 7 (Catawba Street) to Wesleyan Drive	Under construction
	B-6051	Replace the current four lane US 74 bridge with a six-lane bridge.	Construction begin 2023
	U-6143	Improve the NC 7 (E. Catawba Street)/US 74 intersection	Construction begin 2023
	U-3608	Improve NC 7 (N. Main Street/Belmont-Mt. Holly Road) from US 74 to I-85	Construction begin 2025
	I-5719	Widen I-85 to eight-lanes from US 321 to NC 273 and reconstruct eight interchanges	Construction begin 2025
	U-5800	Improve the NC 7/US 74 intersection	Construction begin 2025
	U-5821	Widen New Hope Road to four lanes from Titman Road to Union-New Hope Road	Construction begin 2026
	U-5766B	Widen NC 160 to multi-lanes from NC 49 (S. Tryon Road) to I-485	Construction begin 2027
	I-6016	Improve I-85/I-485 interchange	Construction begin 2027

	U-5959	Improve the NC 273 (Park Street)/US 74 intersection	Construction unfunded, after 2029
	U-6150	Convert the South Point Road/Armstrong Road intersection to a roundabout	Construction unfunded, after 2029
CATS	LYNX Silver Line	26-mile light rail project from the City of Belmont, through Center City Charlotte and the Town of Matthews, with a potential extension into Union County	Construction unfunded
Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (CLT)	CLT Environmental Assessment	Construct fourth parallel runway 1-19 (including end-around taxiways) and terminal and ramp expansion	Construction begin 2028
SCDOT	11149-002	Widen SC 274/Pole Branch Road	Under construction
	P037949	SC 49/SC 274/SC 557 intersection improvements	Construction begin 2021
	P037954	Widen SC 557 to 3-lanes from SC 55 to Kingsbury Road	Construction begin 2024
Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)/ Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP)	Extension of the Southeast High-Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor from Charlotte, NC to Atlanta, GA	Construction unfunded

Sources: NCDOT 2020-2029 Current STIP (February 2021); CATS; SCDOT Programmed Project Viewer; CLT; GDOT

The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study traffic analysis includes the funded roadway projects located within the study area with a planned completion date prior to 2045. The Project's traffic analysis will identify the impacts of the Catawba Crossings corridor on these planned projects and the surrounding transportation network while also identifying improvements like turn lanes and additional through lanes needed at the proposed Catawba Crossings intersections to accommodate projected traffic demands up to 2045.

With another crossing over the Catawba River, travel patterns in the area would be expected to shift, reducing traffic volumes along portions of the corridors in the vicinity of the Catawba River. For example, a portion of the commuter traffic currently traveling along the South Point Road corridor toward Wilkinson Boulevard and I-85 would be expected to shift onto the Catawba Crossings rather than continue along South Point Road through Belmont. Based on preliminary traffic analysis results, the Catawba Crossings Project demonstrates a benefit to the regional transportation network.

Schedule

This Feasibility Study is an early planning tool to generate cost estimates, identify constraints and opportunities, and determine permitting needs. The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study is expected to be complete by the end of 2021. Following the approval of this study, the GCLMPO will decide whether or not Catawba Crossings would be submitted to NCDOT through the Prioritization process – the process by

which NCDOT evaluates proposed transportation projects across the state and determines which will be included in the 10-year State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The next opportunity for Prioritization is expected to begin in 2023.

If Catawba Crossings scores well in the Prioritization process, it would be programmed in the 2025-2034 STIP. Generally, new projects added to the STIP are programmed towards the end of the planning horizon – in this case closer to 2034. In such a scenario, if construction funding were authorized for Catawba Crossings in fiscal year 2034, for example, an approximate three-year construction duration would result in the project opening to traffic in 2037. (Note that this is a hypothetical schedule to illustrate one potential delivery scenario.)

Attachments

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!



WHY: The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) and regional project sponsors have begun a feasibility study for the Catawba Crossings Project to develop conceptual designs, cost estimates, and recommendations for a proposed new alignment roadway between NC 279 (S. New Hope Rd) in southeastern Gaston County and NC 160 (Steele Creek Rd) in western Mecklenburg County. The GCLMPO recommends a multi-lane, median-divided boulevard that includes landscaping along the roadway as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. We welcome your insights into the transportation needs of the area.

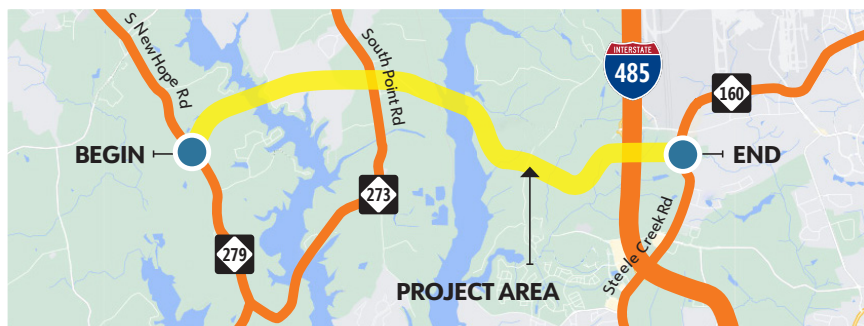
Please visit our website to learn more and take the survey:

WHEN: January 6–February 4, 2021

WHERE: www.catawbacrossings.com



We will carefully consider all comments received when developing the conceptual design. GCLMPO will present designs at a public event in the summer of 2021.



If you do not have reliable access to the Internet, a computer, or smart phone but would like to participate in this project by providing comments, please contact our project manager by email or phone to make arrangements that meet your needs.

GCLMPO Project Manager

Randi Gates, AICP | info@catawbacrossings.com | (704) 854-6604



Anyone with a hearing or speech impairment may call 1-800-735-2962. Language assistance services are available free of charge if you speak a language other than English by calling 1-800-522-0453.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Catawba Crossings Project proposes a new alignment roadway between NC 279 (S. New Hope Road) in southeastern Gaston County to NC 160 (Steele Creek Road) in western Mecklenburg County. The proposed roadway would include two new bridges. The first proposed bridge would cross the South Fork Catawba River about 3.5 miles south of Cramerton in Gaston County. The second proposed bridge would cross the Catawba River on the Gaston-Mecklenburg County line north of the Allen Plant Steam Station. The proposed project would also include a new interchange with I-485 south of the West Boulevard interchange in Mecklenburg County, as shown on the project location map on the reverse page.

Project sponsors are conducting a study to evaluate the feasibility of the proposed roadway. The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) is the lead planning agency producing this feasibility study. The GCLMPO recommends a multi-lane, median-divided boulevard. A boulevard typically includes trees and vegetation along the roadway as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

FEASIBILITY STUDY: AN EARLY PLANNING TOOL

A feasibility study is a tool commonly used to estimate costs associated with construction of a proposed project and to identify challenges and opportunities for inclusion in a project. Public and stakeholder input are critical to the study's success. The GCLMPO is coordinating regularly with local municipalities and regional organizations in the development of the Catawba Crossings Project vision. They are planning two public engagement events to formally present project information and collect public comments.*



FEASIBILITY STUDY GOALS

- Identify key public and stakeholder desires and concerns
- Engage the public and stakeholders in identification of project challenges and potential opportunities to be included in conceptual roadway designs
- Engage permitting agencies to identify challenges; refine the project need and purpose; and identify potential opportunities to be included in the conceptual roadway designs
- Establish a clear, inclusive project need and purpose
- Evaluate the long-term transportation, social and economic needs of the local communities
- Evaluate an NC route designation for the proposed new roadway
- Evaluate project funding scenarios
- Recommend a conceptual design alternative for detailed study
- Submit the Catawba Crossings Project to the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for funding consideration in a future State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

*Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and uncertainties surrounding social-distancing guidelines to battle the spread of the pandemic, all in-person public engagement events associated with this project will be evaluated early in event planning.



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK! This study will carefully consider transportation needs in the context of local and regional goals and priorities, and public input will be central to that understanding. Your insights into the short- and long-term transportation needs of the local community are invaluable, and we welcome your thoughts. The project team will carefully consider all comments received and evaluate whether they can be incorporated into the conceptual design of the project.

ENVISIONING A BETTER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This project is intended to improve safety and regional accessibility, mobility and connectivity. These three transportation goals are interrelated and together measure a transportation system's ability to influence the public's quality of life.

ACCESSIBILITY refers to the ability to reach desired goods, services, activities and destinations. Individuals often evaluate accessibility in terms of convenience, or the ease with which they can reach what they want or need.

Accessibility and **MOBILITY** are closely related. Mobility is typically described in terms of how long it takes to get from place to place. The ability to move freely benefits people and businesses by making it easier to interact with each other, earn a living, and take advantage of recreational opportunities. A mobile society implies *transportation choices*, or availability of travel options. Transportation choices may include different routes or modes of travel. Other travel modes include transit, bicycling and walking.

CONNECTIVITY describes how well a roadway network connects physical destinations like residential, employment, medical, educational, recreational, and entertainment destinations. As connectivity improves, travel distances decrease and routing options increase, allowing more direct travel between destinations.



IMPROVING REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The GCLMPO and regional partners have discussed the need to provide additional east-west connections between Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties for several decades. Travel patterns in the area are influenced by the proximity to downtown Charlotte and other major employment centers, including Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Regional transportation facilities like I-85 and US 29-74 (Wilkinson Boulevard) are experiencing congestion and frequent incidents due to limited east-west transportation capacities. On-going growth and development in the area have increased demand for different routes and more transportation choices.

The GCLMPO and regional partners are committed to improving transportation choices and are currently participating in the **LYNX Silver Line Project**, a 26-mile light rail to connect the City of Belmont to the Town of Matthews via Center City Charlotte.

This project will evaluate other modes of travel and the potential for their inclusion. While a new bridge would serve vehicles, there are also interests to better connect transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options between the two counties.

STAY CONNECTED

The project team will make announcements about the project and public engagement events via social media and the project website:

www.catawbacrossings.com



Join the Catawba Crossings email list to receive updates from the project team in your inbox:

info@catawbacrossings.com

CONTACT US!

GCLMPO Project Manager

Randi Gates, AICP
randig@cityofgastonia.com
(704) 854-6604



Consultant Project Manager

Adam Archual | Gannett Fleming, Inc.
aarchual@gfnet.com
(984) 389-2398

¡QUEREMOS SUS COMENTARIOS!



POR QUÉ: La Organización de Planificación Metropolitana de los condados Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln (GCLMPO) y los patrocinadores del proyecto han comenzado un estudio de viabilidad para el Proyecto Catawba Crossings para desarrollar diseños conceptuales, estimaciones de costos y recomendaciones para una nueva carretera de alineación entre NC 279 (S. New Hope Rd) en el sureste del Condado de Gaston hasta NC 160 (Steele Creek Rd) en el oeste del Condado de Mecklenburg. La GCLMPO recomienda un bulevar de varios carriles dividido por una mediana que incluye jardinería a lo largo de la calzada, así como alojamiento para bicicletas y peatones. Agradecemos sus conocimientos sobre las necesidades de transporte de la comunidad local.

Visite nuestro sitio web para más información y realizar la encuesta:

CUANDO: del 6 de enero al 4 de febrero del 2021

DÓNDE: www.catawbacrossings.com



Consideraremos cuidadosamente todos los comentarios recibidos al desarrollar el diseño conceptual del proyecto. GCLMPO presentará diseños en un evento público en el verano de 2021.



Si no tiene acceso confiable a Internet, una computadora o un móvil, pero le gustaría participar en este proyecto proporcionando comentarios, comuníquese con el Gerente de Proyecto de GCLMPO por teléfono o correo electrónico para hacer arreglos que satisfagan sus necesidades.

Gerente de Proyecto GCLMPO

Randi Gates, AICP | info@catawbacrossings.com | (704) 854-6604



Cualquier persona con impedimentos auditivos o del habla puede llamar al 1-800-735-2962.

Asistencia lingüística está disponible sin cargo si habla un idioma que no sea inglés llamando al 1-800-522-0453.

DESCRIPCIÓN DEL PROYECTO

El Proyecto Catawba Crossings propone una nueva carretera de alineación entre NC 279 (S. New Hope Road) en el sureste del Condado de Gaston hasta NC 160 (Steele Creek Road) en el oeste del Condado de Mecklenburg. La carretera propuesta incluiría dos nuevos puentes. El primer puente propuesto cruzaría el río South Fork Catawba a unas 3,5 millas al sur de Cramerton en el condado de Gaston. El segundo puente propuesto cruzaría el río Catawba en la línea del condado de Gaston-Mecklenburg al norte de la estación de vapor de la planta Allen. El proyecto propuesto también incluiría un nuevo intercambio con la I-485 al sur del intercambio de West Boulevard en el condado de Mecklenburg, como se muestra en el mapa de ubicación del proyecto en la página del reverso.

Los patrocinadores del proyecto están realizando un estudio para evaluar la viabilidad de la carretera propuesta. La Organización de Planificación Metropolitana de Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln (GCLMPO) es la agencia de planificación líder que produce este estudio de viabilidad. La GCLMPO recomienda un bulevar dividido en mediana de varios carriles. Un bulevar generalmente incluye árboles y vegetación a lo largo de la calzada, así como también instalaciones para bicicletas y peatones.

ESTUDIO DE VIABILIDAD: UNA HERRAMIENTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN TEMPRANA

Un estudio de factibilidad es una herramienta comúnmente utilizada para estimar los costos asociados con la construcción de un proyecto propuesto y para identificar desafíos y oportunidades para su inclusión en un proyecto. Las aportaciones del público y de las partes interesadas son fundamentales para el éxito del estudio. El GCLMPO está coordinando regularmente con los municipios locales y las organizaciones regionales en el desarrollo de la visión del Proyecto Catawba Crossings. Están planificando dos eventos de participación pública para presentar formalmente la información del proyecto y recopilar comentarios públicos.*



METAS DEL ESTUDIO DE VIABILIDAD

- Identificar los deseos y preocupaciones clave del público y las partes interesadas
- Involucrar al público y las partes interesadas en la identificación de los desafíos del proyecto y las oportunidades potenciales que se incluirán en los diseños conceptuales de carreteras
- Involucrar a las agencias de permisos para identificar desafíos; refinar la necesidad y el propósito del proyecto; e identificar oportunidades potenciales para ser incluidas en los diseños conceptuales de carreteras
- Establecer una necesidad y un propósito claros e inclusivos del proyecto
- Evaluar el transporte a largo plazo, las necesidades sociales y económicas de las comunidades locales
- Evaluar una designación de ruta NC para la nueva carretera propuesta
- Evaluar escenarios de financiamiento de proyectos
- Recomendar una alternativa de diseño conceptual para un estudio detallado
- Presentar el Proyecto de Cruces de Catawba al Departamento de Transporte de Carolina del Norte (NCDOT) para su consideración de financiamiento en un futuro Programa de Mejoramiento del Transporte del Estado (STIP)

*Debido a los impactos de COVID-19 y las incertidumbres que rodean las pautas de distanciamiento social para combatir la propagación de la pandemia, todos los eventos de participación pública en persona asociados con este proyecto se evaluarán al principio de la planificación del evento



¡QUEREMOS SUS COMENTARIOS! Este estudio considerará cuidadosamente las necesidades de transporte en el contexto de las metas y prioridades locales y regionales, y la opinión pública será fundamental para esa comprensión. Sus conocimientos sobre las necesidades de transporte a corto y largo plazo de la comunidad local son invaluables y agradecemos sus comentarios. El equipo del proyecto considerará cuidadosamente todos los comentarios recibidos y evaluará si pueden incorporarse al diseño conceptual del proyecto.

VISUALIZACIÓN DE UN MEJOR SISTEMA DE TRANSPORTE

Este proyecto tiene como objetivo mejorar la seguridad y la accesibilidad, movilidad y conectividad regionales. Estos tres objetivos de transporte están interrelacionados y juntos miden la capacidad de un sistema de transporte para influir en la calidad de vida del público.

LA ACCESIBILIDAD se refiere a la capacidad de llegar a los bienes, servicios, actividades y destinos deseados. Las personas a menudo evalúan la accesibilidad en términos de conveniencia o la facilidad con la que pueden alcanzar lo que quieren o necesitan.

La accesibilidad y **LA MOVILIDAD** están estrechamente relacionadas. La movilidad se describe típicamente en términos de cuánto tiempo se tarda en llegar de un lugar a otro. La capacidad de moverse libremente beneficia a las personas y las empresas al facilitar la interacción entre ellos, ganarse la vida y aprovechar las oportunidades recreativas. Una sociedad móvil implica **opciones de transporte** o disponibilidad de opciones de viaje. Las opciones de transporte pueden incluir diferentes rutas o modos de viaje. Otros modos de viaje incluyen tránsito, andar en bicicleta o caminar.

LA CONECTIVIDAD describe qué tan bien una red de carreteras conecta destinos físicos como destinos residenciales, laborales, médicos, educativos, recreativos y de entretenimiento. A medida que mejora la conectividad, las distancias de viaje disminuyen y las opciones de rutas aumentan, lo que permite viajes más directos entre destinos.



MEJORANDO LAS CONEXIONES REGIONALES

La GCLMPO y los socios regionales han discutido la necesidad de proporcionar conexiones adicionales de este a oeste entre los condados de Gaston y Mecklenburg durante varias décadas. Los patrones de viaje en el área están influenciados por la proximidad al centro de Charlotte y otros centros de empleo importantes, incluido el Aeropuerto Internacional Charlotte Douglas. Las instalaciones de transporte regional como la I-85 y la US 29-74 (Wilkinson Boulevard) están experimentando congestión e incidentes frecuentes debido a las limitadas capacidades de transporte de este a oeste. El continuo crecimiento y desarrollo en el área ha aumentado la demanda de diferentes rutas y más opciones de transporte.

La GCLMPO y los socios regionales están comprometidos a mejorar las opciones de transporte y actualmente participan en el **Proyecto LYNX Silver Line**, un tren ligero de 26 millas para conectar la ciudad de Belmont con la ciudad de Matthews a través del centro de Charlotte.

Este proyecto evaluará otros modos de viaje y el potencial para su inclusión. Si bien un nuevo puente serviría para los vehículos, también hay interés en conectar mejor las opciones de tránsito, bicicletas y peatones entre los dos condados.

MANTENTE CONECTADO

El equipo del proyecto hará anuncios sobre el proyecto y los eventos de participación pública a través de las redes sociales y el sitio web del proyecto:

www.catawbacrossings.com



Únase a la lista de correo electrónico de Catawba Crossings para recibir actualizaciones del equipo del proyecto en su bandeja de entrada:

info@catawbacrossings.com

¡CONTÁCTENOS!

Gerente de Proyecto GCLMPO

Randi Gates, AICP
randig@cityofgastonia.com
(704) 854-6604



Gerente de Proyectos Consultora

Adam Archual | Gannett Fleming, Inc.
aarchual@gfnet.com
(984) 389-2398

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
1	Email		12/27/2020	The connection between Gaston County and Charlotte is a nightmare to navigate in a daily basis. The growth in the these communities will require innovative and bold decisions. Enabling people from all walks of life and generations to embrace this growth the proposal should include the ability to include a pedestrian walkway, bike lanes, access to the water and a trolley/ train for commute. It should be a green concept to decrease omissions.
2	Email	Belmont, NC	1/6/2021	I am fully in support of this project. As a resident and home owner at the end of South Point road, we are in desperate need for alternative ways to cross into Charlotte and to relieve some traffic trying to commute up south point road to Wilkinson and I-85. I would ask you also assess whether it is feasible to widen South Point road. With the new school and exponential growth residential growth, traffic is already at max-capacity when people are commuting to work and schools are in session. Even if 4-lanes are not possible on South Point, 3 lanes could be. The middle lane could switch directions based on time of day and traffic flow or could be a turn lane in non-rush hour times. Thank you for looking into this and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.
3	Email		1/6/2021	No new bridge project. Fix existing crossing first.
4	Email		1/6/2021	Why is it purposed to create a new interchange on I-485 thus increasing costs, instead of just connecting to the existing West Blvd. interchange?
5	Email		1/6/2021	We do not want this road through our town. Here we go again. Please stop
6	Email		1/6/0201	Thank you for sharing details on the Catawba Crossings project, which I fully support. I have a question regarding the proposed eastern terminus of the project. Why will the project include a new interchange with I-485? I would have thought it would have tied into I-485 at the existing West Boulevard interchange. I realize maps aren't always to scale, but in looking at the proposed path, it appears the new interchange will be quite close to the existing interchange at West. If so, and depending on the design of the new interchange, having two interchanges spaced so close to one another could lead to unsafe merges and congestion, especially over the long term and given the proximity to the airport. Was using the existing interchange at I-485 and West considered for the Catawba Crossings project? The CRTPO plans to relocate West/NC 160 on a new location south and east of this interchange as part of the airport's long-range expansion plans, so it would appear that aligning the eastern terminus of Catawba Crossing with the existing interchange at I-485 would also tying nicely to the relocated West/160 project.
7	Email		1/6/2021	You cannot build this fast enough!
8	Email		1/6/2021	Yes, please! I would love to have the rails gone to Belmont!
9	Email		1/6/2021	1) Will current I-485/West Blvd. interchanged be used to start eastern end of project 2) Will western end of project be designed so if necessary, future expansion to US321 is at least possible (I think it would be a very good idea!!!!) 3) will bridge be built high enough to allow boats to come thru ?
10	Email		1/6/2021	I live in Belmont, the Reflection Pointe neighborhood, and work in Steele Creek. I am very excited to see this Catawba Crossings proposal! This new bridge would cut my commute time in half and would be a wonderful benefit to the area!
11	Email	Belmont, NC	1/7/2021	Yes, please! I enthusiastically endorse this proposal that has been long awaited. The benefits to commuters far out number any cons. Thank you for bringing this to the residents of the Belmont area.
12	Email		1/7/2021	I just wanted to say thank you to the entire team working on the Catawba Crossings project. I know it has been a long road with setbacks along the way, but I take heart in the fact that the team has kept up the fight. I appreciated the opportunity to comment on the feasibility study and some of the questions got me very excited about the possibilities of this new corridor. Here's to an approved project at some point in our lifetimes!
13	Email		1/7/2021	100% support this!
14	Email		1/7/2021	I currently support the project and would like to be notified and possibly involved.
15	Email		1/7/2021	Here we go again. Just another concept pf the Garden Parkway Toll road. Right through my house and about 20 neighbors houses. Why can't you explore other options like widening I-85 or light rail line on existing rail roads. I an 100 % against this as you can easily tell.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
16	Email		1/7/2021	I have lived off So. New Hope Rd. for 17 years now in the Lineberger Estates neighborhood. Ever since all the new homes south of Daniel Stowe gardens have been built, the traffic on So. New Hope Rd has increased tremendously. There are times I have to wait for more than 15 cars each way to pull out of my neighborhood. Thank God you gave us a left turn lane to get into the neighborhood. So tell me, what have you done for improving the two way increasingly traffic volume to incorporate the future traffic North of the new traffic circles already in place for us residents who already hate the increased traffic on our stretch of So New Hope onward towards Interstate 85?
17	Email		1/7/2021	Since more homes are allowed to be built here in Belmont without any infrastructure improvements, this crossing would / could eliminate most if not all of the traffic from SC travelling the single lane South Point Rd north to 85.
18	Email		1/7/2021	I like the idea. I am curious of how the intersections with South Point road will be done though and how this might reduce traffic on South Point from South Carolina currently traveling through Belmont.
19	Email		1/7/2021	I am in favor of a new crossing connecting S New Hope Rd and I-485. This will bring much needed traffic relief to the S Belmont- S New Hope Rd area. This will help bring Gaston County into the 21st century.Its a shame the Garden Parkway never materialized as we need that too.
20	Email		1/7/2021	I've lived in Belmont my whole life. I now live in the proposed path. At sixty years old I've seen the growth and this is surly overdue yet s new hope can't handle it. In the evening it backs up for half a mile near beaty rd. It would need to be 5 or six lane to be able to function with the catawba crossing to be able to unload gastonia Cramerton to Charlotte. Looks like it's time to sell.
21	Email		1/7/2021	Full steam ahead with the crossing project. Gaston county is so far behind in infrastructure that it is embarrassing to let any one know you live here. I work for myself and a new route into the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area would be a god-send to our area. Kudos to those in Charlotte who have a vision for progress.
22	Email		1/7/2021	The propose new road will cross South Point Road in Belmont what are the plans to improve added congestion to South Point Road from this new proposal?
23	Email		1/8/2021	My family and I live off of South Point Rd close to where this bridge would be built and would be so happy with new route into Mecklenburg county! I enjoy running and would love to have a place close to us to run or bike as well, so the walking path would be wonderful!
24	Email		1/8/2021	Hope you are well and excited the see the project getting underway. I live in Misty Waters just south of the proposed road. Will there be an exit on South Point Road? The way the plan is laid out it seems that it will only exit off New Hope Road, which actually would be preferable as it would keep most of the South Carolina Traffic off Southpoint Road which is busy. Also if all goes well in planning when is estimated completion date. Wont hold you to it but are we looking at 5 or 10 years ?
25	Facebook		1/6/2021	I see a lot of positive differences between this project and past concepts. It seems like this project took citizen concerns into account and is seeking to strike the balance between economic opportunity and concerns about the environment / quality of life. Thanks for requesting more input from citizens! I'm excited for Gaston County's future!
26	MetroQuest	28120	1/6/2021	Public Transit
27	MetroQuest	28052	1/6/2021	Multimodal accommodations are important.
28	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Please evaluate widening South Point road. If 4 lanes are not feasible, 3 lanes may be. The third lane could switch directions at certain times of day based on traffic flow.
29	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	With the expansive growth of Charlotte and surrounding, especially in south gaston county and York counties, this project would be a god send. It would literally save me an hour on my daily commute to and from work (live in South Belmont, work in Charlotte). It would cut down on so much congestion on local roads and 85 and Wilkinson Bridge.
30	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Bike lanes!
31	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Adding light rail and trails to connect to the Carolina Thread trail.
32	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Not needed for a boulevard.
33	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Not sure sidewalks are really needed. The side walks currently being installed on Pole Branch Road in the SC Pennies for Progress, are a waste of money, especially on both sides of the road. The suburbs are too car dependent to get to shopping and amenities. It will be decades before there are enough amenities close by like cities (I.E. South End) to be walkable.
34	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	There are existing boat ramps in Belmont that are sufficient. Kevin Loftin Park by Wilkinson Blvd and down South Point Road by Reflection Pointe. Plus a new marina is being built on South New Hope Road.
35	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	City of Belmont directional signage already in use could be continued.
36	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Incorporating greenway type areas into the design.
37	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Minimize for speed.
38	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	express bus lanes make sense w/ park n ride, not many stops

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
39	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Environmental issues. Consider upgrading existing roadways, most people from Gaston County are headed towards downtown Charlotte area. Cost issues.
40	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Growth in Belmont particularly - especially south point road.
41	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	You must look at a rail link with this project. It should go to the airport and link to Charlotte rail. We gotta get cars off roads for simple things like airport runs. Do NOT force the addition of more stop lights in Belmont....cross over roads, not thru.
42	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	can trucks stay in a single lane?? That is sure needed on other key artieries like 49 and Billy Graham
43	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Please no additional lights when this crosses current roads. Build overpasses
44	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Critical!
45	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	quit talking bus, and start talking Rail!
46	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Yes please!
47	MetroQuest	29710	1/6/2021	Adding bus turn ins at "large bus stops" to allow the remaining traffic to flow is more cost effective than having to add bus lanes on each side. Ideally, you should be coordinating mass transit with new business/residential uses in the River District. Park/Ride or large bus stops could be incorporated in Gaston County at key intersections.
48	MetroQuest	29710	1/6/2021	may be more appropriate in River District
49	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	If this could pass over South Pointe Rd in Belmont it would reduce congestion throught the entire city of Belmont and keep average traveling speeds up, with less stops.
50	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Light rail emphasis, rather than buses
51	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	A barrier would reduce mobility of emergency vehicles when they need to bypass traffic.
52	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Gaston County is experiencing a boom in new housing and the explosion is on the way. Unless you plan to widen 80 miles of two-lane roads in the southeastern portion of Gaston County another route is critical.
53	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Current roads are too narrow to accommodate the existing vehicular traffic
54	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	the more roundabouts the better. keeps traffic flowing
55	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Perhaps in certain areas. It would not be required for the entire roadway. not sure if anyone would use it compared to the cost to build it
56	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Impact of proposed future Lynx line from Gaston County to airport
57	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Continued growth and schools around Southpointj Rd further complicates this 2 lane road which in normal times routinely backs up for miles during "prime time"
58	MetroQuest		1/6/2021	Impact to existing business and residential property / neighborhoods (ie where exactly will the roadways be built and how exactly with their redirect current traffic).
59	MetroQuest	28164	1/6/2021	mass transit along gaston county while connecting to cities and towns
60	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Amazon drivers on Wilkinson are horribly aggressive and add to congestion
61	MetroQuest		1/6/2021	Fix existing crossing first
62	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	This bridge is not needed
63	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	have a north and south entrance to either side of cross river boulevard end points, prefer not to have a stop light for the roads which it will go across.
64	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Please evaluate the age of Wilkinson bridge. Its ridiculous to start new projects when our current bridge is an antique
65	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Where these roads dump their traffic... as a boulevard, this overloads roads on either side not prepared for this new funnel
66	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	This will have a negative impact on the ecology on the water. Plus during May Fly spawning periods can make bridge crossing very dangerous(see the problems with the Cramerton bridge which generates walls of May Flys that drivers cannot see through)
67	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Access to local businesses and delivery services
68	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	I listed this as 5 stars first, but then decided on the grade-separated crossing would be 5 stars and now I can't remove a star. They are close though.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
69	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	There's a lot of traffic on South Point Rd as things stand, especially near the high school (where I live). Often we can't get out of our subdivision because there's so much rush hour traffic and no traffic lights to regulate traffic. I'm in full support of the progress, growth, and development of the area, but NCDOT needs to consider updates to existing roads prior (or during) the bridge expansion. Along similar lines, there's a huge opportunity to futureproof the bridge and local roads for more pedestrian or even rail traffic. Home values and tax dollars will go up if these improvements make the area feel more desirable.
70	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Would also take the light rail if that is made available into Gaston/Belmont
71	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Consider the people who live directly where the road will go. There are many homes in that area. What would happen to them.
72	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	Do not want it
73	MetroQuest	28056	1/6/2021	We need better options and more public transportation. If we want CLT to grow and bring new business, we need to move forward with a better infrastructure.
74	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	How the Catawba Crossings road and increased traffic will impact the frequented cyclists along South New Hope and Southpoint. It is already a heavily-cycled route and tensions are already high for cyclists on those roads.
75	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	The capacity of the surrounding roads should be evaluated to understand if they can meet the increased usage. The proposed improvement crosses many roads heavily used for recreational needs, such as cycling.
76	MetroQuest	28012	1/6/2021	The need is now, 1000's of new homes built or planned around the proposed corridor, time to improve access between Gaston and Mecklenberg counties.
77	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Improve Wilkinson bridge over the Catawba and add pedestrian and bicycle access.
78	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Suggestion would be to look at a crossing further south. I.e. - along the canal by the Allen Steam station. This is a more even split between the Buster Boyd bridge and 74 + 85.
79	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Dedicated, connected bike lanes and sidewalks would bring the area into the 21st century - like DC, San Francisco, and major European cities.
80	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Largely lacking in greater Charlotte area. Any addition of sidewalks: a place to run, walk, take dogs on a stroll are an improvement.
81	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Pedestrians and bicycles are an uncommon sight and unfamiliar to many drivers. Separating unprotected travelers from vehicle traffic would increase safety and usage, and have a greater positive impact as a result.
82	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Excellent boat ramp already available in Belmont, nearby
83	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Additional opportunity for outdoor recreation, exercise would be great.
84	MetroQuest		1/7/2021	Need to consider how this will affect an already congested area. Build, build, build, all about tax dollars and not consumer happiness.
85	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	It is a waste of money and currently not needed. Ask yourself- will it save 5 minutes for me each day? Answer- yes Is it worth 10's of millions of tax payers money for your 5 minutes? Answer- yes, because you are so important that everyone else should bow down 🙇
86	MetroQuest		1/7/2021	Improve current roads in Belmont for more traffic first
87	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Upgrade South New Hope Rd., Armstrong Rd., Armstrong Ford Rd. and South Point Rd. before you even build this. There are already plenty of housing developments in the works for this area. Also even more reckless driving South Carolinians will travel the roads mentioned above to reach Mecklenburg County.
88	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Signalized intersections just add to congestion. But take up less real estate in most situations depending on the design.
89	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Lessens possible traffic congestion, but can take up more real estate.
90	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	No bus line, just raises the crime rate in our communities.
91	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	We have enough technology.
92	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	People still find themselves walking in the road like idiots?
93	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Poor people on foot dodging bicyclists if the bicyclists are not still riding on the main road.
94	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	These buttons always fail and if they are the new mid-street style seen around Mecklenburg County, then drivers will just hit each other and still run over pedestrians.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
95	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Good luck.
96	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	No access problems exist as it is.
97	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	No access problems exist as it is.
98	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	No access problems exist as it is.
99	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	We have plenty of Parks in this part of the County already.
100	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	The County and State is already doing a great job. Do not need a new parkway for speeding cars to hit people walking or biking to Mecklenburg County.
101	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Why?Drivers are already distracted enough... Guess it would be nice if it pays homage to Gaston County's history.
102	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Most of the people will be using this a new way from South Carolina to Mecklenburg County for work...But why not, we need more jobs in Gaston County anyways. Might help boost our local economy.
103	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	need roads improved in Belmont first
104	MetroQuest		1/7/2021	Transit
105	MetroQuest		1/7/2021	This will reduce traffic on 85 and reduce accidents
106	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Just need more options to cross the catawba
107	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Living at the most south point on the Belmont peninsula and having to drive 20 minutes north just to return south is insane. I've been waiting for this project. 1,000,000% in support!
108	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	I feel building another road is not a feasible option as long as we are clear cutting forests to build townhomes, apartments, and neighborhoods with upwards of 800 homes. Building another road is only going to attract more people to move to the area, rendering another road useless as it will stay congested as well.
109	MetroQuest	28013	1/7/2021	Something needs to be done to ease the commuting pain of Gaston County residents who travel to Charlotte for work. Anything that can be done to alleviate the I85 and 485 parking lot should be studied and executed with the utmost haste.
110	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Our current infrastructure is in desperate need of expansion just to catch up to today's housing market growth in Gaston county.
111	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Please create this as quickly as possible as travel seems to be getting worse!
112	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	I feel strongly that improvement/widening needs to be made to both I-85 and Wilkinson bridge. People that live in Belmont and south Gaston County do so knowing that travel to other counties may take longer. It is expected. I am strongly opposed to a third bridge destroying nature and wildlife when improvement could be made to the existing structures.
113	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Alternative routes across the Catawba River into Mecklenburg County
114	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Expanding south point road and new hope road to 4 lanes
115	MetroQuest	28205	1/7/2021	Connection to the Carolina Thread Trail master plan to create better transportation integration and a healthier community through integration and access ease.
116	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	It would be nice to connect the bridge/crossing to existing sidewalk and bike paths on either side of the river (if they exist). It would be nice to have a way from South Belmont to NOT DRIVE and still cross the river on bike.
117	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Include bike lanes
118	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	more traffic circles - less traffic lights
119	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	if you really want to make a difference - use solar technology to harvest sun's energy from the roadways (there are precedents for this)
120	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	less light noise pollution please
121	MetroQuest	28013	1/7/2021	Need options for turns against traffic on York Highway
122	MetroQuest	28034	1/7/2021	the Crossing is vital for the economic growth of Gaston County
123	MetroQuest	29710	1/7/2021	The growth in the area is getting to a point where highway 49 / buster boyd bridge lake Wylie crossing is becoming so congested that either expansion needs to happen along existing route or a new crossing is needed. This project sounds perfect. I'm worried that the route will negatively affect the population who owns homes along the proposed route. It would be good to better understand the specific route of way and to accommodate this population as much as possible otherwise I don't think this will go anywhere.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
124	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Possibly widening Hwy 273 through South Point peninsula to SPHS. Congestion is stifling with the massive uncontrolled growth that Belmont allows, especially on school mornings with the new stoplights (3 within 1/4 mile!!). Equally problematic is that 3 of 4 cars in the mornings show SC plates from drivers seeking to reduce their commute to CLT and who would also benefit from the Catawba Crossing.
125	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	The roadway should maintain the 35mph speed limit of local roadways.
126	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	No, do not make this road look like a highway.
127	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	Buses create traffic congestion, bus lanes use up road space, bus shelters end up being dirty and trashy.
128	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	No, the road should be part of the neighborhood and not look like an interstate.
129	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	Bike access need to be away from cars and please do not put up an ugly cement barrier.
130	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	Not good enough to share bicycle and pedestrian path, provide space for all to walk or ride safely.
131	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	The sidewalk needs to be adequately set back from the road, most walkways are too close to traffic.
132	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	If you want to build a greenway, that's fine. Keep bicycle and pedestrians safe.
133	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	No bridges or tunnels for crosswalks. These areas attract graffiti and trash. Provide safety islands for people cross the street.
134	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	In this whole survey, there has been no discussion about environmental impact. Isn't that why the previous project was withdrawn? Protection of the Catawba River and surrounding natural area should be a primary concern.
135	MetroQuest	28120	1/7/2021	Do not build an ugly, cement barrier road. It should have a lot of landscape and green space.
136	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Bring the light rail to Belmont NC
137	Email		1/8/2021	Excellent plan to provide an additional route from Hwy 279 to Hwy 160. I support this project.
138	Email		1/8/2021	That project would be great to alleviate traffic on Hwy 49, since a lot of the traffic comes from Gaston County. Where the new road crosses the creek and river, it would be great to add access for boating and recreation.
139	Email		1/8/2021	Yes we need this!!!!
140	Email		1/8/2021	Are you ABSOLUTELY sure this is not another toll road because what Mecklenburg County residents got on 77 north is a miserable failure.
141	Email		1/8/2021	This is a wonderful plan for the citizens to travel in a safer more timely manner and will help alleviate current traffic issues!
142	Email		1/8/2021	I am in favor of this project. We desperately need commute relief in our area. Thank you for this serious consideration.
143	Email		1/8/2021	Loved the idea, having lived in Belmont for a few years thinking how easy it would be to go from Belmont to Carowinds by avoiding 485! This should be a no brainer project!
144	Email		1/8/2021	I would like to know specifically where this new road crosses South Point Road in Belmont. The map on your website does not specify which properties are affected near South Point Road. I have concerns about the historic landmark of the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church Cemetery on Tucker Road and South Point Road.
145	Email		1/8/2021	I approve of this project with great hope it comes to fruition.
146	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	HWY 273/South Point Rd needs to be widened
147	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Need to reduce signals
148	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	No bike lane should be part of this as the main roads are State Highways
149	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	The purpose of this is to help traffic - so I do not support Pedestrian access
150	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Light rail and direct access to the airport.
151	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Consideration should be given to signal timing and accommodate peak and off-peak flow.
152	MetroQuest	28056	1/7/2021	The feeder roads which our "jack-off" clownty commissioners refuse to widen despite rubber-stamping multiple developments over the years. Maybe using their political contributions from developers could help fund these necessary road projects.
153	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Gaston County is the next population boom. With access to 321, South Carolina, and the CLT Airport, housing requests are sky high. 273 and 274 cannot hold the traffic.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
154	MetroQuest	28214	1/7/2021	This is not needed.
155	MetroQuest	28205	1/7/2021	Streetcar and or light rail
156	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Please consider expanding south point road if you move forward with this. It seems like this will significantly impact an already congested road especially in the morning!
157	MetroQuest	28012	1/7/2021	Bike lanes
158	MetroQuest	28056	1/8/2021	if you MUST build this road then the secondary roads will need improvement. Remember when 485 was built to dump onto hwy 49. it was a parking lot every day until 49 was widened to 4 lanes.
159	MetroQuest	28056	1/8/2021	remove bike lanes from standard transporation routes.
160	MetroQuest	28056	1/8/2021	traffic circles seem to make more sense than signals. intersections should all have turning lanes
161	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	We already get too many cars from South Carolina and the reaffix on S New Hope is terrible. My fear is this will bring even more commuters through here.
162	MetroQuest	28056	1/8/2021	Preserving natural areas & conservation so we can continue to enjoy these areas that are so important for our quality of life, environmental & water quality, and future generations.
163	MetroQuest	28056	1/8/2021	Natural space is very important to preserving habitat & quality of life!
164	Email		1/8/2021	I am not in favor of this project, The South New Hope Road is not capable of handling all the extra traffic. This project would change the surrounding rural charm of the community and add tremendous pressure on existing roads. This will not improve the area for the people who live in the New South Road area.
165	Email		1/8/2021	I feel alternate crossings are needed and i agree with this project.
166	Email		1/8/2021	This is a much needed project. There's way too much traffic flowing across 49 today. There needs to be more options to handle traffic across the lake.
167	Email		1/8/2021	Traffic congestion in Lake Wylie is unbearable. Inlive just off 49, and the flow of traffic is smooth and flows quickly until buster boyd, an alternative route would be a blessing for our commuters and weekend traffic.
168	Email		1/8/2021	Oh yes, yes and yes. This would be great for the community
169	Email		1/8/2021	Very important to add another bridge! Adding additional trails and access to the Catawba river would be a great addition to the project!
170	Email		1/8/2021	Yes yes yes...as so.eone who lived in mclean, to go far north or far south to get to the east aide of the lake wastes time and has. The entire 485, 85, belmont area on 85S is ridiculous
171	Email		1/8/2021	I encourage any alternative to going over the Buster Boyd bridge. It is a living nightmare!
172	Email		1/8/2021	Should have been done years ago as part of Garden Parkway but somehow was voted down. New Road is inevitable to relieve I-85 and 485 as widening does not relieve the back-up when there is an accident on 85 (every morning)
173	Email		1/8/2021	Yes, let's get it going!!!
174	Email		1/9/2021	I am in favor of the project as long as it is not a damn toll road. We pay the highest gas tax in the Southeast and if the money is not embezzled by the legislature, it should be sufficient to fund the project. If you try to force a toll road on us I will do everything in my power to thwart you.
175	Email		1/9/2021	With the Belmont area already expanding quickly due to lower housing costs,another bridge over the Catawba would definitely take a great deal of pressure off I-85, Wilkinson Blvd. and Rt. 49. Also many people live in the western 10 mile area Between Wilkinson Blvd. and Hwy 49 who would greatly benefit with the additional bridge. I am one of those folks!
176	Email		1/9/2021	I live in Belmont and have worked in Gastonia for more than 25 years. This project is essential and would be enormously helpful. I would hope that New Hope would have an additional lane at least between the seven oaks bridge and this crossing. I also think an additional lane north beyond Cramerton middle school should be in the plans. If approved the traffic volume on this crossing will rapidly grow as Gaston county will surely see a population growth. Something like this has been in the works for 25 years. Thank you for your persistence, it's past time to move forward.
177	Email		1/9/2021	With all the growth in the past 15yrs we need to find a faster way for first responders and residents to be able to travel to and from the hospitals in Charlotte from Clover/York County the Buster Boy Bridge always backed up and going 85 also.
178	Email		1/9/2021	This is a great idea
179	Email		1/9/2021	Long time overdue, I support this project 100%
180	Email	The Oaks at Clover	1/9/2021	I am all for a new bridge. The traffic on 49 and 274 is unbearable. It is also a safety issue. One major way in and out of Clover/Lake Wylie is ridiculous.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
181	Email		1/9/2021	<p>I would like to participate in the discussion. I feel the proposed path is not far off at all. Please let me know what else I may need to do.</p> <p>The following items I feel are crucial:</p> <p>Limit stop lights to keep traffic moving freely from 485 to 279. This will make the crossing more appealing. Bike and pedestrian I would like to see as a secondary item. This is more about traffic flow. It would be nice to have a bike or pedestrian lane to cross the river between trails.</p>
182	Email		1/9/2021	This would be so great as a much needed way to cross the river/lake.
183	Email		1/9/2021	I have to cross Catawba River daily for work. This project would help ease conjunction on Rt 85 which has daily backups. My husband crosses Lake Wylie on Rt 49 daily for work and there is always heavy traffic there as well. This project would help both our commutes.
184	Email		1/10/2021	Having another option for crossing the Catawba between the I85/Wilkinson blvd routes or having to travel through Lake Wylie from Gaston County is a great idea. It will distribute the traffic flowing between the two counties and provide options for accessing I485 and the airport.
185	Email		1/10/2021	I more than welcome this project. I live in SE Gaston County and commute to Charlotte for work. Right now I have to drive at least 10 extra minutes north to 74 to get to work. This route has the potential to make my commute a lot easier.
186	Email	Lake Wylie, SC	1/10/2021	I live in Lake Wylie, SC and work at the CLT airport. The distance is about 15 miles, but it normally takes me 50 minutes to 1 hour to get to and from work. This proposal would decrease my drive time significantly, while freeing up the traffic congestion on hwy 49 and 160 to and from the airport. The area around Steele Creek continues to explode in growth, with no visible solution to the traffic congestion. This project would certainly remedy a large portion of that traffic.
187	Email		1/10/2021	Let's get it done the sooner the better.
188	Email		1/10/2021	my family has lived off of south point road on reese wilson since 1890. We have been served by the same 2 lane road since. The traffic has gone from knowing almost everyone who passed you to what it is today with very little road improvement.
189	Email		1/10/2021	This proposed bridge/blvd is a much needed improvement. Many days I have sat in backed up traffic on 74 as 85 is at a stand still also, thinking we really need another bridge if not just for emergency vehicles. Fires, tornados, hurricanes could create a dire need for more options to get across the catawba. I have one suggestion. Think about a additional foot path with maybe a flowering bridge, something like what the Lake Lure community has done.
190	Email		1/10/2021	Great idea long overdue
191	Email		1/11/2021	If approved when Will we start ? And when will it be finished?? And when will we start the most western side ?
192	Email		1/11/2021	I vote against the roadway. The whole idea is absurd!!!!
193	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	Roundabouts are always preferred.
194	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	Drivers have enough distractions, technology has not advanced enough to have a high importance at the moment.
195	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	Dangerous
196	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	Cyclists prefer striped/marked lanes.
197	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	The flow of traffic on this corridor should not need to stop for pedestrians at any time. Building pedestrian bridges would be a lot safer.
198	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	There needs to be something closer to Hwy. 49
199	MetroQuest	29745	1/8/2021	Potential improvements/enhancements to the existing roadways to supplement this project.
200	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	This one project is by far most valuable. Widening I85 would be just OK due to the lengthy construction time which also comes with often substantial traffic/travel delays. The intersection of I85 & I485 is an accident waiting to happen ...daily!
201	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	This Catawba River Crossing is by far the most important. Widening I85 is an option but does not solve or address the problem AND it comes with construction nightmares that last years.
202	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	Not another I77 project!

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
203	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	I just want more than 1-2 ways to get around the same area. We need better options.
204	MetroQuest	29745	1/8/2021	Another bridge across the Catawba river in south Rock Hill. Dave Lyle Blvd.
205	MetroQuest	29732	1/8/2021	improve south new hope road and intersection at bethel crossroads and hwy 9
206	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Light rail
207	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	Help reduce commute time
208	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	Public transportation in the Belmont area
209	MetroQuest	28273	1/8/2021	Please d not waste money on this
210	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Inclusion of Light Rail crossing for the river to add to connectivity
211	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	The growth in the area is increasing dramatically. Developments have vessels leading into a major hwy arterie that is very congested. A 15 minute drive takes 45-60 min during work week.
212	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	More light rail east and west
213	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	Wide path for bicycles and runners to use. Make multiple road entrances so vehicles from multiple directions and areas can get to this corridor.
214	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	Keep traffic moving onto and off Of the new road. Traffic lights slow traffic at major impact times.
215	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Make sure it is wide enough to accommodate growing population!
216	MetroQuest		1/8/2021	Bicycles
217	MetroQuest	28054	1/8/2021	The effexts of this
218	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Greenway, trail systems can both benefit society. We need more of these all over this area.
219	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Build an adequate sized bridge to accommodate future growth and prevent additional construction in the next 10 years.
220	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Prepare for future volumes to avoid construction delays when upgrading later!
221	MetroQuest	28012	1/8/2021	You need to evaluate the roads leading to your planned route. Just like the toll road to now where there will be as many or more traveling So.New Hope & Sopoint. roads AND BOTH ARE 2 LANES & NO WAY FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES TO GET AROUND TRAFFICE OR AN INCIDENT DUE TO NOT ENUFF FLAT GROUND ON THE SIDES...THERE ARE GULLIES FOR WATER RUN OFF. Apparently what we discussed at all those toll road meetings is going to be ignored with this project too....
222	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	Relieve traffic on 85 in McAdenville and Belmont also Buster Boyd on Charlotte hwy.
223	MetroQuest	29710	1/8/2021	It would be nice to restrict semi trucks as they fan out onto secondary roads ruining them with potholes and noise
224	MetroQuest	29745	1/8/2021	Better travel time to CLT.
225	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Hwy 49 does not have enough capacity
226	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	The existing traffic lights need to be synchronized
227	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Nobody cares about their 2 hour commute having pretty landscaping
228	MetroQuest		1/9/2021	Frequency of red light runners. It's terrible between steele creek and Gastonia
229	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Widen South Point Rd
230	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Light rail from Charlotte
231	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Fix the potholes!!
232	MetroQuest	28013	1/9/2021	Make sure construction and long term water flow changes do not reduce water depth on neither the Southfork nor the Catawba Rivers.
233	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Please ensure the project is built for current and future needs. If there is a choice between 4 or 6 lanes, choose the larger option as Belmont has exploded with growth.
234	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	I think a light rail system would be fantastic.
235	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Connecting the crime area to our community will devastate Belmont, keep the criminals on their side of the river
236	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Gated communities
237	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	No bike or paths, no access for criminals
238	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	No access to our community
239	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	No access to our community

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
240	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	If I want this stuff I'll drive to it, not in our community
241	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	No traffic lights. This should be more like an interstate highway and less like a local road—traffic lights only serve to slow traffic through traffic. This road would be a commuter highway to facilitate travel across the natural obstacles (the lake) and should allow for smooth travel from one side of the lake to the other.
242	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	I have lived in Lake Wylie for 13 years. We moved here for 1. The lake 2. A 30 minute commute to uptown 3. Access to airport. Due to growth traveling into uptown is no longer an option. What took 30 minutes on hey 49 is now 1 and 15. If there is an accident it could take 2 hrs. I highly support this project.
243	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	We have a lot of roads in this region with a lot of traffic lights, multi business entrance/exit and crossings. This proposed corridor should limit those elements to provide a easy, direct access to uptown.
244	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	IMHO: If it doesn't have a pedestrian/bike lane - don't build it.
245	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Fix the routes we have by increasing the lanes. NC roads in southern Gaston county are bad and don't consider growth. Do need another crossing to Charlotte area. Expand I85 and widen new hope and south point road first.
246	MetroQuest	29745	1/9/2021	How about we fix what we have that's already crumbling apart. We do need new roads. We need the ones we have fixed.
247	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Waste of money
248	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Bike only lanes could be shared with pedestrians and turned into a feature / trail for families to use as opposed to solely focusing on bike commuters (which would be minimal near this side of the Charotte metro area)
249	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	Right next to the retired coal plant. I don't think anyone wants that kind of liability
250	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	This is the type of feature that can combine the practical features (help for commuters on south Point rd) with making it an attractive feature to visit for Gaston / Mecklenburg / York county residents
251	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Less apartment buildings
252	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Speed of cars traveling on current routes is excessive and there should be traffic cameras to ticket speeding drivers.
253	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	huge growth west of charlotte
254	MetroQuest	28012	1/9/2021	What route? The garden parkway route was flawed.
255	MetroQuest	29710	1/9/2021	Traffic is so bad that I plan on selling my house to move to an area that is less congested. The construction of new housing is absolutely ridiculous, our roads were not built to handle all the cars on the road now and they keep building.
256	MetroQuest	28278	1/9/2021	South New Hope is still only 2 lane and this could create extra traffic problems in an area that does not capacity or resources to handle it. To say the LEAST of Steele Creek Road which is a NIGHTMARE now. Hard to assess since 160 is STILL only 2-lane and a misery to drive on.
257	MetroQuest	29710	1/10/2021	The steel creek shopping center should have something similar made off 321 in clover so people don't have to go across bridge for shopping/target. This would also alleviate traffic since there's nothing for clover area.
258	MetroQuest	28279	1/10/2021	160 can't handle the numbers of cars today. Without widening and enhancing, no more cars need to be added in addition to the population growth.
259	MetroQuest	29710	1/10/2021	Bus routes.
260	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	The idea that anyone will be utilizing the Catawba Crossing to travel via bike or by walking is the lowest priority that should be evaluated. The crossing needs to be utilized to divert SC traffic into Charlotte away from I-85/US-74.
261	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	No bike lanes!
262	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	The need for this connection should have little to nothing to do with bike lanes.
263	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	Creek oriented greenways are the most used pedestrian facilities in any non-urban area. This should be a completely separate item from this roadway project. Adding these additional items to the crossing will only ruin the feasibility by increasing cost.
264	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	Again, this should be a completely separate item to the roadway project.
265	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	This proposed roadway will threaten the lifestyle, real estate values, and amenities enjoyed in Belmont, by bridging higher crime rate areas in western Meck county with Gaston county. This project is totally unnecessary and is also a threat to the Catawba river system, with increased vehicular pollution and roadside trash.
266	MetroQuest	28278	1/10/2021	I am not in support of the current road location. Take advantage of the power line areas instead of established residences and adjoining property.
267	MetroQuest	28278	1/10/2021	I don't want more traffic flowing through our area. Wilkinson is a couple of miles away.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
268	MetroQuest		1/10/2021	Yes. Without any plans to widen New Hope Road this plan is doomed from the start. For those of us who live on New Hope it will not only create unmanageable traffic congestion, it will provide easy access for the criminal element from the metro Charlotte area to our relatively peaceful neighborhoods. These are two of the same reasons the toll road was killed. I vote a resounding NO for this project!!!
269	MetroQuest		1/10/2021	Dedicated public transportation
270	MetroQuest	28012	1/10/2021	Light rail
271	MetroQuest	28056	1/11/2021	Traffic impact on South Point & New Hope Roads in Gastonia. Little residential to be impacted on the Charlotte side!
272	MetroQuest	29745	1/11/2021	No more traffic lights. Please. In 9 years, the number of traffic lights between my house and office has gone from 5 to 13.
273	MetroQuest	28056	1/11/2021	Prioritize light rail connections. This would take a load off current and future roads.
274	Email		1/11/2021	I believe the crossing should focus on moving as many people as possible in an orderly fashion. This area is already overwhelmed with traffic due to the lack of foresight in the transportation department. We are inundated with new residential developments with no consideration given to infrastructure. New Hope road needs to move to a minimum of four lanes, the two lane stretch from the Gastonia city limits to the SC line is absolutely atrocious . The crossing cannot come soon enough.
275	Email		1/11/2021	How will this new plan affect South Point Road? Will this be an at grade interchange with a traffic signal? How will we keep the crime in Charlotte? Steele Creek is very active with crime. This will add direct access to our safe communities.
276	Email		1/12/2021	I just wanted to voice my support of this connection across the lake. I think it would help provide another option to get to belmont when both 85 and Wilkinson are heavily backed up with traffic.
277	Email		1/12/2021	Catawba Crossing is certainly something that will be beneficial. HOWEVER, the roads in Gaston Co. everywhere and bridges should be repaired first and the need is great, then in 10 years or so look at Crossing or yet get a private company to build a toll road for catawba crossing.
278	MetroQuest	28052	1/11/2021	The new Amazon fulfillment center on Wilkinson is causing an absurd about of traffic with the 18 wheelers and endless number of delivery vans. If a light rail is planned to travel from CLT Douglass airport then the space/ infrastructure for that should be considered. Adding a bus lane to the entire length of the new boulevard should be considered to improve public transport options and reliability.
279	MetroQuest	28052	1/11/2021	More lanes will just fill up with more traffic. More lanes is not the long term solution.
280	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	would like to see at a minimum
281	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	shouldn't need
282	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	Shouldn't need
283	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	this is never a good idea
284	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	bridge preferred
285	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	Cars and cycle lanes seem to make the most sense. Light rail is already proposed for the Wilkinson Blvd. corridor and these types of rail projects have been shown to have little impact on vehicular traffic. Wilkinson and I-85 need relief from vehicular traffic and the southern portion of Gaston County needs an alternate route since Highway 49 in SC and both the I-85 and Wilkinson Blvd. highways are not convenient. Most of the growth in Gaston Co. is occurring in the Southeast quadrant of the county and small, secondary roads must be used to access the major crossings into Mecklenburg county. This puts undue pressure on the secondary road infrastructure.
286	MetroQuest	28054	1/11/2021	I85 south merger fro 485 inner, should be one lane from the beginning. Two lanes running down the ramp and merging with one and and on ramp and then merging to i85 is a mess and poor planning.
287	MetroQuest	28164	1/11/2021	Sufficient travel speed. I see the proposals state a 45mph speed limit. Wilkinson Blvd already exists with a 45mph speed limit, but is unable to flow sufficient traffic to offset I-85 congestion. Any new artery should be able to support traffic at 60+mph and have dedicated entry/exit points to prevent stop and go of intersections.
288	MetroQuest	28021	1/11/2021	Congestion that will occur in Belmont and in Mecklenburg County in the new River District. Please make sure the NCDOT takes care to put the necessary road infrastructure in place to alleviate the traffic congestion that will come to these two areas. Definitely need the Catawba Crossing for the current traffic congestion that already exists today!
289	MetroQuest	29710	1/11/2021	I don't even shop or go to Charlotte, NC if I don't have to. I've moved all my family activities, doctors, shopping elsewhere. I moved here 15 years ago and loved being able to get to Charlotte quick. NOT ANYMORE!! I hate the congestion. I don't even want to drive in my area between 3:30 and 7 pm any more. The traffic here is insane now. Cuts my options in everything I do to a small area now. Not sure if I want to retire here anymore!!!
290	MetroQuest		1/11/2021	Economic Development

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
291	MetroQuest	28056	1/11/2021	Population on South New Hope is outrageous without adding extra traffic. This is from Red Bud down to the SC line, due to housings growth.
292	MetroQuest	28012	1/11/2021	the I85 interchanges at Exit 27 and 26 would not clog up so badly if the lanes were not switched right before each exit and uphill stretch. This could be corrected instead of creating the new bridge and interchanges.
293	Email		1/12/2021	I think that it's great how you're approaching the public comment phase of this project. I think that preserving nature, keeping as many roadside trees, or trees within the median as possible would be nice. I also think that bike paths and walking paths would be incredible. Beauty and functionality. While embracing the rural character of our community and allowing for healthy growth and connectivity without radically impacting the community character.
294	Email		1/12/2021	Supporting this project.
295	Email		1/12/2021	I remember one a few years back. Why another?
296	Email		1/12/2021	A bridge over the Catawba river is long overdue to relieve the traffic congestion from South Point Road. The building on the peninsula is out of control and current roads and access to Charlotte is a must! Also, with the growing population I think it becomes a safety issue – in the event of an emergency getting off the South Point peninsula would be impossible. Currently only one way off. This needs to be a priority of state and local government to remedy this issue asap.
297	Email		1/12/2021	I just wanted to voice my support of this connection across the lake. I think it would help provide another option to get to Belmont when both 85 and Wilkinson are heavily backed up with traffic. I commute to Matthews every day, and I think this would reduce my commute.
298	Email		1/12/2021	Something has to be done to improve traffic flow. I support a solution like this.
299	Email	Woodland Bay	1/12/2021	I think a scaled down version that offers more amenities to the local residents (bike and pedestrian access), plus is lower scale and not like having a big highway in our backyard is the way to go. I think you will have to look at taking 279 up to four lanes from 85 to this parkway or you will introduce a headache to our local area since this will become a favorite bailout alternative if 85 is untenable. Thanks for working this and good luck.
300	Email		1/12/2021	Please, please build this for us! We are residents of Belmont. Our son goes to the doctor several times a week in Steele Creek and the drive is 25 minutes each way without traffic. An alternate route to this area would be beneficial to so many people.
301	Email		1/12/2021	There is already too much traffic around southpointe road, and this will bring in more undesirables from the Steele Creek area. I hope this fails.
302	Email	Belmont, NC	1/12/2021	I live in Misty Waters subdivision. I just moved here in he past 6 months from Matthews/Mint Hill area. I appreciate the thoughts gone into Catawba Crossings. Here are a few of my thoughts. The road would relieve the heavily congested 85 south and both directions of Wilkerson Blvd A must are the bike trails and recreational points along the way. It would be incredible if the trails tied into Carolina Thread or Mecklenburg Co existing bike paths Make sure and zone the road frontage on both sides to build the new look of the region rather than unplanned scattered haphazard Limit stoplights and maximize exit and entrance lanes. Thanks for having the vision to propose such a needed access road for the future of the region.
303	Email		1/12/2021	I think it would be great to include a parallel, bidirectional cycling path.
304	Email		1/12/2021	South New Hope Road would need to be expanded to accommodate the traffic. Currently as a 2 lane road it is usually crowded when school is in session - prior to the pandemic.
305	Email	Belmont, NC	1/13/2021	I am a Belmont resident and like this plan, along with the sidewalks, bike routes, and access to the thread trail.
306	Email		1/13/2021	Nothing is being said about the impact on New Hope Rd. and it's residents! To maintain the amount of traffic that this project will generate, a 2 lane road will not suffice. My quiet neighborhood at McLean is going to be destroyed as well as property values. I'm all for progress, however, at what price? It sounds like this is a "done" deal and you're just pandering to the locals so that we will feel as though you're actually going to listen to our input
307	Email		1/13/2021	Interesting project and would have a positive impact all around. Sounds good to me.
308	Email		1/13/2021	Very excited about the prospect of this project. I think it will be extremely helpful to have a closer crossing rather than going into SC or all the way up to 85. I also think it will greatly help the traffic on 85 and locally as well.
309	MetroQuest		1/12/2021	Public Transit

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
310	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Prepare in your planning now for what a 2035 future experiencing the impacts of climate change and hopefully nearer future potential of changes in laws and behaviors attempting to mitigate these impacts. Planning for car parks with vehicle charging stations and bridges built to include dedicated public transportation lines of the most sophisticated and green technologies, in addition to any programs possible to support pedestrian and bike traffic.
311	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	This seems like it would have a larger impact on the environment. Given that this would be involving two rivers and impact to neighborhoods, I'd rank this at the bottom of the options.
312	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Light rail too. By 2035, this could be something that is being considered, so plan your infrastructure to be adaptable now to this possibility.
313	MetroQuest	29710	1/12/2021	Public transportstion
314	MetroQuest	28278	1/12/2021	I think connecting the light rail from Belmont, to the airport, to uptown Charlotte to UNCC area would have a huge impact to traffic and congestion as well
315	MetroQuest	29710	1/12/2021	Would be nice to have mix of signals and some ramps for heavier traffic roads
316	MetroQuest	29710	1/12/2021	I don't like bikes on roadways.
317	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Light rail
318	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	buses, light rail
319	MetroQuest		1/12/2021	Easy access to Stowe Botanical
320	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Develop and add an on/off ramp on SouthPointe Rd.
321	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	No...need to be avoided or contemporary and smart...not historical standard.
322	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Needs to be a top priority. Smart technology will impact efficiency and safety.
323	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Not a good idea...significant safety hazard.
324	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Safest and most user friendly option.
325	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	How can s new hope road, which is only two lanes and has many residences along it, accommodate the inflow headed towards the proposed crossing?? It must be widened and have more restricted access
326	MetroQuest	28912	1/12/2021	Light rail line as alternative to buses
327	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Consider roundabouts where possible. Better traffic flow vs. signals
328	MetroQuest	29710	1/12/2021	roundabouts are better
329	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Population growth in Belmont area
330	MetroQuest		1/12/2021	Access to airport (which i use frequently from Belmont) is always a toss-up between I-85, US-74 and other back roads. It can take 15 minutes on a good day to over an hour. It also takes a long time to get to Ballantyne and S. Charlotte from the Belmont area due to congestion on S. Tryon/construction on Pole Branch Rd or typical I-85/I-485 traffic
331	MetroQuest	28012	1/12/2021	Housing Developments. Future population growth.
332	MetroQuest	28214	1/13/2021	It seems so close to I-85 and 29/74. Would it not serve better if a mule or two farther south?
333	MetroQuest	28057	1/13/2021	Add another bridge over the Catawba River is essential.
334	MetroQuest	28054	1/13/2021	1. I-85 widening is a higher priority that would serve MANY more users and should absolutely be done first 2. Access to Catawba Crossings from Gastonia via New Hope Road needs to be improved- more lanes including turn lanes to improve throughput into and out of Catawba Crossings
335	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	Really want an alternate that relieves traffic congestion on I-85 and South Point Rd, Belmont
336	MetroQuest	28056	1/13/2021	Protect greenspace, the quality of the water, and other natural settings
337	MetroQuest	28056	1/13/2021	Just need another way across the river.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
338	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	While quicker and more direct access to work and recreational locations is primary, please add a mulit-use bike and walking paths, preferably connecting Carolina Thread trail when possible
339	Email		1/13/2021	Absolutely 100% for this!!! Anything to help ease traffic through Lake Wylie/ Buster Boyd Bridge area!! Let's fast track this as it is already way past necessary!!
340	Email		1/13/2021	Great idea
341	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	Travel up and down South Point Road, access from South Belmont to 85
342	MetroQuest		1/13/2021	Access to hospitals.
343	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	Widening of South Point road and Armstrong Road. New hope will need widening also at least at the point of jumping on and off the catawba crossing
344	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	The less lights the better
345	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	What's happened with the train?
346	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	It could be the backway into the airport?
347	MetroQuest	28101	1/13/2021	EV lanes
348	MetroQuest	29710	1/13/2021	Hwy 49 is becoming very dangerous, speeding, running red lights, pulling out in front of people, impatient drivers, traffic volume had easily quadrupled in the last 2 years, poorly maintained roads, unsightly trash, lots of noise pollution from pickup trucks with no mufflers
349	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	Impact to property values in the affected area. Will this increase crime due to increased access?
350	MetroQuest	28120	1/13/2021	Another crossing near Mt Holly and 485 area.
351	MetroQuest		1/13/2021	Future growth- budget now with Future \$\$ not current cost of \$\$
352	MetroQuest	28032	1/13/2021	Mass Transit should be considered. How does the proposed light rail expansion into Gaston County effect the need for this project?
353	MetroQuest	28086	1/13/2021	Entrepreneurship Opportunity along the corridor
354	MetroQuest	28086	1/13/2021	This should be an open road that is an easy alternative. Design it as a by way, not a city road
355	MetroQuest	28086	1/13/2021	Do not waste taxpayer money on digital boards. Road signs work just fine
356	MetroQuest	29710	1/13/2021	Preserving natural spaces.
357	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	Light rail Charlotte to Belmont
358	MetroQuest	28012	1/13/2021	RAIL
359	Email		1/14/2021	The area needs another bridge across the Catawba River. A greenway would be nice.
360	Email		1/14/2021	I am curious as to what neighborhoods will be affected?
361	Email		1/14/2021	We don't need a bridge between south Gaston County and Mecklenburg County. Nobody goes to south Gaston County now. If you build this bridge you will just be adding to suburban sprawl. In the process you will be adding to the detrimental quality of Lake Wylie, the South Fork, and the Catawba River. Everyone says the Catawba River is the crown jewel of the area, why would you want to add to the detriment of this jewel? This bridge will add to the sediment problems, the garbage problems, the pollution problems, congestion problems, etc. Better you add a rail line along Wilkinson between Belmont and Charlotte.
362	Email		1/14/2021	love this idea hope you can put this together and make it happen
363	Email		1/15/2021	We really need another bridge!!! Very excited to hear we may get one.
364	MetroQuest	28278	1/14/2021	Boater traffic
365	MetroQuest	28054	1/14/2021	In taking into account the reliability of the time to travel, please take into account the stress of driving on heavily travelled highways.
366	MetroQuest	28012	1/14/2021	How mwill the intersections at HWY 273 and 279. They should be an overpass. A stop light will just back up all traffic. What changes will be made to 273 and 274 at these intersections?
367	MetroQuest	28078	1/14/2021	Another outer loop from Mooresville down parallel 150 then through Lincoln County around Vale down across 85 then loop through York County, Union County into Stanley county back to Mooresville
368	MetroQuest		1/14/2021	Accomodate light rail
369	MetroQuest		1/14/2021	Dark sky lighting only

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
370	MetroQuest	28012	1/14/2021	Will this increase the option of and start time of the light rail project beginning?
371	MetroQuest		1/15/2021	bicycle lanes
372	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	Overuse of currently rural roads such as S. New Hope and Southpoint Roads. They are getting crowded and creating this crossing will further endanger residents already living in the area. Plus the environmental dangers from building the two bridges will be high.
373	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	If it must be built, limited access is necessary to be safe.
374	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	As much as I would like to make this a higher rating, buses just don't get used as promised by the folks promoting them.
375	YouTube		1/8/2021	Where on south New hope rd will catawba crossings start?
376	Email	Belmont, NC	1/18/2021	I live south of Daniel Stowe Gardens and I will hate to see South New Hope turn into a major travel connection between the new road and the South Carolina border. I don't sense there are that many people on York county are going to travel north to cross into Charlotte when they have several other avenues to access Charlotte. Please address the increased travel on S. New Hope Rd.
377	Email		1/17/2021	While bike lanes and walking pathways with exercise equipment stops are nice, they should be in the long range plan with the primary focus at the start being the highway traffic. As a Lake Wylie resident, the Buster Boyd bridge is way over burdened and this plan excites me althoughm at age 70 I'm not sure Ill ever see completion based on past history of highway projects. ;)
378	Email	Belmont, NC	1/16/2021	<p>I'm a resident of Gaston County and believe the Catawba crossing project would be an extreme benefit to the area and surrounding communities. The benefits are pretty obvious in my opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less conjection on existing roads will improvement public safety - Less travel time to Charlotte will enhance quality of life for residents and open up broader options for employment, medical facilities, and education. <p>I see no downside the continuation of this project. From the conceptual design phase I think it would expand the Gaston country business if bike paths and hiking trails were made available. This would allow for Charlotte residents to access these areas also and would expand (particularly the Belmont) commerce. Exits should be available to the waterfront area and also to/from Route 273.</p> <p>This is a tremendous opportunity to expand the local infrastructure to avoid leaving surrounding areas out of the Charlotte expansion and to enhance the quality of life and economics for individuals on both sides of the river.</p>
379	Email		1/15/2021	<p>I am so glad to see this project begin. I commute from Dallas to north Charlotte (northlake mall area) and back each weekday. Having another bridge to connect Gaston and Mecklenburg will offer relief to the stressed 485/85south interchange that has gotten extremely congested, even during non-rush hour times. When there are any traffic disruptions, and this has become a daily occurrence, it will offer additional options for commuters to circumvent the delays and arrive safely on time.</p> <p>As an avid outdoorsman who enjoys cycling and kayaking, I would very much want to see recreational amenities added to the project for water access (blueway) and localized multi-use trail on either or both sides of the river.</p>
380	Email		1/15/2021	This looks awesome!
381	Email	Gastonia, NC	1/15/2021	<p>Absolutely needed, long overdue. Not sure of the numbers, but VERY many vehicles cross the three bridges (rt 27; I-85; & rt74).</p> <p>One of them is already way inadequate for its share. Should any one of them be disabled long term (months) it could destroy much commerce. Another ADEQUATE crossing of the river is an absolute must.</p> <p>Please proceed with much haste.</p>
382	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	If there is to be a boat access point, then it should be well lit for easier low light launching and to reduce theft.
383	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	Increased crime rate, reduced quality of life and added congestion to the areas this roadway will traverse. This will be very detrimental to those areas. The area does not need this bridge or the extra traffic and crime.
384	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	It needs to family friendly.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
385	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	as far from the road as possible
386	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	Increased traffic flow from SC coming up 274 through Armstrong Rd and Southpoint Rd. All are already stressed at 2 lanes
387	MetroQuest	28012	1/15/2021	Divert SC drivers from Belmont. They never follow speed limits and are aggressive about it.
388	MetroQuest	28056	1/16/2021	Please plan for enough lanes as there is booming growth.
389	MetroQuest	28012	1/16/2021	The amount of traffic already on south point road. This traffic will become an even bigger problem than it already is with schools and developments being added to this road.
390	MetroQuest		1/16/2021	Don't ruin our neighborhoods by running excessive amounts of traffic through them.
391	MetroQuest	28012	1/16/2021	Safety in the event of a mass evacuation incident, which is especially important with a nuclear power facility within a few miles of the proposed Catawba Crossings bridges.
392	MetroQuest	28012	1/16/2021	Very important to have high-tech (smart) signal system to move traffic efficently.
393	MetroQuest	28012	1/16/2021	NO!
394	MetroQuest	28056	1/16/2021	Consider lanes where traffic direction can be reversed using signaling. More lanes could travel east in morning and more could travel west in evening to better align available road space with commuter traffic.
395	MetroQuest	28214	1/16/2021	An additional corridor would relieve the overcrowding on I-85 and Wilkinson Blvd bridges.
396	MetroQuest	28054	1/17/2021	The number of lanes coming off 485 west o ton 1 85 south. 485 drops to one lane to merge onto I 85 and it slows traffic.
397	MetroQuest		1/17/2021	Widening of old 74 bridge at Catawba river
398	MetroQuest	28278	1/17/2021	With the forthcoming River District (which doesn't plan to build river access), there will need to be another public marina facility. All marinas on Lake Wylie are already full with waiting lists. There needs to be more. I have tried to get Duke to approve land for Marina use with no luck. It would make sense that the new Catawba Crossing include a marina facility at the river's edge.
399	MetroQuest	28032	1/17/2021	How disruptive is it to existing residential property and the negative impact on their home values. Just concerned that is might go through a well established neighborhood from the point of view of a realtor
400	MetroQuest	28012	1/17/2021	Light Rail
401	MetroQuest	28056	1/17/2021	I really believe that a high speed rail between Gastonia and downtown Charlotte would get significant use and ease the congestion on the only 3 corridors that are now available. The proposed Catawba crossing (which I wholeheartedly support) should have been built 40+ years ago.
402	MetroQuest	28056	1/17/2021	High speed rail corridor.
403	MetroQuest	28278	1/17/2021	The expansion of 160 to 4 lanes from NC/sc border to 485 was just pushed bach to 2029 that was originally supposed to be done in 2024. Based on the increase in population of Steele Creeke the expansion of 160 should be completed before the new.Catawba crossing.
404	MetroQuest	29710	1/18/2021	The increase in traffic on Pole Branch from York County north to Charlotte as result of new crossing
405	MetroQuest	28012	1/18/2021	Yes the widening of south point road , and south new hope road !!! Seems as though all of the experts put the cart before the horse , as in construction , new housing developments !!!! What's up with that , you don't need a a college degree in transportation to figure that out !!!!
406	MetroQuest	28012	1/18/2021	Environmental impact
407	MetroQuest	28012	1/18/2021	Disruption to neighborhoods and safety
408	MetroQuest	28012	1/18/2021	It sounds as if it has been well thought out.
409	Email		1/19/2021	<p>Since I have moved to the area I have kept a watchful eye on the saga unfold over the decades that is Catawba Crossings/Greenway. A few basic points I wanted to make:</p> <p>I understand the need for another bridge over the Catawba, It makes sense considering the growth in the area and how it is a limiting factor for traffic and reasonable yet responsible development</p> <p>I question the location of the bridge across the Catawba, as the Allen steam station seems like a more ideal location, especially considering the power plant will be closing in the next 5-10 years AND could neatly tie into 273. Is not working with Duke a possibility rather than eminent domain across multiple citizens and their properties?</p> <p>I do not see the rationale and therefore am strongly against a further bridge across the South Fork Catawba. It seems the existing bridges and roads at both Armstrong Ford and Armstrong Rd (273) can be enhanced/expanded to better manage traffic and minimize impact to the area</p>

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
410	Email		1/19/2021	We need more access across the rivers. Not only for commuter traffic, but also emergency evacuations. It will make getting to Charlotte area easy for those in Gaston County that are South of I-85
411	Email		1/19/2021	I'm wondering how the proposed route was determined as it currently passed directly over the home we just purchased in 2020. Is there not an alternative to achieve the same result with fewer implications to residents and their homes?
412	Email		1/19/2021	Catawba Crossing can't get here soon enough, great for the area. Pedestrian access very important.
413	Email		1/19/2021	This only meets the needs of a few not all. Be better off with road traffic bridges in to Gaston County. (1) at New Hope Rd and (2) one between Hwy 27 and 16. This would better serve the Gaston County residents. A tram or rail would only benefit airport flyers. Too costly to everyone!!!!
414	Email		1/19/2021	Think this is an extremely needed project. A little concerned about the dumping of traffic onto South New Hope rd though. Maybe extend it farther West to Union Rd.
415	MetroQuest	28056	1/19/2021	Just need a way to get more vehicles across the river.
416	MetroQuest	28056	1/19/2021	Public Transportation should be a top priority between Gaston County and Charlotte employment centers.
417	MetroQuest	28056	1/19/2021	How about the homes and wildlife you'll be affecting? Any studies on that?
418	MetroQuest		1/19/2021	We do not want to be connected to western mecklenburg county! Too much crime from that area
419	MetroQuest		1/19/2021	Looks like the road is going through my house will the state be taking my house
420	MetroQuest	28101	1/20/2021	Widening existing bridges to add lanes for traffic.
421	Email		1/20/2021	where on south new hope is this going to be.because it has such heavy traffic now I don't think it could handle any more'.Its bumper to bumper as it is.
422	Email		1/20/2021	I would like to see this built. I would like to see river access, bike and walking trails be included. This will help reduce traffic flow from SC through Belmont.
423	MetroQuest		1/20/2021	Plan for sustainable, public transportation that won't outgrow itself as we continue to grow. Options that better for the environment and don't overtake current nature. Commuter trains would be ideal and how all big cities grow. Reduce the necessity of a car, especially for work/commuter traffic. Don't build a road, build a rail.
424	MetroQuest		1/20/2021	Roundabouts tend to work better than signaled intersections
425	MetroQuest		1/20/2021	Include a light rail option that connects the counties and metropolitans, especially for commuters
426	MetroQuest		1/20/2021	Everyone knows people don't respect bikers. Find options that keep them safe
427	MetroQuest	28012	1/21/2021	Possible route for the future light rail coming to Gaston County
428	MetroQuest	28012	1/21/2021	Expansion of S. New Hope Road and South Point Road. They really need turning lanes.
429	MetroQuest	28012	1/22/2021	Saving gas / reduced pollution / environmental impact
430	MetroQuest	28012	1/22/2021	It is incredibly busy now at the junction of 85 and 485. This will only get worse after the pandemic subsides and as our growth continues at a rapid pace. This project should be accelerated and made a high priority in light of the likely infrastructure initiatives coming from the Federal government.
431	Email		1/22/2021	I support any plan that provides a southern throughfare through Gaston County. One only has to observe traffic along Redbud Drive to see the volume of people leaving or returning to southeast Gastonia on weekdays because there is no other viable outlet to I-85 and Mecklenburg County. The interminable line of vehicles makes it impractical for residents living in adjoining neighborhoods to safely exit onto Redbud Drive. The main problem with the current proposal is that it comes decades too late but with growth expected to continue, it's better than the status quo.
432	MetroQuest	28054	1/22/2021	Should initially be increased to 6 or 8 lanes. By the time you finish the 4lanes it will be congested and will need expansion. Plan and build for the future and not just for the present.
433	MetroQuest	28032	1/22/2021	Traffic accidents are horrible, when this happens it closes one or two lanes causing backed up traffic that is a nightmare.
434	MetroQuest	28012	1/22/2021	Bicycle lanes and pedestrians should not be on commuter roads!
435	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	Explore the use of a toll road to speed up the project.
436	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	Makes the most sense to help keep traffic moving.
437	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	Horrible idea, it is better to have designated, segregated bike lanes

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
438	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	It makes more sense to keep traffic moving.
439	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	Low priority as there are already multiple locations with these services
440	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	A designated fishing area/pair with paid access off the Catawba river bridge would be a nice addition.
441	MetroQuest	28056	1/23/2021	Another waste of money.
442	Email	Belmont, NC	1/25/2021	My family and I live less than a mile from the SC line in Belmont in a Lake community. We are very excited to see this new project. Any time we travel into Belmont or Gastonia we are behind SC drivers. This new Boulevard will definitely help the flow of traffic in our Belmont Area/Community. We would love to have a bike and walking trail/route incorporated in the plan. Many bikers out our way on a daily basis. Anything that can make our community more interactive (water access, fitness, etc) we are in favor.
443	Email		1/26/2021	I have need wanting a new bridge for a while! If possible I would build the bridge expandable to 6 lanes or have future expansion available as we are currently growing at exponential rates. I have only lived here for years and I've seen Several forests clearcut and built into housing developments. It would be super awesome if there was a path alongside the bridge(may be some sort of barrier) so that bicyclists could navigate Safely along the road as well as a path connecting to other nature trails. Biking lanes or a path. Adding a few parks along this new area would also help provide a spot for the community to come together. What about water stations or a spot where one could fill up a water bottle?
444	Email		1/26/2021	I am interested in following this project. I'm currently a Charlotte resident, but will soon become a Gastonia resident, and would love to see this project - or something similar - gain acceptance, since it would certainly offer a more direct route to my new residence.
445	MetroQuest	28012	1/25/2021	Include rail.
446	MetroQuest	28012	1/26/2021	I believe the bridge over Wilkinson between Belmont and Charlotte should be updated before a new project is planned. Adding this road would simply cause more congestion and traffic
447	MetroQuest	28012	1/26/2021	if you are going to add bike lanes - should bikers not contribute to the cost
448	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	Based on the type of road I am concerned with business growth along the route that ultimately results in multiple cuts and traffic lights and hence slower traffic and more accidents. If that is the long term plan please consider access roads to minimize cuts and other traffic delays or we'll have another York Road on our hands in a very short while.
449	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	These need to be minimal used for traffic to actually flow.
450	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	Not entirely clear on this. If this is what I think it is and reduces cuts in the road, very important.
451	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	This would be good for recreation and such but better to have parking hubs and pickup/drop off zones off the street than to just add a bunch of stops on an otherwise free flowing road.
452	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	Um no
453	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	Yes let's open up our community features to runners, walkers, racers (5k), etc near the lake where people like to do such things.
454	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	If needed but perhaps to keep traffic moving and allow people to enjoy you build up only one side of the road. Prefer elevated crossings.
455	MetroQuest	29710	1/26/2021	Yes!!! Runners etc are forced out of daylight schedules when they work FT. This is largely missing in our communities today.
456	MetroQuest	28012	1/26/2021	Consider a commuter rail component to access the airport and western Mecklenburg county from Gaston County
457	MetroQuest		1/27/2021	I85 and I485 merges are not designed well at all. Consider improving.
458	Email	28278	1/27/2021	Once again your back. Wasn't enough that the Garden Parkway was a disaster, with false and fake studies that were changed to suit the public. No study of different crossing of the river?
459	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	This new transportation addition should avoid conflict and improve safety for all users.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
460	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	Should prepare for mass transit and other modes of transportation such as bicycles and walking.
461	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	Safest option that will have a longer useful life
462	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	As population increases so will demand for access to the Catawba River
463	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	Blueways are important recreational opportunities
464	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	Might as well utilize buffer areas for recreational fishing and access for all to the river
465	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	Make sure the public has access to preserved properties for passive use. As we grow, so will the need for natural areas.
466	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	An absolute necessity.
467	MetroQuest	28056	1/27/2021	We will only get one chance to get this correct and have a last impact on what users think of this area.
468	MetroQuest	28012	1/27/2021	impact to neighborhoods adjacent to planned expansion - i.e. New Hope Rd developments south of planned widening
469	MetroQuest	28278	1/27/2021	Look at different areas to cross the River. Do not use the fake and falsely reported "studies". Start all over. This route was politically chosen and I'm sure it hasn't changed.
470	MetroQuest	28012	1/27/2021	Widen I85 at exit 26 first, replace Wilkerson Bridge at Meck/Gas county board, light rail line, all of these are more cost effective, more practical. Also those improvements would be much less disruptive to the environment and the communities that would be affected by Catawba Crossings
471	MetroQuest	28012	1/28/2021	The feasibility of dredging the South Fork area around the crossing to reduce silt going further down stream.
472	Email		1/29/2021	I am all for this new road. Been way too long. Will ease the traffic on Red Bud Dr as it is a cut through from Union Road to I85 for SC residents as well as 18 wheelers.
473	MetroQuest	28012	1/29/2021	how will the construction be handled to keep traffic moving?
474	MetroQuest	28056	1/30/2021	Should be very limited number of intersections
475	MetroQuest	28012	1/30/2021	Get those ***** bicycles off the road
476	MetroQuest	28012	1/31/2021	The intersection at South Point Blvd and Lower Armstrong congestion may get worse than already is from traffic trying to reach this better alternative route. Would be good to include improved flow, either round a bout or traffic light there in conjunction with this project.
477	MetroQuest	28012	1/31/2021	evaluate how to get drivers off their cellphones while driving
478	MetroQuest	28012	1/31/2021	build more lanes not transit stuff
479	MetroQuest	28012	1/31/2021	No bike lanes at all
480	MetroQuest	28012	1/31/2021	find a new lake. lake is full we don't want to become lake Norman
481	MetroQuest	28012	1/31/2021	stop wasting our money you steal from us in tax assessments
482	MetroQuest	28012	2/1/2021	riverside fishing areas are always trashy
483	MetroQuest	28054	2/2/2021	Bike lanes and a Fishing Pier
484	MetroQuest	28054	2/2/2021	In the Middle of the Bridge put a Fishing Pier
485	MetroQuest		2/2/2021	Finishing the product
486	MetroQuest		2/2/2021	Not completing this eyesore of a project over Lake Wylie
487	MetroQuest	28012	2/2/2021	Reduce cars with train or busses. Trailways are not used because they are not taken care of or unsafe. A waste. Take walks around neighborhoods or town. Parks and river access are more important.

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
488	Email		2/3/2021	<p>The starting point of Catawba Crossings on the road 279 should be moved to North (it is too close to the SC border), because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It would be important to distribute the traffic "evenly" between the three bridges I85-Catawba Crossing- and 49. - We should make the Catawba crossing much easier accessible for south Gastonia residents. - We should not generate a huge extra traffic on Pole Branch Rd, S New Hope Rd and Armstrong Rd which are not prepared to take a rapidly increasing traffic. If the Catawba crossing on 279 is to close to the SC border, a lot of drivers will tend to use the Catawba Crossing instead of the road 49 and these decisions will generate a permanent congestion on roads 279 and 273. Please keep in mind that a busy airway exist above the area, therefore, a lot of air planes constantly disturb and harms the residents yet who pay very high city taxes as well.
489	MetroQuest	29708	2/3/2021	Evaluate the need for an "I don't know" option on the Congestion question, earlier. ;) Because, I have no idea how much the traffic delays me on these trips ... never done 'em without the traffic!
490	MetroQuest	29708	2/3/2021	I guess a road has to have those, these days
491	MetroQuest	29708	2/3/2021	sounds interesting, I guess.
492	MetroQuest		2/4/2021	This project is sorely needed. Please consider bike/walk lanes along boulevard, as well as a rail to connect to Charlotte. Please consider landscaping/walls to limit noise from boulevard for those of us that will live near it.
493	Email	Belmont, NC	2/4/2021	<p>I completed the survey but have added concerns. I live in Belmont. We have several miles of walking trails that are never used and parks that are not maintained. The park on S. Catawba is filled all the time with basketball, baseball and soccer ball players. But, the courts and fields are always littered. There are gatherings late at night with people in cars drinking after 11 and 12:00 but it seems Belmont does not have enough policemen to patrol that area. The new trail on Wilkinson on the Mecklenburg side of the Catawba River has become so bad that families and joggers don't go there. There's trash and even feces on the walkway. It has become a camping place for the homeless. Charlotte should be taking care of them already.</p> <p>It is so rewarding to see that people prefer walking, running, walking their dogs on our streets and in our neighborhoods. People wave and speak to people that they see regularly. It is also good for the restaurants and the downtown area.</p>
494	Email	Belmont, NC	2/4/2021	<p>I think Belmont is neglecting our infrastruture by investing in any more trails and not maintaining streets. Many streets have been repaved so many times there are no curbs left. Water is running down streets into the grass and the pavement is cracking, not to mention what stress the weight of pavement is putting on water lines that have begun to break. On some streets there is so much repaving that people cannot get into their driveways. Some have filled in what is left of the curb with concrete. That blocks the flow of water to storm drains and causes further erosion of the layers of pavement. A very wise person said, "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth onto an old cloak, for the patch pull away from the cloak and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins: otherwise, the sins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskin, and so both are preserved." The cost of repaving, repaving and repaving is more that restoring the street from the ground up that will last another 100+ years.</p> <p>Belmont is also concerned about the canopy of the 100 yr. old oak trees. I don't think they have researched how long they live or care about what they are doing to the streets. I think they are rewarding bids for construction of streets and neighborhoods on he basis of cost. Oak trees live 100 to 200 years. and I don't think they seek advice from urban forest professors do not take in consideration the placement or types of trees. Dogwoods, cherry, long leaf pine trees live 500 years and are beautiful. I think this is true of thorough fares in and around Gaston county.</p>

Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study
Public Comment Received January 6 - February 4, 2021

No.	Source	Location	Date Received	Comment
495	Email	Belmont, NC	2/4/2021	<p>This may not seem connected to the Catawba crossing but Belmont will be affected and affect traffic. I don't think that the traffic from the high school and the new school under construction has been taken into consideration. Also, before long, South Point road will have to be widened. Traffic cannot be managed by taking and making room for more cars. One bus can take 30 cars off the roads. One light rail can take hundreds of cars off the road and take up less room than a four lane road will not be enough in the future. I would rather see more houses than more roads.</p> <p>People are moving to Belmont and other small towns for their small town atmosphere. So, I don't know why they are trying to be more like Charlotte. Budget the light rail. Belmont could ease some traffic by putting a 50 yard right turn lane on N. Main St. by using the 50 yard wide rail road track along lane N. Main St. in front of Sacred Heart. I think widening the three bridges, especially the Wilkinson Blvd. bridge where three lanes narrow into two lanes will greatly ease traffic.</p> <p>Also, because of the pandemic, a great number of businesses are going to continue to have employees work from home. Saves them money on electricity, water and maintenance of office space. Charlotte may become like New York. People will be moving further away, even from Belmont and the other surrounding small towns because they don't have to commute.</p> <p>In essence, I just feel like tax dollars could be spent in other ways. The future is just as important as the now.</p>
496	Email	Belmont, NC	2/4/2021	Just one more thing I forgot to say. Do you really think people are going to need or want access to or anywhere near a 4 or 6 lane road?
497	Email		2/4/2021	Attached are public comments on the Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study, submitted by Southern Environmental Law Center on behalf of Clean Air Carolina. I have also attached two exhibits referenced in the comments. The comments raise concerns with the proposal's purpose and need, as well as its environmental impacts.
498	MetroQuest	28032	2/4/2021	Light rail options would be preferable to bus if possible.
499	MetroQuest	28032	2/4/2021	Safe crossings are critical for bike/ped. I prefer grade-separated, but would compromise with other crossing types if not feasible.
500	MetroQuest	28277	2/4/2021	The western terminus of the project should be extended to U.S. 321, and eventually I-85, but I know the history of the now-defunct Garden Parkway well and know any further western segments would be fraught with more controversy. But if the goal is long-term regional connectivity, then the western segments must be reconsidered at some point.
501	MetroQuest	28012	2/4/2021	All traffic currently bottlenecks at I85 and Wilkinson due to the river. This project is desperately needed, but will not be enough given future growth in this area. Gaston County needs a rail connection to the airport and downtown.
502	MetroQuest	28012	2/4/2021	Please do not create too many intersections that would cause stop and go traffic. Preferably, the goal should be a Billy Graham or Brookshire style road with limited access.
503	MetroQuest	28012	2/4/2021	Given the likelihood of a Ballantyne-type mixed use development on the Mecklenburg side, bike and walking lanes would provide an alternate form of commuting for those living nearby. It would also be nice to be able to safely bike or walk across from one side to the other.
504	MetroQuest	28012	2/4/2021	An investment today in making the area inviting and attractive will pay off in a better quality of life and higher property values.
505	MetroQuest	28012	2/4/2021	Please consider walls or natural barriers along roadway to limit road noise for those of us living nearby.
506	MetroQuest	28032	2/5/2021	Adding an extra lane from 485 ramp to 85 S. Currently 3 lanes merge into 1 which creates too much congestion
507	MetroQuest	28032	2/5/2021	No traffic circles
508	MetroQuest	28032	2/5/2021	Super dangerous option for bikers. People do not pay attention
509	Email		2/3/2021	<p>Given the growth in the counties that surround Lake Wylie, the Lake Wylie Marine Commission (LWMC) understands the need for and supports an additional crossing of Lake Wylie. The LWMC urges that the Enhanced Erosion Control Requirements as specified in the CITY OF CHARLOTTE & MECKLENBURG COUNTY PROCEDURES (Addressed in Section 17-32(a) of City Ordinance and Section 7(a) of County Ordinance) be implemented throughout the project in both Mecklenburg and Gaston counties within 1000 feet of Lake Wylie.</p> <p>Further, the LWMC requests that No-wake and Danger signs be constructed into the stanchions of the bridge as was done in the construction of the Buster Boyd Bridge. It is noted that the height of any bridge constructed must allow passage of all government law enforcement and firefighting craft with antennas extended and should allow for sailboats to pass as well.</p>

SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

Telephone 919-967-1450

601 WEST ROSEMARY STREET, SUITE 220
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27516-2356

Facsimile 919-929-9421

Submitted via email to info@catawbacrossings.com

February 4, 2021

Randi P. Gates
Project Manager
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization
Garland Business Center, 150 S. York St.
Gastonia, NC 28052

Re: Catawba Crossings Project: Preliminary Public Comments

Dear Ms. Gates:

The Southern Environmental Law Center (“SEL”) and Clean Air Carolina (“CAC”) offer the following comments on the Feasibility Study for Catawba Crossings, a proposed roadway between NC 279 (S. New Hope Road) in Gaston County and NC 160 (Steele Creek Road) in Mecklenburg County.

The Catawba Crossings project as envisioned by the Feasibility Study Group would have serious environmental consequences. Most importantly, Catawba Crossings shares many similarities with an earlier highway proposal, the Gaston East-West Connector, known locally as the Garden Parkway. After several years of litigation, the Garden Parkway was removed from local and state planning documents, in part because of a seriously flawed Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”), and in part because the Garden Parkway failed to score well enough under the state’s data-driven prioritization process to secure sufficient funding. In addition, there was widespread local opposition to the project. Catawba Crossings shares several conspicuous and environmentally-concerning similarities with the defunct Garden Parkway: near-identical alignment, up to six lanes, and two river crossings. The door has already shut on the Garden Parkway. The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (“GCLMPO”) should abandon this attempt to reopen it.

1. Background

a. The Garden Parkway project

The Garden Parkway’s cancellation was the product of critical defects in its design and analysis. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), the N.C. Department of Transportation (“NCDOT”) and the Federal Highway Administration prepared a Draft and Final EIS for the project. To fulfill a core requirement of NEPA, the agencies modeled a no-highway alternative to establish a “baseline” for traffic volumes and household growth. *Catawba Riverkeeper Found. v. NCDOT*, 843 F.3d 583, 586 (4th Cir. 2016). But the baseline

projection suffered from a serious deficiency: although it was meant to represent the result of taking *no* action, it *included* the Parkway in its population and employment estimates, thus misrepresenting the growth and traffic that would be induced if the highway were built. *Catawba Riverkeeper Found. v. NCDOT*, 2015 WL 1179646, at *6 (E.D.N.C. Mar. 13, 2015). The Fourth Circuit had previously held that this magnitude of modeling flaw invalidated an EIS prepared for another proposed highway, the Monroe Connector Bypass. *N.C. Wildlife Fed’n v. NCDOT*, 677 F.3d 596, 603 (4th Cir. 2012). Because the analysis of the Garden Parkway was “almost-identical,” the district court set aside the Final EIS. *Catawba River Found.*, 2015 WL 1179646, at *9.

On appeal, the Fourth Circuit noted that the Garden Parkway also received a low score under the N.C. Strategic Transportation Investments Law, “ranking below 1,200th place” based on a number of factors including cost and congestion. *Catawba Riverkeeper Found.*, 843 F.3d at 587. In addition, the General Assembly repealed statutory earmarked funding for the Parkway. *Id.* NCDOT represented in Court that the project would no longer be moving ahead, rendering the case moot. The “last domino” fell for the Parkway when it was removed from local and state transportation plans. *Id.* at 588.

b. The Catawba Crossings proposal

Despite this history, GCLMPO is now attempting, in effect, to resurrect a portion of the Garden Parkway.

Catawba Crossings is a proposed boulevard in the Southwest Charlotte metro area. It would cross two branches of the Catawba River, South Point Road (Hwy. 273) and Interstate 485. The corridor would run essentially parallel to Interstate 85, ending at the southwest corner of Charlotte Douglas Airport.

Catawba Crossings is based on alignments prepared for two other NCDOT feasibility studies. First, the Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study (Project ID H190069; SP-1710A) was completed in 2017. It considered a highway that (like the current iteration of Catawba Crossings) would run from NC 279 to I-485. This study was a “conceptual design”; it did not include a formal analysis of alternatives or potential impacts. Second, NCDOT began the Airport Area and River District Feasibility Study (Project ID H184060) in 2019, but put it on hold. The latter forms the basis for the conceptual roadway alignment on the Mecklenburg County side of the Catawba River only.¹

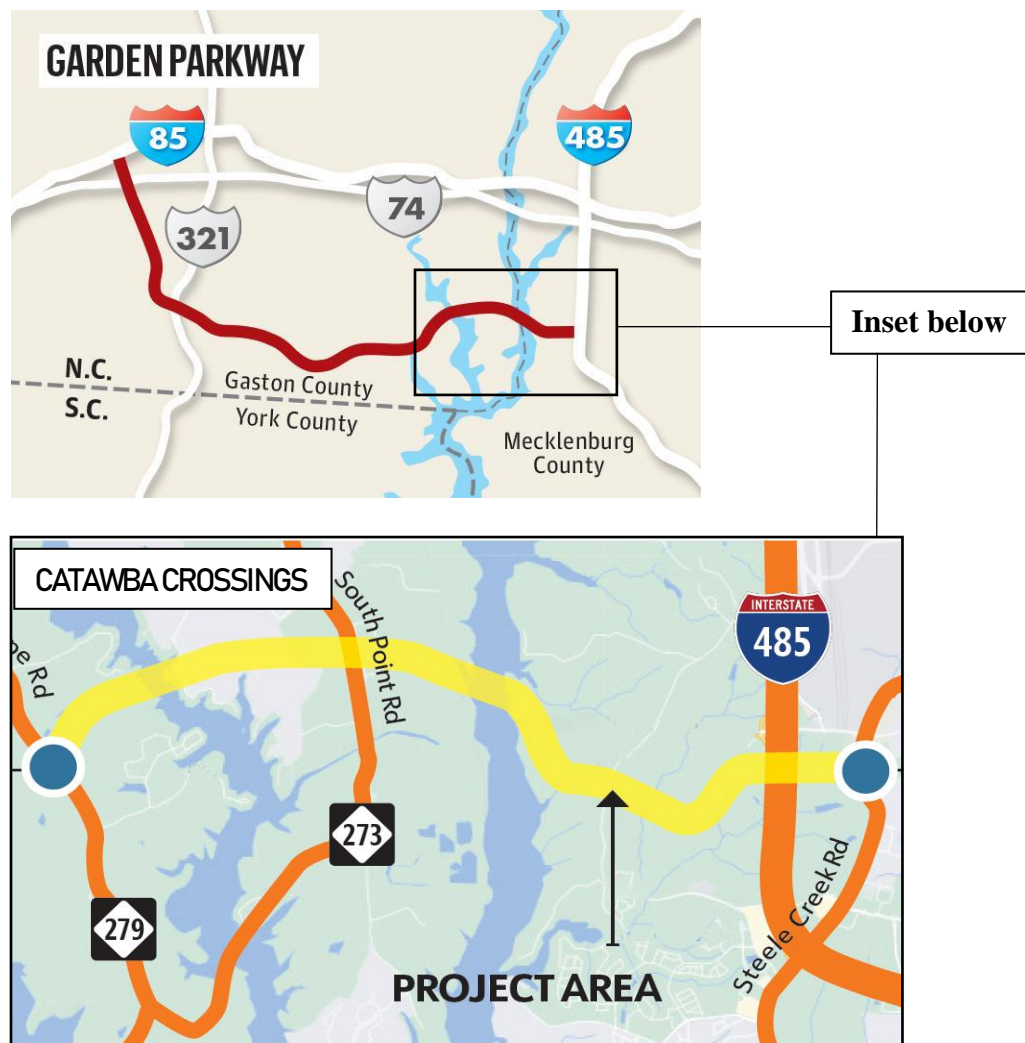
c. Similarities between the Garden Parkway and Catawba Crossings

The similarities between Catawba Crossings and its predecessor have prompted reporters to refer to Catawba Crossings as “Son of Garden Parkway.”² Although the Garden Parkway

¹ Catawba Crossings, “Maps,” available at <https://catawbacrossings.com/maps/>.

² Steve Harrison, *Gaston leaders want to give you new bridge over Catawba, but others question cost*, The Charlotte Observer (July 21, 2017), available at <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article162922338.html>.

corridor was longer, the two highways' route and alignment are strikingly similar. As shown below, Catawba Crossings covers the same area as the eastern third of the Garden Parkway.



Apparently anticipating comparisons to the earlier proposal, GCLMPO has created a table showing differences between the two.³ Catawba Crossings would be six miles, compared with its predecessor's 22 miles—but that six-mile stretch would still include two river crossings.⁴ Similarly, the 45 mph speed limit for Catawba Crossings will likely generate the same amount of traffic as the Garden Parkway's 65 mph speed limit, and the number of lanes may turn out to be the same.⁵ Other offered differences are illusory: although Catawba Crossings will reportedly be “compatible with” regional plans for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access, GCLMPO has not

³ Catawba Crossings, “History—Reimagining the Catawba Crossings,” available at <https://catawbacrossings.com/history/>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *See id.* Over six miles, a 65 mph speed limit would save 2 ½ minutes of drive time compared to 45 mph. The Garden Parkway was six lanes, and Catawba Crossings could be as little as four or as many as six lanes (“depending on projected traffic volumes”). *Id.*

actually said those options will be included—only that they “will be evaluated.”⁶ Still other changes from the earlier proposal would be less effective at resolving congestion: Catawba Crossings’ plan to have at-grade intersections would increase traffic backup compared to the Garden Parkway, which would have used grade-separated interchanges.⁷

Because of substantial similarities with the eastern third of the Garden Parkway, the Catawba Crossings proposal suffers from similar deficiencies and would cause similar environmental impacts.

2. Catawba Crossings lacks any clear purpose or need.

First, it is not clear that an additional road is needed where Catawba Crossings is proposed. The video introducing Catawba Crossings contends that “only four bridges” connect Gaston County to Mecklenburg County, and a large distance (10 miles) separates U.S.-29/U.S.-74 from the Buster Boyd Bridge in York County, South Carolina. Having an additional bridge across the river would supposedly reduce travel time and increase mobility in this section of the county.⁸ But the areas that Catawba Crossings purports to serve are nowhere near it. As Catawba Crossings’ own map shows, the communities of Cherryville, Dallas, Gastonia, Cramerton, and Belmont are all along existing east-west corridors provided by NC-279, Interstate 85, and U.S.-29/U.S.-74.⁹



⁶ *Id.*

⁷ See *id.*; see also Kenneth R. Agent, *At-Grade Intersections Versus Grade-Separated Interchanges (An Economic Analysis of Several Bypasses)*, Southern Section of the Institute of Traffic Engineers, Research Report 422 (March 1975), available at https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2096&context=ktc_researchreports.

⁸ Catawba Crossings Introductory Video, at 2:57, available at https://youtu.be/Vp7W_yYEqkg?t=176.

⁹ *Id.* at 1:28, available at https://youtu.be/Vp7W_yYEqkg?t=88.

The presence of “only four crossings” of the Catawba River was also used to justify the Garden Parkway in the “purpose and need” section of the EIS.¹⁰ As SELC pointed out in its public comments, it is not clear why presence of “only four bridges” across the Catawba River represents a problem, or whether an additional bridge would respond to mobility needs unserved by existing options.¹¹ This is especially true because NCDOT is already planning to widen Interstate 85 in Gaston County, to “reduce congestion and improve traffic flow along this vital corridor.”¹² As SELC showed in its prior set of comments, and as Catawba Crossings’ own map recently acknowledged, “growth in the project area has concentrated along I-85 and US 29-74 corridors, in areas that would benefit little from a new [roadway] 5–10 miles south of I-85.”¹³

Instead of concentrating at the outset on building a new road, GCLMPO and its partners should consider a purpose and need that is broad enough to encompass a range of alternatives. *See* NEPA, 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C); Clean Water Act section 404, 33 U.S.C. § 1344. As SELC noted in its comments on the Garden Parkway, practical alternatives should include upgrading the existing road network (which is already happening on I-85), installing high occupancy vehicle lanes, expanding mass transit, improving freight rail facilities, or any combination of these alternatives.¹⁴ A true “no action” alternative is also required for any proposal subject to NEPA. *See N.C. Wildlife Fed’n*, 677 F.3d at 603.

3. Environmental impacts of Catawba Crossings

a. Catawba Crossings would induce sprawl and car-dependent development.

Catawba Crossings, like its predecessor, would fuel sprawling car-dependent development outward from Charlotte, irrevocably altering the largely wooded landscape of southern Gaston County at the expense of more sustainable and compact development.¹⁵ The two proposed river crossings would exacerbate the impacts of sprawl by concentrating road construction and ensuing development in sensitive riparian areas. Rather than relieving *existing* congestion—an express goal of the proposal¹⁶—Catawba Crossings would induce *new* low-density, car-dependent development, which could actually cause traffic volumes to *increase* on existing roads.¹⁷

b. Catawba Crossings would degrade regional surface waters and wetlands.

As its name implies, Catawba Crossings would require two bridges to cross separate segments of the Catawba River—the South Fork and the main branch, each of which flows into

¹⁰ Garden Parkway Draft EIS at 1-2, 1-9 (Apr. 2009); Garden Parkway Final EIS at 1-2 (Dec. 2010).

¹¹ *See* SELC Comments on Draft EIS for Gaston East-West Connector at 4, attached as Exhibit 1.

¹² NCDOT, “I-85 Widening – Gaston County” (last updated Apr. 27, 2020), *available at* <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/i-85-widening-gaston-county/Pages/default.aspx>.

¹³ SELC Comments on Draft EIS at 4, *supra* n.11.

¹⁴ SELC Comments on Draft EIS at 9, *supra* n.11; *see also* SELC Comments on Final EIS at 5–6, attached as Exhibit 2.

¹⁵ SELC Comments on Draft EIS at 1, *supra* n.11.

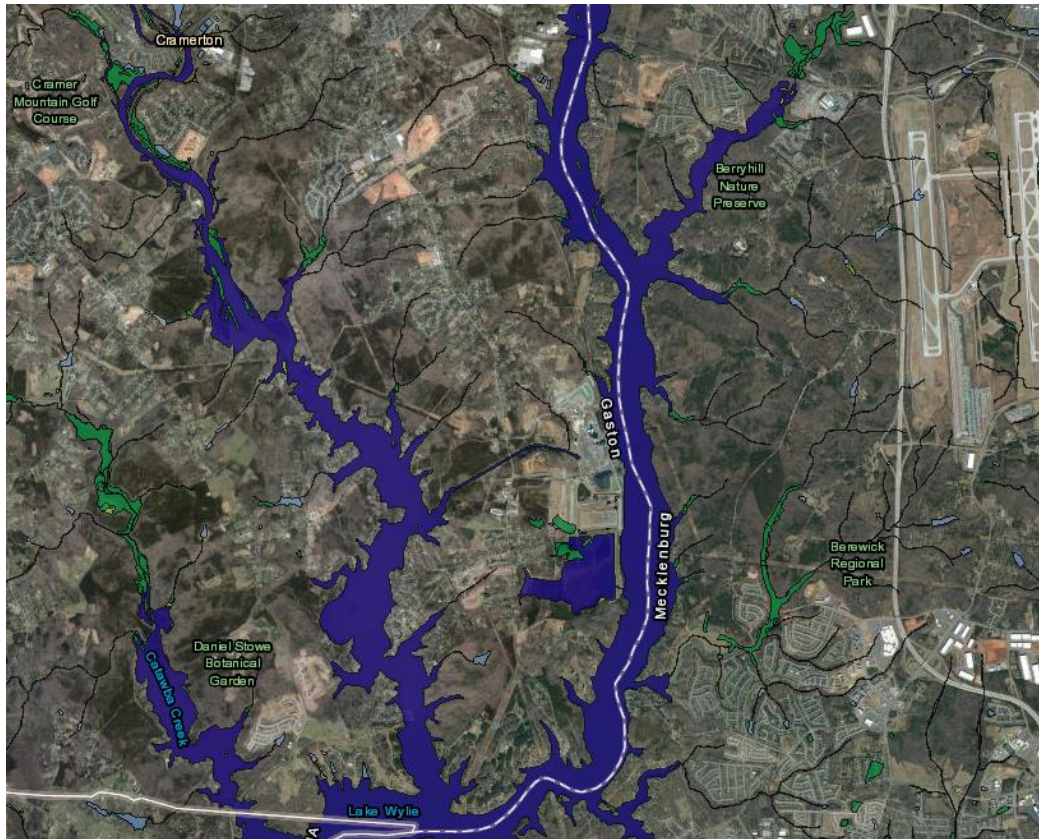
¹⁶ Catawba Crossings, “Project Description,” *available at* <https://catawbacrossings.com/project-description/>.

¹⁷ SELC Comments on Draft EIS at 1–4, 15, *supra* n.11; *see also* SELC Comments on Final EIS at 2–3, *supra* n.14.

Lake Wylie. The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”) has prepared a list of “impaired waters” that do not meet existing state water quality standards under the Clean Water Act. Several of these out-of-compliance waterways are in the immediate vicinity of Catawba Crossings, including Catawba Creek (nutrients), Crowders Creek (nutrients and fecal coliform), and Lake Wylie (total nitrogen and total phosphorous).¹⁸

These impaired waterways are subject to total maximum daily load (“TMDL”) allocations intended to restore them to full compliance.¹⁹ Yet it is all but certain that construction of Catawba Crossings would further degrade water quality. Direct impacts would include increased sedimentation into the Catawba as a result of land disturbance to construct bridges spanning up to six lanes. Indirect impacts could be even worse: opening up some of the least urbanized areas of the Catawba watershed to sprawling development, and replacing vegetation with pavement, would greatly increase the quantity and concentration of polluted stormwater runoff.²⁰

As shown in the green areas on the map below, the project area also contains numerous wetlands—areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water.²¹



¹⁸ DEQ, “Draft and Approved TMDLs (last visited Jan. 26, 2021), available at <https://bit.ly/3tr1pCz>.”

¹⁹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Overview of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) (last visited Jan. 26, 2021), available at <https://www.epa.gov/tmdl/overview-total-maximum-daily-loads-tmdls>.

²⁰ See SELC Comments on Draft EIS at 25–26, *supra* n.11.

²¹ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory Mapping Tool (last visited Jan. 26, 2021), available at <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>; see also U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wetlands Delineation Manual (January 1987), available at <https://bit.ly/3jbvfGG>.

Construction of a new road in this area would likely impact these wetlands, requiring compliance with Clean Water Act section 404 and possibly compensatory mitigation.²² Yet compensatory mitigation sites are difficult to find in the Catawba watershed, making it unclear how Catawba Crossings would comply with federal wetland protections.²³

In sum, the degree of water pollution and impacts to wetlands resulting from Catawba Crossings would occur in an already imperiled watershed and would be yet another negative consequence of unsustainable, car-dependent development in the region.

c. Catawba Crossings would worsen air quality in the Charlotte metro area.

The Clean Air Act requires states to develop implementation plans to meet national ambient air quality standards (“NAAQS”) for several “criteria” pollutants. 42 U.S.C. § 7410. Mecklenburg County has, in the past, violated the NAAQS for ozone.²⁴ Although it is currently in attainment of the 2015 NAAQS, any deterioration in air quality could put that attainment in jeopardy. The most current data prepared by DEQ show that Mecklenburg County’s “design value” for ozone is 70 parts per billion (“ppb”)—the highest in the state and the highest possible value that is still in attainment.²⁵ Because Mecklenburg County only “narrowly met the 70 ppb standard,” it recently acknowledged that “creating breathing room continues to be important.”²⁶ Some recent proposals to achieve this “breathing room” are transit expansion, electrification of school buses and the airport shuttle, and a “Complete Streets” program.²⁷

A new four-to-six-lane boulevard, and induced car-dependent residential development—the inevitable outcome of the Catawba Crossings proposal—would only worsen air quality for the region. Increased air pollution is yet another reason GCLMPO should abandon Catawba Crossings and instead focus on cleaner transportation alternatives.

d. Catawba Crossings would be inconsistent with the State’s climate goals.

By putting more cars on the road, Catawba Crossings would also cause more greenhouse gas emissions into the air. Governor Cooper’s Executive Order 80, acknowledging that global warming is already harming North Carolina, has laid out several bold objectives to spur action. One is to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 2005 levels by 2025. N.C. Exec. Order 80 (Oct. 29, 2018) ¶ 1.a. As the Executive Order acknowledges, achieving this goal will require “clean transportation solutions.” *Id.* ¶ 4. Building another highway, and thereby facilitating suburban sprawl and automobile use, is flatly inconsistent with this path forward.

²² See SELC Comments on Draft EIS at 26, *supra* n.11; see also SELC Comments on Final EIS at 8, *supra* n.14.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ 2014 Mecklenburg County State of the Environment Report (Feb. 24, 2014), available at <https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/SOER/Pages/AirQualityOzone.aspx#:~:text=Mecklenburg%20County%20was%20designated%20as%20a%20non-attainment%20area,attaining%20the%201979%20NAAQS%20on%20July%205%2C%201995>.

²⁵ North Carolina Ozone Design Values (2016–2018), available at https://files.nc.gov/ncdeq/Air%20Quality/planning/attainment/mapping/NC_O3DV_2016-2018_Prelim.jpg.

²⁶ Mecklenburg County, N.C., “Ozone Advance Path Forward for the Charlotte Region – Progress Report (Sept. 26, 2019), available at <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-09/documents/update.092619.pdf>.

²⁷ *Id.*

GCLMPO should pursue a transportation solution geared toward a sustainable future, not an unsustainable past.

4. Catawba Crossings would be an extremely expensive commitment of taxpayer money.

While the Garden Parkway was proposed as a toll road to defray construction costs, Catawba Crossings would be entirely paid for with taxpayer spending or bonds. The cost of the proposal, estimated at \$200 million, has led Gaston County leaders to seek regional transportation funding to help with construction, after Catawba Crossings scored poorly in state rankings as a local project.²⁸ The possible expenditure of regional funds for a road with such an uncertain purpose prompted Mecklenburg County Commissioner Jim Puckett to remark that “from a financial perspective the idea of investing nearly half our funds into a project that has greater financial upside to a neighbor while adding little to our bottom line” would be unwise.²⁹ Regional transportation funds should be used to guide sustainable development in the Charlotte metro area—not to build a road that would primarily benefit greenfield developers in Gaston County.

5. Conclusion

Catawba Crossings, like its predecessor, represents a short-sighted, costly, and unsustainable approach to regional transportation, rather than a sustainable path forward. The best course of action is for GCLMPO to abandon its feasibility study for Catawba Crossings and redirect its focus on transportation solutions that will not perpetuate air pollution, pollute the Catawba River, and accelerate car-dependent suburban sprawl.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please contact us at 919-967-1450 should you have questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kym Hunter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kym Hunter
Ramona McGee
Alex Hardee
Southern Environmental Law Center
601 W. Rosemary Street, Suite 220
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

²⁸ Harrison, *supra* n.2.

²⁹ *Id.*