



# Catawba Crossings Environmental Document RAISE 2023 Executive Summary

Gaston County, on behalf of the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO and in partnership with the City of Gastonia, City of Belmont, and Town of Cramerton, seeks **\$1,514,500** in RAISE funding to complete an **Environmental Document for the Catawba Crossings**.

The Catawba Crossings is a proposed 6.8-mile new location boulevard between NC 279 (S. New Hope Road) in southeastern Gaston County to NC 160 (Steele Creek Road) in western Mecklenburg County, just south of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT). The proposed Catawba Crossings includes new bridges over the South Fork Catawba River and Catawba River (collectively impounded in Lake Wylie) and a new, or expanded, interchange with I-485 south of the existing West Boulevard interchange.



While funding has not yet been identified for the construction of the Catawba Crossings, the utilization of federal funding, federal permits, and/or federal authorizations are likely. Therefore, it is highly reasonable to assume that this Project will be advanced through a rigorous planning and design process that meets the statutory requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.

**The completion of an environmental document for the Project will ensure that potential impacts to the social and natural environment are considered as well as the transportation needs of the public in reaching a decision that is in the best overall public interest.**

The following tasks will be included in the Environmental Document phase of the project:

- NEPA Scoping and Purpose and Need
- Alternatives Analysis
- Data Collection
- Draft Environmental Impact Report
- Final Environmental Impact Report

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared in the absence of a lead federal agency. In the absence of a lead federal agency, certain NEPA actions will not be appropriate (e.g., Notice of Intent (NOI) and Record of Decision (ROD)). The scope and thoroughness of the EIR will fulfill the standards of a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As the project progresses, it will be the lead federal agency's role to confirm a preferred alternative in a ROD and the USACE's role to determine a Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA).

The Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study, completed in August 2022, indicates that providing an additional crossing over the Catawba River between NC 279 (S New Hope Road) in Gaston County and NC 160 (Steele Creek Road) in Mecklenburg County would be expected to:

- Reduce travel time for commuters traveling between southern Gaston County, northern York County and I-485 in Mecklenburg County during the peak hours.
- Improve the resiliency of the US 29/74 corridor within the study area by decreasing traffic volumes and improving traffic operations along the corridor.
- Reduce congestion within the study area by reducing delay at study area intersections along US 29/74, NC 160, N Main Street, and NC 273 north of the Catawba Crossings corridor.
- Increase mobility options by providing an alternate route between southern Gaston/northern York County and Mecklenburg County.
- Reduce the frequency of crashes by reducing traffic volumes along portions of US 29/74, I-85, and NC 273 north of the Catawba Crossings corridor.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Randi P. Gates, AICP  
GCLMPO Administrator  
704-854-6604  
randig@cityofgastonia.com**

**[www.catawbacrossings.com/RAISE](http://www.catawbacrossings.com/RAISE)**

