

Federal Approval Clears Way For NC 12 Bridge

By Administrator

Friday, 16 December 2016 15:08 - Last Updated Friday, 16 December 2016 15:12

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued final approval to move forward with construction of a new permanent bridge for N.C. 12 in northern Rodanthe on Thursday. The Record of Decision is the last environmental document for the project, allowing the N.C. Department of Transportation to award a contract for design and construction.

“I’m pleased that we are now able to move forward with construction of this critical highway connection that will provide a long-term solution for the residents and visitors of the Outer Banks,” Governor Pat McCrory said. “This new bridge will eliminate travel disruptions caused by beach erosion and storm breaches that have resulted in access issues at one of the most vulnerable sections of N.C. 12 for years.”

The Record of Decision document identifies the Bridge on New Location (2014B alignment) as the alternative NCDOT will build. The new 2.4-mile-long bridge, known as a “jug handle,” will extend from the southern end of the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge over the Pamlico Sound into Rodanthe. This alternative was presented as the preferred alternative in the May 2016 Revised Environmental Assessment and at public hearings in June. Responses to public and resource agency comments received at and following the public hearings are included in the Record of Decision.

This design minimizes impacts to the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, the ocean shoreline and the community of Rodanthe, while maintaining safe and reliable access for area residents and visitors.

“Along with the long-anticipated Bonner Bridge Replacement project, this marks the second major milestone for these communities under Governor McCrory’s leadership this year,” State Transportation Secretary Nick Tennyson said. “Greater access to jobs, health care, education and recreation for North Carolinians is a key part of the governor’s 25-Year Vision for Transportation.”

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The project will be built using the design-build method, which allows the department to contract a team that consists of both designers and a contractor to design and construct the project. Projects can be let sooner and completed faster using this approach. Based on the severity of conditions in the area, the agency has been working through the design-build selection process and has narrowed down the prospective design-build teams for the project.

NCDOT

anticipates opening bids in about a week.

Traffic will be maintained on N.C. 12, which is a vital link for this region, while the new bridge is being built. Once construction is complete, the existing roadway in the refuge would be removed the land will be returned to the refuge. In

Rodanthe

, the existing N.C. 12 roadway will remain to provide access to private properties.