



## COUNTY OF BEAUFORT

### RESOLUTION 2026-03-02-001 A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING NCDOT PROJECT U-5860 (15<sup>TH</sup> STREET IN WASHINGTON)

**WHEREAS**, 15<sup>th</sup> Street is considered one of the most dangerous transportation corridors in the State of North Carolina, with crash rates exceeding the statewide critical threshold rates in four of the five major categories, including total crashes, fatal crashes, injury crashes, and crashes in wet conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, crash data from 2020-2024 show there were 417 total crashes on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, with 3 fatal crashes and 11 crashes causing disabling injuries, and without significant improvements to the entire corridor, these crashes will continue and will most likely get worse; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has designed a safety and congestion improvement project for 15<sup>th</sup> Street, designated as U-5860, that will convert the corridor to a four-lane divided facility with medians, turn lanes, and pedestrian enhancements, with this project projected to reduce crashes by over 57%, including a 76% reduction in fatal crashes alone; and

**WHEREAS**, U-5860 is fully funded in the NCDOT Strategic Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and is scheduled to begin right-of-way acquisition in June 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the critical safety improvements provided by U-5860, it will also provide infrastructure upgrades and improvements for the City of Washington at no cost including approximately \$1.5M for sidewalks and multiuse paths, \$5.8M for drainage structures, \$2.7M for signals, \$7.4M for stormwater/sanitary sewer upgrades, \$2.8M for erosion control measures, and the replacement of over 110 City utility poles; and

**WHEREAS**, the current City of Washington Mayor and other City Council members have stated that they wish to replaced U-5860 with a different design that narrows the corridor to two lanes with a center turn lane, commonly referred to as a “road diet” or remove the project from the STIP all together and seek improvements to only specific intersections along the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed “road diet” alternative design was reviewed by both NCDOT and an outside engineering firm and, due to the volume of traffic on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, it was found to be unacceptable as it

was projected to decrease safety and increase congestion in this already extremely dangerous corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, removal of U-5860 from the STIP would result in the project's division-level funding returning to Division 2 and being reassigned to the next highest scoring STIP project, with it more than likely not returning to Beaufort County; and

**WHEREAS**, if safety funding is instead sought for specific intersections along the corridor, each individual location would have to be competitively scored and selected based on NCDOT's safety program criteria and would then require its own design process. Due to limited safety funds and statewide competition, compared to Division-wide competition for the STIP program, it would likely take numerous years before any intersection-specific improvements could begin; and

**WHEREAS**, the NCDOT has worked extensively with the City of Washington and through public input sessions to make changes to U-5860 which have minimized the acquisition of right-of-way and incorporated many of the amenities requested by the City and the public; and

**WHEREAS**, if U-5860 is stopped and removed from the STIP, any future proposed improvement to this state-owned corridor would have to be fully resubmitted, rescored, and selected for funds before project development could begin. NCDOT updates its STIP every two years, meaning projects must wait for and compete in multi-year prioritization cycles before they are considered. Considering this, it would be many years before another approved improvement project on this corridor could realistically advance.

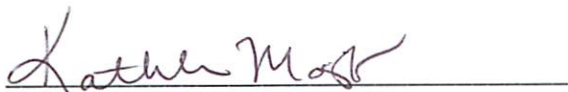
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Beaufort County Board of Commissioners supports the NCDOT project U-5860 as designed because of the safety and congestion improvements it will make to the corridor; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Beaufort County Board of Commissioners calls on the Washington Mayor and City Council members to cease their opposition to the U-5860 project so that the project can get underway and bring the safety and congestion improvements needed to reduce the crashes and fatalities along this corridor.

Adopted this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2026.



Frankie Waters, Chairman  
Beaufort County Board of Commissioners



Kathleen Mosher  
Clerk to the Board