



Agenda Action Form Overview

The Board is requested to authorize the County Manager to award a contract to HDR Engineering Inc. of the Carolinas in the amount of \$1,524,565.00 to develop the East Durham Rail Crossing Study.

Background/Justification

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was signed into law in November 2021. As part of this legislation, additional funding was allocated to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) program. Durham County successfully applied in 2022 for an RCE grant from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for this study. The project cost is \$1,524,565.00, which includes the \$1,220,000 received as part of the RCE grant, and the \$305,000 local match provided through the Durham County Transit Plan. The project is set to begin in 2026 and wrap up in 2028.

The East Durham Rail Crossing Study will entail planning and project development activities to grade separate, close, and/or improve safety through other alternatives identified through the planning process for three adjacent crossings (Driver Street, Plum Street, and Ellis Road) in East Durham. Over the 25-year period between 1997 and 2022, there were 19 crashes causing three fatalities and nine injuries at these three crossings.

This study will focus on completing planning activities, including identifying and developing conceptual design(s) for coordinated crossing improvement options. The study will include pre-National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project development activities, including public engagement, identification of a full corridor project inventory, conceptual design, and establishment of an implementation plan/project phasing plan to assist with the transition of project elements through implementation phases. The planning initiative will reassess recommendations from the 2014 Traffic Separation Study and update the study with new, current, and projected traffic data. The project will include an equitable community engagement effort to facilitate the selection of a preferred solution that is responsive to the needs of the residents and businesses of this area.

The study supports future design and construction of improvements that will significantly improve safety within Durham County, enhance pedestrian and cyclist access options, improve trip reliability and emergency response, and reduce congestion associated with queuing at at-grade crossings. Improving these railroad crossings also supports the reliability and safety of existing passenger rail services and facilitates the expansion of passenger rail services in the state and region.

Policy Impact

This project is in accordance with Durham County Strategic Plan Goal 1: Regional Leadership, as this project will further objective 2 of the Regional Leadership Goal: “Enhance access to different types of transportation in the region.”



Procurement Background

Type of purchase

- ☐ Goods
- ☒ Services
- ☐ Architect, Engineer or Surveyor Services
- ☐ Construction and Repair

Did this request for purchase go through a bid process? Yes ☒ No ☐

Goods: Bids required if $\geq \$30,000$, BOCC approval if $\geq \$90,000$

Services: Bids required if $\geq \$30,000$, BOCC approval if $> \$40,000$

Construction/Repair work: Bids required if $\geq \$30,000$, BOCC approval if $\geq \$500,000$

If yes, attach a copy of bid tab and the minority and women business enterprise (MWBE) compliance review form provided by the Purchasing Division.

If no, why?

- ☐ Sole source exemption
- ☐ Cooperative purchasing program exemption
- ☐ State and federal contract exemption
- ☐ Contract is an amendment to an existing contract
- ☐ Other (please explain)

If exempted from bidding, has this request been reviewed and approved by the Purchasing Division in the agenda Legistar system? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, why?

Fiscal Impact

The East Durham Rail Crossing Study contract with HDR has a cost of \$1,524,565.00, which includes the \$1,220,000 received as part of the RCE grant and the \$305,000 local match that will be reimbursed through funding from the Durham County Transit Plan. These funds are included in the FY26 Durham County Budget and FY26 Durham County Transit Work Program.

Recommendation

The County Manager recommends that the BOCC authorize the County Manager to award a contract with HDR in the amount of \$1,524,565.00 to develop the East Durham Rail Crossing Study.