

## **FAQs for US 1 North Capital Boulevard Upgrade:**

*Accelerating Capital Freeway and Complementary Multimodal Parallel Access Road System via toll revenue*

### **What is the need for upgrading US 1 / Capital Blvd. between I-540 and Franklin County to a multimodal freeway?**

Growing congestion, delays, and unpredictable travel times on US 1 are causing increasing challenges for mobility, economic development, and quality of life for northern Wake and Franklin Co. residents, businesses, and visitors.

NCDOT has a plan to upgrade US 1 / Capital Blvd. north of I-540 to a 10+ mile, 70 MPH freeway (STIP U-5307 A-D) with parallel service roads the entire length of the corridor. When this network is complete, the freeway will have no stoplights, left turns, or driveways, saving travelers substantial time and stress, while the new parallel service road network will provide multimodal access to existing and future businesses and residential areas.

### **How much time could travelers save during peak periods if Capital Boulevard becomes a freeway?**

It will take less than 10 minutes to drive the entire signal-free, 10+ mile freeway from I-540 to Franklin County.

With no improvements, projected 2035 peak period delays will be 12 minutes at a single signalized intersection (e.g., Burlington Mills Rd.) and continue to worsen at other locations (e.g., 6 minutes at US 1-A / S. Main St.)

### **The freeway upgrade is largely delayed due to lack of funding. Could toll revenue accelerate the construction?**

Yes. The cost of the freeway upgrade has increased by more than \$500m in just the last two years, with a total estimated construction cost of \$1.3 billion in the 2026 draft STIP. The NC Turnpike Authority study, requested by the Capital Area MPO, determined that toll revenue could significantly accelerate the corridor construction.

### **Could the state help contribute funding for the road to minimize tolls and/or accelerate construction?**

Yes. NCDOT has already committed \$800m in funding for just the southern segments (A, B) of the corridor. That money can be coupled with future toll user revenue to dramatically accelerate the upgrade of more than ten miles of Capital Boulevard to a freeway.

### **Why are tolls being studied to upgrade US 1 in northern Wake Co. if there are no tolls on US 1 in southern Wake?**

Funding was available to build US 1 in southern Wake County as a freeway years ago. While the proposed freeway along north US 1 is now “fully funded” in the draft state TIP, construction funds are not available until 2031.

This is essentially the reverse situation in Wake County for 540: since there was sufficient funding at the time, I-540 in northern Wake County was not constructed as a toll facility. The western, southern, and eastern Wake sections of 540 are, or are being constructed as, toll roads due to insufficient funding.

### **Would tolls be activated on existing Capital Boulevard even before the freeway is completed?**

No. The existing Capital Boulevard roadway, with a plethora of traffic signals, will never be a toll road.

The toll proposal is to accelerate the construction of a new multimodal freeway without stoplights along the corridor, as well as a parallel access road network. Tolls would only be placed along the freeway, and tolls would not be activated until the entire freeway and service road network were complete.

### **How much would tolls be?**

While potential toll rates are not finalized, a base or full toll rate in the range of \$2.50 to \$3 for the entire ten mile trip from I-540 to Franklin County would be a reasonable initial estimate for transponder users, consistent with the approximate \$0.25 rate/mile for the existing Triangle Expressway system.

### **Would people pay lower tolls if they do not travel the entire ten mile upgraded corridor?**

Yes. The estimated transponder toll of \$2 - \$3 from the preliminary sketch-level analysis applies to travelers who make the entire ten mile trip from I-540 to Franklin County. Shorter trips would pay a lower rate.

### **Would people pay lower tolls if they travel during off-peak or overnight periods?**

While potential toll rates have not been finalized, the Turnpike Authority has indicated that the financial model will allow for discounted or zero tolls during certain off-peak or overnight periods.

Note that the 2025 endorsements by CAMPO, RTA, the City of Raleigh, and the Greater Raleigh Chamber of using dedicated toll revenue to accelerate freeway construction all called for or referenced discounted off peak toll rates.

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#### **Would tolls be collected electronically, like the 540 Triangle Expressway corridor?**

Yes. All North Carolina turnpikes collect tolls electronically, and there would never be any toll booths installed. Tolls would be paid in advance with a transponder, at lower rates, or post-paid via pay-by-plate recognition.

Note that a toll transponder in North Carolina can be obtained for no cost.

#### **Would tolls ever be removed?**

Yes. Existing NC General Statutes require the removal of tolls upon completion of debt payments for all turnpikes in North Carolina. This provision already applies to the NC 540 turnpike and it would apply to Capital Blvd. as well.

A toll removal policy also applies to turnpikes in nearby states. The Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike and Va. Beach-Norfolk Expressway in Virginia and Georgia 400 in Atlanta are all former toll roads in the southeastern US.

#### **Would there be viable alternate routes available for travelers who cannot or do not want to pay a toll?**

Yes. The freeway design includes the construction of miles of new parallel service roads, which will create a new, non-toll travel way parallel to the US 1 freeway, in concert with and accessible from all proposed exits.

In addition, there are several alternative routes for all or part of the corridor, including portions of US 401, Falls of Neuse, Old Falls of Neuse, Ligon Mill, Forestville, etc. for those who do not want or need to travel on the turnpike.

#### **How long would travel time take along the alternate routes – specifically via the parallel service road network?**

An initial analysis commissioned by RTA of projected future peak period corridor travel times found that travel along a parallel service road routing would take far less time than travel along an unimproved Capital Boulevard.

Specifically: less than 10 minutes along future freeway; around 30 minutes along future access roads parallel to the future freeway, which is similar to the 30 minutes to travel along the Capital Boulevard corridor today during peak; about 60 minutes during the peak along the corridor in 2035 if the corridor is not upgraded to freeway.

#### **How would people access existing businesses or other locations once the freeway is in place?**

The freeway design will redirect access to properties and side streets via new access roads, ramps, and bridges.

#### **What about pedestrians and bicyclists – will they be better off if Capital is upgraded to a multimodal freeway?**

Yes. The project will construct miles of new service roads with multiuse paths and/or sidewalks. Traveling across Capital will also be simplified since bridges will separate crossing and through traffic.

#### **Would the multimodal freeway include any provisions for transit?**

Yes. The removal of traffic signals from US 1 will increase capacity and eliminate delay for all through vehicles, including transit. The design includes a 12' outside shoulder for future bus on shoulder system (BOSS) operation.

The regional business community has also requested the inclusion of a 14' dynamic transit priority inside shoulder.

#### **Is there local support for using toll revenue for accelerating the upgrade of Capital Blvd.?**

Yes. In 2025 the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and the City of Raleigh, along with RTA and the Greater Raleigh Chamber, all endorsed tolling the corridor to accelerate the transformation to freeway.

#### **Will legislative changes be required to accelerate the upgrade of Capital Boulevard using toll revenue?**

Yes. NC General Statutes would need to clarify that tolls on an existing corridor would be permitted if approved by the area metropolitan planning organization. In addition, it would be helpful for the Capital Boulevard corridor to be considered part of the Triangle turnpike network to minimize financing risk and reduce toll rates.

The NC House of Representatives FY 2026 budget, passed in May 2025, would preclude the tolling of the roadway.

#### **How does this proposed freeway project relate to the City of Raleigh's plans for Capital Boulevard south of I-540?**

In July 2022 Raleigh adopted a complementary plan for Capital south of 540 that would upgrade and reconstruct the corridor between I-440 and I-540 as a "multiway boulevard" with no stoplights in the center through lanes.

The two projects north and south of I-540 would create a signal-free pathway between I-440 and Franklin County.