N.C. Department of Transportation

Strategic Plan

2026-2031





Message from the Transportation Secretary

Dear NCDOT Colleagues, Partners, and Stakeholders,

North Carolina is growing and changing rapidly, and our transportation system must be ready to meet the demands of today while preparing for what comes next. That requires us to be clear about where we are going, disciplined about the priorities that will get us there, and willing to change how we work when the moment demands it.

I am proud to introduce the N.C. Department of Transportation's Strategic Plan for 2026-2031. This plan is a framework for action – one that should guide our decisions, focus our resources, measure our progress and hold us accountable for delivering a safer, stronger and more future-ready transportation system for North Carolinians.

The past several years reinforced the importance of that responsibility. A changing workforce, emerging technologies, increasing demands on our infrastructure and severe weather events are reshaping how we plan, build, operate and maintain our transportation system. Hurricane Helene, in particular, demonstrated the extraordinary capability of our people while underscoring the need to ensure a resilient transportation system that's ready for the challenges of the future.

Our strategic plan is focused on six priority areas: **Transportation Safety, Workforce Safety and Readiness, Program Delivery, System Reliability, Infrastructure Health, and Digital Modernization.** Each area is critical to our long-term success, and together they chart a clear path toward a more connected and thriving North Carolina. They also support our broader vision for North Carolina's transportation future – one that improves mobility and connectivity, embraces innovation, ensures resilient infrastructure and adapts to cleaner transportation options. This plan is intentionally focused. It does not attempt to capture every important program, project or responsibility underway across the Department. Instead, it identifies areas where concentrated attention and measurable progress over the next five years can make a meaningful impact. Each priority is supported by specific initiatives and measures that allow us to track our progress, demonstrate results and adjust our approach when needed.

This plan's success depends on people throughout NCDOT seeing themselves and their work reflected in it. I challenge every division, unit and team to use this plan as a jumping-off point: identify how your work advances these priorities, establish goals and measures that matter to your organization, and develop your own plans for turning these priorities into action.

As we implement this plan, we invite continued partnership, collaboration, and feedback from our communities, employees, and stakeholders. Together, we can overcome today's challenges and seize tomorrow's opportunities, building a transportation system that supports North Carolina's growth and enhances the quality of life for all.

Ultimately, the measure of this plan will not be what is written on these pages, but what we accomplish because of it. I look forward to doing that work together.

Sincerely,



Daniel Johnson,
North Carolina Transportation Secretary

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About the Department

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is one of the state's largest and most complex public agencies, responsible for planning, building, operating, and maintaining a safe, efficient, and multimodal transportation system that supports more than 11 million North Carolinians.

NCDOT supports all modes of transportation in North Carolina. This includes highways, rail, aviation, ferries, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The Department oversees the state's Division of Motor Vehicles and the Governor's Highway Safety Program, which promotes safety awareness to reduce highway crashes and fatalities. Additionally, NCDOT helps expand economic growth opportunities through oversight of the N.C. State Ports and the N.C. Global TransPark. The Department also oversees the N.C. Turnpike Authority, providing innovative financing solutions for transportation through the use of tolls. The organization's operations are led by the Secretary of Transportation. A 20-member Board of Transportation primarily serves as a fiduciary of the Highway Fund and Highway Trust Fund and, among several enumerated duties, approves the Departments' Spend Plan and schedules of construction and maintenance projects.

This strategic plan outlines a focused set of key priorities, metrics, and initiatives that reflect the Department's highest-priority areas for measurement and accountability. It is not intended to encompass the full scope of work across every division, nor does it capture all operational objectives or ongoing programmatic efforts that contribute to the Department's success. Instead, these metrics provide a clear, concise lens into the most essential areas that will guide progress over the coming years.

Mission, Vision & Values

Mission

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.

Vision

A global leader in providing innovative transportation solutions.

Values

Safety

We are dedicated to providing a safe transportation network and work environment.

Customer Service

We serve our customers in a respectful, professional and timely manner.

Integrity

We earn and maintain trust through accountability, transparency and data-driven decisions.

Quality

We pursue excellence in delivering our projects, programs, services and initiatives.

Teamwork

We work together using our diverse strengths and skills, collaborating to solve problems and serve our communities.

Innovation

We promote the development and use of new and better solutions.

Strategic Priorities

Transportation Safety

NCDOT will improve safety on North Carolina's transportation system by identifying and treating high-risk locations on N.C. roadways, focusing on the emphasis areas of lane departure, intersection, and pedestrian crashes.

Workforce Safety and Readiness

NCDOT will build and sustain a safe, skilled and ready workforce by strengthening our safety culture and practices, recruiting and retaining qualified employees, reducing vacancies and developing the knowledge, skills and leadership needed for the future.

Program Delivery

NCDOT will deliver its transportation program on time and on budget by awarding projects efficiently, controlling cost and schedule through construction, and sustaining the daily services North Carolina depends on.

System Reliability

NCDOT will deliver reliable, accessible service that North Carolina's growing population can count on by making strategic improvements of key systems and minimizing disruptions and delays.

Infrastructure Health

NCDOT will keep one of the nation's largest state-owned transportation systems in good working order by fixing everyday issues like potholes, strengthening assets against future hazards, and mobilizing rapid recovery after disasters like Hurricane Helene.

Digital Modernization

NCDOT will create a fully connected, intelligent digital ecosystem that enables proactive decision-making by empowering the workforce with intuitive tools, streamlining operations, and developing connected data.

Understanding the Plan

This strategic plan is organized to show how NCDOT turns long-term vision into measurable progress. Each priority area has its own page that begins with a **Goal Statement** that defines the outcome we aim to achieve, followed by the **Key External Dependencies** that shape our ability to make progress. **Performance Metrics** track movement toward the goal, and the **Initiatives** outline the actions—near-term, mid-term, and long-term—that will drive improvement. Together, this structure reflects a simple theory of change: initiatives move the metrics, the metrics demonstrate progress toward the goal, and the goal defines the impact we seek for North Carolina.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

1

Transportation Safety

Create a safer transportation system in North Carolina

Goal Statement

NCDOT will improve safety on North Carolina's transportation system by identifying and treating high-risk locations on N.C. roadways, focusing on the emphasis areas of lane departure, intersection, and pedestrian crashes.

Key External Dependencies

- Safety involves many external partnerships, including law enforcement and local planning organizations.
- Traveler behavior, such as alcohol/drugs, seatbelt use, and speed are factors in many fatalities and serious injuries.
- Emerging technologies can help make vehicles and roads safer.
- Federal reporting requirements guide our work, including the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and the Highway Safety Plan.
- The number of locations or miles NCDOT can treat depends on available Highway Safety Improvement Program, state, and federal safety funding, and project delivery timelines are shaped by division staff capacity, right of way needs, utilities, and contractor availability.

Performance Metrics

Metric	Current (CY '25)	Target (CY '26)	Frequency	Data Source
Number and rate of fatalities on public roadways in N.C.*	1,531 fatalities (1.16 rate)	1,012.6 fatalities (0.845 rate)	Monthly	TEAAS via Databricks
Number and rate of serious injuries on public roadways in N.C.*	5,161 injuries (3.91 rate)	3,000.5 injuries (2.499 rate)	Monthly	TEAAS via Databricks
Number of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries on public roadways in N.C.*	759 fatalities and serious injuries	403.4 fatalities and serious injuries	Monthly	TEAAS via Databricks
Number of lane departure fatalities and serious injuries on NCDOT maintained roadways**	3,093	2,938	Quarterly	TEAAS via Databricks
Number of intersection-related fatalities and serious injuries on NCDOT maintained roadways**	1,415	1,344	Quarterly	TEAAS via Databricks
Number of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries on NCDOT maintained roadways **	501	476	Quarterly	TEAAS via Databricks

Metric	Current (CY '25)	Target (CY '26)	Frequency	Data Source
Number of miles of NCDOT maintained roadways improved with lane departure countermeasures**	702	737	Quarterly	TMSD Safety Database
Number of NCDOT maintained locations improved with intersection safety countermeasures**	119	125	Quarterly	TMSD Safety Database
Number of NCDOT maintained locations improved with pedestrian safety countermeasures**	16	17	Quarterly	TMSD Safety Database

Initiatives — Now (Next 12 Months)

- [ ] Execute the Strategic Highway Safety Plan to strategically address key safety issues in North Carolina
- [ ] Study declining fatality trends in the Southeastern US to understand root causes
- [ ] Re-engage the Executive Committee for Highway Safety to implement and evaluate policies and programs to reduce fatalities, injuries and related to crashes
- [ ] Complete a guidance document for implementation of speed safety cameras in school zones
- [ ] Develop road safety assessment training for use throughout the state
- [ ] Establish the Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan
- [ ] Develop shared understanding of the research behind complete streets, safety, and challenges in delivery, to reflect our current efforts

Initiatives — Next (2–3 Years)

- [ ] Expand deployment of low-cost easily repeatable wrong way entry countermeasures to freeway ramp locations
- [ ] Work with locals to develop comprehensive safety actions plans at MPOs, RPOs, and cities throughout the state
- [ ] Develop training on urban and suburban vulnerable road users and multimodal transportation systems in roadway design
- [ ] Develop and lead collaborative partnerships with autonomous vehicle industry to advance the testing, integration, and statewide adoption of emerging vehicle safety systems

Initiatives — Future (4–5 Years)

- [ ] Pursue changes to better integrate Complete Streets Policy into projects
- [ ] Leverage the Executive Committee for Highway Safety to formalize and implement data integration platforms that focus on addressing risky driver behaviors to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. Those risky driving behaviors include alcohol and drugs, speed, seatbelt use, and distracted driving

* Federal Requirements **State Reporting

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

2

Workforce Safety and Readiness

Recruit and retain a thriving workforce to meet North Carolina's transportation needs

Goal Statement

NCDOT will build and sustain a safe, skilled and ready workforce by strengthening our safety culture and practices, recruiting and retaining qualified employees, reducing vacancies and developing the knowledge, skills and leadership needed for the future.

Key External Dependencies

- NCDOT programs must comply with statewide Human Resources (HR) policies & procedures.
- Step salary increases may require legislative authorization.
- University/community college partnerships require long-term external coordination.
- Labor market conditions affect recruitment competitiveness.

Performance Metrics

Metric	**Current** (FY '26)	**Target** (FY '27)	Frequency	Data Source
Employee Safety Index*	1.98	≤2.11	Monthly	SAP Employee Safety Index Data Model
Vacancy rate for permanent, full-time, or time-limited positions	16%	≤15%	Monthly	Beacon
Average number of days a position is vacant	250 days	≤200 days	Monthly	Beacon
Retention rate for permanent, full-time, or time-limited positions	88%	89%	Monthly	Beacon

* The current metric does not include equipment incident information, whereas the target metric does include equipment incident information. Historically, this metric has been calculated using a three year period; however, for this cycle we are using a one year period.

Initiatives — Now (Next 12 Months)

- [ ] Pilot new AI safety tools to assess work zone safety
- [ ] Analyze data to determine root cause of increase in 'post-accident testing' required incidents
- [ ] Build searchable dashboards to track vacancies and retirement trends
- [ ] Explore salary step increases and other retention programs targeted towards hard to fill positions, such as DMV examiners and transportation workers
- [ ] Pilot Pathways Leadership Development Program

Initiatives — Next (2–3 Years)

- [ ] Revise the Workforce Safety Manual and implement changes
- [ ] Create a comprehensive Safety Management System to track data and key performance indicators across the Department
- [ ] Develop knowledge management database to retain institutional knowledge and support succession planning
- [ ] Develop partnerships with universities and community colleges to develop curricula for hard-to-fill roles
- [ ] Build searchable dashboards to track retention trends
- [ ] Build a system to track success of recruitment programs

Initiatives — Future (4–5 Years)

- [ ] Update HR Management system to support full talent lifecycle end-to-end
- [ ] Launch workload tracker to help leadership understand distribution, set targets, and measure performance

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

3

Program Delivery

Award new projects, complete construction, and deliver daily services across North Carolina

Goal Statement

NCDOT will deliver its transportation program on time and on budget by awarding projects efficiently, controlling cost and schedule through construction, and sustaining the daily services North Carolina depends on.

Key External Dependencies

- External partners such as utility companies and construction. contractors assist NCDOT in program delivery.
- Cost escalation and flat revenues can impact program delivery.
- Regulation determines scope of program delivery.

Performance Metrics

Metric	Current (FY '26)	Target (FY '27)	Frequency	Data Source
Preconstruction: Percentage of construction contracts awarded on schedule	Central Let: 43% LAP: 4%	Central Let: 60% (FY '27) 80% (FY '31) LAP: 7%	Monthly	SAP Project Model
Construction: Percentage of projects completed on schedule	68%	75%	Monthly	HiCams
Construction: Percentage on budget	Projects on budget: 81% Construction dollars in on-budget projects: 48%	Projects on budget: 85% Construction dollars in on-budget projects: 55%	Monthly	TBD
Ferry service ridership: Number of ferry passengers*	1,385,288	1,243,000	Monthly	Ferry Dashboard
Rail service ridership: Number of rail passengers	737,152	> 737,152	Monthly	SAP
IMD: Percentage of annual state and federal funds obligated	90%	94%	Monthly	IMD Dashboard

* Session Law 2026-41 requires the Ferry Division to implement tolling on all ferry routes no later than Jan. 1, 2027. As a result of tolling the entire ferry system, the division currently anticipates SFY 2026-27 ridership to decrease to approximately 580,000 vehicles, down from 650,000 vehicles in SFY 2025-26.

Metric	Current (FY '26)	Target (FY '27)	Frequency	Data Source
Aviation funds management: - % of state funds appropriated in the FY allotted/awarded by FYE - % of federal funds expended prior to expiration	100% of state funds N/A for federal funds	100% of state funds 100% of federal funds	Monthly	Aviation Financial Dashboard

Initiatives — Now (Next 12 Months)

- [ ] Use innovative solutions to improve quality and accuracy of cost estimates, plans, packages, and projects
- [ ] Modernize key processes: updated guidance, tools, and contracting
- [ ] Complete preliminary engineering on the S-Line
- [ ] Develop and distribute a project delivery toolkit for airport project managers and grants and environmental teams
- [ ] Create and distribute a toolkit and action plans for completing local transit projects
- [ ] Implement Ferry tolling
- [ ] Sign contract with a Shipyard via CM/GC procurement and make advancements toward final design of new vessel

Initiatives — Next (2–3 Years)

- [ ] Collaborate with federal partners to streamline processes and requirements, including NEPA delegated authority
- [ ] Build an integrated, automated data system that delivers real time visibility and predictive insights across programs
- [ ] Identify and implement new technologies to streamline NCDOT aviation and IMD grant process
- [ ] Substantial completion of Step 2 of Corridor ID for two corridors
- [ ] Develop a Ferry 30-year Capital Plan
- [ ] Refine Ferry tolling policy and processes

Initiatives — Future (4–5 Years)

- [ ] Implement a one-stop platform for preconstruction project development
- [ ] Expand use of alternative delivery methods
- [ ] Improve coordination with rail and utility partners
- [ ] Integrate digital delivery processes

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

4

System Reliability

Deliver a reliable and accessible transportation system in North Carolina

Goal Statement

NCDOT will deliver reliable, accessible service that North Carolina's growing population can count on by making strategic improvements of key systems and minimizing disruptions and delays.

Key External Dependencies

- Ferry reliability is sensitive to gas prices and workforce challenges.
- Rail reliability is sensitive to freight delays.
- Statewide travel time is impacted by crashes, adverse weather, work zones, and other external factors.

Performance Metrics

Metric	Current (FY '26)	Target (FY '27)	Frequency	Data Source
Average uptime of statewide ITS devices and traffic signals	85% (DMS) 80% (CCTV) 67% (Signals)	90% (DMS) 83% (CCTV) 70% (Signals)	Monthly	ATMS Statewide Signal System
Percentage of congested Interstate corridors with a peak period Travel Time Index (TTI) of 1.4 or less	97%	97% or greater	Monthly	INRIX
Percentage of crashes cleared within 90 minutes	80%	90%	Monthly	TIMS
Number of corridor studies, small area studies, and road safety audits completed	0	5 (FY '27) 20 (FY '28) 30 (FY '29)	Monthly	TBD
Rail reliability — On-time arrivals for passenger rail*	70%	≥70%	Monthly	Rail Reliability Data Model EBS
Ferry reliability — Ferries departing as scheduled, excluding weather and shoaling	94%	95%	Monthly	Ferry Reliability Data Model EBS

* The Rail Division expects significant construction on the Corridor in FY '27 which may impact on-time performance.

Initiatives — Now (Next 12 Months)

- [ ] Modernize the Traveler Information Management System (TIMS)
- [ ] Implement an asset and maintenance management system for state-owned traffic signal infrastructure
- [ ] Develop a TSMO Strategy Library of resources that includes easily digestible summaries of TSMO strategy impacts – include performance measures, return on investments (ROIs), and benefit-cost analyses (BCAs)
- [ ] Complete Ferry Shipyard Efficiency Study

Initiatives — Next (2–3 Years)

- [ ] Implement Ferry Shipyard Efficiency Study
- [ ] Establish tools and processes that support continuous education to ensure consistent understanding of access management principles, corridor development, and innovative design options
- [ ] Complete Ferry Strategic Plan
- [ ] Conduct strategic corridor studies, small area studies, and road safety audits to define long-term safety and operational needs on key routes, evaluating factors such as crashes, operations, multimodal needs, access conditions, and project sequencing

Initiatives — Future (4–5 Years)

- [ ] Lead fiber commercialization partnerships, secure funding, and build a resilient, redundant NCDOT fiber network with performance-based operations and maintenance
- [ ] Implement a sustainable approach to funding TSMO strategies
- [ ] Connect all state-maintained signals to a single statewide signal system
- [ ] Implement new AI tools and software for maritime asset management planning and forecasting
- [ ] Replace passenger rail fleet with Airo trains

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

5

Infrastructure Health

Maintain a world-class transportation system and restore access quickly after disasters like Hurricane Helene

Goal Statement

NCDOT will keep one of the nation's largest state-owned transportation systems in good working order by fixing everyday issues like potholes, strengthening assets against future hazards, and mobilizing rapid recovery after disasters like Hurricane Helene.

Key External Dependencies

- Natural disasters are unavoidable and require proactive planning and procedures.
- Funding formulas guide how we prioritize maintenance where it is needed most.
- Cost escalation and flat revenue limits maintenance and repair capacity.

Performance Metrics

Metric	Current (FY '26)	Target (FY '27)	Frequency	Data Source
Helene recovery: Percentage of damage sites repaired	92%	100% by 2030	Monthly	SAP Disaster Management Data Model
Helene recovery: Percentage of roads reopened	99%	100% by 2030	Monthly	TIMS
Percentage of bridges rated in good condition	80%	80% or higher	Monthly	WIGINS
Percentage of pavement miles rated in good condition*	93% (interstate) 70% (primary) 69% (secondary)	85% (interstate) 80% (primary) 70% (secondary)	Annual	Asset Management System (PMS)
Ferry — Percentage of funded marine infrastructure projects completed	0%	100%	Monthly	SAP
Ferry — Percentage of planned vessel maintenance completed	90%	100%	Monthly	SAP

* Pursuant to GS 136-44.3, the Department has established pavement targets.

Initiatives — Now (Next 12 Months)

- [ ] Helene: Integrate a dashboard to track reimbursement status across projects
- [ ] Helene: Approve work packages for all corridor projects and begin construction
- [ ] Implement a checklist for FHWA/FEMA reimbursement
- [ ] Document lessons learned and revise the disaster recovery toolkit
- [ ] Evaluate automated data collection systems for asset management
- [ ] Obligate $35.4M in ferry asset maintenance funding

Initiatives — Next (2–3 Years)

- [ ] Streamline and optimize processes, tracking, and reporting efforts for disaster recovery to provide additional transparency to key stakeholders
- [ ] Collaborate with N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to build out a landslide hazard mapping and warning system
- [ ] Expand the use of LIDAR technology in asset management to improve safety and efficiency
- [ ] Expand drone use in bridge inspections to improve safety and decrease costs
- [ ] Implement innovative technology to improve aviation data collection and communications tools for disaster response
- [ ] Complete the $35.4M in ferry asset maintenance projects

Initiatives — Future (4–5 Years)

- [ ] Helene: Finalize construction and permanent repairs
- [ ] Helene: Continue and finalize reimbursement with our federal partners
- [ ] Increase funding for interstate maintenance/bridge programs with the STIP
- [ ] Expand coverage of the Flood Inundation Mapping Alert Network (FIMAN) at critical infrastructure sites across western North Carolina

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

6

Digital Modernization

Create a future-ready technology infrastructure and data ecosystem for DOH and Modes

Goal Statement

NCDOT will create a fully connected, intelligent digital ecosystem that enables proactive decision-making by empowering the workforce with intuitive tools, streamlining operations, and developing connected data.

Key External Dependencies

- Cloud partnerships, vendor availability, and technology market conditions affect modernization timelines.
- Interagency coordination (DIT, OSBM, OSC, OSHR, DOA) impacts approvals, architecture, and standardization.
- Compliance with federal and state cybersecurity, privacy, and AI governance standards shapes modernization approaches.

Performance Metrics

Metric	**Current** (FY '26)	**Target** (FY '27)	Frequency	Data Source
Enterprise Data Platform Ingestion Rate	TBD — by October 2026	TBD — by October 2026	Monthly	TBD
Digital Modernization Maturity Score	TBD — by October 2026	TBD — by October 2026	Quarterly	Service Now, SharePoint
IT Procurement Cycle Time (RFP Only)	15 months	14 months (FY '27) 12 months (FY '29)	Monthly	Service Now

Initiatives — Now (Next 12 Months)

- [ ] Build the Digital Modernization Roadmap and begin executing, including establishment of governance committees, outreach, technical and business capabilities assessments
- [ ] Complete assessment of key systems and data related to strategic plan priorities such as project and asset management data*
- [ ] Increase data flowing into Databricks to support the metrics identified in strategic priorities*
- [ ] Staff key Digital Modernization positions including executive, analyst, SMEs, and administrative positions*
- [ ] Create process to support a transparent and consistent procurement experience with targets based on complexity

Initiatives — Next (2–3 Years)

- [ ] Improve procurement transparency by implementing traceable dashboards showing cycle times, workload, bottlenecks, and forecasted demand
- [ ] For key data sets related to strategic priorities, establish ownership and governance
- [ ] Implement changes / recommendations from Digital Modernization Maturity Score results to improve user experience and achieve a score greater than 90
- [ ] Implement improved digital processes and equip DOT employees with training to use them effectively

Initiatives — Future (4–5 Years)

- [ ] Complete IT procurement objectives: Deploy end-to-end digital procurement platform, implement predictive analytics for procurement outcomes, and achieve major reductions in overall procurement cycle time
- [ ] Complete modernization of prioritized platforms
- [ ] Fully integrate and govern priority data sets to improve data access and analytics tools for DOT and streamline operations for technical stakeholders
- [ ] Continue Digital Modernization Maturity Score process to maintain a score higher than 90

* Initiative is part of Digital Modernization Roadmap

Strategic Planning Across NCDOT

NCDOT is a large, multifaceted agency made up of numerous specialized units, each responsible for distinct aspects of the state's transportation system. Many of these units already operate under their own strategic plans, which they are actively implementing today to guide their priorities, investments, and day-to-day decision making.

N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles (NCDMV)

N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles provides essential customer services such as driver licensing, vehicle titling, and vehicle registration. The division has undertaken a significant modernization effort, expanding online services, reducing wait times, improving appointment systems, and implementing digital tools such as mobile IDs and document upload capabilities. Ongoing modernization efforts aim to balance customer convenience with regulatory compliance and safety. NCDMV's full strategic plan can be viewed here.

North Carolina Turnpike Authority

The Turnpike Authority develops, operates, and manages toll facilities that help address congestion and provide reliable travel options. It oversees highways such as the Triangle Expressway and Monroe Expressway, and leads innovation initiatives related to tolling technology, financing models, and Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) pilots. More information about the Turnpike Authority can be found here.

North Carolina Global TransPark (GTP)

Located in eastern North Carolina, the Global TransPark is an economic development engine specializing in aerospace, advanced manufacturing, and logistics. NCDOT oversees this multimodal industrial hub, which supports job creation, foreign investment, cargo operations, and statewide freight connectivity. More information about GTP can be found here.

North Carolina State Ports Authority

The Ports Authority operates the state's deepwater ports in Wilmington and Morehead City, along with inland terminals. These ports handle millions of tons of cargo annually and are essential to North Carolina's supply chain competitiveness. NCDOT's relationship with the Ports Authority helps ensure that maritime and landside infrastructure work together to support freight movement and statewide economic growth. The Ports Authority full strategic plan can be viewed here.

Financial Information

Financial transparency is a core responsibility for NCDOT and a foundation for maintaining public trust. As a large agency managing billions in annual investments, NCDOT provides clear, consistent visibility into its finances through weekly Cash Watch reports and monthly financial presentations to the Board of Transportation or the Finance Committee. These publicly available updates help North Carolinians understand how transportation dollars are being managed, reinforce accountability, and ensure that decisions about projects and operations are grounded in accurate, up-to-date financial information.

How We Move Forward

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be anchored in a clear governance process and a modernized approach to tracking performance. NCDOT is establishing structured, Department-wide routines—regular leadership check-ins, recurring performance reviews, and cross-divisional forums—to ensure transparency, accountability, and timely issue resolution as conditions evolve. At the same time, the Department, through its Office of Strategic Advancement, is developing an integrated metrics and initiatives dashboard that provides real time visibility into progress across all priority areas. This system will streamline monitoring, surface trends earlier, and support data driven decision-making through accessible visualizations and public facing reporting. Together, these governance and tracking tools will create the discipline and clarity needed to keep the plan active, adaptive, and aligned across the Department.

Closing

Thank you for taking the time to read the NCDOT's Strategic Plan. Your commitment to understanding our priorities help strengthen the work we do every day to serve the people of North Carolina. If you have questions, feedback, or would like additional information, we welcome you to reach out through our Contact Us page. Follow us on social media to get the latest updates on transportation in our state. We look forward to continuing this work together and appreciate your partnership in shaping a safe, connected, and resilient transportation future for our state.

/ncdot	@ncdotcom	@ncdot	ncdot	ncdotcom	NCDOTcommunications	

Glossary

NCDOA — North Carolina Department of Administration

NCDIT — North Carolina Department of Information Technology

NCDOT — North Carolina Department of Transportation

NCOSBM — North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management

NCOSC — North Carolina Office of the State Controller

NCOSHR — North Carolina Office of State Human Resources

STI — The Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law mandates ongoing evaluation and improvement to ensure that the process responds to North Carolina's diverse needs. This is accomplished by a prioritization work group consisting primarily of professional engineers and transportation planners.

STIP — NCDOT's long-range transportation plan — called the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) — identifies the construction funding and schedule for state transportation projects over a 10-year period. NCDOT updates the STIP approximately every two years. More information is available here.

Non-STIP — Local, regional, or division-managed maintenance, small-scale construction, or alternative projects that are funded and executed outside of the official 10-year STIP.

LAPs — Local Government Agencies (LGAs) receive federal and state money based on the recommendations of Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organizations (MPOs and RPOs); through prioritization via the Strategic Transportation Initiative (STI); by applying and receiving Federal grants; or by Legislative directives. Per N.C. Board of Transportation policy, LGAs are generally responsible for developing and delivering the project or implementing a program, also known as Local Administered Projects (LAPs).

VMT — Vehicle Miles Traveled, or the total number of miles driven by all motor vehicles in North Carolina within a year.

IMD — The Integrated Mobility Division at NCDOT

OSA — The Office of Strategic Advancement at NCDOT

ITS — The Intelligent Transportation Systems, or the advanced computer, electronics, and communication networks used to monitor traffic, reduce road delays, and increase driver safety across the state.

Metric Definitions

Priority Area	Metric	Definitions and Notes
Transportation Safety	Number and rate of fatalities on public roadways in N.C.	North Carolina is a Vision Zero state; even one fatality or serious injury on our roadways is unacceptable. This metric is defined as the total number of people dying in a motor vehicle crash during a calendar year. The fatality rate is calculated as the ratio of total number of fatalities to the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT, in 100 million VMT).
Transportation Safety	Number and rate of serious injuries on public roadways in N.C.	This metric is defined as the total number of people suffering at least one serious injury in a motor vehicle crash. USDOT defines serious injuries here. The serious injury rate is calculated as the ratio of total number of serious injuries to the number of VMT (in 100 million VMT).
Transportation Safety	Number of vulnerable road user fatalities and serious injuries on public roadways in N.C.	This metric is defined as the combined total number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries involving a motor vehicle.
Transportation Safety	Number of lane departure fatalities and serious injuries on NCDOT maintained roadways	This metric is defined as the combined total number of lane departure related fatalities and serious injuries.
Transportation Safety	Number of intersection related fatalities and serious injuries on NCDOT maintained roadways	This metric is defined as the combined total number of intersection related fatalities and serious injuries.
Transportation Safety	Number of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries on NCDOT maintained roadways	This metric is defined as the combined total number of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries involving a motor vehicle.
Transportation Safety	Number of miles of NCDOT maintained roadways improved with lane departure countermeasures	Lane departure countermeasures include visible delineation utilizing long life markings, curve and advanced warning signs, rumble strips or rumble stripes, context driven speed management, and pavement overlays for treatment of wet crashes.
Transportation Safety	Number of NCDOT maintained locations improved with intersection safety countermeasures	Intersection countermeasures include all way stops, reduced conflict intersections, roundabouts, medians, signal improvements, and wrong way driver solutions.

Priority Area	Metric	Definitions and Notes
Transportation Safety	Number of NCDOT maintained locations improved with pedestrian safety countermeasures	Pedestrian countermeasures include a context driven speed management and speed limit setting process, signs, markings, refuge islands, pedestrian signals, leading pedestrian interval, pedestrian hybrid beacons, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and lighting to improve nighttime visibility.
Workforce Safety and Readiness	Employee Safety Index	This metric is defined as the weighted index score for employee injury rates, equipment accident rates, workers compensation claim rates, and workdays lost due to injury.
Workforce Safety and Readiness	Vacancy rate for permanent, full-time, or time-limited positions	This metric is defined as the number of total positions compared to the number of positions that are vacant.
Workforce Safety and Readiness	Average number of days a position is vacant	This metric is defined as the end average number of days between a position being vacated and filled.
Workforce Safety and Readiness	Retention rate for permanent, full-time, or time-limited positions	This metric is defined as the number of total employees remaining employed at NCDOT year over year.
Program Delivery	Preconstruction — Percentage of construction contracts awarded on schedule	The 12-Month Let List is an NCDOT project-delivery management process that identifies all Central Let STIP projects and qualifying non-STIP bridge projects anticipated to be let during the upcoming 12-month period. **Central Let Types Included:** • Raleigh Let • Division Design Raleigh Let • Design-Build Let • Express Design-Build Let • Construction Manager /General Contractor Preconstruction Award • Progressive Design-Build Team Selection The proposed measure evaluates the percentage of Highway and Bike/Ped LAP projects identified in the 12-month Let List for delivery that reach a confirmed let during the measurement period.

Priority Area	Metric	Definitions and Notes
Program Delivery	Preconstruction — Percentage of construction contracts awarded on schedule	The 12-Month Let List is an NCDOT project-delivery management process that identifies all LAP STIP projects anticipated to be let during the upcoming 12-month period. The baseline and goal measure includes the following 4 LAP project groups: • Highway LAP — Non-locally selected • Highway LAP — Locally Selected • Bike/Ped LAP — Non-locally Selected • Bike/Ped LAP — Locally Selected
Program Delivery	Construction — Percentage of projects completed on schedule	Percentage of construction projects completed within 10% of the original contract duration. This includes STIP, non-STIP, central let, and division let but does not include Maintenance Purchase Order Contracts and CM/GC projects.
Program Delivery	Construction — On budget	Percentage of construction projects completed within 10% of the original awarded contract amount. This includes STIP, non-STIP, central let, and division let but does not include Maintenance Purchase Order Contracts. This metric accounts for the adjusted budget based on fuel and asphalt adjustments. **Percentage of projects on budget** is the number of projects completed on budget divided by total number of projects completed. **Percentage of construction dollars in on-budget projects** is the combined contract value of projects completed on budget divided by combined contract value of all projects completed.
Program Delivery	Ferry service ridership — Number of ferry passengers	North Carolina's ferry system consists of 23 ferries and everyday service on seven regular routes across the Currituck and Pamlico sounds as well as the Cape Fear, Neuse and Pamlico rivers. This metric is defined as the total number of ferry passengers on all routes.
Program Delivery	Rail service ridership — Number of rail passengers	This metric is defined as the total number of passenger rail customers on the Carolinian and Piedmont service routes.
Program Delivery	IMD — Percentage of annual state and federal funds obligated	This metric represents the percentage of State funds obligated by June 30 within the fiscal year they are appropriated.

Priority Area	Metric	Definitions and Notes
Program Delivery	Aviation — Percentage of state aid funds appropriated in the FY allotted/awarded by FYE	This metric represents the percentage of State Aid to Airport funds awarded to airports by June 30 within the fiscal year they are appropriated.
Program Delivery	Aviation — Percentage of Federal Funds expended prior to expiration	This metric represents the percentage of Federal Grants expended prior to the federal period of performance deadline. The percentage is representative of grants with an expiration date in the given fiscal year.
System Reliability	Average uptime of statewide ITS devices and traffic signals	NCDOT deploys and maintains traffic signals and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) devices to monitor traffic, verify and manage incidents, reduce crash clearance times, and improve safety. This metric measures the uptime of the following devices: **Dynamic Message Signs (DMS):** Provide real-time travel times, warning messages, and detour information to drivers. **CCTV Cameras:** Used by traffic management centers to visually monitor and verify congestion, weather conditions, and highway incidents. **Signal Systems:** Coordinated, actuated, and modern in intersections that adapt to real-time traffic volumes.
System Reliability	Percent of congested interstate corridors with a peak period Travel Time Index (TTI) of 1.4 or less	This metric measures how many of North Carolina's congested interstate corridors still maintain relatively reliable travel times during rush hour. A corridor is considered congested if its peak-period Travel Time Index (TTI) is above 1.04, meaning travel is slower than free-flow conditions. The metric then identifies what percent of those congested corridors have a TTI of 1.4 or less, which reflects moderate congestion rather than severe delays. In practical terms, it shows the share of busy interstate segments where average speeds during the morning or evening peak remain above roughly 45 mph, even in the heaviest traffic.
System Reliability	Percent of crashes cleared within 90 minutes	This metric represents what percent of crashes are cleared from North Carolina highways within 90 minutes.
System Reliability	Number of corridor studies, small area studies, and road safety audits completed	This metric adds the total number of corridor studies, small area studies, and road safety audits completed year over year.

Priority Area	Metric	Definitions and Notes
System Reliability	Rail reliability — On-time arrivals for passenger rail	Passenger train on-time performance is based on Amtrak reporting and accounts for delays due to freight, weather, passenger, mechanical, signal, track and other issues. The Department cannot control freight, weather, and many other delays, and the target for this metric reflects this reality. Agreements between Amtrak and the railroads set national standards for passenger train reliability. Those agreements define "on-time" as passengers arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival at a station.
System Reliability	Ferry reliability — Ferries departing as scheduled, excluding weather and shoaling	North Carolina's ferry system consists of 23 ferries and everyday service on seven regular routes across the Currituck and Pamlico sounds as well as the Cape Fear, Neuse and Pamlico rivers. Ferry reliability is defined as the number of scheduled runs missed, not including runs missed due to shoaling and weather, as these factors impact safety.
Infrastructure Health	Helene recovery: Percentage of damage sites repaired	North Carolina sustained over 6,900 damage sites during Hurricane Helene. Temporary repairs have been put in place in many sites, and NCDOT continues to work towards permanent repairs throughout the state.
Infrastructure Health	Helene recovery: Percentage of roads reopened	NCDOT has reopened over 90% of all roads damaged in Hurricane Helene. Roads may continue to open and close during permanent repair work, so this number will continue to fluctuate.
Infrastructure Health	Percentage of bridges rated in good condition	A "good condition" bridge will have little deterioration and can safely carry vehicles appropriate for that route's expected level of service. This metric accounts for bridge condition and load capacity while factoring in the route type. To achieve this goal, the department uses a data-driven strategy to improve the overall condition of North Carolina's bridge inventory by focusing taxpayer dollars where they're needed most.
Infrastructure Health	Percentage of pavement miles rated in good condition	North Carolina maintains the second largest road system in the country. In order to maximize limited funding, NCDOT performs road condition surveys to identify roads in greatest need of resurfacing and to help maintain roads throughout their lifecycle. Interstates and primaries are surveyed on an annual basis and secondaries are surveyed biennially with half being evaluated each year.

Priority Area	Metric	Definitions and Notes
Infrastructure Health	Ferry — Percentage of funded marine infrastructure projects completed	The FY '27 State Budget included $35.4M in one-time marine infrastructure funding. This metric calculates progress on project completion.
Infrastructure Health	Ferry — Percentage of planned vessel maintenance completed	This metric measures the percentage of planned vessel maintenance completed.
Digital Modernization	Enterprise Data Platform Ingestion Rate	This metric measures the percentage of priority datasets that have been fully ingested into the new DOT enterprise data platform. A dataset is considered "ingested" once it is integrated, validated, and available for use within the platform's governed environment.
Digital Modernization	Digital Modernization Maturity Score	This metric represents a composite score assessing DOT's progress toward a modern, user-centered digital ecosystem. The score is calculated using weighted results from Net Promoter Scores (40%), User Experience Survey results (30%), and Focus Group satisfaction results (30%).
Digital Modernization	IT Procurement Cycle Time (RFP Only)	This metric tracks the average length of time required to complete an RFP-based IT procurement from initiation to final award. It measures the end-to-end procurement cycle, including development, review, posting, vendor selection, and approval.

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