

RTA has endorsed the accelerated transformation of north US 1 / Capital Blvd. to a multimodal freeway and complementary parallel access road system from I-540 to the Wake/Franklin Co. line via dedicated toll revenue.

We support a zero overnight/discounted off-peak framework to minimize toll rates for freeway travelers.

Our preference would be to accelerate construction without requiring any toll revenue. However, given a litany of past delays and cost increases, there is skepticism by many elected officials, RTA, and other partners that the project will not again be delayed, given inflation, impacts from Hurricane Helene, other competing priorities, etc.

Our region has a history of success with tolls to ensure accelerated delivery (e.g., 540). We are pursuing a toll option to accelerate US 1, while simultaneously supporting other revenue solutions that may eliminate the need for tolls.

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.

Capital Boulevard has been a “toll road” of congestion, stress, and delays for many years in northern Wake County.

[NCDOT has a plan to upgrade US 1 / Capital Blvd.](#) north of I-540 to a 10+ mile, 70 MPH freeway with parallel access roads the entire length of the corridor. The freeway will have no stoplights, while the new parallel access 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 project has increased by more than \$500m in just the last two years, with a total cost of \$1.3 billion in the 2026 draft STIP. The NC Turnpike Authority study, requested by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), found that toll revenue could accelerate and ensure timely corridor construction.

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

Yes. NCDOT funding in the TIP would be retained for the corridor, which would minimize toll rates.

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 of 540: there were sufficient funds for I-540 in northern Wake to be built without tolls at that time, while the western, southern, and eastern sections required toll revenue to accelerate construction.

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 project would accelerate a new freeway without stoplights in the corridor and a complementary parallel access road network. Tolls would only be placed along the new freeway, and tolls would not be activated until the entire freeway and access road network were complete. The access roads would never be tolled.

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 trip from I-540 to Franklin Co. would be a reasonable initial estimate for transponder users, consistent with the approximate \$0.25 rate/mile for the existing Triangle Expressway system. Shorter trips would pay a lower rate.

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

Several spring 2025 endorsements in support of pursuing dedicated toll revenue to accelerate freeway construction – including those by CAMPO, RTA, and other partners – called for or referenced discounted off-peak toll rates.

The Turnpike Authority has noted that the financial model would allow for zero/discount tolls during certain times.

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

Yes. All tolls would be collected electronically. Tolls could be pre-paid via transponder, at lower rates, or post-paid via pay-by-plate recognition. A transponder in N.C. can be obtained for no cost. No toll booths would be installed.

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 access road network?

An initial analysis commissioned by RTA found that it will certainly take longer to travel along the parallel access roads than via the new freeway. However, future travel along the access road routing during peak periods would still be as fast or faster 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 CAMPO authorized the use of toll funding or other alternative delivery methods to accelerate the transformation to a multimodal freeway. RTA has also endorsed the pursuit of tolling as noted above.

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.