

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Clears the Way for  
Future I-685 Interstate Designation in the Carolina Core**

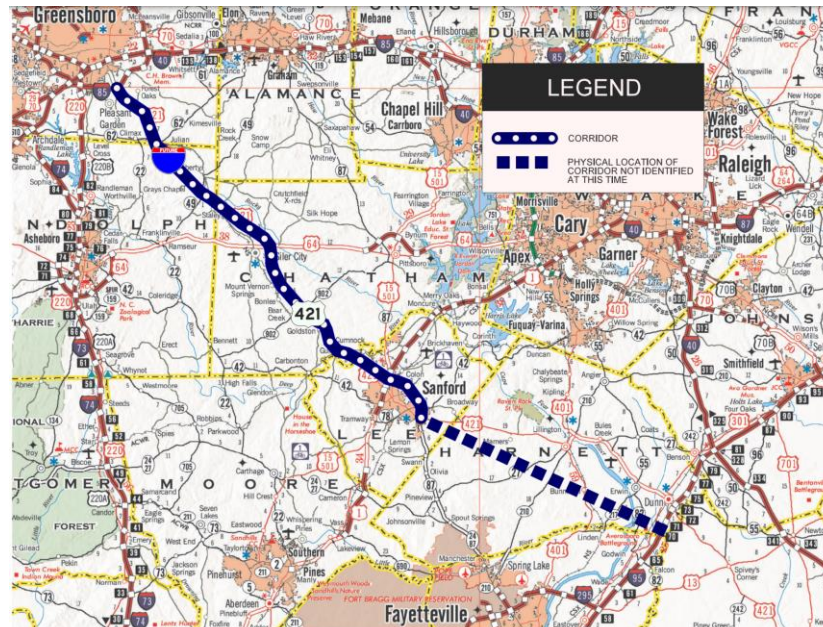
**Carolina Core, N.C.** – The Carolina Core is one step closer to adding another interstate shield to the region, thanks to language included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill signed by President Joe Biden on Monday. Business and civic leaders within the region are partnering with local, state and federal officials to designate part of Highway U.S. 421 as a future interstate in an effort to further spur economic growth and make the region even more competitive on a global stage.

**“This is an important step in a lengthy process to secure a game-changing future interstate designation for Highway 421 in the Carolina Core, which will not only increase our economic competitiveness, but will further enhance safety and mobility throughout the region,”** said Michael Fox, President of Piedmont Triad Partnership. **“This has been a true collaborative effort with our partners from the local, state and federal levels all sharing in the vision for Future I-685 to better connect the region’s plentiful assets, including our megasites, labor markets and colleges and universities, among others. We look forward to continuing our work together to push this important initiative across the finish line.”**



Instrumental to the inclusion of this language in the federal infrastructure legislation were U.S. Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis. This legislation marks important progress, listing U.S. 421 from the interchange with Interstate Route 85 in Greensboro to the interchange with Interstate Route 95 in Dunn as a “High Priority Corridor.” This measure will allow the North

Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to request a future interstate designation through the Federal Highway Administration and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. If approved, NCDOT will then place signs notifying the public that I-685 is a future interstate corridor.



**“One of the most important assets in Randolph County and the Carolina Core is our strong transportation network,”** said Kevin Franklin, President of Randolph County Economic Development Corporation. **“The future designation of U.S. Highway 421 as I-685 will further solidify the county and region as a destination for any business reliant on transportation and logistics. Randolph County is the proud home of the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite which is located on U.S. Highway 421. An upgrade to future I-685 status makes the site more marketable in the short term, and will better serve an end user for years into the future. Interstate access on the eastern side of Randolph County will result in additional development in the community which, in turn, will help the entire community to thrive.”**

Over the last three years, local partners in the Carolina Core have been collectively rallying behind the future interstate designation for Highway 421, which will further enhance the region’s robust transportation network, while providing the vital connection of I-95 with I-40 and I-85. This designation will provide direct connections between large population centers and improve access to Fort Bragg, aiding in national defense and during natural disasters.

**“Future I-685 here in central North Carolina is another reminder that we are ‘the good roads state,’”** said C. Michael Smith, President of Chatham Economic Development Corporation. **“We appreciate all of the support on this effort here in the Carolina Core. We look forward to continuing to build on this collaboration with our neighboring communities.”**

Seven counties along the route have unanimously passed resolutions of support endorsing Future I-685. The region's Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations have also given the green light in support of the future interstate designation.

**"A critical component in Sanford and Lee County's recent economic development success has been our highly strategic location at the epicenter of an abundant and skilled labor shed encompassing both the Carolina Core and RTP region,"** said Jimmy Randolph, CEO of Sanford Area Growth Alliance. **"With the designation of the U.S. Highway 421 corridor as a high priority corridor in the federal infrastructure bill, our long-standing goal of interstate connectivity with both I-85 and I-95 via I-685 is one step closer to reality, further strengthening our competitiveness for both talent and supply chain partners seeking convenient access to the megasites of the Carolina Core."**

### **About the Carolina Core**

The [Carolina Core](#) is a 120+ mile stretch of central North Carolina from west of Winston-Salem to Fayetteville encompassing Greensboro and High Point, all along U.S. 421. The Carolina Core is not confined by traditional borders. Instead, boundaries are built by the assets that make the region a globally competitive market – a [talent pool](#) of more than 2 million people, access to [30+ colleges and universities](#), four certified [megasites](#), urban research parks and more. To learn more, visit [NCCarolinaCore.com](#).

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