

# Bonner Bridge Replacement

## Long Bridge is More Cost Effective



### Background

For two decades, North Carolina and the people of Dare County have struggled with the need to repair or replace the Bonner Bridge and maintain NC-12 to provide a safer, more reliable hurricane evacuation route. Bonner Bridge has reached the end of its life and short-term repairs are becoming prohibitively expensive. NC-12 is built on one of the most rapidly eroding shorelines in the United States and up to \$1 million a year or more is needed to clear the road after storm overwash. Due to the dynamic nature of this barrier island system, the ocean will continue to claim more of the island, and storms will continue to create overwashes, making NC-12 impassable. A long-term, cost-effective solution is needed to provide reliable transportation.

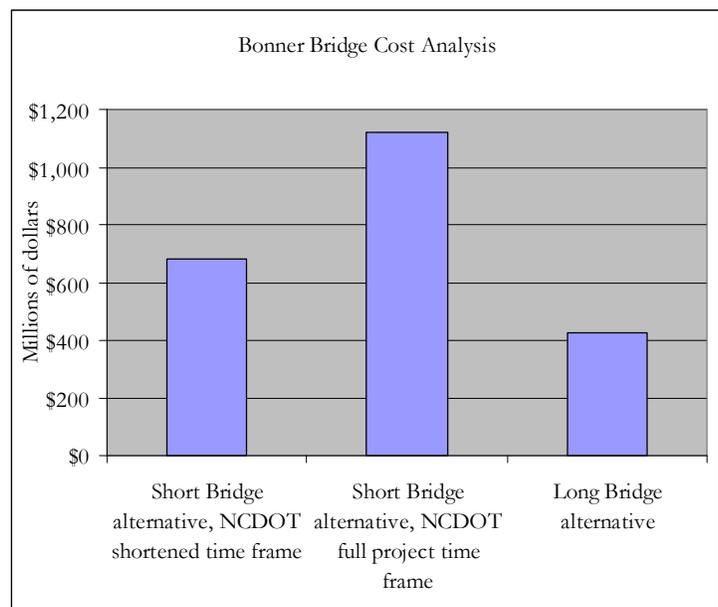
### Cost Analysis Clearly Points to Long Bridge

There are two solutions for fixing this problem:

1) Replace the Bonner Bridge with a parallel bridge and then continue to fix NC-12 as needed (“short bridge alternative”); or 2) Build a 17-mile bridge over Pamlico Sound, bypassing Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and letting the island return to its natural state (“long bridge alternative”).

The short bridge alternative would require replacing Bonner Bridge at an estimated \$191 million. However, due to frequent overwashes on NC-12 and erosion, extensive maintenance would be required to keep the road open to traffic. North Carolina State University engineers estimated the cost of continually maintaining the eroding beach to protect NC-

12 at \$930 million for the life of the project, approximately 100 years. Faced with such a staggering number, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) cut the original project life roughly in half to lower expected long-term costs to an estimated \$429 million. The long bridge alternative would require higher up front building cost, estimated at \$425 million, but over the long run, the long bridge alternative would save taxpayers money.



### Is Long Bridge Estimate Still Too High?

Just north in Currituck County, NCDOT is in the process of planning another long bridge, 9.9 miles, over Currituck Sound. According to NCDOT, the estimated total cost of this project is \$102 million, which is a cost of just under \$10.4 million per mile. If this cost estimate of just under \$10.4 million per mile is used to calculate total costs for the long bridge, the total cost would be just under \$182 million, much lower than the current estimate of \$425 million. So using the per-mile cost estimate from the mid-Currituck bridge project, the cost of the long bridge would drop significantly, making the long bridge alternative even more cost effective.

### For More Information Contact:

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