



TOWN of ST. JAMES

NC 211 Update

St. James Town Council Work Session
March 19, 2026

Town Manager Jeff Repp welcomed Joshua Pratt and James “Steve” Knowles from NCDOT, who were attending in-person after having participated virtually in prior updates over the past year and a half.

Mr. Knowles reported that as of the February estimate, the project is 66% complete, up from 59% at the time of the last update in August. The overall project completion date remains January 2028, with substantial construction completion expected by July 2027, followed by a required 6-month vegetation period.

Barnhill’s schedule for the coming months includes significant grading and nighttime paving in preparation for the major westbound traffic shift, which Barnhill projects will occur between late May and mid-June. Mr. Knowles presented plan sheets showing the traffic patterns during this phase, highlighting that there would be no left turn at Midway when coming from Southport. Instead, drivers would use a new ramp (Ramp YB) that would route traffic around to a temporary signal in front of Lowe’s Food Shopping Center. Large signage will be installed, and a press release will be issued to inform the public. Mayor Toner asked for clarification about the final traffic pattern, and Mr. Knowles confirmed that even in the final configuration, there would be no left turn at Midway onto Oak Island, with traffic continuing to use the bridge system.

When the westbound traffic shift occurs, the Regency Crossing gate will require closure for up to 30 days to allow reconstruction and tie-in to the new westbound lanes. Traffic within the plantation will be redirected to the main gate. It was clarified that this detour is for St. James residents, not general 211 traffic.

Regarding drainage issues at the St. James entrance, Mr. Knowles acknowledged standing water problems and indicated a ditch will be cut to redirect water to existing storm drainage pipes. Six additional storm drains are planned for that section in the final phase of the project.

The council inquired about timing for discussions regarding median planting enhancements within St. James boundaries. Mr. Pratt indicated that conversations with NCDOT’s roadside environmental division would likely begin around the time of substantial completion, prior to the final vegetation period. One percent of the project funding is allocated for aesthetic vegetation improvements to be split among municipalities.

Mayor Toner inquired about the extent of vegetated median coverage. Mr. Knowles explained that normal width grass medians would narrow to concrete at turn lanes and intersections. Mr. Pratt informed council that they would provide a set of roadway plans marked to indicate concrete versus vegetated median sections.