

CITY *of* MEBANE



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2019 ANNUAL REPORT
&
2020 WORK PLAN





2019 Review

The Mebane City Council selected two new individuals to serve on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) in 2019: Sarah Elder and Chelsey Morrison. The City Council amended Chapter 25 of the City Ordinance in order to better represent the residents of Orange County on the BPAC by preferring, rather than requiring, residency in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction for representation on the BPAC. Ms. Elder is a City delegate; Ms. Morrison is the Orange County delegate. The Mebane generally meets the fourth Monday of every month. The BPAC was greatly aided by the regular attendance of the new Parks and Recreation Director Aaron Davis, who brought a different perspective and new opportunities for realizing bicycle and pedestrian promotion to the BPAC.

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	
Rebecca Brouwer	City
Sarah Elder	City
Andy Lynch	Alamance County ETJ
Chelsey Morrison	Orange County
Patty Philipps	Council Delegate
Sylvia Sichi	City
Anna Wirth	City

The BPAC began the year recommending several projects to the City Council, most notably the MACC-Holt Street Greenway. The Chair and Vice-Chair presented the recommendations to the City Council at their April budget workshop. The City Council opted to support the greenway. Other projects proposed in 2019, and their outcomes, are listed below (note that all projects below are drawn from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted by Council in 2015):

- North Second Street sidewalk – not supported
- Sidewalk on Clay Streets – supported
- Sidewalk on Center Street – supported
- Bike boulevards for North Charles, North Fifth, and Clay Streets – supported

2019 Accomplishments

- Successfully advocated for MACC-Holt Street greenway (design and construction in budget, with all unspent funds carried over to 2021);
- Realized first bike boulevards on N. Charles, N. Fifth, and Clay Streets;
- Supported the Police Department "Fitness Bonanza" and bike rodeo Saturday, June 29;
- Placed bicycle safety signs at the MACC; and
- Established monthly and quarterly norms in order to accomplish goals and objectives.

<u>2019 BPAC MEETING DATES</u>
January 28
February 25
March 25
May 20
June 24
July 22
August 19
September 23
October 28
November 19
December 16



The BPAC spent significant time in 2019 promoting the value of a greenway – particularly one that will connect multiple parks and recreation facilities with an elementary school, a library, and two established neighborhoods – to all of the City’s residents. The BPAC presented its recommendation to the City Council at their budget workshop and hosted a walk along the sanitary sewer easement that is the proposed greenway route at the June 29 Police Department Bike Rodeo. Many meetings involved conversation about promoting the greenway when complete as both a recreational asset and a key infrastructure to enable pedestrians and cyclists to navigate through Mebane without having to rely upon the older sidewalks along South Third and South Fifth Streets.

The BPAC welcomed the City’s first bicycle infrastructure with “bike boulevards” on North Fifth, North Charles, and Clay Streets. These projects are low-cost, involving only stencils and signs, but clearly identify roadways as belonging to cyclists as well as motorists. The focus on the downtown business district and connected streets was intentional, as these are more highly-trafficked areas than some others in the City.

Complimenting the bike boulevards was the completion of the sidewalks on Clay and Center Streets, both recommended as capital projects to the City Council for FY20. These sidewalks are critical connections between the downtown business district and the City’s new Community Park. While some traffic calming and safety enhancements may be added, Clay Street can now be described as a “Complete Street”, supporting all modes of transportation.

The BPAC supported staff in realizing more Complete Streets in Mebane through their recommendation of the amendment of the City’s Unified Development Ordinance to include a Traffic Impact Analysis requirement. This requirement may be applied (or waived) at the City’s discretion but is triggered if a development project generates more than 100 trips during a peak hour of use and/or 1,000 trips per day. The City had been relying upon the State statute in this matter, which uses a 300/3,000 trips trigger. This new requirement is more protective of the City’s safety and congestion concerns and requires the consideration of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit needs, which is not included in the statutory language. This amendment was formally recommended by both the BPAC and Planning Board and adopted by the City Council at their September 9 meeting.

The BPAC learned lessons from these projects and engaging with City departments other than Planning and Parks and Recreation. The BPAC is intending on engaging with the Public Works and Engineering Departments semi-annually or perhaps quarterly for updates on capital projects and ensuring that they have all construction proposals before them well in advance of the budget process, when they make recommendations to the City Council. The need to regularly update the City Council on BPAC activities and interests – especially any public engagement efforts – became clear and will become increasingly important as more pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is realized in Mebane.



2020 Work Plan Overview

The Mebane Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) has worked to evaluate opportunities for improving the quality of life for Mebane's residents and guests through enhancing its bicycle paths and walkways.

As a commission, we believe that environment impacts opinion, and opinion impacts word of mouth. As an advisory body, we endeavor to help the City of Mebane generate as much positive informal endorsement as possible from residents and guests who walk our sidewalks, bike our streets, visit our shops and restaurants, and enjoy our public spaces.

The BPAC has been charged with advising Council on how best to allocate resources in 2020 and beyond. With numerous promising opportunities, we have determined it is important to first articulate the overarching aims that will guide our thinking and recommendations. These are served by Promotion, Programs, Policies, and Projects. The two central themes that are guiding the BPAC in its early years are:

1. To support positive, sustainable growth through sound investments in walkways and public spaces that foster a sense of community, improve safety, and uphold a consistent standard of pleasing aesthetics
2. To advise Council on specific high-priority bicycle and walkway improvement opportunities that will increase safety and enjoyment for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle drivers

The first aim acknowledges that Mebane has been - and will continue to be - in a growth mode for the foreseeable future. Our location, infrastructure, affordability, and quality of life create a compelling value proposition for both residents and businesses. At present, there is significant development in nearly every corner of the City, which presents exciting challenges for our committee when anticipating how new traffic patterns will impact bicycle and pedestrian activity. We believe a mindful approach to walkability and bikeability now will set a precedent for the type of growth we (and the broader community) want to see in the future.

We believe that a city that values healthy lifestyles will demonstrate its priorities in part in how it accommodates and makes provision for biking, walking, and running. This goes beyond just providing public parks, but impacts how we connect the City with sidewalks and bike lanes. There is value, albeit somewhat intangible, in choosing to invest in public spaces for the sheer enjoyment of residents and guests. As a commission, we believe this forward-thinking mindset sets the tone for future development by assigning significance and value to both the functional and aesthetic design of public spaces. We are stewards of today's Mebane, but our rationale will impact future residents long after our decisions are made. To this end, we endeavor to influence public opinion in support of initiatives that will enhance the quality of life for residents and guests for generations to come. This means we will "plant trees whose shade will be enjoyed someone else."

The second aim is the practical implementation of the intent of the first. We value both the aesthetic and the function of our public walkways, bike paths, and public spaces. To this end, we will recommend funds be applied to specific opportunities for improvement. Some of these items have already been approved in the maintenance budget, but we will help with prioritization. Others require additional consideration from Council. Some of the projects we have identified will require additional research to assess cost and feasibility, but all have been filtered by considering quality of life, safety factors, and potential fiscal constraints.



Promotion/Programs

The BPAC will be focusing on “Share The Road”-style public engagement efforts. May is Bike Awareness month and the BPAC intends to produce yard signs with customized designs for Mebane that are both friendly and firm in informing motorists about the safety needs and rights of cyclists. The BPAC is also exploring a bumper sticker program using the same slogans and images.

The BPAC acquired a tent, table, and banner for public engagement efforts in 2019. They intend on using these materials at the 2020 Dogwood Festival as well as other public festivals and events in Mebane such as Autumn Fest. There has been discussion of setting up a table at the greenway when it is complete.

Policies

The BPAC looks forward to working with the City on integrating multimodal transportation needs into all City documents as opportunities arise. Per state law, the City must revise its Unified Development Ordinance by January 1, 2021. The City intends to revise other elements of the UDO, creating opportunities for the BPAC to comment upon and recommend new language to address bicycle and pedestrian needs during the development process. This will be critical for seamlessly integrating these needs into all projects in the City, ensuring that infrastructure is provided for pedestrian and cycling accessibility, safety, and promotion is realized for all new development projects reviewed by the City.

The City will be revising its Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan (BPTP) in 2020 to update it. Since it was adopted in 2015, the City has drafted and adopted a new Comprehensive Land Development Plan, a Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and a Traffic Separation Study. All of these plans use a Future Growth Area that is larger than the area of focus in the BPTP. The City is also experiencing growth in areas immediately outside the City limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction that are unaddressed by the BPTP. The City is also participating in both the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPO) Transportation Plan and Orange County Transit Plan processes at the staff and elected official levels. Mayor Ed Hooks serves on the BGMPO Board; and BPAC delegate Councilwoman Patty Philipps is the municipal representative on the Orange County Transit Plan. The BPTP revision will expand its geographic scope, correct some routes that are now known to need realignment, and reflect these other regional plans.

Projects

The BPAC is recommending that the City Council engage three capital projects in 2020: the Jackson Street improvements, the Third-Fifth Street Greenway Connector, and the Crawford Street sidewalk. The former is a \$95,000 construction project and the latter two are design projects to determine project budgets for further evaluation as capital investments. These are described on the following pages.

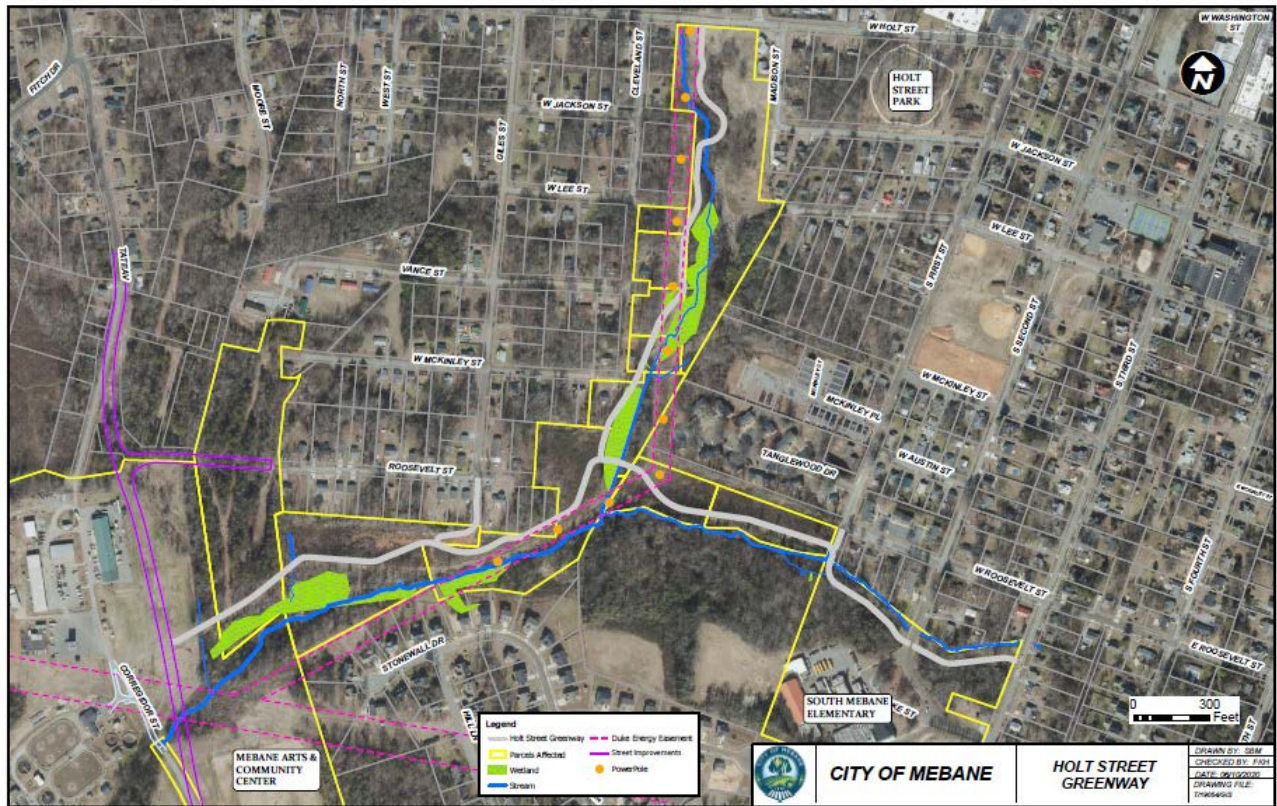
The BPAC recommended that staff submit four other projects to the NCDOT for evaluation in the Statewide Strategic Prioritization Program (SPOT). This program prioritizes projects – including bicycle and pedestrian projects – based upon a suite of criteria. If determined to be a state, regional, or division-level priority, the project will be funded and constructed by NCDOT over a 10-year window. All projects recommended for inclusion by the BPAC will realize connections to

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residential communities that are currently disconnected from the City's pedestrian network: Ashbury Place & Ashbury Crossing, Collington Farm, The Villages at Copperstone, Governor's Green, and Mill Creek. The City currently has no SPOT-funded bicycle/pedestrian projects but is receiving NCDOT support on the Mebane Oaks Road and Trollingwood-Hawfields Road Interchange Improvements, both of which will improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility and safety.

Lastly, the BPAC looks forward to the continued implementation of capital projects is recommends and supports, namely the Cates Farm Park trails and the MACC-Holt Street Park Greenway (pictured).





FY21 Capital Project Recommendations

<u>Jackson Street Sidewalk & Bike Boulevard</u>	
Description:	Provide 1,000 LF sidewalk – where missing – between S. 5 th & S. 1 st Streets Stripe 3,910 LF bicycle lane on Jackson Street between Madison & 8 th Streets
	Creates connection between Walker Field and Holt Street Park
Estimated Cost:	\$95,000



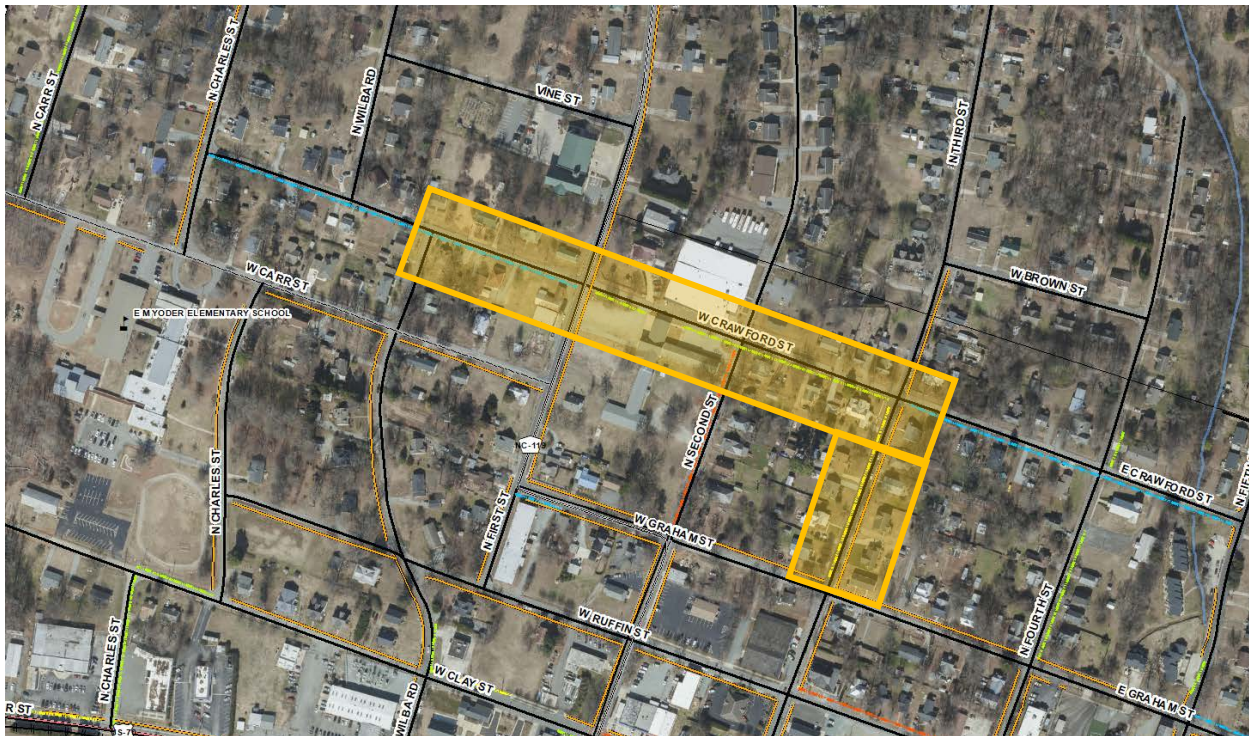
Jackson Street Bike Boulevard



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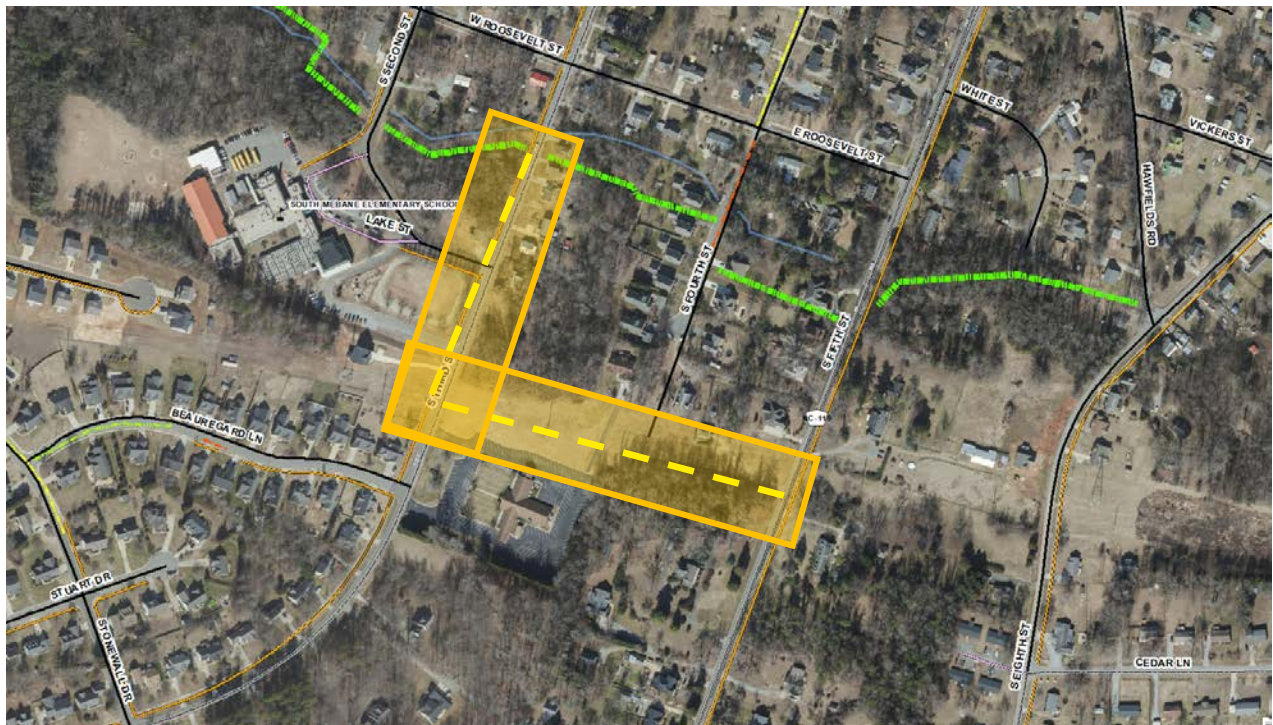
<u>West Crawford Street Sidewalk & Bike Boulevard</u>	
Description:	Provide 1,550 LF sidewalk between N. 2 nd and Wilba Streets along W. Crawford Street.
	All routes recommended for Bicycle Boulevards
	Creates pedestrian connection to E.M. Yoder Elementary along an east-west street.
Estimated Cost:	Design: \$20,000; Construction Cost TBD



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<u>Third-Fifth Street Greenway Connector</u>	
Description:	Provide 1,700 LF greenway between S. 3 rd and S. 5 th Streets using the Duke Energy Right Of Way.
	Creates bicycle and pedestrian connection to South Mebane Elementary & MACC-Holt Street Greenway from Fifth Street.
	Utilizes available ROW rather than crossing private property.
Estimated Cost:	Design: \$20,000; Construction Cost TBD

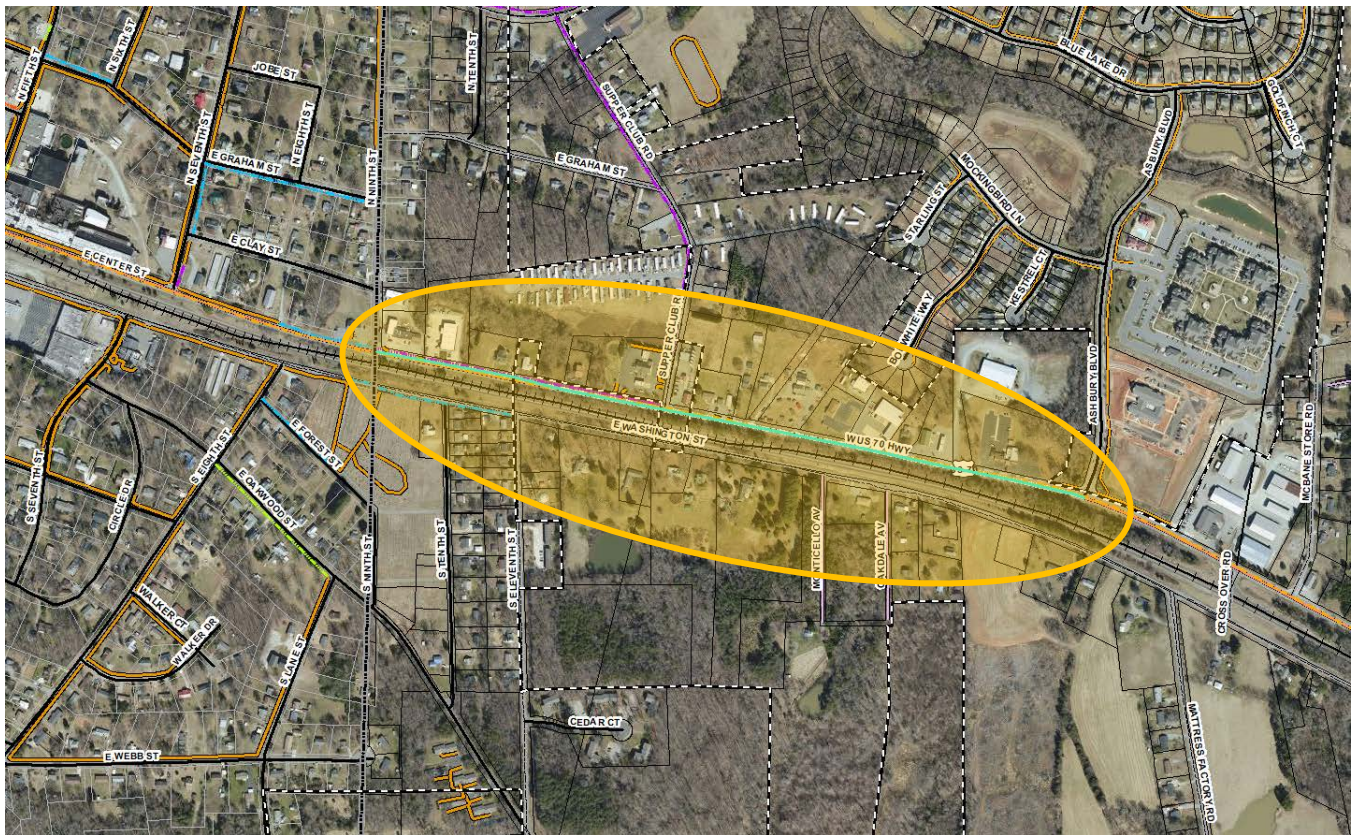


The BPAC is recommending that the City Council support the construction of four new infrastructure projects through the Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT) program. These requests require a 20% match from the City of Mebane, which can be a cash contribution but can also be in-kind donations, especially dedication of right of way for the new project.

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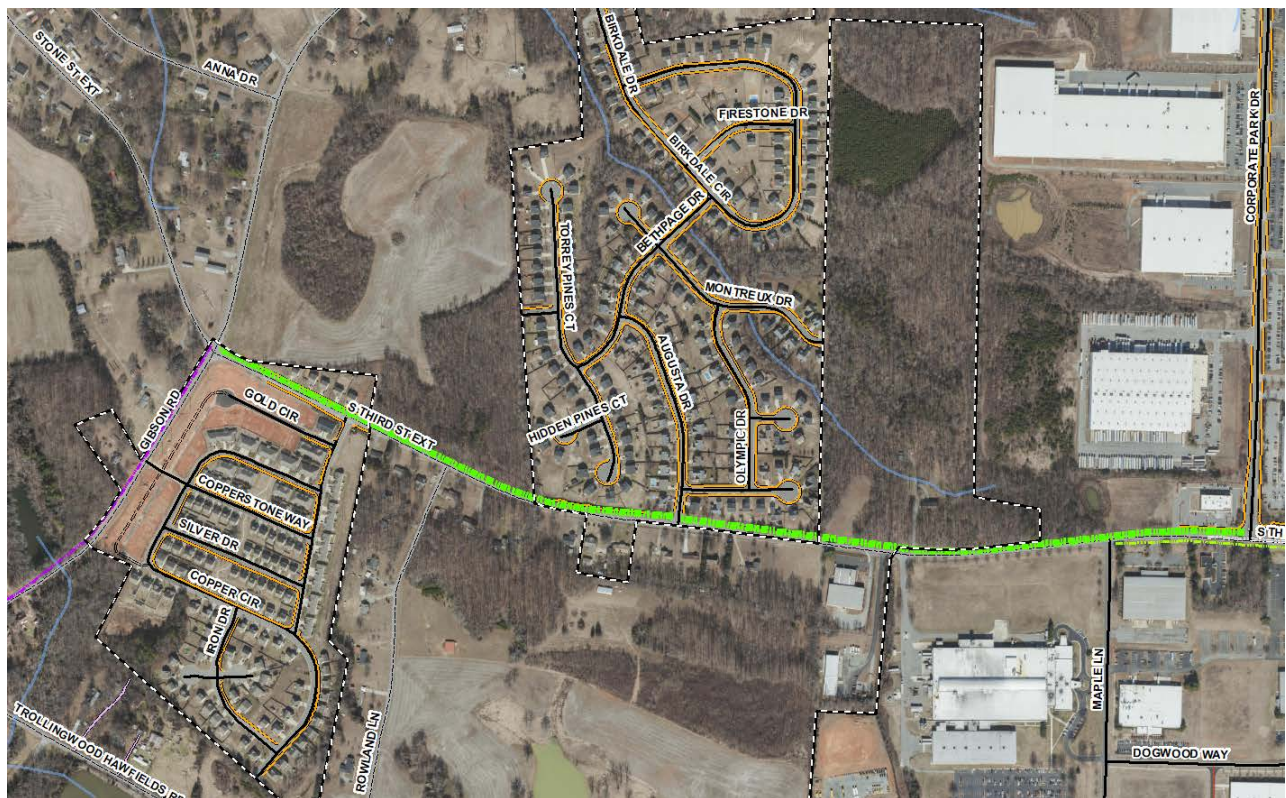
<u>Center Street Multiuse Path</u>	
Description:	Create a 3,356 LF shared use path that connects Ashbury Place subdivision to the existing sidewalk on US 70/Center Street at N. 9 th Street.
	Creates a safer pedestrian & bicycle connection to Downtown for Ashbury Place residents
In NC Railroad ROW	
Estimated Cost:	\$2,285,000



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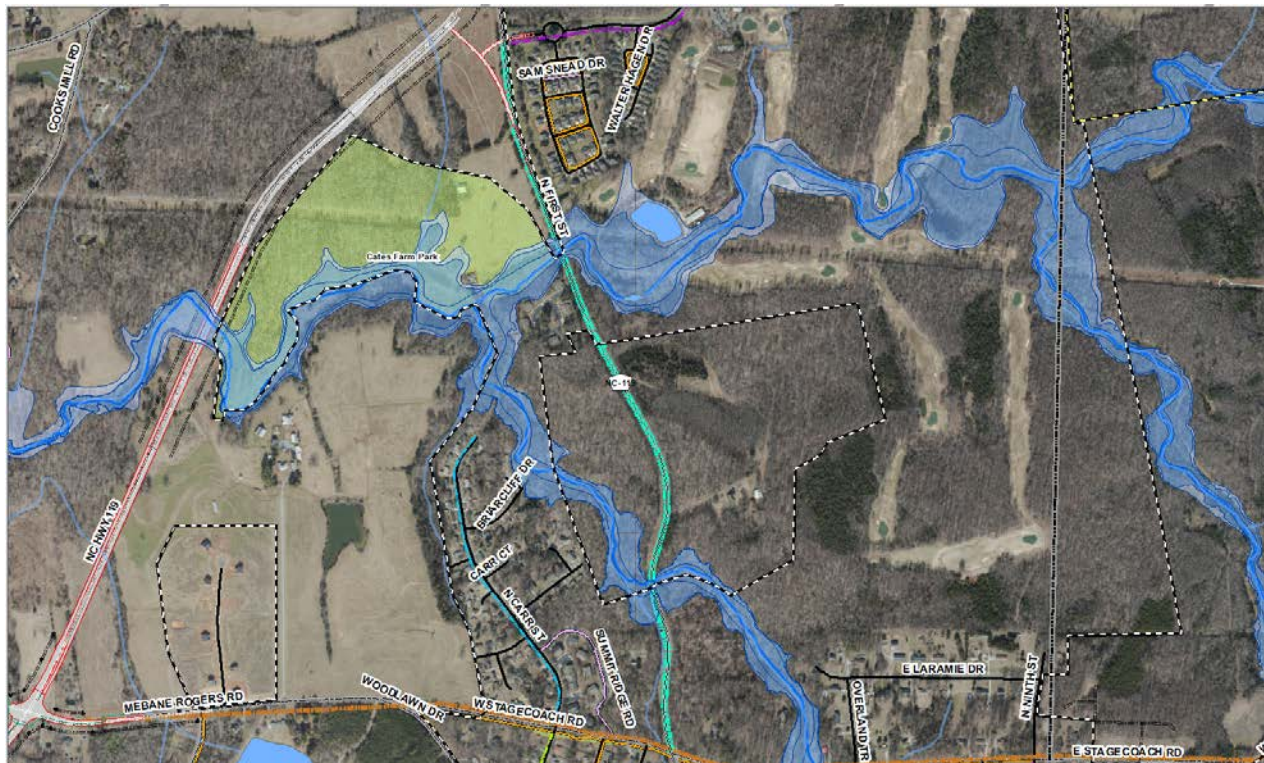
<u>South Third Street Connector</u>	
Description:	Create a 5,280 LF shared use path that connects Governors Green and the Villages at Copperstone subdivisions to the existing sidewalk network.
	Creates safer bicycle and pedestrian network
Estimated Cost:	\$3,600,000



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<u>North NC 119 Multiuse Path</u>	
Description:	Create a 5,800 LF multiuse path that connects Mille Creek subdivision to the existing sidewalk at the N. 1 st Street/Stagecoach Road intersection
	Creates a safer pedestrian connection to retail destinations for Mill Creek residents
	Creates a bicycle and pedestrian connection to Cates Farm Park
Estimated Cost:	\$3,640,000



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Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
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