

1. Agenda Packet

Documents:

[FEBRUARY 23, 2018 AGENDA PACKET.PDF](#)

2. Meeting Materials



Photos will be [POSTED ON FLICKR](#).

Documents:

[MORE IN LENOIR.PDF](#)

[DOWNTOWN TWO-WAY STREET CONVERSION.PDF](#)

[CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM UPDATE.PDF](#)

[BIKE PLAN.PDF](#)

**Lenoir Planning Retreat
February 23, 2018
Blue Ridge Electric Community Room
Breakfast at 8:00am and Discussion Begins at 8:30am
Agenda**

Call to Order and Opening Comments by Mayor Joe Gibbons [8:30am]

Introductions [8:33am]

Customer Service Keys [8:35am]

- A. Customer Service Team provides an update on activities
- B. Council discussion

Mission Statement & Vision Review – Review current mission statement and vision and affirm with any noted changes. [9:00am]

State of the City Presentation [9:15am] – Mayor Gibbons/City Manager Hildebran

Break [9:45am]

Facilitated Discussion

Session 1 [10:00am]

- A. Update on 2017 Council Budget Priorities and 2017-18 Completed Activities [45 minutes]
- B. What issues/projects from 2017 stand out to you? [20 minutes]
- C. What items/issues should be continued as priorities for 2018-19? [25 minutes]

Session 2 [11:30am]

- A. Downtown Traffic Study - Preliminary Data – Ramey Kemp & Associates [25 minutes]

Session 3 [11:55pm]

- A. Bike Plan Review – Jenny Wheelock [25 minutes]

Lunch Break [around 12:20pm]

Session 4 [12:50pm]

- A. What new items/issues should be included as priorities for 2018-19 and beyond? [20 minutes]
- B. Which of these issues are the most important for the City to invest effort and resources during 2018-19? [20 minutes]
- C. Ranking Exercise [10 minutes]

Review of the both continued priorities and the newly identified issues [1:40pm]

Wrap-up and take-away discussion [1:55pm]

Adjournment [2:00pm]

Customer Service Design Team



Chris Bradshaw, Fire, Co-Chair

Zack Carter, Parks & Recreation, Co-Chair

Kyle Case, Main Street

Elizabeth Church, Finance/HR

Daniel Clark, Public Utilities

Joshua Harris, Administration

Anthony Harrison, Fire

Brent Phelps, Police

Tim Sprouse, Public Works

Maria Swanson, Parks & Recreation

Lenoir's Customer Service Keys

Key #1 Personable

- Be approachable and make a positive first impression
- Demonstrate caring and patience
- Be friendly and outgoing
- Provide polite and helpful service

Key #2 Pro-Active

- Anticipate customer needs
- Make customers feel important
- Go above and beyond – exceed expectations

Key #3 Effective Communication

- Demonstrate positive body language
- Be a good listener
- Keep people updated and informed

Key #4 Professionalism

- Know your job
- Create and maintain a customer friendly atmosphere
- Pay attention to detail
- Be knowledgeable about city services
- Take time and show interest in our customers
- Treat others as you would like to be treated

Key #5 Timely and Efficient

- Be consistent
- Fulfill commitments in a timely manner
- Respond to phone calls and emails promptly

Key #6 Teamwork

- Develop and know your community partnerships
- Provide seamless service between departments
- Deliver good value

Key #7 Equitable Service

- Treat everyone with respect
- Apply policy evenly and fairly
- Be sensitive to the situation

Key #8 Successful Service Recovery

- Listen effectively
- Show empathy and concern
- Take responsibility
- Try to resolve customer concerns
- Follow up promptly



CITY OF LENOIR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Lenoir is:

- to serve our citizens and the community by providing a clean, safe, healthy, attractive living and business environment, through the efficient delivery of essential city services in a fiscally responsible manner
- to identify, plan and act on opportunities for preserving and improving the quality of life of all of our citizens.

VISION FOR THE CITY OF LENOIR

We aspire to be the city of choice in western North Carolina for current and future generations—beautiful, clean and safe.

We will achieve our vision through:

- *a healthy economy*
- *strong businesses*
- *vital neighborhoods*
- *a vibrant downtown*
- *extensive recreational and cultural opportunities*

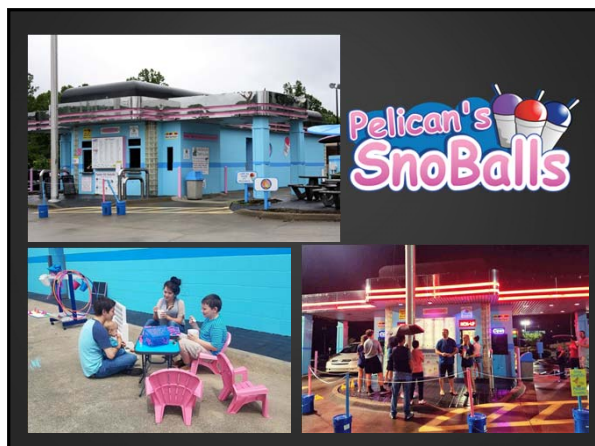
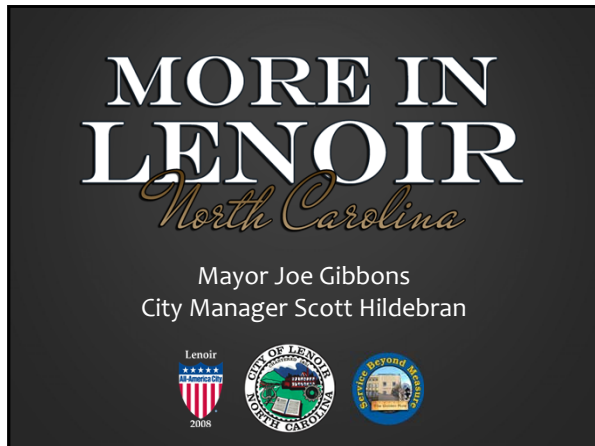
We will preserve Lenoir's friendly, small town atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of our people.

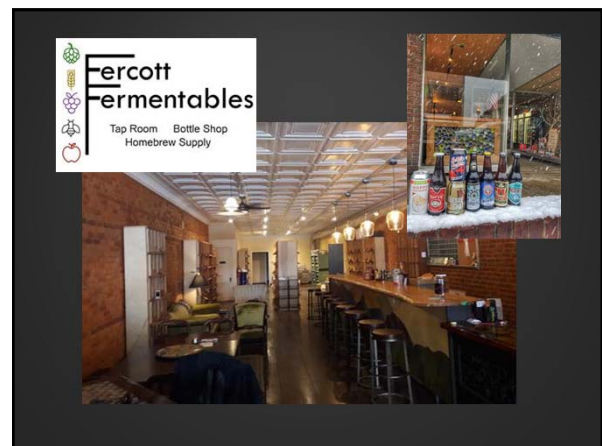
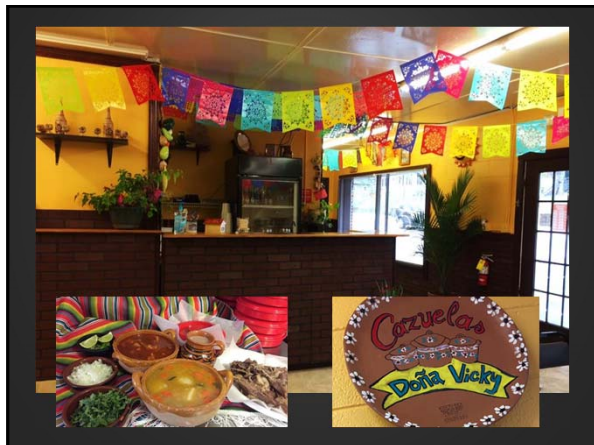
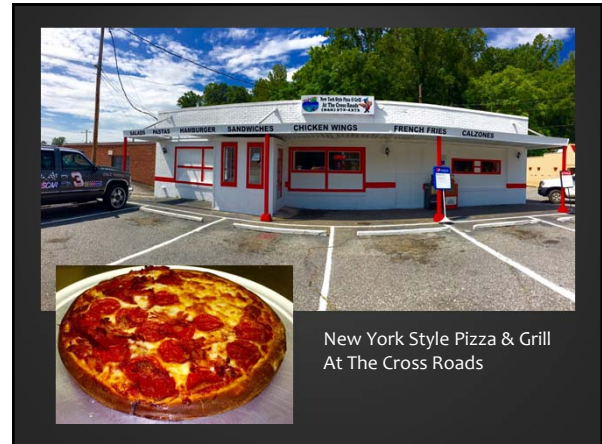
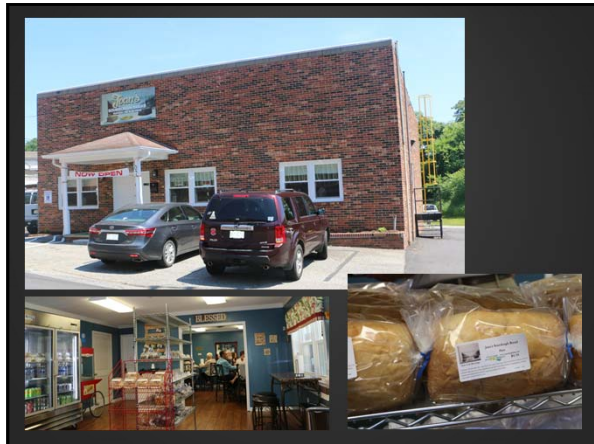
We require a city government that is:

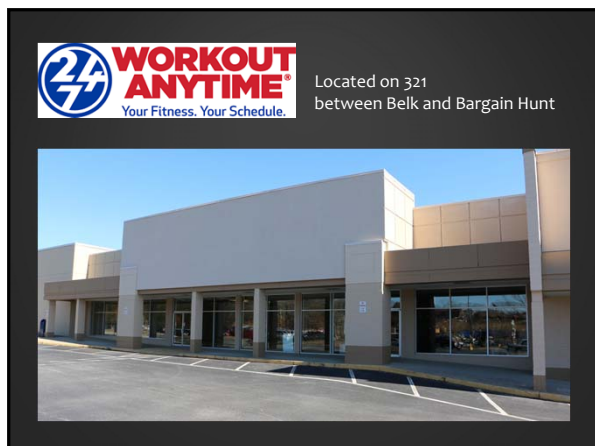
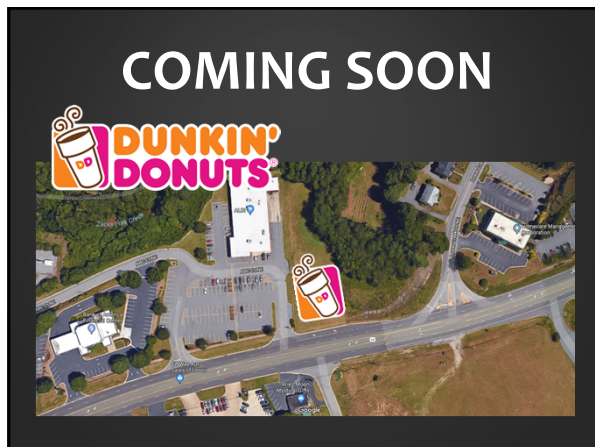
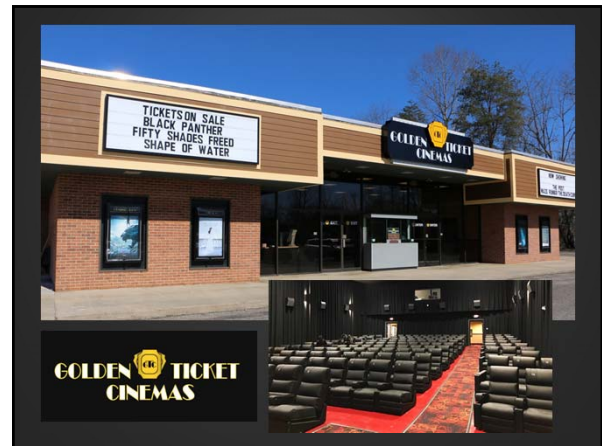
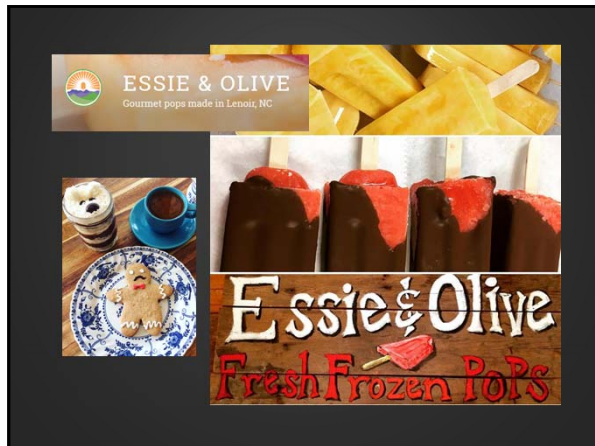
- *accessible*
- *accountable*
- *efficient & effective*
- *future-oriented*
- *inclusive, innovative, collaborative*
- *transparent*
- *fiscally responsible*

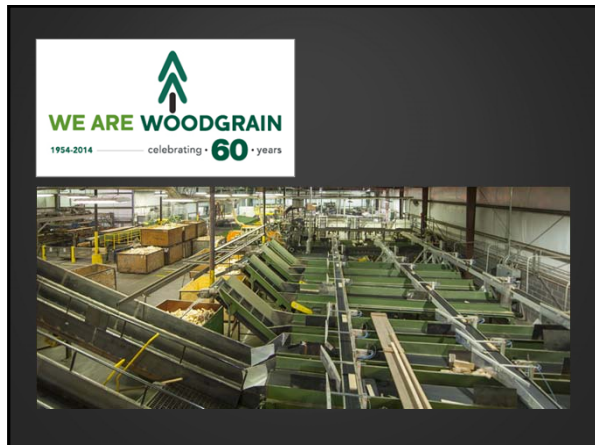
with funding that is fair, affordable, and stable.

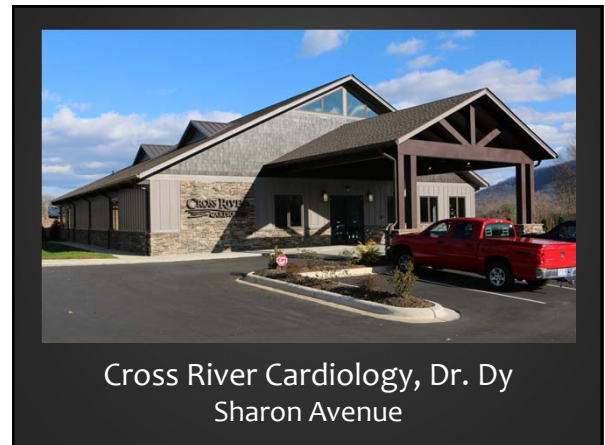












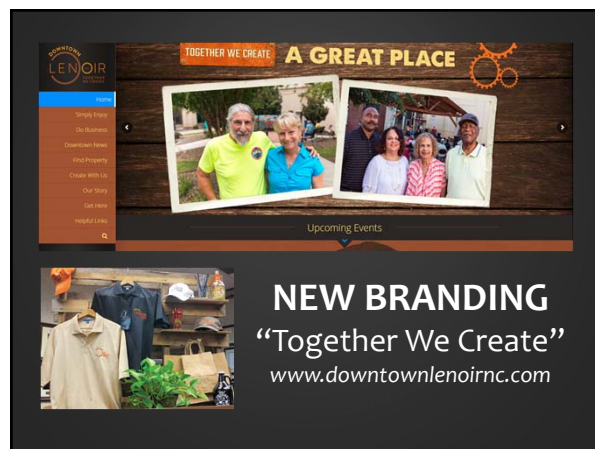
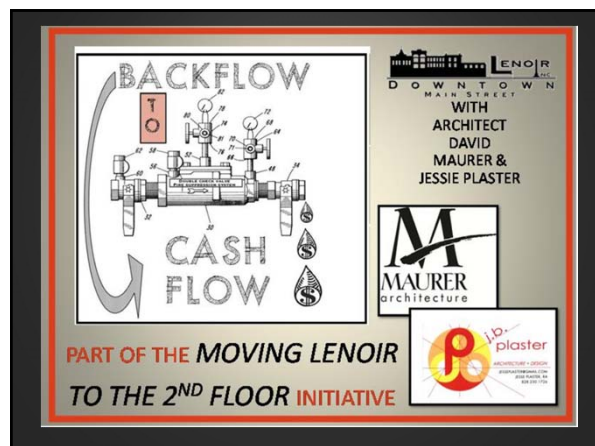
NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION



APPROVED RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION



Crescent Pointe at Greenhaven
60-unit Senior Housing Complex



Walker Stadium Lighting



Relocation and Renovation of Rankin House on Ridge Street

TRAILS & GREENWAYS

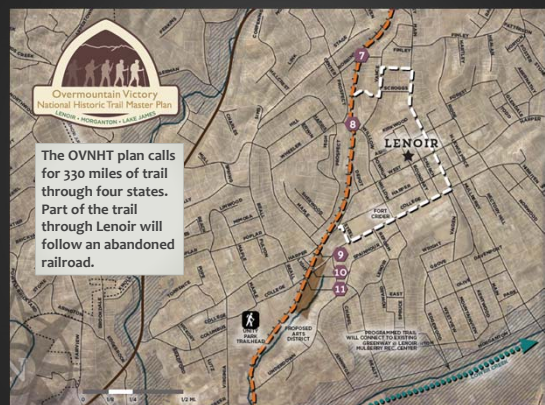


CITY OF LENOIR
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mulberry Connector to OVNHT



Middle section of Mulberry Connector already complete.



Funky Town (Fairfield South)



Funky Town (Fairfield South)



Trestle Bridge



INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



CWMTF Conservation Easement Zacks Fork Watershed Property (590+/- acres)

2 New EMS Stations in Lenoir (County)

- Valmead
- Wilkesboro Boulevard



Water Treatment Plant Improvements

\$11 MILLION: 2 new filters, Active Flow System, Guaranteed 12 MGD Service



\$5 MILLION: New Chemical Storage building, piping, control systems



Lower Creek Wastewater Plant

\$6.6 MILLION:

New biosolids treatment system

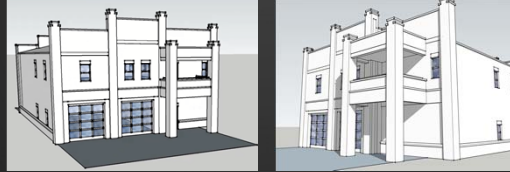
Gunpowder Creek Wastewater Plant

\$3.5 MILLION: Renovation and new 1 million gallon treatment basin, located in Hudson

Fire Station #3

\$1.75 MILLION:

Design stage nearing completion;
construction to start in late spring
- Located in Lower Creek



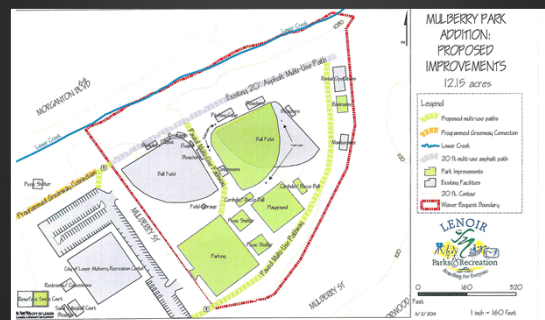
Parks & Recreation



Mulberry Optimist Park

- Funded by a \$327,000.00 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant from the State of North Carolina
- 227,200.00 matching funds were from the donation of the Optimist Club property (private funds)
- 100,000.00 matching funds from the City of Lenoir

New restrooms and lighting, picnic shelters, Playground and parking



J.E. Broyhill Park Improvements

\$125,000 funded by CD Block Grant Funds



Before: Dilapidated buildings



After: New shelters, benches, grills



Coming soon ...

- Basketball court
- Restrooms
- Lighting
- Park signs
- Sidewalks
- 9-hole disc golf

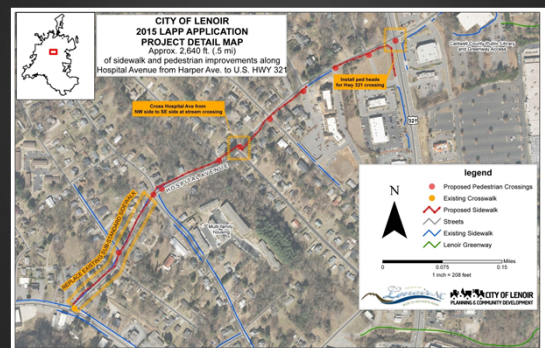


PLANNING INITIATIVES

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans
- North Main Area Plan
- Fairfield South Area Plan



Hospital Ave. Sidewalk Improvements



North Main Small Area Plan



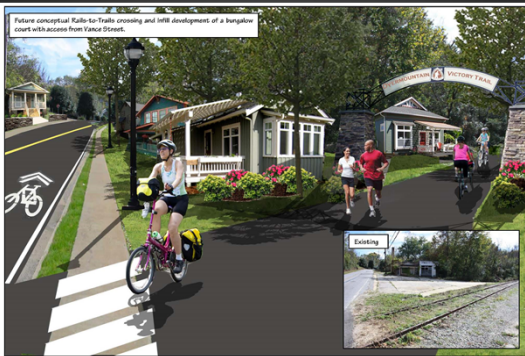
NORTH MAIN STREET SMALL AREA PLAN
SUPPORT DOCUMENT – ADOPTED FEBRUARY 17, 2015



North Main & Old North Rd North Main and Creekway Dr



North Main & Old North Rd Plan



North Main and Creekway Dr Plan



North Main and Creekway Dr Completed



North Main and Creekway Dr Completed



North Main and Creekway Dr Completed



FURNITURE IS STRONG



BERNHARDT
INTERIORS

1,000+ Employees



HHG
Heritage Home Group

1,000+ Employees



FAIRFIELD

300+ Employees

LARGEST TAXPAYERS

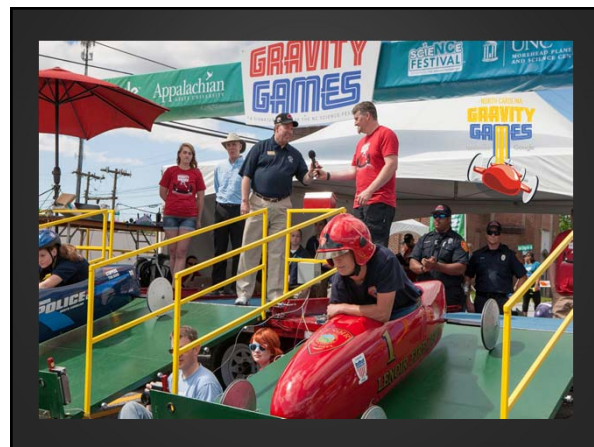
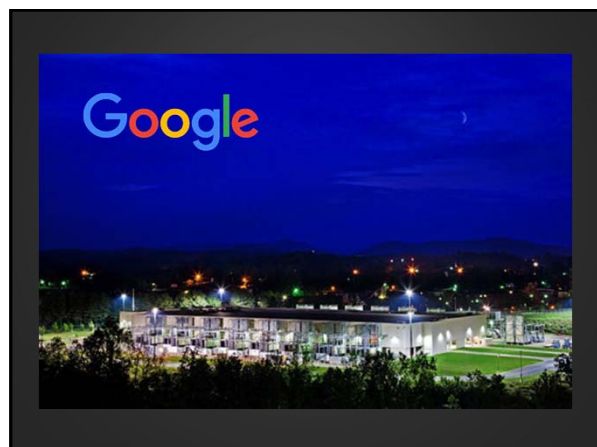
1. Google
2. Duke Energy
3. Bernhardt Furniture
4. Walmart
5. Broyhill / Heritage Home
6. Blue Ridge Energy
7. Kincaid Furniture
8. Vantage Foods (JBS)
9. Greer Labs
10. Sealed Air

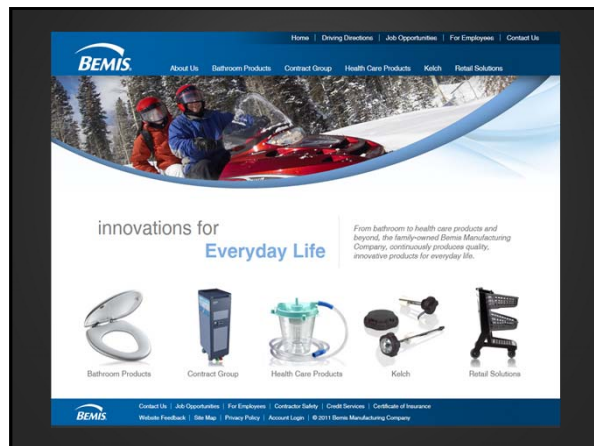












Caldwell County improves economic status to Tier 2 in state rankings

Nov. 30, 2017 | By Guy Lucas, News-Topic

Caldwell showed growth in its tax base, population, median household income, and unemployment rate - the four main factors used to rank counties to determine whether they are economically distressed. The county's four-year poverty rate also declined.

Combined, the improvement prompted the N.C. Department of Commerce to change Caldwell from a Tier 1 to a Tier 2 county in its annual Development Tier Designations. The 40 counties designated Tier 1 are considered most in need of economic help, and the designation can assist them in getting certain grants and other aid. The 20 counties that are best off are Tier 3.

Caldwell saw the greatest improvement in its property tax base per capita, which is the total property value in the county divided by the county's population. It went from \$77,580 in 2016 - 63rd out of 100 counties - to \$80,124, or 59th, as the county's official population increased by 221 people to 82,517.

UNEMPLOYMENT



4.5%



4.4%

Caldwell County median income grew by 2.5%

Higher median income levels and growth make it easier to attract retail and commercial investment.

Population Changes in NC Cities

Pct change '10-'16	Morganton	0.09331490	0.2%
Pct change '10-'16	Morganton	0.00067941	0.2%
2010	Morganton	16,890	0.2%
2011	Morganton	16,923	0.2%
2012	Morganton	16,916	0.2%
2013	Morganton	16,807	0.2%
2014	Morganton	16,699	0.2%
2015	Morganton	16,699	0.2%
2016	Morganton	16,699	0.2%

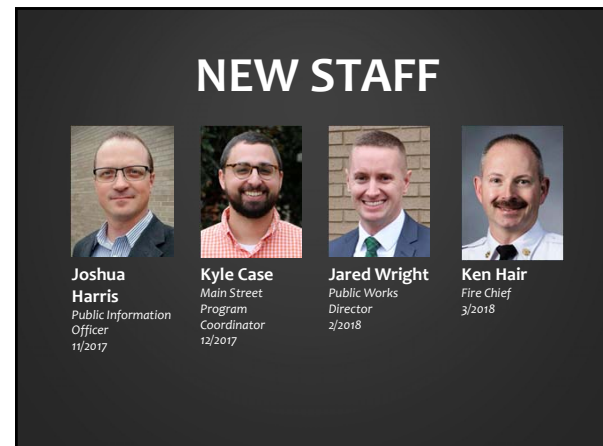
Pct change '10-'16	Lincolnton	0.03360559	1.3%
Pct change '10-'16	Lincolnton	0.013394495	1.3%
2010	Lincolnton	10,566	1.3%
2011	Lincolnton	10,581	1.3%
2012	Lincolnton	10,599	1.3%
2013	Lincolnton	10,763	1.3%
2014	Lincolnton	10,779	1.3%
2015	Lincolnton	10,779	1.3%
2016	Lincolnton	10,779	1.3%

Pct change '10-'16	Lexington	0.00984667	1.6%
Pct change '10-'16	Lexington	0.010335373	1.6%
2010	Lexington	16,933	1.6%
2011	Lexington	16,944	1.6%
2012	Lexington	16,952	1.6%
2013	Lexington	16,993	1.6%
2014	Lexington	16,993	1.6%
2015	Lexington	16,993	1.6%
2016	Lexington	16,993	1.6%

Pct change '10-'16	Lenoir	0.04131909	3.3%
Pct change '10-'16	Lenoir	0.004751789	0.3%
2010	Lenoir	18,734	0.3%
2011	Lenoir	18,087	0.3%
2012	Lenoir	18,017	0.3%
2013	Lenoir	18,042	0.3%
2014	Lenoir	17,920	0.3%
2015	Lenoir	17,920	0.3%
2016	Lenoir	17,920	0.3%

FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Vacant / Dilapidated Housing
- Market Rate Housing-New Stock of Single and Multi-Family
- Infrastructure-Repair / Replacement
- Retaining / Recruiting Youth and Millennials
- Changing Perception



2017 Council Budget Priorities

1. Housing:

- Encourage Downtown Living (Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor)
- Minimum Housing Enforcement
- Pursue Market Rate Housing
- Implement Area Plans
- Market City-owned Properties to Sell
- Communicate building “spec” homes in shovel-ready areas such as Hibriten Mountain, Stonecroft, Huntington Woods & Summerhill
- Work with WPCOG Vacant & Substandard Housing Task Force

2. Economic Development:

- Assemble group of leaders, developers, EDC stakeholders to share financing info
- Explore what other local governments are doing with public/private partnerships
- Maintain healthy infrastructure
- Preserve/don't lose sales tax funds for economic development
- Consider demo of obsolete building on prime sites
- Consider industrial park development

3. Employee Compensation

- Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employee recruitment and retention

4. Staffing:

- Housing/Code Enforcement
- Downtown/Events

5. Healthy Infrastructure:

- Street Paving
- Water/Sewer Improvements
- Stormwater
- City Hall
- Fire Station #3
- Sidewalks/Greenway/OVT (also downtown sidewalks)
- Optimist Park/Mulberry Improvements
- Information Technology

6. North Main Area Plan:

- Complete JE Broyhill Park Improvements (also basketball court relocation)
- Implement Streetscape (Creekway Drive and Main Street)
- Minimum Housing Enforcement

7. Fairfield South Area Plan:

- Finalize Plan

8. US 321 Beautification

- Maintain recent improvements and identify new projects

9. Reduce unnecessary spending

- Review opportunities to best use limited financial resources
- Pursue efforts to reduce or eliminate unfunded mandates

10. Assess Viability of Sister Cities

2017-18 Completed Activities

- **Infrastructure Funding:**

- **Sewer**

- Bost Lumber Sewer Replacement (Steele Street to College Avenue)

- This project involved the replacement of approximately 1,100 feet of sewer line between Steel Street and College Avenue around the old Bost Lumber building. The Project was funded through a grant the city received from the Appalachian Regional Commission in the amount of \$300,000. The city's match for the grant was \$96,000. The construction of this project has been completed and the WPCOG, our grant administrator, is finalizing paperwork to close out the project. A few changes to this project afforded the city the opportunity to rehab additional footage of sewer lines in the project area.

- Security Fencing Project**

- LPD has focused on building security, after several incidents in recent years in which people were found wandering in the back parking lot and have even had a vehicle crash into our security port door. As such, LPD has undertaken a security fencing project at a cost of \$41,000 – with an expected completion later this month.

- **Public Engagement - community meetings & transparency**

- The complete City Council agenda packet is now available for viewing and download on the city website. Council meetings are also available online for review on the City YouTube channel. More info at www.cityoflenoir.com/councilmeetings.
 - The City has implemented an improved mass communications system to deliver important information regarding services, etc. The system upgrade now allows text messaging and emails, in addition to the standard telephone delivery.

- **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

The City was awarded a \$5,000 grant from Duke Energy to install an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station in the parking lot on the corner of Harper Avenue and Boundary Street. The City received quotes for equipment from three (3) vendors and selected the low quote of \$6,406 from Lilypad EV. The station was installed and put into service at a total cost of \$9,900. The station has an annual software contract from Chargepoint of \$599 and thus far a minimal energy cost from Duke Energy. Also, please note that Bernhardt Furniture (NC 18) and Blue Ridge Energy (US 321) have installed EV Charging Stations for community access as well.

- **Tourism:**

- **Walker Stadium**

- Walker Stadium, located behind Davenport School on College Street and the Caldwell County Heritage Museum, was dedicated in 1971 honoring Chicago Cubs Coach Verlon Walker and his brother, Brooklyn Dodgers Catcher Albert "Rube" Walker. The field has been home to a variety of teams over the years including: All American Collegiate Baseball League Lenoir Chiefs, Southern Collegiate Baseball League Lenoir Oilers, Furniture Kings, and Broyhill Chiefs. This past summer, the City coordinated fundraising of \$125,000 and led efforts to install new field lighting. The project involved working with Caldwell County, Caldwell County Schools, the Lenoir Oilers and private citizens. Future improvements may include seating, restrooms and playing field.

- **Downtown Main Street Revitalization**

- **Additional Staffing - Main Street Coordinator**

- Considerable time and effort is required to maintain the electronic communication avenues with up-to-date information, monitor content, and interact with the Downtown

community on a regular basis. With the addition of several new and successful downtown events, staff is confident we will be able to maintain our high level of service and quality as this position will assist with event promotion, coordination and the electronic media/marketing efforts.

- **Downtown Branding Campaign**

Our Downtown branding campaign was launched during first quarter 2017 with great success and was very well-received. The branding campaign was comprehensive with and in-depth research and discover phase, website development, downtown banners, print advertising, a line of retail merchandise and much more.

- **Rankin House**

The Rankin House, originally built in 1843 and the administrative home of Communities in Schools of Caldwell County, was relocated from behind First Baptist Church to 313 Ridge St. CIS acquired the land on Ridge Street in a swap with the City of Lenoir for land CIS owned a short distance north, next to J.E. Broyhill Park. The City, County, LTDA, as well as others contributed to fund the move. The house, regarded as the second-oldest house in Lenoir, was built by James Harper, the founder of Lenoir, and was the longtime home of the Rev. Jesse Rankin, who was the first pastor at Lenoir Presbyterian Church.

- **Downtown Wi-Fi Improvements (provided by Google)**

Google (since 2009) has assisted the City via grant funding to provide free high-speed wireless connection for public use within the downtown area of Lenoir. This past year Google provided approximately \$90,000 worth of upgrades to our WiFi system.

- **Gigabit Access - Downtown Business District**

SkyLine/SkyBest, a NC member-owned cooperative, is a provider of advanced communications technology. Solutions include high-speed Gig Fiber-Optic Broadband Internet, Business Systems, Circuits, Digital TV, Security/Surveillance and Voice. Skyline has been partnering with Blue Ridge Energies and now has a presence in Lenoir. They have recently installed fiber-optic internet, with speeds up 1 Gig, to serve business along US 321 and in downtown Lenoir. SkyLine plans to publicize this high-speed data availability in our community in the near future, which will serve as an economic development tool.

- **Technology Utilization:**

- **Website Upgrade**

The new website was launched in 2017. The site is desktop, mobile, and tablet friendly. The Public Information Officer continues to maintain the homepage and improve various pages across the site. The home page provides quick links to various popular pages, a News and Announcements section, and a Community Spotlight section that lists pages and stories of interest. Staff members with Police, Parks & Recreation, Planning, Public Works/Public Utilities, Fire, and Downtown Development have been trained to maintain webpages for those departments. The PIO plans to work with those staff to ensure a consistent look across the site and a consistent location for regular content.

- **Streaming Council Meetings (Live and/or On-Demand)**

City Council meetings are shown live on Charter cable and are now set up to be shown on AT&T U-Verse. The Public Information Officer launched a YouTube channel for the City of Lenoir and is uploading Council meetings, events, and other video to the site. Council meetings are now available on the channel and linked in the Council meeting pages on the City website. www.cityoflenoir.com/councilmeetings.

- **Electronic Payments**

Currently, the City accepts electronic payments for utility bills and property taxes. The number of customers utilizing this method of payment continues to increase each year. Since 2014, the number of credit card transactions has increased on average 18% per year and the dollar amount of revenue collected has increased on average 20% per year. During 2017, the City's electronic payment option was utilized for more than 26,000 transactions totaling over \$1,954,000, approximately \$300,000 more than the previous year. Historically, the City has absorbed the costs associated with accepting these payments, approximately \$20,000-25,000 annually depending on the number of transactions.

In mid-September of 2017, credit card machines were installed at City Hall. More than 1,000 customers took advantage of the machines from Sept. 15 to Dec. 21 2017. Prior to installing the machines, credit card payments were taken utilizing an online system which required each card to be entered manually. The machines are more efficient and there is less room for data-entry errors. The machines are also more secure and will allow the city to consider expanding credit cards acceptance practice into other revenue streams such as cemetery plots, grave markers, garbage bins, recreation or other items deemed appropriate.

- **Electronic Newsletter**

City of Lenoir E-News was published quarterly in 2008 and 2009. Based on citizen requests, the Public Information Officer re-launched the newsletter, "Connect Lenoir eNews" in February. The newsletter is emailed to subscribers and posted online at www.cityoflenoir.com/eNews.

- **Everbridge City Alerts (Mass Communications System)**

The City switched its citizen notification system in early 2017 to Everbridge. The new system allows city staff to send alerts to citizens and employees. The Public Information Officer met with the new Communication Team to review the current alerts. After review, the team decided to remove some alerts and add others. The PIO plans to grow the alert subscribers this year. The current alerts can be reviewed online at www.cityoflenoir.com/alerts.

- **City IT Improvements**

To insure preparedness, the IT department continues to improve the infrastructure of the city. During 2017-2018, for the first time, technology had their own budget line which allowed for several major infrastructure improvements.

- Various measures have been made to protect the City's system from hackers. Currently, IT staff is implementing technological protection measures to restrict access to Internet content based upon the user's geographical location and feels that using geoblocking will protect against 95% of potential hackers.
- Several of the City's offsite locations were rewired and had new switches installed. These upgrades will allow data to be transmitted at gigabit speed between locations. The added speed gives IT the ability to restore servers in a matter of minutes versus hours/days and avoid lengthy downtime.
- Unfortunately, in November of 2017, the City's email server crashed. Due to corrupt data, restoration took several days. During the recovery, a new email server was installed which will allow for faster recovery should an issue arise in the future. The server is now virtual and the data is no longer corrupt.
- Several improvements to the City's servers have been made during the past year. To improve the efficiency of the financial software currently used, a new CSI server was installed to provide faster production time in what is a cumbersome system.

- As a part of IT's disaster recovery plan, spare servers were purchased to reduce down time should there be an equipment failure.
- In early 2018, new production storage and faster fiber cards was purchased and installed. Now, entire servers can be restored in approximately 15 minutes.
- IT continues to work to improve back-up for data throughout the City. Future plans include adding offsite cold storage at the water plant.

▪ **Caldwell Heritage Museum**

The Caldwell Heritage Museum educates and preserves the history of Caldwell County for future generations through educational services and exhibits. After obtaining the last remaining building of Davenport College, the Caldwell Heritage Museum opened in 1991 at 112 Vaiden Street. Built in 1926, it housed the auditorium and music rooms. Today, the space is being utilized for a chronological history of Caldwell County, from pre-Colonial days until the present, through a series of exhibits. There is also information and pictures about the founding of Caldwell County, as well as the establishment of the City of Lenoir as the county seat and its development into a railroad terminus and furniture manufacturing center. Recently, the City has provided landscaping assistance and support for new signage for the museum.

▪ **UTV's Purchased (Police and Fire)**

Due to the success of the Planning Department and Parks & Recreation in developing/expanding our parks and trail systems, the LPD and LFD are realizing the need to provide adequate patrols/responses that aren't necessarily traditional. The City recently acquired a UTV(s) that will aid us in covering these grounds more effectively and allow for transportation of people and equipment to/from areas not accessible by regular police/fire vehicles as well for use during downtown events.



RAMEY KEMP & ASSOCIATES, INC.
621 Jonestown Road, Suite 221
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
Phone: 336-725-5470 Fax: 336-725-5442
www.rameykemp.com

Session 2 [11:30am]

Downtown Traffic Study - Preliminary Data – Ramey Kemp & Associates (Jay Clapp)
[25 minutes]

Update on study to review a total of 13 intersections located on Harper Avenue and West Avenue, to prepare the analysis, conceptual plan, opinion of probable cost, and document summarizing the study's findings and results.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

CITY OF LENOIR, 801 WEST AVENUE, LENOIR, NC 28645

TO: Scott Hildebran, City Manager
FROM: Jenny Wheelock, AICP, Planning Director
DATE: February 18, 2018
SUBJECT: Lenoir Bicycle Plan

The Lenoir Bicycle Plan has been in development over the past year, working through the NCDOT consulting firm Kimley-Horn and a locally appointed Bicycle Plan Steering Committee. The plan includes recommendations on policy, programs, and infrastructure improvements to promote safe bicycling in our community, building upon previous planning efforts focused around greenways and sidewalks.

Facilities Plan

Through the analysis of the existing bicycle network and the location of key destinations, and feedback from the steering committee, focus group interviews, and public meetings, the consulting team developed a Bicycle Facilities Plan for Lenoir. Then, the recommend facilities were ranked to glean the top 12 projects most likely to gain public support (based on feedback from the public meetings and the steering committee), and then those 12 were further ranked based on a scoring matrix that weighed equally the priorities of the steering committee (20%), the priorities of the public (20%), bicycle safety considerations (20%), and quantitative data (20% – proximity to activity centers, low income population served, no car households served, etc.) to establish the top priority project recommendations.

Top Twelve Recommended Projects:

Map ID	STREET	START	END	TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION	LENGTH (MI)	COST ESTIMATE
1	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	West Avenue	Buffered Bike Lane	Restriping	0.58	\$152,400
2a	Google Connector Phase 1	Fairview Drive	Harper Avenue	Shared Use Path	New Construction	2.36	\$2.32 million
2b	Google Connector Phase 2	Harper Avenue	Library Trail	Shared Use Path & Pedestrian Tunnel	New Construction	0.21	\$1.04 million
3	Pennton Avenue	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Realty Street	Shared Lane Markings & Speed Cushions	Marking	1.58	\$118,000
4	College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue	Bike Lanes	Restriping and Widening	0.64	\$1.07 million
5	West Avenue	Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	Bike Lanes and Shared Lane Markings	Restriping and Marking	0.59	\$192,500

6 ²⁶	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	0.76	\$1.77 million
7	Harper Avenue	West Avenue	Creekway Drive	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	0.83	\$2.05 million
8	Mulberry Street	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Ashe Avenue	Shared Lane Markings	Marking	0.81	\$22,000
9	Greenhaven Drive	Zacks Fork Road	Main Street	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	1.69	\$4.25 million
10	Lower Creek Drive	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Wilkesboro Boulevard (NC 18)	Shared Use Path	New Construction	1.69	\$1.79 million
11	Hibriten Drive	Connelly Springs Road	Starcross Road	Bike Lanes	Restriping & Road Diet (5 to 3 lanes)	1.40	\$442,000

The second-ranked project in the facilities plan is also the most expensive project – however, it is worth noting that this greenway segment overlaps with the Overmountain Victory Trail and some of this connection is already in the development phases (Google is building part of the connector). Another highly ranked project is, not surprisingly, the long-anticipated connection from the Lenoir Mall/Mulberry Rec to the existing 321 Greenway underpass. These two greenway projects (Phase 1 and Phase 2 “Google Connectors”) are challenging, expensive and lengthy segments, but are favored by the public and score well on quantitative factors as well.

While the greenway projects are great long-term projects, the priority project list also contains some more easily (and affordably) implemented projects – re-striping and/or pavement marking can implement 4/12 priority projects (Harper Avenue, Pennton Avenue, West Avenue, and Mulberry Street), offering some “visible victories” that can show a commitment to implementation in the short term. (Because the downtown is currently under consideration to change traffic patterns on streets identified as top priorities for the inclusion of bicycle infrastructure of some type, accommodation for cyclists should be included within the project scope for any traffic change downtown.)

Having an adopted Bicycle Plan, especially the Bicycle Facilities Plan, will allow us to incorporate consideration for bicycle facilities as roads are re-paved, re-striped, widened, etc., as well as to plan for the funding and implementation of key projects that deliver the most positive impact to the community.

Please see the following excerpts from the Lenoir Bicycle Plan attached to this memo – Executive Summary (pages I-III), Recommended Bicycle Facilities Plan (pages 37-8) , and lists and maps of identified priority projects (pages 41-2).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Promoting and encouraging multimodal travel has become a major priority for the City of Lenoir and for communities across the region, the state, and the country. The City of Lenoir Comprehensive Plan recommended the creation of a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Plan, and in 2012 the City completed a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan that included sidewalks, greenway, and crossing locations. Recognizing that bicycling - both as a form of transportation and as a recreational activity - can benefit the community's mobility, safety, health, economy, environment, and livability, the City of Lenoir applied for a grant through North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation's (NCDOT-DBPT) Planning Grant Initiative. The planning grant, along with a 15% match from the City funded the creation of this Bicycle Plan.

The development of the Lenoir Bicycle Plan was spearheaded by a project team consisting of planners, engineers, and City staff. A 17-person steering committee met four times over the course of the plan's development, setting and refining the plan's direction to reflect the needs and desires of the community. Public input was a critical piece of the planning process, and public engagement strategies included two open houses, an online survey, and a public hearing. Ultimately, the overarching and aspirational vision of the Lenoir Bicycle Plan is that:

RIDING BICYCLES IN THE CITY OF LENOIR WILL BE A SAFE AND CONVENIENT WAY FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO TRAVEL FOR TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION. THE CITY'S BICYCLE NETWORK WILL BE ACCESSIBLE, CONNECTED, AND ATTRACTIVE FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, ABILITIES, AND BACKGROUNDS.

The Lenoir Bicycle Plan consists of five major elements, followed by an Appendix. The Bicycle Plan begins with an introduction of Lenoir and the impetus behind the creation of the plan, followed by a detailed look at the demographic, operational, and administrative characteristics of Lenoir. The Public Input chapter presents a synthesis of the input contributed by those who participated in the plan's public engagement activities. The Recommendations chapter details the facility, policy, and program recommendations to accomplish the Bicycle Plan's vision, and the Implementation chapter provides a framework that describes a timeline of strategies and highlights the parties who will be responsible for implementing those strategies. Summaries of each chapter are shown on the next page.

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction chapter of the Lenoir Bicycle Plan presents the timeline of the planning process, starting with NCDOT-DBPT awarding the planning grant to the City of Lenoir and ending with adoption of the plan by Lenoir City Council. This chapter also introduces the Bicycle Plan's vision statement and six supporting goals, and describes how the vision of a more bicycle friendly Lenoir would benefit residents, business owners, and visitors alike.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Existing Conditions chapter defines the starting point for the Bicycle Plan. The chapter begins with an explanation of the Bicycle Plan's philosophy, encapsulated by what has traditionally been called the "Five Es," now joined by a sixth E: equity. Several maps depict where undeserved populations live in Lenoir, followed by a discussion of how Lenoir residents get to work and the identification of non-work destinations. The chapter then transitions to an exploration of Lenoir's transportation network in both driving and bicycling contexts. The chapter concludes with a recognition of existing policies and programs impacting bicycling in Lenoir today and an inventory of previous planning efforts that set the stage for the Lenoir Bicycle Plan.

- » Lenoir has a strong greenway system providing connection to the Northeast quadrant of the City, but no on-street bicycle facilities.
- » Most attractive destinations in Lenoir are located along US 321 and US 64/NC 18, which bisect in the center of the City.
- » There have been many recent wins for bikeability in the City of Lenoir with an additional segment of greenway and the removal of rail for the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail all happening during the short duration of this planning process.

PUBLIC INPUT

The Public Input chapter describes the Bicycle Plan's public engagement process and highlights some key findings. The plan's public engagement included four meetings with the steering committee, an online survey which included a questionnaire and map exercise, two open house meetings that emphasized issues identification and project prioritization, and a public hearing.

- » There was strong support for the continued expansion of the Lenoir Greenway system.
- » Participants in the public engagement sessions placed a strong emphasis on enhancing access to Downtown Lenoir. Members of the Bicycle Planning Committee expressed that the provision of bicycle facilities in Downtown Lenoir would strike a balance of practicality due to low travel speeds and ample destinations, with making the presence of bicycling apparent to the most number of residents in Lenoir.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations chapter comprises three sections: an overview of the bicycle facility planning process, project profiles for the top five priority projects, and a compilation of program and policy recommendations. The project profiles include information about each project's purpose as well as implementation considerations, planning-level cost estimates, typical cross-sections, and conceptual images. The program and policy recommendations consist of encouragement, educational, and administrative improvements to enhance the City's bicycle friendliness.

The top 3 facility recommendations include the addition of a buffered bike lane along Harper Avenue in Downtown, the extension of the Lenoir Greenway parallel to US 64, and shared lane markings along Pennton Avenue connecting Downtown to the existing Lenoir Greenway. The map to the right displays the top 5 priority projects and renderings of each.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation chapter defines actionable steps for the City of Lenoir and its partners in the short-, mid-, and long-term to accomplish the Bicycle Plan's vision. This action plan is supported by an organizational framework that indicates how the City's partners will be involved; information regarding local, state, federal, and private funding sources; suggestions for ways to measure the performance of the Bicycle Plan or its individual facility recommendations; and a listing of guidance documents for the planning and design of bicycle facilities.

1. HARPER AVENUE BIKE LANE



2. GOOGLE CONNECTOR SIDEWALK



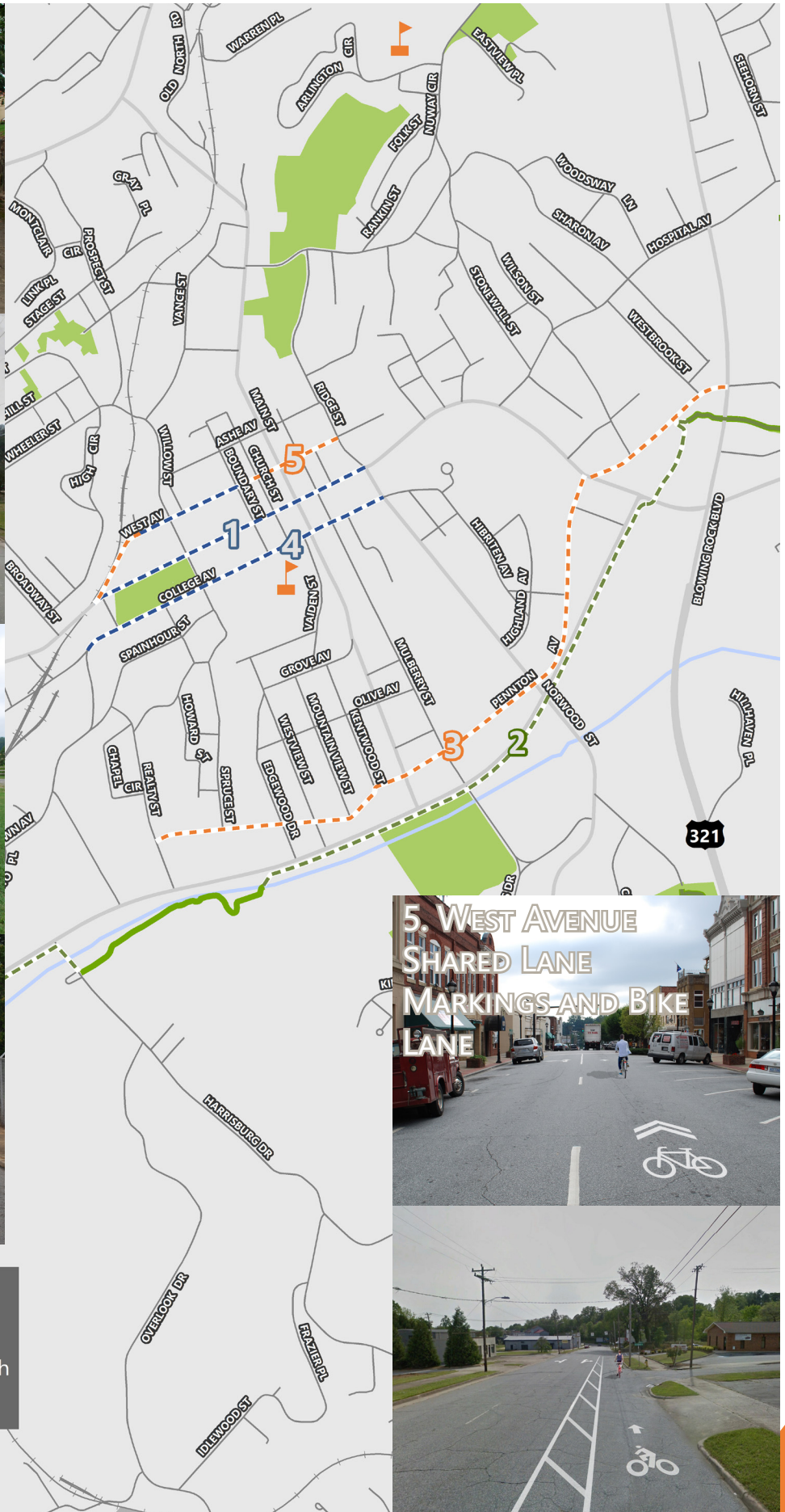
3. PENNTON AVENUE SHARED LANE MARKINGS



4. COLLEGE AVENUE BIKE LANES



5. WEST AVENUE SHARED LANE MARKINGS AND BIKE LANE



- Proposed Bike Lane
- Proposed Shared Lane
- Proposed Shared Use Path
- Existing Shared Use Path

MAP 14: RECOMMENDED BICYCLE FACILITY PLAN
PAGE 37

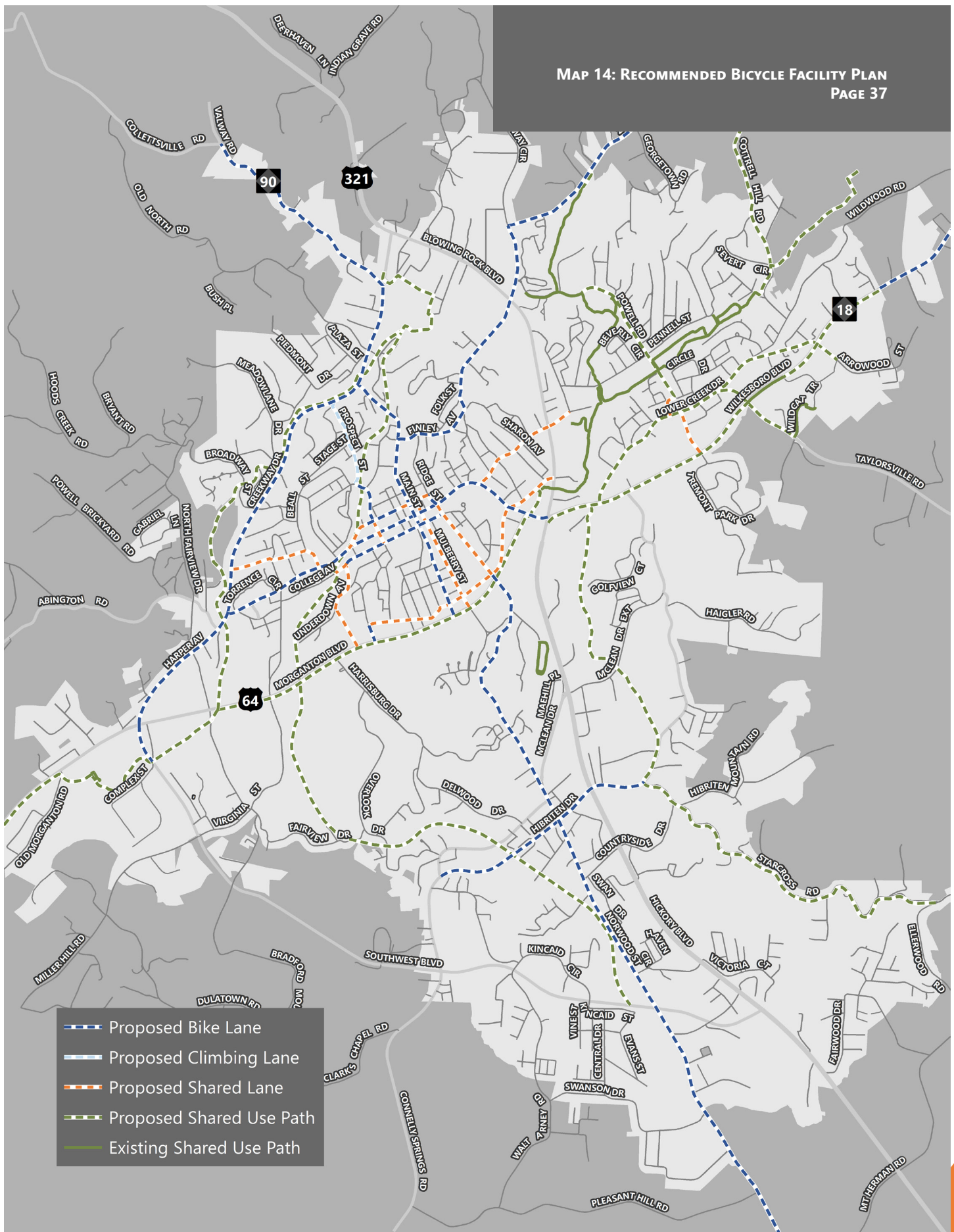


TABLE 7: ALL FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

*	STREET NAME	FROM	TO	FACILITY TYPE
*	Airport Extension	Sherlee Street	Lower Creek Airport	Shared Use Path
*	Cottrell Hill Road Extension	Severt Circle	Black Trail Terminus	Shared Use Path
*	Google Connector 1	Harper Avenue	Library Trail Terminus	Shared Use Path
*	Google Connector 2	Harper Avenue	Fairview Drive	Shared Use Path
*	Huntington Extension	Ellerwood Road	US 64	Shared Use Path
*	Lower Creek Extension	US 321	Tomlinson Court	Shared Use Path
*	Main Street	Morganton Boulevard	Valway Road	Bike Lane
*	Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail			Shared Use Path
*	Rails-to-Trails	US 64	Southwest Boulevard	Shared Use Path
*	Spainhour Creek Extension	Morganton Boulevard	RR Tracks North of Advent Circle	Shared Use Path
*	Valway Road	Main Street	Collettsville Road	Bike Lane
*	Zacks Fork Road	Nuway Circle	Cottrell Hill Road	Bike Lane
	Arrowood Street	NC 18	Panther Trail	Side Path
	College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue	Bike Lane
	College Avenue	Underdown Avenue	Light Street	Shared Lane
	Creekway Drive	Main Street	Harper Avenue	Bike Lane
	Greenhaven Drive	Zacks Fork Road	Main Street	Bike Lane
	Harper Avenue	Morganton Boulevard	US 321	Bike Lane
	Hibriten Drive	Hickory Boulevard	Connelly Springs Road	Bike Lane
	Hospital Avenue	Seehorn Street	Harper Avenue	Shared Lane
	Jennings Street	Underdown Avenue	Morganton Boulevard	Shared Lane
	Lower Creek Drive	US 64	NC 18	Side Path
	Mulberry Street	Morganton Boulevard	Ashe Avenue	Shared Lane
	Norwood Street	Harper Avenue	Pennton Avenue	Shared Lane
	Norwood Street	Pennton Avenue	Mt Herman Road	Bike Lane
	Pennton Avenue	Block Rock Boulevard	Harper Avenue	Shared Lane
	Pennton Avenue	Harper Avenue	Realty Street	Shared Lane
	Poplar Street	Creekway Drive	Beall Street	Shared Lane
	Powell Road	Lower Creek Drive	Glenview Street	Shared Lane
	Powell Road	Glenview Street	Wellington Court	Side Path
	Powell Road	Nuway Circle	Camelot Court	Side Path
	Prospect Street	Creekway Drive	Willow Street	Climbing Lane
	Realty Street	Morganton Boulevard	Pennton Avenue	Bike Lane
	Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	West Avenue	Bike Lane
	Southwest Boulevard	Morganton Boulevard	Complex Street	Bike Lane
	Taylorsville Road	Lower Creek Drive	US 64	Side Path
	Tremont Park Drive	Lower Creek Drive	Wilkesboro Boulevard	Shared Lane
	Underdown Avenue	College Avenue	Jennings Street	Shared Lane
	West Avenue	Harper Avenue	Ridge Street	Bike Lane
	Wilkesboro Boulevard (NC 18)	City Limits	Wildwood Road	Bike Lane
	Willow Street	Prospect Street	West Avenue	Bike Lane
	Willow Street	West Avenue	College Avenue	Shared Lane
* Recommendation from previous planning efforts				

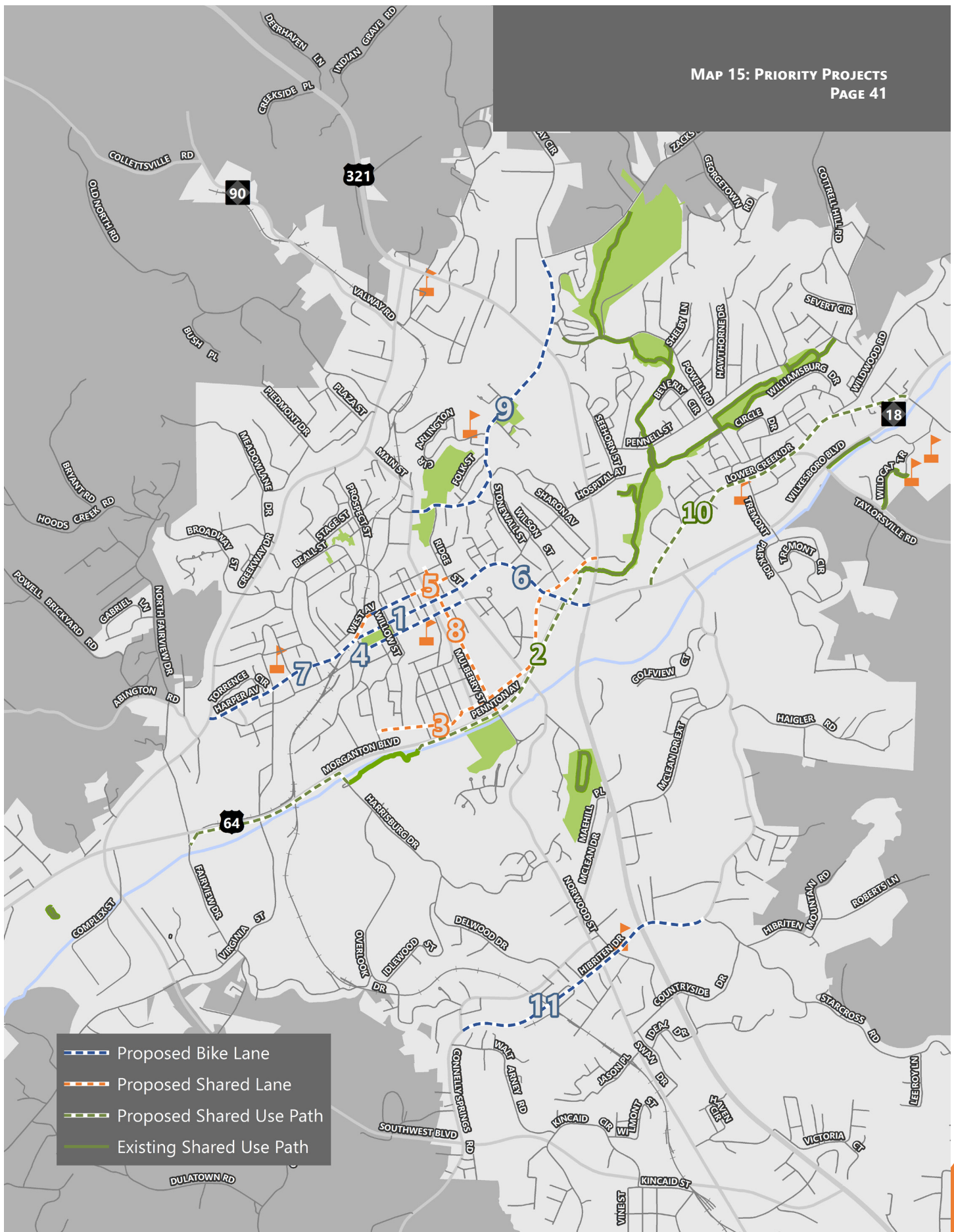
PRIORITY PROJECTS

To guide the development of the implementation plan described in the next chapter, the project team solicited feedback from the BPC and the public to identify twelve priority projects. Of the entire list of recommended bikeway projects, these twelve are the most likely to garner public support and be constructed in the next 10 years.

The priority projects and their planning-level cost estimates are shown in the table below and in the map on the next page. The cost estimates do not include utility relocation, acquisition of right-of-way, or sidewalk construction or reconstruction. More information about roadway maintenance and potential constraints can be found in the Appendix.

TABLE 8: PRIORITY PROJECTS

MAP ID	STREET	START	END	TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION	LENGTH (MI)	COST ESTIMATE
1	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	West Avenue	Buffered Bike Lane	Restriping	0.58	\$152,000
2a	Google Connector Phase 1	Fairview Drive	Harper Avenue	Shared Use Path	New Construction	2.36	\$2.32 million
3	Pennton Avenue	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Realty Street	Shared Lane Markings & Speed Cushions	Marking	1.58	\$118,000
4	College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue	Bike Lanes	Restriping and Widening	0.64	\$1.07 million
2b	Google Connector Phase 2	Harper Avenue	Library Trail	Shared Use Path & Pedestrian Tunnel	New Construction	0.21	\$1.04 million
5	West Avenue	Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	Bike Lanes and Shared Lane Markings	Restriping and Marking	0.59	\$193,000
6	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	0.76	\$1.77 million
7	Harper Avenue	West Avenue	Creekway Drive	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	0.83	\$2.05 million
8	Mulberry Street	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Ashe Avenue	Shared Lane Markings	Marking	0.81	\$22,000
9	Greenhaven Drive	Zacks Fork Road	Main Street	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	1.69	\$4.25 million
10	Lower Creek Drive	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Wilkesboro Boulevard (NC 18)	Shared Use Path	New Construction	1.69	\$1.79 million
11	Hibriten Drive	Connelly Springs Road	Starcross Road	Bike Lanes	Restriping & Road Diet (5 to 3 lanes)	1.40	\$442,000



2018 Council/Staff – Potential Strategic Issues Listing

ONGOING/UNDERWAY

- Customer Service Initiative
- Public Engagement - community meetings & transparency
- City/County Relations
- County Animal Shelter
- Diversity - Boards/Commissions/Staffing
- Employees: Market Competitive Compensation/Recruitment/Retention & Succession Planning
- Finance
 - Safety
 - Software
 - Efficiencies
- Infrastructure Funding:
 - Street Paving
 - Storm Water
 - Water
 - Sewer
 - Water/Sewer
- Transportation Projects:
 - Linkside Connector
 - R-5745 (Taylorsville Rd widening/turn lane plus intersection improvements to US64/NC90/NC18 intersection)
 - Congestion Management/By-Pass Feasibility Studies
- City Buildings/Facilities/Lands/Equipment:
 - City Hall – Rehab
 - Police Department
 - Fire Station #3
 - Zacks Fork Land
 - Optimist Park Improvements
 - JE Broyhill Park Improvements
 - Old Lenoir Furniture Site (Virginia Street – 1429 College Avenue)
 - Automated Sanitation Collection
- Comprehensive Plan (2006) - Update
- Housing:
 - Downtown Living (rehabilitation code/fire code)
 - Minimum Housing Enforcement
 - Moderate-Income Housing Demand (millennial, retiree, corporate)
- Area Plans:
 - North Main Area Plan Implementation
 - Fairfield South Area Plan Development

- **Code Enforcement**
- **Downtown Main Street Revitalization**
- **Economic Development & Incentives Policy**
- **Brownfields/EPA Assessment Grant**
- **Sidewalks/Greenways/Rails to Trails/OVT Master Plan**
- **Old Lenoir Mall Blight**
- **Retire NC**
- **Sister Cities**
- **Sign Code**
- **Neighborhood Branding/Signs**
- **Citywide Wayfinding/Branding Plan**
- **321 Southern Gateway Beautification**
- **321 Smith Crossroads Beautification**
- **Parks/Recreation:**
 - **Disc Golf**
 - **Dog Park**
- **Tourism:**
 - **Center Theater**
 - **Charters of Freedom**
 - **Heritage Tourism**
- **Misc. Planning (Regulatory Reform/Inter-departmental Coordination)**

2018 Council/Staff – Potential Strategic Issues

ONGOING/UNDERWAY

■ **Customer Service Initiative**

City of Lenoir employees take great pride in our “Service Beyond Measure” Customer Service Program developed by a group of employees in 2008 with assistance from (Tom) Westall Consulting, Inc. The program is based on the concept of the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins and, as a result, the City has received tremendous positive feedback from both citizens and employees. An employee-driven committee developed eight customer service keys for our co-workers to follow. The Lenoir Customer Service Keys are: personable, pro-active, effective communication, professionalism, timely and efficient, teamwork, equitable service and successful service recovery. Some highlights of the City’s Customer Service Design Team include - **Golden Ticket Awards**, a program where city employees and/or volunteers go above and beyond their duties to make a difference in our community. They are recognized by fellow employees and a ticket is filled out in their name for their good deed. **TEAM TALK**, an employee newsletter, distributed electronically to co-workers. An **Employee Volunteer Event Presence** was initiated at certain events throughout the City, where team members set up a tent at various events in town and offer information about each department to citizens. An **Employee Appreciation Night** is a city-wide employee family event to honor and recognize city employees for their extraordinary customer service delivery. Events have included an Aquatics Center Pool Party, Crawdads Baseball, and Bo’s Entertainment. Team Lenoir conducts **New Hire Customer Service Training** for new hires with the City so they can understand the importance of Customer Service and Team Lenoir prior to starting their employment. Also, **Hidden Heroes**, a program to recognize individuals/divisions who aid the city behind the scenes but are vital to providing great customer service.

■ **Public Engagement - community meetings & transparency**

The city utilizes a variety of methods to engage the community and improve transparency. Activities include:

- General community meetings in various neighborhoods throughout the city.
- City website, electronic newsletter, Facebook and Social Media to distribute information about services, events and programs.
- Connect Lenoir portal to submit suggestions/feedback/Request for Services.
- Targeted community engagement efforts (block parties, cook-outs, etc.) led by Planning staff, such as with the North Main Area Plan, Fairfield South Area Plan and Rails to Trails/OVT events.
- Main Street, Police, Finance, Administration, Fire, Planning, Public Utilities, etc. have presented programs for a variety of civic/community groups (Rotary, Hibriten High School, elementary schools, churches, daycares, EDC, etc.).
- LPD initiatives such as Community Watch, Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out, Citizens Police Academy, Citizens K-9 Academy, Project Mason, Chat with the Chief, Community Walks, etc.
- In early 2017, LPD simplified its comments, compliments, and complaints protocol. Citizens may file complaints in any way they see fit, i.e. in person or by telephone, email, social media, etc. Every complaint is documented and investigated by a supervisor and follow-up with the complainant is made, or at least attempted, in every case. Complainant meetings with the Chief, Captains, or Lieutenants are encouraged, but not required.

- LFD implemented a citizen customer service survey regarding emergency and service responses.
 - Placing the entire City Council agenda packet and meeting video online for viewing.
 - Mayor monthly radio program discussing current issues.
 - Implementing a mass communications system to deliver important information regarding services, etc. The system upgrade now allows text messaging and emails, in addition to the standard telephone delivery.
 - A variety of other methods are being explored as well.
- **City/County Relations**
 Citizens expect their city and county governments to work together for the public good, which requires collaboration, cooperation, compromise, civility and communication. As always, city departments and staff will continue to meet and discuss issues of common interest with the county and utilize the regular meetings of City/County Services Committee held monthly at CCC&TI for dialogue. For the past six months, our City/County Coordinating Committee has not met due to commissioner scheduling conflicts. We hope to resume those sessions in the near future.
- **County Animal Shelter**
 The City owns a 24.25 acre tract of land located on Fairview Drive that includes leases to both to Caldwell County (for the Animal Shelter) and to the Foothills Radio Group (WJRI, KICKS, WKGX). This tract of land is adjacent to property owned by Tapaha Dynamics, Inc. Caldwell County officials inquired in December 2016 about extending their 30-year lease agreement with the City for the Caldwell County Animal Shelter, which expires in 2025. The County is currently considering the construction of a new animal shelter. Last year, City Council was supportive of either extending the lease an additional 25-30 years or donating the property to the County. The County now appears to be looking to build a new facility on county-owned land near the law enforcement center.
- **Diversity - Boards/Commissions/Staffing**
 City Council has made a concerted effort to improve diversity on city boards/commissions, which better reflect the makeup of our community. Council has also discussed consideration of youth serving on City Authorities/Boards/Commissions. At present, only the Parks & Recreation Commission has youth representation. Staff has briefly looked into the issue. Based on comments received, youth serving in an ex-officio status may provide the quickest impact. There are some limitations of full voting privileges on some boards due to quasi-judicial issues. Staff will continue to explore options.
 General: Our diversity staffing goals include hiring, leadership, and career development. Our Leadership Team, with HR staff, is working to make a more conscious effort to talk to local organizations with community connections, including churches, cultural institutions, schools and colleges in order to help us connect with potential candidates. Utilization of internships and work-study programs are also being pursued.
 Fire: We are continuing to pursue the active hiring of minorities and military veterans, as well as, promoting existing City educational assistance programs that will help all further their educational opportunities.
 Police: Recruiting, and certainly diversity recruiting, continues to be a tremendous challenge for police departments throughout the nation, and Lenoir is no exception. LPD currently has only 5 minorities and 5 females out of 54 total sworn FTE's. The department recruits almost constantly throughout the community, and does specialized recruiting at minority colleges and universities across the state. Over the past 4 years, LPD has started hiring people as trainees so the City sends them to school as our employees, which has resulted in the hiring of 2 minorities and 2 females, one of whom left law enforcement due

to money concerns. LPD is open to suggestions and certainly desires more diversity in staffing.

- **Employees: Market Competitive Compensation/Recruitment/Retention & Succession Planning**

Compensation remains a priority. Salaries are still trailing other municipalities in the region. The Pay and Classification Study, performed by MAPS in 2008, indicated City of Lenoir employees were underpaid, compared to similar municipalities. Salaries have been ranked as a priority for several years by Council and our Leadership Team and some improvements have been made towards making pay more competitive. Unfortunately, most salaries have not reached current market levels. Area governments that have recently completed compensation studies and are making additional gains include: Watauga County, Blowing Rock, Morganton, Granite Falls, Newton, Shelby, etc.

Feedback from department heads indicate that employees feel positive about the recent attention this item has received from Council; specifically, the above average cost of living increases and the small bonuses given over the past two years.

Salaries and workforce shrinkage have led to recruitment and retention issues in most City departments. Just like with most employers, paying competitive salaries is critical to recruiting and retaining quality employees. New hires seem to be more concerned with immediate return rather than the value of benefits. This is especially true for the millennial generation. Being unable to compete with other jurisdictions' salaries coupled with low unemployment, has led to issues filling vacant positions which prompted an evaluation of employee recruitment and hiring practices as well as a renewed focus on retention. The Leadership Team, along with HR, is currently reviewing the City's current pay plan and hiring practices, with the goal of identifying opportunities to "rearrange" the starting pay and probationary raises to become more competitive while staying within the framework of the current pay plan. Recommendations will be forthcoming.

The Leadership Team also has begun exploring new opportunities for recruitment such as attending military Yellow Ribbon Ceremonies to recruit law enforcement officers, promotional videos showcasing the high quality of work life the City offers as well as targeted online job postings. Further, the Leadership Team is exploring all compensation techniques to address our recruitment/retention workforce needs, including but not limited to Education Pay incentives, Career Development Certification(s), Bi-Lingual Bonuses, Referral Bonuses, Military Incentives, Retention Stipends, BLET Certification Bonuses, Signing Bonuses (w/ tenure commitment), Birthday Holiday, etc. Recognizing budgetary constraints, the Leadership Team decided to proactively identify funding sources for salary increases and recruitment/retention strategies by organizing a focus group to identify cost saving opportunities citywide. Several opportunities have been identified and the group is continuing to meet regularly to determine what suggestions can be implemented.

Recent employee surveys and exit interviews indicate that employee salaries are the primary obstacle to recruiting and retaining quality people, a shift from past surveys where equipment needs were the primary need. It is hoped that salaries will remain a priority moving forward.

- **Finance**

During 2017, the collections department process approximately 82,000 transactions totaling over \$24,000,000. The largest percentages of the transaction were made-up primarily of utility and tax bills.

- **Safety**

During 2017, the Finance Department has been meeting to identify opportunities for process improvements in the in hopes of improving efficiencies and safety. The department ranked safety as the highest priority during their brainstorming session.

With the help of the Police Department, the group was able to identify several opportunities to improve security, many of which have been implemented. During the process of identifying opportunities, it became apparent that we should consider limiting access to the upper floors of City Hall. A keyless entry system for the entry doors on each floor is being considered for the 2018-2019 Budget. In 2018, the security aspect of the analysis will be completed and the focus will shift to process improvement.

- **Software**

The current financial software used by the City was created in 2004 and installed in 2008. It is hard to extract data from the system which makes data analytics very labor intensive. In general, the system is not user friendly. During the past year, upgrades from the current vendor were reviewed and did not appear to offer much improvement to the system already in place. During the coming year, the finance team will explore other financial software to determine if there is something on the market that is more efficient and more user-friendly.

- **Efficiencies**

The Departments Heads and other key staff are meeting to discuss opportunities for cost savings and improved efficiencies. The first meeting was held in early February. Ideas for improvement will be incorporated into the budget for the coming year.

- **Infrastructure Funding:**

- **Street Paving**

The City maintains 124.64 miles of paved streets and 2.69 miles of unpaved for a total of 127.33 miles. During the period 2008 – 2017 (10 years), contractors have resurfaced 19.89 miles of streets. In FY 2016-17, we paved 4.49 miles of streets. Previous budget allocations have been:

FY 2012-13 -	\$226,468
FY 2013-14 -	\$170,000
FY 2014-15 -	\$286,508
FY 2015-16 -	\$300,000
FY 2016-17 -	\$375,000
FY 2017-18 -	\$375,000

This FY, the City had an independent pavement management study completed, which ranks pavement condition and prioritizes future paving. Thus far, the City has expended \$11,949 of budget allocation, paving .10 mile leaving a fund balance of \$363,051 for spring 2018 Paving. In addition to the pavement management study list, the City also has implemented strategic priority paving for City Council significant economic development/redevelopment initiatives and/or high volume traffic areas, examples are North Main Street, Mulberry Street, Linkside Connector/Viridian Connector, Powell Road, Finley Avenue, etc.

- **Stormwater**

Both Planning and Public Works staff have previously discussed establishing a stormwater utility fund. In 2016, an App State GIS intern analyzed the impervious surface for all of the non-residential properties in the City, so we have a basis to adopt a stormwater utility fee. The recommendation is to adopt a fee based on a tiered system, where non-residential properties with more square footage of pavement/buildings (i.e. more runoff) would pay more than properties with less runoff. We now have the data available to make policy decisions about where the “breaks” in the fee structure could/should occur. Implementation of such a fee remains complicated, because of our current utility billing software. Fees can be adopted at any time and do not have to be in place with the adoption of the annual budget. Also, the City does not fund stormwater replacements in its Capital Budget. Stormwater replacements currently require a budget amendment.

The information gathered thus far will be useful to implement a stormwater fund in the future, and logistics will still need to be explored. However, the City is lacking the information necessary to create a Stormwater Utility Capital Improvements Program. A consulting firm should be retained in order to assess the condition of our stormwater infrastructure, and create a plan to address current and future needs.

- **Water**

Water Treatment Plant Rehabilitation Project # 1 – The Bernhardt Water Treatment Plant Project # 1 is approximately 50% complete. The major components of the project include the renovation of the filters with new controls, lab renovations, replacement of the vacuum system in the settling basins, construction of a building to house the chemical storage tanks and improvements to the chemical feed system. Also planned are improvements to the Cahah’s Mountain pump station. The project was funded with a 0% interest loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) in the amount of \$6.5 million. The project is scheduled to be substantially complete in May 2018. The original facility was constructed and put in service around 1956.

Water Treatment Plant Rehabilitation Project # 2 – The Bernhardt Water Treatment Plant Project # 2 is scheduled to begin in February 2018. It will involve adding two new filters, the construction of a mechanical pre-treatment facility and other appurtenances to facilitate the addition of the two filters and mechanical pre-treatment. The cost of the construction is approximately \$8.1 million, with a total project budget of just over \$10 million. The project is funded with money on hand. It is scheduled for completion in late spring 2019. Once complete, the Plant can operate at 12 MGD year-round.

Maehill Water Line Replacement – The City plans to replace approximately 500 feet of 6” water line on Maehill to address flow and potential water quality concerns at an expected cost of \$250,000. However, we have been evaluating the problem further and also evaluating alternatives to this problem that may be less disruptive and much less costly. We hope to begin this project in the spring.

Joyceton Water System – Inquiries have been received concerning the City acquiring the Joyceton Waterworks distribution system. There are no current discussions underway at this time.

Water Meter Replacement (Residential) – The Collection and Distribution Division is currently replacing old manual read water meters with radio read meters. This project is currently being done in-house with city staff. It is our goal at this point to replace the meters in at least one “book” of customers in each billing cycle. Once that is done, we will continue this approach until all “books” within each cycle are complete. To date, approximately 3,200 meters have been replaced. We have approximately 10,000 meters to replace and it is projected to take another 5-6 years to complete using the current city staff. We are also installing a remote read technology for a number of our larger industrial and commercial customers.

MeterSys Metering Practices Study – The Utilities Department engaged the services of MeterSys to undertake an evaluation of our meter reading practices and procedures. Phase 1 of the study takes a look at our current technology, meter reading costs, the types of meters we are currently using, a financial analysis of our reading and billing services and an analysis of the technologies available to the city and what is the most economical metering system for our community. Phase 1 is almost complete and will be reviewed with the council at our February Committee of the Whole meeting as information leading into the budget preparation process. Phase 2 will involve the implementation of findings of the Phase 1 study.

Water Meter Replacement (Wholesale Customers) – The Collection and Distribution Division has continued a program to evaluate and replace the larger meters for wholesale customers such as Baton Water Corporation and Caldwell County. The goal

is to replace up to five of these meters in the coming year starting with those that currently have the highest consumption or are in need of replacement due to age or maintenance history. The Baton meters have been replaced and approximately half of the Caldwell County meters have been replaced or are scheduled to be replaced. Staff has also initiated the replacement of many of the older 2 inch and 4 inch commercial meters in the system.

- **Sewer**

Bio-solids System Improvements - The City recently received an SRF loan in the amount of \$6.6 million for the design and construction of a new bio-solids treatment process and facility. The interest rate on the loan is 1.53%. This project is scheduled to begin construction around February 2019. The engineering and design, permitting and bidding will take place between now and then. City staff is planning several site visits to investigate current technology that is being used in other bio-solids treatment facilities to determine which will be the best for the facility.

- **Water/Sewer**

Water And Sewer Arc Flash Studies – McGill Associates is currently conducting Arc Flash analyses on both the water and wastewater facilities including the treatment plants, sewer pump stations and water pumping stations. The purpose is to determine and assure that these facilities meet current electrical codes and standards and the risk for an electrical arc flash is mitigated. These studies are currently underway and should be completed in the spring of this year.

Asset Inventory Assessments – The City has received grant funding from NCDEQ to undertake an asset inventory assessment of the utilities department. The Water Assessment (\$80,000) and Wastewater Assessment (\$140,000) will identify the current assets of the department including the age of the facilities (this includes water and sewer piping), inspection of facilities to determine replacement schedules and cost. It will help us identify valves, fire hydrants, manholes, and equipment needed to maintain the collection and distribution systems. The completion of the assessments will be valuable to the development of future Capital Improvement Programs and in seeking funding for future projects.

- **Transportation Projects:**

- **Linkside Connector**

Hotel Street will connect Linkside Place with Hibriten Drive. When complete, it will provide a safe route for motorists needing to make turns onto Wilkesboro Blvd/US Hwy 64/NC Hwy 18. The project is a joint effort between PB Realty (Broyhill's), Viridian Apartments and the City of Lenoir, and is currently in the construction phase. Right-of-way across the Blue Ridge Tire property continues to be an obstacle.

- **R-5745 (Taylorsville Rd widening/turn lane plus intersection improvements to US64/NC90/NC18 intersection)**

This NCDOT project consists of intersection improvements at the intersection of US 64/NC 90/NC 18 (Wilkesboro Boulevard) and US 64/NC 90 (Taylorsville Road). It is proposed as a "complete streets" project, because of the close proximity to the schools, and the opportunities to tie in with existing and planned sidewalk and greenway networks. Water and Sewer line relocation is estimated at \$54,294. The utility relocation is currently underway. Utilities staff is working with the DOT contractor to coordinate the construction to minimize any disruptions of service. The 8 inch water meter for Caldwell Co. on 64/90 will be replaced as part of this project. We are also in discussion with DOT about the opportunity to have an encasement placed under the round-a-bout during the road construction to facilitate the future extension of the sewer lines in that area.

- **Congestion Management/By-Pass Feasibility Studies**

The MPO is currently updating the Long Range Transportation Plan for the region. Planning staff is recommending that two projects be recommended from Lenoir to be included in the plan, both related to the exclusion of Smith–Crossroads from U4700, which will help the funding of these projects. One is a feasibility study for both an eastern and western by pass for US321 through the middle of Lenoir. The second is a congestion management study for the area from Smith Crossroads north to Valmead and from Smith Crossroads East to Taylorsville Road.

- **City Buildings/Facilities/Lands/Equipment:**

- **City Hall – Rehab**

The current City Hall building was constructed in 1908. The structure is wood and masonry construction. At some point in the near future, an architect/engineer should be retained to evaluate rehabilitation of the building and current/future space needs. Also, per state inspectors, the elevator is nearing “the end of life”. Additional space considerations may include adjoining buildings located at 813 West Avenue NW 127 Main Street NW.

- **Police Department**

The PD anticipates initiating 2 projects at the firing range in the near future – electricity and security fencing. The projects will be funded through the CWMTF land deal, which should close this year. A front wheelchair ramp is on the CIP, as the entrance is not ADA compliant. The elevator at the PD seems to be in regular need of attention. However, our new service provider seems to be doing a much better job of maintaining it and at a much lower cost.

- **Fire Station #3**

The City acquired a LFD3 site for \$30,000 in Lower Creek on Tremont Park Drive and retained the architectural services of Jesse Plaster for \$47,800. Total project costs are expected to be approximately \$1.75 million. Blue Ridge Energy, via the USDA Rural Development REDLG, has secured \$1.36 million in loan funding, with 0% interest and a term of 10 years. The City will fund the project balance with cash reserves. All debt service incurred can be covered with the recently transferred .85 cent Rescue Readiness Tax to the City from the County. Design and bid documents are being finalized at this time, with construction beginning in late spring.

- **Zacks Fork Land**

The City owns a 553.36 acre tract off Zacks Fork Road, known as the Lenoir Watershed. Approximately five acres of this tract is utilized as the LPD firing range/K-9 training. The City was awarded a grant from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) to establish a permanent conservation easement on this tract. The project will preserve the watershed/open space, maintain a wildlife habitat, allow for outdoor passive recreation, maintain the firing range and provide educational opportunities. The CWMTF Board of Trustees agreed, with conditions, to allow mountain biking on the property as well. Based on appraisal data, the grant will be in the neighborhood of \$650,000. Some of the proceeds of the conservation easement sale will be used to run electrical service to and fence off the firing range. The balance of the proceeds is expected to cover capital costs associated with LFD3, the Mulberry/Optimist PARTF Project, the Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project, and Greenway/OVT extensions. It is anticipated the closing on this grant will occur this spring.

- **Optimist Park Improvements**

The Lenoir Optimist Club donated Optimist Park, containing 12.15 acres, to the City in late 2015. The appraised value of the property was \$227,200. The City applied for a PARTF grant for the Mulberry Recreation Center/Optimist Park Expansion Project and was awarded the grant in August 2016. The PARTF Grant is in the amount of \$327,200 with the City putting up \$100,000 as a match. Improvements completed to date include: new fencing and repair of old fencing, new ball field lighting for Mulberry Rec Field # 1, minor repairs to the Park Club House and renovation of the Maintenance Building (which now houses the Parks and Recreation Parks and Ground Division). Other upcoming amenities included in this project are new shelters, playground equipment, restrooms, lighting, tennis court updates and a new parking lot. This project must be completed within three years.

- **JE Broyhill Park Improvements**

Phase 1 of the JE Broyhill Park Improvements is underway. The demo of all the old structures is complete. Three new shelters have been constructed and new picnic tables, trash cans and grills have been added. A new basketball court is also being placed back in the park in a new location and is approximately 50% completed. Sidewalk, restrooms, lighting, playground improvements, nine-hole disc golf and resurfacing the upper parking lot will also be made. This project is being funded with approximately \$200,000 from CDBG monies. It is expected that Phase 1 will be completed by June 1.

Phase 2 of the JE Broyhill Park Improvements include a regenerative storm water conveyance system to address some of the water issues in the park and beautify the area. NC State University has been assisting with grant application and storm water project design, which has an estimated project cost of \$230,000. The City would be asked to provide \$100,000 match that can include "in kind" labor. The City was a finalist, but did not receive, the grant described above for stormwater improvements. NC State has expressed interest in trying again as other opportunities are found. One bonus, the removal of the community building and some of the other site improvements have had a positive impact on the flow of water through the park. However, the stream at the bottom of the park is experiencing erosion and both functional and aesthetic enhancement is still desired.

- **Old Lenoir Furniture Site (Virginia Street – 1429 College Avenue)**

The 14.79 acre property, adjacent to the Community Gardens, was acquired by the City from Applied Abatement Concepts in 2014 for delinquent taxes. The property includes the remains (wood, metal, and brick/concrete) of several demolished Broyhill Furniture buildings. A Phase I & II environmental assessment of the property has been completed and found the debris on the site to be clean. The City pursued an EPA Brownfield cleanup grant for the site, but was not funded. Estimates of up to \$450,000 have been mentioned as a cost to clean up the site. The City has also received increasing nuisance complaints about the appearance of the property and vermin affecting the adjoining neighbors. This property is a strategic part of the "Funkytown" redevelopment plan, and the clean-up of the site may be incorporated into an RFP for a Public/Private Partnership to see redevelopment of that site. Staff recommends that Council continue to carefully weigh decisions about this property based on the comprehensive future vision for the area, and to possibly consider marketing the property for redevelopment.

- **Automated Sanitation Collection**

The Public Works Department has found it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain sanitation workers. Further, automation/technology has changed modern sanitation collection. As such, staff has begun evaluating automated sanitation collection.

Equipment on the market today requires only one (1) employee – the driver. The conversion from 3- person to 1-person equipment could be phased and programmed into future budgets. Sanitation vehicles cost approximately \$350,000. With a new Public Works Director coming on board, staff would like to investigate our current sanitation collection practices to see if modernization is more efficient and effective.

- **Comprehensive Plan (2006) - Update**

The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007. Currently, Planning staff continues to implement the concepts in the comprehensive plan. The fact that staff has completed complimentary plans in the years since we adopted the Comprehensive Plan gives us added flexibility to push off this plan update. The Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Plan, Downtown Branding, ongoing community walks/meetings, and small area plans have allowed us to continue to “check in” with the public and implement good planning policies and goals. Planning staff will explore the options of updating in-house vs. hiring a consultant.

- **Housing:**

- **Downtown Living (rehabilitation code/fire code)**

LFD, along with the other city departments, continue to study the use of 13R multi-residual sprinklers and 13D domestic single family sprinklers in downtown buildings. Also, utilizing the Rehab Code included in the State Building Code, LFD is also looking at means of separation with mixed occupancy and ways to provide alternative means of protection while constantly striving to make Lenoir a safe place to work, live and play. The “Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor” - Workshop Program focusing on increasing Mixed Use in the Downtown core continues. Workshop topics include NC Rehab Code & Building Codes, Historic Tax Credits (State & Federal) – Who can use them and How, Historic Preservation and Funding Sources for Downtown Development. To date, workshops have been facilitated by Architects, Preservation NC Representatives and staff from the State Historic Preservation Office. Further workshops with a focus on Downtown Revitalization are planned. LFD staff has attended various meetings set forth by the City as well as prospective buyers of downtown properties to address fire code enforcement concerns. In March 2018, Main Street has scheduled a Historic Tax Credit Workshop presented by State Historic Preservation Office to be held in Downtown Lenoir.

- **Minimum Housing Enforcement**

Planning staff continues to use the Minimum Housing Priority Formula (MHPF) to prioritize enforcement, combined with strategic foreclosures to help restore properties to the tax rolls. Ed Blair’s office has processed 6 foreclosures, and 5 properties have been returned to new private ownership. We have retained the services of Kania Law Firm out of Asheville to process the next round of strategic foreclosures. Staff continues to use the MHPF to prioritize enforcement, and continues to see a positive response from the community. Lenoir has continued to participate in the WPCOG’s vacant housing task force, including leading a panel discussion on our experiences over the past few years.

- **Moderate-Income Housing Demand (millennial, retiree, corporate)**

Planning staff continues to look at the zoning ordinance to make necessary updates to incentivize, through regulation, desirable housing types to the above groups. In particular, staff wants to create opportunities for “by right” developments that are in line with the research projections for housing demand and provide a broad range of options. The focus will be to direct growth to areas served by existing infrastructure. This will be accomplished mainly through the small area plan efforts underway.

In addition to the introduction of the North Main overlay and conditional zoning districts which add flexibility in housing development options under the code of ordinances,

Planning Staff has also started to research opportunities to make infill development more attainable, especially in neighborhoods that have experienced higher numbers of tear-downs creating vacant lots. Examples of this might include expansion of accessory dwelling units, relaxation of the manufactured home standards to allow end-loaded and smaller multi-segment homes, creating allowances for damaged structures to be repaired within existing footprints, and setback and lot standards in historic neighborhoods that reflect historic development patterns.

- **Area Plans:**

- **North Main Area Plan Implementation**

City staff continues work on JE Broyhill Park and the gateway beautification project. NCDOT has given final approval for the removal of the traffic signal at Creekway Drive and Main Street. Code Enforcement from zoning, housing and nuisance violations has continued to occur. Two properties that have long sat neglected and dilapidated have recently been acquired by new owners (Old Williams building at the gateway, and 530 North Main Street adjacent to the park), and Planning Staff has been working with the new owners on plans to improve the structures. Planning staff is also working with the owners of the box factory (under active enforcement, with an improvement plan), and the stone house at the corner of North Main Street and Conley Place is going to foreclosure auction in March.

- **Fairfield South Area Plan Development**

As a complement to the rail trail effort and to revitalize this neighborhood near downtown with new residential and expanded mixed-use potential, while keeping established rights to continue industrial uses, development of a Fairfield South Area Plan continues. Design standards, infrastructure, placemaking, and implementation are the focus of this small area plan. This “transformation project” will honor the heritage of the core manufacturing area, while setting the stage for it to grow into its “Phase 2” life as a neighborhood integral to, but distinct from, our other premier historic downtown neighborhoods. The College Avenue “Arts and Culture” district and the Unity Park Community Garden will be leveraged in new ways through this project, as special assets that make Lenoir stand out within the region. Community outreach has been conducted, and a vision for the area in line with the above descriptions has emerged. Due to unknowns and delays in potential transformative projects, a formal “plan” has not yet been adopted. However, the recently completed historic architectural survey project focused heavily on the buildings in this area, and two mill buildings have recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places. A second residential unit has been added to the Lenoir Veneer building (Carolina Custom Cabinets).

- **Code Enforcement**

Planning enforces the sign code (in particular temporary signage), zoning and minimum housing. LPD enforces the nuisance code. We continue to make strategic decisions about enforcement in order to do the best we can with the limited staff resources available. The partnership of Planning and LPD splitting enforcement duties continues to be a huge improvement over the previous system. Another staff person who could oversee enforcement, even if it also included commercial building enforcement, maintenance requirements for downtown buildings, or some fire inspections, is still desired to help implement our long term goals for neighborhood stabilization, blight elimination, downtown development, and putting buildings into productive use.

- **Downtown Main Street Revitalization**

- o The Main Street program launched a new branding campaign which includes a new website, electronic newsletter, social media platforms, and kiosk maps. This has been a well-received and much needed communication/marketing piece. Discussions with

Planning staff have led to the shared perspective that this campaign could be extended to “Phase 2” as a citywide branding campaign enabling us to present a consistent image/brand to the public, yet maintaining and recognizing downtown as a unique destination.

- o Main Street program will continue to support Downtown events sponsored &/or co-sponsored by the City. Our Downtown events continue to grow and expand. Main Street program will continue to evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of Downtown events and how to best support them. We will continually strive to maintain a balance of support and consideration for Downtown businesses regarding Downtown events.
- o To date, with the implementation of *Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor* initiative, Main Street has toured 20 properties and initiated conversation with numerous Downtown property owners interested in renovating their properties. Continued efforts will be made to update the property inventory and evaluate the current condition of the Downtown buildings. To date, 13 properties have changed hands and 14 businesses have opened. With the addition of several new property owners and new businesses, as well as anticipated additions, staff believes we could see several additional businesses open and business expansions in the coming year. Staff continues to engage with developers whose focus is providing market-rate apartments in the Fairfield South Area which borders the Downtown Core.

RECENT PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS:

David and Deanna Talbert	108 Main Street SW
Tye Investments, LLC	101 Mulberry St
Tye Investments, LLC parking Lot	120 Main St

PRIOR PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS:

Chris Aiken, Main Offices	1028 West Ave NW
Chris Aiken, Expansion building	1030 West Ave NW
Chris Aiken, parking lot	1020 West Ave NW
Charles and Susan Babbs	115 Main St NW
Tye Investments, LLC	113 Main St NW
Charles Corriher	819 West Ave NW
Charlie Frye	902 West Ave NW
Sean Williams	126 Mulberry St NW
Jennifer Indicott	107 Main Street NW

RECENT BUSINESS OPENINGS / EXPANSIONS

Fercott Fermentables	107 Main Street NW
Pour House	132 Main St NW
Essie and Olive	108 Main Street SW
CrossFit Lenoir	626 Harper Ave
Bodacious Studio 111	111 Mulberry St
Folk Keeper Gallery(reorganized)	902 West Ave NW
Mid-Atlantic Printers (Forbes merger)	1035 Harper Ave

- o The nonprofit arm of Main Street will be re-established and this branding will be for both the Downtown community and the Main Street nonprofit.
- o Main Street will evaluate the feasibility of assuming the management and rebranding of the festival component of the Smoking in the Foothills BBQ Festival to serve as an additional fundraising effort for the newly established nonprofit and Downtown

initiatives. In addition, the Main Street & Parks and Rec *Music Madness Summer Concert Series - Moon in June, Under the Sky in July, After Dusk in August* will continue to celebrate all genres of music and talented artists within Caldwell County. With the additional staff in the department, Main Street is committed to solidifying and supporting the growth of our Downtown events.

- o Efforts to increase the number of Main Street Volunteers will continue. Numbers now exceed 85 and this number is expected to continue to grow in the coming year. With additional staff in the department, a greater focus will be made regarding electronic communications and website promotion. A new electronic newsletter has been launched and efforts have been made to expand our social media presence.
- o In order to communicate goals and objectives to the community and parties interested in downtown development, Main Street will explore the possibility of securing a consultant to develop a Master Plan for Downtown Lenoir based on infrastructure and the Economic Action Plan recently completed.
- o To further spur interest in Downtown revitalization, Main Street will organize educational sessions focused on existing financial tools currently in use by the City, such as the LBAB BUILD Grant. Sessions will also look at tools currently in use in Main Street communities including such tools as P3s, low interest loans, and regulatory waivers.
- o Having implemented the *Downtown Lenoir Outdoor Dining Pod Program*, LBAB, Main Street, Planning and Public Works will continue to promote the program and educate property and business owners considering these types of spaces which significantly contribute to the development of a strong sense of place and daily activity within a Downtown core.
- o One of the issues associated with Main Street's success is the need for special event security, which has become a significant hit to the Police Department's budget. Staff will need clear guidance on when we are to provide law enforcement and security services through payroll and when we are clear to hold event sponsors accountable for the cost of extra-duty Officers. Police, Parks & Rec, Public Works and the Fire Department assist not only in staffing certain details, but also in providing heavy equipment to block vehicular access when streets are closed and occupied by pedestrians. Security has become a high priority and must be considered when budgeting for these events, especially in terms of traffic control, equipment, design, and personnel.

■ **Economic Development & Incentives Policy**

The current tax matrix was created in 2013 to incentivize above median paying jobs in the City of Lenoir. The City wanted to only give tax credits for new investments that were tied to new jobs. Each job would equate to a percentage of a tax incentive capped at 75%. This incentive plan differed from the incentive plan offered by the County. Several comments have been received concerning our current policy and whether the City should evaluate other policies utilized by similar cities around the State. City staff continuously works with the County EDC on the recruitment of industry and retail to our community. In addition, we have been working with the EDC on an initiative to add new housing stock (apartments/townhomes, warehouse reuse, downtown 2nd floor and single-family) in the City.

■ **Brownfields/EPA Assessment Grant**

The city continues to work with Greg Icenhour, a consultant with Mid Atlantic Engineering and Environmental Solutions, to obtain Brownfield Assessment Grant funding from the US EPA. The purpose of the funding is to conduct environmental assessments on approximately 19 local sites (as funding will provide) that were once manufacturing facilities or properties such as former dry cleaning service locations. A grant was submitted to the

EPA in mid-November 2016 requesting \$300,000, but not funded. In November 2017, the City submitted a new grant request seeking \$300,000 in funds. If the City receives the grant, it will enhance the city's ability to market and reuse some of the existing properties located in Lenoir. This funding is a key strategy to the implementation of the Funkytown/Fairfield South small area plan.

- **Sidewalks/Greenways/Rails to Trails/OVT Master Plan**

Major sidewalk and greenway projects include:

- Hospital Avenue sidewalks - The City received a US STP-DA grant totaling \$800,000 requiring a \$200,000 cash match. (US 321 to Harper Avenue) Design is complete and being review by NCDOT. The project must be completed by 2019.
- Rail Trail (Partnership with Caldwell County Pathways, private funds, grants, salvage dollars). Salvage of rails is complete. A "Find Your Park" grant is in final stages of implementation (Pathways trail head beautification project at the former Akzo property), and some trail paving work is scheduled to start this year.
- Mulberry Connector Greenway – connects rail trail @ Google to Lenoir Golf Course (Google grant, RTP grant, PARTF grant, city funds). Phase 1 of this project is complete, which connected Lenoir Mall to Harrisburg Drive. Phase 2 will be implemented by Google, which includes a crossing at Harrisburg and bridge across Lower Creek, then heading west along Google's property to meet the rail trail/trestle bridge). Also, Waterlife Church (new owner of old Belk Building) has agreed to grant an easement for a connection to Mulberry Recreation Center.
- OVT implementation – Destination by Design has been retained by the City and Caldwell County to determine a final route and negotiate easements with property owners to connect the trestle bridge to the Caldwell County Government Center. The project would include a fairly large stream restoration project on County land near Complex Street and the SW Boulevard overpass.

- **Old Lenoir Mall Blight**

Three parcels make up the old mall property. Recently, Waterlife Church purchased the old Belk building, and improvements are planned. The City will continue to work with other two property owners to improve the appearance of the area.

- **Retire NC**

As part of Lenoir's participation in the Retire NC program, staff has access to excellent demographic data and marketing trend data which is being utilized by our Communications Director and the LTDA. The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce is assisting in this endeavor.

- **Sister Cities**

Our Sister Cities program has languished for several years. Also, the Western Piedmont Sister Cities Association, which was organized in the early nineties as an area non-profit organization, has struggled in maintaining a viable program as well. The original intent of the program was to exchange ideas and develop friendships with other cultures. There has been discussion to dissolve the program.

- **Sign Code**

The Sign Code, recently updated, has made enforcement and permitting much easier to explain to the public and established a level of expectations that are being followed by the vast majority of business owners. While a more nuanced approach to signage is certainly one that can be explored, a code update that may have a greater impact on business and site development may be a more comprehensive look at all design standards (not just signs) on certain corridors. Since adoption of the new code, staff notes that complaints have declined dramatically. Planning Staff will review issues as recommended by Council.

■ Neighborhood Branding/Signs

Lenoir, like all cities, is a city of neighborhoods, and many times neighborhoods are more cohesive and inspire more loyalty than the city as a whole. However, the historic names of many neighborhoods are not a part of the collective conscious of many residents, especially as new residents are attracted to the City. Staff proposes an inexpensive project to add the following historic neighborhood markers to the street signs around the downtown neighborhoods. These are little “love notes” that help communicate that these neighborhoods are unique and special places within Lenoir, and can stand alone or as a part of a larger branding effort. This project is a “community development” project in the same vein as the Freedman High School memorial – but it will be more visible and distributed throughout our downtown neighborhoods.

- o Maehill Park
- o Kentwood
- o Fairfield
- o West End
- o North End
- o Freedman
- o East Harper

(Also, as the City thinks about infill and the importance of rooftops to the downtown, these historic neighborhoods that are all within walking distance to downtown will build upon the efforts of the Downtown Main Street. Staff suggests this as a Phase 1, with Phase 2 potentially expanding to historic commercial districts like Fairfield South, Mulberry Medical District, and Whitnel; as well as other historic neighborhoods like Jones Hill, Lenoir Heights, and Lower Creek). With the recent completion of the State of NC Historic Preservation Office Comprehensive Architectural Study, the recommendations for a few historic districts as well as increased knowledge of historic settlement patterns of Lenoir make the timing right to explore implementation of this project. Additionally, this may enhance the marketing of future strategic foreclosure properties, as well as help with desirability of infill lots. This project helps advance goals of public participation and communication through outreach to neighborhoods in the planning stages, as well the goals for increased housing opportunities/investment in neighborhoods near downtown.



- **Citywide Wayfinding/Branding Plan**

Planning staff recommends that the City fund a consultant-led citywide wayfinding and branding sign plan, similar to what Morganton/Newton/Belmont have recently completed/installed, to include gateway signage and wayfinding signs at key locations, with sign sizes and types appropriate to the location. The City applied for, and did not receive, ARC funding to complete this project. Staff will continue to explore grant funding opportunities. With the desire for several beautification/gateway projects for various intersections within the City (N. Main Street, Whitnel Interchange, Smith Crossroads, etc.) having a comprehensive branding/logo/design scheme would help tie these efforts together.



- **321 Southern Gateway Beautification**

The Whitnel interchange is the southern gateway to the community. On a clear day, it is one of the first viewshed corridors to the mountains. Planning staff recommends working with NCDOT to explore beautification options, such as signage, sculpture, and landscaping, to enhance this transportation investment into something that presents a great first impression of Lenoir. If the City could get DOT to approve a sculptural “Welcome to Lenoir” sign on the overpass, the community would be the envy of so many others in the state!



- **321 Smith Crossroads Beautification**

By replacing the center landscaping with sculpture and/or signage it would create a focal point more uniquely branded to Lenoir. A partnership could be explored with the Caldwell Arts Council to find a sculptor to create a piece, or potentially purchase a piece from the sculpture celebration in September. Signage, particularly dimensional letters that could be ground-lit to create shadows and texture, could be explored (ex. “Welcome to Lenoir” – or tagline established as a part of a city-wide branding campaign).



■ **Parks/Recreation:**

- **Disc Golf**

The community has discussed the opportunities for a Disc Golf Course within the City. Identifying a location for this program has been an issue - the two loops of the greenway have been discussed for a future site, but issues of walkers and flying discs could be problematic. For demonstration purposes, the City placed a 3-hole practice area at Wilson Park for the citizens to use. The JE Broyhill Park Improvement Project includes a nine-hole disc golf course, once the renovations of the buildings are completed on the property.

- **Dog Park**

The possibilities of a Dog Park have been discussed by Council in the past. Issues have included: a location for the park, who would operate the park (city or non-profit), who would fund insurance and operational expenses. The land along the greenway where the two loops are located has been discussed, but there were concerns with houses so close to dogs barking. Another location was the old water treatment plant beside the radio station. Staff has met with a private group to discuss their operating a

park on the City's property. Lack of interest and problems with the site were issues. Staff will continue to explore this opportunity.

- **Tourism:**

- **Center Theater**

Main Street staff has identified two committed 'Angel Investors' and conversations continue with current property owners. Meetings have taken place recently with property owners, stakeholders and architects and talks have focused on the various options of the projects organizational structure. Walk-throughs with the property owners, architects, and historic consultants and investors have recently taken place. A low-key engagement strategy has been intentional in the first stages of developing re-establishing a relationship based on collaboration and a mutual desire for the property owners to achieve their vision. With additional staff in the department, steps toward project development will be a priority for the coming year. This relationship will continue to be fostered and funding strategies, resources, and alternatives discussed. The theater could have a tourism impact.

- **Charters of Freedom**

Foundation Forward, Inc., located in Morganton, is an organization that works to build Charters of Freedom Monuments in communities across the country. The Charters of Freedom are our country's founding documents: The Declaration of Independence, The United States Constitution and The Bill of Rights. Projects have been completed throughout the country and NC, with the first project installed at the old Burke County Courthouse in Morganton. The following NC counties have Charters of Freedom - Cherokee County, Buncombe County, Jackson County, Pitt County, Henderson County, etc. Discussions have been had with Foundation Forward about working to bring a Charters of Freedom project to Caldwell County, with hopes of locating one in downtown Lenoir. Main Street has identified several potential sites. Staff is waiting on further interest from Foundation Forward.

- **Heritage Tourism**

The city continues to be part of the following national, regional, and state Heritage Tourism initiatives:

1. Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, BRNHA [<http://www.blueridgeheritage.com/>] Lenoir is part of The Blue Ridge Heritage Trail [<http://blueridgeheritagetrail.com/>] and The Blue Ridge Music Trail [<http://www.blueridgemusicnc.com/>], two BRNHA initiatives.
2. Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor Partnership [<http://www.goyadkinvalley.com/>], a 4-county regional collaboration between Surry, Wilkes, Yadkin and parts of Caldwell counties was established in 2005 as part of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. Its mission is to increase recreational infrastructure in the upper Yadkin Valley region through a multiuse trail system along the Yadkin River and to develop additional tourism infrastructure through an integrated wayfinding program for visitors to the region. It is a grassroots coalition of local and state government agencies, county tourism leaders, and representatives from attractions around the region that are working together to promote and encourage regional tourism and trail development. LTDA, Planning, Communication and Main Street have made it a goal to have a more active presence and engagement within this organization.
3. Overmountain Victory Trail Master Plan from Lenoir to Morganton [http://issuu.com/dbdplanning/docs/ovnht_lenoir_to_morganton_072215_r?e=8715465/30602090]
4. North Carolina Civil War Trails [<http://www.civilwartraveler.com/EAST/NC/>]

■ **Misc. Planning (Regulatory Reform/Inter-departmental Coordination)**

- Implement a Technical Review Committee for the review of major projects prior to going to Planning Board or Council (so that public works, utilities, fire, building, stormwater, etc. can all review and comment on plans).
- Implement a “one stop shop” with online information and a coordinating person to walk new business owners/developers through the various approvals and codes they will need to be aware of. (We already do this when requested, but formalizing the process and getting other agencies involved would help us be “business” or “development” friendly.)
- Code Amendments:
 - o Overhaul the development standards for the zoning districts to modernize and stream line the code, get rid of duplicative zoning districts, and potentially work in some areas that could have relaxed design standards (focus on the core areas to maintain the current standard and allow for some relaxation in other areas (like the Whitnel area or East Wilkesboro Road past Taylorsville Road).
 - o Overhaul the subdivision ordinance, at least to allow some administrative approval for final plats that conform to the preliminary plat.
 - o Develop a commercial building maintenance code (with no visible storage in downtown buildings).
 - o Explore “Boutique Industrial” uses downtown (i.e., makerspace, hackerspace, woodworking, printmaking, glassblowing, pottery, screenprinting)
 - o Explore small surgical amendments related to accessory structures, decks, porches, setbacks, etc. to provide better clarification.
 - o Explore revisions to mobile home rules (allow smaller multi-segment homes and end-loading homes)
- Stormwater Ordinances: Adopt local SW ordinance and work with other Phase 2 towns to adopt local ordinances.
- Mapping/GIS – put more information online in the form of ESRI storyboards. Explore neighborhood maps that would allow citizens to navigate to data that may be interesting to them, such as where city-owned lots are located or where properties going to auction are located, or where new permits have been issued. Use mapping to explore topics for the comprehensive plan update, such as identifying ideal tracks of land for multi-family development, areas with infrastructure in place for new single family construction (both whole subdivisions and infill lots in established neighborhoods), subdivisions with more than 20-30 lots with a single point of ingress/egress.
- Implementation of the sidewalk plan – explore a more strategic use of dollars allocated to sidewalks within the budget and also start to look at how to spend monies collected as a part of the sidewalk fund program. Use the pedestrian plan and try to illuminate gaps in the network.
- Coordinate bike infrastructure improvements with paving plan – any time a street needs to be repaved, we should be checking to make sure that new pavement markings accommodate bike facilities on streets where they are needed.

MORE IN LENOIR

North Carolina

Mayor Joe Gibbons
City Manager Scott Hildebran



NEW BUSINESS









Pelican's
SnoBalls









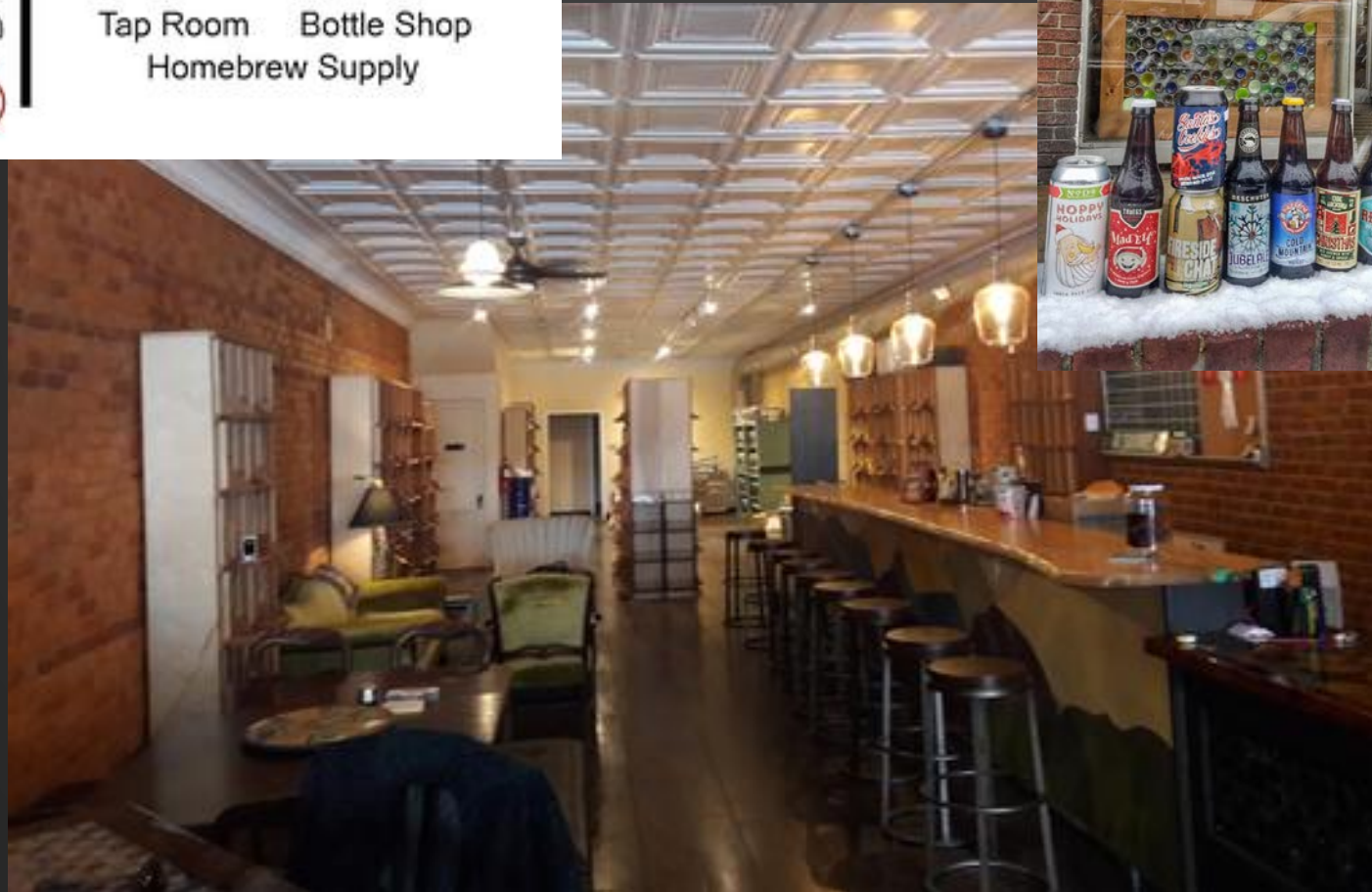
New York Style Pizza & Grill
At The Cross Roads



White
Tire Centers









ESSIE & OLIVE

Gourmet pops made in Lenoir, NC



Essie & Olive
Fresh Frozen Pops



COMING SOON







Located on 321
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COMMERCIAL EXPANSIONS & CONSTRUCTION





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 **AikenControls**
INDUSTRIAL CONTROLS AND AUTOMATION SYSTEMS



Caldwell UNC Healthcare Renovations











TM



Cross River Cardiology, Dr. Dy
Sharon Avenue

NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION



APPROVED RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

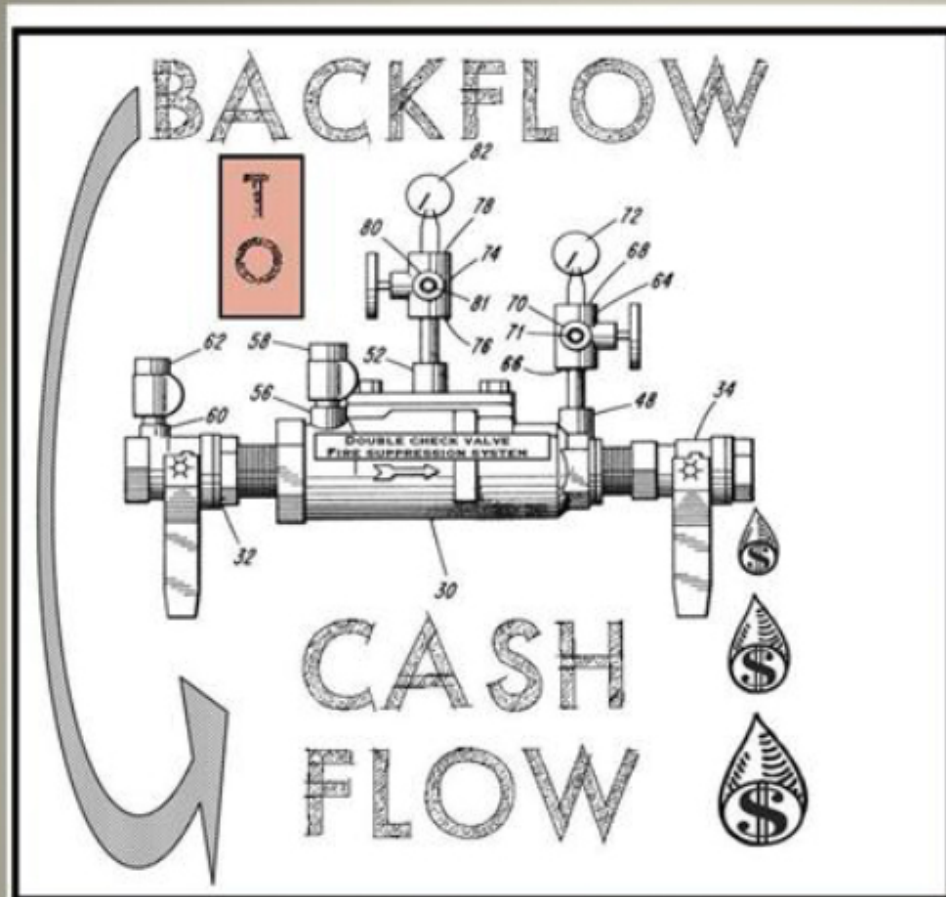


Crescent Pointe at Greenhaven
60-unit Senior Housing Complex



DOWNTOWN LENOIR

- Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor
- Downtown Branding Campaign
- Pop Out Dining
- Downtown WiFi/EV Charging Station



LENOIR
DOWNTOWN
MAIN STREET

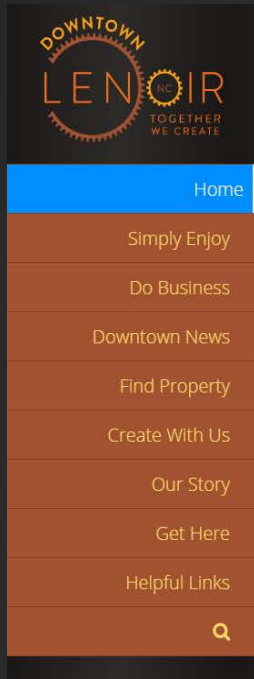
WITH
ARCHITECT
DAVID
MAURER &
JESSIE PLASTER



PART OF THE **MOVING LENOIR**
TO THE 2ND FLOOR INITIATIVE

Pop Out Dining





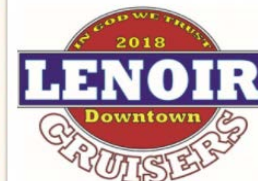
NEW BRANDING
“Together We Create”
www.downtownlenoirnc.com



LENOIR DOWNTOWN CRUISE-IN @ Downtown Lenoir

APR
7
Sat

Apr 7 @ 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm

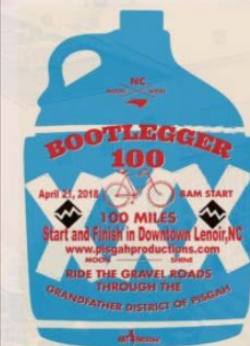


Come join us in Downtown Lenoir for our 2018 Cruise-In season! Free family-friendly fun, old cars, trucks, motorcycles, and a relaxing evening are just some of the things we have to offer on the first Saturday of each month starting at 4pm. 50/50 tickets, T-shirts, drivers tickets, ladies tickets, door prizes, and much more! All[...]

BOOTLEGGER 100 BIKE RACE @ Carolina Distillery

APR
21
Sat

Apr 21 @ 8:00 am – 6:00 pm



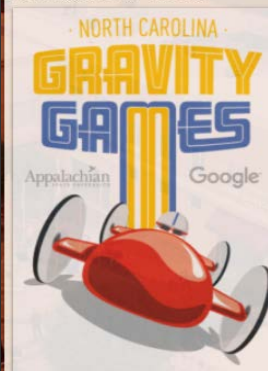
Tickets

2018 BOOTLEGGER 100 – The most scenic and challenging gravel road ride

GOOGLE NC GRAVITY GAMES @ Downtown Lenoir

APR
28
Sat

Apr 28 @ 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

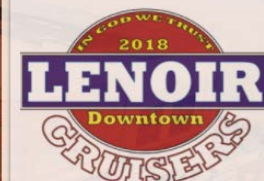


The NC Gravity Games competition sponsored by Google and Appalachian State University (ASU). The NC Gravity Games are educational, hands-on

LENOIR DOWNTOWN CRUISE-IN @ Downtown Lenoir

MAY
5
Sat

May 5 @ 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm



Come join us in Downtown Lenoir for our 2018 Cruise-In season! Free family-friendly fun, old cars, trucks, motorcycles, and a relaxing evening are just some of the things we have to offer on the first Saturday of each month starting at 4pm. 50/50 tickets, T-shirts, drivers tickets, ladies tickets, door prizes, and much more! All[...]

PARTNERSHIPS



Downtown WiFi
Improvements



Free Electric Vehicle Charging Station

Walker Stadium Lighting





Relocation and Renovation of Rankin House on Ridge Street

TRAILS & GREENWAYS





Middle section of Mulberry Connector already complete.





**Overmountain Victory
National Historic Trail Master Plan**

LENOIR • MORGANTON • LAKE JAMES

The OVNHT plan calls for 330 miles of trail through four states. Part of the trail through Lenoir will follow an abandoned railroad.



UNITY PARK
TRAILHEAD

PROPOSED
ARTS DISTRICT

PROGRAMMED TRAIL
WILL CONNECT TO EXISTING
GREENWAY @ LENOIR
MULBERRY REC. CENTER

0 1/8 1/4 1/2 MI.

LENOIR

LOWER CREEK

Funky Town (Fairfield South)



Funky Town (Fairfield South)



Trestle Bridge



INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



CWMTF Conservation Easement Zacks
Fork Watershed Property (590+/- acres)

2 New EMS Stations in Lenoir (County)

- Valmead
- Wilkesboro Boulevard



Water Treatment Plant Improvements

\$11 MILLION: 2 new filters, Active Flow System, Guaranteed 12 MGD Service



\$5 MILLION: New Chemical Storage building, piping, control systems



Lower Creek Wastewater Plant

\$6.6 MILLION:

New biosolids treatment system

Gunpowder Creek Wastewater Plant

\$3.5 MILLION: Renovation and new 1 million gallon treatment basin, located in Hudson

Fire Station #3

\$1.75 MILLION:

Design stage nearing completion;
construction to start in late spring
- Located in Lower Creek



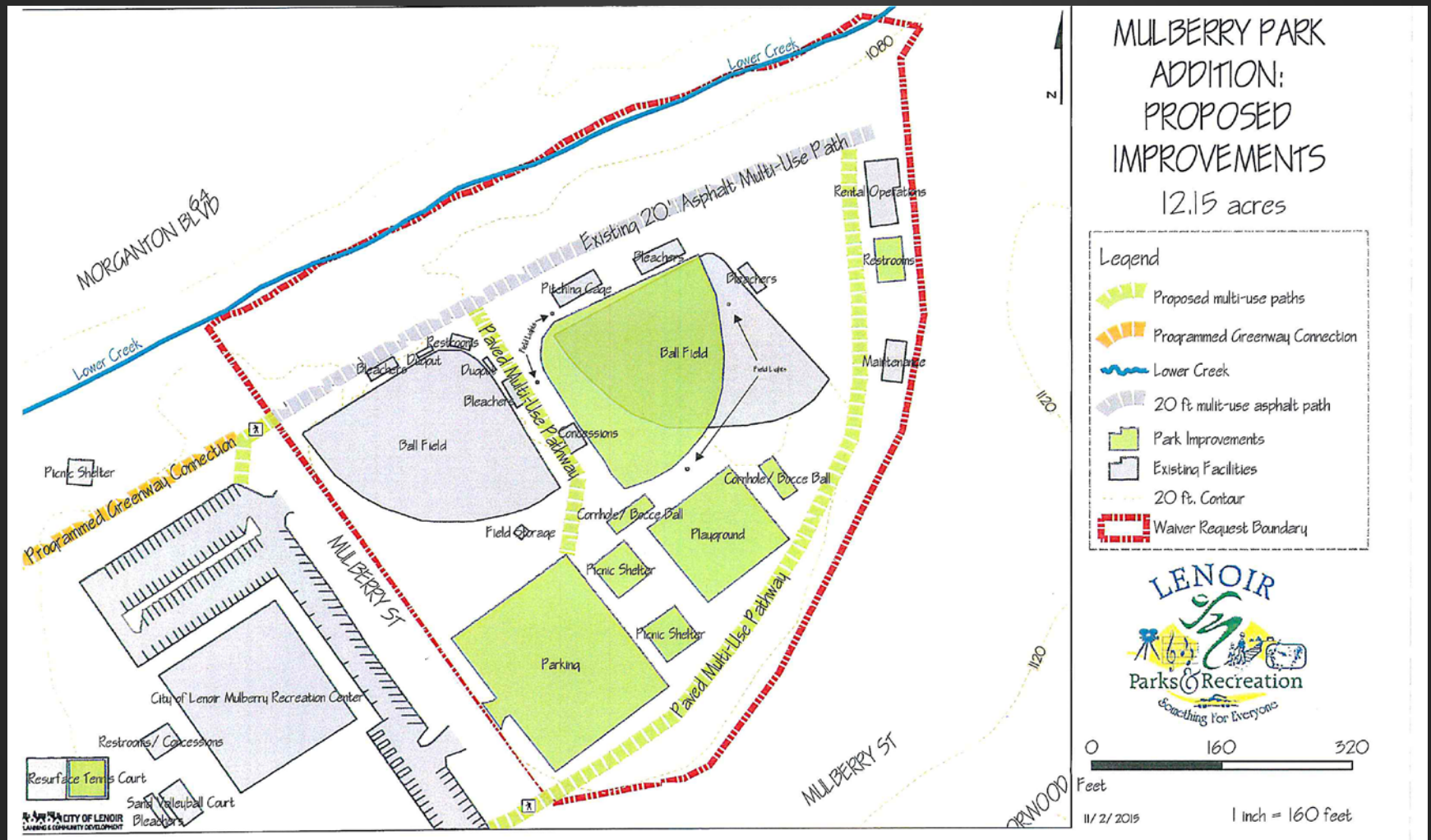
Parks & Recreation



Mulberry Optimist Park

- Funded by a \$327,000.00 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant from the State of North Carolina
- 227,200.00 matching funds were from the donation of the Optimist Club property (private funds)
- 100,000.00 matching funds from the City of Lenoir

New restrooms and lighting, picnic shelters, Playground and parking



J.E. Broyhill Park Improvements

\$125,000 funded by CD Block Grant Funds



News-Topic

May 18 at 12:35pm · 🌐

Lenoir city workers demolish a brick picnic shelter along the Ridge Street side of J.E. Broyhill Park near downtown as part of ongoing work to renovate the 9.4-acre Broyhill Park, which was dedicated in 1970.



Before: Dilapidated buildings



After: New shelters, benches, grills





Coming soon ...

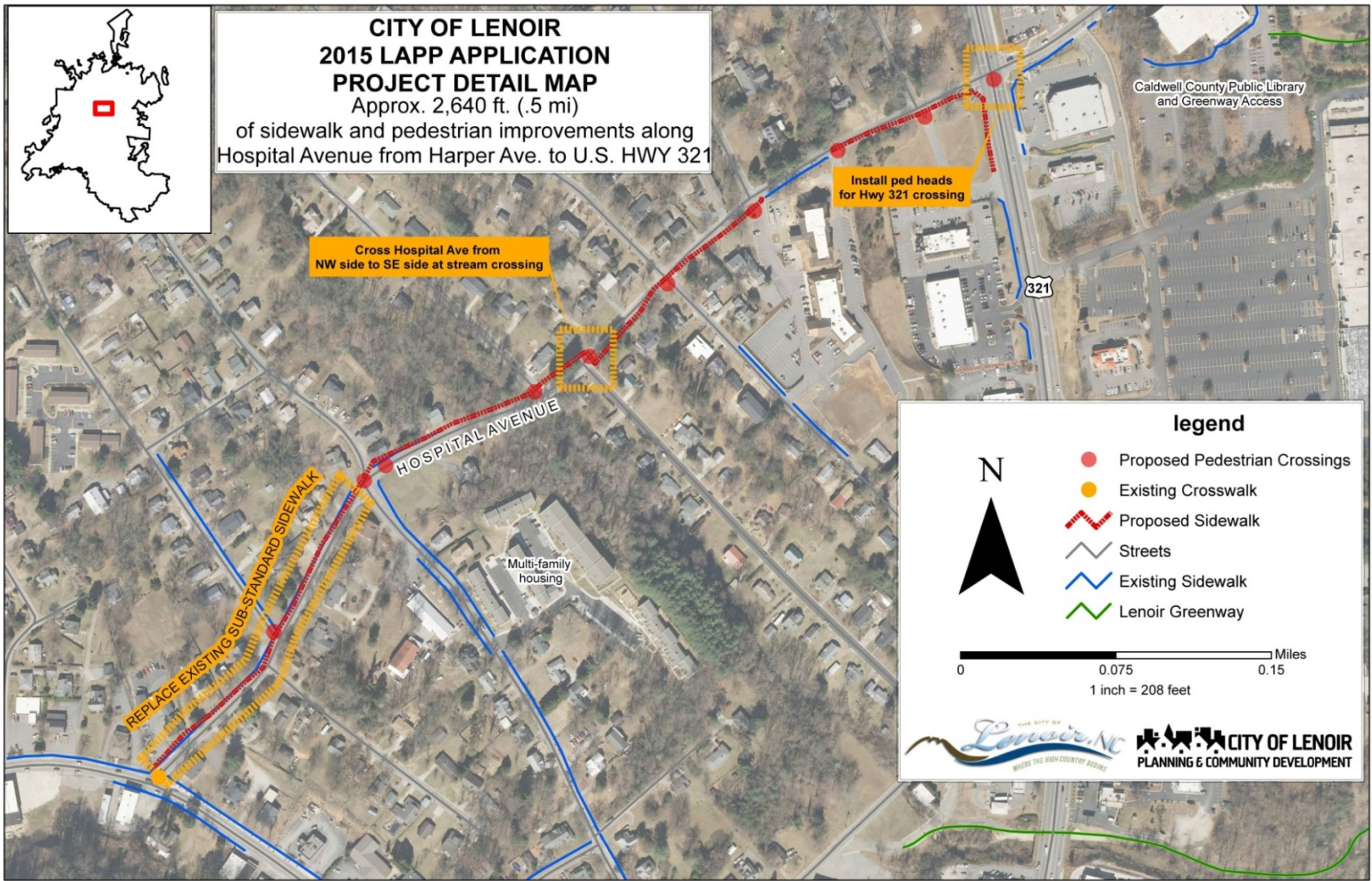
- Basketball court
- Restrooms
- Lighting
- Park signs
- Sidewalks
- 9-hole disc golf

PLANNING INITIATIVES

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans
- North Main Area Plan
- Fairfield South Area Plan



Hospital Ave. Sidewalk Improvements



North Main Small Area Plan



NORTH MAIN STREET SMALL AREA PLAN

SUPPORT DOCUMENT – ADOPTED FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Prepared by:

 **CITY OF LENOIR**
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

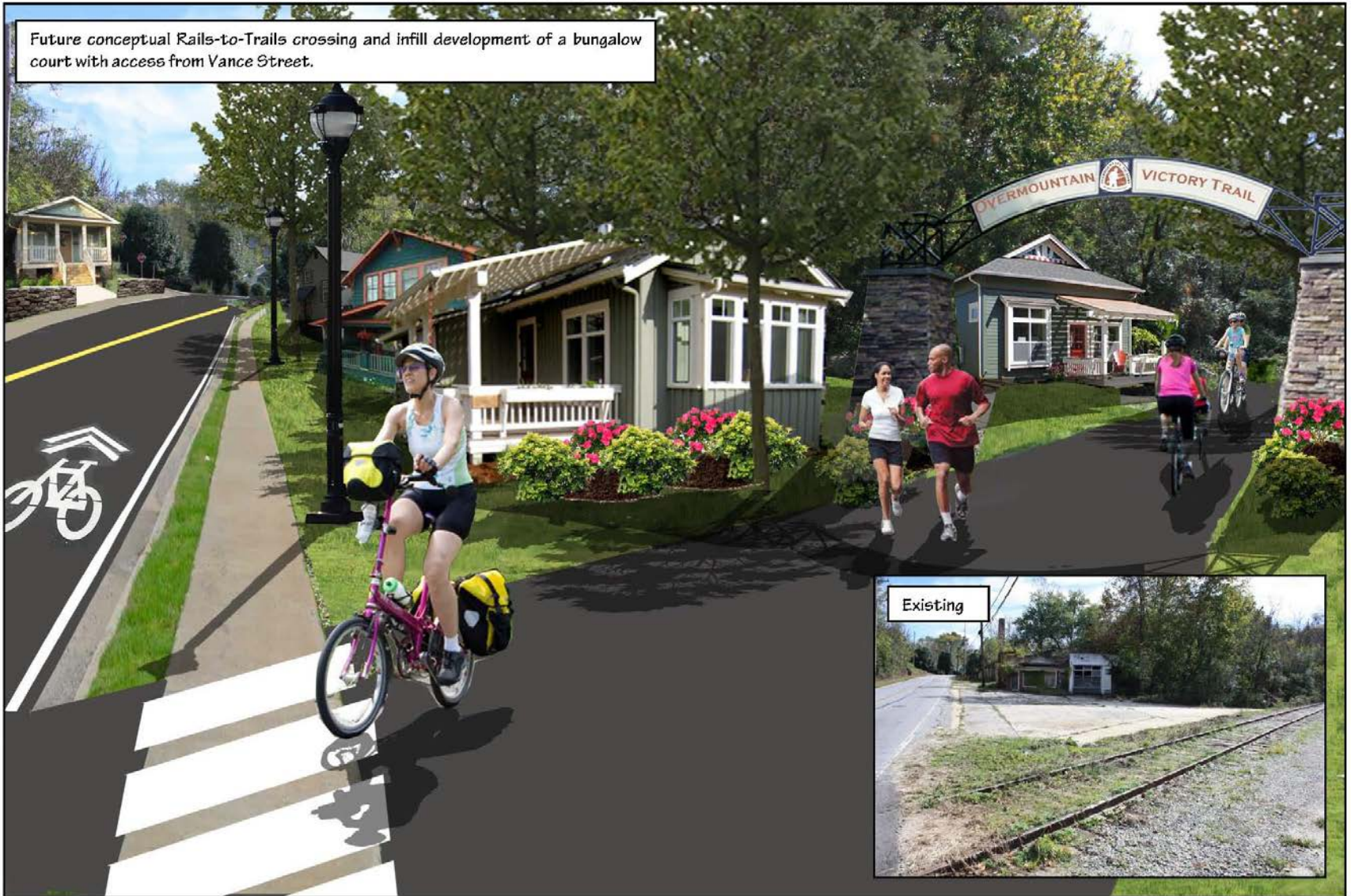
North Main & Old North Rd

North Main and Creekway Dr



North Main & Old North Rd Plan

Future conceptual Rails-to-Trails crossing and infill development of a bungalow court with access from Vance Street.



North Main and Creekway Dr Plan

Future conceptual North Main Street Gateway, with median, directional signage, landscaping, and light pole banners.



North Main and Creekway Dr Completed



North Main and Creekway Dr Completed



North Main and Creekway Dr Completed



INTRODUCING

FAIRFIELD SOUTH

AN INDUSTRIAL MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD

**COMMUNITY VISIONING
WINGS & FROG LEGS
BUILDING TOURS**

**MAY 16, 2016 6:00 PM
439 VIRGINIA STREET**

**HOSTED BY:
CITY OF LENOIR
CAROLINA CUSTOM CABINETS
GRILL AND BREW CLUB**

www.facebook.com/FairfieldSouthLNR * www.cityoflenoir.com/planning * 828.757.2200

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Heritage Home Group

1,000+ Employees



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6. Blue Ridge Energy
7. Kincaid Furniture
8. Vantage Foods (JBS)
9. Greer Labs
10. Sealed Air



Google





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Re-imagine™

Sealed Air 
Re-imagine™





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From bathroom to health care products and beyond, the family-owned Bemis Manufacturing Company, continuously produces quality, innovative products for everyday life.



Bathroom Products



Contract Group



Health Care Products



Kelch



Retail Solutions



Caldwell County improves economic status to Tier 2 in state rankings

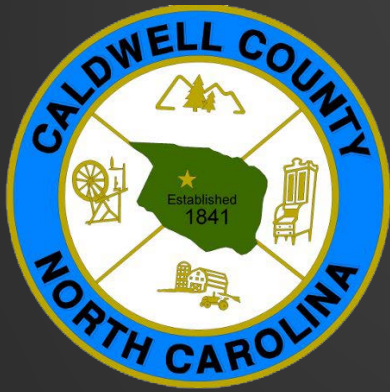
Nov. 30, 2017 | By Guy Lucas, News-Topic

Caldwell showed growth in its tax base, population, median household income, and unemployment rate - the four main factors used to rank counties to determine whether they are economically distressed. The county's four-year poverty rate also declined.

Combined, the improvement prompted the N.C. Department of Commerce to change Caldwell from a Tier 1 to a Tier 2 county in its annual Development Tier Designations. The 40 counties designated Tier 1 are considered most in need of economic help, and the designation can assist them in getting certain grants and other aid. The 20 counties that are best off are Tier 3.

Caldwell saw the greatest improvement in its property tax base per capita, which is the total property value in the county divided by the county's population. It went from \$77,580 in 2016 - 63rd out of 100 counties - to \$80,124, or 59th, as the county's official population increased by 221 people to 82,517.

UNEMPLOYMENT



4.5%



4.4%

**Caldwell County median
income grew by 2.5%**

Higher median income levels
and growth make it easier
to attract retail and
commercial investment.

Population Changes in NC Cities

Pct change '10-'16	Morganton	-0.013321492	-0.2%
Pct change '15-'16	Morganton	-0.001617541	-0.2%
2010	Morganton	16,890	-0.2%
2011	Morganton	16,923	-0.2%
2012	Morganton	16,876	-0.2%
2013	Morganton	16,807	-0.2%
2014	Morganton	16,690	-0.2%
2015	Morganton	16,692	-0.2%
2016	Morganton	16,665	-0.2%

Pct change '10-'16	Lexington	0.009084667	-1.1%
Pct change '15-'16	Lexington	-0.011435372	-1.1%
2010	Lexington	18,933	-1.1%
2011	Lexington	18,944	-1.1%
2012	Lexington	18,952	-1.1%
2013	Lexington	18,993	-1.1%
2014	Lexington	19,257	-1.1%
2015	Lexington	19,326	-1.1%
2016	Lexington	19,105	-1.1%

Pct change '10-'16	Lincolnton	0.023605559	-1.3%
Pct change '15-'16	Lincolnton	-0.013394495	-1.3%
2010	Lincolnton	10,506	-1.3%
2011	Lincolnton	10,581	-1.3%
2012	Lincolnton	10,659	-1.3%
2013	Lincolnton	10,743	-1.3%
2014	Lincolnton	10,732	-1.3%
2015	Lincolnton	10,900	-1.3%
2016	Lincolnton	10,754	-1.3%

Pct change '10-'16	Lenoir	-0.014313919	0.5%
Pct change '15-'16	Lenoir	0.004751789	0.5%
2010	Lenoir	18,234	0.5%
2011	Lenoir	18,087	0.5%
2012	Lenoir	18,017	0.5%
2013	Lenoir	18,042	0.5%
2014	Lenoir	17,920	0.5%
2015	Lenoir	17,888	0.5%
2016	Lenoir	17,973	0.5%

FUTURE CHALLENGES

- **Vacant / Dilapidated Housing**
- **Market Rate Housing-New Stock of Single and Multi-Family**
- **Infrastructure-
Repair / Replacement**
- **Retaining / Recruiting Youth and Millennials**
- **Changing Perception**

CITY COUNCIL



NEW STAFF



**Joshua
Harris**
*Public Information
Officer
11/2017*



Kyle Case
*Main Street
Program
Coordinator
12/2017*



Jared Wright
*Public Works
Director
2/2018*



Ken Hair
*Fire Chief
3/2018*

And last, but not least...



*Hibriten High
Panthers
NC 2AA State
Football Champs!*



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City YouTube, www.cityoflenoir.com



www.flickr.com/photos/cityoflenoirnc/



eNews @ www.cityoflenoir.com/eNews



City Alerts @ www.cityoflenoir.com/alerts

Conversion of Traffic Flow from One-Way to Two-Way

Presented By



**RAMEY KEMP
&
ASSOCIATES**

February 22, 2018



Pros and Cons

Pros:

- + **Reduced traffic speeds**
- + **Increased visibility and access to businesses**
- + **Safer for pedestrians**

Cons:

- **Increased congestion**
- **Reduction of on-street parking**
- **Could be costly**



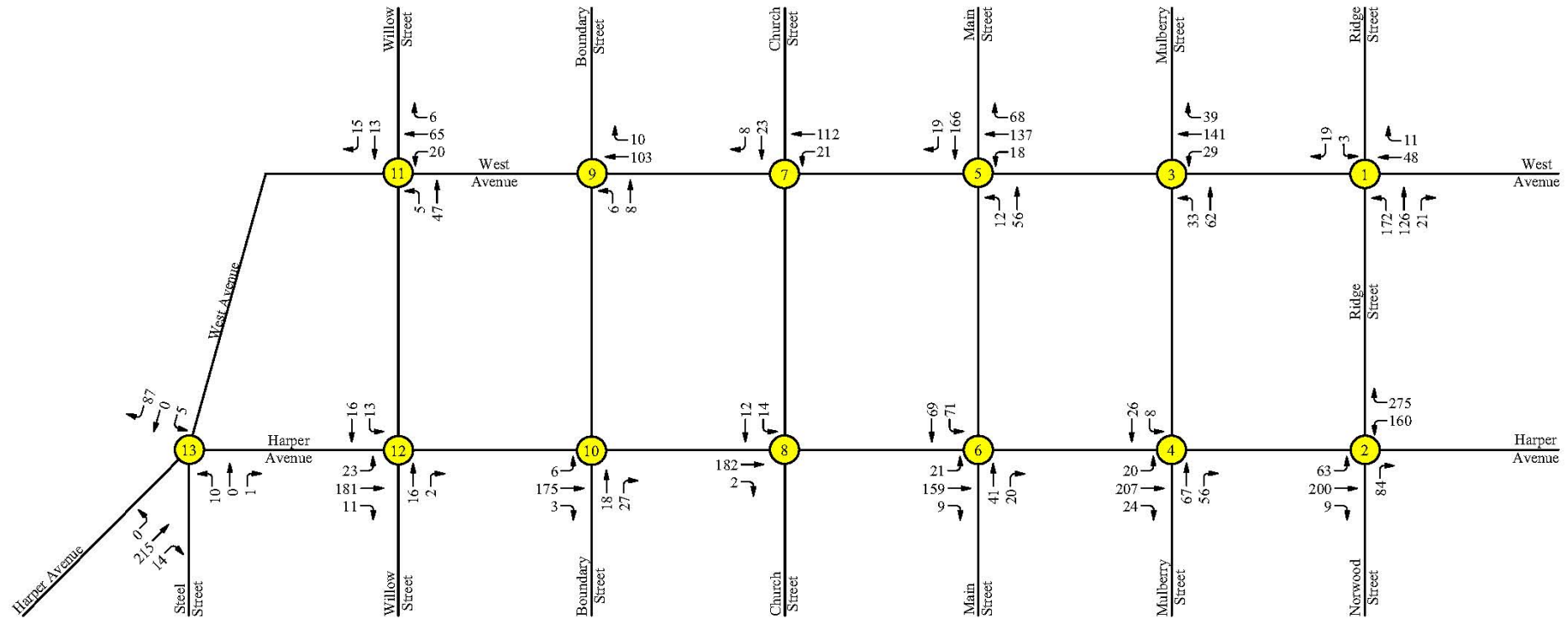
Harper Avenue / West Avenue
Two-Way Conversion Study
Lenoir, NC

Site Location Map

Scale: Not to Scale

Figure





LEGEND

 Signalized Intersection

X Peak Hour Traffic



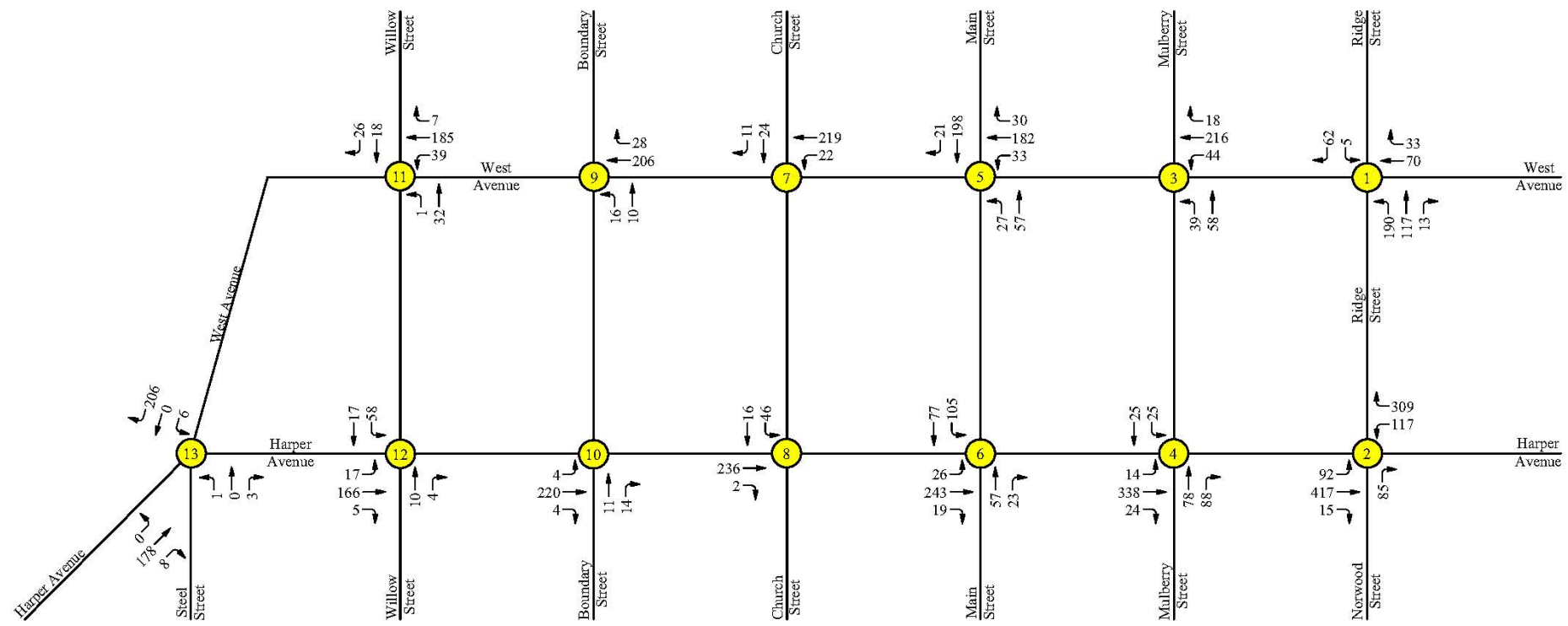
Harper Avenue / West Avenue
Two-Way Conversion Study
Lenoir, NC

Existing Traffic Volumes
[AM Peak Hour]

Scale: Not to Scale

Figure





LEGEND

-  Signalized Intersection
-  Peak Hour Traffic

 RAMEY KEMP & ASSOCIATES TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERS	<i>Harper Avenue / West Avenue Two-Way Conversion Study Lenoir, NC</i>		Existing Traffic Volumes [PM Peak Hour]	
			Scale: Not to Scale	Figure



Next Steps

- ◇ Complete traffic analysis for existing one-way traffic flow pattern
- ◇ Estimate traffic diversion and adjust traffic patterns
- ◇ Complete traffic analysis for proposed two-way traffic flow pattern
- ◇ Prepare conceptual design illustrating the conversion
- ◇ Develop an opinion of probable cost for conversion



Customer Service Team Update

City Council Planning Retreat
February 23, 2018

New Team Members

- “ Chris Bradshaw, Fire, **Co-Chair**
- “ Zack Carter, Parks & Recreation, **Co-Chair**
- “ **Kyle Case, Main Street**
- “ Elizabeth Church, Finance/HR
- “ Daniel Clark, Public Utilities
- “ **Joshua Harris, Administration**
- “ Anthony Harrison, Fire
- “ Brent Phelps, Police
- “ **Tim Sprouse, Public Works**
- “ Maria Swanson, Parks & Recreation

Customer Service Initiative

- “ Started in 2008
- “ Employee driven
- “ Setting expectations on how employees interact with the Public and with each other
- “ Quarterly New Employee training



Customer Service Keys

- “ Personable
- “ Pro-Active
- “ Effective Communication
- “ Professionalism
- “ Timely & Efficient
- “ Teamwork
- “ Equitable Service
- “ Successful Service Recovery





The Customer Service Team recently delivered doughnuts, coffee, and thanks to several groups of everyday heroes in the City.

Everyday Heroes



The Customer Service Team recently delivered doughnuts, coffee, and thanks to several groups of everyday heroes in the City.

Everyday Heroes

Thank You

Hibriten High School
1350 Panther Trail SE
Lenoir, NC 28645



Chief Sam Smith
Phone: 828-758-7376
Fax: 828-758-9708
ssmith@caldwellschools.com

Jan. 22, 2018

Dear Mr. Hildebran;

I would like to brag on two of your fellow City of Lenoir employees. On Jan. 3 of last week I was in need of a special favor. I am installing turnout gear racks in my engine bay and using one inch electrical conduit as the rack. Since the rack space between two metal posts is 9'6" and the conduit is 10' long, I was in a predicament. The conduit required cutting and rethreading. The school system does not have a conduit thread machine. I thought maybe the City of Lenoir maintenance dept. may be able to assist me. I called J.R. Goforth and explained my plight and he said bring it by and we will help you out. Within the hour Mike Engstrom had it cut and rethreaded. What seemed a hurdle for the Fire Academy, your fine employees handled it in a few minutes. I really appreciate what they did for us. They are shining examples of Customer Service and represent the city with professionalism and dedication as ALL city employees do. Of course I thanked them at least twice but I wanted you to know that they went above and beyond. In closing, it reminds me of the many people that protect, serve and service the city residents I was privileged to work with for so many years. Please feel free to pass this along to Mr. Beck. Thank you and your fine employees for all you do.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sam Smith

Chief, Hibriten Fire Academy

They are shining examples of Customer Service and represent the city with professionalism and dedication as ALL city employees do.

- Chief Sam Smith

Thank You

"It was cold as Hades, but they got the job done anyway. I thought it'd take a few days, but he said, 'Oh, no, this'll be a few hours' "
- Jim Finley

NEWS-TOPIC | www.newstopicnews.com

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018

Cold weather breaks water lines

BY VIRGINIA ANNABLE
VANNABLE@NEWSTOPICNEWS.COM

Jim Finley stepped outside Sunday morning to brisk 20-degree air biting at his nose, but what caught his attention was the geyser of water spouting at the end of his driveway on Pennton Avenue.

Finley quickly called Lenoir's Department of Public Utilities, and a crew arrived half an hour later, about 11:30 a.m. It wasn't their first call of this type and it wouldn't be the last: The nine utilities employees who work to fix broken pipes and meters were called left and right all week for breaks related to the cold brought on by a week-long Arctic blast, said Radford Thomas, director of public utilities.

"These guys on these crews have been working

very hard these last five to six days," Thomas said Monday.

At Finley's home, the public utilities crew dug a 4-foot hole in the pavement to reach the 6-inch pipe, which had split down the side. Thomas said when the ground freezes it can shift the pipes and cause these breaks.

The crew geared up in waders and hard hats and lowered themselves into the pit, which was filled with ice-cold water, Finley said.

"It was cold as Hades," Finley said, "but they got the job done anyway."

After diverting the pipe's water to nearby fire hydrants, the crew found not one but two breaks in the pipe. Finley said he and others were without water until about 4 p.m., but it was less time than he expected.

"I thought it'd take a few

days, but he said, 'Oh, no, this'll be a few hours,'" Finley said.

Once the clamps were tightened, the hole filled and the pavement redone, the crew moved on to the next call, Thomas said. While the cold makes for a steady flow of broken pipes, the thaw over the next few takes may bring even more.

"As they thaw out, the ice becomes water, we'll find more issues on the way," Thomas said.

Reporter Virginia Annable can be reached at 828-610-8724.

A Lenoir Public Utilities crew works to fix a water line break Sunday morning on Pennton Avenue after a night of single-digit temperatures.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY JIM FINLEY



Thank You

“ Feb. 2, 9:40 am - Our street has two storm drains that become clogged with leaves in rains. This dead end street is missed when crews clean Wellington Ct. Please clean our street on the same routine as neighboring streets.

“ Feb. 2, 6:31 pm - Thanks for the fast response. Our street was cleaned about 2pm. Great service.

TEAM TALK

Relaunched February 2018

TEAM TALK

City of Lenoir, NC Government Employee News
Vol. 11, Issue 1 • February 2018



#LitterFreeLenoirNC

The Customer Service Team is spearheading an effort to help clean up our streets and keep Lenoir litter-free! As part of the NCDOT Litter Sweep and departments to volunteer to pick up litter on a local street in Lenoir.

The plan is to pick up litter during NCDOT Litter Sweep in mid to late April.

In conjunction with Litter Sweep, Joshua Harris plans to organize a community contest and encourage residents to help pick up litter as well. The idea is to ask residents to post a picture of themselves picking up litter in Lenoir with the hashtag #LitterFreeLenoirNC.

At the end of Litter Sweep, the submissions will be entered into a drawing for a few prizes. A few ideas for prizes are, One-Year Family Membership to the Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center; roll out trash



can, gift certificates from City businesses. We plan to lead by example and use the contest to encourage residents to get out there and get cleaning as well. Stay tuned for updates. Let's help keep Lenoir clean!

EMPLOYEE CALENDAR



CITY COUNCIL PLANNING RETREAT
Friday, Feb. 23 • 8:00 AM
Blue Ridge Energy Corporate Office

RECEPTION FOR CHARLES BECK AND KEN BRISCOE
Tuesday, March 6 • 3:30-5:30 PM
City/County Chambers

SERVICE AWARDS BANQUET
Monday, March 26 • 6:00 PM
J.E. Broyhill Civic Center

Saying thanks to our Everyday Heroes

There are a lot of heroes out there, and many times we don't get to see them in action. The Customer Service Team recently delivered doughnuts, coffee, and thanks to several groups of everyday heroes in the City.

The Public Utilities Collection and Distribution Department addressed between 40 and 50 waterline breaks or leaks as a result of the extreme cold temperatures during the month of January. The cold spell, which began in late December and lasted until late January of 2018, caused several water line breaks on 6 inch water mains. The weather was also responsible for a large number of frozen service lines split and begin leaking. Department crews worked nights and days to make the necessary repairs often in very frigid temperatures. At times, the crews were working 12 to 15 hours per day to make the necessary repairs and keep the water flowing to City customers. In January, the Fire Department had long day. One night, in the middle of a working structure fire, the department had to respond to two fire alarms at local

manufacturing plants. Thankfully, a lot of off-duty firefighters responded to the call back and came to assist the on-duty shift. The Fire Department had approximately 14 emergency calls that day and night with a working structure fire at 2am. They were

up for a 24 hour period with minimum to no sleep. Some had a little sleep and others had none. During a period of three weeks, the department had five working structure fires, which is above average. The Fire



From left: Daniel Clark, Ted Bolick, Brandon Goble, Jonathan Ansley, Derek Goble, and Cole Minton, work in the Distribution/Collection Division of Public Utilities.

TEAM TALK

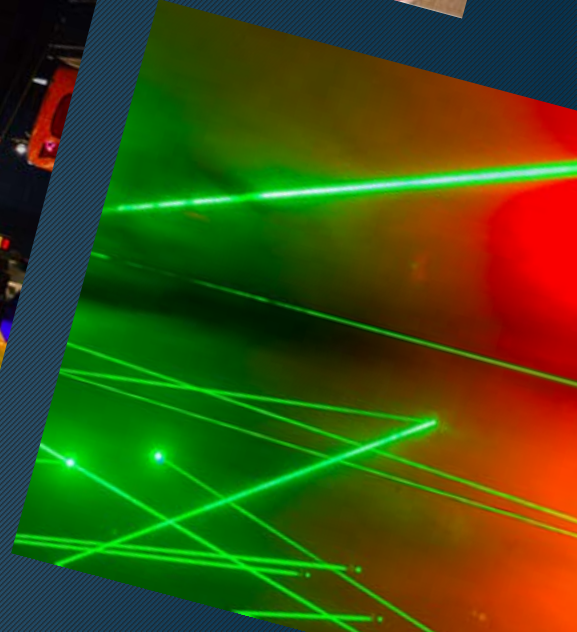
- “News & announcements
- “Achievements
- “Employee Spotlight
- “Promotions, certifications
- “New employees
- “Calendar & reminders

Employee Appreciation Day

Saying Thank You to our Employees

Bo's Bodacious

Everyone could participate
Private, Unlimited games, bowling
Best event so far



Call Back Surveys

How do we measure
customer service?



Call Back Surveys

“ Fire Department created
Call Back Survey
Guideline

“ To measure our
customer service

“ Made 464 call backs

“ Had 133 participants

“ Average 6.7
out of 1-7 rating



Call Back Surveys Moving Forward

- “ Goal to get at least one more department participating in 2018
- “ Different survey options



#LitterFree
LenoirNC



#LitterFree LenoirNC

“Community Campaign

“Spring April 14-28, 2018

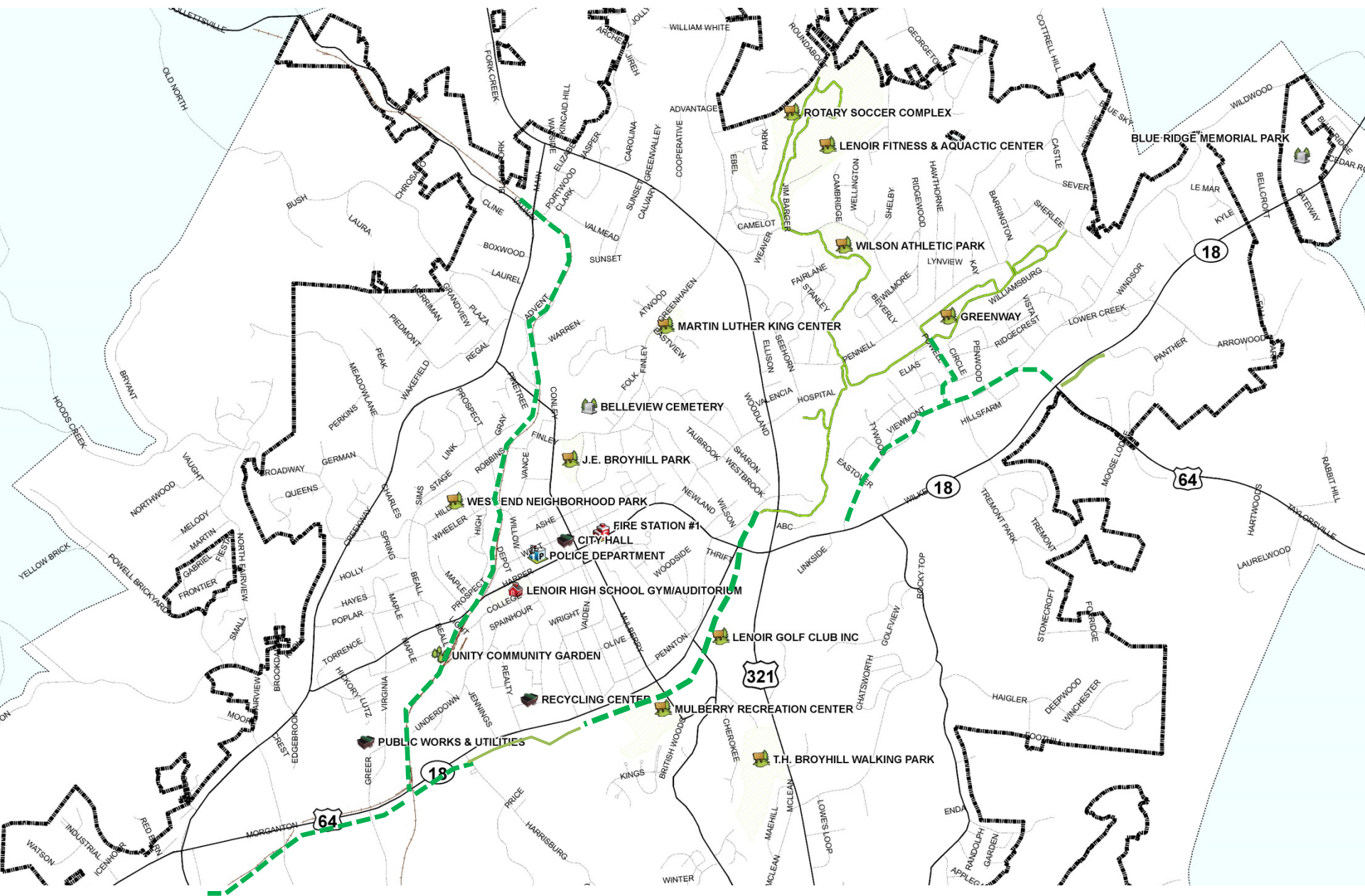
“Employee Pickup Day
April 16, 2018 (tentative)

“Community Contest

Post pics of cleanup w/#
Annual Rec Membership
Free Roll-Out Container
Gift Certificates



Questions? Comments?



The background image shows a large, reddish-brown rock sculpture in the foreground, partially obscuring the view. Behind it, a town scene is visible under a cloudy sky. A black street lamp stands to the left of the rock. In the background, there are green trees, a brick building, and a parking lot with several cars. A tall utility pole with wires is also visible.

CITY OF LENOIR BICYCLE PLAN

NOVEMBER 2017 | FINAL

Background

- Funded by NC DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Division Planning Grant (15% match from City of Lenoir)
- Prepared by Kimley-Horn
- 17-person steering committee spearheaded development of the plan

BICYCLE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Jenny Wheelock

Stacy Whalen

Lt. Chris Robinson

Charles Beck

Brandon Thompson

Ben Willis

Kim Edmisten

Dean Ledbetter

Kenny Heavner

Merlin Perry

Sharon Bryant

Dr. Jeff Church

Dave Debaeremaeker

Jeff Welch

Shawn Moore

Sean Williams

Mark Hite

MARCH 2016
Planning Grant Awarded

JULY 2016

Project
Kickoff

AUGUST 2016

BPC #1
and
Field Review

OCTOBER 2016

BPC #2
and
Public
Workshop

JANUARY 2017

BPC #3
and
Open House

APRIL 2017

BPC #4
and
Draft Plan
Review

JUNE - AUGUST 2017

Draft Plan
Review by
NCDOT

NOVEMBER 2017
Plan Adoption by City Council

VISION AND GOALS

The Lenoir Bicycle Planning Committee and the project team created a vision statement that succinctly communicates the desired future for bicycling in Lenoir.

RIDING BICYCLES IN THE CITY OF LENOIR WILL BE A SAFE AND CONVENIENT WAY FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO TRAVEL FOR TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION. THE CITY'S BICYCLE NETWORK WILL BE ACCESSIBLE, CONNECTED, AND ATTRACTIVE FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, ABILITIES, AND BACKGROUNDS.

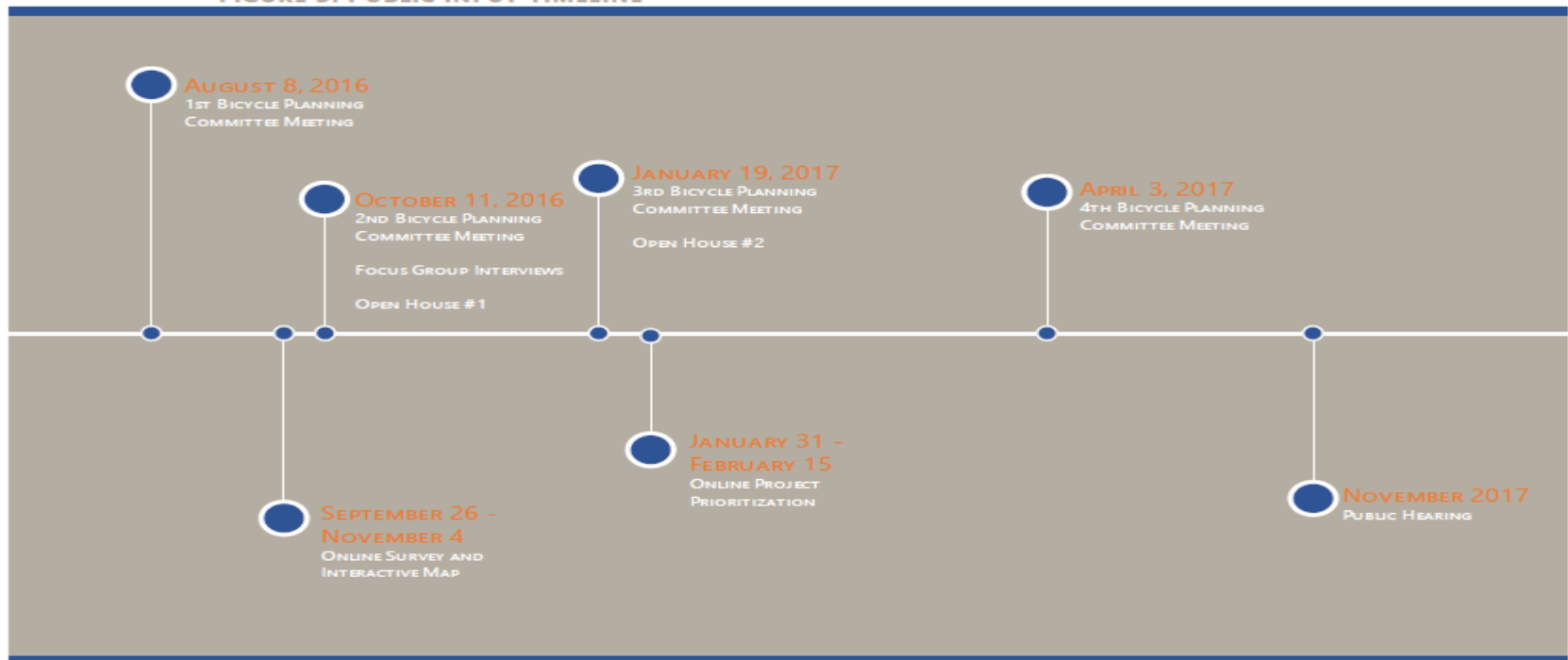
The vision statement served as a guide for the development of the Bicycle Plan's recommendations and was supported by goals encapsulated by what has traditionally been called the "Five Es," now joined by a sixth E: equity. These goals are defined below.

- » **ENGINEERING:** create safe and convenient places to ride and park bicycles
- » **EDUCATION:** give people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride
- » **ENCOURAGEMENT:** create a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling
- » **ENFORCEMENT:** ensure safe roads for all users
- » **EVALUATION & PLANNING:** plan for bicycling as a safe and viable transportation option
- » **EQUITY:** seek fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all bicyclists

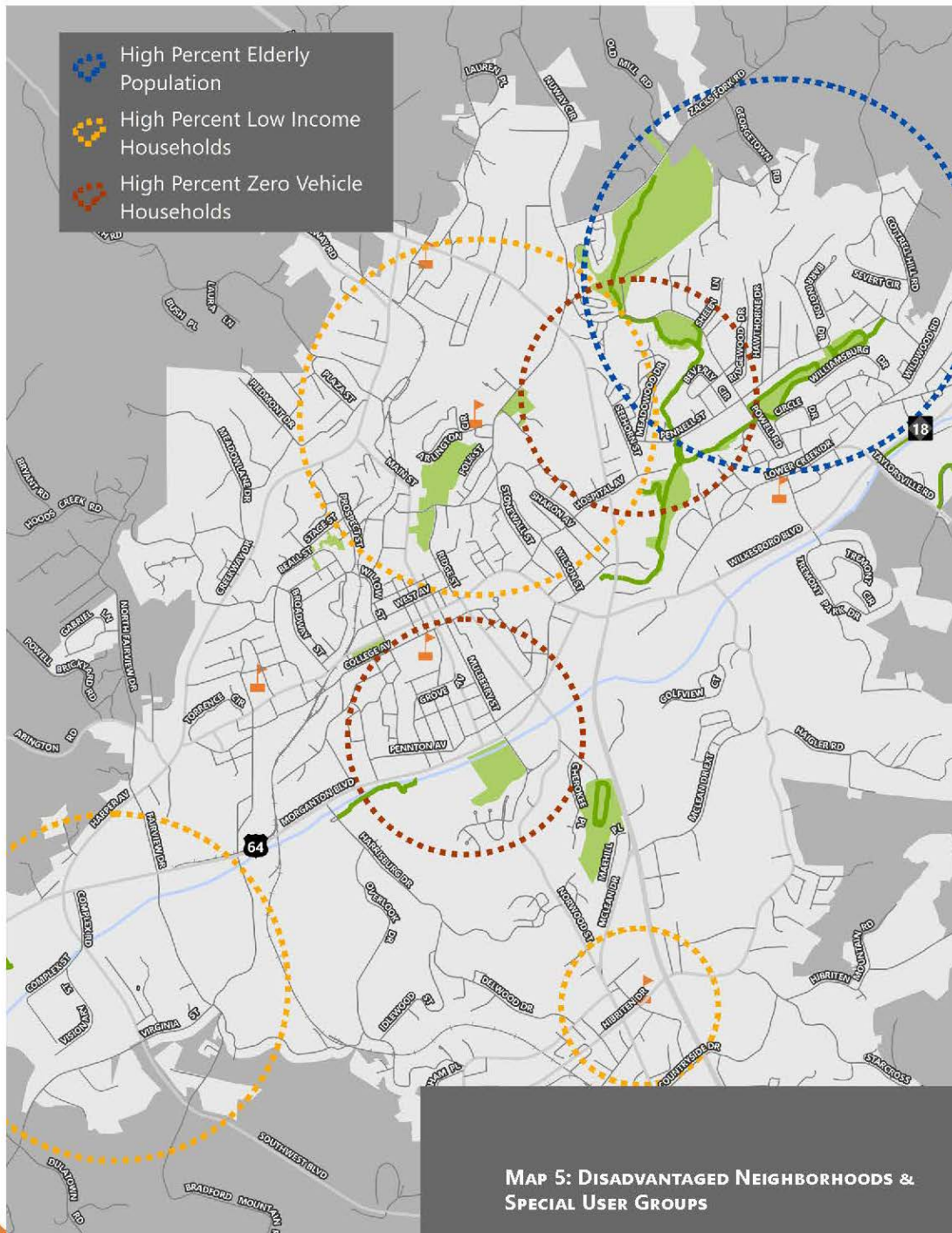
Public Input

- Steering Committee: 4 meetings
- Focus Group Interviews: LBAB, Caldwell County Schools, Caldwell Memorial Hospital, County Health Department
- Two Public “Open House” style meetings
- Online survey

FIGURE 5: PUBLIC INPUT TIMELINE



Analysis



MAP 5: DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBORHOODS & SPECIAL USER GROUPS

FIGURE 2: COMMUTE PATTERNS

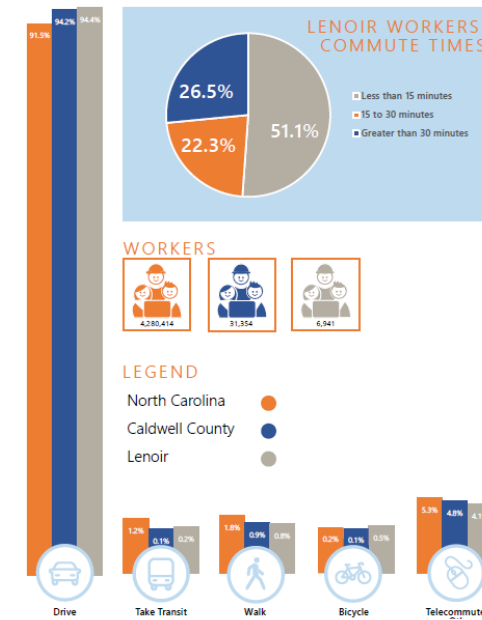
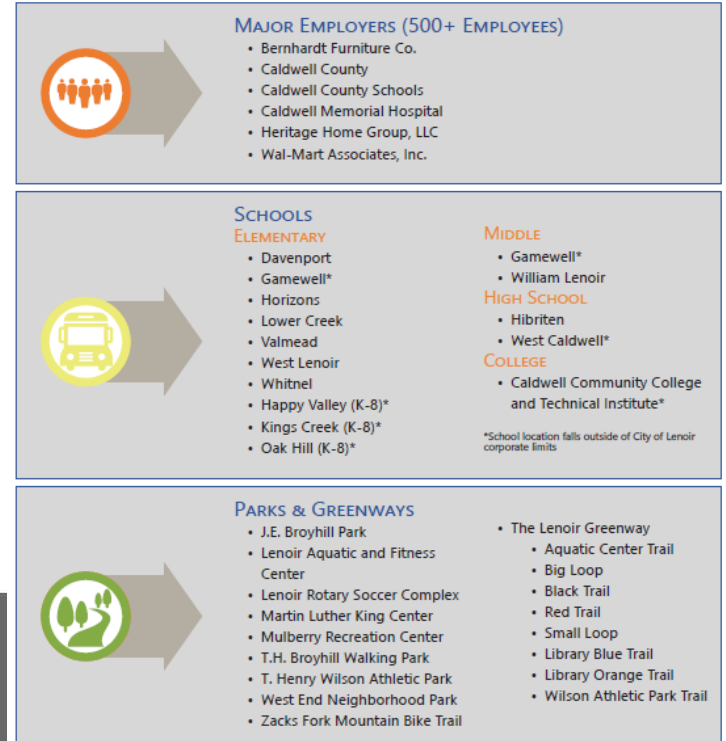
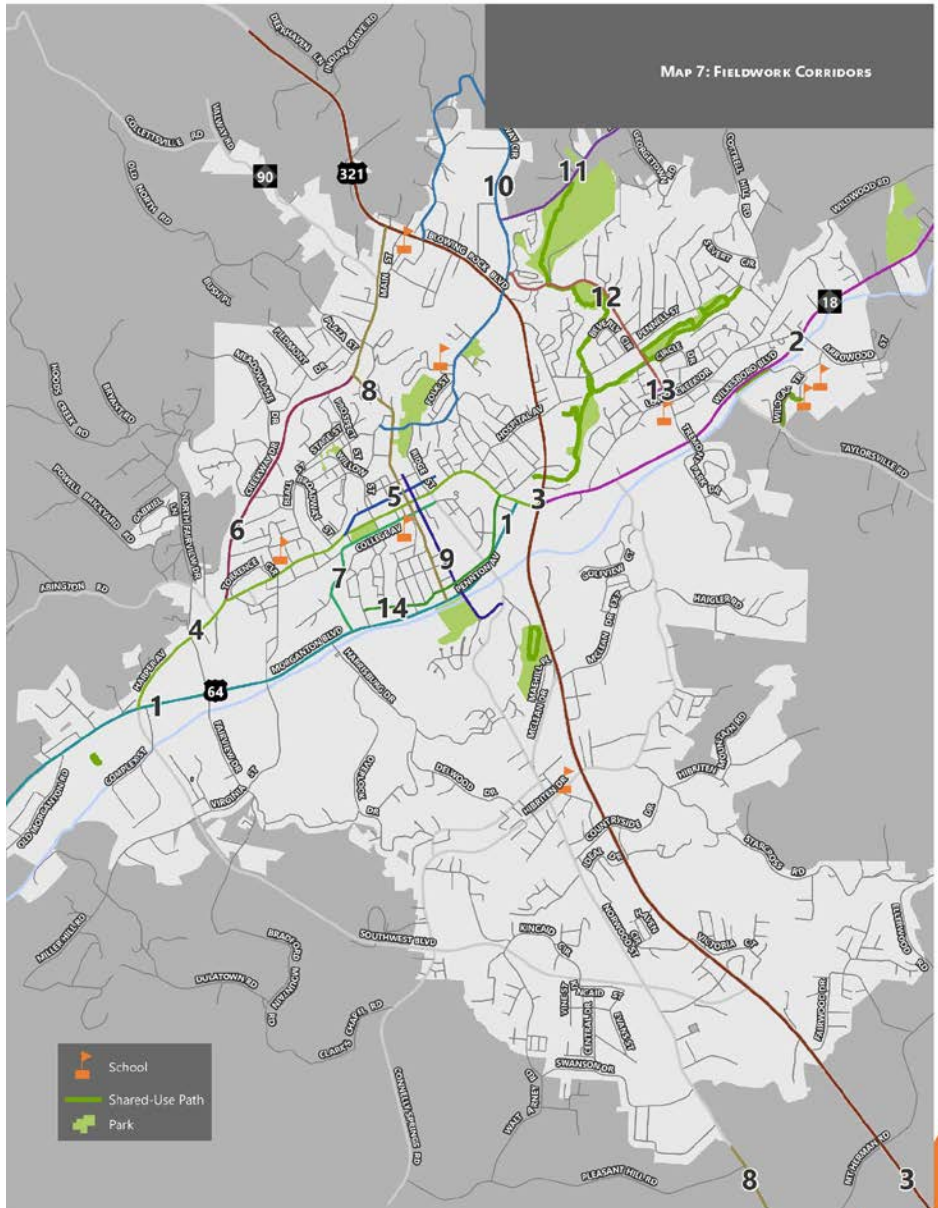


FIGURE 3: KEY DESTINATIONS





- Reviewed existing programs
- Reviewed local ordinances
- Reviewed previous plans

TABLE 6: PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

PLAN NAME	RELEVANT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Lenoir Comprehensive Plan	Recommends and encourages... - the increased use of alternative modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, buses, and railroads - improving connectivity between recreation facilities and destination points such as schools and downtown - the creation of a Pedestrian, Greenway, and Bicycle Plan - the inclusion of a standard DOT bicycle lane on roads when improvements and construction occurs - the construction of a bicycle lane on Harper Avenue as part of the NC 2 Mountains-to-Sea Bike Route
Lenoir Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan	Recommends... - expansion of the Lenoir Greenway - construction of the Lower Creek Greenway - development of wayfinding signage
North Main Street Small Area Plan	Promotes development of... - Rails-to-Trails Greenway within the existing C&NW railroad ROW (planned as part of the OVNHT) - Rails-to-Trails Greenway crossing at Old North Road and Main Street
Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail Master Plan	Includes... - design guidelines for 6 possible trail types - detailed alignment, crossings, trailhead location and design for 3 segments of the OVNHT from Lenoir to Morganton
Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan	Program and Policy Recommendations - creation of the Greater Hickory MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee - safe routes to school programs - establishment of minimum standards for bike facilities and maintenance protocols - roadway retrofitting per NCDOT's Complete Streets Guidelines - law enforcement education about state laws pertaining to bicyclists - involvement with Watch for Me NC & Let's Go NC - development of a regional bicycling website Facility Recommendations - greenway along NC 18/ US 64 connecting Lenoir and Morganton - development of Route Segments 10,11, & 12 using a combination of paved shoulders, sharrows, bike lanes, and sharrows
Greater Hickory MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan	Encourages and emphasizes... - connected multimodal transportation - linking bicycle and pedestrian facilities with public transportation - promoting biking and walking as healthy alternatives - the delineation of pedestrian and bicycle routes
WalkBikeNC Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan	Recommends... rerouting of NC 2 from Abington Road into Lenoir via NC 90

Recommendations

- Combination of 3 types of facilities:

Shared With Motor
Vehicle Traffic
(sharrows; signage)



Dedicated Facilities
(bike lanes – conventional,
separated, buffered)



Shared With Pedestrians
(greenway/multi-use
paths/side path)



MAP 14: RECOMMENDED BICYCLE FACILITY PLAN
PAGE 37

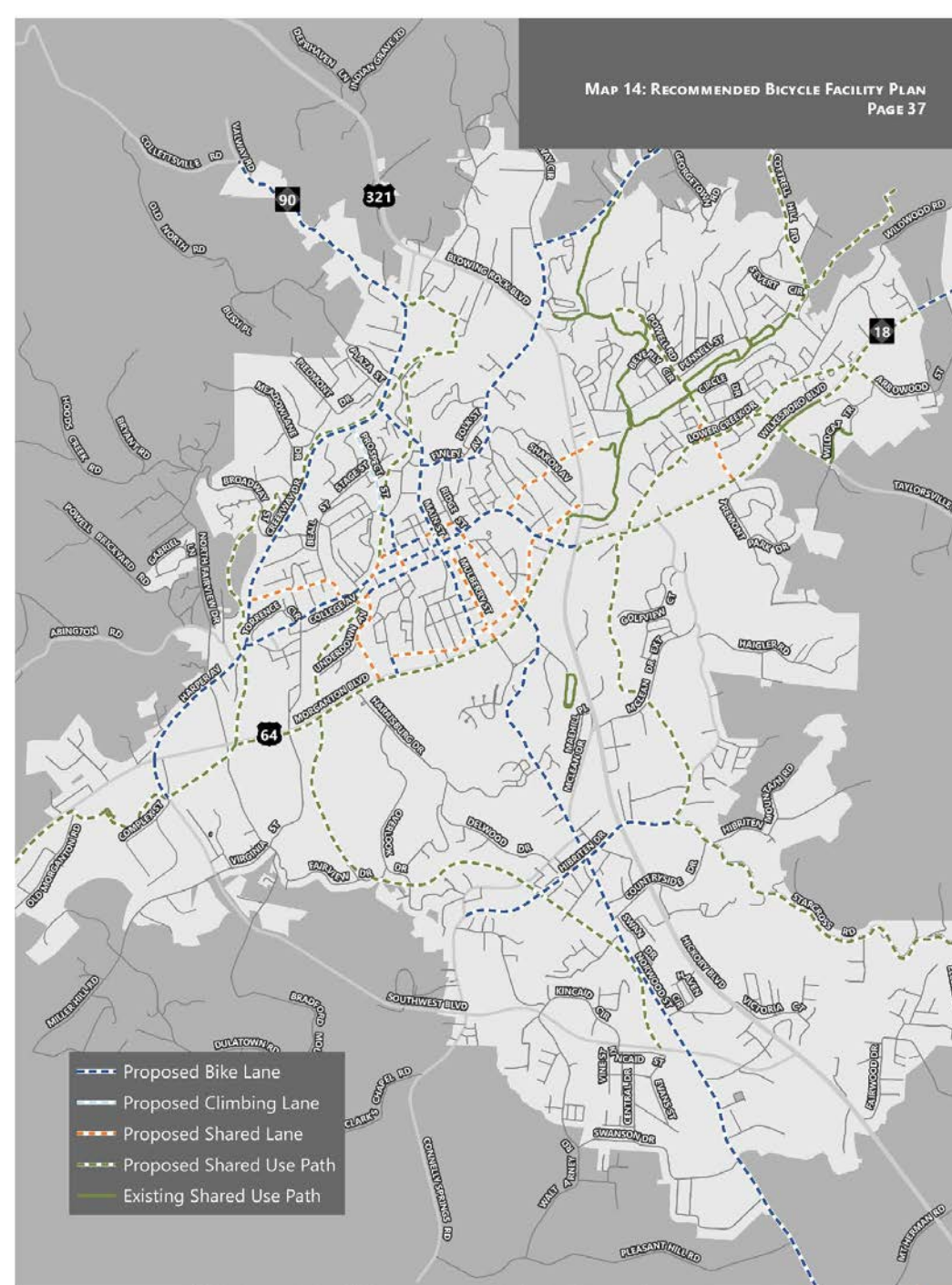
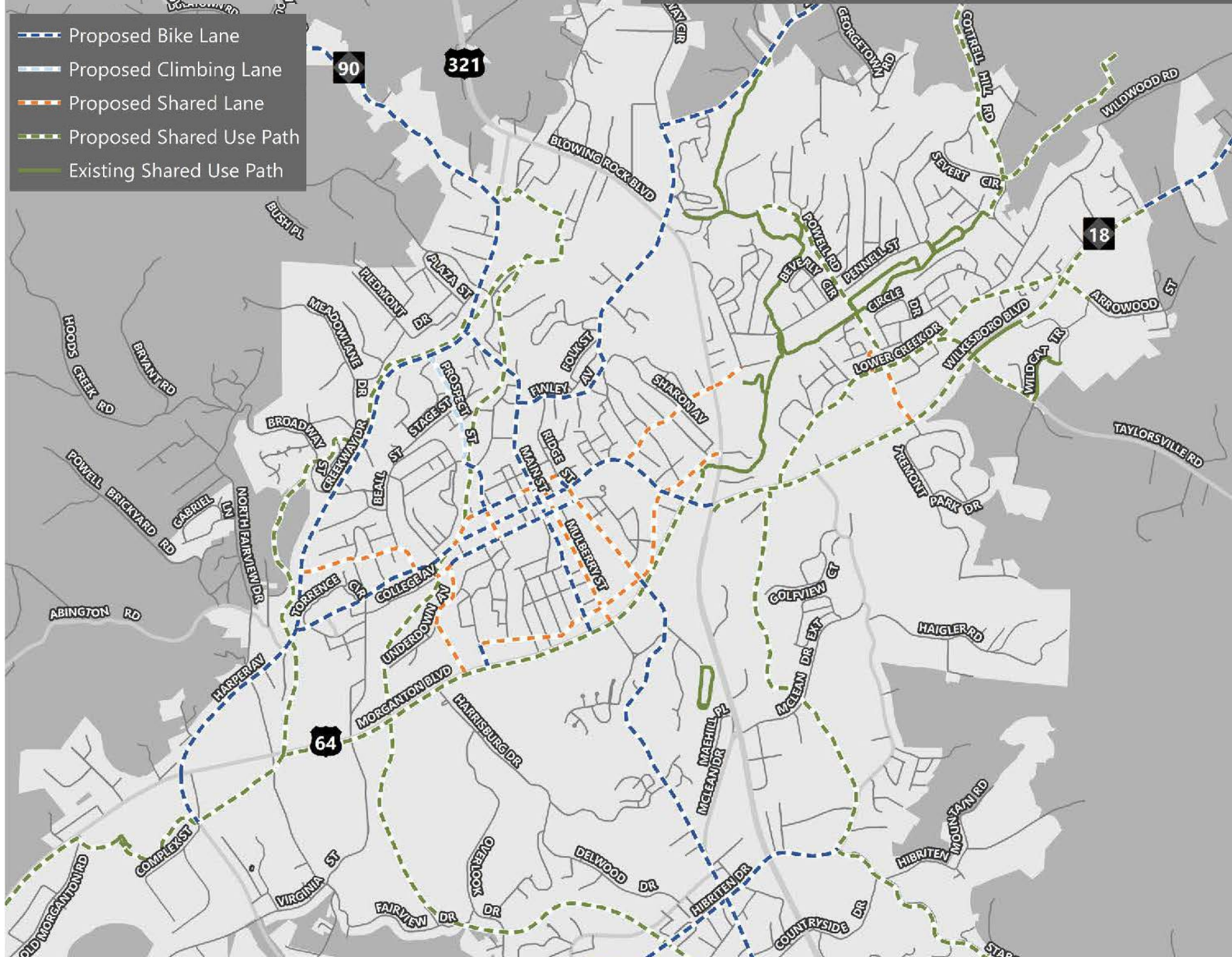


TABLE 7: ALL FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

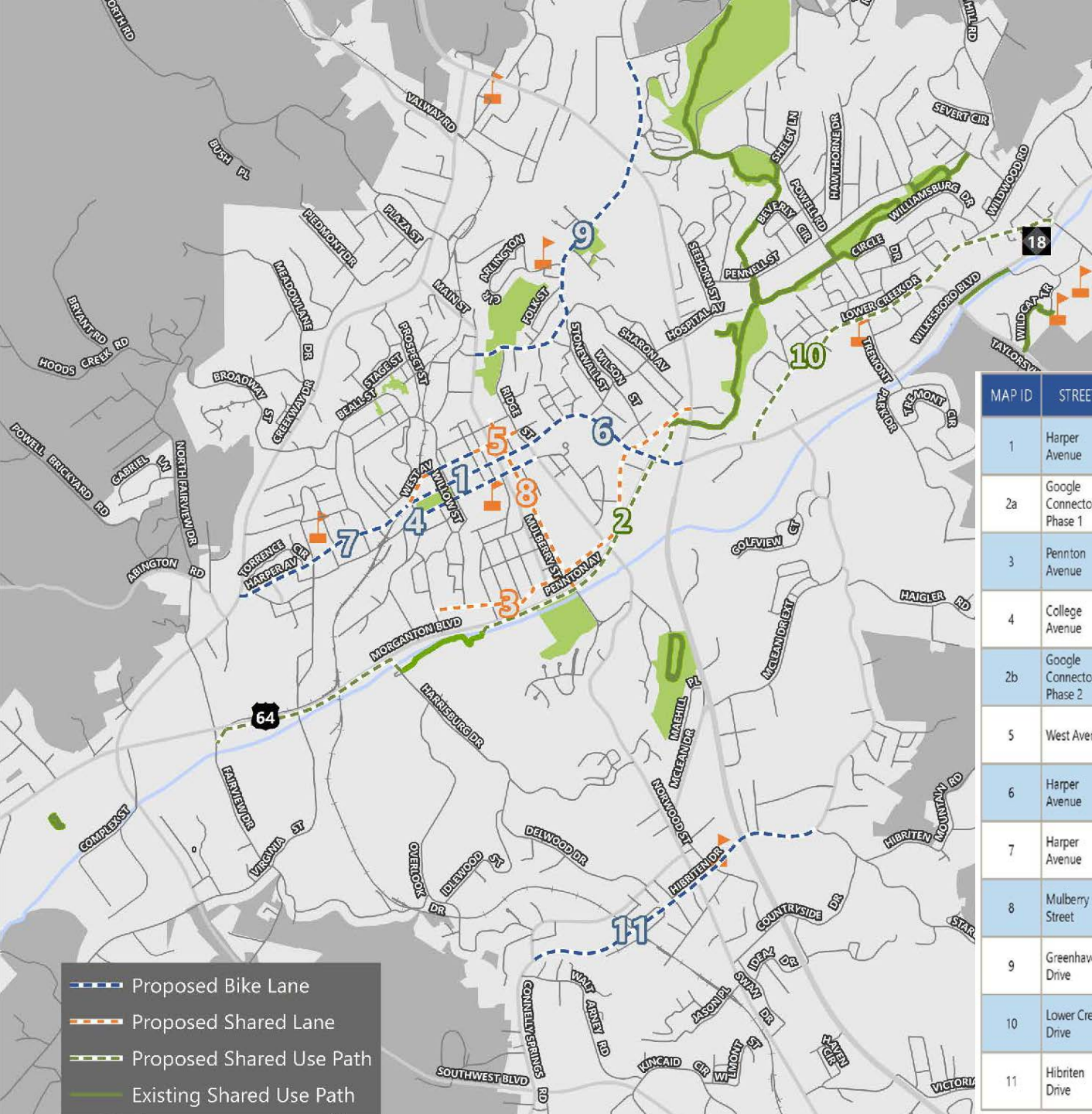
* STREET NAME	FROM	TO
Airport Extension	Sherlee Street	Lower Creek Airport
Cottrell Hill Road Extension	Severt Circle	Black Trail Terminus
Google Connector 1	Harper Avenue	Library Trail Terminus
Google Connector 2	Harper Avenue	Fairview Drive
Huntington Extension	Ellerwood Road	US 64
Lower Creek Extension	US 321	Tomlinson Court
Main Street	Morganton Boulevard	Valway Road
Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail		
Rails-to-Trails	US 64	Southwest Boulevard
Spainhour Creek Extension	Morganton Boulevard	RR Tracks North of Adve
Valway Road	Main Street	Collettsville Road
Zacks Fork Road	Nuway Circle	Cottrell Hill Road
Arrowood Street	NC 18	Panther Trail
College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue
College Avenue	Underdown Avenue	Light Street
Creekway Drive	Main Street	Harper Avenue
Greenhaven Drive	Zacks Fork Road	Main Street
Harper Avenue	Morganton Boulevard	US 321
Hibriten Drive	Hickory Boulevard	Connelly Springs Road
Hospital Avenue	Seehorn Street	Harper Avenue
Jennings Street	Underdown Avenue	Morganton Boulevard
Lower Creek Drive	US 64	NC 18
Mulberry Street	Morganton Boulevard	Ashe Avenue
Norwood Street	Harper Avenue	Pennton Avenue
Norwood Street	Pennton Avenue	Mt Herman Road
Pennton Avenue	Block Rock Boulevard	Harper Avenue
Pennton Avenue	Harper Avenue	Realty Street
Poplar Street	Creekway Drive	Beall Street
Powell Road	Lower Creek Drive	Glenview Street
Powell Road	Glenview Street	Wellington Court
Powell Road	Nuway Circle	Camelot Court
Prospect Street	Creekway Drive	Willow Street
Realty Street	Morganton Boulevard	Pennton Avenue
Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	West Avenue
Southwest Boulevard	Morganton Boulevard	Complex Street
Taylorsville Road	Lower Creek Drive	US 64
Tremont Park Drive	Lower Creek Drive	Wilkesboro Boulevard
Underdown Avenue	College Avenue	Jennings Street
West Avenue	Harper Avenue	Ridge Street
Wilkesboro Boulevard (NC 18)	City Limits	Wildwood Road
Willow Street	Prospect Street	West Avenue
Willow Street	West Avenue	College Avenue
* Recommendation from previous planning efforts		

-  Proposed Bike Lane
-  Proposed Climbing Lane
-  Proposed Shared Lane
-  Proposed Shared Use Path
-  Existing Shared Use Path



Priority Projects

MAP ID	STREET	START	END	TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION	LENGTH (MI)	COST ESTIMATE
1	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	West Avenue	Buffered Bike Lane	Restriping	0.58	\$152,000
2a	Google Connector Phase 1	Fairview Drive	Harper Avenue	Shared Use Path	New Construction	2.36	\$2.32 million
3	Pennton Avenue	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Realty Street	Shared Lane Markings & Speed Cushions	Marking	1.58	\$118,000
4	College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue	Bike Lanes	Restriping and Widening	0.64	\$1.07 million
2b	Google Connector Phase 2	Harper Avenue	Library Trail	Shared Use Path & Pedestrian Tunnel	New Construction	0.21	\$1.04 million
5	West Avenue	Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	Bike Lanes and Shared Lane Markings	Restriping and Marking	0.59	\$193,000
6	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	0.76	\$1.77 million
7	Harper Avenue	West Avenue	Creekway Drive	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	0.83	\$2.05 million
8	Mulberry Street	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Ashe Avenue	Shared Lane Markings	Marking	0.81	\$22,000
9	Greenhaven Drive	Zacks Fork Road	Main Street	Bike Lanes	Road Widening	1.69	\$4.25 million
10	Lower Creek Drive	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Wilkesboro Boulevard (NC 18)	Shared Use Path	New Construction	1.69	\$1.79 million
11	Hibriten Drive	Connelly Springs Road	Starcross Road	Bike Lanes	Restriping & Road Diet (5 to 3 lanes)	1.40	\$442,000



MAP ID	STREET	START	END	TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION
1	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	West Avenue	Buffered Bike Lane	Restriping
2a	Google Connector Phase 1	Fairview Drive	Harper Avenue	Shared Use Path	New Construction
3	Pennton Avenue	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Realty Street	Shared Lane Markings & Speed Cushions	Marking
4	College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue	Bike Lanes	Restriping and Widening
2b	Google Connector Phase 2	Harper Avenue	Library Trail	Shared Use Path & Pedestrian Tunnel	New Construction
5	West Avenue	Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	Bike Lanes and Shared Lane Markings	Restriping and Marking
6	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Bike Lanes	Road Widening
7	Harper Avenue	West Avenue	Creekway Drive	Bike Lanes	Road Widening
8	Mulberry Street	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Ashe Avenue	Shared Lane Markings	Marking
9	Greenhaven Drive	Zacks Fork Road	Main Street	Bike Lanes	Road Widening
10	Lower Creek Drive	Wilkesboro Boulevard (US 64)	Wilkesboro Boulevard (NC 18)	Shared Use Path	New Construction
11	Hibriten Drive	Connelly Springs Road	Starcross Road	Bike Lanes	Restriping & Road Diet (\$ to 3 lanes)

Top 6 Priority Projects

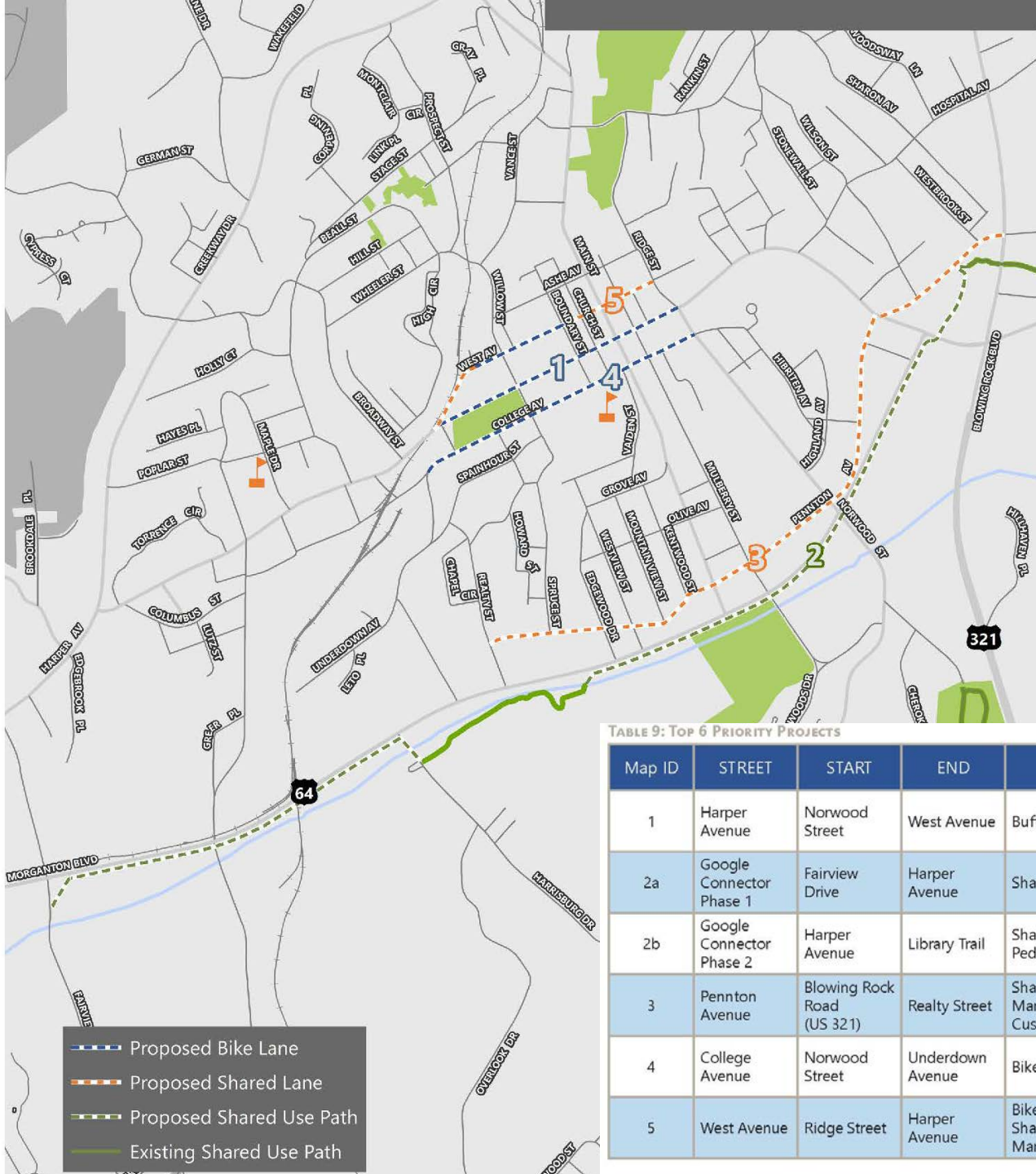
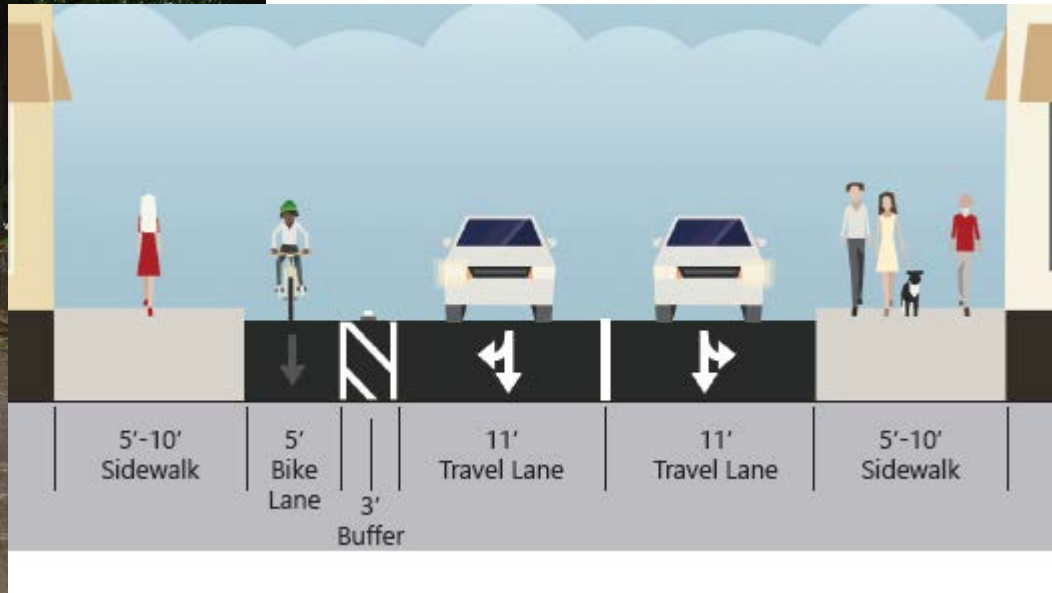


TABLE 9: TOP 6 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Map ID	STREET	START	END	TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION	LENGTH (MI)	COST ESTIMATE
1	Harper Avenue	Norwood Street	West Avenue	Buffered Bike Lane	Restriping	0.58	\$152,400
2a	Google Connector Phase 1	Fairview Drive	Harper Avenue	Shared Use Path	New Construction	2.36	\$2.32 million
2b	Google Connector Phase 2	Harper Avenue	Library Trail	Shared Use Path & Pedestrian Tunnel	New Construction	0.21	\$1.04 million
3	Pennton Avenue	Blowing Rock Road (US 321)	Realty Street	Shared Lane Markings & Speed Cushions	Marking	1.58	\$118,000
4	College Avenue	Norwood Street	Underdown Avenue	Bike Lanes	Restriping and Widening	0.64	\$1.07 million
5	West Avenue	Ridge Street	Harper Avenue	Bike Lanes and Shared Lane Markings	Restriping and Marking	0.59	\$192,500



HARPER AVENUE — EXISTING



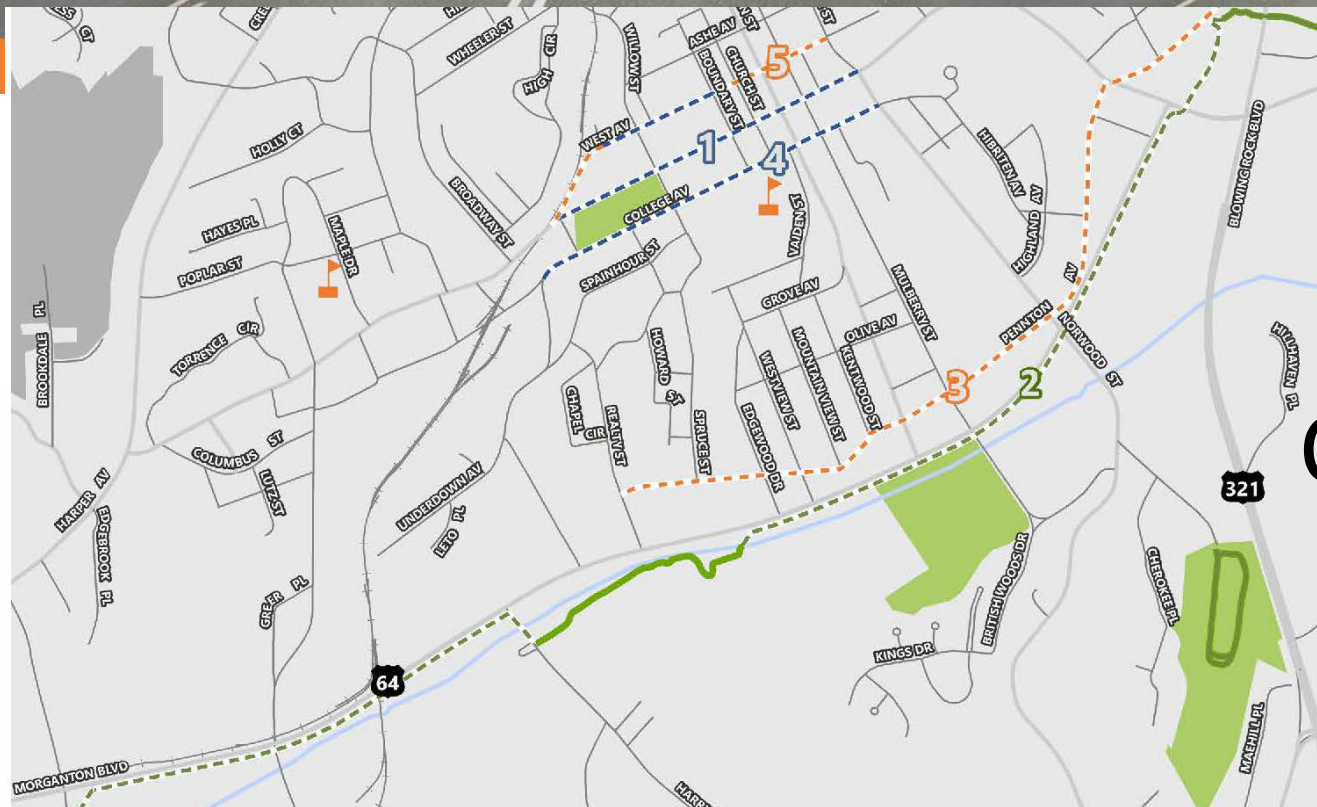
HARPER AVENUE — CONCEPTUAL

- Some on-street parking impacted
- Modification to street design to accommodate two-way traffic
Downtown should consider inclusion of bicycle facilities.

Harper Avenue



GOOGLE CONNECTOR



Google Connector



PENNTON AVENUE — EXISTING



PENNTON AVENUE — CONCEPTUAL

- Low-cost connection between two greenway networks (rail trail/OVT/Google and Lower Creek/Aquatic Center)
- On paving schedule already

Pennton Avenue

Cost Estimate:
\$118,000

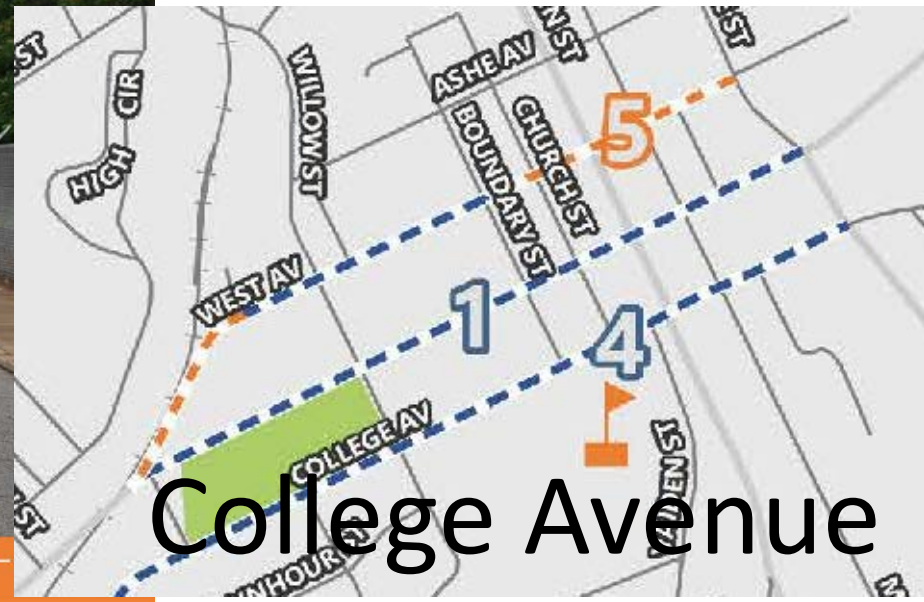


COLLEGE AVENUE — EXISTING

- Re-striping low cost option
- Helps reduce design speed of street
- Segment from Willow to Boundary increases costs dramatically (road widening)



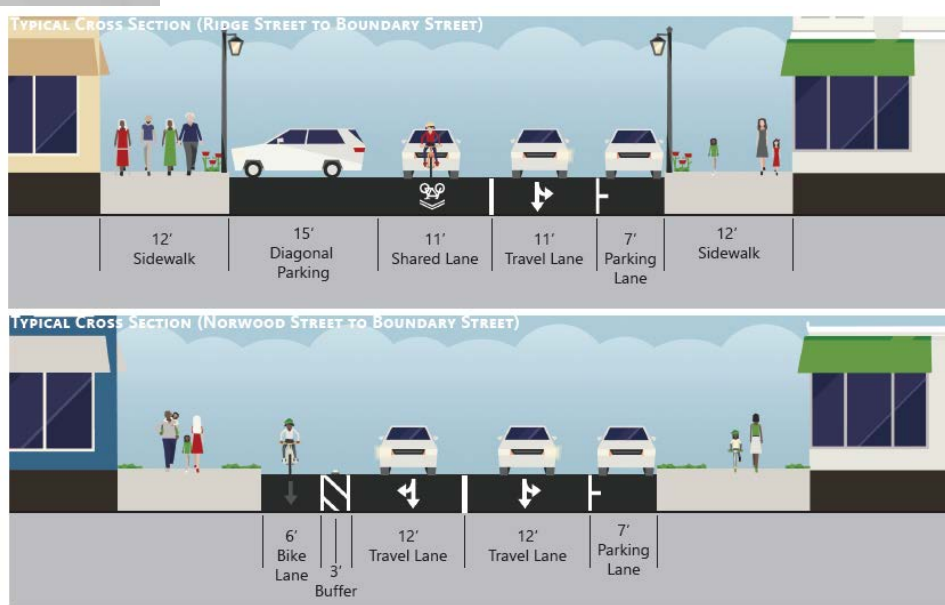
COLLEGE AVENUE —



College Avenue



WEST AVENUE — EXISTING



WEST AVENUE — CONCEPTUAL

- Low cost implementation
- Changes to traffic patterns/returning to two way would impact this design
- Downtown traffic changes should consider bicycles

West Avenue

Other Recommendations

- Policy and Program Recommendations
- Funding resources
- Suggested performance measures
- Implementation guide/schedule
- Design guidelines for various facility types

Next Steps

- Planning Board to review Monday, February 26, 2018
- City Council adoption March 20, 2018
- Implementation by staff, as prioritized by Council
- Further consideration of downtown projects (engage businesses/churches who might be impacted by changes to on-street parking; consider bicycles in plan to two-way)

Questions?